



Dartmoor Business Impact Survey Round 3 – Summer Review

Round 3 of the Business Impact Survey was carried out from Tuesday 6th October to Wednesday 14th October 2020. Responses were gathered using the online platform Survey Monkey. The survey was promoted in emails to a wide selection of Dartmoor businesses, as well as publicised through social media in various community groups.

130 responses were received in total, with an average completion rate of 56%. Respondents took an average of 5 minutes to complete the survey.

This report brings together the responses to each question, and summarises the responses received in free text fields.

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Headlines

Key issues

- Cancellation of shows and events, causing a loss of trade
- Uncertainty around changing government guidelines and local restrictions
- Some businesses can only perform their work face-to-face
- School residentials and group trips being cancelled
- Poor broadband and phone coverage
- Trading from June-September, although good, has not compensated for losses in the spring

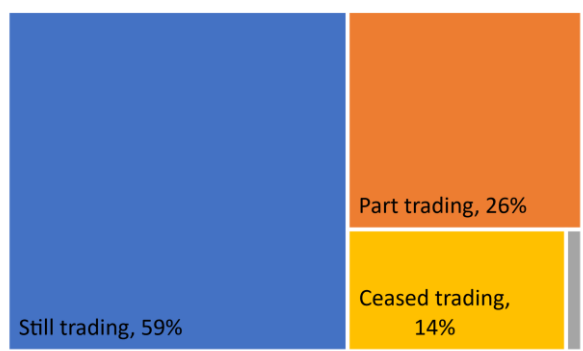
May



Positives

- Most business have seen the same or better summer seasons than in 2019.
- A greater proportion of customers are local
- An increase in domestic visitors and 'staycationers'
- Interaction with the public on online platforms during lockdown has increased business once restrictions were lifted

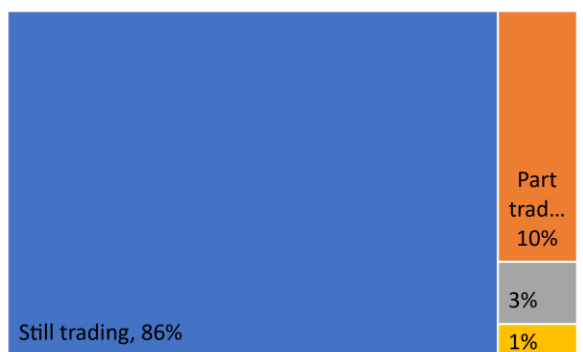
June



Negatives

- A higher proportion of businesses are considering redundancies than previously
- Although summer trading has been good, for most this has not compensated for the loss of income in the Spring.
- Large contracts have been cancelled, so there is a need to chase smaller ones
- The rule of 6 prevents many accommodation providers accepting large bookings

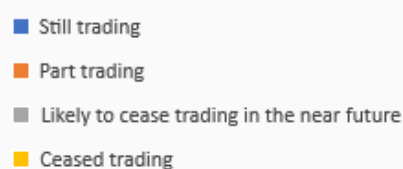
October



Support Ideas

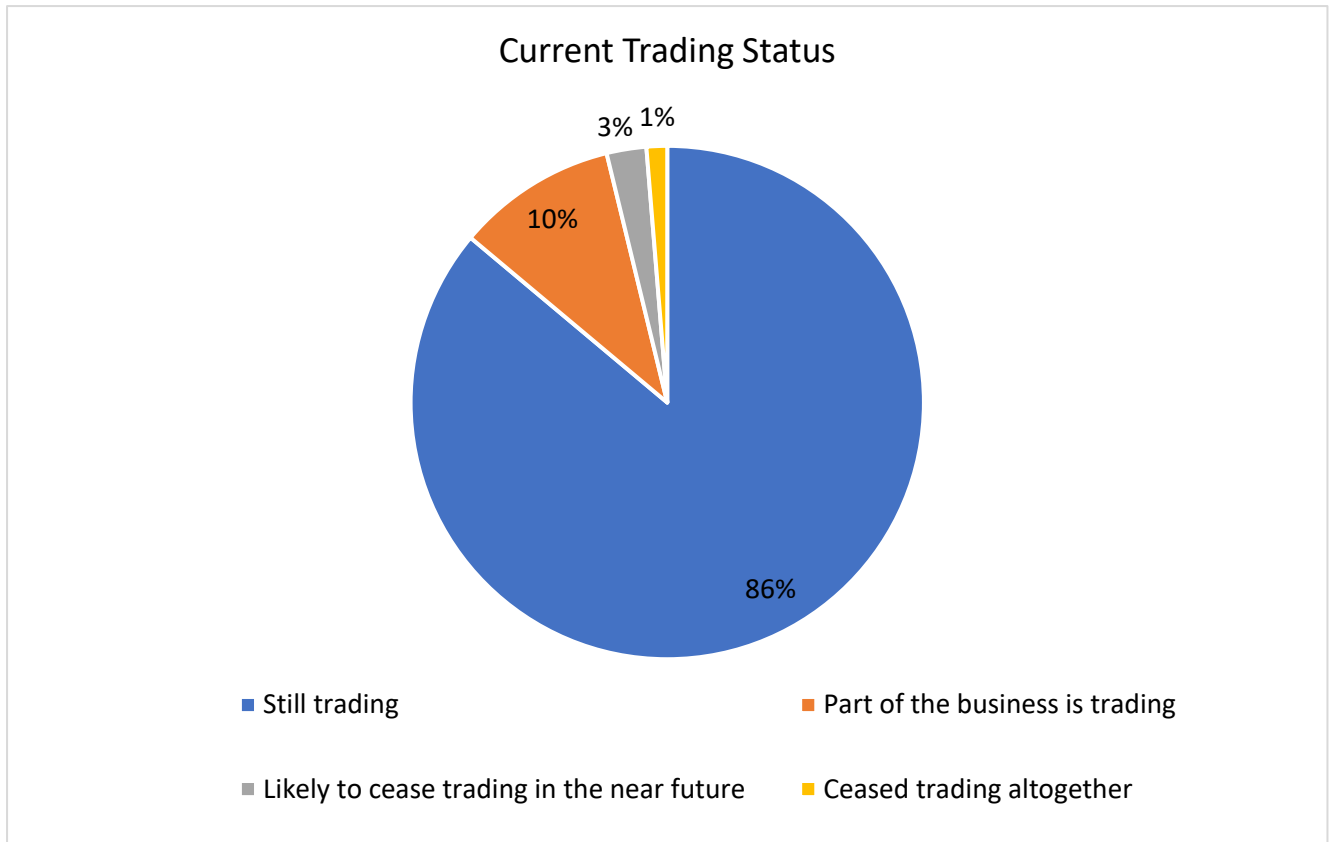
- A 'Made in Dartmoor' initiative
- Support for a 'buy local' initiative
- Promotional campaigns
- Increased mobile and broadband coverage
- Creating local links and networks
- Tech help with marketing and web design
- Late night Christmas shopping
- List/map of local hospitality venues and accommodation
- Christmas time promotion of buying gifts locally
- Opportunities to provide sheltered outdoor space

Figure 1: Over time, a greater proportion of businesses are trading as normal.

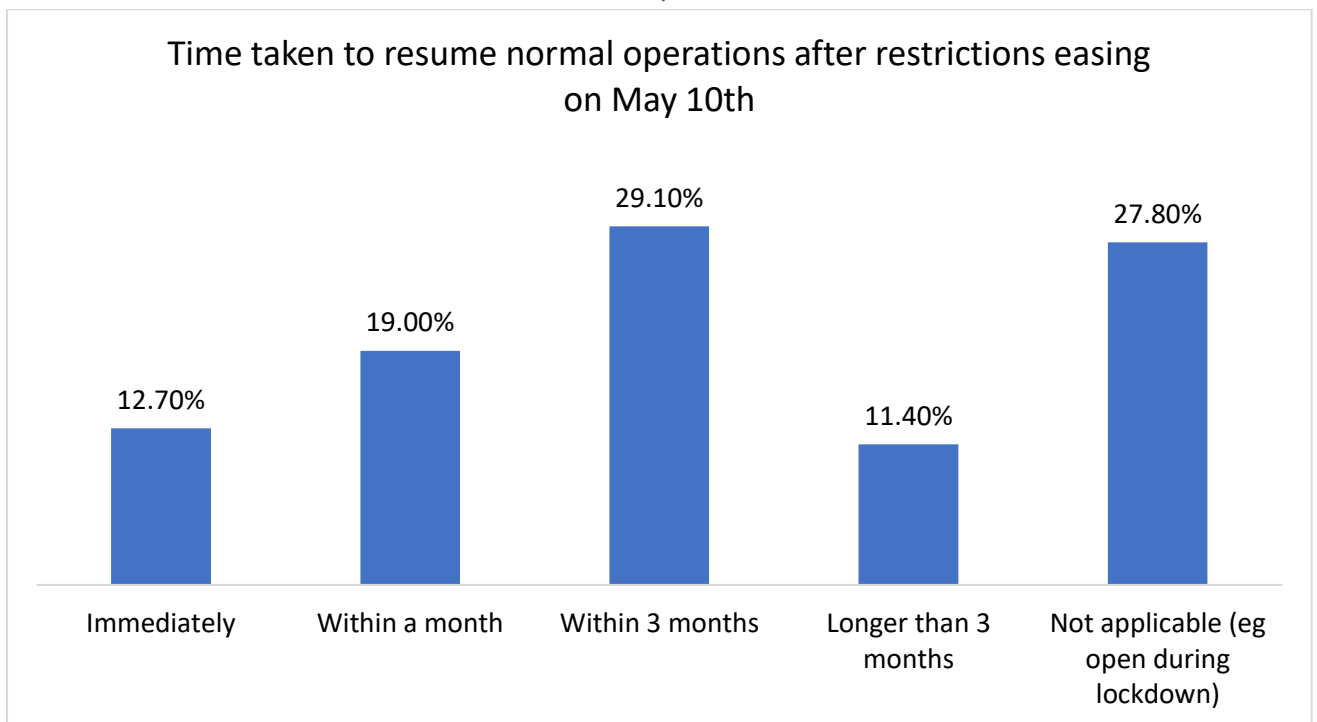




Q13 – Current trading status



Q14 – Time taken to resume normal operations



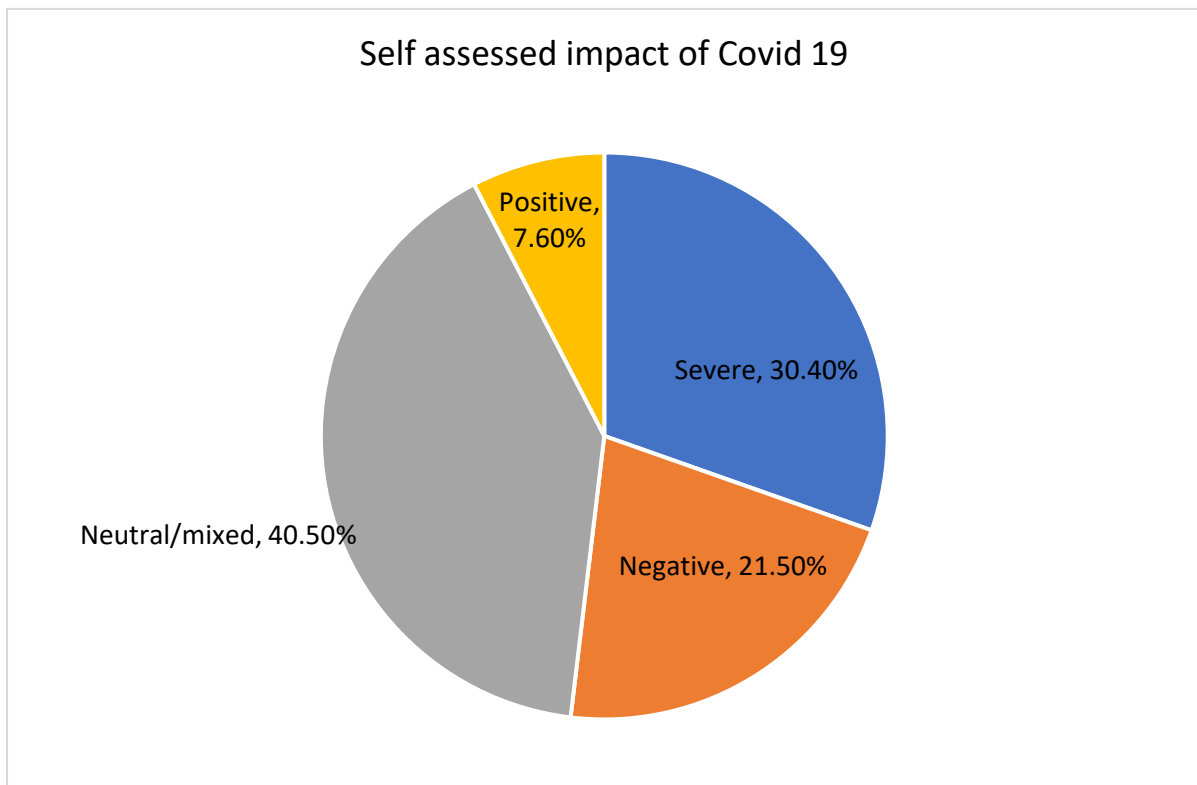
Primary comment themes

- Most hospitality and accommodation establishments opened as soon as permitted to do so, from 4th July.
- Businesses that continued to stay open during lockdown were primarily outdoor based, for example farming, gardening, tree surgery.
- Some businesses operating face-to-face pre-Covid (eg private teaching classes) moved online, however did see a decrease in custom.

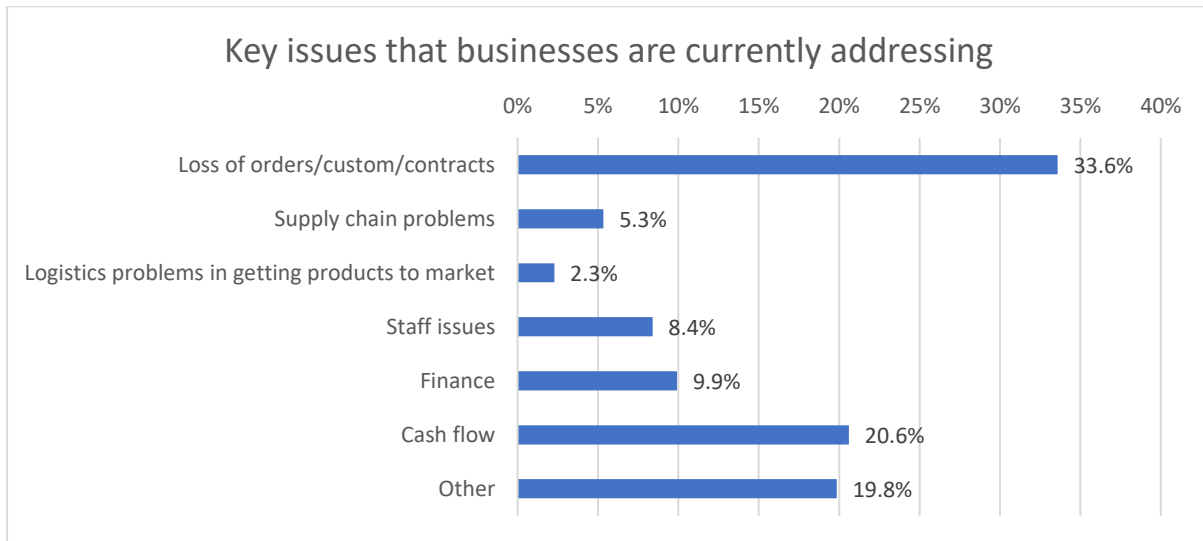
Other individual comments:

- Businesses that rely on school residentials have only been able to re-open partially, as the rule of 6 prevents most of their activities from taking place. Some of these businesses plan to close until 2021.
- Opening by appointment only initially and then introducing more customers, but with Covid secure regulations.
- Those who work with elderly or vulnerable people have seen a decrease in custom, due to the Covid concerns of their customers.
- Some market traders swapped to selling online while restrictions were in place and are now slowing returning to markets where permitted to do so.

Q15 – Self-assessed current impact of Covid 19 on businesses



Q16 – Key issues that businesses are currently addressing



Primary comment themes

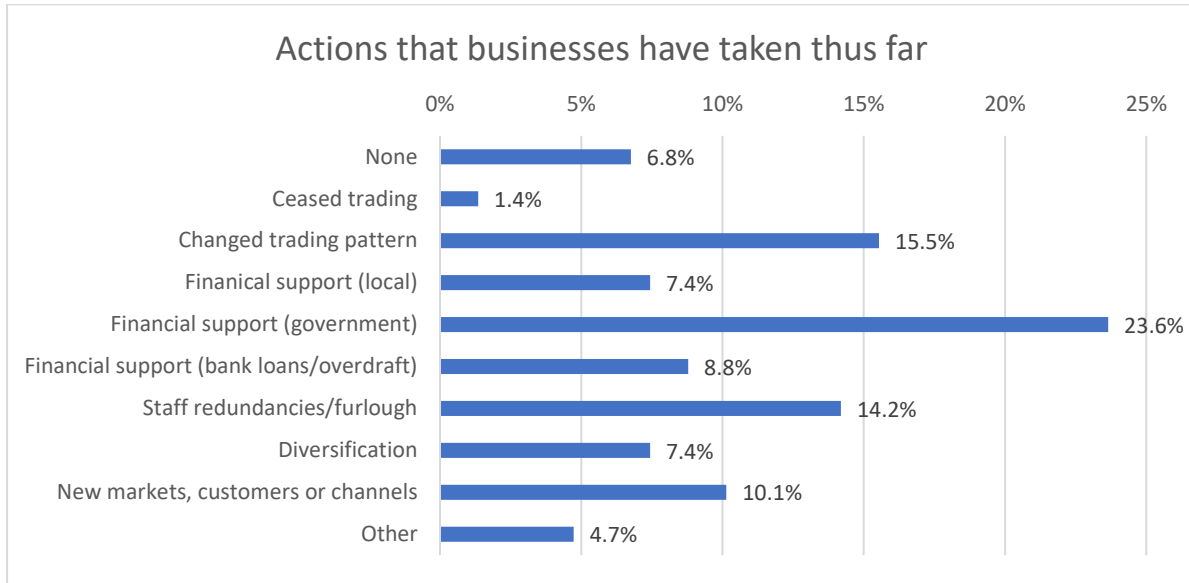
- Although revenue over the summer period has increased from the previous season, this does not compensate for the revenue lost during full lockdown restrictions
- Constant rule changes means customers are unwilling to book accommodation or cancel at short notice. Uncertainty on future rule changes is hampering future planning of accommodation businesses.
- The cancellation of local shows and events has led to a loss in trade for those businesses that often exhibit at them.
- The increase in 'staycation' bookings has been positive.
- Only some parts of the business can be operated online, leading to a decrease in custom.
- In summer hospitality venues used outside space to comply with Covid secure guidelines but going into winter this will be more difficult.

Other individual comments:

- Clients that are vulnerable or shielding are reluctant to use business services, as this group tends to be older, they are less able to engage with online alternatives.
- Main contracts have been cancelled, so businesses must chase up smaller ones
- Marketing and re-organisation of the business are required for adjusted opening hours
- Businesses that continued to interact with customers through online platforms during lockdown saw a rise in custom once restrictions were eased.
- Some businesses have encountered no major issues.
- It has been difficult to get supplies from builders merchants, especially wood, plaster and plasterboard.
- Furlough staff accrued annual leave that they are now unable to take as trade is busy, but the business cannot afford to roll it over or pay for unused leave.
- Lack of decent broadband and mobile phone signal has been a problem.



Q17 – Actions that businesses have taken thus far



Primary comment themes

- Updating facilities to become Covid secure (one-way systems, screens, social distancing, not accepting paper correspondence)
- Change in trading hours and furloughed staff
- Lockdown restrictions have forced many businesses to diversify their services.
- Many businesses have opened online shops or increased their online presence.

Other individual comments:

- Putting projects on hold and planning new services to become more independent of major clients
- Face-to-face classes moved to a more spacious setting to allow for distancing.
- Proactive targeting of new clients for 2021 and 2022.
- Moving meetings online has saved businesses time
- Sales increased using online platforms and local village shops



Q18 – How businesses have changed or diversified

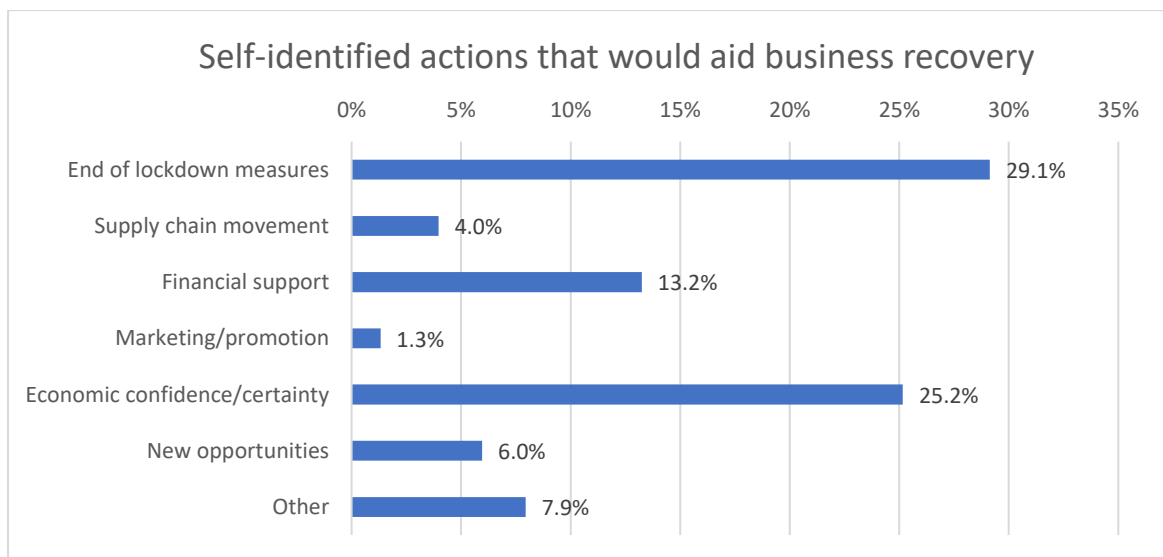
Primary comment themes

- Reduced opening hours due to lack of demand
- Moved towards selling online, and not attending shows as they have been cancelled
- Increasing capacity outside during the summer months, there is a need to invest in shelter to continue serving outside in the winter

Other individual comments:

- Undertaking more work outside the area
- Teaching online rather than face-to-face, during the summer also teaching outside
- Working more locally
- Increasing prices due to increase in overheads
- A greater number of products added to range

Q19 – Actions identified by businesses that would aid recovery



Primary comment themes

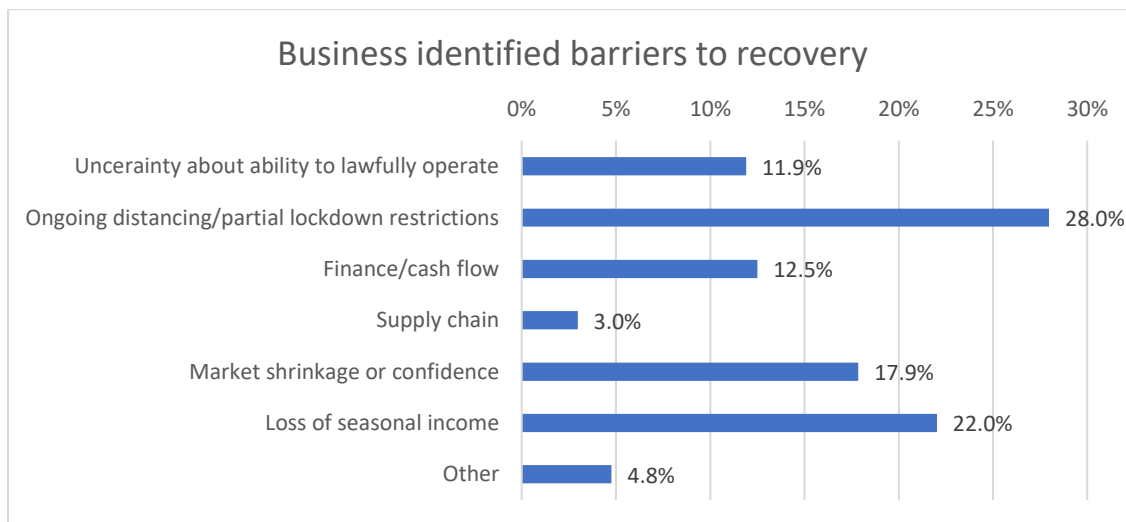
- Lifting of the rule of 6
- Confidence that the area has lower Covid numbers than other regions
- Lifting of restrictions on specific sectors
- Better broadband and mobile phone signal
- Greater certainty on lockdown restrictions in different areas
- Allowing events to start again
- Public confidence to shop and travel again



Other individual comments:

- Opening all year round for camping/glamping
- Learning to use video conferencing services
- New sources of funding and opportunities. Opportunities to link with local community family services.
- DNPA support for planning applications that will enable winter trading, eg outdoor shelters for hospitality businesses
- Funding to provide new facilities to reduce bathroom sharing. A definitive date from the Department of Education when school residentials can resume, to be able to make plans for staffing.
- At peak times an increased capacity would have helped to meet demand. An easier planning system would enable a faster response when considering expansion.
- Review of business rates in April

Q20 – Barriers to recovery as identified by businesses



Primary comment themes

- Uncertainty on future restrictions; concern on whether it is worth advertising for 2021 if businesses think they may still be closed/face restricted opening.
- The Christmas period will see weaker trade than usual, less seasonal stock in available and businesses expect less customers
- Customers are shopping for necessity rather than for pleasure/browsing

Other individual comments:

- Almost impossible to carry out core work with the current restrictions
- Government indecisiveness on regulations means there is no clear direction from government
- People with less disposable income are becoming wary of spending



22 October 2020

- School trips and residentials being cancelled
- Availability of staff

Q21 – Any other comments or information which might inform Dartmoor’s Recovery Plan or ongoing economic work?

Primary comment themes

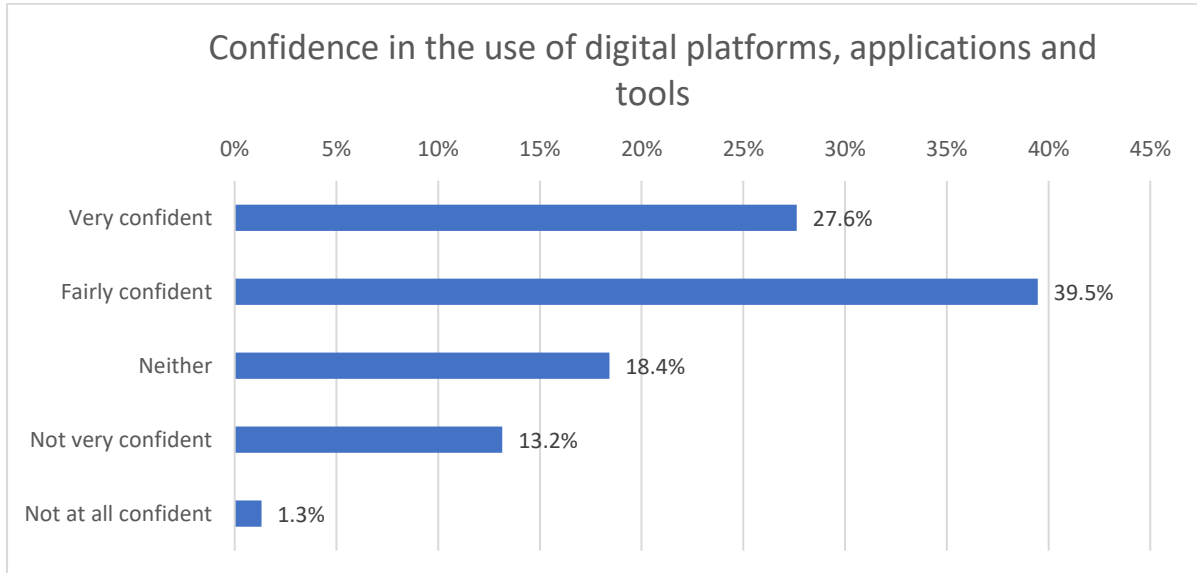
- Forming networks and mutual support on an ongoing basis will be very helpful
- Promotion of a circular economy model
- Promoting Dartmoor as a safe place to visit. Visitors are essential as they spend money throughout the area.
- Ensuring people stay in their local market and creating jobs locally,
- Fully support the ‘buy local’ initiative

Other individual comments:

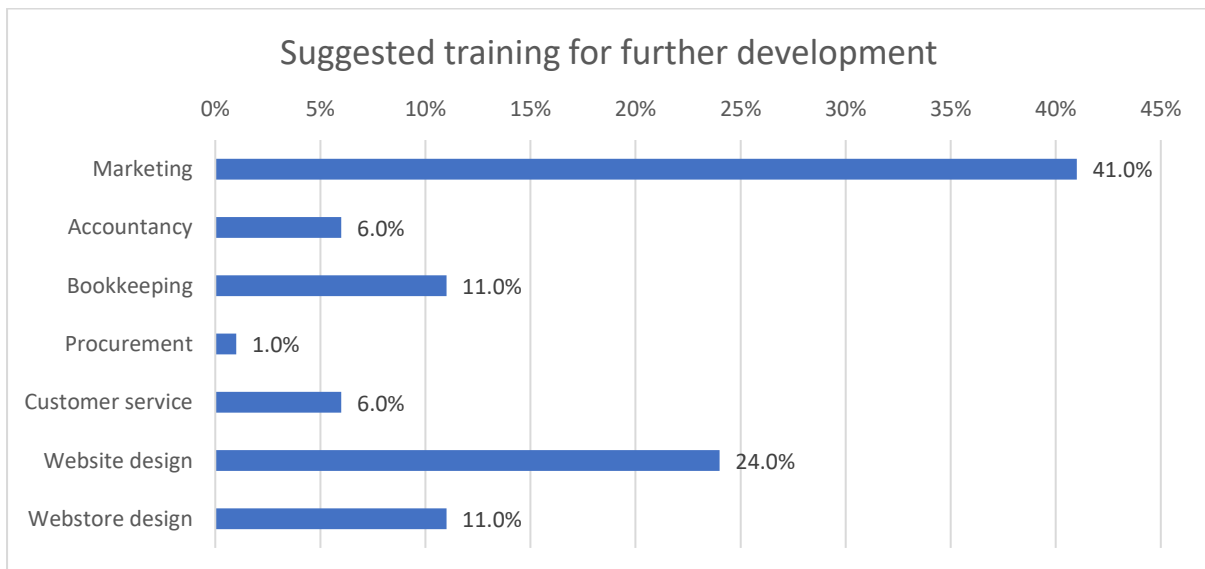
- Less restrictive enforcement of rules within the boundaries of DNP
- Clarity on permitted conditions for outdoor education events and publicity of this so the public are aware
- Coordination of Open Studios to support independent artists
- Diversity, the target audience needs to attract younger families. The pictures on social media attract the older generation, not the younger one.
- Relaxation of planning policies on redundant buildings (agricultural)
- Support for new businesses
- Lifting of government restrictions on specific sectors would be a help, eg school trips and residentials
- Increased broadband and phone signal to support businesses that are not connected to agriculture on Dartmoor
- The We Are Dartmoor campaign has been good. It would be excellent to have a coordinated Made on Dartmoor branding for local businesses to buy into
- Support for freelance event workers
- We would benefit from tighter local hubs recommending each other’s services, word of mouth and website links can be very powerful
- Support for non-tourism related businesses



Q22 – Digital skills play an essential part in many aspects of business activity. How confident are you/your staff in the use of digital platforms, applications and tools?



Q23 – What training would support the further development of you or your employees, creating a highly productive and engaged work force that would drive further success of your business?





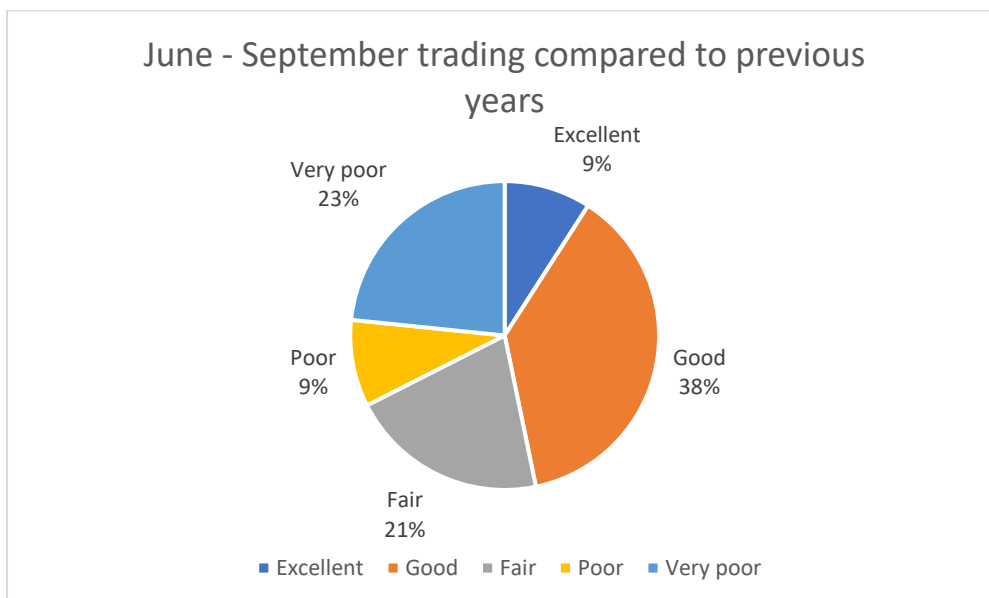
Primary comment themes

- Social media promotion and retailing
- Use of Instagram and Facebook campaigns
- General use of programmes such as Microsoft 365 and apps

Other individual comments:

- Website updates
- Improved broadband and phone signal would be a help
- Facing a lack of trained staff in 2021/22, due to loss on income in 2020/21. Training courses could be run in this phase to allow people to train for future vacancies, if there was funding for it
- Less money should be spent on training, the money should be spent on actually making a difference, for example broadband and phone signal
- Online marketing via social media, adverts and email

Q24 – How has June – September trading compared to previous years?



Primary comment themes

- Increase in local customer base
- Confidence has not yet returned
- There is no 'buffer' in place for the winter
- Slightly better than previous years but not enough to recover from lockdown



Other individual comments:

- Farming business remained open but camping was closed
- Loss of events
- Staycations and high numbers of domestic visitors helped a lot
- Online orders gained as lockdown meant people spent more time in their gardens
- Eat out to help out was a great help, as were the extra high numbers of tourists
- All events were cancelled so no work available
- Bookings are increasingly being made last minute
- Bookings are continuing into the autumn and winter months longer than usual

Q25 – Given your summer trading, how do your winter plans compare to previous years?



Primary comment themes

- Continue with reduced hours but maintain flexibility
- Reduced seasonal offers
- Some businesses will be able to run a small part of their business online

Other individual comments:

- Concentrating on planning and marketing services to offer next spring
- All major bookings over 6 people for the Christmas period have been cancelled



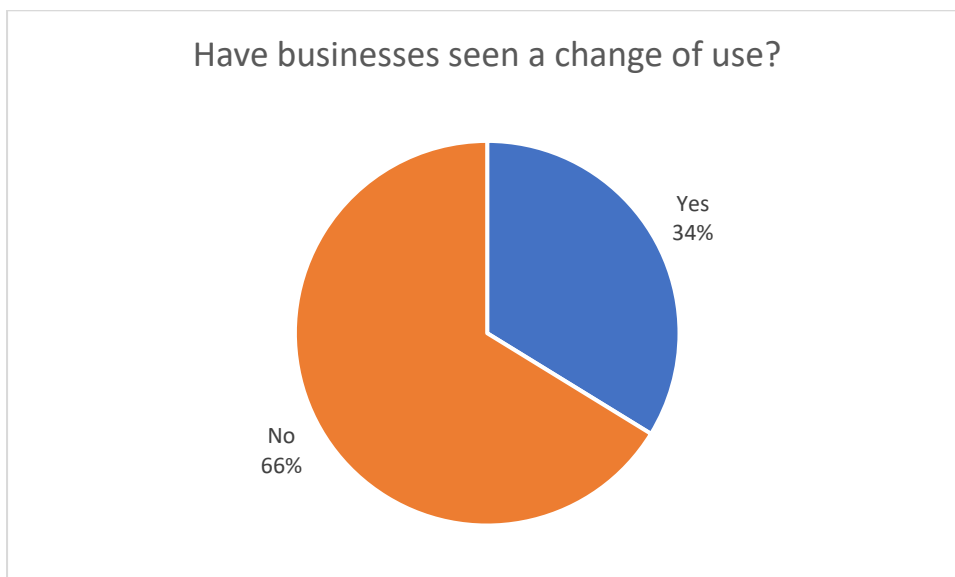
- Planned redundancies due to decreased sales revenue and insufficient work
- Will shut down from November – March, as there is no buffer to carry staff over or ability to open
- Open as much as possible in the run up to Christmas with extended late night opening
- Some businesses plan to seasonally close over the winter

Q26 – If your business has adapted to make up for lost trade during the lockdown period, please outline how

Individual comments:

- Taking on smaller contracts than usual
- Business has moved online with fewer face-to-face classes
- Limiting pro-bono work and seeking higher paid work outside the local area
- Adjusting trading times to maximise footfall
- Working with online platforms such as AirBnB and Booking.com
- Selling through Facebook and delivering locally
- Delivery of products
- Offering takeaway food

Q27 – Have customers used your business differently compared to previous years? If so, have you capitalised on this change of use?





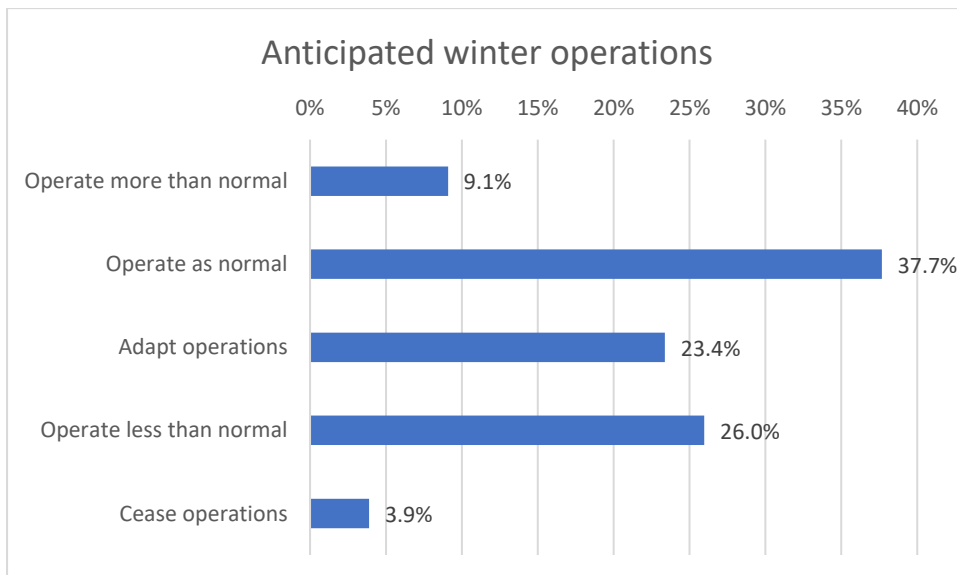
Primary comment themes

- More online sales during lockdown
- Home deliveries have increased
- More local customers
- There has been extra traffic to business websites

Other individual comments:

- Changed operation of food and beverage offerings, which has made us more efficient and profitable and has been welcomed by our customers
- Zoom classes have proved popular
- Fewer customers, but more spend per customer
- Fewer casual browsers, but those who do come in come to buy, so we have an opportunity to promote new products
- Customers are doing larger shops so we have expanded our range
- Offering shorter breaks rather than full week bookings as they seem to be more in demand
- More people have been eating in and asking for packed lunches

Q28 – Over the winter, how do you anticipate your business operating?



Primary comment themes

- Trade will be down due to the lack of function business, Christmas parties and people generally reluctant to travel
- Continue with online classes
- Businesses are unable to plan effectively due constantly changing Government policies



Other individual comments:

- Campsite will be closed but farming will continue as normal
- Rent larger premises at lower rates to smaller numbers of people
- Group accommodation specialists cannot stay open without school trade to supplement the customer base
- There is an increase in interest in bookings over the winter
- Extra late-night shopping evenings in the run-up to Christmas will be helpful
- We will be operating online only
- We anticipate having very little business over the winter due to Covid restrictions
- Nervousness regarding customer confidence, being outside in inclement weather, further restrictions. I will perhaps close a few days a week and market my website more effectively

Q29 – Do you have any comments or ideas on increasing winter trading on Dartmoor?

Primary comment themes

- Promote getting outdoors in all weathers to receive the benefits. Promote safe and responsible outdoor recreation for the wellbeing of people and the environment.
- Link visitors with local hospitality providers
- Encourage people to shop locally
- A 'support local business campaign' in December, before Christmas. As January tends to be quieter it would be a good time to organize a 'Made in Dartmoor' campaign
- Promotion of the 'shop local' message
- Showcasing of local goods and services

Other individual comments:

- Capitalise on second home-owners and those escaping from the city – they tend to be well off and our goods and services will appeal
- Publishing a clear list of Dartmoor's pubs, restaurants, tea rooms and cafes that are open and trading, with their opening hours
- Add craft makers and other small product businesses to the online DNPA food/farm map
- Social media and press coverage for smaller business, perhaps funding to help smaller businesses
- Spend time interacting with local areas to promote Dartmoor.
 - Bring activities to the area
 - Run photo competitions
 - Encourage children to do things for the area and interact with it
 - Marketing towards a younger target audience
- A 'Winter Warmer' campaign producing itineraries of things to do and places to stay. It could be tweaked for social media, web and journalists.



- Encourage shopping early for Christmas, to avoid long queues in the cold
- There is a market for small self-catering places for walkers and cyclists, where they can feel secure they are adequately distanced
- Support for independent traders to support themselves
- Support businesses and trades that do not involve tourism
- Create a register of local suppliers with an outline of what they supply and circulate to all Dartmoor businesses

Q 30 – Do you have any more comments or ideas around doing business on Dartmoor?

Primary comment themes

- A simple award/accreditation scheme for businesses on Dartmoor, featuring these businesses on websites and social media.
- Promote Dartmoor as a complete destination, like Yorkshire or Cornwall, duplication of information is not helpful and expensive
- A web-hub listing and promoting Dartmoor's craft centres, workshops, local suppliers and local garden and garden centres.

Comment summary

- Linking with local families and younger people
- Increase use of local centres for shopping and developing small businesses
- Promote letterboxing/geocaching
- An online business directory
- An opportunity to run Dartmoor Christmas Craft markets featuring local businesses
- An advent calender on the web featuring local businesses and have competitions with prizes from local businesses etc
- Start to look at a Dark Night Skies initiative, greater promotion of Dartmoor's historic landscapes and its unusual geology
- A cohesive hashtag for Dartmoor businesses to use, eg 'Dartmoorproduced'
- A Dartmoor 'check a trade' service so local providers and easy to find
- A united 'Made in Dartmoor' collective to push Dartmoor products in from of a national audience.
- A national campaign highlighting Dartmoor as a beautiful, safe place to visit