

Committee Report:

Trees for Climate – Survey Response Summary

Date: 4th Sept 2025

To: Leisure & Recreation Committee

From: Andrew Briggs – Ops Manager

Subject: Tree Planting Sites

Council Priority: Protect & Improve our Environment

1. Introduction

In July & August residents were surveyed regarding proposed tree planting at six community green spaces. The surveys aimed to capture frequency of site use, perceived benefits, concerns, and overall levels of support. This report summarises the findings site by site before presenting aggregated conclusions.

2. Site Reports

2.1 Southbrook Rec

- **Responses:** 4
- **Usage:** Mainly walking (75%); one respondent involved in maintenance work.
- **Perceived benefits:** Air quality (75%), shade (50%), beauty (75%), wildlife habitat (100%).
- **Concerns:** 1 comment on past tree damage and survival rates.
- **Green space impact:** 100% said planting would not impede space.
- **Support:** 100% supportive (all respondents strongly support).
- **Notes:** Suggestions included reviewing previous planting projects for success.

2.2 Akers Way

- **Responses:** 10
- **Usage:** Walking (50%), dog walking (30%), family activities (10%).
- **Perceived benefits:** Air quality (50%), shade (50%), beauty (60%), wildlife habitat (80%), noise reduction (30%).
- **Concerns:** 30% raised issues – fears about safety near roads, reduced usable space, and climbing hazards.
- **Green space impact:** 70% believed it would not impede use, 10% said yes.
- **Support:** 80% supportive (60% strongly, 20% support), 20% opposed.
- **Notes:** Several comments critical of previous tree removal for the Moredon cycle track; some strong alternative suggestions given (replanting, woodland walk style).

2.3 Tovey Road Green Space

- **Responses:** 5
- **Usage:** 100% for walking.
- **Perceived benefits:** Air quality (80%), shade (60%), beauty (100%), wildlife (100%), noise reduction (40%).
- **Concerns:** 20% concerned about traveller access damaging saplings.
- **Green space impact:** 100% said no reduction in space.
- **Support:** 100% strongly supportive.
- **Notes:** Positive suggestions included cherry and rowan trees, early planting for survival, and stronger maintenance planning.

2.4 Dorset Green

- **Responses:** 4
- **Usage:** Mainly walking (75%) and dog walking (25%).
- **Perceived benefits:** All respondents highlighted wildlife habitat, beauty, shade, and air quality.
- **Concerns:** 25% felt space could be better used for outdoor gym.
- **Green space impact:** 75% said no reduction in space, 25% yes.
- **Support:** 75% supportive, 25% opposed.
- **Notes:** Small site size flagged as limiting factor.

2.5 Cricklade Road Green Space

- **Responses:** 6
- **Usage:** 100% walking.
- **Perceived benefits:** Air quality (100%), shade (83%), beauty (67%), wildlife (67%), noise reduction (83%).
- **Concerns:** None raised.
- **Green space impact:** 83% said no impediment, 17% unsure.
- **Support:** 83% strongly supportive, 17% supportive.
- **Notes:** Suggestions for fruit trees to enhance community value.

2.6 The Venny

- **Responses:** 6
- **Usage:** Walking (50%), dog walking (33%), plus community maintenance work.
- **Perceived benefits:** High consensus on all benefits (83%).
- **Concerns:** 1 concern raised about tree placement creating secluded pathways.
- **Green space impact:** 100% said no reduction in usable space.
- **Support:** 100% strongly supportive.
- **Notes:** Suggested larger specimen trees (oak, horse chestnut) to break up space.

3. Overall Summary

Site	Responses	Support (Support + Strongly Support)	Opposition	Main Concerns
Southbrook Rec	4	100%	0%	Tree survival / damage monitoring
Akers Way	10	80%	20%	Safety, loss of usable space, past removals
Tovey Rd Green	5	100%	0%	Traveller damage to saplings
Dorset Green	4	75%	25%	Small site, preference for other uses
Cricklade Rd Green	6	100%	0%	None (one suggestion re fruit trees)
The Venny	6	100%	0%	Avoid secluded pathways

Total responses across all sites: 35

Overall support: 94% supportive (including “strongly support”).

Overall opposition: 6% opposed.

Key Themes Across Sites:

- **Broad community support** with especially strong backing at Tovey Rd, Cricklade Rd, and The Venny.
- **Concerns** mainly focus on:
 - Tree survival/maintenance (Southbrook, Tovey).
 - Safety and usable space (Akers Way, Dorset Green, The Venny).
 - Past tree loss from other projects (Akers Way).
- **Positive suggestions:**
 - Use of flowering/fruit trees for added community and biodiversity benefit.
 - Strategic placement to avoid creating secluded paths.
 - Ensure long-term maintenance and survival rates.

4. Recommendations

1. Proceed with planting at all six sites, recognising resident support.
2. Prioritise maintenance planning. I.e. watering, protection from damage, and review of past planting success rates.
3. Incorporate community preferences. Consider fruit trees (where appropriate), seasonal species (cherry/rowan), and larger specimens (where appropriate).
4. Mitigate concerns, careful siting to preserve open space, avoid secluded paths, and coordinate with enforcement teams to prevent traveller damage.
5. Engage community groups – involve residents in monitoring, caring for, and making use of the planted trees.