

Clapham Common Access for All Consultation Report:

Lambeth Council, Buro Happold, Disability Advice Service Lambeth



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Summary

During Summer 2023 we worked to assess the priorities for improvement within Clapham Common in order to provide better access for Disabled people. We were grateful to the 117 people who either responded to our surveys or attended our focus groups and shared their opinions. The majority of this report explores the needs of these people in their own words. Below, is a brief summary of the over-riding issues.

Benches and Seating:

There was extensive discussion of how busy the Common is at peak times, and how this makes it hard for a Disabled person who needs a seat quickly to sit down. Ideas were discussed around signage and information to help prioritise the needs of people with disabilities and illnesses. More benches are needed.

Ponds and Nature

Many respondents enjoy sitting by the ponds and observing nature. However, for many, this is difficult because of reasons cited here.

Path Surfaces and Layout

Improvements to path layout and surface was one of the most consistently mentioned areas among survey respondents, and a regular area of discussion for the focus groups. Respondents cited potholes and rough surfaces, inappropriate layout, and barriers as reasons that limited their access to the Common. We were reminded that many Disabled people cannot walk easily on grass and earth surfaces. We also received a number of comments about obstacles faced when the Common is busy, and the way this affects individual access and enjoyment here.

Toilets and Drinking Water:

The main demand was for toilets to be improved in general, for toilet cleaning and maintenance to be improved and to provide at least one modern well-designed toilet for Disabled people. There is also a need for more drinking water stations, and for better signage of existing toilets. Three respondents expressed interest in a Changing Places toilet.

Wayfinding and Signage:

While few people specifically asked for signage, it became clear from discussions that many people are not aware where there are toilets, café, and beautiful wild areas. For example, several people showed they were not aware of the bandstand, and the café and toilets adjacent. Most of the visiting Focus group knew the Long Pond, but not the two further ponds. This suggests a need for a carefully thought through Wayfinding strategy including information online and onsite.

The discussions about both paths and seats, often returned to the need to create more awareness of the needs of Disabled people, to encourage other users to offer space on already occupied benches. A 'not all impairments are visible' campaign and 'make way for those who need it' campaign would be of great benefit. However, it would need to be professionally designed to reach the thousands of people who use the Common.

Many people welcomed the idea of regular guided walks, mindfulness, history walks and similar small outdoor events designed for Disabled people and open to all. These would make it possible for Disabled people with less support to enjoy the Common, would help combat loneliness, and would help share information about different needs.

Definition of Terms

What is Disability?

Throughout this report, authors have used the Social Model of disability, as recommended by both dasl, and Buro Happold.

In the words of dasl:

We believe in the Social Model of Disability, which states that we are Disabled by barriers placed by society, rather than because of our impairments. By capitalising the D in Disabled people, we emphasise the exclusions placed on us and embrace our shared identity.

Who speaks?

We were very grateful to the many people who gave us permission to quote their opinions and experiences as Disabled people, and supporters of Disabled people. The quoted comments in this report are the most important aspect of it.

We have always done this in that person's own words, and written quotes have been transcribed exactly. This may occasionally mean unusual grammar or present a different model of disability.

Where is Clapham Common?

Clapham Common is London's one of London's biggest and oldest open spaces. The Common is mentioned as far back as the Domesday book and is now designated a 'Metropolitan Common.' The Common crosses the boroughs of Lambeth and Wandsworth, but is wholly maintained by Lambeth Council.

Clapham Common is a Site of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC) containing avenues of mature trees, three ponds used for a mixture of fishing, model boating and wildlife conservation, two woodlands, and species-rich meadows and grasslands.

The paths across the Common lead to leisure facilities including: a splendid Victorian bandstand, three cafes, toilets, two popular playgrounds, a paddling pool, skatepark and the Bandstand Beds Community Garden. It is used for a wide range of commercial and community events, including a popular summer music programme on the bandstand.

There is a vibrant voluntary sector around Clapham Common, with key partners being Clapham Common Management Advisory Partnership, Friends of Clapham Common, Bandstand Beds, and a variety of sporting and leisure groups.

Clapham Common in this document refers to the large area of open space, rather than the high street, area or tube station with the same name.

Methodology

The study took place during spring and summer 2023, setting out to find out more about the needs of Disabled people. We started with these questions:

- How do people with accessibility requirements use the Common?
- How can we improve access and experience on Clapham Common for Disabled people?
- What are the priority areas?

The research was delivered and guided by

- Buro Happold's Inclusive Design specialists: Toar Sadia and Jean Hewitt
- Lambeth Council: Hanna Radlowski and Helen Firminger
- Disability Advice Service Lambeth (dasl): Husnara Zaman and Peter Gay

Together we collected detailed information from 114 local Disabled people and carers through the following. Focus group participants were paid for their participation in these.

- Two online facilitated focus groups with five people and eleven people attending.
- One in-person guided walkabout with nine adults, and two children. An online survey filled in by 89 people.

We were very grateful for the diligence in advertising and sharing the survey and events from: dasl, Clapham Common Management Advisory Committee, Friends of Clapham Common, Bandstand Beds, and other members.


We also provided an email address for any responses outside the survey.

dasl spent additional time ensuring each member of the focus groups and walkabout was ready for the project, knew what to expect and that any additional needs they had were taken into account in preparation.

This research and stakeholder engagement study is intended to add detail on the earlier physical study of access conducted by AccessAble in 2021.

How accessible is Clapham Common?

Clapham Common is one of London's largest and oldest public green spaces.



Come to a virtual meeting and have your say on what needs to change to make the green and recreational spaces of Clapham Common more accessible for you.

We welcome all Disabled people living in Lambeth to attend.

Monday 6th February 2023, 5-6.30pm
or
Tuesday 21st February 2023, 5-6.30pm

Location: Zoom

Attendees will be rewarded for their time.

To attend, please call Nara Zaman on 07512 566 875
or email hzaman@disabilitylambeth.org.uk



BURO HAPPOLD **dasl** **Lambeth**

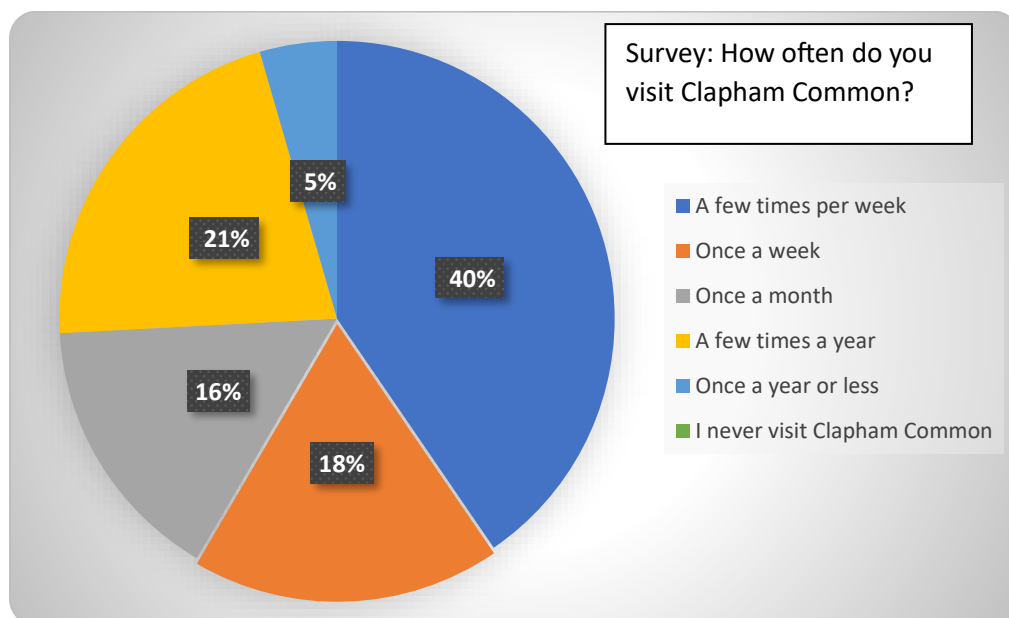
Participants

Through the focus groups, and the survey, we were grateful to receive opinions and ideas from people who experience barriers in the environment for a range of reasons, including physical impairments, visual and hearing impairments, neurodivergence, long term physical or mental illness, and aging. Over 50% of those who filled in the survey noted challenges related to mobility.

In terms of ethnicity: the survey attracted more respondents from people who defined themselves as of white British origin, at nearly 50%, a similar number to many of our online surveys. Beyond this, the responses were spread across all categories, with 18% in 'other'. The focus groups however, showed a much more mixed ethnicity,

We received slightly more responses from females (46) than males (35).

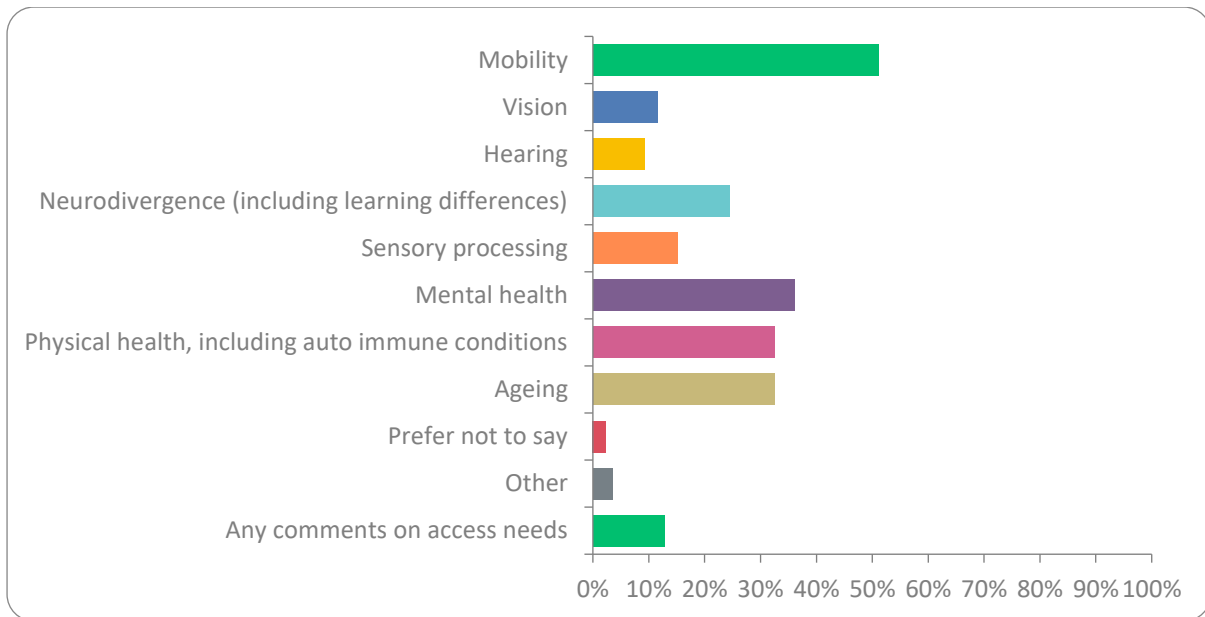
Over half the respondents lived within 15 minutes of Clapham Common, with 90% living within 30 minutes of Clapham Common. Over half the participants visit the Common at least once a week – shown below.



Of the survey respondents:

- 69 had lived experience of a variety of accessibility requirements themselves.
- 13 were parents or carers for Disabled people.
- 12 were commenting for someone in their family.
- 2 were teachers or professionals.
- 6 were interested third parties.

There were a variety of access needs presented by the survey respondents, with the largest number around mobility issues (50%), noting that many of these are not wheelchair users, but have limited range in their walking. The next largest response group was people with mental health conditions (40%), followed by physical health conditions (35%) and ageing related (35%). Users were welcome to tick more than one area, and to provide additional comments. The results are shown below.



Above: Q2, If you feel comfortable to, please tell us about your additional access requirements. Please tick all that apply.

In most of the groups and online, we asked people if they would mind telling us a little about their connection to Clapham Common and how they use it:

'It is where we gather for mental health and well-being walk and talk. Also, sometimes for the prostate cancer group to have do exercise by walking. Additionally, a fun group will meet for picnic, concerts and events.'

'Standing and walking is painful so being able to cycle through the Common is very important to me.'

'Wheelchair Basketball Sport Activities for Young Adults with Neuro Diversities and Medical Conditions'(sic)

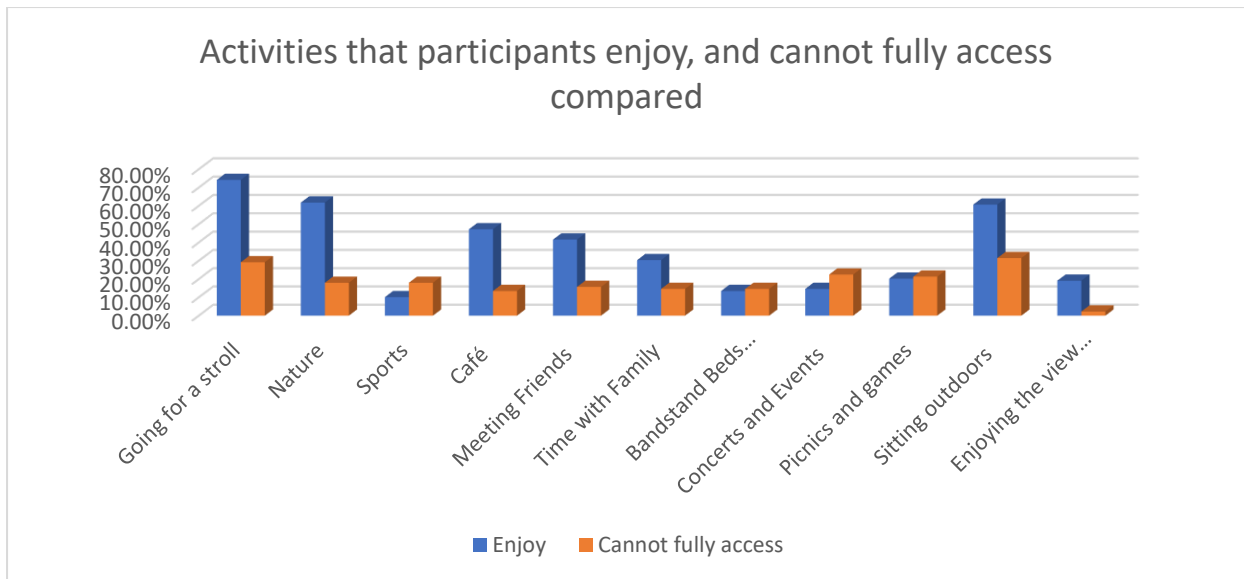
I've lived in Lambeth for over 60 years. I often take my grandchildren to Clapham Common. I work with Black Thrive and focus on issues of accessibility for blind people. I would like to visit Clapham Common more frequently than I currently can.

'I work for Lambeth council, and I have lived in Lambeth for over 10 years. I have prosthetic legs. I want to be able to use a wheelchair in Clapham Common to enjoy sunshine with friends.'

We asked survey participants to guide us on how they use the Common at present, (Please tick up to 5 and add any detail). The highest responses were for 'Going for a stroll' (74%), 'Nature' (62%), and 'Sitting outdoors' (60%).

We also used the same list to ask: Is there anything you would like to do at Clapham Common but cannot do fully for access reasons? (Please tick up to 5 and add any detail).

As can be seen in the graph below, in most cases, many more people enjoyed most areas than felt they could not fully access it. However, there were concerns in each area. On a comparative basis, there is particular concern for: sports, bandstand beds, concerts and events, picnics and games.



While the results are generally reassuring, there are areas that require improvement to provide a fully accessible experience, particularly around 'Going for a stroll', and 'Sitting outdoors'.

However, the results indicate, there is much room to improve and provide better access, ameliorate for difficulties in accessing at certain times, and signpost to areas of the Common not currently used. This would build opportunities for more independent access.

There follows below some summary details on the main areas we were asked to improve through the different discussions and the survey. Wherever relevant we have sorted responses while retaining individual's own words, to help illustrate the importance and relevance of each area of need.

Summary of all findings on access

Benches and Seating

'In terms of accessibility to the park itself, there are no benches. I cannot find a free bench. They are usually occupied, and I feel shy to ask for people to let me take the seat.'

The visiting group realised fairly quickly that there are not enough seats in the first stretch, this was reflected in the online discussions.

'Getting around if I have chronic pain, I need to sit on a bench, most I can manage is 2mins'

'Not enough seating - geared for young people to sit on lawn'

'Please provide many more benches on paths at regular intervals - there are never enough to sit on and they're often full!'

'Sitting, relaxing, enjoying nature & trees/shrubs/flowers - giving mindfulness relaxation'

Many of the participants need to rest often.

'I'm neurodivergent, I live close by in Clapham North, I tend to go there with friends, dine al fresco, have a coffee. Because of my disability, I'd like to see more chairs around the water/pond opposite Lambeth College. There are some chairs, some seating but there are too few. Unless you bring a beach deck chair with you. I cannot sit directly on the grass as I cannot get up. Deck chairs for people would be good so you can lie on it if you want to. Like on the beach where they are for hire.'

The focus group members walked across the Common, from Clapham Common station, they noted there were very few benches along this straight path. The group members would have liked to rest and look at the pond, however the benches here were all around the far side of the pond, with the approach next to the pond on a rough narrow surface, or over mounded grass. The lack of benches is all the more evident when on a busy day many of these will be taken.

'I like to come on a nice day during the week. At the weekend it is too busy, all the benches are taken. See there is space for many more benches, loads of spaces for benches.'

Seating solutions and ideas discussed:

- **Additional benches or other seating beside Long Pond**
- **Better surface to access existing benches beside Long Pond**
- **Signs on benches encouraging people to make way for those with impairments/ conditions**
- **Higher benches for people who cannot easily get up and down**
- **Automated chair borrowing scheme**

There was much discussion of how busy the Common is at peak times, and how this makes it hard for a Disabled person who needs a seat quickly to sit down. Ideas were discussed around signage and information to help prioritise the needs of Disabled people.

'Or possibly seats which state 'Not all disabilities are visible'.



'More benches should be added, there should be a sign on the benches to ask people to give up their seat if needed, things like a sign or someone to match it to the sign that is on the bench.'

'Posters outside the station and at entrances to the common would be useful, as well as on benches eg 'priority for sitting'. (It's really hard to get anyone to agree to give up their seat - I've experienced a terrible time on local public transport with people who refuse of question my disability - so perhaps designated seating for Disabled people is one solution?)'

Ponds and Nature

There are three ponds on the Common; Long Pond, Eagle Pond, and Mount Pond. These are very much a focus for those looking to enjoy nature on the Common. In the survey 62% of people said they enjoyed Nature and 18% said they had problems accessing nature. However, this was also shown among those who specified other areas as their main challenges.

'My mum would like to come to the park and walk on stable ground and have regular places to sit and enjoy the views. It's too difficult to get there, the disabled access is poor, there aren't regularly spaced enough benches for my mum to sit and enjoy the view, it would be nice if there was a paved walk around some of the pretty areas and nice viewing spots with regularly spaced benches, an accessible toilet and nearby disabled parking for each pretty area/nice viewing spot.'

'Also, water seems to calm me down. When I'm in pain it helps me. Sometimes I'm not well enough to leave the house for days. The pain is chronic, and it can come at any time.'

Long Pond



Several people specified enjoying being beside the water, and there are benches around one side. We visited this area during the Focus Group walkabout.

Many people had positive memories about this area:

'When I come from work, I used to come with my children and used the pond, it was a good family place.'

'I like to sit here by the water, and I know that if I need the toilet I can go to the pub. I get "winter panic" and I am always looking to make sure there is a place in a pub or café to go.'

'We like being by the pond, but there are not enough benches around the pond, there seems to be less playing (like ball games) so it feels safer.'

The proximity to the pub was noted as an advantage for toilets.

Unfortunately, when we visited, the pond-side benches were all around the other side of the pond, and only accessible over the narrow gravel path next to the water, or over the mounded grass, so not appropriate for wheelchair users. This was also mentioned online.



'I would be nervous about going in the wheelchair around the pond on that uneven ground'.

'It is currently very dangerous for anyone in a wheelchair or using a tricycle/handcycle to wheel from the main path down towards the path which goes round the pond. The gradient and camber has to be dealt with'.

'I like to sit by the ponds and listen and to watch the ducks but there's not much seating areas.'

Eagle Pond

The focus group visited Eagle Pond towards the end of the walk. Many of the participants had not been this far into the Common. The access was across short grass, it was passable to the edge of the wild area, where we stopped at a picnic bench which was in a poor state of repair, with a partial view through the trees of the water.

Most of the group members were not aware of this pond, and thought it was a pleasant alternative to sit by water, however the poor access and broken bench were off-putting for everyone.

The groups discussed and agreed that better seating was required, and some thoughts over a path for safe access to the edge of the water. The sense of wildness was enjoyed by some here, but not the sense of neglect from the broken table.

Mount Pond

'...I go there because of the water. Sometimes you have people doing fishing, and on the other pond – also fishing, interesting. A few more benches around could be quite helpful.'

'I love seeing the birds on the ponds - I have even heard a reed warbler before the reeds were cut back a few years ago.'

The most resilient members of the focus group visited Mount Pond at the end of the tour. Most of these participants had not been to this end of the Common and had not seen this pond, which includes wheelchair-accessible wooden fishing platforms. All were quite delighted by the combination of natural wildness and easy accessibility.

Woods and Flowers

'I enjoy the trees, but we could do with more tree lined avenues as they are cool in the hot weather.'

A number of people commented on the lack of flowers on the Common, and we hope the work to create additional meadow environments will help to address this.

'More plants and maybe clumps of wild grown native plants and wildflowers that are tough but would give pockets of interest and encourage bio diverse species and less scraggy grasses'

Shortly after visiting Mount Pond, the remaining members of the group found a stag beetle to great excitement, demonstrating the importance of the oak trees on the Common for biodiversity. All were interested to hear about this insects lifestyle and mentioned that they would enjoy further nature-focused events.



Path Surfaces and Layout

Path improvements were regularly mentioned throughout the survey, and was one of two most requested improvements.

'Some of the pavements are extremely uneven and I struggle a lot with balance, I can easily trip and fall.'

Many areas were potholed and potentially hard to navigate.

'For Disabled people, people have to extra careful, we always go together with my husband, I would not go there by myself, people can fall. They should be thinking of a safe area where blind people can go through and feel safe.'

Where able bodied people can walk across short mown grass, this is not always possible for people who are wheelchair users, have visual impairments, or walking difficulties. The paths also provide a clear route for wayfinding.

The road crossings themselves are often challenging for Disabled people, and there are a number of places where the transition into the Common itself is too narrow or needs other work. This is particularly limiting for wheelchair users, those who are partially sighted, or for those walking side by side with a supporter or companion.

The many potholes and sloping paths make Clapham particularly tricky in the wet weather. Puddles are unpleasant on the wheels of hand-propelled wheelchairs, and potholes are difficult to push through. The potholes were particularly mentioned around the Clapham Common fountain area.

At Rookery Road into the Long Pond area (right), the drop kerb from the zebra crossing doesn't line up with the wider gate opening. The wider opening is offset to the right of the picture, forcing a wheelchair or wide buggy to shimmy through this. The surface is broken and sloping, so those with physical impairments/ wheelchair users would need to be in the centre of this for safety. The narrower opening that the drop kerb leads to has a broken surface.



'The common is mostly enclosed by posts with poles. This makes it more difficult with a pram to access without walking round to an open part.'

A drop kerb is needed next to the Spinney. Drop kerbs are especially important for wheelchair users, people with ambulant disabilities, prams and vision impairments.

'Better pathway for wheelchairs especially self-propelling'

From Windmill Drive to the Eagle pond on the informal path there is a difficult entrance for wheelchair users, with the wider side unnecessarily blocked – shown right. This is probably repeated in other parts of the common – refer to the AccessAble study for more information.

'Sometimes there are huge puddles that block the path. Because of my condition it is too difficult to get around them (I cannot walk through muddy grass areas) so I have to turn around and go home. This is detrimental to my wellbeing and social life.'

Cyclists and pedestrians

'The walkways and pavement are not fully accessible, the ways and pavement are too narrow for bikes and pedestrian with accessible needs, the bikes go too fast all over, needs better signalling all over the park, speed control and awareness signalling, like in Holland and Germany. Even dedicated Bike only signalling, traffic lights and speed control



signalling for awareness. Overall better paths and better separation paths for accessible and visually impaired people'

There was much concern and some confusion about rights of way for cyclists and how this made walking difficult. It was regularly mentioned throughout the survey and during the online discussions that clearer markings were needed for cycleways and pedestrian ways, and awareness-raising of hidden impairments/ conditions. This was not witnessed so much during the walkabout, which was on a quiet weekday.

'Sharing paths with cyclists is a menace. Many go too fast; few use a bell or a callout to let you know they are there and many treat pedestrians like obstacles in a slalom race. I often jump out of my skin when trying to have a peaceful walk and have been struck more than once by adult cyclists who ought to know better.'

There is some potential for a marked route on the grass, so long as this is kept mown:

'Having a path that is not shared with cyclists and is soft enough to not impact bones and joints negatively. Given the level of climate change, it would be sensible to have more water points and areas to shelter from the sun, especially for the elderly and people with long-term health conditions.'

Some users mentioned the lack of clarity about which paths are cycleways, which had shared use, and which cyclists are not allowed on:

'From Cedars crossway – cycle lanes could be better marked – when I tell cyclists that they have a cycle lane, there is a sign on the floor, but many are not clear, if cyclist are on pedestrian path they don't know it is pedestrian and it's pedestrian priority'

'All pathways are now treated as cycle ways and as someone with various health issues cyclist can often appear at speed, without giving pedestrians a minimum of a metre and often from behind making me jump with fright. My conditions are relatively kind compared to many, so I feel fortunate, but I still often get a fright due to the behaviour of cyclists. I feel that it would be beneficial to put indicators up or painted on the paths that clearly says that it is not a cycle way. If they are shared spaces and I am incorrect, then please can shared spaces notice be put up for all users to be respectful to others and be aware of people with invisible disabilities. If they are now shared spaces could cyclists be notified that pedestrians have the right of way? I often see cyclists ringing their bells and expecting other to get out their way if they are on the one dedicated cycle lane that crosses the common, but also on the pathways too. This behaviour does not apply to all cyclists.'

'Cycling and electric scooters are a big problem on all pathways & pavements in the area (and across London generally)'

'Too many bikes are on the pavements where they shouldn't be and it's super dangerous with my mobility and eyesight issues'

'It can also be annoying when cyclists do not stick to their routes and come straight at you when you are on the path. Wheelchair users struggle with this as well'

We were encouraged to remind cyclists to be aware of the needs of people with hidden impairments/ conditions, just as with seating.

'we spoke about the label 'Share with care' like the signs on the tube, to remind people that we're not all the same. That people have different support needs.'

Some survey participants were themselves cyclists. There may be a case for some cyclists to be considered 'mobility vehicles' within a speed limit:

'Standing and walking is painful so being able to cycle through the Common is very important to me.'

'Cycling through, but it's often so busy that it's more stress than it's worth, especially with pedestrians on the cycle path .keep pedestrians off the designated cycle path as this leads to stress for cyclists'



Playground

Several people on the tour had happy memories of the playground and approved of the recent makeover.

Some survey respondents mentioned the need for quieter areas for neurodivergent children. There were also requests for more fenced areas.

'There's not a lot to do for autistic kids, it's got a great playground, but it's overcrowded with parents and children that do not understand autistic people. Other spaces families with children with SEND would be great.'

'More areas where you can be sure the children won't escape.'

Toilets and Water

There were many requests for improvements to the toilets through the survey, and the focus groups. It was recognised that this, along with benches, is a fundamental issue for many people that influences how far they explore the Common, and their affects choices in life.

'Urgent need access to toilets. Due to sensory problems, I may need to access a toilet quickly as I may not realise I need to go before it urgent.'

'Always limited by time due to incontinence.'

This was raised through the survey, and all the focus groups as a priority issue even before we asked specific questions. We were reminded that many Disabled people often need toilets very quickly, and that people who use wheelchairs or mobility aids use their hands to move themselves around, meaning it is all the more important to have clean surfaces. People were keen to emphasise this on the survey, using block capitals to make their point.

'Accessible CLEAN toilets for wheelchair users and people who need access to CLEAN toilets for medical reasons. Radar system would be good.'

'CLEAN ACCESSIBLE TOILETS FOR WHEELCHAIR USERS AND THOSE WITH MEDICAL NEEDS. NOT DOUBLED AS A BABY CHANGE. KEPT ONLY FOR DISABLED PEOPLE AND CLEAN. WE HAVE TO USE OUR HANDS FOR MOVING OURSELVES AND TRANSFERRING AND IT'S DISGUSTING HOW THE TOILETS ARE LEFT ESPECIALLY

WHEN THEY ARE LEFT OPEN FOR ALL TO USE AND ARE DOUBLED UP AS A BABY CHANGE’.

‘Also, the toilet facilities – you cannot find them, and you have a long wait if you do. I have a bladder problem; you just want to relax.’

The toilets next to the playground were much needed by many by the focus group members. These toilets are, in theory, accessible. However, all users during the focus group returned with very unhappy faces and pursed lips talking about how unclean they were. There is no accessible cubicle in the male toilets, forcing male wheelchair users, and many Disabled men and boys, to use the female. One member of the party said these were:

‘The worst toilets I have ever been into’.

The toilets next to the Pear Tree Café were cleaner, and also wheelchair accessible, although not perfect. We had some discussion about how these could be laid out differently to provide more space or provide an additional Changing Places toilet.

Others filling in the survey sometimes mentioned that they did not know there are toilets by the bandstand. There were also requests to update these:

‘The toilets at the cafe are in dire need of updating - the disabled toilet is pretty bad’.

‘Are there any near the bandstand? Not noticed this’

‘More toilets as there is only one!’

‘Not sure where they are.’

‘I do not know where any of the toilets are so unable to use them unless I’m in a venue on the common’.

The poor condition of the toilets was raised throughout all the discussions, highlighting the need for improved access. It was made clear that this should be prioritised as a key investment.

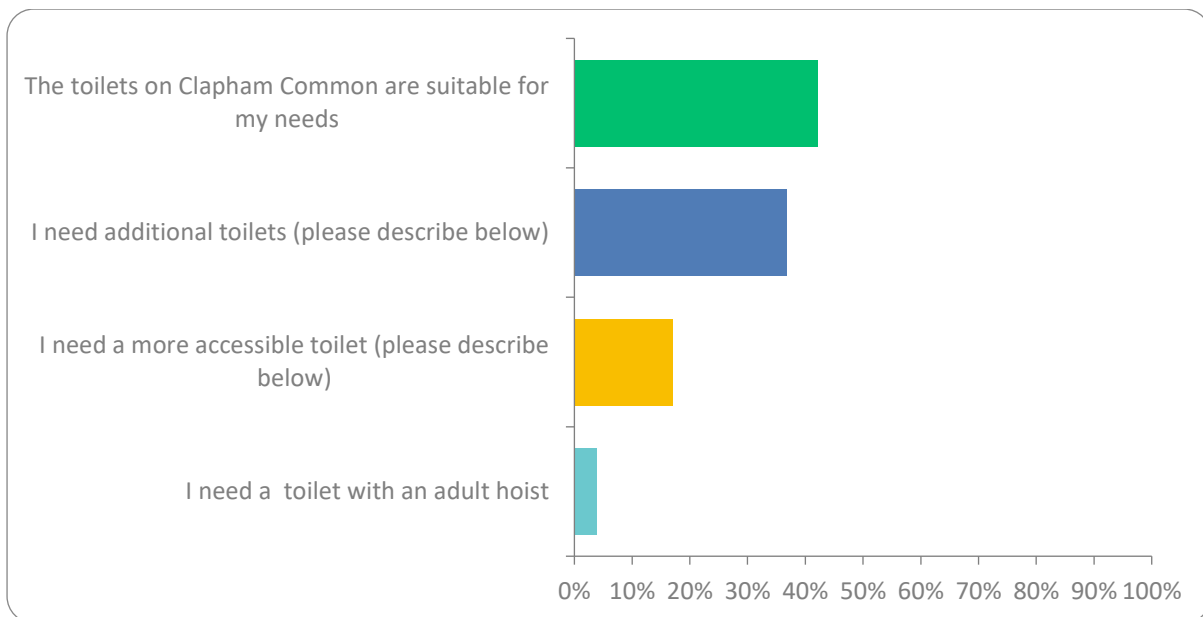
The Portaloo’s were acknowledged as a help, but not enough.

‘The lack of toilets in a heavily used and crowded park is ridiculous. People with digestive health problems (or small children who have less ability to hold it) have few places to head to. I’ve been caught out, and I live near the common. The Portaloo’s for the summer are a bit of a help, but aren’t available year round despite the common being busy year round. Not adding some loos when renovating the Cock Pond was a missed opportunity.’

The new water playground toilet was unfortunately out of use shortly after opening, leading to concerns.

‘The new toilet by the paddling pool has been out of use for days with temporary toilets in place. Considering the experience in the Clapham common over the years. Either there is a full provision for well well-maintained accessible toilet, or it will be another failure, to be bluntly honest.’

We wanted to find out what kind of toilets people need, by asking the question in the survey: *Which of these best describes your needs on Clapham Common in terms of toilets? Note we currently have three toilet blocks on Clapham Common, with left hand transfer accessible toilet beside the cafe, and a new accessible toilet coming beside the water play. More information on toilets on the Common is here.* The results are shown below.



Comments indicated that the prime problem for many of these toilets is cleanliness. This was mentioned by twelve people, with some very specific comments:

'The main problem with the toilets is that all of the toilets are not monitored at all, and there's very dirty. I have personally with other parents/neighbours cleaned the new padding pool toilet to use it myself. I had help, but usually, I can't use the toilets in the Clapham Common because is so dirty. These toilets are brand new. I can't use the toilet by the Windmill playground due to the cleanliness. Many times, the floor is slippery with water or urine. And I don't feel safe.'

'Many facilities are great but due to the lack of continued cleanliness and monitoring, they are vandalised and becoming extremely dirty. It's a public space, no matter how accessible the toilets are if there is no monitoring at all, there's open to the public there is no point due to the vandalised public property, safety and cleanliness. I always use local coffee shops and restaurants... etc. due to the reasons mentioned above.'

'The toilets are disgusting, and we try not to use them.'

There were suggestions made for design of a good toilet for Disabled people , and suggestions that these should be available with a radar key.

'I need disabled toilets to be more strategically placed around the common with changing rooms with bins to dispose of men and women pads. Dispensary machines for men and women pads. Must include panic buttons or chords for disabled people needing assistance or getting into difficulty.'

'An accessibility toilet would be great with safety string or cord, no touch flush, no touch tap, no touch drying technology , no touch toilet seat, accessibility lock, hangers for bags and personal belonging , no touch soap, no touch sanitiser, safety flooring, anti-slip flooring, anti-sliding flooring, individual fully closed toilet, no touch bin, deep wash basin / no flat parts of tap to avoid water sliding on sides. Cleaner or Assistance maintenance the toilet.'

'I need a toilet that is fully accessible for a wheelchair and offers some privacy.'

'The toilets on the common - especially next to Pear Tree Cafe - are outdated, dirty and frequently full. There are no hooks to hang any belongings which makes it harder to sit down

as someone with mobility issues because the floor is wet so nothing can be put down. The built in washer-dryers are older than I am!

'Would it be possible to have toilets with sinks that you can wash yourself in? Not just your hands?'

One user was concerned for longer opening times:

'I like to run around the common - often early in the morning (due to work, heat and other reasons related to my disability). However, frequently I have needed the toilet early in the morning and found that the women's toilets are locked. Sometimes even as late as 7am'

Three people on the survey ticked the box asking for a toilet with an adult hoist but unfortunately none of these provided additional details of their specific needs. Two of these people only visited the Common once a year or less, and by car.

Nearly 60% of people who filled in the survey asked for drinking water, and some were quite specific that this was related to their health condition.

'Free drinking water would help me spend more time on the common without spending too much money'

In summary the main demand was for toilets to be improved in general, for maintenance to be improved and to provide at least one modern well-designed toilet for Disabled people . There is also a need for more drinking water stations, and for better signage of existing toilets.

Signage, Wayfinding and Small events

Wayfinding

'There isn't clear enough information or guidance in terms of what is in the park and where it is, i.e. strategically place maps of the park and it's amenities'

It became clear from discussions that many people are not aware where there are toilets, café, and beautiful wild areas. For example, several people showed they were not aware of the bandstand, and the café and toilets adjacent. Most of the group who attended the walkabout knew the Long Pond, but not the two wilder ponds to the west. This suggests that signage in the environment including distance would be beneficial.

A good wayfinding strategy would link online information with appropriate signage.

'I have psychical mobility issues – I go to Clapham Common sometimes with my child. So I want it to be as accessible as possible, for example signposting to access events and the toilets.'

Shared Use

The discussions regularly returned to creating more awareness of the needs of Disabled people and the importance to support others, which would involve a different sort of signage.

Posters outside the station and at entrances to the common would be useful, as well as on benches eg 'priority for sitting'.

Signage will also be an important tool in separating cycling and walking.

Guided Walks and small outdoor events

Many people welcomed the idea of regular guided walks, mindfulness, history walks and similar small outdoor events for Disabled people, and with a high awareness of individual needs.

'I first came to Clapham Common for a Georgian walk because I am interested in history. It was terrible, we went to visit a Georgian house and they couldn't get the wheelchair in, so I was left outside while everyone else went in to see. Yes, I would welcome some more walks with disability awareness in them.'

'All of the mentioned above, events for all to mingle and raise public awareness would be greatly appreciated, because awareness is key to thriving as a community. Could please also include if possible local organisations for example schools, businesses and churches. Because We are all one community.'

A programme of walks will also help address the pressing need for some respondents to have a source of help if they need it, and also help start to create social bonds for those who are missing these.

'At the moment I have no friends I've had some deaths in my close circle so it would be nice to maybe have a walking group that would encourage me to meet and walk further as I go to walk then get only one part then turn back as I get a bit low and find Clapham a bit bare and needs more plants and greenery planted it's quite a busy road so doesn't feel intimate just busy and not interesting to walk'

'With regard to raising awareness about the needs of people with a disability, please bear in mind that most disabilities are unseen and I'm so sick of disability and physical ailment or impairment being presented as synonymous. Poor mental health is a major factor in disability, and no one can see that.'



Other

We have covered the main requests here, the ones that were obvious and were made with passion regularly and clearly tied to individuals access needs as Disabled people.

Other requests were made including for:

Designated quiet areas: Several people mentioned that the Common was too noisy for them, particularly relating to their impairments/ conditions.

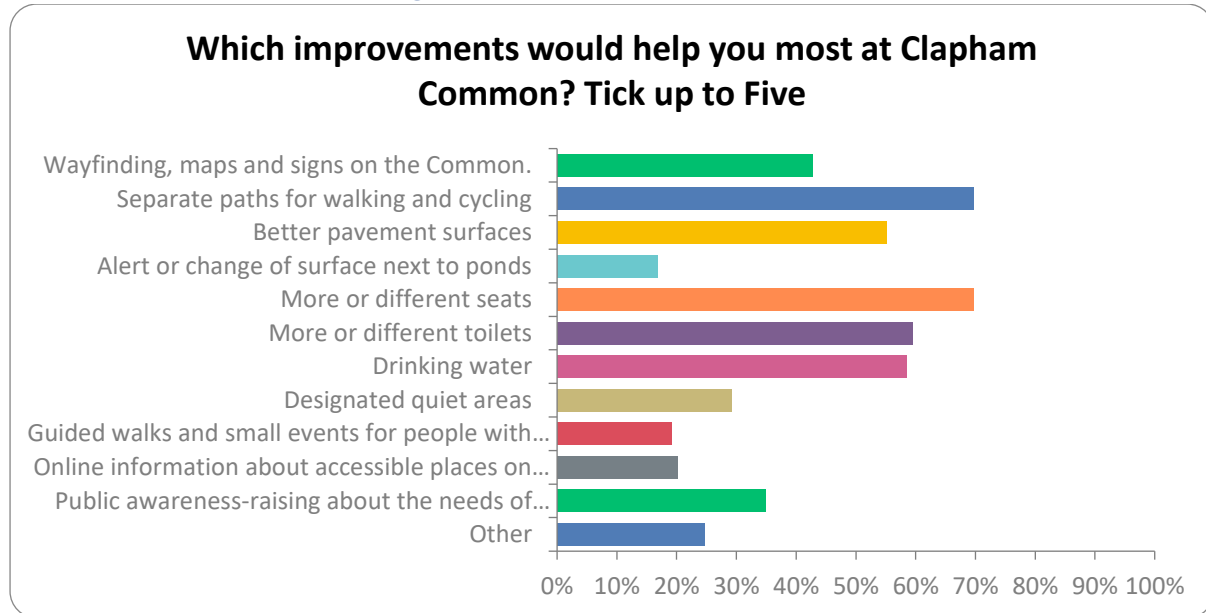
'Stop noise from vehicles that prevent us from having a relaxing experience.'

'I have hyperacusis so it's not good when it's noisy.'

'I am deaf in one ear and suffer from bad tinnitus. The noise of some motorbikes passing by Clapham common south side is unbearable. They seem to install something to make them noisier and this should be fined.'

Disabled parking, blue badge parking: This was not mentioned as extensively as we might expect, partly because most people who filled in the survey live nearby and already use the Common. Nevertheless, it was clearly a barrier for some.

Priorities for Spending



In the survey we asked a specific question about how participants would help us prioritise improvements and spending. This graph demonstrates the results of this, and also reflects many of the conversations had and behaviour noted. The main items requested were

- separation of walking and cycling (70%),
- seating (70%),
- toilets (59%)
- drinking water (58%),
- better pavement surfaces (49%).

We also acknowledge need to create awareness around the needs of Disabled people and to provide interpretation including:

- Wayfinding and awareness of facilities, online and in person
- Awareness and priority for Disabled people; particularly on benches and footways
A programme of disability-aware small walks and events to support Disabled people to enjoy the Common and build awareness of needs into the wider community.

Most needs were summarised helpfully by one of our respondents.

'I list all the needs that I have below. 1. Accessible ways-finding maps and maps, routes and signs in all the common. 2. Accessible, separately pathways for pedestrians and cyclists, and signs with metal barrier to discourage cyclists to use and stopping easy access. 3. Overall better pavement for stable walking all over the common, alert and changing of pavement around all areas specifically around pounds and crossing and bike lanes and quiet routes and quiet areas. 4. Online accessible information dedicated for visual impaired. Voice overs and sensory and other tools available in the park. 5. Accessible water fountain for all. 6. Signs and awareness of litter can be dangerous for visual impaired as well as dogs mess.'

Appendix one: Focus Group Walkabout 20th June 23

An exploratory walkabout was organised by the partnership. We were grateful to the eleven adults who offered to share their experience of accessing Clapham Common as both people with varying impairments/ conditions, and carers and family members. It was a lively and intelligent discussion, and we were privileged to have so much clear and sensible feedback on the Common.

Reasons to visit.

All the participants were at least slightly familiar with the Common, although many had only explored one end of this large space. Two participants were grandparents who had been bringing children to the Common for generations.

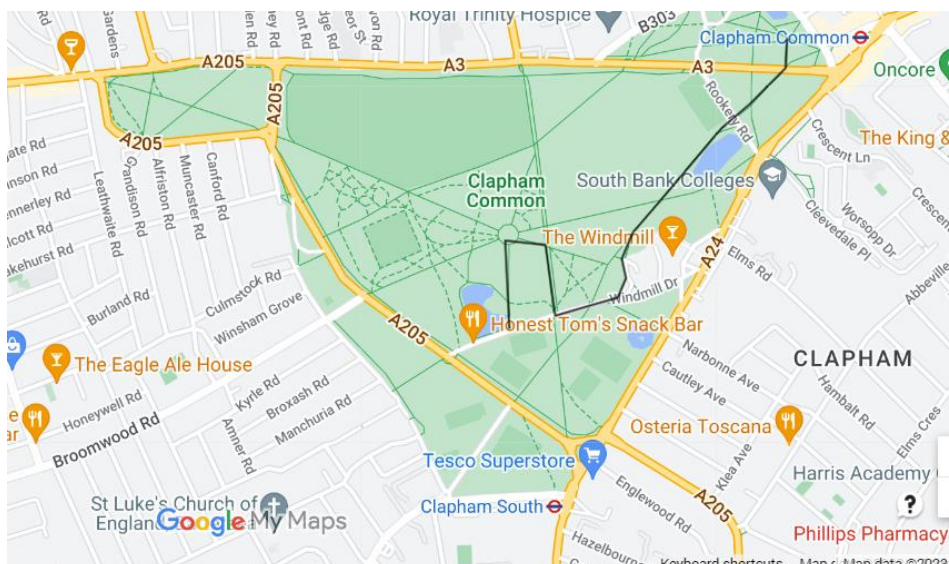
The setting here is really beautiful, look at the trees. I like to come regularly and sit by the water.

Reasons to visit:

- Walking.
- Sitting and enjoying nature.
- Bringing children or grandchildren to the playground.
- Meeting friends.
- Cafes.
- Local history (a walk, which was very badly organised in terms of access).

Most people were more familiar with the area immediately near the Clapham Common tube station, and those with children knew the playgrounds. Participants either lived nearby or took a bus ride to reach the Common.

Route taken across Clapham Common



Participants met at the Temperance statue, and walked across this popular area, then crossed the A3, and the smaller Rookery Road.

The group went past the Long Pond, the playgrounds and toilets, and along the closed section of Windmill Drive, then to the café.

We would have liked to visit the wilder ponds at the southern end but were aware of people's flagging energy after what had turned into quite a long walk for some, so went straight to the café to revive, then returned to discuss Mount Pond for those who still had energy.

Participant Notes by Toar Sadia and Nara Zaman (amalgamated)

Comments from G:

- Retired; enjoys walks, particularly related to history.
- Got to Clapham Common by bus as the Tube is not accessible. Always early to bus as many buses have ramps that don't work and so they need to wait for the next bus or buses.
- Typically uses buses, Overground and taxis, although sometimes has to pay full rate at taxis due to lack in numbers. Rarely uses Tube due to lack of accessibility.
- Sometimes has to move through road if there are no dropped kerbs.
- Has only visited Clapham Common a few times. Knew roughly where it was and how to navigate.
- Has been in Clapham Common on a historical walk organized by the Georgian Group. During walk guide person wanted to show-off an area that was not accessible and has left G for themselves, and so G has decided to leave at that point.
- Uses toilet facilities in church. Church is relatively accessible, although they had turned over and knocked a few items previously when using the small size electrical wheelchair.
- Lambeth cemeteries would be impossible to do on heritage walks, although some parts can be viewed from other paths in City of London tours. Would enjoy joining Lambeth tours.
- Enjoys virtual tours as well.
- Tricky to visit Clapham Common when it's wet as there are many potholes. Rarely goes on grass unless very dry.
- Didn't use to be so interested in nature; now enjoys watching birds at the lake and dogs walking around.
- Not enough signage around the common
- Mentioned some paths are levelled.
- Toilets are issues for when there are festivals in the Common

Comments from E:

- Has always lived around Clapham Common.
- Wanted to sit down but seating at the Temperance Fountain was too low and they were worried they wouldn't be able to get up afterwards. Higher seating needed.
- Lack of seating made it difficult for them to go around, as they require more frequent resting areas than are currently available.
- Clapham Common is a very good place for relaxing.
- There are more restaurants around the common, it comes alive in the evening.
- E took the bus to Clapham Common as he lives 7 minutes away.

Comments from R:

- Participates in a programme on cycling for Muslim women.
- Didn't know about having to give way to pedestrians.
- Has a fear of dogs, which is an issue when they are off leash.
- Could swings for adults be considered? It is important to create fun playful experiences for adults as well.
- R took one bus to the Common, 45 minutes.
- Nice pathway near the bandstand and lots of benches

Comments from C:

- Toilet is always a big issue. Portable toilets can't be used during events. It is also a problem to use the portable toilets with children.
- Lots of places in Lambeth not accessible.
- Wouldn't let kids play near the pond as there is no safety fence.
- Potholes are not safe for buggies and wheelchairs.
- No changing area for kids

General comments:

- No wheelchair accessible male toilets.
- Issues with female wheelchair accessible toilets as they are not in a good condition. Gates to female toilets are too narrow.
- No kerb cut to pedestrianized road.
- Concrete block on grass and low hanging branches may not be identified by blind or partially sighted.
- Overall lack of seating.
- It is difficult to get wheelchairs around to existing benches.
- Idea: could a portable chairs service be considered for people to rent chairs at designated stations around Clapham Common?
- No accessible toilet in the male cubicles, toilets are not very nice.
- No drop curve by the spinney

Appendix Two : Online meetings

Notes from Clapham Common accessibility study workshop no 1

Monday 6 February 2023, 5pm-6.30pm, via Zoom

5x participants: **C**, **B/D** (a couple), **S**, **SH**

Moderators: **T** (BH, asking questions), **N** (DASL, facilitating) and **H** (notetaking, representing LBL)

Q Do you visit Clapham Common?

S : I have walked for many years in the Clapham Common area, I visit every day, for years, it's like a part of me. It's on my way to my house. **T**: do you stay there for a while? **S**: I sit there sometimes, meet friends, I like that there is lots of shops in there, there is the pool and the funfair from time to time.

C: I live close to the park; I go there nearly every day for health reason. I usually try to find a free bench, which is not easy. Sometime do yoga, walk or both. I enjoy the trees, nature, birds, squirrels, fantastic sunset.

B: I've been to Clapham Common with my wife, but I've never been on my own.

SH: I go to Clapham Common for picnics with my family once in a while, it's nice if it's not too busy and you can find a quiet space.

Q. What do you like to do when visiting Clapham Common (eg. go for a stroll and the rest of the list on the screen)

C: I like to sit on the bench to listen to concerts on the Bandstand, the bands are really good in the summer.

SH: It is easy to get to by bus on your way to get somewhere, if you want to go to Streatham or Balham and so on, you can get a bus there, it's easy to get to by bus.

Q: Is going to the common accessible to you? Do you find barriers in arriving at the common?

S: It is accessible to me; it is easy to get to by bus.

C: You have to cross a large road; it is not easy for me to walk. There is a lot of traffic – I have a problem with pollution and I'm allergic to it. If I have to go to Cedars Road crossing – you have to wait there for a long time and also bicycles are going through very fast. If you're disabled, slow and vulnerable it can be difficult to get to and quite stressful. Sometimes there are also lots of ambulances, police cars on a signal so it is not very safe. **T:** Do you think as a pedestrian you are not being prioritised? **C:** I was run over there once by someone.

S: There are a lot of buses in the area, the big road in the Clapham Common – it is very busy and dangerous, not safe for vulnerable people, there are lots of traffic lights.

B: We use Clapham Common station – but it is very difficult.

C: A lot of people who use the common need to use the station, there are 3 sets of steps, quite a lot of steps, Clapham Common stations is not accessible, better stations are Clapham North or Clapham South.

B: Stairs at the station are very scary – near the station there are no railings, the pavement is not good, very dangerous, uneven, and kerbs are not raised for the pedestrians. It is impossible to use the station with a Zimmer frame for example, it is all steps, **B/D:** My husband nearly fell in the station – **B:** but that was when there was no tactile edging.

C: I avoid the Clapham Common station, I go to Clapham North and take a bus to avoid it, buses 88, 155 or 345 to Clapham Common. It takes longer but at least there are less steps. Or I take the bus to Stockwell.

B/D: But you still have to cross a busy road.

S: There is a lot of traffic in the area, there is also a college, very busy area especially in the rush hour, and it is not accessible for people with disabilities, for people to go to the park.

B/D: People have died on the crossing, not just at the station. The crossings do not have a sound (we tried last week) **C:** There are works there at the moment but usually the sound is there.

C: In terms of accessibility to the park itself, there are no benches. I cannot find a free bench. They are usually occupied, and I feel shy to ask for people to let me take the seat.

Q: Is moving around within the common accessible to you?

C: The lack of benches is an issue. They are occupied, it is embarrassing to ask. Many benches are also broken. And a lack of toilet as well – it is a big problem if you need a toilet at D short notice.

B/D: There are no toilets at all.

C: There are toilets at the café and the playground.

B/D: there use do be public toilets by the station where now is the Joe Public café, now there are no toilets near the station. And there are no railings around when accessing the common from the Clapham Common station.

Q: Which entrance do you use to go inside the common? Is there a specific entrance that you find more favourable to you?

B/D: There isn't a proper entrance gate to the common, it is all open. **T:** Is there a point of entry that is better, for example quieter? **B/D:** Coming from the station – you have to be careful when you come from the Old Town, there is a little park, then you have to cross a long road, in general you have to cross a busy road many times. Also, when people leave the church, the path is very narrow, many people are on the road. We do not go there anymore, especially on Saturday evenings when it's very busy. The pavement is very narrow in front of the Belle Vue the pub. Some people even died there. **C:** Some people have been stabbed there, it wasn't a road collision, that's why there are flowers.

C: I personally walk to park, and I use the same place to access it, I don't go on the street, there is too much pollution, **T:** So you're using a longer route but it is more comfortable to you? You have to walk for longer? **C:** Yes, to avoid pollution and there is less traffic, it allows me to be more in nature and inside the park.

S: I wanted to add – also extra bins are needed, a lot of the time there are lots of food remnants, there should be more bins. Regarding your previous question - how do we access – it is very congested when you come from Clapham South, from Tooting. I usually come from Clapham Common, Stockwell side.

B/D: For Disabled people, people have to extra careful, we always go together with my husband, I would not go there by myself, people can fall. They should be thinking of a safe area where blind people can go through and feel safe.

C: there is an area in the park, which is a safe area, it is the dog-free area behind the Bandstand.

SH: It would be good to have first aiders around the park, especially inside the park. Also, the toilet facilities – you cannot find them, and you have a long wait if you do. I have bladder problem, you just want to relax, and the weather is hot, you may run out of water, there are no snack bars except the pubs. From the stations onwards, there is no one around to assist you. There should be something like a hut with assistance, can be volunteers.

C: It would be good if they had uniforms, for example, so we know who Clapham Common employees are, what number to call, you can also get volunteer to help.

SH: On a regular day you don't see people at all which could help, it only happens when there are large events.

B/D: How is a blind person going to see an officer or a number? If they have tents, they are more visible and can help any person in distress. It would be good if there was someone around like volunteers to help someone along. So, the people are able to call for help so that people know there is something to assist.

SH: There should be a support network. Someone may have bad experience and will not go back again.

B/D: Yes, there should be presence around.

S: A helper should have a point at the entrance.

Q: Which areas within the common do you like to go to?

C: The little wood – it is a special area, fresh air, nature, it is a shame that it can get very dirty.

B/D: There seems to be more tables and chairs on the Pavement. We like being by the pond, but there are not enough benches around the pond, there seems to be less playing (like ball games) so it feels safer.

C: I like the pond area, it's relaxing and good for mental health

Q: Do you like to attend events withing the common and so which events?

C: Free concerts in the summer. There is jazz, classical on Sundays every few weeks in June-July-August. They put deck chairs out, it is for free. What is needed is more chairs, more benches. Especially chairs with back and arms support for people with mobility issues.

B/D: Anything free but we haven't been to many events there. When they have big events, the common is out of bounds for us anyway.

SH: Fireworks used to be free. Now everything is at a charge.

S: I take my young one there and he just walks around, we don't go to a particular spot. We do attend the funfairs. It is also lovely in the park relax.

C: There is never enough seats when I'm there. Deck chairs are not good enough for people with mobility issues. They should put up a few plastic chairs with back and arm support. The same goes for the larger events.

B/D: They should have priority areas for disabled people, free tickets. You have to educate people as one day they may be blind themselves.

S: I second the free tickets. **T:** Have you had any accessibility issues at previous events? **S:** I attended a funfair; I thought as a Disabled person I thought I'd be given access but I wasn't. There was a lack of free tickets and no one to talk to on the spot. The experience was awful. There should be support workers. If there were free tickets, it may make people to leave the house more often. If there is no support people are not going to come. **T:** So, this is about management and operation of the event themselves? **S:** Sometimes you walk there and if there are trained workers who understand how to deal with people like that, and older people too, that is it ok.

B/D: In Brixton house, there is a company called Extant, a new company at Brixton House, they do things for blind people.

S: They could do an awareness day for people with disability – all people with disabilities have special needs, like music too loud, nowhere to sit, nothing to be part of, could this be arranged, even once a year. Clapham Park is packed on the normal day, can be very loud, sports, parties, you can't find anywhere to sit. It would be good to have a disability event.

C: Noise, the SW4 concert at the end of August – I went there because they put through your door a letter to contact an officer if it is too loud. I called them, they were nice and polite, and they said they would adjust it. It didn't change after 3 days. I contacted the council, they said that it was a paid event and there was nothing they can do if they don't exceed a certain no of decibels. Now I know there is nothing they can do. They may do it for

an hour two. **T:** how often does this happen? **C:** SW4 and 2-3 other festivals, they normally last 2-3 days.

Q: Are the events in the common relevant to what you're interested in?

N: in the summer we do events in (?) Gardens because it is green area, it would be nice to be able to do an activity for disabled people in Clapham Common (after risk assessment). **C:** You could probably do it at the tennis club.

S: Events are nice but because of the barriers they are not accessible, they have funfairs, events for children, football, but they are irrelevant because of lack of support. Having support in the park – the events would be relevant to me. If there was a first-aider, support at the event and so on. Having volunteers at the event, somebody to greet, to assist, somebody to talk to. Otherwise, it is very lonely. Also, around the pond there should be barriers so that you cannot fall, and you can lean on.

Q: Do you experience any challenges in finding your way round the common? Moving around within the common? Having access to washroom? Participating in activities around the common?

S: Events – it is challenging because of noise, nowhere to sit, I find it stressful. As a parent of a young child, as parents – do we have anyone to help if the child displays a difficult behaviour? I'd like to participate but my hands are already full.

C: From Cedars crossway – cycle lanes could be better marked – when I tell cyclists that they have a cycle lane, there is a sign on the floor, but many are not clear, if cyclist are on pedestrian path they don't know it is pedestrian and it's pedestrian priority.

B: Also, some sign are the other way round – it is amusing.

C: reminding cyclist that they do not have a priority. Sometimes they think they do.

Notes from Clapham Common accessibility study workshop no 2

Tuesday 21 February 2023, 5pm-6.30pm, via Zoom

Participants: 11 (eleven): EB, EU, ST, LE, NA, PA, CA, NI, OS, SL, BO (some joined later in the workshop)

Moderators: **T** (BH, asking questions), **N** (DASL, facilitating) and **H** (notetaking, representing LBL)

Q. Could you share with us a few words who you are and what is your connection to Clapham Common?

EU: I've lived in Lambeth for over 60 years. I often take my grandchildren to Clapham Common. I work with Black Thrive and focus on issues of accessibility for blind people. I would like to visit CC more frequently than I currently can.

EB: I used to be a Friend of Clapham Common in the 80s. I used to cycle there years ago. In general, and from a blind person's perspective, there should be a zebra crossing between the South Side and the Pavement. The outdoor swimming pool - this facility is extremely useful for. Also, football pitches. My children are in their 30s now. I believe that football should be free, but I hear that there is a charge now.

ST: I work for Lambeth council, and I have lived in Lambeth for over 10 years. I have prosthetic legs. I want to be able to use a wheelchair in Clapham Common to enjoy sunshine with friends.

LE: have psychical mobility issues – I go to CC sometimes with my child. So, I want it to be as accessible as possible, for example signposting to access events and the toilets.

NA: I'm neurodivergent, I live close by in Clapham North, I tend to go there with friends, dine al fresco, have a coffee. Because of my disability, I'd like to see more chairs around the water/pond opposite Lambeth College. There are some chairs, some seating but there are too few. Unless you bring a beach deck chair with you. I cannot sit directly on the grass as I cannot get up. Deck chairs for people would be good so you can lie on it if you want to. Like on the beach where they are for hire. In the summer, there should be more toilets like more portacabins.

PA: I don't live locally; I live quite a few miles away. I appreciate the common for the various types of spaces. I meet friends there and I use it for strolling and for experiencing nature. I don't have external mobility issues as such, but my late mother was on a wheelchair.

NI: I've been a local resident since 1977, lived in three flats very close to Clapham Common I know the area from being a parent, as a school principal and as a former councillor up to May 2022, when I retired. I have glaucoma, diagnosed a long time ago, in 1996, I also have a vertigo condition. CC is very important to me for simple exercise. Surfaces are a problem. It also matters to me how close people are. Runners can be quite a challenge as I'm visibly able-bodied and not using a long cane. Higher profile should be given to the area. There is a community garden in the middle of the common that I'm a member and trustee of. I'm keen to let people know about everything there is to do locally.

CA: My aunt lives in Clapham Common South Side. I call it the posh end of Clapham Common. It's very nice. I'm severely visually impaired but I don't walk round there because it is difficult for me to get around there. In the summer my aunt walks me there to the bus stop. If it was more accessible, it would be nice, there is a nice pond by the south side but in the summertime it's not very accessible with a cane to navigate.

EB: Clapham Common is not very friendly for visually impaired/blind people because the approach to this place is not very accessible. The green lights at the crossings are muted, the public toilet by the Clapham Common tube station was closed down. There also used to be a toilet at the end towards the Balham side, close to Windmill Drive. Will it be possible to have more toilets? There is also an issue of security – what about violent folk, assuring safety for users.

NA: I meet friends there, but I usually tend to read a book or magazine. Last year in February as well I met with two friends there, with a flask of tea and biscuits, I was very pleased I discovered it, I used to go to Regent's Park, and others. I used to work 9-5 so I didn't have the opportunity, then my health deteriorated over the last 3 years and now I tend to go there quite a lot. In March when the weather gets warmer, I will go there with a book. Also, water seems to calm me down. When I'm in pain it helps me. Sometimes I'm not well enough to leave the house for days. The pain is chronic, and it can come at any time.

NOTE: Other people joined after the initial question above, totalling 11 participants.

Q: What do you like to do when you visit Clapham Common? (a selection of ideas on the presentation: go for a stroll, exercise, spend time in nature, spend time with family and/or friends, participate in activities, join events, etc.)

CA: Not just as a severely visually impaired person, but also as a woman, it can be dangerous. It was on this site that the young woman was assaulted. Now it's dark and it wouldn't be safe for me. Women's safety should be definitely considered as well. It is very quiet there. The council should make space for people. For example, there is no security lighting, it isn't really lit safely I don't know what the finances are but the council should look into that. Women's safety should be paramount now.

EU: I agree with the issue of safety is an issue for us living with disabilities. There is insufficient lighting.

EB: Especially if you're blind – when we need to go down to a particular area and security is paramount. Only when there is for example a good concert, we should bring some generators to light the place up, solar energy, something to regenerate itself. It gets dark – if you cross from the car from Cedars Road. I agree regarding women's safety.

OS: When I go to the park, I go with my brother who is autistic and dyslexic. It is very disorientating, and he may go away and get lost any time. It's confusing in comparison with Brockwell Park, where it is clear where we are. In Clapham Common there can be better signage. When it comes to safety, if anything happens, I wouldn't know where to go, who to turn to.

LE: There is not signposting, it's confusing. With the pond – it's so massive, I think it should be surrounded by a barrier, if anything happens, someone can drown. Also, the width between the pavement and grass itself – if you're in a wheelchair, it's not big enough, it's like you have to go on the road. I looked at the part where the basketball court is, the way the pavement is there, it's so awkward, if you have people with vertigo, or like me, if I fall - I have arthritis – there should be a surface that is smooth enough to walk through. The actual basketball itself - it seems that it is for people who are not wheelchair users – the ramp is far too high. To go to Megan's (a restaurant), there is lots of grass, it's muddy, impossible to get to with a wheelchair.

PA: About wheelchair use and nature of the surfaces, good point about the width of the path. It is also about orientation. Wheelchair users have issues with the neck, also issues around seating. In some sense it is a common and not a park and it is pretty windswept, wheelchair users are very sensitive to the weather. There is nowhere for users to go.

EU (writing in the chat box): I'm aware of time so I'll put my thoughts here within the chat. I don't consider Clapham Common either a common or park. It occurs to me as just an OPEN GREEN SPACE. There is no colour, in relation to flowers may only daffodils. The paths need to be resurfaced. The paths are also very soggy/muddy.

EB: It is high time to put disabled people on the agenda. We need to follow the 2010 equalities act – reasonable adjustment, this is what it means. .

NA: I stroll in Clapham Common. I do like the events that take place there. I think one event was called colourism, we went with a friend and her son. I'd like to see events kept going on because it keeps us busy. It was great to see all the colours and all the tunnels.

NI: It's called Colourscape, one of the longest standing events, for over 30 years every year. I remember taking my small children there. I think it is accessible. It is one of the middle-year events. In June-July there is a short season of concerts, small, with deck chairs. I liked the Madness concert, years ago when Stevie Wonder played, my wife and I went. I agree entirely about the surfacing of paths, or width of paths. Something like a promenade would be good. The one by the boating lake and the L-shaped path going to Megan's - this is a route from Bromell's Road, across the Long Acre, then you come to Rookery Road, by the boating pond. There is a design going that will make the road much narrower for cars, with more space for pedestrians. There is also a proposal of new café building which would also provide a club house for the boating club. It's only a question of finding money for them. Creating nice, comfortable routes. Continuity is key there. Getting from A to B. I understand signage is needed but you don't want too much of a townscape. New lighting is going in, benches are going in including additional wheelchair standing next to benches. These are all good comments. As PA said – it is a common, like Streatham, not like Brockwell Park and others which are fenced off.

ST: What I like about Clapham Common is openness, you can walk for miles, and it doesn't feel like you're in London. The atmosphere is so friendly, it is a common as someone has said. For me it's a place where I can relax.

Q: (Note: a few questions on the presentation combined into one due to time restrictions) Are there any specific areas that you like to go to? Which events or activities do you like to participate in within the common (if any)? Do you feel events or activities are: Safe for you? Accessible for you? Relevant or of interest to you?

EB: It is most things everyone already said. I like it because of music. What would be a proper way for the common to be designed - it is not linked together. You need to put a big zebra crossing with a light. For people like me – there needs to be a spine of the park. If you look from the Balham side, where people play football – there is no crossing there at all. When I was sighted, I drove there for many years, junction with Cedars Road – is where another zebra crossing is. There is no way for anyone to cross before that. There also needs to be some surrounding security. I went to a place in Hounslow, there they can monitor everything that is happening there. There was only one tragedy in 80s, where a woman was killed there - which means that something is good there, they must be doing something right.

ST: I agree with everything above. For events, can there be something like a priority for disabled, for people with protected characteristics. Priority passes, definitely wheelchair assistance as well. People cannot queue for too long.

Messages in the chat box read by N:

OS: *I like that, if entrances were colour coded, it'll be easier to find my way from where I came or direct friends.*

OS: *I can go to events in the summer cause it's bright out but in the winter no as I am a woman.*

LE: *Festival is no accessible or catered to ambulant or wheelchair users. Need toilet access everywhere not just the pubs. Get toilets with radar key.*

NA: For me, I haven't had any safety issues. I'd like to see a few more benches by the fishing pond, and other places around CC. Make sure there are events there that people with disabilities can take part in, not just able-bodied people.

PT: For commercial events or fenced off screening - a different commercial model could be found, to utilise the nature of the park, the area to the north by the road, utilise the sunsets, the beauty of park, enclosure of trees, like some of the open-air cinemas. Have a seater area. For example, as in Peckham Rye park, some of the events could blend themselves into the nature of the space, to a greater aesthetic effect.

EU: Most of the common is for dogs, there must be an area free of dogs. As visually impaired, we don't know what we trod on or sit on. Dog-free area – for safe clean space for people to walk on. Dogs shouldn't be allowed to use the whole space. (Note: other participants mentioned there is a small dog-free area by the Bandstand).

NA: I agree, it is not hygienic. When I see dogs, I feel uncomfortable, I'm worried about being attacked by a dog. I hardly go there in the evenings, there is usually 4-5 of us, we leave at 8pm when the sun sets in. You can come across dangerous dogs in the evenings. I'm pleased that someone has raised it.

Messages in the chat box read by N:

***LE:** Festival is not accessible or catered to ambulant or wheelchair users. Need toilet access everywhere not just the pubs. Get toilets with radar key.*

***ST:** I don't feel safe to attend any big events anymore due to my mobility but it's excellent for family and friend picnics, especially in the summer.*

***OS:** I'd like to second the benches and I have vertigo and mobility issues that means I may have to sit down.*

***BO:** I feel safe walking through the common at twilight. It is accessible for me. I am very fond of being around trees, which I love.*

***SL:** Yes, I agree to. We all take chairs and large plastic sheet (we throw away afterwards) rather than sit in the grass.*

***OS:** That's why I much prefer Brockwell Park as the flower garden is a dog free zone where I can sit and there are people volunteering in the greenhouse so if I am unwell, I know there is someone that can help.*

Q. Is moving around within the common accessible to you? Do you experience any challenges with: finding your way round? finding toilets? getting assistance if needed?

NA: Getting around if I have chronic pain, I need to sit on a bench, most I can manage is 2mins. Toilets – there should be more. As someone has mentioned, there is greenery there but there are no flowers. I go there because of the water. Sometimes you have people doing fishing, and on the other pond – also fishing, interesting. A few more benches around could be quite helpful.

LE: More benches should be added, there should be a sign on the benches to ask people to give up their seat if needed, things like a sign or someone to match it to the sign that is on the bench.

EB: What is also important is that people don't have to pay. With all what the council is doing, what tends to happen, not only in Lambeth, is that people turn around and say that people have to pay fee, and I don't want it to happen.

NI: There is a depot near the Windmill Pub, in an emergency they can be contacted there. Obviously, officers would have to be prepared, set up and trained for emergency and it needs to be indicated as one of the emergency points. There are also services around it. My main involvement now is community garden there, it's not formal, we're all volunteers and you are all welcome there on Saturday mornings or Monday afternoons. There is also the Spinney for children, Countryfile-like experience for children, there is also a playground. That part of the common has lots going for it. But I agree emergency contacts could be formalised and re-assuring. I guess staff, in their hi-vis jackets, people should be able to be approach them. There is also a degree of wildflower meadows there. It is hard to tell people where to meet like perhaps the Bandstand or the Peartree cafe. But to say how to get to it, it is quite tricky. All those things about wayfinding – should be light touch. Getting across the common – the route I mentioned – you need to be able to get onto the common and across it, with a good width. Last year, when I was a councillor, we spoke about the label 'Share with care' like the signs on the tube, to remind people that we're not all the same. That people have different support needs.

Messages in the chat box read by N throughout the conversation:

LE: *If you have mobility problems you don't want to carry chairs as it's a lot of weight. There should be something there even to hire for like £3 for example.*

EU: *I wasn't aware there was any assistance available!*

BO: *There is not enough toilets, there are not clean. I was not aware there was any assistance available.*

EU: *Or possibly seats which state 'Not all disabilities are visible'.*

NA: *I agree with the above. Not all disabilities are visible. Definitely, lighting is an issue.*

CA: *Has funding ben put aside for all these contribution suggestions?*

(Note: HR explained the funding and this longer-term study to input into action plan and funding applications)

LE: *Officers need to be all around especially summertime.*

NA: *A few of the parks in the city are dog-free. If I remember Regent's Park etc.*

EU: *Were you aware there are actually no blue badge bays around the common?*

SL: *It would be lovely to have an area set aside just for relaxation, flower beds, water fountain and light entertainment for those of us who don't go to larger events due to disabilities of every kind.*

EU: *Thank you for consulting us, I trust our views will be taken onboard.*

SO: *Priority needs to be considered for disabled people when attending events.*

NI: *A very useful session - than you contributors and organisers!*

EU: *Thank you.*

SO: *Thank you all.*

BO: Thank you for tonight. Very good and informative.

NA: Relevant events.

*NOTE: the last few questions on the presentation were not asked due to the lack of time, although they were partly addressed in the conversations above. **Is the journey to the common accessible to you? Do you have a preferred route or entrance into the common? How often you visit Clapham Common? Is the journey to the common accessible to you? What do you think could be changed in order to make the common accessible or more relevant to you?***