



River Deben Association

Survey of river users, Spring 2012

The RDA undertook a web-based survey over two months from 26 February to 20 April 2012. The purpose was to find out about how people use the River Deben and what they like, or don't like, about the river and the area immediately around it. The intention is to use the results to help represent the views of people who use and enjoy the river in discussions as part of the Deben Estuary Partnership, with the local authority and with other local and national organisations.

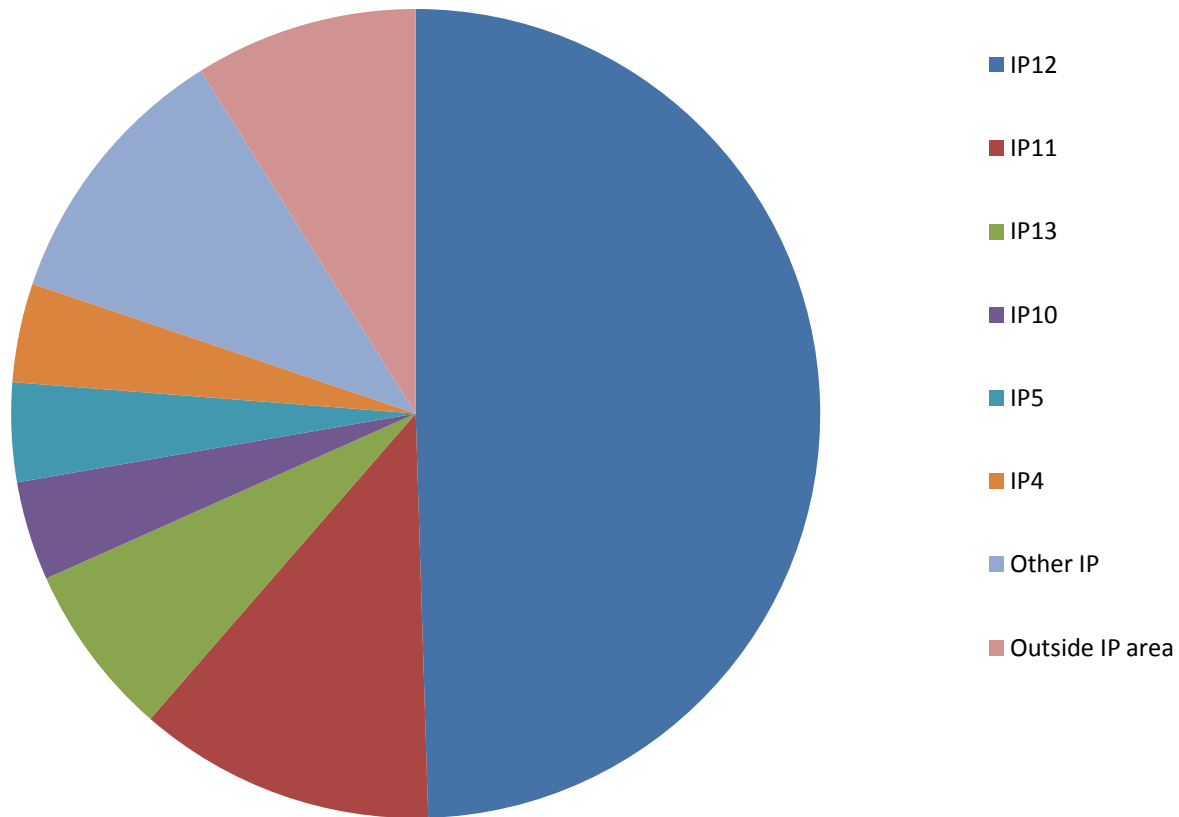
The survey was based on 9 multiple choice questions, with opportunities to add free-text comment, and one open question.

Notices inviting people to undertake the survey – accessible through open pages on the RDA website - were sent to 853 RDA members and to local organisations and clubs, similar notices were also made available in libraries and other public venues in Woodbridge, Waldringfield and Felixstowe.

We received 212 responses to the survey. 2 responses appear to be duplicates reducing the total number of individuals responses to 210.

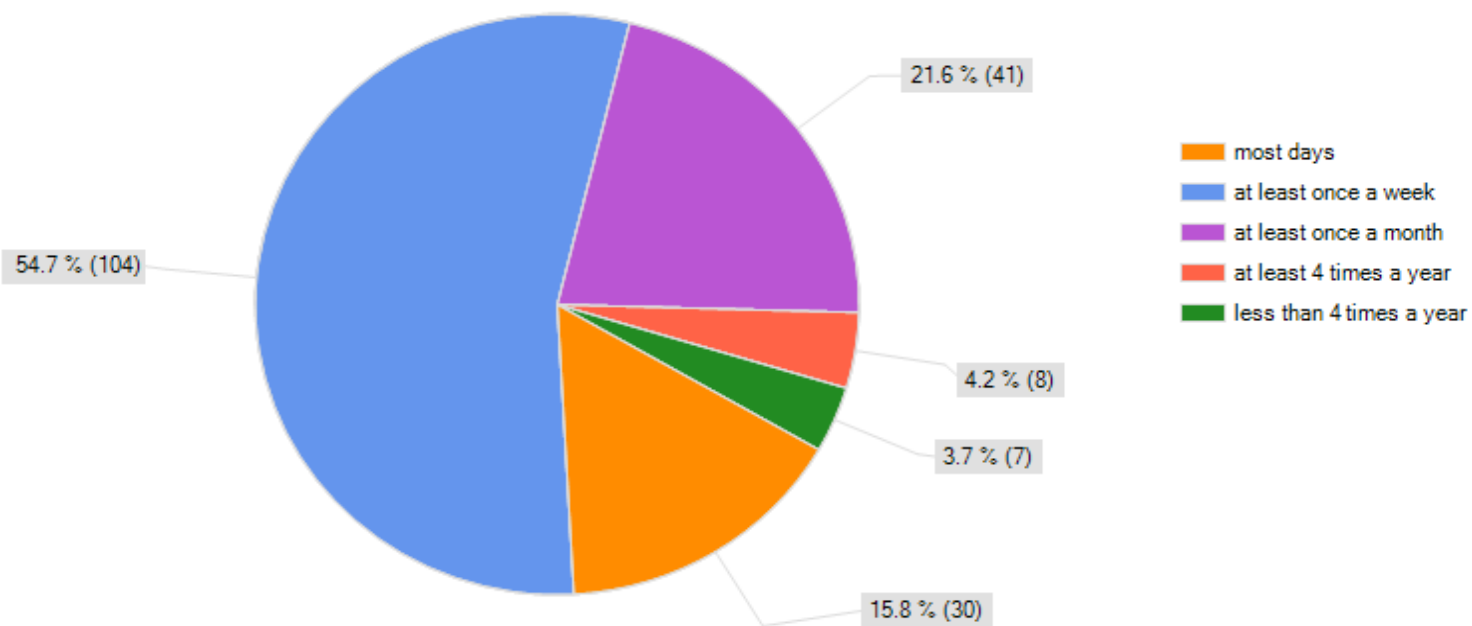
The first question asked for the first half of the respondent's postcode. The majority live in the valley of the Deben or immediately adjacent to it (IP12, IP11, IP13). 9% live outside the Ipswich postcode area.

Where do respondents live?



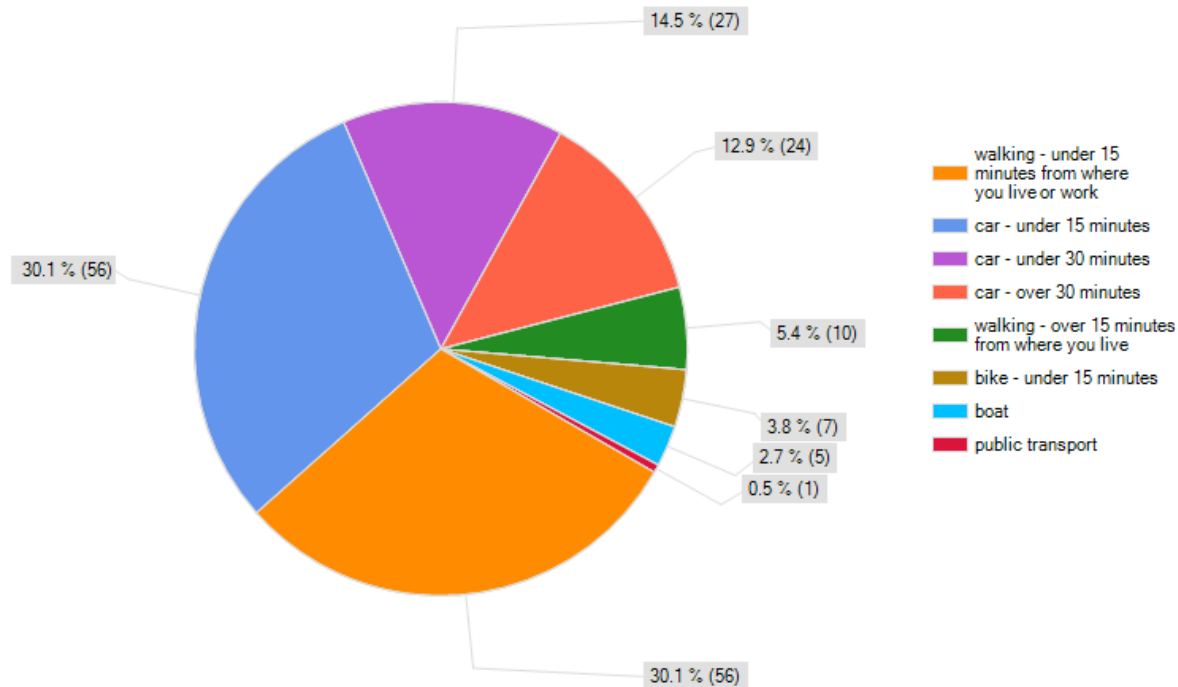
190 people responded to the question about how often they visit the river. 70% do so at least once a week.

**If you have ticked any of the boxes under Q3 or Q4 please tell us how often you use the river or river banks for some form of leisure activity.
Please tick one box**

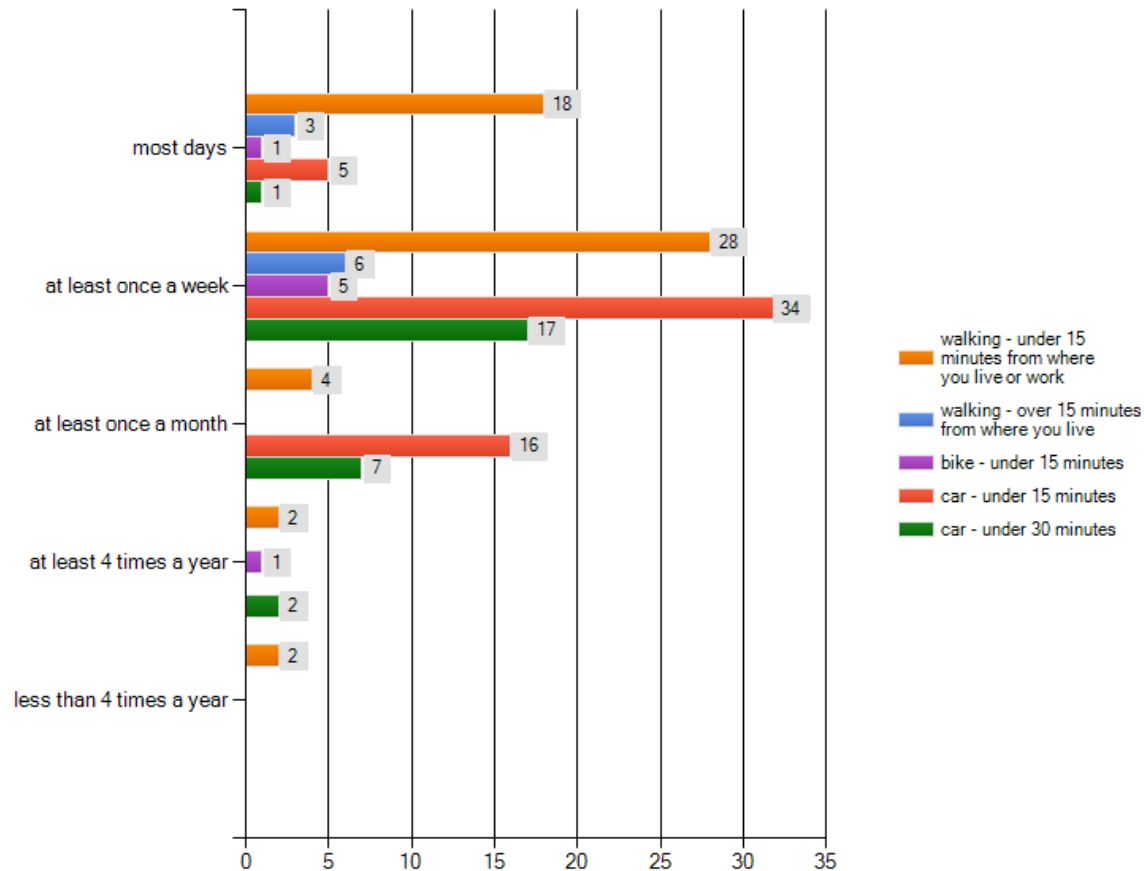


Of the 186 people who responded to the question about how they get to the river, 57% usually come by car and 35% walk.

Tell us about how you usually get to the river. Please tick one box.

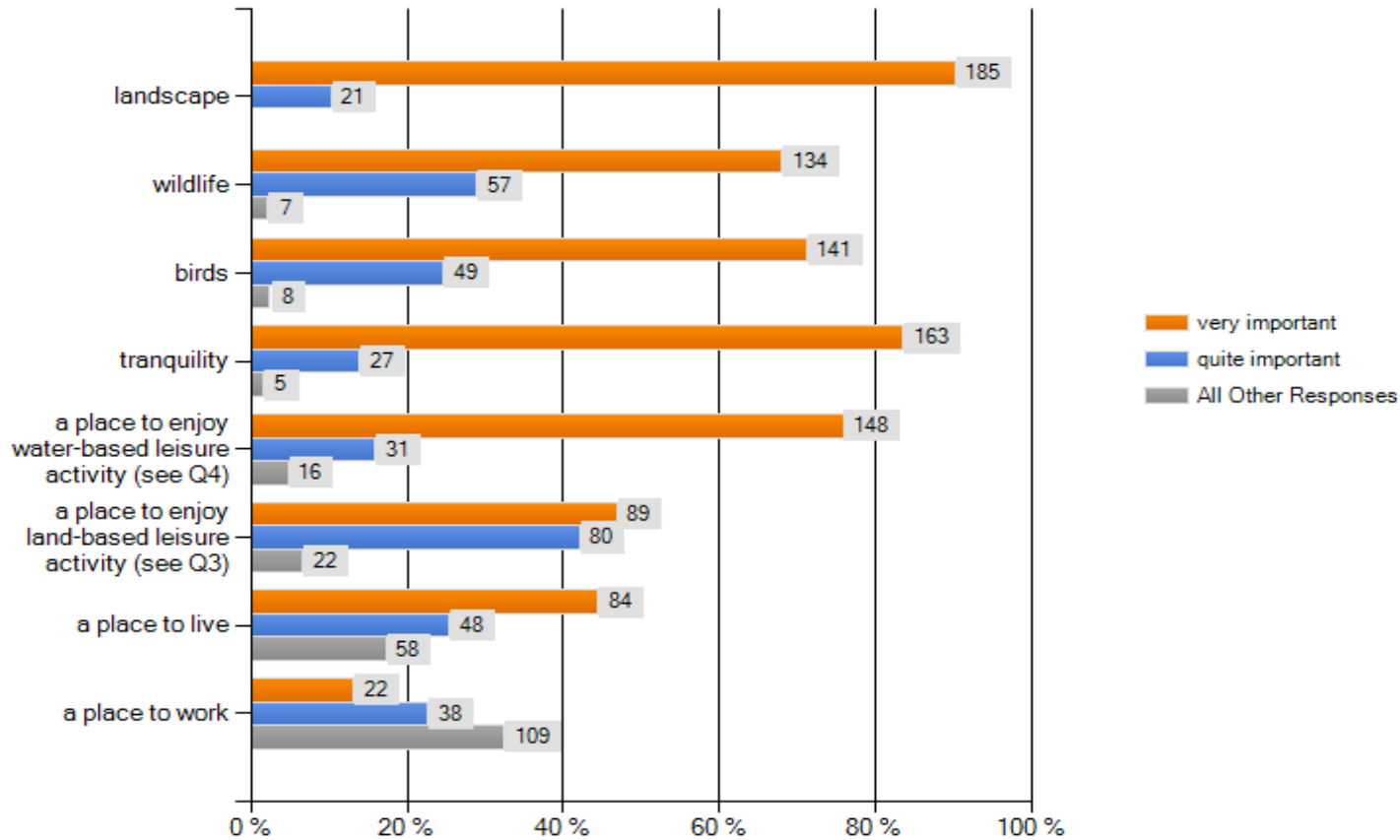


But looking at frequency of visiting and mode of getting to the river together shows that the people who use the river most usually walk or bike rather than coming by car.



206 people responded to Question 2 which asked about what people value about the river. 42 added comments – many on the lines of “The natural unspoilt, ungentrified, undeveloped environment”, some adding comments on the freedom of “A place where all can enjoy equally” – in contrast to other more crowded rivers.

**Please tell us about the things you value most about the River Deben.
There are some suggestions below, or you can add to the list and
comment in the box below the answers. Please tick one box in each row.**

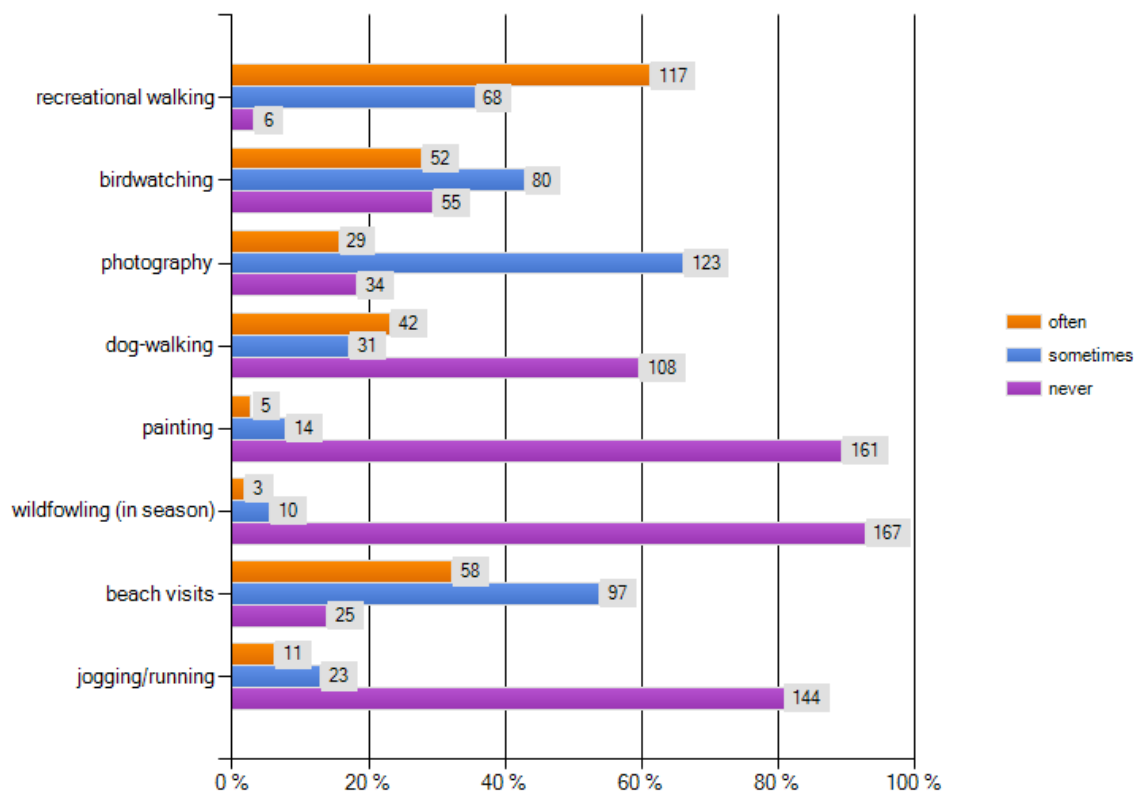


Question 3 asked about how people used the river banks.

193 people responded. Of those over 60% often walk – over 20% with dogs. About 75% watch birds . Nearly 90% visit the beaches. Over 80% never paint, go jogging or engage in wildfowling.

31 people added comments, of those 18 referred to “sitting and enjoying the landscape and river activities” in various forms - some with a picnic.

Do you use the banks of the River Deben for leisure activities? Please tick one box in each row.

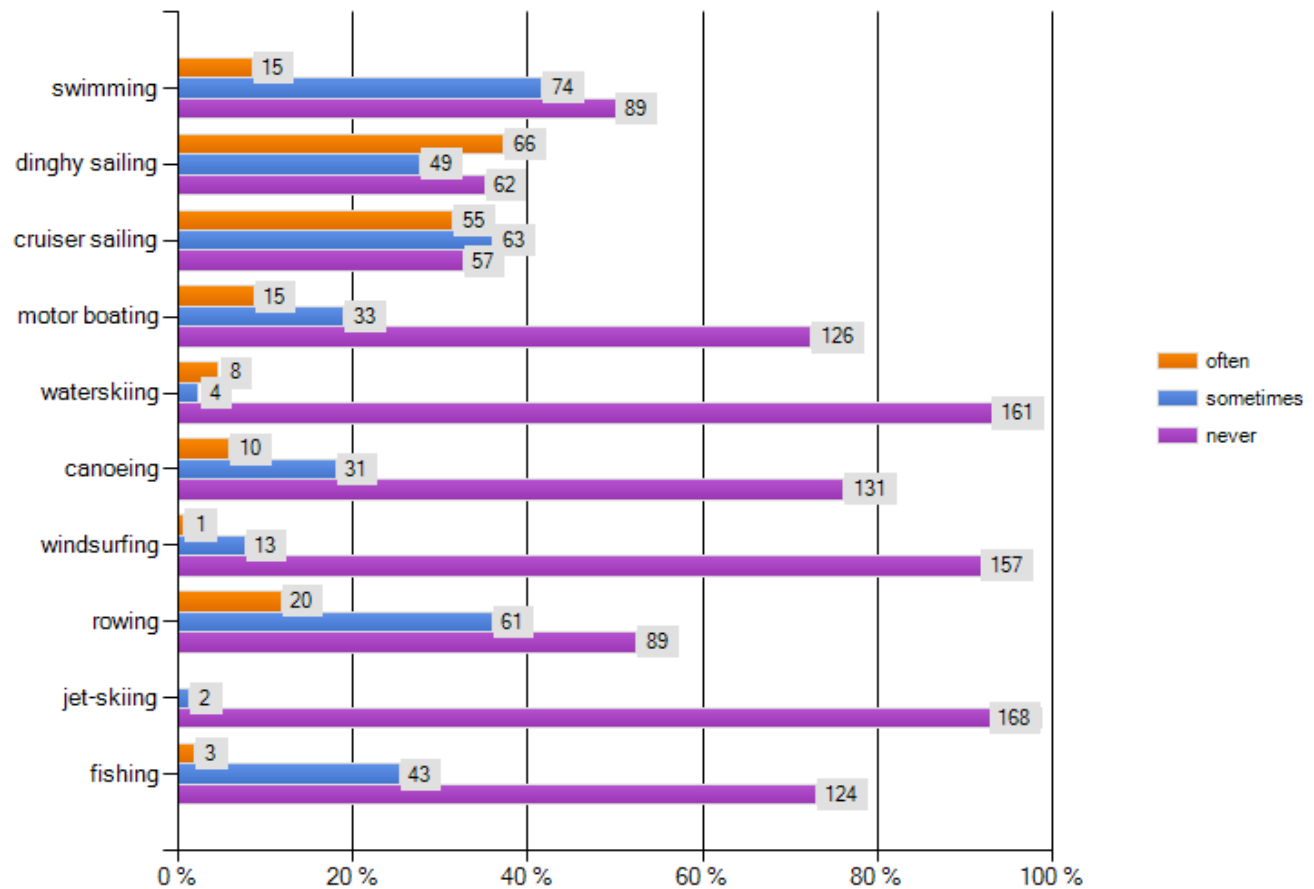


Question 4 asked about water-based activities.

188 people responded. Of those about 50% swim – but mostly not often. 64% sail dinghies and 67% sail bigger boats. 48% row. 34% use motor boats and 24% canoe. 27% fish. Waterskiers, windsurfers and jetskiers each represented less than 10% of responses.

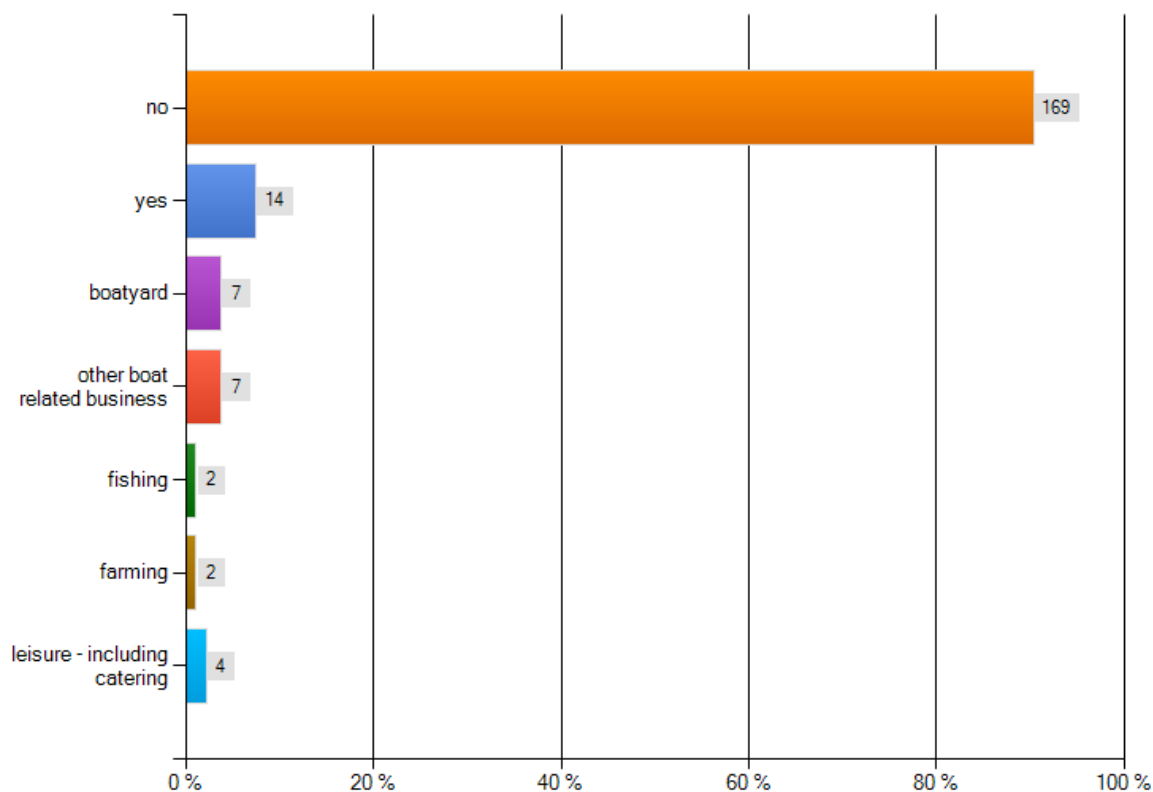
14 people added extra comments, of those 3 referred to crabbing.

Do you use the River Deben for water-based leisure activities? This question assumes that the activities may be seasonal. Please tick one box in each row.



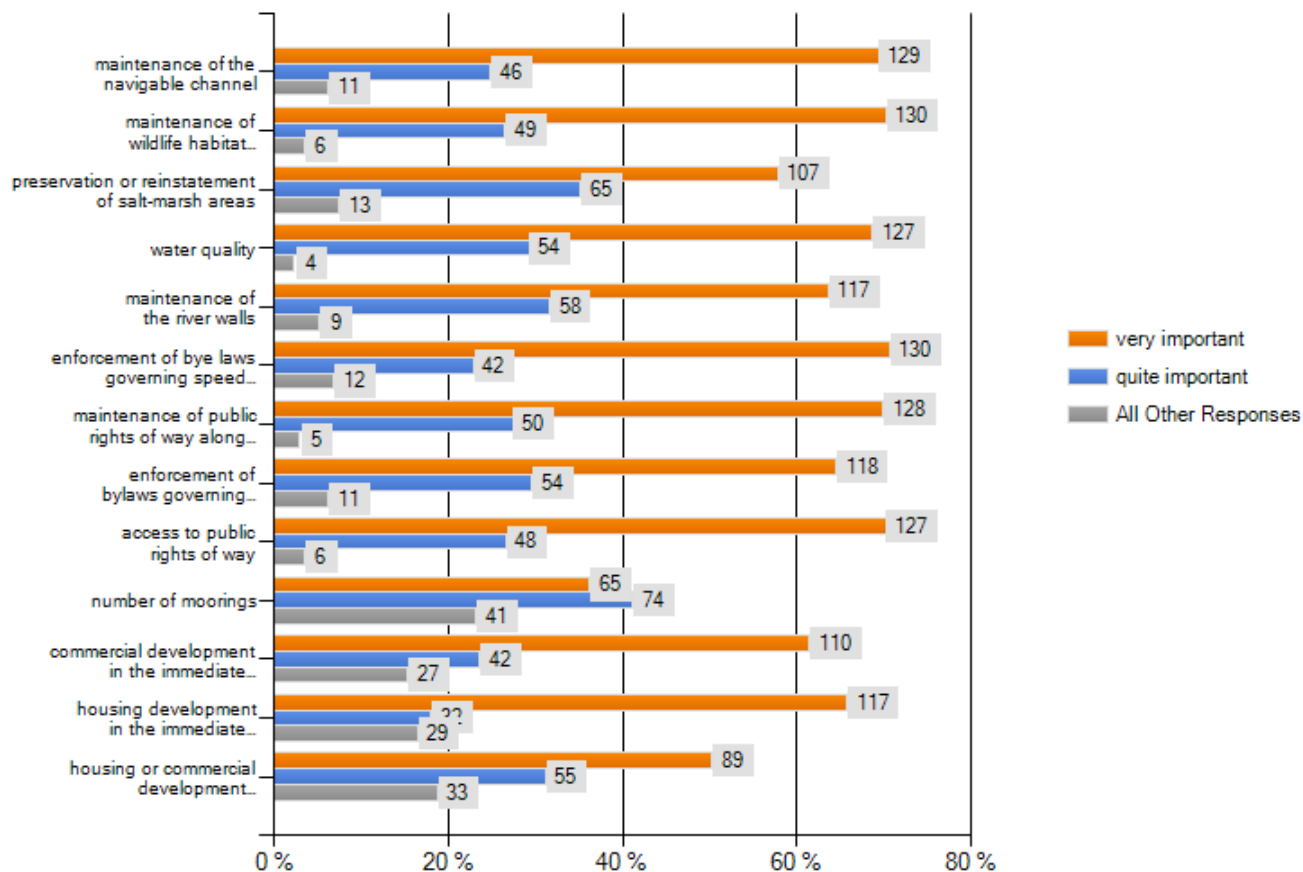
187 people responded to the question about work. Only 7.5% work in a business that is linked to the river.

Do you work in a business that relates directly to the river? Please tick yes or no. If yes please tick a second box to indicate what sort of business you are in, or comment in the box below.



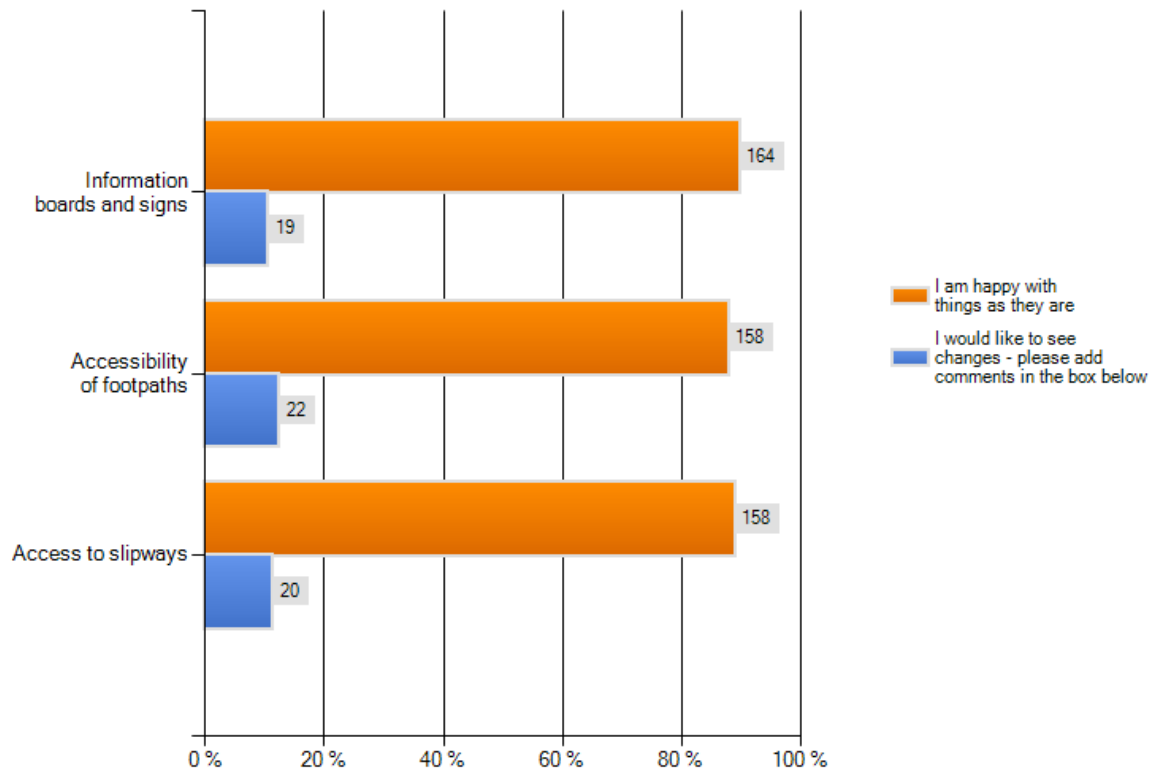
One of the purposes of the survey was to find out whether River Deben Association policies fitted with current concerns. Question 8 gave a list of issues that the RDA has in the past or is currently pursuing. Of the 187 responses to this question a large majority indicated that these issues are still important or very important. The form of the question was not designed to elicit information about why the issues were important - this will require separate, more in-depth research. 41 people added comments - 15 of those emphasised the importance of controlling housing and commercial development, 6 referred to the importance of limiting the number of moorings.

Changes to the landscape of the River Deben. Tell us which of the issues listed below matter most to you. Please tick one box in each row and comment or add any additional points in the box below.



185 people responded to Question 9 about access, over 80% indicating that they are happy with things as they are. 70 people added comments - many very detailed. Common themes include: a desire for continuity of footpaths to be improved and walks extended; information boards to be limited and located only at access points; greater clarity on access to slipways; limits to any changes that might encourage more visitors to the area – though some took the opposite view.

**Tell us what you think about arrangements for access to the river?
Please tick one box in each row and add any comments in the box below.**



93 people responded to an open question:

“Please tell us what you think about any changes to the river and its banks that you have noticed. What do you like or not like?”

Many of the comments are detailed. A minority are about changes people liked, most related to dislikes and concerns.

Common themes are summarised below :

- Silting and shallowing of the navigable channel (13)
- Removal of vegetation, damage to wildlife habitat (11)
- Control of moorings and increase in size of moored boats (10)
- Saltmarsh – degradation and regeneration (7)
- Management of dredging (7)
- Condition of footpaths, dislike of hard landscaping(5)
- Compliance with speed limits (6)
- Objections to jetskis (4)

