

Visitor Monitoring at Bog Lane SANG
Summary 2018

Summary of Visitor Monitoring at Bog Lane SANG

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The Urban Heaths Partnership

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- Monitoring was carried out at the new Bog Lane SANG in late March/early April 2017. 32 survey hours were completed and 12 visitors interviewed.

Survey data suggests:

- All interviewees described themselves as local.
- 83% of interviewees described their main activity at the site at the time of interview as dog walking.
- 25% of interviewees had been visiting Bog Lane between 1 and 9 years and 58% for less than 1 year. 17% of interviewees were on their first visit to the site.
- 50% of interviewees suggested that they visit equally over weekdays and weekends and 57% all year round.
- 75% of interviewees had travelled to the site by car/van. 17% by foot and 8% selected other.
- The most common reasons visitors chose to visit the SANG rather than another site were 'close to home' and 'not many people'.
- Data and feedback suggests that interviewees like the proximity to home, the quick and easy travel route, that there are not many people at this site and the picnic bench by the car park.
- Improvements that were suggested included more paths/greater choice of routes, more seating, improving the safety at the gates so the area is more secure for dogs, make the site more accessible for people with disabilities, improving the safety of the boardwalks as they become very slippery in wet weather and better signage for the site. Some concern was expressed that anti-social behaviour has been witnessed at this site.
- Alternative locations that interviewees described that they would visit, had they not been able to visit the SANG on the day, included Hartland Moor, Stoborough Heath, Wareham Forest, Creech Heath, Arne and Studland.
- Interviewees suggested a variety of habitats and close to home as the main reasons to visit other sites.
- Of the visitors interviewed, 50% suggested that they followed a usual route, 42% were not sure/had no typical route whilst the other 8% said the route on that day was much shorter than usual.
- Of the 12 people interviewed, the highest proportion of visitors (10) entered the site through the main car park whilst the remaining 2 interviewees accessed the site via the main road (A351).
- 92% of interviewees scored the site overall as 6 or above (on a scale of 1-10).

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Acknowledgements

All data presented here was collected by Rachel Pearce and Amy Gallagher (Urban Heaths Partnership). Thanks go to Chris Panter (Footprint Ecology) for analysis and mapping.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs) are new or enhanced greenspaces of a quality and type suitable to be used as mitigation for development likely to affect the Dorset Heathland European and internationally protected sites. They are designed to absorb recreation pressure that would otherwise occur on these designated wildlife sites.
- 1.2 The SANG at Bog Lane was created as part of the package to mitigate from the impact of increased pressure from recreation arising from new development in the district.
- 1.3 The SANG monitoring methodology followed principles set out in the Dorset Heathlands SPA and consisted of onsite tally counts, onsite interviews, installation of automated people counters and car park monitoring in line with the Dorset Heathlands Monitoring Strategy.

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2. On site tally counts

2.1 On site tally counts were conducted at the same time as the visitor surveys at the two main entrances to the site; at the main car park on Holme Lane and at the entrance from the A351. To date 32 survey hours have been carried out across 4 days, for 8 hours each day and evenly spread over weekends and weekdays.

2.2 A total of 19 people were recorded entering the site at both entrances during the sessions (Table 1), an average of 0.6 people per hour. The average group size entering the site was 1.3. The average number of dogs per group was 1.1.

Table 1: Summary of tally data per survey point for people, groups, dogs and minors entering the site.

Survey point	Number of people entering	Number of groups entering	Number of dogs entering	Number of minors entering
PBL1	16	12	14	0
PBL2	3	3	2	0
Total	19	15	16	0

2.3 Also recorded to gain an idea of 'busyness' at the site was number of people on the site in addition to entering the site (leaving the site were also recorded). A further 11 people, 8 groups, 6 dogs and 1 minor were recorded on the site (not entering or leaving at time of tally count, but utilising the site).

2.4 Basic weather, including cloud cover, rainfall and temperature was recorded at the time of tally counts. Weather was generally mild and cloudy, with morning survey periods cooler than the afternoon periods. Rainfall occurred briefly for only a couple of survey periods.

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3. On Site Interviews

- 3.1 Face to face interviews were carried out at the same two locations as the tally counts using a specific SANG survey designed for the site by Footprint Ecology, in line with previous SANG and heathland and visitor surveys. The surveys were conducted on paper and using site maps to mark the visitor routes.
- 3.2 12 visitors were interviewed during the 32 survey hours on the site, again at the same time as the tally counts, in two-hour time periods, equally across weekdays and weekends.

Table 2: Number of interviews per survey point.

Survey Point	Number of people interviewed
PBL1	10
PBL2	2
Total	12

Visitor Situation

- 3.3 All 12 interviewees described themselves as local to the site and were visiting from home.

Activities

- 3.4 Interviewees were asked what their main activity was that they were conducting on their visit to the site at the time of interview. Only a single response was accepted, any other comments about further activities carried out on other days or visits were noted in the free comments and feedback text later in the questionnaires.
- 3.5 83% of visitors described their main activity as dog walking, whilst the remaining 17% were other activities which interviewees described as 'being nosey' and 'getting some fresh air'.

Length of Visitation

- 3.6 Interviewees were asked how long they had been using the site for. The answers ranged from first visit, less than 1 year and between 1 and 9 years where the longest length of time specified was 3 years. Most visitors (58%) had been visiting the site for less than 1 year whilst only 17% were on their first visit. Figure 1 shows the range of these responses.

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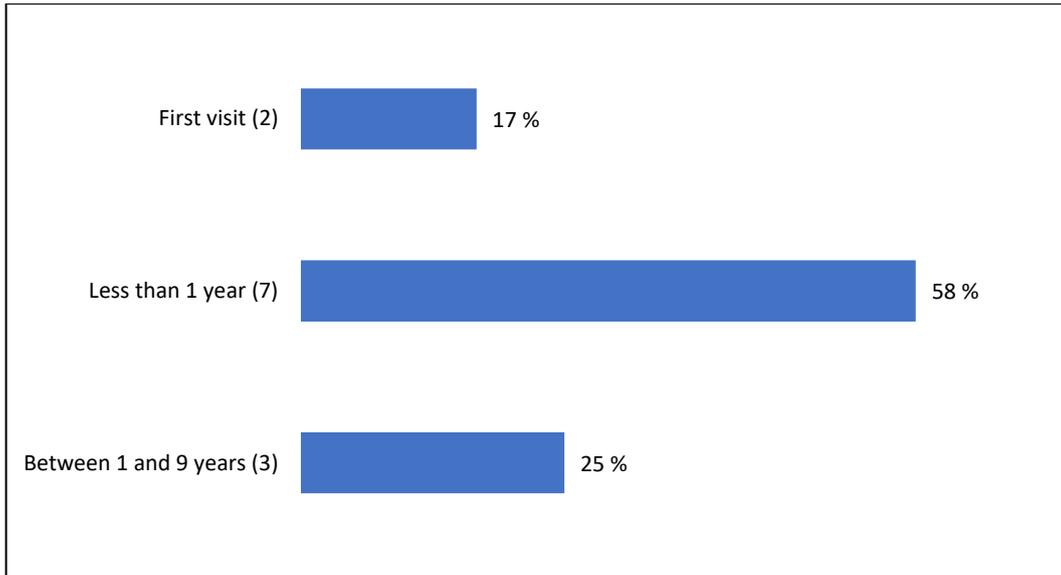


Figure 1: Interviewee responses to Q3 regarding the visitation length to Bog Lane. Percentage of respondents shown next to frequency bars and number of interviewees in brackets.

Visit Duration

3.7 Visitors were asked how long they had/will spend during their visit on the day of interview. 58% of interviewees said that their visit would last less than 30 minutes whilst 8% of interviewees said that their visit would last 1-2 hours. 33% of visitors said that their visit would last between 30 minutes and 1 hour. Figure 2 shows these results.

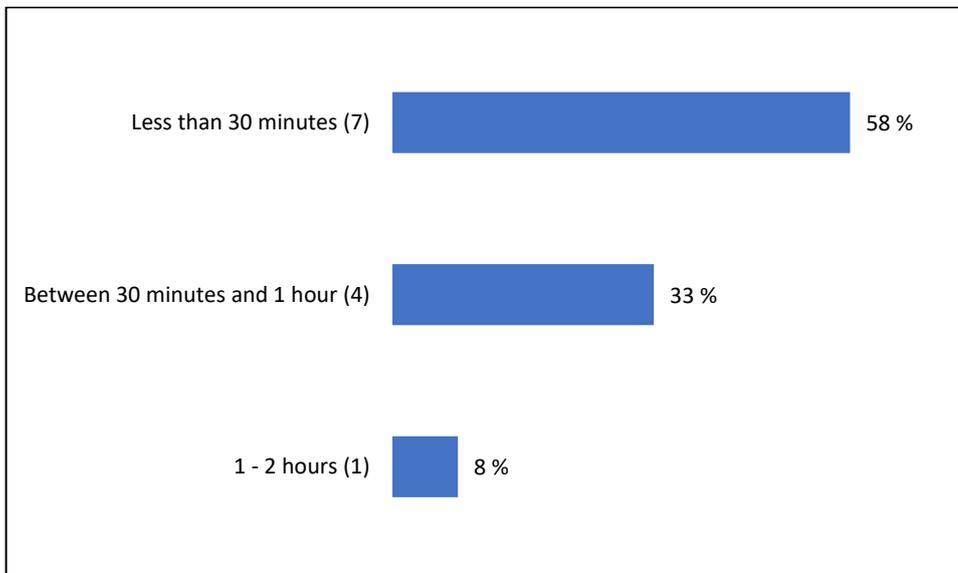


Figure 2: Interviewee responses to Q4 regarding the estimated duration of their current visit to the site on the day of interviewing. Number of interviewees shown in brackets and percentage next to frequency bars.

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Visit frequency

3.8 Visitors were asked how frequently they visited the site and responses are shown in Figure 3. A third of the interviewees said they visited the site more than once a week (33%) whereas 8% said they visited once a week and another 8% said they visited sporadically.

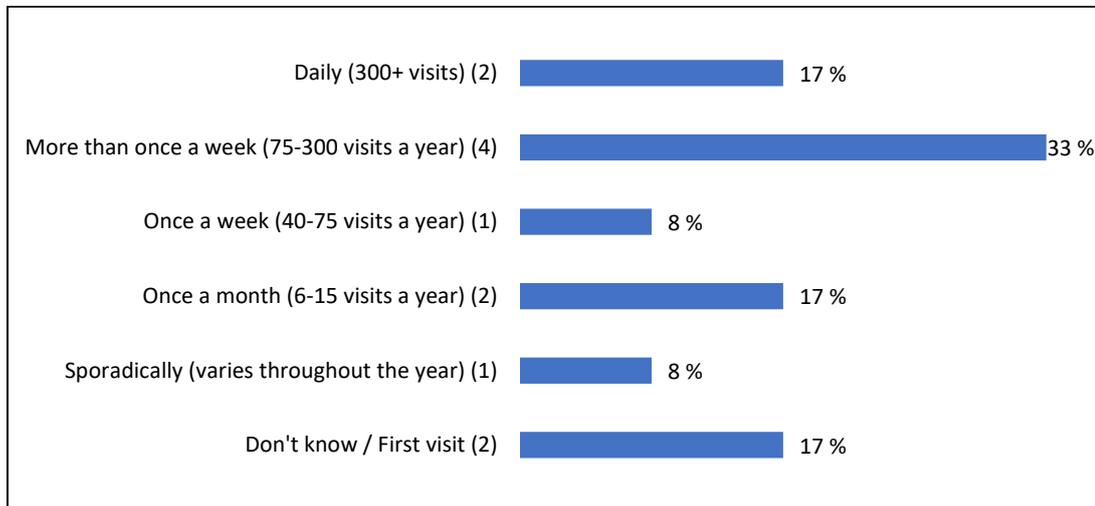


Figure 3: Responses to Q5 regarding the length of visitation to the site. Number of interviewees shown in brackets and percentage next to frequency bars.

Visit timing

3.9 Visitors were asked whether their visits tended to be during the week, weekends or equally over both, responses shown in Figure 4. Half of interviewees said that they visited equally over weekdays and weekends (50%). Weekdays (25%) and weekends (18%) were very similar with only one more visitor saying that they visit during weekdays.

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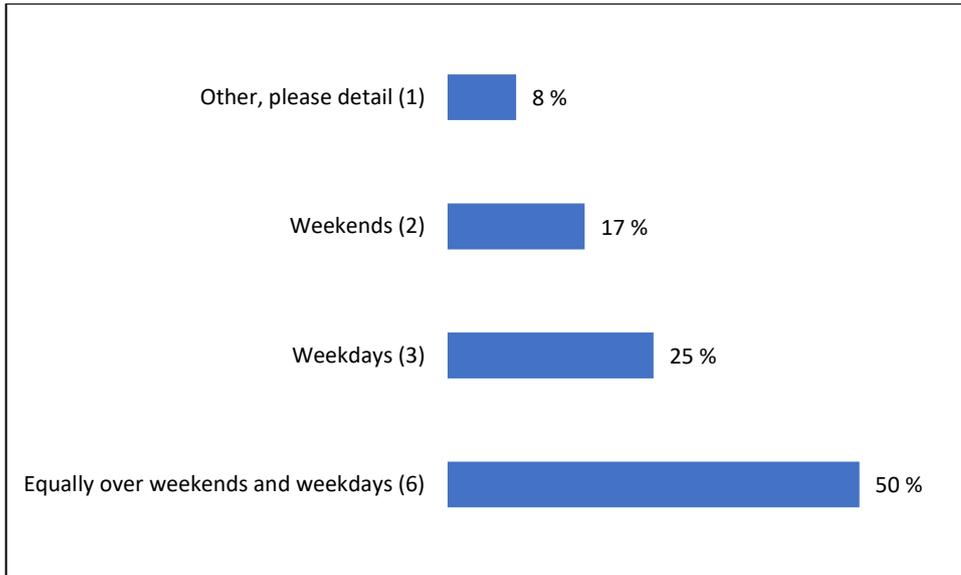


Figure 4: Responses of interviewees regarding timings of visit to the site across weekdays and weekends (Q6). Number of interviewees shown in brackets and percentage next to frequency bars.

3.10 Visitors were also asked in line with this previous question, whether they frequented the site at a particular time of day. Figure 5 shows the most frequent times of day were after 4pm (28%) and varies/don't know/first visit (22%).

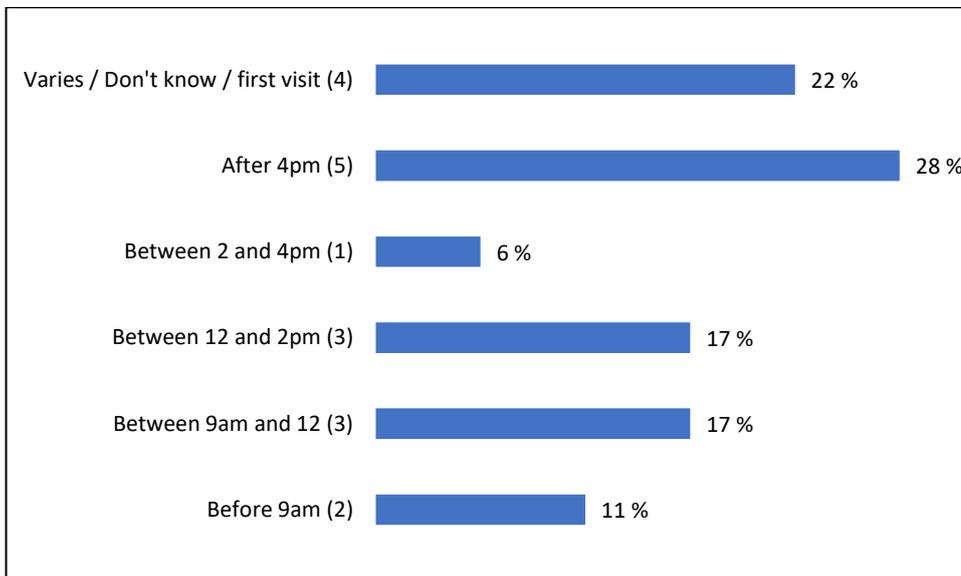


Figure 5: Interviewees responses to Q7, regarding the time of day visitors tend to visit the site. Number of interviewees shown in brackets and percentage next to frequency bars

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3.11 Visitors were also asked if they tended to visit the site at a particular time of year. Figure 6 shows that most visitors suggested that they visited the site equally all year (57%).

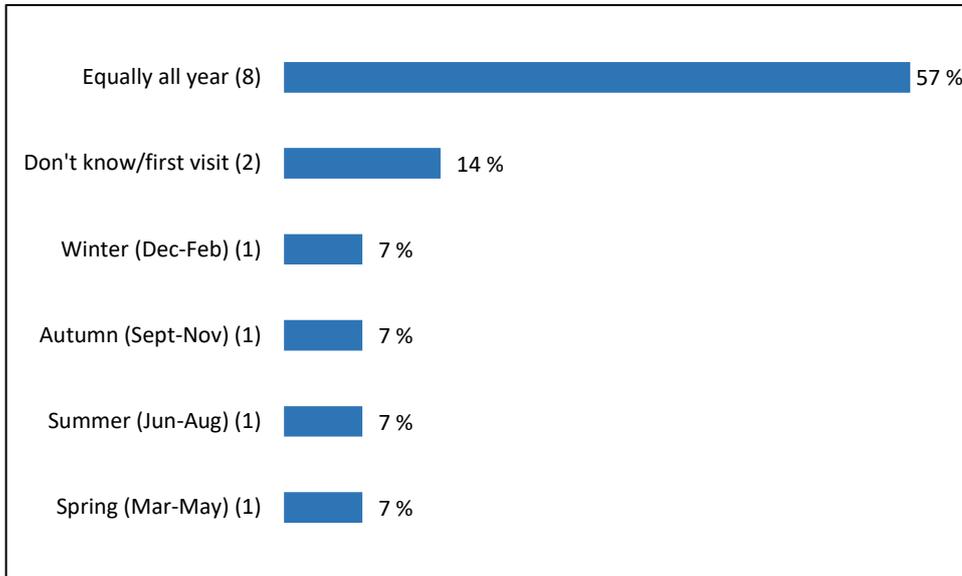


Figure 6: Interviewees responses to the particular time of year that they tend to visit the site. Number of interviewees shown in brackets and percentage next to frequency bars.

Transport to site

3.12 Visitors were asked what form of transport they used to get to the site. Figure 7 shows that 75% of visitors reached the site by car / van and 17% by foot.

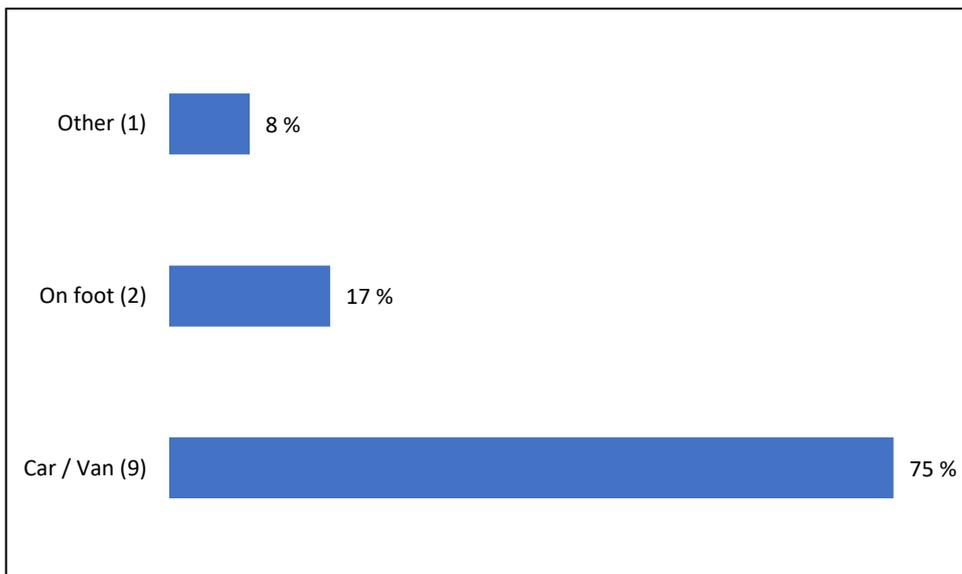


Figure 7: Interviewees responses to Q9, regarding how they travelled to the site on the day of their visit. Number of interviewees shown in brackets and percentage next to frequency bars.

Visit influences

- 3.13 Question 12 asked visitors why they had chosen specifically to visit this site and the most common responses are shown in Figure 8. The primary reasons that visitors suggested why they had specifically chosen to visit the site on the day of their visit were proximity to home, the easy travel route to the site and because there were not many people around. Further comments are included in Figure 9.



Figure 8: Interviewees responses as to why they had specifically chosen to visit the site today rather than another local site

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Steam engine enthusiasts on normal route
On the way on walk. Just saw picnic bench so stopped for lunch.
Investigating new site- will bring dog next time
Peaceful, not many people. Think that the meeting here has decreased a bit, holiday
goers probably don't know about it
En route to birthday party

Figure 9: Further comments for why visitors chose to visit the site on the day of their visit.

Improvement suggestions

3.14 Interviewees were asked what, if any, improvements they would like to see on the site, these answers can be seen in Figure 10. 9% of interviewees suggested that there be more paths/greater choice of routes and 9% suggested more seating on site. The highest proportion of visitors suggested 'other' improvements which included improving the safety of boardwalks in wet weather, ensuring the gates were secure for dogs and tackling the anti-social behaviour which some visitors had witnessed. Figure 11 shows these suggestions and further comments.

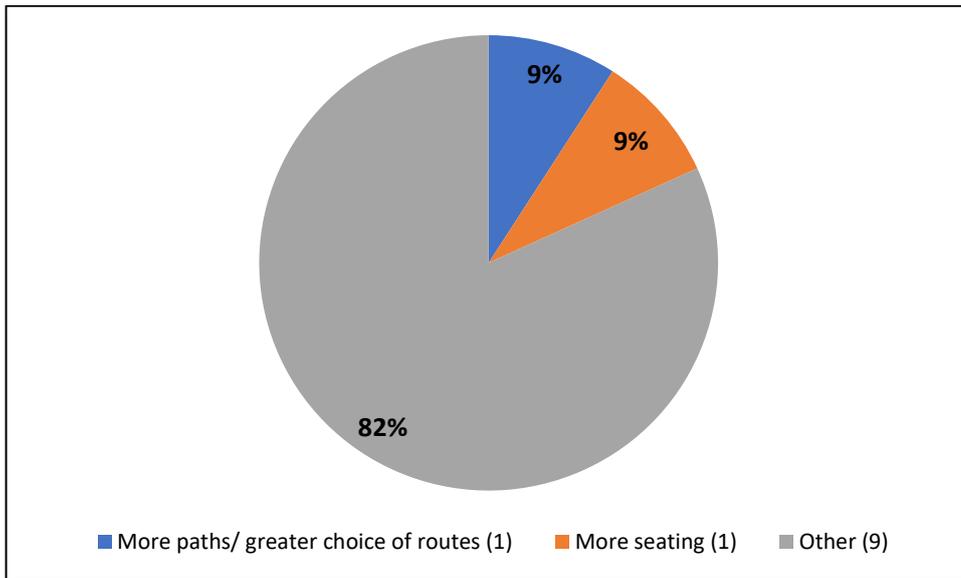


Figure 10: responses of interviewees to improvements they would like to see at the site. Number of respondents in brackets and percentages shown on the chart.

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More secure gates- dog can get through. Gates can't fit buggy/wheelchair so can't share with family

Litter bins

Toilets, play trail

Improved access at stile- dog struggles to get through

Bigger- would like it to include other fields

Would like the problem behaviour in woods tackled

Ditch round car park needs to be more obvious- they drove into it and I had to help push it out!

Remove some more tree stumps - trip hazard

The boardwalks flood, even after work has been done - I'd rather walk on a heath. When the boardwalk was put in all the deer and badgers living in the woods left and came into my field.

Improve the gates. Better wheelchair access

No, I quite like it. There are enough bins. Only thing to check is safety by river by bridge. It is good to keep it to a natural state, good enclosed area

Been witness to anti-social activities - police matter?

Figure 11: Further comments about improvements interviewees would like to see at the site.

Visit/activities proportions to site

3.15 Interviewees were asked what proportion of their weekly visit for the given activity was carried out at the site compared to other sites visited. Almost half of visitors suggested that less than 25% of their weekly activity was carried out at the site. Only 8% of visitors suggested that 75% or more of their weekly activity was carried out on site. Figure 12 shows this data from Q14 which demonstrates a range of weekly visit proportions on site.

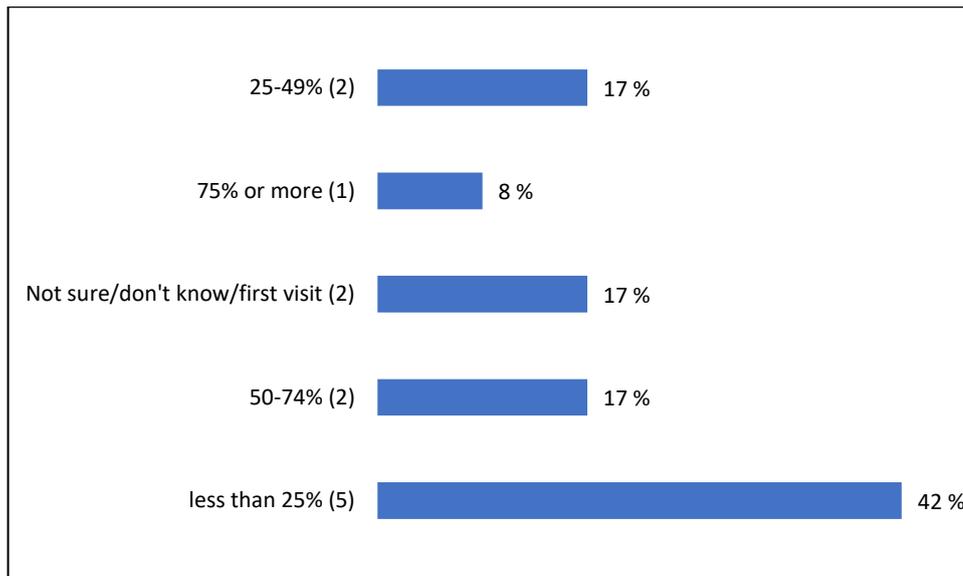


Figure 12: Responses to proportion of weekly visit for the chosen activity that take place at the site compared to other sites visited. Number of interviewees shown in brackets and percentage next to the frequency bars.

Other sites visited

3.16 Interviewees were asked which locations they would have visited for their chosen activity had this site not been visited on the day of interview. Visitors were asked to provide up to three alternative sites, with note taken of the primary site they would have visited. Considering all the responses for named sites, 16 were named. The top five commonly named sites were; Hartland Moor (6), Wareham Forest (5), Stoborough Heath (5), Creech Heath (3) and Arne (3). Figure 13 shows all the responses in a word cloud demonstrating the range and frequency of sites.



Figure 13: Responses of interviewees of alternative locations they would have visited had they not been able to visit this site today for their chosen activity.

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- 3.17 Interviewees were asked why they would choose the alternative sites suggested in Figure 13. Suggestions included for a variety of habitats, proximity to home and 'other' reasons which included 'just for a change' and because they did not know this site was here. Figure 14 shows these reasons in a word cloud demonstrating the range and frequency of responses.



Figure 14: Responses of interviewees of why they would have visited the alternative sites named had they not been able to visit this site today for their chosen activity.

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Memberships of organisations

3.18 73% of people interviewed were members of the named organisations Dorset Wildlife Trust, The National Trust, Dorset Dogs and the RSPB. 27% were not members of these organisations. Figure 15 shows this data from Q19.

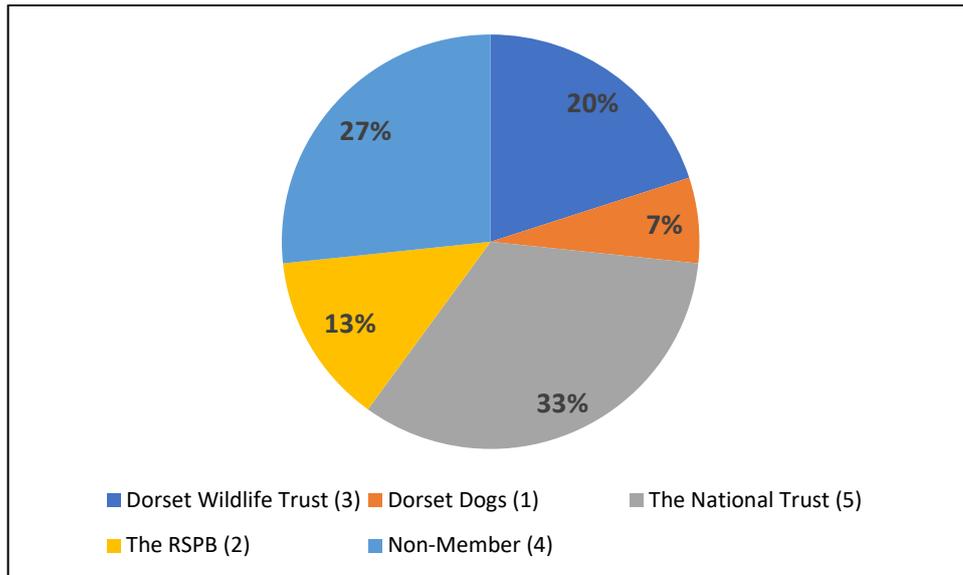


Figure 15: Responses of interviewees about whether they held membership for any of the named organisations. Number of respondents in brackets and the percentages shown on the chart.

How found out about site

3.19 Interviewees were asked how they first found out about the site and responses are shown in Figure 16. The highest number of visitors had heard about the site through local knowledge: word of mouth (46%), with the next common answer saw a sign/drove past (23%). 15% of interviewees answered with 'other' which included one visitor being a Purbeck District Council Councillor and another accidentally coming across it.

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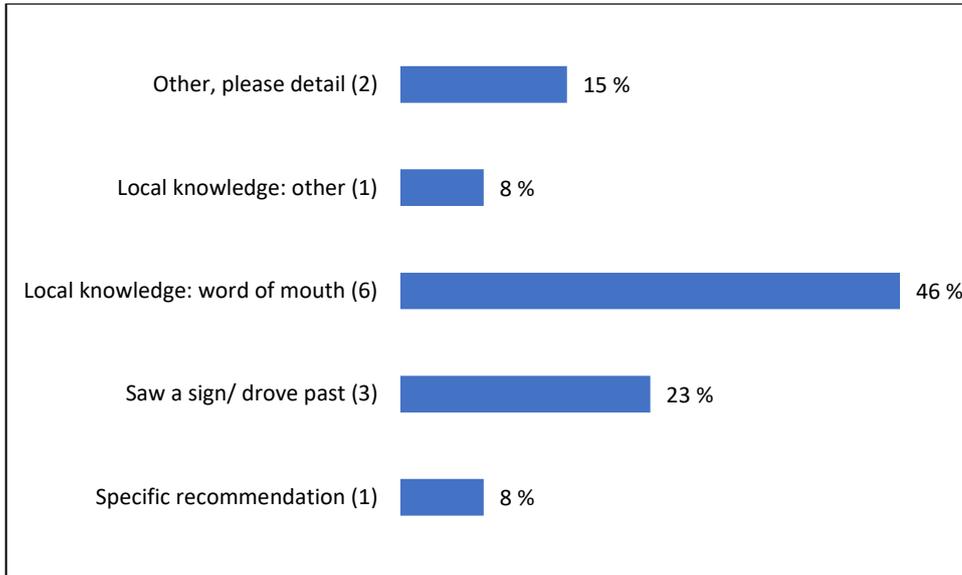


Figure 16: Responses to Q20 about how the interviewees had first heard about the site. Number of interviewees in brackets and percentages next to frequency bars.

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4. Distance to site

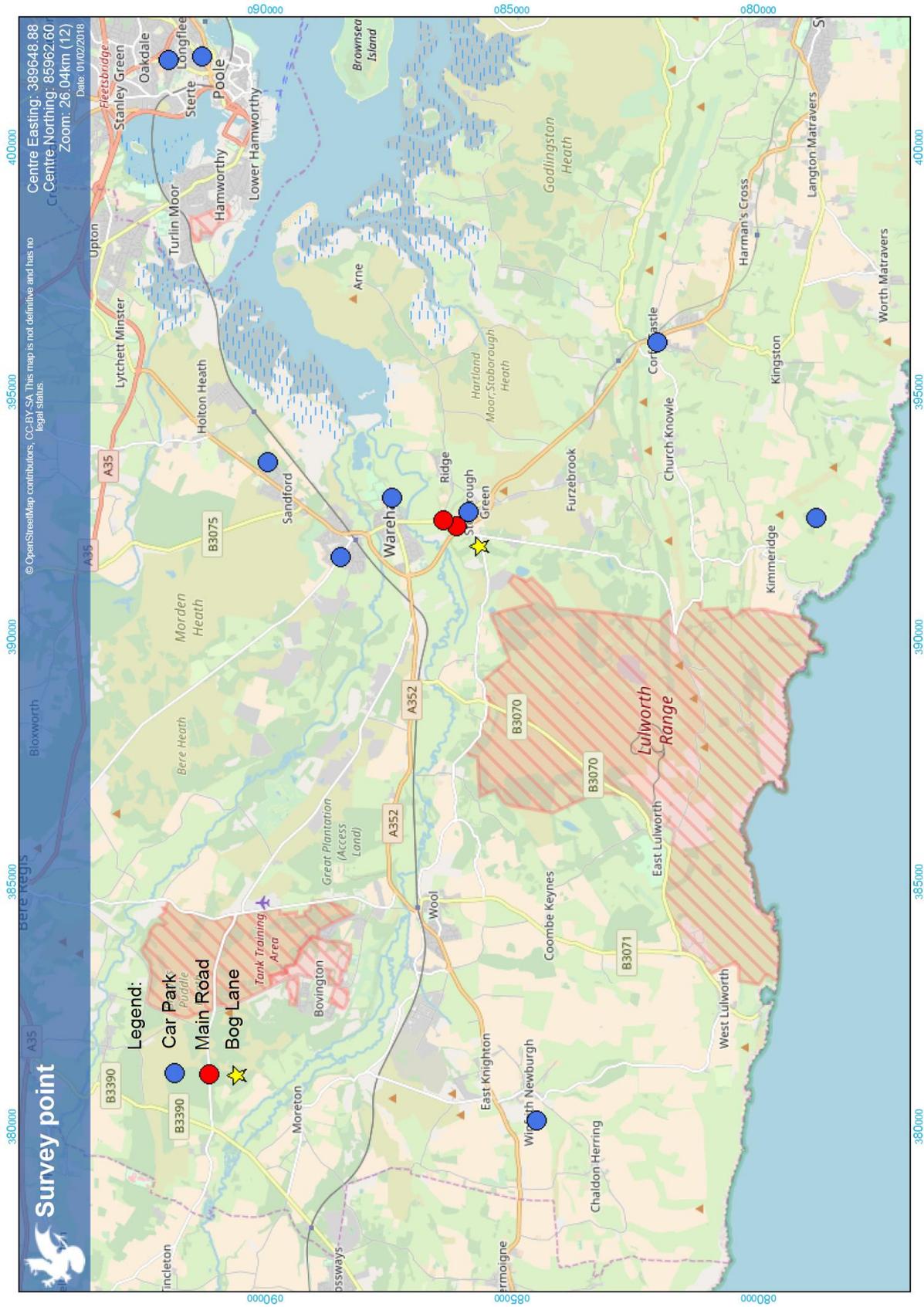
4.1 All interviewees but one gave a complete and valid georeferenced postcode. Table 3 shows the median distance travelled by visitors per activity carried out to the centre of the site. The median linear distance travelled from home to the centre of the site for those that were interviewed by the main car park entrance was 5.53km and for the main road entrance was 0.76km.

Table 3: Summary of median distance travelled from home for main activity carried out, data used from postcodes of interviewees.

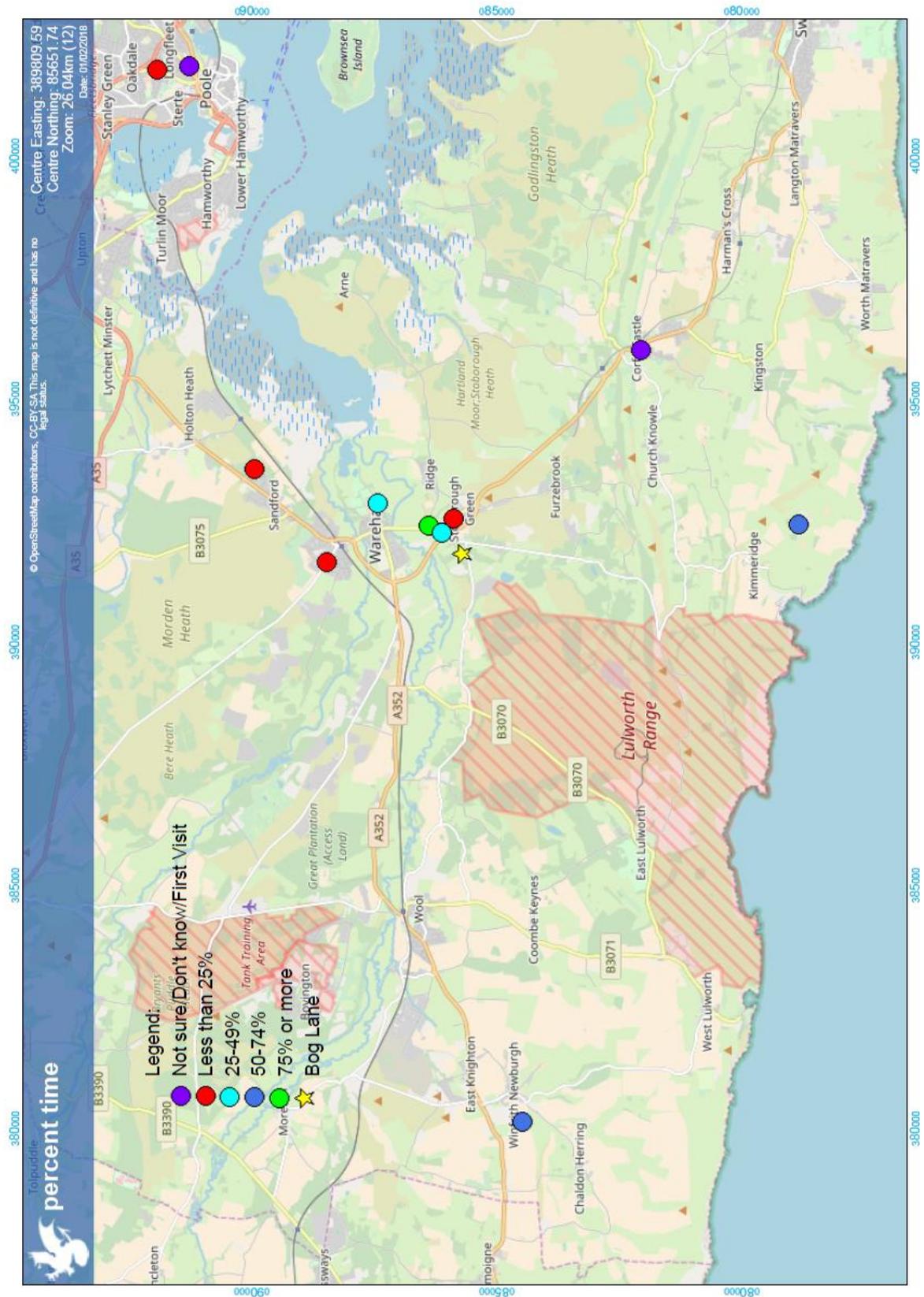
Main Activity	Median distance travelled (km)
Dog walking	2.80
Other	8.52

4.2 Map 1 shows all of the postcodes given by the interviewees, labelled by survey point. Map 2 shows postcodes of interviewees, labelled by what proportion of their visits for the current activity take place at Bog Lane SANG.

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Map 2: Home postcodes of interviewees, labelled by what proportion of their visits are for the current activity.

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5. Visitor Routes

5.1 Visitors' routes were recorded as part of the face to face interviews on maps of the site and digitised in GIS following the interviews.

5.2 Interviewees were asked whether the route that they had taken today was representative of the route that they would usually take at the site. Figure 17 shows the responses to this question with 50% suggesting it was their normal route and 42% not sure/no typical visit.

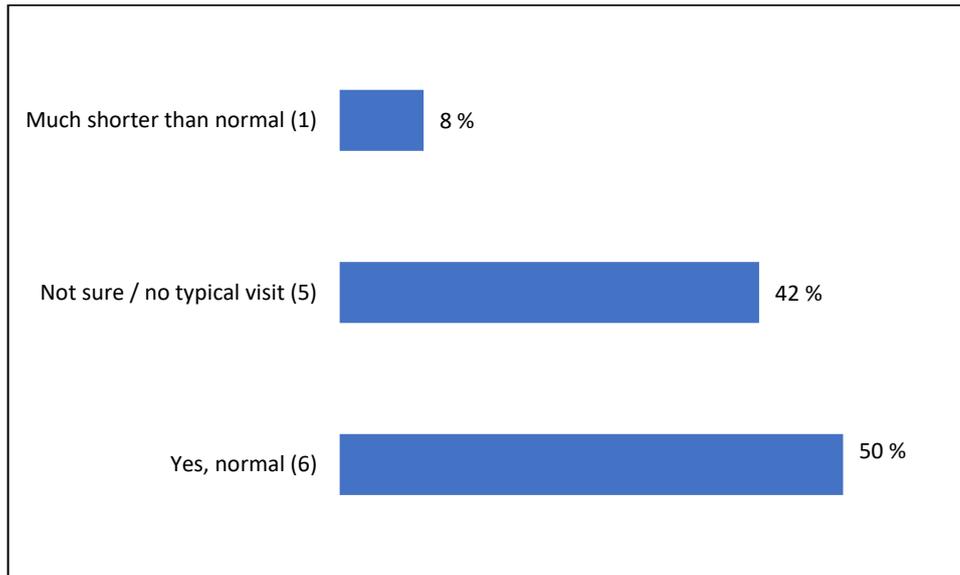


Figure 17: Responses to Q10 whether the route they had chosen today was reflective of their usual route when visiting the site. Number of interviewees in brackets and percentages next to frequency bars.

5.3 Visitors were asked what, if anything, influenced their choice of route at the site on the day of their visit, these responses can be seen in Figure 18. 76% of visitors described dog (actions/activities of dog) (38%) and 'other' (38%) as the reason for the choice of their route. 'Other' influences included avoiding cattle, exploring different habitats and concerns over safety in the woods.

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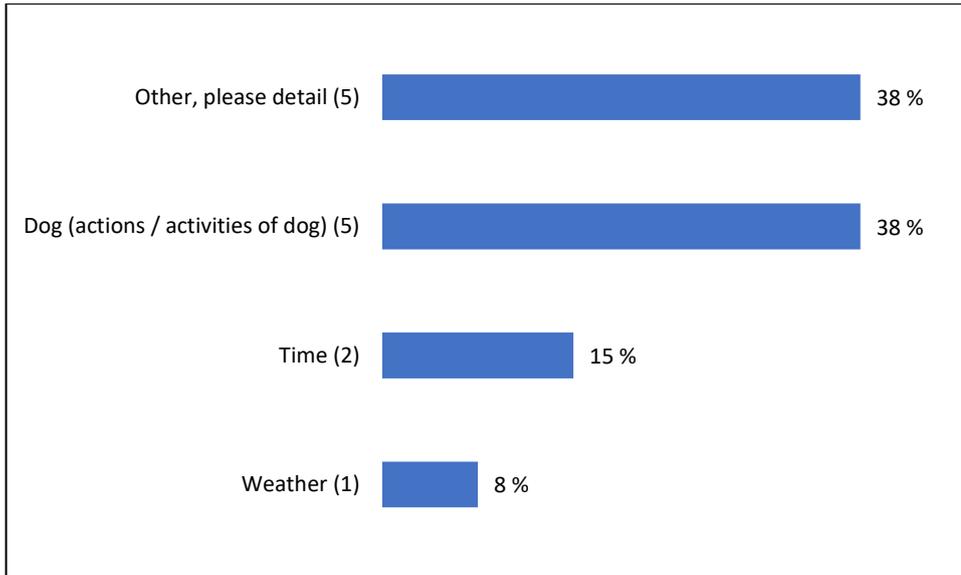
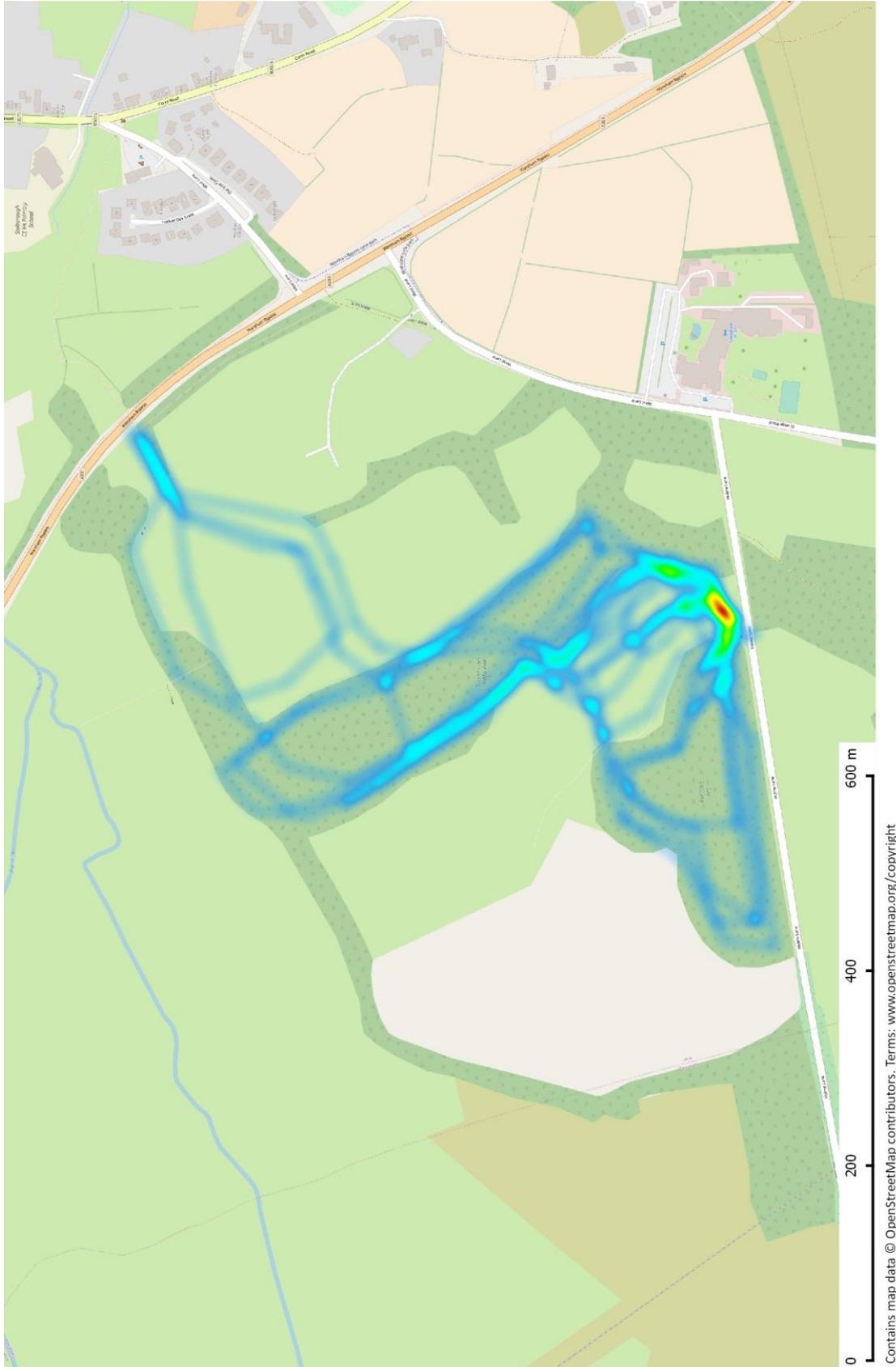


Figure 18: Interviewees responses to, if anything, influenced their choice of route at the site on the days of their visit. Data from Q11. Number of interviewees in brackets and percentages next to frequency bars.

5.4 Map 3 shows the estimated density of recorded routes and use of entry points recorded from the interviews. The map shows that the entrance from the main car park was most frequently used by interviewees, with 10 visitors using this entrance and the remaining 2 entering from the main road entrance.

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Map 3: Density of recorded routes and use of entry and exit points recorded from interviews. Colour key: red = high density, blue = low density

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5.5 Visitors were asked to rate the paths at this site on a scale from 1 to 10 where 1 is very poor and 10 is excellent. 75% of interviewees rated the pathing as 6 or above, with the highest proportion scoring the paths as 8 (25%). Results are shown below in Figure 19.

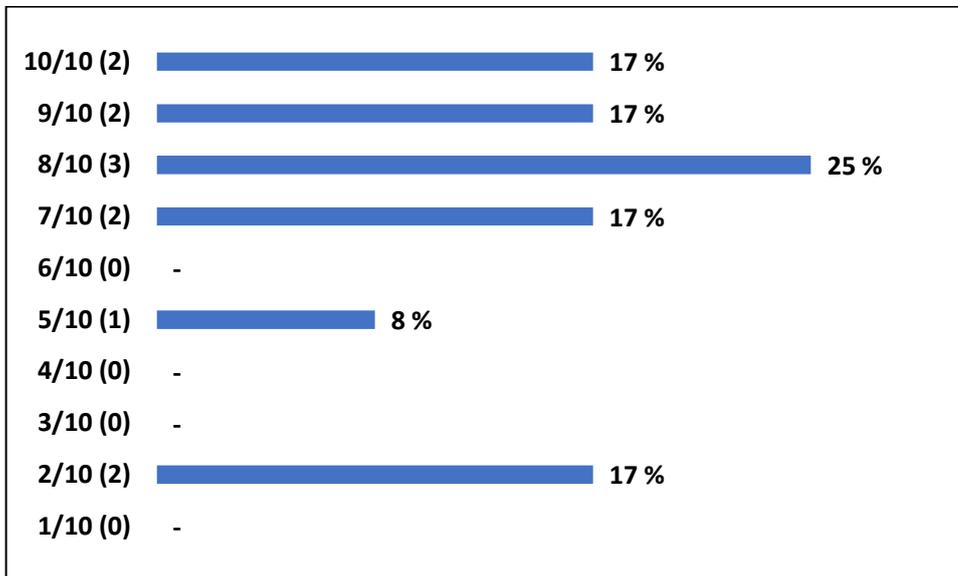


Figure 19: Responses of interviewees when asked to rate the paths on site. Number of interviewees in brackets and percentages next to frequency bars.

5.6 For visitors who had driven to the site today, they were asked to rate the parking from 1 to 10 where 1 is very poor and 10 is excellent. 89% of interviewees rated the parking as 6 or above. These ratings are shown in Figure 20.

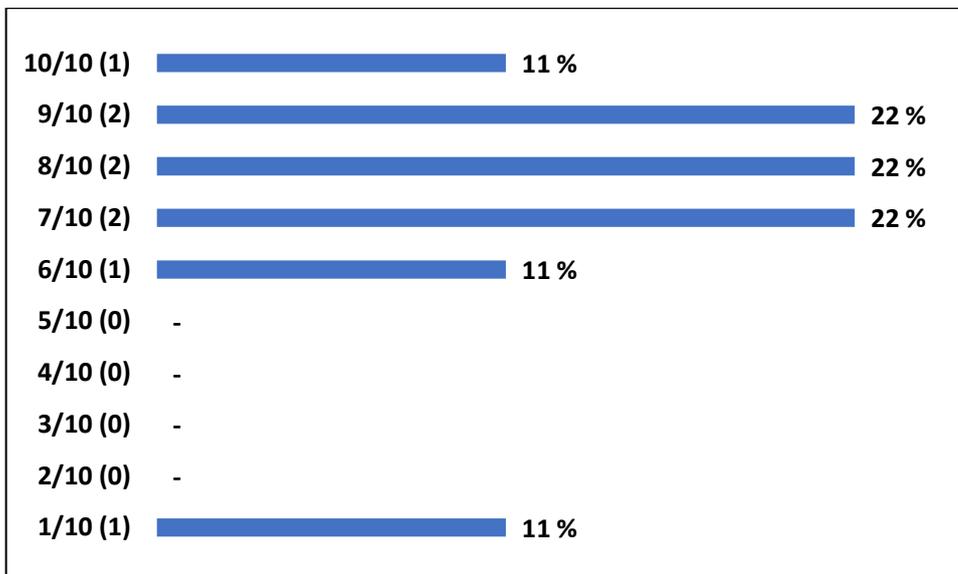


Figure 20: Responses of interviews who drive to the site when asked to rate the parking. Number of interviewees in brackets and percentages next to frequency bars.

5.7 For those that has described dog walking as their main activity at the site on the day of interview, they were asked to rate the site for dogs on a scale from 1 to 10 where 1 is very

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poor and 10 is excellent. 80% of those asked rated the site as 6 or above for dogs. Figure 21 shows these ratings.

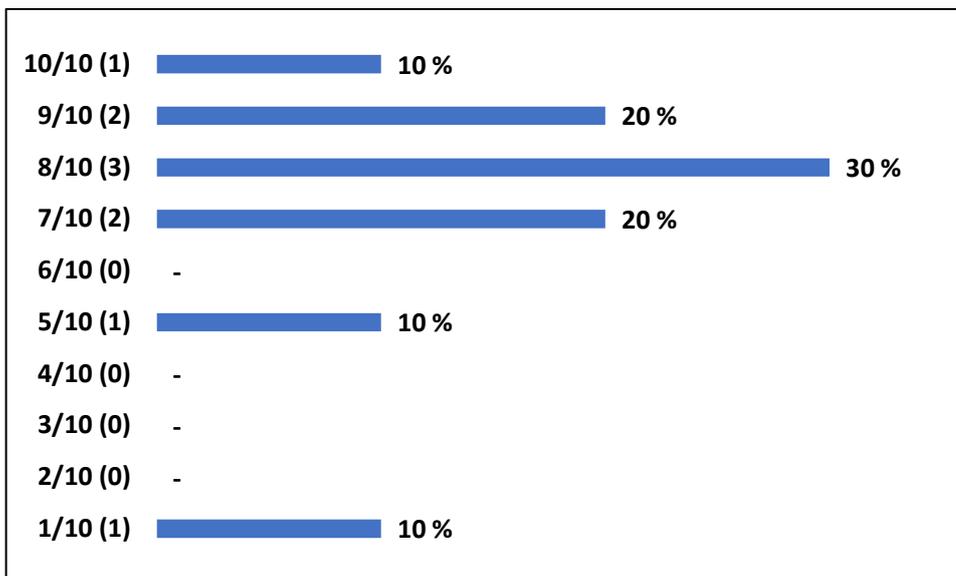


Figure 21: Responses of interviewees who described dog walking as their main activity on site on the day of interview when asked to rate the site for dogs. Number of interviewees in brackets and percentages next to frequency bars.

5.8 Finally, visitors were asked to rate the site overall from 1-10 where 1 is very poor and 10 is excellent. 92% rated the site as 6 or above, with the highest proportion giving the visit 7 (25%). These ratings are shown below in Figure 22.

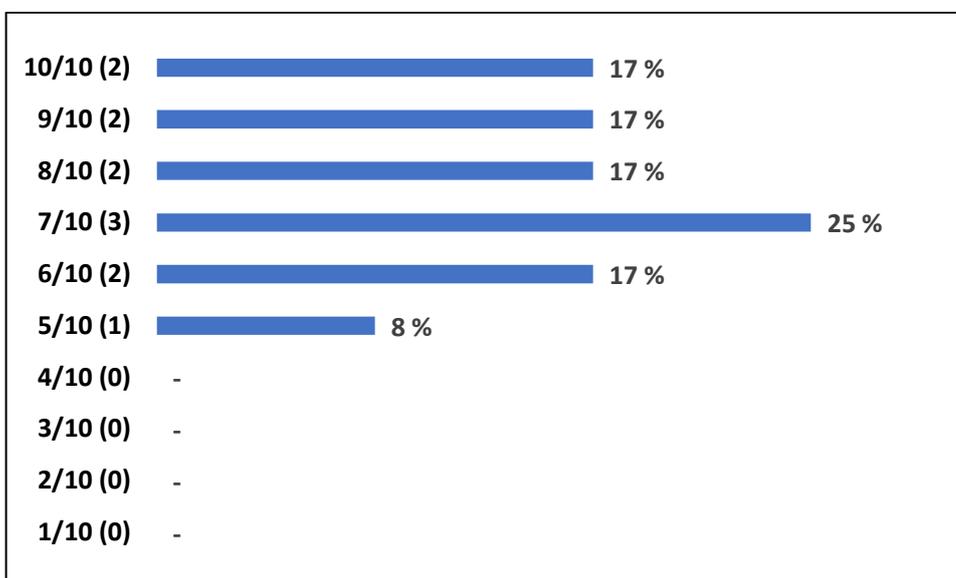


Figure 22: Responses of interviewees when asked to rate the site overall. Number of interviewees in brackets and percentages next to frequency bars.

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5.9 All further comments about the site and how it is managed are shown in Figure 23.

Poor gates, path for wheelchairs/pushchairs in field, more parking, muddy corner, info boards
Litter in car park, no sign posts
Signposts, facebook page
Needs signage
Antisocial behaviour needs addressing, likes that car park not big enough for campervans
Access for large vehicles and cars is a bit difficult from right.
Paths get so muddy it is only walkable in summer when it is dry
Boardwalks - very dangerous when wet
Think it's going well. Hope parking stays free unlike UCP. Like the dog training area
One slight problem- no gate at layby
I love wildlife and nature but this money would have been better spent elsewhere improving hospital facilities

Figure 23: Further comments given by interviewees about the site and how it is managed.

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6. Automated Counters

- 6.1 To date, one pyro sensor has been installed on site to monitor numbers of visitors, counted as 'passes' onto the SANG. There are also plans to install a second sensor. These two sensors tie in with the other visitor counter sensors in the monitoring Strategy for the Dorset Heathlands SPA. The sensors are/will be installed in close proximity to where the visitor interviews were carried out. The currently installed sensor is by the gate leading out from the main car park (391869, 85609).

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7. Car park transect surveys

- 7.1 The new car park for the SANG on Holme Lane has been added to the Dorset Heathlands SPA car park transect survey which is carried out 14 times per year by The Urban Heaths Partnership and partner Heathland Mitigation wardens. This car park was added to the survey transect in March 2015 which coincided with the opening of the SANG site. An automated counter is also installed at this car park which will also give further understanding of visitor numbers at the site. Further information on car park transect figures across the Dorset Heathlands SPA project area are available on request from UHP.