



# Tonbridge Castle

## Results of Online and On-Site Surveys 2022

Final  
3 October 2022



# Contents

---

Introduction .....	1
Online Survey .....	1
On-site Interviews .....	1
Demographic Profile and Origin of Respondents .....	3
Demographic Profile .....	3
Origin of Respondents .....	4
Visits to the Castle .....	11
Mode of Travel – On-site Survey .....	11
Visits to the Castle – Online Survey .....	11
What People Like about Tonbridge Castle and Grounds .....	13
Events .....	16
Attendance at Events.....	16
Events People Would Like at the Castle.....	16
Facilities and Changes at Tonbridge Castle and Grounds .....	20
What Facilities People Want Retained at the Castle and Grounds .....	20
What you would like at Tonbridge Castle and Grounds – Categories Provided .....	21
What facilities would you like to see at Tonbridge Castle or the grounds that are currently not there?.....	23
What changes would you like to see at Tonbridge Castle and grounds? .....	25
Any Other Comments .....	26
Discussion .....	28
Further Views on Options Provided as Choices .....	28
Other Suggestions and Themes .....	31



# Introduction

Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council began a consultation exercise to gain further information on the views of residents, visitors, businesses and the local community on the potential future options for Tonbridge Castle and grounds (see text from webpage to the right).

Comparable surveys were posted online and interviews were carried out on-site. The online and on-site consultation also enabled people to add their names to a mailing list or sign up for workshops. This will enable further in-depth consultation and engagement to take place.

## Online Survey

A survey was posted online between 1 April 2022 and 31 July 2022, hosted on Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council's website.<sup>1</sup> The survey was promoted through QR codes on business cards within the Tourist Information Office, on posters through the site and through social media.

There were 724 responses.

## On-site Interviews

On-site interviews were carried out between April and the end of July on the following dates. Most interviews coincided with events.

- 24 April – Artisan Market
- 22 May – Artisan Market
- 28 May – Food and Drink Festival
- 29 May – Food and Drink Festival
- 12 June – Community Fete and Dog Show
- 26 June – Artisan Market
- 3 July – Music on the Lawn
- 24 July – Artisan Market
- 31 July – Music on the Lawn

### **Page on Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council website at the start of the online consultation**

*A consultation about the future uses of Tonbridge Castle has opened today.*

*Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council is inviting views from the public on the future use of its iconic attraction, Tonbridge Castle. The consultation opens on 1 April 2022 and asks whether the council could be putting the castle to better or different uses in the future.*

*The castle bordering the River Medway dates from the 13th century, and is popular with visitors and schools, while the grounds play host to variety of events from outdoor cinema to food and drink festivals and is a popular wedding venue.*

*The aim of the consultation is to better understand the needs of the visitors, community, and local businesses to ensure that they are involved in the decisions that affect this community asset. The consultation will run until 31 July 2022.*

*The review of Tonbridge Castle will be run in three stages, from the consultation in April through to the implementation from July 2024 of the plans, which will be agreed during 2023.*

*Cllrs Des Keers, TMBC's Cabinet member for community services, said: 'This consultation is a really important opportunity for us to understand the views of all people who use any part of Tonbridge Castle Estate, the general public, organisations, groups and potential future users of the castle and grounds.'*

*'We hope that many people will take part in the consultation and help us to agree plans for the future of the castle that will enhance and safeguard its use, as well as being ever mindful of the impact on the local environment.'*

*Published: Friday, 1st April 2022*

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.tmbc.gov.uk/news/article/53/tonbridge-castle-consultation-opens>

People were chosen at random by trained surveyors.

There were a total of 392 survey responses. Some interviews were carried out on the High Street or in other places nearby the site (52). Only two of these people had not been to Tonbridge Castle and grounds.



# Demographic Profile and Origin of Respondents

## Demographic Profile

### Gender

Most of the respondents (67%) in both the surveys were female, see Table 1.

Table 1: Gender of Respondents

Response	On-site		Online	
	Number	%	Number	%
Male	128	32.7	217	30.0
Female	264	67.3	487	67.4
Prefer not to say	n/a	n/a	19	2.6
Total	392		723	

### Age

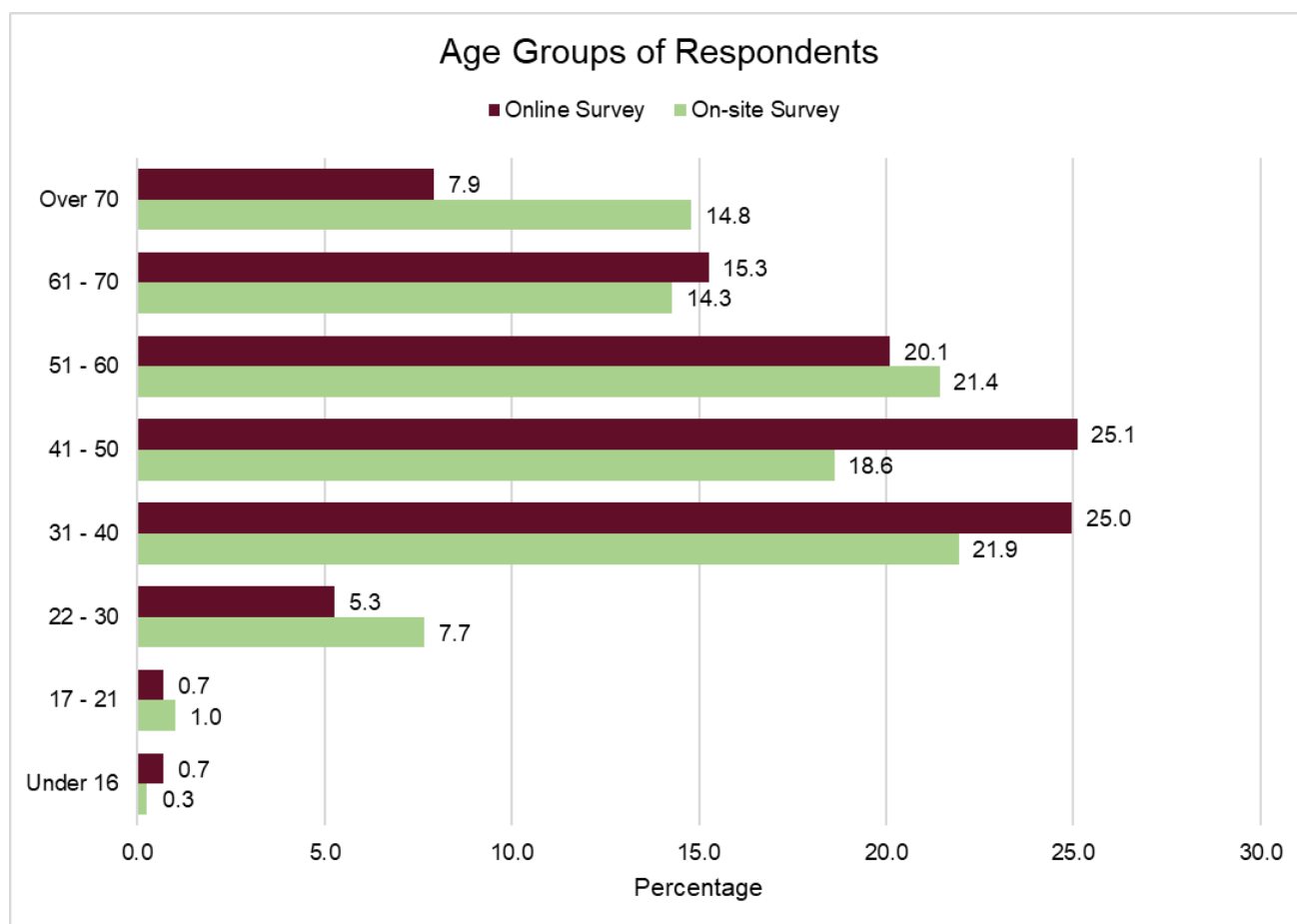
See Table 2 and Chart 1.

- In the on-site survey the highest number of respondents were in the age range 31-40, closely followed by the age range 51 - 60;
- In the online survey the highest number of respondents were in the age range 41-50, closely followed by the age range 31 - 40;
- The lowest number of responses in both surveys were from the age groups under 21 years old.

Table 2: Age Groups of Respondents

Age Group	On-site		Online	
	Number	%	Number	%
Under 16	1	0.3	5	0.7
17 - 21	4	1.0	5	0.7
22 - 30	30	7.7	38	5.3
31 - 40	86	21.9	180	25.0
41 - 50	73	18.6	181	25.1
51 - 60	84	21.4	145	20.1
61 - 70	56	14.3	110	15.3
Over 70	58	14.8	57	7.9
Total	392		721	

Chart 1: Age Groups of Respondents



## Origin of Respondents

Those interviewed on-site were asked to provide the full postcode of their home. This enabled an accurate location to be geocoded. Respondents to the online survey were also asked for their full postcode, as well as being asked to estimate their distance from the Castle from four distance categories.

The summary of results which could be geocoded is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Distance of Respondents from the Castle

Distance from the Castle	On-site	Online
Number of full postcodes which could be fully geocoded	355	361
Number of locations or partial postcodes identified to district level	35	19
Number of locations which could not be identified	2	0
Locations self-reported in distance bands	n/a	343
Total	392	723
Average distance from home - full postcodes only	10.1km	4.1km

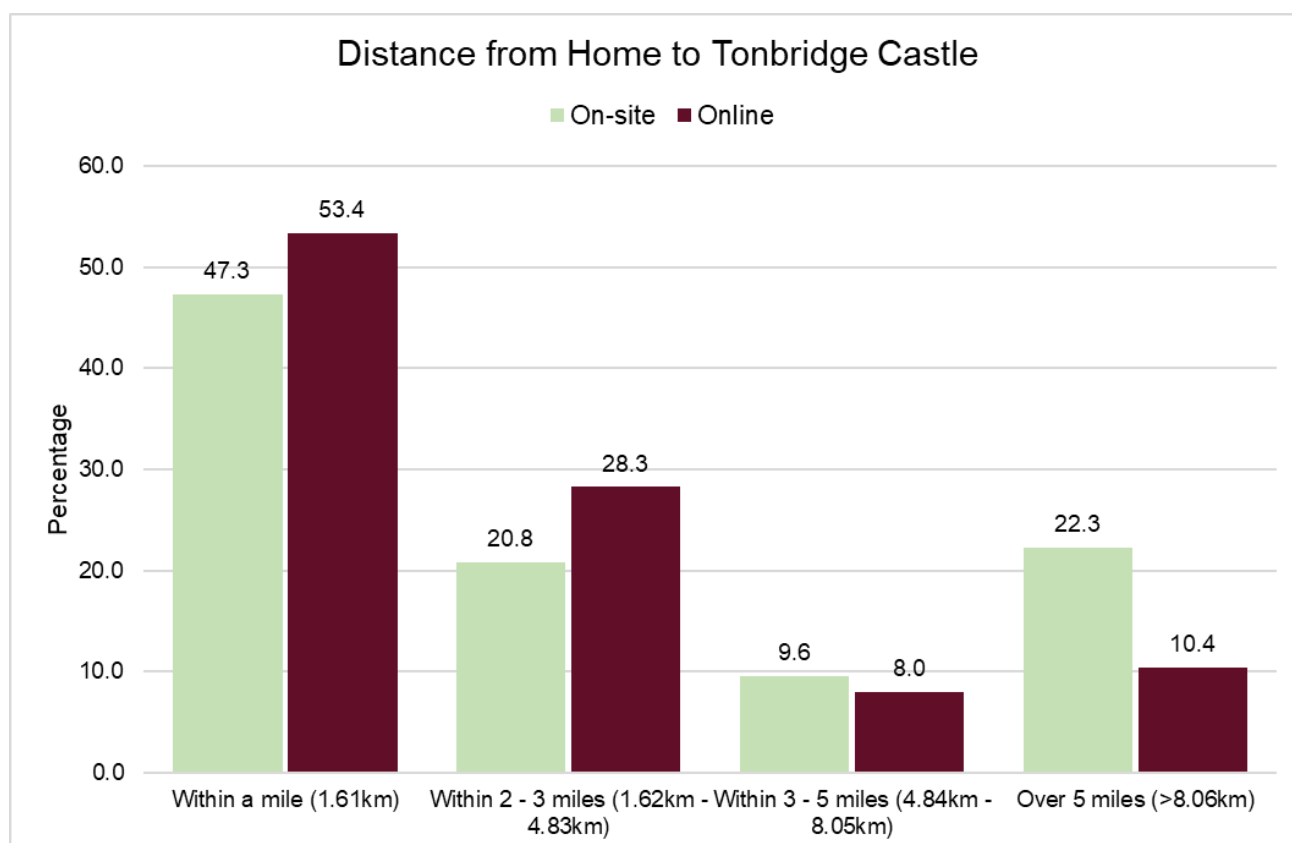
- Overall respondents to the online survey lived closer to Tonbridge Castle. The average distance of locations which could be geocoded from full postcodes was 4.1km;
- There was a greater geographic spread of those interviewed on-site. The average distance of the Castle from home, using full postcodes which could be geocoded, was 10.1km;
- Of those interviewed on-site, the furthest distances from the Castle were Broxtowe (East Midlands), Kingston upon Hull, Swansea and Bassetlaw (East Midlands) – all of which were over 200km;
- Of those responding online, the furthest distance from the Castle was York, at 322km.

The spread of the origin of respondents is shown in Plans 1 to 4 (this includes partial postcodes). The calculated distances were summarised within the distance bands, see Table 4 and Chart 2.

Table 4: Distance of Respondents from Tonbridge Castle by Distance Band

Distance	On-site		Online					
	Number	%	Full Postcodes		Self-reported Distance Bands		Total	
			Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Within a mile (1.61km)	168	47.3	221	61.2	155	45.2	376	53.4
Within 2 - 3 miles (1.62km - 4.83km)	74	20.8	86	23.8	113	32.9	199	28.3
Within 3 - 5 miles (4.84km - 8.05km)	34	9.6	22	6.1	34	9.9	56	8.0
Over 5 miles (>8.06km)	79	22.3	32	8.9	41	12.0	73	10.4
Total	355		361		343		704	

Chart 2: Distance of Respondents from Tonbridge Castle by Distance Band





**Tonbridge Castle 2022 Online Surveys**

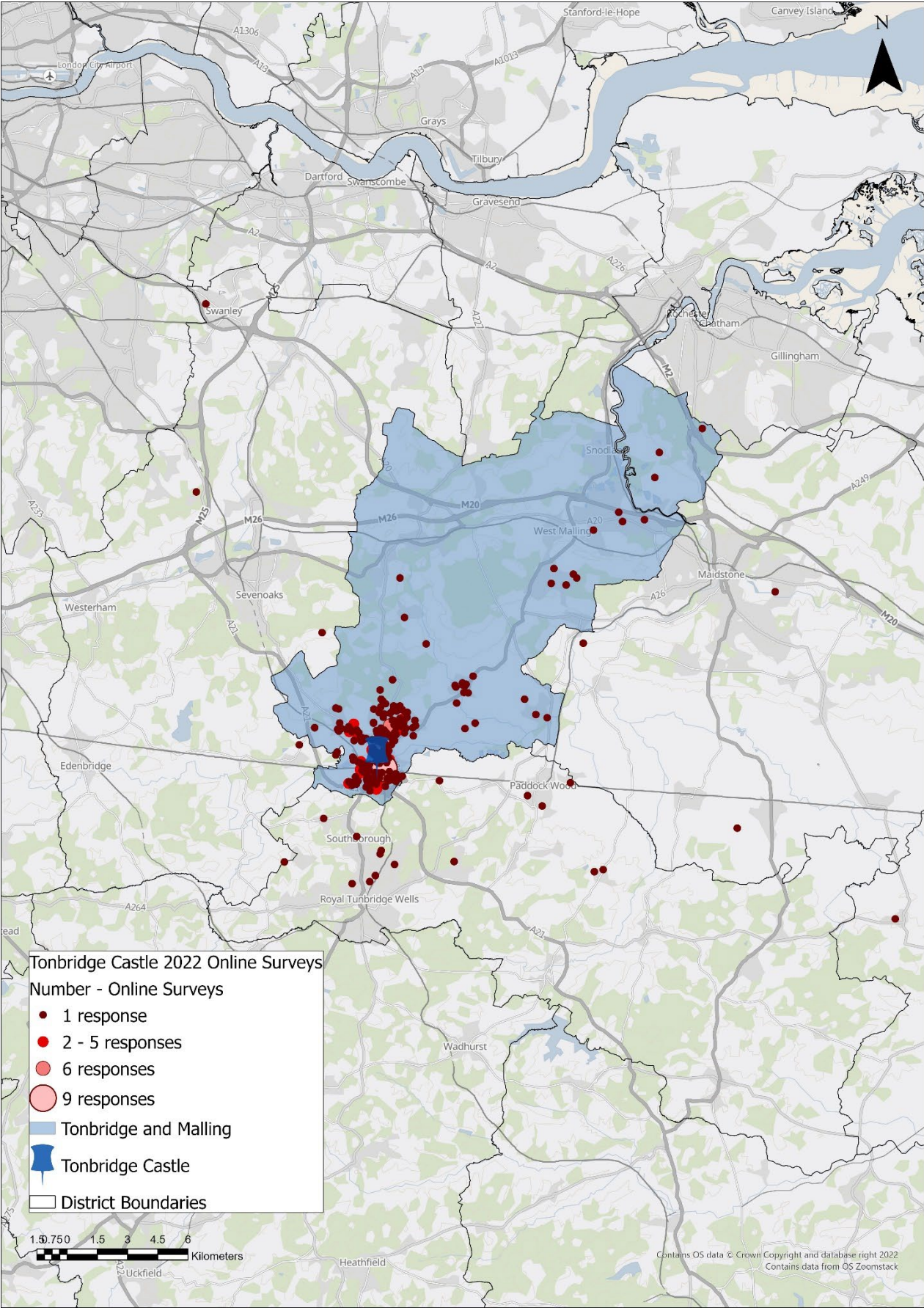
Number - Online Surveys

- 1 response
- 2 - 5 responses
- 6 responses
- 9 responses
- Tonbridge Castle
- District Boundaries

Contains OS data © Crown Copyright and database right 2022  
Contains data from OS Zoomstack

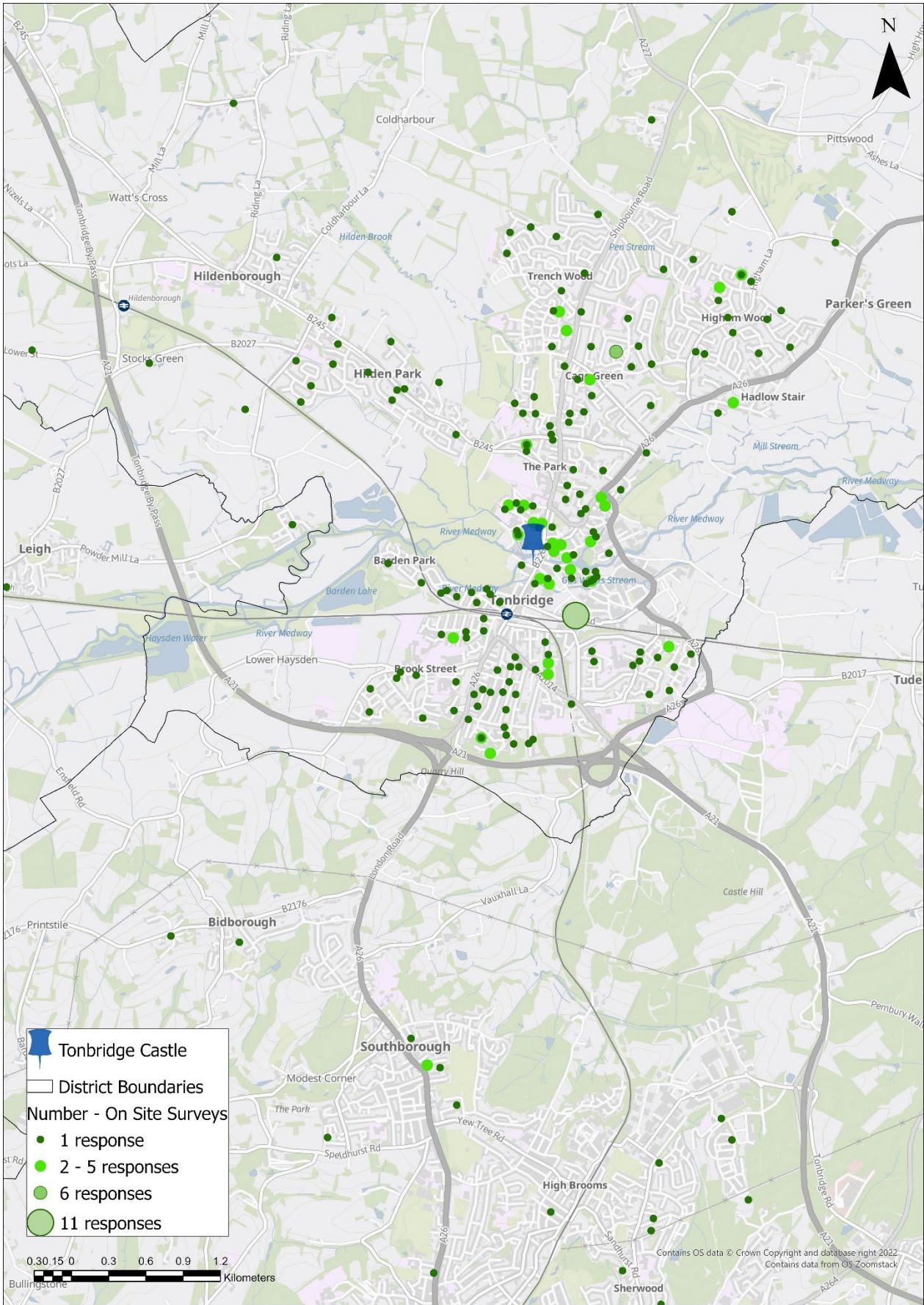


Plan 2: Location of Respondents – Online – Wider Area



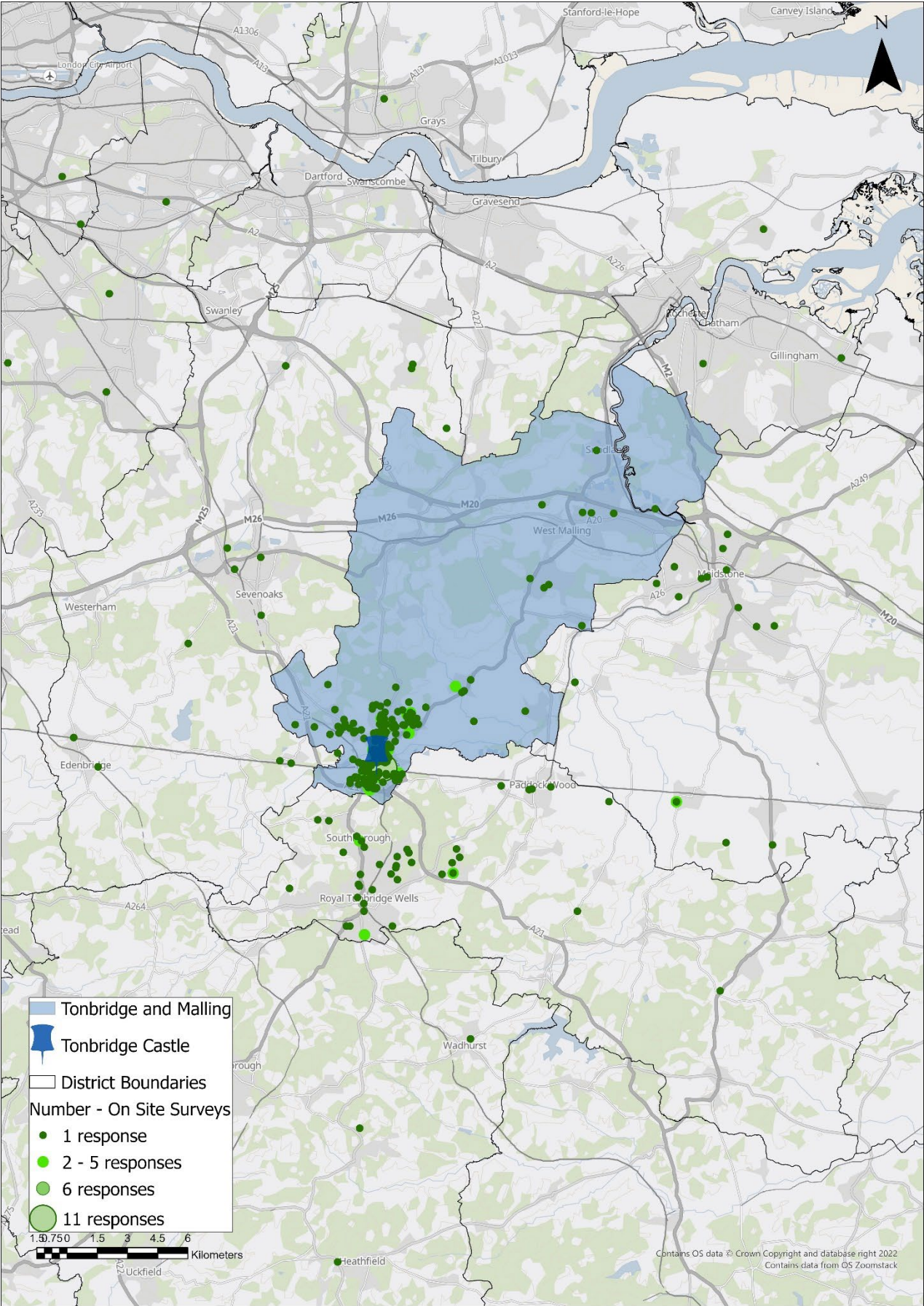


### Plan 3: Location of Respondents – On-site - Tonbridge Town Area





Plan 4: Location of Respondents – On-site – Wider Area





Most respondents came from Tonbridge and Malling District – 70.5% of those interviewed on-site and 90.6% of those responding online, see Table 5. The second highest district for both surveys was Tunbridge Wells. Only full postcodes could be geocoded to this level of accuracy.

Table 5: Origin of Respondents by District (Full Postcodes Only)

District	On-site		Online	
	Number	%	Number	%
Tonbridge and Malling	275	70.5	327	90.6
Tunbridge Wells	44	11.3	16	4.4
Maidstone	18	4.6	2	0.6
Sevenoaks	14	3.6	7	1.9
Bromley	5	1.3	-	-
Ashford	5	1.3	1	0.3
Wealden	4	1.0	-	-
Swale	3	0.8	-	-
Medway	3	0.8	-	-
Greenwich	2	0.5	-	-
Bassetlaw	1	0.3	-	-
Bexley	1	0.3	-	-
Broxtowe	1	0.3	-	-
Croydon	1	0.3	1	0.3
Dorset	1	0.3	-	-
Enfield	-	-	1	0.3
Folkestone and Hythe	1	0.3	-	-
Gravesham	1	0.3	-	-
Harrow	1	0.3	-	-
Hastings	1	0.3	1	0.3
Kensington and Chelsea	-	-	1	0.3
Kingston upon Hull, City of	1	0.3	-	-
London Borough of Lewisham	1	0.3	-	-
Mid Sussex	1	0.3	1	0.3
Norwich	1	0.3	-	-
Swansea	1	0.3	-	-
Tandridge	1	0.3	1	0.3
Thurrock	1	0.3	-	-
Wealden	1	0.3	1	0.3
York	-	-	1	0.3
Total	390		361	

## Visits to the Castle

### Mode of Travel – On-site Survey

Those interviewed on-site were asked how they travelled to the Castle. Most had travelled to the Castle by car, but a high proportion had walked.

*Table 6: Mode of Travel to Tonbridge Castle - On-site Survey Only*

Mode of Travel	Number	%
Private Car	190	49.0
On Foot	171	44.1
Public Transport	17	4.4
Bicycle	10	2.6
Total	388	

### Visits to the Castle – Online Survey

Those responding online were asked if they had visited the Castle:

- 98.6% (714) had visited the Castle;
- Of the remaining 1.4% - 8 respondents had not visited the Castle and 2 respondents did not provide an answer

Respondents were asked why they had visited the Castle from a set of options. More than one answer could be chosen. Most people (91%) had visited the Castle grounds, followed by 71.6% who had visited the Castle Lawn, see Table 7.

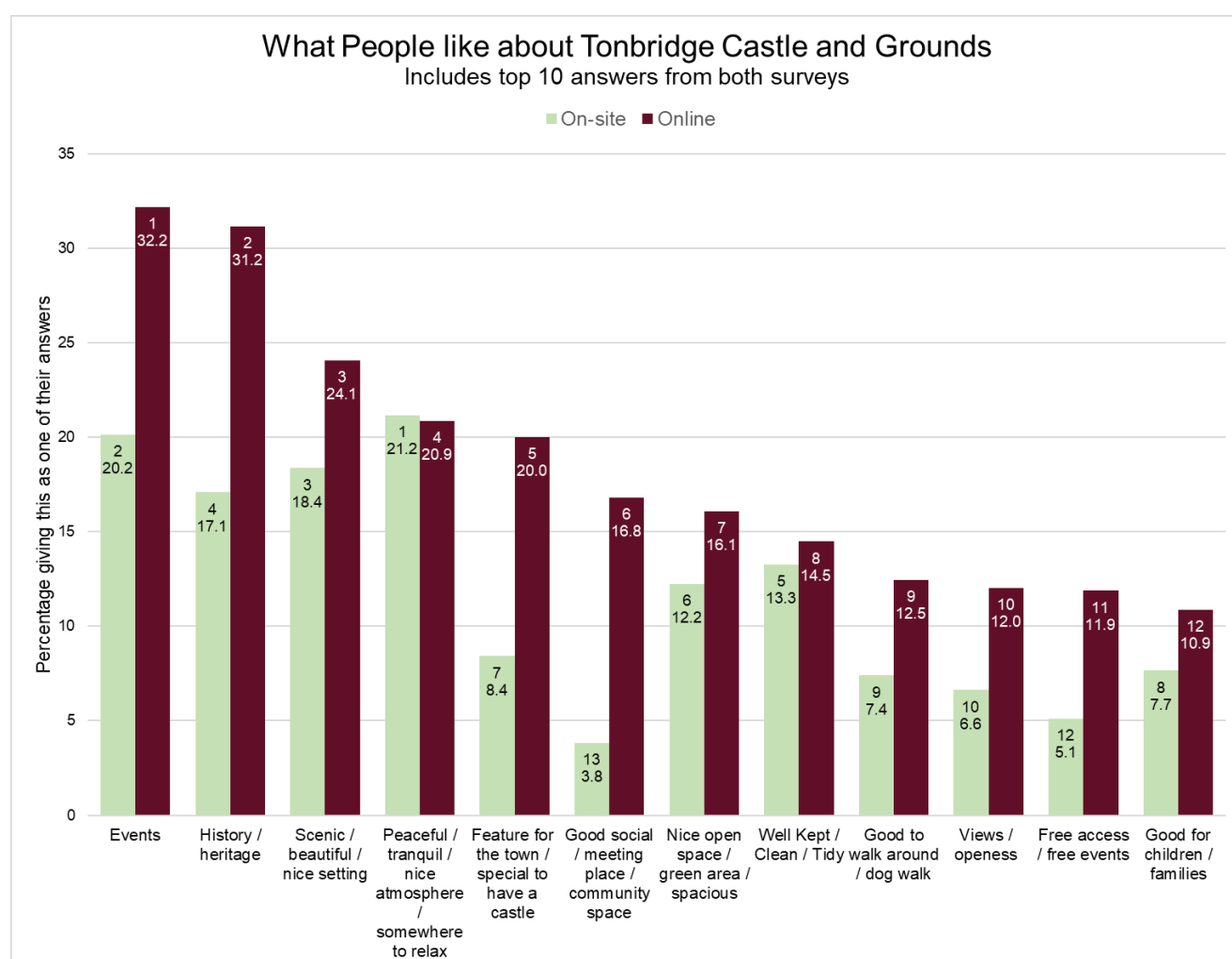
*Table 7: Reasons for Visiting Tonbridge Castle - Online Survey*

Reason	Number n.714	% Giving this as one of their answers	% of all answers
Walk in the grounds	653	91.5	29.9
Use the Castle Lawn	511	71.6	23.4
Attend an event	397	55.6	18.2
Visit an exhibition or attend an event	267	37.4	12.2
Visit the Castle Tour	225	31.5	10.3
Visit the Gateway	128	17.9	5.9
Total	2181		

Respondents to the online survey were then asked whether they visited alone or with other people, from a set list of options. Respondents could only choose one answer. The highest response, with just over half of people (52.4%), was visiting family, see Table 8.

Table 8: Type of Visiting Group - Online Survey

Type of Group	Number	%
With family	374	52.4
With adults and children	124	17.4
With friends	93	13.0
On my own	87	12.2
With a group	36	5.0
Total	714	





## What People Like about Tonbridge Castle and Grounds

---

Respondents to both surveys were asked what they liked about Tonbridge Castle and grounds. This was a free text question and people could give any answer they wished. Respondents of the online survey often gave longer, more detailed responses than those on site.

The responses were categorised as far as possible into commonly given answers. These are shown in Table 9. In the on-site survey 688 categorisable responses were given by 392 people and in the online survey 1927 categorisable responses were given by 690 people.

Events: This was the highest scoring answer in the online survey, given by 32.2% of people, and second in the on-site survey, given by 20.2% of people. Respondents appreciated the range of events, the versatility of the venue and the Castle and grounds as a location for community events.

History and heritage: This was close behind events in the online survey, given by 31.2% of people and fourth in the on-site survey, given by 17.1%.

The attractiveness of the Castle: This was the third highest scoring in both surveys, given by 24.1% of people online and 18.4% of people on-site. Beautiful, picturesque, majestic, stunning and pretty were commonly used to describe the castle. Related to this was an appreciation of the views from the Castle and the Motte, which were mentioned by 12% of people online and 6.6% of people on-site (ranked 10<sup>th</sup> in both surveys).

Peaceful and tranquil: This scored highest in the on-site survey, mentioned by 21.2% of people, and ranked fourth in the online survey, given by 20.9% of people. People commented that the Castle and grounds were a peaceful and calming place; somewhere they would come and sit and relax. A haven of peace close to the town centre.

A landmark of Tonbridge: This was mentioned by 20% of people in the online survey, ranking 5<sup>th</sup> and 8.4% in the on-site survey, ranking 7<sup>th</sup>. These comments centred around the Castle being unique, a landmark, iconic, the heart of Tonbridge and something which was very special to the town.

A community and social space: This was ranked 6<sup>th</sup> in the online survey and mentioned by 16.8% of people. However it was ranked 13<sup>th</sup> in the on-site survey, being mentioned by 3.8% of people. These comments reflected the range of community events, a venue for coming together for civic celebrations and as a place to for people to come together and socialise.

Green space – open and spacious: There were a wide range of comments which broadly showed appreciation for there being a green space and open space. This ranked 6<sup>th</sup> on-site, mentioned by 12.2% of people, and 7<sup>th</sup> online, mentioned by 16.1% of people. Comments appreciated the green space close to the town centre, that it was a 'green lung' for Tonbridge and the size and openness of the space. People thought it was a good place to walk, with this aspect ranking 9<sup>th</sup> in both surveys (given by 7.4% of people on-site and 12.5% of people online).

Well-kept: People were complementary regarding the maintenance of the Castle and grounds. This ranked 5<sup>th</sup> in the on-site survey, mentioned by 13.3% of people, and 8<sup>th</sup> in the online survey, mentioned by 14.5% of people. Respondents appreciated that the grounds were well-maintained,

clean and free of litter. Related to this, 7% of people in the online survey (2% on-site) specifically mentioned the flower beds and gardens as an attractive feature of the Castle and grounds. The presence of wildlife and trees was also mentioned by 4.8% of people in the online survey.

**Free to access:** Being able to freely access the Castle grounds at any time, plus the provision of free events, was another aspect appreciated by respondents, ranking 12<sup>th</sup> on-site (mentioned by 5.1% of people) and 11<sup>th</sup> online (mentioned by 11.9% of people).

Other features which were appreciated, but which were mentioned less often, included:

- A good place for families and children – at events, to play and to climb the Motte;
- Accessible – that the grounds were easy to access;
- A central location – close to the High Street and part of a wider complex of green spaces and leisure facilities;
- By the river – the setting next to the river added to the appeal;
- That the Castle and grounds is a visitor and tourism attraction;
- It is a good wedding venue or was where the respondent was married;
- The facilities inside the Castle – the tour, the tourist office, the coffee shop;
- That the location was safe;
- There is a good range of facilities including a large number of benches.

A summary is shown in Table 9. Chart 3 shows the top ten responses from both surveys.

*Chart 3: Top Ten Responses - What People like about Tonbridge Castle and Grounds*

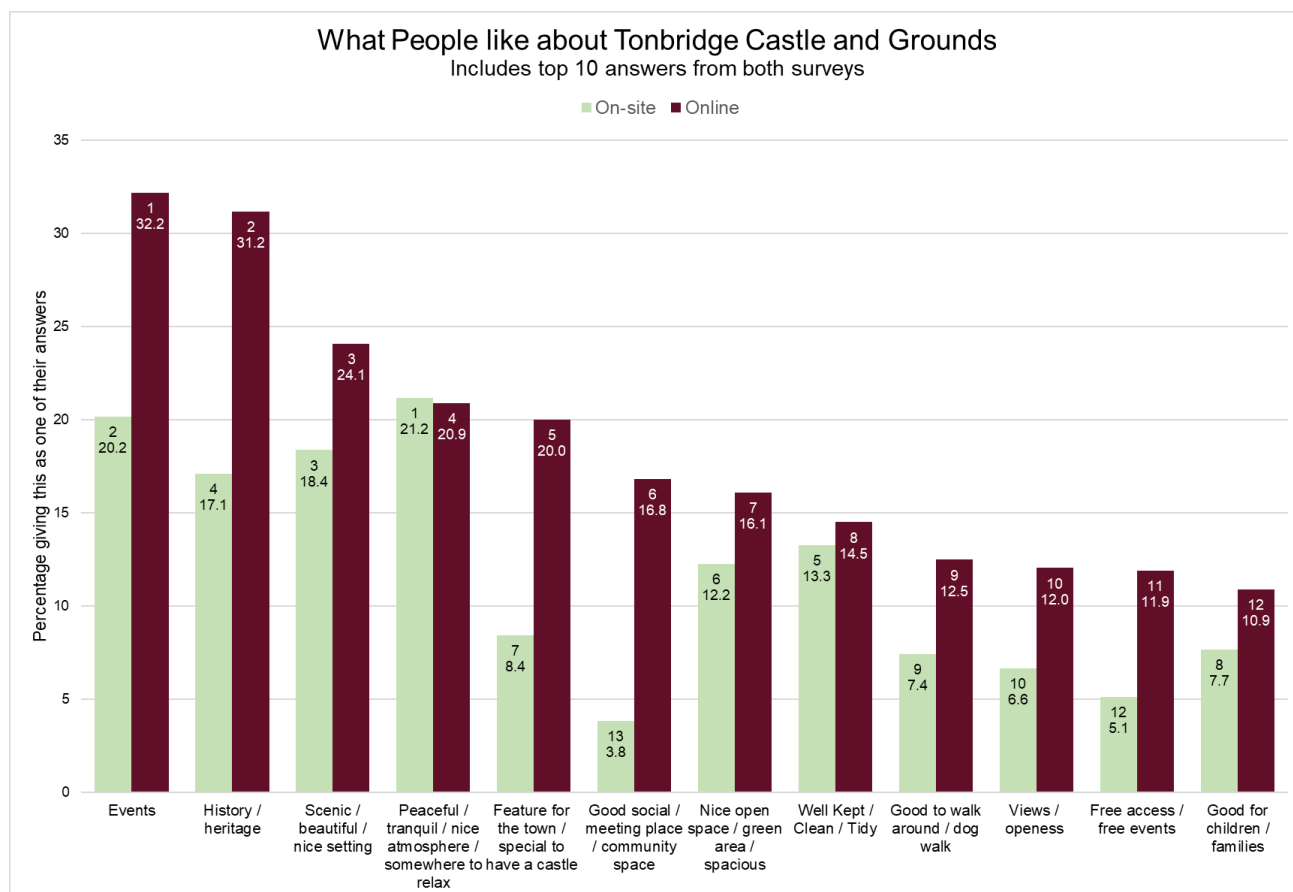


Table 9: What People like about Tonbridge Castle and Grounds

Aspect of the Castle and Grounds	On-site			Online		
	Number (n.392)	% of people giving this as one of their answers	Rank	Number (n.690)	% of people giving this as one of their answers	Rank
Events	79	20.2	2	222	32.2	1
History / heritage	67	17.1	4	215	31.2	2
Scenic / beautiful / nice setting	72	18.4	3	166	24.1	3
Peaceful / tranquil / nice atmosphere / somewhere to relax	83	21.2	1	144	20.9	4
Feature for the town / special to have a castle	33	8.4	7	138	20.0	5
Good social / meeting place / community space	15	3.8	13	116	16.8	6
Nice open space / green area / spacious	48	12.2	6	111	16.1	7
Well Kept / Clean / Tidy	52	13.3	5	100	14.5	8
Good to walk around / dog walk	29	7.4	9	86	12.5	9
Views / openness	26	6.6	10	83	12.0	10
Free access / free events	20	5.1	12	82	11.9	11
Good for children / families	30	7.7	8	75	10.9	12
Accessible	15	3.8	13	58	8.4	13
Flower beds /gardens	8	2.0	19	49	7.1	14
Close to the High Street / good location / located with other parks	22	5.6	11	47	6.8	15
By the river	11	2.8	17	45	6.5	16
Wildlife / wildflowers / trees	7	1.8	22	33	4.8	17
Picnics / eat lunch	11	2.8	17	32	4.6	18
Other	14	3.6	15	23	3.3	19
Visitor / tourist attraction	-	-	-	22	3.2	20
Inside the Castle (tours, drinks, tourist information)	3	0.8	25	21	3.0	21
Good facilities / benches	8	2.0	19	19	2.8	22
Safe	8	2.0	19	13	1.9	23
Everything / the entirety of the place	14	3.6	15	9	1.3	24
Good parking	5	1.3	23	7	1.0	25
Weddings / got married here	5	1.3	23	7	1.0	25
First visit (on-site) / Not visited (online)	3	0.8	25	4	0.6	27
Total	688			1927		



## Events

### Attendance at Events

Respondents were asked whether they had attended any events at the Castle. More than one answer could be given.

Most people had attended an event, with the highest responses in both surveys being 'On the Castle Lawn' or 'Within the grounds', see Table 10. NB. All of those interviewed at the Castle were attending on a day in which an event was taking place, although 52 were interviewed outside of the Castle and grounds.

Table 10: Attendance at Events

Event Location	On-site n.392			Online n.722		
	Number	% giving this as one of their answers	% of all answers	Number	% giving this as one of their answers	% of all answers
On the Castle Lawn	288	73.3	43.4	632	87.5	48.1
Within the grounds	247	62.8	37.2	428	59.3	32.6
Inside Tonbridge Castle	79	20.1	11.9	201	27.8	15.3
This is my first time (on-site) I have never visited any events at the Castle (online)	50	12.7	7.5	52	7.2	4.0
Total responses given	664			1313		

### Events People Would Like at the Castle

Respondents were asked 'What type of events would you like to see take place at Tonbridge Castle and grounds?'. This was a free text question and respondents could give any answer they wished.

The responses were categorised as far as possible into commonly given answers. These are shown in Table 11. In the on-site survey 784 categorisable responses were given by 392 people and in the online survey 1622 categorisable responses were given by 661 people.

There was good support for the events programme currently on offer; 15% of respondents to the online survey and 11% of those interviewed on-site specifically mentioned that the current range of events was appropriate. However, even if support for the current range of events was not explicitly stated, the suggestions for events closely reflected the current programme on offer.

Overall, the theme which appeared from responses was that events should be in keeping with the heritage and setting of the Castle. People viewed the Castle and grounds as a community asset and wanted to see it used for the benefit of the community.

There were also some comments made about improving the advertising of events.

**Music:** The highest response in both surveys was for music events – 56% of respondents of the on-site survey and 46% respondents of the online survey gave this as one of their answers. The current

offering of free events was popular. There was a range of opinions on the type of music and there was not a consensus on genre; most respondents indicated that they wanted 'concerts' or 'music' without specifying a genre. Those which were mentioned included jazz, blues, opera, classical, choirs, local bands, tribute bands, new bands, choirs, 'big name' bands, teen disco, silent disco, rock bands, bands for younger generation and brass bands.

Food and Drink: The second most popular category in both surveys was for events involving food and / or drink – 33% of respondents of the on-site survey and 24% of respondents to the online survey gave this as one of their answers. Events combining food and music held appeal for respondents. The current food festival was popular. Most respondents did not indicate a type of food event but those which were mentioned included beer and cider festival, cheese and wine, Oktoberfest, drink tasting festival, gin event, coffee event, pop-up food and drink stalls, vegan and vegetarian market or festival, chicken wing festival, cooking festival and cocktails on the lawn.

Castlemas: The Castlemas event was single most popular event mentioned by name and was the third highest response in both surveys - 13% of respondents of the on-site survey and 21% respondents of the online survey gave this as one of their answers.

Theatre: Theatre and plays was the fourth highest response in the online survey with 16% of online respondents giving this as one of their answers, ranked 9<sup>th</sup> in the on-site survey with 7% giving this as one of their answers. Most respondents indicated only 'theatre' or 'plays', but there were a few specific suggestions for theatre for children.

History and Heritage: In the online survey in particular, events which celebrated the heritage of the Castle were requested, with 16% of respondents giving this as one of their answers and ranking as the equal 5<sup>th</sup> highest answer. In the on-site surveys, 9% of those interviewed indicated historical events. Most respondents suggested a Medieval event or fayre / festival and historical re-enactment and living history events. Other suggestions included jousting, Tonbridge Historical Society events and tours of the Castle and dungeons.

Community and Charity: In the online survey in particular, events which served the community and the use of the Castle as a community space featured highly, with 16% of respondents indicating 'community' as one of their answers and ranking as the equal 5<sup>th</sup> highest answer. Most respondents indicated 'community events', but specific examples included scouting and events for charity. Also mentioned were marking civic occasions such as St George's Day or May Day, or events such as the Queen's Jubilee.

Markets, Fairs, Fetes and Festivals<sup>2</sup>: Although respondents were not consistent in how they described such events (using all the terms markets, fairs, fetes and festivals) it is clear that these types of events were popular. Most often one of these terms was used without specifying what type of event was preferred – 16% online (13% generic markets; 3% generic 'festivals') and 9% on-site (8% generic markets; 1% generic 'festivals'). Some respondents indicated that the Farmers' Market should be held at the Castle rather than at Sainsbury's (3% online, 2% on-site). Some types of fair were mentioned – vintage and antique fairs (2% online, 1% on-site). Other comments included that

---

<sup>2</sup> 'Festivals' in this survey was taken to mean a market-type event due to the popular food and drink market being named the 'Food Festival' and the frequent use of the word in this context; unless it was clear that a celebration or parade-type event was meant (e.g. Pride).

a weekly Tonbridge market should be held at the Castle and that local businesses should be supported and showcased.

**Events for Children and Families:** Events for children and families were requested (11%, ranked 9<sup>th</sup> online and 8% on-site ranked 7<sup>th</sup>). Specific comments made were events for younger children to appreciate history, bouncy castle, children's theatre, circus, holiday play schemes and free school holiday activities, child-friendly music events and general comments around more events aimed at children and families.

**Other:** There were a range of other suggestions made which had a lower number of responses:

- Events linking with the river (e.g. Dragon Boat) and making more of the setting of the Castle by the river through extending more events onto the riverside;
- Supporting local business and extending the benefit from events to the High Street to help to revitalise the whole area. Supporting local businesses at markets and not just accommodating 'touring' craft stalls from a long distance;
- Ice rink / ice skating rink;
- Fireworks displays;
- Son et Lumiere or light shows;
- Sports and fitness – including yoga on the lawn, archery, dancing, collaboration with local gyms, mountain bike or cycling fair, climbing wall, bowls and boules, croquet, obstacle course;
- Shows for cars, vehicles or machinery – vintage cars and motorbikes, agricultural machinery, bulldozers, go-karting;
- Use for weddings and wedding fairs;
- Comedy and open mike;
- Picnics;
- Gardening and flower shows and fairs;
- Book and literary events.

Chart 4: Events wanted at Tonbridge Castle and Grounds - Top Ten from both Surveys

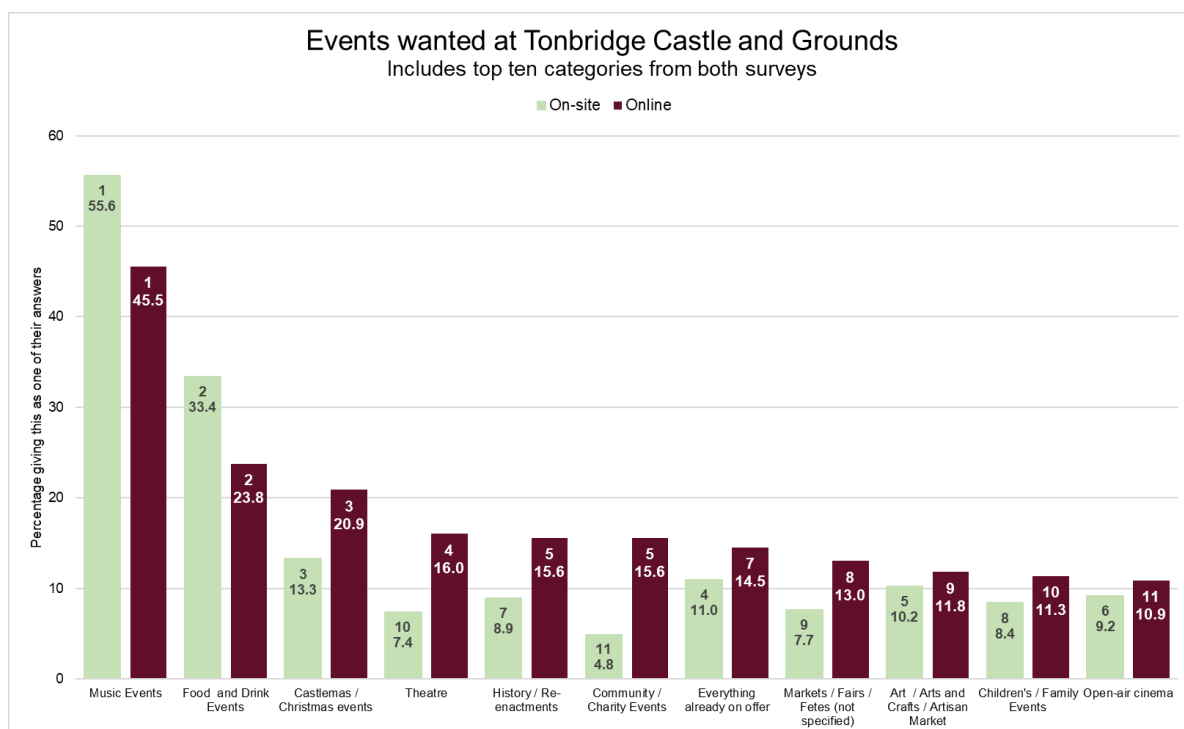


Table 11: What Events would you like to see at the Castle?

Type of Event	On-site n.392			Online n.661		
	Number	% giving this as one of their responses	Rank	Number	% giving this as one of their responses	Rank
Music Events	218	55.6	1	301	45.5	1
Food and Drink Events	131	33.4	2	157	23.8	2
Castlemas / Christmas events	52	13.3	3	138	20.9	3
Theatre	29	7.4	10	106	16.0	4
History / Re-enactments	35	8.9	7	103	15.6	5
Community / Charity Events	19	4.8	11	103	15.6	5
Everything already on offer	43	11.0	4	96	14.5	7
Markets / Fairs / Fetes (not specified)	30	7.7	9	86	13.0	8
Art / Arts and Crafts / Artisan Market	40	10.2	5	78	11.8	9
Children's / Family Events	33	8.4	8	75	11.3	10
Open-air cinema	36	9.2	6	72	10.9	11
Marking occasions (Easter, Jubilee, Halloween, May Day etc.)	6	1.5	20	39	5.9	12
Free / Low Cost / Affordable	8	2.0	16	28	4.2	13
Fireworks	7	1.8	18	24	3.6	14
Using interior of Castle	-	-	-	22	3.3	15
Festivals (not specified)	4	1.0	22	20	3.0	16
Farmers Market / Local Produce	9	2.3	15	17	2.6	17
Sport / Fitness / Dancing	8	2.0	16	17	2.6	17
Weddings / Wedding Fairs	2	0.5	30	13	2.0	20
Dog Events	11	2.8	13	12	1.8	21
Vintage / Antique Fairs	4	1.0	22	12	1.8	21
Ice Skating / Ice Rink	4	1.0	22	12	1.8	21
Connection with river (e.g. Dragon Boat)	4	1.0	22	10	1.5	24
Light Shows/ Projecting onto Castle	3	0.8	27	8	1.2	25
Comedy	1	0.3	31	8	1.2	25
Supporting local business / High Street	-	-	-	8	1.2	25
Picnics	3	0.8	27	7	1.1	28
Gardening / Flower Shows	4	1.0	22	7	1.1	28
Book / Literary Events	13	3.3	12	6	0.9	30
Car / Vehicle / Machinery Events	3	0.8	27	6	0.9	30
Don't go to Events / Not interested / No opinion	10	2.6	14	5	0.8	32
Exhibitions (not specified)	1	0.3	31	5	0.8	32
More events (not specified)	7	1.8	18	4	0.6	34
Other	6	1.5	20	17	2.6	17
Total of responses given	784		1622			



# Facilities and Changes at Tonbridge Castle and Grounds

## What Facilities People Want Retained at the Castle and Grounds

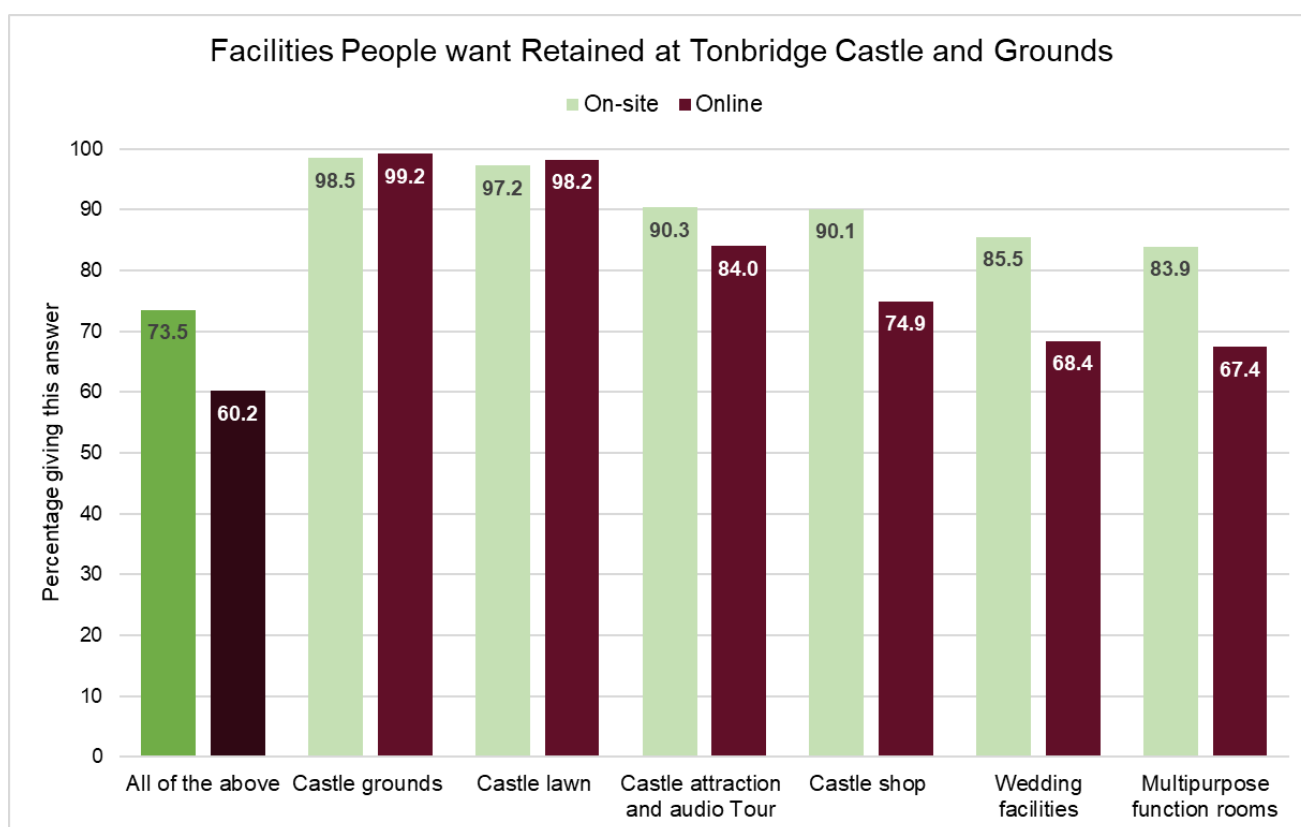
Respondents were asked what facilities they wanted to see retained at Tonbridge Castle and Grounds, chosen from a list. More than one answer could be chosen. Where a respondent had chosen 'all of the above' as well as other facilities from the choices, these were deleted as this would have resulted in double-counting. The 'all of the above' answers were combined with the responses for individual facilities to give a true representation of the level of support.

Over 97% of respondents in both surveys wanted both the Castle lawn and the Castle grounds retained, see Table 12 and Chart 5. The multi-purpose function rooms were the lowest scoring option in both surveys (83.9% giving this answer on-site and 67.4% online). The ranking of the facilities by preference was the same in both surveys, but on-site the castle attraction and audio tour, castle shop, wedding facilities and multipurpose function rooms scored lower than in the online survey.

Table 12: Facilities People want to be Retained at Tonbridge Castle and Grounds

Facilities	On-site			Online		
	Number n.392	Percentage giving this as one of their answers	Percentage plus 'all of the above'	Number n.718	Percentage giving this as one of their answers	Percentage plus 'all of the above'
All of the above	288	73.5	73.5	432	60.2	60.2
Castle grounds	98	25.0	98.5	280	39.0	99.2
Castle lawn	93	23.7	97.2	273	38.0	98.2
Castle attraction and audio tour	66	16.8	90.3	171	23.8	84.0
Castle shop	65	16.6	90.1	106	14.8	74.9
Wedding facilities	47	12.0	85.5	59	8.2	68.4
Multipurpose function rooms	41	10.5	83.9	52	7.2	67.4
Total answers given	698			1373		

Chart 5: Facilities People want to be Retained at Tonbridge Castle and Grounds



## What you would like at Tonbridge Castle and Grounds – Categories Provided

Respondents were asked what they would like to see at Tonbridge Castle and grounds from a range of provided options. More than one answer could be chosen. 'None of the above' was an option in the on-site survey but not in the online survey.

Respondents could also choose 'other'. However, there was not a facility for those taking the online survey to add any further comments if they chose 'other'. Nor was there an option for 'none of the above' (16.7% choose this in the online survey). Some respondents took the opportunity to expand and provide further comment in their answers to following questions. However, 64 people taking the online survey did not answer this question at all. This may have been due to not wishing to choose any of the options provided for them as choices but there is no way of knowing the reason for respondents skipping this question. It was found that this question was also not always immediately understood by those being interviewed on-site. However, the surveyor was able to provide further context to the interviewee on the reason for the question to help them formulate their answer. This additional context may not have been provided in the online survey.

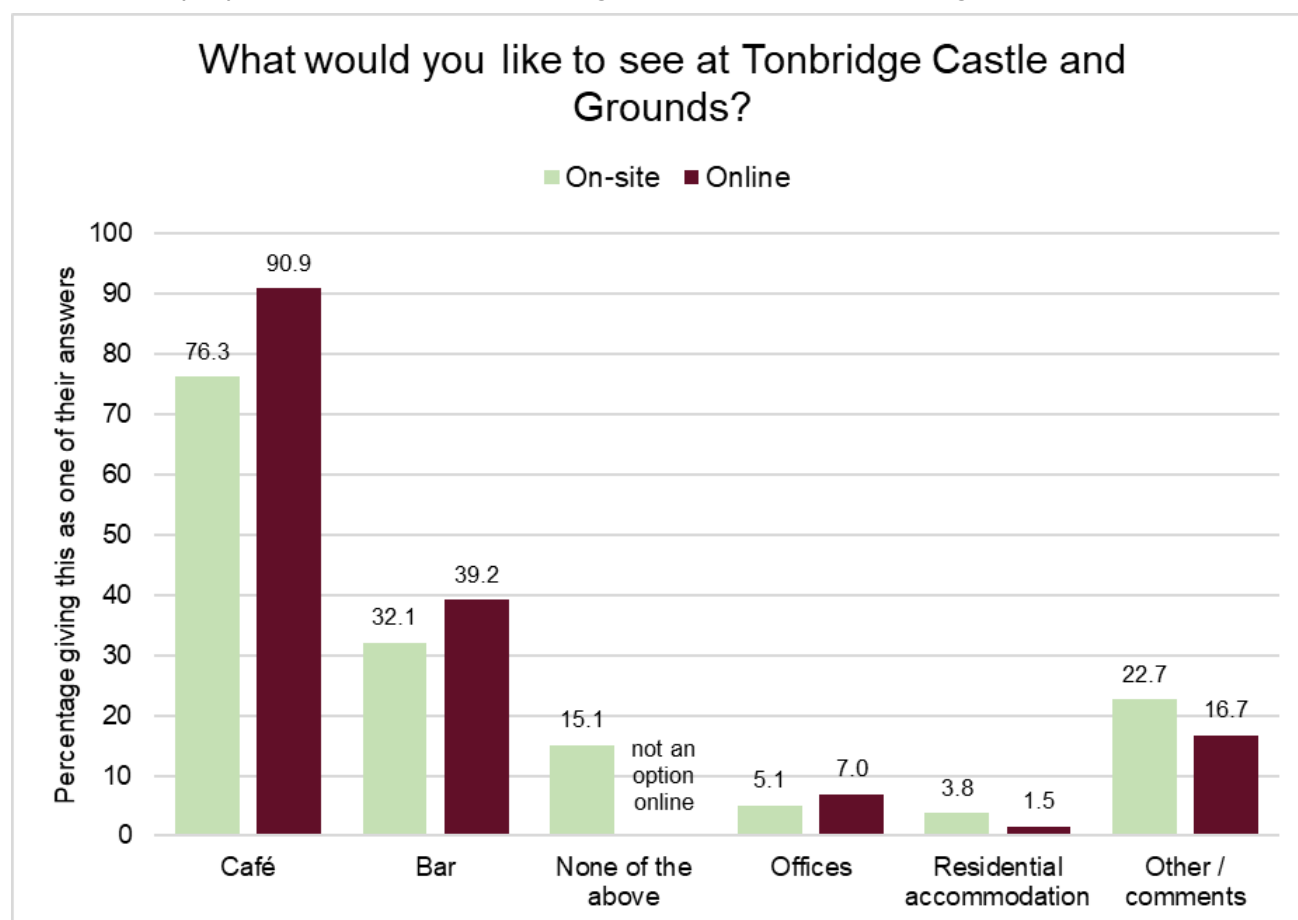
Due to these, albeit small, differences in the construction and application of the surveys, the results from this set of questions are not directly comparable. However, it is possible to ascertain overall sentiment and identify those answers which had high levels of responses. This and the following free text questions, along with the final opportunity for any additional comments, elicited a similar range of responses. These are therefore summarised in more detail from page 28, rather than for each individual question.

It is clear is that, out of the category choices provided, there was high support for a café in both surveys, with this answer scoring higher than the other options provided by some margin (76.3% gave this as one of their responses on-site and 90.9% online), see Table 13 and Chart 6. Second highest in both surveys was for a bar.

Table 13: What people would like to see at Tonbridge Castle and Grounds

Options	On-site		Online	
	Number n.392	Percentage giving this as one of their answers	Number n.660	Percentage giving this as one of their answers
Café	299	76.3	600	90.9
Bar	126	32.1	259	39.2
None of the above	59	15.1	-	-
Offices	20	5.1	46	7.0
Residential accommodation	15	3.8	10	1.5
Other / comments	89	22.7	110 <sup>3</sup>	16.7
Total number of answers given	608		1025	

Chart 6: What people would like to see at Tonbridge Castle and Grounds – Categories Provided



<sup>3</sup> Respondents did not have the facility in the survey to record comments.

Additional comments could be recorded for those interviewed on-site. These comments were categorised and summarised, see Table 14. The highest number of responses was for 'not residential' (46.1% giving this as one of their answers) followed by re-iteration of support for a café (23.6% giving this as one of their answers).

Further answers which only had one or two answers (included in 'Other' in Table 14) were adventure playground and zip wire, couple of swings in the area for children with disabilities, more events, museum, preference of offices to residential, revamp the inside of castle, shops for local crafts, toilets open at all times and tourist and 'crowd pleasers' e.g. comedy, jousting and re-enactment.

Table 14: Summary of Answers given under 'Other' - On-site Survey

Category of comment	Number n.89	Percentage giving this as one of their answers
Not residential	41	46.1
Café	21	23.6
Not offices	12	13.5
Bar	10	11.2
More community use (e.g. classes)	6	6.7
No bar	5	5.6
Restaurant / food offering	5	5.6
Nothing / keep as it is	5	5.6
No new building / development / respect the heritage	5	5.6
Better to do something than lose it	3	3.4
Tourist accommodation / Air B&B	3	3.4
Other	13	14.6
Total	129	

## What facilities would you like to see at Tonbridge Castle or the grounds that are currently not there?

This question was a free text question and respondents could provide any answer they wished. The results were categorised and summarised. All of those interviewed on-site gave an answer and 541 online provided comments (183 did not).

The results from the two surveys are not directly comparable because those being interviewed on-site had the opportunity to expand on their answers to 'other' in the question directly before this in the questionnaire. Therefore, people did not always reiterate their answers.

However, the top three responses in both surveys were the same, although in a different order. These were a café (1<sup>st</sup> online, 3<sup>rd</sup> on-site), toilets or improvements to toilets (2<sup>nd</sup> online, 1<sup>st</sup> on-site) and nothing (3<sup>rd</sup> online, 2<sup>nd</sup> on-site).

Answers are summarised in Table 15.

Table 15: What facilities would you like to see at Tonbridge Castle or the grounds that are currently not there?

Answer Category	On-site			Online		
	Number n.392	% giving this as one of their answers	Rank (excluding 'Other')	Number n.541	% giving this as one of their answers	Rank (excluding 'Other')
Café / coffee shop / coffee van	73	18.6	3	244	45.1	1
Toilets / improvements to toilets	152	38.8	1	108	20.0	2
Nothing / fine as it is / none of the previous suggestions	96	24.5	2	64	11.8	3
Bar / pop-up bar	12	3.1	6	60	11.1	4
Restaurant / pop-up restaurant	9	2.3	10	32	5.9	5
Historical information / education packs & programmes / tours	12	3.1	6	30	5.5	6
Museum	4	1.0	18	29	5.4	7
Community use / workshops / community information / room hire	4	1.0	18	21	3.9	8
More events	15	3.8	5	15	2.8	9
Exhibitions / art / gallery	2	0.5	22	14	2.6	10
More seating / deckchairs / undercover seating / tables	18	4.6	4	13	2.4	11
Play facilities / toddler group / more for children	11	2.8	8	11	2.0	12
No residential	1	0.3	25	10	1.8	13
Ice cream	5	1.3	15	9	1.7	14
Improved shop	5	1.3	15	8	1.5	15
Bandstand / music stage / music venue	1	0.3	25	7	1.3	16
More flower beds	2	0.5	22	7	1.3	16
Sports / activities	5	1.3	15	7	1.3	16
Markets /pop up shops	2	0.5	22	6	1.1	19
Offices / drop in office space	0	0.0	30	6	1.1	19
Wildflowers / improved for nature	0	0.0	30	6	1.1	19
No offices	0	0.0	30	5	0.9	22
Improvements for those with disabilities	7	1.8	12	5	0.9	22
Function room / wider / evening use of function rooms / conference venue	6	1.5	13	5	0.9	22
Don't know	8	2.0	11	5	0.9	22
Retain / improve Tourist Information Centre	1	0.3	25	4	0.7	26
Wedding reception facilities	0	0.0	30	4	0.7	26
Professional kitchen	0	0.0	30	3	0.6	28
Utilising Motte	1	0.3	25	3	0.6	28
Improved signage	1	0.3	25	3	0.6	28
Better parking / cycle parking	3	0.8	20	2	0.4	31
Holiday accommodation	3	0.8	20	2	0.4	31
Improve advertising	6	1.5	13	2	0.4	31
More litter / dog bins	10	2.6	9	1	0.2	34
Other	8	2.0		37	6.8	
Total	483			788		



## What changes would you like to see at Tonbridge Castle and grounds?

This question was a free text question and respondents could provide any answer they wished. The results were categorised and summarised, shown in Table 16. In the online survey 508 people made comments (216 did not) and on-site all those interviewed commented (although the majority indicated there should be no changes – 58.9%).

Table 16: Changes at Tonbridge Castle and Grounds

Answer Category	On-site		Online	
	Number n.392	Percentage giving this as one of their answers	Number n.508	Percentage giving this as one of their answers
Nothing / everything fine / continue as is	231	58.9	139	27.4
Café	15	3.8	46	9.1
More flowers / flower beds / beds retained / landscaping	16	4.1	43	8.5
More events / continue with events / changes to events	8	2.0	39	7.7
As previous answer / n/a	0	0.0	33	6.5
Improved toilets	8	2.0	22	4.3
More benches / seating / sheltered seating / picnic benches	15	3.8	19	3.7
Better use of indoor spaces / more access	1	0.3	18	3.5
Clean the Moat / riverbank vegetation / refill with water	9	2.3	17	3.3
Improved promotion / advertising	21	5.4	16	3.1
Improved paths / issue with gravel	19	4.8	14	2.8
Historic and heritage information	7	1.8	14	2.8
Discount / free entry for residents /reduced fees	3	0.8	13	2.6
Lighting	2	0.5	11	2.2
Improvements to Castle tour /guided tours	0	0.0	10	2.0
Do not over-develop / commercialise / detract from Castle	2	0.5	10	2.0
More for children / families	11	2.8	9	1.8
Maintenance of Motte	0	0.0	9	1.8
Improved signage	2	0.5	9	1.8
Bar	0	0.0	8	1.6
Improvements for wildlife and nature	1	0.3	8	1.6
Don't know	11	2.8	7	1.4
Better maintenance	3	0.8	7	1.4
No residential / offices / bar	2	0.5	7	1.4
Restore / maintain the Castle	0	0.0	7	1.4
Museum	0	0.0	6	1.2
Control pigeons and squirrels	0	0.0	5	1.0
Improved shop	2	0.5	4	0.8
Restaurant	0	0.0	4	0.8
No dogs / dogs on leads	0	0.0	4	0.8
Improvements to parking	7	1.8	3	0.6
Music stage / bandstand	1	0.3	2	0.4
Other	27	6.9	58	11.4
Total	424		621	

The highest response in both surveys was for 'nothing / everything fine / continue as is' and in both surveys this answer was significantly higher than any other answer category. Some respondents took the opportunity to re-iterate comments from previous questions – e.g. support for a café, more events, more seating, improvements to toilets etc.

New categories which appeared from the analysis of this question which had more than 2% of people giving this answer were:

- Expanding and reinstating the flower beds;
- Better publicity and advertising for events and the Castle;
- Comments about the unsuitability of the new gravel path in terms of accessibility;
- Cleaning the moat and refilling with water;
- Discounts or reduction in fees for audio tour, lawn and room hire;
- Improvements to the Castle tour.

## Any Other Comments

Finally, respondents were asked if there were any other comments they would like to make. The results were categorised and summarised, shown in Table 17. In the online survey 397 people made final comments (327 did not) and on-site, 267 gave final comments (125 did not).

In the online survey, respondents took the opportunity to state that they did not wish any residential development; this being the highest category of response, given by 19.1% of the those answering this question.

In the on-site survey, where respondents had already had the opportunity to voice opinions on the four options provided in the earlier questions, the top response was to not change the Castle and grounds / keep it as it is. This was given by 25.8% of those interviewed. This response was the second highest in the online survey, given by 18.9% of respondents.

The third highest response in the online survey (given by 15.6% of respondents) and second highest in the on-site survey (given by 11.6% of respondents) was to keep or expand events, or suggestions were made for events.

The fourth highest response in the online survey (given by 14.9% of respondents) and fifth highest in the on-site survey (given by 6.7% of respondents) was to state the importance of the Castle and grounds at the heart of Tonbridge, that it is a community asset and at the heart of the community.

Table 17: Any Other Comments

Answer Category	On-site			Online		
	Number n.267	Percentage giving this as one of their answers	Rank	Number n.397	Percentage giving this as one of their answers	Rank
No residential	8	3.0	11	76	19.1	1
Don't spoil it / change it / keep its heritage & beauty / like it as it is	69	25.8	1	75	18.9	2
Keep / expand events / suggestions for	31	11.6	2	62	15.6	3
Heart of town / asset for town / heart of community	18	6.7	5	59	14.9	4
Keep it open for all / public and community space and use	8	3.0	11	47	11.8	5
No offices or commercial	0	0.0	25	30	7.6	6
Do not privatise / sell / keep as community & public asset & space	1	0.4	23	30	7.6	6
Don't make too commercial	3	1.1	17	17	4.3	8
It is well maintained / keep it well maintained / restore / conserve	21	7.9	3	17	4.3	8
Is a tourist (visitor) attraction / create more of a tourist attraction	2	0.7	20	16	4.0	10
Venue for education / history / improve historic information & events	11	4.1	8	15	3.8	11
No new buildings / development	4	1.5	14	14	3.5	12
Keep free events / reduce fees / keep free parking	13	4.9	7	14	3.5	12
Better promotion and advertising	21	7.9	3	12	3.0	14
More seating / lighting / access improvements / planting / other general improvements	18	6.7	5	11	2.8	15
No bar	1	0.4	23	10	2.5	16
Consult / seek further advice	2	0.7	20	10	2.5	16
Café / bar / restaurant	11	4.1	8	10	2.5	16
Fewer events / events disruptive to local residents	0	0.0	25	7	1.8	19
Use inside of buildings more effectively	3	1.1	17	6	1.5	20
Keep up the good work	3	1.1	17	6	1.5	20
Toilets / disabled toilet	2	0.7	20	5	1.3	22
Make more of river location / utilise river walk	4	1.5	14	5	1.3	22
Issues with new gravel path	6	2.2	13	4	1.0	24
More for wildlife / nature	4	1.5	14	4	1.0	24
More for children	9	3.4	10	3	0.8	26
Don't turn it into a play park / keep Racecourse for that function	0	0.0	25	2	0.5	27
Other	37	13.9		39	9.8	
Total	310			606		

## Discussion

### Further Views on Options Provided as Choices

The following four options were provided to respondents. Further insight is detailed below, from the additional comments made.

#### Café

*A lovely cafe with cream teas, locally resourced.*

There was a high level of support for a café and this was the most popular choice by a considerable margin, receiving broad and majority support. When choosing between the four options provided in the survey (café, bar, offices and residential), in the online survey, 90.9% of people in the online survey and 70.6% of those interviewed on-site wanted a café. Support for a café was often re-iterated in subsequent free text survey questions.

Within this overall support, some additional comments were made:<sup>4</sup>

- Seating on the lawn was a very popular suggestion. Some people suggested deckchairs; others, tables and chairs. Sheltered seating outside a café was also requested;
- The Castle and grounds as a meeting place was raised by several respondents and the café was highlighted as a potential meeting place, for example for parents and young children (who could play on the lawn) or as a meeting place after community group meetings or classes held in the Castle;
- Some respondents wanted a summer time café or tea room only;
- The current £1 price for take-away tea and coffee was raised and some people requested that prices at any café should continue to be reasonable;
- Some people requested a mobile coffee van rather than a café;
- Some people raised that there were lots of cafes in the area already and another was not needed. Some people also questioned whether a café at the Castle would draw trade away from the High Street;
- The provision of ice-cream, not necessarily just from a café, was also a popular request.

*A cafe would be great, with some chairs and tables that overlook the lawn.*

*Outdoor cafe during the summer, afternoon teas, maybe a tea dance.*

*A cafe might be nice, but there are lots in the area.*

<sup>4</sup> It is difficult to fully quantify these additional comments into percentages of people giving these responses. The summaries provided aim to provide insight into the range of views expressed.

## Bar

A bar was the second most popular option but did not have majority support. When choosing between the four options provided, in the online survey, 39.2% of people in the online survey and 32.1% of those interviewed on-site wanted a bar.

However, the range of ideas of what a 'bar' constituted seemed to vary, ranging from temporary licensed stalls at events to a permanent evening bar. 'Bar' suggestions encompassed:

- A pop-up bar, or a temporary bar for some events;
- Provision of alcohol with food from a licensed café or restaurant. Often respondents would indicate café/bar or restaurant/bar without giving further detail. Some form of licensed venue serving food was the most popular suggestion;
- A 'beer café'-type bar; conversely some specifically said not a 'beer café'-type bar;<sup>5</sup>
- A wine bar;
- A pub-style bar.

The main reservations against a bar were:

- That there are bars in the High Street and that another at the Castle was not needed;
- That the Castle is a family and community space and that this should be the primary role of the Castle and grounds;
- Fears around rowdy behaviour, especially after dark;
- That it would change the atmosphere of the Castle and grounds.

*A basement bar and terrace on the northern side. A cafe with table and chairs overlooking the lawn. A kitchen which would enable far more variety for catering for events such as in the Castle's Keep itself for banquets.*

*A wine bar at the front where the basement entrance is located. Also a huge licensed cafe restaurant where the current shop is with lots of outdoor seating in summer and heated covered seating outdoor in winter.*

*A bar would be a bad idea as it's a family space and also there are plenty of bars in town*

*I don't think it's an appropriate place for a bar, much as I love a glass of wine! It would change the peaceful atmosphere up there. And although more could be made of the space, it is lovely to have an open space above the town, so please don't change that!!*

<sup>5</sup> Fuggles was specifically mentioned in this context. <https://fugglesbeercafe.co.uk/>



## Offices

There was little support for offices. When choosing between the four options provided, in the online survey, 7% of people in the online survey and 5.1% of those interviewed on-site supported offices.

*Small flexible office facilities that people could hire as a supplement to working from home or for occasional meetings etc. for businesses.*

Overall there were few additional comments to provide further insight. Those expressing an opinion against offices often simply stated 'no offices' or indicated that it would make the Castle and grounds too commercial and that it should be a community space. There were a few comments indicating that flexible office space for small businesses, drop in hot-desks and co-working spaces or meeting rooms would be appropriate.

*Offices or residential is a terrible idea. That would ruin the community feel.*

## Residential

There was little support for residential; indeed there was strength of feeling against any residential development. When choosing between the four options provided, in the online survey, 1.5% of people in the online survey and 3.8% of those interviewed on-site supported residential as an option.

Where further background on these views were given, these centred around:

- That it was a community asset and shouldn't be privatised in any way;
- That through such development, access may be restricted to parts of the Castle, including onto the Castle Lawn;
- That it would make the Castle 'exclusive' and the needs and wishes of residents would take precedence;
- That events or activities may be restricted or curtailed (noise etc. becoming a nuisance to residents);
- In the context of residential accommodation some respondents gave their views on development more widely in Tonbridge, and in particular the development of apartments on the southern side of the river.

*Tonbridge has been devastated over the years with far too many blocks of flats. I think the castle and grounds must remain as a facility for townspeople and visitors and certainly should not be considered for residential use.*

## Other Suggestions and Themes

There were additional suggestions and themes which were raised by some respondents. The more frequent suggestions and themes are listed below.

### Toilets

When asked what facilities were wanted, the provision of toilets, or the improvement of existing toilets, was the highest response in the on-site survey and second in the online survey. This request was re-iterated in responses to some of the other questions.

The majority of respondents simply stated that toilets or 'better toilets' were needed. More specific comments included:

- Accessible disabled toilet facilities;
- Facilities for changing disabled child in a wheelchair;
- Cleaner toilets;
- Toilets open at all times (not just when Tourist Information Office is open);
- Comments around nearby toilets (in the Racecourse Sportsground) being unpleasant.

### Castle as the Heart of the Town and a Community Space

There were many comments that the castle was the heart of the town, a landmark of Tonbridge and that is an asset which must be cherished and preserved.

The primary function of the Castle and grounds as a community space was strongly expressed throughout the surveys. This was expressed through comments encompassing:

- That the Castle grounds should be open to all, at all times;
- That priority should be given to community groups, classes and community use of the inside of the Castle;
- Events held which are accessible to the whole community, including those which are not chargeable to enter;
- The Castle and grounds should be the venue for civic events to mark significant national and local occasions.

There was a strong feeling against any privatisation, reduction in access or diminishing of the role as a community resource.

Respondents did not wish to see any of the uses, for example residential or office use, to restrict the community use or access to the Castle or grounds.

*The Castle and grounds are an iconic landmark for the town of Tonbridge. They need to be enhanced and supported to ensure that they remain a feature for the Community for many more years to come.*

*We need to ensure that there are still opportunities for community groups to use the grounds and that the people of Tonbridge remain the main focus of any improvements, profit has to be a consideration but not the only one.*

## Restaurant

A restaurant was mentioned less than a café, but there was some support. Most additional comments indicated that this should be a high-quality venue. Ideas and comments included:

- A pop-up restaurant;
- A restaurant / bistro and wine bar;
- A restaurant would extend use of the Castle into the evening;
- There is a need for a good quality restaurant in Tonbridge;
- In the summer, outdoor dining on the lawn;
- Installation of a catering kitchen for a restaurant and to provide on-site catering for a full wedding function.

*A wonderful cafe, or restaurant would be fab. But it would have to be well done and sell excellent coffee, you have got a number of very nice cafes nearby.*

## Celebrating History and Heritage

A theme through the additional comments was that the Castle and grounds should be a venue for celebrating history and heritage. These comments including:

- The Castle being the location of a Tonbridge museum or a venue which provided information and displays on local history;
- Historical exhibits;
- Historical tours;
- Facilities for children – a children's trail showing heritage, rubbings for children around the site, dressing up in robes or costumes, educational facilities for school visits, educational programme for children;
- Updates to the tour inside the Castle;
- Re-enactment events were a popular response for events;
- Living history camp, medieval banquet;
- More and improved interpretation and signage around the grounds;
- More free access to the interior of the Castle and guided tours.

*I would like to see either a museum or else another way of providing more information about local history and things happening in the town. We have the tourist information, but that seems to have lots of information about other parts of the UK. I think our town has an awful lot to offer tourists whether from abroad or on a day trip from London.*

*Please keep the history alive. It's an important part of the town and I remember a school trip to visit it when I was younger. I'd love my children to have the same experience!*

A theme throughout the comments was that any changes and new ventures should be in keeping with the heritage and history of the Castle and grounds and should not detract from this. There were also comments that the primary aim should be to protect and restore the Castle infrastructure.



## Art and Culture

There were a broad range of suggestions to develop the Castle as a hub for art and culture. These included:

- Art and sculpture exhibitions;
- Gallery space;
- Art and creative classes and workshops;
- Book and literary fairs;
- Venue for theatre, music, cinema, dance and other art forms.

## Charges and Fees

There were some comments around charges and fees:

- That access to the Castle grounds should remain free of charge;
- There should be a discount for residents for entrance, or free entrance, into the Castle;
- That the price for use of the Castle Lawn was too high for schools and community groups, and that this should be a free facility;
- That there shouldn't be a charge for bands or community organisations using the Castle Lawn or for other events which benefit the town, such as the St George's Day parade;
- The price for the tour is too expensive compared with comparable attractions.

## Access for People Living with Disabilities

There were a few comments on the new gravel path. Some commented that the gravel spread around the site. However, more concerning were comments that it was not suitable for disabled and wheelchair access as the stones were too slippery on the slope.

*The path down to the river - it's been replaced with gravel and it's dangerous to anyone on a mobility scooter, wheelchair or anyone with impaired mobility.*

There were also requests for:

- Disabled toilets (adults and children);
- Sensory garden;
- Better access to the lawn area for people living with disabilities during events;
- More for Special Educational Needs children in the Castle, grounds and at events.

## Seek further Input

There were several suggestions of other examples which might provide useful ideas:

- Edinburgh Castle;
- Amelia Scott Centre in Tunbridge Wells;
- Kaleidoscope Gallery in Sevenoaks;
- Oakham Castle in Rutland ([www.oakhamcastle.org](http://www.oakhamcastle.org)) cafe sympathetic to its location;
- Newhaven Fort;
- Eynsford Castle - encouraging non-invasive plants which are not detrimental to masonry, increase biodiversity, manage the grass banks to encourage more wildflowers;
- Calvary Grounds, Tunbridge Wells
- Glasshouse, Tunbridge Wells <https://glasshousebar.co.uk/about/>
- Consult marketing teams at larger local businesses, e.g. AXA;
- Carry out market research and feasibility of options before committing to a direction.

There were also several comments urging Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council to continue to engage and consult with users, community groups and residents on the future of the Castle and grounds.

## Events

Most people responding to the survey had attended an event at the Castle. This was most likely to have been on the Castle Lawn (88% online survey; 73% on-site) or in the grounds (60% online; 63% on-site) rather than inside the Castle (15% online; 20% on-site).

The current range of events on offer was well-supported. Whilst 15% of online respondents and 11% of those interviewed on-site explicitly indicated that they liked the current programme of events, the responses given overall were very much in line with the current offering.

Music and food and drink were the highest responses for preferred events in both surveys (music - 56% on-site; 46% online and food and drink - 33% on-site; 24% online). Combining music with food and drink was popular.

Castlemas was popular and was the third highest response in both surveys (13% on-site; 21% online) and the highest scoring event mentioned by names. A range of markets, fetes and fairs were also popular choices.

Many of the events suggested were cultural, including theatre, music, art exhibitions, comedy, arts and crafts, Son et Lumiere events and book and literary events

Overall, the theme which appeared from responses was that events should be in keeping with the heritage and setting of the Castle. People viewed the Castle and grounds as a community asset and wanted to see it used for the benefit of the community. This was expressed in a range of ways, including the Castle and grounds being the venue for charity events, scouting, clubs and societies and events which were marking civic celebrations (May Day, St George's Day, Jubilee etc.). Some respondents mentioned the costs of events – with the free events appreciated and in keeping with

---

the perceived role of the Castle as a community asset and venue. Responses also included supporting local businesses, linking events with the river and events which benefited the High Street and the wider area.

There were some comments around broadening the market for younger generations. This included more events for children and for younger adults (e.g. silent disco). This included those in their 20's, with the perception that the style of music and type of events appealed to older generations.

There were also several comments around the need for more advertising and better promotion of events. Suggestions included at the railway station and consistency in advertising on social media. Comments were made from those not living in central Tonbridge, that there wasn't sufficient promotion of events at the Castle. This also extended to wider promotion to attract visitors, and revenue, to the Castle from further afield.