

# Poole Park – Whitecliff Gate Trial Closure

## Consultation summary

### Methodology

In January 2024, a trial closure was put in place to assess the impact and a consultation ran for 4 weeks alongside the closure to allow residents and park users to have their say about the proposal while experiencing the effect of the closure.

The trial closure and parallel consultation began on 17 January 2024. Running the trial closure alongside the consultation allows people to experience the impacts of the closure, both positive and negative, before sharing their views.

Temporary signage was put in place 2 weeks earlier on 3 January 2024 to give drivers notice of the intended trial closure

The consultation was open for 4 weeks, closing at 23:59 on 13 February 2024

Signs were put up in the park promoting the consultation. An online survey was available, as well as paper copies in BCP libraries and in the Ark café

The consultation was promoted on the council's social media channels and press releases.

### Consultation results

The survey received 5,392 responses.

Overall, **63% of respondents disagreed** with the closure and **36% agreed**.

The level of agreement increased throughout the trial period, from 29% on day 1 (758 responses) to 46% in the final week (932 responses).

Respondents were more likely to **agree** if they:

- Use the park 6-7 days a week (52%)
- Travel to the park
  - On foot (52%)
  - Bicycle (58%)
  - Scooter (51%)
  - Bus (52%)
- Live in Poole Town ward (61%)

The following groups of respondents were more likely to **agree** than the overall sample (36%), although those supporting the closure were still a minority:

- Age group
  - 35-44 (47%)
  - 45-54 (42%)
  - 25-34 (42%)
- Males (44%)
- No disability (48%)
- Live in Parkstone ward (42%)

The highest level of **disagreement** came from respondents who:

- Use the park
  - once a fortnight (70%)
  - 1-2 days a week (69%)
  - once a month (67%)
- Travel to the park
  - Car / van (77%)
  - Motorbike (84%)
  - Mobility scooter / wheelchair (69%)
- Disability
  - Limited a lot (83%)
  - Limited a little (75%)
- Age group
  - 65-74 (65%)
  - 75+ (73%)
- Live in
  - Creekmoor (78%)
  - Canford Cliffs (77%)
  - Broadstone (74%)
- People who did not specify their postcode or personal characteristics (either by answering 'prefer not to say' or skipping the question. This varies by question but typically around 80% disagree.

## Reasons

Respondents were asked what their reasons were for agreeing or disagreeing with the proposal.

Overall, the largest number of respondents said that they wish to continue driving through the park.

Responses given to this question vary depending on whether respondent agree or disagree, as shown in the table below.

	Overall	Agree	Disagree
Improve quality of the environment in the park	34%	90%	1%
Improve safety for park users	34%	89%	2%
Better environment for park wildlife	28%	76%	0%
I want the park to have fewer cars using it	27%	74%	0%
Concerns about air quality on alternative routes	15%	8%	19%
Concerns about traffic congestion on alternative routes	30%	4%	45%
Concerns about access to the park	39%	3%	60%
I want to continue driving through the park	45%	2%	69%

## Impact of closure

3,953 respondents provided an open text response when asked about the impact of the closure. These comments were analysed by an external agency (Enventure Research Ltd) and a number of themes were identified. The nine themes listed below are those associated with at least 10% of the comments received. 64 distinct themes were identified overall.

More traffic/congestion elsewhere	1036
Longer journey time/need to travel further	630
Negative impact on disabled/elderly/vulnerable groups	610
Safer for pedestrians/cyclists/less dangerous driving	561
More pleasant place to visit/improved experience	482
Park should not be a rat run/too much through traffic	474
More difficult to access park/restriction of access	443
Increased emissions/pollution/poorer air quality	433
Enjoy driving through park/visiting by car/pleasant route	397

Themes highlighted in red came most commonly from those who disagree, while those in green came from those who support the closure.

Sites frequently mentioned by those concerned about congestion elsewhere were the Kingland Road roundabout (where traffic leaving via the single remaining exit point would join the main road network), the busy civic centre gyratory (which many respondents said they find stressful and would deter them from travelling) and the narrow railway bridge on Sandbanks Road.

Comments about congestion were often linked to those about longer journeys and increased emissions.