

Survey of Out of Town Visitors to De La Warr Pavilion Bexhill Town Centre Steering Group Summary of Results to Mid January 2012

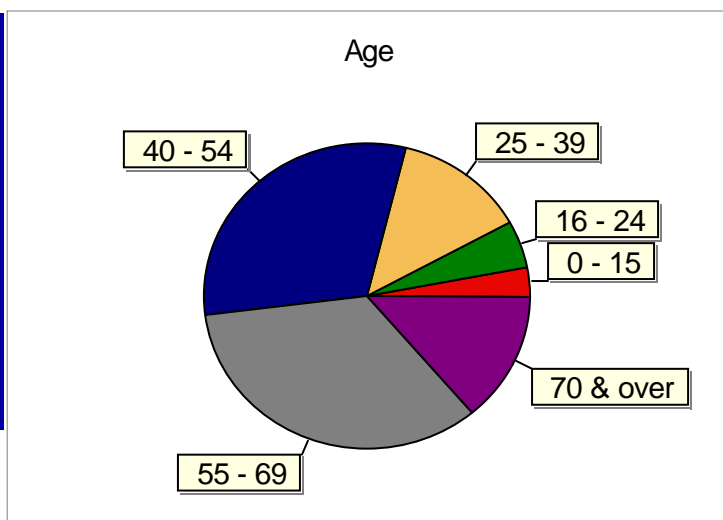
This survey was distributed in the De La Warr Pavilion between September 2011 and January 2012. Two methods were used. The survey was made available on a stand for visitors to take and fill in. In addition, the survey was distributed by hand by staff who encouraged visitors to complete the questionnaire. Staff also completed questionnaires for visitors through interview. In total 162 questionnaires were returned. This is a sufficient sample size to draw some general conclusions on out of town visitors experiences of visiting Bexhill during that time period.

Who Answered this Survey?

Two out of five respondents (43%) lived fairly close to Bexhill, mostly Hastings and St Leonards, Eastbourne, villages in Rother and other towns in East Sussex. More than one in ten or 12% came from London and 15% came from Kent. One in five people (19%) came from the rest of England, from Surrey to Yorkshire. Eight respondents came from other countries: France, Netherlands, Czech Republic, USA and Australia.

Age groups are fairly well spread. A few children answered the survey but not a large enough sample to do any analysis. Just under one third of respondents were in their forties to mid fifties (31%). Just over a third (34%) were aged 55 to 69.

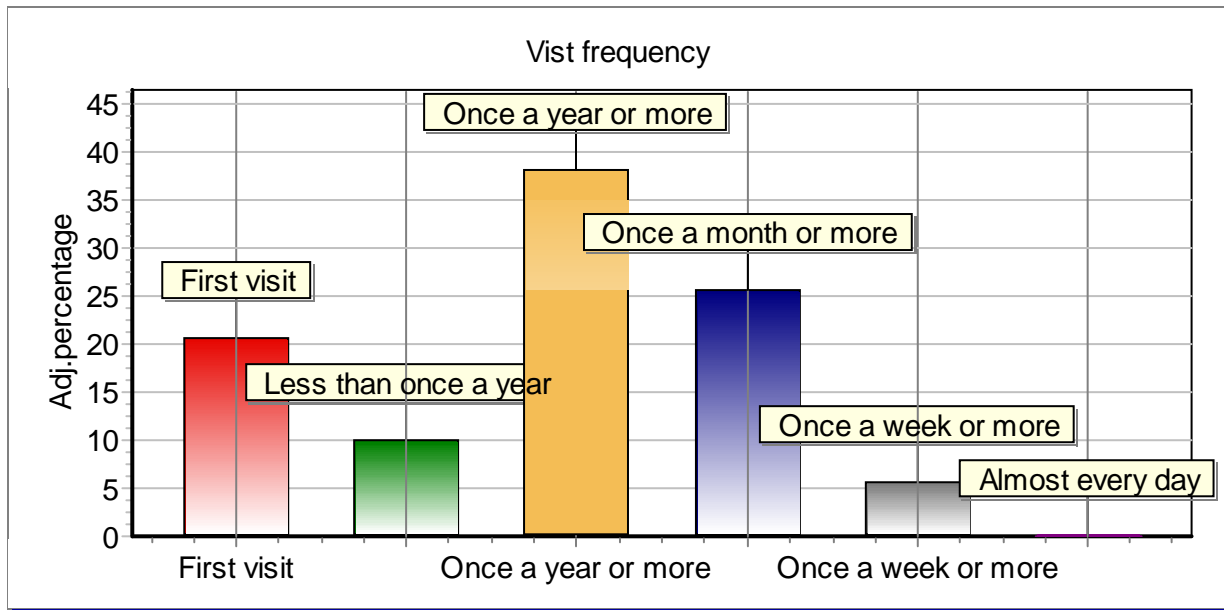
Age	Frequency	Adj. percentage
0 - 15	5	3%
16 - 24	8	5%
25 - 39	21	13%
40 - 54	49	31%
55 - 69	55	34%
70 & over	22	14%
Total	160	100



Home general analysis	Frequency	Adj. percentage
East Sussex	70	43%
London and surrounds	20	12%
Europe	6	4%
Rest of the world	2	1%
West Sussex	9	6%
Kent	24	15%
Rest of England	31	19%
Total	162	100

Vist frequency	Frequency	Adj.percentage
First visit	33	21%
Less than once a year	16	10%
Once a year or more	61	38%
Once a month or more	41	26%
Once a week or more	9	6%
Almost every day	0	0%
Total	160	100

One in five people had not visited Bexhill before (21%). Just under half visited once a year or less (48%). The remaining visitors came to Bexhill quite frequently. A quarter visit at least once a month but only a few visited once a week or more often.



Places Visited

The most popular places to visit were the seafront and beach (75%) followed by shops and cafes and restaurants. Just over one in ten visitors (12%) had limited their visit to the Pavilion. Other attractions in the area were rarely visited and even those attractions near to the seafront and the Pavilion were not visited by more than 6% of visitors. It should be taken into account that this survey was only offered in the Pavilion.

Visited places	Percentage
Shops (other than the Pavilion's)	52%
Cafe/s or restaurant/s (other than the Pavilion's)	54%
Pub or bar or wine-bar	11%
Seafront and beach	75%
Bexhill Museum	6%
Bexhill's Old Town and Manor Barn Gardens (the park in the Old Town)	3%
Egerton Park/boating lake/playground (the park one block inland from the west seafront)	5%
Leisure Centre/Leisure Pool/10 Pin Bowling Centre	3%
Just visiting the Pavilion	12%
Other places	9%
Total	230

People answering 'other places' tended to include visiting family and friends' homes.

What Out of Town Visitors Liked About Bexhill Town Centre, Agreeing with Residents

Where visitors agree with residents about what they like about Bexhill is primarily on the quiet and safe atmosphere, which was selected by three out of five respondents (60%). Half of visitors agreed that they liked Bexhill for friendly people (49%) and free on street car parking (54%). Just under half (44%) liked the large number of independent shops. Additional suggestions tended to be comments about the liking the beach and seafront.

Like	Frequency	Percentage
Large number of independent or family run shops	72	44%
Unusual and/or unique shops	58	36%
Free on-street car parking	88	54%
Shopping streets close to the seafront	69	43%
Shopping streets close to De La Warr Pavilion	54	33%
Quiet and safe atmosphere	97	60%
Friendly people	79	49%
Anything else?	38	23%
Total	555	343

Why Pavilion Visitors Don't Visit Elsewhere in Bexhill

Two thirds of visitors who only went to the Pavilion (68%) say that they lacked time to visit other places in Bexhill. One in five (21%) said they were not interested in the other attractions.

Reason not visiting	Frequency	Adj. percentage
Lack of time	26	68%
Not interested	8	21%
Didn't know about them	3	8%
Limited budget	1	3%
Couldn't find them	0	0%
Total	38	100

It does not appear to be a problem about people knowing what else is on offer in the town, the cost of other attractions or their location. Time and interest are the main factors. However, interest may be improved by knowing more about what else is on offer.

What Would Make Visitors Visit More Often

In this section of the survey we tested the suggestions made by Rother residents on ways to improve the town centre. We tried to find out if out of town visitors felt that providing more in these areas would influence them to visit Bexhill more often. This could then inform the priority the Council could give to improvements where they wished to increase out of town visitors.

Events and Festivals

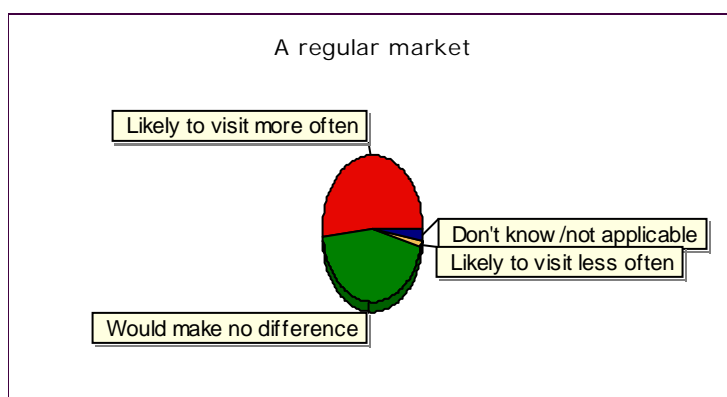
Events and festivals	Frequency	percentage
Likely to visit more often	109	72%
Would make no difference	35	23%
Likely to visit less often	4	3%
Don't know/not applicable	4	3%
Total	152	100

This was the most popular suggestion with out of town visitors and nearly three quarter of them felt events and festivals would make them visit more often. Just over one in five said it would make no difference. Very few people felt it would have a negative effect. This might be a high priority area for attracting more out of town visitors.

A Regular Street Market

Half of the respondents felt they would visit Bexhill more often if there are a regular street market. Two out of five (44%) said it would make no difference and only 1% felt it would have a negative effect. This might be a high priority area.

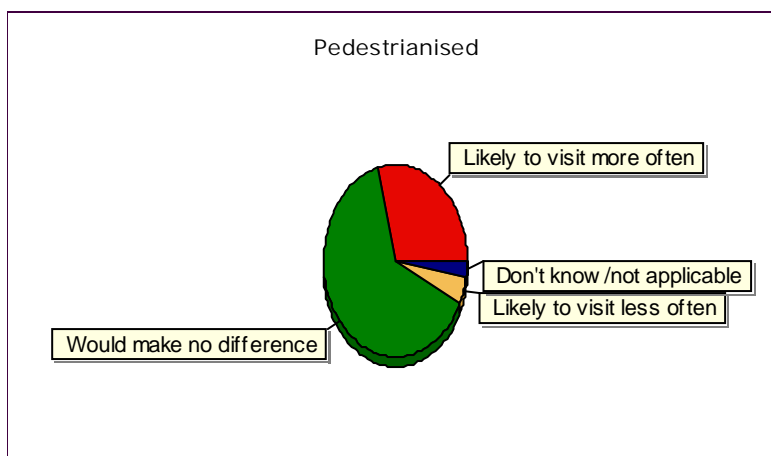
A regular market	frequency	percentage
Likely to visit more often	76	52%
Would make no difference	65	44%
Likely to visit less often	2	1%
Don't know/not applicable	4	3%
Total	147	100



Pedestrianised Street or Streets

Only just under a third (29%) of out of town visitors said pedestrianised streets would make them visit more often. Just over two thirds (64%) said it would make no difference. This might be a low priority area for attracting more out of town visitors.

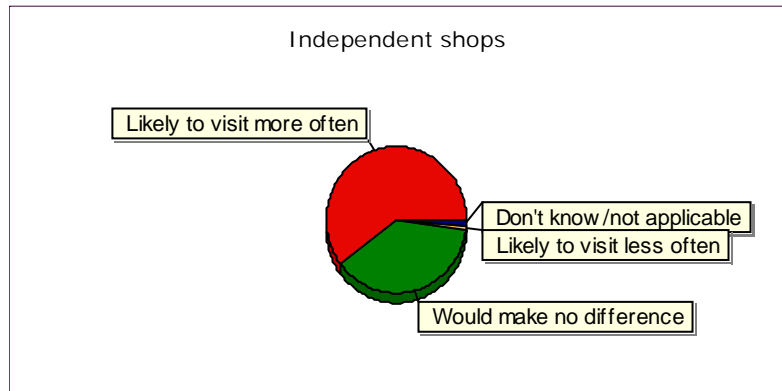
Pedestrianised	frequency	percentage
Likely to visit more often	41	29%
Would make no difference	90	64%
Likely to visit less often	6	4%
Don't know/not applicable	4	3%
Total	141	100



More Unique or Independent Shops

This was another significantly good response from out of town visitors. Three out of five (60%) would be more likely to visit if Bexhill had more unique or independent shops. Just under two out of five (38%) said it would make no difference. This might be a high priority area for attracting more out of town visitors.

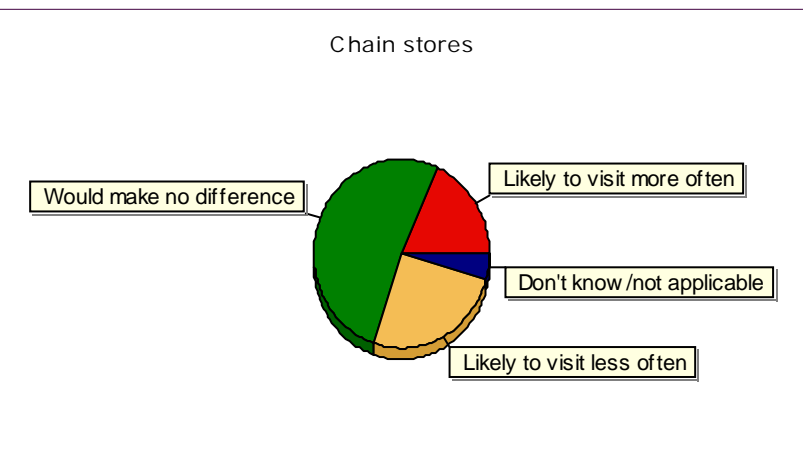
Independent shops	frequency	percent
Likely to visit more often	85	60%
Would make no difference	53	38%
Likely to visit less often	1	1%
Don't know/not applicable	2	1%
Total	141	100



More Large Chain Stores

Where unique shops are popular, chain stores were less so for Bexhill's visitors. Only just under one in five respondents felt it would make them visit more often if Bexhill had more chain stores. This is one of the few suggestions that many respondents felt would actively discourage them. Over one in four respondents said they would be less likely to visit with more chain stores. In fact it would put more people off visiting than would be encouraged to visit. Half of people said it would make no difference. This might be a low priority area for attracting out of town visitors.

Chain stores	frequency	percent
Likely to visit more often	26	18%
Would make no difference	73	51%
Likely to visit less often	37	26%
Don't know/not applicable	6	4%
Total	142	100



More Trees and Flowers in the Shopping Streets

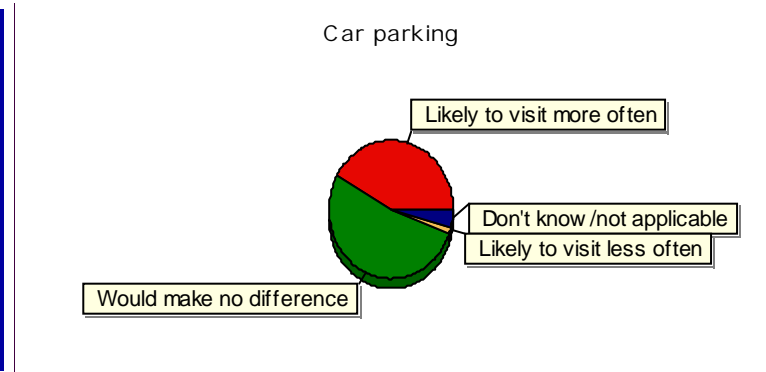
Trees flowers	Frequency	Adj. percentage
Likely to visit more often	59	42%
Would make no difference	78	55%
Likely to visit less often	0	0%
Don't know/not applicable	4	3%
Total	141	100

It would appear that more trees and flowers does appeal to some people. Two out of five respondents felt it would encourage them to visit more often. But just over half of out of town visitors said it would make no difference. This might be a medium priority area for attracting more visits.

More Car Parking on Offer

This result was more of a surprise. It appears that only two out of five (42%) out of town visitors felt that more car parking would make any difference on how often they visited Bexhill. Considering the response on car parking from residents, it would have been expected to be more important to those who have had to travel further. Just over half of visitors said it would make no difference (52%). This might be a medium priority area for attracting more visitors from out of town.

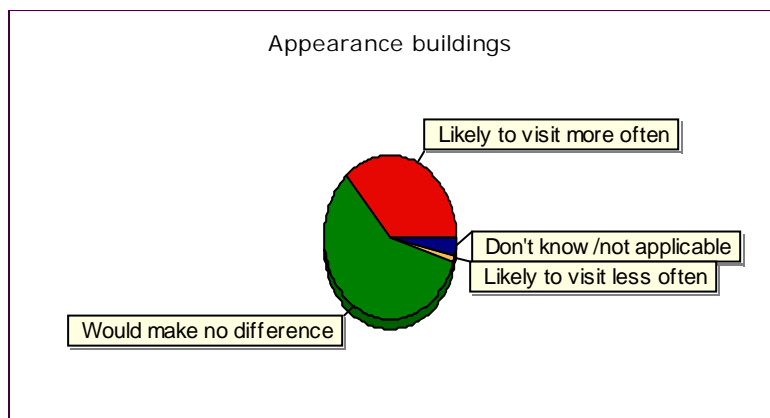
Car parking	frequency	percentage
Likely to visit more often	61	42%
Would make no difference	76	52%
Likely to visit less often	2	1%
Don't know/not applicable	6	4%
Total	145	100



Smarter Appearance of Buildings

Just over one third (36%) would be likely to visit more often if the town had a smarter appearance. But three out of five people (59%) said it would make no difference to how often they visited. This might be a low priority area for improvement for attracting visitors.

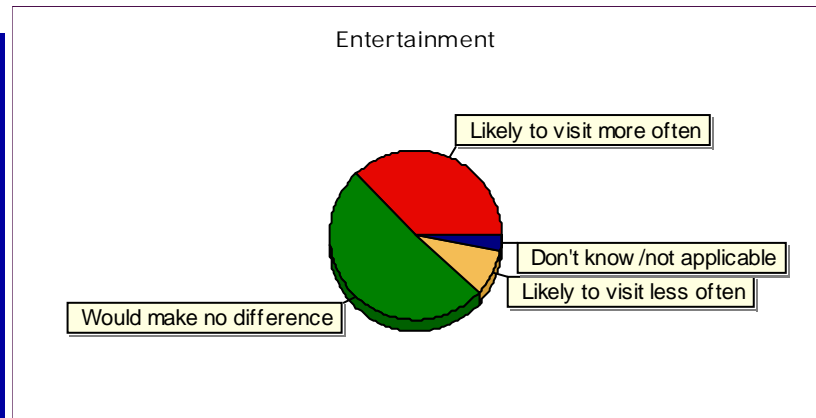
Appearance buildings	frequency	percentage
Likely to visit more often	52	36%
Would make no difference	84	59%
Likely to visit less often	2	1%
Don't know/not applicable	5	3%
Total	143	100



More Places of Entertainment (Cinema, Clubs...)

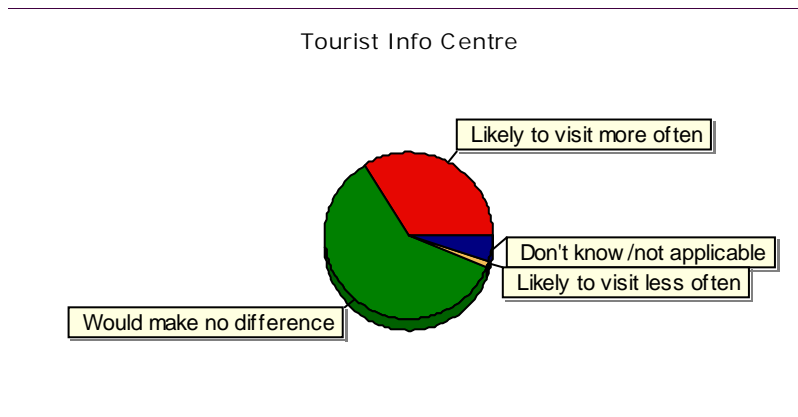
Half of respondents said more places of entertainment would make no difference. Just over a third said it would make them more likely to visit more often. Interestingly, just under one in ten people said more entertainment would make them less likely to visit. This might be a medium priority area.

Entertainment	frequency	percentage
Likely to visit more often	53	37%
Would make no difference	73	51%
Likely to visit less often	13	9%
Don't know/not applicable	4	3%
Total	143	100



A Tourist Information Centre

Tourist Info Centre	reque	percent
Likely to visit more often	49	34%
Would make no difference	87	60%
Likely to visit less often	2	1%
Don't know/not applicable	7	5%
Total	145	100

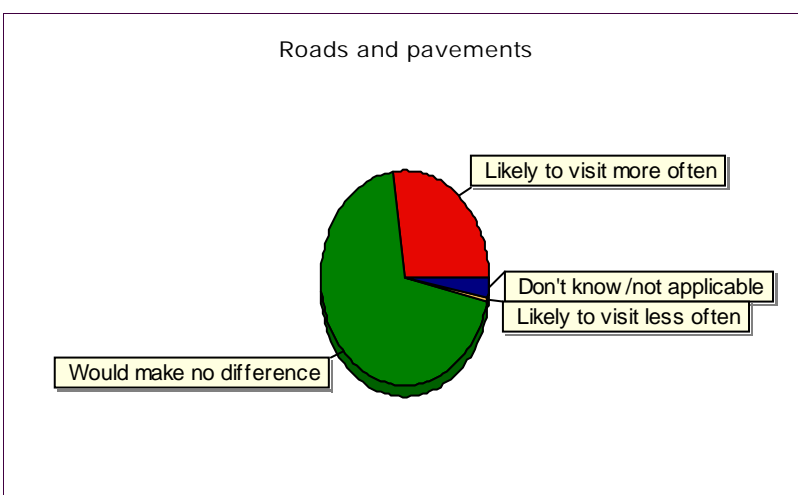


Despite being a facility for tourists, only one in three (34%) of out of town visitors said that a TIC would make them more likely to visit more often. Two out of five said it would make no difference to how often they visited (60%). This might be a low priority area to attract out of town visitors.

Better Maintained Roads and Pavements

Seven out of ten (69%) out of town visitors replied that maintenance of roads and pavements makes no difference to how often they would visit Bexhill. Just under three out of ten (27%) said it would make them visit more often. This might be a low priority area to attract out of town visitors.

Roads and pavements	reque	percent
Likely to visit more often	39	27%
Would make no difference	98	69%
Likely to visit less often	1	1%
Don't know/not applicable	4	3%
Total	142	100



Additional Comments

All respondents were left room to make additional comments on their answers and also to make their own suggestions for improving Bexhill. They are listed in Appendix A. Mainly the comments related to the seafront and beach and the De La Warr Pavilion, mainly positive. There were some suggestions about improvements regarding shopping opportunities and supporting businesses. Most of the comments spoke of things that they valued about Bexhill and they are useful in gaining an insight into what visitors would wish to see preserved.

Conclusion

The survey was a useful exercise in checking what out of town visitors currently value about Bexhill and what would influence them to visit more often. In this way, we have tested some of our other research to see if it is giving us workable ideas for future developments. It has also helped identify some priority areas as they might affect non-residents.