

Habitat Regulations Executive Committee

East Devon Pebblebed Heaths visitor access consultation: Appendix F

Pebblebed Heaths Car Parks Consultation Results Autumn 2019

Summary of Pebblebed Heaths car parks results

Proposals for specific car parks;

Where respondents did comment on the proposals for individual car parks their main concern was around the proposal for a height restriction across the car parks, particularly how it would affect access for horseboxes and horse trailers. There were a lot of comments stating the car parks needed to remain accessible to vehicles transporting horses both in terms of the height restriction and having enough space. A few were also concerned about the height restriction limiting access for campervans and vehicles transporting bicycles.

Where respondents did comment, in addition to the comments mentioned above which apply to every car park listed below;

- **Joney's Cross.** There was some support for the proposals, including resurfacing it and make changes to the entrance.
- **Uphams.** A significant amount of people wanted this car park to stay open, mainly as it's quieter and as closing it would restrict access to the heaths.
- **Model Airfield.** There was some support for the proposals, including to resurface it and make changes to the entrance. There was also some concern that the closure of Uphams would make it too busy.
- **Four Firs.** There was some support for the proposals, including to resurface it and improve the entrance. A few people also felt it wasn't necessary to mark out parking bays.
- **Estuary Entrance.** Significant concerns were raised around people having to make a dangerous crossing across a busy road from this car park to access trails the other side if Woodbury Castle car park is closed.
- **Woodbury Castle.** There were some objections to the closure of this car park as it would restrict access to the trails from here. Significant concerns were raised around people having to make a dangerous crossing across a busy road from Estuary Entrance to access trails the other side if this car park is closed.
- **Estuary View.** There were some objections to the closure of this car park as it would mean people with mobility issues wouldn't be able to drive down and enjoy the view. A few people also felt that anti-social behaviour shouldn't force its closure and other ways should be used to deal with it.
- **Warren.** There was some support for these proposals. There were a couple of requests to make it bigger.
- **Frying Pans.** There was some support for the proposal to close it, and some objections to its closure as people use it because it's quieter. There were a couple of requests to make sure the roadside parking is usable and not blocked.
- **Wheathill.** There was some support for these proposals. There were a few comments that it's too small for horse transporters, make the car park or some spaces just for horse transporters.
- **Squabmoor.** There was some support for these proposals. A few comments stated there isn't enough space in there to be able to remove any, more spaces are needed either here or nearby.

- **Stowford Woods.** There was some support for these proposals. A few comments stated there isn't enough space in there to be able to remove any.

Proposals that apply to the Pebblebed Heaths car parks more generally:

- 93% agreed with keeping parking free of charge, 3% disagreed.
- 76% agreed with improving the surfacing of the car parks, 7% disagreed.
- 72% agreed with sensitively waymarked trails / routes on the Pebbled Heaths, 12% disagreed mainly as it would negatively affect the wild and natural feeling of the heaths.
- 84% agreed with having new freestanding information boards in the car parks, giving information on the area around them. 1% disagreed.
- 83% agreed with increasing the visibility of the car parks to deter anti-social behaviour, 6% disagreed.

Who filled in the questionnaire?:

- 94 questionnaires were filled in, 92 by individuals and 2 by organisations.
- 95% had visited the Pebblebed Heaths car parks in the last 6 months. 72% of these had visited one to 24 times in 6 months, the remaining 38% had visited twice a week or more often.
- The majority of respondents had used the Pebblebed Heaths in the last 6 months for walking, jogging and / or running with or without a dog, wildlife / nature watching and horse riding.
- 13% had a long term illness, disability or infirmity that limits their day to day activities.

Response rate

Are you completing this questionnaire:

2 of the 94 respondents filled in the questionnaire as official representatives of an organisation. The rest completed the questionnaire as individuals.

The two organisations were:

- Ottery Valley Association
- Bicton College

A – Proposals for specific car parks

1. Any comments on the proposals for Joney's Cross car park?

Comment	Number of people
36 respondents commented. These are the comments made by two or more people.	
The height restriction will mean horseboxes can't use this car park. This is unfair and will restrict the amount they can use the bridleways.	11
I support the proposals.	6
The current surface is very poor and damaging to vehicles, the improvements to it will be good.	4
The current entrance is very difficult to use, changes to the entrance will be better.	3
Make sure there's enough room to park a truck and horsebox.	3
Make it easier for disabled people to use – big car parking spaces, easier road crossings.	2

2. Any comments on the proposals for Uphams car park?

Comment	Number of people
35 respondents commented. These are the comments made by two or more people.	
It must be kept open as it's well used, we use it because it's quieter. Closing it will restrict access to the heaths.	16
The height restriction will mean horseboxes can't use this car park. This is unfair and will restrict the amount they can use the bridleways.	8
There needs to be room for horseboxes and trailers to turn and park.	6
I support the proposals.	3
Improve it, don't close it.	2

3. Any comments on the proposals for the Model Airfield car park?

Comment	Number of people
33 respondents commented. These are the comments made by two or more people.	
The height restriction will mean horseboxes can't use this car park. This is unfair and will restrict the amount they can use the bridleways.	7
There needs to be room for horseboxes and trailers to turn and park.	5
I support the proposals.	5
I would welcome improvements to the entrance.	4
I would welcome improvements to the car park surface.	3
The height restrictions will mean I can't go cycling there, my bicycle is on my roof / in my large van.	2
Don't have the height restriction, as it will restrict use for campervans.	2
The car park is already too busy, the closure of Uphams will make it busier.	2
It's good to increase the amount of spaces.	2

4. Any comments on the proposals for Four Firs car park?

Comment	Number of people
45 respondents commented. These are the comments made by two or more people.	
The height restriction will mean horseboxes can't use this car park. This is unfair and will restrict the amount they can use the bridleways.	16
I would welcome improvements to the car park surface.	8
I support the proposals.	7
There needs to be room for horseboxes and trailers to turn and park.	6
I would welcome improvements to the entrance.	3
The height restrictions will mean I can't go cycling there, my bicycle is on my roof / in my large van.	3
There's no need to mark out spaces.	3
Campervans are ok, no need to restrict them.	2
Improvements to the visibility / safety of the car park are needed.	2
It's good to improve access.	2

5. Any comments on the proposals for Estuary Entrance car park?

Comment	Number of people
33 respondents commented. These are the comments made by two or more people.	
If you close Woodbury Castle to most cars people, including families and dogs, will have to cross a busy road from this car park, which will be too dangerous.	13
The height restriction will mean horseboxes can't use this car park. This is unfair and will restrict the amount they can use the bridleways.	6
I support the proposals.	5
There needs to be room / access for horseboxes and trailers to turn and park.	4
It's good to increase the size of the parking.	3
It will stop us / disabled people driving to the view.	2

6. Any comments on the proposals for Woodbury Castle car park?

Comment	Number of people
41 respondents commented. These are the comments made by two or more people.	
If you close Woodbury Castle to most cars people, including families and dogs, will have to cross a busy road, which will be too dangerous.	10
The height restriction will mean horseboxes can't use this car park. This is unfair and will restrict the amount they can use the bridleways.	10
People need more access to the trails from here, don't close it and restrict access.	10
I support the proposals.	4
I disagree with its closure, improve / expand it instead.	4
There needs to be room / access for horseboxes and trailers to turn and park.	2
I support preserving the monument.	2
Campervans are ok, no need to restrict them.	2

7. Any comments on the proposals for Estuary View car park?

Comment	Number of people
30 respondents commented. These are the comments made by two or more people.	
I don't agree with its closure, disabled and elderly people wouldn't be able to drive down to it and enjoy the view.	7
The height restriction will mean horseboxes can't use this car park. This is unfair and will restrict the amount they can use the bridleways.	5
There needs to be room / access for horseboxes and trailers to turn and park.	5
Anti-social behaviour shouldn't cause its closure, find other ways to deal with it such as gates locked at night.	5
I support the proposals.	3
If it happens we'd need an easily accessible trail to get to the view.	3
I support resurfacing the car park.	2
I support an improved entrance.	2
With other changes, there won't be enough car parking spaces in the area.	2

8. Any comments on the proposals for Warren car park?

Comment	Number of people
24 respondents commented. These are the comments made by two or more people.	
The height restriction will mean horseboxes can't use this car park. This is unfair and will restrict the amount they can use the bridleways.	7
I support the proposals.	6
There needs to be room / access for horseboxes and trailers to turn and park.	3
Don't need to restrict campervans, they're ok.	2
The car park is too small, make it bigger.	2
I support an improved entrance.	2

9. Any comments on the proposals for Frying Pans car park?

Comment	Number of people
27 respondents commented. These are the comments made by two or more people.	
I support the proposal to close.	8
The height restriction will mean horseboxes can't use this car park. This is unfair and will restrict the amount they can use the bridleways.	4
Don't close it, I / many groups use it. Make it better / safer instead.	4
We use it as it's quieter so more suitable for us, don't close it.	4
Make sure the roadside parking is usable and not blocked.	3
There needs to be room / access for horseboxes and trailers to turn and park.	2
Don't need to restrict campervans, they're ok.	2
The amount of rubbish isn't an issue.	2

10. Any comments on the proposals for Wheathill car park?

Comment	Number of people
31 respondents commented. These are the comments made by two or more people.	
Horse transporters need access to this car park, without a height restriction.	7
There needs to be plenty of room / access for horseboxes and trailers to turn and park.	7
I support the proposals.	7
It's too small for cars and horse transporters, make spaces or the car park just for horse transporters.	3
The height restrictions will mean I can't go cycling there, my bicycle is on my roof / in my large van.	2
I support resurfacing the car park.	2
Don't need to restrict campervans, they're ok.	2

11. Any comments on the proposals for Squabmoor car park?

Comment	Number of people
27 respondents commented. These are the comments made by two or more people.	
I support the proposals.	8
There isn't enough space to remove any, more car parking space is needed either here or nearby.	5
Horse transporters need access to this car park, without a height restriction.	3
There needs to be plenty of room / access for horseboxes and trailers to turn and park.	3
I agree the current car parking is bad for the trees.	3
I disagree the current car parking is bad enough for the trees to make changes.	2

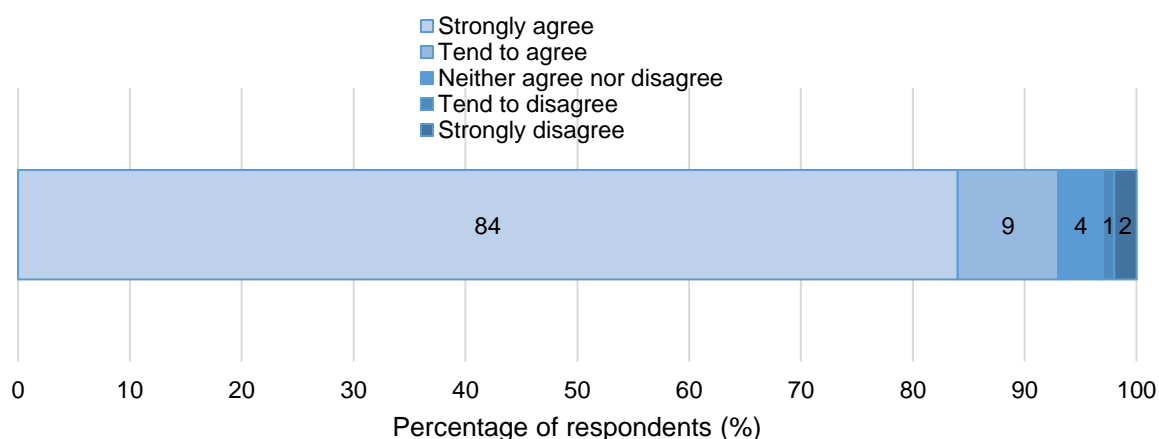
12. Any comments on the proposals for Stowford Woods car park?

Comment	Number of people
26 respondents commented. These are the comments made by two or more people.	
Horse transporters need access to this car park, without a height restriction.	5
I support the proposals.	4
Needs more spaces, not less / a small car park.	4
There needs to be plenty of room / access for horseboxes and trailers to turn and park.	2
Restrict on road parking.	2
Don't need to restrict campervans, they're ok.	2

B – Proposals that would apply to the Pebblebed Heaths car parks more generally

13. How much do you agree or disagree with the proposal to keep parking free of charge in the Pebblebed Heaths car parks?

94 respondents answered this question.



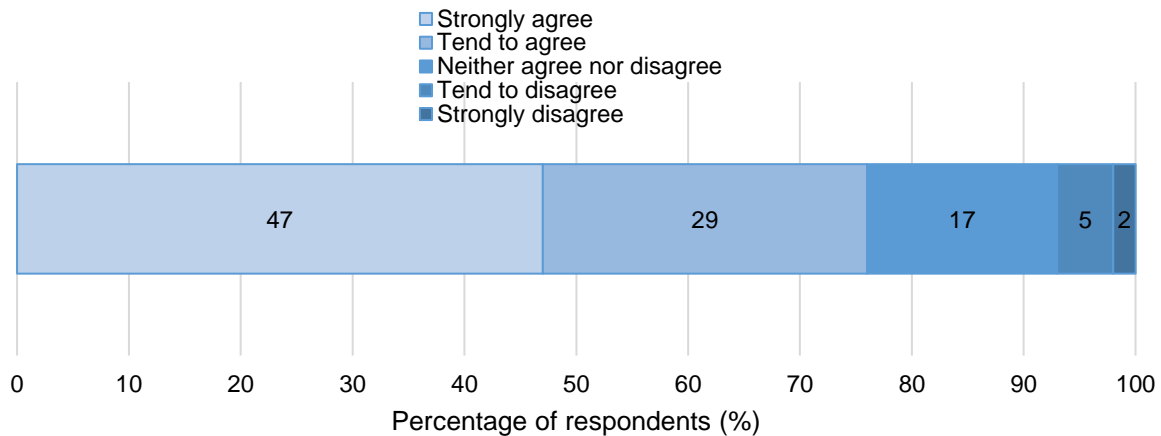
If you disagree, please tell us why, and how you would improve this proposal:

Three respondents that disagreed with the proposal commented:

- A small charge would be acceptable then this money could go towards upkeep of the area and improved security in the car parks.
- You're restricting the car park to dog walkers only. Many of us take our horse boxes to the common. A lot of the riding in our area is now unsafe. Where do we park?
- Charging might reduce the number of visitors and esp their dogs. Wildlife is suffering badly because of uncontrolled dogs. Charging would also encourage visits by other means than private cars.

14. How much would you agree or disagree with the proposal for improving the surfacing of the car parks?

94 respondents answered this question.



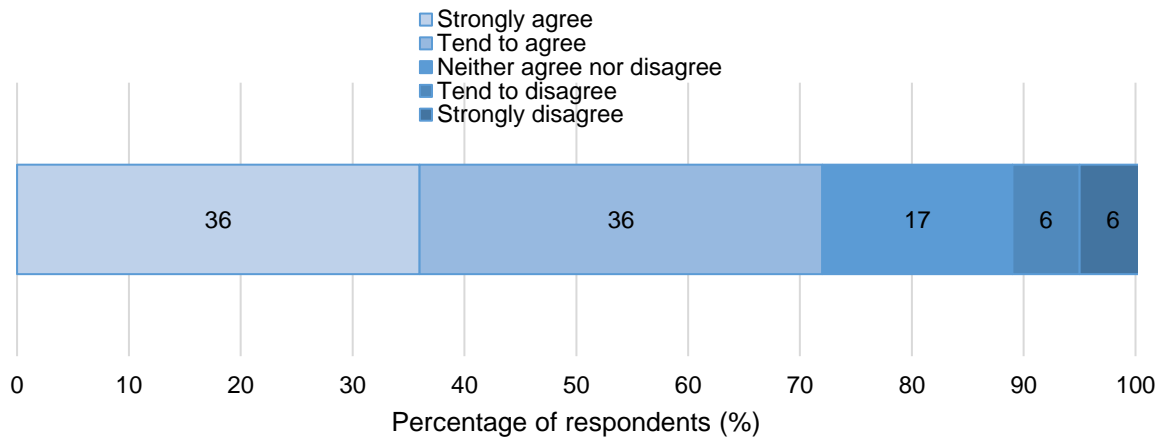
If you disagree, please tell us why, and how you would improve this proposal:

5 respondents that disagreed with the proposal commented:

- It is a natural setting and I would not expect a smooth car park. It could be a cost saved.
- To discourage incorrect use of the car park.
- Money would be better spent elsewhere. Once paved surface will require ongoing maintenance.
- For the reasons I gave above, I think this construction work is unnecessary.
- Prefer natural hard surface to any possible concrete or disturbance of the ground. Any major change to surface may impact on invertebrates and soil composition.

15. How much do you agree or disagree with the proposal for sensitively waymarked trails / routes on the Pebblebed Heaths?

91 respondents answered this question.



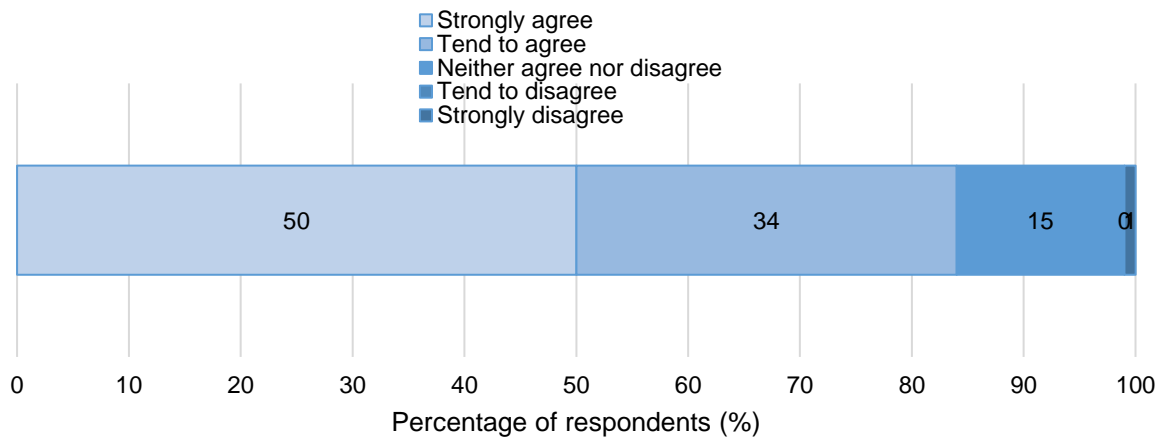
If you disagree, please tell us why, and how you would improve this proposal:

9 respondents that disagreed with the proposal commented:

- Why make this wild countryside like a theme park. The joy of Woodbury common is to follow trails and explore not all be pushed to the same path. Surely that will be more detrimental to the wildlife living there?
- It's an open space, if people use it they should take the trouble to understand where they are going, any waymarked trails will concentrate footfall.
- Reduces the wild and remote feeling of the paths.
- Walkers/visitors should always take with them, and be able to read a map, when walking in the countryside. Waymarked trails give people a sense of infallibility.
- These sites should remain wild. Don't turn them into country parks with additional signage and interpretation.
- They would need to be accessible for ALL and not just walkers and/or cyclists. Horse riders too need to be able to get off-road.
- Most of us walk in the country to get away from reminders of suburbia, do we really have to turn our glorious East Devon countryside into a theme park? Isn't this another case of doing something because you have to be seen to be doing something?
- Not in favour of too much signage on the Commons.
- While I don't think people should be allowed to traipse wherever they please, those who choose these routes will not do so with everyone in mind. A route suitable for walkers will not be suitable for cyclists or horse riders. You would need to seek consultation from local users to gain a full understanding of the routes deemed suitable for each group. Horse riders need wider paths and softer going to allow faster riding. Walkers like varied terrain, some would only use tarmac paths and others like the mud and narrow tracks through the woods and gorse. Cyclists have always made their own paths and appear to cause the most damage which would need looking into. In addition, if you restrict the access, you condense the area everyone is in. This will lead to increased conflict between different users and in turn, force users to break from the trails to find their own space. Horse riders use this area for a change of scenery, away from roads and traffic but this proposal will force them into areas with more walkers/dogs/cyclists which will lead to a rise in conflict and accidents due to irresponsible users. You can now replace horse riders with any of the other user groups and see how each group would have the exact same problem. It is unlikely that selected routes will also be maintained correctly. This is already a major issue with bridle paths/footpaths in other areas so I see it being no different here. It would require a lot more maintenance than it does currently.

16. How much do you agree or disagree with the proposal for new freestanding information boards in the Pebblebed Heaths car parks, giving information on the area around them?

94 respondents answered this question.



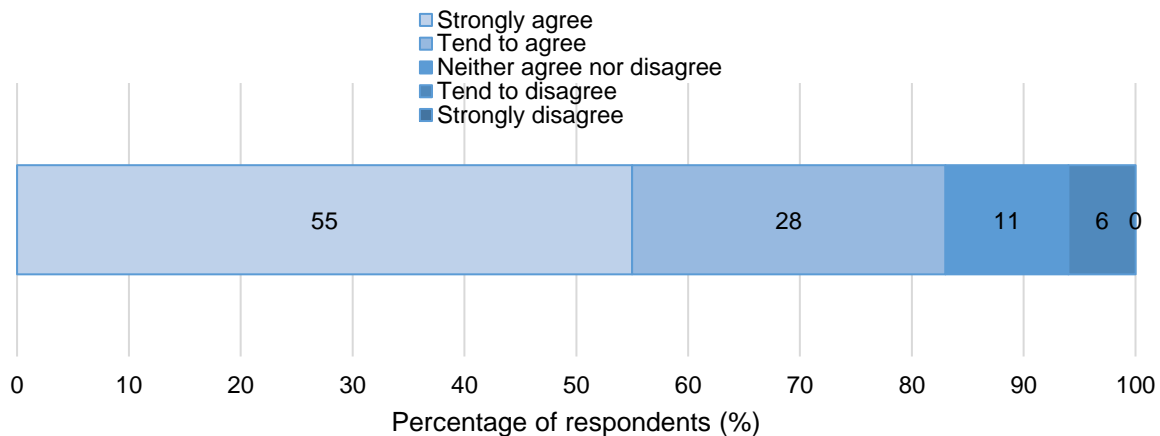
If you disagree, please tell us why, and how you would improve this proposal:

1 respondent disagreed with this proposal commented:

- Keep these places wild. These are not country parks. Why urbanise them further.

17. How much do you agree or disagree with the proposal for increasing the visibility of car parks to deter anti-social behaviour?

94 respondents answered this question.



If you disagree, please tell us why, and how you would improve this proposal:

5 respondents that disagreed commented:

- I disagree if this involves serious tree felling.
- Highly visible car parks would negatively affect the natural appearance of the area.
- Whilst I can appreciate the need for reducing anti-social behaviour in the CPs, the removal of screening such that parked cars threaten to spoil landscape views should be avoided at all costs in the AONB. Thefts from cars can be reduced by educating the public not to leave valuables visible. I don't believe that littering or fly tipping would be prevented by greater visibility.
- The biggest and most infrequent forms of anti-social behaviour are poorly behaved dogs and dog owners, not the strange activities of a few doggers.
- We want to keep the Commons as Commons and not visible car parks. People park at their own risk but generally we do not have many incidents.

18. Are you filling in this questionnaire as:

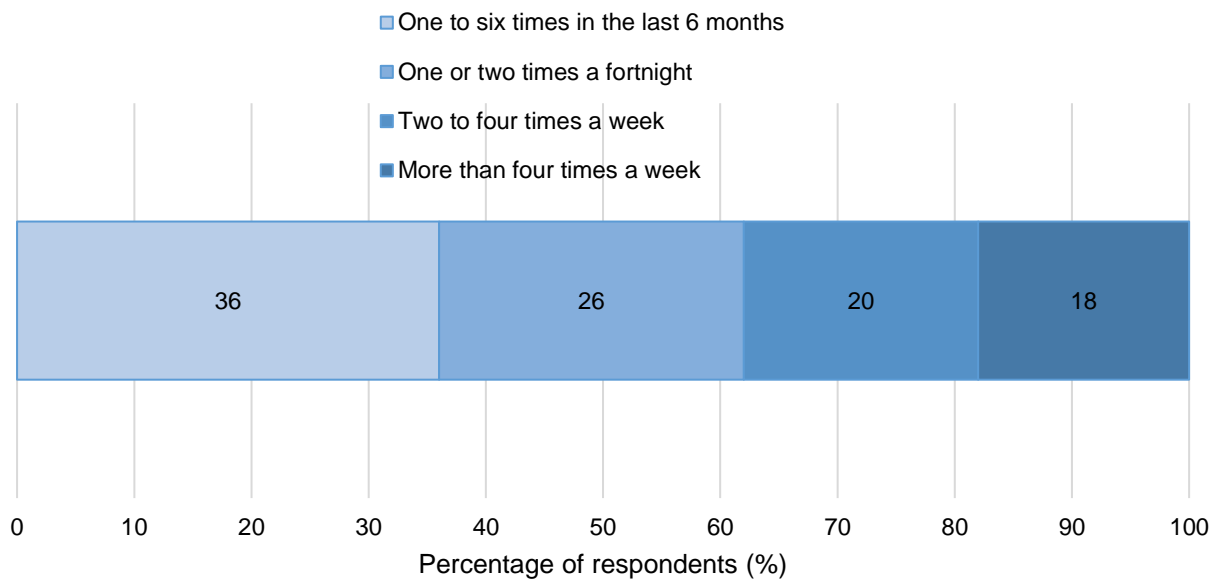
91 of the 93 respondents that answered this question were individuals, the other two were official representatives of organisations. Those representing organisations were asked to move onto question 23.

19. Have you been to / used any of the Pebblebed Heaths car parks in the last 6 months?

95% of the 92 respondents had visited the Pebblebed Heaths car parks within the last 6 months, 5% had not.

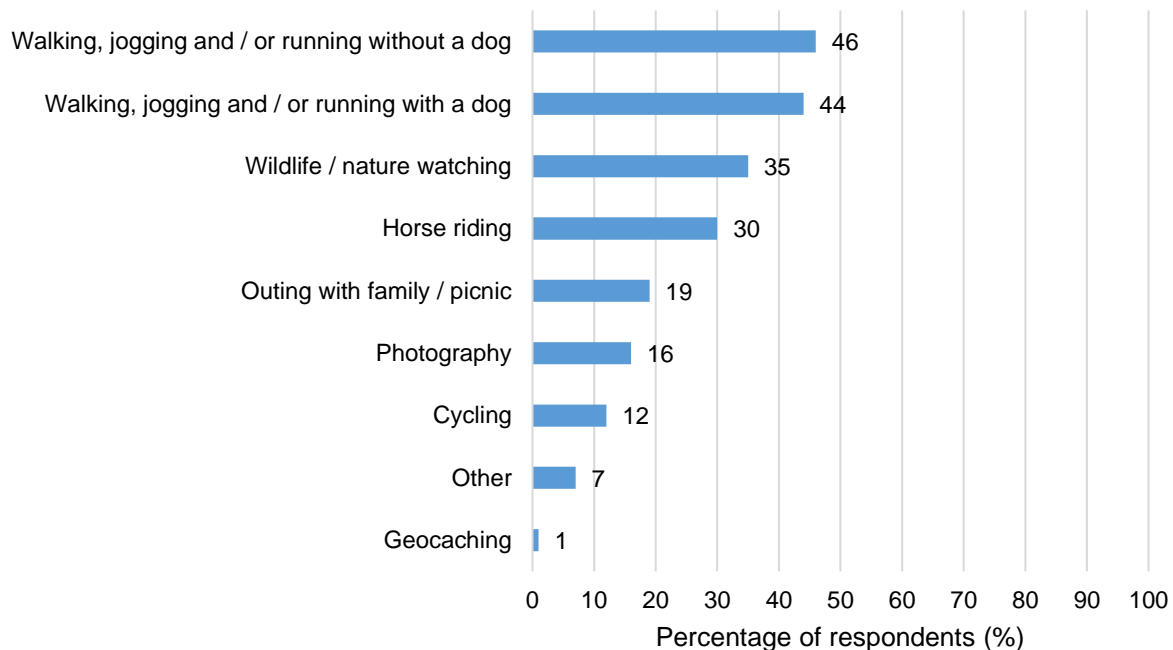
20. On average, how often have you been to / used the Pebblebed Heaths car parks in the last 6 months?

86 respondents answered this question.



21. In the last 6 months, what have you used the Pebblebed Heaths for?

89 respondents gave 187 responses, as they could select all that applied to them.



22. Do you have a long-standing illness, disability or infirmity that limits your day to day activities in any way?

92 respondents answered this question, 13% stated that they did.

If yes, please tell us the nature of your disability:

Of the 12 respondents that stated they did have a long-standing illness, disability or infirmity that limits their day to day activities:

- 8 had mobility issues
- 1 had mental health issues
- 1 was blind or visually impaired
- 1 had a learning disability
- 3 had a progressive disability or chronic illness, for example MS
- 2 were deaf or had a hearing impairment
- 2 stated 'other'

D – Your details

23. Would you like to be emailed the results and feedback from this questionnaire?

60 of the 93 people that answered said that they would, 58 of these subsequently gave us their email address.