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# Executive Summary

This report summarises the 185 responses to a questionnaire circulated by Sidmouth Cycling Campaign in late 2022.

A lot of helpful suggestions were made on how to improve cycling in the Sid Valley. The most popular suggestion was for more off road cycle routes; in particular the proposed route from Sidmouth to Sidbury and the Otter Trail from Sidmouth to the Bowd and down through Harpford Woods to Tipton St John and beyond.

Other suggestions included:

- More cycle stands
- Improvements to the Byes cycle route including an extension to the seafront
- More education for road users
- Making some streets one way
- Building a pump track for BMX

Cover graphic is a word cloud showing the most common words used in responses to our questionnaire



# Stakeholder Comments

**Meg Booth, Devon County Council  
Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport**

“Thank you for your report detailing the findings from your survey work on cycling infrastructure in the Sid Valley.

Devon County Council are committed to improving walking and cycling routes across the county. At present, there is a long list of schemes that are prioritised for delivery in the Multiuse Trail strategy. The top priorities for delivery are currently focused around the Tarka Trail (Knowle to Willingcott), Roborough to Plymouth, Teign Estuary Trail and progressing the Clyst Valley Trail.

The County Council have recently applied for development funding to progress the Sidbury to Sidford route and we hope to get a decision on this by the end of March. The Seaton to Colyford Route is being prepared for delivery.

There has been significant investment in the Sidmouth to Feniton cycle route over several years. Attractive active travel routes including a Toucan crossing of the A375 have been delivered in Sidmouth to the northern edge of the town via the Byes and towards the Bowd and cycle improvements have also been delivered in Ottery St Mary. Route feasibility work has been funded with support from Sustrans; however, delivering the route north of Sidmouth towards Ottery and Feniton will be dependent on securing external grant funding. Our efforts to progress the section through Harpford Woods between Tipton St John and the Bowd were met with disappointment with an unsuccessful Rural Development Programme for England bid in 2019.

Alongside our capital investment, the County Council is developing a Countywide Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) to refresh and prioritise its long-distance multi-use trails in line with the Government’s Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy expectations. I would encourage the Sidmouth Cycling Campaign (SCC) and the Vision Group for Sidmouth (VGS) to engage with this process and make representations in support of local schemes to give these the best chance of securing future funding.”

**Councillor Stuart Hughes, Devon County Council,  
Cabinet Member for Highway Management.**

“Thanks for the comprehensive information. Of course one question that wasn’t asked is where the funding is coming from to pay for all the aspirations? Land agreements is one of the most



timely and costly to sort as we've seen with Sidford to Sidbury flipping from the eastern route to the western route which is at present seeing plans drawn up ..... the now defunct business park scheme has meant we've now got to wait and see if there's a buyer for the land to progress the scheme serving whatever development goes there (as they will have to pay).

We (DCC) have included Sidford to Sidbury in our bid to Active Travel England and we should hear if we've been successful by the end of March.

Sidmouth to Bowd and beyond.... Of course a start has been made each end with the Long Park widening..Toucan crossing across A375 Sidford Road and link into Byes via Lymebourne Lane. We've also got an on road route to Ice House Lane .... Delivery across the A3052 will require a new bridge which will cost circa £1m .....Development of the persimmon owned land will help open this for funding and with the hold on new local plan we need to make renewed calls for Park and Change/Ride as this alone will unlock safer roads into town encouraging more visitors to leave their cars and change mode of Transport into town be it by around town buses or cycling. This scheme is in our cycle strategy and will see development in phases as funding and land agreements can be reached.”

Cycle stands and 20mph in town is already in programme as part of phase 2 of Traffic Management Plan. The first phase saw cyclists being allowed to continue using Old Fore Street etc where other vehicles not permitted

**Councillor Marianne Rixson, East Devon District Council,  
Portfolio Holder Climate Action and Emergencies.**

“I would like to thank the Sidmouth Cycling Group for conducting a survey in order to understand the needs of local cyclists. This information is invaluable to our Council. We look forward to working with your group in the future to provide active travel in the Sid Valley, which is important for health, tourism and to meet our climate emergency pledge.”

**Denise Bickley, East Devon District Council,  
Assistant Portfolio Holder Climate Action and Emergency Response,  
Vice Chair Sidmouth Town Council Environment Committee.**

“What a great report and it is very useful.”



# Introduction

Sidmouth Cycling Campaign was formed in August 2022 to encourage cycling in the Sid Valley.

We quickly decided that we needed to circulate a questionnaire to establish the concerns of local cyclists and ask for suggestions to improve conditions for cycling. The questionnaire went live on 12<sup>th</sup> November and closed on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022.

The questionnaire was advertised as follows:

- Posters on public notice boards
- Emails to local members of Cycling UK
- Emails to members of Sid Valley Cycling Club
- Articles in the Sidmouth Herald (8<sup>th</sup> November and 6<sup>th</sup> December)
- Articles in Sidmouth Nub News (27<sup>th</sup> November and 1<sup>st</sup> December)
- Posts on Facebook: Vision Group for Sidmouth (8/11, 27/11 and 1/12)
- Post on Facebook: Sidmouth community for the people (13<sup>th</sup> November)
- Emails to Sidmouth College and St John's School (12<sup>th</sup> December)
- An article in the Sidmouth CE Primary School Newsletter (16<sup>th</sup> December)
- Paper copies of the questionnaire in the Library and Tourist Information Centre
- A dedicated webpage: <https://visionforsidmouth.org/sidmouth-cycling-campaign/>

The questionnaire was anonymous to encourage participation. The only unique identifier for each response is the date and time it was entered on-line. The completed paper copies were manually entered into the on-line questionnaire, with a prefix "paper".

This report collates and summarises the responses to the questionnaire that we received.

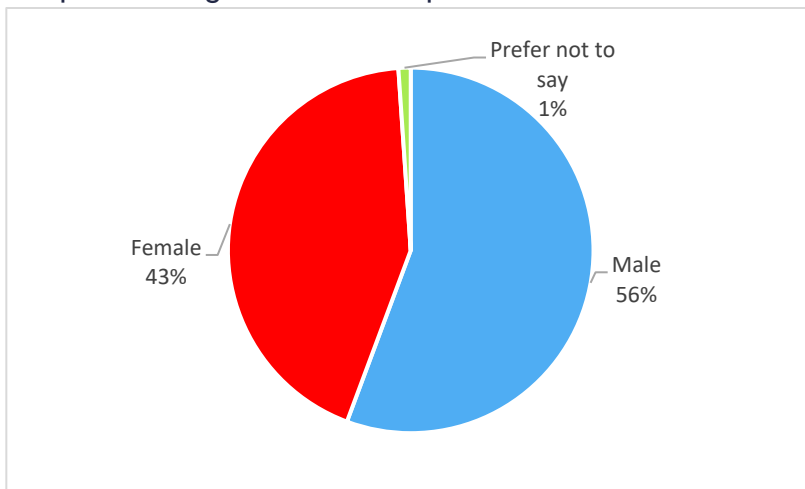
Appendices 1 to 3 are separate documents containing the detailed responses.

# Responses

We received 185 responses, which were either entered on-line or on paper copies from the Library and Tourist Information Centre. The full set of responses are available on request and are summarised below.

## 1. Gender

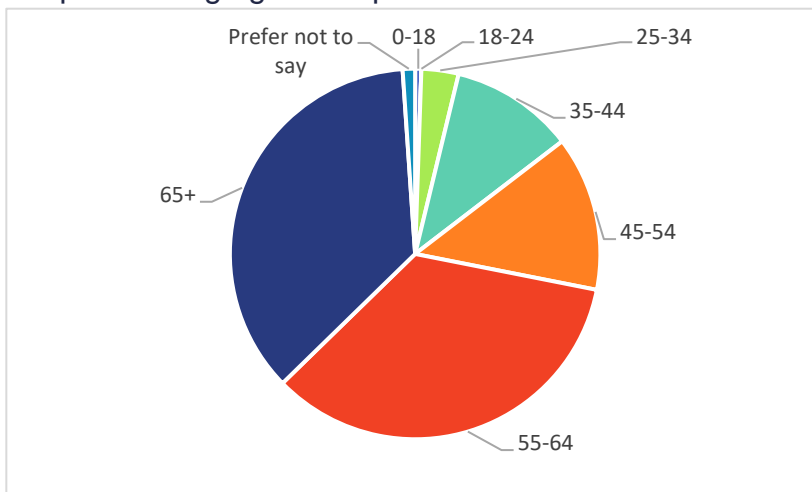
Graph showing Gender of respondents.



43% of respondents were female, which is lower than the UK 2022 Census<sup>1</sup> of 51% but considerably higher than Cycling Weekly’s audience<sup>2</sup> of 27%.

## 2. Age

Graph showing age of respondents.



36% of responses were from those over 65 years of age, which compares well with population estimates from Devon County Council of 38% over 65 years of age in the Sidmouth area <sup>3</sup>.

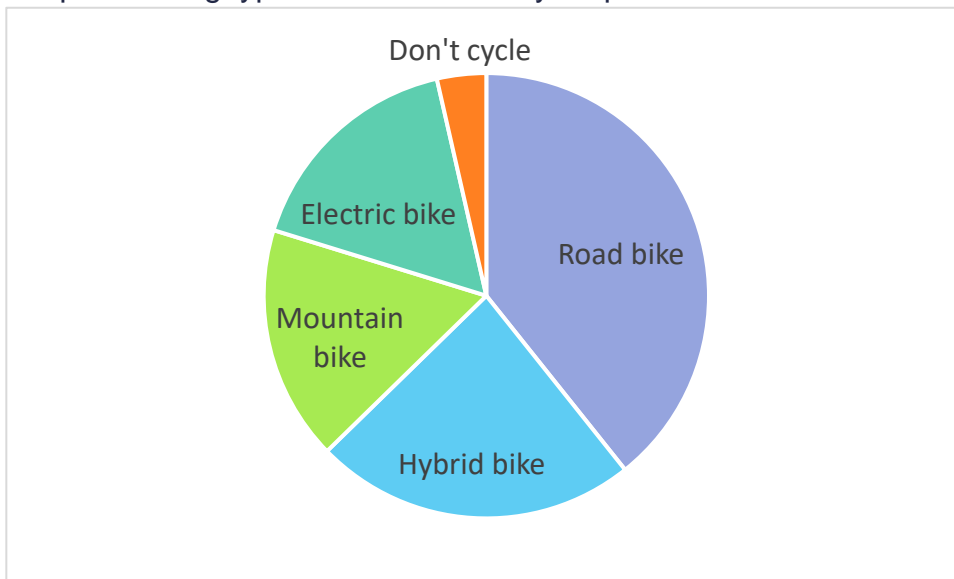
35% of responses were from those aged 55 – 64 which is significantly more than the Devon County Council population estimate of 16% in this age group.

Only 29% of responses were from those under 55's which is lower than the Devon County Council population estimate of 46%.

Only 4% of responses were from those under 35, which is significantly lower than the Devon County Council population estimate of 26%.

### 3. Type of bike

Graph showing types of bike ridden by respondents.



Most respondents ride a road or hybrid bike, with smaller numbers of mountain and electric bikes. Nine of the respondents don't cycle.

<sup>1</sup>

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/bulletins/populationandhouseholdestimatesenglandandwales/census2021unroundeddata>

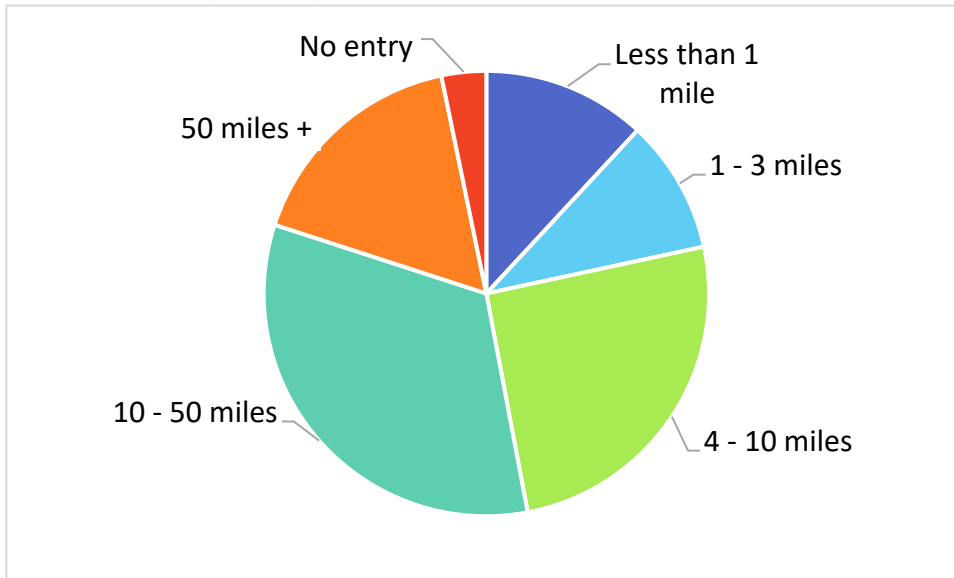
<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cyclingweekly.com/news/covid-lockdowns-saw-more-women-cycling-but-why-do-the-numbers-keep-swelling-now-our-roads-are-busier-than-ever>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.devon.gov.uk/communities/your-community/sidmouth-profile>



#### 4. On average, how far do you cycle in a week?

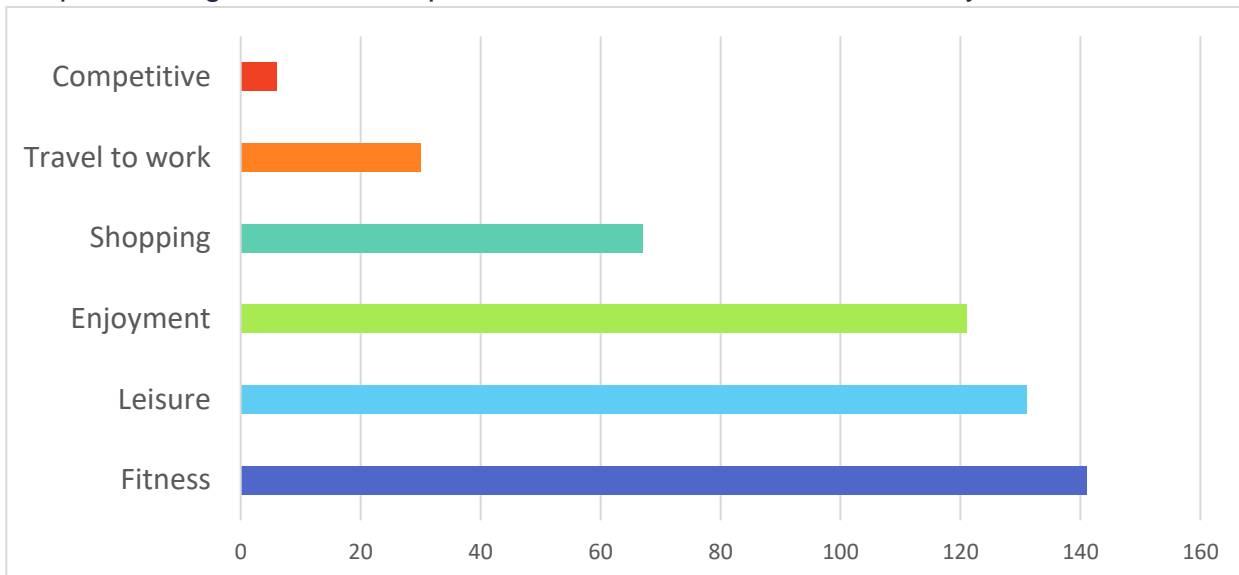
Graph showing average distance travelled in a week.



50% of respondents cycle more than 10 miles a week.

#### 5. Why do you cycle?

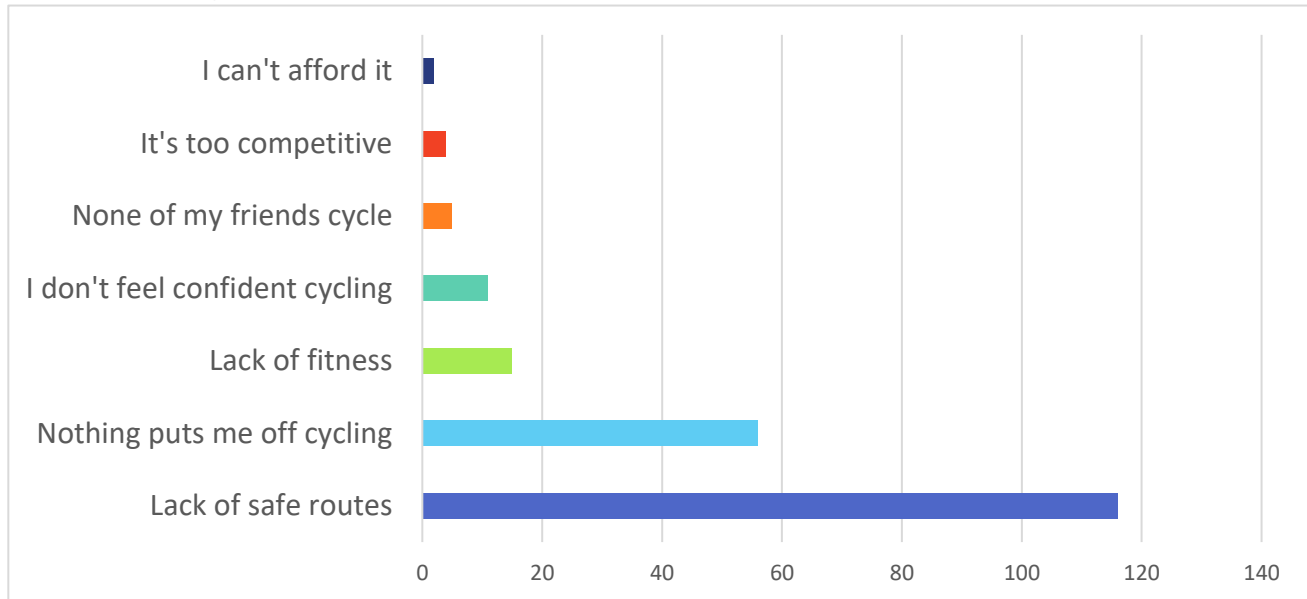
Graph showing number of respondents who ticked each reason to cycle



Most respondents cycle for enjoyment, leisure and fitness. Shopping was mentioned as a reason by 36% of respondents and Travel to work by 16%.

## 6. Is there anything that puts you off cycling?

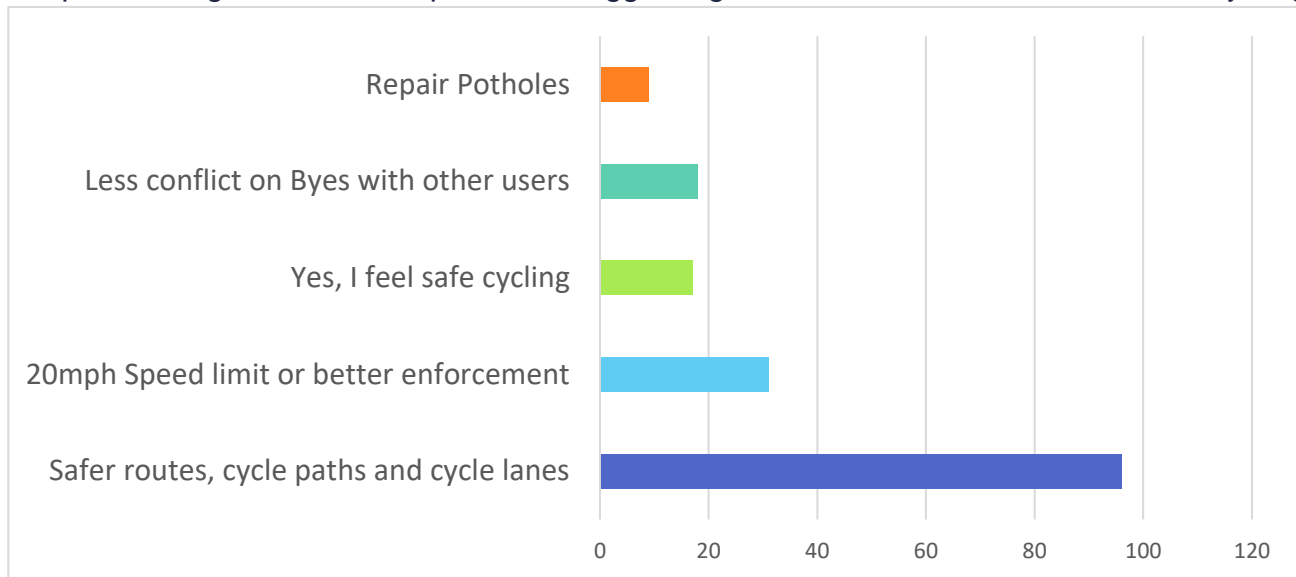
Graph showing number of respondents who ticked each reason



A lack of safe routes was cited as something that puts off 63% of respondents cycling. In contrast 30% stated that nothing puts them off cycling.

## 7. Do you feel safe cycling in the Sid Valley? If not, what could make you feel safer?

Graph showing number of respondents suggesting what would make them feel safer cycling

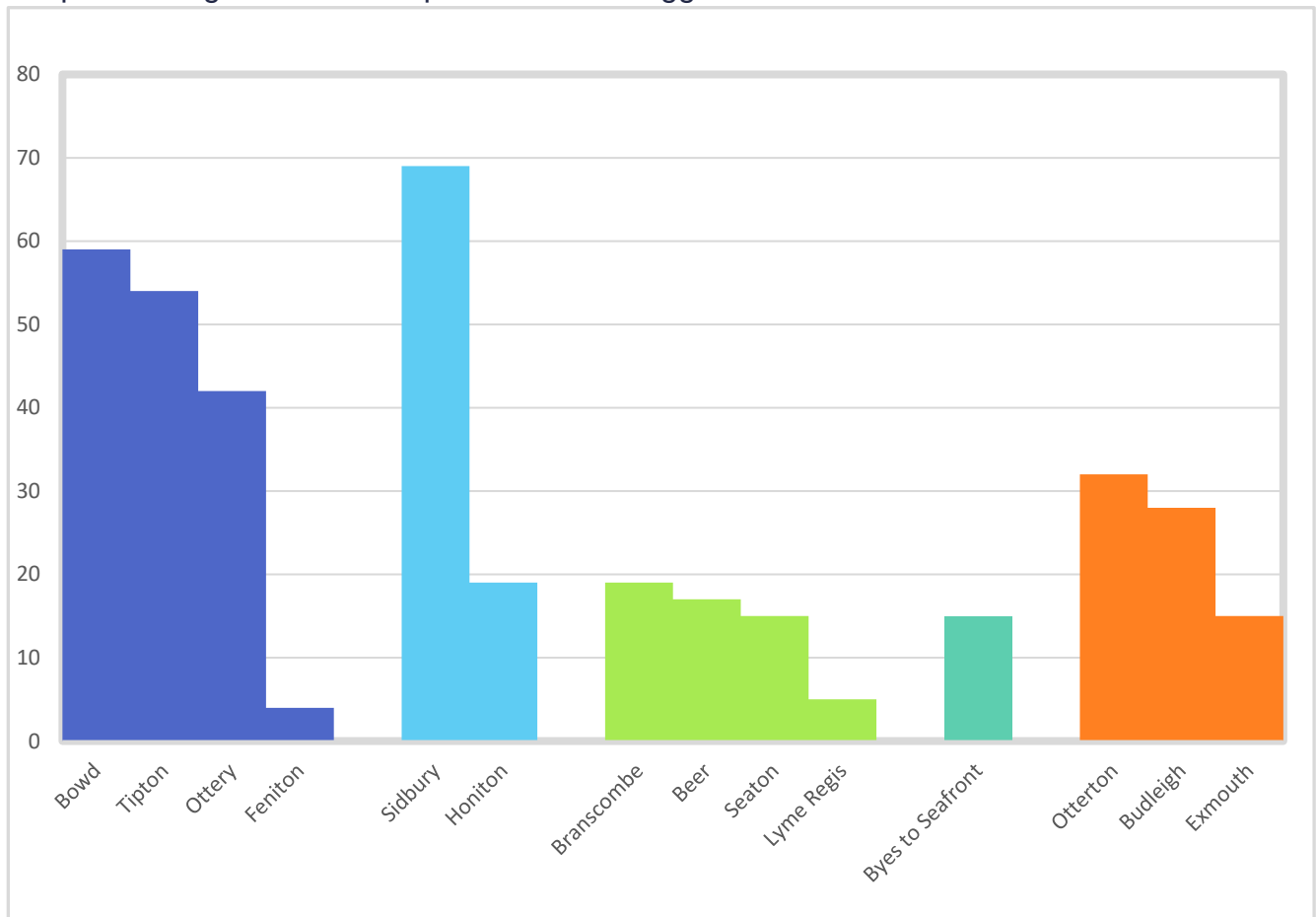


Only 9% of respondents felt safe cycling. Over 50% of respondents suggested safer routes, cycle paths and cycle lanes as ways of improving safety.

As this was an open question, a wide variety of responses were received, that can be seen in Appendix 1. We have summarized these into the five categories in the above graph to aid understanding.

### 8. If more cycle routes existed where would you like to cycle from and to?

Graph showing number of respondents with suggestions for various destinations.



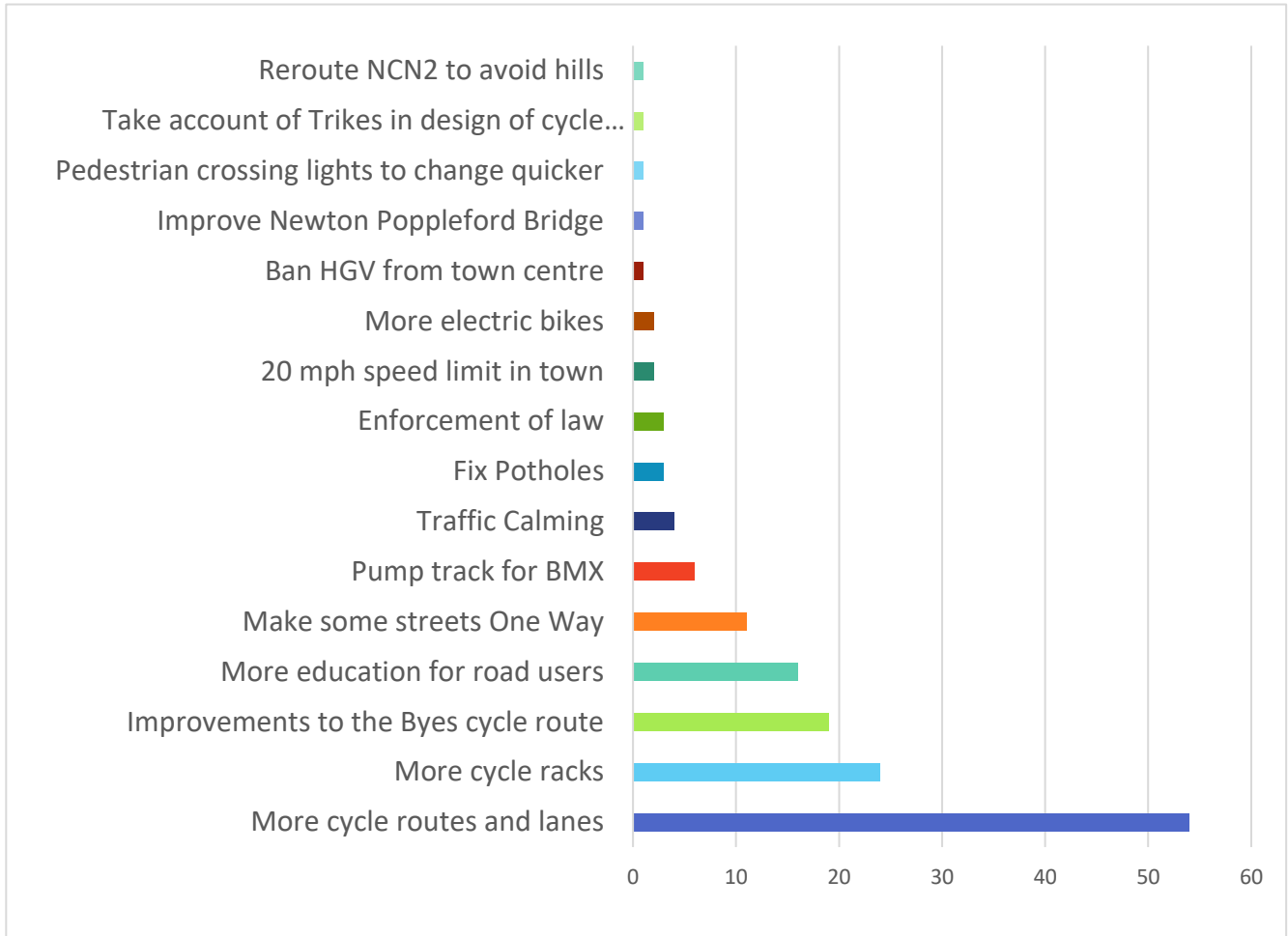
As this was an open question, a wide variety of responses were received, that can be seen in Appendix 2. We have summarized these into the destinations in the above graph to aid understanding.

The most common destination suggested was Sidbury followed by the Bowd (and destinations towards Feniton).

Other suggestions, not included on the above graph, included 11 for Newton Poppleford, 20 for Exeter and one for Lands End.

## 9. Do you have any other suggestions for improving cycling in the Sid Valley?

Graph showing number of respondents with suggestions for improving cycling in the Sid Valley.



As this was an open question, a wide variety of responses were received, that can be seen in Appendix 3. We have summarized these into the categories in the above graph to aid understanding.

The most common suggestion was more cycle routes and lanes. Other suggestions included more cycle stands, improvements to the Byes cycle route, more education for road users and making some streets one way. Six respondents suggested a pump track for BMX.

# Conclusions

We received 185 responses to our questionnaire.

Gender of respondents was 56% male and 43% female.

The number of respondents over 65 compares well with the population estimates of Devon County Council. The number of over 55s was over-represented and the number of under 55s was consequently under-represented.

There was only one respondent under 18 and we will seek to establish views of younger cyclists, particularly school age.

Most respondents ride a road or hybrid bike, with smaller numbers of mountain and electric bikes. Half of respondents cycle more than 10 miles per week.

Most respondents cycle for enjoyment, leisure and fitness. Shopping was mentioned as a reason by 36% of respondents and Travel to work by 16%.

A lack of safe routes was cited as something that puts off 63% of respondents cycling.

The most popular suggestion for new cycle routes was Sidmouth to Sidbury. This was closely followed by a new cycle route to the Bowd (and continuing along the Otter Trail to Feniton).

The following suggestions were also made:

- More cycle stands
- Improvements to the Byes cycle route including an extension to the seafront
- More education for road users
- Making some streets one way (except cyclists)
- Building a pump track for BMX



## Further information

For further information please contact Sidmouth Cycling Campaign:

Email: [sidmouthcyclingcampaign@gmail.com](mailto:sidmouthcyclingcampaign@gmail.com)

Website: <https://visionforsidmouth.org/sidmouth-cycling-campaign/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/sidmouthcyclingcampaign>