



Forestry England

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# Eastridge Woods Community survey

Summary of results

January 2023



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# 1. Context

Between 6 September and 31 October 2022, Forestry England ran a survey to collect the views of the local community, visitors and people who have an interest in Eastridge Woods in Shropshire. The aim was to find out more about the people that visit Eastridge, how they use the woods and what improvements they would like to see.

## 2. Survey methodology

559 people completed the Community Survey on Eastridge Woods. 538 surveys were completed online through Survey Monkey, 21 paper responses were submitted and have been added manually to Survey Monkey.

The survey was built around a set of 19 questions in the following categories:

1. Your relationship to Eastridge Woods
2. Visiting the woodland
3. Working woodland
4. Community woodland
5. About you

The survey questions were promoted in the following formats:

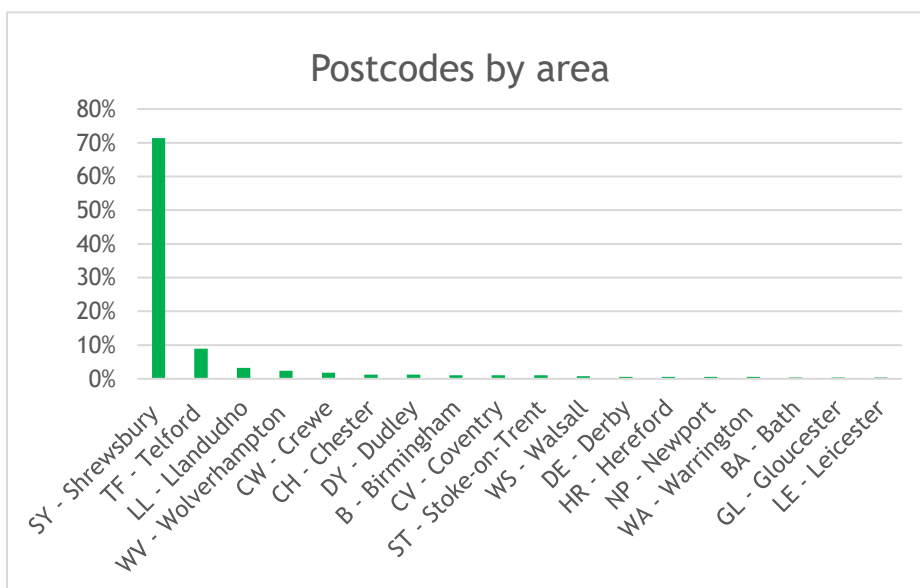
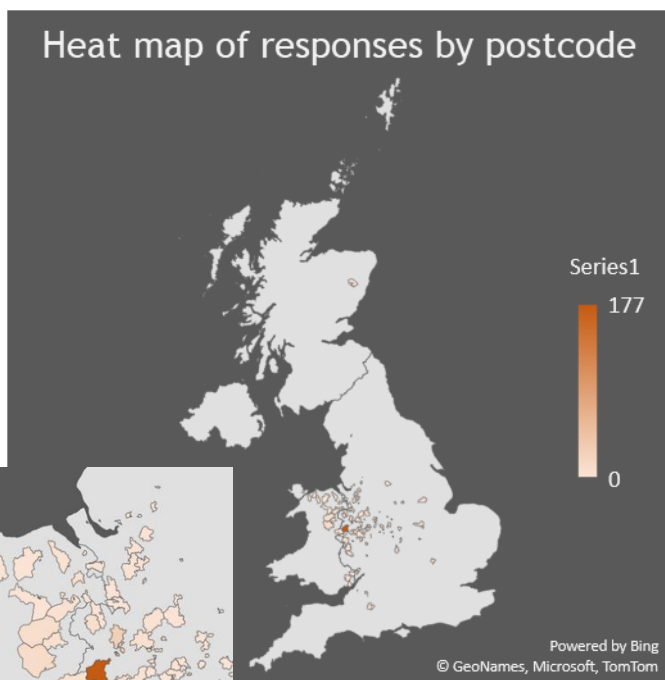
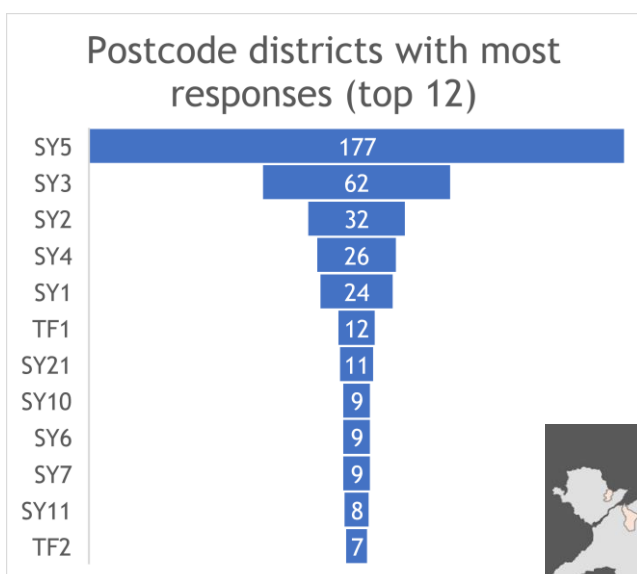
1. Online survey promoted digitally through our local Forestry England Facebook page and shared on an Eastridge Woods community Facebook page and the Snailbeach/ Stiperstones Area Community group Facebook page
2. Online survey link shared further by local mountain biking groups through their own social media channels using their own cover message
3. Posters were displayed onsite at three forest entrances, as well as at the Snailbeach Village Hall and the Stiperstones Inn
4. Paper versions of the survey were available locally at Stiperstones Inn
5. Local MP Heather Kidd, the National Trust, Natural England and Shropshire Hills AONB also helped to share the survey, using posters locally or through their social media channels.

## 3. Summary of results

We have provided the graphs from Survey Monkey, which include online and paper responses. We have been through the hundreds of comments to look for themes and put key themes from each comments section below the graphs. This process is subjective and intended as an overview.

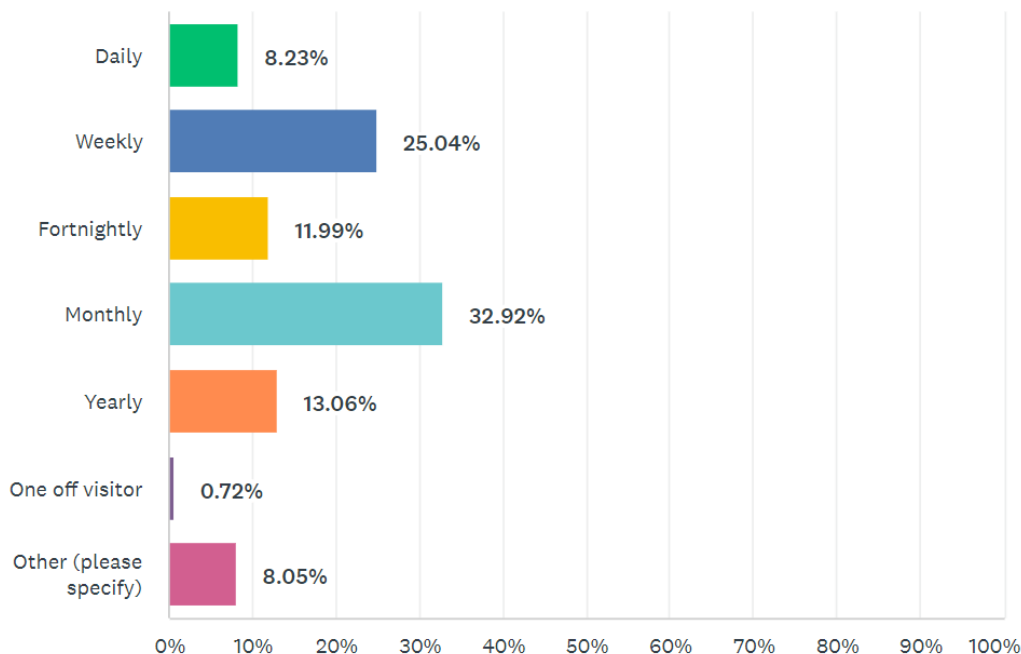
## Q.1: If you live in the UK, please provide the first half of your postcode. Or if you live overseas, what is your country of residence?

The highest proportion of Survey respondents to this survey live within SY5, the same postcode district as Eastridge woods (32.18%). The range of postcodes show that Eastridge is important to both locals and visitors.



Other areas	No. of responses
AB - Aberdeen	1
BL - Bolton	1
BS - Bristol	1
Canada	1
L - Liverpool	1
LA - Lancaster	1
LN - Lincoln	1
M - Manchester	1
NG - Nottingham	1
NN - Northampton	1
S - Sheffield	1
SG - Stevenage	1
WR - Worcester	1

## Q.2: How frequently do you visit Eastridge Woods?



559 respondents answered this question.

‘Other’ responses generally indicated multiple visits per year

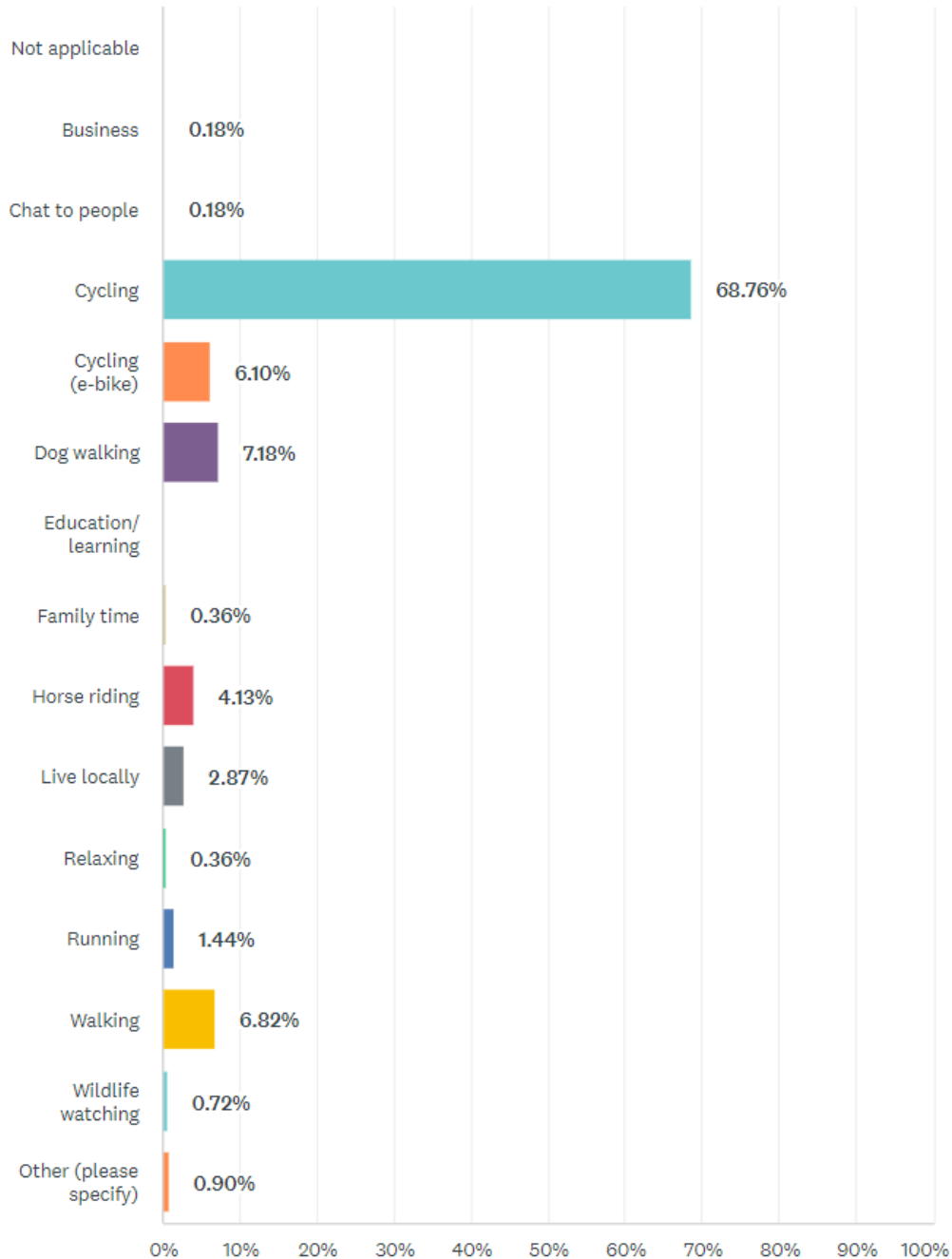
## Q.3: If you don't visit the wood, could you tell us what we could do to encourage you to visit?

Nobody skipped this free text question, of those selecting ‘other’ to the previous question only two people had not visited before.

232 people responded to question three, roughly 50% of these responses were to make suggestions for improvements that might attract more visitors. The most common themes were:

1. New or improved trails for mountain biking, horse riding or walking.
2. Repairs or improvements to the car park access road.
3. Visitor facilities such as a Café and/or toilets.

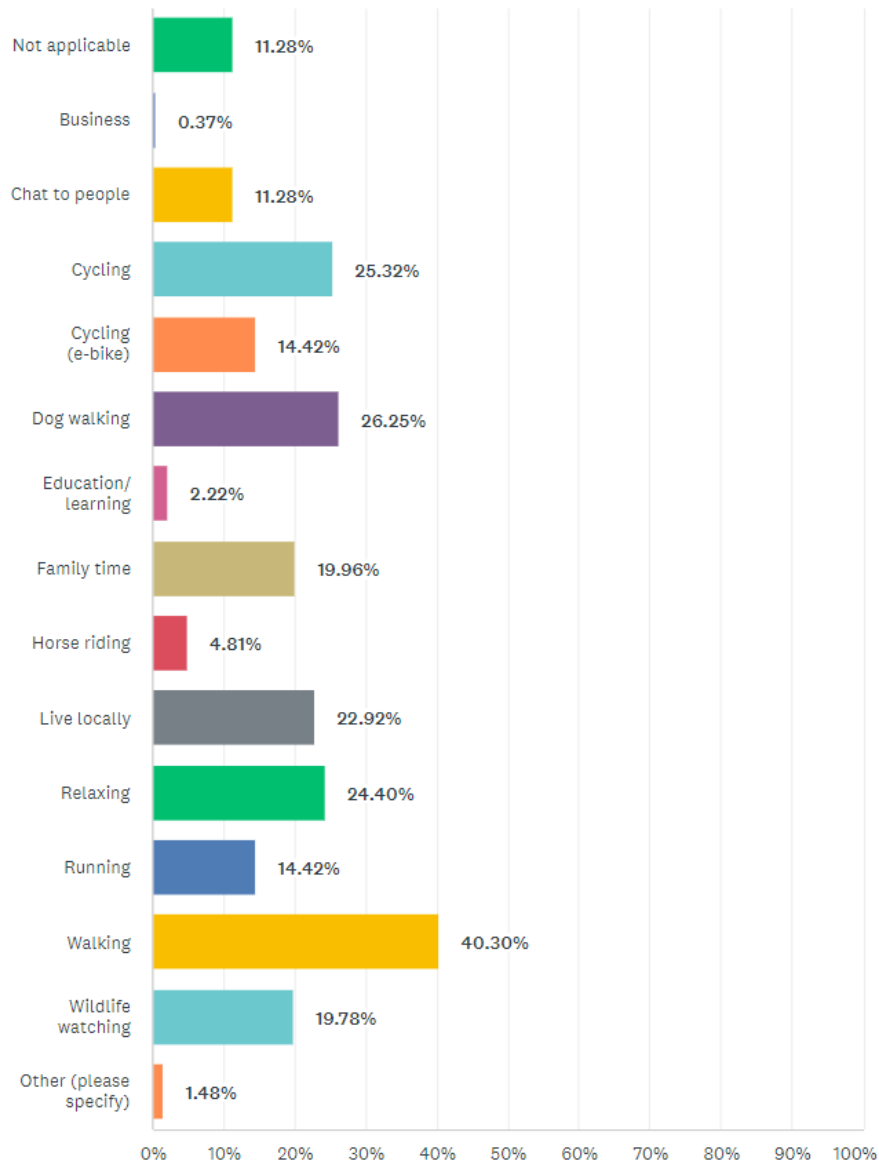
## Q.4: What is your primary interest in Eastridge Woods?



557 respondents answered this question and could only select one option.

‘Other’ responses (5) specified multiple primary reasons for visiting Eastridge.

## Q.5: Are there any other reasons you visit Eastridge Woods?

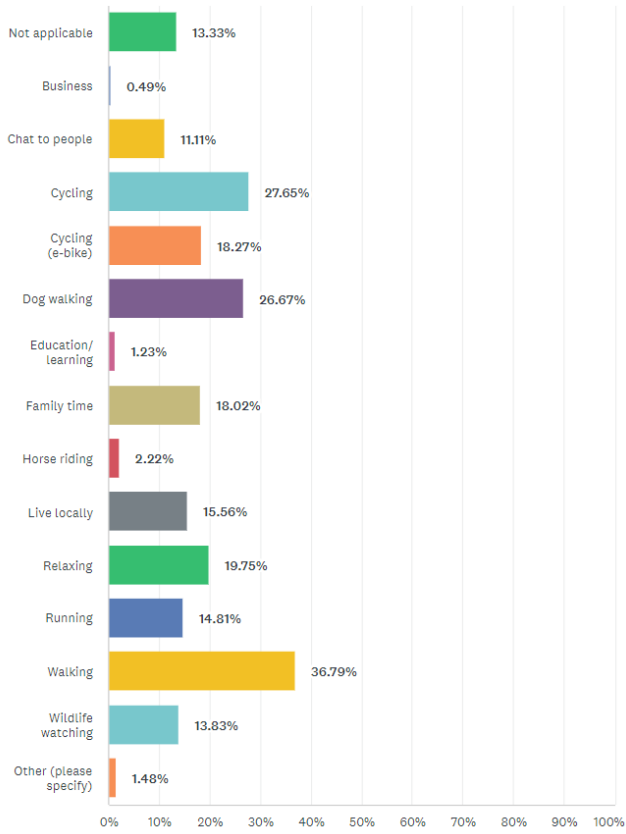


541 respondents answered this question and could select multiple options.

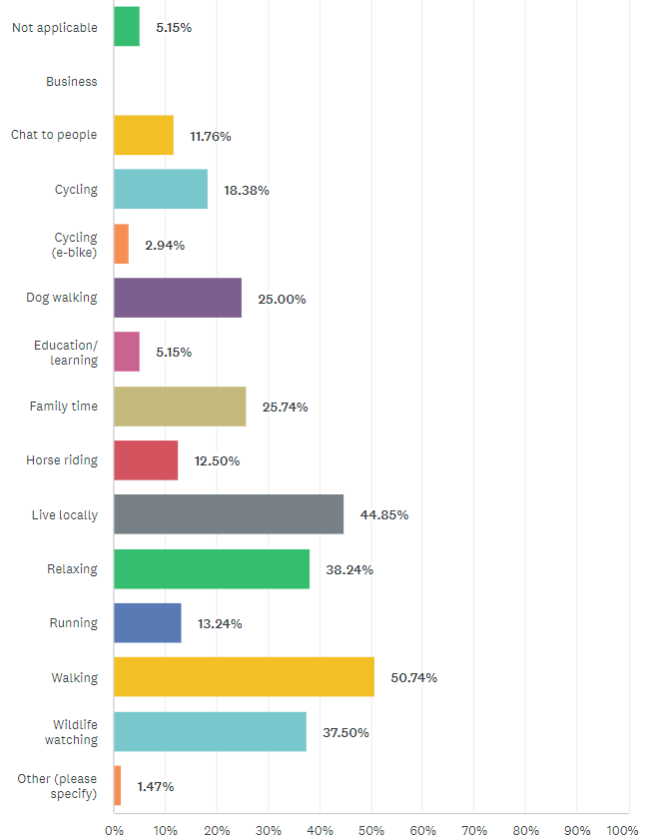
The results of question 5 show that people are using the woods in many ways, suggesting it's not helpful to think about people as 'a cyclist' or 'a walker'. For example, filtering the results shows:

1. 62.41% of cyclists and e-bikers also use the woods for walking and/or dog walking.
2. Nearly 20% of those who primarily visit for other reasons do also cycle or use an e-bike.

**Primary use: Cycling and e-biking  
(417, 74.86%)**  
Are also using the woods for:



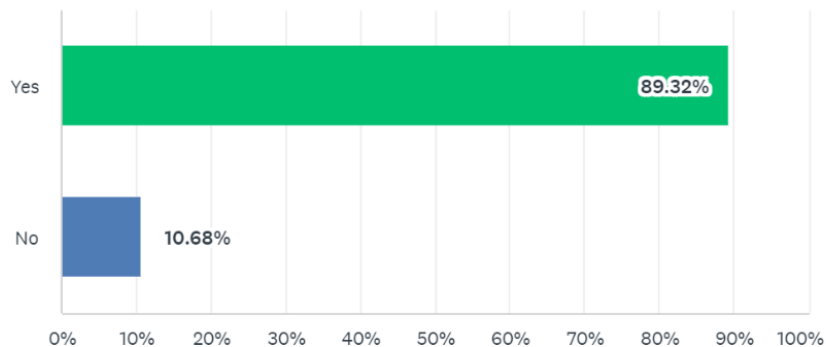
**Primary use: Other than cycling and e-bikes  
(142, 23.32%)**  
Are also using the woods for:





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**Q.6: Eastridge Woods is well used by many people for different reasons such as walking, dog walking, horse riding, mountain biking, wildlife watching and health and well-being activities. Do you feel overall that these groups get along sharing the wood?**

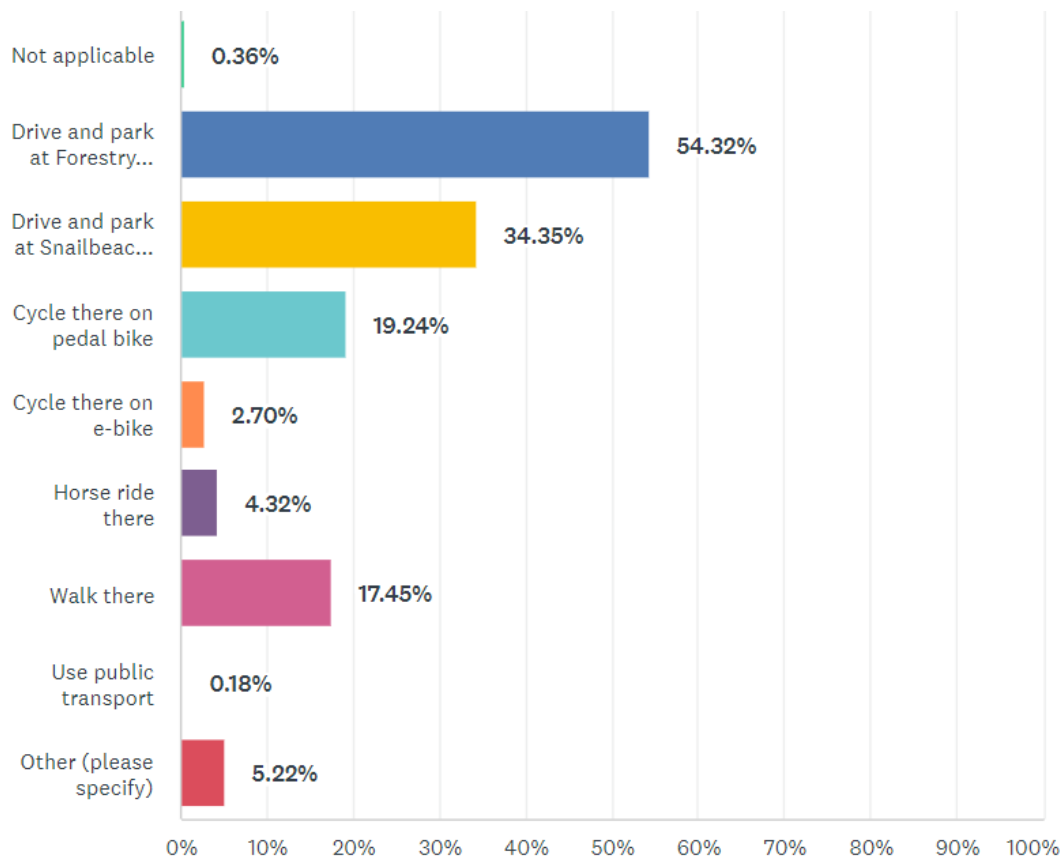


543 respondents answered this question and 178 went on to leave a comment.

The themes that emerged, in order of how frequently they were mentioned:

1. Awareness of conflict between some user groups or individuals.
2. On the whole relationships are positive.
3. Concerns about safety when different user groups are using the same trails.
4. Concerns about use of unauthorised mountain biking trails.
5. Lack of signage contributes to problems.

## Q.7: How do you usually travel to the wood?

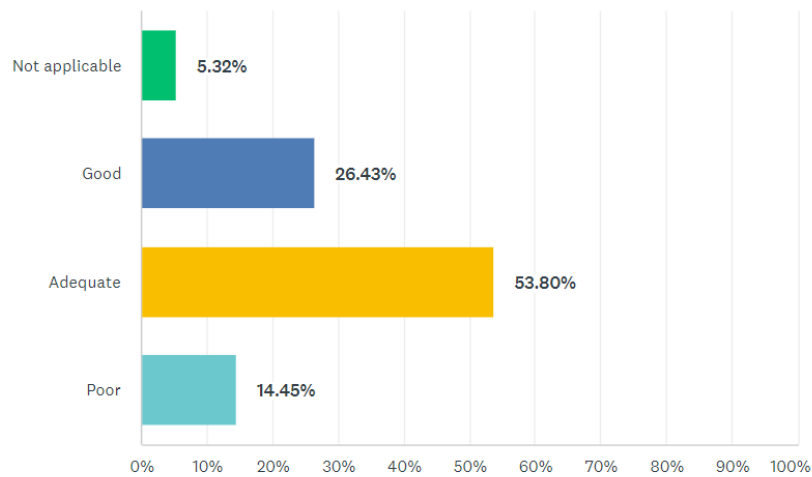


556 respondents answered this question.

‘Other’ responses included running and parking at roadside or layby locations.

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## Q.8: What do you think about the welcome signage?



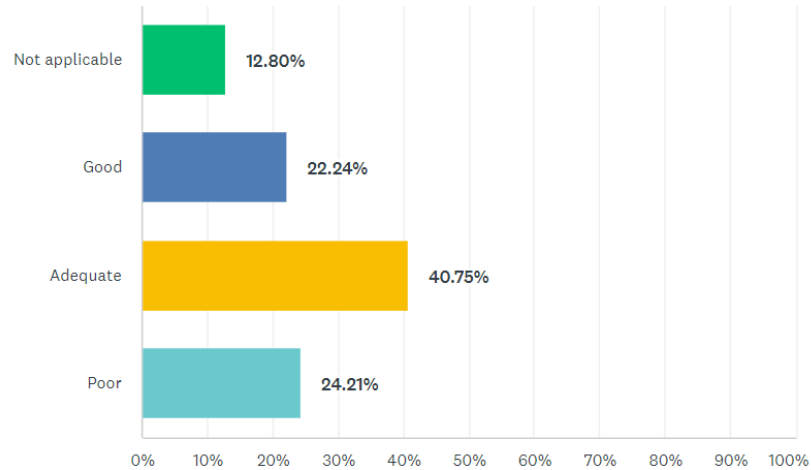
526 respondents answered this question and 57 went on to leave a comment.

Suggestions for improvements to signage included:

1. Better maintenance/replacement of damaged or missing signs.
2. Better orientation and information, particularly which trails are designed for which user group.
3. Importance of using signage to help keep people safe.
4. Improved signage could help reduce conflict between users.

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## Q. 9: Cyclists - what do you think of the cycle route signage and safety information?



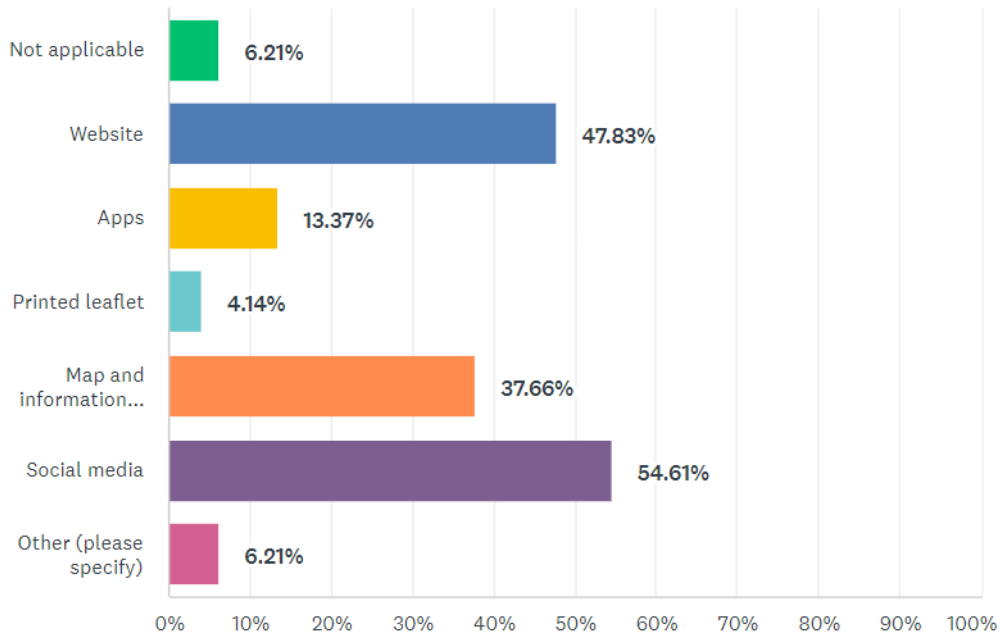
508 respondents answered this question and 85 went on to leave comments.

Suggestions for improvements to signage included:

1. Improved trail markers to help bikers find their way.
2. Address signs that are missing or in need of maintenance.
3. Improved signage could help reduce conflict between different user groups, especially at trail crossing points.
4. Improve signage for safety reasons.

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## Q.10: How do you prefer to get your information about visiting the woods?

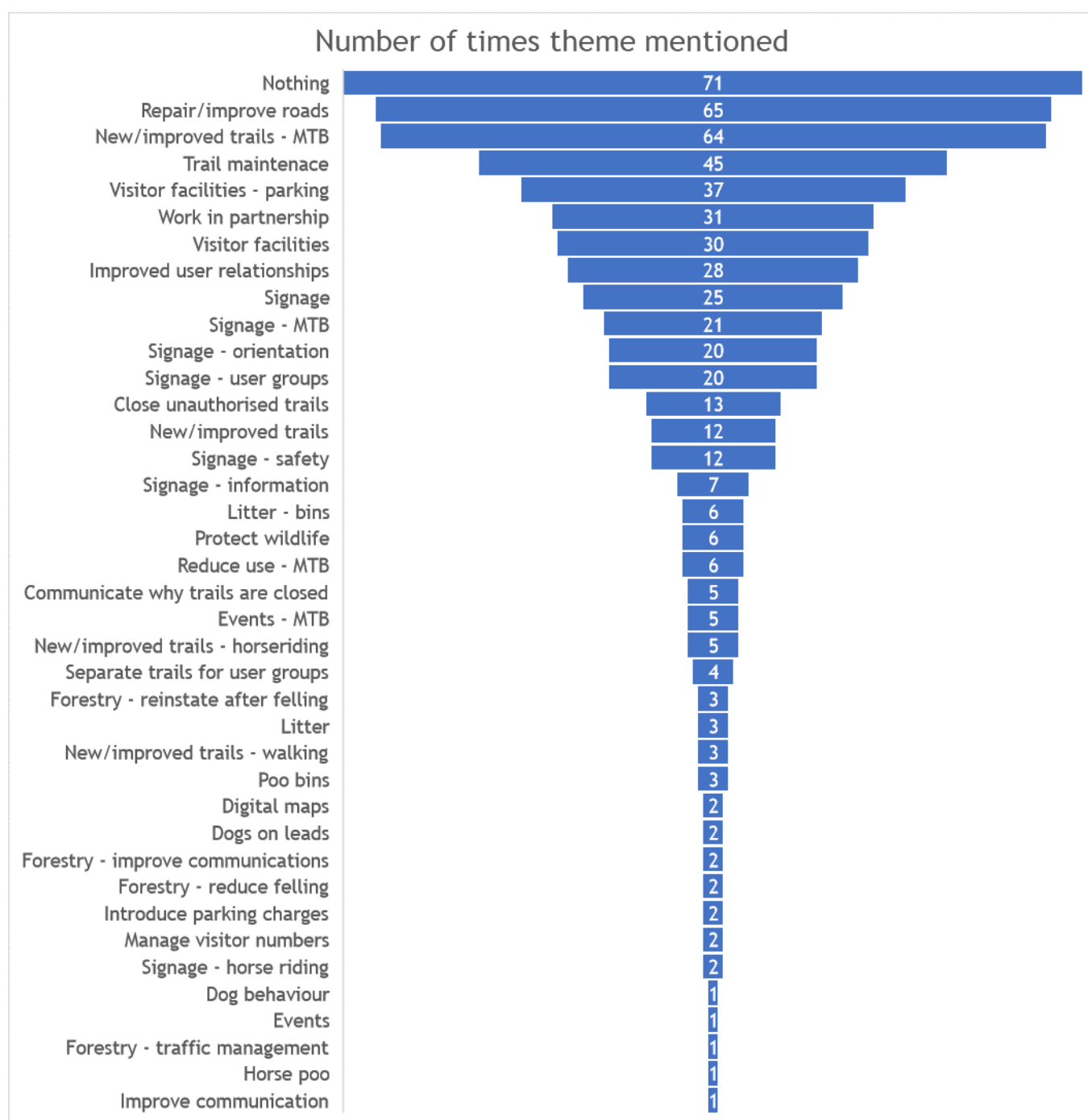


531 respondents answered this question.

‘Other’ responses included word of mouth, maps or apps such as Trailforks.

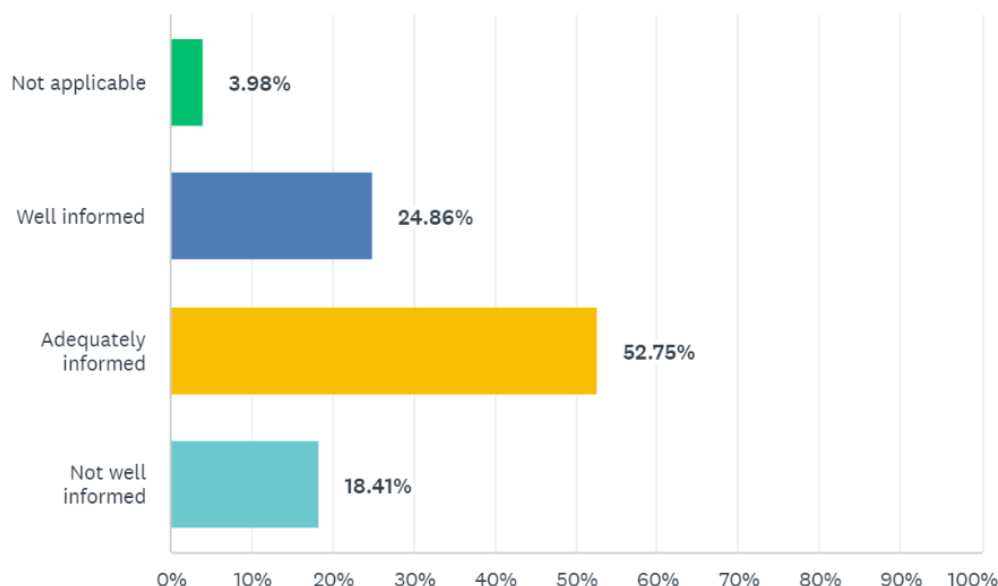
## Q.11: What could we do to improve your visit to Eastridge?

386 respondents answered this question with a free text comment. The themes that emerged, in order of how frequently they were mentioned, were:



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## Q.12: When Forestry England has to fell trees and remove timber in an area of the woodland, how well informed do you feel?



527 respondents answered this question.

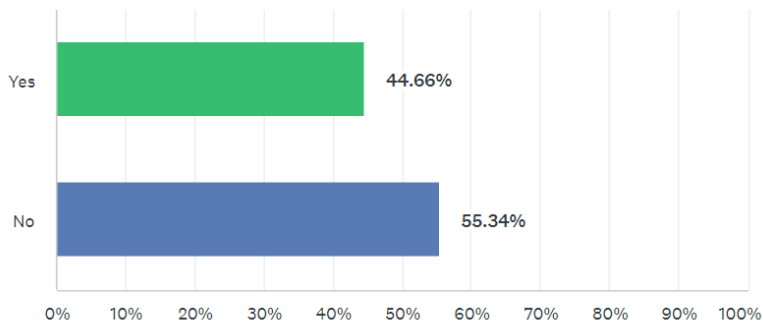
## Q.13: What could Forestry England do differently next time we have forestry operations?

329 respondents answered this question with a free text comment.

The most common themes that emerged, in order of how frequently they were mentioned:

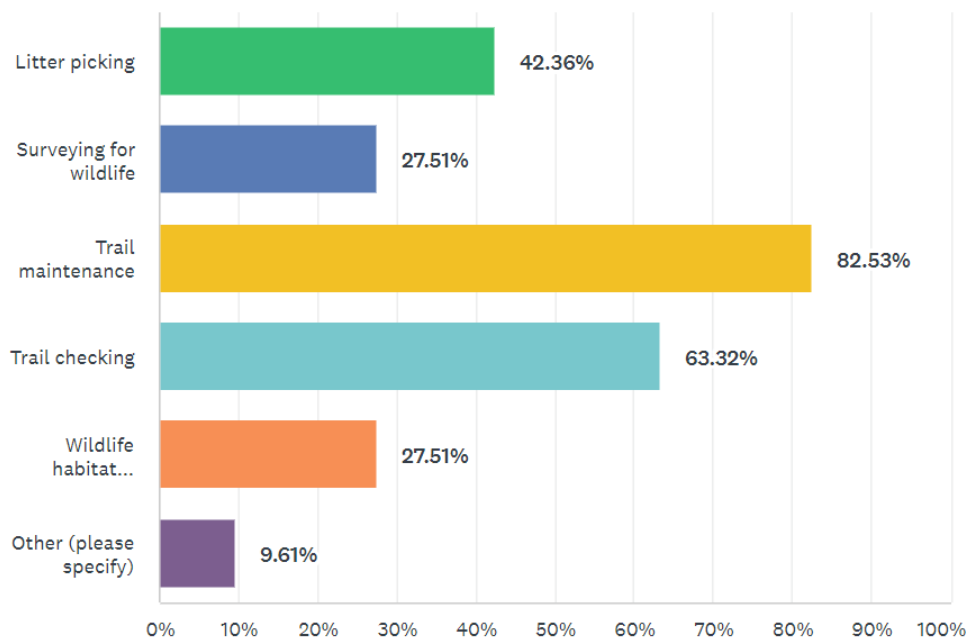
1. Nothing.
2. Communicate more through digital channels, eg website or social media.
3. Reinstate trails after work.
4. Improve signage.
5. Communicate in advance.
6. Ensure communication is up to date and matches what is happening on the ground.
7. Provide more information about what's happening and why.
8. Communicate more through local social media channels or contacts.
9. Provide more access during operations.

## Q.14: Would you like to volunteer in Eastridge Woods?



515 respondents answered this question. 230 said they would like to volunteer at Eastridge.

## Q.15: What sort of volunteer opportunities would you like to get involved with in Eastridge Woods?



229 respondents answered this question.

'Other' suggestions included:

1. Building trails.
2. Working with us to help reduce or resolve user group conflict.
3. Comments that individuals or groups already litter pick.
4. Recommended local groups that we could work with.



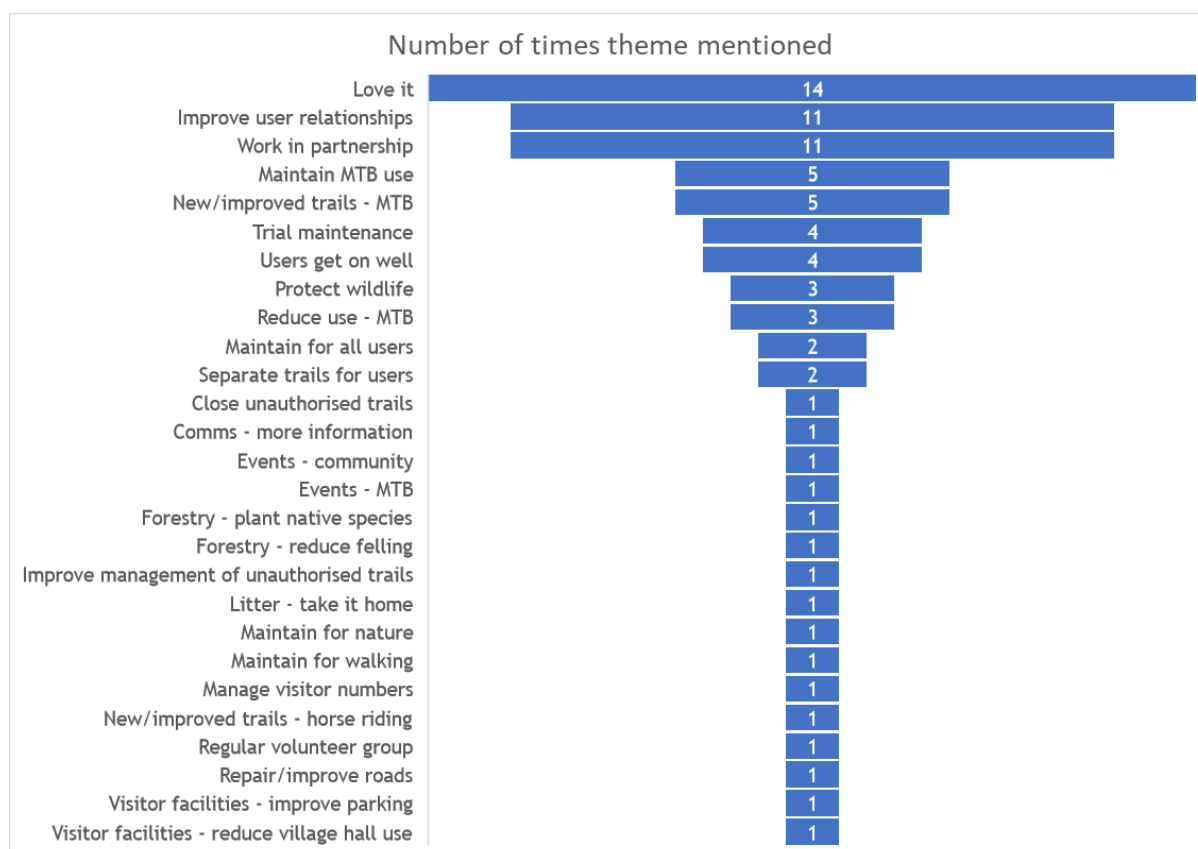
## Q.16: If you would like to be kept informed of any future volunteering activities, please leave your email address here

In line with GDPR, responses to this question will not be shared.

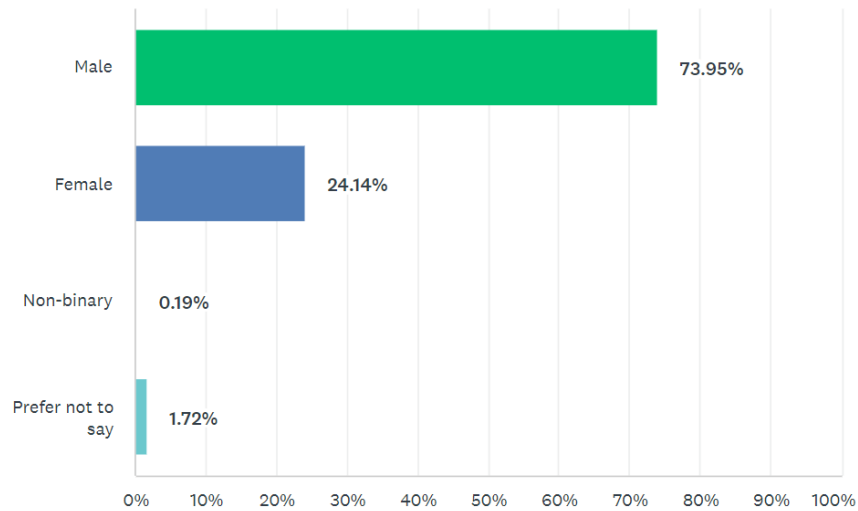
Respondents were given the option to register their interest in volunteering with us directly via our email address so that their survey responses could be anonymous.

## Q.17: Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about volunteering or community use of the wood?

94 respondents answered this question with a free text comment. The themes that emerged, in order of how frequently they were mentioned, were:

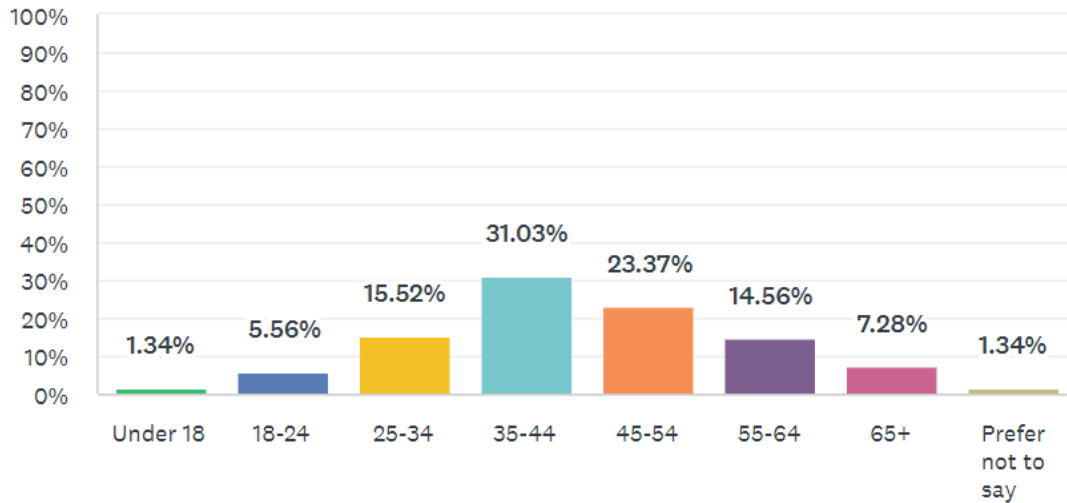


## Q.18: Do you identify as:



522 respondents answered this question.

## Q.19: How old are you:



522 respondents answered this question.

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## Next steps

We will be hosting a drop-in day at Snailbeach Village Hall on Saturday 28 January 2023.

Pop in and see us at any time between 11.00am and 2.00pm to:

- Chat to us about these survey results.
- Tell us more about how you use the woodland and why it's important to you.
- Get involved in future planning for the site.
- Learn more about how Forestry England manages and cares for the woodland.