NORTHERN DEVON VISUALISATION SURVEY – 'THE NEW NORMAL' SUMMER 2020.

A PROJECT BY THE PLASTIC FREE NORTHERN DEVON CONSORTIUM

North Devon Visualisation Survey – 'the New Normal' Summer 2020

Introduction

The aim of this regional public survey was to capture the public's values and any behavioural changes they intend to make after the first COVID-19 lockdown in Spring 2020. This snapshot survey could provide local organisations with a baseline of aspirations and experiences to help shape the places where we live, in a 'new normal'.

We know that the current pandemic and associated 'lockdown' restrictions have severely curtailed both economic and social activity, causing deeply felt impacts across all of society. These have included a profusion of new single-use plastic products (PPE) and additional littering in town and countryside, but there have also been some positive impacts, including reduced air pollution and an increased appreciation for the outdoors and nature. National 'YouGov' surveys carried out in April of this year regarding the COVID-19 crisis found that only 9% of Britons wanted life to return to 'normal', 8 out of 10 people wanted the government to prioritise health and well-being over economic growth and 85% wanted to see at least some of the personal or social changes they have experienced continue after the COVID-19 crisis. We wanted to dig deeper at a more local level to find out what these changes have meant for those living in northern Devon. What do the people of northern Devon value most and what tools does the community need to meet their combined vision?

The partner organisations involved in setting up this survey all form part of the 'Plastic Free Northern Devon Consortium' and were interested to survey residents, to understand whether behaviour changes and concerns raised nationally during lockdown were similar in this area or were there any specific issues for northern Devon. The variety of topics included, reflected the interests of the partner organisations (plastic and waste, natural environment, health and wellbeing, transport, energy, local economy, and consumerism). Partners who contributed to the survey were: Plastic Free North Devon, North Devon Coast Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, North Devon Council, Torridge District Council, North Devon +, Energy 361, North Devon UNESCO Biosphere Partnership, XR North Devon and Beaford.

We had 808 responses to the survey, 93% of them from North Devon and Torridge, giving us a primarily 'local' response. As the online survey was only promoted through email and social media, respondents were self-selecting. Consequently, the results are not presented as being representative of views across northern Devon. The findings will be used to inform the work and type of interventions that could help overcome barriers to change, support positive behaviours for health and the environment and engage our communities with these issues at a meaningful household level. Taking account of the motivations and aspirations expressed in the survey, local groups and government can better frame their priorities to improve the quality of life for all residents alongside an improved and flourishing environment.

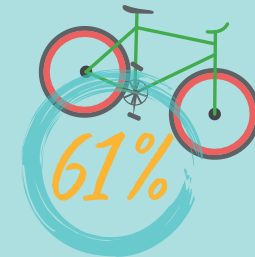**For further information contact: plasticfreenorthdevon@gmail.com**

NORTHERN DEVON VISUALISATION SURVEY – KEY FINDINGS. SUMMER 2020

808 RESPONDED TO THE ONLINE SURVEY BY THE PLASTIC FREE NORTHERN DEVON CONSORTIUM

DURING LOCKDOWN

71%
APPRECIATED NATURE, WILDLIFE AND THE ENVIRONMENT MORE
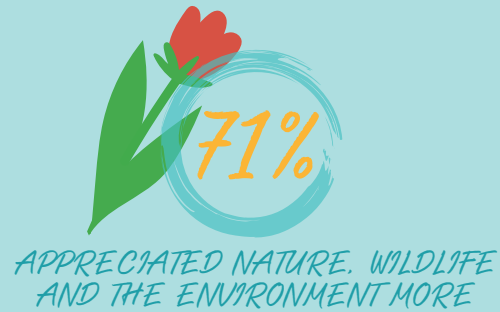
SHOPPED LOCALLY FOR FOOD AND GOODS MORE
60%

61%
WALKED OR CYCLED MORE BECAUSE OF REDUCED TRAFFIC

IN THE FUTURE

WOULD LIKE TO SPEND MORE OF THEIR FREE TIME OUTSIDE
89%

56%
SAID 'SAFER CYCLING ROUTES' WOULD HELP THEM GET OUTSIDE MORE

85%
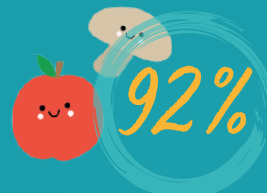WOULD LIKE THE COMMUNITY SUPPORT THAT EXISTED OVER LOCKDOWN TO CONTINUE

84%
WOULD LIKE A SAY IN HOW THEIR COMMUNITY DEVELOPS

WOULD LIKE ALL BUSINESSES/EVENTS TO BE WORKING TOWARDS ZERO WASTE
96%

INTEND TO CONSIDER THE ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT OF THINGS BEFORE PURCHASING
87%

92%
WOULD LIKE TO BUY MORE SEASONAL LOCAL PRODUCE

70%
WOULD LIKE TO GROW MORE FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

87%
INTEND TO REDUCE PLASTIC USAGE
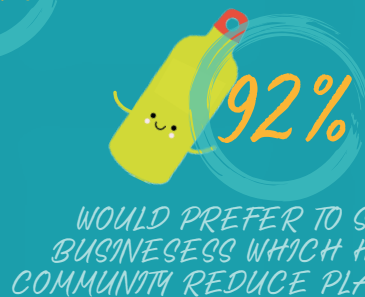
92%
WOULD PREFER TO SHOP AT BUSINESS WHICH HELP THE COMMUNITY REDUCE PLASTIC WASTE

ARE INTERESTED IN SUPPORTING WILDLIFE AND ENVIRONMENT
86%

89%
INTEND TO SUPPORT INITIATIVES THAT REDUCE SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

INTEND TO PURCHASE GOODS MORE LOCALLY WHERE POSSIBLE
87%
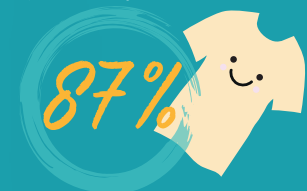
Section 1 – The Respondents

Fig. 1 Gender of Respondents
Answered 808

Gender	Percentage
Female	68%
Male	29%
Prefer not to say	3%

Fig. 2 Age of Respondents
Answered 800

- 39-58, 47%
- 59 and over, 30%
- 29-38, 16%
- Under 29, 7%
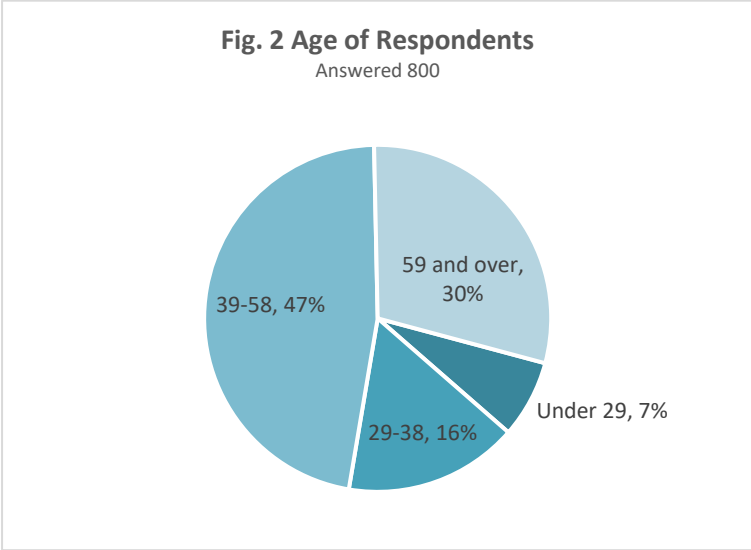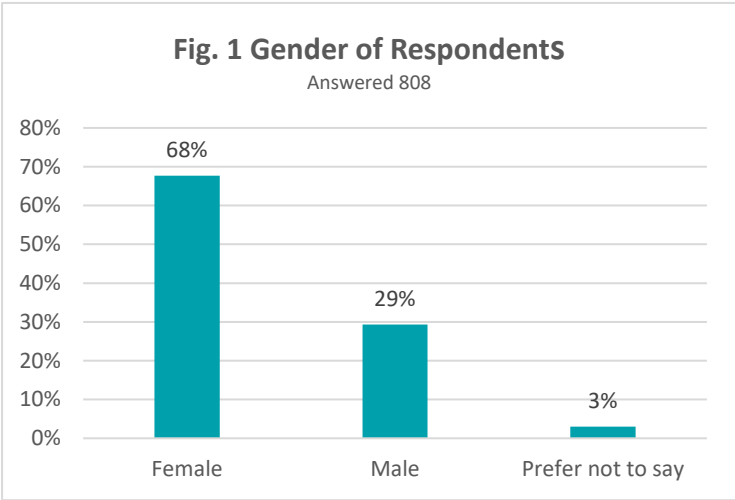
Who responded to the Survey?

- The online survey was open between 27 May and 30 June 2020 and was promoted by all project partners, through email, e-newsletters and social media.
- 808 people responded.

Gender Profile

- Over two thirds were female (68%), just under a third were male and the rest opted not to say (Fig. 1)
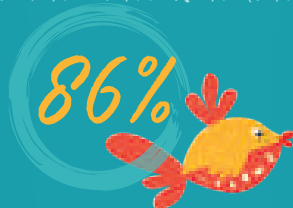
Age Profile

- A questionnaire error produced unusual age categories, hence the category figures here (Fig. 2).

- Just under half of respondents were aged between 39-58. and nearly a third aged 59 and over.

- Only 7% were aged under 29 and of these only 4 respondents were aged under 18.

- These are similar proportions to the North Devon population profile which is older than national averages, with fewer people in their twenties and thirties.

Fig. 3 Location of Respondents

Answered 808
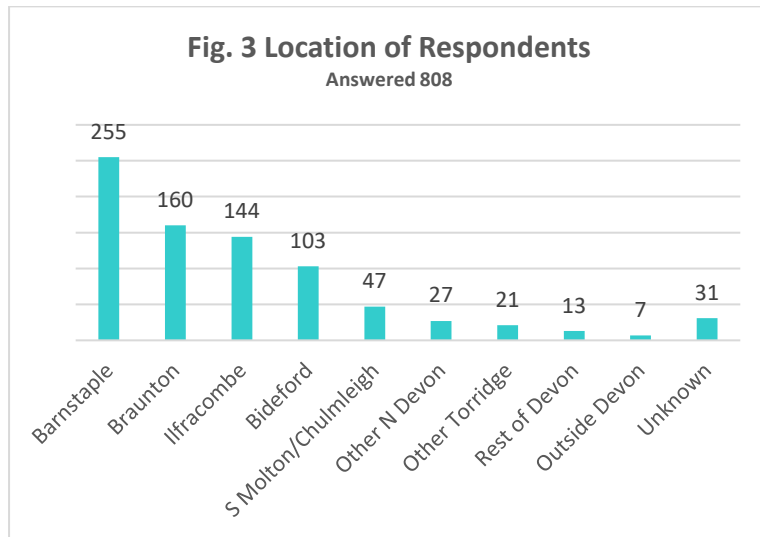
Where respondents came from

- Nearly all (95%) of the respondents were from Devon, with four-fifths from North Devon and a sixth from Torridge (Fig. 3).

- Respondents' locations were spread across North Devon and Torridge (Fig. 4).

- Nearly a third of respondents came from the Barnstaple area, a fifth from the Braunton area, a fifth from the Ilfracombe area and an eighth from the Bideford area.

Fig. 4 Map of Respondents' Locations

Section 2 - Behaviour Change Since Lockdown

Fig. 5 Since the start of the Coronavirus crisis have you changed your behaviour in some way? Have you: Answered 797

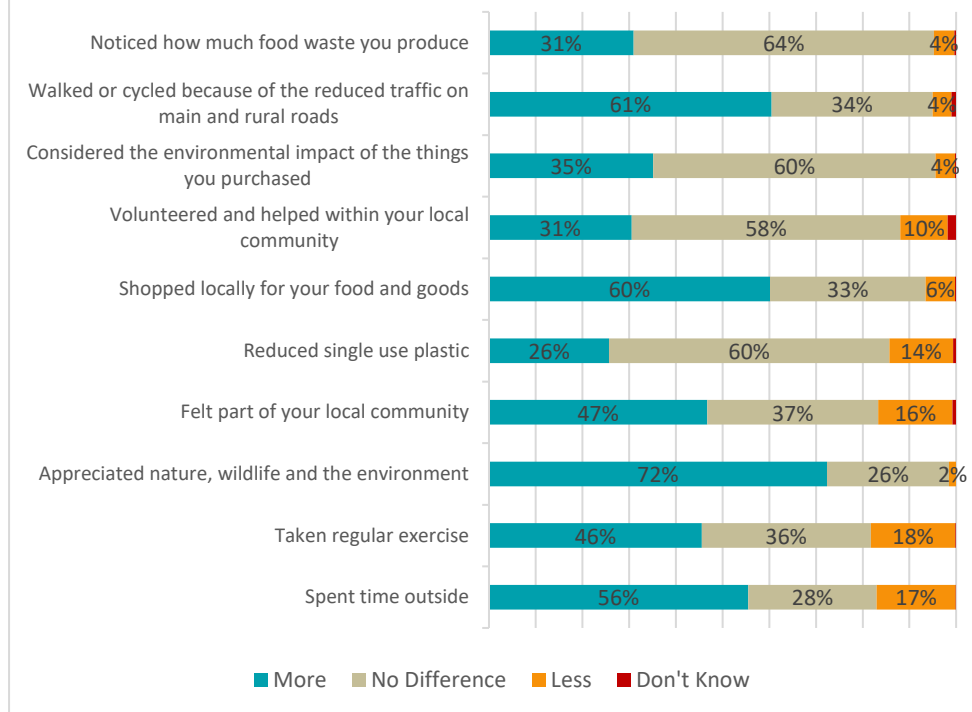| Behaviour	More	No Difference	Less
Noticed how much food waste you produce	31%	64%	4%
Walked or cycled because of the reduced traffic on main and rural roads	61%	34%	4%
Considered the environmental impact of the things you purchased	35%	60%	4%
Volunteered and helped within your local community	31%	58%	10%
Shopped locally for your food and goods	60%	33%	6%
Reduced single use plastic	26%	60%	14%
Felt part of your local community	47%	37%	16%
Appreciated nature, wildlife and the environment	72%	26%	2%
Taken regular exercise	46%	36%	18%
Spent time outside	56%	28%	17%

Legend: ■ More ■ No Difference ■ Less ■ Don't Know

Behaviour Change Since Lockdown

- Over half of respondents had done **more** walking or cycling, shopped locally, spent time outdoors or appreciated nature, wildlife and the environment

- By contrast around a fifth had spent **less** time outdoors, or taken regular exercise, and felt less part of their community

- A small majority of people had **not changed their behaviour** in relation to how much food waste they produced; considered the environmental impact of their purchases, volunteered, or reduced single use plastic.

- Changes in **behaviour related to the wider community** can be seen with nearly a third of respondents saying they had volunteered and helped within their local community more and nearly half felt part of their local community more than before the pandemic

- From feedback elsewhere in the survey, some people struggled to answer this question because they already did a lot of these things anyway and could not 'do more'

Spending Time Outdoors Post Lockdown

Fig. 6 Would you like to spend more of your free time outside? Answered 799

Fig. 7 What stops you getting outdoors more?
Respondents (808) could tick as many as applied

Lack of time	55%
Concerned about safety of myself/family	26%
Other	23%
Lack of confidence / Not go on my own	14%
No bus service to outdoor sites	8%
Limited mobility or disability	8%
No garden	7%
Don't have a car	4%
Can't afford outdoor clothing etc.	4%
Can't afford to travel to sites by car/bus	3%

If you had the opportunity, would you like to spend more of your free time outside?

- The overwhelming majority (89%) of respondents said 'yes' they would like to spend more of their free time outside post lockdown, with only 8% saying 'no' (Fig. 6).

- Asking what stopped them getting outdoors more, over half the respondents (55%) said it was lack of time (Fig. 7).

- A quarter indicated concerns about safety of themselves or family members and 1 in 7 indicated a lack of personal confidence or not wanting to go on their own.

- Other barriers stopping small sections of respondents from getting outside were affordability, transport, lack of a garden, limited mobility or disability.

- A quarter of respondents (187) indicated other reasons, often explaining more about why they had ticked a category. Analysed in more detail, it showed that over 5% of all respondents mentioned health related issues for them or family members, including Covid-19, as a reason for not getting outdoors more, and over 4% of all respondents mentioned roads, traffic, lack of parking and related safety issues as barriers.

Fig. 8 What would help you get outside more?

Respondents (808) could tick as many as applied

Category	Percentage
Safer cycling routes	56%
Safer walking routes and parks	46%
Outdoor taster activities at low/no cost	30%
Organised interest groups	27%
Outdoor volunteering opportunities	24%
More green spaces nearby	21%
Cheaper buses	20%
Able to take outdoor equipment on bus	20%
Learning and citizen science activities	19%
Other	17%
Organised outdoor sports activities	16%
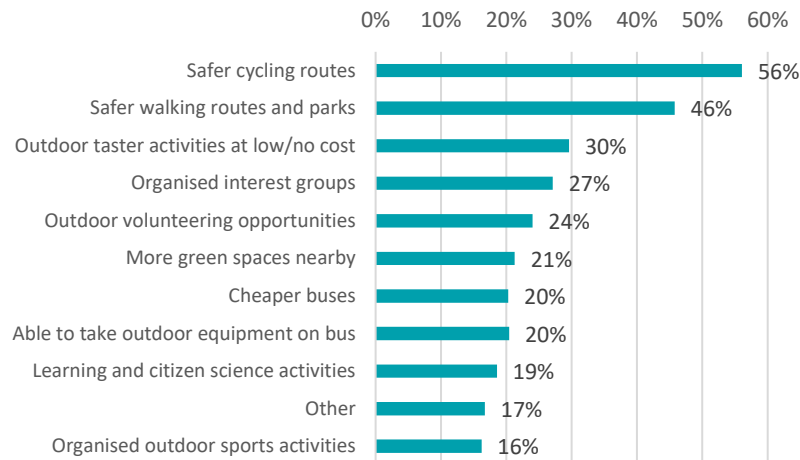
"More walking routes you can do from residential areas are needed. Don't want to have to drive somewhere to go for a walk not surrounded by cars."

"Better connectivity between the Tarka Trail and local towns."

"If it was less crowded with people, I would go out more."

"Able to buy "locals" season tickets for beach car parks."

"Allowing bikes on buses … done in Canada extremely successfully."

"Since lockdown we have discovered so many more beautiful walks/places that we didn't know exist."
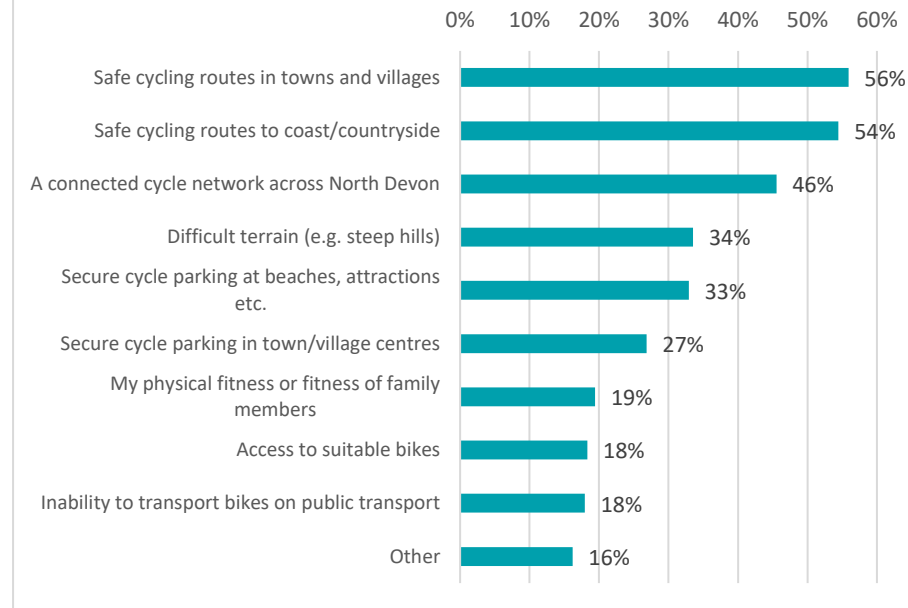
"Access to safe water for kayaking with children."

What would help you get outside more?

- The most frequently mentioned barriers to getting outside more were infrastructure barriers. Just over half of respondents said safer cycling routes and nearly half said safer walking routes and parks would help (Fig. 8).

- Organised activities were supported by around a quarter of respondents including outdoor taster sessions for new activities, organised interest groups such as wildlife watching and gardening, volunteering opportunities or learning and citizen science activities.

- A fifth of respondents highlighted physical access issues such as proximity of green spaces, affordability of buses and taking outdoor equipment on public transport.

- Around a sixth (16%) chose organised outdoor sports activities offering free or taster sessions.

- Around a sixth of respondents (131) mentioned 'other' reasons with a twentieth (5%) of all respondents making suggestions of how improvements and adjustments to walking routes, cycling routes and facilities, traffic management or parking could increase their time outdoors.

- Others raised problems with access to places and spaces, or places were too busy.

Cycling

Fig. 9 What currently stops you from cycling more or at all? Respondents (808) could tick as many as applied

Category	Percentage
Safe cycling routes in towns and villages	56%
Safe cycling routes to coast/countryside	54%
A connected cycle network across North Devon	46%
Difficult terrain (e.g. steep hills)	34%
Secure cycle parking at beaches, attractions etc.	33%
Secure cycle parking in town/village centres	27%
My physical fitness or fitness of family members	19%
Access to suitable bikes	18%
Inability to transport bikes on public transport	18%
Other	16%

What stops you from cycling more or at all?

- Over half indicated safety issues in terms of cycling around towns and villages as well as getting to the coast and countryside.

- Nearly half (46%) said the lack of a connected cycle network across the area.

- A third (34%) said the difficult terrain (steep hills).

- Secure cycle parking is slightly more of an issue at beaches, visitor attractions and countryside than in the town and village centres, a third of people said this.

- Physical fitness, access to suitable bikes and inability to take bikes on public transport were also barriers for around a fifth of respondents.

- 138 respondents (16%) gave more information in the 'other' category, mostly adding explanations to the categories above. Other comments were from those who do not want to cycle or don't have a bike, and those who can't because of their current situation in terms of health and fitness or having a dog/baby/young child.

Other reasons:
"Confidence to get out there and do it, mingled with a bit of not very fit."
"The ability to access a cycle route with children without needing to go along a road."
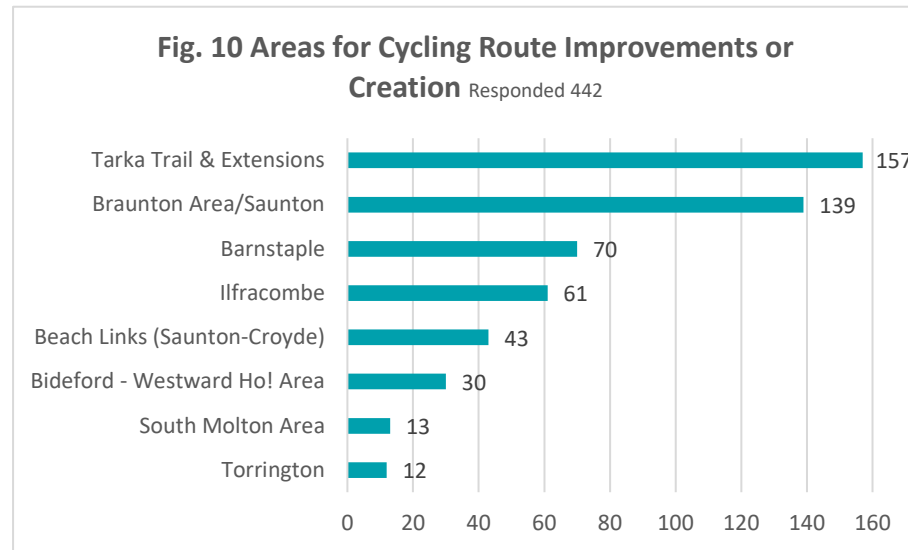"High cost of electric bikes - needed in this hilly terrain."
"Attitude of drivers towards cyclists."
"Weather has an impact. Safety leaving work late at the end of the day when it's darker evenings in the winter. Shower facilities at destination having cycled. Driving gives me safety and convenience."

Cycling Route Improvements or Creation

Fig. 10 Areas for Cycling Route Improvements or Creation Responded 442

Area	Value
Tarka Trail & Extensions	157
Braunton Area/Saunton	139
Barnstaple	70
Ilfracombe	61
Beach Links (Saunton-Croyde)	43
Bideford - Westward Ho! Area	30
South Molton Area	13
Torrington	12

"Tarka trail needs older type access gates replacing to accommodate more modern types of cycle vehicles. Braunton to Saunton is in desperate need of a separate cycle/pedestrian route … If the cycle routes to and from Braunton were improved and more connected, congestion and pollution in the village would be reduced through less car use."

"Definitely in from Braunton to the local beaches. We have a 9 and 7-year old and have biked to the beach, Croyde and Georgeham during lockdown and really enjoyed it. I won't be doing it again now as the traffic is too heavy and fast on those roads and back roads too steep."

"Town centres and surrounding areas - cycling with cars feels too unsafe."

"A cycle route that connects the different trails would be really useful and help cyclists avoid busy roads."

What cycling routes would you like to see improved or created?

- Just over half the respondents (55%) answered this question (Fig. 10) indicating a high level of interest in cycling among the respondents.

- Many respondents named particular places and routes with the largest number of comments, from a fifth (19%) of respondents, mentioning the Tarka Trail including potential extensions. Two-thirds of these comments were for improvements, many praised the trail and only a few were critical.

- People clearly valued the Tarka Trail and wanted it improved and added to. Criticisms mainly focussed on poor surfacing and lack of maintenance, conflicts between users (cyclists, walkers and dogs) and safety issues accessing or reaching the Trail on a bike.

- The Braunton and Saunton areas were the second largest group of suggestions with comments from around a sixth (17%) of respondents.

- Routes to beaches were mentioned both in terms of linking existing beaches such as those at Saunton and Croyde (5% of respondents) and getting to beaches e.g. Braunton area to Saunton beach, or from Bideford to Westward Ho!.

- Barnstaple and Ilfracombe were both mentioned in terms of specific areas and as part of networks to neighbouring settlements. The majority of Ilfracombe mentions referred to extending the Tarka Trail to this area and the lack of an off-road route.
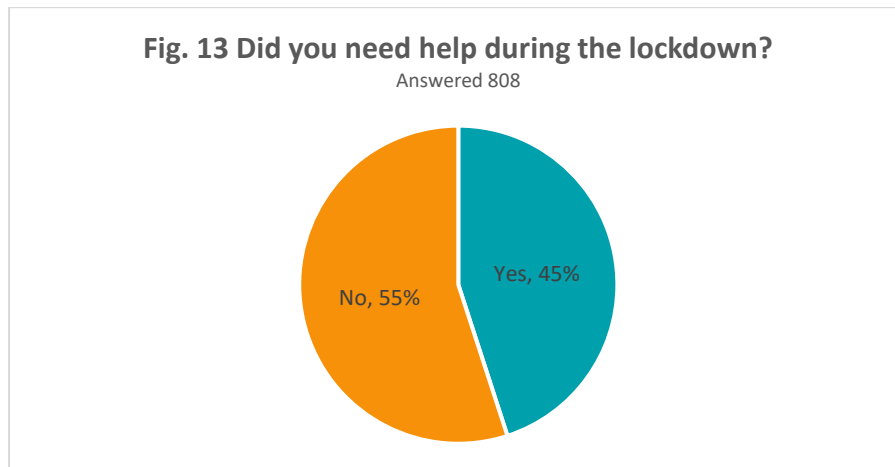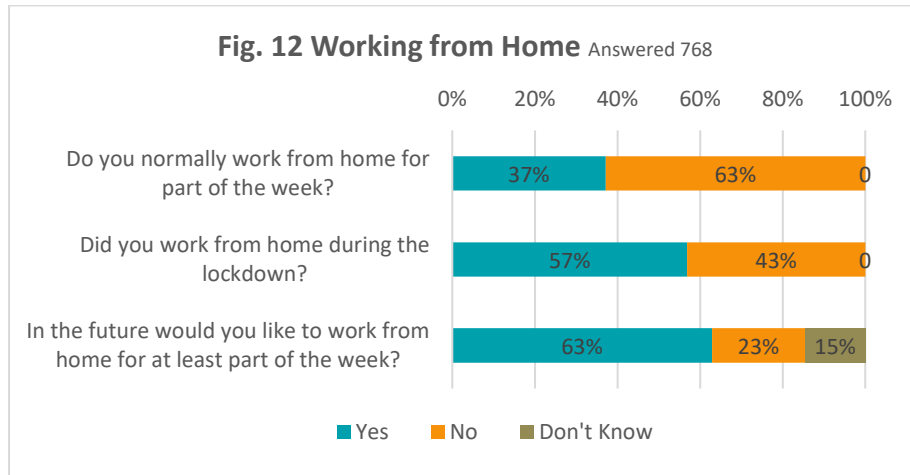
Fig. 11 Main New Cycling Routes Suggested

- **Braunton to Saunton, Croyde, Georgeham, Woolacombe** – linking Braunton with the beaches and coastal villages (120 responses)

- **Ilfracombe to Braunton** – many specifically mentioning an off-road section from Knowle to Willingcott (45 responses)

- **Bideford to Westward Ho!, Northam and Appledore** (20 responses)

- **South Molton to Barnstaple**, including Landkey and Swimbridge (14 responses)

New cycling route suggestions

- Four new routes were mentioned by many respondents as listed in Fig. 11, some specifying they wanted off-road or cycle lanes for these. These were for both leisure and commuting use.

- Two of the specific routes listed are on main roads through North Devon – the A361 around Barnstaple and the A361 between Braunton and Ilfracombe. The Braunton and coastal areas are on smaller roads and even single-track roads, whilst the routes between Bideford and the coast cross the A39 and a range of smaller roads.

- Many comments were not specifically about places but general improvements to the highway infrastructure, to the behaviour of different users and to the challenging terrain with suggestions to "squash the hills" and make electric bikes more affordable.

- A small group mentioned challenges facing families with younger children trying to cycle, or inexperienced adult cyclists with difficulties experienced even on parts of the Tarka Trail.

Working from Home and Help during Lockdown

Fig. 12 Working from Home Answered 768

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Do you normally work from home for part of the week?	37%	63%	0
Did you work from home during the lockdown?	57%	43%	0
In the future would you like to work from home for at least part of the week?	63%	23%	15%

Fig. 13 Did you need help during the lockdown?
Answered 808

No, 55% Yes, 45%

Working from Home

- This section explored potential changes in work patterns during the lockdown from those normally experienced by respondents (Fig. 12).

- Whereas over a third of respondents (37%) normally worked from home for part of the week, during lockdown this increased considerably to over a half (57%).

- Looking to the future, nearly two-thirds of respondents (63%) wanted to work from home for at least part of the week. However, a quarter did not want to work from home.

During Lockdown have you needed help?

- Just over half of respondents didn't need any help but nearly half (45%) of respondents did need help during lockdown (Fig.13).

- Sources of help are shown in the next section.

Sources of help during Lockdown

Fig. 14 Sources of help during the lockdown
Answered 364

Source	%
Family	62%
Friends	62%
Neighbours	48%
North Devon and Torridge Councils	23%
Community Support Networks	18%
Other	9%
Needed help but didn't get it	9%

Fig. 15 Would you like to see this sort of community support continue to exist?
Answered 767
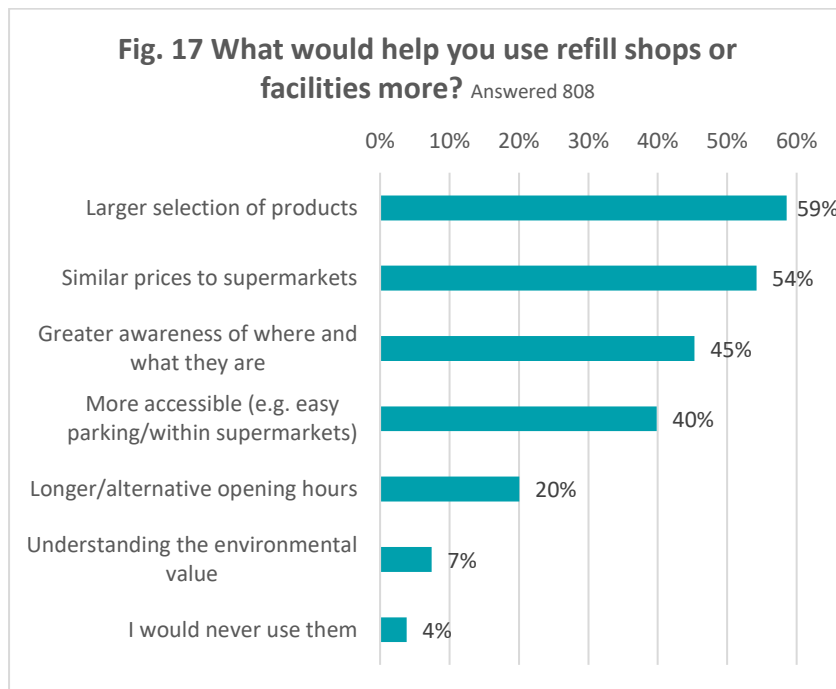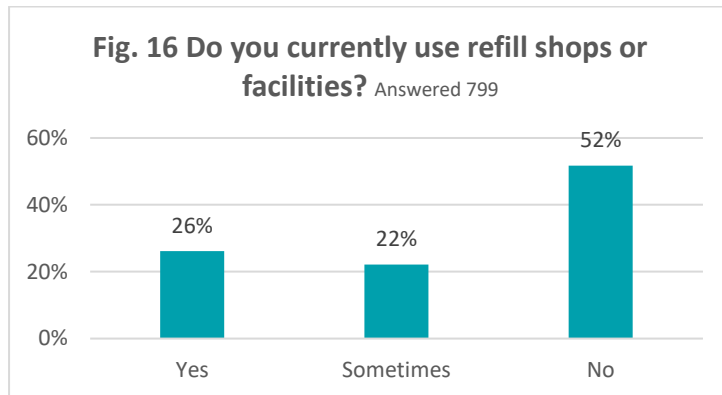

- Don't Know 14%
- No 1%
- Yes 85%
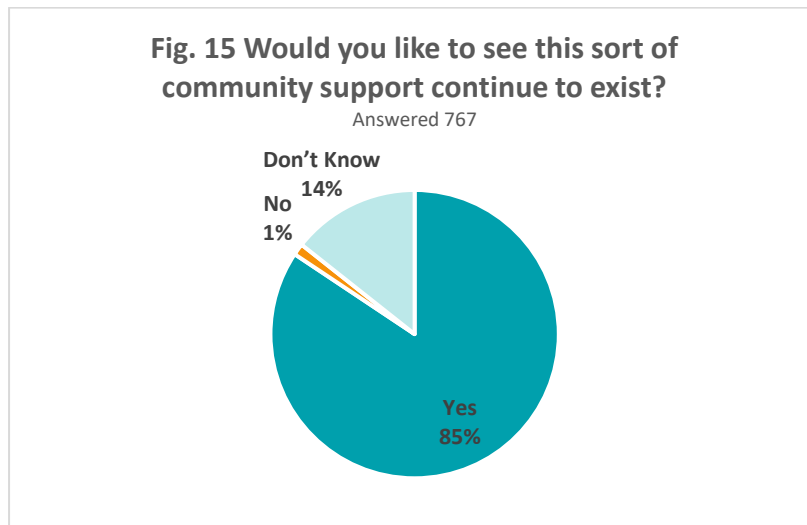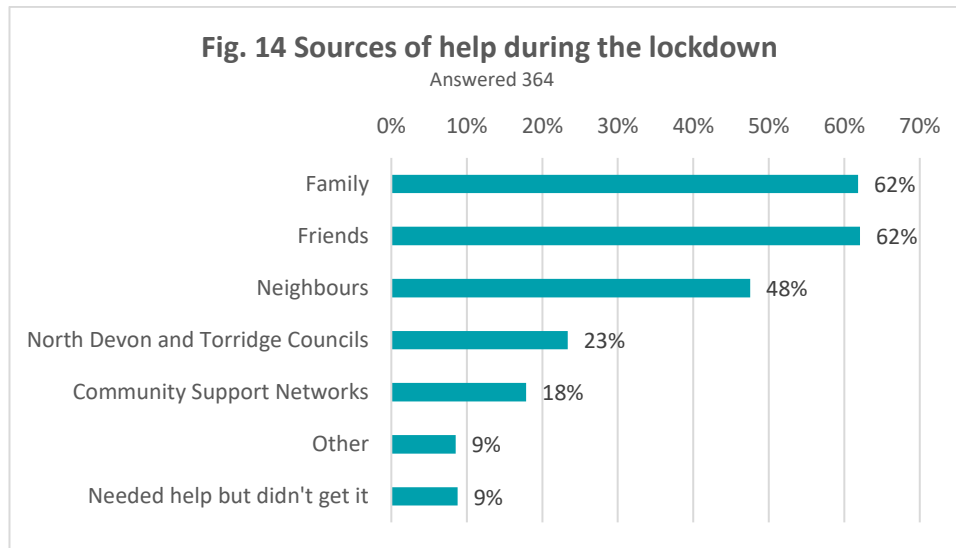
What sources of help used during the lockdown?

- Of those who did need help, nearly two-thirds (62%) got help from family and/or friends, and neighbours provided help to nearly half (48%). Nearly a quarter of respondents (23%) got help from the local authorities of North Devon and Torridge. The newly set up 'community support networks' supported just under a fifth of those who needed help (Fig. 14).

- 40 respondents who ticked the 'other' or 'needed help but did not get it' categories provided more information. A handful mentioned they received help from health services, their employer or government grants. Several people mentioned they didn't get help despite mental and physical disabilities or couldn't get help with shopping as no delivery slots available.

- Only 32 people said they needed help but didn't get it.

Community Support to Continue?

- The vast majority (85%) of respondents wanted 'to see this sort of community support continue to exist'. This is a strong endorsement for maintaining the considerable contribution of the community to coping with this changed situation (Fig. 15).

Refill Shops or Facilities

Fig. 16 Do you currently use refill shops or facilities? Answered 799

A bar chart showing:
- Yes: 26%
- Sometimes: 22%
- No: 52%

Fig. 17 What would help you use refill shops or facilities more? Answered 808

A horizontal bar chart showing:
- Larger selection of products: 59%
- Similar prices to supermarkets: 54%
- Greater awareness of where and what they are: 45%
- More accessible (e.g. easy parking/within supermarkets): 40%
- Longer/alternative opening hours: 20%
- Understanding the environmental value: 7%
- I would never use them: 4%

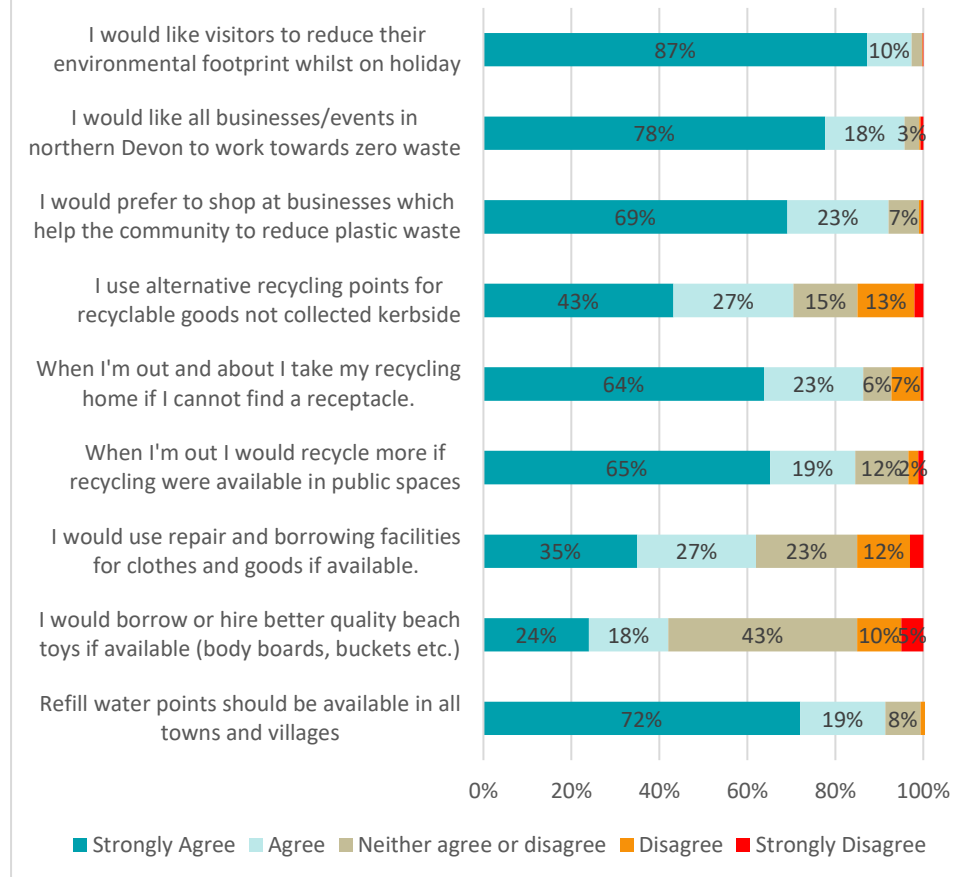### Using Refill Shops or Facilities

- Nearly half of respondents currently used refill shops/facilities, but half of them said they only used them 'sometimes' (Fig. 16).

- Just over half of respondents said they did not use them at all.

- Asked about what would help respondents to use them more, over half said a larger selection of products and similar prices to supermarkets (Fig. 17).

- Awareness and accessibility were the other two important criteria, with only a fifth said opening hours were a constraint and only 7% wanted to better understand the environmental value of refill.

- Only 31 people said they would never use them.

Water Refill Points

- In a further question when asked about the availability of water refill points in all towns and villages, this was agreed or strongly agreed on by the overwhelming majority (91%) of respondents (Fig. 18).

Reducing Waste and Environmental Impacts

Fig. 18 To what extent do you agree or disagree with these statements? Answered 788

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I would like visitors to reduce their environmental footprint whilst on holiday	87%	10%			
I would like all businesses/events in northern Devon to work towards zero waste	78%	18%	3%		
I would prefer to shop at businesses which help the community to reduce plastic waste	69%	23%	7%		
I use alternative recycling points for recyclable goods not collected kerbside	43%	27%	15%	13%	
When I'm out and about I take my recycling home if I cannot find a receptacle.	64%	23%	6%	7%	
When I'm out I would recycle more if recycling were available in public spaces	65%	19%	12%	2%	
I would use repair and borrowing facilities for clothes and goods if available.	35%	27%	23%	12%	
I would borrow or hire better quality beach toys if available (body boards, buckets etc.)	24%	18%	43%	10%	5%
Refill water points should be available in all towns and villages	72%	19%	8%		

Legend: ■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree or disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Reducing Waste and Environmental Impacts

- Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with statements about reducing waste and environmental impacts (Fig. 18).

- Visitors are a significant part of both the North Devon economy and local communities, so perhaps not surprising that the majority (97%) agreed or strongly agreed they would like visitors to reduce their environmental footprint whilst on holiday with only two people who disagreed with this statement.

- The majority of respondents (84%) agreed or strongly agreed that they would recycle more in public spaces if facilities were available, and 87% who agreed they would take recycling home if recycling facilities not available.

- Over two-thirds of respondents (70%) would find alternative recycling points for items not picked up by kerbside collections with 15% who wouldn't.

- Looking for change in how shops, businesses and events operate in North Devon, an overwhelming majority (92%) agreed or strongly agreed that they would prefer to shop at businesses which help the community to reduce plastic waste and 96% would like to see them work towards zero waste.

- Nearly two thirds of respondents (62%) would use repair and borrowing facilities for clothes and goods but less than half (42%) would borrow or hire better quality beach toys. 15% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with these last two statements.

Section 4 - Energy Usage and Actions during Lockdown

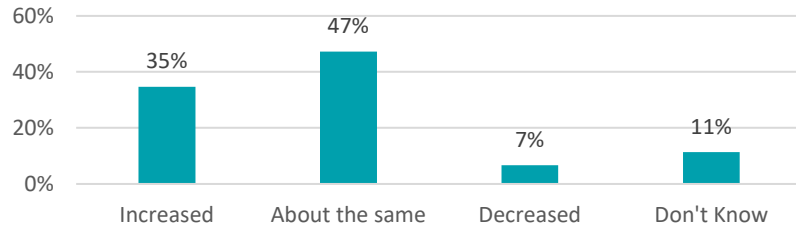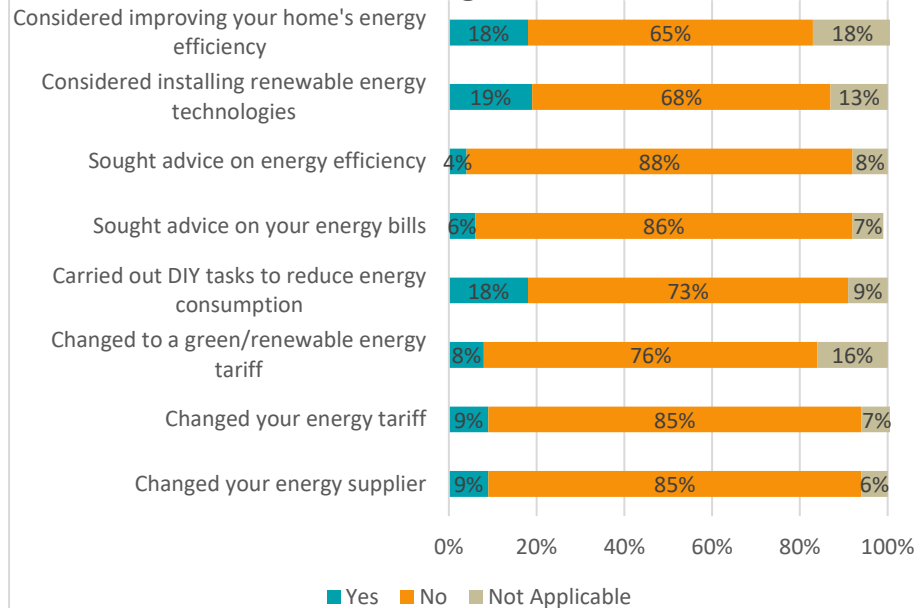### Fig. 19 Has your home energy usage changed during lockdown? Answered 798

Fig. 20 During lockdown have you done any of the following? Answered 752

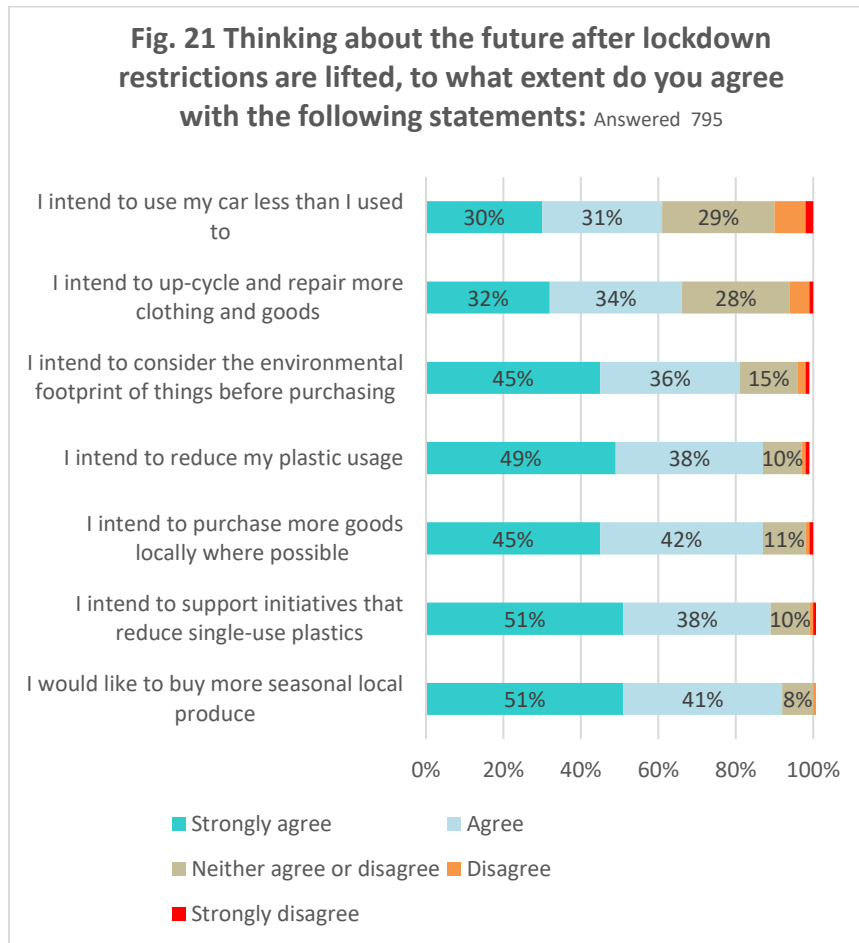|	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Considered improving your home's energy efficiency	18%	65%	18%
Considered installing renewable energy technologies	19%	68%	13%
Sought advice on energy efficiency	4%	88%	8%
Sought advice on your energy bills	6%	86%	7%
Carried out DIY tasks to reduce energy consumption	18%	73%	9%
Changed to a green/renewable energy tariff	8%	76%	16%
Changed your energy tariff	9%	85%	7%
Changed your energy supplier	9%	85%	6%

Energy Usage

- Just over a third of respondents said their home energy usage increased during lockdown, with around half experiencing no change and 7% noticed a decrease but 11% didn't know (See Fig. 19).

- Asked whether they had taken any of the listed actions related to energy usage, on average around three-quarters had not done any of them (Fig. 20).

- Nearly a fifth of respondents (approximately 137 respondents) had considered improving the energy efficiency of their home during lockdown or considered installing renewable energy technologies.

- 4% of respondents had sought advice on energy efficiency and 6% on their energy bills.

- 18% had carried out DIY tasks to reduce energy consumption, some 134 people.

- Around 9% had taken action to either change to a green/renewable energy tariff or changed their energy tariff or changed energy supplier.

- Although there was an opportunity to reduce their environmental footprint, only a minority have taken positive steps during lockdown indicating perhaps the need to reinforce messages and interventions to help, but maybe not a priority at this time.

Intentions and Aspirations post Lockdown

Fig. 21 Thinking about the future after lockdown restrictions are lifted, to what extent do you agree with the following statements: Answered 795

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree
I intend to use my car less than I used to	30%	31%	29%
I intend to up-cycle and repair more clothing and goods	32%	34%	28%
I intend to consider the environmental footprint of things before purchasing	45%	36%	15%
I intend to reduce my plastic usage	49%	38%	10%
I intend to purchase more goods locally where possible	45%	42%	11%
I intend to support initiatives that reduce single-use plastics	51%	38%	10%
I would like to buy more seasonal local produce	51%	41%	8%

Legend:
- Strongly agree
- Agree
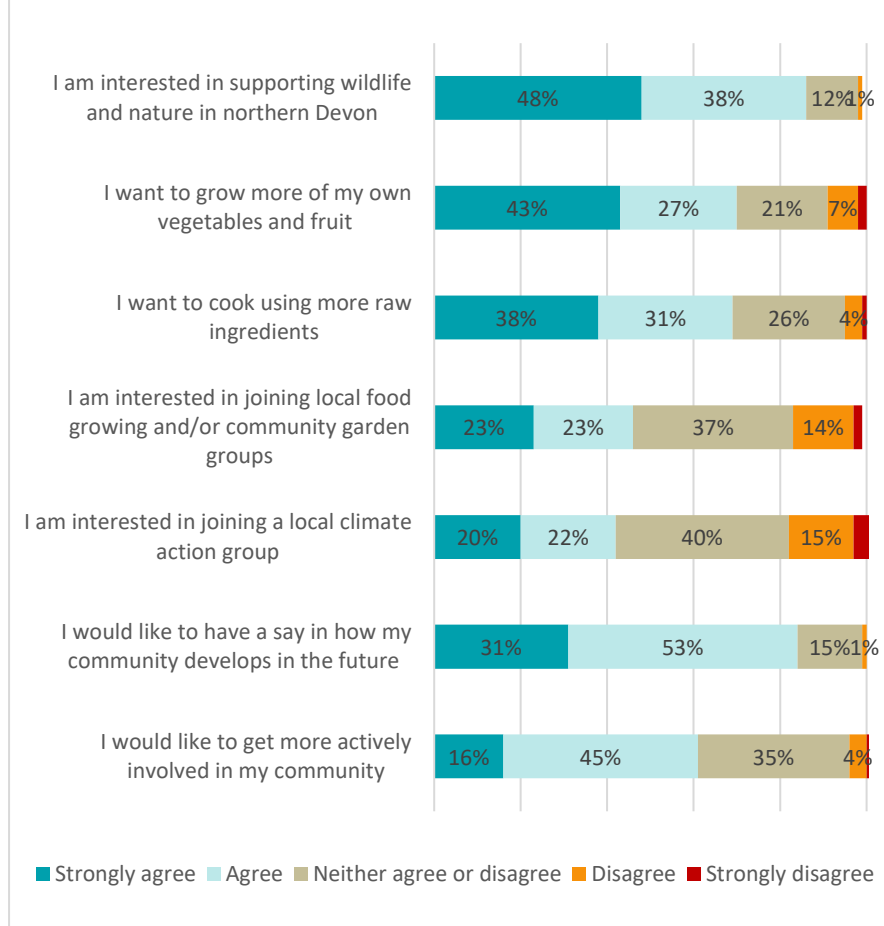- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Intentions and Aspirations post Lockdown

- Respondents were asked what behaviours and intentions they would modify, change or continue to do after lockdown restrictions are lifted (Fig. 21).

- Almost two-thirds of respondents (61%) agreed or strongly agreed that they intend to use their car less than they used to, but 10% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement; and to up-cycle and repair more clothing and goods (66%), with just 6% disagreeing on this statement.

- Over 80% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the following four statements – to consider the environmental footprint of the things they buy, to reduce their plastic usage, to purchase more goods locally where possible and to support initiatives that reduce single use plastic.

- An overwhelming majority (92%) agreed or strongly agreed they would like to buy more seasonal local produce, with 8% neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the statement, and none disagreeing. The very high interest in seasonal local produce is a key finding from this survey.

- Combining the scores for agree and strongly agree responses to these statements suggests strong intentions by over two thirds of respondents, to adapt their behaviour to benefit the environment.

Actions and Interests Post-Lockdown

Fig. 22 Thinking about the future after lockdown restrictions are lifted, to what extent do you agree with the following statements: Answered 790

- I am interested in supporting wildlife and nature in northern Devon: 48%, 38%, 12%, 1%
- I want to grow more of my own vegetables and fruit: 43%, 27%, 21%, 7%
- I want to cook using more raw ingredients: 38%, 31%, 26%, 4%
- I am interested in joining local food growing and/or community garden groups: 23%, 23%, 37%, 14%
- I am interested in joining a local climate action group: 20%, 22%, 40%, 15%
- I would like to have a say in how my community develops in the future: 31%, 53%, 15%, 1%
- I would like to get more actively involved in my community: 16%, 45%, 35%, 4%

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree or disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

Actions and interests post lockdown

- Asked to think about the future after lockdown restrictions are lifted, the statement receiving the highest level of agreement (86%) was an interest in supporting wildlife and nature in northern Devon. This reflects much of the public debate and feedback from other surveys since the start of lockdown (Fig. 22).

- Wanting to grow more vegetables and fruit and to cook using more raw ingredients was agreed or strongly agreed with by over two-thirds of respondents, with just 5-10% disagreeing.

- Linked to growing and cooking food was nearly half of respondents interested in joining a local food growing and/or community garden group. This could indicate an interest in both gaining skills and cooperation with others, or possibly needing access to outdoor space to produce food.

- Nearly half of respondents (42%) agreed or strongly agreed they are interested in joining a local climate action group, with 18% disagreeing and 40% neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

- Two final statements focussed on community. A strong majority (84%) agree or strongly agree they would like to have a say in how their community develops in the future and only 1% disagree.

- 61% of respondents agree or strongly agree that they would like to get more actively involved in their community with only 5% disagreeing.

What other changes would you like to see after Other restrictions are lifted?

Over half of respondents (56%) made a comment about other changes they would like to see in Northern Devon. Suggestions were across a range of areas, but particularly transport and waste & recycling.

Transport (was mentioned by more than half of respondents to this question) - suggestions related to infrastructure such as cycling and walking routes (included Electric charging points) but also measures to improve safety (e.g. measures to reduce cars on the roads and better and cheaper connected public transport). For example:

''Safer cycling routes, perhaps car free routes and cycle lanes, I don't ride my bike in the UK as I fear death'',

''Making space for cyclists on roads. Improving pavements. Pedestrianised areas. Cycle lock up spaces, electric bike charging points, better public transport links for rural areas, encourage walking to school''

''if bus travel was cheaper than car parking and there was a cycle route to the beach, the roads would be quieter, with less pollution and eco-tourism could be established here''.

''Cheaper buses and more of them to reduce the amount of cars on the road. Incentivise people to use buses. A raised monorail on the Tarka Trail''

''Cycling promoted as first choice for local journeys'', ''Smaller buses on routes with low passenger uptake''

''Better transport links from M5, upgrade of Atlantic highway, reinstatement of rail links via the Bideford, Ilfracombe and Okehampton.

''More provision for bikes and surf boards on public transport, especially the train''.

Waste and recycling - **suggestions related to improvements of both the waste and recycling Infrastructure, including;** ~~More~~ **more recycling bins, waste bins, dog poo bins, composting opportunities, increased variety of recycling picked up at kerb side and lids for recycling bins enforcement, education and encouragement of responsibilities, including amongst visitors, and reuse programmes. For example**:

''More recycling bins in tourist spots and a lot more waste bins in towns, especially car parks.

''More penalties for littering. Tourist tax to fund amenities & clearing up.'', '' Fines for people who fail to recycle''

''More initiatives for the encouragement for people to take care of the public spaces outside their homes''.

'' A real focus on how tourism affects our environment - rubbish left at beaches and beauty spot in particular''.

''Strong signs to educate'', ''Regular local Repair cafe or centre where you can take & learn how to fix & reuse items''

''If not already find a leaflet in every B and B and hotel etc about environmental issues relating to tourism so visitors can minimise their impact''

Economy and Work – suggestions here were in relation to the need for an overall greener and more balanced economy (including more sustainable tourism), increased focus on 'purchasing/accessing local', improving work/life balance and support/incentives for green businesss.

''A local review about how we can create an economy which is people focused and greener. We need to create more equality in our locality and eliminate deprivation'', ''Facilitation of continued increased use of local food producers and shortened supply chains''

''Support for green businesses and jobs, and the Council to be supporting start-up businesses through initiatives such as renting out vacant shops in high streets on a temporary basis at a lower rent rate to give these businesses a kick start''.

What other changes would you like to see after Other restrictions are lifted? (cont.)

Economy and Work (cont.)

''More on line meetings to save travel costs to the organisations and the environmental impact. They have worked well during lockdown',
''Increased business rates for business that don't set net zero carbon goals or achieve % of recycling rates, which will pay for reduced rates for those that do'', ''Employers being mindful of the value of less stress, more support, more balance in peoples lives''
.''A move away from tourism being the major attraction for the area with more manufacturing especially within the green sector in the region. This will supply high paying 365 days a year income and careers for young people and families''

Wildlife and the local environment - **Suggestions included improving protection and biodiversity, reducing impacts of pollution and improving the local environment (e.g. reducing herbicide usage, litter picks, upstream river solutions), supporting community growing and local food schemes, protection of green spaces and supported access:**

''I would like to see a real commitment to improving the diversity of wildlife and plants in community areas such as roadside verges and green spaces''
''I want to see the council ban herbicides and pesticides use and ban them from all garden centres in North Devon''.
''more publicity about the amazing green spaces around Barnstaple e.g. Yeo Valley Nature Reserve or walks and woodland on edges of town.''
''Maintaining existing & creating new wheelchair access areas'', 'Fund upstream thinking/upgrade sewers to eliminate CSO's to clean rivers''
''… more land opened up for local people to grow food and even support a land/grower's co-op''
'

Plastic - **Suggestions included the need for more zero waste refill stores, water refill points, reduction of SUPs across businesses and public services that is supported by councils and government, a general reduction of single use packaging across the region and a reduction in sale of cheaper, low value items:**

''Village shops should embrace refilling'', ''ban polystyrene'', ''ban on single use BBQs'',
''Introduce byelaws to prohibit single use plastic take away containers'', ''large supermarkets forced to reduce packaging''
'less non-recyclable packaging on food'', 'refill water points in towns'

Community - **Suggestions related to more community facilities, events, community growing and public toilets. Others mentioned better support for vulnerable members of society, more investment in younger people and the need for more cross-generational spaces and more volunteer opportunities:**

''More cross generational spaces and activities so both young and old can appreciate each other. Promoting kindness and gratitude.''
''Myself and husband are regular litter pickers on local beaches, we would be happy to be involved in more organised initiatives''
''Have street social events'', ''Greater attention towards and investment in younger people - let's hear from our FE colleges''

What other changes would you like to see after Other restrictions are lifted? (cont.)

Buildings, Housing and Energy - comments related to increased use of renewable energy (on all new builds) including community energy initiatives supported by associated incentives. Building comments reflected a preference for smaller more human scale development rather than larger housing estates and highlighted that **any new housing stock is restricted to local residents and not lost to second homes:**

"New homes to have renewable energy'', ''more community energy projects/initiatives'',

''I am a member of the local energy working group set up in response to the climate emergency. Local initiatives need to be supported by the local authorities and government through policies, expertise and funding to bring about significant changes''

''No houses should not be built unless they are affordable for local people especially where they have a catastrophic effect on local wildlife and areas of outstanding beauty'', ''Less housing stock should be used for second homes'', ''less construction work and building large estates''

Other comments: **Reflected broader visionary statements:**

"Re-balancing of our society to one where welfare and community is valued. Our public services should be properly serviced and resourced. More collective community action to challenge other threats to our wellbeing, especially climate change''.

''A huge focus on ensuring everything we do is as green as possible in order to preserve the big environmental improvements we've seen and to hit carbon neutral by 2030''.

''Be brave, embrace innovation, far reaching goals. Learn from successes around the world. Concentrate on making town centres sustainable, Vibrant, and pedestrianised''

''A greener recovery and greener decision making. prioritising the environment over the economy ensuring that everyone can access green space''.'

What 'single thing' would help to continue positive behaviour change?

This open question was answered by 478 respondents (59%) with the majority making multiple suggestions of what would help. The biggest group of suggestions related to travel, particularly safer travel including better cycle networks, reduced traffic and speeds, safer cycling, and safer walking:

"Safe cycling routes - I would love to be able to cycle to work but the road between Braunton & Ilfracombe is not a safe environment during normal traffic"

"Reducing the number of cars or aggressive driving behaviours through town centre, school and urban routes or lowering speed limits to make it safer and more attractive to actively commute and travel - particularly for families and young people ..."

"Less traffic opened up the environment, yes the weather was great, but it had such a positive effect on me with less noise and pollution."

"I work in the N.H.S. so things really haven't changed that much but I liked the reduced traffic and seeing more people walking''

The other main travel issue was for better public transport outside the main towns and to all villages, and the need for it to be cheaper and safer. Restrictions may have also prompted a new assessment of how much people have to travel and more specifically to drive, to access different services in this very rural area. Outlying communities have very limited leisure facilities apart from public rights of way. Access to health, support and police services is often distanced from where people live:

"Improved/affordable rural transport, so my family can hop on a bus, instead of getting in a car", "Better access to services locally in Ilfracombe"

"Increased police presence around towns and villages", "activity area for children in Woolacombe so don't have to drive"

Flexible working was an important change highlighted by many including better broadband, working from home, flexible hours, support from employers, fewer hours per week and less commuting:

" Working from home has improved my wellbeing ten-fold. I have time to tend my garden, make meaningful connections with my neighbours and community, I have always cooked from scratch but now have the time to enjoy it and eat seasonally''

''To continue partly working from home, as this has reduced the amount of petrol used & also, without having to travel to work every day, would give more time for exercise & cooking decent meals''

''More working from home and improvements in facilities provided. I would like to see more refill shops rather than using single use plastics in supermarkets''

''More flexible working and FAIR PAY so that the good work/life/outdoors balance can continue. Wages in North Devon are outrageously low, given the expense of living here (high property prices, big council tax, etc.)''

More time was mentioned in a high proportion of responses, relating to working hours, commuting, family commitments, schooling and earning enough. They wanted more time for their families, for rest and relaxation, for leisure, for getting outdoors and for being more environmentally friendly:

"Working from home more - less commuting time/cost so more time for family, exercise and fun"

"Reduce my working hours so that I have time to continue growing veg, time to cycle to work ... Abolish homework, so my kids have free time to do more sport, and more outdoor activities.", " Time to research products bought and to reduce use of plastic."

What single thing would help to continue positive behaviour change? (cont.)

Being able to shop locally was perhaps brought more into focus by the constraints of the pandemic. Respondents mentioned changing their behaviour in this respect but also what was needed to continue using local shops including cheaper parking, wanting to support local shops, more refill services and access to and information on local produce:

"Improvements in local shop opening hours, and them opening reliably", "Less reliance on the supermarket", "Local shops open after work"

"Convenience of accessing zero waste stores and greengrocers. It's a lot of effort to be zero waste at the moment but should be normal. I try not to shop in supermarkets because of the plastic but that's sometimes impossible to do as a nurse working shifts"

A better environment was wanted by many respondents ranging from improved recycling and waste services and more environmental education to change people's understanding and behaviour, to better access to green spaces and planting trees:

"Less plastic wrapped products. More facilities for recycling plastic bags etc.", "Higher fines for fly tipping and littering … Better bike shelters and racks"

"For local agencies to give us more info on how to promote wildlife in homes/gardens & easy ways to grow our own veg etc."

A large group of respondents mentioned attitudes, values and intentions of individuals, groups, communities, and decision-makers as their 'single thing'. Action and change for the 'new normal' were wanted from local government at parish, district, and county level. At the national level, changes to policies and values were wanted to address climate change, a lack of perceived fairness in policy impacts and prioritising health, wellbeing, care, and the environment. A 'commitment to change' and building 'community spirit' was wanted by many respondents to support positive changes:

"This has to come from businesses and government, if shops are not full of unnecessary plastic items and cheap low welfare foods then people can't buy them. Children need to be re-educated to value the planet and to understand that its resources are finite"

"Mainstreaming of all plastic free solutions and lower carbon living - make it easy to make the right choices"

"Easier access and financial support from local and national government for local community groups. Citizens assemblies and open up local government and decision making to population."

"Council and government recognising the changes and supporting it with policy and action ... councillors have shown no interest in a bike route from Braunton to Saunton despite funding availability and local endorsement."

"Everyone considering other people's requirements including all visitors to the area", "Everyone respecting their surroundings"

"Feeling I was part of a community that understood and wanted to do something about the climate crisis."

"More contact with neighbours, friendlier atmosphere", "Remembering what we have learnt during lockdown, the main one being 'gratitude'."

What one word best describes what you want from your 'new normal'?

Summary of Findings

Behaviour Change since Covid-19 Lockdown

1. 4 big changes – people walked and cycled more, they shopped locally, they appreciated nature more and spent more time outdoors
2. Most would like to spend more time outdoors, but they don't have the time, or they have safety/confidence issues
3. Helping people get outdoors more – invest in cycling and walking infrastructure (to help address safety/confidence issues) and green spaces
4. Cycling - 4 Factors stopping people cycling more – safety, lack of connected network, the terrain and lack of cycle parking
5. Cycling Route Improvements – primarily the Tarka Trail and extending it, 4 key routes for leisure and commuting, getting from home to beaches

Life Changes

6. Changes to Work – more worked from home than usual and more want to in the future
7. Help and Support – almost half needed help and mainly got it from family, friends, and neighbours, only 9% needed help but didn't get it
8. The majority want the Community Support to continue in the future

Plastic, Waste and Energy

9. Refill services used by nearly half – affected by product range, accessibility, and awareness. Nearly all respondents want water refill points everywhere
10. Large majority of respondents' support reducing plastic, aiming for zero waste and recycling more, but only half would repair, borrow or hire products
11. Energy usage during lockdown had increased for a third but three quarters of respondents had done nothing in response to this, a small number doing something about it themselves or changing their supply

The Future

12. Commitment to buy local, buy seasonal, reduce plastic and other actions to reduce environmental impact of purchases and actions
13. Large majority want to support wildlife and nature
14. Large majority want to have a say in their community
15. Other changes they would like to see after restrictions are lifted: Particularly 'safer – cheaper – greener -more connected pubic transport network and improved waste and recycling education and infrastructure. Greener and more balanced economy, improved protection and biodiversity, local and government legislation, and tools to help communities reduce plastic usage, stronger cross generational well-connected communities and more affordable housing for local people and limited second homes were also highlighted.
16. What single thing would help to maintain positive changes: **more, better, and safer transport - more time - flexible working – local shops & services**
17. One word to describe 'new normal': **Peaceful – Sustainable – Community – Time – Safe – Healthy – Green – Changed – Calm – Kind**

Concluding Comments

- Amongst respondents, large proportions through necessity or preference had made changes to lifestyles and choices during lockdown, and in many cases, they wanted to continue their positive behaviour in the future.
- The results of the survey, whilst not representative of the population as a whole, have explored the nature of changing behaviour and attitudes and provide clear indications about the type of interventions that could help overcome barriers to change to help address issues such as health and wellbeing, climate change, waste and recycling, environmental pollution and community cohesion at a meaningful household level.
- Respondents to this survey want change. When asked what single thing could help to continue positive behaviour change, most did not ask for one thing, they asked for many things to change, ranging from the personal to the global.
- Working from home increased and more people wanted to work from home in the future, potentially giving them more time to do other activities, particularly outdoors. However, for some, home working was not a good experience, demonstrating that it needs to be supported appropriately to ensure wellbeing and not isolation, or the feeling that people cannot escape from work.
- There is an aspiration from these respondents to live more sustainable, active lives and an interest in making use of different types of support and tools to achieve this. Some of the examples used in the survey could be taken forward by partners locally to meet some of these aspirations.
- Environmental issues and social issues are inextricably linked, and local organisations need to work together to level the playing field for more people to live sustainably, reducing their impact on the environment. We need to take everybody with us to build a better 'normal' for everyone.
- The term 'new normal' was a useful shorthand to engage people but did not resonate with everyone and was rejected by some respondents.
- North Devon and Torridge contain a wide range of open spaces, green spaces and public rights of way particularly around the coast, the Tarka Trail and in the National Park. The survey revealed that many people really benefited from these outdoor spaces during lockdown but also showed that barriers remain for some in the area. Addressing these barriers whether related to work, leisure, affordability, safety or location is a role for businesses, organisations and local authorities. Taking action could benefit both the health and wellbeing of the local population and the natural environment.
- The strong aspirations expressed in this survey to benefit the environment through personal and consumer behaviour may have been strengthened or tested by the restrictions of a further national lockdown in Autumn 2020, and other Covid-19 restrictions. However, experiences may have been different with colder, wetter weather and the rapid increase in online and delivery services by large and small businesses, although not always easy to discover local and independent businesses offering these services compared to the national and global companies.
- Other areas for research in the future could include the longer-term impact of Covid-19 related legal and personal restrictions on daily life and behaviour, and how this has impacted on the environment both positively and negatively.
- The 'Plastic Free Northern Devon Consortium' plans to use these findings in relation to its Pre-COVID-19 2019 strategy, to define core and current priorities and ascertain how local organisations and councils can further pool their resource and work together, more collaboratively to deliver more effective and meaningful change throughout our communities.