



Research Report

Rights of Way Improvement Plan Consultation – Cyclists

Findings from a survey of cyclists within Warwickshire about the Rights of
Way Improvement Plan

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Contact: David Gardiner
Phone: 01926 418049
E-mail: research@warwickshire.gov.uk

Introduction

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 ("CROW") placed a duty on the County Council to produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP), a 10-year plan for improving the provision of access to the countryside.

The plan will include the County Council's assessment of such things as;

- the extent to which Warwickshire's rights of way meet the present and likely future needs of the public,
- the opportunities provided by rights of way for exercise and open air recreation,
- the accessibility of the rights of way network to blind or partially sighted persons and those with mobility problems and
- targets for the future of the rights of way network.

In order to assess what should be included in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, consultation with interested parties was undertaken. Seven different questionnaires were designed and distributed to walkers and general countryside users, cyclists, horse riders, land managers, motorised users, Parish / Town Councils and Tourist Information Centres. The results in this report relate to the findings from the questionnaires returned by **cyclists**. The consultation was carried out in August and September 2004.

Key findings

- The questionnaire attracted 228 completed responses in total.
- The poor condition of paths and a lack of time were the main reasons why respondents don't cycle 'off-road'.
- Most respondents (82%) cycle in the Warwickshire countryside for health and fitness.
- Respondents reported that places with views and remote / peaceful areas are the most popular places for cycling.
- The most popular facilities that respondents look for are areas with refreshments (e.g. a café or pub).
- Cyclists are put off using particular paths because of the condition of the paths, or if they have to cross or ride along fast roads.
- Journeys could be made more enjoyable by providing better surfaces, more greenways and more named and waymarked routes.

Response rates

- Overall, 228 completed responses were received to the questionnaire; approximately half were submitted from the Internet and half were sent as paper copies.
- Two-thirds of respondents (66%) were male; and more than half (55%) were aged over 45 years old.
- Three-quarters of respondents (75%) were based in Warwickshire whilst a quarter were from outside the County (the majority of the latter being from Coventry). Figure 1 shows the breakdown of respondents from within and outside of the County, who gave a valid postcode on their questionnaire.

Figure 1: Location of respondents to the cyclists' questionnaire

	Number of respondents	% of valid postcodes
North Warwickshire	9	4.5%
Nuneaton and Bedworth	24	12.0%
Rugby	13	6.5%
Stratford	41	20.5%
Warwick	63	31.5%
Outside Warwickshire	50	25.0%
Total	200	100.0%

- Nearly all respondents (97%) classified themselves as 'White', 2% classified themselves as 'Mixed'. Less than 1% classified themselves as 'Black or Black British' or 'Other'

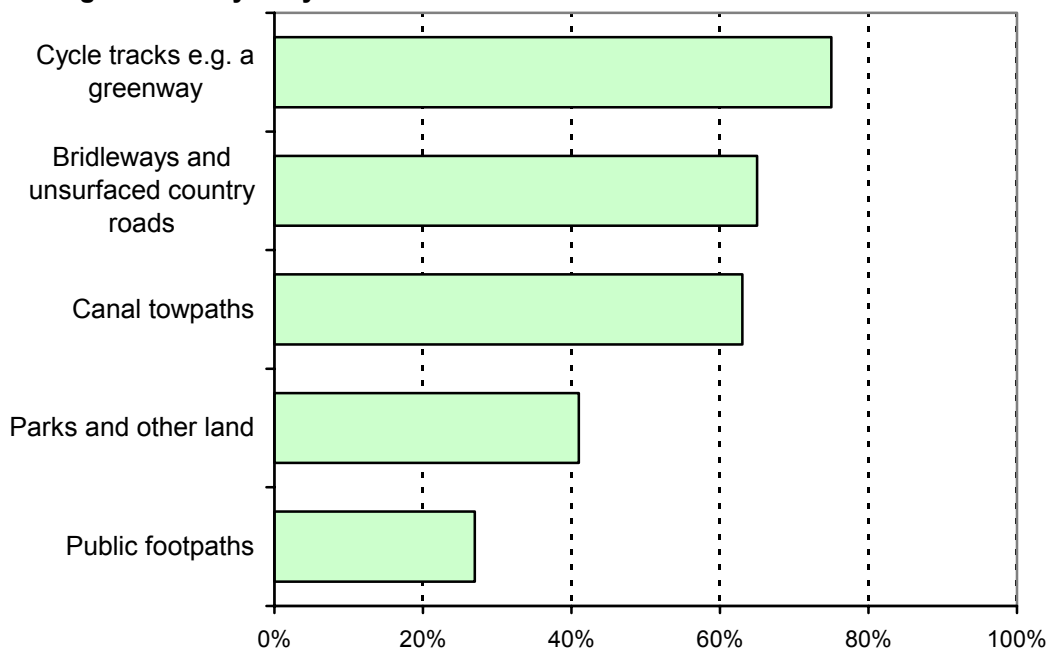
Results – Frequency of visits to the Warwickshire countryside

- Approximately 8% of respondents cycle in the Warwickshire countryside every day, a further 22% visit more than twice a week. A further 24% visit at least once a week with 31% visiting at least once a month. The remaining 15% visit less than once a month.
- One-third of respondents (33%) cycle for more than two hours whilst a further two-fifths (40%) cycle for at least one hour.
- Most respondents (82%) report that they usually cycle from their home when embarking on a ride. The remaining 18% travel more than 10 minutes away from their home before they start cycling. All of the respondents who travel to the countryside before cycling use their car to get to the start of their ride.

Results – Cycling preferences

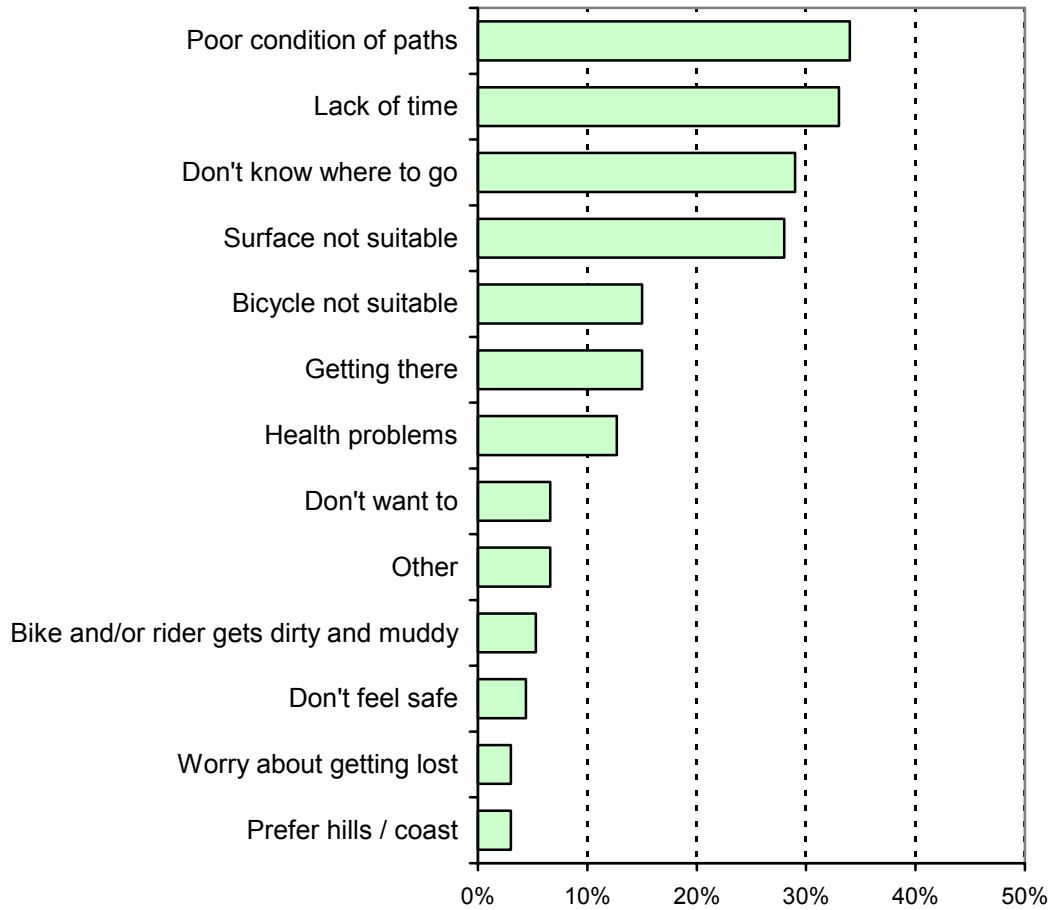
- Nearly one-half of respondents (49%) cycle using their own road bike, whilst a similar number (47%) use their own mountain bike. Hired bikes, borrowed bikes, folding bikes and tandems were the choice of the remaining respondents.
- One in ten (10%) respondents report that they don't travel 'off-road', the types of routes the remainder of the respondents use are summarised in Figure 1.

Figure 1: “Do you cycle ‘off road’ i.e. on routes without a tarmac surface?”



- Respondents were asked to indicate from a list of thirteen options what prevents them from cycling 'off-road' in the Warwickshire countryside more; Figure 2 shows the responses.

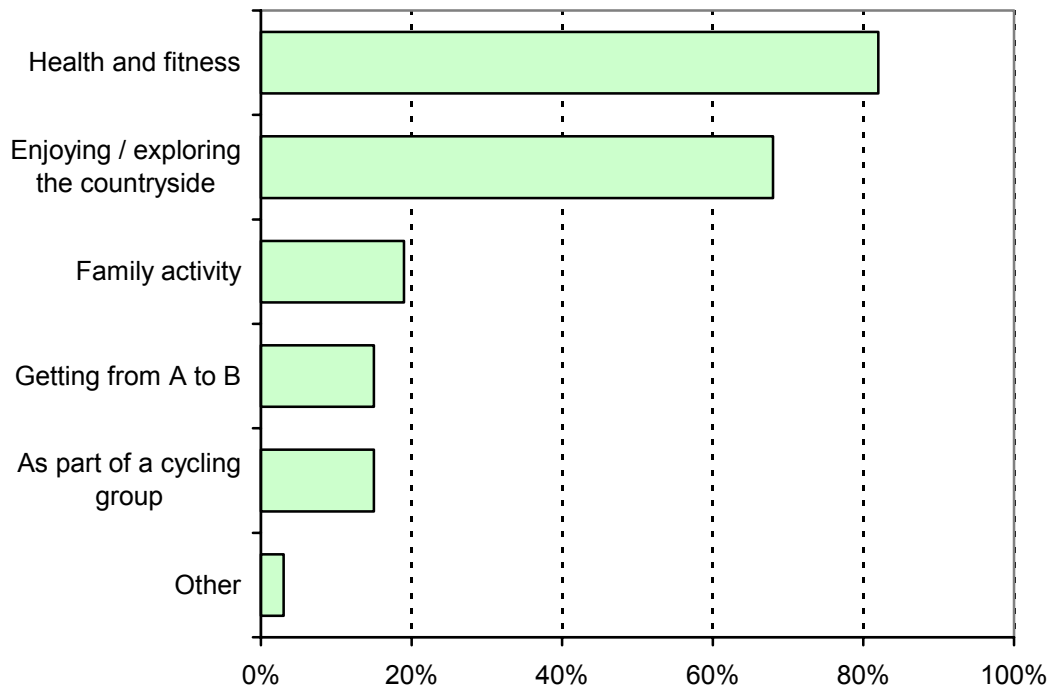
Figure 2: "What prevents you from cycling 'off-road' in the Warwickshire countryside more?"



'Other' comments from respondents included the preference to cycle on the road, the amount of traffic that exists on the routes and the inappropriate behaviour of some cyclists.

Respondents were asked to indicate their two main reasons for cycling in the countryside from a list of six options; Figure 3 shows the results.

Figure 3: “What are your main reasons for cycling in the countryside?”

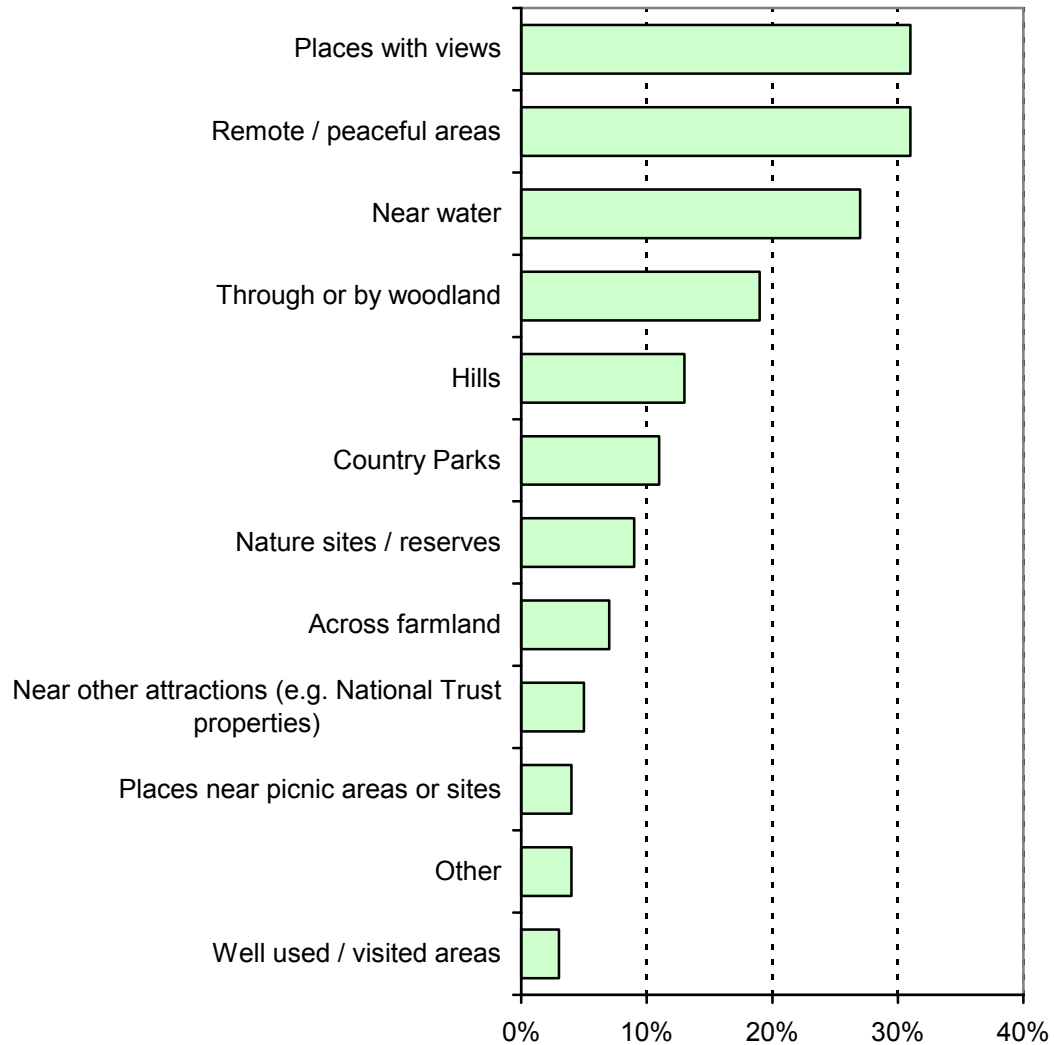


- Health and fitness is the main reason why people go cycling in the countryside, 82% of respondents mentioned it as a reason why they cycled, with a further 69% stating that they cycle to enjoy / explore the countryside.

Results – Likes and Dislikes

- Respondents were asked to indicate which three main types of countryside they like to cycle in from a list of 12 options, the responses are show in Figure 4.

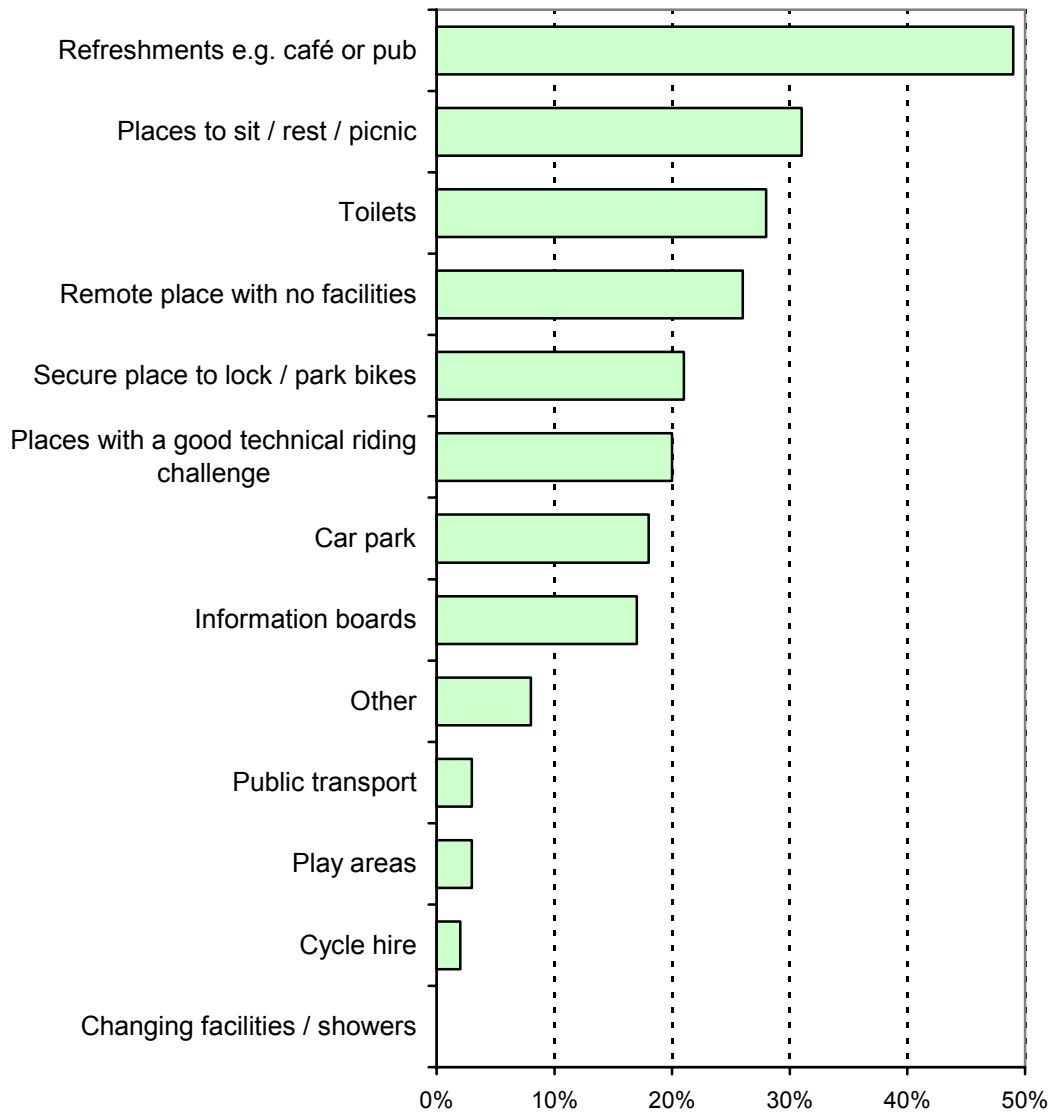
Figure 4: "What type of countryside do you like to cycle in?"



- Other types of countryside that was mentioned by respondents includes areas close to the cyclists home, a varied terrain and safe routes.

- Respondents were asked to choose up to three facilities they look for when they decide where to cycle, from a list of thirteen options; Figure 5 shows the responses. Nearly one-half of respondents (49%) said that refreshments are facilities that they look for, although approximately one-quarter of respondents (26%) stated that they preferred remote places with no facilities.

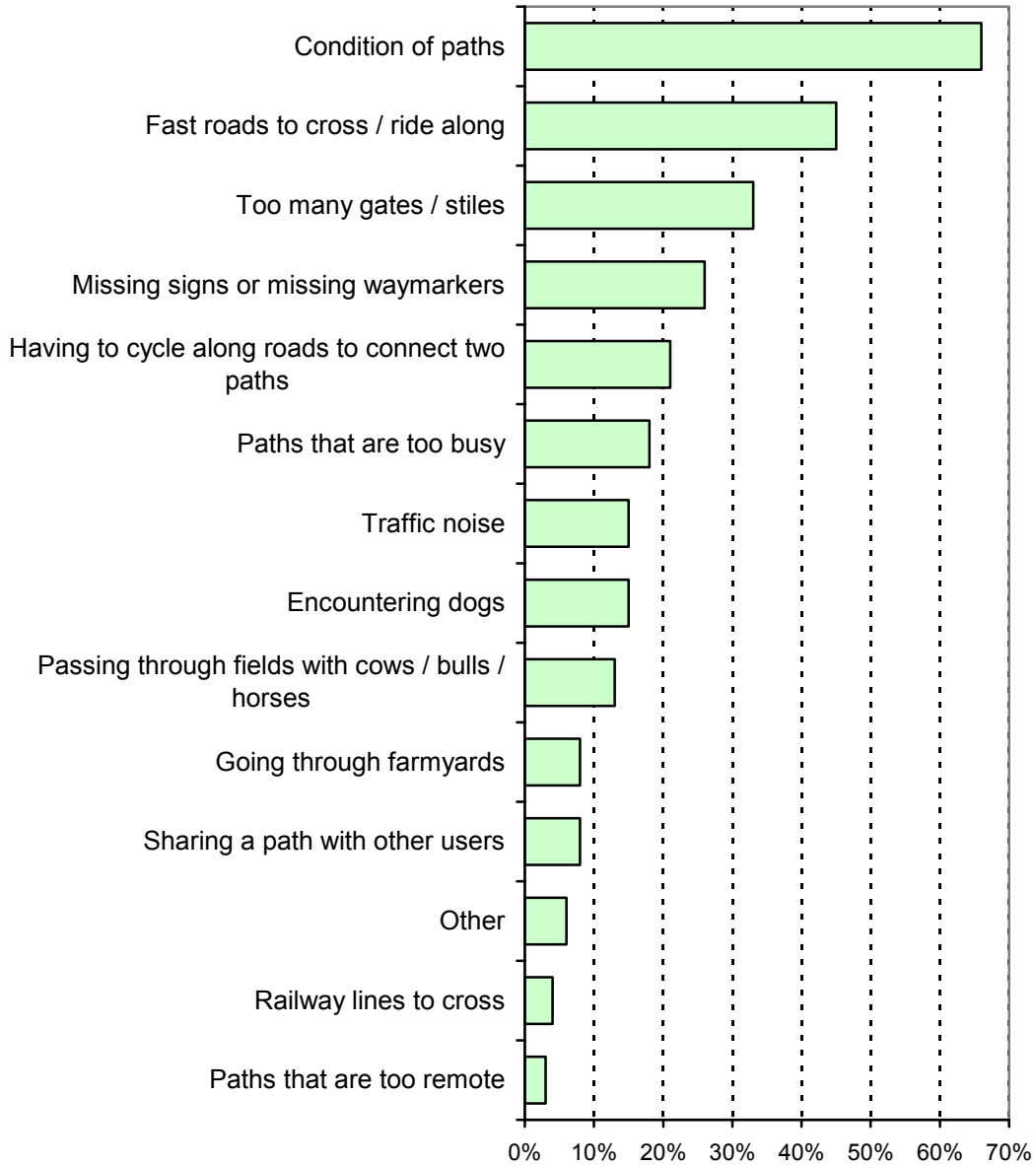
Figure 5: "What facilities do you look for when choosing where to cycle?"



- Most of the 'other' responses included somewhere that was safe to cycle away from traffic as something they look for when choosing where to cycle.

- Respondents were asked to choose up to three factors that put them off using particular paths, from a list of fourteen options. The poor condition of paths appears to be the most common reason why respondents may be put off using particular paths, with fast roads to cross / ride along, another main reason. Figure 6 shows the responses.

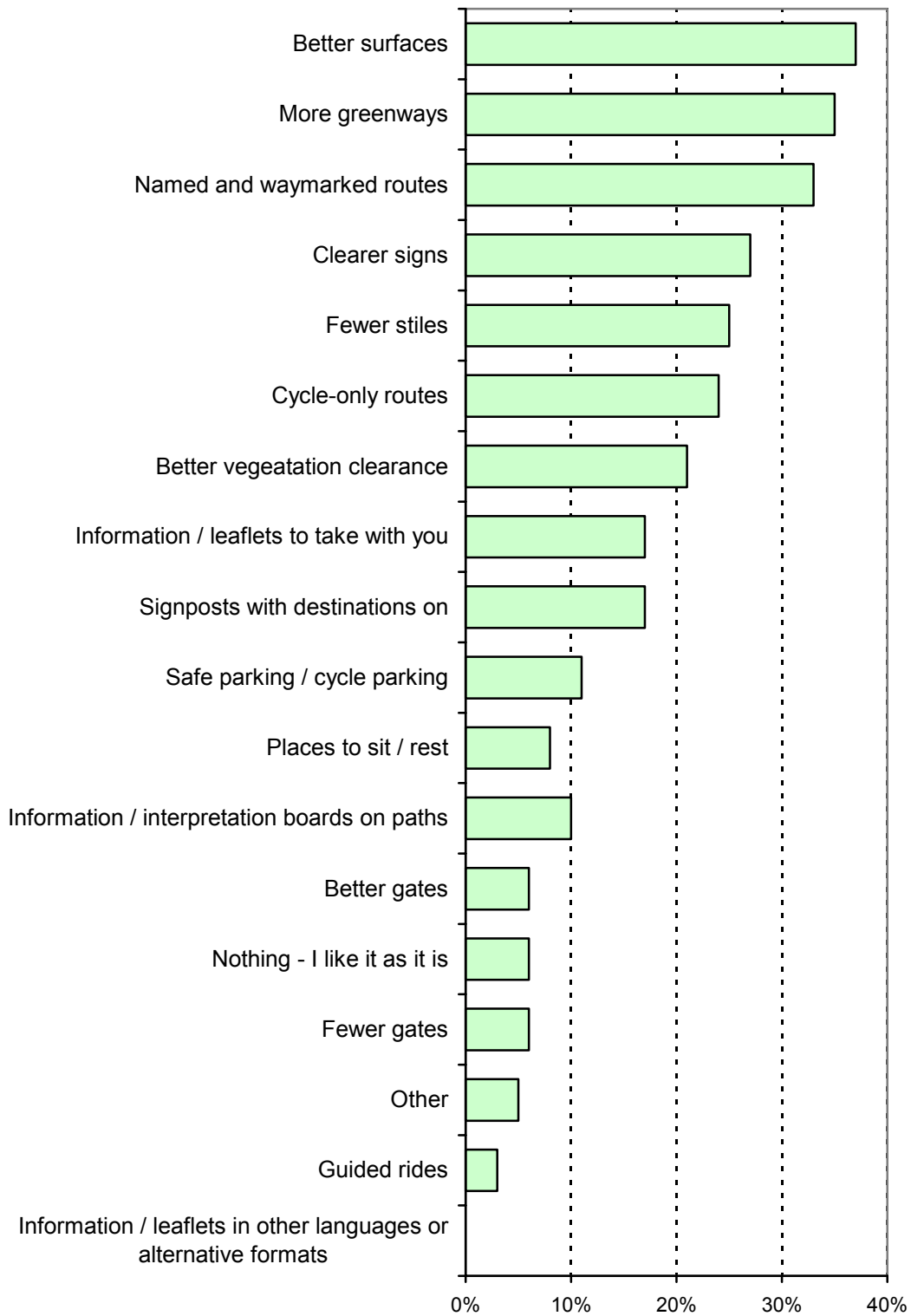
Figure 6: “What puts you off using particular paths?”



- ‘Other’ reasons why respondents are put off using particular paths include children misbehaving and scaring cyclists, and brambles and branches spreading onto routes.

- Respondents were asked to choose up to three factors that would add to the enjoyment of their ride, from a list of eighteen options. Improving the surface of routes used for cycling was the most popular choice. Figure 7 shows the results.

Figure 7: “What would add to the enjoyment of your ‘off-road’ ride?”

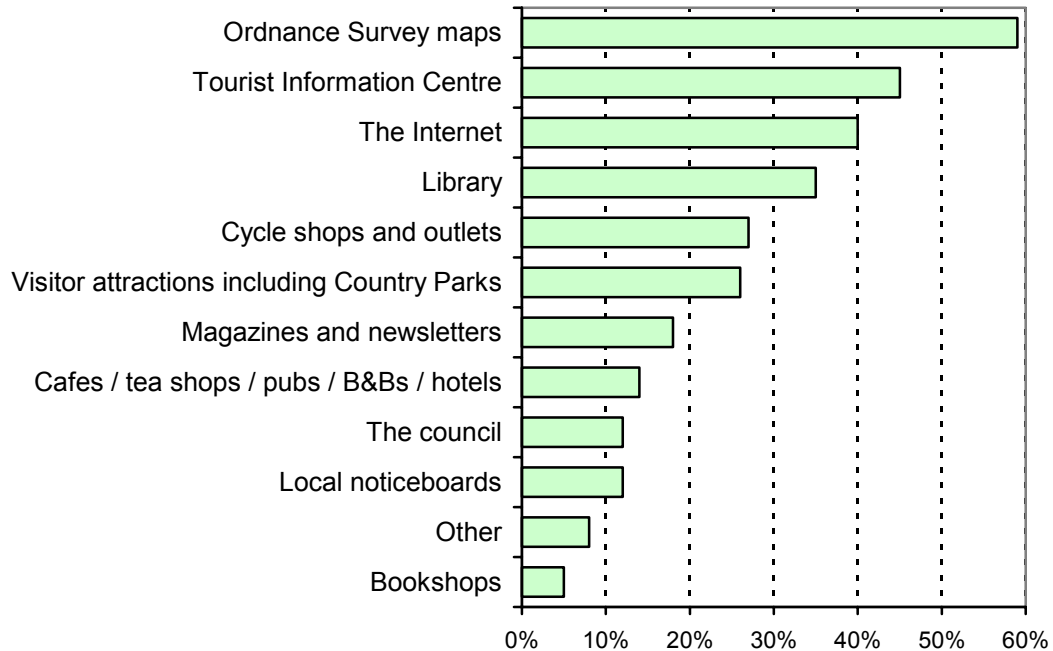


- Most respondents (82%) prefer to explore new places as well as sticking to places they know. One in six respondents (16%) prefer to stick to places they know, whilst 2% prefer to explore new places all of the time.

Results – Availability of information

- Respondents were asked to choose up to three places where they would expect to find out about where to cycle, from a list of twelve options; the responses are summarised in Figure 8.

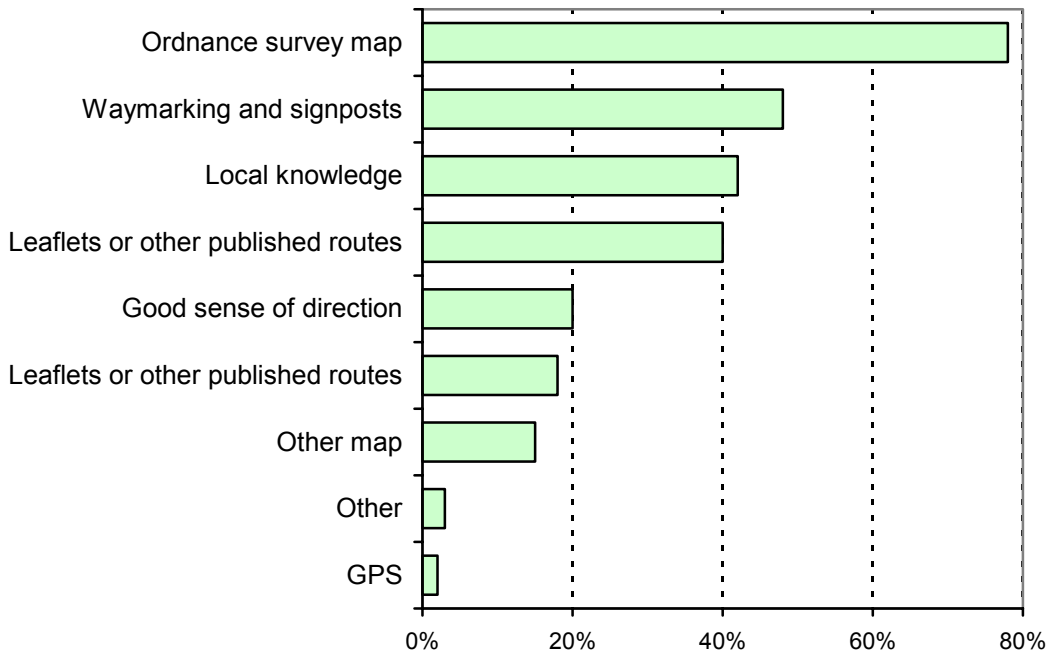
Figure 8: “Where do you expect to find out about where to cycle?”



- Most of the ‘other’ comments made were of the opinion that they didn’t need any further information, as they knew where they were going already.

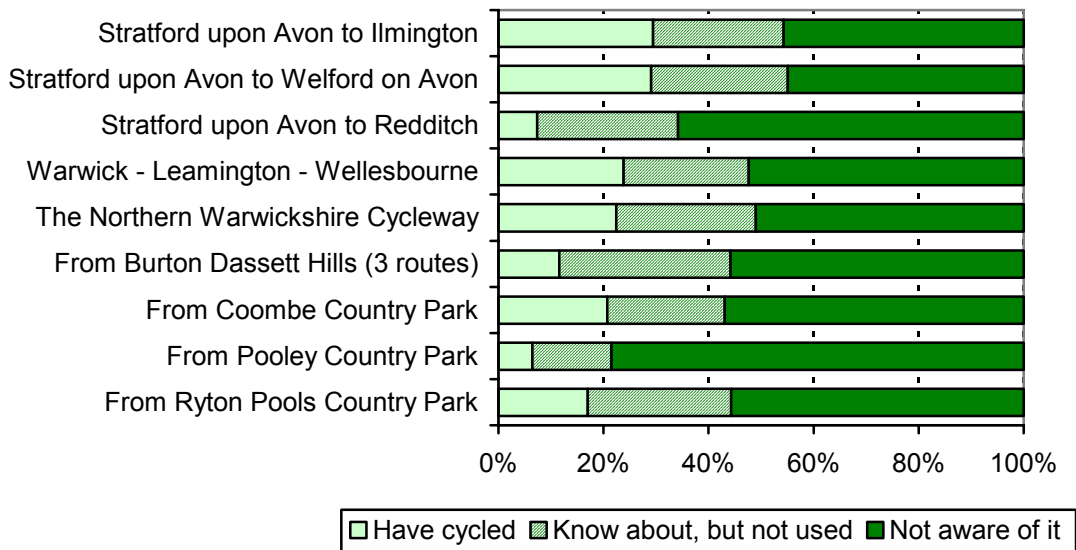
- Respondents were asked what they use to find their way and could choose up to three from a list of nine options. The majority of respondents (78%) use an Ordnance Survey map to find their way around the Warwickshire countryside. A significant number of people also use waymarkers and signposts (48%), local knowledge (42%) and leaflets and other published routes (40%) to find their way around.

Figure 9: “What do you use to find your way?”



- To get an idea of the awareness and usage of the 11 waymarked cycle routes in the Warwickshire countryside, respondents were asked for their knowledge of the routes. Figure 8 shows that the routes from Stratford to Ilmington and Welford on Avon are the most used by respondents. Awareness is lowest on the route from Pooley Country Park and the route from Stratford upon Avon to Redditch.

Figure 8: Awareness and use of waymarked cycle routes



- Nearly three-quarters of respondents (72%) are not members of any cycling clubs or groups, however 15% were members of the Cyclists' Touring Club and 18% were members of other cycling groups or clubs (5% of respondents were members of both the Cyclists' Touring Club and another group or club).
- Some of the common groups that were listed by respondents include:
 - Shakespokes
 - Leamington Cycling Club
 - The Folding Society, and
 - Kenilworth Wheelers
- Respondents were invited to make any further comments on the questionnaire, Figure 9 summarises the nature of the comments that were made, most of which have already been mentioned in the report.

Figure 9: "Please tell us about any specific or general improvements you would like to see on the cycle network?"

Nature of comment	% of respondents
Clearer signage	12%
More off-road / traffic free routes	12%
Prioritisation for cyclists in towns / dedicated lanes	10%
Generally more cycle lanes	9%
Interconnecting cycle routes	8%
More consideration from other users / drivers	6%
More information on routes	6%