



St Annes Event Space.

Consultation Report: August 2023.

「
ps
」



Headline findings.



Markets (Food/Artisan/Christmas Markets) are the most preferred events that respondents would like to see in the new Events Space



Opinions are fairly divided over whether the current amount of seating in the Square is about right or too few



Almost three-quarters feel one or more of the potential accessibility options would be helpful; a slope was chosen as helpful by the majority of respondents



Opinions on whether to keep the domes are divided, although a majority of those consulted (59%) indicated that they would remove some or all of the domes



Of the proposed ideas to shelter from the wind, a temporary bespoke design is the most popular



The majority of respondents:

- agree that **parking provision** in the area by Natwest Bank is **important**
- **support temporarily relocating the bus services** when an event is to be scheduled
- **agree** that **enhanced lighting** will attract visitors and extend the night-time economy whilst helping people feel safe
- **agree** that an **upgraded CCTV system** in St Annes Square is **important** to deter crime and anti-social behaviour



The Kite Festival and St Annes Carnival were the most supported events amongst respondents, and the majority of comments about previous events were positive

Introducing the consultation.



What was the consultation on?

The St Annes Town Centre and the Island Masterplan aims to improve the appearance of the town centre, promote public transport and retain the features of the Conservation areas. The aim of the Events Space, part of the Masterplan, is to provide a dedicated events space within St Annes Square.

For more information on the St Annes Event Space project and the Masterplan, please visit <https://new.fylde.gov.uk/stannesregen/>

The aim of the consultation is to gather observations, comments and questions about the project.



The approach

Fylde Council developed and hosted an online survey to understand people's views on particular aspects of the proposed plan.



232 responses were received to the consultation

The online survey was available to complete between 19 July and 11 August 2023. Of the 232 responses to the consultation, 90% of all respondents provided FY8 postcodes and over half (54%) of respondents gave an FY8 1 or FY8 2 postcode. 95% of all respondents gave their home postcode and 4% said the postcode provided was for their business.

Responses to the consultation.



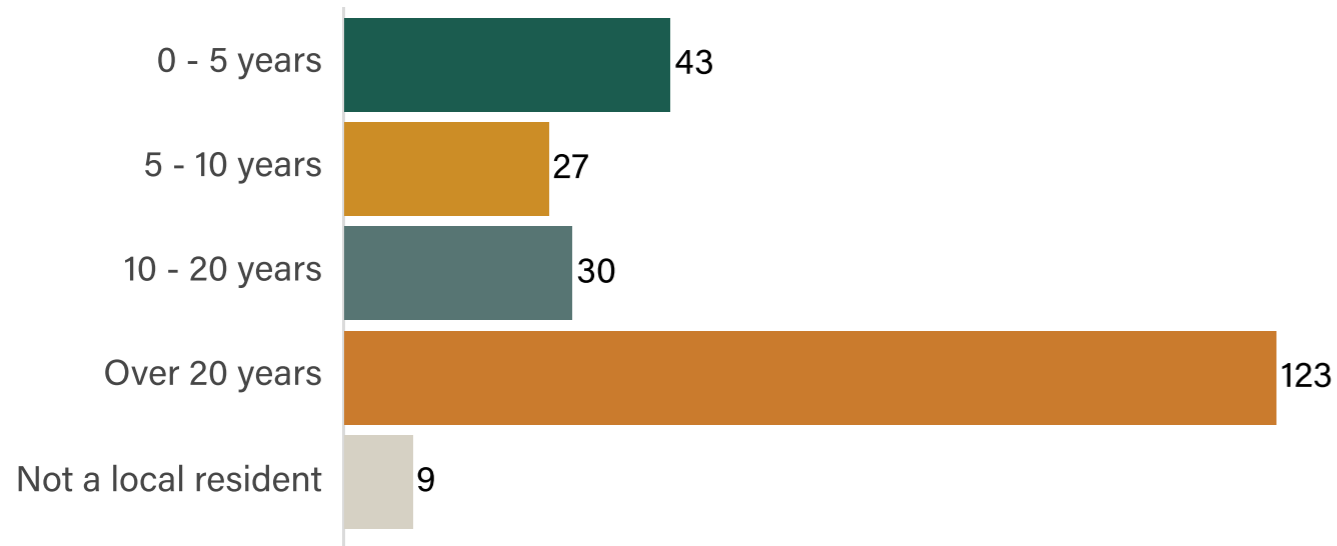
232 responses to the consultation



Half of all respondents (53%) have lived here for over 20 years

96% of all responses were from local residents

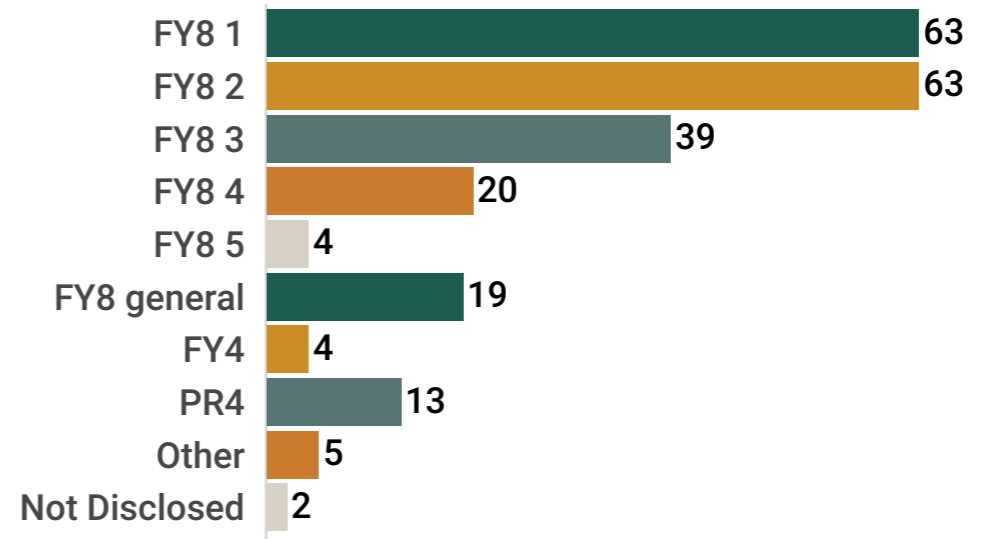
Q: "How long have you lived here?"



9 in 10 of all respondents gave an FY8 postcode

With over half (54%) giving an FY8 1 or FY8 2 postcode

Postcodes provided by respondents (232 respondents)



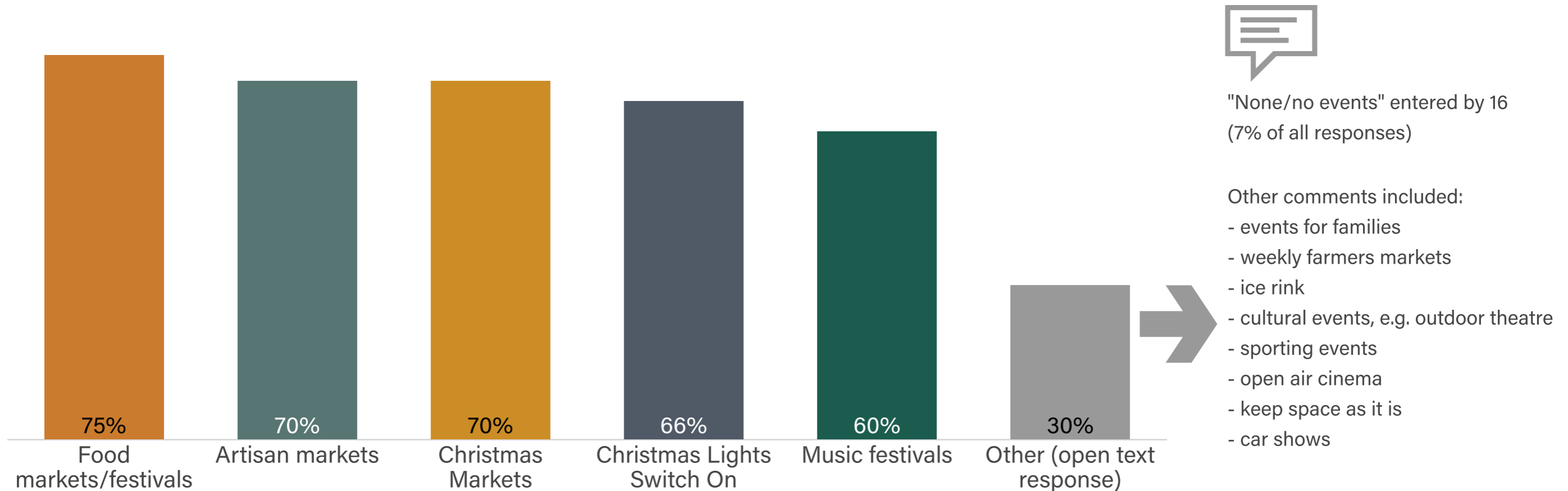
Almost all gave their home postcode; just 9 respondents said the postcode they provided was for their business

8 gave FY8 postcodes; 1 gave a PR4 postcode

Events: Markets are the most preferred events that respondents would like to see in the Events Space.

Q1. What types of events would you like to see in this space?*

(Base: all respondents = 230; more than option could be chosen)

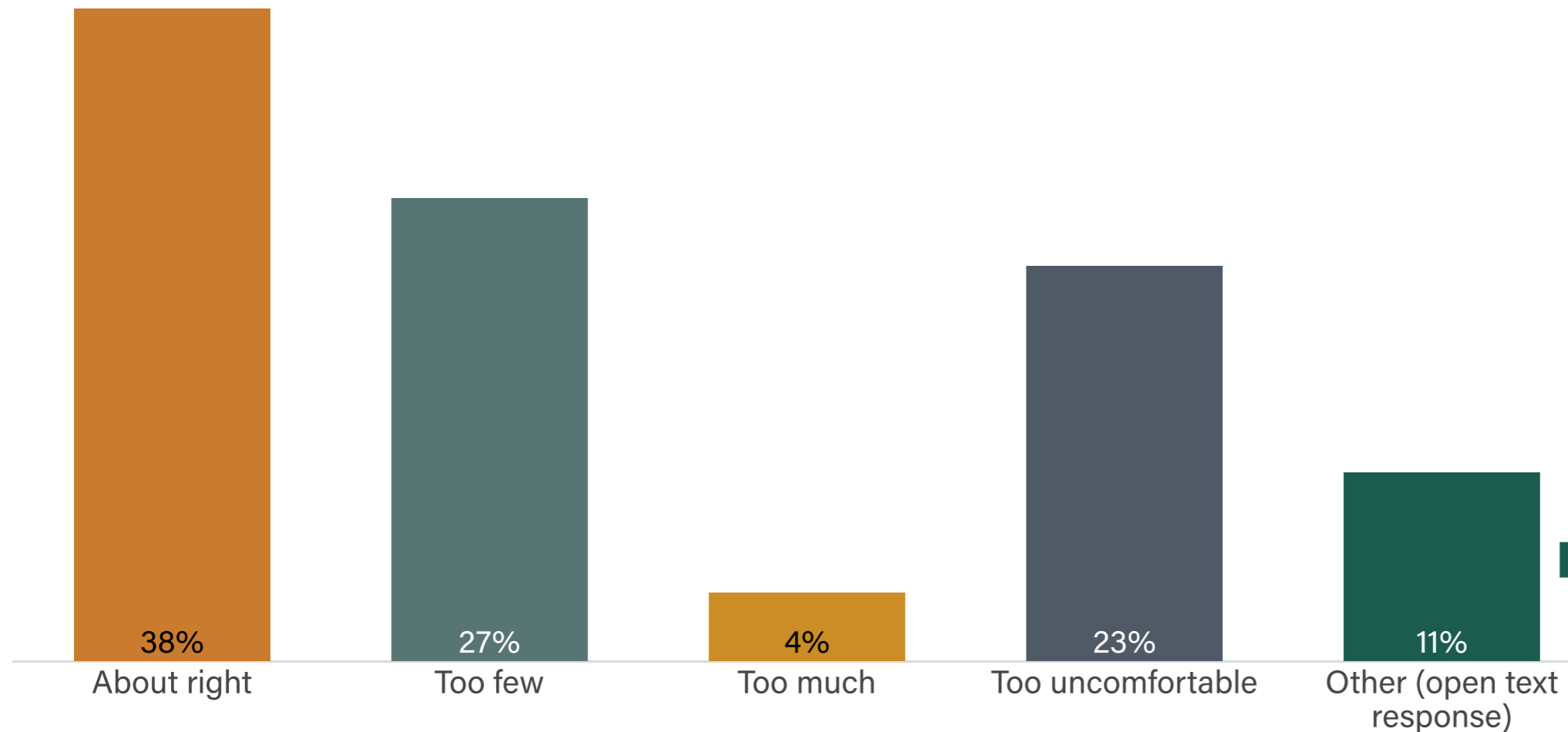



*Full question text: The Events Space (Clifton Drive to Orchard Road) features in the Masterplan for St Annes which was agreed in 2022 following extensive consultation with businesses, residents and county highways. It is central and visible from the main road and promenade, to attract people into the town. The different height levels allow natural viewing points. The space is designed to be flexible to accommodate different size events, the larger ones requiring temporary road closure. What types of events would you like to see in this space?

Seating: Opinions are fairly divided over whether the current amount of seating in the Square is about right or too few.

Q2. The plan is to update the seating and ensure it is attractive, durable and accessible. Do you think the amount of seating in the Square at present is...?

(Base: all respondents = 230; more than option could be chosen)



 Almost a quarter feel the current seating is too uncomfortable

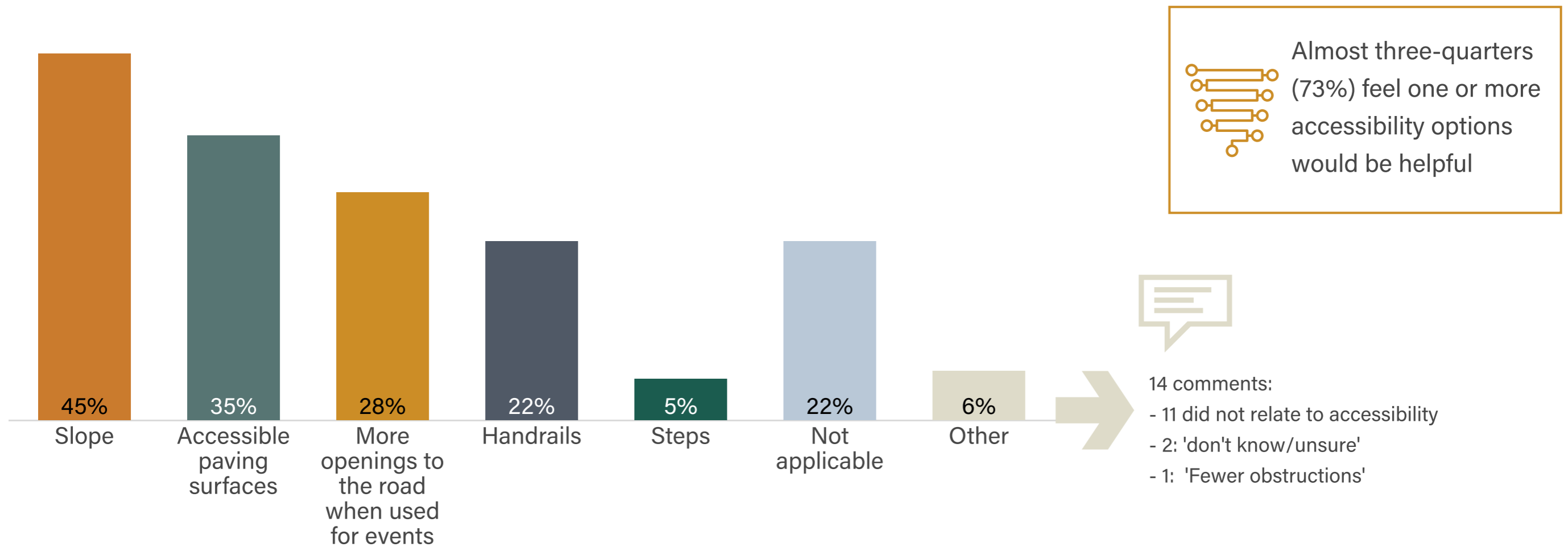


- Comments include:
- cafes provide additional seating
 - current seating is not attractive
 - steel benches uncomfortable
 - dislike blue domes
 - if domes are removed, would need more seating

Accessibility: 45% feel that a slope would be helpful to them in moving through the different levels of the Event Space.

Q3. Which of the following would be helpful to you in moving through the Events Space from one level to another?

(Base: all respondents = 231; more than option could be chosen)

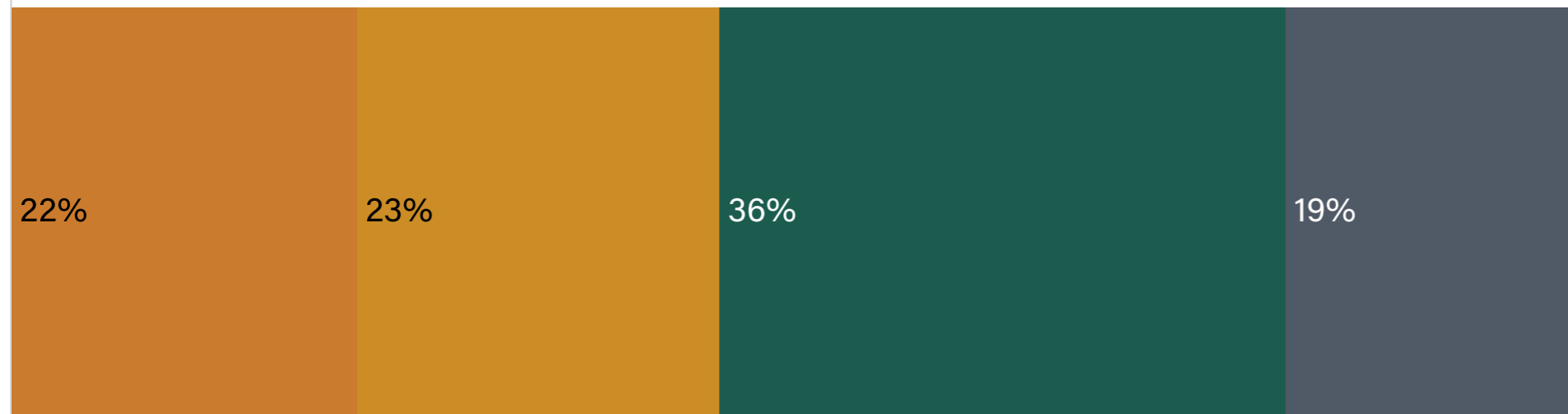


Domes: Opinions are divided over whether to retain the domes, although a majority of those consulted (59%) indicated that they would remove some or all of the domes.

Over a third of respondents (36%) would remove all the domes, just over a fifth (22%) would retain all of the domes and a further fifth of respondents (23%) would only retain some.

Q4. The domes provide a shelter from inclement weather, seating and a space for pop up shops. However, they can also attract undesirable behaviour. Would you....?

(Base: all respondents = 230; single choice only)



'Other' comments include:

- if removing, will need alternative shelter from wind and rain
- domes are outdated
- deal with anti-social behaviour, e.g. install monitored CCTV in the area, PCSOs/police
- install traditional canopies over shop fronts

● Retain all of the domes ● Retain some of the domes ● Retain none of the domes ● Other

Parking: Two-thirds agree that parking provision in the area by Natwest Bank is important.

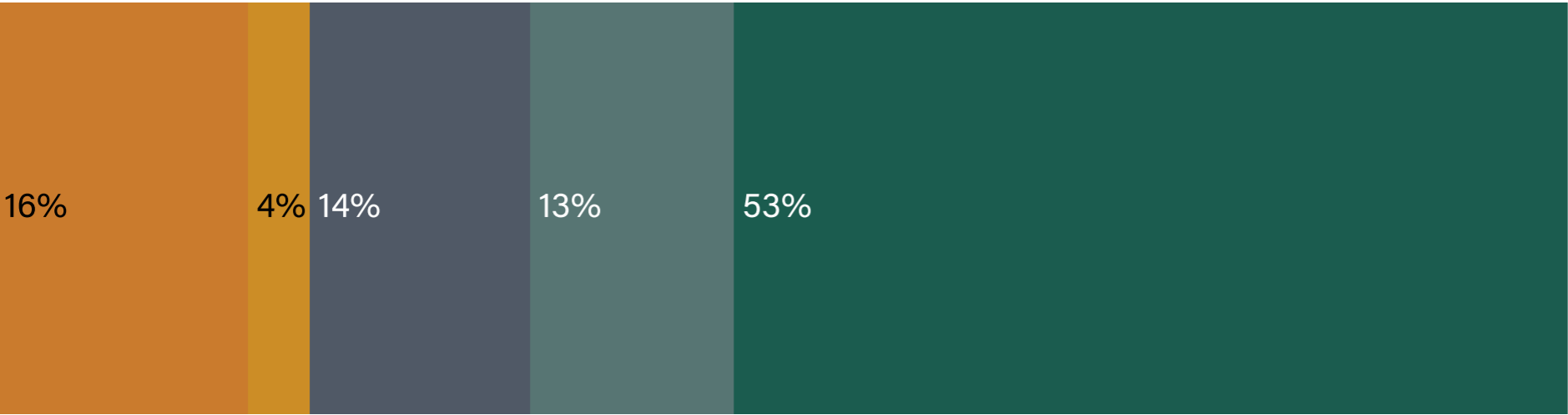
Q5. The plan retains the existing parking area by the Natwest Bank when the events space is not in use. Do you agree that parking provision here is important?

(Base: all respondents = 232; single choice only)



Observations

Disagree ←————→ Agree



● 1 - Strongly Disagree ● 2 ● 3 ● 4 ● 5 - Strongly Agree

Two-thirds of all respondents (67%) agree that retaining parking provision in this area is important; almost a fifth (19%) disagree that this is important.

Respondents from the FY8 1 postcode are slightly more likely to feel this is important (although this difference is not statistically significant):

- 71% from FY8 1 agree
- 67% from FY8 2 agree
- 64% from all other postcodes agree

Most comments about parking refer to the need to keep parking provision, particularly for access to shops and for disabled/elderly residents.

104 respondents provided a comment in response to "Q6. If you wish to make comments on question 5, please use the box below". Comments have been coded into themes; one comment may be included in more than one theme. The three most common themes and example comments:



**Parking already difficult in Square/
need parking for shops (39 comments)**



Parking is vital to ensure people use the square. It is already a challenge to find a parking space most times you try and visit the square.



Need accessible parking (22 comments)



The plans appear to make it harder for disabled people, of which there are many, to park and access the centre.



**Should be no parking in the Square/enough
parking elsewhere (20 comments)**



Open the space up. Car parking makes it look horrible. The square should be a spectacular place, not a car park!!

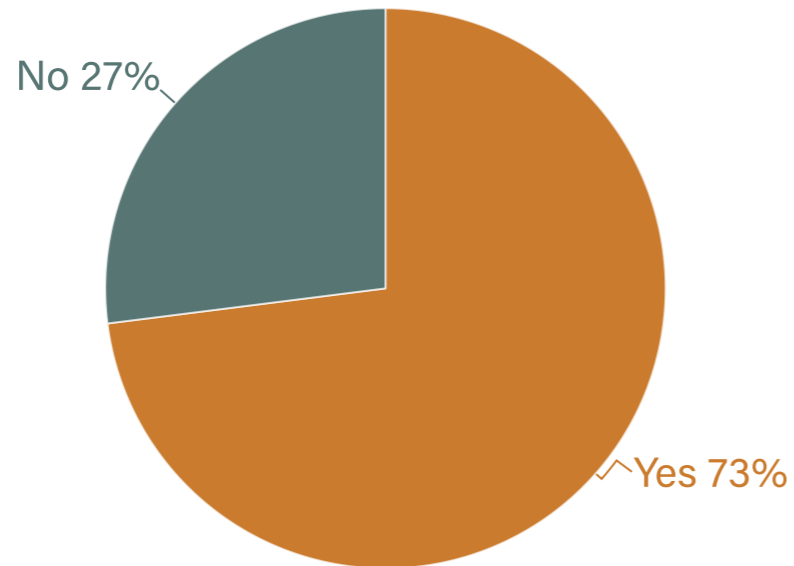
Other themes include:

- Multi-storey car park under-used/needs improving/needs better signage (12 comments)
- Concern over traffic flow/closing roads (8 comments)
- Parking should be free/free for residents (6 comments)

Transport: Almost three-quarters (73%) support temporarily relocating the bus services when an event is to be scheduled.

Q7. When an Event is to be scheduled do you support the bus services being temporarily relocated outside Boots?*

(Base = all respondents = 232; single choice only)



Observations

Local residents who have lived here for more than 20 years are less likely to support the temporary relocation of the bus services:

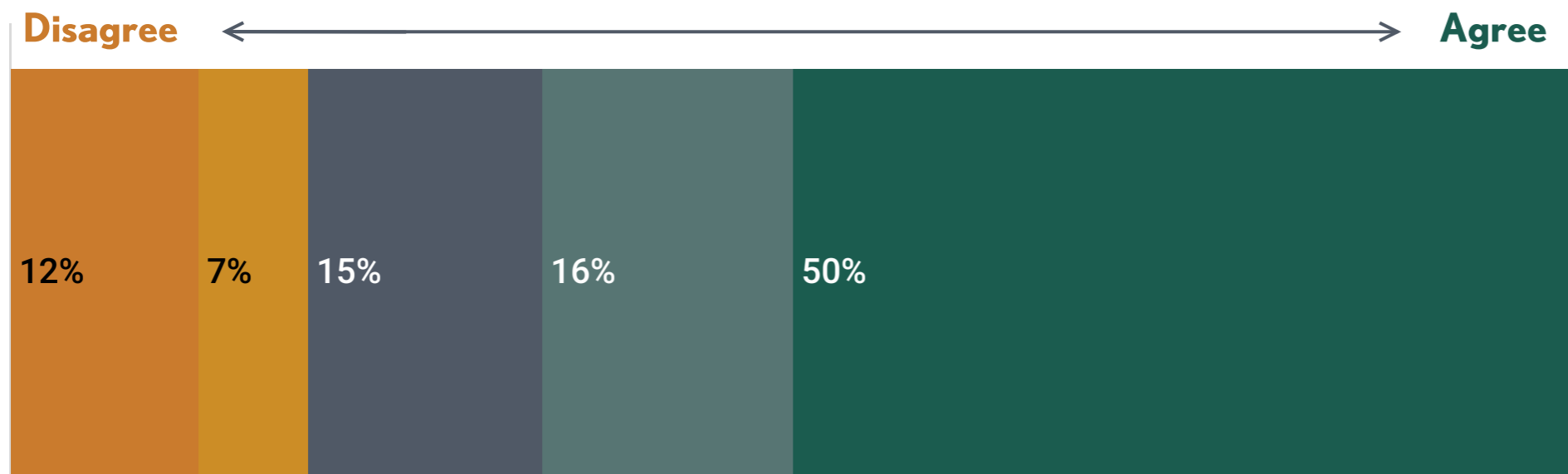
- 65% of those who have lived here more than 20 years support the temporary relocation
- 82% of those who have lived here less than 20 years support the temporary relocation

*Full question text: The Masterplan provides for the bus layby outside Tesco Express to be relocated to outside Boots, to improve connectivity between bus and rail services. This is the longer-term vision when funding is made available for the remainder of the Square. To facilitate use of the Events Square in the medium term there will be the occasional need to move the bus stop for nos 11, 17, 68, 76 and 78. When an Event is to be scheduled do you support the bus services being temporarily relocated outside Boots?

Lighting: Two-thirds agree that enhanced lighting will attract visitors and extend the night-time economy whilst helping people feel safe.

Q8. Do you agree that enhanced lighting will attract visitors and extend the night-time economy whilst helping people feel safe?

(Base: all respondents = 232; single choice only)



● 1 - Strongly Disagree ● 2 ● 3 ● 4 ● 5 - Strongly Agree



Observations

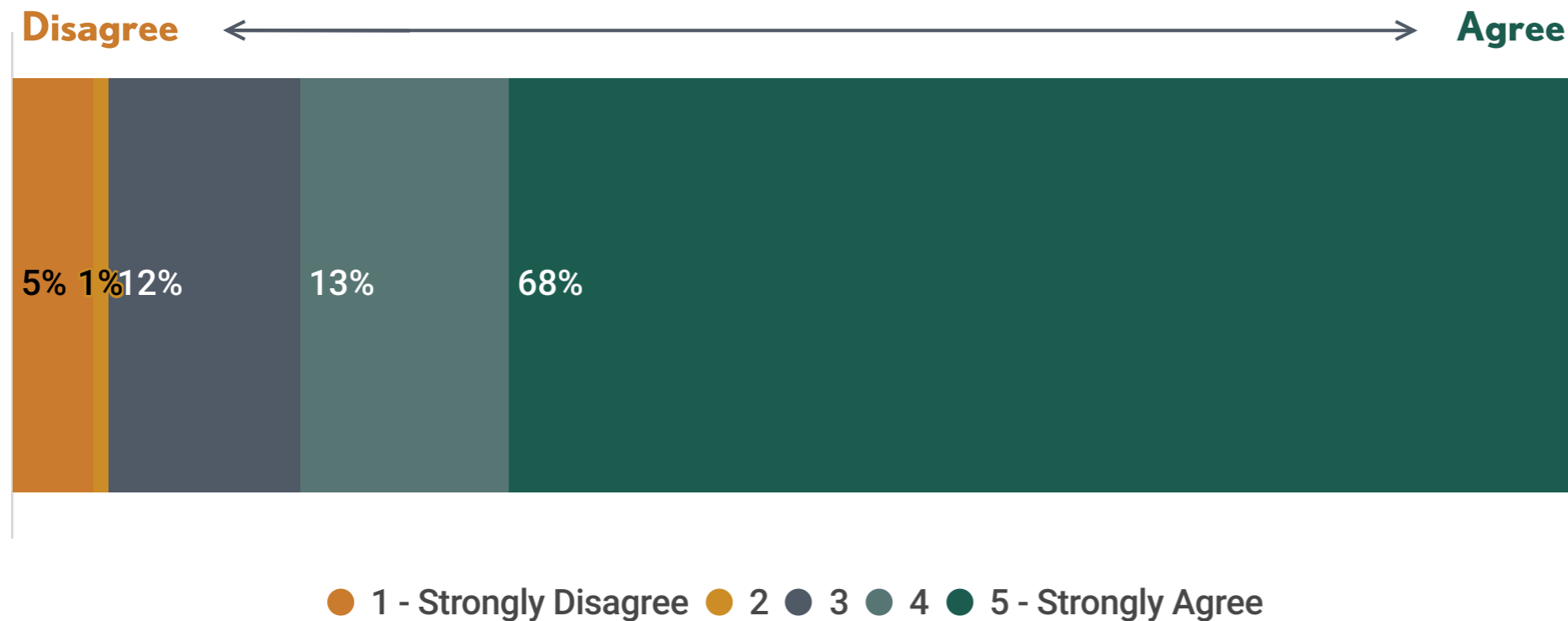
Two-thirds of all respondents (66%) agree overall and a fifth (19%) disagree.

*Full question text: The proposal is to create a bespoke lighting scheme in the Events Square and to equip the space with power and utilities to provide a revitalised and more connected town centre. Side streets also require improved lighting. Do you agree that enhanced lighting will attract visitors and extend the night-time economy whilst helping people feel safe?

CCTV: 8 in 10 agree that an upgraded CCTV system in St Annes Square is important to deter crime and anti-social behaviour.

Q9. The CCTV system in and around St Annes Square will be upgraded with new panoramic cameras installed. Do you agree this is important to deter crime and anti-social behaviour?

(Base: all respondents = 232; single choice only)



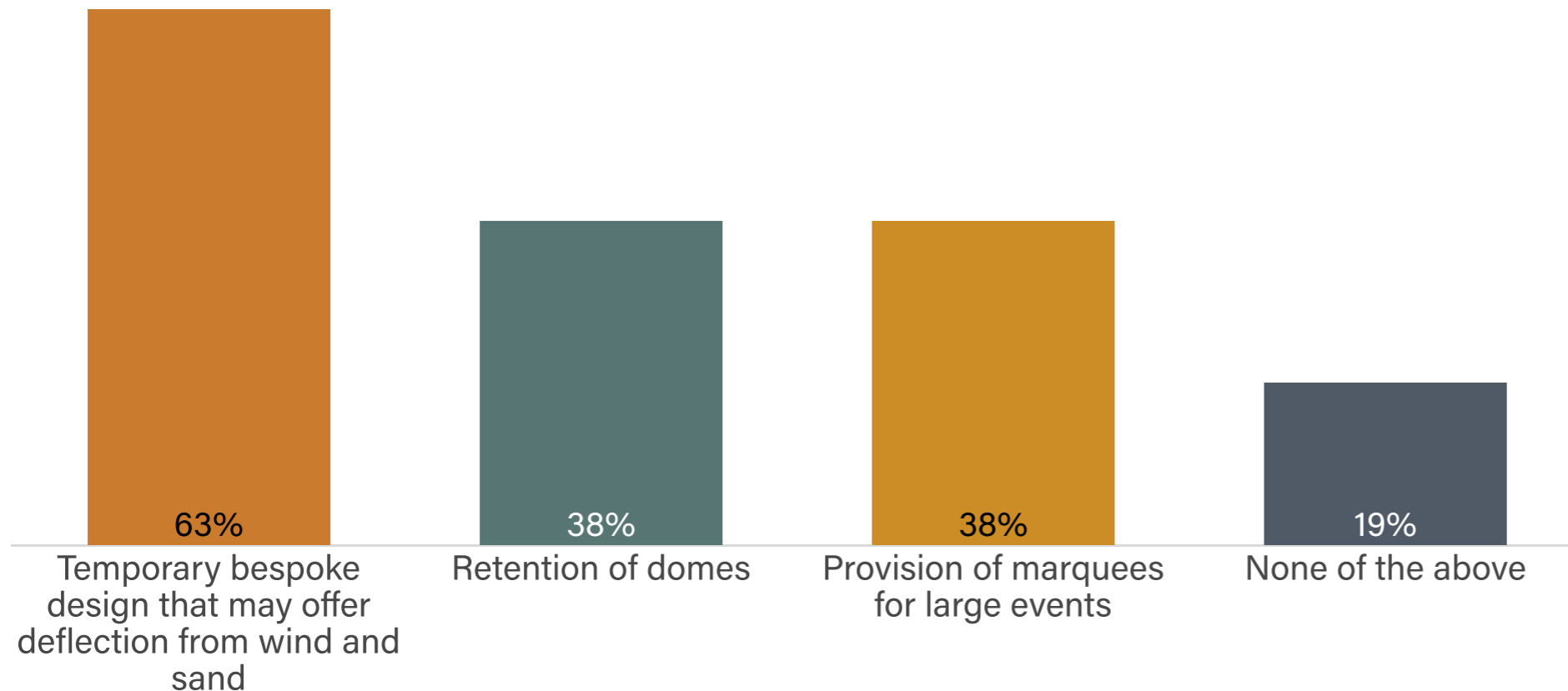
Observations

81% all respondents agree overall and 6% disagree that an upgraded CCTV system in St Annes Square is important to deter crime and anti-social behaviour.

Weather: A temporary bespoke design is the most popular of the proposed ideas to shelter from the wind.

Q10. St Annes is windy from time to time. Do you support any of the following ideas to shelter from the wind:

(Base: all respondents = 232; more than one option could be chosen)



Observations

37 (16%) of respondents chose all three proposed options.

A fifth (19%) would not support any of the proposed ideas.

Of the 89 respondents who support the retention of the domes, 46 (52%) had stated in an earlier question that they would prefer for all of the domes to be retained, while 24 (27%) would retain some of the domes (the remaining 19 chose 'Other' at the previous question).

When describing what they would like to see in the Event Space, the four most common words given were music, entertainment, accessibility and safety.

Q11. What 3 words describe what you would like to see in the Events Space?

(Base: all respondents = 220; only words with five or more entries are shown)



Observations

Music was the most common word, with 26 respondents (12%) mentioning 'Music'.

37 respondents (17%) used this question to voice their overall disapproval of the proposed Event Space. These have been excluded from this diagram.

The view from local business respondents.

Nine respondents gave their business postcode when responding to the consultation.



Preferred events

- All nine would like to see 'Christmas Markets' in the new Event Space, eight would like to see 'Artisan Markets', seven 'Music Festivals', seven the 'Christmas Lights Switch On' and six 'Food Markets'.



Domes

- Three would retain none of the domes, two would retain all of the domes, one would retain some of the domes (three chose 'other')
- Other comments about the domes include: "Update though"; "Maybe reposition some but previous investment should always be utilised"; and, "They act as windshields but the majority hate them and would rather have the flower beds from the past."



Parking

- 7 of the 9 agree that parking provision near NatWest Bank is important
- Comments about parking include: "Parking is important for the area for local business. People can't park they do not shop."; "Perhaps free parking for certain timeframes."; and, "There is already a lack of short term parking in the vicinity and removal of more will have a detrimental impact on local business."



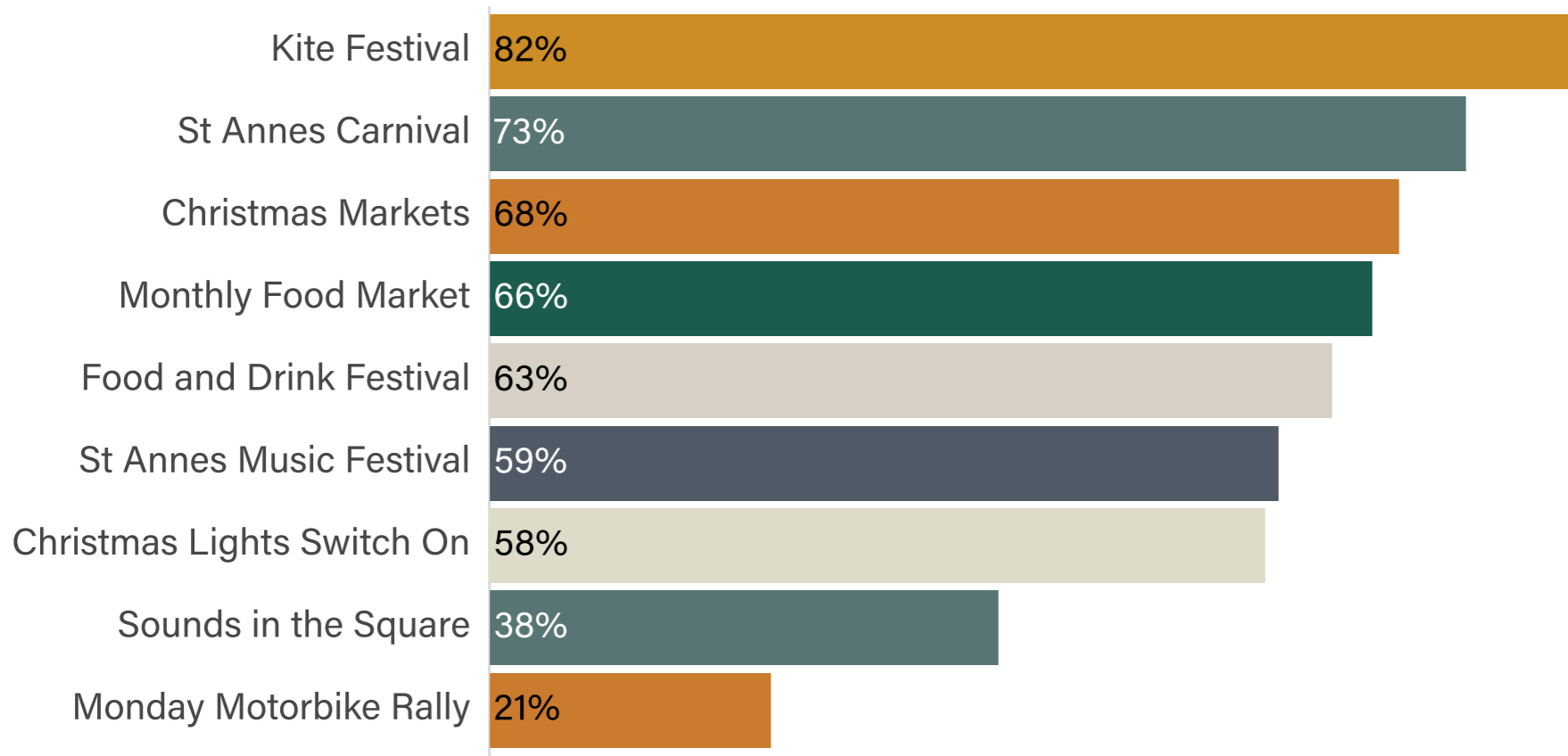
Other comments include:

- "Think it's as good idea, but presume the council will make all the money out of the space. Perhaps give some back to local business 40 empty shops."
- "All for change - need to maintain investment, need to encourage more businesses, need to offer more events for residents (not just tourists), consider evening events, its like a ghost town after 5pm"
- "Location, location, location. Feel the event space would be best where the Amphitheatre resides. Clear out the green on green paths and clutter. Place an angled seated windbreak. Reinstate colour."
- "St Georges Road does not seem to get the footfall it should, Pavement trees would help to give it a distinctive identity. Monthly farmers market could be held here so visitors realise there is a cafe, market entrance, shops, car park, Gardens entrance, Gardens lodges etc. there."
- "I am seriously concerned that possible plans to make adjoining streets one-way if the Square was closed to traffic would make roads congested. The M&S park regularly causes traffic to hook up on to Wood Street and Clifton Drive South. This could get worse and make it extremely difficult for clients to access our business premises."

Attendance at previous events: The Kite Festival and St Annes Carnival were the most supported events amongst respondents.

Q15. Please tick all the events you have previously supported in St Annes

(Base: all respondents = 220; more than one option could be chosen)



Observations

Over 8 in 10 respondents supported the Kite Festival and almost three-quarters (73%) supported St Annes Carnival.

The Monday Motorbike Rally and Sounds in the Square were the least well supported previous events amongst respondents.

"What 3 words describe what you would like to see in the Events Space??"

Example comments.

Don't do it/against changes

- Not required here
- No event space
- Nothing not needed

Entertainment/fun

- Fun. Vibrant. Entertaining
- Family friendly entertainment
- Magic, excitement, dynamism
- Crowds, entertainment, events

Culture

- Markets. Music. Performance
- Local art food
- Family, music, stalls
- Community, music, entertainment
- Theatre, music, art & craft

Accessible/inclusive

- Accessibility Adaptability Shelter
- Inclusive autism friendly
- Something for everyone
- Safety, accessibility, compatability

The majority of those who have previously supported an event would like to see this event (or similar events) held in the new proposed Event Space.

Of those who have previously supported:

 **Christmas Markets** → 79% (118 of 149) would like to see this event in the new proposed Event Space

 **Christmas Lights Switch On** → 76% (97 of 128) would like to see this event in the new proposed Event Space

 **Either the Food and Drink Festival or the Monthly Food Market** → 78% (147 of 189) would like to see 'Food Markets/Festivals' in the new proposed Event Space

 **Sounds in the Square** → 75% (63 of 84) would like to see 'Music Festivals' in the new proposed Event Space

6 in 10 commented that previous experiences have generally been positive.

175 respondents provided a comment in response to "Q16. Following on from question 15, please provide comments on your experience of the events you have previously supported". Comments have been coded into themes; one comment may be included in more than one theme.

Of all comments about previous experiences of local events:



59% had a positive experience(s)



19% felt the experience(s) was poor/disappointing



14% have had mixed experiences

Top 10 themes amongst comments:

- Experience was generally positive (104 comments)
- Generally negative experience (33 comments)
- Mixed experiences/could have been better (25)
- Existing venues are good (esp. Ashton Gardens)/Don't need new space (21 comments)
- Need more in centre/Ashton Gardens takes away from centre/positive about new space (17)
- Events increase footfall/visitors/were well attended (15)
- Well managed/organised (15)
- Enjoyable/friendly atmosphere (13)
- Not enough parking (12)

Previous experiences of local events: example comments.

“ The occasional events are usually of a high standard. I think the monthly market is on its last legs and needs a serious re-think. The stalls are fewer and some of them look tired and unattractive.

“ Too many in Ashton gardens taking business away from the square. Not enough free parking.

“ All events are great but more effort needed to make them feel different from each other. Everything looks and feels the same.

“ Really positive experiences but all have felt quite restrictive on space and movement so this new space would make them hugely more accessible for larger audiences and they'd feel more comfortable!

“ Lovely ideas, but often feel disjointed or 'plonked' in one place not connected to others. Always too expensive for families with young children [...] A lot of the events don't feel like they've got children or how families with children can use them at the forefront of planning.

“ The events I have supported work well as they are and do not need the extra event space. Ashton Gardens provides much better protection against the wind than St Annes Road West ever will.

“ All very good events. Disabled access not great in Ashton Gardens.

“ Good but more variety and higher standard of food stalls required. The same outlets are always present at every event.

“ We enjoy all events. However, we wish for events to be better advertised like- instagram.

“ Great but require a huge amount of effort from volunteers.

“ Events are always a boost as long as larger ones don't clash with other events in the same borough.

Any other comments: Key themes and example comments.

179 respondents provided a comment in response to "Q17. Please provide any other comments you may have regarding this project".



It's a good idea



I think it's a great idea. Forget the moaners. St Annes need a fresh make over and this will help immensely.



I love the project, we need more space to be added.



I think the project is exciting and should be very beneficial for the town.



Concerns/questions over traffic flow/buses/parking



Has anyone given thought to exactly how the buses are supposed to get to Boots? Has anyone consulted a bus driver?



What consideration has there been for traffic flow during events? This may well require changing one way streets to be 2 way or vice versa.



Don't agree with the project



It is a ridiculous waste of money, ill thought through. The project should be abandoned.



If the intention is to attract shoppers to the town centre then an event space is not the answer. It will only hold 5 events per year so will have negligible effect on trade.



We DO NOT need an events space, Ashton gardens is the right place for all large events, the paving area is in desperate need of replacing and better lighting.

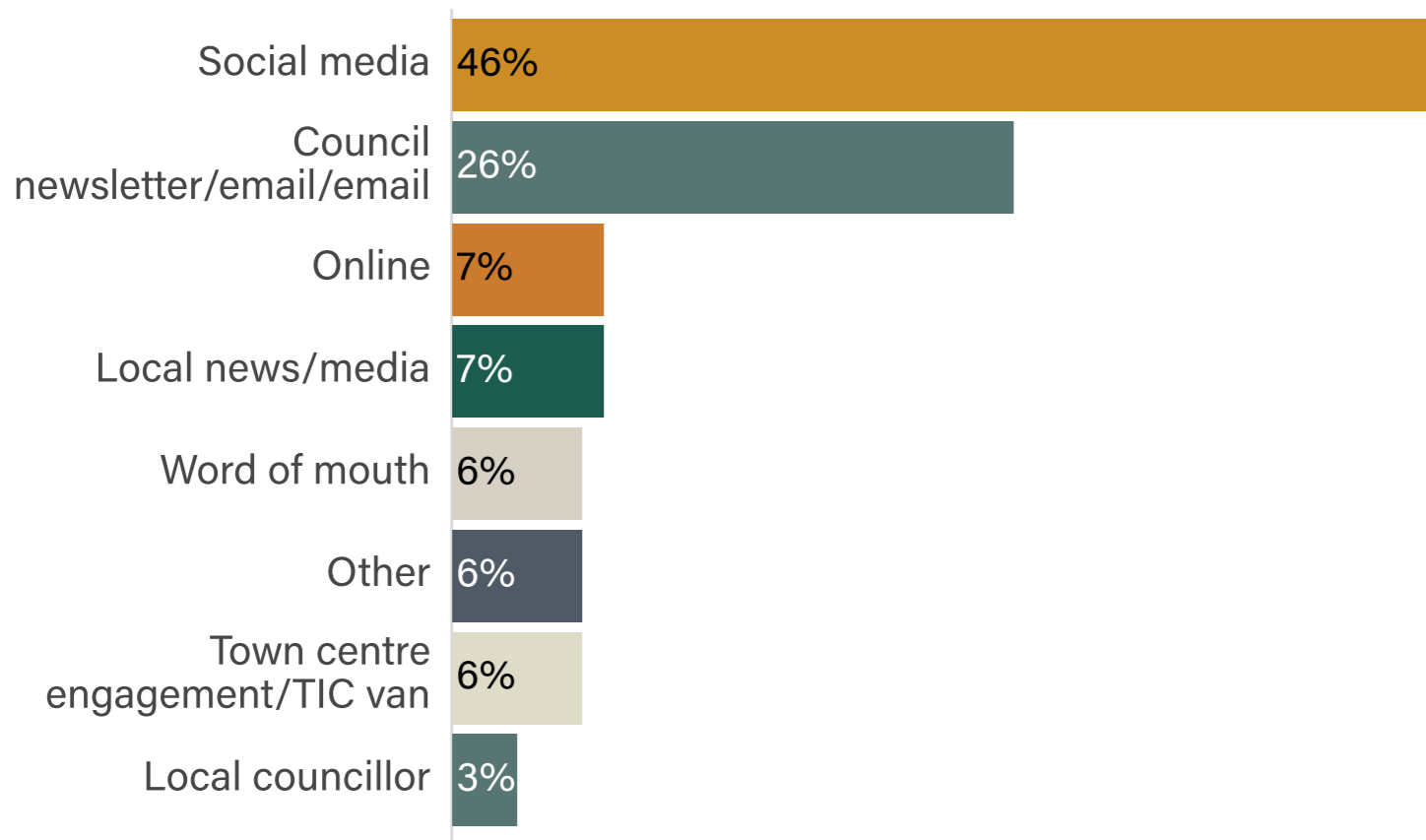
Other themes include:

- Need to do more to help local businesses/fill empty buildings
- Consult more with residents/consider resident needs more
- Concerns/questions over shelter from wind/weather
- Remove domes/tidy planting
- Other suggested changes to plans/project

Almost half heard about the consultation via social media.

Q18. How did you hear about the consultation?

(Base: all respondents = 227; open text comments coded into themes)



Observations

46% of respondents heard about the consultation via social media, with Facebook the most often mentioned platform.

A quarter heard about the consultation via the council newsletter/email.

6% heard about the consultation via the town centre engagement/TIC van.



ps research

Report by PS Research.

psresearch.co.uk | hello@psresearch.co.uk