



Corston Greenspace Resident Consultation:  
The results...

Who am I?



Corston villager  
for 10 years or so

## Volunteer

Concerned about the  
need to secure and  
make the most of our  
village amenities and  
green spaces, and for a  
harmonious village for  
us all to enjoy living in





# About my business - Heritage Insider

## Working across the UK helping:

Gardens and parks

Woodlands, nature reserves and national parks

Specific habitats and species such as marine zones and meadows

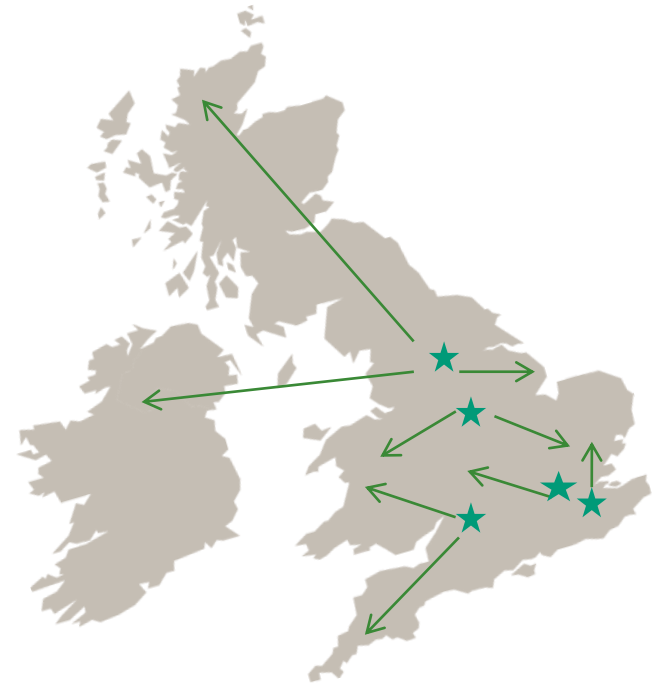
Museums and galleries

Historic houses, buildings and industrial sites

Community and user-led organisations.



We are the **independent consultants**;  
supporting organisations to plan, fund and  
to understand what difference they are making.



# Why

consult villagers and how?

## The need for action

Our village is blessed to have fantastic green spaces for us all to access and enjoy.

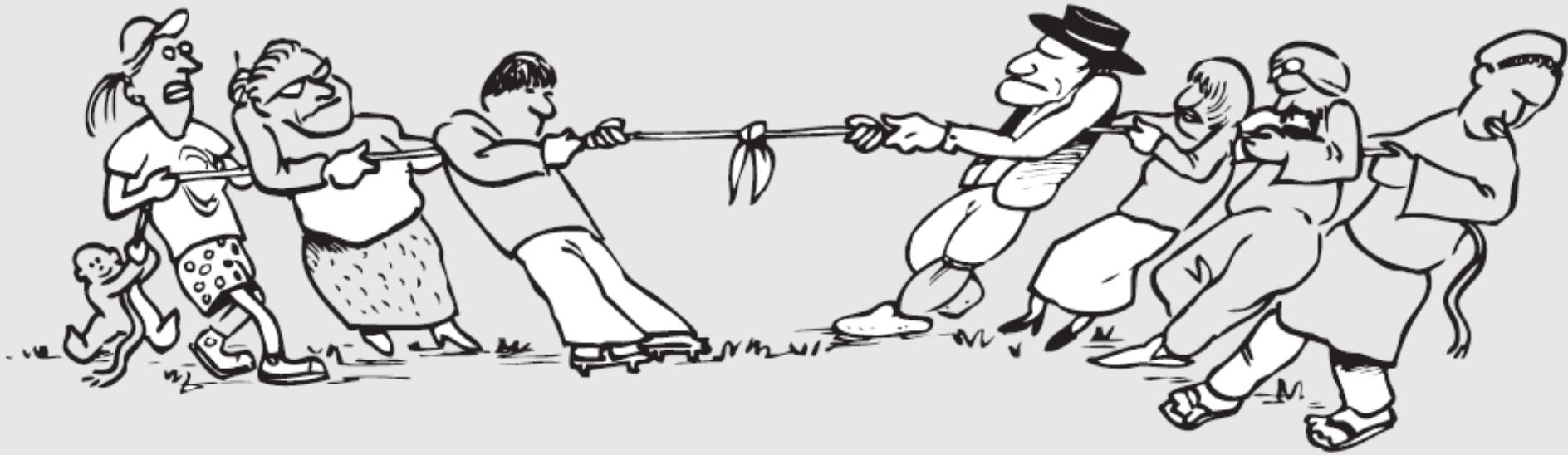
The **jewel in the crown** are the Recreation Ground and Valley Fields; right at the heart of our community.

However:

- There have been a number of initiatives and developments which have raised questions about a **lack of agreed future plan**
- The **maintenance** of the spaces has relied on the goodwill of a few fantastically dedicated individuals
- **Concerns** have been raised by some about the use of the spaces.

**A clear plan for future maintenance** was by far villagers' biggest concern.

It has felt to me like we're pulling against each other rather than working together on this issue – I feel we need to work together on village matters



# The independent consultation

My thinking was that we needed to hear views from across the village, and then come up with an agreed, practical plan for the Recreation Ground and Valley Fields.

This would allow us to have village backing for the way the spaces are maintained in the future, and any projects.

The consultation sent results to the Parish Council but is independent of them.



However this is how I felt on embarking on the consultation...





# A reminder of the process

Two in-person sessions in the Village Hall (weekday evening and weekend options)

An online survey (open for 4 weeks) and help to support people to complete it



A huge THANK YOU to everyone who gave their thoughts



## Purpose of this meeting is very specific

This meeting is to **present back the findings**, and to take questions on the consultation itself.

The meeting is not to review the history of any issues or for discussion at this point (in order to keep to time and allow people to think about the results before discussion and decision – especially those not involved thus far).

This should inform **a future meeting for wider discussion and decisions** as a community. **This will happen 1<sup>st</sup> May 7pm in the Village Hall – all welcome and please do come. It will be a workshop session in small groups to work through each of the main aspects of what needs doing.**

These should be sent as recommendations to the Corston Parish Council as the legally responsible body for the spaces.

## Who took part?

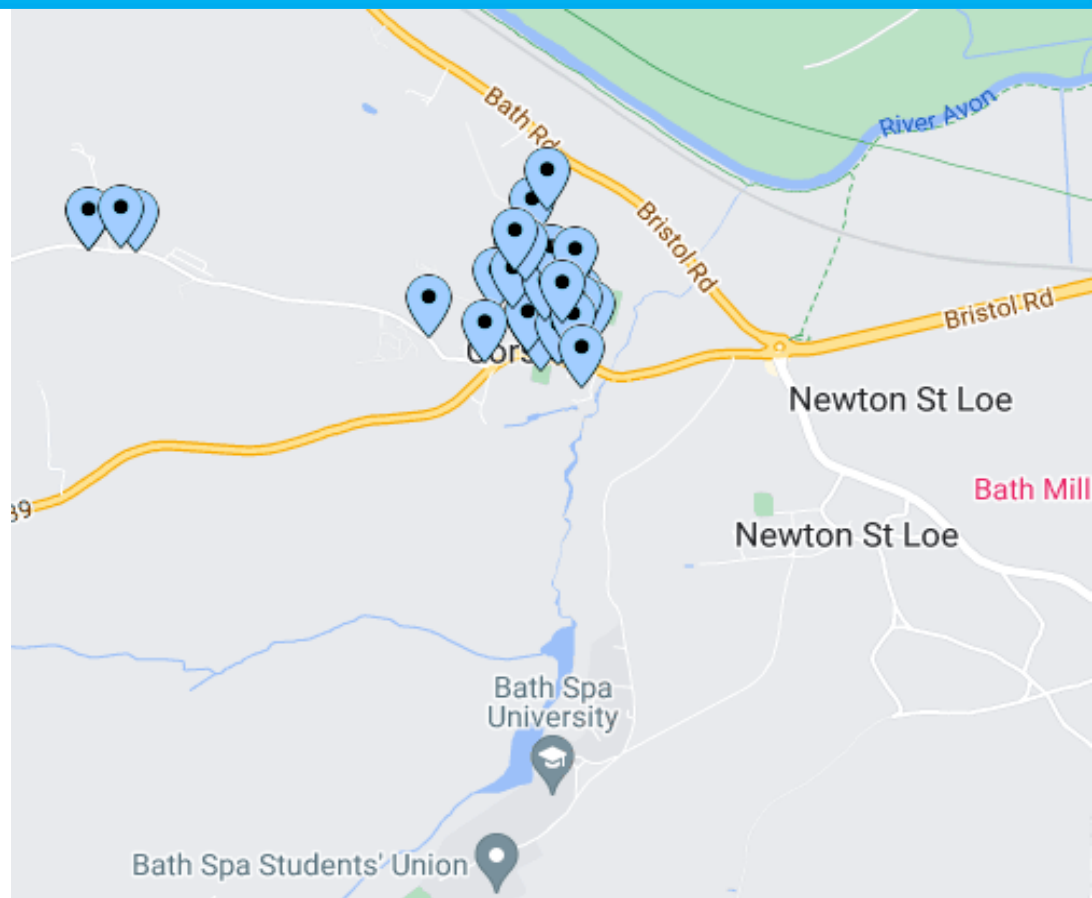
The consultation was only open to residents of Corston Parish

47 individuals responding to the survey

Plus those who attended the in-person sessions

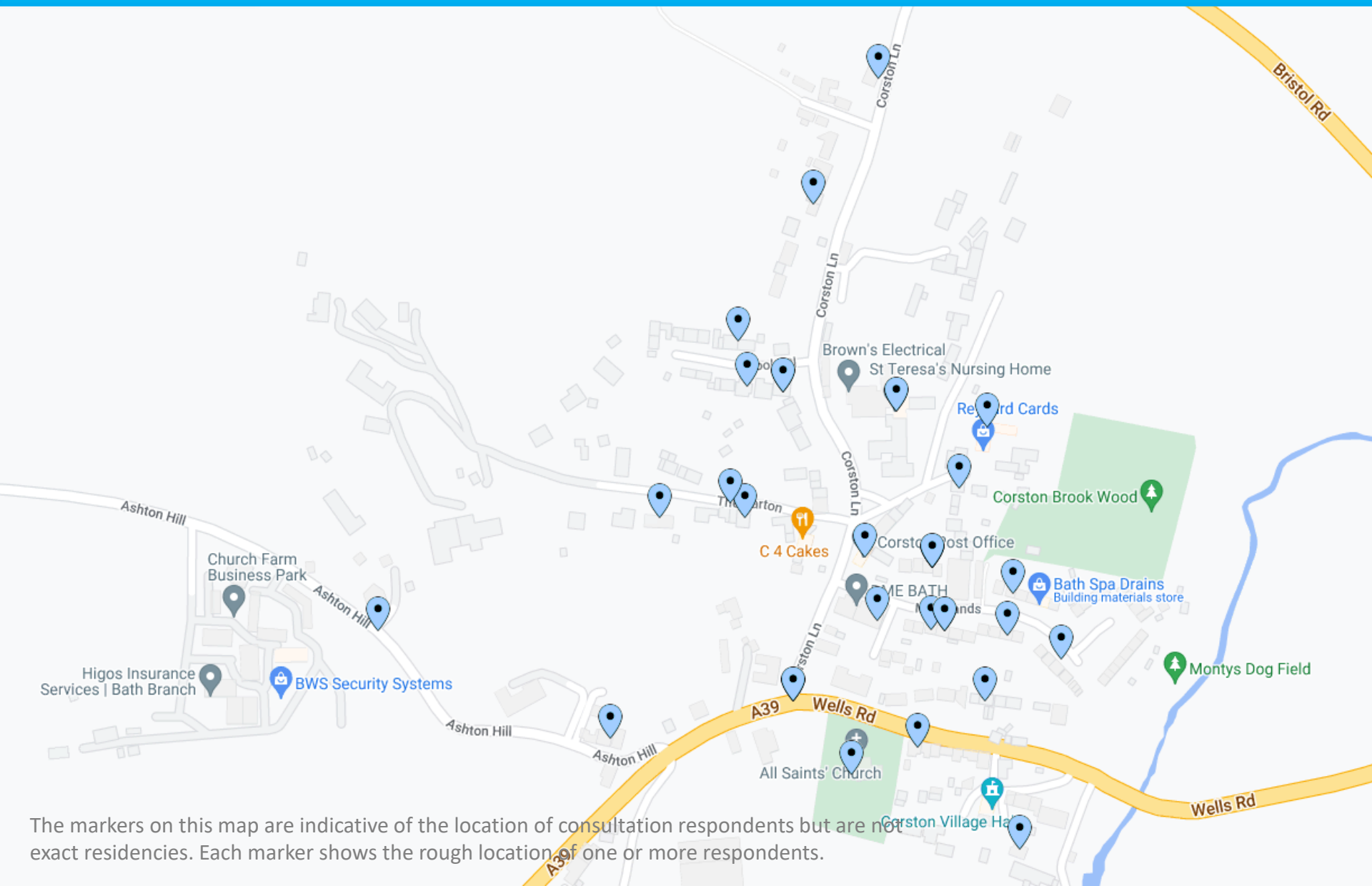
In total, an estimated

**65 villagers** inputted their ideas and thoughts





# There was a good spread across the village



The markers on this map are indicative of the location of consultation respondents but are not exact residences. Each marker shows the rough location of one or more respondents.

# The results

– what are the key things villagers said?

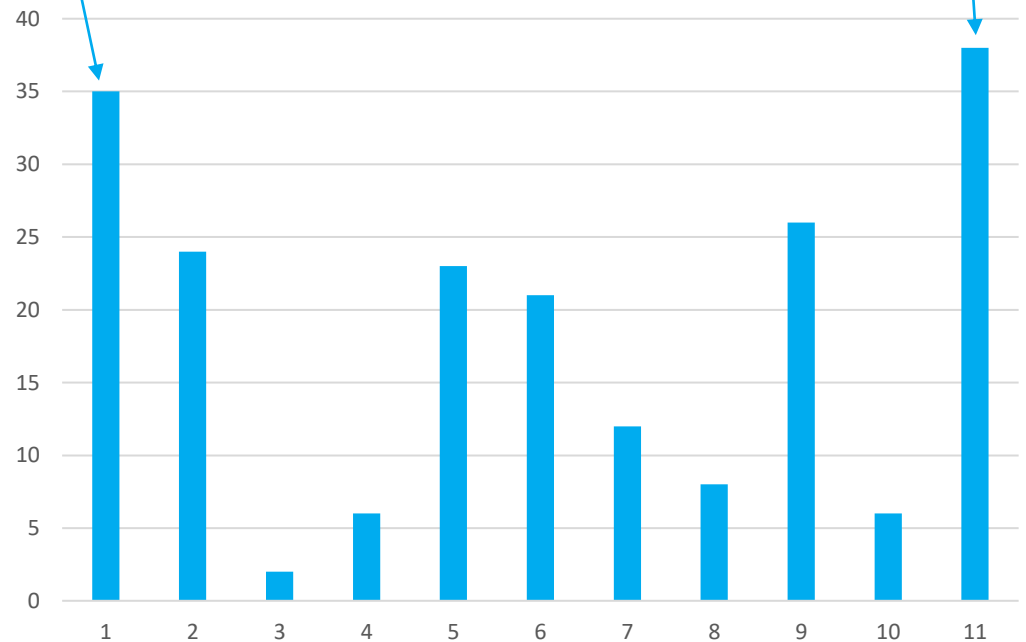
# Well-used...

Most people use the Recreation Ground and Valley Field **several times a week** (46%)

With a third using the spaces several times a month (30%).

Walking for exercise and enjoyment

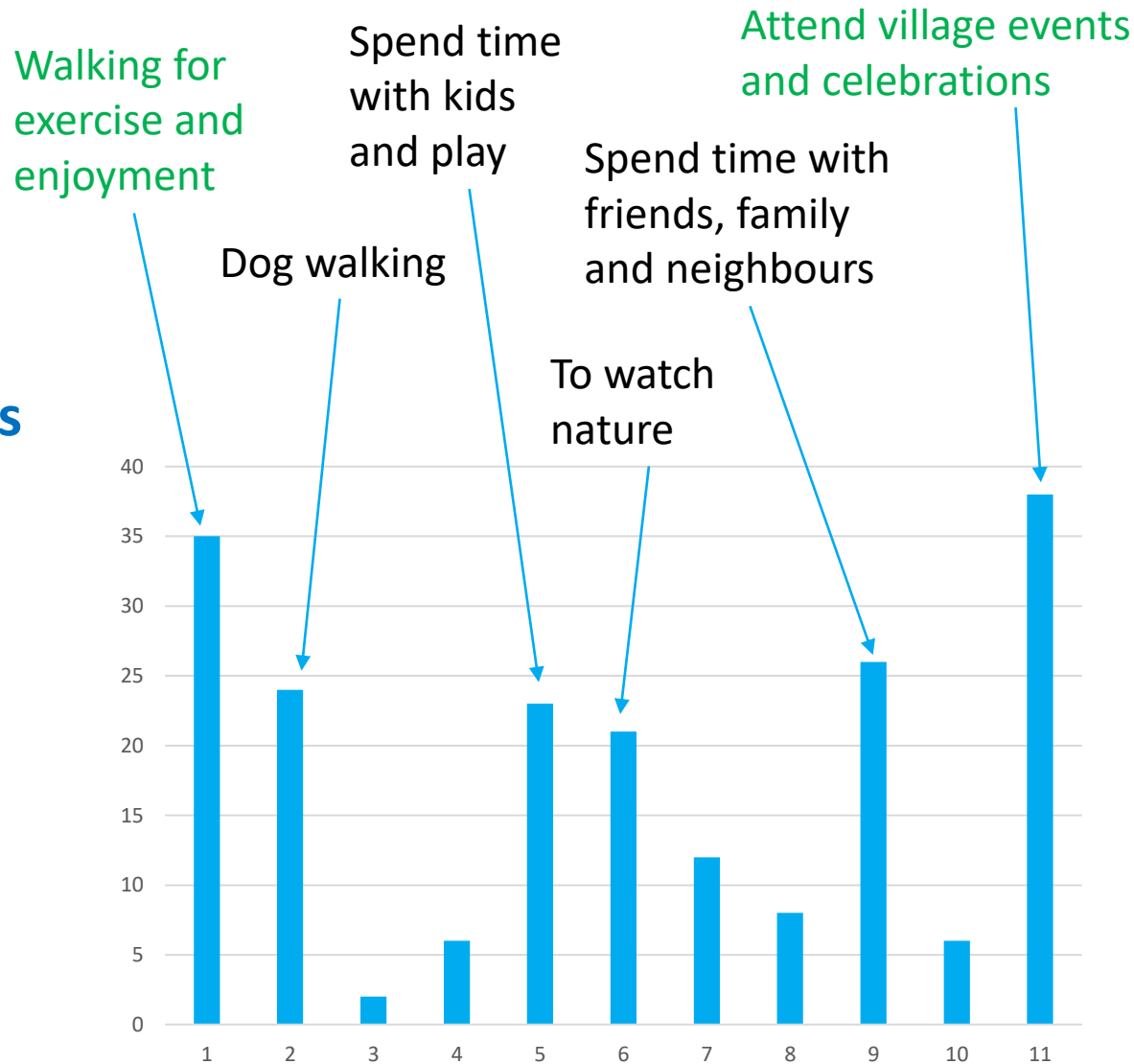
Attend village events and celebrations



# Well-used...

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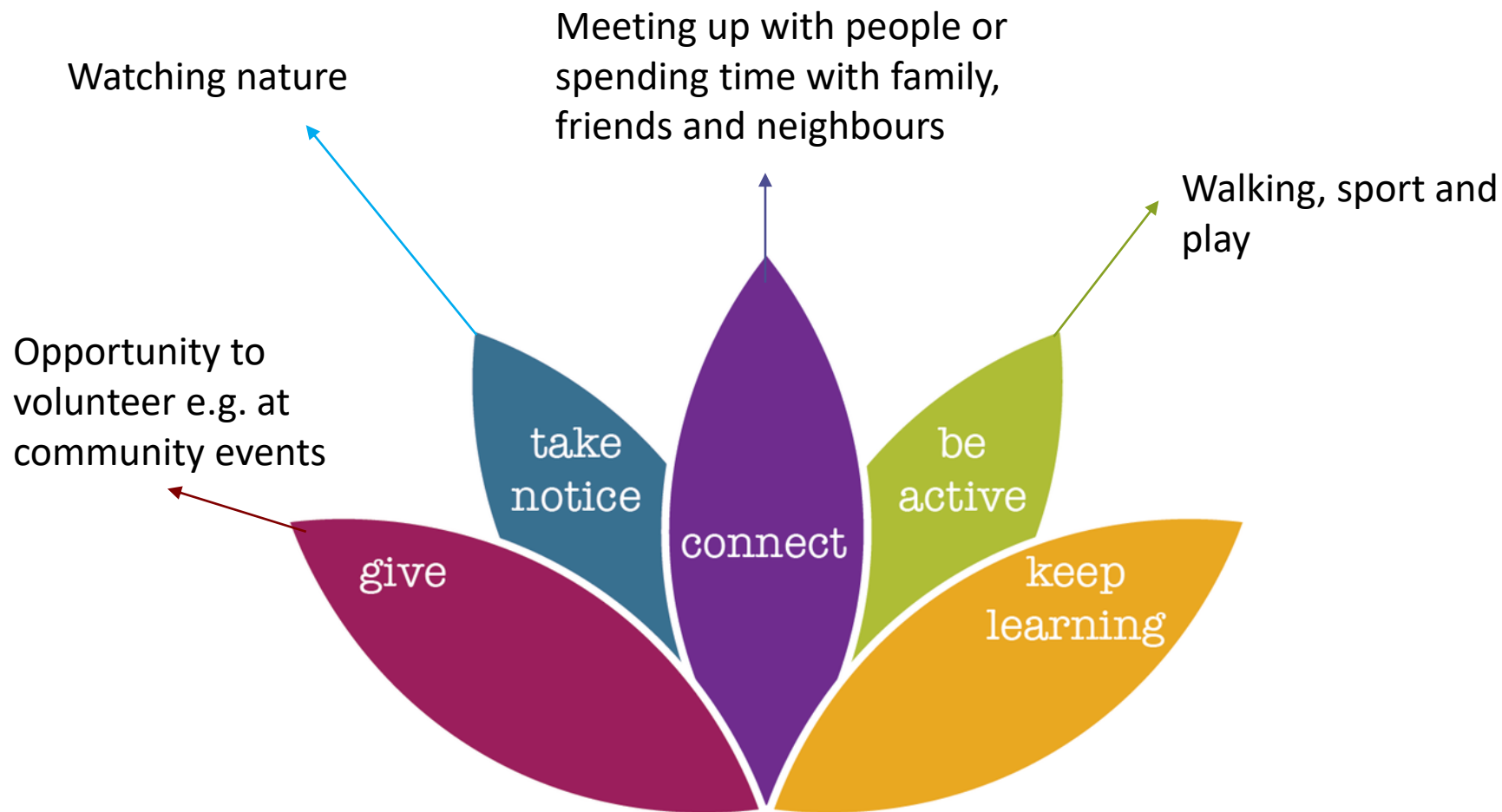
With a third using the spaces several times a month (30%).





# These spaces are strongly supporting wellbeing in our village

(below are the NHS 5-ways to wellbeing)



## Five ways to wellbeing

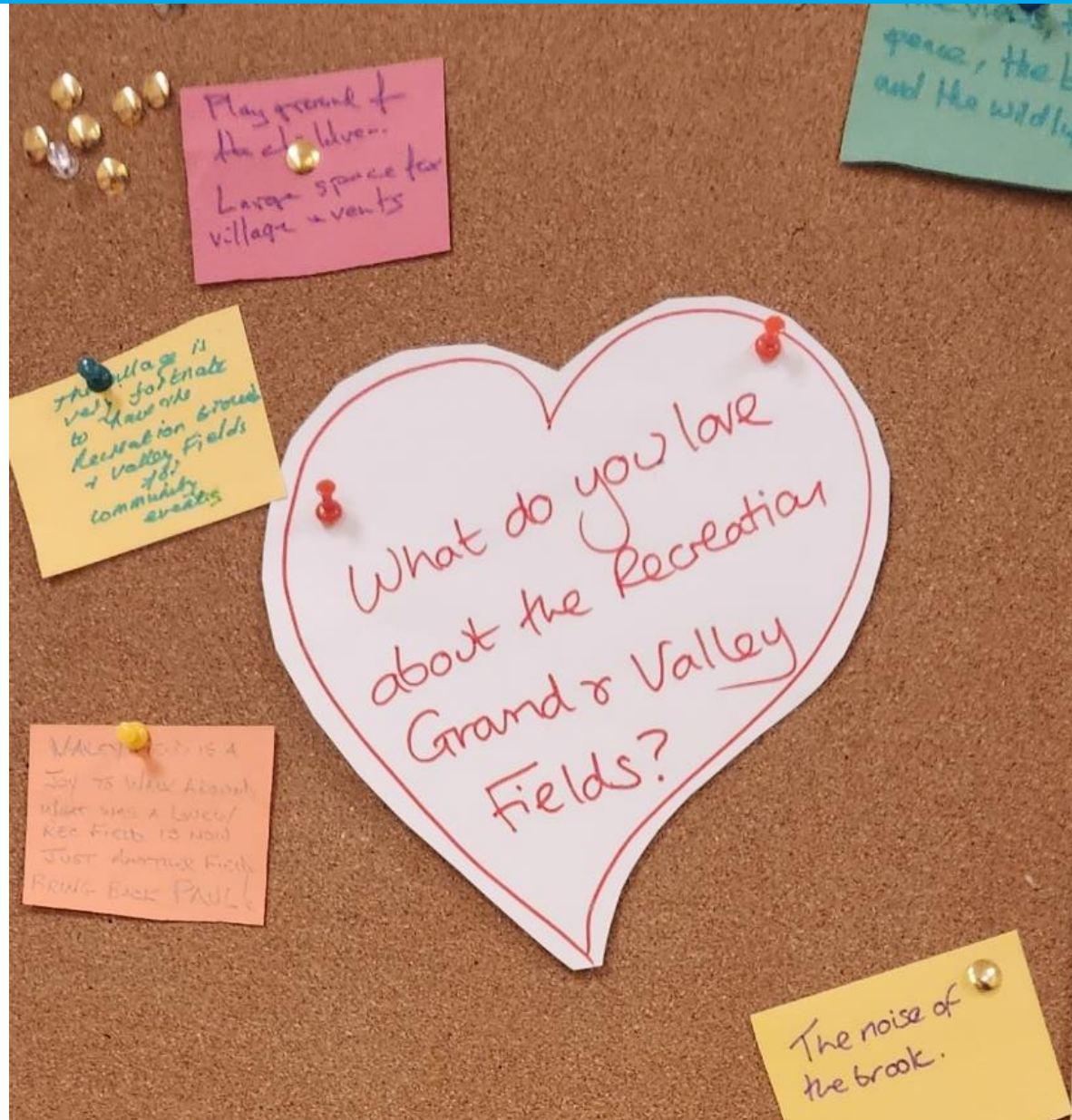
...and well-loved spaces

Villagers are passionate about these spaces

Respondants scored this an

average **4.9** out of 5

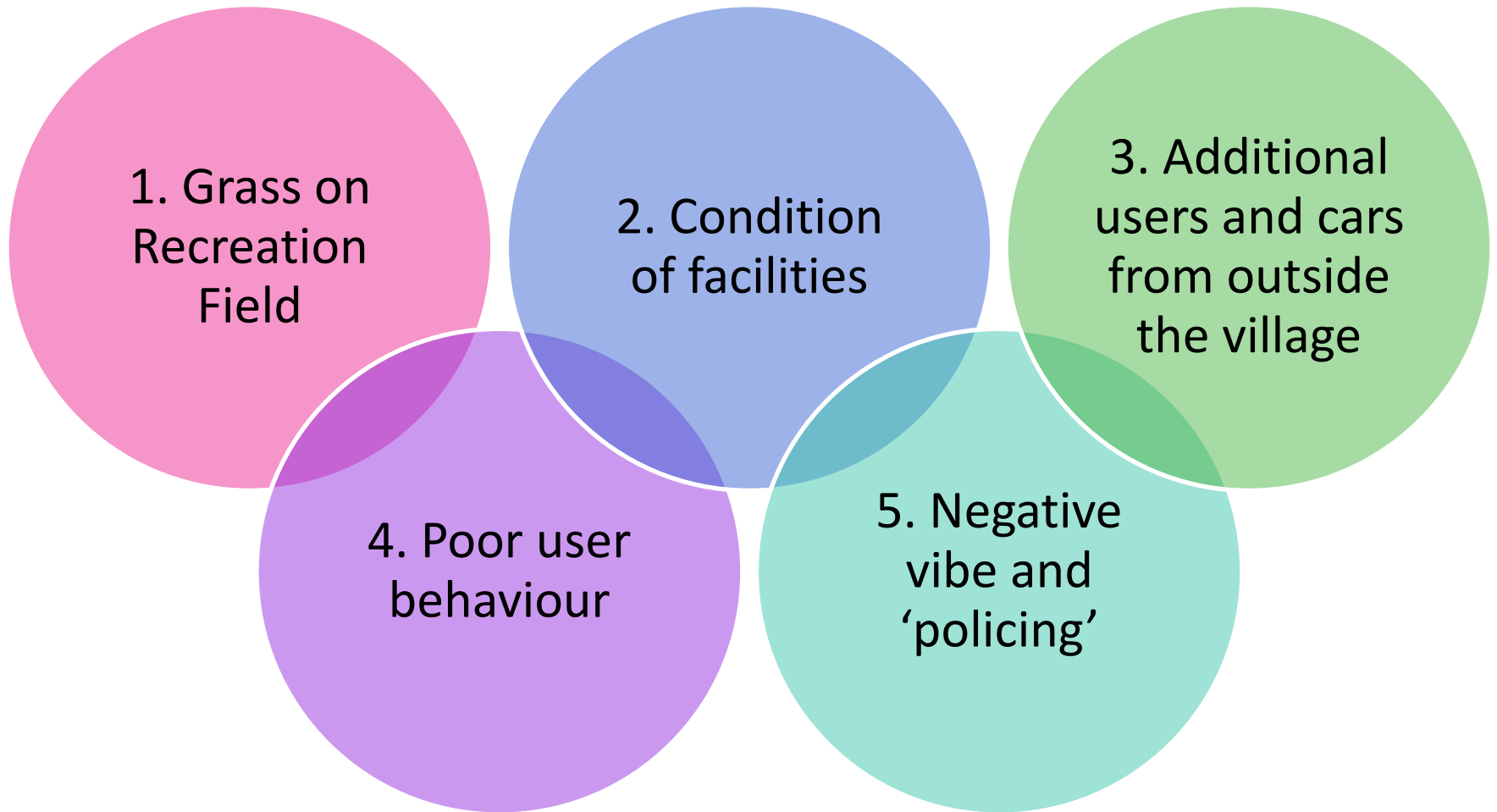
*'I think it is superb. Regularly used without being over-run.'*



## A thankful village

*'Huge thanks to Paul & James Wynne for all their hard work over the years in maintains the Valley Field & making it the lovely village facility for villagers to enjoy.'*

# There were five key areas of concern expressed by villagers





# 1. Concerns over Grass on the Recreation Field

Maintaining the grassed areas was by far the number 1 priority for villagers concerning the Recreation Ground.

*'Would like to see it looking as it was on the Recreation ground with grass cut.'*



## 2. Condition of facilities

Condition of facilities was the fourth highest concern for villagers.

The overall feeling was that no large new amenities should be added to either the Recreation Ground or Valley Field.

*'I feel very strongly, the more things we add to the field the more attractive it is to visitors and that's a problem as they don't always respect it like we do.'*

## 2. Condition of facilities

However, there were four key areas where improvements were suggested:

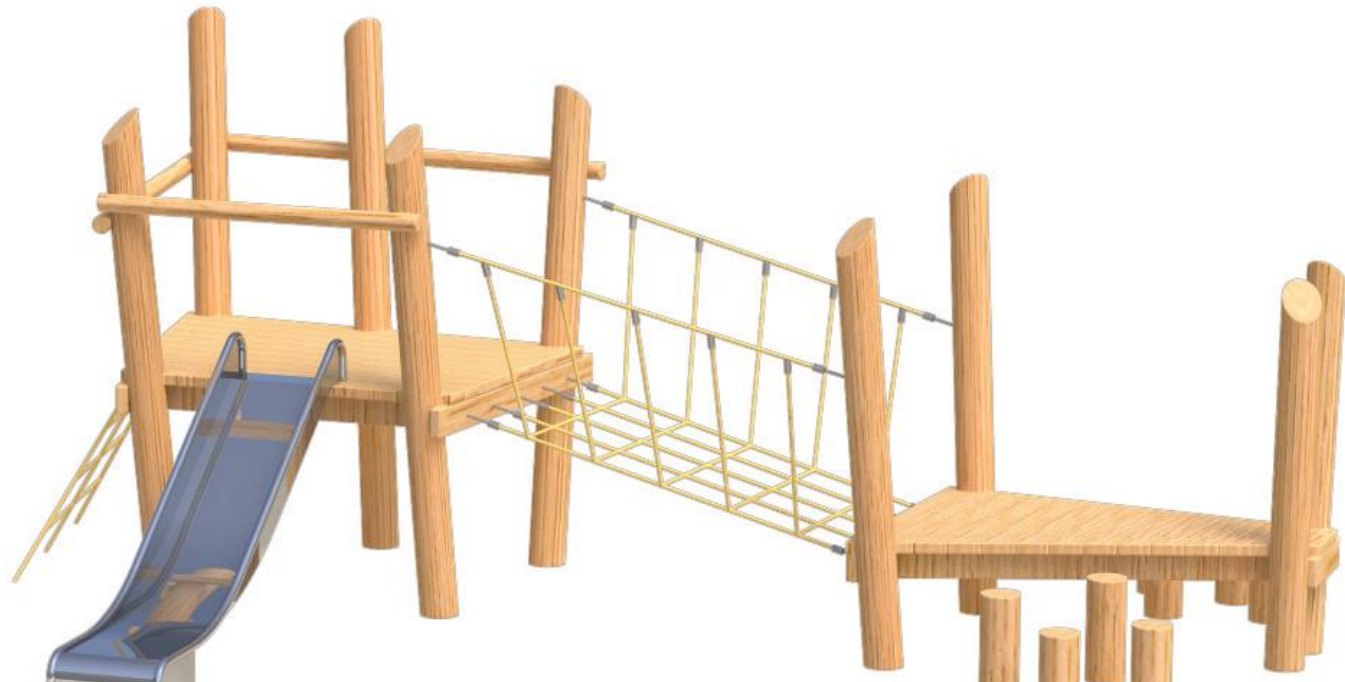


## Feelings about the play area

Maintaining and improving the play area was the second highest priority for villagers concerning the Recreation Field.

*'The children's play area will need a serious investment if this valuable amenity is to exist in 5 years time.'*

*'The children's playground is very important - more equipment. I would like still to be enjoying it!'*



## Feelings about the Pavilion

Refurbishing the Pavilion was the third highest priority for villagers concerning the Recreation Field.

*'Pavilion would be refurbished.'*

*'It would be nice if the hut was used for refreshments in the summer.'*

*'I would like to see the recreation building refurbished to allow greater use by parishioners.'*

*'Although I haven't had the chance to attend any of the Friday night summer gatherings, I'd love to in the future.'*



### 3. Concerns over non-villagers using the spaces

Some villagers felt that there has been an issue with more non-villagers using the spaces since the pandemic.

Visitor behaviours have changed across the UK, and online recommendations do make an impact.

Poor or inappropriate parking was the fifth highest concern by villagers. Some also mentioned cars turning within Meadlands as something they were worried about.

*'I would like to see it go back to when it was a quiet place treated with respect.'*

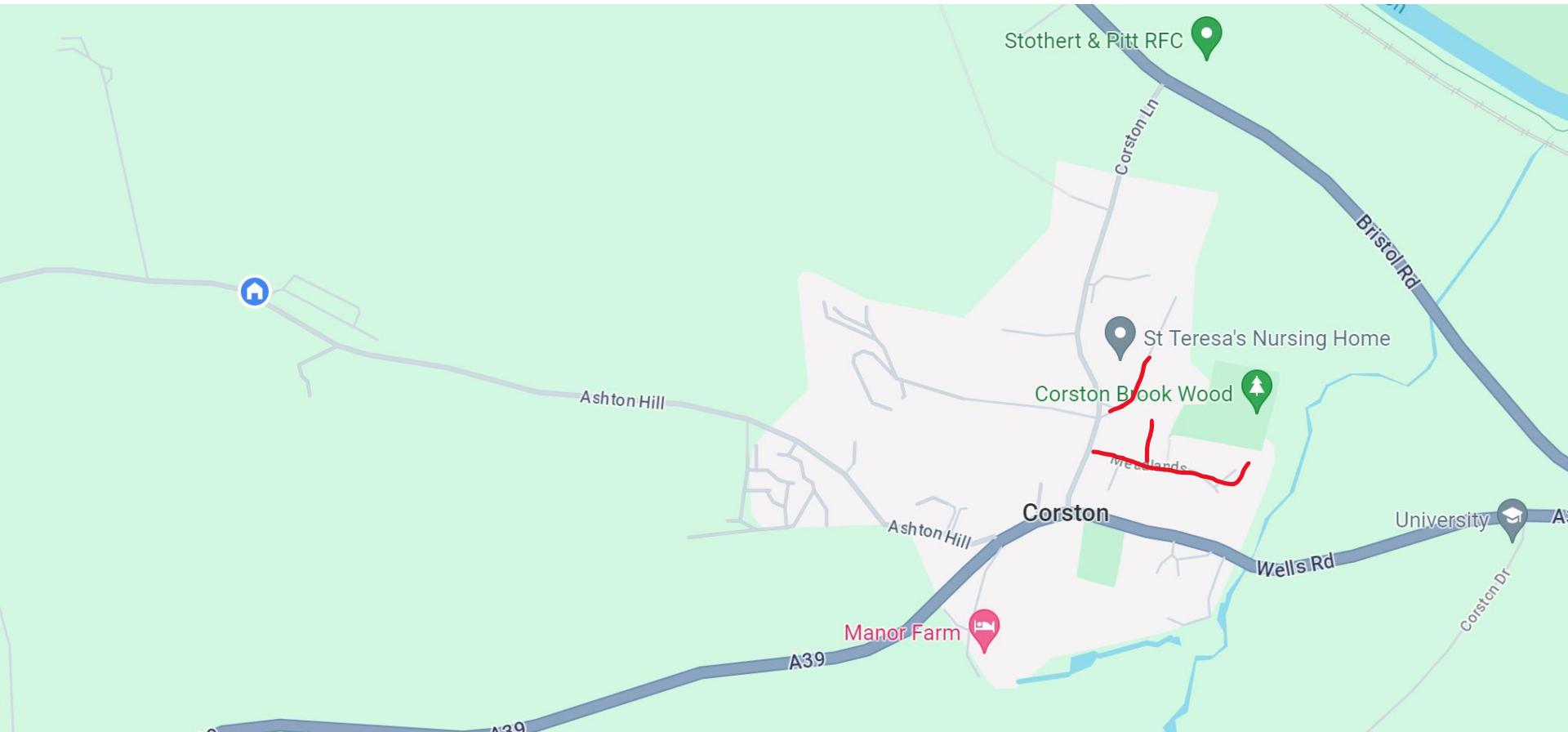
## 4. Concerns over poor behaviour of users of the spaces

Behaviour of fellow users was the third biggest concern by villagers concerning the space.

Visitor management is a major issue throughout the green space sector and conservation organisations.



The strength of feeling about issues concerning visitors varied by where people lived – those living in very close proximity were most concerned



However, other residents expressed empathy for the concerns of those living closest.

## 5. Concerns over negative vibe and 'policing'

Conflict between users was villagers' second biggest concern about the spaces.

*'[I would like to see] A friendlier attitude towards people visiting the amenity.'*

*'The villagers and locals should be able to walk dogs without having abuse.'*

*'I visit the field much less than I used to because of the nastiness between some locals and visitors.'*

*'No rude shouty signs.'*

*'For village kids to be able to play football without getting abuse.'*

*'[It should be] More friendly for families and young children.'*

*'Putting up the fence was awful and I didn't feel comfortable visiting the field after that.'*

# Signage

There is strong support for enhanced signage that promote positive behaviours in both the Recreation Ground and Valley Fields.

Research shows that these can be effective, especially with families.

However, only if they provide positive messaging – negative messaging can be counter-productive, as the previous point in the consultation has shown.



# Villager's priorities concerning the Valley Fields

1. Improving the area for **wildlife**

*'More nature, less plain grass.'*

2. Maintaining the **grassed areas**

*'Would like more trees to be planted to replace those lost to Ash dieback.'*

3. **Improving access** and pathways

*'Footpath not currently maintained to a4.'*



## Villagers had a positive vision for the spaces

*'To maintain the beautiful and calm space to be enjoyed by families, dog walkers , everyone!'*

*'It would be nice to see the recreation field used for sports. Corston once had its own football team.'*

*'A place everyone feels welcome, which is used respectfully and cared for by our community together.'*

*'More ways to share the beauty of nature with children.'*



# Some people had ideas on what they'd like to see improved or happen in the spaces:

Many wanted to see more **community events** happening in the space, for example:

- More community social events, picnics, boules games
- A community picnic
- A smaller grassed area on the Recreation Ground with more space for nature/wilder areas
- Space for young families from the village to grow produce and enjoying the natural environment
- Summer games evening for children and adults
- Dog training classes
- Summer boule



## Some people had ideas on what they'd like to see improved or happen in the spaces:

- Could have "nature friendly" activities in Valley Fields, such as guided bird watching or walks highlighting the different plants there
- Areas of the top field given over to wild flower meadow , perhaps along the hedge area behind the goals ?
- A pond for frogs etc down in the woods area somewhere
- Unobtrusive installation of solar panels
- Toilet facilities
- Picnic benches returned to the riverside and others placed around the perimeter of the playing field.
- Perhaps some Hides in the Valley Fields to observe wildlife



The ambition of the village is bigger than the resource – but if we have a list of things we'd like as a village, then we can work through them





The good news is that there is a potential volunteer team



18 people were  
**interested in  
volunteering**

15 more were potentially  
interested

The main types of volunteering people are interested in are (in order of preference):

1. **Ad-hoc volunteering** tasks that you can opt into

*‘Monthly working parties where villagers help out with jobs to help maintain or improve on.’*

2. **Flexible and micro-volunteering** that you can do while you’re visiting, such as recording wildlife and litter picking

3. Helping with **community events**

*‘More active volunteering by adults and children.’*

4. **Community volunteering days** once or twice a year

Village communications could be improved



**WhatsApp**

22 people were  
interested in joining a  
village WhatsApp group

# What are these results saying we should do?

- ✓ Retain, maintain and enhance this vital community green spaces
- ✓ Form a village green spaces group – with task and finish groups for the Pavilion refurbishment; signage project; play area
- ✓ Corston Country Fair group to continue to organise community events
- ✓ Create new volunteering opportunities
- ✓ Apply for grants for signage, and raise funds for the Pavilion and play area upgrades
- ✓ Signage to discourage visitor parking in Meadlands for the Recreation Ground and Valley Field
- ✗ Ad-hoc negative signage
- ✗ Illegal measures for trying to control visitors

*'[I would like a] Feeling that everyone can have a say.'*



Next steps



A meeting for discussion and decisions – within 2 weeks to keep momentum.



Join fellow villagers on **1<sup>st</sup> May 7pm at the Village Hall** for a workshop in small groups to plan initial actions for each area of the space which need attention.

Recommendations from this group will then be sent to the next Parish Council meeting for consideration and approval.

Questions?



**Thank you!** We've started the journey – now

let's keep moving forward positively for our village 😊

You can contact Kate who volunteered to run the independent consultation on 07966 298516 on WhatsApp

