

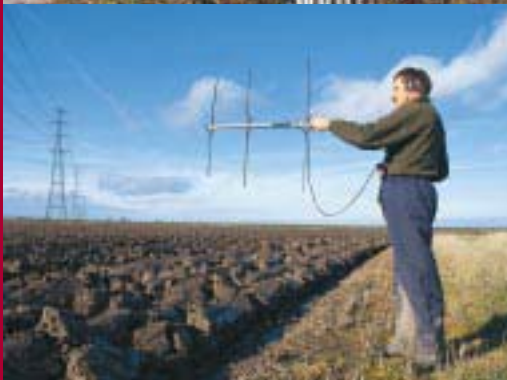


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Nature for people: the importance of green spaces to East Midlands communities

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Nature for people: the importance of green spaces to East Midlands communities

Simon Bell, Nina Morris, Catherine Findlay,
Penny Travlou, Alicia Montarzano, Diana Gooch,
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Executive summary

This report describes the results of research into the importance of nature to East Midlands' communities, as experienced through publicly accessible green spaces. It was undertaken for English Nature by the OPENspace Research Centre based at Edinburgh College of Art/Heriot Watt University. The research was undertaken over the spring and summer of 2003 using a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies (section 1.1).

Aim of the Project

The aim of the project was to specify the contribution that "nature" in green spaces make to people's social well-being by examining the use people make of, and the feelings that they have towards, a selected number of artificial and natural green space sites throughout the East Midlands. As this was a regional study, the sites were selected to fall more or less equally in each of the region's counties. Its findings may be significant at a national level as well, having relevance to other UK regions (section 1.3).

The target audience for the study was the Regional Assembly and all the partners that it is working with to develop social strategies for the region within its Integrated Regional Strategy. The study will also be relevant to other regional policy makers and funders, including Strategic Sub-regional Partnerships (section 1.3.2).

Methodology

The research involved exploring key issues with members of the public in a number of focus groups located in different parts of the East Midland area. The results of the focus group research informed the development of a questionnaire used for data gathering from members of the public visiting a number of different "green" areas widely distributed around the East Midlands (section 1.4).

Scoping meeting

The first phase of the project was a scoping meeting with people from government and non-government agencies working in nature conservation in the East Midlands in order to explore the subject area of the research project and the opinions and perceptions held by these "professionals". A secondary purpose was to identify any significant issues that could be used as starting points for focus group discussions (section 2.1)

A number of themes emerged from the scoping meeting (sections 2.2 and 2.3). Many people shared similar concerns and opinions regarding the subject of the study. Most expressed the view that there is not a single definition of nature as it depends on a person's educational, ethnic and cultural background. However, they all agreed that the definition of "nature" should not be limited to the physical environment since it includes anything that is living and that the term is wider than "wilderness". They also stressed that nature should not be always associated with the countryside as the former is wider and more embracing than the latter.

Another recurring theme was the social benefit of nature. Attendees listed a wide range of social benefits such as flood management, water quality, recreation, health and wellbeing, arguing that nature can break down barriers by being available to everyone. They realized,

though, that there can be an elitist quality to accessing nature, as access to some areas has been restricted to long-standing, close-knit groups. Until very recently, many nature reserves were seen as ‘out of bounds’ and this is still sometimes the case. Fortunately, the situation is improving and wider sections of the community will now visit nature reserves regardless of this perceived elitism or exclusivity. In the East Midlands there are large areas of intensively managed, privately owned farmland with little public access, which leads to an attitude that such places are sterile. As a result, nature has less value in people’s minds in the East Midlands.

In conclusion, everyone agreed that nature contributes to the quality of life by making people feel good, giving them a sense of place and an experience that cannot be derived elsewhere. Nature provides a vitally important sense of freedom from the stress of modern life: offices, deadlines, computers, traffic congestion, noise and consumerism.

Focus groups

The main purpose of the focus group research was to gain a qualitative insight into the ways in which people value nature in the study area, and to inform the questionnaire survey designed to cover a wider geographical area. The location of each group and potential target populations (namely the general public but, in particular, to include people with disabilities, minority ethnic groups, women, the elderly and young people) were agreed by the client and the steering group prior to the inception of the project. The groups took place in six different locations across the East Midlands: Nottingham, Leicester, Mansfield, Corby, Matlock and Silsbee (section 3.1).

Key points from the discussion of “what is nature?” and “what is green space?” are as follows (section 3.2.1):

- € The terms “nature” and “green space” are very hard to define.
- € Definitions are influenced by cultural perceptions of the natural environment.
- € Nature cannot be considered in isolation from the world of human activity.
- € Green space can be land over which residents feel they have little or no control.
- € Green space can be a small pocket of land in an urban area that is badly maintained and unsafe to use.
- € Green spaces can also be very precious.

Key points from the discussion on “what is social benefit?” are as follows (section 3.2.2):

- € The key forms of anti-social behaviour are fly-tipping, litter, vandalism, dogs and intimidation from large groups of young people.
- € Anti-social behaviour can prevent the implementation of green initiatives.
- € Management must be visible whilst at the same time being sensitive to the location.
- € There is currently an imbalance between preservation and access to sites of special interest.
- € Children are not encouraged to explore and take an interest in nature.
- € Parental attitudes towards, and ability to undertake, nature education have changed significantly over the last 50 years.
- € The educational system must take responsibility for nature education.
- € There is a lack of effective interpretation.
- € Green initiatives instil a sense of ownership and encourage responsible behaviour.

Key points from the discussion about the importance of having green spaces nearby are as follows (section 3.3.4):

- € There are many social, mental and physical benefits that can be derived from access to nature and green spaces.
- € All the participants felt that access to nature was important, although in some cases the knowledge of nearby nature and green spaces was enough to instil a sense of wellbeing.
- € Members of minority ethnic groups are rarely approached to take part in green initiatives and are unsure of where to obtain information.
- € Sign posting and information given at sites is often inadequate and not very informative.
- € All attempts to provide inclusive access should be sensitive to the location.

Questionnaire survey

The questionnaire was developed from the issues raised by the focus groups using Personal Construct Theory (PCT), where “place” is defined by the attributes of physical place characteristics, people’s activities and people’s perceptions (section 4.2). The questions were in the form of statements to which interviewees were asked to express different levels of agreement or disagreement, in three categories based on the PCT attributes listed above.

The questionnaire data was collected at 16 different sites around the east Midlands, categorised on a spectrum from the “wild” to the “urban”. These included sites in the Peak District national park, nature reserves, country parks, woodlands, town/city parks and local green spaces. Over 460 interviews were carried out. The data was analysed using the analysis package SPSS (Chapter five).

Results and conclusions

In conclusion, what has been discovered about the social value of nature to the people of the East Midlands of England (section 6.3)?

1. Many people visit all type of sites, regardless of age or sex. However, there are disproportionately low numbers of people from black and ethnic minorities and people with disabilities. While many people visit on their own, couples and families make up the majority of visitors, the latter especially at the country parks and other sites with special facilities and animals or birds. Women visitors are under-represented in comparison with the general population, and children formed a smaller proportion than might have been expected given the times of survey. Comparatively low numbers of unemployed people visit; those in employment are mainly in lower supervisory and technical occupations or lower managerial and professional occupations. Many retired people also visit green spaces (section 6.1.1).
2. The main reasons people visit green spaces are to walk the dog, to gain exercise, and for the pleasure of being in a park or close to nature. Dog walking is most popular at local sites and in woodlands, also at country parks, but less frequent at nature reserves. Reducing stress and relaxing are significant reasons for visiting green spaces and represent one of the main social values (sections 6.1.2 and under 6.1.6).
3. Many respondents were members of conservation organisations but do not necessarily take an active part in conservation activities (section 6.1.3).
4. People think of nature in quite a broad way. They find the term “green space” a difficult term. Nature includes physical characteristics, wildlife and also perceptions and emotions,

especially peacefulness and other terms associated with the calming or de-stressing value of nature. Professionals have contrasting views of the distinction between “nature” and “country side”, for example, and they use the term “green space” more widely than the public understanding of the term (under sections 6.1.4 and 6.1.6).

5. When talking about “social values” people tended to focus on “anti-social uses”. There is a lot of evidence that sites need to be well managed (but not over managed), welcoming, provide information and have a natural appearance if people are to obtain the best value from them.
6. Sites close to home are preferred, especially by those who used to visit frequently when children (sections 6.1.5, and 6.1.6).
7. There are significant associations between the type and degree of use of green spaces by people now and how frequently they visited such sites when children. This suggests that if children are not being allowed or encouraged to visit natural areas or other parks by themselves, they are less likely to develop a habit that will continue into adulthood. Those who had visited a lot as children were more likely to find magical and other positive qualities in nature, and to develop a closer relationship with it as part of their lifestyle, than those who did not (under sections 6.1.5 and 6.1.6).
8. A sense of community ownership of green space, together with good accessibility and a sense of welcome were rated highly. While a site may be legally owned by someone else, such as the local authority or English Nature, if people feel that it is also “their” place, this is a valuable social benefit (sections 6.1.5 and under 6.1.6).
9. The sense of feeling uncomfortable or vulnerable was not very widespread overall, although it was most significant among the female and older respondents (sections 6.1.5 and under 6.1.6).
10. The sites that attracted most positive responses to perceptions were the nature reserves, woodlands and urban parks. Local areas were important for some activities but country parks tended to score less highly. Responses in relation to nature reserves were very positive compared with most other sites. This is partly the value of their being good for children to learn about nature, but other values, such as being associated with spiritual qualities, getting free from stress and feeling energetic are also positively associated with nature reserves. Woodlands share many of these attributes. Wild areas and country parks have the most associations with being bored but also have some positive values associated with them (under section 6.1.5).

Lessons for Providers (section 6.4)

The research has flagged up a number of areas which would be useful to providers:

1. How do the findings of this research affect the implementation of strategic environmental assessments, part of a recent EU directive due to be implemented?
2. The importance of different kinds of green space and of easy and welcoming access for all, including children, disabled people and people from ethnic minorities, needs to be taken into account in regeneration strategies, alongside other social and environmental needs.
3. Urban parks were highly rated in this study. Are there implications for the funding, regeneration and management of these, in particular?
4. The implications raised by the findings for regional environmental strategies need to be considered.
5. Country parks emerged from the research less favourably than some other areas and there are implications for the future of these, in light of the upcoming review of them by the Countryside Agency. Are there ways to enhance their social value?

Lessons for Managers (section 6.5)

There are many pointers to things that managers can do to encourage more people to visit green spaces and to ensure that, once there, the visit is a good one.

1. More and better information is needed, to tell people where they can go, what they can do and how they can get there, orientated at different groups, such as black and minority ethnic groups, disabled people, older people, socially disadvantaged people etc. This may need to be in different languages, presented in different ways and distributed differently in order to meet the needs of those not reached at present.
2. Information at sites is also important, possibly presented in new ways and aimed at different groups in what is clearly a fragmented, not a homogeneous population.
3. More activities and means of engaging children in green spaces should be considered, so that they develop a habit of visiting them (it is important, nonetheless, to understand why teenagers may not want to visit such sites). Working with parents and police/rangers etc to develop a safer environment so that children are allowed to go out by themselves would be very helpful.
4. Further development of educational programmes for children is necessary. This was seen by many people as vital yet also seemed not to be widely enough available. Using green areas near schools, which are easier to visit and not necessarily special parks, should be considered.

Recommendations for further research (section 6.6)

This project suggested several areas where further research could be undertaken. There were gaps in information which would have helped the analysis, and the research has identified aspects that it was not possible to include but which could help to flesh out some of the findings in future. The first list relates to background/contextual research most helpful for strategic purposes.

1. A baseline survey of current levels of use and non-use of different types of green spaces would be useful for several purposes: as a baseline against which to see how progress in meeting targets for use of green spaces is being achieved, for setting the results of this study in a broader context and for identifying which groups are not using various areas and why, so that outreach can be targeted.
2. This study should be repeated in five years' time to enable changes in the social values of nature to be identified, preferably in the context of improvements to management made as a result of these recommendations.
3. The questionnaire data includes postcode information, but it was not possible to use this in the analysis. In future, the data could be related to statistics, such as levels of deprivation, that are available by postcode. Catchments maps of distribution of the visitors to different sites could also be generated, which would help managers in marketing and understanding site users.
4. Given the importance of locally accessible green space, research should be undertaken to relate the amounts and types of green space present in the region to different residential areas, to see how green space standards are being met. This could also be related to the postcode data of health and deprivation, so that increases in the areas of green space could be better targeted.

5. Research should be undertaken to capture the data on informal green areas such as “urban commons” and wasteland, and the levels of use made of these – data not visible in the current project. Focus groups might be used to gain some information, as well as observational techniques.
6. Links need to be made between economic and social regeneration, for example in the National Forest or Community Forest areas, the Nottinghamshire coalfield, etc., enabling green spaces to be considered as important elements in plans for these areas.

The second list of research needs focuses on specific issues most relevant to managers, while also relating to key strategic issues

1. Dogs and parks: how much do dogs improve the sense of security for those vulnerable and walking alone; how often do women and those over 65 use them as companions; how much they are perceived as helping in exercising more; and to what extent are they feared or rejected by minorities in Britain? Some of the plans implemented (fines, mostly) to curb fouling should also be evaluated for their effectiveness.
2. Vulnerable groups: the implementation of an audit kit similar to the one developed in Montreal should be studied, with a view to develop and pilot a similar approach in the UK.
3. Consideration of the effects of belonging to nature organizations in the appreciation of nature should be undertaken. Do minorities watch nature programs in TV? If so, is it only of exotic places? And, if so, how is the British countryside perceived in relation to those exotic places?

Preface

This study was carried out by members of **OPENspace: the research centre for inclusive access to outdoor environments**, based at Edinburgh College of Art and Heriot-Watt University. The project was led by Simon Bell and Catharine Ward Thompson; Simon Bell was also in charge of the study's day-to-day management. Penny Travlou undertook the arrangements for the scoping meeting and prepared the corresponding report. Nina Morris set up the focus groups, ran them, prepared the questions and carried out the analysis of the resulting data. Diana Gooch prepared the main questionnaire to be used at the selected sites and undertook initial analysis of the results. Catherine Findlay was in charge of the quantitative analysis of data and the preliminary presentation of these findings. Peter Aspinall contributed to data analysis and Alicia Montarzino to the discussion of findings in relation to the literature. Research Assistants Gemma Gregory and Alice Lockett, based at Nottingham University, played an important role in assisting with the identification of contacts and the arrangements for the focus groups and well as in the administration of the questionnaire surveys. The data gathering stage also counted with the participation of Martin Lockett, Darcy Panrucker and James Simpson.

For the client, English Nature, Ian Paterson, acted as Project Manager and principal contact.

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Chapter one: Introduction

1.1 Background

This report describes the results of research into the importance of nature to East Midlands' communities, as experienced through publicly accessible green spaces. It was undertaken for English Nature by OPENspace, the research centre for inclusive access to outdoor environments, based at Edinburgh College of Art/Heriot Watt University. The research was carried out over the spring and summer of 2003 using a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies.

The brief provided by English Nature was set within a national and regional policy background (see Appendix 8 for the complete brief). The researchers developed the brief and modified the methodology better to reflect a user-led approach, which is one of the cornerstones of the research centre's philosophy. The research involved interviewing members of the public through a number of focus group discussions held in different parts of the East Midland area. The results of the focus group research informed the development of a questionnaire used for data gathering from a broader sample of members of the public visiting a number of different "green" areas widely distributed around the East Midlands.

1.2 Policy context

Most English regions have completed Regional environmental economy studies that attempt to quantify the contribution that the environment makes to the economic agenda and regional GDP. This has been necessary in order to influence the development of regional governance and the production of regional economic strategies.

The social agenda is equally important, yet it has proved difficult to obtain adequate data on how the environment contributes to people's social well-being and their quality of life. The aim of this study was to specify this contribution by selecting a number of natural and artificial green spaces across the region and detailing the relationship that people have with them.

There are a number of other initiatives in the East Midlands region to which this study is relevant, and that provided a context for development of the project. If the outputs from this study can influence or will be useful to other initiatives then this will help to further demonstrate the social value of nature. Such initiatives include:

- ∄ The Regional Household Survey, funded by EMDA, the Learning and Skills Council and the Regional Assembly, uses 'Euroqual' indicators which measure people's sense of well-being and how good they feel. Health partners, such as the Regional Health Board are hoping to make connections between the
- ∄ Findings of this study and their work.
- ∄ There are three New Deal for Communities areas in the East Midlands where economic and social regeneration are taking place. The findings of this research should be useful for those developing plans in these locations.

- € Neighbourhood Renewal has National Floor Targets covering health, education, crime, housing, and environment. The targets are minimum standards and measure the extent to which neighbourhoods perform against these. If gaps are found then action should be taken by Local Strategic Partnerships. This report may identify some of these gaps.
- € The Government's 'Quality of Life Indicators'.
- € The development of 'Community Strategies' by Local Strategic Partnerships.

The East Midlands is considered a good location for this study, as it is very varied with large rural areas but also contains the Leicester, Nottingham and Derby urban areas. As with the Regional 'Environmental Economy Studies', the methodology adopted in the study has the ability to be applied elsewhere in the country.

1.3 The Brief

1.3.1 Aim of the Project

The aim of the project was to specify the contribution that green spaces make to people's social well-being by examining the use people make, and the feelings that they have towards, a selected number of artificial and natural green space sites throughout the East Midlands. In essence, this was an attempt to identify the social value of "nature". As this was a regional study the sites were selected to fall more or less equally in each of the region's counties.

1.3.2 Target Audience

The target audience for the study is the Regional Assembly and all the partners that it is working with to develop social strategies for the region within its Integrated Regional Strategy. The study will also be relevant to other regional policy makers and funders, including Strategic Sub-regional Partnerships.

1.3.3 Outcomes

The main outcome sought from the report is to raise awareness in the target audience of the contribution that green space can make to people's social well-being, and the vital link between the quality of life and the environment. The study may encourage local authorities to establish or retain green space and to include reference to such matters in Community Strategies. The study also contributes to English Nature's work on encouraging green space standards to be developed in the region. Consequently the consultant anticipates presenting the report's findings to the Regional Assembly Task Group.

1.3.4 Project Management

English Nature nominated a Project Officer, Ian Paterson, to act as the Project Manager and principal contact. A small steering group of key regional players, comprising the Countryside Agency, BTCV and officers of the Regional Assembly worked with English Nature to provide advice on the development of the project. A small steering group of key regional organisations worked with English Nature to provide advice on the development of the project. An initial meeting with the steering group was held to discuss and agree the final approach and details of the project such as data collection.

1.4 Methodology

The brief defined the method to be followed in some detail (see Appendix 8), giving a strong steer on what was to be done. However, in the eventual methodology some steps were undertaken in a different order; for example, the focus groups were held first, as not only is valuable qualitative information gained from them, but the results can be very useful for helping to generate the questions used in the structured interviews. The researchers drew on “personal construct theory” (Kelly, 1955) as part of the underlying theoretical structure for the focus group discussions and questionnaire development. They also proposed to hold a scoping workshop or focus group with managers of green space sites in order to identify their attitudes. This was valuable because very often values and perceptions held by professionals are different from those of members of the public, and knowing where these differences lie can help to further policy implementation and better development and management of plans or accessibility and educational programmes.

This methodology combined the best of both qualitative and quantitative methods and avoided some of the negative aspects. The use of focus groups yielded good qualitative research and enabled a “user led” approach, which is a central feature of the brief, to be used to define the issues while providing a valuable secondary function of directing the development of a questionnaire to be used for the structured interviews. The second phase used a questionnaire as part of the structured, on-site interviews enabling the quantitative, statistically analysable data to be collected. This methodology did not require so many focus groups nor so many questionnaire respondents as would be the case with solely qualitative or solely quantitative methods, respectively, but may have end up collecting more data in total than either of the other methods individually. Depending on the way structured interviews are held, and the way the data is recorded, the method allows for sophisticated statistical analysis, which adds considerable value to the project.

The methodology finally adopted expanded on that described in the brief and followed a number of distinct phases. The key stages of this approach are:

1. Scoping of the issues with representatives of the “clients” such as policy makers, providers, managers and representatives of different interest groups. This was undertaken by holding a forum. This also helped to identify the range and potential location of sites for undertaking the interviews.
2. Identification of groups from which to draw participants for focus groups. These were held in different types of location around the East Midlands region and each group was made up of individuals from a mixture of backgrounds that fitted the main categories of potential participants identified by the client and by the steering group. Geographic location types around the East Midlands included inner city, suburbs, small country towns and villages. It was decided that six focus groups would be needed.
3. Preparation of a set of open-ended questions to guide discussions, and guidance to facilitators to ensure that the data from each focus group was broadly comparable.
4. Holding focus groups at a series of locations, in community centres and other such places. The discussions were led by a facilitator and recorded using a portable tape

recorder. A second researcher or research assistant was present to operate the tapes and to make notes.

5. Analysis and interpretation of the results of the focus group discussions. This was carried out in two stages. The first stage was to understand the qualitative nature of the information and to prepare analysis of the main findings as an important element of the research in its own right. The second stage was to determine the main issues that would form the core of the questionnaire.
6. Development of the questionnaire to be used in the structured interviews. This was derived from the issues raised during focus groups and used the “Facet Approach” to develop the questions themselves. These were actually in the form of statements with which respondents were invited to agree or disagree, on a 7-point scale, from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”. Up to 30 questions were included, some of which would not be relevant depending on the circumstances of the interviewee. Open-ended questions were also included in order to broaden the range of issues that could be explored and to allow for more qualitative results to be obtained. Demographic information on the interviewees was also collected.
7. Piloting the questionnaire. This stage was used to help ensure that the questions covered the correct areas and that they were framed in such a way that potential respondents were able to understand them.
8. Data collection. The main survey was carried out by members of the research team and by temporary research assistants. The data was collected in a number of green space sites, spread across the whole of the East Midlands, as required by the brief. The interviewees were actual users of green spaces, interviewed out in the field, at the sites. The interviews were planned to last for between 10 and 15 minutes. A target of 500 samples permitted good, in-depth statistical analysis. It was originally proposed to interview people who are infrequent users or who do not currently use green space and who would be identified through local community groups from the neighbourhood of the sites and invited to take part. This proved impractical in terms of the project timetable, organisational problems and the difficulty of obtaining a sufficiently large sample size.
9. Data analysis. The data was be entered into a database and subjected to a range of analytical techniques using the computer package SPSS. Principal component analysis was used to identify the main factors apparent in the behaviour or attitudes of respondents and how these are reflected in different groups. A number of charts and graphs have been used to make the results easier to digest and quite firm conclusions were able to be drawn from the data.
10. Reporting the findings. The report contains the results of each phase of the project, presented as separate chapters. The discussion and conclusions draw together the different strands and comparisons have been made between the qualitative and quantitative elements

Chapter two: The scoping meeting with professionals

The first phase of the project was to hold a scoping meeting with a number of people representing the government and non-government agencies working in the field of nature conservation in the East Midlands. The primary goal of the meeting was to explore the whole subject area of the research project, so that the opinions and perceptions held by these professionals could be compared to those of the public. A secondary purpose was to identify any significant issues that could be used as starting points for discussions to take place in focus groups as the next stage of the research.

The meeting was held in February 2003 at the offices of English Nature in Grantham. Fourteen people spent about three hours in discussion. The attendees represented agencies such as English Nature, the Environment Agency, the Forestry Commission and the Countryside Agency as well as people from the voluntary sector such as the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) and others.

The main outcome of the meeting was the formation of a picture of how a small sample of professionals working in the field understand concepts of nature and its value, the terms they use and the definitions they apply. This has been used to make comparisons with the perceptions expressed by a wider sample of the public who use green spaces of various sorts, elicited through the use of focus groups and questionnaires later in the study.

2.1 Scoping meeting format

The meeting began with a brief introduction of the project and of the aims of the scoping meeting. At the end of this presentation, attendees were presented with four questions relating to the key issues of the study as a starting point for the discussion:

- € What is the definition of nature in the context of the East Midlands?
- € What do people understand as “social use” of nature?
- € What is the role of nature for social wellbeing and inclusion?
- € What is the contribution of nature to the quality of life?

Participants were invited to discuss these issues and concerns in an open session over a period of 45 minutes. Due to time limits, only the first three questions were discussed, the last one being included in the later ‘Post-it’ session.

The key themes which emerged were:

- € The idea of wilderness in the East Midlands context;
- € The spectrum of nature in the context of East Midlands;
- € Is nature the same as countryside?
- € The nature of nature;
- € Social use vs. social benefit;
- € Ownership concepts and accessibility;
- € Social vs. anti-social values;
- € Elitism and nature;
- € Is nature challenging?
- € What does nature contribute to the quality of life?

The attendees were then given ‘Post-it’ notes and asked to contribute as many ideas or comments as possible under each of these topics.

2.2 Comments – session 1. Open discussion

These comments are a more-or-less verbatim record of the points people raised during the morning session.

2.2.1 Question 1. What is the definition of “nature” in the context of the East Midlands?

- ∄ Words that immediately came to mind are “wilderness”, “wildlife”, “uncontrolled/free” and “nice”.
- ∄ “Nature” is a much wider concept than “wilderness”; it is inclusive of anything that is living, especially birds.
- ∄ Trees are a part of East Midlands (EM) nature, eg Sherwood Forest, but trees are especially part of the East Midlands landscape, and there has been extensive planting in the area, especially in Lincolnshire.
- ∄ There is a spectrum of nature: from an urban fox or tortoiseshell butterfly in the city to the blanket bogs in the High Peak area.
- ∄ Nature is anything other than “man”. Even cattle and sheep can be a part of natural surroundings, eg their contribution to the management of wildflower meadows.
- ∄ Nature is the interaction with any green space – from a window box to the open moors – there are many categories.
- ∄ There is a complete sensory experience – the sky, horizons, wind, “discovery”, which could also include fear (especially in woodlands).
- ∄ Overcoming any fear may lead to increased value for people, coming from discovery (personal) or education.
- ∄ In Nottinghamshire, nature is sometimes viewed as being inferior to that found in the Peak District.
- ∄ Nature is smelly and untidy – there is also a negative view, eg do pigeons qualify as nature or nuisance?
- ∄ Nature is seen by some as somewhere to dump rubbish, it has low land value and has industrial units built upon it
- ∄ Is “nature” the same thing as “countryside”?
- ∄ Nature is not seen as owned by anyone; for example, some people believe they have the right to collect moss from threatened peat bogs to make Christmas wreaths.
- ∄ There is also the feeling that nature is owned by people (the opposite view), eg “we have paid for that National Nature Reserve so we will do what we like there”.
- ∄ The definition of nature depends on a person’s background: an ecological professional would avoid going to open managed fields, and would concentrate on special sites (everywhere else has zero value).

2.2.2 Question 2. What do people understand as social use of nature areas (as opposed to other types of use)?

- ∄ Sometimes this is anti-social use, eg dogs (can represent opposing views, for and against), motorbikes, drugs.
- ∄ “Spiritual regeneration” is gained in the outdoors and in nature.

- € Do social uses also equal social benefits?
- € Protests and meetings often take place in natural surroundings.
- € Nature is a place where people can go (but not necessarily legally) – if you can get there then you can get social value from it, for example ‘scrumping’ apples.
- € Nature can be used for social benefit in indirect ways, eg the production of coppice materials for power stations.
- € Health and fitness, walking, bird watching, paragliding – all of these activities bring together groups of like-minded people, which is an aspect of social value.
- € Sometimes areas outside nature reserves are more likely to be used due to the elitist perception often brought about by permits and use by eccentrics or “bearded people”; country parks are viewed as more accessible by the general public.

2.2.3 Question 3. What is the role of nature for social wellbeing and inclusion?

- € BTCV and other organizations provide the opportunity for people to gain social benefit from nature on task days and holidays, allowing also access to green spaces not usually accessible to the public.
- € Schools have used nature for “character building” and teamwork exercises, so nature has an educational value, especially for personal bonding.
- € “Getting away from it all” – freedom from a boxed-in life.
- € Adults with learning difficulties have shown improvements in cognition and speech.
- € Nature can break down barriers to social benefits, in that it is available to everyone, cheap and accessible (for the most part).
- € City dwellers are only just starting to use green spaces (in their value system, it is not seen as “trendy”) and can be difficult to engage.
- € Nature is not as challenging as an art gallery (for example), so you do not have to be an academic to enjoy nature.
- € There is the opposite view to this one though, in that there can be an elitist quality to local wildlife groups and some reserves have restricted access.
- € In the past nature reserves were “out of bounds”, and this is still sometimes the case. However, the situation is improving and some sections of the community will still use nature reserves regardless of elitism.
- € The British are out of touch with the natural environment, and are often viewed as being uncomfortable if out of sight of their car. The Swedish have a better connection with their surroundings across the social range (this possibly comes from their fundamental rights of access to the environment).
- € “Biophilia” is a new key concept – the necessity for interaction with nature, we suffer without it.
- € There has been a history of countryside use in coal mining areas in the East Midlands, which is linked to work in the countryside or with the land (in the mines, owning allotments and pigeon-keeping etc.).
- € Much ex-mining land has been reclaimed in the East Midlands to country parks and nature reserves; this has maintained the momentum of access (but may not have contributed much to the social well-being of the area).
- € The coalfield areas of Nottinghamshire show large clusters of Wildlife Trust membership.
- € In the East Midlands, there are large areas of intensively managed farmland with little access (privately owned land) and this may promote a feeling of sterility.

- € Old railways have been developed for accessible routes and can contribute to getting people out of the city. When tarmac paths are laid ecological professionals view them as detracting from the wildlife that was there.
- € The East Midlands is known as the region with the least biodiversity richness (as an average - the Peak District area is an exception).
- € Supermarket recruitment for Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust has doubled membership – this has successfully targeted people across the social spectrum.
- € Donating or subscribing to wildlife organizations can create a feeling of well-being, contributing socially, but not necessarily personally physically doing anything.

2.3 Comments - session 2. 'Post-its'

The notes from the second session were transcribed and the following table (Table 1) presents them as they were written by the participants

Table 1. List of comments raised during “post-it” session

Topic	Comments
<p>1. The idea of wilderness in the East Midlands Context</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∄ Wilderness is woefully lacking in the East Midlands but parts of the Dark Peak and Lincolnshire coast come close; ∄ Wilderness is more of an ‘untouched’ area, not that it is exclusive but more remote than anywhere in the East Midlands; ∄ Wilderness in the East Midlands is limited to the open coast and the Peak District; ∄ The professional’s view of wilderness can be very different to general perceptions: to many, “if it is green, it is wild nature”; ∄ Wilderness can be the fear of entering an unfamiliar natural place, not always wild windswept remote places; ∄ Wilderness is not a place but a concept of freedom, in this way a garden could be a wilderness as well as the woodland “just down the road”; ∄ Wilderness can be found in inaccessible places where there are no paths, toilets and signs.
<p>2. The spectrum of nature in the context of the East Midlands</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∄ In the East Midlands, there is apparent the whole spectrum of nature from “window boxes to wilderness”; ∄ The spectrum of nature in the East Midlands is both the physical and urban environment; ∄ Nature is the habitat, usually made up of vegetation, but also includes water and the plants and the animals it supports; ∄ Nature can vary from wide-open spaces to forest parks or even people’s back gardens in urban areas.
<p>3. Is nature the same as the “country side”?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∄ Nature is wild places away from people (eg woodlands, grass land, moorland etc.) while countryside is those places away from large built up areas; ∄ Nature represents freedom whereas countryside represents managed non-urban areas; ∄ Countryside is the frame within which nature is placed; ∄ The countryside can be perceived as “nature” but in fact it has very little value for wildlife; ∄ Nature and countryside are both intrinsically linked, but the former determines the soul and character of the latter; ∄ Nature is wider and more embracing than the countryside: nature is found throughout the countryside and in built-up urban areas.

Topic	Comments
4. The nature of “nature”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∄ Nature is green space and everything – both living and dead – associated with it; ∄ Nature is the weather, landscape, geology and stars in the night sky; ∄ Nature is not static: it is a series of interacting processes and species all affected by people; ∄ Nature is not just the physical environment: it is about interactions as well as the things people cannot see but allow “nature” to grow and develop; ∄ Nature in its pure sense is characterised by the absence of industrial human artefacts, especially cars, aeroplanes, noise, in a setting of natural or semi-natural wildlife habitat; ∄ Nature cannot be divorced from wildlife;
5. Social values vs. social benefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∄ Social benefits can be more wide ranging than social values as people can often only put a value on something if they can see its benefits to them; ∄ Social benefits of nature can include: flood management, water quality, provision of water, food, biodiversity and access to nature as well as recreation, socialising with friends, health and exercise; ∄ Nature could also enhance opportunities for employment, education, interpretation and training/accreditation associated with the management of nature.
6. Ownership concepts and accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∄ Much of the East Midlands countryside is privately owned with limited access to the general public, as a result nature has less value in people’s minds in the area; ∄ Access to nature and countryside is poor and fosters the belief that nature does not belong to ordinary people; ∄ Ownership and accessibility can put people off “exploring” areas, in other respects it can be seen as a challenge suggesting that nature is not open to all; ∄ Ownership is a major barrier to wider use of “natural” places: land owners need to become more aware of this issue; ∄ Nature belongs to all: people should be able to have access to all “natural” areas and the countryside; ∄ The countryside tends to be nowadays only accessible to car owners, wealthy, fit, healthy and able-bodied people; ∄ People place greater value on nature if it is accessible, whether allotments, country parks or Farmland.

Topic	Comments
7. Social vs. anti-social behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∅ Behaviour can be influenced by designation; ∅ Some forms of behaviour are considered anti-social in some areas (eg letting dogs run loose in a country park); ∅ Anti-social values (eg fly tipping) are possibly associated with those people not “valuing” nature; ∅ In a region where opportunities to access green space is often so limited, conflict between user groups is more likely to occur; ∅ What is socially acceptable to some is not to others: in some respects, it is about freedom of choice combined with restrictions; ∅ One person’s anti-social use of nature is another’s social benefit.
8. Elitism and nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∅ Nature can be elitist because of issues of ownership and accessibility; on the other hand, all sectors of society can enjoy and utilise nature if they value it in some way; ∅ Elitism arises often when people do not know enough about nature; ∅ Elitism can be seen as a barrier to participation by some because of long standing, close-knit groups; ∅ The Wildlife Trust movement is often seen as “being middle-aged, middle-class people visiting nature reserves open to members only”; ∅ If nature is defined as all living things there should not be elitism involved; ∅ If people feel welcome and secure they can enjoy nature at all levels: even a botanist can enjoy a great view!
9. Is nature challenging?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∅ Nature should be challenging to make it exciting and interesting; ∅ Nature can be challenging in a positive way like the thrill of finding and correctly identifying a rare plant or bird; ∅ Interaction with nature affords a spectrum of challenge.
10. How does nature contribute to quality of life?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∅ Nature breaks down barriers socially, physically and emotionally; ∅ Economic regeneration and viability of rural communities through sustainable tourism associated with visits to nature areas; ∅ Nature contributes to quality of life by making people feel good, giving them a sense of place and an experience that cannot be derived elsewhere; ∅ Health benefits associated with outdoor interaction with nature: exercise, mental stimulation, spiritual fulfilment and aspects of “biophilia”; ∅ Experience with nature could give to people a great sense of well-being, happiness and relaxation; ∅ Natural ecosystems could improve air and water quality; ∅ Nature is vitally important freedom from the stress of modern life: offices, deadlines, computers, traffic congestion, noise, consumerism etc.

2.4 Summary of scoping meeting

A number of themes recurred in both the oral discussion and ‘Post-it’ session in the scoping meeting. Many attendees shared similar concerns and opinions regarding the study of the “Social Value of Nature in the East Midlands”. Most of the participants expressed the view that there is not a single definition of nature as this depends on a person’s educational, ethnic and cultural background. However, they all agreed that the definition of nature should not be limited to the physical environment as it includes anything that is living and that the term is wider than wilderness. They also stressed the point that nature should not be always linked with the countryside as the former is wider and more embracing than the latter. Some even said that nature is in fact the soul and character of the countryside.

Another recurring theme was the social benefits of nature. Attendees referred to various social benefits such as flood management, water quality, recreation, health and wellbeing, arguing that nature can break down barriers by being available to everyone. They realised, though, that there can be an elitist quality to nature, as some areas have restricted access to long standing, close-knit groups. Until very recently, many nature reserves were ‘out of bounds’ and this is still sometimes the case. Fortunately, the situation is improving and some sections of the community will use nature reserves regardless of elitism. Referring to the East Midlands, in particular, there are large areas of intensively managed, privately owned farmland with little access to the general public which leads to a feeling that such places are sterile. As a result, nature has less value in people’s minds in the East Midlands.

In conclusion, all attendees agreed that nature contributes to the quality of life by making people feel good, giving them a sense of place and an experience that cannot be derived elsewhere. Nature is a vitally important freedom from the stress of modern life: offices, deadlines, computers, traffic congestion, noise and consumerism.

Chapter three: The focus group research

3.1 Methodology

3.1.1. Locations

This chapter presents the findings of the focus group research undertaken during March 2003 in six diverse locations across the East Midlands: Nottingham, Leicester, Mansfield, Corby, Matlock and Spilsby in East Lincolnshire (Figure 1). The main purpose of the focus group research was to gain a qualitative insight into the ways in which people value nature in this area, and to inform the questionnaire survey designed to cover a wider geographical area and population sample. The location of each group and potential target populations (namely the general public but, in particular, to include people with disabilities, minority ethnic groups, women, older people and young people) were agreed by the client and the steering group prior to the inception of the project.

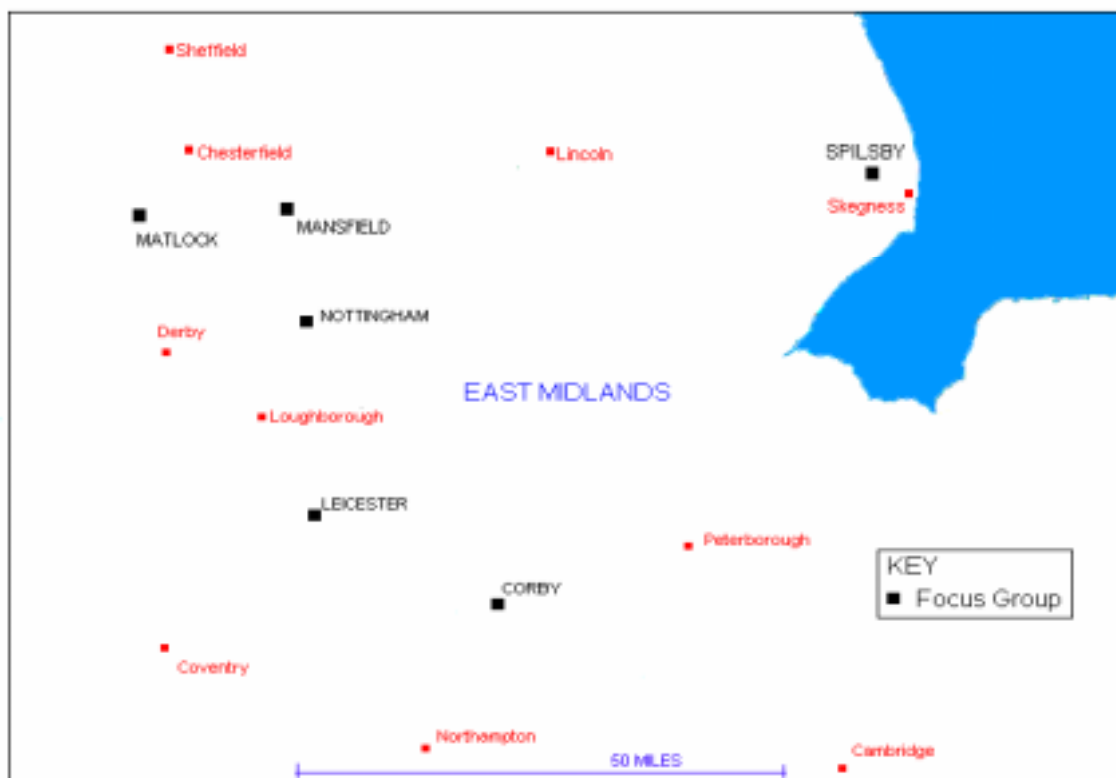


Figure 1 - Focus Group Locations

3.1.2 Methods and techniques used to recruit participants

Throughout the focus group research the researchers were keen to encompass the broadest possible range of participants and every effort was made to avoid targeting purely environmentally orientated groups. In an attempt to obtain a representative sample of the local population in each area, more than 50 posters advertising the discussions were mailed to local libraries, community centres and youth groups as well as selected nature reserves and conservation/environmental groups. In addition, targeted letters were sent out to specific individuals, organisations, clubs and societies run by and for people with disabilities, minority ethnic groups, older people, young people and women. Demographic statistics outlining the gender, age, health, ethnic diversity and unemployment ratios for each focus group location and the East Midlands as a whole were obtained from the East Midlands Observatory, National Statistics Online, and NOMIS.

More than 270 groups, clubs, societies and individuals were sourced from across the East Midlands region using a combination of methods. The first point of reference for potential contacts was the East Midlands Regional Biodiversity Forum membership list, as provided by the client. However, correspondence with the organisations represented on this list yielded only two potential 'gate-keeper' organisations (those that provide a route to gain access to a range of other organisations). The first of these, 'Engage East Midlands' was especially useful in providing a substantial number of contacts and offering to circulate information, whilst the other did not reply to our correspondence.

The second method involved obtaining contact details for local organisations, clubs and societies using a comprehensive key word search of local and national internet sites and, later, incorporated 'snowballing' as groups and individuals volunteered to act as gatekeepers. Key sources of information included City of Lincoln Council, Corby Borough Council, Derby City Council, Kettering Borough Council, Leicester District Council, Leicestershire County Council, Lincolnshire County Council, Mansfield District Council, Matlock Town Council, Northampton Borough Council, Nottingham City Council, Nottinghamshire County Council, Rutland County Council, and Skegness Town Council. Other useful sources of contact information included: the British Towns and Villages Network, the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, the Countryside Agency Vital Villages scheme, the East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA), the Gay Outdoor Club, the Infolinx: Community Information Network for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland, LeicesterOnTheNet, LeicestershireVillages.com, Nottingham City Libraries, Nottinghamshire Rural Community Council, Notts Youth, RADAR, Rutland Online, The Civic Trust, TheLincolnshireSite.com, TownsontheWeb.com, UK Villages Online, Warsop Web, and Yell.com. This search produced a list of more than 220 organisations from which potential participants could be recruited and spanned a diverse range of interests and affiliations (see Appendix 3).

Letters and e-mails introducing the project and the main objectives of the focus group research were sent out to each contact address. 'Cold calling' was kept to a minimum and used only when no other contact details were available. All potential participants were informed that they would be entitled to a small honorarium and that travel expenses or appropriate travel arrangements would be available if required. Each letter and poster was followed up by a phone call or a further e-mail and answer phone messages were left where possible. In total 60 people volunteered to participate in the study. A number of other individuals and groups showed an interest in participating but were unavailable or unwilling to travel long

distances to attend meetings. The latter was a particular problem in recruiting participants in the East Lincolnshire area.

Attempts to include groups currently under-represented in the countryside such as people with disabilities, minority ethnic groups, young people, the elderly, and women met with varying degrees of success. While there was success in recruiting people from minority ethnic groups, younger people, older people, women and people interested in the natural environment through sporting activity and conservation, there was little interest from individuals and organisations representing people with disabilities.

3.1.3 The structure of the focus group discussions

In the interests of comparability, each focus group was conducted following a semi-structured schedule devised by the researchers in advance, informed in part by the findings of the February scoping meeting (see Appendix 4). It must be emphasised that this structure was not rigid and the groups were encouraged to discuss the topics most relevant to their experience and interests. All participants were encouraged to participate in the discussion and every attempt was made to prevent individual participants from dominating the flow of the discussion.

Each focus group was recorded, with participants' agreement, allowing fuller analysis to be undertaken and enabling useful quotations from participants to be used in analysis and presentation of results.

3.2 Results

The next section describes the findings of the focus groups, categorised following analysis of the recorded discussions. No full transcripts were made of the recorded sessions, as resources did not permit this. Instead the researcher listened to the recordings and made notes from them.

3.2.1 Defining nature and green space

Nature. When asked to describe their understanding of the term 'nature' and its inherent meaning the participants offered a wide range of responses. Almost all the participants agreed that the term, or concept of, nature was very difficult to categorise. Initially, the most common descriptions were references to 'natural features' such as the presence of 'woodland', 'trees', 'flora and fauna', 'lakes' and 'the colour green'. However, a significant number also made reference to non-specific 'natural' spaces such as 'rural areas', 'wildlife habitats', 'the countryside', and 'country parks'. A high proportion of the participants made strong associations between nature and 'wide-open spaces', 'freedom of movement', uncomplicated 'outdoor life', healthy 'fresh air', invigorating 'smells', serenity and tranquillity, silence (or at least freedom from noises associated with urban areas) and a calming atmosphere.

“At the boating lake, you go down there and, although you've got the main highway going up, the Market Harborough road... you could sit there and lose yourself quite easily. I prefer the Eyebrook Reservoir myself, I mean I can go down there and imagine I'm in the lochs in Scotland {laughs} with the fir trees out on the islands.” (EF, Corby, 22/03/2003)

Nature was a space in which one could 'get away from it all', escape from other people and leave the pressures of everyday life behind.

After discussing the concept among themselves, however, the participants in each group tended to agree that the term nature encompassed more than the above. Nature could feasibly include the 'whole biological world' (i.e. geology, soil, weather, etc). Several participants expressed the view that nature is all around us and is not just something outside the city; nature can be urban too and include spaces such as an individual's back garden, grass verges and traffic islands. It was general consensus that there should be more natural areas in the city and urban areas. One participant in the Nottingham University group stated that she didn't consider urban parks as nature and that she viewed nature as somewhere that isn't 'made up by people'. Although several members of the other groups stated that their instinct was also to say areas that are 'not man made', they realised that this was a very difficult concept in light of the historical agricultural management of the British countryside. In Spilsby and Matlock, agricultural practices such as lambing, haymaking, the presence of farm machinery and field boundaries were all mentioned in attempts to provide a definition of nature. Others agreed that humans are also very much a part of nature and expressed sadness that much of the time we operate as if we were outside it. Whilst nature was considered to be separate from human beings it was constantly subject to their polluting influence.

The Nottingham University participants were one of the only groups to discuss cultural perceptions of nature and the idea that one's homeland, hometown and where one was brought-up had an influence on 'their nature'. For example, participants in the Spilsby group located close to a coastal region included the sea, sand and maritime environment in their understanding of nature. The Nottingham University participants recognised that although they do not immediately come to mind, deserts could also be included as a natural environment. One participant now resident in Nottingham but originally from Delhi, which he described as a 'concrete jungle', said that for him, nature was the mountains, waterfalls and dense forests of Madhya Pradesh, a state in India.

It appeared that participants in Corby, Mansfield, Matlock, Nottingham and Spilsby were extremely proud of their local area and the wealth of nature that could be accessed fairly easily. Derbyshire was highlighted as a particularly wonderful walking area, despite the fact that certain parts often become overcrowded at key times of year. Others felt that this was not as serious a problem as often suggested; it was nice that people liked to visit the place where they were lucky enough to live, and that it was possible to find quiet places locally if one knew where to go. Participants in Spilsby felt that Lincolnshire was not as 'immediate' a place as the Derbyshire Dales or the Peak District and that one needed to spend more time there to understand it and see the changes. The participants here appeared to have a particularly good local knowledge of rare species and footpaths through the countryside and were very keen on monitoring the introduction of 'non-native' species to the area.

Green space The participants in each location appeared to have very different understandings of the term 'green space'. In Mansfield, Nottingham and Leicester spaces designated as green space were viewed as areas over which the participants/local community had very little control. Green space was described as 'land that the local council can build on', land that 'belongs to *them*' and land that will always be used at some point by organisations with no appreciation of the natural environment. In Nottingham participants gave the example of Trinity Square, the site of an old church and graveyard where people used to sit, which has recently been turned into a multi-storey car park. They also noted with distaste that the City

Council was trying to sell off allotments for development (on the St Ann's allotments in Nottingham). A similar attitude prevailed in the Nottingham University group where green space was thought to define areas of monotonous grassland (e.g. football pitches) and embody distinct urban connotations; again green space was thought to be land earmarked for future development. The general consensus in these locations was that green spaces were 'badly managed', 'poorly looked after', not 'up to standard', and as a consequence, 'unsafe' at night. The term 'green space' was conceptualised as a planner's term, contrived, and never heard in normal conversation.

It is important to note that, whilst the views of the participants in the above areas appear to be negatively skewed against green spaces, in Leicester, Nottingham and Mansfield they appear actually to be very precious - a fact which is highlighted by the struggle to retain access to allotments. Green spaces are seen here as places where people can meet and they provide a similar function to gardens for people who live in high rise flats. In Corby and Mansfield participants expressed concerns that green spaces were too far apart and that there is a greater need for links between areas, such as green corridors, especially when housing quotas in the area are set to increase.

“I can remember as a kid...open space is important for a lot of people. I grew up in the very urban area between Nottingham and Derby and I think our nearest ‘rec’ was about half a mile, three quarters of a mile up the road, a good quarter-of-an-hour slog up the road and that was the nearest bit of green space apart from the back garden to play on, there was no semi-natural. One of the nearest places was Attenborough Nature Reserve or the Erewash Canal, going out that way. You know, it was all like miles away and you had to trek through streets to get there.” (F, Mansfield, 13/03/2003)

Disused railway lines were suggested as a solution to this problem.

“Years ago I remember taking my grandchildren, a number of children, walking around where the herons were. It was amazing because the old railway line had grown over and we saw some absolutely beautiful butterflies down there. It was beautiful and as we went over one fence there was a jackdaw sitting there ... and I said 'good morning' to it and {laughs} it said 'good morning' back as it had obviously been someone's pet. It was so funny {laughs} because my granddaughter said to me 'did you know him granny' {laughs} [...] Going back to the green corridors, I mean, these railways are SSSI's in their own right aren't they?” (EF, Corby 22/03/2003)

Football pitches were also viewed as green spaces in Matlock; however, there they were seen in a much more positive light. Green spaces were thought to 'break up the houses' and were as important in Matlock as in Derby.

“I think in terms of nature, it's not what everybody wants anyway [...] a lot of people come, say, to Matlock Bath, because it's a bit like Blackpool, you know, and they like people, they like to walk with people, they don't want to walk up above and look at nature. [...] We have to recognise that, but having said that I do feel that they enjoy the river [...] and they enjoy the trees that are around the river.” (EF, Matlock, 14/03/2003)

Participants agreed that the most important social function of green space is recreation; for example, local children in Matlock often use the nearby archery fields to play football because they have nowhere else safe to mess around. However, several of the participants

recognised the importance of 'designated green space' or spaces managed for specific activities. A lot of green space in Matlock is unusable because of dog fouling. The participants there were keen to discuss the reasons why bowling greens appear to be rarely vandalised/fouled and suspected that their fencing and 'pristine' nature was in some way key to this.

In Corby, participants praised attempts to foster a local 'green space strategy' and to create 'pockets of green' in residential areas. However, amongst participants in this group, understandings of the term green space also extended to encompass the landscaping and flooding of ex-industrial areas such as Eyebrook Reservoir and other gravel pits. A number of these sites have been restored and regenerated across the county over the last ten years. As the result of a partnership between the council, British Coal and the Forestry Commission, more than 800ha of land has been reclaimed and 2 million trees planted (Cabinet member for the environment report, 2001).

“I'm heavily involved with Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and because land is being gobbled up at such a rate we used to look for prime land as reserves, but now what we do is look for suitable land and by sensitive cultured management developing it to be a grade one site.” (M, Matlock, 14/03/2003)

These so-called 'man-made' environments and associated flora and fauna were thought to have added positively to the already rich natural environment in Northamptonshire.

In Spilsby there was confusion regarding the term “green space”. Participants stated that in a rural area such as Spilsby “everything is green” and expressed a familiarity with the terms “Green Road” and “Green Lane”. As in the other locations, the term “green space” was thought to be linked with urban areas, inherently managed, and designated for a specific use such as playing fields and other recreational activities. Participants drew attention to recognisable green spaces in Lincoln, nearly 32 miles away, including the Willows, the Arboretum, Monks Abbey and the city's parks. Yet people in the Spilsby group also included obviously managed countryside areas and conservation areas such as Hubbards Hill or Snype Dales Country Park within their descriptions of green space.

Key points. Key points from the discussion are as follows:

- € The terms “nature” and “green space” are very hard to define.
- € Definitions are influenced by cultural perceptions of the natural environment.
- € Nature cannot be considered in isolation from the world of human activity.
- € Green space is land over which residents feel they have little or no control.
- € Green space is often a small pocket of land in an urban area that is badly maintained and unsafe to use.
- € Green spaces are very precious.

3.2.2 The social use of nature

Anti-social use of natural areas. When asked to consider the negative aspects of the natural environment, in each location participants always listed the anti-social behaviour of other users rather than focusing on the environment itself. The most common complaints were against:

- € problems with security and vandalism

- € 'fly tipping'
- € litter - particularly around roadside lay-bys;
- € dog fouling and potentially dangerous dogs roaming loose; and,
- € intimidating groups of people.

Residents in Nottingham were particularly anxious about the use of local green spaces by drug users, especially after dark; attempts to provide extra lighting in the worst areas were regularly thwarted by vandalism. This “yob drug culture” was noted as being so bad in one area that it had also jeopardised a tree planting initiative by local children - broken glass and needles in the grass made the activity too unsafe. This situation was understood in terms of people trying to 'ghettoise' the site, to discourage open access and keep the site for their own deviant activity.

“The park is a perfect place, but it's got the reputation of having drug users, so parents won't allow their children to go there.” (M, Leicester, 22/03/2003)

Several of the women stated that they were afraid to walk alone in these areas (and the wider countryside).

“As a woman I actually find it quite difficult to go walking on my own, I mean I like walking. [But] I wouldn't find it relaxing or easy walking on my own. I often say that there are not many safe places women can go on their own, except shopping and things like that, but to actually go out for a walk...it's not safe, you've got it in your head it's not safe.” (F, Mansfield, 13/03/2003).

One Asian female was particularly attuned to the potential dangers of going out alone.

“I will only go to parks and places where I feel I won't face any discrimination, because I'm very frightened. In some places children can be very horrible and very intimidating. When my children were younger we went to Clumber Park but as they've got older, I've shied away because I feel threatened.” (F, Nottingham, 15/03/2003).

Yet participants also recognised that many barriers are perceived rather than actual and that the media was often to blame by focusing on negative events.

M: “I think word of mouth is a better form of publicity than the media, people talking about things and spreading the word.”

F: “But if neighbours don't talk to each other...”

M: “The thing is, the media have their own agenda. They'd much prefer to have 'man stabbed seventeen times' than 'Oh! a new park's opened'.” (Leicester, 22/03/2003)

The Nottingham University group agreed that green spaces such as Burntstump Country Park were used by local youngsters to indulge in forbidden activities such as smoking and under-age sex. However, they believed that deviant behaviour such as this could happen anywhere; it is the degree of isolation and lack of adequate lighting that encourages young people to gravitate to these areas more than others.

Vandalism is thought to be the biggest issue threatening green spaces and other natural areas in Leicester. Participants stated that such anti-social behaviour causes frustration amongst the local community and erodes any sense of ownership or affiliation with green areas. This was thought to be particularly relevant in neighbourhoods where the community had 'broken down. One Leicester participant was particularly dispirited that his area was 'full of anti-socials':

“It entirely depends on the mentality of the area you live in really. The area where I live, they just don't give a toss and it just ends up as a tip and it ends up being more of a liability than a benefit”

M: “Where about is that?”

“New Parks [...] they are always setting fire to it so it turns into a liability.” (M, Leicester, 22/03/2003)

The participants across all the groups expressed sadness that random acts of vandalism and other anti-social behaviour appeared to occur in the areas that needed green space the most, namely urban and urban-fringe areas. In a recent survey of anti-social behaviour in the Mansfield District, litter (closely followed by dog fouling, groups of rowdy youngsters and fireworks; Mansfield District Council, 2003 and N-OPAG, 2002) was identified as one of the biggest areas of concern. Some of the participants believed that people had more respect for nature in the countryside; however, most recognised that activities such as the dumping of burnt out cars at Clipstone Forest near Nottingham are becoming increasingly common.

Litter and fly-tipping were highlighted as major problems in the Northamptonshire area. Participants were particularly frustrated by apparent local authority inaction.

M: “I go running a lot.[...] I live in a small place called Desborough [and] when I go round a lot of the circuits out of Desborough , there is an awful lot of litter and litter is almost breeding. I understand the problem but the local authority don't have any strategy for actually going round and getting rid of the litter. It's actually generated by the young people because it's McDonalds and soft drinks cans and stuff like that { ... } but Local authorities need to have some way in which they can be compelled to have a policy. If they start cleaning up it won't be as bad because people litter where there is already litter. You know, we have an awful problem around here with cars that [...]”

EF: “They go in cars and instead of taking their rubbish home with them they throw it on the side of the road; it's the same as dumping their cars.”

F: “It can't be that much further to the tip.”

EF: “Well if you go onto the lay-bys there is a rubbish bin but they don't use it.” (Corby, 22/03/2003)

Fly-tipping in particular was thought to be a result of the problems and time delays encountered when individuals attempted to arrange appropriate disposal by local Councils and the charges incurred by businesses at local refuse sites. Indeed, schemes such as the 'flying skips' in Mansfield Woodhouse have been victims of their own success and demonstrate the demand for effective and easy disposal of household waste (Mansfield City Council, 2003). Many of the participants felt that highly visual, anti-social use of nature could dissuade some people from visiting an area or a particular site.

In the more rural locations of Corby and Matlock, activities that destroyed or damaged the physical environment, such as off-road motor-biking and indiscriminate use of 4X4 vehicles, farmers removing hedges and people who wilfully run over wildlife (especially badgers), were also viewed as particularly intolerable. In Spilsby, so-called 'exploitation' of the countryside for individual profit, for example by egg collectors, illegal taxidermists, and people who steal wild flower bulbs, were added to the list of anti-social acts.

Management. When participants were asked how the above problems might be addressed, a wide range of solutions and issues were discussed. Visible management and control of the countryside and green spaces was the most popular option yet also the most paradoxical. Noting the problems of vandalism and drug abuse experienced by places such as Woodthorpe

Park and Arnot Hill Park in Nottingham, several participants stated that green spaces and country parks should be locked-up at certain times of the day. This attempt to restrict access was controversial and other participants countered that locking-up areas of green space or other natural environments simply defeats the object of having them available.

“What do you do? [...] in the summer months? In the evening people often go for a walk in the park and smell the, the” [M: “Dog turds”] {laughs} “whatever smells come out in the evening. But often they can't because the parks are locked. They want to see the moonlight in the evening but how can you tell the parks people to keep it open because they don't have the resources? It's enjoying nature only at certain times and the most wonderful feelings in nature are at dawn and dusk ... magical things happen then but these places are closed to the public.” (F, Leicester, 22/03/2003)

Several other participants also noted the sensory experience of walking at dawn or dusk and the value of solitude when walking their dogs.

Recognising that increased security such as lighting simply does not work in many areas, participants suggested that an authoritative presence in problem areas may help to combat anti-social behaviour and encourage more appropriate use. Most people agreed that rangers and park wardens gave a secure feeling to natural areas and complained about the apparent dwindling in their numbers. In Corby participants stated that they used to have park keepers but the local authority couldn't afford to employ them anymore. They believed that their presence cut down on vandalism and saved money in the long run.

M: “I think part of the problem with open spaces is the lack of control ... it attracts people, in other words the fly-tippers and the young people. It is the lack of supervision in those areas that makes them attractive to us and to them.”

EF: “Yes, because when we were younger you'd always got people around, warden and park keepers. I mean they just can't afford them these days can they? Well, they say they can't but if it would cut down on vandalism in these areas, it would save them money.” (Corby, 22/02/2003)

It was suggested, however, that the role of rangers may have to change. One participant noted that in Sheffield there are moves afoot to incorporate an educational function into the warden's duties.

“I think a lot of them are having to go back to considering some sort of control. I was working in Sheffield before and I think they were doing what a lot of places are now. Not just having a park keeper out there to say 'no you can't step on the grass' [but] to try and educate people about different uses, to try and instil some sort of sense of worth.” (F, Corby, 22/03/2003)

In Leicester, participants stated that where there were wardens, they were well loved and respected by local communities and during their 'on-site days' people often stopped to say hello and chat - it was almost like having a 'bobby on the beat'.

In the more rural locations participants were adamant that the management of local green spaces and countryside areas must strike a balance. Several participants in Corby and Matlock felt that country parks are almost too managed and that the proliferation of set routes and car parking detracted from the 'countryside experience'.

“I think [access] is an area of major confusion. To my mind I would much rather go down a valley wading through the mud, realistically that's what I want to see, rather than steps to help me get down. OK, so it's easier to deal with it, that's where you get the dichotomy of disability.” (M, Matlock, 14/02/2003)

“The more you create access and make nature available for the public, the more you make the risk of destroying what you are trying to open up.” (M, Matlock, 14/03/2003)

However, opinion was divided on the issue of access.

“I think we need the accessibility for people to see some of the things. The youth have no problem getting anywhere but I think, I can only comment on one particular walk that I do now which at one time was lethal, you did it at your own risk: going from Matlock to Matlock Bath through the wood, up St John's Road, and I thank whoever did the steps and the availability, because that just makes another pathway to wonderful nature, and you can stand in that wood and even though the road is so close it is so silent and that to me is a joy.” (EF, Matlock, 14/03/2003)

Places such as the Lake District and the Cotswolds were thought to be far too organised, whereas Derbyshire was considered to be a 'working environment' where imperfections such as broken gates and 'fallen down barns' added to a general atmosphere of naturalness and evolution. In Mansfield one participant was particularly concerned about the 'branding', and increasingly 'contrived' nature, of the countryside due to the decline of agriculture and rise of tourism.

“I object to the constant branding of the countryside, Robin Hood Country formerly known as Nottinghamshire, Bronte Country formerly known as West Yorkshire, you know it's constant re-branding for marketing purposes, it's irritating. But that's as imaginative as the Government gets if you like [...] What I object to about it is constantly being treated like a consumer and a customer all the time and the marketisation of all forms of social relationships including relationships with open spaces, nature, historical entities like counties. [...] You know you can have historical walks; you can have geology and any number of dimensions you want. You know you drive around the English countryside these days and the roads of the Shires, and you pass over the boundary into Nottinghamshire but no it's Robin Hood Country. It's turning the English landscape into a theme park.” (M, Mansfield, 13/03/2003)

M1: “But can't landscape and literature mix? [...] You know they're all either novelists or poets which are actually affairs of the heart in relation to landscape ... it does give it a different dimension. I wouldn't have thought about it until we started talking about it tonight.”

M2: “But perhaps you have to brand it to get people in [...] If it's not branded then they don't want to know. Dare I say that about ninety-five percent of the population in this country couldn't care a toss about the countryside? [...] It's like having a country park, to get it over to a lot of the population what it's about you probably have got to have an event, you can't just put a notice up and say come along and have a walk in our park”(Mansfield, 13/03/2003)

Similar concerns were expressed regarding the desire of certain authorities to overly preserve and conserve certain natural areas.

In Leicester, criticism was aimed at English Nature and participants felt that people were prevented from entering woodlands on the grounds of safety but in actual fact this was because they didn't want people trampling on the land.

F: “You find particularly now in Leicester there are lots of environmental organisations each doing their own thing and there's no networking [...] and they won't tell the other person what they are doing.”

M: “I'm a keen environmentalist and over half of the other members of the group are, because it is a sport that involves going into the countryside, and you find that English Nature and other environmental groups treat us like pariahs because they think we're going to wreck their areas. But if they came and talked with you and came to see what we are doing... I mean, I write articles on the environment [...] it's a lack of information: there's got to be some common ground.” (Leicester, 22/03/2003)

In Mansfield and Matlock, participants recognised the need to protect certain species but realised that laws and regulations to prevent access and habitat disturbance could also alienate people.

“Earlier this spring we went for a walk in one of the reserves in Forest Town. There's a series of ponds, and there were lads fishing and one of the members in our group, kind blessed soul that he is, doesn't like the lads and he was saying to the lads 'oh you shouldn't be here, you should be elsewhere'. One of the lads eventually looked into the pond and said 'well there's fish in these ponds, what are they there for if not for fishing' ... and I thought yeah you're right kid, you got it {laughs} ... magic.” (F, Mansfield, 13/03/2003)

F1: “That's a bit of an interesting one as well isn't it? Has it only got a worth if it's accessible for us to see, or does wildlife have an intrinsic value of its own? Because I was absolutely stunned when I went for a walk with friends and my husband and, you know, you extol the worth of nature, but it doesn't mean anything if people can't see it...but it does in and of itself, it's external to us so how do we figure that one out?”

M: “Why are these bluebells here if we can't pick 'em? Well exactly...”

F2: “I think there has to be a balance [...] I mean our nature table at school used to be for picking things up and picking flowers {laughs} and you took them back to school and stuck them on the table ... armfuls of bluebells.” (F, Mansfield, 13/03/2003)

Increasingly stringent health and safety regulations, and a 'compensation culture' were also thought to be to blame for stopping visits to the countryside for school children and other groups aimed at young people.

In Spilsby, one local school used to borrow local farm land for sport but this is no longer possible as neither the school nor the farmer can be insured against compensation for accidents. In Leicester, participants felt that regulation had also taken the spontaneity away from education; impromptu visits were impossible.

“I've never met a group of kids from say five to ten who don't thoroughly enjoy themselves getting wet and mucky outside, they just love it. It's getting them there in the first place and turning them free to get their hands dirty. If they go out there and teachers say they have to walk along this path [...] because teachers are scared of being sued or thumped by the parents.” (M, Leicester, 22/03/2003)

Yet participants acknowledged that in certain situations children can thrive on the possibility of danger and needed areas that were 'damage sustainable'.

“There's an area in Mansfield called 'the desert' which is round the back of ASDA and all of the kids in that area who have bikes or can get mobile tear about the desert like mad things and they love it to bits. They get chucked off regularly by the police or the warden for the wildlife trust because they don't want them there but that desert is so important to them, and it would be really sad if it became official or if it became fenced off. It's really important that the kids can tear about.” (F, Mansfield, 13/03/2003)

“Isn't it mean to control somebody through their adolescence to the rooms of the house and the immediate area of the street outside? It's inhumane, it's like imprisonment and I think green open space is a place that they should be able to get into and use. [...] You can't manufacture it; it needs to be random space that they find themselves just as we did when we were young ... a place to light bonfires {laughs}.” (EM, Mansfield, 13/03/2003)

This participant argued that children need spaces like this to discover, develop, and test their capacity to undertake certain manoeuvres. Such spaces can't be overly manufactured; their presence as random and seemingly beyond the control of familiar restrictions is an important part of the children's experience. If one's experience of the countryside is too formalised it is impossible to learn about being outside. In Corby, participants noted the well-managed country parks with their play areas and set routes and added with regret that children don't

'get dragged through the countryside any more' or encouraged to explore, bend, swing and test the limits of the environment which surrounds them. The Nottingham University group felt that Victoria Park in Leicester had achieved a commendable balance of activities in its provision of a skate park, playground and wide-open areas with space to fly kites.

The importance of education and opportunity for children and adults. In every group the participants felt that contemporary children are over-managed and are prevented, or distracted away, from experiencing the natural environment and outdoor play by a variety of factors. These include access to increasingly sophisticated and complex toys that are thought to stifle imagination and the discovery of natural delights through exploration, the image of outdoor activity (other than that which others consider inappropriate) and green initiatives as not 'cool', and the lack of encouragement from parents and other influential institutions. Fear on the behalf of parents was also a restricting factor in urban and rural communities. For example, Leicester has a large network of canals and rivers which are widely used by the local population for cycling and walking yet, despite extensive renovation, parental fear still prevents children from being allowed to use these areas. By contrast, older participants recalled that in their childhood they were allowed to roam relatively freely and could walk or cycle anywhere they wanted,

“You see, you daren't let your children now, these days' people are afraid to let them. When I was a child I lived in a little village and we used to wander down the fields and go for miles, my sister and me. But you see, you wouldn't let your children do that now would you? We used to go up the woods and make little houses you know.” (EF, Corby, 22/03/2003)

F: “There are more constraints than there used to be, even since I was a kid.”

M1: “I don't think they are allowed to, I don't think a lot of children are allowed to go and explore and come back for a certain time. I mean I used to roam fields and woodlands and nobody ever thought anything about it, whereas today a lot of parents would say 'well you can't go down there, because you might be attacked.' ”

F: “The rest of us think they're up to no good anyway.”

M2: “Yes, it is two-fold isn't it? You're fearful for safety but children also somehow become a liability.” (Mansfield, 13/03/2003)

Several participants also blamed the increase in car ownership for childhood inactivity; parents drive their children to school instead of walking and therefore youngsters do not get the opportunity to experience nature first hand everyday. These days, excursions to the countryside and nature sites are something that only 'well-to-do' families do.

“They belong to so many organisations like dancing and athletics and one thing and another, and they are carted from here to there in the car, they never walk. It's not that I'm decrying what they've got today, because I like to see them doing these things, but it seems such a shame that [they don't have] the basics that we had when you went round fields and walked round fields.” (EF, Corby, 22/03/2003)

Again, in contrast, older participants recalled that their parents regularly took their children out on 'nature walks'.

“I think the people of our age group, our parents used to walk with us. My father walked with me from very small out the back lanes from [...] and into the woods, showing me where jays nested, where badger setts were, and telling me what the plants were. I didn't look upon it as education [...] but there are far more distractions for children in this day and age.” (M, Mansfield, 13/03/2003)

“Oh yes, and my father was a great one for nature and he used to tell us where the badgers lived and things like that you know, that was our Sunday night treat. We went to church and Sunday night we went for a walk across the fields and he'd show us the birds' nests and things like that. That's the way you learn, but you see they don't do that now.” (EF, Corby, 22/03/2003)

Participants were anxious that children were not gaining the knowledge and appreciation of the natural environment that was passed down to them by their parents.

“I think you have a difficult problem now with young people and nature and contact with it. I mean if you look at the groups I belong to, wildlife groups, there are very few young people so a great worry is what children are actually taught about the environment and recycling. They've got a very limited view of what the natural environment actually is. We've got a stuffed badger we use and we go to schools in Wellingborough and all over [...] and children come up and say 'is it real?' It just worries me, the words 'is it real?', what do they mean by real? [...] Most of the wildlife things you see on television are actually wildlife things outside of our country; it's rarely in the UK. They know more about lions than badgers and squirrels and things like that. There's a real problem of actually getting children to the natural environment [...]. The natural environment and the animals that live within in it are not given a high enough priority.” (M, Corby, 22/03/2003)

Participants in Corby and Matlock were anxious that generations were 'being lost' because young people did not have the opportunity to cultivate an interest in the natural environment. Members of several organisations, both sporting and environmental, stated that their age profiles were getting older and older.

In each of these discussions the attitudes of the parents were considered to be just as, if not more, important than the attitudes of children and young people. The general consensus was that if parents are not aware, then neither will their children be. However, the blame for this could not be directed solely at the parents.

“If the kids aren't introduced to these things by their parents ... you can't blame the parents in a sense. They all go to school and there they can teach the children to appreciate these things and take their own initiative later on and when temptation comes along, when somebody in their peer group wants to do something, there might be an element of resistance at least. You've got to try.” (M, Leicester, 22/03/2003)

“If the parents haven't already done this with the children it's because they don't know, they are not equipped to do it, so it has to come from somebody else”. (M. Leicester, 22/03/2003)

Natural history and nature programmes on the television were considered to be informative; however, they did impose certain limits on the accumulation of knowledge about one's local environment. Many participants were regretful that in the UK, children know more about 'exotic' wildlife in other countries than they do about the wonders of British nature.

M: “We're in a new era now and people travel thousands of miles on holiday, so that's another thing why people don't use the countryside. A lot of people say 'oh it's fabulous' in wherever it is, fantastic scenery and countryside, but poor old Kirkby-in-Ashfield so “deprived”, in inverted commas, has got some fantastic countryside that people have never seen. It's not cool is it, it's cool to have your holiday in Miami.”

F: “This is the real trick, how do you value our own back yard if there's this notion that you have to go and travel? I mean, you go trekking off into Derbyshire but there's some fab places in Nottinghamshire, a lot of people wouldn't know where the best local views were, there are some staggering views.” (Mansfield, 13/03/2003)

Knowledge of the local environment was found to be particularly lacking.

M. “We have a nature garden and we grow organic food and we've found that the general folk around the area don't actually know it's there and half the time the reason why it's left untouched is because people don't know

it's there. We've organised a fun day to let everybody around the environment know about it. I cycle there everyday and people ask why and they say 'oh I never knew that was there'. A lot of people are interested in it. [...] A lot of people think it's just a derelict area near the college." (M. Leicester, 22/03/2003)

M1: "Watermead is five miles long, half a mile wide and has seventeen lakes and gets a fraction of the visitors of Bradgate Park... There are people living in Leicester who have lived there all their lives and don't know it exists."

M2: "I think it's the tourism industry's fault as well, you've got things on Abbey Park, Bradgate Park, but you'll be lucky to find anything on just nature."

M1: "They did try to promote Watermead a few years ago, they renamed it part of the Leicester Riverside Park [...] and they put some brochures out and made it a nice long linear park. But once they'd done that initiative and got their brownie points for it, they moved on you know." (Leicester, 22/03/2003)

All too often participants stated that it was only when an area was threatened with destruction, a park threatened with closure, or a favourite tree faces the chainsaw that people showed a willingness to notice and take actual action.

How can we educate? In each location school education was believed to be of paramount importance in fostering children's awareness of nature and this grounding should be developed and built upon throughout a child's life.

"It has an enormous effect. On one of the projects we planted a hedge with a group of [...] youngsters and we had a bit of time. Groundwork had got some shrubs or whatever, and we were saying that whether that comes out now in five years [time] or forty years hence, it's there as a nugget of experience." (F, Mansfield, 13/03/2003)

"I've been involved in educating youngsters, yes. I'll give you a quick 'for instance', it amazed me. When I was very active with the RSPB we used to do exchanges locally, we used to send the Derby group down to Hertfordshire, Hertfordshire would come up to us and we took them to Lathkill Dale. We had children on board from nine to fifteen and it took an hour to get them out of the first field because they'd never seen a cow; that to me is frightening. They'd lived in this great big concrete environment and their faces...it hit home that. There is a need to get these people out, to show them the countryside [...] very sad" (M, Matlock, 14/03/2003)

"They're always really excited to go out on trips. I think they learn a lot. When I was in Sheffield you'd just learn some amazing things from them. They'd come out and they'd be like 'we don't like this there's lots of trees' [...] and it's things you don't think of yourself, reasons why they don't go out into the countryside, because they don't understand what it's about." (F, Corby, 22/03/2003)

People believed that education instils a sense of respect for the nature. For example, amongst the benefits of club membership were that they teach members 'manners' and how to behave in the natural environment. It was recognised that some schools are doing sterling work in introducing children to the natural environment. Participants in Matlock gave the example of Roe Farm Primary School in Derbyshire, where ecology has been included in the curriculum, and in Mansfield the national Learning Through Landscapes scheme to improve school grounds has influenced one local head teacher to dig up part of her playground to plant trees. One younger participant spoke about his experience of school farm.

"I think when I was at school they only took us on one school trip in the space of five years, a geography trip. [But] in my last two years at school I did study rural science. Because we were at Manor we had our own school farm so we studied that. There's quite a few school farms round here in this area. [...] We had stables, goats, pigsties and crop rotation, things like that [...] and every year we had to change the crops, move them from area to area. [...] In our year we had two big classes because loads of people tried to get on to it, it was good." (YM, Mansfield, 13/03/2003).

However, regrettably, the take-up of such activities depends very much on the school head and the presence (or absence) of willing teachers.

“We do an environmental programme to take schools out on visits. We take them out to the countryside but also to villages to learn about the heritage. I mean what we do is like a drop in the ocean compared with the amount of schools in the area. There are other organisations like ourselves but many of the schools that you talk to will say 'sorry but we just don't have the time' to do anything environmental. [...] It's something that I've done work on previously to look at how you can actually link with their actual work on the National Curriculum and do it in the environment around them. You can do it quite easily if you've got the will of the teachers and the local groups to help you out. You need that system.” (F, Corby, 22/03/2003)

A very high proportion of the participants, and in particular those with children, felt that many schools across the region didn't do anything. Secondary schools were even less likely to participate than primary schools.

Despite this the blame was not simply directed at the unwillingness of teachers to introduce so-called 'non-intellectual' topics such as nature and practical tasks. Participants in Mansfield felt that there was a latent demand for nature education but for a variety of reasons these opportunities were relatively under-used. For example, school visits to organisations such as the Sherwood Forest Visitor Centre near Nottingham, the Newton Activity Centre and Rockingham Forest Trust near Corby are popular but relatively irregular. Many participants blamed the emphasis on performance statistics and a restrictive curriculum that prevents 'learning for learning's sake' and in which subjects such as nature get squeezed out.

“I think the curriculum in schools is so controlled now. [...] I've got a niece and nephew of about eight and ten and I took them to the dragonfly sanctuary at Ashton, and they immediately went into project mode, they got their books and started writing furiously like I was a teacher. I said 'you don't have to do it, I'm not a teacher' ... 'I'm not going to mark it' and I thought crikey they're { ... } brainwashed. If it isn't part of a project you don't do it. I think it's about controlling it, isn't it, you got a terrific amount of control over what a teacher does at school.” (M, Corby, 22/03/2003)

In Leicester, participants believed that schools didn't know that some local parks existed, as they didn't have the time to research, while more parks needed to employ a proactive information officer. In other instances it was the forced nature of much education that was thought to influence ambivalent attitudes towards nature.

“There used to be [a council educational officer devoted to environmental issues] in Leicestershire because he used to visit our school quite a lot of the time. But teachers would say 'you are going to this talk' and the kids would go [makes a 'can't be bothered' noise] 'oh I'd prefer to go home' or something like that and they just wouldn't listen or anything, they just wanted to get out. [...] I think if the school said 'this afternoon in the week you won't be in school you'll be out in the environment learning things about plants and flowers and things' the kids would go 'oh yeah, we'll be out of school' and then they'll take notice. But the teachers say 'you're going here' { forceful tone}. [...] If you give them the option of doing it then I think they will do it.” (M, Leicester, 22/03/2003)

In Mansfield younger participants felt that children need positive encouragement rather than force, although a person's attitudes often depended on where they lived.

“Where I was brought up down the back end of Woodhouse, my dad used to work on a farm and my friends always used to hang around there or we used to go down Presley Mills, twelve, thirteen of us to go down there and camp. But the other side of our town they would have had no interest in that. We were brought up on the outskirts of it, like farm fields and mills and things like that [...] but people who lived on the other side who only saw the school fields, they just used to go and play football.” (YM, Mansfield, 13/03/2003)

In general the participants believed that nature education has to be made attractive to children before they will show an interest. In Corby, participants felt that it was a lack of effective interpretation at sites that influenced adults' lack of knowledge.

“It's not just the nature; it's the history of this place. I mean I feel quite annoyed with myself that there are prehistoric remains within six miles of this place and I think ... it's down to communication. If I tell people on the train... because I'm ... 'vaccinated with a gramophone needle', people will tell you [...] they'll say 'never!', and they didn't know and quite a few people have actually gone out and gone on those trails because they didn't know they were there. This is the problem, you see a little sign that say 'the Meden Trail' or 'the Mourne Trail' or whatever it is, but I think if there was some further information about it people would leave the road and go down that trail and see what there is.” (M, Corby 22/03/2003)

Boards that are there are often not informative and would benefit from showing every day life as well as (or instead of) the more exotic, rare animal species that might visit 'once a year'.

“I went down to [...] and as you go through, there's...a thing there, a plastic thing and it says there's these butterflies, there's these flowers that you can see ... now this is along a coastal route. I think that's so good, so good... Now there are some people who would say you shouldn't have pieces of plastic, you should have your book with you, something like that, but I actually like that. I think they are excellent [...] and you come across old buildings in Derbyshire which are clearly interesting and wouldn't it be nice if there was something there telling about it.” (M, Matlock, 14/03/2003)

Participants acknowledged that it makes a difference if you know what you are looking for, and agreed that interpretation in countryside areas was poor and often disappointing for people who do not visit regularly.

“It opened my eyes when someone introduced me to bird watching. I live near Kettering and Wicksteed Park has a lake [...] Now I must have gone round there loads of times and I've seen a few ducks and things but when you know what you're looking for, you see everything. I think it is a lack of appreciation [...] if you know what you are looking for, it is that ability to identify what is there.” (M, Corby, 22/03/2003)

A recent article in the Nottingham Evening Post asked if the contemporary population was 'losing the plot' and stated that just 8 per cent of people now grow their own vegetables. The article criticised the new wave of television programmes devoted to gardening and attributed the decline in allotment and vegetable patch keeping to the rise of consumer culture and hard work involved in cultivating one's own produce. Yet many participants felt that the recent rise in 'do it yourself' programmes on the television had encouraged people to get out and experiment with nature, create wildlife habitats next to their homes and build water features that could be used by aquatic species.

Ownership. Community ownership of local green space was particularly relevant to participants in the Leicester group. Participants spoke of neighbourhoods taking control and the extent to which 'friends of' groups might establish networks similar to the Neighbourhood Watch scheme.

“There's an old mining area ... out near [...] which is about twelve miles out. The Woodland Trust planted a new forest there, it's a very nice spot but what they've done is created a friends of the area group and the local people police it themselves and keep an eye on it.” (M, Leicester, 22/03/2003)

They also discussed the extent to which 'clean-ups' and the habitual use of problem areas by conscientious users might dissipate inappropriate behaviour - recent activity in the area of Bagnall (?) was cited as a good example of this. In giving members of the community a guardianship role it is possible to increase individuals' sense of place and foster a mutual

feeling of responsibility. However, such action usually relies on the presence of a key motivator.

“The problem is getting them motivated to do the job ... I know most of the people in my area think ‘well what's the point of doing it up if someone's going to come along and vandalise it?’ They just can't be bothered.” (M, Leicester, 22/03/2003)

“It's about finding the ideas but mostly it's about finding people who are passionate about that ... if you don't know how thrilling it is to see bluebells, walk through the autumn leaves and hear the sound of leaves you can't explain that.” (F, Leicester, 22/03/2003)

Participants in Leicester recognised that action needs to come from the community and that such movements have recently been encouraged by increased lottery and community funding. The money is there if people want it but once again this relies on key people who are passionate enough to go after it and to spend time filling in the forms. Participants felt that it would be much easier if there was a specific vehicle to spread and share information. Participants in Leicester complained about the short-term nature of funding and the fact that many good community projects that work often fail because funding ceases.

In each area, exposure to the natural environment through hedge-planting, tree-planting, and pond dipping was thought to have an enormous effect on children giving them a sense of ownership and showing them how things grow.

“The belief is that if you plant a tree or a sunflower then you are bound to look after it because it is your baby... Sometimes you get minibuses to take people to the countryside, I mean what do they expect people to do; you can't take them to the countryside and just leave them. You have to put it in context. For people to look after the environment it has to be in context with where they are coming from.” (F, Leicester, 22/03/2003)

Despite widespread vandalism, projects such as the one to involve the community and young people at Titchfield Park (Mansfield; Mansfield District Council, 2002) and the school nature garden at Whitegate Primary School (Nottingham; The Organic Organization; 2003), make positive links between the environment and people's daily lives and encourage the notion that it is a fun and (socially) relevant thing to do. In Nottingham, participants showed a particular enthusiasm for the dynamism of the Tithe Green Burial Ground and the idea of planting/nominating trees for people. In Corby, the well-publicised re-introduction of red kites into Northamptonshire and osprey at Rutland Water has been a huge success with the local populations. Local residents are generally well informed about their progress and often refer to them as 'our kites' and have a real feeling of ownership or connection with the birds because they are 'special'.

In Shipley Country Park, incidences of tree-breaking have declined substantially with the implementation of tree-planting days for young people and members of the local community. Yet participants also stressed the importance of follow up work and suggested that it might be useful to get the same children involved in designing their own school nature garden. Many participants noted that children like doing hands-on physical tasks, especially those which involved getting dirty. In Leicester, Nottingham and Mansfield, the participants, and in particular those below the age of 20, believed that they should be involved in planning their local environment and the implementation of green projects.

“We have to get the young people involved, I think is the answer, we can't produce things and then just give them to them and say ‘there you are that's the answer’. Otherwise they are not going to be interested.” (M, Mansfield, 13/03/2003).

“Let them do their own designs ... if they are involved then they'll appreciate it more. You can give someone something but they won't appreciate it, I mean if they're working towards it then...” (YF, Mansfield, 13/03/2003)

Some of the participants in the Matlock group had a very different view and felt that planners must acknowledge the 'dangers' of trying to include too many minority groups in the planning, design and management of natural environments. They felt that it was more advantageous if people who were already involved in the environment created inclusive spaces and then used publicity to reach out to under-represented groups.

“Would there not be a danger... if you include too many minorities or whatever you make nature unnatural. I mean if you've got too much input into what you are trying to manufacture, for want of a better word, you are effectively getting away from what nature is all about surely. Ok you've got nature and then, as you say, you get people in and say well we need to tinker with that little bit to make access better or whatever. I don't see how you can, you've got to have people who are really involved with it and then get those people in who are going to use it afterwards, I would have thought.” (M, Matlock, 14/03/2003)

Opinion was also divided on the potential use of multi-lingual signage and information.

Key points. Key points from this discussion are as follows

- € The key forms of anti-social behaviour are fly-tipping, litter, vandalism, dogs and intimidation from large groups of young people.
- € Anti-social behaviour can prevent the implementation of green initiatives.
- € Management must be visible whilst at the same time being sensitive to the location.
- € There is currently an imbalance between preservation and access to sites of special interest.
- € Children are not encouraged to explore and take an interest in nature.
- € Parental attitudes towards, and ability to undertake, nature education have changed significantly over the last 50 years.
- € The educational system must take responsibility for nature education.
- € There is a lack of effective interpretation.
- € Green initiatives instil a sense of ownership and encourage responsible behaviour.

3.3 The role of nature in social well-being and inclusion

3.3.1 How easy is it for people to access natural areas?

Participants in Matlock were keen to discuss access to the natural environment and debated the extent to which such areas should be made accessible for all. Opinion appeared to be divided. For example, a few participants felt that the changes needed to create increased access could be damaging to the very environments that people wanted to visit. Older participants felt that accessible paths were extremely valuable and allowed them to continue frequenting favourite places in the local area. However, most people saw the need to strike a balance. The majority of the people in the Matlock group felt that, although most people tended to use maps, sign posting and the provision of interpretative boards in their area was poor.

“I think the sign posting in this country is abysmal, especially in the Peak District; the fact it just says ‘footpath’. It should say it goes to [...] or something.” (M, Matlock, 14/03/2003)

Participants felt that this problem was further compounded by farmers who obstructed paths that were already unclear. A similar view was held in Mansfield, where several people felt they did not know enough about local green spaces and trails around the Mansfield area to feel confident about using them. Participants in Leicester felt that where there was information and signage, it often directed people to the same over-visited places.

Transport and access to the wider countryside was also considered to be a problem but was not discussed in much depth by the participants.

“One of the biggest problems we find, I mean we run events all over, in almost every green space in the county, is even if people want to come, the transport links invariably don't go to wild places because nobody lives here.... So you might find that schools will bring people along a couple of times but there's a problem in bringing them back, if their parents aren't interested and there's no public transport.” (M, Leicester, 22/03/2003)

The National Forest was thought to be particularly inaccessible by public transport.

3.3.2 Minority ethnic groups

In Nottingham one participant felt that minority ethnic groups are significantly absent from green spaces, countryside areas, and organisations responsible for the care of the natural environment. A number of possible reasons were suggested to explain this. For instance, one woman suggested that Asian culture has the utmost respect for nature yet there was a lot of ignorance on the part of minority ethnic groups.

“I realise that there is a lot of ignorance on our part, I think it's an area in which people have not thought about themselves to sort of integrate into, so that's why. There are some pockets of professional life that minority groups just don't feel they fit into, maybe it's not focused at them, through promotion or whatever, it's never targeted at them. [...] They need to attract people through media, schooling whatever, you know. In our lifestyles there are a lot of attitudes that we need to change, to realise that those opportunities are there.” (F, Nottingham, 15/03/2003)

It was suggested that environmental careers are not necessarily promoted in India and Pakistan and minority ethnic groups are significantly absent amongst the key positions in most British environmental organisations.

“I'm sitting here thinking in my mind why I, why communities, don't ... go into jobs like that and I'm thinking that back home through our religion ... I mean I'm speaking about Asian culture because I don't know very much about other ethnic minorities [...] whether it's Indian, Pakistani, Bengali whatever. [...] Back home there aren't jobs anyway, but there aren't jobs that seem to be people caring for open spaces ...do you understand? ... In the bigger cities [...] you know there must be because you get beautiful places all over the world but I'm thinking more on a lower level [...] you know it's not promoted.”
(F, Nottingham, 15/02/2003)

Acknowledging that there are reserves to conserve internationally significant species such as the tiger, this participant felt that there was very little evidence of day-to-day care of smaller open spaces and that such initiatives are rarely aimed at local people. She noted that, in Britain, significantly few Asian people are interested in hobbies such as bird watching, although they do tend to enjoy watching nature programmes on television.

In Nottingham and Leicester, minority ethnic participants felt that they would appreciate guidance from knowledgeable people about how to introduce their communities to green spaces.

“There are three issues: Having the facilities, access to those facilities, and knowing what to do when you get to those facilities.” (F, Leicester, 22/03/2003)

In Leicester a participant who worked with a local youth group stated that no one had ever approached them offering the opportunity to get out into the countryside.

“There are some of them interested, but our main problem is how to get there. You know they live in the local area and they just look for the nearest park, they can walk down. You tell them to go somewhere about three, four, five miles away and they can't.” (M, Leicester, 22/03/2003)

One participant who worked with young Muslim girls stated that her group had wanted to do something environmental but they weren't aware of the opportunities available to them or who to ask for advice. She expressed dissatisfaction with one environmental group aimed specifically at women, whose approach seemed to be 'too much talking and not enough action'.

“I'd be interested to find out how much young teenagers use open space and also, I don't want to offend anybody, I'm interested to find out about ethnic minorities because it does concern me. I run a voluntary girls group, basically because girls don't have anything, anywhere socially, and it's only recently that we've started thinking about doing something environmentally friendly with them but we're not trained. You know, I'm honest, I don't think that way myself and I don't know how to be creative about it to get them involved. I mean, we approached someone from [...] and...it was all talking and overloading information, which is very off-putting to children. There's not enough education. [...] We were hoping it would be a bit more creative, our ages range from the age of ten up to any age, because we cater for whoever wants to come, and the children were getting bored after five, ten minutes.” (F, Nottingham, 15/02/2003).

“Do you ever approach or target Asian communities and their organisations running already, or do any ...professionals at your level, is it happening?” [EF: “If you go to the libraries there's lots of information, they have the leaflets and the programme for the year.”] “I know there's lots of all that but you know it's about, on our part it's about educating ethnic minorities to use these facilities you see. [...] Other groups might be using the libraries and making use of the ... but I'm just thinking if Asian people are.” [EF: “Well you can just pop in to the library.”] “I do personally but [...] from my experience with my group, when we do a more constructive programme they are always involved [...] but if we know a lot more then we can motivate them. You know when organisations have these open days ...all the usual activities are there, like the henna, and it gets a bit boring, nothing out of the ordinary.” (F, Nottingham, 15/03/2003)

F: "It's net-working and partnership working, there are bodies that are looking for information but they don't know the people. People like you who have got the information."

M: "I've got maps, detailed maps, of nearly every park in Leicestershire and nobody knows how to get them off me and I don't know how to get them to other people. We need some sort of central body, like a local directory of what's on." (Leicester, 22/03/2003)

In Matlock a participant with experience of taking minority ethnic groups on escorted visits from Sheffield discovered that the children didn't like the dirt, darkness and silence of the countryside because it was so alien to the city in which they lived.

3.3.3 What are the benefits of having natural areas nearby?

All the participants in each location felt that it was important for people and animals to have locally accessible green spaces and natural areas. However, in Corby and Matlock, some participants felt that local people did not necessarily appreciate the nature surrounding them as much as the tourists who came to visit. Anecdotal evidence shows that there are huge mental, physical and social benefits derived from contact with nature and that experience of the natural environment was a generally pleasurable event.

EM: "We haven't really discussed how the mind reacts to nature, is it calming to some people and agitating to others [...] for some just being able to feel the wind in your hair and sit on a piece of damp grass is very exciting and very pleasant, it gives you freedom. So you can view open space in so many different ways."

F: "Yes it can be seen as a threat."

EM: "Yes, it's about communing with nature and how long you have, if it's only popping out for five minutes, it doesn't do you any good; a couple of hours is a different matter altogether, it can mean a greater space than a small green space. I think it's just beautiful to be together in group in the fresh air ... children enjoy being together doing an activity, learning something new [...] that is beneficial and hopefully it educates them to appreciate it a bit more."

(F, Nottingham, 15/02/2003)

"I think it's wonderful to be out in bad weather, it's the plus feeling when you get back inside, and the warm feeling."

(M, Mansfield, 13/03/2003)

Many participants mentioned the therapeutic value of 'going back to nature' when modern society appeared to be so removed, and the ability of natural environments to provide one with a sense of perspective in a culture seemingly devoted to consumerism.

"I think you work better if you've got some green space surrounding you, a few trees and that. Probably at lunch time, it doesn't have to be a big area and you can go and sit on a bench and have your sandwiches rather than be forced to stay inside, and I think it's very beneficial. I think you probably work better after you've had your lunch or your tea break, it doesn't have to be a large area." (M, Mansfield, 13/02/2003).

Participants in the Nottingham University group felt that green areas can fulfil some sort of spiritual role; they can take a person out of modern life and enable them to begin to reconnect with the land. Yet, in a lot of cases simply the knowledge that a green space is there is enough, regardless of whether a person actually visits it within their lifetime. It was important to be able to see a bit of green from where one lived, even if it was far away.

In Hindu culture there is a significant attachment to trees and there are many religious festivals to celebrate and honour trees. Cultural natural events help local people to celebrate their local identity and natural amenities. One participant in the Nottingham University group spoke about the sentimental attachment to trees that some people have and their

capacity to create a magical experience. 'Wassailing festivals' in local woodlands and pagan rituals such as 'tree candle days' are wonderful ways of increasing social inclusion and participation. After several meetings it was also noticed that the focus groups themselves were being used as an opportunity to meet and share ideas. Many participants exchanged telephone numbers, details of useful contacts, maps and information leaflets, and agreed to help each other with specific problems of access and lack of appropriate information.

In Spilsby, the children stated that they liked going outdoors with their friends instead of being cooped up inside and one, in particular, enjoyed walking to school and walking their dog. These children also liked being able to use the school playing fields instead of the playground when the weather permitted. They could do more things on the grass, as it doesn't hurt to fall over when doing handstands, and they supposed that this encouraged them to be more adventurous and energetic in their games. Some of their friends were unable to take advantage of their rural surroundings and were prevented from playing outside because they lived on busy main roads. In Leicester, several young male participants stated that the only open space they used regularly was the local park but they would meet there to play football with friends. A key social benefit of nature is the opportunity to meet up with other people. One older participant in Nottingham stated that her contemporaries enjoy going to RSPB meetings because they get to talk to young people with similar interests in an atmosphere where everyone is treated equally and with the same respect. She found this aspect just as refreshing as seeing and gaining more knowledge about wildlife, as one doesn't 'always want to be around your own age group'.

3.3.4 Key points

Key points from the discussions are as follows:

- € There are many social, mental and physical benefits that can be derived from access to nature and green spaces.
- € All the participants felt that access to nature was important, although in some cases the knowledge of nearby nature and green spaces was enough to instil a sense of wellbeing.
- € Members of minority ethnic groups are rarely approached to take part in green initiatives and are unsure of where to obtain information.
- € Sign posting and information given at sites is often inadequate and not very informative.
- € All attempts to provide access to all should be sensitive to the location.

3.4 Summary of key points from the focus group research

- € The terms 'nature' and 'green space' are very hard to define and definitions/expectations are influenced by cultural perceptions of the natural environment.
- € Nature can not be considered in isolation from the world of human activity.
- € Green space is seen by some people as land over which they feel they have little or no control and the term is often associated with small pockets of land in urban areas that are badly maintained and unsafe to use.
- € To other people, conversely, green spaces are very precious resources breaking up urban areas and providing for recreation.
- € The key forms of anti-social behaviour are fly-tipping, litter, vandalism, dog fouling and intimidating behaviour by large groups of young people.
- € Anti-social behaviour can prevent the implementation of green initiatives.

- € Management must be visible whilst at the same time being sensitive to the location and character of the area.
- € Contemporary children are not encouraged to explore and take an interest in nature.
- € The contemporary education system must take responsibility for and give more importance to nature education.
- € There is a lack of effective nature interpretation available – sign posting and information given at sites is often inadequate and not very informative.
- € Green initiatives instil a sense of ownership and encourage responsible behaviour.
- € There are many social, mental and physical benefits that can be derived from access to nature.
- € Access to nature was important, although the knowledge of nearby nature can be enough to instil a sense of well-being.
- € Members of minority ethnic groups are rarely approached to take part in green initiatives and are unsure of where to obtain information.
- € Attempts to provide access to all should be sensitive to the location.

3.4.1 Favourite Places to Visit mentioned by Participants

Corby

Barnswell Country Park
 Bidstock Country Park
 Corby Boating Lake
 Eyebrook Reservoir
 Ferry Meadows
 Grafham Water
 North Northamptonshire

Rockingham Forest
 Rutland Water
 Stoke Wood (near Desborou gh)
 Summer Nase(?)
 Titchmarsh
 West Glebe

Leicester

Aylston (part of river/canal network)
 Leicester Botanical Garden
 Riverside (part of river/canal network)
 Spinney Hill Park (for football)
 Water Mead Park

Mansfield

Bentink Banks for the orchids
 Clumber Park
 Countryside around Warsop
 Derbyshire
 Disused Railway Cuttings
 Harlow Wood
 Hodsoc Priory (at snowdrop time)
 King John's Hunting Lodge
 Kings Mill Reservoir
 Little Oak Plantation, Hansley Wood

Meden Trails
 Misk Hills
 Newstead Abbey Gardens
 Portland Park Quarries
 Presley Mills
 Rufford Park
 Sherwood Forest
 Silverhill Tip
 Strawberry Bank, Huthwaite
 Wellow Woods
 Wildlife Trust Reserves

Matlock

Allestree Park
 Black Rocks
 Bradford Dale

Hall Lees Park
 High Peak Trail
 High Tor

Calke
Carsington Water
Chatsworth House Gardens
Chesterfield Canal
Cressbrook Dale
Darley Park, Derby
Foremarke Reservoir

Nottingham

Attenborough Nature Reserve
Clumber Park
Colwick Park Nottingham University Park
and Jubilee Garden
Derbyshire, especially Dovedale
Disabled Access Garden, Wells Road
Martin's Pond
National Forest Visitor Centre
North Nottinghamshire
Nottingham Canals (Trent Bridge to Grantham)

Nottingham University

Nottingham Arboretum
Nottingham University Park
Martin's Pond
Peak District
Shipley Country Park
Victoria Park

Lathkill Dale
Linacre Reservoir
Lumsdale
Manifold Valley
Padley Gorge
Staunton Harold Reservoir
Tissington Trail

Nottingham Castle
Nottingham Arboretum

River Trent Paths
Rufford Abbey Park
Teversal Trails
Tithe Green Burial Ground
Wollaton Park

Chapter four Selection of sites and development of questionnaire

Following the scoping meeting and the focus group discussions, a questionnaire was used to gather information from a larger and more varied sample of people who use green spaces in the East Midlands. The data from questionnaires was collected from 16 very diverse sites throughout the East Midlands area. Using facet theory, themes derived from the transcript of the focus groups were used to form the basis of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed so that the data gathered was in a form that would be amenable to quantitative analysis. The information was then used to construct a profile of people's relationships to nature. This chapter describes the selection of sites and the development of the questionnaire.

4.1 Selection of sites

The aim of site selection was to find 15 or 16 sites which were geographically spread around the East Midlands, but which also represented a range of types of site, from urban city centre formal parks, through forests, local nature reserves, National Nature Reserves, local authority country parks, coastal areas and the Peak District National Park.

The final list of sites was drawn from a long list of suggestions supplied by English Nature (Appendix 5). This long list was compiled from suggestions made by the Regional Biodiversity Action Forum and the project steering group. After studying the long list an initial selection was drawn up and marked on a map of the region so as to be able to see how geographically distributed the sites were. This list was a little bigger than the eventual target choice of 15 sites, as specified in the final agreed brief.

Once the short list was compiled, contact details for each were sourced and these contacts – usually managers or rangers – were approached by email or phone in order to see if they were willing for the research to take place. Many were enthusiastic and were keen to be able to see the data and to have some kind of report about their site, partly as a *quid pro quo* for allowing the research to go ahead. Each site was also visited, checked for its suitability and to see where the best locations for data gathering would be, and site photographs were taken (see Appendix 1).

After the site visits, some alternatives were dropped and the eventual number of 16 sites was finalised. The final number was 16 because of the desire to include a small restoration site that had become a nature reserve but from which only a small number of samples could be expected to be obtained.

Each site was categorised in the range of wild to urban: wild, woodland, nature reserve, country park, local park and urban park. This is a crude categorisation since some nature reserves could also be classed as country parks; in such cases, the main function or management objective was selected.

Table 2 presents the final list of sites used for the data capture by questionnaire survey.

Table 2 Sites used for the questionnaire survey

County	Location	Character
DERBYSHIRE	Chaddesden Wood LNR	A small ancient semi-natural oak woodland on the outskirts of Derby. Surrounded by houses, well used by local people. “Local park”
	Cromford Canal SSSI, Wirksworth	An old canal, an historical relic of the industrial revolution but also important for nature conservation. In the Peak District National Park. Well used for walks along the canal banks. “Nature reserve”
	Lady Bower and Derwent reservoirs	Reservoirs in moorland and plantation forest in the Peak District National Park. Managed by Severn and Trent Water. Heavily visited by people from all over the area plus Sheffield and Manchester. “Wild”
LEICESTER-SHIRE	Brocks Hill country park	A recently developed local authority country park on the southern outskirts of Leicester. Has a new visitor centre and centre for promoting energy and other forms of conservation. “Country park”
	Nature Alive, Coalville	A small reclamation site on the outskirts of Coalville, with a pond/lake and old industrial remains. Managed as a small local nature reserve. “Local park”
	Rutland Water	A major reservoir used for water sports and also valuable for nature conservation. Very centrally located in the region. Managed by Anglian Water. “Nature reserve”
	Victoria Park, Leicester	A traditional Victorian city park in the centre of Leicester. Close to the university. Well used by people all the time. Managed by Leicester City Council parks department. “Urban park”

County	Location	Character
LINCOLNSHIRE	Bourne Woods	Forestry Commission mixed woodland on the outskirts of Bourne. Has a car park, toilets and series of forest walks. “Wood”
	Gibraltar Point	National Nature Reserve south of Skegness on the Lincolnshire coast. Sand dunes and associated vegetation types, very good for bird watching. “Wild”
	Hartsholme Country Park, Lincoln	Local authority country park on the southern outskirts of Lincoln, easily accessible to the residents. Includes a simple visitor centre and offices for rangers etc. “Country park”
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE	Bestwood Country Park	Large local authority country park a few miles from Nottingham. Includes restored coal mining areas as well as older woodlands. “Country park”
	Kings Park, Retford	Traditional, fairly small town park in the centre of Retford. Bisected by a canal. Formal gardens, ornamental trees and paths. Managed by the district council parks department. Well used by local people. “Urban park”
	Major Oak, Edwinstowe	National Nature Reserve and visitor attraction based on Robin Hood and the large old oak tree of the legends. Ancient semi natural woodland. Major visitor centre and walks. Managed by the county council. “Nature reserve”

County	Location	Character
NORTHAMPTON-SHIRE	Barnwell Country Park, Oundle	A local authority country park on former gravel workings, with water and water fowl. Has a small visitor centre. On the outskirts of Oundle. “Country park”
	Brixworth Country Park, Northampton	Large country park containing reservoir and water sports. Has large visitor centre and associated facilities. A short distance from Northampton. Managed by Anglian Water. “Country park”
	Salcey Forest	Forestry Commission forest of ancient hunting forest origin now being restored from attempts to convert it into conifers. A few miles south of Northampton. Contains car park, toilets, picnicking and forest walks. “Wood”

4.2 Questionnaire design

A questionnaire was chosen for the methodology because it has the advantage of being relatively quick to administer, allowing data to be gathered from a varied population with a range of socio-economic backgrounds and provide numerical data which can be analysed in great detail. The results provide an additional perspective on the central issues identified in the focus groups. A disadvantage is the necessity for a questionnaire to be quite succinct and thus the information gathered is necessarily less rich than information from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.

4.2.1 Terminology

During the focus group discussions it became apparent that the terms “nature” and “green space” were hard for people to define clearly and unambiguously. “Nature” is a term that can reflect physical places and their character but also carries many other meanings. “Green space”, while also subject to a wide range of understandings and values, is more clearly related to physical places which, since the questionnaire data collection was to be carried out at nature reserves, parks and other places, was seen as a more useful term for use in the questionnaire. The term “green space” could refer equally to both the artificial and more “natural” sites used for the study. In order to make the term as relevant as possible, the phrases “like this site” and “such as this site” were used when giving instructions to interviewees. Thus, people could answer the questions thinking about how they felt towards the site they had just visited, without being too influenced by the word “nature”. Asking people to think about their feelings towards a particular site also enabled comparisons between the sites to be possible during analysis. However, since the subject of “nature” was central to the study, a question was included in the initial, background section, separate from the attitudinal survey, asking people to think of words they associated with “nature”.

4.2.2 Length

In order to encourage people to participate in the study and to keep them interested throughout the questionnaire, the questionnaire was designed to be as short as possible whilst maintaining integrity as a research tool. The overall time taken to complete the questionnaire, included the introduction and the gathering of background information, was approximately ten minutes.

4.2.3 Anonymity and Confidentiality

For the purposes of this project it was not necessary to take respondents' names, and in some cases, personal details were omitted if the respondent did not wish to divulge such information.

4.2.4 Respondents

The respondents were 459 people (the target was 500 samples) who were using the sites on the days that the interviewing took place. Participants were those members of the public who, when approached and asked if they would like to take part in the study, agreed to complete the questionnaire. The people were interviewed after they had visited the site, on their way back to the car park, so that they could relate the questions to their immediate experience. They were also more likely to be willing to give up an extra 10 minutes to help with the research.

It was originally planned to interview in addition people who do not use, or only infrequently use, sites, by bringing a sample out to the interview locations. The idea was to identify such people through the organisations used to reach focus group participants. However, such was the difficulty of obtaining sufficient cooperation for the focus groups that this additional survey proved impractical. Therefore the data represents the views of green space users. Comparisons of site users with the wider population can be made, however, by examining the demographic profiles of the interviewees against those of the region as a whole (see Chapter five).

4.2.5 Inclusion of children in the sample

In order to explore the relationship that children under 16 have with nature, children were also included in the sample. However, to avoid any ethical problems, children under 16 were interviewed only when their parent or guardian was present and gave their permission.

4.3 Questionnaire structure and content

4.3.1 Introduction

To maintain consistency across the data collection, a form of words of introduction was agreed upon for all interviewers to follow. This verbal introduction needed to be concise and yet also informative enough to allow the potential respondent to give informed consent to completing the questionnaire. The phraseology agreed upon was as follows:

“Hello, we have been asked by English Nature to carry out a survey of how people feel about nature and use places like this site in the East Midlands. Would you mind answering a few questions?”

The term “nature” was used to convey something of the flavour of the subject of the study, and it was felt that explaining the purpose of the study before asking if people would take part would be more successful in engaging their cooperation. As all potential participants were users of the site it was hoped that they would feel a personal interest in the study and want to participate. From then on the term “green space” was used in the body of the questionnaire.

4.3.2 Background Information

Background information was gathered so as to have a clear record of the population that was sampled and to assist in understanding relevant factors related to people’s perceptions of nature. While some background questions were asked at the beginning of the questionnaire, before the main set of questions, the more personal questions were asked at the end.

Information about the respondent is usually collected at the end of a questionnaire for two reasons. Firstly, once accustomed to the questionnaire topic, respondents will be more likely to feel at ease answering personal questions. Secondly, the questions will be less taxing for the participant who will have the information and so if they are tiring of the questionnaire will still be able to answer them (Fife-Shaw, 2000).

Drawing on indicators from the focus group data as to what might be the relevant factors in people’s relationship to nature, the following questions were asked to each respondent:

1. How far a way from this site do you live?

<1/2 mile	1/2-1 mile	1-5 miles	> 5 miles
-----------	------------	-----------	-----------

2. How often do you visit this site?

More than once a week	Weekly	More than once a month	Monthly	Yearly	Other (please state)
-----------------------	--------	------------------------	---------	--------	----------------------

3. Do you usually visit this site?

Alone	With another adult	With children	With a group	Other
-------	--------------------	---------------	--------------	-------

4. Did you visit places like this as a child?

Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly	Never
-------	--------	---------	--------	-------

(This was included because of the importance placed both in the research literature and by focus group participants on children having access to nature and green space.)

5. Can you think of two or three words that you associate with 'nature'?

--

(This was included to elicit more information on what people define as "nature". Questions using the word "nature" had been avoided up to this point to prevent influencing responses to this question.)

6. What is the main purpose of your visit here today?

Walking the dog	Exercise	To meet friends	To get some fresh air	Pleasure	Other (please state)
-----------------	----------	-----------------	-----------------------	----------	----------------------

After main questionnaire:

1. Are you involved with any local or conservation groups to do with green space?

Yes/no	Details?
--------	----------

2. What is your current occupation?

Education	Parent/carer	unemployed	f/t work	p/t work	retired	Other
-----------	--------------	------------	----------	----------	---------	-------

If f/t or p/t would you mind telling us your job title?

This allowed the socio-economic class of interviewees to be categorised for analysis purposes.

3. Gender

Male	Female
------	--------

4. Age

<18	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
-----	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-----

5. Ethnic Origin

White	Mixed	Black/Black British	Asian/Asian British	Chinese	Other
-------	-------	---------------------	---------------------	---------	-------

5. Do you have any special needs?

Mobility	Visual	Hearing	Other
----------	--------	---------	-------

7. Would you mind giving us the first 3 or 4 digits of your postcode? This is so we can see where people are coming from to visit this site.

The postcode information has not been used in the analysis but it is available as part of the data for any further research the client may wish to undertake.

7. Would you like to say anything about what you like or dislike about this site?

This question was included in order to gain more information about the main likes and dislikes that people have for natural and artificial green spaces.

4.3.3 Main Questionnaire Content: A Facet Design

The central objectives of the project were used as starting points from which to understand key issues that were raised in the focus group discussions. Once identified, the key issues concerning the use people make of, and the feelings they have towards, green spaces were classified into three categories as follows:

- ∅ The physical aspects of green spaces
- ∅ The activities that people engage in related to green spaces
- ∅ The perceptions that people have about green spaces

The main issues that were raised during the focus groups are listed below in Table 3, each issue being placed into one of the three categories.

Table 3: Main issues that people raised about the use they make and the feelings they have towards green spaces, from the focus groups.

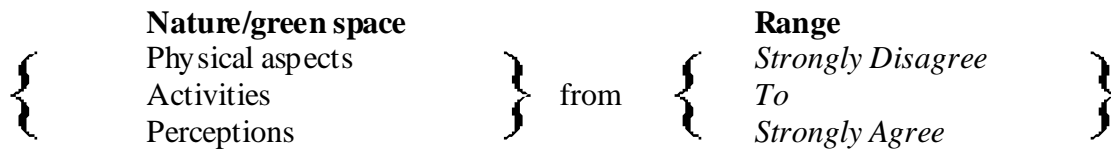
Physical aspects of the green space	Activities that occur in green spaces	The Perceptions that people hold about green spaces
Information about nature is present	Education	Spiritual
Tidiness	Walking alone	Magical
Urban/Rural	Relaxation	Boring
Advertised	Viewing wildlife	Peaceful
Accessible	Exercising	Feel “free”
Man made	Stress relief	Feel “vulnerable”
Proximity to home	Meeting people	Feel “energetic”
Signage to direct to site	Community events	Close to nature
Maintenance	Conservation work	Commercial
Wardens present	Being reminded of childhood places	Owned by community
Well known to individual		Important
		Adventure
		Vandalism
		Comfortable
		Relevant to lifestyle

Mapping Sentence. The next stage was to summarize the issues listed in Table 4 in a “mapping sentence” using the three categories as the “Domain facets”. The questionnaire

was then based on this mapping sentence. Each of the issues is thus an element of the facet to which it belongs. The mapping sentence structure is shown in the following diagram:

Table 4: Mapping Sentence structure for questionnaire design

The attitudes of person **X** towards



Person **X** is defined using the background information.

Question Templates. Once the mapping sentence was complete the main questionnaire was constructed. The questions were in the form of statements to which the respondents could agree or disagree on the scale explained below. Each statement was generated using one of the elements, so a complete range of potential questions was achieved. Thus, there is a direct link between the issues identified during the focus group discussions and the questionnaire, which allows for a much fuller analysis of both qualitative and quantitative information gathered during the project

The mapping sentence produced thirty seven thirty seven statements based on the issues identified in Table 4. The wording of the statements varied slightly between each of the different Domain Facets, for example the statements concerning elements from the “Physical aspects” facet tended to begin “I visit green spaces...” whereas the statements concerning elements from the “Perceptions” facet tended to begin “When in green spaces ...”. The questions were arranged in an order which varied the kind of questions asked and the expected response, in an attempt to minimize ‘questionnaire fatigue’ responses where people start giving the same answer to every question.

The questionnaire used a seven-point attitudinal scale for responses. Interviewees were each given an A5-sized piece of paper with the following information:

“Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements on a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 = strongly agree and 7 = strongly disagree”

Strongly agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Interviewees could then consult the scale for each statement.

4.3.4 Piloting the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was piloted at a test site in the East Midlands. The pilot study was carried out in order to clarify both the underlying structure of the questionnaire and the phrasing of individual questions. All aspects of the interviewing process were conducted in exactly the same way as in the main study. As is to be expected, some of the original questions were

removed from the final questionnaire, for example to remove what was perceived as repetition, and the wording of others adjusted to improve clarity and therefore the expected reliability of the results.

Chapter five. Results and analysis of the questionnaire survey

In this chapter the results of the questionnaire survey are presented, along with the statistical analysis. The questionnaire was successful in uncovering a great deal of information and the analysis presented here demonstrates the primary and most significant findings. There is potential for further analysis of the data in future should the client wish it. The questionnaire results are synthesised and compared with those from the scoping meeting and focus groups in Chapter six.

5.1. Demographics

The first analyses provide information about the samples of people who participated in the questionnaire survey. From this we can see to what extent the sample is representative and who is missing from the sample. Where there are significant differences between the sites in the demographic variables, using Mann-Whitney U or Kruskal Wallis tests, results are presented separately. In all, 459 questionnaires were completed across the 16 sites (see Table 5):

Table 5. Number of interviews carried out by site.

Site name	Green space type	Total
Derbyshire		
Ladybower and Derwent Reservoirs	'Wild'	33
Chaddesden Wood LNR	Local site	33
Cromford Canal SSSI	Nature Reserve	34
Leicestershire		
Victoria Park	Urban Park	33
Rutland Water	Country Park	32
Nature Alive, Coalville	Local site	7
Brocks Hill Country Park	Country Park	25
Lincolnshire		
Gibraltar Point	'Wild'	20
Bourne Woods	Woodland	33
Hartsholme Country Park	Country Park	24
Nottinghamshire		
Bestwood Country Park	Country Park	26
Major Oak, Edwinstowe	Nature Reserve	33
Kings Park, Retford	Urban Park	33
Northamptonshire		
Salcey Forest	Woodland	27
Brixworth Country Park	Country Park	33
Barnwell Country Park, Oundle	Country Park	33

5.1.1 Gender

More men (55.6%) were interviewed at the sites than women (44.4%); there were no significant differences between the sites (Mann-Whitney U test $P = 0.719$). The gender ratio differed from that recorded in the 2001 Census Data for the East Midlands, where there were

slightly fewer males (49.12 %) than females (50.88%). This data would appear to suggest that women are underrepresented on green space sites in the East Midlands.

When gender was considered by group, it can be seen that women constitute a smaller number of lone visitors (7.88%) than men (15.04%) and that most women tend to visit either with another adult (23.39%) or with children (9.55%) (See Table 6 and Figure 2)

Table 6. Group composition of visitors to green spaces by gender

	Male		Female	
Alone	63	(15.04%)	33	(7.88%)
With another adult	103	(24.58%)	98	(23.39%)
With children	34	(8.11%)	40	(9.55%)
With a group	16	(3.82%)	10	(2.39%)
Other	17	(4.06%)	5	(1.19%)

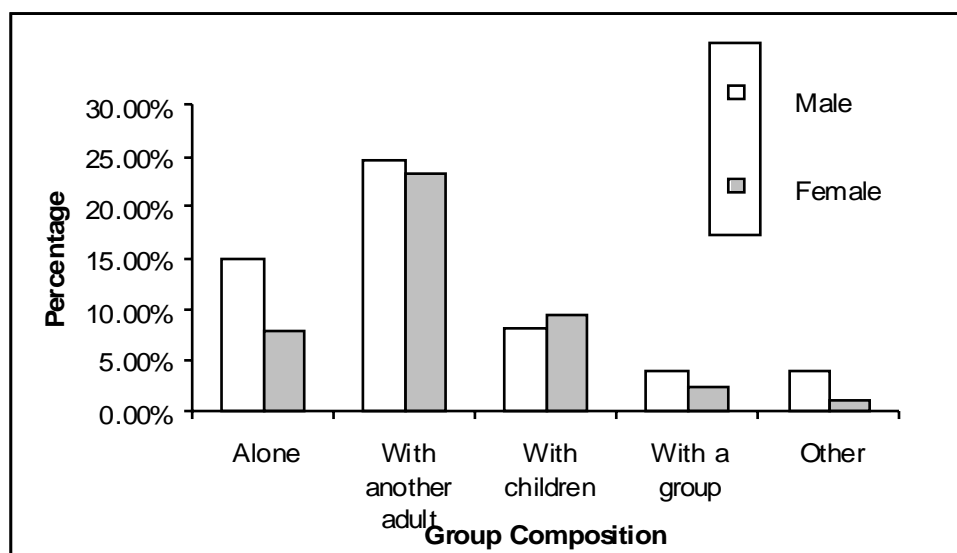


Figure 2. Percentage group compositions by gender (across all sites)

5.1.2 Age

There are ethical issues about approaching children under 18 without parental consent, and a decision was taken not to interview children without their parents. However, it should be noted that children were often part of the groups being interviewed (i.e. within family groups).

Age distribution in the East Midlands (2001 Census Data) is compared with the questionnaire sample across the sites (see Table 7 below). There were highly significant differences between the questionnaire sample and the census data ($\chi^2 P < 0.001$). In particular our samples underestimated young people aged 19-24 years, those aged 25-34 years and the over 64s, and over-represented those aged 55-64 years. Although this may reflect sampling bias, it is more likely to reflect actual differences between the age distribution of those using the green space sites and the surrounding population. Age distribution across sites is shown in Figures 3.1 to 3.3.

Table 7. Percentage age distribution (excluding those under 18)

Age	East Midlands (2001 Census)	Questionnaire Sample	Representation
19 – 24	7.8	4.5	Under
25 – 34	18.1	11.4	Under
35 – 44	19.8	21.7	+/- Same
45 – 54	18.2	19.7	+/- Same
55 – 64	14.6	25.7	Over
>64	21.4	15.0	Under

There were significant differences (Kruskal Wallis $P = 0.005$) in age distribution across the sites, and so these are presented separately. Table 4 shows site type by the age groups that most/least visit the site. From this it can be seen that:

1. Young people (<24) were poorly represented across all sites. Only Brixworth (Country Park) and Victoria Park (urban park) attracted significant numbers from this age group.
2. On some sites, more older people (>54 years) were interviewed (e.g. sites Hartsholme, Major Oak, Chaddesden Wood, Cromford Canal, Brocks Hill, Gibraltar Point and Derwent).
3. On other sites (Salcey, Bestwood, Barnwell, Bourne Woods and Rutland Water) more mid-aged people (aged 35-44 years) were interviewed.
4. Country parks such as Brixworth tended to attract a fairly broad range of ages.

Table 8. Site by age of visitors

County	Site type	Most visited by	Least visited by
Derbyshire			
Ladybower and Derwent Reservoirs	‘Wild’	55-64	<24, >65
Chaddesden Wood LNR	Local site	55-64	<24
Cromford Canal SSSI	Nature Reserve	55-64	<34
Leicestershire			
Victoria Park	Urban Park	19-24	<18, 25-34
Rutland Water	Country Park	35-44	<24, >65
Nature Alive, Coalville	Local Site	>65	<25, 35-44
Brocks Hill Country Park	Country Park	55-64	<24
Lincolnshire			
Gibraltar Point	‘Wild’	>65	<24
Bourne Woods	Woodland	35-44	<24, >65
Hartsholme Country Park	Country Park	55-64	<34
Nottinghamshire			
Bestwood Country Park	Country Park	35-44	<34, >65
Major Oak, Edwinstowe	Nature reserve	>65	<18, 35-44
Kings Park, Retford	Urban Park	45-54	<44
Northamptonshire			
Salcey Forest	Wood	35-44	19 - 24
Brixworth Country Park	Country Park	25-64	<18
Barnwell Country Park, Oundle	Country Park	35-44	<24

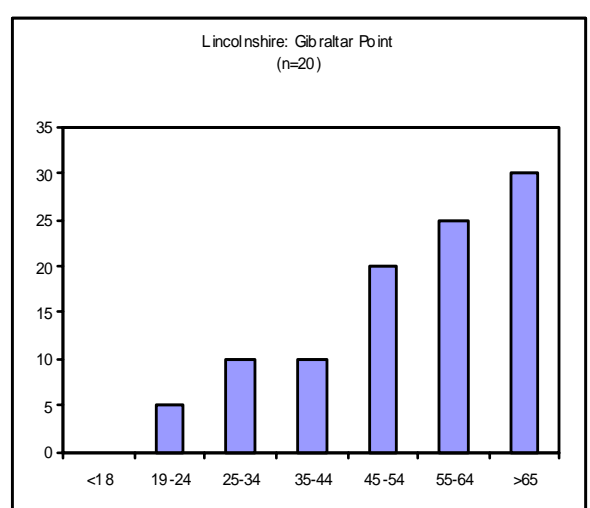
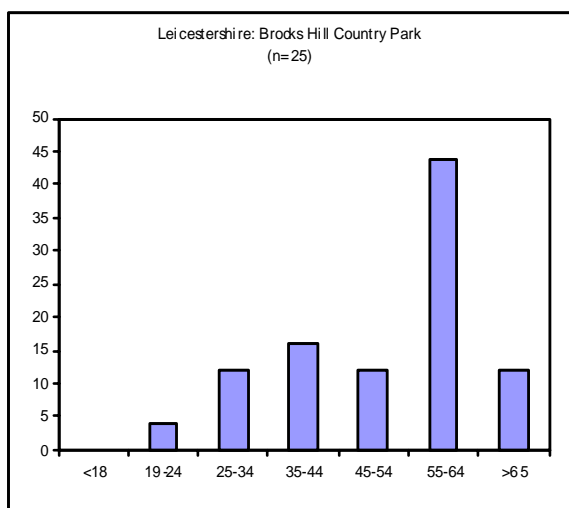
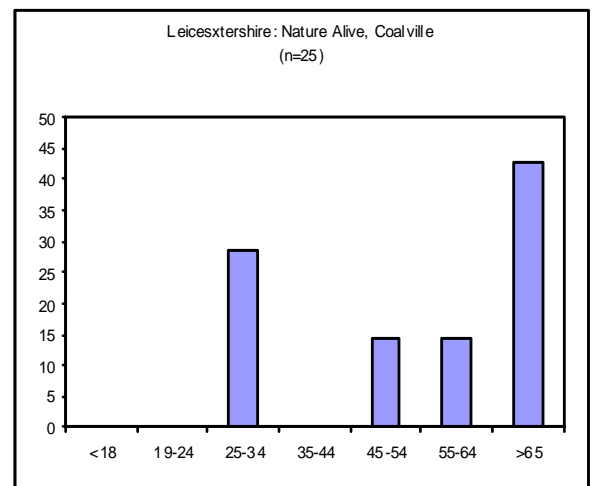
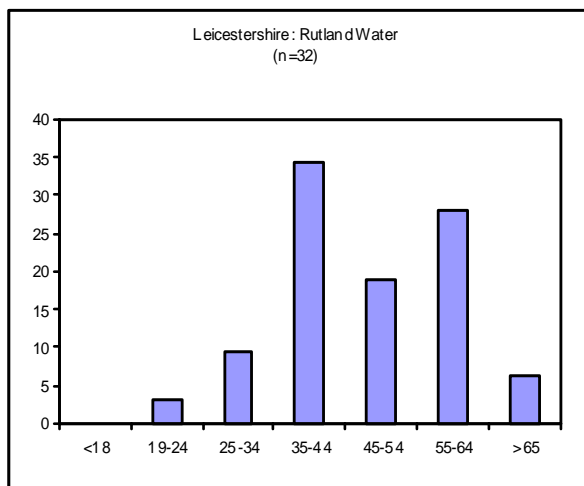
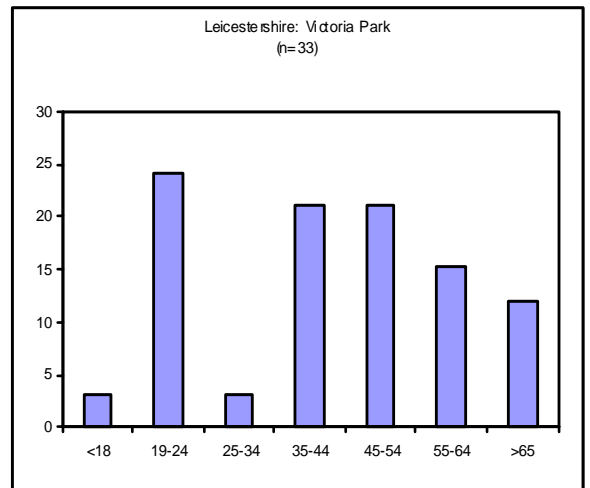
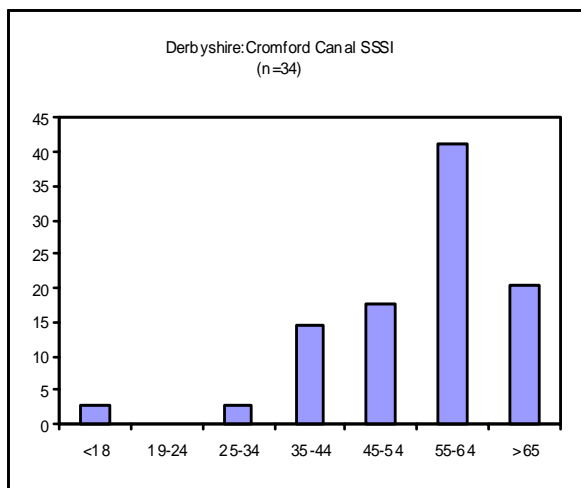


Figure 3.1. Percentage distribution –by site

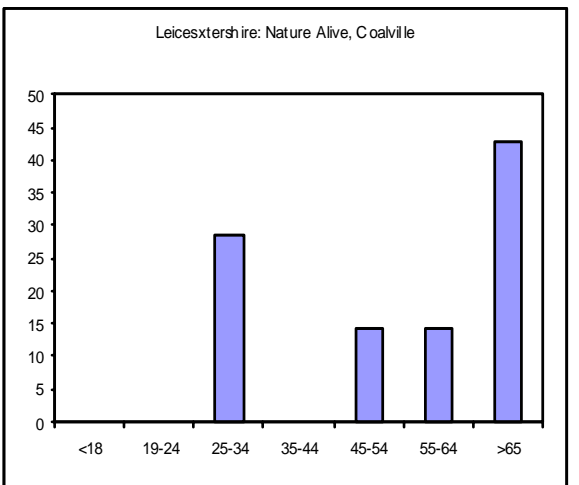
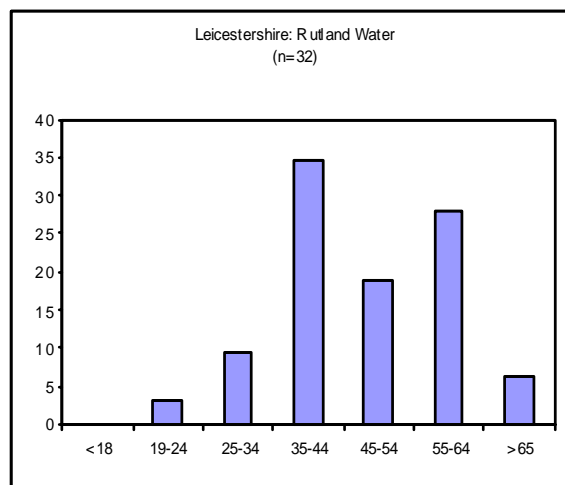
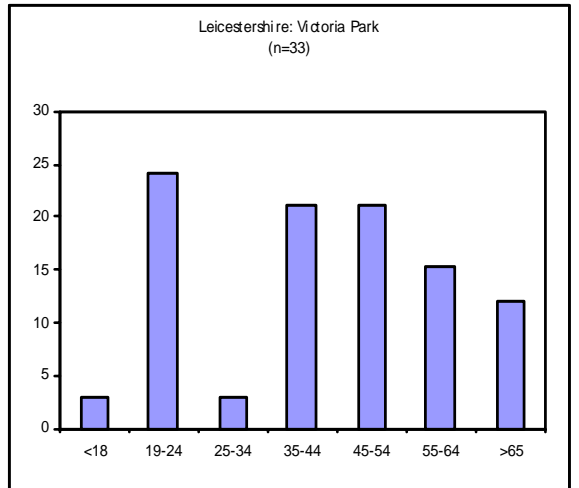
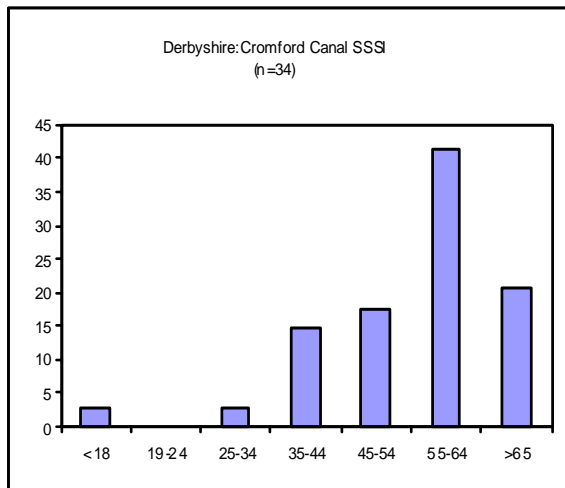
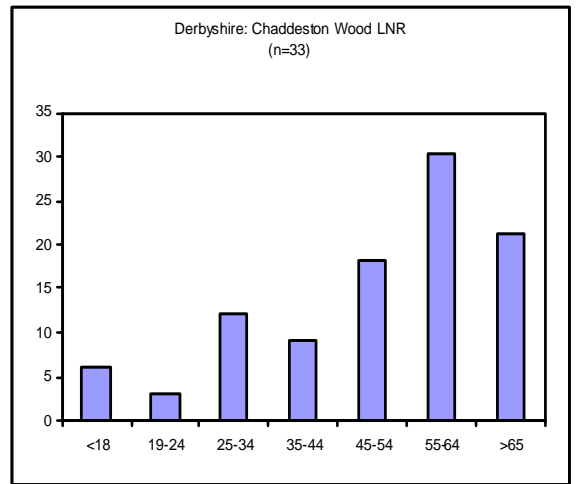
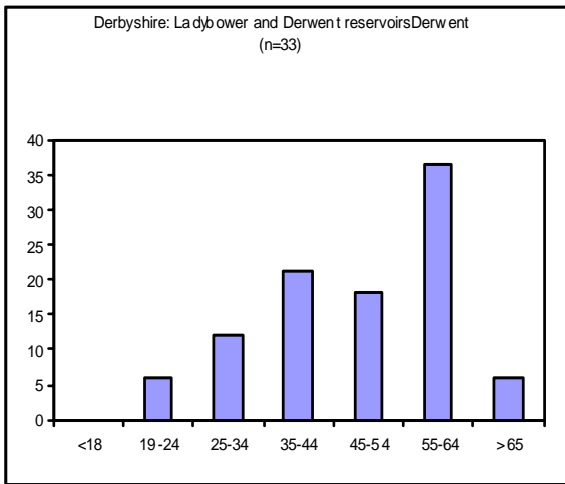


Figure 3.2. Percentage distribution –by site

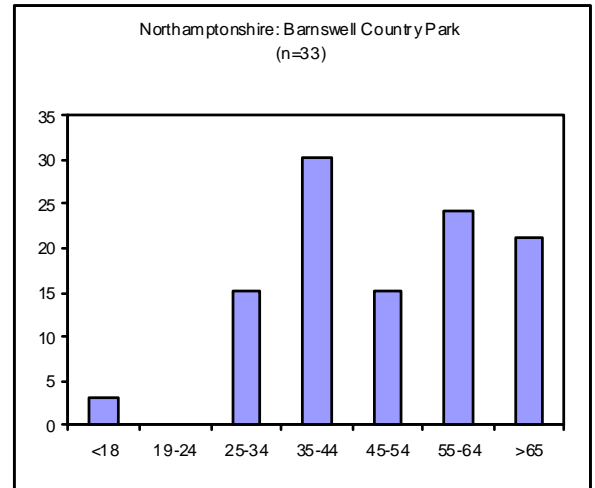
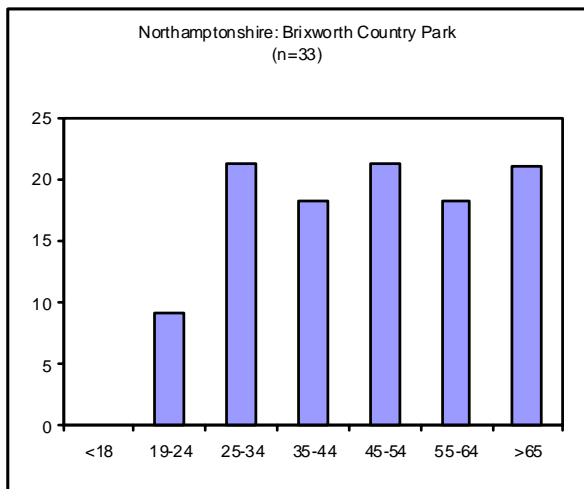
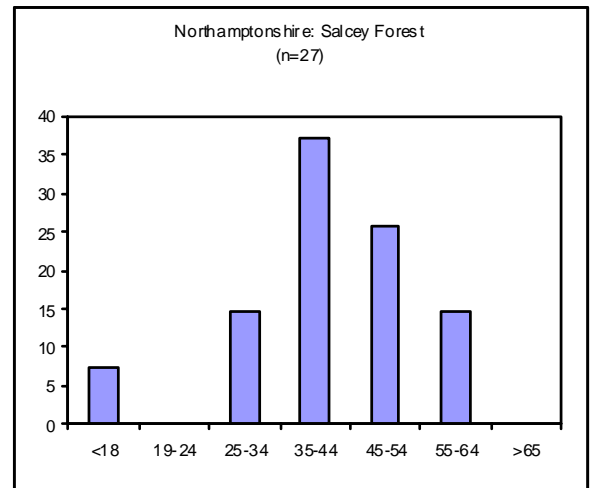
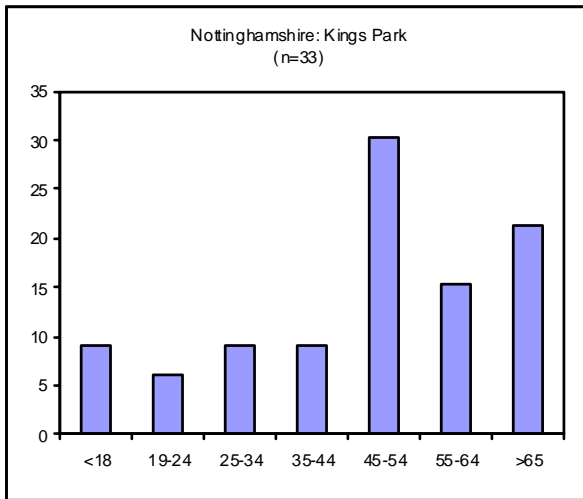


Figure 3.3. Percentage age distribution - by site

Figure 3.3. Percentage distribution –by site

5.1.3 Visitor groups

There were significant differences between sites in the composition of visitor groups interviewed (Kruskal Wallis $P < 0.001$) (See Table 9).

Table 9. Visitor composition across all sites

Site name	Site type	Alone	With another adult	With children	With a group	Other	Total
Derbyshire							
Ladybower and Derwent Reservoirs	'Wild'	2	19	2	3	7	33
Chaddesden Wood LNR	Local site	16	11	1	2	3	33
Cromford Canal SSSI	Nature Reserve	13	18	2		1	34
Leicestershire							
Victoria Park	Urban Park	19	6	6	2		33
Rutland Water	Country Park	1	23	2	1	5	32
Nature Alive, Coalville	Local site	1	6				7
Brocks Hill Country Park	Country Park	8	8	5		4	25
Lincolnshire							
Gibraltar Point	'Wild'	1	10	4	2	3	20
Bourne Woods	Woodland	2	19	3	4	5	33
Hartsholme Country Park	Country Park	1	8	9	1	5	24
Nottinghamshire							
Bestwood Country Park	Country Park	8	11	3	2	2	26
Major Oak, Edwinstowe	Nature Reserve	3	15	2	4	9	33
Kings Park, Retford	Urban Park	13	7	5	5	3	33
Northamptonshire							
Salcey Forest	Woodland	4	14	3		6	27
Brixworth Country Park	Country Park		20	12		1	33
Barnwell Country Park, Oundle	Country Park	5	6	15		1	33
Total		97	201	74	26	22	

Across all sites most visitors tended to visit with another adult (n=201, 43.8%), followed by those on their own (n=97, 21.1%) or with children (n=74, 16.1%). Few visitors were part of a group (n=22, 4.8%).

Exceptions were Kings Park (urban park), Cromford Canal (nature reserve), Chaddesden Wood (local site) and Victoria Park (Urban Park) where more lone visitors were interviewed, and Barnwell (country park) where most visitors were accompanied by children. Again, this may reflect differences in site characteristics.

5.1.4 Visitors from ethnic minority groups

Across all sites, visitors were predominantly white (n=444, 96.7%); few visitors from ethnic minority groups were interviewed (n=15, 3.3%). Distribution of ethnic groups is compared with census data in Table 10 which indicate that in general people from ethnic minority groups were under-represented at green space sites.

Table 10. Distribution of ethnic minority groups in East Midlands

Ethnic classification	Sample		2001 Census data (%)	Representation	Sites visited
	%	n =			
White	96.7	444	93.5	Over	All sites
Mixed	0.2	1	1.0	Under	Best Wood (n=1)
Black	0.9	4	1.0	+/- same	Chaddesden Wood (n=2)
Asian	1.5	7	4.1	Under	Brixworth(n=2), Major Oak (2) Chaddesden Wood (1), Victoria Park (1), Brocks Hill (1)
Chinese	0.0	0	0.3	Under	No sites
Other	0.7	3	0.2	Under	Cromford Canal (n=1), Brock Hill (n=1) Rutland (n=1)
Total White	96.7	444	93.7	Over	
Total Non-white	3.3	15	6.6	Under	

Sites which were visited by people from ethnic minority groups were: Chaddesden Wood (n=3), Brixworth (n=2), Major Oak (n=2), Brocks Hill (n=2), Victoria Park (n=1), Cromford Canal (n=1) and Rutland (n=1).

Sites which were not visited by people from ethnic minorities: Salcey, Gibraltar Point, Best Wood, Hartsholme, Barnwell, Bourne Woods, Kings Park, Nature Alive and Derwent.

5.1.5 Visitors with disabilities

Few visitors with disabilities were encountered on any of the sites (n=44, 9.6%). According to the Health Survey for England (2001)¹ 20% of Adults in the East Midlands reported at least 1 major disability (compared with a national (English) average of 18%). This would suggest that people with disabilities were underrepresented in the green spaces sampled.

The prevalence of disability in the questionnaire sample included mobility problems (n=21, 4.6%), hearing impairments (n=17, 3.7%), visual impairments (n=4, 0.9%) or learning difficulty (n=2, 0.4%) (see Table 11).

The sites most visited by people with disabilities were Brixworth (n=5), Bestwood (n=4), Major Oak (n=4), Kings Park (n=4), Cromford Canal (n=4) and Chaddesden Wood (n=4).

The sites least visited by people with disabilities were Salcey (n=1), Barnwell (n=1), Bourne Woods (n=1) and Nature Alive (n=0).

Table 11. Prevalence of disabilities amongst visitors to green spaces

Classification	N =	%	Sites visited
None	414	90.2%	All
Mobility problems	21	4.6%	Brixworth (n=3), Major Oak (n=3) Victoria Park (n=3), Bestwood (n=2) Kings Park (n=2), Cromford Canal (n=2) Chaddeston Wood (n=2), Salcey (n=1) Gibraltar Point (n=1), Barnwell (n=1) Rutland (n=1), Derwent (n=1)
Visual impairment	4	0.9%	Bestwood (n=1), Cromford Canal (n=1) Chaddesden Wood (n=1)
Hearing impairment	17	3.7%	Hartsholme (n=3), Brixworth (n=2) Gibraltar Point (n=2), Kings Park (n=2) Derwent (n=2), Best Wood (n=1) Bourne Woods (n=1), Major Oak (n=1) Cromford Canal (n=1), Brocks Hill (n=1) Rutland (n=1),
Learning disability	2	0.4	Cromford Canal (n=1), Chaddesden Wood (n=1)

5.1.6 Occupation

Visitor occupations are shown in Figure 4. In general, most visitors were in full time employment (n=207, 45.1%), retired (n=125, 27.5%), or in part-time employment (n=63, 13.7%). Other visitors were in full time education (n=29, 6.3%), parent/carer (n=14, 3.1%) or unemployed (n=10, 2.2%). There were no significant differences between sites (Kruskal Wallis P=0.128). A comparison with census data is given below in Table 12.

¹ <http://www.official-documents.co.uk/document/deps/doh/survey01/skf/skf04.htm>

Table 12. Occupational status of respondents – sample and census population compared

Status	Sample (%)	2001 Census (%)	Representation
Employed	58.8	61.3	Under
Unemployed	2.2	4.3	Under
Student	6.3	7.0	Under
Retired	27.2	14.1	Over
Parent/carer	3.1	5.3	Under
Other (including permanently sick or disabled)	2.4	8.1	under

This would appear to indicate that, in comparison to other occupational groups, retired people were over-represented in the visitor sample.

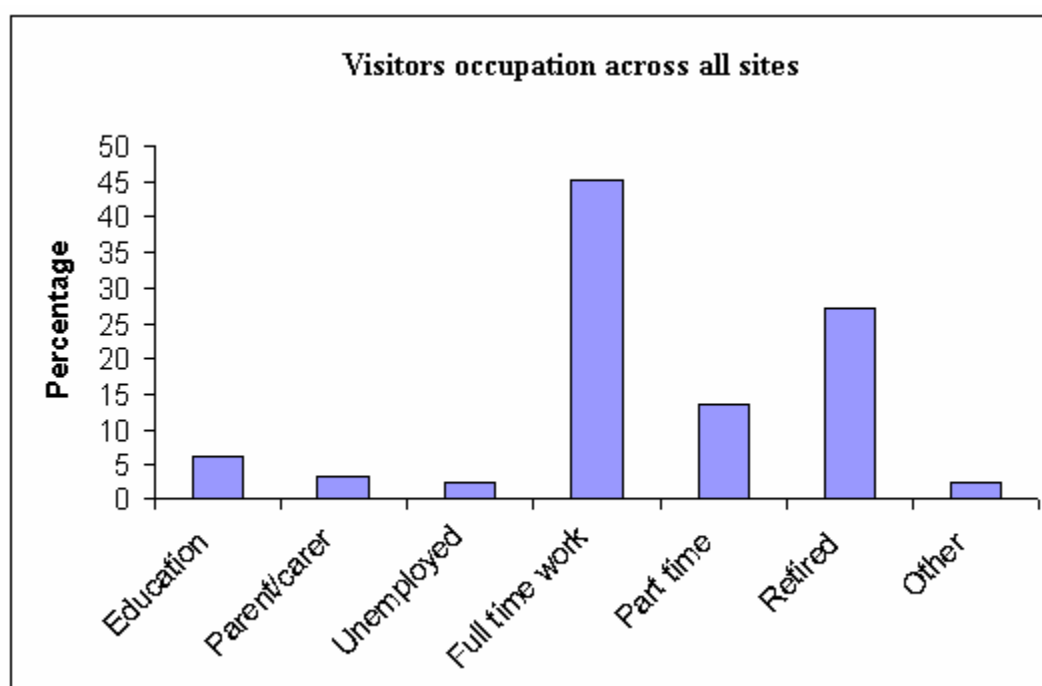


Figure 4. Visitor occupations across all sites

Table 13 shows a breakdown of socio-economic class of respondents based on stated occupations. This shows that (with the exception of those it was not possible to classify) most respondents were in Lower supervisory and technical occupations (23.5%), followed by Lower managerial and professional occupations (12.8%).²

There were no significant differences between site and socio-economic class (Kruskal Wallis $P = 0.601$).

² The 2001 census data on Socio-economic class was not available for the East Midlands at the time the report was being prepared

Table 13. Socio-economic class (by stated occupation)²

NS- SEC	Definition	N=	% (Sample)
1.1	Large employers and higher managerial occupations	3	0.7
1.2	Higher Professional occupations	10	2.2
2	Lower managerial and professional occupations	57	12.8
3	Intermediated occupations	37	8.3
4	Small employers and own account workers	6	1.3
5	Lower supervisory and technical occupations	105	23.5
6	Semi routine occupations	26	5.8
7	Routine occupations	20	4.5
8	Unemployed	10	2.2
	Not classified (includes students, retired, parents, unpaid carers)	175	39.1
	Total	447	100

¹Based on 2001 National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC)

²Excluding those under 18 (n=12)

5.1.7 Demographics by site type

When site type was considered, it can be seen that most of the interviews were carried out at Country Parks (n=173, 37.6%); fewest interviews were carried out at local parks (n=40, 8.7%). This is shown in Table 14A.

Table 14 A. Number of interviews carried out by site type

Site Type	N=
Country Park	173 (37.7%)
Urban Site	66 (14.4%)
Wood	60 (13.1%)
'Wild'	53 (11.5%)
Local Park	40 (8.7%)
Nature Reserve	67 (14.6%)

A series of univariate statistics (Kruskal Wallis Test) were carried out to explore the demographic characteristics of people visiting the various sites types. There were significant differences on site type for 'group' (P<0.001), purpose of visit (p<0.001), involvement with conservation groups (P=0.001) and age (P=0.005). There were no statistically significant differences between site types for occupation (P=0.652), gender (P=0.231), ethnic group (P=0.248) and special needs (0.626). Significant characteristics are indicated in Table 14B, which shows the modal demographic group for each site type. In this way, the visitor profile of who is visiting the various site types may be inferred.

Table 14B. Modal demographic groups by site type

Site Type	Group	Purpose of visit	Member of conservation organisation	Age
Wild	With another adult (54.7%)	Unspecified 'Other' (32.1%)	35.4%	55-64 (84.9%)
Nature Reserves	With another adult (49.3%)	Exercise (31.3%) or 'for pleasure' (29.9%)	25.4%	55-64 (28.4%)
Country Parks	With another adult (43.9%)	Unspecified 'other' (30.1%) or walk dog (22.0%)	26.7%	35-44 (27.2%)
Woodland	With another adult (55.0%)	Walk dog (43.3%)	10.0%	35-44% (33.3%)
Urban Park	Alone (48.5%)	Unspecified 'other' (42.4%)	13.2%	45-54 (25.8%)
Local site	Alone (42.5%) or with another adult (42.5%)	Walk dog (75.0%)	7.5%	55-56 (27.5%) >65 (25.0%)

5.2. Green site use

5.2.1 Distance

Most visitors tended to have travelled more than 5 miles to reach to sites (n=236, 51.4%), or lived within 1-5 miles of the site (n=105, 22.9%). A significant number lived less than a mile away from the site (n=113, 24.6%). This is shown below in Figure 5. Distance travelled differed significantly by site (Kruskal Wallis P<0.001) and so results are presented by site in table 15.

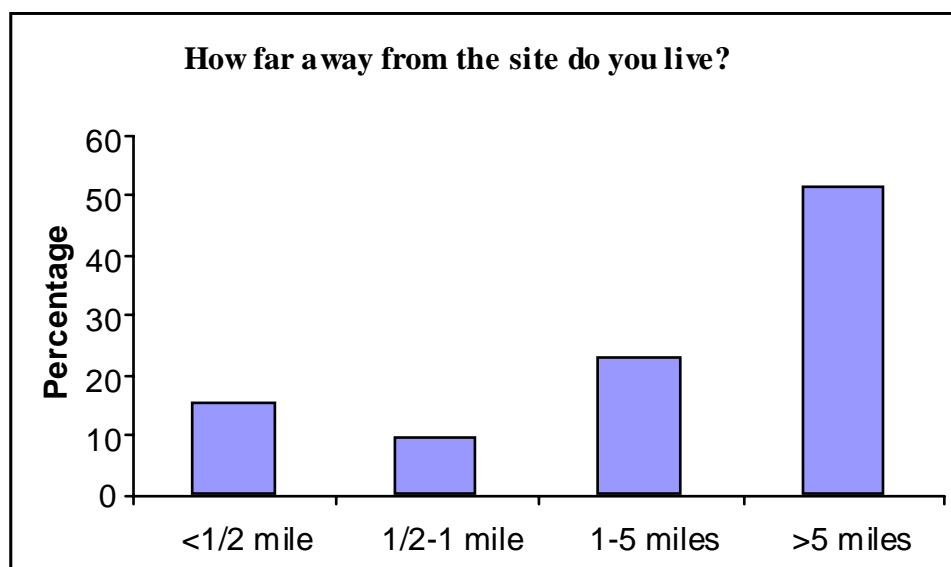


Figure 5: How far from the site do you live?

Table 15. Percentage visitors to each site by distance travelled

Site	<1/2 mile	1-5 miles	>5 miles	Visitor type
Derbyshire				
Ladybower and Derwent Reservoirs	3.0	0	97.0	Non-local
Chaddesden Wood LNR	84.9	21.1	3.0	Local
Cromford Canal SSSI	5.8	14.7	79.4	Non-local
Leicestershire				
Victoria Park	69.7	21.2	9.1	Local
Rutland Water	0	18.8	81.2	Non-local
Nature Alive, Coalville	57.2	42.9		Local
Brocks Hill Country Park	52.0	36.0	12.0	Local
Lincolnshire				
Gibraltar Point	0	10.0	90.0	Non-local
Bourne Woods	3.0	24.2	72.7	Non-local
Hartsholme Country Park	33.3	41.7	25.0	Local
Nottinghamshire				
Bestwood Country Park	18.2	69.2	11.5	Local
Major Oak, Edwinstowe	18.2	3.0	78.8	Non-local
Kings Park, Retford	48.5	12.1	39.4	Mixed
Northamptonshire				
Salcey Forest	0	51.9	48.1	Mixed
Brixworth Country Park	6.1	33.3	60.6	Non-local
Barnwell Country Park, Oundle	3.0	9.1	78.8	Non-local

From this it can be noted that:

1. Sites visited mainly by local people (i.e. travel less than 5 miles): Brocks Hill, Nature Alive, Bestwood, Hartsholme, Chaddesden Wood, Victoria Park.
2. Site mainly visited by non-local people (i.e. travel more than 5 miles): Brixworth, Gibraltar Point, Barnwell, Bourne Woods, Major Oak, Cromford Canal, Rutland, Derwent.
3. Sites with a mixture of local and non-local people: Salcey, Kings Park

5.2.2 Frequency of visits to green spaces

The majority of visitors were either making a first visit to the site (n=126, 27.5%) or made frequent visits to the site (i.e. more than once a week) (n=117, 25.5%). This was followed by monthly visits (n=63, 13.7%), yearly visits (n=62, 13.5%), weekly visits (n=59, 12.9%) or several visits per month (n=32, 7.0%) (see Figure 6). Frequency of visit differed significantly by site (Kruskal Wallis P<0.001) and so results are also presented by site (Table 16).

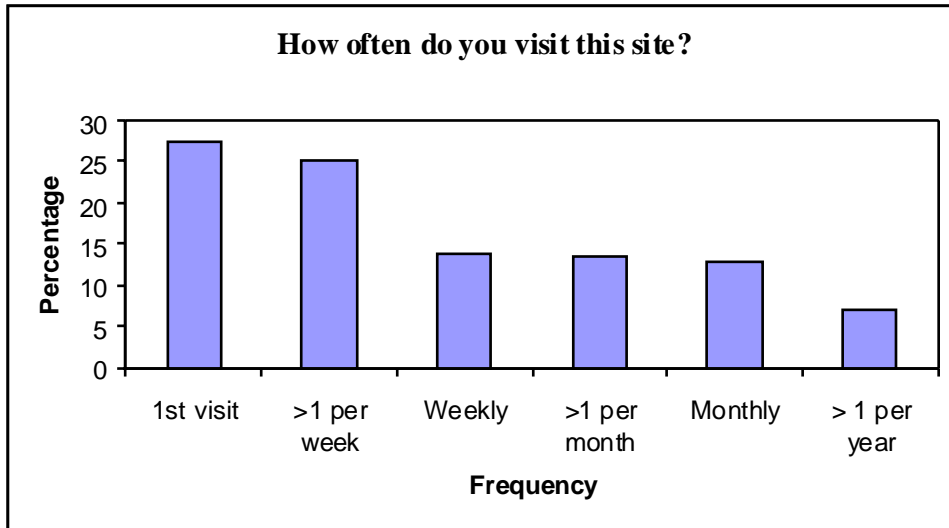


Figure 6. Frequency of visits to green space site

Table 16. Percentage frequency of visits by site

Site	1 st visit	>1 per week	Weekly	>1 per month	Monthly	Yearly	Modal frequency of visits
Derbyshire							
Ladybower and Derwent Reservoirs	3.0	3.0		15.2	18.2	60.6	Yearly
Chaddesden Wood LNR	81.8	9.1	3.0	6.1			1 st visit
Cromford Canal SSSI	29.4	20.6	8.8	8.8	20.6	11.8	Mixed
Leicestershire							
Victoria Park	51.5	18.2		15.2	9.1	6.1	1 st visit
Rutland Water	3.1	6.3	6.3	25.0	18.8	40.6	Yearly
Nature Alive, Coalville	28.6	14.3		42.9	14.3		Monthly
Brocks Hill Country Park	36.0	28.0		4.0		32.0	1 st /yearly
Lincolnshire							
Gibraltar Point		10.0	5.0	5.0	45.0	35.0	Monthly/yearly
Bourne Woods	6.1	21.2	21.2	12.1	21.2	18.2	Mixed
Hartsholme Country Park	37.5	4.2	12.5	37.5		8.3	1st/monthly
Nottinghamshire							
Bestwood Country Park	26.9	19.2	7.7	23.1	11.5	11.5	Mixed
Major Oak, Edwinstowe	24.2	3.0		9.1	15.2	48.5	Yearly
Kings Park, Retford	45.5	12.1	9.1	9.1	12.1	12.1	1 st visit

Site	1 st visit	>1 per week	Weekly	>1 per month	Monthly	Yearly	Modal frequency of visits
Northamptonshire							
Salcey Forest	14.8	25.9	11.1	3.7	22.2	22.2	Mixed
Brixworth Country Park	6.1	6.1	18.2	12.1	3.0	54.5	Yearly
Barnwell Country Park, Oundle	9.1	9.1	3.0	15.2	12.1	51.5	Yearly

From this the following can be seen:

1. Sites mainly visited by first time visitors: Kings Park, Chaddesden Wood, Victoria Park, Hartsholme, Brocks Hill.
2. Sites visited infrequently: Gibraltar Point, Brixworth, Barnwell, Major Oak, Rutland, Derwent.
3. Mixed sites: Salcey, Bestwood, Bourne Woods, Cromford Canal

5.2.3 Childhood visits

The majority of visitors (n=119, 25.9%) claimed to have visited green spaces on a weekly basis as a child, followed by monthly visits (n=91, 19.8%), daily visits (n=66, 14.4%) or yearly visits (n=61, 25.3%). A large number of visitors (n=116, 25.3%) claimed never to have visited green spaces as a child (see Table 17 and Figure 7). Childhood visits differed significantly by site (Kruskal Wallis $P < 0.001$). Some visitors found difficulty answering this question as certain types of sites e.g. Country Parks may not have existed when they were children.

This indicates:

1. Site which were not visited as a child: Brixworth, Gibraltar Point, Barnwell, Brocks Hill Leicester, Derwent.
2. Sites visited frequently as a child: Chaddesden Wood, Kings Park, Victoria Park, Nature Alive, Bourne Woods.
3. Site visited infrequently as a child: Salcey, Rutland, Major Oak, Bestwood, Hartsholme, Cromford Canal.

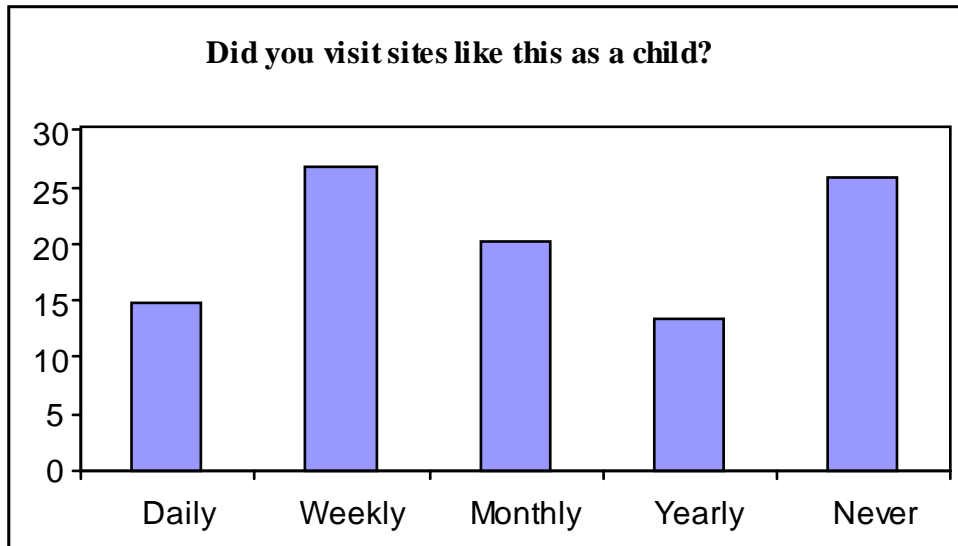


Figure 7. Percentage distribution of childhood visits – across all sites

Table 17. Percentage frequency of childhood visits to site

Site	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly	Never	Modal frequency of visits
Derbyshire						
Ladybower and Derwent Reservoirs		9.1	15.2	27.3	48.5	Never
Chaddesden Wood LNR	33.3	27.3	18.2	3.0	18.2	Frequent
Cromford Canal SSSI	9.1	27.3	21.2	15.2	27.3	Less frequent
Leicestershire						
Victoria Park	33.3	51.5	3.0	3.0	9.1	Frequent
Rutland Water	13.3	23.3	23.3	23.3	16.7	Less frequent
Nature Alive, Coalville	14.3	42.9	14.3	14.3	14.3	Frequent
Brocks Hill Country Park	12.0	28.0	12.0	8.0	40.0	Never
Lincolnshire						
Gibraltar Point	5.0	10.0	20.0	20.0	45.0	Never
Bourne Woods	18.2	33.3	18.2	18.2	12.1	Frequent
Hartsholme Country Park	25.0	20.8	29.2	16.7	8.3	Less frequent
Nottinghamshire						
Bestwood Country Park	28.0	24.0	24.0	4.0	20.0	Less frequent
Major Oak, Edwinstowe	9.7	16.1	32.3	12.9	29.0	Less frequent
Kings Park, Retford	15.2	54.5	12.1	3.0	15.2	Frequent

Site	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly	Never	Modal frequency of visits
Northamptonshire						
Salcey Forest	3.7	29.6	33.3	14.8	18.5	Less frequent
Brixworth Country Park	6.1	9.1	24.2	18.2	42.4	Never
Barnwell Country Park, Oundle	6.1	18.2	21.2	15.2	39.4	Never

5.2.4 Main purpose of visit

Across all sites, a significant number of interviewees visited the sites to walk dogs (n=117, 25.5%), for exercise (n=100, 21.8%) for pleasure (n=84, 18.3%), fresh air (n=40, 8.7), passing through the site (n=30, 6.5%) or to see wildlife (n=16, 3.5%). Other purposes (n=71, 51.5%), where specified³, included horse riding, cycling or looking around (see Figure 8 below).

The main purpose of the visit differed significantly by site (Kruskal Wallis $P < 0.001$) as is shown below in Table 18.

Table 18. Main purpose of visit by site (percentage frequency)

Site	Walk dog	Exercise	Fresh air	Pleasure	Other ¹	Main purpose
Derbyshire						
Ladybower and Derwent Reservoirs	3.0	33.3	9.1	24.2	30.3	Mixed
Chaddesden Wood LNR	78.8	3.0	6.1	3.0	9.1	Walk dog
Cromford Canal SSSI	20.6	38.2	2.9	14.7	23.5	Walk dog
Leicestershire						
Victoria Park	9.1	24.2	3.0	12.1	51.5	Mixed
Rutland Water		9.4		12.5	78.1	Mixed
Nature Alive, Coalville	57.1	14.3		14.3	14.3	Walk dog
Brocks Hill Country Park	52.0	4.0	4.0	24.0	16.0	Walk dog
Lincolnshire						
Gibraltar Point		15.0	25.0	25.0	35.0	Mixed
Bourne Woods	29.2	29.2	16.7		25.0	Walk dog/ exercise
Hartsholme Country Park	48.5	36.4	12.1	3.0		Walk dog

³ There was inconsistency in the way this question – ‘other’ was defined by the interviewees.

Site	Walk dog	Exercise	Fresh air	Pleasure	Other ¹	Main purpose
Nottinghamshire						
Bestwood Country Park	26.9	15.4	19.2	34.6	3.8	Pleasure
Major Oak, Edwinstowe	18.2	24.2		45.5	12.1	Pleasure
Kings Park, Retford	18.2	15.2	3.0	30.3	33.3	Pleasure
Northamptonshire						
Salcey Forest	37.0	25.9	7.4	11.1	18.5	Walk dog
Brixworth Country Park	18.2	33.3	15.2	15.2	18.2	Exercise
Barnwell Country Park, Oundle	15.2	15.2	18.2	21.2	30.3	Mixed

¹ 'Other' was not defined for all sites

This indicates that:

1. Site visited mainly by dog walkers: Hartsholme, Salcey, Bourne Woods, Cromford Canal, Chaddesden Wood, Brocks Hill, Nature Alive.
2. Sites visited mainly for pleasure: Major Oak, Bestwood, Kings' Park.
3. Site visited mainly for exercise: Brixworth
4. Sites with mixed usage: Gibraltar Point, Barnwell, Victoria Park, Rutland, Derwent

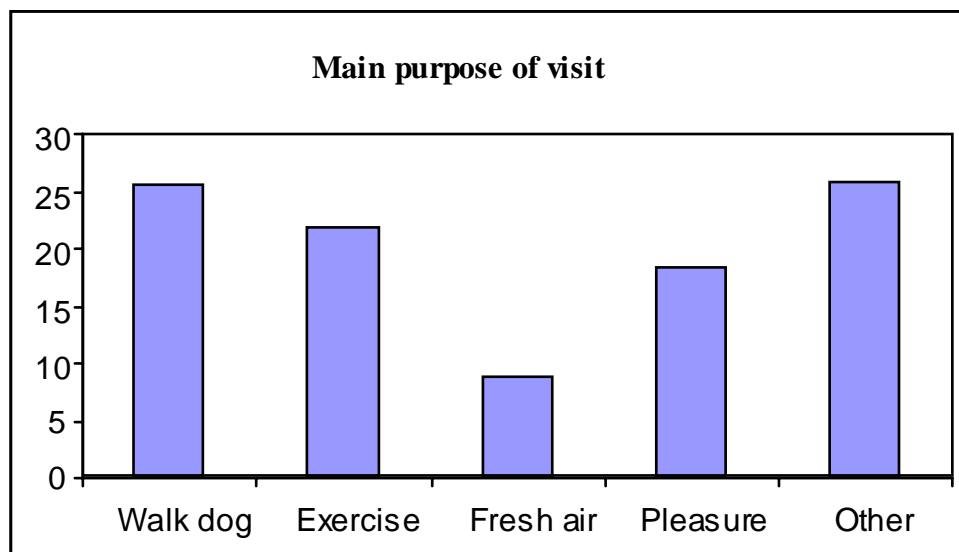


Figure 8. Percentage distribution of main purpose of visit to site

5.3. Involvement with conservation groups

Twenty two per cent (n=101) of interviewees were involved with some sort of conservation organisation. These included: the National Trust (n=31), RSPB (n=27), a local Wildlife Trust (n=25), Ramblers Association (n=6), Woodland Trust (n=5), World Wildlife Fund (n=5), local bird club (n=4) or English Heritage (n=3) (see Table 19).

Involvement with conservation groups did not differ significantly by social class (Mann Whitney U P=0.176), although it did vary significantly between sites (Kruskal Wallis

P<0.001). This is indicated in Table 20, which ranks the sites according to the level of involvement in conservation organisations.

Table 19. Involvement in Conservation Organisation

Organisation	N=¹
National Trust	31
RSPB	27
Wildlife trusts	25
Ramblers Association	6
Local bird club	6
Woodland Trust	5
WWF	5
English Heritage	3
British Association for Shooting and Conservation	2
Basic Expedition Leaders Award (BELA)	2
British Trust for Ornithology	2
Delepre Abbey Group	2
Friends of the Earth	2

¹n.b. some organisations were cited more than once by interviewees.

Other organizations cited once only:

Greenpeace, Local School Nature Group, Badger Watch, Barnsley Footpath Group, Bradlaugh Fields Community Days, BTCV, Bulwell Bogs, Community Groups, Friends Of Belper Deer Park, Oldmoor Wetlands, Pocket Park Committee, Rutland Natural History Society, Seal Sanctuary, Walking Group

Table 20. Involvement in conservation organisation by site (percentage frequency)

Site	Yes	No	Site type
Rutland Water	75.0	25.0	Country park
Ladybower and Derwent reservoirs	36.4	63.6	Wild
Gibraltar Point	35.0	65.0	Wild
Major Oak	27.3	72.7	Nature reserve
Hartsholme Country Park	25.0	75.0	Country Park
Brocks Hill Country Park	24.0	76.0	Country park
Cromford Canal	23.5	76.5	Nature reserve
Bestwood	19.2	80.8	Country Park
Victoria Park.	18.2	81.8	Urban park
Salcey	14.8	85.2	Wood
Kings Park	12.1	87.9	Urban park
Barnwell	9.1	90.9	Country Park
Chaddesden Wood	9.1	90.9	Local park
Brixworth	6.3	93.8	Country Park
Bourne Woods	6.1	93.9	Wood
Nature Alive	0.0	100.0	Local park

5.4. Words associated with nature

Interviewees were asked to think of several words that they associated with ‘nature’. Over 1200 words were used which could be broken down into words associated with wildlife such as plants and animals (n=525), emotions/perceptions (n=265), physical properties (n=232), activities (n=51), ecology/conservation (n=49), and other miscellaneous words (n=31) (Table 21).

Table 21: Themes associated with Nature

Theme	N =	Total
a) Wildlife		
Animals		
Birds	114	
Animals/Wild Animals	79	
Fauna	60	
Birdsong/Singing -	30	
Squirrels	14	
Rabbits	5	
Insects/Bug	4	
Fish	2	
Foxes	2	
Cuckoo; Ducks; Butterflies; Finches; Otters; Ducklings; Stag		
Beetles;	9	319
Eggs; Waterlife.		
Plants		
Trees	118	
Flowers/Wild Flowers	39	
Plants / Plantlife/Wild Plants/Flora	29	
Other Plants Un-mown Grass	3	
Buttercups; Conkers; Shrubs; Undergrowth	4	193
Non-Specific ‘Wildlife’	94	94
B) Perceptions And Emotions		
Peace, Peaceful	53	
Quietness / Quiet	19	
Relaxing / Relaxation	18	
Beauty	18	
Natural	16	
Tranquil	13	
Freedom	11	
Greenness/Greenery	11	
Enjoyment/Enjoyable	8	
Calm	8	
Wild/Wildness	8	
Interesting	7	
Wonderful (7)	7	
Beautiful (6)	6	
Nice (4);	4	
Healthy (4)	4	
Lovely (3);	3	

Theme	N =	Total
Pleasant (3) Fantastic (2); Free (2); Fun (2); Good (2); Pleasure /Pleasurable (2); Stress Free (2); Beautiful Creation (2); Picturesque (2) Creation; Fundamental To The Way I Operate; Lifestyle; Rejuvenation; Contentment; Escape; Essential For Rejuvenation; Exciting; Fascinating; Harmony; Innocent ; Intriguing; Magic; Magnificent; Marvellous; Never Boring; Precious; Romantic; Satisfying; Savage; Solitude; Spectacular; Spiritually Uplifting; Unbelievable; Uplifting; Valuable; A Nice Change; Future; Childhood; Balance; Amazing; Attractive	3 16 32	265
C) Physical Qualities Green Open/Open-Ness, Open Spaces Countryside Woods, Woodlands Or Wooded Areas, Forests Grass/Lawns Outdoors/Outside Space Streams / Brooks / Water Scenery Clean Fields Hills (3) Ponds/ Pond life Lakes (2); Landscapes (2); Mountains (2); Muddy /Mud (2); Nature Reserves (2); Seascapes (2); Sites You Can Go Around; Accessible; Beauty Spot; Blue Sky; Canals; Coast; Gardens; Green Spaces; Natural Setting; Reserve; Reservoir; Skyline; Surroundings; Views; Wilderness	64 26 23 19 13 10 10 10 8 7 7 3 3 12 15	232
D) Activities Fresh Air Walks Or Walking Exercise Fishing; Great Places For Kids To Run Around; Leisure; Sailing ; Being Outdoors	32 12 3 5	51
E) Ecology Or Conservation Conservation /Helping Species Environment Life Habitats Growing / Growing Naturally (2); Ecology (2); Greenpeace (2); The Environment (2); The Great Outdoors(2) Earth; Ecosystem; Endangered Species; Ensuring Survival Of Species; Helping Species; Preservation; Recycling; Sustainability; Variety; Biodiversity	16 7 3 3 10 10	49
F) Miscellaneous Words <i>Senses:</i> Colourful/Colour (6); Smells (4); Aroma; Sounds <i>Weather:</i> Air; Rain; Seasons; Weather; Wet; Wind <i>Not Urban:</i> Unspoilt /Untouched (3); Away From Humans; Free	12 6	

Theme	N =	Total
From Buildings; Likely To See Things You Wouldn't In An Urban Environment; No People; Pesticide Free; Organic; Uncultivated; Tree Huggers, Farmers.	12	31
		1234

5.5. Attitudinal questions

The main part of the questionnaire was concerned with people attitudes about nature and green spaces in terms of physical attributes (n=13 statements), activities carried out (n=15 statements), and perceptions (n=10 statements).

5.5.1 Physical attributes of green space

In general there was agreement amongst respondents about the physical attributes of green spaces. This is summarised below in Table 22 and Figure 9. There was strongest agreement with the statements concerned with natural appearance and freedom from rubbish.

Table 22. Rating of physical attributes of green space (mean across all respondents)¹

	Questionnaire item	Label	Mean	S.E Mean
Q12	I visit green spaces that are natural in appearance	'natural'	2.01	0.056
Q2	I visit green spaces that are free from rubbish	'rubbish'	1.91	0.061
Q5	I visit green spaces where signs help me find the site	'signs'	1.09	0.074
Q1	I visit green spaces that have information about nature	'info'	1.07	0.069
Q4	I visit green spaces that are easy to find out about	'find'	0.97	0.070
Q37	I visit green spaces that appear to be looked after by someone	'looked'	0.93	0.069
Q3	I visit green spaces that are within towns and cities	'towns'	0.63	0.081
Q38	I visit green spaces where there are rangers or wardens	'rangers'	0.55	0.073
Q27	I visit green that are easy to get into	'easy'	0.50	0.080
Q36	I visit green that are within walking distance of my home	'walking distance'	0.31	0.097

¹ Where: 3 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 1 = slightly agree, 0 = neither agree nor disagree, -1 or slightly disagree, -2 = disagree, -3 = disagree strongly

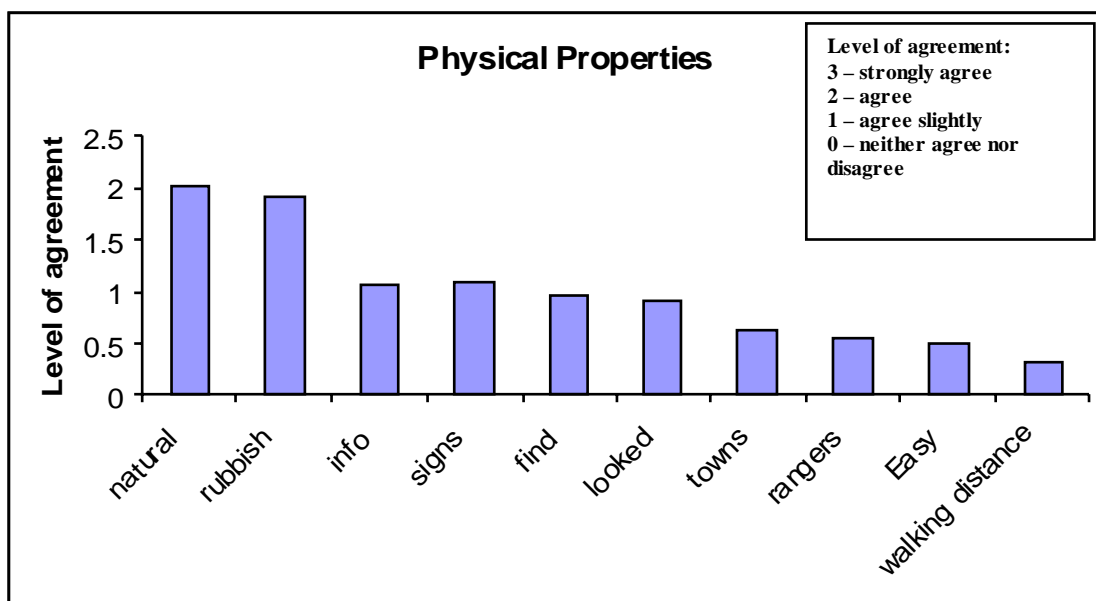


Figure 9. Level of agreement with statements on physical attributes of green space

The statements to do with physical site attributes were then compared by user and site characteristics (see Table 23).

Table 23. Univariate statistics (Kruskal Wallis P =) of physical attributes by user and site characteristics. Figures in bold are significant at P<0.05

Physical attributes	Label	Gender	Child ¹	Purpose	Age	Site type
Q1 Information about nature	'info'	.002	.709	.605	.000	.514
Q2 Free from rubbish	'rubbish'	.407	.024	.103	.001	.000
Q3 Within towns and cities	'towns'	.625	.072	.408	.072	.000
Q4 Easy to find out about	'find'	.031	.059	.504	.113	.036
Q5 Where signs help me find the site	'signs'	.019	.255	.135	.019	.143
Q12 That are natural in appearance	'natural'	.216	.016	.387	.030	.000
Q27 That are easy to get into	'easy'	.825	.095	.699	.137	.000
Q36 That are within walking distance of my home	'walking distance'	.969	.000	.148	.850	.000
Q37 That appear to be looked after by someone	'looked after'	.280	.882	.050	.337	.003
Q38 Where there are rangers or wardens	'rangers'	.081	.236	.104	.058	.125

Gender. There were significant gender differences for ‘Information about nature’ (P=0.002), ‘Easy to find out about’ (P=0.031) and ‘signs’ (p=0.019) (See Figure 10). In general, women appeared to have a lower level of agreement with the statements than men.

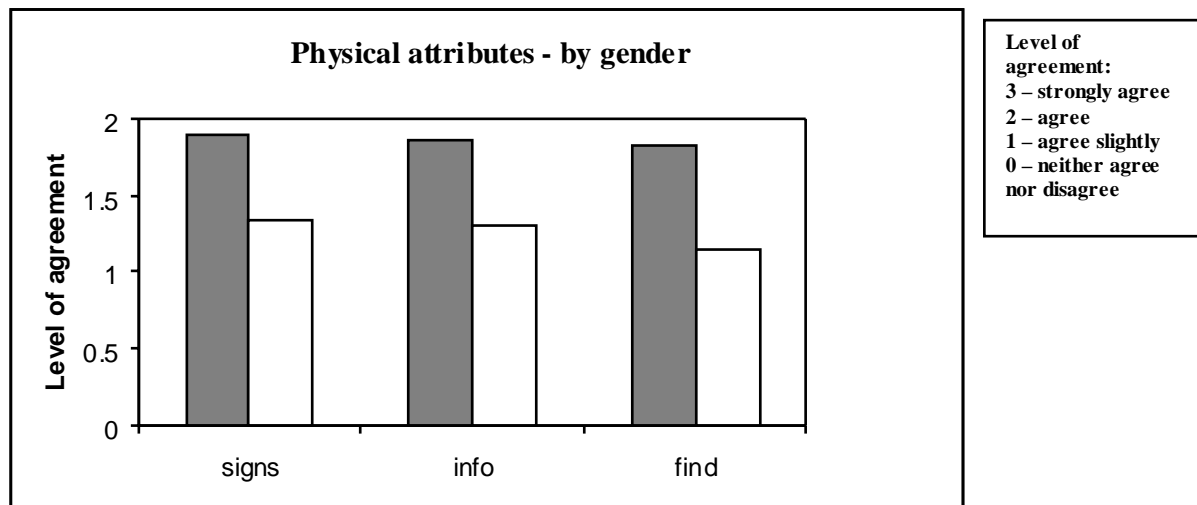


Figure 10: Physical attributes-by gender

Childhood use of green spaces. There were significant differences in relation to frequency of childhood use of green space for ‘free from rubbish’ (P=0.024), ‘natural in appearance’ (P=0.016), and ‘walking distance’ (P<0.001). These are shown in Figure 11.

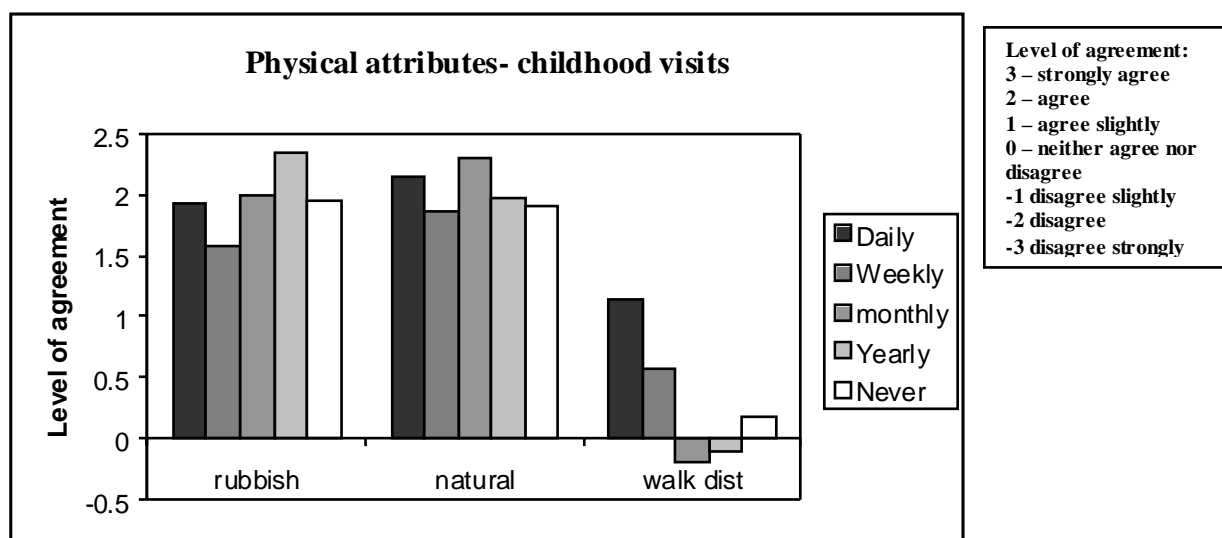


Figure 11: Physical attributes-childhood visits

Purpose of visit. There were significant differences related to the respondents’ stated main purpose of visit to the green space site for ‘looked after’ (P=0.05). See Figure 12.

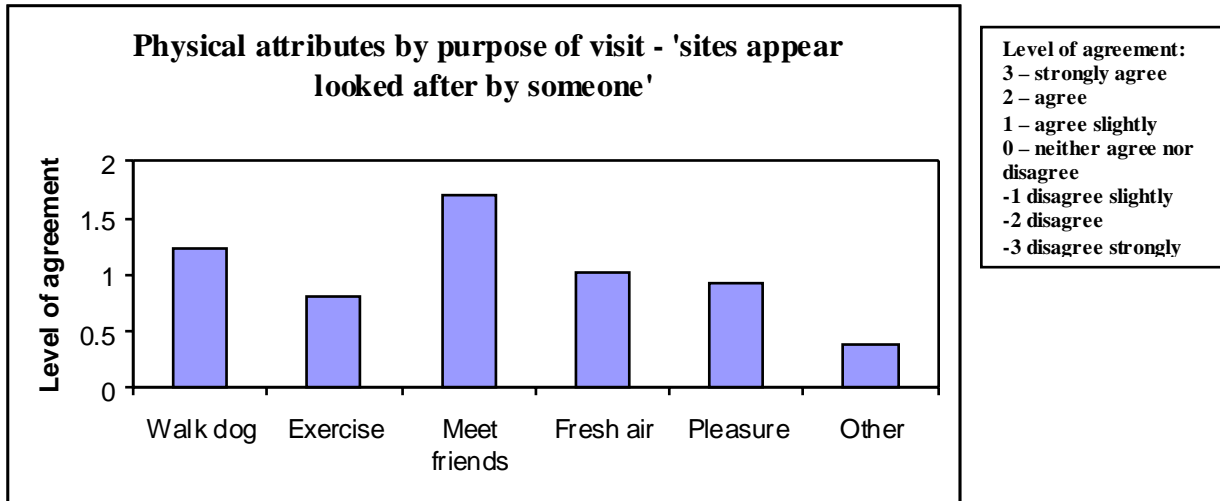


Figure 12. Physical attributes by purpose of visit - 'sites appear looked after by someone'

Age. There were significant differences related to age for 'information about nature' ($P < 0.001$), 'free from rubbish' ($P = 0.001$), 'signs' ($P = 0.019$) and 'natural in appearance' (see Figure 13)

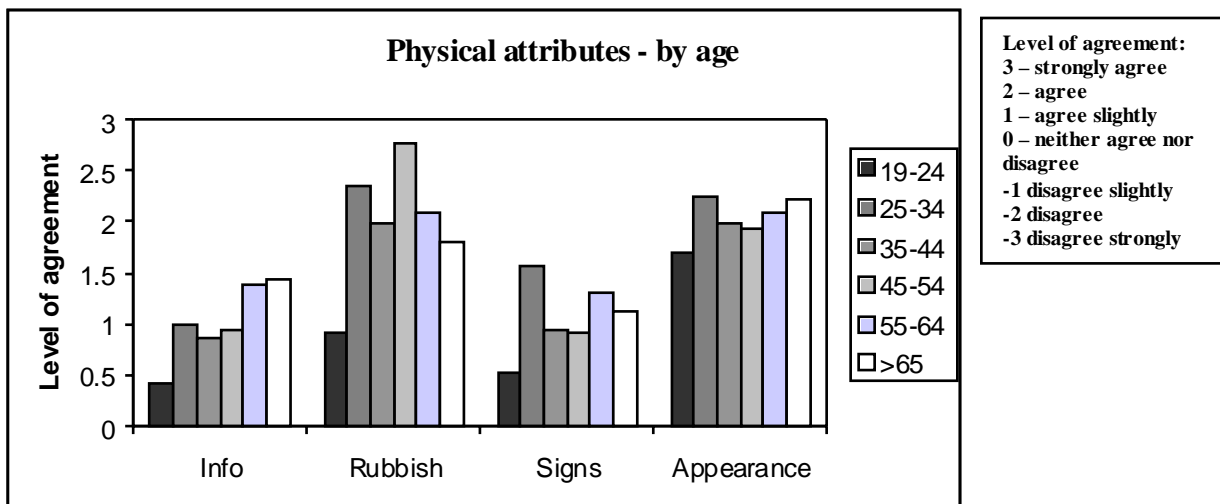


Figure 13. Physical attributes - by age

From this analysis the following can be seen in relation to individual questionnaire attitudinal statements:

'I visit sites that have information about nature.'

Those aged over 55 years tended to agree most strongly with this statement, and those aged 19-24 years tended to have a lower level of agreement.

'I visit green spaces that are free from rubbish'.

The highest level of agreement with this statement tended to be those aged 45-54, followed by 25-34, the lowest level of agreement tended to be those aged 19-24 years.

'I visit green spaces where signs help me to find the green space'.

The highest level of agreement tended to be those aged 25-34, and the lowest level of agreement those aged 19-24 years.

‘I visit green spaces which are natural in appearance’.

The highest level of agreement tended to be those aged 25-34, followed by those over 64 and the lowest level of agreement those aged 19-24 years.

Type of site. There were significant differences due to type of site for ‘rubbish’ (P<0.001), ‘within towns and cities’ (P<0.001), ‘easy to find out about’ (P=0.036), ‘natural appearance’ (P<0.001), ‘easy to get into’ (P<0.001), ‘walking distance’ (P<0.001) and ‘looked after’ (P=0.003) (see Figures 14A and 14B)

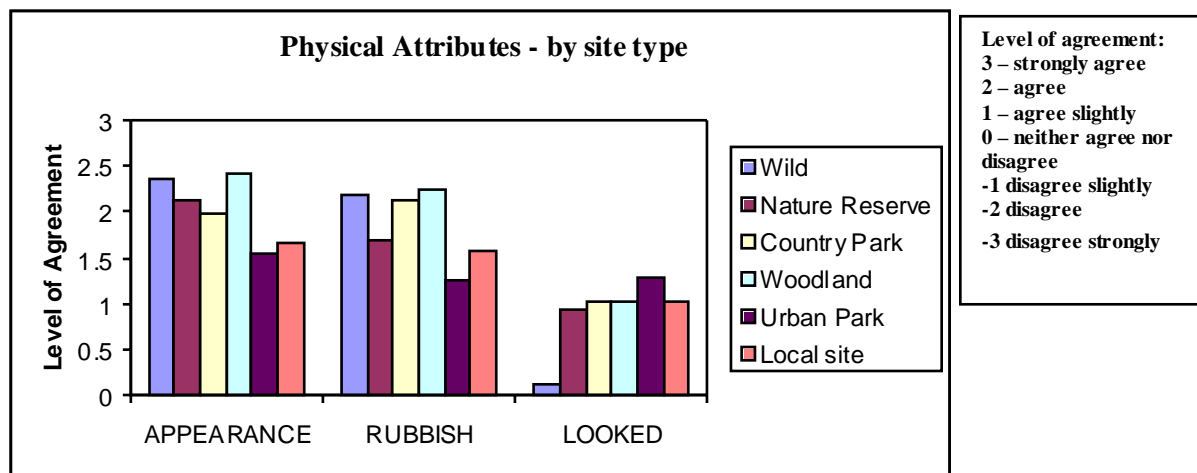


Figure 14A: Physical attributes – by site type

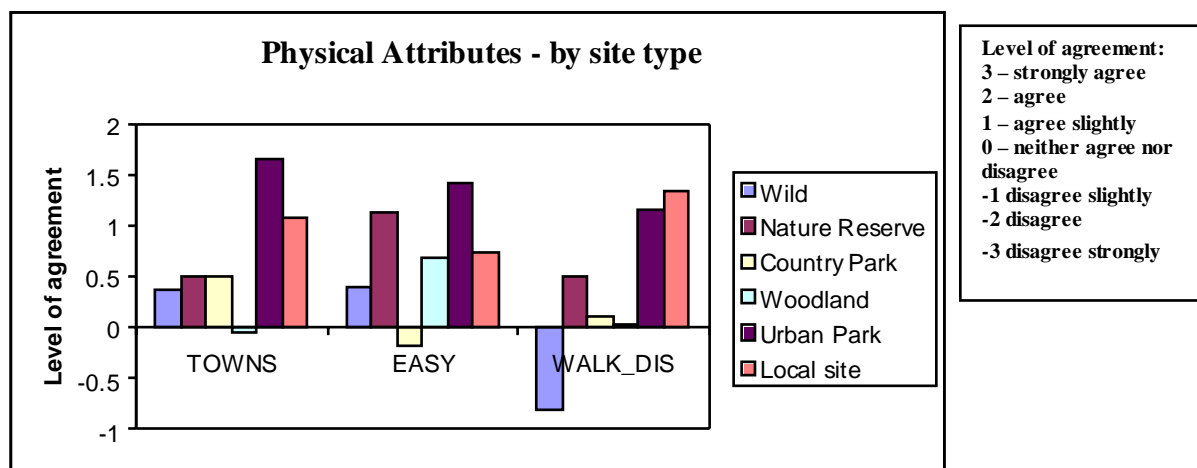


Figure 14B. Physical attributes - By site type

5.5.2 Perceptions about nature/green space

Respondents differed more in their rating of perceptions about nature and green space. This is shown below in Table 24 and Figures 15 and 16.

Respondents tended to disagree with statements Q6 ‘uncomfortable’, Q9 ‘vulnerable’, Q17 ‘vandalism’, Q18 ‘spiritual’, Q20 ‘boredom’, Q21 ‘energetic’, Q22 ‘not relevant to lifestyle’.

Respondents tended neither to agree nor disagree with statement Q23 ‘magical places’ (See Figure 16)

In general there was agreement with statements Q7 ‘peaceful’, Q8 ‘free’, Q10 ‘affiliation with nature’, Q19 ‘close to nature’, Q25 ‘important for local communities’, Q26 ‘commercialised’, Q28 ‘remind me of places as a child’, Q29 ‘well known to me’, Q30 ‘community ownership’. (See Figure 15A and 15B).

Table 24. Ratings of perceptions about greens space – mean across all respondents)

	Questionnaire statement	Label	Mean¹	S.E. Mean
Q25	I think green spaces are important for local communities	‘communities’	2.51	0.031
Q7	When in green spaces I feel peaceful	‘peaceful’	2.35	0.039
Q8	When in green spaces I feel free	‘free’	2.21	0.041
Q10	When in green spaces I feel an affiliation with nature	‘nature affiliation’	1.78	0.053
Q19	I associate green spaces with feeling close to nature	‘nature close’	1.19	0.075
Q26	I think green spaces are becoming too commercialized	‘commercialised’	1.07	0.085
Q30	I associate green spaces with a sense of community ownership	‘community ownership’	0.72	0.073
Q29	I visit green spaces that are well known to me	‘well known to me’	0.71	0.081
Q28	I visit green that remind me of places I knew as a child	‘places as child’	0.62	0.079
Q23	I think green spaces can be magical places	‘magical’	0.08	0.011
Q21	When in green spaces I feel more energetic	‘energetic’	-0.23	0.10
Q17	I associate green space with vandalism	‘vandalism’	-0.28	0.084
Q18	I associate green spaces with feeling spiritual	‘spiritual’	-0.43	0.085
Q20	I associate green spaces with boredom	‘boredom’	-0.79	0.11
Q22	I think green space are not relevant to my lifestyle	‘lifestyle’	-1.17	0.091
Q9	When in green spaces I feel vulnerable	‘vulnerable’	-1.74	0.069
Q6	When in green spaces I feel uncomfortable	‘uncomfortable’	-2.57	0.041

¹ Where : 3 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 1 = slightly agree, 0 = neither agree nor disagree, -1 or slightly disagree, -2 = disagree, -3 = disagree strongly

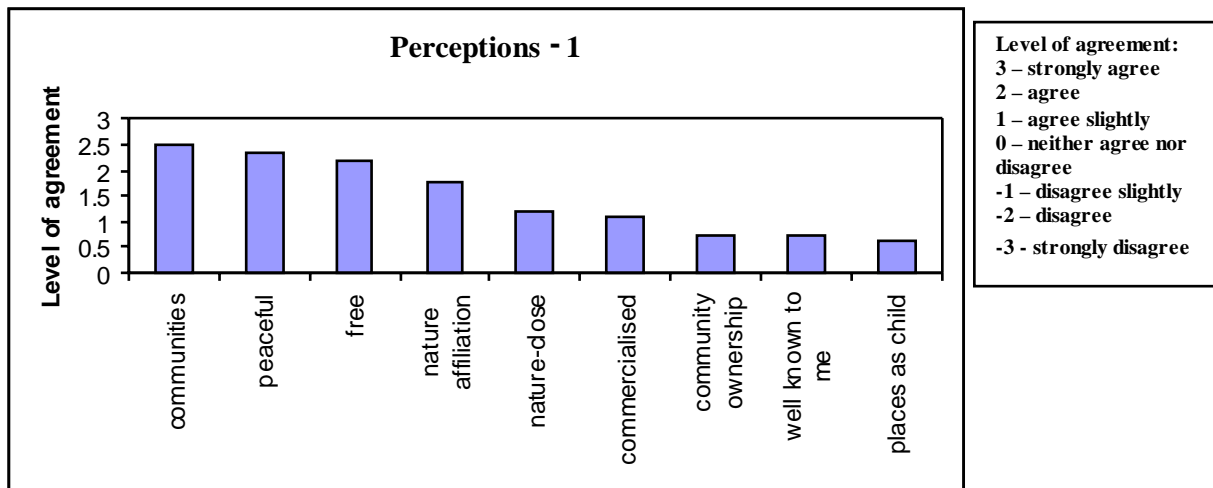


Figure 15A. Level of agreement on statements to do with perceptions about nature and green space

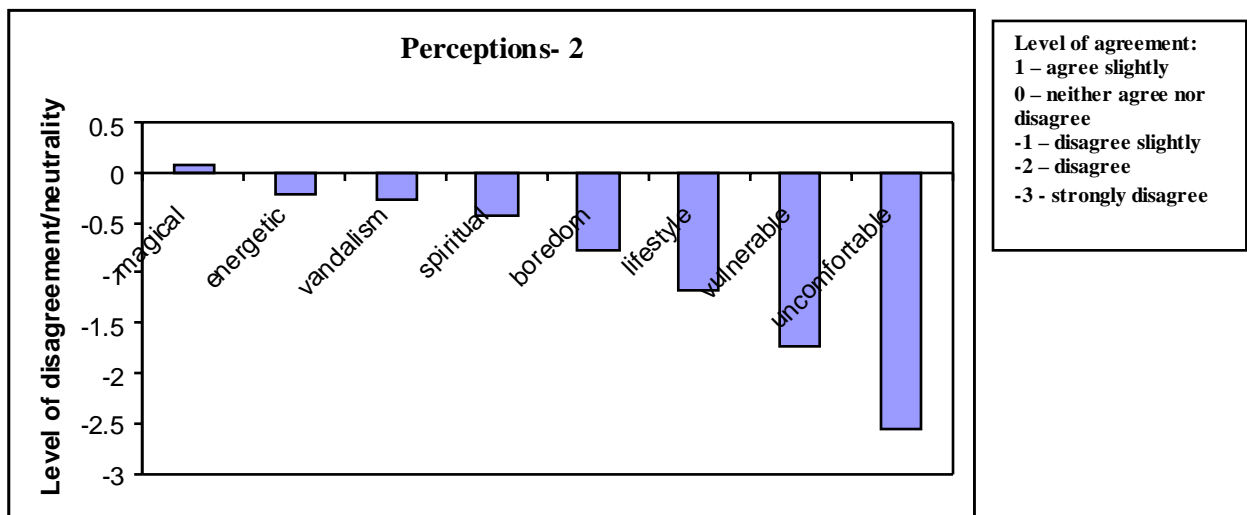


Figure 15B. Level of disagreement/neutrality on statements to do with perceptions about nature and green space

The statements to do with perceptions about green space sites attributes were then compared by user and site characteristics (see Table 25).

Table 25. Univariate statistics (Kruskal Wallis P =) of green space perceptions by user and site characteristics. (Figures in bold are significant at P<0.05)

Perceptions	Label	Gender	Child ¹	Purpose	Age	Site type
Q6 I feel uncomfortable	'uncomfortable'	.004	.048	.408	.011	.004
Q7I feel peaceful	'peaceful'	.256	.261	.921	.082	.217
Q8 I feel free	'free'	.308	.374	.871	.026	.356
Q9 I feel vulnerable	'vulnerable'	.000	.918	.022	.019	.010
Q10 I feel an affiliation with nature	'nature affiliation'	.111	.090	.608	.000	.175
Q16 With adventure	'adventure'	.150	.031	.457	.472	.254
Q17 With vandalism	'vandalism'	.882	.514	.387	.413	.000
Q18 With feeling spiritual	'spiritual'	.052	.165	.080	.016	.000
Q19 With feeling close to nature	'nature close'	.630	.065	.072	.092	.000
Q20 With boredom	'boredom'	.182	.003	.608	.459	.000
Q21 I feel more energetic	'energetic'	.938	.005	.511	.244	.000
Q22 Are not relevant to my lifestyle	'lifestyle'	.093	.012	.665	.882	.000
Q23 Can be magical places	'magical'	.853	.011	.600	.385	.000
Q25 Are important for local communities	'communities'	.452	.791	.460	.032	.089
Q26 Are becoming too commercialized	'commercialised'	.366	.008	.648	.626	.000
Q28 That remind me of places I knew as a child	'places as child'	.100	.047	.056	.126	.559
Q29 That are well known to me	'well known to me'	.471	.000	.435	.000	.001
Q30 With a sense of community ownership	'community ownership'	.440	.351	.020	.052	.002

Gender. There were significant differences between male and female respondents for 'uncomfortable' (P=0.004) and 'vulnerable' (P<0.001). These are shown in Figure 16. It should be pointed out that while the mean level of agreement for 'uncomfortable' does not appear to differ between male (-2.64) and female (-2.49) respondents, there were large differences in the relative proportions of respondents who disagreed strongly with that statement i.e. males (74.4%) and females (62.0%).

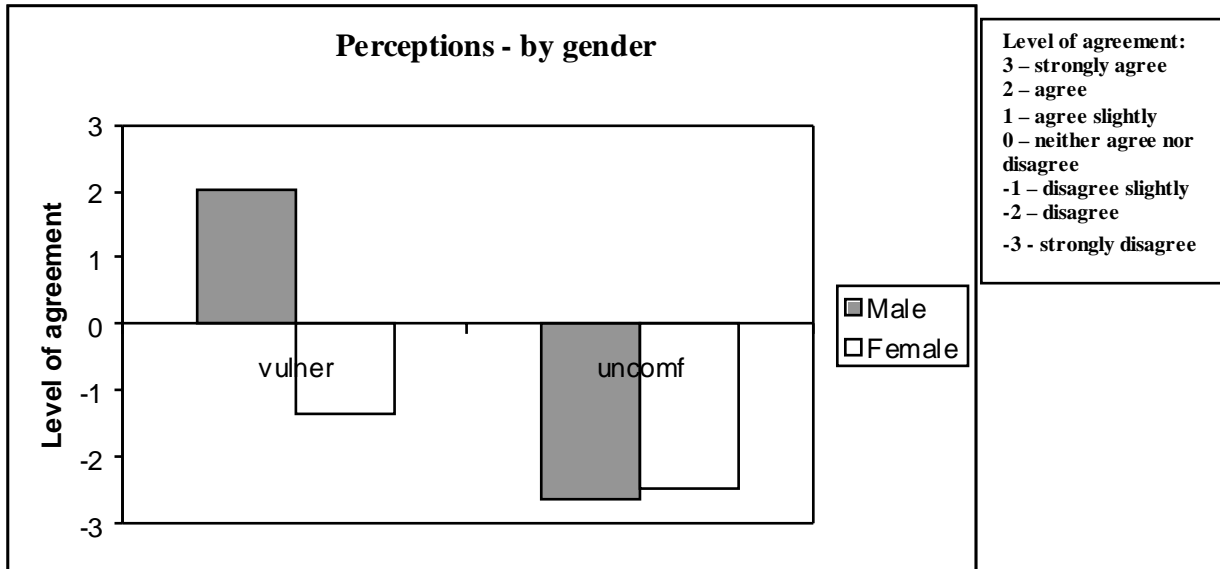


Figure 16. Perceptions by gender

Childhood visits to green space sites. There were significant differences in perceptions of green spaces according to the frequency of childhood use of sites. Figure 17 indicates the statements with which there was broad agreement: ‘commercialised’ (P=0.008); ‘well-known’ (P<0.001); ‘uncomfortable’ (P=0.048), ‘remind of places I knew as a child’ (P=0.008); ‘magical places’ (P=0.011).

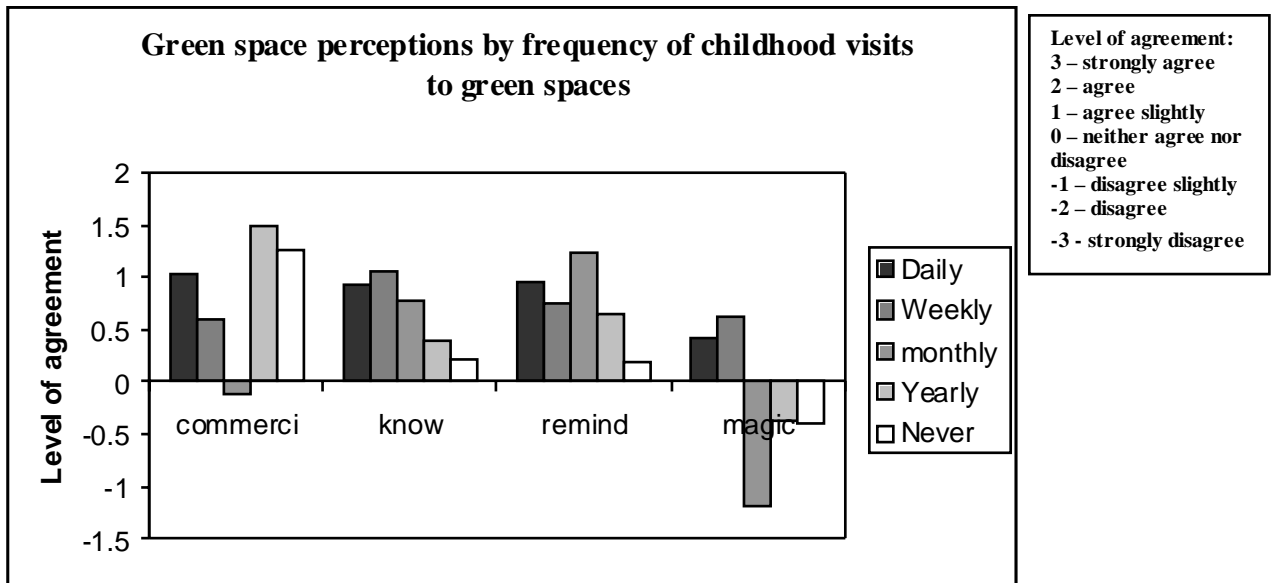


Figure 17. Green space perceptions by frequency of childhood visits to green spaces

Figure 18 A indicates the statements with which there was broad disagreement: energetic’ (P=0.005); ‘boredom’ (P=0.003); ‘relevant to lifestyle’ (P=0.012); ‘adventure’ (P=0.031), ‘energetic’ (P=0.005).

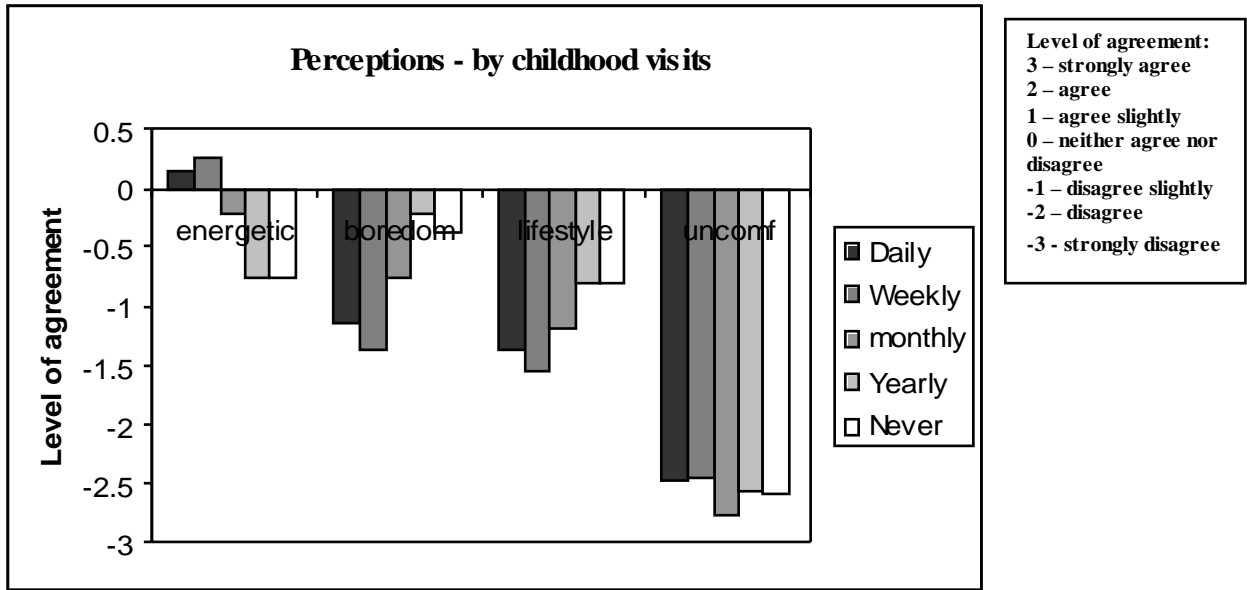


Figure 18. Perceptions- by childhood visits

Purpose of visit. Perceptions were significant by main purpose of visit for ‘vulnerable’ (P=0.022) and ‘community ownership’ (P=0.020). (See Figure 19).

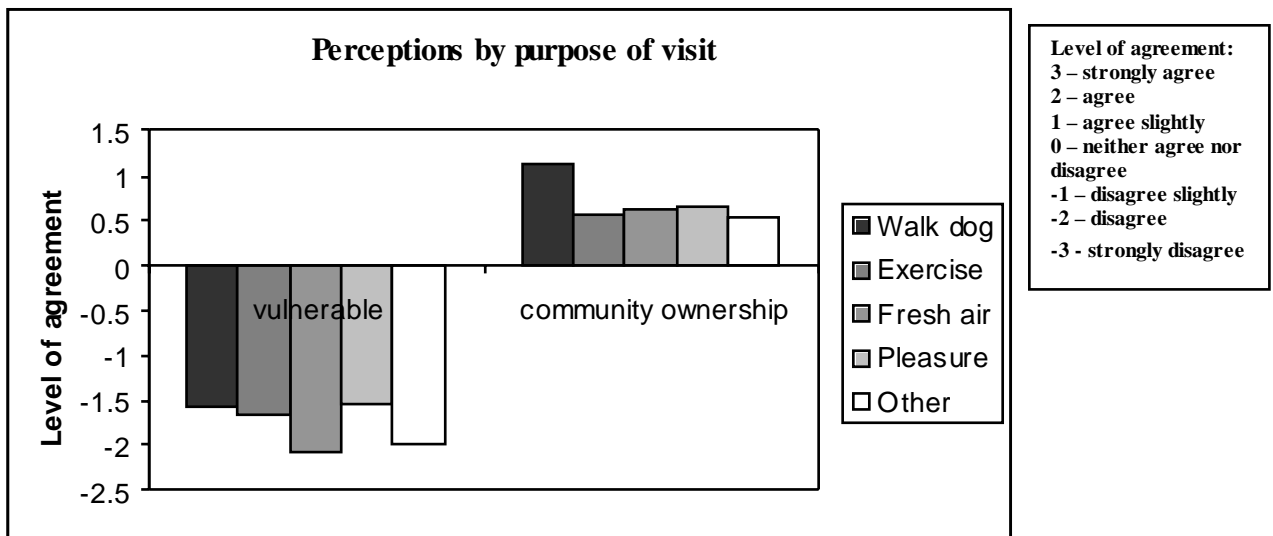


Figure 19. Perceptions by purpose of visit

Age. Age of respondents had a significant effect on ‘uncomfortable’ (P=0.22), ‘free’ (P=0.26), ‘vulnerable’ (P=0.019), ‘affiliation with nature’ (P<0.001), ‘spiritual’ (P0.016), ‘local communities’ (P=0.032) and ‘well known’ (P=0.001). (See Figure 20A and 20B).

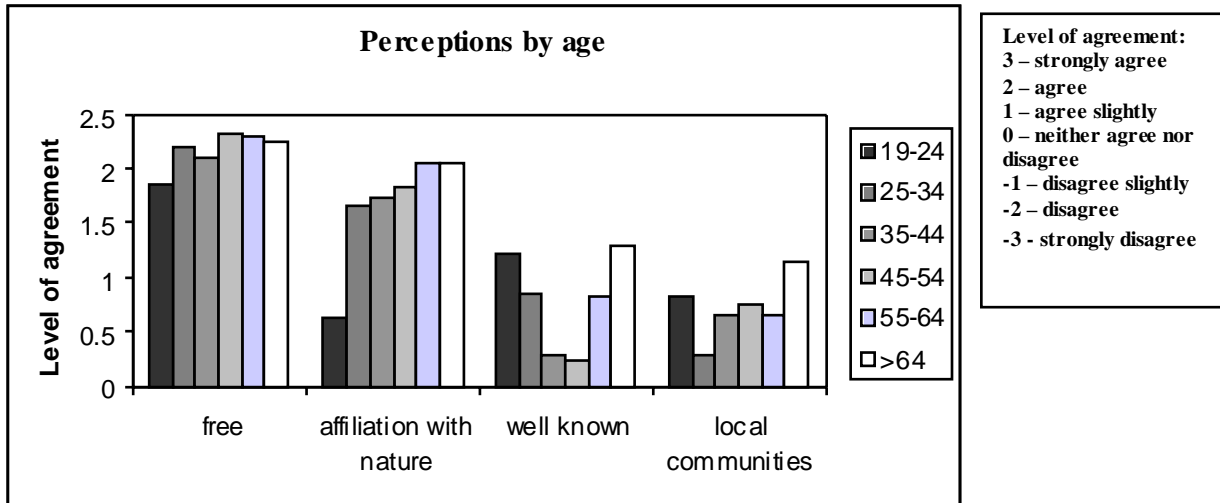


Figure 20A. Perceptions by age

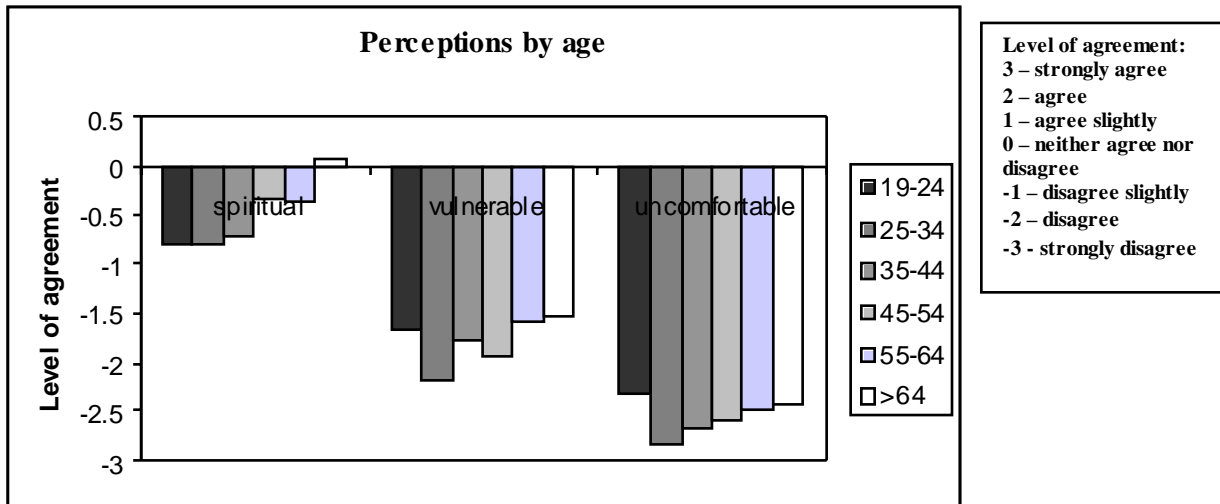


Figure 20B. Perceptions by age

Table 26A indicates the age groups that agree most and least strongly with statements to do with green space perceptions.

Table 26A. Highest and lowest level of agreement with statements to do with green space perceptions – by age group

Statement labels	Highest level	Lowest level
'Free'	35-54	19-24
'Affiliation with nature'	>55	19-24
'Well known'	19-24, >65	35-44
'Local communities'	>65	25-34
'Spiritual'	>65	19-34
'Vulnerable'	>65	25-34
'Uncomfortable'	19-24	25-34

Site type. Almost all of the green space perceptions differed significantly across the site types (See Figures 21A, 21B and 21C).

Table 26B. Highest and lowest levels of agreement with green space perceptions by site type

Statement labels	Highest level of agreement	Lowest level of agreement
'communities'	Urban parks, country parks	Wild sites
'close'	Woodland	Wild sites
'commercial'	Wild sites	Woodland
'magical'	Nature reserves	Wild sites
'energetic'	Woodland	Wild sites
'vandalism'	Wild sites	Woodlands
'spiritual'	Nature reserves	Wild
'boredom'	Wild sites	woodlands

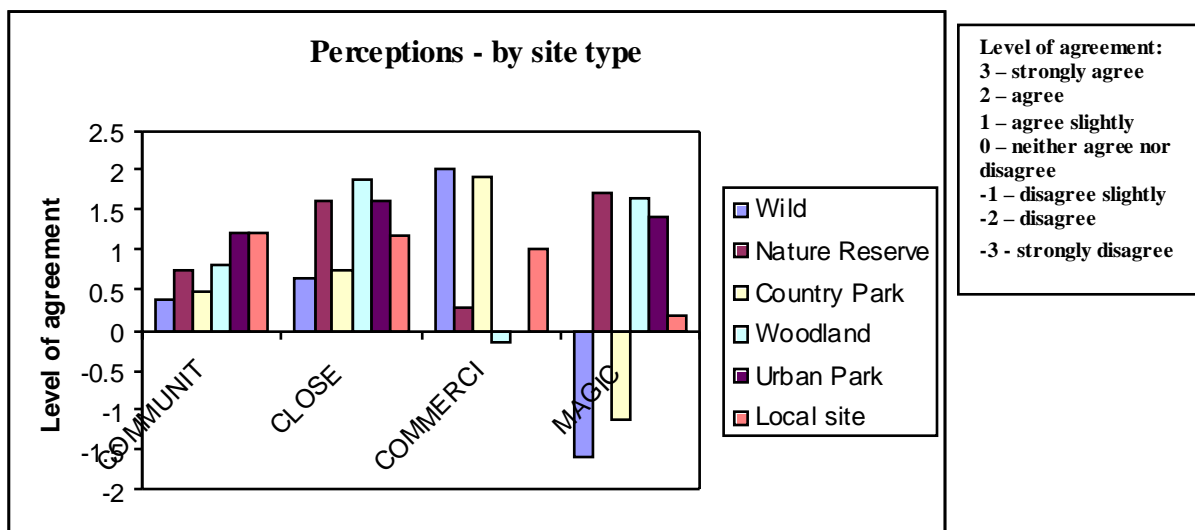


Figure 21A. Perceptions – by site type

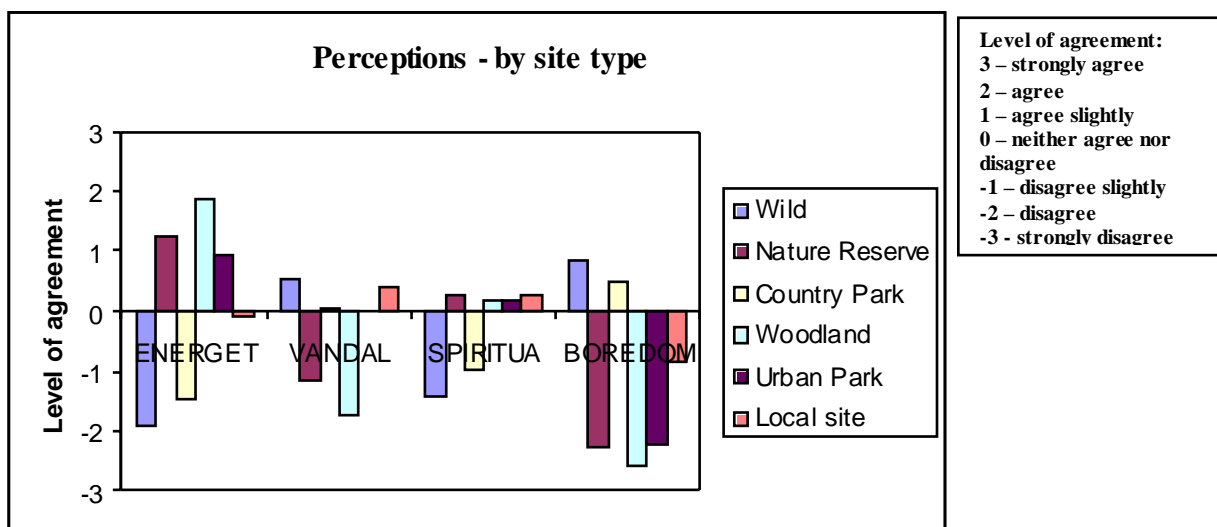


Figure 21B. Perceptions –by site type

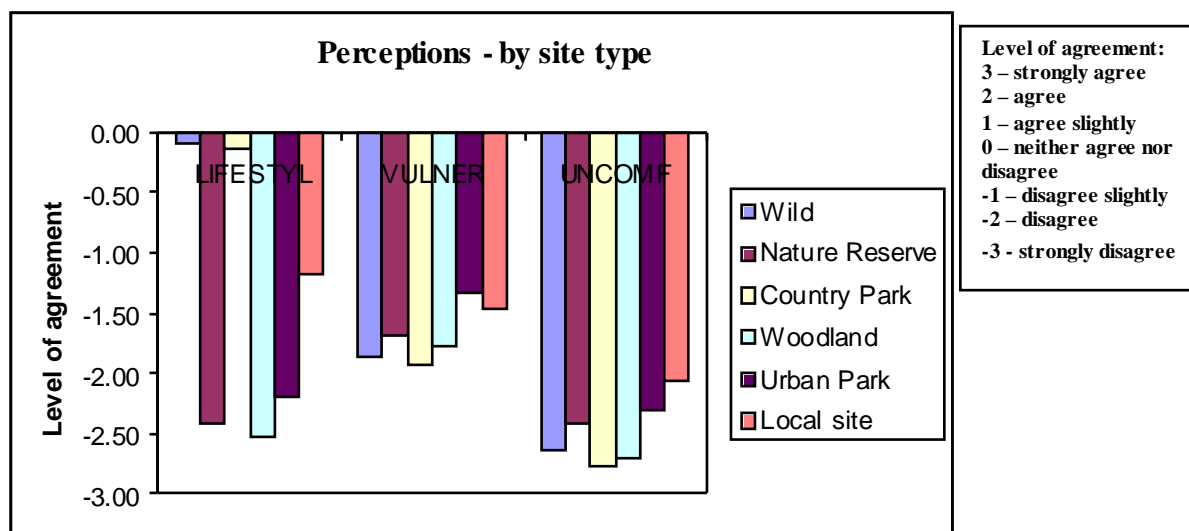


Figure 21C: Perceptions – by site type

Table 26C. Country Parks: univariate statistics for negative perceptions about green spaces. (Figures in bold are significant at Kruskal Wallis Test P=0.05)

Perceptions	Level of agreement	Kruskal Wallis Test P=0.05		
		Gender	Occupation	Involved
Q6 I feel uncomfortable	-2.76	0.055	0.281	0.025
Q9 I feel vulnerable	-1.92	0.027	0.001	0.010
Q17 With vandalism	0.05	0.443	0.013	0.671
Q18 With feeling spiritual	-0.99	0.678	0.001	0.892
Q20 With boredom	0.49	0.055	0.281	0.025
Q26 Are becoming too commercialized	1.92	0.197	0.039	0.253

¹ Demographic variables which were not significant across any of the statements are not given here.

Interviewees at country parks tended to disagree that they felt uncomfortable or vulnerable in green spaces. There was slight agreement with the statement to do with vandalism. This differed significantly by occupation only: in general unemployed people tended to agree more strongly with this statement more than other occupational groups.

There was disagreement that green spaces were associated with feeling spiritual, however this did not differ across any of the demographic variables. There was slight agreement that green spaces were associated with boredom. This differed by gender and involvement in conservation organizations. Women had a slightly higher level of agreement (0.84) compared with men (0.12). People who were not involved in conservation organizations tended to agree more strongly (0.56) than those not involved (0.24).

There was also agreement with the statement that green spaces are becoming more commercialized. This was significant for occupation only: in general those in full time education had a lower level of agreement that the other occupational groups.

Green spaces and local communities. A series of Kruskal Wallis Tests were carried out to explore the demographic characteristics of those who tended to agree with the statement that green spaces were important for local communities. Involvement with conservation organisations (P=0.44), occupation (P=0.006), age (P=0.003), ethnic group (P<0.001) and visitors with disabilities (P=0.045) were statistically significant.

In general, there was a higher level of agreement with this statement from people who were involved with conservation organizations, not in full time education, not from an ethnic minority group or with a disability. However the latter characteristics (i.e. ethnic group and disability) need to be treated with some caution due to low sample size.

5.5.3 Activities carried out in green spaces

Respondents agreed with most statements about activities carried out in green spaces, with the exception of Q32 'walk by myself', Q34 'meet people with similar interests' and Q35 'community events'. These are shown below in Table 27 and Figures 22 and 23.

Table 27. Rating of activities carried out in green spaces (mean across all sites)

Questionnaire item	Label	Mean ¹	S.E. mean
Q13 I visit green space to relax	'relax'	2.23	0.038
Q24 I think green spaces can be places for children to learn about nature	'children'	2.23	0.047
Q14 I visit green space to see wildlife	'wildlife'	2.07	0.050
Q11 I visit green spaces to get away from the stresses of life	'stress'	1.69	0.064
Q15 I visit green spaces to learn about nature	'learn'	1.56	0.064
Q32 I visit green spaces for exercise	'exercise'	1.52	0.065
Q16 I associate green space with adventure	'adventure'	1.07	0.071
Q31 I visit green space to walk by myself	'walk'	-0.15	0.089
Q33 I visit green space to meet people with similar interests	'sim_int'	-0.32	0.082
Q35 I visit green space to take part in community events	'events'	-0.68	0.078
Q34 I visit green space to take part in conservation activities	'conserv'	-1.12	0.069

¹ Where : 3 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 1 = slightly agree, 0 = neither agree nor disagree, -1 or slightly disagree, -2 = disagree, -3 = disagree strongly

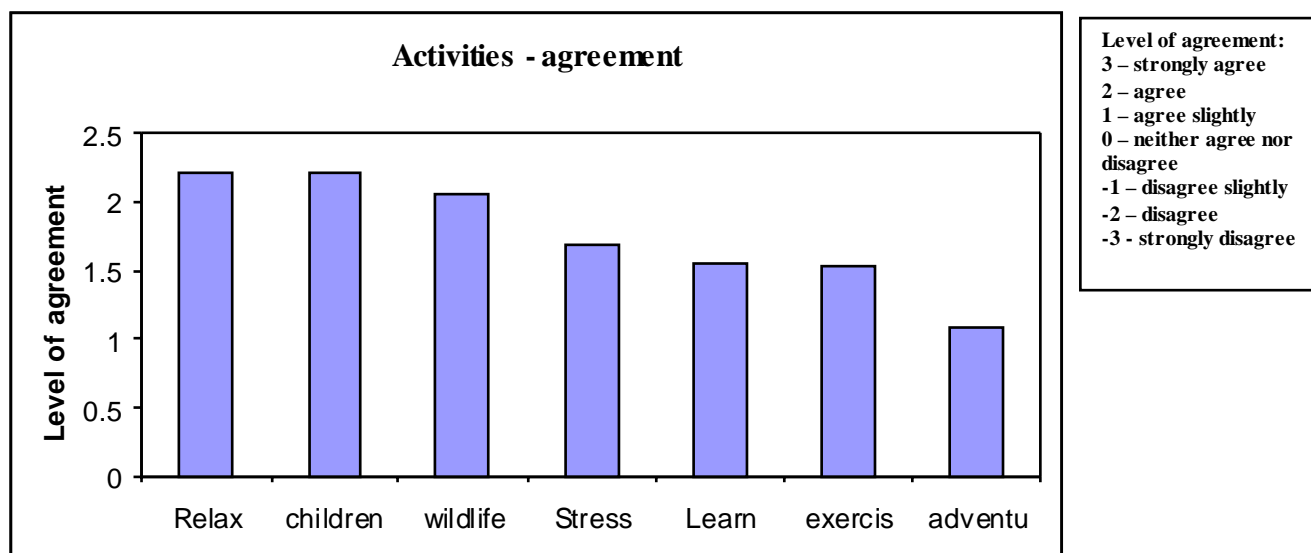


Figure 22. Level of agreement with statements on activities

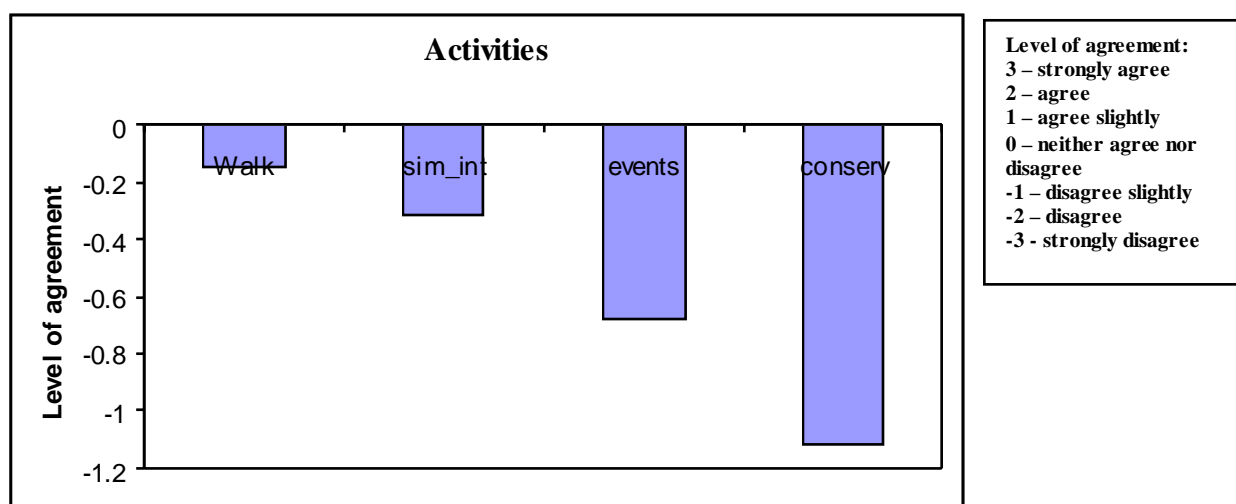


Figure 23. Level of disagreement with statements on activities

The statements to do with perceptions about green space sites attributes were then compared by user and site characteristics (see Table 28).

Table 28. Univariate statistics (Kruskal Wallis P =) of green space activities by user and site characteristics. (Figures in bold are significant at P<0.05)

Activities	Gender	Child ¹	Purpose	Age	Site type
Q11 To get away from the stresses of life	.007	.514	.050	.033	.000
Q13 To relax	.950	.023	.249	.164	.008
Q14 To see wildlife	.721	.110	.144	.000	.000
Q15 To learn about nature	.016	.240	.391	.000	.000
Q24 Can be places for children to learn about nature	.067	.186	.391	.341	.008
Q31 To walk by myself	.086	.031	.012	.079	.000
Q32 For exercise	.266		.000	.020	.005

Activities	Gender	Child ¹	Purpose	Age	Site type
Q33 To meet people with similar interests	.046	.065	.070	.002	.059
Q34 To take part in conservation activities	.443	.468	.846	.715	.107
Q35 To take part in community events	.015	.007	.573	.824	.009

Gender. There were significant differences by gender for ‘stresses’, ‘learn about nature’, ‘to meet people with similar interests’ and ‘take part in community events’. See Figure 24.

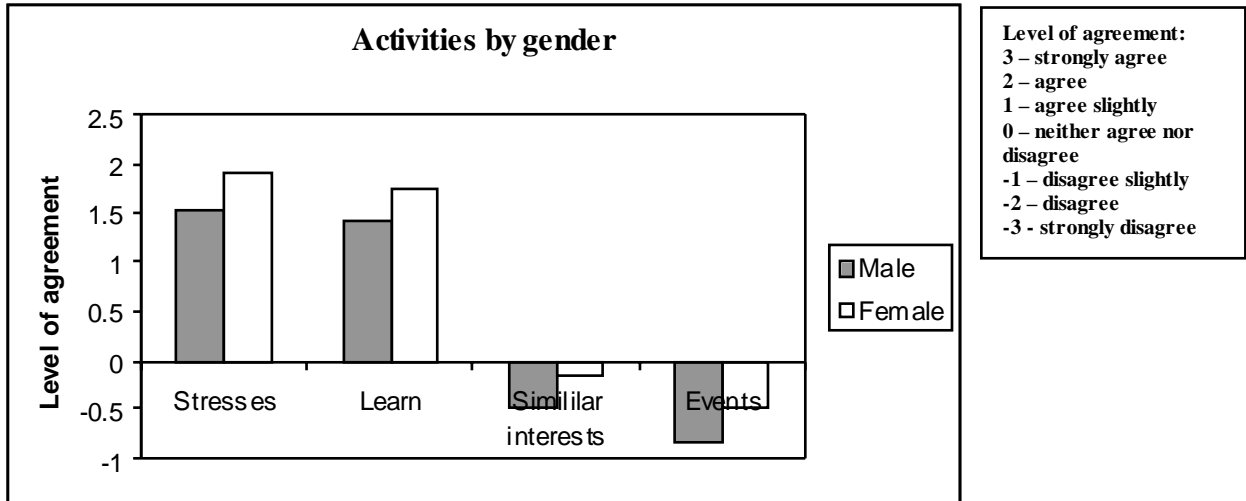


Figure 24. Activities by gender

Childhood visits to green spaces. There were significant differences related to the level of childhood visits for ‘relax’, ‘walk by myself’ and ‘events’. See Figure 25.

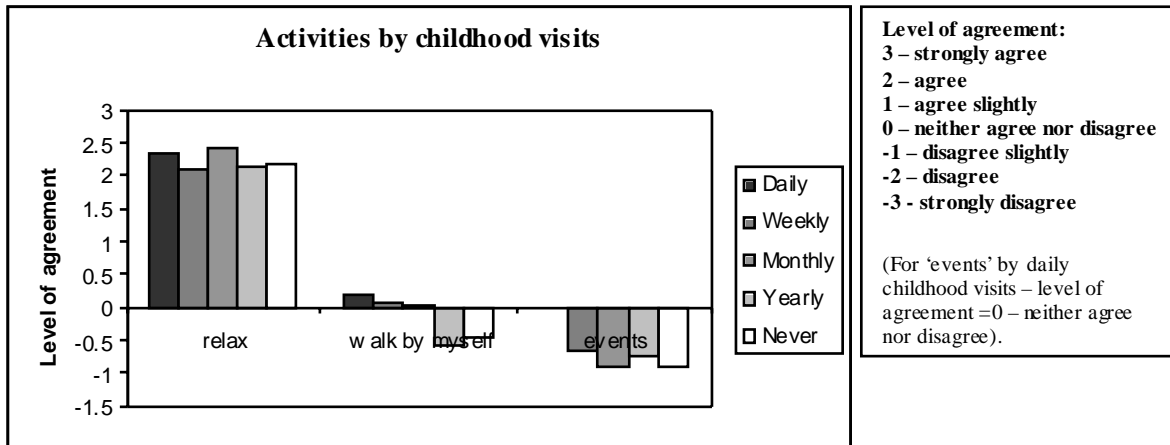


Figure 25. Activities by childhood visit

Purpose of visit. There were significant differences by purpose of visit for ‘stresses’, ‘walk by myself’ and ‘exercise’. See Figure 26.

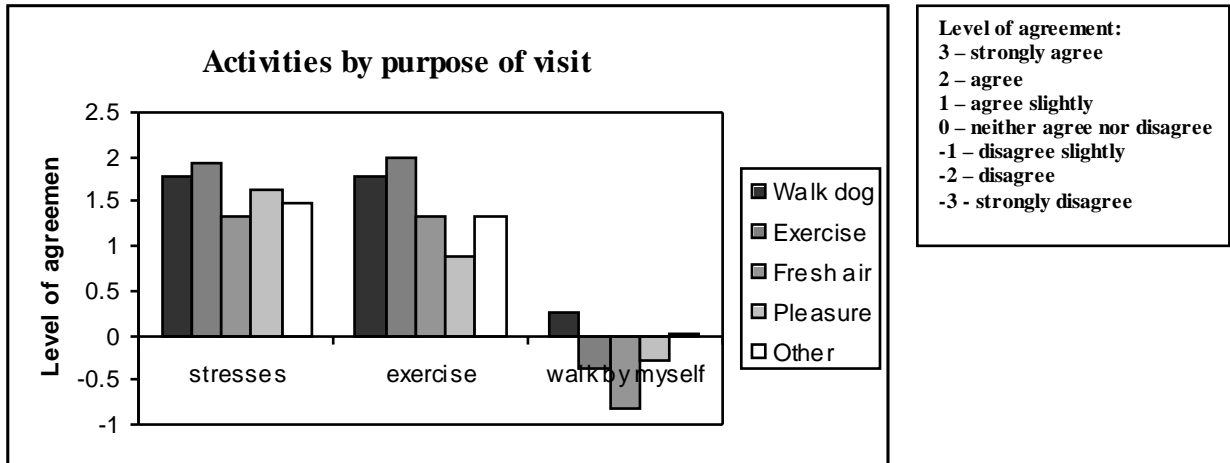


Figure 26. Activities by purpose of visit

Age. Age was significant for ‘stresses’, ‘wildlife’, ‘nature’, ‘exercise’, ‘similar interests’ (see Figure 27).

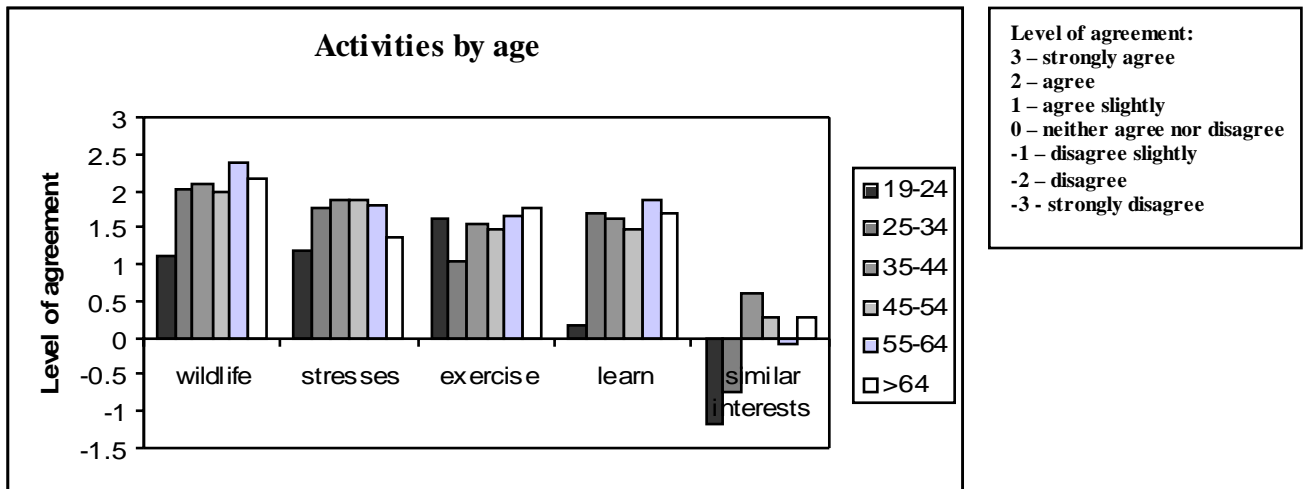


Figure 27: Activities by age

From this analysis, the following can be seen in relation to questionnaire attitudinal statements about activities:

‘I visit green spaces to see wildlife’

The highest level of agreement with this statement tended to be those aged 55-64; the lowest level of agreement those aged 19-24 years.

‘I visit green spaces to get away from the stresses of life’

The highest levels of agreement with this statement tended to be those aged 25-64; the lowest level of agreement those aged 19-24 years, followed by those aged over 65 years.

‘I visit green spaces for exercise’

The highest level of agreement with this statement tended to be those aged over 65, followed by 55-64 and 19-24; the lowest level of agreement those aged 25-35 years.

‘I visit green spaces to learn about nature’

The highest level of agreement with this statement tended to be those aged 55-64; the lowest level of agreement by a large margin were those aged 19-24 years.

‘I visit green spaces to meet people with similar interests’

The highest level of disagreement with this statement tended to be those aged 19-24; the lowest level of agreement those aged 35-44 years.

Site type. Site type was significant for ‘stress’, ‘see wildlife’, ‘learn about nature’, ‘places for children to learn about nature’, ‘walk by myself’, ‘exercise’, and ‘meet people with similar interests’ (see Figures 28A and 28B).

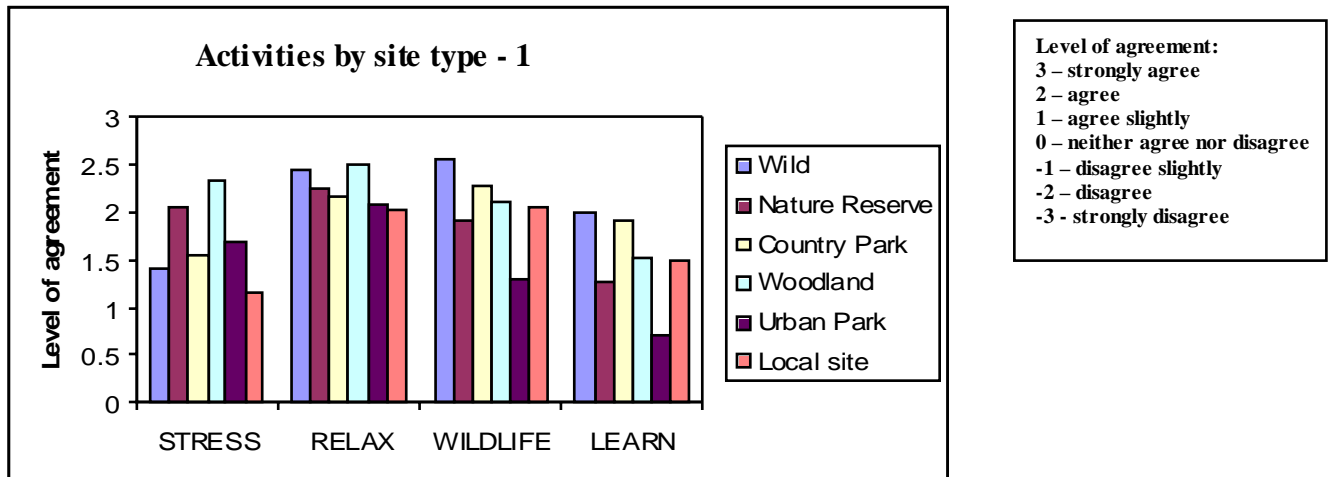


Figure 28 A: Activities by type site

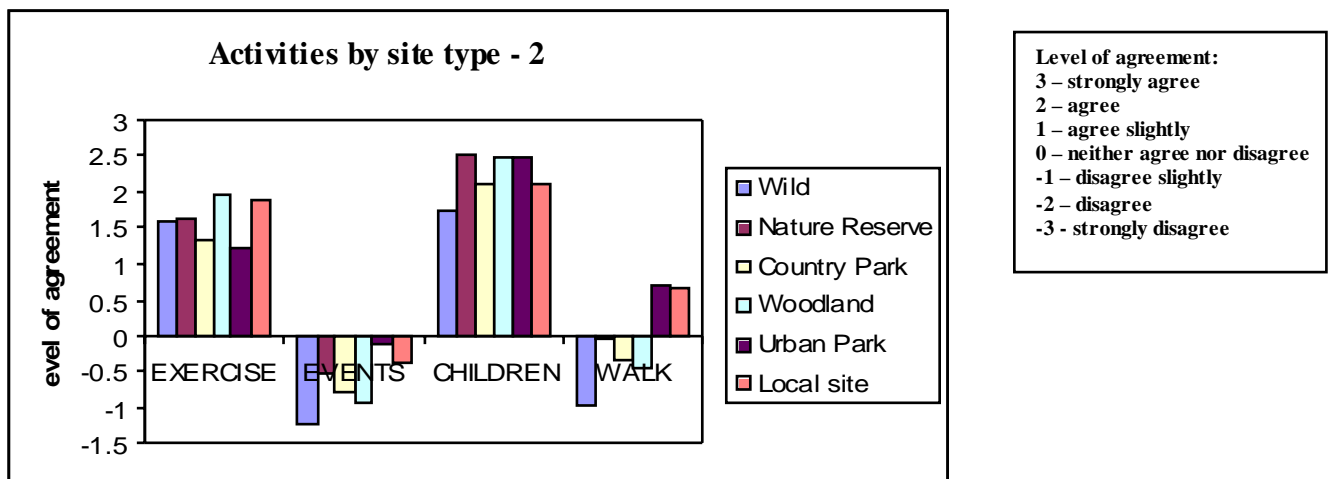


Figure 28 B. Activities by type site

5.6 Factor Analysis of attitudinal questions

Factor analysis is a data reduction technique which helps reduce the complexity in a set of data and reveal a smaller set of the underlying patterns (i.e. factors) within it. It is typically used with questionnaire data to discover the main themes present in people’s responses. The analysis demonstrates the proportion of variance in subjects responses accounted for by each

of the new factors, and the correlation present between each of the original statements in the questionnaire and the new factors determined by analysis.

5.6.1 Overall Factor Analysis

Factor analysis was carried out on the attitudinal questions (Q1-38) in order to identify the attributes which seem to be important in people's experience of green space and nature. As stated in the description of the questionnaire design, the original questionnaire was based on a mapping sentence structured around facet theory. In the mapping sentence, it was assumed that people's values related to green space would relate to three things: physical attributes about green space, perceptions, emotions or beliefs about nature and the experience of green spaces, and activities that might be carried out in green spaces.

The resulting analysis indicated that there were 10 factors which accounted for 60.7% of the total variance. (The conventional cut-off point for inclusion if an eigen value of 1 was used).

On the whole, the new factors emerging from factor analysis retained the original, 3-category structure of the mapping sentence used in the questionnaire. That is, in most cases, each of the factors contained variables relating to one category of 'place' only, i.e. each was correlated with questions related to either physical features, perceptions and activities, and not to questions which crossed these boundaries. Exceptions to these structures were:

1. 'natural in appearance' (physical features) which was associated with activities such as 'getting away from stress' and to 'see wildlife'.
2. 'to walk by myself (activity) which was associated with 'within towns and cities' and 'within walking distance' (activity).

The 10 factors and their suggested names are included in Table 29.

Table 29. Factor analysis of attitudinal questions

Factor – suggested name	Category	Variable	R – value
1. 'Lifestyle'			
I associate green spaces	Perceptions	Boredom	-.925
When in green spaces	Perceptions	Feel more energetic	.978
I think green spaces	Perceptions	Are not relevant to lifestyle	-.876
	Perception	Can be magical places	.897
	Perception	Are becoming too commercialized	-.734
2. 'Relax/nature'			
I visit green spaces	Activity	To get away from stresses	.586
	Activity	That are natural in appearance	.674
		To relax	.672
	Activity	To see wildlife	.683
	Activity	To learn about nature	.590
3. 'Welcome'			
I visit green spaces	Physical	That are free from rubbish	.621
	Physical	That are easy to find out about	.700
	Physical	Where signs help me find the green space	.732

Factor – suggested name	Category	Variable	R – value
4. ‘Community/conservation’			
I visit green spaces	Activity	To meet people with similar interests	.609
	Activity	To take part in conservation work	.777
	Activity	To take part in community events	.679
5. ‘Peace/free’			
When in green spaces	Perceptions	I feel at peace	.775
When in green spaces	Perceptions	I feel free	.757
6. ‘Looked after’			
I visit green spaces	Physical	That appear to be looked after by someone	.825
	Physical	Where there are rangers or wardens	.764
7. ‘Local/walk’			
I visit green spaces	Physical	That are within towns or cities	.652
	Activity	To walk by myself	.574
	Physical	That are within walking distance of my home	.584
8. ‘Children learn about nature’			
I think green spaces	Activity	Can be places for children to learn about nature	.659
9. ‘Childhood/community’			
I visit green spaces	Perceptions	That remind me of places I knew as a child	.656
I associate green spaces	Perceptions	With a sense of community ownership	.662
10. ‘Fears’			
When in green spaces		I feel uncomfortable	.700
		I feel vulnerable	.762
Items not loading			
Q1. Information about nature		Q19 Feel close to nature	
Q10 Affiliation with nature		Q25 Are important for local communities	
Q16 Associate with adventure		Q4 Easy to find out about	
Q17 Associate with vandalism		Q29 Are well known to me	
Q18 With feeling spiritual		Q32 For exercise	

The implications of these results and the relationship of them to the focus groups, the scoping meeting and the wider literature on the subject will be considered in the next chapter.

Chapter six. Synthesis of results, discussion and conclusions

In this chapter the results of each element of the research are brought together, compared, discussed in the context of the project and the brief and related to other research findings of similar work. Conclusions, recommendations for action and recommendations for further research area also presented.

6.1 Synthesis of results

The keystone of this project methodology was the application of the “user-led” approach, where the focus groups were used both to define the issues to be explored by the questionnaire survey and to permit deeper analysis of these issues. The scoping meeting with environmental professionals enables further comparisons to be drawn between the perceptions of professionals and those of the public. The methodology, being so integrated, is ideal for this type of research and has yielded fruitful results at each stage. The next and in many ways most important stage is to weave each strand together and to compare and contrast the outcomes of each so as to be able to draw final conclusions.

The client’s brief for the project identified several issues that were to be researched. These can be divided into factors associated with the people using green spaces and characteristics of the green spaces themselves. Factors associated with people include their activities, attitudes and perceptions towards green space and nature, categorised by gender, age, ethnicity, mobility, sensory or other impairment, area of residence and so on. Factors associated with the green spaces include location, ownership and type of management and general character and size. The results should demonstrate some relationships between the people and the places so that social values of nature in places such as these can be classified and quantified (though not in econometric terms).

6.1.1 Who is visiting green space (or not visiting)?

Gender. There was little difference in distribution of men and women across the range of sites but there were approximately 20% fewer women than men interviewed at the sites, which is considerably different from the regional population structure in general and for the population over 18 years in particular. Our results may reflect an unintended sampling bias, although it is more likely that the survey broadly reflects the actual pattern of visitors. This seems to confirm previous studies that found that women tend to be significantly less frequent visitors than men to woodland or countryside sites (Burgess 1995, Ward Thompson et al 2002). It may reflect the concerns expressed by women in the focus groups over safety, and women’s responses in the attitudinal section of the questionnaire, where feelings of vulnerability were also rated strongly. In a recent survey by the Countryside Agency and English Heritage (2003) it was found that men were more likely than women to visit all types of parks apart from children’s play areas. Slee et al (2001, quoted in Morris, 2003) found that strict dress codes (particularly for females) and a lack of single gender activities may also limit the participation of certain groups in green spaces.

Age. With the exception of young adults, the age range of visitors was fairly widely distributed across most sites. In general, the majority of visitors were in the range of mature adult (prime family age) to older age groups. However, children were well represented in

some sites, such as those located closer to residential areas and in some of the country parks. Older age groups tended to favour the most local sites and the urban parks or else the most “wild”, such as Gibraltar Point.

Type of site There is not much of a pattern to be found in terms of different groups of visitors in relation to the type of site, such as woodland or urban park; the pattern relates rather to proximity to home, i.e. the distances travelled to sites, with a significant number of those questioned having travelled only a short distance of less than a mile. This importance of accessibility to places close to home compared with the site character is reflected in other research (Ward Thompson *et al* 2002). This finding from the questionnaire survey also reflects the information from the focus groups, where there was universal agreement that it is important to have locally accessible green spaces.

Clearly, since a number of sites in remoter locations were also chosen for the survey, a large number of visitors interviewed had travelled considerable distances to get there. Since some of these sites featured special activities, such as bird watching or sailing, they appealed to a more defined set of visitors, such as those who were members of conservation organisations or who wanted to participate in outdoor activities. Some local sites were also attractive to those who lived a little further away and who needed to use a car to get there.

Teenagers were poorly represented across all sites. One of the possible causes is that what urban teenagers frequently consider “outdoor” places to visit are in fact indoor spaces such as arcades and malls (Travlou, 2003). It may be a particular phenomenon of this age group: Læssøe and Iversen (2003), in an in-depth qualitative study of the importance of nature in every-day life, found that youth generates a discontinuity with the nature relations of childhood because a lot of energy is put into social relations during this phase. This may also reflect ethnicity patterns in this age group and associated attitudes to open spaces: in Leicester, for example African-Caribbean and Asian young people together comprise something in the region of 45 per cent of Leicestershire’s youth population (Sangster, 1999).

Adults At a few sites there were significant numbers of adults visiting by themselves. These were mainly the urban parks and locally accessible sites. Of those people visiting alone, there were only half as many women as men and some of these were with a dog. The greatest proportions of users were couples or pairs of adults. Perhaps this reflects the issue of vulnerability among women, so that they feel safer if accompanied by someone, or else the social value of sharing time with a companion in an attractive setting. The factor analysis identified ‘lifestyle’ qualities of feeling more energetic in places that may have ‘magical’ qualities and enjoying nature to relax and get away from stress, as key factors in people’s attitudes to green space. This may be linked with the ways in which people choose to experience nature with companions.

Children The sites where most children formed part of the visiting group (either with parents or other family members) were some of the country parks where there were special attractions or facilities such as wild animals and water fowl or play areas. This appears to confirm recent findings of a large survey in the UK, where grandparents who took their grandchildren to parks enjoyed traditional pastimes such as feeding the ducks and going to the swings (Lottery Heritage Fund, reported by BBC, 2003). According to the Countryside Agency *et al* survey (2003), around three quarters of the parks visited most often had a children’s play area.

The relatively low proportion of groups of adults with children (family groups) in our study, despite the survey times being on weekends, contrasts with the Countryside Agency survey mentioned above, where 86% of respondents said that, when the weather was good, the children would rather go to the park than stay inside and watch television and that nearly two thirds of grandparents took their grandchildren to the park regularly. 43% of adults who said that they had used a park in the past 12 months had taken children to a play area. Accompanying a child to a play area was the second most common activity undertaken in parks by adults, behind going for a walk (75%). Why then are there not more adults with children visiting the areas in this current study? In the focus groups, the importance of children and their access to green space was repeatedly raised, although quite often it was in the context of education or in the problems associated with allowing children out to play because of safety, neither of which is relevant for family groups. One of the reasons may be that the above-mentioned surveys from the literature reported activities by people interviewed at home; what people say they do may not accurately reflect what they do in practice. A great percentage of the respondents in the Countryside Agency survey (68%) said that the park that they most often visited was the one closest to where they lived; this was particularly so for women (72%). Our sample included woodlands, wild areas and nature reserves in comparatively remote locations, so they were sites without a large population of potential local visitors. The use of, and attitudes to, local areas by adults with children may merit further investigation.

Ethnic minorities predictably formed a small proportion of the visitors interviewed, compared to their proportion in the regional population. This seems to follow a common pattern in the UK, as there is a range of evidence from the literature that black and minority ethnic communities in Britain do not participate in visiting the countryside and other natural open spaces, and related activities, proportionate to their numbers in society. Furthermore, fears of racial and/or sexual attack, of being alone in an unfamiliar environment and worries regarding dangerous flora and fauna, all seem to contribute to a sense of unease in countryside and other natural open spaces (British Waterways, 2002, 1995; Slee, 2002; Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council, 2001; Groundwork Blackburn and Manchester Metropolitan University, 1999; Chesters, 1997, reviewed by Morris, 2003). Issues raised in the focus group discussions by people from ethnic minorities, such as being uncomfortable in natural areas, of finding them alien to the urban settings with which they are familiar and of not having enough information about green areas or initiatives confirm such findings. Focus group attendees raised points that might be more easily addressed about information provision, although there are wider issues about the levels of knowledge and interest in nature amongst certain ethnic groups due to cultural differences. Socio-economic factors should not be ruled out: the free time of black and minority ethnic groups is often devoted to 'intra-community' activities, family life, and 'personal development' activities such as further and higher education (Slee, 2002).

In this survey there were not enough visitors from ethnic minorities reliably to distinguish between different categories of black and ethnic minorities or to distinguish a pattern of preferred site types.

People with disabilities also formed a very small proportion of the people questioned compared with their proportion in the regional population; this confirms findings from the Countryside Agency *et al* survey (2003), in which the participation of people with disabilities was also low. The most common category of disability people identified was mobility problems. Few of the sites used in the survey presented serious obstacles to people with

mobility impairment, such as steps, steep slopes or rough terrain, and most provided the usual facilities such as car parking spaces and accessible toilets. Very few people with disabilities participated in the focus groups, so the data on why they tend not to visit is lacking. Apart from the forest sites being less used, there is no obvious pattern of site types either preferred or avoided by people with disabilities.

Socio-economic class. The occupation of visitors questioned showed that most people were either in full- or part-time work or were retired. There were very small numbers of unemployed people interviewed. This contrasts with a recent study of local woodland use in Scotland (Ward Thompson et al, 2003), which showed that unemployed people use woodlands to escape the social pressure of their situation. Our results may reflect the types of sites used in the survey, with a number being in locations needing private transport; it may also reflect the time of survey, since unemployed people need not restrict their visits to weekends unlike most people in full-time employment. In fact, not only can they avoid restricting their visits to weekends but they may also try to avoid constant reminders of a type of life from which they may feel excluded: Wrench, Hessian and Owen (1966) found that unemployed people of afro-Caribbean origin had difficulties mixing with friends who have jobs, this leading to increased social isolation. However, the results may more simply reflect a pattern of little use by unemployed people in the areas of our study.

The socio-economic classes of those in employment were derived from their occupations, using the new classification for the 2001 census. This showed that the most significant proportions were those of lower supervisory and technical occupations followed by lower managerial and professional occupations and intermediate occupations. Unfortunately, at the time of writing the report, the 2001 census data on occupational classes for the region was not yet available, so no comparisons were possible. The recent survey by the Countryside Agency (2003) showed that almost three-quarters of adults from the higher social group (AB) visited a park compared with only half of those from the lower social group (DE). Social class also seemed to have an effect on the type of park visited, as adults classified as AB were more likely to visit a country park, a formal garden and heath land than those classified as DE. Beer (1994, 1997) reporting a study by Burgess *et al*, also mentioned differences in the use of green spaces among social groups: those who lived in the environments most deficient in open space attached great importance to it as they wanted it both as a social and living space, and consequently, not very far from their doorstep. In our survey, it was for many visitors their first visit to the site. Of the rest, many people were regular visitors, going there one or more times per week, although there were also a number of much less frequent visitors. The most frequently visited sites were the locally accessible areas, such as the town parks, urban fringe woodlands and some country parks close to residential areas. The remoter sites were generally reserved for special visits and were not visited so often.

Childhood visits One of the interesting relationships observed in other studies is that between visits in childhood and visits now. A significant proportion of those questioned claimed to have been fairly frequent visitors to green areas as a child. This mirrors previous findings for woodland areas (Ward Thompson et al, 2002), in which 'nearly 63% of daily adults interviewed remembered visiting woodlands on a daily basis as children' (p.78). As is discussed later, this has resulted in significant differences in perceptions about green spaces.

6.1.2 Why do people visit green areas?

Four main categories of reasons for visiting green areas were cited. Of these, walking the dog was the most popular, followed by exercise and pleasure. A smaller proportion of respondents went to get fresh air. A lot of visits that did not fall into these categories were also made. There was a pattern of reasons for visiting, related to different sites. Dog walking was most popular at some of the country parks, the local areas and in the forest sites. These were often also associated with exercise, which may have been linked with the dog walking. The only sites where dog walking did not feature or were insignificant were Rutland Water (where dogs are not allowed), Derwent Reservoir and Gibraltar Point, the two latter where dogs are allowed only when on a lead. The importance of dog walking in relation to green spaces has been corroborated by other studies (Ward Thompson et al, 2002, Countryside Agency survey 2003), and cannot be underestimated. A study by Bauman et al. (2001) found that 41 per cent of dog owners walk, on average, 18 minutes per week longer than people without dogs and that if all dog owners regularly walked their dogs, the resulting boost in physical fitness across the community would save Australia's health care system about \$175 million every year. Yet, in our study, focus groups identified dog fouling as being a key form of anti-social behaviour, so the tensions found elsewhere between dog-owners and other green space users seemed to surface here too (Ward Thompson et al 2002). One of Tidy Britain Group's surveys found that 80% of people questioned were "greatly concerned" by dog mess, an indication that problems caused by dog fouling are all too common (Hampshire County Council, 2001) and some type of balance has to be achieved. This, however, is not the only problem associate with dogs; a study by Madge (1997) showed that the fear of coming into contact with animals, and in particular dangerous dogs, was much higher for African-Caribbean and Asian groups than white groups.

In the attitudinal section of the questionnaire, activities were examined in a different way. Getting away from stress was associated with relaxation and nature – seeing it, being in natural places and learning about it. This suggests that there is a role for natural areas for stress reduction, reflected in other studies where it has been shown that leisure activities in natural settings or exposure to natural features have important stress reduction or restoration effects (Kaplan, S. 1995, Parsons et al, 1998; Sheets and Manzer, 1991; Ulrich, 1981; Ulrich, 1984 Ulrich et al 1991). There can be associations between getting exercise and becoming de-stressed as well as just being in nature or even seeing it, although this is not reflected in our questionnaire data. In the focus groups people mentioned the belief that knowing that there is nature nearby can be enough to instil a sense of wellbeing.

6.1.3. Are people interested in nature conservation or environmental issues?

Of those questioned, 22% were involved with at least one conservation organisation, the most popular being the National Trust, RSPB and local wildlife trusts. These visitors were mostly those who were interviewed at the nature reserves such as Rutland Water, which had the highest level of involvement, followed by Derwent Reservoir and Gibraltar Point. The fewest visitors with conservation interest were those at the most local sites and some of the country parks. This is hardly surprising for several reasons: the nature reserves were mostly at some distance from population centres; the greater the interest of a place, the longer people may be willing to travel; and, thirdly, country parks vary greatly from one to another, having in common the purpose of providing easy access to the countryside to those living in towns. For this reason some may lack “great nature conservation interest” (Fujita Research industry

reports, 1996) Of course, membership of conservation or environmental organisations shows concern, but people may not be members yet still be interested in the environment.

It would have been interesting to compare the levels of membership of conservation groups in the sample with that of the general regional population, but figures for this are unavailable.

6.1.4 What do people think of as “nature”?

From the focus group research it was clear that the terms ‘nature’ and ‘green space’ are hard to define and that nature cannot be considered in isolation from the rest of human activity. Words used included references to natural features such as woodland, trees, flora and fauna. There were also more general references to countryside, rural areas or wildlife habitats. A second category of terms was associated with freedom, fresh air, serenity and tranquillity, all perceptual or experiential aspects as opposed to physical characteristics.

In the questionnaire survey people were asked to list several words associated with nature. These can also be classified in different ways, such as emotions/perceptions, physical properties, activities, ecology/conservation issues and other miscellaneous words. These reflect many of the features of the focus group discussions. The wildlife terms people used covered plants and animals and included specific named types ranging from large mammals to insects. Trees and birds were by far the most common references after the general term wildlife. This may reflect the wooded quality of many of the sites or the fact that some were nature reserves for birds.

Perceptions, physical qualities and activities. Perceptions and emotions were dominated by terms such as peaceful, quiet, relaxing, beautiful, natural and tranquil. Clearly these terms all relate to an important aspect of nature, where the setting provides positive emotional experiences such as calming or de-stressing people. This aspect is reinforced in the factor analysis clustering of terms related to relaxation, all of which attracted strong levels of agreement. The absence of negative words is also noteworthy.

The most frequent words associated with physical qualities were green, openness, countryside and woods, followed by grass, outdoors, space and water. These reinforce the descriptions of nature and green space and tend to exclude what might be perceived as urban green areas, unless the respondents saw these places as countryside.

Activities included getting fresh air, walking and exercise, suggesting that the opportunity to participate in such simple pastimes is a key opportunity provided by green spaces. This was borne out by the analysis of reasons why people visited the sites.

The terms under the classification of ecology or conservation were related to conserving or helping species and with a general reference to the environment. It is possible that these terms were mainly suggested by visitors to nature reserves.

Definitions of nature. At the scoping meeting with countryside professionals, one of the discussion items was the definition of nature. As might be expected, the definitions or the terms used were more sophisticated than those of the general public. The term wilderness was a significant one for the professionals, yet this was referred to only once by any respondents in the questionnaire and was not mentioned by the focus groups. The professionals expanded on aspects of wilderness, which were clearly of considerable

importance to them. The lack of reference to this by the wider public shows that this is an important area of discrepancy between the two groups. Some comments at the scoping meeting suggested that the public think that anywhere green is wild, whereas in fact they recognise that nature and man are linked and do not see wildness as a particular quality.

Focus group members and professionals recognised that all of life could be considered as nature. The professionals were able to articulate ideas such as a spectrum of nature from window boxes to the Peak District and to be able to classify nature in a number of ways.

All groups mentioned the sensory aspects as part of nature but the professionals focussed on the negative feelings such as fear much more than the other groups at the definitional stage. In the focus groups there was more discussion of this under the terms of use and abuse.

The professionals saw specific differences between nature and countryside. The public in both focus groups and site surveys seemed to consider them both as part of the same concept. This suggests that the professionals could be too concerned with definitions and miss the important point about all of these places having value. Of course, where the public fail to understand some aspects such as the role of dynamic processes or the actual differences in biodiversity values between different sites, then professionals have a role to educate, inform and take decisions about management. However, biodiversity values are not the same as social values and these seem to be gained from a much wider range of site types where such ecological definitions do not matter to the same degree.

Green space. The professionals did not spend time defining ‘green space’ as a term. In fact it was rather understood as a useful all-embracing word. However, this was not the case with the public who did not really understand it too well. In fact views differed amongst and between the focus groups. In some cases it was seen as land that the community had no control over, in others it was looked on as areas where people could meet and participate in activities around their residential areas. Recreation and green space seemed to be closely linked. In rural areas the term meant nothing. It seemed to be a term understood best as referring to green areas in urban settings. This confusion over the term or the rather narrow definition understood by the public could be problematic if professionals continue to use it as a general, all embracing term for areas ranging from bits of grass to nature reserves.

6.1.5 What are the social values associated with nature?

Understanding the social value of nature involved, firstly, trying to find out what the term “social value” means to people. To the focus groups it was easier to define what anti-social “values” were and these tended to focus on activities rather than site characteristics. To some extent, in discussing definitions of nature, some of the main values associated with it were defined, even if they tended to be implicit in the descriptions – these were the feelings of calmness, relaxation, de-stressing etc and the activities of exercise and walking. The negative aspects – rubbish tipping, problems with security and vandalism, litter, dog fouling and intimidating groups of people are all factors that tend to prevent people from attaining the social benefits of nature. These findings on attitudes were reinforced by the questionnaire survey results.

The issue of management and the presence of wardens or rangers also came up in the focus groups and was strongly identified as a positive aspect helping people to get the most out of a visit.

Physical attributes of sites and social value. In the section on attitudinal questions in the questionnaire, there was most agreement about the physical attributes of green spaces that people visit, for example naturalness, freedom from rubbish, the presence of information and signs and the feeling that sites were looked after. These findings reinforced the views expressed in focus groups. However, the most significant levels of agreement were with naturalness and freedom from rubbish. These general results, when analysed further show some interesting differences.

Women agreed less with these statements than men, perhaps reflecting a suggestion that women concentrate more on social factors than physical factors when making decisions. There were some differences among those who said that, as children, they visited sites like those sampled. The absence of rubbish seemed to be more important to those who only visited infrequently when children, while naturalness was slightly more important to those who used to visit on a daily basis as children. The question of visiting sites within walking distance showed the most significant differences, those who visited on a daily or weekly basis as children preferring to visit such sites and those who visited least as children tending not to visit such sites.

For those who agreed that they visited sites that appeared to be looked after by someone, the purpose of going to meet friends also rated quite highly, as did walking the dog, followed by fresh air and pleasure. This perhaps means that the quality of the setting is more important for some uses, especially social ones, than others, such as exercise.

Other physical attributes showed levels of agreement that differed according to the age of those questioned. For example, the presence of information matters more to older age groups, the presence of rubbish bothers the younger adults least (perhaps they are more immune to it) and they also show less interest in the presence of signs, although the group that agreed most strongly that they visited sites with signs was the next oldest group, the 25-34s.

Variations across site types. The exploration of key attributes by type of site resulted in some differences. Freedom from rubbish was most important in the “wild”, “country park” and “woodland” site types. The urban parks were where it mattered least. This may reflect the pragmatic fact that urban parks attract more litter than others and that people are used to this.

Respondents in town green spaces were people who tended to visit urban parks and local sites the most and woodlands least – showing strong associations with some site types and certain locations, despite the urban location of some woodlands (although not those sampled in our survey) in the East Midlands.

Finding out about a site is most important for visitors to local sites, woodlands and country parks, while the naturalness in appearance is least important to visitors to urban parks and local sites, perhaps because people recognise that these are more likely to be artificial in the first place.

Parks or green space being easy to get into is most important for visitors to nature reserves and urban parks and least the case for visitors to country parks. This may reflect that fact that people see nature reserves as places they are supposed to keep out of and urban parks as places where it is important for there to be good access in order to serve their purpose. Visitors may expect country parks to have good access and so rate this of low significance or,

conversely, may accept that country parks will be harder to access than more local or urban parks. The issue of walking distance showed that people expected local sites and urban parks to be within walking distance but not so the wild sites, nature reserves, woodlands or country parks.

Management. Those questioned expected all sites to be well looked after except visitors to the wild sites. This suggests a strong association with wildness and the lack of a managed appearance. Perhaps this means more that the places should not appear too well managed or manicured, rather than that they should be unmanaged; for example, if visitors want sites to be free from rubbish, they may have to be managed.

In the focus groups, management and the value of sites being well looked after was a key part of the discussion, with people concerned about rubbish, yet they also thought that some places were too organised and managed, especially countryside areas, which reinforces the questionnaire findings. The presence of managers, wardens or rangers as a visible sign of management was generally welcomed by focus group participants.

Positive and negative perceptions. In terms of perceptions, there was greatest agreement in the questionnaires with the statements that green spaces are important for local communities, for feeling peaceful and free and with having an affiliation with or closeness to nature. People also agreed to some extent that natural areas are becoming too commercialised. They disagreed most strongly with statements about feeling uncomfortable, vulnerable or that such sites are not relevant to their lifestyle. In detail, these perceptions varied quite considerably in relation to certain attributes of the sampled population.

Vulnerability was a greater concern amongst women than men, but feeling uncomfortable less so. This is to be expected and is reinforced by the statements made in the focus groups about crime, anti-social elements present in some green spaces, and so on. The professionals also recognise that this is the case. Given that the anti-social elements were generally perceived by focus group participants to be young people, the focus groups suggested two lines of approach to solve the problem – one being more visible management and control, the other more education. This sense of vulnerability among women reflects the findings of other research (Burgess 1995, Ward Thompson et al 2002). An international example of ways of dealing with this issue is the city of Montreal's Women's Safety Audit, which considers that it is vital not only to take into account the specifics of sexes but also the particulars of groups (elderly and disabled people, ethnic and sexual minorities) as well as involving men in their role of father, partner, son or potential victim (Michaud, 1993).

Childhood familiarity with nature. The perceptions of those who had childhood familiarity with green space are particularly interesting. Those who visited least often as children are most concerned that green spaces are becoming commercialised, although the frequent childhood visitors also agree but to a lesser extent. Those who visited frequently as children tend to go to places well known to them and ones which remind them of places they knew as children. This suggests that preferences for types of green space are affected by childhood memories, so that exposing children to natural places of good quality may lead to such places being preferred later on. A recent qualitative study carried out in Denmark confirms that a person's childhood experience of landscape/nature does have a particular and lasting significance; this, however is more of a yardstick if the person is still living in the same area, as this creates a profound relationship with the nature in question while a more mobile life

trajectory would result in a more multi-faceted relationship with nature (Læssøe & Iverson, 2003).

Those who thought of green spaces as magical places were also those who stated that they visited such places frequently as children, while those who did not strongly disagreed. This was a very clear-cut result, with implications for the way in which future generations see nature if children now are missing out on such experiences. Finding places magical represents a class of relationship to nature which is more than mere liking or familiarity with places.

Those who visited green spaces as children are also more likely to feel more energetic, least likely to be bored and associate visiting green space with their lifestyle more than those who visited infrequently as children. These findings further reinforce the importance to be placed on encouraging and facilitating children's visits to green spaces of all types.

Those who gave a strong level of agreement to certain purposes of visiting, such as walking the dog, gaining exercise and fresh air or going for pleasure, also associated green space with a sense of community ownership and issues of vulnerability, perhaps wanting to consider places they go to frequently as "their" place, especially if it is a local one (as those places visited for dog walking and exercise tend to be). This may be linked with the perceptions expressed in the focus groups of certain places being viewed as owned by others and access being controlled. The professionals raised the issue of some urban green spaces not appearing to be owned by anyone and therefore open to all kinds of abuse. Perhaps if the sense of community ownership can be reinforced, then usage will increase, abuse decrease and people will feel more comfortable using a site. However, the ways this might appear to exclude certain sections of society would need to be explored.

The same purposes for visiting were linked to a disagreement that people felt vulnerable. This suggests that the aspects of management and community ownership mentioned above apply here too.

There were some differences between age groups, so that older people tended to associate green spaces with feeling a sense of freedom or of affiliation or closeness with nature more than younger people. The younger and older groups said they tended to visit areas well known to them and both extremes also perceived green space as important for local communities. Spiritual values were strongest amongst the older people, who also felt more vulnerable and uncomfortable. These differences may reflect changing perceptions and values with age, or the changes that have occurred over the last few decades, such as in the lifestyle of younger people, being reflected in generational differences.

Perceptions related to site type. There are also differences in perceptions in terms of site type. Fears over commercialisation apply most to visitors to wild areas and country parks. Attitudes over an affiliation with nature varied only slightly across the range of site types, so that nature and natural areas or nature reserves do not stand out as appearing to provide more closeness to nature than any others. However, it is the natural areas and country parks that seem most likely to bore people. Nature reserves, woodlands and urban parks are least associated with boredom, and respondents from the same sites feel closer to nature and, to some extent, are least concerned about vandalism (or associating such sites with vandalism).

Feelings of association with community ownership are strongest for visitors to nature reserves, woodlands, urban parks and local sites and less so for visitors to natural areas

(mostly far away from where people live) and country parks (linked with local authority ownership). This seems to contradict what some focus group participants and professionals thought about the elitism of nature reserves. Perhaps this varies from place to place, depending on the character and management of the nature reserves and the attitudes presented through the information provided to visitors.

Nature reserves, urban parks and local sites are also more likely to be well known to the visitors and, although the level of agreement is not strong, it is visitors to nature reserves that are most likely to associate such spaces with spiritual values, while visitors to wild places and country parks are least likely to.

Nature reserves, woodlands and urban parks are the sites which visitors find most relevant to their lifestyle and most magical, as well as feeling more energetic in them.

These findings provide significant support for nature reserves, woodlands and urban parks as some of the most important site types for providing social value to visitors. Why is this? Perhaps it has to do with the more natural character of the nature reserves and woods, the fact that the sites surveyed were fairly easy to get to, and the lack of too much management compared with country parks. Urban parks are possibly valued because of their location, flexibility and artificial character.

Value of activities. Respondents' attitudes to activities on different sites were interesting. Overall, green spaces as places for relaxation, for children to learn about nature and for visiting to see wildlife had the highest levels of agreement. The greatest disagreement was associated with taking part in conservation activities, and to a lesser extent with taking part in community events. This suggests that individual or family activities are more important than other kinds of social or special interest group interaction. Conservation groups and countryside professionals may be disappointed to learn of the low level of interest in conservation activities. Clearly people like to visit sites and believe in some sort of community ownership but do not necessarily want to engage in the work themselves.

Women seem to find de-stressing and learning about nature more important than men, who disagree more about meeting people with similar interests or taking part in events.

There is only a small variation overall in the importance of relaxation to people according to frequency of childhood visit but those who visited frequently as children are more likely to go walking alone and less likely to disagree that they take part in community events. Those who visit to get exercise or to walk the dog are more likely to agree that green spaces are places to get away from stress. Dog walkers are more likely to agree that they use the trip to get exercise for themselves and are most comfortable walking by themselves – perhaps because the dog gives them protection – while those who visit to get fresh air are least likely to walk alone.

Those under 24 years of age are much less likely than any other age group to agree that they visit green space to learn about nature, although the next age group, 25-34 years, has a high level of agreement. Younger age groups are also less likely to agree that they visit to see wildlife or to de-stress. They also disagree the most about visiting to meet people with similar interests.

Activities by site type. Respondents' activities also showed variations according to site type. Visitors to nature reserves are most positive about such sites being for children learning about nature, followed by visitors to woodland and urban parks, despite many country parks having special facilities for such education. For visitors themselves learning about nature, wild sites score highest (both used in the survey have visitor centres), closely followed by country parks, woodlands and local sites, with urban parks scoring low. For watching wildlife, wild areas score more highly than all other sites (one wild site, Gibraltar Point, is a centre for bird watching), with urban parks again scoring the lowest. Perhaps surprisingly, visitors to country parks, woodlands and local parks scored learning about nature and viewing wildlife more positively than visitors to nature reserves. Visitors to woodlands and nature reserves scored stress reduction most highly, and woodlands and wild areas also scored highly on visiting for relaxation. Visiting for exercise is most positively associated with woodlands and local sites.

For walking alone and for participating in community events, wild areas are viewed most negatively, followed by country parks and woodlands. This last perhaps reflects the greatest sense of fear found for woodlands among users such as women. This was mentioned in the focus groups, referred to by the professionals and confirms the results of other studies (Burgess 1995, Ward Thompson et al 2002).

6.1.6 Factor Analysis

In the factor analysis, 29 of the 39 questions accounted for 61% of the results, clustered into 10 different factors.

Lifestyle. The first factor contains attitudes that can be described as "lifestyle" issues, where green spaces are associated with being relevant to one's lifestyle, with not feeling bored, feeling more energetic, finding places to be magical and not becoming too commercialised. This factor demonstrates the general social value of green space as an important or relevant element of people's everyday lives. It is borne out by the strong positive messages coming out of the focus groups.

Relax/nature. The second factor can be described as "relax/nature" and is an amalgam of the questions associated with naturalness, stress reduction, relaxation and seeing wildlife. This seems to imply that areas with a natural character are good for relaxing and de-stressing and that the presence of wildlife adds a significant value. This is good news for those managing nature reserves and places where people can see and learn about wildlife and demonstrates the importance of accessibility to such places.

Welcome. The third factor can be interpreted as being about how welcome people feel in green spaces. This factor is a combination of positive welcoming information coupled with attitudes to an absence of litter and other signs of neglect that put people off. This is also reflected in many of the focus group comments and reflects how important it is for managers to think about how to help their visitors gain a good experience. These factors are sometimes known as "hygiene factors" and it has been demonstrated that reducing the effect of negative factors, such as signs of neglect or visitors worrying about whether they are allowed entry, are necessary before they people can have a positive experience (Bell 1997).

Community/conservation. This is a significant factor for the small proportion of the sample who appears interested in such things in relation to visiting green space. This factor includes

taking part in community and conservation events and activities and meeting people with similar interests. This factor will be of interest to reserve managers, but it must be stressed that overall it is only a limited number of respondents who appear to take part in such activities.

Peace/freedom. This factor combines the questions relating to feeling free and at peace: two of the attitudes with which people agreed most strongly in relation to green space. It therefore reflects a significant social value for many people.

Looked after. Preferences for sites that are being looked after by someone and for the presence of rangers or wardens indicates that management is an important aspect for many people although, as was shown earlier, people also like to see nature that looks natural and not over-managed, so a balance has to be struck by managers. Once again, the visible signs of management have been found to be important in the other studies already cited and observation studies have shown that women were more likely to use areas where a warden was present due to the sense of uneasiness often experienced otherwise (Beer, 1994, 1997).

Local/walk. This factor combines responses about visiting urban green spaces within walking distance of home, and walking alone. It reinforces the importance of local places that can be visited regularly, although the people who walk alone tend to be male and/or accompanied by dogs.

Children learn about nature. This factor contains solely the attitudinal question about green spaces being places where children can learn about nature. It reflects the importance attached to children and the need to put them in touch with nature because of the modern way in which children are brought up and the lack of opportunities to interact with nature raised by the focus groups.

Childhood/community. This factor links the aspects of green spaces reminding people of where they visited as children with a sense of community ownership. This also has associations with the prevalence of such associations among those who visited green areas frequently as children. It reinforces further the comments about children and the need for them to be in contact with nature. It also raises the issue of ownership, or at least a sense of ownership, not necessarily legal ownership, of land. Studies show that when a community feels it has ownership, vandalism and other anti-social activities tend to be reduced. Given the importance attached to such negative activities by focus group members (see Chapter three) this is a subject worth developing further. It is a wider part of the current promotion of community woodlands and other similar initiatives involving community participation, building up community capital and so on. In the scoping meeting with professionals, some people considered that a sense of communal ownership could provide a license to unchecked abuse. The contrasting views of professionals and the wider public in different communities are also worth exploring further.

Fears. This last factor combines the feelings of discomfort and vulnerability which has been demonstrated to affect certain members of society, especially women and older people. Fear is another of the “hygiene factors” that prevents people obtaining as full or rewarding experience as they might. This issue, however, seems rather complex and may need to be studied further. According to findings by Burgess et al (1988) the types of landscape that were most valued (i.e. most nature-like) could also be those that provoked the most fear. Focus groups also expressed the fears parents have for their children, although many recognised that

the risks in practice were lower than they often seemed to be. Once again, this finding reflects that of other studies.

6.2 Discussion: significance of findings

The project proceeded well in terms of data collection and analysis, although it was not without its problems, some of which may have affected the final outcome. One problem was that of samples at the questionnaire survey stage. Some sites, due to weather or competing events, meant that sample sizes were low or the range of people visiting the site was abnormal. An example of this is the data collection at Hartsholme Country Park, near Lincoln, that was scheduled for a day that coincided with an important football match, so that a lot of people were not in Lincoln that day. However, the researchers do not believe that such issues, when taken across the sample as a whole, are significant, although they may affect the findings in relation to individual sites.

Owing to the difficulties in obtaining sufficient interest from members of the public to participate in the focus groups, it was not possible to find a sufficiently large sample of willing volunteers to represent non-users of green spaces for comparison with the main sample of users. This means that the social values uncovered, especially through the questionnaire research element, are biased towards those of green space users. To some extent this is balanced by the results of the focus groups and it is also possible to compare the profiles of questionnaire survey respondents to the structure of the wider population through use of the 2001 census data. This has only yielded limited results for comparison at the time of this report because not all the census data was available at the time of the research, but it offers further opportunities for analysis in future.

A literature review was not identified as part of the research brief. However, the research team has been reviewing literature in the field as part of the main work of the research centre and from it and from other research undertaken by the team has been able to make some comparisons to support the research conclusions.

What emerges from the research, despite the limitations expressed above, is a strong sense of the importance of green space to the population of the East Midlands Region. It is perceived by many people to form an intrinsic element of their lives and it may be of minor relevance how the green space is categorised, so long as it is accessible, looked after, welcoming and preferably close to where they live. In this the respondents are no different from anyone else. It is obvious that significant sectors of the population – black and ethnic minorities, disabled people in particular – are under-represented in terms of green space use. The data from this research does not allow us to understand why this is, although the small number of people from ethnic minorities attending the focus groups gave some indications of the issues.

The main social values of nature can be categorised as those connected with relaxation, de-stressing and being close to nature; the quality of nature seems to be important to get the full benefit, for example the presence of wildlife adds value. Many people feel a strong bond with nature and this seems to be stronger when they were frequent visitors as children. If they did visit as children, this also seems to give people more confidence, for example in walking alone.

There were interesting differences between attitudes of respondents at some of the site types in terms of how people viewed them. The country parks examples were not always viewed so

positively as the nature reserves, woodlands or urban parks. Considering the amount of investment that has gone into country parks this may be worrying. It is unclear why they appear to be less preferred by many people, even for educating children, for which they are usually well equipped. It may be the way they are presented, the lack of a sense of community ownership, the degree of management and control or the artificial landscape of some of them. Managers of nature reserves should feel positive about attitudes to their sites, as should the woodland managers, although fears were also expressed about venturing alone into woodlands. Urban park sites also came out well, being highly valued: both sampled areas are good examples of traditional parks, well looked after and well used, also sited in the centre of their respective towns.

The “wild” sites, Derwent Valley and Gibraltar Point, being the furthest away from centres of population, attracted a different type of visitor. Here, respondents had the most specialist interests and highest membership of conservation organisations.

6.3 Conclusions

In conclusion, what has been discovered about the social value of nature to the people of the East Midlands of England?

- 6.3.1 Many people visit all type of sites, regardless of age or sex. However, there are disproportionately low numbers of people from black and ethnic minorities and people with disabilities. While many people visit on their own, couples and families make up the majority of visitors, the latter especially at the country parks and other sites with special facilities and animals or birds. Women visitors are under-represented in comparison with the general population, and children formed a smaller proportion than might have been expected given the times of survey. Comparatively low numbers of unemployed people visit; those in employment are mainly in lower supervisory and technical occupations or lower managerial and professional occupations. Many retired people also visit green spaces.
- 6.3.2 The main reasons people visit green spaces are to walk the dog, to gain exercise, and for the pleasure of being in a park or close to nature. Dog walking is most popular at local sites and in woodlands, also at country parks, but less frequent at nature reserves. Reducing stress and relaxing are significant reasons for visiting green spaces and represent one of the main social values.
- 6.3.3 Many respondents were members of conservation organisations but do not necessarily take an active part in conservation activities.
- 6.3.4 People think of nature in quite a broad way. They find the term “green space” a difficult term. Nature includes physical characteristics, wildlife and also perceptions and emotions, especially peacefulness and other terms associated with the calming or de-stressing value of nature. Professionals have contrasting views of the distinction between “nature” and “country side”, for example, and they use the term “green space” more widely than the public understanding of the term.
- 6.3.5 When talking about “social values” people tended to focus on “anti-social uses”. There is a lot of evidence that sites need to be well managed (but not over managed),

welcoming, provide information and have a natural appearance if people are to obtain the best value from them.

- 6.3.6 Sites close to home are preferred, especially by those who used to visit frequently when children.
- 6.3.7 There are significant associations between the type and degree of use of green spaces by people now and how frequently they visited such sites when children. This suggests that if children are not being allowed or encouraged to visit natural areas or other parks by themselves, they are less likely to develop a habit that will continue into adulthood. Those who had visited a lot as children were more likely to find magical and other positive qualities in nature, and to develop a closer relationship with it as part of their lifestyle, than those who did not.
- 6.3.8 Accessibility and welcome were rated highly and this seems to go with a sense of community ownership of green space, when there is a sense that it belongs to the community as much as to the formal or legal owners.
- 6.3.9 The sense of feeling uncomfortable or vulnerable was not very widespread overall, although it was most significant among the female and older respondents.
- 6.3.10 The sites that attracted most positive responses to perceptions were the nature reserves, woodlands and urban parks. Local areas were important for some activities but country parks tended to score less highly. Responses in relation to nature reserves were very positive compared with most other sites. This is partly the value of their being good for children to learn about nature, but other values, such as being associated with spiritual qualities, getting free from stress and feeling energetic are also positively associated with nature reserves. Woodlands share many of these attributes. Wild areas and country parks have the most associations with being bored but also have some positive values associated with them.

6.4 Lessons for providers

The research has flagged up a number of areas which would be useful to planners:

- 6.4.1 How do the findings of this research affect the implementation of strategic environmental assessments, part of a recent EU directive due to be implemented?
- 6.4.2 The importance of different kinds of green space and of easy and welcoming access for all, including children, disabled people and people from ethnic minorities, needs to be taken into account in regeneration strategies, alongside other social and environmental needs.
- 6.4.3 Urban parks were highly rated in this study. Are there implications for the funding, regeneration and management of these, in particular?
- 6.4.4 The implications raised by the findings for regional environmental strategies need to be considered.

- 6.4.5 Country parks emerged from the research less favourably than some other areas and there are implications for the future of these, in light of the upcoming review of them by the Countryside Agency. Are there ways to enhance their social value?

6.5 Lessons for managers

There are many pointers to things that managers can do to encourage more people to visit green spaces and to ensure that, once there, the visit is a good one.

- 6.5.1 More and better information is needed, to tell people where they can go, what they can do and how they can get there, orientated at different groups, such as black and minority ethnic groups, disabled people, older people, socially disadvantaged people etc. This may need to be in different languages, presented in different ways and distributed differently in order to meet the needs of those not reached at present.
- 6.5.2 Information at sites is also important, possibly presented in new ways and aimed at different groups in what is clearly a fragmented, not a homogeneous population.
- 6.5.3 More activities and means of engaging children in green spaces should be considered; so that they develop a habit of visiting them (it is important, nonetheless, to understand why teenagers may not want to visit such sites). Working with parents and police/rangers etc to develop a safer environment so that children are allowed to go out by themselves would be very helpful.
- 6.5.4 Further development of educational programmes for children is necessary. This was seen by many people as vital yet also seemed not to be widely enough available. Using green areas near schools, which are easier to visit and not necessarily special parks, should be considered.
- 6.5.5 A sense of community ownership. People seem to value sites more when they also feel a sense of ownership, even where the community does not own an area in legal terms. Managers could help foster this sense of ownership through their outreach and communication activities with various social groups. This is especially valuable in relation to town parks, local sites and other spaces used regularly by large numbers of people.

6.6 Recommendations for further research

This project suggested several areas where further research could be undertaken. There were gaps in information which would have helped the analysis, and the research has identified aspects that it was not possible to include but which could help to flesh out some of the findings in future. The first list relates to background/contextual research most helpful for strategic purposes.

- 6.6.1 A baseline survey of current levels of use and non-use of different types of green spaces would be useful for several purposes: as a baseline against which to see how progress in meeting targets for use of green spaces is being achieved, for setting the results of this study in a broader context and for identifying which groups are not using various areas and why, so that outreach can be targeted.

- 6.6.2 This study should be repeated in five years' time to enable changes in the social values of nature to be identified, preferably in the context of improvements to management made as a result of these recommendations.
- 6.6.3 The questionnaire data includes postcode information, but it was not possible to use this in the analysis. In future, the data could be related to statistics, such as levels of deprivation that are available by postcode. Catchment maps of distribution of the visitors to different sites could also be generated, which would help managers in marketing and understanding site users.
- 6.6.4 Given the importance of locally accessible green space, research should be undertaken to relate the amounts and types of green space present in the region to different residential areas, to see how green space standards are being met. This could also be related to the postcode data of health and deprivation, so that increases in the areas of green space could be better targeted.
- 6.6.5 Research should be undertaken to capture the data on informal green areas such as "urban commons" and wasteland, and the levels of use made of these – data not visible in the current project. Focus groups might be used to gain some information, as well as observational techniques.
- 6.6.6 Links need to be made between economic and social regeneration, for example in the National Forest or Community Forest areas, the Nottinghamshire coalfield, etc., enabling green spaces to be considered as important elements in plans for these areas.

The second list of research needs focuses on specific issues most relevant to managers, while also relating to key strategic issues

- 6.6.7 Dogs and parks: how much do dogs improve the sense of security for those vulnerable and walking alone; how often do women and those over 65 use them as companions; how much they are perceived as helping in exercising more; and to what extent are they feared or rejected by minorities in Britain? Some of the plans implemented (fines, mostly) to curb fouling should also be evaluated for their effectiveness.
- 6.6.8 Vulnerable groups: the implementation of an audit kit similar to the one developed in Montreal should be studied, with a view to develop and pilot a similar approach in the UK.
- 6.6.9 Consideration of the effects of belonging to nature organizations in the appreciation of nature should be undertaken. Do minorities watch nature programs in TV? If so, is it only of exotic places? And, if so, how is the British countryside perceived in relation to those exotic places?

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Appendix one. Questionnaire site photos

Derbyshire



Chaddesden Wood Local
Nature Reserve, Derby
Credit: All photos by Simon
Bell, 2003



Cromford Canal



Leicestershire



Victoria Park, Leicester



Rutland Water



Nature Alive, Coalville.



Brocks Hill Country Park,
Leicester



Lincolnshire



Gibraltar Point
National Nature
Reserve



Bourne Woods, Bourne



Hartsholme Country Park,
Lincoln



Nottinghamshire



Bestwood Country Park





Major Oak, Sherwood Forest NNR





Kings Park, Retford



Northamptonshire



Salcey Forest



Brixworth Country Park,
Northampton



Barnwell Country Park,
Oundle



Derwent Reservoir



Appendix Two. Brief from English Nature

The social value of nature in the East Midlands

1. Background

Most regions have completed *Regional environmental economy studies* that attempt to quantify the contribution that the environment makes to the economic agenda and regional gdp. This has been necessary in order to influence the development of regional governance and the production of regional economic strategies.

The social agenda is equally important yet it has proved difficult to get a handle on how the environment contributes to people's social well-being and their quality of life. The aim of this study is to specify this contribution by selecting a number of natural and artificial greenspaces across the region and detailing the relationship that people have with them.

There are a number of other initiatives in the region that this study is relevant to and that should be borne in mind as the project is developed. If the outputs from this study can influence or will be useful to other initiatives then this will help to further demonstrate the social value of nature. Such initiatives include:

The social strategy in the region's *Integrated Regional Strategy* will include six policy areas: culture; crime and community safety; housing; public health; lifelong learning; and social inclusion. This study is relevant to most of these. The Regional Assembly's Social Inclusion Task Group has been suggested as an informal reference group for the study;

The *Regional Household Survey*, funded by EMDA, the Learning and Skills Council and the Regional Assembly, uses *Euroqual* indicators which measure people's sense of well-being, how good they feel. Health partners are hoping to link to this survey. The survey has gone out to tender, the questionnaire will be produced and the field work should be carried out in the autumn;

- € There are three *New Deal for Communities* areas in the East Midlands that might be useful places to locate sample sites. However some of the communities have been asked for their views so many times that they may best be avoided;
- € Neighbourhood Renewal has *National Floor Targets* covering health, education, crime, housing, and environment. The targets are minimum standards and measure the extent to which neighbourhoods perform against these. If gaps are found then action should be taken by Local Strategic Partnerships. Information on these is on the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit's page of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's web site.
- € The Government's *Quality of Life Indicators*.
- € The development of *Community Strategies* by Local Strategic Partnerships.

The East Midlands is considered a good location for this study as it is very varied with large rural areas but also the Leicester, Nottingham, Derby urban area. As with the *Regional*

Environmental Economy Studies the methodology adopted should have the ability to be applied elsewhere in the country.

2. Aim of the Project

This is to specify the contribution that the environment makes to people's social well-being by examining the use people make, and the feelings that they have towards, a selected number of artificial and natural greenspace sites in the East Midlands.

As this is a regional study the sites selected need to fall in each of the region's counties.

3. Methodology

English Nature nationally has investigated 'the value of nature' for economic, environmental and social purposes (English Nature 2002). This report identified 25 social functions of nature under four main headings: appreciation, knowledge, products from sustainable use, and ecosystem services. The current study is primarily concerned with appreciation but it also touches on knowledge and products from sustainable use. The English Nature report should be used as a framework for the study.

The above framework is believed to be consistent with the 'Quality of Life Capital' approach. Consultants may wish to develop a link with this approach in the work (Countryside Agency, et al, 2001).

English Nature's Project Officer will invite suggestions from the organisations helping steer the project, particularly BTCV and the Wildlife Trusts, as to suitable sites for the study. From this list the consultants, in agreement with the Project Officer, will select a number of artificial and natural greenspace sites across the region, covering both rural and urban situations. Artificial greenspaces are formal parks and gardens with short mown grass and flowerbeds; natural greenspace has either developed naturally from a former use, or comprises semi-natural habitats such as meadows, scrub and woodland.

The consultant will then carry out structured interviews with local people at each site to ascertain the value they put on such greenspace under different headings such as exercise, relaxation, tranquillity, landscape, local distinctiveness/sense of place, community involvement, meeting neighbours, experience of wildlife, opportunities to explore specific interest, etc. There are also issues that should be explored such as ethnicity, how easily people feel that they can access greenspace, disability/longstanding illness, whether people feel safe and fear of crime, the presence of wardens or people in authority and the degree of management being undertaken.

All of the topic headings could be quantified such as type of greenspace, type of settlement, social status of interviewee, age of interviewee, category of activity, etc. This approach should allow lessons to be drawn such as the effect of the type and size of greenspace, its proximity to interviewees, differences due to their social status and age, etc on its use and value for local people. The emphasis should be on actual benefits now, although potential benefits in the future should be noted and summarised in the final report. Any feedback with implications for the future management or use of a site should also be noted and summarised in the final report.

This approach is objective and structured, on its own it might not succeed in drawing out the values and perceptions of local people. To overcome these problems a focus group event should be held at each site. Consideration should be given to including one community in the study that does not have access to artificial or natural greenspace.

The final report should draw out general conclusions from the study for both artificial and natural greenspace and include tables summarising the results for the different aspects of greenspace investigated. The report needs to summarise clearly the contribution that greenspace makes to people's social well-being.

The consultants invited to tender are asked to make suggestions as to how this methodology can be improved, in order to meet the study's overall aim.

To summarise:

- € Use frameworks suggested above ('Value of Nature' and/or 'Quality of Life Capital');
- € Select sites in agreement with the Project Officer and steering group;
- € Carry out structured interviews at the selected sites;
- € Carry out a focus group event at each site;
- € Produce final report which will include summaries of the results for the different aspects of greenspace investigated, general conclusions for artificial and natural greenspace and a summary of the contribution greenspace makes to people's social well-being.

4. Target Audience

The target audience for the study is the Regional Assembly and all the partners that it is working with to develop social strategies for the region within its *Integrated Regional Strategy*. The study will also be relevant to other regional policy makers and funders, including Strategic Sub-regional Partnerships.

5. Outcomes

The main outcome sought from the report is to raise awareness in the target audience of the contribution that greenspace can make to people's social well-being, and the vital link between the quality of life and the environment. The study may encourage local authorities to establish or retain greenspace and to include reference to such matters in Community Strategies. The study could also contribute to English Nature's work on encouraging greenspace standards to be developed in the region. Consequently the consultant would be expected to present the report's findings to the Regional Assembly Task Group.

6. Project Management

English Nature will nominate a Project Officer to act as the Project Manager and principle contact. A small steering group of key regional organisations will work with English Nature to provide advice on the development of the project. It is envisaged that an initial meeting with the steering group will be held to discuss and agree the final approach and details of the project such as data collection. Further meetings may be required to discuss the initial draft report, and the content of the final report.

7. Costs

Tenders should include a cost for surveying a typical site so that it is easier to assess the number of sites that the study can cover.

8. Outputs

A final report in A4 report will be required containing all the information in a format which can be photocopied. Six copies of the A4 report, plus a copy on disc in Word and an unbound top copy should be produced. The report should contain an executive summary (two pages maximum).

9. Time scales

The initial interview work can be carried out over the autumn and spring, with an initial draft report summarising findings required by 1 March 2003. It may be that the focus group events should be held after the completion of the interviews in order to get better value and involvement in these events. This can be agreed through discussion with the project officer. The analysis of the focus group events and production of the final report incorporating feedback from the steering group would then follow. The final report would be due by 2 June 2003.

10. Payment

An initial payment will be made against the delivery of the draft **report and invoice no later than 1 March**. The amount will be dependant upon the amount of fieldwork completed by this time up to a maximum of 75%. Final payment will be delivery of the final report.

11. English Nature and other contacts

The Project Officers will be Rick Keymer and Ian Paterson from the Eastern Area Team, who will be advised by a regional steering group. Cathy Jones, Social Policy Officer for the East Midlands Regional Assembly, will be the lead link to the Assembly.

R J KEYMER

17 October 2002

S:\Managing & Modernising\finance-procurement\external liaison\annexa\annexa02/03

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COUNTRYSIDE AGENCY, ENGLISH HERITAGE, ENGLISH NATURE & ENVIRONMENT AGENCY, 2001. *Quality of life capital. Managing environmental, social and economic benefits*. Overview Report.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION. 2001. *The value of parks and open spaces. Social inclusion and community regeneration*.

NATURE CONSERVANCY COUNCIL, 1988, 1989. People and Nature in cities. *Urban Wildlife Now*, Vol 1,2 & 3.

PPG 17 and the accompanying good practice guide.




SHIRLEY, P.& GORDON, C., 2002. *All things to all people – parks and semi-natural open spaces in 21st century Britain*. Discussion paper produced on behalf of the Urban Forum of the UK Man and the Biosphere Committee.

Appendix three: Sources for information for focus groups

Active Sports (<http://www.activesports.org>)
British Towns and Villages Network (<http://www.british-towns.net/>)
City of Lincoln Council (<http://www.lincoln.gov.uk>)
Council for the Preservation of Rural England (Local groups: East Midlands)
(<http://www.cpre.org.uk/contact/east-midlands.htm>)
Corby Borough Council (<http://www.corby.gov.uk>)
Countryside Agency Vital Villages (<http://www.countryside.gov.uk/vitalvillages/>)
Derby City Council (<http://www.derby.gov.uk>)
East Midlands Development Agency (<http://www.emda.org.uk>)
Gay Outdoor Club Local Groups (<http://www.goc.bi.org/Groups.htm>)
Infolinx: Community Information Network from Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland
(<http://www.infolinx.org>)
Kettering Borough Council (<http://www.kettering.gov.uk/>)
Leicester District Council (<http://www.leicester.gov.uk>)
Leicestershire County Council (<http://www.leicestershire.gov.uk>)
Leicestershire Villages.com (<http://www.leicestershirevillages.com>)
Lincolnshire County Council
(<http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/lccconnect/homepage/home.htm>)
Mansfield District Council (<http://www.mansfield.gov.uk>)
Matlock Town Council (<http://www.matlock.gov.uk>)
Northampton Borough Council (<http://www.northampton.gov.uk>)
Nottingham City Council Online (<http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk>)
Nottingham City Libraries (<http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/services.asp?ServiceID=101>)
Nottinghamshire County Council (<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk>)
Nottinghamshire Rural Community Council (<http://www.nottsrrcc.org.uk>)
Notts Youth (<http://www.nottsyouth.co.uk>)
RADAR (<http://www.radar.org.uk>)
Rutland County Council (<http://www.rutnet.co.uk/rcc/>)
Rutland Online (<http://www.rutnet.co.uk>)
Skegness Town Council (<http://www.skegness.gov.uk>)
The Civic Trust (<http://www.civictrust.org.uk/csocs/regsocs.shtml>)
The Lincolnshire Site.com (<http://www.thelincolnshiresite.com>)
Towns on the Web.com (<http://www.townsontheweb/ketteringtown/corbytown/main.htm>)
UK Villages Online (<http://www.rural.co.uk/>)
Warsop Web (<http://www.warsop.web.btinternet.co.uk/>)
Yell.com (<http://search.yell.com/search/DoSearch>)

East Midlands Observatory (<http://www.eastmidlandsobservatory.org.uk>)
National Statistics Online (<http://www.statistics.gov.uk>)
NOMIS (<http://www.nomisweb.co.uk>)

Appendix four - Groups contacted regarding the focus group discussions

	Represented within a focus group
	Interested in participating but unable to attend
	Not interested/not considered applicable
D	Disbanded/no longer in operation

Beanfield Neighbourhood Centre (D)	 National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardens
Northamptonshire CVS	Sure Start
Northamptonshire ACRE	Woodnewton Play Centre
Corby Chess Club	Guides Association: Anglia Region
Rockingham Forest Trust	Corby Youth Centre
Mums and Tots (Stanion)	English Nature East Midlands Team
Guides Association	Corby Village Hall
Corby and District Bridge Club	Council for the Preservation of Rural England
 Rockingham Forest Trust	Gay Outdoor Club
Corby and District Model Boat Club	MENCAP, North East Lincs (D)
Corby Community College	Corby Women's Centre
Corby and District Model Railway Society	Lincolnshire North FWI
 Market Harborough WWF Supporters' Group	Council for the Preservation of Rural England
Corby Milap Group	Lincolnshire Assoc of People with Disabilities
Our Lady and Pope John Catholic School	Corby Borough Council
 Northants Council for Disabled People	Louth and District Volunteer Bureau
The Kingswood School	Market Harborough Penn Lloyd Library
Oundle and District Dog Training Society	 Lincolnshire South FWI
Lodge Park Technology College	Oundle Library
 North Northants Badgers Group	Children's Links
Millennium Volunteer Project	Corby Borough Council
Corby and District Aquarist Society	East Lincolnshire Ramblers
Cadet Centre	Northamptonshire Pocket Parks
Corby and District Dog Training Club	Lincs Quest
Connaughty Centre	Guide Association
Woodland Trust (Grantham)	Kirton Lindsey Women's Institute
Northamptonshire FWI	Corby Photographic Club
Guides Association Midlands Region	 Guides, Weelsby District
Mums and Tots (Stanion)	Camping and Caravanning Club:
Council for the Protection of Rural England	Northamptonshire D.A
 Corby Volunteer Bureau	
Sure Start	

Lincolnshire Trust for Nature Conservation
Rotary Club of Corby
Louth & District Disabled Archery Club
Balls Up Juggling Club
Yarborough Residents Group
Corby St Andrew Society
**Council for the Preservation of Rural
England (E. Lincs.)**
Social Club for the Blind
Ludford Women's Institute
MIND Corby
Kirton Youth Centre
Corby Floral Art Society
Burgh-le-Marsh Library
Corby Irish Centre
Spilsby Library
Oundle Evergreen Club
Misc.
Kettering Civic Society
Connexions (East Lincs)
Disabled Drivers Motor Club
Louth Civic Trust
1st Corby Scout Group
Spilsby-Franklin Hall
Corby Round Table
Gibraltar Point Nature Reserve
Royal British Legion: Corby Branch
Horncastle Library
Northamptonshire CVS
Kingsway Community Project
Corby Chess Club
Robin Hood Scout Campsite
Mums and Tots (Stanion)
North East Derbyshire Rural Transport
Partnership
Corby and District Bridge Club
Chesterfield Volunteer Bureau
Corby and District Model Boat Club
Mansfield Community Development Project
Corby and District Model Railway Society
Shirebrook Staff Sports & Social Club
Corby Milap Group
West End Social Club
Northants Council for Disabled People

Blidworth Colliery Welfare Youth Club
Oundle and District Dog Training Society
Polish Ex-Servicemens Club
North Northants Badgers Group
Acorn Initiative
Corby and District Aquarist Society
Westfield Folkhouse Youth Centre
Corby and District Dog Training Club
Mansfield Woodhouse Community
Development Group
Woodland Trust (Grantham)
Oaklands Community Centre
Guides Association Midlands Region
Blues Unemployed Group
Council for the Protection of Rural England
Warsop Library
Sure Start
Misc. Contact
Sure Start
Blues Unemployed Group (D)
Guides Association: Anglia Region
Old Mansfield Woodhouse Society
English Nature East Midlands Team
Sikh Youth Group
Council for the Preservation of Rural
England
Rainworth Library
MENCAP, North East Lincs (D)
County Contact
Lincolnshire North FWI
Park Road Resource Centre
Lincolnshire Assoc of People with
Disabilities
The Woodhouse Road Family Life Centre
Louth and District Volunteer Bureau
Lollipops
Lincolnshire South FWI
Whaley Thorns & Langwith Community
Centre
Children's Links
Youth Service Disability Support Team
East Lincolnshire Ramblers
Groundwork Mansfield
Lincs Quest

Ladybrook Community Centre
Kirton Lindsey Women's Institute
Hard to Reach Group Project
Guides, Weelsby District
Welbeck Colliery Youth Club
Lincolnshire Trust for Nature Conservation
Mansfield Youth Link
Louth & District Disabled Archery Club
Shirebrook Library
Yarborough Residents Group
Mansfield Volunteer Bureau
Council for the Preservation of Rural
England (E. Lincs.)
Mansfield Woodhouse Library
Ludford Women's Institute
Forest Town Library
Kirton Youth Centre
Mansfield Library
Burgh-le-Marsh Library
Mansfield CVS
Spilsby Library
Blidworth Community Centre
Misc.
Derbyshire FWI
Connexions (East Lincs)
Derbyshire and Peak Park Recreation
Forum
Louth Civic Trust
Age Concern Derbyshire
Spilsby-Franklin Hall
Matlock Cricket Club
Gibraltar Point Nature Reserve
BTCV
Horncastle Library
British Orienteering Federation
Lincolnshire South Girl Guiding
Matlock Cycling Club
Skegness Library
Derwent Mountaineering Club
Misc
Elton Ski Club (D)
Retired Vicar of Spilsby
Matlock Library
Retired Vicar of Spilsby

Old Fogey's Cycling Club
Voice East Midlands
Wild Thyme Community Garden
British Butterfly Conservation Society East
Mid.
Darley Dale Tennis Club
Gay Outdoor Club
Matlock Park Bowls Club
Engage East Midlands
Nottinghamshire Coalition of Disabled
People
Ramblers Assoc, Leicester and District
Group
Gujarat Samaj, Nottingham
Lansdowne Neighbourhood Centre,
Aylestone
(BEN) Khalsa Wood, Nottingham
Abbey Park Leisure Group Over 50's,
Abbey Lane
Muslim Womens' Organisation
Leicester Civic Society
Muslim Girls Group
Ajani Womens and Girls Centre Ltd,
Highfields
Nottingham Black Initiative
Activate After School Club, Abbey Lane
Garden Street Family Centre
Age Concern Leicester, City Centre
Shiefton Youth Group
BTCV Leicester
Nottinghamshire Royal Society for the
Blind
Abbey Parents and Toddlers Group,
Belgrave
Bennerley Marsh Wildlife Group
Leicestershire & Rutland FWI
Nottingham Over 60s Widows Club
East Midlands Initiative Trust (EMIT)
Nottingham Council for Voluntary Service
English Fed. of Disability Sport (L'boro
Uni)
Attenborough And Chilwell Women's Club
Leicestershire Centre for Integrated Living
Bestwood Park Ladies Club

Age Concern Walking Group, Wigston
Magna

RSPB Nottingham

Highfields Library

Nottinghamshire Birdwatchers

English Federation of Disability Sport

Highbank Over 60s Club

Leicester Forest East WI, Braunstone

Pakistani Kashmiri Community Association
(PKCA)

Quality Protects? Health Action Zone

East Midlands Black Minority Ethnic
Forum

English Federation of Disability Sport

Engage East Midlands

Check This Club (Senior)., Belgrave

Netherfield Wildlife Group

Kingsway Disabled Group, Braunstone

Long Eaton Natural History Society

Club for Young People, New Parks

Greenwood Community Forest

Able Bodied and Visually Impaired Club,
Barwell

Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust

Leicester Walking Club, North Evington

Council for the Preservation of Rural
England (Notts)

Leicester African Caribbean Centre,
Highfields

East Markham Community Playing Field
Association

Old People's Society, Highfields

Nottinghamshire Rural Community Council

Leicester Central Lending Library

Saffron Women's Group, Saffron Lane

Shama Women's Centre, Highfields

Bangladesh Youth and Cultural Shomiti

Council for the Protection of Rural England
(CPRE)

Leicester Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Centre

Young Peoples Project Youth Club

Winstanley Girls Club, Braunstone

West Indian Senior Citizens Project

Victoria Working Mens Club and Institute

Social Sisters, Highfields

Leicester Chinese Community Centre, City
Centre

St Saviours Senior Youth Club, Highfields

African Caribbean Centre

Forest Town Youth Forum

The Mill Youth Club

Youth Forum Project

Matlock Canoe Club & Canoe Polo Club

Hurst Farm Social Club

Matlock Town Council

Matlock Camera Club

Bakewell Library

Ashbourne Library

Ripley Library

Wirksworth Library

Matlock Volunteer Bureau

Matlock Access Group

Amber Valley Access Group

Groundwork Erewash Valley

Derbyshire Coalition for Disabled People

Voluntary Action Bolsover

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust

Derbyshire Centre for Integrated Living

Matlock Angling Club

Derwent Bowman Archery Club

Matlock Athletics Club

Lunch Club for Over-50s

Matlock Bath Bowling Club

Nottingham Mencap

National Council of Women

Nottingham Green Partnership

Lound Bird Club

Nottinghamshire Fungi Group

Rushcliffe Barn Owl Project

Nottingham University

Age Concern Nottingham

Bestwood Country Park

Queensberry Youth Club

Nottingham Anglers Association

Nottingham University Estates Team

Chinese Community

Women's Environmental Network (WEN)

Young Parents Group

EKTA Youth Club

Falcon Youth Club
Carlton Hill Play group
Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme
Bestwood Youth Project
Scout Association 1st Redhill Scout &
Guide Group
RADAR
Groundwork Nottingham
Nottingham Lesbian Centre
Chingford Senior Citizen Club
Asian Women's Project
Afro-Caribbean Community Centre

Afro-Caribbean and Asian Forum
Choice (Nottingham)
MSc. Environmental Management,
Nottingham Uni
Lesser Able Bodied Sector
Notts Wildlife Trust
Choice (Nottingham)
MSc. Environmental Management,
Nottingham University
Lesser Able Bodied Sector
Notts Wildlife Trust

Appendix five. The focus group schedule (semi-structured)

General introduction

- € Introduction to the project and the primary concerns of OPENspace.
- € Introduction to the focus group research and how the information will be used.
- € Ask for permission to record the discussion for later transcription (individual contribution remains anonymous).
- € Opportunity for participants to ask questions.

Themes

1. What is the definition of 'nature' in the context of the East Midlands?

- What does the word 'nature' mean to you, what does it include?
- What makes it a natural area for you?
- Can domesticated animals (sheep, cows, dogs) be included in the definition?
- What does the word 'green space' mean to you (do they make a distinction)?
- Is there a scale imposed on their definitions e.g. window boxes / moors?
- Do they describe sensual experience?
- Do they see a distinction between nature in the Peak District and that in Nottinghamshire?
- Do they have any negative views of nature? (smelly, untidy, frightening, a nuisance - pigeons - different times of day)
- Is nature the same thing as countryside?
- Who owns nature?

2. What do people understand as social use of nature areas (as opposed to other types of use)?

- Is it important to be able to go to a natural area?
- Does social use equal social benefits?
- What sorts of activities are labelled as 'anti-social'? (fly-tipping, motorbikes, dogs, protests)
- Do they feel any sort of spiritual regeneration in the outdoors/nature?
- Is the natural environment a place they feel they can go (legally or illegally)?
- How can nature bring together like-minded groups of individuals?
- How do they perceive other countryside users?
- Would you say that who owns an area is important?

3. What is the role of nature for social well-being and inclusion?

- How easy is it for them to get to natural areas?
- If they don't go very much, why is that?
- Are others from different backgrounds/circumstances aware of problems encountered by others?
- Do they benefit from nearby nature, knowledge it is there?
- Do you think that it is important to be able to visit a nature reserve?
- Is it possible to experience nature if you don't actually visit a park or somewhere green?

What benefits do you think we get as a society from having nature areas?
Have they participated in BTCV activity days, or similar - do they know about them?
Have the younger people encountered nature at school?
Could you name a few places that you particularly like to visit?

Appendix six. Suggestions for sites for the questionnaire

County	Site/Project/Group	Contact	Grid reference	Comments
Nottinghamshire	Moor Pond Wood Project – Papplewick Parish Council	Darren York 01159 313 316		
Nottinghamshire	Friends of Colliery Wood	Darren York 01159 313 316		
Nottinghamshire	Friends of Rushcliffe Country Park	Darren York 01159 313 316	SK550300	
Derbyshire	Stoney Wood – Wirksworth Millenium Woodland	Allan Leather 01629 825 317		
Derbyshire	Chaddesden Wood and West Park Meadows LNR – Derby City Council	Allan Leather 01629 825 317	SK384390	
Northamptonshire	Bradlaugh Fields	Kay Dawson – 01604 643653		NE Kettering road
Northamptonshire	Bradlaugh Barn Association – Laurice Percival	Kay Dawson – 01604 643653		
Leicester-shire	Battrum Turn, Ellistown	Lucy Ashworth 01283 229096		
Leicestershire	Shepherds Close, Ibstock	Lucy Ashworth 01283 229096		
Lincolnshire	Lollycocks LNR	Pete Morrell 01529 414 155 ext 476	TF073459	
Nottinghamshire	Bestwood Country Park, Nottingham	Jane.Beech@ countryside.gov.uk		a very well used, urban fringe site - also where Nottingham's Sikh community has been working with rangers to maintain Khalsa Wood - improving access and celebrating the natural heritage
Nottinghamshire	Atten-borough	Jane.Beech@ countryside.gov.uk	SK525347	a very well used nature reserve, with recent access improvements including access for all - encouraging disabled use etc
East Mids Region	Millennium Greens	Jane.Beech@ countryside.gov.uk		there are 19 Millennium Greens in the East Midlands - ranging from inner city to rural village sites - I can supply more details if required - although we don't have any information on how well they are used.
Northamptonshire	Badby Woods, near Daventry	Tilly Tilbrook 01604 237478	SP565582	
Northamptonshire	Borough Hill Country Park	Tilly Tilbrook 01604 237478	SP588623	
Northamptonshire	Wakerley Woods	Tilly Tilbrook 01604 237478	SP959982	Run by the Forestry Commission
Northamptonshire	Wicksteed Park, Kettering	Tilly Tilbrook 01604 237478	SP900750	

County	Site/Project/Group	Contact	Grid reference	Comments
Northamptonshire	Harlestone Firs	Tilly Tilbrook 01604 237478	SP715639	
Northamptonshire	Salcey Forest	Tilly Tilbrook 01604 237478	SP809508	
Northamptonshire	Grand Union Canal and Oxford Canal Towpaths	Tilly Tilbrook 01604 237478		
Northamptonshire	Abington and Becketts Park	Tilly Tilbrook 01604 237478		Municipal Parks In Northampton
Northamptonshire	Country House Grounds – Cotton Manor, Castle Ashby, Cottesbrooke Hall, Lyveden New Bield	Tilly Tilbrook 01604 237478		
Northamptonshire	Kingsthorpe Mill	Tilly Tilbrook 01604 237478	SP746628	
Northamptonshire	Thorntons Park	Tilly Tilbrook 01604 237478		
Northamptonshire	Barnwell Country Park, near Oundle	Tilly Tilbrook 01604 237478		Approx 200K visitors per yr
Northamptonshire	Fermyn Woods Country Park near Corby	Tilly Tilbrook 01604 237478		Approx 100K visitors per year
Northamptonshire	Sywell Country Park near Wellingborough	Tilly Tilbrook 01604 237478		Approx 240K visitors per year
Northamptonshire	Irchester Country Park, near Wellingborough	Tilly Tilbrook 01604 237478		Approx 300K visitors per year
Northamptonshire	Brixworth Country Park near Northampton	Tilly Tilbrook 01604 237478		400K visitors per year
Northamptonshire	Summer Leys LNR	Tilly Tilbrook 01604 237478	SP885635	
Northamptonshire	Pocket Parks	Sue Paice (spaice@northamptonshire.gov.uk)		Approx 80 in no. ranging from estates, to hospital grounds to rural areas.
Nottinghamshire	Bulwell Hall Meadows LNR	Jenni French at Nottingham City Council (0115 915 2760) for more details.	SK534469	Owned by City Council, now LNR, in quite a deprived area of the City. Well used by a variety of people, from fishing people to dog walkers to youngsters playing football.
Nottinghamshire	Clifton Grove / Clifton Woods / Holme Pit	Jenni French at Nottingham City Council (0115 915 2760) for more details.		Owned by City Council, now LNR, in quite a deprived area of the City. Well used by a variety of people, from fishing people to dog walkers
Nottinghamshire	Bestwood Country Park.	Bob Moody on 0115 9273674	SK550450	Owned by Notts County Council. Very well used, in urban area of some deprivation.

County	Site/Project/Group	Contact	Grid reference	Comments
Nottinghamshire	Kings Park, Retford -	Richard Mervil on (01909 533533)		Owned by Bassetlaw District Council and managed by Friends of Kings Park committee. More of a traditional park with formal gardens and playground as well as more open areas. Right in town centre, so well used.
Leicestershire	Brocks Hill Country Park	Margaret Smith (manager) 01162 714514	SK619997	New Country Park on Green Wedge Land between Oadby and Wigston. Exceeded target visitor numbers.
Lincolnshire	Hartsholme Country Park	Sara Bright, The Visitors Centre, Hartsholme Country Park, Skellingthorpe Road 01522 873577	SK950700	
Lincolnshire	West Common	Steve Bird (contracts and Partnerships Manager for Lincoln CC) 01522 873421		Common Land
Northamptonshire	Friends of the Upper Nene (Upper Nene Valley)	Janet Jackson, University College Northampton, Broughton Green Road, Northampton NN2 7AL (Janet.Jackson@Northampton.ac.uk)		Community led floodplain project to west of Northampton
Northamptonshire	Friends of the Lakes	Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust		Centred around Billing, Northampton
Leicestershire	Watermead Country Park		SK600100	Owned by Leicestershire County Council and Leicester City Council
Leicestershire	Rutland Water SPA		SK907082	Owned by Leicester Rutland Wildlife Trust
Leicester-shire	Newfield Colliery			Managed by volunteers from Friends of Moira Furnace. NW Leicestershire.
Leicestershire	Bradgate Park SSSI		SK532107	Huge no. visitors – many from Leicester
Leicestershire	Snibston Grange LNR		SK416138	Owned and managed by Leics CC. Strong usage by anglers
Leicestershire	Nature Alive, Coalville			Small Area owned and Managed by North West Leicestershire District Council
Leicestershire	Beacon Hill Country Park (SSSI)		SK500150	Owned and Managed by Leicestershire County Council
Leicestershire	Outwoods (Part of SSSI)		SK515164	Owned and Managed by Chamwood Borough Council
Leicestershire	Burbage Common (part of SSSI)		SP450941	Owned and managed by Hinckley and Bosworth District Council
Leicestershire	Melton Country Park			Owned and managed by Melton District Council
Nottinghamshire	Clumber Park (SSSI)		SK623740	
Nottingham-shire	Newstead Abbey		SK541538	

County	Site/Project/Group	Contact	Grid reference	Comments
Nottingham-shire	Rufford Country Park		SK650650	
Nottinghamshire	Sherwood Forest NNR		SK616679	
Nottinghamshire	Kings Mill Reservoir			Sutton in Ashfield
Nottinghamshire	Newark Castle Grounds		SK792539	
Nottinghamshire	Grantham Canal			Notts to Grantham
Nottinghamshire	Cotgrave Colliery site – Country Park		SK651366	
Nottinghamshire	Attenborough Nature Reserve		SK524344	
Leicestershire	Swithalnd Woods Nature Reserve		SK539122	Chamwood
Leicestershire	Scal ford Country Park		SK749231	
Lincolnshire	Gibraltar Point		TF564584	
Lincolnshire	Belton House		SK931390	
Derbyshire	Arborehum			Derby
Derbyshire	Chatsworth House & Park		SK261699	
Derbyshire	Haddon Hall		SK237663	
Derbyshire	Heights of Abraham		SK288585	Matlock Bath, Derbyshire
Derbyshire	Foggatt Edge			Peak District National Park
Derbyshire	Lady Bower Reservoir		SK187862	
Derbyshire	Laithkill Dale SSSI		SK185657	

Appendix seven. The main questionnaire

The next part of the questionnaire contains statements about nature and green spaces such as this site. Please can you tell me if you agree or disagree? (Show scale on sheet)

I visit green spaces	that have information about nature		I visit green space	to get away from the stresses of daily life
	that are free from rubbish			that are natural in appearance
	that are within towns and cities			to relax
	that are easy to find out about			to see wildlife
	where signs help me to find the green space			to learn about nature
When in green spaces	I feel uncomfortable		I associate green space	with adventure
	I feel peaceful			with vandalism
	I feel free			with feeling spiritual
	I feel vulnerable			with feeling close to nature
	I feel an affiliation with nature			with boredom
	I feel more energetic			with a sense of community ownership
I think green spaces	are not relevant to my lifestyle		I visit green spaces	to walk by myself
	can be magical places			for exercise
	can be places for children to learn about nature			
	are important for local communities		I visit green spaces	to meet people with similar interests
	are becoming too commercialized			to take part in conservation work
				to take part in community events
I visit green spaces	that are easy to get to			that are within walking distance of my home
	that remind me of places I visited as a child			that appear to be looked after by someone
	that are well known to me			where there are rangers or wardens

Appendix eight. Comments on sites

Likes	Dislikes	improvements
<p>Salcey paths</p> <p>quiet, lack of people wildlife better than was a child - less litter toilets good</p> <p>not too busy and not too many cars play areas, good for dogs Near to where live, unspoilt 'old', trails, play areas, greenery and bluebells, very well managed size, varied, different types woodland waymarked footpaths, play area</p> <p>well managed marked bridleways and walks playground good waymarking, child buggy friendly paths good peaceful near to home, not too commerical wheelchair access toilets, picnic benches, good pushchair / wheelchair access</p>	<p>vandalism,</p> <p>dog mess motorway noise noise from motorway motorway noise, dogs in non-dog areas mud noise of motorway burnt out cars dislikes proximity to M1 dislikes M1 noise</p> <p>like it being near to home and not too commercial</p>	<p>more defined walks, cycle hire longer walks / map longer walks</p>
<p>Gibraltar Point Quiet well organised</p> <p>Good car park and toilets Good historic interest</p> <p>visitor centre, clear maps</p> <p>beautiful, perfect for stables nearby, peaceful, well laid out, feels natural Clean and quiet (no motorbikes)</p> <p>woods, good paths, easy to find way around information boards</p> <p>Trees, nice to walk in, clean and tidy</p>	<p>nice and quiet fights</p> <p>vandalism vandalism (fires near playground) vandalism, rubbish, joy riders litter</p> <p>burnt out cars, "jobs on motorbikes" run down buildings</p> <p>sometimes a bit lonely (depends on time) lack of markers on tracks</p>	<p>waste bins swings in playground, map of pathways More toilets more for younger ones on playground lack of bins</p>

Likes	Dislikes	improvements
<p>memorial playground, good for horseriding and running and bringing siblings to play wildness, and lots to look at, Signs, park "very forward" variety of pathways, "freedom to wander" Quiet, no-one bothers you, full of trees wildlife history, green</p> <p>Bestwood not too crowded not too crowded, good waymarkings peaceful, varied, places to escape, well kept, quiet natural Lovely good for dog walking</p> <p>Barnwell quiet, peaceful, good for kids different length walks and routes Birds Nice water well looked after, swans well looked after very pleasant</p> <p>Bourne Woods local, not too busy, can walk to nearby villages / do a circuit convenient, big enough for reasonable walk tranquil, beautifully set out, easy walking peaceful, get away from "hubbub" of city life natural woodland</p> <p>not too commercialised, can wander easily, nice and quiet, deer, nice relaxing place to visit nice walks good roads, safe, not too crowded lovely woods, unspoilt</p>	<p>horse trails are out of bounds, parks too managed</p> <p>metal/concrete sculptures</p> <p>shooting some of sculptures poachers in the woods dog muck lack of variety in scenery refreshments the works of art (particularly the metal ones)</p> <p>entrance and vandalism</p> <p>too many trees being cut down dog poo</p> <p>toilets</p> <p>sheep enclosures - introduced without proper public consultation. Bad for dog walkers and ground nesting birds, don't like metal fences of enclosure - unnatural dog muck</p> <p>sometimes too busy too many dogs and off leads development vandalism, litter,</p>	<p>refreshments, more picnic spaces more paths and maps</p> <p>dog bins</p>

Likes	Dislikes	improvements
<p>nice and relaxing, good for children to run around, clean, toilets</p> <p>quiet and peaceful, solitude</p> <p>conservation work - encouraging more broadleaves and open spaces well maintained</p> <p>non-tarmac tracks (gravel) and that you can run in woods, nice big site, dogs aren't a problem</p> <p>maintained footpaths, site is well off-road</p> <p>pleasant</p> <p>nice place to come</p> <p>peaceful</p> <p>car park and access</p> <p>Peacefulness, picnic tables</p> <p>large and open</p> <p>sculptures</p> <p>looks lovely</p> <p>footpaths (don't get muddy)</p> <p>Major Oak</p> <p>looks nice</p> <p>Easily accessible, convenient, part of my life</p> <p>lots of oak trees</p> <p>signposts good (not over top), paths good and don't get muddy</p> <p>likes open space and nature</p> <p>very relaxing</p> <p>large woods where you can lose yourself, lots of people, sociable</p> <p>relaxing, can walk for miles</p> <p>easy walking</p> <p>like walking here</p> <p>so big you can lose yourself</p> <p>free parking, well organised</p> <p>car park, picnic tables, good for children to play, no litter</p> <p>clean and green</p> <p>landscape, primary oak woodland, toadstools to photograph in autumn, good at absorbing people</p> <p>association with robin hood myth</p> <p>paths and signs are well-organised</p> <p>very nice, good for dogs</p> <p>like everything</p> <p>very nice</p> <p>tranquillity, trees, colour, atmosphere, solitude</p>	<p>children trampling on flowerbeds, vandalism</p> <p>play park should be nearer to town</p> <p>development</p> <p>vandalism, litter,</p> <p>funfair is out of keeping</p> <p>often spoilt by unappreciative humans</p> <p>flower borders - not good enough, toilet never open</p> <p>too many dogs</p> <p>not as well-maintained as it used to be</p>	<p>more signs</p> <p>could be more natural</p> <p>- not so many fences, signs and tourist stuff</p>

Likes	Dislikes	improvements
well-maintained and signed, and interesting managed well		
Kings Park lots of happy memories here green space in middle of town - making an effort river and birds squirrels Big play area for children, tranquil river, well-maintained peacefulness peace, escapism, safety, play area, that some parts are "left wild" Sitting on grass vastness, river, well cared for, variety of flora, the trees attract nature, facilities for children and sports, seats, good pathways well-maintained, pleasant, oasis in the middle of town, close to town easy to get to, well-maintained, clean, not many dogs, gardens look beautiful nice park, well looked after nice and quiet privileged to have lovely park very nice Park the big trees are lovely variety of trees, good gardening staff nice park, it's improving	litter too manicured poor state of playground litter rubbish vandalism [of the playground] is really upsetting	more bins swings in playground
Cromford Canal pleasant, good habitat for wildlife the canal reminds of radford canal (used to live near there) peaceful easy to get to it's not too far to drive, easy walking cycling on to wpath, sitting on seats to soak up atmosphere mix of water and trees, very easy walk even in wet weather, High Peak Junction visitor centre always see something different, love the water	smell from sewage treatment works dog fouling dog mess smell, sometimes a bit busy smell of sewage works dog mess the canal has gone to ruin	dredging / clearing

Likes	Dislikes	improvements
Peace	rubbish / overflowing dog mess bins when not cleared regularly	
accessibility	smell of sewage and tourists!	
can do a circular walk	crowds	
peaceful, nice walk, relaxing, plenty of shade, lots of wildlife	smell of sewage	
it's flat, not muddy	overgrown	
pleasant spot	water not clear, bit busy today	
good walks for children	smell of sewage works	
peaceful and quiet	bicycles, sewage works, dogs going in the canal	
dabchicks [little grebes]	smell	
path is very good, free parking for disabled	smell, the ramps are a bit steep for a scooter	
combined nature and industrial activities of the site	canal getting into disuse	
mix of heritage and wildlife	too many interpretive signs	
peaceful	cyclists	
likes the railway history / mining	sewage works	
that they have cleaned out the canal, warden	sewage works	
likes information shop - great	sewage works	
Historic interest	the smell	
Lovely		
lovely		
quite nice		
like that they used an old building, greenness, good clean toilets, the information on the site		
Chaddesden Wood		
pretty good site	vandalism, rubbish	more flowers
bluebells and birds	rubbish	more dog bins
like it as it is	felling trees looks bare	more dog bins
handy site, well looked after		
peaceful site, like to walk through,	rubbish in pond	
like to see animals		
the wood	litter and vandalism	
likes circular walk	vandalism and litter, too managed	
lovely site	would like another dog poo bin,	
it's improved with new paths		
lovely site	vandalism and litter, too managed	
peaceful site	would like another dog poo bin,	

Likes	Dislikes	improvements
Victoria Wood lovely park	some trees missing on avenue	more community awareness of safety
friendly park, relaxed, mixture of sports facilities and other spaces, bats!	litter	more lighting would be good
memories (used to live here)	rumours of being unsafe on park	no regular events here - should be used for more
trees and open space open space play area for children	toilets and other facilities dangerous at night lack of goal posts, security and information about trees and signs about keeping the park clean, horrible toilets	better toilets
well kept	reputation for being dangerous at night	
likes the size, accessible for majority of uses, events on park, paths good for wheelchairs	not enough lighting at night (safety)	
well-maintained and clean, feels safe	shame about park's bad reputation	
Trees	some of the events held here	
Café	graffiti	
flatness, convenient, "makes me feel better"	dogs off lead - frightening	
convenient for lots of local people, not too commercialised, events on park	dog mess	
trees, paths, green, flowers in some parts	dislikes that it has changed since was younger in terms of safety, likes openness	
it is well-used	rubbish	
Clean	dangerous at night	
peaceful and quiet	lighting is a problem in winter	
nice to see greenery in city and likes access to facility	lack of park keepers to clean up rubbish at weekend	
open, large, doesn't get crowded		
great space in the middle of the city, enjoy		
walking through, well-used		
good amenities for sport, nice and open,		
easy access, restaurant		
biggest open space in leicester, big events are good		
huge park and good location		
lots of trees, it's like London parks		

Likes	Dislikes	improvements
<p>Nature Alive</p> <p>paths are good, peaceful water, ducks, fish water features</p> <p>Rutland fantastic resource, not over-commercialised, provides visitor resource and education enjoyable, will come back again</p> <p>wonderful open space and facility good variety, convenient</p>	<p>kids leaving rubbish</p> <p>quite commercialised, lots of people</p> <p>access is channelled, nature is organised</p>	<p>a play area would be nice and a café</p>



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Front cover photographs:

Top left: Using a home-made moth trap.

Peter Wakely/English Nature 17,396

Middle left: Co₂ experiment at Roudsea Wood and Mosses NNR, Lancashire.

Peter Wakely/English Nature 21,792

Bottom left: Radio tracking a hare on Pawlett Hams, Somerset.

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Main: Identifying moths caught in a moth trap at Ham Wall NNR, Somerset.

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