



Research Report

Rights of Way Improvement Plan Consultation – Walkers & General Countryside Users

Findings from a survey of walkers and general countryside users within
Warwickshire about the Rights of Way Improvement Plan

March 2005



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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/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 **walkers and general countryside users**. The consultation was carried out in August and September 2004.

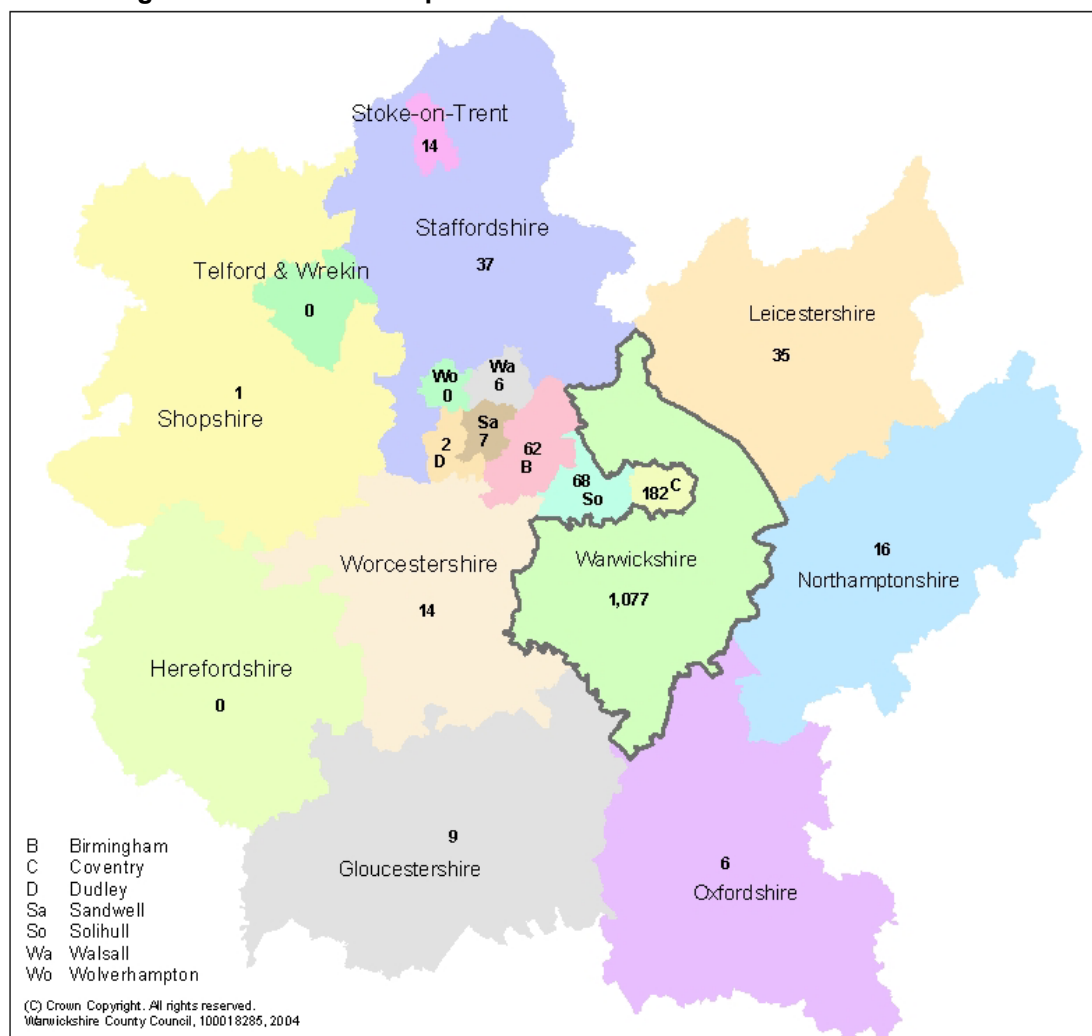
Key findings

- The questionnaire attracted 1,706 completed responses, located both within and outside the Warwickshire county boundary.
- 'Lack of time' was identified as the main reason why respondents didn't visit the countryside more, although a lack of knowledge about where to go was also a popular reason.
- Respondents walk in the Warwickshire countryside for 'health and fitness', 'views and scenery' and 'nature and wildlife'.
- The main improvements to encourage more walking for local journeys included 'less traffic and pollution', 'better pavements' and 'less dog fouling'.
- 'Places near water', 'hilltops or places with views' and 'woodland' are considered the most popular places to walk.
- Facilities that respondents appear to look for are 'places to rest / sit / picnic', 'a car park', 'toilets' and 'refreshments'.
- 'Overgrown paths' and 'fast roads to cross' are considered the things that put most people off using particular paths.
- Over 80% of respondents were not members of any walking group. Just 6% of respondents were members of the Ramblers' Association,

Response rates

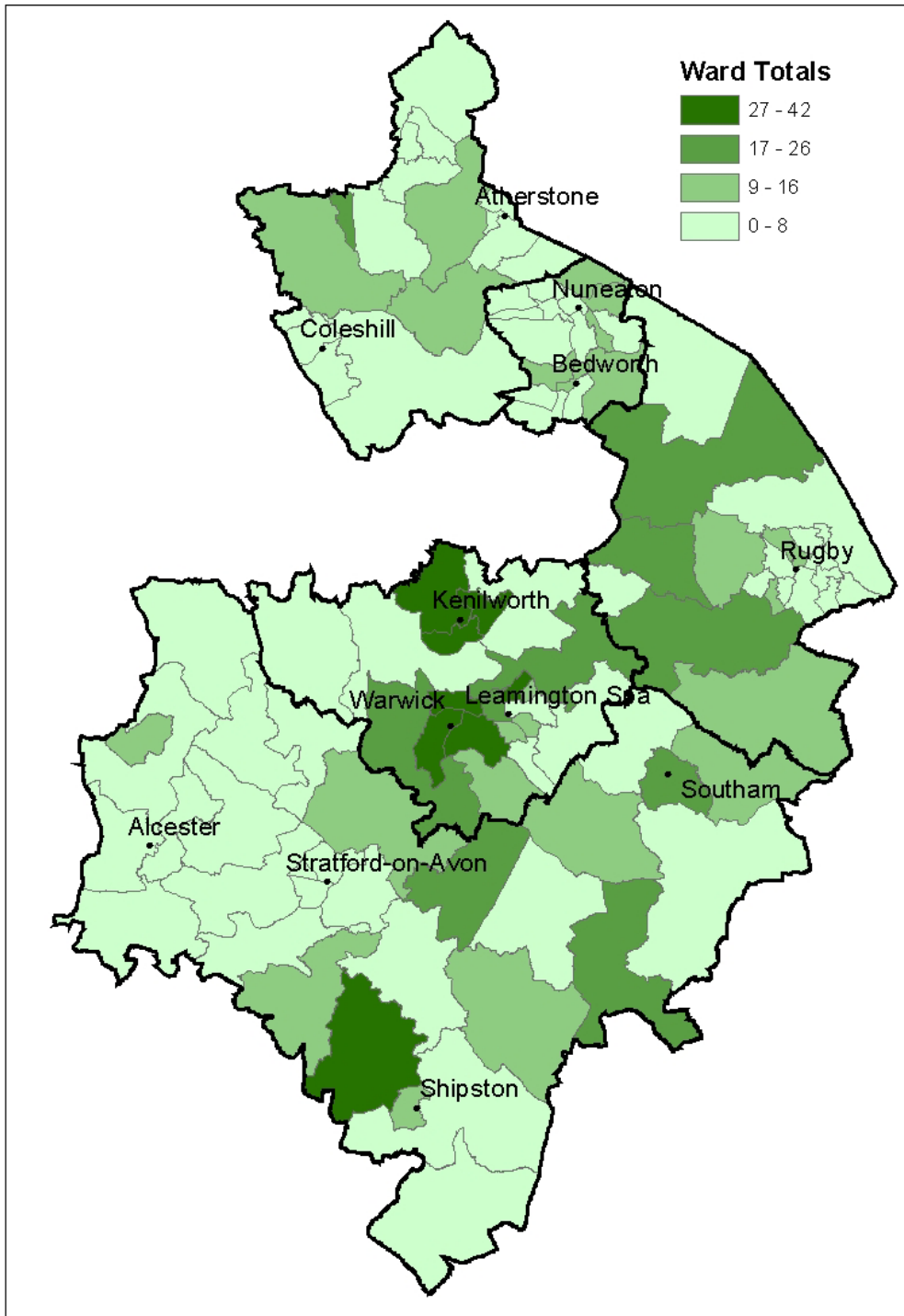
- Overall, 1,706 completed replies were received in response to the consultation for walkers and general countryside users. Nearly one-third (32%) were received through the consultation on the Warwickshire website, and the remainder were completed on paper copies.
- Just over half of respondents (54%) were female. Only 2% of respondents were aged under 18 years, a further 9% were aged 18 – 29. Nearly 29% of respondents were aged between 30 and 44, 34% were aged between 45 and 59 and the remaining 27% were aged over 60. Nearly 98% of respondents classified themselves as White whilst less than 1% classified themselves as Asian or Asian British and a similar number classified themselves as Mixed ethnic origin.
- Although the questionnaire was only widely available across the County, the questionnaires attracted responses from across the West and East Midlands; Figure 1 shows the locations of respondents who supplied their postcode.

Figure 1: Location of respondents across the West and East Midlands



- Significant numbers of responses were received from respondents in Coventry (182), Solihull (68), Birmingham (62), Staffordshire (37) and Leicestershire (35).
- The majority of respondents were from Warwickshire, Figure 2 shows the number of respondents from each ward in the County.

Figure 2: Number of respondents from wards in Warwickshire

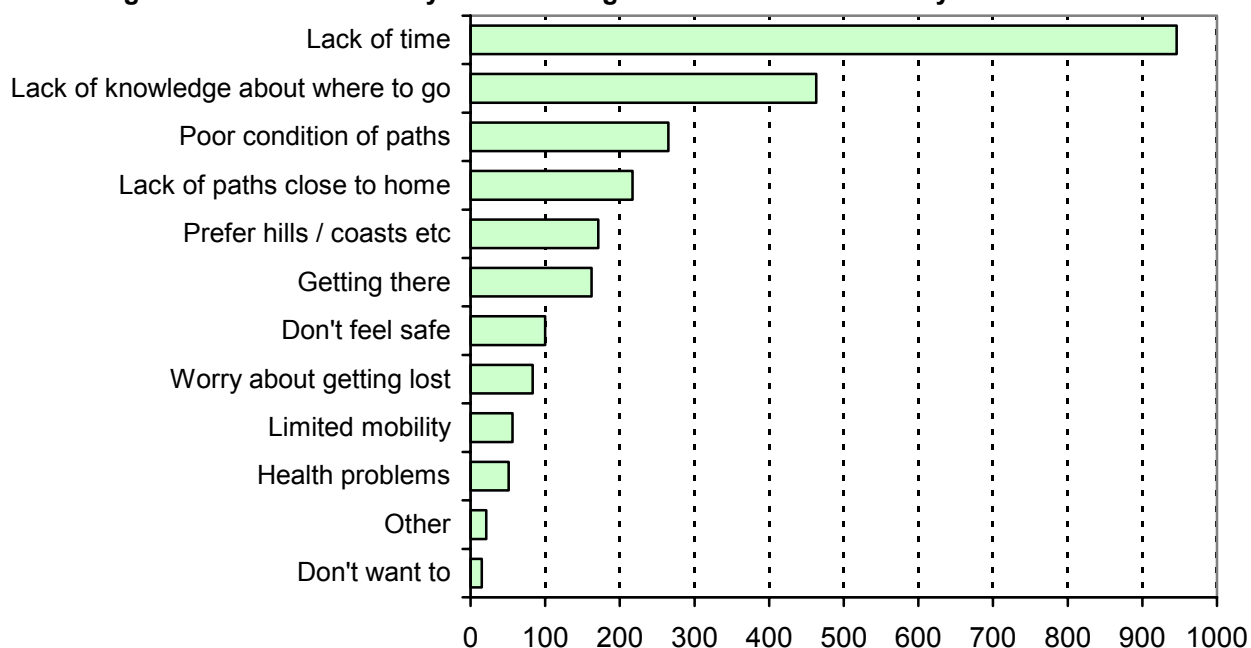


- There was only one ward in the County (Sambourne) where there were no responses to this questionnaire. It appears that the highest numbers of respondents are located around Warwick and Kenilworth.

Results – Use of the countryside

- 97% of respondents have visited the Warwickshire countryside for leisure in the last year. 98% of these respondents reported that they had 'walked' in the Warwickshire countryside. In addition, 34% 'cycled' in the Warwickshire countryside, 9% 'rode their horse' in the Warwickshire countryside and 2% 'drive off-road' in the Warwickshire countryside.
- Respondents were asked what prevents them from using the Warwickshire countryside more; the responses are shown below in Figure 3. By far the most common response was that respondents do not have enough time to visit the countryside more, although a quarter of respondents felt that they do not have enough knowledge about where to go.

Figure 3: "What Prevents you from using the Warwickshire countryside more?"



Results – Frequency of visits

- Respondents were asked how often they walk in the Warwickshire countryside, 24% walk at least twice a week (including 11% who walk every day), 23% walk once or twice a week and a further 22% walk between once a week and once a month. The remaining 31% walk less often than once a month.
- On weekdays, of the respondents that do walk, the average walk lasts approximately an hour and a quarter (72 minutes). On weekends, of the respondents that do walk, the average walk lasts approximately an hour and three-quarters (106 minutes).

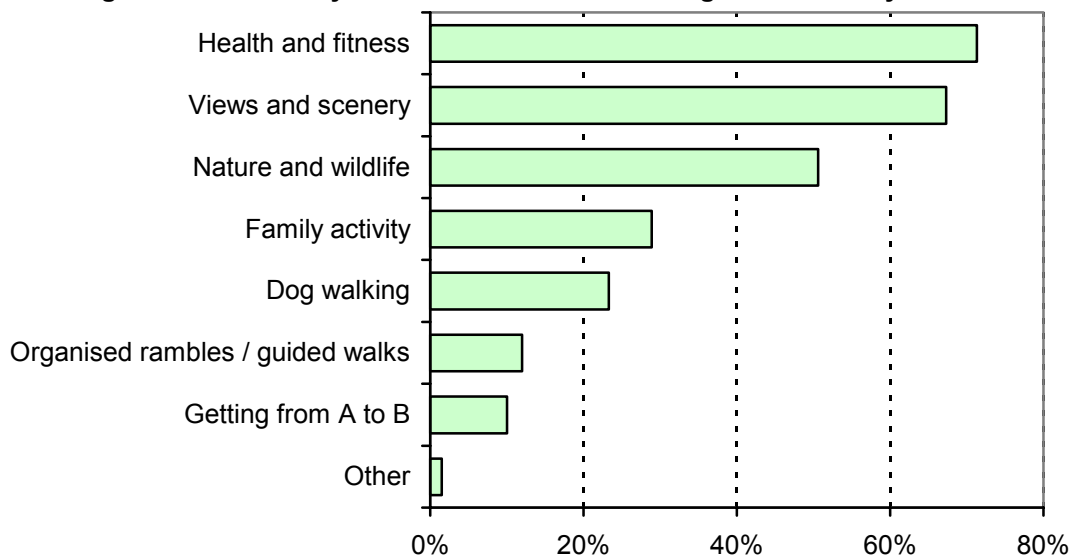
Figure 4: Percentage of respondents spending time walking on weekdays and on weekends

	Half an hour or less	Half an hour to an hour	1 to 2 hours	Over 2 hours	I don't walk on these days
On weekdays	14.7%	30.0%	22.4%	16.4%	16.5%
At weekends	3.8%	15.0%	37.0%	41.2%	2.9%

Results – Walking preferences

- Respondents were asked what their three main reasons were for walking in the Warwickshire countryside. Figure 4 shows the results. The most popular reason for using the Warwickshire countryside is for health and fitness issues, whilst taking in the views and scenery was also a common response.

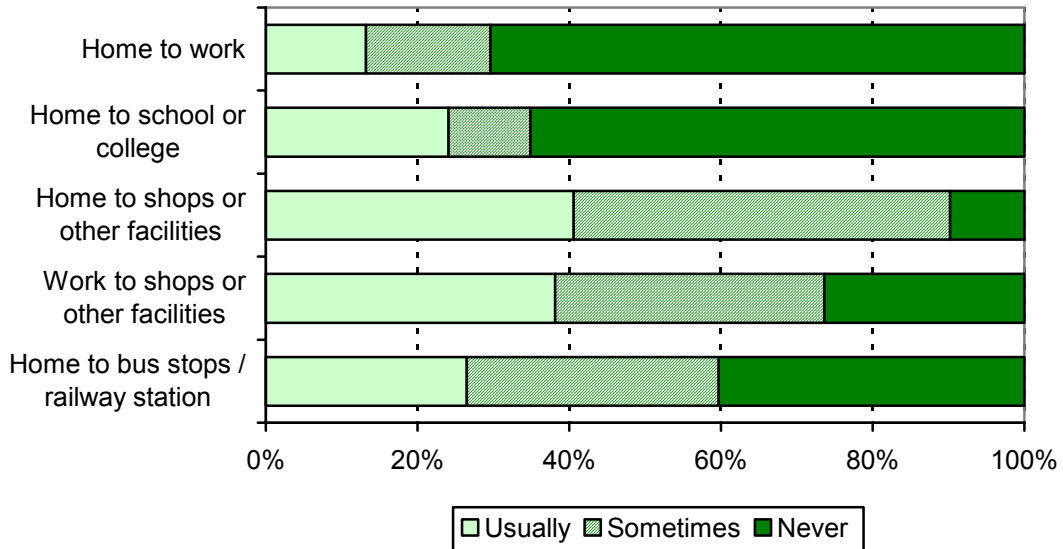
Figure 4: "What are your main reasons for walking in the countryside?"



36% of respondents usually walk in the countryside from their base / home, 9% start their walk up to 10 minutes from their base, 37% start their walk after a 10-30 minute journey and 18% start their walk after more than a half hour drive from their base.

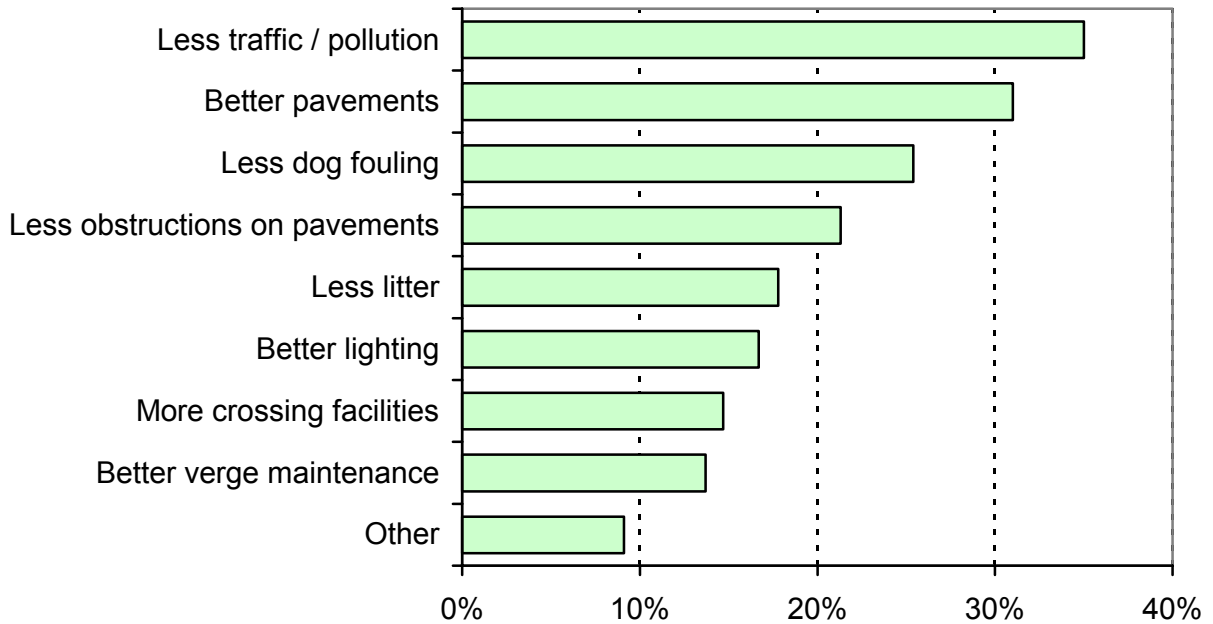
- Respondents were asked how often they walked to and from various places; Figure 5 shows that respondents most often walk between their homes and shops or other facilities.

Figure 5: "How often do you walk from and to the following places?"



- Respondents were given a list of 9 options and were asked what would encourage them to take more local journeys on foot. Figure 6 shows that 'less traffic / pollution' and 'better pavements' are the incentives that would encourage most respondents to take more local journeys by foot.

Figure 6: "What would encourage you to walk for local journeys?"

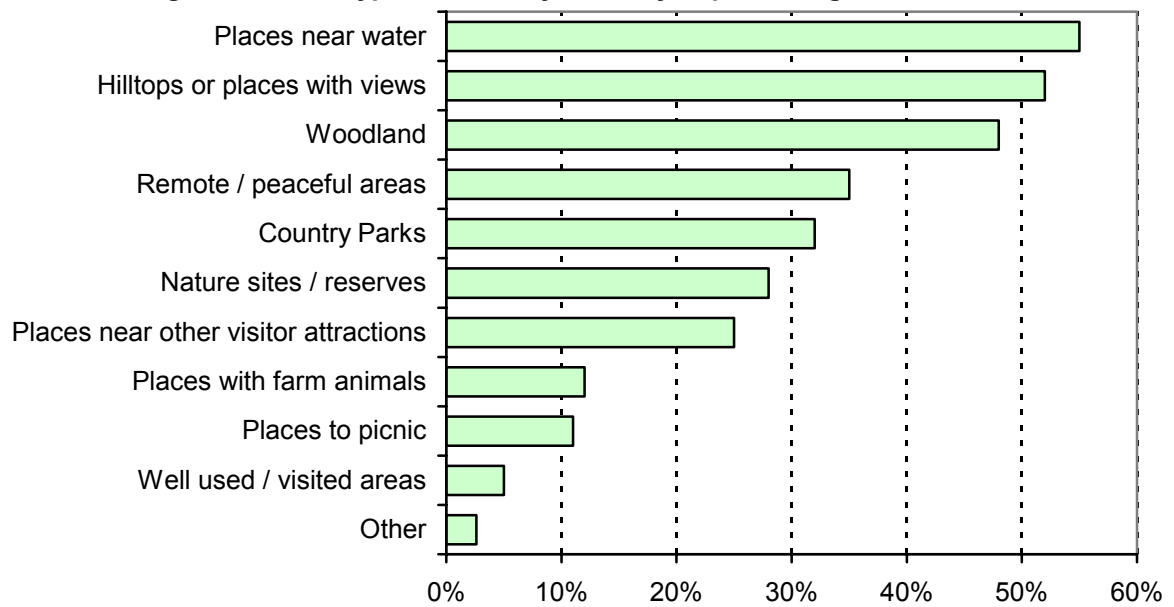


- Adverse weather and safety concerns are other reasons why respondents don't take more journeys by foot.

Results - Access and facilities

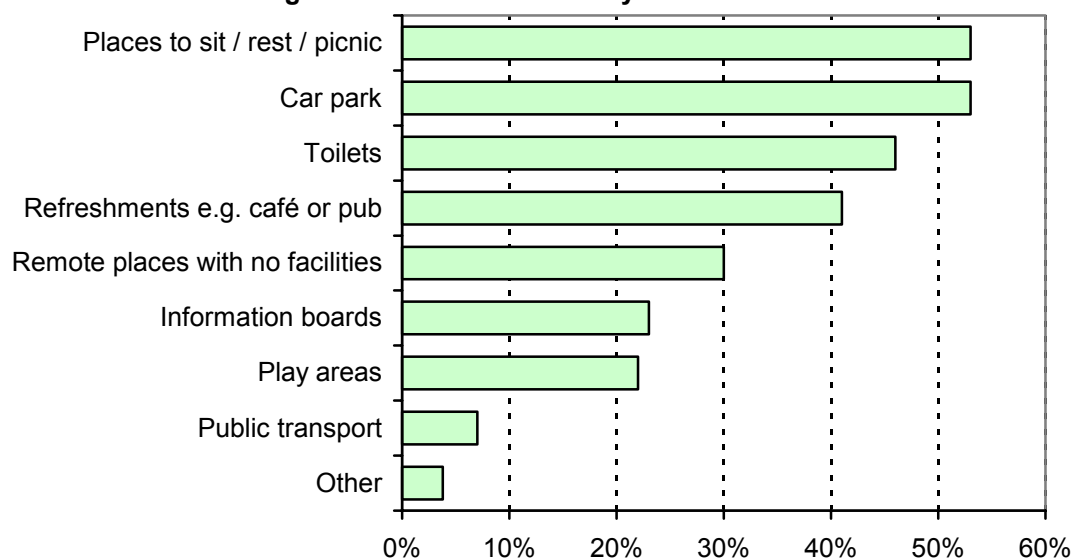
- Three in five respondents (60%) usually travel to the countryside by car, whilst nearly one-third (32%) travel on foot. The remainder travel by bike (5%), bus (2%) and train (1%).
- Respondents were asked what types of countryside they prefer to visit from a list of 11 options; Figure 7 shows the results. The most popular places for walkers to visit are 'places near water', 'hilltops or places with views' or 'woodland'

Figure 7: "What types of countryside do you prefer to go to?"



- Respondents were also asked what facilities they look for, Figure 8 shows the responses. It appears that the facilities that respondents are most interested in are places to sit / rest / picnic and a car park.

Figure 8: "What facilities do you look for?"

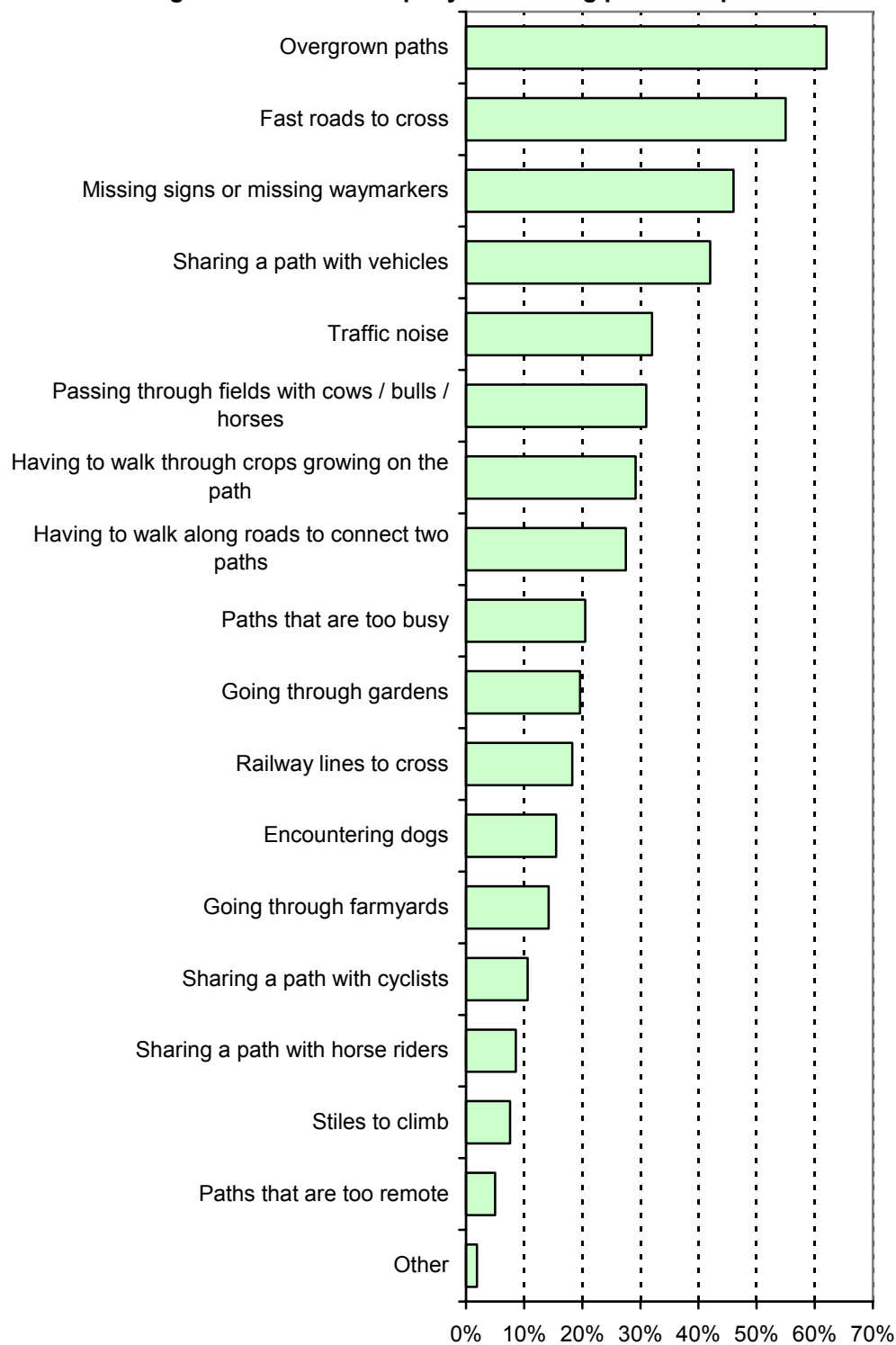


Routes that cater for cyclists and dog walkers were also facilities that respondents look for when planning their walk.

Results – Likes and dislikes

- Respondents were asked what would put them off using particular paths in the Warwickshire countryside. From a list of 18 options they were asked to tick up to five; the results are shown in Figure 9.

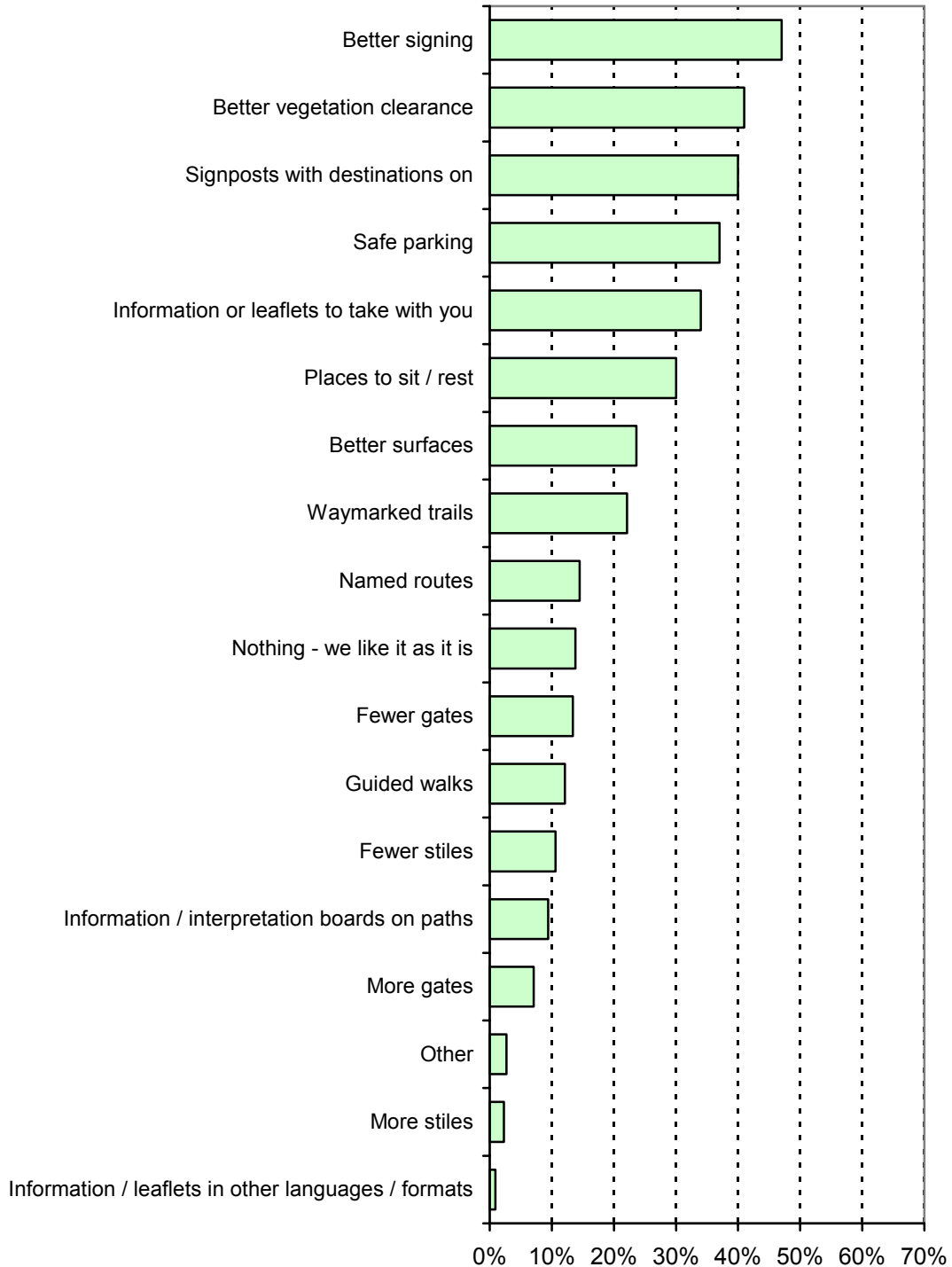
Figure 9: "What would put you off using particular paths?"



- 'Other' responses that were mentioned by respondents include no parking, expensive parking, obstructed footpaths (barbed wire or fences) and areas that have been sprayed with insecticides

- Respondents were then asked what would add to the enjoyment of their walk, approximately one in seven respondents (14%) said that they like it as it is, and there was nothing that would add to the enjoyment of their walk. The results are displayed in Figure 10.

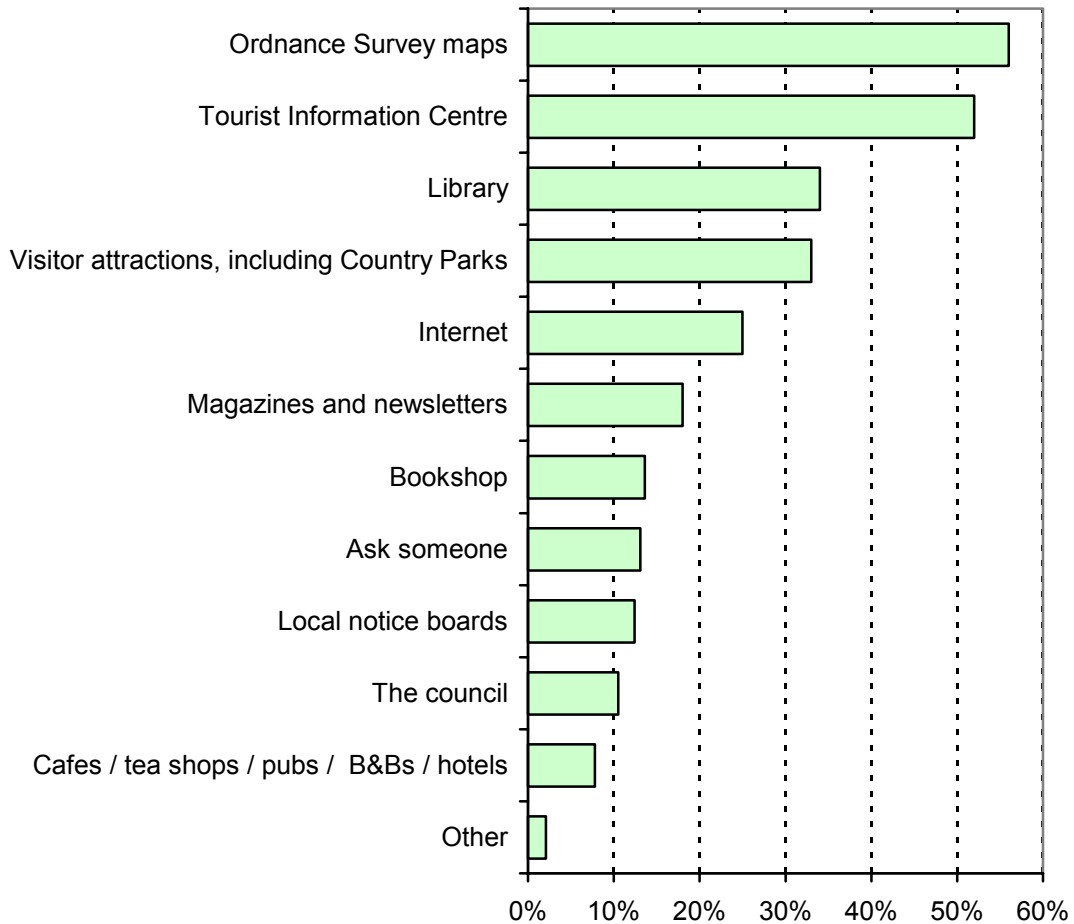
Figure 10: "What would add to the enjoyment of your walk?"



- 'Other' responses include making walkers feel safer, less dogs and dog fouling on paths, better disabled access and more control of traffic speeds when encountering a road.

- Approximately one in six respondents (16%) like to explore new places when they are walking; just 3% like to stick to walks they know. The majority of respondents (81%) like to do a bit of both of the options above.
- Respondents were asked where they expect to find out about where to walk, Figure 11 shows the results.

Figure 11: Where do you expect to find out about where to walk?"

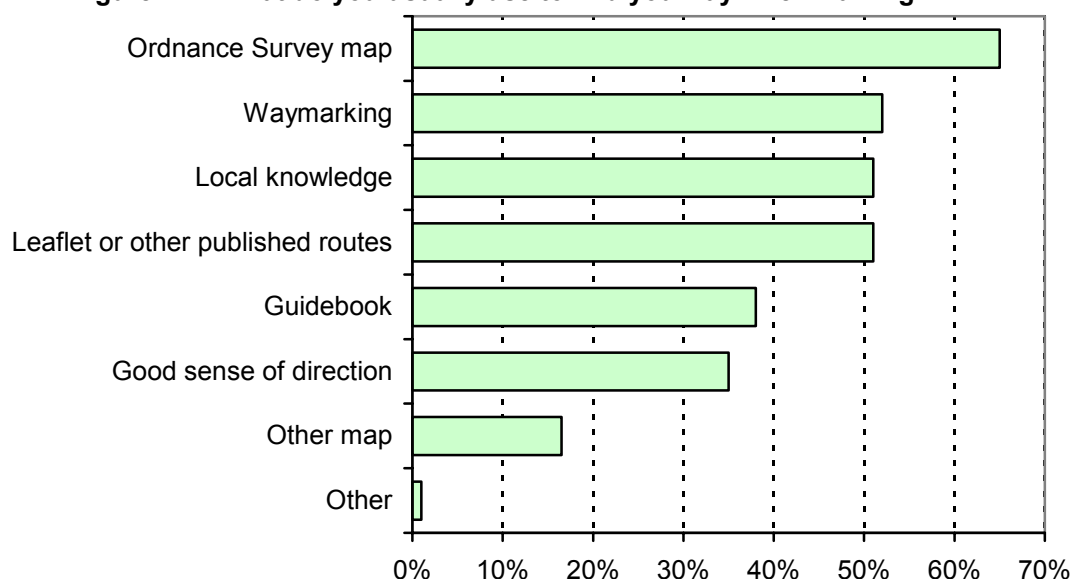


- Respondents also mentioned that they would expect to find information at Schools / Colleges, Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and in car parks

Results – General Information

- Respondents were asked what they usually use to find their way around when walking in the countryside; Figure 12 shows the results.

Figure 12: "What do you usually use to find your way when walking?"



- Respondents also mentioned that they find their way using a compass, GPS or binoculars
- More than four-fifths of respondents (82%) were not members of any walking groups. Just 6% of respondents were members of the Ramblers' Association, 10% were members of a different walking group, whilst 2% were members of both the above groups. Figures do not add up – the 2% members of both should be included in the RA and other group figures.
- Respondents were also invited to make any further comments on the questionnaire, a wide range of comments were received in this section although most of the issues have already been identified in this report. Approximately one-third of respondents mentioned an improvement they would like to see, the most common comments are summarised in Figure 13.

Figure 13: "Tell us about any general or specific improvements you would like to see on the path network."

Nature of comment	% of respondents
Cleared and better maintained paths	11%
More / better signposting	8%
Well marked paths/ consistent marking / waymarking	8%
Landowners / farmers more rambler friendly / co-operative	5%
Better stile maintenance	5%
Clear / restore paths after ploughing / cropping	4%
Improvements to footpaths through farmland	4%
Fine as it is / good	4%
More information e.g. recommended walks	4%
More paths / access (general)	4%
Less dog fouling / more responsible dog owners	4%



Research Report

Rights of Way Improvement Plan Consultation – Cyclists

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

March 2005



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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,
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- 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'

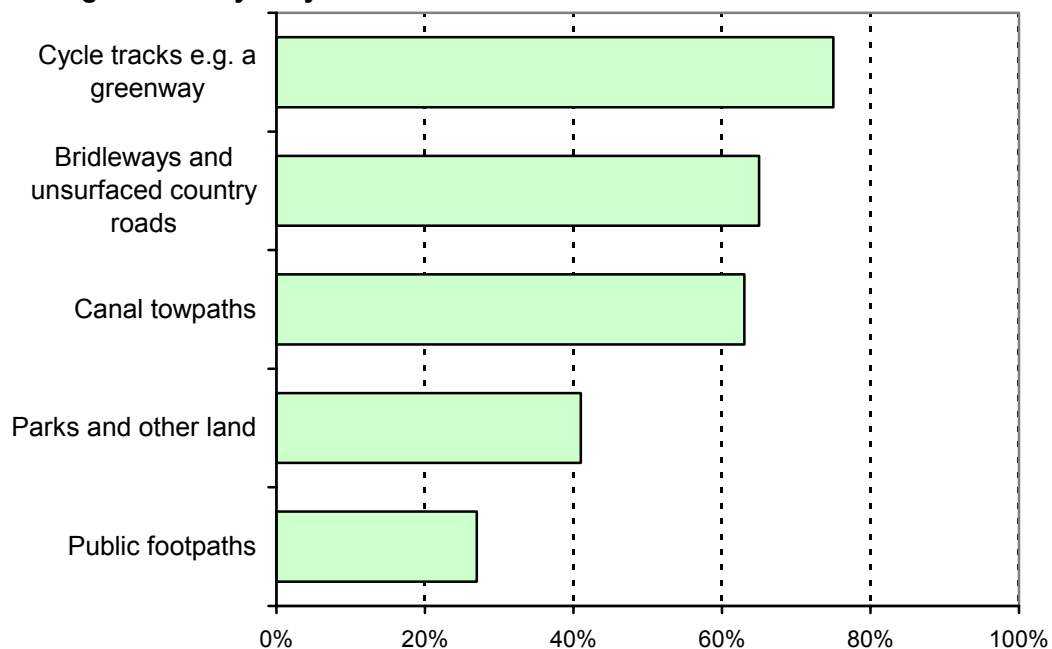
Results – Frequency of visits to the Warwickshire countryside

- 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

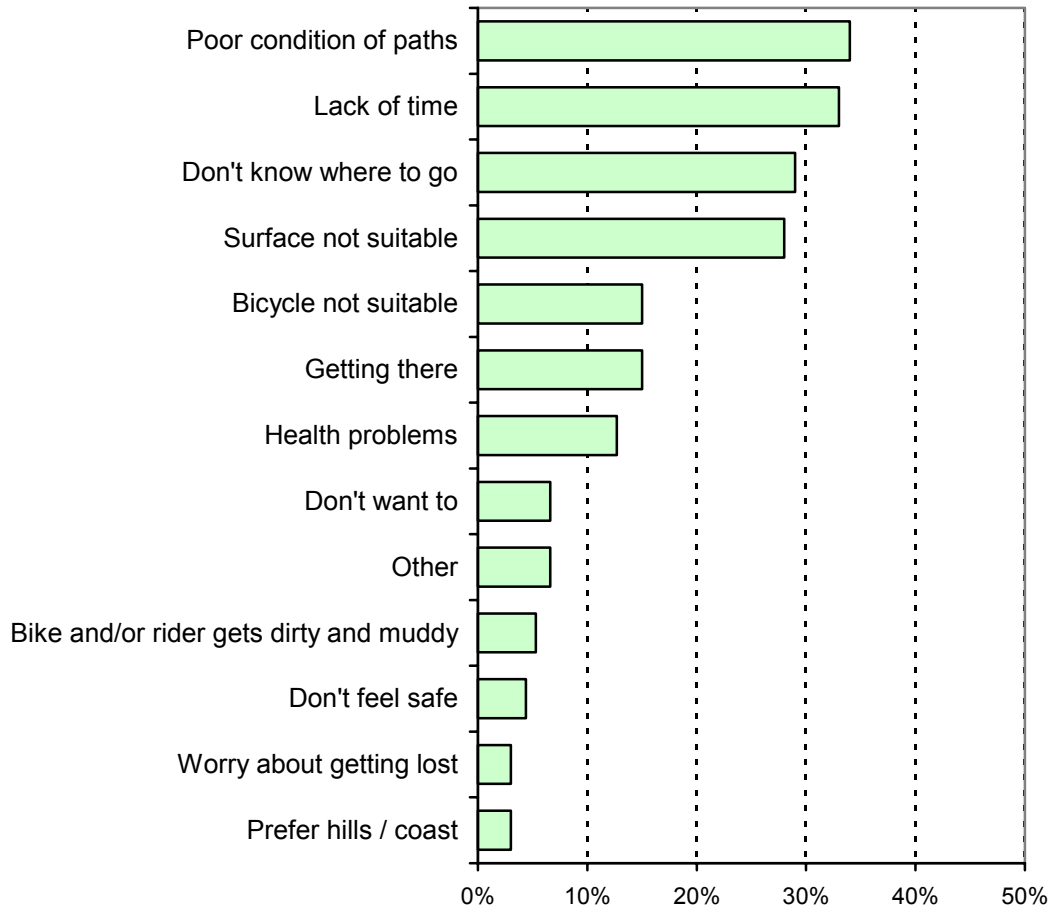
- Nearly one-half of respondents (49%) cycle using their own road bike, whilst a similar number (47%) use their own mountain bike. Hired bikes, borrowed bikes, folding bikes and tandems were the choice of the remaining respondents.
- One in ten (10%) respondents report that they don't travel 'off-road',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

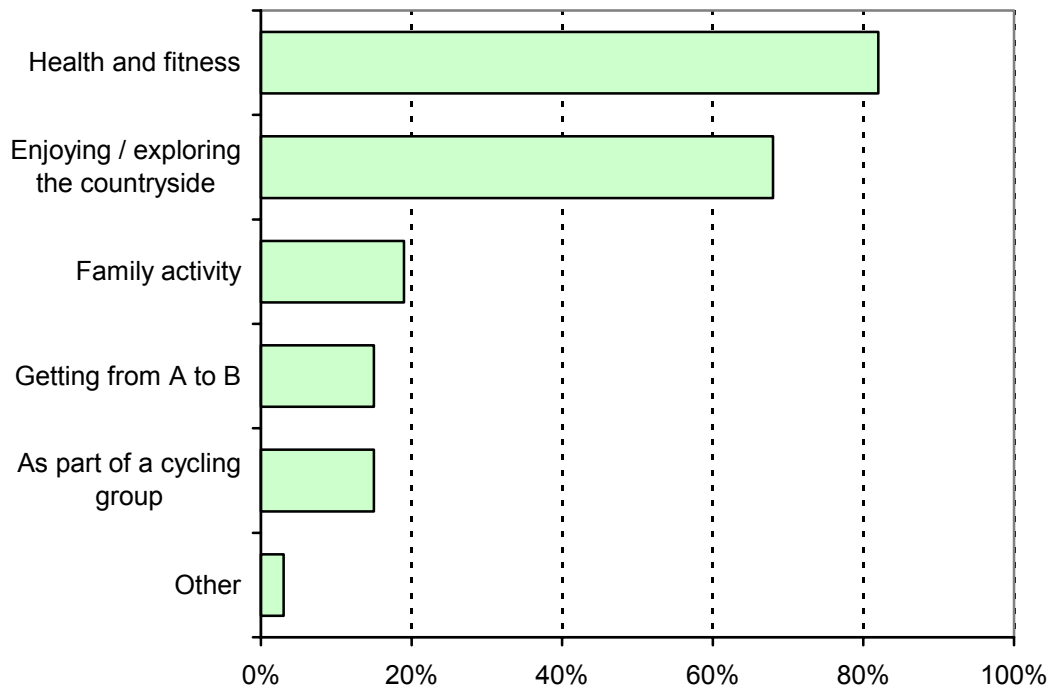
Figure 2: "What prevents you from cycling 'off-road' in the Warwickshire countryside more?"



'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?”

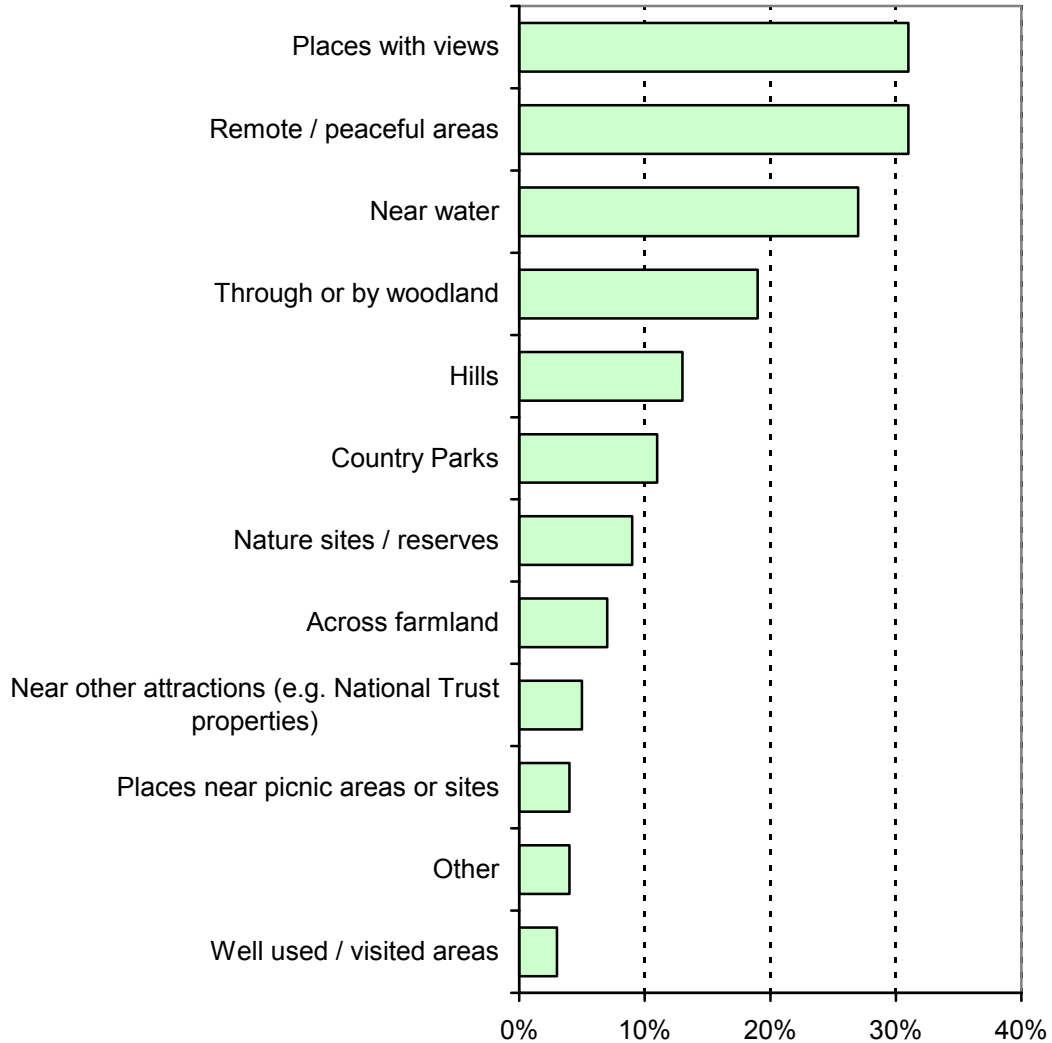


- Health and fitness is the main reason why people go cycling in the countryside, 82% of respondents mentioned it as a reason why they cycled, with a further 69% stating that they cycle to enjoy / explore the countryside.

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.

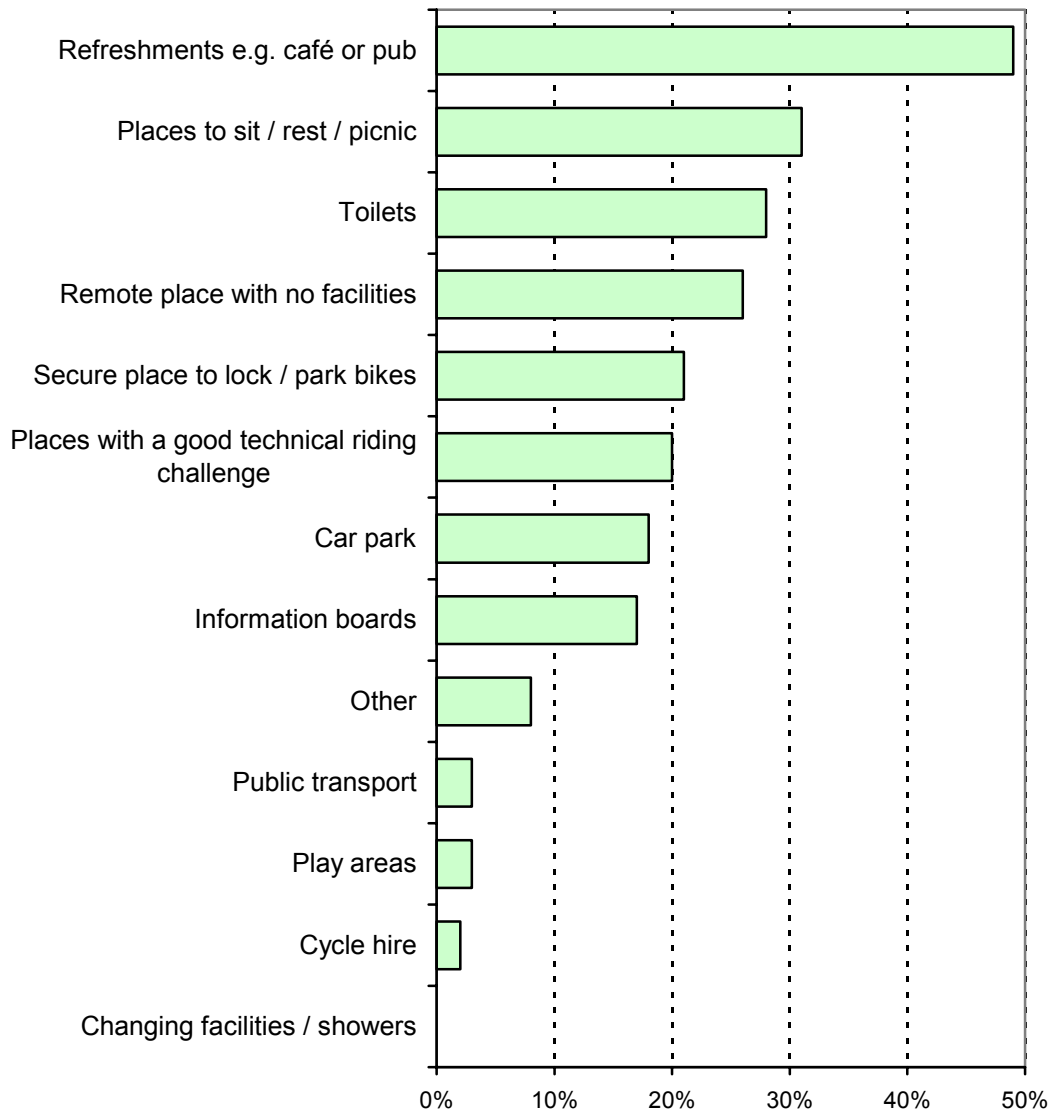
Figure 4: "What type of countryside do you like to cycle in?"



- 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.

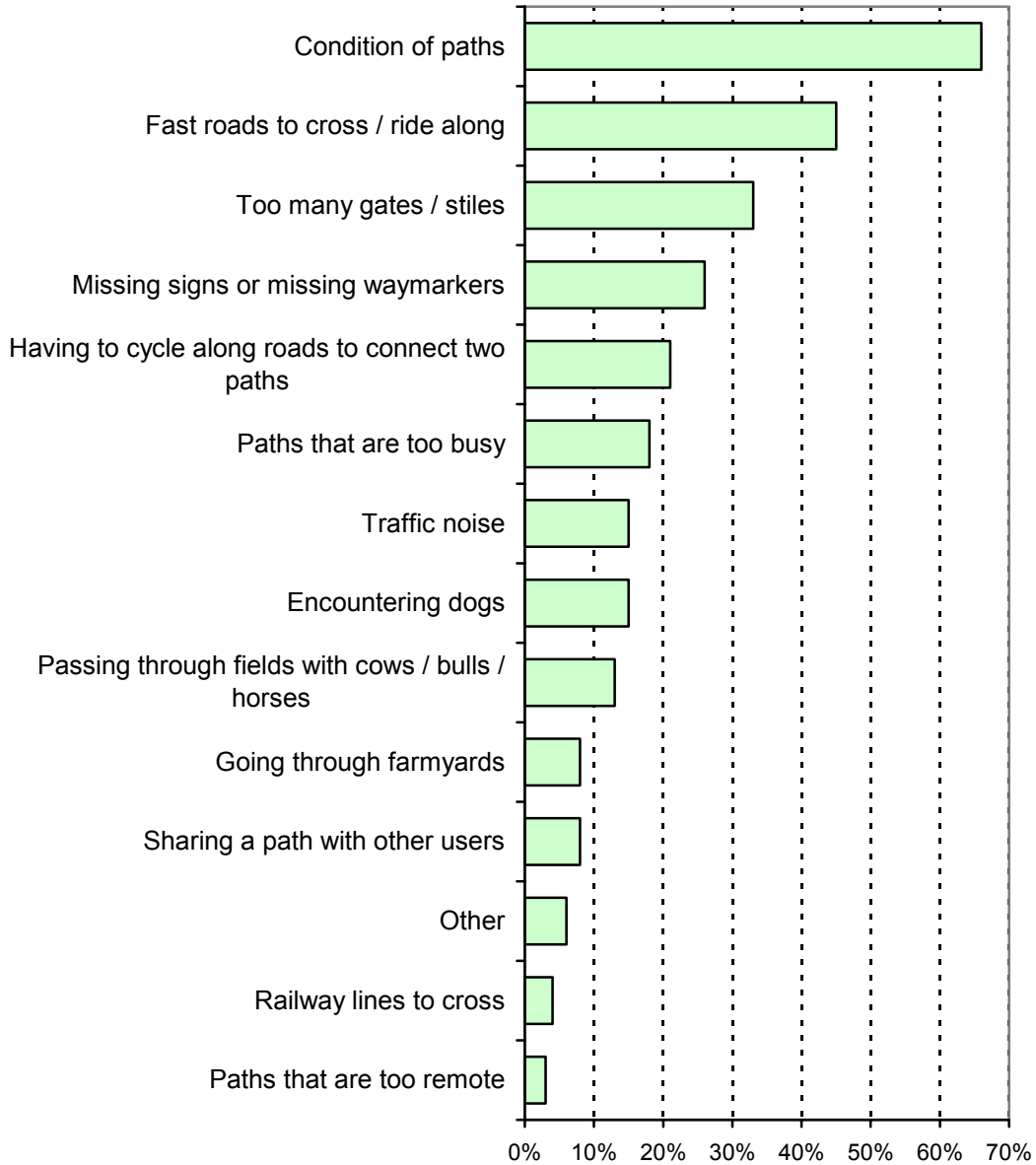
Figure 5: "What facilities do you look for when choosing where to cycle?"



- 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.

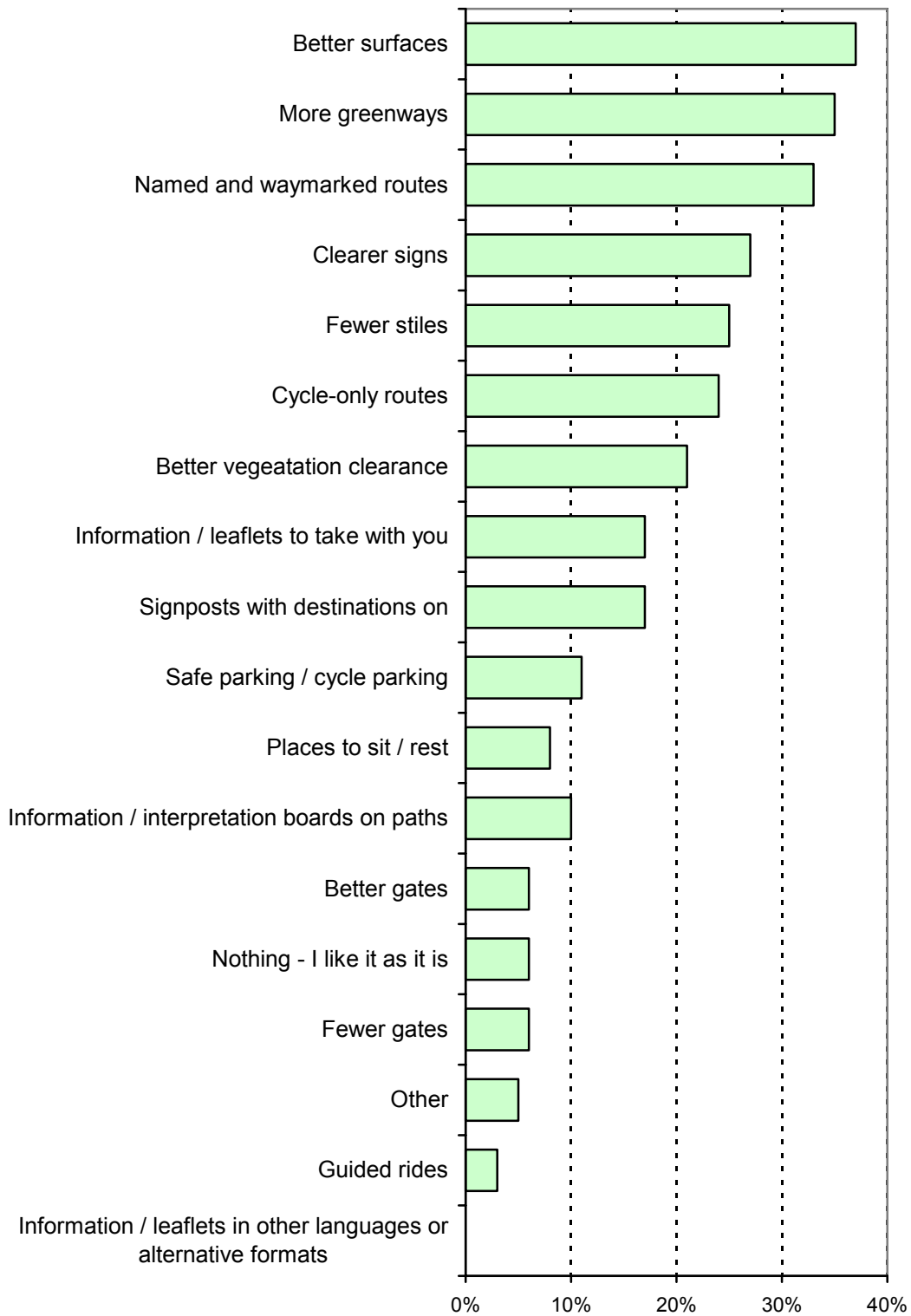
Figure 6: “What puts you off using particular paths?”



- ‘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?”

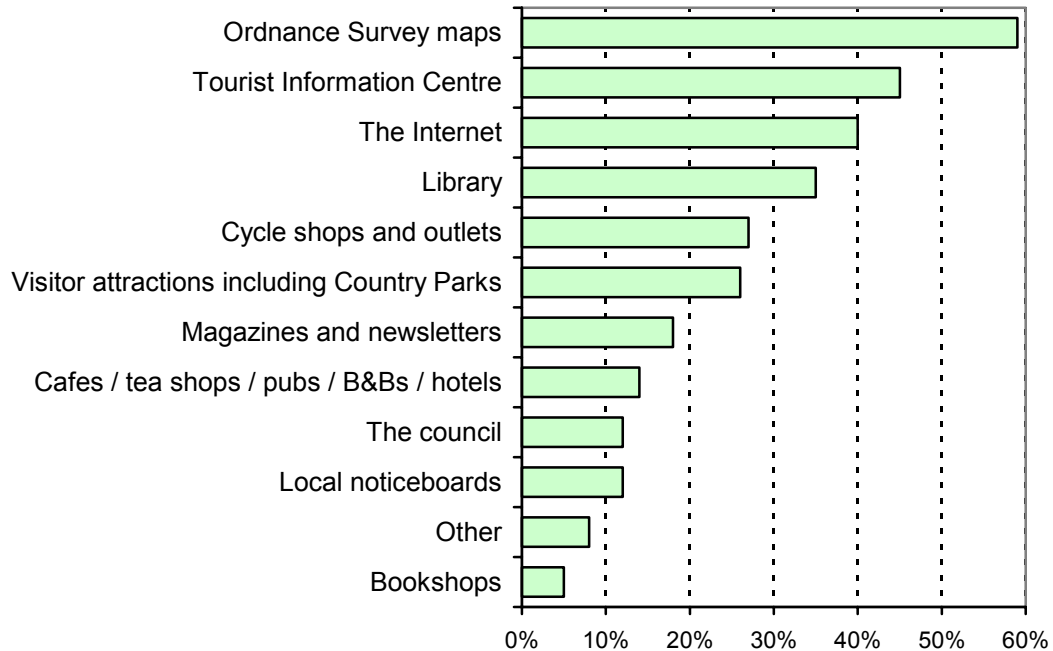


- Most respondents (82%) prefer to explore new places as well as sticking to places they know. One in six respondents (16%) prefer to stick to places they know, whilst 2% prefer to explore new places all of the time.

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.

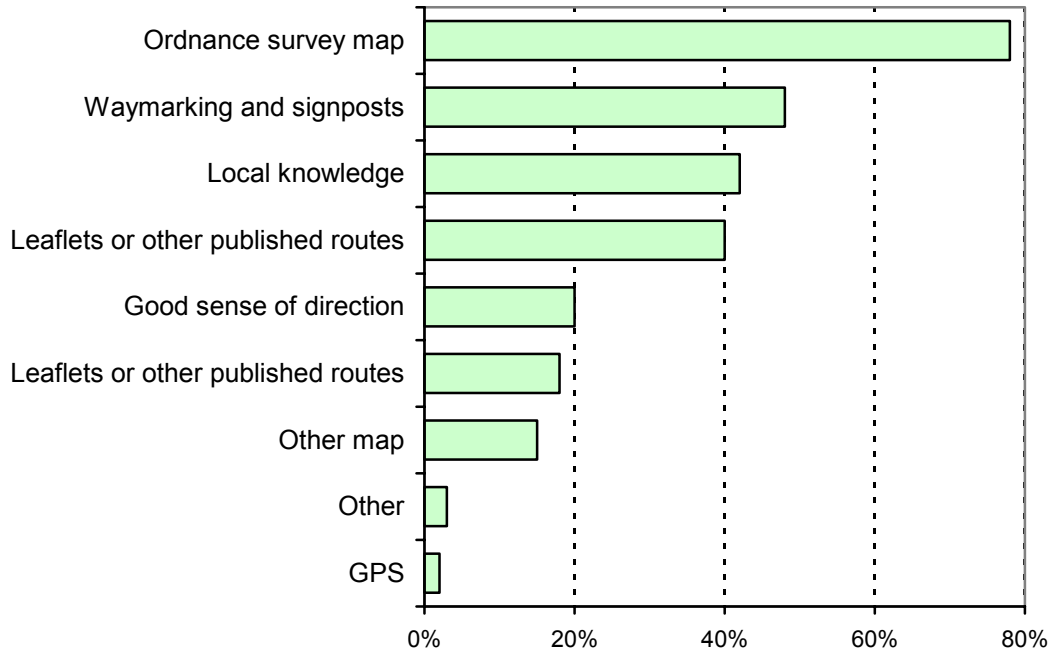
Figure 8: “Where do you expect to find out about where to cycle?”



- 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.

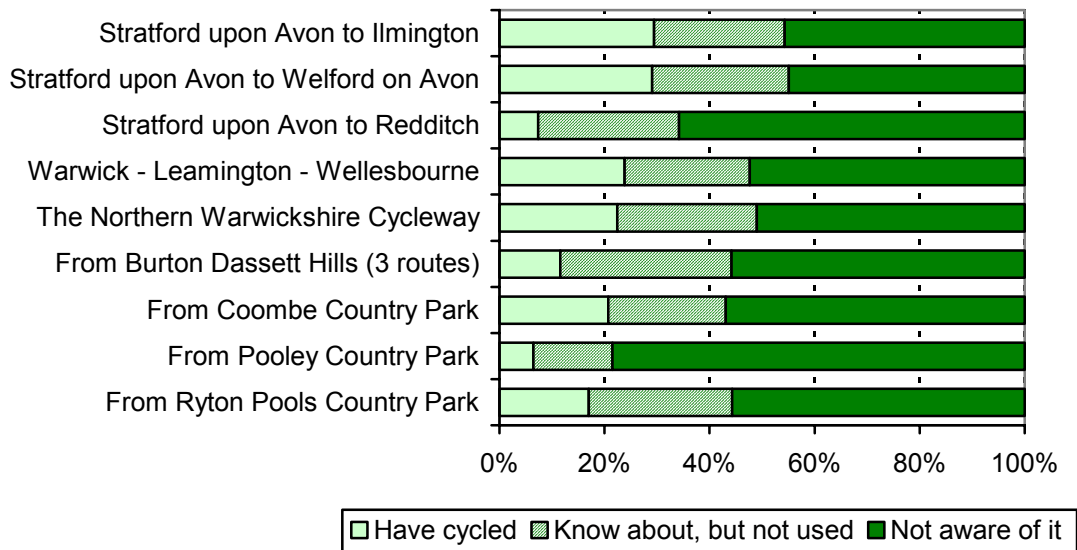
- Respondents were asked what they use to find their way and could choose up to three from a list of nine options. The majority of respondents (78%) use an Ordnance Survey map to find their way around the Warwickshire countryside. A significant number of people also use waymarkers and signposts (48%),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



Research Report

Rights of Way Improvement Plan Consultation – Equestrian Users

Findings from a survey of horse riders, drivers and owners within
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Key findings

- Nearly three-quarters of respondents (72%) ride or hack out at least twice a week, only 6% ride or hack out less than once per week.
- Nearly all respondents (93%) ride on tarmac roads, 87% ride on unsurfaced roads or public bridleways and 54% ride on their own land.
- 73% of respondents feel that bridleways and unsurfaced roads are 'essential' to them as horse riders, and a further 22% think that they are 'very important'.
- Almost four in five respondents stated that they would be willing to pay for toll rides or permits.
- 60% of respondents rated the **condition** of the bridleway network as adequate or better.
- Over 65% of respondents rated the **network** of bridleways in their area as 'poor' or 'very poor'
- The two most significant factors which would encourage horse riders to make more use of bridleways are 'less road riding between bridleways' and 'better connection between bridleways'.
- The three things that put horse riders off using particular paths are 'fast or busy roads to ride across', 'difficult gates' and 'paths that are in poor condition or overgrown'.

Response rates

- Overall, 208 completed responses were received to the equestrian consultation. A total of 61 questionnaires were received through the Warwickshire County Council website, and 147 paper copies were returned.
- The vast majority of respondents to the questionnaire were female (91%).
- The age profile of respondents is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: "How old are you?"

Age group	% of respondents
Under 18	8%
18 – 29	16%
30 – 44	32%
45 – 59	37%
60 or over	7%

- All but one of the respondents classified themselves as 'White'.

Results – Horse and horse riding details

- More than one-half of respondents (53%) specified that they own their own horse at their own stables or grass livery, whilst a further 37% said that they own their own horse and it is kept at a livery yard. The remaining 10% do not have their own horses, with 7% using horses provided at riding schools and 3% using someone else's horse.
- Nearly three-quarters of respondents (72%) ride or hack out at least twice a week. Only 6% of respondents ride or hack out less than once a week. Respondents that own their own horse appear to hack or ride out more frequently than respondents who do not own a horse.
- Figure 2 shows the average time of the usual hack or ride out of respondents during different times of the year. Respondents spend nearly two hours on their average hack or ride on weekends in the summer, but it falls to less than one hour during weekdays in the winter.

Figure 2: Average hack or ride out times throughout the year

Time of year	Average time (mins)
In summer during the week	78
In summer at the weekend	109
In winter during the week	54
In winter at the weekend	85

- Figure 3 shows the percentage of respondents spending time on hack and rides at different times throughout the year.

Figure 3: Percentage of respondents spending time on hacks and ride outs throughout the year

	Half an hour or less	Half an hour to an hour	1 to 2 hours	Over 2 hours
In summer during the week	2.6%	38.5%	51.0%	7.8%
In summer at the weekend	2.2%	9.7%	60.8%	27.4%
In winter during the week	25.7%	43.3%	27.5%	3.5%
In winter at the weekend	3.8%	24.9%	61.1%	10.3%

- Nearly all of respondents (93%) ride on tarmac roads, 87% ride on unsurfaced roads or public bridleways and 54% ride on their own land or land belonging to the owner of the horse. Less than one-quarter of respondents (24%) use toll rides / permit schemes.
- Nearly three-quarters of respondents (73%) feel that bridleways and unsurfaced roads are 'essential' to them as horse riders. A further 22% think they are 'very important' and the remaining 5% think they are 'fairly important'..
- Figure 4 shows that the amount of time that riders spend on bridleways and unsurfaced roads varies depending on the individual. Approximately one in three (35%) respondents spends less than a quarter of their time on these routes, whilst two in five (40%) spend more than three-quarters of their time on them.

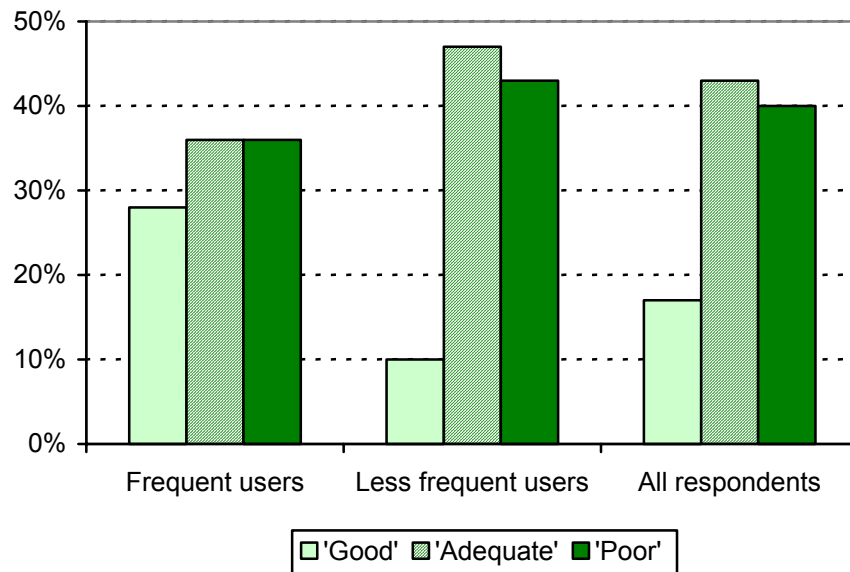
Figure 4: Percentage of hacking / riding time spent on bridleways and unsurfaced roads

Percentage of hack or ride spent on bridleways or unsurfaced roads	% of respondents
More than 75% of the time	14%
50% - 75% of the time	26%
25% – 49% of the time	25%
Less than 25% of the time	28%
None of the time	7%

Results – Satisfaction with bridleways

- Overall, 17% of respondents think that the condition of bridleways in their area is either 'good' or 'very good'. A further 43% think that bridleways in their area are 'adequate', whilst the remaining 40% think they are either 'poor' or 'very poor'.
- Respondents who spend more than half of their time on bridleways appear to be slightly more satisfied with the quality of the condition of them, compared to those who spend less time on them. Figure 5 shows the levels of satisfaction between the two sets of respondents.

Figure 5: Satisfaction with the condition of bridleways



- Overall, 15% of respondents think that the condition of bridleways in their area is either 'very good' or 'good', whilst 65% think that the condition is 'poor' or 'very poor'. The remaining 20% think that it is adequate.

- Respondents were asked what they thought of the network of bridleways in their area, the results are shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6: “How would you rate the network of bridleways in your area?”

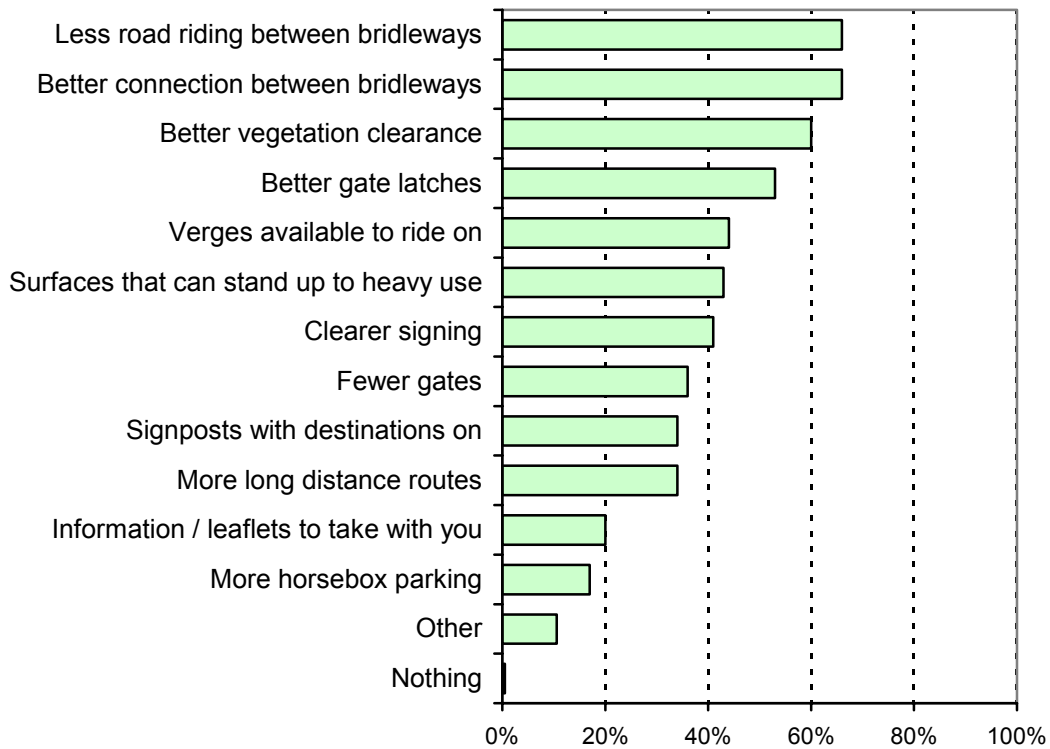


- Again, when the results are broken down to respondents who use the bridleway network the most and least, those who use them the most have a greater level of satisfaction. One-quarter of respondents (25%) who use the bridleways the most think that the network is either 'good' or 'very good', compared to two-fifths (40%) who think it is either 'poor' or 'very poor'. The comparative figures for respondents who use the bridleway network less often are 7% and 83% respectively.
- Respondents were asked what three things they would improve about the bridleways they use. The most popular comments are detailed below:
 - Horse friendly gates 39%
 - Better clearance of vegetation 34%
 - A more even riding surface 33%
 - Better signposting and way marking 19%
 - More bridleways 19%
 - Better linking of bridleways 15%
 - Less road riding between bridleways 13%
 - Wider paths 12%
 - Bridleways that don't allow vehicles 12%
 - More consideration from land owners 7%

Results – Likes and dislikes

- Respondents were asked to indicate what would encourage them to make more use of the bridleways or to use different bridleways. They were asked to tick up to five factors from a list of 14. Less than 1% of respondents thought that there was 'nothing' that would encourage them, the views of the other respondents are shown below in Figure 7.

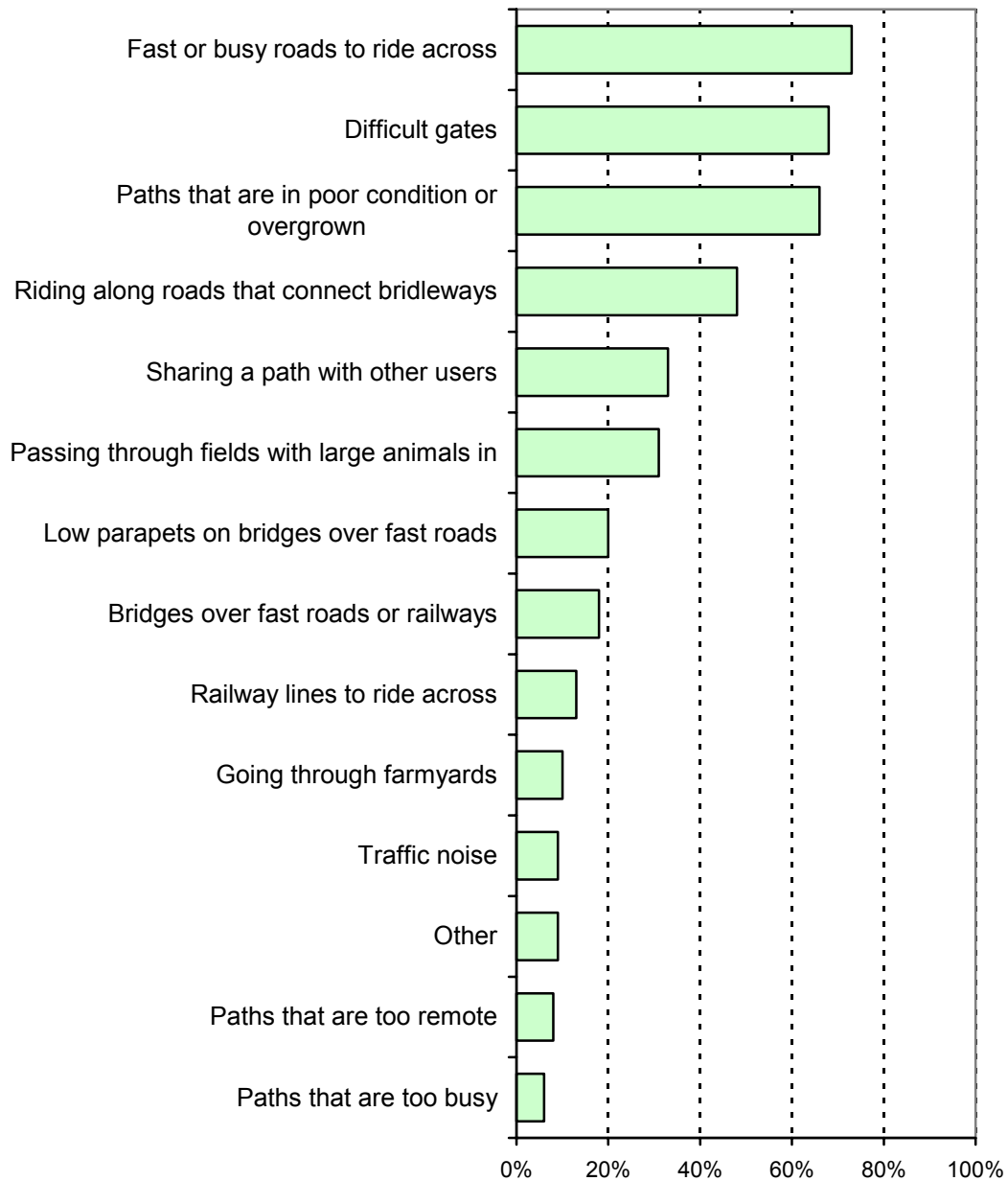
Figure 7: “What would encourage you to make more use of the bridleways or to use different bridleways?”



- Of the respondents who chose 'other' as a factor their suggestions are summarised below:
 - More bridleways in the area 6 respondents
 - Co-operation from landowners / farmers 5 respondents
 - Banning motor vehicles 4 respondents
 - Areas to gallop / jump 3 respondents

- Respondents were asked to indicate what puts them off using particular paths. They were asked to tick up to five options from a list of 14; Figure 8 shows the results.
- Nearly three-quarters of respondents (73%) stated that crossing busy or fast roads put them off using a particular path. Approximately two-thirds of respondents reported that difficult gates (68%) and paths that are in poor condition or overgrown (66%) were also things that would put them off using a particular path.

Figure 8: “What puts you off using particular paths?”



- Of the respondents who chose ‘other’ as a factor that puts them off using particular paths, there were no comments that were made by more than one respondent, although abusive landowners, unsafe routes and lack of signage were all mentioned.

- Nearly four in five respondents (79%) stated that they would be willing to pay for toll rides or permits.

Results – Miscellany

- Nearly one half of respondents (46%) travel to other parts of the County or further afield to ride out.
- There were few respondents who reported that they use their horse for driving. Overall, 5% of respondents reported that they drive their horse on tarmac roads, 3% drive their horse on their own land and 3% on unsurfaced routes.
- Nearly one-half of respondents (46%) said they were a member of the British Horse Society, whilst 3% said that they were a member of the British Driving Society.
- Approximately two-fifths of respondents (41%) said that they were a member of a local equestrian group.
- More than one-third (34%) said that they were not a member of any equestrian groups.



Research Report

Rights of Way Improvement Plan Consultation – Motorised Users

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

March 2005



Contact: David Gardiner
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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 **motorised users**. The consultation was carried out in August and September 2004.

Definitions

The terms 'off road' and 'off roading' were used in the questionnaire to mean the use of a highway, or other land, which does not have a sealed (tarmac) surface.

Key findings

- Most respondents use byways and/or unclassified county roads (83%) and green lanes (79%) to drive 'off road'.
- Four in ten respondents (40%) indicated that they follow a voluntary code of practice, [TRF (Trail Riders Fellowship) or GLASS (Green Lane Association) codes of conduct].
- Water, hedged lanes, routes without hedges, routes with trees and dry and sunny weather were all factors looked for when respondents go 'off roading'.
- To take in the views and scenery, was the main reason why many respondents drove 'off road' in Warwickshire.
- More than 60% of respondents were uncertain about the legal status of Warwickshire's unsurfaced roads.

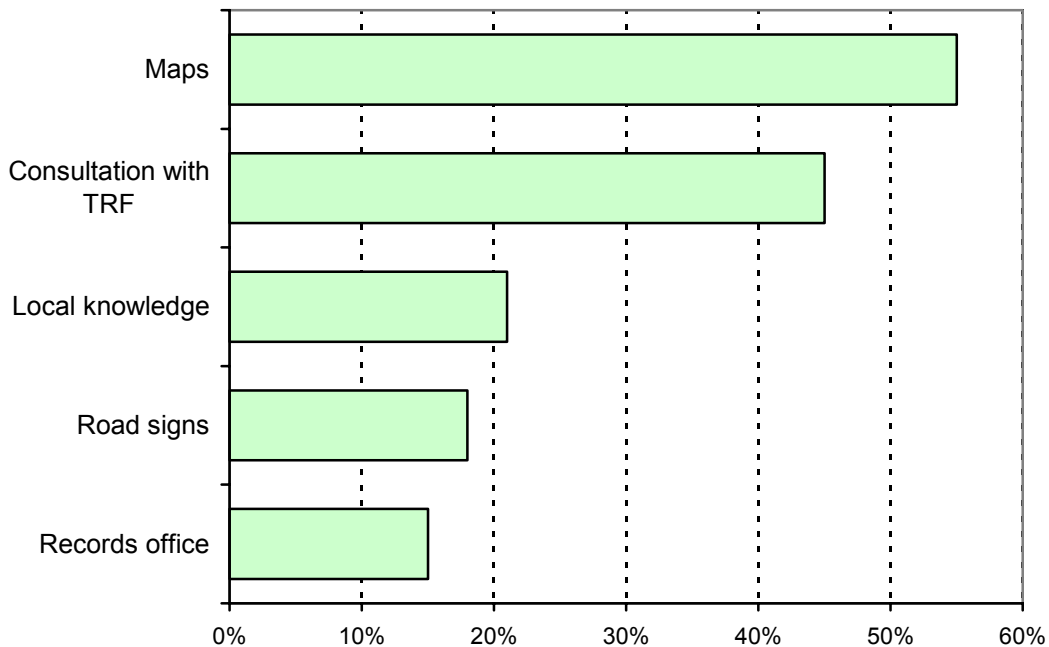
Response rates

- The questionnaire attracted 95 respondents. The vast majority of respondents (95%) were male, and most respondents (74%) were aged between 30 and 59, whilst one in five respondents (20%) were aged under 30. The vast majority of respondents (98%) classified themselves as being 'White' – with the other respondents classifying themselves as 'Asian or Asian British' and 'Black or Black British'.

Results – Your vehicle and 'off roading'

- Respondents were initially asked what vehicle they use when driving 'off road'. The most popular type of vehicle was a Land Rover or other 4x4 vehicle, driven by 59% of respondents. 46% of respondents rode a motorcycle, 6% drove an ex-military vehicle and 2% rode a quad bike or trike.
- 22% of respondents owned a motorcycle that they only use 'off road'. 2% of respondents owned a Land Rover or other 4x4 that they keep just for 'off road' use and 1% owned a quad bike or trike that was only used 'off road'.
- Most respondents use byways and/or unclassified county roads (83%) and green lanes (79%) to drive 'off road' and 85% of respondents go outside Warwickshire to drive 'off road'. Many respondents also use specialist sites or courses (45%) and private land (43%).
- Respondents were asked how they identified which routes they can use; the most popular responses are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: "Tell us how you identify which routes you can use."



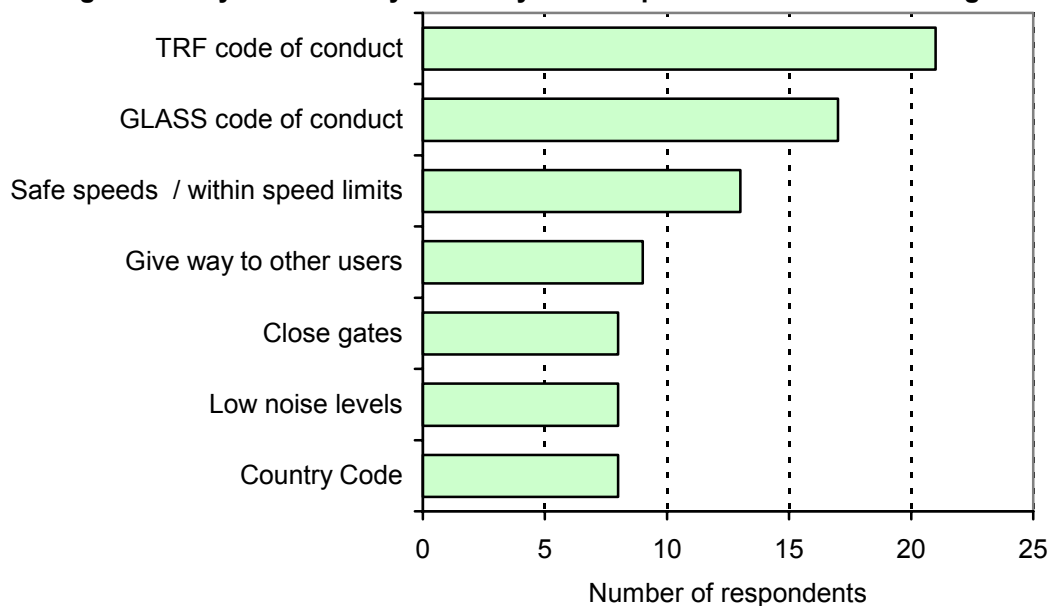
- Nearly four out of five respondents were a member of a special interest motorised user group. The most popular groups that respondents were members of were the Trail Riders Fellowship (28 respondents) and the British Motorcycle Federation (27 respondents). Figure 2 shows the results in more detail.

Figure 2: Special interest motorised user groups

Organisation	No. of respondents
Trail Riders Fellowship (TRF)	28
British Motorcycle Federation (BMF)	27
Green Lane Association (GLASS)	9
All Wheel Drive Club (AWDC)	8
Disabled Off Road Association (DORA)	4
Land Rover Owners Club	3
Land Access and Recreational Association (LARA)	1
Other	40

- 34 respondents were members of more than one user group.
- Respondents were asked whether they followed any voluntary code of practice whilst 'off roading'; Figure 3 shows the results.

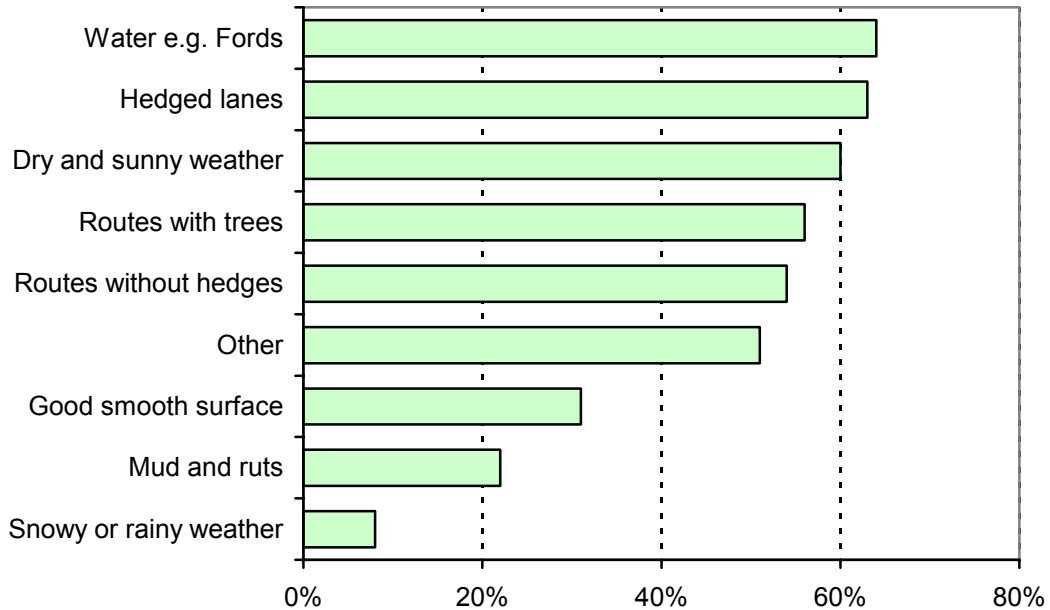
Figure 3: Do you follow any voluntary code of practice whilst 'off roading'?



- One in six respondents go 'off road' driving in Warwickshire at least once a week, a further one-half of respondents travel 'off road' at least once a month, whilst the remainder travel 'off road' less often.
- Respondents were asked who they usually go 'off road' driving with. The results were fairly evenly spread between respondents going in a single vehicle, in a group of other vehicles or on an organised day out with a special interest group.

- Respondents were asked for their opinion on the unsurfaced roads in Warwickshire – 25% of respondents said that they were generally good, although 3% said that they were generally bad. 18% of respondents thought that the signage could be better, although 4% of respondents said that they thought signage was good. 11% of respondents thought that the roads required more maintenance and 9% of respondents thought that more 'off road' facilities should be available in general.
- Respondents were asked what they look for when they go 'off roading' in Warwickshire; the five most popular answers are shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: "What do you look for when you go 'off roading' in Warwickshire?"

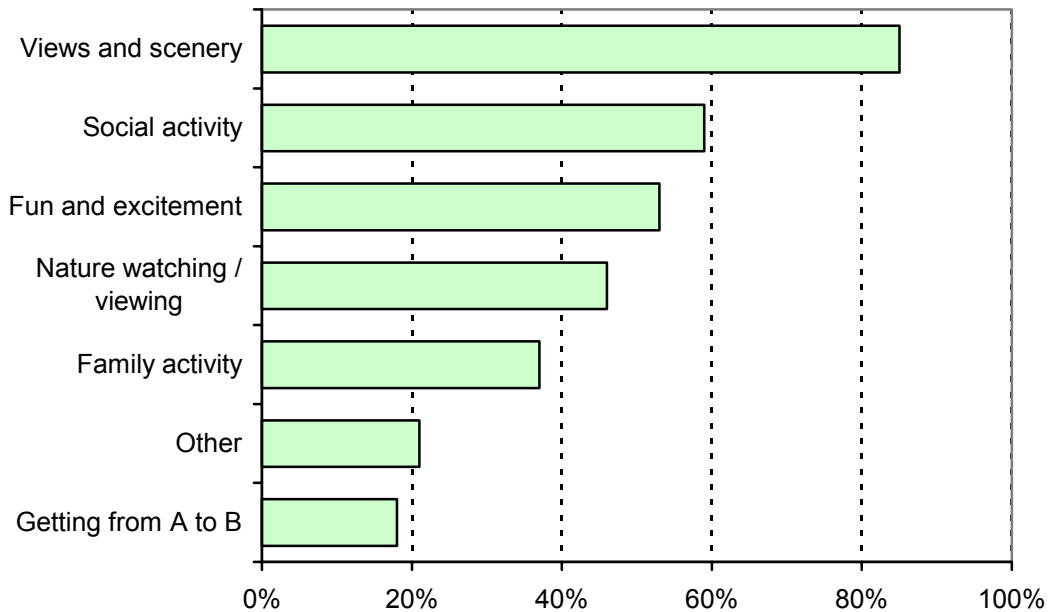


- Of the 50 people who ticked "other", the following topics were mentioned several times;

Comment	no.
good views and scenery	16 respondents
places which cannot be reached by a normal car	4 respondents
routes which are legal for motor vehicles to use	5 respondents
routes which have not been damaged/badly rutted	9 respondents
places without mud and ruts	8 respondents

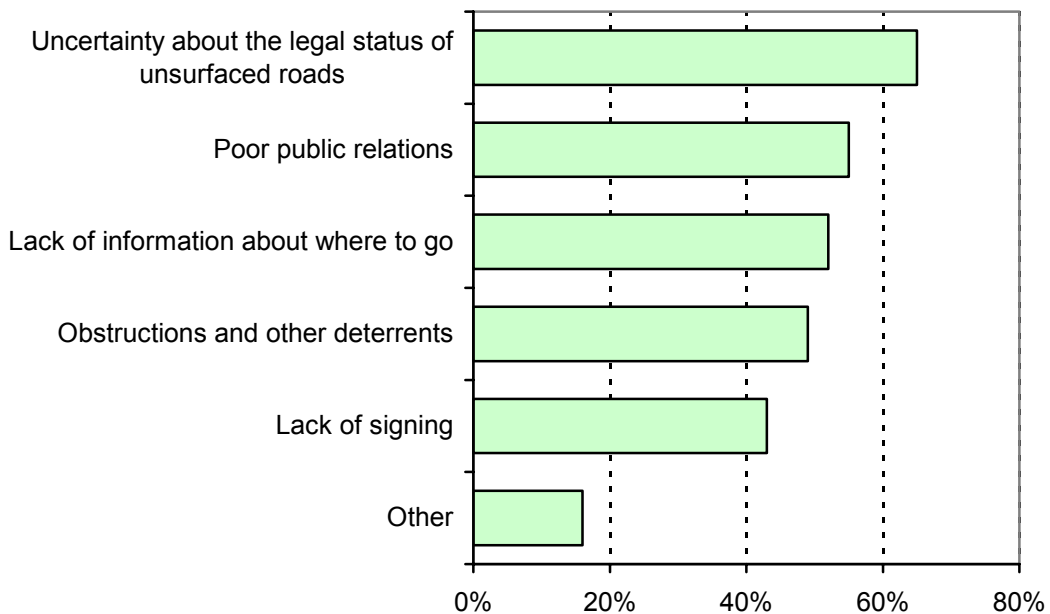
- Taking in the views and scenery was considered the main reason for 'off roading' in Warwickshire, the other main reasons are shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5: "What are your main reasons for 'off road' driving?"



- "Other" answers mentioned include using historic routes, exploring the countryside and navigational challenge.
- Respondents appeared to be divided as to what the most important factors were that affected their use of Warwickshire's unsurfaced roads. Respondents were given a list of six options, and several received similar levels of support; Figure 6 shows the results.

Figure 6: "What are the most important factors affecting your use of Warwickshire's unsurfaced roads?"



Of those who ticked "Other" several people mentioned the unhelpful attitudes of other rights of way users and some landowners.

- Respondents were asked what they understood by the term 'unclassified county roads' to mean. The most correct answer would have been to identify that
 - they are maintainable at public expense,
 - they are public highways and
 - some of them can legally be used by motor vehicles.

More than one-half of respondents (55%) stated that they are public highways and one in five (20%) stated that they are green lanes. More than two in five respondents (43%) think that they are maintainable at public expense.

There seems to be some confusion about whether they can legally be used by motor vehicles, 48% said that some of them can, 42% said that all of them can, and 1% said that they can only be used by motor vehicles.

Although many respondents chose one or two of the correct options, there was just one respondent who got the answer totally correct, as defined above

- Respondents were asked if they had any general or specific improvements they would like to see to the 'off road' network; the most common responses were:
 - Better signage of routes
 - Clearer / better defined legal routes
 - More lanes / legal routes
 - More Rights of Way legislation / enforcement
 - Up to date information
 - Quicker resolution of claims / disputes
 - More tolerance from other user groups / awareness



Research Report

Rights of Way Improvement Plan Consultation – Land Managers

Findings from a survey of land owners and managers within Warwickshire
about the Rights of Way Improvement Plan

March 2005



Contact: David Gardiner
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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 / 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 **land owners and managers**. The consultation was carried out in August and September 2004.

Key findings

- The majority of respondents (90%) were responding with agriculture as their main form of business. Nearly two-thirds of these were family farms up to 500 acres in size.
- In total, the consultation covered landowners who managed approximately 28% of the County's rights of way and unclassified county roads network.
- The greatest benefit that landowners identified with opening their land to public access was that it gave a greater appreciation and understanding of the countryside to more people. Getting the public reconnected with food production was also a common benefit that was associated with public access.
- 'Dogs running loose' and 'dog fouling' were identified as the greatest problems that landowners face when giving public access to their land.
- 'Working with schools and with the community' was popular with landowners as a way of making the public more aware of their responsibilities.
- The most significant factor persuading landowners to provide more public access, is exchanging 'new paths for old'.
- It appears that landowners would be discouraged from opening up more of their land because of the increased liability it would put on them.

Response rates

- Overall, 186 completed questionnaires were received from the land managers consultation, 172 paper copies were received and 14 land managers replied through the Warwickshire County Council website.
- Landowners from across the County were invited to respond to the questionnaire; Figure 1 shows the location of respondents from across the County, and beyond.

Figure 1: "Please indicate where you manage land."

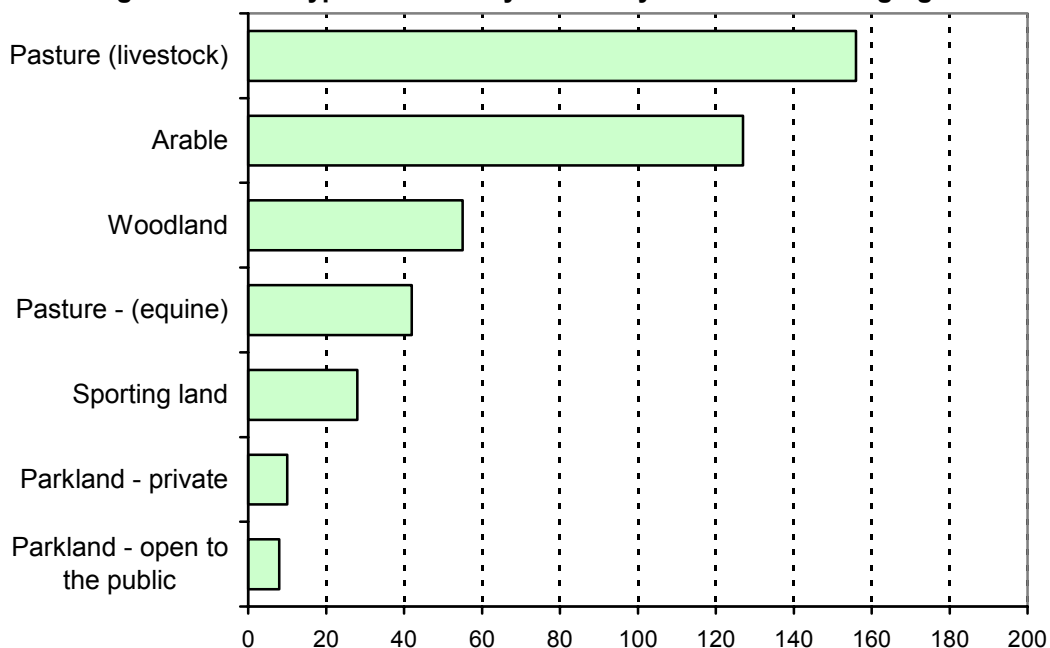
Location	No. of respondents
Coventry and / or Solihull	9
North Warwickshire	17
Nuneaton and Bedworth	11
Rugby Borough	56
Stratford-on-Avon District	86
Warwick District	34

- There were ten respondents who owned or managed land outside of the sub-region, they represent the areas of Leicestershire, North Wales, Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire and Worcestershire.

Results – Type of land management

- The majority of landowners (90%) were responding with agriculture as their main business. Of the remainder 7% own an estate, 2% own an equestrian business and 1% a recreational business.
- Of the agricultural businesses, nearly two-thirds (65%) were family farms up to 500 acres in size. One-quarter (25%) were larger family farms or commercial enterprises, and one in ten (10%) were smallholdings or other small enterprises.
- Respondents were asked what type of land they are directly involved in managing, the various land types are detailed in Figure 2.

Figure 2: "What type of land are you directly involved in managing?"



- Respondents were asked what their responsibility was for the land, 82% were owner occupiers of land, 40% were tenants and 8% were estate / farm managers.

Results – Access for the public

- Respondents were asked how many miles of footpaths, bridleways and byways there were over land that they managed. Taking into account all of the respondents, this consultation has covered approximately:
 - 335 miles of footpaths (326 miles within Warwickshire or 23% of footpaths by length),
 - 115 miles of bridleways (all within Warwickshire covering 38% of bridleways by length) and
 - 45 miles of byways or unclassified country roads (41 within Warwickshire or 65% of unclassified country roads / byways by length).
- Respondents reported that they had other types of public access in the form of:

• Disused railways	15 respondents
• Other permissive access (free)	15 respondents
• Canals	14 respondents
• Countryside Stewardship Scheme (linear)	8 respondents
• Countryside Stewardship Scheme (area)	8 respondents
• Country park or land open to paying public	6 respondents
• Common land	4 respondents

Results – Advantages of public access

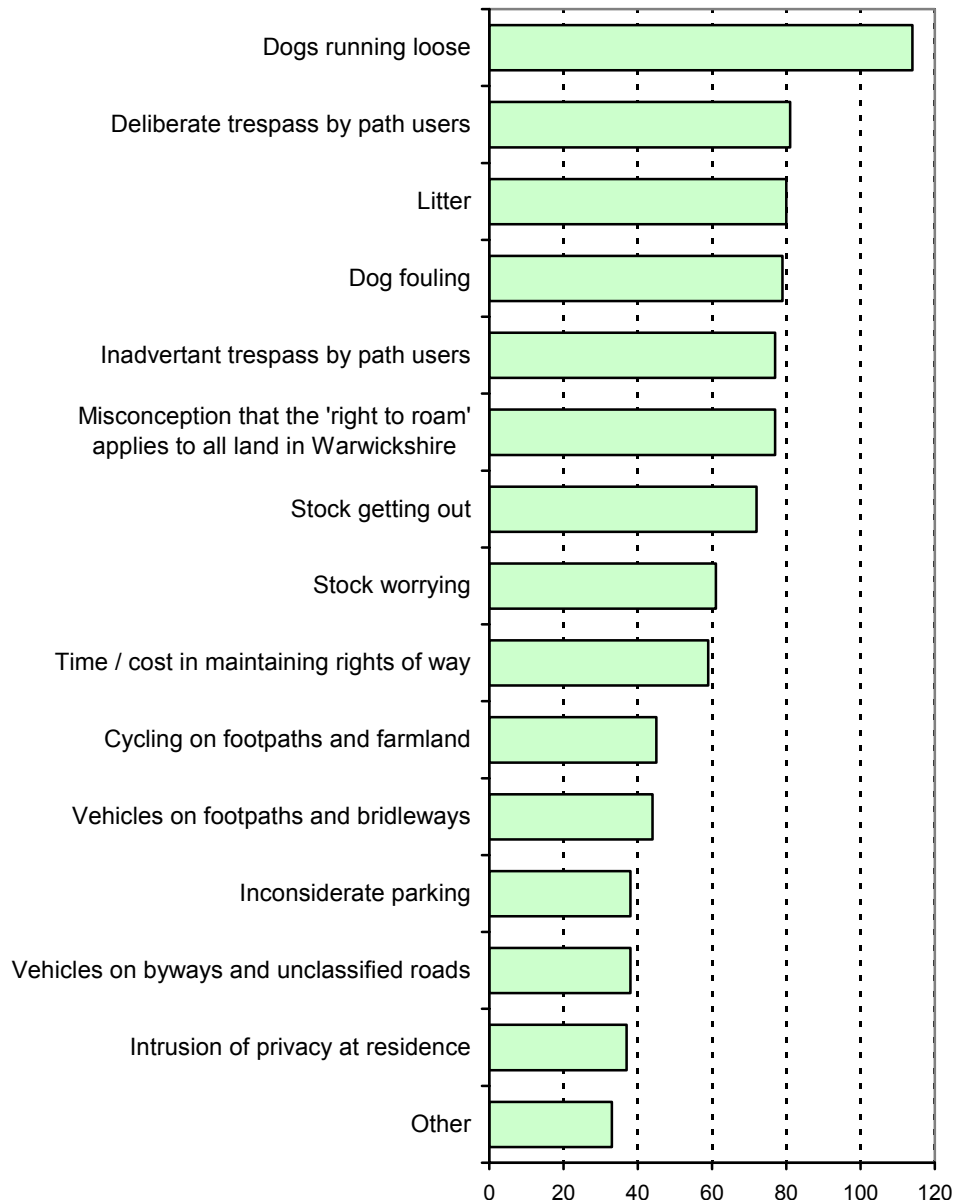
- Only 8% of land managers indicated that public access benefits their business directly, and a further 8% indicated that public access benefits their business indirectly.
- Approximately 14% of land managers thought that public access went a significant way to benefiting the local economy
- 12% of land managers thought that it helped to enable diversification.
- Nearly one-third of respondents (32%) said that opening their land up to the public reconnected people to food production, and nearly one-half (48%) said that it gave a greater appreciation and understanding of the countryside.
- Respondents were invited to say what other further potential benefits they associated with public access over their land; the results are detailed below.

• Let public see how hard it is to run a farm	3 respondents
• Village / residential benefits	3 respondents
• Get told about missing / injured animals	2 respondents
• So they can enjoy the countryside	2 respondents
- It was also mentioned by single respondents that it is a good public relations exercise for farmers and there is also an indirect benefit to horse grazing.

Results – Disadvantages of public access

- Respondents were given a list of 15 potential problems associated with the existence of public rights of way on their land. The most common problem that land owners associated with public rights of way running through their land was 'dogs running loose'.

Figure 3: "Which of the following are the most significant problems directly associated with the existence of public rights of way on land in which you have an interest?"

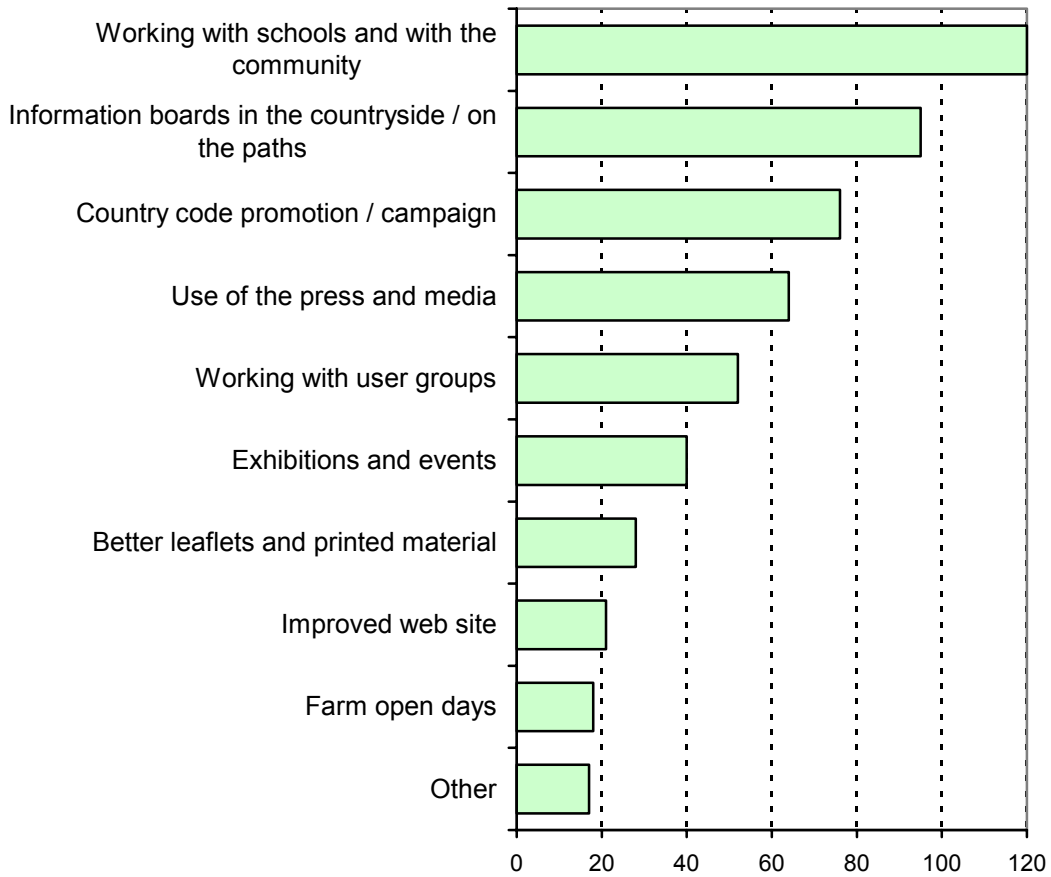


Issues which land managers mentioned under 'other' include a lack of respect/bad attitude from users, trespass, crime/security and concern about wildlife. Many of the 'Other' comments emphasised the problems surrounding dogs and dog fouling and issues around gates being left open.

Several landowners said that a choice of three is not possible because many or all of the options are significant problems.

- Landowners were asked what would be most valuable to them in assisting with making the public more aware of their responsibilities as well as their rights. Respondents were given a list of ten possible options and were asked to select up to three, the results are shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: “Which would be the most valuable in making the public more aware of their responsibilities as well as their rights?”

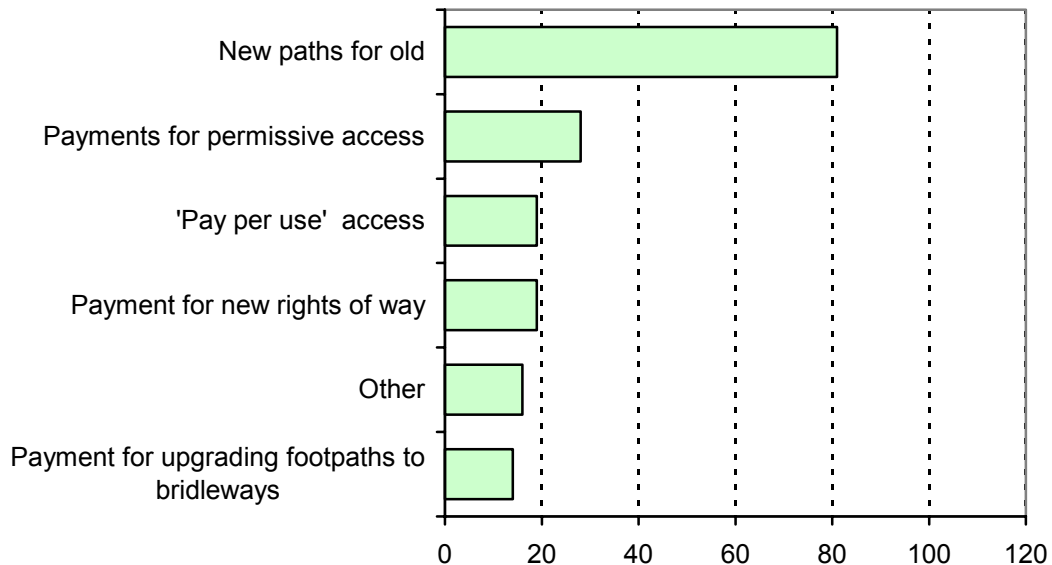


Issues which land managers mentioned under ‘other’ relate to control of dogs. Several landowners believe that the problems are caused by a problem minority and that they would be unlikely to become more responsible.

Results – Providing greater public access

- Landowners were asked, from a list of options, what would encourage them to provide greater public access to land they own, results are shown below:

Figure 5: "Which of the following would most encourage you to provide greater public access to land owned by you?"

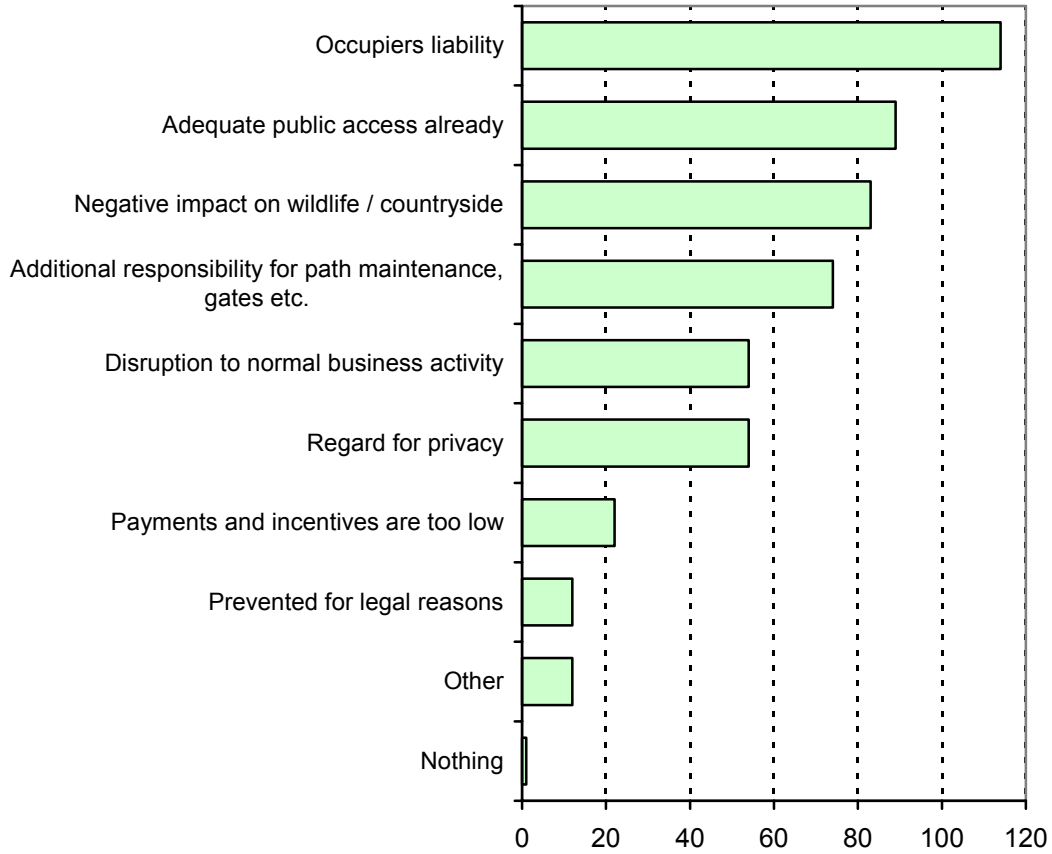


- However, two in five landowners said that there was 'nothing' that would encourage them to open up more of their land for public access.

Issues which land managers mentioned under 'other' include a responsible attitude from users, changes to occupiers liability, payments to cover existing access (stiles, reinstatement) and payment by users to use the existing rights of way.

- Respondents were also asked what would discourage them from providing greater public access. From a list of ten options, the most common responses were:

Figure 6: "Which of the following would most discourage you from providing greater public access?"



- Only one respondent stated that there was nothing that would discourage them from providing greater public access on their land.
- Landowners and land managers were also given the opportunity to tell us about anything else that should be considered in producing a Rights of Way Improvement Plan for the County. More than 50 respondents stated some further issues that should be considered, those that received the most support are detailed below:

- Public need to respect others' land 12 respondents
- Safety concerns 6 respondents
- Insurance concerns 4 respondents
- Curb vandalism 4 respondents
- Conservation concerns 4 respondents
- Litter concerns / fly tipping 4 respondents
- Rights of way activities clash with farm activities 4 respondents
- More dog control generally 4 respondents



Research Report

Rights of Way Improvement Plan Consultation – Parish and Town Councils

Findings from a survey of all Parish and Town Councils within Warwickshire
about the Rights of Way Improvement Plan

March 2005



Contact: David Gardiner
Phone: 01926 418049
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Introduction

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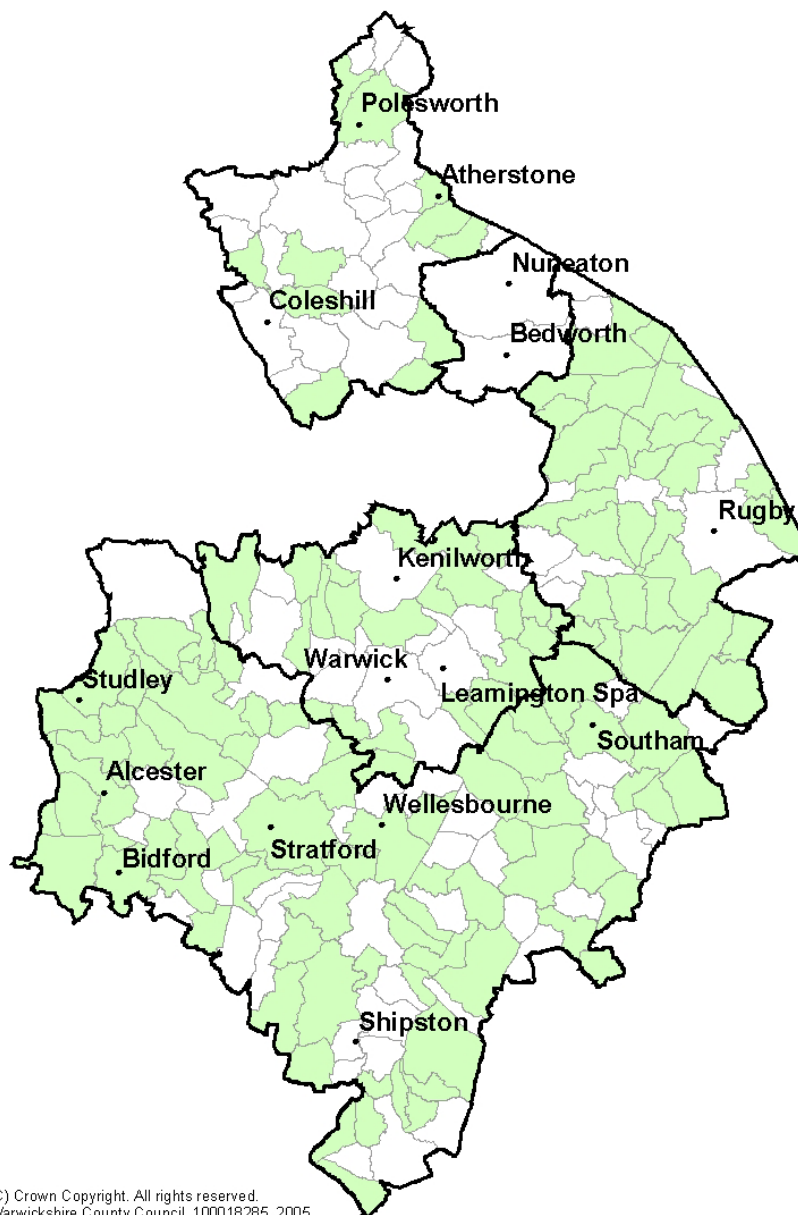
Key findings

- In total, 128 completed responses were received from the 225 that were distributed, a 57% response rate.
- Only 18% of Councils think that there are not enough footpaths, 28% think that there are not enough bridleways and 10% think that there are not enough unsurfaced vehicular routes in their area.
- 35% of Councils thought that the overall condition and signage of routes was either 'good' or very good', although 18% thought they were either 'poor' or 'very poor'.
- To enable more people to access rural paths in the countryside, Councils believe that priority should be given to 'properly reinstating field paths through crops or following ploughing'.
- To encourage people to use the rural paths network more, Councils believe that priority should be given to providing 'good quality circular trails and accompanying leaflets'.
- To improve access when walking or cycling on rural paths, Councils believe that priority should be given to 'reducing traffic speeds on country lanes'.
- To improve utility paths, Councils believe that priority should be given to 'improved surfacing' and 'vegetation clearance'.
- To improve the utility paths network, Councils believe that priority should be given to 'linking up existing paths'.

Response rates

- Questionnaires were sent to all Parish and Town Councils in the County – 225 in all. In total, 128 completed responses were received, a response rate of 57%.
- Response rates were as follows
 - North Warwickshire Borough 34% (11 out of 32)
 - Rugby Borough 77% (30 out of 39)
 - Stratford District 56% (68 out of 121)
 - Warwick District 40% (14 out of 35)
- There were five completed questionnaires that did not supply the name of their Parish or Town Council. Figure 1 shows the Parish and Town Councils that have responded to the questionnaire.

Figure 1: Map highlighting Councils that have responded



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Results - Thinking about your parish and the immediate surrounds

- 80% of Councils think that they have about the right number of footpaths in their area, 18% think that there are not enough footpaths and 2% think there are too many.
- 72% of Councils think that they have about the right number of bridleways in their area, whilst 28% think there are not enough.
- 79% of Councils think they have about the right number of unsurfaced vehicular routes in their area, 10% think there are not enough and 11% think there are too many.
- 82% of Councils thought that the overall condition and signage of routes in their area were adequate or better than adequate.
- Figures 2 and 3 summarise the responses to these questions.

Figure 2: “What do you think about the extent of the rights of way and minor highway network?”

	Not enough	About right	Too many
Footpaths	18%	80%	2%
Bridleways	28%	72%	0%
Unsurfaced vehicular roads	10%	79%	11%

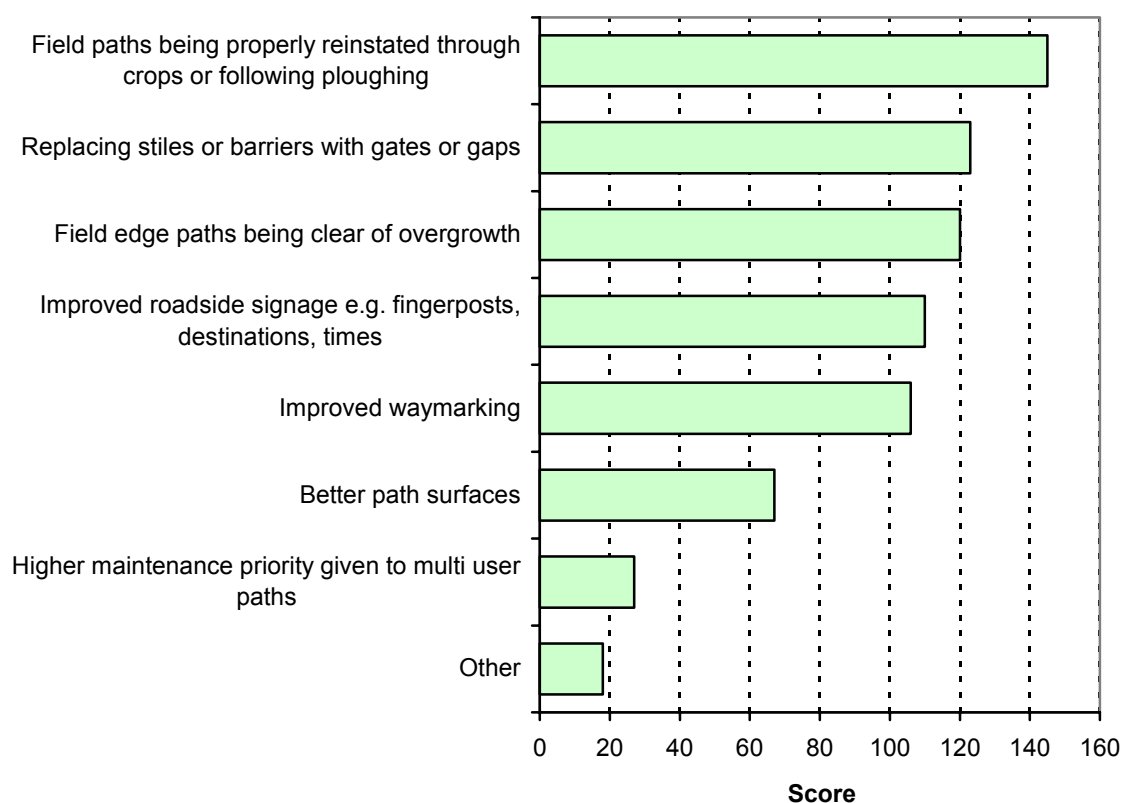
Figure 3: “In general how would you rate the overall condition and signage of the routes?”

	% of Councils
Very Good	6%
Good	29%
Adequate	47%
Poor	16%
Very poor	2%

Setting priorities for your area – thinking about rural paths

- Councils were asked to rate their top 3 priorities, in order to measure the following questions. If an option was the Council's first priority it was given a score of 3, if it was the Council's second option it was given a score of 2, and if it was the Council's third priority it was given a score of 1.
- Respondents were asked what would enable more people to access the countryside, from a list of eight options. The graph below shows the total score for each option based on the scoring system explained above.

Figure 4: “What would enable more people to access the countryside?”



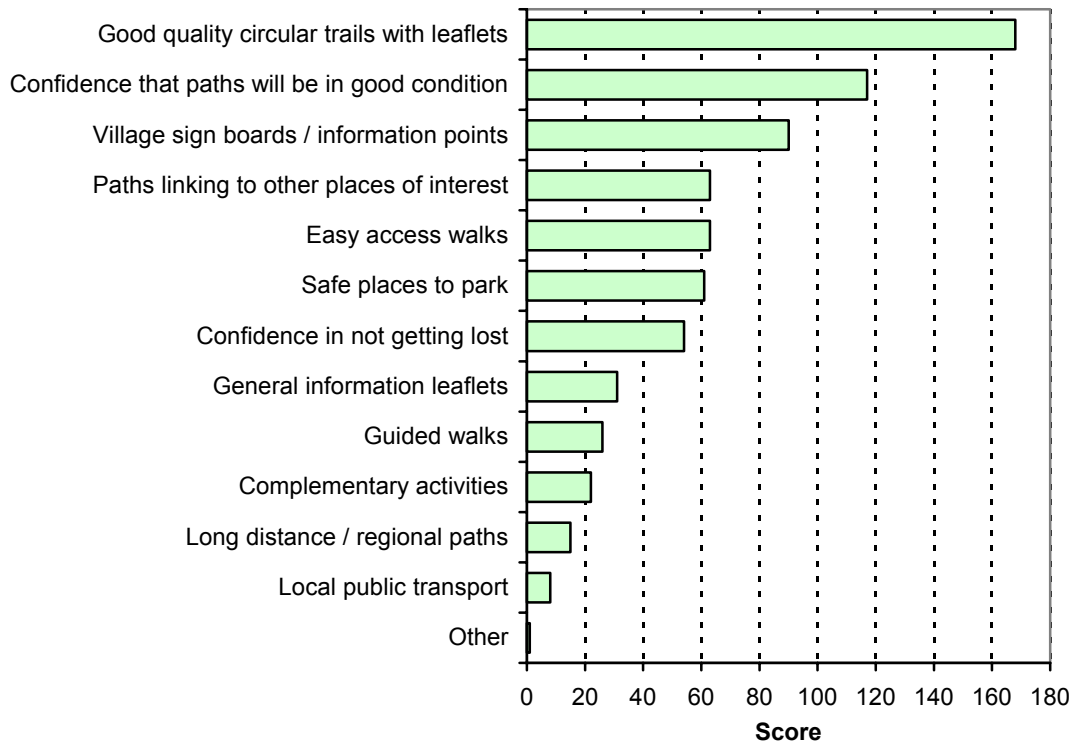
- It appears that ‘field paths being properly reinstated through crops or following ploughing’ is the main priority for Councils. The option was mentioned on 70 occasions in the top three priorities and was mentioned as the top priority by 23 Councils. The following table shows the frequency of responses for the other options.

Figure 5: Frequency of options

	Main Priority	Top 3 Priority
Field paths being properly reinstated through crops or following ploughing	23	70
Replacing stiles or barriers with gates or gaps	24	60
Field edge paths being clear of overgrowth	15	67
Improved roadside signage	21	52
Improved waymarking	13	56
Better path surfaces	11	33
Higher maintenance priority given to multi user paths	3	15
Other	3	9

- Councils were given the option of adding anything else to the list as a priority; keeping all paths clear of overgrowth, the provision of detailed maps and the removal of dog mess were mentioned as alternative ways forward.
- Councils were asked what would encourage people to use the network more. Figure 6 shows the results (using the same scoring system as before)

Figure 6: “What would encourage people to use the network more?”



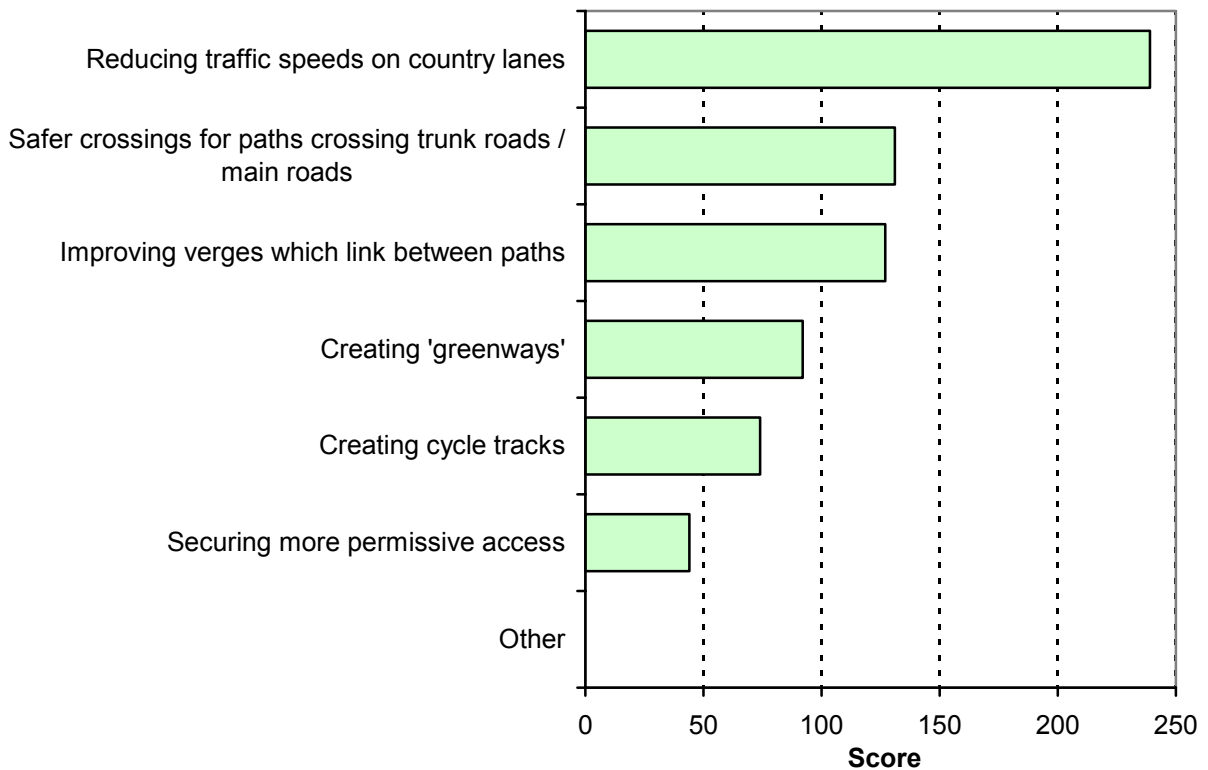
- 30 Councils stated that their top priority was ‘good quality circular trails and accompanying leaflets’, as well as a further 49 Councils placing the option in their top 3 priorities. Figure 7 shows the level of priority given to the other options in the questionnaire.

Figure 7: Frequency of options

	Main Priority	Top 3 Priority
Good quality circular trails and accompanying leaflets	30	79
Confidence that paths will be in good condition	23	56
Village sign boards / information points	22	40
Paths linking to other places of interest	4	43
Easy access walks	6	38
Safe places to park	6	39
Confidence in not getting lost	7	27
General information leaflets	3	18
Guided walks	4	12
Complementary activities	4	13
Long distance / regional paths	2	10
Local public transport	1	6
Other	0	1

- The only other option that was mentioned were the provision of classes in map reading and further information regarding local walks and local maps.
- Councils were asked what other types of access, which may be part of a walk or ride, they think the County Council should prioritise. Using the same scoring system as before, Figure 8 shows the results for the seven options.

Figure 8: “Thinking about other types of access which may be part of a walk or ride, which should we prioritise?”



- 64 Councils stated that reducing traffic speeds on country lanes was their main priority, whilst a further 30 Councils selected it in their top 3. Figure 9 shows how the options were prioritised by all the Councils.

Figure 9: Frequency of options

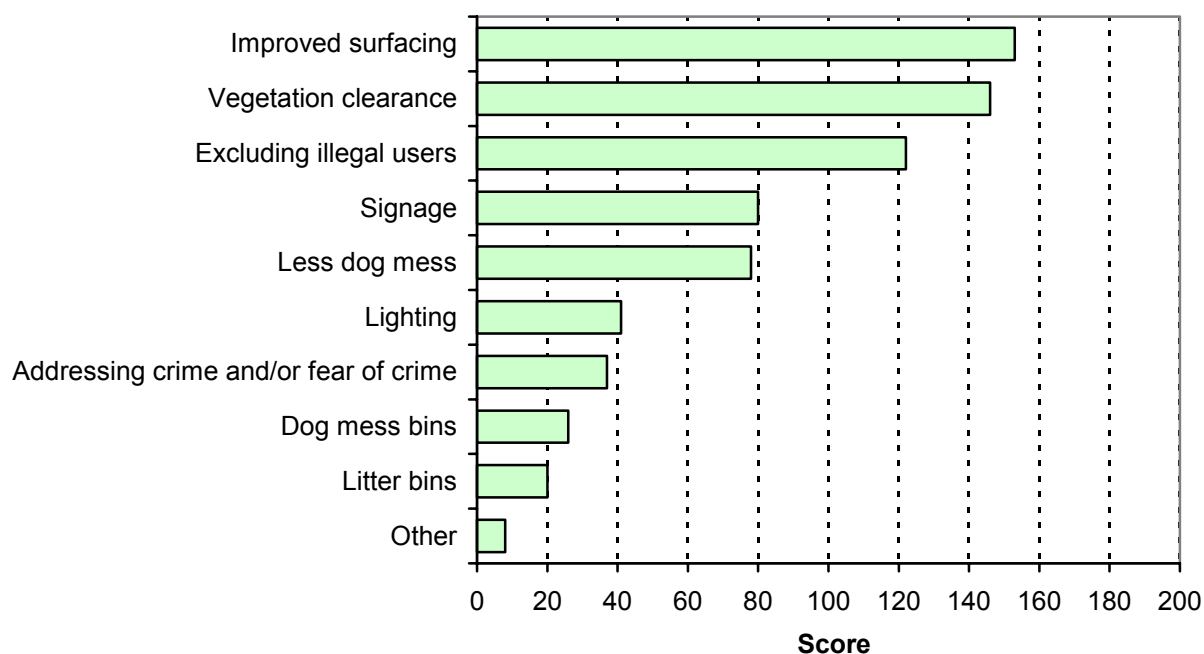
	Main Priority	Top 3 Priority
Reducing traffic speeds on country lanes	64	94
Safer crossings for paths crossing trunk roads / main roads	17	65
Improving verges which link between paths	22	61
Creating 'greenways'	10	53
Creating cycle tracks	4	44
Securing more permissive access	2	28
Other	0	0

- Councils were invited to suggest any other options that the Improvement Plan should consider, but no suggestions were put forward.

Setting priorities for your area – thinking about utility paths

- Using the same system as before, Councils were asked to prioritise their top three from the list of ten, the results are shown in Figure 10.

Figure 10: “ What would improve utility paths?”



- 32 Councils put ‘improved surfacing’ as their top choice to improve utility paths, and a further 38 Councils had the option amongst their top three. ‘Vegetation clearance’ was also popular, being at the top of 19 Councils’ priorities and in the top three of a further 58 Councils.

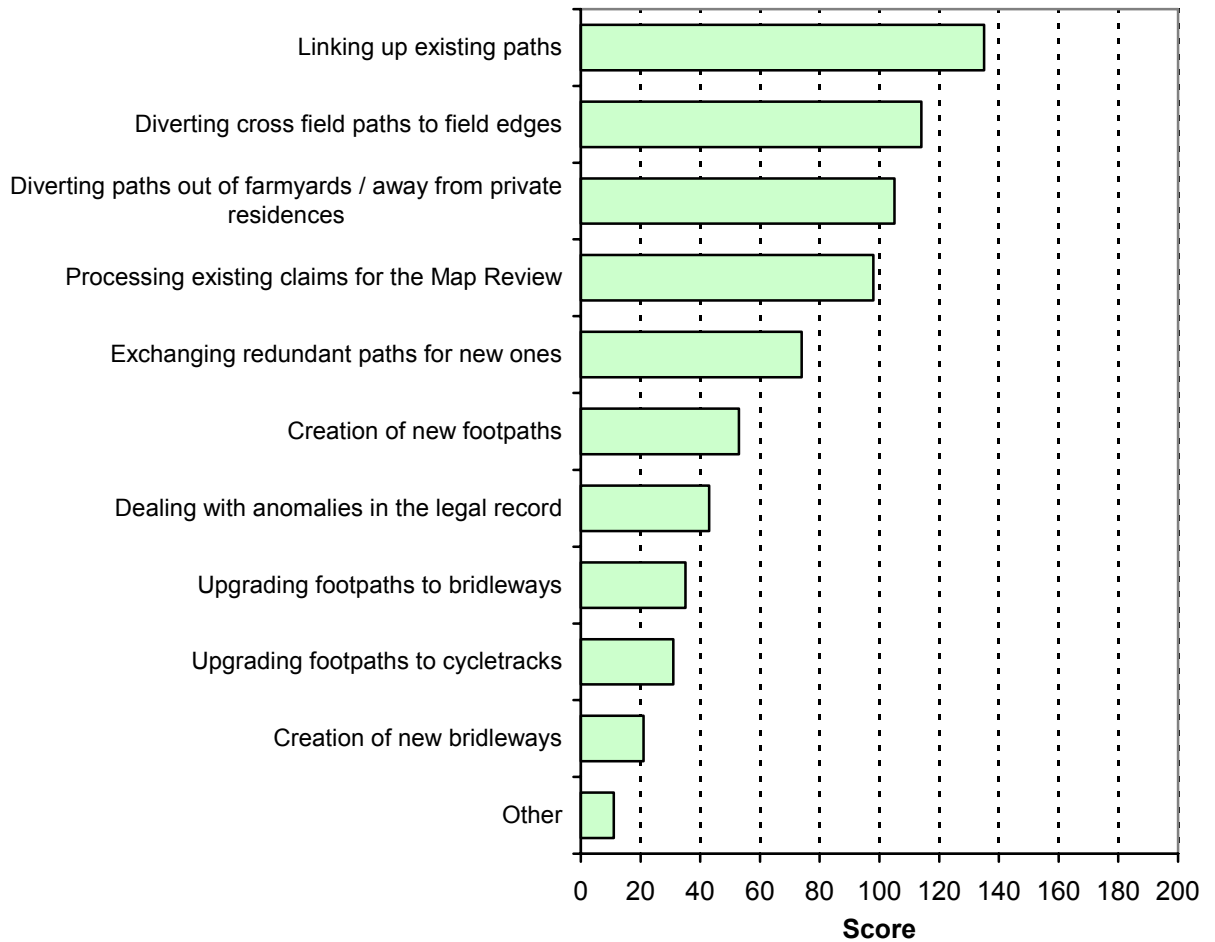
Figure 11: Frequency of options

	Main Priority	Top 3 Priority
Improved surfacing	32	70
Vegetation clearance	19	77
Excluding illegal users	28	53
Signage	12	42
Less dog mess	11	41
Lighting	3	24
Addressing crime and/or fear of crime	3	23
Dog mess bins	2	16
Litter bins	2	13
Other	2	1

- ‘Vehicles parking on paths’, ‘keeping dogs on leads’ and ‘complete links from one village to another’ were suggestions put forward by Councils as other ways utility paths could be improved.

- Councils were asked about what additions or changes should be made to the local utility path networks, the results are shown in Figure 12.

Figure 12: “ Thinking about adding to, or changing, the local network, where should our priorities lie?”



- The top four priorities that were highlighted by the responding Councils were fairly evenly distributed. Although ‘linking up existing paths’ came out as the top priority using the scoring system, ‘diverting paths out of farm yards or away from private residences’ was mentioned as the top priority by most of the Councils. Figure 13 shows the level of priority given to the other options.

Figure 13: Frequency of options

	Main Priority	Top 3 Priority
Linking up existing paths	20	72
Diverting cross filed paths to field edges	16	58
Diverting paths out of farm yards or away from private residences	22	48
Processing existing evidential claims as part of the Definitive Map review	21	47
Exchanging redundant paths for new, more useful, ones	7	42
Creation of new footpaths	10	24
Dealing with anomalies in the legal record	6	27
Upgrading footpaths to bridleways	7	16
Upgrading footpaths to cycletracks	3	18
Creation of new bridleways	3	12
Other	2	3

- ‘Creating new cycle ways into small towns and villages’, ‘removing damaging vehicles from footpaths’ and ‘removing dogs from areas where children play’ were all given as suggestions to improving the local network.

Community Involvement

- 36% of Councils said that they were currently participating in the Parish Paths Partnership scheme (P3) or have an established volunteer group working on paths, whilst 31% would like further information on P3.
- 16% of Councils have been involved in P3 or volunteering but no longer participate. The main reason for Councils no longer participating in the partnership is that they are subject to a three-year time restriction, which had run its course.
- 12% of Councils have no P3 or volunteer group, but do have a nominated Rights of Way Councillor.
- 3% of Councils are considering joining P3 whilst 8% of Councils have no interest in joining.

Figure 14: “What is the level of your involvement in local paths?”

Level of involvement	%
Currently participating in P3 or have an established volunteer group working on paths	36
Would like further information on P3	31
Have been involved in P3 or volunteering but no longer participate	16
Have no P3 or volunteer group, but have a nominated Rights of Way Councillor	12
Have no interest	8
Considering joining P3	3

- The questionnaire asked Councils what would encourage greater participation from their organisation in maintaining, improving and promoting local paths. The availability of a workforce or volunteer group was the most popular response, attracting 49% of Councils responses. Access to grants and other funding was the second most popular incentive, with 47% of Councils mentioning it as a priority. More support was mentioned by 15% of Councils, but 8% of Councils stated that there was nothing that would encourage them.

Figure 15: “What would encourage greater participation from your Council in maintaining, improving and promoting local paths?”

Incentive	No. of Parishes/Towns
Availability of a workforce or volunteer group	63
Access to grants and other funding	60
Support (rights of way training, workshops, talks from staff etc.)	19
Nothing would	10