



# TOTNES TOWN CENTRE CONSULTATION

## Report on the findings of the Town Centre Survey

06.01.21

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Themselves for 60 Years

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## Introduction

Devon Communities Together have produced this report based on the Totnes Town Centre Consultation survey that ran from 28<sup>th</sup> October 2020 - 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2020. This report follows the interim report of 27<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

Totnes Town Council had been asked by Devon County Council to indicate how the Town Centre could be made safer during the COVID-19 pandemic. After much discussion the recommendation was for a temporary 4 hours a week closure of the road, and Devon County Council as the Highway authority made the decision to temporarily close Upper Fore Street, High Street and the Narrows on weekly basis on Saturday mornings 9am - 1pm until 5th December 2020.

At the Full Council meeting of Totnes Town Council on 7th December 2020, based upon the interim consultation report of 27<sup>th</sup> November 2020, Totnes Town Council resolved to apply for a road closure on Sunday mornings between 9am-1pm from 13th December 2020 until 11th January 2021 (with the exception of 27th December 2020). A Temporary Traffic Regulation Order is now on display around the roads affected for Sunday 3rd and 10<sup>th</sup>.

Now that closure period is coming to an end, but with continued need for social distancing, Devon Communities Together were tasked by Totnes Town Council to undertake a survey of Totnes residents, traders, and visitors, in order to understand the impact and effectiveness of the measure and consult on whether it should be extended.

Additionally, Totnes Town Council instructed Devon Communities Together to survey on a range of potential shared space measures in the town centre. This forms part of the same survey.

## Method

Due to COVID-19 the consultation was carried out entirely by survey. This was available in both an electronic format, and a hard copy format that could be posted to Devon Communities Together. Hard copies were available in locations around Totnes that were open at the time (during the second national lockdown and tier two restrictions):

- Totnes Guildhall
- Morrisons, 14 Coronation Rd, Totnes TQ9 5DE

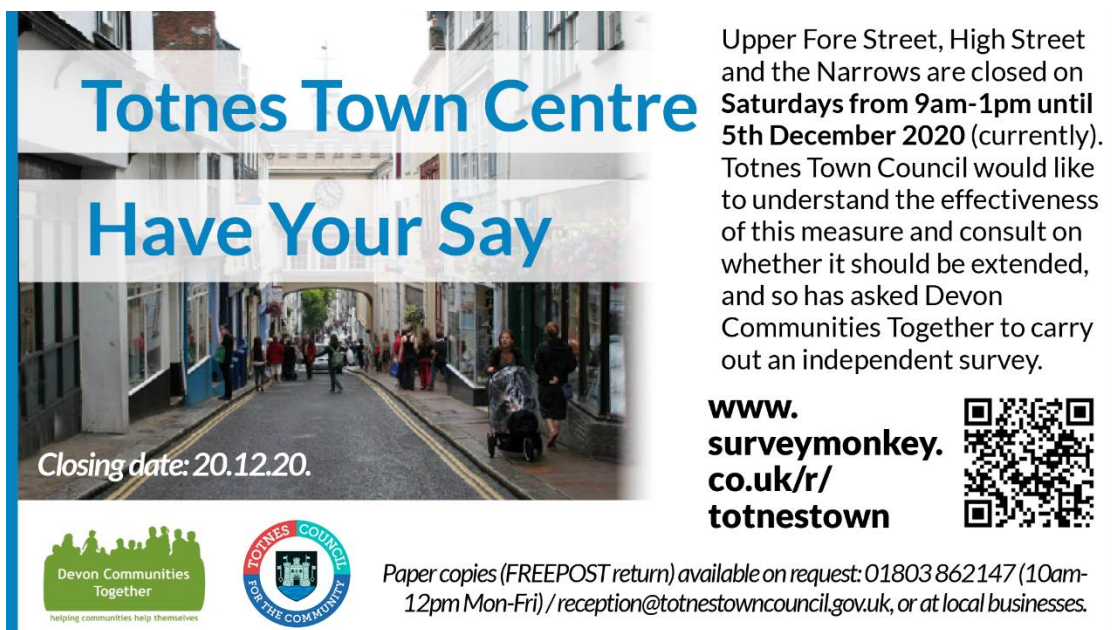
- St Marys Church
- McCabe C M, 5 Fore St, Totnes TQ9 5DA
- Annies, Ticklemore St, Totnes TQ9 5EJ
- Country Cheeses 1 Ticklemore St, Totnes TQ9 5EJ
- Cormacks Seafood, Unit 11 The Plains Shopping Centre, Totnes TQ9 5EJ
- Eversfield Organic, Totnes Farm Shop & Cafe, The Plains, Totnes TQ9 5DR
- Halls, 38 Fore St, Totnes TQ9 5RP
- Greenlife, 1-2, Birdwood Court Market Square, High St, Market Square, Totnes TQ9 5SG
- Ben's Farm Shop, 38 High St, Totnes TQ9 5RY
- Cafe Mumbai, 98 High St, Totnes TQ9 5SN
- Earth.Food.Love, 101 High St, Totnes TQ9 5PF
- Room 101, 101A High St, Totnes TQ9 5PF
- Laundrette
- Lawsons Homewares
- Dartington Petrol Station/shops
- The Potting Shed
- Superdrug
- Back for seconds
- Well Pharmacy
- Spenderwise
- Natures Way
- Totnes Grill
- Lilys Kitchen
- Morrisons Garage
- Good Food House
- Albertros Fish and chip

Additionally, Cllr Claire Allford distributed 100 survey leaflets in the Bridgetown area of the town.

The online survey was live between 28<sup>th</sup> October 2020 and 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2020 when it was widely promoted through social media. A total of 1356 responses were received. At the time of the interim report, 758 responses had been received with a further 598 surveys received since.

Please note that an earlier version of the survey was live from 26<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup> October. This version of the survey did not allow respondents to state whether or not they felt the closure should continue for as long as social distancing measures remain. Based on strong feelings to express this, the question was added. 178 people had responded to the original survey which was then closed, and those that had completed the survey were advised to complete the survey again at the new link. There is no significant difference in the results from this earlier version to the live version on which we now report.

*Example of social media graphic used to promote the digital survey*



**Totnes Town Centre**

**Have Your Say**

Closing date: 20.12.20.

Upper Fore Street, High Street and the Narrows are closed on **Saturdays from 9am-1pm until 5th December 2020** (currently). Totnes Town Council would like to understand the effectiveness of this measure and consult on whether it should be extended, and so has asked Devon Communities Together to carry out an independent survey.

**www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/totnestown**



Devon Communities Together  
helping communities help themselves

TOTNES COUNCIL  
FOR THE COMMUNITY

Paper copies (FREEPOST return) available on request: 01803 862147 (10am-12pm Mon-Fri) / reception@totnestowncouncil.gov.uk, or at local businesses.

## Results

1135 responses were received online, with 101 surveys being completed using paper copies that were posted directly to the Devon Communities Together offices using a freepost address, where their answers were inputted.

### Respondent demographics

The majority of respondents, 83.77%, were Totnes residents. This was followed by visitors who made up 10.41%, and traders who accounted for 5.82% of respondents.

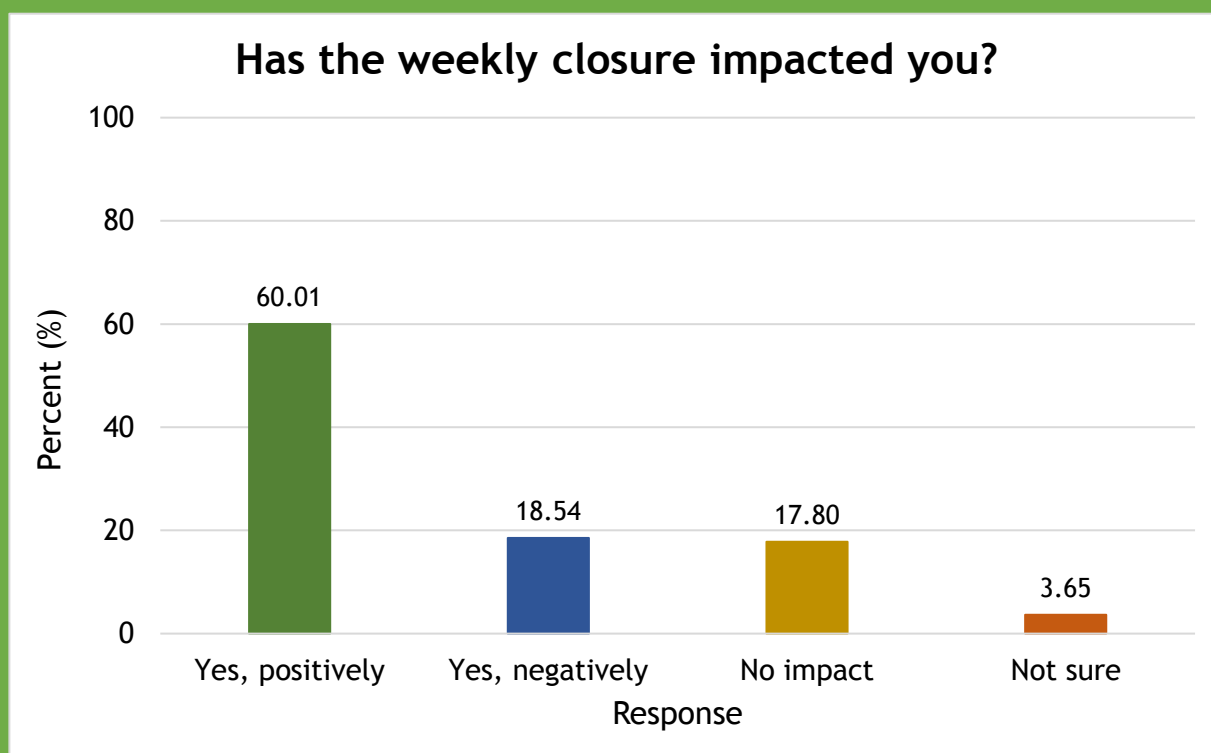
Participants were also asked to provide their postcode. This has enabled us to see that there has been a spread of representation across the town and surrounding villages.

Additionally, participants were asked to provide their age. This shows a mix of age groups having responded to the survey but with a majority of respondents being in the 55-69 age range with: 0.38% under 18, 6.61% aged 19-34, 27.98% aged 35-54, 40.58% aged 55-59, and 24.44% over 70.

### Road Closure

Respondents were asked whether the weekly closure had impacted upon the respondent positively, negatively, no impact, or not sure. Chart one shows that the closure has positively affected the majority (60.01%) of respondents compared to 18.54% with negative impact. 17.8% felt the closure had no impact upon them, and 3.65% were not sure.

#### Chart one; has the weekly closure impacted you?



Similarly, most respondents (77.75%) reported that they think the closure should continue while social distancing measures are in place, compared with 22.25% who do not.

By drilling down into this data further we can see that the answers given depend on whether the respondent is a resident, town centre trader, or visitor. Chart two shows that Totnes residents, who formed 83.77% of respondents, have been predominantly positively impacted with 65.53% of residents positively impacted compared to 14.19% of residents negatively impacted, and 17.51% of residents not impacted. The remaining 2.76% of residents were not sure if they had been impacted.

Similarly, chart three shows that 82.38% of Totnes residents believe the closure should continue while social distancing measures remain in place with 17.62% believing they should not.

However for Town Centre traders, who formed 5.82% of respondents, the weekly closure had predominantly had a negative impact with 59.21% of traders negatively impacted (this represents 45 individual respondents). 21.05% of Townes Town Centre traders were positively impacted and 7.89% of traders were not impacted. The remaining 11.84% were not sure.

Likewise, chart three shows that 66.67% of traders believe that the restrictions should not continue while social distancing measures remain in place, with 33.33% believing they should continue.

Visitors formed 10.41% of respondents and this may include those who live outside Totnes but visit regularly for shopping. Amongst visitors, 44.03% had found a positive impact while 22.39% had found the weekly closure had a negative impact. 27.61% of visitors stated that the closure had had no impact upon them and 5.97% were not sure.

Amongst visitors, 74.26% of respondents felt the closure should remain while social distancing measures continue, compared to 25.74% who feel it should not continue. This is shown in chart three.

**Chart Two; Impact by status as resident, trader, or visitor**

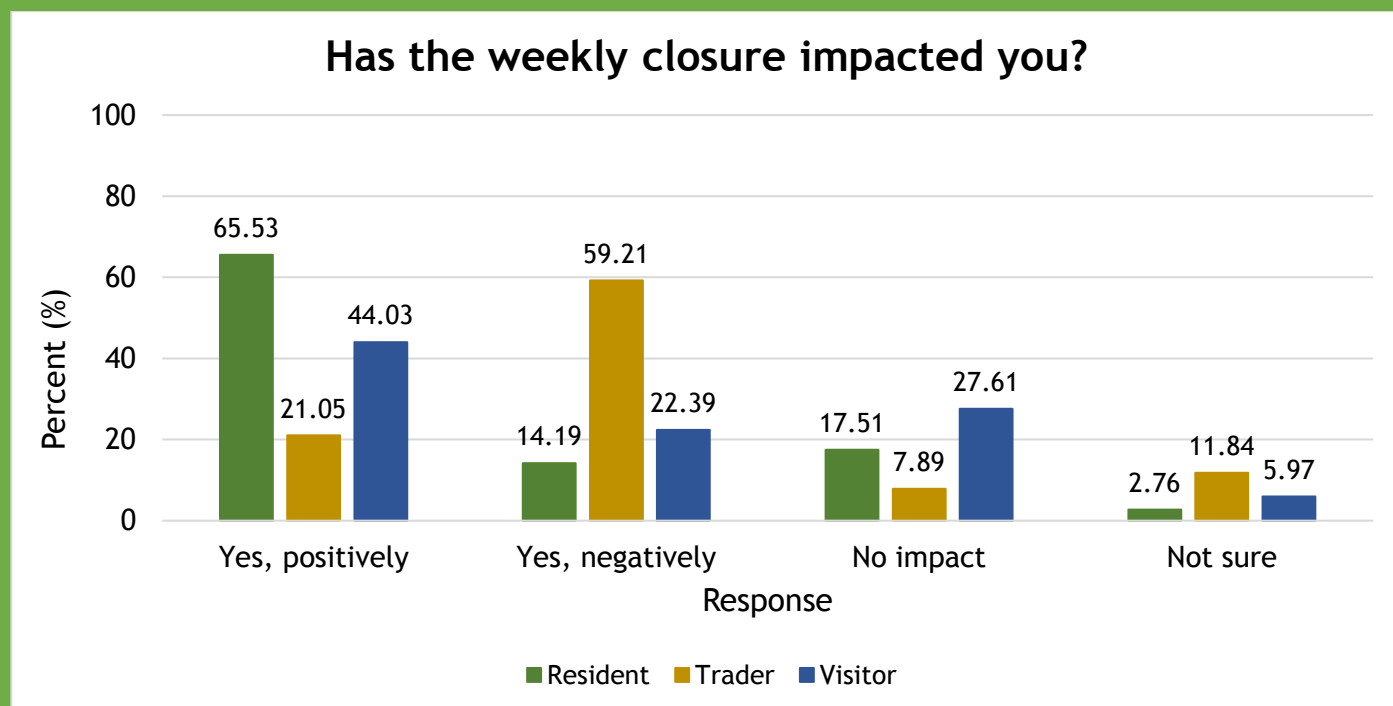
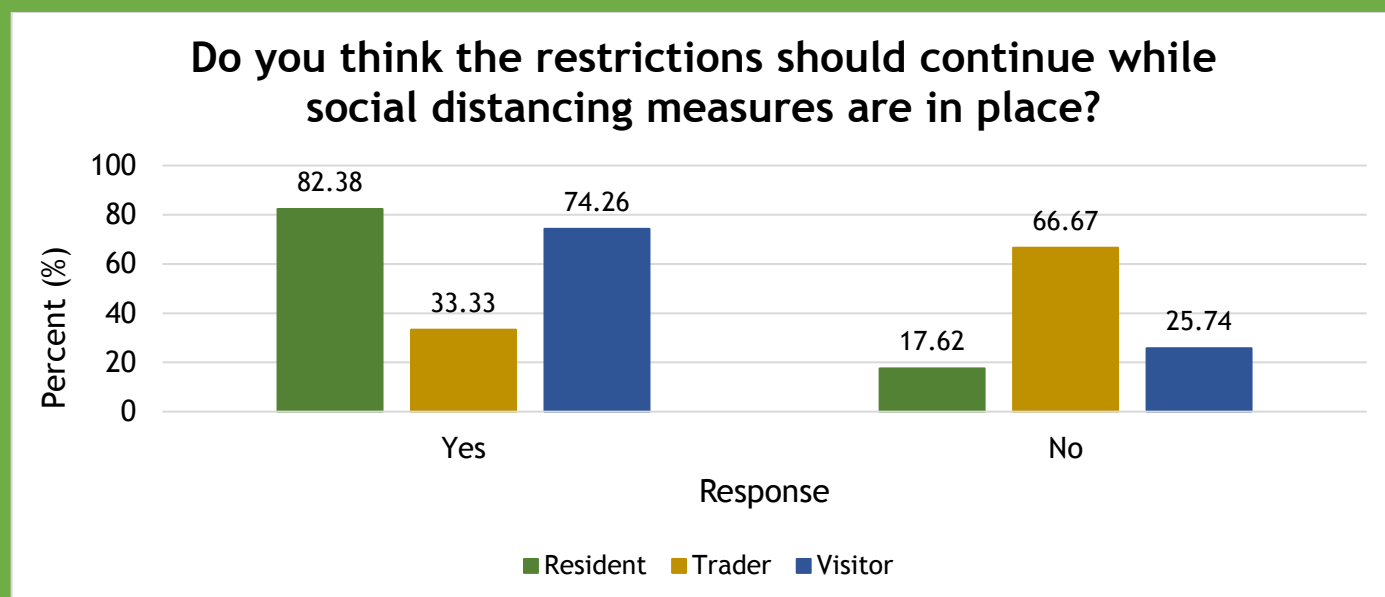




Chart three; Do you think the restriction should continue while social distancing measures are in place



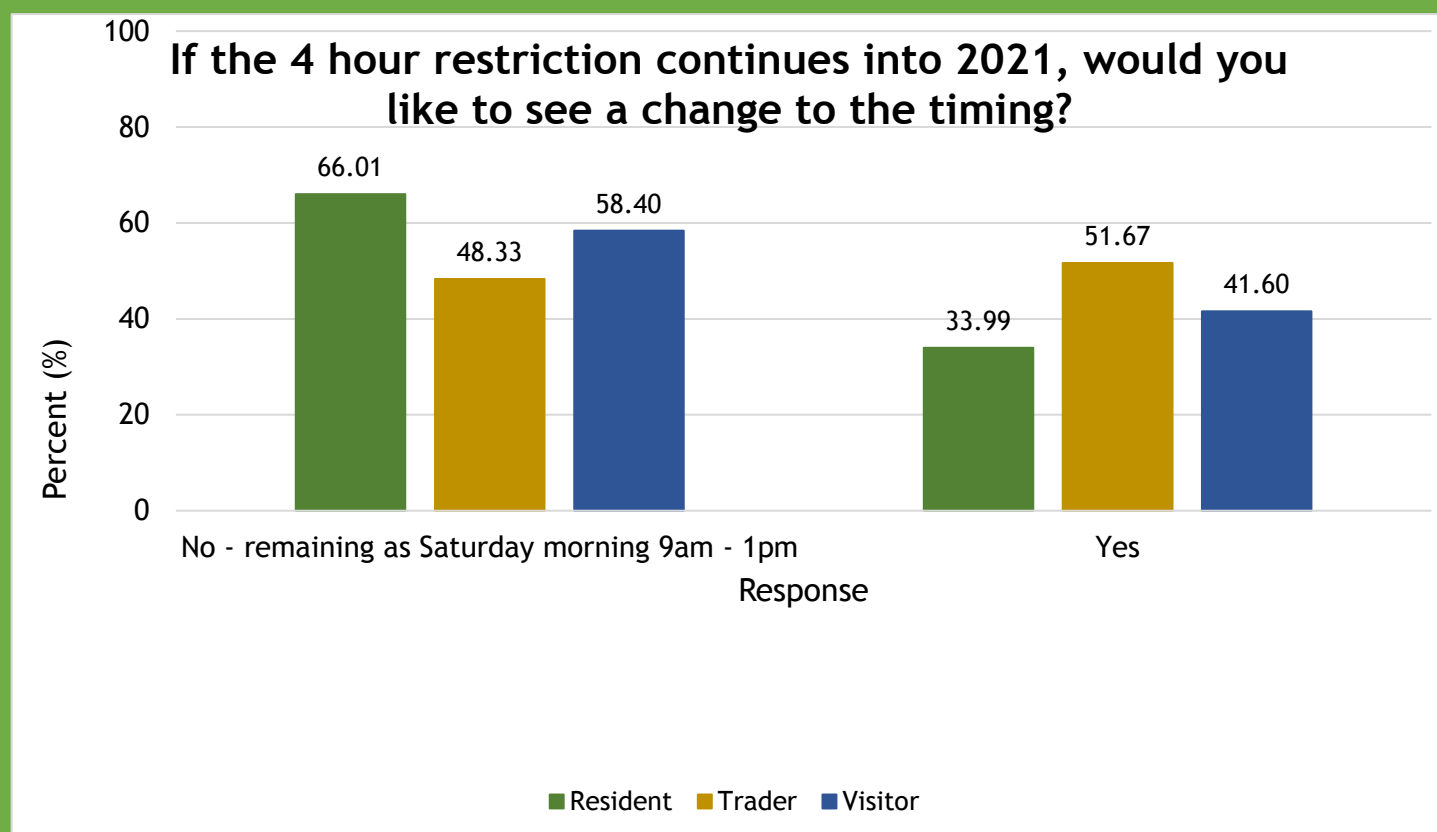
Taken together this data shows that while respondents predominantly found the weekly closure to have a positive impact, there is a divide, with residents and visitors likely to experience the closure positively and traders more likely to experience the closure negatively.



## Road closure times

Respondents were asked, “If the 4 hour restriction continues into 2021 would you like to see a change in day of the week and/or the start/end timings?”. Amongst all respondents, the preference was to not change the time with 64.19% stating “no”, and 35.81% stating “yes”. Chart four shows how this varies by group, with residents and visitors favouring the current time restrictions, and traders slightly (51.67%) favouring a change in the time.

**Chart four; Would you like to see a change in the restriction timing?**



Those who answered that they would like to see a change in the day of the week and/or start/end timings, were asked to select which time they would prefer, they were able to select more than one response. This is summarised by group in chart 5.

**Chart 5; which days and times would you prefer**

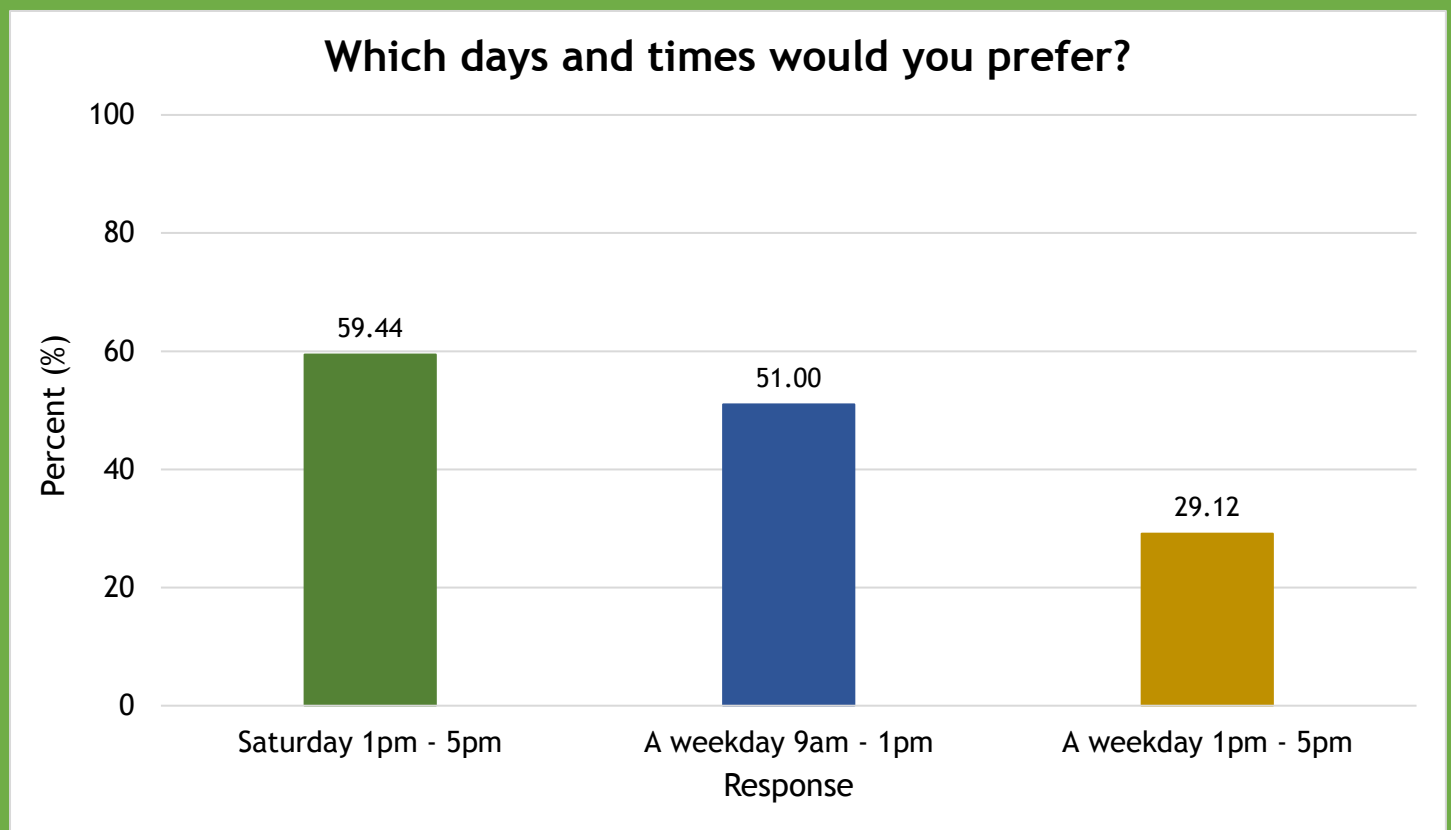


Chart 5 shows that amongst those who would like to see a change in the day or time, a change to Saturday 1pm - 5pm is slightly favoured at 59.44% with a weekday from 9am - 1pm at 51%. Changing the closure to a weekday from 1pm - 5pm was the least favoured option.

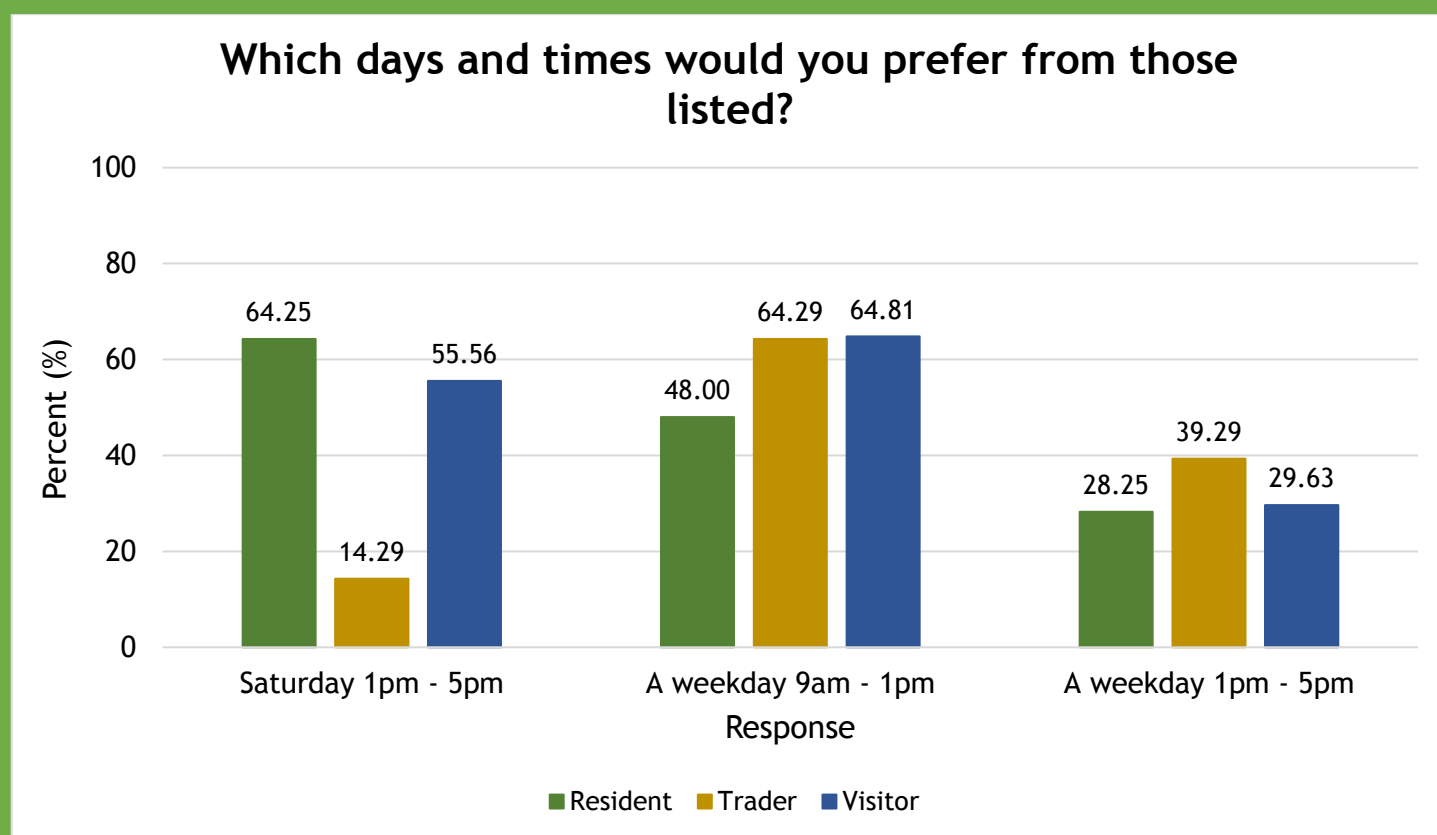
Chart 6 splits this data by group and shows that for Totnes residents, a change to Saturday 1pm - 5pm is preferred. For both Totnes Town Centre traders and visitors to the town, a change in closure time to a weekday from 9am - 1pm is preferred.

Note; this question only asked for responses from those who would like to see the time change. However while 443 respondents indicated that they would like to see the time change, a total of 498 respondents answered the question of their preferred time.





**Chart 6; “Which days and times would you prefer” by group**



## Shared Space

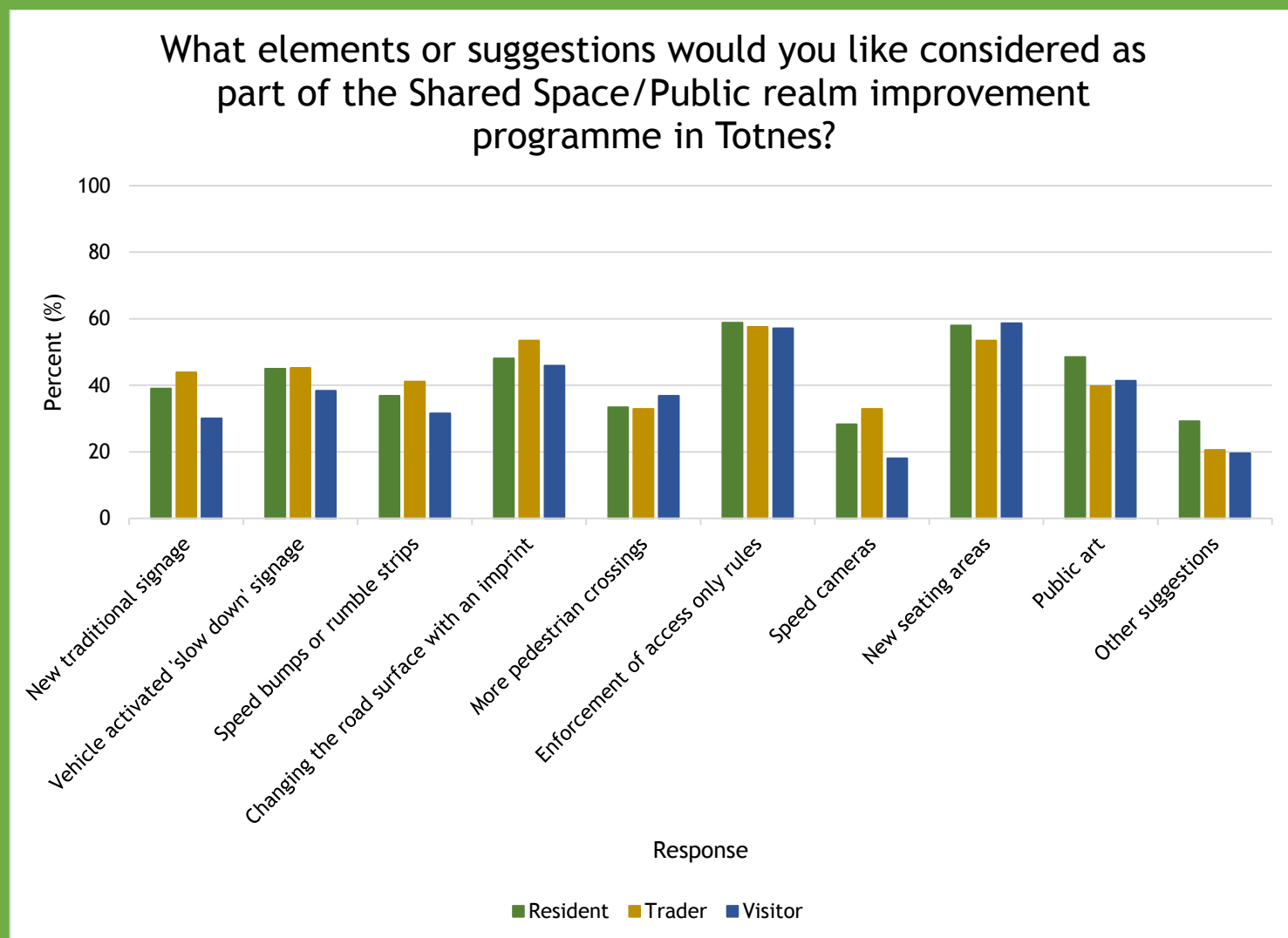
Shared Space is a design approach that improves the appearance of town centres and also minimises the segregation between modes of road user, making it unclear who has priority and therefore making drivers reduce their speed, and in the case of Totnes, reduce the volume of traffic moving through the town without stopping. Respondents were asked to select elements they would like to see considered.

A list of shared space design options were provided in the consultation with respondents asked “What elements or suggestions would you like considered as part of the Shared Space/public realm improvement programme in Totnes? Please select all suggestions from the list below that you would like considered.” The full breakdown per suggestion, separated by resident, visitor and trader, is shown in chart 7. The top three most favoured suggestions taking all groups together are:

1. Enforcement of access only rules (58.62%)
2. New seating areas (57.61%)
3. Changing the road surface in the shared space area (48.06)

The top three suggestions remain in the same order for both Totnes town centre traders and Totnes residents. For visitors, there is a slight variation with new seating areas as the most popular suggestion at 58.65%, over enforcement of access only rules at 57.14%.

**Chart 7; Shared space elements**



The shared space question also allowed respondents to suggest other options. Many respondents used this free text space to reiterate answers that they had already given, but new suggestions for shared space design given include:

- Pedestrianising the High Street and Fore Street. Either completely or on a part time basis.
- Pedestrian priority
- More bike racks and bike hire availability
- Retractable bollards (with an access card available)
- Removal of kerbs or widening pavements
- Trees

- Outdoor performance or eating space
- 5mph speed limit
- Signage designed by children
- No change

It is noteworthy that although the responses given in the free text that did not answer the question were not included in evaluation, a number of respondents used this space to mention that for disabled Town Centre users, the restrictions had made access to the Town Centre difficult for them.

The full list of all responses to this free text can be found in Appendix 1.

## Conclusions

- 1356 respondents completed the survey
- 60.01% of respondents reported the temporary road closure has positively impacted them, compared to 18.54% with negative impact. 17.80% felt the closure had no impact upon them, and 3.65% were not sure.
- Most respondents (77.75%) reported that they think the closure should continue while social distancing measures are in place, compared with 22.25% who do not.
- Most respondents (83.77%) are Totnes residents. Residents favour the road closure restrictions with 82.38% of residents indicating they think it should continue while social distancing measures remain in place.
- 10.41% of respondents are visitors and visitors also favour the road closure continuing, with 74.26% of visitors indicating they believe the road closure restrictions should continue.
- 5.82% of respondents are traders and here there is a divide from the other groups represented in the survey. Amongst traders most (66.6%) believe the restrictions should not continue.
- Amongst residents and visitors there is a preference that if the road closure continues then the day or time should not change. Amongst town centre traders there is a slight preference that if the road closure continues that it change to a Saturday from 1pm - 5pm.
- Popular shared space measures include Enforcement of access only rules, new seating areas, and changing the road surface in the shared space area.

