

# Sheerness Area Committee

## Capital Projects Team Update

### Bench Refurbishment

The bench refurbishment programme was completed on 28<sup>th</sup> May. The ends of the benches have been painted Marine blue and the timber slats rubbed down and re-treated and/or replaced as required.



### New Planters

The new timber planters were installed throughout the High Street on 4<sup>th</sup> June and the existing planters relocated to Beachfield and planted out by Sheppey matters community gardeners.



## **Clock Tower**

The contract to Smiths of Derby has now been formally awarded and they are currently in the process of developing their plans and health and safety requirements with a view to dismantling and removing the clock tower at the end of September. The date has yet to be confirmed as this will be dependent on plant (craneage, haulage) and resource availability as well as Kent County Council in terms of permitting and road closure requirements.

UKPN are due to disconnect the permanent power feed to the tower on 14<sup>th</sup> September leaving the clock in a non-functioning state.

Once the clock tower is removed from site the current Heras fencing will be replaced with timber hoarding which will include historic and informative notice boards.

Time lapse photography is being planned for the removal and installation sequences as well as interviews with council staff and members and representatives from Smiths of Derby.

## **Concrete Balls and uprighters around the clock tower**

The Capital Projects team are currently in discussion with KCC and with electrical contractor Prowired. It is currently being planned to schedule the replacement of the ball bollards and the installation of the new uprighters prior to the tower being re-erected if this is possible with the timber hoarding insitu.

## **Highway Asset Painting**

Painting of the bollards commenced during week commencing 9<sup>th</sup> August. Sheerness town council highlighted some issues with the finish and the contractor carrying out works in accordance with the specification. This has been discussed with the contractor's senior management team and is being addressed.

The contractor is currently awaiting their MEWP licence and permits from KCC to enable them to start works on the lighting columns. This delay has been caused by payment not being received by KCC for the permits. A full post works survey will be carried out and any defects identified with the contractor.

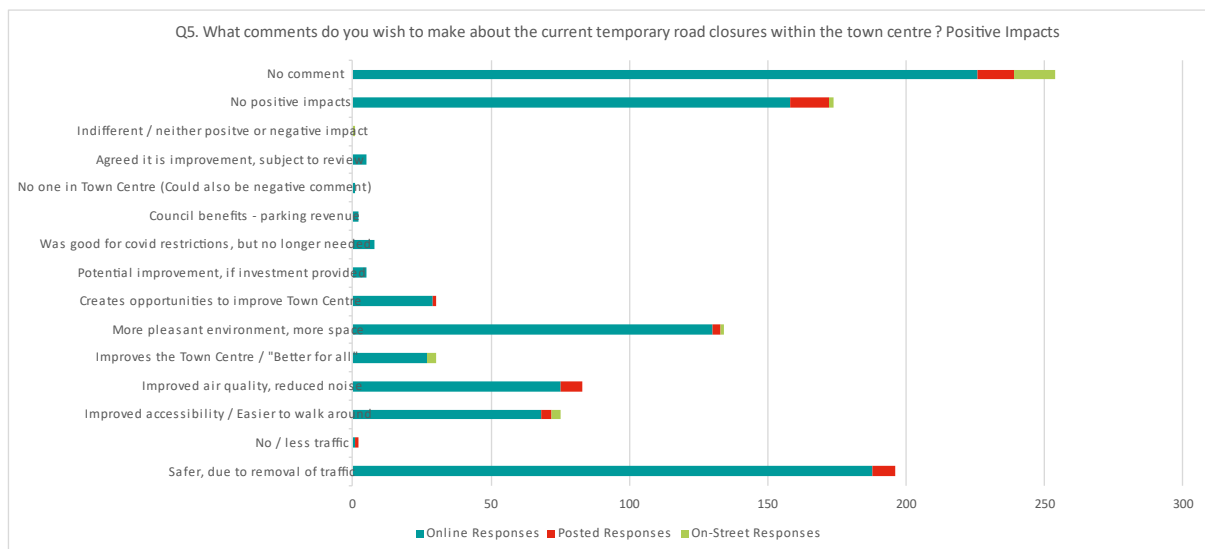
## **Sheerness Permanent Town Centre Informal Consultation**

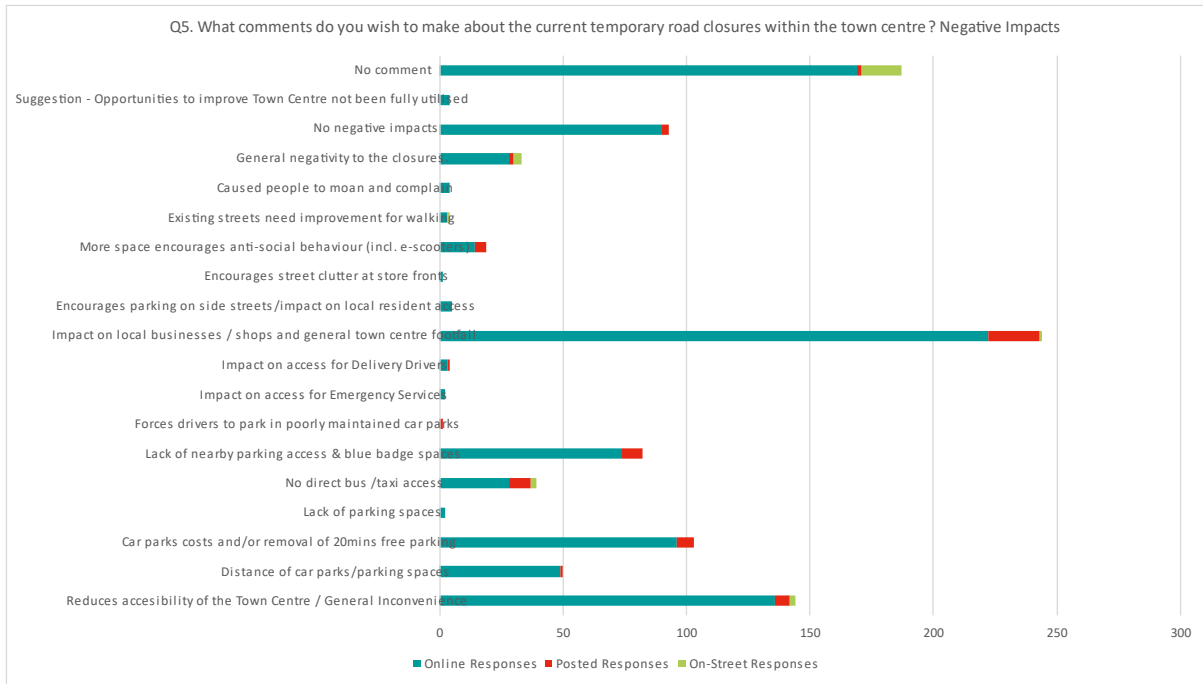
This detail below highlights the results from the analysis carried out following the informal consultation carried out for Sheerness between 21<sup>st</sup> May and 14<sup>th</sup> June 2021 to gauge stakeholders' views on the implementation of permanent road closures (please note the results for Sittingbourne and Faversham are included within the appendices).

The informal consultation took place as a posted, online and on-street survey between 21<sup>st</sup> May and 14<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

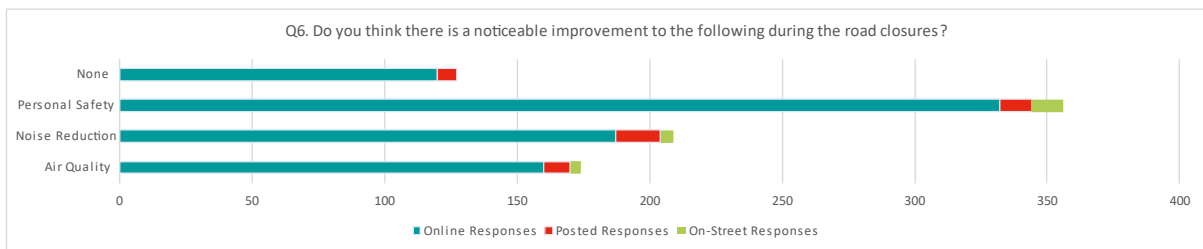
There was a total of 810 responses, of which 744 were online responses, 41 mail responses and 25 on-street responses.

- 71% of responses were a Swale resident, 5% were a business and 10% were a visitor.
- 64% travelled to the town by car/van and 25% travelled by foot.
- 56% travel to town 1-3 days per week and 31% travel to town 4-7 days per week
- 28% of responses consider themselves to have a disability with 77% of these stating physical/mobility limitations
- 47% of respondents had something positive to say while 65% had negative responses relating to the temporary closures. Key reasons raised in support of the closure included:
  - + Safer, due to removal of traffic (20%)
  - + More pleasant environment, due to more space (13%)
 Whereas key reasons raised against the closure included:
  - Impact on local businesses / shops and general town centre, footfall (24%).
  - Reduces accessibility / General Inconvenience (14%)

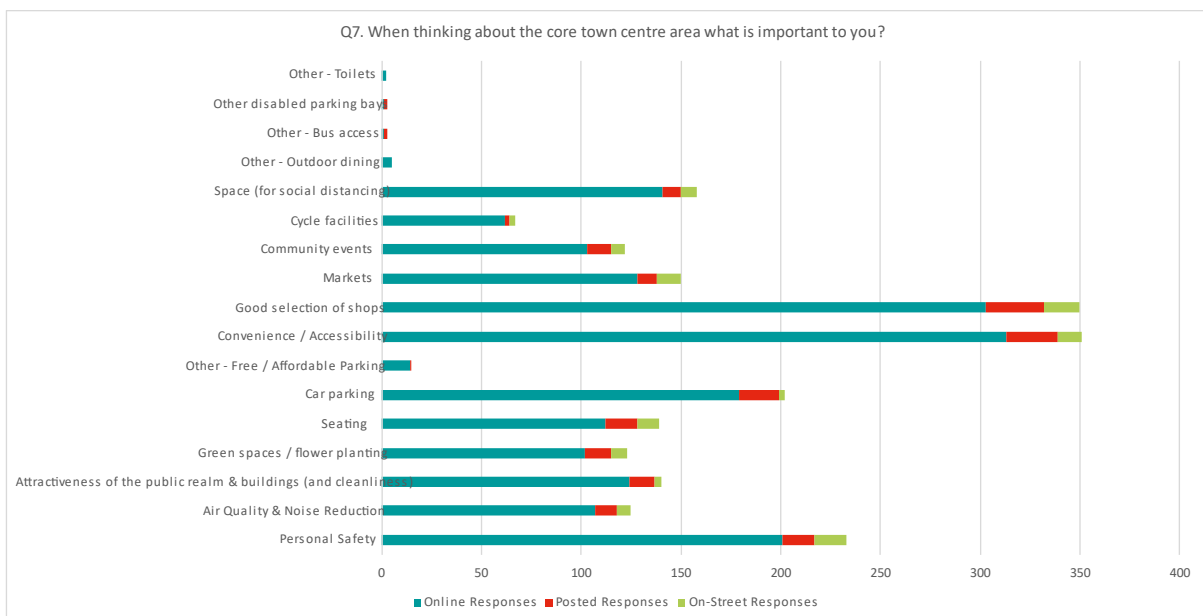




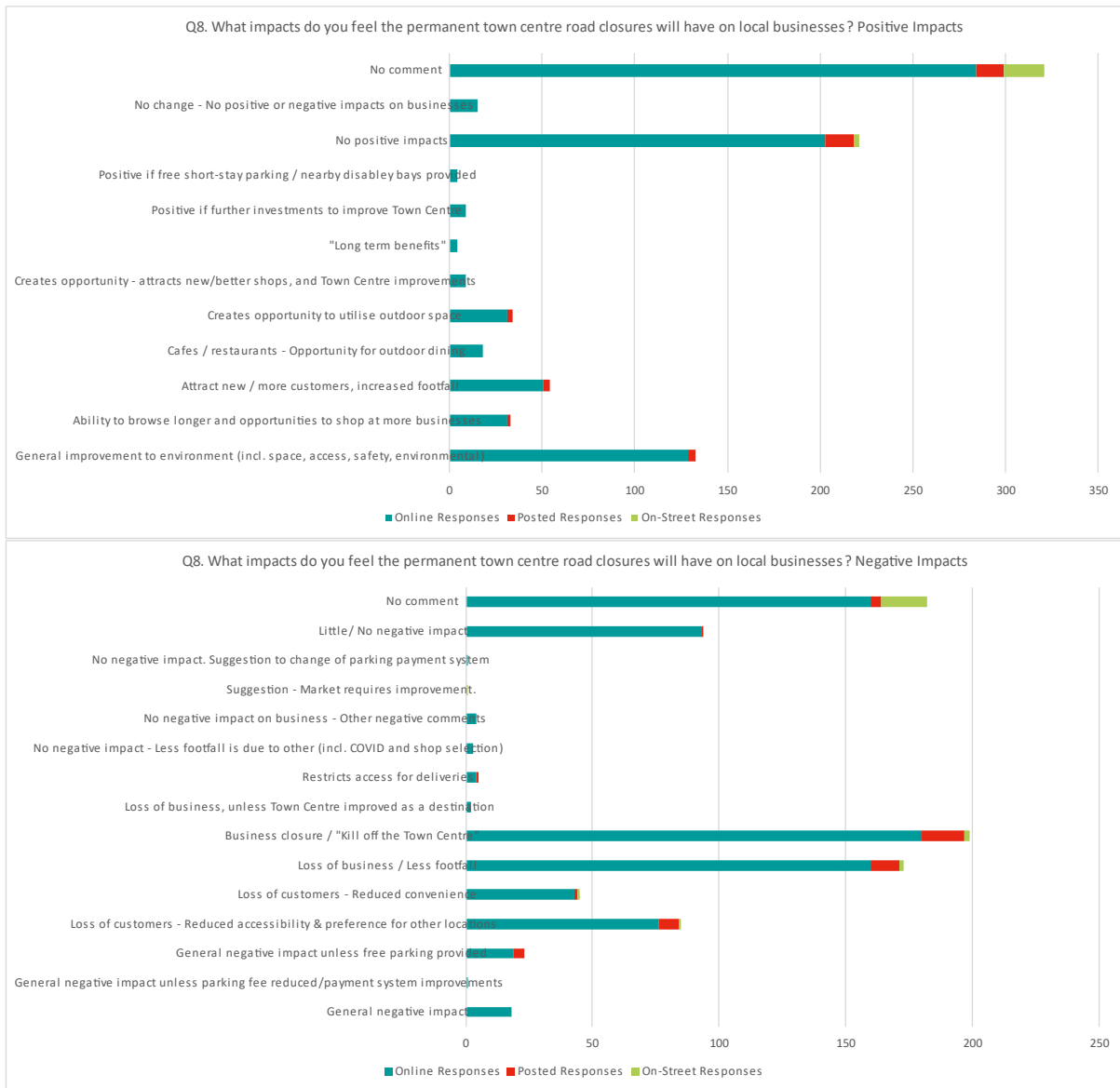
- As with Sittingbourne, people in Sheerness felt there were improvements in personal safety with the temporary closures in place.



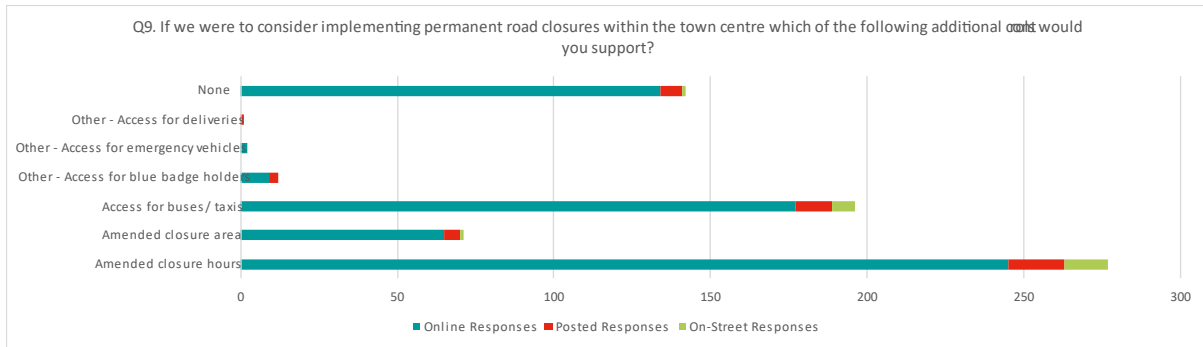
- There were clear themes that were important to people with regard to the town centre.



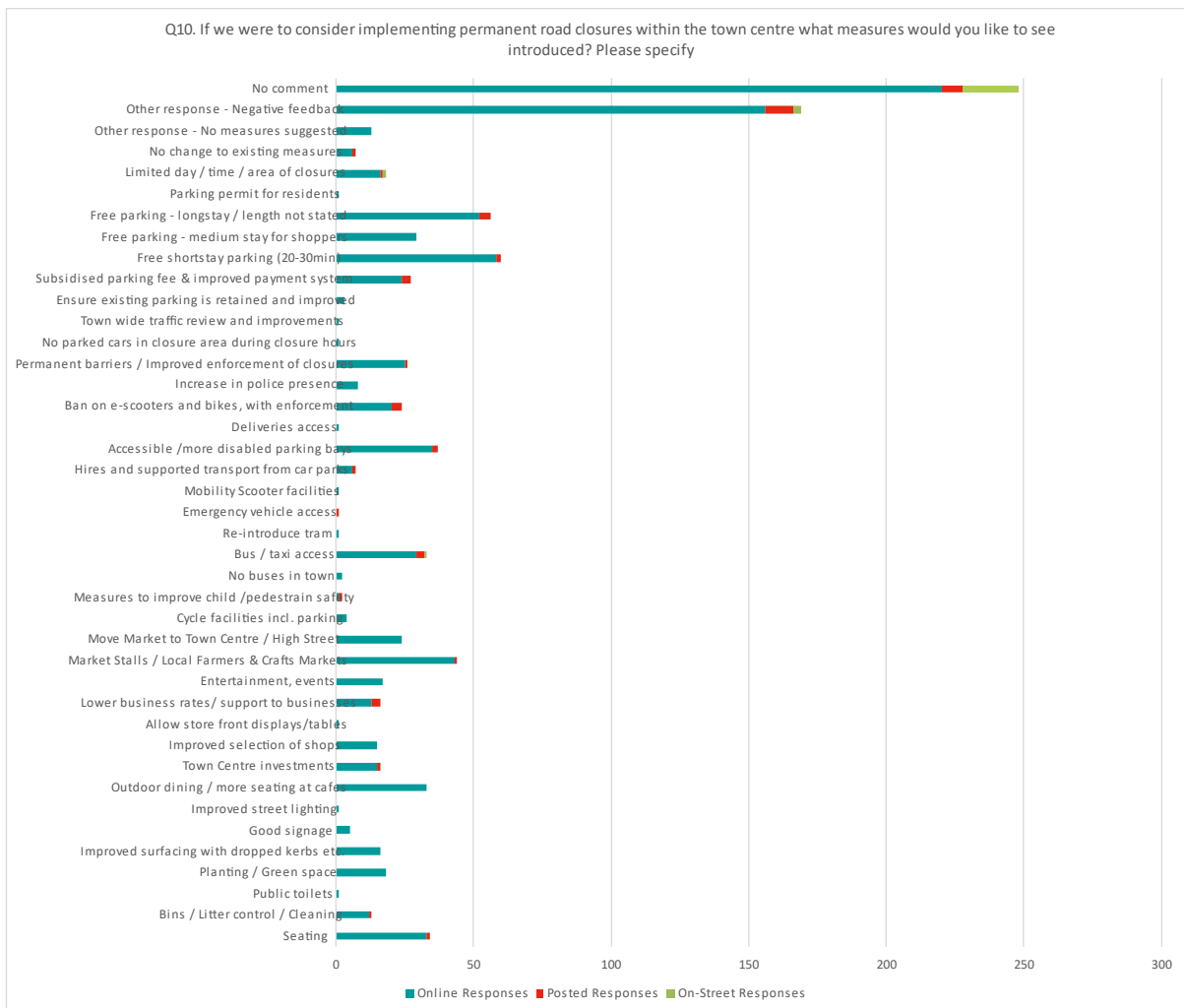
- However, people thought that there were both positives and negative impact to local businesses with the permanent closures in place.



- The key suggestion for additional controls for the permanent closures was amending the closure hours followed by access for buses/taxi's. Most people still indicated a preferred 10am-4pm closure period with 24hours coming second followed by 10am-2pm and then 10am- 3pm.



- Key suggestions to improve the permanent closures, should they be implemented permanently included:
  - Free parking - long stay / length not stated (5%)
  - Free short stay parking (20-30min) (6%)
  - Accessible / more disabled parking bays (4%)



- Out of 810 responses 41% were in support of the closure and 58% were against the closures in Sheerness. Of those in support, 59% said that the

introduction of permanent town centre road closures would encourage them to walk/cycle into town.

### **Next Steps**

There are clear themes and key responses captured within the informal consultation analysis for Sheerness that Swale Borough Council will now focus upon, as part of the capital projects programme, to introduce improvements to the town centres.