

In autumn of 2023 we surveyed 35 households in the Ackender Hill estate in Alton, representing approximately a quarter of households on this estate.

The respondents were predominately working-age adults (57 % of respondents were aged 35 - 67, with a further 23% of respondents aged 25 - 34).

97% of respondents find the topic of “Climate Change” to be either “very important” (51%) or “quite important” (46%), with a clear majority believing that the climate crisis will affect them and/or their families directly (74%).

The level of preoccupation with the climate crisis was fairly high (see figure 1), whereas the effect on respondents’ mental health remains low (figure 2).

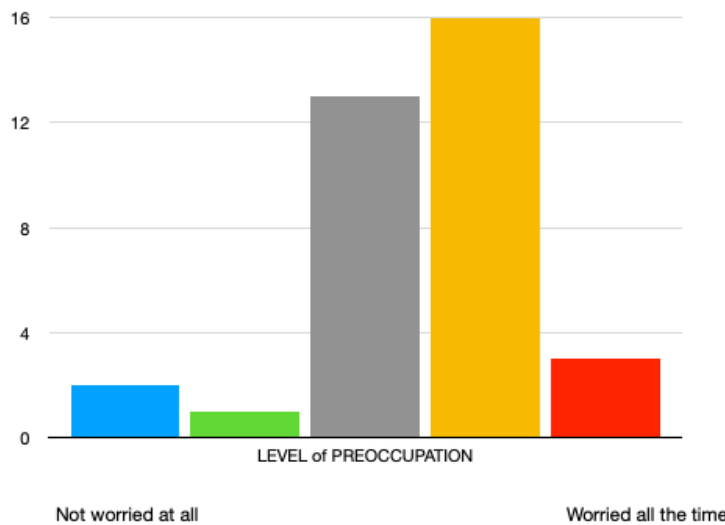


Figure 1. Level of worry about the climate crisis

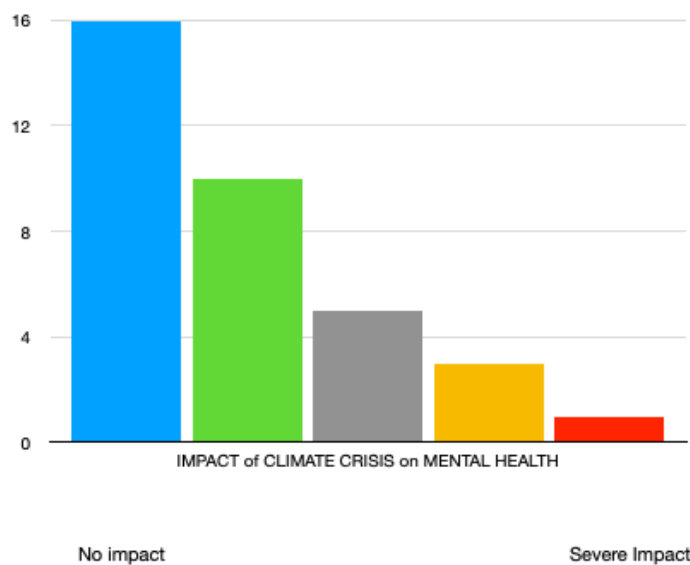


Figure 2. Impact of the climate crisis on mental health

These findings mirror the result of our 2022 survey of 120 households in the Whitedown area of Alton.

Interestingly, only one respondent reported a severe impact on their mental health - that respondent was also the only participant under the age of 16. This lines up with our 2022 survey of 115 primary schoolers, where over 25% stated that their level of worry about the climate crisis was “very high”.

When it came to statements about the climate crisis, the 2023 results once again mirrored the 2022 results: As in 2022, an overwhelming majority of respondents agreed with three key statements:

- 1) “Together we can make a positive impact.”
- 2) “Politicians are not doing enough!”
- 3) “Radical changes are needed!”

Interestingly, the (very deliberate) use of the word “radical” in connection with “changes” did not deter people from agreeing with this statement (22 out of the 35 respondents agreed). This clearly shows that people are aware of the need for change. Combined with the dissatisfaction with the politicians one could argue that people would actually want politicians to bring in more radical measures to combat the climate crisis. The widespread fear of those in power to lose voters if they push a “too radical” agenda seems unfounded.

When it came to lifestyle choices, only two respondents stated that the climate crisis doesn’t inform their personal consumer choices at all (figure 3).

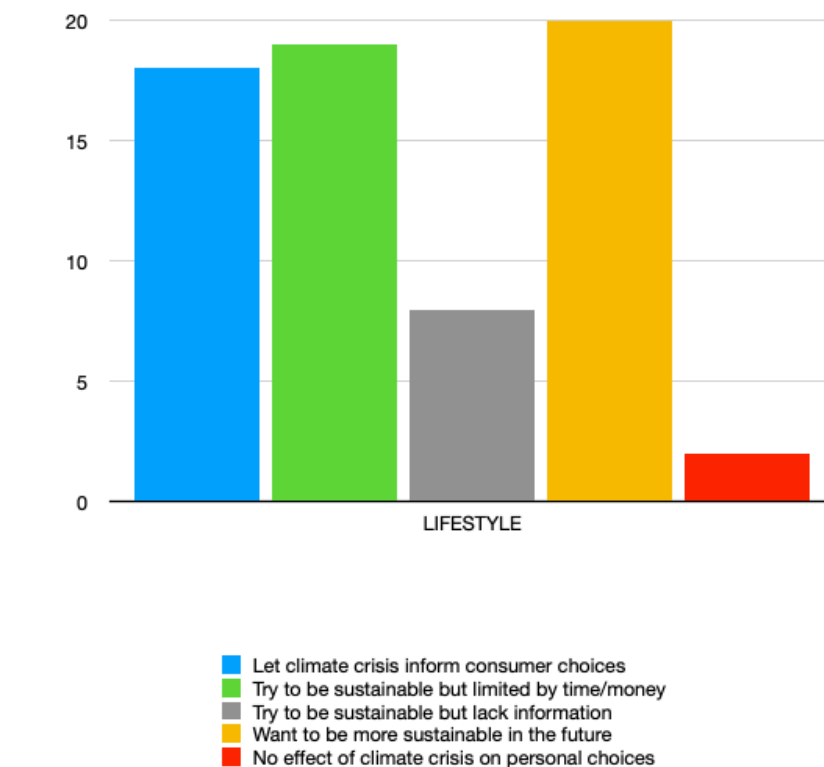


Figure 3. People are letting the climate crisis inform their consumer choices.

This does seem to indicate that offering people information and practical help on how to make sustainable consumer choices is a valuable service for the community.

When asked about their three top concerns, Biodiversity Loss, Pollution of Rivers and Oceans and Extreme Weather came out as the top three concerns, followed by the generic “Climate Change” and Plastic Pollution.

These top three concerns may very well be fuelled by the Blue Planet / David Attenborough effect and by the lived experience of extreme weather in recent years.

Interestingly, key underpinning topics like Fossil Fuels, Food Security and Industrial Agriculture ranked lowest - this may indicate a lack of information, less visibility of these topics in mainstream media or, especially in the case of Fossil Fuels, possibly a push back against the media portrayal of more radical activism (Just stop Oil).

When asked about the focal point of their climate crisis - related worries, it was very clear that the majority of people do not worry acutely about their own future but rather about that of their children and grandchildren (figure 4). If this indicates altruism or a lack of urgency is up for discussion.

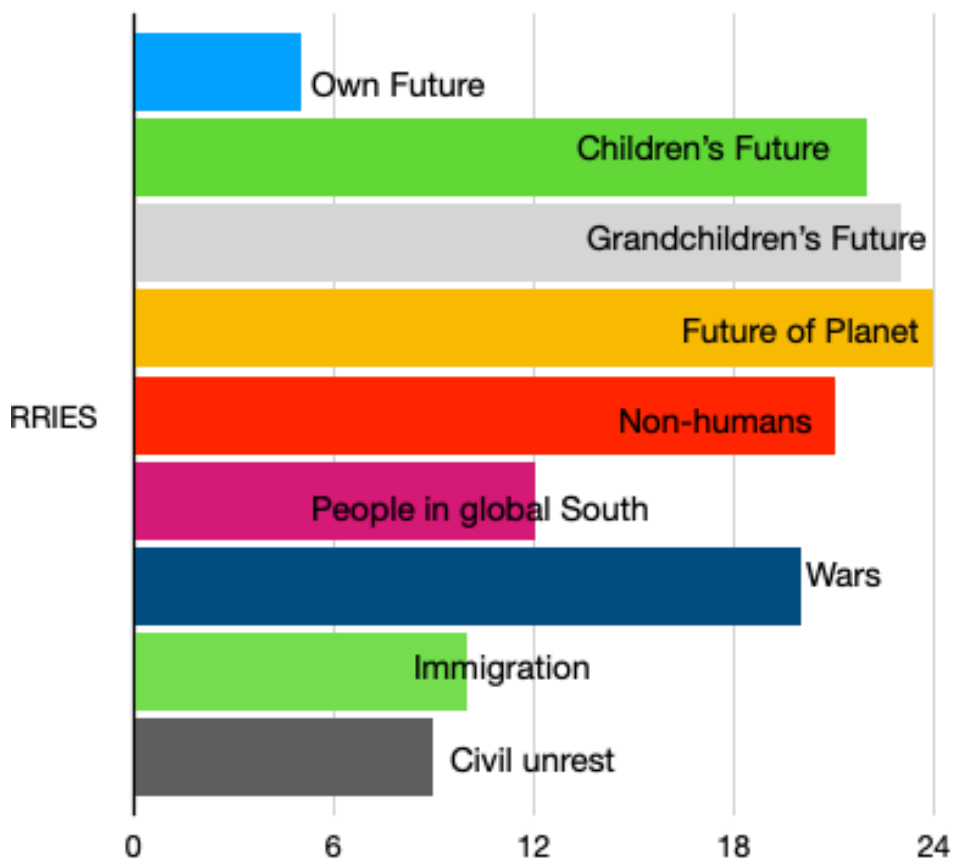


Figure 4. The future of the planet is on people's minds. But do they grasp the urgency?

When it came to issues that people would like to see tackled in their community, the top three were Wildlife-friendly gardening, Energy Consumption and Litter, closely followed by Growing your own Food (figure 5.).

This relates to the top three worries: Wildlife-gardening helps to address Biodiversity Loss, and Litter relates to the concerns about Pollution. Energy Consumption is an obvious one and probably relates more to monetary issues rather than a wish for more sustainable energy. The interest in growing your own food is intriguing when thinking about community resilience. Considering the low ranking of Food Security within the worries, this is more likely also rooted in the wish to help avoid grocery price-hikes.

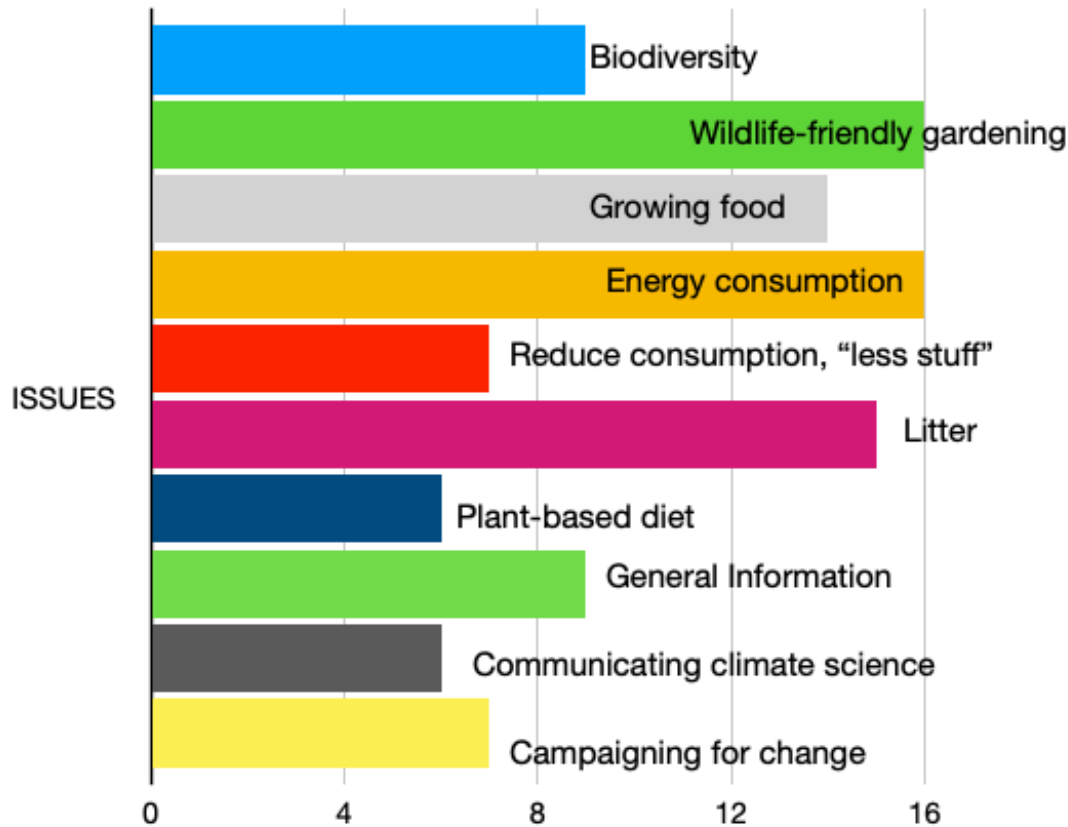


Figure 5. Which topics would people like to see addressed in their community.

Awareness of ACAN was mediocre, with roughly a third of respondents aware of ACAN's work.

As a reaction to this survey, we distributed a flyer to all households on the estate with information on the four ACAN groups that can provide further help and information on these topics.