



Summer Business Survey 2026

By Dartmouth & District Chamber of Commerce

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Methodology & Sample for 2026



321 SURVEY INVITATIONS
VIA EMAIL



29 RESPONSES
50% fewer than 2025 as
we didn't have the
resource to do face to face
interviews



3/4 FROM TOWN
CENTRE



GOOD MIX OF RETAIL
/ HOSPITALITY /
SERVICE



80% VISITOR FACING

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Summary headlines

- **17% of businesses surveyed felt the Summer had been much better than 2025 – an increase of 11% vs the response in 2025**
 - Non-visitor facing businesses were more likely to have had a better summer
 - Hospitality businesses were marginally more satisfied than Retail or Other
- **Whilst cautious customer spending was noted by the majority of businesses, perceptions of other customer behaviour patterns were less consistent**
 - 48% of businesses felt they had had some of their busiest days vs 26% reporting really quiet days
 - 41% felt the weather has been an incredible boost whilst 14% said they weren't seeing the patterns they usually associate with good weather
- **August continues to be the dominant summer month for all businesses**
 - The good weather in June & July had strengthened business for hospitality in particular
- **The increase in cost of living, along with rising energy/fuel prices and costs of doing business were the factors most pressing for businesses**
- **Sorting out parking, reducing rates and reducing VAT were felt to be the main factors that would make a positive difference to business**

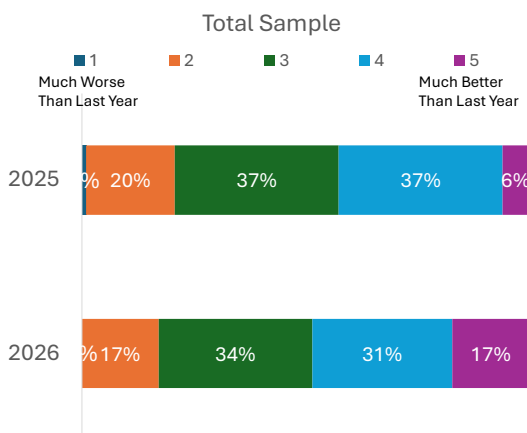
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How business compares with previous year

There has been a significant improvement in business performance – 17% state much better in 2026 vs only 6% in 2025. The improvement is markedly better for Non-visitor facing businesses.



Mean Scores

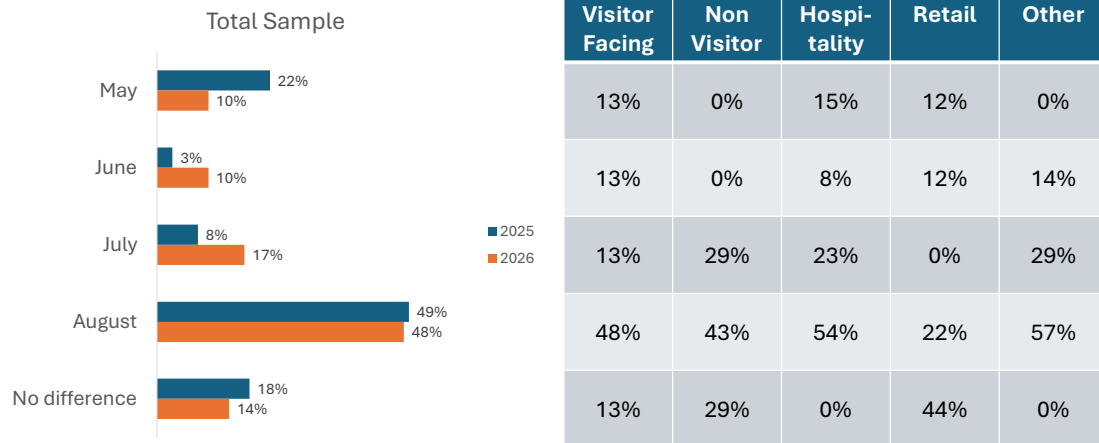
	2025	2026
Total	3.3	3.5
Visitor Facing	3.3	3.3
Non Visitor	3.1	4.0
Hospitality	3.3	3.5
Retail	2.9	3.3
Other	3.4	3.3

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Best months of the summer

The weather patterns were clearly reflected in the improved performances in June and July 2026, with July particularly strong for Non-Visitor facing businesses, as well as Experiences & Services (Other)

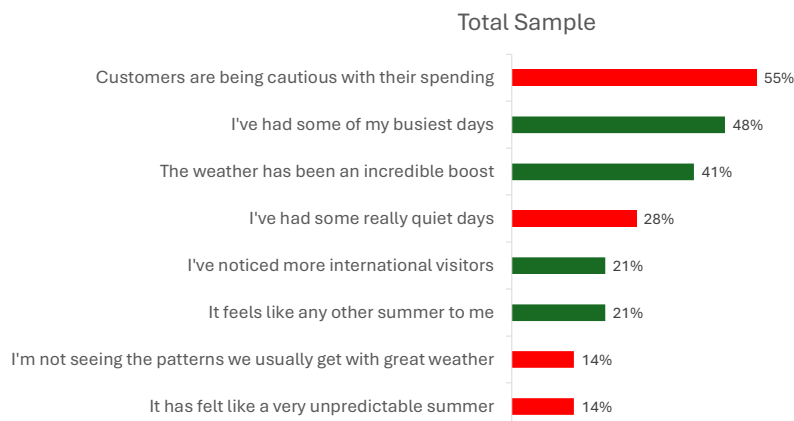


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Statements describing business patterns

Whilst cautious customer spending was noted by the majority of respondents, there was a degree of polarisation on other factors with 1 in 2 having their busiest days this summer, whilst 1 in 3 had some really quiet days. 1 in 10 felt it had been unpredictable and/or hard to see typical patterns.

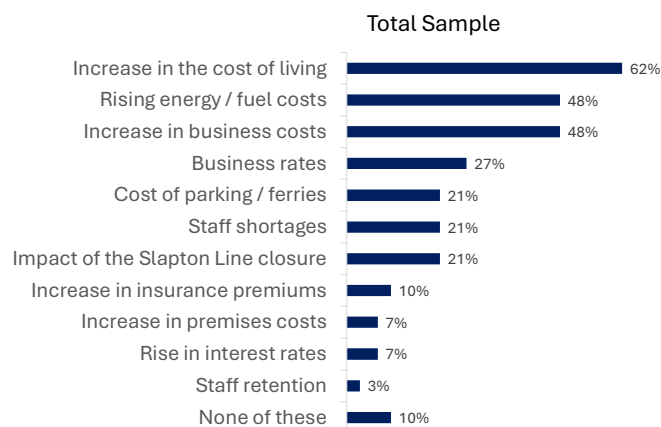


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Issues impact on business in 2026

Costs and logistics were the key issues impacting on business, both in terms of visitor spending and running a business.



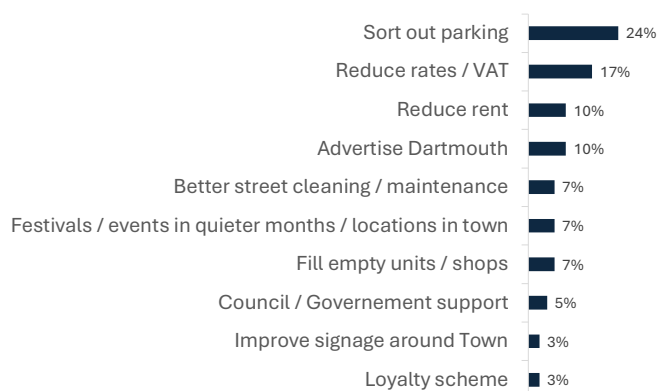
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Making a positive difference to business here

The key concerns for businesses in Dartmouth were evident in the verbatim responses to the improvements businesses are looking for.

Any Mentions among All Respondents



"We should be grateful for how good it (Dartmouth) is and celebrate it, compared with most towns it's doing really well." Hospitality

"Dartmouth is so hard to predict, and it all depends on surplus cash." Retailer

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What Chamber can do for you

- Recognise that whilst a lot of external factors are impacting on businesses **and** on consumers, **Dartmouth has such a lot going for it including a vibrant business community so there are lots of reasons to be positive**
- The Forums we have organised this year are intended to help businesses deal with uncertainty by understanding the wider perspective and looking for the opportunities
- We continue to work with Explore Dartmouth and on the Dartmouth In December initiative to get the message out to the right visitors that **Dartmouth is a great place to visit year round**
- We also continue to share concerns and the business perspective on parking / park & ride with the appropriate local authorities