

## Comments on Raw data

I am not attempting to duplicate the work done on collating information from the survey following the Public Consultation days at the end of June 2017. Nor am I attempting to prove them 'wrong' or attack them in some way. The multiple choice answers are fairly clear but I think the narrative answers have more information to give.

In my opinion, there are some problems both with how some information has been presented and in the way the information has been analysed. There are also inconsistencies, and things in the narrative answers which may not have been picked up by someone who is not local.

Questionnaires with narrative answers are notoriously difficult to reduce to figures and I hope to add understanding to the document 'Survey Results-pr-july17' by the points I raise below. They should be read in conjunction with the official report and are not intended to be a replacement for it.

1) This survey was responded to by a relatively small number of people, 245 responses to the formal questionnaire. So circumstances where there are duplications, or possible under-representation because one response reflects the views of more than one person, become statistically relevant. This is shown by the fact that 4 or more similar responses are seen as worth recording as an important opinion in the summary of the data.

Although there were 248 responses in total this Survey Results document reflects the views of only the 245 responses to the actual questionnaire.

As such I mention that answers from respondents 154 and 155 are identical. Does this represent an error in collation or an intentional duplicate entry? Should that be counted as 2 responses or as one response and the answer count adjusted accordingly?

In the opposite direction, respondents 18, 110, 151, 179, 223, refer to 'we' in certain narrative answers; so should those responses be counted twice or more? There are 6 comments which are representative of organisations, respondent 183 is Devon Building Group, 229 is the Lifeboat, and 239 is Sid Vale Association; but it is not possible to identify other group answers in the anonymised data. However it is possible to see that there are at least 8 instances, and potentially 11 or more, where the answers given represent more than one opinion.

1 response is from an expert on British Drill Halls ( respondent 96) who has written a series of reference books including one on drill halls and who works closely with Historic England on many projects and may therefore be considered to carry more weight.

2) It would appear that the data has been anonymised by machine not by human as there seem to have been references to Bagwell's, meaning the fish shop, removed (judging by context). This will skew the data collected about the importance of Sidmouth Trawlers to the town and may be of particular importance in **Q2**. This problem is one example of where local knowledge when considering answers will make a difference.

3) When considering individual narrative questions :-  
**Q5** is particularly tricky.

In the summary at the beginning of document 'Survey Results-pr-july17' it is stated that 56% of respondents support having some sort of refreshments outlet at Port Royal ('56% would like to see new food and drink outlets on the Port Royal site, 44% would not.'). This is not the truth.

Further on in the document it is explained exactly what the response rate for this question was and it becomes possible to do accurate calculations.

Of the 245 total respondents only 198 of them chose to answer this question (80% of the total.). 20% appear to have no strong feelings either way.

56% of these 198 ( which would be 111) answered yes and 44% ( which would be 87) answered no. So the actual figures are 45% of the total answered yes and 35% answered no (rounded figures).

Out of 111 who answered in the positive 106 made a narrative answer as well (43% of the number of respondents). So the table relating to Q5 represents answers from 43% of the people who answered the survey.

Where people made answers indicating food was wanted the answers tended to cover a range which would be acceptable to them: such as 'A decent restaurant and wine bar with live music licence.' or 'A diner style burger bar that kids can afford.' or 'Café / restaurant / wine bar.'

Yet the way this is reported in the results document ( each item separated out and totalled ) would imply that the person wanted all these things not just something along those lines. ie, a restaurant plus a wine bar, not a restaurant including wine bar.

This obviously creates a false impression. We can not afford to assume anything from these figures except in cases where it was clearly stated that something specific was or wasn't wanted.

It is worth noting that in this question there were 4 spontaneous mentions of using the Drill Hall as a food venue, despite the question being about a new build facility.

2 people say the question is unclear given the info supplied.

Of other narrative questions :-

**Q7 Q7a How much do you agree or disagree with a new multi-function facility being provided on the Port Royal allocated site? Q7b Please tell us the reasons for your answer to question 7:**

Many narrative responses to this do not actually answer the question; which is an indication of how badly the questionnaire performed.

Instead responses give supporting reasons for the respondent valuing the current mixed use at Port Royal.

eg 'There has been a big change in use of the water with sailing, angling, kayaking, sea swimming, windsurfing, kite surfing, paddleboarding and surf lifesaving club.'

or ask questions eg 'Could the lifeboat be located at a purpose built site at the other end of the Esplanade?'

Or confuse having a multifunction use with having to have the concept block shown 'It will destroy that which currently draws visitors back year after year. They return to Sidmouth because of its changelessness.'

Or put forward completely different ideas.

Or mention problems with noise of safety horns, and 'washing through equipment', intermixed with high cost flats.

Or consider that 'multi-function' refers only to the sailing club and associated facilities 'I'm not going to use it. These are elitist pastimes for the few not the many.'

Of the responses which more or less addressed the question there were 14 responses indicating that not enough information had been given for them to feel they could make a judgement.

Spontaneous information surrounding the subject included 42 respondents who asked that the existing facilities be reused and another 7 whose statements seemed to mean that. Of those 42, 10 specifically mentioned a wish for the Drill Hall to be reused.

2 made comments which might appear to support reuse and were only clarified by their other answers in the survey, both respondents actually being for the demolition of all current buildings and replacement with new. This indicates the need to assess answers within a person's responses and not just extract data on a question by question basis.

2 respondents specifically stated their opinion that the Drill Hall be pulled down.

**Q9a How much do you agree or disagree with the new development including some of the area shown as E on board 3 and a new access route being provided from Ham Lane?**

**Q9b Please tell us the reasons for your answer to question 9:**

Many people seem to think this question is about a separate plan and not part a of the whole plan for the area. This is demonstrated by comments such as 'Difficult to accept a access route without seeing the intended overall plan' (sic)

Or find it difficult to remember what they have seen, comments such as 'Can't see the board' and 'It is difficult to say exactly as the proposal/maps are not alongside the questionnaire' and 'I only saw one plan'.

Or did not see the plans, comments like 'have not actually looked at the plans!'

Again there many irrelevant comments, or comments which would have fitted better in other questions, such as those about the use of the turning circle.

In some cases the question is ignored in favour of reinforcing comments already made by them earlier in the questionnaire eg 'Area needs updating and Drill Hall is not fit for purpose, it is not an enhancement to the Esplanade at present.'

Of those who did address the question the people who favour it do so because it gives greater boat storage. No-one commented that it would enhance or improve facilities for the public.

Amongst those who were not in favour 35 people stated that the Ham land should be protected, and within that number 3 also mentioned the Drill Hall being protected.

23 stated that parking should be protected and one of these also mentioned the Drill Hall.

13 said there should be no change.

**Q10a Board 3 shows the pedestrianisation of the Esplanade, shown as B, from the junction with Ham Lane through the existing turning circle to the east of the existing toilet block. How much do you agree or disagree with this pedestrianisation?**

The responses show that pedestrianisation means different things to different people and that a definition would have been necessary to obtain clear information on this subject. This difference in understanding can be seen both where pedestrianisation is approved and where it is rejected.

Some respondents assume the question to refer to total pedestrianisation preventing the movement of boats, the use of bicycles, and access to the fish shop and sewage tanks. Others assume it just means banning the free use as a road for cars, with access and boat movement continuing.

Data from this question should be treated with caution.

**Q12 Final free question**

20 mention some sort of harbour, jetty , pier, or boat launching facility

37 unique responses mention no parking loss, while 9 mentioned it again,

9 respondents mention moving the lifeboat station.

29 people say that the existing buildings should be renewed, an additional 34 allude to retaining the unique character, the heritage, or not spoiling what is there, while a further 20 mention retaining the Drill Hall specifically. This gives a total of 73 people in favour of retaining the current buildings.

6 respondents specifically mention they want the buildings demolished and 4 want redevelopment limited to the footprint of the Drill Hall, giving 10 in favour of some loss of current buildings.

19 individuals state that the current Ham land must be protected as a red line.

11 people make complaints about the structure of the questionnaire

Respondent 183 identifies themselves as Devon Buildings Group. They make many good points on Conservation which are not easily summarised but should be read in full.

**In conclusion** it should be pointed out that many people expressed frustration about the questionnaire, the consultation, and their inability to give clear answers because of how both were structured. There were also complaints about lack of clear information on which to make decisions. Most of these comments occurred in the Free question Q12 but some were mentioned in other questions.

Apart from these direct statements it is also possible to see struggles occurring, such as question boxes for one question being used to give explanatory information relating to other questions. Furthermore there are statements from people who are attempting to answer the questions without having seen the plans ( [‘I have not seen the plans’](#)), or being able to recollect what they have seen ( as the pictures aren’t with the questionnaire); as well as statements which show the plans to have been misunderstood ( one response expresses surprise at allotments being included).

Many people made points which raised questions about what is feasible ( [‘Is a slipway possible?’](#) [‘There should be a jetty.’](#)) I think it is important that such questions are answered as part of the possible redevelopment even though such considerations may be outside the remit of the Scoping Exercise.

The information previously extracted from this survey is obviously of use but I feel that it should not be considered definitive.

Mary Walden-Till, January 2018