

Ladies Mile 2019

Annual report of use of land off Ladies Mile

January 2020 EK



Bristol Zoological Society
Saving Wildlife Together

USE OF THE LAND

During 2019, Bristol Zoo Gardens used the designated area of land off Ladies Mile for car parking on 22 days during the Easter school holidays, May bank holiday and Summer school holidays.

A total of 3,499 cars were parked, an average of 159 per day. As in previous years, the number of days used is comfortably within the days permitted. Parking was used on 4 fewer days than in 2018 and 509 fewer cars in total.

	2016	2017	2018	2019
Days used	41/45	27/40	26/35	22/30
Total cars parked	10,067	6,532	4,008	3499

The car park is staffed from opening to mid-late afternoon when the car park is no longer needed and visitors have stopped arriving. BZG is sensitive to causing damage to the land and avoids use of the land when the ground is wet, even if the weather is fine on the day.



Drone photograph of the Ladies Mile car park area - 2018

SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL PLAN AND INCENTIVES

The Zoo continues to support sustainable travel measures for staff and visitors.

PHYSICAL MEASURES

- Covered parking for visitor cycles in North Car Park
- Secure covered cycle parking for staff
- Changing, shower and locker facilities for staff
- Electric vehicle charging in North & West car parks
- Bicycle maintenance sessions for staff

The real time bus information screens in the gift shop have suffered several technical difficulties due to software issues at the provider end. This has resulted in a change of software which is not supported on the current screens, however plans are in place to replace the hardware in 2020.

INCENTIVES FOR VISITORS

The Bristol Zoo Gardens travel discount has been confirmed by Good Journey as one of the most generous in the country, not just in the local area.

- 33% discount on entry with proof of cycling, bus, train, coach, tourist bus or Park & Ride
- Online advanced ticket purchasers can claim their discount on arrival for a partial refund
- 'Members cycling stamp card' providing £5 off annual membership renewal in return for traveling by bike 5 times to the Zoo
- Discounts promoted via social media and member newsletters
- Route 8 buses promote the discount on vinyl décor inside the bus

STAFF INCENTIVES & MEASURES

- Support for cycle purchase, including electric bikes via interest free loan
- First Bus commuter scheme for reduced monthly and season tickets via the app
- Interest free loan for annual bus and train season tickets
- Guaranteed ride home for staff travelling by bike, public transport or car share in case of emergency
- Car park pass eligibility revised on a needs basis, in addition to seasonal restrictions
- Transport updates via email and internal newsletter, including extraordinary travel arrangements for local events
- Green Team with representation from all departments to discuss and promote sustainable initiatives including travel

THE FUTURE

The Zoo's ability to influence public and staff travel choices is outweighed by the perception of the reliability, affordability and convenience of public transport. As local public transport infrastructure improves we would hope to see more visitors using sustainable transport modes, however if uptake of the admissions discount increases significantly it will need to be reviewed to ensure it remains affordable and appropriate.

TRAVEL SURVEYS

Travel Surveys have been conducted in most of the last 10 years and allows the Zoo to look at patterns of travel since 2010. Surveys are carried out in the peak season, July-August, often in the School Holidays.

VISITORS

Trends from 2010-2018 show that around 75% of our visitors travel over 10 miles to visit in peak season. This restricts opportunities for using public transport, with around 80% of visitors (excluding school parties) coming by car. However, car occupancy is consistently high, an average of 3.5 guests per car, meaning that the vehicles are being used sustainably in terms of behaviour.

We continue to offer a sustainable travel incentive of 33% discount on entry, and the uptake of this increased again in 2019 after a drop in 2018. This may be due to perceived issues of bus reliability during city centre works in 2018.

This is shown below as % of paid entry:

	June	July	August
2016	1.5%	1.5%	1.9%
2017	3.7%	3.0%	6.1%
2018	2.4%	2.2%	3.2%
2019	2.5%	3.0%	5.4%

Percentage of visitors who travelled by alternative transport other than the car

Key reasons given by visitors during surveys for non-car travel being impractical were:

- Visiting with children, especially young children, and the equipment needed
- Visitors with mobility or other access issues
- More than one bus/train required to complete the journey
- Expense of public transport.

The Long Ashton Park & Ride service continues to serve the Zoo but is not well situated for visitors from outside the city, nor locals other than those arriving along the A370. Additional Park & Ride locations for the city in the future may be more suitable for motorway users.

STAFF

We continue to participate annually in Travel to Work Survey to understand staff travel needs, with 2nd highest % participation of any organisation in 2019.

Staff car use increased slightly from 2018 with walking, cycling and train use reducing, however by comparing our staff cohorts across the two periods we can see this is primarily due to staff turnover rather than changes to individual staff behaviour. We also used the additional questions to ask our staff about availability of suitable public transport, and whether their commute was combined with other activities.

- 56% of respondents stated that there was either no public transport option or it would require an impossibly early start to use.
- 18% of respondents stated public transport was not reliable enough to guarantee arrival time
- 52% of staff combine their commute with school drop of/collection or other activities which necessitate car use

STEWARDSHIP OF THE LAND

An independent ecological survey is undertaken annually to provide information around the condition and any variances in the species of flora present. The parking area is compared to an adjacent control area identified in 2005 as being sufficiently similar.

The findings of the December 2019 survey are similar to those of previous surveys, as follows:

- The composition of the vegetation in both areas has been broadly stable since 2006.
- The car parking area, when compared to the control area, has a slightly higher diversity both of plants of unimproved grassland and plants indicative of disturbance.
- There is no evidence of any ongoing decline in the diversity of plants of unimproved grassland in the car parking area.
- There is no evidence of any ongoing increase in the diversity of plants indicative of disturbed conditions in the car parking area.
- There are signs of disturbance in the control area due to use of vehicles (not linked to Zoo use).

There is no evidence of any decline in the nature conservation value of the car parking area since 2006. Changes in the diversity and frequency of desirable species (limestone indicators) and of undesirable species (those associated with disturbed conditions) have been noted from one year to the next without any clear trend, or any ongoing divergence from the sward in the control area, being apparent. The overall diversity of plants indicative of unimproved grassland increased between 2010 and 2015, providing some evidence of an increase in the nature conservation value of the area, which may be due to improvements in the management of car parking. The number of these species recorded has since been stable.

Through close contact with the Downs Rangers, we carry out maintenance work and general management of the land, to an agreed protocol, using agreed seed mixes and to an agreed method. In recent years the parking area has been reduced and amended as shown to allow the upper bank to the South East to return to uncut meadow. Where anyone has queried the use and condition of the land, Zoo staff have offered to meet on site and openly discuss this.

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

In order to reduce congestion on busy days both our North and West Car Parks open at the start of days when required. Ladies Mile opens once we approach capacity on the two main car parks, which continues to reduce congestion significantly on Clifton Down at the peak arrival time of 10:00-11:30am. Our traffic management signage continues to operate effectively and provides clear instruction and information to visitors on arrival.

This summer we also undertook arrival and departure surveys in our car parks on several days throughout the summer season, which showed a substantial changeover in early afternoon with a second busy period in our main car parks. However sufficient morning guests have departed that this does not impact on Ladies Mile or cause significant congestion when compared to the morning peak.