

Street Trees Project Consultation 2022/2023

Outcome Summary

10th January 2023

Street Trees Project 2022/2023 Consultation – Outcome Summary

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Parks and Greenspaces, Bath and North East Somerset Council

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background Information

In October 2019 Bath and North East Somerset committed to increasing we agreed a motion to increase tree cover and developing a strategy for planting trees within the local authority area. The Council agreed a target to plant 100,000 trees within our district by May 2023, in collaboration with partners and communities.

The Council formally adopted a [Tree and Woodland Delivery Plan](#), outlining the delivery of tree planting for carbon capture, ecological enhancement, and multiple other green infrastructure benefits for people and the environment.

The Council is a member of the [West of England Nature Partnership \(WENP\)](#). It also supports the [West of England Nature Recovery Network's \(NRN\)](#) ambition to double woodland cover and urban tree cover across the district by 2050.

The WENP launched '[The Forest of Avon Plan, a West of England Tree and Woodland Strategy](#)' in June 2021. Bath and North East Somerset falls within the Forest of Avon, one of England's Community Forests. Community Forests were established to connect people with trees locally.

The Tree and Woodland Delivery Plan works alongside the Forest of Avon Plan to deliver positive results that suit the mixture of urban and rural characteristics of our area.

1.2. Scheme Overview

These tree planting proposals been developed to increase tree canopy cover across the district and enhance ecological connectivity.

Tree planting benefits nature and communities through the delivery of 'ecosystem services' which include:

- Mitigating the impacts of climate change by absorbing and storing carbon dioxide
- Regulating air temperature with water vapour and shade provision
- Enhancing biodiversity by providing habitat and food for birds and pollinators
- Minimising the effects of air pollution by absorbing some vehicle emissions
- Helping to manage storm water by absorbing excess rainwater runoff
- Visually improving the streetscape through the addition of a natural feature
- Encouraging people to enjoy the outdoors, promoting good physical and mental wellbeing

1.3. Public Consultation

This particular consultation is to advertise the proposed planting locations of trees across Bath, Keynsham, Peasedown St John, Saltford, Camerton, and Paulton at the following sites:

- Bear Flat, Bath
- Evelyn Road, Bath
- Fox Hill, Bath
- Old Frome Road, Bath
- Southdown Estate, Bath
- Third Avenue, Bath

- The Daglands, Camerton
- Tennis Court Avenue, Paulton
- Orchard Way, Peasedown St John
- Stratton Road, Saltford
- Coronation Road (and surrounding), Keynsham

An online public consultation ran for a period of one month between 5th September to 3rd October 2022 and was publicised digitally via the Council’s website; twitter account; press release; and bydirect email contact to all parish councils (where applicable). A letter was delivered to all properties on streets where trees have been proposed, directing residents to the online consultation with a web address through a scannable QR code. A web-based questionnaire was developed to seek the views from all stakeholders on the proposals.

Funding for this project through the Trees for Climate Grant was confirmed in November 2022.

2. Consultation Response

2.1. Feedback generated

The online questionnaire generated a total of 363 responses. A further 23 general comments were received via email (treeplanting@bathnes.gov.uk), and one by letter.

The primary aim of the consultation was to establish whether stakeholders ‘support’, ‘partially support’ or ‘object’ proposed planting locations. General feedback on the overall project was also asked.

The consultation analysis has involved both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data was gathered through single answer questions producing numerical results. Qualitative data was gathered through additional comments to support the respondent’s choice or add additional comment.

2.2. Response profile and distribution

Data was collected using the equality monitoring questions in the survey. These questions were optional and 78% of respondents provided answers to these questions.

Respondents were asked to best describe their ethnic group. Most respondents described their ethnic group as ‘White’ (see Table 1). The 2021 Census indicates that 92.2% of the B&NES population identify their ethnic group as ‘white’, followed by 3.3% identifying their ethnic group as ‘Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh’.

Table 1. Questionnaire response to the question ‘what best describes your ethnic group?’

What best describes your ethnic group?	Responses	Percentage (%)
White	280	93.6
Asian or Asian British	1	0.3
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	9	3.0
Other ethnic group	2	0.7
Prefer not to say	7	2.3

Respondents were asked to provide their postcode to allow identification of Bath & North East Somerset residency and those outside of the Local Authority area.

The majority of responses received via the online questionnaire were from individuals that could be identified as living within the Bath and North East Somerset district (97.25% - 353 responses). The remaining 2.75% (10 responses) could be identified as individuals living outside of the Bath and North East Somerset district.

47.2% responses (141) were from individuals aged between 35 and 54 (see Figure 1). The 2021 Census indicates that 55.6% of the B&NES population are aged 35 and over. A disproportionate number of 16 – 34 year olds responded to the questionnaire, at 14%, who make up 28.2% of the Bath and North East Somerset population.

HOW OLD ARE YOU?

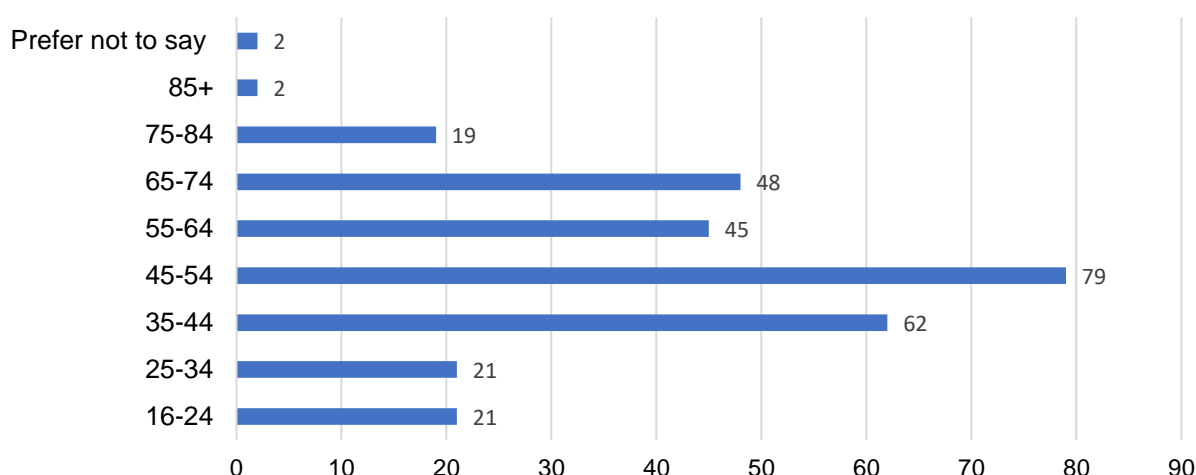


Figure 1. Questionnaire response to the question ‘how old are you?’

Respondents were asked if they considered themselves to be disabled (see Figure 2). Of the responses, 7% considered themselves to be disabled, 85.3% did not, and 9% preferred not to say. A total of 14 respondents did not consider themselves disabled, but they do live or care for someone with a disability.

DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF DISABLED?

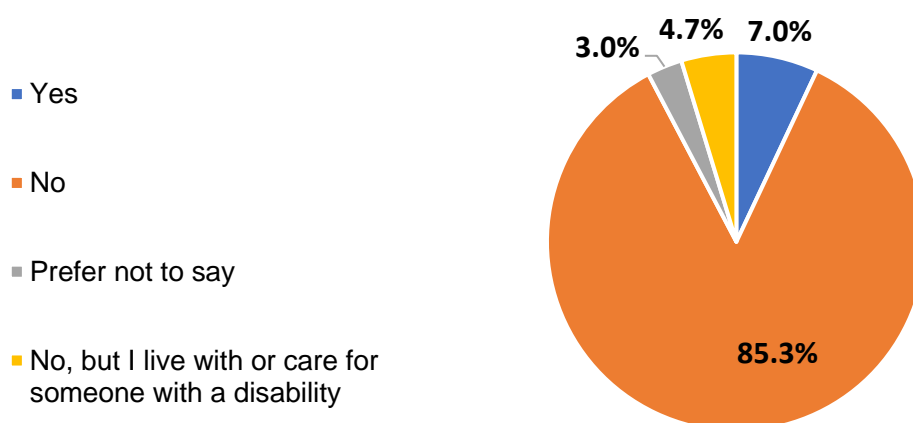


Figure 2. Questionnaire response to the question ‘do you consider yourself disabled?’

2.3. Presentation of results

All proposed planting locations received over 67% support, with seven of the ten sites receiving support from 80% of respondents (see Table 2).

Table 2. Breakdown of feedback when respondents were asked whether they ‘Object’, ‘Partially Support’, or ‘Support’ proposed tree planting locations at each site.

Location	Object %	Partially Support %	Support %
General Response: All Sites	1.0	16.8	82.2
Bear Flat	6.1	10.6	83.3
Coronation Avenue	2.5	8.8	88.8
Evelyn Road	2.6	23.1	74.4
Fox Hill	5.0	12.5	82.5
Old Frome Road	17.5	15.0	67.5
Orchard Road	4.7	14.0	81.4
Stratton Road	0.0	8.7	91.3
Tennis Court Avenue	17.4	4.3	78.3
The Daglands	9.1	9.1	81.8
Third Avenue	4.9	6.6	88.5

Figure 3 shows the breakdown of the 363 responses received via the online questionnaire. The proposal at Old Frome Road in Combe Down received the highest number of objections at seven, and Stratton Road in Saltford received the fewest number of objections at zero. A combined 99% were supportive or partially supportive in the general response to the project.

DO YOU SUPPORT OR OBJECT PROPOSALS?

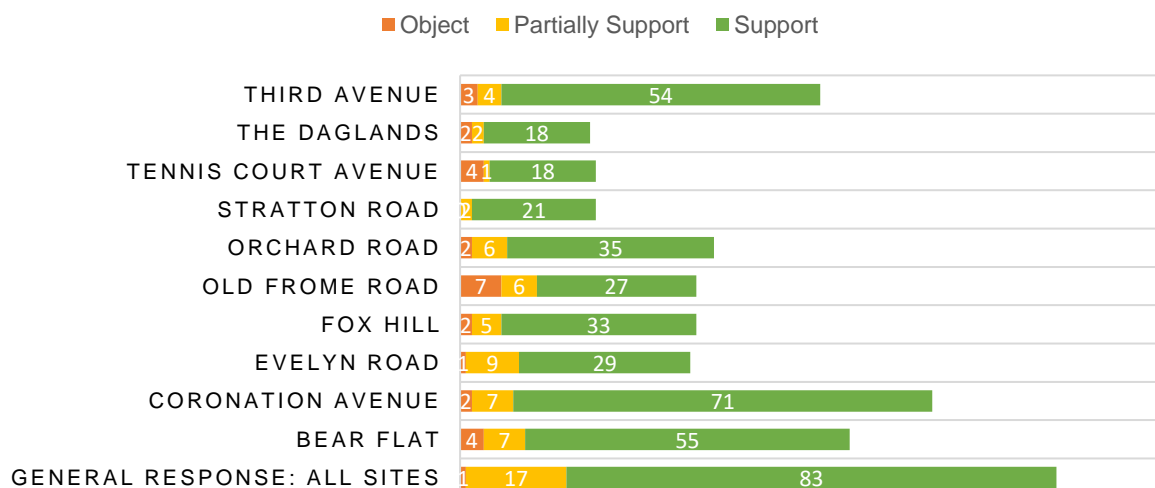


Figure 3. Breakdown of feedback when respondents were asked whether they ‘Object’, ‘Partially Support’, or ‘Support’ proposed tree planting locations at each site.

Further analysis was undertaken on responses to identify respondent ward of residence or whether the individual lived outside the Local Authority, based on postcode information provided (see Appendix 1). From this, the data was analysed where the respondent’s ward of residence and ward of proposed planting location were the same (see Table 3).

N.B: It was noted after the consultation had closed that an option to feedback specifically on the Southdown tree planting proposals was not available. This was an error. However, the postcode analysis evidences 12 respondents whose residence is within the Southdown ward. 67% of Southdown residents ‘supported’ the proposals when feeding back on ‘All Sites’, and the remaining 33% ‘partially supported’ proposals.

Table 3. Breakdown of feedback when respondents were asked whether they ‘Object’, ‘Partially Support’, or ‘Support’ proposed tree planting locations at each site, where the respondents ward of residence is the same as the proposed tree planting location.

Site Location	Ward of Site and Respondent Residence	Object	Partially Support	Support
Do you support or object to our plans on Bear Flat ?	Widcombe & Lyncombe	2	5	32
Do you support or object to our plans on Coronation Avenue and the surrounding area?	Keynsham South	2	3	34
Do you support or object to our plans on Evelyn Road ?	Newbridge	1	6	14
Do you support or object to our plans on Fox Hill ?	Combe Down	2	2	14
Do you support or object to our plans on Old Frome Road ?	Combe Down	7	4	10
Do you support or object to our plans on Orchard Way ?	Peasedown	2	6	24
Do you support or object to our plans on Stratton Road ?	Saltford	0	2	7
Do you support or object to our plans on Tennis Court Avenue ?	Paulton	4	1	5
Do you support or object to our plans on The Daglands ?	Bathavon South	2	2	5
Do you support or object to our plans on Third Avenue ?	Oldfield Park	2	2	35

WARD FEEDBACK: SAME RESPONDENT RESIDENCE AS SITE WARD

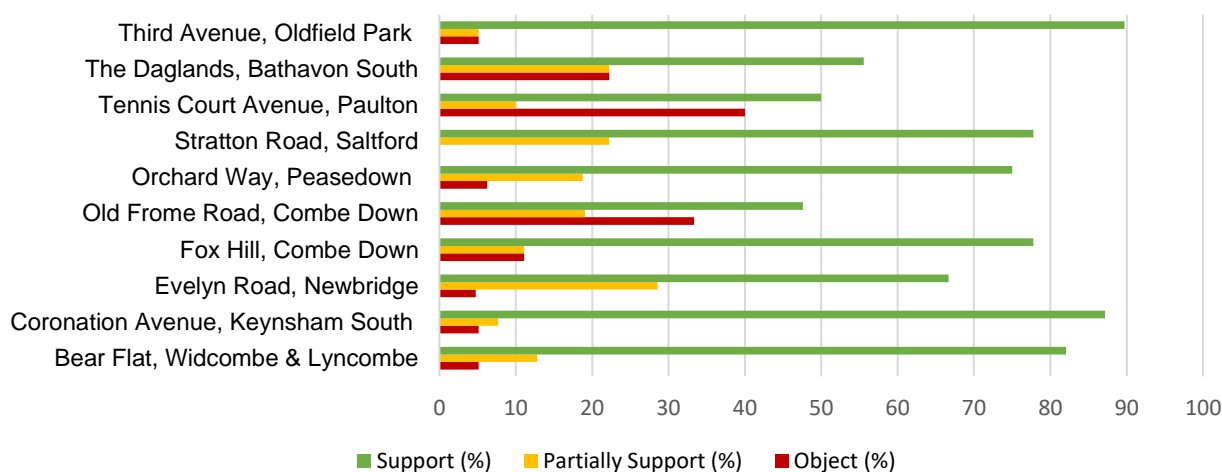


Figure 4. Feedback where respondent ward is the same as the proposed planting site.

When analysing the results where respondents ward of residence is the same as the proposed tree planting location ward, 9 of the 10 sites received 50% or greater support with 7 out of the 10 sites receiving greater than 67% support.

It should be noted that when viewing the respondent feedback based on wards, that the results for the Fox Hill and Old Frome Road proposals may be marginally skewed given they both sit within the Combe Down ward.

Sites that received less than 60% 'Support' and greater than 20% 'Object', were reviewed along with the general feedback comments to identify reasons for objections. Three proposed planting locations fell within this criterion.

At **Tennis Court Avenue**, four objections were received citing the following concerns:

- Damage to building footings
- Creating trip hazards by lifting the pavements
- The verges are used for parking
- Trees will block light in homes

Officer response: small tree species will be planted in verges at this location that will not grow large roots systems that are associated with building damage or pavement lifting. According the 1980 Highways Act, there is no legal right to park on a verge or footway. In addition to selecting appropriately sized species, trees will generally be planted on property boundary lines and not directly in front of property windows.

At **Old Frome Road**, seven objections and four partial supports were received citing the following concerns:

- Overcrowding of trees given existing trees in the gardens of properties,
- Leaf litter onto pavements and into gardens; and
- Proximity of trees to boundary walls given verges are situated inside of the pavement (property side rather than roadside).

Officer response: leaf litter is managed by the Council's highways cleansing team which is scheduled throughout the autumn and winter months. The comments regarding proximity to boundary walls and overcrowding have been taken on board. It is recommended that given the grant constraints it would not be possible to reduce the number of trees at Old Frome Road, and the most appropriate action is to withdraw the site from the project.

At **The Daglands**, two objections and two partial supports were received citing the following concerns:

- Obscure views to Cam Valley which is of value to their property,
- Subsidence to garden walls,
- Trees will block light into homes; and
- The verges are used for parking.

Officer response: according the 1980 Highways Act, there is no legal right to park on a verge or footway. The comments regarding views to the Cam Valley have been taken on board, it is recommended that trees will be planted in the large verges as you enter The Daglands from Camerton Hill only.

All general comments provided in the questionnaire have been reviewed and considered.

3. Frequently Asked Questions

How are tree planting sites selected?

The tree planting proposals are designed to meet the objectives outlined in the Tree and Woodland Delivery Plan. A primary aim for tree planting is to increase tree canopy cover, and the proposals prioritise projects in wards that have below the Forestry Commission's recommended urban tree canopy cover of 20%. Canopy cover data is available here: [Forest Research - UK Ward Canopy Cover Map](#) For wards that already have high canopy cover, particularly within Bath, we seek opportunities for planting that will strengthen ecological connectivity, in line with the [Forest of Avon Plan](#). Sites are ultimately assessed as suitable for planting based on a number of criteria including but not limited to landscape character, utilities, pavement width, and eligibility for grant funding.

Does the project include maintenance for future years, including watering?

Yes, the grant funding covers the initial establishment maintenance for a period of 24 months. This covers watering and formative pruning. The trees will be managed longer term once at maturity through regular tree inspections, with pruning carried out where necessary.

How will damage to pavements or buildings from roots and branches be prevented?

By applying the 'right tree, right place' principle, a suitable species of tree will be selected for each planting location. For many of the planting locations, cultivated varieties suited to urban settings will be planted, characterised by columnar, upright growth, and compact crowns. Smaller species with a mature height of between 6 and 10 metres will be planted in narrower verges or when constructing tree pits in pavements. In wider verges, a larger species of tree may be planted to enable greater benefits (ecosystem services) for people and nature, such as increased carbon sequestration. This project does not involve the planting of large tree species that have been historically planted on streets, e.g., Lime and London Plane, that have much larger root systems associated with pavement lifting.

Do the plans consider pavement accessibility for wheelchair users or partially sighted individuals?

Yes, final plans adhere to the guidelines set out by the Department for Transport in the ['Inclusive Mobility – A Guide to Best Practice on Access to Pedestrian and Transport Infrastructure'](#) document.

How would the proposed species of new trees be selected to reinforce existing tree planting?

A mix of species will be planted in most locations to strengthen structural and functional diversity in urban street trees, as well as build resilience to pests and disease. There are instances where uniformity with single species planting is considered more appropriate, typically where visual amenity is valued highly.

Is tree planting a good use of taxpayer contributions given the cost-of-living crisis?

This project is funded by the Trees for Climate grant and is not funded directly by council tax income. Tackling climate change and mitigating the impacts is necessary to create a resilient, functional, and sustainable future for society.

Why are you not planting in the Clean Air Zone hot spots?

Areas of high air pollution that are suitable for tree planting have been targeted in previous planting seasons.

Why were underground services not identified before consulting the public?

General utilities had been identified and considered as part of the proposals in advance of the consultation, however, a manual survey is also required on site to confirm actual routes. Due to resource and the time constraints of the project, crucially the winter planting season, it was not possible to complete the manual surveying on site in advance of public consultation.

Why have a list of trees not been included in the consultation?

The consultation was seeking feedback on the proposed locations of trees and not the proposed species. Our arboricultural experts will apply their knowledge to select the most suitable tree for each location, applying the 'right tree, right place' principle.

How will leaf litter from new trees be managed?

Leaf litter on public highways is managed by Cleansing Team through routine street cleaning. Leaf litter that could be deemed excessive or dangerous can be reported via [Fix My Street](#).

Why were the trees on London Road not maintained?

The Lime Trees on London Road received establishment maintenance which included watering. There were several contributing factors to the failure of these trees including the quality of the substrate used for planting. These trees will be removed and replanted, with a new soil substrate, before the end of March 2023.

4. Summary and Recommendations

In October 2019 the Council set a target to plant 100,000 trees, in collaboration with partners and communities, within Bath and North East Somerset Council by May 2023. The [Tree and Woodland Delivery Plan](#) outlines the delivery of tree planting for carbon capture, ecological enhancement, and multiple other green infrastructure benefits for people and the environment.

The proposals set out in this consultation were developed to facilitate the outcomes outlined in the Tree and Woodland Delivery Plan. Planting more trees on our streets and increasing canopy cover will bring benefits to nature and our communities through the delivery of 'ecosystem services'.

The consultation set out the Council's Street tree planting proposals and was advertised through social media and a press release. All properties on streets with planting proposals received a letter notifying residents of the consultation. The consultation was live for a total period of 28 days.

The online questionnaire generated 363 individual responses.

When analysing all responses all proposed planting locations received over 67% support, with seven of the ten sites receiving support from 80% of respondents. There was variation to this feedback when analysing results based on shared ward of respondent residence and of the proposed site.

All general feedback comments for all sites were reviewed. Frequently asked questions from this feedback are answered in Section 3 of this report.

Other sites across the district that had been put forward through the general feedback and via email as suggestions for tree planting in future have been recorded. These sites will be assessed for tree planting suitability and eligibility for funding in future planting seasons.

After consideration of the results and feedback from respondents, it is recommended that the proposals are amended to remove proposed trees outside of properties at The Daglands with views to the Cam Valley, and to withdraw the proposals at Old Frome Road. Several minor changes at other sites involving tree pit installation, based on feedback provided regarding property access from the footway, have been recommended and are reflected in the final plans.

It is recommended that all other sites are implemented as per the proposed plans, subject to final utilities assessment and highway safety approval.

5. Appendix

Appendix 1. Breakdown of results by location of respondent

O = Object, PS = Partially Support, S = Support. Highlighted row corresponds to the planting location ward.

WARD	Bear Flat	Coronation Avenue and surrounding	Evelyn Road	Fox Hill	Old Frome Road	Orchard Way	Stratton Road	Tennis Court Avenue	The Daglands	Third Avenue	All sites, direct wide																					
Bathavon North	O 0 PS 7 S 55	O 0 PS 7 S 2	O 0 PS 9 S 29	O 0 PS 5 S 33	O 0 PS 6 S 25	O 0 PS 6 S 35	O 0 PS 2 S 21	O 0 PS 4 S 18	O 0 PS 2 S 18	O 0 PS 4 S 55	O 0 PS 1 S 17																					
Bathavon South	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 2	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 2	O 0	O 0																					
Bathwick	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 1																					
Combe Down	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 2	O 2	O 1	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 4																					
Keynsham East	O 0	O 0	O 2	O 0	O 2	O 0	O 1	O 0	O 1	O 0	O 2																					
Keynsham North	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 1	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 1																					
Keynsham South	O 0	O 2	O 3	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 1	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 1																					
Kingsmead	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 1	O 1	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 1	O 3																					
Lambidge	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 1	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 3																					
Lansdown	O 1	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 1	O 1																					
Moorlands	O 0	O 1	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 2																					
Newbridge	O 0	O 1	O 0	O 0	O 1	O 0	O 1	O 0	O 1	O 0	O 3																					
Odd Down	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 3																					
Oldfield Park	O 0	O 4	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 2	O 3																					
Paulton	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 4	O 1	O 5	O 0	O 2																					
Peasedown	O 0	O 2	O 0	O 0	O 1	O 2	O 1	O 0	O 1	O 0	O 1																					
Radstock	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 3																					
Saltford	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 2	O 7	O 0	O 0	O 1																					
Southdown	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 4																					
Tinsbury	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 1																					
Twerton	O 0	O 2	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 1	O 0	O 1	O 0	O 2	O 1																					
Walcot	O 0	O 2	O 0	O 0	O 2	O 0	O 2	O 0	O 2	O 0	O 5																					
Westmoreland	O 1	O 3	O 1	O 2	O 1	O 2	O 0	O 2	O 0	O 3	O 8																					
Western	O 0	O 2	O 0	O 0	O 2	O 0	O 2	O 0	O 2	O 0	O 6																					
Widcombe & Lyncombe	O 2	O 5	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 2	O 0	O 2	O 0	O 3	O 6																					
Unknown	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 1																					
Outside of B&NES	O 1	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 0	O 1	O 6																					
TOTAL	4	7	55	2	7	71	1	9	29	2	5	33	7	6	25	2	6	35	0	2	21	4	1	18	2	18	2	4	55	1	17	83