Grass cutting and ground maintenance survey summary 2025

GRASS CUTTING AND GROUND MAINTENANCE SURVEY SUMMARY 2025

Southwater Parish Council invited residents to share their views on the frequency and standard of grass cutting, ground maintenance, and potential biodiversity enhancements across Southwater. A total of 158 responses were received, giving a strong community perspective.

- **Grass cutting frequency:** 61% of respondents were satisfied with the current schedule (around 12 cuts per year, excluding May to support "No Mow May"), and 85% of respondents expressed their view to retain the same number of cuts with some asking for more frequent cuts to keep spaces tidy. Others also valued longer growth times for ecological benefits.
- **Ground maintenance:** Satisfaction levels were slightly more divided with 44% of respondents sharing their satisfaction, 15% saying neither satisfied or dissatisfied and 41% being dissatisfied with the ground maintenance. Frequent concerns regarding ground maintenance were raised in Question 13 about the standard of tasks such as strimming and clearing paths in certain areas. Please note, most of the areas and paths mentioned do not belong under the maintenance of Southwater Parish Council, but come under the responsibility of Horsham District Council and West Sussex County Council.
- **Biodiversity support:** 81% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with actions that protect and enhance biodiversity. Many supported areas being left to grow naturally or additional planting being introduced.
- **Wildflower planting:** There was strong support for wildflower areas across open spaces. Suggestions highlighted a variety of sites across the parish, please see find the detailed responses on the following pages.
- **Flower baskets:** Most residents welcomed the idea of flower baskets and floral displays, with Lintot Square and the village centre being the most suggested locations.

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- **Village appearance:** 63% of respondents are satisfied with the general appearance of the village, 17% saying neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 15% somewhat dissatisfied and only 5% very dissatisfied.
- **Council tax contribution:** 55% of those who responded to the survey were open to a small increase, some stating making sure it directly funded improvements and/or retained current service levels, while others were citing a need for efficiency before additional charges.
- **Other feedback:** Comments highlighted the importance of balancing tidiness with biodiversity, ensuring value for money, and improving coordination between Parish and District responsibilities.

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DETAILED RESPONSES FOR EACH QUESTION

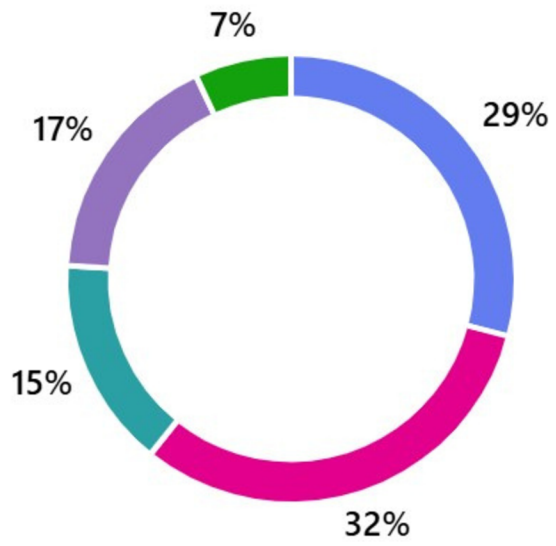
Q1: Confirmation of postcode to make sure respondents live within the boundaries of Southwater Parish.

Q2: How satisfied are you with the current frequency of grass cutting in public areas managed by Southwater Parish Council?

Current schedule is around 12 cuts per year (with no cuts in May, supporting "No Mow May").

Please use the link below to access the area map to help you fill out the survey.
https://983bdac3-8796-4e4a-af88-987663475d5e.usrfiles.com/ugd/983bda_4919472d27e043889d787b7f5b303151.pdf

Very satisfied	46
Somewhat satisfied	50
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	24
Somewhat dissatisfied	27
Very dissatisfied	11

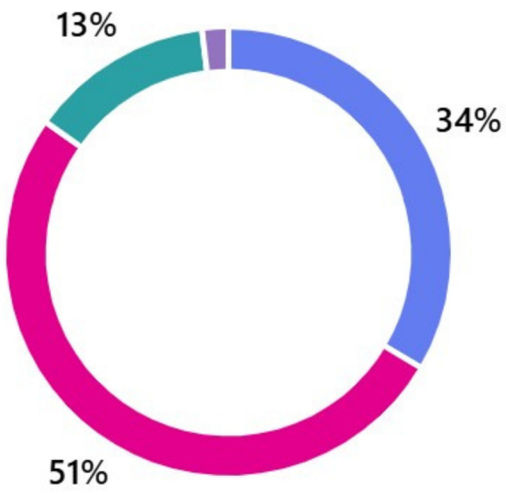


DETAILED RESPONSES FOR EACH QUESTION

Q3: Was asking residents on their preference regarding the frequency of the grass cutting and if it should be more, the same as now, or less.

The majority of people suggested keeping it the same as it is now.

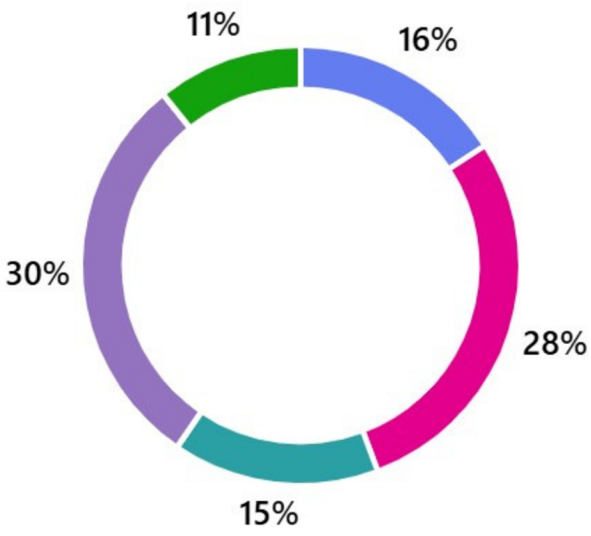
More frequent	53
About the same as now	81
Less frequent	21
Not sure	3



Q4: How satisfied are you with the general standard of ground maintenance in public areas within the parish?

General tasks include but are not limited to strimming path edges, scraping back encroachment and cutting back vegetation from paths, weed removal, hedge cutting.

Very satisfied	25
Somewhat satisfied	45
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	24
Somewhat dissatisfied	47
Very dissatisfied	17

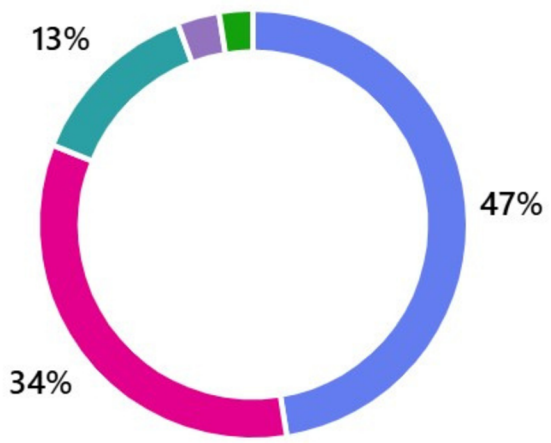


DETAILED RESPONSES FOR EACH QUESTION

Q5: I support actions that protect and enhance biodiversity* in public spaces in Southwater.

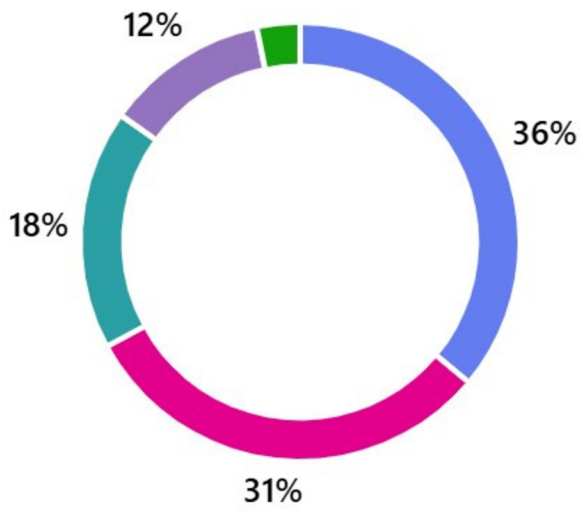
**Biodiversity is the variety of all living things; the different plants, animals, fungi and microorganisms, the genetic information they contain and the ecosystems they form.*

Strongly agree	75
Agree	53
Neutral	21
Disagree	5
Strongly disagree	4



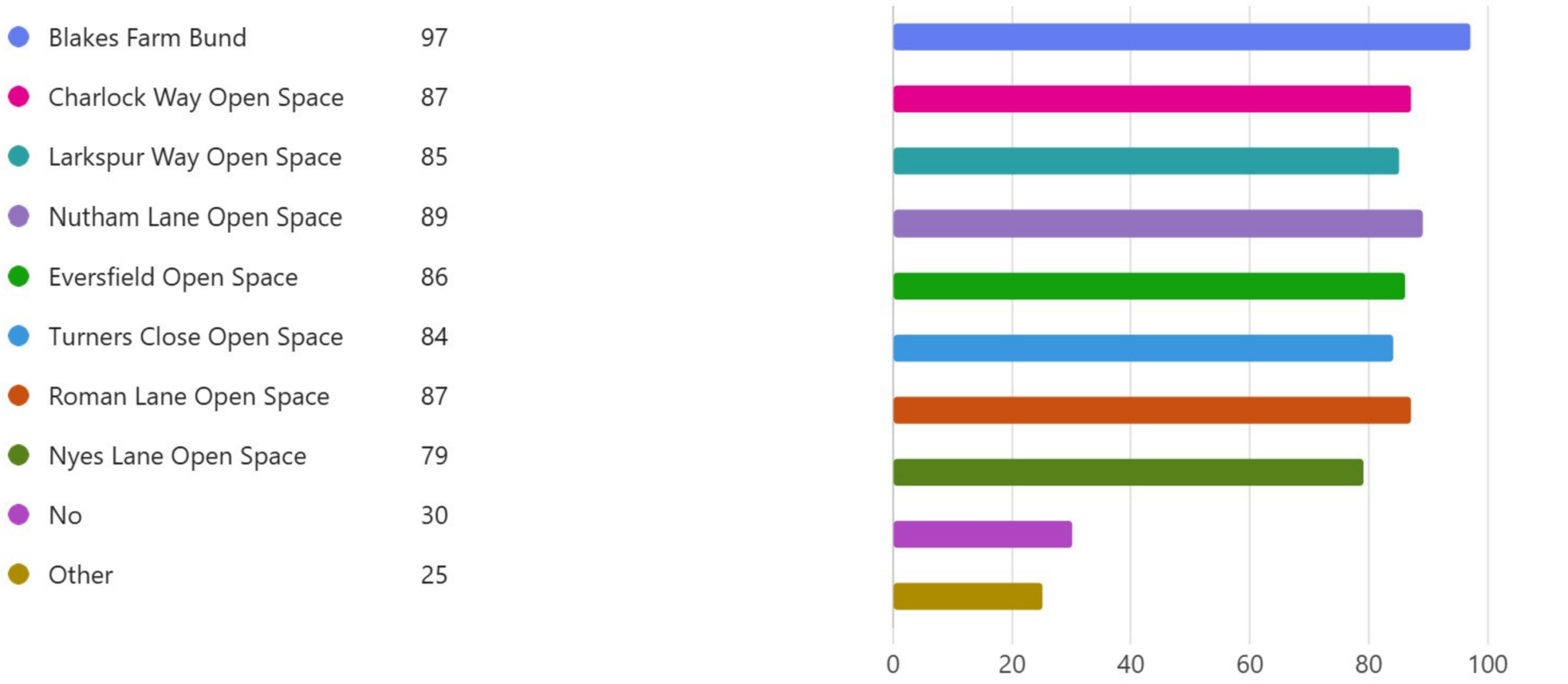
Q6: Do you support allowing areas of open spaces to grow naturally or additional planting to be added to enhance biodiversity?

Strongly agree	57
Agree	49
Neutral	28
Disagree	19
Strongly disagree	5



DETAILED RESPONSES FOR EACH QUESTION

Q7: Would you be supportive of the Parish Council adding wild flower areas (where possible), in any of the following spaces?



Specific location mentions outside the 8 main spaces:

Total other locations mentioned = 17

Below comments have been copied from the survey as originally shared there.

Railway bridge → 1, The Ghyll → 1, Some of the older more established roads → 1, Lintot Sq → 1, York Close → 1, East of A24, Coltstaple lane. The forgotten Southwater parish postcode :(→ 1, Woodlands Way / College Road (and similar mentions: Woodlands Way and College Road, College road /Woodlands way green) → 3 total, Church Lane – land opposite the bus stop/village hall → 1, Field by great lime kilns → 1, Camelot Close / Swan Close Open Space → 1, Church lane Green → 1, Corner of Andrews Road / Worthing Road, area of open space on College road / Worthing road → 1, Butterfly park → 1, Castlewood Road / Camelot Close → 1, Little Bridges Close → 1, Edinburgh Close Open Space → 1.

DETAILED RESPONSES FOR EACH QUESTION

Q8: Would you be supportive of flower basket arrangements around Southwater?

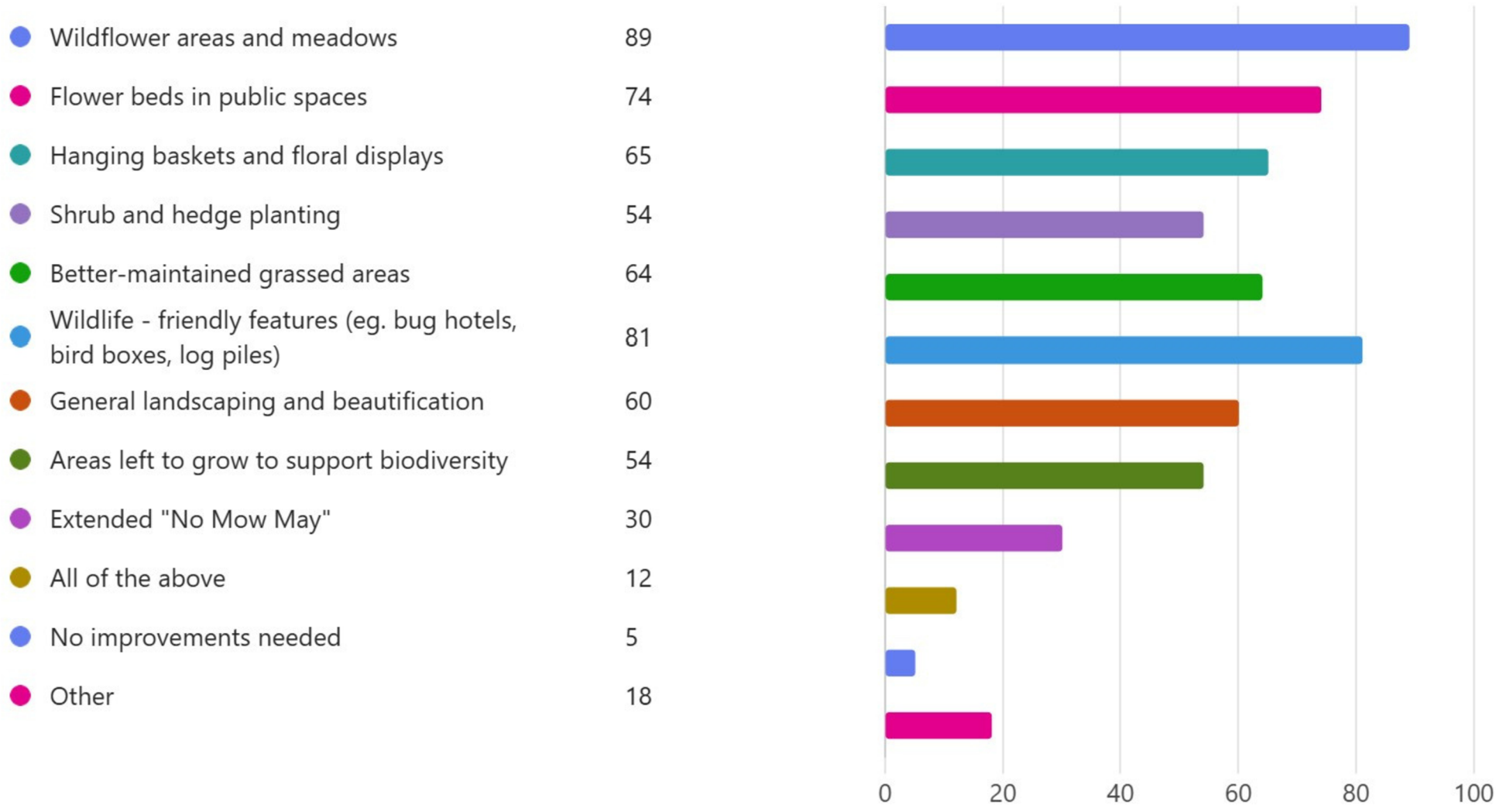
Q9: If you selected Yes regarding flower baskets, where would you like to see them in the village? Please suggest an area.

Here's the count of how many times each location/area was mentioned in the flower basket responses:

Lintot Square → 71, Worthing Road → 9, Village Centre → 5, Roundabout(s) → 5, Surgery → 4, Bus Stop(s) → 3, Shops → 3, War Memorial → 2, Cedar Drive → 2 Village Hall → 2, Iggy (trees by statue) → 2, Blake's Farm Road → 1, Downslink → 1, Church Lane → 1, Library → 1, Gazebo → 1

DETAILED RESPONSES FOR EACH QUESTION

Q10: What would you like to see more of in the Parish?



Respondents were able to select multiple answers and the following suggestions were shared in the “Other” section from the 17 responses added there:

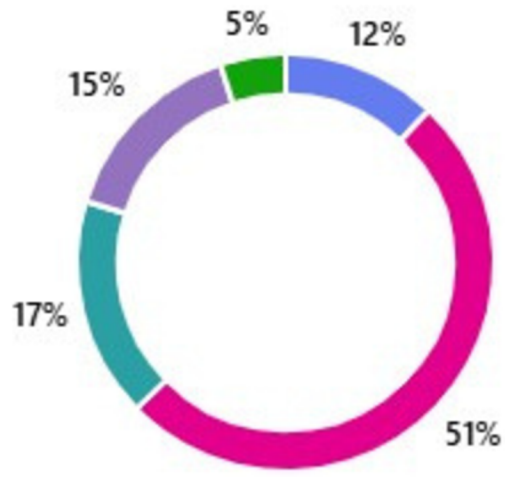
- Scrap No Mow May – described by 2 responders, as leaving verges messy, tick-prone, and making dog waste harder to collect.
- Path and hedge maintenance – brambles along the path by the infant school and Cedar Drive park railings; grass and verges at Nutham Lane; footpath behind Easted allotments (impassable); car park beds at Lintot Square; grounds around the Tipsy Fox pub.
- Plastic flowers at the Tipsy Fox pub – requested removal and replacement with natural flowers.
- Tree planting – more blossom trees, oaks, and planting on the green, and in Church Lane.
- Litter and rubbish collection – more frequent clearing along verges.
- Grass management – keep the grass cut to reduce pollen and improve visibility for drivers at, especially at roundabouts.

DETAILED RESPONSES FOR EACH QUESTION

Q11: How satisfied are you with the general appearance of the village?

63% of the respondents are satisfied with the general appearance of the village.

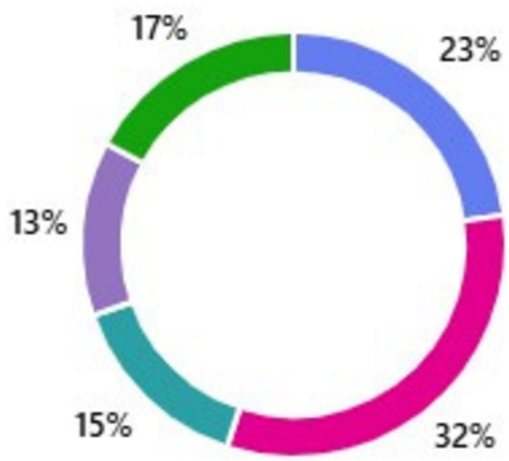
Very satisfied	19
Somewhat satisfied	80
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	27
Somewhat dissatisfied	24
Very dissatisfied	8



Q12: Would you be agreeable to an increase in council tax (equivalent to a cup of coffee) to sustain present maintenance efforts and to further enhance the open spaces, woodland and other land managed by the Council?

55% of the respondents would support an increase.

Strongly agree	36
Agree	51
Neither agree nor disagree	23
Disagree	21
Strongly disagree	27



DETAILED RESPONSES FOR EACH QUESTION

Q13: If there is anything else related to the items discussed in this survey, please feel free to share your views.

Summarised bulletpoints of the 80 additional reviews shared in the responses to this question:

- ***Council tax use*** *– support for increases, making sure money is spent appropriately on improving public spaces and maintaining access.*
- ***Wildlife protection*** *– requests for surveys to be carried out and shared with the public before hedge cutting during nesting season.*
- ***Path and hedge maintenance*** *– paths often overgrown then cut back too harshly; requests for lighter, more regular maintenance.*
- ***No Mow May*** *– One response suggests frustration that councils aren't consistent; one oppose it entirely, one response prefers longer-term uncut areas instead of a single month.*
- ***Poor maintenance concerns*** *– roundabouts at Mulberry Fields, Camelot Close field, Southwater Street, Martingales end of Blakes Farm Road, and Cedar Drive highlighted as not maintained enough. These areas are all under the management of Horsham District Council, or West Sussex County Council.*
- ***Responsibility of property owners*** *– requests to ensure residents cut back trees/hedges that block pavements, especially on Cedar Drive.*
- ***Contractors and public areas*** *– there was criticism of contractors working on behalf of Horsham District Council for poor work at Lintot Square car park beds.*
- ***General maintenance requests*** *– gutters cleared, pavements kept free of weeds/foliage, areas tidied properly after works, timing maintenance outside nesting season.*
- ***Community involvement*** *– suggestion for voluntary groups to help cut hedges and maintain public areas.*
- ***Specific locations needing work*** *– roundabout at Cedar Drive, which is under the management of West Sussex County Council was described as a disgrace; path between Easteds Lane and Charlock Way impassable; shrubs on Station Road scratching cars.*
- ***Tree planting*** *– in Lintot Square, which is managed by Horsham District Countil, there was a call to replace the trees that were previously removed.*

Conclusion

- The survey results highlight the interest and support towards current practices and possible improvements in how Southwater's green spaces are managed. While some residents favour more frequent grass cutting to maintain tidiness, a strong majority support greater biodiversity measures, the planting of wildflower areas and natural growth and are satisfied with the current number of cuts.

- There is also a desire to enhance the village's appearance through better maintenance and flower displays, though funding remains a more sensitive question. Any proposal for a council tax increase should therefore be carefully justified with visible outcomes.

- Overall, residents want Southwater to look cared for, vibrant, and environmentally responsible, which suggests that future policy should strike a balance between neatness, ecological value, and community pride.

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