

## NORTH EAST HAMPSHIRE CONSTITUENCY



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## 1. Introduction and executive summary

The Aldershot and District Military Lands Byelaws (1976) govern military and civilian use of approximately 15,000 acres of lands in North East Hampshire, East Hampshire, Surrey and Berkshire. In 2019 the MoD announced that the long delayed byelaws review and the public consultation would take place, due to begin in April 2020. This was later postponed due to public interest with the consultation now expected in late 2020.

A number of local access groups have come together under the Byelaws Review Campaign Team banner to campaign for responsible public access and to address widely held fears that the MoD's recent behaviour (removal of parking provision, fencing, cycling ban, etc) will mean that the revised byelaws will further reduce public access.

It has become clear that without detailed quantitative and qualitative data it is difficult for the local residents' elected representatives to show the social, mental and physical health impacts of fencing and the loss of access to the lands. This survey is intended to provide detailed information to both the MoD and elected officials to allow evidence based policy making.

### How we did the survey

The survey was conducted from mid-July to mid-August 2020, with the majority of the responses being received within the first two weeks of the survey launching. The survey was promoted predominately on local Facebook groups and received a total of 10,899 responses.

### Key findings

Land users resided in a total of 18 parliamentary constituencies, with **87% of respondents being from four constituencies - Surrey Heath (3,171), North East Hampshire (2,736), Aldershot (2,472), and South West Surrey (1,093)**. Residents of all ages and genders make use of the land with a gender bias toward female users of 11%. The **average user is likely to be 46 years or older** (61%) of respondents, with the highest single age group being 46-60 at 41% of land users.

The survey found that **land users are most likely to frequent the areas that are closest to their homes**. For example, within GU46 94% of people said they used the Minley Woods area, whereas across the North East Hampshire constituency it was 64%, and across all respondents it was only 47%.

Collectively the respondents used the lands a total of 59,150 hours each week which equates to an **average 5.8 hours per week per respondent**. **79% of the respondents said that they used the lands at least once a week, with 24% using the lands on a daily basis**.

Residents undertake many activities on the lands - the most popular uses are: **walking (86% of respondents), enjoying the outdoors (50%), dog walking (44%), family time (45%), cycling (42%), running (34%), and wildlife watching (30%)**.

**Most respondents are aware of the forthcoming byelaws review. A total of 8,845 residents took the time to write detailed comments about why they value the land so highly**. It is very likely, given the response rate to the survey and the number of respondents that wrote comments, that **the forthcoming byelaws review will receive a very high number of responses**.

### Recommendations

As the survey comments make clear, the local community is passionate and cares deeply about the lands and access. The local communities understand and support the need for military primacy on the land but this

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should not mean that the use of the land by the public for recreation can be circumvented or ignored by the MoD.

A relationship centred on partnership has greater potential benefit, to work together for what are often joint goals and objectives. For such a relationship to function it must be equitable and the new byelaws must reflect the rights and responsibilities of both parties.

### **Enhance Recreational Access for All**

Preserve and enhance the byelaws to protect the right of recreational access when the lands are not in use for military training.

### **Roll Back Access Restrictions**

By rolling back recent access restrictions such as the removal of public access to the Ash Range Complex and the fencing of Long Valley, the MoD can demonstrate that it is a true partner of our local communities. Public consultations on future access changes can provide a route to find ways in which the MoD concerns around vandalism and safety can be addressed without reducing access.

### **Embrace Cycling**

42% of land users are cyclists – the recent marginalisation of responsible cyclists is an intrusion into what is a perfectly valid, beneficial and valuable means of recreation. Restoring parity with walkers will correct a historical anomaly created in the 1976 byelaw review.

### **Political Engagement with the MoD and Local Communities**

It is clear from the survey and recent campaigning that access to the military lands is a key local issue. Local politicians must engage with the MoD to ensure that their constituents' voices are heard and that the benefits to physical and mental health of public use of the land are considered when the revised byelaws are drafted.

## 2. Questions we set out to answer

Prior to the Byelaws Review / #Saveyourwoods Team undertaking this survey there had been no study of how the local populations use the lands covered by Aldershot Military Lands Byelaws 1976. With no detailed quantitative and qualitative data it is difficult for the local residents' elected representatives to show the social, mental and physical health impacts of fencing and the loss of casual access to the lands.

The Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) has shown that it is not prepared to undertake public surveys or consultations into public land use, therefore local resident groups (such as the Byelaws Review / #SaveyourwoodsTeam) have stepped in to assist.

### The key questions

Anecdotally the military lands are used by a large proportion of local residents for a broad variety of activities, ranging from dog walking to cycling. However beyond this broad statement there is very little information – this survey and report aims to resolve this. The key questions that this report seeks to answer are:

- **Who uses the land?**  
Who is the typical land user? Are they young or old? Are they male or female? Where do they live?
- **Which areas of land are used by which groups of residents?**  
Do residents only use the areas of land closest to their homes? Which areas of land does a given MP's constituents most use? Which areas of land are most popular overall?
- **How often do people use the lands?**  
Are people using the lands on a daily basis, or just occasionally? Just for a five minute stroll, or are most people out for hours? What is the total recreational use across the community?
- **What do people use the lands for?**  
Do most people use the land for a single activity? What sorts of activities take place on the lands?
- **Do land users know there is a byelaws review coming up?**  
The delayed byelaws review will change the way that people use the lands – are residents aware? What proportion of them are likely to submit a consultation response?
- **Why do residents value their use of the lands?**  
In their own words, why do people love the lands? Is it the sense of wildness? Is it for their mental health? Or is it just for the chance to get away from it all?

By providing hard data to answer the above questions the Byelaws Review Team hopes that it is possible to demonstrate that whilst there are costs in allowing public access to the military lands, these are outweighed by the public good provided by the same.

## 3. Detailed results for the North East Hampshire constituency

The following results have been constrained to only those postcodes which fall within the North East Hampshire constituency (GU13, GU46, GU51, GU52, RG27, RG29).

### Who uses the land?

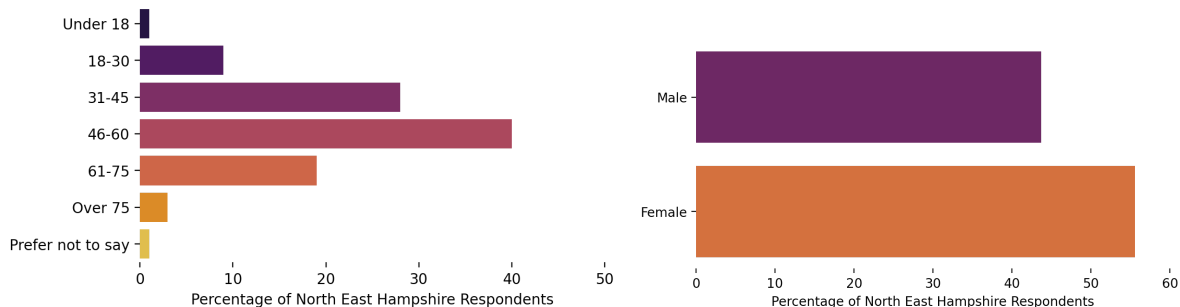
*Who is the typical land user? Are they young or old? Are they male or female? Where do they live?*

A total of 2,736 respondents out of 10,899 respondents (25% of total respondents) identified themselves as living within the North East Hampshire constituency. As the graphs below show, the largest user age group is 46-60 years old with 40% of respondents belonging to this category. The largest gender category was female, with 56% vs 44% of respondents who identified as male. This respondent gender imbalance is significant as

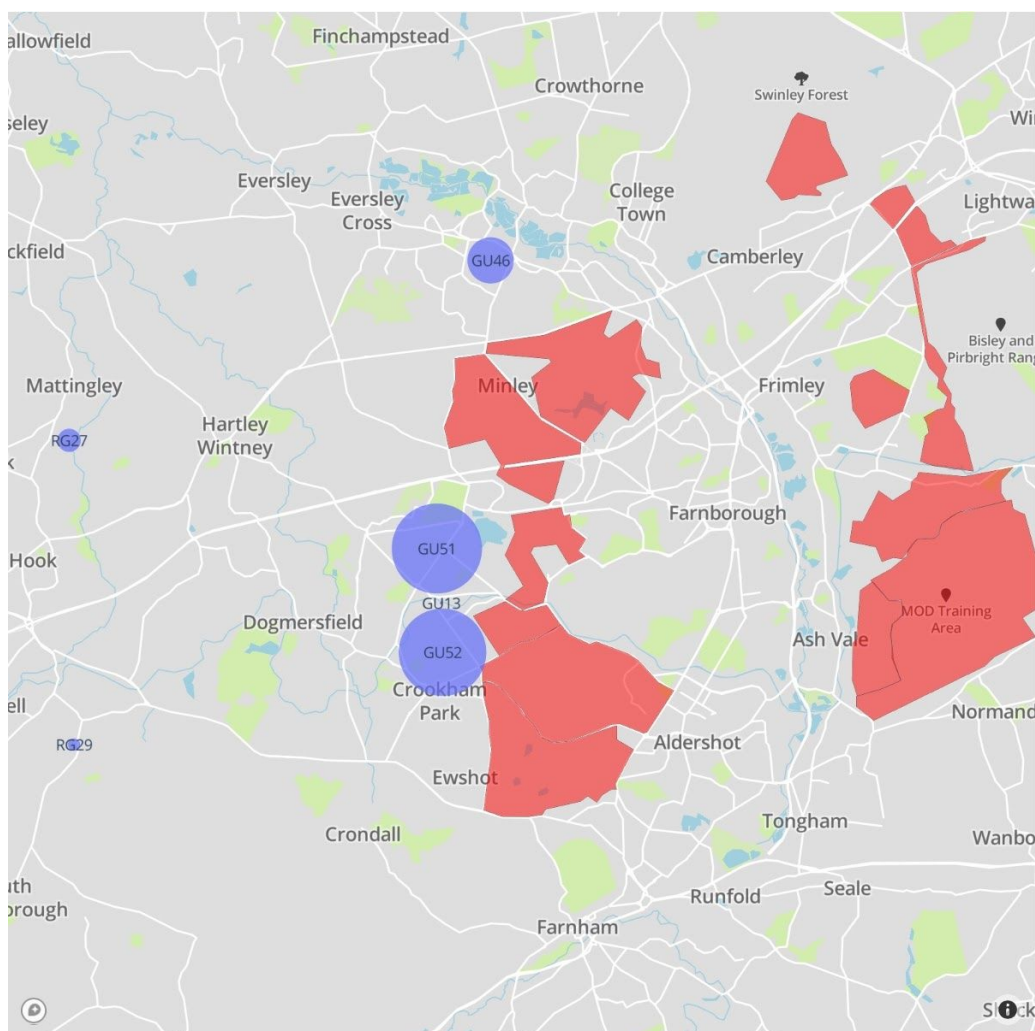


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the 2011 national census showed the gender balance within the constituency to be closer to 51% / 49% male to female respectively<sup>1</sup>.



The bubble plot below shows where within the North East Hampshire constituency each respondent resides – the bubbles are sized in proportion to the number of responses. As can be seen the largest groups of respondents are from the GU51 and GU52 postcodes with 1,189 and 1,121 responses respectively. The next closest, GU46 had 318 responses.



**Summary: Over 2,500 people replied from within the North East Hampshire constituency. The nearest military lands for this constituency are Minley, Hawley, Fleet Pond area and Velmead Woods, Caesars**

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/ks101ew>

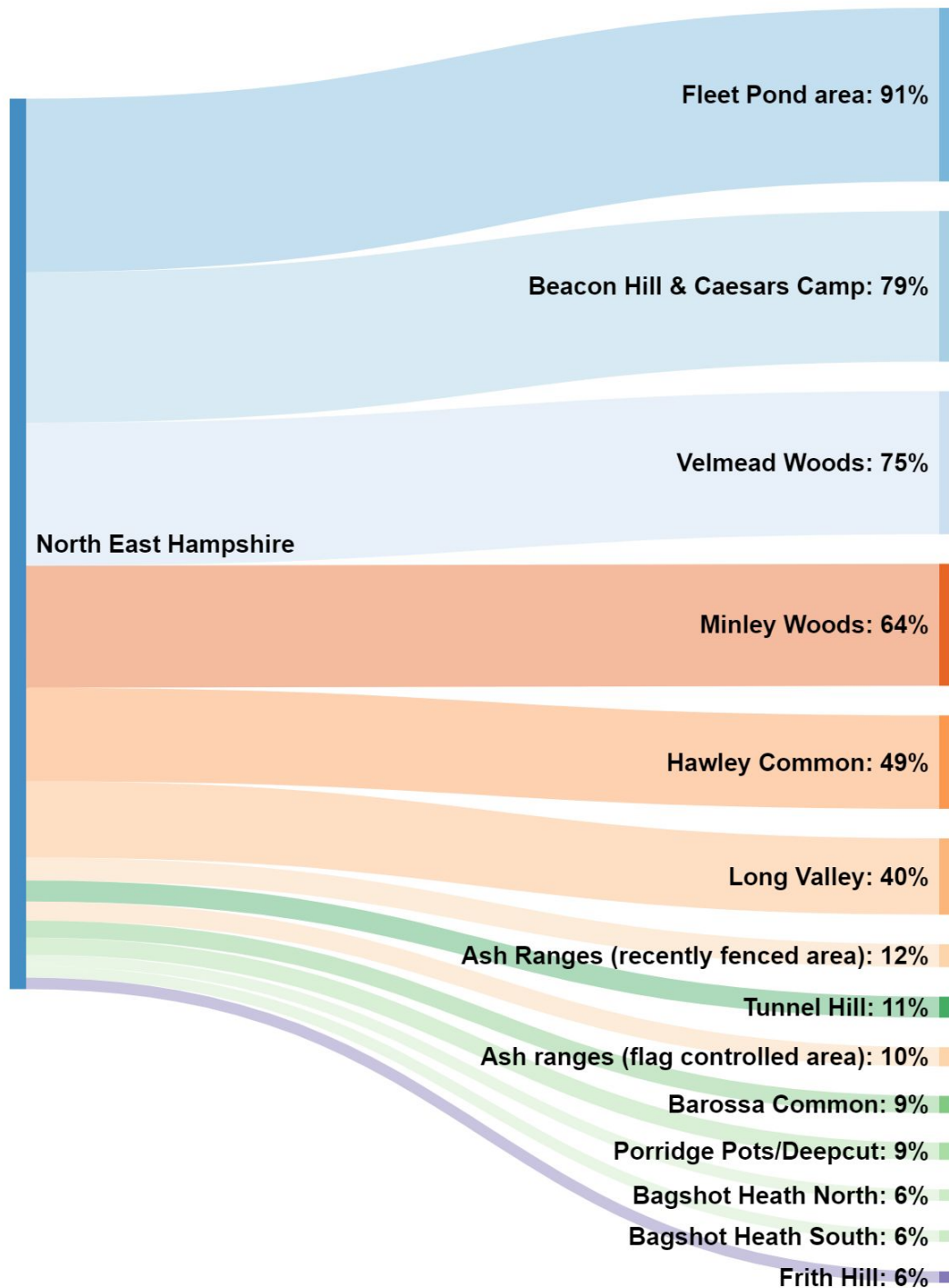
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**Camp and Long Valley.** There is a 12% bias towards land users being female and the average user is likely to be 46 years old or older (62% of respondents).

### Which areas of land are used by which groups of residents?

*Which areas of lands are most popular with which residents? Do people favour the lands closest to their homes?*

The Sankey diagram below shows the overall percentage of North East Hampshire residents that use each area of land – note that because respondents could visit more than one area, the percentages add up to more than 100%.



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The Sankey diagram hides a great deal of variation about where the residents from each post code that makes up the North East Hampshire constituency actually visit. The table below shows the most popular destinations for each postcode area – as can be seen residents tend to visit the areas that are closest to their homes.

	GU46	GU51	GU52	RG27	RG29
<b>Fleet Pond area</b>	78%	97%	89%	80%	88%
<b>Beacon Hill &amp; Caesars Camp</b>	38%	80%	90%	74%	92%
<b>Velmead Woods</b>	20%	81%	86%	52%	46%
<b>Minley Woods</b>	94%	70%	48%	79%	58%
<b>Hawley Common</b>	89%	53%	34%	66%	54%
<b>Long Valley</b>	17%	37%	48%	35%	46%
<b>Ash Ranges (recently fenced area)</b>	14%	11%	12%	22%	8%
<b>Tunnel Hill</b>	16%	10%	9%	22%	12%
<b>Ash ranges (flag controlled area)</b>	14%	9%	10%	16%	8%
<b>Barossa Common</b>	22%	8%	6%	16%	8%
<b>Porridge Pots/Deepcut</b>	15%	8%	7%	22%	8%
<b>Bagshot Heath North</b>	14%	6%	4%	13%	12%
<b>Bagshot Heath South</b>	14%	6%	4%	13%	8%
<b>Frith Hill</b>	12%	6%	4%	13%	4%

**Summary:** North East Hampshire residents make extensive use of the military lands, analysis shows that residents favour the areas nearest to where they live. Overall the most popular areas for North East Hampshire residents were: Fleet Pond area (91% of respondents), Beacon Hill & Caesars Camp (79%), Velmead Woods (75%), Minley Woods (64%), closely followed by Hawley Common (50%).

The popularity of each area varies considerably by postcode area – for GU52 (roughly Crookham), 90% of respondents used the Beacon Hill & Caesars Camp but only 48% use Minley Woods, whereas for GU46 (Yateley) 94% use Minley Woods but only 38% use Beacon Hill & Caesars Camp.

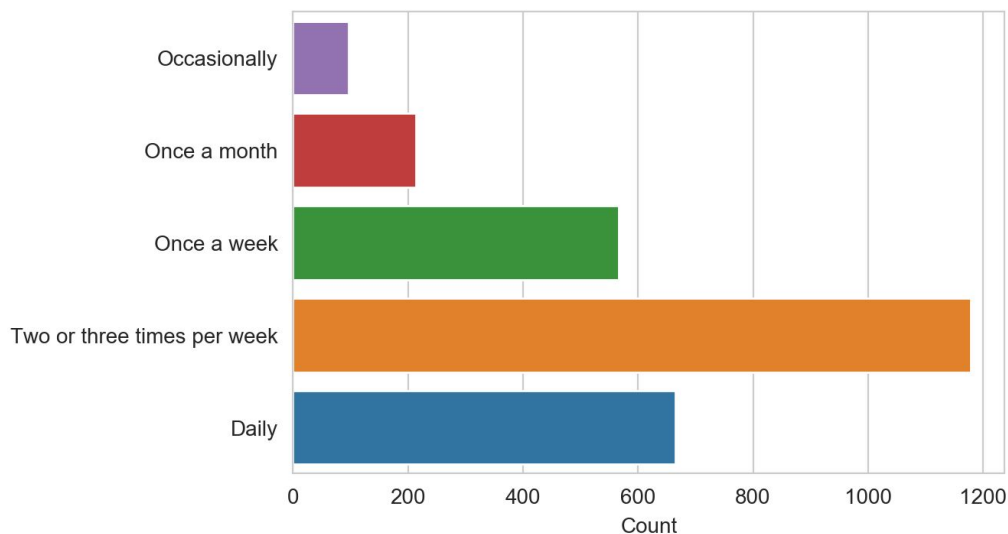
### How often do people use the lands?

*Are people using the lands on a daily basis, or just occasionally? Just for a five minute stroll, or are most people out for hours? What is the total recreational use across the community?*

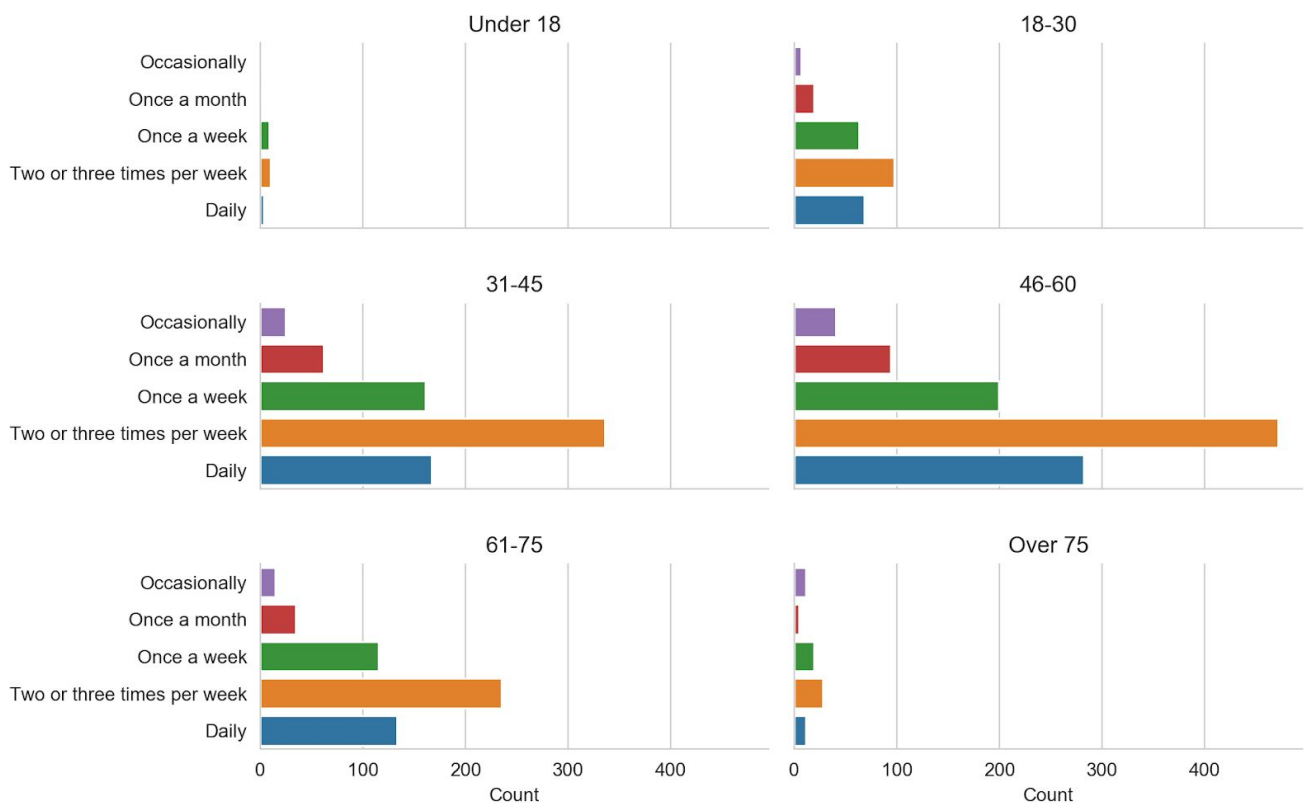
The graph below shows a view of how often the respondents who live in North East Hampshire use the lands. As can be seen using the lands two or three times a week is most common, with daily use the next most common.



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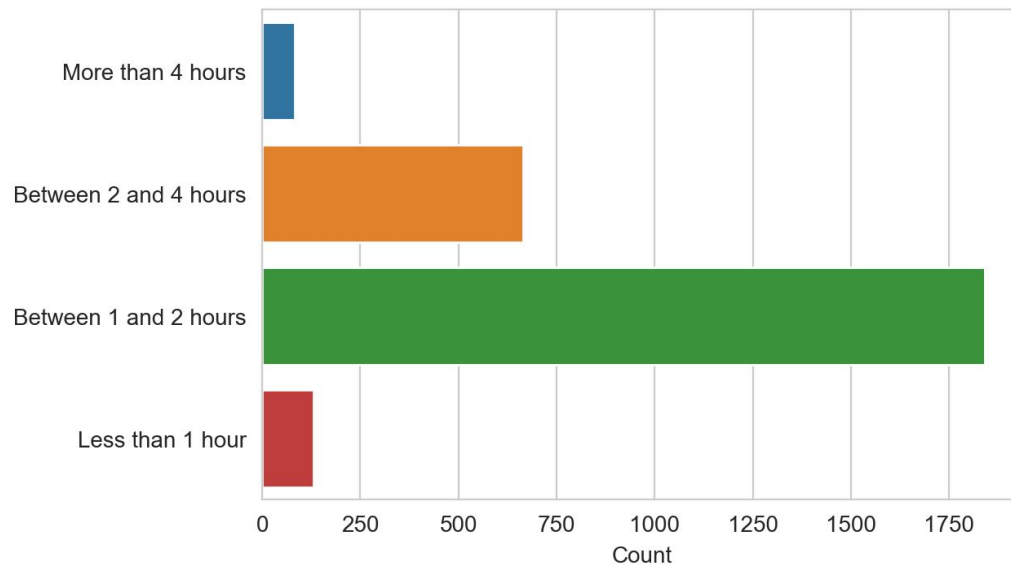


The graphs below demonstrate that the breakdown of use duration pattern is common across all age groups, although the relative proportions within an age group do differ from the overall view in some cases (e.g. in the 46-60 age group more people use the land on a daily basis than those who use it on a weekly basis, whereas in the 31-45 group, the proportions are roughly equal).



The graph below shows a view of the duration that residents of North East Hampshire use the land for – as can be seen, between one and two hours is overwhelmingly the most popular.

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This pattern is repeated across all age groups almost identically.

Across the North East Hampshire community, it is possible to calculate the average number of hours each respondent spends using the lands to be 5.6 hours per week. The total time spent by North East Hampshire residents using the lands each week is found to be 15,500 hours.

**Summary: Residents of North East Hampshire constituency make a great deal of use of the military lands – the average respondent to the survey spent 5.6 hours per week on the lands. Across the constituency respondents as a whole the total number of hours spent on the land was 15,500 hours per week.**

**The overwhelming majority of respondents were using the land at least once a week (85%), with 43% of respondents using the lands two or three times a week, and 24% of respondents using the lands daily. When they visited the lands 95% of residents would stay for at least one hour, with the most common duration being one to two hours.**

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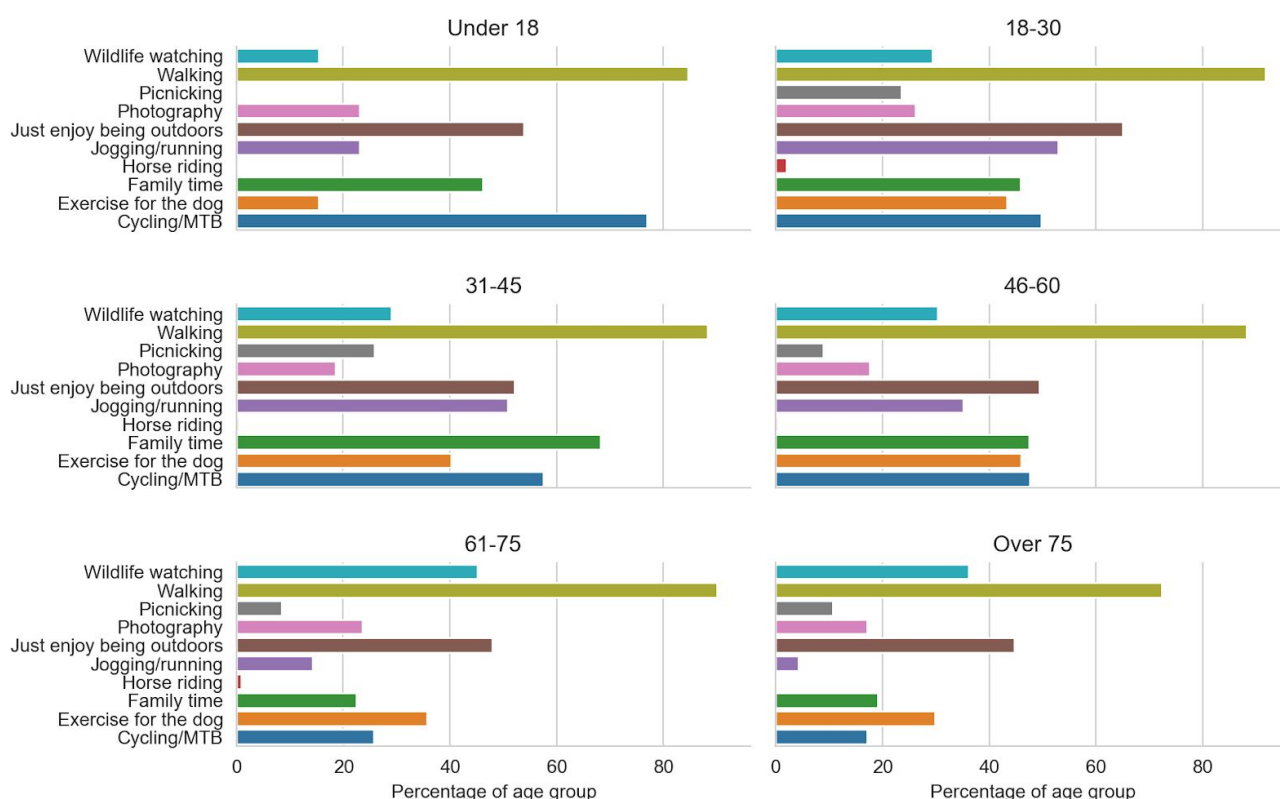
### What do people use the lands for?

*Do most people use the land for a single activity? What sorts of activities take place on the lands?*

Almost all North East Hampshire respondents said they used the lands for multiple purposes. There was an extremely wide variety of activities (200 activities were counted in the 'Other' category) that took place on the lands – some expected (walking, cycling) and others perhaps less so (astronomy, butterfly surveying, and litter picking).

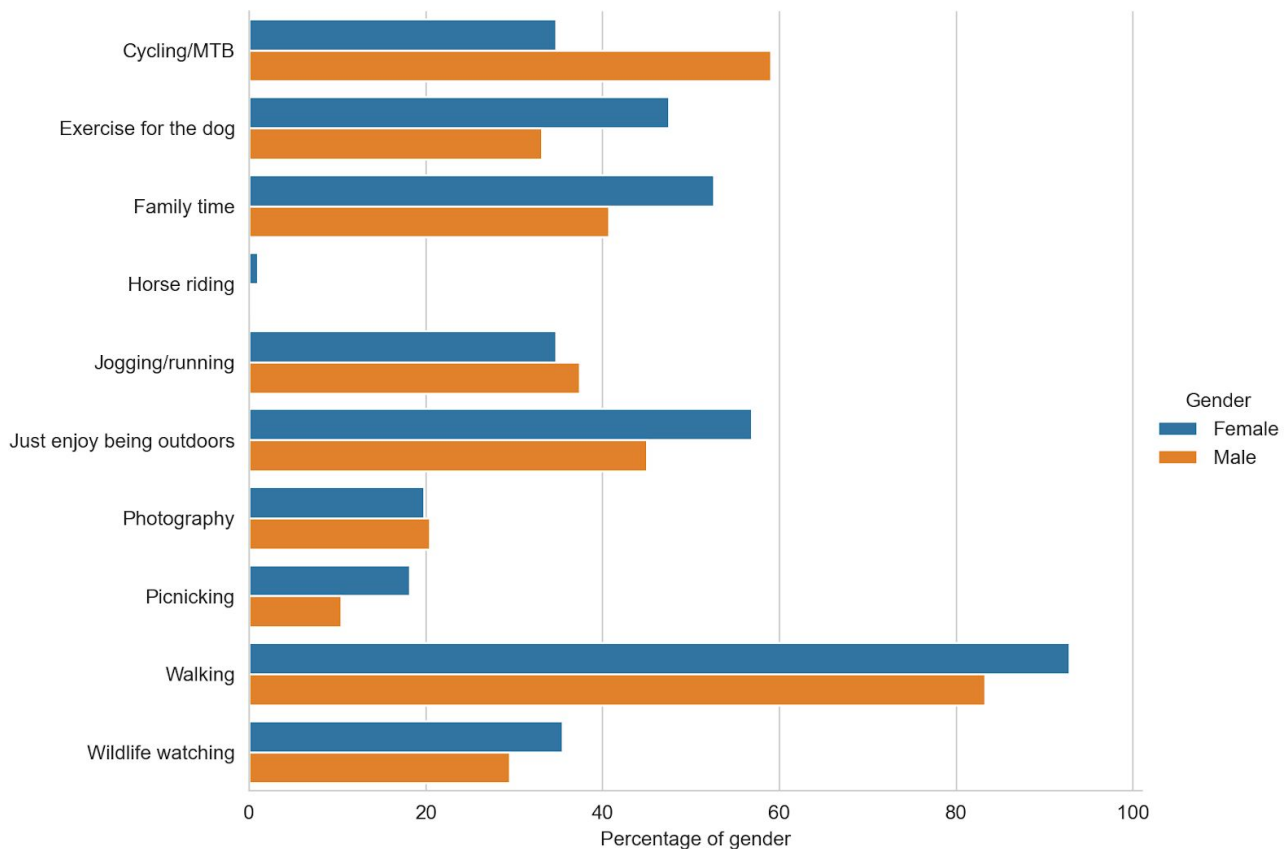
The most popular activities for North East Hampshire residents were: walking (88% of respondents), enjoying the outdoors (51%), family time (47%), cycling (46%), dog walking (41%), running (36%), and wildlife watching (33%).

The graphs below show that the mix of activity varies by age group; for example cycling is enjoyed by between 40% and 60% of people below the age of 60, but then drops to less than 10% in the over 75s. Family time as an activity peaks in the 31-45 age group, aligning with the age when most families are fairly young. Walking is the most popular activity in all age groups. Note that the percentages within each age group adds up to more than 100% as respondents were able to select multiple activities.



The graph below shows the gender split across different activities in North East Hampshire. As can be seen some activities demonstrate a moderate gender imbalance – for example cycling (59% of male respondents vs 35% female), family time (40% male vs 52% female), and picnicking (10% male vs 18% female). Other activities such as walking, exercising the dog, and running are more equally split.

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**Summary:** Almost all residents of North East Hampshire use the military lands for more than one purpose. The most popular activities are: walking (88% of respondents), enjoying the outdoors (51%), family time (47%), cycling (46%), dog walking (41%). The activities that residents enjoy varies by age, with lower impact activities increasing in popularity with the over 60s. There are also moderate gender imbalances in certain activities with a higher percentage of females participating in Family Time than males, and a higher percentage of males participating in cycling than females.

### Do land users know there is a byelaws review coming up?

*The delayed byelaws review will change the way that people use the lands – are residents aware? What proportion of them are likely to submit a consultation response?*

The data from the survey shows well over half (65%) of the respondents from North East Hampshire are aware of the byelaws review. This number is largely driven by the relatively light online awareness campaigns undertaken by the #Saveourwoods team over the past year. The number of residents who are aware is expected to increase once the date of the byelaws review is announced and campaigning begins in earnest in both the physical and online domains.

Additionally the number of respondents who wrote detailed comments was very high in the North East Hampshire constituency at 83% / 2,300 comments. Given the average length and passionate statements contained within many of the comments (see examples in the appendix) it is likely that the residents of North East Hampshire will collectively make thousands of submissions to the forthcoming byelaws review.

For comparison byelaws reviews that have been conducted to date by the MoD have received at most 94 comments (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ministry-of-defence-byelaws-responses>). It is

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likely that the North East Hampshire constituency comments alone will overwhelm the MoD byelaws review team.

**Summary: Even with relatively light touch online campaigning to date, the residents of North East Hampshire have shown that well over half are aware that the byelaws review is due. The 2,300 detailed comments submitted by constituents shows the interest and likely consultation response rate is likely to be unprecedented.**

### 4. Summary results across all constituencies

#### Who uses the land?

In total 10,899 responses were received to the survey between the 11th July and mid-August - with the vast majority being received in the first two weeks. These broke down into a total of 18 Parliamentary constituencies, with the top four by number respondents being: Surrey Heath (3,171), North East Hampshire (2,736), Aldershot (2,472), and South West Surrey (1,093). Land users are more likely to be female (55% to 43%) and the average user is likely to be 46 years or older (61% of respondents).

#### Which areas of lands are used by which groups of residents?

The survey found that overwhelmingly residents use multiple areas of land with most use of the lands closest to their homes. The most popular areas of military land varied extensively by constituency and postcode - however overall the most popular areas were Beacon Hill & Caesars Camp (59% of respondents), the Fleet Pond area (59%), Minley Woods (47%), Ash Ranges (32%), Velmead Woods (32%), Long Valley (28%), and Tunnel Hill (21%).

#### How often do people use the lands?

Across the 18 constituencies the average land user used the land for 5.8 hours per week - although this varied by postcode with those areas without obvious alternatives to military land for greenspace using the land the most. The total amount of time that residents used the land for was 59,150 hours / 6.8 man years per week. The overwhelming majority of respondents (79%) are using the lands at least once a week - 36% use the lands two or three times a week, 24% daily, 19% once a week, and 10% use it monthly. When they visited the lands 95% of residents would stay for more than one hour with the most common duration being one to two hours (65%), a significant minority used the lands for two to four hours (23%).

#### What do people use the lands for?

Almost all respondents said they used the lands for multiple purposes. There was a wide variety of activities (200 activities were counted in the 'Other' category) that took place on the lands – some expected (walking, cycling) and others less so (astronomy, butterfly surveying, and litter picking).

There was little variance in land use between constituencies - the most popular uses are: walking (86% of respondents), enjoying the outdoors (50%), dog walking (44%), family time (45%), cycling (42%), running (34%), and wildlife watching (30%). The survey found that there were some gender imbalances in activities - for example family time and dog walking were more likely to be reported by female respondents, whereas photography and cycling were more likely to be reported by male respondents. As respondents increased in age lower impact activities became more popular, especially in the over 75s.



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### Are land users engaged in the byelaws review process?

The majority of respondents were aware of the forthcoming byelaws review (64%). Over 8,800 (87%) residents took the time to write detailed comments in the survey with many citing the expectation that military lands can be shared, whilst acknowledging military primacy. Other key themes that emerged from the comments were that many residents had used the lands for decades, they were vital to residents mental health, and that residents were ready to campaign for continued public access.

## 5. Survey Conclusions

In undertaking this survey the [Byelawsreview.com/#Saveyourwoods](https://www.bylawsreview.com/#Saveyourwoods) team set out to provide detailed quantitative and qualitative data on the public use of the Aldershot Military Lands – something that until this survey was undertaken was sorely lacking from the public discourse.

The volume of responses provided by local residents to the survey, and the passionate comments that they included, demonstrate the importance that the lands have to the local community and the strength of feeling regarding access.

The survey was structured to answer a number of key questions – summarised answers to these are provided below.

- **Who uses the land?**

Residents of all ages and genders make use of the land. In all constituencies there was a gender bias towards land users being female of 11% overall, and 12% in the North East Hampshire constituency. The largest age group of land users was consistently the 46-60 year old group across all constituencies. The greatest numbers of land users came from postcodes, such as GU12, which are constrained by urban areas meaning their nearest green spaces are the Military Lands. For many postcodes there are no other green spaces that could realistically provide an alternative.

- **Which areas of land are used by which groups of residents?**

There was a large variance between constituencies as to which was the most popular area. Across all constituencies Beacon Hill & Caesars Camp and the Fleet Pond area were the most popular areas with 59% of all respondents saying they used these two areas. The variance across constituencies and postcodes particularly, show that people use the areas of military lands closest to where they live. For example, within GU46 94% of people said they used the Minley Woods area, whereas across the North East Hampshire constituency it was 64%, and across all respondents it was only 47%.

- **How often do people use the lands?**

Local communities make a great deal of use of the land – across all constituencies the average land user used the land for 5.8 hours per week. The total time that residents used the land for was an enormous 59,150 hours / 6.8 man years per week. The vast majority of respondents (79%) are using the lands at least once a week - 36% use the lands two or three times a week, 24% use the lands daily, and 19% use it once a week. When they visited the lands 95% of residents would stay for more than one hour with the most common duration being one to two hours. There was moderate variation within these figures, for example daily use was almost as popular as two or three times a week in Surrey Heath.

- **What do people use the lands for?**

Local residents undertake a huge variety of activities on the land – from astronomy to butterfly surveying. Almost all residents use the land for more than one purpose, with very little variation between constituencies - the most popular uses are: walking (86% of respondents), enjoying the outdoors (50%), dog walking (44%), family time (45%), cycling (42%), running (34%), and wildlife watching (30%). The activities that residents enjoy varies by age, with lower impact activities increasing in popularity with the over 60s. There are also moderate gender imbalances in certain activities with a higher percentage of females participating in Family Time than males, and a higher

percentage of males participating in cycling than females.

- **Do land users know there is a byelaws review coming up?**

Even with very light touch online awareness campaigning to date a significant majority (64%) of residents are aware of the forthcoming byelaws review. A total of 8,845 residents wrote, frequently impassioned, comments explaining what the use of Military Lands means to them and given the extensive online and physical campaigning planned by local community groups the response to the forthcoming public consultation will be very high. The previous highest number of public consultation responses for a byelaws review (The British Underwater Test and Evaluation Centre) was 94 comments in total<sup>2</sup> – it is likely that the MoD will be overwhelmed especially if the new byelaws seek to further reduce access.

It is also possible to draw further, more general, conclusions. When reducing public access to the lands (removal of access to Deepcut, fencing of Long Valley, removal of access to the Range Complex, closure of almost all car parks (e.g. Bourley Road car park), etc) the MoD has frequently referred to the costs they incur due to vandalism.

Specifically the MoD provided a statement to the press that since 2015 they had incurred costs of £170,000 due to vandalism – our survey shows that well over 15 million hours of recreational use of the land has occurred since this time, which means that each hour of public use has cost well under £0.01. Furthermore the government has published many studies on the cost of physical inactivity to the NHS – a Public Health England Study in 2016<sup>3</sup> estimated that the Surrey and Hampshire Primary Care Trusts spent £30.7m on the five health conditions most associated with inactivity. Any further reduction in access to the Military Lands will likely have a substantial negative impact on these numbers.

Finally it is clear that access to the Aldershot Military Lands is now a major local political issue – this has been driven by the continual actions of the MoD unilaterally reducing public access to lands without any public consultation or impact assessment.

This survey shows that a significant majority of land users are already aware of the forthcoming byelaws review and are motivated to participate in the consultation. The comments make it very clear that whilst residents are supportive of the need for military primacy in the use of the lands for military training, they are not prepared to accept unjustified curtailments to access.

Movements such as the SaveAshRanges campaign (related to the removal of all public access to the Ash Ranges Complex) show that residents are motivated, organised, and prepared to campaign on the issue. Irrespective of party allegiance, politicians should support their constituents in ensuring that the forthcoming byelaws are fit for purpose and guarantee ongoing public access into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ministry-of-defence-byelaws-responses>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/physical-inactivity-economic-costs-to-nhs-clinical-commissioning-groups>

## 6. Methodology

### The questionnaire

The questionnaire had ten questions and was designed to provide general information on how local residents used the areas of MilitaryLand covered by the Aldershot Military Lands Byelaws 1976 for the three months prior to July 2020. The questions were organised into six sections as follows:

- Areas that the respondent uses
  - Do you use the military lands for recreation?
  - Which areas do you visit? (multiple responses permitted with a map provided for clarity)
- Frequency and duration of use
  - How often do you visit the lands?
  - How long do you typically spend visiting the lands?
- Activities undertaken on the military lands
  - What do you do while visiting? (multiple responses permitted together with a free text option)
- Awareness of the forthcoming byelaws review
  - Are you aware the Byelaws that govern the land are being reviewed and a public consultation will be conducted, giving an opportunity to ensure they are fit for purpose?
- Why the respondent values their use of the lands
  - Please tell us in your own words why you value the lands (free text response)
- Demographic information (Optional)
  - What is the first half of your postcode?
  - With which gender do you most identify?
  - How old are you?

### Survey distribution

The questionnaire was primarily distributed on the Facebook social network. The initial post with a link to the survey Google Form was posted onto the Byelaws Review Facebook page<sup>4</sup> at 5pm on the 11<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

The post was then shared by the Byelaws Review team onto a number of other local interest Facebook groups, thereafter the post went viral and was shared organically without input from the Byelaws Review team. Whilst Facebook does not provide tools to see the total number of shares (private shares are hidden), it does allow us to see that the initial post received 770 public shares and 1,995 public likes. Facebook estimates that the post reached 9,172 people with 3,431 engagements (comments, likes, & shares) with the post. In addition to the original post, a large number of people shared the direct link to the survey – this number is not possible to quantify.

### Survey sample

The questionnaire received 10,899 responses from the 11<sup>th</sup> July and when the survey was closed (mid-August) – the vast majority (94%) of these responses were received in the first week after the initial sharing of the survey on Facebook.

Of these responses 8,841 people left a detailed comment as to why they valued the land showing how engaged local residents were with the survey – many of the comments would have taken the respondent several minutes to write.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/byelawsreview>

## Survey processing

The survey results were downloaded in CSV format and underwent data cleanse using Python and Pandas. Analysis and visuals were subsequently undertaken using Python, Seaborn, Pandas, Plotly, and Inkscape.

## 7. Who are the Byelaws Review Campaign Team?

The Byelaws Review campaign was set up in 2019 by a number of local residents and existing local access groups including the Trail Action Group (TAG). The group were brought together by our love of the lands and the knowledge that the long delayed review of the 1976 byelaws was finally upon us.

Since formation the team has undertaken online awareness campaigning and put together a comprehensive website<sup>5</sup>. The stories and posts made by the campaign have had high organic penetration on social media, with Facebook analytics for March/April 2020 showing our posts reached some 95,000 individuals from the local area, and were actively engaged with (commented upon, liked, clicked through etc.) by over 20,000 individuals.

It is important to note that the Byelaws Review Campaign team is not affiliated with any political party in any way whatsoever.

If you would like to get involved in our campaign please reach out to us directly via our email address - [info@byelawsreview.co.uk](mailto:info@byelawsreview.co.uk).

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<sup>5</sup> [www.byelawsreview.com](http://www.byelawsreview.com)



### 8. Appendix – Why North East Hampshire residents value the land in their own words

The below comments are a very small selection of the thousands of comments provided by the residents of North East Hampshire. The word cloud that titles this report was also generated using comments received to the survey - the size of the word is proportionate to the frequency that the word appeared in the comments.

*"I have walked these lands for over 50 years and they are an important part of my life. I am not exaggerating to say I love the land, the forests and the trees. This land has seen me through troubled and happy times and are essential for my well being both physical and emotional. I miss being able to walk from the Bourley Road car park through Long Valley and dread losing access elsewhere. I am disabled and am unable to now walk through Long Valley even when open as it is too far from where I can park to a gate and on to the land. If it is possible to reopen the Bourley Road car park, even if limited to the occasional weekend, it would be fabulous. In the meantime, please do not restrict access further."*

**GU52 Resident**

*"I have regularly used these open spaces. They are THE reason I have lived in Fleet for over 30 years."*

**GU51 Resident**

*"Personally, I think that these areas are invaluable to my mental health and personal fitness. Where I live, I am surrounded by army land and if access becomes restricted, this will mean the need for transport to a different area for a daily walk. I am acutely aware that the land is owned by the army and am always respectful of this fact."*

**GU51 Resident**

*"The open spaces & proximity to where I live has enhanced my families quality of life & time spent together. We exercise together and walk our dog. The fresh air does wonders for all of our mental health & wellbeing. We chose to move to an area close to all this green space for the above reasons & love living near them."*

**GU51 Resident**

*"As a nation we need to be active outdoors to help with vit D absorption and mental health. Since having depression I have found that walking every day has greatly helped and improved my mental health. These lands in particular fleet pond are very popular and ideally should be passed back to the public."*

**GU51 Resident**

*"I live in a flat and have no outside space and my main time outside is on these lands."*

**GU51 Resident**

*"This is a resource that my parents took me to to enjoy and now I can do this with my children. It's one of the big perks to living in the area. The obesity epidemic will get worse in our area if the residents can't access these areas."*

**GU52 Resident**

## COMMUNITY USE OF THE ALDERSHOT MILITARY LANDS

*"I grew up playing in Velmead woods, Long valley and Caesar's Camp. It is this access and proximity to the military that gave me respect for our forces and led to me joining the army."*

**GU13 Resident**

*"They make Hart one of the best places to live, improve mental wellbeing, physical health and provide an opportunity for children to be with and learn about nature. We need to protect access for the next generation."*

**GU52 Resident**

*"Beautiful wide open spaces, in 10+ years of using them I have always respected them and only seen Army activity a couple of times"*

**GU51 Resident**

*"The availability of the land for recreation is a key reason why the local area is such a great place to live."*

**GU46 Resident**

*"These areas are invaluable to me and my family - we use them almost daily (despite not living in the immediate vicinity). I'm in the military myself and use these areas all the time when visiting my in-laws who live in Maultway Crescent. In addition, I use Minley and Hawley areas for exercise when my daughter is at netball practice in Hawley and regularly run or cycle to/from these areas to keep fit. And when our dogs go 'on holiday' to the in-laws they are entirely reliant on Bagshot Heath to give the dogs their daily exercise; without having access to this land would be a complete disaster."*

**RG29 Resident**

*"It's part of my life. I've lived in this area for 46 years and used the military land regularly for the whole time."*

**GU51 Resident**

*"They're the reason I live in this area."*

**GU51 Resident**

*"Such amazing local place to walk and cycle with my family. I've been visiting the land for over 40 years, long may it continue."*

**GU51 Resident**

## COMMUNITY USE OF THE ALDERSHOT MILITARY LANDS

*"I've lived in fleet for 50 years. Access to this land is essential for our health and mental well being and makes Fleet a special place to live."*

**GU51 Resident**

*"I love the fact that I have been using these lovely open spaces for over 50 years. First as a child playing, and building camps, later as a runner and cyclist, and in more recent years as a walker. So much of it is familiar, but there is always something new to see, or a path that is unfamiliar - no 2 walks are ever the same. There are many great and distant views. The terrain is interesting, and plenty to challenge you when you need some proper exertion. I like seeing the army at work too!"*

**GU51 Resident**

*"Particularly in the heavily populated south of the country, large expanses of accessible land such as these are invaluable resources for the well-being, health and fitness of local (and wider) users. Any restriction on use of lands would greatly limit this opportunity. It would in turn also require current users to travel further to access similar areas causing greater harm to the environment through energy related emissions. Whilst these are military lands, I feel equal weight should be given to wider public use given the vast area they cover."*

**GU52 Resident**

*"With more and more house building in the area we are having less and less ground to walk around. It is so important for people to get close to nature as we have heard during this covid pandemic. So much land has been closed off or built on during the 40years we have lived here. We desperately need to keep access open to what remains."*

**GU51 Resident**

*"It was a deciding factor when we moved to the area. We love walking as a family and exercising the dog."*

**GU52 Resident**

*"I have enjoyed walking on the land and always keep out of the army's way and abided by the law for the last 25 or more years and I love the land."*

**GU46 Resident**

*"I grew up exploring these amazing places and now get to share them with my children. Being on a tight family budget the woods are a fantastic free day out together. It has helped my mental health by getting time with nature to clear my head. My kids have learned so much about nature here, I also often enjoy bike rides with friends. Would be truly devastated if access was restricted further."*

**GU52 Resident**

*"It is a great outdoors area to MTB, run, walk and just enjoy the great outdoors. I feel lucky to have these lands on my doorstep and respect the area, especially as still serving I understand that it needs to be used for*

## COMMUNITY USE OF THE ALDERSHOT MILITARY LANDS

*training and this is respected by others using the areas."*

**GU52 Resident**

*"Without access to the land there would be very little green space. This has been essential to our mental health and is the only place with green space to exercise or run safely. I can't imagine my life without access to this nature and countryside. It would be devastating. I use it daily for running and walking and being out in the air. I very rarely see the military there and if I do, I find another place to walk."*

**GU51 Resident**

*"Gorgeous countryside with lots of paths, a range of habitats and experiences for me and my dog, woodland, water, open space...far better than the sanitised SANGS which don't provide a true nature experience."*

**GU52 Resident**

*"It is such beautiful land to explore with my children. I always ensure that they treat it with respect, never leave litter, and don't cause a nuisance to anyone. It would be such a shame if they were no longer allowed to explore the wildlife and nature that is on their doorstep."*

**GU52 Resident**

*"It is my sanctuary, my place to be, my place to breathe."*

**GU52 Resident**