





Monitoring and Evaluation of the Foresters' Forest HLF Landscape Partnership Programme in the Forest of Dean

Delivery Stage

Residents and Visitors Survey - Outline Report

Submission to:

Foresters' Forest Landscape Partnership Programme

By

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1. Introduction and overview of the evaluation

1.1. Introduction

This outline report presents the key results and analysis of a survey of residents and visitors to contribute to the ongoing understanding of the impact of the Delivery Stage of the Foresters' Forest Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnership Programme operating in the Forest of Dean at the end of March 2018.

The residents and visitors survey was developed to explore perceptions and understanding about the Forest of Dean from the general population. Data were collected from an on-line survey during the period 1 February – 31 March 2018. A total of 780 questionnaires were completed.

Aims and objectives of the evaluation

The aims of the evaluation element of the Foresters' Forest programme are to establish a monitoring and evaluation methodology for the Foresters' Forest programme and its constituent projects (including stakeholder engagement), and to create a baseline assessment that meets HLF requirements.

There are four main objectives:

- To create a toolkit of qualitative and quantitative monitoring and evaluation methods that is appropriate for the programme overall and the projects individually, tailored to the different audiences involved.
- To establish a comprehensive baseline using those qualitative and quantitative methods, such that subsequent measures at successive intervals collect the evidence to prove that the programme and its constituent projects have made a difference over time.
- To collate and analyse the baseline data (both qualitative and quantitative) to create a report for Foresters' Forest early in the Delivery Stage.

Methodology

A residents and visitors survey was developed to explore perceptions and understanding about the Forest of Dean from the general population. Data were collected through the use of an on-line survey, with a total of 780 questionnaires completed during the period 1 February – 31 March 2018.

The on-line survey was delivered in the Spring of 2018 as part of the overall baseline study to assess understanding, knowledge, and perception about the Forest of Dean, and activities of the Foresters' Forest programme, in the initial phase of programme delivery during the 2017-18 period. The survey forms part of the Foresters' Forest Programme evaluation and has been designed to be repeated towards the end of the programme period (late 2021) to enable a comparison of responses over the time frame of the Foresters' Forest Programme (2017-22).

The on-line survey was designed to maximise potential responses from residents in the Forest, and was also available for visitors to make a submission. The survey was open to any

interested person of any age for a period of 8 weeks (1 February – 31 March 2018). As with any form of remotely delivered survey, the respondents will be a self-selected group that will not necessarily be representative of the target population (residents within the Hundred of St. Briavels and visitors to the Forest of Dean). A key aspect of the methodology therefore is an initial comparison of socio-economic characteristics of both the survey sample respondents and the wider Forest of Dean (FoD) population.

Analysis of the survey data includes the following:

- Descriptive statistics the summarise key characteristics of the sample;
- Cross-tabulations to compare answers from sub-groups within the sample (e.g. comparisons of male/female; visitor/resident; within age group) on the same question;
- Comparison of mean scores between sub-groups to explore for significant differences in terms of understanding, knowledge, and perceptions about the forest.
- Comparison of survey results with a previous survey conducted in 2016 on a small sample of Forest Visitors and residents.

1.2. Evaluation context

The on-line survey, in line with other elements of the Foresters' Forest programme evaluation incorporates HLF Guidance on evaluation (Evaluation guidance: Landscape Partnerships, Feb 2013, revised July 2014), identifying nine key outcomes for landscape partnership programmes:

Outcomes for heritage with HLF investment, heritage will be:

- better managed
- in better condition
- identified/recorded

Outcomes for people – with HLF investment, people will have:

- developed skills
- learnt about heritage
- volunteered time

Outcomes for communities – with HLF investment:

- environmental impacts will be reduced
- more people and a wider range of people will have engaged with heritage
- your local area/community will be a better place to live, work or visit

In addition, the LP Guidance notes the following:

- The evaluation must measure the difference the programme makes as a whole: to heritage, to people, and to communities.
- Individual projects should contribute to one or more of the nine outcomes.
- Evidence collected should enable the evaluation to show the 'distance travelled' as a result of HLF funding.

 Decision-makers, stakeholders, local people and partners will all want a better understanding of the nature of lasting benefits arising from the programme.

The evaluation is designed with HLF guidance in mind, and in a manner that enables provision of evidence to identify progress towards the nine key outcomes. The Foresters' Forest HLF Landscape Partnership comprises 38 projects, which all have their own individual outcomes, as well as contributing in different ways to the nine overall HLF outcomes. Projects will also be assessed as part of the evaluation, utilising a mix of evaluation criteria and indicator measures.

2. Baseline Survey of Residents and Visitors

2.1 Characteristics of the Hundred of St. Briavels

The Foresters' Forest Programme is delivered across the area of the Hundred of St. Briavels, an area of land totalling 48,327 acres (19,557 hectares) about which there has been some dispute over the years in terms of its boundaries, but which has been specifically defined for the purposes of this Programme¹.

The total population of the Hundred (2011 Census) was 44,260 with 20% of the total under 18 years of age and 27.8% over the age of 60 years. This age structure is broadly similar to that across the rest of England but with an older population than compared to the rest of England. The age structure is also showing a trend towards ageing, with a slight decline in those under 13 years and a larger increase in older people (those over 60 years of age) over the ten-year period 2001-2011. An increase in 'one-person' and 'married couple-no dependent children' households, and a slight reduction in the proportion of those living in 'married couple – dependent children' households is also indicative of this.

The sub-set of the population identifying as an ethnic minority was 1.48% in 2011, up from 0.95% in 2001.

2.2 Basic demographic characteristics of the sample

A total of 780 responses were received. The gender breakdown was 35% Males and 63% Female (2% not specifying) with 10% indicating they had some form of disability. The majority of those stating a disability indicated some kind of physical impairment affecting mobility (7.1% of the total sample, n = 55), while only 1% indicated a mental impairment and

¹ Hart, C.E. (1945) The Origin and the Geographical extent of the Hundred of St. Briavels in Gloucestershire.

Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, Vol. 66, pp.138-165.

1.5% a communications disability. It is worth noting that 3.2% of the sample (n=25) indicated they did not want to state whether or not they had a disability.

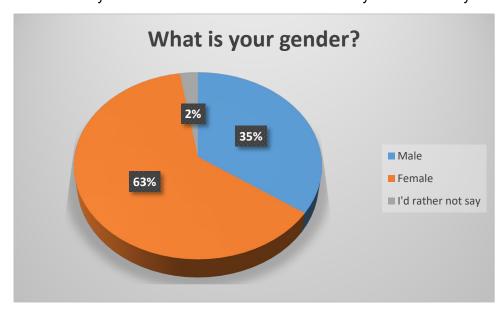


Figure 2.1. Gender of sample respondents

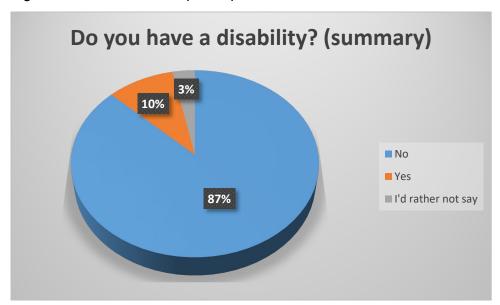


Figure 2.2. Self-reported disabilities of sample respondents

The age of respondents was weighted towards those over 26 years of age with 7.9% (n=61) being 25 yrs. or under (and only 2.4% of sample respondents being under 19 yrs.). Just over one third (34%; n=265) of the sample are in the 45-59 yrs. age group (34%) while slightly more than one quarter of the sample lay either side of that group (26-44 yrs. = 27.6%; and 60-74 yrs. = 26.2%). Figure 2.3 indicates that the majority of the respondents are aged 26 – 74 yrs., with very few young people or those aged 75 and older represented. The sample thus appears to over-represent the older age categories of the wider population in the area, while the younger age groups are not well-represented, compared to characteristics of the resident population. It is important to keep in mind that the sample includes visitors as wells as local residents and therefore a close match with the resident Forest population is unlikely.

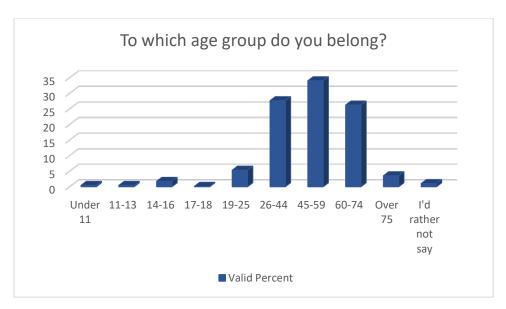


Figure 2.3. Age of the sample respondents

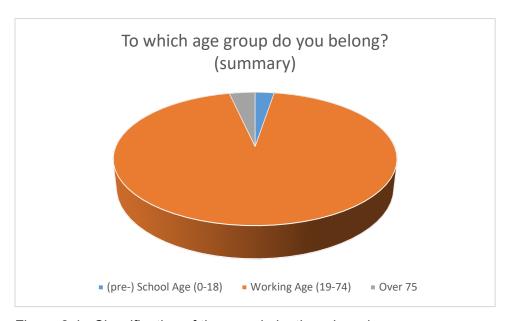


Figure 2.4. Classification of the sample by three broad age groups

Ethnicity

The ethnicity of respondents was overwhelmingly white (95%), with other ethnic groups representing around 1%, and approximately 4% electing not to specify.

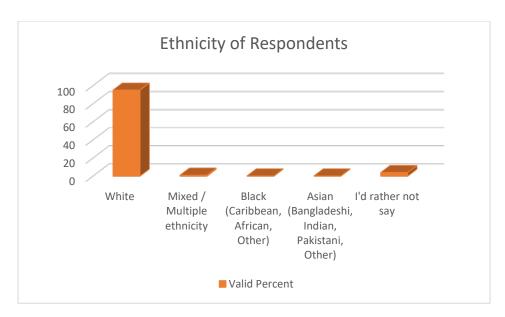


Figure 2.5. Ethnicity of sample respondents

Occupation

Respondents were asked to indicate their occupational status. The highest response (40%; n=312) were in the category of 'working full-time', with a further 18.6% (n=145) indicating they worked part-time. Thus overall a total of 58.6% indicated they were engaged in some form of full or part-time work. The second largest category (25% of the sample; n=202) were those indicating they were 'retired'. People with caring responsibilities (children or relatives) formed 6.7% of the sample, with a further 1.8% identifying themselves as unemployed and 6.5% as being at school or a student. A small number (n=33) elected not to state their occupation. It is worth noting that respondents were able to indicate more than one category but the data suggest less than 5% of the sample did this in their response to the question.

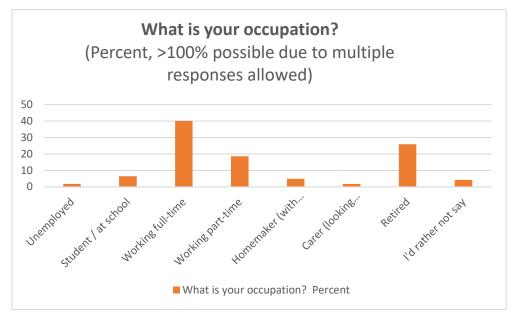


Figure 2.6. Occupation of sample respondents

Residential status

The majority of the sample (83%) were residents, and 17% (n=130) were visitors to the Forest. Approximately 40% of residents indicated they had lived in the Forest of Dean for more than 30 years, or for all of their lives). Around 15% (n=97) of residents indicated they were a 'Born & Bred Forester' while the categories '10-30 years' and 'less than 10 years' were selected by 28% and 27% of the sample respectively.

The sample is thus fairly evenly split between those who have lived in the forest for less than 30 yrs. (45.9%) and those who have lived there for 30 yrs. or more (46.1%)

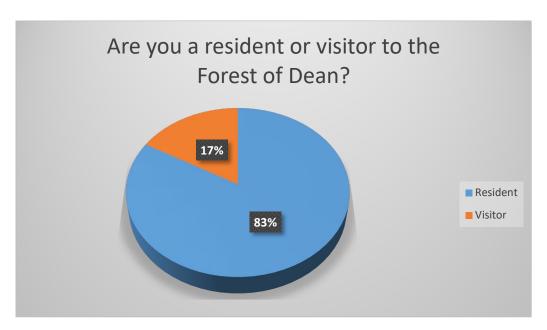


Figure 2.7 Resident/visitor breakdown of the sample

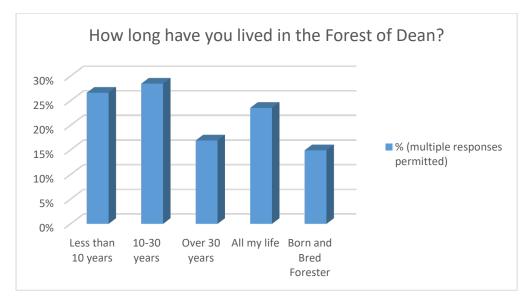


Figure 2.8. Length of residence in the Forest

The survey has clearly picked up frequent visitors to the Forest of Dean. The majority of the 130 visitors in the sample (47%) indicated that they visit the Forest of Dean at least 6 times per year, whilst a further 29% said they visit between two and five times per year. Only 15% of respondents said they visited once per year, and 8% less than once per year.



Figure 2.9. Number of annual visits to the Forest by visitors in the sample (n=130)

2.3 The Foresters' Forest Programme – Awareness and Participation

A total of 44% of the sample indicated they had heard of the Foresters Forest before taking the survey.

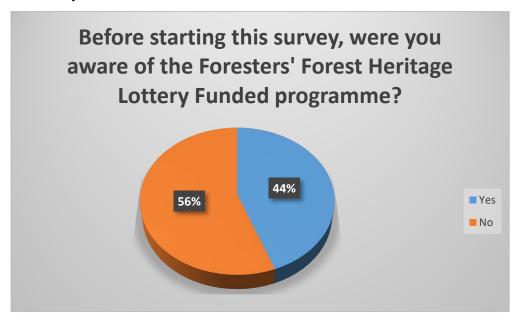
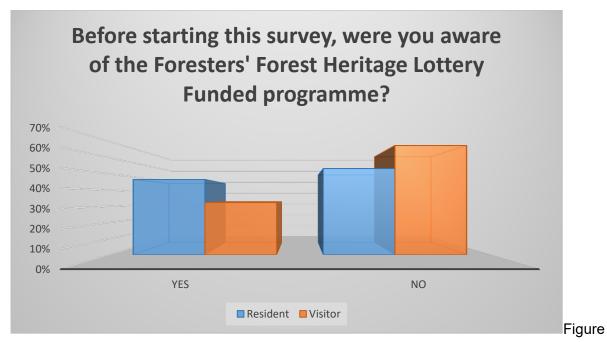


Figure 2.10. Awareness of the Foresters' Forest Programme (complete sample n=780)

Looking at the difference in responses between Residents and Visitors, it can be seen that Residents had a higher level of prior awareness with almost half of Residents (46.6%) responding 'Yes', compared to Visitors where just under one third (32.3% Visitors) responded Yes. This is not unsurprising given that one would expect local residents to be more attuned to local events and to have been more exposed to potential opportunities to read, learn, or hear about the programme from local media, as well as social media.



3.11. Awareness of the Foresters' Forest Programme: Comparison of Visitors and Residents

Differences within the sample population are also evident when comparing gender, with Male respondents being more likely to answer 'Yes' (48.3%) than Female respondents (41.3%), with 4.1% not answering either way. Thus, slightly more than half of both Males and Females indicated a lack of awareness about the Foresters' Forest Programme.

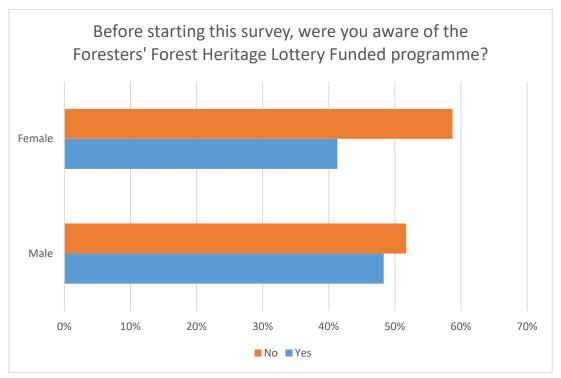


Figure 2.12. Awareness of the Foresters' Forest Programme: comparison of male and female responses

Foresters' Forest activities participation

A total of 11.9% of respondents (n=93) indicated that they had taken part in some form of activity, event or training course run by the Foresters' Forest programme. Further analysis of comments provided indicates higher levels of participation in natural heritage-type activities, including surveying and archaeology, and lower levels of participation in cultural heritage and other activities. A total of 15.9% (n=30) of those indicating participation noted they had undertaken some form of training course.



Figure 2.14 Participation in Foresters' Forest activities (n=780)

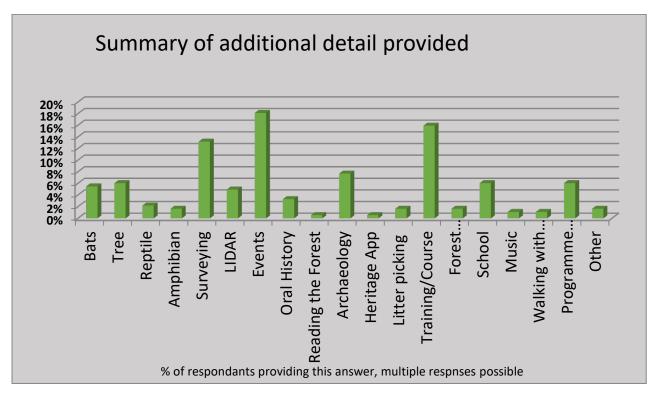


Figure 2.15 Participation in Foresters' Forest activities: Breakdown by activity type *Volunteering*

A total of 9.1% (n=71) of the sample indicated they had done some volunteer work with the Foresters' Forest Projects.

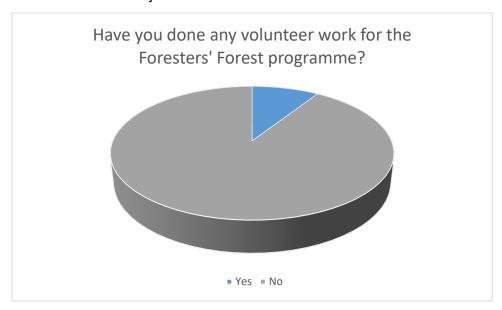


Figure 2.16 Volunteering in the Foresters' Forest Programme

Further analysis of comments provide indicates higher proportions of volunteering in the natural heritage, in particular some form of involvement in survey work (26% of those volunteering have undertaken some form of survey work), followed by built heritage, and least in cultural heritage and other activities.

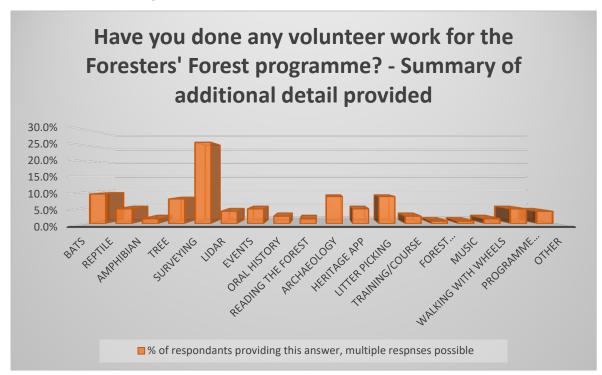


Figure 2.17 Volunteering in the Foresters' Forest Programme: breakdown by type of activity

It is notable that the text responses indicate a degree of confusion within the responding population, and a resulting cross-over in the responses provided, between those activities which the respondents deemed to be 'participation' and those which involve 'volunteering'. It is difficult to differentiate (and respondents themselves are not differentiating) between those respondents who are contributing to a project (for example as Project Leads, Volunteers, surveyors, trainers, youth workers, etc.), and those who indicate they are benefiting from a project (e.g. young people, those receiving training, those being supported in outdoor recreation, those using information or translational resources). This issue may be complicated by individuals having more than one role in a Project or across the Programme. It is likely to be of benefit to the Programme to ensure that this difference is better understood.

2.4 Knowledge of the heritage of the Forest of Dean

Respondents were asked twelve questions through which an evaluation of their knowledge of various aspects of the Forest of Dean could be made.

For the purposes of the survey, 'heritage' was defined as, "anything that has originated from the historic activities of previous generations. This could be the language or dialect, music, literature, the natural environment, industry, buildings, local rights to use resources, or even the very appearance of the landscape around us."

Heritage was divided into three sub-groups; built and industrial heritage, natural heritage, and cultural heritage, with questions being asked in the survey on each of these.

The first three question asked respondents to identify a feature of the built heritage, providing a recent photograph and four names, of which one could be selected in each case. Findall's Chimney was correctly identified by 59% of respondents, Darkhill Ironworks by 60% and Scarr Bandstand by 71%.

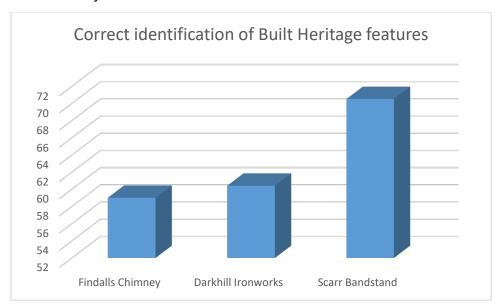


Figure 2.18 Knowledge of built heritage

Respondents were then asked to choose from four images of industry, those images that are still important to the Forest of Dean. The images showed mining, stone work, oil production and tree felling. In relation to mining and stone work just over 60% of respondents gave the correct response; in terms of oil production and timber a much higher proportion (88.3% and 93.8% respectively) gave correct responses. Looking across all four questions around 77% of responses correctly identified industries which are currently important.

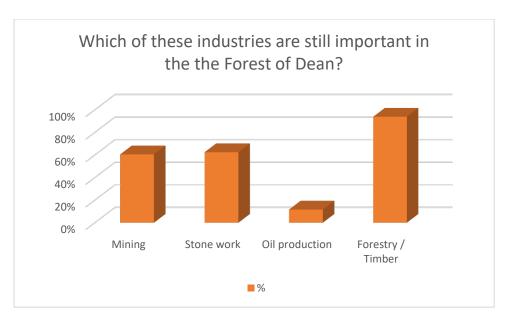


Figure 2.19 Knowledge of industrial heritage

Respondents were asked five questions relating to the natural heritage of the Forest of Dean; this involved correctly identifying plant or animal species from photographs. The proportion of correct responses varied across the categories of natural heritage as follows:

Category	No of respondents Answering correctly	Proportion (%)		
Trees	400	51.3Adders	736	94.4
Bats	414	53.1		
Butterflies	421	54		

Responses suggest around half the sample have a reasonable knowledge of the natural heritage of the Forest.

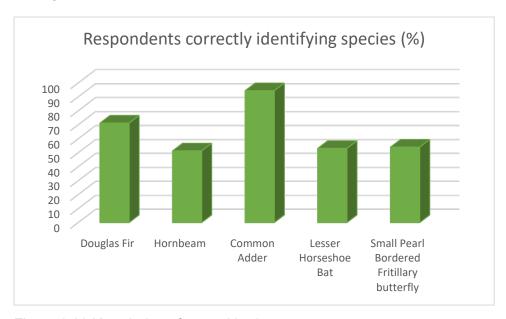


Figure 2.20 Knowledge of natural heritage

Cultural heritage

Respondents were asked about the role of the Verderers in the Forest. Qualitative responses indicated a significant proportion (57%) of the sample did not know their current role (or even what the Verderers are), whilst the 43% remaining responses determined as 'correct' were granted under wide ranging criteria.

Respondents were asked about the association of four authors with the Forest. Approximately three-quarters of respondents correctly identified Dennis Potter, J.K. Rowling, and Ralf Anstis as having links to the Forest, with a small proportion wrongly identifying George Orwell as being associated with the Forest.

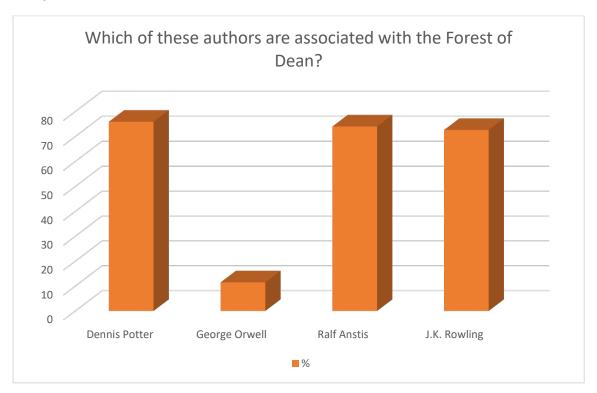


Figure 2.21 Responses to cultural heritage questions on author associations with the Forest

2.5. Opinions on Forest of Dean issues

Respondents were asked three questions about their opinions on the heritage in the Forest of Dean. Questions were exploring perceptions about the condition of heritage, whether it was being preserved for future generations, and to what extent it is being identified and recorded. Questions were scored on a 1-10 scale where 1 is equivalent to 'very strong disagreement', and 10 equates to 'very strong agreement' with the statement (see Table 2.1 below).

	Proportion of total sample responding (%)					
Score (1 – 10)	Heritage is being protected and preserved for future generations	Heritage is in good condition	Heritage is being identified and recorded			
1	2.42	3.23	2.15			
2	4.58	4.58	1.86			
3	7.67	9.97	6.29			
4	7.27	11.19	6.44			
5	15.07	18.33	13.45			
6	15.34	19.54	16.02			
7	19.38	16.85	18.60			
8	15.61	9.43	18.88			
9	4.71	3.10	6.87			
10	7.94	3.77	9.44			
Total %	100.00	100.00	100.00			

Table 2.1 Opinions about heritage in the Forest of Dean

In all three cases the highest proportion of responses were clustered around the mid-to upper range of scores (scores of 5 to 8) suggesting a majority agreed that heritage is in good condition and being preserved. Over all three questions approximately 22% of respondents gave scores of 4 and below, while only 11.8% of respondents gave scores of 9 or 10, meaning that approximately two-thirds of the sample were scoring the questions between 5 and 8. It is interesting to note that scores for the statement about identifying and recording heritage are slightly higher than for the other two questions; suggesting that a larger proportion of the sample strongly agree with the statement. Conversely relatively fewer respondents allocate high scores to the statement about condition suggesting a higher level of disagreement with the statement See Figure 2.22 below).

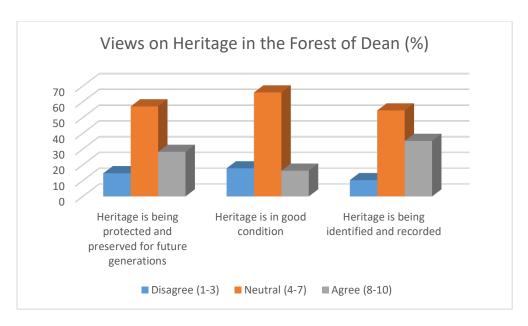


Figure 2.22 Views on the level of agreement/disagreement with statements about heritage

Table 2.2 and Figure 2.23 below summarise responses to a set of questions exploring perceptions of the Forest of Dean as a place to live, work, and visit. It is clear from the responses that the majority of respondents believe it is a beautiful area, with 80% of the sample giving it one of the two highest scores (9 or 10). In addition respondents indicated the Forest was a 'good place to visit', with a total of 83.7% giving one of the three highest scores (8 – 10), and a 'good place to live' (a total of 72.6% giving this statement a score of 8 - 10. There was less agreement regarding statements over the Forest being a good place to work (31.2% gave it a score of 8-10); and their perception of how clean and tidy it is (19.9% gave it a high score of between 8 and 10 while 24% disagreed giving the statement a score of 1 to 3).

Score	Proportion of total sample responding (%)						
(1 – 10)	It is clean and tidy	It is a good place to live	It is a good place to work	It is a good place to visit	It is a beautiful area		
1	7	1.1	5.1	0.1	0.3		
2	6.6	0.9	6.1	0.5	0.1		
3	10.6	1.7	7.7	0.5	0.6		
4	11.1	2.4	8.8	0.8	0.6		
5	15.9	3.7	17.5	1.9	1.2		
6	11.4	5.7	10.6	4.1	1.9		
7	17.7	11.8	13	8.4	5.3		
8	12.4	21.6	12.8	18.6	9.8		
9	4.8	19.8	7	21.3	16.1		
10	2.7	31.3	11.4	43.7	64.1		
Total %							

Table 2.2 Perceptions of the Forest as a place to live, work and visit

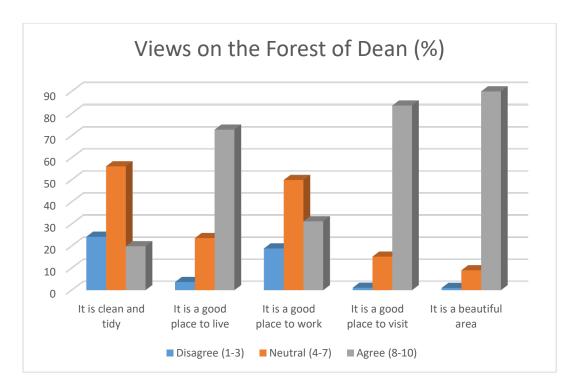


Figure 3.23 Generalised comparison of views on the Forest as a place to live, work, and visit

Learning

Respondents were asked about their views on learning more about the Forest of Dean. Table 2.3 and Figure 2.24 summarise the responses across the full sample. Agreement was strongest for wanting to learn more about 'the wildlife and habitats of the Forest of Dean' with 87.2% agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement, closely followed by wanting to learn more about 'the historical and industrial importance' (85.7% agreeing or strongly agreeing).

It is worth noting that 8.7% of the sample felt they already had a good knowledge about the historical and industrial importance of the Forest of Dean, and 7.1% felt the same about the wildlife and habitats of the Forest. Overall, the interesting point about these responses is the high level of demand for learning in relation to all aspects of the Forest. Whether this demand is replicated across the wider population of the Forest would be worth exploring in more detail.

	Proportion of the total sample (%)						
	I want to learn more about						
Score	the historical and industrial importance of the Forest of Dean	the wildlife and habitats of the Forest of Dean	the local literature of the Forest of Dean	the local music of the Forest of Dean	the local art of the Forest of Dean	I want to be more involved in looking after the Forest of Dean	
Strongly Agree	34.9	42.3	19.8	15.4	19.6	23.9	
Agree	50.8	44.9	50.6	46.6	50.8	53.3	
Disagree	3.8	3.7	20.8	28.6	22.2	16.4	
Strongly Disagree	1.9	2	4.5	4.9	4.7	3.7	
I already have good knowledge	8.7	7.1	4.3	4.5	2.7	2.8	

Table 2.3 Attitudes towards aspects of Forest of Dean heritage

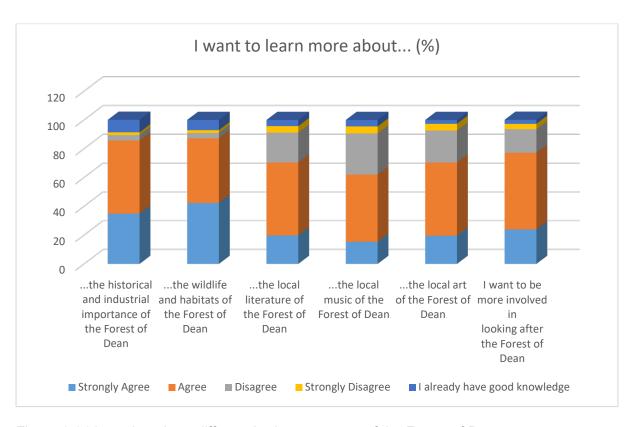


Figure 2.24 Learning about different heritage aspects of the Forest of Dean

Woodland Management

Respondents were asked for their views on six different aspects of woodland management. It is interesting to note that 'access to outdoor activities' stands out as an area of good management with over half the sample (55.9%) indicating good or very good management. Protecting wildlife habitat also stands out with almost one third of the sample (32.8%) indicating that management is good or very good, and management of tree felling and timber production was identified as good or very good by 27.3% of the sample.

Control of wild boar received the lowest score with over nearly two-thirds of the sample (64%) indicating management was poor or very poor. In addition it is worth noting that 37% felt that conservation of the built heritage was poor or very poor.

	Proportion of sample (%)							
	How well is the woodland managed in the Forest of Dean?							
Score	Access to outdoor activities	Tree felling / timber production	Protecting Wildlife habitats	Increasing the amount of grazing animals	Control of wild boar	Conservation of built heritage		
Not undertaken	2.2	1.7	1.5	6.2	3.2	2.9		
Very poor	1.2	13.7	7.4	4.9	37.3	6.4		
Poor	6.8	17.9	21.8	19.7	26.7	30.6		
About right	34	39.4	36.4	51.2	24	41.3		
Good	38.3	19.9	24.6	14.5	6.8	15.4		
Very good	17.6	7.4	8.2	3.6	2.1	3.3		

Table 2.4 Attitudes towards woodland management in the Forest of Dean

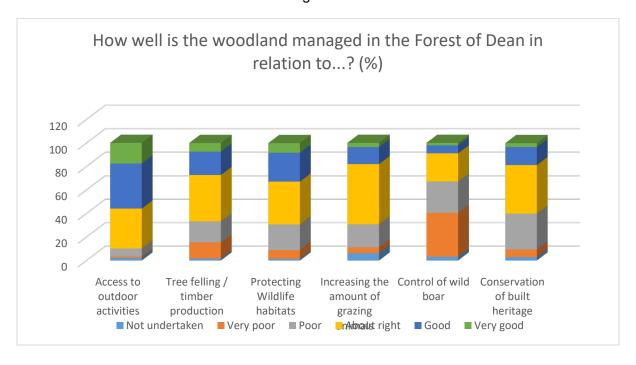


Figure 2.25 Column graph of opinions on woodland management

Woodland visitation

Respondents were also asked how frequently they visit the woodland within the Forest in an effort to understand the level of utilisation of the woodland resource. Just over one third (35.6%) said they visited daily (some of these may possibly be dog walkers), while a further 28.7% said they visited weekly. A small proportion (2.2%) indicated they would like to visit the woods but have limited mobility while 1.2% indicated they had only visited once, and 0.5% said they had never visited.



Figure 2.26 Frequency of visits to the woodland

3. Additional Comments provided by Respondents

3.1 Overview of comments

Survey respondents were provided with the opportunity to express their views on the subjects covered in the survey. This led to 154 respondents providing 166 individually identifiable comments, of which 108 comments fell within the subject of the survey, 33 provided feedback on the survey itself, and 25 were outside of the scope of the question.

These responses have been broadly categorised to enable reporting of what was a diverse, sometimes extensive, and occasionally very direct collection of responses.

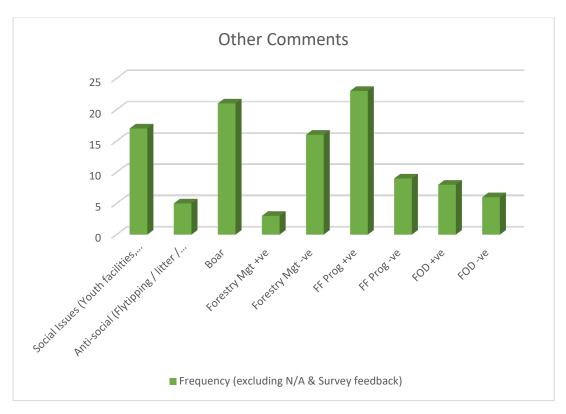


Figure 3.1 Additional comments on the survey: breakdown by subject

One of the most extensively written set of responses, and the third most frequent, related to a range of social issues affecting the area. This included:

- the need for youth facilities to provide a stable social environment for young people,
- additional and improved signage to facilitate easier navigation,
- Acknowledgement of the great potential to access outdoor activities, but often with low local take-up,
- health provision in decline, in particular the community hospitals,
- the need for increased investment, both in training for employment, and to create additional jobs to sustain the economy so preventing the Forest from becoming a commuter dormitory for large towns and cities in the region, and
- the need for affordable housing and associated schools, doctors and other facilities.

Alongside social issues were comments about anti-social behaviour. Whilst less numerous, they represent an important source for potential negative impression of the area and included: fly-tipping, litter, and speeding vehicles.

Issues relating to management of the forest area were well represented. Comments about Wild-Boar were second most frequent and almost without exception criticised the alleged failure to reduce the number of Boar to a reasonable number, with one respondent stating "[we] need to get a grip on the boar... The Forest is beginning to resemble a World War 1 battlefield". Whilst some positive comments were received about other forest management issues, further negative comments were received, mostly relating to the "damage", "mess" and "obstruction" left behind after forestry operations.

Comments about the Foresters' Forest programme itself were mostly positive, and made up the highest frequency of responses. Positive comments included; "I do think it's fantastic what is being done and I hope you can engage all generations in getting involved" and "Foresters are invariably proud of their culture but don't always show it. I hope the project will help remedy this". Negative responses on the Foresters' Forest programme mostly revolved around inclusivity, either of people or subject matter, or around value for money in the use of Lottery funding. One sample comment was:

"I think the name 'Foresters Forest' is a bit misleading, when I first heard about it I thought it was just for Foresters, i.e. people born and bred in the Forest so I thought it wasn't for me and didn't take any notice"

The remaining comments noted the special character of the natural environment of the Forest of Dean, the benefits for raising a family in that environment, or to enjoy recreationally. Negative comments raised issues about poor governance and management, lack of affordable housing and change, in general, being for the worse.

3.2. How respondents found out about the survey

The survey asked respondents how they learned of the survey so they could complete it. More than half of respondents identified a variety of social media platforms as their source, representing a positive testament to the extensive and well-planned social media campaign delivered by the Programme team. Around 12% identified Foresters' Forest newsletters or website as their source, small number from traditional media, and around 21% from 'other' sources.

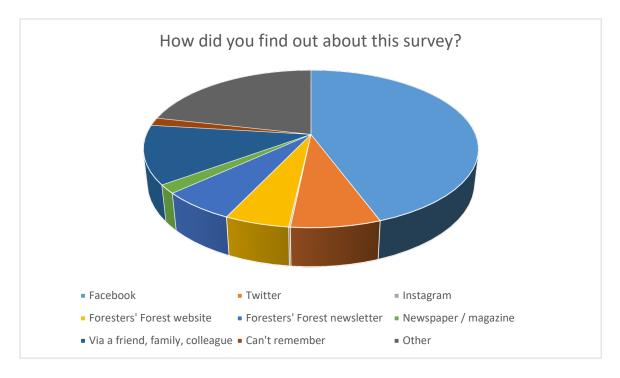


Figure 3.2 How respondents found out about the survey

Of the 'Other' sources, more than 25% were simply listed as 'email' without specifying the source, but most likely to be either from a close contact or newsletter. Local organisations are identified as the source for almost the entirety of the remainder, with particular note made of Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, Local History Society, Local Councils, Forest Voluntary Action Forum and University of Gloucestershire.

These distributions form an important observation of the existing networks that have been reached in this survey and a useful point of reference for the distribution of future surveys as the Programme goes forward.

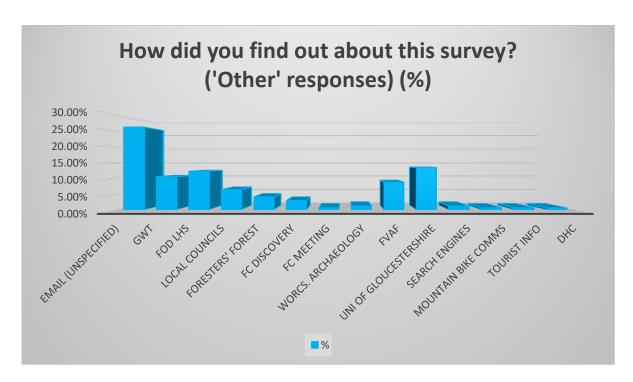


Figure 3.3 How respondents found out about the survey 'Other' responses



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