



Titchfield Haven Future Strategy Survey Analysis

Produced by the Insight and Engagement Unit, November 2022

Project Background



Hampshire County Council has developed proposals for the future management of Titchfield Haven National Nature Reserve (THNNR), which aim to invest in THNNR to improve and protect the environment, special habitats and wildlife; increase resilience to coastal and climate change; to place THNNR on a financially stable footing; and to secure the future of THNNR for the local community, volunteers and visitors.

The proposals included the sale of two buildings - Haven Cottage (currently disused) and Haven House (currently hosting the café, shop, and visitor centre - which would close).

Anyone with an interest in THNNR was invited to help shape the future of the site. This opportunity was promoted via a range of channels including, but not limited to: Press releases, Social media (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter), direct communications to key stakeholders, annual members and volunteers. Visitors were also made aware by posters, business cards (including QR codes) and paper copy surveys on site.

Respondents were asked to share how they used and experienced THNNR; to comment on proposed plans to improve the sustainability of the site and to share their ideas about how the County Council could invest in THNNR for the future.

The feedback survey was open from 27 September until 1 November 2022. A total of **2997 survey responses** were received.

NB: Respondents do not provide a representative sample of the Hampshire population. All questions were optional and the analyses only take into account actual responses. As such, the totals for each question generally add up to less than the total number of respondents who replied. Open-ended responses were analysed by theme, using an inductive approach. This means that the themes were developed from the responses themselves, not pre-determined based on expectations, to avoid any bias in the analysis of these responses. This report focuses on key themes - all comments have been read and considered by the project team.

Exec summary



Whilst respecting the importance of the reserve, many respondents felt that visitor access and facilities should be prioritised as a gateway to appreciating nature and a place to pause and appreciate the beautiful surroundings. There was therefore much dismay about the potential for the current facilities to be lost.

Many of the respondents lived in the areas surrounding the reserve and were concerned about the impact on the local community – particularly with regards to the potential sale of Haven House, which was regarded as an important hub that enabled people of all ages and abilities to come together and provided a destination at the end of a walk – benefitting both mental and physical health. There was trepidation about what might be done with the land once sold, the disruption of development, and that access would be restricted if put into private hands.

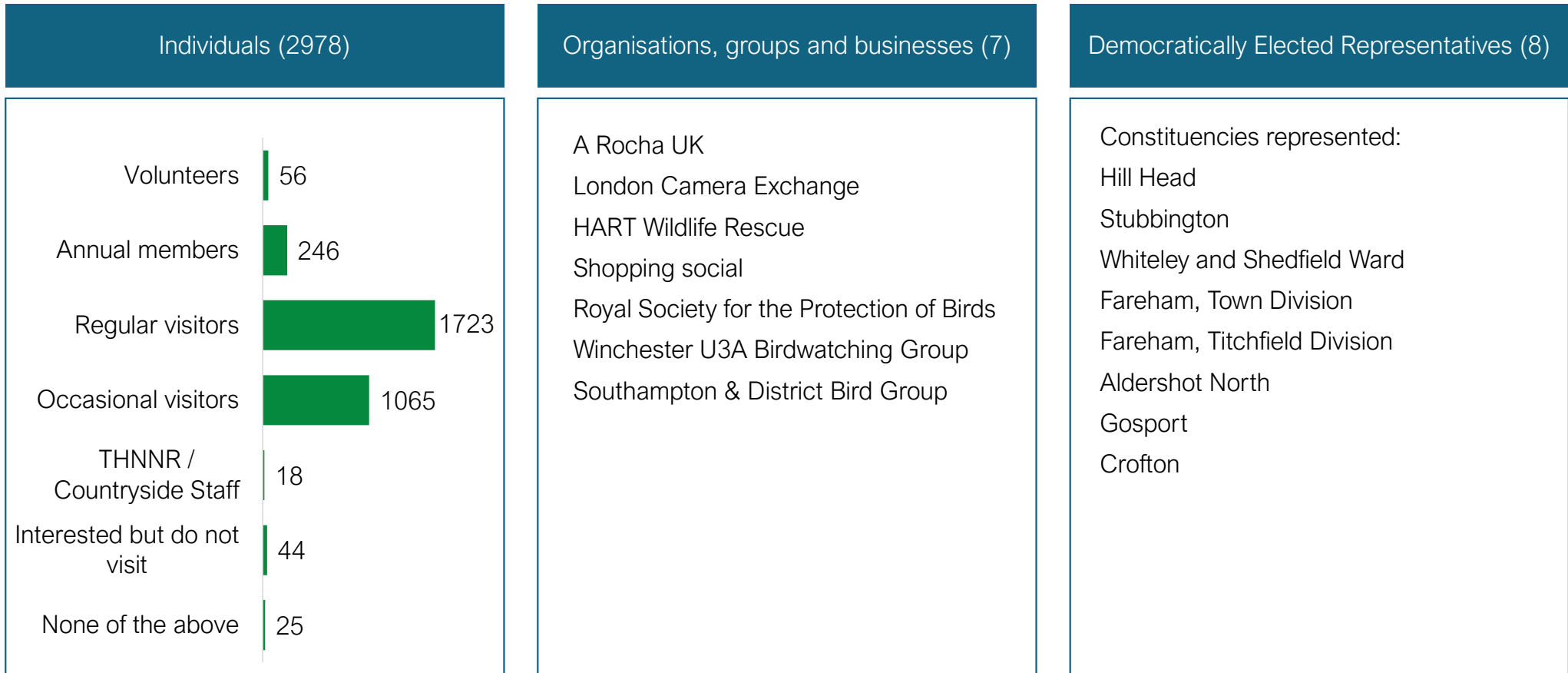
There was recognition that the buildings in their current state may not be the best fit for purpose. However, the desire remained, even amongst those who prioritised the reserve, for a visit to incorporate information about the site, places to rest and some form of refreshments and toilet facilities that would enable an extended stay, an extended season and facilitate visits from further afield. It was feared that without these, visitor numbers and therefore income to support the site may reduce.

In this context, the sale of Haven Cottage was seen as more palatable – particularly if some of the funds could be used to retain visitor facilities. However, respondents also put forward a range of other suggestions to increase available resources, such as investigating alternative income and fundraising streams, considering alternative uses for the buildings, or alternative management options (for café or site).

Should the buildings be sold, respondents highlighted a long list of features around the reserve that might benefit from additional consideration or investment. Further engagement work would help to inform the best use of resources.



Who responded – respondent type: The vast majority of respondents were individuals who visited the site on a regular or occasional basis. The respondent base also included 76% of THNNR’s volunteers and 38% of annual members, as well as staff from the wider Countryside Service, local elected officials and a number of wildlife organisations



Q: In what context are you responding...? Respondent Base: 2993 (NB: 4 respondents did not reply to this question)

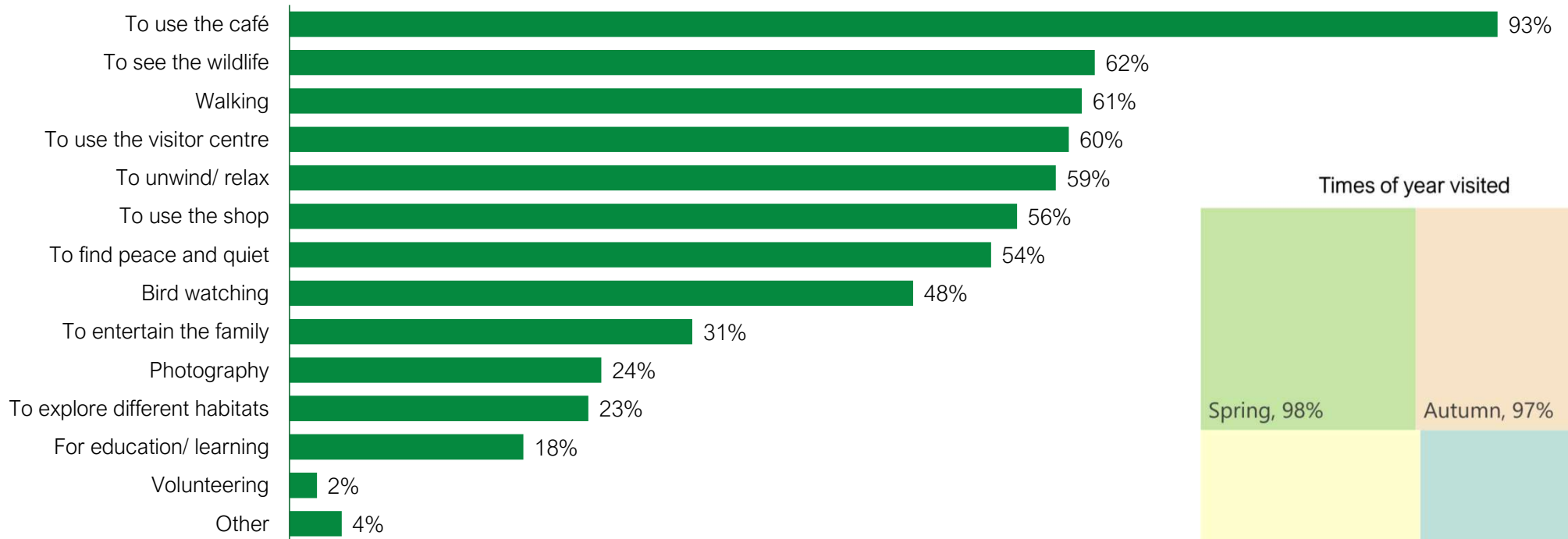
Q: How would you describe your connection to THNNR? (Multichoice). Respondent Base: 2970

Given the relatively low number of organisations / Democratically Elected Representatives, volunteers and staff in the sample base, the usefulness of percentages in quantifying their views is limited. However, analysis has been completed by 'respondent type', using indicative percentages in order to help illustrate any contrast between their views and those of individuals – recognising their 'expert' view and/or that they speak on behalf of a larger audience.

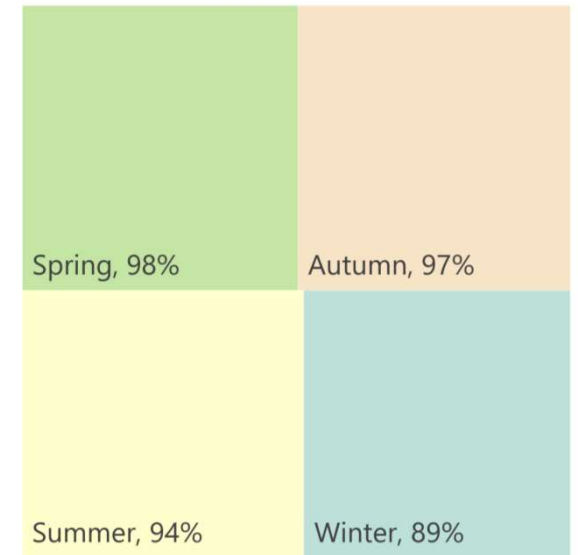


Who responded – site usage: Respondents visited THNNR throughout the year for a range of reasons, with café use predominating amongst this group. Just over six in ten respondents were attracted by the wildlife, with a similar proportion visiting for exercise, relaxation or to use other facilities within Haven House.

Key reasons for visiting THNNR



Times of year visited

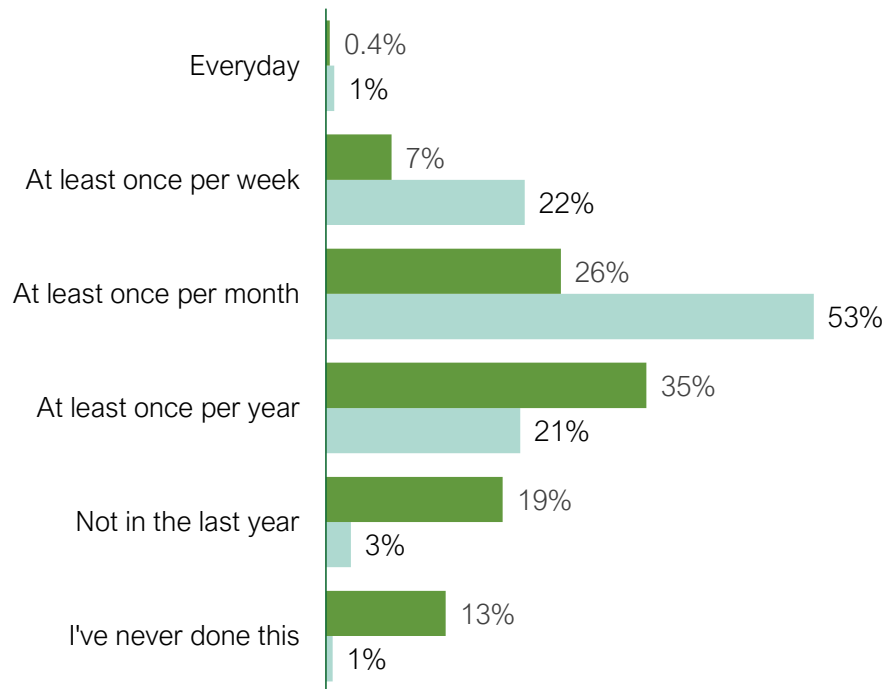


Q: What are your key reasons for visiting THNNR? Respondent Base: 2886
Q: At what times of the year do you like to visit THNNR? Respondent Base: 2883

Who responded - site usage: On average, responding café/shop users visited for up to an hour at least once a month whilst responding reserve visitors stayed for a couple of hours at least once per year. Many respondents used both parts of the site, although around a quarter visited the café/shop at least annually, but had not visited the reserve in the past year.

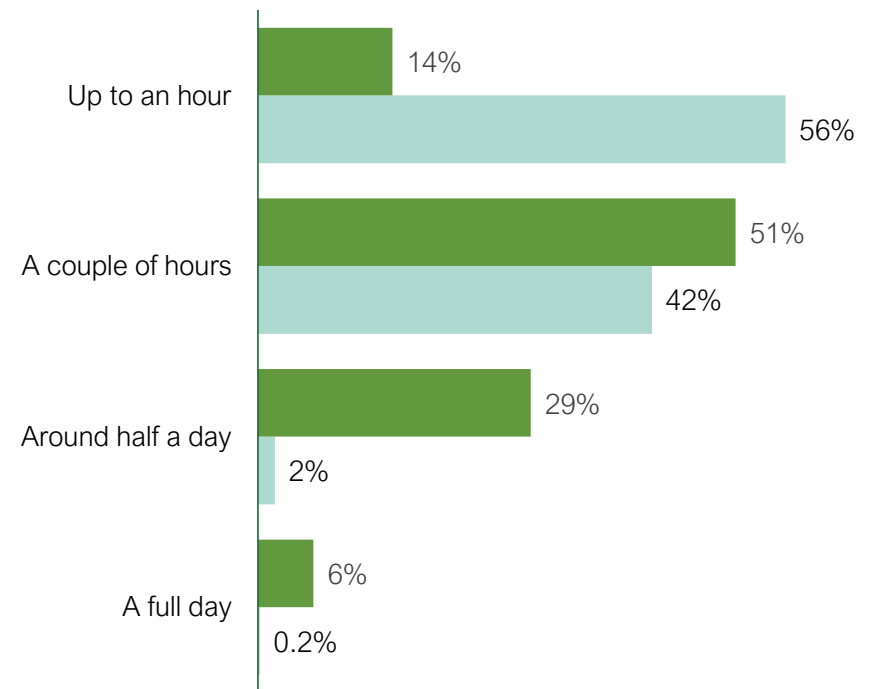


How often do you visit THNRR in order to . . . ?
(Base 2463, 2847)



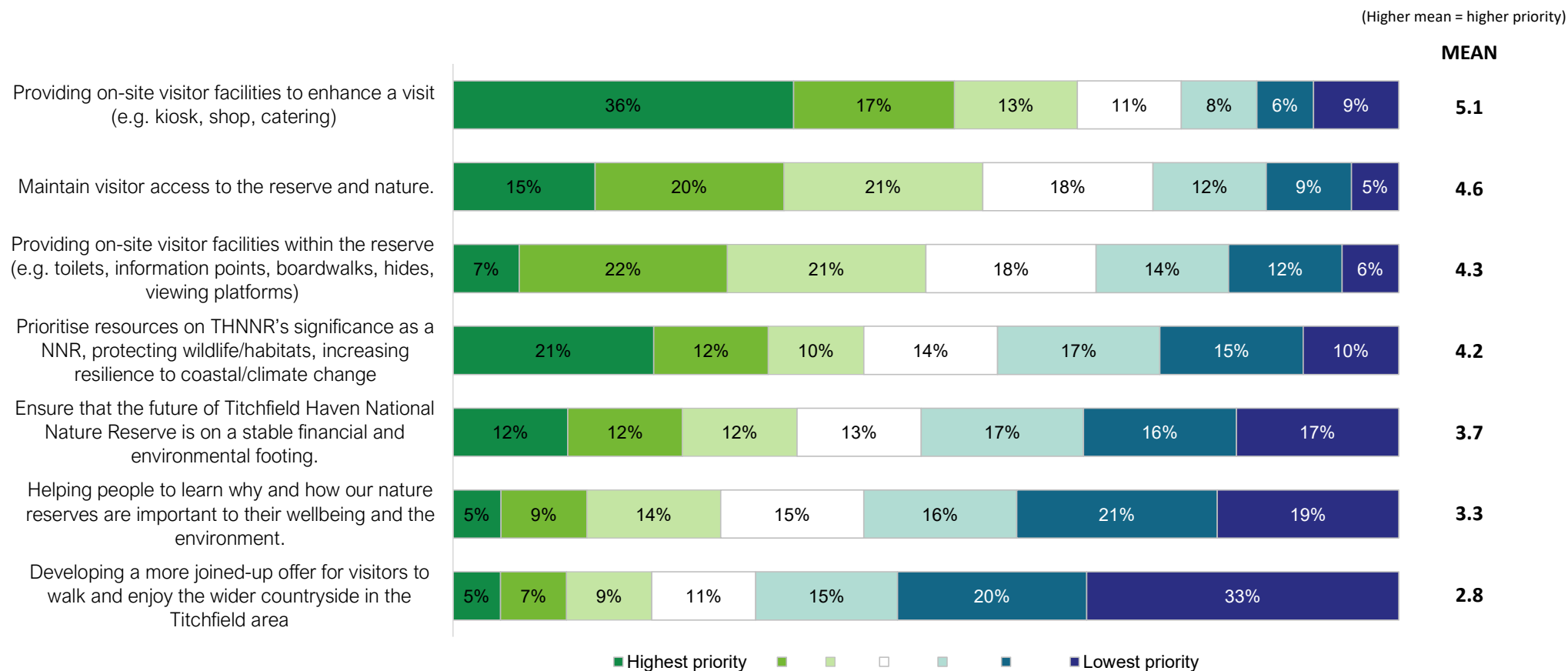
■ Enter the reserve (ticketed area) ■ Use the café and/ or shop

When visiting THNRR, how much time do you usually spend?
(Base 1915, 2743)



■ Out on the reserve (ticketed area) ■ In the café and/ or shop

Priorities: When asked to choose how they would prioritise resources to support and improve THNNR, respondents generally prioritised the continuation of visitor access to the site and the facilities that enhanced and enabled this, whilst also recognising the importance of protecting THNNR’s habitats and wildlife



Q: How should the County Council prioritise its resources to support and improve THNNR in future? Respondent Base: 2439 ranked all seven priorities as requested.
 NB: Some respondents chose to rank less than seven priorities – analysis including these responses gave the same mean priority order and less than 1% variance to the scores shown above

Priorities: Providing on site visitor facilities (such as a café or shop) to enhance a visit was particularly important to responding organisations, groups and businesses and café users, who generally prioritised all aspects of the visitor experience within their top three choices.



	Providing on-site visitor facilities to enhance a visit	Maintain visitor access to the reserve and nature.	Providing on-site visitor facilities within the reserve	Prioritise resources on THNNR's significance as a NNR	Ensure that the future of THNNR is on a stable financial and environmental footing.	Helping people to learn why and how our nature reserves are important to their wellbeing and the environment.	Developing a more joined-up offer for visitors to walk and enjoy the wider countryside in the Titchfield area
Individuals	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th
Organisations, groups and businesses	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	7 th	6 th
Used café/shop, but not reserve in the past year	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th
Uses café/shop monthly or more often	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th

Priorities: Other respondents had a slightly different focus, with annual members, volunteers and reserve visitors prioritising visitor access to the reserve and nature. There was also more reference to the reserve itself amongst the top three priorities chosen, with securing the future of the reserve a particular priority for staff and elected representatives.



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Elected Representatives	4 th	2 nd	3 rd	5 th	1 st	7 th	6 th
Countryside staff	7 th	3 rd	6 th	1 st	2 nd	5 th	4 th
Volunteers	5 th	1 st	3 rd	2 nd	4 th	6 th	7 th
Annual Members of THNNR	5 th	1 st	4 th	2 nd	3 rd	6 th	7 th
Uses reserve annually or more often	2 nd	1 st	4 th	3 rd	5 th	6 th	7 th

Proposal: Sell two buildings: Haven House and Haven Cottage



Both buildings are ageing and requiring significant investment to maintain.

Haven House (Visitor Centre)

This would include the closure of the current reception, café, and shop. Toilet facilities and an information point for visitors would be retained at the entrance to the East Reserve.

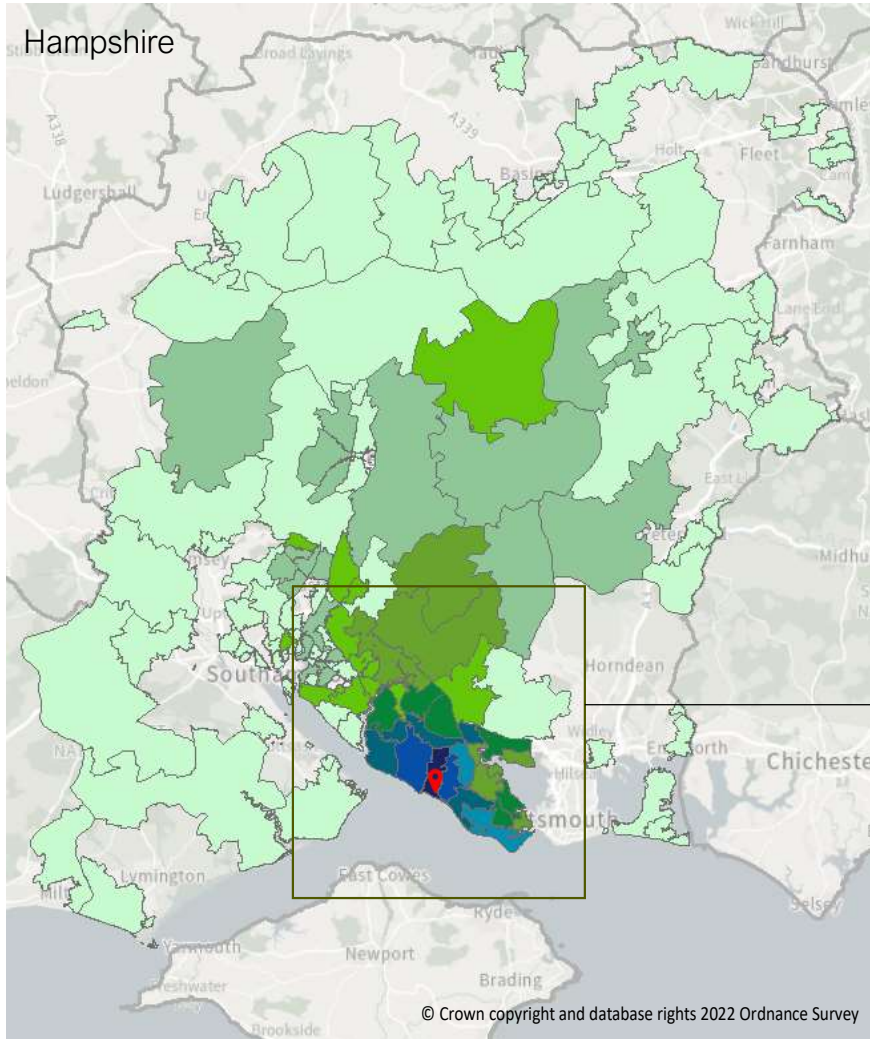
Haven Cottage

This is a vacant residential building, Grade II listed, with no public access.



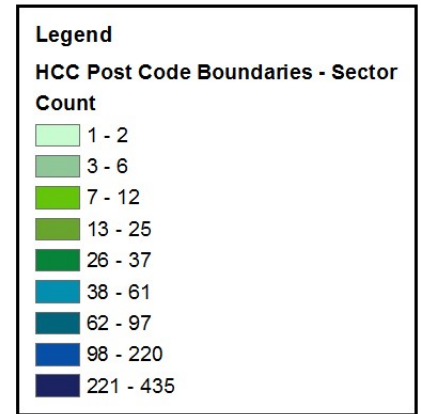
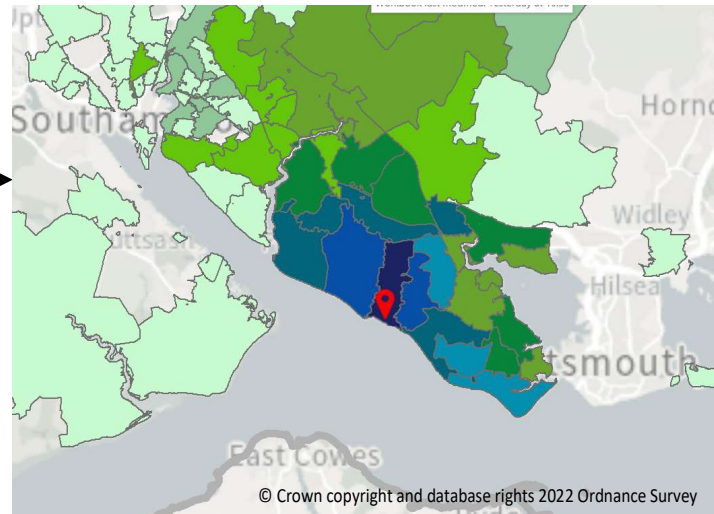


Who responded - location: The responses include representation from across Hampshire and beyond, with the highest concentrations from the areas surrounding Titchfield Haven.



These maps show the number of responses within Hampshire by postcode sector. Postcode sector is identified by the first part of the postcode, plus the next number (e.g. SO23 9). 2351 individuals, groups, businesses or organisations provided a postcode that could be mapped at this level.

Focussed view – area surrounding THNNR

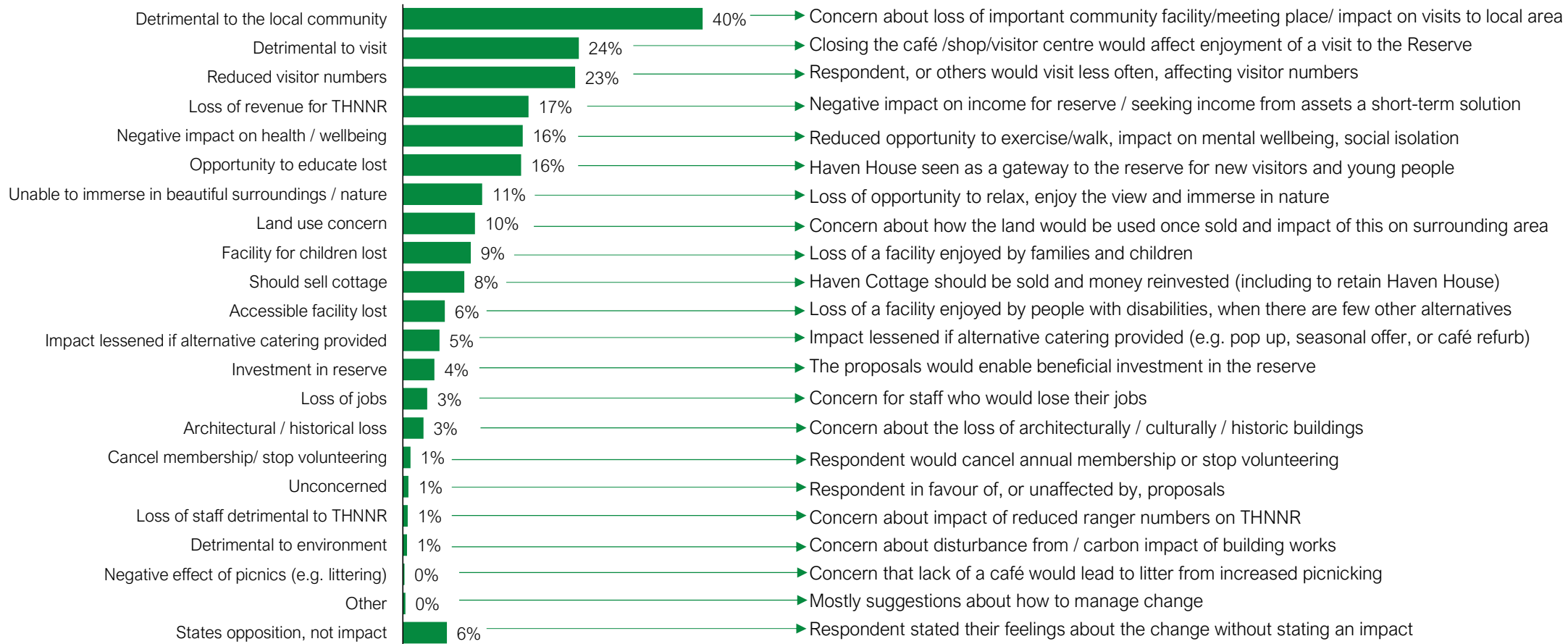


 Indicative location of THNNR

Response to proposal: The predominant concern was the potential impact on the local community - particularly with regards to the proposed sale of Haven House. It was felt this change would also be detrimental to a reserve visit, thereby reducing visitor numbers and impacting revenue.



Impacts

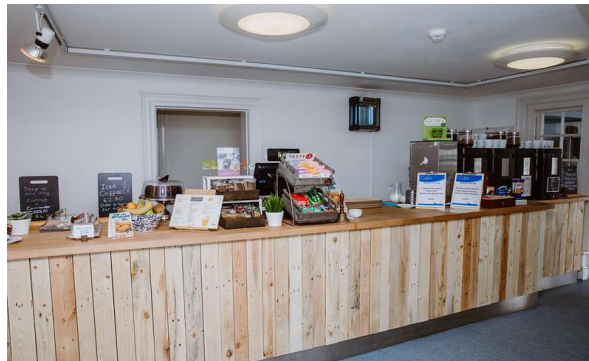


Q: If you would like to tell us how the County Council's proposals for THNNR may affect you or the local area then please do so in the box below. Quantified verbatim (multicode). Respondent Base: 2273 (excludes n/a).

Response to proposal: A search of key terms within comments about potential impacts helps to further illustrate respondents' key areas of focus with regards to the proposals.



Café = 1525 mentions



Shop = 663 mentions



Visitor Centre = 442 mentions



Haven House = 338 mentions



Haven Cottage = 276 mentions*



*Of which 188 suggested that the cottage should be sold

Impacts: Key concerns about the closure of facilities at Haven House are outlined in more detail below. They document the role that the centre plays in drawing people to the site, thereby helping them to engage in nature and with others, and apprehension about what the proposals might mean for the local area and the future of the reserve.



Community value of Haven House

Affordable and accessible local amenity
Well used by elderly, disabled and vulnerable people and family groups
Hub, focal point that brings the community together
Useful for local groups, events & exhibitions

"Haven House is one of the few local places here that provides a centre for the local community."

Reduced revenue / visitor numbers

Income from thriving café supports reserve
Ticket kiosk needed, concerns of evasion
Ongoing revenue lost by selling assets
Assets can only be sold once
Decline in visitor numbers/frequency if café closes, especially casual visitors/ tourists
Reduced word of mouth promotion

"Visitors numbers would drop and the income from local and non-bird watchers would cease altogether thus the advantage from selling haven House and the Cottage would diminish!"

Detrimental to Reserve visit

With no café a visit is less enticing - solely educational rather than an outing or event
Cafe offers shelter and a place to warm up – extending the visiting season
Visitor facilities enable a longer visit
Facilities enable a visit from further afield
Visitor facilities an integral part of experience

"The tea room at the reserve is an asset which really makes a visit complete. I like to meet birding friends there as well as take a rest there between sites."

Health and wellbeing / immersion in nature

Café encourages people to walk / exercise
Local meeting place reduces social isolation
Calming and peaceful place to relax/unwind - encourages mindfulness, good mental health
People with mobility issues can enjoy nature from the café

"I have a neurodiversity and find it helps me manage my health because of the peaceful and beautiful surroundings"

Education – opportunities lost

Place to talk to and learn from other site visitors, volunteers and staff
To educate children about nature
Drawing people in who wouldn't normally be interested in environmental issues
Space for talks and events

"The café and shop encourage those who might not normally visit a nature reserve to visit and this provides a teaching opportunity to those who are less aware of the importance of habitats which are so frequently lost"

Land use

Concern about flats or housing
Adverse effect of building works or unsympathetic development on surrounding area
Can restrictions be placed on how the land is used if sold?

"This beautiful site which is part of the local community will be sold off for greed profit where houses are going to be built by developers and will ruin the landscape"

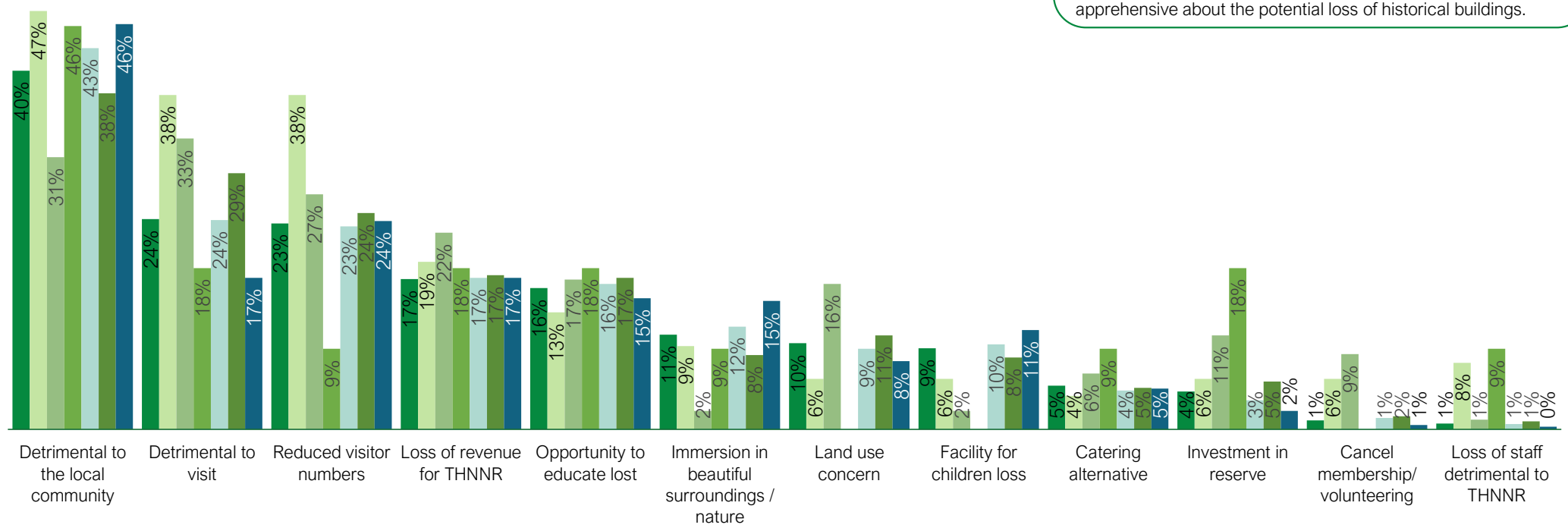
Q: If you would like to tell us how the County Council's proposals for THNNR may affect you or the local area then please do so in the box below. Key themes.



Impact: Concerns did vary slightly amongst different respondent types, often reflecting their priorities and their relationship with THNNR. For example, café/shop users were those most worried about the impact on the local community; volunteers and annual members were those most concerned about the detrimental impact on a reserve visit and visitor numbers.

Impacts by respondent type

- Overall
- Annual THNNR member
- Uses the café/shop monthly or more often
- Used the cafe/shop but not the reserve in the past year
- THNNR volunteer
- Countryside staff
- Uses the reserve annually or more often



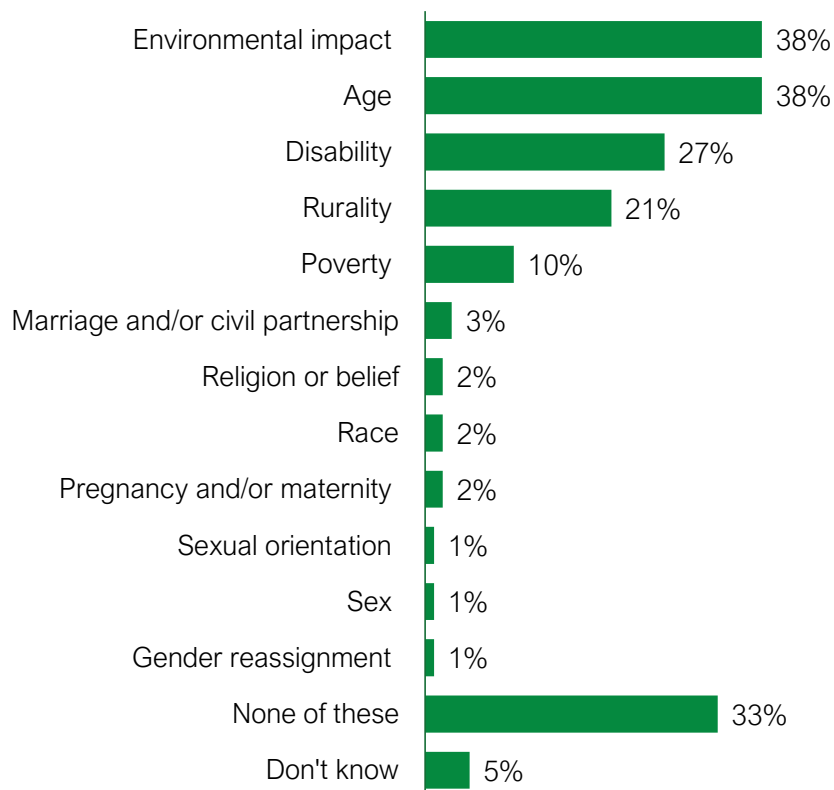
Within the comments from the 4 organisations who shared their concerns were multiple mentions of the community impact and the opportunity to educate. Elected representatives' comments, although recognising the opportunity for investment in the reserve, also included multiple mentions of community impact and detriment to a reserve visit. Although two Members felt that selling the cottage would be acceptable, the same number were apprehensive about the potential loss of historical buildings.

Q: If you would like to tell us how the County Council's proposals for THNNR may affect you or the local area then please do so in the box below. Quantified verbatim (multicode) by respondent type. Respondent Base: 2273, 53, 189, 11, 1742, 623, 608, 1268. Shows impacts where variance between groups is 5% or more



Impacts: Around a third of respondents classified the impact of the proposals by affected characteristics or issues. Of these, impacts on people based on their age were most commonly anticipated, together with impacts relating to the environment.

Affected characteristics or issues



Environmental impact: Emphasised concerns about how the land would be used if properties sold and the impact of works on the local community. Comments also stressed the loss of opportunities to generate interest in the natural environment and the importance of protecting it.

Age: Predominantly focussed on older and younger people. For the elderly, there were particular concerns about the impact on health and wellbeing and increased social isolation caused by the loss of community focal point. For children, comments focussed on loss of a family friendly facility and opportunities to educate / embed a love of nature.

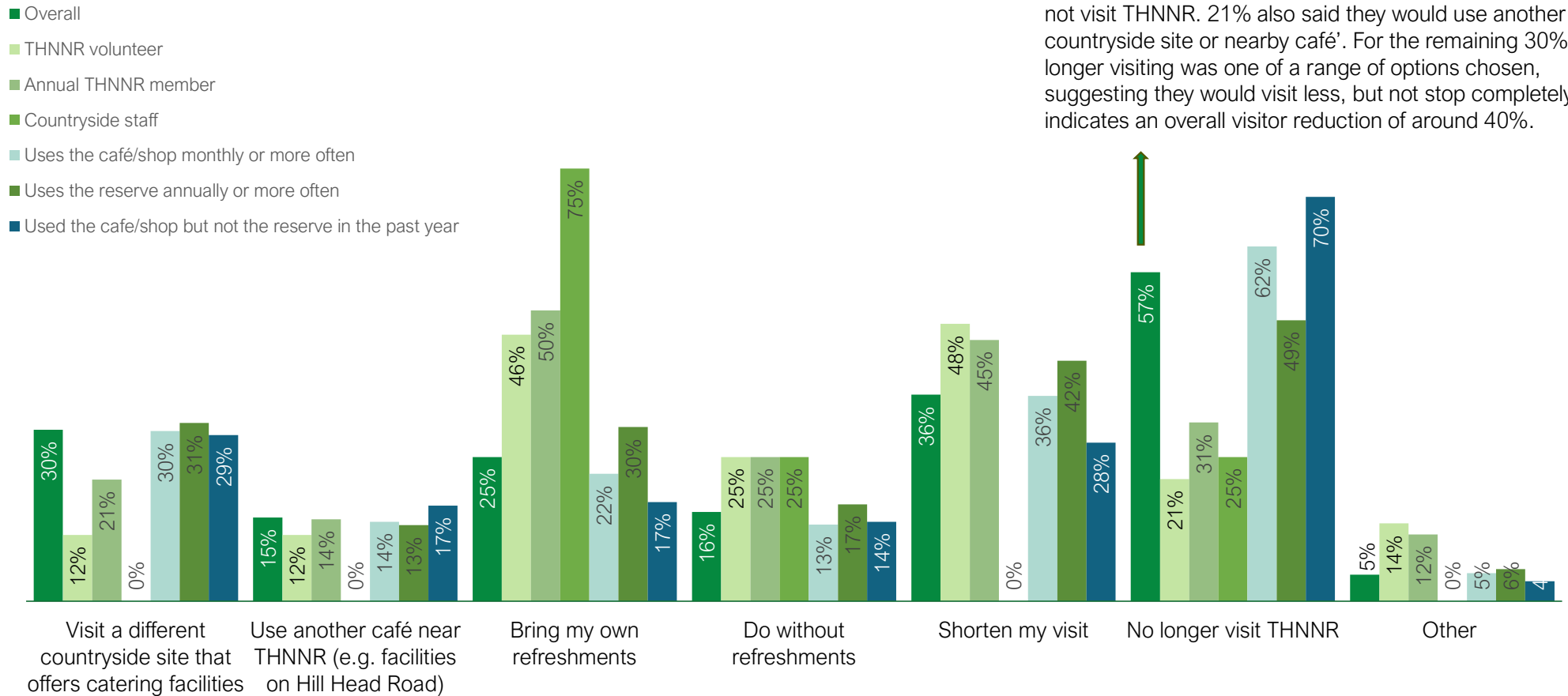
Disability: Comments described the lack of other accessible facilities in the area, and the importance of the café in providing a place for rest that enables people with mobility issues to enjoy the reserve. Health and wellbeing of people with mental health needs was also a focus, with respondents highlighting the Haven as a peaceful sanctuary.

Rurality: Particularly concerns about the detrimental effect the closure of Haven House could have on the local community, citing the loss of a central hub and amenity that brings local people together and contributes to a sense of community. Also flagged concerns about the impact of commercial / property development in the area.

Poverty: Encompassed a range of factors relating to universal access to amenities, including community facilities, affordable ways to support wellbeing, access to nature, and activities for children and people with disabilities and health issues. Also emphasis on loss of jobs and revenue to support the Reserve.

Q: Do the effects that you have mentioned relate to any of the following characteristics or issues? Multicode. Respondent Base: 1099. Commentary reflect impacts which are notably higher than average. For more information, please refer to the project equalities impact assessment

Impact: Respondents who had used the café/shop were asked what they would do if it closed. Around half indicated that they would “no longer visit THNNR” – higher amongst those who predominately visit for café/shop facilities. Others, particularly annual members and volunteers, would continue to visit – either for a shorter period or with their own refreshments.



Q: If the café at THNNR were to close, what would you do instead? By respondent type. Multicode. Respondent Base: 2807, 52, 232, 4, 2130, 1610, 746



Suggestions: The most common suggestions for an alternative approach are outlined in more detail below. Often these encouraged the involvement of external agencies in funding, running or partnering to enhance or develop the site's potential.

Alternative income streams

Consider fundraising or savings options
Lobby government for funding
Increase council tax
Use developer contributions / CIL towards upkeep of site.
Apply for grants (e.g. Natural England, Forestry Commission, National Lottery, ExxonMobil)
Seek community funding or business sponsorship
Crowdfunding, donations
Engage the community in work parties, volunteers, bequests, donations or fundraising activities
Create a trust / charity to open alternative funding streams
Increase membership, entrance or café prices
Charge aircraft using nearby airport a subsidy
Sell Life Memberships

"Fund raise. Target members for bequests. Work with the community do they invest in the reserve. More community engagement"

Site management alternatives

Concerns about current site management
Partner with or pass responsibility to a charitable organisation
Preference for RSPB, HIOW Wildlife Trust, Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust or National Trust

"Look into the possibility of a joint venture with some other wildlife provider. ie RSPB or HIWWT. So that a proper visitor centre and cafe/toilets are provided."

Catering / café management alternatives

Important a catering offer is provided
Can a café be incorporated into new buildings
Could the community run the café?
Could catering facilities be outsourced?
Would a mobile caterer be viable?
Nearby alternatives too far/expensive/busy

"Please preserve some sort of meeting area with a covered area with catering provision even if it is different."

Parking

Have charges impacted visitor numbers?
Can charges be removed or reduced?
Can parking income fund THNNR?
Can more parking be provided?

"Where is all the extra money from the local car parking charges going? Use that."

Encourage more visitors

Educational workshops
Art and photography courses
Trails and tours
Provision for schools, activities for children
Function hire (weddings, meetings, classes)
Increasing range or size of shop
Longer opening hours for café or site
Encourage local business use
Improve marketing activities, disabled access

"Offer more facilities not remove those that are there. Offer talks and education. Organise and advertise regular informative walks"

Suggestions: Respondents expressed less concern about the proposal to sell Haven Cottage than the proposed plans for Haven House, with some agreement evident. However, others remained keen to explore if alternative uses could be viable.



In total, 271 respondents proposed that Haven Cottage be sold in order to enable investment in other parts of the site. Many of these felt that the proceeds from the Cottage could be used to protect Haven House from closure.

However, 111 respondents felt that the Cottage could be retained, refurbished and re-purposed. Suggestions included using it as a holiday let, a rental property, a museum or a function space to help generate interest and income to support the reserve and visitor centre.

Additionally, 50 respondents suggested that the existing flat within Haven House could be converted to a holiday or rental let to help fund the visitor centre.



“By all means sell the cottage but please retain the visitor centre”

“My suggestion is that Haven Cottage is sold to fund renovations of Haven House. This could include converting the upstairs of Haven House into a residential apartment, which could then be sold to raise further funds for THNMR whilst maintaining the downstairs for the shop and cafe.”

“The cottage could be used for accommodation for weekend stays for people attending courses to learn about birds, wildlife and the environment. Alternatively the cottage could be made into an education centre to run courses for people of all ages.”

“Consider using the accommodation at Haven House and Haven Cottage as holiday lets to get a valuable income stream”

Proposal: Re-invest the proceeds from the sale of the two properties in the nature reserve

This would include investment in:

- the nature reserve, increasing the investment in our management to help protect and enhance the habitats for wildlife;
- visitor facilities and access to the reserve (toilet, membership and admissions, a new digital booking system, information boards);
- a new sustainable operational base for staff and volunteers.

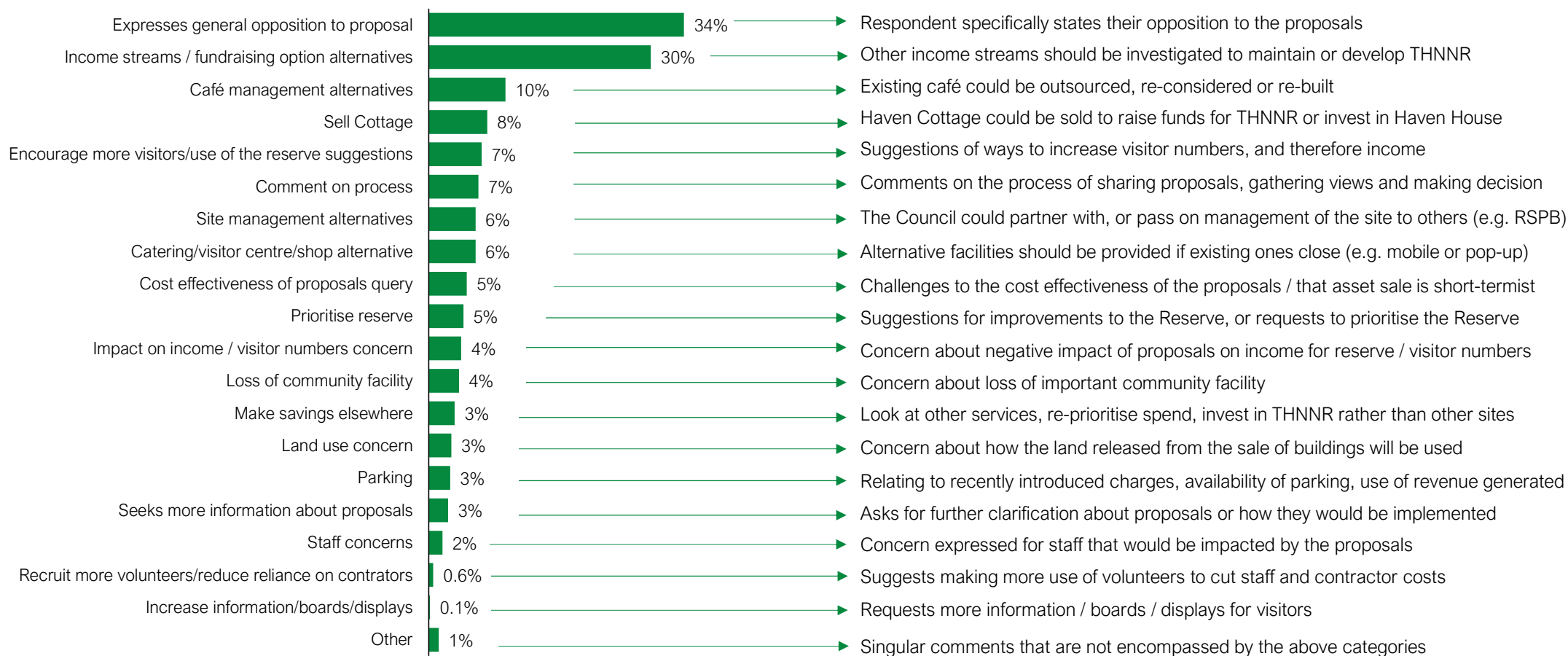
Respondents were invited to help shape this future by sharing their experiences of THNNR and recommending areas for improvement.



Further comments and suggestions: Respondents submitted a range of suggestions as to how the proposals could be adapted to lessen the impacts raised, with investigating alternative income streams the most common idea. In the most part, further comments added more emphasis to key points made within previous questions.



Further comments and suggestions

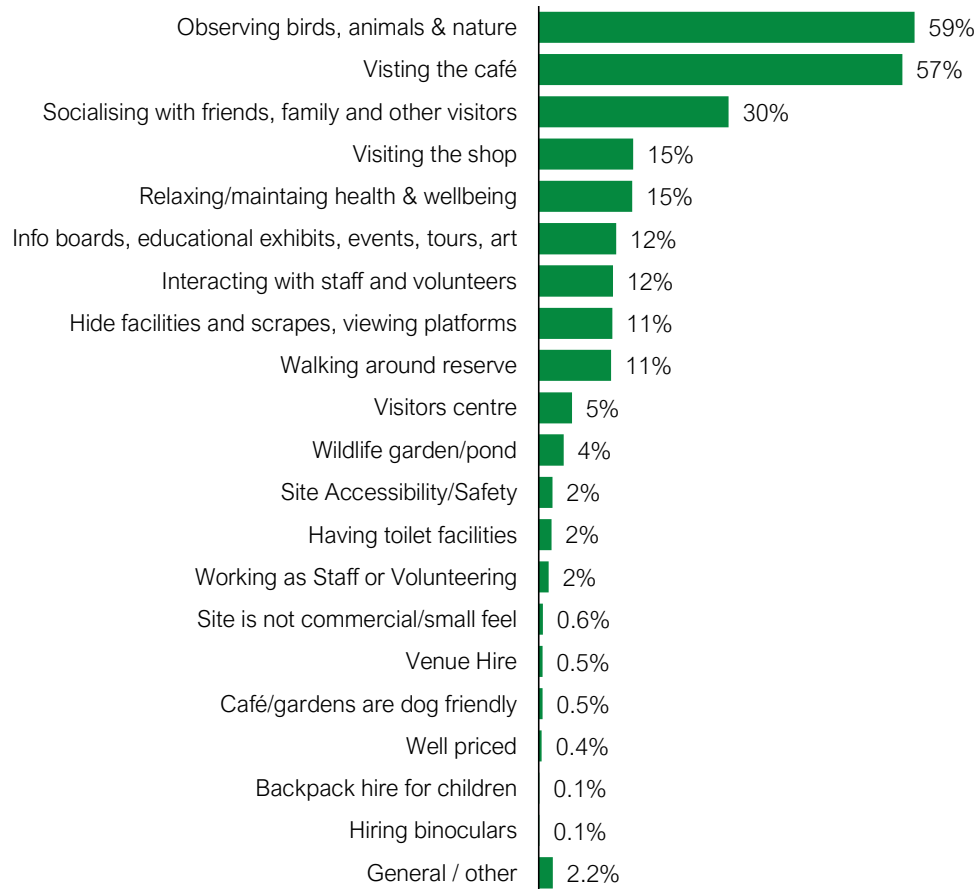


Q: If you have any further comments, or suggestions as to how the County Council could continue to meet its statutory duties at THNNR, please summarise these below. Quantified verbatim (multicode). Respondent Base: 1354 (excludes n/a).

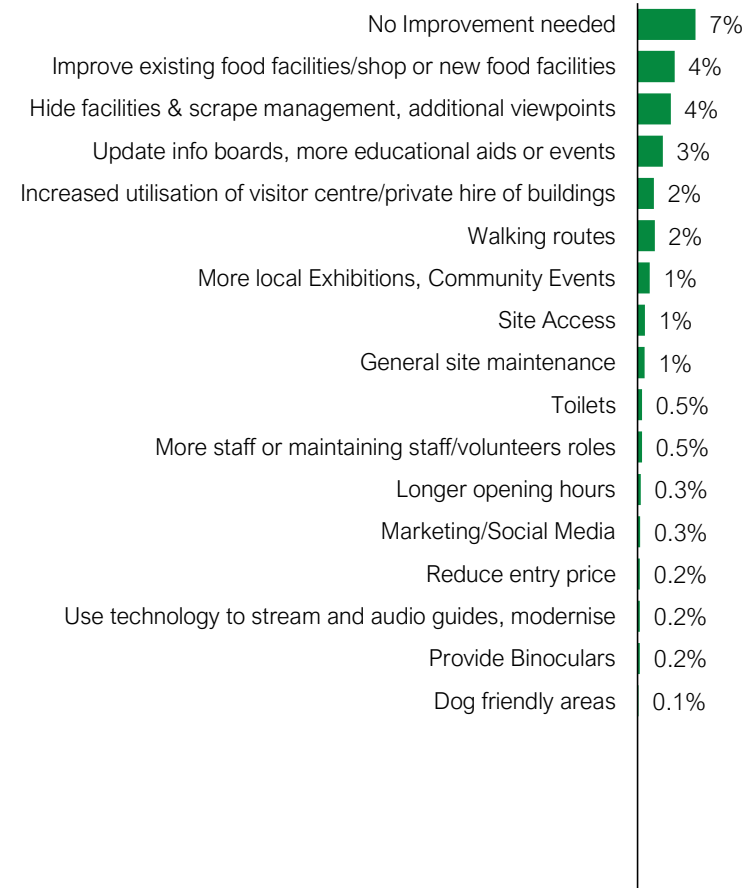
Ideas for investment: Nature was at the heart of many respondents' favourite experiences at THNNR, often combined with a visit to the café and an opportunity to spend time with others. For most, there was little that would enhance these experiences, but some felt a few improvements to catering, viewing facilities and educational resources could be beneficial.



Favourite experiences



Areas for improvement to enhance these experiences



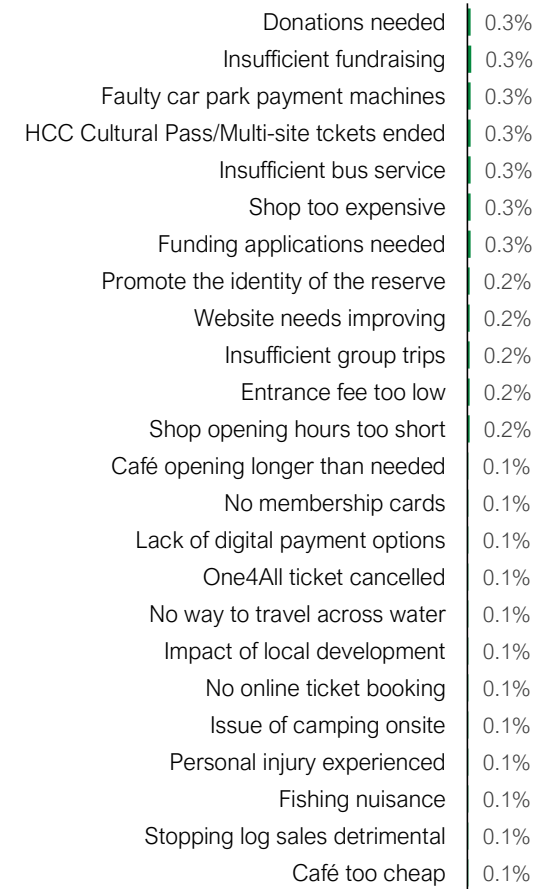
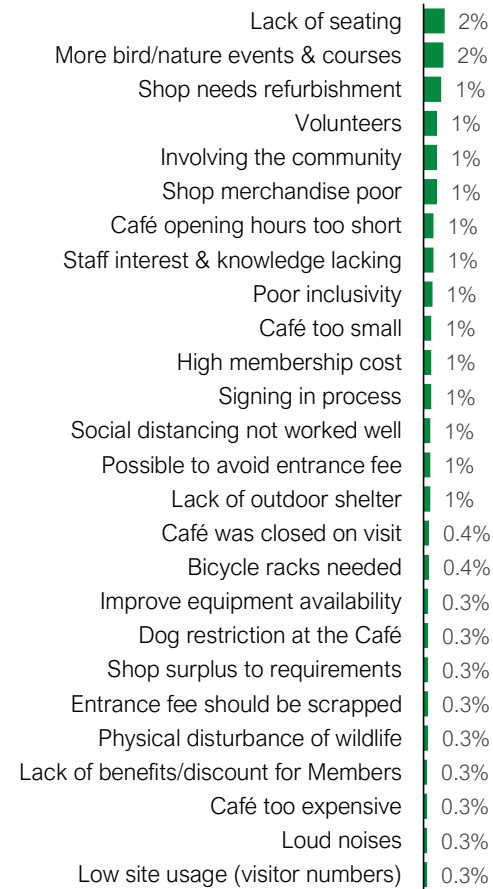
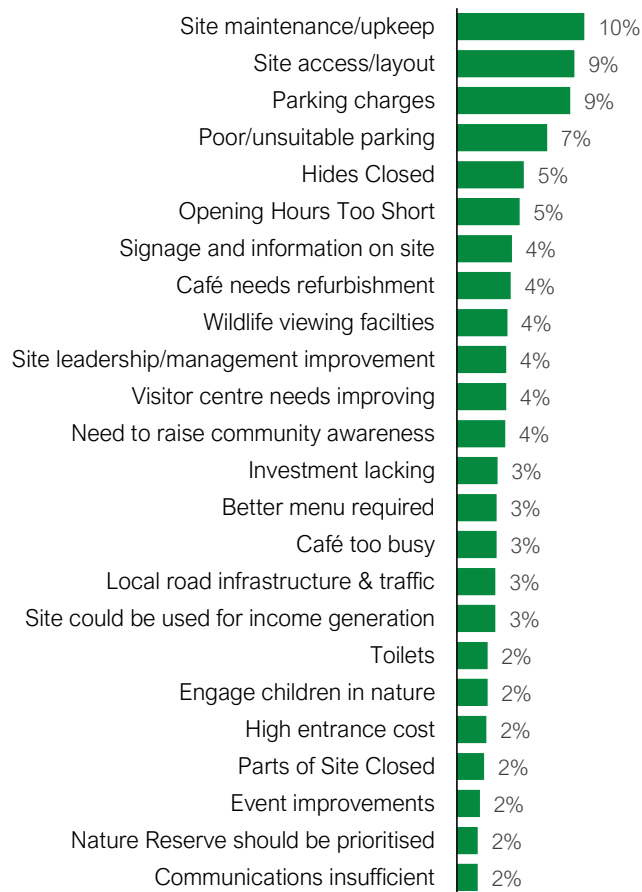
Q: What have been your favourite experiences at THNNR and how might they be improved. Quantified verbatim (multicode). Respondent Base: 2273 (excludes n/a).



Ideas for investment: A focus on things that worked less well at THNNR flagged no major concerns, but did reveal a long list of areas that might benefit from additional consideration or investment, including site maintenance and access, viewing and informational facilities, parking and extended opening hours.

30% of comments said that no improvement was needed

Not working so well – improvements needed



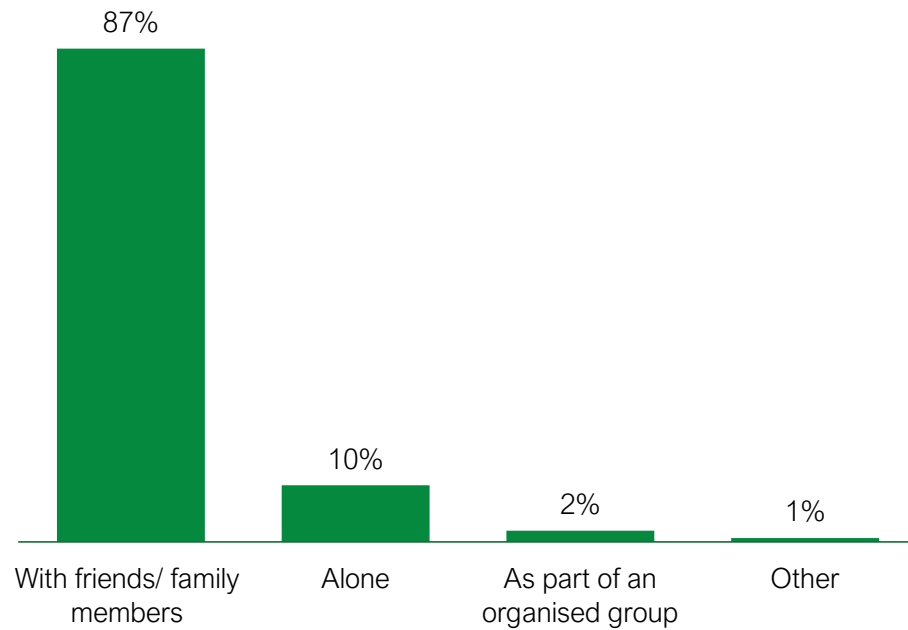
Q: What has not worked so well at THNNR and how might this be improved?. Quantified verbatim (multicode). Respondent Base: 1199 (excludes n/a).

Appendix: Respondent Demographics

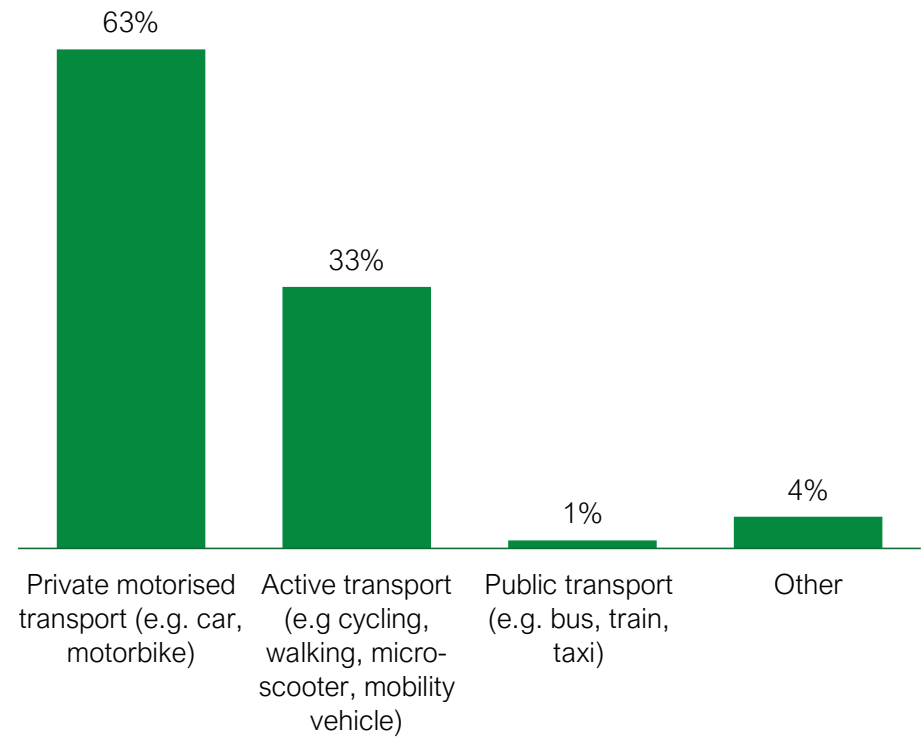
Respondent demographics: Visiting



When you visit THNNR, do you usually come. .?
(Base 2,872, multi-code)



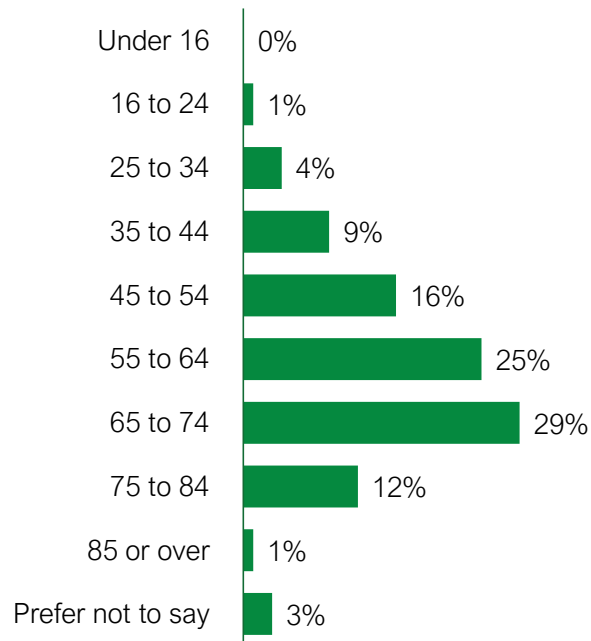
How do you usually travel to THNNR?
(Base 2,872)



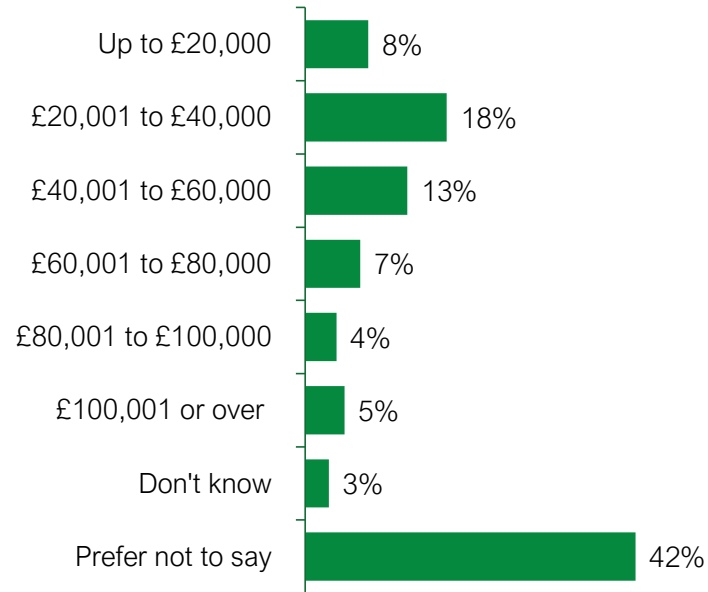
Respondent demographics: Age, income and household makeup



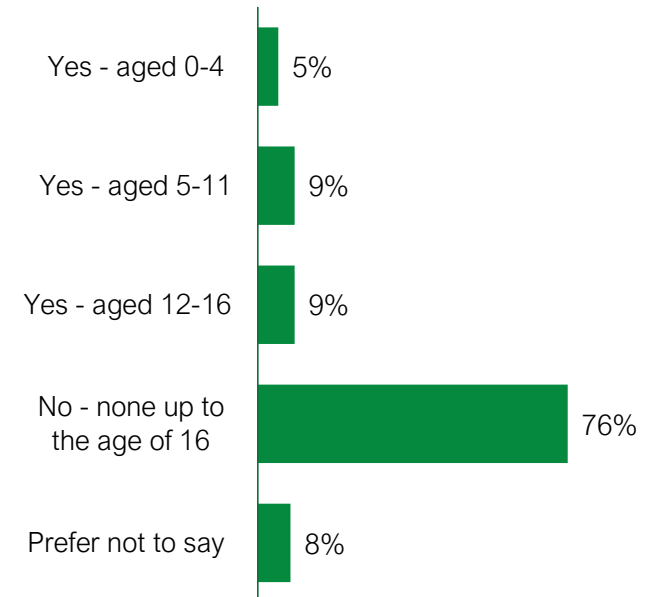
What was your age on your last birthday? (Base 2,898)



What is your annual household income from all sources? (Base 2,517)



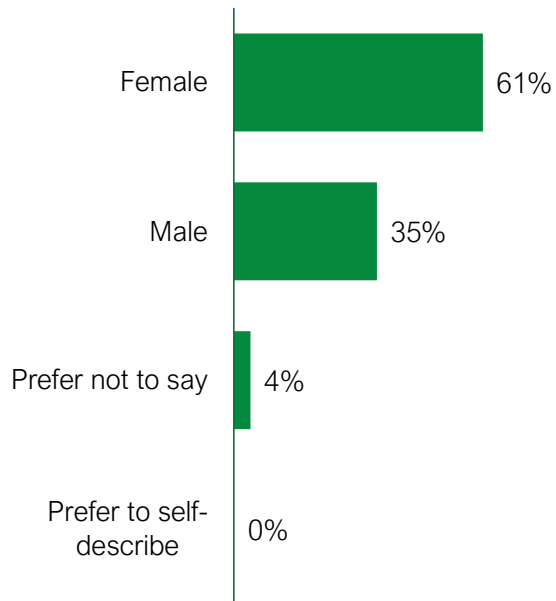
Are there any children or young people living in your household? (Base 2,830, multi-code)



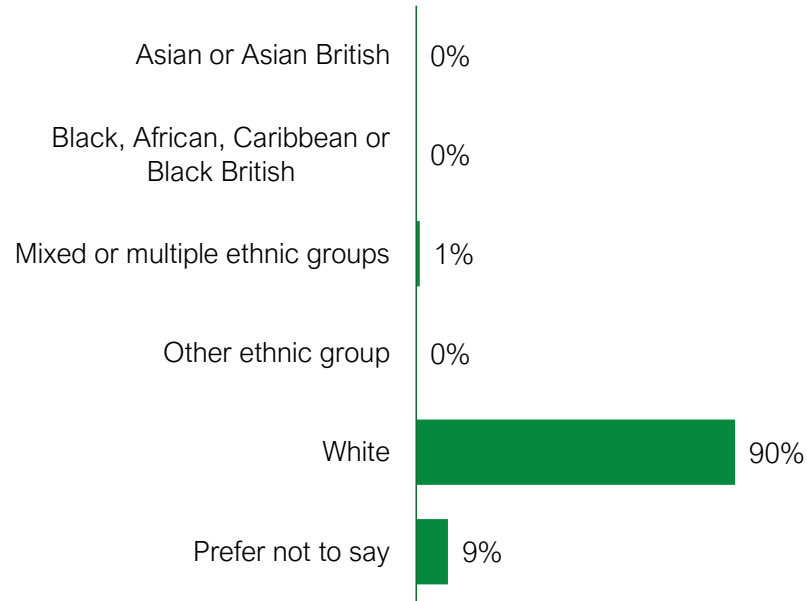
Respondent demographics: Gender, health and ethnicity



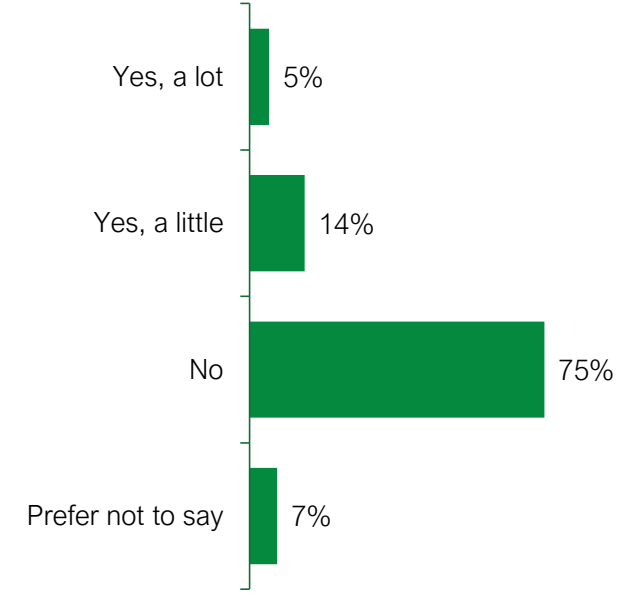
Which of the following best describes your gender? (Base 2,865)



What is your ethnic group? (Base 2,858)



Are your activities limited by a long-term health problem or disability? (Base 2,780)



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