

Footscray Meadows parkrun consultation response

Consultation period: 1st – 31st December 2017

Leaflets delivered/displayed: Riverside Road – Maylands Drive – Burnham Road – Pembury Crescent – Davenport Road – Water Lane – Co-Op Store – Mayland Stores – Albany Park Rail Station – North Cray Residents Committee (via email) – Friends of Footscray Meadows mailing group (via email)

Advertised attended visits to the Meadows: 9am on 9/12/17 & 11am on 16/12/17

Number of responses received: 11

Questions/Feedback and Answers Below.

Has the route been determined and if so can you provide details?

The route is yet to be confirmed. However, the start/finish area will be adjacent to the playground towards the Kelsey Farm Shop corner of the meadows.

For those travelling by car to the event, where will they be advised to park?

Parking will be advertised for Kelsey Farm Shop with agreement from the management there free of charge – together with use of their toilet facilities. Runners will be made aware of this via the message carried on the parkrun website and we will encourage drivers to use this facility and not to park in neighbouring roads.

Do you have a rough idea of what date this run will commence?

The start date is yet to be confirmed.

Brilliant! It's great for bringing the community together - people get the chance for a regular Saturday morning exercise and a little social after.

Thank you for your feedback.

We were so excited to receive your leaflet through our door about parkrun, we have been meaning to make it to Danson for ages but it's just too far without a car on a Saturday morning when the bus times are rubbish! We run on the meadow regularly and have always said it would be perfect for a parkrun.

We will be sure to be there as soon as you start, when is this likely to be?

Thank you for your feedback. The start date is yet to be confirmed.

1. There are no paths within the meadows so all footfall would be on grass. After even a short period would this would be eroded and become very muddy during the winter months and then drying out into deep grooves and ridges during the summer months. Both unsightly and dangerous.

We have worked closely with both the Friends of Footscray Meadows and Bexley Council on this point. Taking this into consideration, all routes will be on already used paths and there will be a contingency route planned should areas need to be left clear or avoided. We will be monitoring conditions on a regular basis, as will Officers from the Bexley Parks & Open

Spaces Office. Should there be any need to cancel the event due to conditions, please rest assured that this is a viable option which will be considered.

2. There is insufficient parking for the number of runners that would attend anywhere around the meadows even if Kelsey Farm were to be used.

We cannot accurately assess the numbers of cars arriving for parkrun. Kelsey Farm do have a large parking area, along with an overspill area that has been offered for use free of charge. We will encourage runners to use this facility and not to park in neighbouring roads. Many runners will come from the local area and would be urged to use public transport, walk/cycle or car-share. We will be monitoring this.

3. It is an area that is full of wild life which could be affect by the introduction of a significant number of people on a regular basis.

We have made careful consideration with the feedback of the Friends of Footscray that any route planned would not affect seasonal wildlife. We cannot comment on the regular numbers of runners who would attend at this stage.

4. I frequently walk around the park (but always on a Saturday & Sunday morning) I see many people with dogs and I don't believe that the mixture of that hundreds of runners & dogs is a good one.

We cannot comment on the number of runners who would attend on a regular basis.

However, please be aware that there are over 400 UK locations that hold parkruns and runners are aware that we share the space, not have exclusivity of it with other users of the area. This would be monitored and any dog issues will be reported to Bexley Council who will work closely with the parkrun team and other site users to manage any issues.

I am a big fan of parkrun, Danson Park being my nearest, and know others who are too but I have concerns about holding the event at the Meadows.

My concern is that there is not a proper pathway to follow all the way around. The routes that most walkers use are well trodden and at the moment very muddy - so quite dangerous. If parkrun is held there, this can only get worse and the route which backs on to the houses at the start and finish will become a mess which at the moment is a nice green space.

We have worked closely with both the Friends of Footscray Meadows and Bexley Council on this point. Taking this into consideration, all routes will be on already used paths and there will be a contingency route planned should areas need to be left clear or avoided. We will be monitoring conditions on a regular basis as will Officers from the Bexley Parks & Open Spaces Office. Should there be any need to cancel the event due to conditions, please rest assured that this is a viable option which will be considered.

Having done a few parkruns myself at Danson Park I do not think the meadows is suitable. The running route proposed gets very muddy in the winter and believe this would create an accident risk to runners. We walk our dog in the meadows around 6 times a week and even with walking boots it is very easy to slip.

Also Parkrun would make this worse by churning up the mud making it even more dangerous for runners and walkers.

We have worked closely with both the Friends of Footscray Meadows and Bexley Council on this point. Taking this into consideration, all routes will be on already used paths and there will be a contingency route planned should areas need to be left clear or avoided. We will be monitoring conditions on a regular basis as will Officers from the Bexley Parks & Open Spaces Office. Should there be any need to cancel the event due to conditions, please rest assured that this is a viable option which will be considered.

As a regular user of the meadows I am most concerned about this taking place on a regular Saturday morning.

My main concern being parking, there is very limited parking at the stables car park. If you have Parkrun every Saturday are you going to provide further parking I.e. open up the larger space at the rear of the big house, or are they going to clog up the small car park that the regular users park in? Will it mean that we will no longer be able to use the meadows on a Saturday morning?

Not so long ago we had issues with parking due to the people attending swimming lessons at the big house parking and informing us that we were not allowed to park there it was just for the swimmers. This thankfully has now been stopped.

The entrance to the car park and the roads leading to it are narrow, car parking on the road is a not sensible option either. So this does lead to the question where will all these extra cars park?

Also, although some runners are polite and considerate, in my experience many are not. Many seem to think they have more rights than anyone else and in the past I have been run into and sworn at for not getting out of their way. For this reason I stopped using the park at Avery Hill.

Walkers tend to vary their routes around the meadows but a large amount of runners on a regular basis, no doubt running a regular course, will damage the grass and the few pathways that there are, churn it even more into mud, and it certainly will not be good for the wildlife that inhabits the area.

In response to the points raised in turn:

Parking - We have agreement from Kelsey Farm that all runners who drive to the event will be directed to park there. They have a large parking area, along with an overspill area that has been offered. Many runners will come from the local area and would be urged to use public transport, walk/cycle or car-share. The start area is adjacent to the playground towards the Kelsey Farm Shop corner of the meadows and it is felt that this would mean that the Rectory Lane parking area is too far away for runners to use.

Your use of the meadows – The meadows will not be closed off to anyone during the run time. Runners are aware that we share the space, not have exclusivity of it with other users of the area.

Entrance to the meadows/local roads – All drivers will be directed to Kelsey Farm Shop, off the North Cray Road.

Runners attitude – We cannot comment on this currently, but any complaint received will be shared with Bexley Council and also parkrun HQ to be investigated and actioned on.

Damage to the meadows - We have worked closely with both the Friends of Footscray Meadows and Bexley Council Parks and Open Spaces Officers to make every effort that now and in the future no flora or fauna will be damaged. The route will not be over wildflower meadows and will remain away from any sensitive areas of the open space. Taking this into consideration, all routes will be on already used paths and there will be a contingency route planned should areas need to be left clear or avoided. We will be monitoring conditions on a regular basis as will Officers from the Bexley Parks & Open Spaces Office. Should there be any need to cancel the event due to conditions, please rest assured that this is a viable option which will be considered.

Wildlife and Environment safeguarding - A large area of the Meadows is designated as a Nature Reserve, and we have an abundance of wildlife and flora. I believe that the organisation will not be able to protect undisturbed the wildlife, trees and principally the fields which form the unique character of the place. If you have visited Footscray Meadows recently, you will know that especially at this time of year, the paths and tracks become very muddy and a great amount of damage is done to the water meadow land. Adding the impact

of over 200 runners for 2 hours EVERY Saturday is going to increase the impact on the paths, woods and wildlife to a point where the damage will become irreparable. We have worked closely with both the Friends of Footscray Meadows and Bexley Council Parks and Open Spaces Officers to make every effort that now and in the future no flora or fauna will be damaged. The route will not be over wildflower meadows and will remain away from any sensitive areas of the open space. Taking this into consideration, all routes will be on already used paths and there will be a contingency route planned should areas need to be left clear or avoided.

We cannot comment on the number of regular runners that will attend, nor the time that will elapse during their run/walk of the course. Please note, the average run time for parkrun in general is currently 28 minutes and 13 seconds. We will be monitoring conditions on a regular basis. Should there be any need to cancel the event due to conditions, please rest assured that this is a viable option which will be considered.

Parking - The Meadows is not set up to be a mass event venue on a regular basis. Parking is very limited and we face the prospect of all the local roads becoming clogged with an influx of 200 runners cars, plus organisers, Marshalls and first aid, etc.

We have agreement from Kelsey Farm that all runners who drive to the event will be directed to park there. They have a large parking area, along with an overspill area that has been offered. Many runners will come from the local area and would be urged to use public transport, walk/cycle or car-share. We cannot comment on the number of runners who will attend at this time.

Sanitation - there is one toilet block in a remote corner of the Meadows, which will generally be out of reach of the runners. This invites the prospect of runners popping into the bushes to relieve themselves, putting the current level of the dog fouling problem into the shade!

Along with parking, the use of facilities at Kelsey Farm Shop has been offered for runners. The use of correct facilities will be highlighted within the website. Any complaints raised due to parkrun attendees abusing the meadows in anyway will be reviewed and acted upon.

Permissions - The land was gifted to the people of Bexley as a place to enjoy the wildlife and trees, there are far better places for these events, which offer sanitation, properly managed paths, suitable parking and less impact on the environment. Although this is offered as a free event, I can't help thinking that there is some commercial benefit to the organisers somewhere.

We are working with Bexley Council to obtain the required permissions to use the meadows. Although a limited company, parkrun do not make a commercial benefit from the runs. Costs are covered via a number of sponsors and donations from runners.

Insurances - I presume that there would be a requirement to provide proper insurances for the event. There is no mention of these in the flyer.

All UK parkrun events are covered by public liability insurance which is provided through their affiliation with UK Athletics.

Dog Walkers - Due to the policies of neighbouring Councils, there has been a massive increase in the number of commercial dog walkers using the Meadows. There are sometimes people walking 9 or 10 dogs in a pack, which has resulted in attacks and confrontations. I have seen runners being chased and this could only become worse, given the number of participants.

We cannot comment on the status of commercial dog walkers in the Meadows. Any incidents faced by parkrun will be reported to both Bexley Council and also to parkrun HQ and reviewed with the information available at the time. We would like to work with local users of the meadows to eradicate any form of confrontation that occurs during our time there.

It's a great idea and such a lovely park to run and good varied terrain.
If you need any volunteers, let me know
Thank you for your feedback and offer of help.

Great idea
Thank you for your feedback

I am enquiring as to when the park run on north cray meadows will start & has a route been confirmed?
The route and start date are yet to be confirmed. However, the start/finish area will be adjacent to the playground towards the Kelsey Farm Shop corner of the meadows.
