

Mid Suffolk District Council

Stowmarket Car Park Survey Results

October 2025

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Introduction

Whether in car parks, outside homes on residential streets, or on the high street, few subjects evoke as much passion as parking. Now Mid Suffolk District Council hopes feedback from car park users will help find the balance between supporting the town centre, relieving pressures for residents and supporting more sustainable travel options to and from Stowmarket.

Motorists parking in the town's council-owned car parks in Bury Street, Iliffe Way, Ipswich Street, the Meadow Centre, Milton Road, Union Street and Union Street West were invited to complete an online survey at which was open for submissions between Monday 23 June 2025 to Sunday 10 August 2025.

To promote the survey, the council issued a press release, displayed notices in the car parks and sent emails to season ticket holders and customers registered with MiPermit, our digital parking provider.

The survey asked car park users why they have chosen a particular car park, how often they use it, how far they have travelled, the duration and purpose of their visit, for example, for work, shopping, leisure etc.

The survey builds on action already taken by Mid Suffolk District Council to try to tackle parking pressures in the town – even in areas where they are not directly responsible, for example public transport and on-street parking.

October 2024 saw the [launch of the Mid Suffolk Tax Bus and a Rural Connect community bus service](#), funded through a £600k investment by Mid Suffolk District Council – designed for residents wanting to travel to and from Stowmarket from surrounding villages.

Then, in February 2025, [Mid Suffolk District Council agreed to provide funding of £25.6k to Suffolk County Council](#), so they could take the next steps in developing a possible residents' parking zone, covering several streets around the town centre.

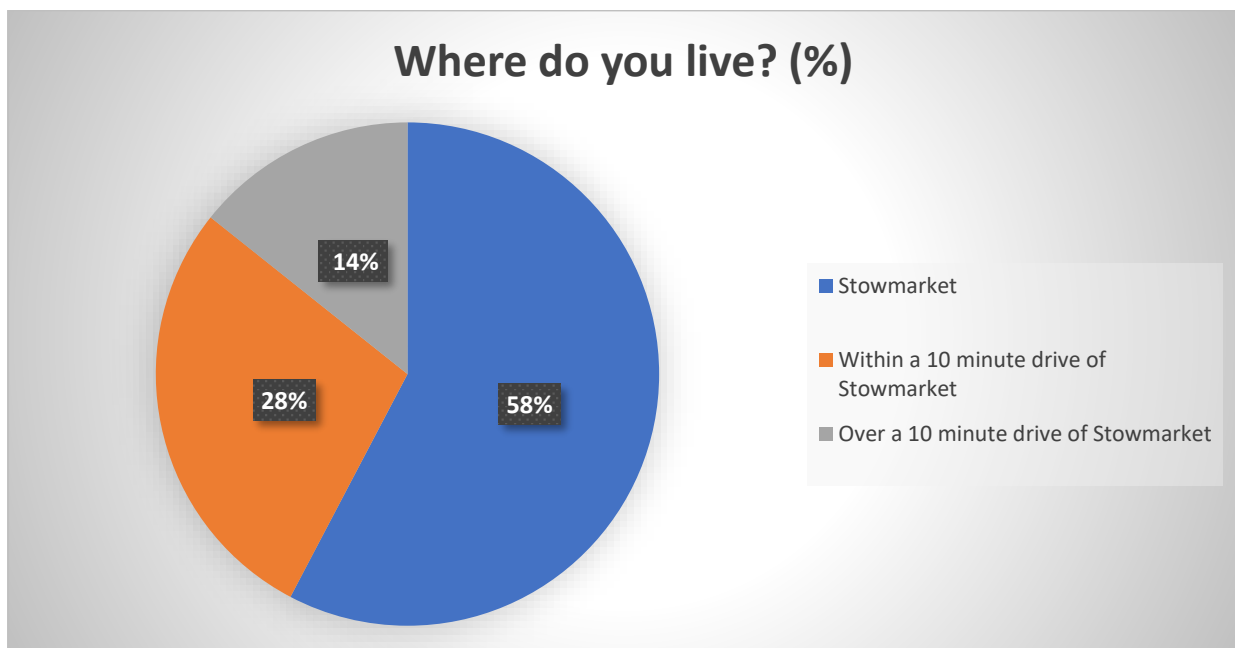
We received 511 submissions to the survey.

Survey results

Question 1

Where do you live?

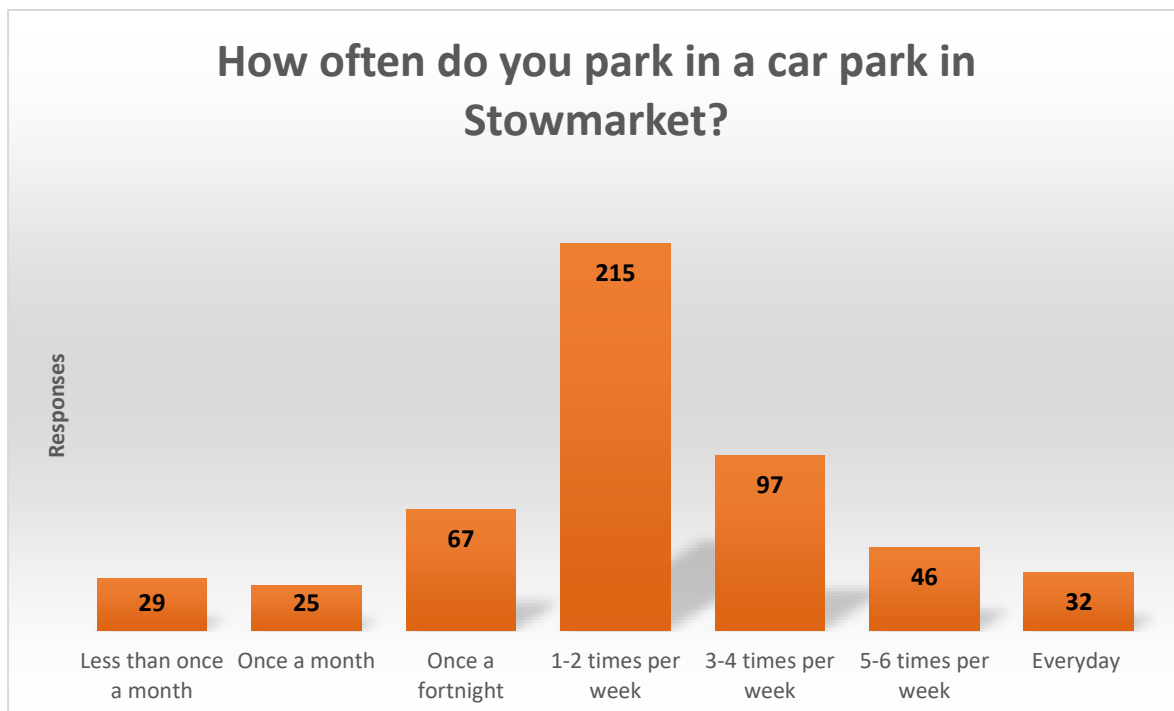
Options	Responses	%
Stowmarket	295	57.7
Within a 10-minute drive of Stowmarket	143	28
Over a 10-minute drive of Stowmarket	73	14.3
	511	100.0



Question 2

How often do you park in a car park in Stowmarket?

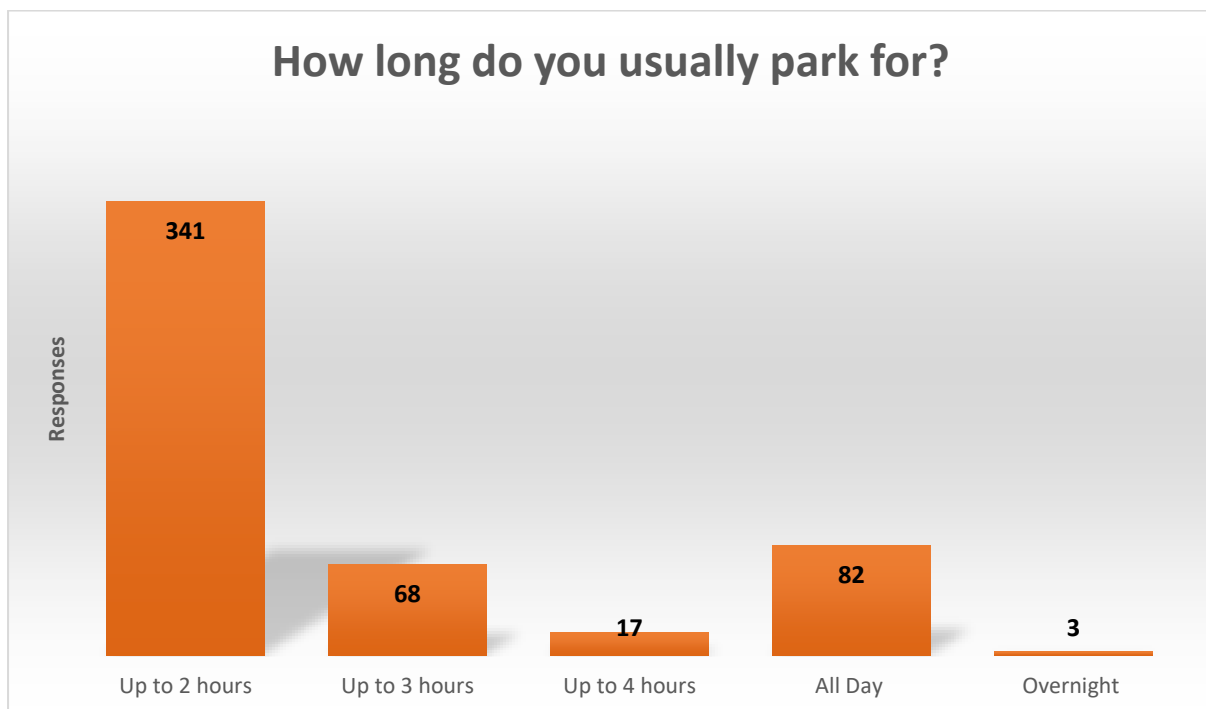
Options	Responses	%
Less than once a month	29	5.7
Once a month	25	4.9
Once a fortnight	67	13.1
1-2 times per week	215	42.1
3-4 times per week	97	19.0
5-6 times per week	46	9.0
Everyday	32	6.3
	511	100.0



Question 3

How long do you usually park for?

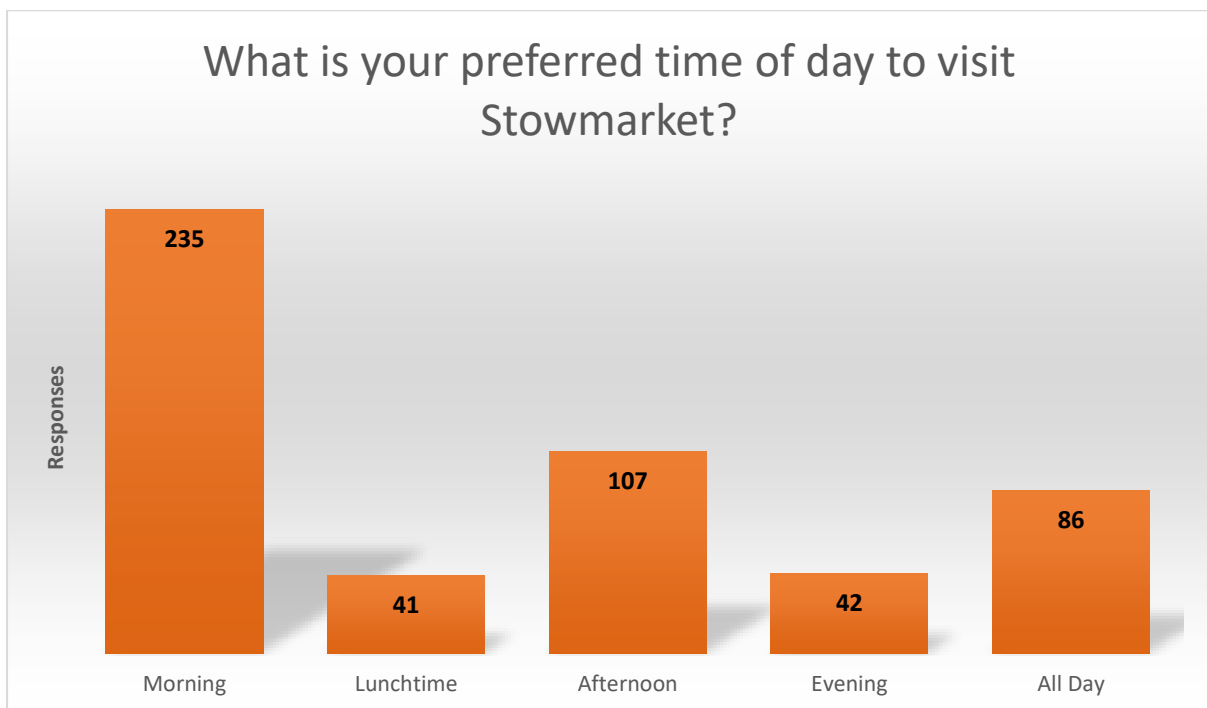
Options	Responses	%
Up to 2 hours	341	66.7
Up to 3 hours	68	13.3
Up to 4 hours	17	3.3
All Day	82	16.0
Overnight	3	0.6
	511	100.0



Question 4

When is your preferred time of day to visit Stowmarket?

When	Responses	%
Morning	235	46.0
Lunchtime	41	8.0
Afternoon	107	20.9
Evening	42	8.2
All Day	86	16.8
	511	100.0



Question 5

When parking, what is usually the main reason for your visit?

Options	Responses	%
Shopping	323	63.2
Socialise/Leisure	58	11.4
Regular place of work	57	11.2
Other	30	5.9
Catch a train (work/study)	16	3.1
Work appointment	13	2.5
Park as a resident	13	2.5
Catch a train (leisure)	1	0.2
	511	100.0



Other responses

“Appointment in town”

“Appointment in town or collecting items from stores via click and collect service”

“Appointment opticians”

“Appointments, shopping and socialising”

“Attend a class”

“Attend church service”

“Attended dental and eye appointments”

“Banking, optician, nails, shopping”

“Dentist and opticians”

“Dentist, bank or market shopping”

“Dentist, hair and optician appointments”

“Dentist, optician, cinema”

“Dentist, shopping”

“Dropping of parcel, posting items”

“For appointments. Dental, eyes, banking while there is a bank left! Other appts shopping”

“Hair salon”

“Hairdresser, dentist, chiropodist etc.”

“I live where I have to pay for car parking”

“Nursery and shop”

“Opticians”

“Shopping, ballet classes”

“Socialise and shopping”

“To go gym or B&M”

“To go shopping or nursery pick-up”

“To unload donations to charity shops”

“To go shopping and use the gym”

“Unable to charge EV at home”

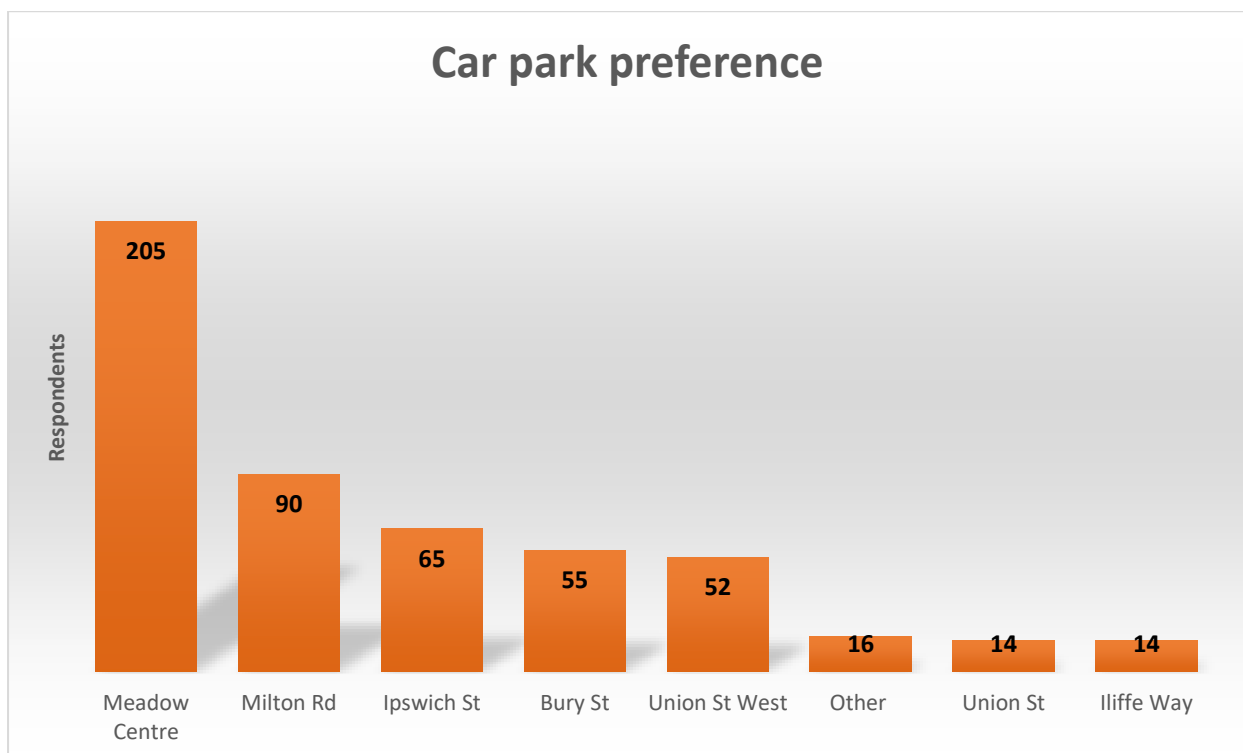
“Various - a combination of the above”

“Medical appt”

Question 6

Which car park do you prefer to use?

Options	Responses	%
Meadow Centre Car Park	205	40.1
Milton Road Car Park	90	17.6
Ipswich Street Car Park	65	12.7
Bury Street Car Park	55	10.8
Union Street West Car Park	52	10.2
Other	16	3.1
Union Street Car Park	14	2.7
Iliffe Way Car Park	14	2.7
	511	100.0



Other responses

“Aldi”

“Behind library”

“Businesses own car park”

“Car park used depends on where I need to be in Stowmarket - choose closest one”

“Depends on where I'm going”

“Disabled”

“Disabled bays Main Street”

“I like to find a free parking space and walk”

“I park in streets around the outskirts of town”

“I use quite a few car parks”

“Marriott's walk behind Argos”

“No applicable; I have only every visited once”

“Regal”

“Regal Theatre”

“Station Car Park”

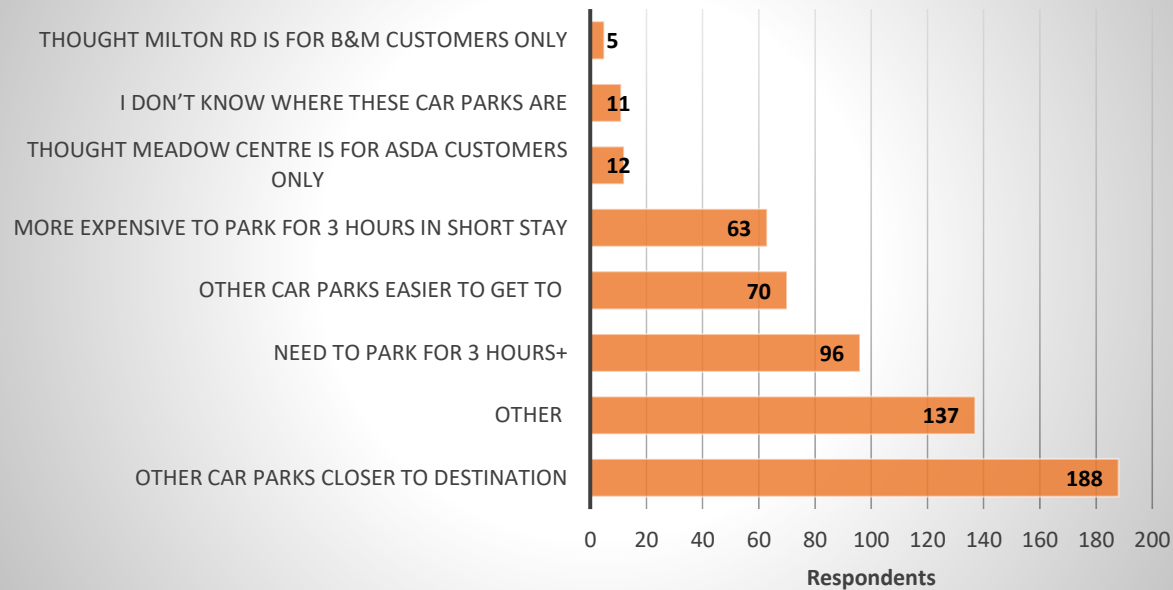
“The Regal”

Question 7

Our long stay car parks are often busy, but spaces are usually available in our short stay car parks (Meadow Centre Car Park and Milton Road Car Park). What puts you off using one of these car parks?

Options	Responses	%
Other car parks closer to my destination	188	32.3
Other	137	23.5
Need to park for 3 hours+	96	16.5
Other car parks easier to get to	70	12.0
More expensive to park for 3 hours in short stay	63	10.8
Thought Meadow Centre is for Asda customers only	12	2.1
I don't know where these car parks are	11	1.9
Thought Milton Rd is for B&M customers only	5	0.9
	582	100.0

Why don't you use short stay car parks?



Other responses

"Convenient location"

"As a severely disabled driver I need to park as near to where I am going as possible. Generally, we go to the Regal cinema very regularly or to the shops in the high street"

"Asda car park is the only one where you get your money back"

"Asda is difficult to get to and always traffic jam through town to the karnser"

"Can be very busy with tight spacing"

"Can still be very full"

"Current provision works well"

"Daft question because nothing puts me off using them"

"Disabled driver - need to park near where I need to go and some double yellow lines are loading only"

"Disabled spaces for mum who can't walk far"

"Disabled when there is one"

"Doesn't make sense to park in Asda or B&M car park if I am going elsewhere"

"Don't need long stay"

"Don't use or have a need to use long stay car parks"

"Due to walking difficulties, they are too far from my dentist, hairdresser and optician"

"For a quick visit to B&M it's not worth paying"

"Free parking"

"Get my fee back from Asda when I park"

"I already use Meadow Centre car park"

"I already use the Milton Rd car park"

"I am a blue badge disabled driver and used to shop in Stowmarket 2-3 times a week, however since the parking restrictions were introduced in Ipswich Road, even the walk from the B&M car park to the main shops and market is becoming impossible for me now, which is why I now only come in once a week if I need something from B&M. A great pity as I used to enjoy shopping in the centre of Stowmarket"

"I am disabled and need to go to Bury Street. I'm unable to walk from short stay car parks"

"I can't walk far due to my hip"

"I didn't know there was long stay car parks"

"I do park at Meadow Centre as it is likely to have space"

"I do use Meadow Centre"

"I do use Asda car park as I shop in Asda"

"I do use meadow centre."

"I do use that car park, this question is idiotic"

"I do use the car park Milton Road"

"I do use them"

"I do use them!"

"I do use these"

"I do use these"

"I do use these car parks"

"I don't need more than 3 hours; average shop is 30 mins or less"

"I don't usually need a long stay car park"

"I don't want to pay for parking"

"I don't park for a long period"

"I don't understand this question"

"I don't use a long stay car park"

"I go to the one nearest to where I'm going to shop reduce how far I have to carry stuff"

"I have a parking permit for the one nearer home"

"I have a parking permit which I cannot use in these car parks"

"I have a permit to park which does not allow these car parks"

"I have no problem using the other car parks"

"I have severe rheumatoid arthritis, so I need to be close to work"

"I never need to stay long stay so use the short stay car park close to where I am shopping"

"I never use the long stay car parks"

"I only park in short stay as easiest to access"

"I only want to nip in, and I don't want to pay"

"I park in Meadow"

"I park at Asda"

"I park at the Meadow Centre"

"I park in the most convenient car park to where I need to go"

"I park in whichever car park is more convenient for where I am going"

"I park near to where I need to go"

"I park where I need to"

"I rarely need long stay"

"I said I park there"

"I shop at Asda"

"I sometimes do; it depends where I'm going in town"

"I try to park in which park suits my needs for that particular day"

"I try to avoid paying to park in Stowmarket. Prefer to street park as less chance of damage to my vehicle as people ding the bodywork and parking spaces are no longer big enough for SUVs"

"I use Meadow Centre car park"

"I use Milton Road"

"I use both of these but usually walk into town if we can"

"I use Meadow Centre car park"

"I use short stay car parks"

"I use the short stay car parks"

"I use the short stay parks"

"I use them"

"I use them"

"I use the Union Street Car Park to go to the gym occasionally and it is free for PureGym members"

"I use them"

"I usually use Meadow"

"I want one as close as possible to the town centre so I can be in and out quickly"

"I work in Bury Street"

"I would use the others. I mainly walk into town but use a car park when carrying heavy items"

"I'm not put off by anything"

"I'm not put off"

"It's closer for my shopping"

"Its 3-hour max stay but if originally pay for two hours I cannot the pay for the final 1 hour as there is no tariff for that"

"I'm happy to use either short-stay car park most of the time"

"Meadow Centre is closest to where I need to go"

"My season ticket does not cover these car parks"

"None of statements above apply to me as I live in Lavenham Park so always use Milton Road car park; have not yet found it full"

"Nothing, but typically we shop at Asda to get the parking back"

"Only use car park with cash option"

"Only use cash car parks"

"Other car parks are usually busy or don't have parent & child spaces"

"Parking in B&M car park is less hassle - sometimes I park there and walk to Asda/through town"

"Price, can get money back at Asda"

"PureGym offers free parking ONLY in the Union Street car park. If there was a different option / you could park in any council car park for free, I would do that"

"Regal"

"The faff of a 2-hour ticket for a 30-minute stay"

"The long stays tend to be used in preference to the station as they're cheaper"

"The other car parks are toilets far to carry heavy bags, awkward boxes to"

"There are plenty of spaces when I park"

“Too expensive”

“Union St West is closer to my place of work”

“Union St is free for PureGym members”

“Unless visiting cinemas, I use Meadow car park”

“We choose the nearest to where we want to shop”

“We only use Meadow Centre and Milton Road when using B&M or Asda. We got in the evening, so we don’t need to pay for parking or walk during the day”

“You get your ticket refunded”

“You have to pay for up to 2 hours even if you’re needing to park there 1 hour or less”

“You want to use a carpark near to where you want to go. You don’t always want to use the same one. Which makes your question invalid”

“Depends on which end of town I need”

“I buy an annual season ticket which doesn’t cover these other car parks”

“I use it to go to the gym so needs to be close and linked in to the free parking provided”

“Killing the town by paying for parking”

“Nothing”

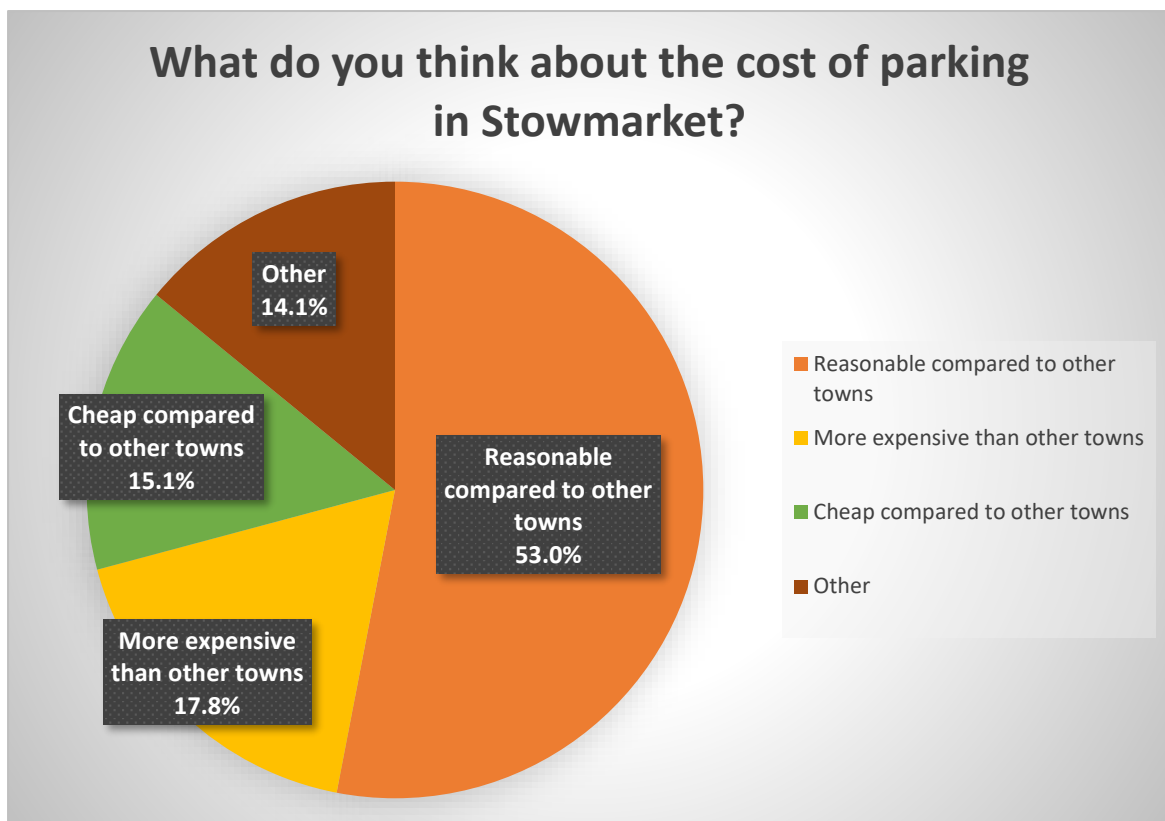
“Spaces are easier to get into”

“Too far to walk”

Question 8

What do you think about the cost of parking in Stowmarket?

Options	Responses	%
Reasonable compared to other towns	271	53.0
More expensive than other towns	91	17.8
Cheap compared to other towns	77	15.1
Other	72	14.1
	511	100.0



Other comments

"A small town that's losing footfall because people don't want to pay for parking"

"All parking should be free"

"Car park in a town that is basically impossible to find street park is a call to kill the local business, I personally think that the car parks should be free. I avoid going to town for this reason, do my supermarket shop at Lidl, Aldi or Tesco. And I never go to town just for the shops. Last time I went I have to stay over 3 hrs and couldn't even park at Asda. Had to park outside town and walk as I had no idea where else I could park for longer"

"Cost is reasonable, but it would be better if there was 30 minutes free"

"Disabled driver, don't pay"

"Do not know as rarely park in other towns; seems reasonable to me"

"Don't agree with paying to visit Asda or B&M"

"Don't charge, puts people off going to the town"

"Fair for what is actually in Stowmarket. We tend to use Milton Road for Wetherspoons trips - anymore expensive we would go elsewhere unless on walk in day"

"For the facilities available the parking is expensive. It is sometimes better value to drive to a larger town, for your parking fee you get better choice"

"Free half hour parking in B&M would be beneficial"

"Having to pay to pop to one shop is ridiculous"

"I am registered disabled with a badge so therefore do not pay. However, there is not enough disabled parking spaces available. We were informed by a parking attendant some time ago that we could park in electric charging spaces. These rules were then changed without it being clearly displayed at the entrance that the rules had been changed at the Ipswich Street Car Park, culminating in us receiving a parking fine"

"I believe you should offer first 1 or 2 hours free to encourage people to shop in Stowmarket and perhaps encourage wider range of shops !!!!!!!!!"

"I don't park in other towns, cost is reasonable, but I have nothing to compare it with"

"I don't pay to park so don't know"

"I don't think the town has enough shops and restaurants to warrant paying for parking"

"I have no idea about parking in other towns"

"I have no idea how much parking is in other towns so I cannot compare, however, I think the parking costs are very reasonable"

"I mostly only need 20mins during the day, but only Asda give refunds"

"I only park after 6"

"I only park in Asda so I can get my money back. I begrudge having to pay £1 if I only need to quickly pop in to town to do things for 30 mins or less. I think there should be a 30 min free option at all the car parks"

"I personally think that a free 30 minutes would encourage more shoppers to the town"

"I think it's reasonable, but I would like to see the up to an hour for 50p come"

"I think that it should be free in all car parks for at least 2 hours to encourage customers to the town as is the case in other towns in Suffolk"

"I think there should be 30mins free. I often have to pop in for one or two things and don't need the minimum of 2hrs"

"Is expensive when just want to pop to B&M"

"It should be free"

"It's excellent value but because it's cheaper than the British Rail car park all the commuters fill up the car park"

"It was good but getting expensive"

"It's ok"

"Little attraction to go to Stowmarket"

"Make 1 hr free to encourage people to pop in – more people means more shops"

"Make more free parking and get rid of pay by app!"

"Need a cheaper up to 1 hour rate. Often need to quickly stop in so 2 hours isn't needed but have to buy it"

"No idea, I rarely park in other towns"

"Other towns usually allow you to park for an hour or thirty minutes for free. I go elsewhere if I can"

"Parking cost same as most other towns"

"Parking should be free for up to 2 hours"

"Parking should be free. I only park in Asda car park so that I can get my car park refunded in store. Or I park near B&M on a Sunday when it's free"

"Paying for parking puts many people off visiting town centre using local shops, it is the same in all towns where you have to park"

"Ridiculous cost, only town that doesn't encourage people in with free parking times during market"

"Should be free"

"Should be free for the first half hour"

"Should be free for two hours to encourage people to the town"

"Should be free in my opinion, for the benefit of the town centre"

"Should be free to encourage folks to use Stowmarket"

"Should be free, especially for workers"

"Should offer 1/2 hour or 1-hour free parking"

"The Asda car park should be free. It's a hassle to have to pay so I tend to avoid Asda and use Aldi or Tesco instead"

"The cost is cheap and Asda refunds parking fee. The charges are reasonable for the town as there's not a lot of interesting shops to go in for"

"The cost is cheap however ridiculous just to go into B&M or pick my child up from nursery opposite pure gym"

"The cost is cheap, but there's not tons to visit for, so it doesn't feel good value at times"

"The cost reflects the limited range of retail outlets within the town"

"The old method of Hadleigh of up to 2 hours free encourages people not to go to Tesco!"

"There is nothing in the town to make me want to look around the shops for my age"

"There should be no charge to encourage people into the town"

“There should be no cost to park”

“There should be shorter parking times available. I rarely need 2 hours”

“There's simply not enough options for people who live in the town centre. My address isn't eligible for permit parking despite being on the main high street. I want to be able to park in the parking behind my house but often it's used by people who want to go shopping and don't want to pay for parking”

“Think there should be 30 mins or 1-hour free parking”

“Use meadow car park as use Asda and get my car park fee back”

“We deliberately avoid parking in town car parks during charging hours”

“We need to be encouraging foot fall. Our town has no shops and is in decline. Unless we have some free parking, it will get worse. Be bold”

“Whilst I believe £2.50 per day is fair, the price for shorter stays is detrimental to footfall in town”

“Why do the card machines take 4 minutes to use and have payment authorised”

“Would be good to get an hours free parking as quite often I just need to pop in to grab something but puts me off having to pay to park”

“Cost of parking is excessive and off putting, will discourage customer footfall”

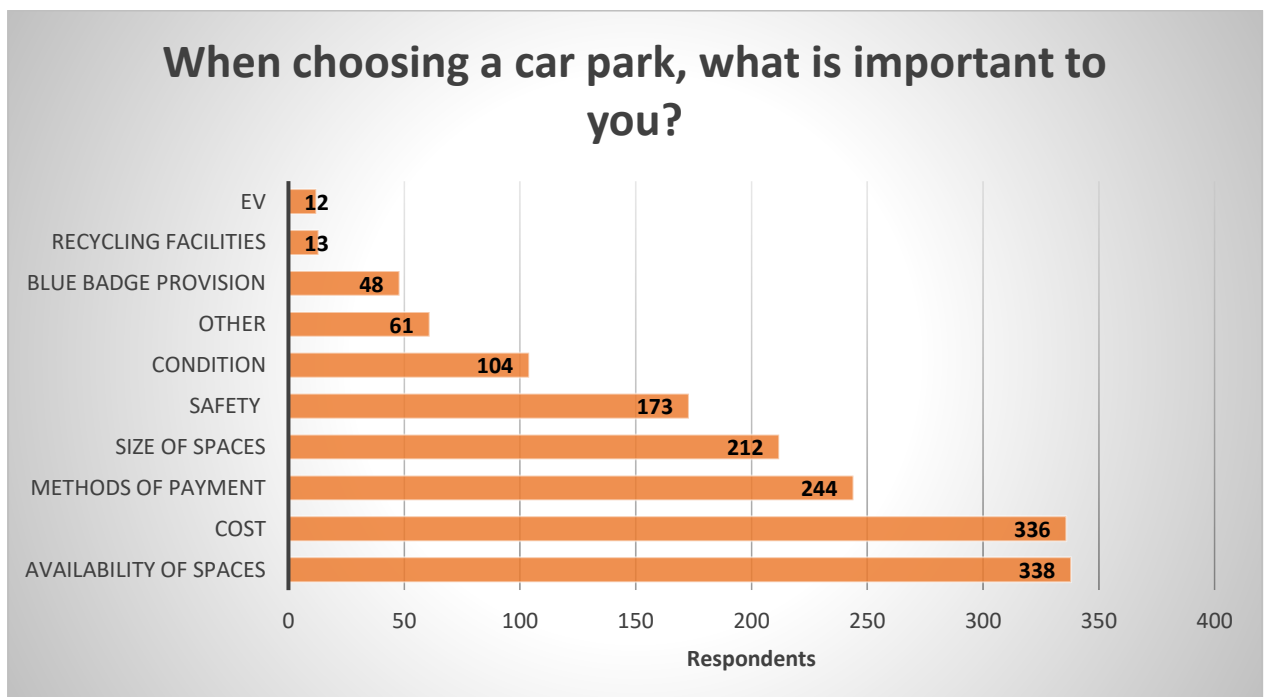
“Should be free”

“£2 for half an hour is expensive”

Question 9

When choosing a car park, which of the following are important to you?

Options	Responses	%
Availability of spaces	338	21.9
Cost	336	21.8
Methods of payment	244	15.8
Size of spaces	212	13.8
Safety	173	11.2
Condition	104	6.7
Other	61	4.0
Blue badge provision	48	3.1
Recycling facilities	13	0.8
Electric Vehicle charging	12	0.8
	1541	100.0



Other responses

“Access in and out of the car park”

“All day parking”

“Availability of parent & child spaces”

“Being close to where I am going e.g. shopping, appointments, etc”

“Car parking machines that actually work!”

“Child bays”

“Child space so I have enough room to open the door and strap children in”

“Child spaces”

“Close to home. I am a resident with no parking”

“Close to my home”

“Close to shopping place”

“Closest to the town centre and easy to get to”

“Convenience”

“Cost and how easy it is to access where I need to go”

“Distance to where I am going in town”

“Distance to where going”

“Ease of access to the car park”

“Easy to get in and out of. The speed bump in Asda car park is very steep. While Asda has more parent and child spaces, they’re often full while B&M is usually empty”

“Getting my money back from Asda”

“Getting the parking cost back”

“How far I have to walk to the Ipswich Street shops as I have mobility issues”

“How long I can park for”

“How long you can park there”

“It’s right next to my work”

“Location”

“Location”

“Location”

“Location due to distance”

“Location of the car park”

“More long stay car park facilities”

“Mother and baby parking”

“Motorbike parking”

“Near where I’m going”

“Nearest to our house”

“Not having to pay for parking”

“Parent and Child spaces. I can’t get my son out of the car without them as the spaces are way too narrow. Also being heavily pregnant there is no way I can park in a normal space”

“Parent and child spaces”

“Parent and child spaces as I am a single mother to twins and usually need somewhere that has big spaces”

“Parent and child spaces especially the number of them as people with no children decide to park in the spaces”

“Parent and child spaces, there should be more”

“Parent child spaces”

“Proximity”

“Proximity to business I want to visit”

“Proximity to my house, resident permit”

“Proximity to our shop”

“Proximity to where I am going”

“Proximity to where I'll have to carry my purchases from”

“Proximity to work”

“Redeemable ticket in Asda”

“The amount of time I can park for”

“The distance from where I need to go”

“The length of time available to park, I would like to see more long stay spaces available”

“The most convenient to where I need to go”

“The shops in the town”

“Walking distance to the train station”

“Which car park is closer to where I want to go”

“You omitted the most important question. Distance to destination, most people try to park close to where they want to go”

“Children spaces/location”

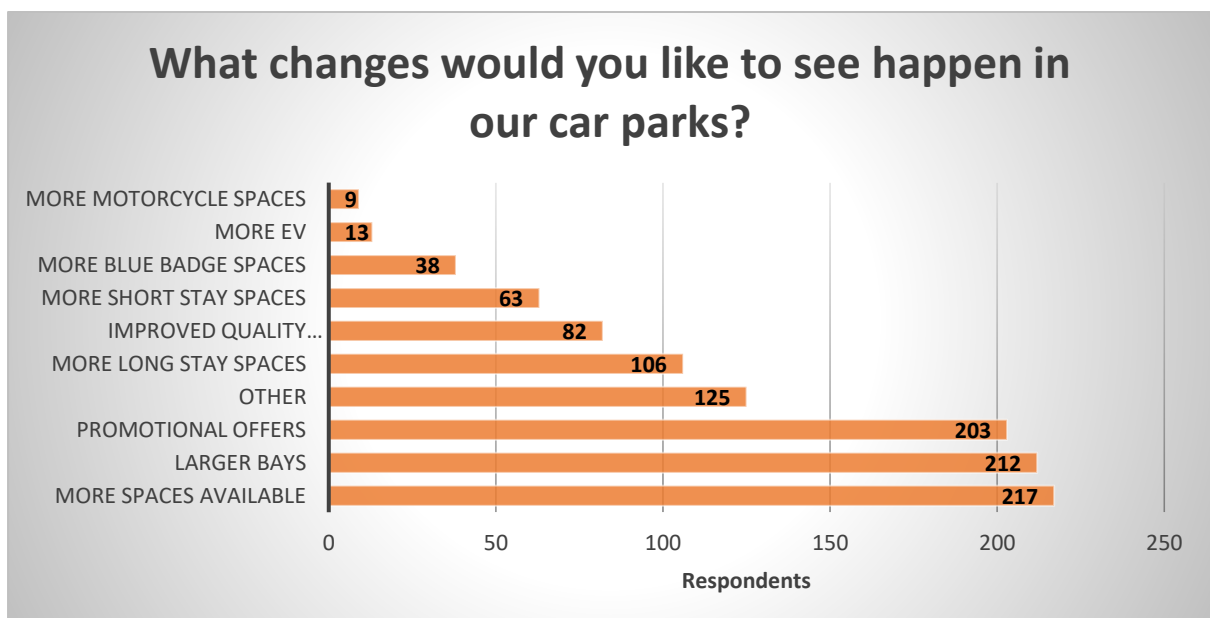
“Nearest to where I want to go”

“Over 4 hours stay”

Question 10

What changes would you like to see happen in our car parks?

Options	Responses	%
More spaces available	217	20.3
Larger bays	212	19.9
Promotional offers	203	19.0
Other	125	11.7
More long stay spaces	106	9.9
Improved quality (surface, markings, landscaping)	82	7.7
More short stay spaces	63	5.9
More Blue Badge spaces	38	3.6
More electric vehicle chargers	13	1.2
More motorcycle spaces	9	0.8
	1068	100.0



Other comments

"1hr free parking would encourage me to go town more"

"A safe pathway through the Asda car park"

“Allow to pay for an hourly parking ticket but be able to park in any council owned car parks within that time window”

“As a local business owner, reduced parking on very quiet days could possibly help”

“As said above, maybe an hour’s free parking”

“Better EV charging prices for residents who are unable to have home chargers”

“Better parking at the station”

“Better ticket machines as always not in use! And have to walk around the car park to find one working!”

“CCTV (if liability is an issue, then put up a sign absolving yourself of liability in the case of theft)”

“Control and management of parking including ignorant parking and parking in spaces that are not child/disabled/electric”

“Cash payments availability is paramount to many, standing around in the wind and rain trying to use an app or mipermit is most annoying and time consuming, cash is much much easier and quicker”

“Cashback at Regal / B&M”

“Change to Ringo app, MiPermit is horrendous and puts us off visiting the town”

“Cheaper 30min or 1-hour rates”

“Cheaper parking”

“Cheaper parking”

“Cheaper short-stay parking”

“Child spaces”

“Coin meters only, not pay via mobile apps”

“Convert Short Stay Car Parks to long stay”

“Diss offer 1hr free perfect to nip into a shop”

“Environmental impacts taken into account. And consider discounted local travel to encourage use of public transport instead”

“EV charging is good now but will need to be expanded in future. Could add 50kw plus options”

*“FREE car parking for short stay. Commuters can jog on. The high street is dying and people being gatekept from nipping into town is stupid. MAKE SHORT STAY FREE. 2-3 hours no return. Fab. You’d get much more uptake. Look at Sudbury. It’s brilliant. It’s **** here”*

“Fewer charging space. Can't find parking space but empty charging spaces”

“Fewer electric vehicle charging places”

Fines for non-EV drivers parking in charging spots. Free or cheaper parking supporting the high street and the motorist. No one wants to use the bus we all want to drive just embrace it”

“First 1 hour free to allow you to nip into town and keep it alive”

“First hour free”

“First hour free like they do in other towns like Diss”

“Free 1 or 2 hour to encourage people to use the town”

“Free 30-minute ticket (perhaps for locals/introduce a Mid-Suffolk Card for residents, for library use/discounted parking etc)”

“Free 30 minutes at car parks near B&M and Asda to help ppl pop in”

“Free 30-minutes & clear rules to encourage people to use the town shops and facilities”

“Free first 20-30 minutes”

“Free first hour”

“Free for 1 hour”

“Free for a short while and making car parks unattractive for out of Stowmarket commuters and all-day workers!”

“Free on market days, including Saturdays! Just like Bury St Edmund’s”

“Free parking”

“Free parking”

“Free parking for 30 mins, more parent and child bays and stricter regulation of the existing parent and child bays to ensure they are not abused by people without children and/or small children that actually need the space to park. An 8 year old doesn’t need help getting out of the car so they should be using a normal space. I would also love to see dual purpose bays for disabled and parent and child like they have in Norwich as often the disabled bays are empty but residents with young children can’t park anywhere. I actively avoid using the car parks in town when I have my son with me, I go to Bury st Edmunds if I can’t find space on a residential road”

“Free parking for B&M”

“Free parking for a short period i.e. 30 minutes if you just need to pop into town”

“Free parking for a shorter period to encourage people into the town. Will often go to boots in Bury as it's better value with the other shops”

“Free parking if you need to park for less than 30 minutes”

“Free parking in town for shoppers”

“Free parking on market days”

“Free parking to encourage more use of the town - I would visit almost daily if parking was free”

“Free parking to encourage people into town away from Aldi, Lidl etc”

“Free parking to encourage people the town and support shops”

“Free spaces at certain times (like BsE on Tues afternoons) or for shorter visits (like Diss) for people who only need to nip into town for a couple of bits. Also, better card readers that don't take forever to connect (why are they so slow?)”

“Free spaces for 1 hour of shopping”

“Free stay for short visit”

“Free times during the day”

“Free to encourage using the town”

“Get Better ticket machines or fix the ones that go out of order instead of just sticking bag on them especially at Asda”

“Half an hour free in B&M car park as I often just need to pick a few bits up from B&M and I’m usually in and out in 10 minutes”

"Have an electronic list for residents instead of a paper permit. Separate areas for residents as the car park is regularly full"

"I think the car parks are fine"

"I use the app but Asda car park machine often out of order"

"I want you to encourage commuters to park elsewhere"

"I would like the tickets to be transferrable between the car parks"

"If council can afford it - free car parking"

"If there were free 1 hr for shopping"

"If u park in Milton Road and go to pictures u need more than 3 hours parking as the films are longer than that"

"Increase the cost so people using the train will park at the station instead of Union Street"

"Introduction of a free 15-minute condition, or reimbursement program for the cost of parking. The council want the high street and local shops to thrive and attract business, but I avoid going in to Stowmarket town and local shops that require me to pay for parking, because often I only need a couple of things, and will not pay for parking. I instead shop almost exclusively at Aldi or Tesco where I don't need to pay to park. Inadvertently taking business away from small, independent, and other High Street shops that are often recited in many local planning proposals as a reason to object 'out of town' shops"

"Keeping the price exactly the same as it is or lowering the price, definitely not a price increase"

"LESS EV spaces. These are disproportionate to the size of the car parks and other non-EV spaces left available. They are rarely used, and it is often difficult to find a space to park due to the excessive amount of EV parking spaces which have recently been introduced. Why are there 6 EV spaces at Ipswich Street for example. Completely unnecessary and wasteful"

"Larger spaces. The EV spaces are not big enough to park an average EV"

"Less EV charging points. Never see them being used. 8 points at Needham Station Yard, and every time I've been they are always empty, yet I can't park to shop in the High Street. You are killing local trade"

"Less electric parking spaces because they are under used/ usually empty and take away regular parking spaces"

“More child spaces and no more electric spaces they are never used!!!!”

“More children’s bays”

“More free parking near town centre for up to 30 minutes”

“More free parking. What’s the incentive to shop in Stowmarket when parking is so expensive”

“More long stay car parks in close proximity of train/bus”

“More mother and baby parking”

“More mother and toddler spaces as these are very few”

“More parent & child spaces”

“More parent and child”

“More parent and child parking bays”

“More parent and child spaces or joint parent and child with disabled”

“Never had a problem, so happy as it is”

“No changes”

“No changes needed”

“No charges”

“No price increase”

“Offers on market day to get people into town”

“Often, I need to go to different places in town which require different car parks but I still have time left on the previous and I have to pay again would like to pay once but use more than one car park”

“Open market place for parking on non-market days”

“Options for those working in Stowmarket”

“Parking should be free for first half hour to quickly go into town and free one day a week. Ridiculous we have to pay at all”

"Parking should be free. I don't shop as much as I would due to parking charges"

"People charged for being parked in the wrong spaces for wrong reasons e.g. sitting in the car whilst partner goes shopping and child remains in the car. People hoping in to the shop but using the parent bays"

*"Removal of EV charging spaces - Way too many! If you park in one of the car parks and pay for a the wrong one by accident you fine that person even! You own all of them and charge the same prices, show some common decency and stop ripping people off. Bunch of ****!"*

"Remove long term parking from Bury St/Union St car parks where commuters block spaces at no benefit to the town. Half the price for all day v the station"

"Removing the cost to park"

"Secure covered cycle parking"

"Some free parking"

"Sorter time parking"

"Speed limit signs of 5MPH, both painted on roads and on signs in all walking areas!"

"Stop charging at 5pm. Most of the high street is closing down by then so it just penalises people going to socialise / exercise at the gym"

"That the machines in Asda car park work! It's not easy for elderly people to walk the park to find the one working machine"

"The ability to park in the B&M car park with a season ticket, as all other long stays are always full and that one has loads of spaces available. If I start work after 9, I'm generally riding around trying to find a space as the Union Street and Bury Street ones are always full too. I end up parking further away and it's a strain when you have laptop and other bits to carry. Not to mention when it's darker and the weather is rubbish when you leave off work at 5:30. I'm fed up of having a season ticket and not being able to find a space in the long stay car parks"

"The range of answers is a bit limited ref promotional parking. I'd suggest-free every day for 45 mins - collect a ticket so this can be governed. Raise the price for 2hr plus parking"

"There is nothing wrong with the car parks as they are"

"Three hours at Ipswich Street is not long enough if going to the Regal to watch a film and then eat at the cafe afterwards"

“Ticket machines should work. It should not involve looking for a working machine. They should be updated also perhaps with access to parking app”

“Ticket machines that actually work”

“Too many electric spaces now! They take up spaces which are needed”

“You really needed to add a ‘not applicable’ option to this survey”

“A free or lower cost option EG first 15mins Free, 30mins 50p. for those trips - Pick up take away. Post a letter”

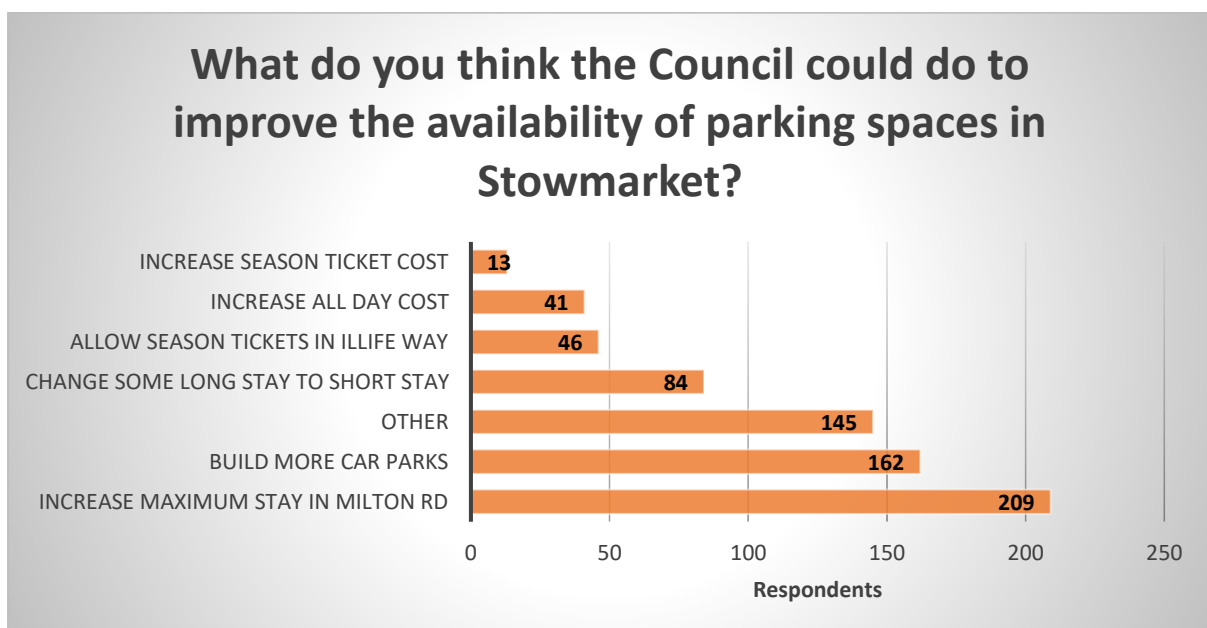
“Remove parking charges altogether to encourage more in-town visitors”

“Take out some of the unused electric charging bays or make them also available to season ticket holders or instate season ticket holder bays even if this means the price of the season ticket needs to increase”

Question 11

What do you think the Council could do to improve the availability of parking spaces in Stowmarket?

Options	Responses	%
Increase maximum stay in Milton Road Car Park	209	29.9
Build more car parks	162	23.1
Other	145	20.7
Change some long stay to short stay	84	12.0
Allow season tickets in Illife Way Car Park	46	6.6
Increase all day cost	41	5.9
Increase season ticket cost	13	1.9
	700	100.0



Other responses

“1 free hour parking”

“1 hour free”

“Add a layer to some of the car parks that may benefit from it, or solar panel carport to feed into the grid and provide cover”

“Again, encourage British rail users to park at the station”

“Allow all cars to park in electric bays”

“Allow car parking for up to 30 minutes for free”

“Allow disabled drivers in non-EV cars to use empty EV spaces”

“Allow season ticket holders to park in B&M”

“Allow to pay for an hourly parking ticket but be able to park in any council owned car parks within that time window”

“Always find a space at ASDA or B&M car parks”

“Better parking at the station”

“Bring in more residents parking”

“Bury Rd and Pure Gym car parks are nearly always full because people park there when using the railway station, as much cheaper and still close to the station. Maybe parking in those car parks should increase or all day parking but keep cost the same for short stay. May encourage train users to use the station car park and free the other spaces for shoppers”

“Cashback, and free for 30mins”

“Change B&M to long stay”

“Change every car park to have an all-day charge. No minimum stay. ie £5 all day”

“Change short stay to working day”

“Clamp down on people using parent and child when they do not have children”

“Coordinate parking restrictions and pricing with local venues. For example, people visiting the cinema during the day need parking nearby that is long stay enough to cover the length of a film and stopping for refreshments. Look at creating a fund that

local businesses can use to refund parking ticket costs for customers spending in their shop or business. Devise a strategy to push commuters to park in the station car parks, e.g. significantly increase the cost of all day parking in town centre car parks”

“Copy Bury St Eds on market day free parking after 3pm and get rid of traffic wardens in town centre, killing the shops”

“Create more free parking”

“Definitely needs a larger car park somewhere with easy access to the town and retain cash machines as they are much easier than standing in all weathers trying to use online payments, currently wherever they are it’s a frustration”

“Do not increase pricing”

“Encourage people to stay for shorter stays”

“Encourage people to use other transport options? What are these other options? I live in a village where there are other options 2 days a week. These comments are very short sighted”

“Encourage walking and cycling if you aren’t buying a lot and are able to walk or cycle”

“Ensure there’s enough parking for residents. This is the 21st century, most people have cars. Public transport in this part of the country is lacking too much to be relied on”

“First half hour free”

“First hour free to encourage shopping in the town, e.g Diss car parks use this”

“Free parking for half and hour/ hour so you can pop in the bank post office etc”

“Free parking for market days and first hour free”

“Free parking would increase footfall people just go to Tesco instead”

“Free to encourage using the town”

“Get cost of station parking reduced so travellers use it instead of other car parks”

“Get in with the shops better so you can get your money back”

“Give 30 mins free or free to B&M customers”

“Give reduced rate to local business owners and increase prices in general”

“Go back to allowing a single ticket to cover Union Street and Union Street West”

“Greatly improve public transport into Stowmarket from surrounding villages, so people don't have to use their cars”

“Have 30-minute options”

“Have free parking for the first 60mins to encourage more people into the town”

“Have less militant parking wardens and open up 30min parking in zones closer to town to pick up bulky items or post a letter”

“Have more blue badge spaces - less EV”

“Haven't had a problem to park”

“I NEVER have a problem parking in Stowmarket. Always spaces!”

“I don't think Stowmarket needs extra car parks as can always park at any time. It would be good to have free parking after 2 like in bury 1 day a week to stop the town from dying”

“I have no idea”

“I wasn't aware there was a shortage of required spaces?”

“I would like to be able to move my car from regal to meadow without paying twice on same parking time. A universal parking tariff”

“If you were to increase the maximum stay in B&M car park I believe it would have a negative impact on B&M and Wetherspoons as there would be no spaces available to just quickly pop into B&M”

“Improve bus services throughout the communities - villages and towns offering annual discount passes to encourage more people to use public transport. Consider working with existing local private bus/taxi/transport to explore how and if this could be feasible”

“Improve public transport”

“In my experience there is not a problem with availability of spaces. I think this is deflecting from the main issue, and your survey does not recognise the main problem which is prohibitively outdated machines and zero creative ideas to boost town centre footfall. Look at BSE - Tuesdays are free after three. You should be thinking of ideas like this rather than asking about a non-issue”

“Increase reason to come to the town”

“Increase the cost for commuter all day parking in line with the station car park. Shopping hours parking kept at lower rates”

“Increase the hours you can park in Asda and B&M car parks”

“Institute a first hour free policy if you want people to pop to the shops”

“Introduce an hour tariff to reduce cost”

“I’m not sure as the distance I’m able to walk is the problem. It’s a pity as I used to enjoy coming to Stowmarket about 3 times a week as I live in Debenham”

“I’ve never had a problem finding a space”

“Keep everything the same but introduced a 15-minute free parking. Ensure that PAYMENT BY CASH is retained most definitely!”

“Keep the price but make people aware of the current spaces”

“Larger bays”

“Larger bays, shorter time periods”

“Less electric vehicle charging bays and more blue badge bays”

“Long stays reduced a maximum of 8 hours to encourage those using trains to use the appropriate car park”

“Lower the cost or free parking”

“Make non central car parks cheaper”

“Make parking at the railway station cheaper”

“Make some residents parking available on Stowupland Street. The street is clearly wide enough for bays”

“Make the bays wider. If I have to park next to a van, I often struggle to open the car door”

“Make the spaces fit vehicles for this century!”

“Make them free for one hour”

“More car parks and cheaper”

"More disabled bays in Main Street"

"More free parking near town centre for up to 30 minutes"

"More long stay car park you only have 2 and they are small"

"More spaces and bigger spaces cars aren't that small anymore"

"More spaces now pure gym is in Union Street"

"No suggestions - I rarely have a problem parking. On event days I would walk"

"None"

"Not had any trouble parking except at the Regal"

"Nothing"

"Nothing, there are always free spaces at the B&M car park. I believe firmly that a free short period parking (ie. a free 15 minute stay) would improve local trade and encourage local people to consider shopping on the high street"

"Offer free parking for the first hour! I don't want to pay to go to the library"

"On special events there no chance of parking needs to be something in place on these days"

"Open market place for parking on non-market days"

"Open market square on High St for free short-term parking. I am often put off popping to Stowmarket for one item when I'm short on time as it can take time to walk from one of the paid car parks and I'm usually on a lunch break. I also don't really want to pay for parking to buy one or two items"

"Park & ride"

"Parking in B&M at cost does encourage people to shop there first hour should be free"

"Perhaps 30 minutes free would help a lot of people. Money back not just at Asda"

"Provide more parking for station users to free up spaces for shopping/leisure"

"Public transport. Remove the reliance on cars, don't build MORE car parks, increase the options for people to leave their cars at home. Shuttle buses (on eco-friendly vehicles) from the villages/outskirts into town"

“Rail offers and discounts to give alternative, as Stowmarket is well served by rail routes, but often too expensive”

“Realistically what other transport options are viable? I didn’t know season tickets were available

“Reduce cost”

“Reduce parking fees overall”

“Reduce the amount of electric bays it has made it very difficult to get a space and is one reason why my company are now looking for new offices elsewhere with onsite parking”

“Reduce the amount of spaces now reserved for electric vehicles, there are too many and rarely in use, I have an electric vehicle but it’s cheaper to charge it at home anyway, maybe allow these spaces to be used for all vehicles instead of them taking up all the spaces”

“Reduce the cost of parking to attract tourism”

“Remove the cost of park”

“Residential parking permits”

“Seems OK to me”

“So many EV charging spaces are not required some disabled spaces were taken away for EV spaces and there are no disabled spaces in the large Bury Street car park but there are unused EV spaces. Also, electric car owners seem to think the spaces are exclusive for them even though they’re not charging their vehicle. Very disheartening for the disabled”

“Stay as you are as the cost is affordable and spaces are always available”

“Stop people parking in private car parks. Speak to shops to see who has private car parks and help them stop non workers parking in them”

“Support those who live in Stowmarket with suitable parking close to home that cannot be used by commuters using station. Some of us can’t afford fancy properties with parking and work in locations not accessible to public transport so require cars. It’s also quality of life as we need to exist, utilising land for parking instead of more houses it will make the roads near the station a lot safer”

“Terrible selection of shops to warrant increased parking fees”

“Unify parking charges so all car parks have same code”

“Unsure, I wasn't aware availability was an issue”

“Very little, if anything. I feel those who moan often don't appreciate just how fortunate they are”

“Very short stay spaces in high street on non-market days”

“While foot fall in town is low. Having the town centre pedestrian free and increase outside dining areas would be wonderful”

“Why do we need to increase the availability? The only place it is ever difficult to park is at the station and that isn't a council car park”

“Allow parking tickets to be used in any carpark, so that if parking in Asda car park to do shopping you can move to regal car park to go to the cinema”

“Allow season ticket holders to park in all the car parks. Reduce the number of EV allocated spaces. Stowmarket is a small town. Very few EV here”

“Change the short stay carpark at Milton Road to a long stay”

“Free parking more carparks to get footfall back”

“I honestly don't know! I only use the one by PureGym and that is often too busy to find a spot, but I understand that there just isn't any more space for more parking there”

“Increase parking capacity near or at the train station; take ownership of the car park at the train station”

“Less EV points”

“Make all Bury Street on road parking season ticket holders and residents only parking look at changing some of the disabled parking in bury street to season ticket / shop/ resident parking and monitor disabled parking as many who utilise these spaces are not disabled”

“Make tickets transferrable i.e. if I need to pop to B&M for one item bit do my weekly shop in Asda”

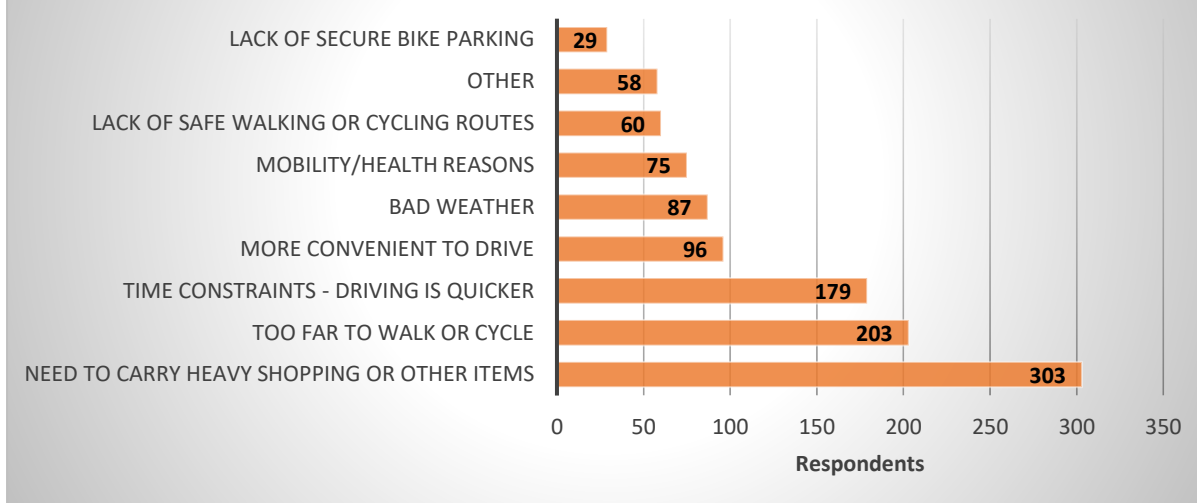
“Put a cap on the maximum hours allowed. If you limit some car parks to 4 hours you will then discourage the train commuters who hog all the spaces for most of the day”

Question 12

What are the main reasons you choose to drive to town rather than walk or cycle?

Options	Responses	%
Need to carry heavy shopping or other items	303	27.8
Too far to walk or cycle	203	18.6
Time constraints - driving is quicker	179	16.4
More convenient to drive	96	8.8
Bad weather	87	8.0
Mobility/health reasons	75	6.9
Lack of safe walking or cycling routes	60	5.5
Other	58	5.3
Lack of secure bike parking	29	2.7
	1090	100.0

What are the main reasons you choose to drive to town rather than walk or cycle?



Other responses

“As I work in an Estate Agents, I need my car to attend viewings. It is so frustrating that although we pay for parking permits it is sometimes impossible to find a space”

“As stated, I live in a village, I drive to work as there is no public transport. Luckily, I can park at work. I try to do all town stuff when I am there to save journeys”

“Baby”

“Children in tow”

“Connection from train poor”

“Disabled child in car”

“Don't want to walk or cycle home in the early hours after returning from a train trip to London”

“Don't have a bike”

“Don't drive to town, use car park for charging”

“Don't want to walk or cycle home late at night”

“Elderly parents that I need to be able to get to in an emergency”

“En route back home”

“Feels unsafe to walk in Stowmarket”

“Generally, I walk to town to shop etc, there are times I’m working in London and need to park, because I am either leaving early or finishing late”

“Have to go home on my lunch break for my dog”

“Having a young baby and pram and no path from Onehouse to Stowmarket”

“Having children with me”

“I do cycle when I can”

“I don’t”

“I have 2 children under the age of 3 and the weather can sometimes be too much for them especially the heat”

“I have 3 children and while walking to B&M is doable it isn’t with 3 children”

“I have anxiety, and my car is my safety net, I know I can then leave and get home quickly if I start to panic”

“I have twin toddlers, and I cannot always walk depending on weather or other factors. If I’m doing a large shop, I cannot walk to town holding both my twins hands and hold heavy shopping bags”

“I live behind library. Every day at all hours of day constantly coming and going looking for free parking”

“I live in Bacton, and we have very little bus service from here. I would use the bus if it was available”

“I live in the town centre and rarely need to park in public car parks. However, as a town councillor, parking is one of the main concerns of residents who contact me. Finding parking spaces in the car parks in the town centres is increasingly difficult as commuters fill up the cheapest car parks rather than parking by the station, or they add to congestion on streets with on-street parking”

“I live there”

“I live too far to walk or cycle and there is no public transport – Bacton”

“I need to park near our shop for deliveries etc”

“I often stop in Stow on my way home from work, so I’m already in my car”

"I only drive if on another journey or need to buy a lot"

"I only park as I am a resident with no parking facility. I walk to the shops from home"

"I own and pay insurance and tax to drive wherever I like. Not to sit on my driveway!"

"I park in the car park as I'm a resident"

"I park in the carpark as I don't have parking at home"

"I walk to town from home"

"I will walk if I feel able to, and used to cycle when in better health"

"I'm 1.1 miles away, so 1-hour plus round trip to 'pop' into town. Wish there were more local facilities to avoid having to travel into town"

"If you're going to the cinema I don't want to walk home late at night"

"Lack of public transport"

"No one wants to walk or use public transport. If you can get over the fact that most of the population want to drive and work on that basis you will have made a good start"

"No other options - I commute from Ipswich but have to take dog to dog day care on route"

"No public transport available"

"No reliable daily public transport since 2020 - only option is to drive"

"Poor public transport, buses"

"Require access my car for work related travel between home visits"

"Safety at night or something heavy to carry"

"Shift work"

"There are no buses from home to Stowmarket"

"Too hilly!"

"Train too expensive for a family"

"We also tend to travel elsewhere after visits so its convenience when trying to pack lots into a day"

“We walk when we can, but my wife has cancer, so we need the car for food shopping or when I play tennis”

“With 2 young children, it is safer/easier to drive from Onehouse”

“In answer to previous questions, I use various car parks not just Asda, I also park for different reasons and different times. Your space for giving answers do not allow for giving honest answers”

“Live in Ipswich - have a shop in Bury Street but also do customer measures enroute so train is not an option”

“Pavement parking in Creting Road West prevents walking to town”

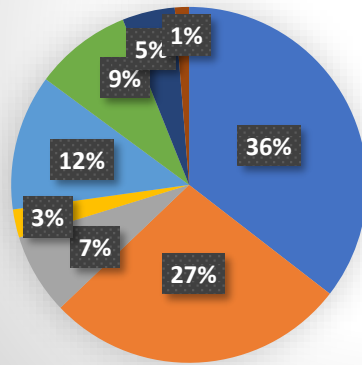
“Pregnancy/young children”

Question 13

In terms of alternative transport into Stowmarket, have you heard of the Rural Connect service or the Mid Suffolk Taxi Bus service, and would you consider using them?

Options	Responses	%
I haven't heard of them, and I'm not interested	193	35.5
I have heard of both but wouldn't use them	149	27.4
I have heard of Mid Suffolk Taxi Bus but wouldn't consider using it	40	7.4
I have heard of Rural Connect but wouldn't consider using it	14	2.6
I haven't heard of either but would consider using them	67	12.3
I have heard of both and would consider using them	48	8.8
I have heard of Mid Suffolk Taxi Bus and would consider using it	26	4.8
I have heard of Rural Connect and would consider using it	7	1.3
	544	100.0

In terms of alternative transport into Stowmarket, have you heard of the Rural Connect service or the Mid Suffolk Taxi Bus service, and would you consider using them?

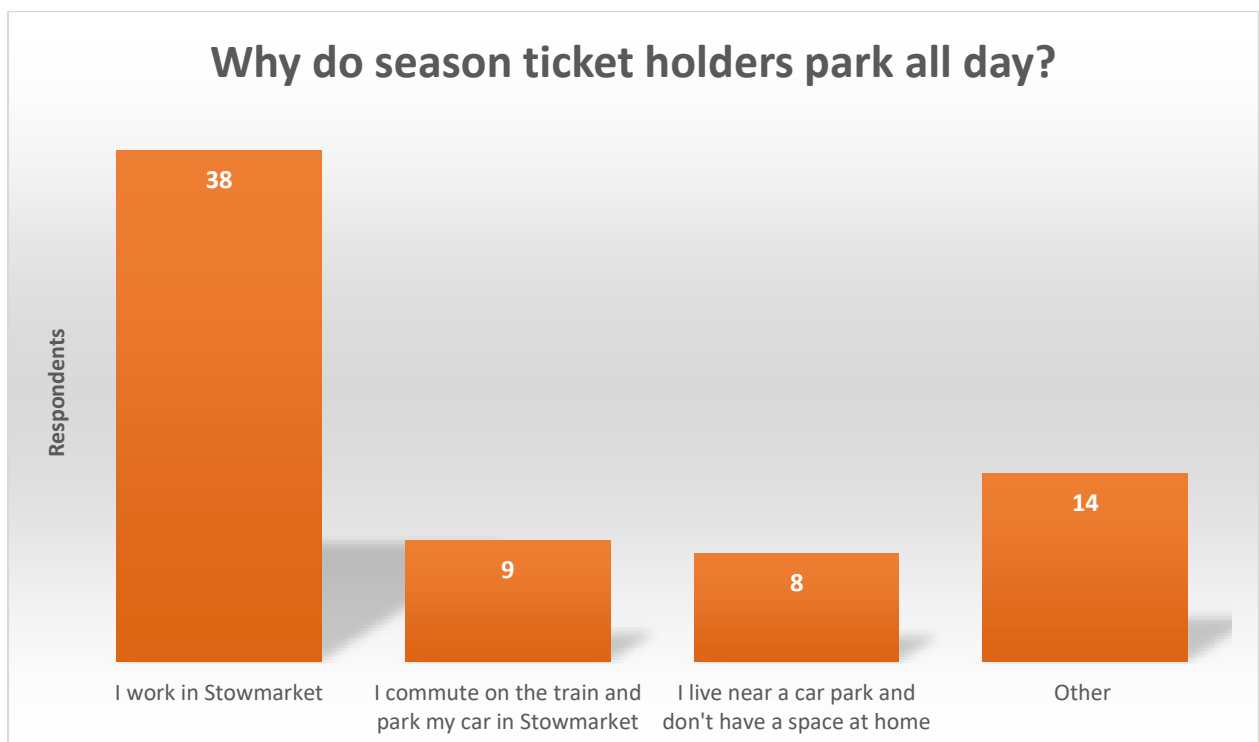


- I haven't heard of them and I'm not interested
- I have heard of both but wouldn't use them
- I have heard of Mid Suffolk Taxi Bus but wouldn't consider using it
- I have heard of Rural Connect but wouldn't consider using it
- I haven't heard of either but would consider using them
- I have heard of both and would consider using them
- I have heard of Mid Suffolk Taxi Bus and would consider using it

Question 14 (Season Ticket holders only)

Why do you park all day on a regular basis?

Options	Responses	%
No response (question not applicable)	442	86.5
I work in Stowmarket	38	7.4
I commute on the train and park my car in Stowmarket	9	1.8
I live near a car park and don't have a space at home	8	1.6
Other	14	2.7
	511	100.0



Other responses

“I live near the station and don’t have parking at home”

“Sometimes I need to go to stow”

What happens next?

Thank you to everyone who participated in this survey. The results are a great contribution to our review of the car parks in Stowmarket and will help us to make decisions about how to make improvements to the car parking provision.

The car park review will also feature the following:

- Current car park provision
- Car park data
- Parking enforcement
- Blue Badge parking
- Electric Vehicle charging
- Sustainable and Active transport
- Car park leases and restrictions
- The National Parking Platform (NPP)
- The Mid Suffolk District Council Parking Strategy 2024-2042
- Residents Parking

The car park review will make recommendations for changes where appropriate and will be presented to councillors.

Thank you.