



SOUTH EAST DEVON
HABITAT REGULATIONS
PARTNERSHIP

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**Agenda for South and East Devon Habitat
Regulations Executive Committee
Tuesday, 28th January, 2020, 2.00 pm**

Members of South and East Devon Habitat Regulations Executive Committee

Councillors S Bond, R Sutton, M Wrigley

Venue: Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Border
Road, Honiton, EX14 1EJ

Contact: Chris Lane 01395 517544; email
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(or group number 01395 517546)
20 January 2020

1 Public speaking

Information on [public speaking](#) is available online.

2 Minutes of the previous meeting (Pages 3 - 5)

3 Apologies

4 Declarations of interest

Guidance is available online to Councillors and co-opted members on making
[declarations of interest](#)

5 Matters of urgency

Information on [matters of urgency](#) is available online

6 Confidential/exempt items

To agree any items to be dealt with after the public (including the Press) have
been excluded. There are no items which officers recommend should be dealt
with in this way.

7 East Devon Pebblebed Heaths visitor access consultation. (Pages 6 - 65)

- 8 Presentation from Stephanie Harper-Chung, Exe Estuary Officer for the Exe Estuary Management Partnership - Verbal report
- 9 Effecting positive behavioural change (Pages 66 - 83)
- 10 Dates of future meetings - The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 21 April 2020 in the Yarty Room, Blackdown house, Border Road, Honiton. Future meetings will be: Tuesday 14 July 2020, Tuesday 3 November 2020, Tuesday 2 February 2021 and 27 April 2021. (all at 2.00pm at Exeter City council offices)

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[Decision making and equalities](#)

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EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of South and East Devon Habitat Regulations Executive Committee held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Border Road, Honiton on 30 October 2019

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and ended at 3.40 pm

23 Public speaking

There were no members of the public wishing to speak.

24 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16 July 2019 were agreed and signed as a true record.

Alison Slade, Natural England, provided the Committee with an update on progress with Monitoring Petalwort at Dawlish Warren. She would liaise with the Habitat Regulations Delivery Manager to provide a written report to the Committee as soon as possible, when significant progress could be evidenced.

Neil Harris, Habitat Regulations Delivery Manager, gave an update on the staffing requirements of the SEDESMS. He would provide a written update report at the next meeting of the Committee.

25 Declarations of interest

Minute 28 Cllr Martin Wrigley – Personal interest. His house looked over the Estuary. Was a member a treasurer of Cockwood Boat Club.

Minute 28 Cllr Geoff Jung – Personal interest. EDDC Environment Portfolio Holder and former speed boat owner.

26 Matters of urgency

There were no matters of urgency.

27 Confidential/exempt items

There were no matters which the officers recommended be dealt with in Part B.

28 Monitoring the South East Devon European Site Mitigation Strategy and Pebblebed Heaths Visitor Management Plan

The Executive Committee considered the report of the Habitats Regulations Delivery Manager concerning a review of the South East Devon European Site Mitigation Strategy and Pebblebed Heaths Visitor Management Plan monitoring programmes. It was acknowledged that monitoring was an essential component of the mitigation approach

and that he considered the current monitoring programme was considered to be robust, sufficient and fit for purpose.

Councillor Martin Wrigley, Teignbridge District Council wished to express his concerns that the report as presented had not answered the questions that he had given at the previous meeting. There was no evidence base and no monitoring of the impact of measures and monitoring of what was being achieved.

He considered that there was the need to achieve behavioural changes by the users of the Exe Estuary. It was crucial that the public supported what we were trying to achieve. Cllr Wrigley felt that there was a failure to market activities that were being carried out. An improved evidence base would lead to greater influence on the Exe Estuary Partnership and other users of the Estuary. If what we are doing was not working we should change the way things were done. In addition he felt that there was no effective monitoring of the effect of each action taken and measure of what they had achieved. The exclusion zones designed to protect wildlife were voluntary and there needed to be understanding of their purpose by users for them to be respected.

During discussions the following points were noted:

-) Natural England were happy with the approach being taken.
-) Would producing more statistics change the behaviour of users of the estuary?
-) Need to persuade estuary users to change their behaviour and avoid disturbing the wildlife.
-) It was not cost effective to spend more money on monitoring of the estuary.
-) Balance between holidaymakers, environment and estuary users.
-) Many estuary users did not like regulation as it affected what they wanted to do on the estuary.
-) Could be valuable for Committee members to attend a forum meeting of the Exe Estuary Management Partnership (EEMP) to learn more about the concerns about the operation of the estuary. Although it was acknowledged the people who attend the forum are not necessarily fully representative of users of the estuary.
-) Importance of increasing the education of the users of the Exe estuary, possibly in partnership with the Queens Drive Water Sports Centre built by Grenadier.
-) Understanding the importance of mitigation measures on the Exe Estuary. Education and marketing were key to changing people's behaviours.
-) When taking actions there was the need to inform local residents why we were doing it.
-) A need to seek a change to behaviour in the estuary.
-) Importance of winning over hearts and minds of estuary users as the codes of conduct were voluntary and needed to be adhered to by consent. This could be achieved by having more evidenced based monitoring.
-) The committee's purpose was to mitigate the effect of further development that goes on in such a way that it does not affect the ecological integrity of the Exe estuary.

RESOLVED:

1. that the recommendations presented at the meeting be noted but in the light of discussions at the meeting a further report be presented to the next meeting considering the role of the Executive Committee, the discharge of its legal duties and whether it should undertake further responsibilities to protect the wildlife in the Exe estuary by changing behaviour of users, including improvements to education and marketing strategies.

2. that a representative of the Exe Estuary Management Partnership be asked to make a presentation to the next meeting of the Executive Committee.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

S Bond (Chairman)

Rachel Sutton

Martin Wrigley

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

G Jung

Officers in attendance:

Naomi Harnett, Principal Projects Manager East Of Exeter

Neil Harris, Habitat Regulation Delivery Manager

Peter Hearn

Fergus Pate

Andrew Wood, East of Exeter Projects Director

Henry Gordon Lennox, Strategic Lead Governance and Licensing

Christopher Lane

Alison Slade, Natural England

Anne Mountjoy

Officer apologies:

Ed Freeman

Chairman

Date:



SOUTH EAST DEVON
HABITAT REGULATIONS
PARTNERSHIP

South East Devon Habitat Regulations Executive Committee

*East Devon Pebblebed Heaths visitor access
consultation*

Naomi Harnett, Principal Projects Manager
Neil Harris, Habitat Regulations Delivery Manager
January 2020.

Legal comment/advice:

The report does not raise any specific legal implications requiring comment.

Finance comment/advice:

The financial implications of the consultation exercise will be better understood once the costs relating to the developments required are better understood and quantified. Finance should be involved in reviewing the timing, funding and development of the recommendations before a 5 year delivery programme is presented.

Public Document:	Yes
Exemption:	None
Review date for release	None

Recommendations

It is proposed that the Executive Committee:

1. Notes the proposals outlined in the Pebblebed Heaths Visitor Access Advisory Report.
2. Notes the outcome of the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths visitor access consultation exercise on the proposed changes to visitor access on the heaths
3. Will receive costed recommendations as part of the 2020-21 annual business plan and 5 year delivery programme at the next meeting of the Executive in April 2020.

Equalities impact: Low

Risk: High. This report outlines the mitigation measures for the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths as identified in the Visitor Management Plan. Within the context of an increasing human population, it is critical that future visitor access to the heaths is planned and prepared in advance of impacts. Robust and effective mitigation enables the partner authorities to be certain of no net impact to this highly protected site. This enables the continued development as outlined in respective local plans and within 10km of the heaths without the risk of legal challenge.

1. Background

1.1 Covering over 1,400 hectares, the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths (EDPH) comprise the single biggest expanse of lowland heathland in Devon. The main core of the EDPH is notified as Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The site is also of international conservation value and is designated a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the EU Birds Directive and the EU Habitats Directive due to its support of rare habitats, Nightjars, Dartford warblers and the southern damselfly.

1.2 The East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) was designated in 1963 and covers all of the EDPH. The AONB Management Strategy recognises the EDPH as a significant landscape feature in East Devon, containing important natural habitats and archaeological features.

1.3 In simple terms, this put the heaths in the top hierarchy of international conservation sites and affords them legal protection against the deterioration of their habitats and disturbance (and deterioration) of the species for which they have been designated.

1.4 The Pebblebed Heaths are registered commons and as such are Open Access Land under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. The heaths comprise several separate but adjacent common ownerships. Most of the designated area (ca. 80%) is owned by Clinton Devon Estates and managed by the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust (EDPHCT) for the benefit of wildlife and to promote the public enjoyment and appreciation of the reserve. Some smaller areas are leased or owned by the RSPB, with remaining areas privately owned and managed, including by the Devon Wildlife Trust (DWT).

1.5 Visitor surveys conducted as part of the Pebblebed Heaths Visitor Management Plan (VMP) (2017) found that the majority (91%) of interviewees had travelled to the interview location by car or van. The report concluded that provision of parking is fundamental to how the site is used and how recreation is managed.

1.6 Many human activities on heathland will result in impacts, whether it is from localised trampling and nitrogen impacts from dog waste, or major impacts such as large fires. The range of impacts from visitors to heathland, as presented in the VMP, is summarised in Figure 1:

Figure 1. Impacts of recreation on heathland.



1.7 The results from the research summarised in the VMP shows clear and unequivocal effects of human activity on breeding Nightjars and Dartford warblers. This is based on careful recording of the distribution of recreational activities and the actual nest locations of breeding birds. Effects range from lower densities of breeding birds, to higher failure rates from predation and direct disturbance, as well as later breeding and fewer broods.

1.8 Additional effects from human activity are as a result of increased nutrient load as a result of dog waste. Heathland systems are generally poor in nutrients and many of the plant species can only survive and compete successfully on soils with low nutrient availability. Enhanced nutrient levels in heather plants can speed up the growth cycle so that aging occurs more rapidly, the plants become more vulnerable to cold weather effects or drought and can encourage more frequent attacks by insects, particularly heather beetle. A range of grass species benefit from increased nutrient levels and one of these, purple moor grass, has displaced heathland vegetation on many heaths.

1.9 Long-term changes to the car parks (layout, surfacing, etc.), linked with improved interpretation, signage, provision of dog waste bins and promoted trails were therefore identified as priority measures for the plan. This included significant investment in reorganising the provision of car parking to focus access in specific (less sensitive) areas. The long-term intention of this measure is to protect sensitive species and habitats by ensuring that diffuse access across the heaths is reduced. As a result of visitors being directed to a number of promoted car parks, key behavioural messages can be more easily communicated to a greater number of visitors, either by interpretation, signage and/or staff.

1.10 In April 2018, the Habitat Regulations Executive Committee (HREC) approved commissioning a consultant report to look in detail at the principles, methodology and potential costs relating to a review of visitor access on the heaths. The key objective of the report was to limit the impact of visitors on the designated features of the heaths.

1.11 Working in close partnership with EDPHCT and reviewed by the officer working group (OWG), a consultant brief (included here as Appendix A) was prepared and sent to 5 consultancies.

1.12 The consultant brief recognised that the heaths are important for a number of additional reasons and that there is an interplay of a range of factors to be considered. The importance of these factors are acknowledged in the supporting objectives listed, which include:

-) Protect the aesthetic of the landscape and character of the heaths.
-) Limit impacts on other site features (i.e. Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM)).
-) Prevent antisocial behaviour.
-) Ensure visitor safety and minimise liability.
-) Ensure financial viability regarding long term management.

1.13 Three consultancies quoted for the work and following scoring by the OWG, AGB Environmental Ltd (AGB) were awarded the contract. AGB were represented locally by Roger Worthington, with significant experience of working with Forestry Commission England. Mr Worthington's previous experience included work on the rationalisation of 100+ car parks across the New Forest with the purpose of protecting sensitive habitats and concentrating visitor access to the most robust sites. Additionally, Mr Worthington had lead the redevelopment of Haldon Forest Park, preparing the feasibility report, project initiation document and the planning application drawings and submission.

2. The Pebblebed Heaths Visitor Access Advisory Report.

Research

2.1 Following 6 months of scoping, research, design and comprehensive stakeholder engagement, the Pebblebed Heaths Visitor Access Advisory Report was submitted on 28th May 2019. This advisory report is available to view online¹ and forms Appendix B of this report. Due to the size of the document it has not been possible to include in the agenda in the same way as with the other appendices. The main recommendations in the advisory report are to install extra dog waste bins, new signs showing trail maps and changes to the layout of car parks to make them easier and safer to use, prevent erosion and protect historic features and the landscape.

2.2 In consideration of its key objective, the report begins with an appraisal of the primary SPA/SAC conservation interest features of the sites. Indeed, the report benefits hugely from the longstanding and comprehensive monitoring of the heaths. As detailed in the separate, 2016 "Providing Space for Nature" report²:

"There have been a number of vegetation surveys on the Pebblebed Heaths over the decades of varying degrees of detail... recent surveys...describe, classify and map vegetation communities using the methodology of the National Vegetation Classification (NVC)... all areas of the heathland have been surveyed following NVC methodology at least once in the last decade."

"National surveys for the Dartford Warbler have been carried out in 1974, 1984, 1994 and 2006, with data collated by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO). In addition, from 1989 the Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust, RSPB staff, ecological contractors and volunteers have monitored this species annually using the Common Bird Census methodology."

"National surveys have also been the primary means of monitoring the Nightjar population, with these carried out in 1974, 1981, 1992, 2004 and 2010. RSPB staff and volunteers have monitored Aylesbeare and Harpford Commons annually for this species since 1976, Withycombe Raleigh from 1995 and Venn Ottery (East) from 1996."

¹ www.southeastdevonwildlife.org.uk/visitors

² "East Devon Pebblebed Heaths – Providing Space for Nature" (Dr S Bridgewater & Lesley Kerry, 2016)

“...the primary focus of annual survey work is the Southern Damselfly ..., with population counts made at the three known existing sites on the heaths, with historical data available from 1977 (Aylesbeare Common) and 1994 (Colaton Raleigh Common). The Southern damselfly was reintroduced onto Venn Ottery Common in 2007 and has been monitored annually since this date.”

2.3 The results of recent monitoring data, with key breeding territories and mire (wet or boggy ground suitable for the Southern damselfly) habitats, were overlain on detailed maps of the heaths to ascertain the most sensitive areas. Key points of visitor access were then compared against this map and helped to begin to give some indication of how visitor access could be managed into the future. As the breeding territory information of vulnerable species is highly sensitive, this data was not included in the final mapping shown in the advisory report.

2.4 The advisory report draws upon a number of key reference documents in consideration of the range of factors to be taken into account:

-) East Devon Local Plan 2013-2031.
-) South East Devon European Site Mitigation Strategy.
-) East Devon Heaths SPA & Pebblebed Heaths SAC: Visitor Survey Report.
-) East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Visitor Management Plan.
-) Clinton Devon Car Park Survey Report.
-) Police crime and incident reporting.
-) Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue, Woodbury Common Tactical Plan.
-) Royal Marine Access.
-) Pebblebed Heaths: public access path/track network.
-) East Devon AONB Historic Environment Action Plan, Historic Character Assessment and Management Guidelines.
-) Formal and informal Car Parking locations.

2.5 An updated audit of both “formal” (established and maintained) and “informal” (mainly roadside) car parking spaces was established to act as a baseline. This audit identified 293 current formal spaces across 11 car parks and 153 informal spaces across 43 diffuse areas of the heaths. This resulted in a total of 446 spaces.

2.6 Leading on from this understanding, the report also considers the primary access routes to the heaths for visitors coming by road, combined with existing survey results which identify where visits originate. New visitor pressure from future developments are identified from Exmouth in the south and Cranbrook to the north west.

2.7 Appendix B³ (pgs. 26/7) provides maps of the heaths with all of the car parking areas identified. Four key roads bisect the heaths and the main formal car parks sit adjacent to these roads. They provide the nearest access points for local communities but are in unplanned locations, are poorly laid out and have issues of ponding and potholing. They are also mostly screened by dense vegetation that leaves them prone to vandalism and anti-social behaviour.

³ www.southeastdevonwildlife.org.uk/visitors

2.8 Other scattered car parking on the heaths occurs in any available verge, lay-by or gateway. This informal parking leads to a number of issues, including widespread habitat disturbance, difficulties for neighbours and emergency services when roads are blocked and lack of opportunities for engaging with visitors about key issues and messages.

3. Concept and Strategic Principles

3.1 Research from previous studies as identified in 2.4 (above) identifies that visitors to the EDPH are mainly local, visit frequently throughout the year, overwhelmingly use a car, arrive for a short walk with a dog and have been doing so for many years.

3.2 The principles set out in the advisory report seek to provide for these key visitors and future visitors, without attracting increased numbers, in a manner that makes for an enjoyable and informative visit, whilst minimising the disturbance to protect species and habitats by ‘steering’ visitors towards car parks that are away from sensitive locations and towards those that have less impact on protected habitats and species:

1. A place of entry, to retain and develop the formal car parks that are as close as possible to the points of entry on the heaths and adjacent to the principle roads. To reduce car movements across the heaths and the scattered informal parking that occurs as a consequence.
2. Moving visitors away from sensitive locations to provide a “gathering in” of scattered informal parking. To close some informal roadside parking where wildlife and habitats are likely to be adversely affected by disturbance. To relocate roadside parking to formal car parks.
3. Promoting less sensitive locations where the surrounding habitat does not have sensitive habitats or protected species. To provide access from retained formal car parks to existing Public Rights of Way (PRoW), with information, interpretation and messaging promotes responsible public access.
4. No net increase so as to maintain the current number of car parking spaces. Proposals seek to maximise the number of spaces available to equally balance the number of roadside parking places that are proposed to be closed. To increase the number of parking spaces available is likely to increase visitor numbers at peak times of the day/month/season and result in increased damage to habitats and disturbance to ground nesting birds.
5. Creating “nodes” in the formal car parks as the starting point for promoted trails and the opportunity to direct people away from sensitive areas at key times of the year. Car parks which create a welcoming and attractive setting where visitors can engage with interpretation, messaging and wardens about the heaths and responsible dog walking.
6. Appropriate design to promote the development of good design and build standards that are appropriate to a countryside location within an AONB;

avoiding urban design, materials and finishes. Improving visibility within the car parks and from adjacent minor roads improves surveillance from other site users, passing motorists and the police.

7. Flexibility in controlling access and visitor numbers at certain times of the year (or for specific events) by adopting the partial, phased or seasonal closure of several car parks.
8. Efficiency. Improving the arrangement and construction of the existing formal car parks to maximise capacity and reducing long term maintenance costs. This makes the proposals more financially sustainable and ensures that other investment can be focused on the protection of species and habitats.

4. Analysis and survey

4.1 Applying the strategic principles outlined in section (3) above, as part of a desk study, each of the formal car parks were assessed in terms of their proximity to the key protected species and in the context of PRow (and other trails suitable for promotion in keeping with mitigation aims to reduce disturbance).

4.2 In February 2019, site visits to the main formal and informal car parks were undertaken with AGB and the respective site managers from EDPHCT, RSPB and DWT. These site surveys, with consideration of specific issues, informed the development of a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis of each site.

4.3 The SWOT analyses for each car park were used to prepare draft concept proposals, considered in the context of the strategic principles and the following concept design principles:

1. Use the existing footprint of formal car parks and entrances, as far as possible. This reduces disturbance/loss of habitat and the need for formal planning approval.
2. Maintain existing features and materials so as not to adversely affect the SPA/SAC soil characteristics and reflect the landscape characters of the AONB.
3. Restore the countryside character damaged by road-verge parking, through natural, physical measures, such as bunds and ditches.
4. Adjust formal car park layouts to protect and preserve SAMs.
5. Establish management principles for adjacent vegetation to reduce the likelihood of vandalism and anti-social behaviour.
6. Keep access for management, emergency services and MOD separate to public parking areas as far as possible.
7. Improve drainage provision within the construction proposals to improve flood attenuation.
8. Further principles as outlined in section 10 of Appendix B ⁴(pgs. 68-9).

⁴ www.southeastdevonwildlife.org.uk/visitors

4.4 A further site visit with AGB, the EDPHCT site manager and a consultant civil engineer was undertaken in late March 2019. This survey focused on three “typical” formal car parks and was aimed at achieving a greater understanding of engineering options. This provided further detail behind the car park proposals and cost estimates, particularly in respect of materials, vehicle specifications, entrance arrangements, width of spaces, drainage and turning circles.

5. Draft concept designs

5.1 Proposals for each of the formal car parks are put forward in section 11 of Appendix B⁵ (pgs.79-104) and each contains a summary of the cost estimate for the work proposed. Feedback given by the Devon Countryside Access Forum (DCAF) put forward specific design principles for all-ability access from car parks to surrounding trails.

5.2 In the preparation of the report, two alternative cost options were modelled against the recommended proposals. These options were:

-) Additional capital investment (for reduced ongoing maintenance)
-) Reduced capital investment (with anticipated increase in maintenance)

5.3 The recommended proposals look to adopt a balanced approach between the costs of undertaking the more expensive work of creating a robust parking surface with the ongoing revenue cost of maintaining those surfaces. Whilst upgrading all the car parks to a tarmac finish would result in the solution requiring the least maintenance, it would not be in keeping with the landscape character of the heaths. However, due to the increased wear and tear at the car park entrances, tarmac is the preferred option for these areas.

5.4 Any future improvements, closures or changes to the car parks need to be well planned in advance. To reduce the potential for disruption and to align most appropriately with the available capital it is logical to phase the implementation of any agreed works over time. As the fundamental driver of the work, the report rightly identifies that the protection of habitats and species should be the focus of investment. The report identifies 3 groupings or phases of work to align with this logic.

5.5 The report goes on to point out that careful consideration needs to be given to ensure some car parking options remain open for visitors to use whilst others are closed for refurbishment.

⁵ www.southeastdevonwildlife.org.uk/visitors

5.6 The concept designs were reviewed by stakeholders at two workshops in early March and late April 2019. Organisations represented included:

-) Clinton Devon Estates
-) East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust
-) South East Devon Habitat Regulations Partnership (SEDHRP)
-) East Devon District Council (Planning)
-) Natural England
-) Devon and Cornwall Police
-) RSPB
-) East Devon AONB
-) Devon Countryside Access Forum

Comments and feedback from these workshops were incorporated into the final concept designs.

6. Car park charging

6.1 The advisory report does not recommend the introduction of car parking charges, nor does it form part of the current management proposals from any of the site managers/landowners. Reasons for this include a likely negative response from members of the public who are accustomed to free car parking and the potential for increased roadside parking, which the proposals aim to reduce.

6.2 Whilst it remains within the gift of the landowners to review car parking charges in future (for example in the interests of helping to fund the considerable costs of ongoing management and maintenance) this could displace motorists onto verges and gateways. If not addressed, this may undo the aim of ensuring that visitors access the heaths from designated locations where key behavioural messages can be conveyed.

7. Clearways and roadside parking.

7.1 Where it applies on highways in designated zones, the Clearway sign (a red cross on a blue background) denotes no stopping on a road carriageway. Any vehicles parked in Clearway restricted areas may be issued with a Penalty Charge Notice by a Civil Enforcement Officer.

7.2 Vehicles may stop in a layby or on a verge if it is not stopped on the carriageway. Therefore, on the Pebblebed Heaths a Clearway will not prevent verge, layby or roadside parking unless it is accompanied by physical barriers such as bunds, ditches or other obstacles.

7.3 The report identifies the provision of free parking and the improvement of formal car parks as sufficient incentive to prevent roadside parking. It suggests that this, combined with physical obstacles to prevent roadside/verge parking will achieve the desired outcome without the need for a Clearway.

7.4 If the measures are insufficient then Clearway orders are identified as a potential option for any problem areas which subsequently become apparent.

8. Pebblebed Heaths visitor access consultation - planning and promotion.

8.1 A consultation plan was produced with key stakeholders in July 2019, and included the following items:

-) Pre-launch actions.
-) General principles.
-) Communication – web and social media.
-) Outside bodies to be consulted.
-) Consultation methods.
-) Consultation events.
-) Comments/responses – handling.
-) Timescale plan.
-) GDPR considerations.

8.2 A letter introducing the rationale for the work and the intention to hold a public consultation was sent to all relevant parties 7 weeks prior to the launch. Recipients of this letter included:

-) 12 Town and Parish Councils (those nearest to the heaths).
-) MP for East Devon and other local politicians.
-) District and Ward councillors.
-) Natural England.
-) Historic England.
-) Devon County Council.
-) Devon Community Access Forum (DCAF).
-) Devon Archaeological Society.
-) Butterfly Conservation.
-) Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust
-) British Horse Society.
-) Ramblers.
-) Devon Birds.
-) Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE).
-) Open Spaces Society.

8.3 In the weeks prior to the launch of the consultation, a leaflet was produced which identified the rationale for the work, included a page relating to frequently asked questions (FAQs) and contained an A3 pull-out map of the heaths. It was distributed to local libraries and at a stand at local farmers markets. The front cover of the leaflet was used as a poster which was put up at all the formal car parks on the heaths and on noticeboards in local villages. The leaflet is included as Appendix C.

8.4 The SEDHRP website was updated to include specific pages which hosted the advisory report, provided answers to FAQs, hosted images of each of the proposals, and provided a link to the online visitor survey. The survey was roughly divided between site specific proposals and other proposals which apply across the wider area (waymarked trails, dog bins, no charging, etc.). The survey questionnaire is included as Appendix D and images of the proposals (as they would appear when completed) are included as Appendix E.

8.5 The consultation launched on September 23rd 2019 and consisted of 3 public events (2 at popular car parks during the day and 1 at Exmouth Town Hall in the evening) and a presentation to Newton Poppleford & Harpford Parish Council. Notes of conversations held at the public events were taken and compiled for inclusion in the results report. Feedback was also received by post and email.

8.6 The consultation was also promoted through a number of press releases, through various social media channels, 6 parish magazines, the EDDC website and BBC Radio Devon covered the story on 23.9.19 with an interview with Cllr Susie Bond - Chair of HREC and Kim Strawbridge (EDPHCT site manager).

9. Pebblebed Heaths visitor access consultation - results.

9.1 A total of 94 completed questionnaires were received, 92 by individuals and 2 by organisations. 10 individuals and 3 organisations submitted comments by email rather than by completing the questionnaire.

9.2 Where respondents commented 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.

9.3 There was significant support from respondents to the proposals affecting the wider area:

-) 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.

9.4 The most common responses to all the proposals were:

-) The height restriction will mean horseboxes can't use this car park and may disadvantage some disabled users. This is unfair and will restrict the amount they can use the bridleways/heaths.
-) There needs to be room for horseboxes and trailers to turn and park.
-) I would welcome improvements to the car park surface.
-) I support the proposals.
-) The height restrictions will mean I can't go cycling there, my bicycle is on my roof / in my large van.
-) I would welcome improvements to the entrance.
-) 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.

-) Car parks must be kept open as they are well used. Closing them will restrict access to the heaths.

9.5 Full results and redacted responses (to remove personal details) are included here in Appendices (F) and (G). The results and responses were considered and debated by key stakeholders on 12th November 2019 and the SEDHRP OWG on 18th November 2019, in order to agree recommendations to HREC. All comments and feedback received during the consultation process were considered in order to balance the legal obligations of the protected areas with the legitimate interests of users.

10. Analysis

10.1 It can be seen that a substantial number of responses to the survey concern the proposals to install height restriction barriers at the entrances to the formal car parks. This measure aims to prevent unauthorised access, overnighting, reduce fly tipping and prevent parking by large haulage lorries which affect the surfacing, block access and take up space which could otherwise be used by visitors.

10.2 In order to respond to these requests it is recommended that a compromise is reached. This would see the main car parks in close proximity to the key roads (Joney's Cross, Warren, Estuary, Four Firs) retain height barriers. Other car parks (Model airfield, Wheathill) will have height barriers installed but these will be locked open (i.e. no height restriction in place), use of the car parks will be monitored and the height restriction imposed if problems arise. This would address the concerns of site managers relating to unauthorised use of the car parks whilst leaving a wide choice of other car parks available for use. The situation regarding height restrictions at the small informal parking areas (Stowford, Squabmoor, Frying pans roadside) will not change (i.e. no height restriction). It would remain within the gift of the landowners to keep this arrangement under review.

10.3 There are also a number of responses concerning the proposal to reduce car parking at Woodbury Castle. These relate to potential issues of safety if people park in the Estuary car park and cross the busy/fast B3180 road. There was also misinterpretation by some that the car park was marked for closure.

10.4 These proposals were drawn up to address multiple issues at this location. The routes that are accessed from this point can also be accessed from other car parks (Four Firs, Model Air, Warren) which are being improved as part of the overall plan. Improvements would be made to these alternative locations before any changes occurred at the Castle, the hope being that many people would naturally relocate (particularly to Four Firs) easing the pressure at the castle without the need to cross the B3180. The strong connection that the existing visitors have to this location may undermine this concept and so a common sense compromise is proposed as an alternative.

10.5 The capacity of castle car park has already been reduced by a small proportion in the last year by the landowner, so it is recommended that this lesser reduction is formalised and the situation monitored. It remains in the gift of the landowner to review this arrangement in the future should issues arise. As this amendment will not see a significant reduction in spaces at this car park, reduction needs to be realised elsewhere to ensure no net gain in capacity across the site - this is likely to be at Estuary View. The implications from this amendment need to be worked through before the final plans are drawn up to ensure it complies with the design concepts.

10.6 Respondents generally welcomed the creation of an all-ability trail at Estuary View and understood the reasons behind moving the vehicle parking from the viewpoint back to the roadside. A small number of people stated that they wanted to be able to continue parking at the viewpoint as they would not be able to use the trail. The trail would be designed to enable standard wheelchair access with rest points along the <200m route and seating at the viewpoint. The landowner has indicated that they would be receptive to allowing parking at the viewpoint on a small number of occasions during daylight hours but daily opening and locking of the barrier by site staff would be too resource heavy and not a reasonable request.

10.7 There were some responses highlighting the closure of Uphams to public vehicles. This was to separate out Royal Marine and site operation vehicles from the public, with the former utilising Uphams and the later Model Air which is 400m away. This proposal is recommended for action; however the landowner has confirmed that that this area could be made available to public parking on limited occasions and if not to the detriment of the designated features.

10.8 There were requests from people that travel to the site in horse boxes for dedicated horse box parking. This can be accommodated at Wheathill with the back section of the car park signed to be for parking of large vehicles such as horse boxes.

10.9 General request for more parking spaces to be created. This would not be appropriate as it would undermine the core objective of limiting the impact on designated features. Furthermore, the landowner is not in a position to fund increased maintenance costs by increasing parking provision. Although there will be no net gain in spaces, currently many of the spaces are not filled for much of the time. It is the intention of this strategy that parking spaces will be used more efficiently, with a greater proportion of spaces filled at any given time. This will allow some increase in visitor time spent on site but will effectively cap the number of visitors that can be on site at the same time. The strategy can accommodate this level of increase in visitor numbers by mitigating against their impact by reducing diffuse access and behaviour change measures. The site infrastructure is designed to accommodate the local community, whilst remaining mindful not to create a destination.

10.10 Some concern was expressed in relation to the aesthetics and the wild nature of the site. As identified in the VAAR, all designs would be implemented as sensitively as possible to retain the character of the site. Infrastructure such as signage will be kept to the main access points. Any trail markers would be low-key, similar in style to the discs that mark the East Devon Way – see Figure 2, below:

Figure 2. East Devon Way disc markers.



11. Conclusion

11.1 The view of those engaged within the consultation have been considered, with the recommendations made taking these views into considerations. There has been a balance between views of site users, site protection and operational requirements.

11.2 The partner authorities have a legal obligation to ensure no net impacts to protected sites as a result of local housing plans. To be certain of no net impacts from recreation, robust and effective management of access to the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths is required.

11.3 The visitor access proposals outline significant changes to the arrangement and provision of access to the heaths for a number of years. They are needed in the context of a significant increase in the local human population, associated recreational activities and the potential for significant impacts to protected species and habitats. The existing and proposed number of car parking spaces are shown in Table 1, below:

Table 1. Car parking tally – existing and proposed.

Parking space across the Pebblebed Heaths	Current Parking	Proposed Parking
Formal Parking Spaces	293	293
Informal Parking Spaces	153	119
Total	446	412

11.4 It is recommended that the Executive Committee receive a further report in April 2020 which outlines the recommended expenditure and phasing of access improvements as part of the 2020-21 annual business plan and 5 year delivery plan.

Naomi Harnett, Principal Projects Manager

Neil Harris, Habitat Regulations Delivery Manager

**South East Devon
Habitat Regulations
Executive Committee
January 2020**

Natural England comment:

The management of car parking on the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths, with the primary objective of safeguarding the SPA protected bird species and SAC heathland habitat, is an important part of the overall mitigation strategy. Natural England notes the findings of the consultation exercise, which will inform the proposals going forward.

Habitat Regulations Executive Committee

East Devon Pebblebed Heaths visitor access consultation: Appendix A



Pebblebed Heaths Car Park Strategy and Design Brief

Background

The East Devon Pebblebed Heaths (Pebblebed Heaths) cover some 1,400 ha and make up the largest block of lowland heath in Devon. The majority of the heaths are designated SSSI, Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA) due to the rarity of the habitats and the species they protect. The Pebblebed Heaths are also registered commons and as such are Open Access Land under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act. Most of the designated area (ca. 80%) is owned by Clinton Devon Estates and managed by the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust, which manages the site for the benefit of wildlife and to promote the public enjoyment and appreciation of the reserve. Some smaller areas are leased or owned by the RSPB, with remaining areas privately owned and managed, including by the Devon Wildlife Trust.

Under the current Local Plan over 40,000 new homes are planned in the in the East Devon, Exeter and Teignbridge districts through to 2030. This level of growth has implications for all popular recreation sites, with significant increases in visitor pressure expected. However, there are specific requirements for protecting European conservation sites within the National Planning Policy Framework, which includes designated SPAs and SACs. Within the local area this includes the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths, Dawlish Warren and the Exe Estuary. The Habitats Regulations translate European legislation set out within the Habitats and the Birds Directives and there are specific legal obligations to ensure that local development avoids deterioration of habitats and species for European sites. In south-east Devon the strategic approach to deal with issues related to access and the impacts of increased recreation from planned development are set out in the South-east Devon European Site Mitigation Strategy (Liley *et al.* 2014b), with its implementation overseen by the South East Devon Habitat Regulations Partnership (SEDHRP). Under the auspices of this strategy the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Visitor Management Plan (Liley *et al.* 2016) was commissioned to provide a framework for delivery of mitigation for the Pebblebed Heaths to ensure they can cope with the increased levels of recreation in the future, and to give confidence that the expected growth will not result in adverse impacts on designated features. The report makes a series of recommendations for the long-term management of access, focusing on influencing visitors' behaviour and ensuring the site is more robust in terms of its ability to absorb recreation pressure. SEDHRP developed a five-year plan based on these recommendations and since 2017 priority actions have been delivered in line with this plan.

An estimated 400,000+ visits are made to the Pebblebed Heaths annually, with the majority of visitors travelling to the site by car or van. Although there is no legal obligation to provide car parking on the heaths, there are 13 formal car parks across the site, with a further 30+ informal areas accommodating a few cars, and significant extents of verges also frequently used (Liley *et al.* 2016). Rationalising car parking was highlighted in the visitor management plan as potentially playing an important role in influencing where people choose to go and how they behave, helping to reduce negative recreational impacts. This could include the closure of some car parks and the improvement of others to make them more attractive should the evidence suggest this would be effective. The current approach anticipates targeting the improvement of a select few formal car-parks in order to focus access, with this work complemented by adjacent trail improvements, waymarking, mapped walks and trail guides to assist with directing visitors around the site. Over time these car parks would become the main access points used by visitors with this transition supported through limiting roadside parking and allowing other car-parks to deteriorate before eventual closure. In combination these measures would reduce the risk of growth of uncontrolled diffuse access over a wider area. Improvements could include better surfacing, clear marking of bays, ease of access onto/from roads and signage. The selected car-parks should be chosen to match those most likely to minimise recreational impact on the designated features and would provide a focal point for interpretation, dog bins and wardening time ensuring greater engagement with a higher proportion of visitors. The Visitor Management Plan has provided the foundation for this work through the provision of recreational pressure heat maps. The broad approach is to shift from widespread diffuse access (multiple locations with ample parking and limited engagement opportunities), to access which is more concentrated (less access points, a similar number of parking spaces and good engagement opportunities). The aim is to develop access infrastructure that protects the designated features from future increases in visitor pressure, which is easier to manage and which promotes more effective public engagement and education (both face to face and via interpretation signage). Improvements would provide the potential to also set the number of parking places at particular locations, giving a means of setting a limit on the number of visitors that may visit at a particular time. Changes can therefore ensure no overall net increase in the number of parking spaces at the site.

Project Brief

The development and costing of car parking plans for a site as complex as the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths requires specialist support. The SEDHRP and managers of the Pebblebed Heaths require a consultant specialising in car park strategy and design to assess the current parking across the heaths and recommend an appropriate costed strategy to manage this access. Ensuring protection of the designated features, alongside providing safe and sustainable infrastructure, which is in keeping with the character of the heaths. To ensure that the work is continually informed by the ultimate objective to avoid impacts on designated features the consultant should have ecological understanding and experience of infrastructure projects set in sensitive countryside locations. This project will be led by the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust with support from the RSPB and DWT. The contractor will draw from the principles outlined within the Visitor Management Plan and with broad consultation from site management teams develop a long-term costed strategy for parking. It is also expected that EDDC and Natural England will also be consulted regarding requirements for planning permission and consents. DCC Highways may need to be consulted regarding car park entrances and prevention of roadside parking.

This strategy will ensure that future funding is spent appropriately and efficiently to deliver works specifically designed to maintain the integrity of designated features. The work will be carried out alongside other mitigation actions relating to visitor flow and behavioural change making on site delivery more efficient and ensuring the different elements complement each other on the ground. Changes to car parks have the potential to be controversial and so this report will provide evidence to justify our decisions and works that are taken forward. Our objective is to protect the site whilst improving visitor enjoyment of it.

Required output:

- Compile information on current parking offer across the heaths (visitor data available and survey of current carpark infrastructure in progress), with reference to the Visitor Management Plan
- Develop strategy for carpark offer across heaths to achieve listed objectives. Should identify the general approach to car parking, focussing of resources and where parking should be encouraged or discouraged. The strategy should include details of financial considerations such as the effectiveness of charging to cover long-term management. A clear rationale explaining the choice of recommendations should accompany the strategy.

Key objective: to limit impact of visitors on designated features (SSSI, SAC, SPA)

Supporting objectives:

- protect the aesthetic of the landscape and character of heaths
 - limit impacts on other site features e.g. SAMs
 - improve the visitor experience for new and existing visitors but without creating a 'destination'
 - prevent antisocial behaviour/camping etc
 - understand the heaths car park offer in the context of the wider landscape
 - prevent overspill parking on verges/roadside
 - direct visitors as appropriate around site, focus access (visitor flows)
 - support the increased understanding of the special qualities of the heath, education and responsible access (visitor behaviour)
 - ensure visitor safety and minimise liability
 - ensure financial viability regarding long term management
- Recommendations for design of car park offer to deliver strategy to include:
 - mapping of options for car parking offer across the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths
 - risk register
 - annotated graphics to illustrate options for individual car parks that will be retained
 - options appraisal (objectives achieved; potential drawbacks; materials used; installation value for money; expected maintenance requirements)
 - consent requirements (planning permission, Natural England consent etc)
 - indicative costing for installation of options
 - proposal of scheduling and prioritisation of works

It is recognised that detailed specifications of works are likely beyond the scope of this project and that in order to comply with CDM regulations this element will be carried out once the final strategy and design has been agreed upon. An engineer or architect is likely required to take on the role of 'principle designer' and will draw up the final detailed plan of works which quotes can then be received against. If you have the expertise to also offer this service, please make that clear in your response.

Sources of information:

Liley, D., Hoskin, R., Lake, S., Underhill-Day, J. & Cruickshanks, K. (2013). South-east Devon European Site Mitigation Strategy. Footprint Ecology. Unpublished report for East Devon District Council, Exeter City Council and Teignbridge District Council.

<http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/369997/exe-overarching-report-9th-june-2014.pdf>

Liley, D., Panter, C., Underhill-Day, J. (2015). East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Visitor Management Plan. Unpublished report by Footprint Ecology for East Devon Council.

<http://www.footprint-ecology.co.uk/reports/Liley%20et%20al.%20-%202016%20-%20East%20Devon%20Pebblebeds%20Heaths%20Visitor%20Management%20PI.pdf>

For more information please contact:

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DDI: (01395) 446919

Mobile: 07976062715

Email kim.strawbridge@clintondevon.com

www.pebblebedheaths.org.uk

East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Consultation

Have your say on visitor access proposals to protect habitats and wildlife and improve visitor experiences and safety

The East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust (EDPHCT) and the South East Devon Habitat Regulations Partnership (SEDHRP) are seeking your views on proposals to improve the experience for visitors at the same time as protecting vulnerable wildlife.

The consultation is open from 23rd September to 4th November 2019

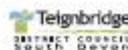
To have your say come to one of the events and take the survey online.

Four Firs car park: Saturday 28th September, 9am - 1pm

Exmouth Town Hall: Thursday 10th October, 2pm - 8pm

Joney's Cross car park: Thursday 17th October, 1pm - 5pm

Find out more by looking online www.southeastdevonwildlife.org.uk/visitors



East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Visitor Access Consultation



Proposals include ideas to install extra dog waste bins, new signs showing trail maps and changes to the layout of car parks to make them easier and safer to use, prevent erosion and protect historic features and the landscape

The heaths cover over 1,400 hectares and are managed by the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust (EDPHCT), RSPB Devon Wildlife Trust and private land owners. 80% of the land is owned by Clinton Devon Estates and managed by the EDPHCT.

Have your say, come to the events and take the survey at www.southeastdevonwildlife.org.uk/visitors. Help us protect this special place for years to come



Your Questions Answered

Why are changes needed?

The East Devon Pebblebed Heaths are popular for a variety of activities including walking, cycling and horse riding. With a growing population, it is important to balance these activities with the needs of wildlife and habitats on this globally significant conservation site. The protection of the rare and vulnerable wildlife found on the Heaths is a legal obligation and we want to keep the Heaths special for future generations to enjoy. Detailed research leading to an advisory report make the case for these precautions with SEDHRP funding improvements to make it an easier and safer place to enjoy.

What are the main changes?

The proposals include suggestions to install extra dog waste bins, new signs showing trail maps and changes to the layout of car parks to make them easier and safer to use, prevent erosion and protect historic features and the landscape.

What makes the heaths special?

The Pebblebed Heaths are well known as important recreation spaces for local people and have a long cultural history with many nationally protected historic features. The Heaths are also incredibly rich in natural history and have international, legal designations which highlight the importance, rarity and vulnerability of the wildlife which call the Heaths "home".

How can I share my views?

Visit southeastdevonwildlife.org.uk/visitors to answer an online survey, come along to one of the events (see front page for details) or email habitatmitigation@eastdevon.gov.uk

Will I have to pay for parking?

There are no proposals to introduce parking charges. However, donations to EDPHCT for maintenance are welcome.

Will there be less parking space?

Overall, there is no loss of parking spaces across the Pebblebed Heaths. Spaces are being spread across the site to make more efficient use of the available space.

Are you putting in more dog waste bins?

Extra dog bins will be installed at key locations. They will only ever be in car parks or at key access points - never on the heathland itself. This protects the character of the landscape and enables contractors to empty the bins.

Will you be tarmacking the car parks?

The surface of the car parks will be improved but will not be tarmacked except in the entrances. The car parks fall within the SSSI designated area, so local materials will be used to keep the character of the site. Drainage will be improved and the layout will be designed to limit wear and tear, which leads to issues such as potholes.

I find it difficult to find my way round, will you give us more information?

Yes. There are proposals to put name signs at car parks so that people know where they are. To help people make the most of their visit to the Heaths, proposals suggest new information boards with improved maps and facts about the special nature of the site. The signs will help people access the area responsibly by explaining activities which are not permitted.

Are you creating a visitor centre or attraction?

No, there are no proposals for a visitor centre, which may attract extra visitors. These proposals accommodate a growing population in the local area. The proposals aim to improve the visitor experience for people while retaining the character of the Heaths. We do not propose to open any new car parks at this time.

Are you installing toilets?

There are no proposals to install toilets.

What are you doing to protect historic features?

All historic features have been considered as part of the improvements. Some features are currently at risk of damage so specific measures are proposed, particularly for Woodbury Castle and the barrow at Model Airfield car park.

Who is paying for this?

SEDHRP has paid for independent research to inform an advisory report* to protect the Pebblebed Heaths. SEDHRP is paying for the public consultation and will pay for any agreed capital works. EDPHCT will pay for ongoing maintenance, once the upgrades have been completed.

What happens next?

From 23 September - 4 November, you can fill in a survey about the proposals. All views will be taken into account when the results are analysed in November. A final report including all feedback will be compiled by SEDHRP and presented to the South East Devon Habitat Regulations Executive Committee for a decision next year.

*Visit www.southeastdevonwildlife.org.uk/visitors to read the report and answer an online survey or you can email habitatmitigation@eastdevon.gov.uk.

Habitat Regulations Executive Committee

East Devon Pebblebed Heaths visitor access consultation: Appendix D

South East Devon Habitat Regulations Partnership

Pebblebed Heaths Visitor Access Consultation

- Read the consultation information and proposed changes on the website: <http://www.southeastdevonwildlife.org.uk/visitors/>
- If you need this consultation on paper or in any other format please call us on 01404 515616 or email habitatmitigation@eastdevon.gov.uk
- Give us your views by 5pm on 4 November 2019 by answering this questionnaire.

Data Protection

Your responses will be received and the data input by East Devon District Council (EDDC), as the partner authority that will be analysing the consultation responses. Any personal names and contact details will have been removed before consultation responses are shared with the South East Devon Habitat Regulations Partnership (SEDHRP) as the organisation running the consultation. The analysis done by EDDC will be sent to the SEDHRP, who will produce a report on the consultation exercise and recommendations on final proposals for all the partner authorities. This consultation report will be made publicly available online and may include anonymous comments made in your response. By completing and submitting your responses to us you are giving permission for them to be used in this way.

Any personal information which you provide will be held and used by EDDC for the purpose of this consultation. Your information will be briefly stored by SNAP Surveys Ltd who provide the councils online survey software. Your information may also be shared within EDDC for the purposes of carrying out our lawful functions. Otherwise your personal information will not be disclosed to anybody outside EDDC without your permission, unless there is a lawful reason to do so, for example if disclosure is necessary for crime prevention or detection purposes. Your information will be held securely and will not be retained for any longer than is necessary.

There are a number of rights available to you in relation to our use of your personal information, depending on the reason for processing. To find out more about your rights, visit <http://eastdevon.gov.uk/access-to-information/data-protection/data-protection/your-rights/>
Further detail about our use of your personal information can be found in the relevant Privacy Notices which can be accessed online: <http://eastdevon.gov.uk/privacy>
SNAP Surveys Ltd Privacy Policy: <http://www.snapsurveys.com/survey-software/privacy-policy-uk>

Please select the box below to confirm you've read and understood the above data protection statement:

A - Proposals for specific car parks

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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 continue to not charge people for parking in the Pebblebed Heaths car parks?

- Strongly agree Tend to agree Neither agree nor disagree Tend to disagree Strongly disagree Don't know / unsure

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

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

- Strongly agree Tend to agree Neither agree nor disagree Tend to disagree Strongly disagree Don't know / unsure

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

15. 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?

- Strongly agree Tend to agree Neither agree nor disagree Tend to disagree Strongly disagree Don't know / unsure

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

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

- Strongly agree Tend to agree Neither agree nor disagree Tend to disagree Strongly disagree Don't know / unsure

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

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

- Strongly agree Tend to agree Neither agree nor disagree Tend to disagree Strongly disagree Don't know / unsure

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

D - About you

18. Are you filling in this questionnaire as:

- An individual
 The official representative of an organisation - please move onto question 23

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

See background information to see where they all are.

- Yes
 No - please move onto question 22

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

- Not used in the last 6 months - please move onto question 22
 One to six times in 6 months
 One or two times a fortnight
 Two to four times a week
 More than four times a week

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

Please select all that apply

- Walking, jogging and / or running without a dog
 Walking, jogging and / or running with a dog
 Cycling
 Wildlife / nature watching
 Photography
 Horse riding
 Geocaching
 Outing with family / picnic
 Other - please write in below

We are asking the following questions so we can see if any particular groups have particular issues. Your answers will be treated in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

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

- Yes
 No - please move onto question 23

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

Please tick all that apply

- Mobility (physical disability)
 Mental health
 Blind or visually impaired
 Learning disability
 Progressive disability or chronic illness, for example MS
 Deaf or hearing impairment
 Other (please write in below)

E - Your details

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

Please tick all that apply

- Yes No

24. If you have answered yes to question 23, please leave your e-mail address in the box below:

Your contact details will be treated in accordance with the Data Protection Act and only be used to send you the results and feedback from the questionnaire. You can stop this at any time by emailing: habitatmitigation@eastdevon.gov.uk

Thank you for taking the time to take part in this consultation.

Please press the submit button below to send your answers to us.

Habitat Regulations Executive Committee

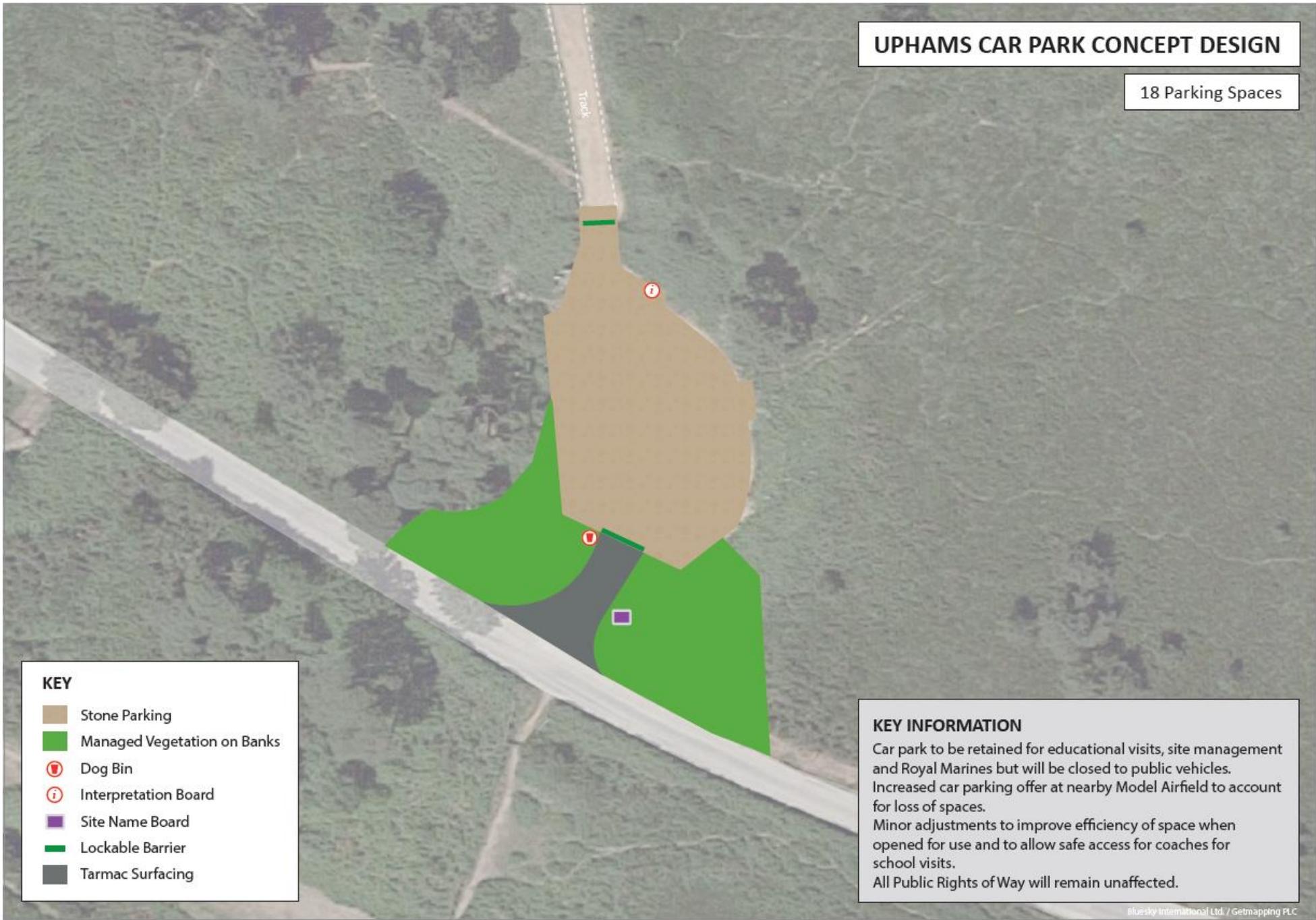
East Devon Pebblebed Heaths visitor access consultation: Appendix E

page 36



UPHAMS CAR PARK CONCEPT DESIGN

18 Parking Spaces



KEY

- Stone Parking
- Managed Vegetation on Banks
- Dog Bin
- Interpretation Board
- Site Name Board
- Lockable Barrier
- Tarmac Surfacing

KEY INFORMATION

Car park to be retained for educational visits, site management and Royal Marines but will be closed to public vehicles. Increased car parking offer at nearby Model Airfield to account for loss of spaces. Minor adjustments to improve efficiency of space when opened for use and to allow safe access for coaches for school visits. All Public Rights of Way will remain unaffected.

MODEL AIRFIELD CAR PARK CONCEPT DESIGN

41 Parking Spaces



KEY

- Stone Parking
- Pedestrian Area of Stone
- Managed Vegetation on Banks
- Bank/Bund
- Height Restriction Barrier
- Dog Bin
- Interpretation Board
- Site Name Board
- Tarmac Surfacing

KEY INFORMATION

Increased car parking capacity to account for any losses at nearby Uphams car park.
Move entrance away from the Scheduled Ancient Monument.
All Public Rights of Way will remain unaffected.

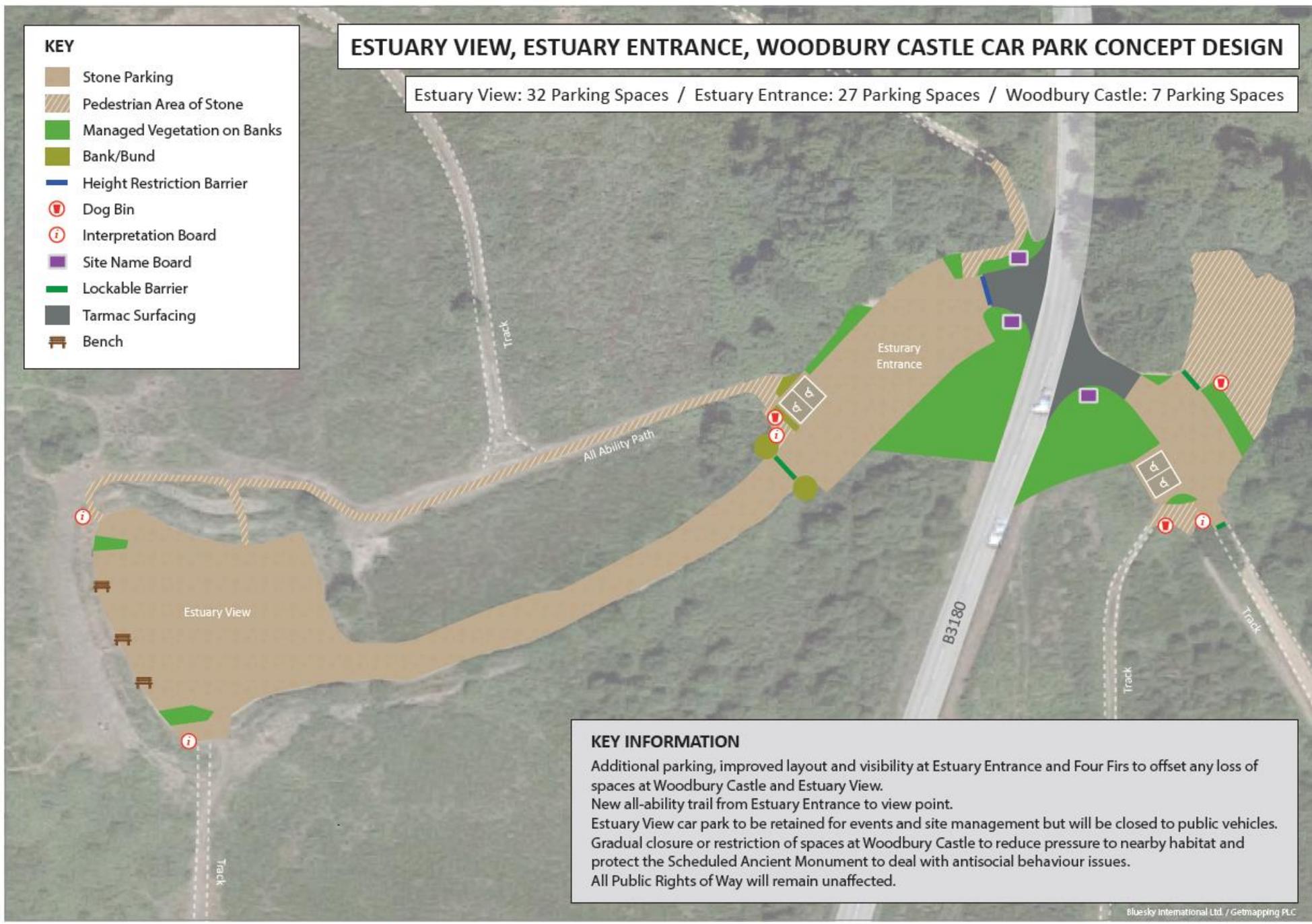


ESTUARY VIEW, ESTUARY ENTRANCE, WOODBURY CASTLE CAR PARK CONCEPT DESIGN

Estuary View: 32 Parking Spaces / Estuary Entrance: 27 Parking Spaces / Woodbury Castle: 7 Parking Spaces

KEY

-  Stone Parking
-  Pedestrian Area of Stone
-  Managed Vegetation on Banks
-  Bank/Bund
-  Height Restriction Barrier
-  Dog Bin
-  Interpretation Board
-  Site Name Board
-  Lockable Barrier
-  Tarmac Surfacing
-  Bench



KEY INFORMATION

- Additional parking, improved layout and visibility at Estuary Entrance and Four Firs to offset any loss of spaces at Woodbury Castle and Estuary View.
- New all-ability trail from Estuary Entrance to view point.
- Estuary View car park to be retained for events and site management but will be closed to public vehicles.
- Gradual closure or restriction of spaces at Woodbury Castle to reduce pressure to nearby habitat and protect the Scheduled Ancient Monument to deal with antisocial behaviour issues.
- All Public Rights of Way will remain unaffected.



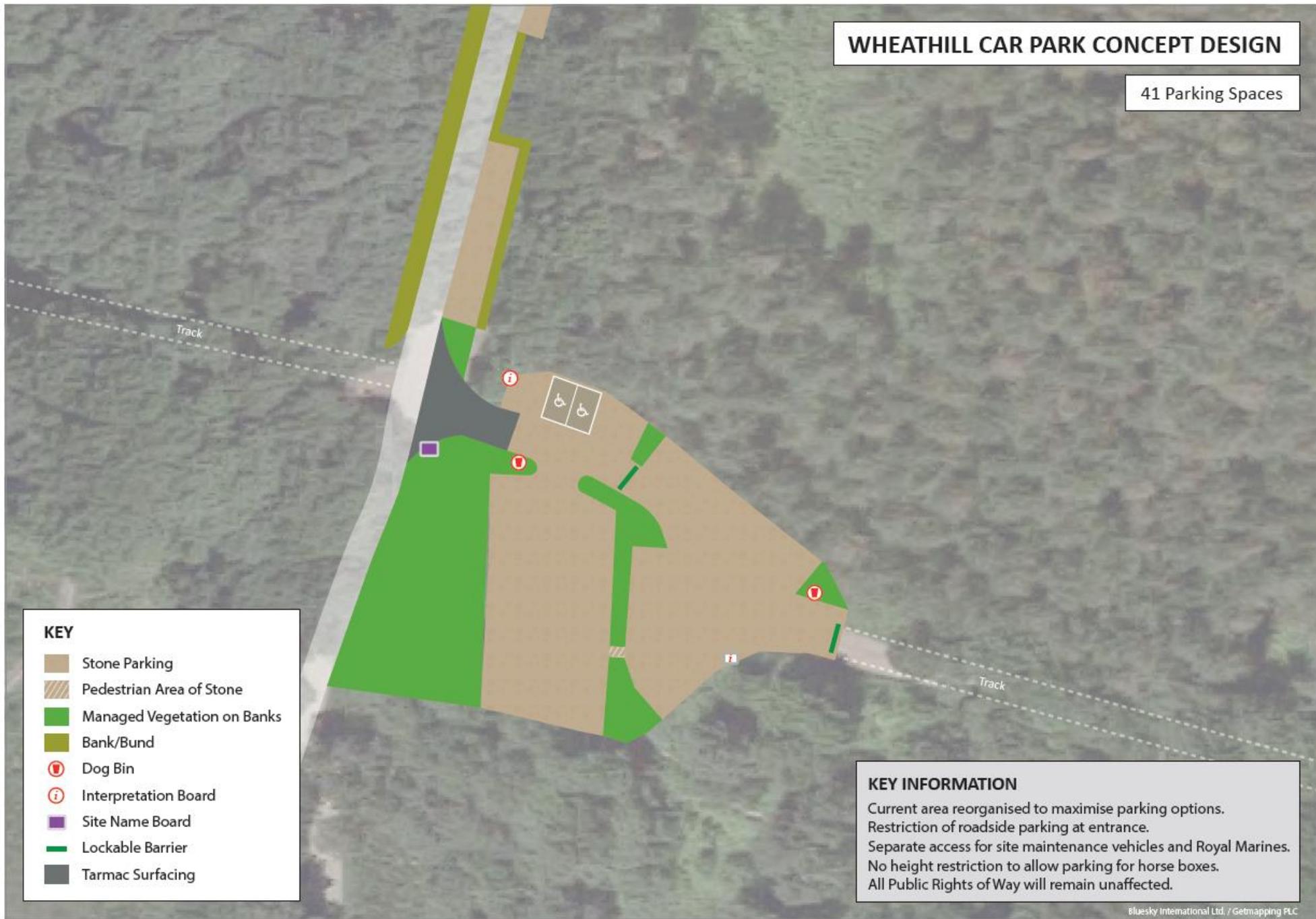
FRYING PAN CAR PARK CONCEPT DESIGN

16 Parking Spaces



WHEATHILL CAR PARK CONCEPT DESIGN

41 Parking Spaces



SQUABMOOR CAR PARK CONCEPT DESIGN

7 Parking Spaces



KEY

- Stone Parking
- Pedestrian Area of Stone
- Bank/Bund
- Dog Bin
- Interpretation Board

KEY INFORMATION

Formalised access for a small number of spaces to provide additional capacity to nearby Bystock Ponds. All Public Rights of Way will remain unaffected.

STOWFORD CAR PARK CONCEPT DESIGN

5 Parking Spaces



KEY

- Stone Parking
- Bank/Bund
- Dog Bin
- Interpretation Board

KEY INFORMATION

Formalised access for a small number of spaces on more robust ground to protect trees, other parking in the area restricted. All Public Rights of Way will remain unaffected.

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

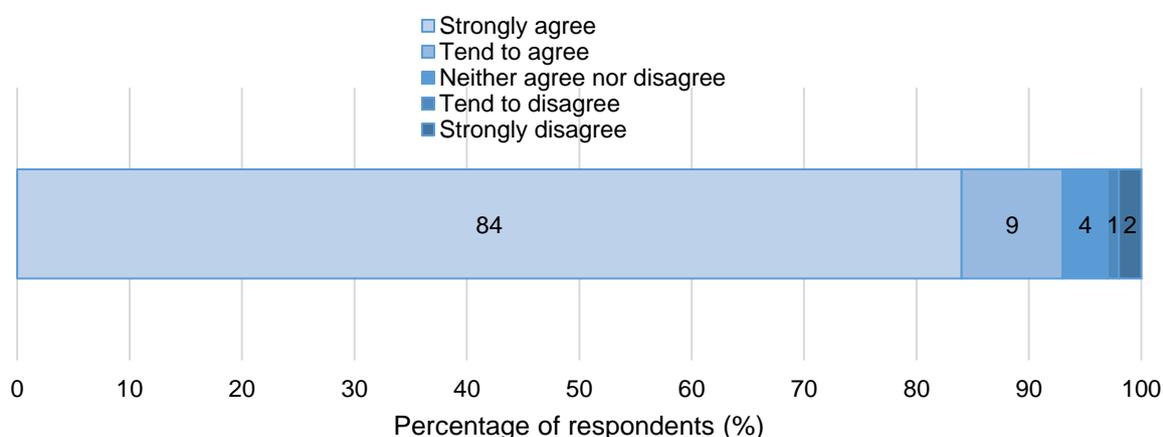
12. Any comments on the proposals for Stowford Woods car park?

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.



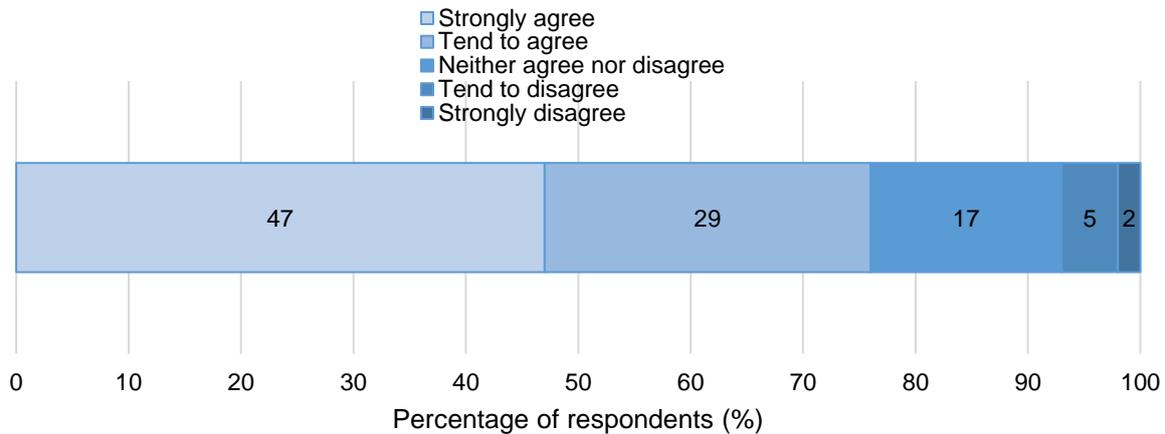
If you disagree, please tell us why, and how you would improve this proposal:

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.



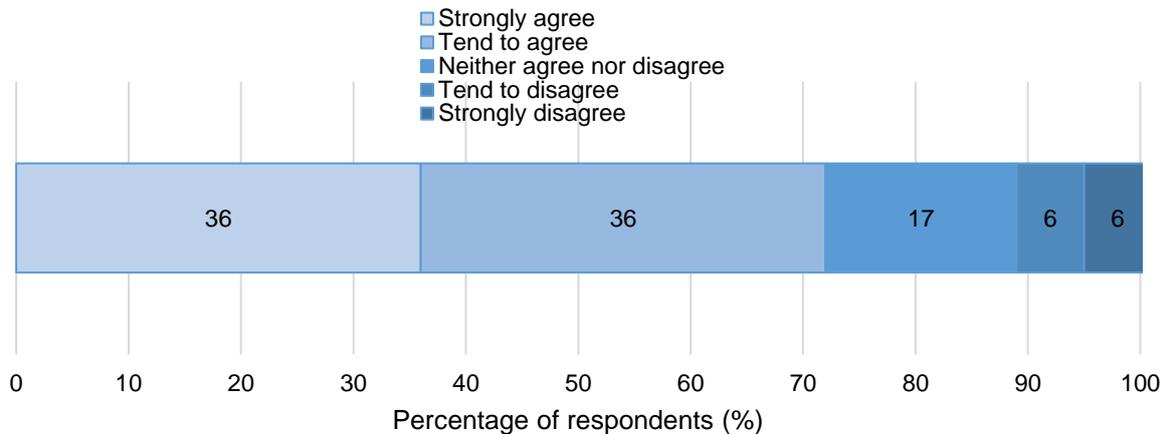
If you disagree, please tell us why, and how you would improve this proposal:

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.



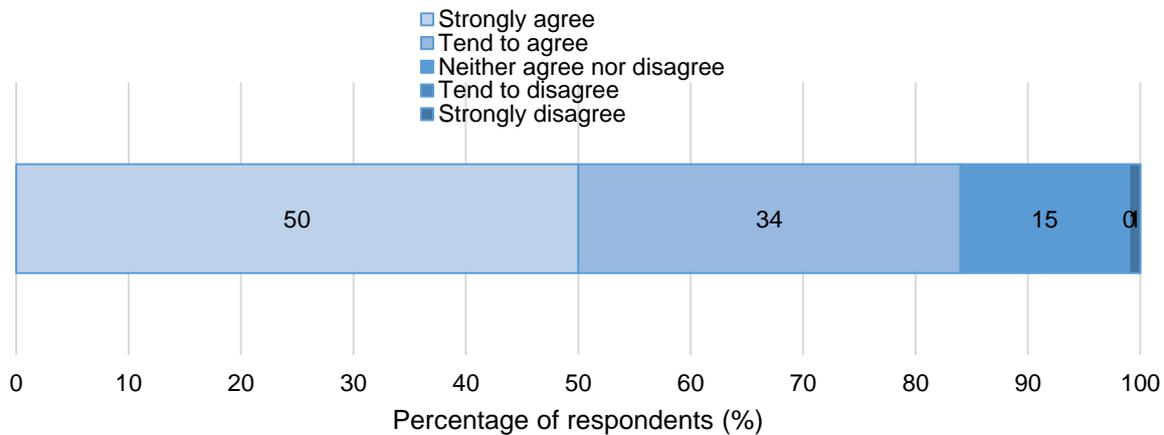
If you disagree, please tell us why, and how you would improve this proposal:

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.



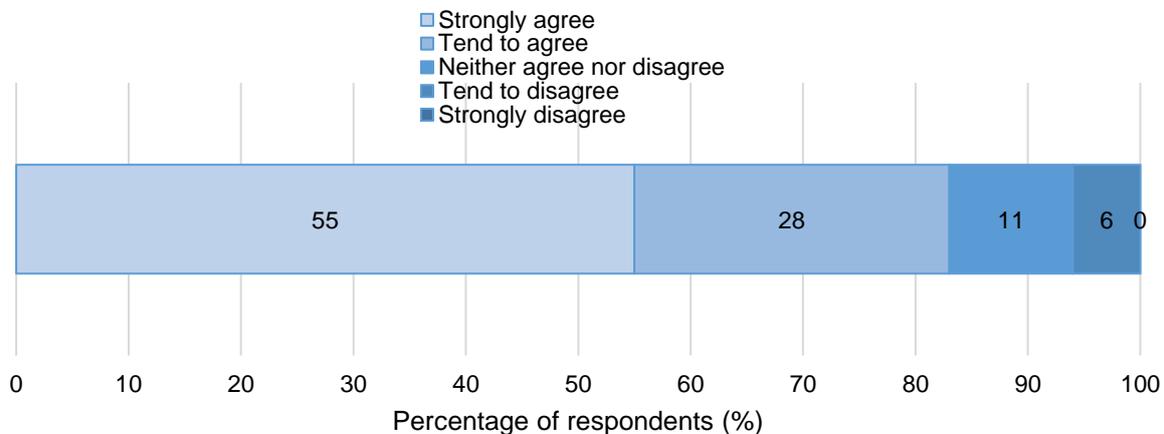
If you disagree, please tell us why, and how you would improve this proposal:

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:

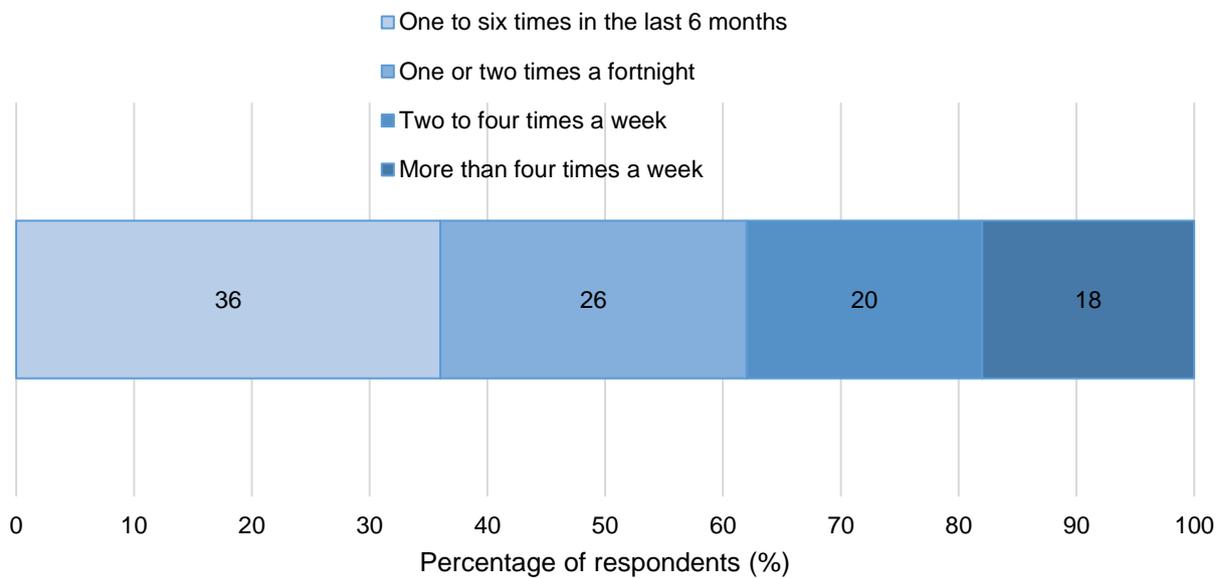
91 of the 93 respondents that answered this question were individuals, the other two were official representatives of organisations. Those representing organisations were asked to move onto question 23.

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.

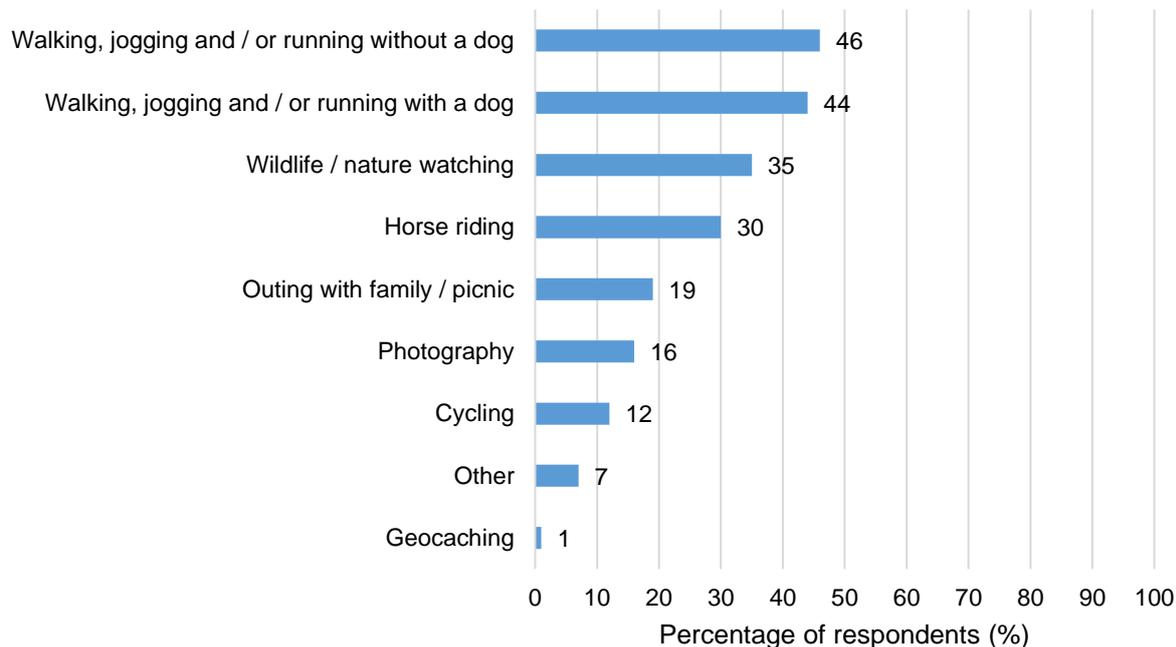
20. On average, how often have you been to / used the Pebblebed Heaths car parks in the last 6 months?

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.

Habitat Regulations Executive Committee

East Devon Pebblebed Heaths visitor access consultation: Appendix G

Organisation responses

These responses were from organisations that did not complete the online consultation form. They can't be added to the views of the 2 organisations expressed in the results document of the consultation form.

Devon Countryside Access Forum

Dear East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Site Manager

Pebblebed Heaths Visitor Access Consultation

The Devon Countryside Access Forum (DCAF) is a local access forum under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act). Its statutory remit is to give independent advice "as to the improvement of public access to land in the area for the purposes of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area..." Section 94(4) of the Act specifies bodies to whom the Forum has a statutory function to give advice. The South East Devon Habitat Regulations Partnership is formed from the three district councils in the area and the Forum has a duty to advise district councils.

The DCAF currently has fifteen members, appointed by Devon County Council, who represent the interests of landowners/managers, access users and other relevant areas of expertise such as conservation and tourism.

A group of members visited the site and these comments have been agreed by the Forum and take into account advice previously developed. The response will be on the agenda at the next meeting in January for formal approval.

The DCAF recognises the importance of safeguarding the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths and protecting species which give it Special Area of Conservation and Special Protection Area status. The increasing population growth in the immediate and wider area, such as Cranbrook, will inevitably increase recreational access on the heaths. The heaths offer significant recreational access opportunities for safe off-road use by a wide range of users including walkers, dog walkers, families, cyclists, horse-riders and disabled users. Open access plus the network of public rights of way (footpaths and bridleways) and permissive paths provide many options for informal recreation.

Car parking charges

The DCAF strongly supports the proposal not to charge for parking in the formal car parks on the Pebblebed Heaths. A charge may not be economic to collect, and any charges may displace people onto the roadside verges and passing places. The area is widely used by local residents on a regular basis and such use is important to health and well-being.

Car parking proposals

1. The Forum would welcome more information on the topics and messages that will be included on the interpretation/information boards. In principle these are supported.
2. The provision of additional dog bins, if regularly emptied, will encourage responsible dog walking.
3. Managing vegetation to improve the visibility of car parks should encourage use and deter anti-social behaviour.
4. Closure of the little-used Frying Pans car park would appear appropriate. Similarly use of Uphams for the Royal Marines and educational visits would be sensible, subject to Model Airfields car being enlarged to accommodate cars that would previously have used Uphams.
5. Additional way-marked trails from Four Firs car park to Woodbury Castle would ensure people had confidence to use this route. New gates permitting greater access to Bicton Common by people with disabilities and tramper buggies would be appreciated by this user group.
6. Reducing car parking at Squabmoor and Stowford Woods to minimise tree root damage is appropriate, if informal car parking close by is available.

Matters for further consideration

The Devon Countryside Access Forum is concerned about some of the proposals and the impact on access, as outlined below:

Horse-riders

The proposed closure of car parks and use of height restriction barriers will effectively limit horse box parking. Information from staff at the consultation suggested that Wheathill car park to the south will be available for horses. However, on the website summary, reference is made to a height restriction barrier so it is not at all clear where horse boxes could be parked.

The Pebblebed Heaths are criss-crossed by bridleways and individual horse riders are permitted on open access land by Clinton Devon Estates. Historically, the heaths have been an important horse-riding area and are used extensively today. Significantly reducing the options to park horse boxes will disadvantage this recreational user group for whom road riding is increasingly unsafe. There are very few places, outside the National Parks, where there are good off-road riding opportunities. The Forum advises the South East Devon Habitat Regulations Partnership and Clinton Devon Estates to reassess this aspect of the proposals, consult closely with the British Horse Society and local horse-riding groups and ensure horse riders can continue to park in some car parks and access the wider area.

This impact on horse riders was not brought out sufficiently in the consultation summary, entitled 'Visitor Access Improvements' and the accompanying report. Consequently, equestrian users may not have responded to the consultation.

Disability access and height barriers

Use of height barriers could also disadvantage some disabled users who transport mobility scooters in high vans or in vehicle top containers. It is likely that the increasing sophistication and automation of transportation options could mean more vehicles fall in this category. Consideration should be given to ensuring that access is available in several car parks.

Estuary Entrance/Estuary View and Woodbury Castle car parks

Estuary Entrance/Estuary View and Woodbury Castle. The Estuary View car park has outstanding views. The Forum has reservations about closing this car park as it is used by people enjoying the views or having a picnic, some of whom would be unable to walk far or to use the proposed all-ability trail. The DCAF appreciates the challenges of having to deal with anti-social behaviour but this could be displaced elsewhere if this car park is closed. The all-ability trail is nonetheless an additional route for people who wish to walk to the viewpoint which would be appreciated.

Access to the Estuary Entrance car park is not inviting and improvements to the car park and increased number of spaces would enhance this area. However, the DCAF has concerns if capacity is improved at this site at the expense of the Woodbury Castle car park – proposed for closure/partial closure. Woodbury Castle is a honeypot location on the heaths and also explored by families and young people who would not necessarily walk on the wider common. Access opportunities to walk, cycle and ride are much more limited on the Estuary Entrance car park side of the road. The B3180 is a relatively busy road with restricted views coming out of the Estuary Entrance car park. Focussing parking at Estuary Entrance will mean additional numbers of vulnerable road users – children, dog walkers, disabled and elderly people in particular – would want to cross this road to Woodbury Castle and the heathland beyond. Unless there were significant traffic calming measures this crossing is potentially very unsafe. Restricting car parking to blue badge holders at Woodbury Castle would not necessarily reduce damage to the Scheduled Monument or ease congestion.

Car parks: general improvements and disability access

The DCAF supports changes to the formal car parks which would make them more welcoming to visitors. However, surface improvements should be with local stone, with tarmac kept to the absolute minimum, to minimise urbanisation of the landscape. Compacted local gravel is suitable for disabled users but loose gravel could impede movement.

A couple of members of the DCAF, together with members of the Wheelchair Access Group, visited the Pebblebed Heaths in June 2019. This visit highlighted the requirements of disabled users. These included removing earth bunds to permit access out of car parks onto trails, providing accessible gates and reducing problems associated with deep gullies and steep cross slopes. Where disabled car parking is allocated, consideration needs to be given to space at the side and rear of vehicles to allow scooters/buggies to be taken out.

Landscape considerations should be borne in mind when putting in additional signage and height restriction barriers to ensure minimal visual intrusion.

Anti-social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour could be reduced by increasing the visibility of car parks, but it could also displace such behaviour to other areas. Improved site maintenance, regular monitoring visits by staff, quick responses to reports of fly-tipping, removal of litter and a welcoming environment should assist. Local community engagement is a major factor in tackling this issue. The information boards should include a telephone number to report problems.

Closing some car parks at night or putting up CCTV signs/equipment could deter inappropriate behaviour but the DCAF recognises that there would be staff and resource implications.

Overall car parking provision

It will be difficult to control and enforce efforts to reduce the number of informal car parking spaces, especially if population increases mean additional numbers of visitors are coming to the Heaths. This is particularly the case as the number of formal car parking spaces is not being increased. The Forum recommends continual monitoring and review to ensure formal car park capacity is sufficient.

Sustainable transport

The focus of the consultation is on car parking provision. The Devon Countryside Access Forum recommends that the partners involved in conservation of the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths seek to encourage access users to visit the area using sustainable transport and the public rights of way network, and to consider whether any improvements would facilitate this.

The Forum would welcome feedback on its comments.

Yours sincerely

Forum Officer

Letter sent on behalf of the Devon Countryside Access Forum

Chair: Sarah Slade

Vice-Chair: Chris Cole

British Horse Society (BHS)

Dear sirs,

Further to my recent discussions at the consultation event last month, I am writing to confirm the points and concerns that have been raised to me by riders who use the Pebblebeds.

As is appreciated by your organisation the Pebblebeds are a much used resource by many user groups, not least by a large horse riding community. These riders are not only local to the area, as evidenced in the survey passed on to you, but by visiting riders who travel by horsebox. There are also riding stables which utilise the commons and also it is appreciated by yourselves that organised riding events take place from time to time, which are properly notified to you.

I take positive reassurance from our conversations that the riding community is seen in positive terms by yourselves and that your organisation will not seek to restrict the free riding of the commons. There is no issue from your part with regard to the surface, which is seen as robust and not subject to any wear or erosion from horse riding. In addition there is not any desire on your part to restrict in any way riders from accessing the commons from any point convenient to the individual rider. These rights are protected by the 1923 Act to make open access (by Lord Clinton) and this has been reinforced by the 2000 Countryside Act.

Where there have been areas where there are access restrictions raised by riders I appreciate that you are prepared to enter in to dialogue to try and mitigate any concerns. The main point of contention has been over the issue of parking. Some car parks are seen by yourselves as purely car parks, unsuitable for the parking of horse boxes or trailers due to the confines of size. There are remaining issues over several larger car parks which are larger but where there have been issues with travellers and usage by commercial vehicles. It has been necessary on your part to make them unusable for larger vehicles by adding height barriers. We discussed the use of combination locks or additional keys for riders who may wish to park horse boxes. This is something that you were prepared to consider on a case by case basis, especially in regards to requests for licensed riding events. I was given a contact at the Estate Office on 01395 443881.

As this visitor consultation is predicated to positively promote access I hope that requests for keys or a number to the locks are given appropriate consideration, especially as it would avoid additional parking on the road, which I know is an issue that the consultation wishes to avoid and discourage.

British Horse Society County Access and Bridleways Officer

East Devon Radio Control Club

Good morning,

Thank you for alerting us that the club hadn't sent in a response to the consultation.

Looking at the overall plan, it's good for the management of the commons, nature and the protection of ancient sites. However, the EDRCC committee has concerns that the proposed changes will adversely impact upon our members' use of the flying site. In particular our disabled members will no longer be able to transport their models and equipment to the airfield. Also as time passes there may be more of us requiring this facility.

For the remainder of the membership the layout to increase the number of parking spaces is of concern to modellers when assembling models with other vehicles manoeuvring close by within a much restricted space.

The inability to gain vehicle access from the car park to the flying site will also make site maintenance an even more onerous task than it already is.

If vehicle access from the Model Airfield Car Park is removed we suggest that CDE permits access for our disabled members from Uphams Car Park and to relieve them from a very much longer walk over uneven ground when returning and retrieving vehicles that they park on the fire break just the other side of the Model Airfield Car Park as we do during organised events like the Commando Challenge and Cycle Races.

A further suggestion is that by permitting all of our members the privilege of parking there that it will remove the concerns we have as mentioned above and reduce the pressure of space in the busier Model Airfield Car Park as well.

Best Regards, Chairman; East Devon Radio Control Club

Individuals responses

These responses were from people that did not complete the online consultation form. They can't be added to the views of the 94 people expressed in the results document of the consultation form.

As in the survey results the main issues raised was keeping the Pebblebed Heaths accessible for horse riders and horse transporters. The height restriction barriers will restrict / prevent access. Also mentioned is that horse riders can't ride underneath height barriers.

Group of respondents 1

A few notes from yesterday:

- Request for disabled parking on Aylesbeare as the tarmac track provides easy access for people who rely on traditional wheelchairs. There are few places on the heaths that can be accessed. Would be a nice compliment to the planned all ability trail at estuary view. Likely to be achievable earlier than the new trail.
- Emphasis from local couple regarding importance of deterrent to travellers
- Suggestion for 'passing place' signage down Hawkerland road in gaps that are left to deter parking.
- Expecting the model air club to get in touch regarding stopping vehicle access to the airfield from that car park. Currently there are a small number of less abled members that we allow to drive to the field.
- BHS I am expecting a thorough formal response
- With the notes from the Joneys event please can you add on that there was a request from one person for more parking in general across the site to take the growing population, we had a long conversation with her.

Thanks,
Pebblebed Heaths Site Manager

Group of respondents 2

A few things to note that cropped up in the session in Exmouth:

- Bike racks – fair point, I had actually been thinking about those. Particularly castle car park as people cannot cycle on the monument, they could cycle to it then lock their bike up, could be in the space that is closed off to vehicles.
- An additional bench part way along the all ability trail at estuary view so that people can pause for a rest, again a good suggestion. I got the impression that the lady that suggested it probably wouldn't do the survey.
- General desire for traffic calming/speed limit on the main road, mentioned a couple of times, mainly in relation to castle/estuary view

Thanks

Pebblebed Heaths Site Manager

Individual respondent 1

Hi

I recently completed the online survey but forgot one of the most important suggestions. Like many other people we meet at Stowford/Yettington we desperately need the wooden bridge over the stream to be rebuilt. I know that the floods washed the bridge away but so many people used to use the bridge to make a circular walk or take their dogs to the small pond and turn around rather than going up the steep bank as the steps were becoming difficult for some people. Hopefully this will be included in the work you will be doing.

Many thanks

Individual respondent 2

I have read the plans for the upcoming improvements to what is an outstandingly beautiful area.

Could you please explain why the height restrictions are being added. We like to bring our horses to the area to use the bridle paths. Obviously we need horse boxes to be able to do this. Height restrictions may mean that we are unable to continue to ride here.

Individual respondent 3

Hello

I would like you to consider installing a 1 mile circular 'board walk' somewhere on Woodbury Common.

A slightly raised wooden route with handrails and benches would provide an accessible route for people with mobility problems, people with push chairs, to school groups and to anyone who finds the Common a bit daunting to walk and would benefit with a circular walk which would be impossible to get lost from. An accessible car park would also be important so people could go straight from parking the car to the board walk.

Along the route could be tasteful signs explaining the wildlife and plants which could be seen, the birds, the history etc.

I have been on a few similar boardwalks on holiday and thoroughly enjoyed them. They provide a safe walk and also protect the wildlife from feet as people stick to the boardwalk and don't venture off.

I am an XXX who lives in the area and walk my dog regularly on the Common, so I am particularly interested in making the beautiful Common accessible to all.

I look forward to receiving your comments.

Kind regards

Individual respondent 4

Dear Team,

I just wanted to email you my dismay at the news there are plans to stop people parking horse boxes/trailers in the car parks on Woodbury common. There are designated bridle paths on the common, and therefore one draws the conclusion that it is ok to ride a horse there.

Most people who own horses are animal lovers and follow the 'country code' myself included. I do not live a hackable distance from the common so have to use a trailer in order to be able to enjoy the common as many other folk do.

It seems this is discrimination against horse riders, but it is ok for mountain bikers to use the common. I urge you to reconsider these plans or at least put in designated area where people can park a horsebox/trailer.

Many thanks,

Individual respondent 5

I was dismayed to learn that some of the VMP proposals will mean horse box access will effectively be prevented or restricted in many of the car parks. As we live some distance from the common, boxing to these car parks is our only option to enjoy the great riding on the common.

Please can you review this and ensure that the access we currently have is not compromised.

Many thanks.

Individual respondent 6

Dear Sir /Madam

I live in Southerton and often walk over Aylesbeare Common.

Last year May 2018, i was bitten by an infected tick which had, unbeknown to me crawled up my trouser leg to calf.

I developed full blown symptoms of Lymes, but because i sought treatment early, made a full recovery after 4 weeks of antibiotics.

The treating nurse said that Aylesbeare common was notorious for ticks.

I recommend that when / if new signage goes up, a warning to walkers, of presence of ticks and need to cover up bare flesh, is included.

Exmoor and other moors popular with holidaymakers has them, so i was very surprised/shocked that there were no warnings, as far as i could see, on Aylesbeare.

It is surely a duty of care by providers of public facilities to include this Health and safety as matter of course.

Ironically, i was bitten again same leg, whilst sitting in the garden of a neighbour whose house is on fringe of Common. The nurse removed, the still alive tick! Thankfully this wasn't diseased.

Lymes disease as result of tick bites is on the increase nationally.

I would appreciate your response.

Individual respondent 7

Sir/madam

I'm writing to express my concern about the changes to the car parks on the common especially to horse riders. The new design to the car parks will seriously restrict horse boxes and trailers using the common. Woodbury Common is open to everybody. There are many riders that use the common but people have a very aggressive opinion of horses on the roads and there have been many incidents of aggression and near misses in Exmouth and the surrounding area. The common is our safe place to ride. We still have to cope with dirt bikes and 4x4s on the green lanes, marines popping out the bushes and all our nice sandy gallop tracks have disappeared.

Please, let us enjoy our hobby along with everyone else. Make the car parks accessible to all horse boxes and trailers.

Kind regards

Individual respondent 8

Good afternoon

I attended a consultation event and was asked to feedback some points I raised, having completed the survey I find the only way to feed these points back is to email you.

There is little mention regarding horse riders. I do not box my horse to the common, my horse is stabled on the edge of the common so I ride from there and back. I use the common normally 5 or 6 times a week. I use Dalditch Plantation, Dalditch Common, Lypstone Common, East Budleigh Common, Bicton Common, Woodbury Common and Colaton Raleigh Common.

Many of the car parks have tracks leading to and from them, as horse riders we regularly ride through the car parks as we leave one track and join the next. Where height restriction barriers are planned, there will need to be another way for riders to exit/enter the car park, it is not practical (or safe) to expect horse riders to ride under the barriers.

If I was asked what you could do to improve my experience of using the area, I would say it falls into 2 areas

1. Access. My head is approx. 8 feet in the air when I ride. Unfortunately when vegetation is cut back it is done only at ground level, this means the gaps beside the low barriers are often impassable and vegetation around gates makes using them difficult. The proposals suggest that the number of low barriers will increase, not only must there be space beside them for access but these spaces must be kept free of vegetation (at all levels)

2. Use of off road areas by Clinton Devon Estates/Military Services. The 3 Codes request that users stay on established paths to avoid damaging the land, keep their speed down so as not to kick up stones and are considerate to other users. Please can CDE and the military consider

- if they are off road, is their journey really necessary (or is it a short cut)?
- are they travelling slowly to avoid kicking up stones/water?
- does the track they are using require some maintenance due to the damage the vehicles have caused?

I hope the consultation goes well and look forward to seeing the results. I am sure that most people are really thankful that we have such a wonderful space and appreciate the need to look after such a valuable environment

regards

Individual respondent 9

Dear Sirs,

I have read the consultation document of which I mostly approve, as a resident of Lymptone and a lifelong visitor to the Commons.

I was disappointed to find that in your online Consultation Survey, the Bystock site is not listed. There is, however, a section in the Consultation Information about it: I attach a copy of the relevant section. It refers to the parking area off the Pine Ridge to Yettington road.

The section on strengths and weaknesses seems confused. Weakness: "No public access" - there has indeed been public access for a long time. "Access to Bystock ponds" - this is a strength, would you not agree? The road visibility is a valid point.

Then the Opportunity section refers to it as a "car park with potential for improvement work", subsequently ignoring this and mentioning a Wrights Lane car park which currently does not exist. The Threat section would seem to indicate that this is not likely to be a good option.

Nevertheless the car park has been closed, which means that access to the meadow and the ponds from that end is not now possible. The Draft Concept Proposal would appear to have been pre-empted without the possibility of consultation, since it does not appear on the online public survey.

Would it not be wise to give more details of the "Alternative location" so that consultation can take place? Should the car park not have been kept open until the consultation is complete?

Thank you for your time in reading this opinion.

Individual respondent 10

Pleased to hear that you are not planning to introduce car parking charges and are going to improve car parking surfaces. We walk there every day and love the common just as it is, but if we could have one wish it would be for some strategically placed logs to sit on so that us oldies can rest our weary old bones - especially up the hills! Also more notices asking people to pick up after their dogs, people let their dogs out of cars, let them run ahead and by the time they catch up they have missed their dog leaving excrement on paths (or just choose to ignore it)

Kind regards



SOUTH EAST DEVON
HABITAT REGULATIONS
PARTNERSHIP

South East Devon Habitat Regulations Executive Committee

*The South East Devon European Site Mitigation
Strategy – effecting positive behavioural change*

Naomi Harnett, Principal Projects Manager, EDDC
Neil Harris, Habitat Regulations Delivery Manager
January 2020

Legal comment/advice:

The report does not raise any specific legal implications requiring comment.

Finance comment/advice:

There are no specific financial considerations to be noted within the report at this stage.

It is difficult to quantify the additional funding required of adapting the public engagement approach for greater effectiveness, though investment in influencing behaviours to protect the sites is a high priority and should be encouraged to prevent damage and the significant costs that could be incurred.

Public Document:	Yes
Exemption:	None
Review date for release	None

Recommendations

It is proposed that the Executive Committee;

- 1) Note the review of the approach to public engagement, education and behavioural change that has been undertaken.
- 2) Note the proposals for adapting this approach to achieve greater levels of understanding and awareness of key issues.

Equalities impact: Low

Risk: Low. This is a report to the Executive Committee concerning a review of current and potential public engagement and education. Promoting awareness and understanding of key messages is an essential component of the mitigation approach.

1. Background

1.1 The Exe Estuary, the Pebblebed Heaths and Dawlish Warren are popular local sites and access to these areas is vital to the local economy and highly valued by local people. Access to such sites has widespread benefits including active leisure, opportunities for education, and general well-being. While much of the access takes place regardless of the wildlife interest, that wildlife interest is also a part of the specific draw for many people.

1.2 Some mitigation measures as outlined in the South East Devon European Site Mitigation Strategy (“the Strategy”) and Pebblebed Heaths Visitor Management Plan (VMP) seek to control or limit access in some areas (to be confident of no adverse effect). However, the overall aim is to enhance the existing recreation experience and provide opportunities such that access and nature conservation interests are not in conflict. The (separately reported¹) proposal for visitor access improvements on the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths demonstrates the ongoing commitment to this approach.

1.3 Education is widely regarded as crucial to reducing impacts by visitors to natural areas. Education initiatives, such as interpretation, guided walks, wardening, school visits, community events, etc. are widely used and accepted as they do not overtly regulate or control visitors.

¹ East Devon Pebblebed Heaths visitor access consultation, Jan 2020

1.4 Such approaches are proactive, rather than reactive, but clearly they are unlikely to solve problems in the short term and depend largely on the audience and style of communication. Good communication and education measures can ensure users understand the importance of the sites and why they are managed in a particular way and may also help local people and visitors to develop stronger connections with local sites.

2. Specific mitigation measures.

Signage.

2.1 Promoting behavioural change is the consistent aim of many of the measures in the Strategy and VMP. Whilst a previous report² to the Executive Committee identified the challenges presented in precisely identifying the factors influencing visitor behaviour, it is much more likely that change will occur if a variety of measures are employed. This is reflected in the breadth of approaches outlined in the Strategy.

2.2 Signage is an important means of conveying information to visitors. There are two main types of signage:

- Interpretation – this provides information for visitors, enhancing their understanding of the site and its importance.
- Information – it is important that there is clear messaging relating to expected visitor behaviours on particular sites, insofar as they relate to health and safety advice or where access/activity is limited in order to protect the nature conservation interest.

2.3 Signage has been updated at strategic locations around the Exe Estuary (as shown in Appendix A). This signage includes both interpretation and information messages at key access points to the estuary. It now includes information relating to the importance of the estuary for wildlife, speed limits, the location of wildlife refuges, no landing areas and applicable byelaws.

2.4 All key access points at Dawlish Warren now have updated signage pertaining to the reserve (as shown in Appendix B). This includes information about the special interest of the site, the wildlife refuges, information for dog owners and site byelaws. Provision of new signage is a key part of the emerging proposals for the Pebblebed heaths, where there are already signs promoting the Pebblebed Dog Code at all of the main access points to the heaths.

2.5 It has not been possible to install signage at all locations as identified in the Strategy, for example in Topsham, at Powderham and at the Imperial Recreation Ground. In Topsham and at Powderham this is largely due to the wishes of landowners who do not necessarily want signage on their land/property. EDDC Streetscene wished to include information relating to the wildlife refuges on the beach safety signage at the Imperial Recreation Ground, rather than install the specific signage recommended in the Strategy. This was to avoid what they considered to be a proliferation of signage in the area.

² *Monitoring the South East Devon European Site Mitigation Strategy, October 2019.*

Exe wildlife refuges.

2.5 The Exe wildlife refuges consultation was carried out in partnership with the Exe Estuary Management Partnership (EEMP) over the course of 9 months. Emerging from the EEMP's own proposals³ and the recommendation to review zonation in the Strategy, the refuges seek to protect two critically important ecological areas.

2.6 Consultation started on 8th December 2016 and consisted of 18 specific user group meetings, 2 general meetings, a dedicated website and 2 online surveys. A number of conversations and informal meetings also took place to enable detailed discussion. Comprehensive explanation of the reasons for the refuges were provided by partners including Natural England, EEMP and RSPB.

2.7 The consultation was promoted through a number of press releases, through social media, the Exe Press newsletter, the EEMP and Devon County Council websites, by email, on-site posters and through direct contact with the Habitat Mitigation Officers (HMOs). The HMOs also attended many of the evening meetings with a variety of user groups and clubs during the consultation phase.

2.8 Following approval by the Executive Committee in October 2017, the refuges were further promoted through on-site staff, leaflets, signage, social media, press releases and ITV West Country news. Significant on site support was provided by EDDC Countryside in the months preceding the official "launch" of the refuges (and in the following year) in concerted attempts to communicate the existence of and reasons for the refuges to visitors.

2.9 Officers have also presented to EEMP winter and summer forums to convey key messages about the rationale and initial results of the refuges direct to water users. Despite the considerable outreach and engagement work detailed above (and ongoing) there remains an element of opposition to the work of the Executive Committee by some users of the Exe.

2.10 There have been repeated attempts by mitigation staff and other partners to explain the rationale and evidence for this work through a wide variety of media. Despite this, there remains the necessity for continued effort to communicate the rationale and legal responsibility for the work, whilst recognising that this will not be possible in all circumstances.

Codes of conduct

2.11 Working in partnership with the EEMP and utilising the knowledge and expertise of national bodies and local clubs, a set of 6 codes of conduct for the Exe estuary have been established. These cover all the main water-based activities, information on the wildlife interest and maps which identify the wildlife refuges.

³ *Exe Estuary Recreational Framework, Exe Estuary Management Partnership, 2014.*

2.12 Codes of conduct set out clearly how users undertaking a particular activity should behave, and are most relevant to sporting activities, including watersports. Developing good, clear codes with user groups ensures that safety issues, insurance, consideration of other users and nature conservation issues can be accommodated, ensuring users can enjoy their chosen activities while minimising any impacts.

2.13 During spring and summer of 2018 the Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust also worked with local user groups to establish codes of conduct for the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths. Three codes, covering dogs, horses and cycling have been produced and are distributed to users online, through hardcopy prints and at public events. Organisers of cycling and horse events are required to follow and promote respective codes.

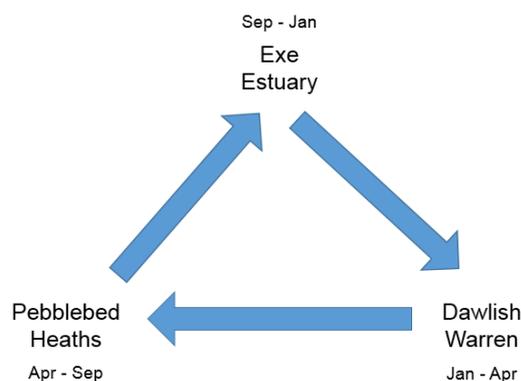
2.14 The results of future visitor monitoring survey work and wider species/habitat monitoring will help to determine the extent to which these codes have been successful. However, there is encouraging work by PHCT to establish a registration scheme for commercial dog walking businesses (20 businesses to date). This requires them to pay a small fee and to follow and promote the Pebblebed Heaths Dog Code. As well as providing a direct link between landowner and frequent business users of the site, this enables responsible businesses (and customers) to demonstrate their support of the heaths.

Wardening.

2.14 Many sites across the UK have wardens who fulfil a range of roles, including interacting with the public and education. Such wardens can work both on-site and off-site, playing an outreach role (e.g. undertaking visits to schools and liaising with local communities).

2.15 The importance of employing wardens (our two Habitat Mitigation Officers) to engage with and educate site users was recognised early in the delivery of the Strategy. In post since October 2016, the presence of the HMOs remain a key element in the approach to public engagement and behavioural change. These staff are the public face of the partnership and target their approach according to the ecological importance and time of year, as shown in Figure 1, below:

Figure 1 – Balance/focus of HMO presence throughout the year.



2.16 A database which records details of interactions between the HMOs and members of the public⁴ shows that in the two years until February 2019 there have been 1875 conversations with over 3600 people. This presence on the ground provides direct delivery of our key messages in areas such as the Exmouth Imperial Recreation ground, where we are aware of acute issues.

Devon Loves Dogs.

2.17 Development of the Devon Loves Dogs scheme started in November 2016 and was formally launched in July 2017. This free membership scheme provides positive messaging, information and resources to local dog owners (including commercial dog walkers) across the region. The overarching aim of the scheme is to enable dog owners and dog walkers to understand where, when (and how) they can walk without causing problems to wildlife.

2.18 Face-to-face contact with dog owners provides a means of engaging with local walkers to building membership and interest in the project. To date, the (part time) scheme has attracted over 500 members, engaged with over 2267 people directly through pit stops, “waggy walks” and public events. Table 1, below, provides an example of some of the key events with highest interaction counts:

Table 1. Devon Loves Dogs – interactions at key events.

Event	Date	Information packs	People spoken to
Killerton Cider Festival	Oct 2017	134	400
Dawlish Countryside Park	Jan 2018	56	127
Devon County Show	May 2018	386	490
Lambing Sunday (Bicton College)	March 2019	154	300
Devon County Show	May 2019	363	476
Killerton Apple Festival	October 2019	176	280
Half term at Dawlish Warren	October 2019	70	96

2.18 In March 2019, the HMOs and DLD officer worked in partnership with the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust (EDPHCT) to deliver a campaign week across the key car parks on the heaths. This targeted and co-ordinated approach to on site engagement was aimed at thanking visitors for enjoying the site responsibly and asking them to pledge to follow the Pebblebed Dog Code.

⁴ See 2018/19 Annual Business Plan, Appendix C, April 2019.

2.19 The scheme is also achieving high levels of engagement on social media. The statistics below as are of December 2019:

Followers

Instagram 559

Facebook 709

Twitter 410

Organic reach last 28 days

Facebook 4833

Facebook average post reach 300+

Twitter 7680 impressions

Website last 28 days

Page views 726

Users 240

The Exe Estuary Management Partnership.

2.19 The Exe Estuary Management Partnership provides leaflets and other information for residents and visitors, including a website with a range of reports, leaflets and other information. The Partnership is not a statutory body and therefore is not subject to the same legal duty as the Executive Committee. Instead, the EEMP as a representative group has an advisory and outreach role, working with schools, undertaking estuary clean-ups, running an estuary forum each year and running large events, festivals etc. in some years.

2.20 The EEMP's role is to bring together a wide range of different stakeholders (including the organisations that have a responsibility for managing the Estuary), to form a coordinated approach. As such the partnership has for some time been active in ensuring that pressures arising from existing users are not harming the special features of the Special Protection Area (SPA).

2.21 The EEMP is recognised in the Strategy as a longstanding organisation with a neutral approach to management of the Exe. Given this unique position and history of involvement with users of the Exe, the EEMP were identified as a means of delivering some of the required mitigation. As described in the sections above, the EEMP worked with many different national bodies, parish councils, user groups and individuals on the wildlife refuges and codes of conduct.

2.22 The Habitat Regulations Delivery Manager and the Exe Estuary Officer continue to work closely on issues of mutual interest. The Exe Estuary Officer sits on the Officer Working Group to offer advice and support recommendations to the Executive Committee. Due to their experience and network of contacts, the input of the EEMP helps to shape and inform some of the mitigation measures, which is more likely to lead to successful implementation.

Social media, website, literature, television.

2.23 The work of the South East Devon Habitat Regulations Partnership (SEDHRP) continues to be conveyed in a range of different media. Throughout the delivery of the Strategy there has been a careful and considered approach to behaviour change and the provision of information to help effect that change. Regular television and social media coverage by ITV West Country news has helped to increase our reach to more people across the region.

2.24 Information leaflets and posters have been designed to advise people of consultations, wildlife refuges and the fire risk at Dawlish Warren. A newsletter for local distribution to the Warren has been completed which aims to provide updates for local residents and engender an understanding of the sensitivity of the site and a sense of ownership. It is hoped this will encourage more local people to care about the reserve and share that feeling of ownership with other visitors.

2.25 A website for SEDHRP is regularly updated and provides information about each of the protected sites, as well as links to reports, codes of conduct and detailed background about the reasons for the work. We are also active on social media, with accounts on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Our overarching aim is to engage with stakeholder communities to convey a real sense of value and appreciation of the three sites, so that this understanding is shared as widely as possible. Social media is also very useful for reaching and explaining specific information relating to consultations, reports and messages from partners.

3. Future development.

3.1 Whilst the previous section outlines in some detail the extensive work already established to effect positive behavioural change, there is always room for improvement. Circumstances do not remain constant from year to year and it is recognised and understood that our approach needs to be proactive in addressing emerging issues.

3.2 Delivery of the mitigation measures outlined in the Strategy and the VMP fulfils planning obligations established in legislation. However, the way in which we deliver this mitigation and how we frame our messaging is essential to the success of the approach. From the outset, there has been an emphasis on continual improvement to refine our methods and the following section details the ways in which our work will develop in the next 12 months.

Wardening/social media.

3.3 Although the majority of HMO time is rightly focused on face to face interactions with visitors to the sites, it is recognised that additional effort can be directed toward outreach activities, as indicated below in Table 2:

Table 2. Priority events in 2020.

Event	Why	Likely level of interaction (numbers)
Farmwise Devon Schools Day, Westpoint Arena, Exeter.	To communicate key messages, foster activity and interaction.	300 school children.
The Big Bang Fair South West, Westpoint Arena, Exeter.	To communicate key messages, foster activity and interaction. Present, discuss and interpret results of ecological species/monitoring work.	300-400 school children.
Presentations to local clubs and interest groups.	Update local groups on key results, introduce mitigation work and rationale. Communicate key messages.	120 annually.
Work with partners to complement school visits (EDPHCT, EDDC, TDC, and EEMP).	Introduce rationale for mitigation work and promote good behaviours/understanding.	150 annually.
Bicton College Lambing Sunday, East Devon.	Introduce rationale for mitigation work and promote good behaviours/understanding.	300 (based on DLD figures).
Investigate potential night cycle event on Pebblebed Heaths.	Introduce rationale for mitigation work and promote good behaviours/understanding.	30
Regular scrutiny of social media analytics.	To better understand the best content, days and times of day when our audience is online.	A Facebook post on 15 th Nov about plastic pollution was seen by nearly 3,400 people.
A revised and refreshed approach on social media.	To connect with local communities of interest as well as geographical communities, especially through Facebook groups.	500

Wildlife refuges.

3.4 Initial results from the first year of monitoring the Exe wildlife refuges (as reported in July 2019⁵) indicated an improvement in the reduction of disturbance events. However, despite concerted efforts onsite at Exmouth throughout August and subsequent months, it is unlikely that the second year will provide the same outcomes. Results of the ongoing monitoring will be reported in summer 2020 but through late 2019 there were frequent reports of major disturbance.

3.5 Following review with the OWG and HMOs, a number of refinements to the approach have been put forward for investigation, as shown in Table 3, below:

Table 3. Future engagement initiatives for the Exe wildlife refuges.

Initiative	Why
Improved signage at the Imperial Recreation Ground. Further discussion with colleagues at EDDC.	To re-examine and explore opportunities for additional and simplified signage, as identified in the Strategy. To communicate with the general public more effectively.
Further work with colleagues at EDDC and watersports operators.	To ensure clear and consistent messaging to users
Opportunities to advise on the content and provision of messaging at the new Watersports Centre, Exmouth.	The Watersports Centre will be a focal point for water activities and so will be an important place to communicate essential messages about the sensitive nature of the Exe estuary.
Realignment/removal of refuge buoys adjacent to the Powerboat zone.	Feedback from staff and consultants is that this will reduce incidences of misunderstanding of refuge boundary.
Investigate costs of seasonal changeover of Exmouth refuge buoy markers.	To emphasise active/inactive status to users by changing colour/shape.
Investigate potential for seasonal wildlife refuge messaging on car parking pay stations and tickets in vicinity of the Imperial Recreation Ground.	To increase opportunities for messaging and information about the wildlife refuges.
Observe the effect of the wall built as part of the Exmouth Tidal Defence Scheme and consider any further measures required.	By observing the effect of the tidal defence wall on pedestrian access to the Duck Pond we will be able to develop proactive strategies to future engagement in the area.
Continued work with Exe Estuary Officer in relation to shared messaging and further engagement with sailing/windsurfing/kite boarding clubs.	To better understand different perspectives and pursue additional ways of building understanding with water users.

⁵ *Exe Estuary wildlife refuge monitoring – 1st Annual report, July 2019.*

Devon Loves Dogs

3.6 Staff resources will inevitably play a key role in deciding what more can be done to extend the reach and engagement of this scheme. That said, the development of South West Exeter (SWE) SANGS offers the potential for increased cross-working with the Teignbridge Green Spaces team, as outlined below in Table 4:

Table 4. Future engagement initiatives for Devon Loves Dogs (DLD).

Initiative	Why?
Liaise with TDC Green Spaces team regarding plans for official opening of the first parcel of SWE SANGS.	DLD worked closely with TDC on the opening plans for Dawlish Countryside Park. Collaborative working has (and will continue to) benefit both mitigation measures.
Discuss opportunities with Green Spaces team for increased range of guided walks in Teignbridge to cater for residents west of the Exe and to provide additional choices for dog owners.	Whilst DLD has been able to establish a well-developed presence across the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths, this has not yet been possible to the same extent in Teignbridge. This would help to increase the “offer” for new and existing members and cater for the residents west of the Exe.
Continue work to develop membership “offer” including more alternative walks and traffic light paw print scheme covering more sites regionally.	To encourage members to maintain their engagement with the scheme. The paw print scheme works well in other areas (Dorset) but this is largely reliant upon uptake of the scheme by partners.
Increased focus on efforts to engage with local businesses.	To investigate the possibilities of income generation for the scheme. This would be reinvested to increase our reach and fund other initiatives.

South East Devon Visitor Survey

When complete, results from the South East Devon Visitor Survey (due to begin Feb 2020) will provide valuable insights on visitor motivation, behaviours and awareness of mitigation aims and objectives. Covering a combined 192 hours of survey at 12 locations across the protected sites, these results will enable detailed and informed discussion on future efforts to effect positive behavioural change.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Engagement and education are essential elements of how the mitigation Strategy is delivered successfully. This report reviews the significant time and effort invested in public engagement to date and recognises that further efforts are required.

5.2 Other emerging work (such as the current proposals for the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths) will require close working with our partners to ensure that the intended outcomes are realised. In addition to physical changes on the ground, provision of interpretation, signage and the opportunity for an established warden presence will help to influence how aware visitors are of key mitigation issues.

5.3 There is always room for improvement in any given project and insight to be gained from experience. The success of the Strategy and VMP are closely aligned to how effective the different methods of behavioural change prove to be. The approach to date has been focused on encouraging behaviour change rather than seeking to enforce against inappropriate behaviour, in an attempt to foster genuine understanding and appreciation of the key issues.

5.4 The latter part of this report seeks to reassure the members of the Committee that there is an ongoing process of evaluation and refinement of the approach. Where this evaluation and refinement is of a suitably strategic nature, this is also discussed and agreed with the partner organisations represented in the OWG.

Naomi Harnett, Principal Projects Manager, EDDC
Neil Harris, Habitat Regulations Delivery Manager

South East Devon
Habitat Regulations
Executive Committee

January 2020

Natural England comment:

The South East Devon Mitigation Strategy seeks to influence recreational behaviours in the protected sites through a wide range of measures. We recognise that the provision of SANGS are at an early stage of delivery. Once a portfolio of alternative green spaces are available, over time, we expect these will act to further mitigate impacts on the protected sites. The extension of the Devon Loves Dogs activities to new SANGS as they become available for use is welcomed.

The Habitats Regulations Officers have been working effectively with the other relevant bodies on influencing behaviours – clearly this joint working is essential and should continue.

Habitat Regulations Executive Committee

Effecting positive behavioural change: Appendix A



Map Ref	Name	Notes
1	Topsham Rec. Slipway	Small slipway. Limited parking
2	Topsham Ferryman Slipway	Launching point for small passenger ferry. No formal public use
3	Topsham Church Steps Slipway	Small uneven slipway. Some parking in area, but difficult with boats
4	Topsham Strand Slip	Small slipway usable on most tide states. Limited parking
5	Topsham Goat Walk	Slipway at end of lane. Access to water only at high tide. Limited parking
6	Bowling Green Road	Jetty at end of lane (past RSPB reserve). No parking
7	Lympstone Port	Very sheltered, small harbour. Very muddy at low tide
8	Lympstone Beach	Very muddy at low tide. Limited parking
9	Lympstone Courtlands Slipway	No parking. Not accessible at low tide
10	Exmouth Rec. Slipway	Only accessible at high tide. Pay and display car-park nearby
11	Exmouth Gut Head Slipway	Only accessible at high tide. Pay and display car-park nearby
12	Exmouth Camperdown Slipway	No/v. limited motor vehicle access
13	Exmouth Belshers Slipway	Slipway useable at all states of tide. Parking limited.
14	Exmouth Mamhead Slipway	Can be busy. Leads into sea and currents can be difficult. Some parking nearby. Currently deemed structurally unsafe so therefore closed
15	Exmouth Carlton Hill Slipway	Pay and display car park. Strong currents
16	Exmouth ILB Slipway	Primarily used for Lifeboat and rowing club. Pay and display parking available in area
17	Exmouth Orcombe Point Slipway	Sheltered area to launch, but above normal tide range. Pay and display parking nearby
18	Cockwood Harbour Slipway	Slipway only accessible during spring tides. Difficult parking
19	Starcross Southern Slipway	Narrow access under railway and only usable at high tide. Limited parking in residential area (Generals Lane)
20	Starcross Northern Slipway	Only accessible at high tide. Can be difficult to use
21	Turf Jetty	Jetty accessed on narrow gangway. Also beach nearby with access to water at high tide

Habitat Regulations Executive Committee

Effecting positive behavioural change: Appendix B

Dawlish Warren

Welcome to beautiful Dawlish Warren, a popular seaside holiday resort and one of the most important and sensitive wildlife sites in Europe.

Species Information

Dark-bellied Brent Goose & Oystercatcher
Thousands of winter & wildfowl like Oystercatcher and Brent Geese breed in the far north but winter on the Exe.

Marsh Harlequin & Southern Marsh Orchid
Coloured Southern Marsh Orchid and Marsh Harlequin are found in damp meadows, pure daisy from May to July.

Autumn Lady's-tresses & Sand Crabs
Sand Crabs and Autumn Lady's-tresses are species of dry grassland. Sand for Wading crabs flows from March to late April. Autumn Lady's-tresses are numerous from August.

Sea Birdweed, Marram grass & Sand Usard
Sea Birdweed, Marram grass and Sand Usard are found in areas of eroding dunes. Marram grass plants a vital part in building the dunes that make Dawlish Warren so special. Sand Usard can be seen looking from as early as March.

Sandwich Tern & Common Scoter
Sandwich Terns are summer visitors, that winter around the coast of Africa with rainforests building in July and August while Common Scoter can be seen in groups, called rafts, offshore throughout the year.

Wedge Spindler & Great Green Bush-cricket
The Warren is home to spectacular invertebrates like the Wedge Spindler and Great Green Bush-crickets.

Wildlife Refuge
Dawlish Warren has been identified as one of two areas on the estuary that are particularly vital for protected birds. These areas are known as wildlife refuges. In winter, thousands of birds nest and feed on the mudflats and eelgrass beds of the Warren, during their long migratory journeys.

For dog owners
All users are asked to avoid the wildlife refuge where safe to do so, all year round at all tidal states, due to its importance as a high tide resting area.

Please note there is an existing byelaw in place for statutory exclusion of dog walkers anywhere past groyne 9 and in the refuge area.

Warren Point
All visitors are asked to avoid the beach past groyne 9 for approximately three hours either side of high tide on certain days during September to March (check on-site signage). In summer, from 1 April to 31 August, this area can be fished at any time.

Site of Special Scientific Interest
The Warren is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), a National Nature Reserve (NNR) and forms part of the Exe Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site. It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb the wildlife in a SSSI or to damage or disturb land known to be an SSSI. It is also an offence to take down, damage or obstruct a SSSI notice or sign. These offences carry a fine of up to £20,000.

Codes of conduct for Dawlish Warren and many of the activities to be enjoyed on the Exe are available from the Visitor Centre, local libraries and online at www.southeastdevonwildlife.org.uk or www.exe-estuary.org

No BBQs or fires

Don't pick flowers or collect driftwood

No drones

No camping

No cycling

No launching/landing of watercraft

Don't dig up plants

Metal detecting only on beach

Bag it and bin it

SOUTH EAST DEVON HABITAT REGULATIONS PARTNERSHIP

Teignbridge
District Council
South Devon

