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Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of a consultation survey of visitors to nine Forestry Commission car parks in the New Forest. The survey was commissioned by the Forestry Commission. All those interviewed were UK residents, with two thirds of the survey sample being residents of the New Forest area and one third being visitors from further afield.

The highest proportion of visitors described the main purpose of their visit on the day they were interviewed as dog-walking (59%). A further 20% were visiting primarily for a walk. Relatively few people were visiting for other activities such as horse riding or cycling.

92% of survey respondents indicated that they were aware that the New Forest is a designated area for rare wildlife. Not surprisingly, New Forest residents demonstrated higher levels of awareness than other visitors.

Interviewees generally considered the protection of the New Forest habitat for rare wildlife to be “very important” or “important” to them (72% and 26% respectively). Less than 2% of interviewees considered this to be of low importance.

Visitors were advised that in order to protect wildlife, the Forestry Commission may consider restricting access to the Forest from some car parks. They were also advised that restrictions might be applied seasonally, just during the breeding season, or that restrictions might be permanent. Interviewees were then asked whether they would support or oppose seasonal and/or permanent closure of some car parks.

Overall, 74% of survey respondents indicated that they would “support” or “strongly support” seasonal car park closures. 24% indicated that they would “oppose” or “strongly oppose” seasonal closures and the remaining 2% were unsure or had no particular opinion.

When asked for their opinion about possible permanent closure of some car parks, 68% indicated that they would “oppose” or “strongly oppose” this. Only 27% expressed a willingness to support this, while 6% were unsure or had no opinion.

As might be expected, New Forest residents were more likely to “oppose” or “strongly oppose” permanent closure of some new Forest car parks than visitors from outside the area.

A high proportion of those who would support or strongly support seasonal closure would also support permanent closure of some car parks. However, around half of those who would support or strongly support seasonal closure would oppose or strongly oppose permanent closure of some car parks.

Progress Disturbance Management Proposals Survey Research Findings

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

This report presents the findings of a consultation survey of visitors to nine Forestry Commission car parks in the New Forest. The survey was commissioned by the Forestry Commission and undertaken by the Research Department of Tourism South East.

The aims of the research were; to assess levels of awareness of the New Forest as a habitat for rare wildlife species among locals and visitors; to find out how important the protection of wildlife is to New Forest users and to find out whether New Forest users were likely to support or oppose seasonal or permanent car park closures if these were used as a method of preventing disturbance to wildlife, particularly ground nesting birds.

This survey is only one element of the consultation process which the Forestry Commission are undertaking. Site surgeries were taking place at a number of car parks situated close to sensitive areas prior to the survey, and New Forest visitors interviewed for this survey were offered the opportunity to be involved in discussion groups run by the Forestry Commission.

1.2 Objectives

The objectives of the 2006 survey were as follows:

- i) To contact recreational users of New Forest car parks close to sensitive habitat areas to find out their origin (home location), frequency of their visits to the New Forest and to that particular site and the nature of their activities at that site.

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- ii) To assess levels of awareness of the New Forest as a habitat for rare wildlife species among those visiting or using the New Forest.
 - iii) To gauge the personal importance of the protection of wildlife and habitat to New Forest visitors.
 - iv) To obtain visitors' views on management proposals being considered by the Forestry Commission, including seasonal or permanent closure of a number of car parks, and reasons why visitors might be likely to support or oppose these proposals.
 - v) To offer New Forest visitors/users an opportunity to be involved in further discussions about the management of sensitive habitats in the New Forest.

1.3 Methodology

In order to meet the above objectives, a face to face interview survey was carried out at nine Forestry Commission car parks, by trained TSE interviewers.

The survey took place between mid September and early October 2006. Interviewing took place over two weekdays and two weekend days at each site, with sessions staggered to cover mornings (8am to 2pm) and evenings (1pm to 6pm) as well as the main part of the day (10am to 4pm) in order to capture a representative sample of New Forest users/visitors.

A total of 628 interviews were completed, including a small number which were completed by Forestry Commission staff in Lyndhurst at a Local Produce Market. The sample achieved at each site is shown in Table (i) below.

Table (i): Sample size achieved

Survey site	Sample	%
Beaulieu Heath	45	7%
Crockford Clump *	37	6%
Dibden Inclosure	91	14%
Deerleap	86	14%
Godshill Cricket	79	13%
Hincheslea Moor *	25	4%
Longslade View *	50	8%
Whitefield Moor	79	13%
Wilverley	95	15%
Lyndhurst Town Centre	41	6%
All sites	628	100%

* A GPS tracking survey was carried out at these sites concurrent with this survey and took priority over interviewing at these sites

A copy of the questionnaire is provided as an Appendix.

2. Origin & Profile of Survey Respondents

2.1 Home location

None of the New Forest visitors interviewed for this survey were overseas visitors. All were UK residents, with the proportions of local residents and visitors from outside the area varying from site to site.

Using the postcode parameters employed in the 2004/5 Study of Recreational Visitors to the New Forest National Park¹, 62% of respondents were residents of the New Forest and 38% were visitors from outside the area.

Table 1: Origin of survey respondents – local/ non-local

Survey site	Base	New Forest resident	Visitor from outside the area
Beaulieu Heath	45	37 (82%)	8 (18%)
Crockford Clump	37	23 (62%)	14 (38%)
Dibden Inclosure	91	71 (78%)	20 (22%)
Deerleap	86	52 (61%)	34 (39%)
Godshill Cricket	79	43 (54%)	36 (46%)
Hincheslea Moor	25	15 (60%)	10 (40%)
Longslade View	50	35 (70%)	15 (30%)
Whitefield Moor	79	22 (28%)	57 (72%)
Wilverley	95	64 (66%)	32 (34%)
Lyndhurst Town Centre	41	29 (71%)	12 (29%)
All sites	628	390 (68%)	238 (32%)

Relatively high proportions of New Forest residents were recorded at several sites including Beaulieu Heath, Dibden Inclosure and Longslade View. In contrast, low proportions of residents and high proportions of visitors were sampled at Whitefield Moor, while Godshill Cricket was visited by similar proportions of locals and visitors.

Non-local visitors to the Forest came from a wide range of home locations around the UK.

¹ A Study of Recreational Visits to the New Forest National Park 2004/5 (TSE). New Forest residents were defined as those living within the following postal sectors/districts: SO40, SO41, SO42, SO43, SO45, BH23, BH24, BH25, SP5 2, SP5 3, SP5 4, SP6 1, SP6 2, SO51 5 and SO51 6.

The county of origin of visitors surveyed at each site are shown in Table 2, below, and the home postcodes of local and non-local interviewees have been mapped in Figures 1, 2 & 3.

Table 2: Origin of survey respondents – home county

County of origin	All survey sites	Beaulieu Heath	Crockford Clump	Dibden Inclosure	Deerleap	Godshill Cricket	Hincheslea Moor	Longslade View	Whitefield Moor	Wilverley	Lyndhurst town centre
Base:	628	45	37	91	86	79	25	50	79	95	41
Hampshire	459 (73%)	87%	70%	93%	98%	70%	52%	68%	41%	63%	76%
Dorset	36 (6%)	2%	8%	-	-	1%	20%	4%	6%	14%	15%
Kent	18 (3%)	2%	3%	-	-	6%	8%	8%	4%	1%	2%
Wiltshire	13 (2%)	-	-	-	-	9%	-	-	3%	3%	2%
Greater London	10 (2%)	-	8%	-	-	3%	-	2%	5%	1%	2%
Surrey	10 (2%)	-	-	1%	-	-	8%	-	6%	2%	-
Essex	8 (1%)	2%	3%	1%	-	-	-	2%	3%	2%	-
East Sussex	7 (1%)	-	-	-	-	1%	4%	2%	5%	-	-
Hertfordshire	7 (1%)	-	3%	-	-	1%	-	-	4%	2%	-
Berkshire	6 (1%)	7%	-	1%	-	-	-	-	3%	1%	-
West Sussex	5 (1%)	-	-	1%	-	1%	-	2%	3%	2%	-
Buckinghamshire	5 (1%)	-	-	-	-	1%	-	2%	1%	1%	-
Devon	4 (1%)	-	3%	1%	-	-	-	-	1%	1%	-
Somerset (inc. Bristol)	4 (1%)	-	-	-	1%	3%	-	-	1%	-	-
Northamptonshire	3 (1%)	-	-	-	-	1%	-	-	3%	-	-
Isle of Wight	2 (0%)	-	-	-	-	-	-	2%	1%	-	-
Elsewhere in the UK	28 (4%)	-	3%	2%	1%	3%	8%	8%	11%	7%	2%

Figure 1: UK Map showing the home location of survey respondents

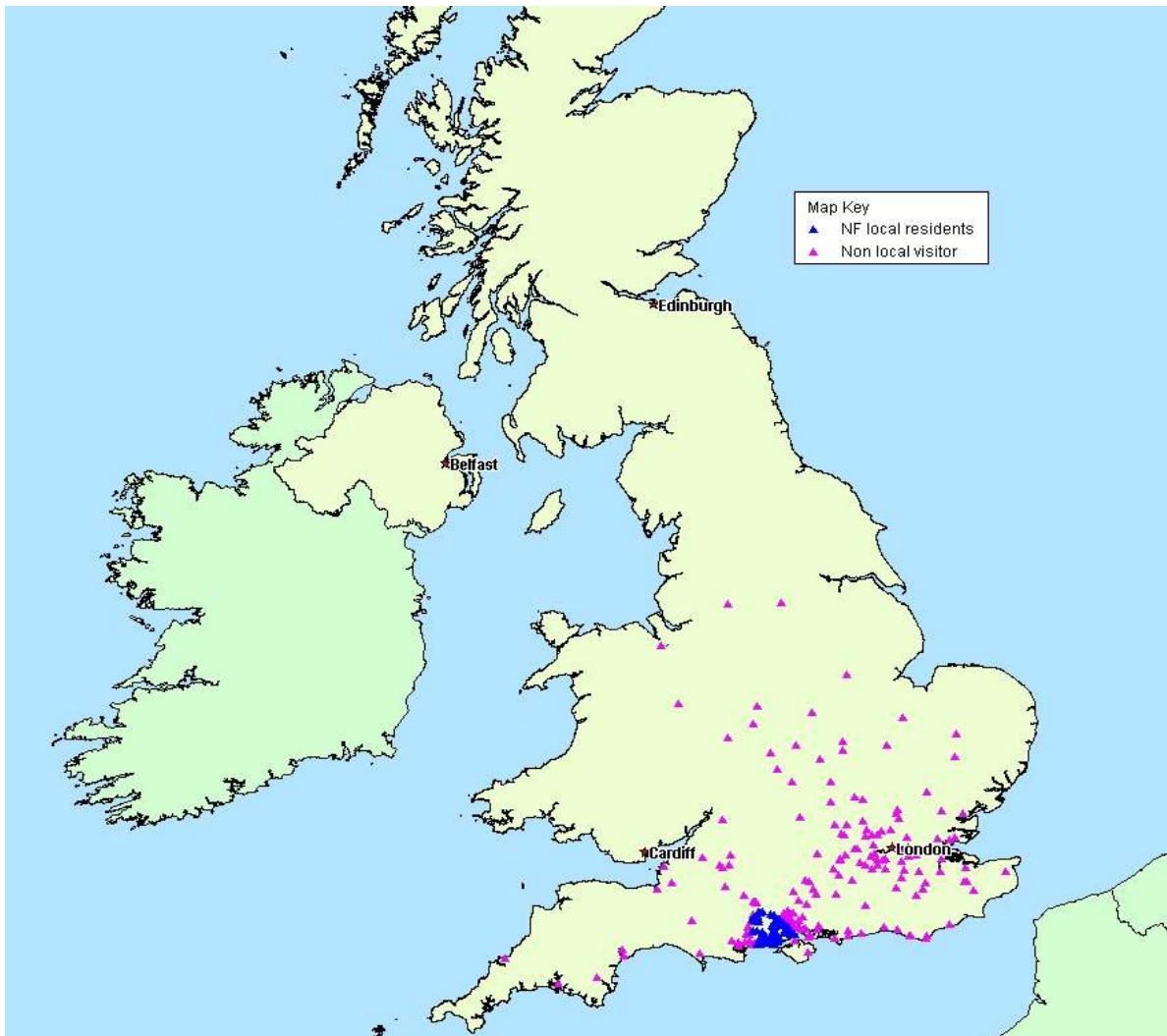


Figure 2: England Map showing the home location of survey respondents

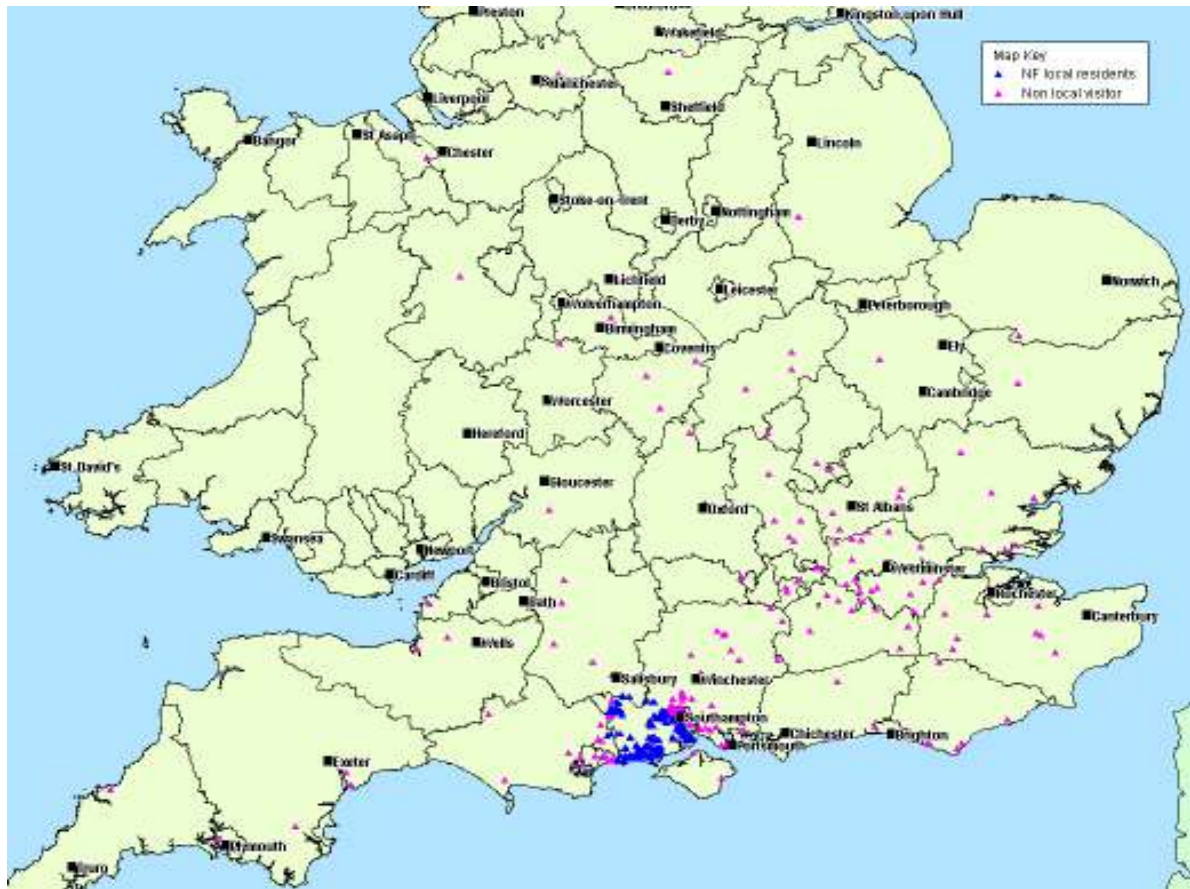
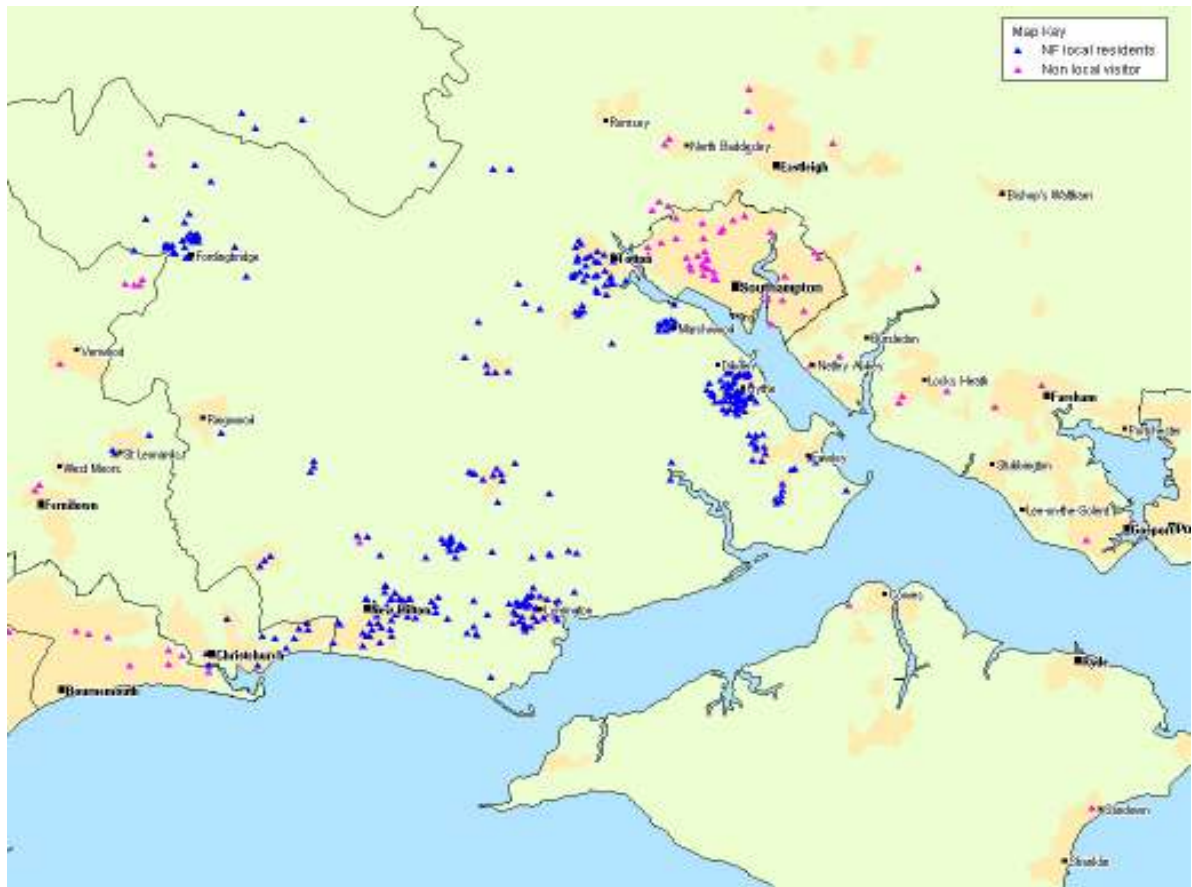


Figure 3: New Forest area map showing the home location of survey respondents



2.2 Purpose of visit

Visitors interviewed in the New Forest car parks were asked what the main purpose of their visit was on the day they were interviewed. They were also asked to indicate any other activities they would be taking part in during their visit to the Forest that day.

As shown in Table 3a, the highest proportion of visitors described the main purpose of their visit as dog-walking (59%). Walks accounted for a further 20% of main activities. Relatively few people were visiting primarily for other activities such as horse riding or cycling.

Table 3a: Main purpose of visit (single response) – by site & by visitor type

Main purpose of visit	All survey sites	Beaulieu Heath	Crockford Clump	Dibden Inclosure	Deerleap	Godshill Cricket	Hincheslea Moor	Longslade View	Whitefield Moor	Wilverley
Base:	587	45	37	91	86	79	25	50	79	95
Walking the dog	59%	56%	46%	81%	73%	43%	68%	70%	25%	62%
Short walk (up to 1 hr)	11%	13%	3%	6%	6%	17%	16%	10%	25%	7%
Walk (1-2 hrs)	6%	4%	11%	8%	5%	5%	4%	-	10%	5%
Long walk (>2hrs)	3%	2%	5%	2%	5%	4%	-	2%	3%	2%
Relaxing/ enjoying views	8%	9%	3%	2%	2%	10%	4%	10%	13%	15%
Driving around/ sightseeing (from car)	4%	2%	5%	-	-	-	4%	4%	18%	1%
Recreational off road cycling	2%	9%	-	-	2%	1%	-	-	1%	3%
Watching wildlife/ nature/ ponies	1%	2%	-	1%	-	3%	4%	-	-	-
Horse riding	1%	-	3%	1%	-	-	-	2%	-	1%
Visiting friends/ relatives	1%	-	-	-	-	4%	-	-	-	-
Mountain biking	1%	-	-	-	4%	-	-	-	-	-
Jogging or running	0%	-	-	-	1%	1%	-	-	-	-
Cycling – on roads	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	2%	-	-
Educational/ outdoor course	0%	-	-	-	-	1%	-	-	-	-
Other	5%	2%	24%	-	2%	11%	-	-	5%	3%

“Other” main reasons for the visit included rest stops while passing through or en route elsewhere (x6), picnics (x3), mushroom picking (x3) and photography (x2).

Other reasons included stopping to make a phone call, stopping for ice creams, playing with children, meeting relatives and looking for insects or wildflowers.

Table 3b: Secondary reasons for the visit (multiple responses permitted)

Other reasons for the visit	All survey sites excl. Lyndhurst town centre	Beaulieu Heath	Crockford Clump	Dibden Inclosure	Deerleap	Godshill Cricket	Hincheslea Moor	Longslade View	Whitefield Moor	Wilverley	Lyndhurst town centre
Base:	587	45	37	91	86	79	25	50	79	95	41
No reply	29%	91%	3%	7%	33%	9%	24%	76%	4%	42%	-
Walking the dog	6%	-	11%	5%	1%	13%	8%	2%	9%	4%	46%
Short walk (up to 1 hr)	28%	-	38%	45%	29%	39%	28%	10%	24%	21%	49%
Walk (1-2 hrs)	13%	-	16%	27%	17%	9%	16%	4%	13%	11%	59%
Long walk (>2hrs)	2%	-	5%	2%	7%	-	-	-	5%	-	42%
Relaxing/ enjoying views	28%	-	16%	43%	21%	28%	28%	2%	65%	22%	63%
Driving around/ sightseeing (from car)	11%	-	8%	4%	-	10%	12%	-	43%	16%	24%
Recreational off road cycling	2%	2%	-	1%	-	-	-	4%	10%	1%	22%
Watching wildlife/ nature/ ponies	31%	4%	14%	46%	21%	24%	28%	2%	73%	29%	59%
Horse riding	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1%	2%	42%
Visiting friends/ relatives	5%	-	5%	7%	-	8%	-	-	13%	6%	22%
Visiting a pub, café or tea room	14%	-	-	7%	3%	20%	12%	-	43%	24%	63%
Visiting a town or village	13%	-	3%	4%	2%	11%	20%	-	44%	19%	39%
Routine shopping	5%	-	3%	2%	-	13%	-	-	9%	13%	24%
Other shopping (e.g. antiques, souvenirs)	3%	-	-	-	-	3%	-	-	14%	7%	10%
Jogging or running	1%	2%	-	1%	2%	1%	-	-	1%	1%	7%
Cycling – on roads	0%	-	-	1%	-	-	-	-	1%	-	2%
Other	5%	-	14%	12%	1%	10%	4%	-	1%	2%	10%

NB: Purpose of visit for Lyndhurst town centre respondents relates to all visits to the New Forest in general

Walks, relaxation/ enjoying views and watching wildlife were the most significant secondary reasons for the visit. A small proportion were dog-walking but had not considered this to be the main purpose of their visit.

A small proportion of interviewees were combining their visit to the survey location with visits to a pub or café, a town or village or with shopping.

5% mentioned “other” secondary reasons for visiting. These included exercise/ keeping fit (x6), picnics (x4), looking for or collecting mushrooms (x4), ice creams (x3), watching the pony drift (x2) or meeting a friend or relative (x2).

2.3 Frequency of visits to the New Forest

Respondents were asked how many times they had visited the New Forest over the last 12 months, and how many times they had visited the site they were interviewed at over the same period.

As shown in Table 4, the number of visits made over the last 12 months ranged from none to 1095 visits (3 visits every single day of the year), resulting in an average of 213 visits per year.

As might be expected, the average number of visits to the Forest over a 12 month period varied considerably according to whether the interviewee was a local resident (average 313 visits per year) or a visitor from much further afield (average 9.8 visits per year).

Table 4: Visits to the New Forest over the last 12 months – by survey site, visitor type and by the purpose of visit/main activity on the day they were interviewed

Survey site	Base	Min.	Max.	Average
Beaulieu Heath	45	1	900	242.2
Crockford Clump	37	0	365	165.2
Dibden Inclosure	91	0	1095	307.0
Deerleap	86	1	730	234.7
Godshill Cricket	79	0	1000	216.7
Hincheslea Moor	25	0	1000	225.6
Longslade View	50	1	700	218.0
Whitefield Moor	79	0	365	78.9
Wilverley	95	0	700	203.9
Lyndhurst Town Centre	30	1	365	237.8
All sites	617	0	1095	213.2
New Forest residents	381	0	1095	313.1
Other residents of Hants, Dorset or Wilts	108	0	700	101.6
Visitors from further afield	128	0	270	9.8
Dog walkers	391	0	1095	292.6
Walkers (without dogs)	140	0	365	67.7
Cyclists	14	1	360	53.8
Horse riders	4	12	365	265.5
Other	68	0	365	85.8

As might be expected, those who were dog-walking on the day they were interviewed were the most frequent users of the Forest (average 292.6 visits per year), followed by horse riders, who visited, on

average, around 265.5 times per year. Those taking part in other types of activity tended to visit much less frequently.

As shown in Table 5, in terms of frequency of visits to the site where visitors were interviewed, Dibden Inclosure had the highest frequency of visits, followed by Godshill Cricket, Wilverley and Deerleap.

Other sites tended to have either a higher proportion of first-time visitors, or a higher proportion of occasional or infrequent visitors.

Table 5: Visits to the interview site over the last 12 months – by survey site

Survey site	Base	Min.	Max.	Average
Beaulieu Heath	45	0	500	77.1
Crockford Clump	37	0	365	33.0
Dibden Inclosure	91	0	700	190.9
Deerleap	86	0	500	101.7
Godshill Cricket	79	0	600	107.0
Hincheslea Moor	25	0	600	55.9
Longslade View	50	1	300	40.2
Whitefield Moor	79	0	365	23.4
Wilverley	95	0	700	102.2
Lyndhurst Town Centre	Not applicable			
All sites	587	0	700	92.4

Table 6, overleaf, shows the proportion of visits to the interview site over the previous 12 months as a percentage of all visits to the New Forest during the same period.

Among the New Forest residents surveyed, Dibden Inclosure and Wilverley appear to have the highest proportion of “loyal visitors”, with visits to that particular site representing 50% or more of all the visits made to the New Forest by those interviewees. Godshill Cricket and Deerleap also showed high levels of loyalty among New Forest residents.

Several sites showed high levels of loyalty among visitors from outside the area. It is possible that non-local visitors tend to keep to a few sites they know well, which are easily accessible to them or which are close to holiday accommodation bases.

Table 6: Proportion of all visits to the New Forest which were made to this survey site - by visitor type and by the purpose of visit/main activity on the day they were interviewed

Survey site	Base	New Forest residents	Visitors from outside the area	Dog walkers	Walkers	Cyclists	Horse riders	Other
Beaulieu Heath	45	32%	29%	35%	24%	14%	-	24%
Crockford Clump	37	19%	30%	23%	3%	-	-	42%
Dibden Inclosure	91	62%	65%	62%	58%	-	-	-
Deerleap	86	42%	50%	46%	22%	16%	-	28%
Godshill Cricket	79	47%	64%	51%	55%	-	-	5%
Hincheslea Moor	25	25%	3%	25%	-	-	-	-
Longslade View	50	18%	17%	19%	64%	-	-	6%
Whitefield Moor	79	28%	41%	26%	44%	-	-	25%
Wilverley	95	50%	58%	53%	39%	-	-	16%
All sites	587	43%	51%	46%	38%	15%	-	18%

** NB Small sample sizes by site for cyclists & horse riders. Results not shown where sample base is less than 3 respondents.*

Dibden Inclosure, Wilverley and Godshill Cricket were used for a high proportion of all visits to the New Forest by those who were dog walking on the day they were interviewed.

Among the walkers (without dogs) who were surveyed, Longslade View, Dibden Inclosure and Godshill Cricket were sites where 50% or more of all visits to the New Forest (on average) were made.

3. Awareness & Importance of rare wildlife & habitats

3.1 Whether visitors were aware that the New Forest is a designated area for rare wildlife

Overall, 92% of survey respondents indicated that they were aware that the New Forest is a designated area for rare wildlife.

As might be expected, levels of awareness were highest among New Forest residents (94% awareness), while slightly lower levels of awareness were evident among visitors from further afield.

Table 7: Whether aware that the New Forest is a designated area for rare wildlife – by survey site & by visitor type

Survey site	Base	Aware	Not aware
Beaulieu Heath	45	98%	2%
Crockford Clump	37	97%	3%
Dibden Inclosure	91	87%	13%
Deerleap	86	93%	7%
Godshill Cricket	79	81%	19%
Hincheslea Moor	25	92%	8%
Longslade View	50	94%	6%
Whitefield Moor	79	94%	6%
Wilverley	95	95%	5%
Lyndhurst town centre	41	95%	5%
All sites	628	92%	8%
New Forest residents	390	94%	6%
Other residents of Hants, Dorset or Wilts	110	88%	12%
Visitors from further afield	128	87%	13%

Respondents surveyed at Godshill Cricket and Dibden Inclosure showed the lowest levels of awareness, while the highest levels of awareness were found among those interviewed at Beaulieu Heath and Crockford Clump.

3.2 Personal importance of the protection of New Forest wildlife & habitats

When asked about the personal importance (to the interviewee) of the protection of the New Forest habitat for rare wildlife, 72% of respondents indicated that this was “very important” to them. A further 26% stated that it was “important” and only a small number of interviewees (n=11) indicated that it was “not very important” or “not at all important” to them.

Table 8: How important to you is the protection of New Forest habitat for rare wildlife – by survey site, visitor type and awareness of the Forest as a designated area for rare wildlife

Survey site	Base	Very important	Important	Not very important	Not at all important
Beaulieu Heath	45	67%	31%	2%	-
Crockford Clump	37	92%	8%	-	-
Dibden Inclosure	91	62%	35%	3%	-
Deerleap	86	62%	37%	1%	-
Godshill Cricket	79	77%	20%	1%	1%
Hincheslea Moor	25	84%	12%	4%	-
Longslade View	50	58%	40%	-	2%
Whitefield Moor	79	90%	10%	-	-
Wilverley	95	70%	28%	2%	-
Lyndhurst town centre	41	81%	20%	-	-
All sites	628	72%	26%	1%	0%
New Forest residents	390	66%	32%	2%	0%
Other residents of Hants, Dorset or Wilts	110	73%	25%	2%	1%
Visitors from further afield	128	92%	8%	-	-
Aware*	576	72%	26%	2%	0%
Not aware*	52	71%	29%	-	-

* Awareness of the New Forest as a designated area for rare wildlife

4. Level of Support for Management Proposals

Visitors were advised that in order to protect wildlife, the Forestry Commission may consider restricting access to the Forest from some car parks. They were also advised that restrictions might be applied seasonally, just during the breeding season, or that restrictions might be permanent. Interviewees were then asked whether they would support or oppose seasonal and/or permanent closure of some car parks. They were also invited to give their reasons for the opinion stated.

4.1 Whether respondents would support seasonal closure of car parks

As shown in Table 9, the majority of survey respondents indicated that they would “support” seasonal closure of some car parks.

Table 9: Level of support for seasonal closure of some car parks

Survey site	Base	Strongly support	Support	Oppose	Strongly oppose	Don't know/ no opinion
Beaulieu Heath	45	13%	60%	18%	9%	-
Crockford Clump	37	30%	54%	16%	-	-
Dibden Inclosure	91	10%	52%	24%	11%	3%
Deerleap	86	6%	61%	17%	12%	5%
Godshill Cricket	79	27%	37%	22%	14%	1%
Hincheslea Moor	25	24%	44%	20%	8%	4%
Longslade View	50	20%	56%	18%	2%	4%
Whitefield Moor	79	22%	66%	10%	1%	1%
Wilverley	95	14%	64%	19%	3%	-
Lyndhurst town centre	41	49%	49%	2%	-	-
All sites	628	19%	55%	17%	7%	2%
New Forest residents	390	18%	50%	22%	9%	2%
Other residents of Hants, Dorset or Wilts	110	15%	62%	14%	7%	3%
Visitors from further afield	128	26%	66%	6%	1%	1%
Aware*	576	19%	55%	17%	7%	2%
Not aware*	52	21%	54%	17%	8%	-
Very important **	454	25%	56%	13%	4%	2%
Important **	163	3%	56%	26%	12%	3%
Not very/ not at all important **	11	-	18%	45%	36%	-

* Awareness of the New Forest as a designated area for rare wildlife

** Perceived importance of protecting New Forest habitat for rare wildlife

4.2 Whether respondents would support permanent closure of car parks

As shown in Table 10, the majority of survey respondents indicate that they would “oppose” or “strongly oppose” permanent closure of some car parks. Only 27% of respondents would “support” or “strongly support” permanent closure (24% and 3% respectively).

Table 10: Level of support for permanent closure of some car parks

Survey site	Base	Strongly support	Support	Oppose	Strongly oppose	Don't know/ no opinion
Beaulieu Heath	45	2%	24%	18%	26%	-
Crockford Clump	37	8%	8%	62%	5%	16%
Dibden Inclosure	91	1%	24%	24%	44%	7%
Deerleap	86	2%	24%	42%	24%	7%
Godshill Cricket	79	1%	10%	35%	48%	5%
Hincheslea Moor	25	4%	44%	28%	20%	4%
Longslade View	50	4%	14%	34%	46%	2%
Whitefield Moor	79	-	43%	44%	9%	4%
Wilverley	95	2%	21%	57%	17%	3%
Lyndhurst town centre	41	12%	34%	17%	24%	12%
All sites	628	3%	24%	38%	30%	6%
New Forest residents	390	3%	19%	36%	36%	6%
Other residents of Hants, Dorset or Wilts	110	4%	30%	35%	26%	6%
Visitors from further afield	128	2%	35%	45%	13%	4%
Aware*	576	3%	23%	38%	30%	6%
Not aware*	52	-	37%	31%	27%	6%
Very important **	454	4%	29%	39%	23%	6%
Important **	163	1%	12%	36%	45%	6%
Not very/ not at all important **	11	-	9%	9%	82%	-
Strongly support seasonal closure	118	14%	43%	31%	8%	3%
Support seasonal closure	347	0%	29%	46%	18%	7%
Oppose seasonal closure	109	-	-	36%	62%	2%
Strongly oppose seasonal closure	42	-	-	-	100%	-
No opinion about seasonal closure	12	-	-	25%	33%	42%

* Awareness of the New Forest as a designated area for rare wildlife

** Perceived importance of protecting New Forest habitat for rare wildlife

As might be expected, New Forest residents were more likely to “oppose” or “strongly oppose” permanent closure of some new Forest car parks than visitors from outside the area.

When comparing attitudes towards seasonal and permanent closure, it is evident that a high proportion of those who support or strongly support seasonal closure would also support permanent closure of some car parks. However, around half of those who would support or strongly support seasonal closure would oppose or strongly oppose permanent closure of some car parks.

Not surprisingly, all of those who would oppose or strongly oppose seasonal closure would also oppose or strongly oppose permanent closure of some car parks.

As shown in Table 11, 69% of dog walkers and 83% of walkers indicated that they would support seasonal closure. However, high proportions of both groups indicated that they would oppose or strongly oppose permanent closure of some car parks.

Table 11: Level of support for seasonal & permanent closure of some car parks – by purpose of visit on day of interview

	Dog walkers	Walkers	Cyclists	Horse riders	Other
Base:	395	146	15	4	68
Strongly support seasonal closure	15%	32%	20%	50%	13%
Support seasonal closure	54%	51%	60%	50%	69%
Oppose seasonal closure	20%	12%	20%	-	18%
Strongly oppose seasonal closure	9%	4%	-	-	-
No opinion about seasonal closure	2%	2%	-	-	-
Strongly support permanent closure	2%	5%	7%	25%	2%
Support permanent closure	23%	23%	33%	-	29%
Oppose permanent closure	32%	51%	40%	25%	43%
Strongly oppose permanent closure	37%	19%	13%	-	18%
No opinion about permanent closure	6%	3%	7%	50%	9%

The sample sizes for cyclists and horse riders are small, however, while these groups were generally supportive of proposed seasonal car park closures, they were less likely to support permanent closure of some car parks.

As might be expected, the reasons given for either supporting or opposing seasonal or permanent car park closures were wide ranging and varied.

Among the 27% of the sample who support (or strongly support) both seasonal and permanent closure of car parks, many of the reasons given for this stance centred around the importance of preserving wildlife and habitats.

- *Important to preserve/ protect wildlife (x40)*
- *Wildlife protection is paramount (x2)*
- *Need to preserve wildlife - as long as not too much of the Forest is closed*
- *It would be a shame, but if necessary I would support it to preserve wildlife.*
- *Because the preservation of wildlife is important and the Forestry Commission needs to do what is necessary*
- *The birds, animals & habitats of them in the Forest need protection above the needs of people for recreational purposes*
- *In the way that we humans need our privacy, so do other species*
- *To protect wildlife from pressures of modern life*
- *Seasonal closure is necessary to protect wildlife*

- *Preservation of habitats is important (x5)*
- *To protect habitat as it is very unique*
- *Reduce the number of people in key habitat areas*
- *National habitat should be protected*
- *Support if it would be beneficial to habitat of wildlife*
- *Because many ground-nesting birds are endangered (not just locally but internationally) and where suitable habitat survives, it should be protected*

The comments made by those supporting seasonal and permanent closure also reflected acceptance of the introduction of measures if they were felt to be necessary, and trust in the decisions made by the Forestry Commission.

- *Support if it is necessary for the wildlife (x7)*
- *If it was for a good reason, would support closure (x2)*
- *If there's a need for it then fine (x2)*
- *If it has to be, it has to be*
- *If it helps, they are willing to comply*
- *OK if it was reviewed and there were very good reasons*
- *Understand the reasons for it*

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- *Support so long as it is done sensibly*
 - *Trust them (the Forestry Commission) to close areas for the right reasons (x2)*
 - *Trusts the Forestry Commission's decision & feels it is important to consider wildlife*
 - *Trust them (the Forestry Commission) to manage the area properly*
 - *Trust the Forestry Commission to decide if it was important*

A number of respondents also accepted that measures might be needed to maintain the Forest environment generally, in order to preserve it for future generations.

- *Support - if it is good for the environment (x5)*
- *Support - so that the area could be protected (x2)*
- *Support - so that it will be available for future generations (x2)*
- *Because certain areas should be left to regenerate*
- *Areas are needed for wildlife to survive*
- *Important area - needs to be looked after*
- *Needs to be preserved for my children & grandchildren*
- *The Forest is worth supporting & looking after*
- *To help nature*
- *To protect my heritage*
- *If it is for the general good of the Forest*

A number of respondents supporting both seasonal and permanent closure acknowledged that alternative car parks would be available, and were willing to go elsewhere.

- *There are lots of other car parks (x5)*
- *There are lots of other enclosures/ areas to visit (x4)*
- *Will support as long as there are alternatives to use (x4)*
- *I'd go to an alternative site (x3)*
- *There are a lot of other areas that people could visit (x2)*
- *As long as other car parks open that can be used instead*
- *OK as long as they do not close all car parks.*
- *Too many car parks are open so wouldn't mind using another*
- *OK if there was an alternative place to visit nearby*
- *Enough other car parks to use - wouldn't be inconvenienced*
- *I support the permanent closure of some car parks to protect the habitat of certain wildlife as long as there are alternative car parks within a reasonable distance*

Although supportive of both seasonal and permanent closure, a few respondents expressed concern about the potential pressure on other car parks and road verges and were unsure whether some visitors would comply.

- *Need to police where people park - on verges, blocking entrances etc. Also police where cyclists go*
- *Areas which are proposed to be closed should be known to the local residents who use them often*
- *Would want to know specifically why. Might support as long as foot access wasn't banned. It would depend on the reason.*
- *Support as long as the other car parks were kept well maintained (pressure onto other car parks)*
- *Such closures won't prevent access. Without such closures, certain species may be wiped out as breeding species in the Forest*
- *Not sure of the impact - would cars be left at the side of the road instead?*
- *I think that it is important that the trial actions go ahead so we know whether we can increase bird numbers by reducing human disturbance*
- *Seasonal closure will rest areas. Permanent closure might over-populate a small area*
- *It depends which car parks*

Among the 43% of the sample who support (or strongly support) seasonal closure but oppose (or strongly oppose) permanent closure of car parks, there were again concerns about access to the Forest and impacts on users freedom to roam, particularly among local residents.

- *Because it is here for all to enjoy (x19)*
- *Access to the Forest needs to be available (x17)*
- *Cars will park on roads/verges if car parks are closed (x9)*
- *People should be allowed to enjoy the Forest without too many restrictions (x9)*
- *Access for people to visit should not be denied (x8)*
- *Like/need to have freedom to roam (x8)*
- *Facility to be enjoyed by local people - that is why we live here (x3)*
- *National Park - it's for people to come & look at & enjoy (x3)*
- *Accessibility is important & people would park up roadsides which would be dangerous (x2)*
- *Car parks have high amenity value (x2)*
- *We should be able to get near nature and appreciate the wildlife (x2)*
- *Inconvenience as a local resident - should have the right to access all parts of the Forest (x2)*
- *Nice to have access to a variety of areas (x2)*
- *Because we own it & wouldn't be able to use it*
- *Car parks are an ideal way for people to access the countryside*
- *A shame not to be able to use the Forest*
- *Defeats the purpose - leisure access*
- *Freedom of choice for visitors is important*

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- *Having visited the Forest all my life, and generations of my family before me, permanent restriction would not be an option I would support. We have rights.*
 - *I enjoy walking and do not live directly on the Forest. Car park provision is very important to me*
 - *I walk a lot (NOT with a dog)*
 - *If they can't park here in this popular easily accessible car park, they'll park in worse areas*
 - *If too many are closed, people will park in unsuitable places. Restricting access to the Forest - should keep access open as much as possible.*
 - *It's a public facility used by a large number of people. Important that National Parks are used by the people.*
 - *Need car parks at the side of the road to see & enjoy scenery, for elderly & disabled*
 - *Restricts access & needs to be a safe area to let dogs out of cars*
 - *Taking away my rights to visit*
 - *The Forestry Commission has already closed too many car parks*
 - *Will hinder access to walks*

A number of respondents who would support seasonal closure but oppose permanent closure had personal reasons for wanting continued access to the Forest, either because of a particular preference or because of their need for suitable access points.

- *Enjoy using the area/ walking here (x4). Lots of people enjoy the Forest.*
- *Love this car park, always come here when we visit the Forest (x2)*
- *Lovely place to walk from. Local to where I live. (x2)*
- *Good meeting place, favourite stop on journey to local area on our regular holiday visits*
- *Inconvenient to find another walking area*
- *It would limit my reason to visit*
- *Like to go into the Forest where there is easy walking as I have had a hip replacement*
- *Nice view here. I'm disabled and can't walk. This is the only place for me.*
- *Nice walk from here - children would miss it*
- *This is our nearest car park. It's safe for the children.*
- *No way I'd be able to bring the children here without a car*
- *Particularly like the walk we take and wouldn't want to go elsewhere*
- *Really good recreational area. Strongly oppose unless alternative is provided. Local car park for us*
- *Several car parks already made smaller or closed, intensifying use of others. I don't want to be surrounded by others so have to venture ever further into the Forest to get away, defeating the object!*
- *Still could get access but not so convenient as further away*
- *This is best view for disabled people. Aesthetic value!*
- *Will park on the road*
- *Want to walk dog here*

Some of those who would support seasonal closure but oppose permanent closure considered themselves to be responsible users of the Forest and did not consider their use to have a sufficiently negative impact on wildlife or habitats to justify permanent closure.

- *For everyone's enjoyment so should be able to have access with respect (x5)*
- *Abides by rules & important to use the area for healthy living. Sensible use should not affect habitats.*
- *As a walker & responsible dog owner - I am not causing any damage*
- *An amenity - people can use it. Birds are important but nature has a way of looking after itself*
- *Careful users are not harmful to the environment as they abide by the rules*
- *Don't believe dog walkers damage wildlife - they keep predators away*
- *If people are careful and respect the area there should be no problem*
- *Forest is for the use of people. Ground nesting birds are known to use certain areas. Affects residents & tourism.*
- *Local place to walk from. I respect the Forest.*
- *Lots of visitors just park & look at the view*
- *It's dogs/ owners that are the problem*
- *Never seen anyone causing problem to wildlife*

A number of those who would support seasonal closure were unconvinced about the need for permanent closure of car parks and questioned why this would be necessary.

- *Can't see a valid reason for permanent closure (x9)*
- *Permanent closure would restrict access & enjoyment (x9)*
- *Counterproductive - people will still have access to all areas (x2)*
- *No need to close permanently, enough natural boundaries, stick to paths (x2)*
- *Why be restricted out of the breeding season? (x2)*
- *No specific reason to do it. Give us a valid reason. (x2)*
- *What about ponies & cattle? (x2)*
- *Don't see why. What are the reasons?*
- *Don't know the case for permanent closure*
- *Because I need more information why this is necessary*
- *Don't want concentrations of people in reduced areas*
- *High amenity value. Dogs aren't the issue*
- *I do not want it closed permanently*
- *It wouldn't be for birds then (if permanent) would it?*
- *Won't make any difference*
- *No rationale*
- *Not aware of damage from car park use*
- *Not much point having the car parks if they are closed*
- *Not necessary for the whole year. Only a few car parks in this area.*

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- *Over the top to close car parks permanently*
 - *If birds aren't happy they'll find somewhere else to go. The area has been used for walking and cycling for a long time.*
 - *Should be able to use the Forest. Cyclists are more harmful than walkers*
 - *They will still be used - people will walk from other car parks*
 - *Wildlife have to learn to live with people in this environment*
 - *Why? Cost control?*
 - *Would need a strong reason to do this - adult birds should be OK*
 - *Would only support permanent closure if really necessary*

A very small proportion of respondents were cynical about the possible reasons for permanent closure or expressed mistrust about the Forestry Commission's motives for proposing permanent closure of car parks.

- *Because the Forestry Commission have ruined vast tracts of land with inclosures and destroyed habitats.*
- *Stuff the FC !*
- *Suspect non wildlife reasons for closure. Are reasons proven?*
- *Thin edge of the wedge*

Several of those who would support seasonal car park closure but opposed permanent closure were concerned that the needs of wildlife should be balanced with those of visitors and recreational users. They would support reasonable measures to limit disruption to wildlife and habitats, but were generally hoping that this would not necessitate permanent car park closures.

- *Need to balance needs of wildlife with visitors (x3)*
- *Depending on amount of car parks being closed - wouldn't mind a few being closed at certain times*
- *Designate paths through sensitive areas so people can still walk through*
- *Forest is for everyone to enjoy. Compromise is preferable to a blanket ban.*
- *If you close this car park, close it for the cricket as well. Don't be elitist.*
- *It will do more harm than good. This area hasn't many wild birds but it would encourage them to go to vulnerable areas.*
- *Limits accessibility - more important to educate people*
- *Local people are important - concerns must be addressed. As important as wildlife.*
- *Need to protect wildlife but not by total exclusion of us!*
- *People should enjoy and respect the area - so no need for permanent closure*
- *OK during the breeding season. Outside this period, it should be open*
- *People's needs are not all the same. Closures will discourage people*
- *Room for everyone to roam, no need to close off areas*
- *Support - as long as it is not the whole Forest*

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- *Support seasonal closure if logical & explained. Oppose permanent closure unless very good reason - enjoy using the Forest.*
 - *Support, as long as it is not all car parks*
 - *There needs to be a balance between accessibility & protection*
 - *This is common land. Suggest people stick to paths*
 - *We should have a balance between human & wildlife existence*
 - *Would rather another way was found. Needs to be accessible to everyone.*

Among the 24% of the sample who would oppose (or strongly oppose) both seasonal and permanent closure of car parks, the highest proportion of reasons for this related to freedom of access and a belief that the Forest should be accessible to everyone at all times for the enjoyment of both locals and visitors. Some of these respondents felt this was a “right” due to them as a local resident or tax payer.

- *The Forest should be open and available at all times for all to enjoy (x16)*
- *Forest is a public amenity/ for everyone to use (x9)*
- *Freedom of access/ right to roam (x9)*
- *People have a right to use the New Forest (x6)*
- *Restricting the freedom of locals/ local residents should have access (x3)*
- *Forest is for everybody - not just the birds (x3)*
- *People need car parks to use & enjoy the Forest and walk dogs (x2)*
- *I need access to walk my dog (x2)*
- *Blanket ban on all people is unfair. Tax payers should have access. The FC sanctions shoots that cause major disturbance to wildlife.*
- *Forest should be able to be used - no point to the Forest if people can't use it*
- *Infringement of personal liberty - unnecessary. Overstated problem.*
- *We have a right to walk our dogs as we pay taxes.*
- *Should have the freedom of choice*
- *The Forest is for people. 1000s of acres of Forest - it's wrong to pick on areas people use*
- *National Park access is a right*
- *Because we enjoy coming here and don't want our access stopped*
- *I need to go & see wildlife*
- *Centuries tradition of free access*
- *Should have access for everybody as long as they're responsible*
- *Not many areas the public can access - a pity to further limit our options*
- *So many restrictions in parks - have to use the Forest to walk dogs*

A significant proportion of the respondents who would oppose both seasonal and permanent closure of car parks were concerned about adverse effects of car park closures such as parking on roadside

verges and the problems this might cause. They also expressed concern about the effect of car park closure on other areas of the Forest.

- *People will still park on roads/ verges - won't make a difference (x6)*
- *Because people would still visit the area but would be in a more concentrated area (x3)*
- *Everyone will park on the side of the road & will make matters worse (x3)*
- *Car parks have been closed over the past few years - this leads to too much concentration of people in different areas (unclosed areas).*
- *Access the public have to the Forest is tiny compared to the size of inaccessible areas - doesn't perceive it to be a problem as wildlife can exist in vast unused areas.*
- *If you start closing things people will stop coming & eventually everything will be closed*
- *Waste of investment in car parks. Not convinced that car park closures would be effective.*
- *People will park on roadside and then you have less control over them*
- *Erosion through tourism. Tourists are not always sympathetic.*
- *Parking on roads will cause more problems - accidents etc*
- *Better to use the car park than have people blocking gates and using verges*
- *Using fewer car parks will cause more damage in specific places and would then necessitate even more closures*
- *We need more car parks to take traffic off the roads - no bus access available.*
- *Now that this is a National Park, more car parks should be opened*

A number of those who opposed both seasonal and permanent closure of car parks did not consider their use of the Forest to be a significant problem for wildlife. They tended to consider themselves to be responsible users of the Forest and felt they were being unfairly penalised.

- *Most visitors respect wildlife. Not necessary to close car parks*
- *I enjoy using the Forest and use it responsibly. It causes hazards if people park on verges.*
- *Dogs behave & stick to tracks.*
- *No proven case that dogs are a problem to wildlife nesting*
- *No need to change. Animals are under control.*
- *Very few go off track. Ponies etc are more damaging*
- *Access to sensitive areas will still be available from other places*
- *Plenty of room for all of us*
- *Conserve, not preserve - they have to live with humans!*
- *Wildlife has been OK for centuries. Too many restrictions already.*
- *Nice place to visit. Would not harm wildlife.*
- *From personal viewpoint, dog is always under control*
- *Dog owners are responsible.*
- *Most people don't stray far from the car park. Regular dog walkers preserve wildlife*
- *Wildlife not worried by people. Not necessary - more interference from natural predators than people*

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- *Facility well used by cricket club etc - not abused*
 - *We're not doing any harm - just sitting relaxing, enjoying the views*
 - *Most people stick to the paths. If there is a truly valid reason you can justify then fence the areas off.*
 - *As a responsible user, I wouldn't cause any problems*
 - *As long as people respect the area, people should be able to roam*
 - *If users are sensible people they keep away from sensitive areas*
 - *Car parks are there to be used - the New Forest should be used & is respected by regular users*
 - *Facility used and enjoyed by all people. In this area there aren't many birds to disturb*

A number of those opposing both seasonal and permanent closure were concerned about the potential inconvenience of car park closures to themselves, while others felt that any closures were not necessary because wildlife would adapt or survive in spite of human use.

- *Inconvenient to have to travel further*
- *Not enough parking anyway. It would be inconvenient*
- *Would need to know about alternatives*
- *This one is nearest to Fordingbridge. Other car parks here are too hilly for old dogs*
- *This is our nearest place to park to walk the dog in the Forest (x2)*

- *No reason for it/ not necessary (x3)*
- *No need to change (x3)*
- *Wildlife will adjust to the situation/ nature takes care of itself (x2)*
- *Don't think it will make any difference (x2)*
- *Believe in survival of the fittest - shouldn't cater so much for the birds.*
- *Wildlife will relocate themselves so as not to be disturbed*
- *No reasons for closure - everything runs perfectly well as it is*
- *It has survived many years*

A number of those opposing both seasonal and permanent closure indicated that they enjoyed their visits to particular sites and were not keen to have their access restricted, or to have to go elsewhere.

- *Access to Crockford (studying Damsel fly)*
- *Want to gain access for walking*
- *Always been regular visitors/ walkers*
- *We like coming here*
- *We always come here. Walking is good from here, views are fantastic.*
- *Enjoy using the area. New Forest is a huge area - why close off areas used by walkers?*
- *It would exclude us from areas we enjoy walking from*

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- *Our best place for locals to come to run, walk, walk dogs and meet up*
 - *Local to me - know routes & enjoy this area. Close to home. Good family base for walking.*

A small proportion of those who opposed both seasonal and permanent closure suspected there were hidden agendas behind the proposed car park closures or rejected the concept that the removal of humans and dogs from sensitive areas would benefit wildlife or habitats.

- *Education, not restriction, e.g. fences*
- *Would be better to use different methods*
- *Scientific basis is not what I believe to be correct*
- *Policy is totally wrong*
- *Because this is not an environment where things grow naturally. A lot of trees have been introduced and trees with a TPO on have been cut down.*
- *Hidden agenda - parking meters/ reduced maintenance costs*
- *Suspect non-wildlife issues (financial)*
- *Don't think closing car parks will protect wildlife*
- *If it's for the protection of nesting birds, how do you stop all the livestock disturbing them?*
- *Birds have been here for 30 years so what's changed - why now?*
- *Not beneficial to close the Forest to people. If they can't use it, they won't treasure it.*
- *Because you're trying to stop dog walking. Dogs do less damage to ground nesting birds than ponies.*
- *Since the Forest has been managed, water has gone, paths made & trees added. Less room for ground nesting birds.*
- *Should fence off the breeding areas - did it at Deerleap*
- *During nesting periods people & dogs should be kept to defined paths*

Around 7% of the survey sample were unsure or had no particular opinion regarding seasonal and/or permanent closure of car parks. Some of these respondents indicated that their support or opposition to car park closures would depend on which car parks might be affected and whether this would affect or inconvenience their access to the Forest. Other comments reflected either a neutral position or need for further information.

- *It depends on which car parks are closed (x3)*
- *Depends on where the closures take place (x2)*
- *Depends on which car parks & how personally inconvenient (x2)*
- *Dependent upon the area considered & other nearby access*
- *Depends on reasons & whether its used by the person regularly*
- *Depends on personal impact & accessibility*
- *It depends which ones might be closed. Nice to keep some small quiet car parks open*
- *Depends on how many car parks are being closed. Freedom of access is important.*

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- *Depends on which car parks are to be closed. Weekends and Bank Hols there are lots of people about, mostly tourists, who would park anywhere.*

 - *I don't think it matters*
 - *Need more information*
 - *We visit other car parks anyway*
 - *Don't know the facts*
 - *Not fully aware of all the issues involved*
 - *Would want knowledge & research support for reasons if permanent closure*
 - *Neutral - if proven that it's the right thing to do for the wildlife, would support it*
 - *The Forest belongs to people & most use it responsibly. Only irresponsible people should be targeted.*
 - *People will still use the same paths, even if the car park is closed*
 - *Why have car parks if they are closed*
 - *Would need to be a strong case for permanent closure*

4.3 Respondents' ideas and suggestions for controlling disturbance to sensitive areas

Respondents were asked for their ideas or suggestions to help control disturbance of areas, particularly ground nesting birds and their habitats.

Responses frequently related to raising awareness of the issue through information, education and signage.

- *Adequate signposting/ information (x4)*
- *As long as people are made aware, they will stick to the rules*
- *Better education of the public e.g. informational panels at car parks, leaflets about type of habitat to avoid at certain times of year, info on species & their rarity*
- *Educate dog owners. Warden the areas. Mobile education unit.*
- *Educate forest users/ the public & raise awareness (x10)*
- *Educate people to respect the area (x2)*
- *Educate people to stick to the footpaths (x2)*
- *Educate some people to keep dogs under control. Keep to paths.*
- *Educate. Restrict access to the Forest.*
- *Education about dogs on leads (x2)*
- *Education programmes, seminars, events etc. Signs & information. Knowledge is powerful & gives a sense of participation/ pride.*
- *Education, especially of holidaymakers*
- *Education. Tell people why. Fence off? Keep dogs on leads.*
- *Signs/ informative notices (x22)*
- *Advice, fencing off, signs etc.*
- *Give out leaflets to visitors explaining importance of certain areas & wildlife within. Offer free nature talks/ walks from the busy car parks to get the message across to more people.*
- *If there were signs at the vulnerable areas most people would avoid them.*
- *Increase awareness generally*
- *Information & signage ALL year round . Information board.*
- *Information in car parks. Charging to provide for a warden (small charge only)*
- *Make people aware of areas where birds are nesting (x8)*
- *Make people aware via the media e.g. Bill Oddie Nature Watch*
- *More public information*
- *Make visitors aware of rare wildlife and dog control*
- *More signs as to what is and isn't allowed here (generally). Fence off certain areas.*
- *More signs up & close off areas. Quiet zones for walkers only.*
- *Need lots of information on signs to explain what they're doing & why*
- *Notices around areas concerned so we can avoid them (x4)*
- *Notices to say when you can go to an area & when you cannot (x4)*

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- *Name the wildlife.*
 - *Perhaps workshops taken into local schools to educate young people about protecting the Forest. Not a short term measure, but looking to the future.*
 - *Signpost in every car park along with a map showing restricted areas*
 - *Put signs up & encourage people to use paths rather than open heath (x2)*
 - *Signage - specify when can visit/ times of the year. General info e.g. on TV to inform people & schools.*
 - *Signposting & education. Some riders are unaware of the importance of keeping to gravel tracks.*
 - *Signs and information. Contact telephone numbers.*
 - *Signs. Leafleting local area. Info at Tourist Information Centre for tourists*
 - *Simple but ample information provided to all to explain the reason for this*
 - *Visitors should be made aware so they can control their dogs & kids*
 - *Signs at nesting places so dogs & children could be controlled*
 - *Signs here - information boards at car park plus signs around as well*
 - *Signs in car parks - which birds are under threat - map showing vulnerable areas*
 - *Signs near/ on approach to habitat - need to know where specific habitats are in order to avoid them*
 - *You can't because people don't take notice. Educate people from the youngest age.*

Fencing or cordoning off of sensitive areas to keep people and livestock away, along with closure of car parks and tracks were also suggested by a high proportion of respondents.

- *Close paths etc. Put up signs. Close off those particular areas.*
- *Close roads. Too many car parks. Put one car park for everyone in each area.*
- *Close the areas off/ restrict access at breeding time (x7)*
- *Designated areas or paths (x3). Park rangers.*
- *Close gates at night to avoid reckless driving and vandalism*
- *Close off areas to be protected from wild animals as well as people and dogs*
- *Close areas off (x7)*
- *Fence areas off like the Lake District. Keep people away*
- *Fence certain areas - people stick to tracks anyway (x2)*
- *Fence off area as ponies would also trample on nesting birds*
- *Fence off breeding areas/ sensitive areas (x38)*
- *Fence/cordon off to keep people out & put up signs (x11)*
- *Fences have come down, some could go back up*
- *Fencing & proper management control*
- *Fencing & signposting clearly, more publicity*
- *Mark the area where you can go or use fencing (x4)*
- *Protect the areas where they're breeding - perhaps volunteers could record registration numbers and report it*
- *Fence off areas & provide alternative routes. Designated paths to keep to.*
- *Be sympathetic when designating paths*
- *Better marking of footpaths (x2)*

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- *Better waymarking. Some paths non-existent*
 - *Encourage people to stay on paths (x15)*
 - *Good footpaths would encourage people to stay on them*
 - *Keep to the paths. Mark allowable paths. (x2)*
 - *Limited walking - zone-ban areas (x2) Keep to tracks.*
 - *Obvious path routes to follow with signs (x2)*
 - *Rotate car parks to be closed*
 - *Seasonal closure is a good idea for ground nesting birds*
 - *Seasonal closure of car parks (x6)*
 - *Sections closed off with reasons for closure given*
 - *Waymarked walks diverted around sensitive areas*

The need for control of dogs, either by limiting their access or keeping them on leads was also frequently mentioned.

- *(Stronger?) restrictions on free running dogs*
- *Byelaws re dogs*
- *Clearer notices about dogs running*
- *During nesting season put signs up and ask people to keep their dogs under control. Most people will understand and be reasonable.*
- *At nesting time, keep dogs on leads then well-behaved dogs are not a problem*
- *Cut dog walking down somehow*
- *Dog owners to keep dogs under control (x10), particularly during the breeding season*
- *Control irresponsible owners*
- *Dog owners should be more responsible. Dogs shouldn't run loose. Keep them on lead to prevent damage*
- *Dog walkers must be sensible and control their animals, including horse riders*
- *Dogs kept away. Close the whole area.*
- *Keep dogs on leads (x40)*
- *Dogs on leads & restricted access (x10)*
- *Dogs on leads & signs (x7)*
- *Dogs on leads in sensitive areas during breeding/ nesting season (x15)*
- *Dogs on leads in certain areas. Trees get chopped down which affects other birds.*
- *Dogs on leads. Police area and use fines (x2)*
- *Dogs on leads in designated areas (x8)*
- *Don't allow dog walking in area as I think even my dog on a lead would still disturb wildlife*
- *During nesting periods people & dogs should be kept to defined paths*
- *Dogs on leads. Restriction/ regulation*
- *Keep dogs on lead until in a safer area. We know where the areas are vulnerable, being local.*
- *Keep dogs on leads and stay on paths if that's the reason for disturbance. (x2)*
- *Keep dogs out*

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- *Keep dogs under control (x10)*
 - *Limit dogs seasonally*
 - *Keeping dogs under control, perhaps consider delineating the boundary of such areas. Signs in the car park.*
 - *Locals know about the birds. Take dogs elsewhere.*
 - *Possibly keep dogs under control more, not all dogs are a nuisance to birds. Put the onus on the dog owner.*
 - *Insist dogs are on a leash & enforce this.*
 - *Some places should be NO DOG areas. They run out of control and leave lots of mess*
 - *Ban dog walking*

Although use of the Forest by dogs and dog owners was felt to be of greatest significance, a number of respondents felt that other recreational users of the Forest needed to be controlled. Horse riders, cyclists, campers and tourists were mentioned among other users. Some respondents felt these users should be banned, while others felt their access to the Forest needed to be controlled.

- *Ban bicycles*
- *Ban people from using the Forest! Too much speeding on the roads.*
- *Bar people - close paths*
- *Control the people who are abusing it - police areas*
- *Control tourists into set car parks. Keep cycles on tracks.*
- *Control animals*
- *Control animals and litter*
- *People should have better control over their dogs & children (x4)*
- *Control cyclists*
- *Limit cycling & riding areas*
- *Ensure people keep to open areas*
- *Keep people away! (x2)*
- *Keep the townies out. They leave litter all over the place, ruin the Forest & don't care for it*
- *Keep to cycle paths*
- *Less tourists*
- *Keep travellers out*
- *More patrols at night time to stop litter from drinkers & leaving debris from fires. Lock at night.*
- *More policing of the area (x3)*
- *No dogs in the area, no mountain bikes*
- *Motorbikes (illegal) (x2)*
- *Prevent visitors from using these areas*
- *Shoot magpies & foxes*
- *Shut it all*
- *Reduce the number of cows*
- *Restrict camping - use New Park*

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- *Horse riders and cyclists should be more careful. Keep to paths*
 - *Horse riders should also be more careful*
 - *In nesting seasons restrict activity - ALL activity to paths, including horses (leisure activities)*
 - *Restrict horse riding in these areas*
 - *Stop bikes riding where they are not supposed to. No connection between this car park & the cycle track that runs parallel. Enclose areas that birds are breeding in.*
 - *Stop cyclists*
 - *Stop people from going to those areas.*
 - *Stop tourists trampling all over the Forest*
 - *Use of quad bikes should not be allowed in sensitive areas*
 - *Use permits to restrict numbers. Educate visitors via plaques in car parks.*

A small number of respondents made other suggestions to control disturbance of habitats.

- *Council cut hedges too early in the nesting season*
- *Complete burning BEFORE nesting time*
- *Create wildlife habitat purely for preserving bird life*
- *Cut gorse - leave on the ground.*
- *Sometimes the work the FC does seems more detrimental - churning up paths & cutting down trees*
- *If it's really important, no alternative but to close the car park*
- *Maintain existing policy of controls*
- *More trees, more secluded parts. Refinery is damaging the environment & trees keep being cut down*
- *Not being disturbed any more than is natural*
- *Restrict publicity of rare situation, otherwise people will come to investigate*
- *Take cows & horses off the Forest (x3)*
- *The present methods are adequate*
- *Yearly pass for local residents or just for those who pay to use the Forest. Special pass for regular users - something like the existing parking clock.*
- *Use areas that are used commercially for rare wildlife*
- *Wardens or local residents watching. Temporary fencing. Possible though that signs may encourage egg theft.*
- *Wardens to patrol the area (x4)*

A number of respondents felt unable to offer any suggestions or indicated that they did not know enough about the issue to comment.

- *Don't know (x5)*
- *Don't know enough about it to suggest anything (x2)*
- *Don't know enough about it. But fence off areas and put up signs in the car park and in the area*
- *Don't know. Don't think people/ dogs affect the wildlife.*

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- *Don't think there is a solution - difficult to mark the areas. Need to know areas to keep control of dogs.*
 - *Putting up signs would notify where birds are nesting - not necessarily a good idea!*
 - *Leave it to the experts to decide (x3)*

A small number of respondents did not consider there to be a problem, or were convinced that their use of the Forest did not have any adverse impact on wildlife habitats. Concerns were also expressed that any restrictions would be impossible to police.

- *Can't see there's a problem - convince me there's a problem*
- *Impossible to police*
- *Is it needed? Less people in sensitive areas than 20 years ago*
- *It's not needed. Restrict/ control the most important bird sites & educate the dog owners.*
- *Cyclists don't stay on tracks & no-one is here to enforce it. Also horseboxes ride on the heath - more enforcement of the rules.*
- *Keep dogs on leads during bird nesting. Treat everyone the same including hunts. Not aware of any species on decline or under threat.*
- *Most people stick to paths - not convinced it needs protecting*
- *Our dogs don't disturb anything*
- *Signs could be put up & car parks closed, but people would use the area by going to another car park.*
- *Wildlife can protect themselves*
- *There's plenty of room for both. Birds will nest away from the paths.*

4.4 Any other comments

Survey participants were invited to make any additional comments at the end of the interview. Many comments reiterated the issues already discussed.

Some respondents took the opportunity to say how much they enjoyed and appreciated the Forest, however, a number raised other issues relating to conflicts of use of the Forest and other issues relating to the car parks and overall management of the Forest.

- *Like the Forest as it is. Love nature.*
- *A lovely area to visit. It would be a shame to have too many restrictions.*
- *Lives in Worcester but has a house here. Loves & appreciates the area.*
- *Fantastic. Pleased it's a National Park*
- *Very impressed with the Forest itself*
- *Lovely area*
- *Thank you for allowing us to come here*
- *Great place!*
- *Beautiful area - wonderfully unchanged over the last 20 years*
- *Lovely place open to everybody - get the balance right*
- *We love the New Forest*
- *Wonderful heritage place*
- *Love the Forest and lucky to have the opportunity to enjoy it. It's a beautiful place.*
- *Appreciates having the Forest on the doorstep - adds value to life.*
- *We love the Forest & will always do what we can to protect it*
- *A beautiful place*

Comments on the Forestry Commission and management of the Forest:

- *Forestry Commission do a good job*
- *Forestry Commission is too bossy*
- *Forestry Commission are already doing a good job*
- *The FC is trying. NF Dog represents me well. People are breaking the dog poo collecting bin by using it as a litter bin.*
- *Close if there are compelling reasons - valid reasons. Worried about future management by the National Park Authority. Worried about erosion of FC management.*
- *Does not believe the Forestry Commission listens to residents' opinions.*
- *Should obtain people's opinions extensively before closure as Ipley was closed without consultation*
- *Forestry Commission don't listen - they promised to stop it. They were going to put stickers on cars - nothing has been done.*

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- *Forestry Commission needs to employ someone who understands public relations*
 - *The FC won't be happy until the Forest is all heathland.*
 - *Half-baked ideas - not well researched*
 - *It's a foregone conclusion!*
 - *Car park closure is contrary to Govt initiative to get people walking*
 - *Dog mess statement last year was wrong i.e. tonnes of mess. How many tonnes of livestock poo? No less biodegradable.*
 - *Would like to be kept informed via the local press about management of the Forest. Feels that too much money goes to "quangos" since National Park status. The Verderers do a good job.*
 - *It's nice to be asked for an opinion on these matters.*
 - *Explain to people reasons for closure if it is necessary*
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- *I like fallen logs staying where they fall - it's more natural. Empty bins more often.*
 - *Rubbish dumping needs to be looked at. Feel that the forest should be used without restrictions*
 - *Badgers not noticeable in recent months - possibly due to cutting fir trees?*
 - *Has concerns about the number of trees that are felled*
 - *Not enough real knowledge of conservation even among professionals. Can't chop down fir trees all at once as species rely on them.*
 - *Felling & churning up that takes place makes tracks impassable. Need to be better maintained otherwise people widen them.*
 - *More natural woodland, don't cut down trees - leave everything to grow naturally which would create a better environment for natural wildlife.*
 - *Certain areas have been spoilt due to building. Used to live here years ago and have seen changes.*
 - *Cycling gets out of order in some places. We need more litter bins. FC vans - won't clear up around car park i.e. bottles, cans etc.*
 - *Litter problem should be addressed. Would like to see a cycle path from Hatchet Pond to Beaulieu*
 - *Not happy with tree felling & path blockage following work undertaken by the FC. More dogs bins & better maintained car parks needed.*

Comments on access to the Forest for dog walking and problems with dog mess:

- *Don't close car parks in winter - need access to walk dogs*
- *Perhaps provide advice on which car parks to use for different purposes e.g. dog walking, so that people don't go near ground nesting birds*
- *Even if dogs are on leads birds would still get frightened if they got too close*
- *Wouldn't wish dogs to have to be kept on leads permanently*
- *Should have visiting dog litter wardens & more bins for dog litter*
- *Dog walkers feel persecuted because of issue of dog waste. Suggest verderers clean up after their animals. Car parks should be better maintained.*
- *Provide more dog litter bins*

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- *Visitors with dogs are the ones who do not understand and cause problems*
 - *Dog litter bins should be provided a bit further down the main path*
 - *Not enough poo bag bins around*
 - *Can't bear the dog mess, especially when we're picnicking*
 - *Dog poo bin a good idea but responsible people always take care anyway*
 - *More dog wardens - dog mess*
 - *People should pick up after their dogs around the car parks. Not obvious there is a dog litter bin here in this car park. Hunt don't clear up after their dogs.*
 - *Dog mess problem*

Issues relating to recreational use of the Forest and conflicts/ problems caused by other users:

- *Would like more dirt track riding - open up some of the old tracks*
- *Broken glass in car park. Youths visit late at night & also in winter when car park is closed. Also seen fly tipping here.*
- *Cyclists don't keep to tracks*
- *Too many speed merchants (40mph limit)*
- *Need more cycle routes to be connected off-road, taking into consideration people with young children and of course wildlife*
- *Cycle tracks need to be more clearly displayed. Could be away from areas that are sensitive.*
- *It appals us how people ignore the speed limit - enforce it, with cameras if necessary.*
- *Cycling, mountain bikes causing a lot of erosion all over the Forest. Need more rangers. Timber extraction is legalised vandalism. Have to collect rubbish from kids raves - told ranger.*
- *Motorbikes & trailbikes using the area*
- *The Forest is for everybody but this is spoilt by a few people. They've cut down a favourite tree.*
- *Bikes are a problem*
- *BBQs should be in designated areas*
- *Today slowed down in car to let grouse cross the road. Motorist behind started tooting and was impatient, but this is how some people are. They just want to rush across the Forest.*
- *People should drive slower through the Forest and be more aware*
- *Rubbish about where people have been illegally camping. Areas should be patrolled.*
- *Fines & patrols for disruptive tourists, litterists, cyclists, riders & most of all, out of control dogs.*
- *Ponies are a destructive nuisance in Brockenhurst. This needs to be considered.*

Issues relating to car park use & misuse:

- *More bins for dog waste and general rubbish. Fines for those who do not pick up dog poo.*
- *Emptying of litter bins should be done more often*
- *Maps should be displayed in car parks for all routes*
- *Evenings this car park is used by young people who loiter by cars. Could this be monitored?*

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- *Bins should be emptied more regularly*
 - *Better signposting for safe & suitable routes around Deerleap. Suggests a big board in the car park with routes shown.*
 - *More regular emptying of bins & provide separate bins for dog litter*
 - *Provide more bins. People use it as a dumping ground for litter*
 - *Car park needs filling in with some gravel as surface is full of holes*
 - *More litter bins to encourage people not to leave litter lying about*
 - *Patrol areas to stop fly tipping and youngsters drinking and leaving rubbish about*
 - *Should be more control over what people are doing in car parks - camping, litter, breaking barriers etc*
 - *Rockford Common car park is in trouble - should shut it.*
 - *A real need for more information in the car park "there's nothing here but a Samaritans sign!" Want to know what is or isn't allowed re bikes, scooters etc.*
 - *Car park should have a hard surface and be better maintained in winter*
 - *Car park used by irresponsible people in evenings. Don't like people parking either side of the entrance to the main car park.*
 - *Not many big car parks - feels it is safer for her with a dog & small child not to park on the roadside*

Final comments on the issue of possible car park closures and impacts on recreational use of the Forest:

- *Not keen on work the Forestry Commission does - some lovely walks have been taken away & tractors leave big ruts & mess isn't cleared up*
- *The New Forest should be enjoyed by all. It is for the people.*
- *Understand why talking about restricting access to car parks*
- *Do not agree with shrinking car parks as it makes people park on roads/ verges. Visitors cause most problems.*
- *Must have some parking provision otherwise people will park anywhere*
- *Provide alternatives if car parks are closed - sign with directions. Not keen on height barriers for camper vans.*
- *Agrees with clearance & getting rid of pine trees - work that the FC currently undertake*
- *Rigidly enforce non hunting - ban it on Forestry Commission land & ban shooting*
- *Would support closures if they abandoned inclosures & commercial conifer logging. Worried about climate change. Set aside areas for reservoirs to store water & for irrigation.*
- *Don't see a lot of wildlife*
- *Attended a fungi day with the FC and found it very interesting. Learned a lot. Now have an interest in mushrooms.*
- *The government's fault originally - they destroyed the habitats*
- *Surely deer, horses, cattle etc are worse than dogs & walkers!*
- *The wildlife lobby is in danger of overplaying its public sympathy hand*
- *The agisters are doing a wonderful job. Let them look after the Forest.*
- *Noted there are less birds, but reckon it's not because of disturbance.*

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- *Regular walkers are sources of useful information & keen observers of wildlife. Don't risk losing them.*
 - *More signs to make people aware of wildlife, especially people with children who let them run all over, not realising the ponies are wild.*
 - *Local people respect & enjoy the Forest and are considerate to wildlife. Visitors do not always have the same consideration.*
 - *Should maintain alternative car parks*
 - *I keep my dog on a lead in specific places so as not to endanger wildlife but also to protect my dog from being kicked by a horse*
 - *The Forest has been managed over many years*
 - *Suspect there are other reasons for car park closure*
 - *What about the horses & cattle?*
 - *Do what is necessary to protect the environment*
 - *Consider the older people who enjoy the Forest from their cars*
 - *The New Forest is big enough to enjoy without more restrictions*
 - *Summer closure holiday time? Exceptionally busy*
 - *Convenient meeting place for people and a good starting point for walks in this area. Would probably want to know an alternative close site*
 - *It may tempt people to park on the verges. Big animal accident notices showing accident rate - not small ones*
 - *It's the visitors who cause all the trouble.*
 - *Don't see birds now - Stonechats etc. Not around any more - perhaps too many people disturbing things*
 - *Lots more parking available now which is good*
 - *Don't think walkers & dogs have a big impact & other wildlife should be taken into account.*
 - *Would need a close alternative*
 - *Would support closure as long as alternative sites are available*
 - *Good idea to protect wildlife but must let public in. Keep children & dogs under control. Information would be very helpful.*
 - *Might as well shut the whole Forest. Grass over the A31 & turn it back. Ban lorries - they ignore livestock and leave litter all along the road.*
 - *People are part of the Forest, we walk on the paths. Signs during bird nesting time at the car parks.*
 - *People come before wildlife. There is a movement to restrict people. Nature copes with it.*
 - *Need to encourage education about the area - display boards with info about birds would be a good idea*
 - *People are as important as animals*
 - *Leave us alone - people are more important than birds*
 - *Doesn't just belong to people. We visit, all the animals live here. It's important to inform people WHY*
 - *Limit the tourists? Difficult balancing act due to loss to the economy*
 - *Explanations are vital on site, in car parks & around the area*
 - *Dogs on leads wouldn't work because they come here to let dogs exercise freely*
 - *Burning is taking place at bird nesting time. People might park on verges.*
 - *There's a lot of habitat out there and people seem to stay local to the car park. FC already restrict access by not putting car parks all over the place*

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- *Make it known if you close car parks where to go where you can walk dogs off the lead. Up to Forest residents to take decisions on forums.*
 - *If this is available it will keep people off the more vulnerable areas. They charge for a lot of car parks in the Forest now.*
 - *A shame Pig Bush is being closed - a favourite place.*
 - *Got to balance the protection with the enjoyment of the Forest by people, particularly locals.*
 - *Car park closures - my support depends on how many*
 - *Even when close to nests, they're used to it and know how to protect themselves*
 - *Good job you've made it a National Park*
 - *If you limit the access how can you educate people about the wildlife?*
 - *Don't mess it around too much please*
 - *Have attended meeting at Pig Bush. Understand how great the involvement is to fence off or try to protect areas of high sensitivity.*
 - *Do it for a trial period to close areas*
 - *Consideration to adjacent car parks to those closed - as they will be used more - also what damage to that area of Forest due to increased use*