

Campaigners from Car Free Holyrood Park say Historic Environment Scotland have ‘no more excuses’

Survey results show clear support for getting rid of traffic in the park.

This is a comment piece by Car Free Holyrood – a group which campaigns for a traffic free park. The park is managed by Historic Environment Scotland who recently conducted a traffic management [survey](#).



Holyrood Park. Photo: © 2021, Martin P. McAdam

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A spokesperson for Car Free Holyrood writes:

Excuses are running out for why Historic Environment Scotland continue to allow private motor vehicle traffic through the historic site and the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Holyrood Park, as their own survey shows widespread support for current and further restrictions on car usage in the park.

Newly released findings from last year's Traffic Management Survey conducted by Historic Environment Scotland include 62% of respondents saying they 'would like to see further road closures for vehicles in Holyrood Park', while 73% agreed that 'closing the road on both Saturdays and Sundays has made the park a more pleasant place to spend time'.

Drilling down into the results, it's clear that many of the nearly 4,000 respondents to the survey live locally, with 70% saying they visited the park at least weekly. The aspects of the park most enjoyed by its users are those most negatively impacted by the continued presence of traffic through the park. For example, 82% of respondents use the park for 'leisurely walking', 71% for '[getting] some fresh air and for mental wellbeing' and 47% for 'hiking, jogging or running'.

All of these are negatively impacted by the noise, pollution and danger posed by motor vehicles.

Comments from people visiting the park with children were particularly grateful for traffic-free roads, one respondent said that roads being closed to vehicles 'totally transforms the experience of visiting the park for me and my two children. It creates a safe and peaceful environment where I don't have to worry about the danger of speeding cars.'

Many respondents also called for the need to make changes during the ongoing climate emergency.

One respondent said: “The climate crisis demands we move away from private vehicles rapidly. Any opportunity should be taken especially where it creates a high-quality active travel route with little to no investment.”

Regardless of their opinion about road closures in the park, all respondents wanted the park to be accessible for all. Some raised concerns about how access could be achieved if cars could not be used as mobility aids within the park, however others suggested a number of ways to open up accessibility, including for the many visitors who don't have access to a private motor vehicle or family who could drive them around the park.

[Car Free Holyrood](#) strongly believe that it's time for Historic Environment Scotland to act upon these results by closing the park-roads to through-traffic and enabling access for those with mobility needs through an Inclusive Access Hub. Such a hub could provide access for all, including those who don't have a car, by providing mobility scooters, wheelchair attachments, and other mobility aids suitable for use in the park. We are currently trying to work with HES to start a [Cycling Without Age](#) Scotland chapter and encourage them to overcome bureaucratic hurdles so the community can start this trial and open up a new way to experience the park on trishaws piloted by volunteers.

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