



# **Blue Badge Holders Parking Access Survey**

**June 2010**

Prepared for Directors

**Contents**

Summary ..... 3

Purpose ..... 4

Background ..... 4

Objectives..... 4

Questionnaire development..... 4

Methodology ..... 5

Costs ..... 5

Results ..... 6

## Summary

As part of the consultation process on the introduction of blue badge parking charges, over 1000 questionnaires were sent/given out of which a total of 348 surveys were returned.

The majority of respondents are Blue Badge holders, 82.5%. A further 16.3% are designated drivers or carers for Blue Badge holders. 1.5% were from representative groups.

Of those responding 41.6%, said they visit Epsom & Ewell by car 1-2 times a week and the car park that the majority, 49.7%, of respondents said they usually use is the Ashley Centre.

44.4% said they stay in the car park they usually use for 1-2 hours, followed by 37.5% who said they stay for 2-3 hours.

74.4% of respondents rated the Ashley Centre car park as very easy or easy to use.

60.1% of respondents said that the additional free hour would assist them.

40.7% of respondents said getting a ticket and exchanging it at the Ashley Centre was difficult or very difficult and 50.1% of respondents felt it was easy or very easy.

73.8% of respondents said they would prefer to validate their ticket at a ticket machine instead of visiting the Ashley Centre car park office. 64.3% of respondents said they would like to be able to enter and leave the Ashley Centre car park using a pre paid card.

41.3% of respondents said they would like more disabled spaces in the Ashley Centre.

92.6% of respondents agreed with the proposal to create additional spaces in the Ashley Centre.

49.6% of respondents feel that getting a ticket (in a car park other than the Ashley Centre) and displaying it will be difficult or very difficult.

39.4% of respondents feel that there should be more disabled spaces and 28.8% feel the Council should ensure disabled spaces are located close to a ticket machine.

More disabled spaces was ranked highest in suggested improvements to the car parks, followed by dedicated shop mobility spaces in the Ashley Centre and improved access for wheel chair users.

10.5% of respondents use shop mobility, of these 85.2% would like to see the provision of three dedicated spaces in the Ashley Centre.

77.2% of respondents felt that the signs used in the car parks were clear enough.

50.2% of respondents said they cannot usually find a disabled space in the car park they usually park in.

52.2% of respondents said they would like to contact a member of staff through an intercom help point.

61% of respondents said they had access to all the information they need regarding disabled parking before they plan their journey. 41.5% of respondents would like to access information on disabled parking in car parks.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to highlight the findings of the Blue Badge parking and access survey.

The document brings together the views of Blue Badge holders and representative groups on Epsom & Ewell Borough Council's proposal to charge Blue Badge holders for parking in its off street car parks and suggestions for improvements to disabled access in the car parks.

## **Background**

In February 2010, the Council agreed a package of cost-saving and income generation measures to meet the budget gap. One of these measures was the proposal to charge Blue Badge holders for parking in the Council's off-street car parks, where they had previously parked free of charge. The proposal included one hour free, after paid for time and money was set aside for improvements to disabled access in the car parks. The proposal was approved subject to consultation and the completion of the traffic order process.

## **Objectives**

The objectives of the survey were to:

- Obtain Blue Badge holders and representative groups views on the proposed changes
- To understand what impacts the proposal will have in order to mitigate them as much as possible
- To find out where Blue Badge holders feel the allocated money to improve disabled facilities should be used
- To gain an understanding of which improvements to disabled parking will have the greatest impact.

## **Questionnaire development**

The questions were developed in liaison with the Chair of The Environment Committee, Directors and Officers. They were designed to cover three areas:

- The detailed arrangements of the proposed charging
- Elements of the Equality Impact Assessment to inform its collation and completion
- Improvements people would like to see in regards to disabled access in the Council's car parks

## **Methodology**

The survey was conducted as a paper and an electronic version from 1 to 17 May 2010.

Copies of the survey were sent to all members of the Council's Citizens Panel members who are registered as disabled, a total of 175.

The Surrey Adult Linked Disability Register sent 111 copies to its members Council for Voluntary Services (CVS) sent copies to 65 individuals and 40 representative groups.

Mid-Surrey People with Disabilities Empowerment Board sent out 20 copies to interested parties.

800 surveys were also distributed in the Council's car parks to Blue Badge holders.

In addition the survey was also available from a link on the front page of the Council's website.

In response a total of 348 surveys were returned. This consisted of 30 online surveys and 318 paper copies.

Two focus groups were also held to gain more in-depth responses to the three areas covered by this survey. A separate report is available covering those focus groups.

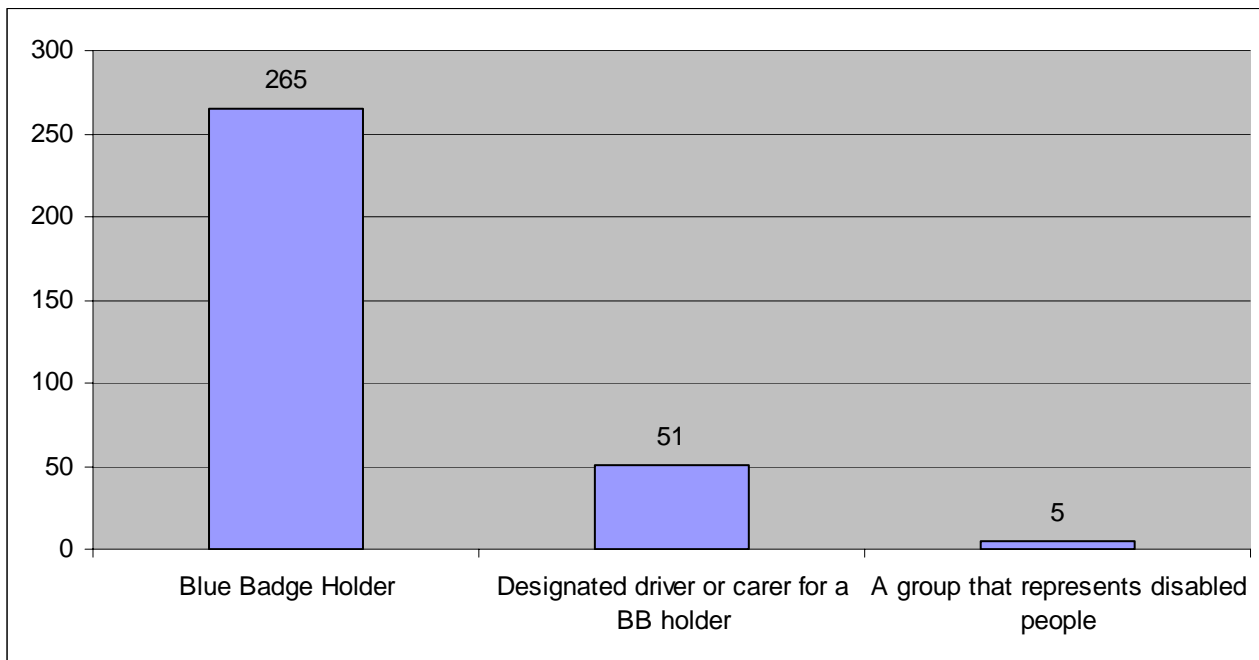
## **Costs**

Data entry costs: £642

Postage costs are included in the central budget. The Council assisted the CVS by covering their postage costs.

## Results

### Question 1. Are you a...



Base 321

The majority of respondents, 82.5%, to the survey are Blue Badge holders.

### Question 2. Please provide your Blue Badge number, the number of the person you drive or care for or the name of your representative group?

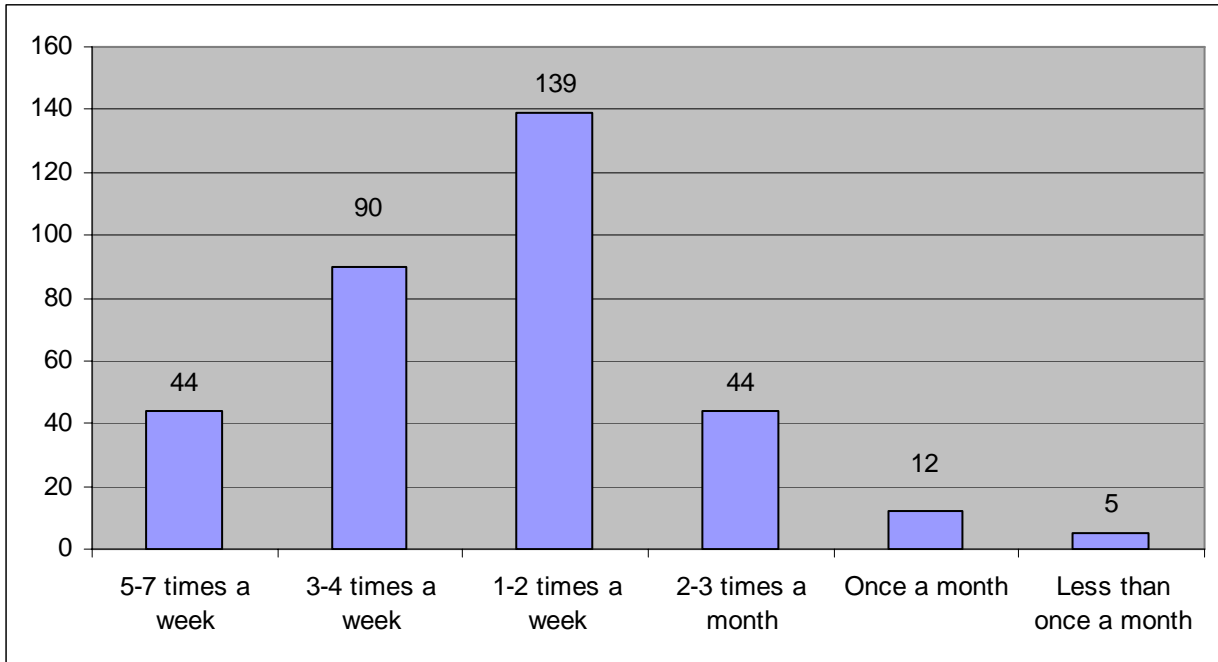
210 responses were received for this question. Five of them named their representative group.

- Gallwey Day Centre, St Ebbas, Epsom
- Mobile and Surrey Independent Living Council
- QEF Independent Living Services, Dorincourt
- Cuddington Residents Association
- The Brigitte Trust.

A late survey was received from the Surrey and Borders NHS Trust, the survey is not included in the results.

Three letters were received from residents and one letter was received from Age Concern.

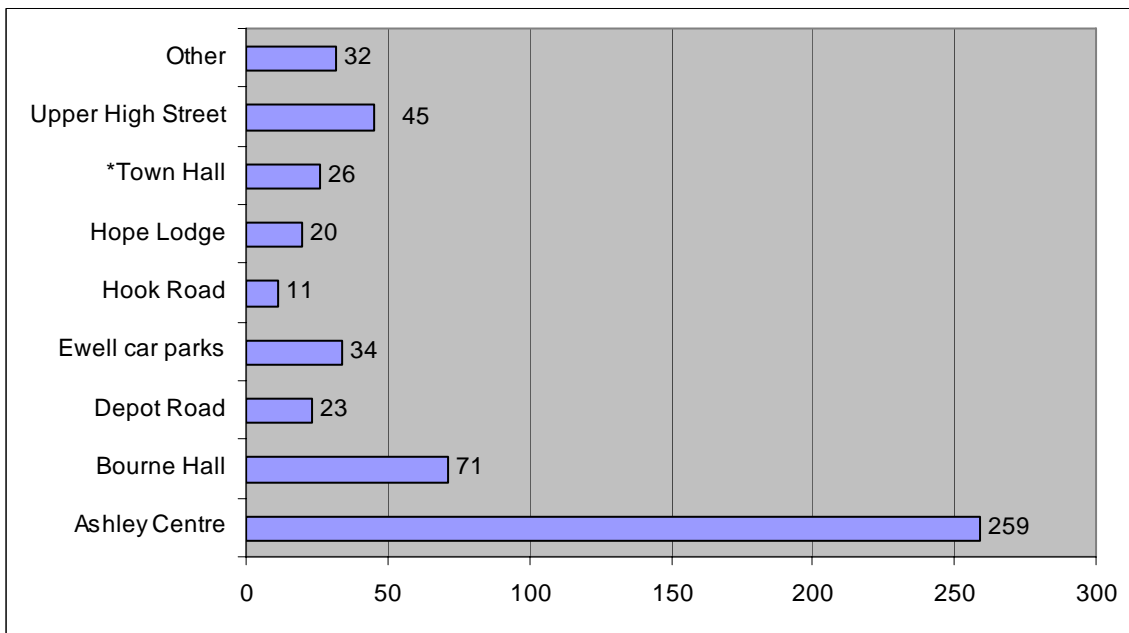
**Question 3. How often do you visit Epsom & Ewell by car?**



Base 334

41.6% of respondents said they visit Epsom 1-2 times a week. With a further 26.7% of respondents stating that they visit 3-4 times a week. 13.1% said they visit 2-3 times a month and the same number said they visit 5-7 times a week.

**Question 4. Which Epsom & Ewell car park do you usually park in?**

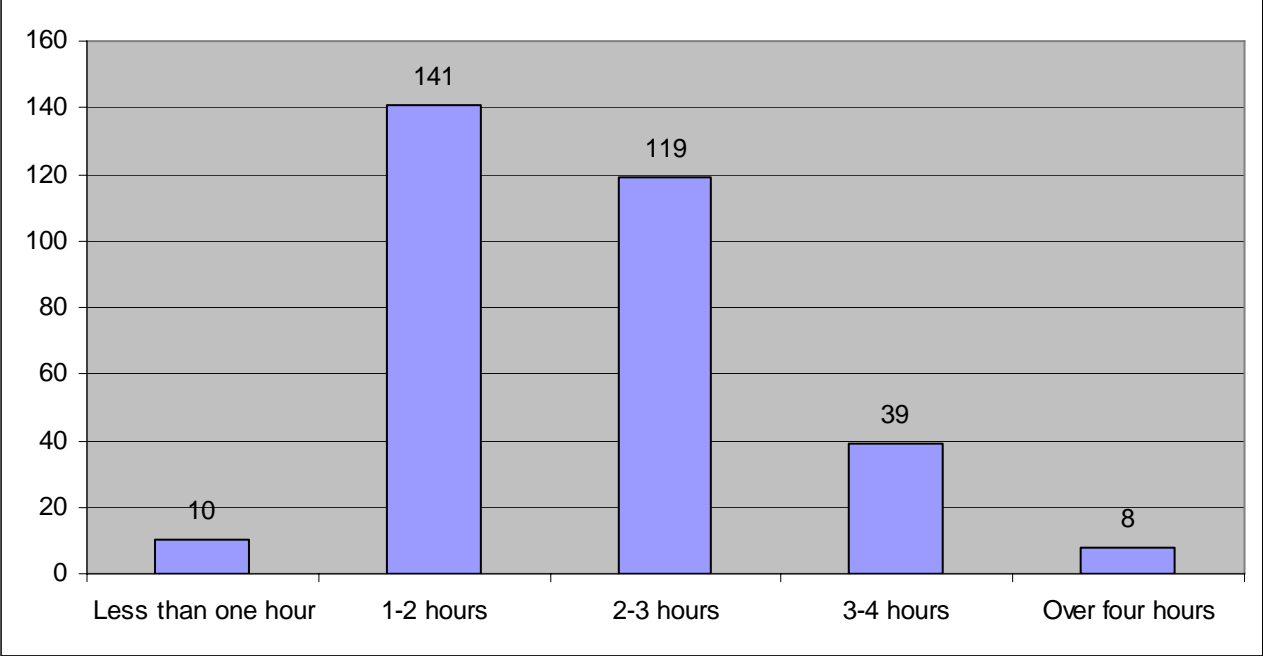


Base 521

\* Number refers to the number of people who 'wrote in' this car park.

49.7% of respondents said that the car park they usually park in is the Ashley Centre, with Bourne Hall the second most used car park. Only 2.1% of respondents said they use Hook Road car park.

**Question 5. How long do you usually stay in the car park?**



Base 317

44.4% of respondents said they stay in the car park for 1-2 hours, this was followed by 37.5% of respondents saying they usually stay for 2-3 hours. Only 3.1% said they stay for less than one hour.

**Q3 X Q5**

Question 3, How often do you usually visit Epsom & Ewell by car? Cross tab with question 5, How long do you usually stay in the car park?

		No reply (not included)	Base	How long do you usually stay in the car park?				
				Less than one hour	1-2 hours	2-3 hours	3-4 hours	Over four hours
No reply (not included)				-	1	-	2	-
Base				10	140	119	37	8
<b>How often do you visit Epsom &amp; Ewell by car?</b>								
	5-7 times a week	5	39	1	14	15	5	4
				2.60%	35.90%	38.50%	12.80%	10.30%
	3-4 times a week	5	85	4	41	30	8	2
				4.70%	48.20%	35.30%	9.40%	2.40%
	1-2 times a week	6	133	4	55	56	17	1
				3.00%	41.40%	42.10%	12.80%	0.80%
	2-3 times a month	3	41	1	22	13	4	1
				2.40%	53.70%	31.70%	9.80%	2.40%
	Once a month	-	12	-	6	3	3	-
				-	50.00%	25.00%	25.00%	-
	Less than once a month	1	4	-	2	2	-	-
				-	50.00%	50.00%	-	-

There seems to be no significant difference between how often respondents visit Epsom & Ewell car parks compared with how long they stay. No matter how often respondents visit the table shows that they usually stay for between one and three hours. The exception to this is respondents who visit once a month, a quarter of them say they stay for three to four hours.

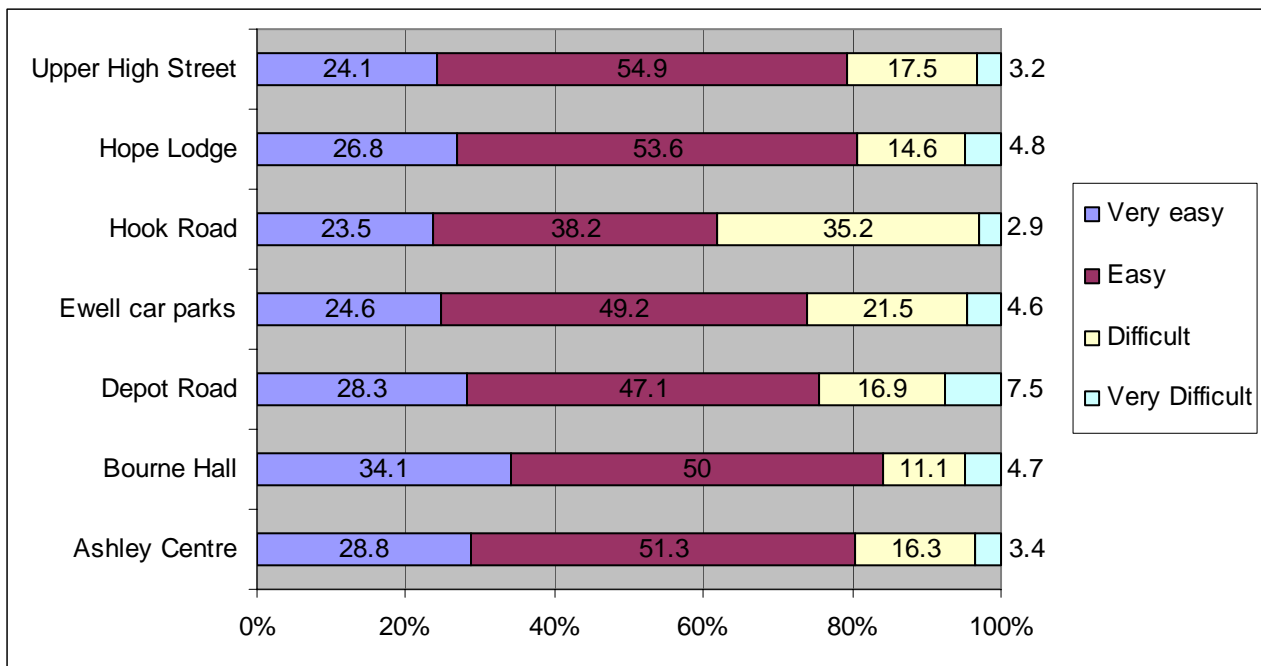
#### Q4 X Q5

Question 4, which Epsom & Ewell car park do you usually park in? Cross tab with question 5, How long do you usually stay in the car park?

		No reply (not included)	Base	How long do you usually stay in the car park?				
				Less than one hour	1-2 hours	2-3 hours	3-4 hours	Over four hours
No reply (not included)				1	12	11	3	1
Base				9	129	108	36	7
Which Epsom & Ewell car park do you usually park in?	Ashley Centre	15	244	5	112	91	31	5
				2.00%	45.90%	37.30%	12.70%	2.00%
	Bourne Hall	11	60	3	24	23	10	-
				5.00%	40.00%	38.30%	16.70%	-
	Depot Road	23	19	-	7	7	4	1
				-	36.80%	36.80%	21.10%	5.30%
	Ewell car parks	5	29	1	12	9	7	-
				3.40%	41.40%	31.00%	24.10%	-
	Hook Road	1	10	-	3	5	-	2
				-	30.00%	50.00%	-	20.00%
	Hope Lodge	1	19	2	8	7	2	-
				10.50%	42.10%	36.80%	10.50%	-
	Upper High Street	4	41	1	21	15	4	-
				2.40%	51.20%	36.60%	9.80%	-
	Other	2	30	1	13	12	3	1
				3.30%	43.30%	40.00%	10.00%	3.30%
	Town Hall	1	25	1	10	12	2	-
				4.00%	40.00%	48.00%	8.00%	-

Most respondents seem to stay in the car park they usually park in for between one and three hours. Almost a quarter of respondents stay in Ewell car parks for three to four hours and 20% of respondents said they usually stay in Hook Road car park for over four hours.

**Question 6. Currently how easy to use do you find the following car parks?**



The above graph excludes 'Not sure' and 'Do not use' responses. The full results can be seen in the table below.

	Base	Very easy	Easy	Difficult	Very difficult	Not sure	Do not use
Base		198	353	118	29	39	547
<b>Ashley Centre</b>	310	83	148	47	10	6	16
<b>Bourne Hall</b>	191	43	63	14	6	4	61
<b>Depot Road</b>	155	15	25	9	4	5	97
<b>Ewell car parks</b>	162	16	32	14	3	7	90
<b>Hook Road</b>	147	8	13	12	1	5	108
<b>Hope Lodge</b>	144	11	22	6	2	5	98
<b>Upper High Street</b>	175	22	50	16	3	7	77

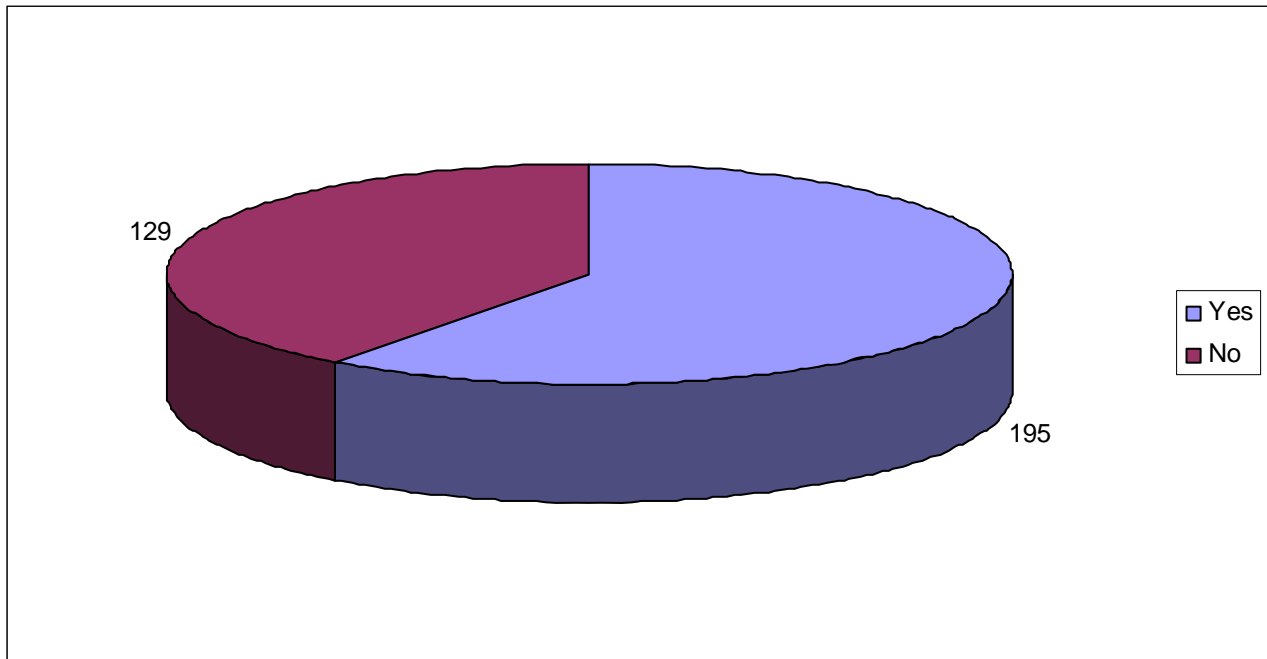
When rating the Ashley Centre, Bourne Hall, Hope Lodge and Upper High Street on ease of use around 80% of respondents rated each car park as very easy or easy to use.

*The Council intends that from July 2010 Blue Badge Holders will pay to park in Epsom & Ewell Borough Council car parks.*

*The Council recognises that some Blue Badge holders may be less mobile than other car park users and may require extra time. The Council therefore proposes that Blue Badge holders will be entitled to one additional hour after paid time at no extra cost.*

*Blue Badge holders will continue to be entitled to park either at the conveniently located disabled spaces or in any other space in the car park.*

**Question 7. Do you think this additional free hour will assist you?**

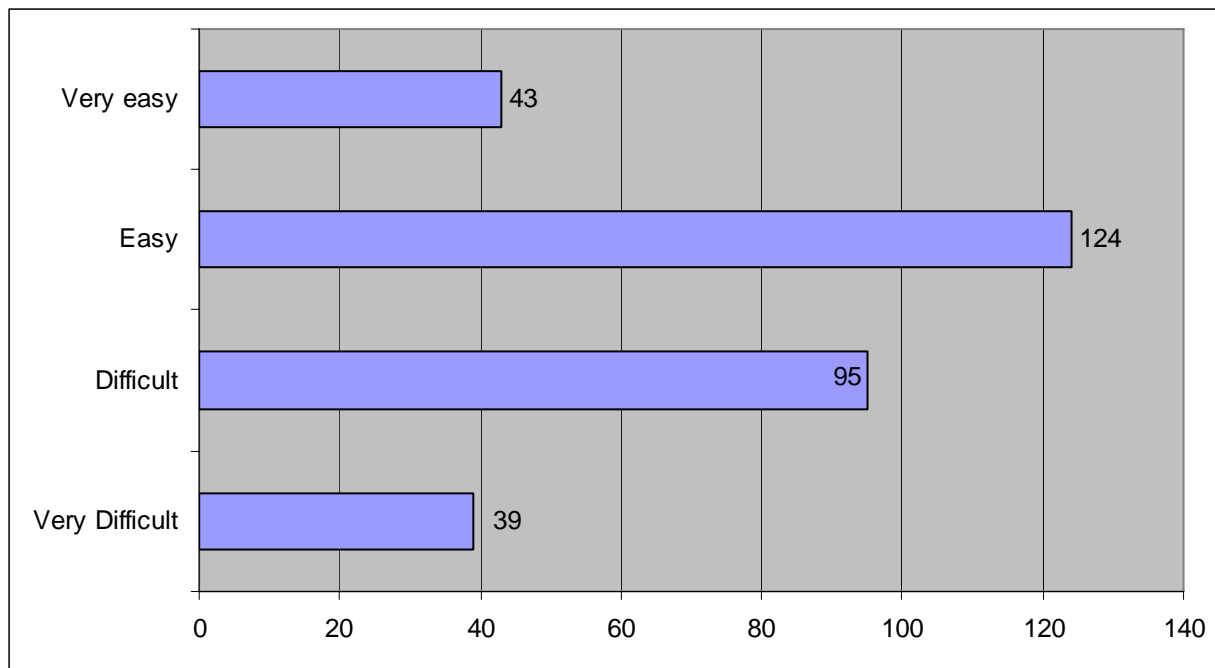


Base 324

60.2% of respondents feel that the additional free hour will assist them. 39.8% say that the free hour will not assist them.

*In the Ashley Centre barrier controlled car park, the new arrangements will be very similar to those which apply at the present time. Blue Badge holders will get a ticket from the barrier on entry and then either they or a companion will need to visit the car park office to pay and exchange the entry ticket for one which will raise the barrier.*

**Question 8. Thinking about your own circumstances, how do you find getting a ticket and exchanging it at the car park office in the Ashley Centre?**

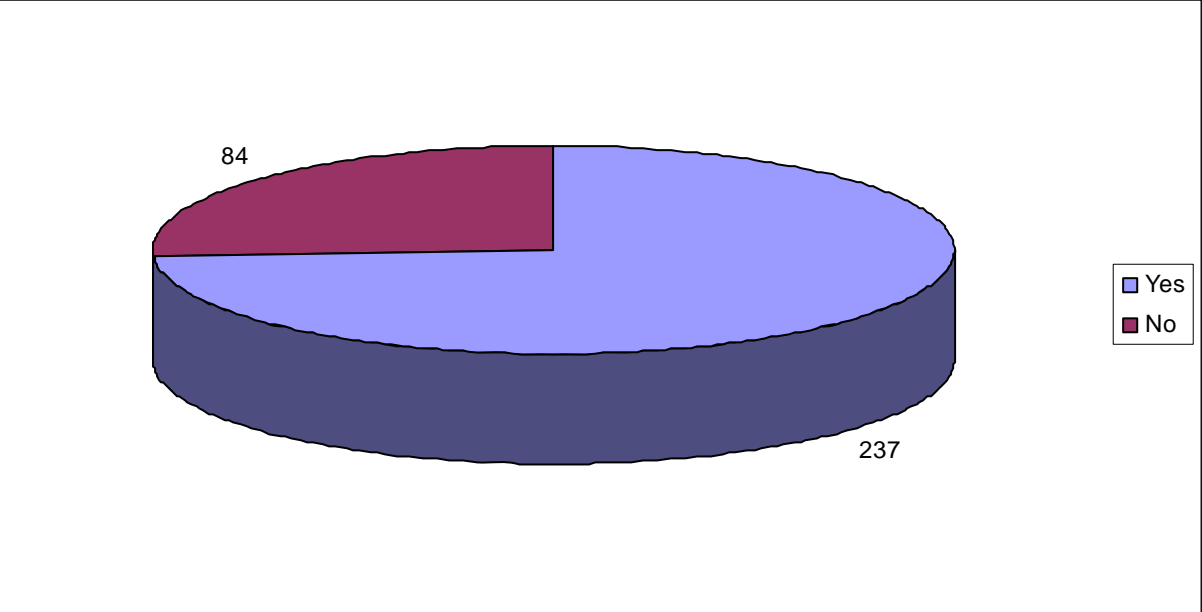


Base 301

55.4% of respondents find getting a ticket at the Ashley Centre either very easy or easy. 44.5% said they find it difficult or very difficult.

22 respondents said they did not use the Ashley Centre and five said they were not sure.

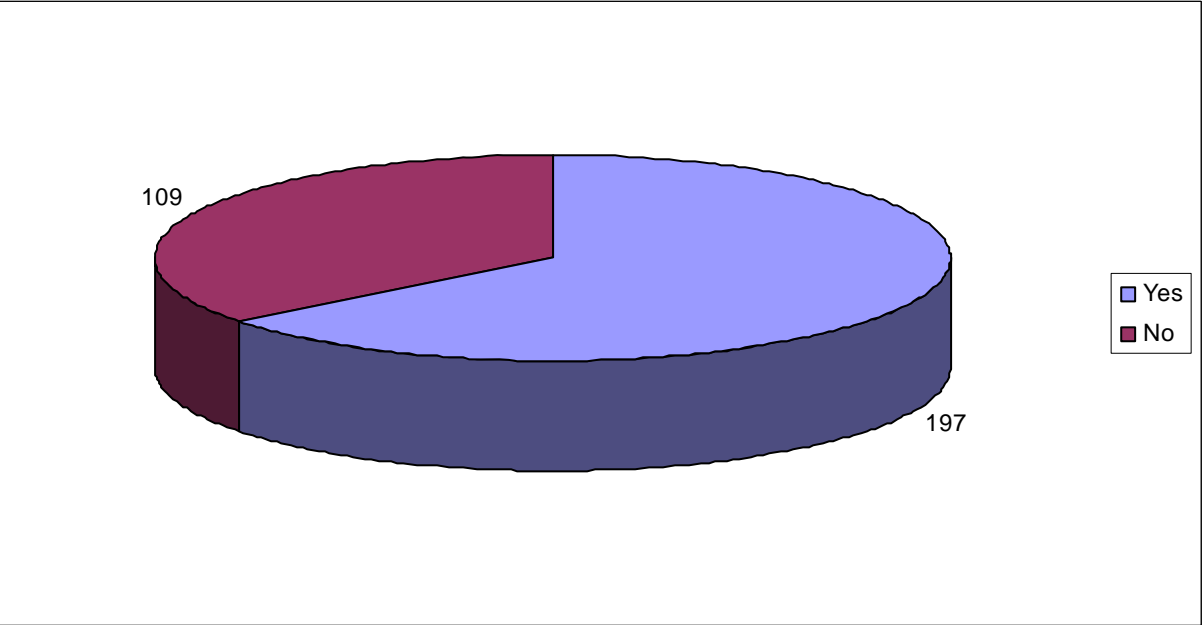
**Question 9. If it is possible in the future, would you prefer to validate your ticket at the ticket machine instead of visiting the Ashley Centre car park office?**



Base 321

73.8% of respondents said they would prefer to validate their ticket at the ticket machine instead of visiting the Ashley Centre car park office.

**Question 10. If it is possible in the future, would you prefer to be able to enter and leave the Ashley Centre car park using a pre paid card to raise the barrier instead of visiting the Ashley Centre car park office?**

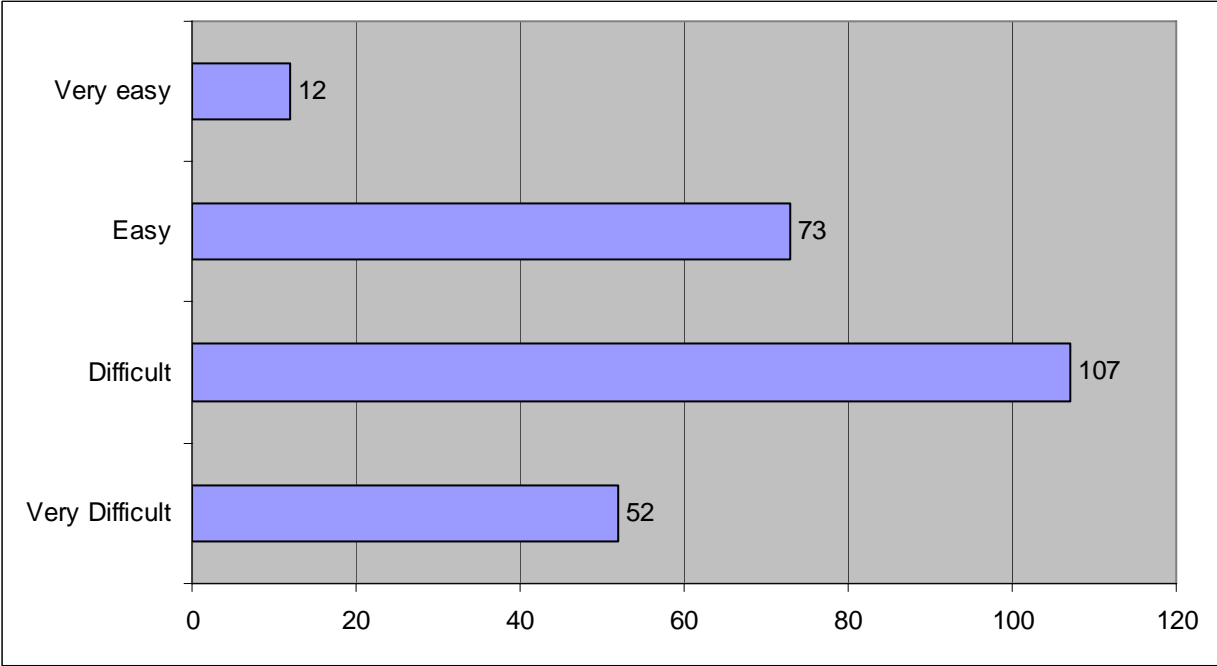


Base 306

64.3% of respondents stated that they would prefer to be able to enter and leave the Ashley Centre car park using a pre paid card.

*In all other car parks you will need to pay for a ticket at the pay and display machine and display it on the dashboard next to your Blue Badge in order to qualify for the one additional hour free.*

**Question 11. Thinking about your own circumstances and mobility, how easy do you think getting a ticket and displaying it will be in one of the car parks other than the Ashley Centre?**



Base 244

65.1% of respondents said they would find it very difficult or difficult to get a ticket and display it at one of the other car parks. 34.8% of respondents said it would be easy or very easy.

41 respondents said they were not sure and a further 35 respondents said they do not use the other car parks.

**Question 12. What other areas of the Council's changes do you think will have an impact on you and why?**

216 responses were received for this question.

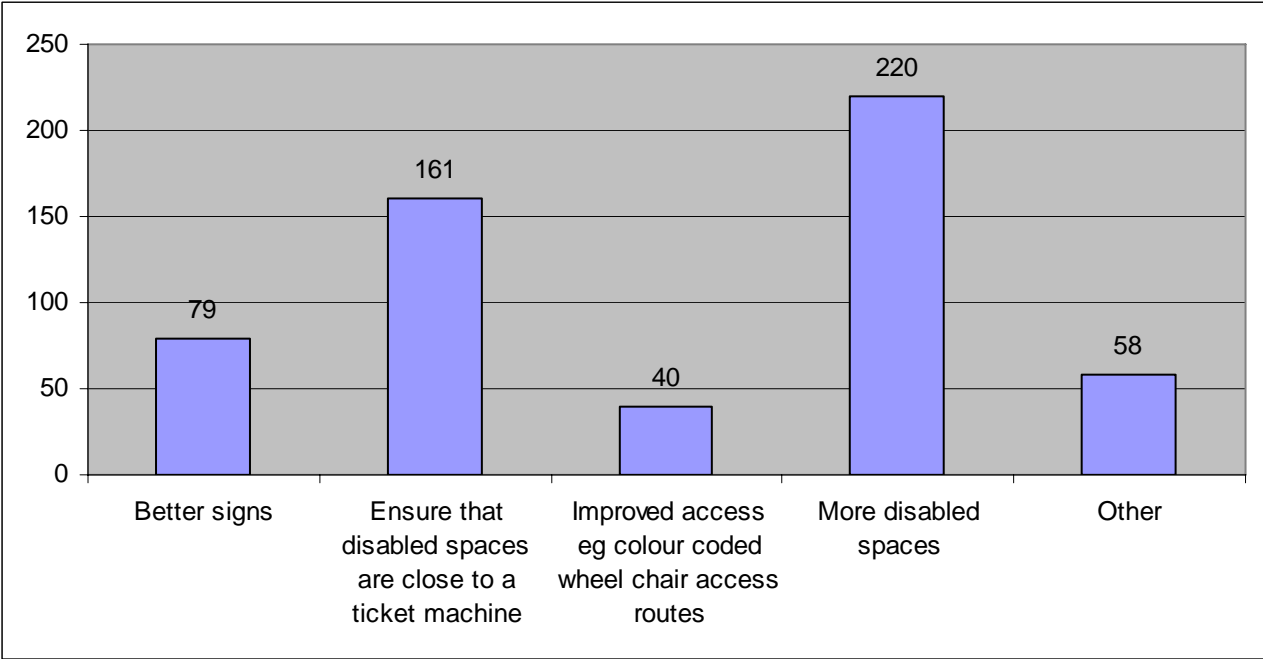
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Number of comments</b>	<b>Summary</b>
Financial issues	40 <b>18.5%</b>	Respondents say they cannot afford the cost of parking if charges are introduced.
Stop coming to Epsom	38 <b>17.5%</b>	Respondents say that they will shop elsewhere in the future.
Distance to ticket machines	20 <b>9.2%</b>	Respondents say that getting to a ticket machine and back to the car again will be a problem.
Parking on yellow lines	12 <b>5.5%</b>	Respondents say that they will park on yellow lines instead of using the car parks.
No other problems	2 <b>0.9%</b>	Respondents do not see any other problems with the changes.
General	98 <b>45.3%</b>	General comments on a variety of parking issues.

**Question 13. What actions could the Council take to minimise any problems?**

196 responses were received for this question.

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Number of comments</b>	<b>Summary</b>
Against the introduction of charges	94 <b>47.9%</b>	Respondents say they do not want the Council to introduce charging.
Ideas about the scheme	22 <b>11.2%</b>	Suggestions about how the charging could be implemented.
Ashley Centre	15 <b>7.6%</b>	Comments about the Ashley Centre car park and how it could be improved.
Non disabled users using Blue Badges/ disabled spaces	11 <b>5.6%</b>	Comments about the Council ensuring that disabled bays are only used by disabled users.
Improvements in car parks	8 <b>4.0%</b>	General comments about how car parks could be improved.
General	21 <b>10.7%</b>	General comments on a variety of parking issues.

**Question 14. Thinking of the car park you usually park in, what actions could the Council take to improve the facilities for Blue Badge holders?**



Base 558

39.4% of respondents feel that there should be more disabled spaces and 28.8% of respondents said the Council should ensure that disabled spaces are close to a ticket machine.

Other, please specify. 57 responses were received under this section.

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Number of comments</b>	<b>Summary</b>
Car park office	12 <b>21%</b>	Comments about the location of and using the car park office in the Ashley Centre car park.
Against charging	12 <b>21%</b>	Respondents say they do not want the Council to introduce charging.
Non disabled users using Blue Badges/ disabled spaces	10 <b>17.5%</b>	Comments about the Council ensuring that disabled bays are only used by disabled users.
Lighting	6 <b>10.5%</b>	Respondents express a need for better lighting in car parks. (Ashley Centre)
Disabled spaces	5 <b>8.7%</b>	Comments about disabled spaces needing to be bigger.
Wheel chairs	3 <b>5.2%</b>	Comments about wheel chair users.
Signs	3 <b>5.2%</b>	Comments about the signs in the car parks.
Positive	2 <b>3.5%</b>	Respondents comments on the Ashley Centre being a good car park.
Other	4 <b>7%</b>	General comments on a variety of parking issues. Two suggest that spaces should be near to the toilets.

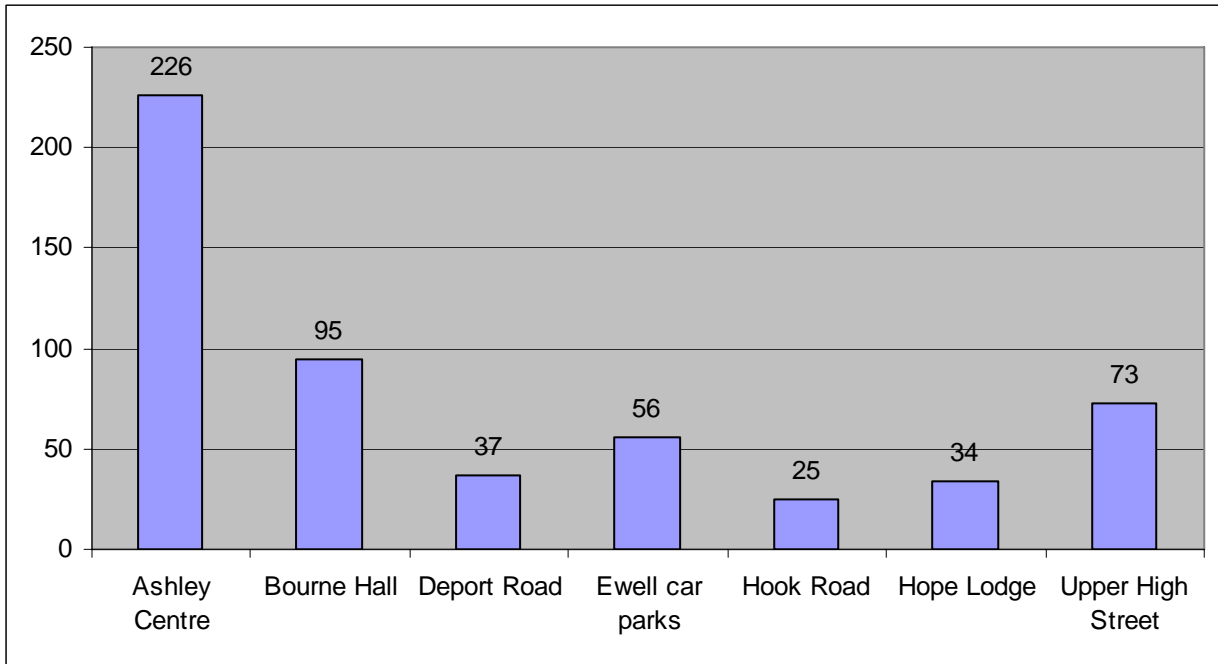
The Council has allocated £88,000 to improve disabled facilities in its car parks.  
Detailed below are five areas for improvement.

**Question 15. Please rank them in order of preference. 1 being highest priority, 5 being lowest.**

Ranking	Base	Colour coded wheel chair access routes within car parks	Dedicated shop mobility spaces in the Ashley Centre	Improved access for wheel chairs	Longer disabled spaces for modified vehicles	More disabled spaces
<b>1</b>	421	35	67	66	45	208
		8.3%	15.9%	15.7%	10.7%	49.4%
<b>2</b>	162	29	35	44	31	23
		17.9%	21.6%	27.2%	19.1%	14.2%
<b>3</b>	149	26	32	37	37	17
		17.4%	21.5%	24.8%	24.8%	11.4%
<b>4</b>	119	36	29	21	26	7
		30.3%	24.4%	17.6%	21.8%	5.9%
<b>5</b>	151	52	31	19	40	9
		34.4%	20.5%	12.6%	26.5%	6.0%

The provision of more disabled spaces was ranked as first with 208 respondents choosing it as their first option.

**Question 16. Where would you like to see more disabled spaces?**

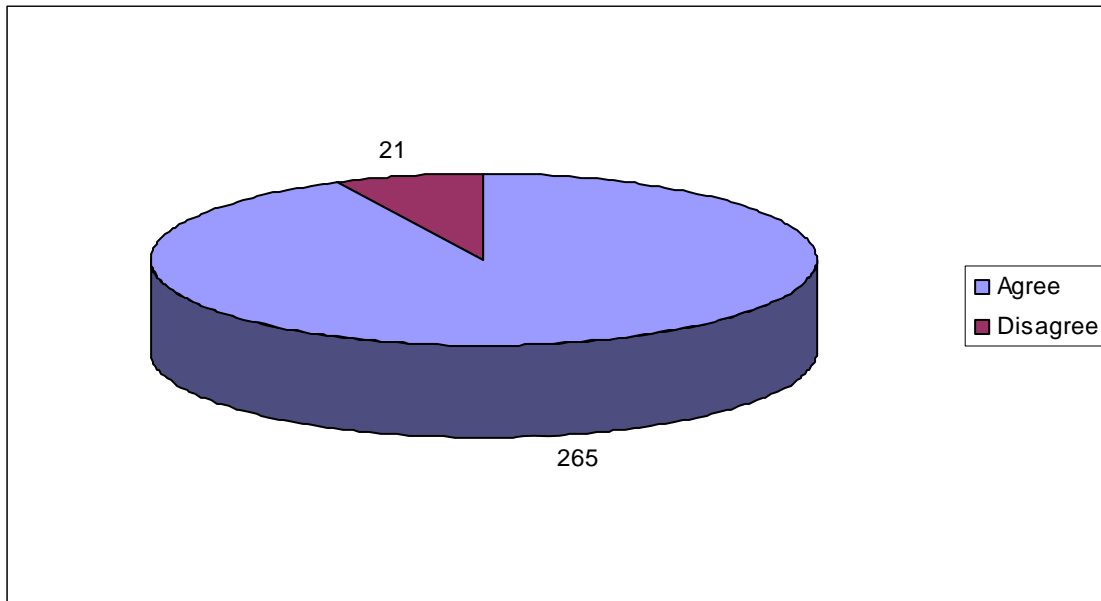


Base 546

41.3% of respondents would like to see more disabled spaces in the Ashley Centre car park, with 17.3% of respondents stating they would like to see more disabled spaces in Bourne Hall. 13.3% of respondents would like more disabled spaces in Upper High Street.

*We are considering increasing the number of disabled spaces in the Ashley Centre car park by 10 spaces on the lower ground floor.*

**Question 17. What do you think?**

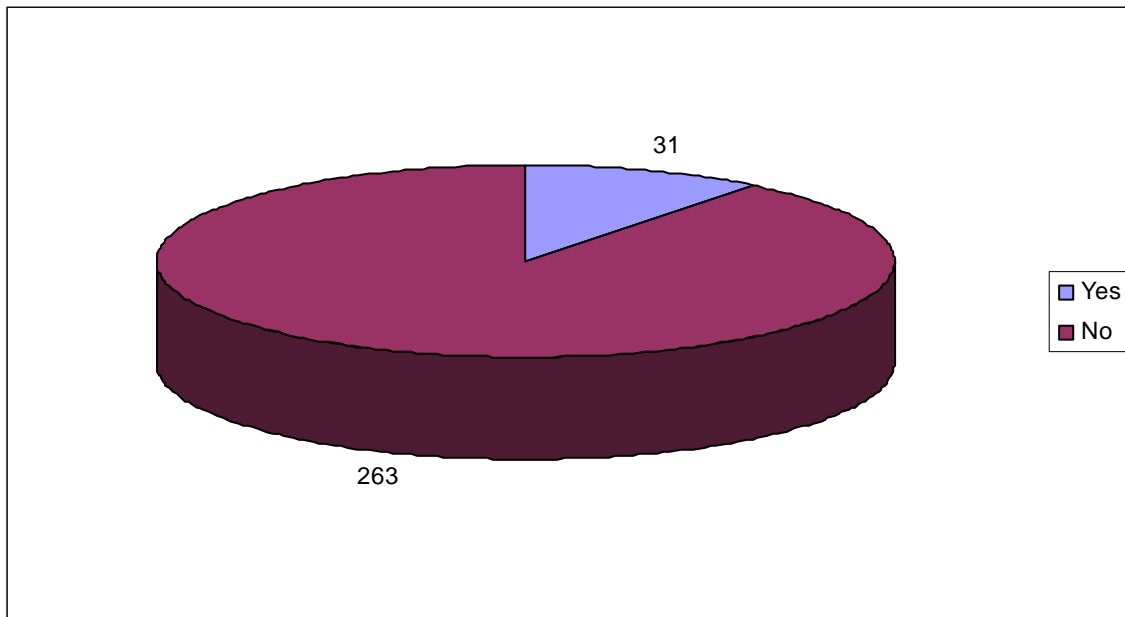


Base 286

92.6% of respondents agree with the proposal of creating additional spaces in the Ashley Centre.

*Members of shop mobility can hire an electric scooter at the Ashley Centre to get around Epsom Town Centre.*

**Question 18. Do you use shop mobility?**

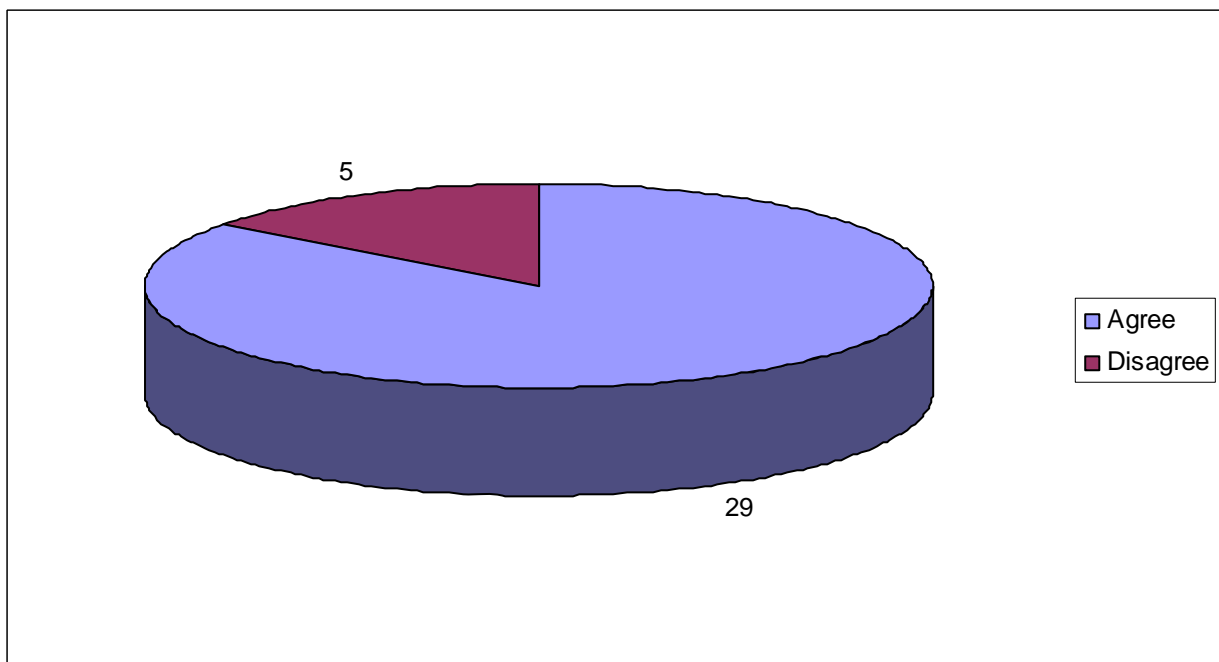


Base 294

The majority of respondents, 89.4% do not use shop mobility.

*We propose to provide three dedicated shop mobility spaces in the Ashley Centre car park on the ground floor.*

**Question 19. What do you think?**

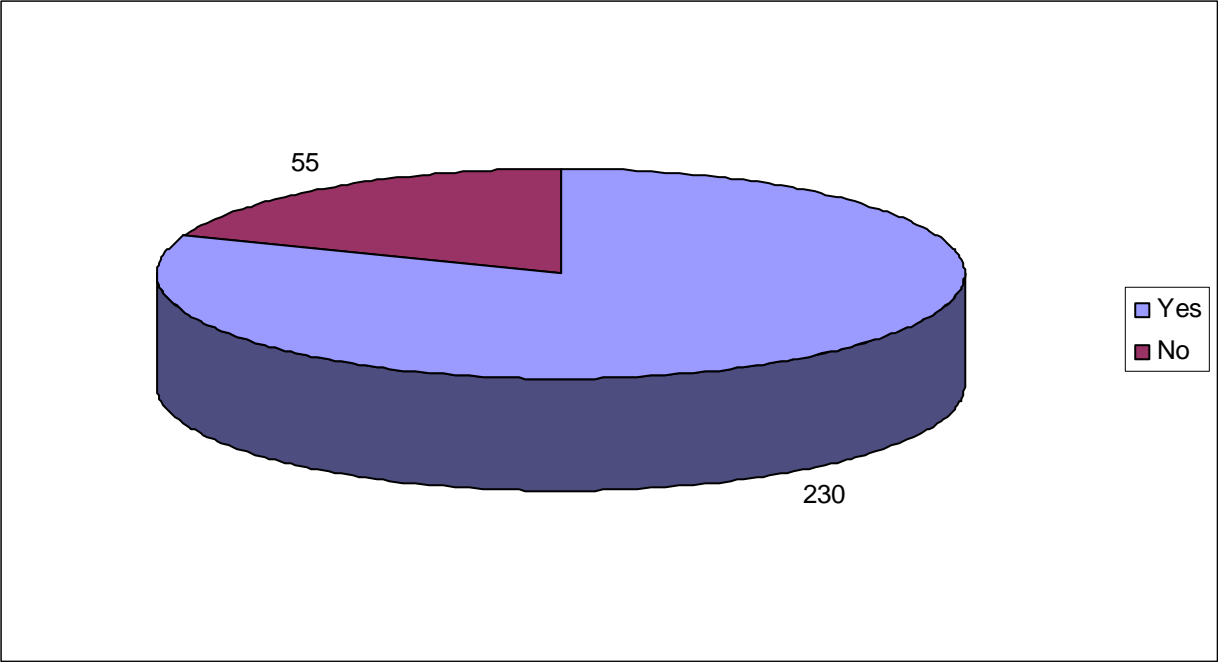


Base 34

Of the 34 respondents who use shop mobility 85.2% agree with the proposal to provide three dedicated shop mobility spaces in the Ashley Centre.

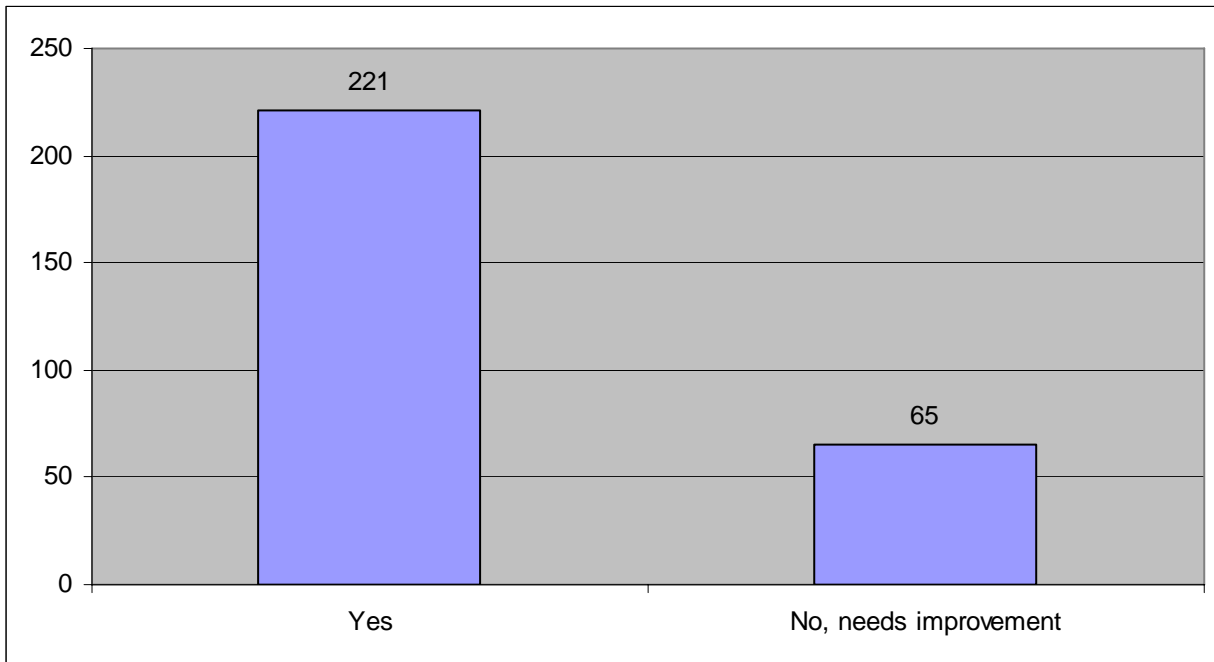
*While all Blue Badge holders are entitled to park on double and single yellow lines for a maximum period of three hours there may be an opportunity to create short term reserved bays for easy access to the Town Centre.*

**Question 20. Would you like to see 30 minute disabled spaces on the roads close to Epsom High Street?**



80.7% of respondents said they would like to see 30 minute disabled spaces on the roads close to Epsom High Street.

**Question 21. Do you find the signs in our car parks clear enough?**



Base 286

77.2% of respondents find the signs in our car parks clear enough.

Please specify improvements needed. 47 responses were received under this section.

Theme	Number of comments	Summary
Look of the signs	13 <b>27.6%</b>	Respondents comments about how the signs look, many of which suggest they should be bigger, with larger print.
Directions to spaces	12 <b>25.5%</b>	Respondents cannot find where disabled spaces are located and they would like to know if they are vacant or not on entry to the car park.
Blue Badge parking rules and procedure	4 <b>8.5%</b>	Respondents would like better signs relating to the procedures they must follow when going to a particular car park.
General	18 <b>38.2%</b>	General comments about signs and on a variety of parking issues.

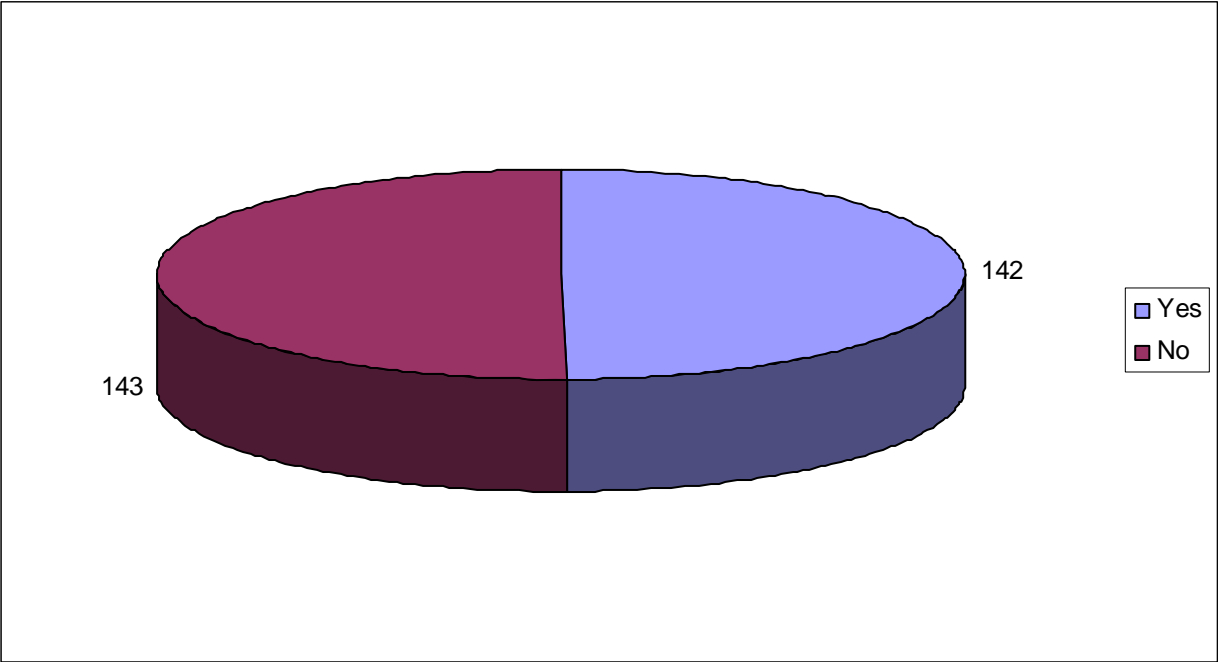
#### Q4 X Q21

Question 4, which Epsom & Ewell car park do you usually park in? Cross tab with question 21, Do you find the signs in our car parks clear enough?

		No reply (not included)	Base	Do you find the signs in our car parks clear enough?	
				Yes	No, needs improvement
No reply (not included)				-	-
Base				221	65
Which Epsom & Ewell car park do you usually park in?	Ashley Centre	13	246	201	45
				81.70%	18.30%
	Bourne Hall	9	62	38	24
				61.30%	38.70%
	Depot Road	2	21	14	7
				66.70%	33.30%
	Ewell car parks	5	29	21	8
				72.40%	27.60%
	Hook Road	-	11	8	3
				72.70%	27.30%
	Hope Lodge	3	17	13	4
				76.50%	23.50%
	Upper High Street	1	44	30	14
				68.20%	31.80%
	Other	1	31	19	12
				61.30%	38.70%
	Town Hall	4	22	11	11
				50.00%	50.00%

The majority of respondents, no matter which car park they usually park in, find the signs in our car parks clear enough. However, 50% of respondents who usually park in the Town Hall find signs in our car parks need improvement. 38.7% of respondents who usually park in other car parks and 38.7% who usually park in Bourne Hall car park said the signs in our car parks need improving.

**Question 22. Can you usually find a disabled space in the car park you use regularly?**



Base 285

49.8% of respondents say they can usually find a disabled space in the car park they use regularly with 50.2% stating that they can't usually find a space in the car park they use regularly.

**Q4 X Q22**

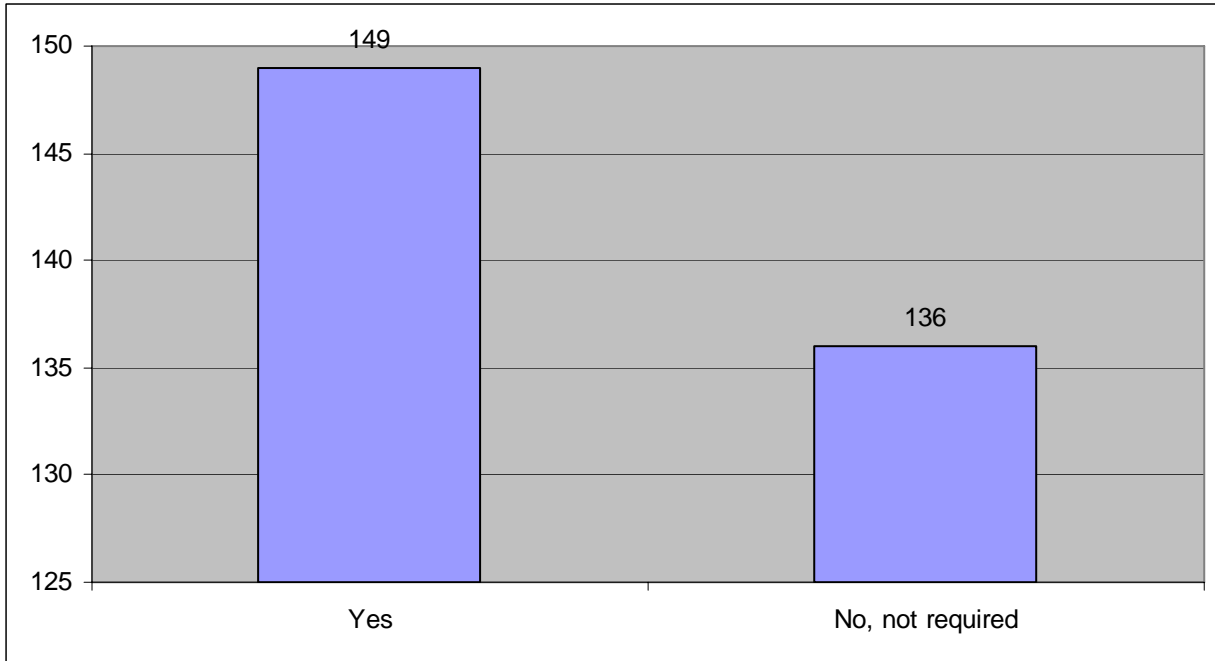
Question 4, which Epsom & Ewell car park do you usually park in? Cross tab with question 22, Can you usually find a disabled space in the car park you use regularly?

		No reply (not included)	Base	Can you usually find a disabled space in the car park you...	
				Yes	No
No reply (not included)				-	-
Base				142	143
<b>Which Epsom &amp; Ewell car park do you usually park in?</b>					
	Ashley Centre	17	242	126	116
				52.10%	47.90%
	Bourne Hall	13	58	24	34
				41.40%	58.60%
	Depot Road	3	20	6	14
				30.00%	70.00%
	Ewell car parks	3	31	9	22
				29.00%	71.00%
	Hook Road	1	10	7	3
				70.00%	30.00%
	Hope Lodge	1	19	6	13
				31.60%	68.40%
	Upper High Street	3	42	16	26
				38.10%	61.90%
	Other	2	30	12	18
				40.00%	60.00%
	Town Hall	6	20	9	11
				45.00%	55.00%

71% of respondents who usually park in Ewell car parks said they cannot usually find a disabled space with 70% who usually park in Depot Road saying the same thing.

70% of respondents who park in Hook Road can usually find a disabled space.

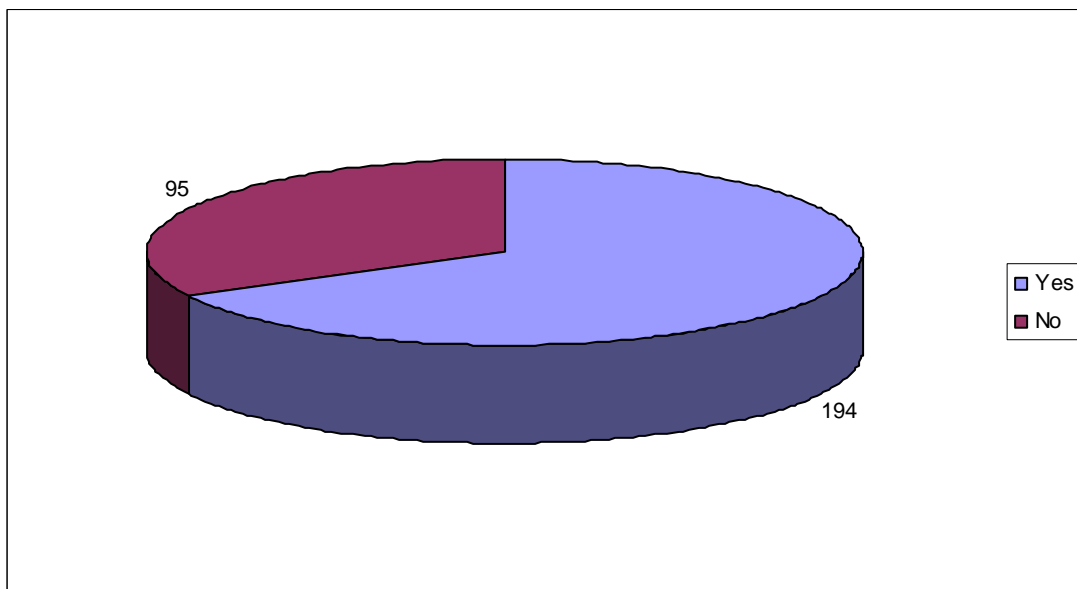
**Question 23. Would you like to be able to contact a member of staff through an intercom help point for assistance in all car parks?**



Base 285

52.2% of respondents said they would like to be able to contact a member of staff through an intercom help point for assistance in all car parks.

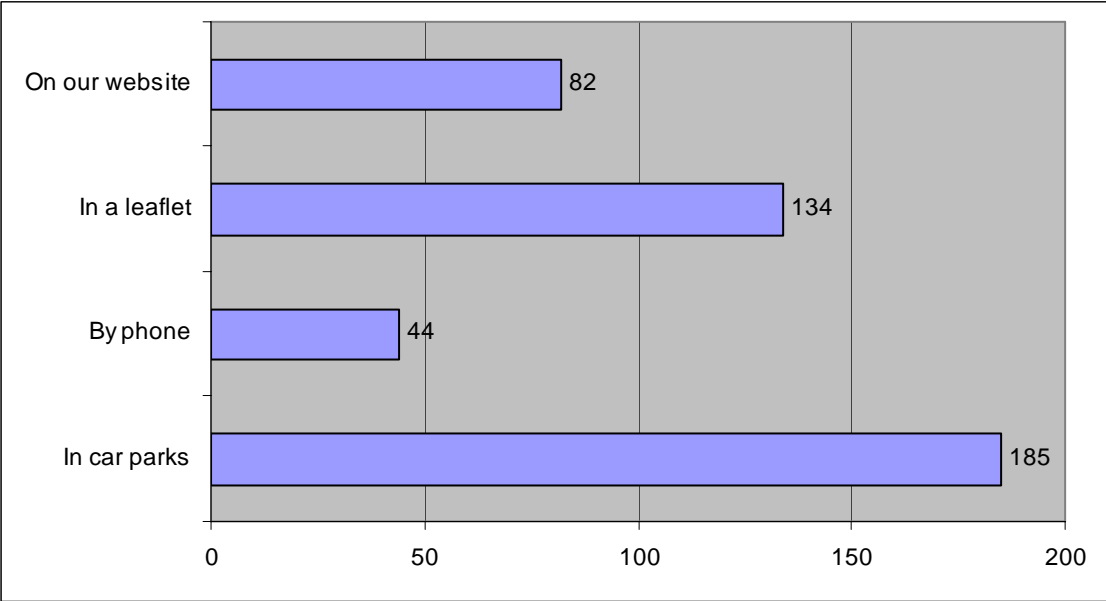
**Question 24. Before you plan your journey to Epsom, do you have access to all the information regarding disabled parking you need?**



Base 289

67.1% of respondents feel they have access to all the information they need regarding disabled parking before they plan their journey.

**Question 25. How would you like to access information on disabled parking?**



Base 445

41.5% of respondents want to access information in car parks and 30.1% of respondents want to access information in a leaflet.

**Question 26. Are there any other ways in which we can physically improve your access to the car parks?**

140 literal responses were received for this question.

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Number of comments</b>	<b>Summary</b>
Against the introduction of charges	16 <b>11.4%</b>	Respondents say they do not want the Council to introduce charging.
Amount and location of disabled spaces	17 <b>12.1%</b>	Respondents say that there should be more disabled spaces and that they should be located close to lifts and ticket machines.
Lifts in the Ashley Centre	14 <b>10%</b>	Respondents comments on the lifts in the Ashley Centre being difficult to use.
Positive	6 <b>4.2%</b>	Respondents saying they are satisfied with current arrangements in the car parks.
Pedestrian crossing in the Ashley Centre	4 <b>2.8%</b>	Comments about the crossing in the Ashley Centre.
Ideas about the scheme	3 <b>2.1%</b>	Two comments about a pre payment scheme and one about a special access road for disabled people.
Access in to the Ashley Centre	2 <b>1.4%</b>	Comments about getting into the car park.
Lighting	2 <b>1.4%</b>	Comments about poor lighting, one refers directly to the Ashley Centre
Non disabled users using a Blue Badge/disabled spaces	2 <b>1.4%</b>	Comments about the Council ensuring that disabled bays are only used by disabled users.
Barriers in the Ashley Centre	2 <b>1.4%</b>	Respondents comments on difficulty using the barriers.
The money allocated to improve disabled facilities	2 <b>1.4%</b>	Comments about using the allocated money to continue providing free parking for the disabled.
General	21 <b>15%</b>	General comments on a variety of parking issues.
Letters	4 <b>2.8%</b>	Four letters were received, one from Age Concern.

**Question 27. Would you like to be part of a focus group on Thursday 27 May for future proposals for disability access improvements to the Borough?**

34 respondents said yes. The focus groups took place on Thursday 27 May 2010.