

Consultation responses on draft Public Spaces Protection Orders for Bath City and Midsomer Norton:

Consultation review

The proposal for Bath City and Midsomer Norton subject to consultation was to renew the PSPOs as far as possible on a 'like-for-like' basis, with regard to both the geographical scope of the areas and the framing of the orders themselves. In summary the formal consultation proposals were:

- To “mirror” the previous PSPOs following national guidance, by only making it an offence to fail to comply with a request to cease drinking or surrender alcohol in a restricted area. A person may get an instant Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) of £100 for breaking a PSPO. A person guilty of an offence arising from breach of a PSPO would normally be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 (£1000) on the standard scale.
- To “mirror” the previous geographical scope of the previous PSPOs – i.e., the whole of the City of Bath and Midsomer Norton town centre. To reflect the Act, the PSPO would apply to all “public spaces” within the boundary line set out in the proposals. Public spaces are defined in the legislation as those to which “the public or any section of the public has access, on payment or otherwise, as of right or by virtue of express or implied permission.” This means the proposed PSPOs would include public car parks and public parks as well as other public spaces such as streets.

Bath City and Midsomer Norton Proposed PSPO Consultation Engagement

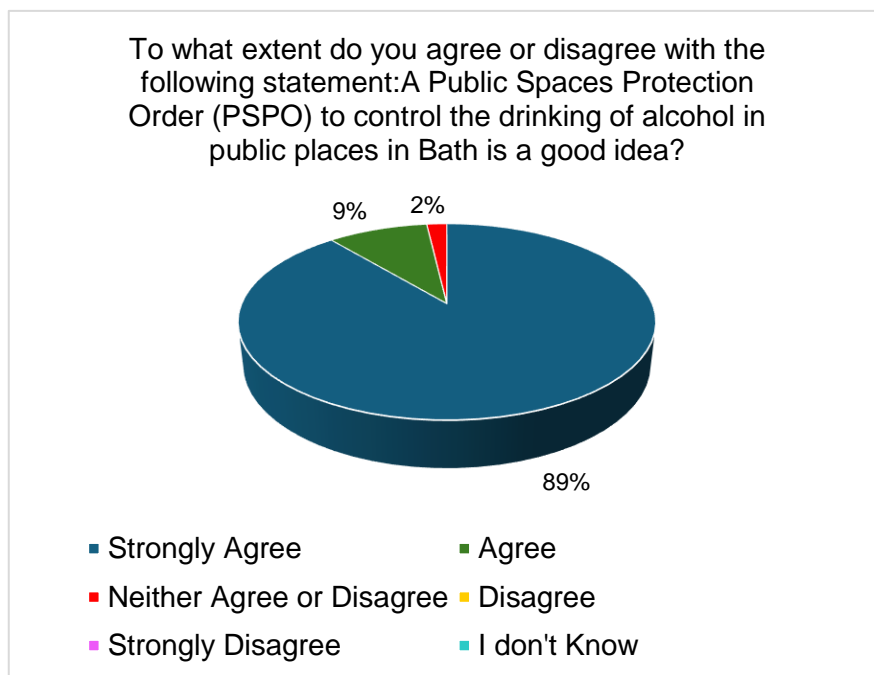
A 6-week formal consultation period ran from 08th of July 2024 to 16th of August 2024 for both Bath City and Midsomer Norton. This included:

- An online questionnaire including links to the proposal and background information.
- Communications to a wide range of partners and stakeholders, including City of Bath and Midsomer Norton Town Councils, Avon & Somerset Police, Ward Councillors, Bath Community Safety and Safeguarding Partnership, Bath Bid and Nighttime Economy Group.
- A Press Release, circulated to a wide range of stakeholders, and subsequent press coverage.

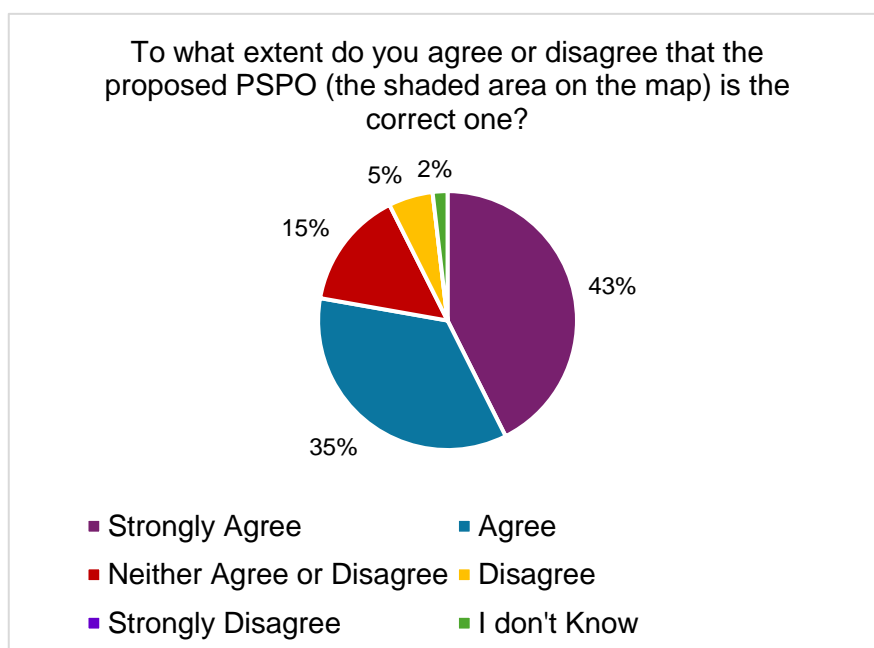
A Bath City Draft PSPO Consultation Feedback

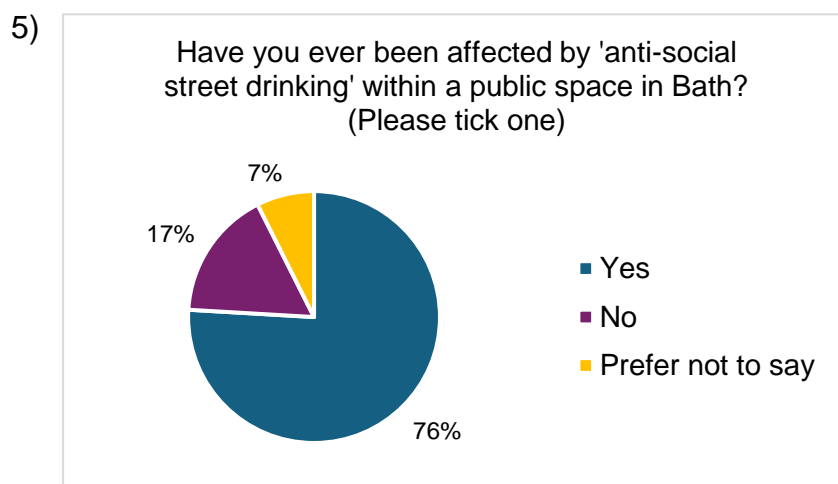
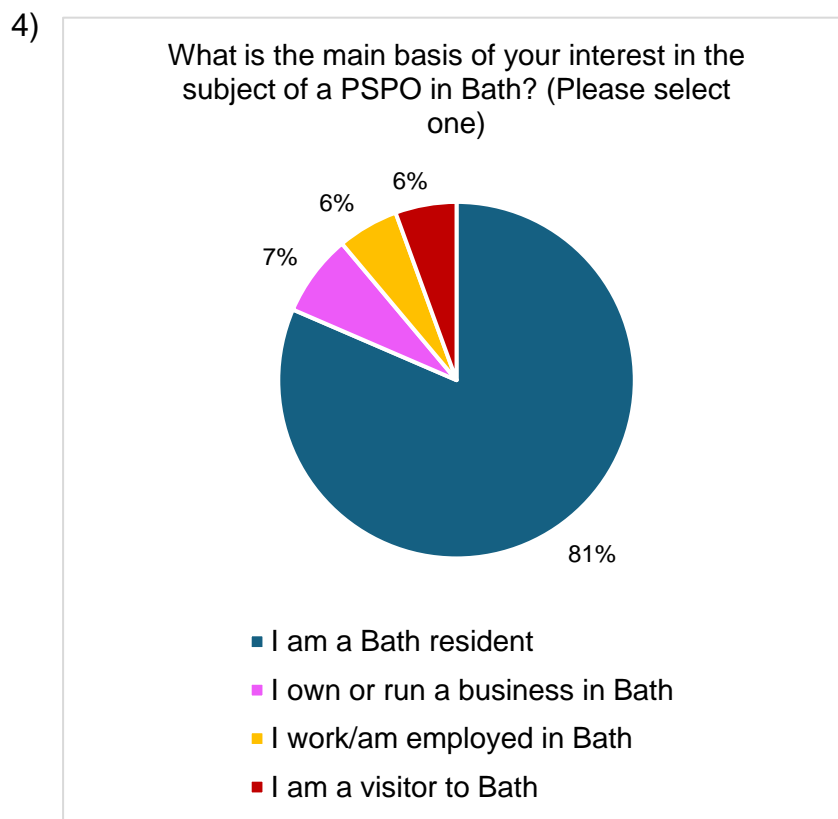
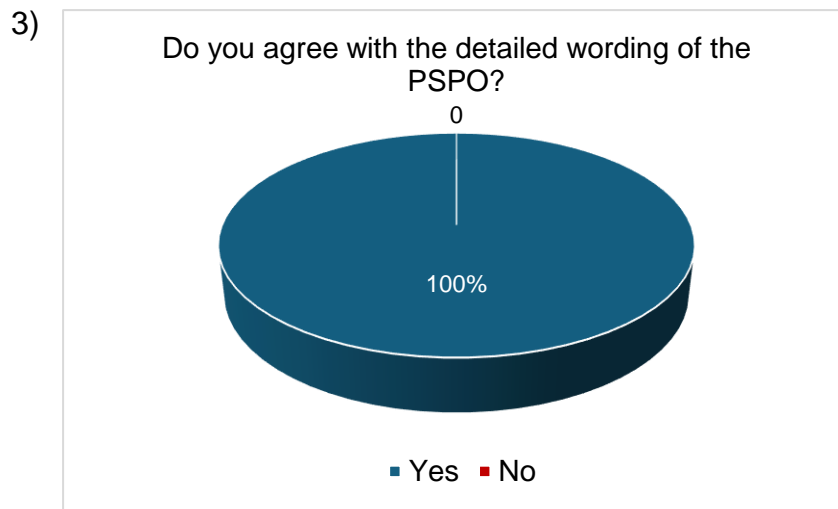
Fifty-four replies were received in response to the consultation. A summary of responses is set out below:

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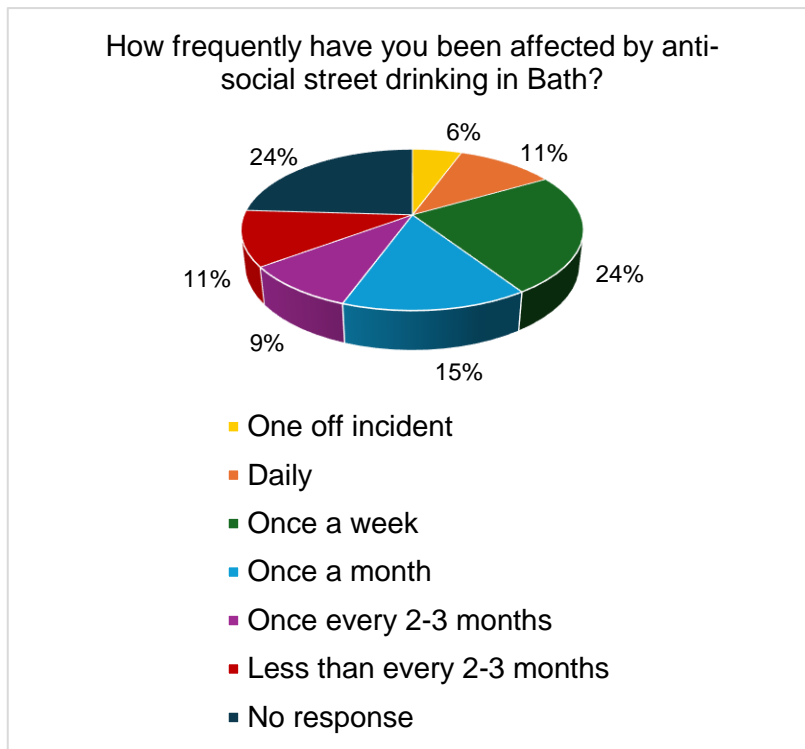


2)





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B Of those who had been affected, the following issues were identified:

(NB these are direct quotes from respondees):

1. "Regularly encounter groups of homeless people drinking on the street and becoming more aggressive as the day goes on. Large groups of **loud drunk stag and hen parties** in the city centre every weekend."
2. "We live next to a public footpath which is often frequented by noisy and drunken people, whether **students, hen/stag groups, drug dealers** etc."
3. "Hen/Stag parties partying loudly, walking around openly carrying alcohol, and generally **being loud and antisocial**."
4. "Groups drinking on the river footpath and steps and doorways on town are **intimidating** for passersby, especially lone women."
5. "Anti-social behaviour sparked by drinking and drugs **has increased significantly over the last few years** in our area (Widcombe Parade). This includes **intimidating, noise, lewdness and littering and fouling** of the area. Any action to help address this is supported."
6. "Drinking in public places can be **intimidating** to other users of the space."
7. "Widcombe and the wider area of Bath are **plagued by street drinkers** who are **intimidating and abusive** to the public and staff in shops. More enforcement of the PSPO needs to be carried out."
8. "It seems fair to have some control over drinking in public places as sometimes it can get very rowdy, **unpleasant and intimidating** particularly for women, the young and the elderly."
9. "There is an increase in anti-social behaviour in society currently and alcohol only makes this worse. The area near Kingsmead Square where there is a group of regular addicts and **alcohol drinkers is incredibly intimidating** and as a woman, I **do not feel safe** going down there. It is also horrible to see and for tourists/people living in Bath."
10. "There is a very bad problem with street drinking in Bath in all the areas that are easily accessible from the bus and train station, including Widcombe to the South. Drinkers often become **abusive and are intimidating the** general public. The police need to have the powers to deal with this."
11. "Homeless people drinking on the steps of Manvers Street Church and in doorways of Milsom Street **calling out for money as you walk past** is very intimidating or staggering around the streets carrying beer. The anxiety is that because they are **drunk, they are uninhibited**, so you don't know what they'll do next."
12. "I frequently cross the road or **change my route to avoid** groups of people drinking on the street as I am a woman often walking alone and don't feel comfortable getting close to them."
13. "Daily at times on Widcombe High St, the PSPO has been **a useful tool** for managing this."

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14. "There's a group of drunks sitting by the river yards from the weir that are **constantly drinking and very swears**. Embarrassing to see our visitors to the city being exposed to that."
15. "Outside the Sainsburys Local by Kingsmead Square. On the river footpath under North Parade Bridge. Widcombe High St. **Feel threatened** by the behaviour and by being accosted and asked for money."
16. "Milsom Street, Union Street and High Street. Also, in Hedgemoor Park. I have experienced or witnessed antisocial street drinking in all these places, **several times in recent years**. It is **offensive and distressing** to see and makes a **mockery of Bath's reputation as a genteel, visitor-friendly city**."
17. "Henrietta Park - the effects are **noise and litter**, which the park volunteers have to clear up. This environment also attracts **drug dealers** and may have been the cause of a stabbing nearby."
18. "**Accosted by drunk** on street holding bottle."
19. "Had to step in to assist a tourist family being **harassed by drunken youths**."
20. "Drugs and drink. **Residential areas. Not just the city centre**."
21. "Street drinkers being **aggressive and accosting the public**."
22. "**Shouted at** in Widcombe and Bath. Seen others abused for no reason than just walking past them. Not a great example for children to see. Just really unpleasant."
23. "Yelled at, the numbers are frightening. I feel intimidated and **see young women crossing the road**. Also working on green spaces nearby we need to contend with **human faeces** where individuals go behind bushes to urinate and defecate. It's extremely upsetting and an infringement on ones right to a peaceful environment."
24. "Drinking alcohol early in the morning until dusk along Widcombe Parade is frequently evident on the bench at the top end and in the middle of the Parade where mainly men sit on steps drinking, surrounded by cans, calling out to passersby and often begging then leaving detritus on the pavements that the residents volunteers need to clear. Often, they are **loud, use scatological language and are frightening** requiring residents to **cross the road** to avoid them."
25. "It is a **frightening environment** if drunks are lolling around in the city. Please continue the PSPOs."
26. "Yobs in Gravel Walk kicking fencing. Frequently picking up empty bottles thrown onto the Crescent lawn."
27. "I continue to see, on a regular basis, people sitting around drinking in Bath. Today, there was a beggar **laying on the pavement** outside of Lloyds Bank, Milsom Street, with empty bottles of drink next to him. **Completely comatose**. What sort of impression does that give of the city to visitors? There are known pockets within the city centre where these people group together to drink with what appears to be impunity. Someone really needs to get a grip of this problem and set a deterrent."

28. "Groups of drinkers (particularly around Manvers Street area), **urinating, begging, shouting.**"
29. "**Loud, disorderly behaviour** near to where I'm walking. Drunk people (often homeless) ranting and shouting abuse at nobody in-particular. I've been **shouted at for not giving money to beggars who have been intoxicated.**"
30. "Around Moorland Road, Memorial Gardens at Shaftesbury Road and the lane between Canterbury Road and Junction Road."
31. "It's not hard to find a patch of **broken glass** from alcohol bottles anywhere in the city centre, which I see near enough daily. The main issue is the group of homeless people by Sainsbury's local on Kingsmead Square causing a nuisance. Some of these repeat individuals have **claimed their patch** under sheltered car parking areas in River View Court area where they openly drink, smoke glass pipes and break into the refuse store to camp out. The same ones again can be found on a daily basis also Palace Yard Mews sheltered car parks."
32. "Bath on a Saturday and Friday night is an awful place to be full of groups of **people binge drinking** and has a completely different feel. Something needs to be done and put in place before it gets worse. Hen parties make the situation worse also."
33. "Our office is sited alongside a spot where individuals regularly drink alcohol, they can leave the passing general public and individuals working in the office feeling vulnerable, these individuals **regular urinate and open their bowels** beside or behind the building, litter is left for us to clear up and dispose of."
34. "There are a few people who spend time on the streets of Bath who can be noisy, disruptive or hassle for money - they can seem drunk at times and then can be worse. They regularly interrupt my walks/time in Bath in a negative manner and I try to avoid the areas where they are, however, it is difficult to avoid them if I am sat outside a café or bar and they then **approach to ask for money** and/ or cause disruption nearby due to drink."
35. "Homeless people mouthing off."
36. "The homeless community regularly drink on the streets in area such as Westgate Street, Kingsmead Square and Manvers Street. I have walked these streets many times and have had **abuse shouted at me.**"
37. "At least once a month. People who have been refused entry on venues then obtaining alcohol to be able to then sit in the **street drinking and giving abuse to staff and the general public.**"
38. "In work in town and I am regularly **abused** by people drinking outside Sainsburys Local on Westgate Buildings. **This needs to stop.**"
39. "Every day something happens, especially in the Kingsmead square area. Selling of stolen goods to antisocial behaviour."
40. "**Abusive** drunk vagrants in the street."
41. "Observed anti-social behaviour and been **shouted at** by a drinker."

C Of those who agreed with a PSPO in Bath City, the following points were made:

- 1) "Trying to reduce anti-social behaviour due to excessive alcohol is a good thing for the city and would **make residents and tourists feel much safer.**"
- 2) "Street drinking creates a **threatening environment.**"
- 3) "We need to do everything possible to **prevent unruly, disruptive, inconsiderate** and anti-social behaviour."
- 4) "There is a lot of **noise** in Bath in the late and very early hours, on occasion from people drunk or drinking nearby."
- 5) "**Alcohol-fuelled disorder and disruptive behaviour** is a real problem, and this assists the police and others to deal with it."
- 6) "I live in Bath city centre and value being able to **walk home without fear** of antisocial behaviour."
- 7) "Because it allows action to be taken where there is alcohol related antisocial behaviour."
- 8) "**Unthinkable not to have those powers.**"
- 9) "There is a problem with certain groups of drunk people who regularly congregate in certain areas and behave in an unpleasant manner to anyone passing. **Bath feels like a threatening place.** E.g. Currently by the footpath under North Parade Bridge."
- 10) "I want the **police to have robust powers** to stop or pre-empt alcohol related anti-social behaviour in public places, including public parks and open spaces."
- 11) "The **police do their best in often difficult circumstances.** This order will help them to carry out their job in ensuring that well-behaved citizens and visitors can enjoy the city without fear of anti-social behaviour associated with drinking in public places."
- 12) "For a more **friendly and less threatening perception** of the city."
- 13) "Safety of the general public (including tourists)."
- 14) "To keep Bath City Centre free of **people sitting drinking on the curb side** and steps and door ways."
- 15) "I am a regular to Bath and it's not nice to see drunk or drugged people on the streets, you **automatically feel threatened.**"
- 16) "As long as the PSPO is there to deal with excessive/aggressive drinking then this has my backing. **Drinking in public per se is not the issue, it is those that drink to excess and cause a nuisance to others that is the problem.**"
- 17) "Too rowdy on Saturday nights especially."
- 18) "Behind the train station near Widcombe, **regularly shouted at or intimidated by street drinkers who want money and can get very aggressive,** I try to avoid now."
- 19) "Peaceable social drinking is fine but drinking to excess such that behaviour become **disruptive and/or threatening** to others should continue to be subject to police action."
- 20) "It deters antisocial behaviour."

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- 21) "Lots of nightlife in Bath which can make it **feel somewhat edgy at night.**"
- 22) "To **keep the streets safe** from people abusing alcohol on the streets."
- 23) "When the consumption of alcohol gets out of hand the consequences are mind altering of the perpetrator, and unpleasant at best, argumentative and challenging at worst. **It makes me feel unsafe and can be frightening.**"
- 24) "The **scheme has worked well to date.** Any change is also likely to increase litter and broken glass."
- 25) "**Important for the safety** of residents and visitors."
- 26) "Anything to mitigate unwarranted bad behaviour in a city that relies on tourism can only be a good thing for both residents and visitors."
- 27) "Having someone police the situation, when necessary, makes total sense."
- 28) "Increasing episodes of anti-social behaviour experienced which are made worse by alcohol, which coupled with an almost zero police presence makes **walking through bath late at night** unpleasant at times."
- 29) "The **streets in Bath are starting to become quite a scary place for elderly** with lots of people disregarding them. People drunk being abusive and young people going on pavements with e-scooters, bikes, and skateboards. If something can start to turn that tide and make the streets more inclusive, then that has to be a good thing."
- 30) "It is good to have policies in place to restrict any antisocial behaviour related to drinking."
- 31) "Provides a means to address the anti-social behaviour aspects that may arise from alcohol consumption, while allowing responsible alcohol consumption from other residents and visitors."
- 32) "Good idea if it keeps everyone safe. Especially **if you are on your own, you feel more vulnerable.**"
- 33) "People should be able to enjoy visiting, living, and working in Bath without having their time spoilt by a few individuals. I do understand that people can continue to drink in a sociable manner in public places and this will help to manage just those **few people who can spoil things.**"
- 34) "It is good to limit anti-social behaviour where possible and ensure there is policy that allows action to be taken when necessary."
- 35) "Bath is a heritage city that attracts visitors, I think it is **an embarrassment for the city** to present visitors with drunken and disorderly behaviour."
- 36) "It helps to keep antisocial behaviour to a minimum keeping our young people, vulnerable people and older people safe, as well as discouraging unpleasant behaviour."
- 37) "Too much antisocial drinking in the area."
- 38) "I strongly agree as criminality and ASB in the city centre is bad enough at the moment with in the homeless community, and if we were to remove the PSPO, I **feel it would only get worse in the city.**"
- 39) "There is no need to be drinking in the streets of Bath. There are enough venues for people to go to. Excessive alcohol consumption in the streets leads

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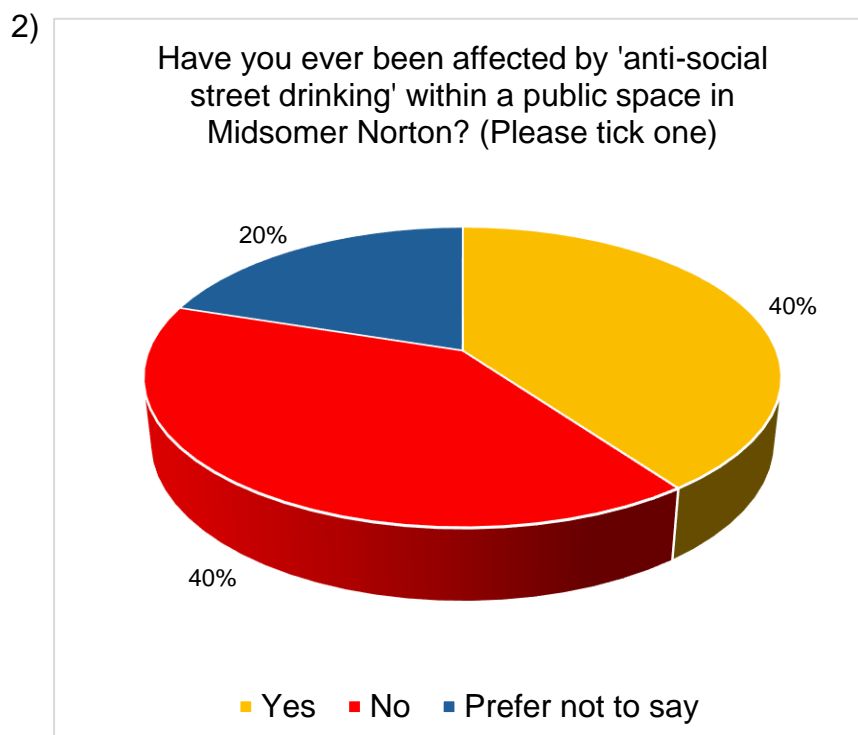
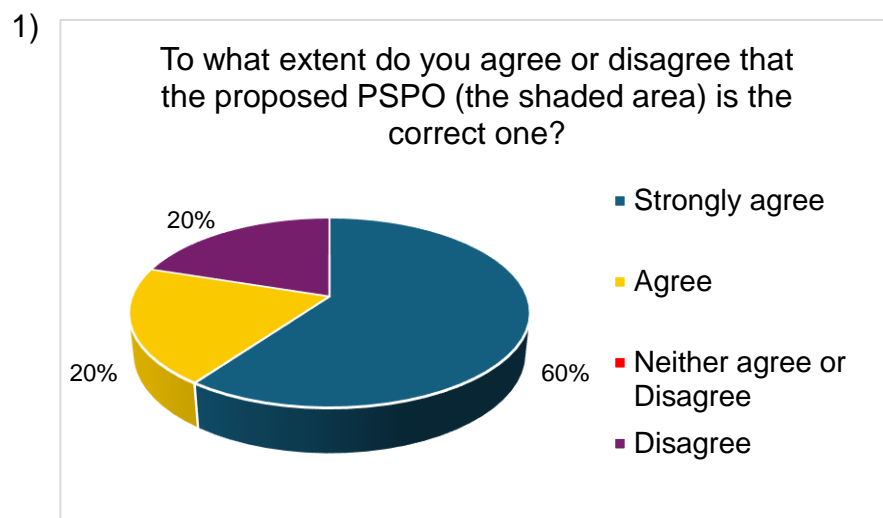
to issues in venues and illness. This puts **pressure on the NHS** services and venues.”

40) “Drinking in public areas promotes anti-social behaviour and I do not feel safe going into the city centre and seeing loud drunk people. There are allocated places to drink - most bars, pubs and restaurants have a late licence or outside seating.”

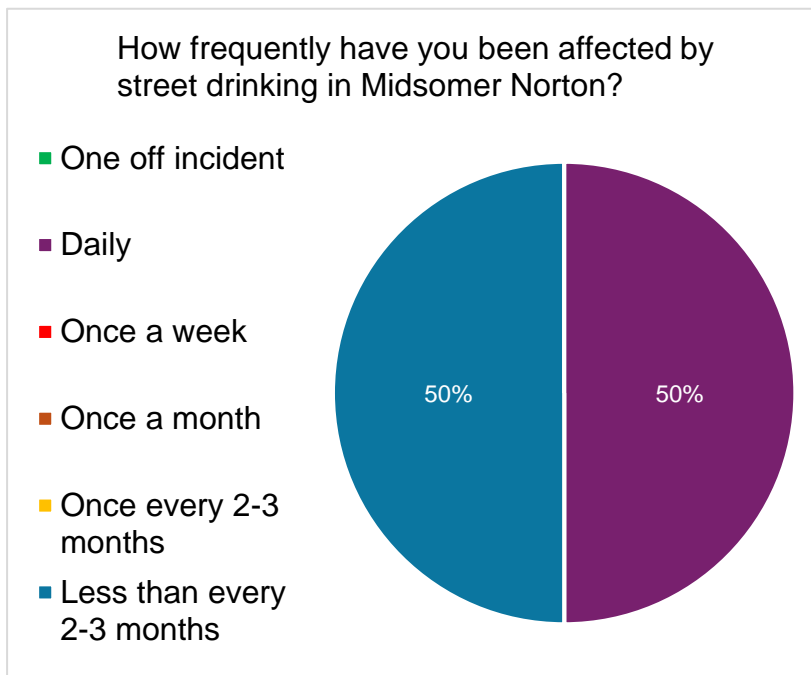
41) “Seems a reasonable idea.”

D Midsomer Norton PSPO Consultation Feedback

Five replies were received in response to the consultation, 100% of which are residents of Midsomer Norton. A summary of responses is set out below:



3)



4) 100% of respondents strongly agreed that a PSPO to control drinking in Midsomer Norton would be welcome and 100% of respondents agreed with the specific wording of the proposed PSPO.

E Of those who *agreed* with a PSPO in Midsomer Norton, the key points made were:

- 1) “Controlling street drinking can only be a good thing for the **town to help make it a safer and more welcoming** space.”
- 2) “The area is **becoming increasingly unsafe** for residents’ particularly young people. I want to feel assured that my daughters are safe when out socialising.”
- 3) “Sensible drinking in public places is fine. The police should have the ability to stop people causing trouble.”
- 4) “The PSPO is a **good incentive** to stop the ever-growing trend of antisocial drinking.”
- 5) “Ensures that Midsomer Norton can **remain a safe place** to go out in the evening with the knowledge that anti-social behaviour relating to alcohol can be addressed quickly and smoothly.”

F Police response to consultation

Avon & Somerset Police have responded to the consultation as summarised below:

- 1) Broadly speaking the powers conferred under the existing PSPO are considered by officers as an essential tool to manage street crime and disorder. They provide an opportunity to engage with street drinkers, and people involved in Anti-Social Behaviour to intervene at an early stage. They are an important deterrent.
- 2) National Guidance issued in support of the implementation of PSPOs makes it clear that this is a discretionary power, and not to be used to disrupt peaceful activities. The advice given is not to challenge those persons consuming alcohol where that individual is not causing a problem, or likely to cause a problem.
- 3) PSPOs relating to alcohol consumption in public spaces should make it clear to both officers and members of the public the intentions of the orders. The Order in bold, would prohibit:

Any person from having in their possession, care, or control in any Public Place within the restricted area alcohol where that person-

- i. Is or has been consuming alcohol in any Public Place in the Restricted Area, or*
- ii. Intends to consume alcohol in any Public Place in the Restricted Area, and*
- iii. Is behaving in a way likely to cause, or where the authorised officer reasonably suspects will lead to, harassment, alarm or distress, or crime or disorder in the Restricted Area.*

END.