



Consultation Report and Option Analysis

Mead Lane Moorings, Saltford

November 2019

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1 Background

Mead Lane in Saltford runs alongside the River Avon and has since 2014 has become an increasingly popular mooring point for the boat community travelling between Bristol and Bath. A short-term mooring trial was undertaken by Bath and North East Somerset Council (the owners of the land), with a mix of 14 day and 48-hour moorings. Lemon Gazelle was commissioned to support stakeholder engagement work on the Mead Lane moorings, to examine viable options for a way forward in respect of the moorings and to inform decision making using Lemon Gazelle's Decision Tool.

The area is significant to the village, and Mead Lane and The Shallows are a popular visitor attraction. The Strategic River Group was formed in 2014, and in 2017 the Waterspace Study was completed by a partnership comprised of Bath and North East Somerset Council, The Canal and Rivers Trust, Wessex Water and the Environment Agency.

There has been increasing controversy over recent years relating to the moorings in Mead Lane, and an amount of tension between the boating community and local residents. This has resulted in police action and interventions from various departments of Bath and North East Somerset Council.

2 Method

Stakeholder engagement was undertaken between 30th September and 31st October 2019 and comprised the following;

- Research into stakeholder groups and individuals to engage
- Presentation with Q&A from local people at Saltford Parish Council meeting (1st October 2019)
- Online and paper survey, promoted online and through posters and articles
- One-to-one conversations with partner organisations
- Three separate events targeting residents, Partner Stakeholders and boaters (22nd October 2019)

Following the close of the stakeholder engagement, analysis of the information collected was undertaken, and this then formed one element of the Options Appraisal. The Options Appraisal uses the Decision Tool to bring together the criteria by which all options will be evaluated, enabling the weighting and subsequent scoring of each option to provide an accountable and rational recommendation.

3 Engagement

3.1 Events

3.1.1 Residents' Event

A drop-in event was held on Tuesday 22nd October between 10am and 1pm at Saltford Hall for residents to drop in and have a conversation with Lemon Gazelle about the Mead Lane Moorings. The intention was to give the opportunity to add to submissions made to the online survey with any new or additional information. The event was attended by 25 residents who had individual conversations with Lemon Gazelle personnel and provided submissions to support their views. The information in these submissions and conversations has been included within the community engagement reporting.

3.1.2 Boaters Event

A drop-in event was held at Bath Cricket Club between 5pm and 8pm on Tuesday 22nd October for members of the boat community to come along and speak to Lemon Gazelle Directors in support of their submissions. 14 people attended this event and participated in one-to-one and group conversations about the Mead Lane Moorings. The content of these conversations has informed the community consultation and issues and ideas taken on board.

3.1.3 Partner Stakeholders Event

Partner organisations were invited to a workshop session at Bath Cricket Club on Tuesday 22nd October. Those organisations in attendance were Avon and Somerset Police, Bath and North East Somerset Council, Julian House and Avon Frome Partnership. Other partner organisations chose to submit their views in writing or through the survey rather than attending the workshop session.

3.2 Stakeholder Engagement Survey

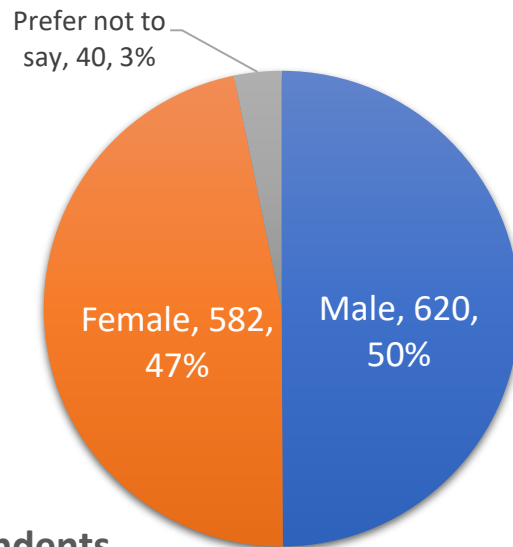
The following organisations submitted views as part of the engagement, either in writing or through the events or the survey;

- Saltford Parish Council
- Avon and Wilts Inland Waterways Association
- Bristol Avon Sailing Club
- Saltford Marina
- Kennet and Avon Boaters Action Group
- Kennet and Avon Trust
- Campaign to Protect Rural England
- Keynsham Angling Association
- Bristol and West of England Federation of Anglers
- Saltford Environment Group
- Saltford Community Association
- Bath Boys Brigade
- Saltford WI
- Saltford Primary School
- Avon and Somerset Police
- Wessex Water

A total of 1,251 responses were submitted to the survey which included over 3,500 long answer comments. Unfortunately, some respondents chose to enter multiple responses, which could have been an attempt to seek to give additional weight to their views; therefore, the majority of the qualitative data will be reported using a narrative rather than a statistical format.

The demographic and geographical breakdown of the respondents can be seen in the sections below.

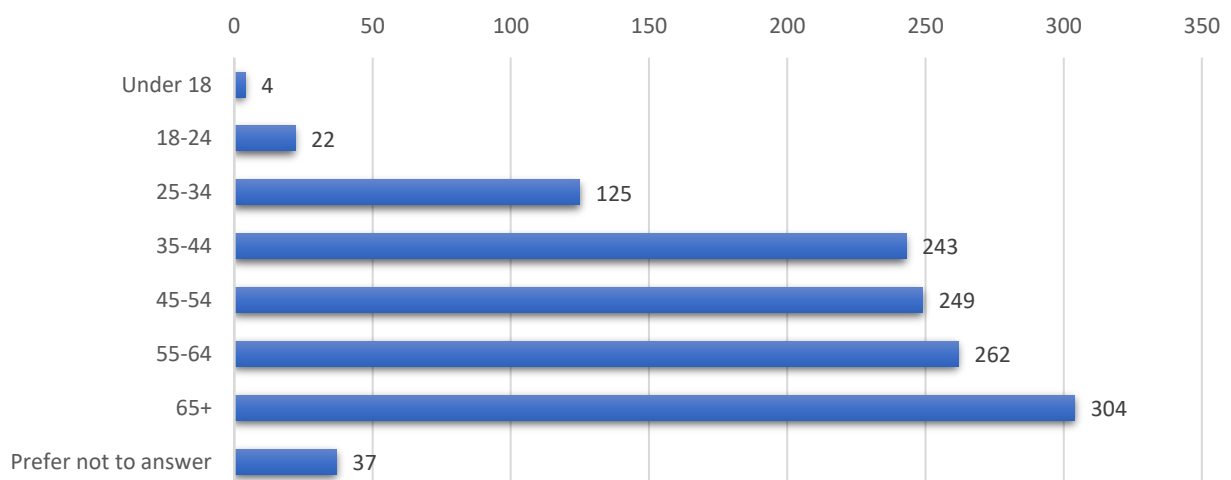
3.2.1 Gender



Gender profile of respondents
(1,242 answered question)

3.2.2 Age

Age profile of respondents
1,246 answered question



3.2.3 Geographic spread

Postcodes or a place where people were at present situated was collected to ensure that, for residents and locals there was an even spread across Saltford and that there was a reasonable opportunity for leisure users and boaters who, at the time of taking the survey, may not be in the vicinity of the area even if it is an area that they use.

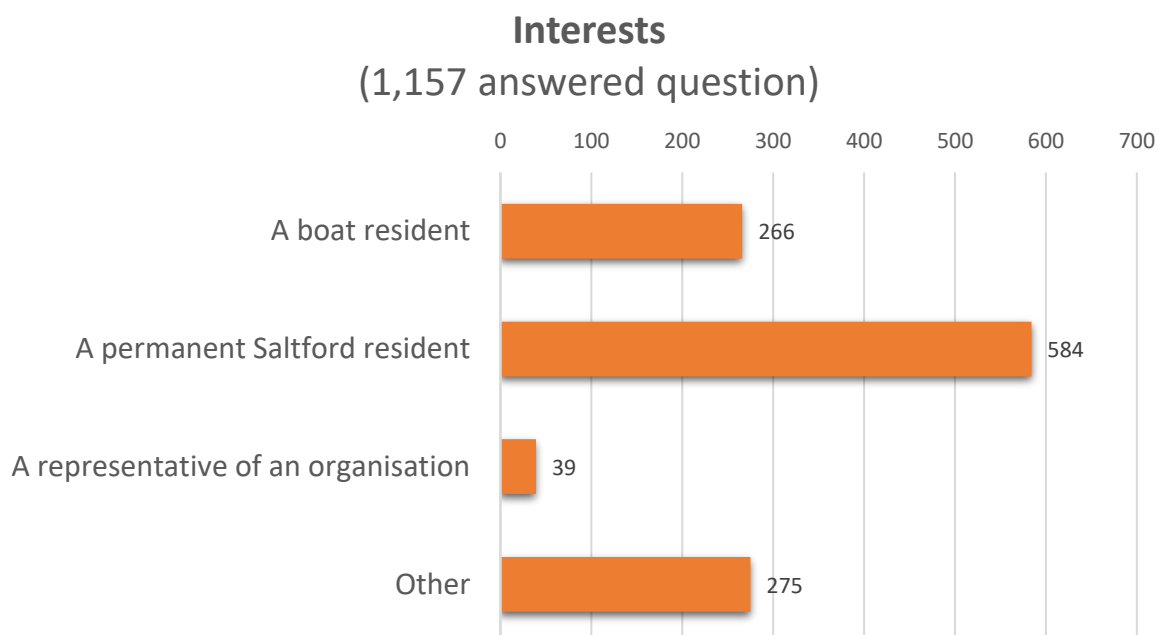
As expected for locals / residents those addresses that were closer to Mead Lane tended to have the higher response rate per road. An example of this is set out in the following table showing those declared postcodes from where there were more than 10 complete postcodes submitted.

	Road associated with postcode (from Royal Mail)	Number of addresses under that postcode	Number of responses from postcode
BS31 3EP	Mead Lane	15	33
BS31 3ER	Mead Lane	14	16
BS31 3EZ	Shallows	6	24
BS31 3EG	Homefield Road	28	21
BS31 3EJ	High Street	40	20
BS31 3AL	Claverton Road West	24	18
BS31 3ED	High Street	26	18
BS31 3AD	Haselbury Grove	36	14
BS31 3HL	Tynning Road	39	14
BS31 3DY	Anson Close	31	12
BS31 3BQ	Norman Road	28	11
BS31 3DW	Claverton Road	21	10
BS31 3HP	Rodney Road	26	10
BS31 3LB	Lawson Close	13	10

As far as other users (boaters, leisure users, wider organisations, for example), there was a wide spread from where those respondents were, at present, located. The following gives some examples of the geographic range from those who gave narrative answers:

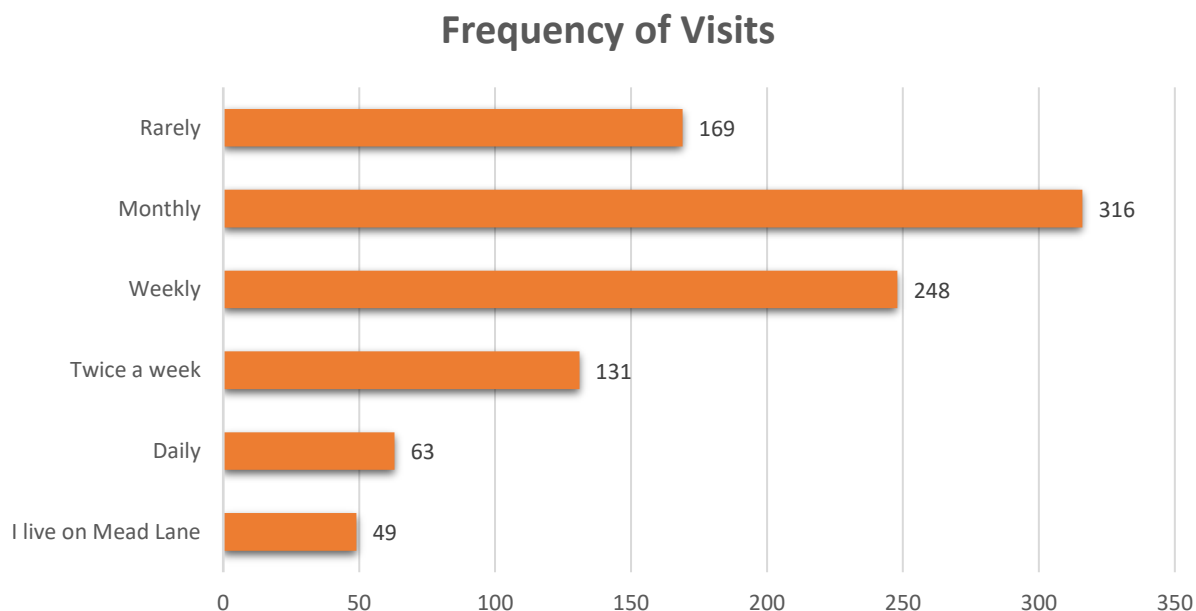
Bristol harbour, River Avon and Kennet and Avon Canal, currently with boat in transit, Bathampton, Darlington Warf, Bath, Swineford, Dundas aqueduct, London, Saul, Cheshire, Bradford on Avon, boater without a home mooring, Boat moored at Semington, Keynsham, Bradford, River lee, Brentford, Keynsham, kanda canal, Avoncliff, All Cannings Wiltshire, Sharpness, River Thames, Portavon marina, Dundas Aqueduct, Kelson, Pewsey, Newbury, Caen hill, Newbridge Bath, Sells green, Great Bedwyn, I am out travelling the country, Widcombe on the K&A, Banbury, Wilcot, Wiltshire, Seend Cleeve West bound, Frouds Bridge Marina, , Semington, Ely, Great Ouse, Oxford canal, Bradford on Avon, Braunston Marina, Gloucester, Nottingham, Continuous cruiser of UK canal system, Bishops cannings, Saltford Marina , Portavon, Lapworth, Braunston, Northants, Claverton, Hilperton, Cropredy, Coventry, Corston.

3.2.4 Interests

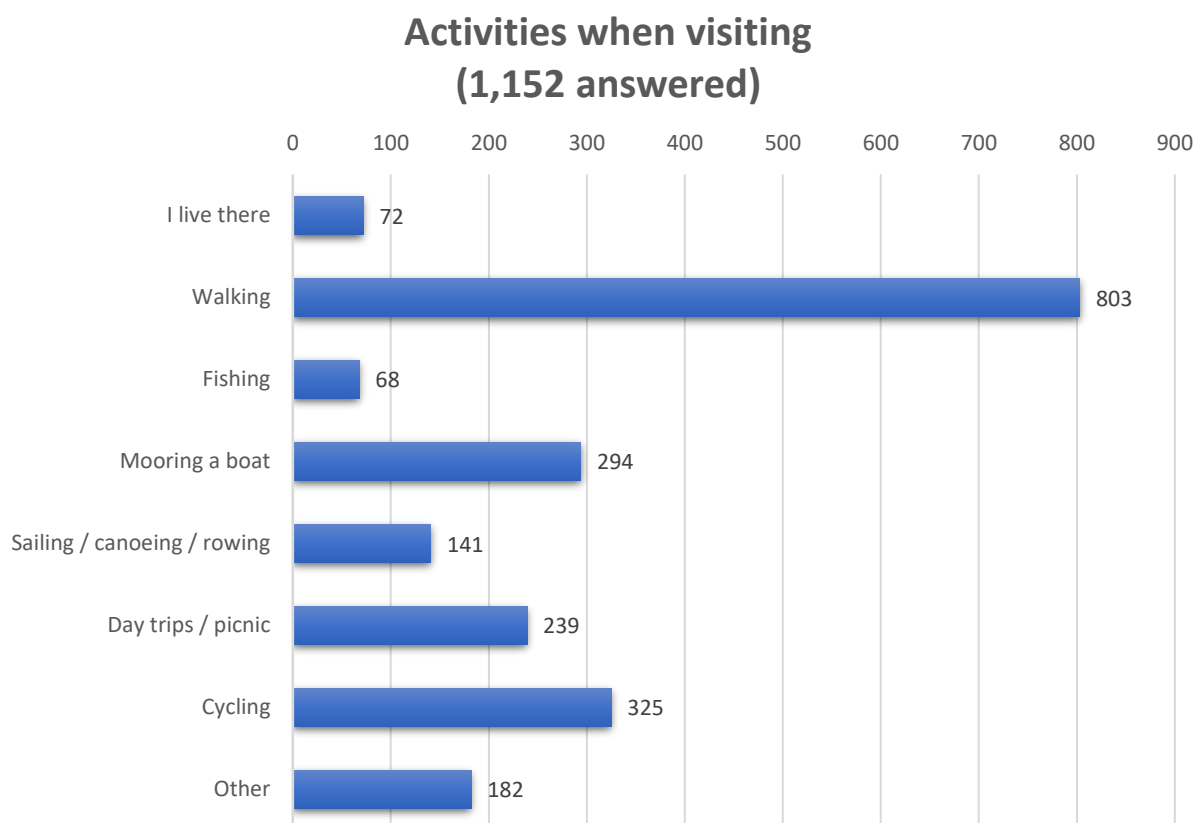


3.2.5 Frequency of visits and activities at Mead Lane

Respondents were asked how frequently they visit Mead Lane, with the greatest number of people visiting monthly. Those who moor at Mead Lane were asked to comment on how many times they moor each season. 177 people provided information, suggesting that mooring visits were usually between 2 and 10 times a season, and tended towards the summer.



3.2.6 Activities



The survey asked what people responding did when they were at Mead Lane. 1,152 people answered this question, with the most frequent answer being walking, as shown in the chart above. Other activities accounted for 182 responses, including the following;

- Using the pubs
- Swimming in the river
- Wildlife watching
- Visiting for work/running a business
- Running
- Visiting friends and family
- Boating
- Horse riding
- Litter picking

3.2.7 What do you like best about the Mead Lane location?

Survey respondents were asked to describe in their own words what they like best about Mead Lane. 1,033 people answered this question, and their answers, whatever their outlook and point of view on the mooring issue were similar.

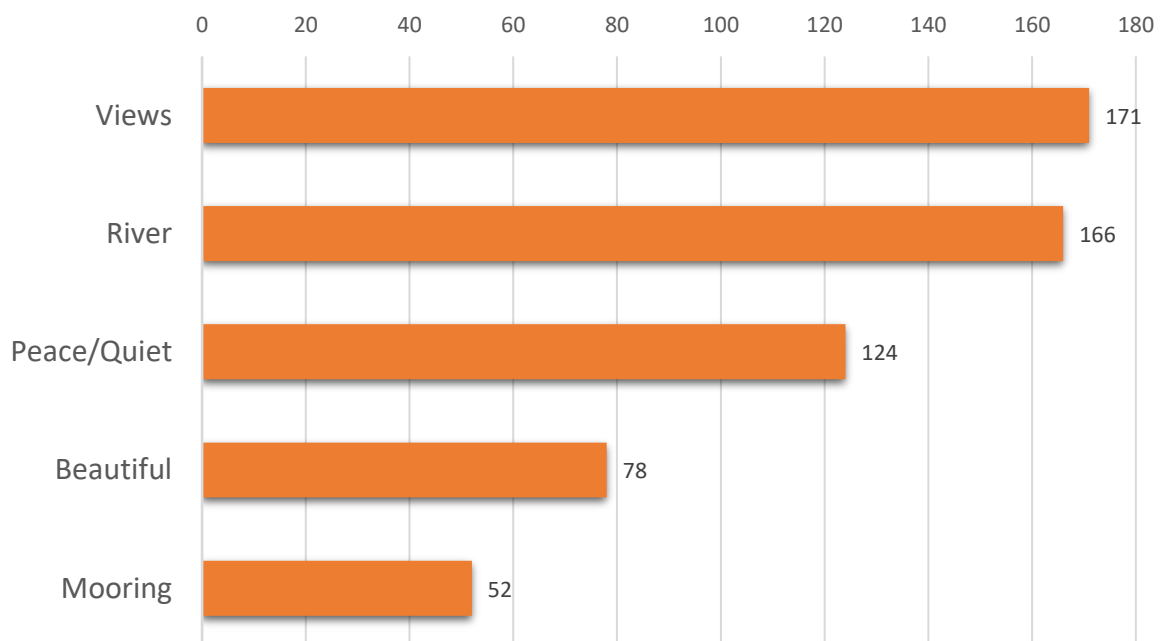
The most commonly raised attributes that people appreciated were the views of the river and the landscape in this area. Natural beauty, wildlife and peace and quiet were also raised by the majority

of individuals. Accessibility and parking were further commonly raised attributes of Mead Lane, and many people from the boat community commented they liked that it is a safe place for mooring.

Despite the controversy surrounding the moorings in this location, a number of residents and visitors remarked that they enjoyed the presence of the boats at Mead Lane.



Like best - top categories



3.2.8 What do you like least about the Mead Lane location?

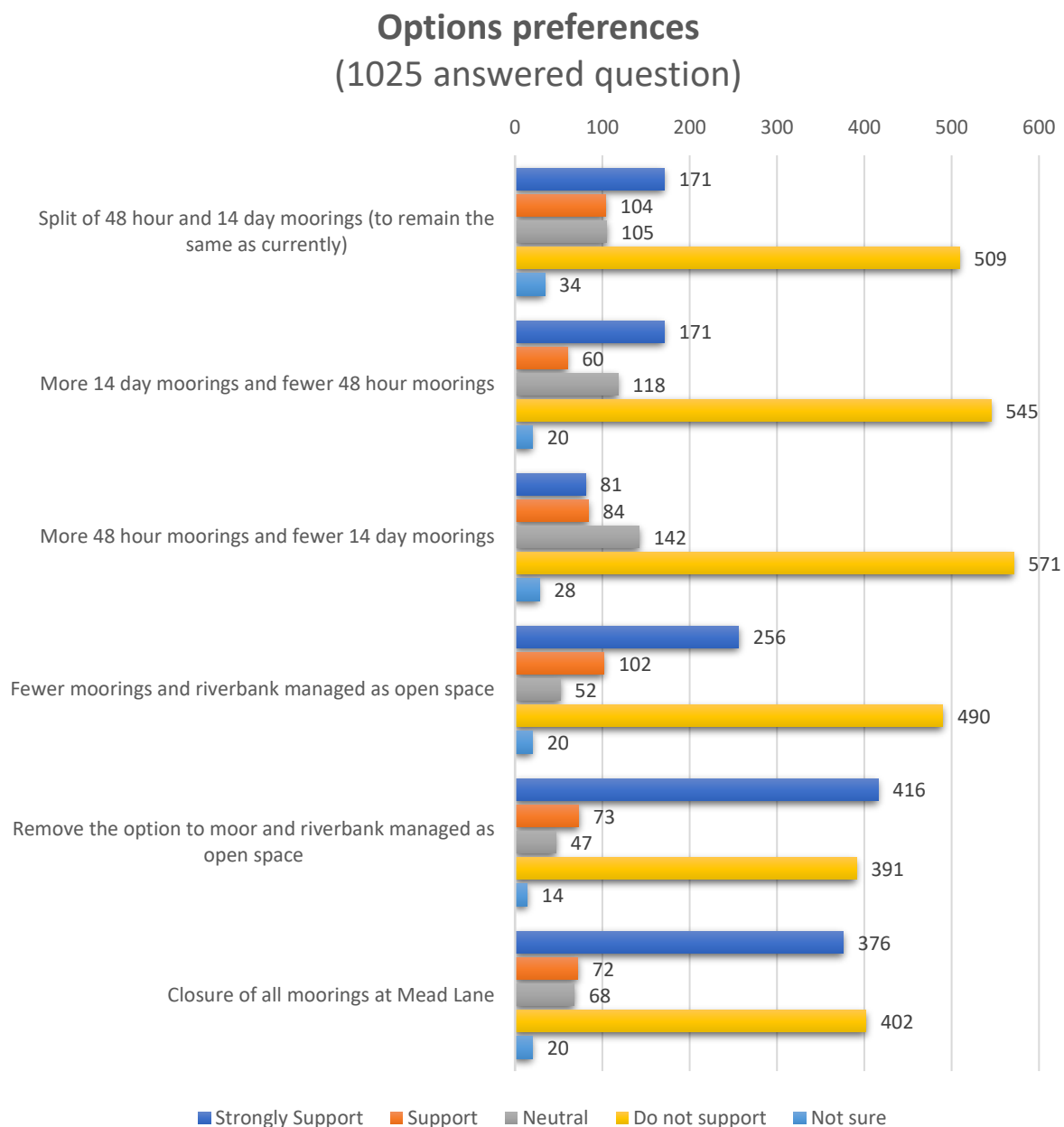
A wide variety of issues and concerns were raised by the 965 people who answered this question, with 64 of these remarking that there was nothing they disliked about the location. Concerns over the mooring of boats at Mead Lane were raised by many individuals. The other specific issues raised can be broadly grouped “dislikes” around environment, traffic, behaviour and facilities, and included;

- Litter and waste management
- Dog control and fouling
- Antisocial behaviour
- Aggressive and antagonistic behaviour from some boaters
- Aggression, excessive scrutiny and invasion of privacy by some residents
- Risk of damage to the riverbank and trees
- Lack of enforcement, control, investment and monitoring by the local authority
- Reduced access to the river for potential users such as anglers and owners of small boats
- Parking
- Volume of traffic
- Speeding and road safety concerns
- Lack of pavement and street lighting
- Residents’ concerns that their views are impeded
- Lack of facilities for mooring such as chemical waste disposal, litter bins and fresh water supply

As with the question on what people like best about Mead Lane, there were many answers the same, and it therefore appears that there is substantial common ground in what people like and don’t like about this location. The common issues that people, whichever user group they come from dislike are unfriendliness, aggression, rudeness, litter, waste, pollution and damage to biodiversity.

3.2.9 Preferences

The survey asked respondents to provide their views on the level of support they would give to the options for the future of the moorings at Mead Lane. The chart below shows their answers.



When viewed by respondent type, those who identified themselves as Saltford residents were more likely to support the provision of open space and fewer or no moorings. Notwithstanding this general trend, the option offering the split of mooring types (14 day and 48 hour) to remain the same was either “strongly supported” or “supported” by 42 Saltford residents, and the idea of increasing the number of 48 hour moorings and offering fewer 14 day moorings was supported by 67 Saltford residents. 69 Saltford residents stated that they did not support the closure of all moorings at Mead Lane.

Pursuing a “no change” option was identified as raising the following issues for the Partner Stakeholder organisations, as described in their workshop session;

- Constant and continued reporting of issues such as anti-social behaviour to the police and Council by both residents and boaters
- A lack of resolution and consequent continuation of aggression
- Reduced risk of homelessness, given the lack of alternatives for continuous cruiser mooring (by continuing with the opportunity to moor here)

Any alteration in mooring duration was not seen as likely to resolve many of the issues by the Partner Stakeholders who felt that complaints, issues with compliance and aggravation would not be reduced. Reducing or removing moorings was discussed by the Partner Stakeholders, and the following issues raised;

- An increase in the risk of homelessness
- Law enforcement issues on open space
- Potential for increased conflict, reporting and aggravation
- The need for additional enforcement since compliance with a reduction or ban is unlikely to be complied with due to boaters need to access jobs and services
- Increase in trespass
- Fewer moorings mean boats moving on more frequently and means life for boaters is more risky

Those who identified as boat dwellers were more likely to support maintaining or improving mooring opportunities in this location. 66% of the boat residents who answered the question were supportive of an increase in 14-day moorings, and 62% supported the situation remaining as it is currently. 416 individuals chose to make additional comments in support of their answers to this question, reiterating the remarks they made in the like/dislike questions above.

3.2.10 Management of Mead Lane Moorings in the event of moorings remaining

The survey asked people if they had views on enforcement and management in the event that the moorings remain at Mead Lane. In response to this question, which 677 individuals chose to answer, a variety of views were expressed as to suitable control and management measures. Whilst some individuals chose to reiterate their desire to remove the moorings, others provided constructive ideas, with the majority stating that effectively resourced monitoring and enforcement are essential going forwards, if this option were selected. The Partner Stakeholders workshop also discussed how the continuation of the moorings could be managed effectively, and proposed the following;

- Accountability, a joined-up approach and clear responsibility for the issue
- Consistent enforcement
- Possibility of commissioning C&RT to monitor and enforce mooring stays
- Provision of facilities such as water, waste and bins

3.2.11 Booking/Charging for mooring

Contrasting views were expressed with some wishing to see a system of booking and charging for moorings in order to adequately regulate it, and others wanting it to remain more informal and self-regulated. Some boaters commented that they would support increased regulation so that all those

who wish to have a fair opportunity to moor at Mead Lane. Charging was generally an unpopular option with boaters.

3.2.12 Enforcement to eliminate overstays

Monitoring and enforcement of boat stays was commented on by a large number of respondents, many of whom were supportive of increased regulation. Whilst enforcement was supported by many, it was noted that previous regulations had not been enforced and questions were raised over the resourcing and commitment of the local authority to implementing these measures in a way that ensures their effectiveness.

Some individuals proposed that the Canal and River Trust be commissioned to regulate boat stays, with penalties in place for overstays that occur without good reason. Whilst enforcement is broadly supported, a number of boaters pointed out in their responses that there may be times when it is not possible to move on in the allotted period, for example in the case of illness, emergency or boat breakdown, and that flexibility is needed in such circumstances. Individuals commented that it is preferable for an independent organisation to carry out monitoring and enforcement, rather than encouraging local people to carry out this role, which unnecessarily causes antagonism between boaters and residents.

3.2.13 Parking and Road Issues

As noted above, concerns were raised in the “dislike” section over parking, speeding, road safety, street lighting and lack of pavement. The possibility of managing some of these concerns by providing additional parking or controlling street parking on the road were raised by some individuals. A number of boat residents commented that one of the attractions of the Mead Lane moorings is the option to park a car nearby, thus enabling the delivery to boats of heavier items such as shopping or wood. A Traffic Regulation Order or parking restriction would require management and enforcement in order to make it effective.

3.2.14 Pollution, littering, flytipping and waste

Concerns were raised flytipping, littering, waste disposal and the pollution arising from generators and wood burning stoves. Large numbers of views were expressed on these issues, which call for the same monitoring, management, enforcement and penalties as in any other location, via the same agencies and authorities. As a preventative measure in this location, some individuals proposed the provision of waste bins, a chemical waste disposal point and a fresh water supply.

4 Evaluating Options

The consultation and engagement process has provided a wide range of data which can inform the future use of the moorings on Mead Lane. In addition to many positive and constructive comments that have been made, a large element has been reflective of past frustrations with the situation. All of these comments will assist in predicting consequences going forward and what actions can be put in place to ameliorate potential negatives.

The detail of the delivery of a recommended option is beyond the scope of this report and much of the thinking around future management can be taken on board if/when the potential for technical assessments have been investigated by the council. This element has been discussed as part of the actions going forward (Section 5.1).

The following methodology utilises a Multi-Criteria Decision Tool to assess future uses of the site in an open, accountable and easy to understand way. It is designed to assist discussion and assessment and provide a recommendation to decision-makers.

4.1 How has the engagement informed each option under consideration?

The engagement helps us find common ground and evaluate the support for the different options as well as ascertaining the potential requirements for a preferred one.

It is important to note that the consideration of options is focussed on the *future* of Mead Lane Moorings and not a judgement of prior behaviour, decisions or anecdotal evidence from the past. At the same time, collected information can help inform the likely behaviours which might result from future actions of chosen options.

In addition, in considering the options it is the use of the bank in the future and the emphasis of the options is around the responsibilities and duties of the owner of the bank; in this case, Bath and North East Somerset Council. Other parties have put forward strong views and submissions based on their own remits and responsibilities, as they were asked to do. For example, Saltford Parish Council have a responsibility to their own constituents / residents; and the Saltford Environment Group have a responsibility to their own purpose. The duties and responsibilities of Bath and North and North East Somerset as owners of the land in question are very different, although sometimes shared. This point is an important one in considering the following options. Bath and North East Somerset Council cannot consider one issue in isolation in detriment to another or that one is more important than another, where a single-issue group may be able to do so. A number of the stronger comments have been made as if it is in the power of Bath and North East Somerset Council to isolate one issue and not consider the impact of that on other issues it also has responsibilities for.

The following takes account of the complexity of this position whilst focussing the assessment on the fact that the bank is owned by Bath and North East Somerset Council and, therefore, they have the responsibility for providing uses which fit *their* responsibilities and liabilities. If other parties owned / were responsible for the site, the recommendations of the following assessment may well be different.

4.2 Assumptions

There are a number of unknowns which will need consideration prior to any option finally being put into place. However, in order to give a pragmatic and useful assessment of the options that were part of the engagement process, the following has been assumed. In order to be considered as an option, ultimately, each option must be,

- Legal
- Viable
- Deliverable
- Fit for purpose

Any option that fails these tests should not be evaluated through the options process. At this point it cannot be *definitively* stated that any of the proposed options fail these tests, however there are questions on *all* options around one or more of the above which will need remedial action before being finally decided upon. A short discussion around the meaning of the assumptions is below. The prior actions are discussed in the Recommendations section.

4.2.1 Legal

The legal requirements referred to here are mostly regarding the enforcement measures which will need to be put in place. It is assumed that whichever option is chosen, that the resource can be found, and adequate enforcement expedited. Many comments (from all user types) were made around how *adequate* enforcement measures were needed. For the boating fraternity, for example, this may be appropriate enforcement of stays; or if a non-mooring option is ultimately decided upon, then how trespass is avoided through illegal mooring, for example.

4.2.2 Viable

There have been a number of submissions which have set out that the stability of the bank is under question. Quoted engineering assessments have included that taking place in 2005. This assessment is now 14 years old and was undertaken for a different purpose (road stability) than those under consideration here. Given the speed of the river and the use of the bank since (not that considered in that assessment), it would be a practical and pragmatic step to undertake an independent engineering assessment of *all* of the uses under question here. The condition of a riverbank changes over time and Mead Lane is no different. Any safety considerations in this regard applies to *all* potential future uses and despite some public concern, it is an *independent* and professional view that would be appropriate in assessing the potential of the bank.

In addition, in considering a more public use, perhaps as a Local Natural Reserve, as has been suggested, there are particular issues which might create concern for those responsible for the liabilities of bank. In addition to the above engineering assessment, an independent risk assessment for such a use would be appropriate. Having a public road on one side and the river on the other, amongst other things, creates several risk factors which need to be seriously considered.

4.2.3 Deliverable

All options under consideration need to be deliverable if they are ultimately chosen. All contain an element of finance and/or resource to do so. Identification of this is necessary; if the finance/resource cannot be found for an option, then it cannot be recommended.

4.2.4 Fit for purpose

The evaluation concerns a particular piece of land. The place must be appropriate to uses being assessed. To some extent, these uses are assessed as being viable, as discussed under the previous section. However, the site being fit for purpose also applies to uses such as a local green space or a nature reserve. Elements such as the wider road network, safety or that there are other local nature reserves nearby may negate the cost-benefit of providing another similar use when public money may be better spent elsewhere which has more potential for that use. This assessment is beyond the scope of the brief but needs considering.

4.3 What are the criteria against which to measure the options?

In considering the criteria against which the options are measured, they were drawn from the common issues in the consultation process and those driven by the duties and responsibilities of Bath and North East Somerset Council.

These criteria were:

- Peaceful Enjoyment
- Biodiversity
- Access for All
- Finance
- The duties of Bath and North East Somerset Council

These criteria, where appropriate, were broken down further (below, Section 4.5)

4.4 Criteria weighting

Working with Bath and North East Somerset Council, in order to understand their priorities, each of these criteria was given a weighting under which the options could be assessed. The following sets these out:

- Peaceful Enjoyment – 50%
- Biodiversity – 25%
- Access for All – 30%
- Finance – 60%
- The duties of Bath and North East Somerset Council – 70%

4.5 Criteria Breakdown

To help refine, define and weight any attributes of the specific criteria, the evaluation broke down as follows

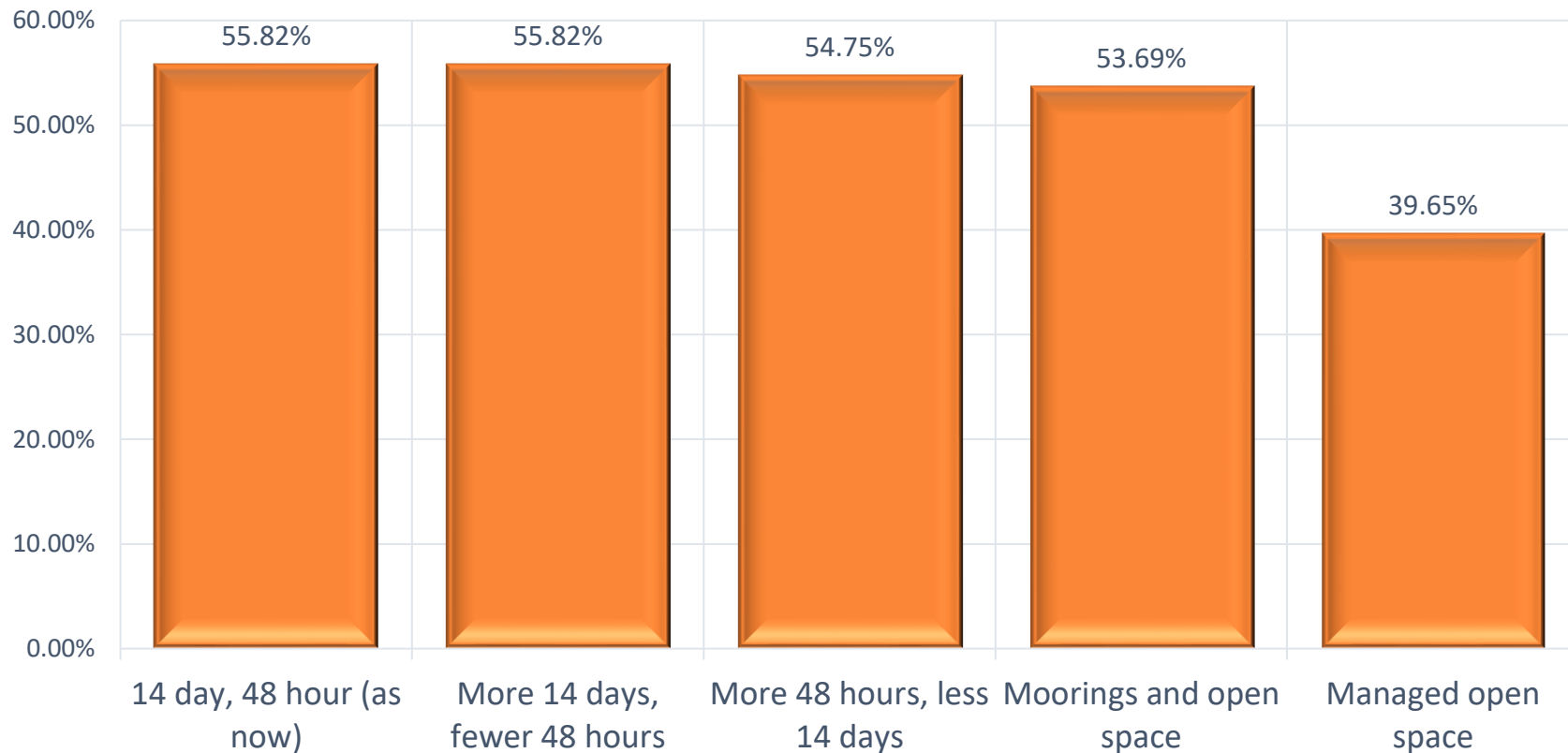
- Peaceful Enjoyment – informal use
- Biodiversity – Management of habitats
- Access for all – attribute weighting evenly split between water based and land based
- Finance – cost of enforcement (weighting of this attribute x2 compared to the other attributes under this criteria), capital cost to deliver, ongoing maintenance
- Owner's Duties – Legal risk (x3 weighting of attribute under this criteria), reputation, homelessness (x2 weighting of attribute under this criteria)

4.6 Scoring the Options against the Criteria

There were no further options under the engagement process that were outside of the Options already suggested.

Taking each option in turn, each were given a score as to how well each did against criteria / attributes. These scores were then calculated, taking account of the weightings of attributes within the criteria and the overall criteria weighting. Below is the summary of this Scoring (set against an idealised perfect score). It should be noted that the question “close all moorings on Mead Lane” is not an option of itself as it is a negative statement.

Overall preference against maximum possible score



5 Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Proviso

There were several assumptions set out at the beginning of the evaluation which could alter the options' consideration. These applied to all the options. The safety of the bank itself could be vital in the assessment of any of the potential uses as well as the ongoing use of the road. Therefore, an up-to-date, independent engineering assessment of the condition of the bank (above and below waterline) would be a practical step. This may result in a reassessment of options to incorporate the additional cost of repair (if applicable) or other works to expedite a particular option. Similarly, a risk assessment of options may also be required under the "fit for use" elements and may exclude or create an additional cost of amelioration, as appropriate.

It is suggested that these assessments will need to be put into place prior to action being undertaken on the recommendations of this report, or that a "subject to" decision be made.

5.2 Option Recommendation

The Options that scored equally were those of retaining the 14 day and 14 hour Mooring (as now) or having more 14 days / fewer 48 hour moorings. That said, the other two Moorings options were not dissimilar in scoring. Whilst these were the more favoured scoring options, it is important to note that all of these options had very large numbers of comments from all sectors answering the consultation about the need for effective independent enforcement and management. Many of the present issues stemmed from the issue of enforcement on a number of levels. It is beyond the scope of this report to detail how such measures should be made but many of the issues that would underlie those comments described under the following Sections of this report:

- Enforcement to eliminate overstays (3.2.12)
- Parking and Road Issues (3.2.13)
- Pollution, littering, flytipping and Waste (3.2.14)