



PLANTING
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**Attitudes & Perceptions Study:
On Site Survey Report
February 2008**

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Executive Summary

The Central Scotland Forest is not a conventional Forest. Instead, woodlands are spread in a mosaic throughout 620 square miles bounded by Edinburgh, Glasgow, Falkirk and Lanark. Since 1995, and by precursor bodies before that, the Forest has been developed by a partnership led by the Central Scotland Forest Trust. It is believed by the partnership that the Forest is dramatically improving the image, environment and landscape of a large part of Scotland and will play a key role in its future prosperity. It is seen to be providing a greener, cleaner and more versatile environment for the 750,000 people who live and work in the area, as well as for the many visitors to, and travellers through, the area.

As set out in the *Central Scotland Forest Strategy*, there are a large number of specific aims and objectives relating to social, environmental and economic benefits of the Forest. (For further information see CSF website – www.csft.org.uk). This report particularly relates to the social impact of the Forest upon people's lives.

This study is part of a wider research strategy which aims to find out more about how people who inhabit the Central Scotland Forest feel about their local environment and how they use the Forest as a resource. In some respects, the investigation is follow-up to a piece of baseline research undertaken in 2005 - the *Social Impact Study*. Although the *Attitudes & Perceptions* study surveyed different people and was based in different parts of the Forest, it did use the same methodology and the same survey scripts. In this way it is hoped that by periodically repeating the research, it will be possible to provide robust and useful data upon which to measure the success of the Forest in delivering one of the Trust's key goals – to make the Forest a better place for people to live in.

The *On Site Survey Report* is published in tandem with another piece of *Attitudes & Perceptions Study* research called the *Random Individual Survey Report*. The *On Site* survey specifically targeted the users of Central Scotland Forest sites and fieldwork was located purely in these greenspace locations, whereas urban environments provided the location for the *Random Individual Survey* fieldwork.

The findings included in this report provide useful information which can be used by Trust staff and partner agencies to help them in the task of delivering the Forest. It is also hoped that the report will be of interest to individuals and organisations outwith the Forest seeking to undertake similar social research.

The sample used in this research represents an accurate reflection of the people who use the Forest. Therefore, we believe the survey findings provide a clear understanding as to what people think across a range of diverse issues.

The themes chosen in the research were set by our experience of engaging with local people on environmental projects. In particular, our Development Team, who have close contact with members of the public, were consulted in drafting of the survey. With their guidance, we did not shy away from challenging subject matter such as personal safety, physical and mental health problems and vandalism. We feel strongly that such themes affect quality of life and are a fundamental element contributing to how people feel about their local environment.

One of the key findings from the On Site Survey was that nearly half of Forest users (people who visit sites which CSFT has worked on) had heard of the Central Scotland Forest Trust. This is a relatively high proportion, and twice as high as that found in urban areas (recorded using the Random Individual Survey (RIS)). The main reason appears to be signage. People see CSFT signs on the Forest sites that they visit and make a mental note of the organisation, whereas in urban areas there are no such signs.

However, similar to findings in the *Random Individual Survey*, it appears that few people have an accurate idea as to what the Trust actually does. In fact, most people thought that it was purely concerned with trees and part of the Forestry Commission.

The majority of users surveyed visit CSF sites on at least a weekly basis. The most frequent visitors have one or more dogs requiring daily exercise. Nearly everyone interviewed think that having access to CSF sites is important to them and nine out ten people think that it is well maintained.

Most people interviewed believe that visiting the site helps them to become healthier, more relaxed, and generally feel good. It appears that the Forest is, therefore, directly helping improve both the mental and physical well being of the people who use it.

In addition to these health and happiness benefits, users also recognise other advantages from having the Forest. It helps to raise awareness of nature, improves the quality of their local environment and it appears that the Forest is helping to build and strengthen local communities through the provision of space in which people can meet and interact in. This latter point is emphasised by the finding that the majority of people visit Forest sites in groups of two or more.

Although the survey was successful, as outlined in the Conclusions section of the report, it could be improved. One of the main recommendations is that when the survey is next undertaken, the sample size could be boosted in order to provide robust local authority data which can be analysed by person characteristics.

Furthermore, as the survey focuses upon deep set ideas and behavioural patterns it is perhaps unrealistic to expect to even marginal changes in the results over a short period of time. Therefore, it is suggested that the next survey of this nature should be conducted in 2011 rather than in 2009 as originally proposed.

Although the study was able to shed light on many issues, due to its methodology (relatively brief interview time and the survey script nature) it was unable to explore at length certain interesting themes. For example, several topics raised in the *Comments* and *Value Statements* sections of this report may be worthy of more exploration. Therefore, it is recommended that in 2009, further research including a series of focus group sessions, should be undertaken to explore these and other key findings in more depth.

Finally, this report represents further evidence of the Central Scotland Forest Trust's on-going commitment towards producing high quality research across a range of social, economic and physical themes.

Acknowledgements

Central Scotland Forest Trust would like to thank all the people within the Forest who took part in this survey. We would also like to extend thanks to Ashbrook Research & Consultancy who undertook the fieldwork element of the research.

1. Introduction

Introducing the Research

In the summer of 2007, Ashbrook Research & Consultancy was commissioned by the Central Scotland Forest Trust and its Partners, to provide perception and attitudinal data from residents of the Forest. This piece of research was similar to that undertaken in 2005 as it used the same methodology and survey scripts. However, unlike the previous survey, the 2007 data was presented to the Trust in its raw format. This enabled the Trust staff to explore and analyse the data with more freedom and facilitated series of revealing cross-tabulations to be undertaken.

The On Site Survey gathered the views of 252 random adult individuals located within six specified Central Scotland Forest locations. The survey sought to capture perceptions and opinions of adults, together with a measure of their behaviour within/and understanding and awareness, of the Central Scotland Forest.

It should be noted that, although most of the surveys were undertaken in dry weather, 2007 had one of the wettest summers in many years and this may well have affected some respondents in terms of how positive/negative they were towards the local environment and outdoor activities in general.

The Research Methodology

A number of experienced researchers were allocated to the survey. These researchers were briefed to systematically carry out fieldwork on a random basis throughout six sites within the Forest. A structured and comprehensive five page questionnaire was used for the purpose of data collection. This incorporated both open and closed questions with attitude and behaviour statements. A copy of this questionnaire is attached as an Appendix to this report. A prize draw for £100 was additionally used as an incentive to participation.

The original intention had been to carry out a total of 400 interviews. Based on previous experience, it was anticipated that this number of interviews could be achieved in 15 Researcher Days. However, this did not prove to be possible. Indeed, even the allocation of an additional 10 Researcher Days only produced a total of 252 interviews.

Discussions with the researchers who undertook the onsite interviews indicated that their failure to achieve daily interview targets was a function of three factors:

- The small number of people using sites – particularly during weekdays and during inclement weather
- The size of sites (particularly larger sites) i.e. whilst researchers were often aware that people could be seen in other parts of the sites, by the time they had reached these people, they had gone
- Researchers being limited to interviewing only one person in groups of 2 or more (i.e. asking to interview the person in that party who next had a birthday)

There was also a degree of difficulty for researchers in terms of achieving interviews with particular types of user and, more specifically, those who were jogging, on bike or on horseback. More specifically, such individuals were more difficult to approach and were often unwilling to 'stop' to be interviewed (particularly those jogging or on bikes).

Despite this, it should be stressed that refusal levels to the Onsite Surveys were very low (typically 10%) and, in particular, the vast majority of those who were approached for interview were willing to participate in the interview process. It should also be stressed that the original intention had been to adopt a random systematic selection procedure i.e. approaching '1 in n' of those visiting sites to be interviewed. However, given the low number of potential participants, this

approach was amended to allow researchers to approach all of those who were entering sites for interview.

Site Selection

In order to avoid respondent survey fatigue and ensure that the Trust's social research exercises cover as much of the Forest as possible, the survey sites selected in *2005 Social Impact Study* were not considered for the 2007 survey. The sites chosen for the *Attitudes and Perceptions Survey* were selected using GIS software enriched with local knowledge from CSFT's Estates Team. The software identified sites with close proximity to areas of deprivation or derelict land. It also highlighted sites in terms of heritage value and access criteria. The Estates Team was able to provide local information on each of the short-listed sites which aided the selection process. Using this methodology, it was possible to select sites which reflect the rich diversity of the Forest, whilst avoiding areas that were used in 2005.

Presentation of findings

This report presents the findings of the survey and is divided into a number of sections to facilitate easy reading. The results are presented in a selection of graphs with interpretive comments.

Wherever possible in this report, the 2007 findings are presented alongside the collated 2005 results for comparative purposes. For the 2005 survey, the sample was divided into high, medium and low usage areas. Results were also presented in this manner. In general, the findings revealed that although there were some differences between the three usage bands, there was little overall consistent pattern or trend. In order to explore the latest data from a different perspective, a decision was taken to try to analyse the 2007 results by visitor type rather than site usage characteristics. Despite the relatively small sample size, it is considered that this approach has been beneficial and worthy of further research in the future.

It is important to note that although the 2007 report does not analyse results using the site usage characteristics banding system, it is possible to group the sites together in this manner. Indeed, this may be something to re-examine in the future once more surveys have been undertaken and the sample becomes larger.

All percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole figure and may therefore not total 100. Percentages have also been calculated excluding 'missing' responses.

2. Observed Characteristics

Independent of the actual survey, the researchers were periodically asked to record observational data regarding people visiting the sites. This was undertaken to provide information for all site visitors and not just those who agreed to take part in the sample. It is important to note that the data is not comprehensive and is not statistically significant for the Forest as a whole. The data was gathered merely to provide an extra layer of indicative information to add greater depth to the survey results.

The five pieces of information were: number of people, time of day, weather conditions, main activity and mode of transport to the Forest site.

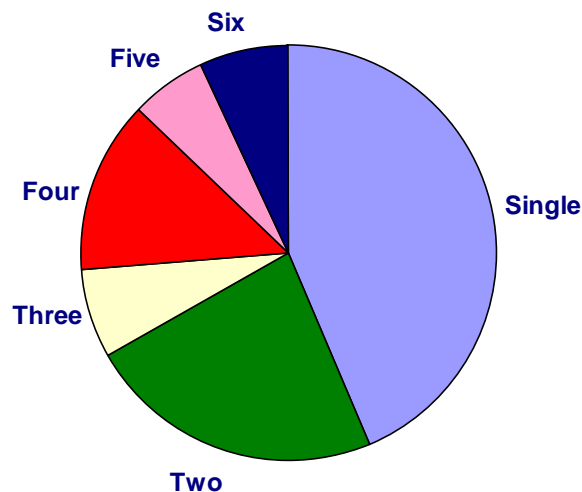
Number of People in the Party

Around two fifths of people visit the site alone and around one quarter were in pairs. Therefore, a relatively large proportion (over one third) of visitors are in parties of three or more. As over half of the visitors are in company, it appears that people are using the CSF sites as a venue for social interaction.

The information in the Chart below contrasts with the survey data shown in Chart 4.2 where seven out of ten of site users were alone. The reason behind this difference may well be due to the tendency of people to be less amenable to the idea of undertaking an interview if they are in parties of more than two people. As a consequence, the survey data may be skewed towards the views of people who visit the Forest site alone and under-estimate the views of people who visit in groups. Further research is recommended in order to comment on this idea with more authority.

Chart 2.1

Number of People in the Party

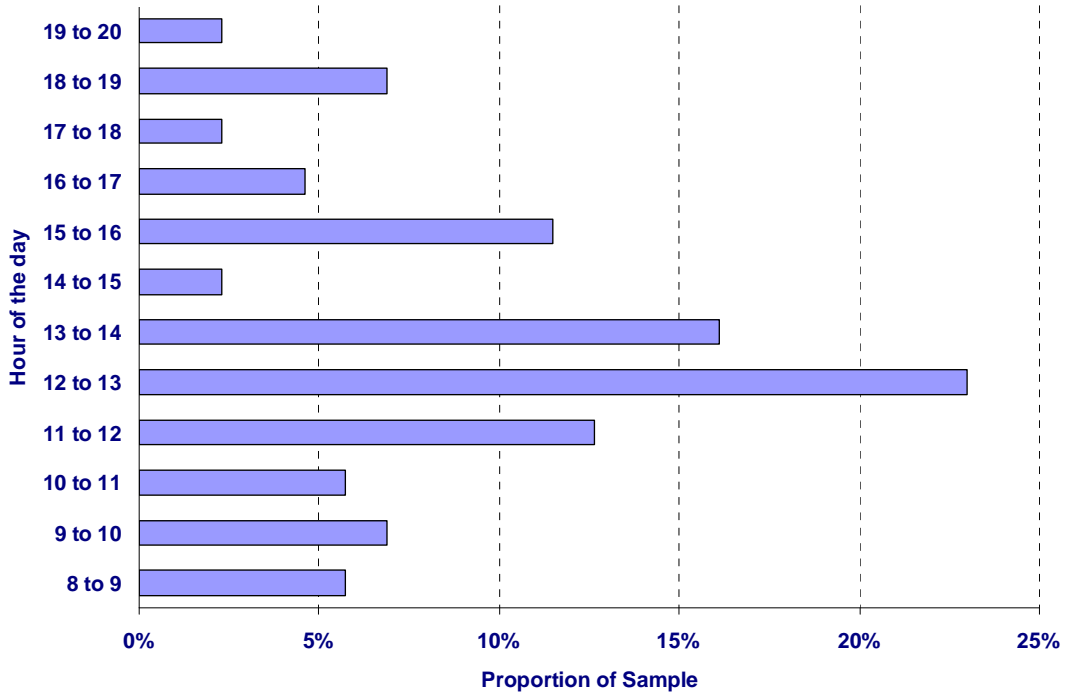


Time of Day for Forest Visitors

It appears that the sites chosen are used throughout the day. The peak hour of the day was between midday and one o'clock and over half of all usage occurred between 11am and 2pm.

A secondary peak occurred between 3pm-4pm, possibly coinciding with the schools finishing. The sites are least used between 2pm-3pm in the afternoon and between 5 - 6pm and 7-8pm.

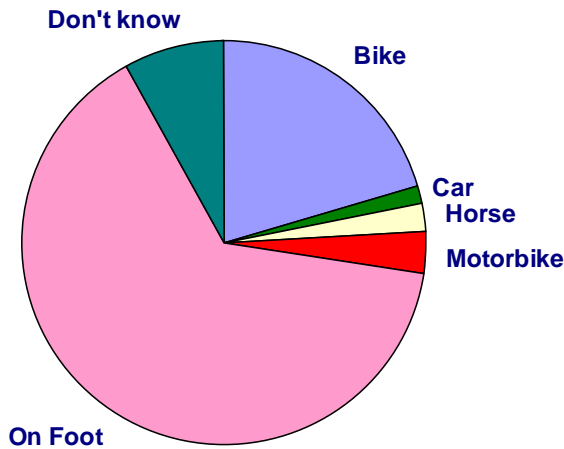
Chart 2.2 Time of Day of Forest Visitors



Mode of Transport Observed

As shown in Chart 2.3 below, two thirds of visitors arrived on foot and around one fifth arrived by cycle. Less than one in ten accessed the site by other methods.

Chart 2.3 Mode of Transport Observed



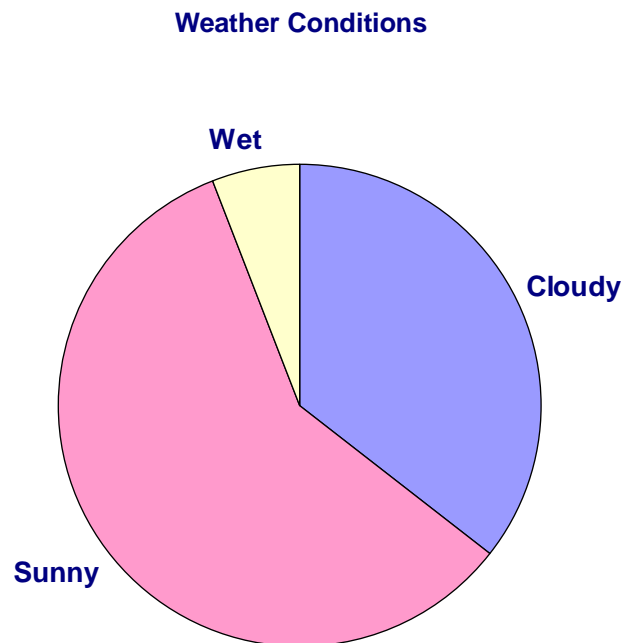
These findings are similar with those from the survey with the exception that a higher proportion of people who arrived at the site by car were willing to be included in the survey.

Weather Conditions

Weather conditions are an important consideration in any survey of this nature – it appears that most people are unwilling to visit the site in wet weather. Observations revealed that nine out of ten people visited the sites when it was dry. In fact, six out of ten visit the sites when it was sunny.

Unfortunately, during the interview period, the weather was wetter than was hoped for. As a direct consequence, the interviewers struggled to find people to talk to on sites and extra interview days had to be time tabled in order to meet the quota.

Chart 2.4



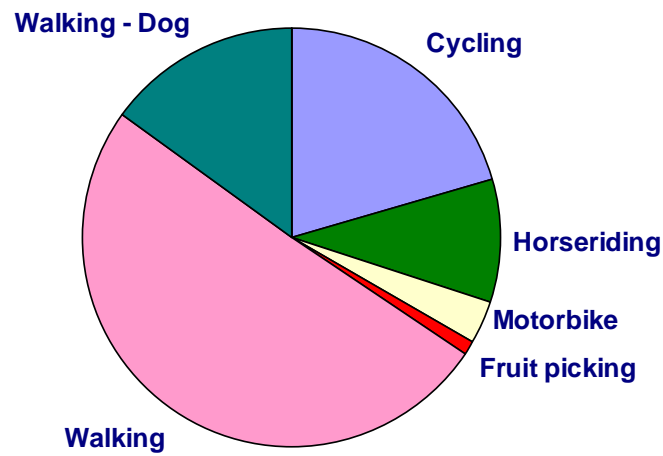
Main Activities Observed

As shown in Chart 2.5 below, two thirds of people visiting the survey sites were walking (either with or without a dog). Cycling was the next frequently observed activity (one fifth of total) followed by horse riding.

These findings are generally in line with findings from the survey with the possible exception that more horse riding activity was observed. Again, this may well be due to the fact that people out horse riding are less inclined to be interviewed – a consideration recognised in the *Research Methodology* section above.

Chart 2.5

Main Activities Observed



Summary of Observed Characteristics

Visiting CSF sites appears to be a social activity as the majority of people arrive in the company of others. Although people visit at all hours of the day, the most popular time is around lunch time.

The most frequently used mode of transport is *on foot* the majority of the rest of site users arrived via cycle. These findings were consistent with the visitor activities observed ie most people were either walking or on a bike. We can, therefore, infer that most users live nearby to the site they are visiting

Weather conditions were recognised as being an important factor, only one in ten observed site visitors arrived during wet weather.

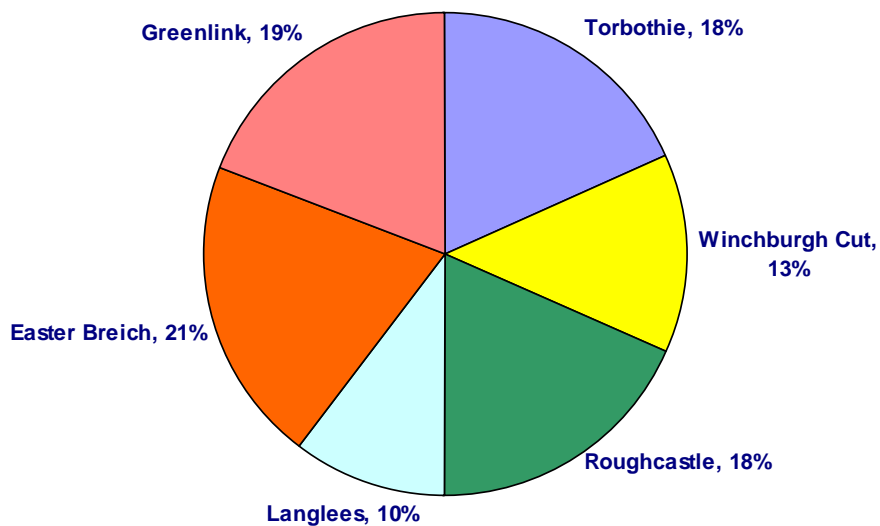
3. About the sample

Who Was Interviewed

A total of 252 people were interviewed across the six sites. The breakdown of numbers is shown in the chart below.

Chart 3.1

Where the interviews took place

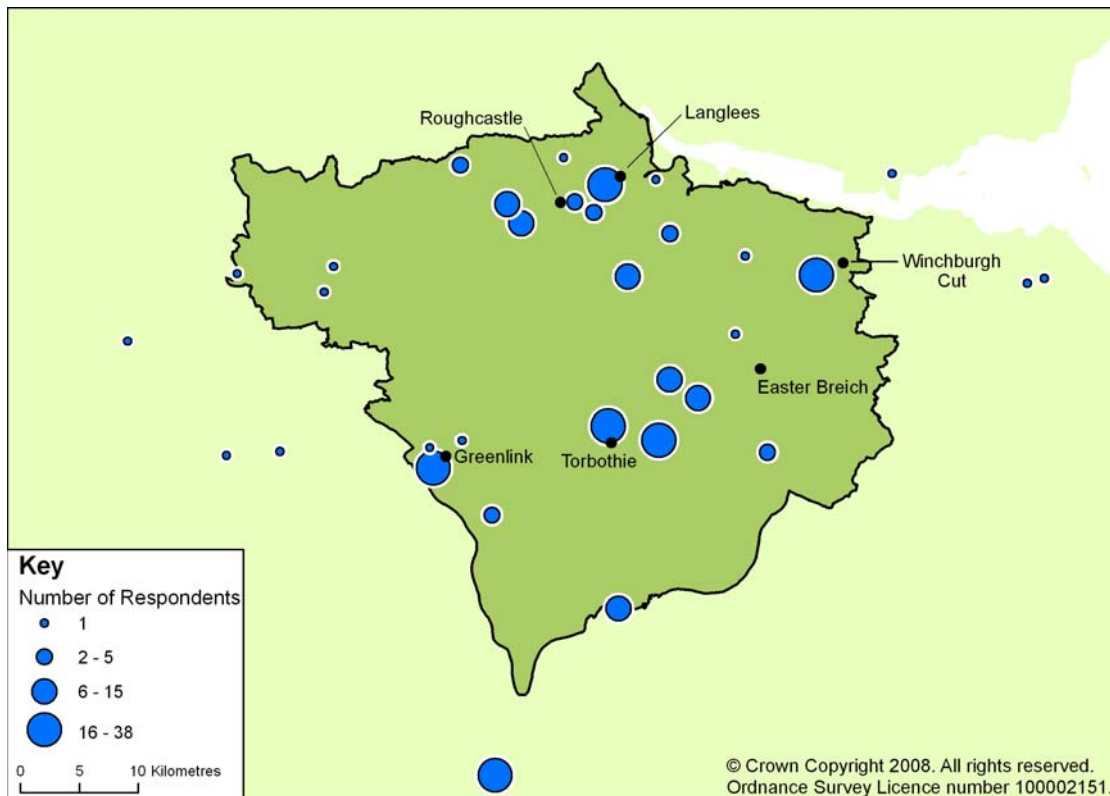


All interviews were completed in July and August 2007. The average length of an interview was around ten minutes, with some completed in just five minutes, and others taking much longer. Similar to 2005, this was found largely to be related to the interest/enthusiasm of the interviewee with regard to the natural environment.

The map on the next page shows where the respondents live in relation to the location of the survey sites. The majority of the respondents were from within the Forest and most of these lived within close proximity to a survey site. However, there were a few people from outside the Forest including some from Glasgow, Fife, Edinburgh and Coalburn (in South Lanarkshire).

Map 3.1

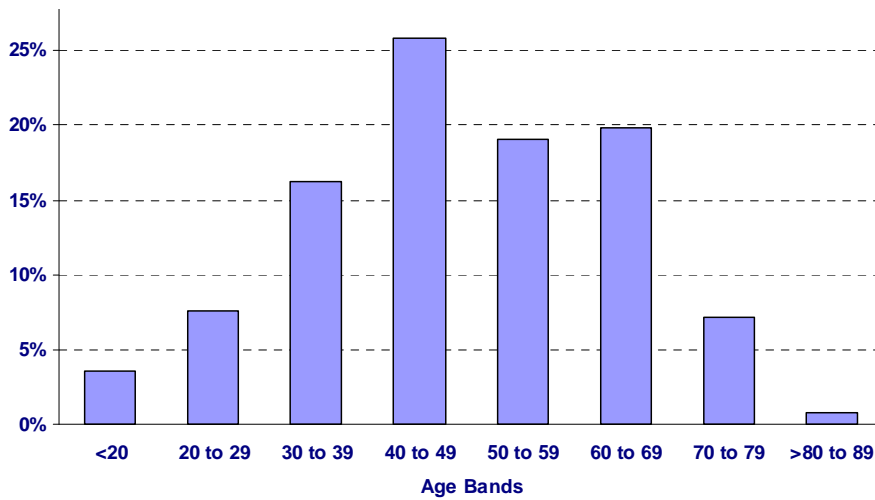
Where the Respondents Live



The Characteristics of Respondents

- 63% of respondents were male; 37% were female. Although imbalanced, this is the same as the 2005 survey which also found that it is generally easier to engage males
- As shown in the chart below, the age of respondents ranged from 17 to 90. 11% of respondents were under the age of 30, and 42% were between 30 and 49yrs and 47% were aged 50yrs or more. These findings were generally in line with those from 2005 when 44% of respondents were over the age of 50
- Chart 3.2 below shows that in 2007, 45% of all respondents were in employment, three quarters of these had full time jobs. Similar to 2005, three out of ten interviewees were retired. However, there was a higher proportion of unemployed people in the 2007 sample than the 2005 and fewer students
- One in ten interviewees said that they had a long-term limiting health problem, illness or disability, a lower proportion than in 2005
- As shown in Chart 3.4, nearly all interviewees were *White British*. The vast majority of these people describing themselves as *White Scottish*. It is important to note that although the non white figure of less than 1% may appear to be low, it is not dissimilar to the population characteristics of those people living within the Forest boundary, where just 1% reported their ethnic origin as being non white in the last Census

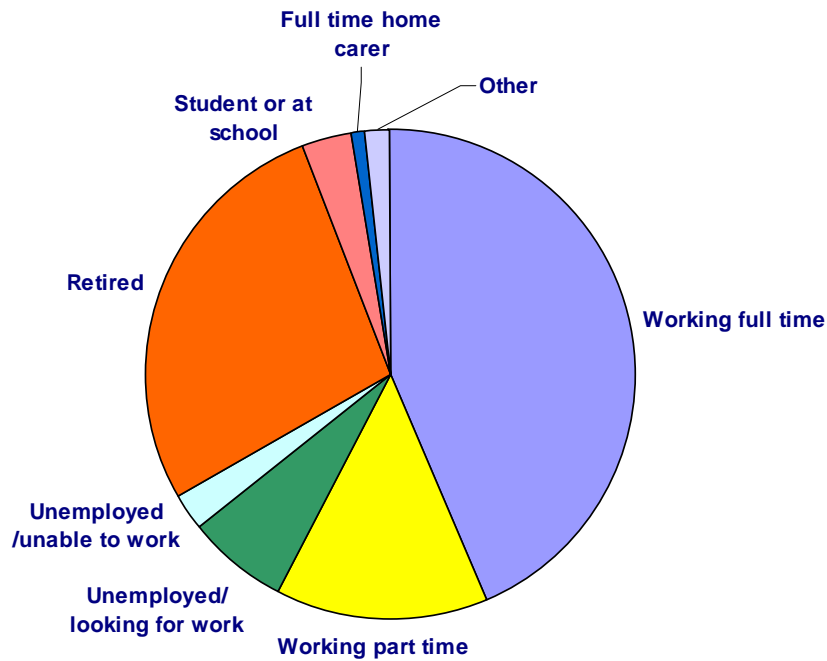
Chart 3.2 **Age Breakdown of 2007 Sample**



This chart shows that the peak age band in the sample was 40 to 49. In fact, the sample was evenly distributed around the 48 year old age band. As such, 48% are aged 17 to 48 and 52% of the sample were aged 49 to 90. These two groups have enough people in them to form statistically valid subsets and can be cross-tabulated for analysis in the rest of the report.

As indicated in Chart 3.3 below, it is also possible to create two subsets from this data, one for those in employment (58%) and one for those not in employment (42%).

Chart 3.3 **Economic Status of Sample**



The table below takes a closer look at the figures behind the breakdown of the sample population in comparison with the average for the CSF area as a whole and also Scotland.

Table 3.1 **Economic Status of Sample, CSF Average & Scotland**

Employment Status	Sample	CSF Average ¹	Scotland ¹
Working full-time	44%	48%	47%
Working part-time	14%	11%	11%
Unemployed/looking for work	7%	4%	4%
Unemployed/unable to work	2%	9%	7%
Retired	27%	13%	14%
Student or at school	4%	6%	7%
Full time home carer	1%	5%	6%
Other	2%	4%	4%
Total	100%	100%	100%

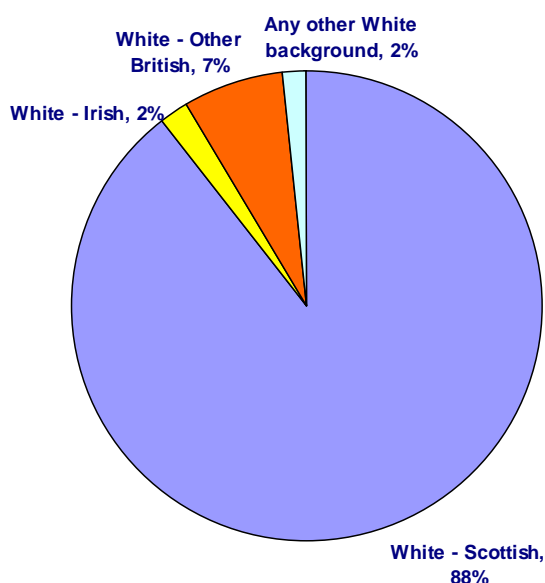
¹ Source: Census 2001.

Census results have been used for context purposes only. It is important to note that they are not directly comparable with the 2007 survey as the Census was not conducted in a greenspace/park setting. Despite this, the figures contained in the table indicate that the survey sample is broadly reflective of both the CSF and Scottish averages. This means that the survey has been successful in gathering a fair cross section of society in terms of economic activity.

The main difference is the greater proportion of people who are *retired* in the sample. This proportion is twice that of the average for the Forest as a whole. This may well reflect the role of the interview site, ie more retired people use CSF sites than non retired people.

The Chart below shows that all of the people interviewed described themselves as *white* in ethnic origin. Although this may appear to be low, it generally reflects the population characteristics of the Forest as a whole where just 1% reported their ethnic origin as being non white in the last Census.

Chart 3.4 **Ethnic Origin of Sample**



Summary of Sample Characteristics

The vast majority of respondents live within the Forest and were interviewed in sites that were close to where they lived. The survey indicates that eight out of ten Forest site users are between the age of 30 and 69 and more men than women use the Forest.

In some respects, such as employment status and ethnic origin, the sample closely mirrors results from the latest census. However, the sample does appear to over-represent retired people and under-represent those people in employment. Therefore, it should be noted that the 2007 results may be skewed slightly towards the thoughts and feelings of retired people. It is unclear whether this is an accurate reflection of the age group of users across the Forest as the sample size is relatively small and further research is required in this respect.

In general, the methodology and techniques used in the 2007 survey were broadly successful in delivering the goal of accessing a fair and representative cross section of people who use the Forest.

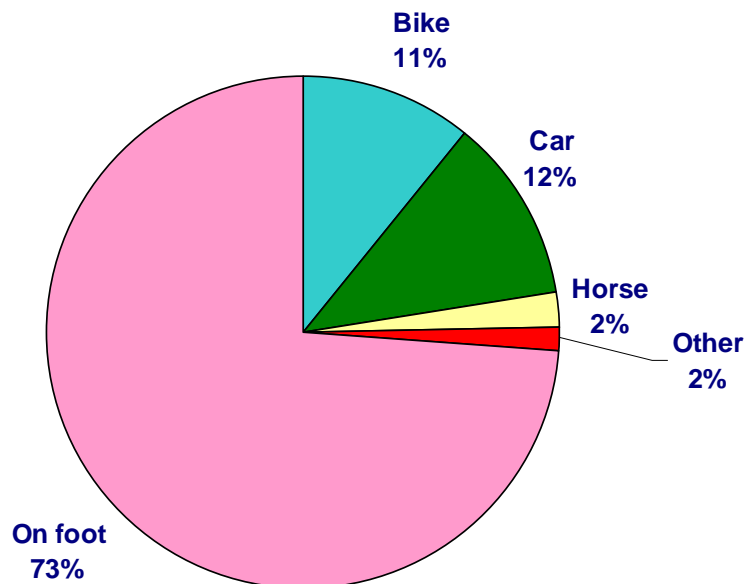
4. General Findings

The initial part of the survey explored a number of broad topics. Several of the questions were relatively open ended and structured to allow respondents to elaborate fully on the themes being discussed. To aid analysis and interpretation, these qualitative responses have been grouped together under several broad headings.

How Respondents Access The Site

Chart 4.1 below shows how people accessed the Forest sites in 2007.

Chart 4.1 Access To The Site



Disaggregated by person characteristics, the following was revealed:

- Bike access was highest amongst males
- Higher proportion of older people arrived at the site on foot
- Car use is highest amongst the youngest age band and those in employment

The most popular method of accessing the sites is by walking. Nearly three quarters of people arrive *on foot*. This is obviously related to where people live and, therefore, reflects closely the findings presented in Map 2.1 above showing that most people live near to the site in which they were interviewed.

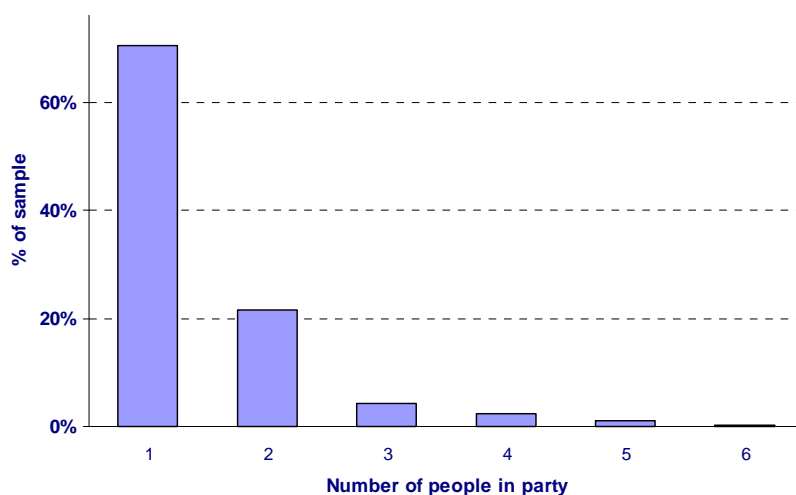
Around one in ten people gained access using a car and it appears that younger people favour this method more than older ones. A similar proportion of people used bicycles, these were mainly male.

Number of People in the Party

As shown in Chart 4.2 below, seven out of ten people visited the site alone and the majority of the remainder were in couples.

This contrasts slightly with the information shown above in Chart 2.1 where one third of the Forest site visitors were in a party of at least three people or more. As mentioned earlier, the reason behind this difference may well be due to the tendency of people to be more amenable to the idea of undertaking an interview if they are either alone or in pairs.

Chart 4.2 **Number of people in party**



As might be expected, women are less likely to visit CSF sites alone than men. It also appears that a lower proportion of employed people visit the sites alone than unemployed people.

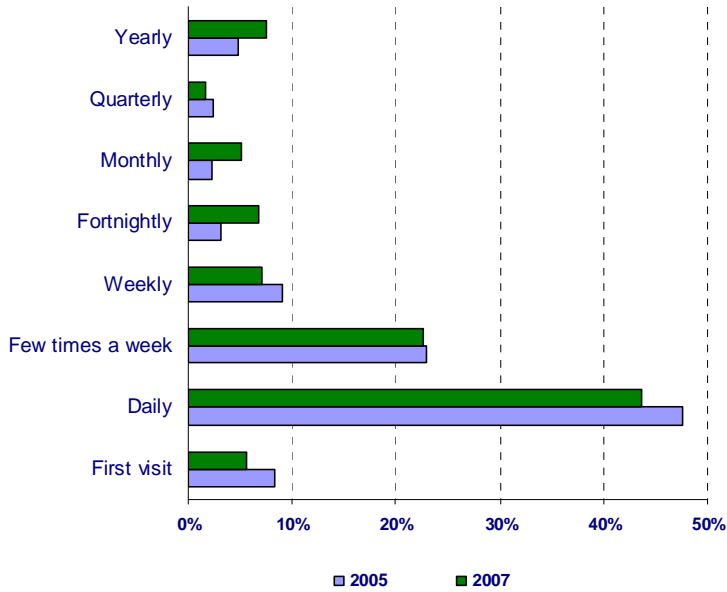
The Frequency of Site Usage

Site usage was high amongst the sample. Seven out of ten respondents use CSF sites on at least a weekly basis. Two fifths of the sample visited on a *daily* basis, whilst a further fifth went a *few times a week*. As shown in the Chart below, the results from 2007 were entirely consistent with those for 2005.

- Older people visited the site most frequently
- A higher proportion of women use the site on a daily basis
- There was little variation in terms of economic activity

More than half of respondents over the age of 48 visited the site on a *daily* basis. Conversely, a higher proportion of younger people said they visited the site a *few times a week*. Half of the female respondents said they visited the site on a daily basis, whereas this figure was just 40% for males.

Chart 4.3 The Frequency of Sites Usage

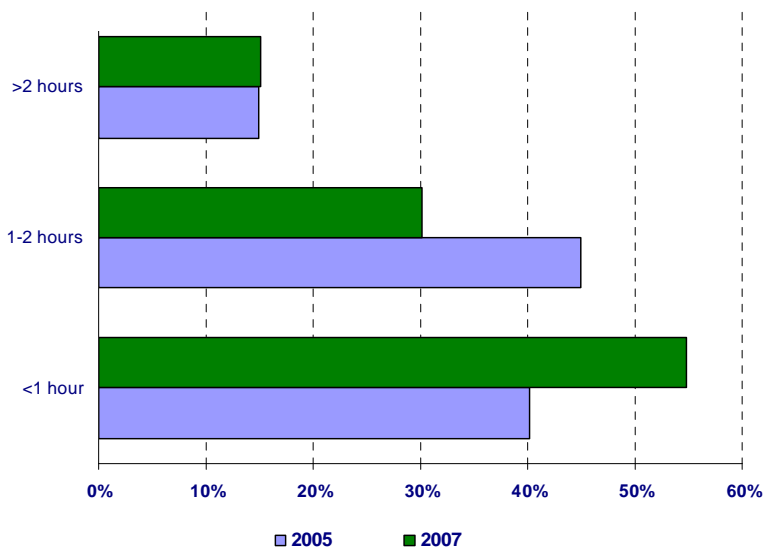


Length of Time on Site

The length of time people spent on the site varied from between five minutes to four hours. The most frequently (55%) cited length of time spent was up to one hour. However, over one in ten people (15%) spent two hours on the site.

As shown in the chart below, these results are generally in line with those from 2005. The main difference is that a higher proportion of people in 2005 tended to use the site for between 1 and 2 hours than in 2007.

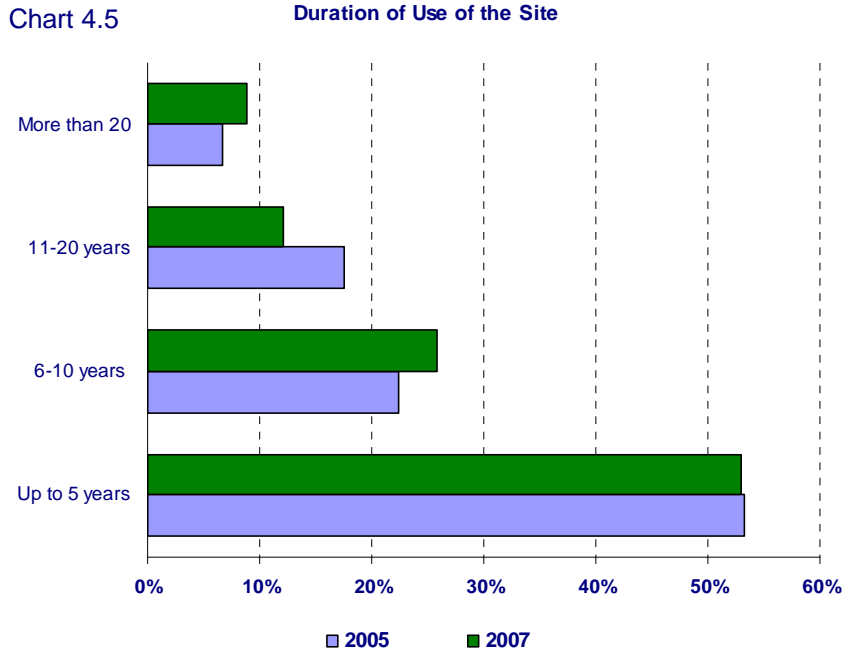
Chart 4.4 Length of Time On Site



Although there is no evidence to suggest that there are variations in length of time spent on site by gender or employment status. It does appear that a lower proportion of younger people remain onsite for more than one hour. Less than two fifths of those under the age of 48 years visited the sites for longer than one hour in comparison with more than half of people over this age.

Duration of Use of the Site

As shown in Chart 4.5 below, the most frequently cited (53% of sample) length of time that people had been coming to the site was 5 years. This was followed by 6 to 10 years (26%) and then 11 to 20 years (12%). The 2007 data closely mirrored 2005 results with very little variation in the respective results.



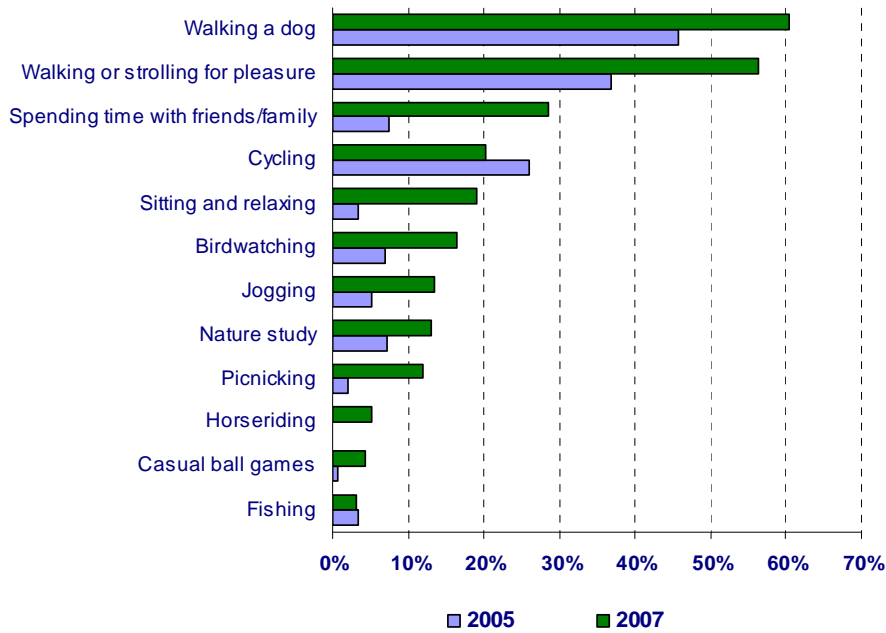
Predictably a higher proportion of older residents (14%) have been visiting this site for more than twenty years than younger ones (5%). However, there was little variation by employment status and gender.

Activities Undertaken Regularly on Site

The two main responses to this question were *walking a dog* (60%) and *walking or strolling for pleasure* (56%). These were also the two most popular answers in 2005.

In line with findings earlier, noting how people access sites, more males cycle in the CSF sites than women. It also appears that horse riding is mainly undertaken by young people.

Chart 4.6 **Activities Undertaken Regularly on Site**

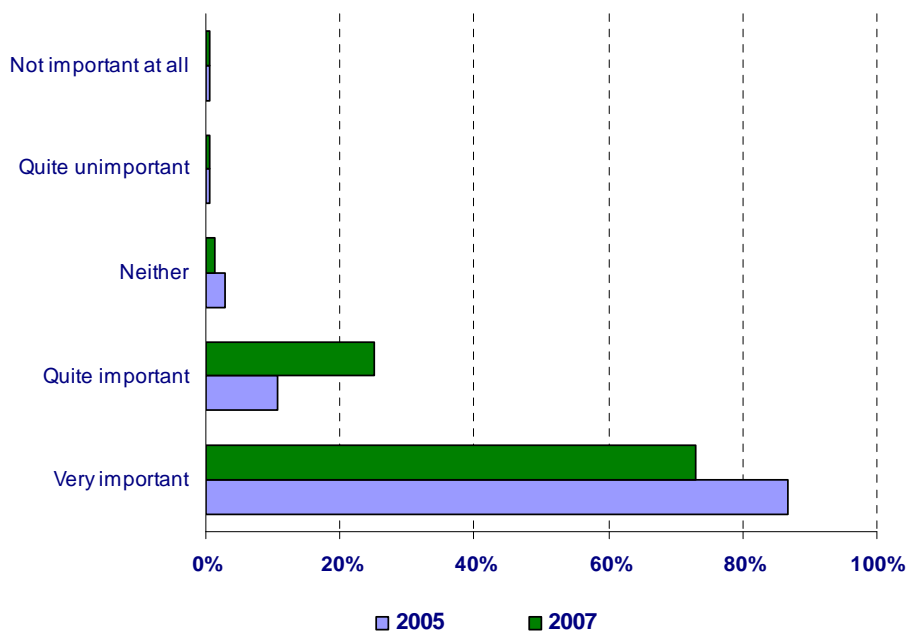


The Perceived Importance of Access to the Site

Chart 4.7 below, shows the responses to the question, *How important is having access to this site to you?*

Almost all (98%) of the interviewees said that access to the site was *important* to them. This was the same as in 2005. The majority (73%) indicated that it was *very important*. However, this figure was lower than that recorded in 2005. Again, there was little difference in responses by person type.

Chart 4.7 **The Perceived Importance of Access to the Site**



Exploring this theme in more depth, it appears that access is main reason why the site is important to people. Common responses included:

Because it's more local and I know it.

I live next to it. It's handy for walking the dog.

Live in local area and can use it daily.

However, several people also noted the importance of CSF sites in providing a venue in which to socialise:

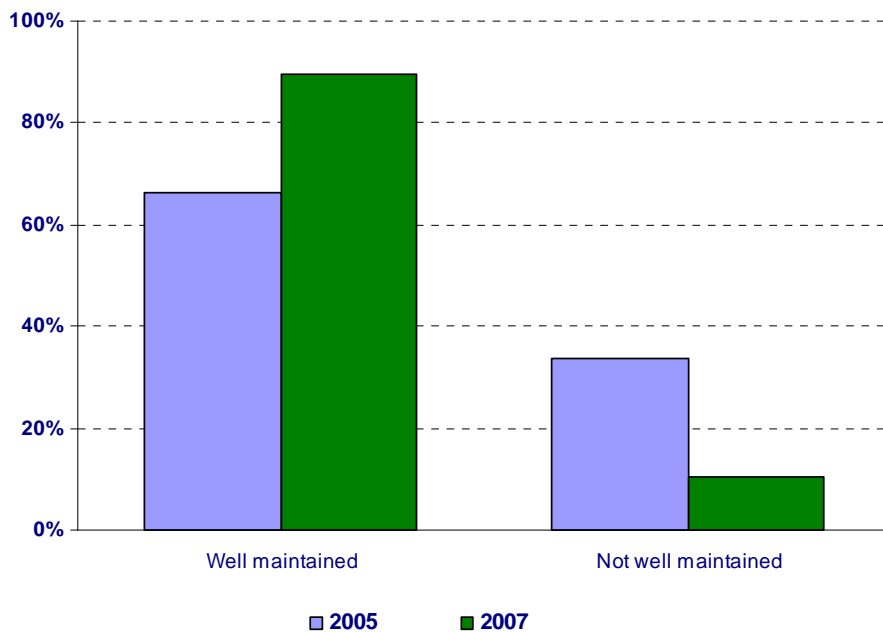
It's excellent for walking dogs and the people that you meet are quite friendly.

Maintenance of the Site

A higher proportion of respondents in 2007 said that the site they were interviewed at was well maintained. There were no variations by person type.

Chart 4.8

Perceptions of Maintenance of the Site



Summary of Site Use Characteristics

The majority of people access CSF sites by foot. This appears to be closely related to the fact that most live in close proximity to the site visited. The other two most popular methods were by car and cycle. More men than women tended to cycle and younger people who were in employment were more likely to have used a car.

Seven out of ten people visited the site on their own and the majority of the remainder were in couples. It appears that women are less likely to visit the CSF sites alone than men. Over half of people had been using the sites for up to 5 years

CSF sites are well used by the people interviewed. Most people visit it on at least a weekly basis. In fact, four out of ten users visit the sites daily. Visiting sessions tended to last around one hour with older people spending more time on site than younger ones.

The top activity in CSF sites was *dog walking*. Six out of ten people undertake this activity. *Walking for pleasure* was a close second pastime and three out of ten people regularly enjoyed *spending time with friends/family* in the Forest.

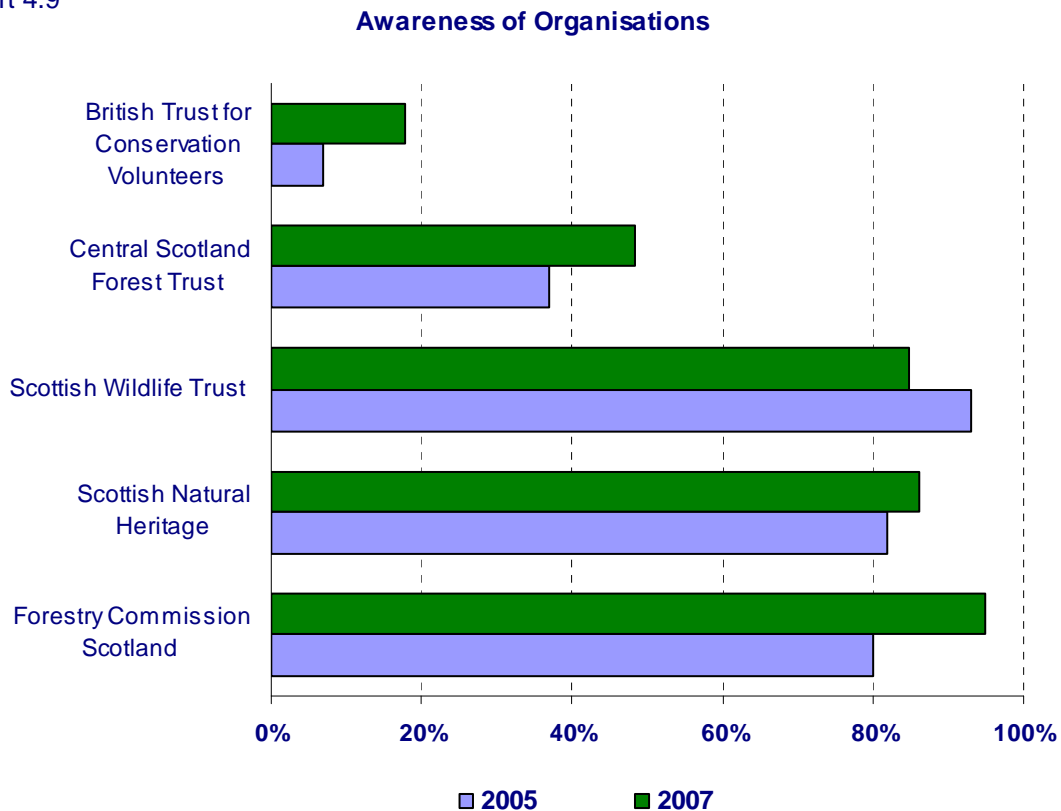
Nearly everyone said that having access to the site was important to them with seven out of ten people saying it was very important to them and nine out of ten people think that it is well maintained.

Awareness of Organisations

As shown in Chart 4.9 below, in 2007 the majority of respondents had heard of *Forestry Commission Scotland*, *Scottish Natural Heritage* and *Scottish Wildlife Trust*. A much lower proportion had heard of *Central Scotland Forest Trust* (48%) but this figure was higher than the *British Trust Conservation Volunteers* (18%). These results are very similar to those recorded in 2005.

It is notable that in comparison with the Random Individual Survey (interviewing people in mainly urban locations) the figure for the Site survey was twice as high. Therefore, people who use CSF sites are twice as likely to have heard of the Trust.

Chart 4.9

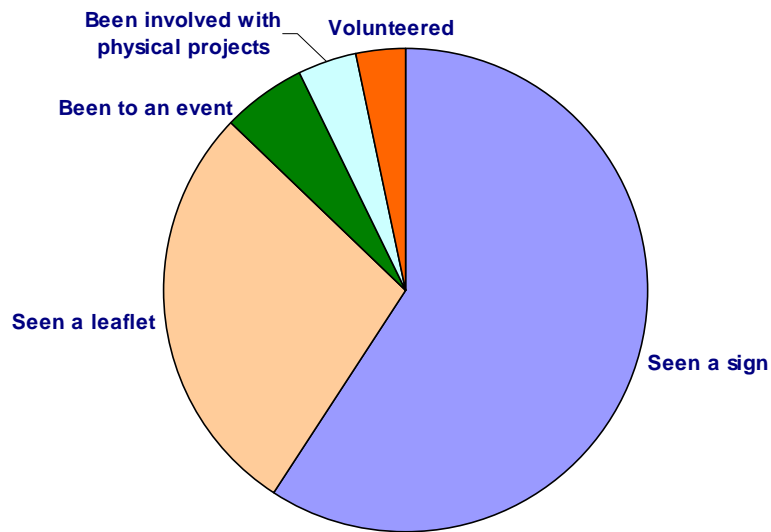


One finding was that six out of ten employed people had heard of the Trust in comparison to just four out of ten for those not in employment. This is interesting as it is not consistent with findings from the 2007 *Random Individual Survey* which showed no difference by employment status. Further research is required to investigate as to why this is the case.

How did you become aware of the Central Scotland Forest Trust?

Chart 4.10 below shows that for the respondents who had heard of the Trust, the majority (two fifths) of them had *seen a sign* adjacent to an area of land. The second most popular response (one fifth) was that they had *been to an event* closely followed by *seeing a leaflet*.

Chart 4.10 **How did you become aware of the Central Scotland Forest Trust?**



These findings were consistent with those from the *Random Individual Survey* and there were no differences by personal characteristics.

Respondents were encouraged to describe the Central Scotland Forest area in their own words. Researchers reported that this question was not particularly well answered and interviewees had difficulty articulating responses. In itself, this indicates that many Forest site users were unsure as to what the Forest is. For example several responses revolved around the idea that it was *just trees* or *part of the Forestry Commission*.

Other respondents concentrated on the leisure opportunities which the Forest provides:

A chance to get into the countryside, close to my home.

Allows me more access to green land areas.

An area that can be used free of charge for outdoor activities.

Leisure opportunities. Helps to get people outdoors.

Some also said that they were proud of the natural aspect of the Forest environment.

Very important to be able to enjoy nature. Great pride in local area.

The role of the forest as protecting and regenerating the local environment was also mentioned by some of the interviewees.

It's a new forest, regenerating old sites.

Keeping an eye on the environment.

Made a good job of this - was a mess before

The question 'Are there any other comments, ideas or suggestions you would like to make about the Central Scotland Forest that benefits you or could be improved?' was not well answered and responses tended to be brief. The answers given mainly consisted of five key themes which are listed here in order of frequency:

1. Increase and improve the publicity of Forest sites
2. Increase the number of bins, especially for disposal of dog waste
3. Improve condition of some paths and provide push/wheelchair access
4. Keep motorbikes away from sites
5. Provide more picnicking/seating areas for families to use

Awareness & Comments Summary

Just under half of all Forest site users had heard of CSFT, this was much lower than that for the other environmental organisations listed. In fact, over three quarters of people had heard of FCS, SWT and SNH.

Visual methods, particularly signs and leaflets were the main methods that people have become aware of CSFT.

Many people seem to think that the Central Scotland Forest is exclusively concerned with trees and several thought it was part of the Forestry Commission. However, others focussed on the role of the Forest as an environment in which to undertake leisure activities and regenerating degraded areas.

Few improvements were suggested for the Forest. However, the two most frequently cited were better publicity of sites and an increase in refuse bins – especially for dog waste.

5. Answers to Value Statements

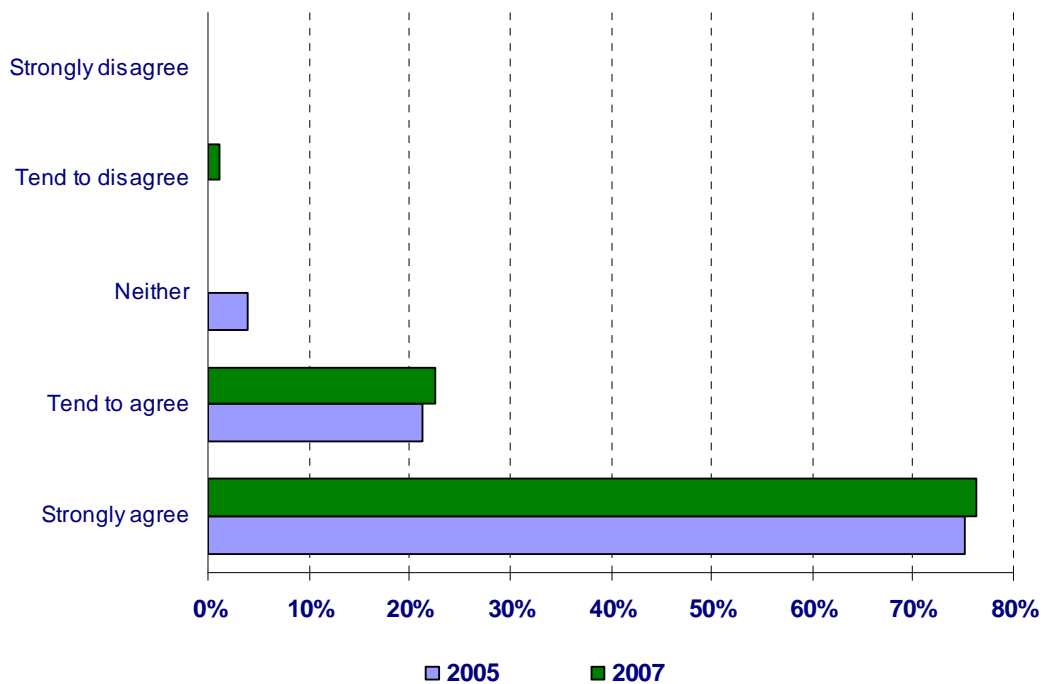
During the survey, ten statements were read out to each interviewee and they were asked to consider how much they agreed or disagreed with each statement and elaborate why. Answers are shown below next to 2005 results.

Makes me Feel Healthier

I like the fresh air in the countryside. It encourages you to come out - gets you out of the house.

The vast majority of respondents (99%) agreed with this statement with only 1% disagreeing. In fact, 76% of respondents *strongly agreed*. These results were very similar to those recorded in 2005. There were no differences by gender, age or employment status.

Chart 5.1 **Makes Me Feel Healthier**



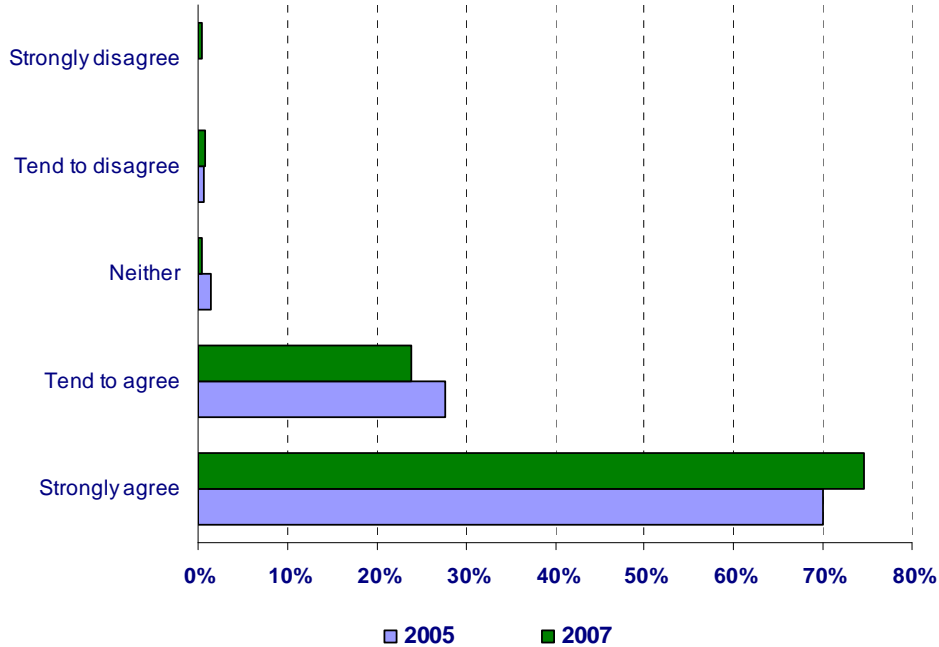
Makes Me Feel More Relaxed

It's a nice place to unwind and relax.

Gives people more awareness of their environment. Good to have a quiet, safe place to walk and relax.

Similar to the previous question, nearly all respondents agreed with this statement and three quarters *strongly agreed*. Again this was consistent with results from 2005 and there were no differences by gender, age or employment status.

Chart 5.2 **Makes Me Feel More Relaxed**



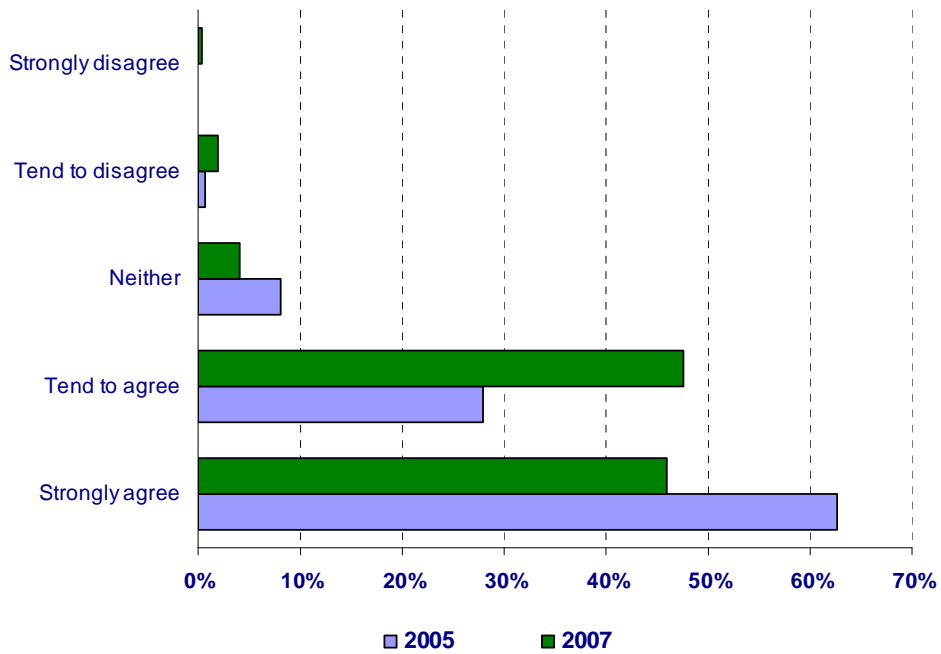
Increases My Awareness of Nature & the Environment

It's good to see changes in the seasons. You do see birds and wildlife.

You get to see wildlife and become more aware of it around you.

As shown in Chart 5.3 below, the vast majority of respondents (94%) agreed with this statement. This was marginally higher than that in 2005 (90%). However, in 2007 only 46% of respondents *strongly agreed* with this statement in comparison with 63% in 2005. There were no differences by gender, age or employment status.

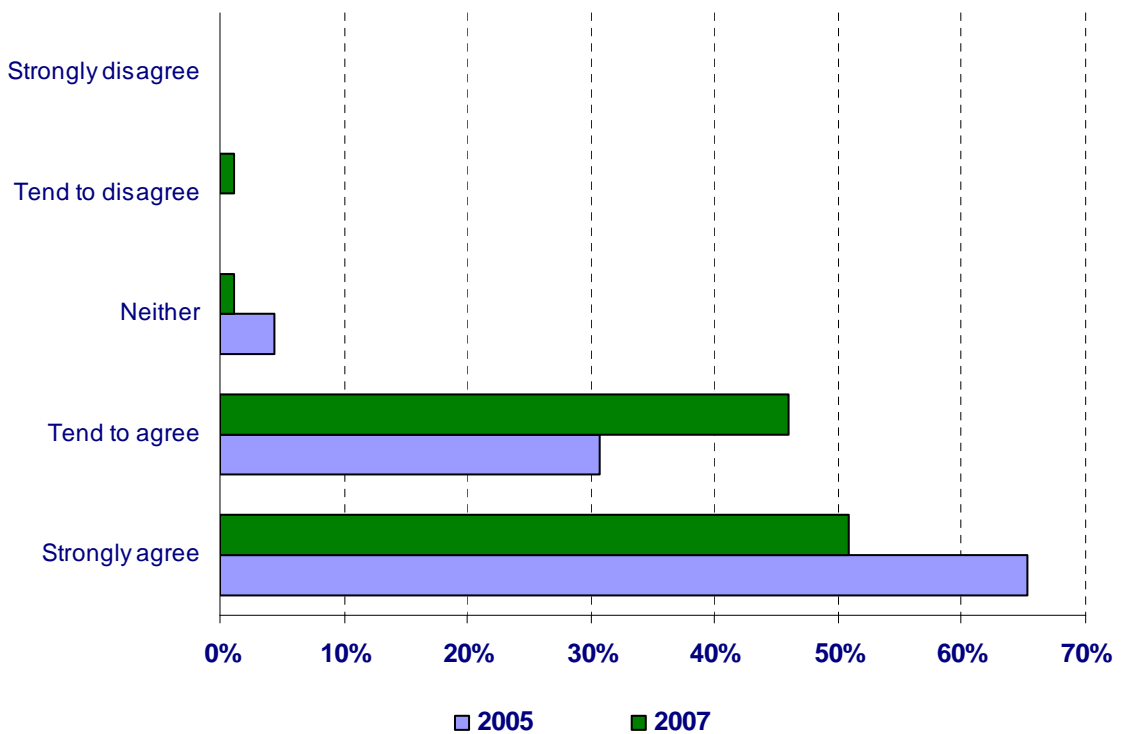
Chart 5.3 **Increases my Awareness of Nature & the Environment**



Generally Makes Me Feel Good

Again similar to the last question, the majority of respondents (97%) agreed with this statement. However, in 2007 half of respondents *strongly agreed* in comparison with two-thirds in 2005.

Chart 5.4 **Generally Makes Me Feel Good**



Whilst there was little difference in the proportions of the population who *agreed* with the statement overall, a higher proportion of male respondents (55%) *strongly agreed* than female (44%). Also a higher proportion of employed people (59%) *strongly agreed* with this statement than those not in employment 39%.

Provides Me With A Choice Of Things To Do

Gives me a break from the office.

It's a free day out!

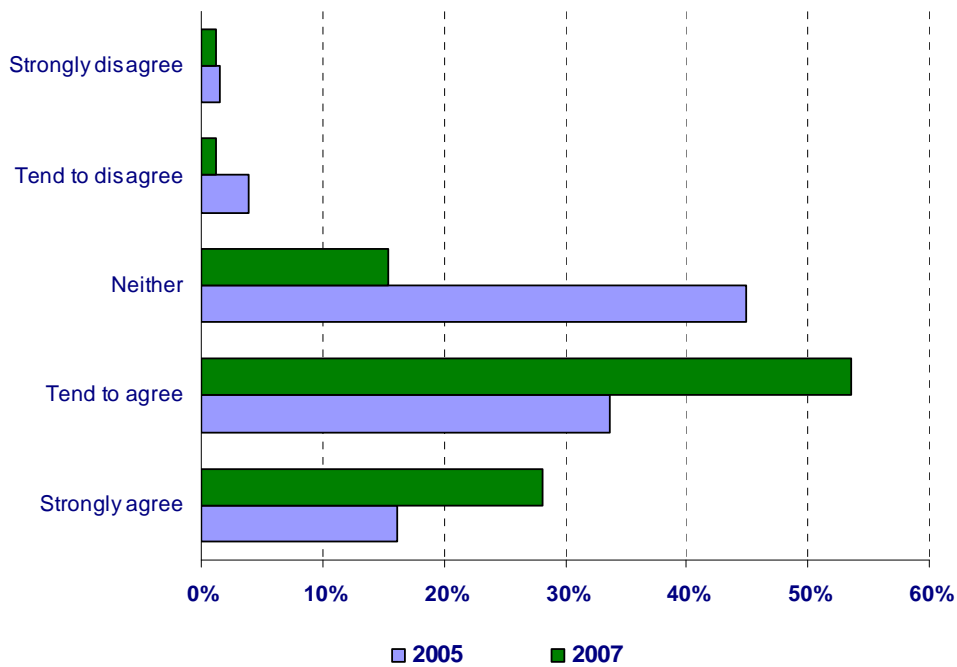
Quiet place to take horses - don't have to go on the roads.

As shown in Chart 5.5 below, eight out of ten respondents agreed with this statement. This was much higher than that recorded in 2005 when only half of the sample agreed. However, any conclusions drawn from this should be tempered by the fact that in the previous survey the most popular answer was *neither*.

- More men (32%) than women strongly agreed (22%)
- Responses were similar by employment status and age

Chart 5.5

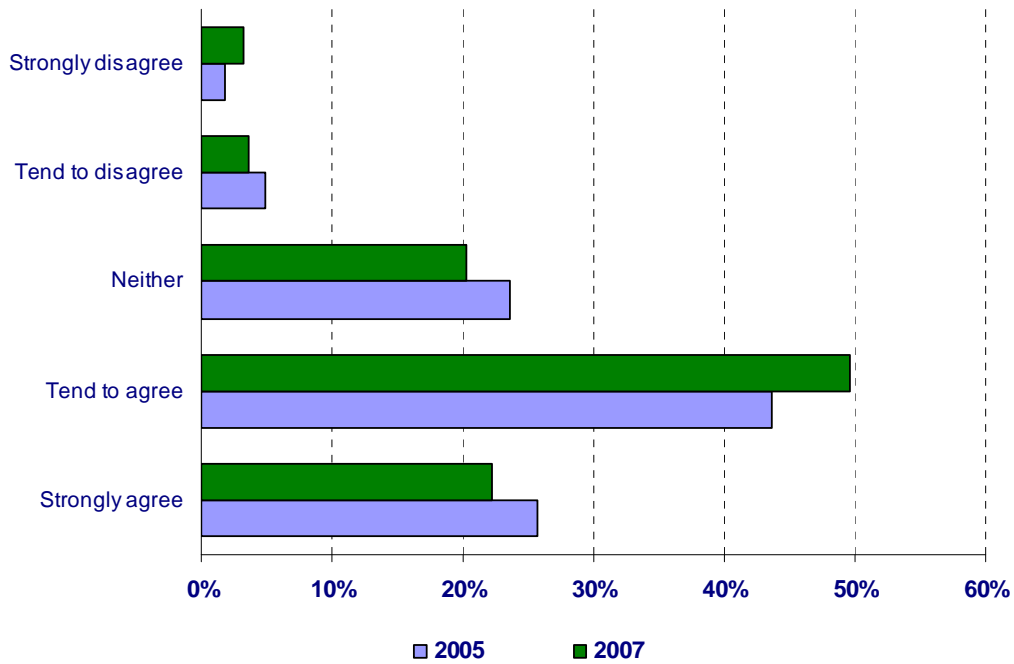
Provides Me with More Choice of Things to Do



Gives Me Opportunities To Meet People

This question prompted a much more mixed response from the interviewees. Overall, seven out of ten agreed and this was similar to the 2005 survey. However, as in 2005, 7% of respondents actually disagreed with the statement and one fifth of the sample gave a neutral response.

Chart 5.6 Gives Me Opportunities to Meet People



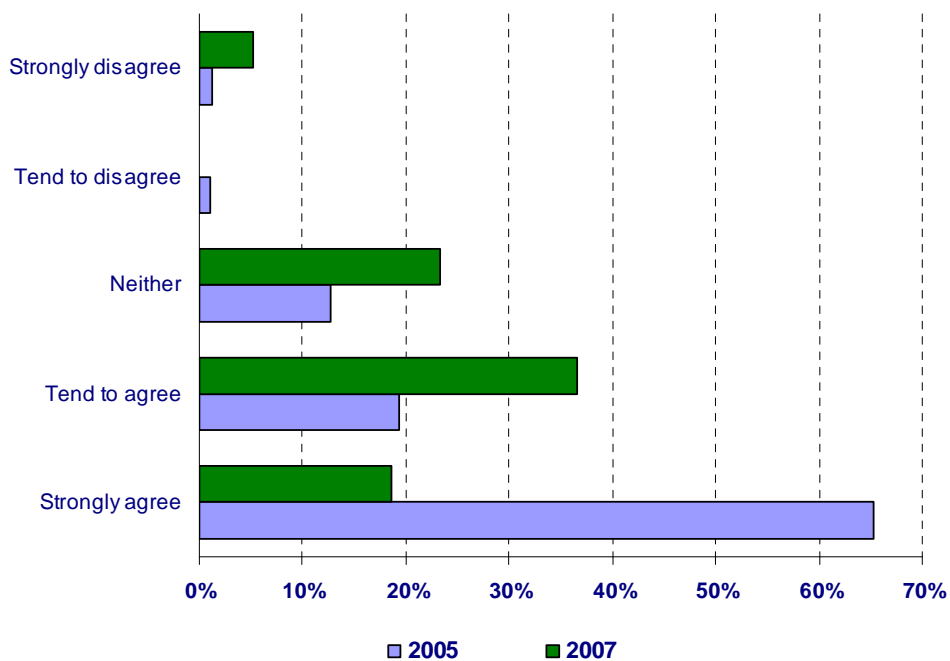
Responses to the statement varied by age. Just 65% of the younger age group agreed with the statement in comparison to 78% of the older age group.

Is Good For My Children

It's a natural environment, good for children to learn about it. Safe for them too.

Well over half (55%) of respondents agreed with this statement. However, this was less than that recorded in 2005 when 85% of people agreed with the statement.

Chart 5.7 Is Good for My Children

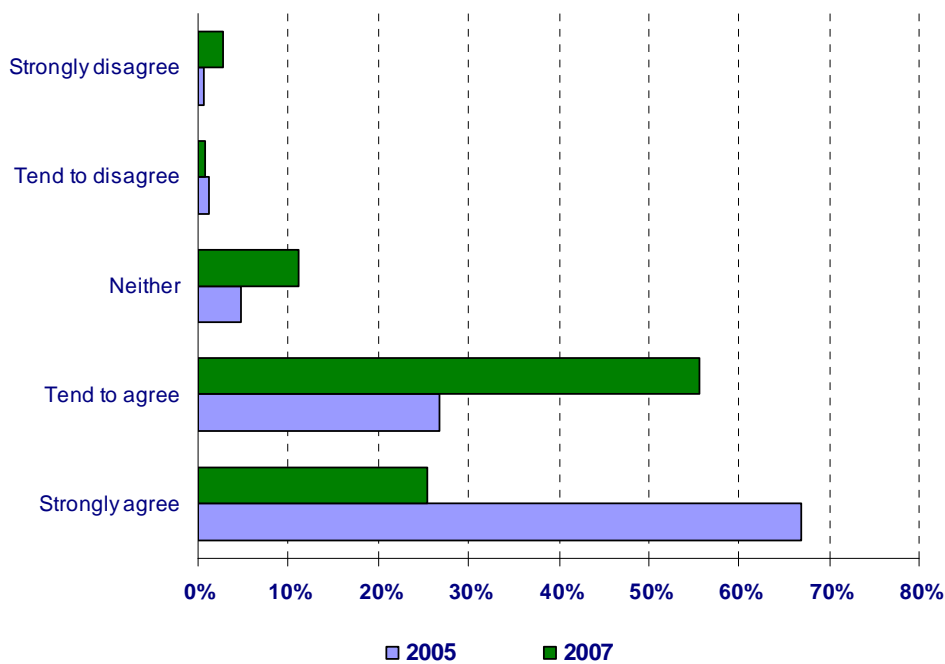


As might be expected, a greater proportion (66%) of younger people (who are more likely to have children living at home with them) agreed with this statement than older people 45%. Maybe more unexpectedly, a greater proportion of employed people (61%) agreed with the statement compared to those not in employment (48%).

Screens Out Local Road/Factories/Eyesores

Eight out of ten respondents agreed with this statement, this was a little less than the 2005 figure of 94%. A much higher proportion (67%) of people in 2005 *strongly agreed* with the statement in comparison with those for 2007 (25%). A slightly lower proportion of younger people agreed with this statement than older people

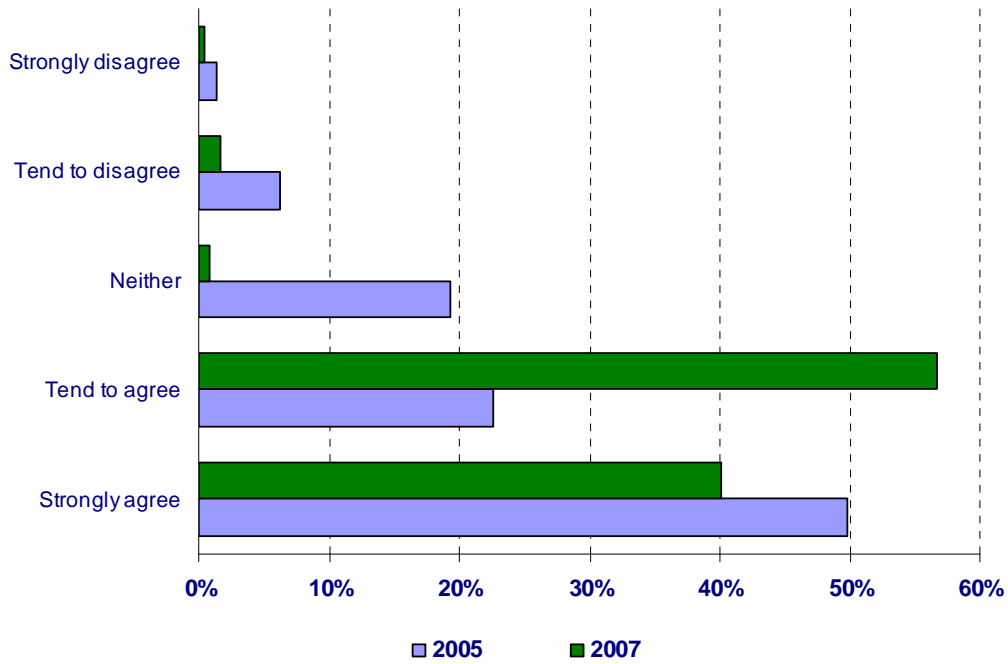
Chart 5.8 Screens out Local Roads/Factories/Eyesores



I Feel Safe On This Site

Nine out of ten respondents agreed with this statement, this was higher than in 2005 when seven out of ten agreed. In part, this is explained by the fact that in the previous survey the proportion of people giving a neutral view was higher than in 2007, despite this, a higher proportion of people strongly agreed in 2005. There were no marked difference by age group, employment status or gender.

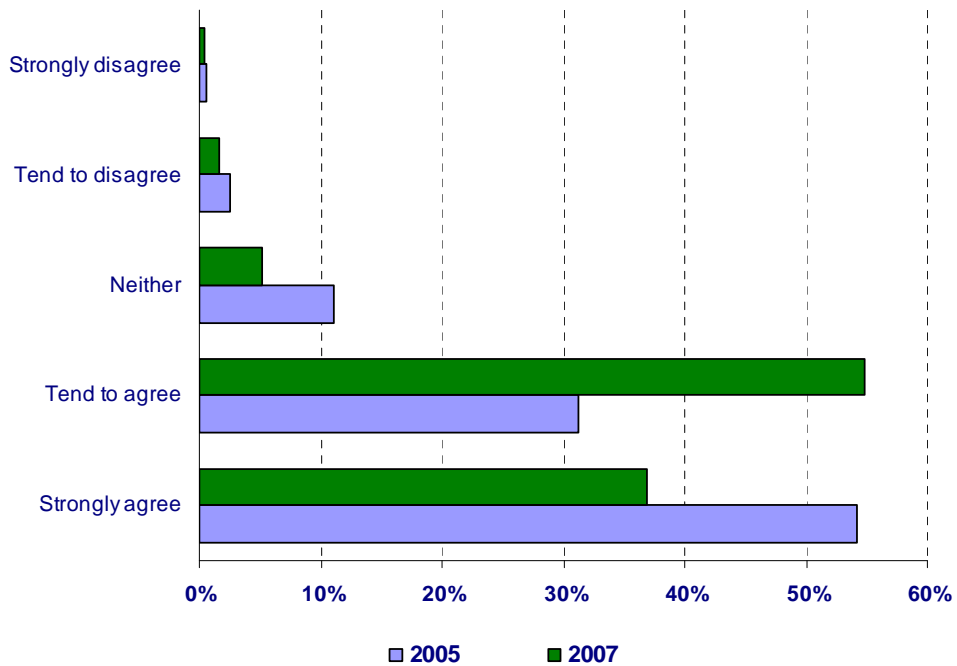
Chart 5.9 I Feel Safe On This Site



Raises Pride In The Local Area

Nine out of ten people agreed with this statement, this is similar to the 2005 survey, although a higher proportion of people strongly agreed with this statement in the previous study.

Chart 5.10 Raises Pride in the Local Area



There was very little difference within the sample in terms of gender, employment status and age groups.

Summary of Value Statements

It appears that the Forest is helping improve both the mental and physical well being of the people who use it. Nine out of ten respondents agreed that it makes them *feel healthier, more relaxed*, and generally makes them feel good. Similarly, nine out of ten people said they *felt safe on this site*.

Forest site users also agreed that one of the benefits of CSF sites is that it has informative and educational aspects. Nine out of ten respondents said that it *increases their awareness of nature and the environment*. Possibly linked to this, well over half of all users recognised that the Forest was *good for their children*.

The Forest is seen as a place which provides options for them. Eight out of ten people agree with the idea that it *provides them with a choice of things to do*. And nearly all respondents think that *the Forest provides them with a venue in which to meet and interact with people* who they might not otherwise see. This helps build and strengthen communities.

Most people also agree with the idea that CSF sites perform a valuable function in improving their local environment by screening out urban features such as *local roads, factories and eyesores*. This helps to improve the image of the area and nine out of ten people said that they think CSF sites *raises pride in the local area*.

6. Conclusions

Conclusions from the Survey

The study was successful in supplementing the findings from the 2005 baseline data. This in itself is a useful finding and confirms that the survey, as a tool for social research in the Central Scotland Forest, is working well and delivering the desired information.

It was noted that, in many respects, there was little change between the 2005 and 2007 data. Therefore, the results did not show, for example, a marked change in the quality of life for local residents due to the continued existence of the Forest and the work of the Trust. This is not unexpected and in no way reflects of the effectiveness or otherwise of the Trust's activities. There are two main reasons why results should not be used in this manner.

Firstly, the two surveys were located in a different suite of geographic sites. As a consequence, it is impossible to directly compare the samples over time with any robust degree of accuracy. However, this will be possible in future years when the original benchmark areas are revisited.

Secondly, it should be recognised that two years is a relatively short period of time for deeply set opinions and ideas to change. Although the actual landscape may alter relatively quickly once a Forest project is embarked upon, the transformation of the local communities, which the Trust hopes to influence takes much longer. This is one of the reasons why it is suggested that a proper update of the Social Impact Study will not take place before 2011.

Moving on to the specific findings of the work, the survey provides a clear view of Forest site users. Most of these people live within the Forest boundaries and arrive at the sites on foot for the purpose of walking. The majority of people in the sample (which only sought to interview adults) were over the age of thirty. Evidence suggests that although the sample reflects the wider population in terms of employment status and ethnicity, the number of retired users is much higher than might have been anticipated. Further research is required to understand the reason(s) behind this particular finding.

Although the survey reported that seven out of ten respondents visited the site on their own, the observation data indicated that six out of ten visitors were actually in company. This difference may well have influenced the survey results, as it appears that people on their own were more willing to participate in the research than people in groups. However, aside from the retired status and alone/company issue, it is considered that the methodology and techniques used in the 2007 survey were successful in delivering the goal of accessing a fair and representative cross section of people who use the Forest.

Over half of people had been using Forest sites for up to 5 years and most people visit the sites on at least a weekly basis. Four out of ten users visit the sites daily. *Dog walking* is the most popular activity in the Forest with *walking for pleasure* a close second. In addition, survey and observational evidence indicates that users feel the Forest is a social space, with three out of ten people valuing it as a venue to *spend time with friends and family*.

Nearly everyone said that having access to the site was important to them and nine out ten people think that it is well maintained. Just under half of all Forest site users had heard of CSFT. This was much lower than that for the other environmental organisations listed. However, the figure was still nearly twice as high as the corresponding question in the urban area survey (*Random Individual Survey*). This confirms other results from the *On Site Survey* indicating that visual methods, particularly physical signs viewed by Forest site visitors on the

CSF sites, are the main method that people become aware of the Trust. It may be beneficial to increase the profile of the Trust through improved signage or other visual methods such as carefully targeted leaflet drops near to CSF sites.

It appears that the Forest is helping improve both the mental and physical well being of the people who use it. Most people interviewed believe that it makes them healthier, more relaxed, and generally feel safe and good.

Users recognise that the Forest has many educational benefits, particularly for young people in terms of increasing awareness of nature and the environment. Most people also believe that the Forest performs a valuable function in improving their local environment by screening out unsightly urban features. Furthermore, they believe that this helps to improve the image of and raise pride in the local area.

The Forest sites are seen as places which provide options and opportunities. In some respects it is believed that this helps to build and strengthen communities. For example, nearly all respondents think that the Forest provides them with a venue in which to meet and interact with people who they might not otherwise see.

Recommendations

One of the main recommendations from this research is for the *Attitudes & Perceptions* research to be continued. The suite of surveys developed in the *2005 Social Impact Study* work well and produce information which is useable and of immediate value to the Trust at strategic, organisational and project specific levels.

By repeating the survey in its present format, it will allow a large and robust dataset to be created which can be used to effectively monitor change over time within the Forest area and facilitate a thorough evaluation of the social impact of the work of the Trust in delivering the Central Scotland Forest.

However, it may be beneficial to undertake a much larger survey in the future in order for regional variations to be commented upon with more confidence. Increasing the sample size would be more costly; however it is considered that this is outweighed by the depth of useful information which could be made available. In particular, it is envisioned that Trust staff such as Sustainable Development Officers (who work mainly on a local authority basis) would find data specific to their area very relevant to their core activities such as competing for funding resources to finance projects.

To offset the additional cost implications of undertaking a larger survey, it might be appropriate to run the next Social Impact Study in 2011 rather than in 2009. This is considered acceptable as one of the findings of the 2007 study was that for many issues, the thoughts and opinions of CSF site users have not changed a great deal over the last two years. Instead of undertaking a questionnaire type survey, it is suggested that in 2009, a series of focus groups are held as outlined below.

We believe that both the 2005 and 2007 surveys were successful in accessing a representative sample of Central Scotland Forest site users and these respondents were able to express their thoughts and opinions across a wide range of subject matter. However, there is a concern that certain sections of the community, specifically retired people may be over represented in the sample. To discover if this has affected the results, it may be beneficial to adopt a weighting or quota system in future surveys.

Despite the fact that most residents value and use the Forest, it does appear that relatively few have an accurate idea as to what the Forest is and what the Trust does. A commonly held misconception was that the Central Scotland Forest is purely concerned with trees. Therefore, it is recommended that more qualitative research such as focus groups should be undertaken to explore this issue in more depth. Through such additional research it may be possible to

provide information which could assist in marketing strategy formation and more relevant promotional activities.

Another finding from the study which appears to be worthy of more research is that older residents tend to have a different perspective of the sites and usage characteristics than younger ones. In particular, they use the Forest sites more and stay longer in them than other users. Furthermore, a higher proportion of older people feel that Forest sites are a good place to meet people, than other age groups. It may be interesting to find out more regarding the reasons behind these findings – contrasting results directly with other sections of the community such as younger residents.

It is suggested therefore that, in 2009, an experienced consultant is commissioned to undertake a series of focus group sessions. These sessions will target different sections of the community who may possess different views, for example older people, women, teenagers, young parents etc. Key findings from CSF social research will be used as the catalyst to initiate these explorative sessions. In this manner, the focus groups will provide deep insight and usable knowledge regarding the perceptions and feelings of the participants across a range of relevant themes. By adopting such a targeted and explorative approach, it is hoped that findings will inform Trust employees to work more effectively and help define the role that CSFT can play in accommodating the aspirations and needs of different sections of the Forest population.

The consultant who undertook the fieldwork indicated that the main problem with conducting the On Site Surveys was the lack of individuals to be interviewed. Therefore, it is suggested that a greater emphasis is given to undertaking interviews at times of high use (notably weekends). The draw back from adopting this method would obviously be that the resulting data would be skewed towards weekend users.

It would also be possible to increase the number of interviews achieved per day by having more than one interviewer on site. However, this would be cost prohibitive and, although a greater number of interviews would be achieved in any given day, it is unlikely that any greater number of interviews would be achieved by each researcher.

It is also suggested that greater emphasis should be placed upon undertaking interviews at car parks, on the basis that this would help to enhance the number of interviews which can be undertaken with those who are using the site to jog, to use bikes and, to a lesser extent, to ride horses.

The survey was also successful in gathering a range of other suggestions for the future development of the Forest. These included an expansion of marketing and events activity, and the provision of litter and dog waste bins.

Further Information

If you would like to discuss this report or comment on its findings, please contact CSFT's Monitoring & Evaluation Officer by emailing info@csft.org.uk.

Appendix: Survey Script

RESEARCHER - READ OUT:

Good Morning/Afternoon. My name is _____ Ashbrook Research & Consultancy Ltd. We have been commissioned by the Central Scotland Forest Trust (Researcher, show Letter of Authority) to undertake a survey amongst people using this park/woodland/reserve (Researcher, use appropriate term and apply throughout the questionnaire). I wonder if you could spare 4 or 5 minutes to answer some questions. Your answers will, of course, be treated with the strictest confidentiality. In particular, your identity and views will not be made known to any third party.

1. How did you get here today?

		<u>Route</u>
On foot	1	Q2
By bike	2	Q2
By car	3	Q2
By horse	4	Q2
Other (specify)	5	Q2

2. How many people are in your party today – including yourself?

_____ Route
Q3

[SHOWCARD 1]

3. Which of the terms on this card would best describe how often you use this park/woodland/reserve?

		<u>Route</u>
Every day	1	Q4
A few times a week	2	Q4
Once a week	3	Q4
Once a fortnight	4	Q4
Once a month	5	Q4
4 times per year	6	Q4
Less often	7	Q4
First visit	8	Q4

4. How long do you normally spend here?

_____ minutes Route
Q5

5. How long have you been coming here for? (**Researcher, code either months or years**)

_____ months OR _____ years Route
Q6

6. Why do you come here rather than a more noted beauty spot such as Loch Lomond, The Trossachs or The Border Abbey's for example? (**Probe fully. Do not prompt**)

_____ Route

Q7 [SHOWCARD 2]

7. I am going to read out a list of activities and would like you to tell me if you ever do any of these activities here frequently, occasionally or never.

	Frequently	Occasionally	Never	Route
Walking or strolling for pleasure	1	2	3	
Walking a dog	1	2	3	
Jogging	1	2	3	
Bird watching	1	2	3	
Nature study	1	2	3	
Cycling	1	2	3	
Picnicking	1	2	3	
Horse riding	1	2	3	
Fishing	1	2	3	
Ball games	1	2	3	
Spending time with friends and family	1	2	3	
Sitting and relaxing	1	2	3	
Other (specify)	1	2	3	Q8

8. Do you feel this wood/forest/site is

	Yes	No	Route
Well looked after and maintained	1	2	Q10
Not well looked after and maintained	1	2	Q9

9. How would you improve the maintenance of this wood/forest/site? **(Probe fully. Do not prompt)**

Route

Q10

10. For you, is having access to this wood/forest/site...

		Route
Very important	1	Q11
Quite important	2	Q11
Neither important nor unimportant	3	Q11
Quite unimportant	4	Q11
Not important at all	5	Q11
Don't know	6	Q11

[SHOWCARD 3]

11. I am going to read out a list of statements about the possible benefits of this site and would like you to tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with these statements. This site... (Strongly Agree [SA], Tend To Agree [TTA], Neither [N], Tend To Disagree [TTD], Strongly Disagree [SD], Don't Know [DK])

	SA	TTA	N	TTD	SD	DK	Route
Makes me feel healthier	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Makes me feel more relaxed	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Increases my awareness and nature of the environment	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Generally makes me feel good	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Provides me with more choice of things to do	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Give me opportunities to meet people	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Is good for my children	1	2	3	4	5	6	

Screens out local roads, factories or eye sores	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Raises pride in the local area	1	2	3	4	5	6	
I feel safe in this site	1	2	3	4	5	6	Q12

12. What other benefits, if any, do you feel spaces like this provide? **(Probe fully. Do not prompt)**

Route

Q13

None 1

13. What improvements, if any, would you make to this open space? **(Probe fully. Do not prompt)**

Route

Q14

None 1

14. Had you heard of the Central Scotland Forest Trust before today?

		<u>Route</u>
Yes	1	Q15
No	2	Q15

15. [SHOWCARD 4] **Revised read out statement to be provided by Stephen.** Here is a leaflet which tells you more about the Central Scotland Forest **(Researcher, give respondent leaflet)** In a few words, what would you say the Central Scotland Forest area means to you? **(Probe fully. Do not prompt)**

Route

Q16

16. [SHOWCARD 5] Have you heard of any of the following organisations?

	Yes	No	Route
The Forestry Commission	1	2	CHECK INSTRUCTION BELOW
Scottish National Heritage	1	2	
Scottish Wildlife Trust	1	2	
British Trust for Conservation Volunteers	1	2	
Central Scotland Forest Trust (CSFT)	1	2	

Researcher: If respondent has heard of Central Scotland Forest Trust, go to Q17. If not, go to Q18

17. Regarding the Central Scotland Forest Trust, have you....

	Yes	No	Route
Seen a leaflet before today	1	2	
Seen a sign relating to the Trust	1	2	
Been to an event they had organised or been present at	1	2	
Volunteered for them	1	2	
Been involved with staff on physical projects such as tree planting	1	2	Q18

18. Are there any other comments, ideas or suggestions you would like to make about the Central Scotland Forest that benefits you or could be improved? **(Probe fully. Do not prompt)**

Route

Q19

None 1

19. Finally, I would like to ask you a few questions about yourself to help us analyse the data we gather. What age are you? **(Researcher, if refused, code best estimate)**

Route

_____ Q20

[SHOWCARD 6]

20. Can you tell me what your employment status is?

		<u>Route</u>
Working full time	1	Q21
Working part time	2	Q21
Unemployed/looking for work	3	Q21
Unemployed/unable to work	4	Q21
Retired	5	Q21
Student or at school	6	Q21
Full time home carer	7	Q21
On a training scheme	8	Q21
Other (specify) _____	9	Q21

21. Do you have a long term disability, health problem or illness?

Route

Yes 1 Q22
No 2 Q22

[SHOWCARD 7]

22. How would you describe your cultural or ethnic background?

		<u>Route</u>
White - Scottish	1	Q23
White - Irish	2	Q23
White - Other British	3	Q23
Any other White background	4	Q23
Mixed	5	Q23
Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British	6	Q23
Indian	7	Q23
Bangladeshi	8	Q23
Pakistani	9	Q23
Chinese	10	Q23
Any other Asian background	11	Q23
Black, Black Scottish or Black British	12	Q23
Caribbean	13	Q23
African	14	Q23
Any other Black background	15	Q23
Any other background	16	Q23

23. What is your postcode? (**Researcher, probe for at least first four digits e.g. FK1 9. This is a critical piece of information**)

Route

Lives outwith UK

1 Close

Researcher, enter respondent details on Respondent Detail Sheet, inform them that they will be entered into a prize draw to win £100 worth of shopping vouchers, code gender and area, then close interview

Gender

Male 1

Female 2

Area

Torbothie	1
Winchburgh Cut	2
Roughcastle	3
Langlees	4
Easter Breich	5
Greenlink	6

CLOSE INTERVIEW BY READING OUT STATEMENT:

Thank you very much for your help. Can I remind you that this was a bona fide market research interview conducted within the Market Research Society code of practice by Ashbrook Research & Consultancy Limited. If you would like to check that we are a bona fide market research agency then you can call Freefone Market Research on 0500 369999.

RESEARCHER DECLARATION:

I declare that this interview was carried out accordingly to instructions, within the Market Research Society's Code of Conduct and that the respondent was not previously known to me.