

The Future Rutland Conversation

Narrative summary report:
Leisure and Recreation

June 2021

A summary report outlining the key findings and themes identified as part of the Future Rutland Conversation about 'Leisure and Recreation'

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*We asked and this is what you told us.
Is there anything we've missed?*

1. Introduction

The Future Rutland Conversation is just that: a conversation with everyone who lives and works in Rutland, to find out what's most important to local people – both now and in the future.

Using a series of specially designed surveys, open forums and live discussion events held over a period of two months in the spring of 2021, people of all ages and backgrounds from across Rutland were invited to share their views on wide range of important issues. They were:

- Your Life in Rutland
- Climate change and the environment
- Getting around
- Leisure and recreation
- Health and well-being
- Living in the county
- Learning, skills and employment
- Local services and public spending

There were dedicated surveys and discussions for young people, businesses and visitors to the county. Local stakeholders, schools and new digital channels, like Instagram, helped to reach the widest possible audience. People without internet access were also supported to take part in Future Rutland Conversation by phone, making sure that everyone had an opportunity to share their views.

In total, 2022 people took part in the Future Rutland Conversation. This comprised 1,557 adults who registered online, plus 465 children and young people who were not required to register their details. Together, these participants provided more than 4,500 responses across multiple themed surveys. Alongside these surveys, more than 1,000 contributions were made across nine online forums and some 250 people took part in live discussion events.

The aim of all this is to develop a new shared vision of Rutland – a set of common goals and aspirations based on the things that matter to local people, and which can help to shape a bright and prosperous future for our county.

The following report summarises the comments and feedback received as part of Future Rutland's 'Leisure and Recreation' conversation.



2. Method statement

The Future Rutland Conversation ran for a period of eight weeks, from April to June 2021. During this time, 15 online surveys were launched, asking participants more than 100 questions. This was supported by eight two-hour engagement events led by independent facilitator Michael Maynard, plus a further seven two-hour face-to-face video calls with the Leader and Chief Executive of Rutland County Council. Feedback was also gathered in the form of submissions from Rutland County Councillors and Parish Councils, who provided responses from local meetings and other forms of engagement. A significant awareness-raising campaign took place online and through traditional local media outlets, such as newspapers and radio stations. This helped to support engagement with children and young people, visitors to the county and local businesses, as well as those who live, work and were educated here in Rutland.

The many thousands of pieces of raw data and information resulting from the eight-week conversation were sent for analysis by Rutland Community Ventures (RCV), a community-based company in Oakham and operating independently of Rutland County Council. RCV's analysis involved watching and transcribing verbatim comments from hours of video-recorded Zoom conversations; listening to audio files; analysing and summarising survey data; reading and annotating event notes and reports; and reviewing the highly detailed statistics derived from the online surveys. This intensive independent analysis was undertaken over a three-week period without influence from Rutland County Council. The results of the analysis were then submitted by RCV to the Council, who have published this material in a series of theme-based reports. These reports summarise while fully representing participants' original uninterpreted views, opinions and experiences.

If you would like to view all of the original data and information behind these summary reports, this can be read in full online at:
future.rutland.gov.uk/leisure-and-recreation



3. Who took part?

570

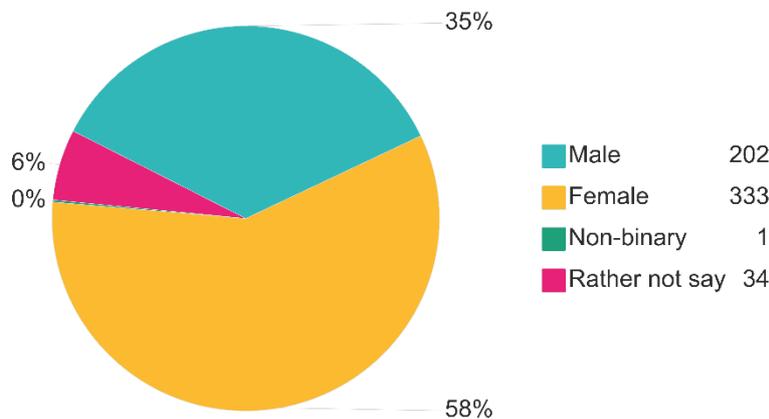
 responses

A total of 570 people provided responses to Future Rutland’s ‘Leisure and Recreation’ survey. This was in addition to online forum comments and two live discussion events chaired by independent facilitator Michael Maynard.

Gender profile

Just over half of respondents to the ‘Leisure and Recreation’ survey were female (58%), while 35% were male. One respondent identified as non-binary and a small proportion (6%) chose not to share this information.

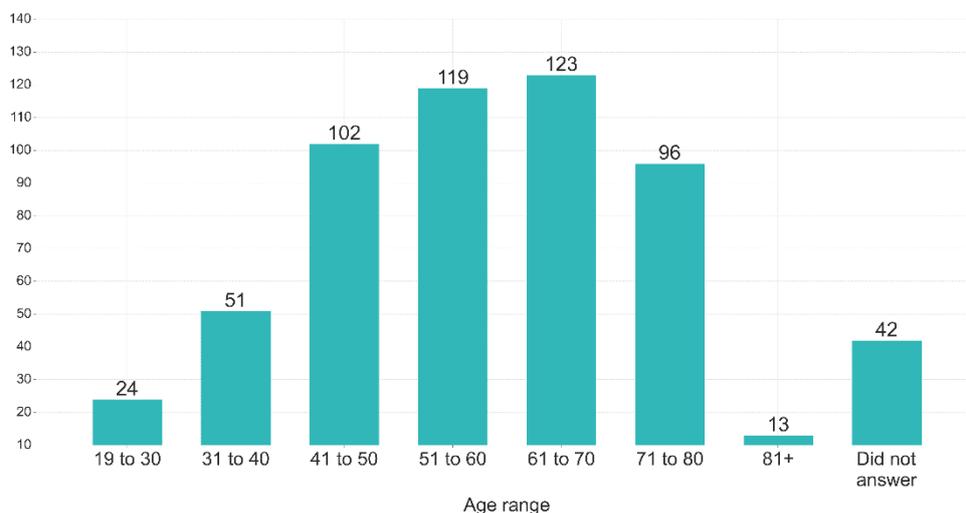
Figure 1 – Gender profile of ‘Leisure and Recreation’ respondents



Age range

The largest number of responses to the ‘Leisure and Recreation’ survey came from the 61-70 age group, followed closely by those aged 51-60. Half of all respondents were aged 51 and over.

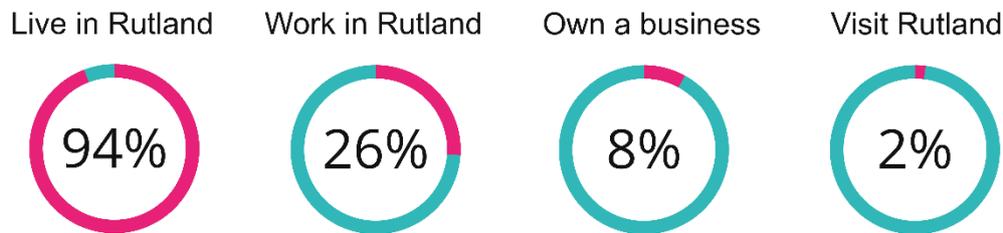
Figure 2 – Age range



Connection to Rutland

Almost all respondents to the 'Leisure and Recreation' survey (94%) lived in Rutland, while 26% worked in the county. Business owners accounted for 8% of respondents. A very small percentage of respondents (2%) were visitors to the county. The results from a dedicated 'Visitors' survey carried out as part of the Future Rutland Conversation have been captured in a further report.

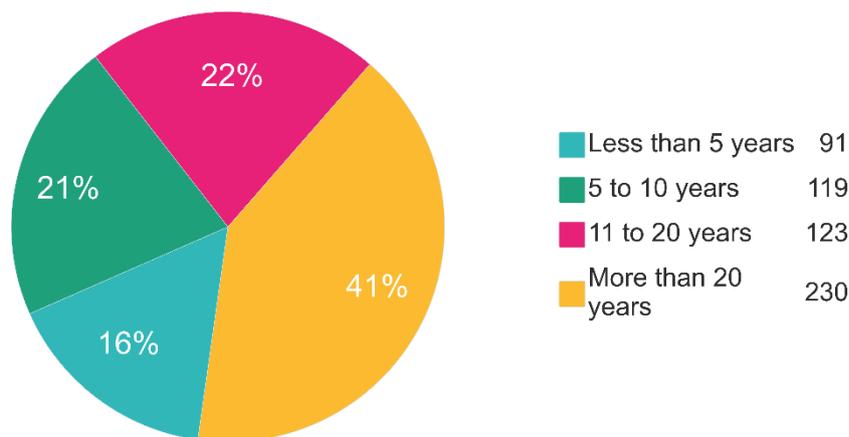
Figure 3 – Connection to Rutland



Length of residency

Of the respondents who took part in the 'Leisure and Recreation' survey and identified themselves as local residents, 43% have lived in the county for more than 20 years. Just 17% of respondents have lived in the county for less than five years.

Figure 4 – Length of residency



In terms of geographical location, the areas of Rutland that contributed the largest number of responses were:

- Oakham (33.5%)
- Uppingham (10%)
- Barleythorpe (8%)
- Cottesmore (4%)
- Ketton (3.5%)
- Whissendine (3.5%)
- Langham (3%)
- Empingham (2%)
- South Luffenham (2%)

4. Thoughts and feelings about key issues

People who engaged with Future Rutland's 'Leisure and Recreation' conversation were invited to talk openly about local leisure provision here in Rutland and the kind of leisure services they use.

Following analysis of two live discussion events focussing on this subject and hundreds of responses to open text survey questions, respondents' thoughts and feelings about leisure and recreation have been separated into three areas:

- You choice of leisure activities
- Rutland's existing leisure provision
- What you would like to see in future

In this section of the report, people's thoughts and feelings have been summarised as short statements, which are accompanied by direct quotes from individuals who took part.

Your choice of leisure activities

Summary statement

There is a strong appetite for leisure and recreation among people who live in Rutland and the majority of those we spoke to said they go out of the county to access facilities and activities. This includes travelling to Stamford, Corby, Melton, Peterborough, Kettering and Milton Keynes. Appetite for leisure is matched only by the variety of activities that people enjoy. Sports and physical activities such as swimming, golf, tennis, climbing, gymnastics and hockey were all mentioned by respondents. However, you also said that you value theatre, cinema and the arts – not just for entertainment but also for mental stimulation and socialising. Walking was mentioned as a popular form of leisure and exercise by lots of people, with a number of respondents highlighting the important role that Rutland's countryside plays as setting for leisure and recreation activities.

-  *"(I go to...) Stamford Meadows for walks as this is a nice alternative to Rutland Water and close to amenities."*
-  *"I use Stamford Arts Centre Stamford Leisure Pool, Corby Swimming Pool."*
-  *"Center Parcs with family for facilities and activities in one place (Rutland Water gets way too busy at peak time)."*
-  *"Cinemas, theatres, art centres in Stamford, Melton and Peterborough."*

-  *“Yoga in Stamford, Adult dance lessons in Ketton and Peterborough Theatre and Art centre in Stamford. Art Galleries in London. Shopping facilities in Stamford Festivals and gigs in Leicestershire and countryside.”*
-  *“Swimming in Corby Cinema in Peterborough, Stamford and Leicester Theatre in Leicester, Stamford, London and Peterborough.”*
-  *“Phoenix Art Centre, Melton Cinema, Foxton Locks and other walking venues, preferably with refreshment facilities.”*
-  *“Corby pool, Oundle school pool, Tallington lakes open water swimming. The Hub Swimming centre at Melton Mowbray.”*
-  *“National Trust properties and other historic buildings elsewhere in England.”*
-  *“Concert halls such as Albert Hall Nottingham & West Road Cambridge, large school halls, Victoria Hall, Thrapston Plaza, churches set out with a larger alter/performance area.”*
-  *“Indoor climbing walls at Kettering or Milton Keynes.”*
-  *“Shooting, sailing, golf - but less now. Tennis - my wife plays two times a week. My wife walks daily with our dog. Footpaths are well signed now with good gates.”*
-  *“Woodhall Spa 2 Prior to the pandemic, and hopefully later this summer. Stamford Arts Centre for music, theatre, cinema.”*
-  *“Sports pitches in Notts and Leics. Golf courses within a 10-mile radius. National Trust properties within a 1–2-hour radius. Burrough Hill Fort.”*
-  *“I live between Oakham and Stamford, and I find Stamford has a lot to offer RE shopping, leisure, arts centre.”*
-  *“Market Harborough hockey club lady’s hockey. Also was part of Rutland hockey club but doesn’t have one now.”*
-  *“Gymnastics and shopping in Corby. Online shopping. Adrenaline Alley in Corby.”*
-  *“Not only are the walking groups good recreationally they are good socially.”*
-  *“I use Uppingham instead of Catmose because it’s much nicer and is better run. It’s a shame the one my doorstep isn’t better.”*
-  *“I prefer to stay local and exercise in the county I live in, reducing environmental impacts.”*

Rutland's existing leisure provision

Summary statement

The existing leisure facilities that we have in Rutland are valued by people who live here. You told us you are also keen to see improved and developed access to leisure and recreation facilities in the county. Your comments indicate that there is enthusiasm for a Rutland swimming pool that is open to the public at all times and not dependent on local schools. A number of you also said that you would welcome a dedicated sports centre/hub that offers access to other sports and leisure facilities. Many of you spoke about the importance of cycle routes and footpaths to support leisure and recreation out in the countryside – particularly cycle tracks. Cost and accessibility were both mentioned as barriers to leisure. A number of you were also keen to point out that leisure and recreation includes the arts, and that our local towns are an important part of Rutland's wider leisure offer.

-  *"Kids play football for Houghton Rangers (as do nearly a dozen kids from Uppingham) because of a lack of team here."*
-  *"The services are not joined up, you can't use a bus to go into Stamford for the theatre as you can't get home again."*
-  *"The biggest problem is always going to be in Rutland is there are not a lot of people who live there and therefore not a lot of money."*
-  *"Apart from walking, my leisure is paid for privately as the leisure provision in Rutland is pretty poor."*
-  *"Not clear what is going to happen now that Catmose swimming pool is closed. Would be good to have something with a more child friendly area with shallower and warmer(!) water, as I believe this is the main thing people go out of area for."*
-  *"Swimming pool as it's currently closed down for good. This is crucial for the community."*
-  *"Work more with local healthcare providers to ensure those who need to exercise to improve health have no excuses not to do so. It will save wasting tax payers' money on unnecessary healthcare in the long run."*
-  *"It really needs a whole new sports centre that isn't owned by the school so it has full use of every studio, sports hall, gym and is separate from the kids, including the pool. The pool needs to be more like Corby and Uppingham."*
-  *"If Catmose doesn't get a new pool or the old one renovated, then I will cancel my membership."*
-  *"The Catmose pool should be made safe and brought back into use, whilst plans are made to replace it with a modern eco-friendly pool as soon as possible. The current lack of a public pool for Rutland is a massive blow to Rutland residents wishing to keep fit and healthy, and those wishing to improve their well-being after the pandemic."*

-  *“More walking routes needed that are short (1-2 miles) and accessible to the less mobile. More seating along walking routes.”*
-  *“Ensure adequate funds allocated to the upkeep of Rights of Way in the county. The county is exceptionally beautiful and unspoilt, and these rights of way provide the means for visitors to gain access and partake of healthy exercise.”*
-  *“Need to have better public transport for villagers to reach the facilities - especially in the evenings and weekends if for leisure.”*
-  *“There seems to be a large ageing population. U3A and AgeUK provide interests. Nothing much from Rutland Council to speak of.”*
-  *“There needs to be more for children. A youth centre in Uppingham would be great. Also a local sport team.”*
-  *“In my opinion, improved cycle paths is important to encourage safe activity.”*
-  *“Dance classes open to all - the Ballroom dance at Victoria Hall when I enquired was for the closed group who had been going for a while and they were not open to anyone else joining them.”*
-  *“Making the High Street accessible for pedestrians – this would encourage better shops so more local people would come into Oakham as well as tourists... Open a cafe in the museum and the castle.”*

What you would like to see in future

Summary statement

The need for non-sports/activity-based recreational groups was mentioned by a number of respondents – both for adults and young people. One area of increasing demand is for facilities where young families can do things together. The desire for an arts centre in Rutland was also mentioned repeatedly. A number of you said that you would like a local cinema (especially younger people), but views are mixed about where this could be located. The need to improve transport links in order to access leisure and recreation was mentioned again, as was the high cost of some local activities and the importance of maintaining green spaces for outdoor leisure and exercise. Post-COVID, there is a desire to maintain and further pursue positive habits like increased exercise and new hobbies/interests. A number of you said you would like facilities and activities to support this, as well as have easier access to sources of information that tell you what’s on, where and when in Rutland.

-  *“Group or community meetings not based only on physical activities.”*
-  *“More for teenagers that doesn’t have to be a sport.”*
-  *“Tolthorpe is an example of having a theatre in the middle of nowhere and people travelling to attend shows, it’s an example of what can be done.”*

- 

“More access to the arts and culture would improve my wellbeing as I find taking part in these activities stimulating. I would like there to be more live music and 'fun' things going on for young adults. I don't mean things which are for the sole purpose of drinking - I mean social activities such as gigs, festivals, craft events, creative arts and food experiences which are aimed at young working adults who do not participate in school (parenting) based entrainment or organised sport.”
- 

“My wife would say the development of shops in the county, as these attract people.”
- 

“Get Uppingham Sports Centre open ASAP to fulfil their charitable status duties.”
- 

“Far more resources for younger people, and accessible outdoor activities for older.”
- 

“Social, play and sporting facilities for children and adults close to population centres.”
- 

“Activities for teens and young adults - places for them to meet, have access to age suitable drinks and snacks, music. Dare I suggest a decent local nightclub?”
- 

“Cycle lanes such as the one proposed for the old railway line from Market Harborough to Peterborough.”
- 

“More areas where dogs are allowed off a lead at Rutland Water. More walking areas and footpaths without livestock and few stiles etc. The Exton Estate is an excellent example of this type of provision, as is Morkery Wood.”
- 

“Subsidised gym membership for residents of Rutland struggling with their mental health and improved support services for men's mental health such as establishing an Andy's Mans Club.”
- 

“Anything you can do in Rutland without having to travel for miles or spend a fortune!”
- 

“Central site online to find out what is on and links to connect to the organisers. E.g. Pilates at the Active Hub. Different providers but difficult to find them.”
- 

“An indoor climbing facility similar to those at Milton Keynes would be beneficial to all age groups.”
- 

“Park area could be better utilised perhaps some outdoor fitness equipment so that we are not wholly reliant on the school sports centre.”
- 

“More accessible adult further education & creative arts groups - i.e. local facilities without the need to travel.”
- 

“Adult classes to offer cooking courses, DIY, arts and crafts, learning an instrument etc. More variety for young children - a decent youth club that is welcoming and offers and provides good activities for children.”
- 

“Develop an arts centre – not everyone is able to take part in physical activities but need more cultural activities.”

-  *"Climbing facility - need to replace the defunct Rockblok at Rutland Water."*
-  *"There is an opportunity at St George's to develop imaginative leisure opportunities which would also attract more visitors and boost local economy."*
-  *"A central place to advertise everything that's going on instead of having to hunt. E.g. I lived here for three years before I found the Baptist church cinema facility."*
-  *"Better rail service - so that you don't have to return home as soon as you get to your destination in order to catch the last train connection."*
-  *"Between working and childcare, very difficult to find the time to improve physical and mental wellbeing, more flexible class & opening times along with creche facilities would dramatically improve this."*
-  *"Pedestrianise Oakham High Street so we can safely walk around and enjoy the experience. A street café environment would revitalise a tired town. Bring back 'Live at the Museum'."*
-  *"Would be incredible to have a swimming pool or hydro pool that has a hoist or chair lift in so it's accessible to disabled people."*
-  *"Green spaces Footpaths to villages e.g. Braunston, Encouraging walking and cycling locally and discouraging car use."*
-  *"Bowling alley or cinema on the bypass for families to use, especially for those who cannot travel. Rutland is so big now and these children need something to do and some parents cannot travel."*
-  *"An Art Centre. Spaces for live music which appeal to the younger audience (19–40 year-olds)."*

5. What you enjoy doing

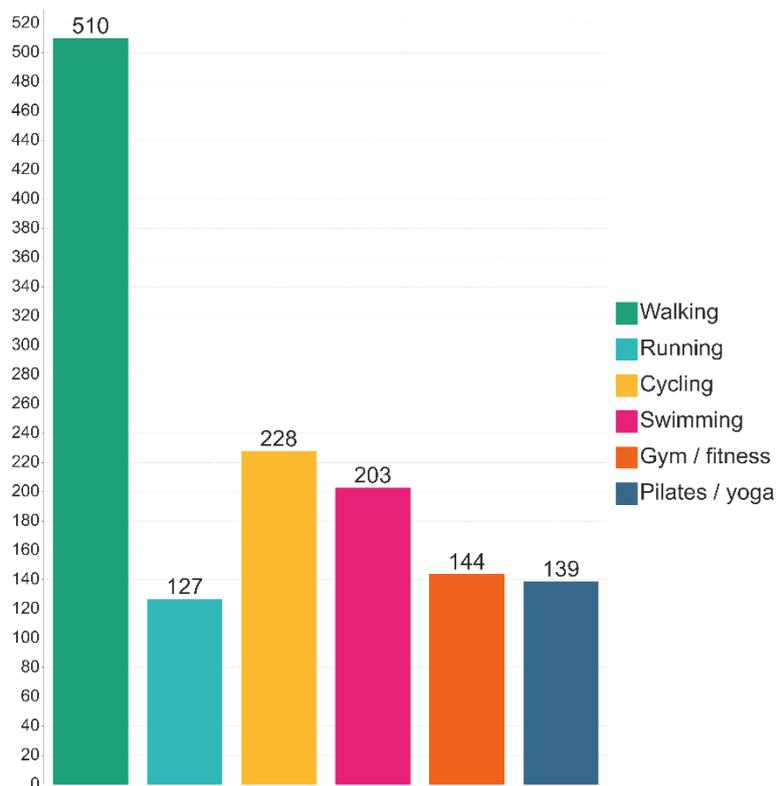
Future Rutland's 'Leisure and Recreation' survey asked some specific questions about the activities that respondents like to do, where they go for leisure and recreation and what changes or improvements they would like to see made to local services.

When respondents were asked what sport and leisure activities they you normally participate in, the top answers (in rank order) were:

1. Walking
2. Cycling
3. Swimming
4. Gym/fitness
5. Pilates and yoga

Walking was by far the most popular response, selected by 90% of those who answered. The next most popular choice was cycling, selected by 40% of respondents.

Figure 5 – What sport and leisure activities do you normally participate in? Select all that apply. (Answers with more than 100 responses)



When respondents were asked what creative and hobby activities they enjoy doing, the top answers (in rank order) were:

1. Reading
2. Gardening
3. Music (listening and performing)
4. Cinema
5. Theatre

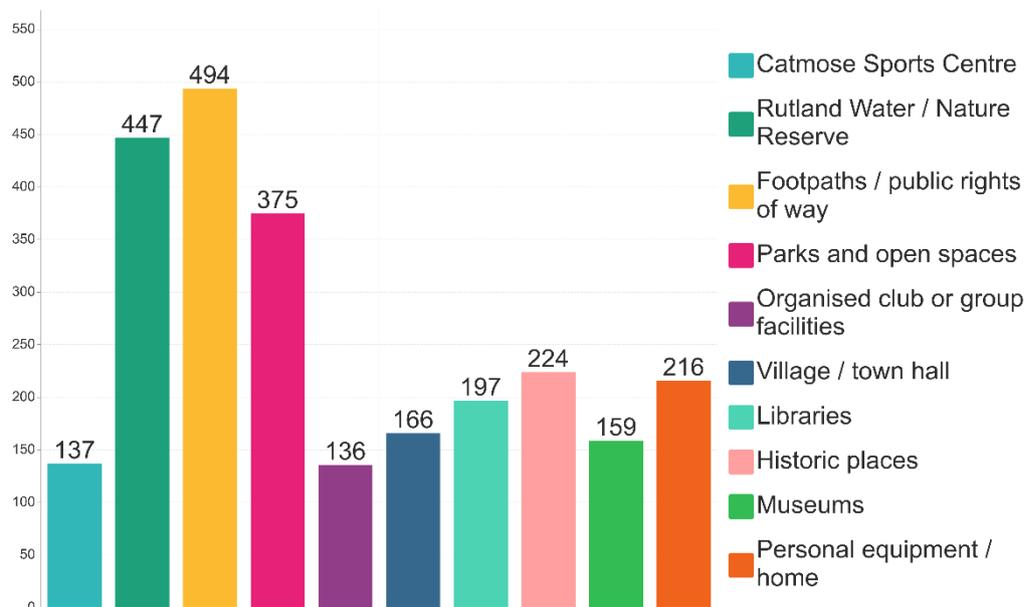
6. Where you go for leisure

People who took part in Future Rutland's 'Leisure and Recreation' survey were also asked which leisure facilities they use. The top answers to this question (in rank order) were:

1. Rutland Water
2. Footpaths
3. Parks & open spaces
4. Historic places
5. Own equipment at home

Libraries, town/village halls, museums and Catmose Sports Centre also received a large number of response.

Figure 6 – Which facilities do you use? (Answers with more than 100 responses)



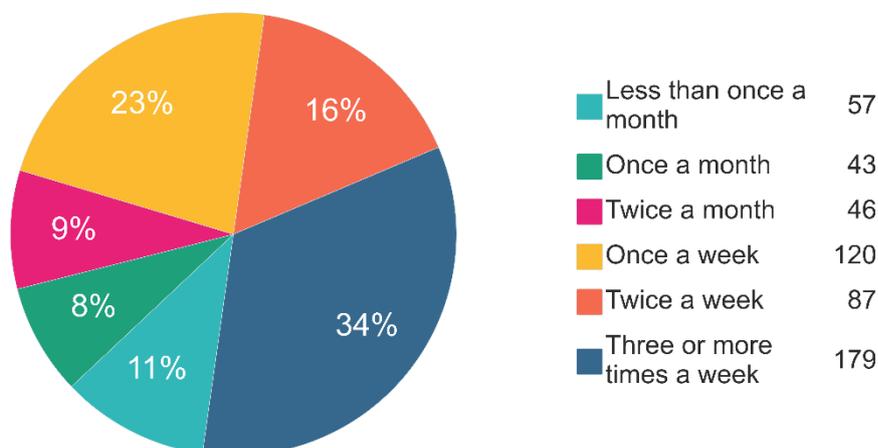
When respondents were asked why they use these facilities, the top answers (in rank order) were:

1. It's in a good location
2. The facilities are good
3. I use the facility with my family

A large number of respondents (more than 100) also pointed to good prices, good service, the range of activities, and a good community of users as reasons why they choose to access these facilities.

When asked how often they use leisure facilities, the majority of respondents (34%) said that they access leisure three or more times a week. Almost three quarters (73%) said that they access leisure at least once a week.

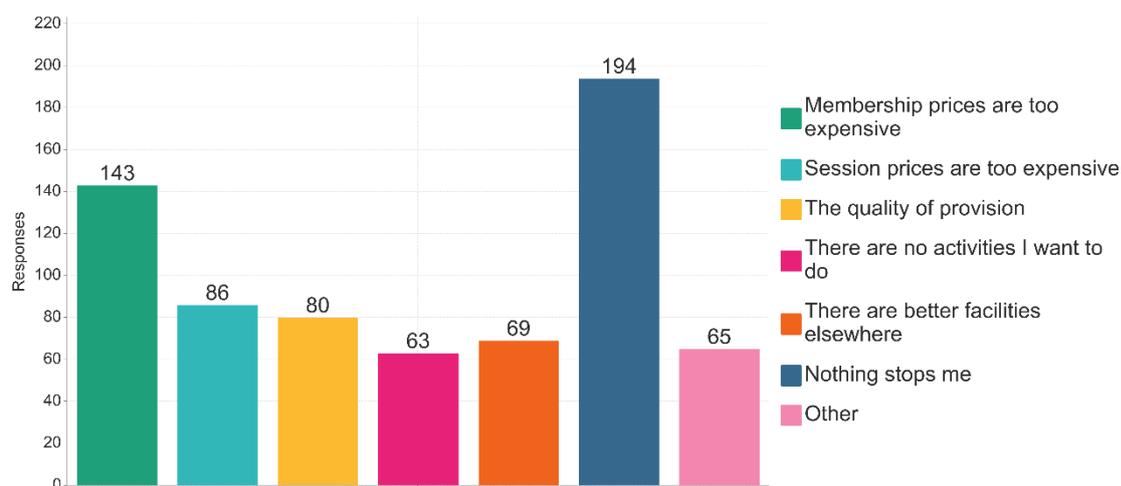
Figure 7 – How often do you use these facilities?



The ‘Leisure and Recreation’ survey also asked people what stops them from using facilities in Rutland. The top answers to this question (in rank order) were:

1. Nothing
2. Membership too expensive
3. Sessions too expensive
4. Quality is not good enough
5. I can find better elsewhere

Figure 7 – What stops you from using leisure and wellbeing facilities in Rutland? (Answers with more than 50 responses)



When asked what leisure facilities they use outside Rutland, respondents said:

- **Swimming pools** – Melton/Stamford/Corby
- **Theatre** – Leicester/Peterborough/Stamford/Tolethorpe
- **Cinema** – Melton/Peterborough/Leicester
- **Outside spaces** – Burghley House/Bourne Woods/Foxton Locks/Tallington Lakes
- **Gyms** – Leicester/Peterborough/Stamford

7. Change and improvement

As part of the 'Leisure and Recreation' survey, respondents were asked a range of questions about the future of leisure provision in Rutland.

When people were asked what leisure provision they felt Rutland needs in order to maintain or improve the wellbeing of its residents, the top answers (in rank order) were:

1. Swimming
2. Footpaths and cycle paths
3. Cinema
4. Access to facilities for all – low cost and not linked to public schools
5. County or Council owned and run sports facilities

When asked if they had any other comments about the future of leisure and wellbeing provision in Rutland, respondents once again highlighted the following:

- Access to swimming facilities
- The provision of a local cinema
- A perceived lack of council-run facilities and open spaces

8. The impact of COVID-19

People who took part in Future Rutland's 'Leisure and Recreation' survey were also asked about the impact that COVID-19 has had on their leisure habits.

More than three quarters of respondents (77%) said that the pandemic had changed the kinds of leisure and wellbeing activities they undertook.

When asked how the pandemic had change things, the most common responses were:

- Staying local / closer to home
- More walking and running
- Unable to use gyms and leisure facilities
- Started exercising / working out at home
- More time spent outside / in nature
- Online exercise classes
- No group sport or exercise
- Limited opportunities to socialise

9. Sharing further feedback

This report summarises the comments, feedback and survey responses collected throughout Future Rutland's 'Leisure and Recreation' conversation. The purpose of gathering this feedback is to develop a new shared vision for Rutland – one that's based on things that really matter to local people and helps organisations like Rutland County Council plan for the future.

Please remember that you can read all of the original data and information behind this summary report by visiting: future.rutland.gov.uk/leisure-and-recreation.

Getting your views and feedback was just the first step of the Future Rutland Conversation. Now, we need to know if we heard you correctly. To tell us what you think about this report and whether you feel it's an accurate representation of what matters to people in Rutland, please go to: future.rutland.gov.uk or email: rutlandconversation@rutland.gov.uk. If you don't have access to the internet, you can call us on 01572 722 577.

Once we're sure that there's nothing we've missed, we'll use all this information to develop a draft vision for the county, which we hope to publish before the end of summer 2021 to invite even more discussion and feedback.

[Click here to comment on this summary report](#)

