



# Trail Action Group Access Report 2017

CYCLISTS AND THE USE OF ALDERSHOT AND DISTRICT MILITARY TRAINING LANDS  
SIMON BROWN – TAG CHAIR



*Figure 1 - With no reference to the use of unicycles in the Byelaw the rider is free to enjoy recreation on Aldershot and District Military Lands, whereas DIO do not welcome responsible cyclists in spite of many using the lands for decades.. Image © Simon Brown. All rights reserved.*



**Figure 2 - A visual representation of text data, derived from the responses as detailed in Appendix 8.3, where the size of the word correlates to number of times it was used by survey respondents.**

### ***About Trail Action Group:***

***Trail Action Group was founded by a group of local mountain bikers that wish to retain and enhance cycling access to the Aldershot and District Military Lands.***

**Further contact:**

***info@trailactiongroup.co.uk***

**+44 (0)7910 243 499**

## 1. Summary

During late July and early August 2017 Trail Action Group (TAG) conducted a survey of cyclists that use the military training estate lands as defined by the Aldershot and District Military Lands Byelaw (1976)<sup>1</sup>.

The use of the land by members of the public is described within the Byelaw<sup>2</sup> and a right of access for the purposes of recreation exists when the land is not in use for military training. Cycling is permitted in the Byelaw on parts of the land *constructed and made up for general use by vehicular traffic*<sup>2</sup>.

Irrespective of what the Byelaw says the military lands have been widely used for recreation by cyclists for many years. Historically this access has been without objection by the landowner (Ministry of Defence, currently represented by Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO)). However, since 2014 the current assertion adopted by DIO is that beyond tarmac roads<sup>3</sup> cycling is not permitted on the land. DIO has sought to enforce the Byelaws and to restrict recreational cyclists from the lands. This enforcement could not be considered aligned to MoD's own guidelines (See appendix 8.2)

It is the view of TAG that any ban is both unreasonable and unworkable, and to that end TAG has attempted to engage with DIO to find a more practical, community-led solution that recognises the benefits of responsible recreational cycling whilst ensuring cyclists do not impinge on or interrupt military training.

With respect to the local cycling community, DIO has been very reticent and unwilling to discuss or engage with local representative such as TAG, nor to adopt or pilot what TAG believes to be highly cost effective (extremely low cost to DIO) alternative means and methods of reducing risk to both riders and troops. In their latest communication<sup>4</sup> to TAG, DIO now consider the best way to address the issue of cyclists using the land is to work with national bodies.

TAG do not share this view and consider the issue of land access for recreational cycling to be fully integrated to the heart of the local community. To that end, TAG firmly believe that the local cycling community are best placed to work with DIO and to work together to resolve issues of concern at a local level. To either endorse or refute TAG's views, a survey of riders using the land has been conducted.

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<sup>1</sup> A copy of the full Act may be downloaded here:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/39456/aldershot\\_district\\_military\\_lands.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/39456/aldershot_district_military_lands.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Section 2, Aldershot and District Military Lands Byelaw – *Use of Lands by Public*

<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that tarmac is not mentioned anywhere in the Act. TAG considers the judgement in the case of *Commission for New Towns & Anor v JJ Gallagher Ltd* [2002] as an acceptable definition of what a road is – any surface with a dressing of stone.

<sup>4</sup> Email from DIO-SEE-EPS ESC AR1 to TAG chair, dated 11<sup>th</sup> July 2017 & subject listed as 20170711-Cycling correspondence.

The survey sought to answer the following questions:

- a) Who is riding on the military land?
- b) How many years have the riders been accessing the land?
- c) How long does a typical ride last?
- d) What are their riding interests?
- e) Are riders aware of the Byelaw and the TAG Code of Conduct?
- f) Why was accessing the land for recreational cycling important?
- g) Where do riders come from? And how do they travel to the land?
- h) Would riders be willing to use an App or website, to be notified in advance of training areas in use that day, and to base their planned route on such information?

A total of 673 responses were recorded. The Results section delves into the detail of the data recorded and the conclusions draw upon the analysis, but some headline figures are as follows:

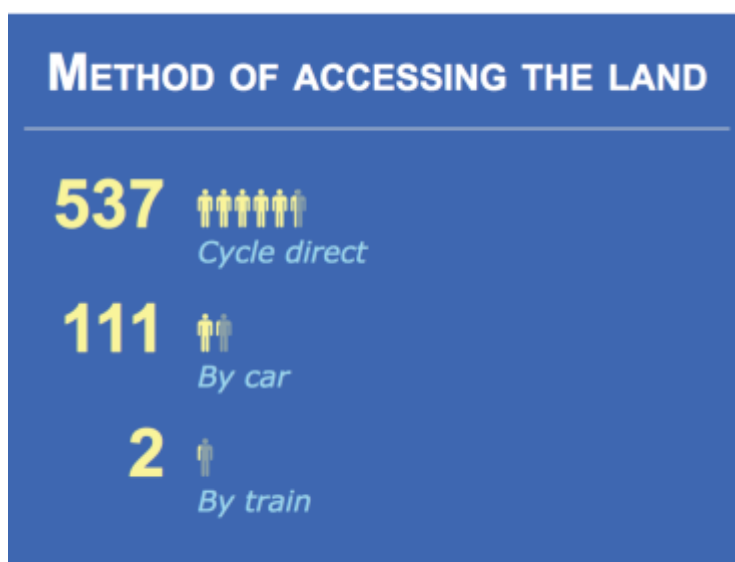


Figure 3 - Method of accessing the land

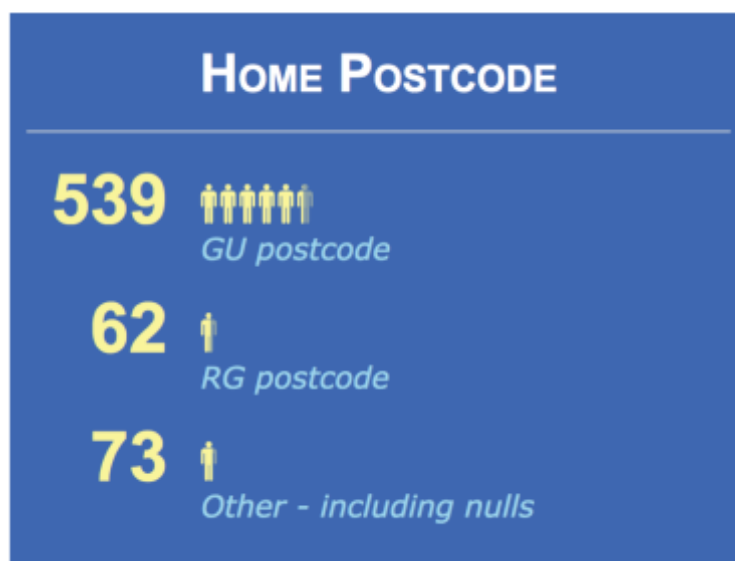


Figure 4 - First two digits of those who ride on the land.



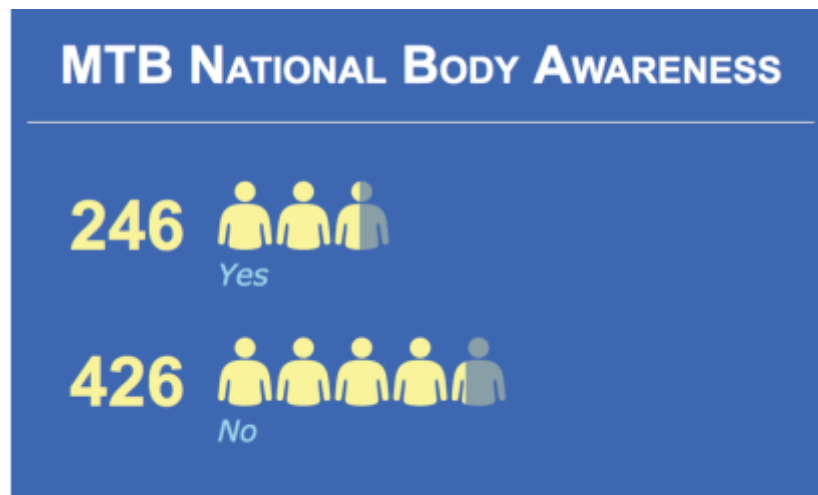


Figure 5 - Riders who recognise the national body for the sport of mountain biking

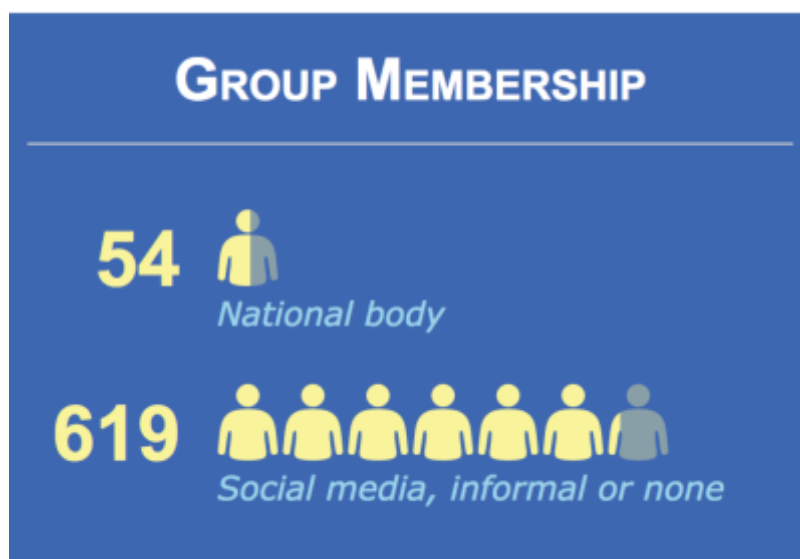


Figure 6 - Membership of formal clubs vs informal groups or no declared membership

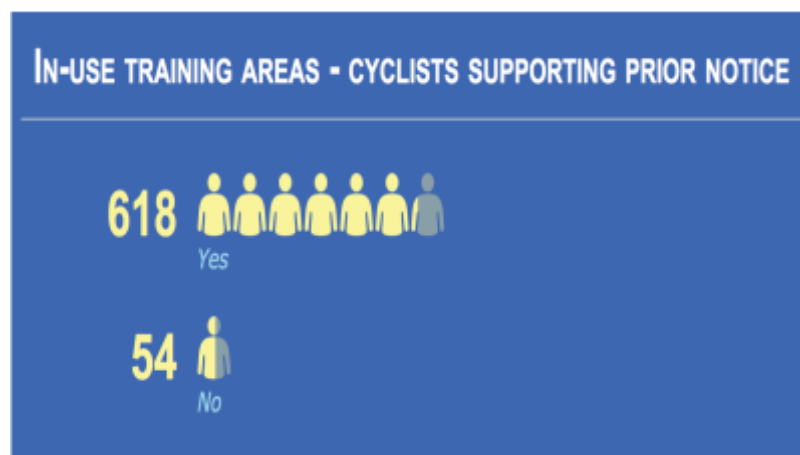


Figure 7 - Cyclists willing to use an App or website to find out what training areas are in use.

The data clearly validates TAG's opinion that most those accessing the land for recreation cycling live within the local community, have been doing so for a very long time, are supportive of military training and are equally likely to be disengaged with a national body or the traditionally recognised cyclist's representatives.

From the analysis, multiple conclusions are very clear:

- 1.1 Any message that DIO wishes to communicate via cycling national bodies may well impact other areas, but here in North East Hampshire this approach to communication will not be cost effective and it will fail to reach its intended target audience.** To that end, the current approach adopted by DIO is not working, nor will it deliver intended outcome(s) in the short-to-mid-future. DIO are at liberty to accept all, part or none of this report but to continue with the strategy of engagement at a national level will not deliver cost-effective communication, or any reduction in risk.
- 1.2 Whilst not gathered from the survey, the following observation has been supplied to TAG from Cycling UK:**  
  
*“Cycling UK (national cycling charity), have tried to resolve the situation with DIO for some time, without progress. Cycling UK have expressed concern that the user messages that DIO have asked it to share have carried an overall negative rather than welcoming tone and were focused on risk rather than education or the promotion of responsible use.” – Kieran Foster, Cycling UK national off-road advisor.*
- 1.3 The logical conclusion to draw is that DIO are at risk of wasting taxpayer money should the present course of action remain unaltered.**
- 1.4 Those accessing the land live close or very close to the training estate, with most electing to ride directly from home.**
- 1.5 Those accessing the land respect the military and the ongoing requirement to train.** There is very strong support for publication and notice of areas of the estate being actively used by the military, and from that inference, a desire to change a planned route to reduce the risk of disturbing military training would become the accepted behaviour.
- 1.6 By the volume and strength of responses, TAG is has clearly demonstrated its ability to quickly reach the local cycling community, to communicate a simple message and receive a very effective and positive response.** It is also worth noting at this point that TAG is run at zero cost to the landowner/tax payer.
- 1.7 DIO has repeatedly voiced its opposition to the widespread extension of access to the training estate by cyclists, with safety often cited as a reason.** The actual risk of serious injury or death to non-motorised users on existing rights of way (not just those on the training estate) is recorded as so extremely low that official statistics are not maintained on the issue<sup>5</sup>. Any reduction of ‘risk’ to riders or to DIO by enforcement of a ban must be taken within the wider picture of road safety for vulnerable road users. Rural roads accounts for 32% of cycle traffic, but account for 58% of fatalities. TAG therefore urge DIO to recognise that the tiny increase in risk created by riders using the training estate is insignificant when compared to the ongoing risk of riders on the roads.

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<sup>5</sup> The author has personally recorded two fractured collarbones in 40+ years of accessing the training estate by bicycle, with the most recent occurrence in 2013. Neither occurrence acted as a long-term deterrent to mountain biking.



*Figure 8 - Unicycling is perfectly legal. DIO have elected to interpret the law to mean cyclists using roads such as this one pictured here, are in breach of the Byelaw. Perhaps everyone should buy a unicycle? Image © Simon Brown. All rights reserved.*

- 1.8 TAG remains willing to engage with DIO and to seek a common ground, whereby cycling is not only permitted but recognised and endorsed for all the physical, mental and social benefits, and to maintain recreational access for all users (not just cyclists).
- 1.9 Irrespective of any further engagement between the local mountain biking community and DIO, those who wish to continue to ride on the land should take a positive approach in dissuading the actions of the minority that construct significant trail features (such as gap jumps) on the land. It remains TAG's long-term view and desire that trail management (following best practice) remains a viable means of reducing risk, but until permission is obtained constructing significant trail features are serving to damage the relationship between landowner and cyclists.
- 1.10 Both TAG and DIO have some common ground. Both wish to reduce risk of disruption to military training. However, TAG believes this goal need not be mutually exclusive or incompatible with cycling, and the analysis of survey results supports this view. Cyclists and troops training have, after all, coexisted for decades, and will continue to do so irrespective of Byelaw enforcement.





*Figure 9 – Responsible cycling has been enjoyed by many on the lands for decades. Only in recently has DIO sought to enforce a ban. Image ©Simon Brown. All rights reserved.*

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### **3. Introduction**

This report details the findings of a survey conducted by TAG concerning off road cyclists and their use of the Aldershot and District Military Lands as defined by the Byelaw<sup>1</sup> that governs military and civilian use of the lands.

### **4. Methods**

#### **4.1. Questions**

The survey was created by TAG using Google Forms. Google Forms allow small groups such as TAG to efficiently present a series of predetermined questions, with a combination of restricted list, suggestive or free text responses permitted.

A complete list of the questions asked, the format of the response and if the field was required or not may be found in appendix 8.1

#### **4.2. Publicity/Awareness**

The survey was published on the 20<sup>th</sup> of July 2017 and remained open for responses until the 4<sup>th</sup> of August 2017.

Publicity was achieved by two methods:

1. On the TAG homepage as a news item: [www.trailactiongroup.co.uk](http://www.trailactiongroup.co.uk)
2. Social media: Via the TAG Facebook page, with a link directing potential respondents to the TAG homepage.
3. Social Media: Via a paid-for targeted advert.

Beyond social media, the survey was shared on [www.singletrackworld.com](http://www.singletrackworld.com), a web forum comprising of mountain biking enthusiasts. This was unexpected, but nevertheless welcomed. It is worth noting that as of 14<sup>th</sup> August 2017 singletrackworld.com is achieving 805k visits per month, and is ranked in position of 2,171 of all the sites in the UK.

### **5. Results**

#### **5.1. Publicity and Reach**

The survey received a total of 673 responses, of which 7 were discounted as being duplicate.

The following analytics were gathered and recorded by Facebook and relate to the TAG post advertising the presence of the survey:

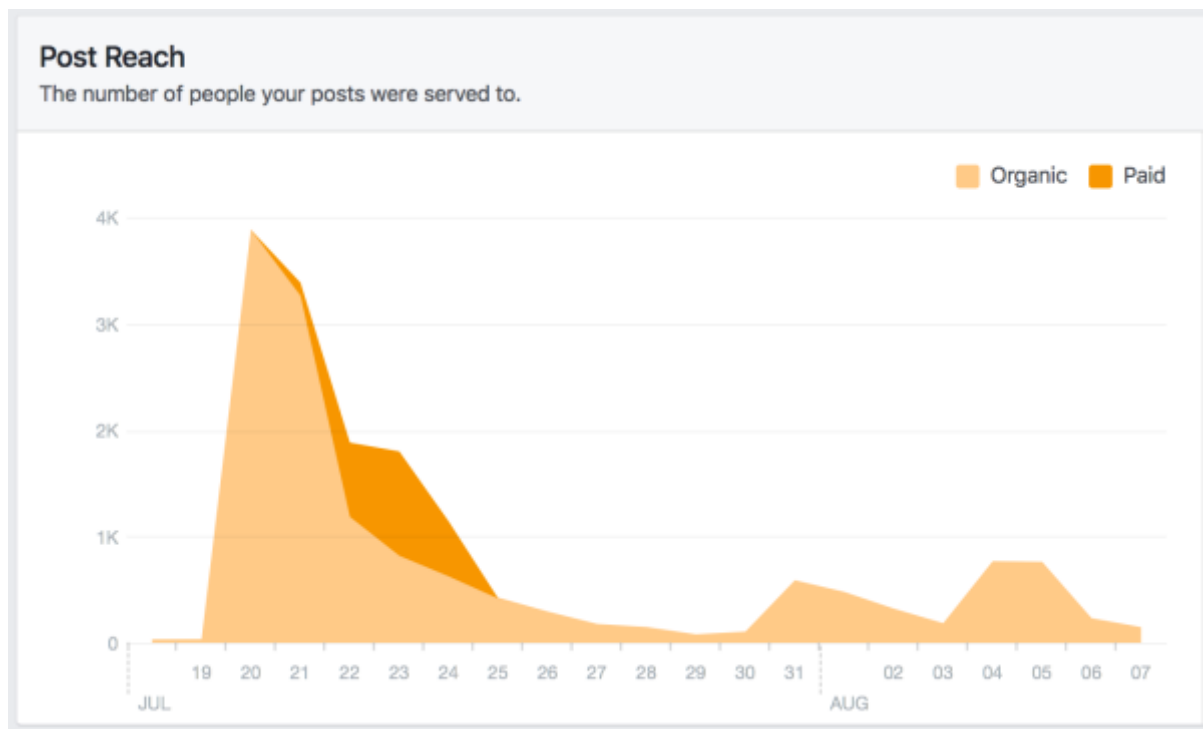


Figure 10 – Post Reach on Facebook

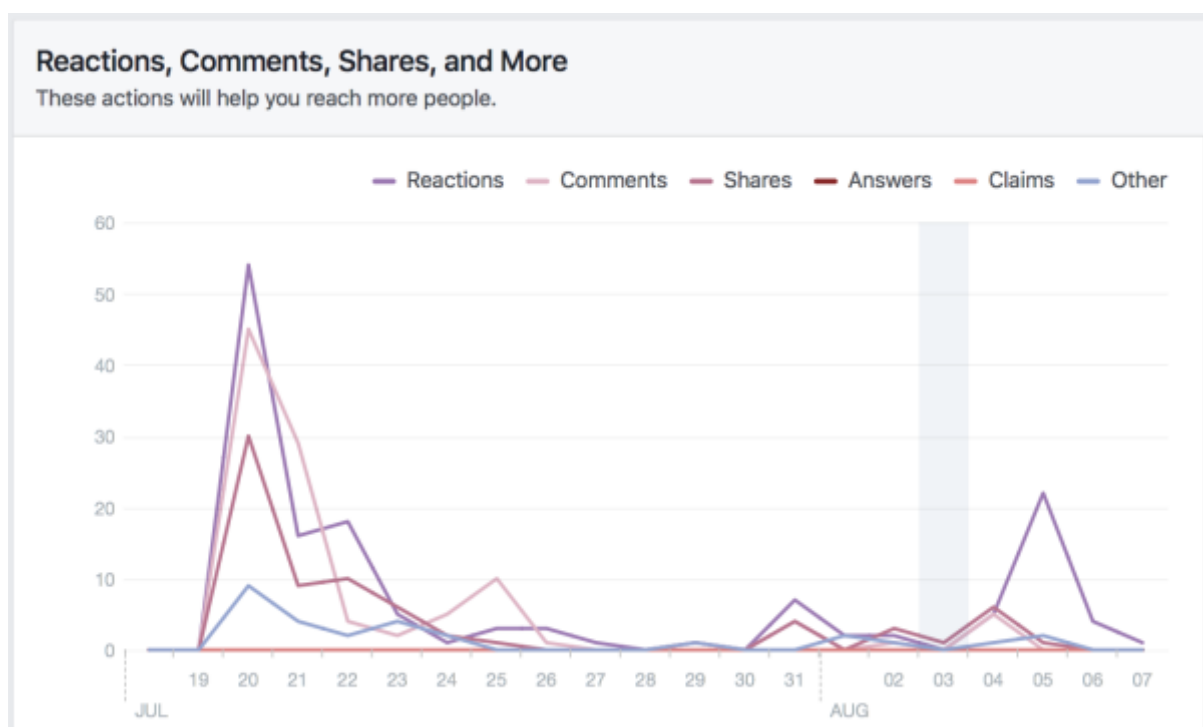


Figure 11 - Reactions, Comments and Sharing. Note that 30 shares will have reached other groups – including closed & secret groups that are not visible to non-members.



Figure 12 - Number and timing of reactions to the TAG post.



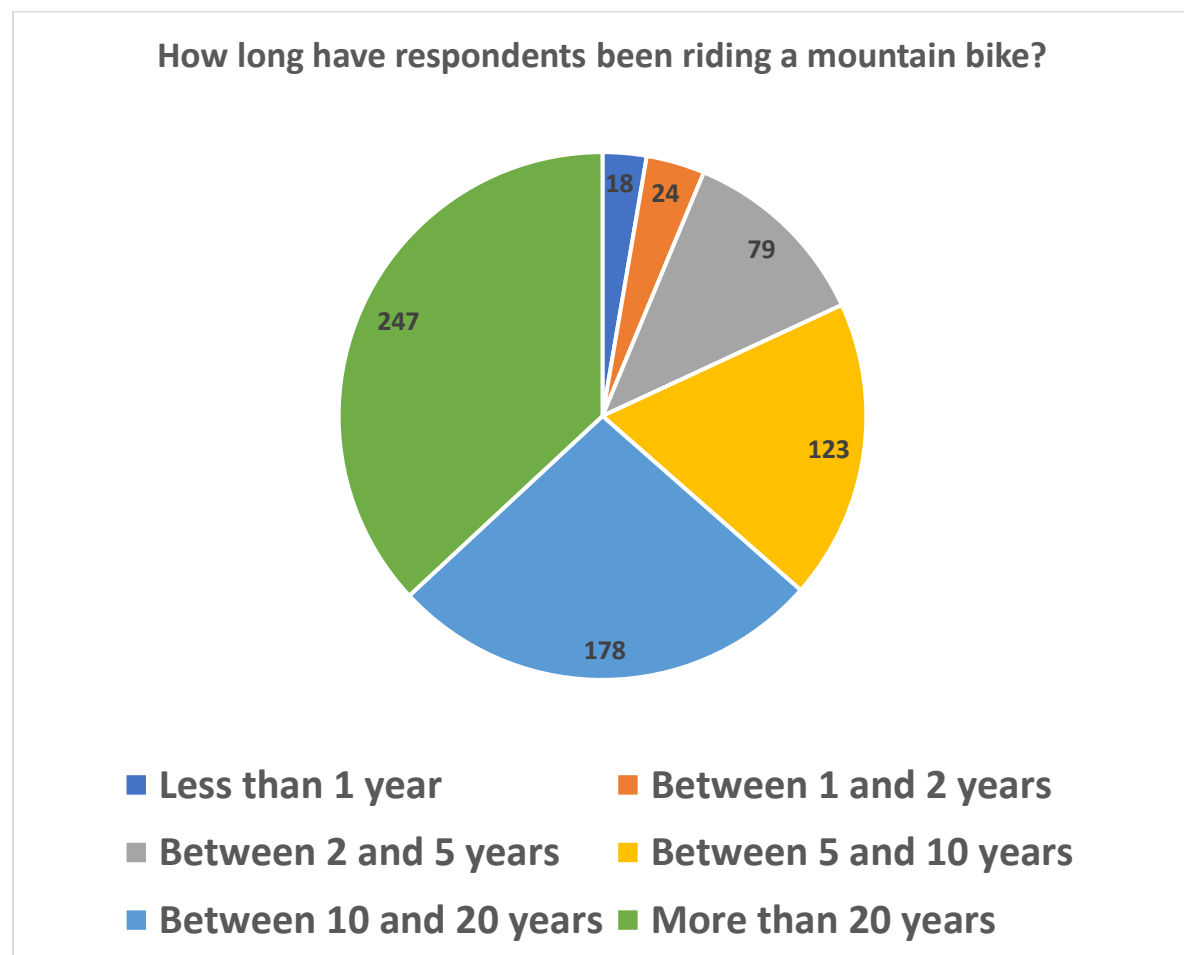
Figure 13 - Number of users indicating a dislike for the TAG post. Single digit...very low numbers.



## 5.2. Response results

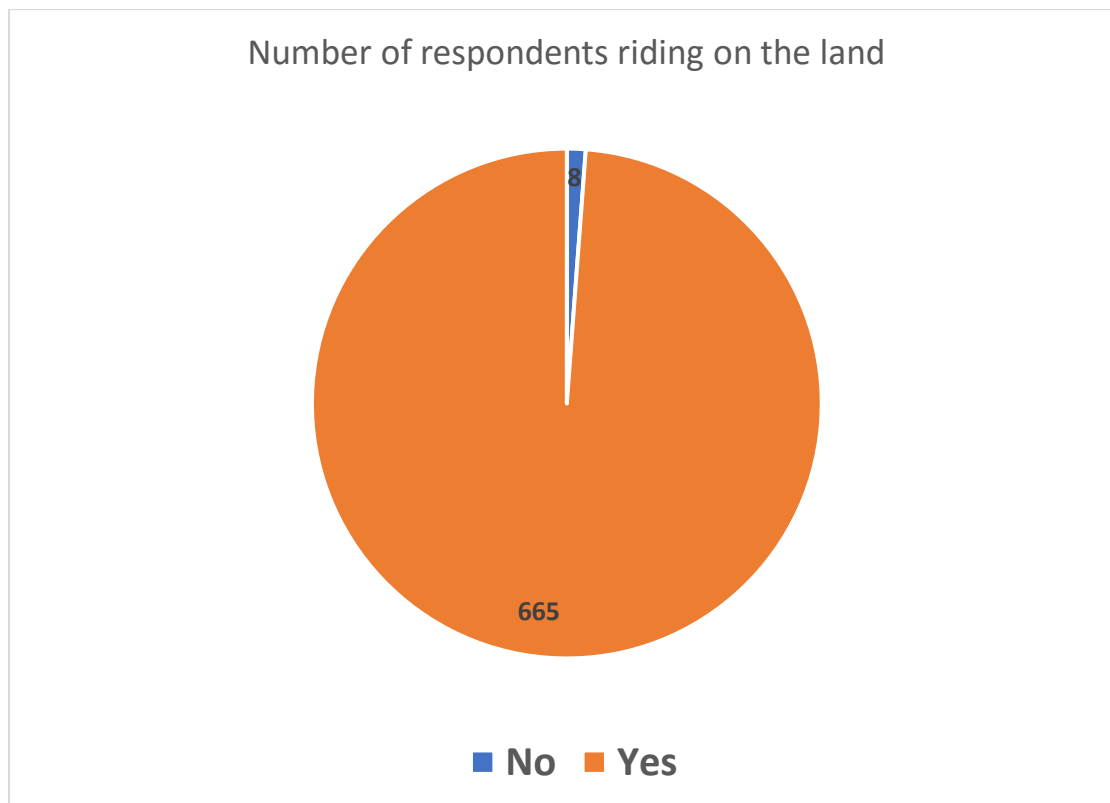
From the survey results, the following responses were recorded:

### 5.2.1. How many years have you been riding a mountain bike?



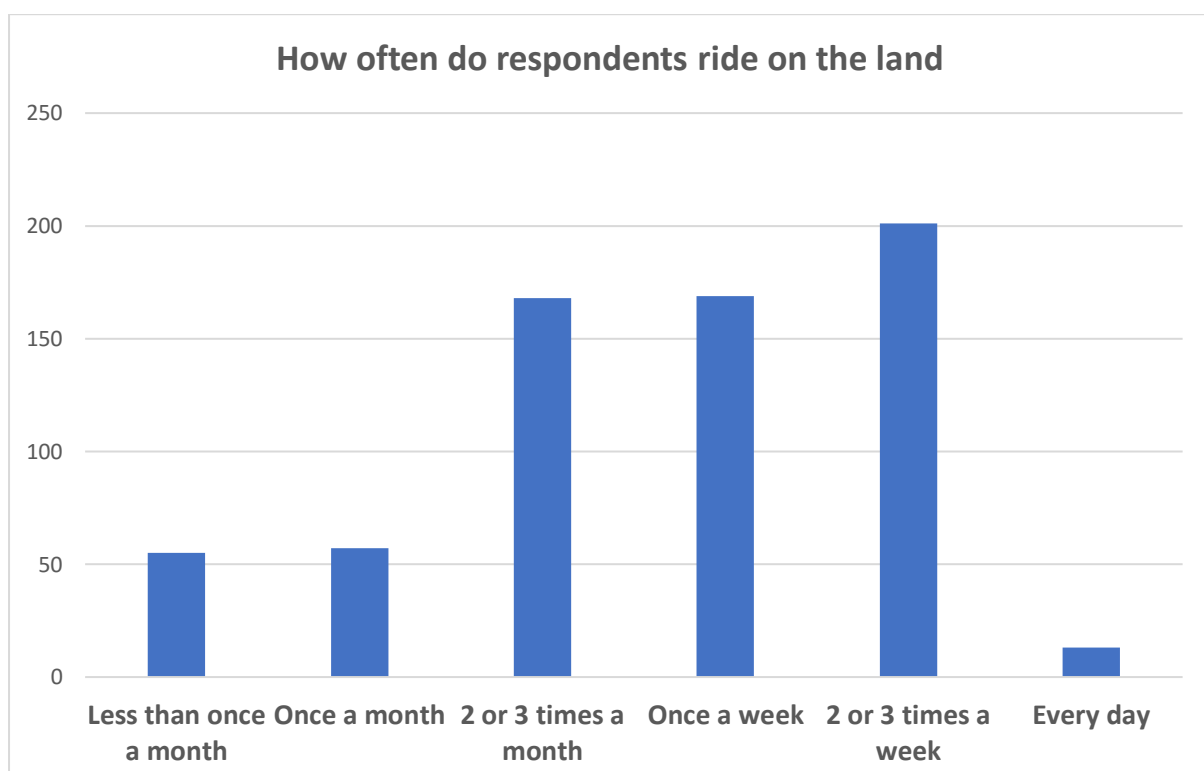
Mountain biking (MTB) is often considered to be a recent invention, however this data suggests MTB has been part of cycling for 20+ years. This data goes correlates data responses for 5.2.7 and any differences assumed to be as a result of riders moving into the area.

### 5.2.2. Do you ride on the military land?



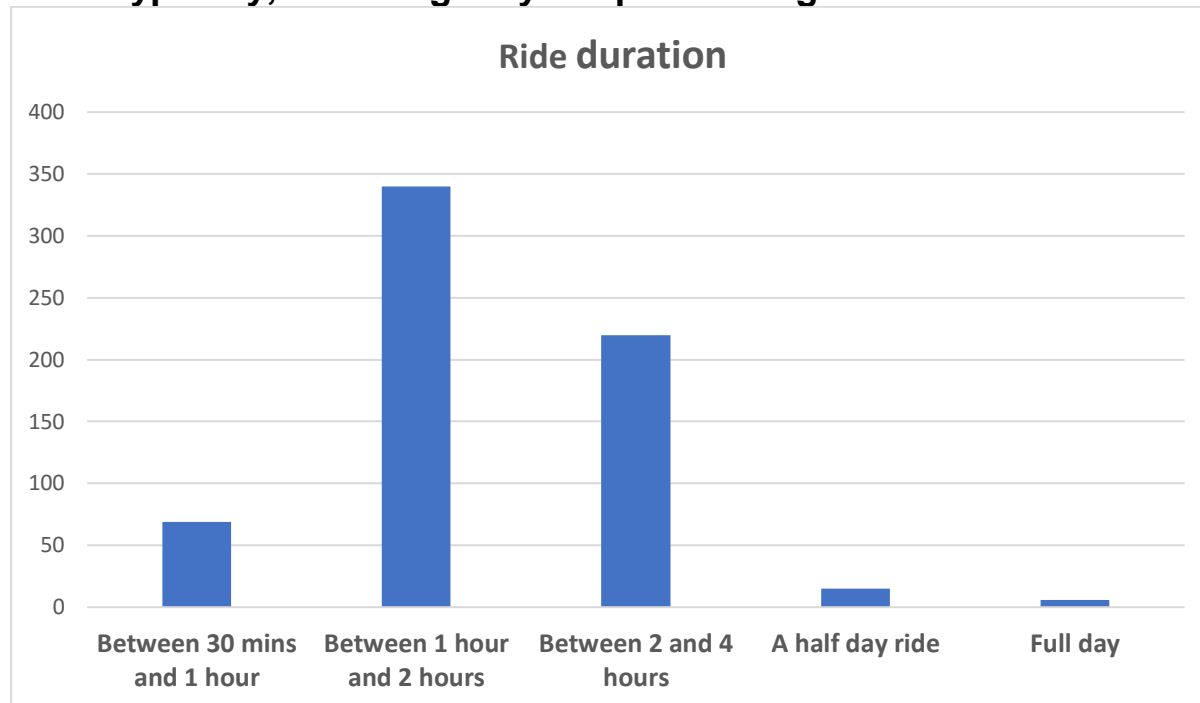
From the above, the target respondents were reached and a high degree of confidence in the validity of the results established.

### 5.2.3. How often do you ride on the military land?



With most respondents cycling between 2 or 3 times a month and 2 or 3 times a week, recreational use for cycling is extremely popular. It is presumed those riding every day are using the land to commute to/from work.

#### 5.2.4. Typically, how long do you spend riding on the land?



Using both this response and data in 5.2.3 a very rough estimate of 1,110 hours of recreational cycling per week is undertaken on the military lands. It must be stressed that this number is considered low and does not carry any estimate or adjustment for riders who did not respond or were not aware of the survey. Neither does this estimate carry any seasonal adjustment, but it is likely cyclists will be more active in the spring and summer months, and less active during winter.

#### 5.2.5. What is your preferred style of ride?

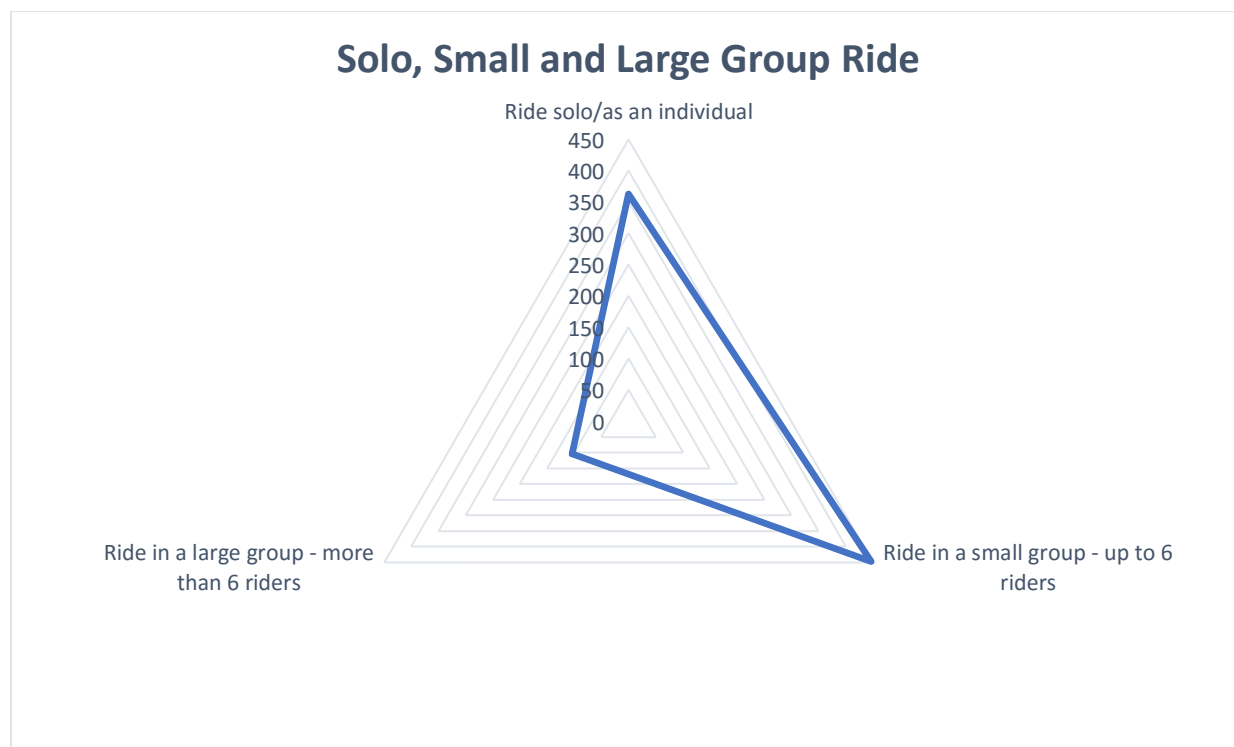


This question allowed for multiple responses, recognising that many riders will not consider themselves a practitioner of a single style of riding. The data, as presented, counts the total number of respondents listing each interest, making the total greater than the number of respondents.

Apart from the similar disciplines of cross country and tracks/trails, very few riders identified with a single type – jump and downhill recorded single respondents respectively.

As identified, there is a very strong bias towards what would typically be described as fire road and single track riding. As a total, a relatively low number list downhill (almost equal to family rides) and even less list jumps as a specific, individual interest.

#### **5.2.6. When riding do you typically ride solo, as a small or large group?**



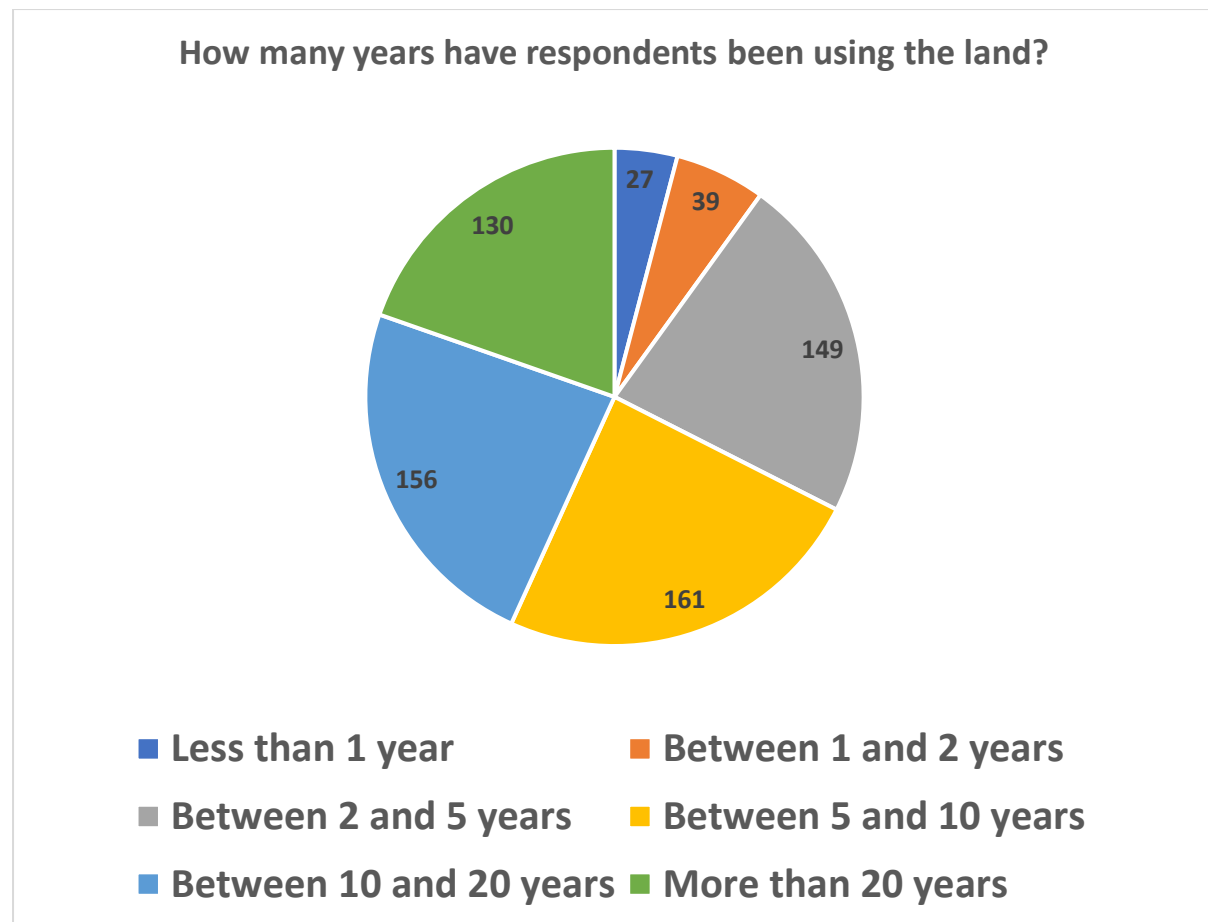
As per the previous dataset (5.2.5) it was recognised there would not be a single preference, with some riders electing to ride solo and on other days choosing to ride as a group.

Whilst it is recognised that large groups do ride on the land, most prefer either solo or in a small group

It should be noted that as per the Byelaw<sup>1</sup> Section 4. (5) prohibits attempts to assemble or to assemble groups on the land. Given the widespread acknowledgement of said Byelaw (see 5.2.12) it can be surmised that most are simply ignoring that clause the Byelaw. To put it simply, riding with friends and as a social activity is seen as more beneficial than observing the strict interpretation of the Byelaw. When taken into account that the landowner has made little or no attempt to enforce, the rewards and benefits outweigh the risks.

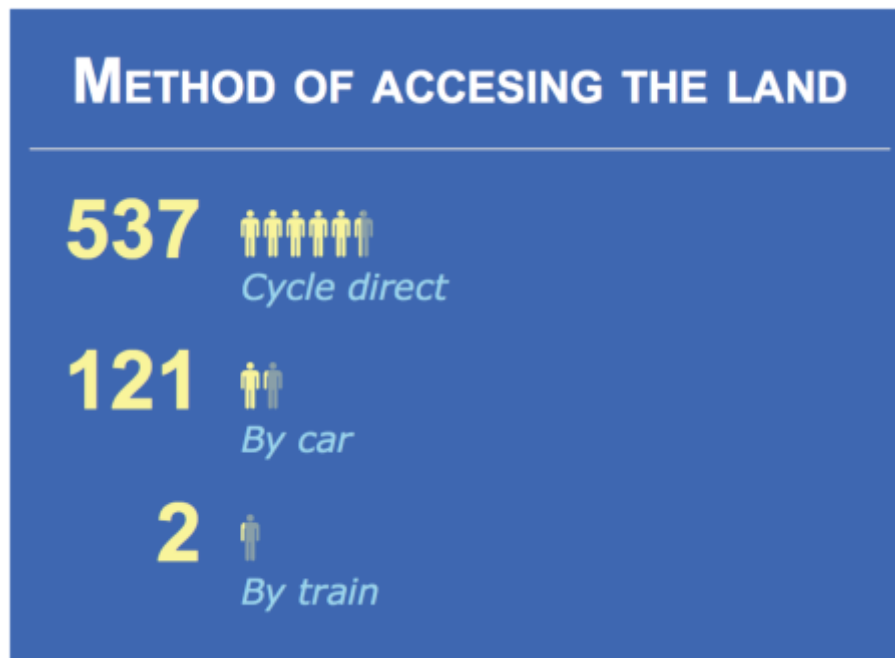
#### 5.2.7. How long have you been riding on the land?





This response was the most surprising. TAG had suspected cycling on the land was not a new phenomenon but a long-term accepted custom and practice. The responses clearly demonstrate how long the land has been in use for recreational cycling, and such cycling is not a new phenomenon. MTB has been established practice on the land since the birth of the sport as recognised today, and cycling in general is likely to predate the rise of MTB.

#### **5.2.8. How do you access the land?**



The numbers accessing the land by cycle outweigh any other means by a significant margin.

This data, in conjunction with the postcode question (see 5.2.22), clearly demonstrates that the issue of access to the training estate is a very, almost hyper, local matter.

### **5.2.9. In a few words, could you explain why cycling on the land is important to you?**

This section allowed respondents to express in their own words why riding on the land, and maintaining access, was important. The full responses are in appendix 8.3, but a few sample quotes are included here:

- a) *Quiet spaces, riding natural trails more technically challenging and physically demanding.***
- b) *It's on my doorstep and provides a brilliant base for fitness training, as well as allowing a superb social aspect with group rides. The terrain is varied and fun and I appreciate how lucky I am to live so close to such great land to cycle on.***
- c) *Great for fitness. Leisure time it key and definitely wouldn't be as happy and healthy if it wasn't for riding on the military land. Whether it's with friends or my 2 sons, it's great for so many reasons. Would rather be riding in the pissing rain on the military land than sitting at home on the iPad and so would my 2 young boys :-)***
- d) *I enjoy cycling off road and enjoy taking my children cycling away from traffic. The unspoilt country side and wild life is also a major attraction.***
- e) *Really convenient location to get out and ride without having to travel in a car somewhere else. Because of this my mates and I tend to ride more often, improving our fitness while having a great laugh.***
- f) *I've been riding on Army land since a child. (Age now listed as between 40 and 55).***

*g) The land is away from cars, and as tax payers, we have funded this land (and continue to do so), so MOD should have a policy of open to all unless they are actually training. This does not appear to be the case around Longmoor and Bramshott. Landmarc have a habit of lording it over land users, and again, they are paid for my the public purse I believe. One of them even chased me and started yelling at me. I am a man in my late forties, I expect to be appropriately addressed. ("Sir" would be a good starting point)*

*h) I live in the middle of military land, all around me are woods and common land that have large areas of military land. I can not ride more than 100 yards from my house without crossing onto military land. 90% of the time there are no personal other than LANDMARC staff on that land*

*i) I love cycling especially off road as I am in nature and not worrying about cars*

*j) I have lived in Farnborough since I was a kid, (I'm now 59) and from my early teens we were riding, walking and playing in the local woods, (as we knew them). I also used them to ride to work. We understood and respected that they were there to train the army and also that that was the reason they still existed. We knew that because our family was either in the services, or was supporting them as MOD employees. They are part of why myself and so many people chose to remain living in this town, (so urban, yet surrounded by woods & moorland). I am sure it is also a factor in people moving into the area.*

*k) Quiet and the only accessible land around for off road cycling. Everything else is tarmacked with potholes or with heavy traffic.*

*l) Modern life is full of stressing and strains with time very limited. To be able to readily get on my bike and ride over the open terrain is both a literal and metaphoric breath of fresh air. I also now have the pleasure of introducing my daughters to the benefits of riding with the military land providing a safe environment for them to learn. A fantastic amenity for the local people.*

*m) As you can see I've been riding ceasars camp for over 20 years it's been a massive part of my riding since I started riding mountain bikes. The first time I ever rode was up at ceasars camp. If we loose access to the area and others it would be a very sad day. Please consider this after all I've never caused any harm. I have Always have respected military personnel and yielded when told. I love the place.*

*n) Good mountain bike terrain. Rode while serving so carried on once left.*

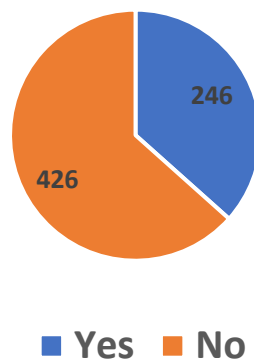
It is worth noting the following use of key words:

- 66 respondents used the word 'safe' (in the context of comparison to roads)
- 13 respondents used the word 'nature'.
- 62 respondents used the word 'fit' or 'fitness' to describe benefits.
- 38 respondents used the word 'exercise'.

In summary, the comments section was an absolute pleasure to read. The respondents hold the land and access with deep regard, whilst often referring to respect for military and training.

## **5.2.10. Do you know what body is the National Representative for mountain biking?**

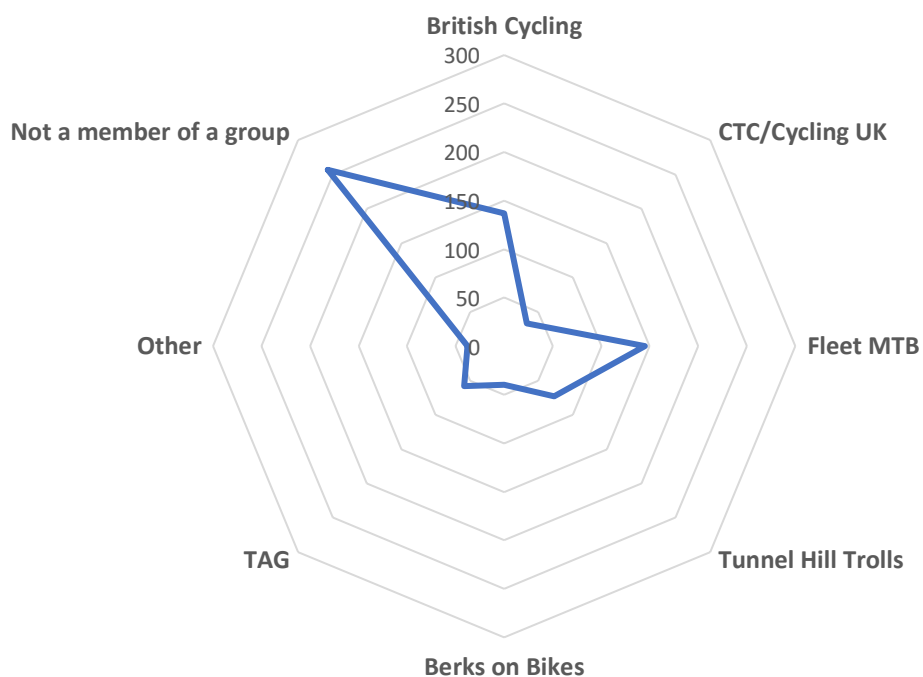
### Respondents knowing what national body represents mountain biking



Just over 2/3rds of respondents do not know who the national body is.

### 5.2.11. Are you a member of a cycling group or club?

#### Respondents and Club/Group Membership



This question allowed for multiple responses, recognising that respondents could be members of more than just one body or club.

The strongest response (38%) was from those who were not a member of any club or group. When asked if this group of riders knew who the national body was, 207 of this subset of respondents reported 'No'.

Of additional interest is those reporting to be members of groups falling outside of traditional clubs. More riders reported being a member of Fleet MTB, a Facebook group not affiliated in any way to governing bodies or national representatives, than were members of British Cycling.

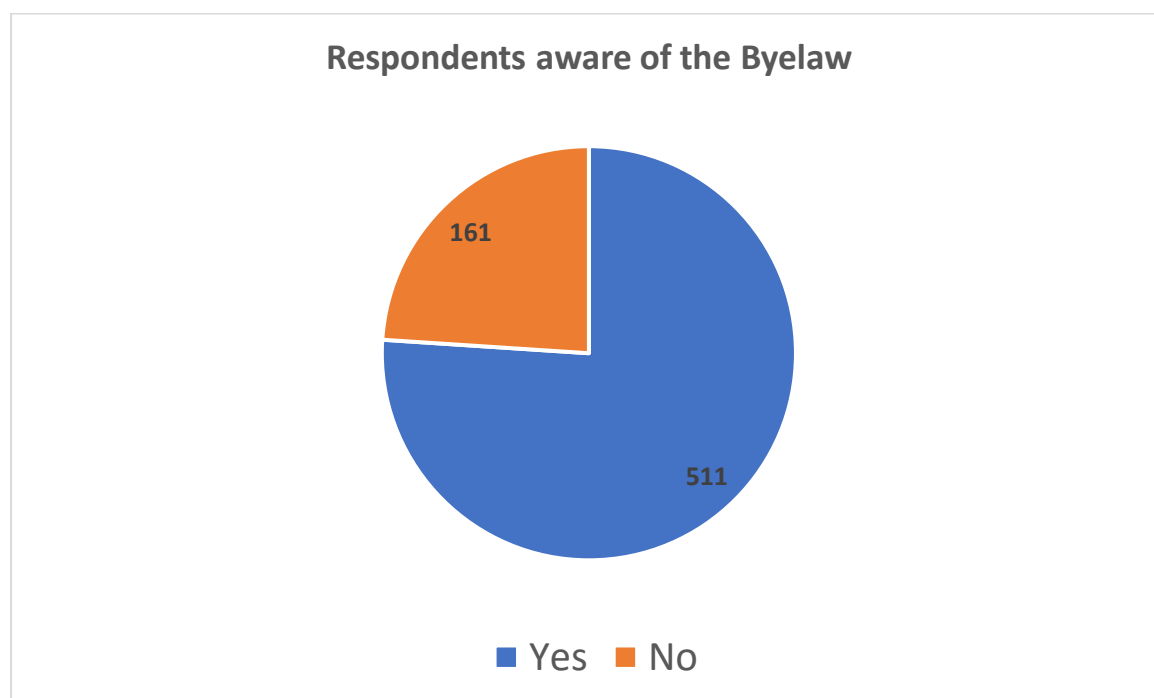
The responses demonstrate a strong bias towards Informal groups that lack both formal membership or recognition/affiliation with a national body. Equally, the national bodies are present, but representation is weak.

One other point of interest were the numbers of riders listing TAG membership. This was surprising as TAG is explicitly not intending or trying to be a cycling club, rather it is a land access advocacy group .

Respondents could enter their own values for this response, to cover membership of clubs or groups outside of the provided range. The variance in the number of clubs was extremely high, with no single club/group recording significant levels of membership.

Irrespective of riders stating TAG membership, the survey has reached a significant group of riders who claim informal or no declared membership of a group or club, thereby demonstrating the reach TAG has amongst that group.

#### **5.2.12. Are you aware of the Byelaws that govern the use of the land?**

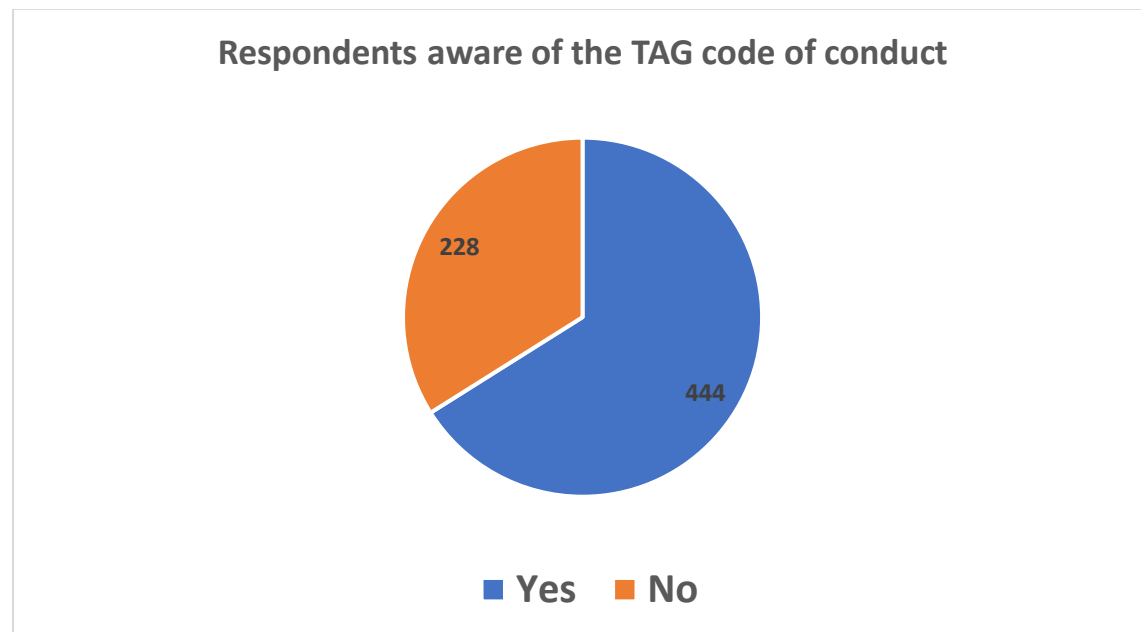


The local community are aware of the Byelaws that govern the land, whilst at the same time demonstrate rational and reasonable disregard for clauses in the Byelaw



(cycling and group assembly) that would otherwise prevent or restrict recreational access.

**5.2.13. Are you aware of the TAG guidelines for responsible riding on the military lands?**



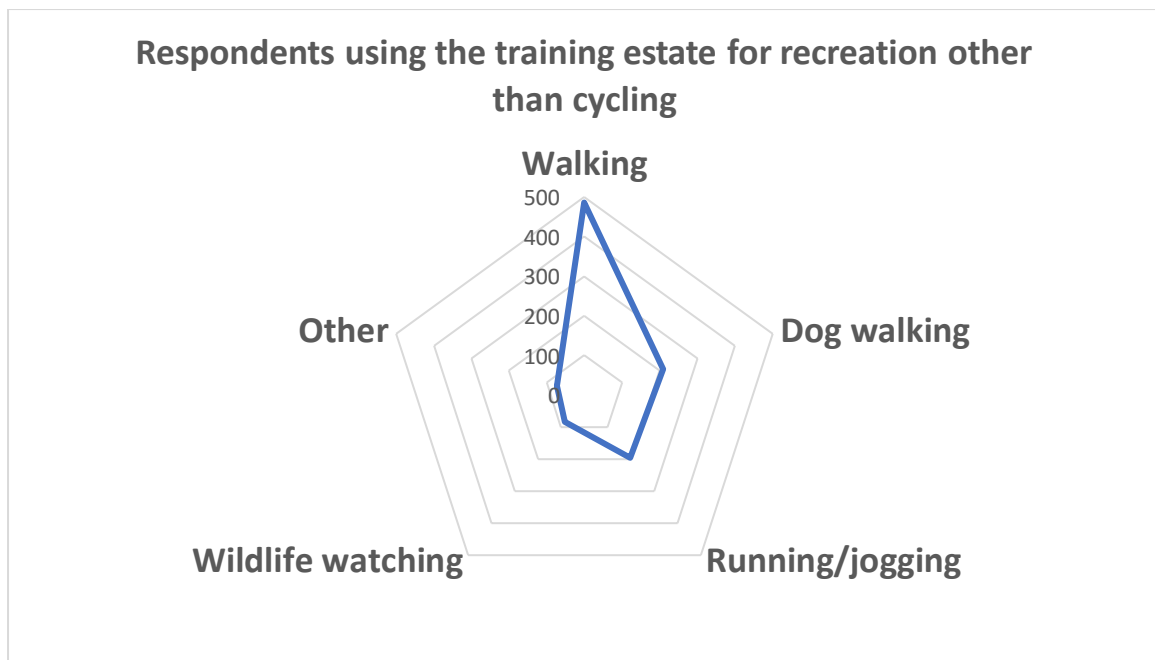
66% of respondents said they were aware of the TAG code of conduct<sup>6</sup> that sets out expected behaviour and responsibilities when using the military land for cycling.

TAG will follow up with all respondents who are not aware of the code, and have recorded permission for follow-up contact from TAG.

**5.2.14. Do you use the military training land for other leisure activities? Please choose all that apply.**

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<sup>6</sup> See <https://trailactiongroup.co.uk/code-of-conduct/>  
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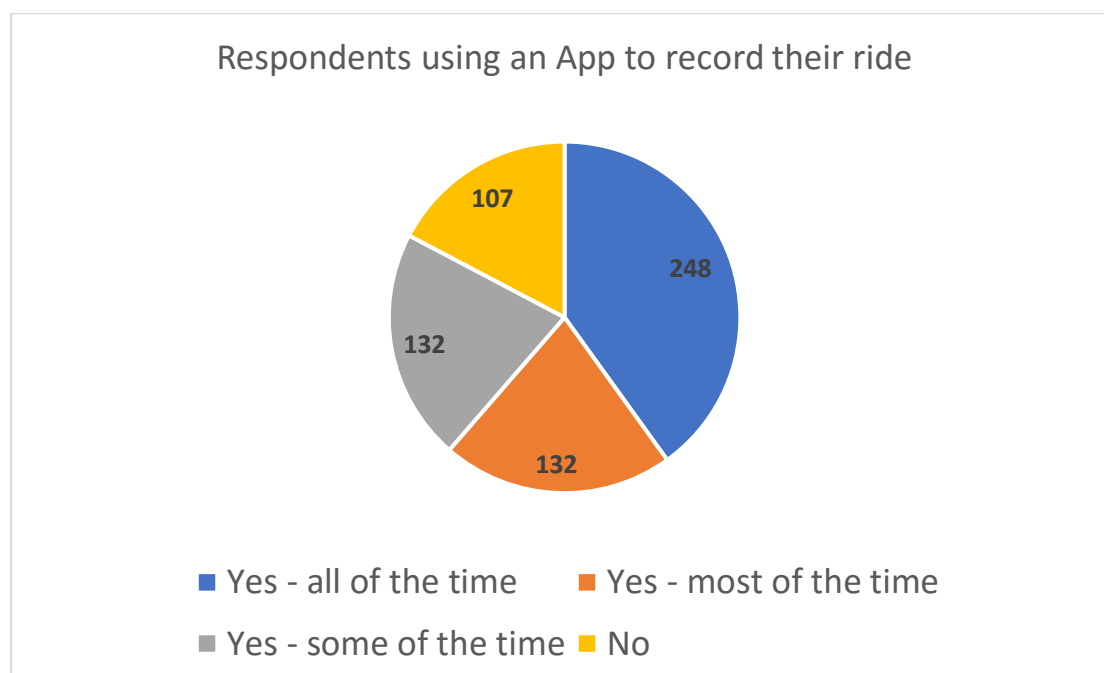


This question allowed multiple responses, recognising that respondents may have a diverse set of recreational uses(s) conducted on the training estate.

Respondents could enter their own values, and this recorded a wide variance of responses ranging from sledging and photography to orienteering. As per previous multiple response questions, there was no single additional activity that was considered statistically significant.

Overall, the value of the land and its free access for recreation is of extreme value to the local population, and is used for a broad range of activities.

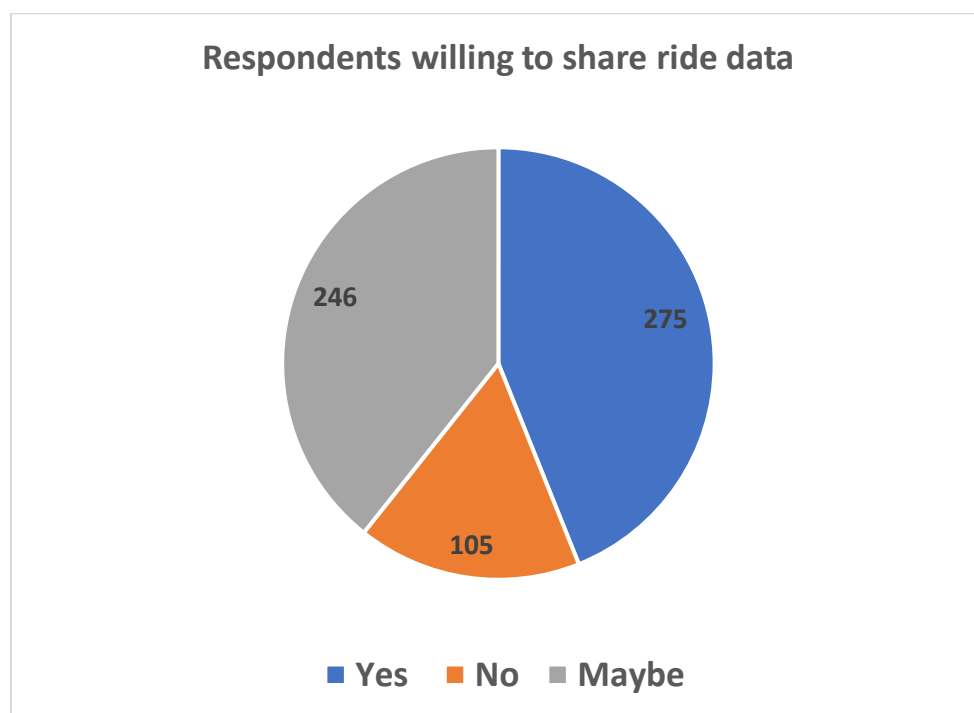
#### 5.2.15. Do you use a device or App to record your ride?



The rise in popularity of smart phones has given birth to many Apps that can be used to record activity such as running or cycling. This question was used to gain a feel for how popular recording activity was amongst respondents.

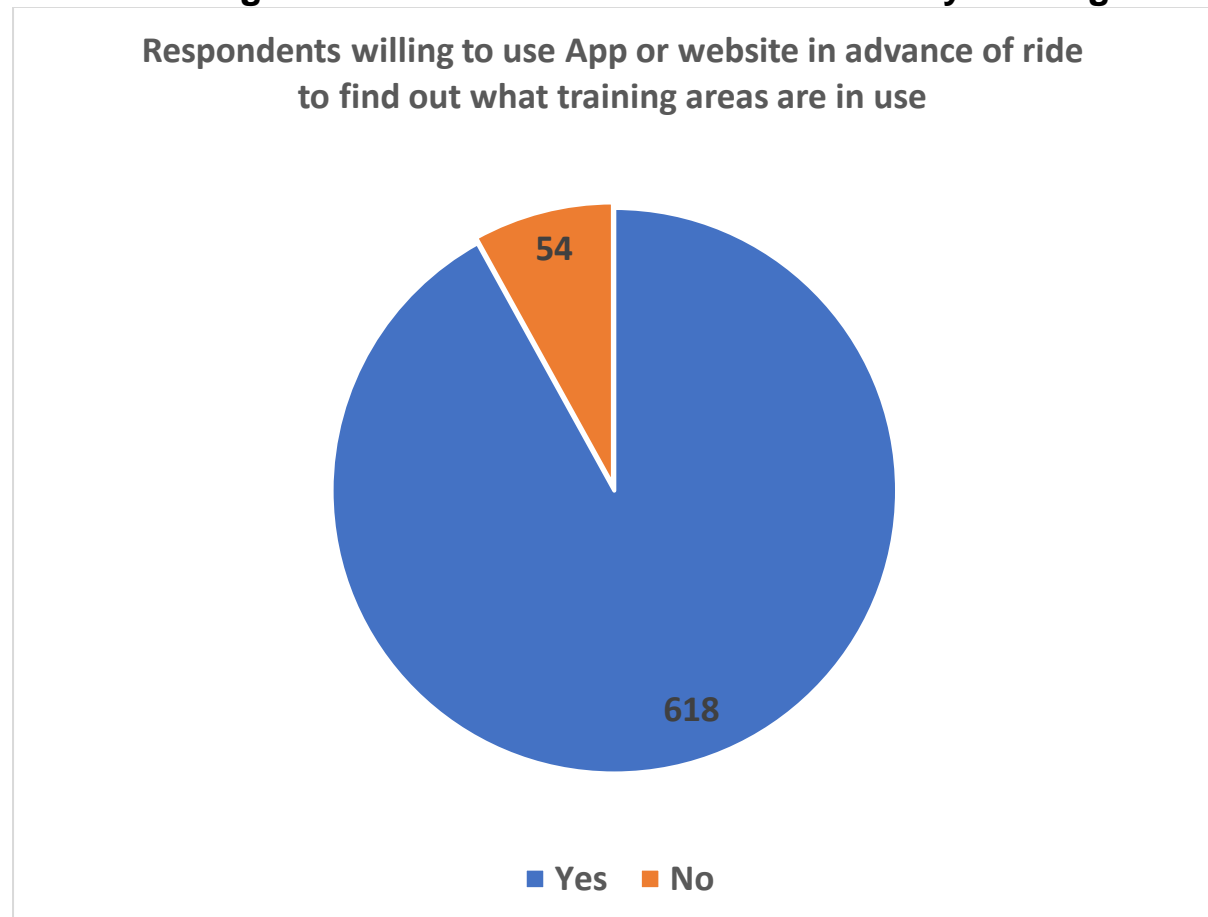
With 380 riders recording their ride most or all the time there is a strong indication that recording devices and Apps are an inherent part of the ride and using another App to check land use before riding (5.2.17) is likely to achieve widespread adoption.

**5.2.16. If you answered yes to the previous question, would you be prepared to share the ride data with TAG?**



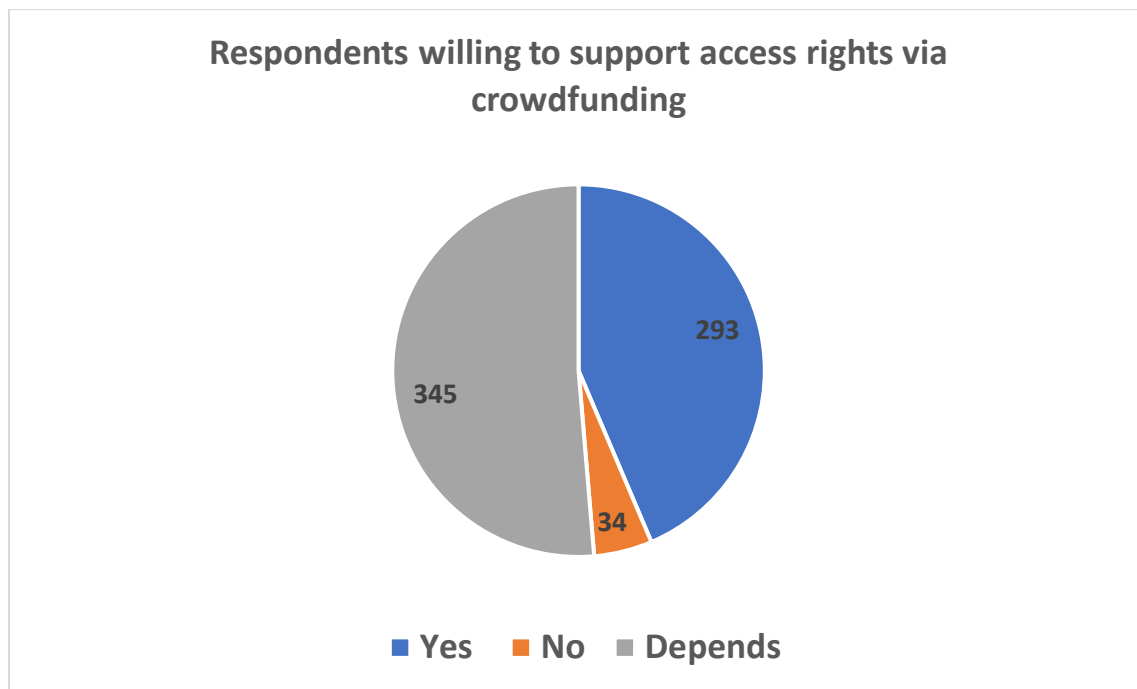
Whilst TAG has no current plans to analyse ride data, it is welcomed that many are willing to share, or consider sharing such data.

**5.2.17. Would you use an App or website to get notice of areas of the training estate that are in active use for military training?**



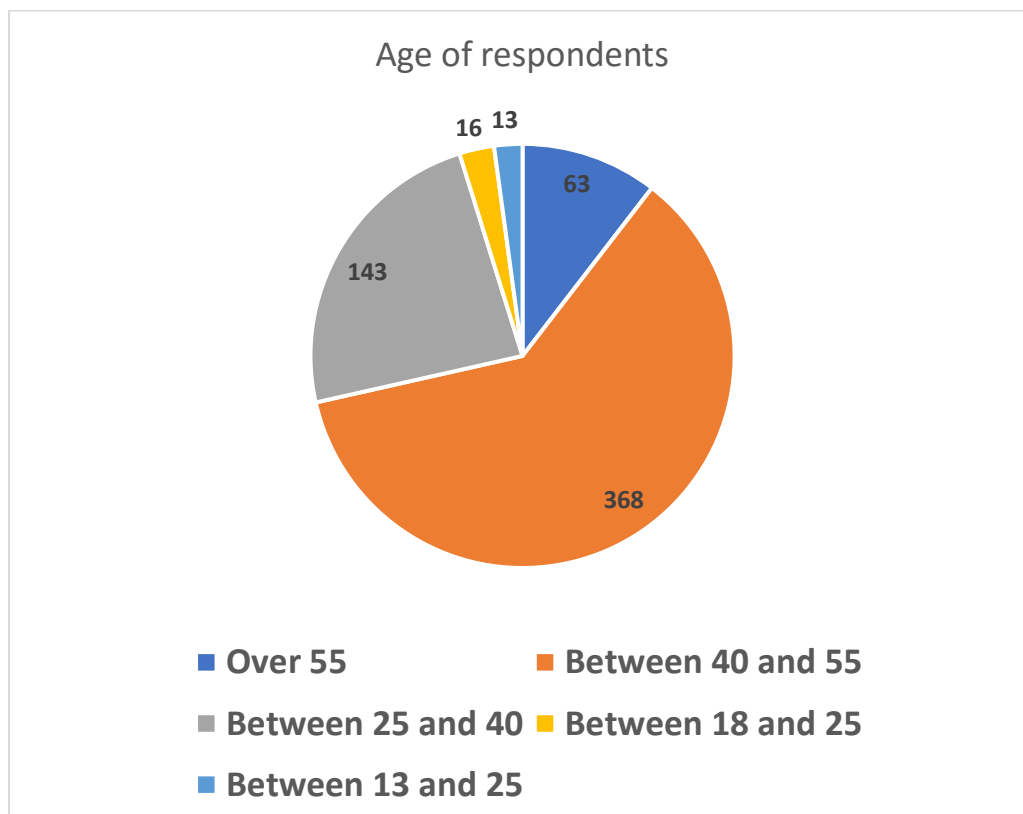
The response to this question is very clear indeed, supporting the view that riders have no wish to use the land when in use for training, or to inadvertently disrupt those at work.

**5.2.18. Would you be willing to contribute to crowdfunding that would support rights of way and off road mountain biking access?**



Whilst TAG has no current plans that requires funding, the idea of an App to receive updates of where troops are training (either as seen and in real time by other riders or via DIO publishing booked training) has been discussed. Such an App may require funding, but there is no current commitment or plans to do.

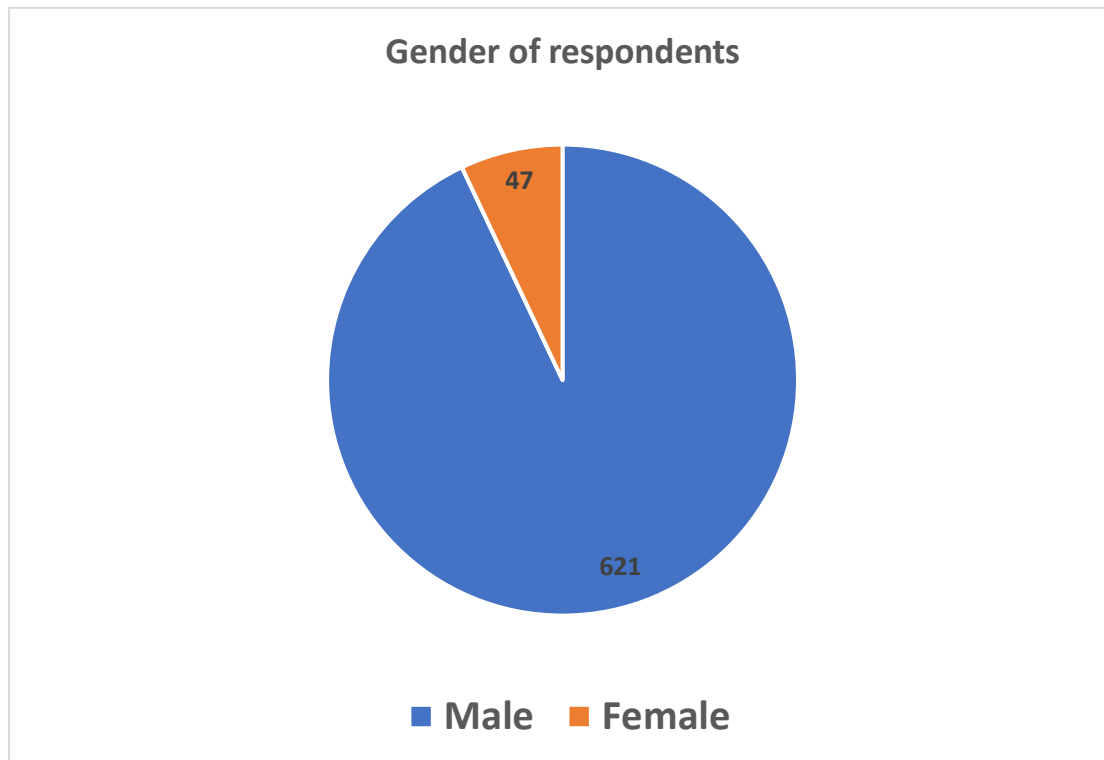
#### 5.2.19. What is your age?





Very little analysis is required to see the demographic of rider: Specifically, this disproves any presumption that any youth element are the primary riders on the land.

#### 5.2.20. What is your gender?

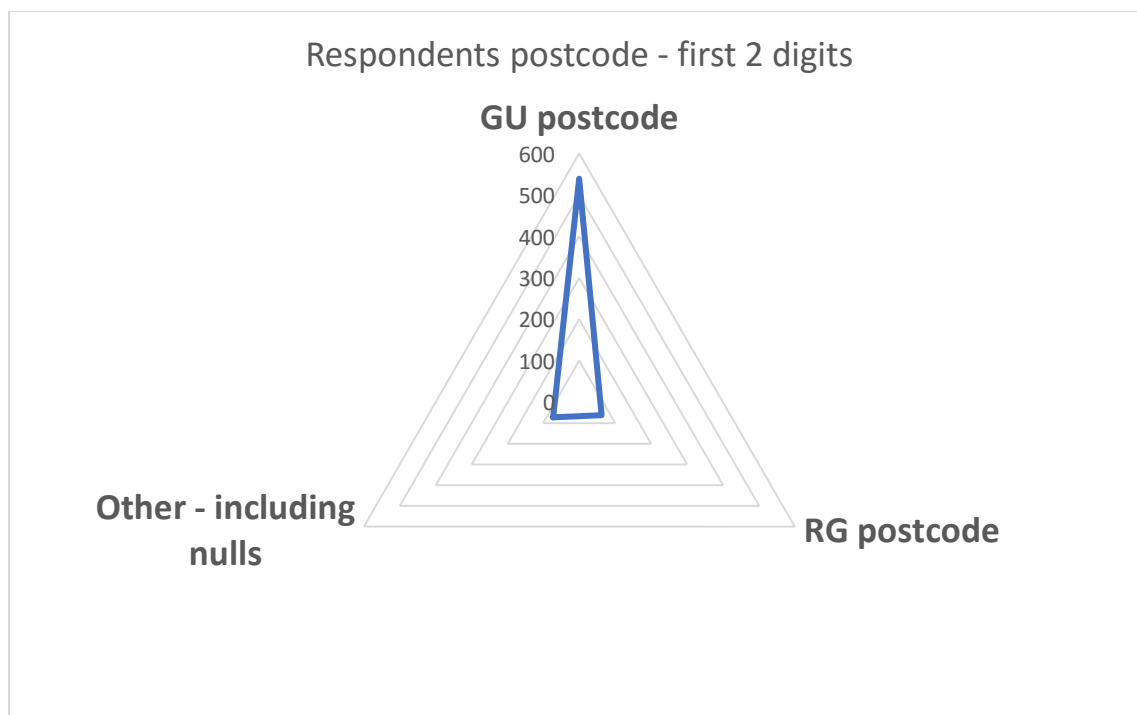


#### 5.2.21. What is your name?

Free text field that allowed the respondent to provide their name, if they wished.

This data is not published.

#### 5.2.22. To give us an idea how far you travel to ride on the military land please provide the first 4 digits of your postcode.



This was a free text entry field. As a result, some formatting correction (mainly converting alpha characters to uppercase) was required. The field was optional but the response very strong and considered to be an accurate reflection of cyclist postcodes, with just 1.5% of entered values being deemed unusable (One rider reported MI and this was interpreted on the map to mean Missouri, USA) as their postcode) within the analysis methods.

At this point, it must be noted that the training estate as defined by the Byelaw<sup>1</sup> falls within the Guildford GU postcode area.

80% of respondents are within the same GU postcode area as the training estate. When viewed in conjunction with how respondents access the land (see 5.2.8) it is very clear that most cyclists are local or very local to the land, and that relatively low numbers are travelling from outside the immediate area to ride.

Within Excel it is possible to display map based data using the first four digits of the respondent's postcode. The results are presented in a clear, graphical way that indicates the home postcode of each respondent. The map content is restricted to 100 rows at a time, but the results are worthy of inclusion into the report.

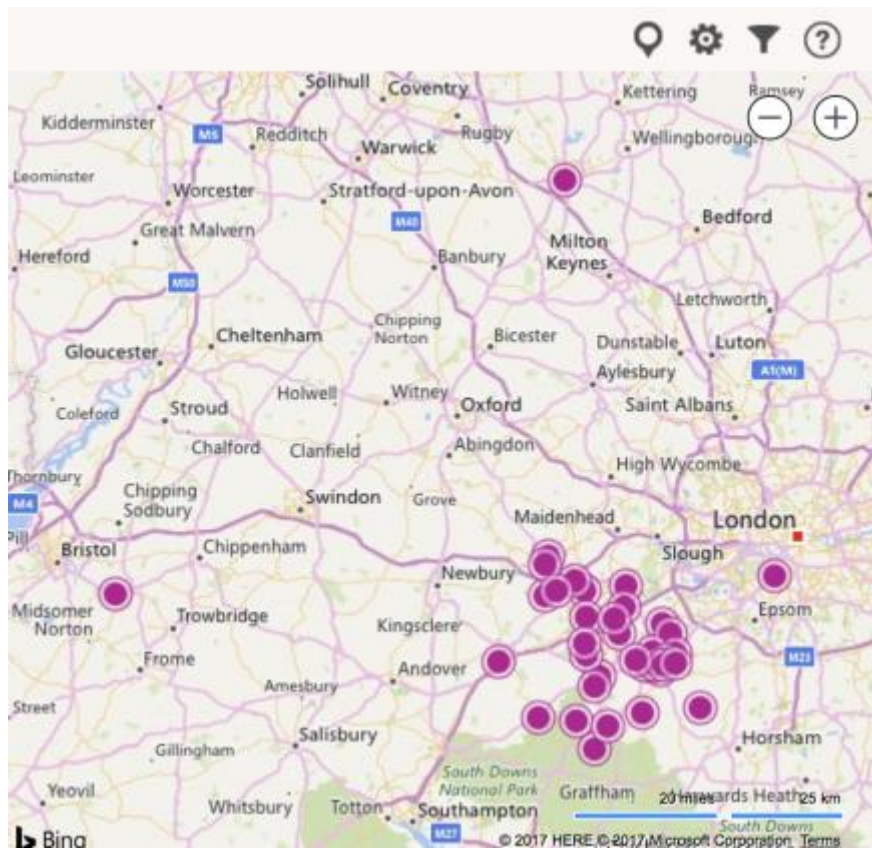


Figure 14 - Respondents 1-100 postcode

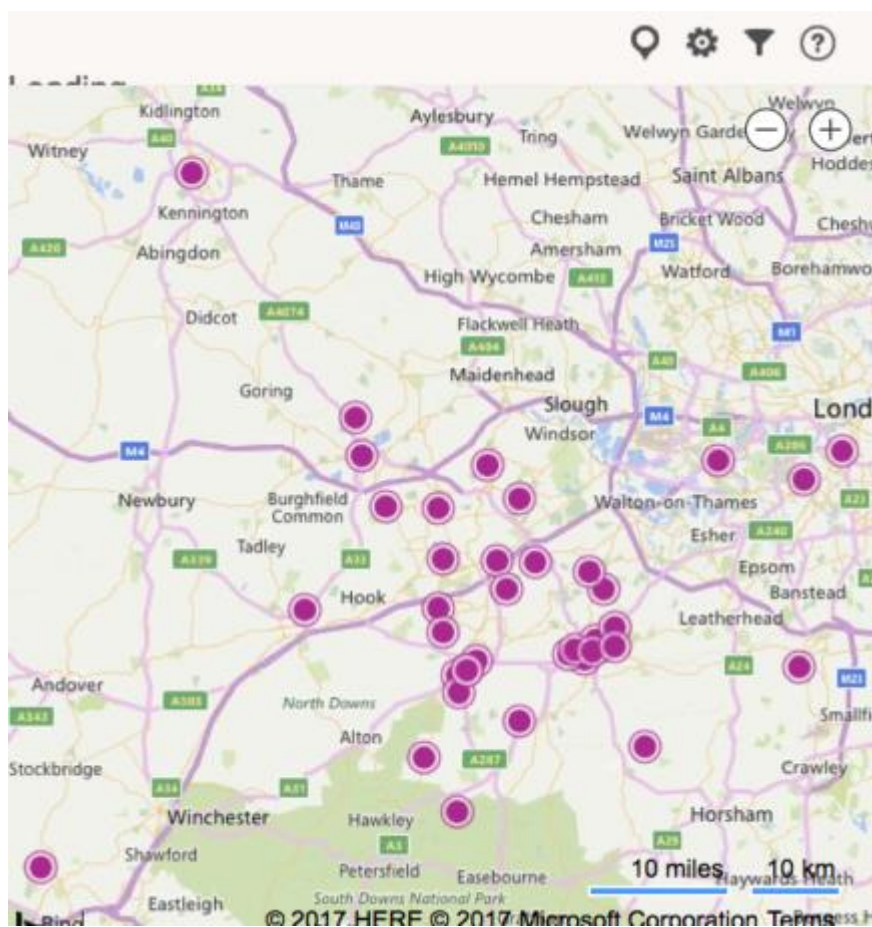


Figure 15 - Respondents 101 - 201 postcode

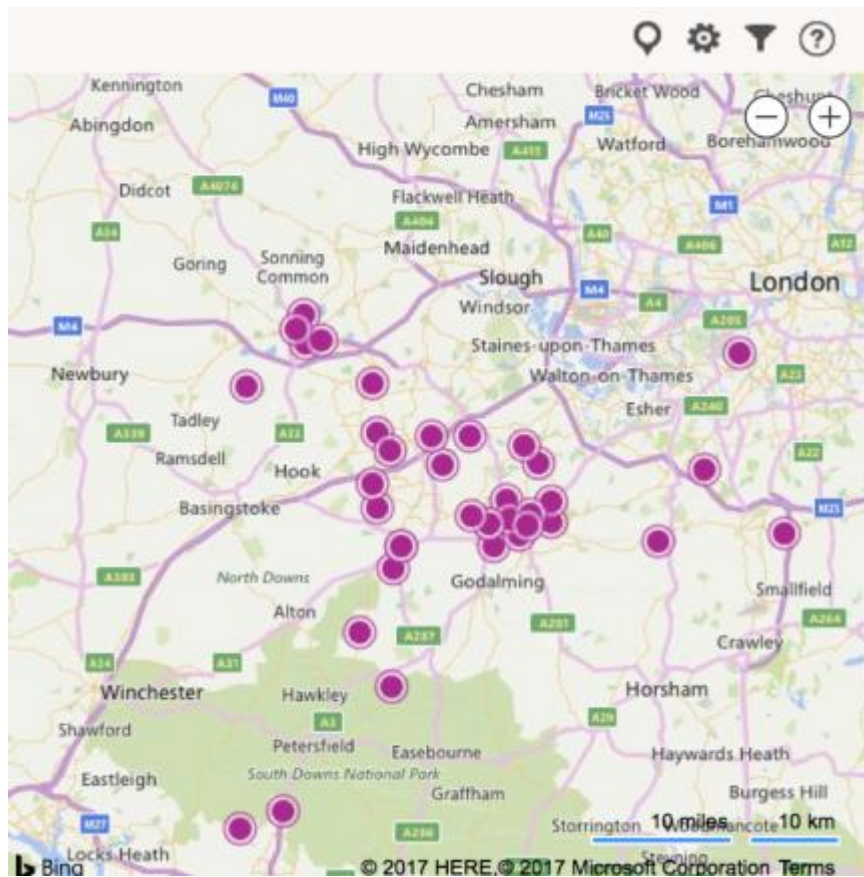


Figure 16 - Respondents 203 - 303 postcode

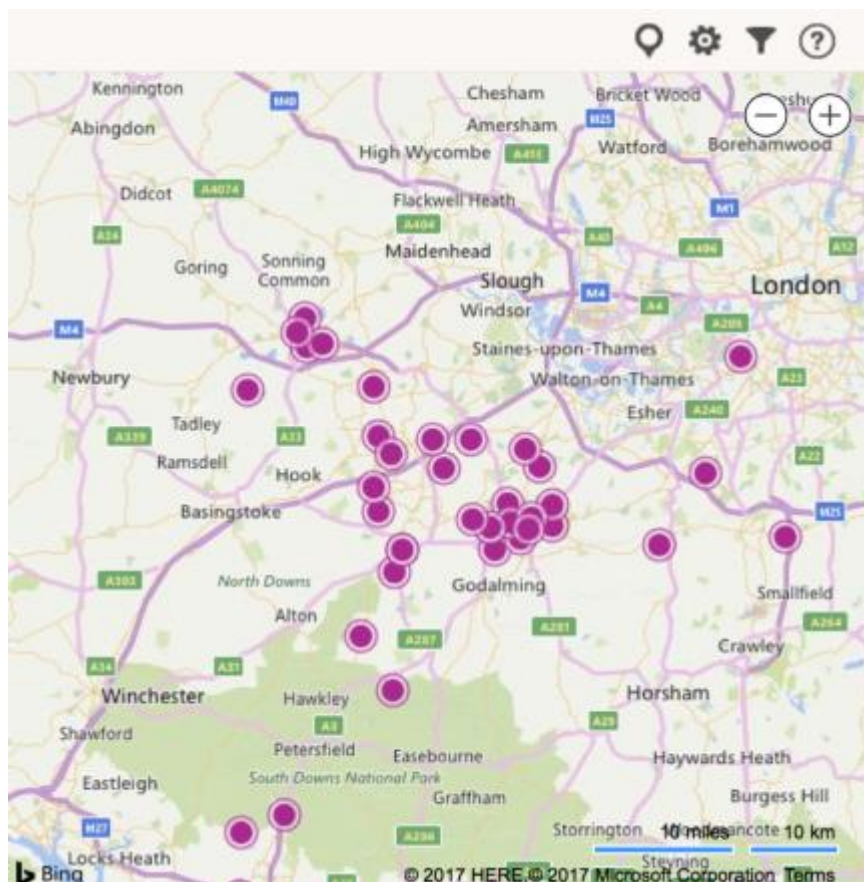


Figure 17 - Respondents 303 - 403 postcode



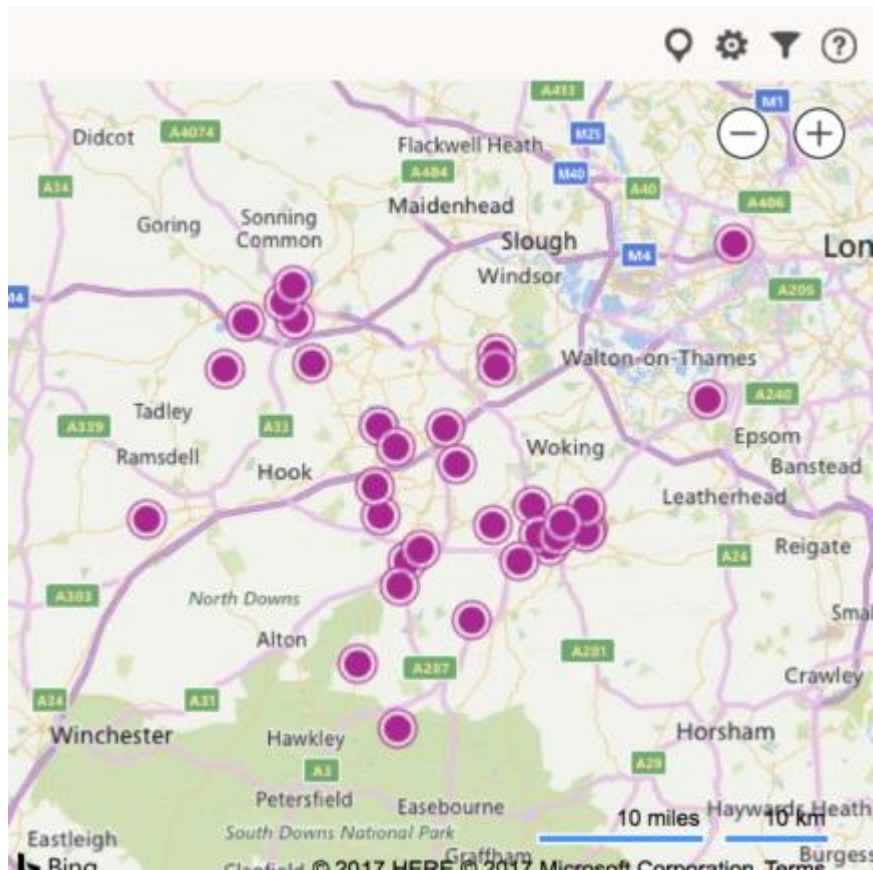


Figure 18 - Respondents 404 - 504 postcode

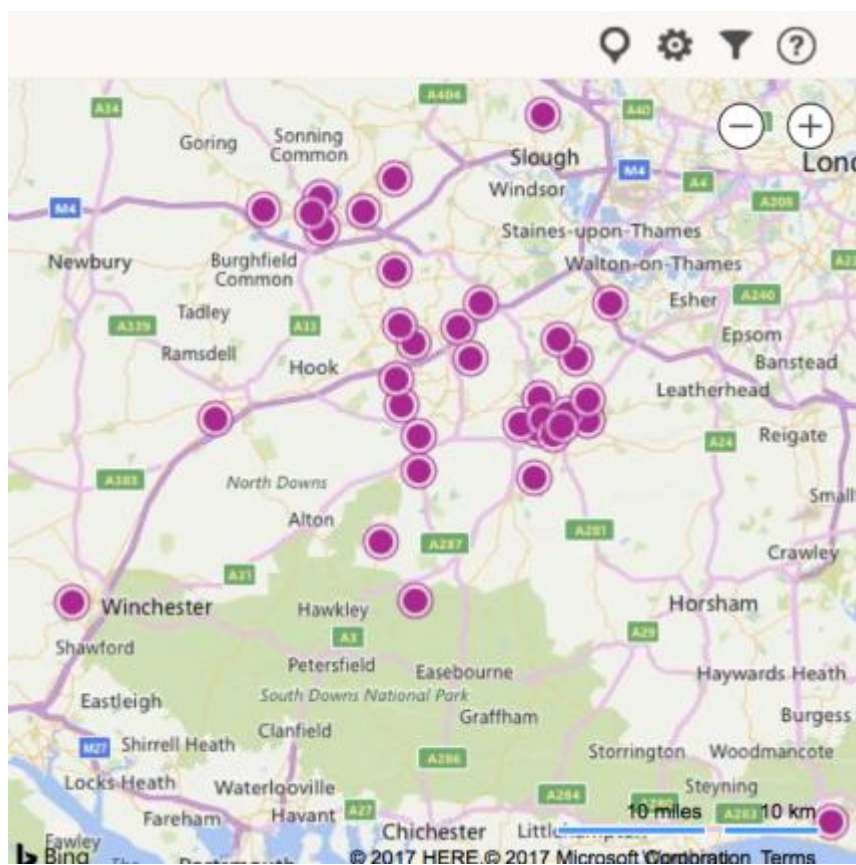


Figure 19 - Respondents 505- 605 postcode

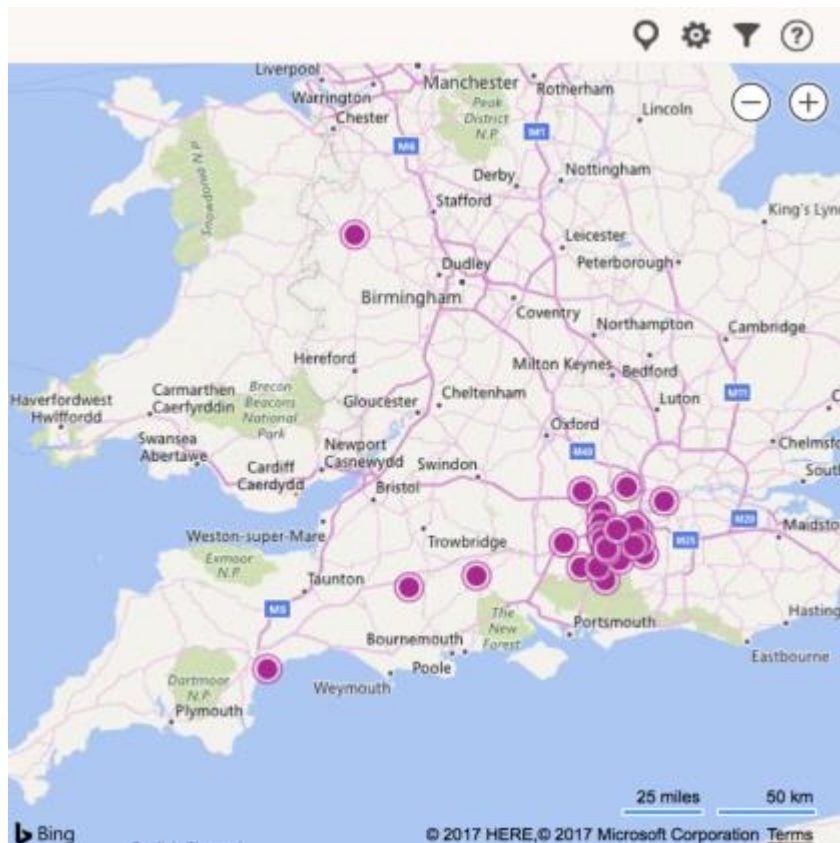


Figure 20 - Respondents 606 - 673 postcode

The data presented in the derived maps (Figure 14 to Figure 20 inclusive) clearly demonstrates a cluster of points surrounding the training estate, and those who ride regularly and with greatest frequency are living close or very close to the training estate.

Of the outliers, such as EX, BA, PO and SO postcode areas, the respondents recorded their visit as two or three times per month, or less.

### 5.2.23. May TAG contact you in the future about this survey?



Question used to establish if the respondent was happy to receive future communication from TAG via email.

Whilst respecting the privacy of those who declined, TAG is extremely grateful to those granting permission.

#### **5.2.24. If yes to the previous question, please enter your email address in the box below**

A free text field that allowed the responded to provide their email address, if they wished. A total of 465 respondents have provided an email address.

This data is not published.

## **6. Discussion**

The response to the TAG survey exceeded expectations and gathered excellent data that clearly articulates who uses the land, for how long, why the land is used so extensively and the value that is placed on recreational access to the land (5.2.9).

DIO have stated to TAG that their preferred method of engagement with riders is to use the national body for cycling as a conduit. It should be noted that DIO did not state who that body is. The survey of riders clearly articulates why this policy is deeply flawed: a large percentage of riders do not know who the body is (5.2.10) and even less are a member of what could be considered a national body (5.2.11). Most riders, if part of a group at all (5.2.6), ride in informal groups that are not affiliated to a national body and are typically formed and run via social media. Quite how DIO intend to communicate to such a disparate group of individuals has not been explained. TAG has offered to act as a voice between DIO and those who use the land, but this zero cost service run by volunteers has been declined.

TAG now feel that the strength and reach of the survey (paras 5.2.2 5.2.13 5.2.23 5.2.18 5.2.23) DIO should reconsider the option of using TAG as a means to communicate with cyclists using the land. Furthermore, given the strength of feeling

and value expressed by the public (5.2.9), the numbers of cyclists using the land for decades (5.2.7). and the overall desire to improve how the community avoids troops training on the land (5.2.17), DIO must now reconsider the current policy of actively discouraging cycling on the training estate. Should any more reasoning be required then it is worth stating that the current DIO policy of seeking to deny cyclists the right of responsible access to the estate when not in use for training is directly opposite to the Ministry of Defence's own policy guidelines, which is supportive of recreational access to the training estates and cites cycling as a valid activity (See section 8.2 – JSP 362).

The question Byelaws and of legality (5.2.13) regarding access to cycle on the land is understood by many respondents, but is routinely ignored (paras 5.2.2 5.2.3 5.2.4 5.2.6 5.2.7 5.2.9). When this data is considered in conjunction with the respondent comments articulating why cycling on the estate is of value It is quite easy to see why DIO's continued desire to actively discourage cycling within the training estate is disregarded as unworkable and unreasonable.

The matter of DIO publishing where and when troops are using areas of the training land has been raised during the limited and informal discussions between TAG and DIO, Suggested means and methods such as a website or a smartphone App have been proposed as a 21<sup>st</sup> century tool to supplement the need to raise a flag. The survey shows a very strong interest from cyclists to use such a method (5.2.17), and there is evidence of support to pay for such a service (5.2.18). DIO have dismissed such this method, with the issue of security being given to explain why such publication is unwise.

TAG now take the view that any security concern is disingenuous, or the actual risk posed by cyclists to be lower than the unknown risk of unknown persons gaining knowledge of where/when training is being conducted with a view to perpetrating unknown acts against said troops. In other words, on balance, a known risk of the public (it is presumed the wider public would be equally reticent to knowingly disrupt training) interference with military training and possible injury is considered by DIO to be a lower risk than an unknown or unidentified risk by person(s) unknown?

The two views are not compatible and to that end require further explanation of the reasons for zero disclosure, or an acceptance by DIO of the *low cost/outlay value* in reducing risk for both parties (troops and civilians) by means of notification. It should be noted that other training estates (Lulworth, Salisbury Plain to name two) publish firing dates in advance, thereby helping the public plan months in advance recreational use. Red flags serve the estate well for live fire, and TAG now believe it is time the digital equivalent for areas where dry training is conducted must be considered as a means of risk reduction.

TAG recognises there is a concern with the building/digging of wildcat jumps and trails on the estate. This kind of activity has only two outcomes: the landowner will remove the features, incurring costs, and will take a negative approach to the entire community. By analysing the results it is possible to estimate likely numbers engaged in digging, with those riders a) expressing a preference for jump/downhill (5.2.5) and b) in the age group between 13 and 25 (5.2.19) thought to be most likely to dig. When filtering the results to exclude others the numbers of riders most likely to dig total just 19, or 2.86% of the total respondents. This figure represents a tiny fraction of those who cycle on the land.



It is worth noting that historically TAG was actively involved in trail maintenance. With the withdrawal of permission to do so by DIO, this activity has ceased. The current approach adopted by TAG is to discourage unauthorised digging on the land, to explain the issues it causes and to reduce digging by way of education. We are currently unable to measure the effectiveness of this strategy, but believe gentle yet persistent message has had some impact.

During the limited and informal discussions with DIO TAG has offered to organise work parties from the local community and to assist in the removal of the dug features. After DIO removed one section of unauthorised section of trail TAG offered to act on DIO's behalf, to highlight to the community why the removal was going ahead, why building/digging was damaging cyclist/landowner relation and therefore why digging had to stop until permission for trail maintenance was granted.

As with all attempts to engage and assist DIO these offers of assistance (free labour and free, wide reaching communication) has been dismissed.

The conclusion thus is that digging will continue, and is done by a very small minority within the community. TAG do not wish to demonise any group or individuals for digging, but without any meaningful engagement from DIO TAG are unable to demonstrate any benefit or advantage to not digging, so this activity will continue.

It is also worth sharing a comment (outside of this survey, but worthy of inclusion) that one unauthorised trail builder made:

“The MOD do not give us anything. We have nothing to lose”

By granting permissive access to the training estate DIO would then be granting something of extreme value to the wider community. The overwhelming majority of cyclists will therefore be more engaged in reducing unauthorised digging as a result, by peer pressure alone. Maintaining permissive access would be at risk and the community is very unlikely to want to lose such permission. To put it bluntly, if DIO grant permission there will be something to lose if digging continues. Digging is more likely to reduce with positive DIO engagement.

There is a better way.

The wild trails management guidelines give a detailed management matrix and flow chart for how to treat these trails, and recommends simple steps to be taken in the event of removing an unsafe obstacle, such as liaison with local groups and shops, and the posting of clear notices explaining the reasons for removal, to prevent them simply being rebuilt. They also recommend that managed solutions in partnership with local rider representatives will stand a greater chance of success in preventing the construction of unsafe obstacles through education and peer pressure within the tiding community. DIO have been presented with industry best practice (as authored and used by the Forestry Commission) but to date there has been no indication of likely adoption even when the legal issues, landowner duty of care and risks are comparable or even identical.

In summary, the users of the land are extremely unlikely to be reached by any joint communication from DIO and national cycling bodies with respect to land access, and any message discouraging further cycling will be ignored. Should this planned method of engagement and communication continue, DIO are at extreme risk of wasting taxpayer money. The message, whatever DIO chooses to say, will simply not reach those using the land in sufficient numbers and therefore fail to effect any change or modification of behaviour.



*Figure 21 - Two activities; One considered to be illegal and a problem, the other within the law. Irrespective of the style of riding, it is extremely unlikely that local riders hear DIO's communication(s) via national bodies. Image © Simon Brown. All rights reserved.*

Those using the land responsibly, and those who dig without permission, will continue to do so. There is a much better, more cost and means effective way to deliver what both DIO and the cycling community want: space to train or ride in a flexible open manner whilst taking a positive approach to risk reduction for both parties wherever possible.

## **7. Conclusions**

The following conclusions were drawn from the survey:

- 7.1 DIO communication via national cycling organisations, particularly messages intended to influence or alter the behaviour of cyclists accessing the Aldershot and District training estate, will fail reach the intended recipients in significant numbers.
- 7.2 TAG is a demonstrably effective communication method and should be used by DIO. It is a remedy to their problem of communication to a disparate section of the local community.

- 7.3 With a weak or ineffective communication strategy, DIO is at extreme risk of wasting both time and taxpayer money.
- 7.4 The training estate and its wild open space is held in very high regard by recreational cyclists. Cycling within the training estate considered a far safer and more enjoyable alternative than cycling on public roads, and access has been enjoyed for decades by very significant numbers of respondents.
- 7.5 The clear majority of those accessing the estate live either local or very local to its boundaries.
- 7.6 Responses and analysis supports the view that suggesting riders go elsewhere to ride (Such as Swinley Forest) is will fail. Those accessing the land live and work locally. For most, going elsewhere will not be considered a reasonable or accessible substitute.
- 7.7 The Byelaws are generally recognised and acknowledged to exist, but are equally ignored to be considered irrelevant.
- 7.8 Numbers of cyclists using the land unlikely to reduce because of DIO insistence that the Byelaws are valid, in force and act as a blanket ban on MTB use.
- 7.9 Long term cyclists accessing the land have ignored DIO insistence that cycling is not permitted, considering any attempt at a ban to be both unworkable and unreasonable. This group will continue to act as lead for others who wish to derive the many benefits offered by the land and the sport of mountain biking. The trend therefore is likely to lead to more, rather than less riders.
- 7.10 The TAG guidelines are reasonably well known but there is room for improvement. Follow-up by TAG will be to communicate the code of conduct to respondents who granted follow-up permission and who stated that they are unaware of the code.
- 7.11 With 2/3rds of riders aware of the TAG code, DIO must reconsider their reticence to adopt the code formally and recognise it as a means to promote responsible cycling.
- 7.12 Unless strong evidence exists of a valid and real threat, restricting the knowledge of training area booking by units (not details such as unit or the purpose or type of training undertaken) for a specific period of time, will not reduce the risks of the general public (not just cyclists) interfering with or being injured by military training.
- 7.13 Due consideration must be given to improving communication as to when and where the areas of the training estate are in active use, to enable the reduction of risk of disturbance and injury to both civilians and those undertaking training.

## 8. Appendix

### 8.1. Survey Questions

No	Question:	Answers	Mandatory?
1	How many years have you been riding a mountain bike?	Less than 1 year: Between 1 year and 2 years: Between 2 years and 5 years: Between 5 and 10 years: Between 10 years and 20 years: More than 20 years	Yes

2	Do you ride on the military land?	Yes: No	Yes
3	How often do you ride on the military land?	Every day: Two or three times a week: Once a week: Two or three times a month: Once a month: Less than once a month: Not applicable – do not ride on the land: Other	Yes
4	Typically, how long do you spend riding on the land?	Up to 30 minutes: Between 30 minutes and 1 hour: Between 1 hour and 2 hours: Between 2 and 4 hours: Half a day ride: Full day ride: Not applicable.	Yes
5	What is your preferred style of ride? Please choose all that apply.	Leisure/Family: Cross country/XC: Downhill/DH: Tracks and trails: Jump: Other	Yes
6	When riding, do you typically	Ride solo/as an individual: Ride in a small group – up to 6 riders: Ride in a large group – more than 6 riders: Other	Yes
7	How long have you been riding on the land?	Less than 1 year: Between 1 year and 2 years: Between 2 years and 5 years: Between 5 and 10 years: Between 10 years and 20 years: More than 20 years: Not applicable: Other	Yes
8	How do you access the land?	Cycle directly from home/mates house: By car: By train: By other public transport: Not applicable: Other	Yes
9	In a few words, could you explain why cycling on the land is important to you?	Free text	Yes
10	Do you know what body is the National Representative for mountain biking?	Yes: No	Yes
11	Are you a member of a cycling group or club?	British Cycling: Cyclists Touring Club/Cycling UK: Fleet Mountain Biking Facebook Group (FMTB): Tunnel Hill Trolls (THT): Berks on Bikes (BoB): Trail Action Group (TAG): Other: Not a member of any organisation, group or club: Other	Yes

12	Are you aware of the Byelaws that govern the use of the land?	Yes: No	Yes
13	Are you aware of the TAG guidelines for responsible riding on the military land?	Yes: No	Yes
14	Do you use the military training land for other leisure activities? Please choose all that apply.	Walking: Dog walking: Jogging/running: Wildlife watching: Other	Yes
15	Do you use a device or App to record your ride?	Yes – all of the time: Yes – most of the time: Yes – some of the time: No	Yes
16	If you answered yes to the previous question, would you be prepared to share the ride data with TAG?	Yes: No: Maybe: Other	Yes
17	Would you use an App or website to get advance notice of areas that are in active use for military training?	Yes: No	Yes
18	Would you be willing to contribute to crowdfunding that would support rights of way and off road mountain biking access?	Yes: No: Depends	
19	What is your age?	Under 13: Between 13 and 18: Between 18 and 25: Between 25 and 2040: Between 40 and 55: Over 55: Prefer not to say: Other	No
20	What is your gender?	Female: Male: Prefer not to say: Other	No
21	What is your name?	Free text	No

22	To give us an idea how far you travel to ride on the military land please provide the first 4 digits of your postcode	Free text	No
23	May TAG contact you in the future about this survey?	Yes: No	No
24	If yes to the previous question, please enter your email address in the box below	Free text	No

## 8.2. JSP 362 relevant sections:

05105. The MOD is committed to taking a positive role in Britain's wider socio-economic environment, and in the community. **Where possible, MOD will seek to make our land available for public enjoyment, particularly our rural estate.**

05121. It is MOD policy that land will not be dedicated as 'access land' under section 16 of the CROW Act as such dedication is in perpetuity and therefore not compatible with the potential future requirements of military training. **Provision for open access by whatever means (foot, cycle, horseback) should be formalised, in agreement with the establishment under the byelaws or other appropriate means which are compatible with the primacy of military training and the needs of public safety, security, conservation and the interests of tenants.**

05142. The Defence Estate is widely used for recreational purposes. Large-scale events such as motor rallies and marathons and orienteering events take place at a number of sites and events are also held on the estate promoting the role of the Services. These include the recent Army 2002 held on Salisbury Plain, as well as events at RAF, RN and DLO sites. Routine use of sports facilities by local communities is widespread. Recreational use of the estate is also important for service personnel. **The estate therefore plays an important role in the recreational activities of both service and civilian personnel.**

1206. **All new byelaws are to ensure that access is not restricted unnecessarily and that opportunities for access are optimised.** In Scotland, this includes ensuring that measures are appropriate in relation to the provisions under the LR(S) Act. In England and Wales, the introduction of byelaws on land with CROW access rights will remove access rights from such land. **Such cases are to be kept to a minimum and the Designated Officer (see chapter 7) is to be consulted to**

**establish the existence of such rights and ensure that opportunities are maintained in so far as is possible.**

**1209. It is the responsibility of the CO or HE in consultation with the DE Estate Surveyor to undertake periodic reviews of byelaws currently in force to ensure that they remain relevant and applicable to the circumstances pertaining in the area. It is MOD policy to ensure that access opportunities are not restricted unnecessarily.**

1213. For any area where byelaws are operative, the following guidance on implementation should be observed:  
unless it is expressly stated within the byelaws and agreed by the relevant Highways Authority, no public rights of way or other legal highways may be interfered with. **Access opportunities by whatever means are to be optimised** (see chapter 7);

### 8.3. Personal entry responses in full

It's the only sensible option to where I live - it's a great resource for the local community.
The land is as close to wild as we get in the south east. To ride the land is a pleasure, important for the mental and physical health. The open spaces simply clear one's mind, reduces stress and calms the mind like no other space or place can do. It is precious and its right on our doorstep. Going somewhere else to ride is impractical and never really considered as an option.
Important for access between byways and bridleways not just solely riding on military land.
Collectively They are a large/arguably the largest area of lands available to me within a short ride or car journey from my current home & the homes I've lived in over the course of my life.
Great terrain, fantastic trails, great company
Available trails free from other users like on bridleways etc
Quiet spaces, riding natural trails more technically challenging and physically demanding.
the military Land surrounds Fleet, riding in Themis land means that I don't have to use the car to drive to a trail centre or somewhere else to access trails.
Great trails close to home. All natural and expansive. Beautiful scenery.
This is the nearest place I have to ride. Without it I would not exercise
Cycling is my freedom, it's my escapism
In such a crowded part of the country the open spaces are precious and the "army land" allows me to get away from all the hustle and bustle and keep myself fit and healthy.
The trails are great and it's local!
Local, good area, distance, use as a link between areas
It's hard to avoid, really
It's a great way for me to exercise and make use of the excellent military lands around us. I'd likely move out of the area if it wasn't for the number of good local off road riding available ~ 2 miles from my front door. I often cycle with my dog, and sometimes on fire roads with the family.
It's local to me and I prefer to ride straight from my house rather than use the car
It helps my fitness and gives me time with friends new and old. I can test myself mentally and physically.
Because it has good terrain, is traffic free and well maintained.
It's the best land with the best trails within an hours drive.
Its off road - healthy and challenging. No equivalent alternatives locally.
Provides enjoyment and keeps me fit, and allows me to ride with my family and enjoy sporting activity with children together
It's more open space that I can enjoy. Clean air, quiet and great views. I'm always aware of where I am and always show respect and deference to the primary users
The terrain is perfectly suited to XC
Gives me great access to open areas direct from my house in Frimley
Off road and one of the reasons I chose to live here
It's on my doorstep and provides a brilliant base for fitness training, as well as allowing a superb social aspect with group rides. The terrain is varied and fun and I appreciate how lucky I am to live so close to such great land to cycle on.
Great area for families and it keeps me fit.
Great for fitness. Leisure time is key and definitely wouldn't be as happy and healthy if it wasn't for riding on the military land. Whether it's with friends or my 2 sons, it's great for so many reasons. Would rather be riding in the pouring rain on the military land than sitting at home on the iPad and so would my 2 young boys :-)
Leisure/enjoyment, fitness, safe place to ride away from traffic with my daughter
I love riding on the land as it's natural trails that have developed over time.
Traffic free peaceful route to Basingstoke canal - commute to work.
Fantastic scenery, trails and quiet
Varied riding and close to home
It provides great riding locally and a range of terrain types
It allows me to ride from home
It's great for fresh air and to get out in open keeps me fit and clears the head to.
It's an escape from the daily grind of work somewhere to clear your head in peace and quite
freedom, safety - it's better than roads, fitness - keeps the old ticker going,



## Trail Action Group – Access Report 2017

Important shared local resource.
Good quality trails, well drained ground, unique countryside, easily accessible trails, less conflict with other trail users.
It's close to where I live and so its very convenient. Also being military it's a way for me stay in shape and have fun at the same time. I am always aware that's it's military ground and if I see the guys training I am polite and courteous and endeavour to keep away from their training.
It's safer than the roads and allows me to enjoy the type of riding I like without having to travel to far.
I enjoy cycling off road and enjoy taking my children cycling away from traffic. The unspoilt country side and wild life is also a major attraction.
Reasonable terrain and close to home
Local open land to where I live
Good mountain bike terrain. Rode while serving so carried on once left
Because it's generally quieter than most other areas and there is a large variety of terrain
Making full use of the space around my home town
The area we live in is being so heavily developed open space is becoming harder to find. Riding give me a chance to unwind from the stresses of modern life.
It is a local area which is brilliant for mountain biking, which is very convenient as it allows me to have excellent access to mtb terrain within cycling distance so I do not have to drive to ride mountain bike trails.
I use it mainly now as a safe commuting route to and from work
I think I'm very lucky to have such beautiful forrest's with stunning scenery & views in my area. Being able to ride my bike in these areas is a way of escaping normal everyday stresses.
It's the nearest we get to a natural forest down here in Surrey.
The natural trails and terrain provide great riding without disturbing anyone.
Non agricultural land is rare and much more enjoyable to ride on.
Access through to and through to other trails
Open space, views , wildlife, trails, the climbs, solitary, for well-being
It's an open accessible area
There is a good variety of very natural trails. A lot of hard work has gone into carefully building the trails. There is plenty of space for everyone to use the space for multiple purposes safely.
Caesars Camp offers particular technical riding challenges not available anywhere else in the local area.
It's local, it's good terrain, it's generally quiet.
It typically connects one area to another - or in the case of tunnel hill and minley has good trails in their own right
Variety of trails, enjoy riding the trails - fun and challenging, quiet
Local, ideal terrain, fitness, social, hobby, family rides.
Its the only off road area around
Links up other areas otherwise I would have to ride on the road
It's the closest off road land to get to and plenty of options available in this area without having to drive to it.
Good variety of trails. No litter, less busy.
It isn't. Lots of other places to ride
Cycling on the land is important because it is easily accessible, every time is different. Using it helps me avoid riding on the road. the views and lands are fantastic. The terrain is challenging. The wild life is fantastic. I'd be stupid to ride anywhere else!
It is easy access. The main thing is it's local.
there are great trails there!
It provides a great natural area to ride with little pedestrian traffic, the fire tracks also make it a great place to ride and explore without getting completely lost
Being able to ride somewhere without having to take the car.
Health, enjoyment, nature, beauty and the outdoors.
Mtb is life !
Best available local terrain that is safe to ride (not on roads) and offers variety of routes
It's the only good riding land around this local area (fleet/church crookham). Having access to the land has helped me to challenge myself and develop myself as a rider more than anything. In a time where many are sitting indoors playing with or using electronics etc, I think it's very important to have land like this around to keep people like us active. It's also a great place for newer riders (like we all once were) to get into the sport. We're very fortunate to have such access and we respect that.
It's the closest MTB riding to where I live, and only that doesn't require me to drive really
local ease of access

Local and easy to get too
The local heaths and woodland are a unique landscape that is enjoyable throughout the year. The MOD have proved to be a good landlord so far and I hope that rumours of possible restricted access in the future will not become reality.
It's a good size area away from traffic, lots of different areas to explore plus we can access a lot of other areas via the ranges
gives me somewhere just up the road to be able to just go and escape to the forest and take a break from the outside world.
Because of the area we live in the majority of our open countryside is military land. So what choice do we have?
Good landscape, good trails, great way to connect different areas of public access land, eg bourne woods, Surrey Hills AONB/ Punchbowl. Good use of land that would otherwise be idle outside military exercises.
The land provides a beautiful scenery, great riding and fantastic fitness. So lucky to have this so close. We also get people travelling from all over the place, Southampton, Reading, Epsom, Woking and other surrounding areas.
As you can see I've been riding ceasars camp for over 20 years it's been a massive part of my riding since I started riding mountain bikes. The first time I ever rode was up at ceasars camp. If we loose access to the area and others it would be a very sad day. Please consider this after all I've never caused any harm. I have Always have respected military personnel and yielded when told. I love the place.
It's quiet, natural land. It offers variety away from trail centres, and it's local.
Part of longer routes that cross over.
Limited other land to ride on in south of England. Military land provides vital recreational space
Peace and quiet. Different open landscape and views. Nice to get away from normal trails.
Natural and low pollution
Unique terrain and some challenging tracks makes fitness more enjoyable
Important shared local resource.
Fitness and fun
Just a fantastic area to ride.
Convenient to home, well-established trails that are great to ride, good practice area for official MTB races that are held on the land.
For fitness. Enjoyment of countryside.
It is the closest open space to my house. I enjoy the exercise in this relatively quiet / safe environment.
A wonderful space to ride within easy riding distance from home
It's an amazing area on our door step and it provides space to relax on the bike
Good social aspect to the village. Helps to keep fit. My children also love being out in the fresh air.
I would much rather my kids were cycling on the ranges than hanging round on a street corner
Many good trails
Really convenient location to get out and ride without having to travel in a car somewhere else. Because of this my mates and I tend to ride more often, improving our fitness while having a great laugh.
Local. Wouldn't ride as much if couldn't ride on MOD land. Less fit. More health problems if couldn't etc
Generally quiet, fun.
Space and terrain
Diversity of terrain and trails
It is away from traffic.
It has a great mix of terrain, it is off the roads and so feels safer
It's great to cycle away from traffic in the safety of the woods.
It bring great community together
Keeps me fit, social and something to look forward to after a rough day
Big group rides of up to 50 riders are a great way to make new friends with people who all share a common interest. Confidence on the bike is improved, its a big social function and good exercise.
Good tracks. Nice country side and good links to paths outside of the army land
It's quiet, the areas are large and easy to get to, I'm not a fan of Trail Centers as I find them to busy
Cycling on this land offers escapism and a sense of adventure not available at local trail centres and other off road areas.
The free access to open land is important in stress reduction from work. The time with friends riding the land is surprisingly beneficial. It is important. To share this land. We appreciate the night time exercise requirements. And respect the need for this land to be used in training.
The variety of terrain
It's the best land round here for trails riding. All the land around fleet is military so if we weren't allowed on military land, we wouldn't be able to ride.
Cause I can't cycle on water or air☹
The variety of terrain

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There are so few places where you can ride in a woodland which is natural and beautiful
Because of its varied terrain.
Amazing trails, local, good fun with friends, teach my kids how to ride without traffic issues and enjoying and respecting the countryside
The variety of terrain
Riding somewhere with different terrain. Looking for new trails. Gets boring riding same place all the time
Its right on my doorstep
Its right on my doorstep
Meet with friends and the terrain is great for training and well looked after.
A great place to ride and to walk, unspoilt and close to nature
Back to nature
Provides me with a safe place to ride/exercise
Mainly due to the space to explore and try different paths and trails, but also because of the ease of access from home.
The fun, fresh air, exercise and camaraderie.
It's very local and a good open area and surface to ride on. Clear of cars
Because it is local and a great way to access the countryside
Of the few wild spaces in developed area. Being in nature.
Different place to ride, areas drain well when it gets very wet and muddy elsewhere
A large percentage of land in our area is MOD owned so it unavoidable to a certain extent.
Local accessible land with varied terrain
Easy to ride to from home and varied terrain
It keeps me fit, healthy and sane. ☺
Accessibility and terrain
Great fun, part of circular route - good trails
Love being out in the countryside, riding fun trails with friends
Cycling is life. It's a release from the real world. What better way to spend in the outdoors away from traffic
As the primary access to Sout Downs national park from Whitehill and is traffic free for family Longmoor is a great place to ride.
It's local. There are no few trails, sobyou can go yoyr own way. Tgere are fewer people on them and you tend to not get big groups
Great for fitness level improvement
It is well looked after land
Health and well-being.
It's more open space that I can enjoy. Clean air, quiet and great views. I'm always aware of where I am and always show respect and deference to the primary users
It links other areas togheter and provides traffic free cycling.
The riding available is very good, close to where I work.
It's accessible. And has great variation for our sport
it allows us to enjoy a ride without getting in the way of walkers and horse riders. Also, it is often essential to cycle across military land in order to move between other cycling areas and avoid road use... again, trying to be courteous and stay out of the way of other road users.
Car free
not applicable I believe the army have not encouraged cycling use of the land so do not use. They have their own byelaws.
Good area easy to get to
Part of the route, joining up other places. Gives a broader range to my riding.
It offers an alternative location to the over used Surrey Hills with a different style of riding.
It's a great way to exercise, it's only 200 meters from my door and I spent my childhood growing up in these woods with great cycling memories.
Without the use of military land which is close by and provides an area for me to exercise and de-stress in natural surroundings i would give up biking 100%.
It's free and still wild and not man made.
It provides new areas of exploration beyond Swinley Trails and a place to enjoy the beautiful scenery.
Very good riding in the local area
Sadly there are few places in the south east with such a varied unspoiled landscape. It is invaluable.
Exercise

The trails and terrain are fantastic. It is 5 minutes from my home, and I simply love mtb.
I don't have regular access to a vehicle. This land is right on my doorstep and varies greatly in terrain and gradient.
The sheer size of the area means that you feel as if you are miles from anywhere. Great way to get away from the stress of modern life.
It's local, I don't have to drive, and it's great fun
It's a local spot with beautiful countryside and very quiet most of the time
Riding keeps me physically and mentally healthy. The only other place to ride single-track is Swinley, but it's not convenient to get to, doesn't have enough variety and challenges, isn't natural surfaces, and gets too busy.
Due to where I live most of the area is military land.
Fitness, social aspects, enjoyment and variety of trails
I live in Fleet which is pretty well surrounded by military lands - if I want to ride offroad, other than the canal towpath I have no choice. I can also bike commute to work offroad which is a safer choice than the often congested roads
Local open spaces with good access, terrain etc.
Right on my door step
The land and the trails on them are a valuable resource for the community providing a space for exercise and time out. This therefore supports health and wellbeing for all and should remain accessible for walking and sports.
Lovely quiet trails
Keep fit, social with friends, enjoy countryside.
It forms part of a loop for me and keeps me off public roads. It also gives great riding.
the majority of the land that can easily be accessed from the area I live in is owned or leased by the MOD
In the Berkshire/Surrey area all the best woodland is controlled by the army.
Because it is a fun way to exercise
The environment is beautiful and after all it was/is common land
access to any land is important in a relatively crowded south east of England, the mod land offers a great alternative to the established riding centres such as swinley and peaslake et al.
I moved to Fleet specifically due to the proximity of land to cycle on. It keeps me and my family fit, healthy and stress levels reduced.
It's perfect terrain and there is nowhere else that offers such a large area. There is so much space that no one gets in the way and we can all share.
I've been riding on Army land since a child.
the trails are local and generally aside from tree felling, in good condition. our group take good care to preserve the countryside ensuring no litter, no damage as far as I am aware and ensure we close all gates as requested.
Exercise, learning new skills, thrills, being out with mates
Because cycling keeps me fit and give me the breath of fresh air that I need to escape the everyday stresses.....it's great therapy!
There is no where else local other than military land to cycle on and don't want to travel miles to go riding
It makes me happy, it lowered stress, it's healthy, it's fun exercise
Local open spaces with good access, terrain etc.
Easy to access good riding within a few minutes of home, without the need to drive somewhere first.
Variety of riding
In an area of high density housing access to the outdoors is limited. The local farm land isn't well served with bridle or by ways so being able to use the mod land is an amazing privilege. Which I hope remains.
Appreciate the land is owned by the Army, but providing we/MTB folk respect that, i.e. During army exercise etc. Then I'm sure we can all share these fantastic areas
Local resource. Quality trails. Well drained for year round use.
Best area for cycling within range
I work from home and miss the daily cycle to the office that I used to do. Having a local riding spot that I can cycle to within 10 minutes ensures that I can still get a regular dose of cardiovascular exercise without cutting into work time.
To enjoy the countryside and to keep fit and healthy.
It's a great place to ride, with all levels of rider. A chance to shake off the worries of the week, enjoy the free air and have fun with my friends and most importantly my family, who have learnt to ride on the trails.
It is a great way to experience peace and tranquility close to urban environments.
It can be an interesting and pleasurable ride along extensive tracks.
Longmoor is relatively flat and great for riding with my children who are keen mountain bikers. Also it is a huge area of land with lots of good riding (and even more potential). It is also close to home.
It's a fantastic resource to use, safer than road riding, love the scenery and the diverse types of land and terrain

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To me it's just fantastic that we have all this common land on our doorstep, I like that most of the trails/fireroads that I ride aren't that extreme so I take my sons and the dog. If I want extreme I go elsewhere.
Out the door riding with some reasonable trails
No traffic. Not busy. Beautiful area (barossa )
Locally it is the closest area of off road riding available. It also provides reasonable challenges and circular routes around fire tracks and perimeter roads
Most of the local countryside suitable for cycling is military land
It's a wonderful, natural resource containing lots of great trails. More than happy that it is used solely by the military at times for their training, but when it's not being used it should be available to the public. In the south-east we're heavily populated so having these open spaces/woodland available for occasional access is much appreciated.
Away from traffic, enjoy the natural environment, peaceful, wide range of land to enjoy local to home.
The surrounding area is largely military use so there's very little alternative.
It's local and great place to ride
It enables us to get out in the countryside and enjoy the UK at it's best
Basically I see most military land as a link to other trails. For example I ride from Farnham and cross hankley to get to the devils punch bowl.
My house backs onto military land which gives me a great chance to get out regularly get some exercise and clear my head
It's a nice countryside environment within the congested south of England.
Local open spaces with good access, terrain etc.
Living in Lower Bourne and riding from home means when I ride key areas and routes I am able to get to areas that would otherwise mean I would have to get in a car to get to.
Close proximity to excellent trails which means ease of getting a good ride when time is tight
exercise, social activity, variety of paths/trails, great views
Great way of getting exercise and enjoying nature
Free from general traffic it is close to where I live
The terrain is varied, the trails are natural, you have a sense of exploration and finding your route, often you are alone in the woods. It gives you a place and space mentally, and you can't just stroll back to a cafe for bacon and coffee with the hordes. It gives me a range of distance options. I have ridden mtb for up to 9h in a single day covering 70 miles from my front door. You need the variety away from trail centre riders and hardpack to be able to do that. If you ride frequently you need variety; MOD land gives that, plus options, plus a completely different type of natural riding, that can expand into a full day linking sites, right from your front door. No driving, just a pack of drink, some food and spares, you and a bike.
1. It provides a safe place for me and my family to ride avoiding the fast and busy roads. 2. It also provides a way of linking up existing cycle trails and other off road rights for way eg. bridle ways. 3. Using the military training areas I can cycle to other towns and villages and avoid the busy roads.
There are existing trails on the land. And mixed terrain and gradient.
Lots of military land near where I live, if I dont ride on the land it limits my riding.
The scenery is wonderful and no/very few cars. As long as you respect military training and stay away from their vehicles all should be well.
Local open spaces with good access, terrain etc.
My garden backs onto the land so I run or ride daily.
Fantastic, safe fun for friends and family
I feel safer
Access to other villages
Local open spaces with good access, terrain etc.
locality...
Great trails & there are very few places in SE England which have such diversity & so little traffic to contend with. It's very important this resource is maintained.
on my doorstep without having to drive for miles to enjoy the sport I love
Its near by, very scenic and brilliant for mountain biking, large enough area to not be overcrowded.
Close, beautiful, relatively mud free routes
its great cycling on fantastic trails away from traffic, good routes to link up areas too avoiding roads again
There is very little natural open space in the area apart from the military land
Without access to this land our options for outdoor activities and exercise in the local area would be greatly diminished. It would be such a shame to live in an area surrounded by countryside but be unable to access it.
It's somewhere within striking distance from the house with decent trails and gorgeous views. My other options are relatively dull fire roads closer to home or other trails further afield (meaning less time riding them!).

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The land is away from cars, and as tax payers, we have funded this land (and continue to do so), so MOD should have a policy of open to all unless they are actually training. This does not appear to be the case around Longmoor and Bramshott. Landmarc have a habit of lording it over land users, and again, they are paid for my the public purse I believe. One of them even chased me and started yeling at me. I am a man in my late forties, I expect to be appropriately addressed. ("Sir" would be a good starting point)
Great for health and family time as we often all ride together, not having to worry about traffic.
I love lamp
It makes use of land that is otherwise wasted from a leisure point of view.
Variety - Few choices without spending over an hour in a car which results in a loss in cycling time and significant increase in carbon footprint
its on our doorstep
Because it's awesome
It's right on my doorstep and there has always been access to walkers and cyclists
This is beautiful scenery and enables many miles of pleasurable cycling often without disturbing other countryside users. When cycling with the family it safe and secure. Both my children learnt to ride bike on these trails.
Where else would you vet as much fun
Easy access
Military land is a fantastic resource close to home and offers the best cross country riding in the region. It also allows me to connect to other common land and forms part of a network of trials that allows me to travel to other great areas without resorting to riding on the road
Access to these areas allow vehicle free trails, making the ride much safer
As an off road rider the majority of land apart from Swinley is MOD so access is very important.
There is a lack of wild space elsewhere around us
Great to access the countryside away from busy, dedicated leisure areas. Unique countryside and features not found elsewhere.
Far quieter than Swinley, nice trails that are natural and twisty. Generally good conditions year round
its the best in the area
not important as such, if there are decent trails i want to ride them don't really think about where they are
Its perfect for cycling safely off road with children. Its a wonderful resource for locals to get some fresh air and to be able to exercise safely.
It's mature - i.e. not a manicured trail centre type of ride. Don't see many people
Extremely important for fitness.
Family recreation and healthy activity. Getting to school and work.
It's the majority of open area to ride. At some point in a ride we will go through MOD land.
Because all the local land is military land . If we couldn't ride on it there wouldn't be anywhere to ride local
Just somewhere to ride
Fun, social, benefits physical and mental health. The variety and type of riding on offer elsewhere would mean travel times of over 1 hour
It's great exsercise, good fun and very sociable
..
Access to cycle track that are safe for me to ride with my children and dogs with out cars and other traffic is very important and much safer. The military land is perfectly located, and when not being used by the military is perfectly suited for cycling and dog walking.
Good new trails to ride and keep well during wet conditions
Because there is little / few places else to ride. The military owns it all in this area. Otherwise, it's SSI land which I don't want to ruin with my tyres.
Freedom and appreciation of what a great country we have on our doorstep
Great available tracks that are local
Freedom and adrenaline
Member of the military and closest place for me to get out and just ride.
Provides a good varied tracks away from the roads and busy trails centres.
Location relative to my house
It's the only open access woodland in the area. Without access I'd have to drive somewhere else to go for a ride.
it's on my doorstep to be able to ride daily and I rarely see anyone else
It is local, spacious and has steep inclines. Not busy due to the large amount of space.

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Some of this land is the best of its kind for enjoying biking for many miles in any direction. Purpose built area like swinley are congested at peak times.
Walkers/horses etc allowed to use the trails - so why is there an issue if bikes use them?
Very local tonne with good trails
I used to cycle through Minley Manor or Yateley Heath to get to other places, but I've moved house and don't need to as much, although it would be nice to still be able to cycle on the land if possible.
Lovely remote scenic location, but if I come across army exercises, I divert to avoid
It is convenient and not far from my house. I do not like cycling on the road. Lots of trails I can follow.
There is a large area where it is SAFE for both cyclists, dog walkers, runners etc. There are no restrictions on cycling
I live in the middle of military land, all around me are woods and common land that have large areas of military land. I can not ride more than 100 yards from my house without crossing onto military land. 90% of the time there are no personal other than LANDMARC staff on that land
It is one of the closest woodlands near my house. It's a great bonus that it has MTB trails too.
I live in Ash Vale, and my choice to move there was because of access to this land. I have ridden round here since I started riding in 1992, and it is still one of the best places I have had the pleasure to ride.
Allows safe cycling on decent tracks off road
Easy access, great trails, not crowded
Military land is the only natural forest in the area
Important to me because I can ride there from my house. Therefore not having to get in a car and drive to somewhere to ride
essential link between Rodborough, Thursley, Hankley and Frensham Commons
For the varied selection of trails and there is nothing else near by!
I'm able to access the land easily from home without needing to get in the car and needlessly drive.
The land has some fantastic trails and allows me to enjoy spending time with my friends and family. This area is very close to my home and work and I love being able to explore the area by bike.
Na
I live in Fleet and use the military land for short cuts to get to other places.
Allows me to commute to work offroad
No cars so its safe, enjoy riding the tracks that have not been used much.
It's close to home and has interesting terrain
Beautiful forest, not so many louts like in some trail centres.
Local outdoors, need to get out.
It's local, has plenty of space for all activities and is a great place to ride
Local open spaces with good access, terrain etc.
On doorstep, great cycling land.
Health and fitness, convenience, and lack of alternatives
Great trails and awesome access
Cycling got me out of a mental (and to a lesser extent physical) rut many years ago. Informal groups like the THT's and the free access to areas like Tunnel Hill were a big part of this. While there are other places to ride bikes (Swinley, Chilterns bridelways, etc) TH, PP, MM etc offer something unique with unmaped trails to explore and sandy trails that remain rideable all year round without eroding into muddy swamps.
Variety is the spice of life. Military seem to own most of the land
Ideal place to ride with young family and friend.
It's the best natural riding resource within direct cycling distance of where I live - if it were closed off, then I'd have to drive in order to ride areas of similar quality, reducing the time available to ride, adding pollution to the environment, etc.
Varied terrain and routes
Good variety of terrain. We are lucky to have such a natural environment so close to built-up areas.
Because the roads are too dangerous. You have to be able to cycle somewhere. I'm not entirely sure that I do cycle on military land but I know the boundaries are blurred in some places. I ride around the Pond and along the canal and near places like the Army Golf Club etc. But I don't ride on areas near Bourley Road which are obviously Army land.
It gives a good variety of terrain in the local area.
I enjoy off road riding and like to be away from it all enjoying the nature and natural trails that come with it.
This land has been used by the public as open space alongside the military, with the drive for people to keep fit the use of land is even more important
it's local, its accessible, I own it (kinda as a tax payer)
Live locally for many years, walk, cycle and jog on the land, this is one of the reasons of living in the Fleet area with great access to the land for various measure activities and great way of keeping healthy and meeting like minded people.

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i live in Deepcut so all the land in the immediate area is MOD. Also as most of the land was once common land until the MOD needed it should be open access. Next nearest place is the swinley forest but that's too busy these days.

As the land is currently used occasionally for race events some nice bits of single track get made every now and then and it's fun to ride. It would be a shame to lose that.

I have no problem with the big white sign that most people have never read. Saying you are 100% liable for your own actions even if you rode into the back of a tank and hurt yourself. Which face it the root of all this is public liability. HSE gone mad, it's a military training ground you are on it at your own risk deal with it. If your riding around recklessly near the army they should be able to detain you that might get some respect back or certainly keep riders away from the soldiers training ;)

There was no room for a comment at the end so.

One other thing a website that says when military are using the land would be next to useless as it nearly always is. Also when they are using the areas they aren't using all of it and it really doesn't take much to stay out of their way. I have quite often stopped and asked one of the instructors (they are easy to spot) what areas they are training in and will try to avoid those areas they are happy to help you in those situations.

It's the closest safe place to ride with established trails

I love cycling especially off road as I am in nature and not worrying about cars

All land in all directions is military land from where I live. Best way to keep myself fit. No where else to ride that is on the door step.

The vast amount of military land in our area is no longer actively used by the military & provides a variety of easy well maintained cross country routes for riders, runners etc, use regularly for commuting

Great way to keep fit, it's local, great variety.

It's very convenient, free and ticks a lot of riding boxes.

The roads are dangerous, and it's really nice to get away from them

Good natural trails, some from previous race events or old motorcycle routes with little intrusion over footpaths. Areas are well off the road so can let kids loose without too much worry. Quiet areas with great views.

I have military land within 5 minutes of my house, it's a great place to ride.  
Used to ride there with my Son & friend when walking the dog.

I tend to do longish XC loops from home and use the military land as part of those loops, it would be hard to do them without access to that land. And the trails on some of that land are really good, provide a nice addition to an XC loop, eg Porridge Pots

Easy access for me & there are a few different routes

Partly to access FC/CE land, or because it has a great trail network and is usually not very busy

Accessibility, health

Space, good trails, challenging terrain

Living in Fleet and working in Mychett it's great to be able to access trails without having to drive

These areas are all natural heathland and so fun to ride

As a single track rider it's the closest to home and best resource in the area

It's a fantastic area to get out and ride, there isn't anything else locally.

Safer than roads, plenty of space to share with walkers and horse riders so don't often meet, variety of trails from easy to hard so good place for everyone.

Provides a bit of adrenaline

Good trails

It is important to me to cycle in the land because it is near to my home. I feel safe in riding within the military ground. I am very familiar with the trails and I felt that Tunnel Hill is part of me as a MTB rider.

It's easily accessible from home without using a car & generally quiet

The roads don't really work for an MTB and non-military areas are full of walkers / dogs

Allows me to cycle without going on busy roads

Growing up in Fleet I have always enjoyed cycling in the various areas of military land. It's part of my life now. I'm 39 and I have been riding there since my first mountain bike at 12.

It makes up 80% of the surrounding area, it's easily accessible and safe away from traffic/cars.

Gives me a sense of freedom and real joy, it's a big part of my life.

Unspoilt, few other users

We are surrounded by miles of military land and as my hobby is mountain biking, it makes sense to ride locally rather than travelling elsewhere or riding on busy roads

The enjoyment of exercising in the countryside away from busy traffic



## Trail Action Group – Access Report 2017

It is local. It is free Longmoor is a wonderful experience for all ages and varied terrain
It's on my doorstep and it's an enjoyable route
Keeps me fit and physically active
They hold up in bad weather really well.
Excellent terrain Ride Gorricks
It's distance for me, I can make a good enjoyable ride that covers distance that is enjoyable
It is the only decent MTB riding I have that is close to where I live, I need to drive to the surrey hills or other good riding places. I do respect and avoid the Army at all costs. It's their land.
Some great, natural trails available
I use it as a commute route, as well as leisure riding, to keep off the roads and away from the cars. The roads are too dangerous. Too many drivers don't know how to overtake and are far too aggressive and impatient. Simply put, I do not enjoy road riding. Bike paths begin then suddenly end expecting us to disappear! Car drivers treat us like we do not exist as well. I have had many close calls and the roads scare me.
Best mountain biking terrain around, uninhabited, rideable all year.
Good variety of trails and features close to home.
There is so much open access MOD land around Fleet. If access was revoked, I would be severely limited in where I could ride without travelling by car.
Social, Fitness and fun. Limited number of other users so ideal for cycling. Great trails. Nice scenery and wildlife. Close to home, no need to drive anywhere. Free to use.
So many of the good MTB trails within a short distance of home are on military land
As its close to my house and is a great place to train as it is the sport i race and love to do.
Riding on the road is dangerous now and it's far safer and more exhilarating to ride off road also we can take the dog and the children at the same time.
It is local and is a great place to exercise
I like to have variety
It's great for fitness and mental wellbeing
Keeps leisure cycling off the roads, much safer and more enjoyable than competing with cars on the crowded streets!
Safe riding for health, fitness, fun, social and family time away from roads. Enjoying natural environment.
It's been part of my life since the 70s
I ride to and from work everyday, it keeps me off the roads and de stresses me
Health, happiness and enjoyment of our wonderful living space and countryside. Always ride with respect to the Military and land and hugely appreciate the fact this space is accessible thanks to the MOD. I feel this is right of way to the public and have been using this space for recreation including riding at day and night all of my life (and 3 generations of my family) . It would be Devi stating to lose this privilege and most likely a breach of law one would hope ??
It is near and it is unique terrain
It's safe without cars & lorries and healthy
Close to home, picturesque, flat,
Living in Farnborough I am surrounded by military land so have used it for training rides for many years. Where we have met with army training we have always changed our route and left there to it. I've always thought we had a right to access the land (but as it turns out walkers do, riders don't) and this was kinda backed up by the land being used for organised MTB races. Since the bike ban I have reluctantly changed where I ride and to be fair have now only ridden Ash Ranges when I know the red flags are not showing. In reality, most of my rides now start with a train journey to Alton. <a href="mailto:Jeremy_barnett@hotmail.co.uk">Jeremy_barnett@hotmail.co.uk</a>
Great existing natural trails that provide diversity of riding.
Its becoming harder and harder to find family friendly open spaces to ride .
It is the only terrain of it's type available for mountain biking in the area. It offers technical and hilly challenges that are ideally suited to mountain biking. We are very fortunate to have this available in the area.
It's safe when I'm with my kids and it's a natural trail environment that keeps me happy and healthy!
It's a different style of riding , very grippy , rideable all year round
Great land for Mtb to get away from cars and urban areas.
They give me a challenge. Riding the tank training facilities is fun and challenging.
The land is quite large, there are lots of trails, due to the space there is less potential for conflict with other users
Main land owner in the area and without it the choice of paces to go locally would be limited.
Good recreation less dog walkers. Trails not spoilt by Crown Estate
Close to home, got some good tracks and enjoyable
Fresh air, exercises, social fun that keeps me fit close to home.

safe compared to road cycling
A wonderful space to ride within easy riding distance from home
The terrain and trails are more natural.
It's local , car free , safe for riding with my dog and quality testing terrain.
Cycling is an enjoyable way to stay fit and active as well as to socialise with friends. It is much safer on the military land worth wide trails as opposed to cycling on the roads.
Keeping fit.
Ceasars camp is beautiful, great trails and without access there isn't a lot in the local area for me to have a good loop of Aldershot, Ash, Farnborough. Plus the views are great
It's a large area normally away from dog walkers where you can have fun riding your bike and help keeping yourself fit
Very accessible good for all capabilities
Safe off road cycling with good single track trails.
It's perfect for it. A much needed and valuable resource. I have always lived close to military land and have been running and cycling on it on an almost daily basis for over forty years.
Underused land
There is no traffic so ideal (when safe to do so) for kids/families. Wide paths, not overgrown.
Helps me maintain fitness in an open Heath/ woodland environment well away from the stresses of modern life. It's something I look forward to all week. Part of a work/life balance thing.
Beautiful location, great trails, fun and free (but would be happy to pay for upkeep)
Because I enjoy being over the woods on my bike, it's great recreation, it's social and it's a lot safer and more fun than being on the roads.
It's a fantastic bit of countryside, I use it for cycling, running and walking just enjoying the countryside. I always respect the rules and on the odd occasion I've noted into military personnel offered a polite hello.
I feel cycling on the land is important as it's an area that is off the road and local we only have Fleet Pond and this is not suitable as the paths are small and very busy with walkers maybe a separated area for bikes to allow the army to still work
therapeutic
The majority of good riding in the local area is on military land. Doing laps of a purpose built loop at Swinley is not as enjoyable
MOD hold most of the open spaces (non beauty spots) in this area. It is necessary to cross MOD land to access local towns, villages and other off-road areas and trails.
MOD land is often the only access to other areas. MOD hold most of our off-road resources.
Traffic free, easy access, well defined paths, great in summer
It's just very convenient. And has an amazing network of natural trails
Do not like cycling on the road because of traffic
Freedom
The safest way to get fit on a bicycle, has a huge amount of benefit to all who have access and is a fantastic platform for family rides. I live next to MOD land and have had many hours riding with my children/wife/friends.
Safer than cycling on the road. Cleaner air. Nicer scenery.
Ability to join sections to make a decent off-road ride.
Nearest off-road accessible land to my house for myself and family to enjoy
Great recreation, enjoy the changing landscape while appreciating other users.
the trails are good
Good access to heathland with very suitable tracks
Safe, quiet, beautiful
The area's natural woodlands and Man made trails are not available elsewhere
They are the only decent places within a short distance from my home
I commute through Minley to avoid Fleet bends
I have lived in Farnborough since I was a kid, (I'm now 59) and from my early teens we were riding, walking and playing in the local woods, (as we knew them). I also used them to ride to work. We understood and respected that they were there to train the army and also that that was the reason they still existed. We knew that because our family was either in the services , or was supporting them as MOD employees. They are part of why myself and so many people chose to remain living in this town, (so urban, yet surrounded by woods & moorland). I am sure it is also a factor in people moving into the area.
It is much more convenient than getting the bike racks out and tugging up to Swinley forest unless you're making a day of it. It enables my son to ride off road without being reliant on a car lift to get him out.
Personal fitness and it helps me keep a healthy lifestyle that is not expensive but is fun to do on my own or in groups. The MOD land is unique in the south of England where access to land that is suitable for off road riding that is not a Bridal Way, By-Way of other type of path is difficult to find. The land is well drained with reasonable hills and easy access.

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exercise, getting out and enjoying nature and the great outdoors, de-stressing and enjoyment
Variety of trails
It is close to where I live and access has always been good
Most of the open land in cycling distance from my house is military land
The amount of freedom you get; it's an accessible large area with varying terrain and topography
a
I use it commonly as part of my commute as it shortened the distance significantly. Without the ability to use the land commuting by bike would probably not be possible.
I also use the the land to cycle with my son at weekends as it is ideal for his skill level
It's a safe place to cycle.
It is very enjoyable and good for the local people
It is unspoilt and not crowded and having served in the Army for 30 years normally on my doorstep.
To keep active and healthy. To enjoy the uk countryside
The amount of freedom you get; it's an accessible large area with varying terrain and topography
.
There is a nice variety of routes without having to deal with traffic. Lovely trails/paths through the trees and nice to be out in nature
I both walk and cycle on the land and enjoy heath land
Most local cycling available to me
Being able to enjoy open spaces, exercise with friends and family, especially in the winter months when other trails are in poor condition.
Mtb is a release for me. Mental health is now receiving widely gained support but that fact still remains most of us will keep it to our selves and do what little we can to keep our heads just above water. Access virtually from my back gate to the land helps me to help myself. I don't believe that the effort of having to go to a trail centre or bike park is conducive. I don't use them at the moment as it is.
Great land, well respected by most and lots of memories
It is local to me and close to home. This is part of my leisure and fitness program keeping me fit. Its where I also bond with my family.
To enjoy the countryside and to enjoy cycling in a safe environment
Some of the best riding to be had is on this land. Away from the manicured trail centers this is the best riding in the UK.
It gives me a break from life, allows me to see nature, escape from the noise of life.
Brilliant fun, great exercise
Great escape, both relaxing and exhilarating. Great exercise. Social.
Local land that I have been enjoying and riding on for over 20 years. Suits my style of riding. I have always respected the MoD ownership and have adopted a sensible approach to useage when the military are active on the land.
Need more space
The military land dominates the available land in the area, which is also some of the best mountain biking terrain, where I can go mountain biking.
Enjoyment
Need more space
It's quiet, safe, and accessible.
Freedom, variety, exercise
It's on my doorstep
Cycling on roads is too dangerous because of the behaviour of motorised traffic
Easy access to home for me to get some training time in before hitting bigger trails at places such as Swinley or Bike Park Wales
Its natural landscape, and easily accessible
I ride the land because it's just behind my house
Nice views/trails/contours providing a good mixed variety of cycling away from roads
Other than Bridleways, not much singletrack alternatives locally
Great terrain, easily accessible and local
Close by
It is a big part of the reason why I live and continue to live in this area. I regard it as indispensable.
Easy of access, good trails and safe environment with plenty of wildlife

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It's a great resource for those of us who live close to the land. I am conscious that it is military land, so I'm really grateful for the permission the army give us to access the land. I'm sure that if the military publicised any changes in the access, they would well respected as long as they were reasonable.
Open space and wild. Escape from the noise.
Great terrain for all levels and it's on my doorstep
Lovely open land with lots of fun available and different terrain
I do it for fun, but also as part of my job, I organise runs on MOD areas and also a lot of orienteering events and I increasingly use my bike as I cannot run as much these days, I find a bike allows me to get out and about and cover a lot more ground, but what you have to remember though is biking is not allowed on much of these areas, there are different bye laws for each area and you need to be aware of them and which parts you can and cannot ride a bike on.
Fun, fitness, getting out into some woodland
Less people
One of the few places cycling on trails is permitted without strict regulation disruption
Conveniently located, Good sized area to ride in, Safe from vehicles.
Lack of traffic makes it a very safe place to cycle, tracks are always well maintained. All makes for easy, pleasurable cycling.
In areas that are often built up with limited access, the military estate is an island that has not been developed.
It is the only opportunity to ride away from towns and villages without a long car journey. It enables me to think of something completely different after a day at work, enjoy the fresh air and get fit.
am able to watch the changes of nature throughout the year, its great to avoid cars etc.
Good riding trails
to experience different terrain
Fantastic quiet trails close to home
Because it's close, a great way to get exercise and enjoy the area I live in. It would be a huge shame to have something so good and so close and not to use it.
The amazing trails and tracks
The terrain is challenging and well suited to riding. It is also the only real forested land with good access nearby.
I don't like/feel safe road cycling in this area, this land provides potentially large areas for recreational cycling as well as off-road commuting routes
The land is excellent riding is local, we always ride respectfully to other users and especially the military
Its great access to this land in the overcrowded south east
Excellent trails that are on my door step
Being able to exercise outdoors is very important to me and I use the MOD land to get out on the bikes with my children who love spotting all the various plants and wildlife. The accessibility of this land allows my children to engage with the outdoors and all the health/education benefits this brings. Without access to this land we'd all be crammed in the local parks dodging the ice cream vans!
Local, open spaces. Much safer than the road
The areas around here are surrounded by military land. Complete avoidance is not so easy when trying to get from one area to another (and staying off road) otherwise, each pocket of non-military land (with the exception of Swinley) is small and offers little to the MTB fraternity forcing people to travel further afield etc.
to open up the available area to ride - there are few options in the area without driving to access
Immediately next to my house or within easy reach which is also good for my sons
Love being outside away from the cars, enjoying the countryside on my bike
I've not cycled on military land yet but I would like to be free of cycling on public and military land, when possible, and I accept and agree that cyclist should follow a code of conduct.
Great trails in both race format in the Gorrick races and also access to these on my commute I couldn't really ask for more!
Gives me the opportunity to get out on my bike without having to drive somewhere, as a full time employed parent time is precious so being able to ride some amazing trails on my doorstep is invaluable. I do make a point of taking a plastic bag out with me and clear up any trash lying around hopefully keeping things clean will help show us bikers in a positive light, sadly there are some fools who are happy to leave their rubbish behind.
Because it's off the main road (with cars) which is important to me when I have a child with me.
It's my recreation / hobby & most enjoyable
Quiet and the only accessible land around for off road cycling. Everything else is tarmacked with potholes or with heavy traffic.
It's a massive natural recreational resource where i can enjoy my hobby in relative safety.
Beautiful scenery. Wide open spaces.
Being out in the country side. Enjoying where I have lived for 50 years without issue. I used to ride the tracks around Minley when I was a boy without problem and there was a bigger military presence then.
Generally quiet compared the other wooded areas and they have good runs for trail riding (singletrack)

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It is the only land local that we can access for of road cycling
Natural trails and the freedom to choose your own route.
i don't ride on military land
Variety of trails (more natural than trail centres), easy of accessibility, ability to follow defined trails, less busy than marked trail centres
Fitness and Social aspect
The freedom being away from cars and the feeling of safety
It allows me to go for miles in the safety of being off road and in beautiful areas
It is an escape from the built environment.
With cycling on road becoming more difficult with busy roads, it is important to maintain a safe accessible cycling network off road
The lands mentioned at the top of this survey encompass nearly every local riding spot. Without these areas to ride in, I would be restricted to driving to other places to ride, rather than being able to ride straight from my house.
it is on my door step and is a safe place to ride and taking in the beauty of the British countryside
Safe to cycle off Road and fun
In my immediate area, it's really the only place to ride.
It feels good to have the freedom and fresh air. I love the variety of the trails on military land.
I don't ride on military land as it is not permitted. However I would welcome the opportunity to do so if the byelaws were changed to allow it. There is plenty of space and I am sure an arrangement to benefit riders and military personnel can be found without sacrificing training programmes or security.
So that I can practice for Gorrick events
Such a vast area and am very often just passing through but its fantastic scenery.
I ride a hybrid and so my answer to the first question was not quite true. I cycle on military land when I take less confident people out on a ride and also as a more pleasant route to get to places like Fleet, Church Crookham and Yateley when on a journey.
Provides the variety of local trails.
Fitness and to counter a sedentary job, and it's a special riding environment.
We have huge network of trails stretching from Bracknell to the Surrey Hills. Great variety of tracks and challenges to hone your skills without having to travel the same route twice.
Access to safe off-road areas.
It's an natural oasis of peace and tranquility with incredible geography for the area in an increasingly populated area.
Offers a route to work across Barossa (I live in Bracknell & work part time at Collingwood College on the Old Dean) that promotes a healthy and 'green' lifestyle. Offers an extension to the existing local trails. Offers a range of different terrain and technical challenge. Provides some of the best local competitive events each year organised by 'Gorrick' including the 12:12 at Minley Manor.
Love the countryside and no traffic
Beautiful countryside with natural, varied terrain, with challenging climbs and descents.
Because its on my doorstep takes two minutes to get there.
Safer and more fun
nice selection of trails
It's a real pleasure to be able to ride these beautiful and unspoilt areas
Ungroomed and organic tracks
Good to get away from roads on good trails, lovely scenery
Swinley Forest is my nearest trail centre, however to get to this from home I have to go through the military lands. If this is no longer possible I will have to drive to the lookout, pay for parking, adding both pollution and congestion to the area.
I can commute/exercise across it
It is close to where I live and is safe from traffic
We as a family with young children ride around the Longmoor ranges track. It is ideal as perfectly safe for children to ride without encountering any other traffic. We do not venture off the track and feel it is a good ride for children to keep fit.
Terrain variety, accessibility. Don't need to drive to location so less pollution/cost etc.
It's close to where I live so no need to travel anywhere by car. There's plenty of it so there's always somewhere to go, and if you see the army you can move on to another area.
Because there are no vehicles, no pollution and is relatively flat
Military land provides an invaluable local resource for an activity that has huge benefits both physical and mental. The links between exercise and better health both physical and mental are well established. Riding on military land provides a safe environment where people can exercise without the pressure and danger of road traffic to contend with. If access to military

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land was denied it would have a very negative effect on large numbers of people's physical and mental health and have reaching effects on health services.
the trails are great, there is no traffic, there are not many other riders
Cycling offroad is my pastime and having access to as much land as possible is crucial
Safer and more enjoyable than road cycling
It is by far the best local mtb area, providing a mix of different types of riding. It helps create a thriving local mtb scene
Lots of different trails to pick from
In the words of William Wallace..... "FREEDOM"
It allows me to keep fit on my doorstep with my dog and son
Since I've started cycling again, I've met a whole new circle of friends. Cycling on the ranges has put smiles and laughter back into our lives. It is an awesome place where everyone you meet is so friendly :)
It has a perfect mixture of terrain types, meaning there's something for everyone, from experts to new comers. It's also extremely local so getting out for a ride after a long day at work or for a group ride on the weekend so it's perfect.
The local training area is very convenient
It's close to home, it takes me away the stresses of life and clears my mind. I love being in the forest with natural and the peace and quiet.
Easy access to a great variety of terrain suitable for different abilities, plus the well documented health benefits of cycling.
It is very local, most of the land local is military, so without it I would have to travel much further.
Whether it's alone or a social ride, i have a grin from ear to ear. It's a place close to home where I can go to escape everything I hate about life for a couple of hours.
It's safer than using roads. The trails are awesome and the land is close to my home
Good lands plenty of hills for dh ect and all very close
I was a serving soldier and the training area was easy access and understood the rules and when exercises where running so knew when to avoid the areas
The land is local, used little by the military, the terrain is variable and it is an asset to the community. It is an opportunity to exercise without travelling far and means a lot to me and many others. People from outside the area also visit, bringing revenue to the local business. All users must be respectful and the vast majority are.
Local, undisturbed terrain that is clean and not widely used.
Very good exercise. Less stressful than riding on the road away from the cars. Allows escape from life pressures and is good for fitness. I do competitions that have historically taken place on mod land or forestry / crown land. In the past I have been able to call for help for someone unwell - I might have been the only person around for some time. And once reported a forest fire which allowed a quick response from the fire brigade saving further loss of wildlife habitat.
Its the only place that I can cycle from my door. Sometimes it feels like I could be riding in Canada with the views that caesars camp provides. The military are always also very friendly aslong as the guidelines are followed, personally I try to educate others if they are unaware.
It allows me to go out and ride without having to drive somewhere and it also allows me to ride to work without having to go on roads with cars at rush hour.
Helps to keep me fit and socialise with friends
Good tracks, trails fresh air, exerise and somewhere to do something outside,somewhere safe with my children as they grow up!
The land is enjoyed by many not just cyclists. I, like many, go outdoors, by foot, cycles or horseback to enjoy nature. To escape for a small amount of time from a complicated life to do something we enjoy. The majority, myself included, appreciate and respect that we do not own the land and try to leave only tracks or footprints. I hope that the land remains open for many years as a place I can take my young family to enjoy and to show my son where the men who defend the nation in which he lives are trained.
It gives my partner and I somewhere that we can ride to straight from our house, without having to contribute to pollution by driving. It allows us to keep fit and healthy without burdening the environment.
Fantastic riding that is convinient from home.
There is nothing else like it in the local area
Some of the best terrain around with the best trails. Well maintained with little to no litter or other problems
It's the best MTb land in our area
perfect land quite
I took up cycling to improve my health I have go from living down the pub to living on my bike. I have given up smoking and cut down on my drinking and as a result I have lost a lot of my weight. I am asthmatic and before I took up cycling I could hardly walk down the road without getting out of breath. I couldn't have done this without ride on the common land near where I live but it is all military land if I am forbidden from riding on it it could be detrimental to my health and I fear I would go back to my old ways. I do not drive so I am limited to where I can get to to ride of road.

Fantastic natural trails. Such variety in type of routes taken rather than following a way marked route at a trail centre. Every ride is different.
I have lived in the Farnham-Aldershot area all my life, so cross the area to get to another area, ride on the area because a good terrain and a beautiful area to ride around.
It gives me an opportunity to leave behind all that I worry about whilst I am riding.
Only local open area.
Local area and just love keeping fit riding bikes
It's the best area for miles to ride on, we always expect any military activities that are going on and the Facebook group helps to keep us up to date with where we can / can't ride.
Good and dry terrain and not too busy
Cycling off road, with beautiful views is something I look forward to every week.
Some of the best undeveloped country side in the south east
Its is great to be able to get out into fresh air, and the health benefits have helped me stay off medication.
Fantastic resource so close to home. Natural trails with great scope and range of terrain.
I live in ash vale so it's all the trails we have without loading up the car
It's a nice open area that I can cycle with my dog. I have not seen any problems in the 2 years I have been walking or cycling the land. Living next door means it has helped improve mine and my family's health.
It makes up so much of the local wooded / trail areas close to my home. Also it sits adjacent to the canal and pond tracks and they join up seamlessly making adventures on the military land natural.
I am always thankful that I am lucky enough to have such a fantastic area of land close by to allow me to ride my bike. I've ridden on this land for 25 years and have never tired of it. Unlike trail centres, there are no sanitised routes, just a sense of freedom to roam.
It would be a tremendous loss to mountain biking and the community in general if access was withdrawn. It would push people into cars simply to look for the opportunity to enjoy outdoor activities.
To free roam is a real plus and not being continually told to ride on the road (dangerous) with a mountain bike
It's a fabulous resource which we greatly value, and is much safer than road biking.
Its local and some of the trails are well maintained. Typically the paths are wider and less issues with dog walkers and children. There's very little dedicated off road cycling that's maintained pathways locally that's not hard core downhill mountain biking.
It's my hobby that I love to do.
If you ask anyone where you would go to ride mountain bike round here you'll get the obvious answer. Beacon hill. Why because it has the best natural and man made obstacles around and it's the biggest hill around here. Riding is life and it isn't slowing down by any means. Make the hill a sectioned riding place and the army can train by building tracks down the hill. X country and others too. All in all the hill is loved by many more than you think. And is just screaming for the praise of the MOD
It is one of the few wild places with decent off-road paths in the area
It is the most accessible land to mtb on for me.
I have been riding these areas since childhood. I have met many friends riding in these areas and enjoyed many great memories. Local riders are aware of the conflict between civilian users and army and did their best to avoid interference with training.
Good access to off road trails
It's is really the only local woodland available
If for nothing else, the simple pleasure of being able to enjoy the beautiful surrounding woodlands, even when on foot. The diversity it allows me in varying my cycling routes. Giving me the opportunity to get expediently to and from my place of work, without having to go near a road.
It's a great resource to spend time with friends after a long day/week at work. Being able to ride round and forget the day-to-day troubles for me is priceless.
I really like the lowland heath terrain. I also like being able to reach the land in a few minutes without the need for a car.
Enjoyable, exhilarating, traffic free and great social aspect
Dad ride there back in the 80s so wanna keep that going
one of the few easy access mtb trails in the area
Right next to my house and a good place to get fresh air and exercise
Close to my house, good trails and I do it everyday, source of exercise.
It's the best MTb land in our area
I took up mountain biking to raise money through participation in charity events - more specifically the BHF - and to share a common interest with my stepson in the hope we become closer.
The land provides the perfect area and mixture of terrain to both have fun, and to help train on varied terrain.

It's the best MTb land in our area
Its the chance to get out and have fun at the same time get fit.
Have been riding on the land since the late 80s so would miss it
It is good social activity which keeps me/ others in good health mentally and physically
Not many other people and lovely scenery
It's part of the reason I moved in to the area so as I wouldn't have to put a bike in the car and then drive to a place I can cycle! Plus the whole place is stunning.
It's the only available land on our doorstep suited to off road cycling.
To surround myself in nature, beautiful scenery and take in the local wildlife - I have lived here 45 years and I am very lucky to have this on my doorstep
Freedom
modern life is full of stressing and strains with time very limited. To be able to readily get on my bike and ride over the open terrain is both a literal and metaphoric breath of fresh air. I also now have the pleasure of introducing my daughters to the benefits of riding with the military land providing a safe environment for them to learn. A fantastic amenity for the local people.
Fresh air and exercise, I like to get outdoors for stress relief.
The opportunity to ride on anything else with the exception of Army land is very limited. Not having the opportunity to ride on Army land would effect many many people who just want to keep fit and enjoy the countryside.
Freedom
Because the best places to ride are there as well as the most easily accessible places are there.
It's a sick place to shred!
We live in any area surrounded by Army land if i couldn't ride here i would have to travel much further to get my trial fix, also i like to ride to where I'm going to ride rather than get in the car & drive on our congested roads
Only off road cycling available
Feels safe, I know most of the land from mytchett up to the hogs back and eelsmore to church crookham it's good exercise and looks great, the other people I come across are friendly and I feel there is a good relationship between cyclists and dog walkers etc which is rare and it started me riding with my mates at about 12 and I still do it now 15 years later. The areas are usually ride able all year round whatever the weather and I am very pleased they exist
Best terrain in the area, prefer off road to defined tracks
Keeps me fit, the kids live getting out too, helps with my anxiety and depression, it nice to be able to ride it an open area which is safe.
Some of the best xc races are on this land
Good to get into the open and enjoy my hobby,
Open unspoilt country side that is away from large populations if not for military training areas I would have to travel up to a 100 miles to enjoy a similar environment
Convenience, great environment.
Not/applicable
Very, access to this land is critical for my riding