

Norton Duck Pond Scheme Feedback Summary



Stockton-on-Tees
BOROUGH COUNCIL



In July 2021, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council asked Norton’s businesses, residents and visitors for their feedback on proposed designs for improvements to Norton’s duck pond.

Residents, businesses and visitors were given the opportunities to provide their thoughts on the proposed design for the duck pond, which includes a programme of repairs to the perimeter path and steps as well as a replacement of the fountain and surface improvements.

The scheme is part of the Council’s Town Centres Development Programme, with an aim to bring further improvements to Norton and making the facilities there inclusive and accessible for all, following the ‘Let’s Talk About Our Towns’ consultation in 2020 which highlighted the duck pond as being one of the key priorities for improvement in Norton.

Two feedback sessions took place in Norton on Monday 19th July and Tuesday 20th July. There was also an online feedback form available on the Council’s website for two weeks.

The main objective of these sessions was to seek the views of Norton’s residents, businesses and visitors to finalise the design of the duck pond scheme before work begins on-site in Autumn 2021.

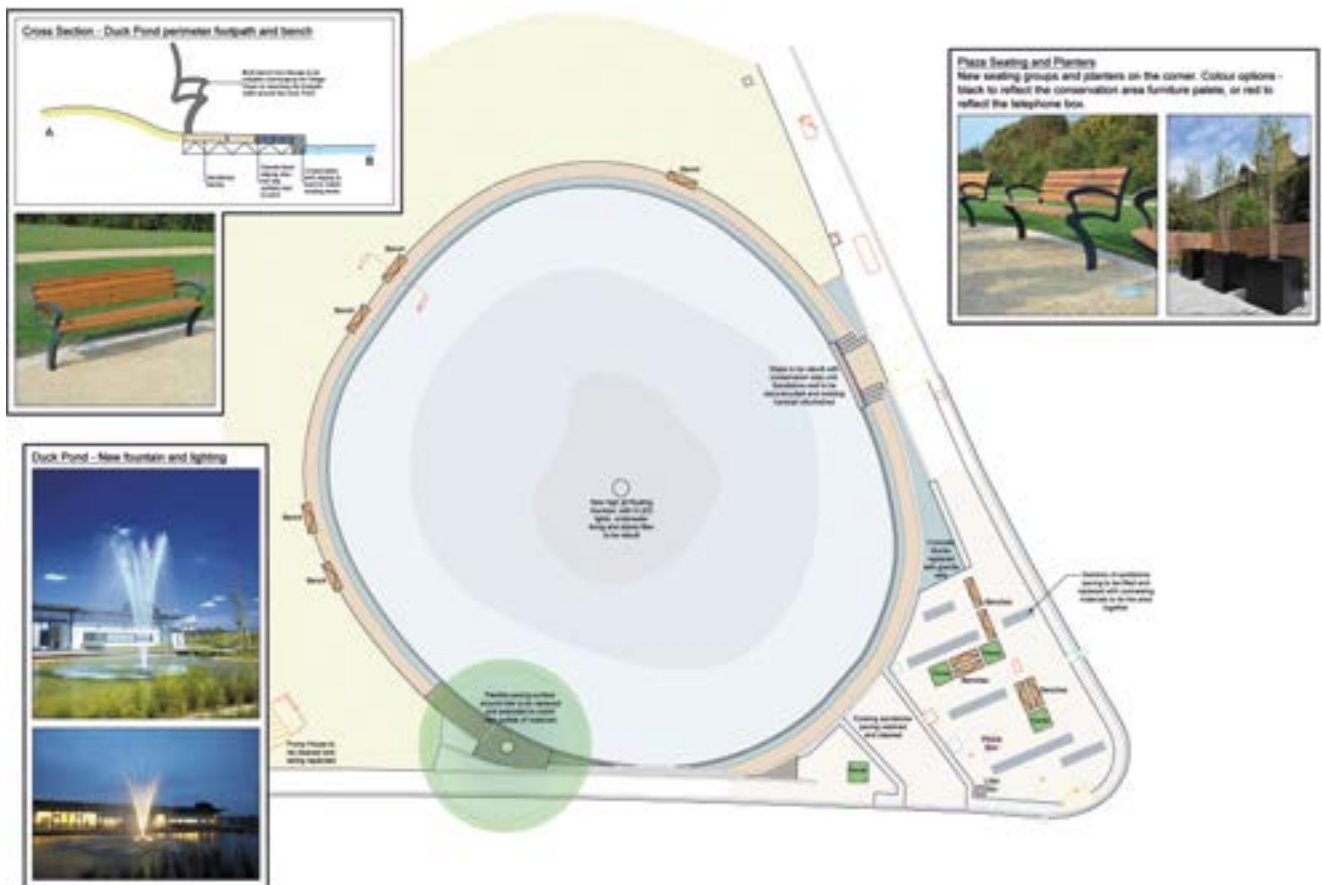
More information about the Council’s Town Centres Development Programme can be found at Stockton.gov.uk/towncentres

The sessions and the online form were promoted widely on social media and were included in an invitation that was posted to all households in the Norton North ward.

All responses were added together, giving a final total sample size of 207.

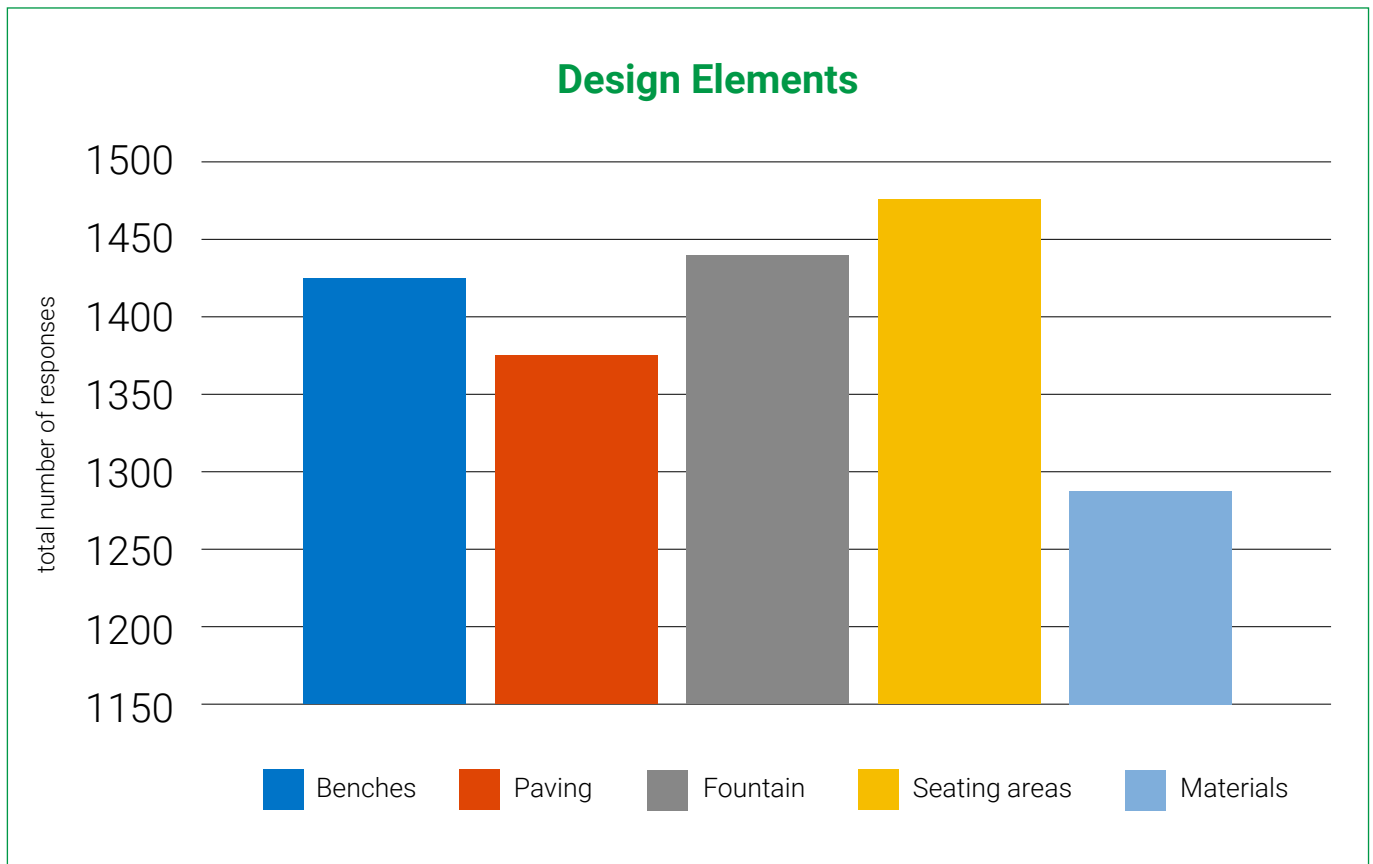
This summary presents the findings from the Norton duck pond feedback sessions and explores views on the design option that was presented, the materials used in the design, as well as the benefits that an improved duck pond would bring to Norton.

It also explores a range of themes covering attitudes towards the safety of the ducks, extra bin provision, the importance of the design being sympathetic to the area’s heritage and thoughts on the provision of new seating and benches.



Summary of Findings

Respondents were asked to score the individual design elements on a scale of 1-10 and the graph below represents the total value of scorings. Here is the summary of findings:



- All five design elements received an average score of 7 when rounded to the nearest number.
- To provide further distinction between the data the total value of scorings made by the respondents were recorded, with 'seating areas' scoring the most highly, closely followed by 'fountain' and 'benches'.



Profile of Responses

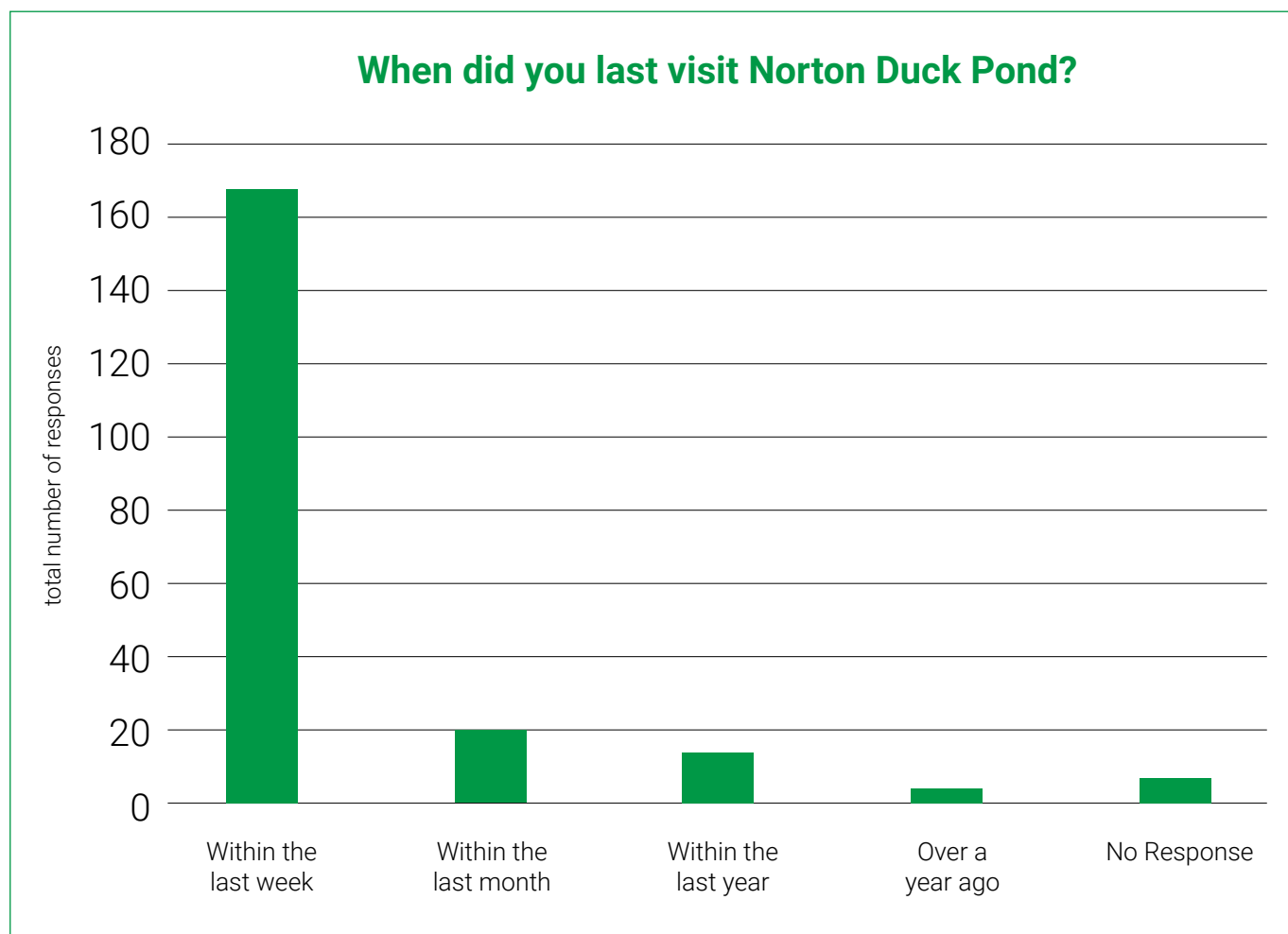
Respondents were asked to tick all options that applied to them in terms of their profile.



- 192 people who provided feedback said that they lived in Norton.
- 51 people who responded with feedback said that they shop in Norton, with 31 saying they would visit for a night out.
- 19 people said they worked in Norton.



When did you last visit Norton Duck Pond?



- 169 respondents said that they had visited Norton's duck pond within the last week.
- 19 respondents said they had visited the duck pond within the last month.
- 11 respondents said they had visited the duck pond within the year.
- 4 respondents said they had visited the duck pond over a year ago, and 4 people provided no response to this question.

Tell us your age

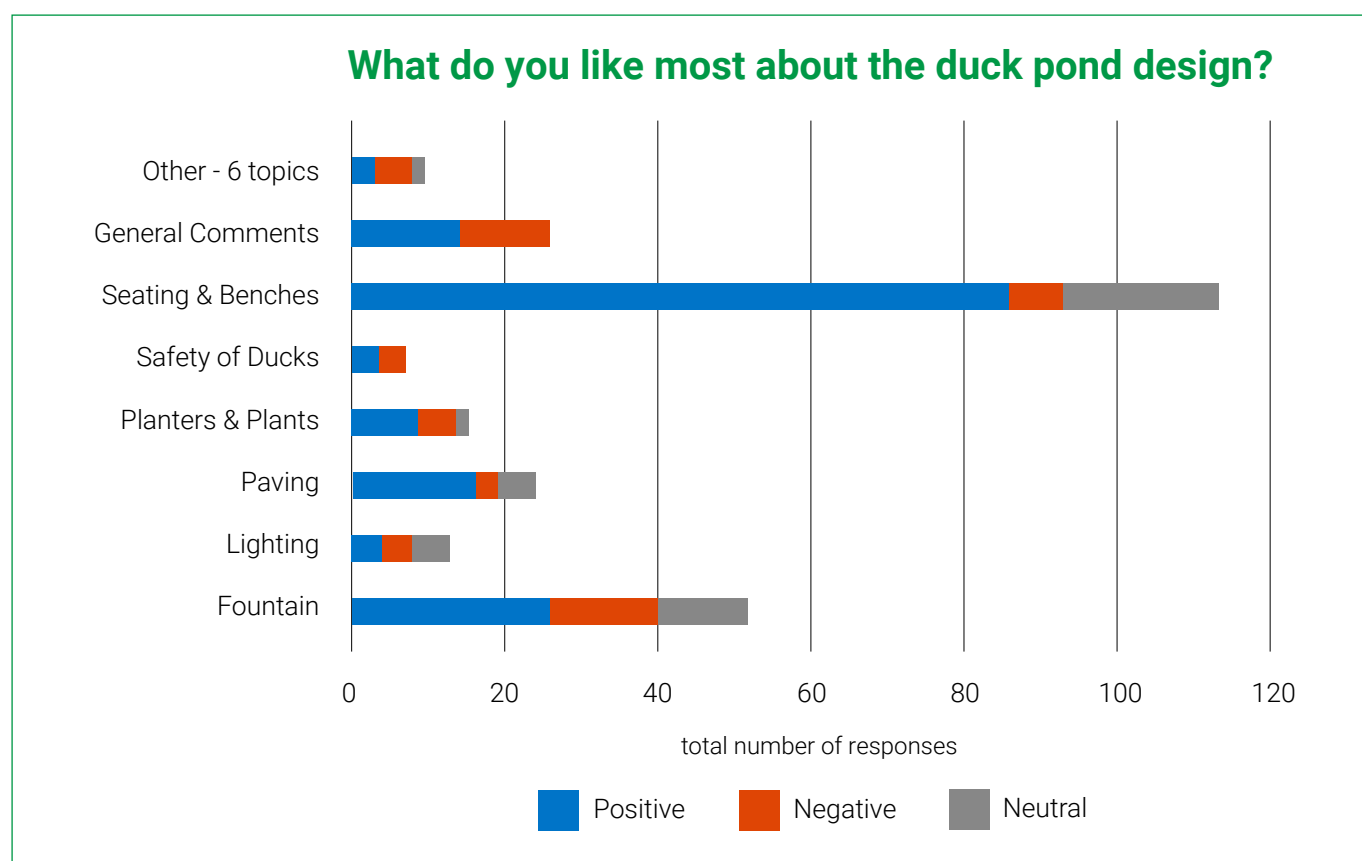
- 1.5 per cent of respondents were aged between 17 and 25.
- 24 per cent of respondents were aged between 26 and 40.
- 40 per cent of respondents were aged between 41 and 65.
- 32 per cent of respondents were aged over 65.
- 2.5 per cent of respondents did not give a response to this question.

Additional Comments

What do you like most about the duck pond design?

190 respondents offered additional comments when asked 'what do you like most' about the duck pond design.

70 per cent of these comments were of a positive sentiment, with comments relating to the Seating and Benches receiving the highest score with 87 positive comments.



Some of the comments received include:

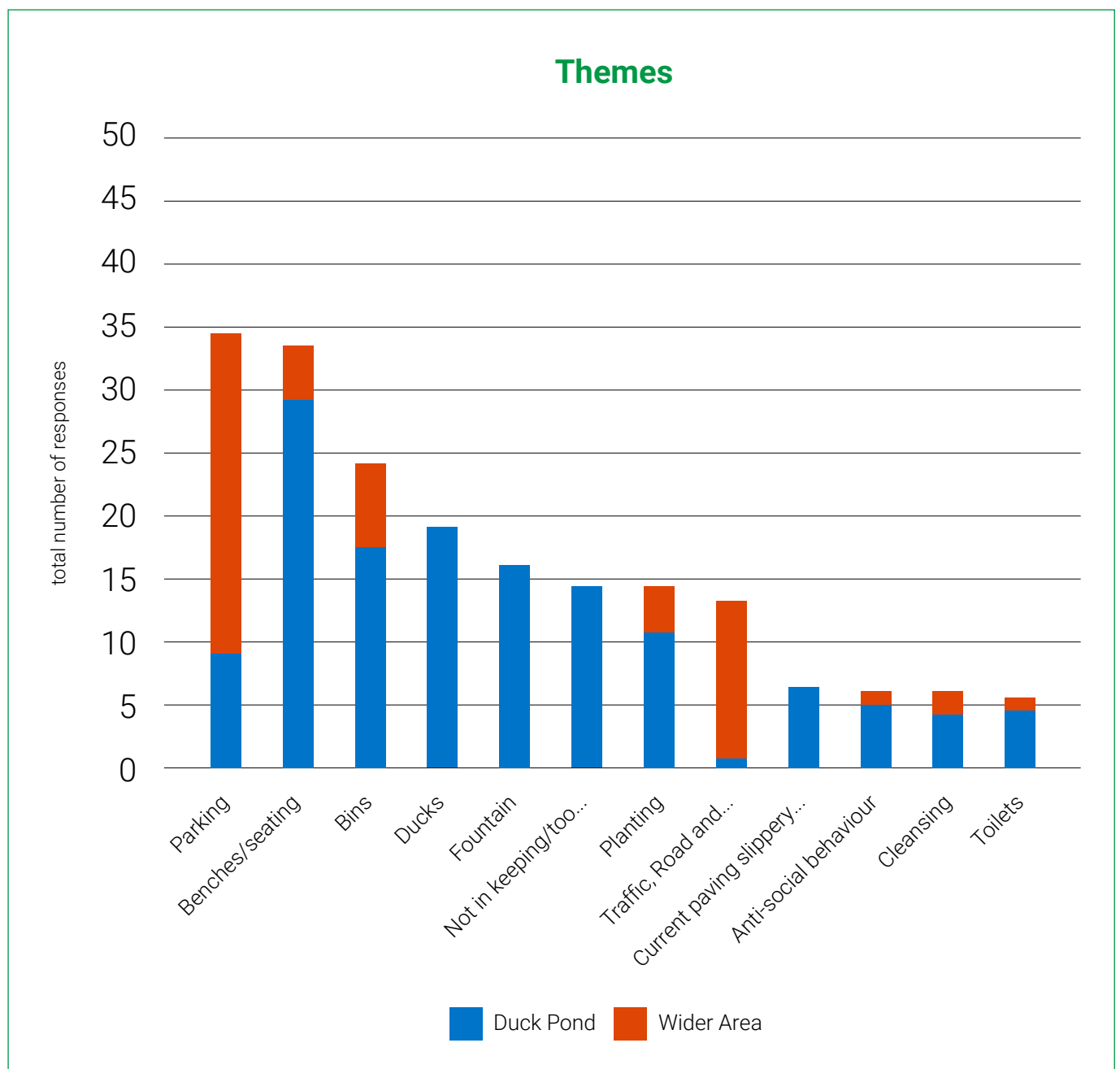
- *"I like the extra benches and turning the existing benches to face the green is a great idea. Also making the corner area more of a feature will enhance it significantly..."*
- *"More seats around the pond however a few tables would be nice, the fountain sounds good."*
- *"Seating facing the duckpond/away from the road."*
- *"That it's beautiful and can be a quiet place to spend time. It is at the heart of the village and part of its history."*
- *"I like the fact that the changes are not too significant - it's important the duck pond retains its traditional look"*

Would you be more likely to visit the duck pond once the improvements have been made?

- 130 respondents answered 'Yes' equating to 63 per cent when asked if the improvements would encourage them to visit the duck pond more often.
- Of those that responded 'No', 16 per cent of these stated that they already visit the duck pond frequently and will continue to do so.

Is there anything else you'd like to tell us? Please use the box below to share any thoughts, ideas or plans you'd like to be considered for the wider Norton area.

- 134 additional comments were given and the following themes emerged.



From the responses received, comments show that respondents were keen to see more bins within the scheme and wider Norton area and to include recycling and dog waste bins where appropriate.

- *"I don't think that there are enough bins in the new design, there needs to be at least one near the benches around the edge of the pond too."*

Comments received relating to the benches and seating suggest that respondents would like to see more seating introduced while a small number (8 per cent) expressed some concerns with the location and placement of the benches and the proposed materials within the design.

- *"It would be nice to have more seating/benches available the length of the village especially around the green areas."*
- *"I like that there are benches but not the choice of design - need to be more traditional. I don't think the benches on the road side need to face inwards - they look over onto the other green and people like to watch the world go by!..."*

Parking was highlighted as an area for concern in the wider Norton area with request for additional parking along with better parking restrictions and enforcement in place.

- *"I believe there needs to be more consideration (other than the proposed plans) to increase parking in the village, and I mean significantly - there just appears to be less and less available spaces each time I go to Norton village."*
- *"Parking needs addressing round the green and near Norton Hall especially - double yellow lines needed."*

There were also comments around the safety of the pavement around the duck pond, with some respondents reporting the current materials as hazardous with surfaces prone to slipping.

- *"The current paving around the pond is dangerous when wet. I am young and fit and have had my legs go from under me on more than one occasion. Thankfully I just ended up sore, but an older person could break something. Please make the benches black."*
- *"...And please consider the paving material carefully as I have seen so many people slip on the current paving especially when wet/ icy and pedestrians have to take to the road as it's safer underfoot."*

Other comments received related to the importance of the safety and welfare of the ducks, design elements of the fountain and planters along with additional planting of trees and wildflowers.

- *"Make sure the ducks are happy. First priority. It's their green."*
- *"...[regarding] the colour scheme for benches and planters. I would agree with black which is more in keeping with the Victorian feel or the duck pond area that we all love and do not want to lose..."*
- *"...It would be nice to plant a few more trees that will give shade in a few years."*

Next Steps

The feedback received will help shape the final design of Norton's duck pond improvement scheme.

Concerns around lack of bins was a strong theme that emerged from the additional comments. As a result of this, the Council will increase the number of bins around the duck pond area as part of this scheme.

A number of questions were also raised around materials used in the scheme. The scheme has been designed to improve the safety of surfaces around the duck pond and materials have been carefully selected in keeping with the conservation area. Sandstone paving and granite blocks will be used as the main paving materials around the perimeter path and seating area. The design and materials of additional features such as new benches and planters have also been selected to ensure they are in keeping with the conservation area.

Other comments around safety included the prevention of antisocial behaviour around the duck pond and Village Green. There are already two CCTV cameras on light columns in front of the duck pond and as a further security measure the scheme will be adapted to include drop down bollards to the pond access ramp.

Parking issues were also raised as a concern by respondents. Whilst a number of additional parking spaces will be provided as part of the highways scheme at the southern end of the High Street, the duck pond scheme is focused on improving the natural environment and protected beauty of the duck pond and Village Green therefore no additional parking will be provided as part of this scheme.

Work on this scheme is expected to begin in Autumn 2021.

Information on the final design and programme will be available to view online in the coming weeks at [Stockton.gov.uk/towncentres/Norton](https://stockton.gov.uk/towncentres/Norton)

Thank you to all who shared their thoughts about the future plans for Norton duck pond. For further enquiries about this scheme, please contact the Council's Town Centres Investment Team on: towncentresinvestmentteam@stockton.gov.uk



