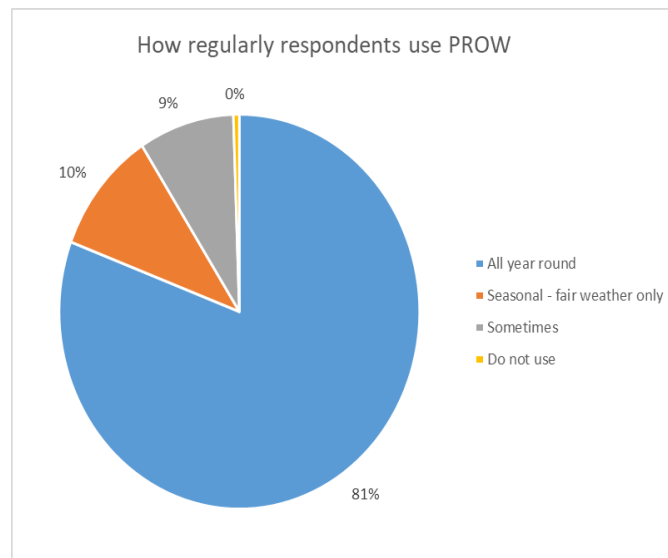# 2.3 Findings

2.3i) General Survey

The General Survey has provided Countryside Services with a wealth of information regarding the current usage of, and demand for the PRoW network and Access land. The survey sought clarification on a wide range of issues affecting legal and practical management of rights of way.


- Graph 1 highlights that a very large percentage of the respondents use the PRoW network all year. The majority of those that utilise the network do so for *leisure, recreation and for physical exercise*.
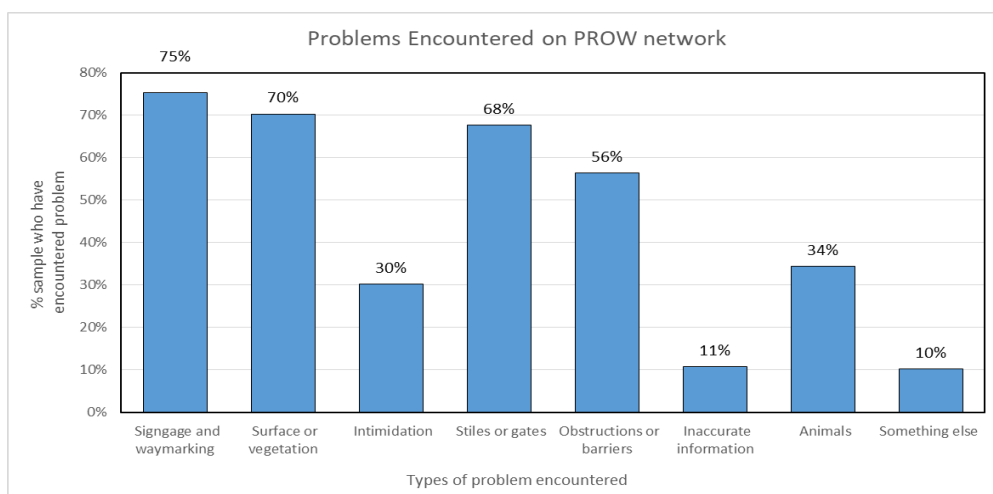
- Over half of the respondents have encountered problems whilst using the PRoW network with *lack of signage* being the most commonly encountered problem.

Table 5 Satisfaction with Services Provided by Countryside Services
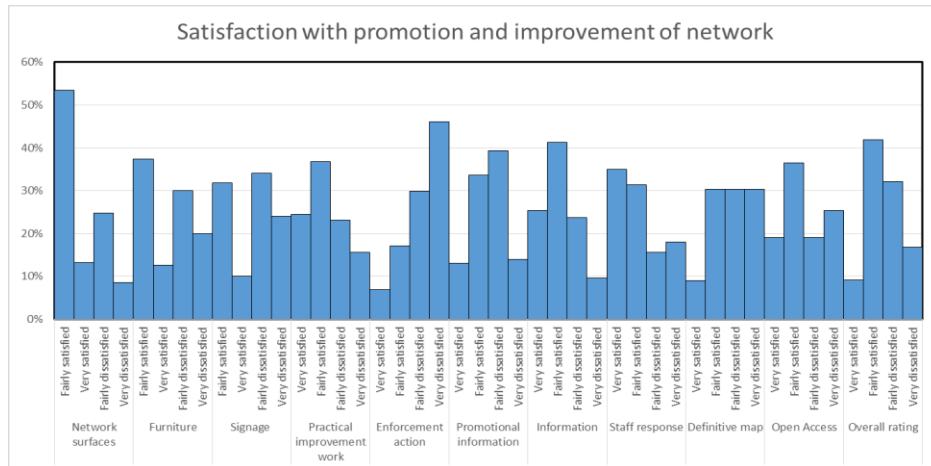
- Respondents were most satisfied with *surfaces, staff* and *promoted long-distance trails* and least satisfied with *enforcement*.
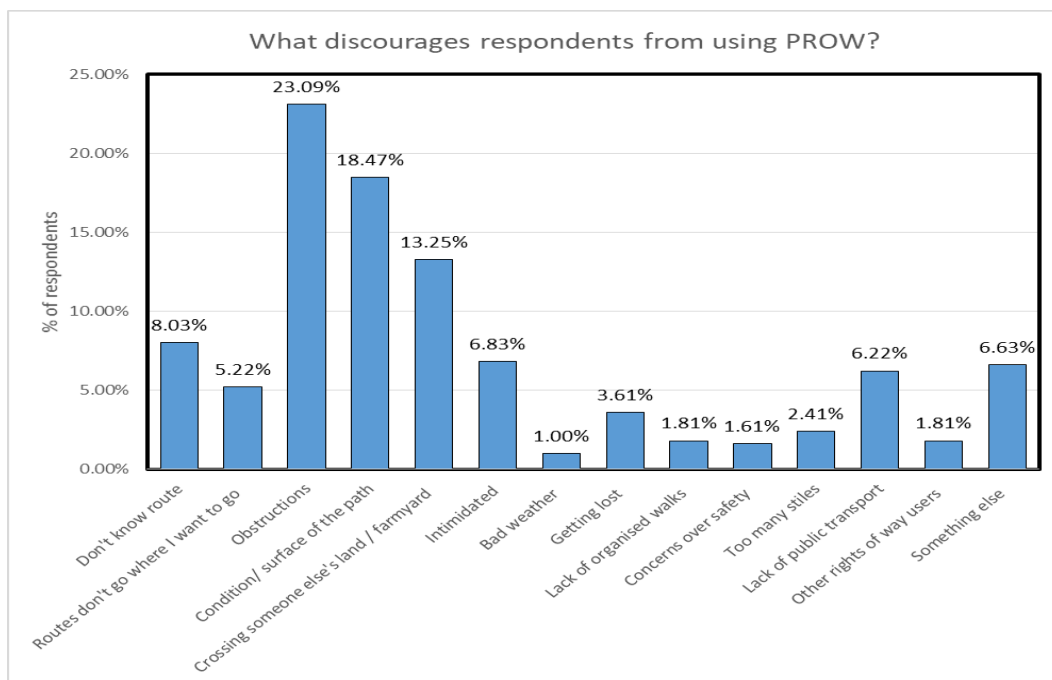
- *Obstructions* were the most common reason why people didn't use the network, closely followed by the condition of the path and a dislike of walking on someone else's land.

Table 6 Where should future work be prioritised? Priority Rankings

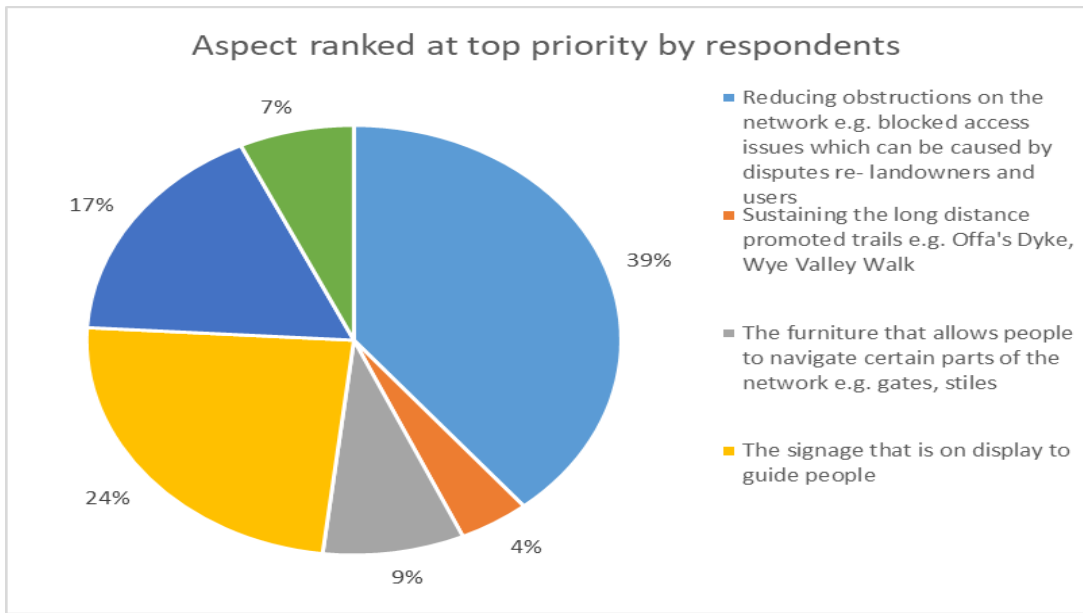Aspect ranked at top priority by respondents

- Reducing obstructions on the network e.g. blocked access issues which can be caused by disputes re- landowners and users
- Sustaining the long distance promoted trails e.g. Offa's Dyke, Wye Valley Walk
- The furniture that allows people to navigate certain parts of the network e.g. gates, stiles
- The signage that is on display to guide people

- The key aspect that respondents thought was important is to remove obstructions on the network with 39%. 25% chose signage and then followed by the network surface with 17% as their key aspect.

Respondents' priorities for the future of PROW network
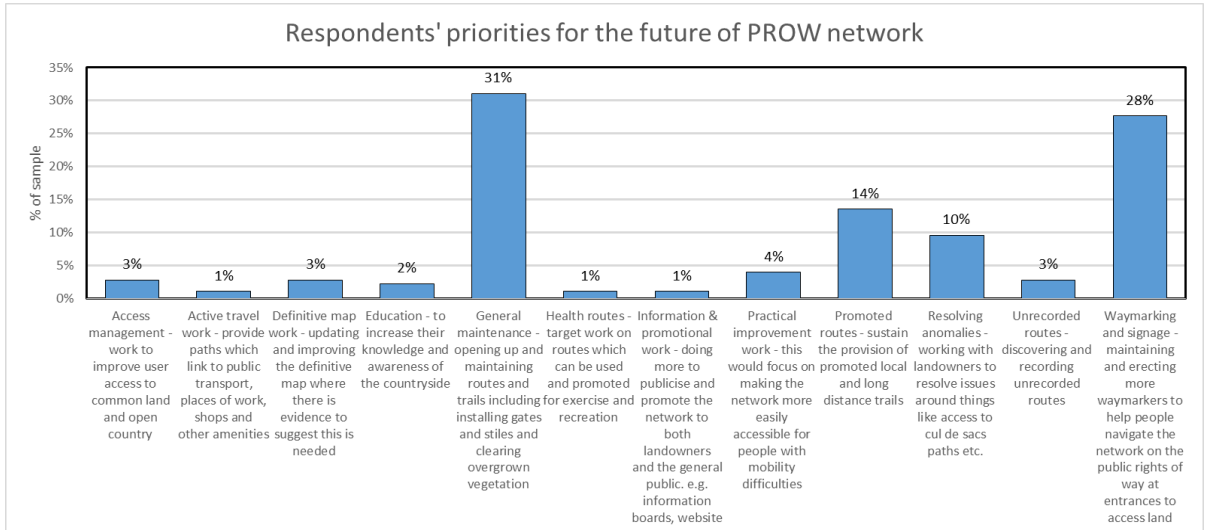
- One of the main aims of the public consultation was to find out where Countryside Services should be prioritising future resources. Maintenance came back as the number one priority followed closely by waymarking and signage.

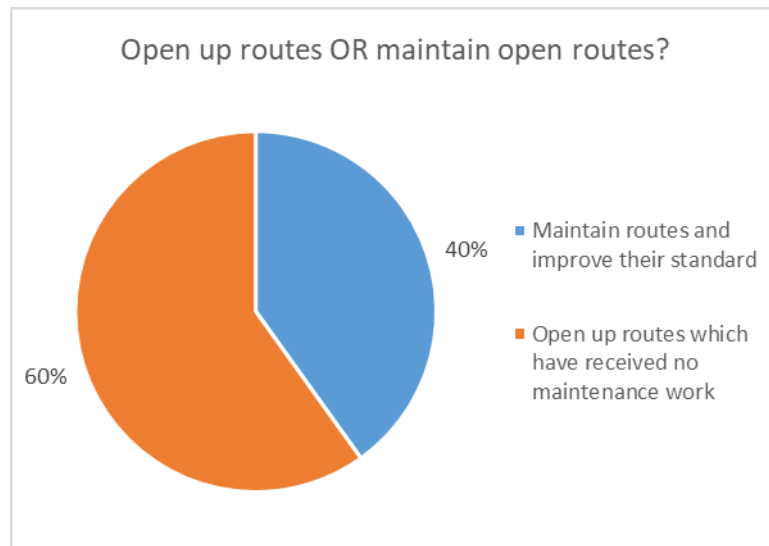| Priority	Ranking	% of sample
Packages that would resolve anomalies e.g. linking dead end paths to the network or roads	1	28%
Farmyard diversions	2	23%
Diversions which protect wildlife/flora or fauna i.e. conservation	3	17%
Diversions to make paths more convenient to use e.g. by moving them off steep ground	4	14%
Diverting rights of way from a person's private garden	5	9%
Diversions due to a new housing or road development	6	6%
Diversions around woodlands or forests	7	2%
Diversion to avoid high maintenance costs	8	1%

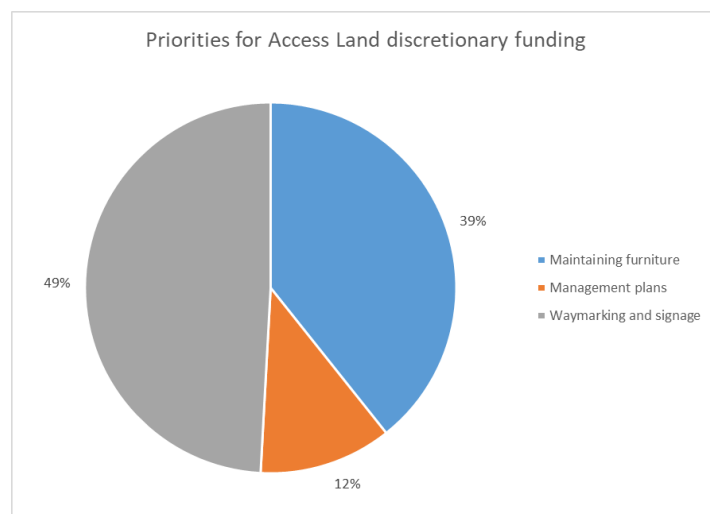- Respondents were asked to prioritise Public Path Orders, the results showed that a package of work to *resolve anomalies* was the highest priority followed very closely by *diversions out of farmyards* and *private gardens*.

- Respondents strongly felt that information needed to be made more accessible, with *the website* being the most popular location for access for the definitive map and statement.
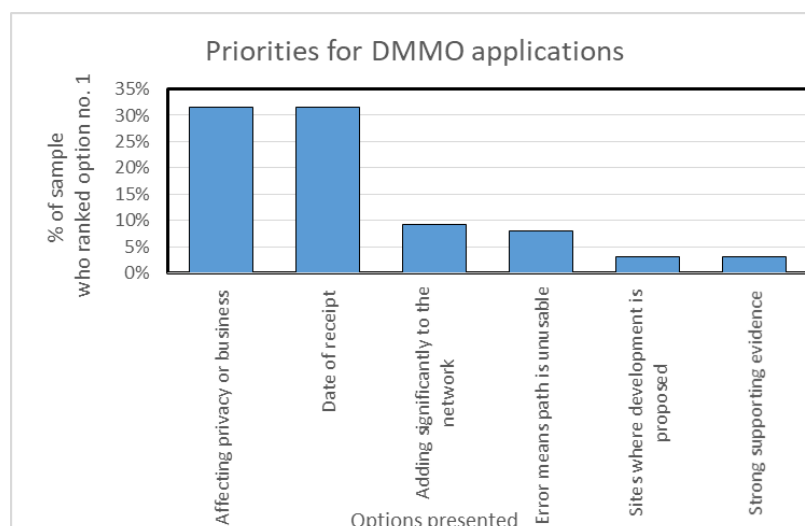
- The Council processes Definitive Map Modification Order applications to include or extinguish a public right of way by way of providing evidence. The Council needs to prioritise these applications. The priority out of the six choices outlined, was *where an error has meant that the path cannot be used at all*, followed closely by *an application that benefits the existing network*.

Open up routes OR maintain open routes?

40% ■ Maintain routes and improve their standard

60% ■ Open up routes which have received no maintenance work

- Respondents were asked to make a choice between opening up currently obstructed paths OR maintaining routes already open, as this was a particular issue that Countryside Services felt needed resolving. The results show that more emphasis needs to be placed on the opening of routes in the future.

Priorities for Access Land discretionary funding

39% ■ Maintaining furniture
12% ■ Management plans
49% ■ Waymarking and signage

- The priorities for Access land are very similar to that for public rights of way with *waymarking/signage* and *maintaining furniture* accounting for

49% and 39% of the responses. The other 12% thought that *management plans for commons* was a priority.

DILEMMA QUESTIONS

- Respondents were given a series of dilemma questions and were asked to decide which of the options they would prefer to see the Service prioritise in the future.
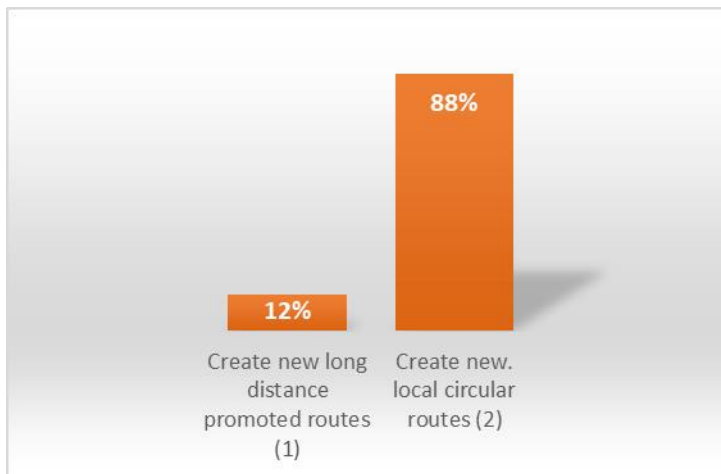
- Overwhelmingly, respondents were in favour of the council creating new local circular routes as opposed to new long distance trails.
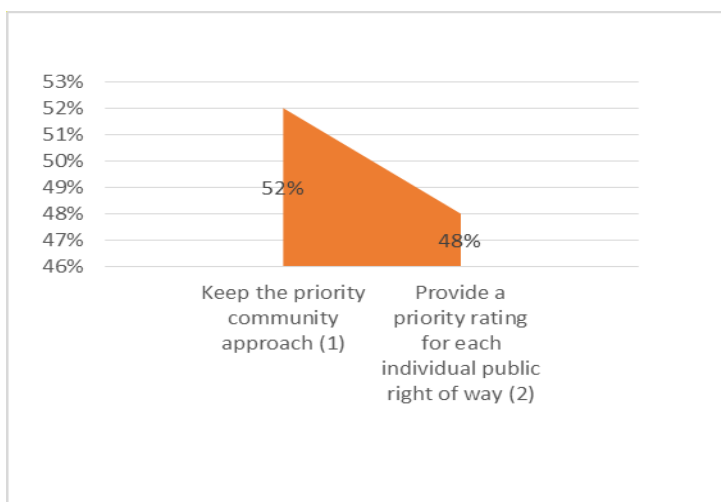
- The second dilemma question resulted in a closer view, with 52% wanting the council to continue with the current priority community approach as opposed to creating a rating for each and every individual public right of way.
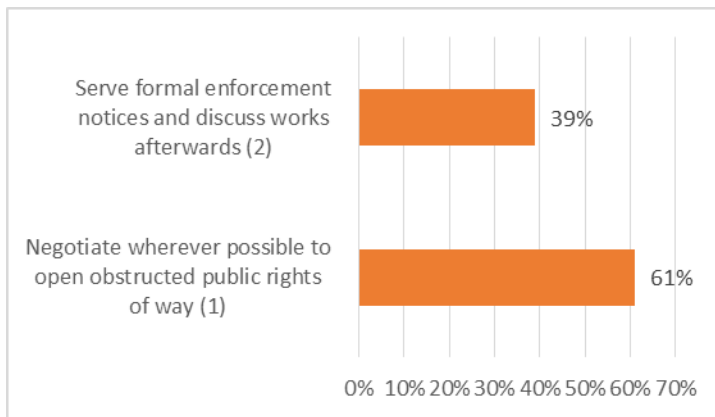
- The penultimate dilemma question resulted in 61% of respondents stating that they wanted the council to negotiate with landholders around obstructions to the network wherever possible. Just under a third felt we should move towards serving enforcement notices to progress things.
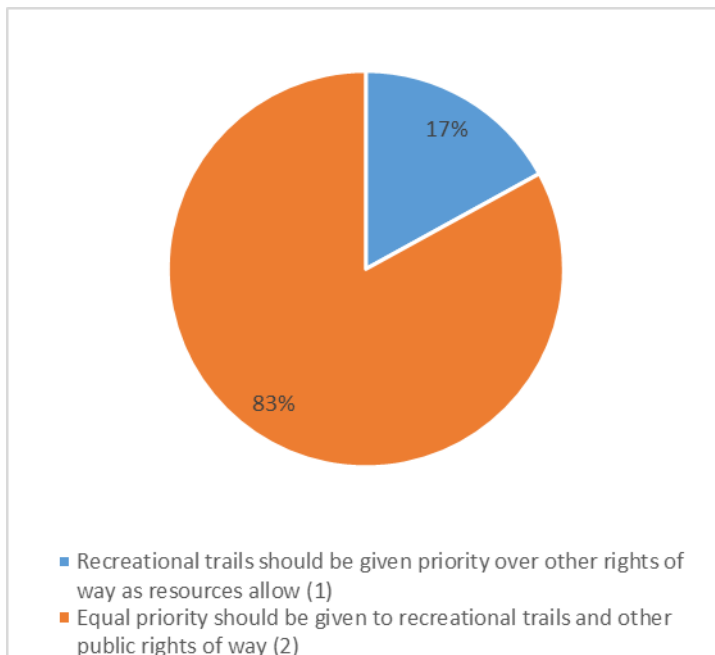
- 83% of respondents felt that recreational trails should not take priority over other rights of way on the network and that they should all be given equal priority.

2.3ii) Landholder Survey

The Landholders Survey looked at the issues surrounding countryside access for the owners and occupiers of the land, and how Countryside Services can improve its management in the future. Key findings from the landholder survey include:
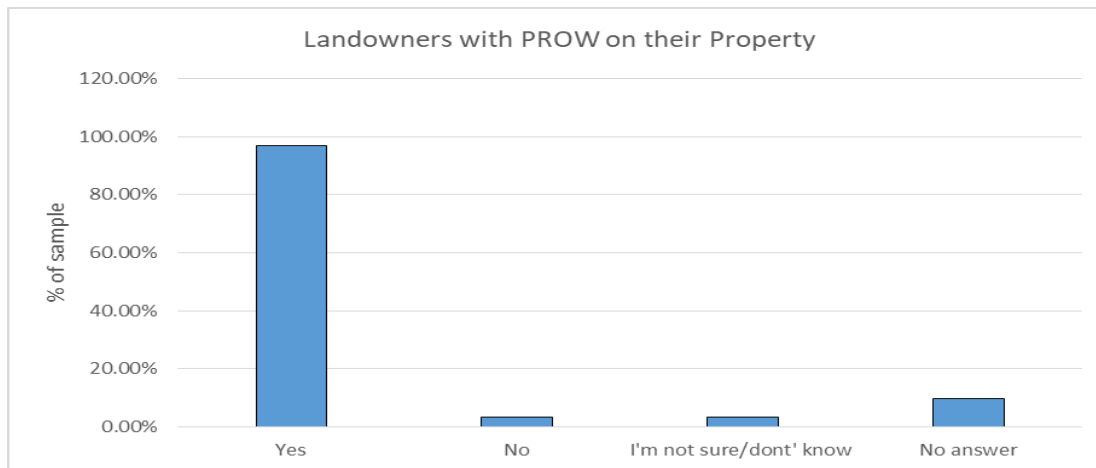
- 97% (30 respondents) of landholders are aware of the existence of PRoW on their property. The vast majority did not think there was a positive benefit to tourism and education etc. 84% did not think there was a benefit to tourism for example.

- Of those landholders with known PRoW on their land, the most common problems were *gates being left open*, with *dogs off leads* and *people trespassing* as the next most frequent issues followed by *littering*.

- 46% of respondents stated they were aware of their legal duties regarding PRoW, with a further 46% aware of the assistance and support available from Countryside Services with regards to assisting landholders with their responsibilities on their PRoW.

- Landholders agreed with the general survey results, being that *negotiation should be sought before formal enforcement*, and *equal priority should be given to recreational trials to the rest of the ProW network*.

2.3iii) Town and Community Council Survey

All of the Town and Community Councils, lying partially or wholly outside the Brecon Beacons National Park, were contacted and their views sought on the demand for and management of the PRoW network. Some of the main issues highlighted by the local Councils are shown below:

- Three out of the fourteen responses (21%) of the local Councils are already involved with PRoW maintenance to some extent, with a further six Councils saying they are sometimes involved.

- 73% want to see more work to *maintain and improve routes already open*.

- 79% want priority to be given to the development of *local, circular routes rather than long distance routes*.

- The local Councils were asked to rate the provision and importance of suggested improvements to the PRoW network. These improvements fall outside general PRoW work. The results from these questions have been calculated to give a priority ranking for the different issues. Table 7 on the next page, shows the results of this ranking.

Table 7 Provision and Importance of Countryside Service Improvements

Q11 -What do you Think our Priorites Should be for the Future of the Rights of Way Network?

| | Priority Ranking | | | | | | | | | | | | |
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Waymarking & Signage	5	2			1		1						1
Information & Promotional Work						2	1	1	1		3	1	
Practical Improvement Work	1		1	1			2	1		1	1	1	
General Maintenance	1	6	2										
Resolving Anomalies		1	1		2		1		1	1	1	1	
Unrecorded Routes							1		1			1	6
Definitive Map Work		1	2					3	1	1	1	1	
Active Travel Work				1	1	3	1			1	1	1	
Access Management			1	2	1	1			1	2			1
Health Routes			2	2		2		1		1		1	
Schools Routes	1		1	1	3			2		1		1	
Education				1			1	1	3	1	1	1	
Promoted Routes	2			1	1	1	1			1		1	1
Number not responded				1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10

- *Amend.* *Local, circular routes*, *attractive routes to support tourism* and *routes to enable people to avoid busy roads* are the improvements that the local Council's feel require increased funding, whereas *access to commons* and *long-distance routes* are generally already well catered for, or of low importance.

- The local Councils were also asked to prioritise general PRoW management issues and the results show that work should concentrate on *maintenance, waymarking* and the *Definitive Map*.