

November 2025

# Parks, pride and place

The role green spaces can  
play in building pride in  
place and support at the  
ballot box

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More in  
Common

Wates Family  
ENTERPRISE TRUST



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## About More in Common

More in Common is a think tank and research agency working to bridge the gap between policymakers and the public and helping people in Westminster to understand those voters who feel ignored or overlooked by those in power. Our British Seven segmentation provides a unique lens for understanding what the public think and why. We've published ground-breaking reports on a range of issues from climate and refugees to culture wars to crime. We are a full-service research agency offering polling and focus group research and are members of the British Polling Council.

We are grateful to the Wates Family Enterprise Trust for supporting this work. We also acknowledge the contribution of the Town and Country Planning Association for their advice as we conducted the research for this report and are thankful for the Green Infrastructure Partnership's willingness to share their expertise and on the ground experience of the issues explored in this report.

More in Common has retained full editorial control over this report.

## Foreword

Britain has long held a public who love and care deeply for our environment. From the national symbols of the oak tree to the red rose, nature is the force which unites us across even the deepest political divides.

From our Trust's work across the country with challenged communities, we know things are tough right now. People want change. This report highlights a growing malaise among the public that those in power cannot improve their lives. And yet it also highlights a great opportunity. It makes clear that a programme to improve the quality and condition of Britons' green spaces in our cities, towns and neighbourhoods can act as an important tonic to this rising discontent.

The research comes at a time when we're seeing the success of politicians who make people feel heard, and a time when neighbourhood-level community empowerment approaches are being incredibly well received. The writing is on the wall. The answers are held within communities, but they need support.

On this note, the research offers valuable guidance. Britons' key asks are not requests for large infrastructure but a bid for their communities to be involved in shaping and stewarding their green and blue spaces. Spaces which we know have myriad co-benefits, and the power to transform local ecosystems and the health and well-being of all who live, work, and play locally. Evidence shows that the benefits from such spaces reap multiple savings from the public purse in the long term – health needs can be supported, anti-social behaviour reduced, and community resilience strengthened.

This report demonstrates that green spaces are a major source of pride and enjoyment for Britons of all backgrounds. It powerfully corrects any assumption that there is no political benefit for politicians who make the protection and improvement of Britain's green spaces a priority.

It should give our sector confidence that Britons share our passion for nature. By enabling a better understanding of how Britons conceive of urban green spaces and their benefits and what they want policymakers to do to improve them, this report represents a valuable resource for policymakers, local authorities and those working across the field.

With public trust in politics and the perceived ability of government to deliver meaningful improvements to Britons' lives so low, the report's demonstration that improving green spaces can help rebuild public confidence is more important than ever.

My hope is that this report will encourage readers to go out and improve their communities and green spaces however they can, be that policy change, community empowerment or getting their hands in the soil. This mission is not only a moral imperative but one that is vital for tackling the forces that are driving our communities apart.

Parks, Pride and Place

*Jonny Wates, Trustee, Wates Family Enterprise Trust*

<https://www.wfet.org.uk/sustainability/>

## Executive Summary

The founding motivations for this report were quite unique.

Each month More in Common is privileged to organise and moderate dozens of focus groups to hear the views of Britons of all backgrounds and political inclinations up and down the country. At the start of our focus group discussions, to make participants feel comfortable sharing their views, we ask an icebreaker question. Often we ask “*what is the best thing about where you live?*” Regardless of where participants are from, whether it is urban or rural, whether they are young or old or what their voting preferences are, almost always a majority of participants will say one thing: their local parks and green spaces.

This made us question why if Britons love their parks and green spaces so much, are they rarely, if at all, considered a political priority by policymakers? From conversations with policymakers and green space and nature campaigners it became clear that this is because there is an assumption that there is little political credit and few votes to be won on this issue.

It is this assumption that this report seeks to test.

This report, drawing on a survey of 3,000 Britons and four focus groups of voters in the key electoral battlegrounds of Wakefield, Scunthorpe, Grimsby and inner city Birmingham, provides a comprehensive analysis of Britons' attitudes towards green spaces.

Parks and green spaces are indeed Britons' biggest source of local pride. This is the case for voters of every political party and six of More in Common's seven segments - demonstrating their potential as a unifying source of local pride.

Our research also found that Britons see, define and value green spaces in a more instrumental way than some in the nature sector traditionally have. When Britons conceive of high-quality green spaces they focus on their enjoyment of them rather than the intrinsic environmental value they might possess.

The enjoyment Britons gain from their green spaces is rich and multi-faceted. However, Britons are clear that the mental health benefits they see spending time in green spaces as bringing are the most important benefit they offer - this is true for voters of all parties and six of the seven segments. It is clear that green spaces play a vital role in allowing Britons to decompress from their increasingly stressful lives.

While Britons' experiences of accessing their green spaces are broadly positive, there are real barriers which are restricting their enjoyment of them. Anti-social behaviour and a lack of safety are the biggest barriers stopping Britons from spending more time in their green spaces. A failure to tackle this and to keep parks and green spaces well maintained and clear of litter is, for many Britons, driving a sense that their local communities are in decline and those in power don't care about addressing this.

Our research indicates there would likely be widespread support for any reasonable form of government action to improve Britons' parks and green spaces. However, Britons also want government, both at the national and local level, to empower local communities with the resources they need to take stewardship and responsibility for improving their own green spaces.

While important in their own right, Britain's parks and green spaces also have the potential to play a much bigger role in reversing the pessimism and frustration that is currently dominating public mood in Britain. A sense that those in power aren't capable of delivering improvements to Britons' lives and communities is driving this anger.

The government's recent recognition of the importance of this through their Pride in Place Strategy is wise. Britons want their parks and green spaces to form a key part of restoring pride back into their communities and believe funding to support the improvement of green spaces is the second most effective of the potential uses of the £5 billion Pride in Place funding pot.

An additional statistical 'maxdiff' experiment also reveals that though not quite as large as addressing the cost of living or NHS waiting lists, improving the quality of Britain's parks and green spaces presents a significant opportunity to improve Britons' confidence in government to improve their lives and local communities - an opportunity of greater magnitude than the reduction of legal migration levels represents.

If politicians, at all levels, want to protect or grow their support amid growing anti-system sentiment in Britain then they must persuade voters that they are capable of improving their lives and communities. Focusing on protecting the quality of the one thing, parks and green spaces, Britons are most proud of is clearly a good starting point for achieving this.

## The seven segments

Using extensive research into Britons' core beliefs, their values and behaviours, More in Common has developed a unique segmentation of the British public. This segmentation allows us to look upstream not just at what different groups think, but why they think it, reflecting fundamental differences between groups in how they relate to authority, change, community and the future.

More in Common's analysis produces seven segments within the British population, which are referred to throughout this report:

### **Progressive Activists - 12 per cent of the population**

A highly engaged and globally-minded group driven by concerns about social justice. Politically active but feeling increasingly alienated from mainstream party politics, they prioritise issues such as climate change and international affairs. Occasionally outliers on social issues, they maintain a strongly held and sometimes uncompromising approach to their beliefs.

### **Incrementalist Left - 21 per cent of the population**

A civic-minded, community-oriented group holding views which are generally left-of-centre but with an aversion to the extreme; they prefer gradual reform over revolutionary change. They trust experts and institutions yet are largely tuned out of day-to-day politics and can be conflict-averse, stepping away from issues they see as particularly fraught or complex.

### **Established Liberals - 9 per cent of the population**

A prosperous, confident segment who believe the system broadly works as it is and who trust experts to deliver continued progress. They have a strong belief in individual agency which can make them less empathetic to those who are struggling. Institutionally trusting, they maintain faith in democratic processes and have a strong information-centric way of engaging with issues.

### **Sceptical Scrollers - 10 per cent of the population**

A digitally-native group whose unhappiness with the social contract means they have lost faith in traditional institutions and seek alternative sources of truth online. Often shaped by their experience of the Covid pandemic, they prefer individual influencers over mainstream media and are increasingly drawn to conspiratorial thinking.

### **Rooted Patriots - 20 per cent of the population**

A patriotic but politically untethered group which feels abandoned and overlooked by political elites and yearns for leaders with common sense, but does not want to overthrow the system as a whole. They are particularly concerned about community decline and the pressures of migration. Interventionist on economics but conservative on social issues, they have shaped much of Britain's politics over the past decade.

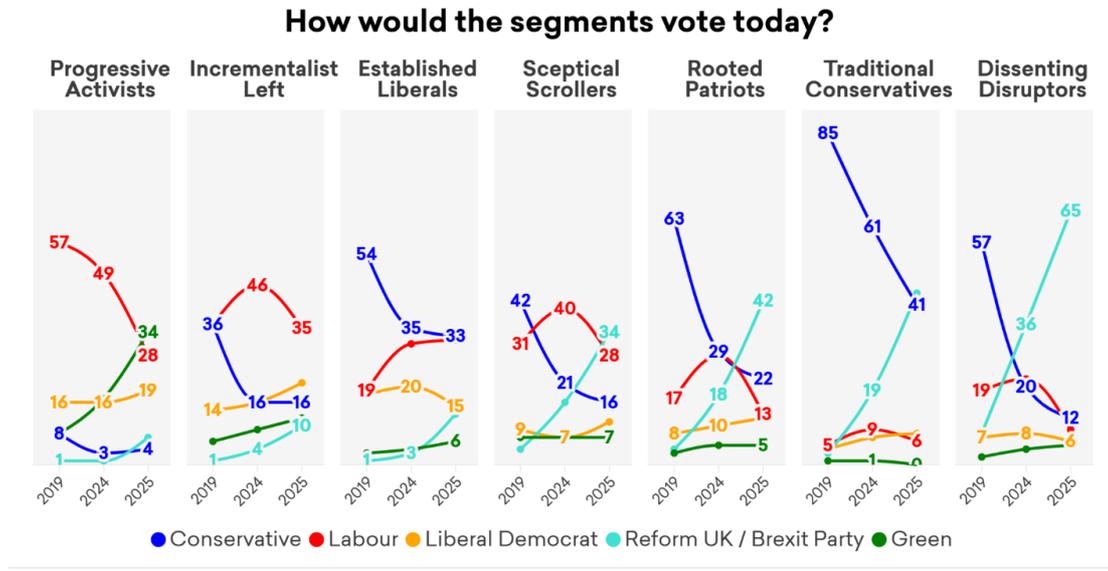
**Traditional Conservatives - 8 per cent of the population**

Respectful of authority and tradition, Traditional Conservatives believe in individual responsibility and established norms that have served them well. Nostalgic for the past but optimistic about the future, they are deeply sceptical of many forces of change such as immigration or the path to net-zero.

**Dissenting Disruptors - 20 per cent of the population**

Frustrated with their circumstances and with an appetite for radical solutions, Dissenting Disruptors crave dramatic change and strong leadership. Highly distrustful of institutions, opposed to multiculturalism and feeling disconnected from society, they are drawn to political movements that promise to overhaul the status quo and put people like them first.

Voting patterns of the Segments



More in Common • September 2025  
2025 data is current voting intention, 2019 and 2024 is recalled General Election vote

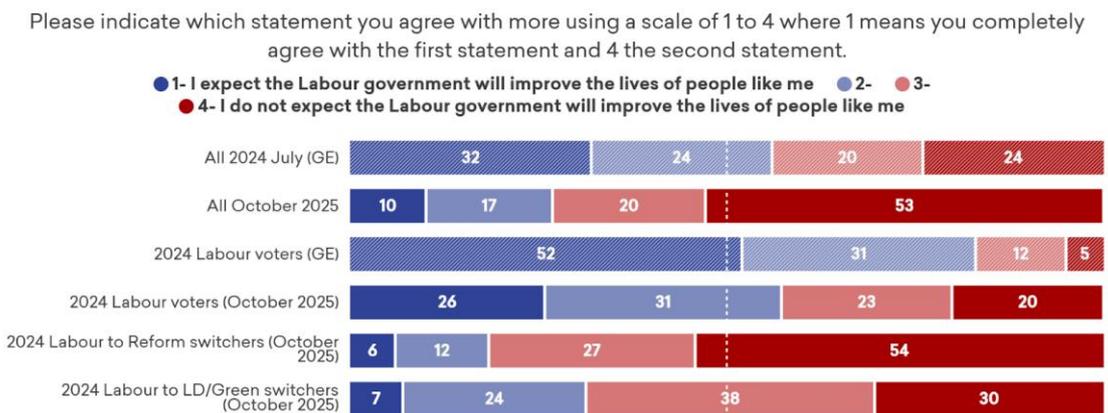
## The Backdrop - a collapse in confidence in government's ability to make things better

Over the last year, More in Common's research has painted a bleak picture of the British public's mood. Britons feel their own personal lives are becoming more and more of a struggle, while many, and particularly those who now intend to vote for Reform UK, feel that the condition of their local communities is in decline as well. Increasingly, disillusionment is turning into anger at those in power.

While this frustration with the state and direction of Britain is being channelled towards multiple targets there is a common cause: a sense that politicians and those in power aren't capable of improving Britons' lives and communities.

As More in Common's [Change Pending report](#) showed, Britons voted for change at the last General Election. For Labour supporters a desire for change was the dominant driver of their vote. Labour voters, and Britons overall, had genuine hope that a Labour government would be capable of delivering this change. Asked immediately after the General Election, 54 per cent of Britons and 84 per cent of 2024 Labour voters said they expected the Labour government to improve the lives of people like them. Just over a year later, the proportion of Britons who think the government will improve the lives of people like them has halved to just 27 per cent - among 2024 Labour voters just 57 per cent say they expect the government to improve their lives.

### Confidence in the government's ability to improve Britons' lives has halved since the General Election



More in Common • October 2025 & July 2024

This collapse in confidence in government to make things better extends to Britons' local communities as well as their own lives. Three quarters (74 per cent) of Britons do not expect the Labour government to help improve their local area or community. From our focus group conversations in Wakefield, Scunthorpe, Grimsby and inner city Birmingham it

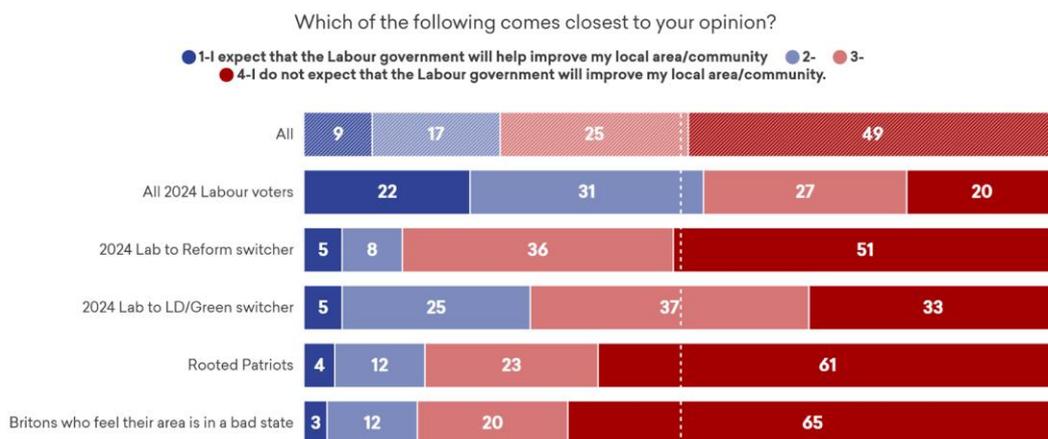
became clear that in areas of the country that have become ‘left-behind’, pride in place and confidence in government to improve their communities was even lower. Indeed, among those who say their local area is in a bad state, confidence is even lower than it is across the public as a whole: 85 per cent of Britons who think their area is in a bad state do not expect the government to improve their local communities.

**“I think what people are forgetting is that all these parks, what’s the common thing they have amongst each other? They’re maintained and owned by the city council, local authorities they’re all bankrupt. So that’s the reason why in the last year or so there’s been a decline in the state of these parks. Some people have obviously mentioned community spirit, community pride, that does have a link to it. Ultimately the parks are cleaned, maintained, repaired by the council which is currently bankrupt”.**

**Mohammed, a security guard living in Birmingham**

It is clear that this sense that Labour won’t improve Britons’ lives and communities is driving their post-election collapse in support. 81 per cent of Labour to Reform switchers and 68 per cent of Labour to Lib Dem/Green switchers believe Labour won’t improve their lives while 87 per cent of Labour to Reform switchers and 70 per cent of Labour to Lib Dem/Green switchers believe the government will not help improve their local communities.

### Just a quarter of Britons expect the government to improve their local communities



In the public’s eyes, blame for the feeling that those in power are incapable of making improvements to their lives and communities extends beyond simple incompetence. Increasingly, ordinary Britons feel that those in power do not care about them or their local communities. 84 per cent of Britons believe that politicians do not care about people like

themselves, while 77 per cent believe politicians don't care about areas like their own local community. While dislike and negative perceptions of the motivations of politicians is nothing new, this sense that those in power don't even care about ordinary Britons' problems should create real worry for those seeking to preserve Britain's political institutions and systems.

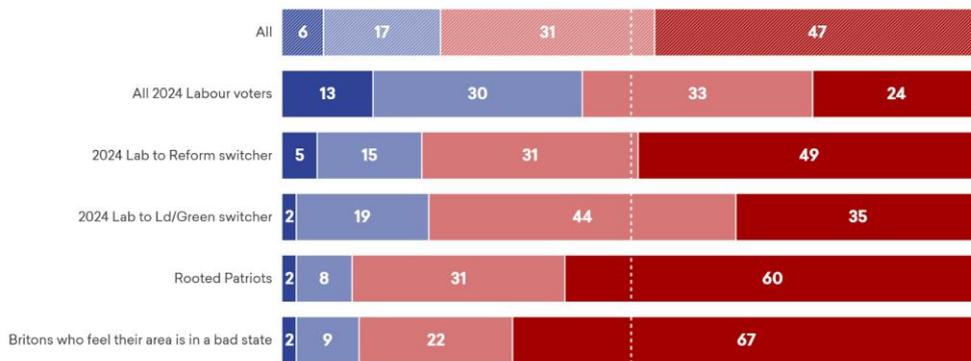
**“We need people that care about our communities. The council don't care about our community. So we need to make sure the people getting funding do care about our community”.**

**Stacey, a homemaker living in Grimsby**

**Britons overwhelmingly feel that politicians do not care about their local communities**

Please indicate which statement you agree with more using a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 means you completely agree with the first statement and 4 the second statement.

● 1- Politicians care about areas like my local community ● 2- ● 3- ● 4- Politicians do not care about areas like my local community

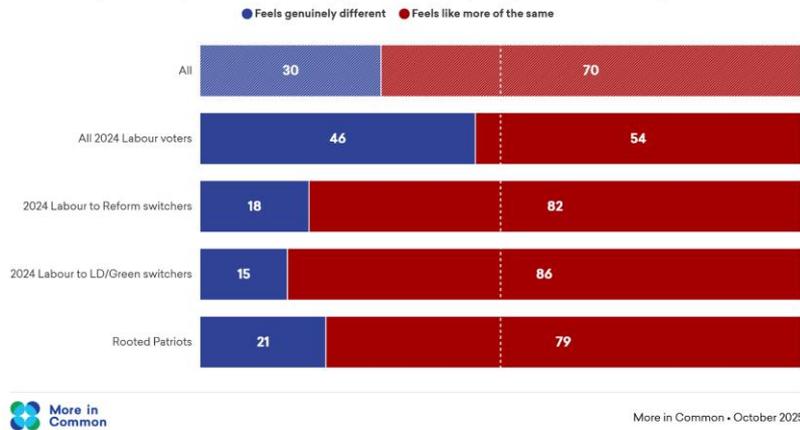


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This perception that Labour is incapable of improving Britons' lives and communities has fed into a belief that the party represents a continuation of the previous Conservative governments, rather than the change Britons voted for at the last election. Asked directly, seven in ten (70 per cent) Britons say the new government feels like more of the same rather than genuinely different when compared to the previous Conservative government. A majority (54 per cent) of Labour's own 2024 voters say the new government feels like more of the same with 82 per cent of Labour to Reform switchers and 86 per cent of Labour to Lib Dem/Green switchers saying this.

**Britons, including a majority of 2024 Labour voters, don't think this government represents change from their Conservative predecessors**

Compared to our previous Conservative government, would you say that our new Labour government...



This perceived lack of change is also driving a particularly acute problem for Labour in areas that feel ‘left behind’. Labour is retaining 84 per cent of their 2024 voters who feel that politicians **do** care about areas like their local community but just 51 per cent of their voters who feel politicians **do not** care about areas like their local community. This holds huge political ramifications for the party in the Red Wall. Indeed, among More in Common’s Rooted Patriots, the segment most likely to feel that politicians don’t care about areas like their local community and the segment that best captures Red Wall voters, perceptions of Labour representing more of the same are even more entrenched than they are with British public as a whole and belief that Labour will not improve their local area is ten percentage points higher than among Britons overall.

**“There’s not a lot of things for people to do. There is nothing. Half the pubs are closing, so you’ve got no night life if you wanted to go out, but there’s just nothing in the precinct that you could go and do here...”**

**Debbie, works in a Chinese takeaway in Grimsby**



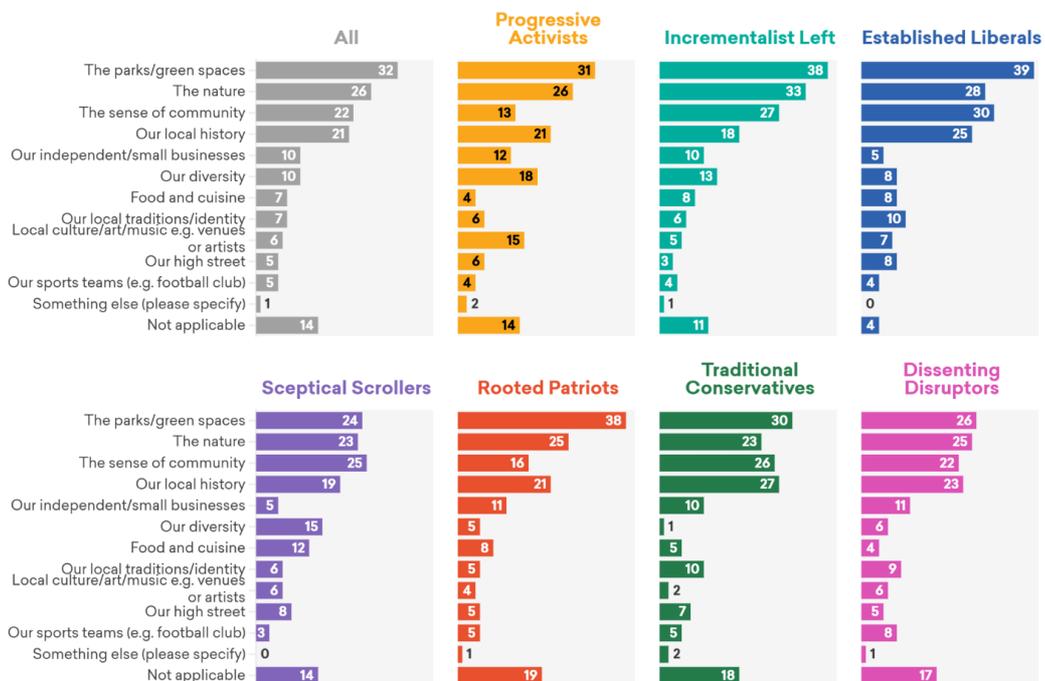
**“We lose a lot of green spaces due to housing development and things like that. And it's only increasing with the more people that we have in the UK. We need the housing obviously. But these green spaces are important for when you just need to just let go of all of the people running around your mind and being in your ear and things like that. So I think that the value of nature is actually really big for a lot of people and especially for me, the nature for me is really, really important”.**

**Georgie, an administrator living in Scunthorpe**

Crucially, while policymakers can sometimes assume that a love of parks and green spaces is the preserve of only middle class liberals, this is simply not the case. Parks and green spaces are the biggest source of local pride for six of our seven segments, with Sceptical Scrollers the sole exception, and are a greater source of local pride for our Red Wall style Rooted Patriots than the Progressive Activists who dominate much of the environmental movement. This unity also extends to political parties as parks and green spaces are the top source of local pride for both the 2024 and current voters of every party - with those currently intending to vote Reform fractionally more likely to opt for parks and green spaces than those currently intending to vote Labour.

### Parks and green spaces are the biggest source of local pride for six of our seven segments

Thinking about where you are from, what makes you most proud of your local area?



Similarly, a strong appreciation of local parks and green spaces extends beyond those with the greatest access to them. Parks and green spaces are the largest source of local pride

for those living in urban and city centre areas. Urbanite Britons are more likely to say parks and green spaces are their greatest source of local pride than Britons overall, while those living in large towns are the most likely of all Britons to say parks and green spaces are their greatest source of local pride. Britons across the income distribution are also unified on the important role of parks and green spaces in building community pride. With the exception of those with middling household incomes (those earning between £40,000 and £50,000 and £50,000 and £60,000,) parks and green spaces are the biggest source of local pride for all income groups. The prioritisation of green spaces only falls among middle-income groups because of their disproportional citing of local nature as a source of local pride.

### Parks and green spaces are just as important sources of pride for those in urban areas as they are for those in rural areas

Thinking about where you are from, what makes you most proud of your local area?



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The government has recently recognised the importance of place-making and restoring pride into Britain’s communities through its Pride in Place Strategy. In focus group conversations, a sense that their public spaces are crumbling and their towns and communities are in decline is for many Britons at the heart of driving their perception that Britain is broken. This pervasive sense of decline and feeling of ‘Broken Britain’ among the public will only start being tackled when Britons feel the visible problems in their communities and shared spaces, including their parks and green spaces, are beginning to be addressed.

**“God, what's my favourite thing about Grimsby? I don't really know. It's a bit of a shithole... I guess if you look out to the sea then you don't realise you're living in this dump”.**

**Tom, works in an auction house living in Grimsby**

Though they are not without their own challenges, which will be examined in greater detail later on in this report, Britain's parks and green spaces are one of the few things people in this country still feel positively towards. If the government is to achieve its ambition of restoring pride in place then ensuring the one thing going well in the public's eyes, our parks and green spaces, are looked after so they can continue to be a source of local pride would be wise.

## What are these green spaces that Britons love so much?

Discussions with the nature and green spaces sector threw up a number of definitions of what a good quality green space is. In early focus group conversations there was no single consensus on what a 'green space' meant among participants although there was a stronger emphasis on local parks and a lighter focus on the more expansive definition of green spaces, inclusive of things like verges, which the sector deploys. It was clear that green spaces mean different things for different people and in different places.<sup>1</sup>

To more robustly understand what Britons understand 'green spaces' to mean a photo-based experiment was run in the quantitative survey. Participants were randomly shown photographs of up to four out of eight different green spaces, of varying quality, and asked to rate how much of a green space they considered them to be on a ten point scale where zero denoted a space that was not at all a green space and 10 denoted a completely green space.

This experiment indicated the existence of a small but important difference between the nature sector and the general public on the definition of a green space. While greater emphasis is placed on the importance of nature and biodiversity in green spaces by some campaigners, the general public's criteria of what constitutes a green space is more lenient and simple. Among the public, a photo of a nature depleted community football pitch, with a mean score of 7.3 out of 10, outperformed a photo of a community flower garden in a park full of trees and richer biodiversity - mean score of 6.7 out of 10. The full set of photos shown to the public, and their mean scores, can be found in the report appendix.

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<sup>1</sup> *Conscious of these different interpretations of green spaces, participants, after completing the photo exercise, were shown the following definition of green spaces and instructed that this is what would be meant by green spaces in subsequent survey questions. By 'green space' we mean any green area in a town or city that is freely open to the public – for instance parks, playing fields, community gardens, river banks or canal sides, woodlands, or grassy areas between houses or at the edges of roads*

	<p><u>Football pitch</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Average score by public: 7.3/10</li></ul>
	<p><u>Community Flower Garden</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Average score by public: 6.7/10</li></ul>

Those living further from green spaces have lower expectations of what constitutes a green space. With the exception of a photo of a valley replete with natural trees and grass, which 81 per cent of Britons ranked as a completely green (10 out of 10), those living in urban areas and those living more than a 20 minute walk away from a green space were more likely to rank all of our photos with higher scores, suggesting their bar for what constitutes a green space is lower. In the parts of Britain where access to quality green spaces and nature is lowest, given these reduced expectations, even small improvements to local parks and green spaces could generate real rewards and credit for those delivering them.

## Why do Britons love their green spaces so much?

### The attributes which make a green space a high quality one

While Britons may not be unified over the definition of a green space, there is greater public consensus on what makes a green space a high quality one: good quality nature and cleanliness. Asked directly what features make a green space a high-quality green space, two in five Britons (41 per cent) say diverse natural wildlife and plants making it the most important factor. Proper maintenance of the grass, plants and natural features, free entry and the space being clean and free from litter or vandalism were other top factors.

**“For me, I just like sitting and being able to sit and listen to birds”.**

**Stuart, out of work due to disability living in Wakefield**

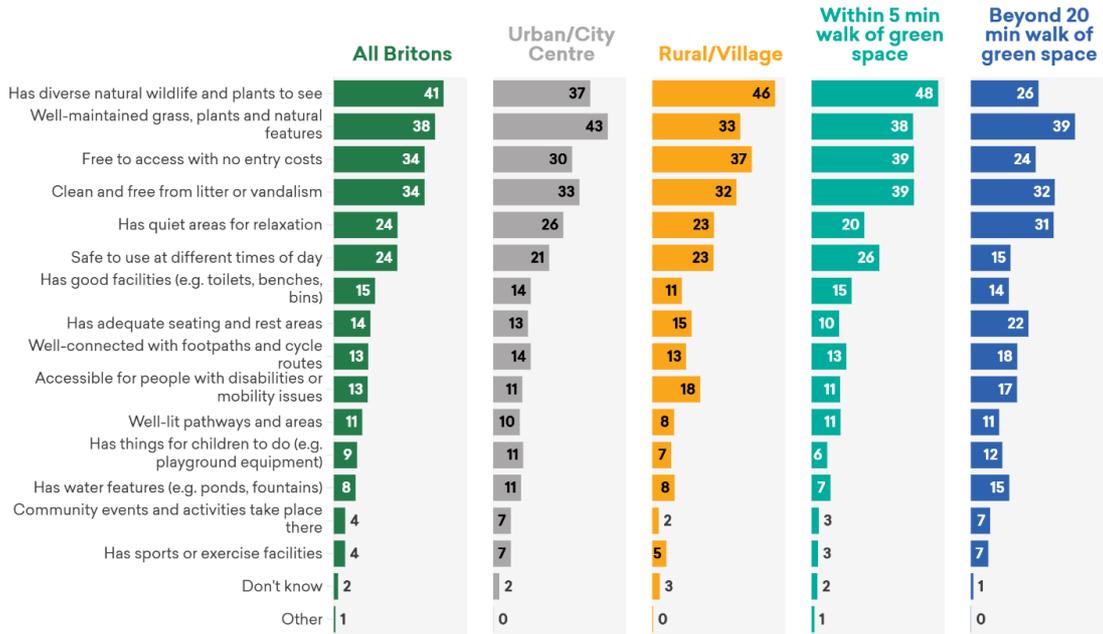
**“Its a shame... you go down in the summer and after scorching hot sunny day, you see the beach the next day and it's absolutely full of litter and trash”.**

**Tom works in an auction house worker and lives in Grimsby**

On the face of it, this emphasis on nature in determining the quality of a green space may seem out of kilter with the fact that Britons put a relatively low weight on it when identifying green spaces in our photo experiment. However, in focus group conversations, it was clear that Britons see green spaces as an instrumental asset - focusing on the benefits they bring to them directly rather than the intrinsic value they may create for the environment. This is particularly the case for those who live in areas with less access to green space. Those in rural areas are more likely to select the presence of diverse natural wildlife and plants to see (46 per cent) as being a key factor for a high quality green space while those in urban areas and city centres are more likely to select the good maintenance of the space (43 per cent) and the presence of play and exercise facilities and hosting of community events. Among those living within a five minute walk of a green space, the share selecting the presence of diverse natural wildlife and plants to see rises to 47 per cent compared to a 26 per cent share among those more than a 20 minute walk away from green space.

## The ability to enjoy nature is the most important criteria for a high-quality green space but facilities are more important for those living in less nature rich areas

What do you think are the most important features for making a green space a high-quality green space?



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## The benefits green spaces bring to Britons

This instrumental viewing of green spaces can also be seen in the prioritisation of the perceived benefits green spaces bring local communities. Asked why having access to green spaces is important, the most commonly selected reasons are all benefits brought to local people directly rather than intrinsic benefits brought to nature and the environment more broadly. In clear first place is the mental health benefits they bring - seen as a top priority by two fifths (40 per cent) of Britons. The presence of good quality nature and biodiversity in green spaces is important for Britons but this is driven by Britons' enjoyment of this rather than the perceived value to the environment. Half of Britons (51 per cent) either say their enjoyment in seeing wildlife or their ability to connect with nature are top benefits of having access to green spaces compared to only a third (35 per cent) who opt for either the benefits to the environment improved biodiversity brings or the local environmental benefits, like improved air quality, green spaces bring.

**“So I personally don't drive so I quite like having it [green space] on my doorstep and because I work from home as well... that gets me out and about so you can get a bit of fresh air when, I call it cabin fever, when you're working from home all the time”.**

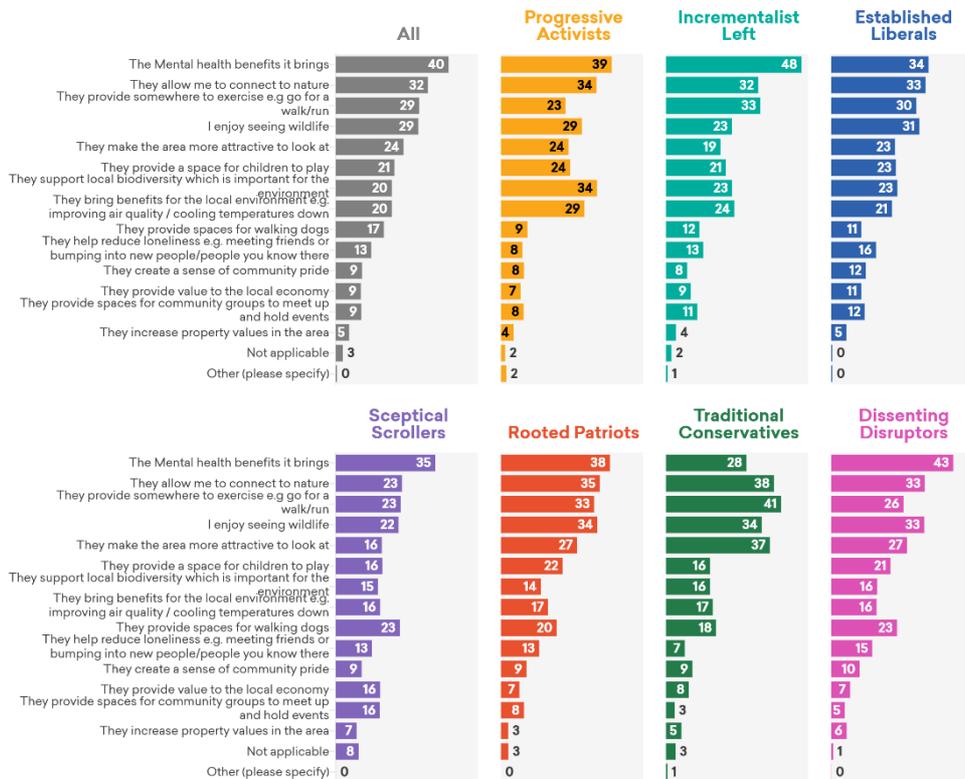
## Jonny, works in IT and lives in Wakefield

More in Common's Seven Segments framework can help explain the green spaces sector's stronger emphasis on the intrinsic environmental benefits green spaces bring. Like [much of the charitable or third sector](#), many of those managing and volunteering in the green spaces sector will be Progressive Activists. Progressive Activists are the only segment to see the intrinsic biodiversity benefits green spaces bring as one of their most important benefits. A third (34 per cent) of Progressive Activists select this - 11 percentage points higher than any other segment. In contrast, there is a strong cross-segment consensus that the mental health benefits and connection with nature they facilitate are green spaces' most important benefits. All but one segment (the older and more mental health sceptic Traditional Conservatives segment) select the mental health benefits they bring as the most important benefit of green spaces, while their facilitation of connection to nature is in all seven segments' top three factors.

### The mental health benefits it brings is seen as most important advantage of having access to green space

Why do you think having access to green spaces is important?

Select up to three reasons



This strong consensus on the mental health benefits that green spaces bring was also borne out in all four of our focus group discussions where participants proactively brought up the role that being able to spend time in green spaces play in helping them to switch off from the stresses of life and improving their mental wellbeing.

**“Bringing people together in lockdown. Well I got my dog just before and I always thought that walking my dog, I thought that would always be such an effort but it is really not. It is probably one of the best parts of my day. I love taking him for a walk.”**

**Lisa, a legal assistant in Scunthorpe**

**“I just think that parks are so important because then, even if kids live in an area let's say, where they've not got a really nice space, they've still got somewhere they could sit on the grass or be able to sit with a friends and discuss problems or family troubles... do you get what I'm saying?”**

**Josh, studying for an apprenticeship in Grimsby**

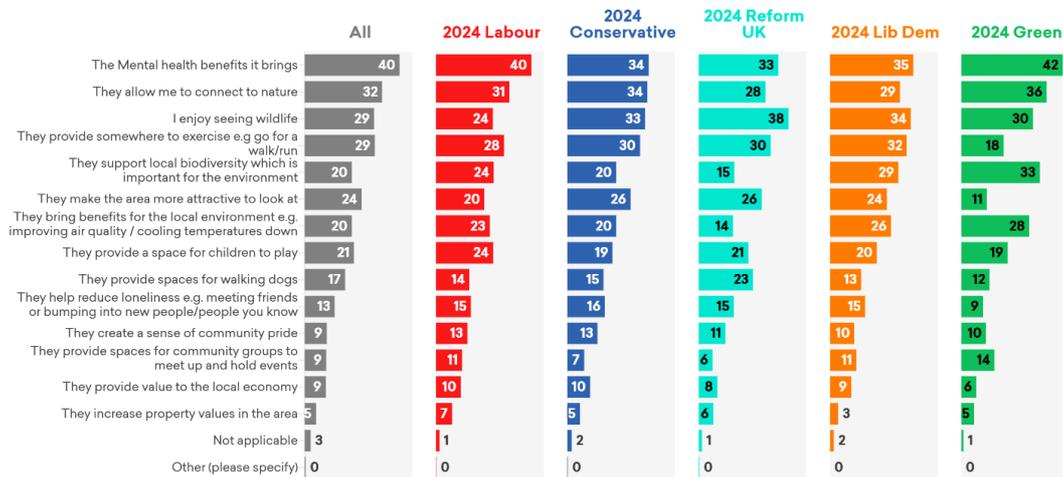
## **A source of consensus and shared community enjoyment**

In Britain's increasingly fraught and divided politics, green spaces have the potential to act as the foundation for strong political consensus. The top perceived benefit of green spaces for 2024 Reform voters is their enjoyment from seeing wildlife, demonstrating the role green spaces and nature can play as a more palatable bridge into environmental issues for those who are more wary of climate action. For the Labour Party, the core of their vote is united by a recognition of the important role that access to green space can play in supporting strong mental health. Prioritisation of the importance of the mental health benefits of green spaces is strongest among the Incrementalist Left, who make up a third of Labour's current vote, and Rooted Patriots and Dissenting Disruptors - whose coalescing around Reform risks wiping the party out in the Red Wall.

**2024 Reform voters are the most likely to say their enjoyment from seeing wildlife is the most important benefit access to green space brings**

Why do you think having access to green spaces is important?

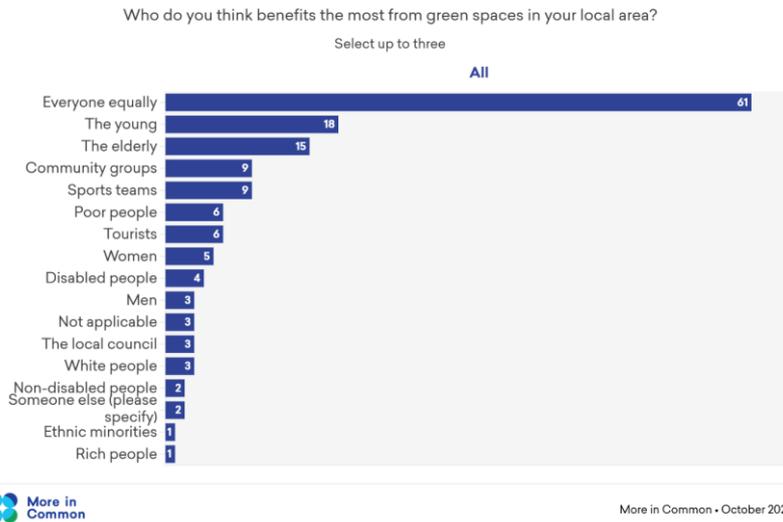
Select up to three reasons



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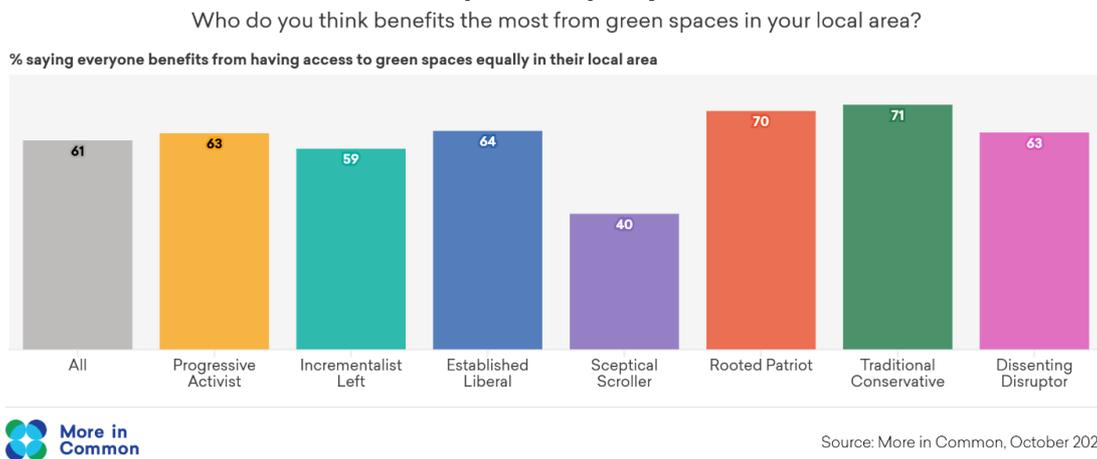
Green spaces are also seen as a genuinely shared community asset - something that is extremely valuable amid Britons' increasingly zero-sum approach to politics. From focus group conversations it is clear that the economic insecurity that many Britons face and the distrust of politicians to address this is making them increasingly sceptical and zero-sum. Britons increasingly see politics and policies as always having winners and losers with few Britons ever believing they will be the beneficiaries. Promises that the government will take action which will improve all Britons' lives are met with scepticism and when discussed in focus group conversations are almost always met with suggestions that there must be a catch. Green spaces are seen as a collective asset however, allowing them to escape this trap. Asked who benefits the most from green spaces in their area, three fifths of Britons (61 per cent) reject the premise of this question and say everyone benefits equally.

### Britons overwhelmingly believe we are all equal beneficiaries of green spaces



The electorally key Rooted Patriots (70 per cent) are particularly likely to say this but a majority of all but one of the Seven Segments (Sceptical Scrollers) agree with this and majorities of voters of every party also say this. Britons feel that if their green spaces are improved then they will personally benefit, a depressingly unique attribute for a policy outcome to have in Britain today.

### Majorities of six of the seven segments think everyone benefits from green spaces equally



## The barriers limiting Britons' enjoyment of green spaces

### Britons feel they can access their green spaces

Overall, Britons' report having positive experiences when it comes to accessing green spaces. Asked directly, just five per cent of Britons say it is either somewhat or very difficult for them to access green spaces with 80 per cent of Britons saying it is either somewhat or very easy. This positive story of access broadly applies across the population as while for some groups, like those struggling to afford their basic costs and those living beyond a 20 minute walk of a green space, the proportion saying it is difficult for them to access green spaces may be higher, it only reaches 15 per cent and clear majorities still say it is easy for them to access green spaces. Indeed, while disabled people<sup>2</sup> do face more barriers in accessing green spaces, only 14 per cent say it is difficult for them to access green spaces, though this does rise to 19 per cent for those with a mobility impairment.

**"I mean I've got 400 acres of meadows on my doorstep, which is quite nice. It has got the playground in the football pitch but there's a lot of open spaces on that. Access for me isn't brilliant because there's an awful lot of dogs up there".**

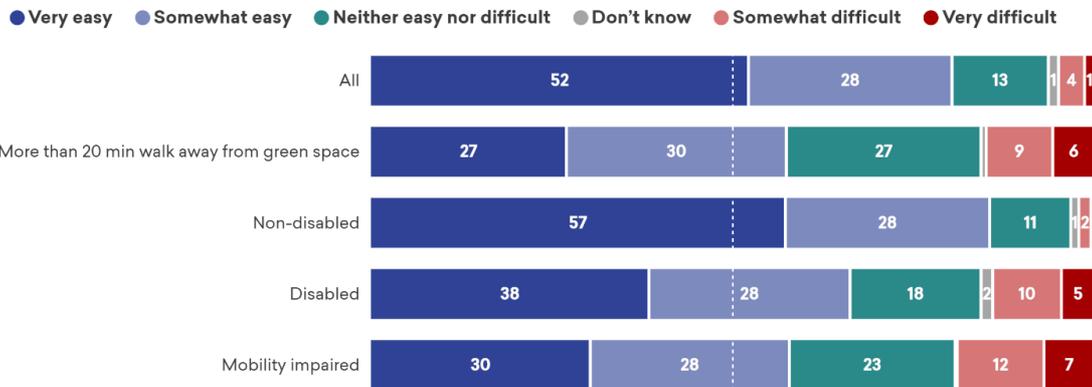
**Stuart, out of work due to disability living in Wakefield**

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<sup>2</sup> Defined as those who have a long-term health condition or illness lasting or expected to last for at least 12 months which affects their ability to carry out day-to-day activities.

### Most Britons think that it easy for them to make use of the green spaces in their area

For some people, barriers exist which can make it hard for them to access green spaces. Thinking about you personally, how easy or difficult do you find it to access or use green spaces in your area?



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### Safety and anti-social behaviour represent key barriers to Britons’ full enjoyment of green spaces

However, from our focus group discussions it became clear that while there may not be major barriers stopping Britons from accessing green spaces, there are significant barriers preventing them from *enjoying* their green spaces. In line with wider research, we found divergent experiences of green spaces. In Wakefield and Scunthorpe, participants were overwhelmingly positive about their local green spaces but in inner city Birmingham and Grimsby, participants were much more negative. These negative experiences in Birmingham and Grimsby were driven by concerns around the safety and cleanliness of their local green spaces with anti-social behaviour, including littering, at the heart of this. Though they didn’t undermine their overall enjoyment of green spaces to the same extent, concerns around safety and anti-social behaviour in green spaces were still pervasive in Scunthorpe and Wakefield with flytipping, littering, loitering, drug dealing and consumption and the dangerous riding of bikes/motor bikes all coming together to often create an environment where people didn’t want to be. Though the poor maintenance of some green spaces, namely downtrodden facilities and unkempt grass and plants, was also raised by participants, this was less of an emotive issue for them.

**“I doubt the council would keep it maintained, either because as soon as they've got it settled, nice and pretty, well guess what? The next week you're going to get a bunch of hoodlums going in there just to trash it and spray paint it just for shits and giggles”.**

**Peter, works in a fish and chip shop in Grimsby**

**“I think safety is a big concern these days. You've got young teenagers, with knife crime on the rise and stuff being around in parks and local parks, it's not very safe compared to how it used to be”.**

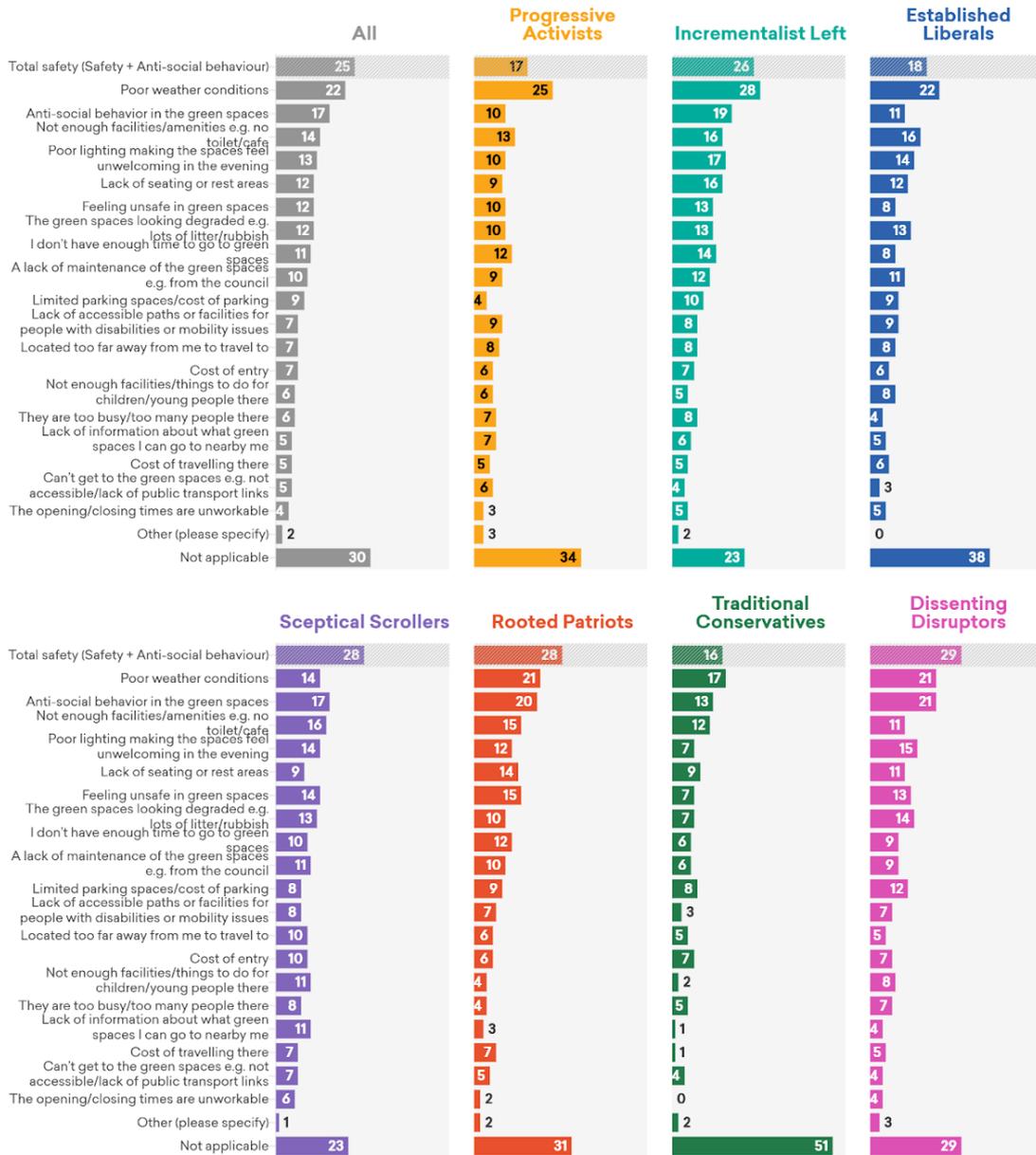
**Mortaza, a school teacher living in Birmingham**

These concerns around safety and anti-social behaviour came out strongly in our survey. Asked what, if any, are the biggest barriers stopping our respondents from accessing green spaces as much as they'd like, anti-social behaviour (selected by 17 per cent) came in second place, behind only the inclement weather. Take those selecting at least one of anti-social behaviour in green spaces and feeling unsafe as their top reasons together however and this comes out on top with a quarter (25 per cent) of Britons selecting at least one of the two. These concerns over safety in green spaces closely match the values divide in More in Common's Seven Segments. The more anti-system Dissenting Disruptor (29 per cent), Sceptical Scroller (28 per cent) and Rooted Patriots (28 per cent) are particularly likely to see safety as a key barrier preventing them from enjoying green spaces. In contrast, Progressive Activists (17 per cent) and Established Liberals (18 per cent), the two segments which are likely most overrepresented in the nature/green spaces sector are much less likely to see safety threats, helping to explain the prioritisation gap between campaigners and the public around safety in green spaces. Politically, the government has identified that tackling anti-social behaviour will be vital for winning back the support of Labour to Reform switchers. Incorporating a focus on tackling anti-social behaviour in green spaces would be a good starting point for this as, by itself, anti-social behaviour (24 per cent) is the biggest barrier to enjoying green spaces for these voters.

## Besides bad weather, safety and in particular anti-social behaviour is the biggest barrier stopping people from accessing green spaces

What, if any, are the biggest barriers which stop you from accessing green spaces as much as you'd like?

Please select up to four

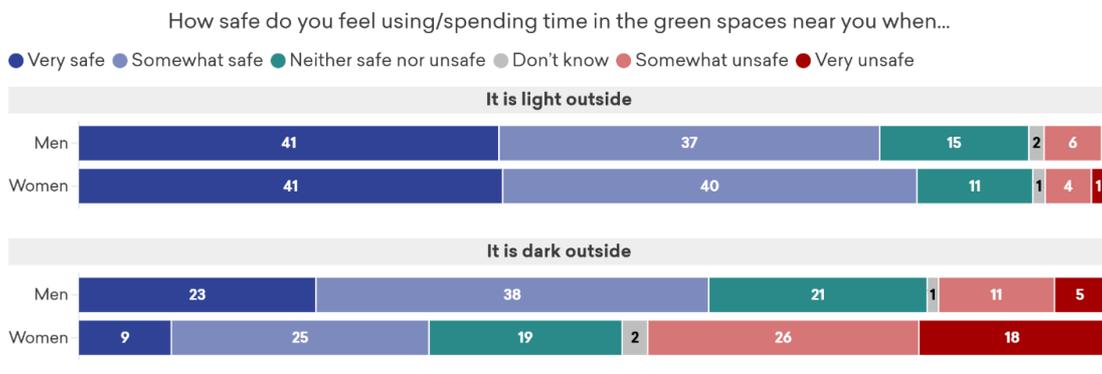


## Who are safety concerns most salient for?

It is also clear that safety concerns are particularly restricting the ability of women to enjoy green spaces. While women are only marginally more likely than men (7 per cent to 3 per cent) to say they face difficulties in accessing green spaces, it is clear that darkness creates

distinct safety concerns for them. This was brought up in our focus group discussions and so to test this we ran a split sample experiment, randomly splitting the sample into two and asking one half how safe they feel spending time in local green spaces when it is light and the other the same question but when it is dark. While women were actually three percentage points more likely to say they feel safe in green spaces when it is light outside, when it is dark outside they are 28 percentage points more likely than men to say they feel unsafe in green spaces and eleven points more likely to feel unsafe (45 per cent) than feel safe (34 per cent) overall. These feelings of unsafety are particularly pronounced among older women with 52 per cent of women aged 55-64 and 51 per cent of women aged 65+ feeling unsafe in green spaces when it is dark. More broadly, and demonstrating the pervasive impact that feelings of unsafety have on enjoyment of green spaces, among the 5 per cent of Britons who say it is difficult for them to access green spaces, feeling unsafe is seen as second most important barrier preventing them from spending more time in green spaces and 43 per cent select at least one of anti-social behaviour and feeling unsafe in green spaces. Politically, only Sceptical Scrollers are more likely to feel unsafe in green spaces than the Red Wall style Rooted Patriots.

**There is little gender difference in perceived safety of using green spaces during the day but when it is dark, women are much more likely to feel unsafe**



Source: More in Common, October 2025

**“It's important for me to feel safe whether I'm on my own or whether when I was taking my kids when they were younger, it is just important to feel safe”**

**Bernie, works for housing association, Wakefield**

Overall, it is clear that anti-social behaviour and a lack of perceived safety in green spaces are having on detrimental effect on Britons' enjoyment of green spaces and so if the government is to grasp the opportunity that green spaces can play in building pride in place, then alongside better maintenance of green spaces, tackling safety concerns must be a priority - particularly if the Labour Party is to address the concerns of higher threat perception voters in the Red Wall. It is beyond the scope of this report to define quite how they should do this, but policymakers should be careful of throwing the baby out with the

bathwater. In several of our focus groups, participants spoke of their frustration that the councils' response to anti-social behaviour had been to just fence parts of their parks off as this had done nothing to tackle the issue. While anti-social behaviour needs to be tackled, stopping the enjoyment of green spaces by the law-abiding majority shouldn't be the solution.

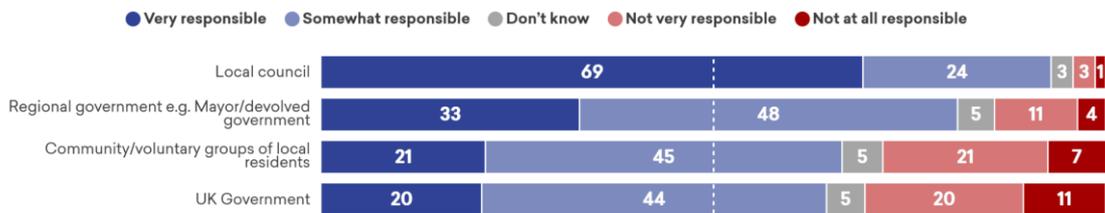
# What should policymakers do to improve the quality of green spaces?

## Britons see the improvement and maintenance of green spaces as a local government priority

While in our focus group conversations participants took real pride in the role local community and volunteering groups play in the upkeep of their green spaces, they were clear that the ultimate responsibility for this should lie with government and more specifically, local government. Indeed, 93 per cent of Britons say that local councils should be responsible for maintaining the quality of green spaces in their local area with 69 per cent saying councils should be very responsible for this, more than double of any of the other options tested. Britons also believe that local councils should be responsible for the creation of new green spaces. Fundamentally, Britons believe that it is the role of government, particularly local government, to improve their access to high quality green spaces.

### Britons think local government should hold responsibility for maintaining green spaces

How responsible do you think the following should be for maintaining/upkeeping the quality of green spaces in your local area?



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## The strength of support for policy solutions to improve Britain's green spaces

To examine the solutions which would command the most public support, we tested 16 different headline policies drawn from discussions with members of the TCPA's Green Infrastructure Partnership. As evidence of the extent to which Britons love green spaces and nature, all 16 of the policies commanded the support of a majority of the public. Every policy enjoyed strong net support across all seven of our segments. It is clear that any reasonable policy to improve the quantity and quality of green spaces commands overwhelming support, though the relative underperformance of the creation of a new Minister with specific responsibility for parks and green spaces demonstrates the public's strong scepticism of politicians.

## Planning and BNG reform

Also clear is that Britons' preferences overwhelmingly lean towards supporting policies which prioritise the protection and creation of green spaces in the planning system over the facilitation of new development. While the government has made it clear that it is unlikely to move in this direction, there is one notable point of intersection between itself and the public on biodiversity net gain (BNG) reform. In May 2025, the government launched a consultation on reforming BNG to boost the viability of development. From conversations with sector stakeholders it was clear that there is real frustration among many that as currently set up, BNG rules do little to improve people's access to nature or to improve nature where development is actually taking place as compensatory biodiversity improvements are allowed to be made across the country. Asked if they would support the reform of planning rules to ensure that any nature uplift delivered to offset development must be delivered in the local area rather than other parts of the UK, 70 per cent of Britons say they are, making it the third most popular of the policies tested. This policy was seen as holding the second greatest potential to improve local green spaces and also came second when respondents were asked which of the policies they would prefer the government to prioritise. Accompanying a potential weakening of BNG requirements with tweaks to how BNG operates to better prioritise local nature improvements would be an effective way of both shoring up public support for BNG reforms and improving access to nature in Britain's more urban and nature depleted areas.

## Policies to improve the safety and maintenance of green spaces

The British public is also strongly supportive of policy measures to improve the safety of green spaces. Increasing the number of police and enforcement officers patrolling parks and green spaces to try to discourage anti-social behaviour was the fourth most supported policy and the policy seen to have the fourth largest potential impact on Britons' access to quality green spaces. In three of the four focus group conversations, participants proactively brought up their frustration and disappointment at the cutting of their local community park rangers. Before the government spending cuts of the 2010s, these park rangers were responsible for the locking and opening of parks and their general maintenance. There was real latent demand for their restoration as participants saw them playing a critical role in stopping their green spaces from falling into disrepair and acting as a visible deterrent for anti-social behaviour.

**“So years ago you used to have park keepers that would go and look after the parks, monitor the parks and close the parks up or - a key holder. That funding was cut many years ago and now more and more, drug addicts, people with alcohol issues, they will frequent the parks along with teenagers where they do the balloon things... that laughing gas, them little canisters. And then they leave paraphernalia and broken glass everywhere”.**

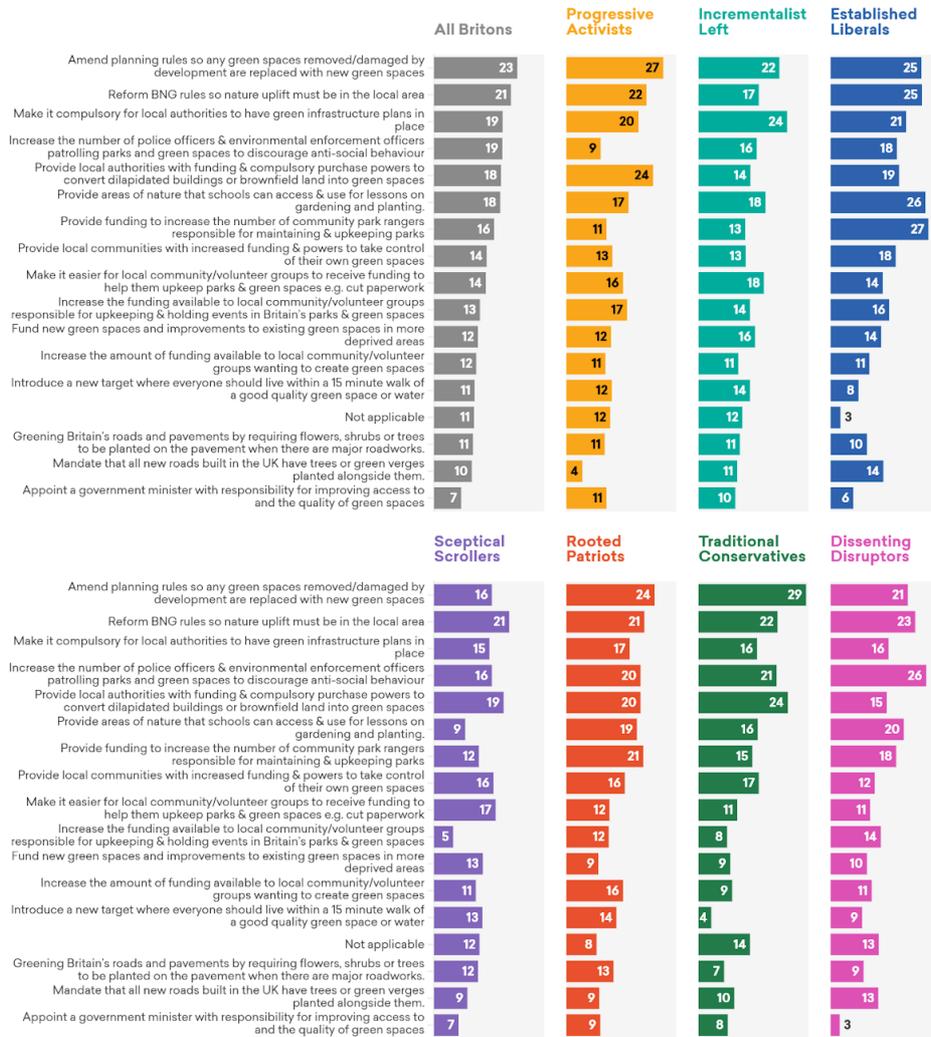
**Rachel, finance officer in Scunthorpe**

Quantitatively, the restoration of park rangers performed particularly well among Established Liberals, who saw it as the policy change which would bring the biggest improvement to their local green spaces and Rooted Patriots for whom it was a narrow third place. More broadly, there was a strong relationship between threat perception and support for policy measures to boost safety with the introduction of more patrols by environment and police officers seen as the best way of improving the quality of green spaces for Dissenting Disruptors. Britons recognise it will be challenging for policymakers to entirely stamp out littering and anti-social behaviour but they want persistent offenders to have to overcome a stronger deterrent.

### Planning reforms and increasing staff to tackle anti-social behaviour seen as best ways of improving green spaces

Below is the same list of potential policies - which of them, if implemented, do you think would have the most positive impact on improving access to or the quality of green spaces in your area?

Select up to three



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Respondents were shown full explanations of the above policies

## Unlocking the power of community stewardship of green spaces

Britons view their green spaces as community assets and want to be involved in how they are managed. Focus group participants spoke of how they felt their councils were distant and so didn't understand what local residents needed or wanted from their local green spaces nor the challenges that specific green spaces face. They argued local residents know best when it comes to green spaces and were supportive of community and voluntary groups and associations driving the management and improvement of green spaces.

**“What I think is right is that they should talk to the people as well. The community. They should talk to the community - what do you want? How do you want this money spent and this is what we've got so what do you want?”**

**Bebe, An interpreter living in Birmingham**

**“The Government funds projects and the community does the work. So if you can set out live projects for us or if you could put stuff in place that the communities can guide and they can pay for it”.**

**Zane, A quantity surveyor living in Birmingham**

In our discussions with policymakers as part of this project, it became clear however that there was a lack of clarity about how this desire for local control and ownership of green spaces should be squared with the belief that local councils should be primarily responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of green spaces. How power and responsibility for green spaces could be shared with local communities without burdening them was a theme we explored in depth in our Grimsby and Birmingham focus groups. Our participants there rejected the dichotomy often proposed in debates over the role of the state. They neither wanted government to step in and take full responsibility for the provision and management of green spaces, nor wanted government to step aside entirely. Instead, they made it clear they want government to get behind and support local community and voluntary groups, allowing volunteers and community representatives to make decisions but stepping in behind them with the resources and equipment they need to implement their vision.

## Case Study - Community stewardship in Grimsby

### East Marsh Grimsby

East Marsh, an area of Grimsby which has seen several generations of decline and neglect, is in the top 1 per cent of most deprived wards in the country. Local community organisation East Marsh United has led a rejuvenation project to green this local community. Funded by the Urban Tree Challenge Fund (UTCf) the community group planted 30 saplings in parks and 100 trees across seven schools across the town using local community volunteers. They are now working to plant trees on the main thoroughfare road in the local community.

### Barriers

While the project to green East Marsh has helped to bring local people together and restore a sense of collective pride, it faced significant hurdles to get off the ground.

Applying for UTCf money to fund the treeplanting proved difficult with intense bureaucratic requirements, including the production of a masterplan for the trees' location and a design code for their planting. For a community organisation, this was a real challenge and they were reliant on the voluntary donation of time and technical support from Create Streets and local tree planting experts. Even the delivery of funding caused problems - delivered only after the planting took place and then delayed by three months, it created real cashflow problems for the small community organisation. The local council initially acted as an inhibitor rather than enabler of the project with East Marsh United having to work to secure council permission to plant the trees in council parks. The council has now taken responsibility for the maintenance of the trees but is charging East Marsh United £10 per month per tree for the privilege.

### Lessons

The campaign to green the East Marshes has galvanised all parts of the local community with local schools, residents, institutions like the local Fire Brigade and even Grimsby Town Football Club players getting involved to help plant the trees - demonstrating the power of community stewardship to restore pride in place. However, the achievement of this was in large parts despite, not because of, the actions taken by government. If the benefits of community stewardship and improvement of green spaces are to be felt on a wider scale then government funding must be simplified and more local councils must work to support and facilitate projects like this rather than adding more hoops for community groups to jump through. Local groups must be empowered to improve their green spaces rather than being burdened to fix every problem themselves.

## **Britons would welcome Pride in Place funding being invested in the improvement of green spaces**

Growing financial pressures on councils means that finding the resources to support the improvement of local green spaces is challenging. However, for the 250 local communities set to receive £20m of funding over the next ten years, the government's Pride in Place programme offers the opportunity to change that. While the design of the scheme is novel in devolving decisions on how the money is spent to local councils themselves, the government's [example activities](#) for funding decisions provides a strong steer and shortlist for potential spending decisions. To test how investment in both creating new high quality green spaces and improving the quality of existing green spaces rank in the public's priorities for spending this money, we ran a 'maxdiff' experiment as part of our survey with all 22 of the example activities. As part of this 'maxdiff' experiment, respondents were shown randomised lists of example activities and asked to identify the activities for which the funding of would have the most and least positive effect on how nice a place their area is to live - creating a robust ranking of which of the possible uses of Pride in Place funding Britons think would be most effective in improving their area and restoring pride back into their communities.

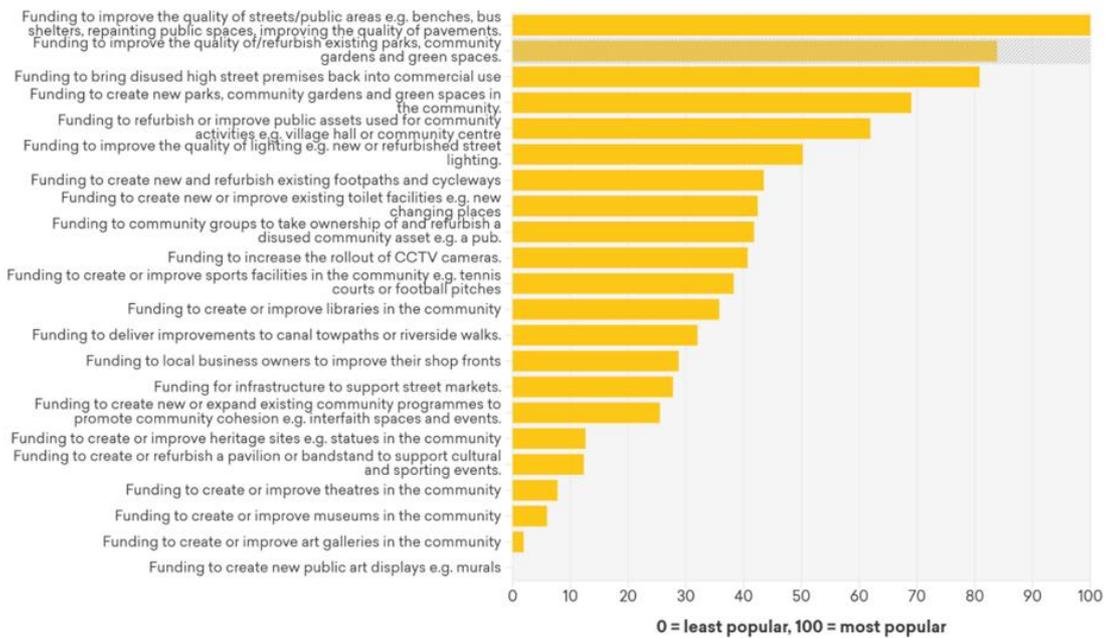
The results of the maxdiff experiment demonstrate just how important green spaces are to Britons. Funding the improvement or refurbishment of existing green spaces, parks and community gardens was seen as the second best potential use of the funds, beaten only by providing funding to increase the quality of the public realm (streets, pavements, bus stops and benches). Improvements to green spaces outperformed several funding priorities given far more attention and focus by politicians, including bringing disused premises on high streets back into commercial use. This prioritisation of green spaces was true of Britons of all political backgrounds, not just our more liberal and comfortable segments, with Rooted Patriots and Traditional Conservatives the two segments who prioritised the improvement of green spaces the most. Similarly, the only set of 2024 voters for whom it wasn't the second most important priority for was 2024 Reform UK voters. Demonstrating the role that improved green spaces can play in addressing the crisis of public confidence in government - prioritisation was the highest among those with the least confidence in this government to make their lives better and lowest among those with the most confidence.

The maxdiff experiment also demonstrated that Britons also put a much greater weight on improving the quality of existing green spaces compared to creating new green spaces - across every segment the former was seen as more of a priority than the latter. In focus group conversations, it was clear that while most participants thought they had enough green spaces around them, a smaller proportion thought they had access to high quality green spaces. Any movement or campaign to harness the power of green spaces to tackle dissatisfaction would be wise to focus on improving the quality of the country's existing green spaces before they move onto creating additional new green spaces.

Fundamentally, green spaces represent ‘low hanging fruit’ for policymakers. Britons would respond warmly to policy changes which would incur little additional government spending nor require huge amounts of political tradeoffs. Green spaces offer the opportunity to deliver the meaningful, tangible improvements to Britons’ lives and communities that are needed to stop the swelling of anti-system attitudes in Britain.

### Funding improvements to the quality of green spaces is the second most popular possible use of Pride in Place Programme Funding

Below is a list of potential things that could be done to try to make your local town or area a better place to live. Please indicate which of them you think would make the most positive and least positive impact on how nice a place your local area is to live.



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 All potential uses open to local authorities through the Pride in Place programme (Pride in Place Prospectus - example activities) were tested through a maxdiff experiment. The chart shows their relative ranking.

## **The magnitude of political opportunity if politicians get this right**

Since the Labour Party entered government, More in Common's biggest issues tracker has consistently shown the cost of living, the NHS and immigration as the three biggest issues facing the country in the public's eyes. The dominance of these three issues as priorities for the country raises a natural question - what political reward is there to be had from improving green spaces when there are bigger, more important issues facing the country and impacting Britons' lives.

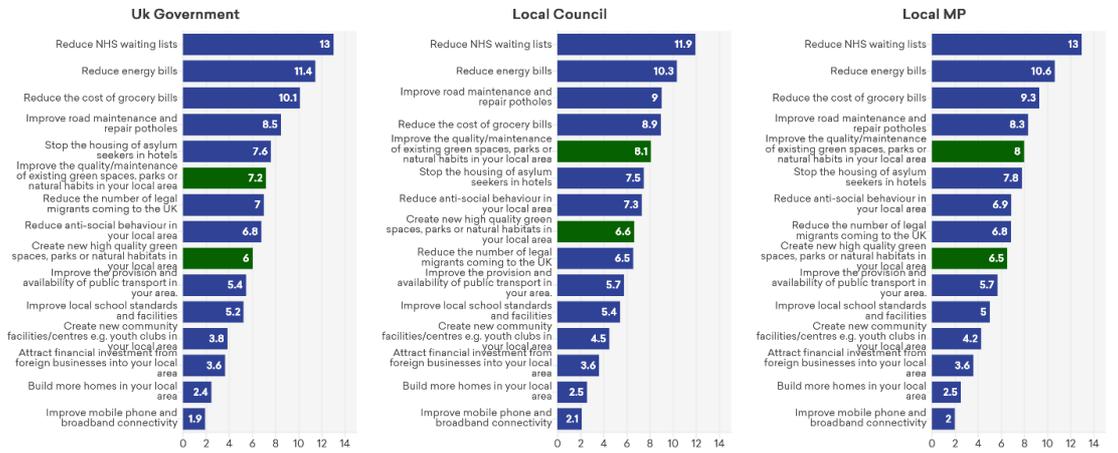
To robustly assess the size of political opportunity that green spaces present - we ran a further series of maxdiff experiments, showing our respondents a range of policy ambitions and asking them if the UK government, their local council and their local MP achieved or campaigned to achieve this, which would give them the most and least confidence they are capable of improving their lives and, in a separate experiment, their local communities.

Unsurprisingly, the experiments found that for all levels of government, addressing the cost of living and reducing NHS waiting lists provides the best opportunity to restore confidence in their ability to make Britons' lives and communities better. This report is not arguing that a renewed political focus on improving Britain's green spaces should be in competition with or of an intensity that is comparable to the government's focus on addressing these issues.

However, the maxdiff experiments did demonstrate that improving the quality of Britons' green spaces has more potential to restore public confidence in the ability of politics to deliver improvements to Britons' lives and communities than most in Westminster assume. Of the things the UK government could do to improve confidence in their ability to make Britons' lives personally better it ranks sixth below repairing potholes and stopping the housing of asylum seekers in hotels but above cutting the number of legal migrants coming to the UK. Reflecting the fact that Britons see local government and politicians as most responsible for it, improving green spaces performs even better among the things local MPs and councils can do to improve Britons' lives coming in ahead of stopping the housing of asylum seekers in hotels in fifth place.

### Improving the quality of green spaces would give Britons more confidence in the ability of those in power to improve their lives than cutting legal migration

If the UK government [your local council/ local MP] was to achieve [campaign to achieve] the following things, then which would grow your confidence that they are capable of improving the lives of people like you the most and least?

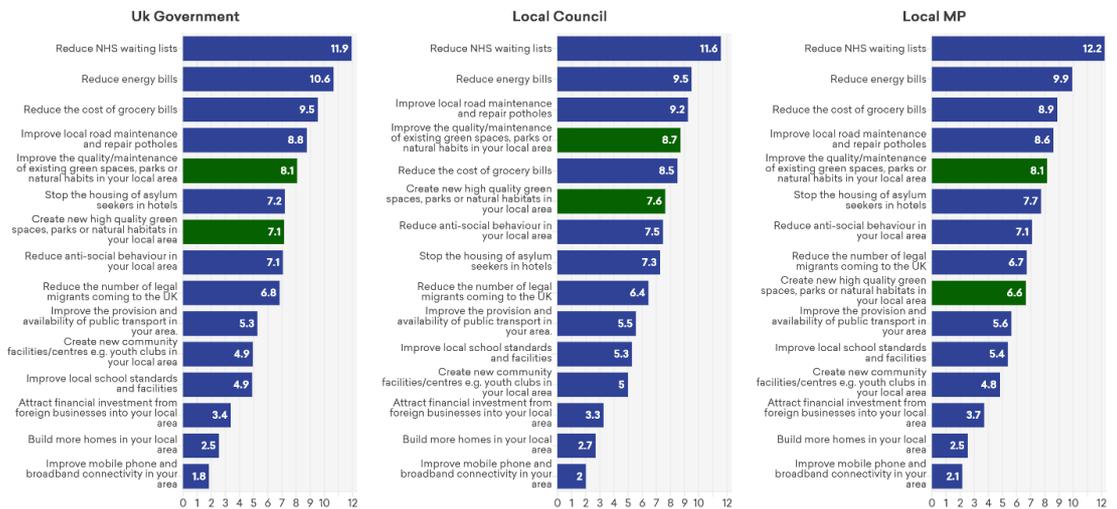


More in Common - October 2025  
0 = Least, 14 = Most. (Units are utility scores in maxdiff experiment)

The potential boost to Britons’ confidence in politicians from improving green spaces is even greater at the place-based level, reflective of green spaces’ role as a shared, community asset. In the ranking of things the UK government could do to improve confidence in their ability to make Britons’ local areas nicer places to live, improving green spaces comes fifth, outperforming the ending of the housing of asylum seekers in hotels. It ranks in fifth on this metric for local MPs as well and perhaps reflective of their reduced ability to influence this, the improvement of green spaces outperforms reducing the cost of grocery bills for local councils, leaving it as the fourth best thing local councils could achieve or campaign for to grow public confidence in their ability to make their local areas better places to live.

### Improving the quality of green spaces would give Britons more confidence in the ability of those in power to improve their local communities than cutting legal migration

If the UK government [your local council/ your local MP] was to achieve [or strongly campaign for] the following things, then which would grow your confidence that they are capable of making your local area a better place to live the most and least?



More in Common - October 2025  
0 = Least, 12 = Most. (Units are utility scores in maxdiff experiment)

In focus group conversations, participants offered a more nuanced view of the role that improving green spaces could play in restoring their confidence in the government’s ability to improve their lives and communities. As a starting point, many argued that the problems facing the country, from the cost of living and NHS in particular, were so big and their personal circumstances under such stress that while it would be nice to improve their green spaces, the impact of doing so on their confidence in government would be no more than a small uptick. Indeed, given the acute financial pressure many Britons face, with the cost of groceries and heating their homes a struggle, it was also clear that they were much more likely to see green spaces as a priority for their community rather than their own lives.

**“Yeah, for me, I think there's bigger fish to fry in this country rather than green spaces at the moment. I think the councils, every single council are going to end up bankrupt again”.**

**Danny, Software developer in Wakefield**

However, these participants also spoke of a complete collapse of confidence in government to make their lives better. Almost none of them could highlight a single thing they were aware of the government doing to improve their lives or communities. In this context, there was a consensus that while improving green spaces wouldn’t be enough to turn around these perceptions in their own right, being seen to be making some improvements, even if small, would give them greater confidence that the government was capable of addressing the bigger problems the country faces. A successful national mission to improve Britain’s green spaces may not be enough in itself to persuade Britons

the government is capable of delivering change, but it would make them more inclined to listen to and trust their wider plans to achieve this.

**“It'd be a start wouldn't it? It would be a massive start. That's what the government need to do. Make a start somewhere to show us that they're willing and if they've got a start then they can work it from there”.**

**Stacey, home maker in Grimsby**

Overall, this report is not arguing that a mission to restore and improve Britain's green spaces should be pursued with the same vigour as efforts to tackle the cost of living, NHS waiting lists and the perceived loss of control at Britain's borders. Nevertheless, it is clear that politicians and policymakers underestimate the political importance of green spaces to Britons and there are significant potential electoral rewards to be claimed by the government with an increased focus on green spaces. For example, the government places far more of its attention and energy on attracting foreign direct investment into Britain than it does on improving Britain's green spaces with the Chancellor and Prime Minister personally attending multiple investment summits and meetings. While there may be value in doing this in its own right, politically Britons are much less likely to see the attraction of investment by overseas companies into their local area as improving their lives or communities. If the government was to see green spaces as a political opportunity and spend as much energy on improving them as they do on attracting foreign investment, then it would earn them far more political credit.

## Conclusion

British politics has never been more volatile. Taken together, just two fifths of Britons currently intend to vote for the Conservative and Labour parties. A growing number of Britons are splintering in an increasing number of political directions, united by discontent with those in power and the broader political system they represent.

If mainstream politicians are to start reversing or even halt this tide of disaffection then they must start demonstrating that they can make Britons' lives and local communities better.

Achieving this ambition will require tackling the big, complex challenges which Britain faces, such as the cost of living, immigration and NHS backlogs but it will also necessitate the protection of the few things that Britons still view positively and as going well.

Britain's parks and green spaces fall firmly into this latter category. They are Britons' favourite things about their local area and their biggest source of local pride. Crucially, this is not only true for middle-class Britons as many stereotypes assume but also for Britons of all backgrounds - urban and rural, Left and Right.

Parks and green spaces matter more to the British public than most politicians and policymakers realise and matter more than many other issues seen as greater political priorities.

For those trying to clearly demonstrate they are delivering change and improvements to Britons' lives and communities, as spaces which Britons regularly enjoy spending time in, the improvement of Britain's parks and green spaces holds the potential to deliver change and improvement that is extremely tangible.

Britain's parks and green spaces also represent 'low-hanging fruit' for those in power. Policies to improve them command strong support and significant improvements, in Britons' eyes, could be delivered to them through policies with minimal financial burden. While the financial cost of clearing the NHS's backlog or bringing down energy bills may be in tens of billions, the cost of restoring park ranger numbers is much more likely to be in the hundreds, if not tens, of millions.

Furthermore, if government was to embrace the desire of many local communities to take stewardship of their parks and green spaces, then it would not even to deliver the improvements itself, it would just need to empower local communities with the small amount of funding and resources needed to allow them to take ownership of the maintenance and improvement of their green spaces.

Ultimately, the core question throughout this research project has been whether there are votes to be won in improving Britons' parks and green spaces. Although, given the big challenges and pressures Britons and the country face, improving the quality of parks and green spaces might not by itself entirely satisfy Britons' demand for political upheaval, it can, by demonstrating that those in power can do something to improve Britons' local

communities, play an important role in building support for politicians who achieve and champion it.

## Methodology

### Quantitative Research

Unless specified otherwise, the polling findings referenced in this report refer to a nationally representative survey of 3,073 Britons. Fieldwork for this survey took place from 5-9 October 2025.

More in Common undertook the survey in line with our standard methodology. More in Common is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules.

Full data tables for this survey can be found on our website.

### Qualitative Research

Four online focus groups were undertaken as part of this research project. Focus groups were moderated by More in Common with participants recruited to the following criteria by an independent recruitment company:

#### Group One

- All residents of Wakefield and Rothwell constituency
- All voted Labour in 2024
- Current voting intention is either Liberal Democrat or Green or if not, participants must be willing to consider voting Liberal Democrat or Green.
- All participants are either Progressive Activist, Established Liberal or Incrementalist Left
- Mixture of ages and genders

#### Group Two

- All residents of Scunthorpe constituency
- All to be from urban/suburban/town parts of constituency
- All voted Labour in 2024
- Current voting intention is either Reform or Labour or Don't know. If current voting intention is Labour or Don't know must be willing to consider voting Reform UK.
- Mixture of ages and genders

- All participants are Dissenting Disruptors

### Group Three

- All to be residents of Birmingham Yardley, Birmingham Hall Green & Mosley and Birmingham Ladywood constituencies
- All to be British Asian/Muslim
- All to have voted for Independent/Workers Party or Labour in 2024
- Current voting intention is either Independent/Workers Party or at least willing to consider voting Independent/Workers Party
- Mixture of ages and genders

### Group Four

- All to be residents of Great Grimsby and Cleethorpes constituency
- All voted Labour in 2024
- Current voting intention is either Reform UK or at least willing to consider voting Reform UK
- Mixture of ages and genders
- All to be from C1,C2, D and E socioeconomic grade
- All Rooted Patriots

## Appendix

### Green space photo experiment

Respondents were shown a series of photos of different types of green spaces and asked to score how much of a green space they perceived them to be out of 10 with 0 referring to a space that is not at all green and 10 referring to a space that is completely green.

	<p><u>Green Roundabout</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mean score: 4.1</li></ul>
	<p><u>Canalside</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mean score: 4.5</li></ul>
	<p><u>Green valley</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mean score: 9.6</li></ul>



Park with Playground

- Mean score: 6.8



Football pitch

- Mean score: 7.3



Park - grass and trees

- Mean score: 8.5



Allotment

- Mean score: 8.0



Community flower Garden

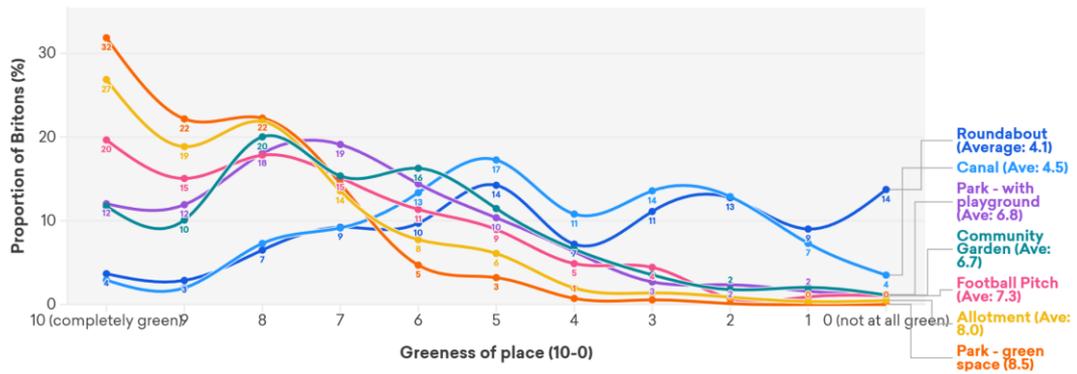
- Mean score: 6.7

## Distribution of responses [green valley photo excluded as score too high]

### Britons conceive of green spaces in an instrumental way

Please use the scale below to indicate the extent to which you view the below image as a green space 0 - 10.

- Roundabout (Average: 4.1)
- Canal (Ave: 4.5)
- Park - with playground (Ave: 6.8)
- Football Pitch (Ave: 7.3)
- Park - green space (8.5)
- Allotment (Ave: 8.0)
- Community Garden (Ave: 6.7)



Source: More in Common, October 2025

