Footloose member survey 2025

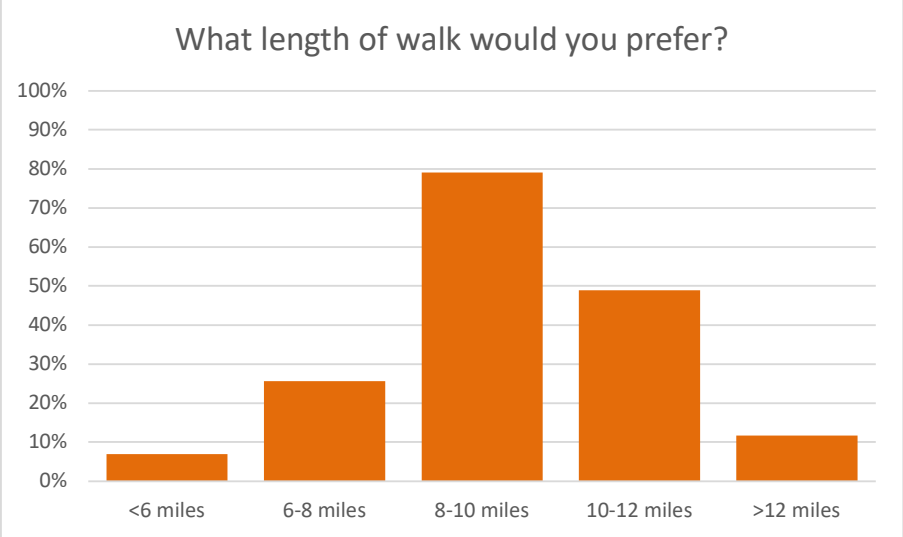
Compiled 17.11.25

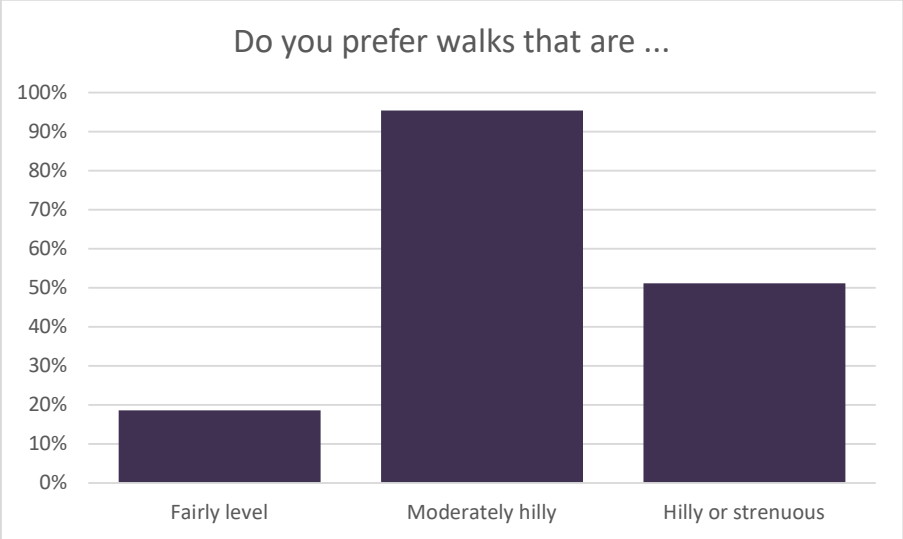
The online survey was open for the first two weeks of November. It was completed by 44 members (60% of the current total).

The length and grade of walks

Preferences for the length and grade of walks are shown below. On balance this roughly reflects what we are doing at present, **except that** a quarter of respondents would like at least some walks to be less than 8 miles.







Fourteen respondents made additional comments about level and grade. Nine of these agreed that the current mix was about right, with two commenting that they could do shorter and more local walks on their own, but preferred company and car-sharing for longer walks or going further afield. Other points included:

- Varying walks according to season and conditions
- Pace is also important – moderate rather than a route-march or slow stroll
- Maybe have shorter walks on alternative days
- Eight miles is about maximum (two respondents)
- Use a standard grading system based on length, ascent and descent
- Avoiding lots of mud!

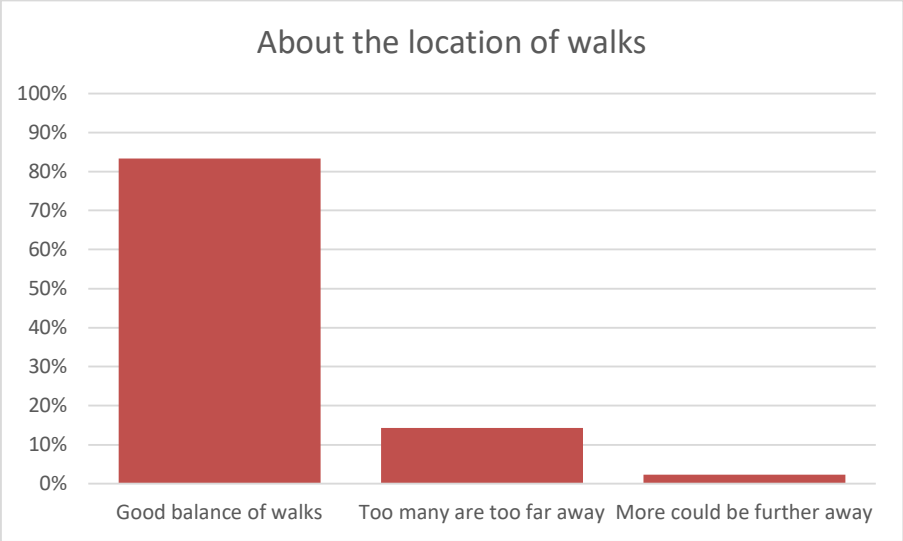
The location of walks

Most respondents (83%) thought that there is a good balance of walks in terms of location, with 14% thinking that too many were too far away, and one wanting more walks further afield (see below). Of the members who thought walks were too far away, one wanted to see more in Dorset, and one on Exmoor.

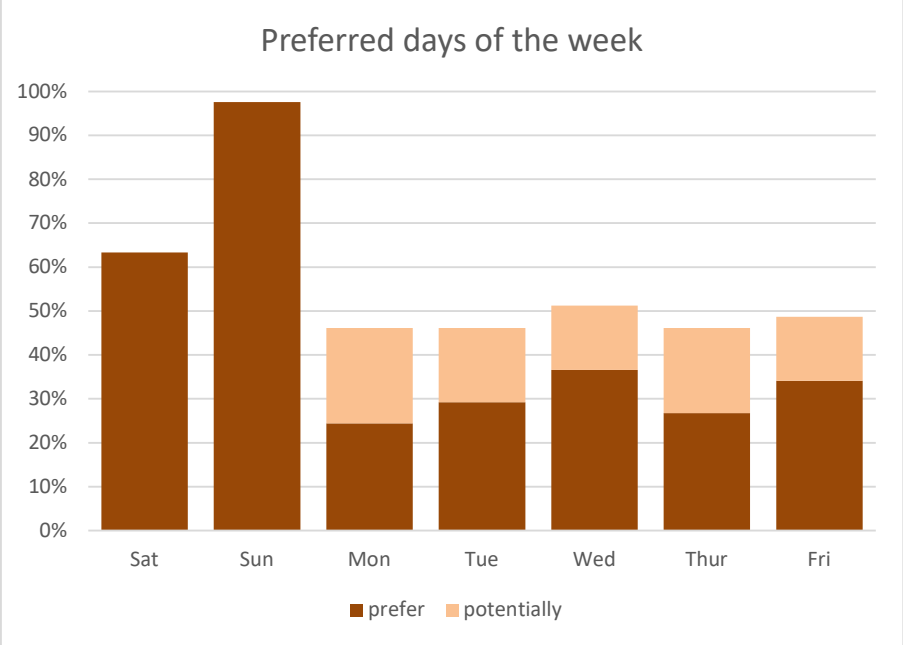
Areas where respondents want to see more walks are:

- Exmoor (4 respondents, one also Dartmoor, the Quantocks and the Blackdowns)
- The coast (3)
- The Mendips (3, one also NW and NE Somerset)
- Dorset (2, one specifically the coast)
- Mid-south Somerset (2)
- Wellington across to mid-Devon
- East Devon.

Four commented that there are lots of walks on the Quantocks, although for one at least this was positive as it was close by. A further comment was to avoid repeating walks within 12-18 months.



When to walk, and how often?

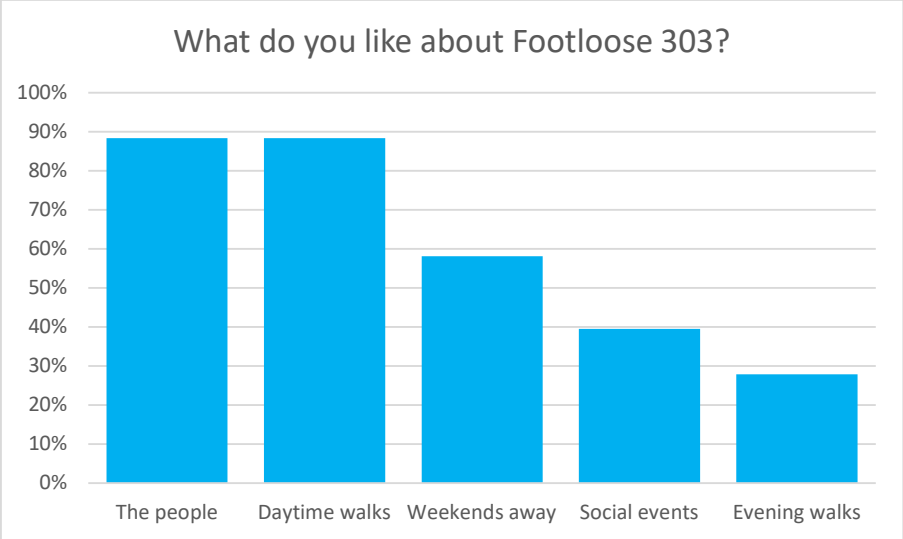


All but one respondents' preferred days for walking included Sundays. The second most popular day was Saturday, but no-one selected Saturday and not Sunday. Weekdays were less popular, although around half the respondents could walk on any given weekday (see above); conversely 20% indicated that they would never be available in the week. This suggests that weekdays could be used for a 'secondary' (e.g. shorter) walk, but the alternate weekend day (usually a Saturday) would be more popular.



Over 90% of respondents expected to come on at least five walks in the next year, and over 60% on at least ten. This figure may however be unrepresentative if respondents were on average the more active members of the group.

Likes, dislikes and suggestions



The most-liked aspects of Footloose were the people, the daytime walks and to a lesser extent weekends away. Social events and evening walks have been less prominent in the calendar over the last few years, potentially contributing to the lower scores.

Twenty-three comments were made, with three themes recurring: the **friendliness of the group** (8 respondents) and opportunities to make new friends, sometimes leading to new interests outside Footloose; the **locations of the walks** (5), often involving discovering new places; and the optional

tea and cake and socialising at the end of walks (4). Other areas that were commented on positively were:

- Well-organised (2) by great volunteers
- The car-share system
- Weekends away
- Evening walks
- The 'no dogs' rule
- Not using pubs for lunch.

Few dislikes were mentioned. Two comments were made about some walks having **too many people** on them, and one about members who were **inconsiderate** of others and tried to 'push the pace' of walks.

Various suggestions were also made for changes or improvements. Four of these were essentially 'no change' comments, liking the group as it is both for the walks and the social aspects. The main area suggested for change was **more flexibility in times and distances of walks** (7 comments), particularly having shorter (e.g. half-day) and less formal walks in the week. Other suggestions included:

- Walks ending in a pub meal
- Pub meals and 'dine with me' events
- Occasional visit to a nature reserve or similar
- Reducing the mileage charge – it is expensive particularly for two people sharing
- More people making themselves available to car-share, will help those who don't have a car available
- Walks where there are toilets!

Leading walks

The majority of members who answered the questionnaire were either regular walk leaders, or had led a walk and expected to do again. Three thought that they might lead a walk with some help, while a third were not prepared to lead at the moment (below).

Challenges for leading walks were described as:

- Finding a suitable walk with car park and (preferably) refreshments at the end (8 respondents)
- Finding time to research the route (4)
- Setting up the Framadate and email (4)
- Navigation, map reading and following the route on the day (6)
- Keeping people together (5), with all commenting about problems when one or a small group try to push on ahead
- Feeling obliged to organise refreshments at the end
- Lack of acknowledgement or thanks from participants.



Areas where help was requested were:

- 'All elements of the task'
- Navigation and map reading (2)
- Help with apps (2)
- Suggestions for areas to explore
- Someone to share recces or leading on the day
- A back marker with a back-up map (possibly agreed in advance).