

Mendip Hills National Landscape – Cheddar Gorge for everyone

Involving people in plans for Cheddar Gorge An Easy Read document

This is the Easy Read version of the ['Mendip Hills National Landscape – Cheddar Gorge for everyone Statement of Community Involvement'](#) document.

This document explains the **proposal** from Mendip Hills National Landscape to close Cheddar Gorge to cars, motorcycles, lorries and vans for a short period of time. A **proposal** is a plan or suggestion shared for consideration by others. This is called an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (order).

Mendip Hills National Landscape (MHNL) are the team behind protecting and sharing information about the Mendip Hills area.

This document explains who we spoke to, what people said, and what we recommend happens next.

Hard words

In this guide we show **hard words** in bold. We explain these harder words in the following sentence.



About this document

The Mendip Hills National Landscape team (known as 'the team') is sharing information about plans to close Cheddar Gorge to traffic one day a month.

This would be done using an **Experimental Traffic Regulation Order**.

What is an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order?



An Experimental Traffic Regulation Order is a way to test changes to how a road is used.

This helps groups understand how the changes will work, and whether they will be good at managing traffic, improving road safety and improving the environment. We will refer to this as 'the order' in this document.

Examples of an order in use include: new one-way systems, reducing traffic during certain times, or creating zones for walkers.



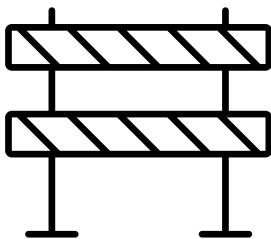
Image credit: Marcus Woodbridge, Unsplash.

Why is this being suggested?

People have asked how the Gorge is visited and could be better enjoyed by more people.

In the past, local residents and businesses have said that the amount of traffic and anti-social driving on the road through Cheddar Gorge sometimes makes the area less safe and less enjoyable.

The team believes that closing the road that runs through Cheddar Gorge once a month would allow walkers, cyclists and other visitors not in cars to enjoy the Gorge more safely and make their visitor experience better.



About the Cheddar Gorge traffic order

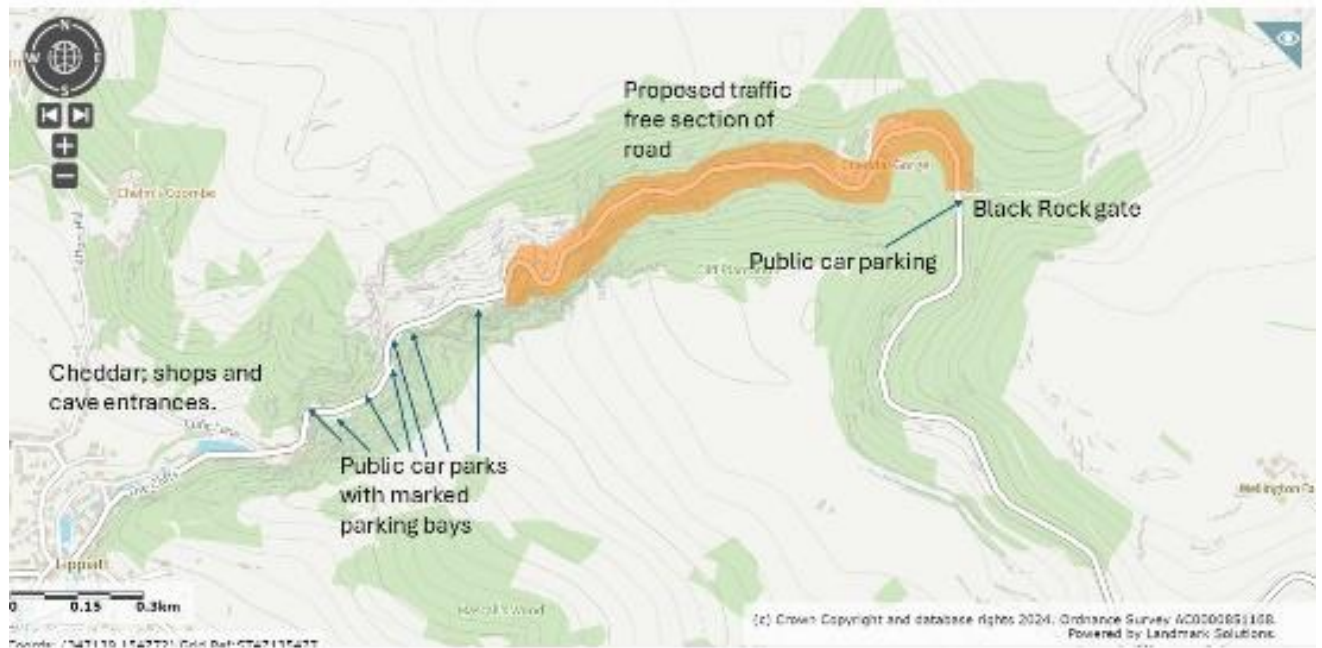
The proposal suggests closing Cheddar Gorge for one day each month for 18 months. This is the maximum length an order like this can be in place.

When the order is in place, Cliff Road (B3135) would close to **vehicles** from above the car parks to the Black Rock car park (see map below). In this case, **vehicles** are cars, lorries, vans and any other form of transport with a motor.

Businesses throughout the village of Cheddar would remain open as usual

during this time. The car parks at either end of Cheddar Gorge would also remain open.

The map below shows the B135. It highlights where the traffic free section of the road will be.



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The survey

It is important that people who live in, work in, and visit Cheddar Gorge can comment on how the order could work.

We created a **survey** to allow people to share their views on how the order could work best.

A **survey** is a set of questions which help us to find out what people think.

More than 1,700 people responded to the survey.



How did we share the survey?

The team shared this by:

- The project website – which was visited by people more than 10,000 times
- Social media
- Local and regional media (at least 16 news pieces)
- 120 leaflets given to local businesses
- Meeting people in person (9 meetings)
- Contacting 59 **stakeholders** via email to give them the key information about the plans.



A **stakeholder** is someone with an interest in or concern about something, usually in a professional way. These included Cheddar Parish Council, Somerset Council, and local emergency services.

We explained what the order meant and included FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) on the website too.



We also set up an email address and telephone line. This ensured as many people as possible could contact the team.



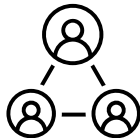
Who responded?

We had responses from 240 different postcode areas, and 2 international responses.

Postcode areas with the highest number of responses:

- BS27 (Cheddar, Draycott, Rodney Stoke)
- BA5 (Wells, Wookey, Croscombe, Coxley, Westbury-sub-Mendip, Priddy)
- BS26 (Axbridge, Rooks Bridge, Badgworth, Weare, Biddisham)

This information shows that we reached people within Cheddar and the areas close by.



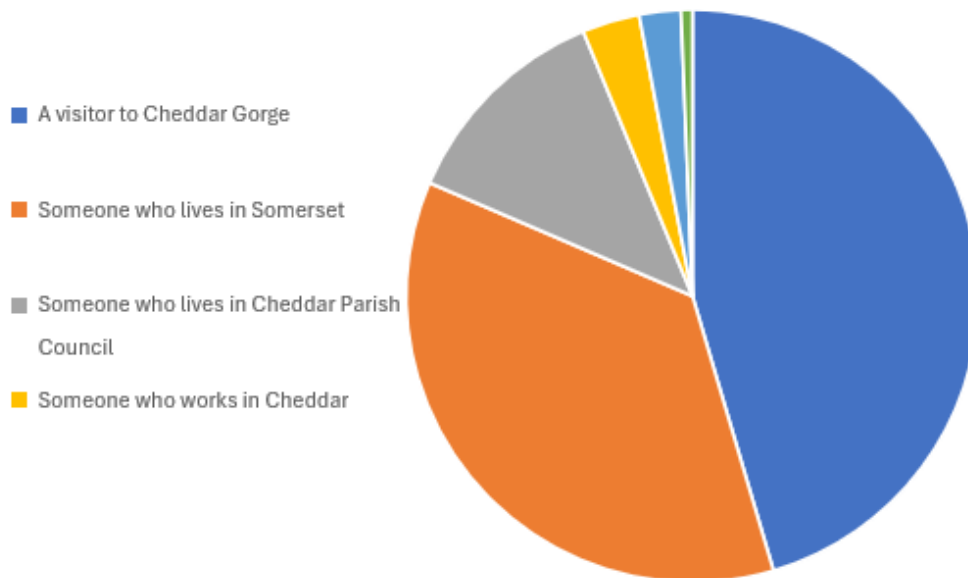
We also asked people who filled in the survey for their relationship to the area. People could choose more than one answer to this question.

- A visitor to Cheddar Gorge: 1,064
- Someone who lives in Somerset: 844
- Someone who lives in the Cheddar Parish Council area: 288
- Someone who works in Cheddar: 76
- Local business owner or representative: 55
- Other: 15

These responses show the split between people that live in, work in and visit Cheddar Gorge. The pie chart below shows the relationship the **respondents** to the survey had to Cheddar.

A **respondent** is someone who has answered the survey questions.

Pie chart showing respondents' relationship to Cheddar





Emails and phone calls

We received 15 emails from 11 different people, and 3 phone calls.

How did people respond to the survey?

Support for the order:



- 8 out of 10 respondents agreed that Cheddar Gorge should be easier to access for people walking, using a bike or others not using cars.
- 8 out of 10 respondents agreed that closing the road would make it safer for visitors.
- 6 out of 10 of respondents agreed it would encourage more people to visit Cheddar Gorge.
- Half of respondents would like to see the order used straight away.



Respondents who agreed with the road closure said:

- **Safety and peace:** There could be a more peaceful and safer environment, with no cars or noise, especially at weekends.
- **A better experience for visitors:** Focusing on the area's beauty, wildlife and peaceful nature.
- **Closing the road more:** Some respondents agreed to closing the road once

a month, others thought it should be every weekend.



Against the order

1 in 5 respondents would not like a road closure to happen at all.

Respondents against the road closure said:

- **Can it really happen?** It was said that some people, especially people who live close by, need the road for essential travel.
- **It won't solve the problems:** The closure may not solve the problems of traffic and anti-social driving. It may just move the problems to other times and areas.
- **Impact on local business and tourism:** Some people are worried that the closure could reduce the number of visitors and mean businesses have fewer customers.

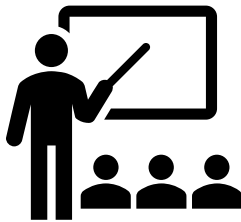
Some respondents shared what they were worried about.

This included:



- **It is not enough:** This will not be enough to stop all problems. The issues would happen on different days instead.
- **People not knowing:** It needs to be clear that roads are closed and people must know this before their visit.
- **Cycle danger:** People on bikes can travel very fast down Cheddar Gorge. This could be dangerous to walkers.

- **Parking and public transport:** We need to make sure there is enough parking and that people can still use public transport.
- **Ease of travel:** It will be more difficult for those less able to get to where they are going, and for emergency vehicles to get to where they need to be.
- **Getting around the closed road:** This will make journeys longer and pollution and traffic on other roads higher.

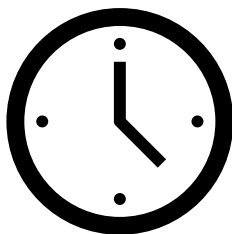


Recommendations

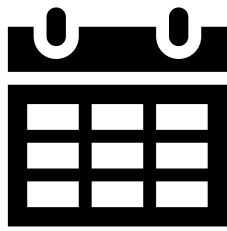
This consultation provided a lot of feedback. This will help shape the order in ways which work best for all.

There is a lot of interest in Cheddar. People want it to be a welcoming, connected and successful place.

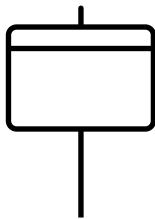
We recommend:



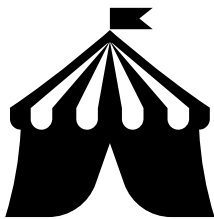
Timing: The feedback suggests that the road closure should be all day on a Sunday, to start with.



How often the road will be closed: Weekly closures was the most popular response when asked. However, there were worries about how this would work. We therefore recommend monthly closures to test how this works.

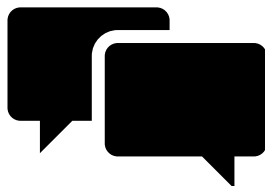


Signs: Enough signs need to be put up and there will need to be safe spaces for cars to turn around - at both ends of the closed area.



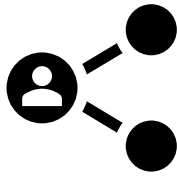
Activities and enjoyment: Many people commented that enjoying the peace and beauty of Cheddar Gorge would be a good thing. We therefore do not recommend having events on every day that the road is closed to vehicles.

Walking and cycling groups were popular activity choices and these would be encouraged.



Clear communication: The days and times of the closure will need to be made clear to the public to ensure visitors, residents and businesses are aware. **Highways Officers** will need to make emergency services and public transport providers aware.

Highways Officers are people whose job it is to help keep the roads clear and safe for road users.



Sharing feedback: The answers included comments on other issues that are outside the control of the team. We have therefore provided a list to be passed onto those who would benefit knowing these.

These include the condition of surrounding roads (potholes, footpaths etc.), the need to manage and reduce anti-social driving behaviour, maintenance of public areas in Cheddar, and improved public transport.

This is the Easy Read version of the 'Mendip Hills National Landscape – *Cheddar Gorge for everyone* Statement of Community Involvement'.

This main document includes more information about:

- Full list of survey questions
- Responses
- Media coverage
- Social media posts
- Communication with stakeholders (key people)
- The web page

If you would like to discuss the order more, please contact us by telephone or email: 0330 107 0535 or CheddarGorge@distinctivecomms.co.uk.