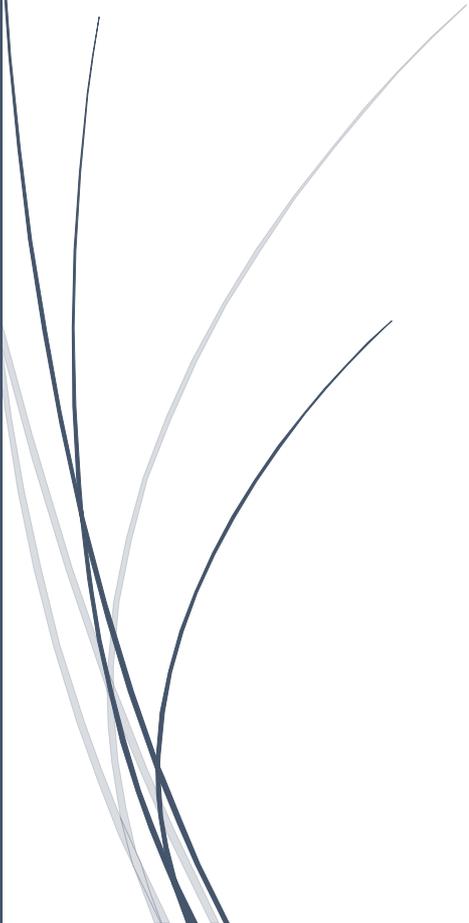


April 2018

Summary of visitor monitoring at Frenches Farm SANG



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URBAN HEATHS PARTNERSHIP

Visitor Monitoring at Frenches Farm SANG
Summary 2018

Summary

- Monitoring was carried out at the new Frenches Farm SANG in April 2018. 16 hours were completed and 44 visitors interviewed.

Survey Data Suggests:

- 100% of interviewees described their visit as a day trip/short visit and travelled from home.
- 93% of interviewees described their main activity at the site at the time of interview as dog walking.
- 80% of interviewees had been visiting Frenches Farm SANG for less than 1 year. 9% had been visiting between 1 and 9 years and 5% for 10 years or over. 7% were on their first visit to the site.
- 77% of the interviewees suggested that they visit equally over weekdays and weekends and 61% all year round.
- 64% of interviewees had travelled to the site by car and 36% by foot.
- The most common reasons for why visitors chose to visit the SANG rather than another site were 'close to home', 'not many people', 'no need to use car', 'can let dog off lead' and 'good for dog/dog enjoys it'.
- Data and feedback suggests that interviewees like the dog pond, that there is not much dog mess and that compared to other sites it is not as muddy.
- Improvements that were suggested included more dog poo bins, better access to the site, more seating on site and better paths (including surfacing). 19% of interviewees suggested 'other' improvements, many of which included improving the drainage on site as some areas were becoming particularly muddy, especially at the gateway by the allotments and close to the dog pond. It was also suggested that there could be better signage explaining which areas visitors are permitted to walk in. 9% of interviewees expressed that no further improvements were required.
- Alternative locations that interviewees described they would visit, had they not been able to visit the SANG on the day included Upton Country Park, Upton Heath, Wareham Forest, beaches and Lytchett Bay.

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- Interviewees suggested a variety of habitats as the main reason to visit other sites as well as if they had limited time or for the convenience and because they were close to home.
- Interviewees on average travelled a median of 0.91km to walk their dogs, 8.64km for commercial dog walking, 0.36km for wildlife watching and 0.61km for 'other' activities at the SANG.
- Of the visitors interviewed, 68% suggested that they followed a usual route on the site and 18% had no typical route.
- 95% of visitors scored their visit on the day as a 6 or above (on a scale of 1-10).

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Acknowledgements

All data presented here was collected by Amy Gallagher (Urban Heaths Partnership). Thanks go to Chris Panter (Footprint Ecology).

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 Frenches Farm was commissioned by Wyatt Homes to mitigate from the impact of the nearby residential development. The site opened in the late months of 2017 and hence visitor monitoring was carried out as Frenches Farm SANG in April 2018.
- 1.3 The SANG monitoring methodology followed principles set out in the Dorset Heathlands SPD and consisted of onsite tally counts, onsite interviews and car park monitoring in line with the Dorset Monitoring Strategy.

2. On site tally counts

2.1 On site tally counts were conducted at the same time as the visitor surveys at the main entrance to the site by the newly built car park. To date, 16 survey hours have been completed, during two-hour sessions (7am-9am, 10am-12noon, 1pm-3pm & 3:30pm-5:30pm) with an even spread over weekends and weekdays.

2.2 A total of 85 people, of which 12 were minors were recorded entering the site during the sessions (Table 1). An average of 5 people per hour. The average group size entering the site was 1.4. The average number of dogs per person was 0.9.

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

Survey Point	Number of groups entering	Number of people entering	Number of dogs entering	Number of minors entering
Main Car Park	62	85	73	12

2.3 Also recorded at the site was the number of people leaving the site. 78 people and 68 dogs were recorded leaving the site during the survey period.

2.4 Basic weather, including cloud cover, rainfall and temperature were recorded at the time of tally counts. Weather was mainly described as warm with a couple of sessions noted as mild or hot. Cloud cover varied between the survey period and there was no rainfall during any of the sessions.

3. On site interviews

3.1 Face to face interviews were carried out at the same location as the tally counts using a specific SANG survey designed for the site by Footprint Ecology, in line with previous SANG and heathland visitor surveys. The surveys were conducted on a tablet and using site maps to mark the visitor routes.

3.2 44 visitors were interviewed during the 16 survey hours on the site, again at the same times as the tally counts, in two hour time periods, equally across weekdays and weekends.

Visitor Situation

3.3 All interviewees described themselves as on a day trip/short visit and travelled from home.

Activities

3.4 Visitors 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 different days or visits are noted in the free comments and feedback text later in the questionnaire.

3.5 93% of visitors described their main activity at the time of survey as dog walking, 2% commercial dog walking, 2% wildlife watching and 2% as other (Figure 2).

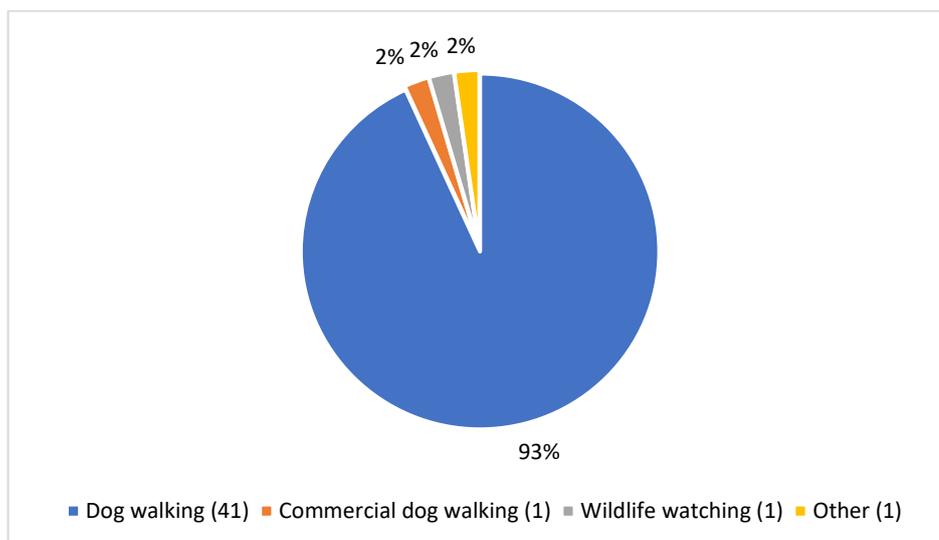


Figure 2: Responses to Q2, visitor responses to their main activity on site at the time of interview. Number of respondents in brackets and percentages shown on the chart.

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Length of visitation

3.6 Some visitors to the SANG may have potentially been using the site before it was improved and created into a SANG site. Interviewees were therefore asked how long they had been using the site to gain an understanding of visitor use. Only 5% of interviewees suggested that they had been using the site for 10 years or over. Most interviewees (80%) said they had been using the site for less than 1 years and 7% were on their first visit (Figure 3).

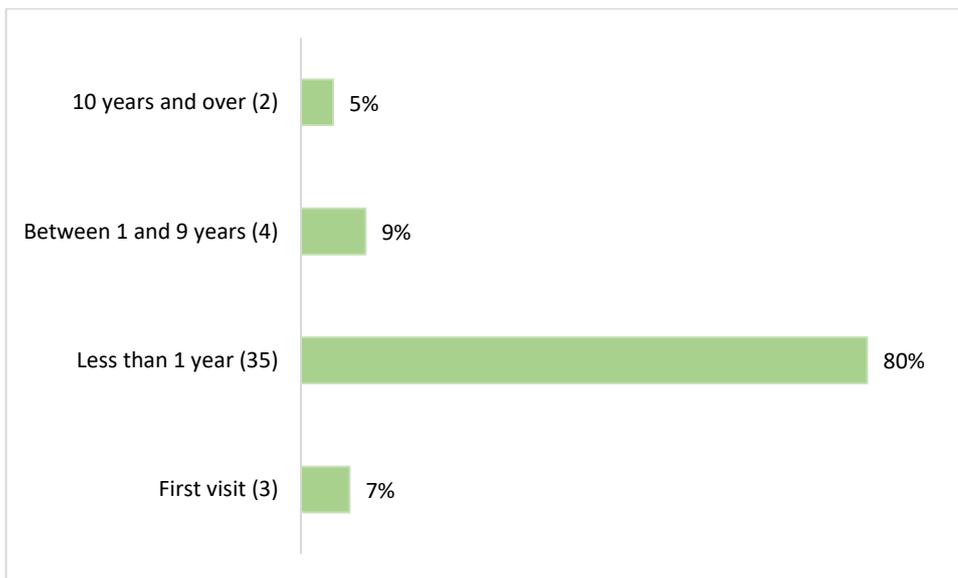


Figure 3: Interviewee responses to Q3 regarding their visitation length to Frenches Farm. Percentage of respondents shown next to frequency bars and number of interviewees in brackets.

Visit duration

3.7 Visitors were asked how long they had spent/will spend during their visit on the day of interview (Figure 4). Half of the interviewees (50%) said that their visit would last between 30 minutes and 1 hour. 45% said it would last less than 30 minutes and 5% between 1-2 hours.

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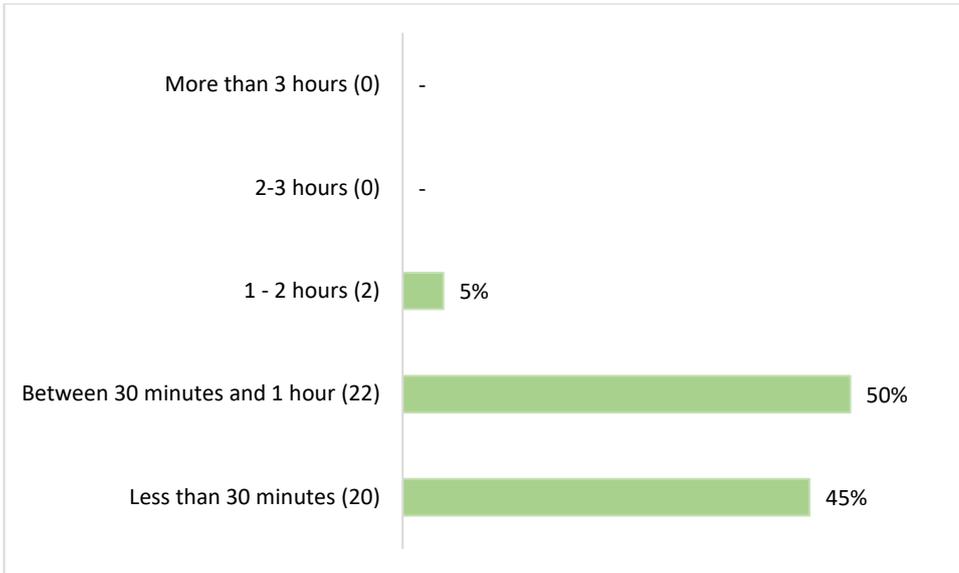


Figure 4: Interviewee responses to Q4 regarding their estimated duration of their current visit to the site on the day of interviewing. Number of interviewees shown in brackets and percentages next to frequency bars.

Visit frequency

3.8 Visitors were asked how frequently they visited the site and responses are shown in Figure 5. Over two thirds of the interviewees said that they visited the site either daily (32%) or more than once a week (36%). An additional 11% said that they visited the site more than once a day.

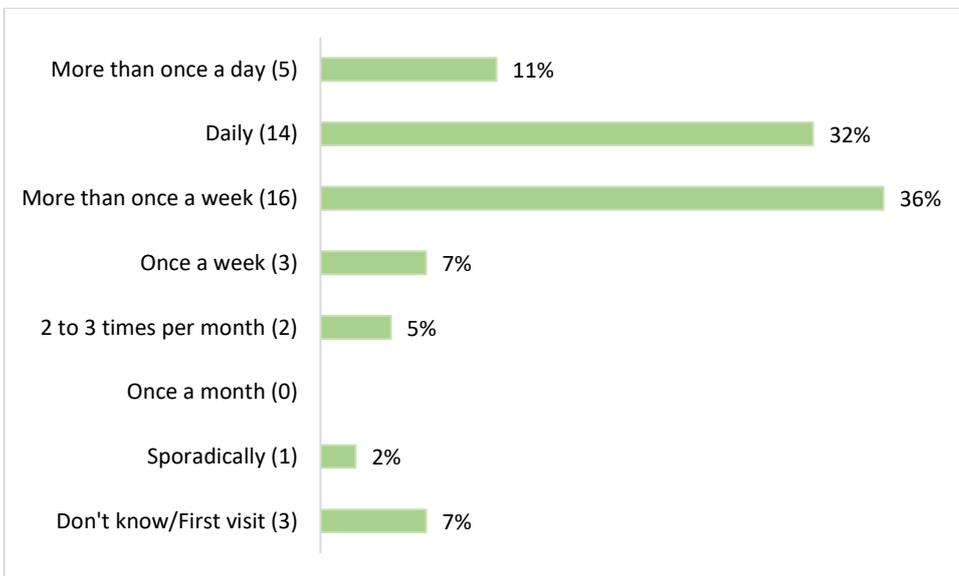


Figure 5: Responses to Q5 regarding how frequently visitors visited the site. Number of interviewees shown in brackets and percentages next to frequency bars.

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Visit timing

3.9 Visitors were asked whether their visits tended to be during the week, weekends or equally over both. 77% said that they visited equally over both weekdays and weekends. Weekday (18%) and weekend (5%) split was not even, with a higher proportion visiting the site on weekdays (Figure 6).

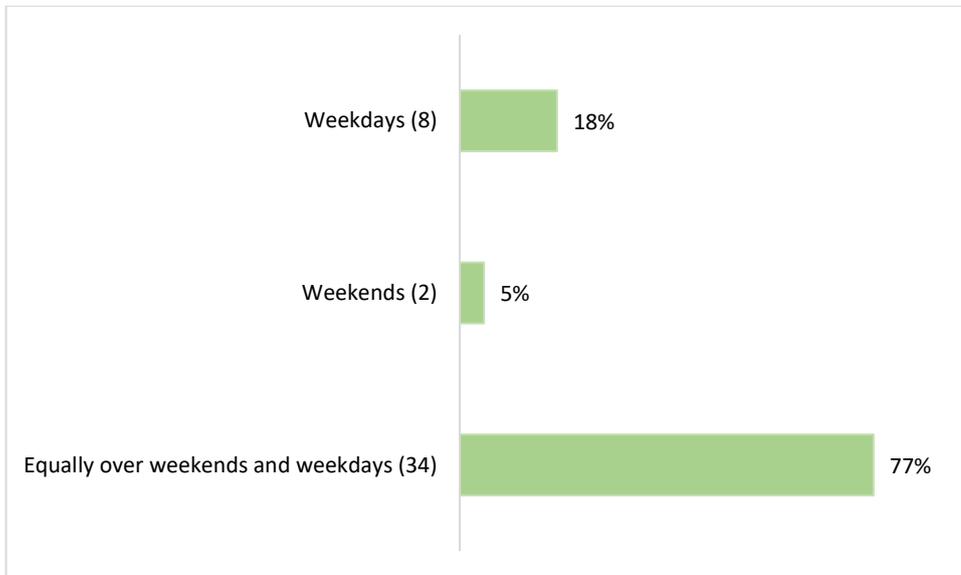


Figure 6: Responses of interviewees regarding which days they tend to visit the site on. Number of interviewees shown in brackets and percentages next to frequency bars.

3.10 Visitors were also asked in line with the previous question, whether they frequented the site at a particular time of day. Figure 7 shows that most interviewees suggested that it varied/didn't know/were on their first visit (28%). 26% of interviewees said they came after 4pm and 18% between 9am and 12.

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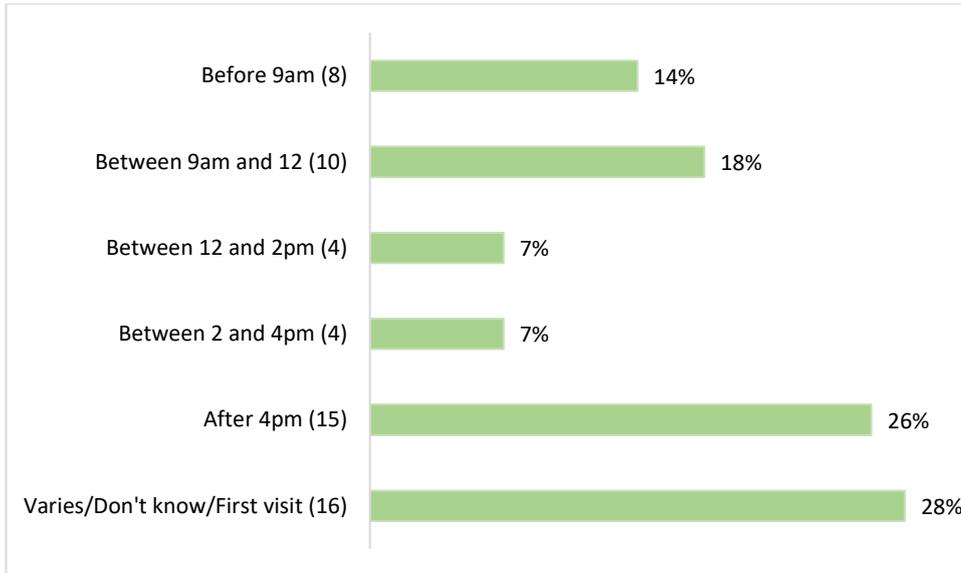


Figure 7: Interviewees responses to Q7, regarding the time of day visitors tend to visit the site. Number of responses shown in brackets and percentage next to frequency bars.

3.11 Visitors were then asked if they tended to visit the site at a particular time of year. Figure 8 shows that most visitors suggested that they visit the site equally all year (61% of interviewees).

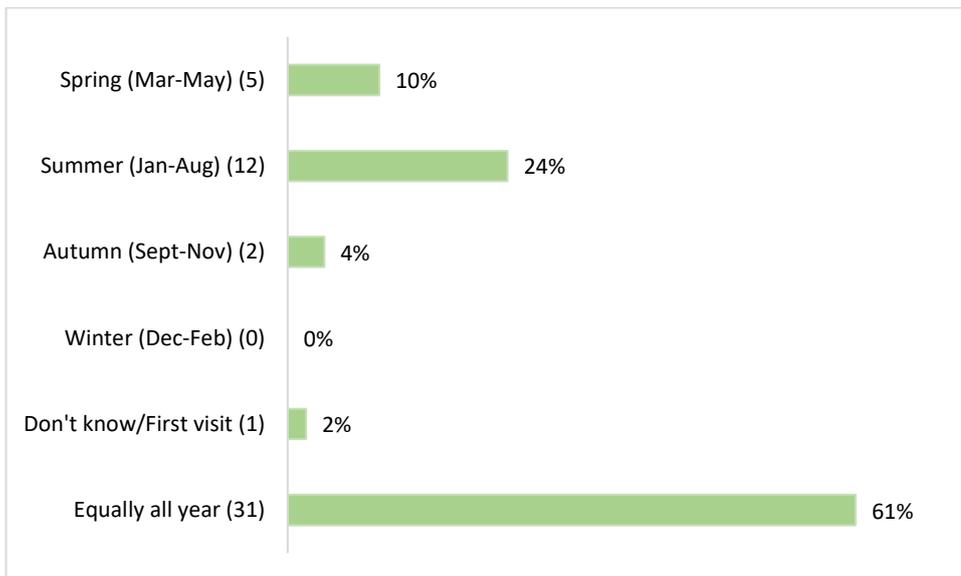


Figure 8: Interviewees responses to the particular time of year they tend to visit the site/ Number of visitors in brackets, percentages next to frequency bars.

Transport to site

3.12 Visitors were asked what form of transport they used to get to the site. Figure 9 shows that 64% travelled by car/van and 36% travelled by foot.

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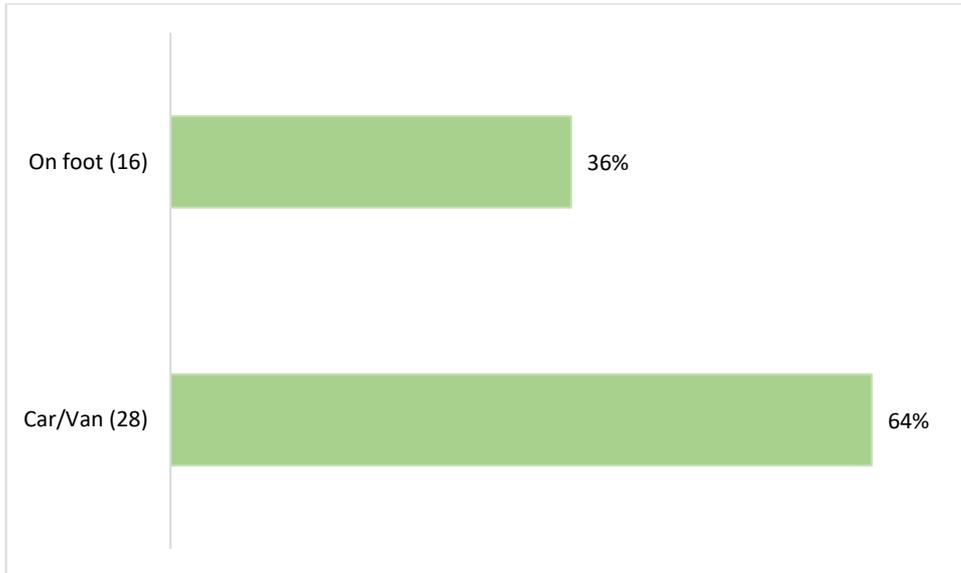


Figure 9: Interviewees responses to Q9, regarding how they travelled to the site on the day of their visit. Number of responses shown in brackets and percentages next to frequency bars.

Visit influences

3.13 Question 12 asked visitors why they had specifically chosen to visit the site and the most common responses are shown in Figure 10. The primary reasons that visitors suggested why they had specifically chosen to visit the site on the day of their visit were that it was close to home, not many people, no need to use car, can let dog off lead and good for dog/dog enjoys it. Further comments are included in Figure 11.

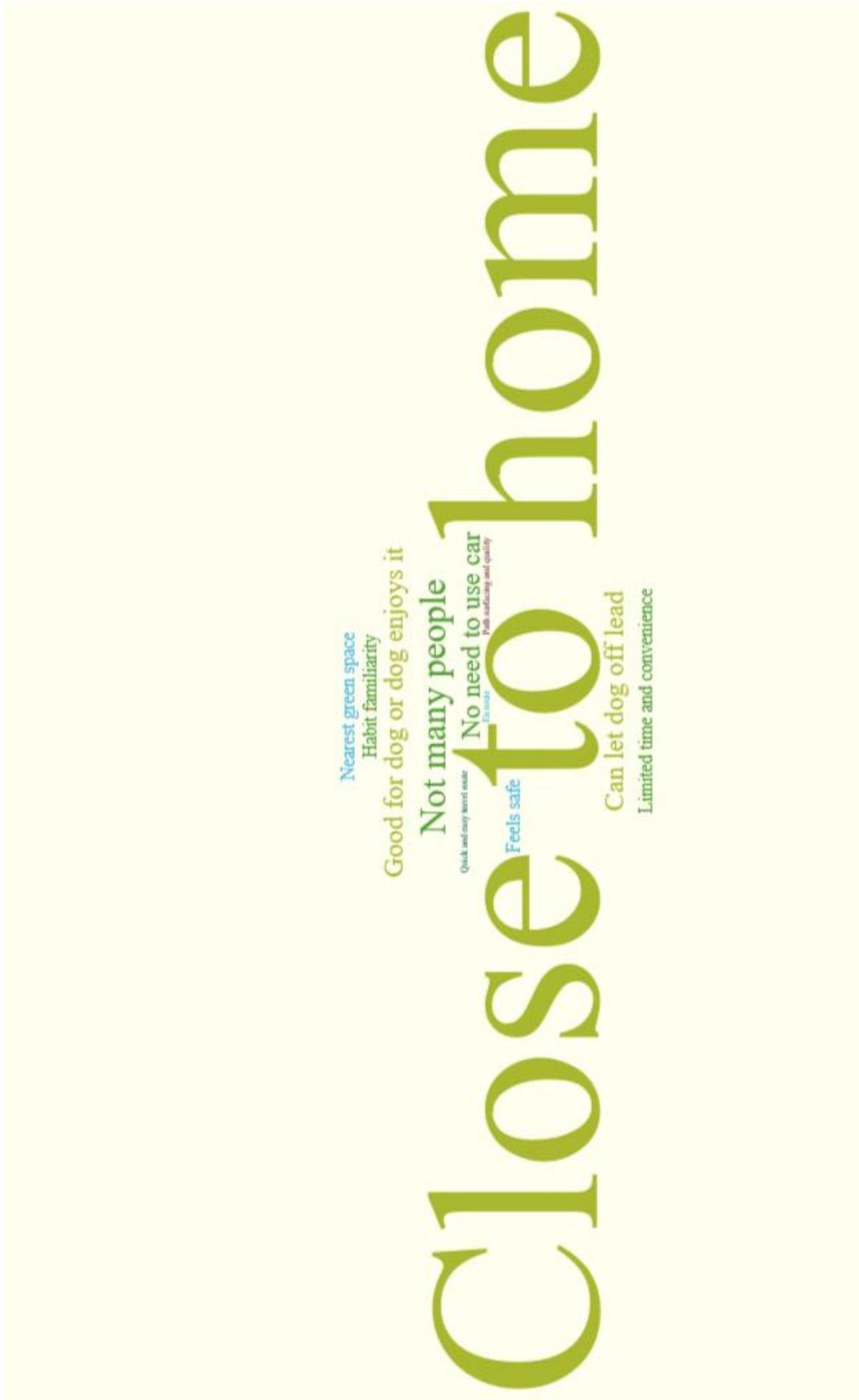


Figure 10: Responses to Q12, why interviewees had chosen specifically to visit the site today rather than another site.

Nice for a change.
I like to go to different places and this place was recommended.
Not as muddy as other places.
I like the pond.
Secure and quiet.
Not much dog mess.
Wanted to show neighbour the site.
It's quiet.
You can see other people from a distance.

Figure 11: Interviewees further comments about why they 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 (Figure 12). Over a quarter of interviewees (27%) suggested that there needs to be more poo bins on site, with extra comments adding there could be more enforcement to ensure people pick up after their dogs. Other suggestions included better access to the site, more seating and better paths (including surfacing). 19% of interviewees suggested 'other' improvements which included better drainage on site as many visitors had noted that several paths were waterlogged and very muddy, especially by the allotment entrance. In fact, some interviewees stressed that this had become such a large problem that they were unable to use that access point anymore. People also noted that around the dog pond it was very muddy too and would like to see it improved. Other suggestions included better signage to show where visitors can walk and sheltered seating. Figure 13 shows these suggestions and further comments.

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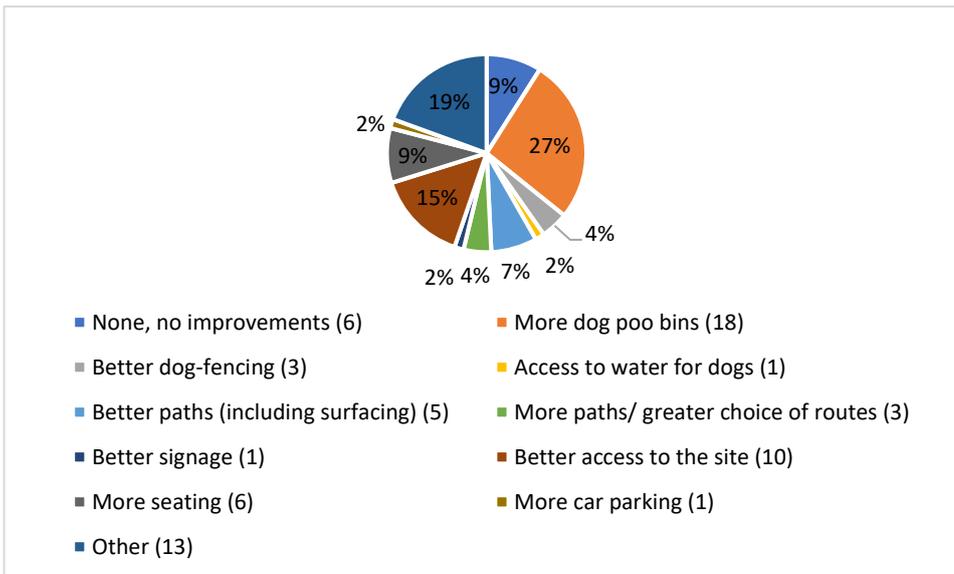


Figure 12: Responses of interviewees of improvements they would like to see at the site. Number of responses shown in brackets, percentages shown on the chart.

Better drainage on lane to allow you to walk around.
 Dog pond is muddy and unusable.
 Muddy corner has 40ft of mud.
 Redundant barbed wire fence removed and perimeter fence improved due to undulating ground.
 Waterlogged entrance by allotments needs sorting.
 Sheltered seat (by trees etc), boggy entrance unusable near allotments, lane now floods around outside after development put in.
 Sort muddy entrance. Foul run-off from end of building site.
 Waterlogged path, more drainage is needed.
 Gravel near allotment entrance to combat mud.
 Drainage in allotment corner or build up height.
 Improvements to dog pond.
 Area for reactive dog.
 More signage to show where you can't walk.
 Muddy paths need sorting out.
 Enforce dog fouling law! Especially for professional dog walkers.
 More drainage at allotment gate, it's not useable.
 Muddy access point near allotments could do with sorting.
 Drainage in other field and remove barbed wire.
 Paws and more commercial dog walkers are bringing lots of dogs and not watching them, not picking up and dogs not under control.
 Can't use allotment gate because of mud.
 Path surfacing near allotment could do with some work.
 Sort drainage in small field, my dog gets mucky.

Pedestrian access from Policemans Lane, sort out boggy entrance at slough lane.
Drainage in corner access point near allotments.
Sort mud.

Figure 13: Further comments about improvements that visitors would like so see at the site.

Visit/activities proportions to site

3.15 Interviewees were asked what proportion of their weekly visits for the given activity are carried out at the site compared to other sites visited. 30% of interviewees suggested that 50-74% of their weekly visits are carried out on site and 23% suggested that 75% or more are carried out on site. Figure 14 shows this data from Q14.

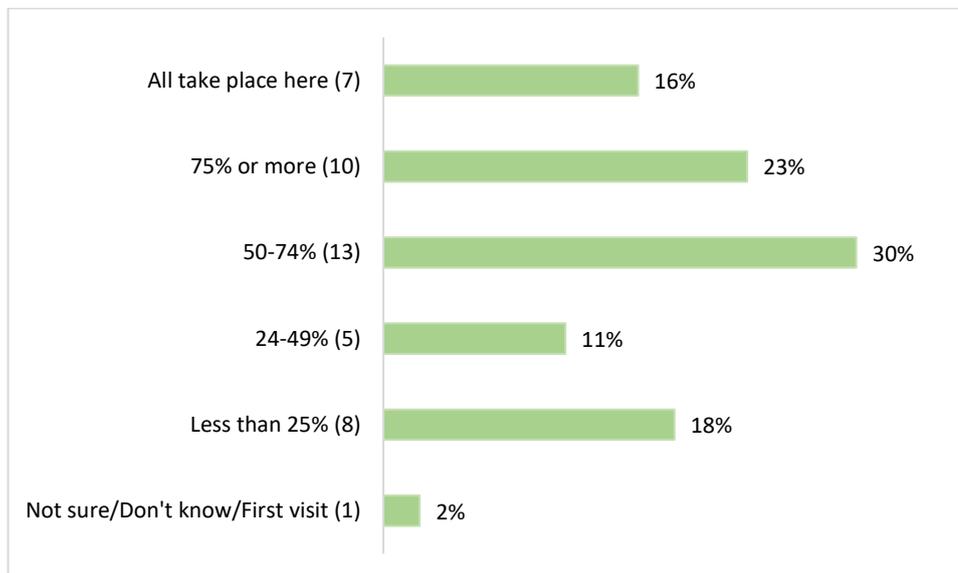


Figure 14: Responses to proportion of weekly visits for the chosen activity that takes place at the site compared to other sites visited. Number of interviewees shown in brackets and percentages next to frequency bars.

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 the interview. Visitors were asked to provide up to 3 alternative sites. Considering all 103 responses, 28 different sites were named. The top 5 commonly named sites were Upton Country Park (28), Upton Heath (14), Wareham Forest (11), 'beach' (6) and Lytchett Bay (5). Figure 15 shows all responses in a word cloud demonstrating the range and frequency of sites.

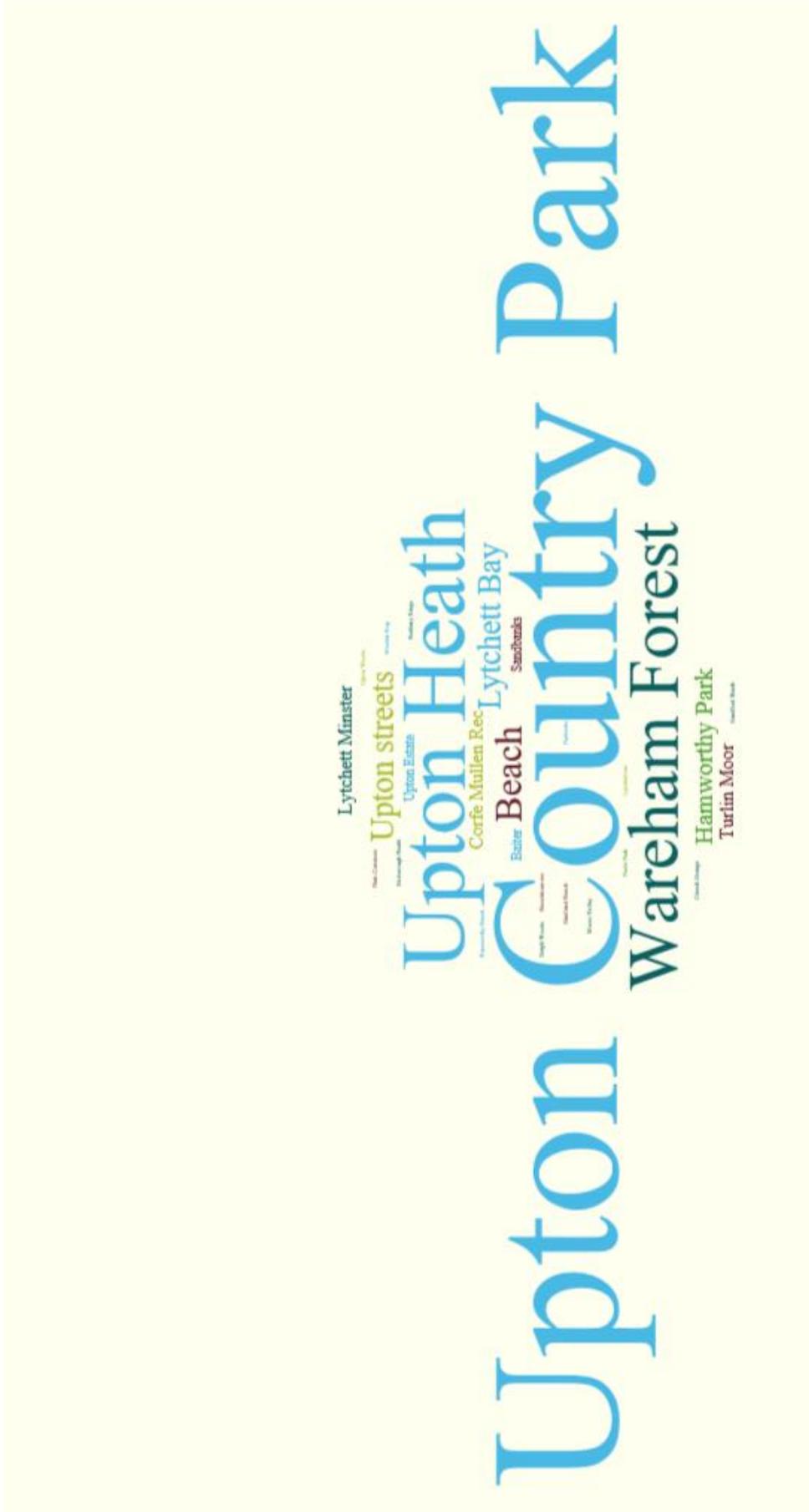


Figure 15: Responses of interviewees of alternative locations they would have visited had they not been able to visit this site today for their chosen activity.

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3.17 Interviewees were asked why they would choose to visit these alternative sites suggested in Figure 15 in preference to this site. Suggestions included for a variety of habitats, limited time or convenience, habit/familiarity and because it is close to home. Figure 16 shows these responses.



Figure 16: Interviewees responses to Q18 why they would choose to visit an alternative site other than here for their chosen activity.

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Membership of organisations

3.18 50% of people interviewed were members of the named organisations Dorset Wildlife Trust, the National Trust, Dorset Dogs and the RSPB. 50% were therefore not members of any of these organisations. Figure 17 shows the data from Q19.

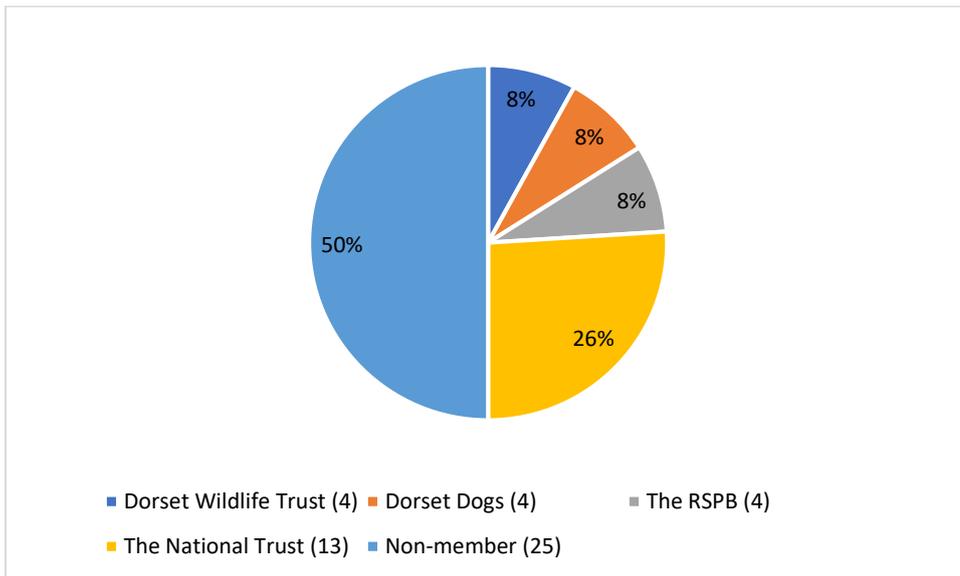


Figure 17: Responses of people interviewed about whether they were members of any of the named organisations. Number of respondents in brackets and percentages on chart.

How found out about site

3.19 Interviewees were asked how they first found out about the site and responses are shown in Figure 18. The highest number of visitors heard about the site either through 'local knowledge: other' (38%) or saw a sign/drove past (38%).

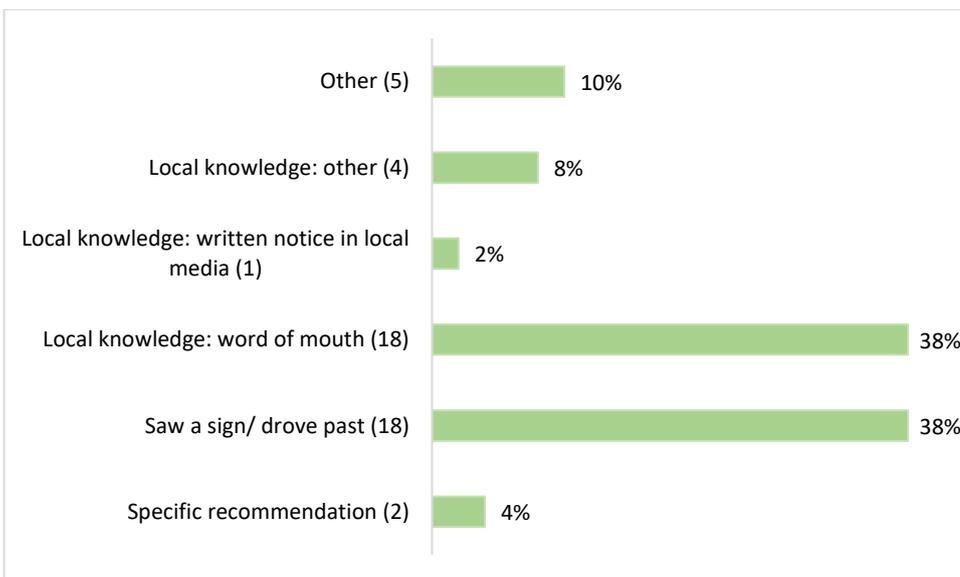


Figure 18: Responses to how interviewees first heard about the site. Number of responses in brackets and percentages next to frequency bars.

4. Distance to site

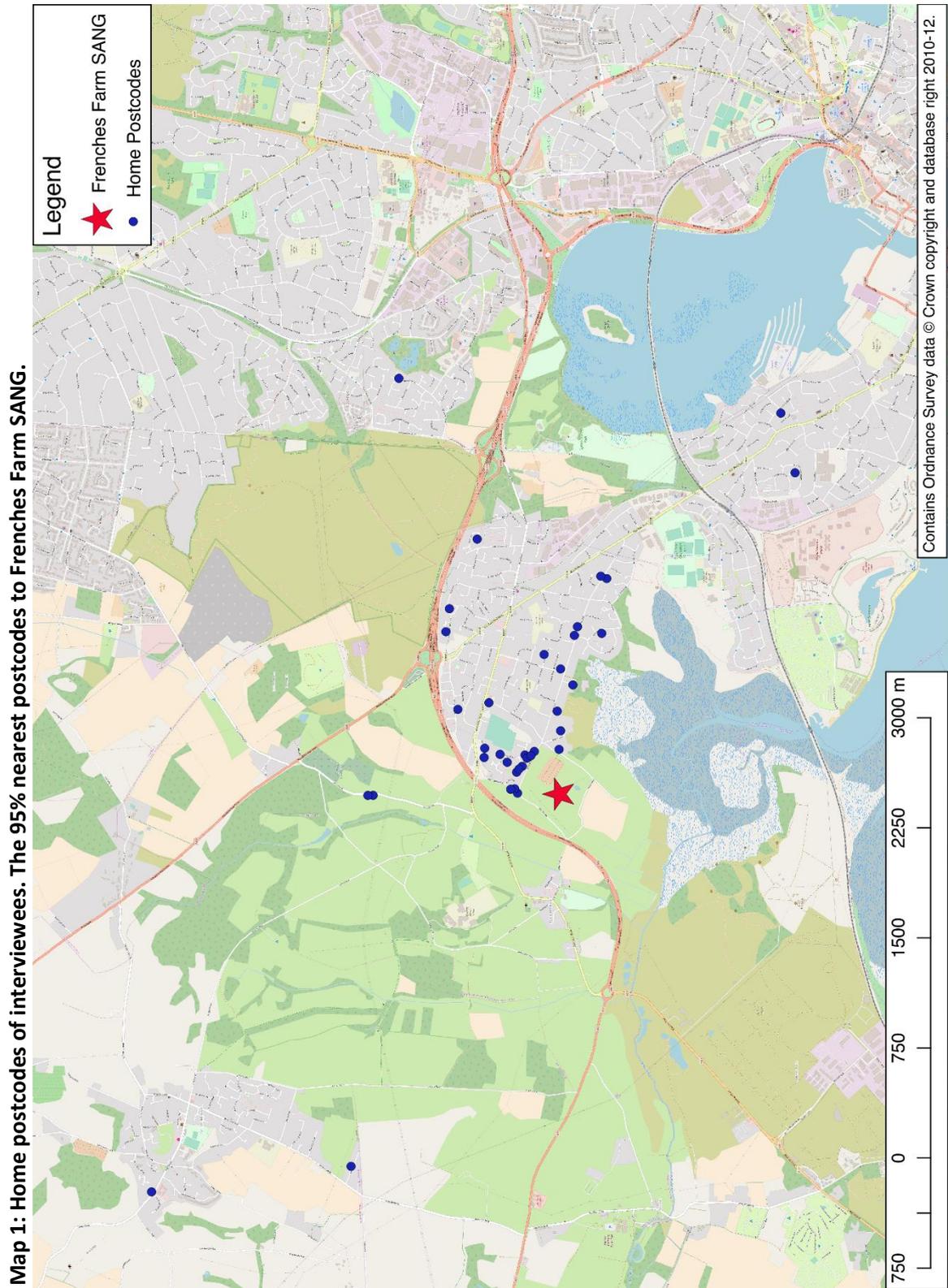
4.1 All the interviewees but 5 gave a complete and valid georeferenced postcode and all would be described as local. This is also in line with how they described themselves from Q1. Table 3 shows the median distance travelled by visitors per activity to the centre of the site.

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

Main activity	Median distance travelled (km)
Commercial dog walking	8.64
Dog walking	0.91
Wildlife watching	0.36
'Other'	0.61

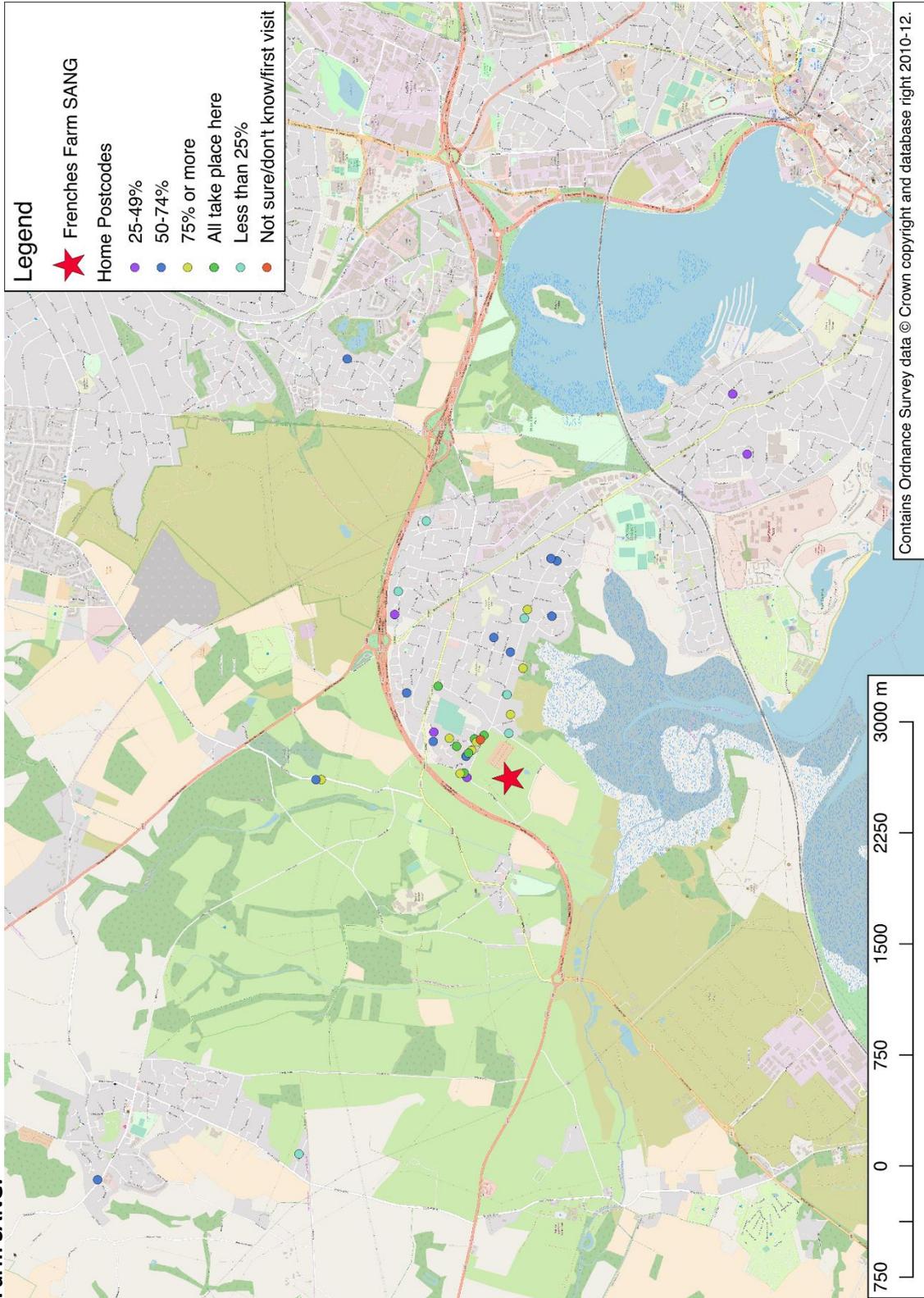
4.2 Map 1 shows the home postcodes of the 95% nearest to Frenches Farm SANG and Map 2 the home postcodes of the interviewees labelled by what proportion of their visits for the current activity take place at the site.

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Map 2: Home postcodes of interviewees, labelled by what proportion of their visits for the current activity take place at Frenches Farm SANG.



5. Visitor routes

5.1 Visitor 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 if the route they had taken today was representative of the route they would usually take at the site. Figure 19 shows the responses to this question with 68% suggesting that it was their normal route and 18% suggesting they had no typical route.

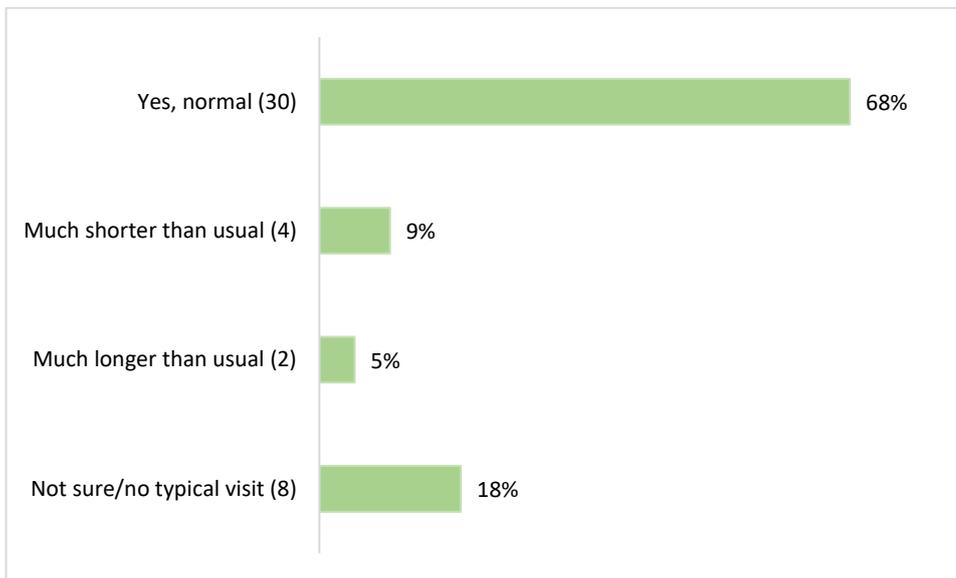


Figure 19: Responses to Q10 whether the route chosen today was reflective of their usual route when visiting the site. Number of interviewees in brackets and percentages next to frequency bars.

5.3 Visitors were asked what, if anything influenced their choice of route at the site on the day of their visit. The most common response was 'other' (77%) which included responses such as avoiding other dogs and sticking to where the path was drier and not as muddy. 15% of interviewees described the reason for their choice of route was actions/activities of dog. Figure 20 shows these responses.

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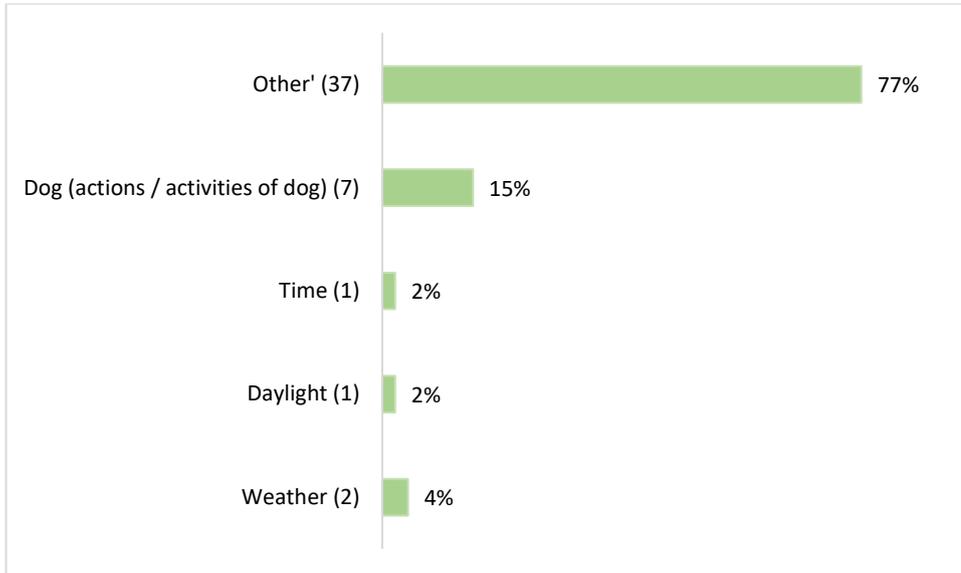
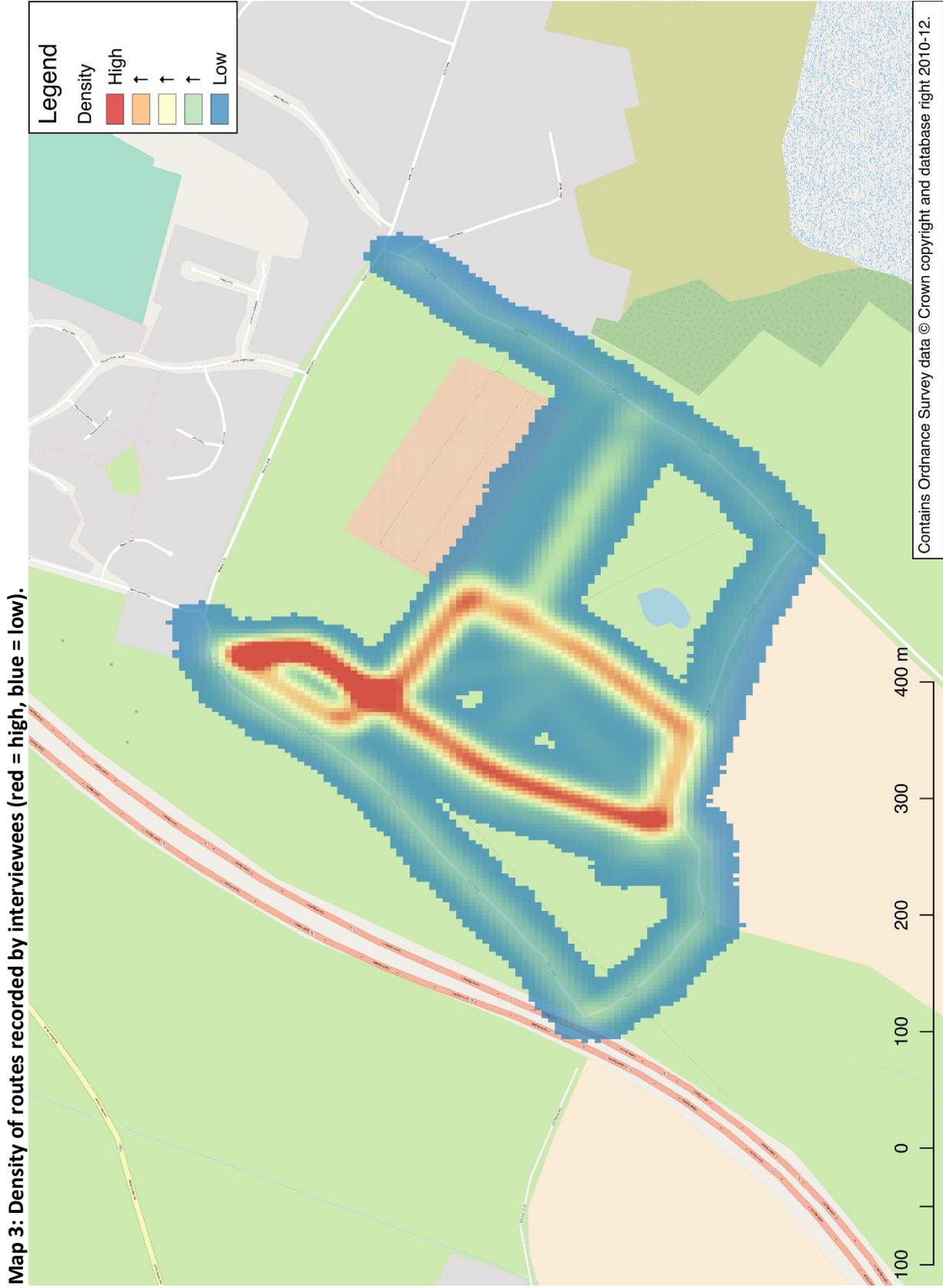


Figure 20: Interviewees responses to if anything influenced their choice of route on the site on the day of their visit. Number of interviewees in brackets and percentages next to frequency bars.

5.4 Map 3 shows the estimated density of recorded routes from the interviews.

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5.5 Finally visitors were asked to rate certain aspects of their visit and the site. Firstly, interviewees were asked to rate the paths in the SANG from 1-10 (with 1 being poor and 10 being excellent). Figure 21 shows that 91% rated the paths as 6 or above.

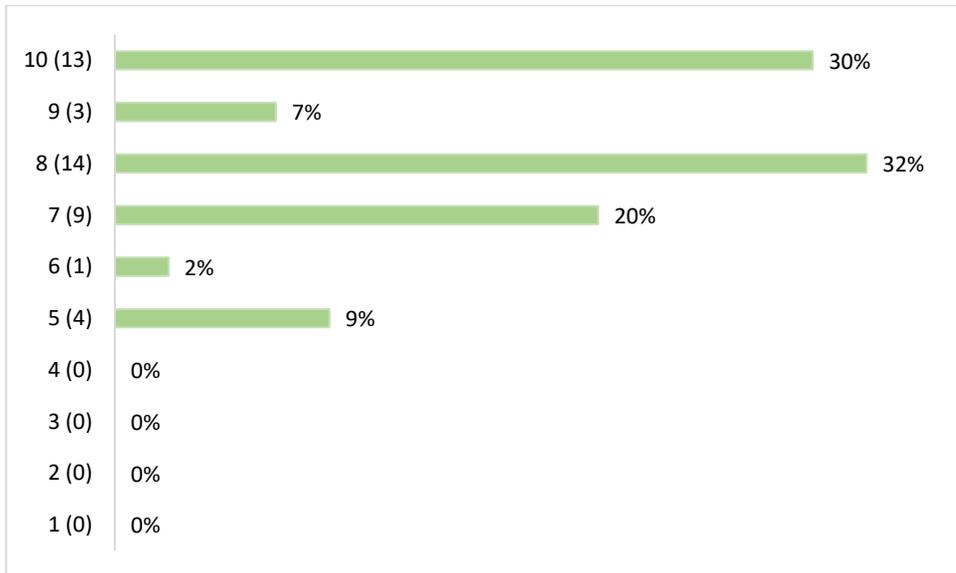


Figure 21: Responses of interviewees when asked to rate the paths in the SANG. Number of interviewees in brackets and percentages next to frequency bars.

5.6 For those interviewees who had driven to the site today, they were asked to rate the parking at the site from 1-10 (with 1 being poor and 10 being excellent). Figure 22 shows that 73% of interviewees rated the parking as 6 or above.

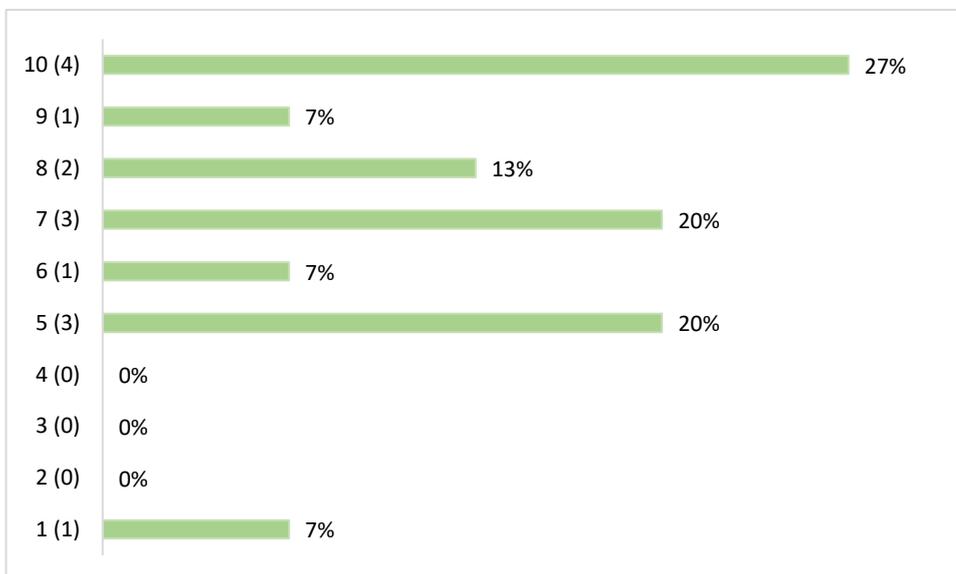


Figure 22: Responses of interviewees when asked to rate the parking at the site. Number of responses in brackets and percentages next to frequency bars.

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5.7 Visitors who had described their main activity at the site on the day of interview as dog walking were also asked to rate the site for dogs from 1-10 (where 1 is poor and 10 is excellent). Figure 23 shows that 96% rated the site as 6 or above.

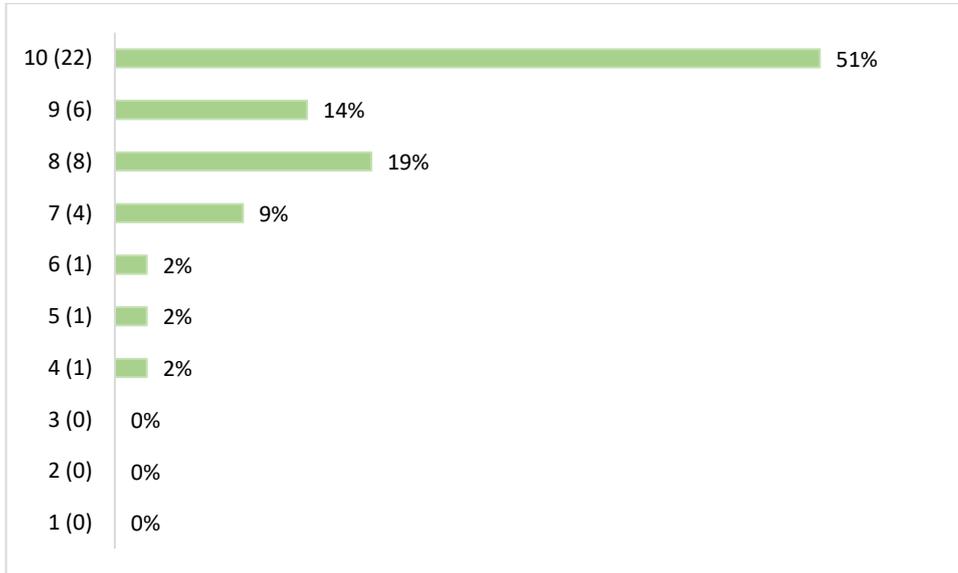


Figure 23: Responses of interviewees when asked to rate the site for dogs. Number of responses in brackets and percentages next to frequency bars.

5.8 Lastly, all interviewees were asked to rate the site overall from 1-10 (where 1 is poor and 10 is excellent). Figure 24 shows that 95% of interviewees rated the site as 6 or above.

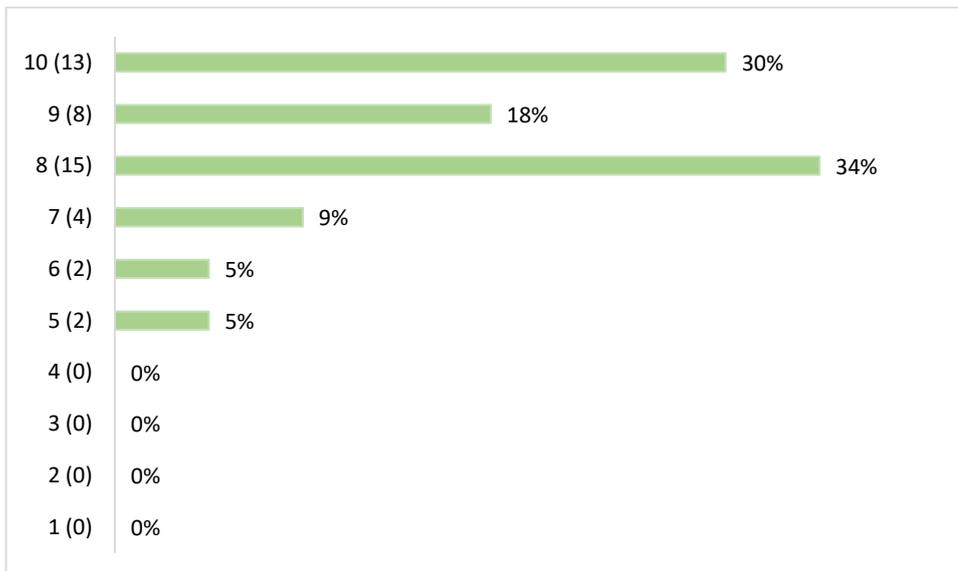


Figure 24: Responses of interviewees when asked to rate the site overall. Number of responses in brackets and percentages next to frequency bars.

5.9 All further comments about the site and how it is managed are shown in Figure 25.

People parking in the car park for development as no parking on streets around new houses.
Need drainage for allotment gate. Not disabled access all round. No disabled parking.
Mud on the lane around the outside.
Car park needs expanding.
Height restrictor on barrier not locked. Worried about local heron.
Would like to know who manages site.
Entrance issue.
Needs promoting but not too much! Worried about when there will be livestock.
Drainage issue.
Worried about barbed wire fence. Dog ripped stomach open on it.
Builders vehicles in car park. Car park is very small.
Drainage issues near allotments so can't use access point. Car park full of non site users.
More poo bins.
All lovely.
Boggy small field.
Muddy rutted lane stops them doing longer route, mud from building site horrendous.
Small dog can get under gate, allotment gate needs drainage, worried about grazing.
No footpath to car park so have to walk on road and dangerous on bend.
Wet entrance means can't use nearest entrance point (slough lane).
Dog pond gets too muddy.
Bigger car park would be nice.

Figure 25: All further comments about the site and how it could be managed.

6. Car park transect surveys

- 6.1 The Dorset Heathland SPA car park transect is carried out 14 times a year by the Urban Heaths Partnership and partner Heathland Mitigation wardens. In line with the opening of the SANG, a new car park at the bottom of Policemans Lane was added and scheduled for surveying. Further information of car park transect figures across Dorset Heathlands SPA project areas are available on request from UHP.