

OTTER TRAIL GROUP

2023

Results of Survey about Attitudes to Cycling in the Otter Valley



Conducted by
The Otter Trail Group

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Executive Summary

This report summarises the 409 responses to a questionnaire circulated by the Otter Trail Group in March/April 2023.

The questionnaire sought to document the concerns of cyclists in the area and to solicit suggestions as to how the cycling environment might be improved.

Concerns of Cyclists

By far the two biggest concerns of cyclists were that they felt unsafe cycling, and the lack of safe routes.

- 73% of respondent indicated that they felt unsafe cycling in the Otter Valley,
- 79% said that lack of safe routes puts them off cycling.

Suggestions

The most popular suggestion (raised by 49% of respondents) was for dedicated or shared use cycle paths. The next most popular suggestion was to implement measures to make it safer cycling on the roads in the area.

- 49% wanted more off road or traffic free cycle routes, many citing the Feniton, Ottery, Sidmouth route.
- 32% wanted to see a range of changes to deliver improved road safety such as - signage, and reduced traffic speeds.

Introduction

In 2011 Ottery St Mary received National Lottery Funding via Sustrans' Connect-2 Programme which allowed DCC to establish the Coleridge Bridge between Ottery Town Centre and King's School. This provided a safe route from the town to the school avoiding a narrow bridge on the main road.

At the same time the Otter Trail Group was formed with a view to developing an off-road shared-use trail along the old rail line between Feniton, Ottery and Sidmouth.

- The Otter Trail Group - <http://ottertrail.org>

The Coleridge Bridge Project received the greatest community support in the Southwest and as a reward in 2014 Sustrans undertook a feasibility study of the Feniton, Ottery, Sidmouth route. They recommend that the Trail be constructed in seven distinct sections.

Since then, the Otter Trail Group have undertaken more detailed studies of the most promising sections of the route, and together with DCC have made an application for grant funding for construction.

The Survey

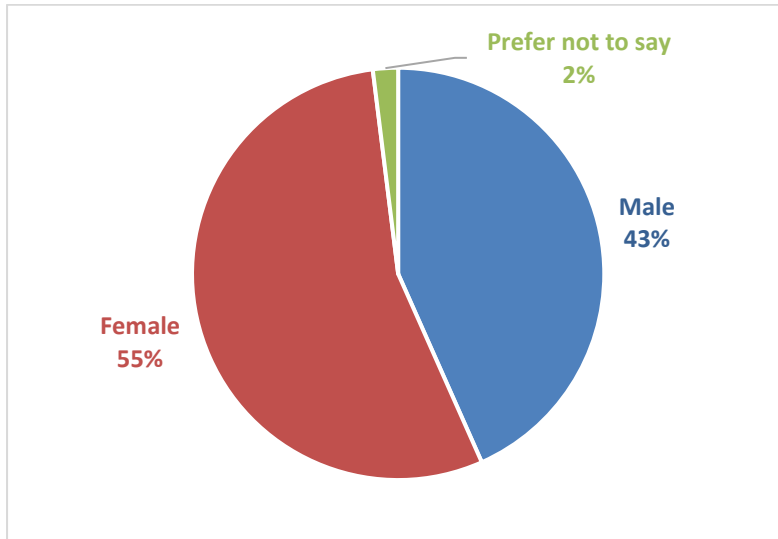
The present survey was undertaken to review the concerns of cyclists in East Devon and to seek their views on what might be done to improve conditions for cycling.

We received 409 responses from an on-line questionnaire which was accessible during March and April 2023. All responses were anonymous. The full set of responses are available on request and are summarised below.

Responses

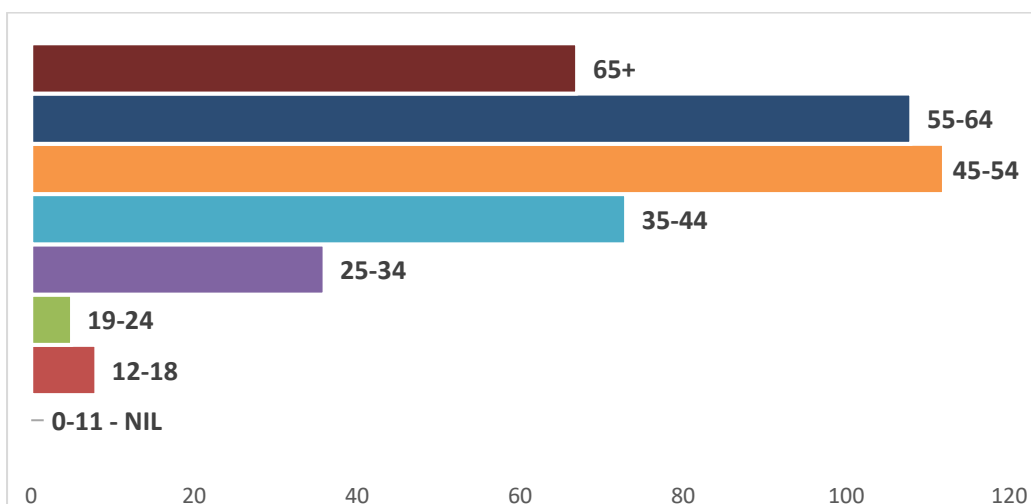
1. Gender

Graph showing Gender of respondents.



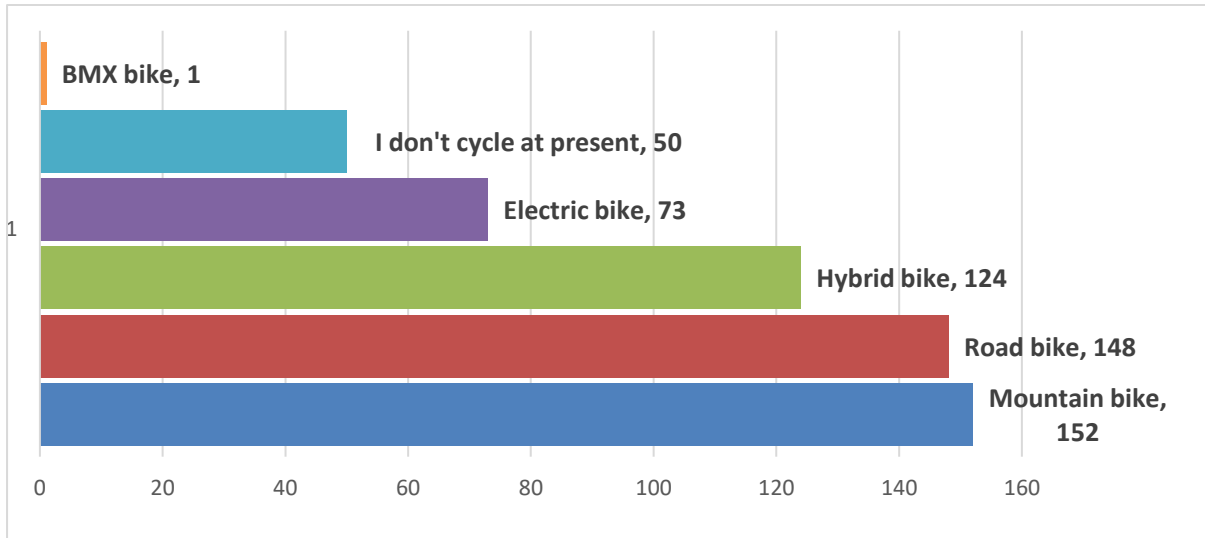
2. Age

Graph showing number and age of respondents.



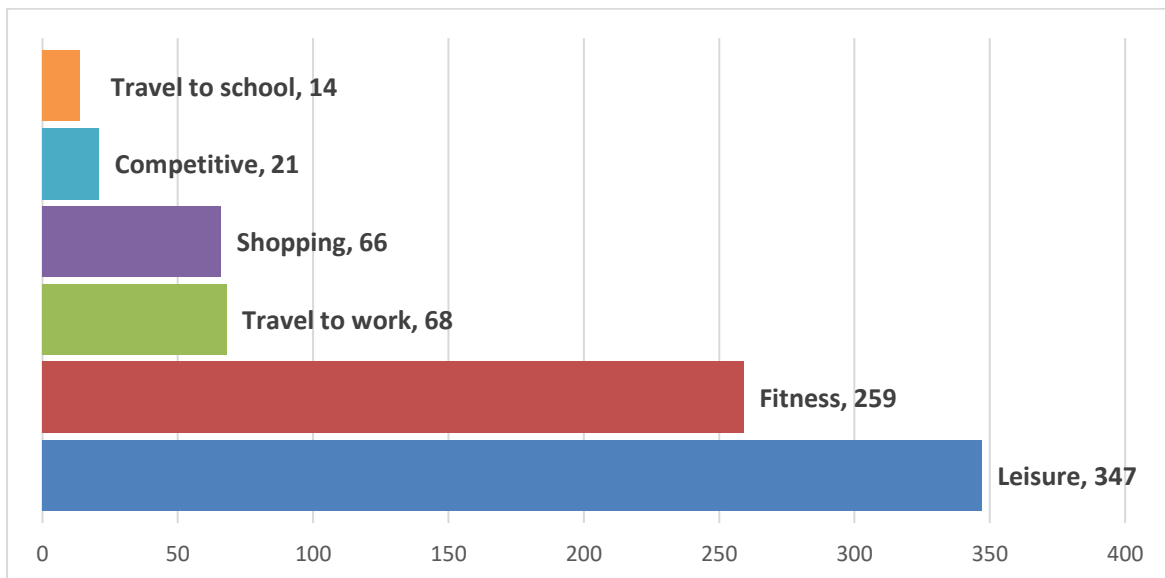
3. Type of Bike

Graph showing types of bikes ridden by number of respondents.



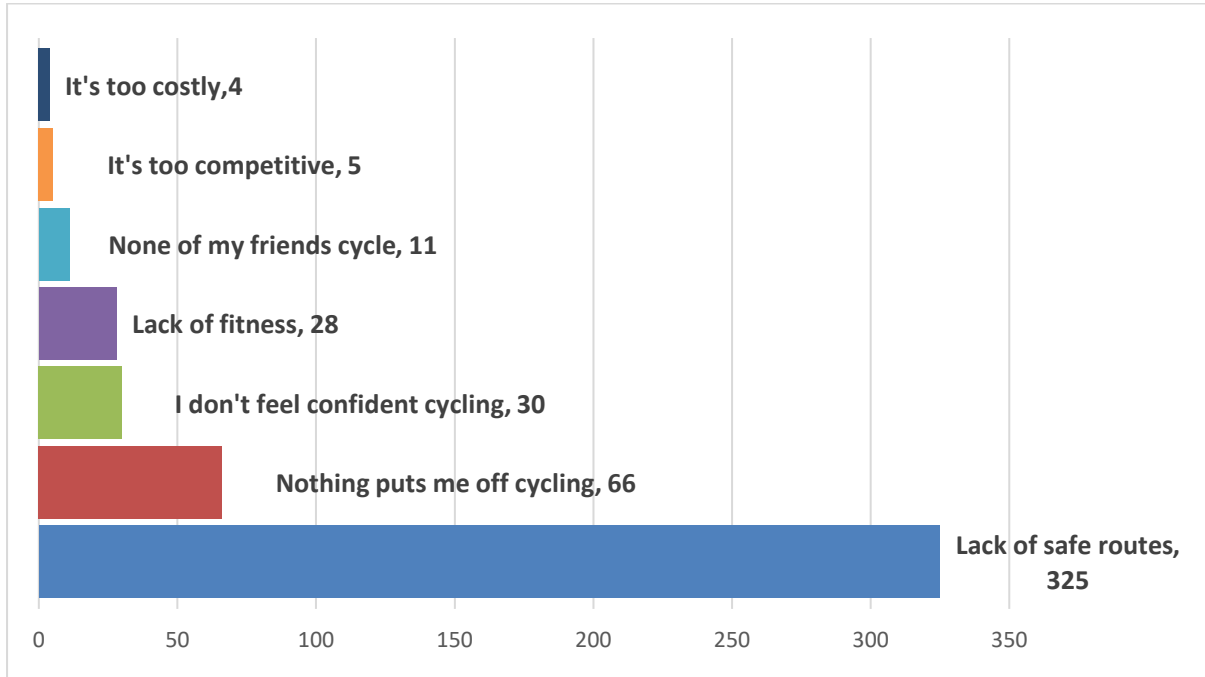
4. Why do you Cycle?

Graph showing number of respondents who ticked each type of bike.



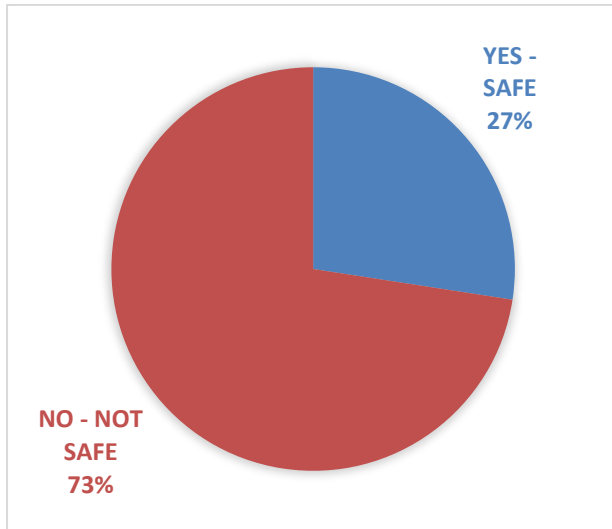
5. Is there anything that puts you off cycling?

Graph showing number of respondents who ticked each reason.



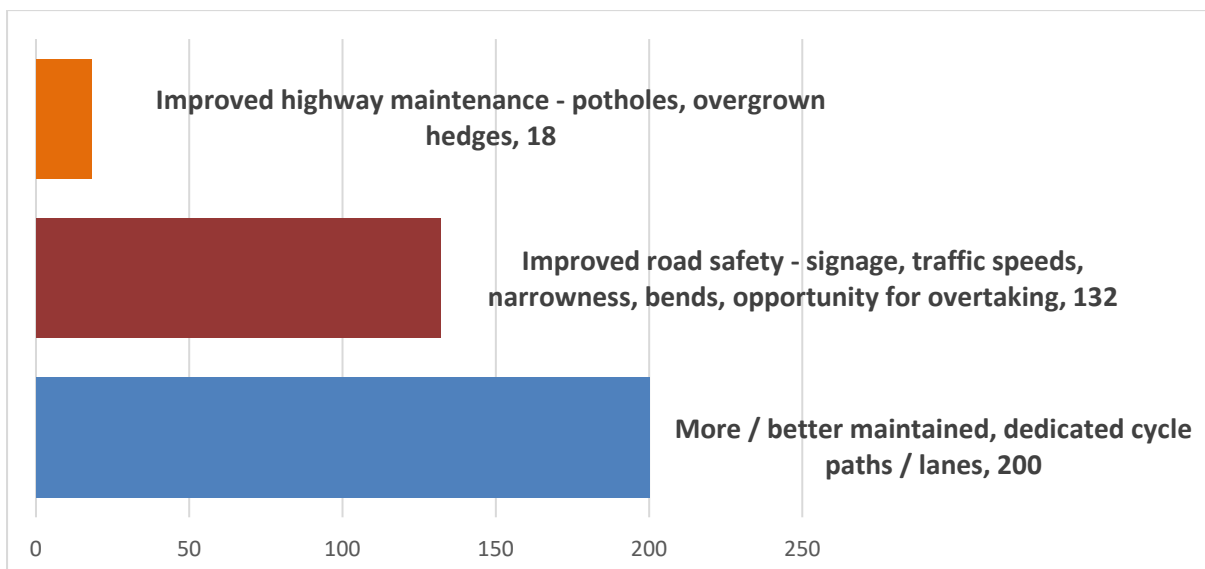
6. Do you feel safe cycling in the Otter Valley and surroundings?

Graph showing proportion of respondents who indicated their feelings on this.



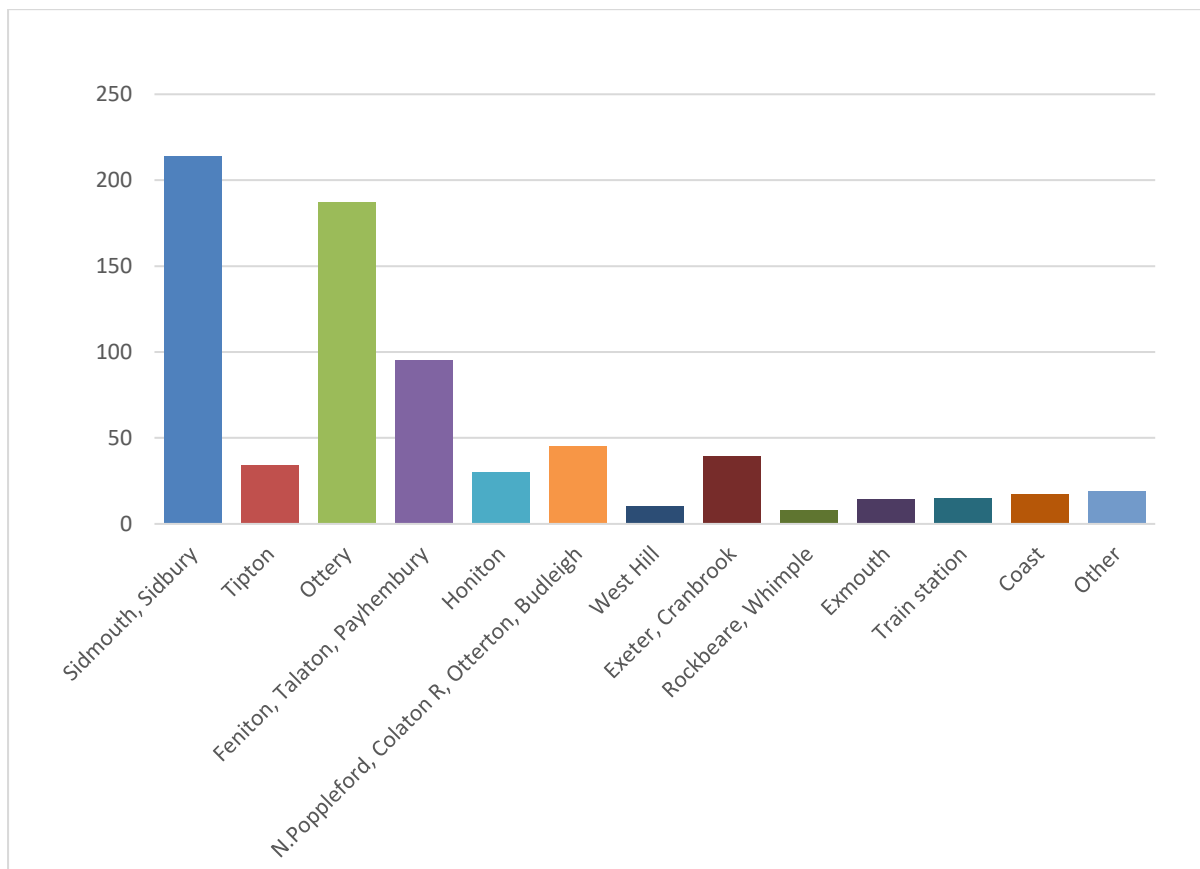
If not, what would make you feel safer?

Graph showing number of respondents suggesting what would make them feel safer cycling.



7. If more cycle routes existed where would you like to cycle from and to?

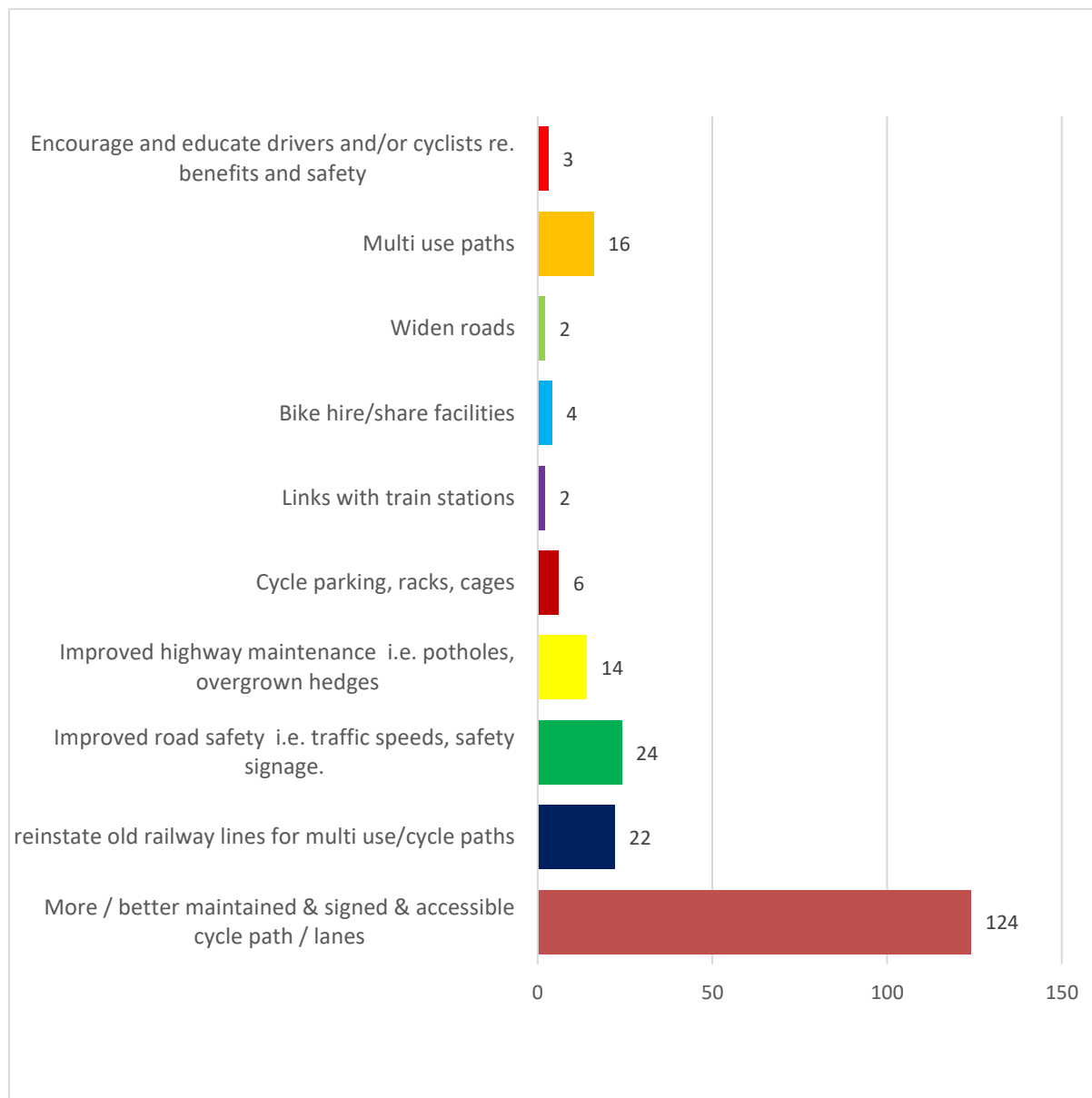
Graph showing number of respondents with suggestions for various destinations.



As this was an open question with a wide variety of responses we have amalgamated some destinations in the same areas to provide a clearer picture.

8. Do you have any other suggestions for improving cycling in the Otter Valley?

Graph showing number of respondents with suggestions for improving cycling in the Otter Valley.



This was an open question and a wide variety of responses were received. We have summarised these responses into a number of categories to provide a clearer picture.

Conclusions

Both women and men were keen to participate in the survey, and a range of adult ages were represented. A small number of teenagers also took part.

There were different types of bikes ridden, including e-bikes, road bikes, hybrid bikes and mountain bikes. Most people cycled for fitness and leisure, with smaller numbers for work or shopping.

One of the most notable findings shows that a huge majority of people were put off cycling by a lack of safe routes, and 73% of people did not feel safe cycling in the Otter valley at present. More than half of respondents felt a dedicated cycle path would make them feel safer cycling.

There were many locations people would like to cycle between. The most commonly cited destinations include Sidmouth, Ottery St Mary and Feniton. An overwhelming majority of respondents felt that a dedicated cycle/multi-use path would improve cycling in the Otter Valley.

Further Information

For further information please contact the Otter Trail Group:

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