



Knowle Parking Survey 2022

Businesses and residents were asked a series of questions related to parking in Knowle during October 2022

Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Forum, Visit Knowle and The Knowle Society compiled the survey and collated results from 77 business respondents and 334 residents

Background

Knowle consists of a range of businesses including 46 retailers, 29 hospitality businesses, 24 health and beauty businesses (some of which are separate businesses within one commercial unit) and at least 75 other businesses. The majority of businesses are independent, with many owned or managed by local people.

Visit Knowle monitors vacant rates, sharing our data with Springboard in a quarterly basis. We count the number of ground floor units in the centre of Knowle and classify them as multiple (five or more premises) or independent (less than 5 premises). As of 3rd October, Knowle has a higher than average vacancy rate, or 15% with 19 empty units.

Our survey was circulated to Knowle businesses and attracted a 45% response rate representing 77 businesses

A separate resident survey attracted 334 responses, of which 64% live in Knowle, 16% live in Dorridge, 5% live in Bentley Heath.

Representatives from key stakeholder groups met Solihull Council's Highways team to review the centre of Knowle

	Ground floor Occupied Units	Ground Floor Vacant Units
Vacancy Rates		
Independent	86	19
Multiple	26	
Grand Total	112	19
Vacant Units		15%

Mix of Businesses	Business Count	Independent Count	Count of survey respondents	% Independent	Representing % mix of businesses
Food & Drink	28	23	11	82%	16%
Health and Beauty	24	21	10	88%	14%
Professional Services	75	56	30	75%	43%
Retail	46	35	28	76%	26%
Accommodation	1	1	1	100%	1%
Grand Total	174	136		78%	

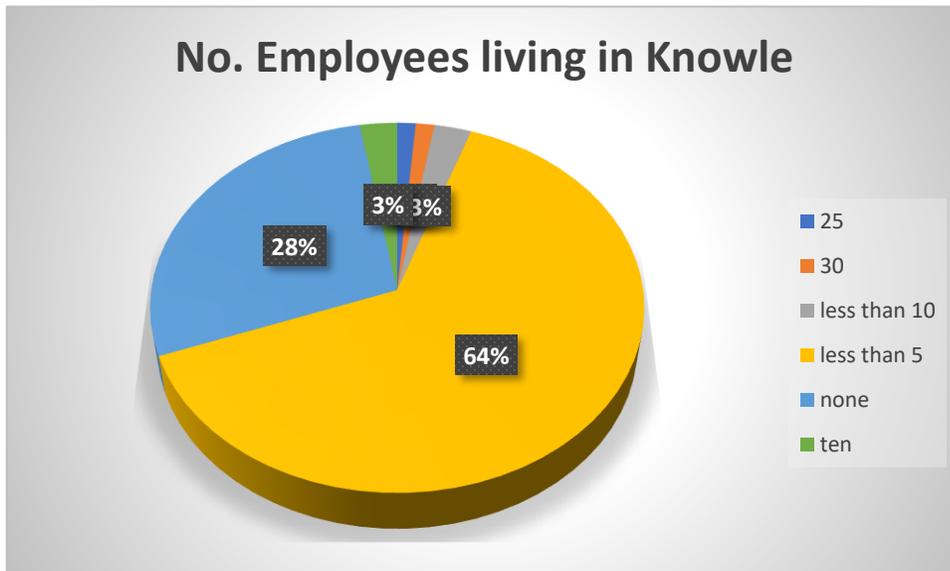
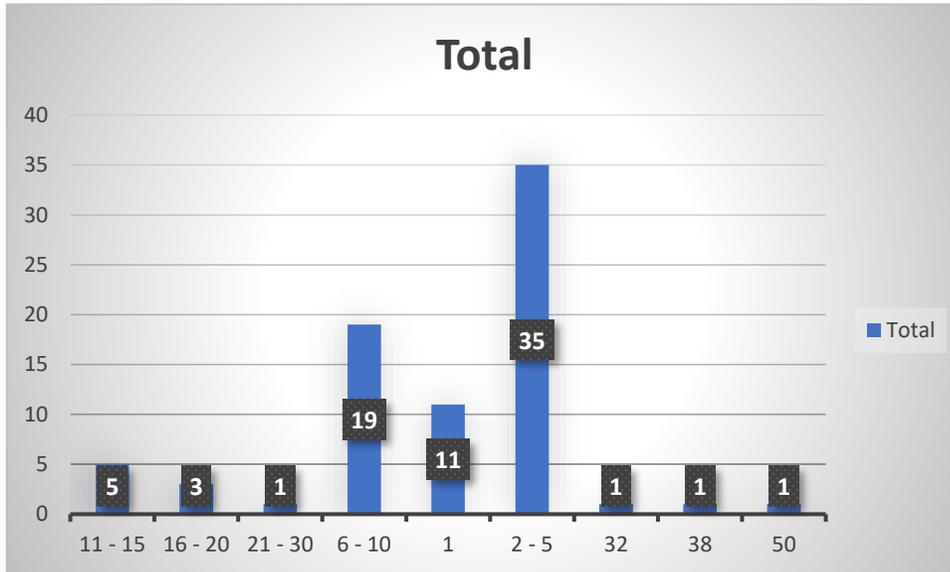
Current parking requirements for businesses

46 business respondents have between 1 and 5 employees

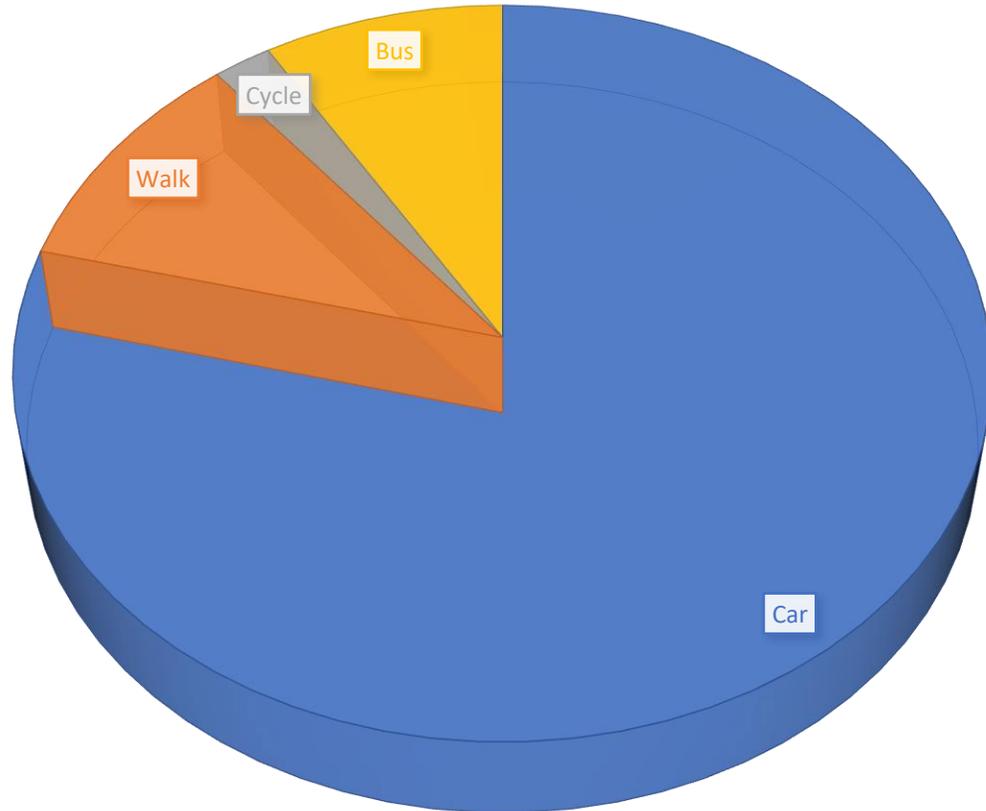
19 respondents have between 6 and 10 employees

3 respondents employ over 30 people

28% respondents have no employees who reside in Knowle



Businesses: How many of your employees commute by....



How employees come to Knowle

Out of all the businesses responding representing 575 employees...

A total of 370 people commute to work by car (68%)

A total of 48 people walk to work (9%)

A total of 10 people cycle to work (2%)

41 employees travel on public transport to work (8%)

Businesses: Access to private parking



Total Employees	Parking requirements for employees	Parking Requirements for clients	Access to private parking
545	288	500	197

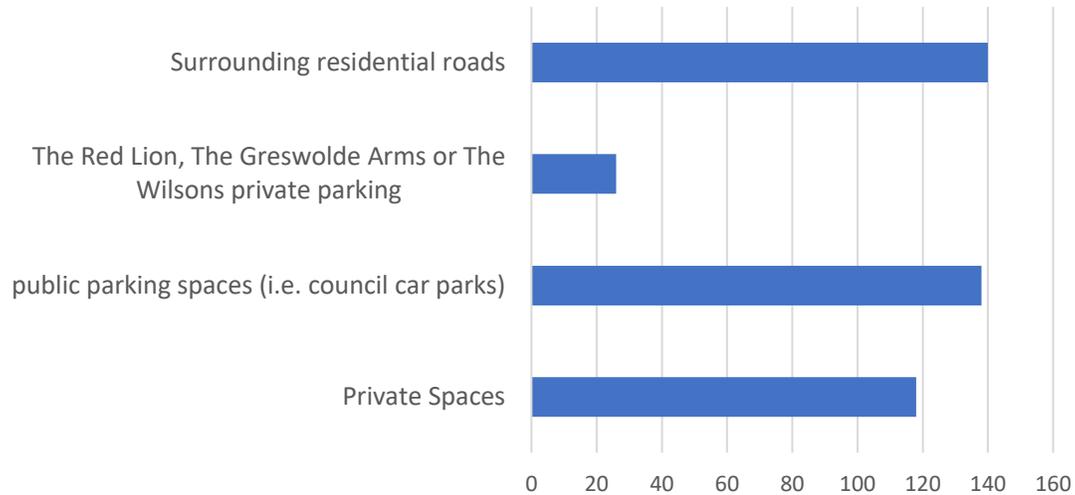
Access to private parking for employees

Of the businesses who responded, there were 197 private parking spaces identified.

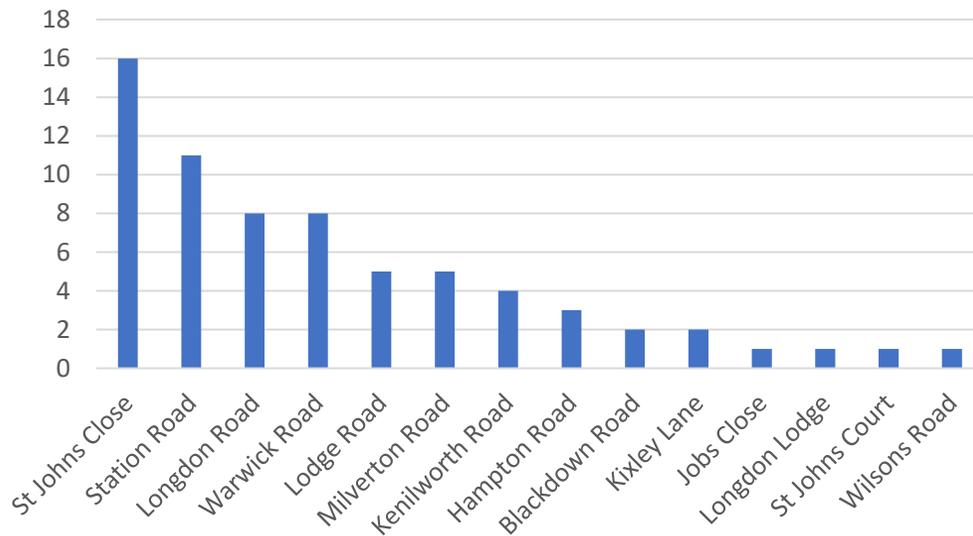
There are 91 additional employees that commute to work by car than private parking spaces supplied

77% of businesses responded that they had insufficient private parking in Knowle

Businesses: How many employees regularly use.....



Residential Roads Used



Where employees park

A small number of employees utilise private car parks such as The Red Lion and The Greswolde Arms

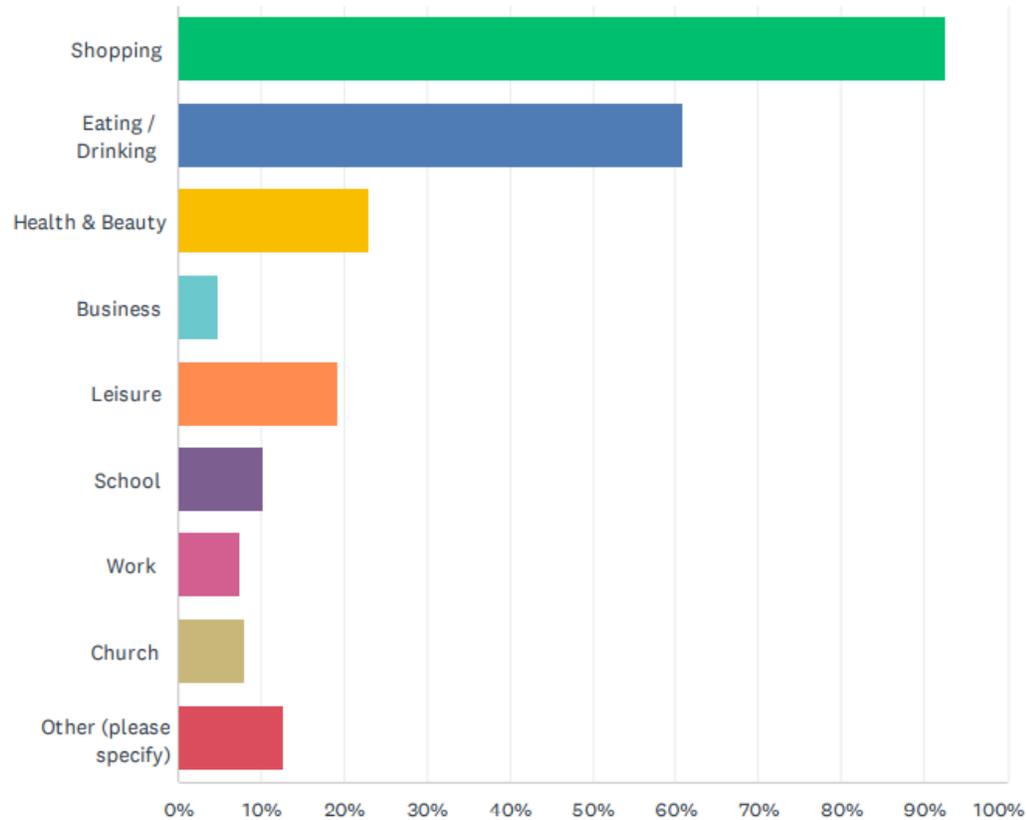
24% of employees use council car parks

24% of employees park in surrounding residential roads

St Johns Close, Station Road, Longdon Road, Warwick Road, Lodge Road and Milverton Road were the roads most frequently named as roads employees park in

Visitors: What are the main purposes of your visits (tick all that apply)

Answered: 334 Skipped: 0



Why people visit Knowle

Over 90% of respondents come into Knowle for shopping.

Over 60% of visitors come to eat and drink while over 20% visit for health and beauty.

Less than 5% come to do business, although businesses make up 40% of the commercial outlets.

22 respondents visit Knowle as it's the closest place to shop and an additional 10 say they come to support local

11 respondents choose Knowle due to the choice of independents

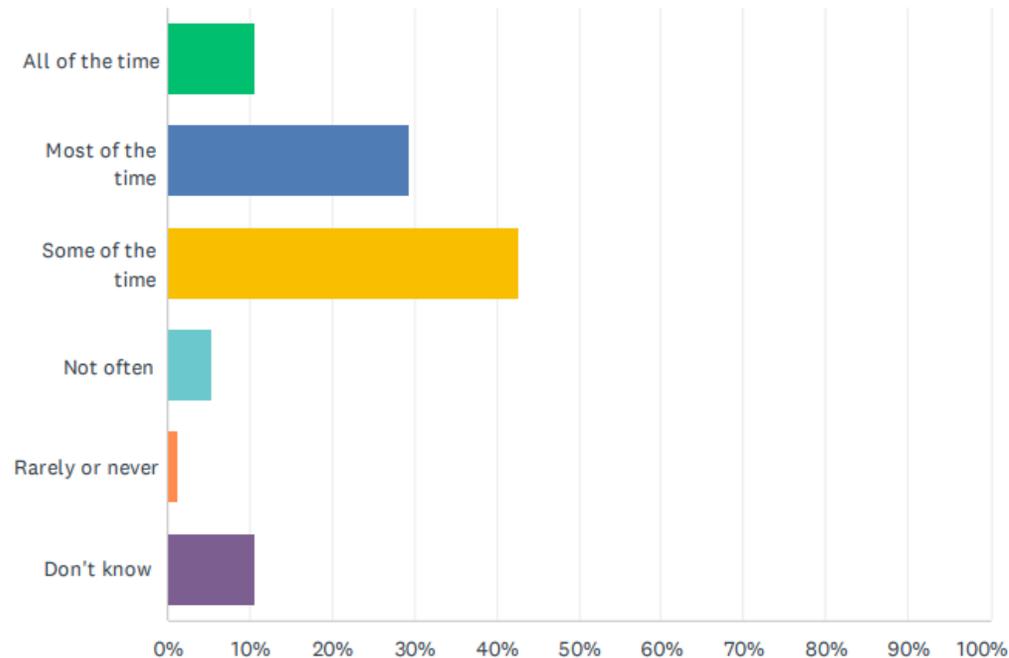
Not many people listed community events as a reason to come to Knowle

Footfall Drivers include:

Tesco, Chemist, Butchers, Library, charity shops (donating & shopping), entertainment (meeting friends, walking, classes, keep fit, shows) the bakers and children's clubs

Businesses: Do your clients stay in Knowle for other purposes before or after seeing you?

Answered: 75 Skipped: 2



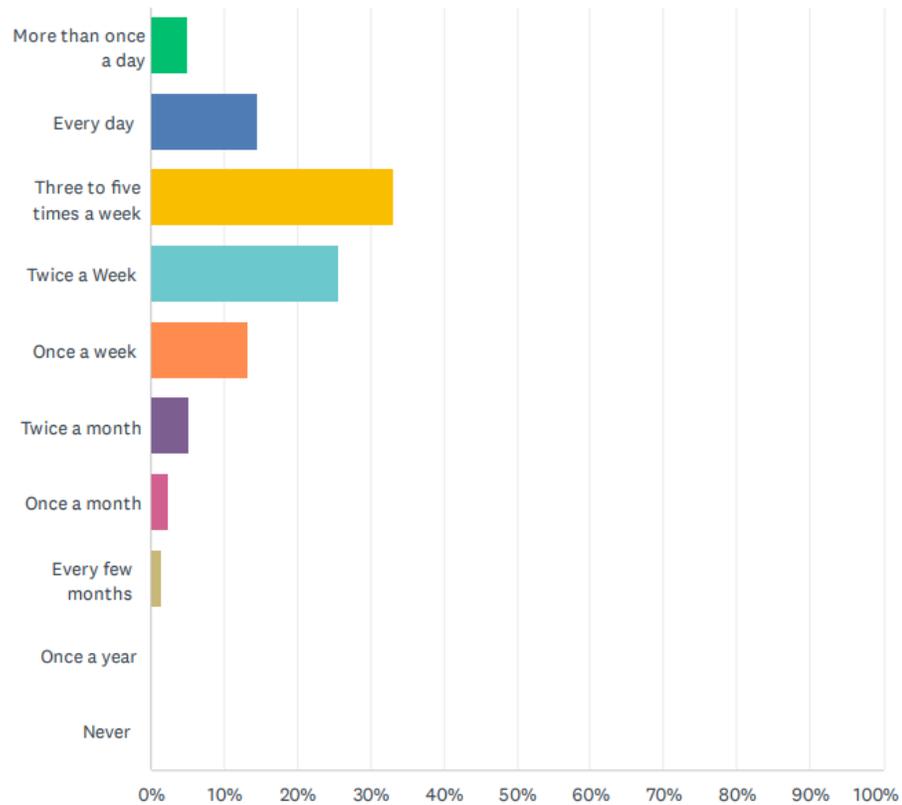
Why people visit Knowle

11% of businesses reported their visitors staying in Knowle for other purposes as part of their visit all the time

30% of businesses reported their visitors staying in Knowle for other purposes most of the time

Visitors: On average, how often do you come to the centre of Knowle?

Answered: 333 Skipped: 1



How often visitors come to Knowle

Over 50% of respondents come into Knowle more than twice a week

How visitors get to Knowle

A third of respondents walk to Knowle three times a week or more.

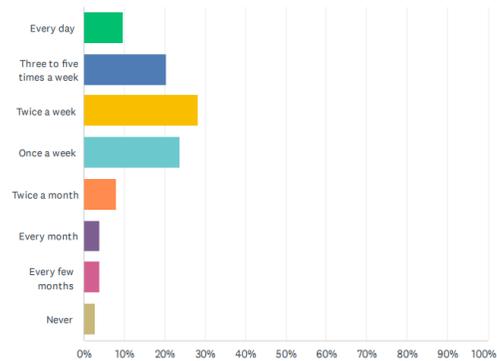
57% of respondents use their car to get to Knowle more than twice a week.

The majority of respondents never cycle to Knowle, with only 24 respondents indicating they cycle every few months.

Only a handful of respondents use public transport to get into Knowle, with only 8 saying they use the bus at least once a month.

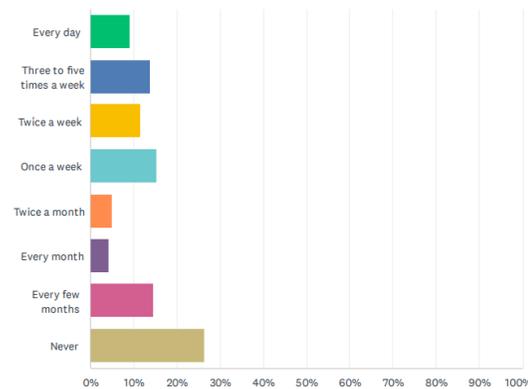
Q4 How often do you get to Knowle by car?

Answered: 331 Skipped: 3



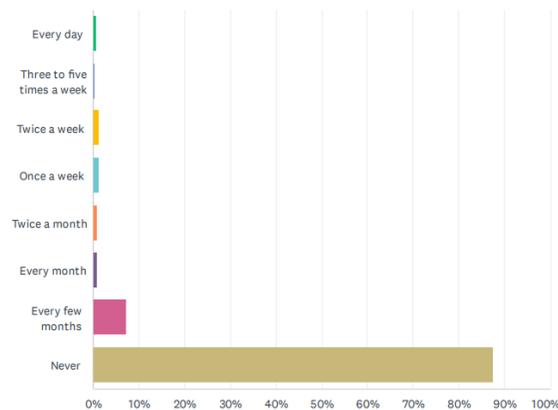
Q5 How often do you get to Knowle by foot?

Answered: 330 Skipped: 4



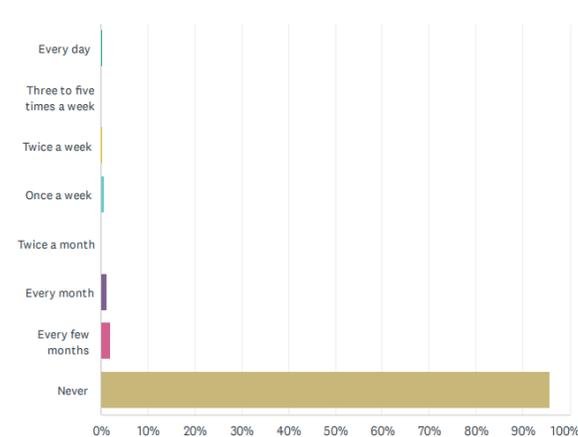
Q6 How often do you get to Knowle by bike?

Answered: 328 Skipped: 6



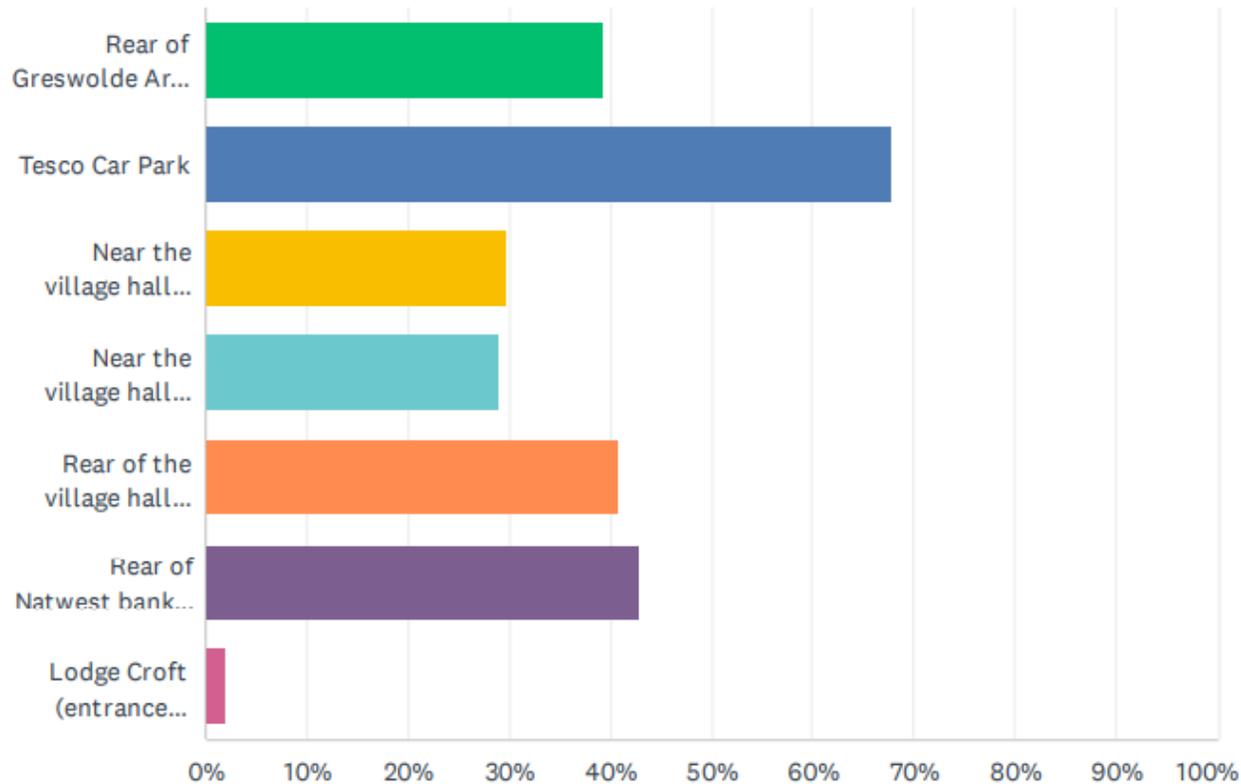
Q7 How often do you get to Knowle by bus?

Answered: 325 Skipped: 9



Visitors: Which car parks do you use most regularly?

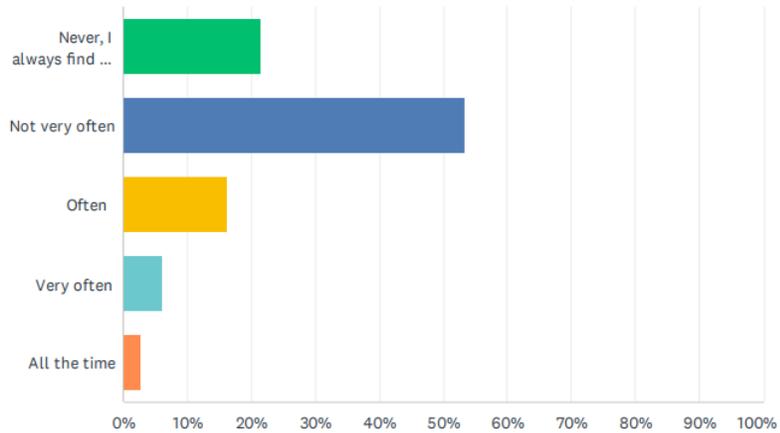
Answered: 324 Skipped: 10



Car Park usage by visitors

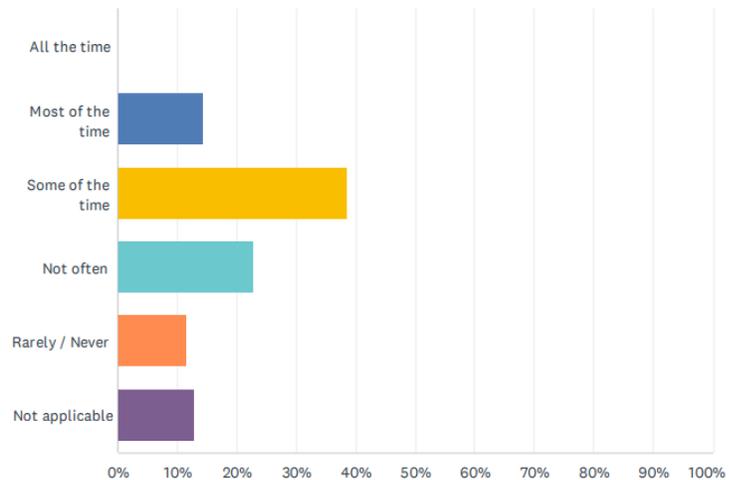
Car parks are reasonably evenly used, with the exception of Tesco Car Park which is used most regularly, and the (we think less known) Lodge Croft car park used least regularly.

Visitors: how often do you fail to find a parking space in the first car park you try?



Businesses: how often are your clients late due to parking?

Answered: 70 Skipped: 7



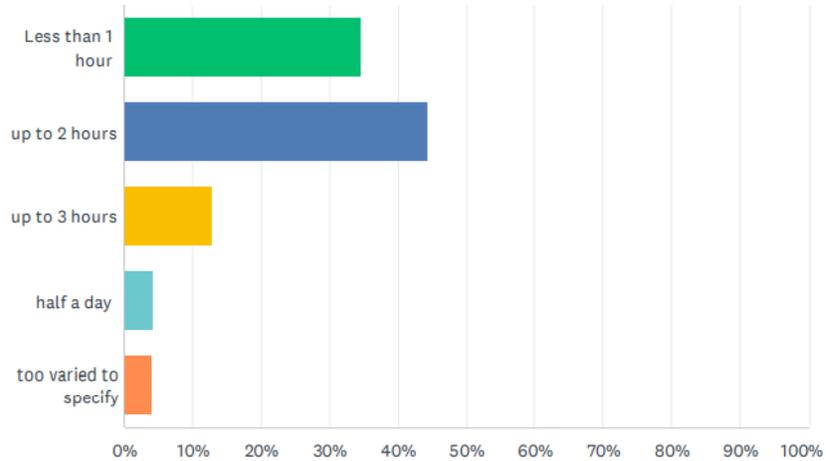
Ease of finding parking spaces for visitors

25% of resident respondents fail to find a car parking space “often,” “very often” or “all the time”

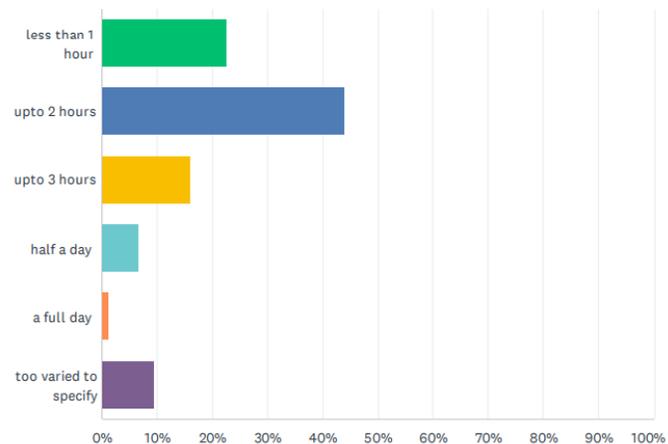
Almost 15% of businesses stated that clients were late most of the time due to parking with 39% of businesses reporting parking blamed for lateness some of the time

Visitors: On average, how long do you need to park in Knowle during the day (not inc. evenings after 6pm or Sundays)?

Answered: 327 Skipped: 7



Businesses: Tell us, on average, how long your clients require parking to use your services



Duration of visit

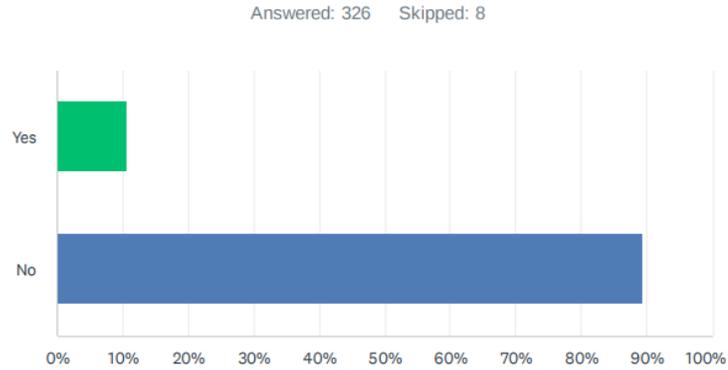
The majority of respondents require parking for less than 2 hours. Only 20% of respondents require parking for over 2 hours.

67% of businesses reported that clients needed 2 hours or less to use their services

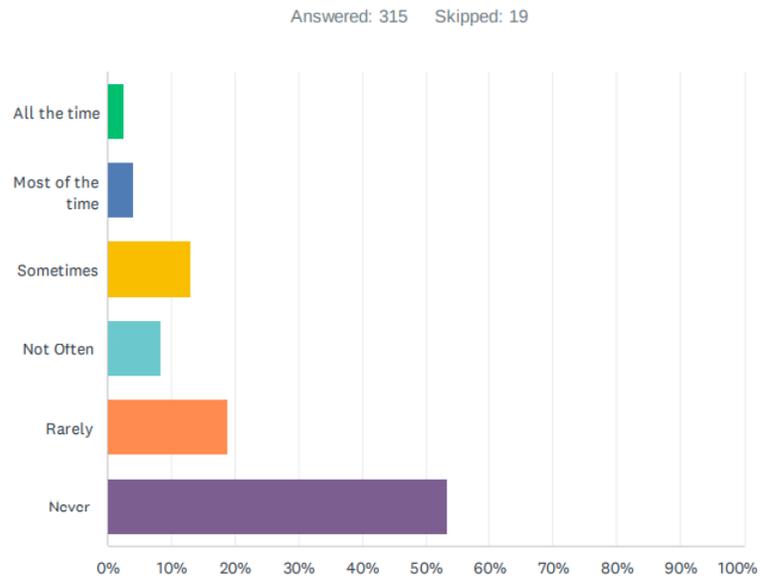
16% of businesses reported that up to 3 hours is required

Most respondents don't overrun their parking time, and if they do, it's for less than 10 minutes

Visitors: Have you ever utilised private parking spaces such as at The Wilsons Arms, The Greswolde or Red Lion other than for use of those premises?



Visitors: If you haven't found a parking space in Knowle, how frequency have you parked on nearby roads or places (such as Knowle park or a friend's drive?)

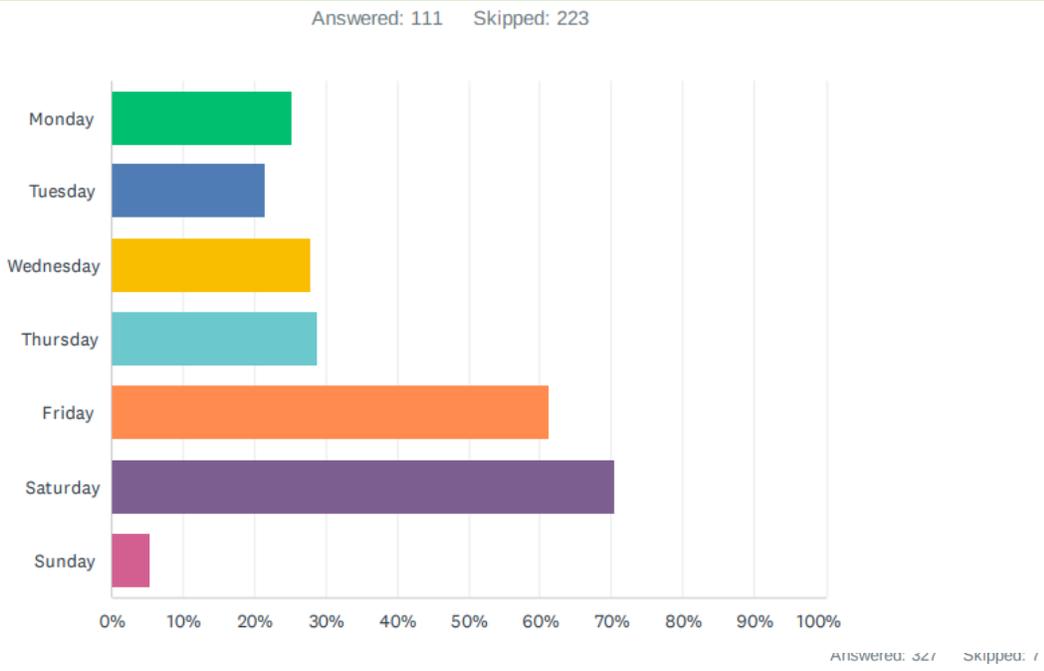


Where visitors park

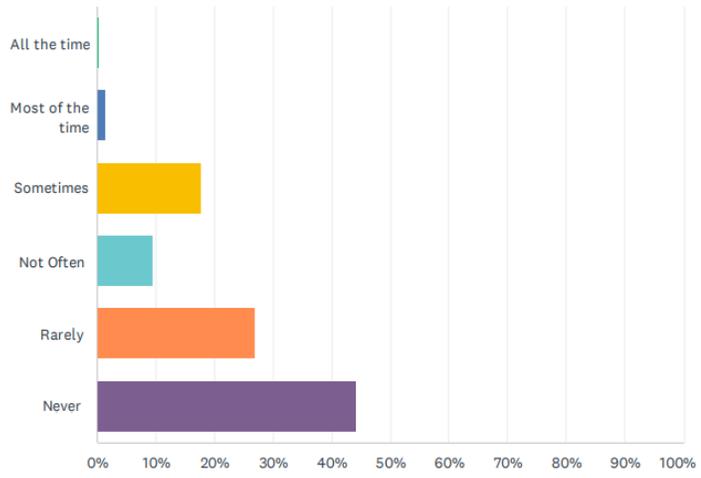
90% of respondents do not use private car parks unless they are using the facilities

Almost 20% of respondents park in residential roads at least some of the time

Visitors: Are there days of the week you struggle to park?



Visitors: How frequently have you abandoned a trip to Knowle due to lack of parking?



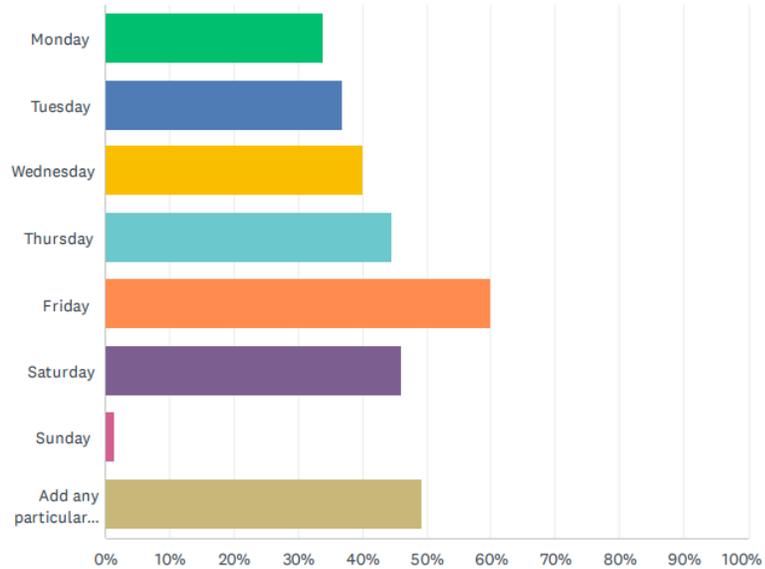
Problems parking visitors see

60% of respondents stated they struggle to park on Fridays and 70% stated they struggled to park on Saturdays.

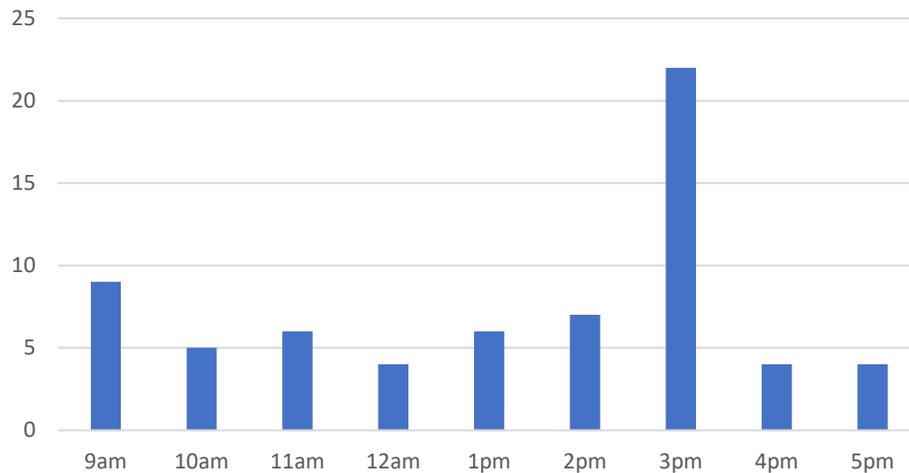
This reflects what anecdotally we see in terms of activities in the village.

17% of respondents sometimes abandon their trip to Knowle due to lack of parking

Businesses: Are there any days or times of the week when parking is particularly challenging?



Problematic times to park



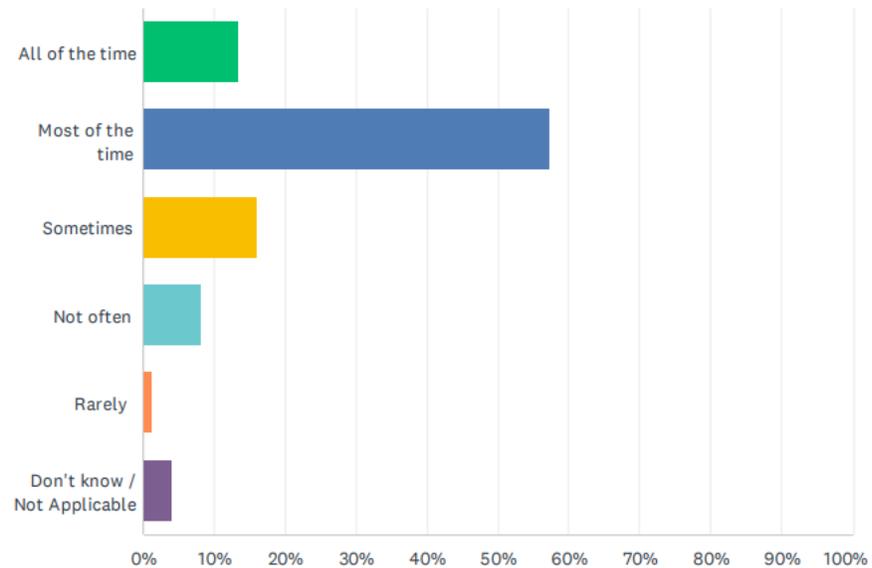
Problems parking businesses see

Friday is the day most frequently noted for difficulty in parking

Businesses reported school times were most problematic times for parking, particularly at the end of the school day

Businesses: Can your clients regularly access parking spaces in Knowle?

Answered: 75 Skipped: 2

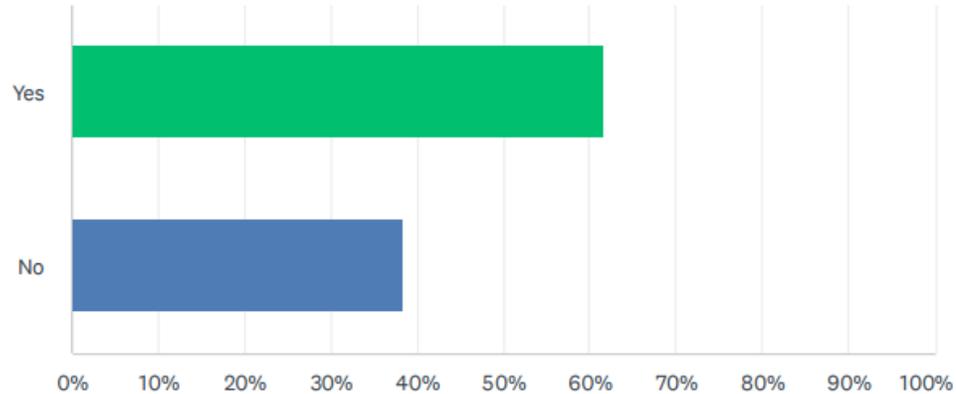


Client feedback

16% of businesses reported that clients struggled to park some of the time

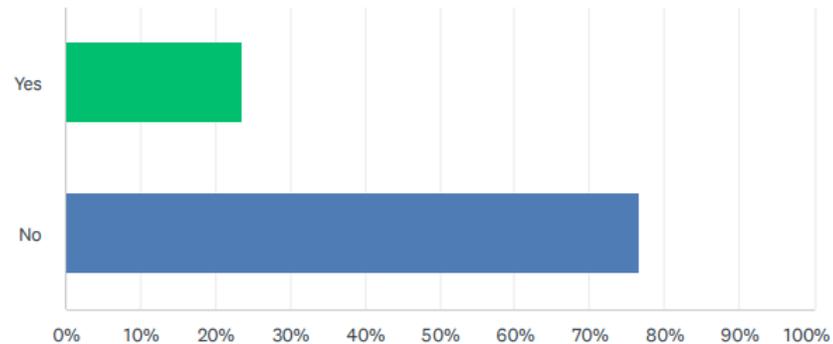
Visitors: Do you think Knowle needs additional parking spaces?

Answered: 320 Skipped: 14



Businesses: Is there a sufficient number of spaces in Knowle?

Answered: 77 Skipped: 0



Parking capacity in Knowle

Over 60% of residents responding stated that they think Knowle needs additional parking spaces

76% of business respondents said there is insufficient parking in Knowle

Comments on long stay provision for workers	Frequency
make it easier and cheaper for workers to park in Knowle so they don't park in residential streets	1
make long stay car park on land opposite Milverton Rd	1
Milverton Road used by workers, impacting access to residents.	1
need affordable parking for workers	2
need long stay parking to stop workers parking in residential roads	9
parking in St Johns Close makes it awkward for residents	1
remove parking restrictions off Station Road to allow residents to park	1
understand it's difficult for workers	1
Grand Total	16

Comments on Design of Car Parks	Frequency
spaces too tight	31
Issues on Longdon Road / Lodge Road	9
inefficient design	5
spaces are too tight leading to incidents	5
more blue badge provision needed	4
access and exit are tricky	2
more parent / child spaces please	2
No return in 2 hours creates difficulty	2
pointless getting a ticket for 5 - 10 minutes	2
better facilities required (in sympathy with village centre)	1
could we use ANPR for parking	1
easier road access as it gets very congested	1
Issues on Longdon Road / Lodge Road and Station Road	1
It's shocking and puts me off going there	1
its all very easy	1
Make cycling on station road safer then less need for car	1
need larger car parks too many tiny car parks	1
need parent / child spaces	1
no buses from Bentley Heath	1
no return for 2 hours forces me onto residential roads	1
parked cars in road blocks visibility getting out of car parks around Tesco	1

Feedback from residents

There were some suggestions to use green spaces to ease parking, or to relocate cycle hire. One respondent said to leave green spaces alone

There is recognition of the need for parking for workers in Knowle to ease the impact of parking issues on surrounding roads

Almost 10% of respondents commented about the size of spaces, with a few noting the frequency of damage to cars

Traffic flow, visibility and general issues related to parks cars on St Johns Close, Longdon Road and Lodge Road was a frequent comment

There were requests to increase accessible parking for blue badge holders and parents

Feedback on parking	
Cars get damaged on residential roads	3
Customers clients rushing due to parking period	1
Don't utilise St Johns Close	1
EV parking spaces under utilised	1
Free - discounted parking for workers please	3
High Street doesn't look inviting	1
Insufficient parking at peak times	1
Lack of enforcement	1
Make parking machines easier	1
More spaces would encourage more visitors	1
Need more free parking	1
No Return causes issues	1
Parking permits for workers please	1
Spaces too tight	1
use St Johns green	1

“The parking in Knowle is not sufficient enough for businesses, over the last 5 years I have known of over 8 employees working for us that have had their car keyed for parking on St Johns Close, which rules out this road as a parking option.”

“parking is very limited and the restrictions aren't long enough to meet people's needs. residents use spaces that aren't residential, so employees struggle to park. if employees have ever parked on a residential road at least a 15/20 min walk from the business premises they have had their cars scratched and vandalised, nasty notes left.”

“We need to have additional parking for the busy times and definitely a lot more when they plan to redevelop certain areas and build all the new houses that are being proposed“

“Could do with more spaces...our customers always say they had to park far away or have to rush in and out so are unable to really look at all of our products through fear of getting a ticket so don't spend as much time as they would like to buy things in our shop”.

“We need more as a village to attract more custom especially at peak times, people will go elsewhere if they cannot park easily and get their groceries, coffee and shop”

Feedback from businesses on parking

Businesses have reported damage to employees and clients cars when parked on residential roads

Some businesses called for free or discounted rates for employee parking

A number of comments centred around the need to increase parking capacity

Comments capacity	Count of Capacity
additional parking needed due to developments	25
need more spaces	17
good provision	14
I select to visit outside of peak hours	7
encourage more active travel	4
Improved since Covid	4
I go elsewhere when I can't park	2
there's too much parking on side roads	2
create residents parking in St Johns Close	1
Don't reduce parking	1
eased since Sainsbury in Dorridge opened	1
I would come more often if parking was available	1
if there was adequate parking there wouldn't be parking restrictions on neighbouring roads	1
improved since parking charges	1
It's sufficient most of the time.	1
It's crap I go to Dorridge instead	1
just about adequate but busy when school or church activities	1
Keep the car parks we have.	1
less parking encourages walking but what about visitors further away	1
need a multi storey car park	1
need better bus services	1
Not enough for existing residents, always parked cars along road, creating a one way problem with traffic flow	1
on street parking (Longdon Rd, Milverton Rd, Lodge Rd, St Johns Close) are causing problems	1
people park anywhere, and inconsiderately on St Johns Close	1
Rarely shop in Knowle due to difficult parking	1
require school drop off points	1
residential roads are used due to parking charges	1
school times are busy	1
There are a lot of elderly people who live here , and need to drive into the village to shop , and can't carry shopping home so they do need transport	1
Too many people park on roads in the village centre which makes both driving and walking more dangerous	1
too many restrictions on roads	1
would support more parking if it is difficult at peak times and impacts local businesses	1
consider permits for residents	1
could have spaces	1
Grand Total	101

Feedback from residents on spaces required

40% of people who left comments suggested extra spaces are needed

- A number of people said we needed additional spaces now
- 25 people believe there will be insufficient parking when the precinct is developed and when additional housing is introduced
- A number of comments were made about the impact of parking on residential streets
- A few people remarked that pre-pandemic parking levels have not yet been returned

Some visitors elect to visit outside of peak hours

“When collecting prescription I frequently have to return because Pharmacy not prepared the medication. They do not understand that the 'no return within 2 hours' rule prevents me from returning and delays collection.”

“Too annoying searching for car parking space”.

“Knowle is a pleasant village but has let standards slip over time I don't come as often now as there is nothing but empty shops”

“I think the 2 hr free parking is fair. When it was reduced to an hour that was very difficult to manage. Bringing forward end of charging period at end of day to say 4pm might make it easier for evening visitors. Until it feels safer to cycle on Station Rd, I will not feel encouraged to cycle to Knowle, which I'd really like to do.”

Parking on St John's Close approaching Lodge Road is dangerous. There need to be more restrictions on the left hand corner because this is currently a blind spot

“Arrows need redoing on Tesco and other car park as people are now frequently coming in the exit”

“I love coming to Knowle as it has that Village feel, I live in Hampton-In-Arden so it is my nearest place to shop.”

“We need to redevelop KNOWLE desperately and if needed than more parking can be provided in St John. Making an attractive an thriving village is more important than parking concerns”

“Your survey seems to fail to capture those who drive into the village with no intention of using the car parks yet clog up the side road. Arden School 6th Form students, posties working at the sorting office parking around St Johns close, Barclays and Nursery Staff on the Warwick Road / Milverton Road. This is before the high number of properties in central Knowle which already do not have off street parking, St Johns Close, Station Road from Arden to Phonlik house, Flats above the hight street / precinct.”

Feedback from residents on parking

Residents and businesses commented that cycle lanes were insufficient to make cycling an option in Knowle. Station Road and Warwick Road were both cited as roads

Comments suggested parking in residential roads by students and workers was a concern

There are concerns about visibility and traffic flow on Lodge Road / Longdon Road

Parking Views	Count
Just right /about right / fair / ok	175
Should be free	31
against charges	13
should be 3 hours	12
need discounts for workers	9
I would spend more if....longer free period / more spaces	8
too expensive	8
Impacts residential roads	5
cheaper in Shirley	3
Any higher charges and I won't shop in Knowle	2
residents should have permit	2
should be free longer	2
1st hour should be free	1
2 hours for Station Road please	1
apple pay please	1
charges are low - are they necessary?	1
charges could be detrimental to businesses	1
Encourage active travel	1
good to promote active travel	1
I will not park to pay in the village	1
I'd pay if not too expensive	1
Inconvenient for quick visit	1
Inevitable	1
It's free which is brilliant	1
Make 1st hour free then reasonable charge	1
Need a multi storey	1
need at least 2 hours	1
Never stay long enough	1
Parking charges have made it easier to park	1
should be able to extend it	1
Should have free parking	1
would like 1/2 hour more	1

"I think 2-3 hours free is perfect, keeps parking available for shoppers and visitors, allows a lunch etc but stops carpark a being full all day, makes more spaces available. Having app parking would be good as you could extend easily if running late."

Feedback from residents on parking charges

52% of people think current charges are right

13% of respondents think parking should be free

Some respondents think the free period should be extended

Some respondents think workers should get a discount / permit

Some respondents gave free parking as the reason they come to Knowle

Some respondents would like to access a parking app to pay / extend stays

Parking Charges Comments	Count of Reponses
Awful	1
Discouraging	1
Fair	32
Need longer free period	6
Shirley has 3 hours	1
Should be free	3
Too much	10
Unnecessary	1
Workers need parking	1

Costs me over £16 to park a week..due to my work.

“the parking charges for a full-time worker is £4.00 a day, £20 a week, £80 a month and £960 a year. with the cost of living for ever on the rise it is making it more difficult to keep full time workers as they can't afford travel costs and parking costs. I have previously worked in Birmingham city centre and as a business we were given discounted parking from NCP car parks. maybe this could be an option to help.”

“Our customers use to be happier with 3 hours free parking as they would have time to walk around the shops and grab a coffee. Customers don’t have as much time to spend in the shop as they use when they had 3 hours free parking.”

“Not happy as it puts people off coming for the service, but also challenging to recruit.”

Feedback from businesses on parking charges

The majority of businesses think the parking charges are fair.

Many believe 2 hours is sufficient and helps turnover of visitors to Knowle.

Some businesses suggested increasing the free period to 3 hours or more

10 respondents stated that parking was too expensive



Highways Audit

Some signage require cleaning / replacement

Clearer information on parking and regarding the parking app is required

Fingerpost signage is faded and difficult to read

Some signage is missing

Attractiveness of car parks to be enhanced, including reducing overgrown planting

Some litter bins require repair

Walkway requires levelling at Swan Yard

Lighting in public car parks, particularly behind the Greswolde Arms could be improved



Conclusions

- The economic sustainability of Knowle is at risk due to the lack of sufficient parking in Knowle. Visitors and businesses state dwell time could increase if parking was improved.
- Broadly speaking, parking charges seem “about right”
- Parking on residential roads is an issue, caused due to insufficient private parking for employees and driven by employees finding all day parking fees too expensive
- Parking in Knowle at peak times, particularly on Fridays and Saturdays can be problematic, leading to some visitors electing to shop elsewhere
- Respondents are concerned that there will be insufficient parking when the precinct development is completed, and when additional housing as part of the Neighbourhood Plan are occupied
- While active travel is important to people, most employees travel to Knowle by car. Public transport and cycle routes are insufficient to encourage more people to switch
- Out of 30 businesses who attended a meeting regarding parking, there was significant concern regarding the impact on parking during the development of the precinct. A mitigation plan to minimise disruption to visitors and businesses is vital.
- The collective representative bodies of B93 would welcome a meeting to discuss options with the Council as it is clear from these results that there are parking issues now, that will only be exacerbated by the development of the precinct and new houses.

Successful Outcomes would be...

The revitalisation of the commercial centre in Knowle, with increased visitors and dwell time

The creation of circa 50 additional car parking spaces in Knowle

The creation of a parking area for employees in Knowle

Improved access and traffic flow around the car parks in Knowle through a strategic review of how the current small car parks can be integrated together, and reconfigured to maximise spaces and to cater for wider cars

Review of public space on St Johns Close green, considering utilizing some of it for parking, and enhancing the remaining green as a place to dwell

Consider traffic flow in Knowle and model impact of creating one-way systems around St John's Close and Lodge Road

Public transport provision to be assessed for Knowle to aid employee recruitment and to reduce parking

To increase attractiveness of the village and to create a zone where visitors and dwell, we propose exploring a trial to close the one way section of St Johns Close – from the High Street to the Daawat. This would necessitate considering optimal access to a private car park accessed from St Johns Close. As part of the assessment, the impact of traffic on surrounding roads should be monitored

Parking provision outside of the centre to be created for contractors involved with the precinct development