



**Monitoring and Evaluation of the Foresters'
Forest National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF)
Landscape Partnership Programme in the
Forest of Dean**

Delivery Stage

Mid-term Evaluation Report

Submission to:

Foresters' Forest Landscape Partnership Programme

By

The Countryside and Community Research Institute

March 2020

Project Title: Monitoring and Evaluation of the Foresters' Forest NLHF Landscape Partnership Programme in the Forest of Dean

Client Reference: Contract No. 317/R11/16 3.5D

Start Date: 15/02/2016

Finish Date: 31/05/2022

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When quoting this report use the following citation:

Powell, J., Rayfield, C., Leake, B. (2020) *Monitoring and Evaluation of the Foresters' Forest NLHF Landscape Partnership Programme in the Forest of Dean: Delivery Stage Mid-term Evaluation Report*. Report to Foresters' Forest Landscape Partnership, Coleford, Forest of Dean. Countryside and Community Research Institute: Cheltenham.

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Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of the mid-term evaluation of the Foresters' Forest National Lottery Heritage Fund Landscape Partnership Programme operating in the Forest of Dean at the end of December 2019. The evaluation was conducted over the period September 2019 – February 2020 and consisted of the following elements:

- On-line survey of the wider Forest of Dean Community (including both residents and visitors)
- Interviews with Foresters' Forest Programme delivery personnel
- Interviews with key stakeholders, including lead representatives from the projects supported by the Partnership
- Analysis of documentary evidence.

The resident and visitor on-line survey was developed to explore awareness of the Foresters' Forest programme in the Forest of Dean, and incorporated questions relating to volunteering and other forms of participation in the natural, built, and cultural heritage projects delivered through the Programme. Data were collected from the on-line survey during the period 26 September – 17 November 2019. A total of 402 questionnaires were completed. The report presents descriptive statistics from the survey, comparisons across sub-groups, and comparison with an online survey conducted in early 2018 focused on the same target population.

The samples from the two surveys (2018 and 2019), although significantly different in size, were comparable in demographic characteristics. The main difference was that the 2019 survey sample had fewer young people responding. The majority of respondents were residents (86%) with around 40% of the sample having lived in the Forest for more than 30 years, and just over one quarter (28%) for less than 10 years.

A total of 80% of the sample indicated they had heard of the Foresters' Forest before taking the survey, compared to around 40% of the 2018 survey sample, suggesting an increase in Programme awareness across the community. A total of 41% of sample respondents indicated that they had taken part in some form of activity, event, or training course run by the Foresters' Forest programme (compared to 12% of respondents in 2018). In addition, 30% of the sample indicated they had done some volunteer work with the Foresters' Forest Projects, this compared to 9.1% of the sample in the 2018 survey.

Despite the differences in sample characteristics there were no significant differences between the samples in relation to the knowledge or attitudinal questions presented in the questionnaire. In general respondents had good knowledge of the natural and cultural heritage of the Forest, with no significant differences noted between the samples from the two surveys. Approximately two thirds of the respondents agreed that heritage in the Forest is being identified and recorded, slightly fewer (60%) agreed that heritage is being preserved for future generations, while only one third of the respondents agreed that the heritage is currently in a good condition.

Almost two thirds of the sample indicated the importance of the natural heritage when asked what single aspect makes the Forest of Dean special. Just under one quarter of respondents indicated the importance of the cultural heritage making reference about the ways in which the heritage of the Forest provides a connection to the past, to a sense of perspective, and connections to family history. A much smaller proportion (16%) made reference to the built and industrial heritage of the Forest of Dean.

Delivery of the FF Programme relies heavily on voluntary activity although the number of volunteers, and the level of time input varies significantly across the programme period and across projects. In general, the natural heritage projects involving wildlife, water, or plant surveys tend to be more demanding of volunteer time, as does the archaeological project, compared to the cultural and built heritage projects. Voluntary activity is closely monitored, with support from the Forest Volunteer Action Forum (FAVF), who note that a total of 715 people have undertaken voluntary activity since the start of the programme. The FF Programme has been extremely successful in engaging volunteers and exceeded its 5-year total voluntary activity targets before the end of 2019 (i.e. by the mid-point of programme delivery).

Volunteers responding to the On-line survey noted high levels of satisfaction with their volunteering experiences with over 80% agreeing that they were able to use their skills doing meaningful work and feeling they were making a difference to the future of the Forest of Dean. Volunteer case studies demonstrated a wide range of benefits gained by volunteers including development of skills, learning, improved understanding and development of friendships and wider social relations.

Project leaders were interviewed to ascertain the challenges and successes of the 38 individual projects contributing to delivery of the Foresters' Forest Programme (FF Programme). Interviews were a mix of face-to-face and telephone interviews conducted during the period November 2019 – February 2020. Projects were explored within the five thematic groups developed under the FF Programme: Our Stronghold for Nature; Exploring our Forest; Revealing our Past; Celebrating our Forest; and, Securing our future.

Project leaders noted relatively few changes to projects over the first 2.5 years of programme delivery: there were very few changes to project objectives or funding; the largest source of change was loss of key personnel (either because people moved out of the area, or wider agency changes resulted in personnel being withdrawn). A number of projects have been impacted by withdrawal of Natural England and RSPB expertise.

Project Leads indicated delivery of a wide range of outcomes linked to meeting National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) criteria in relation to heritage, people, and communities. The majority of projects are delivering outcomes either at or above the level anticipated at the mid-point of the programme. A small number of projects have started late or been delayed for a number of reasons (e.g. loss of project leader, the need to agree on technical specifications, loss of specific expertise), while other projects have exceeded expectations and achieved outcomes ahead of schedule (e.g. Scarr Bandstand, Mindscape, Hidden Heritage App).

Major achievements cover a wide range of activities, including: increased understanding and new knowledge, improved recording and identification of heritage, increased access to the heritage, community engagement with project activities, and benefits to volunteers. Project

Leaders noted that in most cases residents of the Forest of Dean were identified as primary beneficiaries in relation to outcomes for people (i.e. developing skills, learning about heritage, volunteering). Those benefitting tend to be those who get engaged in volunteering or in project related activities. These are often middle-aged, older and retired people (i.e. those with interests and time), although in some projects young people were also identified as getting involved, as well as benefitting from the projects targeted directly at young people. Disabled people are also being supported through improved access (Walking with Wheels project), engagement (Mindscape), and involvement in project volunteering. There was less clarity about those in the wider community who might benefit from the projects in more indirect ways (e.g. through improved environmental quality of the area).

Future challenges identified by Project Leaders include managing volunteers and maintaining volunteer support over a multi-year programme. A small number of projects have mentioned volunteer 'burnout' as an actual or potential risk, and some projects are heavily reliant on a small core group or even a single individual for success. Although the volunteer data base indicates over 700 people involved, the volunteer coordinators report that most of the voluntary activity is undertaken by a core of 2 – 300 people, who often get involved with more than one project.

Communications were also identified as a challenge faced by almost half of the 38 projects. Communications included both internal communications within the FF Programme, and externally between the project and the wider community. A recent appointment of a Communications Officer to the core FF Programme delivery team is expected to reduce communications issues, but communications in relation to awareness raising are perceived as challenging by both project leaders and FF Programme personnel.

Project leaders indicated that the two most common challenges were related to awareness raising among the wider community (in relation to their project activities and outcomes), and communications (both within the FF Programme and externally). These issues are related and for some projects relate to lack of relevant skills and expertise to market or promote their activities, in other cases it is a lack of sufficient resources (mainly time, administrative support, and volunteers) to undertake the tasks.

On a personal level almost half of all project leaders indicated time-related factors influenced their performance. This is a particular issue for the smaller projects where delivery is focused on individuals or a small group that are not supported by larger organisations.

In relation to legacy and longer-term outcomes the majority of projects have a clear idea of their outcomes in terms of impacts on heritage and how they fit into the wider FF Programme. Most projects also have a clear idea of how their projects contribute to outcomes for people but overall, there is less awareness of the potential impacts (both direct and indirect) of project activity on wider communities.

The FF Programme is well managed with a wide range of skills in the Delivery Team and sound project management practices. The team are supported by a Community Stakeholder Group (CSG), and a Programme Board, which meets regularly to keep track of progress and deal with problems arising. The FF Programme is also fortunate in being located within the FE offices where additional support can be called on if needed. Key issues facing the Programme over the next two years are related to: communicating more widely and building

awareness of the programme across the Forest of Dean; ensuring funding is managed; and, addressing project specific problems (e.g. where there has been a loss of expertise or personnel). The addition of a communications officer to the programme team in 2019 will help to address the communications and awareness raising issues.

Recommendations

Recommended actions include reviewing the role of the Community Stakeholder Group, consideration of the potential value in creating a wider 'community forum' type of organisation to bring in new voices and interests, as well as helping with communications and awareness raising. Analysis of the current programme delivery also suggest it might be worthwhile making the nature of community focused outcomes more explicit, particularly the more indirect impacts, and characterising the causal chain through which they must operate in order to have the desired effect.

Suggestions are also made regarding the final evaluation, timed to occur at the end of 2021, including: a re-focusing of the on-line survey to explore connections between FF Programme activities, and attitudes, knowledge, and understanding about heritage among respondents, and less focus on attitudes to the Forest and the current state of the heritage; and, utilisation of targeted mini-surveys, or events such as a small workshop series operating through existing community organisations to explore views across a wider sector of the community.

1. Introduction and overview of the evaluation

1.1. Introduction

This report presents the key results and analysis of a survey of residents, visitors and volunteers, along with interviews of key stakeholders, to contribute to the ongoing understanding of the impact of the Delivery Stage of the Foresters' Forest National Lottery Heritage Fund Landscape Partnership Programme operating in the Forest of Dean at the end of December 2019.

The resident and visitor on-line survey was developed to explore awareness of the Foresters' Forest programme in the Forest of Dean, and incorporated questions relating to volunteering and other forms of participation in the natural, built, and cultural heritage projects delivered through the Programme. Data were collected from an on-line survey during the period 26 September – 17 November 2019. A total of 402 questionnaires were completed.

Interviews with key stakeholders, including lead representatives from the projects supported by the Partnership, and the management and governance of the Partnership were carried out from October 2019 to February 2020.

Aims and objectives of the evaluation

The aims of the evaluation element of the Foresters' Forest programme are to establish a monitoring and evaluation methodology for the Foresters' Forest programme and its constituent projects (including stakeholder engagement), and to complete three stages of assessment:

- Baseline assessment at the start of the Delivery stage (2018)
- Mid-Term assessment in the middle of the Delivery Stage (2019)
- Final assessment at the end of the Delivery Stage (2021)

The objectives vary slightly according the stage:

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

- To review delivery at the end of the programme, summarising the outcomes delivered and describing the legacy and sustainability of the constituent projects.

Methodology

At the start of 2018 an online survey was designed and implemented over the period 1st February – 31st March 2018 (at the start of the Delivery stage). The target population were residents of the Forest of Dean and visitors to the area. The aim of the survey was to assess understanding, knowledge, and perceptions about the activities of the Foresters' Forest programme in the Forest of Dean.

This baseline survey received a total of 780 questionnaires completed during the period.

The survey was repeated in the Autumn of 2019 at the end of the first half of the Delivery phase. The survey forms part of the Foresters' Forest Programme evaluation and has been designed to be repeated towards the end of the programme period (late 2021) to enable a comparison of responses over the full delivery time period of the Foresters' Forest Programme (2017-22).

The on-line survey was designed to maximise potential responses from residents in the Forest and was also available for visitors to make a submission. As with any form of remotely delivered survey, the respondents are a self-selected group that will not necessarily be representative of the target population (residents within the Hundred of St. Briavels and visitors to the Forest of Dean). A key aspect of the methodology therefore is an initial comparison of socio-economic characteristics of both the survey sample respondents and the wider Forest of Dean (FoD) population.

Analysis of the survey data includes the following:

- Descriptive statistics that summarise key characteristics of the sample;
- Cross-tabulations to compare answers from sub-groups within the sample (e.g. comparisons of male/female; visitor/resident; within age group) on the same questions;
- Comparison of mean scores between sub-groups to explore for significant differences in terms of understanding, knowledge, and perceptions about the forest.
- Comparison of survey results between 2018 and 2019.

In addition to the survey, project leaders were interviewed to ascertain the challenges and successes of the 38 individual projects contributing to delivery of the Foresters' Forest Programme (FF Programme). Interviews were a mix of face-to-face (where possible) and telephone interviews conducted during the period November 2019 – February 2020. Interviews lasted from 30 minutes to 1.5 hours depending on the scale of the project and number of issues arising.

A member of the evaluation team also attended a meeting of the Community Stakeholder Group and the Programme Board, and interviewed representatives from the FF Programme delivery team.

1.2. Evaluation context

The on-line survey, in line with other elements of the Foresters' Forest programme evaluation incorporates NLHF Guidance on evaluation (Evaluation guidance: Landscape Partnerships,

Feb 2013, revised July 2014), identifying nine key outcomes for landscape partnership programmes:

Outcomes for heritage with NLHF investment, heritage will be:

- better managed
- in better condition
- identified/recorded

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

- developed skills
- learnt about heritage
- volunteered time

Outcomes for communities – with NLHF investment:

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

In addition, the LP Guidance notes the following:

- The evaluation must measure the difference the programme makes as a whole: to heritage, to people, and to communities.
- Individual projects should contribute to one or more of the nine outcomes.
- Evidence collected should enable the evaluation to show the 'distance travelled' as a result of NLHF funding.
- Decision-makers, stakeholders, local people and partners will all want a better understanding of the nature of lasting benefits arising from the programme.

The evaluation is designed with NLHF guidance in mind, and in a manner that enables provision of evidence to identify progress towards the nine key outcomes. The Foresters' Forest NLHF Landscape Partnership comprises 38 projects, which all have their own individual outcomes that contribute in different ways to the nine overall NLHF outcomes. At the start of the programme each project selected which of the nine outcomes their particular project was going to address, and these were detailed on an 'outcome spreadsheet'. This document has been updated by project leaders every quarter to record progress over time against their selected NLHF outcomes.

2. Mid-term Survey of Residents and Visitors

2.1 The On-line Foresters' Forest Survey 2019

The target population for the on-line survey was the residents of the Hundred of St. Briavels and visitors to the Forest of Dean. A large number of people live around the edges of the Forest and visit regularly, some are also involved in volunteering for FF projects, and others take part in a range of activities delivered through the FF Programme.

The aims of the survey include the following:

- understand the views of residents and visitors towards the Forest
- assess the level of knowledge about natural, built and cultural heritage of the Forest
- identify areas of concern
- identify the level of participation in FF programme activities
- identify demographic characteristics of the respondents

The evaluation team recognise that an on-line survey is unlikely to provide a representative sample of the population of the target area. Those without access to a computer, or lacking in the skills required, will not be included, neither will young people who are unlikely to have the interest or capacity for engaging with an on-line instrument. Feedback from these elements of the population need to be obtained by other measures. Evaluation resource constraints, however, limited the data collection options in relation to exploring the views of the wider community of the Forest of Dean. An on-line survey was identified as the most cost-efficient means of collecting data from the wider community. The survey was designed in 2017 and applied in the first quarter of 2018 receiving 780 usable responses. Analysis revealed a reasonable representation of the population although excluding those under 18 years of age. The survey was therefore modified slightly and delivered in the Autumn of 2019 to explore any changes in understanding of the Foresters' Forest Programme, engagement in activities, or levels of knowledge regarding heritage. A significantly smaller sample of respondents (N=402) engaged with the survey, although with similar socio-demographic characteristics as the previous sample of respondents. The results of the on-line surveys are presented in Section 2 of this report.

2.2 Characteristics of the Hundred of St. Briavels

The Foresters' Forest Programme is being delivered across the area of the Hundred of St. Briavels, an area of land totalling 48,327 acres (19,557 hectares) which has had a fluctuating boundary over the years, although one has been specifically defined for the purposes of this Programme¹.

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

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

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

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

2.3 Basic demographic characteristics of the sample

Gender and Disability

A total of 402 responses were received in 2019 compared to 780 in 2018. In 2019 the gender breakdown was 35.6% Males and 63.7% Female (0.7% not specifying) with 9% (a decrease of 1% 2018-19) indicating they had some form of disability. The majority of those stating a disability indicated some kind of physical impairment affecting mobility (7.2% of the total sample, n = 29), while only 0.7% indicated a mental impairment and 1.2% a communications disability. These figures are broadly similar to the baseline survey. It is worth noting that 3.7% of the sample (n=15) indicated they did not want to state whether or not they had a disability.

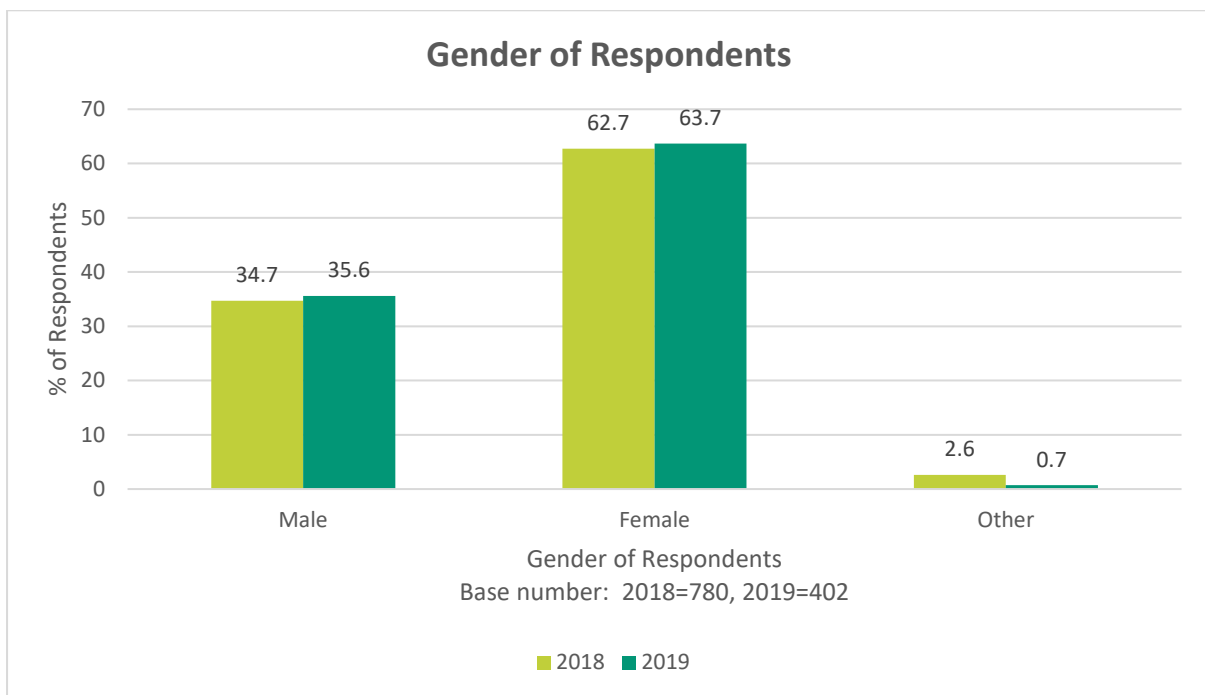


Figure 1 - Gender of sample respondents

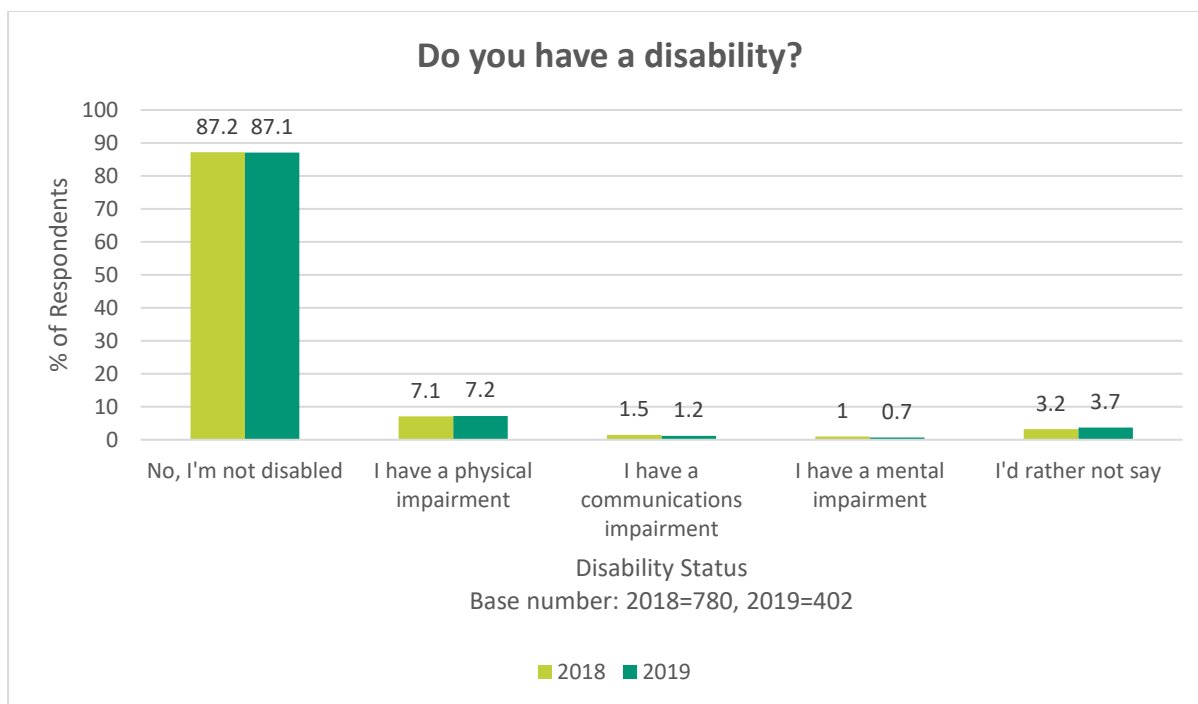


Figure 2 - Self-reported disabilities of sample

Age

The age of respondents was skewed towards those over 26 years of age with 1.5% being 25 yrs. or under (and none of sample respondents being under 19 yrs), representing a reduction in this age group when compared to the 2018 sample. The most well-represented age group at just over 37% (n=149) are those aged between 60 and 74 yrs, closely followed by the 45-49-year age bracket at just under 33% (n=132). The other significant group of respondents were those aged 26-44 yrs (22%; n=88) with a much smaller number of respondents aged over 75 years.

The 2019 sample is thus characterised as having a larger proportion of older respondents and fewer from the younger age groups compared to the 2018 survey sample. The age structure of the area population is weighted towards older people, thus providing a reasonable representation of those in the 26-74 yr range. The lack of young respondents, whilst disappointing, likely reflects the nature of the subject matter at the younger end, and the use of online survey tools. The sample thus appears to over-represent the older age categories of the wider population in the area, while the younger age groups are not well-represented (particularly those under 25 years), compared to characteristics of the resident population. It is important to keep in mind that the sample of respondents includes visitors as well as local residents, making a close match with the resident Forest population less likely.

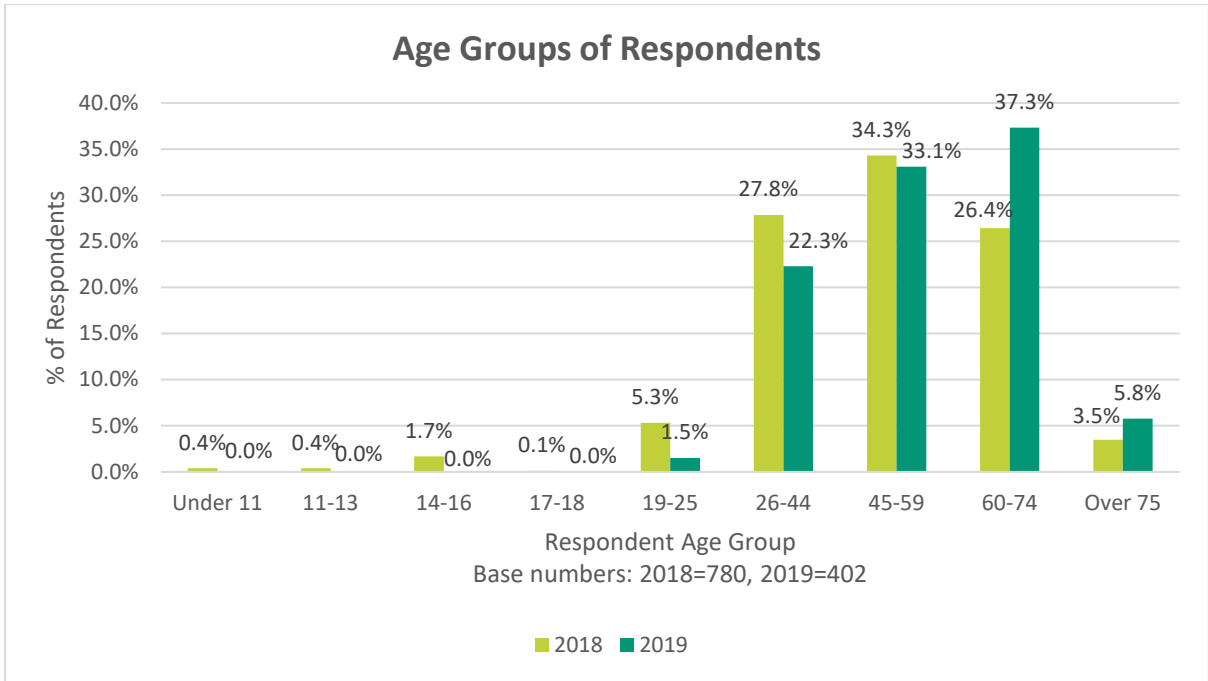


Figure 3 - Age of sample respondents

Ethnicity

The ethnicity of respondents was overwhelmingly white (95%), with other ethnic groups representing around 1%, and approximately 4% electing not to specify. There is no substantive change between this and the Baseline survey and it is representative of the target population in the Forest of Dean according to the 2011 census information.

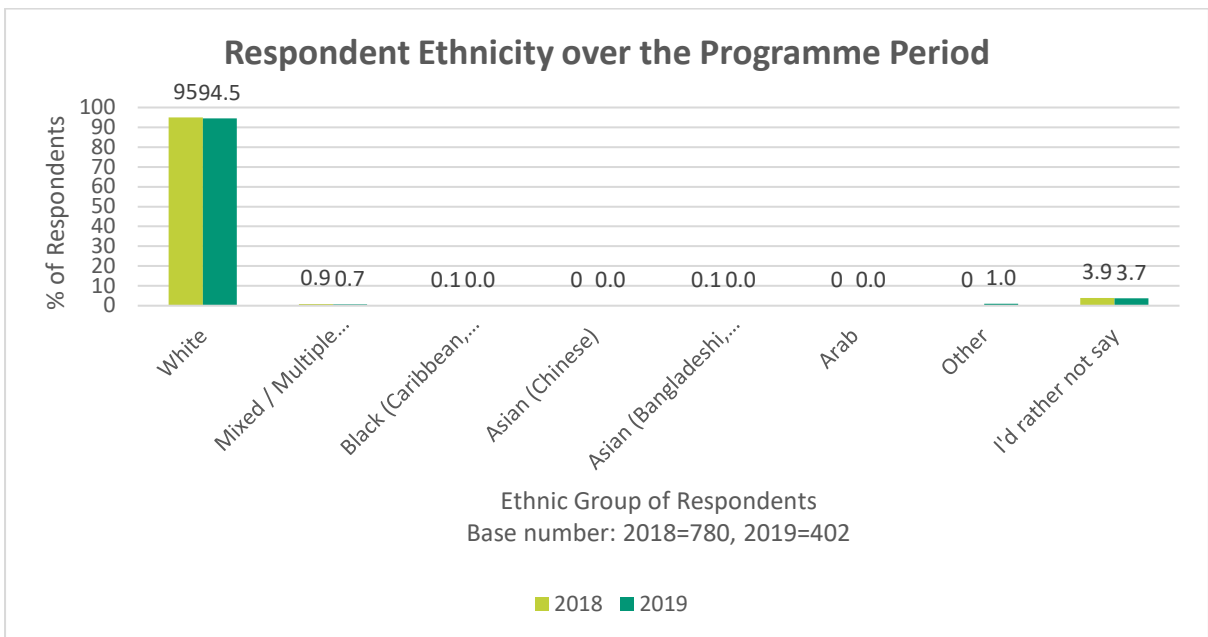


Figure 4 - Ethnicity of Respondents

Occupation

Respondents were asked to indicate their occupational status. The highest responses were for the categories 'Work full-time' and 'Retired', both at around 40% of the responses. This represents a difference in the samples with the 2019 survey having less respondents in full-time (↓6%) and more retirees (↑9%) compared to 2018. In 2019 a total of 20% of respondents reported being in part-time work, thus indicating that 54% of the sample were in employment of some form, with a further 2.2% identifying themselves as unemployed (↑0.4%). People with caring responsibilities (children or relatives) formed 1.7% of the sample (↓5%), and 0% reported being at school or a student (↓6.5%). A small number 4% (n=17) elected not to state their occupation. It is worth noting that respondents were able to indicate more than one category, but the data suggest less than 1% of the sample did this in their response to the question.

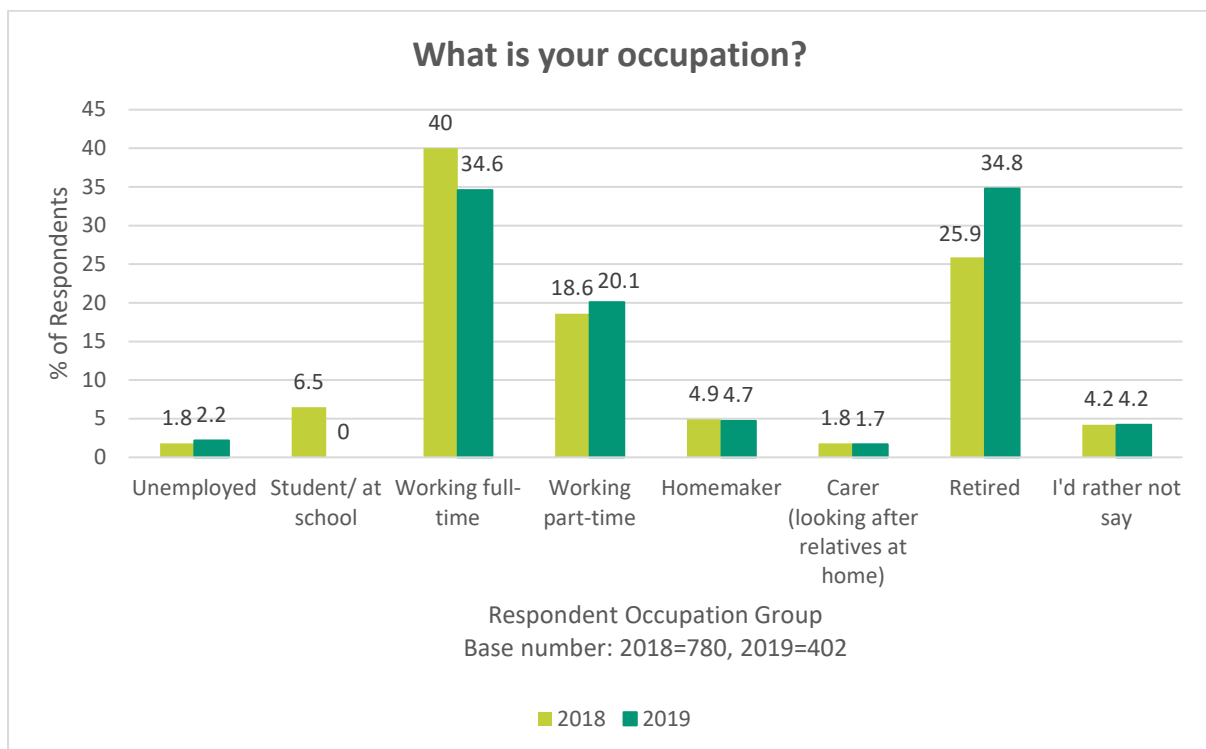


Figure 5 - Occupation of Respondents

Residential status

The majority of the sample were residents (86%, up from 83% compared to 2018), and 14% (down from 17%) were visitors to the Forest. The sample thus contains a relatively small number of visitors n=56).

Of the residents, 28% and 30% selected 'less than 10 years' and '10 to 30 years' respectively, with 16% reporting residency of more than 30 years; all being similar to the 2018 survey. Approximately 15% (compared to 24% of the sample in 2018) of residents indicated they had lived in the Forest of Dean for 'all of their lives'; and around 13% of residents indicated they were a 'Born & Bred Forester' (compared to 15% of the sample in 2018).

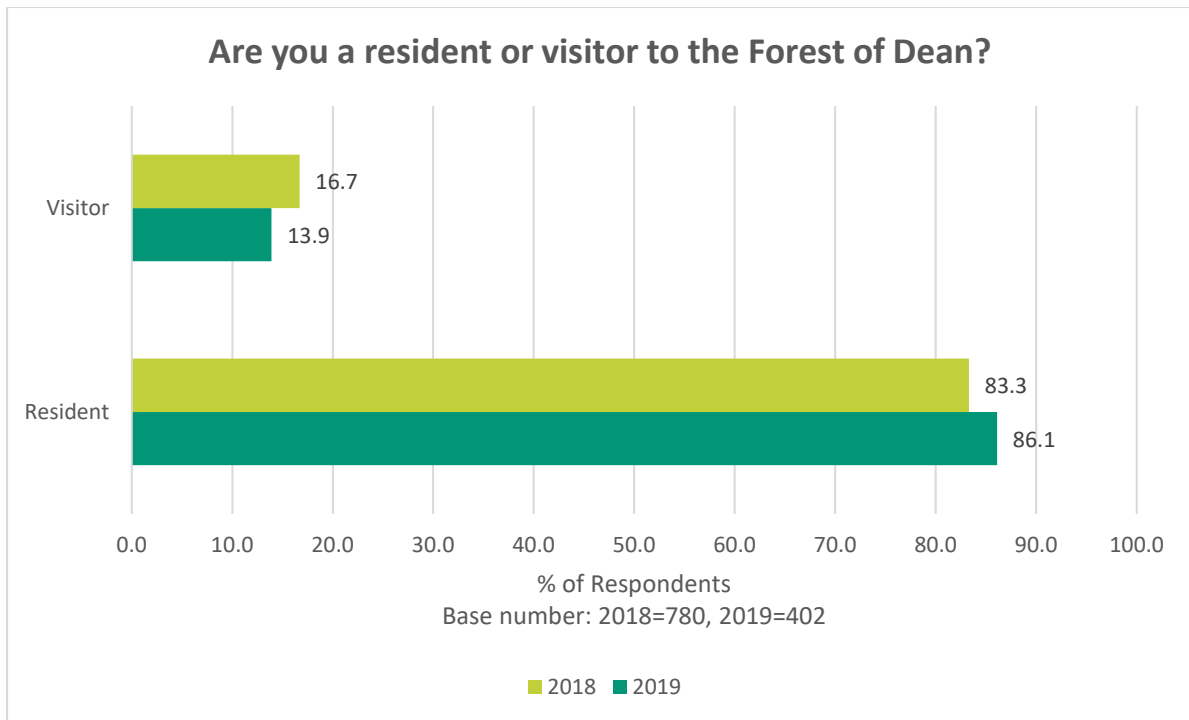


Figure 6 - Resident / Visitor breakdown of respondents

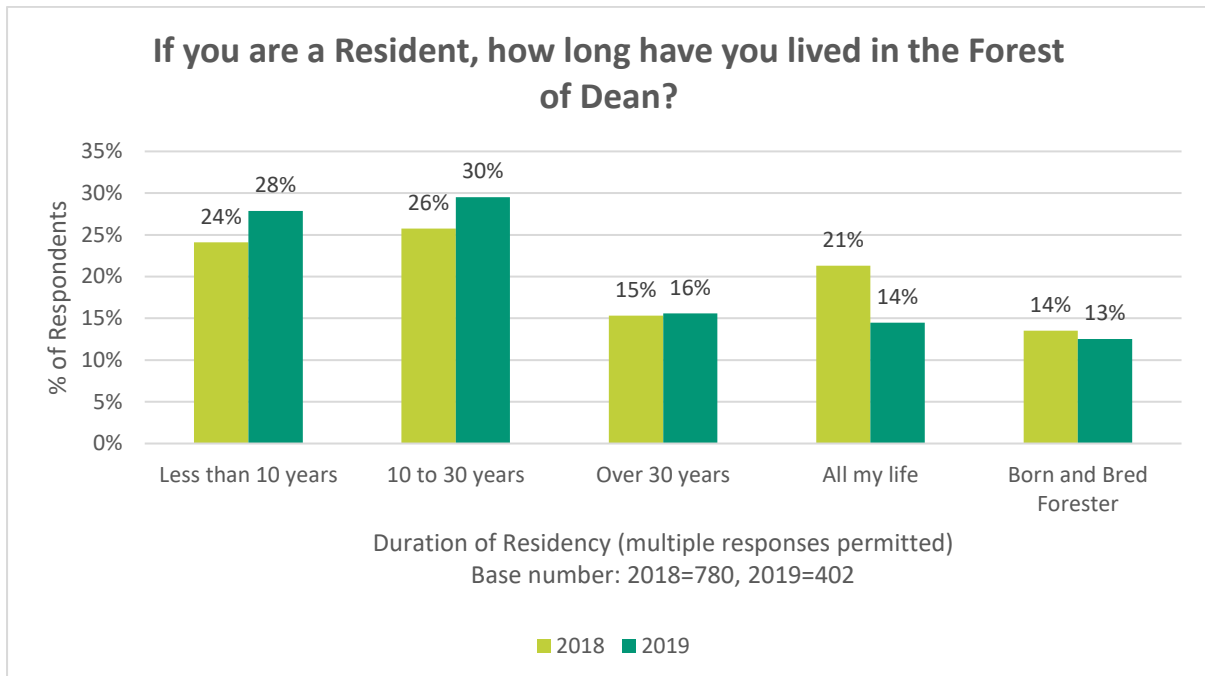


Figure 7 - Length of Residence in the Forest

A total of 56 respondents classified themselves as 'visitors to the Forest of Dean'. Of these, more than two-thirds (68%) visited six or more times per year (compared to 48% in the 2018 sample), with another 18% visiting 2-5 times a year, leaving just 15% of visitors in the sample visiting once per year or less.

The on-line questionnaire would appear to be capturing the more regular and interested visitors (many of whom have had some interaction with FF projects) rather than occasional Forest Visitors.

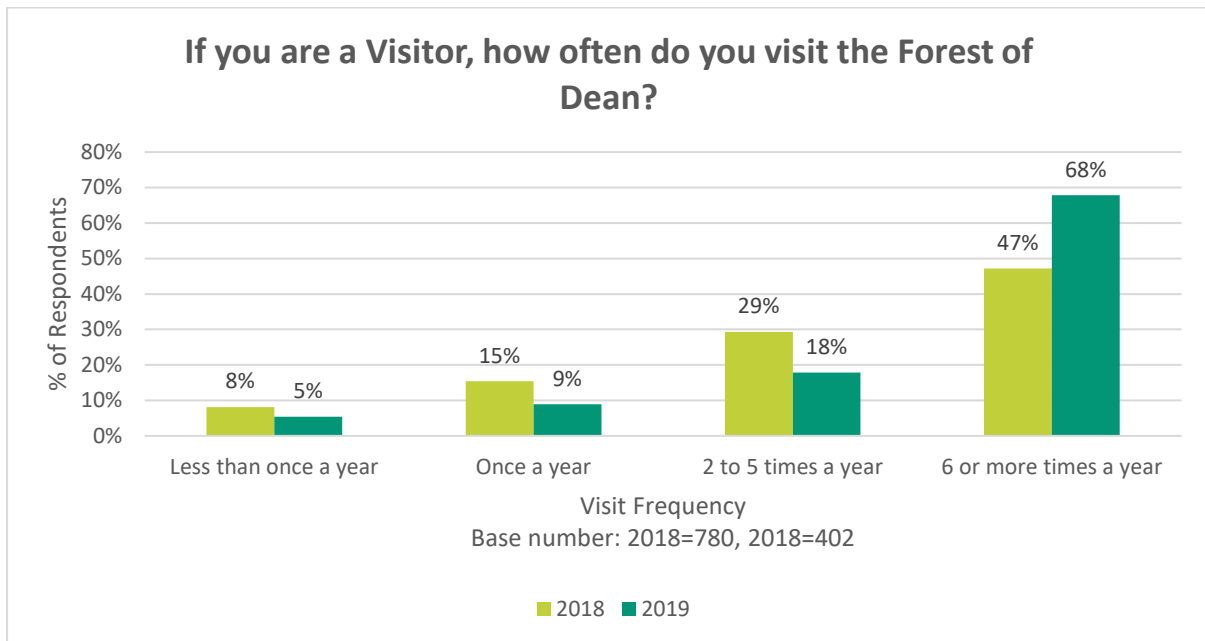


Figure 8 - Annual visits to the Forest by visitors in the sample

2.4 The Foresters' Forest Programme – Awareness and Participation

A total of 80% of the sample indicated they had heard of the Foresters Forest before taking the survey (n=323). This compares to around 40% in the 2018 survey (n=345). The response for the 2019 survey suggests the on-line survey may be capturing those who are already familiar with the FF Programme rather than a cross-section of the Forest of Dean Community. We cannot state for certain that the increase in the proportion of the sample indicating they had heard of the FF Programme before starting the survey represents an increase in awareness among the wider target population of the Forest of Dean. It may be that that the survey is only capturing those who already know about it.

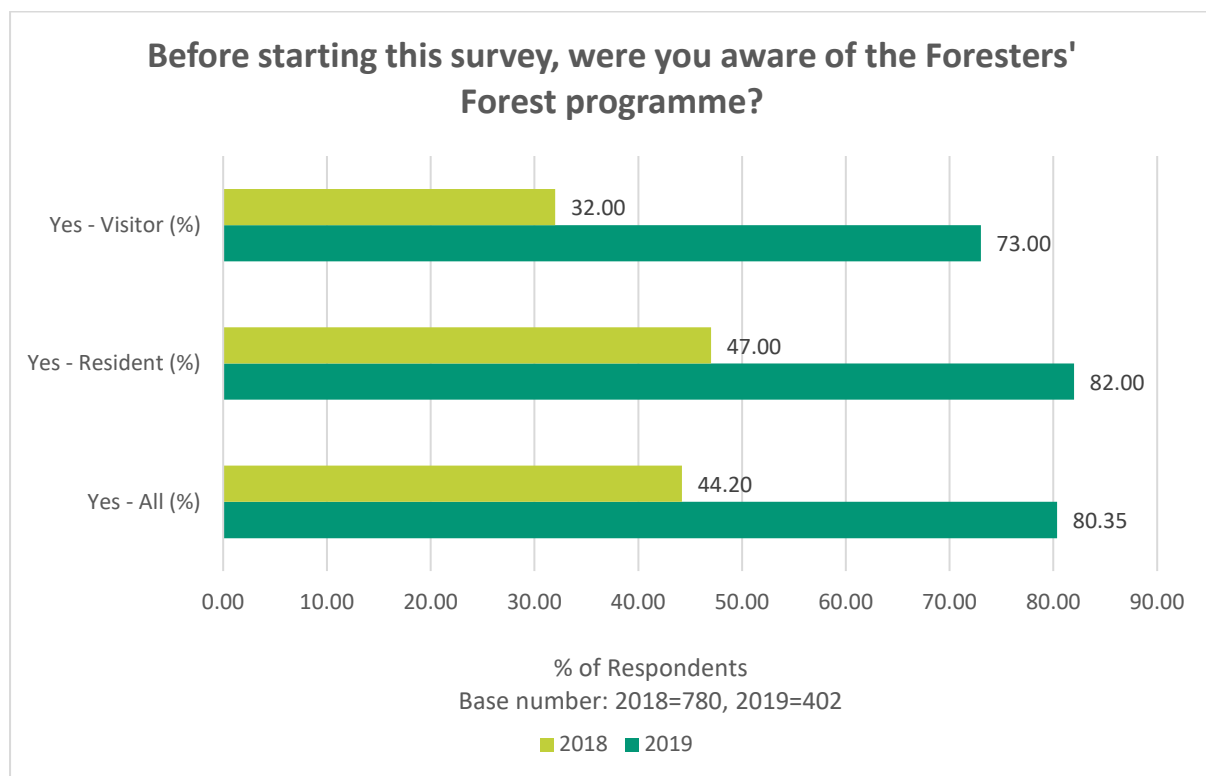


Figure 9 - Awareness of the Foresters' Forest Programme

Comparing responses between Residents and Visitors, it can be seen that there is only a small difference (9%) between the two groups with a smaller proportion of the Visitors indicating they had prior awareness of the programme, (compared to a 15% difference in the previous survey. This is perhaps surprising given that one would expect local residents to be more attuned to local events and to have been more exposed to potential opportunities to read, learn, or hear about the programme from local media, as well as social media, but it may be indicative of the fact that Visitor respondents to the survey are those who tend to be engaged with the Forest of Dean as a chosen 'place of interest' to visit.

Awareness of the Programme was, not unsurprisingly, complete amongst Volunteers. Amongst non-Volunteers, 72% (n=201) also indicated awareness of the Programme prior to starting the survey.

Participation in Foresters' Forest activities

A total of 41% of respondents (n=165) indicated that they had taken part in some form of activity, event, or training course run by the Foresters' Forest programme (compared to 12% of respondents to the 2018 survey). Increases in participation amongst respondents were visible for both Residents and Visitors, with Resident participation increasing from 13% to 44%. The data represent significant increases in the numbers participating in FF Programme activities in the period between the two surveys. Again, we must advise caution in the interpretation of the data as the on-line survey is likely to be capturing a wider proportion of those that have been involved in the programme in some way, rather than a representative cross-section of the Forest of Dean population. The fact that almost one third (30%) of the survey sample in 2019 indicated they had undertaken some volunteer work suggests that the sample over-represents those who have some connection with the FF Programme, compared to the wider population.

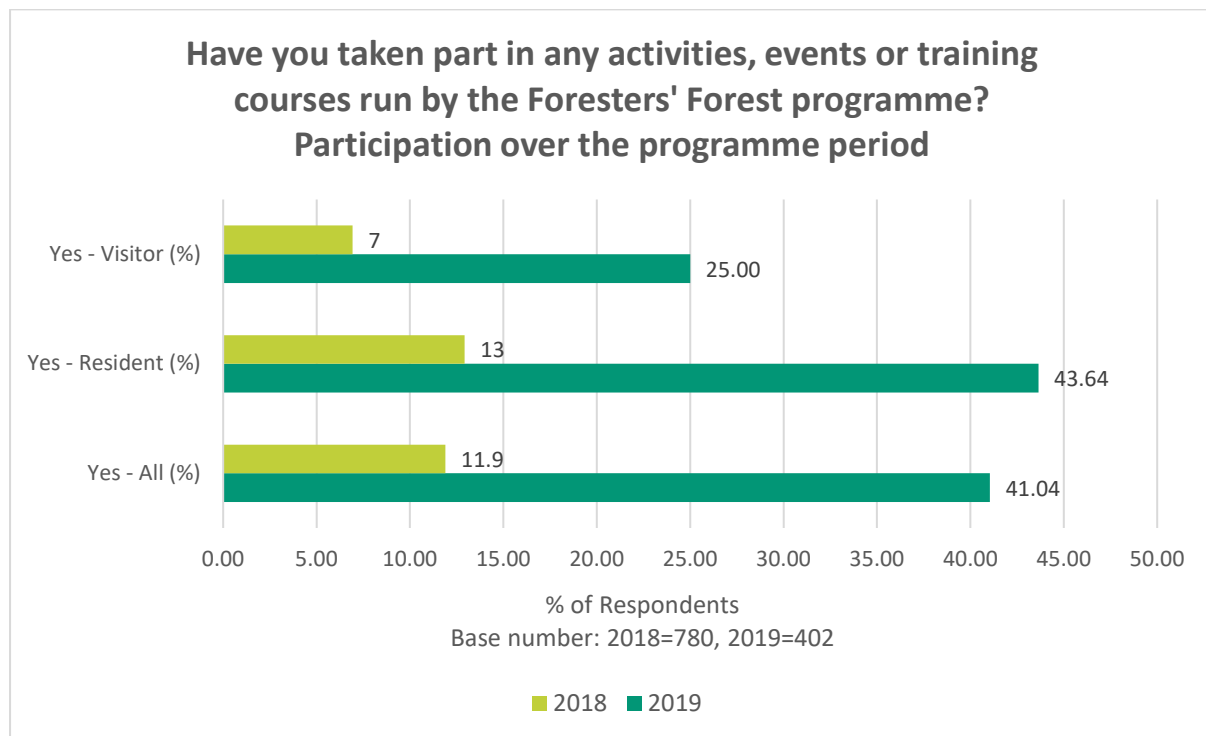


Figure 10 - Participation in Foresters' Forest activities

Further analysis of comments provided indicates higher levels of participation in natural heritage-type activities, including surveying and archaeology, and lower levels of participation in cultural heritage and other activities.

Volunteering

A total of 30% (n=123) of the sample indicated they had done some volunteer work with the Foresters' Forest Projects, compared to 9.1% (n=71) of the sample from the 2018 survey. While evidence from other sources (for example: from the numbers of people entered onto the FVAF data base; evidence from project leaders) indicates an increase in the number of volunteers involved in the FF Programme activities, we cannot project the sample proportion across the wider population of the Forest. Again, this suggests the On-line survey is capturing a sample of those who are more actively engaged in FF Programme activities than a cross-section of the wider target population.

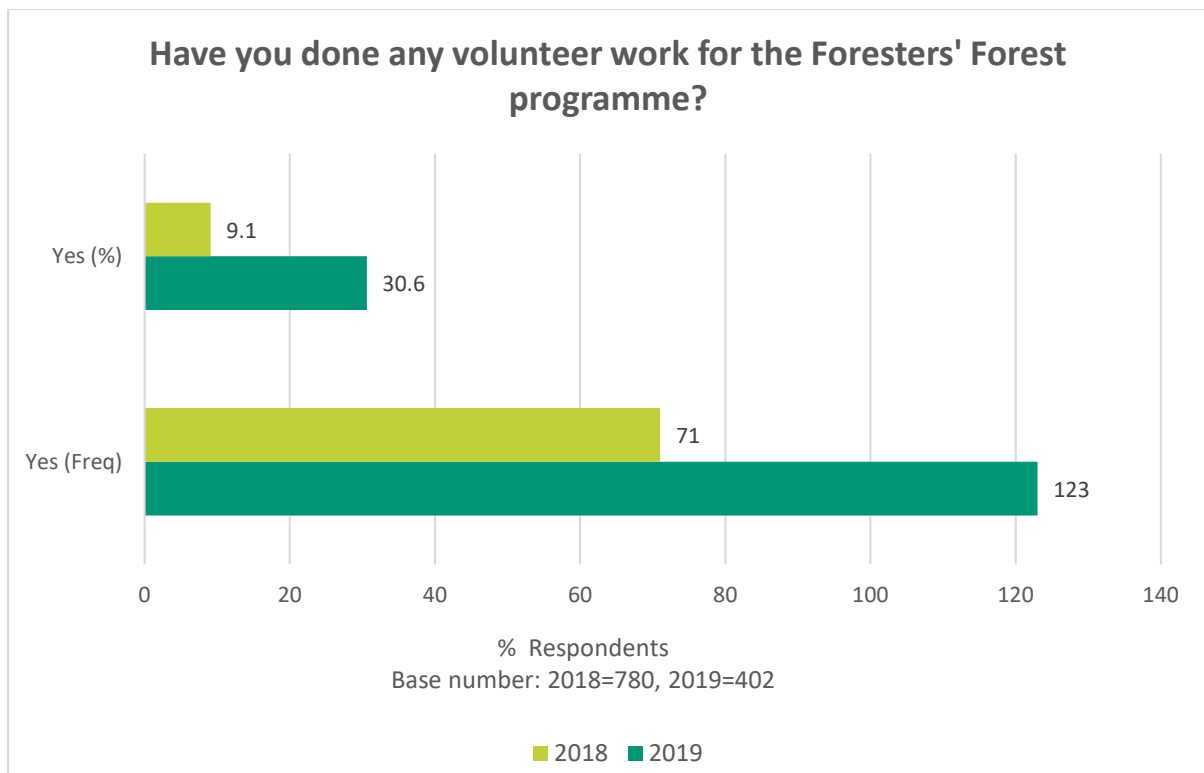


Figure 11 - Volunteering in the Foresters' Forest Programme

Further analysis of comments provided indicates higher proportions of volunteering in relation to the natural heritage projects, followed by built heritage, and least in cultural heritage projects and other activities. It should also be noted that 278 responses were received from 123 volunteers (average projects per volunteer = 2.26) indicating that a significant proportion of volunteers are active on more than one project.

Which of the following Foresters' Forest projects have you been involved in?

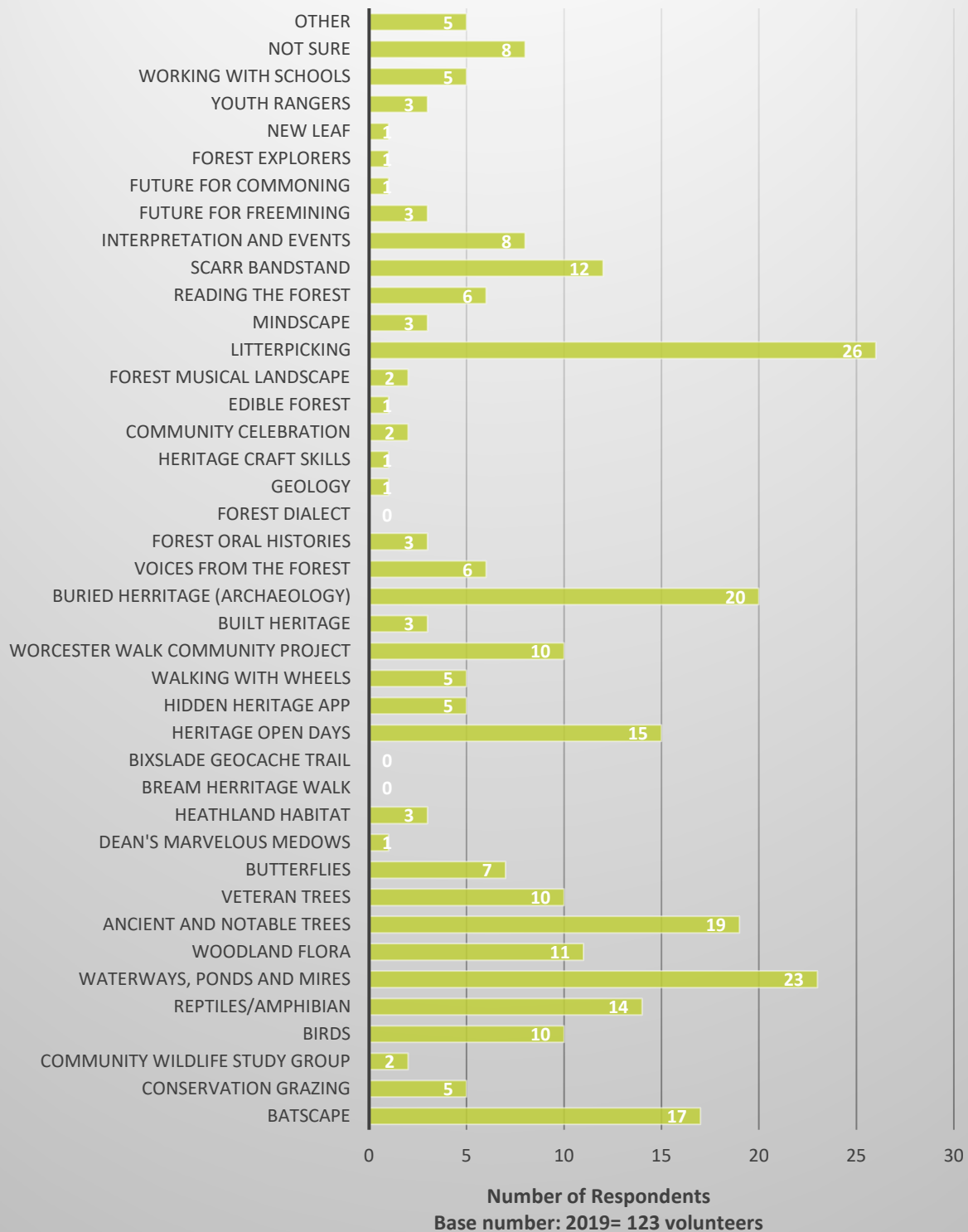


Figure 12 - Numbers of Respondents volunteering on Projects

(Note: some respondents volunteer for multiple projects, a total of 278 responses were received)

2.5 Knowledge of the heritage of the Forest of Dean

Respondents were asked questions to try and assess their knowledge of various aspects of the Forest of Dean.

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

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

The first three questions asked respondents to identify a feature of the built heritage. Each question contained consisted of a recent photograph and four names, of which one could be selected in each case. Findall's Chimney was correctly identified by 66% of respondents (compared to 59% of the sample in the 2018 survey), Darkhill Ironworks by 73% (compared to 60%) and Blakeney Limekiln by 44%. Blakeney Limekiln replaced Scarr Bandstand which was used in the previous survey and which was recognised by 71% of respondents in the 2018 survey.

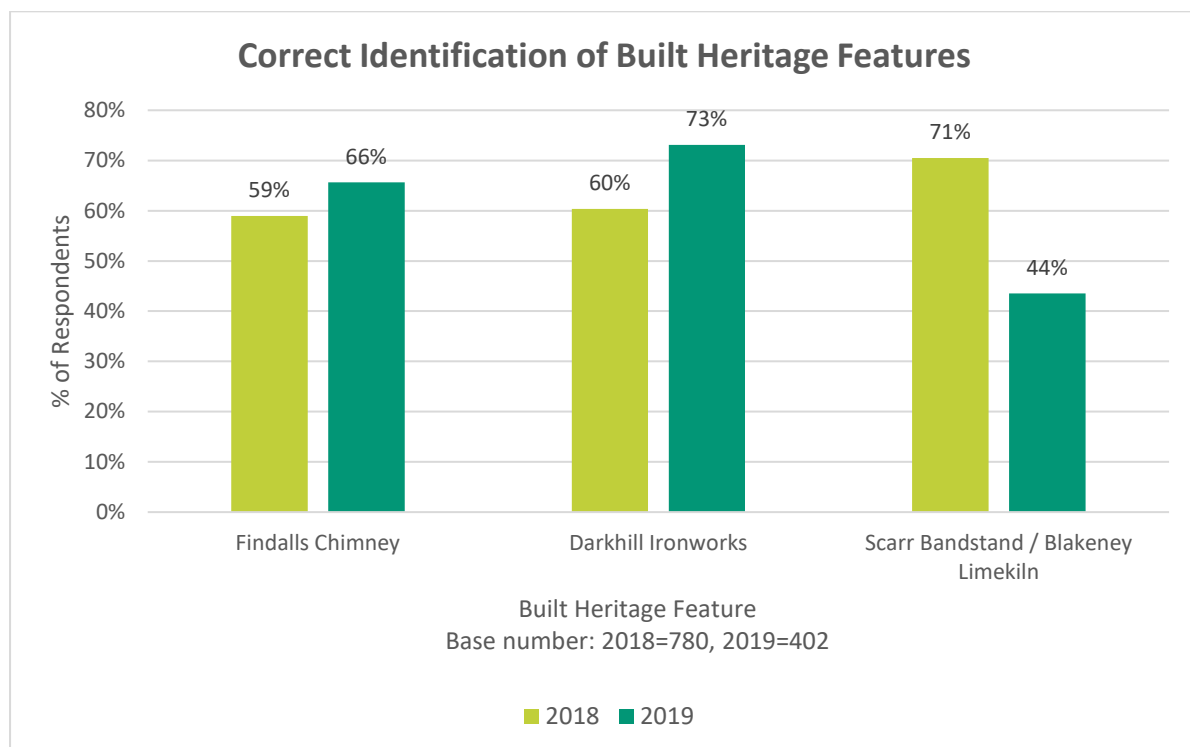


Figure 13 - Knowledge of Built Heritage Features

Respondents were then asked to choose from four images of industry, illustrating those activities that are still important to the Forest of Dean. The images showed mining, stonework, oil production, and tree felling. In relation to mining and stonework 67% and 74% respectively of respondents gave the correct response; in terms of oil production and timber a much higher proportion (90% and 95% respectively) gave correct responses. Looking across all four questions, 48% of the respondents correctly identified all of the industries which are currently important, and the one which was not (compared to 44% in the 2018 survey sample).

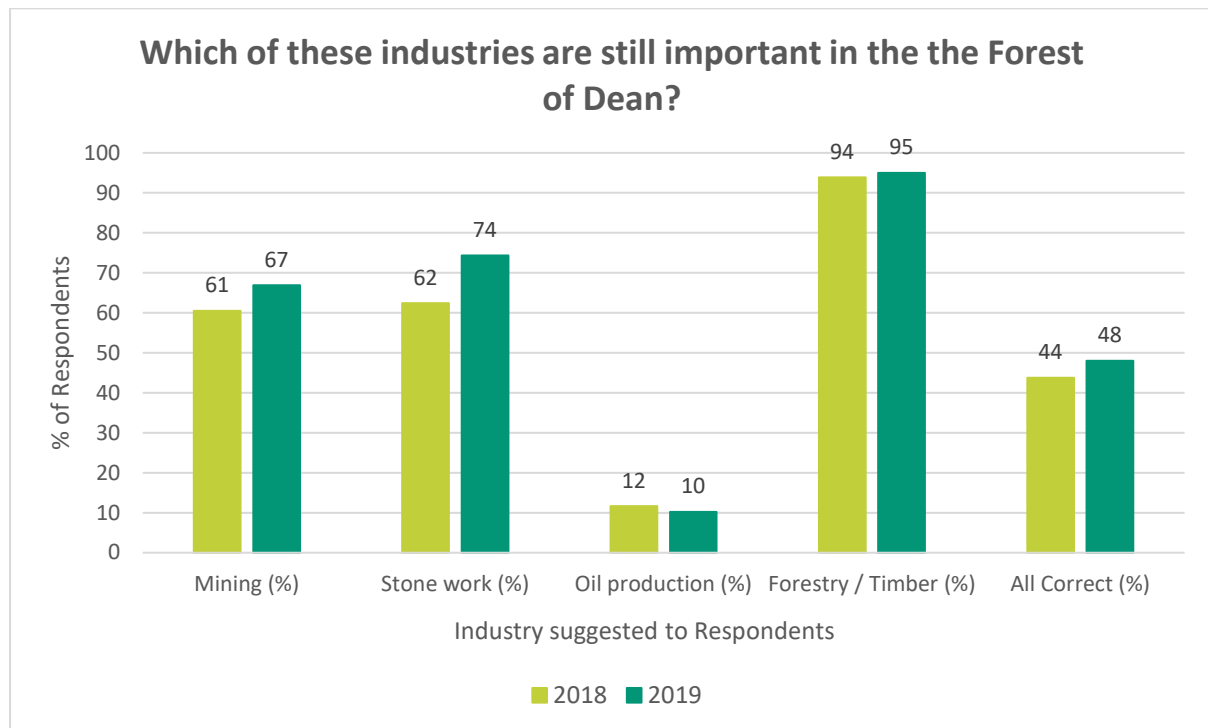


Figure 14 - Knowledge of Industrial Heritage

Respondents were then asked five questions relating to the natural heritage of the Forest of Dean; this involved correctly identifying plant or animal species from photographs. The proportion of correct responses varied across the questions as illustrated in Figure 15 below:

The responses would seem to indicate a reasonable degree of knowledge of the natural heritage of the forest. We would expect a reasonable level of knowledge from a sample where a large proportion of the respondents are involved with either volunteering or other FF Programme activities. The difference in responses between the 2018 and 2019 surveys suggests a slight improvement in knowledge but as the samples are non-equivalent, we cannot draw that conclusion with any certainty.

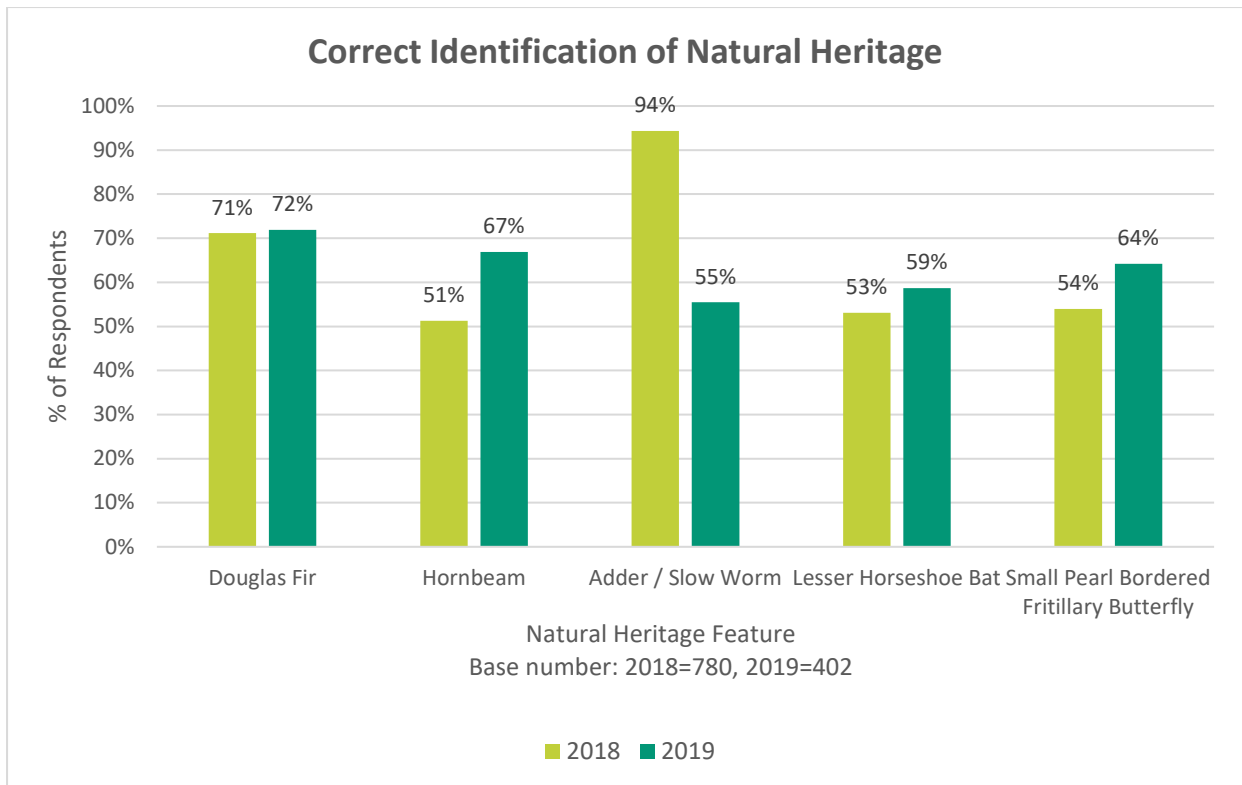


Figure 15 - Knowledge of Natural Heritage

Cultural heritage

Respondents were asked about the role of the Verderers in the Forest. Qualitative responses indicated a significant proportion (70%) of responses were considered 'correct' using relatively broad interpretations of the responses, which compares to 43% of the sample in the 2018 survey. The remaining 30% of respondents were not clear about the Verderers current role, with 18% simply stating 'Don't know' or similar (See Appendix 6 for a more detailed analysis).

Respondents were asked about the association of literary figures with the Forest. Whilst the respondents scored well with more than 70% of the sample recognising two authors, J.K. Rowling lacked recognition. Compared to the 2018 survey sample, fewer respondents correctly identified J.K. Rowling's association with the Forest, or the fact that George Orwell was not associated with the Forest.

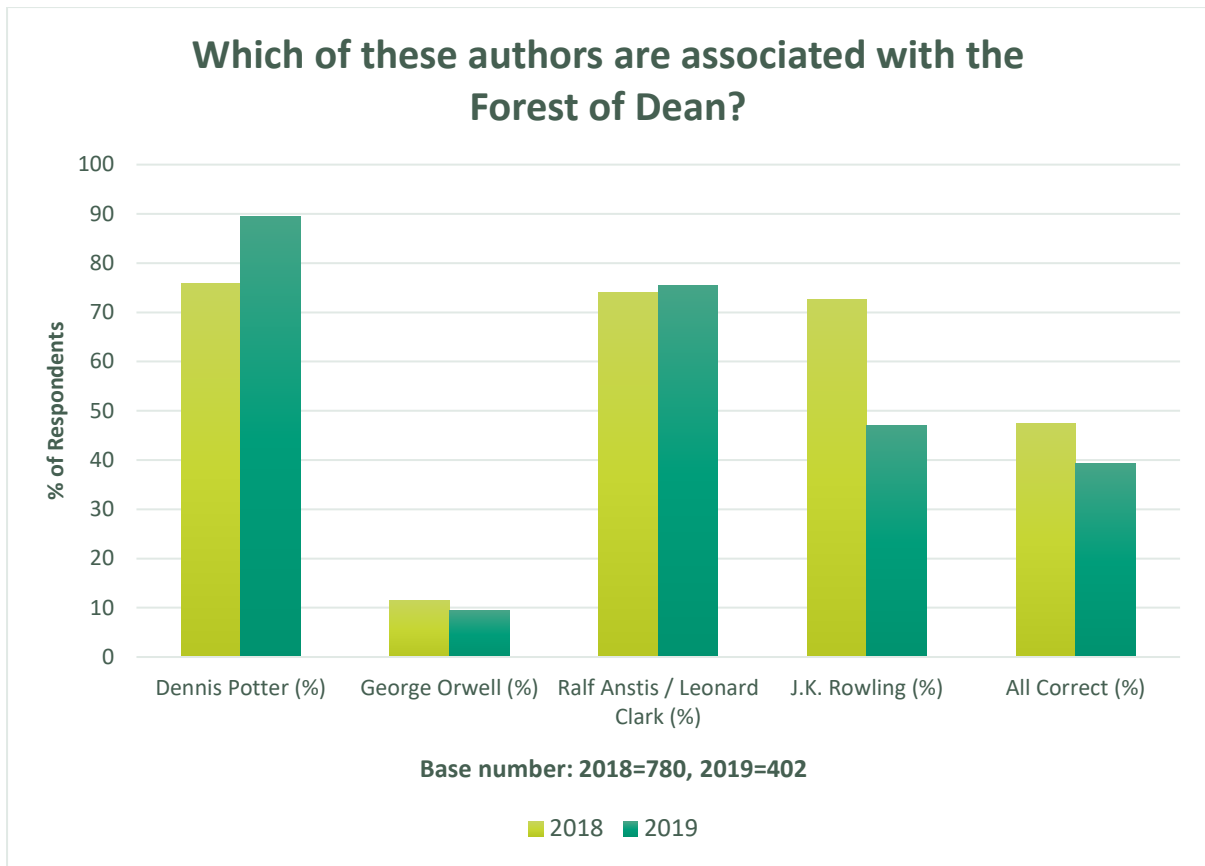


Figure 16 - Knowledge of Cultural Heritage (authors associated with the Forest)

2.6. Opinions on Forest of Dean issues

Respondents were asked to score three statements about their opinions on the heritage in the Forest of Dean. The statements referred to: the condition of heritage, whether it was being preserved for future generations, and to what extent it is being identified and recorded. The statements were scored on a 1 – 10 scale where 1 is equivalent to ‘very strong disagreement’, and 10 equates to ‘very strong agreement’ with the statement.

Table 1 below indicates that in general, the majority of respondents agreed with the statements. Table 2 provides a clearer overview by grouping the scores into three categories of ‘disagree’ (those that generally disagreed with the statements scoring below 5 on the scale); those that scored in the middle of the scale (5 or 6), and ‘agree’ (those who generally agree with the statements scoring 7 – 10).

Table 2 shows that two thirds of the respondents agreed that heritage is being identified and recorded, and a slightly smaller proportion (59.5%) agreed that heritage is being protected and preserved for future generations. However, only slightly more than one third of the respondents (37%) agreed that the heritage is in a good condition, while 36.5% indicated a score in the middle of the scale (5 or 6) and just over one quarter of the sample (26.5%) disagreed with the statement. This is an interesting outcome suggesting that although the majority of sample respondents feel heritage is being recorded and protected there is a significant proportion that feel it is not in good condition.

In all cases, however, a majority reported having a positive view of heritage. In the case of “Heritage is being protected and preserved for future generations” around 73% gave a response of ‘6’ or higher; for “Heritage is being identified and recorded” this was around 78%; while for “Heritage is in good condition” only 56% gave a response of 6 or higher

Figures 17 and 18 compare the respondent perceptions on these three characteristics between the 2018 and 2019 surveys. Table 18 illustrates a similar pattern of scores across the time periods and also shows that the mean scores of the sample in 2019 is slightly higher in each of the three categories compared to the 2018 survey, although the differences are not statistically significant.

Score	Heritage is being protected and preserved for future generations	Heritage is in good condition	Heritage is being identified and recorded
Very Strongly disagree with the statement 1	2.8%	4.2%	1.9%
2	2.6%	3.7%	1.9%
3	6.9%	7.3%	4.5%
4	4.1%	11.3%	4.0%
Neither agree nor disagree 5	10.8%	17.3%	10.3%
6	13.3%	19.2%	11.6%
7	23.8%	20.7%	20.1%
8	20.0%	10.2%	22.8%
9	6.4%	2.9%	10.8%
Very strongly agree with the statement 10	9.2%	3.1%	12.2%
Total (Valid)	390	381	378
Don't Know	3.1%	5.5%	6.3%
Total	402	402	402

Table 1 - Perceptions of Heritage

Score	Heritage is being protected and preserved for future generations	Heritage is in good condition	Heritage is being identified and recorded
Disagree with statement (score 1 - 4)	16.4%	26.5%	12.2%
Neither agree nor disagree (Score 5 - 6)	24.1%	36.5%	22.0%
Agree with statement (Score 7 - 10)	59.5%	37.0%	65.9%
Total (Valid)	390	381	378
Don't Know (n)	12	21	24
Total	402	402	402

Table 2 - Views on Heritage in the Forest of Dean, aggregated

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about heritage in the Forest of Dean?

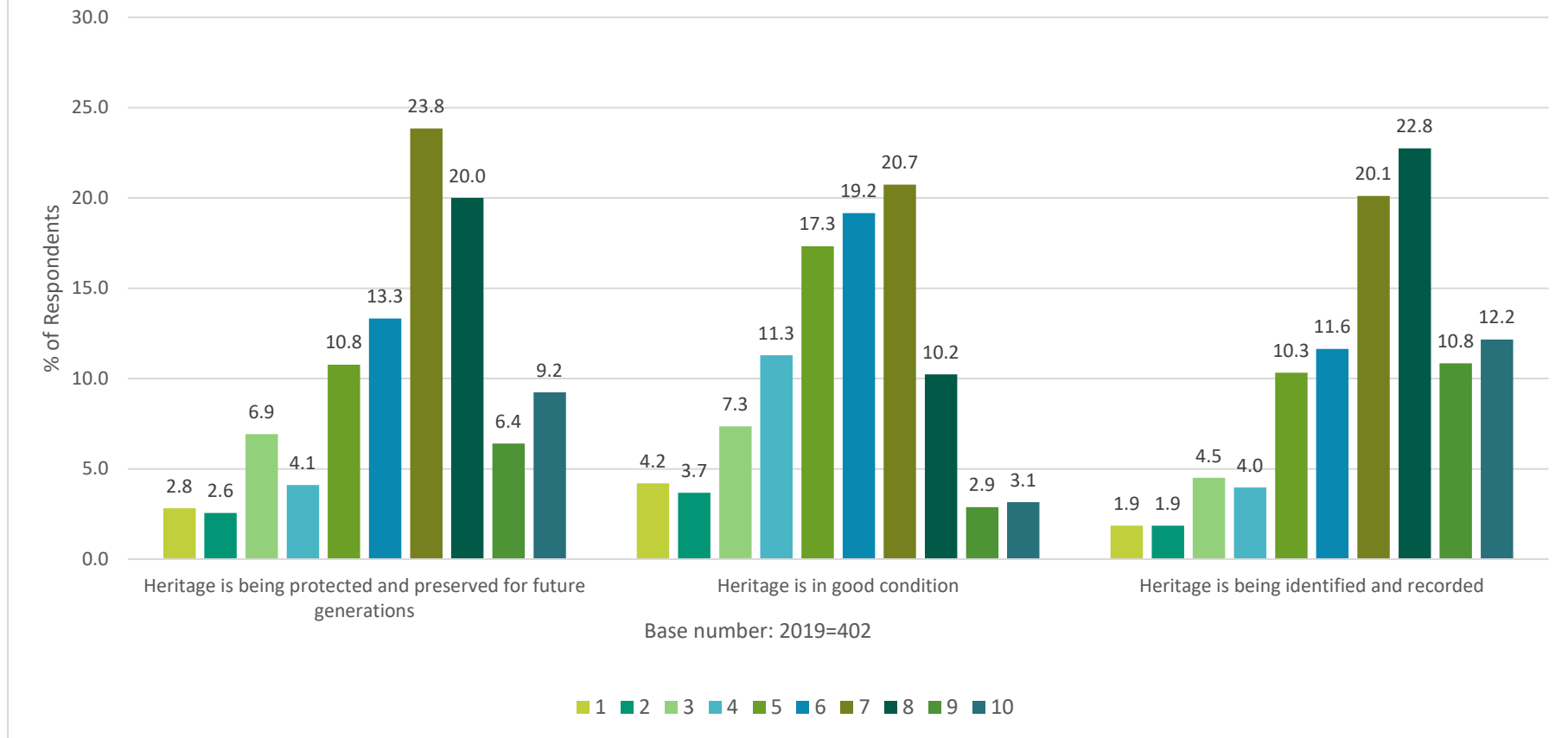


Figure 17 - Views on Heritage in the Forest of Dean

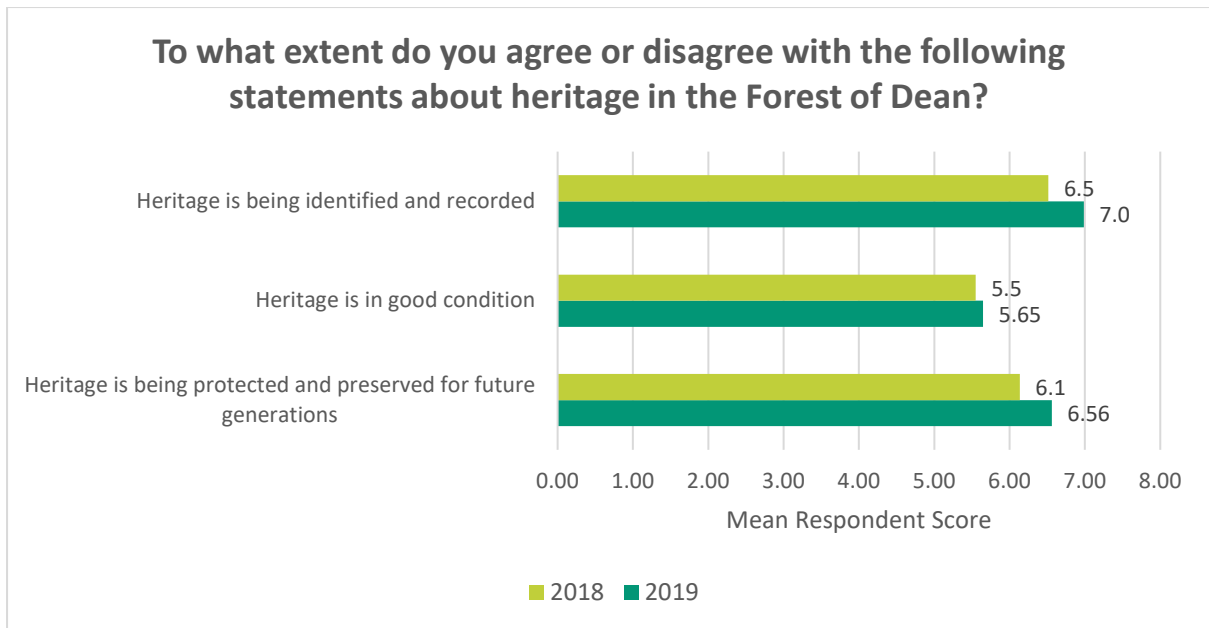


Figure 18 - Views on Heritage in the Forest of Dean (mean scores)

Respondents were then asked about their views on the Forest of Dean more generally. Each of the following statements: : “It is clean and tidy”, “it is a good place to live”, “it is a good place to work”, “it is a good place to visit” and “it is a beautiful area” were scored on a 10-point scale where 1 = strongly disagree, to 10 = strongly agree. Responses to the question “It is clean and tidy” were the only ones where there is a clear leaning towards a negative viewpoint, but even here some 55% scored 6 or higher. In response to “it is a good place to work” there was a more evenly distributed scoring, with 60% scoring 6 or higher, but with a higher proportion of scores around the central point of the scale. In the three other cases, 90% of the responses scored 7 or higher, demonstrating clearly the esteem that the area is held as a place to live, or visit, and for its aesthetic character.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the Forest of Dean?

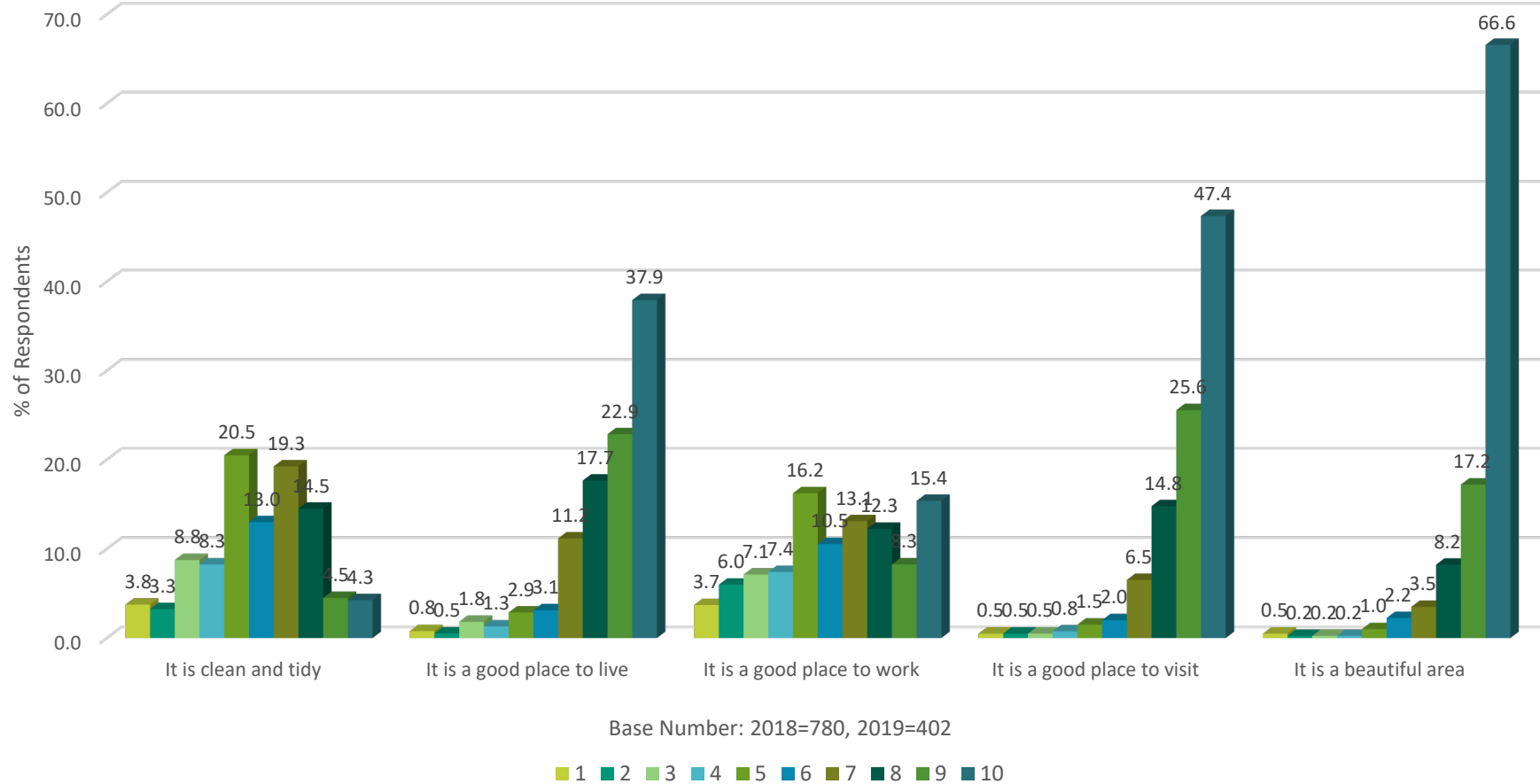


Figure 19 - Views on the Forest of Dean

Mean scores in the 2019 survey are slightly higher than that for 2018 but a comparison of mean scores between the 2018 and 2019 surveys reveals no significant differences between the samples.

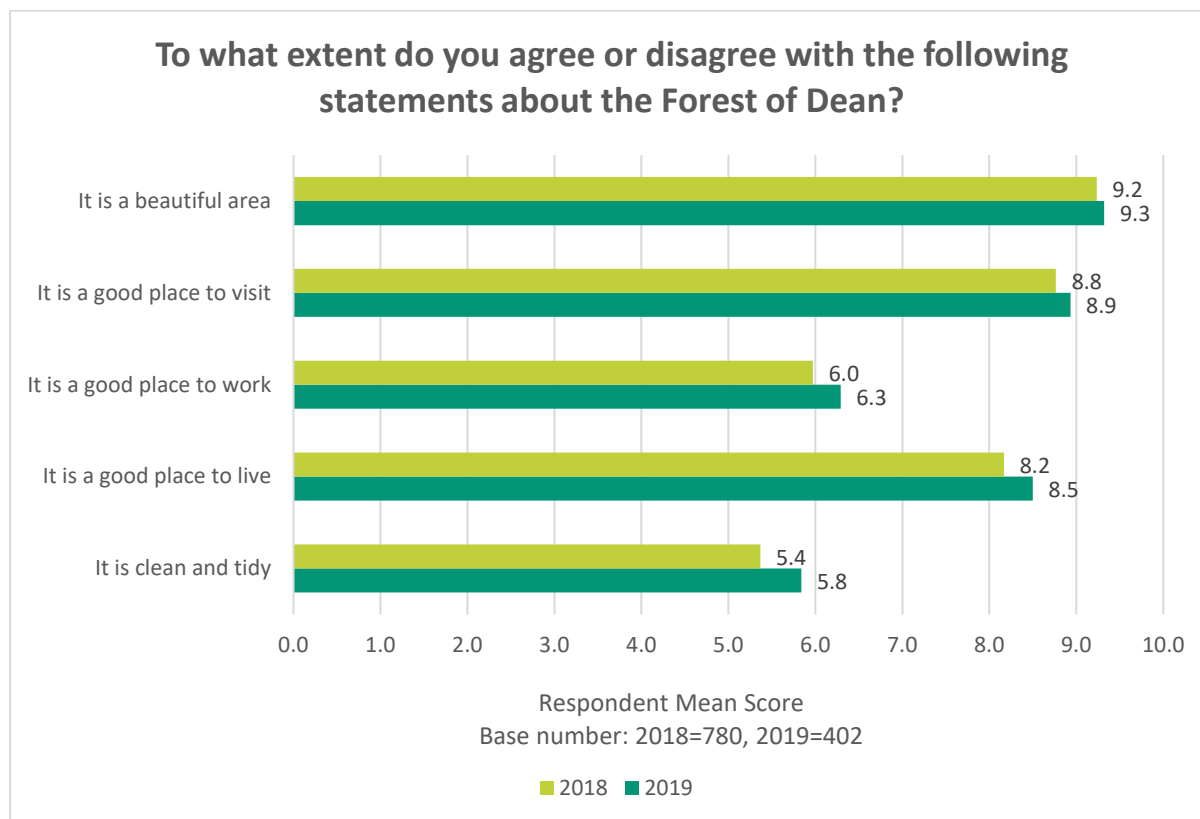


Figure 20 - Views on the Forest of Dean (mean scores for 2018 and 2019)

Learning

Respondents were asked about their views on learning more about the Forest of Dean. Agreement was strong for wanting to learn more about ‘the wildlife and habitats of the Forest of Dean’ with 88% agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement (compared to 87% for the 2018 survey), closely followed by wanting to learn more about ‘the historical and industrial importance’ where 87.5% agreed or strongly agreed (compared to 85.7% in 2018). Learning about music scored the lowest level of interest at 65% agreeing or strongly agreeing (compared to 62% for the 2018 survey). In each question, there were some respondents who reported already having a good knowledge, this ranges from a low of 2.5% to a high of around 10%.

Overall, these responses suggest a high level of demand for learning in relation to all aspects of the Forest’s heritage.

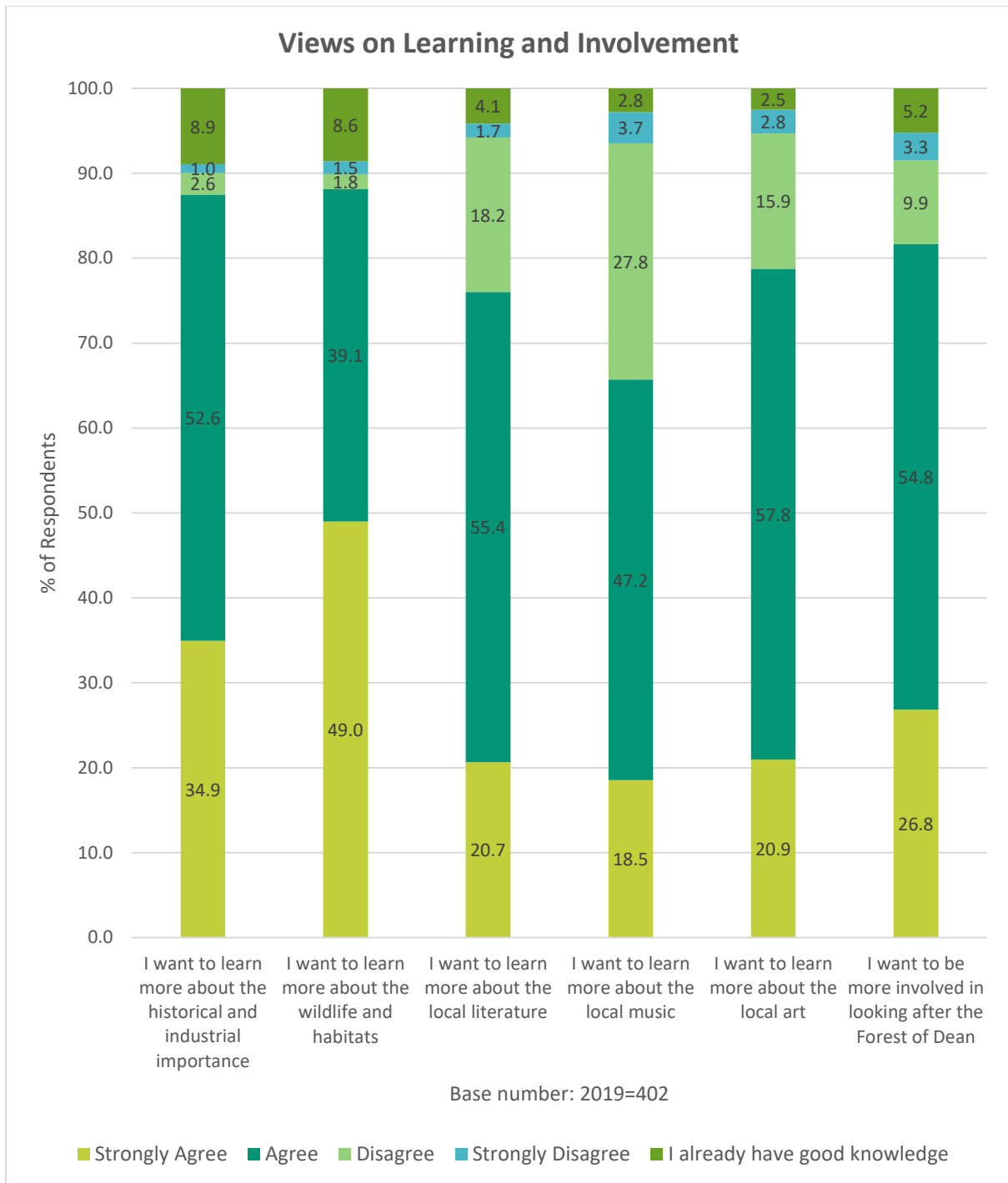


Figure 21 - Views on learning and involvement

Comparison of sample mean scores between the 2018 and 2019 surveys reveals small differences against all statements with mean values for 2019 being slightly higher in all cases, suggesting a slight difference in levels of agreement towards statements in favour of learning and involvement. Note that in Figure 22 the lower the score the higher the level of agreement with the statement. This for each statement the mean scores for the 2019 survey sample are higher than the mean scores for the 2018 survey sample.

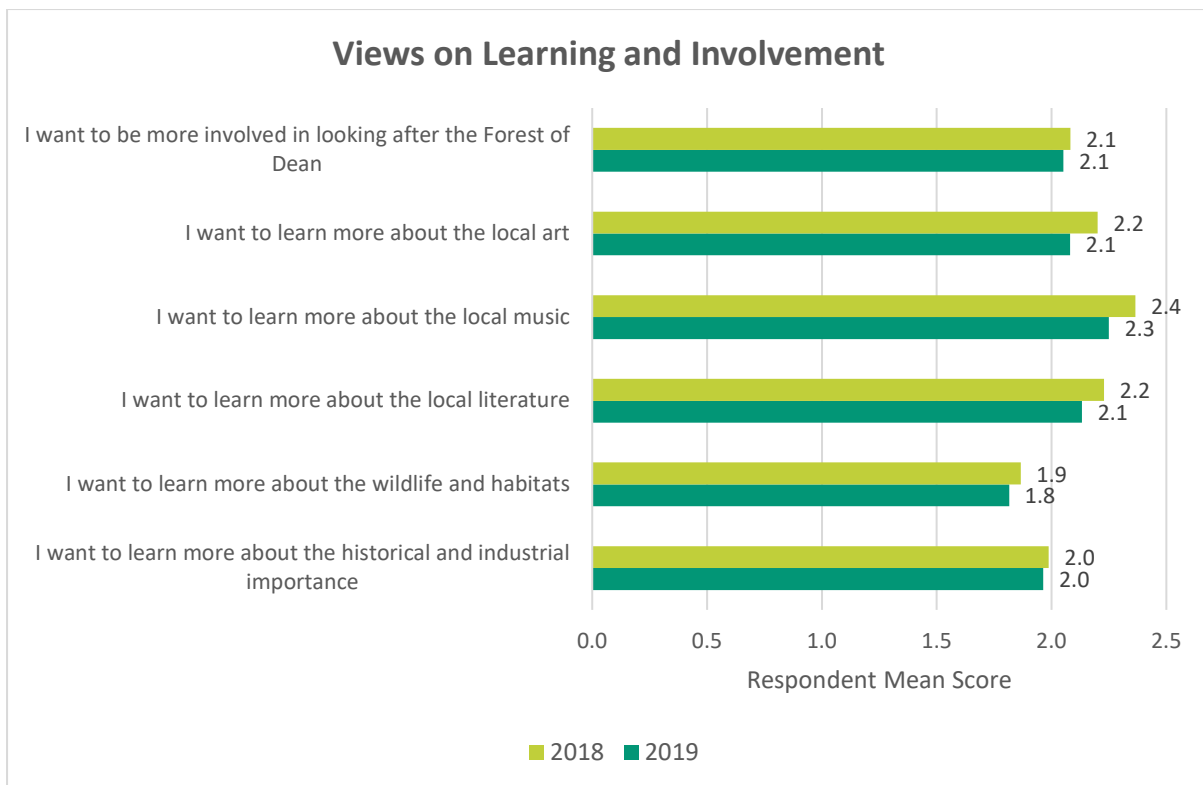


Figure 22 - Views on learning and involvement (mean scores)

[Note: Figure 22 scoring: 1 = Strong Agreement; 2 = Agreement; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 4 = Disagreement; 5 = Strong Disagreement]

Woodland Management

Respondents were asked for their views on six different aspects of woodland management. As was the case in the 2018 survey, 'access to outdoor activities' stands out as an area of good management with over half the sample (55%) indicating good or very good management. 'Protecting wildlife habitat' also stands out with around 40% of the sample indicating that management is good or very good (compared to 33% for the 2018 survey). The 'management of tree felling and timber production' was identified as good or very good by 30% of the sample (compared to 27% previously), whilst similarly managing an 'increased amount of grazing animals' was identified by 31% of the sample as good or very good (compared to 18% from 2018).

The remaining management aspects, 'Control of wild boar' and 'Conservation of built heritage' scored less well. A total of 40% of the sample reported 'Conservation of built heritage' as poor, very poor, or not undertaken, and a similar level indicated it was 'about right'. Similar to the 2018 survey responses, the 'Control of wild boar' received the lowest score with 63% reporting this as poor, very poor, or not undertaken.

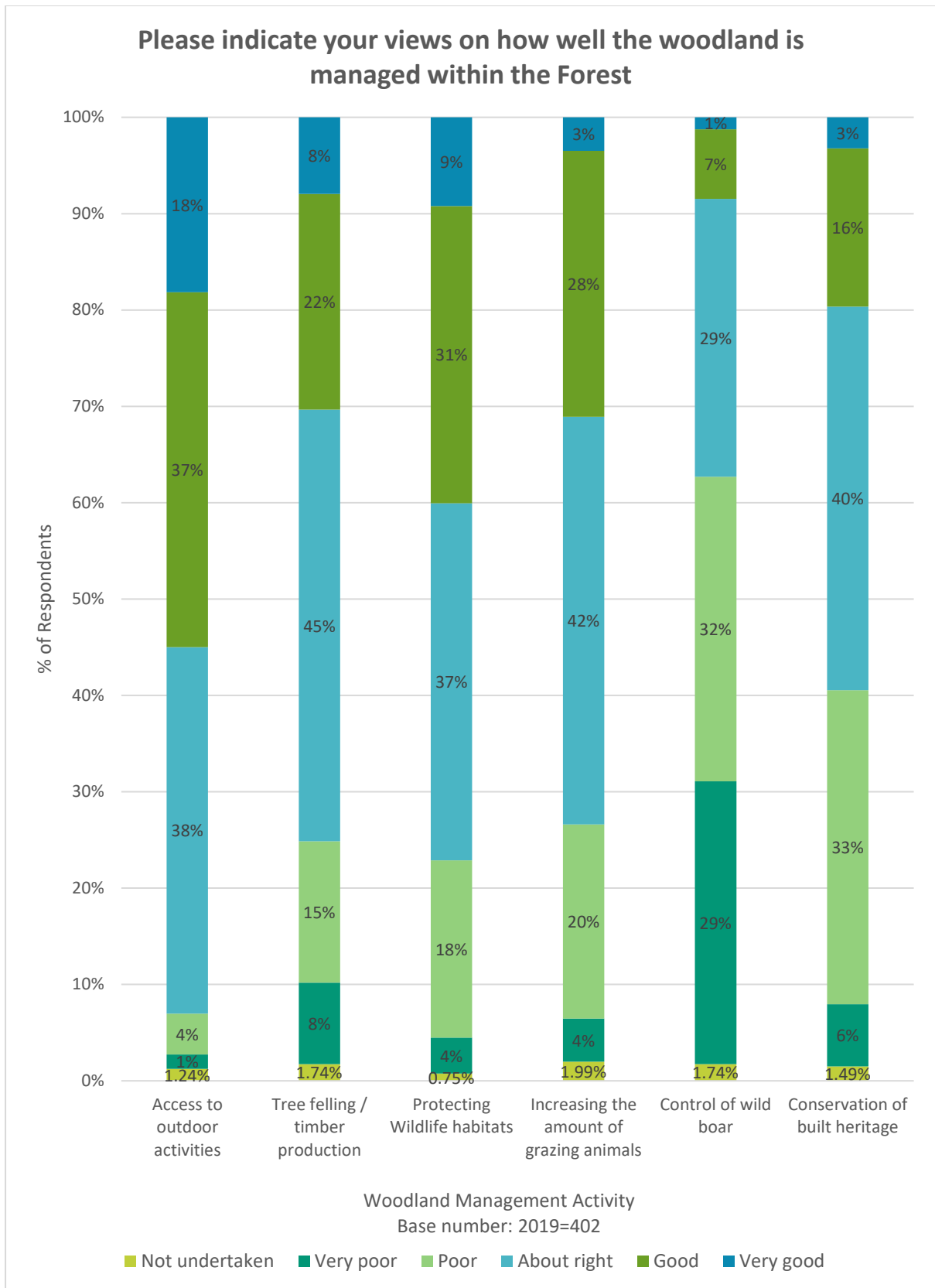


Figure 23 - Views on woodland management

Comparison of sample mean scores between the 2018 and 2019 surveys indicates relatively small differences (none of which are statistically significant). Mean values for 2019 are slightly higher for all issues, suggesting slightly higher values for management of these aspects when compared to the sample from the 2018 survey.

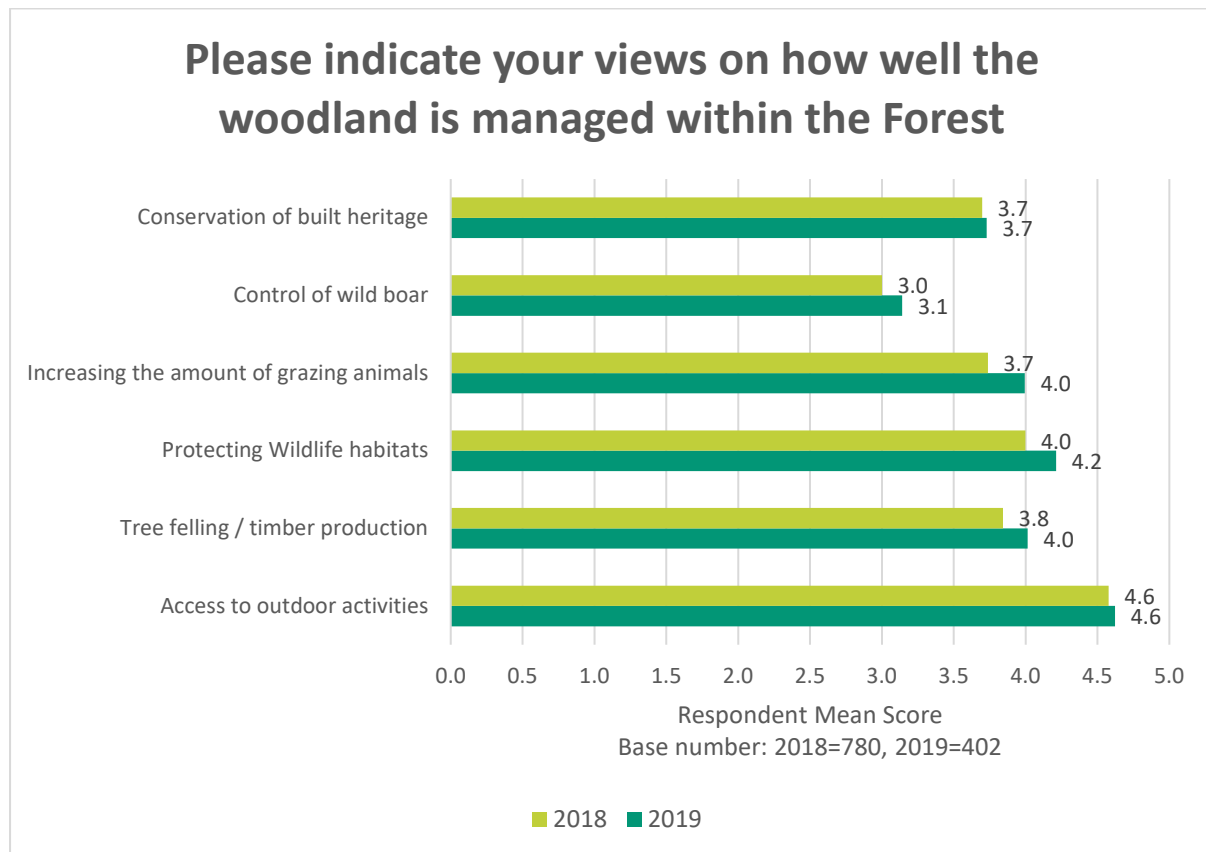


Figure 24 - Views on Woodland Management: comparison of 2018 and 2019 data

Woodland visitation

Respondents were also asked how frequently they visit the woodland within the Forest in an effort to understand the level of utilisation of the woodland resource. The use of the term ‘woodland’ was deliberate to try and ascertain the proportion of respondents who went into the forested areas for recreation or some other purpose, and how often.

Comparisons of the 2018 and 2019 surveys indicate relatively minor differences between the proportion of the sample frequenting the woodland on a daily or weekly basis, but small differences overall in the frequency of visits, except for the frequency of ‘once every 6 months’; it is not clear why there is such an increase for this specific frequency but it could be a sampling issue.

A total of 41% of respondents (includes both visitors and residents), (compared to 35.6% in 2018) said they visited the woodland on a daily basis (the majority may possibly be dog walkers), while a further 32% said they visited weekly (compared to 29% in the 2018

sample). In the 2018 survey, a small proportion (2%) indicated they would like to visit the woods but have limited mobility, this was not reported in the most recent survey and potentially indicates the situation has changed (though whether this is due to the Walking with Wheels project cannot be ascertained).

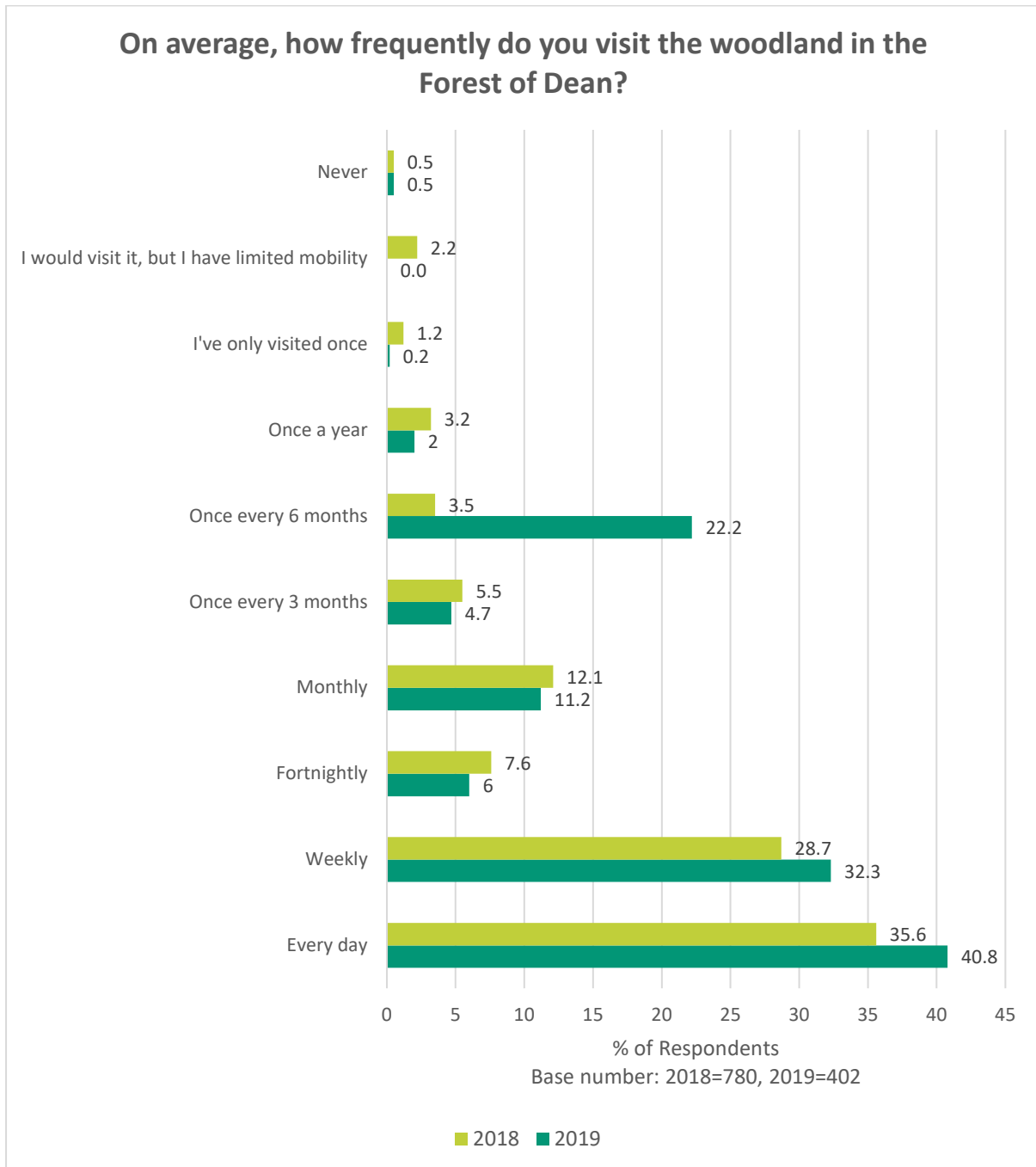


Figure 25 - Frequency of visits to woodland in the Forest of Dean

(full sample, 2018 n=780; 2019 n=402)

2.7 Respondent perceptions of what is special or needs to be improved

Respondents were asked to state what heritage characteristics made the Forest of Dean Special for them, and why; and were then asked, what could be improved, and why. Whilst this was a compulsory question, some respondents used 'space' to avoid submitting an answer, so respondent numbers for each question vary. Respondents were reminded that the definition of heritage for the survey is:

“anything that has originated from the historic activities of previous generations. This could be the language or dialect, music, literature, the natural environment, industry, buildings, local rights to use resources, or even the very appearance of the landscape around us”.

Aspects of heritage which make the Forest of Dean Special

When asked what single aspect of heritage makes the Forest of Dean special the majority of respondents indicated some aspect of the natural environment. A total of 323 responses were submitted, of which 196 (61% of all sample responses) related to the natural heritage of the Forest of Dean. Table 3 below categorises the responses illustrating that they coalesce around the aesthetic of the forest environment, and the positive effect that this has for people (physical and mental health), and for the environmental services that it provides e.g. habitat, biodiversity. Over one third of the full sample (38%) indicated that the 'forest/wood' or the 'natural environment' were key aspects making the Forest special for them. While 10% of all respondents made some reference to 'landscape', or 'beauty'. Only 5% of the sample made specific reference to 'wildlife', suggesting that it is the forested environment that people find attractive.

Category of response	Number	Proportion of Natural heritage sub-sample (n=196)	Proportion of total sample (N= 323)
Forest/wood	68	35%	21%
Natural environment	55	28%	17%
Beauty	17	9%	5%
Wildlife	26	13%	8%
Landscape	16	8%	5%
Other	14	7%	4%
Total	196	100%	61%

Table 3 – Aspects of Natural Heritage which make the Forest of Dean special

A total of 53 respondents (16% of the full sample) made reference to the built and industrial heritage of the Forest of Dean. The qualitative statements supporting this choice referred to personal or family relationships in respect of the heritage, the ability to 'see' the past, finding interesting places to explore, and places of personal significance. Two thirds of this group (n=53) indicated either 'buildings and remains' or 'mines/mining' in their responses, and a further 15% mentioned industry.

Category of response	Number	Proportion of Industrial & built heritage sub-sample (n=53)	Proportion of total sample (N= 323)
Buildings & remains	17	32%	5%
Mines/mining	18	34%	6%
Industry	8	15%	2%
Rail/tramways/transport	5	9%	2%
Other	5	9%	2%
Total	53	100%	16%

Table 4 – Aspects of Built and industrial heritage which make the Forest of Dean special

A total of 74 respondents (23% of the full sample) identified the cultural heritage of the Forest of Dean as a key aspect of what makes the Forest special. In their qualitative responses people mentioned concern for ways in which the heritage of the Forest provides a connection to the past and, a sense of perspective, connections to family history, the need to conserve the heritage as the number of ‘born and bred’ Foresters decreases and ‘incomers’ increase, and the importance of the freedom and value of the foresters’ rights such as mining and sheep badgering. Just over one third (35%) of the respondents in this sub-sample (n=74) indicated some aspect of history as important, 15% mentioned dialect, and 14% mentioned free mining as significant aspects of the heritage.

Category of response	Number	Proportion of Cultural heritage sub-sample (n=74)	Proportion of total sample (N= 323)
History	26	35%	8%
Language/dialect	11	15%	3%
Free mining	10	14%	3%
People	7	9%	2%
Music & Literature	5	7%	2%
Rights	4	5%	1%
Other	11	15%	3%
Total	74	100%	23%

Table 5 – Aspects of Cultural heritage which make the Forest of Dean special

Aspects of Heritage in the Forest of Dean which need improvement

A total of 209 responses were received to this question. Approximately a quarter of responses directly related to the resident feral Wild Boar population, or other wildlife management issues. Of these, 38.9% cited concerns over the damage caused by the boar, in particular to grass verges, recreational areas and to sites of importance for other flora. It is clearly an issue that concerns a large proportion of the population. Three respondents (5%)

reported having concerns about safety, in particular for walkers/ dog-walkers. A total of 24% of responses indicated support for a boar cull, or a greater level of culling, with damage to the wider forest environment being the main underlying argument. The 2019 survey also included a very small number of responses (n=4; or 7.4% of the sub-sample) in favour of not culling the boar, instead controlling by fencing or through natural setting of the population level, with one response specifically relating to 'animal rights' issues. This type of response was not captured in the previous 2018 survey.

The remaining 13 responses (24%) of this sub-group, present a somewhat confused picture as to animal and wildlife management in the Forest of Dean generally. Some respondents view animals as a pest, eating up ground vegetation, others that they are necessary to stop scrub encroachment and the resulting impact on other ecology. Some see sheep as a problem, some as a benefit, some see fencing as wrong, others that it controls grazing and stops vehicle accidents with livestock. Overall, the responses present some insight into the alternative outcomes sought by a range of interests, and how the management actions required to achieve the differing aims may potentially create conflict.

Category of response	Number	Proportion of Wildlife sub-sample (N=54)	Proportion of total sample (N=209)
Wild Boar - Damage	21	38.9%	10.0%
Wild Boar - Fear	3	5.6%	1.4%
Culling of wild boar +ve	13	24.1%	6.2%
Culling of wild boar -ve	4	7.4%	1.9%
Other wildlife/sheep management issues	13	24.1%	6.2%
Total	54	100.0%	25.8%

Table 6 - Aspects of Heritage needing improvement: Boar

A total of 45 respondents (21% of the sample responses; n = 209) identified concerns with regard to woodland management. Concern over 'Woodland management operations' formed around 58% of the total responses for this sub-sample (n=45), and issues around 'tree felling' formed around 42% of these comments. With regard to tree felling the main issue raised revolves around the damage caused by the tree felling operations, damage to access routes and perceived delays in replanting. Respondents made frequent references to the forest "looking a mess". There is no indication that there is a lack of understanding that this work needs to be carried out as part of a 'working' environment, just displeasure with the result. The other 58% of responses were focussed on the need to create a more diverse forest, using a broader range of tree species, creating and maintaining the open grass and heathland environments, and the need to create and better maintain footpaths to support and encourage more walking.

Category of response	Number	Proportion of Forest Operations sub-sample (N=45)	Proportion of total sample (N=209)
Tree felling	19	42.2%	9.1%
Management issues	26	57.8%	12.4%
Total	45	100.0%	21.5%

Table 7 - Aspects of Heritage needing improvement: Woodland Management

Sixty of the responses (just under 30% of the total responses to this question on what can be improved) related to various aspects of communication of information. The sub-categories of information and signage were strongly related and accounted for 45% of this group, with a focus being a lack of information that is available at key heritage sites or features, along with a lack of good quality or properly maintained signage where it is present. Fourteen of the responses (23% of the sub-group) were about educational opportunities; this was reflected in comments about the lack of knowledge and understanding, especially amongst local people, and the need to have more opportunities to learn about the heritage both in-person and through other resources, including formal education. In the final sub-group, relating to communication and awareness raising, 19 respondents (around 32% of the sub-sample) drew attention to the need to develop better awareness and understanding of the heritage, what it is and where it is; and also to communicate this through a variety of means including communications between groups, e.g. Forestry England, the District Council and community groups, and also more informal means such as advertising.

Category of response	Number	Proportion of Information/awareness/signage/communication sub-sample (N=60)	Proportion of total sample (N=209)
Information	15	25.0%	7.2%
Signage	12	20.0%	5.7%
Education	14	23.3%	6.7%
Communication & awareness raising	19	31.7%	9.1%
Total	60	100.0%	28.7%

Table 8 - Aspects of Heritage needing improvement: Information & Communication

A total of 29 respondents (58% of this sub-group or just under 14% of the total responses) responded to this question about what can be improved with 'don't know' or similar. A further 17 responses were categorised as miscellaneous, covering a wide range of fairly negative views, but none which coalesced into an identifiable narrative. The exception to this was two comments relating to increasing engagement and engaging with youth, which are consistent with other aspects of the data emerging from the survey. Four respondents provided very positive views on the development of the forest in so far as there is a strong need to conserve the heritage but without attracting so many visitors that it causes damage.

Category of response	Number	Proportion of 'Other' sub-sample(N=50)	Proportion of total sample (N=209)
Don't Know	29	58.00%	13.88%
Positive views	4	8.00%	1.91%
Miscellaneous	17	34.00%	8.13%
Total	50	100%	23.92%

Table 9 - Aspects of Heritage needing improvement: Other Responses

2.8 Additional Comments Provided by Respondents - Overview of comments

Survey respondents were provided with the opportunity to express their views on the subjects covered in the survey. This led to 86 respondents providing 87 individually identifiable comments, of which 49 comments fell within the subject of the survey, 17 provided feedback on the survey itself, and 21 were outside of the scope of the question.

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

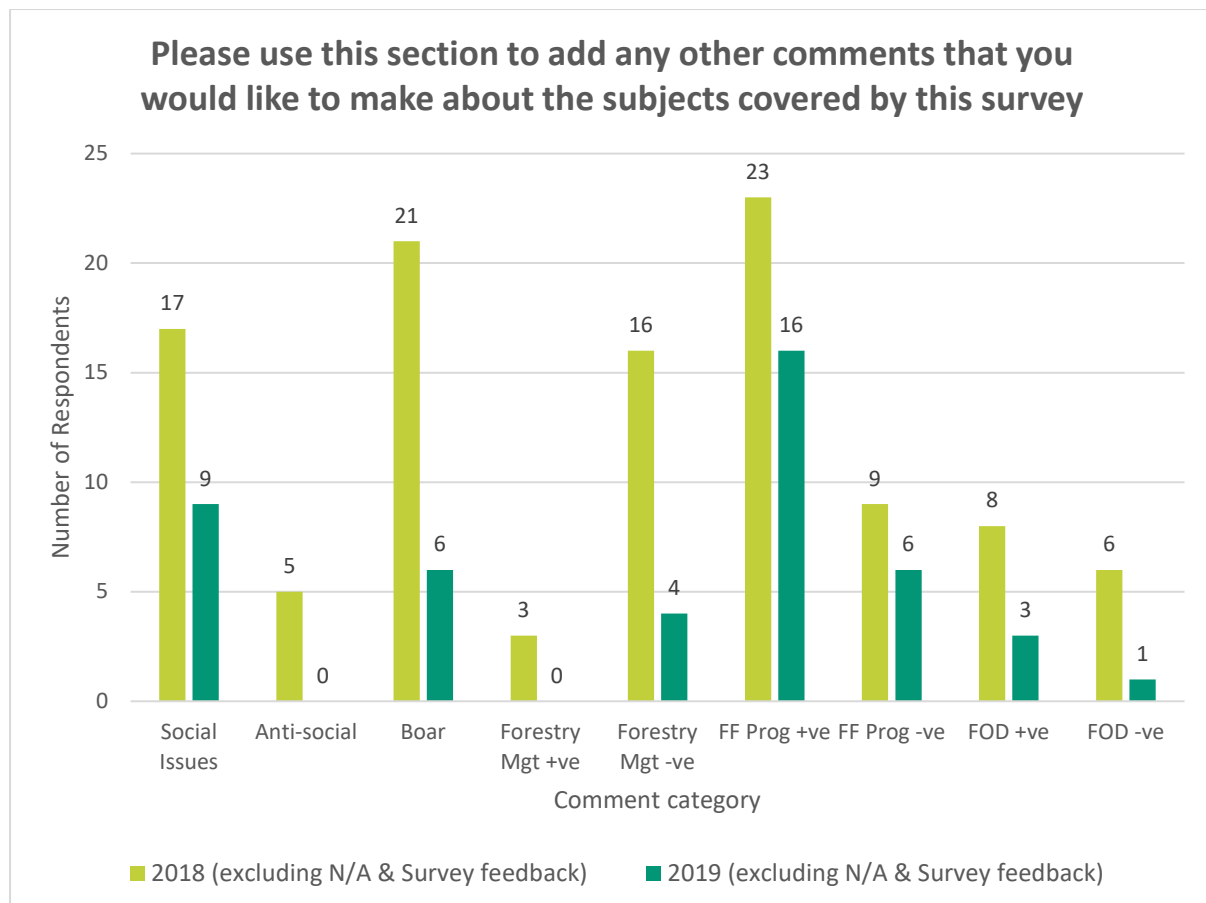


Figure 26 - Other comments on the survey topics

The most common responses relate to the Foresters’ Forest programme, with many positive comments (16), and some negative (6). Positive responses mostly refer to the management of the programme, such as:

“I have added some criticisms but overall I am impressed with the organisation of the FF project. It shines when compared with most state-run institutions.”

“the project is great! and Sue is doing a fantastic job leading it.”

“Only to say how well-managed I think the Foresters Forest project is. Sometimes with large grants so, much time/money can be wasted procrastinating, but I feel that it is a coherent and well-managed project.”

Even the negative comments tended to be supportive or developmental, such as:

“Unless you actively look for what this project does there is very little information and the website is limited. and the sites of interest need to be easier for tourists to find and celebrate.”

“I notice...that there is a newsletter. This had not previously been made aware to me.”

The next most common set of responses (n=9) related to broadly social issues, such as roads (quality, speeding), footpaths (need for more) and planning, where there is a genuine concern that the growth in housing is too great and that there are too many tourists being encouraged, all of which jeopardises the Forest as a special place.

The Feral Wild Boar could not avoid mention, of course, with 6 comments provided. These comments were all in favour of increased control measures to reduce the numbers and are exemplified in these comments:

“I think the boar problem is out of control and is causing detriment to the Forest. I know they were introduced accidentally but I do have concerns about the deliberate introduction of other species such as beaver, pine martins, grazing cattle and ponies. These are not natural to the Forest of Dean. The boar are ruining the leisure activities for the residents of the Forest by rooting up sports fields and common ground.”

“Wild boar are a real problem to walkers, I feel numbers should be drastically reduced - they have increased so much in the time I have lived here. They are aggressive and too many for area “

There were a small number of comments (n=4) critical of forestry management, including issues such as needing to reduce or better manage felling, or replace felling with coppicing.

Lastly, there were a small number of comments about the Forest of Dean more broadly, three being positive about the aesthetic qualities of the forest - and one negative, about the perception of ‘over-use’ of the forest.

2.9 How respondents found out about the survey

The survey asked respondents how they learned of the survey so they could complete it. It should be noted that in the 2018 survey, respondents were asked which social media platform they had heard about the survey from, whereas in 2019 they were asked simply to distinguish between Foresters' Forest social media and 'other social media'. A total of 43% of respondents identified social media platforms as their source, compared to 53% of the 2018 survey sample. This was split almost equally between Foresters' Forest social media and other social media outlets. Around 23% identified Foresters' Forest newsletters or website as their source or they were asked to complete it by staff or volunteers of the programme. A small number of respondents reported traditional media, and around 4% (compared to 22% in the 2018 survey) from 'other' sources.

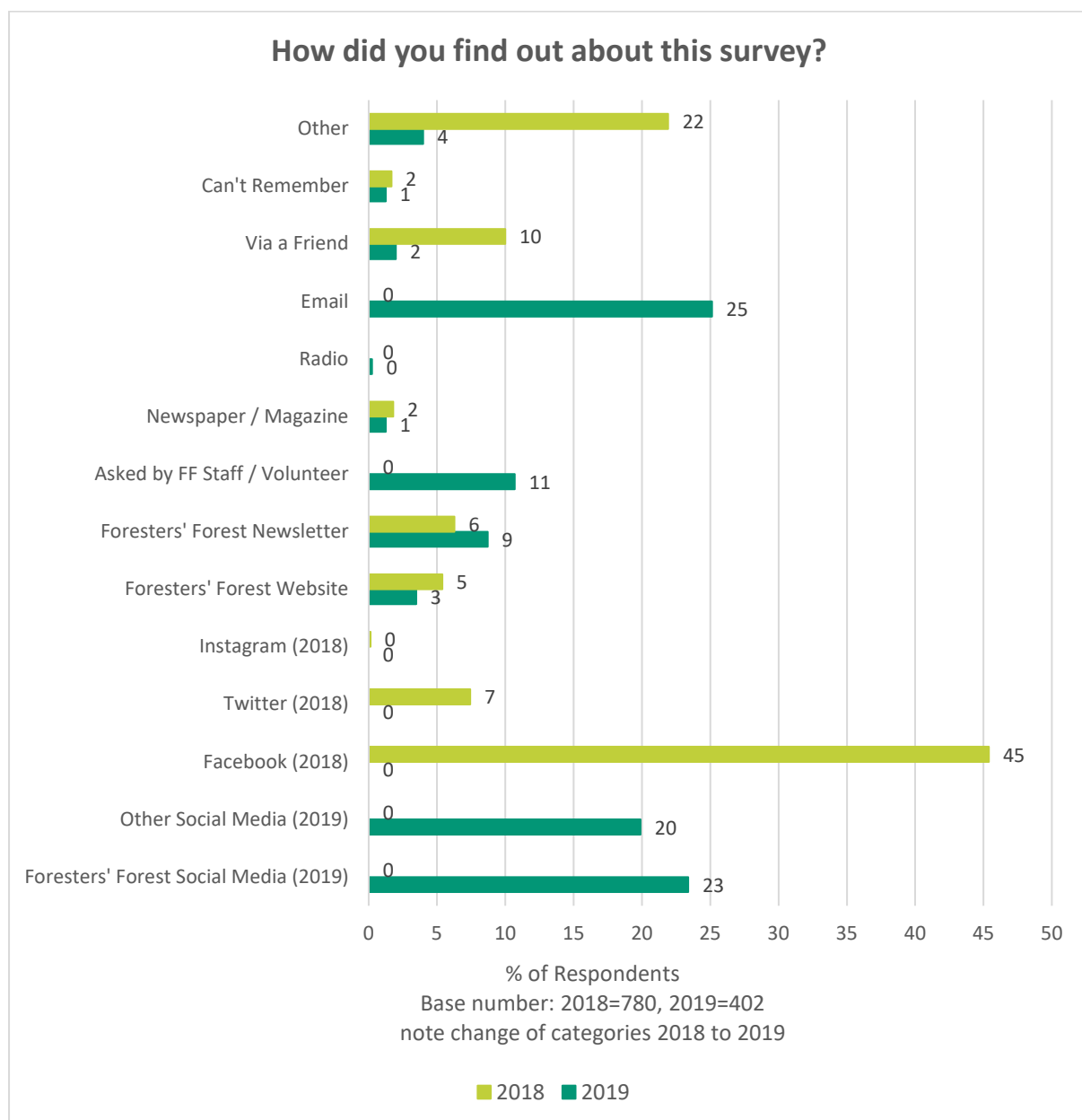


Figure 27 - How Respondents found out about the Survey

Of the 'Other' sources, this represented only 16 of the 402 respondents. Whilst this limits the significance, it can be noted that more than a third of these reported the Forest of Dean Local History Society as their source.

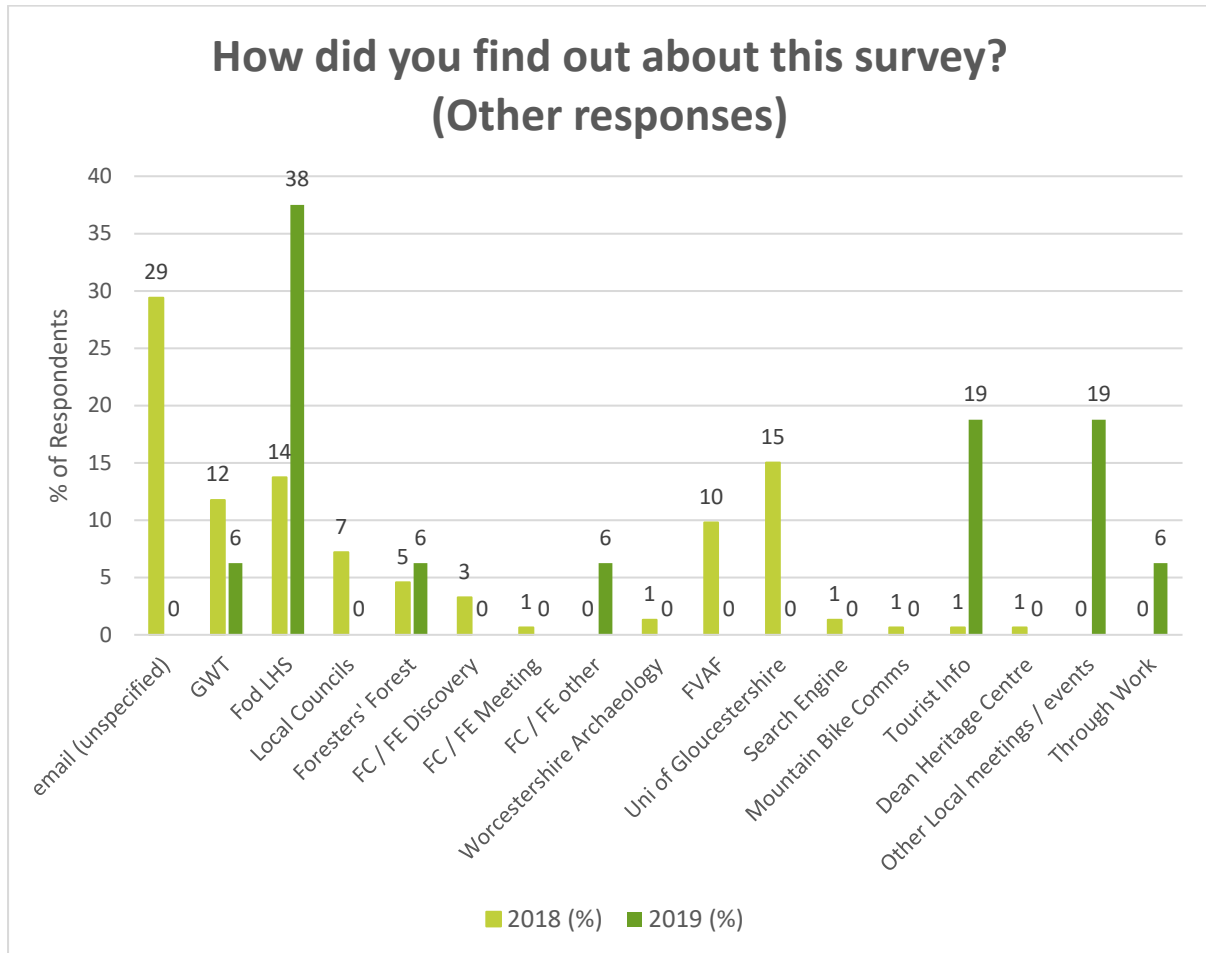


Figure 28 - How Respondents found out about the Survey, 'other' responses

3. Volunteers and Volunteering

3.1 Volunteer activity within the FF Programme

Delivery of the FF Programme relies heavily on voluntary activity and there is continual pressure to engage and keep volunteers involved. However, the number of volunteers, and the level of time input (measured in hours) varies significantly across the programme period and across projects. Some projects have only one, or relatively few volunteers, others have a large number (more than 20). In general, the natural heritage projects involving wildlife, water, or plant surveys tend to be demanding of volunteer time, as does the archaeological project. Some of the cultural heritage projects such as Forest Dialects and Freemining, use fewer volunteers.

Voluntary activity is closely monitored, with support from the Forest Voluntary Action Forum (FVAF), who also manage a Forest of Dean volunteer data base. This shows that overall there are 739 people registered as volunteers (those who have expressed an interest in volunteering for the FF Programme) and 715 people who have at some point been active volunteers (since the start of the programme to the midway point). Within the FF Programme each project leader is required to submit quarterly reports to the FF team, detailing their volunteers, tasks completed, and the level of expertise, which can be Unskilled, Skilled or Expert (See Appendix 2 for a sample Volunteer Time Spreadsheet). The value of volunteer hours is then calculated based on a 7-hour volunteer day at the rate of £50 for Unskilled, £150 for Skilled, and £350 for expert volunteers. The tasks that volunteers complete is wide ranging, but for example, litter picking would be classed as unskilled, anyone who has had some training before completing their task (e.g. Buried Heritage Archaeology volunteers) would count as skilled and any project leader or other specialist would count as expert.

The target figure for the matched funding contribution from volunteer hours (£474,000) was met and exceeded by Dec 2019. At the end of the first quarter of Year 3 the total was £485,099.51. However, this figure may not reflect the full value of volunteering activity across the Programme. Volunteer Coordinators with FVAF indicate that around one quarter of FF projects do not provide any information about volunteer activity, suggesting the full amount of volunteering that has occurred is under-recorded.

The FF Programme works closely with two volunteer coordinators in FVAF (a partner organisation) to record and identify volunteers for projects. Project Leaders contact FVAF when they will be running an activity or event requiring volunteers. The Volunteer Coordinators at FVAF communicate to relevant people identified on their database. Potential volunteers then contact either FVAF or the Project Leaders directly (it is split fairly equally with about half of volunteers making contact through FVAF). FVAF coordinators sent out surveys asking volunteers for their opinions across all projects (undertaken at baseline and the 2.5 yr stages) but noted that the response rate for the most recent survey had decreased, and not all volunteers are responding. Coordinators suggested that in some cases the non-response was due to lack of communication with the project leads.

3.2 Volunteer Badges & Certificates

The FF Programme Team have created a set of badges and certificates to recognise the efforts of volunteers, and the time and effort they devote to projects. These are designed to be in the shape of an oak leaf (a key species to represent the Forest of Dean) and are awarded to volunteers after they have achieved significant levels of input, as follows:

- Green badge 50 hours
- Yellow badge 200 hours
- Orange badge 500 hours

Each volunteer also receives a certificate thanking them for their contribution (see image below). These are awarded to volunteers at 'Thankyou Volunteer' events which are held in the Summer and at Christmas each year to celebrate all the hard work and commitment to the FF projects and programme. Each 'Thankyou Volunteer' event has concentrated on one or two of the FF Programme themes, so that over time all 38 projects get represented.



3.3 Volunteer Numbers by Project

The 2019 On-line survey identified a wide range of voluntary activity associated with the FF Programme. The projects reporting the highest number of volunteers are Love Your Forest litter pickers, Waterways Ponds & Mires, Buried Heritage, Batscape, Ancient & Notable Trees, Heritage Open Days, and Scarr Bandstand. Figure 29 compares volunteer activity across the programme as captured by the 2018 and 2019 on-line surveys. It is important to note that this is not the total of volunteers on each project, but only those who completed the relevant surveys. It is interesting to note that 17 (45%) of the projects had two or fewer volunteers (in 2019), while the remaining 21 projects each had from 3 to 21 volunteers involved. A total of 9 projects (24%) had 10 or more volunteers involved in 2019.

Projects with the largest number of volunteers tend to be those undertaking natural heritage surveys and the Buried Heritage Archaeological digs. Volunteer coordinators working with FVAF also noted the importance of the project leader personality in attracting volunteers, and that projects work best when a ‘team spirit’ is created. It was noted that some projects attract large numbers of volunteers, while others struggle to even get a few. The attitude of the project leader towards volunteers was identified as important. If volunteers are “embraced as part of the team” then it is likely that they will return, whereas if they are just given a job to do with little support the positions are more difficult to fulfil. Hence FVAF note the difficulty of finding volunteers for one-off events where volunteers are needed for relatively boring or routine tasks such as car parking duties.

FVAF also noted there were a lot of volunteers that ‘dipped in and out’ of volunteering (e.g. doing the occasional litter pick) and that although there were over 700 names on the data base, the majority of volunteering was carried out by a core of about 350 people, the remainder tending to drop in and out of activities. FVAF indicated that the major reason for people moving off the data base was due to moving out of the area, although in some cases there were personality clashes which resulted in people dropping out.

The number of volunteers is only part of the picture, however, as the number of hours of service by individuals is also a key measure of volunteer input. All the projects are different, and some will have fewer numbers of volunteers but a high number of hours of volunteer time.

Table 10 provides data on the number of volunteer hours recorded for each project over the first 2.5 years of the FF Programme (to the end of the 2nd Quarter of 2019). The data show that two projects stand out well beyond the others in terms of hours of volunteer time donated, Scarr Bandstand and Buried Heritage (Archaeology), each with well over 3,000 hours of volunteer time. The Buried Heritage project had large numbers of volunteers engaged in archaeological digs, and more offers of help than they had work for, and the Scarr Bandstand was a restoration project, which may account for the large amounts of volunteer time. The table reveals a wide range of volunteer time utilised by projects, with no clear pattern emerging, other than the fact that the natural heritage projects involving survey work tend to have higher number of hours of input. Following on from the two frontrunners, the next two largest projects, in terms of volunteer hours (both slightly above 1,700 hours each), are the Birds project and Wetscape (Waterways, ponds and mires). Both of these involved survey work requiring significant time input. Following on from them are Batscape (1,371 hours), also involving significant amounts of survey work, and Walking with Wheels (1,100 hours), which

used volunteers to train people how to use the equipment and initially required volunteers to accompany those using the Trampers in the woods.

Ten of the projects currently running (27% of those operating) have involved less than 100 hours of volunteer time, and several record zero hours of volunteer input. Some of these relate to projects that have started late, and a small number have not reported volunteer hours (e.g. Freemining). There is some concern, however, at under-reporting of volunteer hours as projects vary in their capacity for recording volunteer input accurately, and according to project lead interviews, not all of the time input is recorded. The table does, however, indicate the high reliance on volunteer activity to deliver the FF Programme, with an overall recorded total of 25,256 hours in the first 2.5 years of Programme delivery.

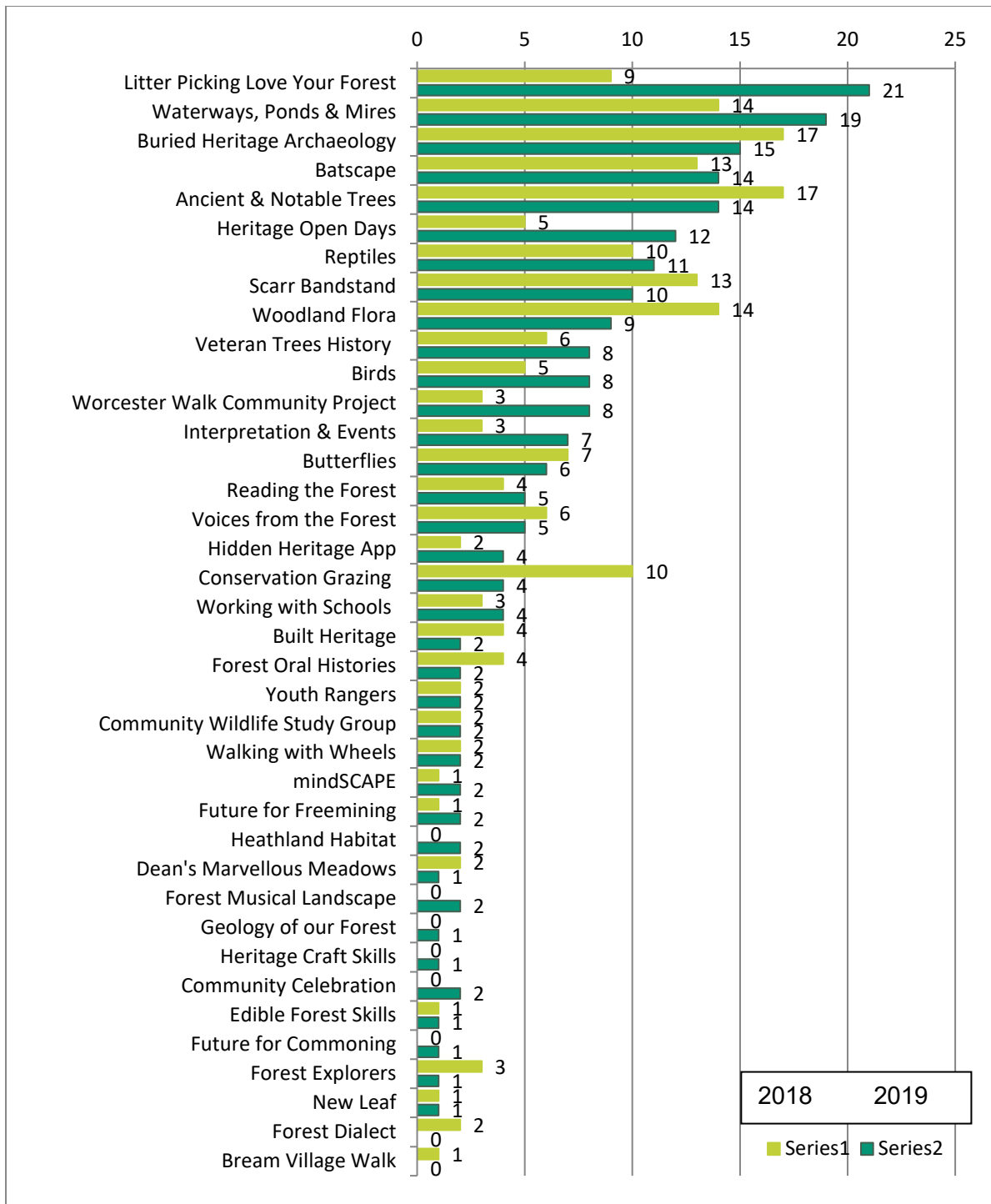


Figure 29. Foresters' Forest projects: voluntary activity (number of participants).

Source: On-line survey for 2018 (n=106), On-line survey 2019 (n=123).

Theme	Project title	Total hours to date (rounded up to nearest hour)
OUR STRONGHOLD FOR NATURE	1.1 Batscape	1,371
	1.2 Conservation Grazing	411
	1.A Heathland Habitat	0
	1.3 Community Study Group	51
	1.4 Birds	1,788
	1.5 Reptiles	897
	1.6 Wetscape - Waterways, Ponds and Mires	1,721
	1.7 Woodland Axiophytes	152
	1.8 Ancient and Notable Trees	678
	1.9 Veteran Trees History	483
	1.10 Butterflies	716
	1.11 Deans Meadows	677
1.12 Heathland Habitat	0	
EXPLORING OUR FOREST	2.1 Bream Village Walk	456
	2.2 Bixslade Geocache Trail	0
	2.3 Heritage Open Days	762
	2.4 Hidden Heritage App	7
	2.5 Walking with Wheels	1,114
	2.6 Worcester Walk Community Project	374
REVEALING OUR PAST	3.1 Built Heritage	234
	3.2 Buried Heritage (Archaeology)	3,740
	3.3.1 Voices from the Forest	625
	3.3.2 Forest Oral Histories	360
	3.4 Forest Dialect	561
	3.5 Geology of Our Forest	5
3.6 Heritage Craft Skills	393	
CELEBRATING OUR FOREST	4.1 Community Celebration	0
	4.2 Edible Forest	109
	4.3 Forest Musical Landscape	2
	4.4 Love Your Forest	377
	4.5 Mindscape	12
	4.6 Reading the Forest	848
	4.7 Scarr Bandstand	3,811
	4.8 Interpretation & Events	528
SECURING OUR FUTURE	5.1.1 A Future for Freemining (CIC)	238
	5.1.2 A Future for Freemining (Freeminers' Assoc)	
	5.2 A Future for Commoning	0
	5.3 Forest Explorers	346
	5.4 New Leaf	744
	5.5 Youth Rangers	485
5.6 Working with Schools	0	
PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT	6.5 Volunteer coordinator & FVAF office costs	0
	6.7 Training/Learning (FF Team & Leaders)	17
	6.8 Monitoring & Evaluation - CCRI	0
	6.9 FF Office costs (incl. Finance database)	268
	6.10 Office Costs FVAF	0
Total		25,356

Table 10 - Volunteer hours recorded

3.4 Type of Volunteer Activity

The On-line Surveys (2018 and 2019) identified a range of tasks carried out by those respondents who indicated engagement in voluntary activity. Many of the volunteers are actively engaged in survey work (whether this is for Biodiversity projects or Buried and Built heritage) so it is not surprising that about half of the volunteers in both 2018 and 2019 report this type of activity. There is quite a range of other activities that volunteers report, with the most frequent being 'helping to run or organise events' (n=23), 'conservation work on natural heritage' (n=16), 'litter picking' (16 people in the 2018 survey; 29 people in the 2019 survey sample), project administration (n=13) and 'providing information to people' (9 people in 2018, and 18 in 2019). A wide range of other activities are also carried out by volunteers, from stock checking (related to conservation grazing) to working with young people, and the disabled, and from driving to doing research.

FVAF volunteer coordinators noted that quite a high proportion of volunteers are incomers, or live around the edge of the Forest, and a significant number are recently retired, though still active and looking for new activities to get involved with (applies in particular to the active core of volunteers). In some ways this cohort constrains the type of work that can be carried out by volunteers (e.g. limited amount of heavy manual labour). No particular challenges were noted in regard to supporting volunteers over the next couple of years of the Programme. Attempts are being made to try and engage the more hard-to-reach sectors of the community (e.g. young people; young parents; and, disadvantaged households). Customised groups were being identified for engagement with specific projects (such as New Leaf).

FVAF personnel felt that two key issues limited their effectiveness. The first relates to a lack of awareness within the community, and they felt that more could be done to raise the profile of volunteering with hard-to-reach sectors through basic communications such as posters, and newspaper advertisements, rather than relying on the website and social media. The second major concern is insufficient notice from project leads to attract volunteers for planned events. Without sufficient notice the volunteer coordinators find it difficult to raise awareness and attract volunteers to sign up for events. Getting information out of project leaders was identified as the most difficult part of volunteer coordination work. FVAF noted that around 10 – 15 of the 38 projects are relatively easy to work with, while they never hear anything, or receive any information, from around another 10 projects. As a result of this it is assumed that the recorded volunteer activity is lower than is actually occurring on the ground as "some projects never send any information in".

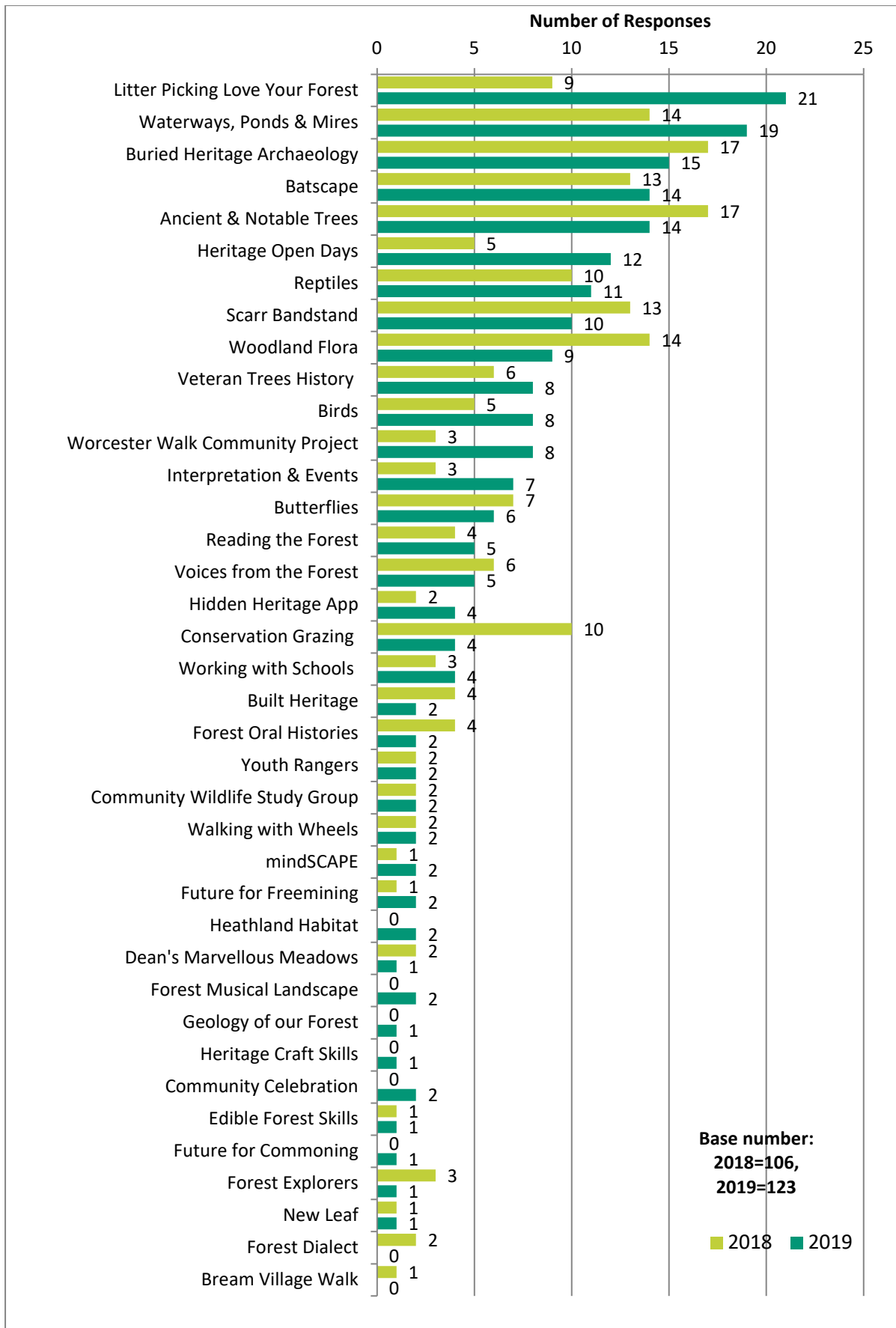


Figure 30 - Type of volunteer work undertaken

3.5 Reasons for volunteering

Respondents to the 2018 and 19 surveys were presented with a list of reasons for wanting to engage in volunteer activity with the FF programme. Figure 31 below indicates that for the vast majority of volunteers, their most important reasons for volunteering were to 'help protect the natural environment' (87% scored this as of high or very high importance) and to 'contribute to the community' (83% scored this as of high or very high importance). The least important reasons were for 'work experience' (5% scored this as of high or very high importance) and 'as a requirement of school/work/church/other organisation' (4% scored this as of high or very high importance). This suggests that the majority of volunteers are getting involved due to interest and a genuine desire to contribute, rather than for some ulterior motive. This may, however, be a reflection of the demographic profile of FF volunteers, in that the majority of them are older and retired.

Slightly over 50% of respondents indicated that 'conserving the culture and traditions', and 'wanting to learn something new' were of high or very high importance in undertaking volunteer work, and 44% indicated that 'wanting to help people' was a significant reason in their decision.

One of the challenges of the FF programme in future, is to try to find ways to engage younger volunteers. One of the projects, Worcester Walk Community Project (WWCP) has already achieved this by linking up with Cinderford Fire Cadets who have been attending regular work parties at the site and have expressed interest in helping other projects, as well as maintaining their involvement with WWCP. A couple of the cadets and their group leaders attended the Christmas Volunteer Thankyou event in Christmas 2019 as the 'Star Volunteers' for WWCP.

Converting the importance ratings to a 5-point scale (where 1 = Not at all important; 5 = Very high importance) the mean scores for each statement can be seen on the right hand side of Figures 31 and 32. Scores above 3 indicate some level of importance is attached to the reason for volunteering, with the three highest scores (in 2019) attributed to protecting the built/industrial heritage; protecting the natural heritage, and contributing to the local community. As Figure 32 illustrates, there is very little difference in the mean scores between the two survey samples, suggesting that either the sample respondents are largely the same people, and/or that the rationale for volunteering is consistent across local residents and time.

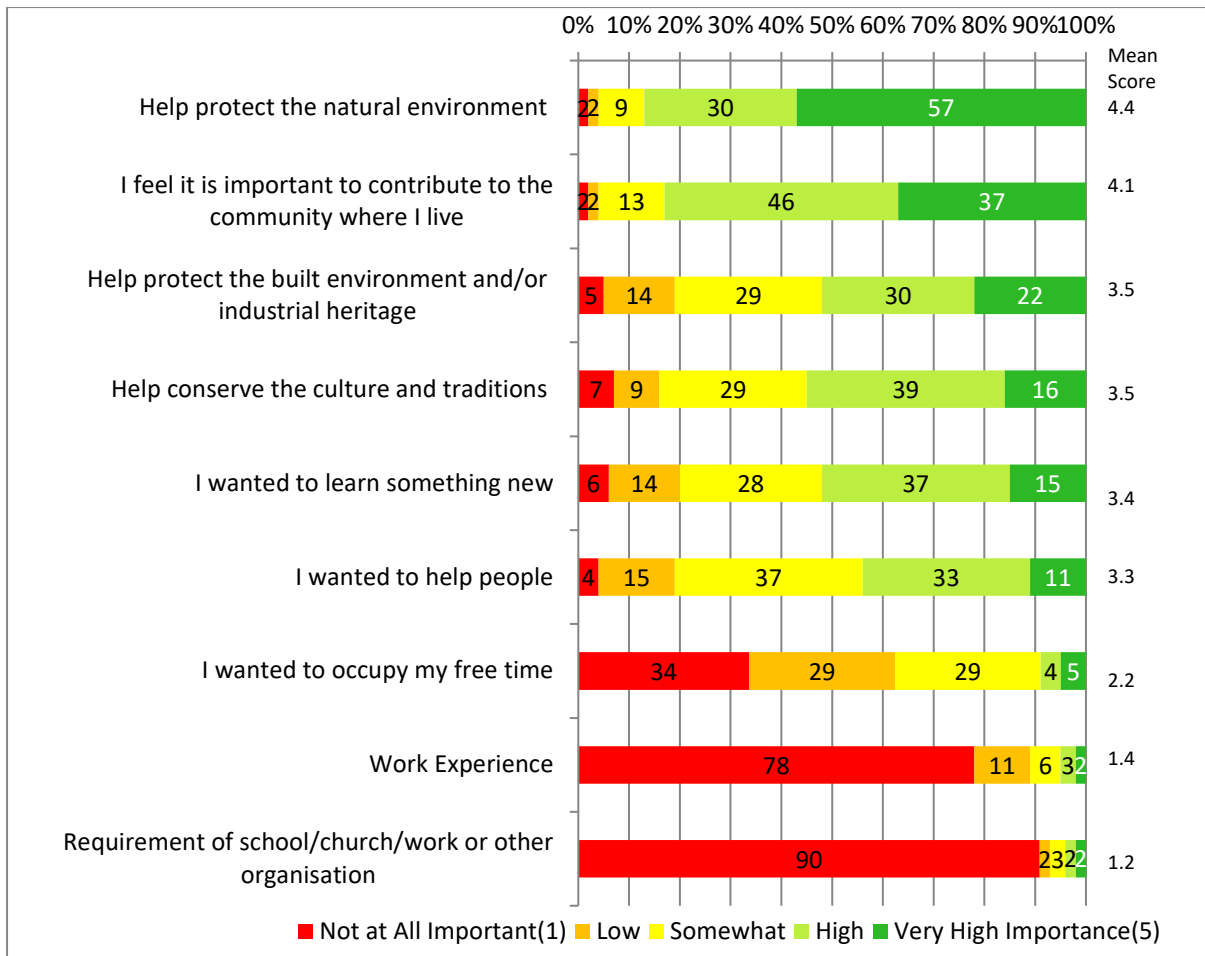


Figure 31. Reasons for wanting to undertake volunteer work in the Forest of Dean

Source: On-line survey 2019 (n=123).

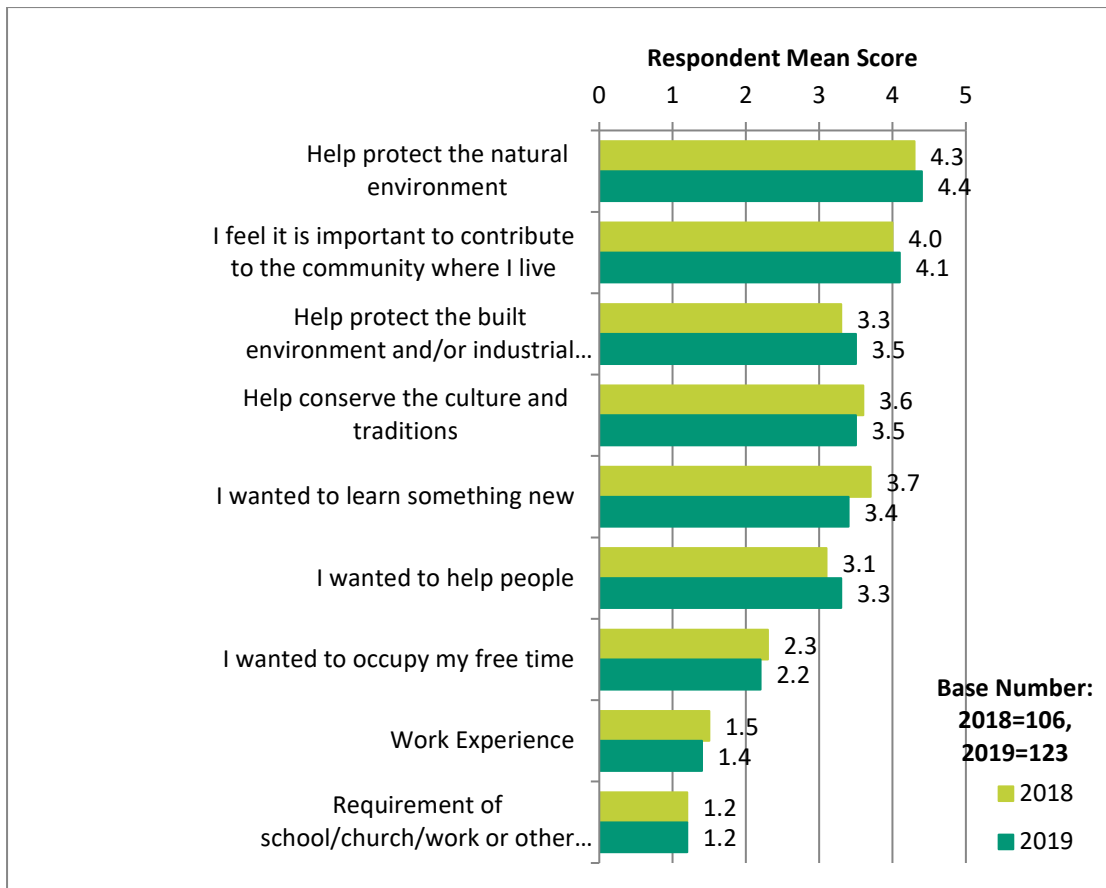


Figure 32. - Scores for statements of rationale for wanting to undertake volunteer work

3.6 Volunteering Experience

Respondents to the On-line survey in 2018 and 2019 were asked to score a series of statements relating to their volunteering experience in the FF programme. The vast majority of respondents in the 2019 survey sample (Figure 33) agreed with the statements that they were: 'able to use my skills and abilities doing meaningful work' (81%) and that there was a 'positive climate of teamwork among paid and volunteer staff' (82%). A slightly higher proportion (86%) agreed with the statement that 'I can make a difference to the future of the FoD', by volunteering but only 26% indicated strong agreement with the statement (compared to 39% and 40% for the two previous statements). The majority of volunteers (56%) disagreed with the statement 'I am gaining experience to help further my career', which might be expected given the older, mostly retired nature of the volunteers, but also represents a degree of altruism among respondents. National level studies suggest that the majority of people engaging in voluntary activity do not do it to further their careers. A total of 86% of respondents disagreed with the statement 'I feel that I am taken for granted', suggesting that the vast majority of volunteers are valued within FF projects. Comparison of the surveys from 2018 and 2019 (using mean scores from the 5-point rating scale indicates very little difference in volunteer's opinions on the set of statements over time (Figure 34).

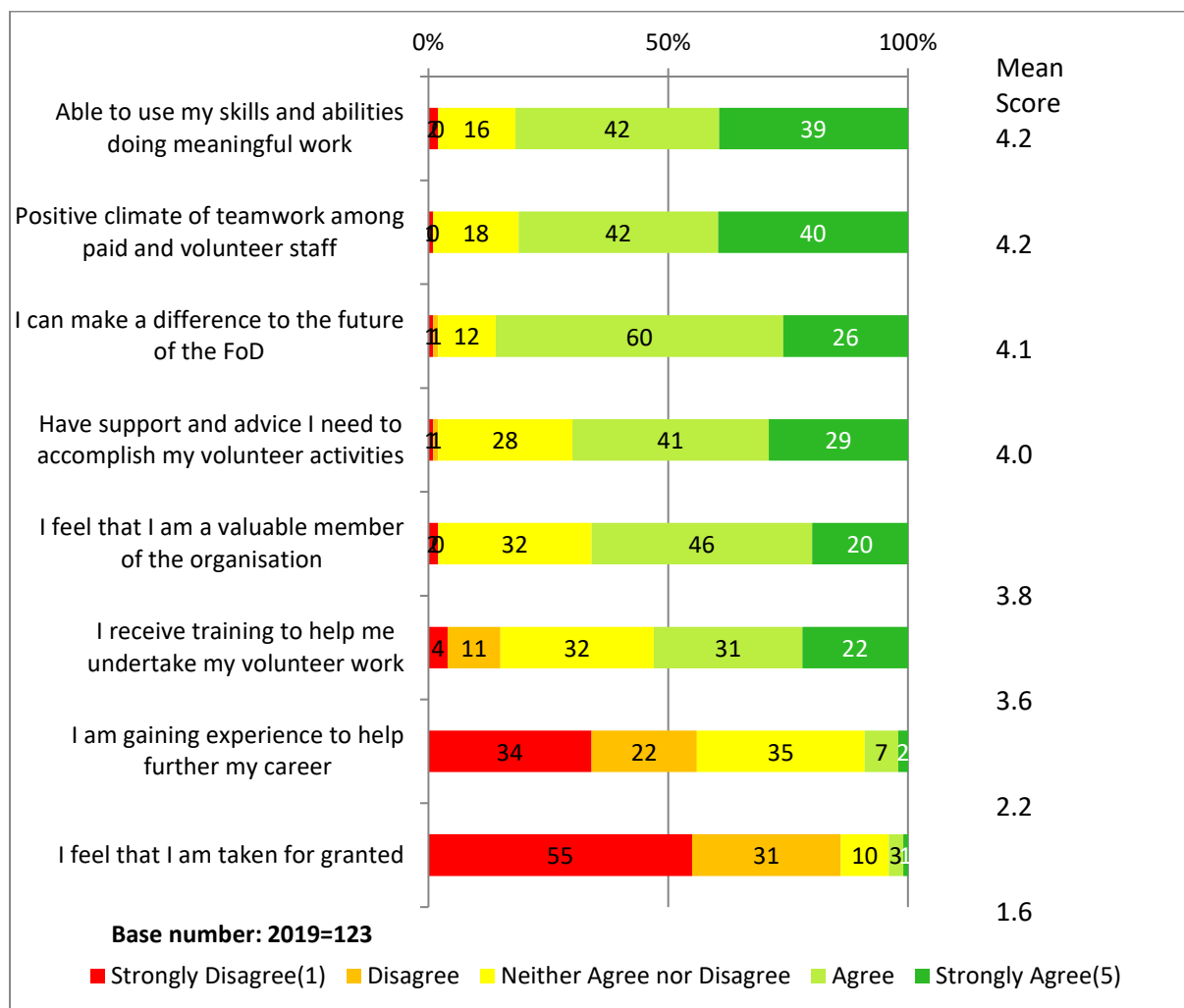


Figure 33 - Volunteers rating of different aspects of their experience

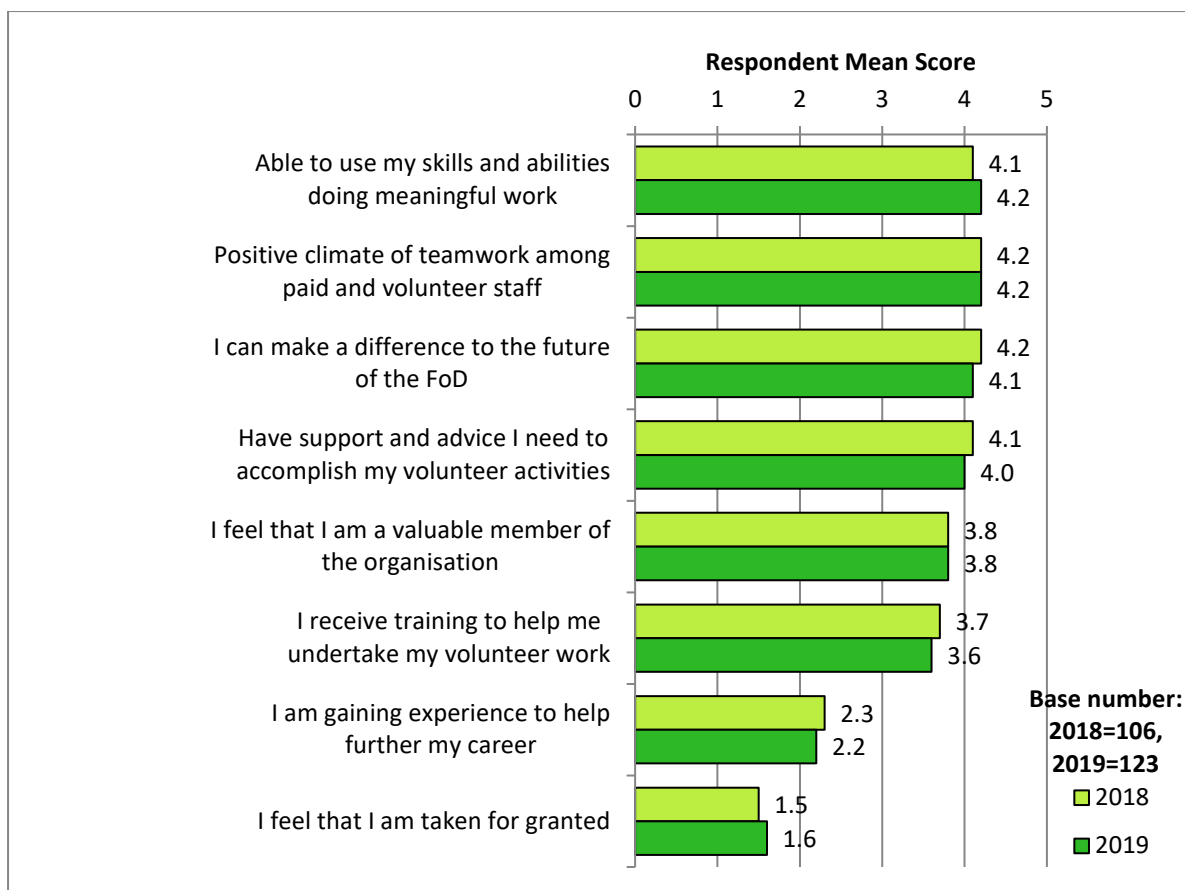


Figure 34 - Volunteers rating of different aspects of their experience

3.7 Volunteering Perceived Benefits

The number of active volunteers associated with the FF Programme suggests significant benefits for those involved. Few people engage in voluntary activities unless they also get some personal benefit, which may come from the satisfaction of helping others, or from helping to improve the community in which they live. The FVAF data base suggests a core of around 350 people involved in FF projects, some of whom are involved with multiple projects, while around another 400 are more intermittent in their level of voluntary activity. The extent to which these benefits are captured varies. Some projects are collecting feedback forms from activities, FVAF have undertaken a baseline and mid-term review and a number of case studies to showcase individual experience, and the on-line survey asked some questions about the rational for volunteering and perceived benefits. Findings from the on-line survey and a summary analysis of some of the case studies are described below.

Findings from the On-line Surveys (2018 and 2019)

In the 2019 on-line survey a total of 103 people (31% of the sample; n=402) indicated they were engaged in some type of voluntary work with the FF Programme, compared to 106 people in the much larger 2018 survey sample (9% of the sample; n=780). We cannot draw any conclusions from the comparison of sample data since each sample is self-selected rather than a representative cross-section of the community. Although the FVAF data base suggests some initial growth over the programme period, the majority of voluntary activity seems to be undertaken by a core group of people which has remained fairly consistent in size and make-up. Many of the questions reveal similar levels of scoring and responses from each of the two samples (2018 and 2019), suggesting either that the two groups are very similar in make-up, and/or that responses across those who volunteer for the FF programme are similar and consistent across time.

Respondents to the On-line surveys were asked to score their level of agreement with a set of statements about perceived benefits of their FF voluntary activity. In 2019 (Figure 35) just over three quarters of volunteers (78%) agreed that 'Volunteer work has made me want to look after the Forest more in future' and that they had 'increased awareness of the natural environment of the FoD', as a result of their volunteer work. A total of 70% of respondents agreed that they had 'increased awareness of historical and industrial importance of the FoD'; and 69% agreed that 'volunteering improves my own mental health or feeling of wellbeing'. The majority of respondents (61%) also agreed with the statements that volunteering had benefited their physical fitness and increased their awareness of local culture and traditions. Interestingly, only a small proportion (26%) agreed that voluntary work had increased their self-confidence. This could be due to the characteristics of the respondent group that completed the survey (older, more highly educated than average), members of which may already have high levels of self-confidence.

Comparison of the surveys from 2018 and 2019 (using mean scores from the 5-point rating scale indicates very little difference in volunteers' opinions on the set of statements over time (Figure 36).

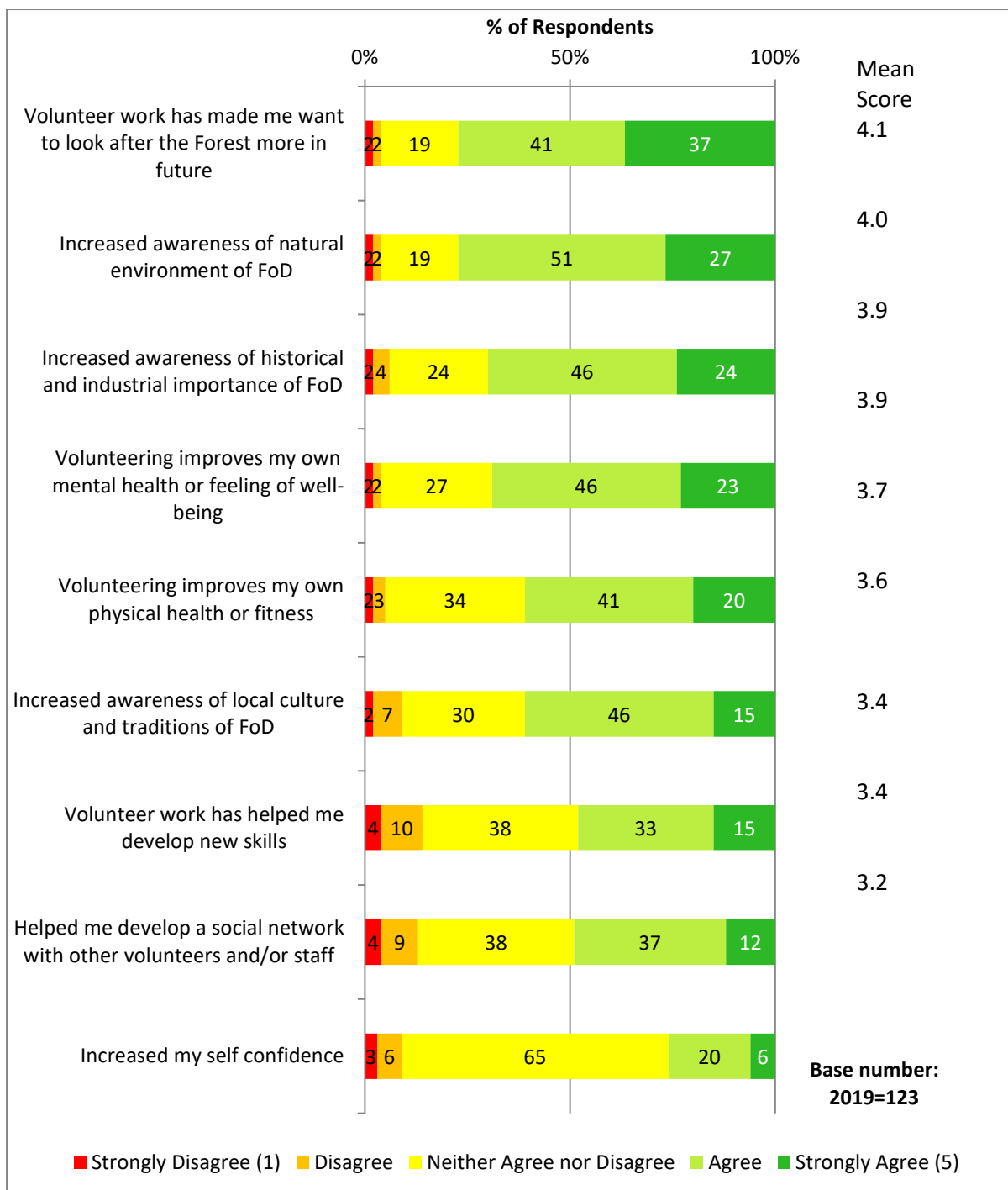


Figure 35 – Personal benefits from FF volunteering activity

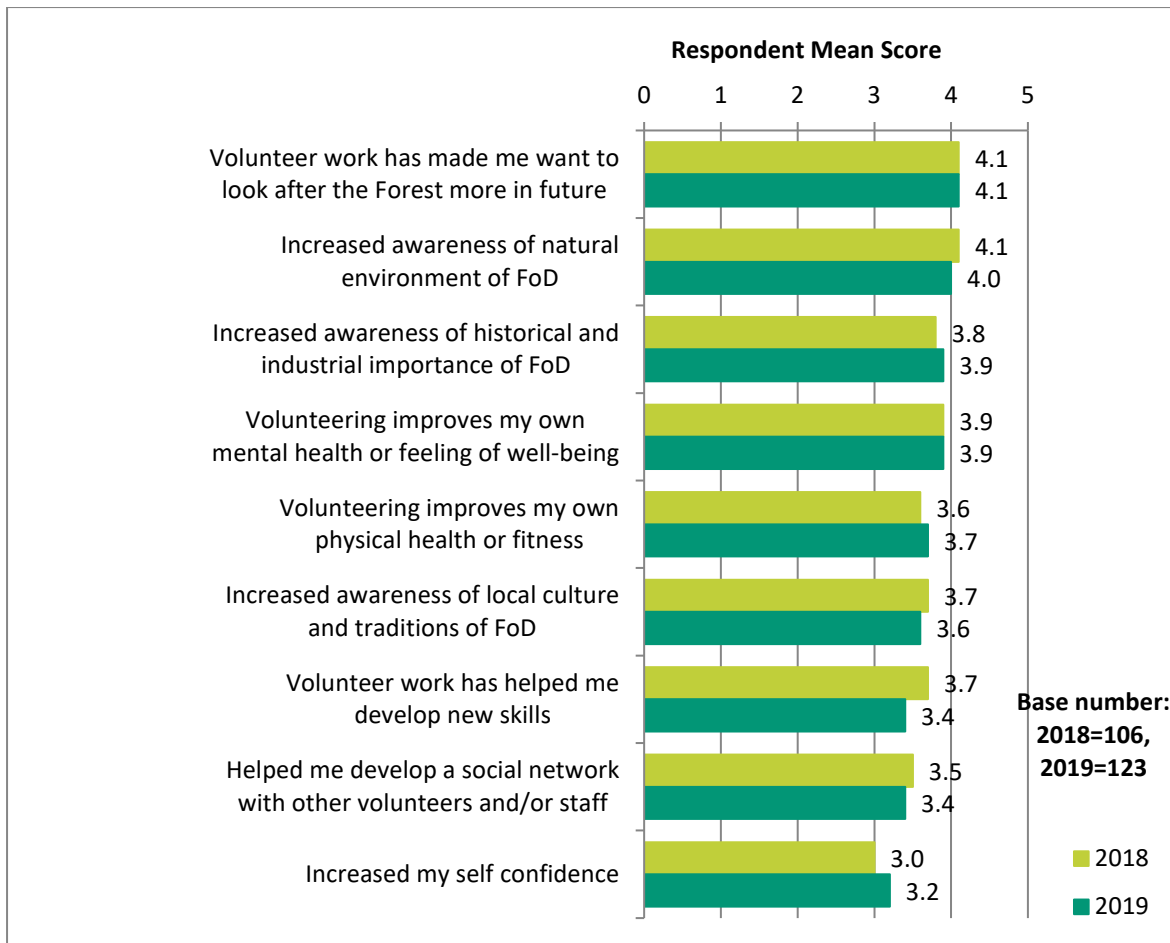


Figure 36 - Personal benefits from FF volunteering activity (comparison)

When asked how the volunteering experience for FF projects could be improved in future, the most frequent responses (see Figure 37) were about ‘better communication’ and ‘increased notice period of upcoming activities’ (26.1% and 10.9% respectively, of the 46 volunteers who answered this question). There were a wide range individual comments regarding improvements including, for example, reference for the need to expand volunteer events so they are not just on weekdays, and making events amenable to working people and not just retired people. Also, it is worth noting that 17.4 % of the volunteers felt that the programme could not be improved, it was already wonderful, and they hoped it would be able to continue.

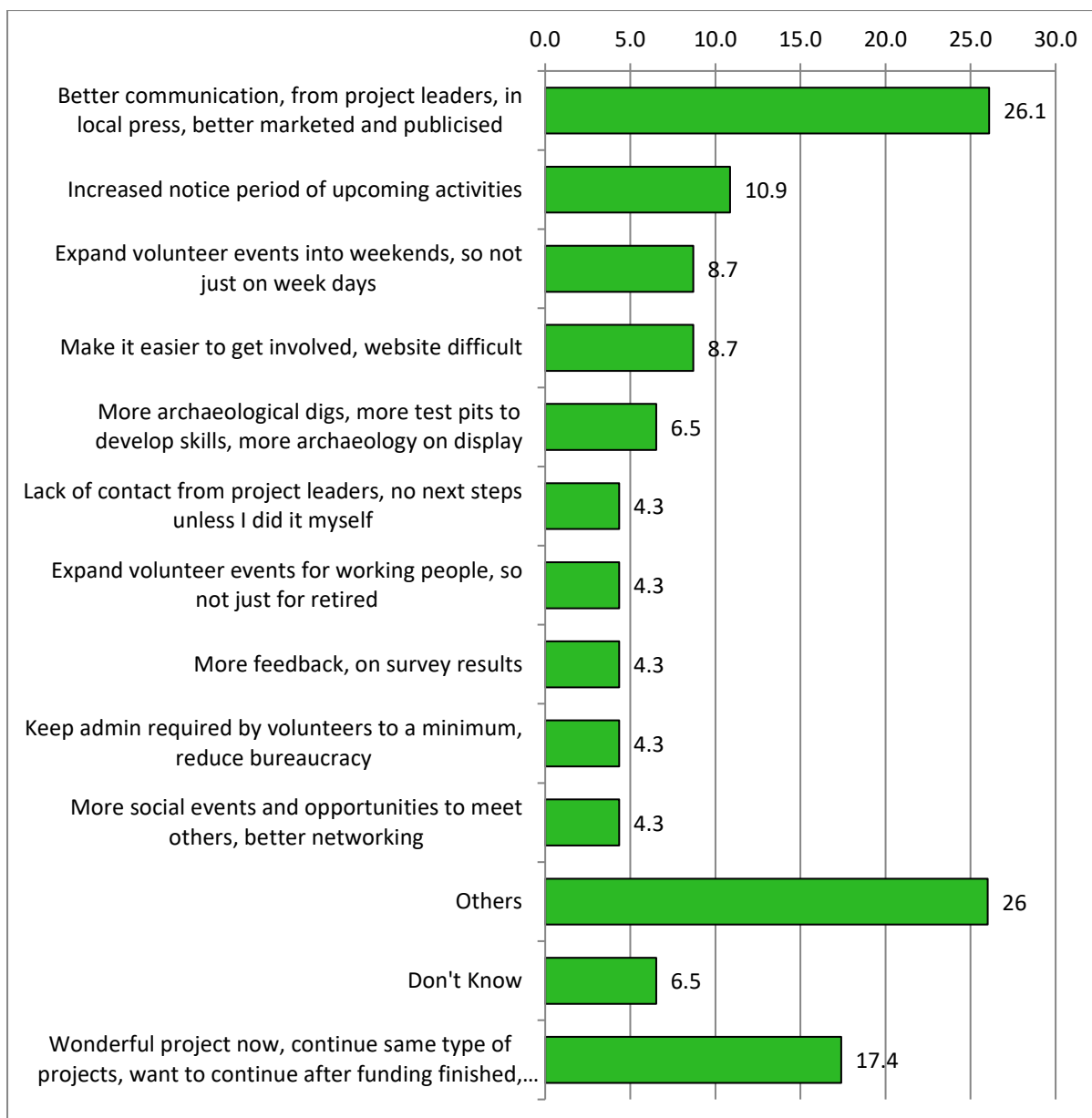


Figure 37 – Participant views on how the volunteering experience could be improved

Source: On-line survey 2019 (n=123).

Volunteer case studies

The FF programme collects significant amounts of information on volunteer hours, collects feedback on experiences, and also undertakes some case studies of individual volunteers. At an individual level, the impact that volunteering within the FF programme has had on people can be described by examining some of the case studies, examples of which are provided in Appendix 1.

An analysis of seven of the volunteer case studies identified some commonalities in terms of the benefits gained from engaging in the FF Programme. Table 11 below identifies four broad

categories of benefits gained by a small sample of volunteers as well as their contribution to the overall programme:

- Capacity Building
- Social inclusion
- Personal achievement
- Other
- Contributions to FF Programme

Volunteers range from a young mother to someone retired and include both incomers to the Forest and long-time residents. Capacity building comes across very strongly in the interviews with volunteers, in terms of both increasing knowledge and understanding, and in learning and developing new skills. These range from oral histories, through to riverfly sampling, LIDAR analysis, working with greenwood, identifying reptiles and learning more about specific species of birds. One aspect that comes across quite strongly in all of the interviews is the excitement of discovery, and the enjoyment of developing new understanding. Social relations are also an important aspect of volunteering and all of the volunteers mention enjoyment from engaging with others in some capacity, either in terms of making friends, sharing experiences, or working together.

Volunteers also noted that they had sometimes surprised themselves, through identifying new interests, or building confidence to do something new, or not tried before. Other benefits include finding a new role late in life, being able to use existing skills as a new mother, gaining qualifications and experience that may help in future career development, and changed perceptions about the Forest and their place in it.

Benefit category	Case study volunteers					
	<i>Retiree</i>	<i>Incomer</i>	<i>Born and bred in the Forest</i>	<i>Young Mother</i>	<i>Forest Ranger</i>	<i>Long-term volunteer</i>
Capacity Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learned more about natural environment - Discover new things 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Making discoveries - Learning new skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learned new skills - Developed existing skills - 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enjoyable experiences - Using my skills - Learning new skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deeper knowledge from working alongside experts - Learning skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learned new skills - Discovering new things
Social inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enjoys meeting others with similar interests - Shared experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shared experiences - Making friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Confidence to teach others - Excitement at learning from others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meeting Forest residents - People open up their thoughts and experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working with experts - Being able to pass on his knowledge to enthuse others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Making friends - Enjoyment of working in a group together
Personal achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discovered new evidence on wildlife 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Excitement at finding something new 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Realisation of what I love doing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capturing stories of the past before they disappear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Excitement at finding range of reptiles during surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training built confidence to do something new
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A new role for someone retired 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changed perspective on landscape 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gained qualifications - Potential new career path opening up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changed way I view the Forest - Feel more connected & stronger sense of place - May help with future career 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contributes to work as forest ranger, helps enthuse people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unexpected area of interest opened up
Contributions to FF Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Worked on multiple natural heritage projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Archaeological digs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teaching others a range of skills (woodcraft) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviewing people about past experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ecological surveys on multiple natural heritage projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Litter picking - river sampling

Table 11 - Personal benefits from volunteering

4. Feedback from Training Courses and Events

4.1 Participant Feedback from Training Courses

Participant feedback was collected from people who had attended training provided by some projects in the FF Programme. Data were collected for 7 courses or events with a total of 83 responses collected manually on feedback forms and the information then digitised through a web-based portal by volunteers.

Course	Participant responses
Batscape - Meeting for Farmers and Landowners	2
Blacksmithing	8
Bowl Carving	10
Brewing & Fermenting	13
First Aid +F	5
Mushroom Foraging	33
Skinning and Tanning	12

Participant numbers on training courses

The 83 respondents generated 88 comments relating to what they liked about the course they had attended. The vast majority (96% of respondents) commented favourably on the quality of the course content or delivery, with smaller numbers commenting positively on the opportunity to meet people with similar interests or just to enjoy the experience.

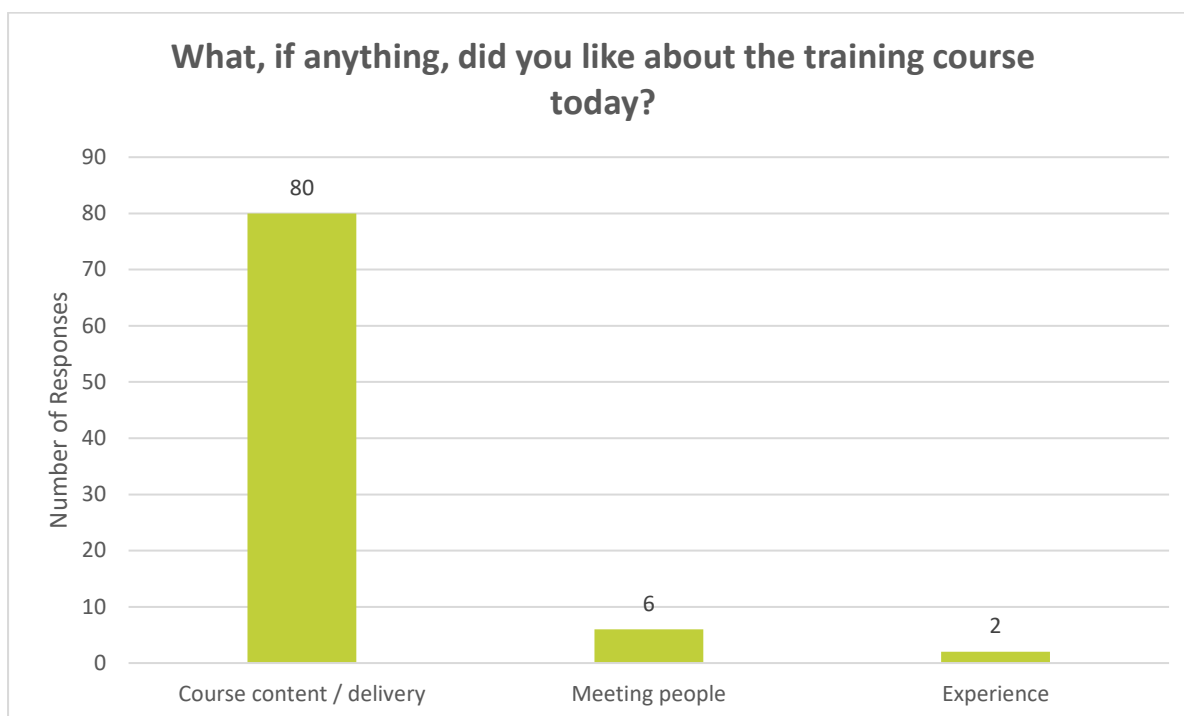


Figure 38 - What did you like about the training

Feedback included comments such as:

“[instructor] was a fantastic teacher; good clear instruction and great personality.”

“Fun, informative, and met some great people.”

When asked what they had disliked about the course they attended a total of 77% (n=64) of the comments from respondents stated that they had no negative feedback. Of the remaining 19 comments, 4 said that there was not enough time, or that the course should preferably be longer; 3 considered the pre-course information to have been lacking in either detail or timeliness; 3 more that course delivery could have been improved; and 2 who would have liked more information to take away. There were 6 comments on the learning environment, with some having difficulty getting the most from the course where there was excessive disruption or background noise, and some struggled with either very hot, or very wet, conditions. There was one comment about the need for adaptation for the less able.

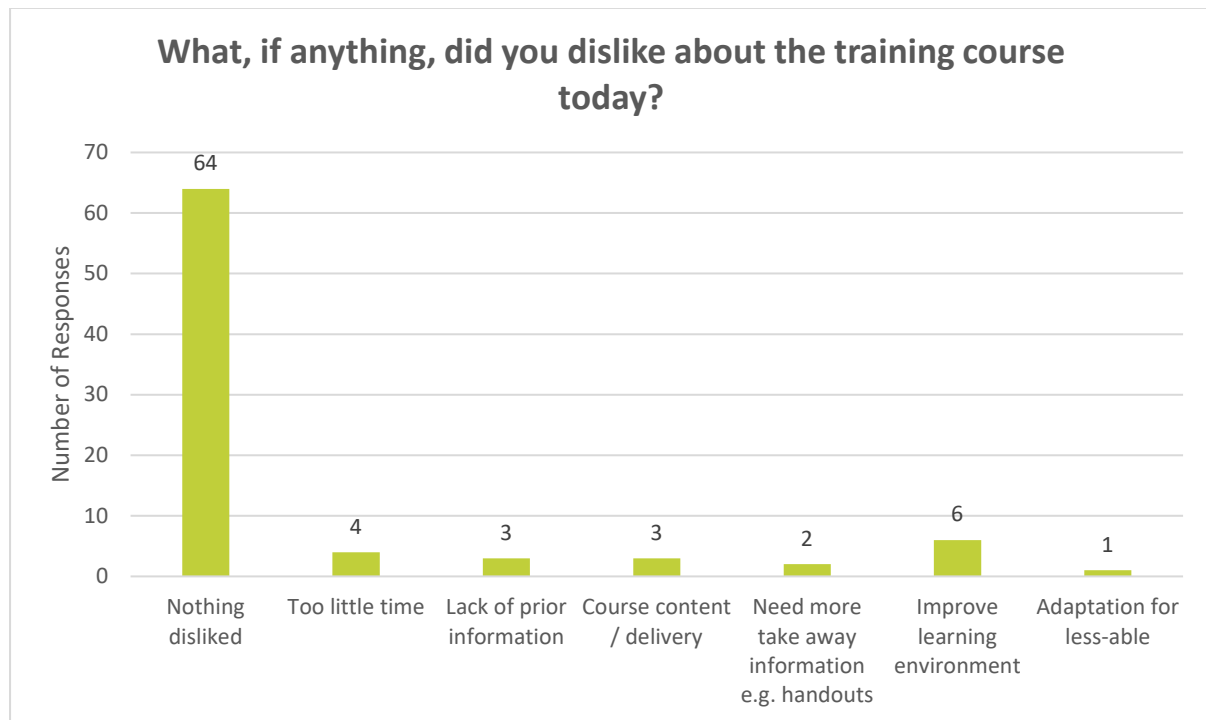


Figure 39 - What did you dislike about the training

Feedback included comments such as:

“Not enough time to get into detail or specifics of land management and funding”

“I didn't receive the email telling me what to bring”

Overall, satisfaction was considered to be very good with around 99% of respondents reporting themselves as either 'very satisfied' or 'quite satisfied', and just one person reporting to be 'quite dissatisfied'.

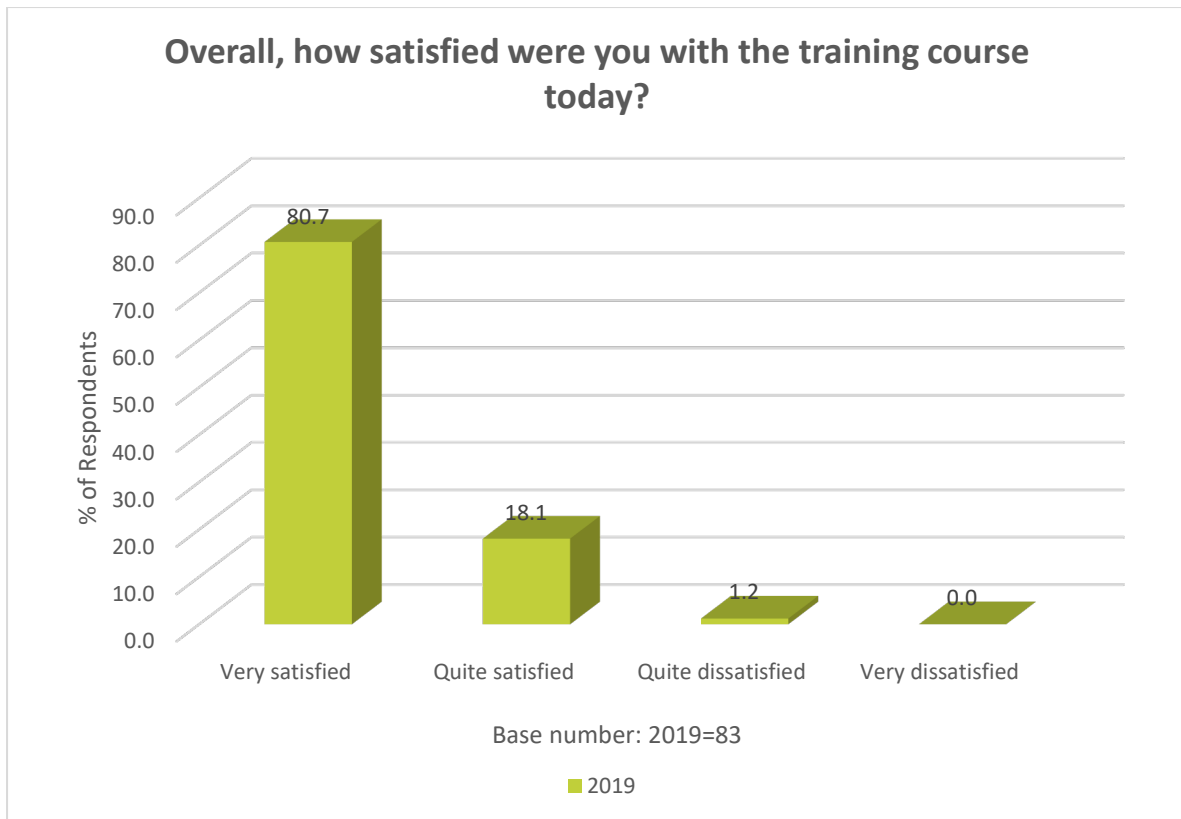


Figure 40 - Participant satisfaction with training courses

In response to the question of how the courses could be improved, the feedback was closely aligned with the question “what did you dislike?”. Just over half of respondents (58%) indicated that no improvement was required. The most numerous suggestions for improvement were related to course content and delivery, including ideas for better delivery by the instructors, content to include and exclude, and equipment needs. There were a small number of comments seeking better pre-course information, learning environment, or time, perhaps by having a second day, or developing an ‘advanced’ course.

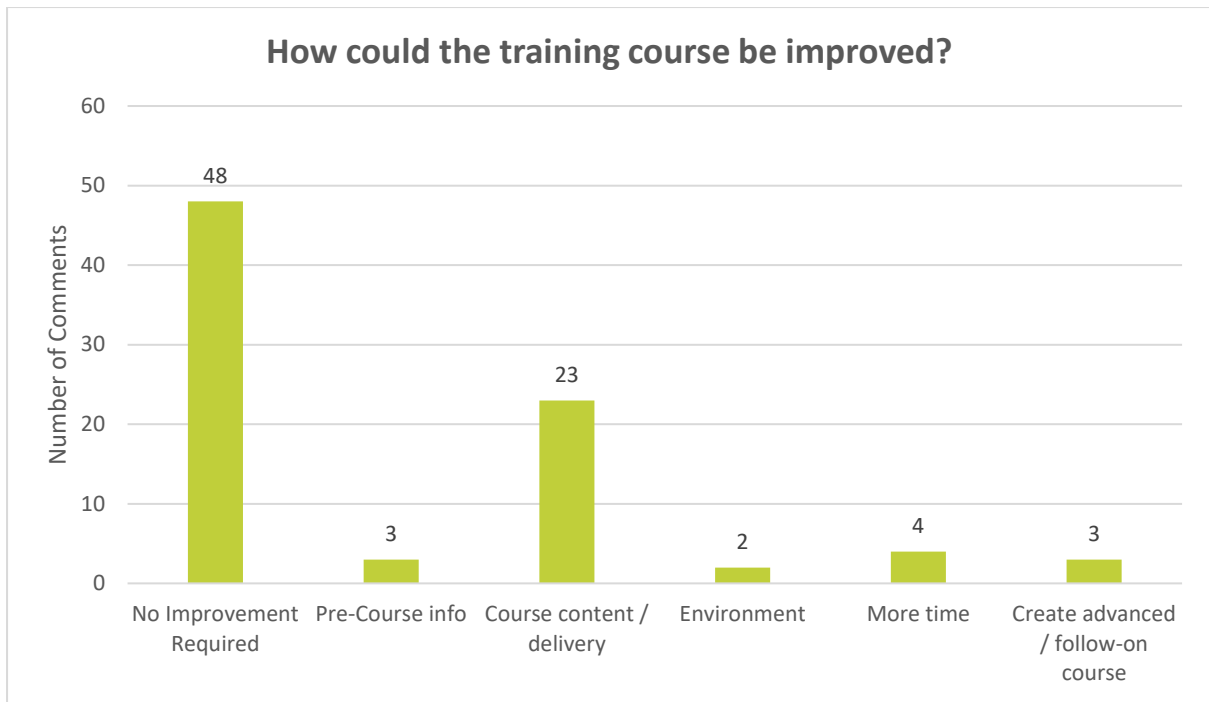


Figure 41 – Responses to the question: How could training be improved?

Course participants were asked if they had increased their knowledge of heritage in the Forest of Dean by doing the course. Of the 83 respondents, 59% (n=48) said that they had increased their knowledge 'a lot', 32% had increased their knowledge 'a little', and just 9% (n=7) said 'not at all'.

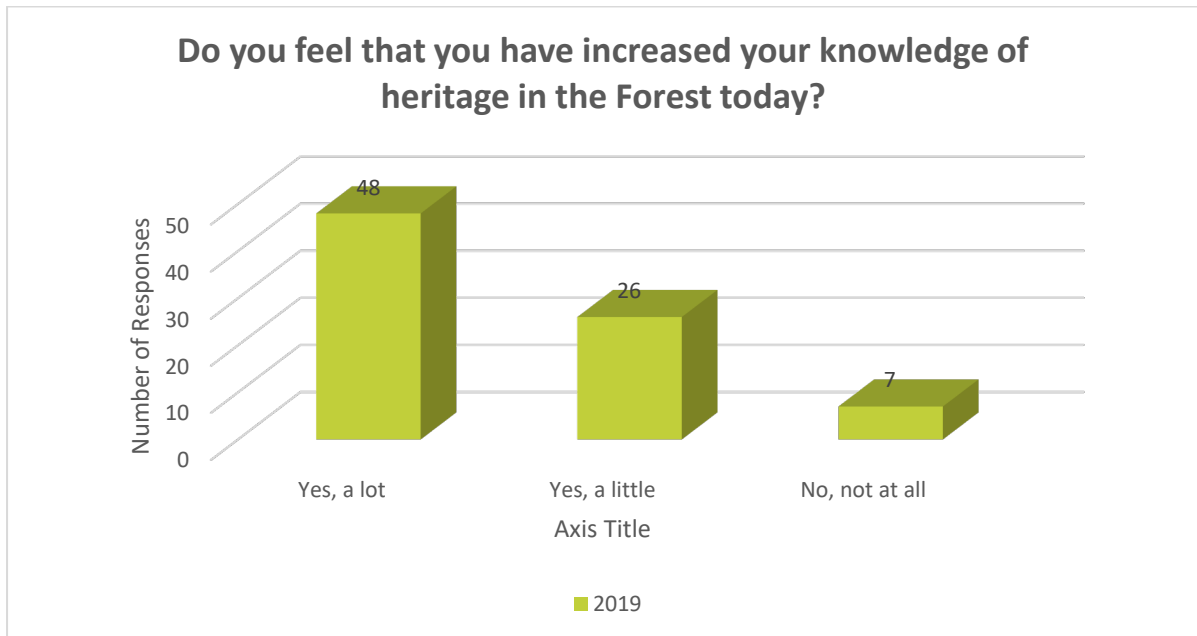


Figure 42 - Participant increased knowledge of heritage

When asked if they had developed skills, 100% of respondents replied positively, with 78% (n=63) indicating they had developed new skills, and the remainder developed existing skills.

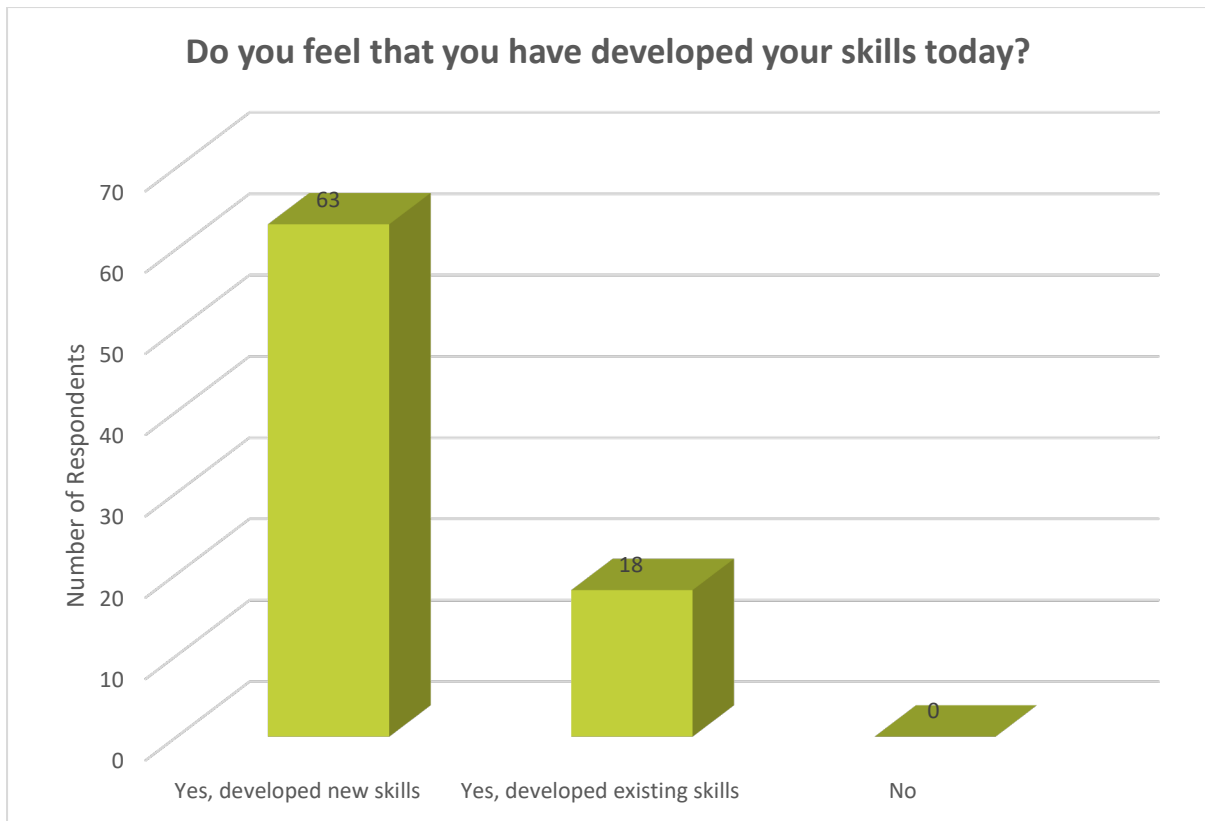


Figure 43 – Participant’s response in relation to skills development

Participants were asked what changes they might make as a result of having done the training course. Excluding the 19 participants whose response wasn’t applicable, or who did not respond, 75% (n=48) said that they would be putting the training to use in some way, such as practicing carving, brewing their own drinks, or acting as a first-aider on projects. Around 23% stated that they would be looking to do additional training.

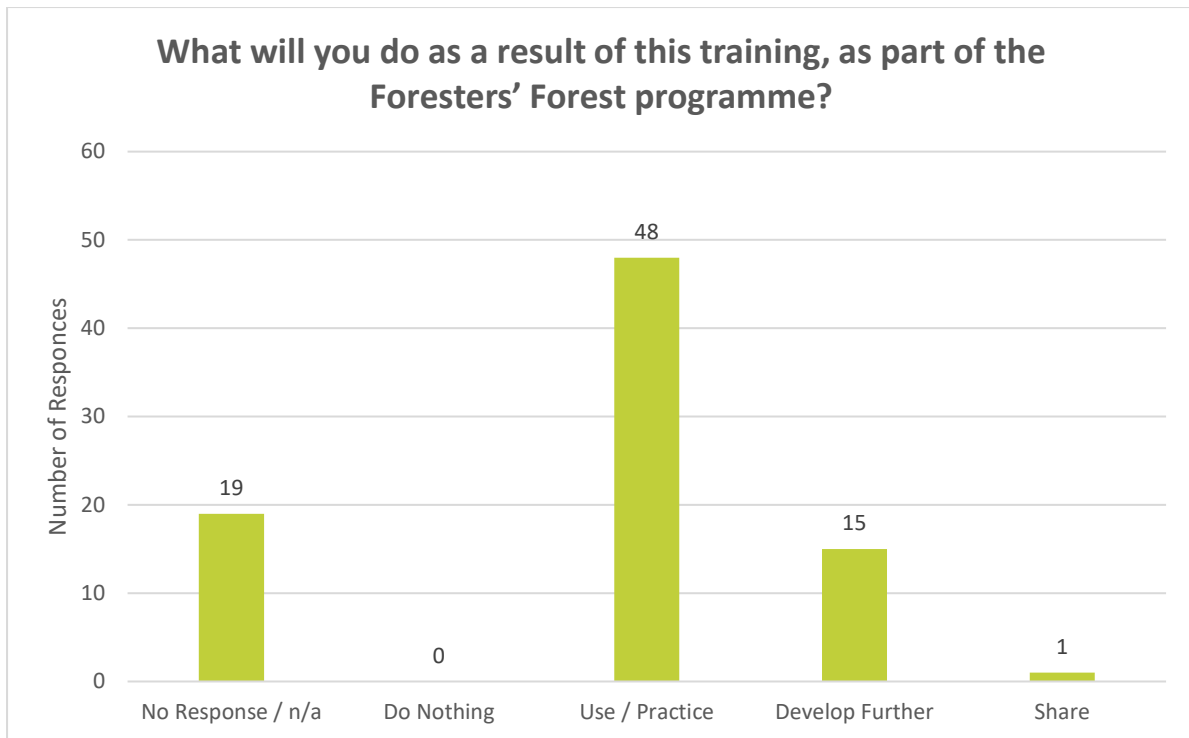


Figure 44 - What participants will do with the training

The participants were asked for their reason for attending the training course. Multiple responses were permitted resulting in a total of 259 responses from the 83 participants. Of these, 10.4% of responses related to learning about the Forest; and 26% related to learning more about archaeology, and 42% (n=109) of responses related to learning skills or gaining experience, resulting in 79% responses indicating some form of capacity building. A total of 10.4% of responses indicated participants wanted to meet new people, and 2% of responses indicated that the participant had been given a place on the course as a gift. A further 8% of responses related to learning 'to do something in the community', and 'to improve the Forest'.

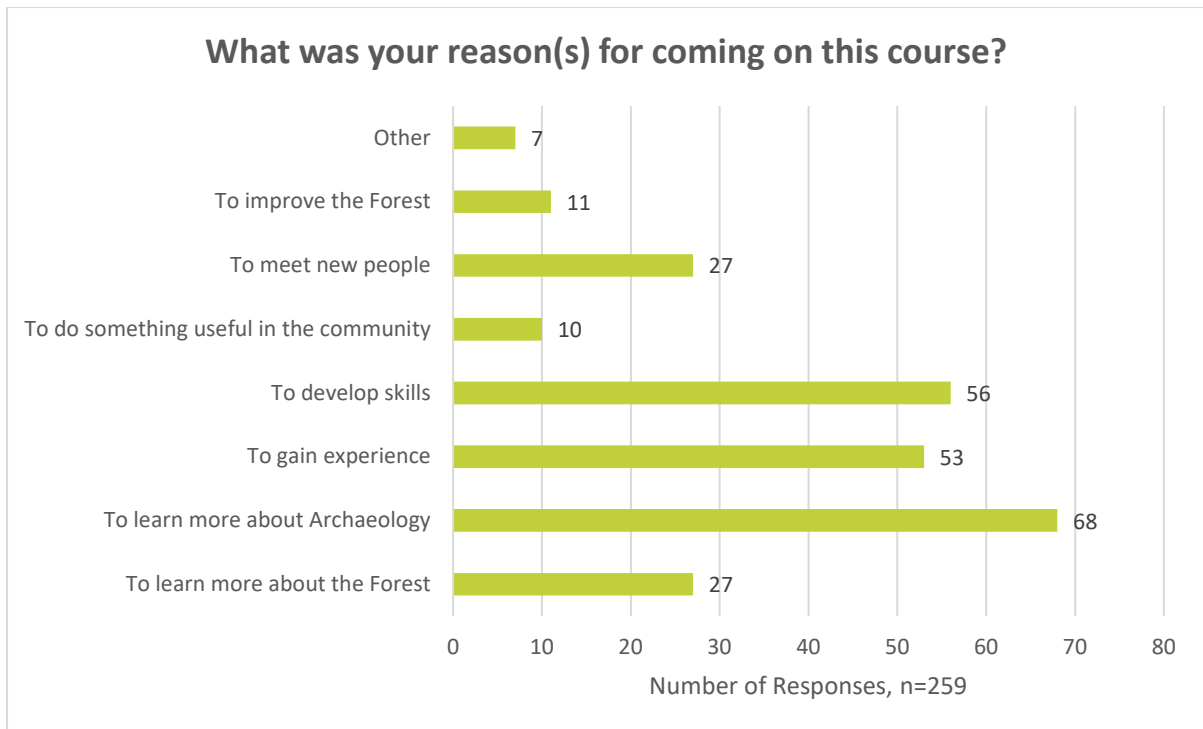


Figure 45 - Participant reasons for attending

Outline demographic data was also collected from the participants indicating that 43% were male and 57% were female. One participant was in the 11-13 category, but other than that all participants were in the range 19 years to 84 years range. A total of 10% of participants were under 25 yrs and almost 40% (the single biggest group) were in the 26-44 years category. Just over 97% of participants were white and just over 2% of mixed ethnicity, and 14% reported some form of disability. This shows a participant sample that is slightly younger, slightly more mixed, and very slightly less able than is the case in the community survey (assuming that all respondents / participants are unique).

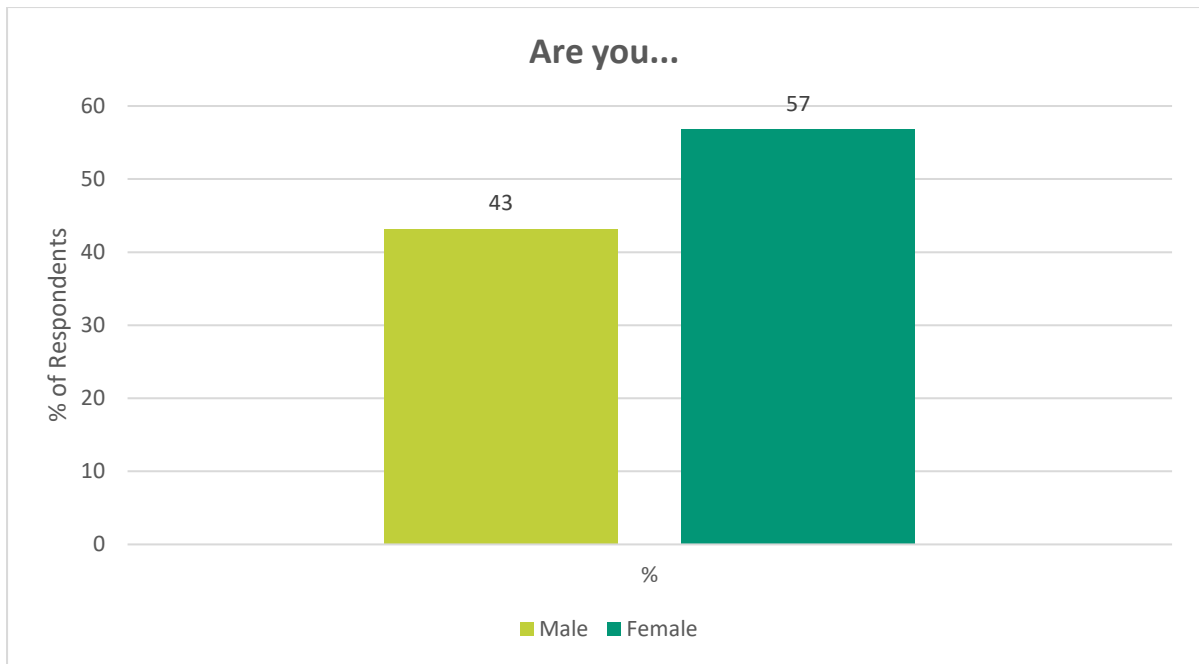


Figure 46 - Gender of participants

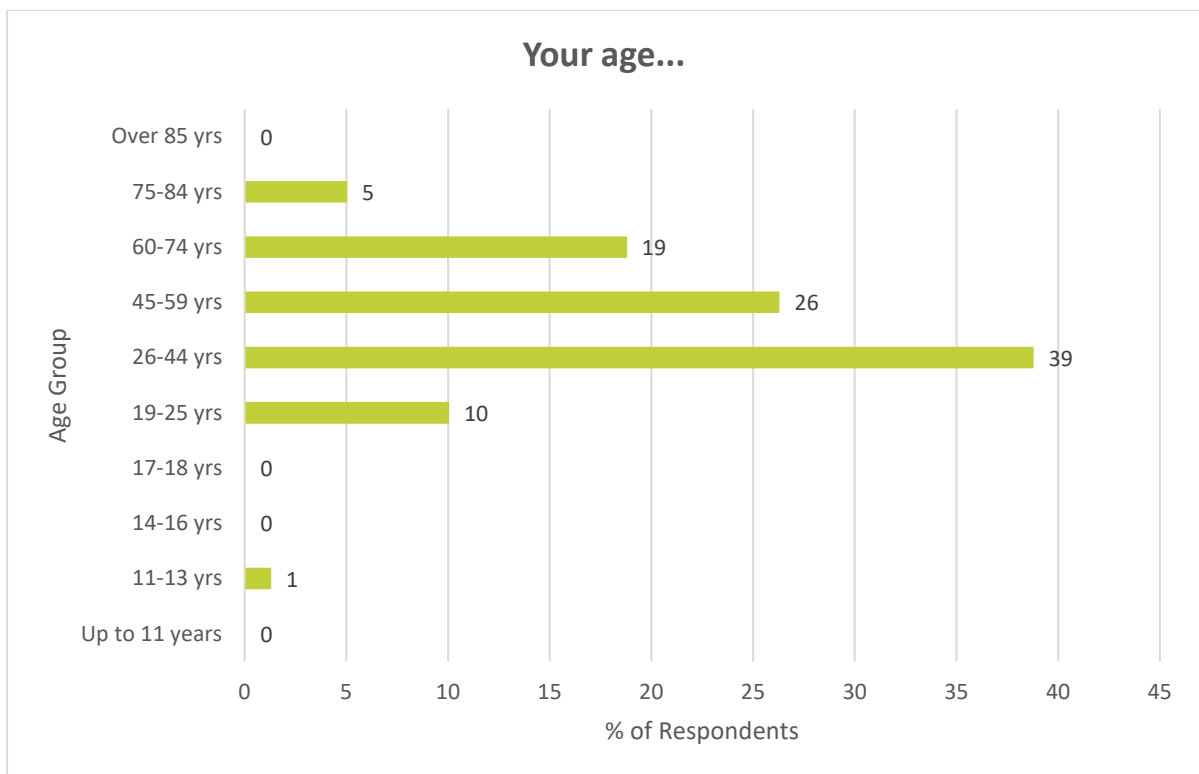


Figure 47 - Age of participants

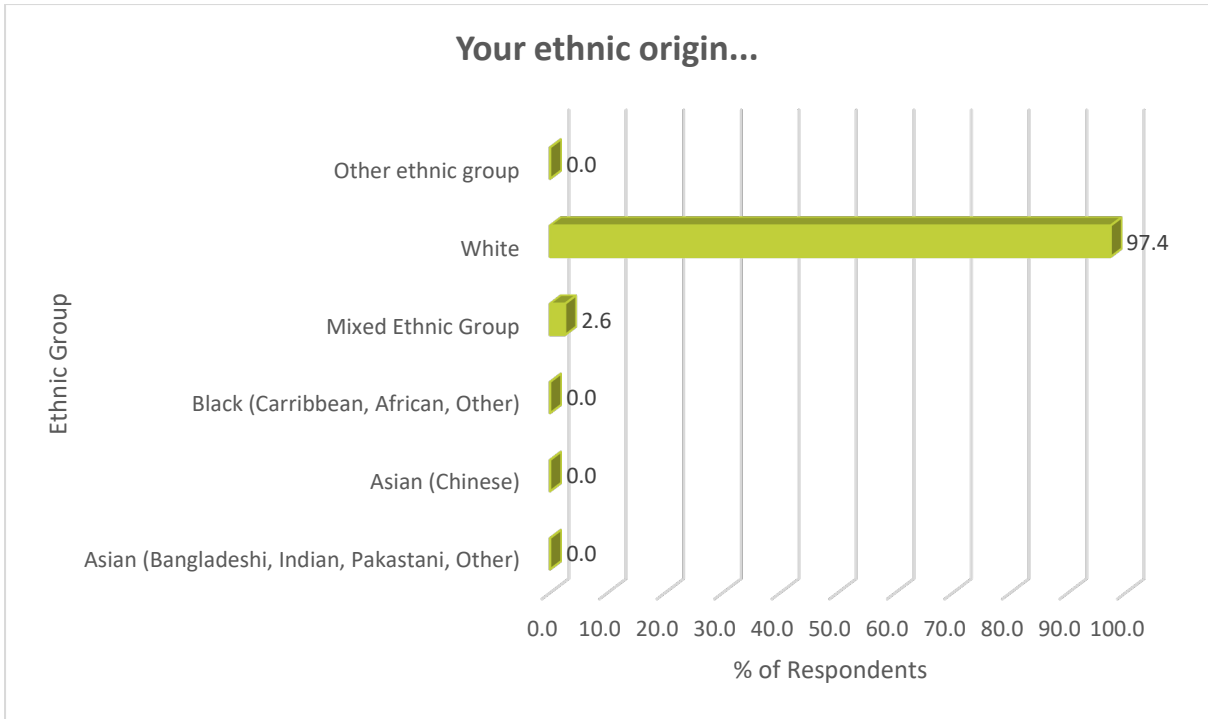


Figure 48 - Ethnicity of participants

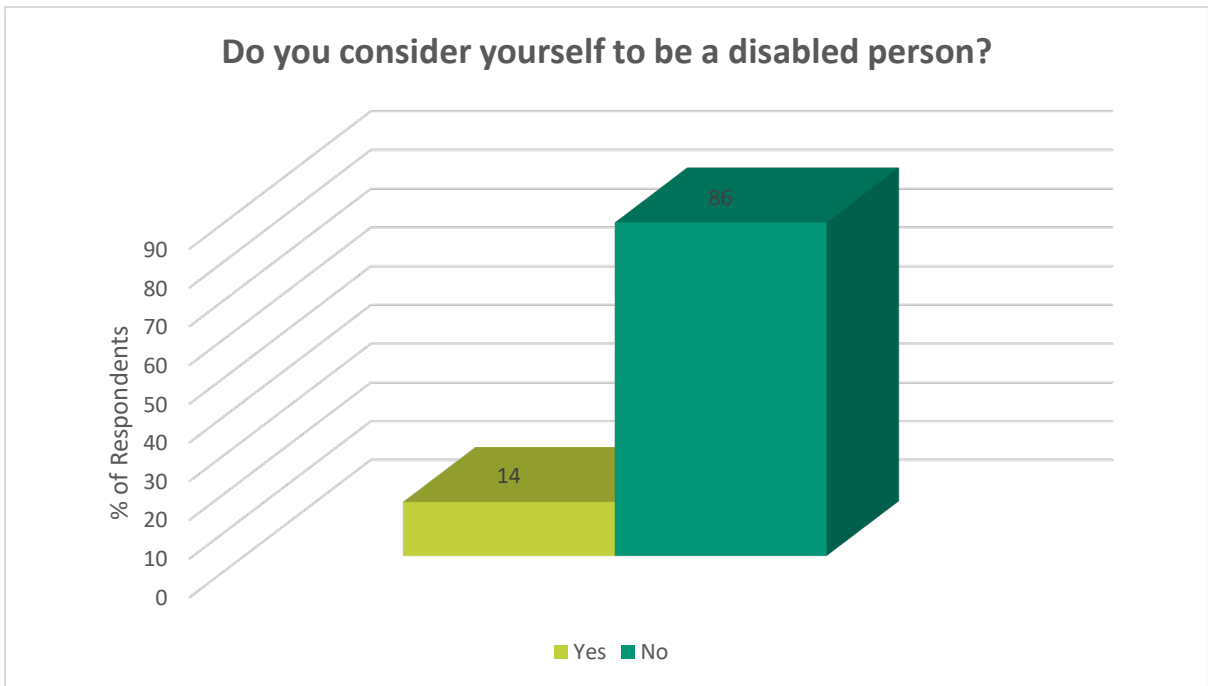


Figure 49 - Participants with disabilities

4.2 Participant Feedback from Minibus tours

The tours were targeted at Teachers, Tourism Providers and Local Councillors, taking them to a series of FF project sites, so they could learn about the projects, what they are doing, why and then spread the information.

During the last couple of years, the Foresters' Forest has consistently tried to promote the projects within the Forest of Dean and the various opportunities it offers for a wide range of public. Most notably the diverse actions taken to re-vitalize the forest and unearth its most notable features. The minibus tours are being organized by the Foresters' Forest and are free to join. 3 took place in 2018 and 3 in 2019 over the summer months on which some feedback was asked. They take a number of participants (10-20) from the vicinity to FF Project sites to raise awareness on what the projects are delivering, the facilities available ,, volunteering opportunities and room for involvement.

A target of the tours has been teachers from local schools (some dedicated tours were offered) which were given an education focused tour to see what opportunities the Forest of Dean offered to include its heritage and features in their curriculum, thereby connecting local children's education to the local knowledge and environment available. Some logistics details and modalities were collected by teachers. The feedback was very positive and with a will to engage. Some teachers took part in other tours with a very similar thinking.

The Forest of Dean is a considerable tourist attraction in Gloucestershire and tourism providers were taken through a tour, very similar to the teachers' tour to discover the projects, heritage, environmental features and opportunities. The goal was to engage them in promoting the forest and giving out advice to visitors through their position, delivered through a trail of experiences that could be offered to them without overlooking the practical details. The feedback was good with a number of tourist friendly suggestions to enhance the visibility and attractiveness of the Forest.

Local Councillors were also taken through a similar tour of sites, focusing on heritage as a way to showcase the actions taken in the Forest of Dean by the Foresters' Forest projects. A part of the purpose was to get further support from local councils as well as increased awareness of the challenges and opportunities of the projects within the territory they jointly manage.

These tours were a facilitation to raise awareness on the work done by the Forester's Forest projects in the Forest of Dean and to engage local communities in it by trying to inform gatekeepers with the knowledge necessary to guide others to make the most of it through provision of information on sites, contact points, logistics etc. Sample feedback from one of the tours undertaken in 2019, can be viewed in Appendix 5.

5. Interviews with Key Stakeholders

5.1 The Interview Process

Project leaders were interviewed over the period November 2019 - February 2020. Interviews were a mix of face-to-face meetings and telephone discussions using the same structured interview format. Interviews ranged from 30 minutes to 1.5 hours depending on the scale of the project and range of issues requiring discussion. Interviews were conducted by senior CCRI research staff. Data were collated into Excel spreadsheets to generate comparative tables and analysed within broad categories of project type (see below).

Project lead interviews have been analysed under 6 headings:

- Project changes over the period 2017-19
- Project outcomes to date (end of 2019)
- Future challenges
- Measuring success
- Legacy and process
- Administration and Management

Within each of the five headings the findings are described by project focus using the FF breakdown of projects into the following five broad categories (See Tables 9 - 13 for the full list of projects within each category):

- Our Stronghold for Nature
- Exploring our Forest
- Revealing our Past
- Celebrating our Forest
- Securing our future

5.2 Project changes 2017-19

Our Stronghold for Nature

Table 12 summarises the most significant changes to natural heritage projects over the first 2.5 years of the FF programme identified by Project leaders. Only four of the eleven projects indicate no changes over the period, although two of these projects note that the project leader is facing time constraints, which in one case is delaying implementation, and a third project is anticipating potential problems in the near future due to high average age of the target group (Dean Meadows).

Four projects have noted some relatively minor changes to aims and objectives of their project, some of these due to successful implementation. The Birds project, for example, has added two species to its targets, while 'Ancient and Notable Trees', having successfully surveyed 90% of the Forest and recorded 670 Ancient and Notable trees, now wants to re-focus its attention on raising community awareness. Only one project (Conservation Grazing) has

significantly altered its objectives as a result of overly ambitious targets being set by one organisation (FE) that was not the delivery body, and also a delay caused by the need to wait for strategic forest management plans to be developed. Rather than deliver poor quality management across a larger area the project team decided to reduce the scale of the project to what could be achieved within the five-year programme timeframe. The reduction in funding has been re-allocated across other projects in the FF programme.

None of the projects indicated any significant issues around finance. Conservation Grazing reduced spending as a result of focusing on smaller areas and Waterways and Ponds received some additional funding to create ponds in a school and increase community engagement.

The most significant changes to projects have occurred as a result of changes to personnel experienced by four projects. The largest impacts have been caused by loss of experienced personnel, in particular the withdrawal of Natural England (NE) expertise associated with Batscape and the Woodland Flora project. The impact on Batscape at a critical point in project delivery may reduce the scale of management changes achieved by landowners, and there are suggestions that the desired landscape changes may have to be delivered through agri-environment schemes rather than the project. One project leader started a year 'late' although this does not appear to have had an impact on delivery.

The Community Wildlife Study group has also lost access to Natural England (NE) and RSPB expertise, and in addition suffers from the project designer not being involved in delivery. The original design has made it difficult to record outputs from the group (as participants tend to work on a range of other projects which account for their time and inputs separately):

“Targets developed... relate to the twelve biodiversity projects – it is their data that gets fed into the system, not outputs from this project. This project focused on creating a community of volunteers to do wildlife surveys.” (Community wildlife Study Group)

In addition, the project leader finds it difficult to ascertain when and to what extent targets are being met:

“Targets are not quantitative, they are more fuzzy. It’s difficult to say whether they have been met or not. One target, for example, is ‘data and findings feed into management decisions’; plus, some of them are ongoing, with no definitive delivery date.” (Community wildlife Study Group)

The changes described here are not unexpected given the range of projects being delivered in a multi-year programme. Many of the changes indicated are relatively small and some have been taken in order to take advantage of successful implementation, or potential links with other aspects of biodiversity. The most significant impacts arise from factors beyond the control of either project leaders or the FF Programme delivery team (i.e. loss of personnel). One concern with the group of biodiversity focused projects is the reliance on a relatively small group of people, who tend to be involved in multiple projects. While this might be viewed as efficient it does incur risk and places greater pressure on people who are essentially volunteers. External factors (such as family and work pressures) also play a role in enhancing stress and reducing time available for delivery. These kinds of pressures are to be expected over a multi-year programme period, but there appears to be limited back-up or support for some of those with key expertise or skills.

Exploring our Forest

The six projects contributing to the 'Exploring our Forest' theme cover a range of activities, from supporting those with disabilities to access the Forest (Walking with Wheels) to development of a heritage App (see Table 13). None of the projects note any change to aims and objectives, the most significant being the Hidden Heritage App which continues to expand following successful development of two Apps and receiving additional funding from local town councils to develop a third. The main changes are in relation to personnel where four out of the five operating projects note some change. The project lead for Walking with Wheels changed, and Heritage Open Days note the loss of three people in two years, largely as a result of people moving jobs.

The Hidden Heritage App suggests the loss of 6 volunteers through burnout in developing the first App, and the pressure this has added to the small core team remaining.

"Each version of the app builds upon the technology of the previous one. We are learning lessons all the time about how to use the latest technology and present the historical information in a way which captures the imagination of the user."

"We started with 9 volunteers, but the 600 hours it took to develop the 1st App took its toll, as people could not spare that amount of time. However, 3 core volunteers have dedicated a considerable amount of time and have become skilled developers and historical investigators. They have formed a commercial LTD company to develop the ideas and plan to continue after the FF project finishes."

Worcester walk has also had several people leave or move on and recently a change of Project Leader (Feb 2019). Leadership issues and internal conflict have led to implementation delays and changes in project design:

"We have a new member now who doesn't seem to know what our objectives are - to preserve the area for local people and wildlife so the local people can enjoy it. The whole area is overrun with mountain bikes, wildlife is suffering, it looks like a moonscape out there in the woods."

In relation to financial issues two projects received some additional funding and only one project (Walking with Wheels) indicated significant problems as a result of not being able to fund the purchase of Trampers with the NLHF money due to NLHF regulations. The problem was successfully overcome by seeking local business sponsorship. More complex were issues around siting the Trampers where they could be easily accessed. Problems with the initial siting required changing the location and as a result both management and volunteer roles altered, for the better.

"Trampers could not be funded using the NLHF funding due to the supplier...also being NL funded and this would have been seen as double funding. As a result, FVAF approached a number of local organisations and companies to fund the Trampers through sponsorship."

“Users tend to want to go out with their family or on their own rather than with a guide, so, now that there are good rental sites, volunteers are no longer required to go out each time. Staff and volunteer time is now focussed on marketing and raising awareness to increase use of the Trampers, and doing the extensive Forestry England administration to approve the routes and processes being used.”

Revealing our Past

Only one of the seven projects under this theme (Table 14) suffered from personnel issues: the Geology project was affected by loss of the project lead, and by additional loss of support from problems associated with operational difficulties experienced by the county Geological Trust. Finding a replacement project lead has been difficult leaving the project in limbo for some time and delaying implementation. New personnel have recently been appointed (‘co-opted’ and ‘drafted-in’ were terms utilised in discussion) but at the point of evaluation were still finding their feet and had limited understanding of any proposed changes to the project.

Only one project noted problems with finance: ‘Voices from the Forest’ indicated significant underfunding from being too ambitious in its original objectives and also faced technical problems associated with digitising recordings.

“It feels like the funding was squeezed in the negotiation stage and so it has been challenging to deliver the project objectives, which didn’t change.” We were able to produce the collections and archive materials but getting public engagement was the issue.”

Additional funding allocated at the end of 2019 will help alleviate problems and put the project back on track. ‘Buried Heritage’ also received additional funding to expand its operations due to successful implementation. None of the projects, other than ‘Voices from the forest’ indicated any changes to aims and objectives.

Celebrating our Forest

None of the projects under this theme (Table 15) indicated any significant changes to aims and objectives, and only one (Mindscape) noted any decrease on scale as a result of downsizing to meet resources and having learned from experience what works.

“The original bid for the Mindscape FF project was quite ambitious, but the funding was not available. Therefore, the scale of the project had to be downsized to meet the available resources.” (Mindscape)

“The aims and objectives of the project have not changed in the last two years but there has been a greater focus on the art activities themselves as many of the recipients have an advanced dementia which limits verbal communication. We learned from experience and have adapted the programme to better suit the participants. This means that the recording of verbal stories spoken by the participants has not taken place. Stories are gathered through the artwork itself, so the project is looking at the ways

people with dementia are expressing themselves through their artwork.”
(Mindscape)

“The extra funding for the resource guide has been very helpful. This will be very important for the legacy of the project. The money has paid for artists to create 10 pieces of art and writing a step-by-step guide on how to create the art. This has been published as a resource guide. The additional money also allows for wider distribution of the guide (outside FoD and across Glos).” (Mindscape)

Scarr Bandstand, on the other hand, noted it had been ‘too timid’ in its initial objectives and had widened its objectives to go beyond simple restoration to include delivery of performances due to early successes. This was also the only project under this theme to note any significant personnel changes, as the project originator had resigned.

“The original founder resigned; it was a crisis. Sue from FF was instrumental in keeping the project going. We are now a small group of volunteers [core team of 8] devoted to the project.” (Scarr Bandstand)

None of the projects faced financial problems and one (Mindscape) had secured some additional funds.

Securing our future

One of the seven projects under this theme (Future for Commoning, see Table 16) has not yet started due to differences of opinion over approaches to grazing. None of the projects has experienced any changes to aims and objectives but four of the projects have experienced personnel changes. Two projects, Forest Explorers, and New Leaf have lost personnel. In the case of the Forest Explorers it is the loss of RSPB expertise, for New Leaf the original delivery body was replaced in the summer of 2019. The changes created delays to implementation and the loss of volunteers that had been involved in the initial stages of implementation. The other two projects noted positive changes in relation to increasing numbers being closely involved in project delivery. Working with Schools noted that all staff in Lydbrook primary school were involved in project delivery, and the project is building on initial success through expansion to other schools.

“Development and sharing of the curriculum and resources has expanded to other schools and Lydbrook is benefitting from lessons learned and developments in those schools.” (Working with Schools)

“We are now working towards engagement with secondary schools (5 Acres, Forest High, Dene Magna) and Heart of the Forest...No changes to aims - plans have been agreed for a while. Initially the project focused on our school, but knowing we were going to broaden it out – we also realised we can learn from other schools who will do things in a different way.” (Working with Schools)

The Future for Freemining project also noted new membership as a result of creating a CIC, the aim being to deliver a sustainable model of support for Freemining into the future.

“We previously had a steering group. We had a meeting of the Association and asked for volunteers to help develop the company. Five new people stepped forward plus two of us who were on the steering group.” (Freemining)

“The aim of the CIC is to administer the grant initially. After that it becomes focused on sustainability of Freemining, to make sure it keeps going...We are trying to get away from the notion of Freemining as an activity of the past, it’s for the future.” (Freemining)

Table 12 - Our Stronghold for Nature – changes 2017-19

Project	Aims & Objectives	Personnel	Finance	Impact on delivery
Ancient and notable trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Want to re-focus on raising awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spending to focus more on raising awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve awareness in local communities
Batscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change • Minor modification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of NE expertise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant – will restrict work with landowners to change management practices
Birds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addition of two species due to links with other species and projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Lead started 1 yr late 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some movement of funds within project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional benefits recognised due to inclusion of two species
Butterfly project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project leader changed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No impact
Community Wildlife Study Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some activities affected by new Shared Forest programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Original project designer retired. • Loss of expertise (NE, RSPB personnel) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaching targets not easy due to way they are written. • Outputs from this project not recorded • Loss of skills & knowledge
Conservation Grazing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreased scope of project; • original objectives too ambitious for the time-scale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some funding re-allocated to other projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community engagement issues; • delay in order to align with new Forest management plans • New objectives will improve quality of delivery
Dean Meadow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None yet but concern for future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No impact to date

		due to high average age of group		
Reptiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited time of key expert 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project behind schedule but catching up
Waterways and ponds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced time availability of key expert 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional funding to create ponds in school grounds and increase engagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some aspects delayed due to absence of recording software Pond creation costs under-estimated; Forestry England will assist in resolving problems
Woodland Flora	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of Natural England Project Leader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under review
Veteran Trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change Project Lead is stretched 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Underfunded; limited time to achieve objectives; working with volunteers helps.

Table 13 - Exploring our Forest – changes 2017-19

Project	Aims & objectives	Personnel	Finances	Impact on delivery
Bixslade Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not started 			
Bream Heritage walk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change, only difference is the trail will be a bit shorter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change - still some left. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everything is mostly in place. • We have a fixed route; 6.5 miles with 55 sites located • The brochure will have the map and 55 blocks of information.
Worcester Walk Community Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in steering group: one person left, one taking a year out, new person taken over secretarial duties • Change of project leader Feb 2020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moved money internally because of cost changes. • Applied for additional funding • Received small donations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restoration will be delayed • The pond will be moved • Pond will have to be fenced to keep dogs people getting access.
Walking with Wheels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims remain same but have changed approach to delivering them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project lead changed in August 2018 + one additional person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trampers could not be funded using the NLHF funding • Local organisations approached for sponsorship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changed location sites of Trampers • Changed management and volunteer role and interaction

Hidden Heritage App	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project has been very successful. • Developed 2 Apps and now developing a 3rd. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Started with 9 volunteers, but lost a lot as time to develop the 1st App took its toll • 3 core volunteers have formed a commercial LTD company to develop the ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town councils have provided matching funding for the second 2 apps. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of volunteers has put more pressure on the core team. • Developing the project to cover a third area Has been challenging. • The project is expanding.
Heritage Open Days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lot of change in personnel (three people in two years). • The work is part-time and people move on as their careers develop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes create problems in continuity. • Project has gained and lost skills due to changes in personnel. • Desperately need someone with IT skills

Table 14 - Revealing our Past – changes 2017-19

Project	Aims & objectives	Personnel	Finances	Impact on delivery
Geology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't know if anything has changed • New to project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project lead left • New personnel brought in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not aware of any change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long delay with no action • Re-orientation of project
Built Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointed consultant to manage contractors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project start delayed due to need for creation of Built Heritage strategy first.
Buried Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not really, but the schools project has expanded recently. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Just got approval for more funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowed the project to expand its operation and carry out more excavations.
Forest Dialect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recordings not freely available • Restrictions limit the involvement of volunteers
Forest Oral Histories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Voices from the Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should have reviewed objectives in the light of limited funds. • Aspirations too high in the beginning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial funding was insufficient to cover ambitions. • Just received additional funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recording of the oral histories has worked well • Problems on technical side, digitising records and producing outputs (YouTube /podcasts etc.)

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hoping project will deliver its objectives in final two years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Heritage Craft skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None

Table 15 - Celebrating our Forest – changes 2017-19

Project	Aims & objectives	Personnel	Finances	Impact on delivery
Forest Musical Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Scarr Bandstand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widen objectives from restoration only to including putting on events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considerable changes • Original founder resigned • We are now a small group of volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No changes, had a plan and stuck to it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Original aims were timid - we have delivered more than anticipated • We are now more ambitious because of project success
Reading the Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Underfunding has been compensated by putting in many hours of unfunded time.
Edible Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change to the overall aims 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Mindscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scale of project downsized to meet resources • There has been a greater focus on art activities • Learned from experience and adapted the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The core staff stays the same. • The project draws upon a pool of professional artists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secured an additional £1,000 to develop the resource guide. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extra funding has paid for artists to create 10 pieces of art and writing a step-by-step guide on how to create the art. • The resource guide will be very important for the legacy of the project

	programme to better suit the participants.			
Love Your Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Community Celebration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple changes in staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delays because of changes in staff and lack of continuity

Table 16 - Securing our Future – changes 2017-19

Project	Aims & objectives	Personnel	Finances	Impact on delivery
Forest Explorers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint project with Glos Wildlife Trust, RSPB and FF. RSPB officer has left 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not yet – it's only just happened. • Depends on skills & capacity of replacement
Youth Rangers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of volunteers, need to recruit more 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need more support, cannot deliver alone.
Working with Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No changes to aims • Initially the project focused on our school, but knowing we were going to broaden it out. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff in school are involved as it is / will be across the curriculum. • A local NQT recruited 2 yrs ago 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Immersion' trips now funded out of school budget and parental contributions. • FF funding now focussed on wider staff development across many schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and sharing of the curriculum and resources has expanded to other schools • Now working towards engagement with secondary schools
Future for Commoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not started 			
Future for Freemining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created a CIC • New people have joined from the Freeminers Association. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delay in starting & setting up the company. • Split contract: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Briquette machine & training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim of CIC is to administer the grant • After that the CIC will focus on supporting sustainability of Freemining, to make sure it keeps going.

			ii. The Freeminers memorial	
New Leaf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change to the overall aims • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Huge changes to personnel and delivery. • Arbour Training was managing the project, I was advising • Arbour Training finished July 2019 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lot of money was spent • Only left us with £9,000 for the next two years. • Match funding all fell apart. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We lost 6 - 7 months of time in delivery. • We lost a lot of volunteers. • Working with the FC everything is incredibly slow – decisions take ages

5.3 Project Outcomes

Table 17 below summarises the perceived outcomes delivered to date by project leaders for all projects in the FF Programme. In addition to the outcomes Tables 18 to 11 summarise the main achievements to date (the end of 2019), and Tables 12 to 16 identify the main groups of people affected by each project, as perceived by project leaders interviewed.

Outcomes are categorised according to the nine NLHF outcome criteria relating to the heritage, people, and communities. Project Leads were asked for their opinion on the extent to which outcomes were currently being delivered compared to initial expectations, and to provide a score on a 0 – 10 scale where values below 5 indicated lower than expected outcomes, and scores above 5 indicated higher than expected outcomes. A score of 5 therefore indicates that the anticipated level of outcomes are being delivered.

There is a distinct difference on the scoring for the projects in the 'Our Stronghold for Nature' group compared to the other four thematic groups of projects. Our Stronghold for Nature projects are very much focused on recording, identifying, managing, and improving the condition of the natural heritage and biodiversity of the Forest, and many of the projects are delivered or supported by organisations familiar with scoring approaches. The interviewees thus found the scoring process easier to complete. In contrast many of those interviewed in the other thematic groups had less familiarity with scoring outcomes, and found the process difficult, resulting in fewer scores across the cells of the table, particularly in relation to criteria focusing on management, condition and recording of heritage. Blank cells indicate an absence of a score, in some cases this might relate to inability to score the outcomes, or it may reflect a perceived absence of outcomes. The outcome scores will be discussed under two sub-headings:

- Outcome scores for Our Stronghold for Nature projects
- Outcome scores for other thematic groups of projects

Outcome scores for Our Stronghold for Nature projects

Overall scores for the three heritage criteria tend to be slightly above or below the mid-range of the scale (i.e. the expected level of outcomes at this point in time). The exceptions are the two projects related to Veteran Trees and Ancient and Notable trees which both indicate much higher levels of outcome in terms of identifying and recording the heritage. The problems with Batscape in relation to loss of expertise are also reflected in the below average score for Heritage being in better condition.

The scores for the three 'People focused' outcomes tend to be slightly higher than those for heritage outcomes, especially in relation to the amount of time volunteered and skills development. The Batscape, Birds, Conservation Grazing, and Veteran trees projects all indicate high levels of volunteer time. It is also worth noting that none of the projects have an outcome score below 5 for the two criteria: people are 'learning about heritage' and 'developing skills', suggesting that all projects are exceeding anticipated outcomes for these criteria.

In contrast the interviewees found it much more difficult to identify and score the impacts on communities, as indicated by the number of empty cells in Table 17 below. In some cases, it was clear that interviewees had not considered that their projects would have any impact on

the wider community, in other cases there were suggestions that it would have no impact, or that they could not provide a score for lack of information. The following response summarises some of the difficulties here:

“Cannot say. It’s difficult – some of the targets have not been reached yet. You can’t put a number on it. There are clearly impacts on those who go out into the forest, and improved habitat makes nicer places and more biodiversity.” (Birds project)

The outcome related to reduced environmental impacts was not considered as relevant to any of the natural heritage projects, while only two projects identified a potential impact on wider communities in terms of being better places to live, work, or visit. One of these, Dean Meadows, indicated that as the meadows were private land it was the owners of the meadows that would be better off, not the wider community. Six of the projects identified positive outcomes in terms of more people and a wider range of people becoming engaged with heritage, and one other (Conservation Grazing) were unsure. The Conservation Grazing project felt some people in the wider communities might benefit but noted that the grazing areas were not located close to communities, and that access involved a significant walk, potentially limiting wider engagement. On the other hand, they also indicated that the biggest impact on the people in the Forest from their project was the introduction of grazing livestock, which attracted a lot of people to come out and look at the animals and ask questions of project personnel.

The scoring and comments relating to the impact on wider communities suggests a lack of consideration of the relationship between project outcomes and how residents and visitors might benefit over time, and a lack of clear measures, rather than an absence of impact. In some cases, there may be limited outcomes for the wider community (e.g. due to distance to sites, or lack of awareness), in other cases the benefits might be more indirect and/or require some form of awareness raising or more active engagement from the community (or visitors).

Outcome scores for other thematic groups of projects

Some of the projects in the first two thematic groups (Exploring our Forest; Revealing our Past) were able to identify a significant level of outcomes for the three heritage criteria. The Hidden Heritage App, Forest Dialect, and Buried Heritage, for example, all identified high levels of outcomes for managing, improving condition, and identifying/recording heritage. The Geology project were unsure about all outcomes as the interviewees had only recently become involved, and unclear about what had previously been achieved by the project. In the other two thematic groups (Celebrating our Forest; Securing our future) only the Scarr Bandstand provided outcome scores for the heritage criteria, indicating a high level of success. Other projects in these two groups either did not recognise outcomes affecting heritage or did not see these criteria as relevant to their work.

In terms of criteria related to people, the majority of projects across all four thematic groups indicated scores of 5 or above for ‘developing skills’ and ‘learning about heritage’, while scores in relation to volunteering tend to be slightly lower with fewer projects scoring above 5. The scores are backed up by commentary from interviewees relating to difficulties of obtaining and retaining sufficient volunteers for their projects. Lower scores for volunteering also occur for some of the ‘Our Stronghold for Nature’ projects, particularly those being delivered by a single

person (i.e. 'one-man bands'). There are multiple reasons for the lower scores and no clear pattern; reasons include: changes in personnel due to changing jobs or moving out of the area, volunteer burnout, and delays caused by changes in leadership.

In terms of community focused outcomes, the pattern of scores is more variable and uneven. Virtually none of the projects identified outcomes that would reduce environmental impacts. Only the Worcester Walk and Buried heritage indicated any effect on these criteria. Worcester Walk noted a potential reduction in litter, broken glass and vandalism in an area of forest as a result of the project improvements, while the impact of Buried Heritage activities on environmental quality is not clear. In contrast, quite a few of the projects identified outcomes that would result in communities having 'more people and a wider range of people engaged with heritage'. High outcome scores were identified for Walking with Wheels, the Hidden Heritage App, Scarr Bandstand, and Working with Schools. The scores are all underpinned by a clear rationale: Walking with Wheels noted the impact on enabling physically disabled people to access the Forest and have also provided some case studies describing the impact of the Trampers on those that have used them. The Hidden Heritage App is becoming more widely used, not just by walkers but also cyclists, the Scarr Bandstand is engaging more widely with communities through organising performances, and the Working with Schools project has noted the impact on parents and other family members of children that have been learning about their local heritage.

Very few outcome scores have been obtained for any projects having an impact on the quality of life in local communities (Communities...will be better places to live, work or visit). Part of the reason for the low level of scoring may be the difficulty respondents were having in relating the outcomes of their projects to local communities. Respondents tended to think of communities as geographic locations rather than as specific 'communities of interest' or people. Thus, the biodiversity and nature focused projects noted the distance of their sites from built up areas, and the lack of impact if people were not aware of the changes. Two of the walking/trail focused projects suggested communities would benefit (e.g. through improved access and potential to improve health for the Bream trail); Buried Heritage and the Bandstand also indicated outcomes in terms of making communities better places. The other two projects noting outcomes, Mindscape and Working with Schools, are focused on particular sectors of the community and perhaps could more readily make the connection between their activities and improved quality of life.

Another reason for the lack of outcome scores is that some of the respondents had clearly not considered what potential links might exist between their projects and specific communities (of either people or place). Discussions with some of the project leaders indicated a lack of previous consideration and some recognition of potential links that perhaps should be explored in more depth.

Table 17 - Outcome scores: all projects

Scored on a 0 – 10 scale where: 5 = anticipated level of outcomes achieved; 6 – 10 = exceeds anticipated level of outcome; 0 – 5 = lower than anticipated level of outcome achieved.

Project name	Heritage			People will have...			Communities in the area...		
	Will be better managed	Will be in better condition	Will be identified /recorded	Developed skills	learned about heritage	volunteered time	...will have reduced environmental impacts	...more & wider range of people engaged with heritage	...will be better places to live, work or visit
Ancient and notable trees	7	7	9	6	6	4	n/a		
Batscape	4	3	5	8	8	9	n/a	7	
Birds	4	5	7	7	7	9	n/a	6	
Butterfly project	4	4	7	6	5	5	n/a		
Community Wildlife Study Group	n/a	n/a	n/a	5	5	7	n/a		
Conservation Grazing	4	5	n/a	7	7	7	n/a	?	
Dean Meadows	7	6	7	5	5	4	n/a	6	5
Reptiles	n/a	5	5	5	5	4	n/a	5	5

Waterways and ponds	4	4	5	5	5	4	n/a	5	
Woodland Flora							n/a		
Veteran Trees	6	5	10	6	5	8	n/a	5	

Table 17 Continued: Outcome scores for all projects...

Bixslade Project									
Bream Heritage walk			7	5	4	5		4	5
Worcester Walk	0		9		2.5	5	5		
Walking with Wheels	n/a	n/a	n/a		10 at start; 6 now	4.5		10	7
Hidden Heritage App	8	8	10	7	7	3	n/a	7	
Heritage Open Days	0	0	0	0	5	3	0	5	0
Geology	n/a	n/a			?			?	
Built Heritage									
Buried Heritage	8	5	8	8	5	6	5	5	5
Forest Dialect	7	7	7	6	7	5		5	
Forest Oral Histories	5	5	5	5	4	5		4	
Voices from the Forest	0	0							
Heritage Craft Skills		n/a	n/a	7	7	4		3	

Table 17 Continued: Outcome scores for all projects...

Forest Musical Landscape	0	0	0	*	*	*	*	*	*
Scarr Bandstand	10	10	10	7	10	10		10	7
Reading the Forest	0	0	0	*	*	*	*	*	*
Edible Forest				7	7	4		3	
Mindscape	n/a	n/a	7	8	7	5	0	5	5
Love Your Forest									
Community Celebration	n/a	n/a	n/a						
Forest Explorers	n/a	n/a	n/a	5	5	3.5		5	
Youth Rangers	n/a	n/a	n/a	5	5	5		5	5
Working with Schools	n/a	n/a	6	10	10	0		8	6
Future for Commoning									
Future for Freemining				6	6	n/a			
New Leaf	n/a		n/a	7	7	4			

5.4 Major achievements

Project Leaders (and others) who were interviewed were asked to describe what they felt were the key achievements of their projects to the current point in time (December 20189 – January 2020). Tables 18 - 22 illustrate that virtually all projects (except perhaps for Geology, where the project personnel are very new) identified some significant achievements.

Our Stronghold for Nature Projects

The nature focused projects noted a wide range of successful outcomes including (in no particular order):

- improvements in data and recording of ecological condition
- provision of information that can contribute to future management
- volunteer involvement, along with skills development and learning
- community engagement
- higher levels of awareness
- active conservation work on the ground

In some cases (e.g. Ancient and Notable Trees, Batscape) the project leads indicated significant success and meeting or exceeding initial targets, to the point where they were looking to expand the project or re-focus their activities.

“We have identified a large number of trees that would have been otherwise completely overlooked and forgotten about. We have literally put them on the map. Getting people out into the woods has been satisfying as well.” (Ancient and Notable Trees)

“We exceeded our targets for quite a few things: farmer engagement, public involvement at walks and talks. There was a good level of involvement in the Bat surveys. As a result of that we got a more general awareness raising of the importance of the FoD for bats.” (Batscape)

“Starting to develop the community study group – it’s beginning to take shape. That’s a success.” (Community Wildlife Study Group)

“The biggest success of the project is engaging with lots of members of the public. The training has also been very successful, and people now can go off and survey veteran trees in all sorts of different circumstances.” (Veteran Trees)

It is important to recognise that the interviewees are naturally supportive of the projects they are leading, and it is to be expected that they would readily be able to identify success. Ensuring a balanced view is important and although project leads may not always identify problems when questioned they did discuss, problems, disappointments, challenges, and current issues facing project delivery in a frank and open manner.

Exploring our Forest

The five operating projects within this thematic group indicated successful delivery of project elements to date. The Hidden Heritage App indicated major success in terms of the app being useful for recording and raising awareness of heritage in the Forest as well as providing some unintended benefits of people using them to find their way around. In addition, some of the other projects are starting to link into the app as a useful resource and source of information.

Two of the access focused projects, Bream Heritage Walk and Walking with Wheels have made good progress. Walking with wheels, despite some initial problems associated with locating and managing the utilisation of Trampers reports successful operation and agreements made with two 'fantastic' hire sites. Due to the way that people prefer to use the Trampers, and improved management by the hire centres, Staff and volunteers have had time freed up to enable them to concentrate on marketing and raising awareness of the availability of the Trampers.

"The main chunk of resource is used on staff time, especially developing systems and processes, especially safety. We want to get more people using them and ensuring systems are in place that will outlast the project. This is of particular importance due to FE regulations and their very high level of risk averseness."

"This project could not and would not have happened without the FF funding."

"We are receiving good feedback. The positive feedback about changes to people's lives has been humbling. Enabling people to develop their feeling of self-worth is an important benefit."

The Bream Heritage walk has established a 6.5 mile route, that is now signed (despite some initial vandalism) and poised for launch at the beginning of May (2020). In addition, the Worcester Walk, which is more a local community site improvement area, report improvements in site quality (fewer boars and people 'trashing the land') and removal of invasive species.

Revealing our Past

The main success stories within this group relate to the Buried, written and oral heritage. Buried Heritage have raised a lot of interest in the Forest Communities through their archaeological digs. They report significant increases in knowledge, skills development among volunteers, and both schools and community engagement.

"There have been big increases in knowledge, awareness, expertise, and skill sets. A lot of the volunteers are developing their interests outside of the project. For example, joining the Forest of Dean Archaeology Society."

"The interaction between professional archaeologists and community volunteers has been mutually beneficial. The input of the professional archaeologists has helped to strengthen the skills, knowledge and expertise in the volunteer archaeology community (upskilling)."

“The project has developed a school’s Pack - a bound folder of teaching resources – Key stage 2 of the National curriculum. There is also an accompanying CD with more resources on it. Also, each pack has artefacts with it so that pupils can actually look at the archaeology. All this was designed in consultation with teachers.”

The oral history project notes success with digitising archived tape recordings and development of volunteer skills while the Voices from the Forest project has built up a collection of recordings of people’s memories. The Forest dialect project notes increasing interest from their community engagement activities.

The only project that has not yet started to deliver its outcomes is Geology, which has suffered from loss of leadership and expertise, and loss of support from the county geology trust which has had to break up its collection and currently has no permanent home. New personnel have been involved since Autumn 2019 and are still finding their feet.

Celebrating our forest

The projects involved in celebrating the forest focus on the music, literature and other forms of utilisation, such as Edible Forest and Mindscape (using art to let those with dementia experience the Forest and express themselves).’

Mindscape has been successful in development of a resource guide which is having an impact beyond the Forest of Dean border. They also note the high level of engagement of some of the care homes with the project activities.

The project is now reaching out beyond the Forest of Dean into wider Gloucestershire. This has been an unexpected positive outcome. Another major achievement has been the extent to which some of the care homes have become deeply engaged with the project. Some of the activity coordinators have been extremely enthusiastic and got on board with project.

“The depth of engagement has been very impressive, for example the extent to which artists have been able to work alongside activity coordinators and codevelop the activities they are delivering. At some of the care homes the activities have carried on outside the session times. For example, an artist may deliver an hour-long workshop, but the care homes will spend many more hours developing the activity once the artist has left. Two care homes in particular have really engaged with the process. In other cases, it has not been quite as successful, but it’s still been good.”

The Scarr Bandstand project indicate completion of the FF Programme funded restoration and have now moved on to running events for the community, engaging a much wider population than anticipated, including visitors. They now make reference to increased pride in the site among local people, and a more ambitious level of activities for those involved in the project. The Forest Musical Project also identify ‘tremendous enthusiasm in the community for this project’. The Reading the Forest project also notes a high level of interest and participation among young people.

Securing our Future

One project, 'Future for Commoning', has not yet started and a second, 'New Leaf' went through a change of management which created delay and loss of volunteers. Despite this New Leaf report success in terms of developing a woodworking centre, designing an orchard, and creating two coppicing teams.

The other four projects report significant success. Forest Explorers are reaching young people and their families, running regular events and activities, and introducing people to different parts of the Forest. The Youth Rangers noted numbers has increased, despite working with a difficult target market (teenagers). Working with Schools report a high level of achievement of both intended and unintended effects. Teachers indicate not only increased knowledge and interest from children in their local heritage, but also increased interest from families, and higher levels of engagement between the school and hard to reach sectors of the community. In addition, an unexpected outcome was improvement in writing skills across the year groups that have engaged with the curriculum. The project has developed materials which it is now sharing with a wide range of schools in the Forest and starting to think about how to approach secondary schools.

"The Ofsted inspection report in 2019 revealed improving attainment and engagement attributed to the curriculum, and specifically mentions Forest and other community-based interventions as beneficial to attainment. "

"It's talked about...it has grown in enthusiasm...it still generates a buzz".

"There's a demonstrable improvement in knowledge and confidence of pupils. They're gaining presentation skills, language skills, and writing has improved across the board."

The Future for Freemining project reports success despite a slow start. One key indicator of change is getting a group of Freeminers to work together to create a CIC to manage the new briquetting machine (which is on order from India) and provide a sustainable source of income for the future of freemining.

"We got the company started. We all sat around the table to push it forward. For Freemining it's a sign of improvement (traditionally we only meet once a year at the Association AGM, the rest of the time people are working independently)."

"We are progressing on the memorial commemorating the Waterloo mine disaster. It will be erected in an area called Waterloo Screens, near the old Waterloo Pit. Now we have to go through a process with the FC to get it put there. Got to jump through all their rules and procedures, the FC is hard work."

Table 18 - Our Stronghold for Nature projects: Main achievements to-date

Project name	Main achievements to-date
Ancient and notable trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree recording and locating has gone very well. The project is providing data and best practice guidance which will help a host of stakeholders make better decisions about the management of the forest. • Successful in rediscovering ancient and notable trees which had their own names and were appreciated by local communities. • One of the most important findings is the lack of ancient trees. However, there are many trees which have the potential to become ancient trees and these have been located and identified by the project.
Batscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project exceeded targets for quite a few things: farmer engagement, public involvement at walks and talks. • There was a good level of involvement in the Bat surveys. As a result of that we got a more general awareness raising of the importance of the FoD for bats.
Birds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer engagement from the local community better than expected – and the amount of time people give up – hundreds of hours in some cases. Their enthusiasm and interest and increase in knowledge is good to see. • Increased understanding of why we are doing certain actions in the Forest.
Butterfly project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a higher awareness of the problem. • There is active conservation work on the ground.
Community Wildlife Study Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with project leads on the 12 biodiversity projects and supporting them to deliver their targets. • Starting to develop the community study group – it's beginning to take shape. That's a success."
Conservation Grazing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting cattle grazing in the forest and moving them around to every site. • Working on a landscape scale to restore important habitats & being able to resource it. • Having the Forestry Commission facilitate our vision (e.g. felling, fencing, layback land, etc.). Cultural changes like this are difficult for the FC to make.
Dean Meadow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in area of wildflower meadows under management • Increase in people knowing how to manage wildflower meadows
Reptiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness of how valuable reptile habitats are. Public pressure will prevent the loss of these habitats. • Finding Adders on sites where there have been no previous sightings. • We have created our own database so that the reptiles can be recorded.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project has created a number of reptile hibernation sites.
Geology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-starting under new leadership
Waterways and ponds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating the new pond habitats. • Recoding the Great Crested Newts (GCN) distribution. Many ponds have been discovered with GCNs. 210 ponds have now been recorded with GCN (some ponds have been discovered due to the project).
Veteran trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The biggest success is engaging with lots of members of the public. • The training has been successful, and people now can go off and survey veteran trees. • Some volunteers have been inspired to go and work on other projects. Some of the students have been inspired to develop careers in conservation. • The project has collected good environmental data on veteran trees. This will inform management and help tell the story of the forest over the last 3 to 400 years.

Table 18 - Exploring our Forest: Main achievements to date

Project name	Main achievements to-date
Bixslade Project	
Bream Heritage walk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting signage in place; • pulling all the information together; • producing the map; aims to launch brochure on 8th May.
Worcester Walk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The fence, plus some hedging and getting some trees planted. • Fewer Forestry commission organised events in 2019 has helped. • The bracken and Himalayan Balsam is disappearing; the land is being better looked after and the people and the boars are not in there trashing it; and, there are no teenage parties.
Walking with Wheels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting up 2 fantastic hire sites that believe in the project and have a good likelihood of lasting beyond the project. • Setting-up systems resilient enough to last beyond FF project (especially relating to Forest England admin requirements). • Receiving good feedback – positive feedback about changes to people’s lives “has been humbling”, enabling people to develop their feeling of self-worth is an important development.
Hidden Heritage App	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The apps have exceeded expectations as a means of recording and preserving the heritage of the Forest. The photo image results have been spectacular from a technical point of view. • The apps have provided with a great way of engaging with the history of the Forest. • A number of unintended benefits: people are using the app as a walking guide; mountain bikers use it as a GPS positioning tool. It has been very rewarding to see a concept mature and develop into a concrete reality. • It is also gratifying to see the interest in the app from the other FF project.
Heritage Open Days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing access to some of the less well-known locations, sites, and aspects of Forest history. • Raising people’s awareness of history and sites of the Forest.

Table 19 - Revealing our past: Main achievements to-date

Project name	Main achievements to-date
Geology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing to date – just some words and rough sketches (for the APP). • I'm only just getting my head around what's expected. • In meetings it's very hard to understand what's going on. Much better in one-to-one meetings.
Built Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of Built Heritage Strategy which guides small-scale conservation work to be completed in the project.
Buried Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The survey work has answered a lot of research questions, but also posed a lot of new ones. There has definitely been an advance of knowledge. • The project has strengthened the amount of archaeological expertise in the area and this will be part of the project's legacy. The interaction between professional archaeologists and community volunteers has been mutually beneficial. • Interaction with schools: the project has undertaken 2 training days with teachers to show them the resources in the training pack. The school's Pack is a bound folder of teaching resources designed in consultation with teachers. The packs have been given to local schools and the teachers trained.
Forest Dialect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community engagement and increasing interest in the project
Forest Oral Histories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digitised 3 batches of tapes which is over 100 tapes • Catalogued 80 recordings • In the next couple of years I would like to promote the project more widely. There are good volunteers involved who learned new skills and hopefully will stay on as volunteers with the Heritage Centre.
Voices from the Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building a real legacy in terms of the oral histories that have been recorded. • Have built up a great collection, there is a lot of material on e-prints at the University. This will be available to academics and researchers who have an interest in the literature of the Forest of Dean.
Heritage Craft Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We created a green woodwork centre. • We created a Women's Coppice Team and a Mixed coppice Team; • we helped create an Orchard.

Table 20 - Celebrating our Forest: Main achievements to-date

Project name	Main achievements to-date
Forest Musical Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feels that there is tremendous enthusiasm in the community for this project. • More confident that this project will carry on beyond the end of the funding.
Scarr Bandstand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scarr Bandstand- 1st phase restoration complete. The FF project is completed. • Have run 3 successful summer seasons of events, with visitor numbers increasing every year. Community groups have used the site for various events. It is a community asset, very important for Sling to feel pride in the site. Before it was a derelict site associated with drugs.
Reading the Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feels that they have worked incredibly well with schools. A lot of young people have shown interest in the project and have participated. • Feels that the learning impact of reading the forest has been very good. People are a more familiar with the works of the key authors such as Dennis Potter, FW Harvey etc. that has been a big positive.
Edible Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run a series of Edible Forest Skills workshops.
Mindscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being able to roll out the programme through the resource guide has been a major success. The project is now reaching out beyond the Forest of Dean into wider Gloucestershire. This has been an unexpected positive outcome. • Another major achievement has been the extent to which some of the care homes have become deeply engaged with the project. The depth of engagement has been very impressive, for example, the extent to which artists have been able to work alongside activity coordinators and codevelop the activities they are delivering. • At some of the care homes the activities have carried on outside the session times. Two care homes in particular have really engaged with the process. In other cases, it has not been quite as successful but its still been good
Love Your Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community litter picks are well attended.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Love Your Forest partnership of Hubbub, Forestry England, Foresters' Forest, Lucozade Ribena Suntory, Forest of Dean District Council and FoD Wye Valley Tourism works well, using a variety of methods to raise the profile of the 'Love Your Forest', Take your litter home, and Recycle messages.
Community Celebration	

Table 21 - Securing our future: Main achievements to-date

Project name	Main achievements to-date
Forest Explorers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of families attending events • The increase in children’s knowledge (especially the regulars) • People go to places they have not been to before, we go all over the forest.
Youth Rangers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have managed to keep going. We have more people attending now. • It’s very buoyant - getting teenagers to attend on a regular basis is an achievement • Parents must be committed as well as they provide the transport
Working with Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ofsted (section 5, full) inspection in 2019 revealed improving attainment and engagement attributed to curriculum, later specifically mentions Forest and other community-based interventions as beneficial to attainment. • "It's talked about... grown in enthusiasm... it still generates a buzz". • Demonstrable improvement in knowledge and confidence of pupils, gaining presentation skills and presenting to local history society, poetry recital at Hopewell Colliery, language skills, improved writing.
Future for Commoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project has not started yet.
Future for Freemining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have started training young people. • We established a CIC • Briquetting machine order has been placed, it’s a calculated risk but the technology is basic, so we can fix it if it goes wrong. • The artist (Antony Dufort, Yorkley) has been selected for the memorial commemorating the Waterloo mine disaster. The memorial has been designed and agreed.
New Leaf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We created a green woodwork centre. • We created a Women's Coppice Team and a Mixed coppice Team; • we helped create an Orchard.

5.5 Identifying project beneficiaries

Our Stronghold for Nature: people affected

Interviewees were asked who they felt were benefitting from the identified outcomes (Table 23). In most cases residents of the FoD were identified as primary beneficiaries in relation to outcomes for people (i.e. developing skills, learning about heritage, volunteering). Those benefitting tend to be middle-aged, older and retired people (i.e. those with interests and time) although in the majority of cases young people were also identified as getting involved.

Interviewees were less clear about those in the wider community who might benefit from the projects. The Dean Meadows project noted it was mainly small private landowners that benefitted. The Conservation Grazing project noted their sites were a long walk from population centres so felt it unlikely the wider community would gain any benefit; while the Ancient and Notable Trees and the Community Wildlife Study Group felt that their projects were not providing outcomes for people in the wider community.

Exploring our Forest: people affected

Table 24 summarises the projects in this theme. Across the suite of projects those affected include most sectors of the population (residents/visitors, old/young, and disabled). Walking with Wheels focuses almost exclusively on people with physical disabilities (which can include visitors as well as residents) while the two other walks (Worcester and Bream) are targeted at the more local communities surrounding each area. Bream Heritage Walk indicates that about 90% of those that have gone on the walk to date tend to be older residents, of the Forest. In future it is anticipated that most users will be from the Bream area, with perhaps a few visitors. The Worcester Walk project suggests that local people are the ones who volunteer and will benefit the most.

Revealing our Past & Celebrating our Forest: people affected

The suite of projects under these two themes (Tables 25 and 26) is targeted at a wide sector of the population although most are targeted more at residents than visitors. Buried heritage is targeted at all age groups, though not those with disabilities while the Heritage Crafts project notes that although volunteers tend to be older residents the participants can come from anywhere to take part in the activities. The Dialect, Oral and Voices projects are similarly open to all sectors of the community in terms of both volunteering and wider impacts. It is worth noting that local University students formed the main group of volunteers for the Forest Dialect project, due to the fact the project leader was employed there.

Mindscape is targeted at a particular set of people (those with Dementia) but benefits not only those suffering but also their families, and is mostly targeted at older residents.

Securing our Future: people affected

Table 27 summarises the situation for the projects under the 'Securing our Future' theme. Three of the projects are deliberately targeted at young people (Forest Explorers, Youth Rangers, Schools) under the age of 18 years, while the wider community is also affected, in particular parents and wider families who see and hear or even take part in what the young

people have been doing. With respect to New Leaf the volunteers tend to be older local residents with some skills while the participants range in age from young to old and can come from outside the Forest boundary as well as inside.

Future for Freemining is somewhat different. In terms of training and developing skills/learning the preference is for younger people (over 21 yrs) who need to be residents. No-one is considered a 'volunteer' and the activity is more in the nature of an apprenticeship to learn the necessary skills. Those that benefit will be the Freeminers and the wider community benefits only in the sense that the Freeminers represent a living heritage.

Table 22 - 'Our Stronghold for Nature' projects: People affected

Project name	People directly affected by skills development, learning about heritage and volunteering	People most affected and engaged with heritage within communities in the area
Ancient and notable trees	Residents Visitors Young people Old people	n/a
Batscape	In terms of developing skills and learning about heritage: Residents, farmers and landowners in particular. Volunteers range from young to retired but tend to be the more middle-aged people.	Mostly residents - tends to be middle-aged and retired people. We get some local residents going on guided walks.
Birds	Residents Young people Old people Disabled Wide spectrum of volunteers from 19 – 75 yrs of age)	Residents Young people Old people Disabled Ethnic minorities
Butterfly project	Tends to be residents and in particular older, retired people. They have the time and interest. A few young people looking for ecological experience get involved - something to put on their CV.	Residents
Community Wildlife Study Group	Residents Young people Old people	n/a
Conservation Grazing	A mix of visitors and residents. We try to get people living adjacent to sites as stock checkers. We also have a few visitors from Gloucester. Most of the volunteers are retired (i.e. older people); partly because there is a Mon - Friday opportunity to join the GWT staff.	?
Dean Meadow	Residents, small landowners	Small landowners; those interested in wildflower meadows.
Reptiles	Residents; Young people; Old people	Residents; Young people; Old people; Ethnic minorities

Waterways and ponds	Residents; Young people; Old people	Residents; Visitors; Young people; Old people
Veteran Trees	Residents; Young people; Old people	Residents; Visitors; Young people; Old people

Table 23 - 'Exploring our Forest': People affected

Project name	People directly affected by skills development, learning about heritage and volunteering	People most affected and engaged with heritage within communities in the area
Bixslade Project		
Bream Heritage walk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning - mostly local people on the walks so far (perhaps 10% are visitors to FoD). • Tends to be older people. Don't get young people or families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older residents (Bream and local area in particular); • some visitors.
Worcester Walk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local residents, those living on the doorstep in Broadwell, Mile End, Coalway. • Mix of young and old. The project was always aimed at local people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents. Young and old people, a real mix. Those living on the doorstep benefit most: residents of Broadwell, Mile End and Coalway. • We also get people from further away driving here to walk the dog.
Walking with Wheels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disabled (residents and visitors) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disabled and physically impaired residents and visitors
Hidden Heritage App	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents; Visitors • Young people; Old people • Disabled 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents; Visitors • Young people; Old people • Disabled
Heritage Open Days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents; Visitors • Young people; Old people • Disabled 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents; Visitors • Young people; Old people

Table 24 - 'Revealing our past': People affected

Project name	People directly affected by skills development, learning about heritage and volunteering	People most affected and engaged with heritage within communities in the area
Geology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All sectors relevant • Walks for older people. App for younger, education work with schools, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old people; young people • Schools
Built Heritage		
Buried Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents; Visitors • Young people; Old people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents; Visitors • Young people; Old people disabled
Forest Dialect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UoG students were the main group of volunteers, other groups participated mostly remotely- e.g. disabled and residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • residents • young people, old people, disabled
Forest Oral Histories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students- young people, old people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • young and old people
Voices from the Forest		
Heritage Craft Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers tend to be residents and older people. • Participants can come from all over and cover the range from young to old. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents, mostly older people. • We do get volunteers from other FF projects coming to volunteer. • We tend to attract the middle-class incomers - not the true born and bred Foresters.

Table 25 - 'Celebrating our Forest' projects: People affected

Project name	People directly affected by skills development, learning about heritage and volunteering	People most affected and engaged with heritage within communities in the area
Forest Musical Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents, old people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents, old people
Scarr Bandstand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> residents, old people, visitors, young people- training bands, disabled 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> residents, visitors, young people, old people, disabled
Reading the Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Edible Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteers tend to be residents and older people. Participants can come from all over and cover the range from young to old. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents, mostly older people. We do get volunteers from other FF projects coming to volunteer. We tend to attract the middle class incomers - not the true born and bred Foresters.
Mindscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> residents, young people, old people, disabled 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific communities benefitting: Friends and family of dementia sufferers. residents, visitors, young people, old people, disabled
Love Your Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large range of young to old people, mostly local residents but sometimes visitors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local residents who 'Love your Forest' but hate the litter.
Community Celebration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">

Table 26 - 'Securing our Future' projects: People affected

Project name	People directly affected by skills development, learning about heritage and volunteering	People most affected and engaged with heritage within communities in the area
Forest Explorers	Residents Young people Aged 4 – 13 yrs. Others (specify)...Parents of children, or grandparents	Residents Young people - Plus their parents or grandparents Specific communities benefitting: Forest wide – no specific focus
Youth Rangers	Young people	
Working with Schools	Residents (parents), Young (pupils), teachers.	Residents - parents / pupils, young people - pupils, teachers,
Future for Commoning		
Future for Freemining	For the training: Residents Young people; Old people Targeting anyone but better if they are younger. Need to be residents. For the CIC – other Freeminers	
New Leaf	Volunteers tend to be residents and older people. Participants can come from all over and cover the range from young to old.	Residents, mostly older people. We do get volunteers from other FF projects coming to volunteer. We tend to attract the middle-class incomers - not the true born and bred Foresters.

5.6 Future Challenges

Tables 28 – 32 summarise the challenges anticipated in delivering projects over the next 2 – 3 years from a whole project point of view, while Tables 33 - 37 briefly summarise personal challenges facing project lead personnel. Towards the end of this section Table 38 explores factors that might help overcome some of the more difficult challenges described.

Tables 28 – 32 are colour coded to highlight issues which are deemed to be of small, medium, or large significance. Each Table addresses one of the five thematic objectives of the FF Programme.

Funding

What is striking initially is that very few projects see funding as a future challenge. Only six of the 38 projects indicated that funding was an issue, and only three of those suggest it is a significant problem. The Veteran Trees project notes the large amount of data it has collected and the lack of support available to fully analyse and write-up reports, The Worcester Walk project indicates a shortage of funding for planting trees to meet their objectives, while the New Leaf project indicates a more serious lack of funding due to poor management in the first two years of delivery.

Lack of knowledge/skills/ expertise

Similarly, lack of knowledge and skills was only perceived as a significant issue by one of the 'Our Stronghold for Nature' projects (Waterways and Ponds); their concern was in regard to the administrative issues involved in obtaining licences for volunteers to engage in surveys of protected species, rather than any specific lack of subject knowledge or skills. Only 3 other projects indicated the issue as a minor one, mostly in relation to training of volunteers. Among the other thematic groups of projects, the issue is more significant. A total of 10 projects (out of 27) noted some form of challenge associated with this factor. Of these, a total of seven projects indicated it was more than a small problem, caused in most instances by a lack of volunteers, the scale of tasks being undertaken, and the need to develop skills among volunteers, either in terms of technical ability, administrative capacity, or improve their confidence to enable them to undertake more responsibilities. One project (Freemining) noted a different challenge, that of not being able to use their skills and abilities to undertake tasks which they felt they could accomplish quickly and easily, due to restrictions put in place by Forestry England.

Accessing/reaching target groups and, Raising Awareness

These two categories are considered together as they tend to overlap in practice. In relation to reaching target groups most projects indicated few problems. Among the 'Stronghold for Nature' projects only one, Conservation Grazing, noted that they reached more people than they targeted as people would come up to project personnel in the field and ask questions. Two projects (Birds, Ancient and Notable Trees) indicated medium levels of difficulty in reaching their target audiences, and a third noted the difficulty of keeping a team of volunteers occupied when the project (Waterways and Ponds) is only one person deep. Other project thematic groups also noted few challenges associated with reaching target groups. Where problems were identified it was usually in relation to insufficient personnel to undertake the work, or lack of expertise in promotion and marketing.

Raising awareness has not been an issue for most projects and all of those are within either the 'Our Stronghold for Nature', or 'Exploring our Forest' thematic groups.

"We have not done much re-raising awareness or communicating with the wider public. Digitisation has been the main focus, there is no time for promotion, we would have to invest a lot of extra time to do this. Promotion of the project is not sufficient, more is needed." (Oral History project)

Only 8 projects identified challenges arising in this area while some noted it had been a positive experience (e.g. Ancient and Notable Trees; Batscape). Again, the root cause of the problems appears to be either the need for a wider range of volunteer support with the relevant expertise, or a lack of manpower to undertake the work (Community Wildlife Study Group; Butterfly Project), or both.

Communications

In terms of scale of the challenges faced by projects, 'Communications' and 'Other issues' are viewed as more problematic than the other categories in the Tables. A total of 17 (out of 38) projects spread across all thematic groups indicated that 'communications' presented some form of challenge. Communications included both internal communications within the FF Programme, and externally between the project and the wider community. The two instances where communications are identified as a large-scale issue (Worcester Walk; Walking with Wheels) both relate to communications with Forestry England, where their experiences indicate difficult communications and contradictory responses. The extent to which these issues are related to communications, or poor understanding of FE procedures is difficult to determine here.

"FF people are helpful – there are no issues internally but communications with the public are a challenge – the Forest of Dean is disjointed, there's no central point of information for people." (Worcester walk)

Projects that mention communications with the FF Programme team appear to be divided between those that are happy with the level of communications and those indicating it is poor. There is not consistent pattern but the data suggest (through references to lack of a communications officer, and the fact that things have improved since the start of the programme) that some of perceptions are out-of-date and refer to an earlier period in the programme.

It is worth noting that one project suggested that although the FF Programme team is good at communicating with project leaders directly, issues arise because some leaders "don't attend meetings, which results in a lack of connection between projects", then went on to suggest that "the FF Programme team lacks the skills to properly facilitate communications". Another project indicated it was not happy with the social media at the FF Programme level and tended to use their own social media resources. The impression given is that some of the perceptions are backward looking and lacked awareness of recent programme developments, rather than looking to future challenges over the next two to three years.

Other issues

A large number of projects (21) highlighted a wide range of issues in the 'Other' category. Of these a total of seven were identified as 'large scale' and relating to the following:

- Butterflies: grazing and the issue of fencing, which is viewed as divisive, and linked to opposition between interests of commoners and those who want to protect certain areas to avoid loss of specific species:
- Geology noted three issues: the limited time available for delivery following re-organisation and new personnel being brought in, the issue of access to land, and the issue of maintaining sites (e.g. cutting back vegetation).

“Access to land and cuttings where geology is exposed may be an issue for both the App and the walks. Some of the exposures are on private land – owners don’t want people going there without permission. Long-term there are issues with conservation of exposed faces; plants grow over them – and they need maintenance and cleaning. We don’t have the resources, it’s a legacy issue.” (Geology Project)

- Walking with Wheels: Getting agreement and buy-in from Trumper sites. The project personnel indicated they did not anticipate the scale of problems that might be associated with locating the Trampers at the start of the project, or that they would have to undertake the tasks to resolve issues.
- Scarr Bandstand: indicated they felt they are taking on too much work and a bigger set of problems than they can handle.
- Reading the Forest: suggested that going forward the biggest challenge will occur in securing the legacy of the project. They express concern that partner institutions may not continue the work/activity once the funding stops.
- Future for Freemining: noted a range of issues relating to arranging the lease with FE for land for the briquette machine building; the need for some formal recognition for those who completed working a year and a day underground; extremely high costs for insurance to lead a couple of mine walks (on the surface), and, developing a clear idea of the balance between project needs and the needs of Freemining, to ensure that Freemining needs are not subsumed or undermined by grant requirements in order to gain some funding.
- New Leaf: expressed concern about the need for paid staff to deliver some elements of the projects, especially where the skills are not available among volunteers.

Table 27 - 'Our Stronghold for Nature': Future challenges in project delivery

Project name	Funding (Scale: small/medium/large)	Lack of knowledge/skills/expertise (Scale: small/medium/large)	Accessing/reaching target groups (Scale: small/medium/large)	Raising Awareness (Scale: small/medium/large)	Communications (Scale: small/medium/large)	Other (Scale: small/medium/large)
Ancient and notable trees	No problem	Scale: Small The training of volunteers has been very successful.	Scale: Medium Project has not fully engaged with local communities. Most success with the residents who are newcomers.	Scale: Medium Where we have been able to engage with people the awareness raising has been successful.	Scale: small Internal - No problems. External - Website has improved but could be better	No problem
Batscape	No problem	Not an issue - we could get the expertise when it was needed.	No problem	No problem No problems raising awareness - with farmers we had +ve engagement	No problem	Scale: small Difficult to balance workload - things had to be put on hold
Birds	No problem	Scale: small Possibly on the forestry side of things. We train up the volunteers	Scale: Medium A struggle to reach everyone	No problem	Scale: small Foresters Forest: understanding what's expected, and who is dealing with what.	Scale: Medium Land management aspects – working with FE and GWT. With FE it is all about changing management practices.

Butterfly project	No problem	Not an issue - we have an expert on the ground and volunteers recording stuff.	Scale: small We need to find new ways of getting people on board.	Scale: small We tend to fall back on press releases - we need to keep things fresh to make people interested.	No problem	Scale: large Grazing: we can't get people to do it. The fencing issue is divisive.
Community Wildlife Study Group	No problem	No problem	No problem	Scale: small We could do more with volunteers. We need to make them more aware of opportunities on other projects	Scale: small Could be better between the volunteers themselves – not a lot of interaction.	Scale: Medium Reporting – trying to report on what is actually being done on all the 12 projects without double counting
Conservation Grazing	No problem	Scale: small It would be good to upskill people further and invest in them for the legacy.	Scale: small People visit the reserves, talk to volunteers on the site. We reach more people than we target - people come to us.	No problem	Scale: Medium Communications within FF Programme an issue from early stage. Dedicated communications people needed	Scale: medium Biggest challenge is around the Worgreens site - there's a lot of other biodiversity projects there as well.
Dean Meadow	Not a problem	No problem.	No problem.	Scale: small We could do more – in relation to making it more widely known in the wider FoD community.	Scale: small Not a problem within the organisation. However, in the wider community we could do more.	Scale: small A future problem: aging volunteers. Losing volunteers with relevant botanical skills; loss of expert knowledge.

Reptiles	No problem.	No problem	No problem	No problem	No problem	No problem
Waterways and ponds	No problem	Scale: Medium Admin. for Health & Safety is complicated. Problems getting licences for volunteers to survey protected species	Scale: Medium Engaging with volunteers and keeping them interested. Working by himself.	Scale: Medium Working on his own. Hasn't the time to do this.	Scale: Medium Only himself. Had problems with publicity for events. Very reliant on others for admin and support.	No problem
Woodland Flora						
Veteran Trees	Scale: Medium Not enough to analyse & write the surveys.	No problem	Scale: Small Would like help to engage with the disabled and minority groups	Scale: medium Collection of the scientific evidence has been successful. Data needs interpretation & narrative written for the wider public.	Scale: Small Would like to engage more with disabled and minority groups, but needs help with this.	No problem

Table 28 - 'Exploring our Forest': Future challenges in project delivery

Project name	Funding (Scale: small/medium /large)	Lack of knowledge/skills/ expertise (Scale: small/medium /large)	Accessing/reaching target groups (Scale: small/medium /large)	Raising Awareness (Scale: small/medium /large)	Communications (Scale: small/medium /large)	Other (Scale: small/medium /large)
Bixslade Project						
Bream Heritage walk	Not an issue	Not an issue	Not an issue	Not an issue	Not an issue. We will reach people through the brochure and website.	Scale: Medium Vandalism of signs - had to re-sign with steel backing plates.
Worcester Walk	Scale: Large Planting costs increased because of FC rules, they frustrate us.	Scale: Large Lack of expertise - We need more active members to do the hard graft.	Scale: Medium Not had the manpower to do this.	Scale: Medium FF people are helpful - no issues internally. Communications with the public are a challenge	Scale: Large The FC are not helpful. Issues take time to go through their processes and we get contradictory responses.	Scale: Medium <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speedier responses. We feel forgotten about by the FC. • Weather - there is no shelter on site, no tool storage.

Walking with Wheels	Not an issue We developed capacity to fund raise	Not an issue	Not an issue FVAF has good access to disadvantaged groups	Not an issue	Scale: Large Bureaucracy of FE is a major barrier to effective working. Joint FF events help to some extent.	Scale: Large Getting agreement and buy-in from Trumper sites. We weren't aware of this role at the start
Hidden Heritage App	Not an issue	Scale: Medium Up-skilling needed to run App platform ourselves	Not an issue	Not an issue	Not an issue	Scale: Medium Retaining volunteers, because of the workload has been an issue
Heritage Open Days		Scale: Large Need committed volunteers with IT skills.		Scale: Large Publicity for the HODs - needs IT expertise.		Scale: Medium Project takes up more time than anticipated, this places pressure on centre staff who also run the projects and activities.

Table 29 - 'Revealing our Past': Future challenges in project delivery

Project name	Funding (Scale: small/medium /large)	Lack of knowledge/ skills/ expertise (Scale: small/medium /large)	Accessing/reaching target groups (Scale: small/medium /large)	Raising Awareness (Scale: small/medium /large)	Communications (Scale: small/medium /large)	Other (Scale: small/medium /large)
Geology	Not a problem	Not a problem	Not a problem	Not got to the point of considering this yet.	Scale: Medium Understanding what's going on is difficult because we are coming in halfway through.	Scale: Large Access to land and cuttings where geology is exposed. Long-term issues with conservation of exposed faces A big problem is limited time to deliver
Built Heritage						
Buried Heritage		Scale: Medium Scale of surveying and mapping tasks larger than expected			Scale: Medium The social media/website of the project hasn't worked as well as expected. Use own social media more than FF.	Scale: Medium Greatest challenge is to manage the expectations of the volunteer community. There is so much interest and not enough

					Have sent things to FF for publishing but nothing seems to have happened.	places, or volume of work, for all volunteers.
Forest Dialect	Scale: small Could have achieved more with more funding	No issue. Student volunteers- approach worked well.	No issues - pleasantly surprised with peoples' interest		Scale: Medium Communication within the University challenging. Communication with the FF team fine. Wider public - mostly via social media, website.	Scale: Medium A lot of voluntary extra hours invested to get it done. Could have done more if situation was different- e.g. built/link project into courses,
Forest Oral Histories	Not an issue	Scale: Small No issues regarding the main delivery, digitisation is done by professional company, but need to learn a few skills- e.g. marketing, promotion, etc.	Scale: Medium Main difficulty- project promotion, activities need more publicity	Not an issue	Scale: Medium Not much done re-communication with wider public Promotion of the project is not sufficient, more is needed.	Scale: Medium Time is an issue, working part time, can't devote enough time to the project, it would be a lot of extra work
Voices from the Forest						

Heritage Craft Skills					
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Table 30 - 'Celebrating our Forest': Future challenges in project delivery

Project name	Funding (Scale: small/medium /large)	Lack of knowledge/skills/expertise (Scale: small/medium /large)	Accessing/reaching target groups (Scale: small/medium /large)	Raising Awareness (Scale: small/medium /large)	Communications (Scale: small/medium /large)	Other (Scale: small/medium /large)
Forest Musical Landscape	Not an issue	Not an issue	Not an issue	Not an issue	Scale: small The FF team good at communicating with project leads	Scale: small FF sometimes set unreasonable deadlines for delivery of things
Scarr Bandstand	Scale: Large continuous work-spending a lot of time applying for funding	Scale: Large We need more people, currently dependent on 1 treasurer, 1 admin person, not enough staff, volunteers	Scale: Small Need to make improvement in marketing and promotion	Not an issue	Scale: Small More support from Coleford town council. We do not receive any support apart from info in visitor's brochure	Scale: Large taking on too much, far too big of a problem

<p>Reading the Forest</p>		<p>Scale: Medium</p> <p>Community volunteer fatigue is going to be an issue going forward.</p> <p>Will need to train a new cohort of volunteers soon.</p> <p>Youth groups are quite challenging to work with.</p>		<p>Not an issue</p>	<p>Scale: Medium</p> <p>The FF project team very good with communicating with project leads.</p> <p>Issue is lack of engagement - some people don't attend meetings – results in lack of connection between projects. FF team lacks skills to properly facilitate communications.</p>	<p>Scale: Large</p> <p>Biggest challenge is in terms of securing the legacy of the project.</p> <p>Partner institutions may not continue the work/activity once the funding stops.</p> <p>Duration (five years) can be a challenge</p>
<p>Edible Forest</p>				<p>Not an issue</p>		
<p>Mindscape</p>		<p>Issue resolved:</p> <p>The project has been adapted to suit the needs of those experiencing advanced dementia.</p>		<p>Not an issue</p>		<p>Scale: Medium</p> <p>Did not expect to be working with people in the late stages of dementia. The</p>

						Mindscape project normally works with people in the early and middle stages of dementia.
Love Your Forest						
Community Celebration						

Table 31 - 'Securing our Future': Future challenges in project delivery

Project name	Funding (Scale: small/medium /large)	Lack of knowledge/skills/ expertise (Scale: small/medium /large)	Accessing/reaching target groups (Scale: small/medium /large)	Raising Awareness (Scale: small/medium /large)	Communications (Scale: small/medium /large)	Other (Scale: small/medium /large)
Forest Explorers	Not an issue We are struggling to spend our money – no real expenses.	Scale: Small Lack of confidence of volunteers to run events. They often have the skills and knowledge but not the confidence.	Scale: Small We could do more. We tend to rely on a mailing list and use facebook.	Scale: Small We could do more. We ought to be reaching out to wider community.	Not an issue	Scale: Small Recruitment of volunteers – we get some from the parents but not all. People happy to help but not take responsibility for running sessions.
Youth Rangers	Not an issue Should be OK – we have been careful	Not an issue	Scale: Medium An on-going challenge because 14-18 yr group difficult to access.	Not an issue – spread by word of mouth. We don't do a lot of awareness raising	Not an issue	Scale: Medium Recruitment: tend to find school difficult in different ways. Tend to leave in groups - can make it difficult to manage

Working with Schools	Scale: small OK for Lydbrook, but needed for other schools for staff to attend training and time for curriculum development	Not an issue We are engaging with other schools and will be able to learn from each other.	Scale: Medium Secondary schools hard to reach but 2 schools have new heads; we are hosting an event for secondary schools.	Scale: Medium Getting to secondary schools is an important next step	Not an issue Internally no problem - it is a whole school activity. Comms good with FF team.	Just started to develop natural sciences area of the curriculum. We want to build on the cultural heritage (e.g. music, literature).
Future for Commoning						
Future for Freemining	Not an issue	Scale: Medium Sometimes we can't exercise our skills and knowledge We have to go through FC rules and procedures, we are restricted – cannot use our skills to get things done.	Not an issue	Not an issue	Scale: Medium There is a difference in approach (attitude) between Freeminers and FF personnel. FF people are so prescriptive and risk averse. We come up against their bureaucracy.	Scale: Large Lease with FC required for the briquette machine building - has created problems. Recognition for working year and a day in mine. Balancing what is good for Freemining. Insurance for doing surface walks meant we

						could not do them.
New Leaf	Scale: Large this is the biggest challenge. We are applying externally for funding. We need more paid staff.	Scale: Small As long as we can pay people there is not shortage - but it is a potential problem			Scale: Small Within the FF it has got better. Externally we have difficulties with local print media	Scale: Large The programme should not be so totally reliant on volunteers for delivery - we need to be able to pay people to deliver stuff for us.

5.7 Personal challenges in project delivery

Tables 33 - 37 provide some additional information regarding personal challenges. Project personnel that were interviewed were asked to identify which factors affected them personally in terms of project delivery. The most significant issue was time to undertake the work required, although a range of other factors was also identified.

Within the 'Our Stronghold for Nature' thematic group of projects three out of the four projects indicating that time was not a problem are all led by people who work for larger organisations (e.g. NE, RSPB, GWT) where the project forms part of their job. The majority of leading projects out of interest, or during their non-working lives indicated some degree of conflict (e.g. running their own business, involvement with multiple projects, delivering a project on their own). A range of other factors affecting delivery included the need for more staff, lack of time to undertake administration, managing relations with partner organisations, and loss of professional expertise.

Across the full range of projects, a total of 17 indicated time related factors affecting their performance. A wide range of other factors also influence project leaders in their ability to effectively deliver their projects. Although some of these have also been mentioned in the previous section, they were mentioned again in relation to their impact on the individual's capacity for delivery. They include the following:

- lack of relevant skills and expertise to undertake tasks (e.g. marketing and publicity)
- the need for a reliable income stream, putting in extra hours, and undertaking un-costed work
- undertaking too many tasks
- managing to keep on top of the administration tasks
- lack of support, and feelings of being 'on your own' in delivery of objectives
- Lack of Support and need for help with tasks such as project administration, finance, promotion, communications and raising awareness
- Loss of enjoyment from too much bureaucracy and paperwork
- Having other responsibilities to deal with outside of the project
- Heavy reliance on others to provide specific skills (e.g. IT, marketing)

Table 32 - Our Stronghold for Nature: Personal challenges in project delivery

Project name	Time	Other issues
Ancient and notable trees	<p>Scale: Medium</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Running 3 projects, not enough time to devote to each of them. Need greater time allocation. 	<p>Scale: Medium</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In hindsight, delivery would benefit from more staff (see comments above). More time to deliver and run workshops
Batscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not a problem 	<p>Scale: Large</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initially we signed a 5-yr contract - felt it was achievable but then we had staff and budget cuts (in NE) and the local team started shrinking. Now there is no-one to continue.
Birds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not a problem 	<p>Scale: Medium</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing relationships with partner organisations is the hardest.
Butterfly project	<p>Scale: Large</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding time - I do recording in the season but it's tough because I run a small company. 	
Community Wildlife Study Group	<p>Scale: Medium</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need more time to really develop the community study group 	
Conservation Grazing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not a problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not an issue - both experienced GWT personnel
Dean Meadows	<p>Scale: Medium</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time was an issue this year due to increase in members 	<p>Scale: Medium</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This year was a challenge with lots of new members – all needing survey and advice
Reptiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not a problem 	
Waterways and ponds	<p>Scale: Large</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A big problem. Only 1 person working on the ponds aspect. 	<p>Scale: Large</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The administrative side of the project is an issue. Does not have time to do all administration, H&S assessments for events, getting licences for surveyors, etc.

Woodland Flora		
Veteran Trees	<p>Scale: Large</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only 1 person, don't have enough time to do everything. • Putting in free time to ensure that the recording and data management is keeping pace. 	<p>Scale: Small</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of any connection with disability and minority groups

Table 33 - Exploring our Forest: Personal challenges in project delivery

Project name	Time	Other issues
Bixslade Project		
Bream Heritage walk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not an issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main thing is waiting for the text for the brochure to be completed by others.
Worcester Walk	<p>Scale: Medium</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PL1: Lack of time is an issue. I live nearly 100 miles away. • PL2: Lack of time 	<p>Scale: Medium</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of expertise (e.g. hedge-laying, ponds) • Organising work parties, getting the timing right - especially in this winter period.
Walking with Wheels	<p>Scale: Large</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dealing with Tramper bookings in the first 6 months, intruded into other work and personal time. 	<p>Scale: Large</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bureaucracy and planning sap any passion for the project.
Hidden Heritage App	<p>Scale: Medium</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team revolves around three people, pressure on time is an issue. 	
Heritage Open Days	<p>Scale: Medium</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not a lot of free time as lot of things need to get done. • Time is precious because of other management responsibilities 	<p>Scale: Medium</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre volunteers are often busy with other responsibilities • Reliant on others for IT skills

Table 34 - Revealing our Past: Personal challenges in project delivery

Project name	Time	Other
Geology	<p>Scale: Large</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neither of us can dedicate our lives to this. The big problem is limited time to deliver what is wanted. The whole delivery is on 2 people. 	<p>Scale: Medium</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geology Trust not currently functional, no support. A lot of the specimens and materials given away when had to vacate building.
Built Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Buried Heritage	<p>Scale: Medium</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The flow of work is uneven, can sometimes lead to pressure on time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team has considerable experience in engaging with the volunteer community as a result of past projects (35 yrs experience)
Forest Dialect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not an issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project has its own momentum, going fine
Forest Oral Histories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not an issue 	<p>Scale: Medium</p> <p>Lack of Support. I'm on my own in this project.</p> <p>Looking to FF personnel to help with project promotion.</p>
Voices from the Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not an issue 	<p>Scale: Medium</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biggest personal challenge going forward is to do fewer things well rather than many things poorly.
Heritage Craft Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Running multiple projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keeping on top of all the administration and paperwork is a problem

Table 35 - Celebrating our Forest: Personal challenges in project delivery

Project name	Time	Other
Forest Musical Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not an issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Scarr Bandstand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scale: Large • More time and people - volunteers, would be great if people stepped up 	Scale: Small <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing and publicity • Reliable income stream • More volunteers - especially finance and admin support • More positive attitude from FE
Reading the Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not an issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feels that the biggest personal challenge going forward is to do fewer things well rather than many things poorly.
Edible Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not an issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping on top of all the administration and paperwork is a problem
Mindscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scale: Medium • As a small charity allocation of time is always an issue. 	Scale: Medium <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not paid for all time input. Put a considerable amount of un-costed time into the project.
Love Your Forest		
Community Celebration		

Table 36 - Securing our Future: Personal challenges in project delivery

Project name	Time	Other
Forest Explorers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No issues
Youth Rangers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efficient with my time. I have been doing it a long time. 	Scale: Medium <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reporting back is the most challenging thing. Spend more time on this than doing stuff. There is a lot of paperwork: risk assessments, permissions There isn't the level of trust needed - seems heavy-handed.
Working with Schools	Scale: Small <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial funding paid for development time; now new development is just a part of 'routine' curriculum development 	Scale: Small <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning journey was daunting at first, because we took the lead. We need to keep creating/maintaining links with knowledge keepers
Future for Commoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Future for Freemining	Scale: Large <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This evening we will meet for 3 hours – it's all free time given by people. 	Scale: Large <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I'm not paid for all the extra work.
New Leaf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited time, running a lot of projects. This is only one of three FF contracts and doing other work outside of these. 	Scale: Large <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Leaf is a struggle Transport is a big issue for us - a van/minibus would be a huge help.

5.8 What would help improve the current situation

Table 38 summarises responses regarding what would help improve the current situation in relation to project delivery. Responses tend to be project specific and linked to the issues identified as most significant for the project and/or the individual. The most frequently cited issues are for more support (in the form of more people and/or expertise), mentioned by eight projects, improved communications between projects or between projects and the Programme team or with the wider community (mentioned by five projects), a more pragmatic management approach by FE and the FF Programme team (4 projects), and more funding (mentioned by six projects). There are also a wide range of project specific suggestions.

Some of the key issues are highlighted below:

A need for project integration

“There's a huge variety of projects all focused on this one little area. We have a good relationship with the other projects, but the issue is the sheer volume, and a lot of them are one-man bands. We get it in the neck when other projects can't deliver their outcomes - but it's not just us - others are active on the site as well. Working with other projects is a big issue, they came in late and were not integrated with us. It's difficult to find room for them without impacting our own objectives - we're having to give way quite a lot.” (Conservation grazing)

“Linking up with other projects hasn't evolved as much as I would have liked. Creating the circumstances for better links with other projects would be helpful. The FF team has tried to do this but for some reason it hasn't worked well...” (Buried Heritage)

Finding volunteers with a different range of skills:

“Finding the right volunteers with both people skills and subject knowledge/skills to help create the study group. We need people with the inclination to do more of the background support work, office work, paperwork, informing people of what's going on, etc. We get plenty of people who want to put on boots and get muddy – finding people with complementary skills is much more difficult. We might have to do a specific search for people to do indoor stuff.” (Community Wildlife Study Group)

“Having someone with IT skills to help with publicity and dissemination.” (Heritage Open Days)

Table 37 - Factors that would help improve project delivery

Theme	Project name	What would help improve the current situation
Our Stronghold for Nature	Ancient and notable trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The biggest problem is identifying landowners to gain permission to access the land to undertake the survey and recording. • It would be good to get help because it takes so much time. • It would be good to get a mobile exhibition about the old trees, because that would lead into a lot more people engaging with their old trees.
	Batscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to replace Bat expertise that has been lost due to NE cutbacks
	Birds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better communications with partner organisations (e.g. GWT; FE)
	Butterfly project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solving the grazing problem
	Community Wildlife Study Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Someone to bounce ideas off. • Finding the right volunteers with both people skills and subject knowledge/skills to help create the study group • Need people with the inclination to do more of the background support work, office work, paperwork, informing people of what's going on, etc.
	Conservation Grazing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There's a huge variety of projects all focused on this one little area. Working with other projects is a big issue. • We need to improve communication and integration of projects using same sites.
	Dean Meadows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding a couple of new key volunteers
	Reptiles	
	Waterways and ponds	
	Woodland Flora	
	Veteran Trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More resources (money) to help with the writing up of the records. • Would like to attend more meetings and network with other projects but can't afford the time at the moment. More money to facilitate meeting attendance and networking would be useful.

Table 38 Continued...

Theme	Project name	What would help improve the current situation
Exploring our Forest	Bixslade Project	
	Bream Heritage walk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everything is under control
	Worcester Walk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More manpower. Speedier responses from Bank House (i.e. the Forestry commission). We feel we get forgotten about by the FC. The weather is an issue - there is no shelter on the site, no tool storage.
	Walking with Wheels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forestry England could be more relaxed in administrative requirements without reducing safety. FF Programme Manager can sometimes intrude into local management; they would do better by being left to get on with it.
	Hidden Heritage App	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Could not think of any.
	Heritage Open Days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having someone with IT skills to help with publicity and dissemination. Having a photographer to provide publicity shots.

Table 38 Continued...

Theme	Project name	What would help improve the current situation
Revealing our past	Geology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find more people to help with delivery – but I don't see that happening. Where will they come from? In my area of expertise (App) there is no-one.
	Built Heritage	
	Buried Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More money would always be helpful, but that is the case with the project. Linking up with other projects hasn't evolved as much as he would have liked. Creating the circumstances for better links with other projects. The FF team has tried to do this, but it hasn't worked as well as we would like. The social media/website hasn't worked as well as expected so we have used our own. Improved communications with wider community would help.
	Forest Dialect	
	Forest Oral Histories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Putting extra funding into the projects will be really helpful. It always is. The many changes at the FF Administration level has not been helpful. Some activities should be allowed outside the statutory boundaries of the forest.
	Voices from the Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects are hindered to some extent by being associated with forestry England. There is tension in the Forest between the local community and Forestry England. Feels that work needs to be done to encourage the local community to see the FF project as a partnership of many organisations, not just forestry England, with a broader set of engagement aspirations.
	Heritage Craft Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transport, our own building and land for delivering projects, would remove a lot of the administrative problems. More funding to pay for staff

Table 38 Continued...

Theme	Project name	What would help improve the current situation
Celebrating our Forest	Forest Musical Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting extra funding into the projects will be really helpful. It always is. • Does not agree that all the activity should be within the statutory boundaries of the forest. This is very contentious and a lot of communities outside the boundary also do not agree with this position. The project was prevented by FF from doing an activity outside the boundary.
	Scarr Bandstand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More volunteer support
	Reading the Forest	
	Edible Forest	
	Mindscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The FF Programme team have been very supportive so far, even had volunteers from the team come to help with the delivery of workshops. • One slight annoyance is that they have to report outputs quarterly, when they get paid annually. In some quarters, because of the nature of the project, there is nothing to report.
	Love Your Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Community Celebration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	

Table 38 Continued...

Theme	Project name	What would help improve the current situation
Securing our Future	Forest Explorers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
	Youth Rangers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More volunteers prepared to take responsibility for leading sessions.
	Working with Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building links to new areas we have not yet been able to tackle. • We know how to teach but we don't know who to go to for the knowledge to turn into teaching and to develop new curriculum and materials.
	Future for Commoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
	Future for Freemining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A more pragmatic view from the FF Programme people. Sue and the others work very hard, put a huge amount of work in, and they are very dedicated. • With Freeminers we have got a group of people who are very independent minded, it's not in their nature to conform to rules and regulations. This needs to be recognised.
	New Leaf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More funding. More media and communications support. • They (FF Programme) do a volunteer newsletter but barely mention us. • Access to our own land and property rather than relying on the FC would be a big benefit.

A more pragmatic management approach:

“A more pragmatic view from Sue and the FF people. Sue and the others work very hard, put a huge amount of work in, and they are very dedicated, but they need to recognise we have got a group of people who are very independent minded...”

“...projects are hindered to some extent by being associated with Forestry England...there is some suspicion amongst the local community about Forestry England’s plans for the area...work needs to be done to encourage the local community to see the FF project as a partnership of many organisations, not just Forestry England, with a broader set of engagement aspirations.”

“(We) have a much more laid-back approach than Forestry England which causes clashes. Forestry England could be more relaxed in admin requirements without reducing safety.”

5.9 Measuring success

Project leads were asked to identify measures currently being used to capture the outcomes being generated for heritage, people and communities (Table 39), to score the proportion of outcomes they felt were being captured for each of the three areas, and to identify where they felt additional measures were needed. The intention was to enable exploration of current activities in terms of recording and measuring outcomes, and whether other techniques might provide a broader range of outcomes to be captured. Scores ranged from 1 to 5 where 1 = a low level of outcomes captured, and 5 = a high level of outcomes captured.

Table 39 summarises the information for the natural heritage outcomes. Most interviewees scored their projects around 4 or 5 indicating they felt they are capturing the majority of outcomes. Two projects did not provide a response: (i) The new personnel involved with developing the Geology project were so new and the project being re-oriented that they felt they could not comment on measurement of outcomes; (ii) The Community Wildlife Study Group noted that their work involved assisting other projects to capture information so did not feel it appropriate to comment here as it would amount to double-counting. Only four projects indicated the need to enhance their outcome measures:

- Ancient and notable trees suggested GIS maps would be useful for training and raising awareness
- Dean Meadows suggested some follow-up work was required to capture management changes; and
- Reptiles indicated they would need additional volunteer input to undertake monitoring work required
- Waterways and ponds noted that the lack of software had prevented creation of a new database and would like to find a way to incorporate photographs.

Table 40 summarises the same information in relation to outcomes for people. The first point to note is the relatively low scores and the question marks in the scoring column. In general interviewees found it difficult to identify people centred outcomes and could not provide a meaningful score on the 0 – 5 scale provided. In most cases the projects are not measuring any outcomes beyond volunteer hours and roles (which are required as part of the FF monitoring). With prompting some of the projects indicated they were aware of benefits and changes taking place with regard to volunteers, for example, they noted improvements in wellbeing (Community Wildlife Study Group), confidence and a sense of stewardship’ (Conservation Grazing), as well as loss of interest among volunteers (Ancient and Notable Trees). One example is the Birds project which reflects some of the views of other projects as well:

“If they (volunteers) keep coming back then clearly they are getting some kind of benefit (though we don’t know what). We also see increased enthusiasm.”

Some of the interviewees also suggested potential measures for trying to capture such outcomes, such as use of wellbeing or satisfaction scales, attitude surveys, and a range of other data collection techniques to capture a wider range of outcomes. A small number of issues were also identified in association with capturing people outcomes, including the lack of time and additional personnel to record people’s views and information, and the need for quick and easy ways of capturing information.

The final table in the series (Table 41) indicates that none of the projects are measuring outcomes on the wider community, and some explicitly stated it was not part of their focus or remit. It is interesting to note, however, that a few projects indicated wider potential benefits that were not being considered. Conservation Grazing, for example, stated:

“The livestock is a pull - the single most important thing we have brought into the Forest - these few animals - they have created so much interest.”

This suggests that there are wider benefits to be explored. In a similar vein the Butterfly project noted that benefits to the wider community may not be apparent due to lack of access, awareness and understanding of ecological improvements, while the Ancient and Notable Trees project suggested there may be value in enhanced engagement with wider communities and assessment of the benefits.

Community benefits seems to be an area where the natural heritage projects feel they have little to offer wider communities in the Forest and have not considered how biodiversity and environmental improvements might create outcomes that are perhaps more indirect more widely shared.

Table 38 - Project lead perceptions of the proportion of 'heritage' outcomes captured

Score: 0 = no outcomes captured; 1 = a low level of outcomes captured; 5 = a high level of outcomes captured.

Project name	Current measures to capture outcomes	Score	Additional measures needed
Ancient and notable trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recording and locating all the ancient and notable trees. Mapping the trees and sending the data to the records office. Photographic record of the trees has been created so that change can be monitored over time. Keep records of interactions with landowners 	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would be useful to have feedback from the records office in the form of GIS maps Could then use the information for education and awareness raising.
Batscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently measuring quantitatively. Survey data and radio tracking for example. 	4.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No
Birds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practical work – quantitative measures such as hectares of brash raked and number of trees planted. Species reaction to habitat management using bird survey – how many birds of different species, where focused, etc. 	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> none
Butterfly project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Butterflies on the ground, recording numbers The amount of available habitat 	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None
Community Wildlife Study Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> n/a 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> n/a
Conservation Grazing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect data on number of grazing animals, time spent grazing, stocking densities, evidence of habitat quality improvement. We have good survey and spatial data. 	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None
Dean Meadows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We do a baseline survey of new members meadows land but there is no follow up to see if they are following advice. We capture expenditure through capital works fund – small projects up to £1,000 	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ecological & management changes can take years to appear Not capturing change to management behaviour.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's easier to measure what people are doing than species change.
Reptiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed own database for recording reptiles. Allows surveyors to enter their records of visits to sites. 	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 sites to monitor regularly over the next 2 years. Need to re-energise the volunteer army needed to do this.
Waterways and ponds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers have filled in recording forms for 90 ponds. • Database software did not arrive. A lot of useful information is still on 'paper forms'. Has developed his own database. 	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bespoke software that captures all the information they have recorded would be helpful. • Need to find a way of incorporating photos into the database
Veteran Trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All the trees are “snapshotted” in time. This means that a paper record of each tree is made, this is supported by photographs taken from different angles, a location record and a condition record. 	4/5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forestry Commission can use this data in 50 years time to study change. For example, are the trees still there, what condition are they in, etc.

Score: 0 = no outcomes captured; 1 = a low level of outcomes captured; 5 = a high level of outcomes captured.

Table 39 - Project lead perceptions of the proportion of ‘people’ outcomes captured

Project name	Current measures to capture outcomes	Score	Additional measures needed
Ancient and notable trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep some records of attendance at training events and workshops. These are not comprehensive. • Has taken photographs of events/activities; unsure about informed consent, etc. 	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feels they have a good “running commentary” of activities taking place. • Would like to know why volunteer engagement has fallen off. Why do people lose interest? • Extra person at events to do recording would be useful.
Batscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer hours, etc. 	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need some additional measures. Data such as people benefits are not being picked up. • Each year we do a refresher course for hedgerow volunteers - it might be appropriate to talk to the volunteers to assess benefits.
Birds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect hours completed by volunteers 	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not sure we are capturing wellbeing changes, e.g. from volunteers. • We have not done any qualitative or attitudes survey of people.
Butterfly project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of volunteers each year; measure if it has changed 	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no time for assessing feedback or evaluation. • Some way of measuring benefits to people/volunteers.
Community Wildlife Study Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not currently capturing outcomes of this particular project. • Focus has all been on ensuring other projects meet their targets and to create a study group 	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative measures: A scale to measure attitudes of volunteers and movement of the group from a set of people sitting in silos to a set of people able to work on multiple projects • Qualitative measures: a wellbeing scale –to measure changes in volunteers from involvement.

Conservation Grazing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We get some feedback forms filled out by site visitors - but these are fairly short. We did compile a longer questionnaire recently and tried it out at a show - only 15 responses. Feedback from volunteers using WhatsApp but tends to be very specific to the roles - very focused on day-to-day practical issues. 	?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to capture conversations people have on site with wardens, volunteers and others. Capturing volunteer benefits would be good but it needs to be simple. We are noticing a sense of stewardship appearing among volunteers – would be good to capture changes.
Dean Meadows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are not recording any changes in knowledge or management skills.
Reptiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fill in attendance forms for volunteers. Quarterly reports and some photos of events. FF sometimes collect feedback forms 	?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None mentioned
Waterways and ponds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fill in attendance forms for volunteers. Quarterly reports and some photos of events. FF sometimes collect feedback forms 	?	None mentioned
Veteran Trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect information on people attending. Record who has volunteered and how many hours they have done. 	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantitative measures: information on disadvantage and disability. Qualitative measures: might be useful to collect information on satisfaction through feedback forms

Score: 0 = no outcomes captured; 1 = a low level of outcomes captured; 5 = a high level of outcomes captured.

Table 40 - Project lead perceptions of the proportion of ‘community’ outcomes captured

Score: 0 = no outcomes captured; 1 = a low level of outcomes captured; 5 = a high level of outcomes captured.

Project name	Current measures to capture outcomes	Score	Additional measures needed
Ancient and notable trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not been actively measured. Keeps an inventory of media activities There has been feedback on social media, but not systematically captured. 	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> So far the project has not had a great deal of contact with local communities. In future might be useful to undertake measures of community engagement, understanding and awareness of ancient and notable trees and the benefits they provide.
Batscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 		<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Birds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are hitting our outcomes – this is not really a focus of our work
Butterfly project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each site is well away from communities - it's a walk to get there - a half-hour walk from the centre of Cinderford.
Community Wildlife Study Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> n/a 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> n/a
Conservation Grazing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The livestock is a pull - the single most important thing we have brought into the Forest - these few animals - they have created so much interest.
Dean Meadows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> n/a 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have no intentions here. People involved are scattered throughout the Forest – it's not a specific geographic community.
Reptiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Waterways and ponds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">

Veteran Trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not really measuring success or outcomes in relation to the community. 	1 or 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts on community will be long term, through better managed forest, etc. • Has been engaging with the community through, press, radio, conferences, academic papers, guided walks and talks, but is not measuring this engagement.
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Score: 0 = no outcomes captured; 1 = a low level of outcomes captured; 5 = a high level of outcomes captured.

5.10 Measuring success: Other thematic project areas

In the following sections projects within each thematic area are explored separately with tables linked together under each theme to highlight outcomes that are currently captured for outcomes related to heritage, people, and communities. A large number of project leaders interviewed under the thematic areas found it very difficult to identify which outcomes were being captured (beyond the standard information being provided to the FF Programme), and even harder to think about whether additional measures were required. As a result, a lot of the questions in this section of the interviews went unanswered. [Note: in the following tables, where no information was collected, the projects have been deleted.]

Exploring our forest

Table 41 below summarises the information for projects under the Exploring our Forest theme. Only two projects made any comment regarding capturing the outcomes related to heritage and neither were able to provide a score in relation to the proportion of outcomes captured.

In relation to 'people' outcomes four of the projects provided a score. The highest score was for 'Walking with Wheels' which indicated they were capturing all the relevant outcomes. Walking with wheels also noted that outcomes related to communities were not relevant for the project, and also queried how the term community was being defined.

Bream Heritage walk and the Worcester Walk projects both noted that additional work would be required to develop instruments capable of measuring outcomes to people and communities once their projects were fully implemented. Worcester Walk and the Hidden Heritage App indicated they had some anecdotal information on utilisation of the area/App but no solid evidence. Several projects also indicated the potential benefits of capturing some information on people's experiences in relation to project outcomes (Worcester Walk; Hidden Heritage App; Heritage Open Days).

Three projects provided a score for capturing outcomes targeted at communities, but the highest score was 3, suggesting that project leaders recognise there are community level outcomes not being captured.

Table 41 - Exploring our Forest: Outcomes captured

Heritage			
Project name	Current measures to capture outcomes	Score	Additional measures needed
Worcester Walk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We fill out forms every quarter: number of volunteer hours, demographics, skills learned, activities undertaken, etc. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once the pond is in, there will be more visible changes – it's just a fence at the moment.
Historic Heritage App	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not collecting much information on measuring outcomes. They don't monitor the sites that are contained in the app. 	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Question is not relevant

Score: 0 = no outcomes captured; 1 = a low level of outcomes captured; 5 = a high level of outcomes captured.

People			
Project name	Current measures	Score	Additional measures needed
Bream Heritage walk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used feedback forms in the Phase 1 guided walks. About 2/3 people return them. When the trail becomes operational, the only way is to ask people to go to a web page and fill in a survey. 	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback form only designed to get feedback on needs before the walk is mapped and on-line. Will need to be re-designed to capture outcomes and value to walkers.
Worcester Walk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need some kind of questionnaire to get feedback from volunteers & people using the area. We get anecdotal evidence but nothing else.
Walking with Wheels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of feedback forms after each hire session. Also receive feedback collected by Countryside Mobility 	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None needed. There's a direct question on the form that captures all outcomes

Hidden Heritage App	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record the number of times the apps are downloaded, but not how the apps are used. 	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantitative measures: Use of apps in the FoD. We only have anecdotal evidence that app is being used and enjoyed. Qualitative measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Purpose in using App. - Feedback on user experiences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heritage Open Days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect information for the official returns that have to be done for the FF program and the national organisation. 	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantitative measures: the income raised from events. Qualitative measures: Would like to collect info on experiences, could be done through feedback forms.

Score: 0 = no outcomes captured; 1 = a low level of outcomes captured; 5 = a high level of outcomes captured.

Communities			
Project name	Current measures	Score	Additional measures needed
Bream Heritage walk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nothing yet - walk has not yet been launched. 	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Worcester Walk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event records / feedback forms 	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once the pond is in there will be more visible changes – it's just a fence at the moment.
Walking with Wheels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Question is not relevant. Difficult to measure at a community level, which communities do we mean – local/visitor, sick/well.
Hidden Heritage App	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gets returns from sites on the number of people visiting. 	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anecdotal evidence of community use and appreciation. Gets positive feedback at events /demonstrations. Would like to get more information about visitor experiences

Score: 0 = no outcomes captured; 1 = a low level of outcomes captured; 5 = a high level of outcomes captured.

Revealing our past

Table 42 summarises the Project Leader perceived outcomes achieved to the present time for 'Revealing our past' thematic projects. Three projects under the 'Revealing our past' theme provided high scores for heritage outcomes captured. In the case of Buried Heritage, a large amount of survey and 'dig' data has been captured and recorded in official records, and impacts on people were also felt to be largely captured. There was less certainty over whether all the wider community outcomes were being captured (score of 3). There were no suggestions of a need for additional measures in relation to heritage or people outcomes, but project leaders suggested additional qualitative information regarding utilisation of the school resources pack would be useful.

Overall few of the projects made comments regarding measurement of outcomes, and one project objected to the whole concept of measuring project outcomes.

Table 42 - Revealing our Past: Outcomes captured

Heritage			
Project name	Current measures to capture outcomes	Score	Additional measures needed
Buried Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baseline mapping and surveying. Outputs been deposited in official records. All records are scanned and entered onto a GIS system. 	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Forest Dialect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Forest Oral Histories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mainly quantitative measures used 	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Voices from the Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The respondent indicated the project measures of success and outcomes were not generally useful for the projects. Felt that measuring outcomes was part of the culture of funded programs, saw similarities to EU funded projects. 	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feels that projects are held hostage to measuring outcomes. Measuring unexpected outcomes would be useful. Anecdotal outcomes can be quite informative and useful

People			
Project name	Current measures	Score	Additional measures needed
Buried Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the community excavations they have a feedback folder and visitor books. Log the hours worked on the project 	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Forest Dialect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Forest Oral Histories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> volunteers very active- at present 3 people, students also involved, all their time input is recorded 	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no qualitative measures/outcomes are recorded

Communities			
Project name	Current measures	Score	Additional measures needed
Buried Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Created schools pack. But is not monitoring the use and impact of the pack. Keeps a log of everything that goes out on social media. 	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative measures: get better feedback of what is happening with the school's pack, how the teachers are using it and what impact it is having on the students
Forest Dialect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Forest Oral Histories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantitative outcomes are not an issue, easy to record. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative - an issue, hard to do; lack sufficient skills to do it (e.g. questionnaires)

Celebrating our Forest

Table 43 summarises the Project lead perceptions of the proportion of outcomes captured within this thematic group of projects. Only one project (Scarr Bandstand) made reference to capturing outcomes related to heritage, indicating from the score that they had quantitative measures of all relevant outcomes. They did, however, suggest the need for some qualitative information in relation to feedback from performers and those in the audience.

Mindscape made significant comments on the difficulty of measuring outcomes for those with advanced dementia suggesting this is an area with which they are currently struggling. Even though they are capturing as much as they can (in terms of outcomes) the score of 3 indicates they recognise they are not able to fully capture the experience of dementia patients who engage with the project. Measures tend to be indirect, from carers perceptions, or photographing artwork and events. Project personnel are actively seeking help to try to improve their measures of outcomes.

None of the projects indicated they were capturing community level outcomes.

Table 43 - Celebrating our Forest: outcomes captured

Heritage			
Project name	Current measures to capture outcomes	Score	Additional measures needed
Scarr Bandstand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluating summer season events- quantitative- figures- - info on all post codes where people came from, age profiles; 	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative- collecting comments- feedback from performers, audience, locals. Team de-brief after events

People			
Project name	Current measures	Score	Additional measures needed
Scarr Bandstand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of visitors, videos, articles, feedback - each funder requires slightly different outcome, etc. 	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Mindscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exhibitions and artwork are a physical record of some outcomes. Attempted to capture experiences by photographing events and activities. Evidence often indirect, e.g. feedback from carers 	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biggest challenge is measuring outcomes for those experiencing advanced dementia. It is not possible to use traditional techniques such as questionnaires or narrative recordings.

	<p>rather than those experiencing dementia.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feels that they have been able to capture as much as they can. They have recorded feedback from carers. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Struggle to capture outcomes from people who cannot vocalise their experiences. • Had some discussions with people at the University about capturing outcomes. Open to suggestions about how they can better capture the experiences.
Love Your Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently collect fairly simple measures of output, such as number of people participating, number of sessions delivered etc. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measuring outcomes is more difficult.

Securing our Future

Table 44 summarises the Project lead perceptions of the proportion of outcomes captured. None of the projects identified measurement of outcomes in relation to heritage.

Forest Explorers and Youth Rangers are both targeted at young people and are clearly capturing some of the outcomes identified. Forest Explorers use simple techniques such as smiley faces to get feedback from events but realise that are not capturing all of the people outcomes. In particular they recognise that parents and other adults are benefitting from the activities (e.g. in terms of enhanced knowledge, learning and possibly behavioural changes) and would like to find a means to capture these. Youth Rangers sporadically collects feedback but suggests there are wider outcomes on which they are not picking up. Both projects note the need for simple techniques that can be utilised outside and completed in a short span of time.

The Schools project is slightly different in that formal teaching does capture improvements to learning, knowledge and understanding. Project personnel, however, note a wide range of outcomes not being formally assessed. These include impacts on children (such as improved writing skills and confidence levels and impacts on parents who have become more engaged with the school). In terms of impacts on the community the Schools project indicated that outcomes were felt to be significant and that some attempt should be made at formal assessment,

Table 44 - Securing our Future: outcomes captured

People			
Project name	Current measures	Score	Additional measures needed
Forest Explorers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We measure numbers attending and details of what they did. We use smiley faces for feedback at end of each session – count up the numbers (3 faces, sad, straight, happy) – mostly happy faces. 	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need something more to catch impacts on parents. A way of capturing comments made by parents and other adults. We are outside all the time – any method has to be quick and easy. Knowledge increase and engagement in learning – we are capturing some of this – but not all. Not capturing whether there are any behaviour changes at home, or longer-term changes.
Youth Rangers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We count the numbers who show up. Sporadically get some feedback. We have done feedback questionnaires in the past. Get feedback on activities but it is difficult to do if we are outside. For the FF the most interesting thing are quotes - I've done that in the past. 	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Probably need to do some more feedback forms after events. There probably are wider outcomes. Some of the participants have ended up in related careers. I don't have the evidence but some of them probably do continue to go and visit the wood.
Working with Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We do formal assessments of learning in school, but we don't do anything extra. Formal assessment of pupils can provide data but can't be used specifically to substantiate this project. Ofsted report probably summarise this data best. 	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no formal evaluation of teachers. On the leadership side our staff have been on CPD and have developed professionally. We could do with some form of evaluation method - e.g. in science which we have not started yet - and see how much more confident the teachers become.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard to assess directly as the topics are approached on a cross-subject basis. • Some informal professional development of staff is taking place, but not measured. • The unexpected outcome is writing - the writing is much better.
Future for Freemining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbers going on a course; Numbers completing training plan; Number who get through the year and a day requirement • Practical measures of success. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
New Leaf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tricky to measure. We have done some case studies. • We use feedback forms provided by the FF programme. 	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not currently capturing changes in wellbeing and skills development.

Communities			
Project name	Current measures	Score	Additional measures needed
Working with Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No formal community level data collection taking place, no parental survey 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Might be valuable to do something - parents engagement with the school experience has been higher, comments they make are more supportive. • Parents are more comfortable coming along to the 'drier' school events because of their engagement with the project work – and it has made us more approachable.

5.11 Legacy and longer-term outcomes

Telling the Foresters' Forest story

Interviewees were asked how they felt their projects would contribute to telling the wider Foresters' Forest programme story (Table 45). Some interviewees found the exercise difficult and had not previously considered how their individual efforts were fitting into the wider picture of the overall FF Programme impacts across the Forest of Dean. Others had a clearer picture in their minds of how their project fit into the wider Forest landscape.

On the biodiversity side, projects such as Ancient and Notable Trees and Batscape recognise the importance of changing the way land management decisions are made through improving awareness and understanding of the needs of specific elements in the larger ecosystem. Some projects, such as Conservation Grazing, and Waterways and Ponds note the significance of increased ecological awareness and understanding among a wider group of people, that will then ripple out through conversations with family, friends and neighbours (Community Wildlife Study Group). Other projects (e.g. Birds) note how an improved ecological quality and biodiversity will create a better overall environment which would bring benefits to those living in and visiting the area, and possibly lead to an increased sense of stewardship for the future (Conservation Grazing).

The Exploring our Forest projects aim to enhance understanding and awareness of the heritage through direct experience (Bream Heritage Walk; Walking with Wheels) while others provide access to information that can be utilised in a wide range of locations (Hidden Heritage App). A series of projects under the Revealing our Past Theme captures memories through recordings making them more widely accessible to people, as well as exploring less widely known aspects of the Forest such as women's lives and the local dialect (Forest Dialect, Forest Oral Histories, Voices from the Forest) while the Buried Heritage project connects residents and visitors to the more distant past through archaeological excavations.

The group of projects encompassed within the Celebrating our Forest theme raises awareness and increases pride in current cultural activities and heritage such as music and literature, as well as providing the means for those with dementia to celebrate living in the Forest (Mindscape). Securing the Future themed projects focus more on teaching through direct experience (Forest Explorers, Future for Freemining, New Leaf) raising awareness of what the Forest has to offer through visits, engagements in practical activities and skills development. In addition, there are opportunities across the range of projects to enable wider sectors of the community, such as those with disabilities less mobile, to gain increased understanding and enjoyment from accessing the Forest (Walking with Wheels, Mindscape).

Overview of key contributions:

Our Stronghold for Nature

- Improving biodiversity and habitat of the Forest
- Improving understanding and raising awareness of the ecological aspects of the Forest
- Providing opportunities for people to develop skills & knowledge about nature conservation

Exploring our Forest

- Increasing people's understanding of the heritage of the Forest
- Giving people a greater understanding of their locality and sense of place
- Enhancing access and understanding of the local heritage

Revealing our past

- Raising awareness of the ancient heritage by bringing to the fore the hidden histories of the Forest
- Maintaining a living heritage of skills and reminding people of the recent past through living and recorded memories

Celebrating our Forest

- Enhancing local culture and confidence through supporting traditional and current activities
- Supporting skills and knowledge about local resources
- Helping those with disabilities to participate and obtain enjoyment from living in the Forest

Securing our Future

- Enhancing awareness, knowledge and understanding of the Forest among the next generation through learning and experience
- Ensuring the continuation of living and working heritage

Table 45 - Contribution to the Foresters' Forest Story

Theme	Project Name	How the project will help tell the Foresters Forest story
Our Stronghold for Nature	Ancient and notable trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project will help tell the story of the history of the forest going back to the 1500s. • The information that the project is providing, will hopefully help decision-makers take a more enlightened approach to forest planting, recognising the value of existing ancient and notable trees.
	Batscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It will create a greater awareness and understanding of bats and the importance of landscape in supporting internationally important populations of bats. • The next step is to enhance landscape. It could be farmers with hedges (i.e. maintaining them) or making sure people are not having their houses floodlit.
	Birds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People will benefit from having a more stable bird population and habitat in better condition. • People will benefit from living in a fantastic environment.
	Butterfly project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very much part of the wildlife side of the story
	Community Wildlife Study Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't know. • Having more people engaged with wildlife, they will talk to family, friends, neighbours, etc., spread the word that way, raise awareness more generally.
	Conservation Grazing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project is increasing the biodiversity value in the FoD (in the forested landscape) providing open space for people to enjoy the wildlife. • The project is instilling a sense of stewardship among local people. • For us (i.e. GWT) it is creating bigger & better landscapes for wildlife to move about in.
	Dean Meadows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meadows are important – attached to old smallholdings. In old days most properties would have had some space for chickens or a pig. • It also links-in to other forest biodiversity projects. • We want to capture and improve the meadows, so they are available for future generations.
	Reptiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lot of great publicity for the FF programme through the Countryfile episode on reptiles in the FoD.
	Waterways and ponds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lots of interest in the Newt survey • Volunteers starting to understand the importance of ponds to the FoD environment.

Exploring our Forest	Bream Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It will help people understand their local area (around Bream) better.
	Worcester Walk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It will give local people a sense of where they came from. • This land is key to understanding how the area became the Forest of Dean. There was a riot here and people won the right to stay; it was also involved with WW2.
	Walking with Wheels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FVAF have been engaging people who otherwise wouldn't be involved, making a core contribution to FF programme. • Provides an opportunity to access FoD that other more remote projects can't do.
	Hidden Heritage App	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The app is very good at showing change through time and connecting the community and visitors with the history and heritage of the FoD. Hopes the story telly will use their project.
	Heritage Open Days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People will become more aware and more interested in finding out the story of the Forest of Dean. • Hopefully people will better understand the Forest and understand what makes it so different.
Revealing our past	Geology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not sure yet - although geology underpins everything - the mining, the industry, the cultural heritage, and the built.
	Buried Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The archaeology of the forest will be better understood, recorded and archived. • The people of the Forest will be more in touch with the archaeology that surrounds them
	Forest Dialect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tells an aspect of story that is completely overlooked in most heritage projects and poorly understood
	Forest Oral Histories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project tells stories about the Forest and life within, it adds a great deal to the FF story. • It is not dry academic knowledge, these are personal histories, history comes alive in these recordings – it's about early 1900s, WWI, WWII, etc. This 'history' can be used in many different ways- by media, artists, and others.
	Voices from the Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with the Dean Heritage Centre to make recordings. • Done a lot of work to introduce the histories of women in the Forest during the last century, including the economic changes and their impact on women's lives, which is in contrast to the already well covered histories of the mining industry. • Created an archive and are now working on making this available online.
	Heritage Craft Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People will have greater understanding of how to use local resources in a sustainable way. • We are keeping heritage alive by teaching people the traditional crafts and land use.

Celebrating our Forest	Forest Musical Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project has done a lot to build confidence amongst the brass bands and choirs. People now feel appreciated. • There is a lot more collaboration between the groups.
	Scarr Bandstand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage of brass bands in the Forest. Brass bands had no base in FoD prior to restoring the site
	Reading the Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciation and awareness of the literary heritage of the Forest of Dean which will result in increased aspirations among the local community.
	Edible Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People will respect and understand the landscape more. • They will have greater understanding of how to use local resources in a sustainable way.
	Mindscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinks that the project has a lot to contribute to the telling of the Forester's Forest story. • It will be quite exciting for the FF programme to incorporate non-verbal communication, through the medium of art itself
Securing our Future	Forest Explorers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's about the future of the forest – we are working with children – making sure they understand what the forest is like now. Hopefully it will have influences in the future, might change their attitudes and behaviour.
	Youth Rangers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's quite a disparate thing. We are connecting people to the natural and built heritage, to landscape influenced by human actions as much as natural. • We explore what that tells us - how to read the landscape, picking through layers of history or understanding natural history. • It's about really looking and engaging.
	Working with schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are immersing our children in the context of their Forest of Dean through provision of a creative form of education which will increase pupil aspirations and engage parents. • We are enhancing knowledge and understanding about the Forest, building a stronger sense of place, and raising aspirations of the next generation. • We also want to teach the national curriculum in the most exciting way possible using local resources.
	Future for Freemining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We've been here for a thousand years; we are still here, still practicing a living heritage, a working heritage. • Ensuring the continuation of a living and working heritage
	New Leaf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are keeping heritage alive by teaching people the traditional crafts and about using local resources in a sustainable manner

5.12 Anticipated long-term outcomes from projects

Tables 46 to 50 identify the long-term outcomes from the projects for heritage, people, and communities.

Our Stronghold for nature

In terms of heritage the long-term outcomes relate to improvements in recording, management and condition of the resource, improved habitat (Ponds, meadows, Conservation Grazing), and healthier populations (Batscape, Butterflies, Birds, Reptiles). Projects note that the improved level of information should help with improved understanding and future management by other bodies, such as Forestry England. Outcomes for people focus largely on volunteers and interest groups involved with the projects themselves, resulting in deeper understanding, knowledge, and skills. Specific groups mentioned include schoolchildren (Reptiles), landowners (Dean Meadows), and land managers (Birds).

Outcomes for the wider Forest of Dean community are less clear. Several projects note that more people will be involved, but these seem to relate to those already volunteering with the project in some way. A couple of projects suggest that one outcome will be 'greater awareness', others refer to 'better understanding', 'changed attitudes', and greater connection between communities and their surroundings. How these outcomes will be spread across communities, and how they will come about, is not clear and requires deeper exploration.

Exploring our Forest

Not surprisingly the focus is on outcomes for people and communities. Key outcomes for people relate to having a greater understanding and awareness of the Forest, and potentially more confidence to access different areas. A range of benefits for the wider community were also identified, including helping to link communities more strongly to their heritage and leaving the heritage more accessible after the FF programme has ended.

Revealing our past

There were fewer responses from this suite of projects, but a wider range of potential benefits identified. In terms of long-term outcomes for heritage projects noted that they would be making heritage more visible, accessible, or more obvious which would lead to greater awareness and understanding. In terms of impacts on people the focus was on skills that had been acquired during the project which could be applied elsewhere in future. One project referred to "growing a community of people with skills". There was less certainty about the outcomes for the wider community. There were references to a resources pack for teachers in relation to Buried Heritage which would be of value in the future in schools, and the fact that digital recordings would be available for future researchers to use. Other projects noted how their work (e.g. on dialect and oral histories) might contribute to communities 'taking ownership' of the heritage and creating greater sense of place or belonging.

Celebrating our Forest

Responses from this suite of projects were sparse. Some outcomes were similar to the outcomes for other categories of project, for example, the potential to empower people through giving them a sense of ownership of their heritage. Mindscape has produced a resources pack which can be used by care homes in the future to develop and run activities. Finally, it was noted that the Scarr Bandstand provides a place for the community to meet as well as providing a tourist attraction.

Securing our Future

Only one of the projects was able to identify a benefit to the wider community: the schools project noted their work had been embedded into the curriculum and would continue to inform future generations of children. In addition, the resources created, and the experience gained would help other schools in the area to develop their school curricula in the same way. The majority of long-term outcomes related to people with several projects noting that they were instilling ideas and knowledge into future generations that might influence the way they look at and think about their local heritage. Outcomes were also viewed as empowering people by giving them a sense of ownership over their heritage.

Table 46 - Our stronghold for nature: identified long-term outcomes

Project Name	Long-term outcomes...			
	...for heritage	...for people	...for communities	Other
Ancient and notable trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The information that the project is providing, will help decision-makers take a more enlightened approach the forest planting, recognising the value of existing ancient and notable trees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement has opened people's eyes to the benefits that ancient and notable trees provide. People are more aware of and knowledgeable about the physiology of trees and the related wildlife. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging with the communities has been the most challenging aspect Hopefully, there will be a great connection between local communities and their ancient and notable trees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project is hopeful that some of the volunteers will become tree guardians and tree champions.
Batscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving connectivity of hedgerows used as flyways, and extending HLS agreements. Enhancing roosts; making new artificial roosts to strengthen populations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People will have improved botanical skills and knowledge (e.g. in relation to hedgerow species), also social and wellbeing benefits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More people will be involved, increasing the local knowledge of bats, enabling some people to get a bat licence.
Birds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better habitat, healthier populations of key species. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benefits of living in a thriving habitat with abundant species 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land managers will take our concerns on board and change forest management processes.

Butterfly project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 or 3 meta-populations so they can interbreed. • Multiple sites with butterflies • A more robust ecosystem. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It needs a group involved - a recording team is essential. • It's important to get new people on board (we only have 8 - 10 now). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dovetailing in with the GWT is important.
Community Wildlife Study Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group member contribute to a wide range of biodiversity project outcomes through their volunteering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major impacts will be on the group of volunteers in the group. • Key issue will be to get people to the point where they are independent and have capacity to continue doing the work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Conservation Grazing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An improved level of biodiversity • Conservation grazing will be an integral part of providing a more valuable open habitat. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A greater appreciation of the value of open habitat, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It might change future attitudes to the area - when people look back in time, they only tend to look across a generation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It will create a more connected and viable landscape for wildlife.
Dean Meadow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meadows will be better managed and understood. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More knowledge on wildflowers and management options (among landowners). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • none - not relevant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Reptiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better understanding of reptile populations and their distribution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working to create ponds and better pond habitats in schools is very good for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ultimately less destruction of existing reptile habitats and more creation of new 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

		engaging with young people.	habitats will benefit the community.	
Waterways and ponds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New and better managed ponds • Better recorded and identified ponds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More people interested in ponds and their wellbeing. Greater understanding and learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More awareness, access to and understanding of ponds in the FoD. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Veteran Trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Database will go to the Forestry Commission & Gloucester Centre for environmental records. • Lots of information generated about veteran trees and associated archaeology. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The volunteers will be a valuable resource for the community. They come away from the training with the tools to undertake veteran trees surveys. They often become recorders for the Woodland trust. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project has developed a body of volunteers who are engaged and informed about veteran trees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hopefully the scientific information collected will help the Forestry Commission and others manage the resource in a sustainable way.

Table 47 - Exploring our Forest: identified long-term outcomes

Project Name	Long-term outcomes...			
	...for heritage	...for people	...for communities	...other
Bream Heritage walk		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More people will know more about the area they live in. • Some people will have more confidence about where they can walk and it will encourage them to go as it is a signed path. • More people might get some exercise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's linked into the bus routes and starts in the high street of Bream. • Provides easy opportunity for local people to learn about local heritage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Worcester Walk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It will give people an idea of how people lived in olden times. • The land was where people got all their resources. We will run small courses to teach people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People will get a greater sense of history and place. • Grandparents tell stories about things that went on here. • People will get information on wildlife and history. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instagram, Facebook and interpretation boards will get the message across. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We were going to have a website, but it needs funding to keep it going and there is no point yet as there is nothing to see
Walking with Wheels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People having access to Trampers beyond life of project. • Link between people and host sites consolidated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More active and engaged local community and support to visitors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop escalation of cycle of loneliness and isolation, support families to get outside together.

Hidden Heritage App	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater awareness of the history of the Forest and use of the sites through using the app will encourage the owners to care and protect the heritage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide greater awareness and understanding of the history and heritage of the FoD. • Each new app engages with a new set of people who provide the materials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will help link communities with their heritage. • Very good for engaging the young as they are technologically aware of the phone interface and its capabilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • n/a
Heritage Open Days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sites will be better looked after. • Hope that sites who joined the Heritage Open Days project, will continue to open their sites the public in future. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers will gain a better understanding of the Forest and what it means to people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More people will have access to sites through the Heritage open days programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

Table 48 - Revealing our past: identified long-term project outcomes

Project Name	Long-term outcomes...			
	...for heritage	...for people	...for communities	...other
Geology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not sure, better understanding perhaps. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not clear, Greater awareness of underlying geology. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not sure, greater awareness? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Built Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Buried Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's a starting point for research, management and understanding of the archaeological resource of the forest. • The archaeological data will be useful for archaeologists and researchers into the forest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skill sets for community volunteers. There has definitely been up-skilling. • Future digs in the forest will be better organised and better recorded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be a long-term legacy through the school's pack. If the teachers continue to use the pack it will increase awareness. • Social media/website: will increase outreach. Interactive element will enable people to click on maps, look at sites, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All the records are archived and will be available to academics and researchers
Forest Dialect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • making the heritage more visible and accessible to people using online spaces so people can engage with it in different ways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes to communities taking ownership of their heritage, to be proud of it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting FoD- what is special about the place, why us/who are we?

Forest Oral Histories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recordings will be digitised and catalogued for future generations to use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteers involved developed new skills in cataloguing oral history. There is wider interest and engagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The recordings are unique to FoD, very strongly linked to the history of FoD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We now know what is on the tapes- before we did not even know Recordings will also enable study of how the dialect changed over time
Heritage Craft Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are empowering people; giving them a sense of ownership and responsibility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The skills may offer potential employment in the future and contribute to creating a local economy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are growing a community of people with skills - a community within a community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">

Table 49 - Celebrating our Forest: identified long-term project outcomes

Project Name	Long-term outcomes...			
	...for heritage	...for people	...for communities	...other
Scarr Bandstand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hub for brass bands, community hub for events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The bandstand provides a space for future cultural events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A place for Sling to come together • The bandstand is community owned; a place of pride and ownership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourist attraction- it is part of Coleford Industrial heritage walks
Edible Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness of ancient skills in using local resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are empowering people; giving them a sense of ownership and responsibility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are growing a community of people with skills - a community within a community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The skills may offer potential employment in the future and contribute to creating a local economy.
Mindscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The artwork itself. Some of the care homes have the artwork on permanent display. The artwork is displayed both indoors and outdoors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In future activity coordinators will be able to use the resource guide long after the project has finished. • Activity coordinators now have the skills to run the activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In future people with dementia who move into residential care homes will benefit from the project as the skills are now embedded within the care home communities themselves. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project has allowed them to work with care homes that they have not worked with before. • The care homes have recognised the value of working with the charity.

Table 50 - Securing our Future: identified long-term project outcomes

Project Name	Long-term outcomes...			
	...for heritage	...for people	...for communities	...other
Forest Explorers	•	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wider range of people understand/ appreciate the Forest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raising awareness of future generation 	•
Youth Rangers	•	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are investing in people at a very formative age - they will always remember inspiring activities - it can last a lifetime. 	•	•
Working with schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources are firmly embedded in the school. As personnel change people will know where the resources are because we have embedded it throughout the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scheme is well established and working well There are well embedded curriculum links to knowledge keepers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aim to have it well and consistently embedded in school, with broad school involvement. Our job is to help the other schools embed the process in their curriculum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It doesn't just last for one class, everyone is involved and committed, and linked into the 2 yr planning cycle.
Future for Freemining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That we are still here, still practicing, a living and working heritage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential for employment for a small number of people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued practice of ancient skills 	•
New Leaf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing traditional skills using local resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are empowering people; giving them a sense of ownership and responsibility. People will have greater understanding of how to use local resources in a sustainable way. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The skills may offer potential employment in the future and contribute to creating a local economy. 	•

5.13 Delivering a Legacy

Our Stronghold for Nature

Project plans to deliver the legacy are explored in Table 51. Some projects, especially those affected by lack of time, (Reptiles, Waterways and Ponds, Geology, Butterflies) have not had the opportunity to consider how their legacy might be delivered. Among those that have explored options involvement of some other organisation with a more secure foundation is important. Thus, conservation Grazing, the Community Wildlife Study Group, and Batscape all make reference to the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust (GWT), the Butterfly project makes reference to Forestry England. The Bird project, Dean Meadows, the Community Wildlife Study Group, and Veteran Trees all note the importance of continuing with volunteer groups. Dean Meadows indicate that the group contributing to the project were volunteers before FF funding came along and will revert to that, the Veteran Tree project aims to have a self-sustaining group of skilled volunteers in place to continue the work. Birds and Batscape are the only projects that specifically mention the need for alternative funding models.

Overall, legacy planning appears to be in its early stages. Some projects are relying on existing organisations to continue the work (e.g. the Gloucestershire wildlife Trust), some have considered what is required, but few have started to put into place the specific actions to ensure long-term sustainability of the work. This may need to be an additional focus for more projects over the next two years of programme delivery.

Exploring our Forest

Only one project, the Hidden Heritage App, appears to have a sound plan for a legacy, and that is based on establishment of a company that will generate an income stream from continued creation of Apps. The other four projects have no clear plans, or sources of funding to ensure continuation of the project activities and/or outcomes.

Revealing our past

Projects under this theme present a mix of ideas of how the legacy will continue into the future. The Geology project admits that they have not considered how a legacy will be assured, which is not surprising as this is a project trying to get back on track following a change in leadership. Buried Heritage, Forest Dialect, and Voices from the Forest suggest that the information and archives that have been developed, as well as those trained in undertaking recordings will be the major part of the legacy and not require further support.

Buried Heritage also noted potential future funding from FE, and support for maintaining the website from volunteers, but no clarity on either at present. Oral histories indicates it is exploring potential funding options to enable continued development of the oral recordings, and Heritage Craft Skills indicated discussions were occurring in relation to continuation of workshops at alternative venues (such as the Dean Heritage Centre).

Celebrating our Forest

The two musical projects (Forest Musical Landscape; Scarr Bandstand) indicated great confidence that their work would continue based on local community support.

Reading the Forest indicated that the project would not continue beyond the end of the FF programme, stating that “For some projects coming to an end is a good thing”. They noted that volunteers who had been trained would be able to provide support for future activities. In contrast Mindscape, a project which was established before the FF Programme started, will continue to operate across a wider area supported by the Wye Valley AONB.

Securing the Future

Three of the projects indicated quite strong and advanced thinking about the future, with two projects basing their plans on securing income streams to ensure sustainability (Freemining; New Leaf). The Schools project also indicated a strong potential legacy. They noted the resources that had been built up and the embedding of the materials and approach into the whole school curriculum. Also, with praise for their approach from Ofsted they are confidently looking to spread the approach to other schools in the FoD. The other project in this theme (Forest Explorers) had less clarity about the future. Although they indicated a need to develop capacity of volunteers to take on the leadership role, perhaps with support from GWT, there is no guarantee that this might happen, leaving the future of the approach in doubt.

Summary

Overall the projects present a mixed bag of approaches in relation to securing their legacies, ranging from a clear decision not to continue with the projects once it has accomplished its FF goals, to establishing some form of legal organisation (e.g. CIC; Limited Company) to manage income streams and ensure financial sustainability for activities. A small number of projects indicated they had not yet considered how to create a legacy beyond the programme lifetime, and some were basing their plans on “hopes” and assumptions of how individuals or other organisations might act once the funding ends.

Overall the project lead interviews suggest a considerable amount of thinking has occurred within some projects regarding the future, but others need support to explore their options, and clarify the nature of their legacy. As one project leader noted, some projects have a natural lifetime and there is no point in always seeking to continue with the same type of activity when there are other needs and requirements, or potential to build on what has gone before.

Table 51 - Project plans to deliver legacy

Project name	Organisation plans to deliver legacy
Ancient and notable trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting tree champions and tree guardians. Getting a network of tree champions and tree guardians in place across the Forest. • Develop a programme of trees naming and connecting communities with individual trees. • Have the value and benefits of ancient and notable trees accepted by key decision-makers, plant makers and landowners who control the management of woodland in the Forest.
Batscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers could transfer to the community study group (at GWT). • Farmers will continue to deliver agri-env schemes. • We would like to see a facilitation fund, i.e. get farmers together to set up a fund to enable the group to carry on and be self-supporting.
Birds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doing the bird surveys and geo-location work now will provide management data for the future. • Local volunteers who are passionate will take it upon themselves to continue the work; take land managers to task, etc. • There are other sources of funding such as Forestry England bursaries, Naturalists bursaries.
Butterfly project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A recording team is crucial. The Butterfly team in the FE could coordinate work • We have no formal plan yet - we are still thinking.
Community Wildlife Study Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intention is to have a community wildlife study group at the end of the period: a body of volunteers to monitor sites and feed the records into the GCER and other places; also to create a social network such that people will want to continue to meet each other. • The theory is that this group should create a strong legacy. This year's job is to get a small core of volunteers more involved in the planning and development activities – so that they have capacity to take it forward. • The intention is that the community study group becomes self-sustaining. To do that need to develop organisational capacity.
Conservation Grazing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are looking to build it into the core strategy of the GWT and maintain a close relationship with the FC, ensuring it is built into their strategy and influences their policy development. • These sites in the FoD are the last ones that the GWT would walk away from - they are so rich, so valuable and so connected.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing to engage and recruit local volunteers is critical to the future of the project
Dean Meadow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group will continue – but without funding for capital works. It was volunteer-led before the FF started, it will go back to that. We have to make sure we have a good set of volunteers who can carry it forward into the future.
Reptiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Waterways and ponds	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Woodland Flora	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Veteran Trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The database will go to the Forestry Commission and the Gloucester centre for environmental records. There will be a nucleus of highly trained and motivated surveyors dotted around the Forest. Hopefully the volunteers who have been trained will be integrated into the conservation networks already existing in the Forest.
Bixslade Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Bream Heritage walk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plan at the moment is to leave the back page of the brochure empty so that in future if a local business wants to sponsor a print run, it could use the back page for marketing. Hopefully someone will come along and take it over. The trail uses existing footpaths, pavements, FC tracks, and miners tracks, should be easy for FC to maintain it as part of their regular forest maintenance. The signs will last a good few years.
Worcester Walk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We need to get more people to visit, via the schools. If school kids come here they will bring their children in the future. If we run some courses we can generate some income. There are other things we could do on the field such as BBQs and events but the FC will not let us. We will develop a leaflet to go into the tourism information office and on facebook. We wanted a commitment from the FC to take ownership of it but they will not give us a lease on the land, it would require fundraising.

Walking with Wheels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue the operation of Trampers post-project. Site buy-in and foundations already set. Develop a third Trampler site if possible, subject to funding. • Where possible, continue to support Trampler sites with FE providing admin. etc., to relieve the burden.
Hidden Heritage App	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created a limited company and continue to develop apps.
Heritage Open Days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The FF programme money was mainly for publicity and raising awareness. This has been very helpful for the Heritage Open Days programme, they will have to use their own money in future, so the scale of the publicity will be less. • The project has helped us to learn about IT and publicity - this will be very useful going forward.
Geology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • App – will continue – but there are issues of updating and maintenance, and paying for cost of keeping it in a store. Not sure how this will be achieved. • Walks/education – raising awareness of geology, landscape and industrial heritage. Hopefully that will be the legacy. • No real consideration at this point of how things might be supported in future.
Built Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Buried Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be a cohort of community volunteers who are experienced surveyors and excavators. These skills can then be used on other projects. • Many of these community volunteers have already joined the local archaeology group and will be active well beyond the current project. • All the sites visited are recorded and archived into local and national datasets. These will be available to academics and researchers well into the future. • Outreach should continue through the use of the teachers pack and the social media/website platform. • Hoping that one of the local groups associated with the FF program can continue to maintain and update the social media/website platform (discussions are just beginning.) • Forestry England may also provide some Legacy funding so that the excavations can continue
Forest Dialect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website resources and social media presence, academic papers and academic engagement is part of the project

Forest Oral Histories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has encouraged other people to offer their oral histories, we have more depositions now. People are offering their histories. • We need to look for further funding, we started with nothing and have built quite a sizeable oral history archive.
Voices from the Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who have been trained in collecting and recording oral histories will carry the skills into the future. There will be opportunities for these people to encourage other groups and projects to use oral histories for recording their changes and identity.
Heritage Craft Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are in discussion with someone regarding setting up an eco-community. They want to work with us to deliver workshops - working in collaboration. • Might continue the workshops at Kensey sheds, if the FC let us, or at Dean Heritage Centre (currently developing workshops down there)
Forest Musical Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is tremendous enthusiasm in the community for this project. Confident that this project will carry on beyond the end of the funding. • The choirs and brass bands will carry on after the end of the project.
Scarr Bandstand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great ambition to continue, not relying on FF funding. • Parish Council has taken over the maintenance cost and insurance.
Reading the Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with a lot of groups, for example, the Dean Writers Circle. Also doing a lot of work with the local libraries • The reading Forest project itself will not carry on but, there are a lot of people who have been trained to will be able to provide support in the community for literary activities. • For some projects coming to an end is a good thing.
Edible Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are in discussion with someone regarding setting up an eco-community. They want to work with us to deliver workshops - working in collaboration. Might continue the workshops at Kensey sheds, if the FC let us, or at Dean Heritage Centre (currently developing workshops down there). We also have loads of interest from Exclusion units and we are working more with social prescribing.
Mindscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Mindscape project will continue after the FF project has finished. The project had been running for a number of years before the FF programme (2014). • The Mindscape project will continue to be operated by Artspace and the Wye Valley AONB in the future. By linking with the FF programme, the Mindscape project was able to be taken into care homes, so the Synergy has been brilliant and has allowed the project to be expanded. • The resource guide (and the experiences from the project, best practice) will be shared across the AONB network. Subject to

	<p>securing additional funds the plan is to take the process and apply it to be areas of the AONB outside the FOD.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lessons from the FF project will inform the AONB Mindscape project. The project will inform the Gloucestershire-wide strategy for health and well-being.
Love Your Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Community Celebration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Forest Explorers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The intention is to develop the confidence of volunteers to the point where they will continue to run the sessions after the end of the FF programme. We want the volunteers to take it on – Glos Wildlife Trust might offer a supporting role. There will be 5 yrs of session plans on the shelf – these could be used by others.
Youth Rangers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will start looking for more funds. We were doing this previously. It's up to the AONB to examine its capacity for future delivery. Currently it's part of the business plan.
Working with schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue on current track, additional subject curriculum, more embedded. We have established the scheme - it will only go from strength to strength - we have built up a core of resources.
Future for Commoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Future for Freemining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on the CIC. Take small coal and increase its value. The pits will submit their coal and pay a fee to use the equipment. Pays for maintenance and good works fund. CIC and the Freeminers Association can decide what to spend money on each year. Enables flexibility in spending and will also allow us to adapt to and comply with any new legislation.
New Leaf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are in discussion with someone regarding setting up an eco-community. They want to work with us to deliver workshops - working in collaboration. Might continue the workshops at Kensley sheds, if the FC let us, or at Dean Heritage Centre (currently developing workshops down there). We have loads of interest from Exclusion units and we are working more with social prescribing.

5.14 Contact between projects

Our Stronghold for Nature

There has been some interaction between the biodiversity projects and somewhat less between these and other projects in the FF Programme (Table 52). Only 3 of these projects have had no contact with other projects, while two projects have had contact with three or more others. The Community Wildlife Study Group is different from the others in that it supplies support (often in the guise of volunteers) to all the other projects, but this does not appear to be apparent to all those interviewed as only one project indicates contact. The Conservation Grazing project notes a large number of overlapping projects on some of its sites (Woorgreens in particular) but does not indicate any formal contact or joint activities beyond talking to the project leads and meeting at events.

There is some suggestion that some of the interviewees would like to have contacts and links with a wider group of projects, including those looking at industrial and cultural heritage. Where linked activities do occur, there appear to be potential benefits (e.g. The Hidden Heritage App including ancient trees, training Batscape personnel to identify trees. The Veteran trees project indicated a desire for wider contact and indicated a possible silo perspective among projects, stating, for example:

“I get the feeling sometimes that some projects do not want to engage with expertise outside their own network. It feels like some projects are a bit insular and there could be better integration, but because of the insularity this would need quite skilful facilitation.”

It is difficult to know how widely this view is shared as no other project mentioned it, although one project (Batscape) did indicate a desire to work with some of the cultural heritage projects.

Table 52 - Contact between natural heritage and other projects

Project name	Contact with other projects	Nature of contact
Ancient and notable trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rewilding • Batscape • Hidden heritage App • Ponds • Worcester Walk Community Project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rewilding: planning to run a session on oak-tan leather • Batscape: He has run training with Batscape personnel to identify ancient trees. • Hidden heritage App: talked about including trees as a feature on the App. • Ponds and Worcester Walk Community Project: provided background information on how to manage the ancient trees situated on their site. Also provided advice on the restoration of hedgerows.
Batscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ancient Trees • Community wildlife study group (GWT) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ancient Trees: we did some training days with Paul Rutter. Enabled our hedge survey volunteers to also do a tree survey when they were out there. • Community Wildlife Study Group: a good link. • We had ideas early in the project to link more to the cultural side (literature, poems about bats, etc.) or commission someone to write something, but it didn't happen. • We touched on the schools side but did not have the resources to do anything.
Birds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open habitat creation Grazing project • Waterways project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation grazing – it's face-to-face and email – regular communications • Waterways – email mostly –I gave a talk to them. • Some cross-over of volunteers working on multiple projects
Butterfly project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Community Wildlife Study Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes – the 12 biodiversity projects – all 12 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support project leads of all 12 projects to deliver their objectives through developing skills of volunteers and providing specialist knowledge and skills.

Conservation Grazing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There's a lot of overlapping FF projects on our sites (especially Worgreens) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We talk to other project leaders, meet at the events.
Dean Meadow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worcester Walk • Forest Explorers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worcester Walk – we have a couple of meadows there. • Forest Explorers – we did a session on meadows for them.
Reptiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connected with ponds • Forest skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connected with the ponds because a project leader on both • Forest skills provided stakes for the reptile sites.
Geology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None at present 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Waterways and ponds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reptiles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connected with reptiles (project leader on both)
Veteran Trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading the Forest project • Young Rangers project • Buried archaeology project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading the Forest project: wanted to work with creative writing project, contacted them but they never got back. • Young Rangers project: ran a session on veteran trees with them. • Buried archaeology project: passes on information about archaeology uncovered in their survey. Knows the project lead personally.

5.15 Communications

The final questions in the project lead interviews explored communications within the FF programme (Table 53). All interviewees felt well informed and indicated that communications had improved over the programme period. The Birds project and Ancient Trees both suggested there could be better integration between the projects and potential to share ideas and experiences. Again, it is difficult to determine from the data collected, how widely this view is shared across projects. Most seem to think that the current level of communications is adequate (or in one case, too much). The Ancient Trees project noted:

“It would be good to make time so that we could all meet and talk about our projects and share ideas. Ancient and notable trees have a connection with both the historic projects and the ecological projects.”

Table 53 - Communications within the FF Programme

Project name	Effectiveness of communications within FF Programme	Are you kept informed
Ancient and notable trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are a bit detached and isolated. Would appreciate more contact. • More cross connection with other people would be useful so we could see what they are doing and how we could cross fertilise and share ideas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not very good to begin with, but the website is getting a lot better. • Improving the connection between the project leads would be helpful.
Batscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • yes
Birds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very difficult because so many projects. • Could be better engagement between ecological projects – we did at regular meetings together at the start – should resurrect that idea. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes – no problems.
Butterfly project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • yes
Community Wildlife Study Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • yes
Conservation Grazing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • yes

Dean Meadow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, effective. • I don't know what happens in all projects but I have a good idea as I am involved with the 12 biodiversity projects and sit on the CSG. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • yes
Reptiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too busy to communicate. Swamped by emails and communications get lost. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Probably
Geology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes – seem effective, but not tested yet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes – we get emails, we are kept in the loop.
Waterways and ponds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too busy to communicate. Swamped by emails and communications get lost. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Probably
Veteran Trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feels that the core FF team do their best to integrate everything. But the team is quite small so there are limits to what it can do. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FF team is often slow at answering emails. • Overall the communication is good.

5.16 Administration and Management

The FF Programme is delivered by a core team based at The Forestry England Offices in Coleford, Forest of Dean. The team consists of the following:

- Programme Manager
- Contracts Officer
- Administration and Finance Officer
- Communications Officer
- Volunteer Coordinators (Based in FAVF)

A Community Stakeholder Group (CSG) provides advice and acts as a sounding board to discuss proposed actions, providing links directly into the wider Forest of Dean community. A Programme Board with representatives from FE, The Forest of Dean District Council, and key stakeholder groups oversees programme delivery. The CSG meetings occur one or two weeks before Programme Board meetings to enable Community concerns to be taken into account with regard to proposed actions.

A number of other activities are also related to implementing the programme, including:

- Project Leader's meetings – to get project leaders together to improve awareness, communications, and development of links across the projects;
- Celebratory events such as volunteer social evenings to thank volunteers and hand out badges/certificates recognising different levels of input;
- Supporting the Schools project by bringing schools together to explore how they might learn from Lydbrook Primary School's experience and develop their own curricula;
- Minibus tours targeted at specific groups (e.g. teachers, tourism stakeholders, local councillors) to enhance awareness of the FF programme, the projects, and opportunities to benefit from outcomes and/or to get involved.

The programme is run and delivered in an efficient manner, with support from FE, particularly in relation to administration and finance. FAVF also provide key support through managing the volunteer database which is critical for recruiting and contacting volunteers. One downside to locating the FF Programme within FE is that some residents of the area do not view Forestry England in a positive light. The result is that for some people the FF programme becomes identified as just another FE programme, creating a negative attitude. It is difficult to ascertain the extent of such views, although it appears to be a minority of the resident population.

On the other hand, it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to deliver parts of the FF Programme without FE support, given the nature of land ownership and management across the Forest of Dean area.

FF Programme team perception of relationship with FE: *"We couldn't do it without them."*

The Programme team report some friction with FE operational personnel (i.e. those working on the ground) early on in the programme, but these have largely been resolved through improved understanding on both sides of the reasons for actions and working practices.

The programme delivery team have been successful at establishing a programme identity through development of a website, creation of a logo and branding their activities and events, and wider communications through local newspapers, social media and even television (e.g. Countryfile).

Project management

Delivery of 38 projects across five widely differing themes over a multi-year time frame was never going to be an easy task. Changes in the political situation, the wider funding context, and more recently the restrictions on all forms of economic and social activity as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic, all impact on project delivery. More locally, changes in personal circumstances of those involved in project management and delivery, personality clashes, and the availability of volunteer time and expertise will also occur over a multi-year period and impact on project delivery. As a result of the nature of the activities and issues such as loss of personnel, a number of projects are being delivered by the core project team:

Bixslade Geocache Trail	Project Leader left the area. A Project plan has been written and will be implemented with support from the Geology Project and managed by the FF Programme team.
Love Your Forest	Currently delivered by Hubbub with support from local partners. The FF Programme Team organise monthly litter picks in target areas, which also brings in new volunteers. Works with District Council who produce 'Love your forest' stickers and offer prizes based on car registration lottery. The project profile has also been raised through working with sculptors who make things from recycled rubbish and a 'trash converter van' that visits schools.
Interpretation & Events	Consists of activities to facilitate delivery of the overall FF Programme (e.g. volunteer events; minibus tours, forest showcase events, etc.). These tend to be activities that cut across projects and engage people. Across the whole FF programme approximately 20 to 30 project related events are occurring each quarter (about 4 of these are delivered by the FF Programme Team)
Schools project	Head teacher from Lydbrook Primary got involved at development stage and developed the school curriculum using local community heritage as a focus. The aim is to expand the project out to all primary and secondary schools in the area. Takes significant resources (personnel, funding) and it was also felt the project would be more likely to achieve its objectives if managed by a neutral organisation rather than a school. The project is also viewed as delivering an essential part of the programme legacy.

Challenges

Overseeing 38 projects and involvement in delivery of several creates challenges. Time management is identified as critical for projects to meet their objectives as the programme is being delivered over a relatively short time period. For example, if a project leader is lost, it is important to address the issue quickly as there are limited people within the Forest with the time and skills to lead projects, and delays tend to result in loss of volunteer support, and perhaps goodwill that has been built up around a previous leader.

Dealing with people is identified as a challenge. There are personality clashes and conflicts which can damage relationships and slow down or even prevent project delivery.

Personality issues also extend to utilisation of volunteers. Some projects could be filled several times over with volunteers, (e.g. Archaeology), while others struggle to get any. The Programme team identify a significant proportion of the issue comes down to personalities, and project success can depend to a large extent on the personality of the project leader. Trying to get cooperation to deliver projects is identified as difficult in some cases. When there is conflict then meetings are held to try to resolve the issues. Programme personnel also noted that some project leaders are good and do what is required while others 'don't embrace the routines' and require constant chasing. Administration is identified as an issue with some projects struggling to meet basic reporting requirements.

The Programme Manager tends to focus attention on current issues and addressing problems as they arise. A risk Register is maintained to assist in identifying potential problems but cannot always predict what will happen (e.g. the loss of Natural England personnel from several projects as a result of cutbacks). Project underspend is one area kept under review and some money was re-allocated at the end of 2019, benefitting projects that could utilise more funding.

The sheer number of projects is identified as a challenge in relation to administrative and financial management. Projects require a wide range of support, especially the smaller projects, some of which do not have bank accounts. Larger projects are usually able to cope with requirements, but smaller projects tend to need more support. Project support can range from organising supplies of materials, printing, laminating, arranging for parking vouchers for volunteers, all the way to taking care of all aspects of finance and payments. FF Programme personnel also manage on-the-ground works for some projects and organise and pay the contractors.

"Some smaller projects wouldn't be able to do this stuff (such as fencing, repair work) without our support. Eventually they will have to learn how to put things in place to do this but for bigger works it's better if FE do it as they can get cheaper rates."

On one site, where there are multiple FF projects active as well as FE management actions, the FF Programme personnel noted the advantages of being integrated into FE systems:

"It's hugely beneficial being in FE. We are aiming to tag onto existing FE contracts such as fencing. We have access to lots of people to talk to and get advice, we can sort out procurement; it would be much harder to do it outside of FE."

Some projects (typically the smaller ones) require support with procurement procedures, some do not like the FE rules regarding Health and Safety requirements, use of non-approved sub-contractors, and the need for permission to undertake activities:

“It’s hard because I have to chase them. It’s getting better but people see it as barriers and when they try to fight it, where they kick against it, it creates delays.”

Procurement issues were reported as being difficult at the start of the programme (due to differing rules and requirements of NHLF and FE) but once things were set up interviewees indicated that “the problem eased off”, largely through linking into FE system approaches. No major changes are foreseen over the next two years in relation to procurement systems.

Personnel interviewed report that the team works well together:

“It’s great being in this small dynamic team, everyone wants to push things forward.”

Monitoring of finance and outcomes is supported through customised databases and spreadsheets. Administrative personnel report that when they first started, the FE systems the programme was required to use were ‘clunky’ but over time have been simplified. One example is the purchasing order system; the one designed by FE was very time consuming and inappropriate, but the FF Programme team managed to get it simplified and fit for purpose. The Programme team noted the value of being able to ‘tap into FE expertise’, access administrative assistance, and support in terms of ‘bank-rolling’ activities.

A future challenge in relation to the financial aspects of the programme is ensuring that the projects all stay on target in relation to expenditure. In particular there is concern over under-spending at the present time:

“Over the next two years we need to keep tight monitoring on spending. We need to identify under- and over-spends in good time. We are concerned that some projects won’t spend it all.”

Keeping projects on track, especially in relation to spending and delivering outcomes, is identified as one of the main challenges in programme delivery.

Another issue for the coming two years is identification of project legacies. The issue has already been raised with project leaders but not all projects have undertaken legacy planning. An aim for the next two years is to move more towards interpretation of outcomes and ‘telling the story’ as a way to bring projects together.

The role of the CSG is being reviewed. It was established to provide links directly into the community but not all members are ‘strong advocates for their community, and some are viewed as ‘dormant’. There is significant overlap in terms of membership of the CSG and the Programme Board and some consideration of whether both are needed. The FF Programme Team is currently exploring whether the CSG is fulfilling its intended role and whether it should be asked to do more.

Communications: reaching the wider community continues to be a challenge, even though the on-line survey, social media, and other interactions suggest that awareness of the FF programme is increasing. Young people are one sector of concern. There has been some consideration of a ‘junior website’ but the target population has not been clarified. Young

people can potentially be reached through schools, but different approaches are required for different age groups. A key challenge for the next two years is to maintain the number of social media channel followers and ensure there is no decrease.

There is some concern over the role of the website, it is now seen more as a repository of information and user visits appear to be declining. There has been some discussion regarding a re-launch of the website but benefits are limited and the decision has been taken to focus on other media channels rather than re-launch. In terms of the programme legacy the role of the website is unclear. One idea is for the website to host the Forest of Dean Timeline, which is viewed as a major delivery output, but this has yet to be decided, along with the future role of the website.

Communications

The Communications Officer has developed good working relationships with local newspapers, which is regarded as critical for reaching local residents. Regular press releases are issued, and the local papers are supportive and will run stories (if they are regarded as being of local interest). So far, all the press releases put out by the Communications Officer have been printed.

The Communications Officer has also developed a good working relationship with the FE communications team, an early outcome of which was inclusion in an episode of Countryfile on television. Countryfile was identified as a major success, it helped to showcase local activities and also increased interest locally, as some were involved and saw the filming taking place.

Social media is utilised including Instagram, twitter and Facebook (3 Facebook groups). The Communications Officer noted that when attending large scale FF events, she had the impression that there was a general awareness as people had heard of the FF Programme. The aim for the next two years was identified as reaching more people, particularly in relation to 'telling our story' whereby the aim is to ensure all of the FF projects get their message across about aims, objectives and outcomes.

Plans for the future

The programme team are currently working on a wide range of activities to enhance programme delivery and raise awareness more widely across the area. Activities planned for the next two years include:

- Improving communication, including social media. The Communications Officer is aware of the need to maintain the flow of information to multiple outlets. The FF Programme has a website and also uses Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook.
- Development of a map of the Forest of Dean making reference to all FF projects and sites.
- Creation of green and blue plaques (through the Interpretation & Events project) to recognise local people (e.g. writers, musicians, engineers, others). Nominations are supported through a public vote.

- Development of the Forest timeline on the website, showing how the Forest has developed over time and linking to a broader national timeline.
- Working more closely with FVAF and the Forest of Dean District Council to support social prescribing activities.
- One new task will be the creation of a quarterly Programme Newsletter, with a wide circulation focusing on main events occurring, in order to raise awareness further.
- A focus on 'telling the story' as a means of bringing the projects together and raising awareness of outcomes being achieved across the Forest of Dean area.
- Ensuring a legacy plan is created to ensure the benefits of the FF programme are not lost after funding ends.

FF Programme personnel also note the additional outcomes created from involvement of project leaders with FF and FE administrative requirements:

"Among some project leaders, in particular the small ones, we have seen an increase in skills, they seem more informed, and the networking is a lot better."

6. Thematic Analysis

6.1 Achieving project outcomes

Table 54 illustrates the outcomes anticipated from each project in the FF Programme according to the NHLF criteria. These were the outcomes identified at the project design stage. The 'Stronghold for nature' projects are oriented towards producing outcomes related to heritage (management, condition, identification/recording) and people (skills development) with few projects targeted at delivering outcomes to the wider community. Projects under the 'Exploring our Forest' theme are the opposite, with none of the projects delivering heritage outcomes but a focus on people and communities.

Projects within the 'Revealing our past' and 'Celebrating our forest' themes tend to have a fairly even spread of outcomes across all three critical areas, while projects under the 'Securing our future' theme are very much focused on outcomes for people. Only 2 projects in this group indicate any anticipated outcomes for heritage, and almost all of the 'community' outcomes are focused on increasing awareness and engagement of people living in communities. It is also worth noting that overall, only nine projects out of the 38, anticipate delivering outcomes that will reduce environmental impacts. Even here it is not clear how some of these projects will achieve the outcome as they are not directed at impact reduction.

Table 55 is an 'actual outcomes' colour-coded table derived by the FF Programme Team from report data supplied at regular intervals to the team to enable tracking of progress and programme delivery. Green identifies where outcomes are being 'well-delivered', amber indicates 'partial' delivery, and red indicates where outcomes are 'not being delivered'. The majority of cells coloured red in the table relate to projects that have not yet started, or only recently started for one reason or another. Examples are the Geology project, which has had to re-start due to personnel and leadership changes, and both the Bixslade Geocache Trail and Future for Commoning, which have not yet begun.

The cells coloured amber indicate partial delivery of outcomes, which covers a wide range of possibilities, and causal mechanisms. Partial delivery may be due to specific project related challenges, personnel issues, or delayed start dates. The following sections explore project outcomes and reasons for delays in more detail.

Changes to project aims and objects

Almost no changes were identified to project aims and objectives, or to finance, over the first 2.5 years of programme delivery. Most of the changes affecting projects relate to issues around leadership and key personnel, such as expertise being withdrawn by external bodies (e.g. loss of Natural England personnel from Batscape), and people moving away (e.g. Geology project). A suite of three projects were also delayed due to conflicts and changes in the management body delivering the projects. One project (Mindscape) felt it had been too ambitious and down-sized its objectives due to a realisation it could not deliver everything within the time frame and resource constraints, while another project (Scarr Bandstand) felt they had been too timid in their initial aims and expanded their delivery horizons. Although changes can seem relatively minor, they can have significant knock-on effects within projects.

A change in leadership, for example, can cause delays, changes in direction and the need to adapt to new management regimes, as well as loss of volunteers, and the goodwill, knowledge, and skills that may have been built-up over months or years of engagement.

Project leader perceived outcomes

A large number of projects identified some form of impact on natural/built/cultural heritage. Projects indicated clear outcomes in relation to heritage being better identified and recorded and being in better condition as a result of project activities. Fewer projects focused better management outcomes. Almost all of the projects within the 'Stronghold for nature' theme identified better management of the natural heritage as an outcome, but only 6 projects outside of that thematic group. Management outcomes are clear for some of the natural heritage-focused projects, such as Conservation Grazing, Dean Meadows (changing private land-owner behaviour), and Batscape (changing management behaviour of land managers), but less clear for others (such as Ancient and Notable trees, and Veteran Trees where the focus is on identification and recording, though improved management might be a more indirect outcome). It is also difficult to see how the Community Wildlife Study Group is going to deliver better management except indirectly through provision of information to land managers.

Project leads demonstrated a more comprehensive understanding of the people focused outcomes (Developed skills; Learnt about heritage; Volunteered time) across all of the five thematic areas. This is not surprising, perhaps, given that almost all projects rely heavily on volunteer support for delivery, and the strong recognition in the development phase of the programme of the potential benefits in terms of improved knowledge, awareness and skills. Many of the projects in the 'Stronghold' for nature theme exhibit above average scores for delivering people focused outcomes, suggesting delivery is higher than anticipated at this stage of programme delivery. The actual outcomes table (Table 55) also supports this perception with most of the cells under the three central columns coloured green. Projects in the other four themes also perceived above expected levels of outcomes in relation to people (developing skills, learning about heritage) but lower than expected for volunteer time. There were significant comments in relation to difficulties encountered in obtaining and retaining volunteers by those projects not focusing on the natural heritage (with some exceptions such as the Buried Heritage project which is regularly inundated with volunteers).

Table 54 - Anticipated project outcomes

Theme	Project	Heritage will be:			People will have:			Communities:		
		Better managed	In better condition	Identified/recorded	Developed skills	Learnt about heritage	Volunteered time	Environmental impacts will be reduced	More people/wider range of people will have engaged with heritage	Local area/community will be a better place to live, work or visit
Our Stronghold for Nature	Ancient and Notable trees	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	
Our Stronghold for Nature	Batscape	1	1	1	1	1	1			
Our Stronghold for Nature	Birds	1	1	1	1	1	1			
Our Stronghold for Nature	Butterfly project	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	1
Our Stronghold for Nature	Community Wildlife Study Group	1	1	1	1	1	1			
Our Stronghold for Nature	Conservation Grazing	1	1	1	1	1	1			
Our Stronghold for Nature	Dean Meadows	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	
Our Stronghold for Nature	Reptiles	1	1	1	1		1		1	
Our Stronghold for Nature	Waterways and ponds		1	1	1		1	1	1	
Our Stronghold for Nature	Woodland Flora	1	1	1	1		1			
Our Stronghold for Nature	Veteran Trees	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

		Heritage will be:			People will have:			Communities:		
Theme	Project	Better managed	In better condition	Identified/recorded	Developed skills	Learnt about heritage	Volunteered time	Environmental impacts will be	More people/wider	Local area/community
Exploring our Forest	Bixslade Project					1	1		1	1
Exploring our Forest	Bream Heritage walk					1	1		1	1
Exploring our Forest	Worcester Walk				1	1	1	1	1	1
Exploring our Forest	Walking with Wheels					1	1		1	1
Exploring our Forest	Historic Heritage App				1	1	1		1	1
Exploring our Forest	Heritage Open Days					1	1		1	

0		Heritage will be:			People will have:			Communities:		
Theme	Project	Better managed	In better condition	Identified/recorded	Developed skills	Learnt about heritage	Volunteered time	Environmental impacts will be	More people/wider	Local area/community
Revealing our Past	Geology		1	1	1	1	1		1	
Revealing our Past	Built Heritage			1	1	1	1		1	1
Revealing our Past	Buried Heritage	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Revealing our Past	Forest Dialect		1	1	1	1	1		1	
Revealing our Past	Forest Oral Histories									
Revealing our Past	Voices from the Forest			1	1	1	1		1	
Revealing our Past	Heritage Craft Skills				1	1	1	1	1	

		Heritage will be:			People will have:			Communities:		
Theme	Project	Better managed	In better condition	Identified/recorded	Developed skills	Learnt about heritage	Volunteered time	Environmental impacts will be	More people/wider	Local area/community
Celebrating our Forest	Forest Musical Landscape			1	1	1	1		1	
Celebrating our Forest	Scarr Bandstand	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1
Celebrating our Forest	Reading the Forest			1	1	1	1		1	
Celebrating our Forest	Edible Forest	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	
Celebrating our Forest	Mindscape				1	1	1		1	
Celebrating our Forest	Love Your Forest	1	1			1	1	1	1	1
Celebrating our Forest	Community Celebration			1	1	1	1		1	1

		Heritage will be:			People will have:			Communities:		
Theme	Project	Better managed	In better condition	Identified/recorded	Developed skills	Learnt about heritage	Volunteered time	Environmental impacts will be	More people/wider	Local area/community
Securing our Future	Forest Explorers				1	1	1		1	1
Securing our Future	Youth Rangers				1	1	1		1	
Securing our Future	Working with Schools					1	1		1	1
Securing our Future	Future for Commoning	1			1	1		1	1	
Securing our Future	Future for Freemining	1	1		1	1	1			
Securing our Future	Future for Freemining				1				1	
Securing our Future	New Leaf				1	1	1		1	1

Table 55 - Project outcomes: Progress to date (end 2019)

PROJECTS	Better managed	Meeting Outcomes Well = Green, Partly =Amber, Not = Red	In better condition	Meeting Outcomes Well = Green, Partly =Amber, Not = Red	Identified/recorded	Meeting Outcomes Well = Green, Partly =Amber, Not = Red	Developed skills	Meeting Outcomes Well = Green, Partly =Amber, Not = Red	Learnt about heritage	Meeting Outcomes Well = Green, Partly =Amber, Not = Red	Volunteered time	Meeting Outcomes Well = Green, Partly =Amber, Not = Red	Environmental impacts will be reduced	Meeting Outcomes Well = Green, Partly =Amber, Not = Red	More people/wider range of people will have engaged with heritage	Meeting Outcomes Well = Green, Partly =Amber, Not = Red	Local area/community will be a better place to live, work or visit	Meeting Outcomes Well = Green, Partly =Amber, Not = Red
	Project plan	Actual	Project plan	Actual	Project plan	Actual	Project plan	Actual	Project plan	Actual	Project plan	Actual	Project plan	Actual	Project plan	Actual	Project plan	Actual
Batscape	1		1		1		1		1		1							
Conservation Grazing	1		1		1		1		1		1							
Community Wildlife Study Group	1		1		1		1		1		1							
Birds	1				1		1		1		1							
Reptiles			1		1				1		1				1			
Wetscape - Waterways, Ponds and Mires					1		1				1		1					
Woodland Flora	1		1		1		1				1							
Ancient and Notable Trees	1		1		1		1		1		1				1			
Veteran Trees History					1		1		1		1				1		1	
Butterflies	1				1		1				1							
Deans Marvellous Meadows	1				1		1		1		1							

As at 2.5yrs Yr 3 Q2	Heritage will be:						People will have:					Communities:						
PROJECTS	Better managed	Meeting Outcomes Well = Green, Partly =Amber, Not = Red	In better condition	Meeting Outcomes Well = Green, Partly =Amber, Not = Red	Identified/recorded	Meeting Outcomes Well = Green, Partly =Amber, Not = Red	Developed skills	Meeting Outcomes Well = Green, Partly =Amber, Not = Red	Learnt about heritage	Meeting Outcomes Well = Green, Partly =Amber, Not = Red	Volunteered time	Meeting Outcomes Well = Green, Partly =Amber, Not = Red	Environmental impacts will be reduced	Meeting Outcomes Well = Green, Partly =Amber, Not = Red	More people/wider range of people will have engaged with heritage	Meeting Outcomes Well = Green, Partly =Amber, Not = Red	Local area/community will be a better place to live, work or visit	Meeting Outcomes Well = Green, Partly =Amber, Not = Red
	Project plan	Actual	Project plan	Actual	Project plan	Actual	Project plan	Actual	Project plan	Actual	Project plan	Actual	Project plan	Actual	Project plan	Actual	Project plan	Actual

Bream Heritage Walk								1		1				1		1	
Bixslade Geocache Trail								1		1				1		1	
Heritage Open Days								1		1				1			
Hidden Heritage App							1		1					1		1	
Walking with Wheels								1		1				1		1	
Worcester Walk Community Project							1		1			1		1		1	
Built Heritage					1		1		1					1		1	
Buried Heritage (Archaeology)	1				1		1		1					1		1	
Voices from the Forest					1		1		1					1			
Forest Oral Histories	1		1		1		1		1					1			
Forest Dialect			1		1		1		1					1			
Geology of Our Forest			1		1		1		1					1			
Heritage Craft Skills							1		1			1		1			
Community Celebration					1		1		1					1		1	
Edible Forest	1		1				1		1			1		1			
Forest Musical Landscape					1		1		1					1			
Love Your Forest	1		1									1				1	
Mindscape							1		1					1			
Reading the Forest					1		1		1					1			
Scarr Bandstand	1		1				1		1				1		1		

As at 2.5yrs Yr 3 Q2	Heritage will be:						People will have:						Communities:					
Projects	Better Managed	Meeting Outcomes Well = Green, Partly =Amber, Not = Red	In better condition	Meeting Outcomes Well = Green, Partly =Amber, Not = Red	Identified/recorded	Meeting Outcomes Well = Green, Partly =Amber, Not = Red	Developed skills	Meeting Outcomes Well = Green, Partly =Amber, Not = Red	Learnt about heritage	Meeting Outcomes Well = Green, Partly =Amber, Not = Red	Volunteered time	Meeting Outcomes Well = Green, Partly =Amber, Not = Red	Environmental impacts will be reduced	Meeting Outcomes Well = Green, Partly =Amber, Not = Red	More people/wider range of people will have engaged with heritage	Meeting Outcomes Well = Green, Partly =Amber, Not = Red	Local area/community will be a better place to live, work or visit	Meeting Outcomes Well = Green, Partly =Amber, Not = Red
	Actual	Project plan	Actual	Project plan	Actual	Project plan	Actual	Project plan	Actual	Project plan	Actual	Project plan	Actual	Project plan	Actual	Project plan	Actual	
Interpretation & Events							1		1		1				1		1	
A Future for Freemining	1		1				1		1		1				1			
A Future for Commoning	1						1		1				1		1			
Forest Explorers							1		1		1				1			
New Leaf							1		1		1				1			
Youth Rangers							1		1		1				1			
Working with Schools									1		1				1		1	
Overall Total	15		13		20		31		34		36		7		29		13	

In the final set of outcomes, those in relation to communities (Reduced environmental impacts; More/wider range of people engaged with heritage; Local area/community a better place to live) a more complex picture emerges. As noted earlier the vast majority of projects did not identify reduction in environmental impact as an outcome. This is borne out by project leader perceptions. Only three projects leaders (Worcester Walk; Scarr Bandstand; Love Your Forest) actually identified specific impacts in relation to environmental quality. For some other projects (e.g. Veteran Trees; Heritage Craft Skills; Edible Forest) it is difficult to see how the work undertaken by the project will reduce environmental impacts, and the FF Programme might benefit from some more detailed exploration of whether such outcomes should be maintained given the nature of the deliverables.

A large number of projects identified the outcome *'More people/wider range of people will have engaged with heritage'* as relevant. Project leaders found it relatively easy to discuss impacts on specific groups of people with the Forest of Dean (e.g. old people, young people, those with disabilities). Where direct impacts occurred project leaders were able to draw the links between project activities and community benefits. High outcome scores were recorded, for example, for the Schools project, Walking with Wheels, and Buried Heritage, with project leaders noting higher levels of community engagement than expected. Indirect benefits (for example improvements in well-being, enhanced social capital, and individual confidence) are perhaps not recognised or measured in any formal way by most projects.

Project leaders found it much more difficult to identify indirect links between their project outcomes and community benefits in terms of the impact on making the *'Local area/community a better place to live, work or visit'*. Communities tended to be thought of in terms of specific locations, rather than as groups with common interests or specific sectors of society. As a result, those involved in natural heritage projects, for example, noted that the sites in which they are working are remote from communities and thus unlikely to have any impact, while others suggested that ecological improvements would benefit everyone in some way. In discussions, some project leaders indicated a lack of consideration at the development stage of how their projects might affect communities, and the beginnings of recognition of potential links.

Overall, the outcome scores in relation to the three outcomes for people tend to be above the expected level at this stage of programme delivery. Some projects have also clearly exceeded the expectations of those involved in delivery. These include, for example:

- Batscape - exceeded people focused outcomes
- Birds - exceeded people focused outcomes
- Conservation grazing - exceeded people focused outcomes
- Veteran trees - exceeded identification/recording of heritage
- Buried Heritage - exceeded heritage & people focused outcomes
- Forest Dialect - exceeded heritage outcomes
- Scarr Bandstand - exceeded heritage, people, & community outcomes
- Working with Schools - exceeded people focused outcomes

Overall, the majority of projects are currently delivering outcomes at a level either anticipated or slightly above those anticipated at the start of their projects. Some projects are exceeding their anticipated outcomes by a significant margin and are expanding (e.g. Scarr Bandstand,

Historic Heritage App), while a small number of others have not yet reached full potential. The most significant causal mechanisms suppressing delivery of outcomes appears to be related to changes in key personnel (e.g. expertise and project leaders), and issues with obtaining and retaining sufficient volunteers to undertake the work.

Wider community outcomes – Key points from the On-line survey

The two online surveys targeted at the wider community (early 2018 and end of 2019) provide some scope for understanding wider community knowledge about heritage and views on the Forest of Dean, and also some scope for comparison across (a rather short) time frame. The following aspects highlight the main findings from the on-line survey:

- The survey indicates a relatively high level of knowledge and understanding across the natural, built, and cultural heritage, with some slight differences between the samples from the two periods.
- Engaging in FF Programme activities: in 2019 a significantly higher proportion of the sample respondents (41%) engaged in activities compared to the 2018 survey (12%). This suggests more people in the community have engaged but we need to be wary that the sample may also be reflecting the fact that a larger proportion of those responding are involved in some way (e.g. through attending an activity, or volunteering).
- Level of volunteering: the number of those volunteering is almost the same in each of the two samples; however, the proportion of the 2019 sample that are volunteers is larger due to the smaller sample size.
- Reasons for volunteering: the survey identified that people wanted to help protect the natural and built heritage, conserve the cultural heritage, and contribute to their local community. The survey also noted that volunteers had good experiences, were able to use their skills, and make a difference.
- Benefits of volunteering: the survey highlighted the benefits to volunteers in terms of increasing their awareness of heritage, made them want to look after the Forest more in future, and led to improvements in well-being.
- Opinions on heritage: responses are similar across the two time periods. A large proportion feel heritage is being protected, identified and recorded; fewer people feel that the heritage is in good condition.
- Views on the FoD more generally as a beautiful area and good place to live. A large proportion of each sample agree it is a good place to live.
- Attitudes towards heritage: in general people want to learn more about the heritage and to see it protected and preserved for future generations. There are only minor differences between sample responses from 2018 and 2019, and the key issues highlighted are similar in both samples.

The On-line survey does not throw much light on the extent to which wider community is engaging with the FF programme, or the natural, built, and cultural heritage. One concern is that the survey reflects views of those already engaged and is not a representative sample from across the community. For example, 80% of those responding indicated they had heard of the FF programme before starting, and 41% indicated they had taken part in an event or activity. In addition, it is not possible to attribute changes in attitudes, knowledge or understanding about heritage to the FF programme for several reasons:

- There is no counterfactual information on what other sources of information are influencing responses;
- the groups are self-selected and non-equivalent; it is possible that the sample is more knowledgeable because they have been more involved in volunteering and/or engaging in project activities, or more knowledgeable generally;
- the samples may represent those with on-line access and skills, or those who are more interested in the issues (and thus more likely to respond), while not reflecting the underlying nature of the wider community;
- the samples include very few people under the age of 26 yrs.

6.2 Identification of major achievements

Project leaders were asked to describe what they felt were the most significant achievements for their projects to the current time (end of 2019). Achievements are different from 'outcomes', they are more varied; not necessarily focusing on headline objectives, key indicators, specific targets, or other reporting requirements. They take into account obstacles that have been overcome, challenging conditions, unexpected effects, and opportunities that have arisen, and they often represent a more considered view of success and its causes.

Table 56 summarises the perceptions of project leaders in relation to what they felt were their key achievements in delivery of projects to date. The focus on the effects on people comes across strongly: achievements are linked to involving, engaging, enabling, developing, inspiring, and generating enthusiasm in people. Getting people working together was also cited by three projects as a major achievement. One example is the Freeminers who have always operated as individuals; getting them to form a CIC and work towards a common goal is viewed as a major accomplishment, that has built human and social capital in terms of the obstacles that have been faced and overcome. Reference was also made to unexpected outcomes and benefits, for example the schools project which incorporated local heritage not the curriculum resulted in increased confidence among pupils (e.g. making presentations) improvements in writing skills and use of language which fed through into other work, and even impacts on wider families in terms of engagement with the school.

More surprising is the range of achievements in relation to the wider community. A large number of projects, across all themes made reference to community-related achievements. Terminology utilised to express achievements included: increasing, generating, changing, and

enhancing, in relation to awareness, attitudes, understanding, appreciation, engagement, and enthusiasm. Reducing anti-social behaviour was also identified by two projects as an achievement. This focus on achievements in the wider community is somewhat at odds with discussion over the community outcomes where in many cases project leaders found it difficult to identify specific outcomes. The list of achievements is however in line with the focus of community outcomes on increasing engagement of a wider range of people.

Project leaders working with natural heritage made more references than the projects in other thematic areas to the heritage itself. Key achievements relate to 'discovery' (and the excitement that creates) and generating new knowledge and information that can be used to improve management. Similar achievements were also mentioned by project leaders in the 'Revealing our Past' theme (in particular buried Heritage). Not all projects across the themes identified heritage as the focus of key achievements; mentioning instead, people and communities, or in a few cases, overcoming management challenges.

Overall, the impression is a set of projects where changing the awareness, understanding, and behaviour of people and communities is just as (if not more) important, as identifying, recording, and improving the heritage.

Table 56 - Project Leader perception of key achievements

Theme	Achievements, linked to		
	Heritage	People	Communities
Our Stronghold for Nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New information & guidance for management - Discovery/new findings - Landscape scale action - Overcoming obstacles to new grazing - Increasing area under management - Creating new habitat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Involvement - Volunteer engagement - Enthusiasm generated - Getting people working together to create a group - Working with FE - Inspiring volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increasing appreciation within communities - Wider public engagement - Increasing awareness - Changing attitudes
Exploring our Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Signposting/collating information - Improvements through tree/hedge planting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishing resilient operational systems - Enabling people to feel better - Enabling access - Increasing engagement with heritage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reducing anti-social behaviour - Wider use of materials than originally intended - Increasing awareness
Revealing our Past	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discovery - Generating new knowledge - Information for future research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhancing wider interaction between different groups - Increasing engagement
Celebrating our Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creating a community asset 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reaching young people - Increase in learning and familiarity with heritage - Increasing engagement and creating new links 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing enthusiasm - Creating community pride - Reducing anti-social behaviour - Creating a resource for wider use

Securing our Future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensuring continuation of traditional practices (of the living heritage) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increasing knowledge of participants - Making the forest 'accessible' through familiarity - Developing interests of young people - Increased confidence and learning in unexpected ways - Developing capacity - Getting people to work together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wider range of people more aware - Increasing community engagement - Generating enthusiasm in the community (created a 'buzz')
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6.3 Measuring success

Natural heritage focused projects (Stronghold for Nature theme)

Project leaders noted that a high level of heritage and basic information on people centred outcomes (e.g. numbers attending events) are being measured, but few outcomes in relation to communities are captured. Projects also recognise that a wide range of people-related benefits are generated, in particular volunteers associated with their projects, but not all of these are being captured or measured in any formal manner. There are some event feedback surveys, and a couple of volunteer surveys have been completed, along with some volunteer case studies. The volunteer case studies are a good source of information, capturing the richness of the volunteering experience across a range of projects and volunteers with differing backgrounds. It would be useful to have a wider range of the in-depth volunteer case studies, ideally from each project that uses volunteers.

Project leaders did note in their discussions how additional information on volunteers might help them: one mentioned a need to 're-energise' volunteers going forward into the next two years of delivery, and another indicated the need to understand 'why people lose interest' in a project. A third project noted that a 'sense of stewardship is appearing among volunteers – it would be good to capture changes', and a fourth noted there was no recording of changes in knowledge or skills. In all, 9 out of the 12 Stronghold for nature projects indicated a need to capture benefits to people. Three projects also mentioned the need to capture outcomes experienced by the wider community.

Other thematic groups: built and cultural heritage projects

Interviewees had difficulty in scoring some of the outcomes from their projects. In general, the people focused outcomes (developing skills/learning/volunteering) were well documented but impacts on heritage and communities were less clear.

6.4 Project delivery - issues for the next two years

Project leaders indicated that the two most common challenges were related to awareness raising among the wider community (in relation to their project activities and outcomes), and communications (both within the FF Programme and externally). These issues are related and for some project relate to lack of relevant skills and expertise to market or promote their activities, in other cases it is a lack of sufficient resources (mainly time, administrative support, and volunteers) to undertake the tasks.

More significant, in terms of the scale of challenges, are project specific issues. These are wide ranging and linked to specific current problems facing project leaders. A total of 21 projects indicated 'other' issues and 7 of these noted the problems were large scale.

Some of the smaller projects ('one-man bands') appear to be suffering from lack of sufficient support, whether it is in terms of someone to share the delivery load, the administration, or find (and keep) sufficient volunteers. There is a potential risk from having multiple projects reliant on the same individuals for delivery, in terms of 'burnout', or missing targets if the person is unavailable, or incapacitated for some reason.

In the case of the natural heritage projects three individuals are charged with delivering two projects each (and one also helps to deliver a third project outside of natural heritage). Thus, half of the biodiversity projects are being delivered by just three people, with some evidence that external factors (such as jobs, limited time) are influencing the capacity to deliver.

Two other project leaders are delivering multiple projects related to heritage craft skills, and cultural heritage focused projects.

6.5 Rubbing up against the limits of volunteering

Feed-back from Project Leader interviews hint at the limits of relying on large-scale volunteer input to deliver complex multi-year programmes. Project Leaders indicate a range of factors either currently affecting their projects or likely to affect them in the next 2 – 3 yrs. These include:

- lack of time to undertake all the work, especially in regard to administration and meeting requirements of FE, NLHF, and others. This is a particular problem for small organisations or 'one-man bands', or those who work full or part-time on other employment. These issues are not mentioned by PLs who are being paid to undertake work on the project as part of their employment with a larger organisation (e.g. GWT, NE, FE)
- lack of volunteers with the required skills (in particular, IT, administration, business skills, marketing, communications, specific expertise)
- lack of volunteers prepared to take on responsibility for delivering elements of projects
- lack of volunteers with confidence/capacity to develop leadership roles
- volunteers cherry-picking what they choose to do. The less glamorous aspects of project work are often under-resourced. It also means some projects are overwhelmed with volunteers, while others struggle to get them
- Some people are leading more than one project, which affects quality of input and time available to deal adequately with issues (such as awareness raising, communications, reporting, etc.)
- Project Leaders put in more hours of unpaid time than they anticipate
- Some project leaders do not have the required skills to engage with the public and manage volunteers – and they do not receive training to help them do this.

The pool of volunteers listed on the FVAF data base (700+) does not mean that a large number of people are always available to be allocated as a labour force to any project. The majority of volunteering is undertaken by a smaller core group of 2- 300 volunteers who often get involved in multiple project activities.

6.6 Legacy and longer-term outcomes

The majority of projects have a clear idea of their outcomes in terms of impacts on heritage and how they fit into the wider FF Programme. Most projects also have a clear idea of how their projects contribute to outcomes for people, but overall there is less clarity on the potential impacts on communities.

A majority of projects identified some level of community impact following prompting by the interviewer (either communities of place or interest), but a significant number were not able to identify clear outcomes for wider communities in the Forest, in particular the biodiversity focused projects. It was difficult for the natural heritage focused project leaders to articulate a clear set of outcomes for communities, beyond referring to general improvements to the ecological quality of the Forest and, for the most part, community-based impacts were not part of their planned outcomes. In discussion however, some of the projects noted the potential for wider community benefits (e.g. Conservation Grazing, Dean Meadows, Batscape, Ancient and Notable Trees) suggesting there might be some value in exploring the wider impacts of projects in more detail.

The diagram below (Figure 50) summarises the connections and links from project activities (at thematic level) focused on heritage, to wider community benefits across the Forest (based on analysis of the project leader interviews). The diagram illustrates the direct effects on the heritage assets, and people, mostly those delivering projects and volunteers and possibly also those that participate in events/activities (first two columns: Impact on heritage; Effects arising from close involvement), and the indirect effects (3rd column: Influence on wider communities) leading to long term impacts (perhaps even generational) at a broader scale (4th column: Longer-term shared outcomes). An exploration of how the wider impacts at community (and possibly broader scales) might be identified, assessed, and valued, might be a useful task to consider in the final two years of programme delivery, in anticipation of the end of programme evaluation and understanding the legacy.

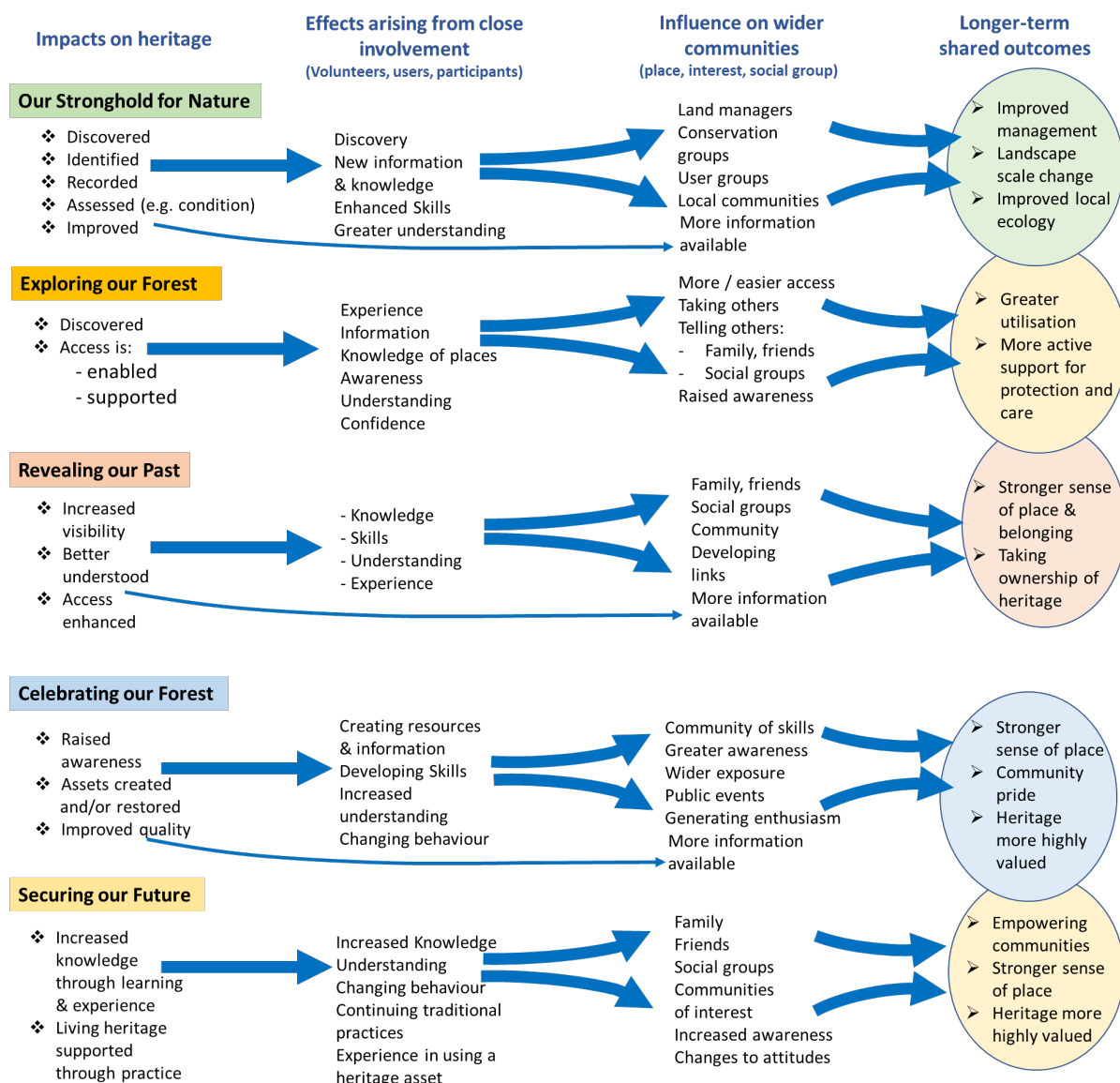


Figure 50 - Linking project activities to long-term outcomes

Wider outcomes from programme activity, such as Foresters' Forest can be tenuous and difficult to identify and predict, especially over longer time periods into the future. For example, work with young people might take decades to reveal itself in terms of changes in attitude, values held, and behaviour, and difficult to separate out the impacts of a single programme from other influences and contextual effects. In the same way, assessing the wider effects (such as sense of place) from ensuring the continuation of traditional practice and custom as part of a living heritage, can be extremely difficult. But the same can apply to more straightforward outcomes, for example, the new information on habitat and biodiversity provided by some projects, that may or may not feed into future management decisions and influence ecological conditions in the wider community. Although many of these outcomes might be uncertain it is worth identifying the linkages to help raise awareness among project leaders, volunteers, and the wider community, of the potential for change initiated by FF programme and project activities.

6.7 Future challenges and Key issues for consideration

There are no real issues in relation to programme management and delivery. The FF Programme Delivery team is well managed, with a wide range of skills and applies sound project management practices. The team are supported by a Community Stakeholder Group (CSG), which acts as an advisory and sounding board to explore issues with community representatives, and the Programme Board, which meets regularly to keep track of progress and deal with problems arising. The FF Programme is also fortunate in being located within the FE offices where additional support can be called on if needed.

The FF Programme does, however, face a number of challenges over the next 2 years of delivery to the end of the programme. Key issues are related to: communicating more widely and building awareness of the programme across the Forest of Dean; ensuring funding is managed; and, addressing project specific problems (e.g. where there has been a loss of expertise or personnel). The addition of a new communications officer to the programme team will help to address the communications and awareness raising issues. Project specific issues are being picked up by the Programme Team based at the Forestry England offices at Bank House in Coleford. For example, the Bixslade Geocache Trail, the Schools project, and Love your Forest are all managed centrally for a variety of reasons.

The evaluation has also identified a number of issues in relation to programme delivery, and in identifying and assessing outcomes. Some recommendations for action are made below.

6.8 Recommendations

Management

- The role of the Community Stakeholder Group (CSG) is unclear. There is a significant membership overlap with the Programme Board which means a lot of duplication of discussion for those who are members of both. While consultation and input from the wider community is essential it is not clear the CSG is fulfilling this function adequately.
- Given the changing focus of programme delivery to concentrate on legacy issues and telling the story it might be worth re-thinking the role of the CSG and amalgamating the current CSG with the Programme Board. For example, a wider 'community forum' type of organisation might be of greater value at this point, to bring in new voices and interests, as well as helping with communications. This could have the following benefits:
 - Assist with efforts to reach the wider community in the Forest of Dean and find new ways to communicate (e.g. with the 'harder-to-reach' sectors of communities), and in raising awareness more widely.
 - To initiate discussions on where to go from here, what to do once the FF Programme funding ends, and how to maintain (and build on) the legacy.

- Explore how to support the groups and skillsets that have grown up around projects, how to continue the voluntary activities (where they are required, not all projects will need to continue, as has been noted, some have a natural life).
- A community forum might have a different approach. Meet less often but for longer (e.g. a workshop type approach) to focus on specific issues and feed ideas into the Programme board.

Outcomes

- It might be worthwhile making the nature of some outcomes more explicit, particularly the more indirect impacts, and characterise more clearly the causal chain through which they must operate in order to have the desired effect.
- In relation to reducing environmental impacts, only three projects leaders (Worcester Walk; Scarr Bandstand; Love Your Forest) actually identified specific issues in relation to environmental quality. For some other projects (e.g. Veteran Trees; Heritage Craft Skills; Edible Forest) it is difficult to see how the work undertaken by the project will reduce environmental impacts, and the FF Programme might benefit from some more detailed exploration of whether such outcomes should be maintained given the nature of the deliverables.
- We recommend a re-focusing of the on-line survey to explore connections between FF Programme activities, and attitudes, knowledge, and understanding about heritage among respondents. Some questions will need to remain the same to enable comparisons over time.
- We also suggest a range of smaller and targeted mini-surveys, or events such as discussion groups or a small workshop series operating through existing community organisations to explore views across a wider sector of the community. This would result in validating the information gained through the survey and creating a more useful set of tools for assessing impacts of the FF programme across the wider community.

Measuring success

- The FF programme could increase its understanding of outcomes generated, by taking steps to create a common metric across all projects to capture some of the social and individual benefits currently missed.
- One potential area for improvement is in clearer identification and measurement of the outcomes to the wider community across the area (which may require some re-conceptualisation of what is meant by 'community'). This may have the added benefit of identifying benefits that are not currently recognised.
- Projects may benefit from one or more of the following:

- development of a generic programme level set of measures (applicable to all projects) to capture benefits to volunteers and other stakeholders linked to programmes;
 - small scale discussions with volunteers associated with each project to capture benefits and changes (for example, in wellbeing);
 - development of a wellbeing scorecard approach to capture people and wider community outcomes;
 - a set of scaled questions to capture changes in knowledge, understanding and attitudes towards the Forest among volunteers and other stakeholders;
- Projects in the ‘Stronghold for nature’ theme do not all currently recognise potential impacts on the wider community from improvements to biodiversity, ecological quality and environment of the Forest. A meeting of the biodiversity projects could explore potential benefits to the wider community (e.g. from increased awareness of project impacts, and/or increased engagement), and how they might be captured. This may not be relevant to all, but it is clear that some natural heritage focused projects are having an impact on the wider community (e.g. Conservation Grazing through bringing livestock into the Forest; ancient and Notable trees through re-engaging communities with trees).
 - Projects in other thematic areas: Capturing these wider outcomes will be more difficult than measuring changes to specific groups of people:
 - The Schools Project should be examined in terms of how to capture the people and community outcomes in a more formal and systematic manner.
 - The FF Programme may want to consider small-scale targeted surveys using a mix of interviews and discussion groups to capture changes in relation to specific communities (of place and interest/people).
 - In terms of impacts on heritage it may be worthwhile exploring with each project lead the extent to which their projects might be having an effect, either directly or indirectly, now and in the future.

Future challenges

- Almost half (17) of the projects indicated that ‘communications’ presented some form of challenge. We also note that there is some confusion around some of the terms utilised: awareness raising, marketing, promoting, and communicating. Some further exploration of this issue might identify specific categories of problem and potential solutions. We are aware that the appointment of a Communications Officer towards the end of the evaluation period may address many of the concerns raised in this evaluation.
- We suggest the following activities might be useful in exploring the wider outcomes from the FF Programme:

- a focused discussion on the nature of communities (spatial, demographic, and interests);
 - how different communities/types of community are impacted by the FF Programme;
 - methods to identify and capture the benefits;
 - how to identify long-term outcomes and take steps to raise awareness of community outcomes as well as enhance delivery.
- Consider whether the next two years offers an opportunity for exploration of the relationship between FE and the wider community, other interests in the Forest of Dean. Several projects have worked closely with FE in delivering outcomes and many of the wider benefits of the FF Programme would not be possible without FE support. There may be potential benefits from clarifying the key supporting role played by FE and exploring options for how to develop future relations.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Volunteering - Case study examples

Mervyn – Volunteer on a range of projects including: Birds, Ponds, waterways, Reptiles, and Veteran Trees

Ecology and a love of the natural world has been a life-long habit for Mervyn.

“As a child I was always interested in living things such as insects and flowers. I’m grateful to my Mother who spent a lot of time helping me to discover the wonders of nature.”

Mervyn went on to study Biology at University and taught it in Secondary School, passing on his love of the natural environment on to local students over many years. Mervyn has always immersed himself in nature during his spare time too.

“I have always spent a lot of time in the Forest and retirement has allowed me to do this even more”.

Mervyn is involved with the Gloucestershire Naturalists Society (GNS) and through this was aware and involved with Foresters’ Forest right from the start.

Mervyn has involved himself in a wide range of Foresters’ Forest projects including Birds, Ponds, Waterways, Reptiles, Veteran Trees, and the recent Sphagnum Survey.

“Birds have been my major interest,” he said, “Foresters’ Forest has provided the opportunity for Bird study groups in the Forest to extend and develop what they do. I’ve been able to lead on two in-depth studies of Dippers and Nightjars (in partnership with another volunteer). This stemmed from many years of having a license to ring birds. And it has been fascinating to study these species in such detail!”

This voluntary work studying both Dippers and Nightjars has led to some important discoveries and achievements.

“The Nightjar study is focussed on whether individual males can be identified by their song. This was previously thought to be impossible, but we are due to publish a scientific paper sharing our findings, confirming that we can in fact identify individuals in this way.”

Mervyn told us,

“My work on Dippers has been about breeding success on streams. It has involved surveying local populations and improving nesting opportunities. Numbers had dropped, but I’m now delighted to have seen an increase over the last few years of work on this.”

Mervyn originally got involved in Foresters’ Forest because of his existing interest in the natural world, but over time his volunteering has deepened and broadened his interests further.

“I really enjoy doing the Waterways survey, but through this I’ve become more and more fascinated by the history and archaeology of the Forest and how this links to the ecology. My interest in other animals and species has blossomed. I feel like I am learning and developing my skills all the time!”

Mervyn is a solitary creature but has surprised himself by the joy he has found in meeting other Foresters' Forest volunteers and being part of a team.

"I've met lots of great fellow volunteers. I have really enjoyed supporting and sharing knowledge with others... and I have felt privileged to work alongside so many experts in their field and learning so much from them."

Some of Mervyn's favourite volunteering moments have been through shared experiences with other volunteers.

"I remember one day we all looked under a reptile refuge and saw a baby adder. Group experiences like this are a great part of Foresters' Forest because you all share in each other's delight!"

He said,

"I have also had some great solo moments, such as re-capturing a five-year-old Nightjar that I had ringed, knowing that it had been to Africa and back four times since then, returning to the same clearing each summer to breed."

Mervyn really enjoys every minute of his volunteering.

"The Waterways survey is a particular joy, it is massively fun, like going back to pond dipping as a child!"

The programme has also opened his eyes to the importance of engaging and involving people.

"It is impacting on my ideas as Chair of the GNS. Inspiring younger people feels very important and we are working hard to develop this through schemes such as Awards to University Students. I want to help spark the same love of nature in young people that my mother gave to me."

Mervyn is passionate about legacy.

"I can see that the work of Foresters' Forest will carry on through volunteers and that the GNS can play a role in this. We are hoping to do more and more with Foresters' Forest on this!"

Gwyneth – Buried Heritage

“We moved to the Forest a few years ago and being completely new to the area I set about joining clubs and getting out and about to meet people. One day at my Book Club I heard someone mentioning Foresters’ Forest and that there was an Archaeology Project. I thought, “Sounds interesting, I’ll do that!” This was during the development stage of Foresters’ Forest in 2015 and I’ve been involved ever since.

I’ve had some fantastic experiences through the project. I’ve worked on the LIDAR data survey, taken part in three archaeological digs and have recently got involved in a project researching Palmers Flat where I live. I’m enjoying this research working with a friend who lives nearby, and we are finding out some fascinating information about our locality. I’ve been able to use lots of different techniques such as computer research into ancestry and looking at archives and maps. Some of this research I was already familiar with but seeing it all come together into a picture of the past is interesting.

I have found learning to do the LIDAR surveying very rewarding. It can be a bit arduous, but it really changes the way you look at the landscape forever. I now see features everywhere that help me recognise the small quarries, mines and tramways that were once dotted everywhere. Finding a charcoal platform at Birchhill was exciting. There are actually very many of them in the Forest and I find myself spotting them wherever I go.

The digs have been such a pleasure to take part in. Working with other volunteers and experts has taught me so much. It is such a special feeling to be uncovering things that haven’t been seen by human eyes for such a long time. Another volunteer and I were lucky enough to find a piece of mediaeval pottery at the Yorkley Dig. The feeling as we spotted something different in amongst the earth was thrilling. Then scraping away and gradually revealing a piece of the past with people eagerly waiting to see what we’d found – it was such a great experience!

Volunteering on the project has been full of positives. I’ve made friends, such as Cathy who I’m working with on the research project and Elaine and David who I work with on the LIDAR project. It feels great to be involved in something that is all about looking after the Forest of Dean and keeping it special for future generations. More than anything, taking part in an archaeological dig has been something I have wanted to do since my university days, and finally through Foresters’ Forest I’m getting to realise that dream.”

Steve – New Leaf and Heritage Craft Skills

A born and bred Forester, Steve has a passion for woodland and green woodworking skills. Since being made redundant some years ago he has struggled to find work and true satisfaction. Finding the [New Leaf](#) project and volunteering at Kensley Sheds has helped him to develop his skills and has given him a new focus and a potential new career. Steve said,

“I’ve been interested in Bushcraft and primitive living skills for years and green woodwork has been a hobby. When I heard about the workshop at Kensley Sheds from a friend, it sounded just my thing.”

He got involved with New Leaf and met Scott Baine from the Rewild Project, who is project leader for [Heritage Craft Skills](#). He discovered a whole range of interesting courses and activities that he could take part in.

“I’ve learned lots of new skills with the Rewild Project courses – tanning, leatherwork, wool spinning. But I’ve also been able to develop my existing green woodworking skills and use them to help out on some of the courses as a volunteer.”

He said.

“It’s made a big difference. It has perpetuated what I do and has linked my skills together on a different level. It has improved my skills, and my confidence has grown greatly. It has shown me that I can teach other people new skills and that I could maybe use that to build a business.”

“I have gained some proper qualifications; Chainsaw Cross Cutting and Tree Felling City & Guilds and Adult Education Entrepreneurship and Preparation for Business.” Said Steve. “That has given me a real lift! I’m also the voluntary Site Manager over at Kensley Sheds for New Leaf.”

Steve has had some great experiences through his volunteering.

“I discovered that I really love tree felling. It’s a great feeling taking a tree down and I love the way we are being eco-friendly and low impact by using a tree and everything on it... I made my first green wood gate with Richard Gates, who is one of the best men in the UK teaching this kind of thing. It was a real buzz to learn from someone so renowned!”

Steve’s volunteering experience has motivated him with a range of plans.

“I want to get a teaching qualification and am going self-employed... I feel like I can make a living out of something that I enjoy, which is amazing!”

Follow Steve’s journey on Instagram [@ned_bushcrafter](#)

Emily – Voices from the Forest

Emily heard about Foresters' Forest on social media.

"Following the Facebook page has been an excellent way for me, as a busy mum, to keep in touch with what is going on. When I saw 'oral histories' come up, it caught my interest and I immediately wanted to get involved."

Emily told us,

"I was on maternity leave and I thought it would be an enjoyable thing to do with that time. I planned to do it with a sleeping baby in a basket – which sometimes worked out... and sometimes didn't!" She laughed. "But it gave me a bit of a focus and was good fun."

Emily is a freelancer working in radio so was already familiar with the equipment.

"I'm very interested in oral testimonies and I thought that this could be a perfect way of getting to know the place I live better, using skills that I already had... I also believe strongly in supporting and 'giving back' to the community, so this felt like a small thing that I could contribute."

Although Emily envisaged that the volunteer role would rely on skills that she already possessed, she was surprised at how much she learned through the initial training session.

"The training was excellent! It was fascinating learning about other oral history projects, and about the ethics of oral histories. I found it very useful."

Emily has gone on to record new oral histories with eight older residents of the Forest of Dean.

"I have learned so much about the Forest of Dean through these people's stories. I was truly amazed to hear about just how much the area has changed in less than eighty years, through tales of childhood with no electricity, no running water and Mothers who devoted every Monday entirely to the families' laundry."

"This past rural way of life is captivating. I loved hearing about the 'pig man' who arrived in Yorkley each year to slaughter the pigs kept by many families; about the sharing of a cider press that the whole community would come together to use; and the many stories of women going into service which I had not previously realised was so common."

Emily felt very honoured to have captured these stories and moments in time.

"I know that one of the men whom I interviewed has since passed away. I feel so privileged to have spoken to him and collected his story... I have been so moved by how people have opened up about their thoughts and experiences during the interviews."

Emily told us about one of her favourite moments:

"I interviewed a brother and sister who grew up near Flaxley. They went to Plump Hill School, which immediately struck a chord as it is a place that I am personally very familiar with. Their tales of childhood were just so charming: picking plums, walking to school and Chapel, really of a community that is now gone. Their education at Plump Hill School sounded beautiful and innovative and sadly so different from how our children learn now."

Her volunteering has altered her relationship with the Forest of Dean.

"It has changed the way I view the Forest forever; I can see the layers of history and have a far great sense of place."

Emily has now returned to work part-time as a freelancer for the BBC and has set up her own business making promotional films for local charities and organisations.

"I'm feeling much more connected to the Forest now and I'm so happy to be trying to base my work here rather than in Bristol."

She has sadly had less time to give to the project.

"I'm very keen to stay involved and I would love to take part in a catch-up session."

Emily feels that the experience will also have a long-term input into her career.

"I would love to do a bigger project focusing on oral histories at some point in the future... And I would enjoy seeing these stories shared more widely as they are so precious!"

Emily hopes to volunteer more for the project when she next has a gap in her schedule.

"I want to do more with the oral histories I have recorded, with more photos and help the project make them accessible to a wide audience."

Gerry – Volunteer with: Batscape, Waterways, and Reptiles

Gerry grew up in rural Ireland and has always loved the outdoors, wildlife and the environment. After a career in the Army, he has worked hard to build a new lifestyle and career which immerses him in the natural world. He now works as a Forest Ranger at Forest Holidays, where his job is to engage guests in the woodlands and wildlife by running activities and experiences. Volunteering for Foresters' Forest appealed to him because of the opportunity to plunge deeper into the ecology of the Forest of Dean and because of the community focus of the programme which engages so many local people in taking care of the precious local heritage.

Gerry has become a committed volunteer on several Foresters' Forest projects.

"I'm volunteering mainly on Batscape, Reptiles and Waterways..."

"The Forest of Dean has so many layers and being involved in several projects keeps deepening my understanding of how interlaced and connected they all are. The ecology is all linked for sure, but also the local history and heritage are inseparably tied in."

Gerry is loving his involvement and the opportunities it is allowing him.

"I've clocked up over sixty hours on Batscape alone so far. I've done Greater Horseshoe radio tracking and have been so privileged to go out with some prominent and highly experienced experts within the 'bat world'. I've witnessed the bats been caught and tagged [under licence] and see them being tagged. It's so rewarding to be a part of this and then see exactly where they go via the tracking."

Growing up in Ireland, where there are few reptiles, has made Gerry curious about these creatures, and during his travels in Australia and Asia he developed a real passion for them.

"The reptile monitoring is very exciting! Once I found two adders, one grass snake, nine slow worms and two common lizards in twenty minutes surveying a small area!"

"It's been great working with David Dewsbury [Reptiles Project Leader]. He has been able to help me establish an area near to where I work for regular reptile monitoring, which is very exciting."

Gerry's volunteering with Foresters' Forest has enriched many areas of his life. He is completing an Open University Degree in Environmental Studies.

"My experiences on the projects are all really feeding into my studies. I'm a big fan of restoring natural processes and I feel that I'm gaining a lot of understanding of that as I involve myself more."

"It is also enhancing my experience professionally; I can take all the knowledge back to feed into my Ranger walks and talks. My personal ethos is all about 'people power'."

Gerry explained,

"I'm passionate about environmental protection and I feel that as I develop my knowledge and understanding of the natural world, I can continue to enthuse about it to others. This can be incredibly powerful as those who feel more connected to nature are more likely to want to preserve and

protect it. Local level impacts are very important and in sharing my experiences gained through volunteering I feel that I am having a ripple effect through all the people that participate in my ranger activities. Foresters' Forest has a lot of 'people power' in this way, spreading outwards an appreciation for nature through all the many projects and local people involved."

Ann – Volunteer with: Love Your Forest, and Waterways

Ann is a long-term volunteer who has been a stalwart of Foresters' Forest litter picks for several years. She has also become involved in the Waterways project which has thrilled and benefited her in a way she never would have expected!

"Littering really needles me and because of that I'm still loving the litter picking after all this time!"

"What I find so satisfying about LOVE YOUR FOREST is that, as an individual you can do a bit of litter picking, but when you involve a who group of people, it is possible to achieve so much and make a real impact. Doing it in a team is great fun and I find the litter picks are always well organised and short enough to make a difference without becoming tedious."

Ann explained.

"Some locations have been so badly littered that we have had 'rich pickings' but it is so pleasing to see that we have made a significant difference to so many sites in the Forest."

Ann has also felt that litter picking has played an Important part in spreading the word about not littering locally and has helped to make dropping it more anti-social.

"Getting out and collecting litter has increased my appreciation of the Forest in all its aspects... and I intend to keep on keeping the Forest tidy!"

Ann also attended a training day for Riverfly Sampling as part of the Waterways project as a bit of an experiment, not sure whether it would be right for her.

"The training was really excellent, and I enjoyed it so much more than I thought I would. It gave me the confidence to do something new, and I've got so much out of it including making a really good friend.

Helping with these surveys has been a revelation and has given me a fun, educational and sociable activity each month."

Ann explained,

"Once a month, I meet Alison at a specially selected location that is both near to a stream and a good café! We carry out our river sampling using a three-minute kick sample (which more enjoyable than it sounds!), we then

assign different categories to the 'creepy-crawlies' collected which gives us a score to do with river water quality."

The informative and social aspect of the Waterways surveying has surprised and pleased Ann.

"Learning together, making discoveries and chatting about what we are doing has been really enjoyable."

"Seeing a development through time has also been encouraging. We are discovering new things each time, getting better at identifying, seeing small but fascinating changes such as the size of larvae changing each month. I so look forward to each time we go out and really want to continue doing it."

David – Volunteer with: Conservation Grazing

Looking after wild ponies in the Forest of Dean has helped volunteer David stay active, learn about conservation and make a real difference to his local landscape.

David volunteers with The Foresters' Forest Conservation Grazing project, led by Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust. The project has introduced areas of wild pony and cattle grazing in the Forest to improve habitat for a wider range of plants and wildlife. David is part of a team of trained Conservation Grazing volunteers who help Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust staff to check on the grazing animals.

Speaking about his background with horses, David said:

"I retired early due to problems with my balance and vision. I moved to Spain, where I learned to horse ride, and became aware for the first time of horses and how much I enjoyed being around them. A funny thing is that my condition makes it impossible for me to ride a bike but riding horses seems to work just fine, so these creatures represent something very special to me."

When David moved back to the Forest of Dean, volunteering quickly became an important part of his life.

"When we moved back to the UK, we were eventually drawn to the Forest of Dean because it just felt like such a great place... I've become extremely busy with all sorts of volunteering since moving here. Volunteering means a lot to me, it keeps me busy, active and provides structure and constant interest."

The Conservation Grazing project meant that for the first time, David could combine volunteering and ponies. He said:

"I hadn't been aware of Foresters' Forest until the Conservation Grazing project was about to start and needed stock checking volunteers."

“Because horses are really my thing, when I saw the signs up at Edgehills saying that Exmoor Ponies were coming, I was chomping at the bit to help!”

Speaking about his experience with the project, David said:

“Being a Stock Checker has involved some real adventures at Edgehills. We’ve had some great fun and games whilst encouraging the ponies to move from one reserve to the other, particularly when it’s been muddy! As volunteers we talk with local people about litter and not feeding the ponies, and I think it’s helped to raise awareness with people regularly walking in the area.”

Getting to know the ponies of the Forest has been a special part of the project for David.

“Being with the animals and caring for them is the highlight for me... I love it in the summer when you can get in amongst them and if you stand still for ages, they might come up and give you a nuzzle. It’s a careful balance that we have had to achieve as volunteers, because we need the ponies to feel relaxed with us so that we can check them, but we want them to remain wild and keep their distance from members of the public. We have got to know them well and have nicknames for some of the real characters.”

It’s not just the ponies that keep David busy.

“Volunteering has brought a social element that I didn’t expect... Regular visits to the site are crucial and it’s not uncommon to meet up with other members of the volunteer team during these. I’ve made some good friends, and feel completely in loop with the project, particularly through our Stock Checkers WhatsApp groups which is such an easy tool for interacting as a team.

“I do feel that I am fulfilling an important role, and the project leaders have made it clear that our volunteer involvement is really appreciated. The role is a real responsibility and commitment, so it is great to feel valued for what I do.”

The Conservation Grazing project ponies do an important job for nature, eating plants that dominate like bramble and gorse, and trampling bracken. It’s a natural way of managing the land for a wider range of animals and plants to thrive, including birds, reptiles and insects.



David has already noticed a difference in the Forest since starting as a volunteer.

“I have learned loads through my involvement with the project... The animals were my primary interest when I started, but my awareness of the conservation issues has grown enormously.

“It has been fascinating to see the effects happening. I have observed a gentle clearing of the ground, different species being more obvious. I’ve gradually seen more adders and a greater variety of birds at Edgehills.

“I’m wholeheartedly enjoying my role as a Stock Checker. I feel I am contributing to caring for the Forest of Dean in a small way, and I hope to continue supporting the Conservation Grazing Project for as long as I can.”

Appendix 2: Example of volunteer time recording sheet

		<h1>VOLUNTEER TIME RECORDING</h1>						
Please can I have the proper first and second name of the Volunteer. No initials please.	I'm attempting to make sure all our volunteers are registered, so please can you include their email address so I can contact any that are new names to me.	Please add the date the Volunteering was done, I need the actual day.	Please add the project name	Please provide a very short description of what they did:	Please add the number of hours that was volunteered into the correct column depending on the expertise level. Remember that this is in relation to the task they are doing - even the most highly knowledgeable tree expert would still be considered 'unskilled' if they were litter picking.	Please indicate if the time has been volunteered or has been paid (in kind). V or P		
					Hours per Task Category			
Full Name	Email address	Date	Project	Task Carried Out	Unskilled	Skilled	Expert	Volunteered or Paid (in kind)
An Other	Another@gmail.com	16/12/2019	Batscape	Trawl FoDDC planning applications and extract horseshoe bat data		3.5		v
An Other		06/01/2020	Batscape	Trawl FoDDC planning applications and extract horseshoe bat data		2		v
An Other		13/01/2020	Batscape	Trawl FoDDC planning applications and extract horseshoe bat data		1.25		v
An Other		20/01/2020	Batscape	Trawl FoDDC planning applications and extract horseshoe bat data		1.5		v
An Other		05/02/2020	Batscape	Trawl FoDDC planning applications and extract horseshoe bat data		1.5		v
An Other		10/02/2020	Batscape	Trawl FoDDC planning applications and extract horseshoe bat data; check previous entries		1		v
Volunteer Data Authorised by:			Project Leader Name: - note that this volunteer work was for various biodiversity-related projects where the data input took place at GCER		Project Leader Signature & Date: 12/3/2020			

Appendix 4: Feedback form utilised for training courses

THE FORESTERS' FOREST: Training Courses Feedback Form

Training:

Date:

Q1. What, if anything, did you like about the training course today? Please write in.

Q2. And what, if anything, did you dislike about the training course today? Please write in.

Q3. Overall, how satisfied were you with the training course today?
Please tick one box only.

Very satisfied
Quite satisfied
Quite dissatisfied
Very dissatisfied

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

Q4. How could the training course be improved? Please write in.

Q5. Do you feel that you have increased your knowledge of heritage in the Forest today?
Please tick one box only.

Yes, a lot
Yes, a little
No, not at all

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

Q6. Do you feel that you have developed your skills today?
Please tick one box only.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Yes, developed new skills | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Yes, developed existing skills | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| No | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Q7. What skills in particular were they? Please write in.

Q8. What will you do as a result of this training, as part of the Foresters' Forest programme? Please write in.

Q9. What was your reason(s) for coming on this course? Please tick multiple boxes.

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| To learn more about the Forest | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| To learn more about topic of course | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| To gain experience | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| To develop skills | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| To do something useful in the community | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| To meet new people | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| To improve the Forest | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (please write in) _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Q10. As we need to report to the Heritage Lottery Fund about the people who take part in our training courses, please complete the questions below about yourself.

10. Are you...?

- | | |
|--------|--------------------------|
| Male | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Female | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- | | | |
|-----|----------------|--------------------------|
| Age | Up to 11 years | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 11-13 yrs | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 14-16 yrs | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 17-18 yrs | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 19-25 yrs | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 26-44 yrs | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 45-59 yrs | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 60-74 yrs | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 75-84 yrs | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Over 85 yrs | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Asian (Bangladeshi, Indian, Pakastani, Other) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Asian (Chinese) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Black (Carribbean, African, Other) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Mixed Ethnic Group | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| White | <input type="checkbox"/> |

11. What is your postcode? Please write in. _____

12a. Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

12b. What type of disability is that?

Deafness or partial hearing loss	<input type="checkbox"/>	Blindness or partial sight loss	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	Physical disability	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developmental disorder	<input type="checkbox"/>	Long-term illness, disease or condition	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mental health condition	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (write in) _____	

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS FORM.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO KNOW ABOUT OTHER TRAINING COURSES/ VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN FORESTERS' FOREST, please contact forestersforest@fvaf.org.uk 01594 822073

Appendix 5: Example of feedback from one of the Foresters' Forest Mini-bus tours

FORESTERS' FOREST MINIBUS TOUR - Collated feedback Wednesday 10th July 2019

Site/Project	Have you learnt anything new?	Comments/Questions
Scarr Bandstand	<p>I learnt the history of the stand and type of events being held but came across stand on walk. That it's here. Yes, never been here before. Important part of forest heritage that I didn't know about. Yes, hadn't been to bandstand and knew nothing of its history. Never been to bandstand before – had no idea of its history. Yes. Yes, origin of bandstand re Hospital fund. Had not heard of the venue. Didn't know site was here or that site was used to fund miners healthcare. That children can use it/hire it. Yes, where it is, the history – what's available. No knowledge about it – very interesting. Yes, knew of it but had not visited. Fascinating history.</p>	<p>What a great possible venue for open-air theatre. Very good. Want to attend one of the events on here. In addition to schools, would be good for youth musical theatre groups. Would be good to get young bands involved such as a festival? Very good. Great for performing arts groups and events. Are events advertised outside the Forest of Dean? Very interesting. Everyone can use it.</p>
Darkhill Ironworks & Titanic Steelworks	<p>Although I've heard of them I've never been to explore. I've learnt about the importance of steel. Didn't know it exists. Very impressed. Outstanding heritage.</p>	<p>Fascinating. Very good. Need to come – spend more time here. Good. Nice signage.</p>

	<p>Yes, wasn't aware of Titanic steelworks. Again, no idea of the history and I've lived in forest my whole life. No. Yes, basis for other more commercial works. All new. Has heard of the Mushets but didn't know were based in the Forest of Dean. That it exists. Where the Titanic works are. I didn't know about it at all.</p>	<p>Titanic looked very overgrown but Darkhill looked good from viewpoint. I will be walking here with my husband in the future. Need to explore this site on bike.</p>
<p>Coleford's Hidden Heritage app & Hidden Heritage of the Dean app projects</p>	<p>Am familiar with the app – it's an amazing way to see past and present. All new to me. Good for hearing. Didn't know about the app.amazing service. Had heard of app but not seen it in action. Such a good idea – didn't know about the app. No. Got it, used it. App sounds great. Didn't know Cinderford was next project. That you can use heritage app. Already aware. I knew about application. Interesting to hear about Cinderford project.</p>	<p>Worth exploring. Interesting app. Very good. Will be trying this for myself. Good that app doesn't rely on phone signal – really interesting. Think it will engage my children. Good. App works well and mix of drawings and photos work well. Need to download it.</p>
<p>Clearwell Caves (A Future for Freemining and Batscape projects)</p>	<p>I came to the caves 5 years ago before we moved here and found it fascinating. I've learnt so much, fascinating. How extensive it is. Ancient history of mining here, the hard life. Great tour. Amazing heritage and bat project. No. Interesting new features since last visit, aspects of mining didn't know about.</p>	<p>Fascinating – very knowledgeable guide. Excellent. Will be offering this as a day out to guests. Good. Very informative, great venue. Will definitely visit again. Great to hear about wildlife ie the bats and sound location was fascinating. Will come back for deep exploration or Xmas project.</p>

	<p>Great visit and tour – very interesting. Haven't been for a long time, good to learn more with a guide around the site. How big the caves are and all about the life as the miner and how it compares to other mines. So much more there, very interesting talk and walk. Knew about caves but hadn't been. All new to me...very informative and a great sense of forest history.</p>	<p>Will be back.</p>
<p>Walking with Wheels project, FVAF and Forest Holidays</p>	<p>A great asset to the forest. Never been to this site. Lovely café. Great asset. A great facility to offer visitors. Yes, useful info. No. Excellent; I want one. All new. Didn't know they were available to hire by anyone. I had no idea this was here. You can book it hourly, costs £2.50 – very interesting. Definitely brilliant idea. Forest should be accessible for loads of people.</p>	<p>A wonderful place to stay when you visit – the reason we moved here. The cabins – looks great. Good. Good to open the opportunity of a walk in the forest to everyone. More in more places eg, to access sculpture trail would be great. Good. Great, very accessible. Really good scheme at low hire price. Will there be more than two in the future? Now know what is available so I can inform visitors at Tourist Info Centre, Coleford. Want to see more.</p>
<p>Worcester Walk Community Project</p>	<p>A little gem tucked away and a peaceful asset for the community. I live nearby so know about the project. Love this project. Peaceful community project – would like to get involved.</p> <p>Really interesting to learn about the project – lovely place. Yes. Interesting to see how it works out. Knew where Worcester lodge was but not that the meadow site was next door and accessible.</p>	<p>Needs more publicity and signing. A real opportunity for schools and community to get hands-on. Amazed at people's enthusiasm and dedication. Good. Might look into volunteering.</p>

	<p>I had no idea this was here. Lovely area. I didn't know it existed, so beautiful, so many butterflies. Not knowledgeable about this. All completely new to me. Great project.</p>	
<p>Hopewell Colliery (A Future for Freemining project)</p>	<p>Brilliant! A great comparison with Clearwell. Learnt about the way coal was mined, the conditions for men and children. Grim work, especially past. New experience for me. Every child should go. How coal was and is mined now. Yes. Done before but Rich was very interesting. All new. About the miners lives/working conditions. About the free-mining Lovely café/outside seating area – tour not done. Was aware of it but hadn't been. Brilliant place to go with family/friends for a picnic. Great experience and all new to me.</p>	<p>Thank you for a lovely lunch. Loved the total darkness. Excellent. Excellent tour. Excellent food. Food was fantastic. Very good. Very knowledgeable guide and made experience interesting. Always wanted to visit, very enjoyable and great guides. Will visit again.</p>
<p>Site/Project</p>	<p>Have you learnt anything new?</p>	<p>Comments/Questions</p>
<p>Beechenhurst and Sculpture Trail (Forestry England and Working with Schools' project)</p>	<p>A variety of activities for all. Climbing wall – I learnt you can just turn up. New sculpture. New Treetop adventure, Zog trail, etc Super facility. Very good family area, interesting idea with info packs. Ranger in a Bag kit will be very useful. Didn't know there was a younger 'GoApe' on site. Yes. Good to see work done to help school children understand the forest. All new.</p>	<p>Parking expensive – local rates? Must do the trail again, see what's new. Schools project should appeal to schools and children. Great place to visit. Could hotel have an info pack? Changing places will be a huge boost for site as would more inclusive play equipment such as a wheelchair swing. Good. Ranger in a Bag is a great way to integrate other projects into education.</p>

	<p>Ranger in a Bag sounds like a great idea for schools. They have climbing here, half-marathons. Backpacks can be borrowed (by schools) for three weeks. About other activities, new ladies' toilets, etc. (interesting info about Working with Schools' project). Know about sculpture trail but interesting to find out about packs and children's activities.</p>	<p>Could similar but smaller bags be available for parents to use at sites?</p>
<p>GWT Woogreens/Crabtree Hill – Conservation Grazing, Birds (RSPB), Reptiles projects</p>	<p>Learnt about how the habitat is managed, about the principles behind the project. Gret project. Very good. Had no idea it was so vast. Yes, really interesting to hear how the area is evolving with natural intervention. No idea area was there. Yes. Interesting to see people's reaction to the truth about the fences. All new. About different habitats needed by British wildlife. Yes, about thinning of the forest habitat, birds, etc Not aware of this. Thought I knew all about this; turns out I didn't!</p>	<p>Excellent talk, loads of information. Really impressed. Keep going. Must explore this site. Had no idea keeping the area 'wild' took so much work. Very good. Great intro to 'Rewilding' or habitat restoration. Investigating learning about long term plans for open areas and about lifecycles of species/processes used at site. Good to see current developments. More aware of why trees are cut down in the middle of the forest. Has inspired me to become a stock-checker.</p>
<p>Dean Heritage Centre (Voices from the Forest, Working with Schools' projects)</p>	<p>A great day out for family, anyone interested in history. Learnt about recordings. Great museum. Great visit. Lots of info on past forest life. Yes, looking forward to being able to access oral histories. Yes. Much improved from my last visit 20 years ago. Voices project very interesting. All new.</p>	<p>A bit short at the centre – more time, but can go back. I look forward to having a proper look around. Must be kept going. Great place to send people for snapshot of forest heritage. Good. Good centre to base activities from. Wish more time was allocated to this site but will visit again to see rest of the site. Lovely art work. Will come back.</p>

	<p>Didn't know there were so many exhibitions and sections to explore.</p> <p>I've been here a few times before. There are some excellent artists in the Forest of Dean.</p> <p>No, visited two months ago.</p> <p>Was aware but hadn't been inside.</p> <p>Will be good to see how the Voices project progresses.</p>	
<p>Overall: What did you think of the Foresters' Forest tour?</p>	<p>Fantastic! Well organised. Lovely day.</p> <p>Fantastic, a real eye-opener.</p> <p>Excellent project.</p> <p>This has been an excellent day, would recommend it.</p> <p>Very informative.</p> <p>Really had no idea all of the various projects were going on.</p> <p>I loved it.</p> <p>Very good, used good speakers.</p> <p>All new.</p> <p>Fantastic.</p> <p>Opened my eyes to areas I had not known about before.</p> <p>Leaders' were all very informative and knowledgeable.</p> <p>Brilliant. Highly recommended and so happy to have gone on this trip.</p> <p>Brilliant, passionate, enthusiastic guides, well-planned and managed.</p>	<p>Sue and Helen are great hosts and really welcoming and friendly.</p> <p>Very worthwhile.</p> <p>Wish I'd done this tour 20 years ago.</p> <p>Very much enjoyed even if I was not able to enjoy all of the projects.</p> <p>Good.</p> <p>Brilliant. Great showcase. Very informative guides and speakers.</p> <p>Great tour at a very good pace. Great knowledge from those leading each section.</p> <p>Cannot believe that all those sites are just on my doorstep.</p>
<p>Will you take any action as a result of being on the tour?</p> <p>Do you have any suggestions for improvements?</p>	<p>Tell everyone about the projects. May volunteer.</p> <p>Support it, promote it in whatever way I can. Visit it – or various parts. Spread the word. Volunteer.</p> <p>Work to keep these sites going.</p> <p>Can recommend any of these places to visitors to area with confidence.</p> <p>I will be using the tramper with my family in the future.</p> <p>Walk in the woods more.</p> <p>No, not sure that I can. No.</p>	<p>Thank you for the opportunity.</p> <p>Excellent lunch too.</p> <p>Contribution of GWT content to various projects. I think this is really great.</p> <p>Revisiting several sites and look into volunteering in project. more time at Dean Heritage Centre could be better.</p>

	<p>I will recommend this to other teachers. None. Go on some more walks. Inform visitors to Tourist Info Centre about heritage in Forest of Dean. Will come back and go to other projects on leaflet. It was lovely. More informed at Tourist Info office. Hope to become a stock-checker.</p>	<p>Will download heritage app and learn about other attractions.</p>
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Appendix 6: What do the Verderers of the Forest of Dean do?

Analysis of data from the 2019 and 2018 On-line Surveys

We have not drawn any direct comparisons between the 2018 and 2019 surveys regarding the question exploring respondent's perceptions of the role of the Verderers in the Forest. A brief summary of the results of the 2019 survey, and a more in-depth analysis from 2018 are presented below. A total of 402 people responded to the 2019 survey. The proportion of the sample that were engaged in volunteering or some form of activity within the FF Programme was significantly higher than the much larger sample (n=779) obtained for the 2018 survey.

A review of responses to the open-ended question regarding the role of Verderers is presented below. Due to the nature of the responses the categories of response do not fully match up, but there is sufficient similarity between the categories with the highest response rates to draw some basic conclusions. Table A6.1 below indicates the proportion of each sample falling into the response categories is not that different. It is interesting to note that the proportion indicating 'Do not know' is smaller for the 2019 survey sample than for 2018. However, it must be emphasised that the 2019 sample has a higher proportion of respondents who have taken part in FF Programme activities and/or volunteered, so we would expect the proportion of the sample indicating 'Don't know' to be lower. It is also worth noting that almost 20% of each sample indicated that 'Caring for the forest/protect and manage the Forest' was the prime role of Verderers. A larger proportion of the sample in 2019 felt that 'Administer and maintain forest Laws and Byelaws' was a key role of Verderers, but this is a slightly broader category than that utilised in 2018, so it might be expected to be larger.

Category	2018 Survey (%) (n=779)	Category	2019 Survey (%) (n=402)
Don't Know	20.53%	Don't know	16.7%
Care for the forest /Look after aspects of forest	19.13%	Protect and manage the Forest, protect the wildlife, habitat, flora and fauna	18.4%
Administer Forest Law	12%	Administer and maintain forest Laws and Byelaws	19.2%
Manage aspects of forest	7.70%	Manage, administer the Forest on behalf of crown; manage aspects of Forest such as deer and boar	5.7%
Act as Guardians/protect forest	6.29%	Act as guardians, look after rights, traditions, interests of the Forest	19.7%
		Overlook Freemaners mining for and quarrying for stone, iron, coal	7.2%
		Ensure protection and maintenance of vert and venison	9.2%
Act as a Court	3.21%	Act as a court, meet at Speech House; adjudicate Forest disputes	10.7%
Make decisions	2.82%		1.5%
Manage/administer forest on behalf of Crown/Queen	1.16%		3.0%

Table A6.1. Comparison of responses relating to the question: What do the Verderers of the Forest of Dean do? 2018 and 2019 On-line survey responses.

(Note: values do not add up to 100 as not all categories of response are included)

2019 On-line Survey response to the question: What do the Verderers of the Forest of Dean do?

As with the 2018 On-line survey, there was an extensive range of responses to the open-ended question regarding '*What do the Verderers of the Forest of Dean do?*', and these have been summarised below in Figure A6.1. Note that the total adds up to more than 100% as some respondents provided statements that fit into more than one category.

The most frequent responses related to 'looking after the rights, traditions and interests of the Forest' (19.7%), 'Administer/maintain Forest law/byelaws' (19.2%) and 'Protect and manage the Forest, flora and fauna, wildlife and habitat'(18.4%). In addition, 16.7% of the sample indicated 'Don't know' in response to the question.

It is also interesting to note that some respondents felt that Verderers still had a strong role in managing conflict within the Forest; 10.7% indicated that Verderers 'Act as a court, meet at Speech

House; adjudicate Forest disputes' in response to the question. A slightly smaller proportion perceived the Verderers as having a relatively strong role in managing Freeminers. A total of 7.2% of the sample indicated that a role for the Verderers was to 'Overlook Freeminers mining for and quarrying for stone, iron, coal'.

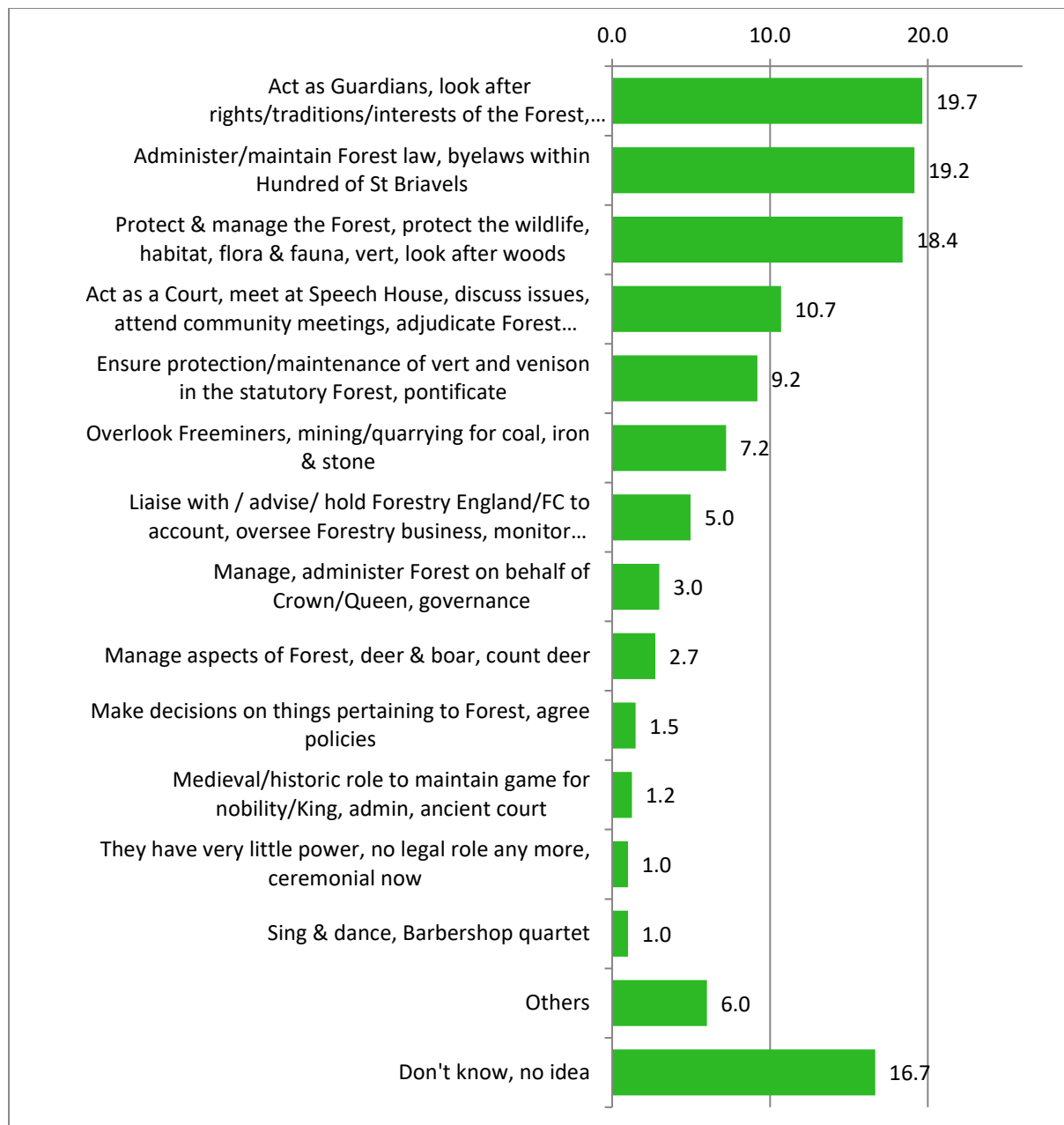


Figure A6.1. Summary of responses to the open-ended question: What do the Verderers of the Forest of Dean do? On-line survey 2019 (n = 402)

2018 On-line Survey response to the question: What do the Verderers of the Forest of Dean do?

The Forester's Forest on-line survey conducted during the February - March 2018 period, included a question to explore the level of understanding of the role of the Verderers of the Forest of Dean. It was a single open-ended question that asked respondents to indicate in their own words what they understood about the role of the Verderers.

A total of 779 respondents provided some form of written answer to the question. The responses have been coded by category of response. The largest proportion of respondents (20.53% or just over one fifth of the sample) indicated that did not know what the Verderer's do. Slightly under one fifth of the sample (19.13%) indicated that the Verderers 'care for or looked after' the Forest in some way while 16.94% identified a specific activity that they felt the Verderers carried out. Note – these 'specific roles' are analysed in more detail in Figure A6.2 and Table A6.2 below.

Almost 14% of the sample specifically indicated some form of protection and/or management role in relation to the forest. A further 12% of the sample indicated that the Verderers engage in 'administering' Forest Law, although it is not clear whether they understood the nature of 'Forest Law'. Smaller proportions of the sample indicated a number of roles including: decision making on forest management (2.82%), making rules or exerting some form of control over the Forest (1.54%), and managing the forest on behalf of the crown (or the Queen) (1.16%). Just under 5% of the sample indicated that in their view the Verderers did not do very much. Sample responses ranged from 'cutting the grass' to 'raising money as a charity' with several respondents indicating that the role was 'largely ceremonial'. Responses included the following:

"debatable actually what they do really do!"

"Don't really know. I probably see them as more symbolic of heritage than performing a current function"

"Have meetings at the speech house"

"Not a lot"

"Not entirely sure other than hold meetings and look regal! Something about an ancient court."

"Occasionally meet to chat and have a cup of tea."

"Sustain tradition by continuing to hold court at speech house- in reality, they 'do' very little."

"They are judicial officers."

Overall, the data suggest that around two-thirds to three-quarters of the sample had some indication that the Verderers are involved with looking after one or more aspects of the Forest, although the exact nature of their role seems less clear.

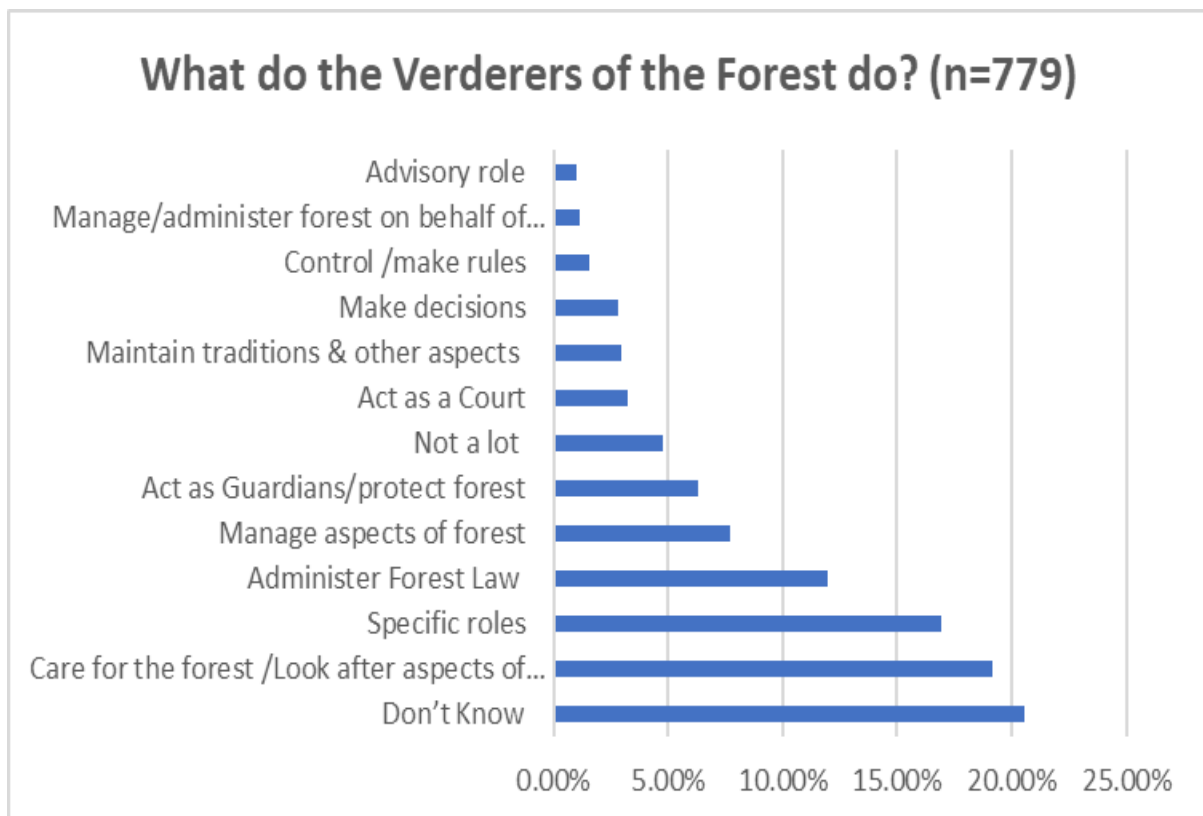


Figure A6.2. Summary of responses to the open-ended question: What do the Verderers of the Forest of Dean do? On-line survey 2018 (n = 779)

Category	Percent (%)	Number
Don't Know	20.53%	160
Care for the forest /Look after aspects of forest	19.13%	149
Specific roles	16.94%	132
Administer Forest Law	12%	93
Manage aspects of forest	7.70%	60
Act as Guardians/protect forest	6.29%	49
Not a lot	4.75%	37
Act as a Court	3.21%	25
Maintain traditions & other aspects	2.95%	23
Make decisions	2.82%	22
Control /make rules	1.54%	12
Manage/administer forest on behalf of Crown/Queen	1.16%	9
Advisory role	1.03%	8
Total	100.0%	779

Table A6.2. Summary of responses to the open-ended question: What do the Verderers of the Forest of Dean do? On-line survey 2018 (n = 779)

A total of 130 respondents identified some specific type of role for the Verderers (beyond simple references to protecting the forest or administering forest law) and these are analysed in more detail in Figure A6.3 and Table A6.3 below. The responses were assigned to one of eight categories. The largest proportion of respondents fall under the 'miscellaneous' (19.23%) and 'common land/common rights' (also 19.23% of the sample) categories. 'Miscellaneous' includes a wide range of activities that could not easily be categorised including the following responses:

"Advocates for the forest"

"Aim to protect natural landscape in FOD"

"Caretakers of the forest"

"Educate"

"help repair projects"

"Keep a record of the history and it's forest laws"

"Prune the greenery on trees"

"Safeguard the forest for residents and workers, resources"

"Set local laws and resolve disagreements"

"Tend to hedgerows"

"They help animals in the forest of dean . And also living creatures."

"Welfare for Boar and Deer"

There were a significant number of references to the Verderers having a role in managing or exercising common rights, or common land, or resolving disputes over rights. In some cases respondents suggested the Verderers themselves exercised rights of common and several suggested that their role was one of 'overseeing' either common land or rights. A sample of responses is indicated below:

"Committee for commoners"

"Have rights on the common land"

"In charge sheep grazing and common land rights"

"Keepers/caretakers of the common forest land"

"Legal system within the Forest, protecting the rights of those born with the 100 of St Briavels."

Meet at the speech house once a year to iron out commoners rights

"Oversee the rights of sheep badgering and mining rights"

"Responsible for certain rights within the forest ..sheep badgers, etc"

"run the forest grazing / mining rights in the forest out of the Speech house hotel"

"They are officials of common land"

A significant proportion of respondents (16.92%) indicated the Verderers carry out a 'governance' or 'control' function in relation to the Forest. This includes references to being 'in charge of Forest laws', 'overseeing the work of the Forestry commission', and 'governing the forest, its management and uses'. Just under one tenth of respondents (9.23%) noted a specific role in relation to mining (including actually digging out coal or ochre), and one sixth (15.38%) indicated some form of livestock management control with some respondents seeming to suggest that the Verderer's grazed their own sheep (for example: '*allow their sheep to roam*'; '*graze their sheep*'; '*Own free range livestock*'). A smaller proportion also suggested that the Verderers role involved managing cycling and/or mountain biking (5.38%).

The reader must keep in mind that the percentage figures presented here are a breakdown of the 130 respondents within the overall sample (i.e. 17% of the overall total of 779 respondents) that identified a specific role for the Verderers.

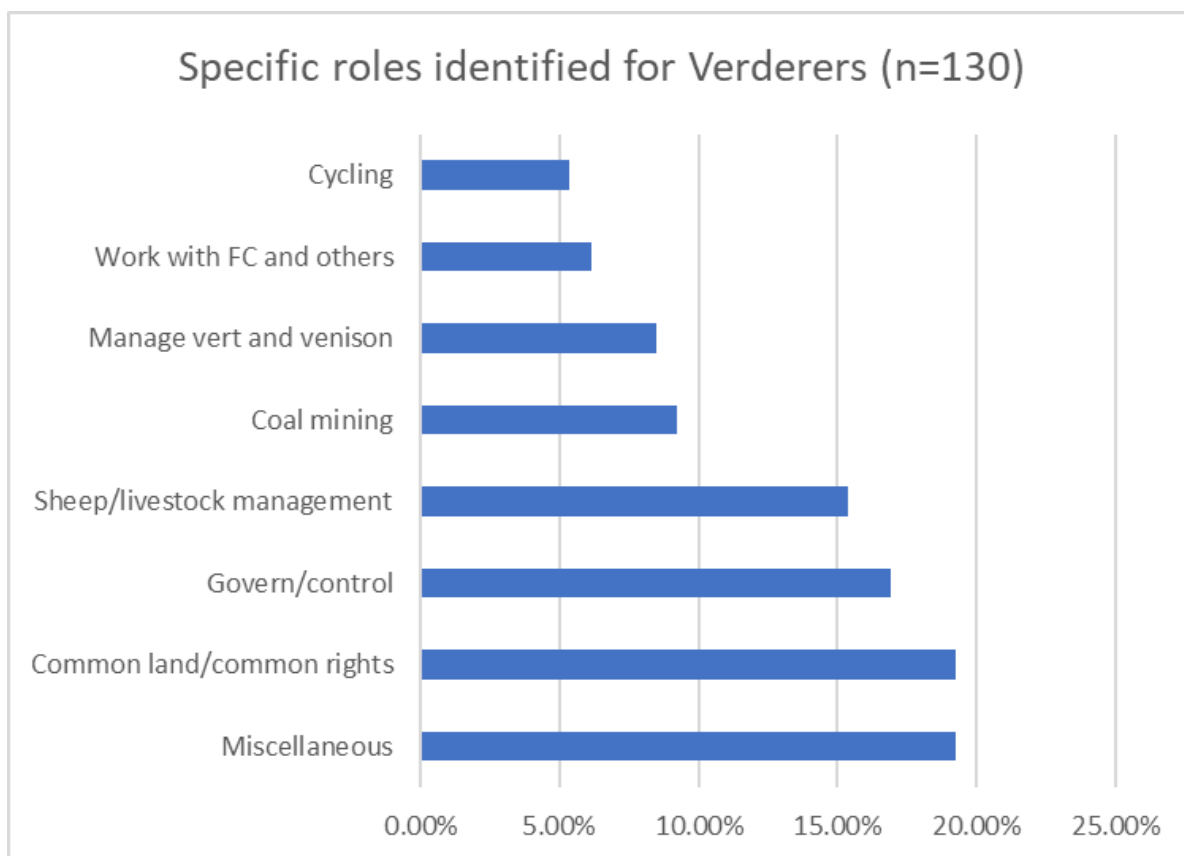


Figure A6.3. Respondent perception of specific roles undertaken by the Verderers. On-line survey 2018 (n = 130)

Category	Percent (%)	Number
Miscellaneous	19.23%	25
Common land/common rights	19.23%	25
Govern/control	16.92%	22
Sheep/livestock management	15.38%	20
Coal mining	9.23%	12
Manage vert and venison	8.46%	11
Work with FC and others	6.15%	8
Cycling	5.38%	7
Total	99.98%	130

Table A6.3. Respondent perception of specific roles undertaken by the Verderers. On-line survey 2018 (n = 130)

Appendix 7: Demographic characteristics of the Foresters' Forest Programme area.

Source: Monitoring and Evaluation of the Foresters' Forest HLF Landscape Partnership Programme in the Forest of Dean: Development Phase Evaluation Report, Section 3. The Countryside and Community Research Institute, October 2016

Section 3. Introduction and background context (including key characteristics of the area)

3.1 Characteristics of the Hundred of St. Briavels

The Foresters' Forest Programme is delivered across the area of the Hundred of St. Briavels, an area of land totalling 48,327 acres (19,557 hectares) about which there has been some dispute over the years in terms of its boundaries ever since the first mention of St. Briavels in 1161².

Table 57 and Figure 51 below illustrate the age structure of the population for the Hundred of St. Briavels and England. Data are taken from the most recent (2011) census. Super Output Lower Layer data has been accumulated for all the areas within the Hundred of St. Briavels. The proportion of each Super Output Area lying within the boundary of the Hundred was utilised to determine the relevant proportion of the population within the Hundred of St. Briavels. The total population of the Hundred (2011 Census) was 44,260 with 20% of the total under 18 yrs of age and 27.8% over the age of 60 yrs.

The age structure is similar to that across the rest of England but with slightly smaller proportions of those in the younger age categories (below 44 yrs of age) and slightly more in the age categories of 45 yrs and above suggesting an older population than compared to the rest of England.

Age range (years)	Hundred of St Briavels		England
	Number of people	Proportion of total	Proportion of total
0 to 4	2334	5.3%	6.3%
5 to 7	1405	3.2%	3.4%
8 to 9	883	2.0%	2.2%
10 to 14	2543	5.7%	5.8%
15	574	1.3%	1.2%
16 to 17	1121	2.5%	2.5%
18 to 19	908	2.1%	2.6%
20 to 24	2213	5.0%	6.8%
25 to 29	1973	4.5%	6.9%
30 to 44	8093	18.3%	20.6%
45 to 59	9879	22.3%	19.4%

² Hart, C.E. (1945) The Origin and the Geographical extent of the Hundred of St. Briavels in Gloucestershire.

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

60 to 64	3424	7.7%	6.0%
65 to 74	5014	11.3%	8.6%
75 to 84	2792	6.3%	5.5%
85 to 89	741	1.7%	1.5%
90 and Over	365	0.8%	0.8%
TOTAL	44260	100	100

Table 57 - Age Structure of the Population of the Hundred of St. Briavels

Note: Hundred of St. Briavels below national average above national average

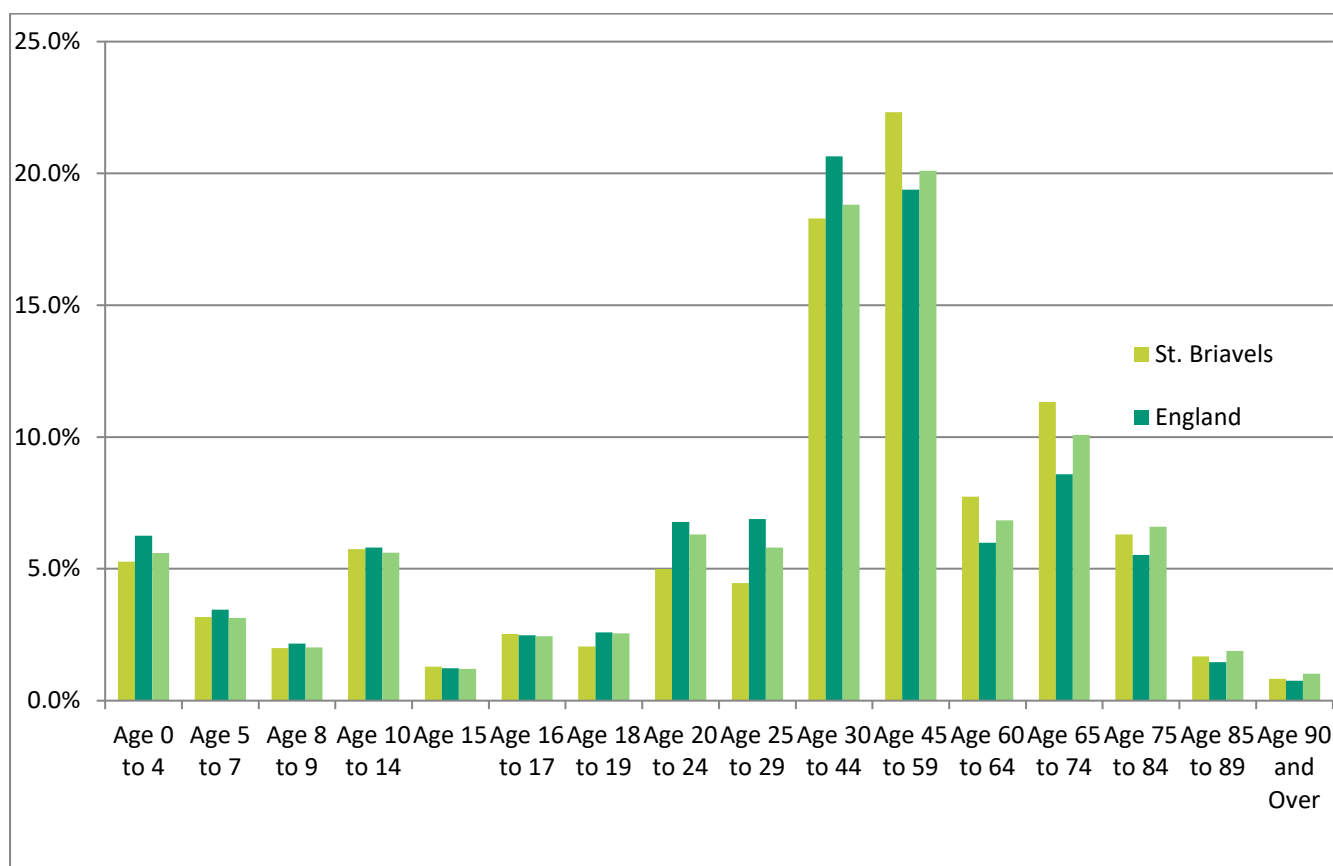


Figure 51 - Age structure of the population: comparison of the Hundred of St. Briavels with the SW Region and England

Figure 52 illustrates the change in population age structure over the previous two census periods (2001 and 2011) for the Hundred of St Briavels (figures compiled using Super Output Area Lower Layer data from the Office for National Statistics based on 2001 and 2011 national census data). The figures indicate there has been a slight decline in those under 13 yrs and a larger increase in older people (those over 60 years of age) over the ten-year period. Overall this suggests a slight trend towards an older population. An increase in 'one-person' and 'married couple-no dependent children' households, and a slight reduction in the proportion of those living in 'married couple – dependent children' households also suggest an aging population.

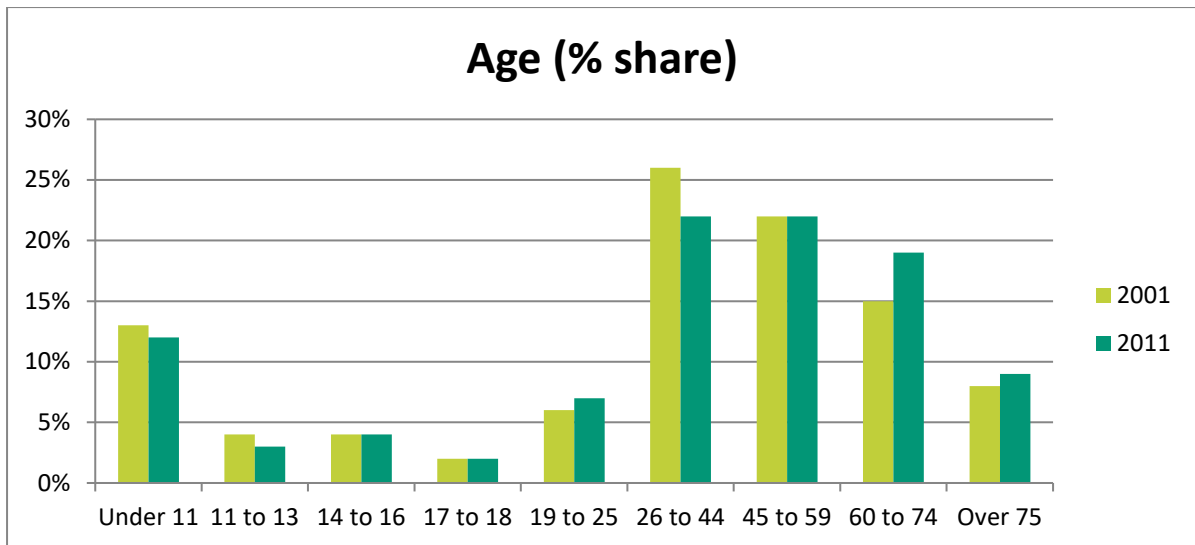


Figure 52 - Comparison of age structure of the population of the Hundred of St. Briavels

There has been a slight change in the ethnic structure of the population over the 2001-2011 period (Figure 53) with relatively small increases in the numbers identifying themselves as Black, Asian, or of mixed ethnic origin and in 2011 accounting for 1.4% of the population (up from 0.95 of the population in 2001).

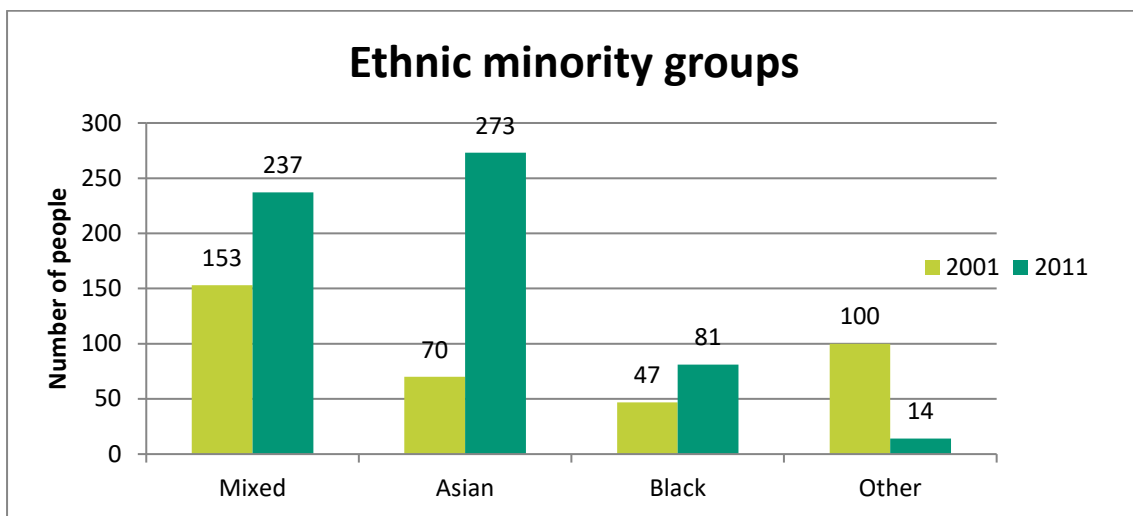


Figure 53 - Comparison of change in the ethnic structure of the population of the Hundred of St. Briavels

(2011 census data indicate approximately 1.48% of the population is of ethnic origin)

Predicting future demographic change is difficult but recent studies carried out for the Forest of Dean District Council give some indication of changes that may occur. It is worth noting that the Forest of Dean District is a larger area than the Hundred of St Briavels with a population of 82,700 in 2012 and a projected population increase of 4.2% over the period 2012-2021 with the largest change in the over 65 yrs age category, which is anticipated to increase by 24% over the period. Net migration is anticipated to only account for a small proportion of these changes (500 persons over the 2012-21 period) though the source of in-migration is not

known. Demographic data from the Forest of Dean District Council website³ suggests a 2.5% population increase over the period 2003-12. It also suggests a 9% decrease in the 0-15 yrs age group (compared to a 2.9% increase for England) and a 25.5% increase in those aged 65 years and older (compared to a 14.2% increase for England). As the Hundred of St. Briavels lies largely within the Forest of Dean District, many of these anticipated changes will be applicable.

Figure 54 indicates an increase in single households and married couples with no dependent children). This is supported by the increasing number of people commuting out of the area to work on a daily basis and the loss of large local employers such as Rank Xerox in Mitcheldean (which finally closed in 2010 and at one time employed 5,000 people). An estimated 15% of people of working age in the Forest of Dean travel to Gloucester for work, and an unknown number commute to the South Gloucestershire and Bristol area⁴. A 2004 study⁵ on out-commuting from the Forest of Dean District Council revealed that 36.9% of the employed population of the District (an estimated 14,000 people) who are resident in the Forest of Dean work outside the District. At the time this was the second highest figure in Gloucestershire for out-commuting and showed an increase of approximately 5% from 1991. Highest rates (over 46%) were found to come from the northern and southern edges of the District with lowest rates found in and around Lydney, Coleford and Cinderford. In 2004 the city of Gloucester was the main destination for out-commuters (33%), followed by South Wales and Monmouthshire, and the West Midlands.

³ https://www.fdean.gov.uk/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=7203&tt=graphic

https://www.fdean.gov.uk/media/Assets/Improvement-Policy/documents/Community%20Profile/Demographic%20Profile/Forest_of_Dein_Demography_Local_Profile_2013.pdf)

⁴ Source: Gloucestershire Local Economic Assessment 2011, Chapter 3: People and Communities. <http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/inform/index.cfm?articleid=94005>

⁵ Payne, J. (2004) Out-commuting from the Forest of Dean. A Report to Forest of Dean District Council.

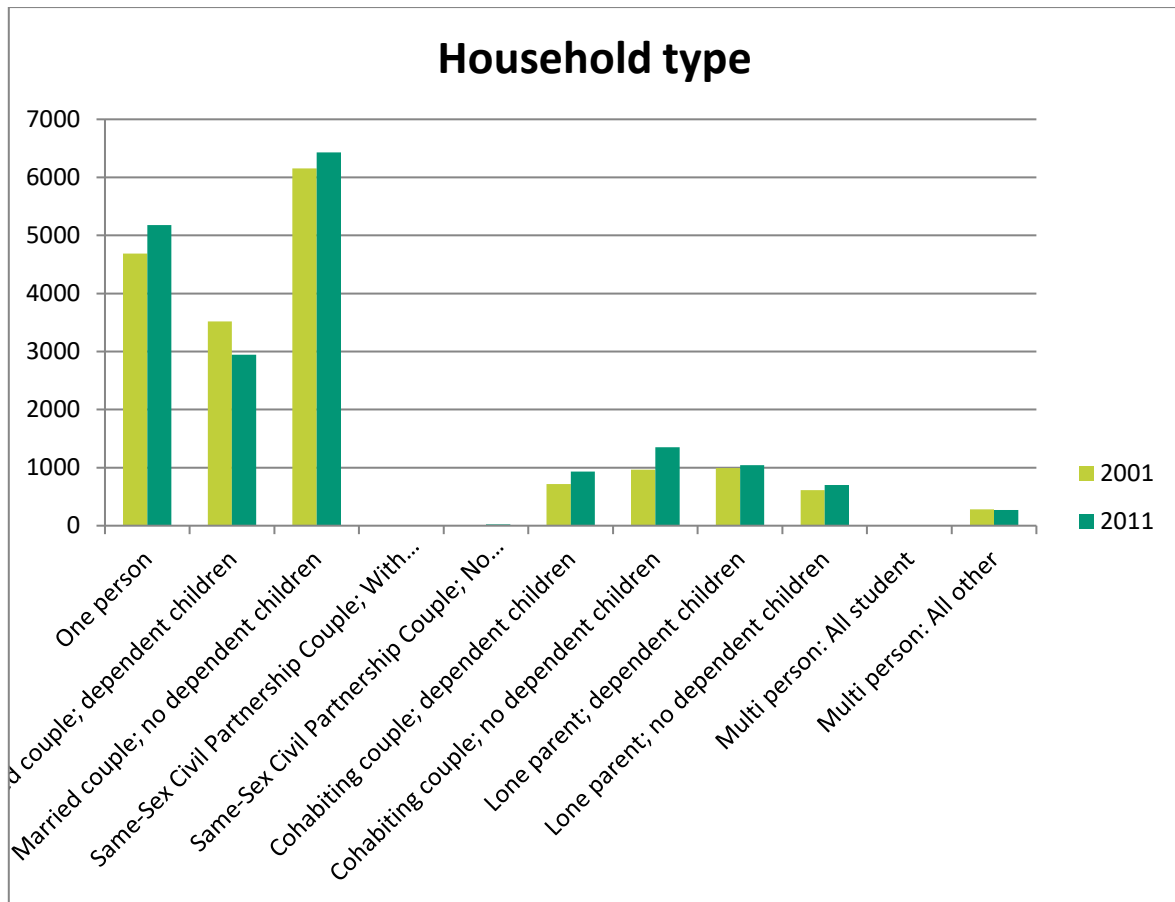


Figure 54 - Household characteristics in the Hundred of St Briavels, 2001 - 2011



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