

The Bristol Wildspace Project

Troopers Hill Local Nature Reserve

Visitor Survey 2002/3



By Sally Oldfield, Local Nature Reserves Officer



CONTENTS

	Page
1 Summary	1
2 Introduction	
2.1 Background to the project.....	3
2.2 Purpose of the visitor survey.....	3
2.3 Methodology.....	4
3 Key findings	
3.1 Response rates.....	4
3.2 Demographics of respondents.....	5
3.3 Use of Troopers Hill by respondents.....	7
3.4 Attitudes towards Troopers Hill.....	9
3.5 Comments made about site management.....	11
3.6 Knowledge about the site's wildlife and history.....	13
3.7 Respondents interested in attending future events.....	16
3.8 Respondents interested in helping to look after the site.....	17
3.9 Respondents interested in receiving further information.....	18
3.10 Additional comments made.....	18
4 Conclusions	
4.1 Demographics.....	20
4.2 Site management issues.....	20
4.3 Wildlife.....	21
4.4 Education and interpretation.....	22
4.5 Community Involvement.....	22

APPENDIX

The questionnaire

Map showing distribution of questionnaires posted

Responses by road

Full list of responses and comments

1. Summary

This research was carried out as part of the Bristol Wildspace Project, funded by English Nature's Wildspace! Grant (through the New Opportunities Fund) and Bristol City Council's Inclusive Parks Fund. The aim of the Bristol Wildspace Project is to increase peoples' enjoyment and involvement in the city's local nature reserves, as well as to ensure that these sites are managed to a high standard for nature conservation.

The major aims of the visitor survey were to:

- Find out how often people living locally visit Troopers Hill.
- Find out how much people know about the wildlife of the site.
- Find out how people feel the site could be better looked after.
- Find out whether there is any local interest in forming a "Friends of Troopers Hill Group".
- Put together a mailing list of local residents interested in receiving further information about Troopers Hill.

The visitor survey was carried out by posting questionnaires by hand to approximately 1000 households within a short walking distance of Troopers Hill. Questionnaires were also available from St. George library, Summers Hill Infant and Junior Schools and Air Balloon Infant and Junior Schools. The questionnaires were delivered in late November 2002 and the closing date for returns was 16th December.

192 questionnaires were returned which represents a good response rate. The key findings are summarised below:

- Almost half the respondents visit Troopers Hill at least once a week.
- Providing more seats and reducing dog mess were the two most popular suggestions respondents gave for encouraging people to visit more often.
- Enjoying the view and going for a stroll were the two most popular reasons respondents gave for visiting Troopers Hill.
- The views and the natural open space were the things people liked most about the site.
- The dog mess, litter and poor footpaths were the things people disliked about the site.
- Over 90% of people agreed that Troopers Hill is important for wildlife and over 80% agreed that they enjoy seeing wildlife there. Over 75% agreed that living near Troopers Hill is important to them.
- Respondents named improving footpaths, reducing dog mess and reducing litter as the top priorities for managing Troopers Hill better.
- 42% of respondents did not know that Troopers Hill is a local nature reserve. However, 72% of respondents had read the signs on site.
- The wildlife species/groups named most often by respondents as being seen at Troopers Hill were deer, badgers, birds and foxes. Very few people named any plant species among the wildlife they had seen, despite being asked to list plants as well as animals.

- Over 80% of respondents were interested in finding out more about Troopers Hill, preferably via leaflets or improved signs on the site.
- Respondents showed an interest in attending a wide range of events and activities at Troopers Hill, particularly guided walks on history and wildlife.
- Around a quarter of all respondents were interested in taking part in practical work parties on site.
- 32 people were interested in attending a meeting to start a "Friends of Troopers Hill Group".
- 138 households wanted to receive information about future events and activities taking place at Troopers Hill, with 48 of these households also interest in receiving information about events at other local nature reserves.

2. Introduction

2.1 The Bristol Wildspace Project

The Bristol Wildspace Project is about improving the links between people and nature through raising the profile of Bristol's Local Nature Reserves. It is a Bristol City Council project, funded by English Nature's Wildspace! grant (through the New Opportunities Fund) and Bristol City Council's Inclusive Parks Fund. The aim of the Bristol Wildspace Project is to increase peoples' enjoyment and involvement in the city's local nature reserves, as well as to ensure that these sites are managed to a high standard for nature conservation.

Troopers Hill was designated as a Local Nature Reserve in 1995. The site is owned and managed by Bristol City Council. Situated in the residential area of St. George, Troopers Hill is easily accessible and is well-used by local people. However, there is only a limited history of community involvement in looking after the site.

In terms of its ecology, Troopers Hill supports very important heathland and acidic grassland habitats. These are rare in the Bristol and Avon context. The site is also very valuable for invertebrates, some of the rarest of which are associated with areas of bare ground caused by erosion. The unusual ecology and dramatic landscape of Troopers Hill result from the mining and quarrying that has taken place in the past there. The 19th century chimney, which still stands on the highest point of Troopers Hill, is a remnant of the site's long history of industrial use.

2.2 Purpose of the visitor survey

The aims of the visitor survey were:

- To get an idea of how often local people visit Troopers Hill.
- To discover how people feel about the site and why they visit.
- To find out whether people experience any problems on the site.
- To find out how people feel Troopers Hill could be better looked after.
- To find out how much people know about, and appreciate, the wildlife on the site.
- To find out what sort of future events and activities would appeal to people.
- To raise local interest in and awareness of Troopers Hill.
- To put together a mailing list of people interested in attending events and in looking after the site.
- To find out whether there is any local interest in setting up a "Friends of Troopers Hill Group".

2.3 Methodology

A questionnaire was produced with the help of Jane Greenaway at Bristol City Council (Marketing Officer, Parks Development). A freepost, addressed envelope was included with the questionnaire in the hope that this would increase the number of returns received. Completed questionnaires could also be handed in at St. George library.

Questionnaires were posted by hand to approximately 1000 households within short walking distance of Troopers Hill (see "Map showing distribution of questionnaires posted" in Appendix). Questionnaires were also available from St. George library, Summers Hill Infant and Junior Schools and Air Balloon Infant and Junior Schools. The questionnaires were delivered in late November 2002 and the closing date for returns was 16th December. A prize draw to win a Christmas Hamper worth £50 was offered as an incentive for people to return their forms.

The survey was aimed at people living very close to Troopers Hill and did not seek to include people who visit the site from further afield. Although the intention was to survey as wide a cross section of visitors as possible, limited resources meant that the survey had to be restricted to a relatively small geographical area. It was also thought that the proportion of questionnaires returned would be higher, the closer people lived to Troopers Hill.

Ideally, the postal survey should be supplemented with on-site interviews with visitors, and this is something that could be addressed in the future. It did not form part of this survey because, due to the weather conditions in December, it was felt that visitors walking on the site might be reluctant to take part in interviews.

3. Key findings

3.1 Response rates

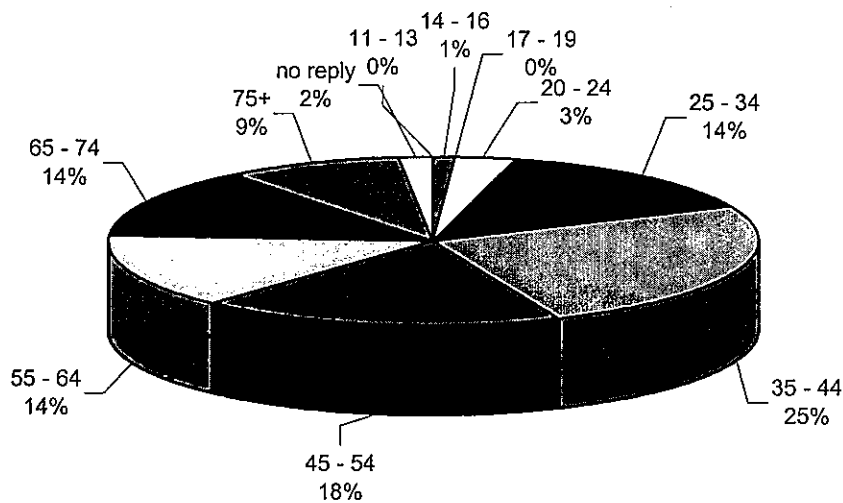
- 1000 questionnaires were delivered and 192 were returned. This represents a return rate of almost 20% which is considered a good response.
- Very few questionnaires were returned via St. George library. Almost all were returned in the free post envelopes.
- Some questionnaires were returned from roads that had not been delivered to as part of the survey (see "Map showing distribution of questionnaires posted" and "Responses by road" in Appendix). These were presumably from people who had picked up questionnaires from either the library or the schools. However, these represent only a very small proportion of questionnaires received.
- Responses were received across the whole area to which questionnaires had been posted and there was a good geographical spread. However, the response rate tended to be higher from the older, longer established residential areas than it was from the areas of new

houses and flats (see "Responses by road" in Appendix). For example 24 questionnaires were returned from the houses on Troopers Hill Road, in comparison with 18 responses from the new development of houses and flats off Crews Hole Road, where there are several hundred households in total.

3.2 Demographics of respondents

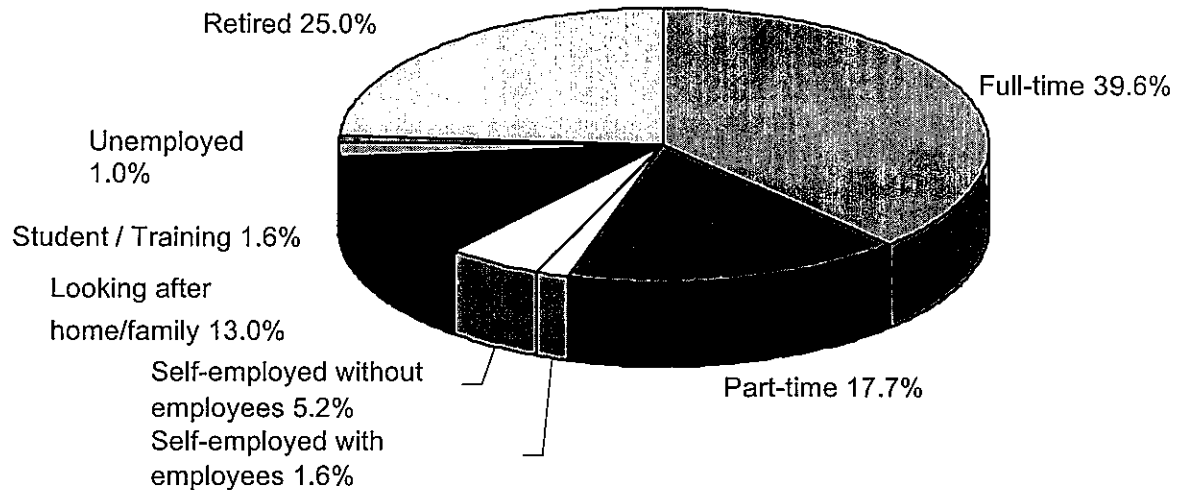
- 42.4% of respondents were male and 59.7% were female (some questionnaires were completed by couples which explains why some respondents were recorded as both male and female)
- The piechart below shows the percentage of respondents in each age category. Only 4% of respondents were under the age of 24, indicating that young people's views were under-represented in the survey. All other ages groups however were relatively well represented. The 35-44 year olds were the biggest group overall, with 25% of all respondents falling into this category. However, this figure is matched by those people over the age of 65 who also represent nearly a quarter of all respondents.

Which age group applies to you?



- The piechart below shows the working status of respondents. When grouped together the percentage of respondents in work (whether full-time, part-time or self-employed) is 64.1%. The second largest group of respondents, after those in full-time work, were retired people (25%). (A large number of older people were recorded as unemployed rather than retired. It was assumed that people were ticking the "unemployed" rather than "retired" box on the form by mistake, and therefore anyone over the age of 65 was actually recorded as retired.) Only 1.6% of respondents were in school or training.

Which best describes your working status?



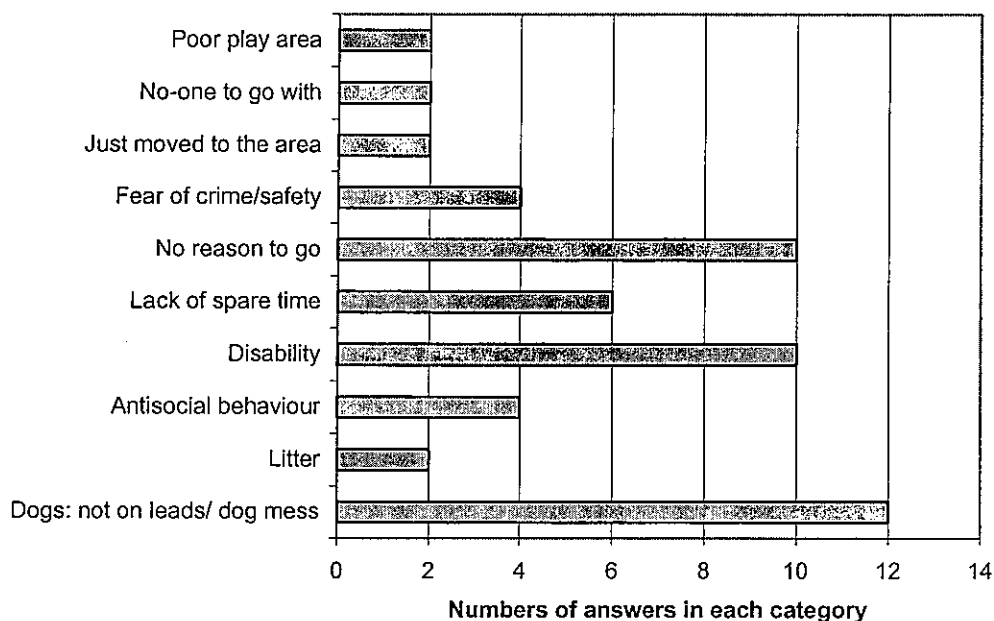
- 92.2% of respondents described themselves as "white British". 2.1% as "white Irish", 2.1% as "white other", 0.5% as "Asian or Asian British Indian" and 0.5% as "Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi". The census data for the ward of St. George states that 2% of the population here is from ethnic minorities (this is below the average for the city of 5%). So minority ethnic groups were slightly under-represented in the Troopers Hill survey but not by a large margin.
- 10.4% of respondents considered themselves to be disabled. This represents quite a high proportion of respondents and perhaps reflects the fact that 9% of people were over the age of 75. The census data for St. George also reveals that this ward has a higher than average level of physical disability. A range of different disabilities were recorded by respondents (see "Full list of responses and comments" in Appendix for details) including mobility difficulties, deafness, lung disease and partial sightedness.
- 9.9% of respondents considered their disability affected their use of Troopers Hill. Suggestions made by these respondents for improving access included providing handrails, changing the kissing gate on Troopers Hill Road to make it accessible to wheelchairs, improvements to path across playing field and footpaths on site generally. Several respondents said that nothing could be done to improve access for them.

3.3 Use of Troopers Hill by respondents

- Most of the 192 respondents visit Troopers Hill frequently, with 43.7% visiting the site once a week or more. A further 43.8% visit between one and six times a year. 8.3% visit less than once a year. It seems that most people either visit Troopers Hill on a weekly basis or just a few times a year, since only 1.6% of respondents visit between one and four times a month.
- 28.6% of respondents answered the question "If you never, or rarely, visit Troopers Hill can you tell us why?" Their answers have been grouped into several broad categories and are shown in the bar chart below. Dogs and dog mess, followed by disability and having no reason to go were named most frequently as reasons for not visiting Troopers Hill more often.

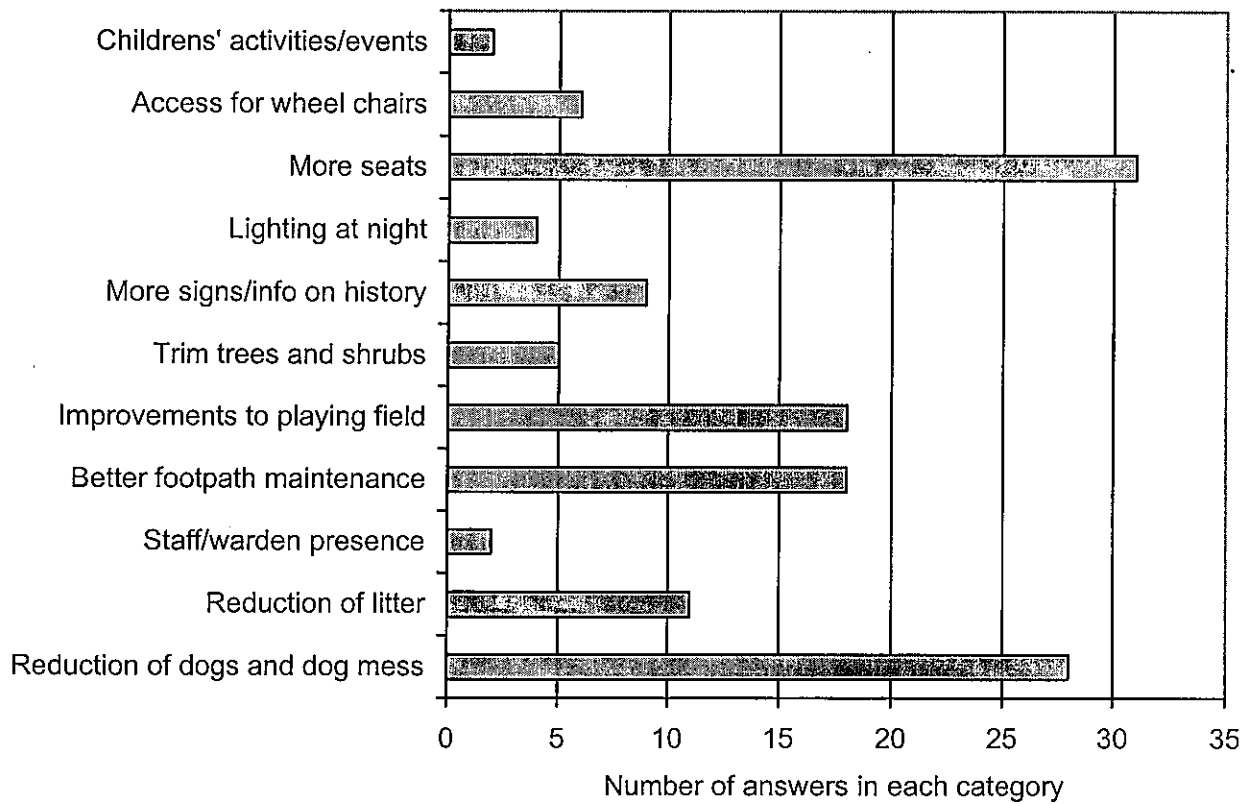
The play area mentioned is situated on the playing field accessed from Malvern Road. The field is adjacent to Troopers Hill but is not actually part of the local nature reserve.

Reasons given for only rarely visiting Troopers Hill



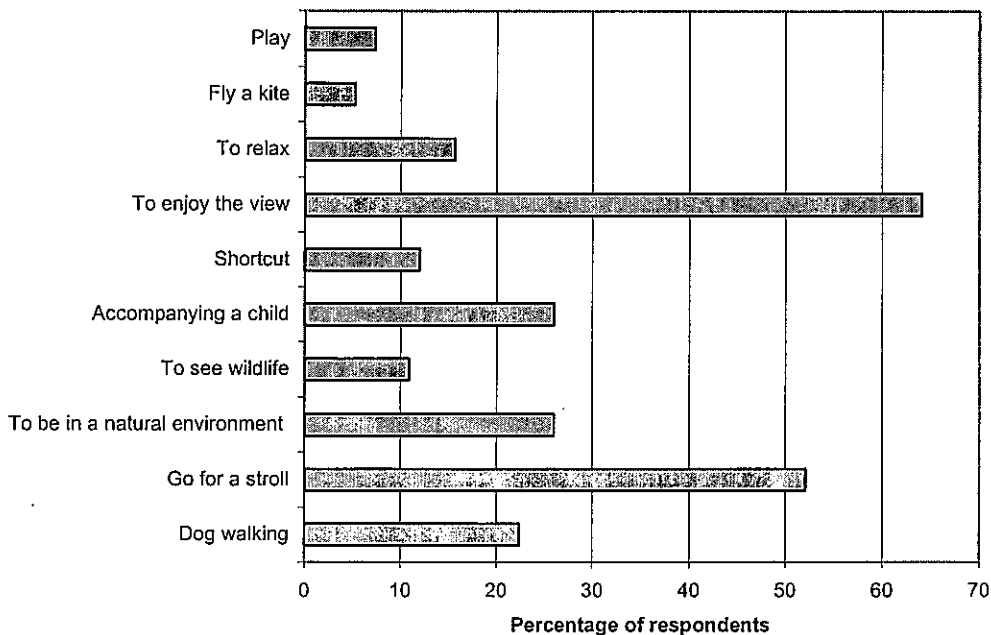
- 63.5% of respondents suggested changes that could be made at Troopers Hill to encourage them to visit more often. These were again grouped into broad categories and are illustrated below. The most popular change identified by people was the desire for more seats on the site.

Suggestions for changes at Troopers Hill that would encourage people to visit more often



- 94.3% of respondents travel to Troopers Hill on foot. This is unsurprising since the questionnaire was posted to houses within walking distance of the site.
- Respondents were asked to give two reasons why they visited Troopers Hill (tick boxes and categories were provided on the survey form). The bar chart below illustrates these results (categories chosen by under 5% of respondents are not shown). 8.9% of respondents listed "other" reasons for visiting, such as "to watch the Ashton Court hot air balloon fiesta". Enjoying the view and getting out for a stroll were the most popular reasons given for visiting Troopers Hill.

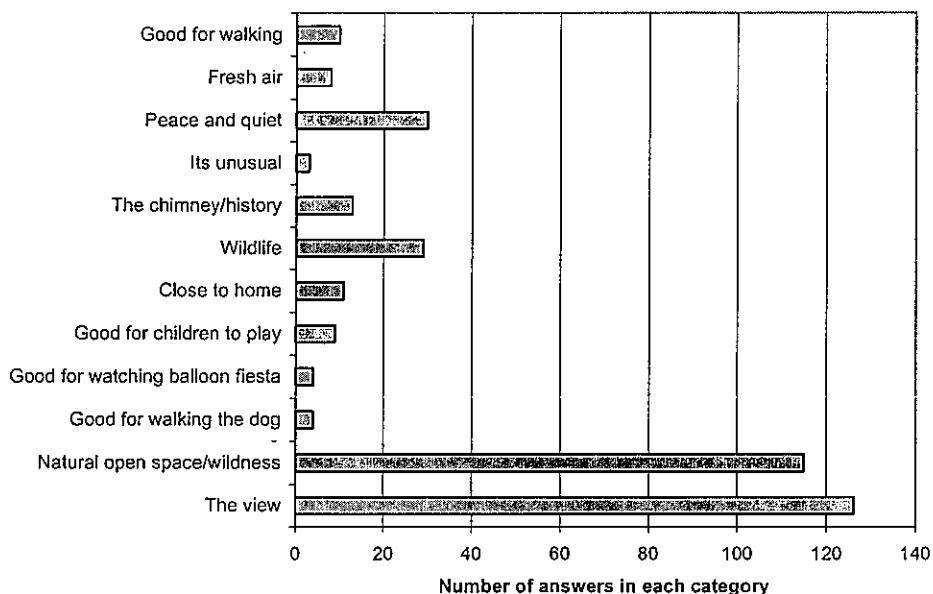
Reasons for visiting Troopers Hill



3.4 Attitudes towards Troopers Hill

- Respondents were asked to give two things they most liked about Troopers Hill. The answers were grouped into categories and are shown in the bar chart below. By far the most popular things people liked about the site were the views and the natural open space.

What two things do you like most about Troopers Hill?

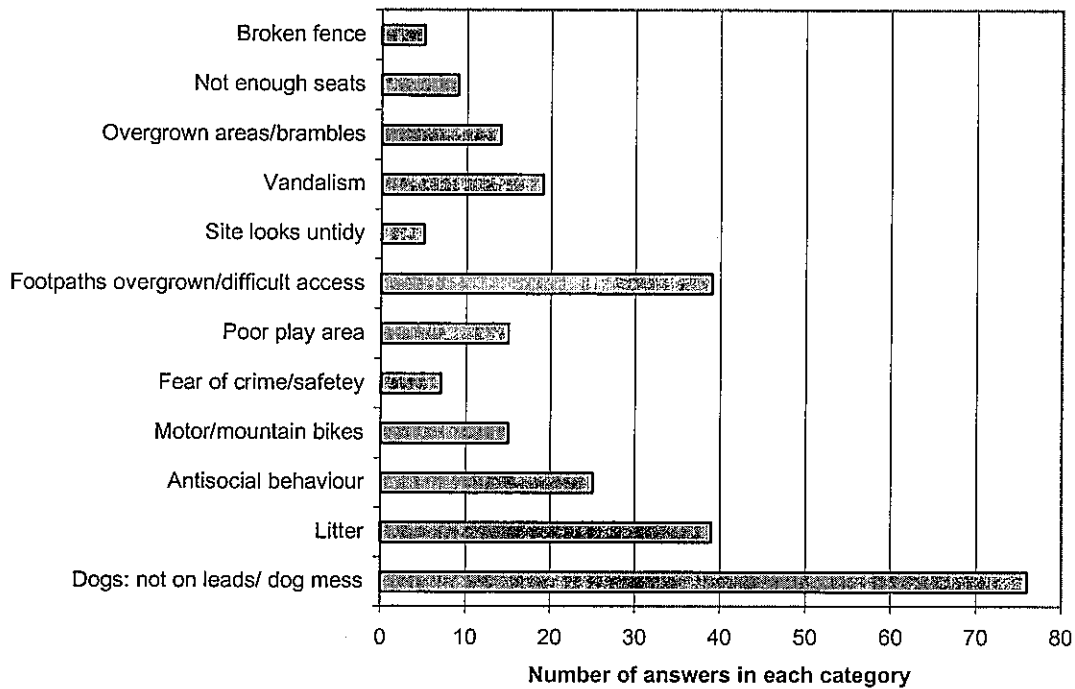


- Respondents were asked to give two things they disliked about Troopers Hill. Again, answers are shown below. By far the most common answer given was dogs and dog mess. Of those respondents who listed dogs as an issue, most referred to dog mess as being the problem. However some people also disliked dogs being off leads.

The condition of the footpaths on site was mentioned by almost 40 respondents. People referred to a range of issues concerning footpaths including paths being overgrown, the path across the playing field being muddy, paths on Troopers Hill being "rough underfoot", unsafe steps and poor access for wheelchairs. It is unclear whether all the footpaths referred to are actually on the local nature reserve or outside it. The playing field, for example, is not part of the reserve and it may be that some of the overgrown paths mentioned are in Crews Hole Woodland which also adjoins the site. Some further consultation with local residents is required to clarify this and address general footpath maintenance. The poor play area referred to is, again, situated on the playing field and is not part of Troopers Hill.

It is worth noting that the overall response to the question about what people dislike about Troopers Hill was lower than the response to the question about what people like about the site. 87% of respondents could think of two (and not just one) things they liked about Troopers Hill in comparison with 65.6% of respondents who could list two things they disliked.

What two things do you like least about Troopers Hill?



- When asked to respond to statements about the importance of Troopers Hill, most people had very positive feelings about the site's value to both wildlife and to themselves.

90.7% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement "Troopers Hill is an important place for wildlife within Bristol".

78.7% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement "Living near Troopers Hill is important to me".

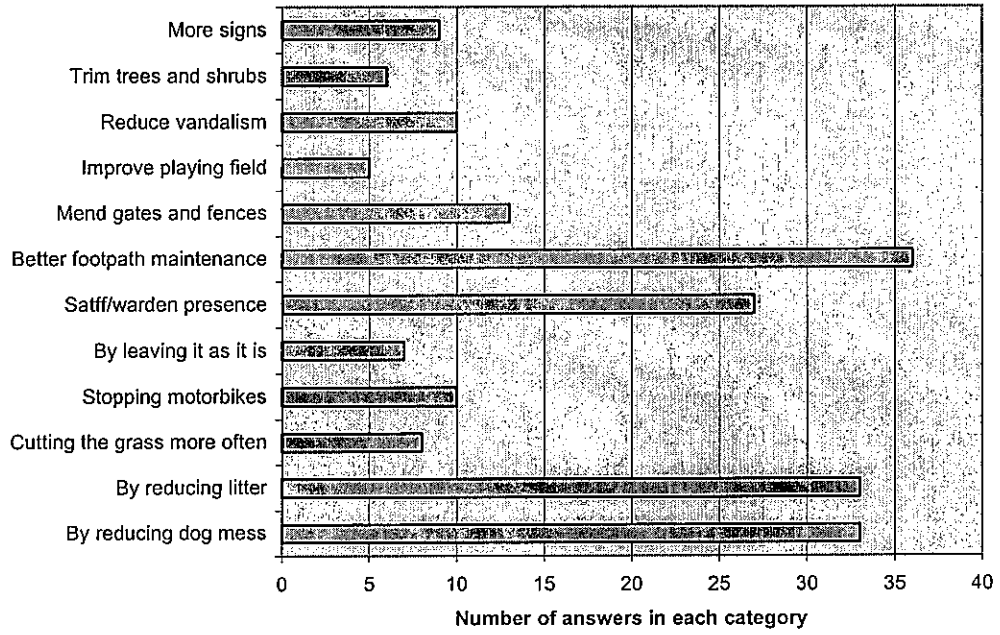
81.3% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement "I enjoy seeing wildlife at Troopers Hill".

3.5 Comments made about site management

- Respondents were asked how they felt Troopers Hill could be better looked after, and results are shown below in the bar chart. The most popular suggestion made was to maintain footpaths better. This is slightly surprising since dog mess received the highest score in what people dislike about the site. However, reducing dog mess and reducing litter were also mentioned by a large number of respondents in their suggestions for better management. A further significant result was the idea to provide staff or warden presence on site. Several people suggested that Troopers Hill should be left as it is with no interference. Suggestions relating to ecological management on the

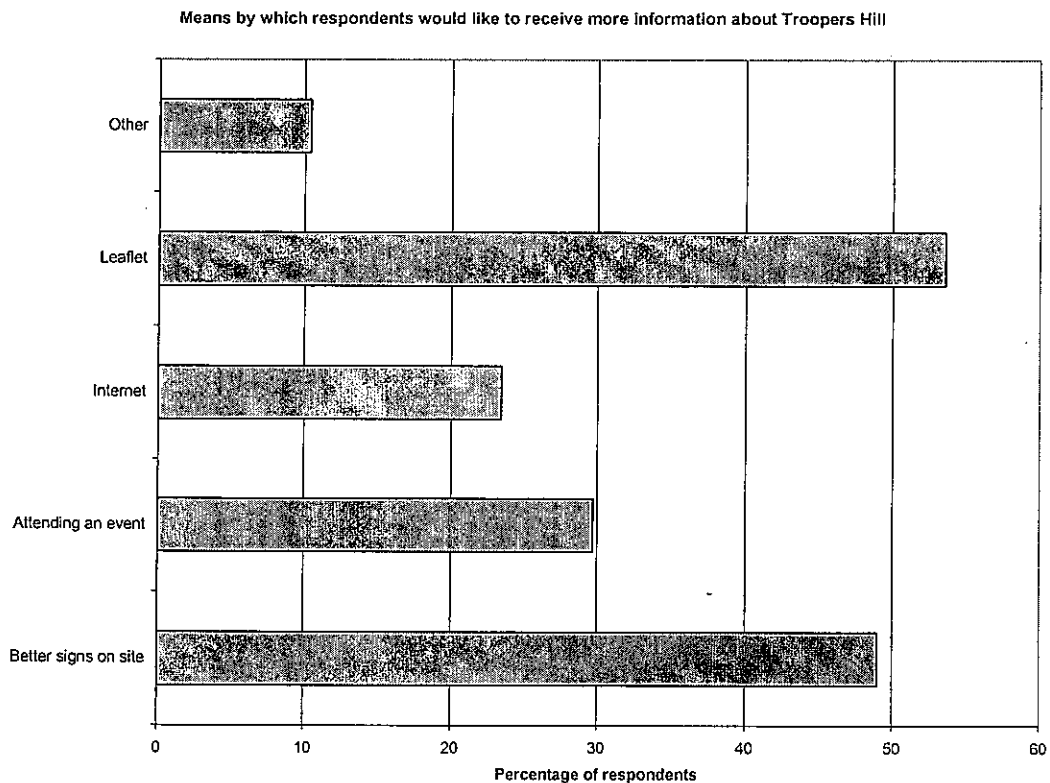
site (cutting trees or grass) scored relatively low in terms of the number of people listing them.

How do you feel Troopers Hill could be better looked after?



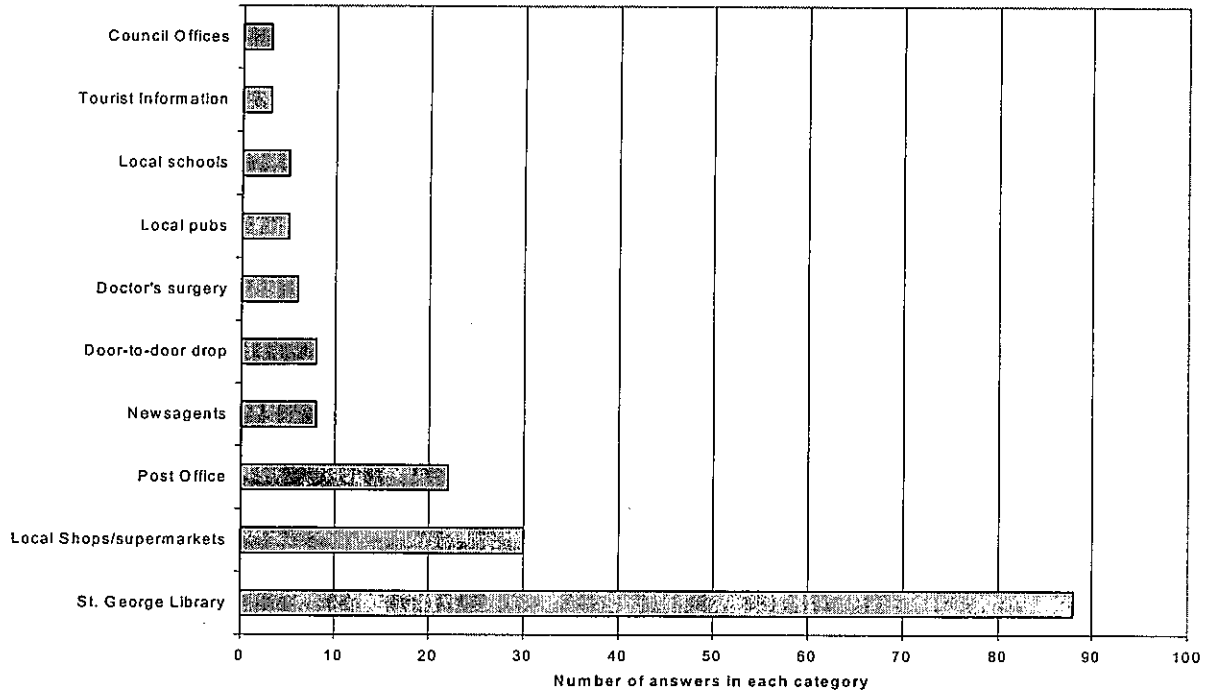
3.6 Knowledge about the site's wildlife and history

- 56.8% of respondents knew that Troopers Hill had been designated a local nature reserve and 42.2% did not. This information is available on the two interpretation boards on the site. The fact that over half the respondents were aware of the local nature reserve status of the site is encouraging and suggests that people are aware that Troopers Hill is considered important for wildlife and that is being managed in a different way from a more amenity focused public open space. However, since over 40% of respondents did not know that Troopers Hill is a local nature reserve, perhaps some further interpretation of the site is needed.
- 71.9% of respondents had read the signs on the site and 26.6% had not. This suggests that the signs are positioned in places which make them visible to most people but not all. However it is not known whether people who had not read the signs had not seen them or had not wanted to read them. One of the signs is hidden by vegetation in the summer months.
- 84.4% of respondents were interested in finding out more about Troopers Hill. This result is very encouraging and suggests that local people have a real interest in the ecology and history of the site. Informing people of the value of Troopers Hill and its importance as a local nature reserve is one of the aims of the Bristol Wildspace Project.
- Of those respondents that were interested in finding out more about the site, the means by which they would like to receive the information are shown below. Some people ticked more than one answer which accounts for the percentages totalling more than 100%. People showed interest in all types of means suggested, but picking up a leaflet was the most popular. Suggestions in the "other" category included promotion in local media, production of a local history book, and information in the library.



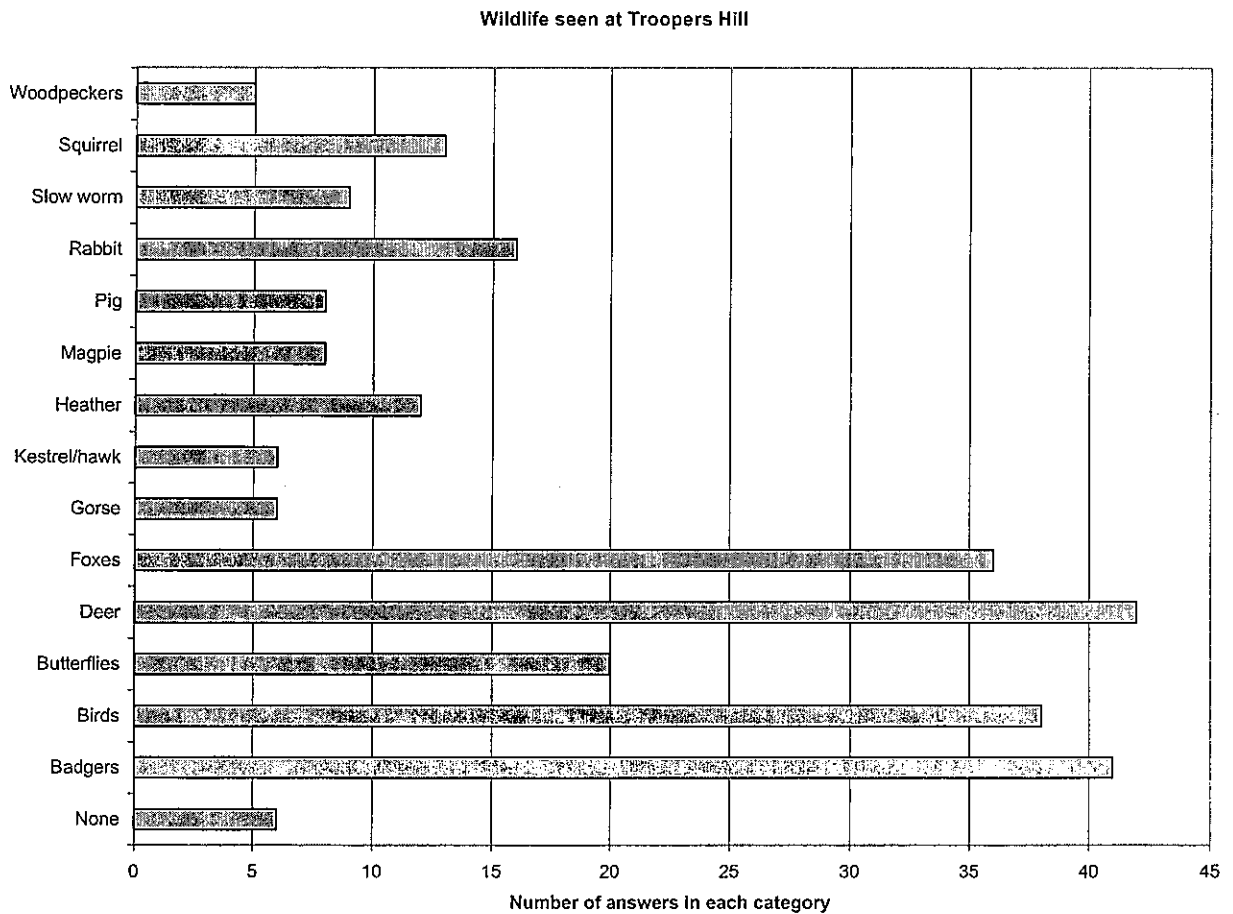
- Suggestions for where people would like to pick a leaflet up from are illustrated below. St. George Library was by far the most frequently mentioned location, with almost half of all the respondents in the survey naming it as a place where they would pick a leaflet up from. It is interesting that of all the other locations suggested, almost all are very local to Troopers Hill, indicating that the more local the publicity, the more effective it is likely to be.

Places where respondents would like to be able to pick up leaflets about Troopers Hill



- Respondents were asked to list any plants or animals they had seen at Troopers Hill in an effort to gauge peoples' knowledge of the wildlife value of the site. 62% of respondents answered this question. A summary of the species listed is shown below.

Six respondents had a much greater level of ecological knowledge and were able to provide more comprehensive species lists for the site (questionnaires numbered 37, 47, 57, 96, 109 and 129).



- Respondents were asked to provide any other information, historical or otherwise, that they had on Troopers Hill. Only 31.3% of respondents gave answers to this question. Their responses make interesting reading (see "Full list of responses and comments" in Appendix). Some people did not know the history of the site, but said that they would like to find out about it.

3.7 Respondents interested in attending future events

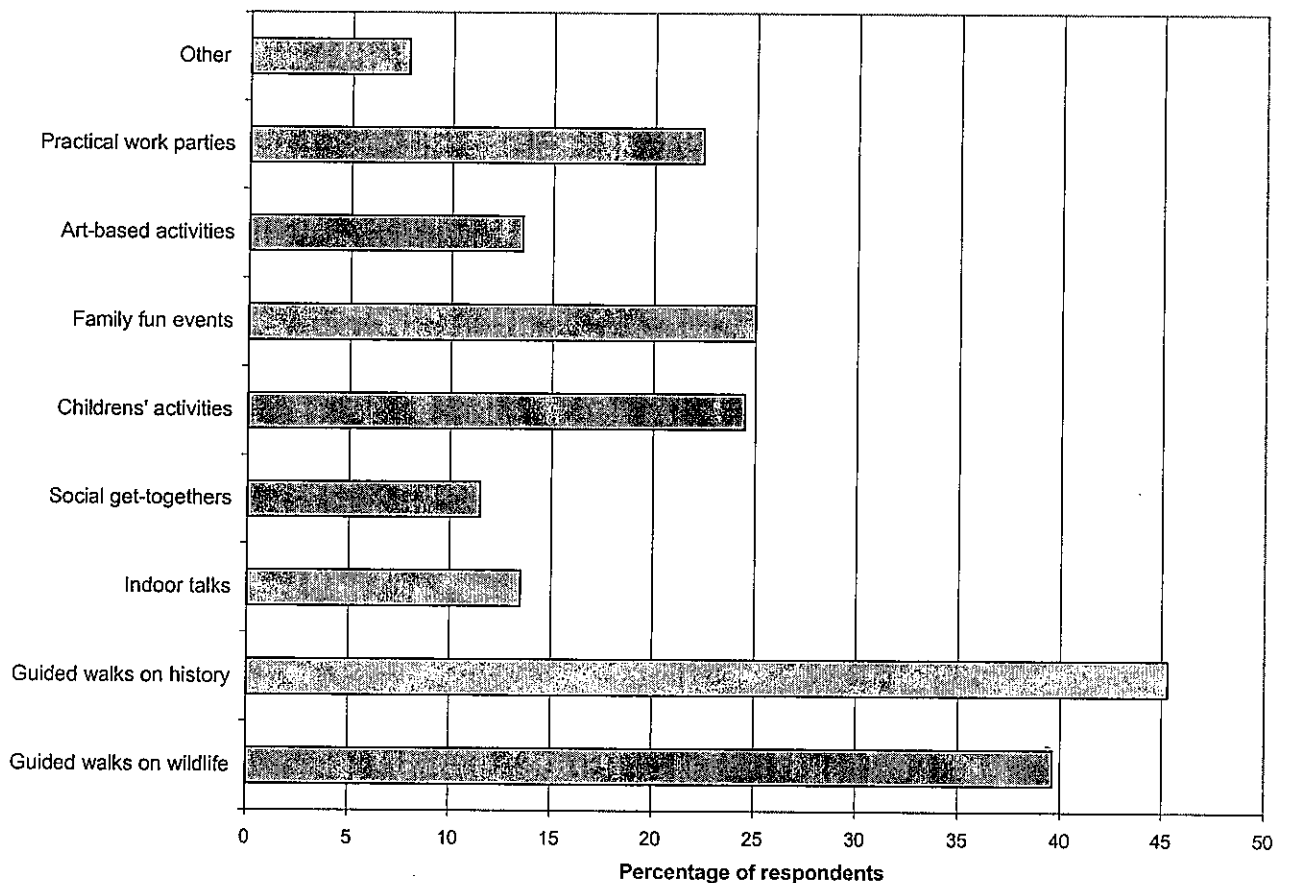
There was a lot of interest in attending future events of various sorts on Troopers Hill. The bar chart below shows the breakdown of types of events and percentage of people interested.

Guided walks were the most popular types of events, with history walks (45.3%) rating slightly higher than wildlife walks (39.6%). The Bristol Wildspace Project is primarily about raising awareness of local nature reserves as important sites for nature conservation and as valuable places where people can come into everyday contact with wildlife. However, it is important to bear in mind that people may be interested in other aspects of a site, such as history, and that this interest may provide a way of encouraging greater understanding and appreciation of the site as a local nature reserve.

All the other events listed in the questionnaire received some level of interest from people, suggesting that running a wide range of activities may be the best way of engaging the largest number of people. Practical work parties, family fun events and children's activities all received interest from approximately a quarter of all respondents.

The "other" category included improvements to the playing field (which is not part of Troopers Hill), dog shows, fireworks, barbeques, pig roast and comments from people who did not want to take part in any events.

Respondents interested in attending different types of events



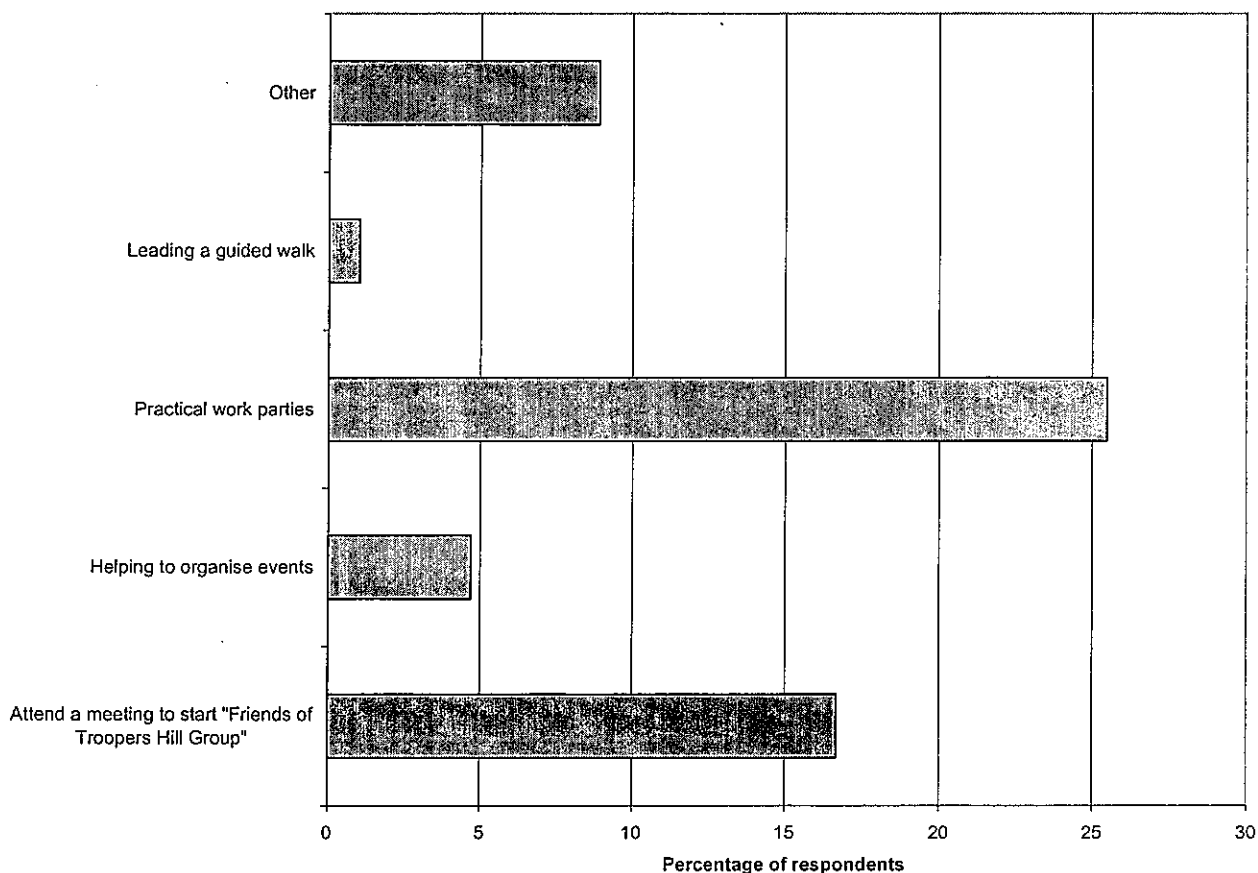
3.8 Respondents interested in helping to look after the site

- The questionnaire gave people several options for becoming more involved in the management of Troopers Hill. The response is shown below in the bar chart. Attending practical work parties and attending a meeting to start a Friends of Troopers Hill Group were the most popular ways in which people wanted to participate. Only 1% of respondents wanted to lead guided walks.

The highest percentage scored (for practical work parties) was 25%, indicating that the majority of respondents do not want to be involved in helping to look after the site. However, since the number of respondents was large, 25% represents a considerable number of people (49) which is very positive. 32 people expressed an interest in attending a meeting to start a group.

Several people made comments that they would like to help but simply did not have the time or the ability (e.g. due to ill health). Suggestions in the "other" category mostly consisted of the reasons why people felt they couldn't get involved.

Ways in which respondents would like to become more involved in looking after Troopers Hill



- Respondents were asked to suggest any other groups or organisations that might be interested in taking part in events at Troopers Hill. 15.1% of respondents answered this question (although several of these simply replied that they did not know of any). Groups that were suggested included local scouts, local churches, local schools, St. George Townswomens Guild, Barton Hill Settlement and East Bristol Allotment Society.

3.9 Respondents interested in receiving further information

- 71.9% of respondents (138 households) provided their name and address and indicated that they would like to receive information about future events and activities at Troopers Hill.
- 26% of respondents (48 households) provided their name and address and indicated that they would like to receive information about future events and activities at other local nature reserves.
- 7.8% of respondents did not want to receive any information in future.
- These results represents a very positive response for the Bristol Wildspace Project, since a mailing list of 138 households can now be set up. These households can be invited to take part in future events and activities on Troopers Hill and can potentially be consulted about any proposed changes to the management of the site.

3.10 Additional comments made

- 31.3% of respondents made additional comments. For a complete list of these see Appendix.
- Any assessment of the additional comments made by respondents will doubtless be made on a subjective level. Bearing this in mind, there follows some of the most interesting/typical comments made:
 - Please do not make the hill a park – stop cutting the grass and brambles and keep it natural.
 - Under NO circumstances should Troopers Hill be developed.
 - Bought my home because of the beautiful natural view from all my windows.
 - I used to love going to Troopers Hill with my children...but then the council fenced it in. Now the dog-owners remove leads inside gate and let them roam freely, I don't take my grandchildren. The dense undergrowth from the chimney to Strawberry Lane needs the paths to be cleared.
 - It would be helpful if the paths and steps leading to chimney could be improved as over the years they have worn away and not been replaced – very muddy after rain.
 - Signs showing the way to Troopers Hill (suggest at top of Summerhill Terrace).
 - Keep dogs off Troopers Hill and adjoining playing field.
 - I really do think the Japanese Knotweed needs to be controlled – it is taking over the entire area and as an invasive plant I understood there was a legal obligation.
 - What a super questionnaire, full marks to the person who suggested this.
 - We specifically chose Troopers Hill when moving to Bristol as it was an area of outstanding natural beauty. I do not think as someone who has lived in the country all my life that management committees are the way forward. The way to a truly natural habitat is with as little "man" management as possible and that wildlife should not suffer at the hands of "events".

- Please, please do something about the dog mess so that people other than dog owners can enjoy the area.
- I'd like to know more about the local history of Troopers Hill and may even take a walk there, now I'm inspired by your leaflet.
- Children love to play on Troopers Hill. I do wonder about the safety aspects.
- I think there should be more signs saying no bikes on the hills as it is dangerous. Most people don't realise there shouldn't be any bikes.
- I have not visited Troopers Hill recently as it does not appeal to the children as much as other places. I value it being there. When I first went there 41/2 years ago it felt magical. There was not a view exactly on a sunny Sunday morning but a dazzling white hint of a vista. I wanted to show my mother, who lived outside Bristol. She died unexpectedly that year so I never did.

4. Conclusions

4.1 Demographics

The response rate of almost 20% is very positive and suggests that local residents have a genuine interest in Troopers Hill. The site appears to be well-used by the local community, since most respondents visit Troopers Hill regularly, with 43.7% visiting once a week or more.

The percentage of respondents describing themselves as disabled was quite high, at 10.4%. Most of these respondents felt that their disability affected their use of Troopers Hill. Suggestions for addressing some of the issues caused by disability included making gates wheelchair friendly and improvements to some footpaths. The steep nature of the site makes much of it inaccessible for wheelchair use. However, wheelchairs could possibly reach the top of the hill via the playing field entrance, if the gate here was modified. Care would need to be taken however not to increase access by motorbikes.

4.2 Site management issues

When asked what changes could be made to encourage them to visit more often, the most popular suggestion from respondents was to provide more seats on site.

The problem of dog mess and dogs off leads on Troopers Hill is obviously a major issue for a large number of people. It scored highly on "reasons for not visiting Troopers Hill more often", "suggestions for changes that would encourage people to visit more often", "what two things do you least like about Troopers Hill" and "how do you feel Troopers Hill could be better looked after". At present there are no dog bins at all on the site, although there is one dog bin on the playing field, near the entrance to Troopers Hill.

Litter was also a concern for a lot of people, but did not attract as many comments as the problem of dog mess.

The need for better footpath maintenance scored quite highly on "suggestions for changes that would encourage people to visit more often" and "what two things do you least like about Troopers Hill" and was the highest scoring suggestion in "how do you feel Troopers Hill could be better looked after?"

The footpaths on the site were created about 12 years ago and are in need of repair. The steep nature of some parts of the site mean that footpaths would need to be carefully designed to prevent the substrate materials from being washed downhill after rain. Some of the footpaths referred to by respondents lead onto to Troopers Hill but are not actually part of the local nature reserve. Access work to improve these footpaths could be achieved through liaison with relevant Bristol City Council staff. Further consultation with the public is needed to ensure that any footpath improvement work is successful.

Establishing a staff or warden presence on the site was suggested by 27 respondents. This is perhaps connected with the desire to see a reduction in vandalism, anti-social behaviour and motorbike access, all of which were highlighted by some respondents. Providing a paid member of staff to patrol the site is unlikely to be feasible in terms of Bristol City Council's resources. However, the presence of a volunteer warden has had beneficial results on other sites, and may well receive community support at Troopers Hill.

Despite encountering some problems at Troopers Hill, the attitude of respondents towards the site was very positive. The view and the natural surroundings were the two things people liked most about Troopers Hill.

4.3 Wildlife

Respondents' attitude to wildlife on Troopers Hill was very positive, despite the fact that very few people seemed aware of the plant life, for which the site is ecologically important.

29 people stated "seeing wildlife" as one of the two things they liked most about Troopers Hill. An overwhelming majority of respondents agreed with the statement that "Troopers Hill is an important place for wildlife in Bristol" and over 80% agreed that they enjoyed seeing wildlife at Troopers Hill. These statistics are encouraging and suggest that local residents both value wildlife and feel it contributes to their enjoyment of being outdoors.

It is interesting that very few respondents named heather, gorse or any other plants as being present on site, despite the fact that it is the heathland and acid grassland for which Troopers Hill is notable. These plants are mentioned on the two on-site signs as being important, which suggests that even those visitors who have read the signs are either not understanding or not retaining the information.

A further explanation as to why so few plant species were listed, could be that respondents may tend to think of "wildlife" as referring only to animals (despite the fact that they were asked to list plants as well). Some respondents clearly had very specific ideas about what comprised wildlife and what didn't, with replies such as "no wildlife seen" or "none, only birds". This theory is backed up by the large number of people who only listed large mammals, such as badgers and foxes, despite the fact that these animals are rarely seen in comparison with plants and common birds.

There is also the barrier of identification, which prevents many people from being able to list plant, bird or invertebrate species. However, this is partly overcome by the use of broad terms such as "birds" or "butterflies".

In contrast to plants, the number of people listing butterflies is very encouraging. It is not surprising however that some of the rare invertebrates for which the site is important were not mentioned by the respondents.

It may be case that the type of wildlife listed by respondents reflects the interest of individuals in these species, since people list only those animals or plants which they have noticed while on site, and which they can remember. If so, then it seems that deer, badgers, foxes and birds are the most popular groups among visitors to Troopers Hill.

Suggestions concerning better management of the site tended to focus on appearance and accessibility and not ecological management. This may be either because people feel the site is already well managed for wildlife, or because respondents do not understand the principles of nature conservation management. In fact, ecological monitoring shows that Troopers Hill is currently in favourable management for nature conservation, and that species of interest are, in the main part, increasing.

4.4 Education and interpretation

The research indicated that further education on the wildlife and history of Troopers Hill would be welcomed by the local community (84.4% of respondents were interested in finding out more about the site). More awareness raising is needed on the ecological importance of Troopers Hill, its management needs and the reasons for its designation as a Local Nature Reserve.

Reading a leaflet and having better signs on the site were the most popular methods by which people wanted to learn more about Troopers Hill. Leaflets were produced in the past, but are now somewhat out-of-date and so consideration needs to be given to the production and design of new ones.

The two signs at Troopers Hill are around 7 years old and are looking rather worn. The questionnaire did not ask people to suggest what they meant by "better signs" and perhaps further consultation is needed to ensure that the positioning and design of any new signs would be effective.

4.5 Community Involvement

The research suggests that events held at Troopers Hill would be likely to attract local residents and that organising a variety of different types of events would be the best way to encourage greatest participation.

One of the aims of the Bristol Wildspace Project is to set up and support community groups to help look after local nature reserves. 32 respondents in this survey indicated that they would be interested in attending a meeting to start a "Friends of Troopers Hill Group". This is very encouraging and provides a good starting point for setting up a new group.

This project has resulted in the production of a mailing list of 138 households who would like to receive more information about Troopers Hill, with 48 of these households also interested in other local nature reserves in Bristol. This is an excellent result for the Bristol Wildspace Project, as it ensures that a large number of people living close to Troopers Hill can be kept informed

directly about new plans, and can be invited to take part in future consultations and other activities.

