

Countryside Access Strategy for Jersey 2015

Department of the Environment



Summary of Consultation Responses



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Summary

Summary

The Countryside Access Strategy for Jersey public consultation was launched on 1st May 2014 for a 12 week period, closing on 7th August 2014. The aim of the consultation was to raise awareness of the issues surrounding the use of the paths on the coast and countryside, and determine possible options for their future management. It also aimed to provide Jersey's access users with an opportunity to have their say.

The consultation comprised of an issues and options paper, a supporting questionnaire and a series of focus groups run by an independent consultant. Respondents were given the option to either remain anonymous, or have their comments be publicly attributed to them. All names have been withheld for the purposes of this report in order to ensure no-one is subject to negative feedback.

A range of engagement methods were used including site signs, social media and press releases. People were also invited to respond in writing, on hard copies of the documents or via a dedicated email.

This report summarises the feedback received in response to this consultation, it is not intended to provide details of each individual response. The purpose is to set out the key points and themes that emerged from the consultation across all engagement methods. All formal written responses have been read and key points and themes have been captured. The full results are available on request.

The comments included in this report are taken either from the written submissions or from the focus groups. Comments have not been amended unless to correct spelling and punctuation for ease of reading. Where a comment has been abbreviated, it is indicated by an ellipses.

Method of public response	Number of individual responses
Issues and Options Paper	57 comments from 23 individuals
Questionnaire	813 surveys completed
Focus Groups	6 meetings attended by 44 individuals

Foreword

Foreword



Jersey has an extensive network of paths across public and private land in some of the Island's most beautiful landscapes.

The paths are used by an estimated 100,000 people a year including local walkers and tourists. They promote significant environmental, educational, health and economic benefits to the Island.

The Department of the Environment, which manages much of it, is developing a strategic, co-ordinated approach to planning for the future of the network, taking into account the needs of existing and new users, changes in leisure activities, wildlife conservation and biodiversity, and the many public and private stakeholders involved.

The department launched a public consultation to ask for people's views on the main issues surrounding use of the paths and possible options for their future management.

How do people use the paths? What other facilities would they like? How can we balance the cost of maintaining the paths to keep them safe and usable with limited resources?

Discussion on the future management of the paths needs to take account of existing States policy and agreements; these include Jersey's international commitments to increasing awareness of the importance of biodiversity, the Island Plan, the Rural Economy Strategy and the Strategic Plan.

Overview

Overview

For all its small dimensions of 14 x 8 kilometres, Jersey has over 100 kilometres of paths through some of the Island's most beautiful landscapes. These often dramatic areas remain relatively untouched by development, and are important for their historical, geological and ecological character. The feeling of remoteness and wilderness which the footpaths provide are unusual in a busy island like Jersey, and draws both visitors and locals.



The Department of the Environment is the Government Department tasked with supporting nature conservation

in Jersey whilst also providing a footpath network that permits access to the Island's countryside. The Department of the Environment would like to manage, improve and promote its coast and countryside access network in a strategic, coordinated way, taking account of the needs of existing and new users, wildlife conservation and biodiversity, and the many public and private stakeholders involved.

Much of the access network is within protected areas designated as Sites of Special (Ecological) Interest (SSI). These areas are managed for the important habitats and wildlife present, and the network of paths allows public access to these special areas. Although the responsible pursuit of outdoor activities is encouraged, the Department of the Environment is primarily committed to the conservation of the sensitive environments in which they take place.

The Department of the Environment is responsible for the management and enhancement of pedestrian access and the network is largely designed for walking. Since the north coast footpath was constructed in the 1980s people's recreational activities have changed and there appears to be a greater desire for bridle paths and off road cycle tracks. This consultation paper aims to establish what the public of the Island desire from an access network.

Overview

Public access to our coast and countryside brings significant social advantages; it promotes education and awareness of environmental issues, improves health, provides economic benefits and showcases the best scenery in Jersey.

The paths cross public and private land; the States of Jersey, the National Trust for Jersey and Jersey Water are three of the biggest landowners providing public access. However, there is an extensive footpath network which crosses either land owned by private individuals or parish land and continued access depends on the goodwill of these many individuals and of the parishes.

It is essential that all stakeholders, partners and user groups work closely together to deliver and oversee a comprehensive and well planned access facility.

The paths are used by walkers, horse riders, dog owners and cyclists. In addition to thousands of local users, the paths are used by at least a third of visitors to Jersey, (685,000 total visitors or 335,000 leisure visitors 2010)⁽¹⁾ and are cited in successive visitor surveys as one of Jersey's primary attractions.

The consultation targeted walkers, cyclists and horse riders, as well as users who may find access to the coast and countryside difficult, and who sometimes have competing needs on paths. The purpose was to gather people's views and ideas on the future of the recreational access network.

Future management of the paths needs to take account of existing States policy and agreements; these include Jersey's international commitments to increasing awareness of the importance of biodiversity, the Jersey Island Plan 2011⁽²⁾, the Rural Economy Strategy 2011 - 2015⁽³⁾ and the Strategic Plan 2012⁽⁴⁾.

Jersey's Coastal National Park was designated in the 2011 Island Plan and a management plan is currently being prepared. Outcomes from the final Countryside Access Strategy may well form initiatives presented in the Plan.

Within a short period of time the launch of two access strategies will have taken place; one, The Active Travel Strategy, launched by the Transport and Technical Services Department is being driven by the Sustainable Transport Strategy and this, the Countryside Access Strategy for Jersey, is driven by the Rural Economic Strategy.

The Active Travel Strategy, a part of the Sustainable Transport Policy, is an attempt to steer people away from using their cars to get from point A to point B with the result of benefiting the natural environment by decreasing the Island's petrochemical use. The aims are to provide satisfactory public transport in the Island and good cycle/ pathways linking St Helier with the other Parishes.

This Countryside Access Strategy for Jersey aims to improve the availability of the open countryside to the public and increase the opportunities for people to enjoy Jersey's natural heritage with the ultimate aim of maximising the Island's natural leisure resources whilst providing maximum conservation and landscape protection.

1 Jersey Tourism 2010 Annual Report, States of Jersey

2 Jersey Island Plan 2011. Department of the Environment, States of Jersey

3 Rural Economy Strategy 2011 - 2015. Economic Development Department and Department of the Environment, States of Jersey

4 States of Jersey Strategic Plan 2012

Overview

The Countryside Access Strategy for Jersey is being prepared in conjunction with various existing policies including the Island Plan (in particular proposal 24 and the Coastal National Park), the Protected Areas Policy and others which are explained in Section 3.1.

Although there are synergies between both strategies in that they are concerned with assorted forms of transport and how to provide the infrastructure to facilitate the various provisions, the two strategies are quite different in their objectives.

However, the crossovers are apparent and discussions have been held between the two departments over the course of 2012 and 2013 to identify where efficiencies and joint responsibilities can be made.

Possibilities for joint aims include the provision of timed public transport to identified 'honeypots'⁽⁵⁾ for countryside access so that participants can time their days out and their walking/ cycling routes taken. Also, links across the centre of the Island (north – south and east – west) are a priority for both strategies and if routes can be selected across land which can be used for cycle/ pedestrian travel as opposed to car travel, and used for recreation by individuals and families then this would be a benefit to everyone concerned.

5 A popular area which attracts a large number of visitors

Vision

Vision

- To provide and manage welcoming access to the coast and countryside of Jersey in a co-ordinated manner giving consideration to public demand and the needs of informal groups with an interest in the coast and countryside.
- To promote better understanding of the coast and countryside by encouraging education and increasing awareness of the environment.
- To promote and provide sustainable and safe public access to the coast and countryside, in a way that takes account of landscape and wildlife conservation and to ensure that access does not damage or detract from features of interest.
- To encourage and enable more people to enjoy physical recreation outdoors, thus benefiting the quality of life and health, fitness and wellbeing of Jersey's population.
- To continue to promote and encourage walking and public access to the coast and countryside as a 'flagship' tourism product, thus bringing economic benefit to the Island.
- To provide appropriate levels of quality signage to offer the visitor a enjoyable experience.
- To provide additional links between existing access provision in order to improve the network.
- To acknowledge the concerns of landowners and managers in the development of improvements to access and ensure that, as far as possible, all developments achieve consensus between the landowners, community and users.
- To strive for an access network that will meet the needs of a growing and diverse population as further development takes place in Jersey.
- To manage and promote the coast and countryside access network in a strategic, coordinated way, in partnership with stakeholders.
- It is important that the network is cost effective, provides safe access and has minimal impact on biodiversity.

Introduction to Questionnaire

Introduction to Questionnaire

The aim of the consultation was to raise awareness of the issues surrounding the use of the paths on the coast and countryside, and suggest possible options for their future management. It also aimed to provide Jersey's access users with an opportunity to have their say.

In order to make sure that the opinions of as wide a range of access users as possible were gathered, the questionnaire was made available on line with paper copies being available on request. Respondents were able to remain anonymous if they wished to.

This method of consultation proved the most popular option with 813 surveys being submitted, interestingly, more than 600 respondents chose to remain anonymous.

Results of Questionnaire

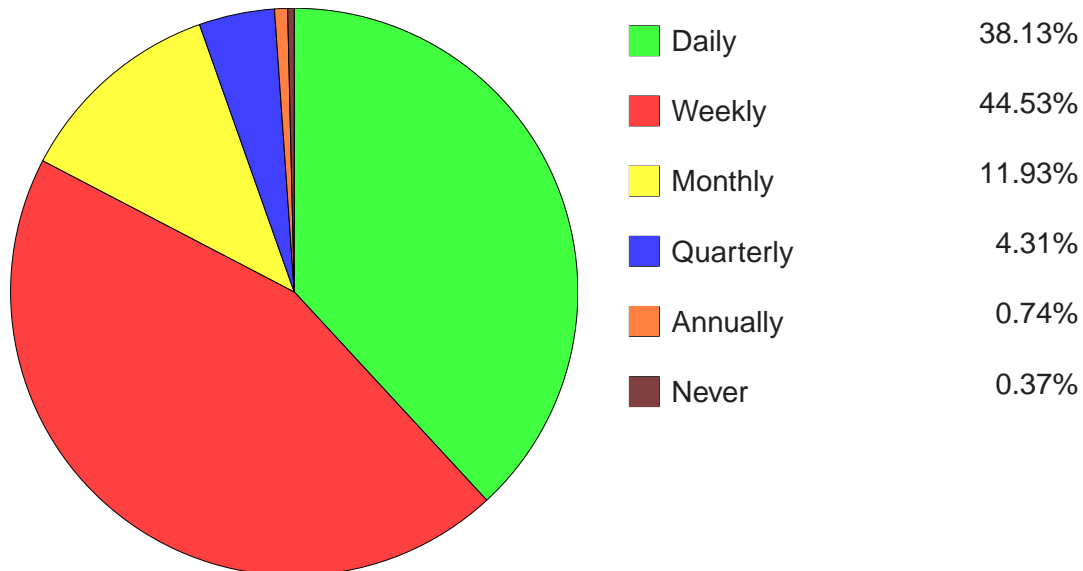
Results of Questionnaire

About you

The questionnaire attracted a total of 813 responses, with 98% being from Jersey residents, the majority of which (60%) were between the age of 30 and 60. More than 98% responded as individuals.

- 19% of respondents wanted to see improved facilities for their interest which ranged from paragliding to rock climbing and shooting to photography, however, the vast majority were walkers (27%) followed by dog walkers (14%)
- When asked how often they have used the coast and countryside paths in the last 12 months; 38% said they used them daily, and 45% weekly

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- 50% said that their preferred time for using paths at the weekend was between 08.00 and 12.00, 42% revealing they spent between 1 and 2 hours there, and 38% spending 2 or more hours. Less than 2% said they spent half an hour or less on a visit to the paths
- As would be expected the paths got slightly less use on a weekday with roughly 60% of respondents spending between 30 minutes and 2 hours. The preferred time of day was after 17.00 (43%)
- When asked why they didn't use coast and countryside paths, the standout answer was that respondents were unaware of available routes (30%), 10% cited that there were too many hazards; dog mess and conflict with other users being the main hazards specified

"There are too few accessible bridle paths which results in riders having to use busy main roads much more frequently than they should. This is particularly a problem with speeding cars and noisy motorbikes which may spook the horses but can also be bad for their legs making maintaining fitness for them difficult"

Results of Questionnaire

"litter and dog mess put me off. When people exercise 4-8 dogs at a time they are not always able to see if or where a dog has messed. Some owners are lazy and or selfish by not taking litter/dog mess home"

"...I use countryside paths, but coastal paths can be too narrow and dangerous to avoid bikes and horses"

General

Type of access

When asked to choose their preferred option between single use (i.e. all users have separate paths), combination use (i.e. walkers kept separate from cyclists and horses) and multi use paths (i.e. all users on one single path) the majority of respondents preferred multi use paths (41%), there is still a large proportion of people who want combination (32%) or single user (27%) paths. The main reasons given for people choosing multi user paths is that they believe everybody is capable of sharing and should have more mutual respect for each other, closely followed by the fact that the island does not have the resources to provide for every user.

From the 216 respondents who would prefer single user paths, the main reason given was that health and safety was too much of an issue with multiple activities taking place on one path. Especially noted was the speed of cyclists when meeting walkers or horses. The reasons given by respondents who prefer combination user paths was very similar to that of the single user paths. Health and safety being the main concern, followed by individual sports pursuits as the reason to separate. A theme that emerged was that walkers and horse riders could generally coexist on paths, as can horses and cyclists, however problems occur largely between cyclists and walkers/dog walkers.

"Less expensive upkeep of one path. Simple user rules on sign posts at car park areas to remind people to think of others"

"I think bridle ways for horses and cycles and footpaths for walkers would be a good idea the same as the UK it works well there"

"This question is hard to answer because the best answer depends very much on the location. In some places, a multi user path may be appropriate, in others not, to the extent of being hazardous. In such cases, all but walkers should be excluded"

"After a trip to the Alps in the summer of 2010 I noticed that most areas were shared but there were some designated spots for walkers/ biking. But on the shared areas walkers would take priority and a mutual respect from both parties who were using the area was apparent"

• "In the UK bikers do not cycle on footpaths and in many years of walking I have never met one. Cycles use the bridle paths in UK and the footpaths are therefore not chewed up by bikes"

- Questioned as to what respondents would like more of Jersey's countryside made available for, the top answer was walking, running and taking exercise (17%).
- The most important factors when visiting the countryside was remoteness (21%) followed by car parking (19%) and signage (17%)

Results of Questionnaire

Funding

- Respondents were offered a choice of options to fund paths and asked to choose strongly agree to strongly disagree for each. States of Jersey (Department of the Environment/Tourism etc) was most popular under strongly agree (51%), followed by grants e.g. Tourism Development Fund (40%) and private sponsorship (28%).
- 57% of respondents said that they would consider joining a volunteer working party to physically create and maintain new paths, however, perhaps unsurprisingly, 56% strongly disagreed to creating a licensing system for path users.
- Other ideas not offered as an option but which proved popular suggestions included using prisoners/community services and schemes for the unemployed.

"Use work parties made up from unemployed and tagged low-risk prisoners"

"Maintain open free access, but the creation of a trail network group or association where by membership would contribute to maintenance costs"

"The sites should be run as a public service by the States. They should therefore be funded by the taxpayer. However, if private sponsorship can be obtained to lessen the burden on taxpayer this could be worthwhile, but if there is excessive advertising by that sponsor then it will become inappropriate"

"Dog owners pay a licence fee which although is not a lot, they don't get anything for. Perhaps those funds could be used. Also dog fouling laws and fines should be enforced as should people who litter the countryside with cigarette butts and revenue arising can be put to good use"

"A proportion of any planning fees should be diverted. Development projects should have environment levy placed on them. A percentage of tax revenues for fuel duty"

"In US public paths are privately sponsored to great success. Also support the La Moye prisoners/ those on probation being used to maintain the pathways and surrounding land"

"Clubs such as ccc.je could contribute for cycle access from their membership fees. The countryside should be promoted for local and visitor use"

"If National Park status was created for the west to match RAMSAR in the east a £1 levy should be raised on all arriving air and ferry passengers for the protection and maintenance of the countryside. This could be limited to non-residents. Alternatively a charge of £1/ occupied room/ night could be put on all the islands hotels and guest houses avoiding the issue of residency"

Signage

- 30% of people who do not use countryside paths state that the main reason is that they are unaware of available routes
- 17% considered signage to be an important factor when visiting the countryside

Results of Questionnaire

- 57% wanted more information to be available about the coast and countryside. Users said they preferred the information to be made available on websites (26%), signs and panels (25%), leaflets, maps and guidebooks (22%)

"Online maps. I mention these as a separate category to the options above as online maps enable you to see paths without any organisation interfering or telling you how to use the paths etc. I quite often think I've not been to a part of the island in a while so will look at google or apple maps to see what's there and where the paths are"

"I usually ask friends and family. Being a jersey family and connected to farmers we tend to grow up knowing. Also there is that good book on circular walks"

"Signs make you aware of places in your area you might not know were available for use, guided events (such as the type Jersey riding club are doing) share local knowledge of areas for different user groups, websites are ideal for planning in advance, same as mobile apps and social media – which would also be useful for advising if particular areas were undergoing maintenance etc so we knew to avoid the area in advance"

When asked what their preferred walking routes were, 15% said they like to explore new routes, 5% said they stick to routes familiar to them or close to where they live (5%). The remaining respondents said they like to do a bit of each. 44% of walkers favour circular routes, with only 3% suggesting they would chose linear routes.

Other Users

- 3% of respondents considered themselves disabled with 68% of those saying that they had restricted mobility, 12% were wheelchair users, and 16% blind or partially sighted.
- The majority of disabled users or carers don't use the footpaths because there is no wheel chair access in most places, and therefore there are health and safety issues.
- Improvements would be to make some routes wheel chair accessible, which would also improve the health and safety issues for these users. Improved signage / information along with more rest stops are also required

"Wheelchairs and footpaths don't mix very well"

"Don't often see disabled users, would be nice to improve access but appreciate that you can't flatten the countryside"

"Signs to inform disabled people of the type of terrain they might encounter and maybe different networks that run alongside more demanding paths so people with disabilities don't miss out on the scenery"

"Two family members have disabilities. I haven't used Jersey's footpaths with either of them but I would like to in future. It would be nice if there were at least some walks which were wheel chair friendly, even is this isn't realistic for most paths. Also disabled loos have to be as nice as possible – some disabled people find it hard to go out because they are reluctant to use disabled loos."

Results of Questionnaire

"I'm long in the tooth but normally mobile. I have recently broken my leg and am not as able to climb rocks and obstacles on the paths as I was. Steps could do with being less slippery; handrails on very steep paths would be good too. Specially marked routes would be wonderful for wheelchair and disabled scooter users. Bridle paths would need to be signposted as such to deter other users and horses would need to be kept off the wheelchair areas as they poach the ground. Safety is a big issue for users of all abilities and requirements, so paths would need to be sited away from the edge of cliffs"

"In the past 15 years of being paralysed in a wheelchair, I have met countless fellow wheelchair users trying to access areas near Masion des Landes who are on holiday asking if a certain path was accessible. It is a shame that with a disabled hotel so near to a country location measures have never been taken to improve the area to allow visitors to take evening strolls they are forced to only be able to use the tarmac roads"

Horse Riders

There are currently approximately 10 km of bridle paths managed by the Department of the Environment, and 61% of respondents to the questionnaire either rode horses or had family members who did.

- 60% of riders said that their average hack was 2-5 miles but that there was not a path near enough to them to use regularly.
- The main issues for horse riders were the lack of connection to other paths (19%); current bridle paths being too short (18%) and riders being forced to use busy roads to reach them (18%).
- Another concern voiced by riders was that paths that have been used historically were being closed to them.

"Horse rider who only does hacking, off road riding being very important as local roads are very busy"

..."I think there is a popular misconception that the minute a rider gets on a path they are going to be riding at a fast pace this is not the case. Mostly we would like to get off the roads for some peace and relaxation..."

"Unsure which ones can use now. Many of old routes people used to use are gone or look as though they are not public access so unsure about going down them"

"Lack of connection with other paths is a pain, it would be lovely to have an area to park a horse box and go off road for an hour or more on a circular route"

"...there is a general lack of LOCALISED bridle paths. Often we rely on a farmers or other landowners good nature to allow horses to cross their land. With the continuing trend of these access ways being denied more and more horses are forced onto the road with an ever increasing volume and variety of traffic and other road users"

Results of Questionnaire

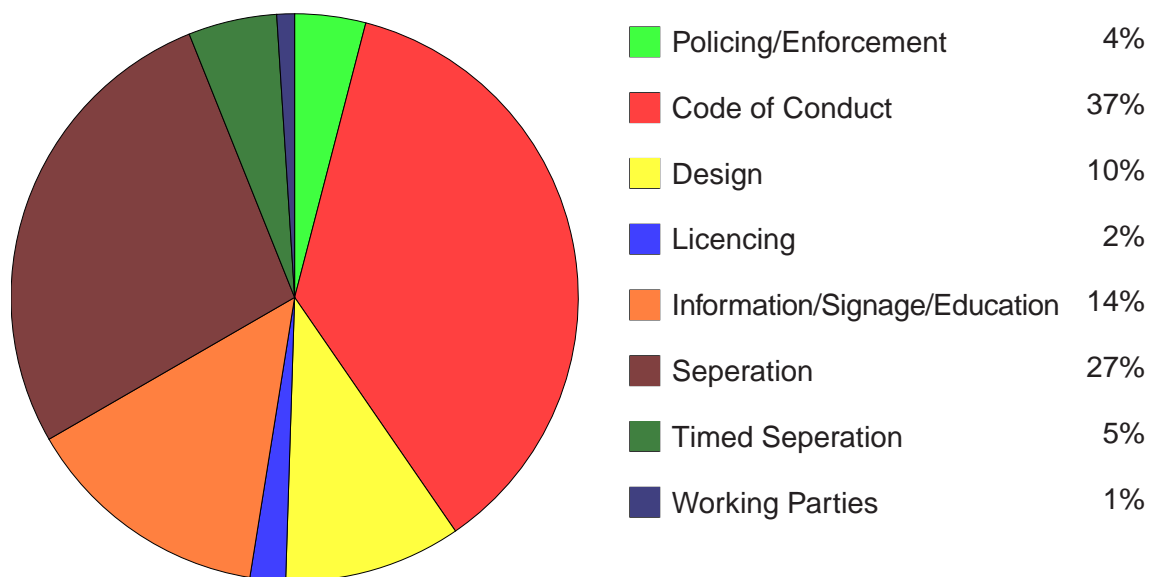
"There are no paths in my area, I am unsure where there are any. I would trailer to a track"

"...I cannot find a map that shows all the bridle paths, PLEASE could one be made or if a website is published somewhere on Facebook,..."

Cyclists

The Department of the Environment does not currently make provision for cycling apart from a 800m stretch at L'Oeillère, St Brelade, however, the number of cyclists using the footpaths has increased substantially in the last ten years causing problems of erosion and conflict with pedestrians.

- It is apparent from the responses received that different cyclists have very different requirements as to the type of facility they prefer i.e. jumps, cross country routes, a variety of terrain etc. Others have less 'sporty' and more recreational needs, others cited the desire for facilities that could be enjoyed as a family.
- 12% of respondents cited that cycling was their primary purpose for using coast and countryside paths.
- 12% said they wanted more off road cycling to be made available.
- 57% of cyclists who responded said they currently cycle 'off road' and 25% of those admitted to riding on public footpaths.
- 37% of respondents thought that the best way to resolve issues between cyclists and other users sharing paths was through development of codes of conduct and information/signage/education (14%). 27% believed that 'separation' is the only way to resolve user issues.



"Commute daily by bike during week and enjoy recreational mountain biking, road riding at weekend"

Results of Questionnaire

"I do all kinds of cycling including cross country on cliff paths and walking trails road cycling Racing on private land on a mountain bike in jersey and the UK Racing on the road And recreational riding with friends and clubs Also cycle touring all over the world"

"I commute, race both on and off road and enjoy cross country"

" Rider/walker code of conduct. Possibly restrict use of bike to early morning and evening in high season. Better awareness and shared responsibility for their use and ongoing maintenance. The countryside should be shared and respected by everyone"

"Cliff paths are too narrow for bikes and should not be allowed. Mountain bikers travelling downhill are dangerous to other users, and often push their bikes uphill's. It would be good to have bikers on wider paths similar to UK system i.e. ok to ride on bridle paths"

Stakeholders and Partners

Landownership

Only 37% of respondents disclosed that they were landowners who permit the public to use paths across their land. The main reason for not allowing public access was concern regarding crime/vandalism (17%) and dogs, both dog mess (and litter) 17%, and stock worrying (13%). When asked whether they would consider allowing public access 67% of those who responded said that they would not.

"Can I go and walk around other people's property/land leave litter? - people need to be educated and respectful and unfortunately like most things it is the small number that ruin it for others"

"Allowing the public on wouldn't take them anywhere as we only have one field and putting a bounded path in would cause us issues. However, if way marked paths with stiles and arrows as common in the UK were introduced then I would have no issue with people walking across our field to get to the next stile"

"Lack of respect by users. Little understanding by users of countryside law. However, I would be happy to provide a path for countryside users especially horse riders as part of a larger network of bridle paths which could have some kind of licensing so it could be policed and paid for"

Enterprise Opportunities

13.5% (110) of the total respondents to the survey answered this question

When asked whether they had a business that benefited from Jersey's coast and countryside paths almost 41% thought that they did. The most common business being cafe/pub/holiday accommodation (18%), closely followed by tour/walking guide (13%) and outdoor activity operator (15%). Other business operations that profited from access to the countryside included equestrian, retail and cycle hire.

Results of Questionnaire

" Finance industry - the business does not benefit, but the countryside enhances the Island and enhances peoples image when they visit, so they think more positively"

" All Jersey business benefits from public access to coast and countryside"

"Law. Living in a beautiful island attracts business people and high net worth individuals to the island. It is in everyone's interests that we maintain the island"

Other

This section encouraged respondents to voice opinions on any matter they felt had not been covered fully by the issue and options paper, the questionnaire or the focus groups. A total of 223 people made comments with dog mess being cited as the single biggest issue (15%), followed by landownership issues (13%), codes of conduct (13%) and information/education/signage (11%)

" The single biggest issue for me as someone who enjoys the countryside with kids (and who has been a dog owner) is irresponsible dog owners who either let their dogs off the lead and can't or don't control them (they bounce up to kids, parties of pre-schoolers etc), or who don't pick up after their dogs. There are some parts of the Island I don't go to because there's dog mess everywhere (Noirmont, some sections of the dunes, Les Mielle sometimes). Ad hoc swings are 'removed' for safety reasons - why then no action on dog mess - just as much a health issue. Please, please get on top of this"

" Has the department been to any of the purpose built cycle trail centres such as Haldon Forest & numerous other UK venues or to Morzine or other French venues as this could help in understanding what could be done to enhance the cycling opportunities of our beautiful countryside. This in turn, if done well, would actually attract visitors and help to improve our tourism industry"

" In the UK horse riders pay a fee of £100 per year (this does vary from county to county) to use the edge of farmers fields and they can ride across a network of fields as much as they like for this fee. The only restriction is that they must carry their identifier with them at all times or they can be fined. There is no reason why Jersey couldn't do this and it would work much better in Jersey as the fields are pretty much all interconnected. This would get the riders off the roads (which we want!) and some income for the farmers. This would work as long as the tractor drivers slowed down, who are just terrifying on some days in our small lanes!! "

" I enjoy walking on Jersey's footpaths, it would be a benefit if more of the paths were connected so that you didn't have to walk on the roads as much. If landowners could be incentivised to allow access such as reduced rates for fields they allow access to this might help"

" Local tourism benefits hugely from walking holidays. The cliff paths should be regularly maintained and signage checked. Tourism should contribute towards this"

Results of Questionnaire

" The jewel in Jersey's crown is the round island walk, as used for the Itex/Collas Crill yearly walk, various coast to coast walks following safe routes could also be included. How about having a GR (Grande Randonee) system such as is used in France, the route(s) could be marked with rustic signs, or permanent colour coded signs painted on lamp posts, walls etc? The different GR routes could be given simple names in Jersey French with an English translation, the coastal path around the Isle of Man for example, is called 'Raad ny Foillan' which translates as 'The way of the Gull'. Guide books with the different routes in could be sold online or at the Tourism office in town"

" I think the farmland walks are an excellent idea - especially the St Clements countryside paths around the fields from Causie lane to La Blinerie, it would be great to see these extended. These should be better publicised however as there is currently no web presence. I've tried searching for maps online but have been unable to find any; I'd like to see maps for these walking routes put online somewhere"

" Public transport is inadequate to locations such as Plemont especially on weekends and out of season - there are great walks from Plemont along the cliffs and it is disappointing that these walks are not supported by regular services - or any service at all on Sundays! - the lack of transport from, for example, St. Peter's village to Plemont for a family wanting to take a picnic and make a day out is not encouraging"

Introduction to Issues and Options Paper

Introduction to Issues and Options Paper

The issues and options paper provided the background to the provision of access to the coast and countryside of Jersey. It set out the key issues and proposed policy options to resolve them. Respondents could address the issues only pertinent to them or complete the whole document.

It was made available on line as well as hard copies on request. This method of consultation was less popular than the questionnaire resulting in only 57 comments received from 23 individuals

Results of Issues and Options Paper

Results of Issues and Options Paper

In order to help respondents the Issues and Options paper was separated into different key sections depending on their interest; whether walking, horse riding, cycling or if users were of limited mobility or are challenged in some way that may restrict their full use or enjoyment of the existing network. There were also sections dedicated to issues and options facing landowners or stakeholders and partners.

This section of the report summarises the responses of those access users who made comment on the Countryside Access Strategy for Jersey 2014 Issues and Options paper

General

The Department of the Environment provides access to the coast and countryside to enable people to engage with the natural environment. Apart from 10km of designated bridle path, all the paths have been designed for pedestrian access and are unsuitable for traffic generated by other modes of transport. Health and Safety issues arise from conflicts between different types of user.

When asked whether people supported the review of current legislation in order to reduce risk to the users of the paths, none of the 8 respondents said that they supported the option directly. However, it was mentioned that the current lack of clarity about which routes different user groups were restricted to was a problem. Many expressed concern at sharing paths with cyclists

"...allowing unrestricted access is likely to increase conflict and potential for health and safety issues to arise"

"I am afraid I have had very bad experiences with mountain bikes speeding down paths"

"...off-road cyclists are the bane of our walking lives"

"The problem with mountain bikers is their refusal to follow sensible rules set to protect the environment"

To a lesser extent, horses and dogs on paths were also mentioned as problematic. It was generally thought however, that providing animals were kept under control the problem could easily be ameliorated. Other solutions expressed by those responding to this issue included introducing a licencing system for horse riders and cyclists in order to compensate for the damage they do, banning mountain bikes from the cliff paths and better enforcement measures.

On request to choose a preference between multi-user paths (all user groups use one path), single user paths (keeping different use groups on separate paths) or combination user paths (walkers kept separate from other users) , generally respondents understood that separate paths for each user group would be difficult to achieve due to a lack of space as well as it being expensive and having an adverse impact on the landscape and environment. Multi-user paths appeared to be the most popular choice for those who expressed an opinion, and these people said that they thought that where appropriate paths should be open to all to share as long as they behaved appropriately.

Results of Issues and Options Paper

"...everyone should be free to use the paths. I see no reason why walkers, runners, cyclist, horses and families should not use the public paths as long as no one litters/messes or wilfully damages them. It would be very disappointing if any restrictions were even attempted to be enforced to prevent any one using what is in fact everyone's right to enjoy"

" I think they should be available to all users apart from motorised vehicles. I am not sure if there is a code of conduct for users , if not a user group should make one...."

"Allowing unrestricted access is likely to increase conflict and potential for health and safety issues to arise. By all means review the legislation, and clarify which paths are suitable for multi-purpose use and which should only be used by pedestrians"

It was overwhelmingly agreed that the coastal footpath is one of the Island's greatest assets however, there was clear support for the development of new routes, particularly inland and away from the coast. In particular it was felt that more use could be made of farm tracks and field edges . The existing green lane system, although valued, was not considered ideal as walkers, cyclists and horse riders still have a to share with motor vehicles.

"...an island wide network would support so many strategic aims and provide another asset for tourism"

" I believe there is a major gap in the provision of footpaths away from the coast"

"...many walkers would ideally prefer footpaths to roads as they offer a more restful experience"

Respondents acknowledged that the provision and consequent management of new routes would be expensive and time-consuming but were in general agreement that the access network was worthy of investment. Ideas for resourcing any expansion ranged from the use of voluntary work groups to States of Jersey cross-departmental funding.

"Given its significance in terms of contributing towards States strategic objectives, it is perhaps surprising that the Environment Department receives only £55,000/year for access provision. The department is to be congratulated on the value for money that it achieves from this budget, as their footpaths are maintained to a good standard"

"The States should provide a ring-fenced dedicated budget for this and contract out to private sector"

"It is acknowledged that promoting and establishing such trails would involve a considerable degree of effort (including negotiating access, producing leaflets, promoting new routes, and possibly also signposting), and this is an area where perhaps Jersey Tourism and the Tourism Development Fund could become involved, together with other organisations such as the Jersey Heritage Trust and Jersey Trees for Life"

Walkers

Despite campaigns in recent years one of the main issues for walkers is still that of dog mess. Several respondents were in agreement that developing codes of conduct could not only help resolve this issue but would also assist in different user groups understanding how to act responsibly in the countryside.

Results of Issues and Options Paper

"Dog mess is always a problem on the paths..."

"I am not sure if there is a code of conduct for users , if not a user group should make one, I realise such codes can be difficult to enforce, but Public responsibility should play a part here"

Horse Riders

The main concern expressed by respondents who rode horses was that more and more paths were being closed to them. Remaining bridle paths are unconnected and are more frequently used by cyclists and dog walkers so there was more risk of conflict .

"A large majority of the bridle path system (already limited to say the least) has become unsafe to use by horse riders in recent years with the growing popularity of off road cycling and also dog walkers who seem to prefer the more rustic bridle paths to the pedestrian paths"

"...there is a requirement among riders for a network of paths, tracks along edges of fields creating circular routes between livery yards, private yards and in rural areas to alleviate density of riders on roads and facilitate better routes for riders.

"Suggest you look at tollrides.co.uk (TROT) which works with farmers and landowners through a membership system"

Cyclists

It appears that there needs to be greater clarity as to where cyclists can and can't cycle as although there are currently areas that are being used by off road cyclists, they seem to be unaware that these are of 'unofficial' status. Cyclists generally think that there is a need for improved facilities for their sport, however it is apparent that there are different types of off-road cyclists requiring different facilities.

"...Mixed use of broad paths with good surfaces, e.g. the Railway Walk will rarely lead to problems. Rougher 'off-road' areas, where a more 'competitive' style of cycling or riding may be prevalent, are best kept segregated on grounds of amenity, safety and easy maintenance"

"There are certainly a fair few off-road cycling areas in northern Trinity, e.g. Egypt Woods, Les Platons cliffs, Le Tas de Geon. I have no idea who set up and maintains these or what the position may be with landowners"

"Should there be some sacrificial areas for these users to carry out stunts?"

"As a user of the cliff paths for mountain biking I would be pleased to help with maintaining paths"

Stakeholders and Partners

There were very few comments relating to this section so it is difficult to gauge preferred options however some comments included:

"This work will require some funding. The Department of the Environment seems to be best placed to lead"

Results of Issues and Options Paper

"Volunteer working parties would also appear to offer a potential way forward in terms of supplementing the work that is carried out by the Environment Department and its contractors, e.g. as part of the 'Corporate Responsibility' programmes offered by many private sector organisations, and by interest groups such as the Conservation Volunteers"

Landowners

This section did not stimulate much response apart from in regard to public liability insurance

"Not sure if individual landowners are expected to carry their own public liability insurance. This is likely to put off individual owners from allowing access. A huge incentive would be a blanket policy funded by the government, which individuals could apply to join"

Introduction to Focus Groups

Introduction to Focus Groups

A focus group consists of an informal discussion with a small number of selected participants being guided by a professionally trained moderator who does not influence the outcome of the discussion. The goal being to get beyond superficial answers and uncover insights on consumer attitudes and behaviour.

4insight, an independent Jersey company with global expertise in qualitative market research, was appointed to conduct a series of 6 x 90 minute focus groups.

Research Aims and Objectives

Specific objectives included:

- To probe into the access path attribute needs of different user types.
- To explore the reasons behind conflicts between the various user groups.
- To uncover the appropriateness of the various new path type options (multi user, single user and combination user) as proposed by The Recreational Access Strategy for Jersey.
- To co-create a means of compromise between various stakeholder needs and values with an appreciation of cost and environmental concerns

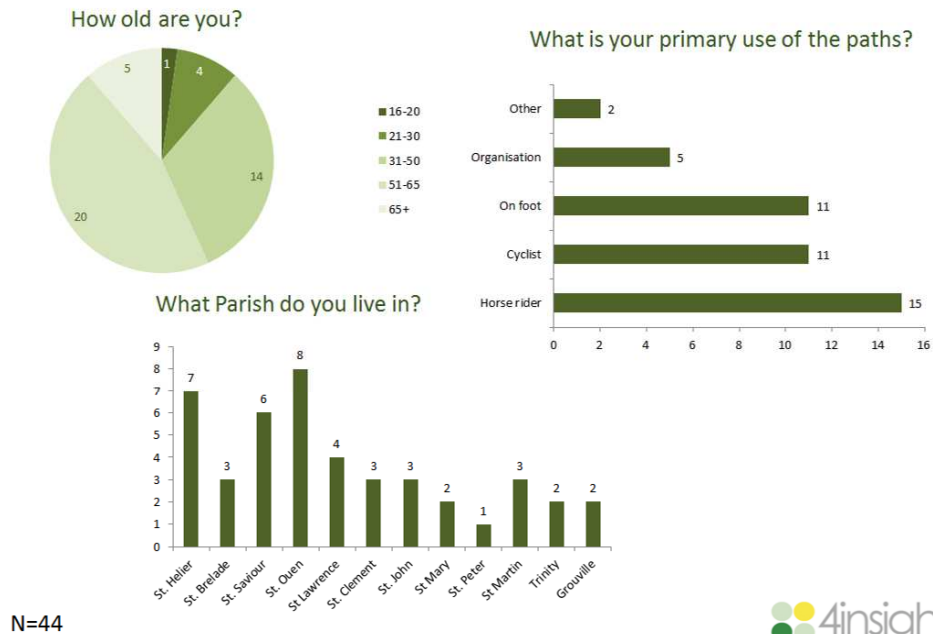
Qualitative methodology was used to ensure a true level of depth & understanding from both the rational and emotional responses to the issues at hand

All the focus groups were conducted in the central facilities based in 4insight's offices in St Helier. The purpose built viewing studios are the only ones in the Channel Islands and one-way mirrors gave the opportunity for team members to view the meetings live and share learnings from the research.

Introduction to Focus Groups

The Method

Sample demographics



4insight were responsible for drafting screening criteria, recruitment & discussion guide development. Participants were carefully screened and recruited to ensure that they were part of the relevant target market and each group was made up of a range of ages, skill level, socio-demographics and from a range of the Island's parishes.

There were 6x 90 minute focus groups with a total of 44 respondents (an average of 7 respondents per focus group).

The groups targeted were:

- 1 group of 'walkers' (representatives of various types)
- 1 group of cyclists (representatives of various types and skill level)
- 1 group of horse riders
- 1 group of disabled/elderly users
- 2 mixed user stakeholder conflict groups

Results of Focus Groups

Results of Focus Groups

The following results are as determined by 4insight:

- Multi-user paths were preferred by all user groups; there was an appreciation that some paths naturally restricted certain users e.g. cliff paths
- In general people felt that the different user groups co-exist in harmony, and that the majority of users are respectful and considerate. They had an appreciation that every now and then they will have a bad experience with another user, and unfortunately those bad experiences stay with them longer
- However, there was some anxiety between user groups which they felt can be addressed with education
- Education (Code of Conduct) was perceived to be key when addressing the needs of the different user groups, if all user types understood each others needs and concerns any potential conflicts can be avoided
- All the groups felt a map was important and suggestions included creating an activity focused online map with grading, e.g. similar to a ski piste map
- Other ideas; clear signage (including Code of Conduct, timings and difficulty), opening up more bridle paths for horse riders and a network of paths through the Parishes
- Across all groups, dog mess was perceived to be an issue that needed addressing
- Policing and licencing were felt to be impractical and a potential drain on resources
- Users did not feel that they should be charged for using the paths, however they were willing to help by volunteering their time to maintain the paths. They suggested that each club would volunteer a certain amount of time a year
- Users felt that funding should be supplemented by Tourism, as the paths are a unique selling point for Jersey. Other means of potential funding could come from corporate sponsors or allowing people to sponsor a path
- Wildlife preservation was not spontaneously mentioned by many users, however when probed on the issue they said it was important. Users were more concerned with landscape conservation and 'keeping the paths natural'



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