

Analysis of Thames Basin Heaths SANG Visitor Survey Data

Winter 2016/17

Summary of unpublished report by Footprint Ecology for Natural England

SANGs were surveyed during the winter of 2016/17 by the SAMM project team. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with site users at 17 SANGs. A single survey point was used to intercept visitors at key access points, mostly main car parks. Surveys were conducted for 6 hours on two week days and one weekend day (8:00-10:00, 11:00-13:00, 14:00-16:00), giving 18 hours of survey in total per SANG. 960 interviews were conducted.

SANG	Local Authority	Size of site (ha)
Allens Field	Windsor and Maidenhead	9.2
Brooklands Community Park	Elmbridge	25.6
Brookwood Country Park	Woking	19.8
Chantry Wood	Guildford	77.1
Chobham Place Woods	Surrey Heath	11.1
Crookham Park	Hart	72.8
Engelmer Pond	Bracknell Forest	27.5
Farnham Park	Waverley	85.8
Heather Farm	Woking / Surrey Heath	24.8
Homewood Park	Runnymede	23.3
Lily Hill (Long Hill Park Group)	Bracknell Forest	33.3
Riverside	Guildford	29.5
Rook's Nest Wood	Wokingham	18.6
Rowhill	Waverley / Rushmoor	24.2
Southwood Woodland	Rushmoor	32.4
St Ann's Hill	Runnymede	21.1
White Rose Lane	Woking	7.4

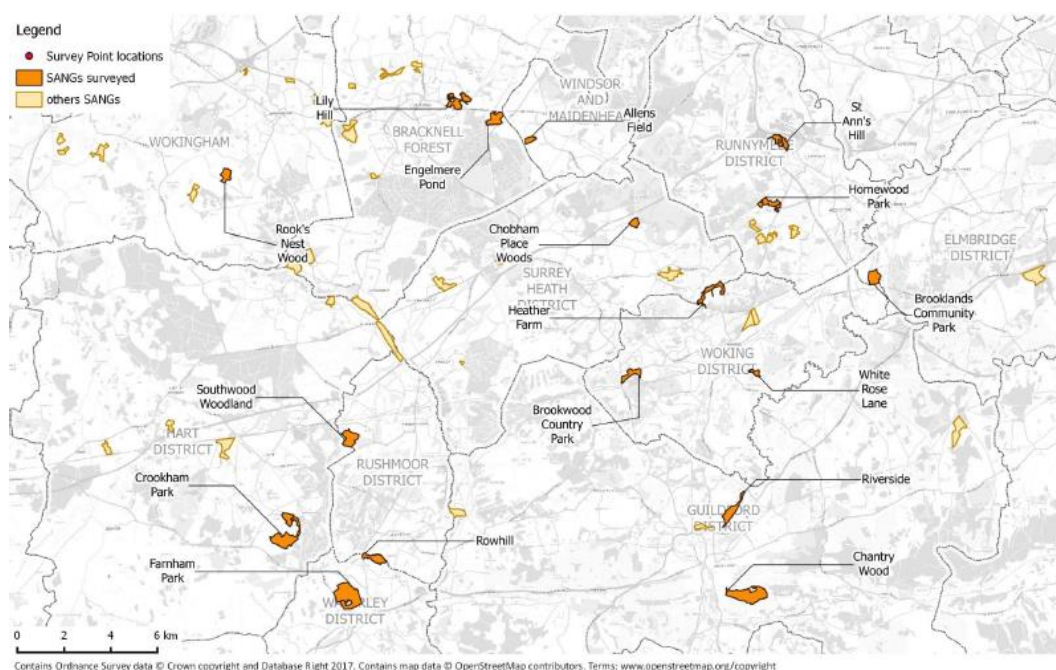


Figure 1 - Summary of the 17 sites surveyed

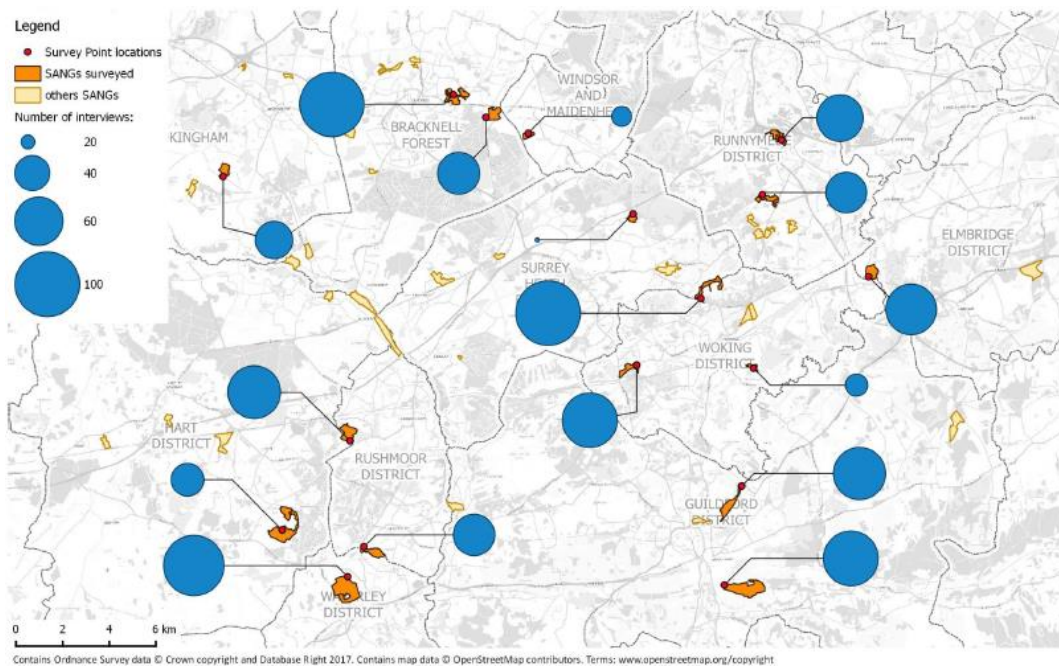


Figure 2 - Number of interviews conducted

1. Reason for visiting

Solely dog walking accounted for 72.4% of interviewees, increasing to 76.9% when including those combining dog walking and other activities (e.g. dog walking/running) (this includes commercial dog walking, as we did not distinguish between private and commercial dog walkers).

The average number of dogs per group was 1.1.

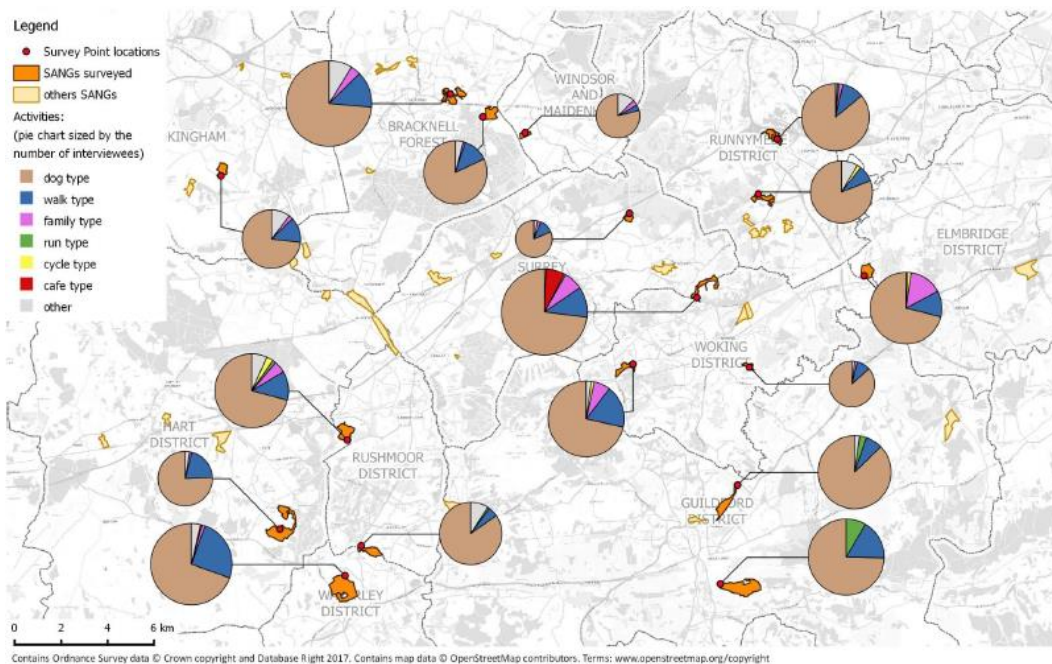


Figure 3 - Pie chart showing activity types

2. Duration of visit

The most common response was “40 minutes to 1 hour”, given by 45% of interviewees, compared to just 2% visiting for “less than 20 minutes”.

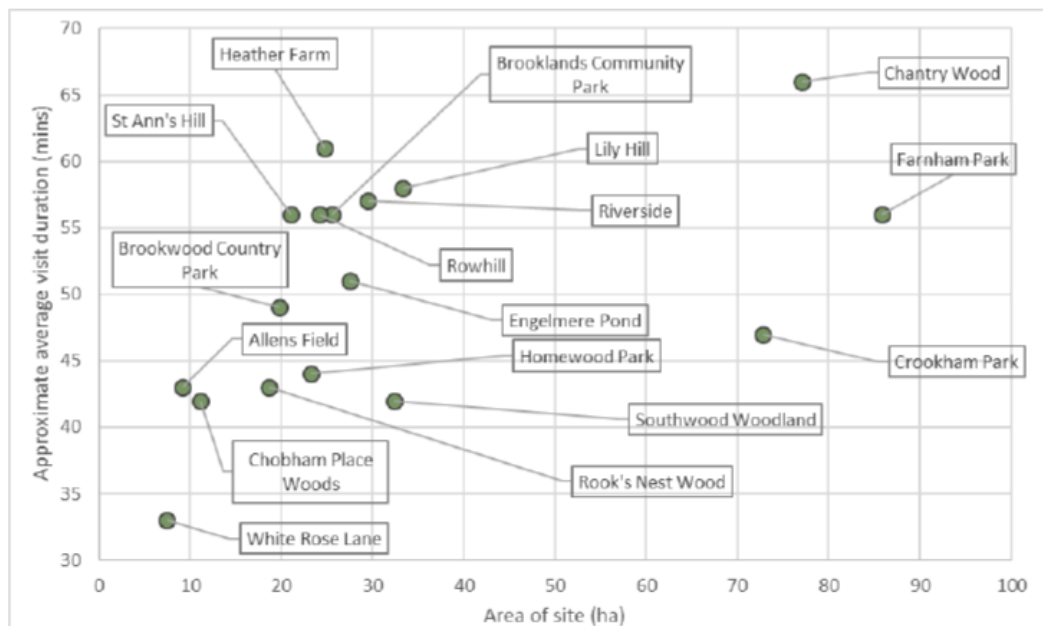


Figure 4 - Scatterplot of average visit duration compared to area of site (hectares)

3. Frequency of visit

The most common response was “daily” (given by 39% of interviewees), followed by “weekly” (29%) and “several times a week” (13%). We are pleased to report high use of sites by regular visitors.

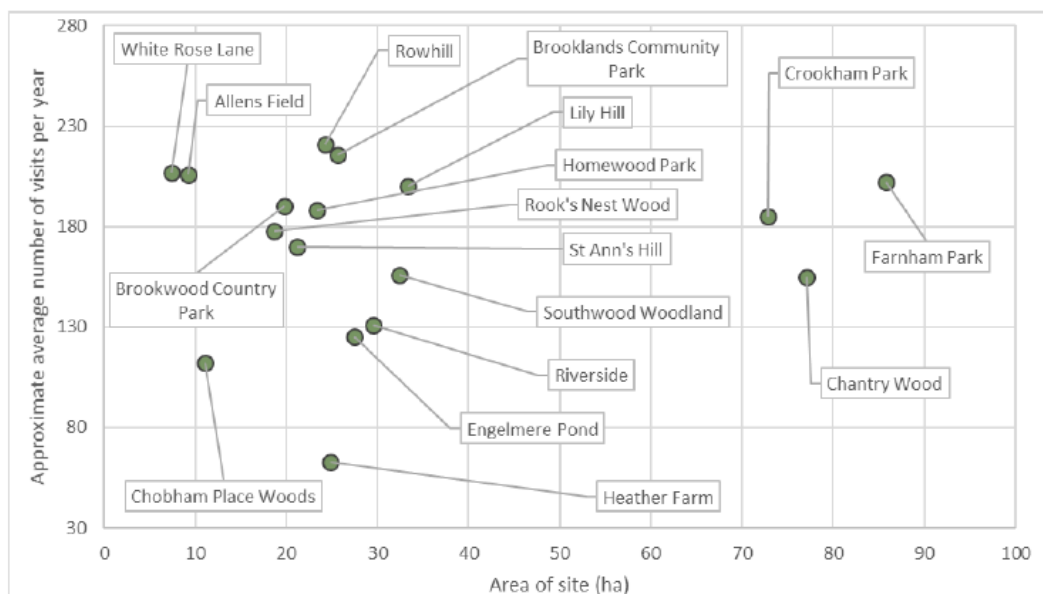


Figure 5 - Scatterplot of average number of visits made per year compared to area of site (hectares)

4. Features liked

Close proximity to home was the most common reason interviewees liked a site, with 21.9% mentioning this. This was followed by scenery or comments regarding views, picturesque nature etc. (19.9%), quality of paths/surfacing (16.8%), being peaceful/quiet (15.6%) and well maintained/tidy (15.5%).

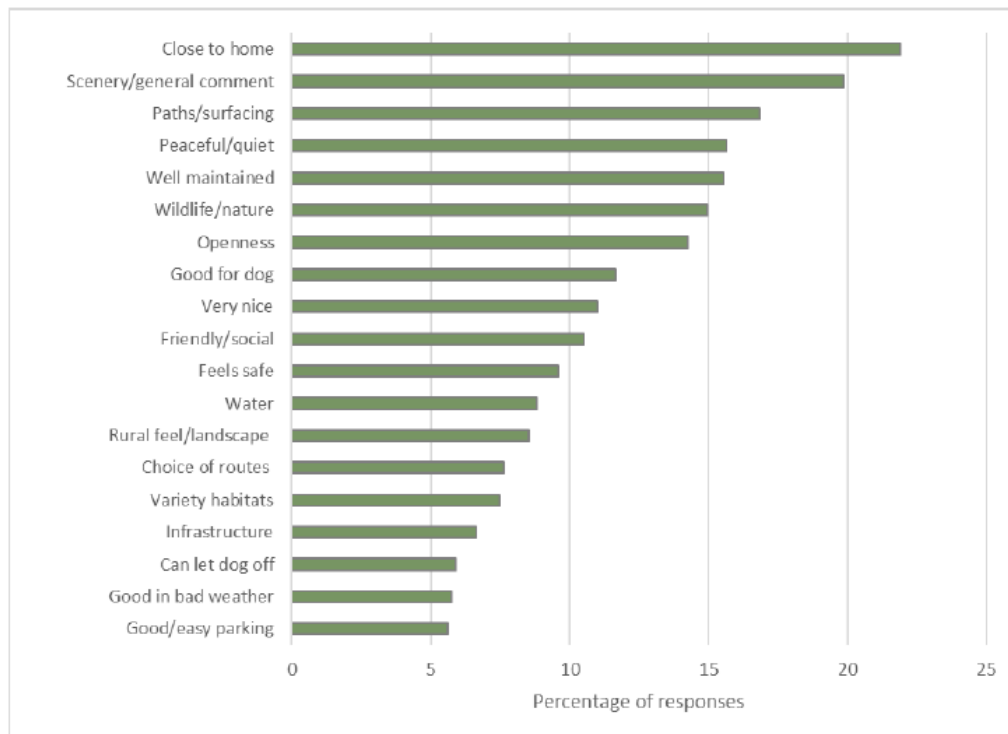


Figure 6 - Percentage of responses selecting features liked

5. Suggested improvements

The most common improvement asked for was for more bins or more regular emptying of bins. Approximately one fifth of all interviewees mentioned this in their suggested improvements. The second highest ranked suggestion was for better paths.

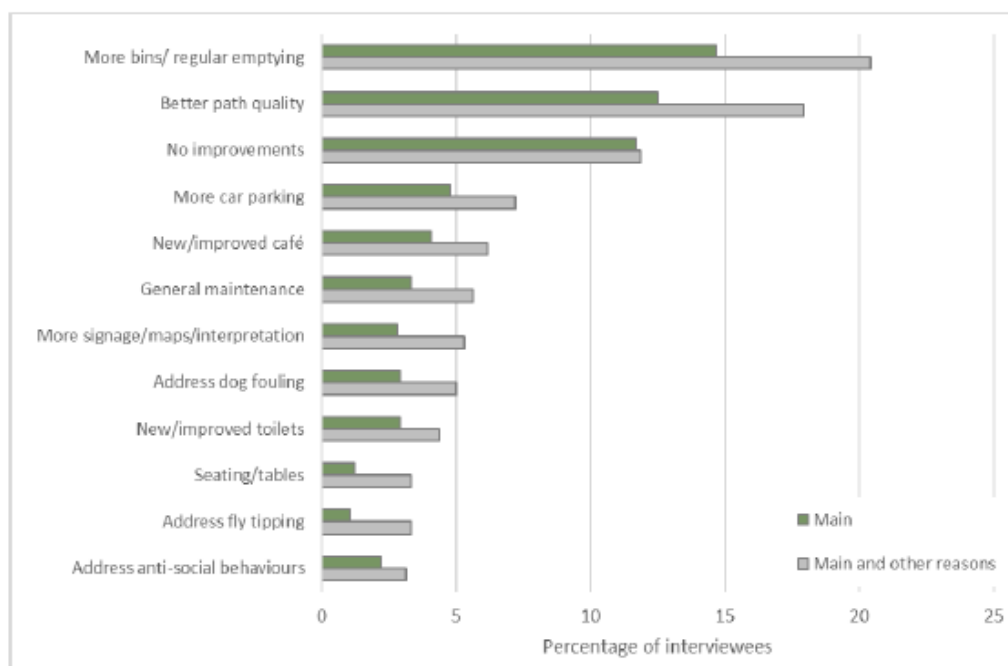


Figure 7 - Percentage of responses selecting features for improvement

6. Alternative sites

The use of the SPA and other SANG sites was also examined. While 50% of interviewees included an SPA site in their alternative named sites (e.g. at least one named in the list of sites given), it was good to see that just under a quarter of interviewees named SANG sites.

7. Postcodes

The typical radius for interviewees was quite small; on average 3.68 km (mean values). Half of all interviewees lived within 1.47 km of the survey point where they were interviewed (i.e. 1.47 was the median). However, this varied greatly between sites.

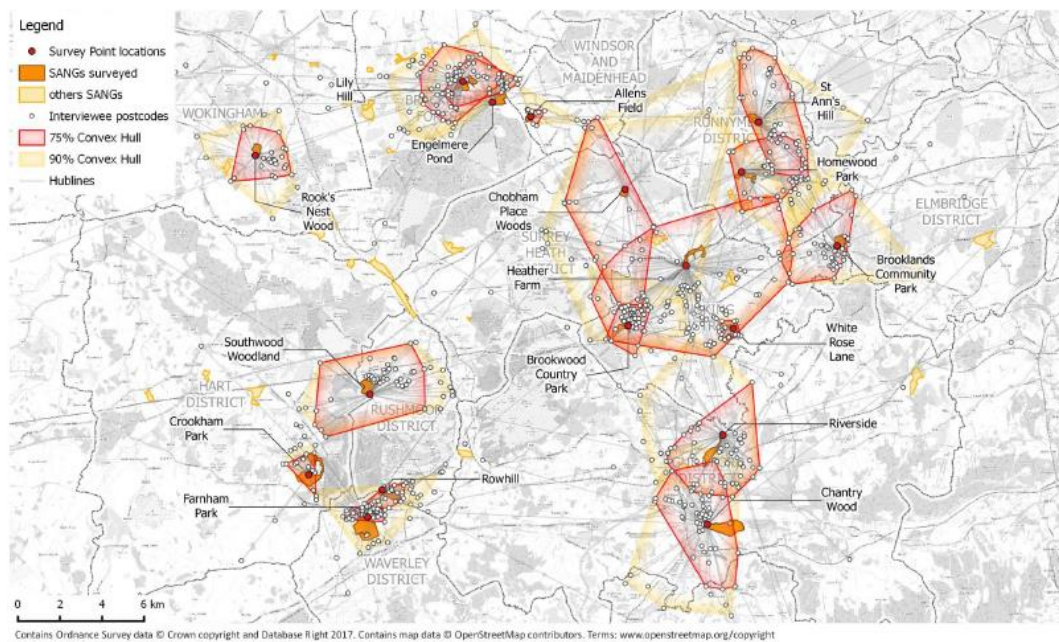


Figure 8 - Distribution of interviewee postcodes showing 75th and 90th percentile radius for each site

8. Knowledge of TBH partnership:

One of the final questions in the survey asked if the interviewee had heard of the Thames Basin Heaths Partnership. We asked this question if interviewees mentioned that they visited the SPA. Of those asked, 29% had heard of the TBHP.