Cycle Café Survey

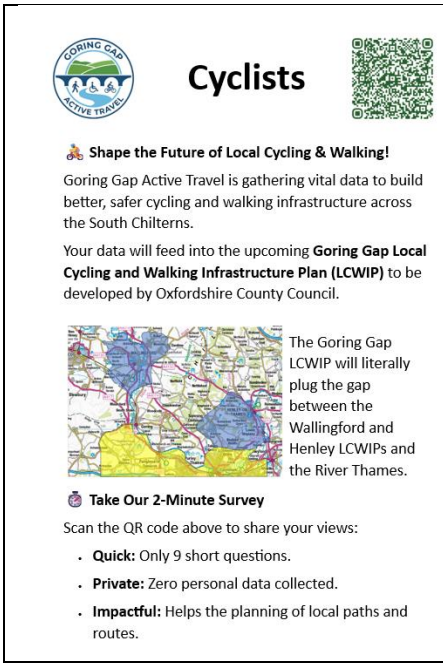
Goring Gap Active Travel (GGAT) has carried out a survey of cyclists using several of the most popular cafes in the South Chilterns area over a four-week period in August 2026

Objectives

The objectives of the survey were to

- Test the feasibility of collecting meaningful data from cyclists self-reporting while at a café
- Get an idea of the distances travelled to the cafes
- Estimate the balance between day and multi-day rides
- Measure the proportion of cyclists who travelled to the area by train or by car
- Measure the proportion of cyclists who were using Strava to record their rides

Methodology



Cyclists

Shape the Future of Local Cycling & Walking!

Goring Gap Active Travel is gathering vital data to build better, safer cycling and walking infrastructure across the South Chilterns.

Your data will feed into the upcoming **Goring Gap Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)** to be developed by Oxfordshire County Council.

The Goring Gap LCWIP will literally plug the gap between the Wallingford and Henley LCWIPs and the River Thames.

Take Our 2-Minute Survey

Scan the QR code above to share your views:

- **Quick:** Only 9 short questions.
- **Private:** Zero personal data collected.
- **Impactful:** Helps the planning of local paths and routes.

Which café are you visiting today

Date of visit

How many people are in the group you are with today

How many of the group use Strava to record the ride

Where have you travelled from today

Where are you going to today

If this is a multi-day trip, how many days

If part of your trip has been by car, where have you parked

If part of your trip has been by train, which station did/will you use

An A4 size poster was given to the owners of five cafes and a deli in the local area that are known to be frequented by cyclists. The poster included a QR code pointing to a secure online Google form.

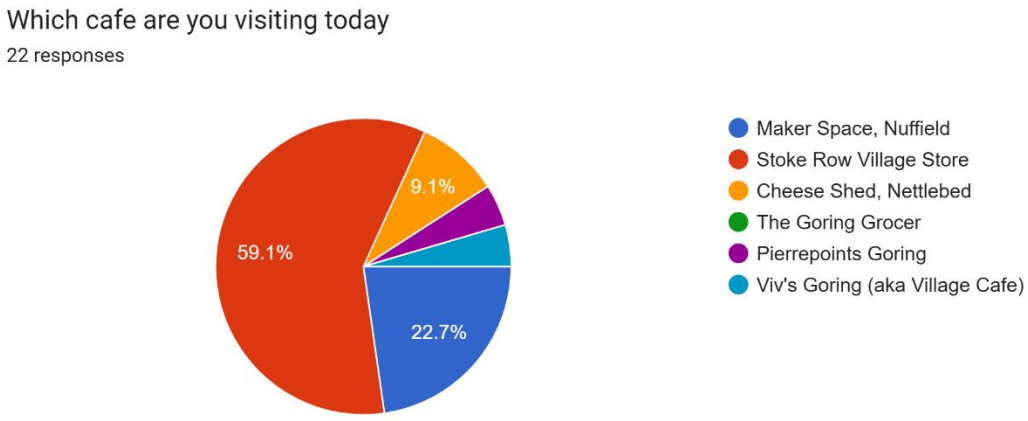
Display locations used by different cafés

The café owners were asked to display the poster for a four-week period during the 2026 summer school holidays. Progress of the survey was monitored online, then the data was extracted in spreadsheet form for analysis and presentation.

The questionnaire was deliberately kept as short as possible and anonymous, so that no personal data was being collected.

Analysis

28 people completed the survey, representing a total of 44 cyclists. The highest number of responses were obtained at locations where the survey poster was most prominently displayed, for example next to the point of sale. For example, although the poster displayed in the café window was very visible, most visitors to this café sit under cover around the corner, or inside the café.

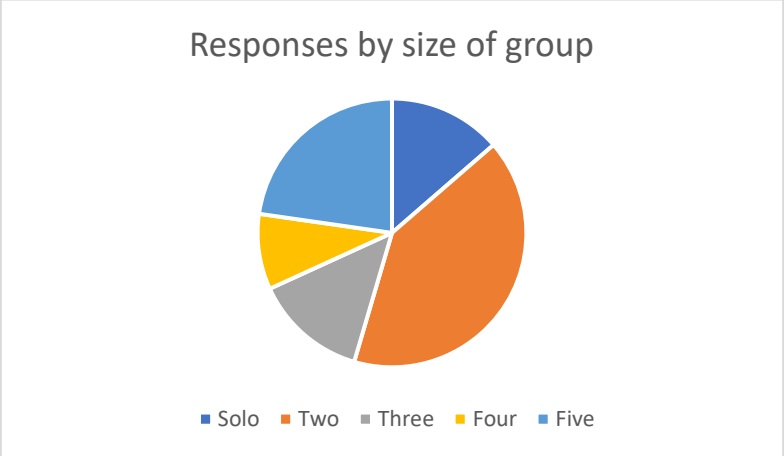


Because of the self-reporting nature of the survey, it is not possible to estimate the overall levels of cycling. It is evident that some cafés yielded more reportees than others and these correlate with those known to be particularly cyclist-friendly. This would need to be taken into account if the survey was to be repeated covering other locations.

Group Size

Most responses represented groups of two cyclists – three times as many as cyclists on their own. There were also two groups of three, one of four and two of 5. This supports the notion that cycling is a sociable activity, although it could be argued that solo cyclists may be less likely to take a break.

It's not unusual for some of the venues to receive visits from large number of club cyclists. It could be that there were fewer large groups around during the holiday period, or that it was less likely for one individual to report on their behalf. Groups from further afield (eg Didcot or High Wycombe) might not have been interested in participating if they did not see the survey as relevant to them.



Strava

Many cyclists use the Strava app to plan and/or record their routes, as a navigation aid, for training purposes or for bragging rights. Strava data is available for analysis from the Strava Metro gateway by approved users, such as local authorities. This data has been used in the past to estimate cyclist traffic volumes in the absence of any other data. This approach has been criticised as Strava is not typically used by shoppers, students, commuters (except for those using the commute for fitness training) or most family cyclists. Nevertheless, the survey provided an opportunity to see how many cyclists in the leisure/fitness category routinely use Strava.

The survey data showed that 64% of the riders were using Strava. In one instance, all four members of a group from Henley were using it, reinforcing the stereotype of Henley cyclists having fancy bikes and expensive kit.

For comparison purposes a WhatsApp quick poll was used to measure the proportion of cyclists in two local leisure cycling groups. One group consisting predominantly of retired male riders reported 11 of 21 riders (52%) using Strava. A group of 19 female riders reported 4 Strava users (21%). Both groups ride weekly in the area covered by the survey.

With access to Strava Metro data it could even be possible to carry out a more detailed calibration. For example, the Strava data could be used to identify numbers passing a particular café on a

particular date and compared to the reported information. This could be developed further using a Teleraam automated counter.

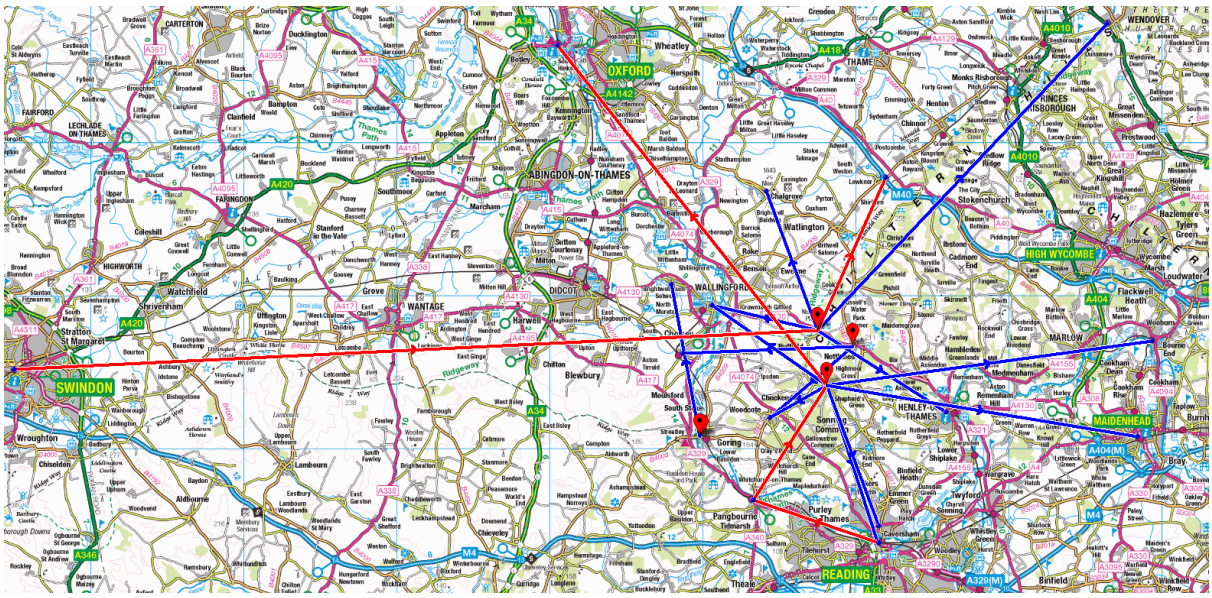
Journey Types and Distances

Two of the groups reporting were involved in multi-day rides. From the responses given, these appear to be

- A five-day ride involving train to Swindon, then travelling from Wallingford to Lewknor on the day in question. This looks as though the pair of cyclists involved may have been riding The Ridgeway National Trail;
- A two-day ride from Reading to Oxford, preceded by train from Paddington to Reading. The Maharah's Well was mentioned specifically as a waypoint.

One pair of cyclists had taken the train from Ealing Broadway to Reading for a circular day ride.

All the other respondents were involved in one-day (or part-day) rides, with none using car transport to get to the area.



The map shows the multi-day rides in red, and one-day rides in blue. Straight lines are used to connect the cyclists' origin or destination to the relevant café, in the absence of any further information. The furthest distance travelled may have been by a pair of cyclists from Wendover, a distance of 21 miles each way by bike. Other origins were Bourne End (18 miles) and Maidenhead (16 miles). These distances are calculated using Google maps and represent a recommended direct cycling route. In practice cyclists might well take longer routes to avoid busy roads, visit places of interest, or just enjoy a longer ride.

Experience indicates that most cyclists would not typically include a café stop on a ride of 10 miles or less. One report was for Woodcote to Nettlebed, a journey of around 6 miles each way. A number of cyclists explicitly reported "loop" or "circular route" as part of their response. One pair reporting from a Goring café mentioned a "33km loop via Brightwell and Wallingford". The overall view that emerges is of leisure cyclists riding journeys of between 10 and 40+ miles in length.

Recommendations

The survey has shown that cyclists stopping at local cafés are willing to answer an online questionnaire, without any personal prompting. There was no evidence of any respondents abandoning the survey part-way through, so a slightly longer set of questions could be tolerated. If the process is to be used again, the following suggestions are worth considering:

- Run for a longer period than just the summer school holidays
- Include a larger number of cafés in the area, for example in Wallingford, Benson, Watlington, Sonning Common, Henley and Pangbourne. The main barrier to this would be the logistics and effort involved in engaging with the cafés and delivering the posters.
- Include a few more questions, such as:
    - Total distance to be cycled today
    - For multi-day trips, the Origin and Destination of the trip as a whole
    - How frequently do you use this café: First time, Once per year/month/week/day
- Use a Telraam counter in the close vicinity of the café. This would give a count of all the cyclists passing the counter, which could be used to calibrate the survey:, along the lines of "On average xx% of the cyclists passing the café stopped and completed the survey". Suitable locations for such a counter could be Stoke Row or Goring High Street, both areas where there are a number of suitable Telraam locations on the same stretch of road as the café.

Conclusions

The Goring Gap Active Travel (GGAT) Cycle Café Survey successfully demonstrated that leisure and fitness cyclists are willing to self-report meaningful travel data via QR-code-based online questionnaires. Over a four-week period in the summer of 2026, the pilot survey gathered data representing 44 cyclists based on 28 distinct responses.

The main findings are:

- **Prominence drives engagement:** The highest response rates occurred at locations where posters were displayed directly at the point of sale.
- **Social and leisure habits:** Groups of two or more made up the vast majority of respondents (though it could be solo cyclists are less likely to stop at cafés). These leisure and fitness riders typically cover distances between 10 and 40+ miles per journey.
- **Strava Use**: 64% of riders covered by the survey used Strava to record their trips. This confirms that while Strava data may miss utility commuters or family shoppers, it remains a useful baseline for tracking leisure and fitness traffic in the area. A poll of two local social cycle groups reported Strava use of 21% and 52%.
- **Active Travel integration:** The survey captured a mix of single-day loop rides and multi-day tourists integrating rail travel (e.g., via Paddington, Reading, or Swindon), while zero respondents relied on cars to access the area.
- **Cycle Clubs:** It is a little surprising that the largest group reported was of five cyclists. These venues are known to be frequented by a number of formally-organised cycle clubs. It could be that there is lower attendance on club rides during the school holiday period, or that groups from outside the area on the poster's map thought it was nor relevant to them.

The self-reporting methodology is feasible for future infrastructure planning. By expanding the survey's timeframe, increasing the number of participating cafés, and integrating automated Telraam traffic counters, the data could be calibrated to feed more accurately into the planning activities such as a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).

For further information, please contact info@goringgapactivetravel.co.uk