

## **Summary of responses to the 2017 Troopers Hill Ways to Nature Questionnaire**

### **Introduction**

The consultation was run through via a questionnaire. Volunteers delivered over 1,800 questionnaires to homes immediately surrounding Troopers Hill Field and Troopers Hill. The questionnaire was also made available online and the link sent to the Friends of Troopers Hill mailing list and published on Twitter and Facebook.

### **Period of consultation**

The consultation opened on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> June and closed on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> July.

### **Number of responses**

A total of 225 responses were received. Paper questionnaires were copy-typed by volunteers into the online system so the results could be seen as a single report.

71 paper responses were received and 154 responses were made online. This is a high response to a survey.

A graphical report of the results is shown in appendix A.

### **Responses to tick box questions**

Just over 67% of replies said people would visit more often if the work was carried out to improve paths, track and install a new path. 57% of replies said they would be more likely to invite people with mobility problems, 35% said they would be more like to visit Troopers Hill after using the play area and over 51% said they would be more like to invite people with toddlers or children in buggies to Troopers Hill.

19% of replies said the work would make not change how often they visit but some respondents qualified this by saying they visited every day and by saying they were very fit.

2 people (0.9%) said they would visit less often if the work was done.

Nearly 89% of replies were in favour of replacing the rotting wooden boundary fences and gates on Troopers Hill Rd with metal estate fencing as protection against access by motorbikes, 9% (22) replies asked for a different type of fencing, suggestions were mainly for wood and a more natural appearance, 4 replies (1.8%) said the fence should be removed and the boundary left open.

Nearly 75 % of replies were in favour of local schoolchildren being consulted about metal wildlife sculptures to be put on the new fence, 42% wanted existing visitors to be consulted and 12% (28) wanted consultation done at a one-off event. 20 replies (8.9%) were not in favour of metal sculptures.

82 replies (nearly 39%) said they would donate or club together with friends to donate £150 to sponsor a metre of path. However at least 26 of the replies that said this did not include contact details. Over 61% of replies say they would not sponsor a metre of path.

Over 65% (144) of replies thought hopscotch games and other images applied to the new path would be a good idea, 34% thought this was not a good idea. 13 replies (8.1%) said they would be willing to sponsor an image.

Over 42% (82) said they would be will to help with this project (although 16 did not supply contact details) and nearly 58% said they would not.

### Written responses

81 people took the time to add more information in the comments section of the questions. This information covered the following themes:

Theme Description	Number of responses in that theme
1. In support of paths/surfacing/fencing with some qualifications	14
2. The fence to be in a more natural material than metal, mainly wood but there was a suggestion of recycled plastic	14
3. Comments on sponsorship, ranging from inability/unwillingness to do so to willingness to do so.	13
4. Reasons why there should be no images on the new path	12
5. Other ideas – such as an additional litter bin, a handrail from the Greendown entrance to the top of the Hill, planting flower beds, collecting boxes in local shops to fundraise, etc.	11
6. Comments against metal sculptures, mainly concerning potential vandalism and conservation work being a better financial investment.	9
7. Comments against paths	6
8. Compliments for Troopers Hill	2
9. Suggestion of a school to consult about the wildlife sculptures	1

10. Suggestion for animals to serve as models for the wildlife sculptures	1
11. Uncertainty about the location of the fence on Troopers Hill Rd	1

### **Conclusion including next steps**

The results of this survey give Friends of Troopers Hill a clear mandate to go ahead with a grant application for funding the Ways to Nature project. [www.troopers-hill.org.uk/waystonature](http://www.troopers-hill.org.uk/waystonature)

An outline figure has already been supplied by Bristol City Council for the work on paths and fencing. If the grant is awarded Bristol City Council will manage a tender process. Friends of Troopers Hill will collect quotations for other, complementary parts of the projects. Letters of support will be requested from the adjacent intermediate care home, our local MP and relevant local people and organisations. Other necessary documents will be gathered for the grant application, particularly those needed to show the backing of the landowner, Bristol City Council.

### **Acknowledgements**

Grateful thanks to:

- All the volunteers who delivered over 1,800 questionnaires to local homes.
- Margaret Watson for entering the paper questionnaires into Google Forms so the results could be collated
- Rob Acton-Campbell for the web pages relating to the project [www.troopers-hill.org.uk/waystonature](http://www.troopers-hill.org.uk/waystonature)
- The committee of Friends of Troopers Hill who have supported the initiation of the project, delivered questionnaires and reviewed the questionnaire drafted by Susan Acton-Campbell before it went to press.
- Bristol City Council for proving outline costs to enable us to assess the appropriate grants to apply for
- Children of Summerhill Out of School Club – when this group ended they decided to donate some of their remaining funds to Troopers Hill. We used £60 of these funds to part pay for the printing costs of the questionnaire.
- The University of Manchester. They donated £200 to Friends of Troopers Hill as part of an award to Susan Acton-Campbell, Chair of Friends of Troopers Hill as a Volunteer Alumnus of the year 2017. This money was used to fund the remainder of the printing costs

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A

#### Summary of questionnaire results



A – visit more often, for example not just in summer

B – be more likely to invite friends/family with mobility problems to visit Troopers Hill

C – be more likely to take a walk on Troopers Hill after using the play area

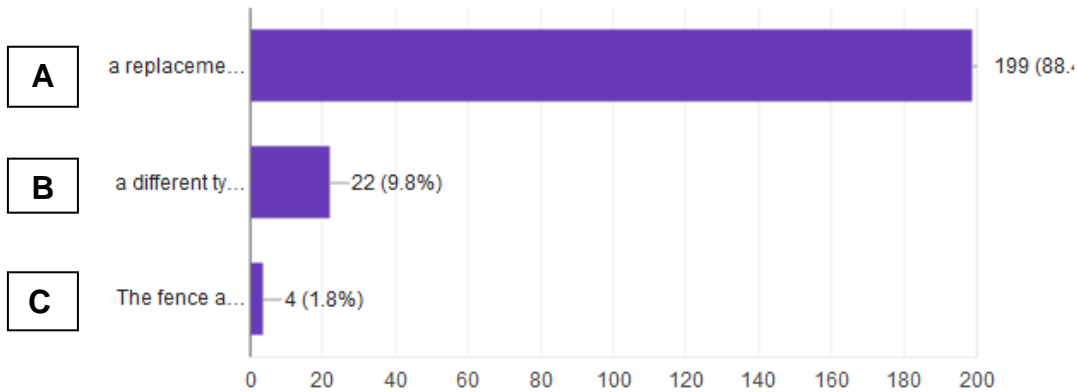
D – be more likely to invite freinds/family with toddlers or children in buggies to visit Troopers Hill outside summer

E – not change how often you visit at all

F – visit less often

2. Since kissing gates were installed in 2004 illegal access by motorbikes to the Hill and Field has been very limited. The wooden boundary fences and gates on Troopers Hill Rd are nearing collapse. Do you think (tick one):

225 responses



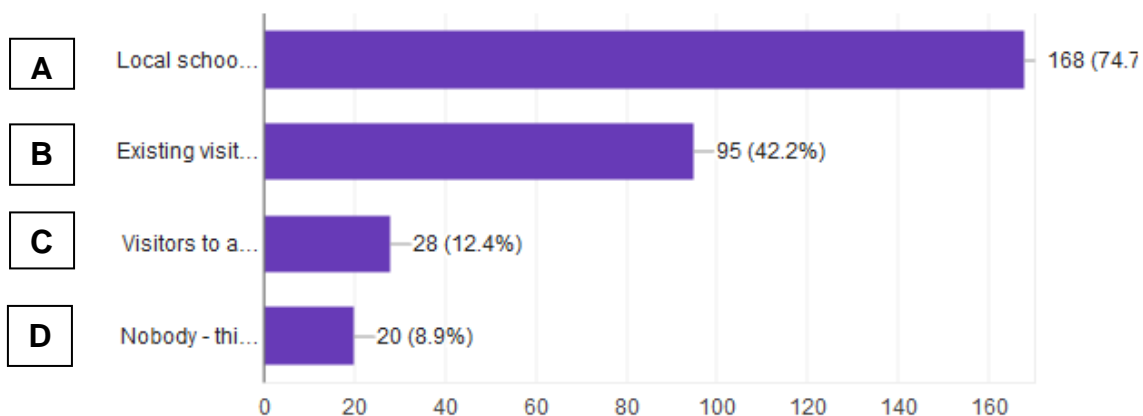
A – A replacement metal estate fence and gates, similar to the ones on the Greendown boundary, should be installed

B – A different type of fence should be installed

C – The fence and gates should be removed and the boundary left open

3. Small metal sculptures of wildlife found on Troopers Hill could be welded to the new fence. Who should we ask to choose which species are displayed? (tick all that apply)

225 responses



A - Local schoolchildren

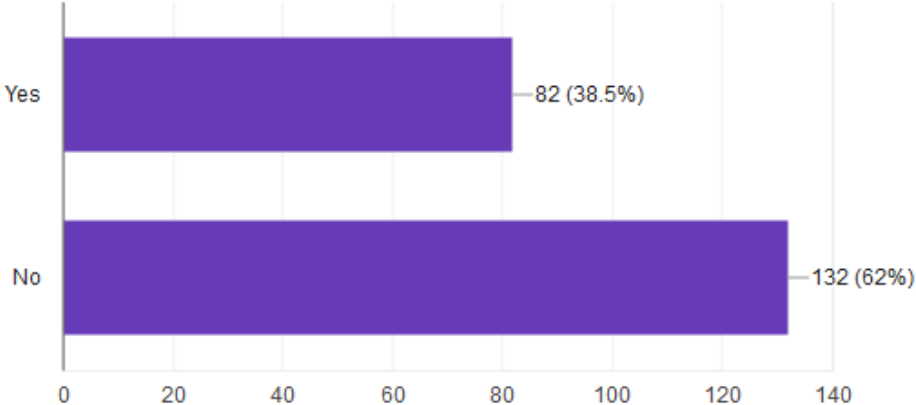
B - Existing visitors to Troopers Hill

C - Visitors to a one-off consultation event on Troopers Hill

D - Nobody – this is not a good idea

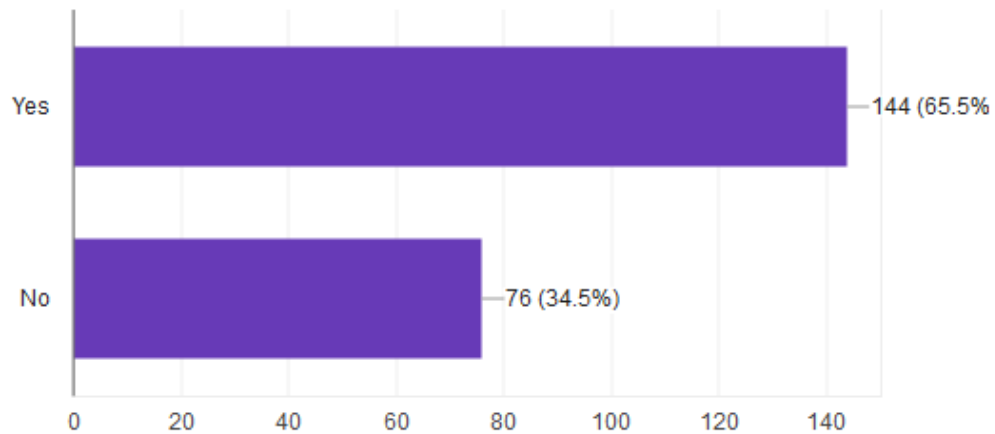
4. A metre of path would cost about £150. Would you donate or ask your friends to club together to donate this?

213 responses



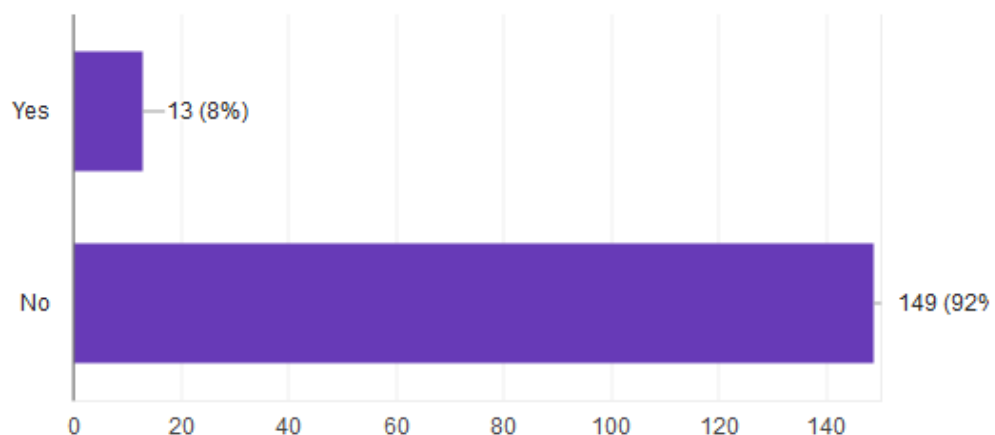
5a. Hopskotch games, flowers and other images could be put on the new path (like ones you see in school playgrounds). Is this a good idea?

220 responses



5b. Would you sponsor one of the images on the path (starting price £200)?

162 responses



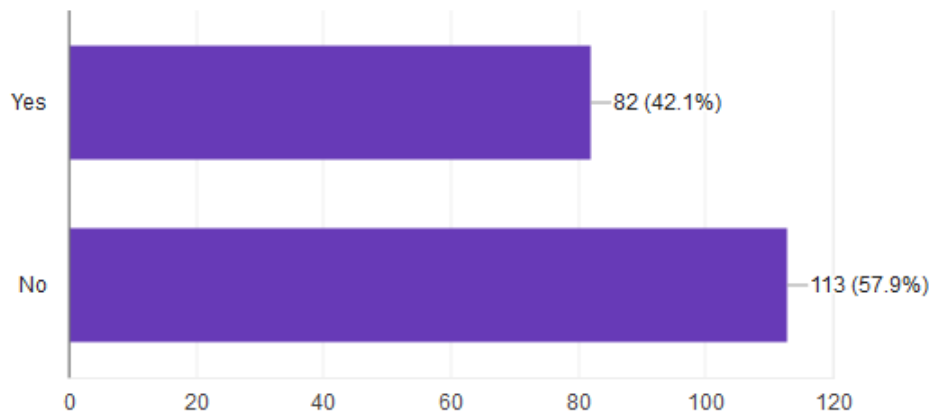
## 6. Comments

114 responses

See appendix C for sample responses and appendix B for responses to questions raised in responses to the survey.

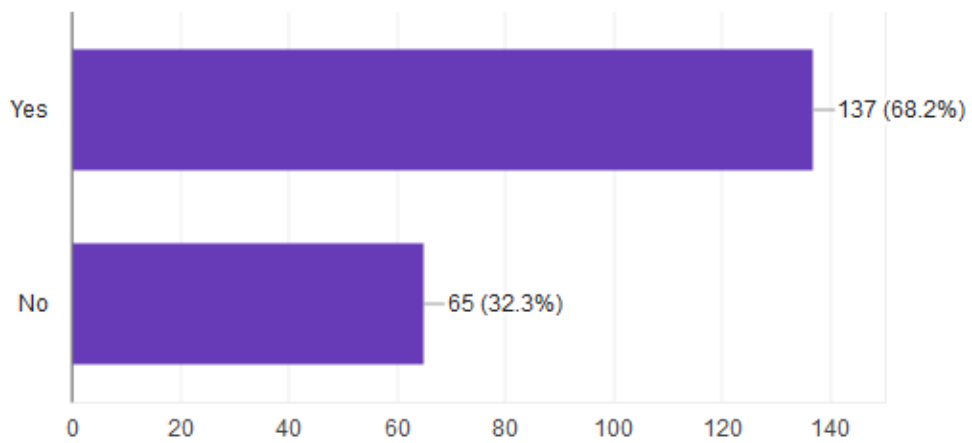
### 7. Are you willing to help with this project?

195 responses



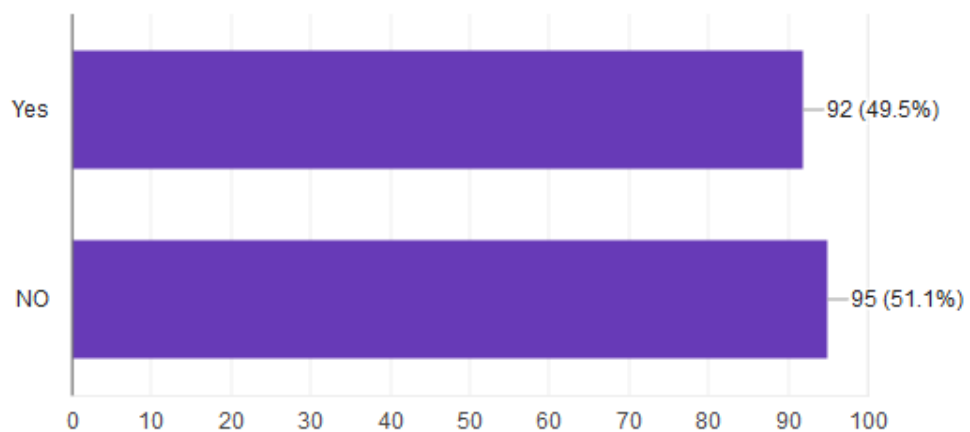
### 8. Do you want to be kept updated about this project?

201 responses



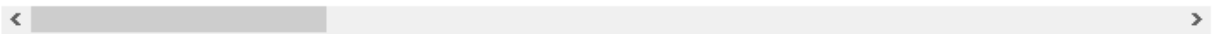
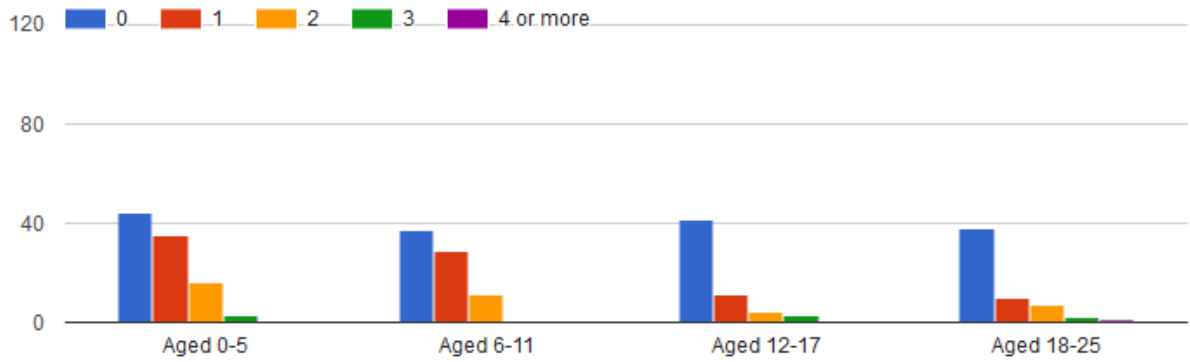
### 9. Do you want to be added to the Friends of Troopers Hill free mailing list?

186 responses

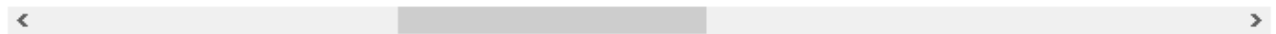
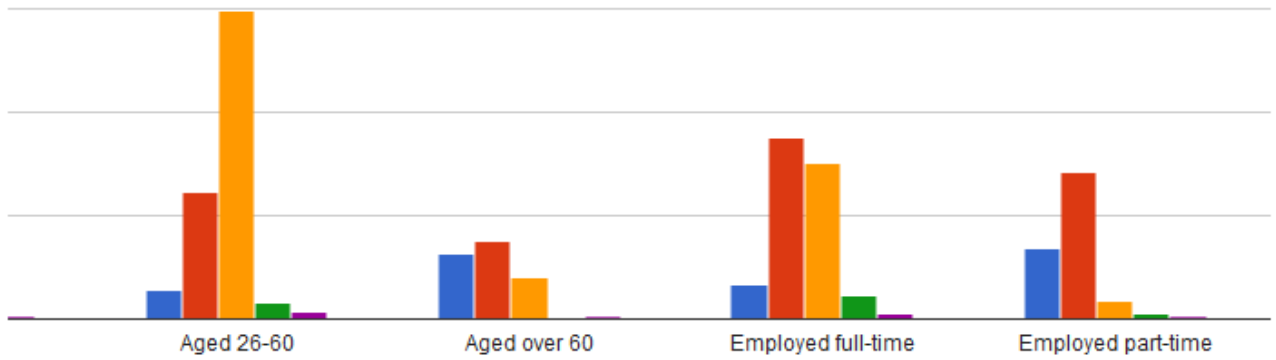




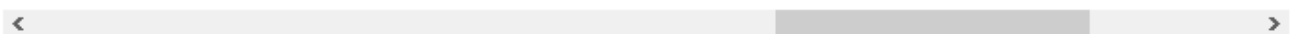
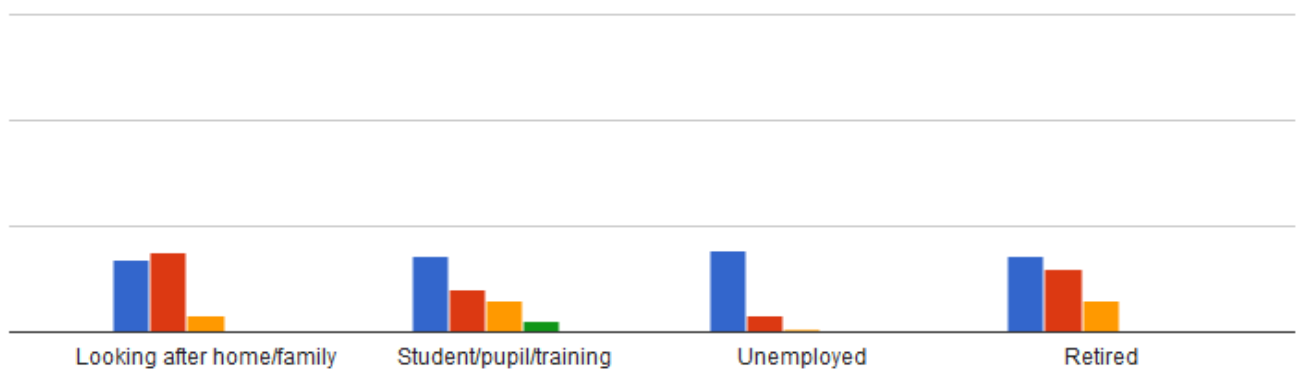
A. How many people in your household are:



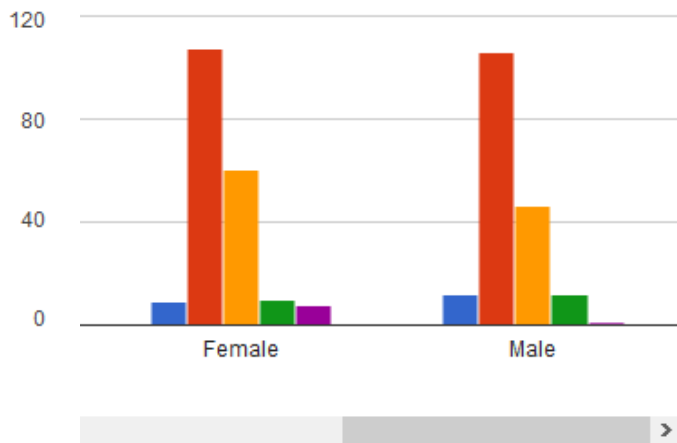
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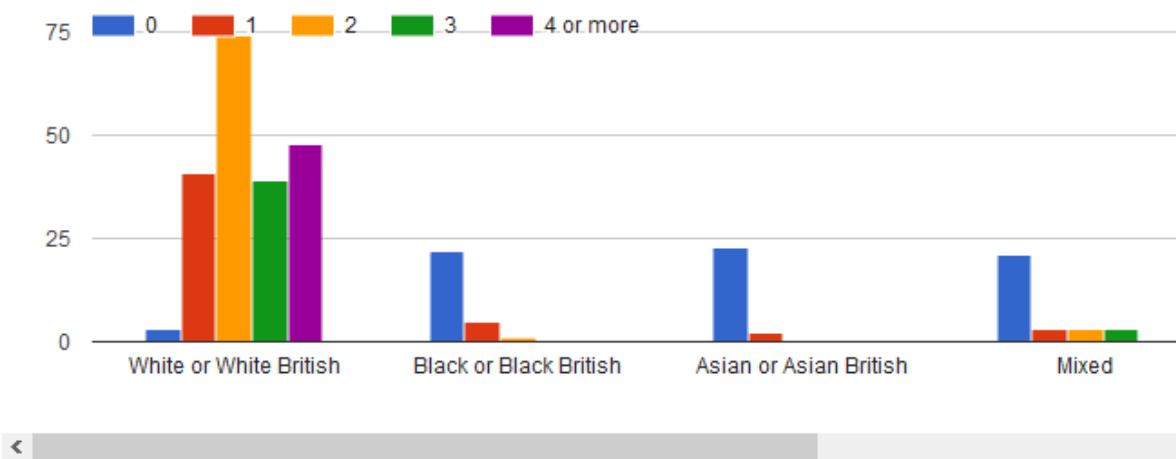
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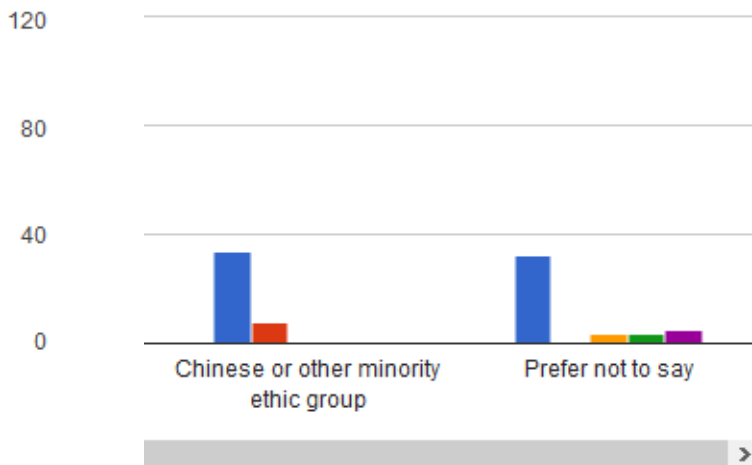
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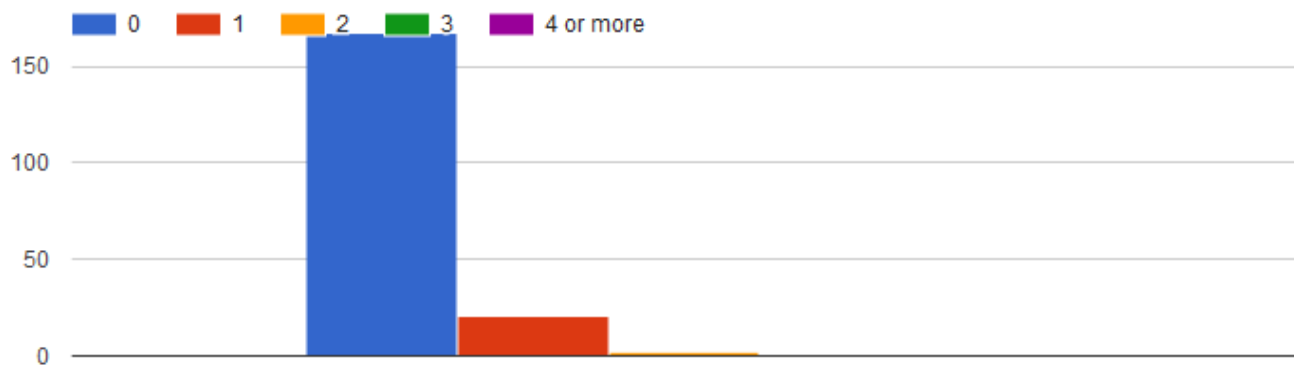
B. How many in your household are of the following ethnic origins?



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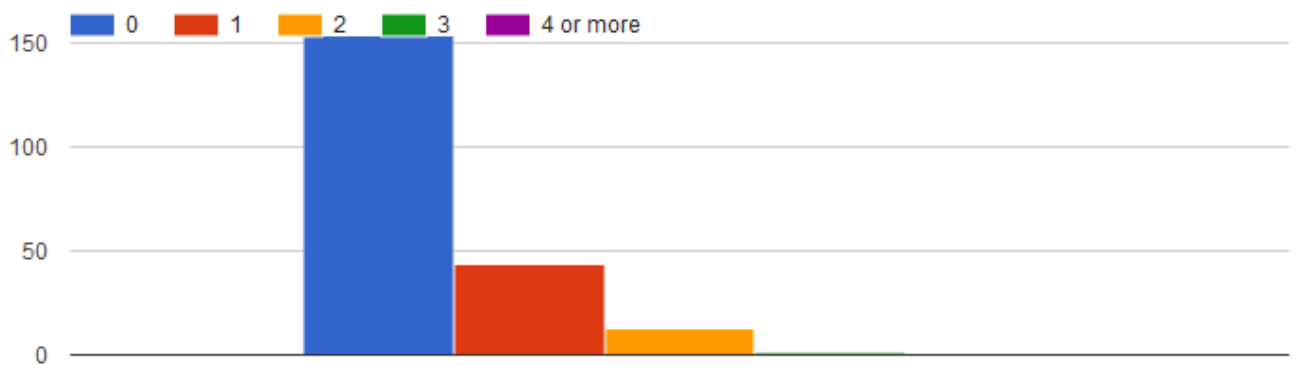


### C. How many in your household would consider themselves disabled?



21 households with one disabled person, 2 households with 2 disabled people

### D. How many dogs are in your household?



44 households with 1 dog, 13 households with 2 dogs

## **Appendix B**

### **Answers to issues raised in responses to the survey**

#### **1. Fencing**

While a clear majority 89% (199 people) were in favour of replacing rotting wooden fencing with metal estate fencing 22 people wanted a “more natural” or wood replacement.

Friends of Troopers Hill want this Local Nature Reserve to look as untouched as possible. Metal estate fencing is already in place on the Greendown boundary of Troopers Hill and blends in very well into the background. It is much less noticeable than wooden fencing while also being longer lasting. Parts of the boundary, where bramble, slopes and trees provide a good barrier to motorbike access will not be fenced at all. We believe metal estate fencing will give the best “natural look” on the parts of the Troopers Hill Rd boundary that needs protection from motorbikes. Two people suggested planting a hedge – the issues against this solution are:

- taking years to provide a solid barrier to motorbikes,
- blocking sightlines which give Troopers Hill such good natural security with so many homes overlooking it,
- invasion of the special acid grass and heathland by the hedging species and
- maintenance requirements. Initial mulching and weed control would be needed plus annual cutting by hand for about 7 years. After 7 year an annual flail cut or other type of machine cut would be needed. The landowner, Bristol City Council, intends to reduce their parks maintenance budget. This description of the maintenance requirements of a hedge comes from the Friends of Troopers Hill own experience of planting a mixed, native species 70 metre hedge on the Greendown boundary of the site in 2006.

#### **2. Images such as hopscotch on the new path**

Question 5a of the questionnaire read: Hopscotch games, flowers and other images could be put on the new path (like ones you see in school playgrounds). Is this a good idea?

144 people thought this was a good idea and 76 did not. Some of the reasons given against images included:

- I've said no to the path images because 1) they need regular refreshing maintenance to keep them attractive and 2) let this remain a place where children play imaginative games rather than provided ones.
- Hopscotch games often wear out quickly and end up making parks look worn out.
- I don't think the play games/images are a good idea, there is already a good size play area for children, and it would be unhelpful to have them playing on the path when wheelchair users like myself need access.
- The hopscotch, flowers etc on the path could be confusing for visually impaired visitors.
- I think the area should be kept as natural as possible and the images would spoil this, there are other areas locally where these can be played on. The money could be better spent.

This feedback particularly about images becoming worn and bringing down the look of the green space and that visitors, particularly those with mobility issues, might have difficulty using the path if children were using it to play, has led Friends of Troopers Hill to think that this idea should not be taken forward.

A new £80,000 play area and activity trail was installed for children on Troopers Hill Field in 2016 and there is a very large area of green space, woodland and heathland for natural play so not intentionally making the path attractive for play will not significantly reduce play opportunities. Children will still be able to bring chalk to the site and create their own, temporary designs on the path.

### **3. Funding for the path**

One response read "The footpath should be funded by the Council. We pay enough in taxes."

There is no statutory duty to provide, maintain or improve public parks. Bristol City Council's only statutory duty is to ensure parks are safe.

Funding to councils from central government is being cut every year and the amount being raised from council tax payers is not enough to offset these cuts. The only way improvements can be made is if people either donate money or find grants to fund improvement. In both cases, the Council still has to give permission for the work to be done and usually to agree that they will maintain the completed work for 5 years after implementation.

#### **4. Additional ideas**

A range of other ideas for works on Troopers Hill Field, Troopers Hill Local Nature Reserve and Troopers Hill Woodland were suggested by 11 individuals. These ideas either:

- fell outside the Friends of Troopers Hill remit
- had previously been identified as inappropriate for the site
- in previous surveys had shown insufficient support for the ideas to be taken forward
- were for additional items of furniture, such as seating or litters bins which are already well provided and where further provision is seen as detrimental to the natural feel of the site by many local people.

### **Appendix C**

#### **Samples of comments included in responses.**

##### **1. In support of the project**

The friends of Troopers Hill have done such an amazing job with the play area and Conservation area, it would be a shame if it doesn't continue. My Mum would use Troopers if there was a proper path for a wheelchair. It's hard going at the moment. Please don't take fence gates away. Live at the side of Troops and had awful trouble at one time there.

So many people gain great benefit from Troopers Hill, so it is vital that funding is secured to support access for all and encourage the engagement of the local community

I think it's really important that all people are able to access green spaces regardless of mobility issues, and hope the group gets the funding they need.

I think the primary concern is definitely to continue restricting motorcycle access with replacement fencing. This should be the first priority, followed by making good existing pathways.

Regular walker at the field with my dog. Would be much more enjoyable to walk her in the winter with out the two of us coming home filthy.

##### **2. More natural fencing material**

No metal fence. Keep existing fence to protect dogs and kids from the speedy cars on troopers hill.

Something more natural - not sure really as wood needs upkeep. Old stone wall?  
Using recycled materials. I visit on a regular basis walking the dog.

The wooden gates and fences I believe should be replaced by wooden gates and fence as this is a natural material and cannot be beaten & with a good care package can be very hard wearing.

### **3. Against images such as hopscotch on the path**

I've said no to the path images because 1) they need regular refreshing maintenance to keep them attractive and 2) let this remain a place where children play imaginative games rather than provided ones.

Hopscotch games often wear out quickly and end up making parks look worn out.

I don't think the play games/images are a good idea, there is already a good size play area for children, and it would be unhelpful to have them playing on the path when wheelchair users like myself need access.

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