

Westonbirt Interpretation Survey 2007

Introduction

Westonbirt provides visitors with a range of interpretative opportunities during their visit from events and guided walks to trails, interpretative panels and signage. In the past some of these have undergone limited evaluative surveying with regard to their effectiveness – both directly (through observation counts, self-completion/interviewer questionnaires and focus groups) and indirectly (through other more general visitor surveys/comments).

However we have never evaluated our interpretative provision as a whole site to try and see the ‘big picture’ – as to which methods are most used/valued by visitors and also visitors general opinions about the value of interpretation to their visit.

Survey Aims

Specifically the purpose of this survey was to find out:

1. Which of our current forms of interpretation provision do our visitors actually use and which were their favourites
2. What they think of our provision
3. Why some visitors don't engage with any of our interpretation
4. Whether our provision actually delivers what it is trying to do in terms of providing visitors with choice, way marking, enjoyment and greater understanding/empathy with the site
5. The attitudes of our visitors towards interpretation
6. What if any interpretation they would like to see more of and in what form

Methodology

The diffuse nature of Westonbirt's interpretation throughout the site, coupled with the nature of our aims led us to choose an interviewer-led, exit questionnaire as the most appropriate evaluation method. An initial questionnaire (Appendix 1) was prepared and comments sought from a number of Forestry Commission staff including David Thorp, Paddy Harrop, Bob Jones and Neil Grant.

Through the process of carrying out the survey this questionnaire was then amended (Appendix 2). These amendments are as follows:

Question	Amendment	Reasoning for change
4	Change from ‘which types of information did you use <i>to plan</i> your visit today’ to ‘which types of information did you <i>actually use during</i> your visit today’	It quickly became obvious that many visitors pick up all available materials such as trail leaflets but do not actually use all of them – the question was refined to make sure we captured only what they actually did
4/5	Reduction of options – removal of ‘telephone’ and combining of guided walk/event into ‘other’ category	To shorten the questionnaire
8	Removed	From the initial surveys it became apparent that visitors were unable provide meaningful responses
11 (Q10 on amended)	Removal of ‘The information helped me make the most of my visit by telling me where to go / what to do’	Duplication from previous question
14 (Q13 on amended)	Separation of ‘none’ category into ‘can't think of anything’, ‘there is enough information already’ and ‘I don't want more information provided’	To gain greater clarity as to the reasons behind why visitors said they did not want more information provided

In total 100 surveys were carried out during the week (Mon – Fri). With the exception of the two earliest survey days (29/6 and 31/7) all were carried out in August. 37 used the original form (the earliest dates), while 63 used the amended form.

Date	F 29/6	Tu 31/7	Th 2/8	M 6/8	Th 9/8	M 13/8	Tu 21/8 FOTT date	Tu 28/8
No. Surveys	12	19	6	18	13	8	9	15

A trained volunteer carried out surveys with randomly chosen groups in the café/restaurant area. Although efforts were made to ensure both morning and afternoon surveys, because this was an exit interview it was found that it was unproductive to start morning surveying until around midday.

Survey limitations

The survey has a number of limitations that need to be highlighted:

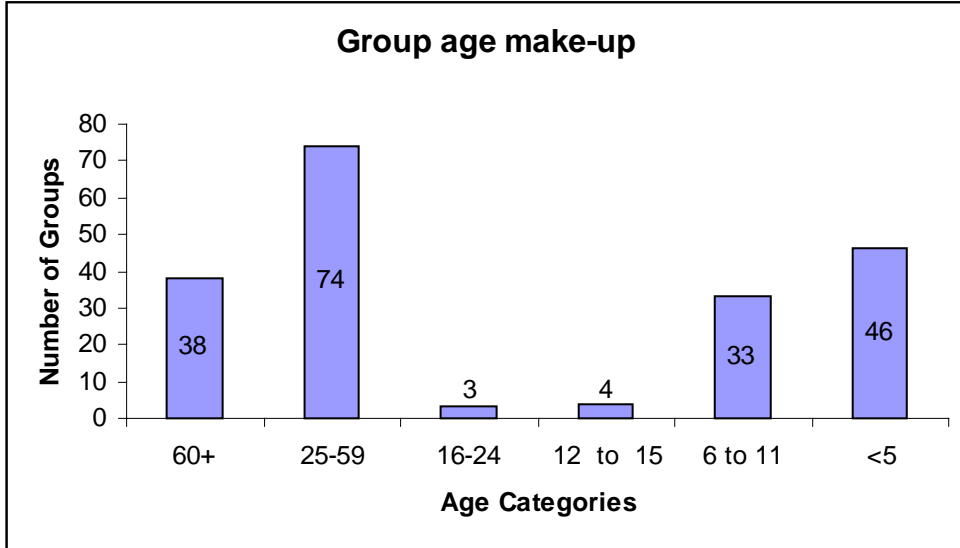
- Surveys were carried out during the week (Mon-Fri) – this meant that at least one form of interpretation (guided walks) was excluded as these only occur at the weekends. Similarly surveying occurred outside of events except for the 21/8. In addition, of course, the profile and usage habits of weekend could vary from those of weekday users.
- The sample size of 100 is large enough to provide indicative results, but does not provide full statistical vigour.
- The results provide a snapshot of one particular month. We know from admission figures that August sees a greater proportion of Friends members/repeat visitors – it would be interesting to carry out the survey during a different season to compare results
- The use of interviewer-led survey technique does have their drawbacks. In particular it has been shown that visitors do not like to appear critical (or stupid!) and thus may provide a more positive response than they would on an anonymous questionnaire. It has also been shown that visitors may give responses that they believe the interviewer is looking for. Care was taken during initial conversations with the volunteer undertaking the surveys to emphasise the need for neutrality when carrying out the survey so as to minimise this factor. However, as a result it is worth treating the results to questions 9-11 (10 – 12 on original questionnaire) with a degree of caution. This said they can I believe provide us with basis trends and attitudes. Furthermore their accuracy should improve as more surveys are undertaken.
- The location of the surveying may have influenced the visitors interviewed – and in particular may have underrepresented those using Silk Wood exclusively.

Results

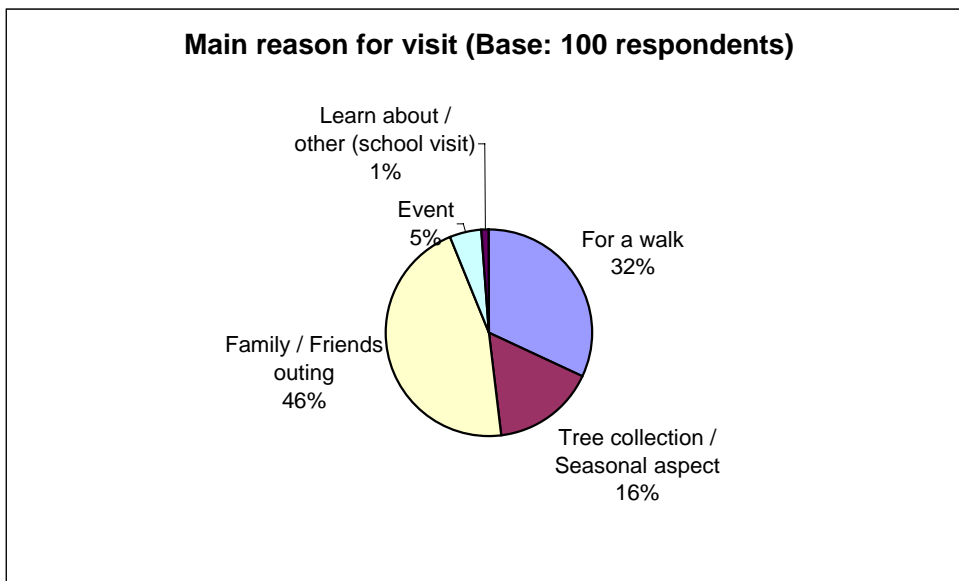
Additional comments are found in appendix 3

Background to groups (Based on: 100 respondents)

52% of those surveyed were Friends compared to 48% non-members. The group make-up is shown in the chart below. NB – group make-up was assessed by the volunteer – it was not asked. Assessment was made on a 'present/absent' basis in each group.

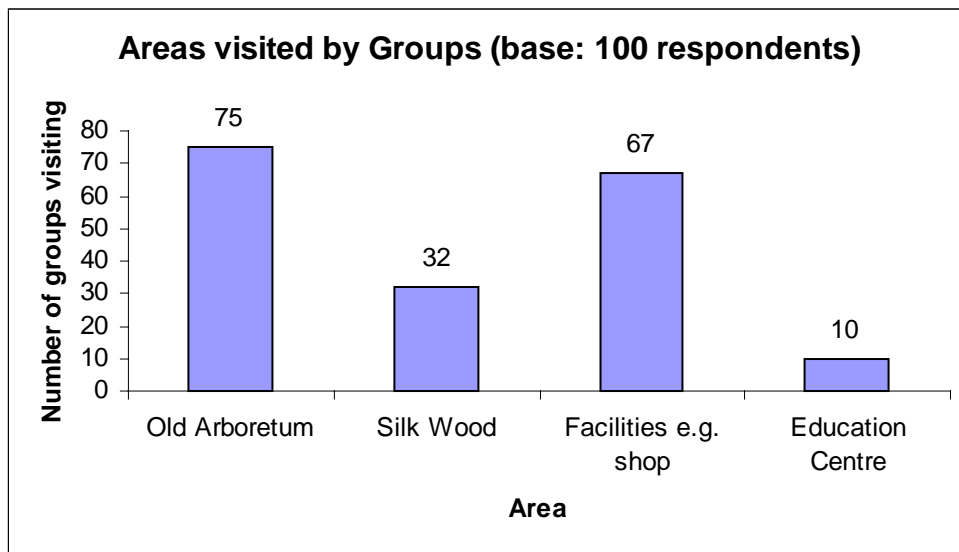


10 groups contained dogs and 34 groups contained pushchairs or wheelchairs.



Almost half of respondents indicated that their main reason for visiting was to undertake a family or friends outing. A third were visiting for a walk, while under a fifth of respondents had come for the tree collection or a seasonal aspect. Given the timing of the surveys it is not surprising that only 5% of respondents had come for an event. Only 1% had specifically come to learn.

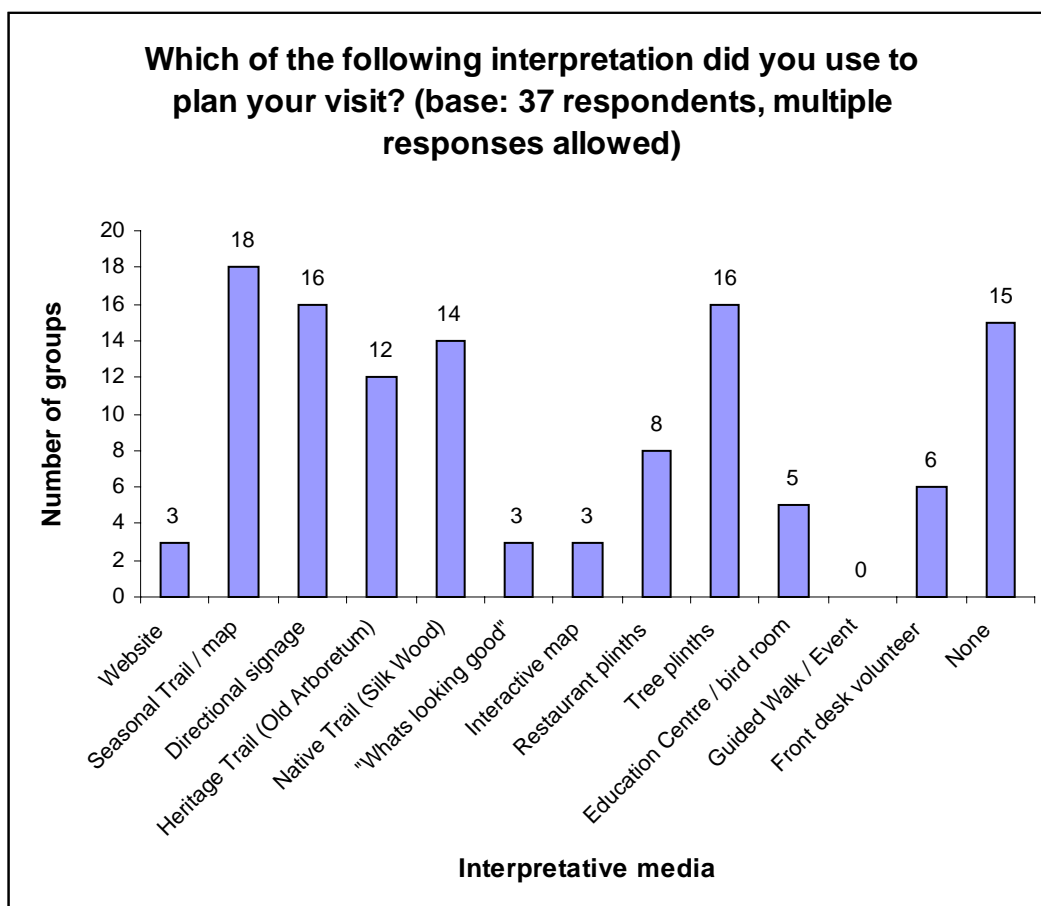
Three-quarters of groups had visited the Old Arboretum – over double the number visiting Silk Wood. It is surprising that despite the fact that the surveys were carried out in the area closest to the facilities, 33 groups said they had not visited them. Fewer groups had visited the education centre.



Use of Interpretation

Over the entire survey almost half (48 groups) said that they had not used any of the identified forms of interpretation during their visit. The following two charts present responses for both pre/post question amendments.

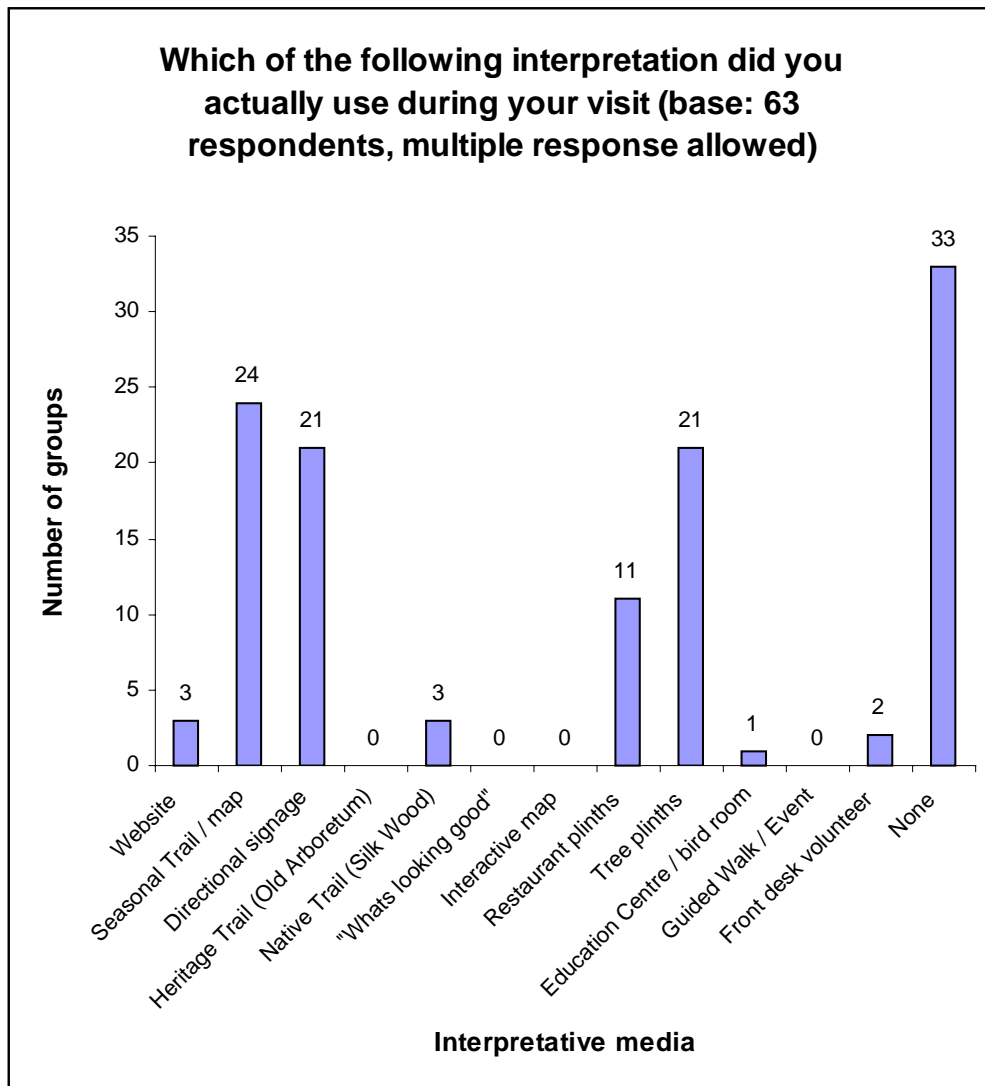
Original Questionnaire



Of the groups that did use interpretation the seasonal trail/map (82%), directional signage and tree plinths (73%) were the three most commonly used forms of interpretation *to plan their visit*. Other trails – such as the heritage trail and native tree trail (55% and 64% respectively) were also used in planning. Other forms of interpretation were used less – but all of the available interpretation was used by at least some groups (these surveys were carried out during the week when no events/guided walks were available).

41% of those groups surveyed used no interpretation to plan their visit.

Amended Questionnaire



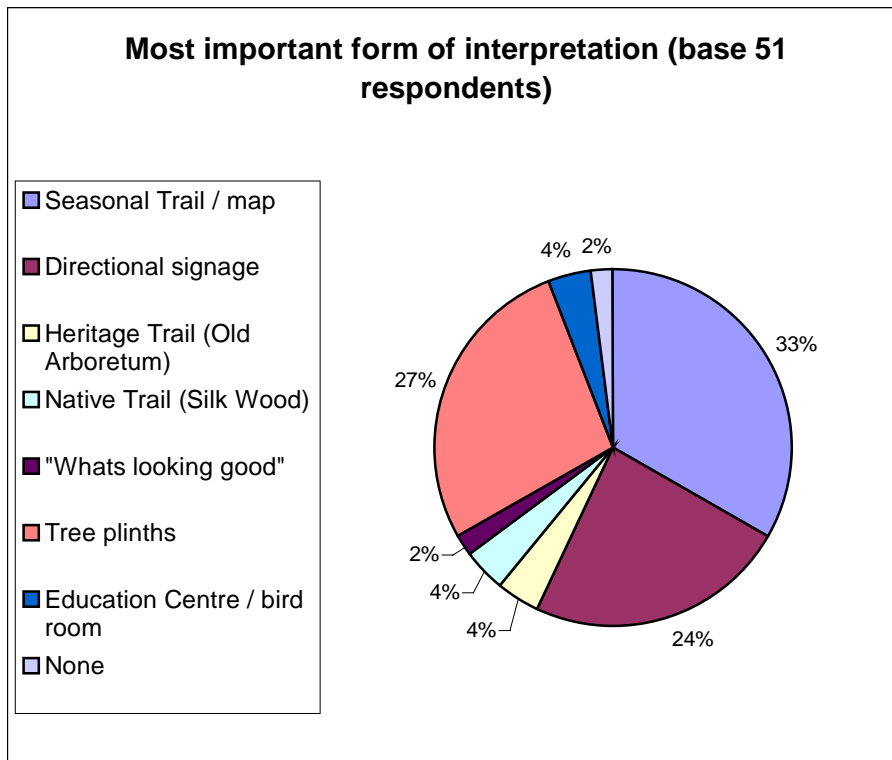
Of the groups that did use interpretation *during their visit* the seasonal trail/map (80%), directional signage and tree plinths (70%) were the three most commonly used forms of interpretation. A third of groups also used the restaurant plinths (37%). 10% of groups used the native tree trail. The heritage trail/interactive map/'What's looking good' panel were not used by any of the groups.

52% of groups asked used no interpretation during their visit.

Reason for looking at interpretation

Of the groups that did use the interpretation (52) 52% said the main reason for looking was to find their way around the site. 38% of groups said they wanted to learn something and 10% to find out what choices were available.

Most important Interpretation



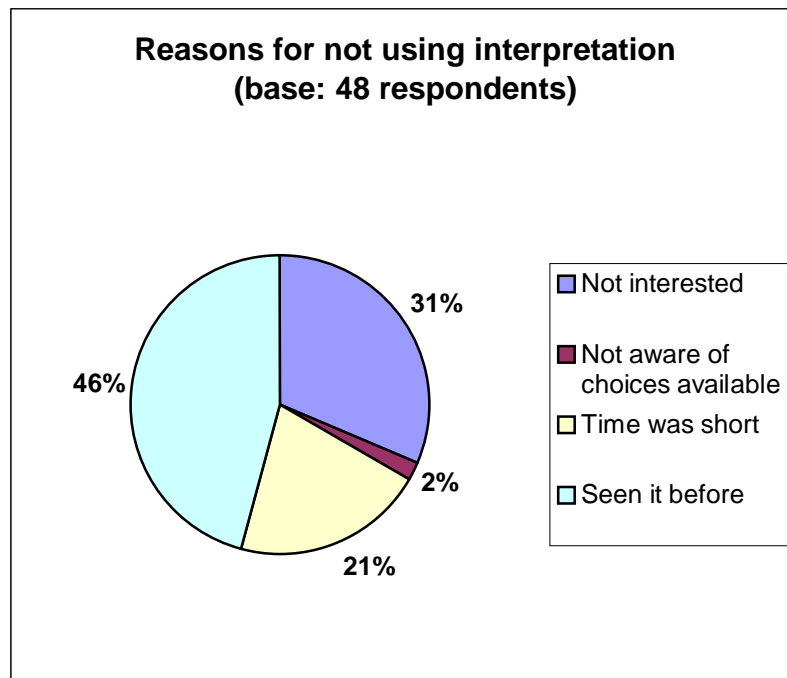
Those respondents that used interpretation found the seasonal trail/map (33%), tree plinths (27%) and directional signage (24%) the most important forms of interpretation. Other trails were considered most important by 4% of groups respectively.

In reality this question proved quite difficult for visitors, with some unable to provide an answer without assistance/rephrasing of question from the interviewer.

Access to Interpretation

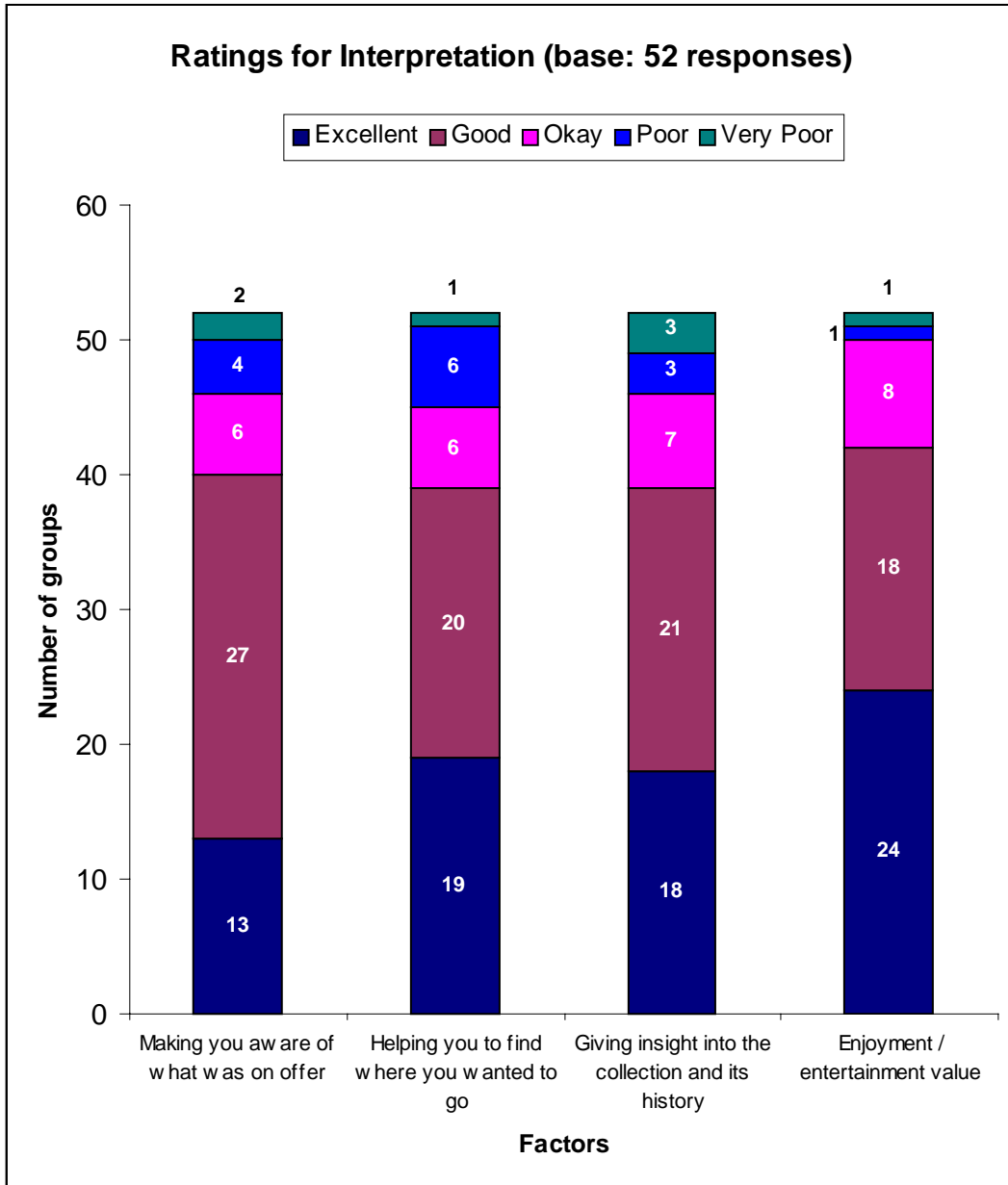
The majority of groups that used interpretation found it easy to access (85%).

Reasons for not using interpretation



The main reasons groups gave for not using the interpretation on offer was that they had seen it before (46%), followed by 'not interested' (31%) and 'time was short' (21%). Only 2% of groups asked had not been aware of the choices.

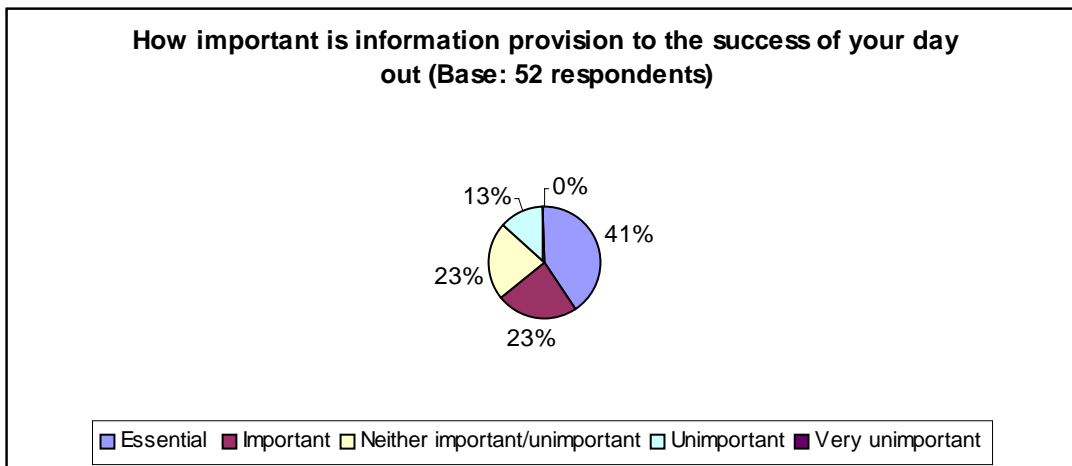
Success of Interpretation



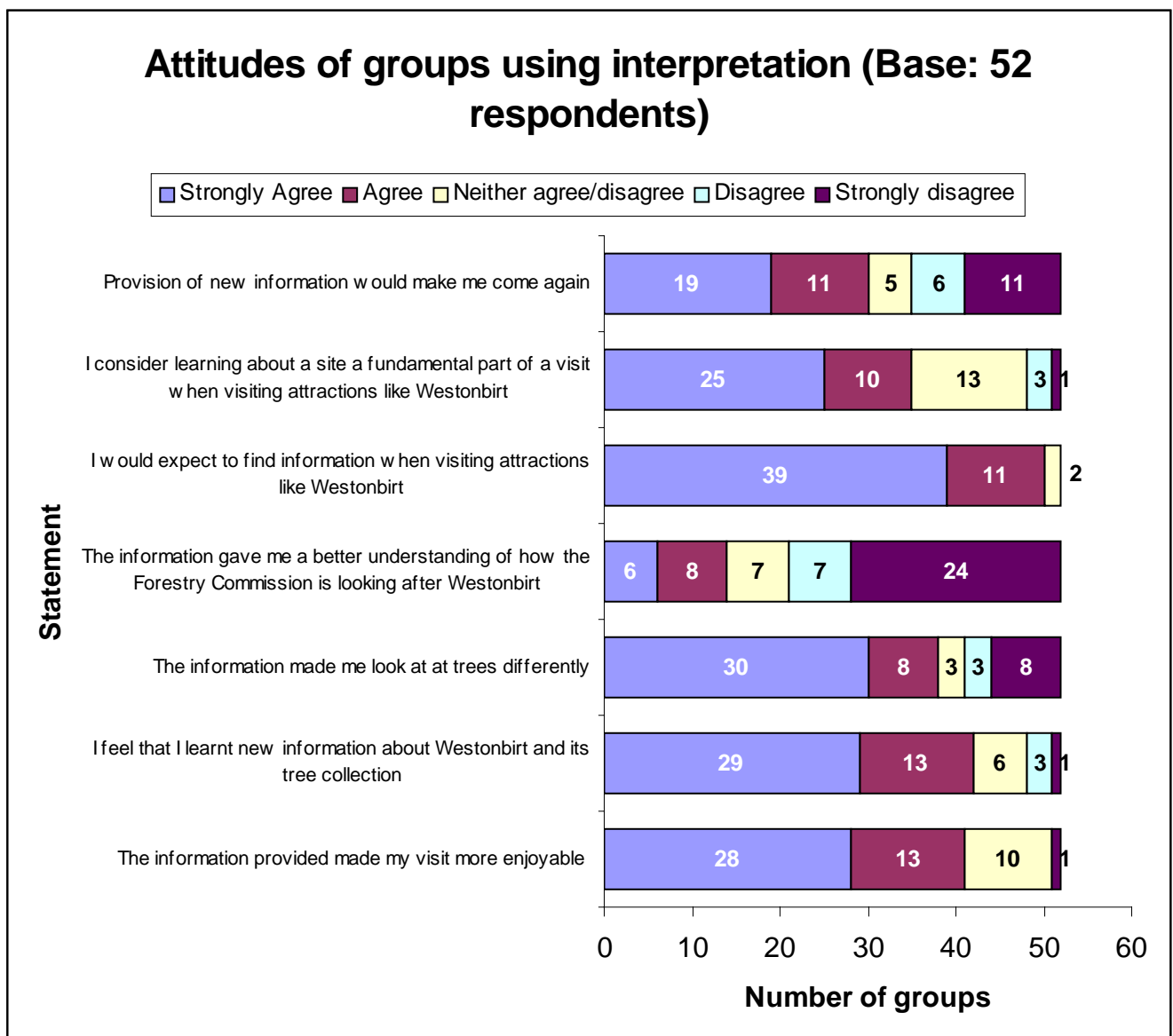
Most groups that used our interpretation found it either 'excellent' or 'good' for all factors – with 'enjoyment/interest value' rating highest (81%) to 75% for 'giving insight' and 'finding where you want to go'. However a small number of groups did rate our interpretation as 'poor' or 'very poor'.

Attitudes to interpretation

Groups were also asked to rate how important information provision was to the overall success of their visit. The results are highlighted below.



Groups using interpretation were also asked about both how well they felt Westonbirt's interpretation delivered its messages and their attitudes to interpretation in general.

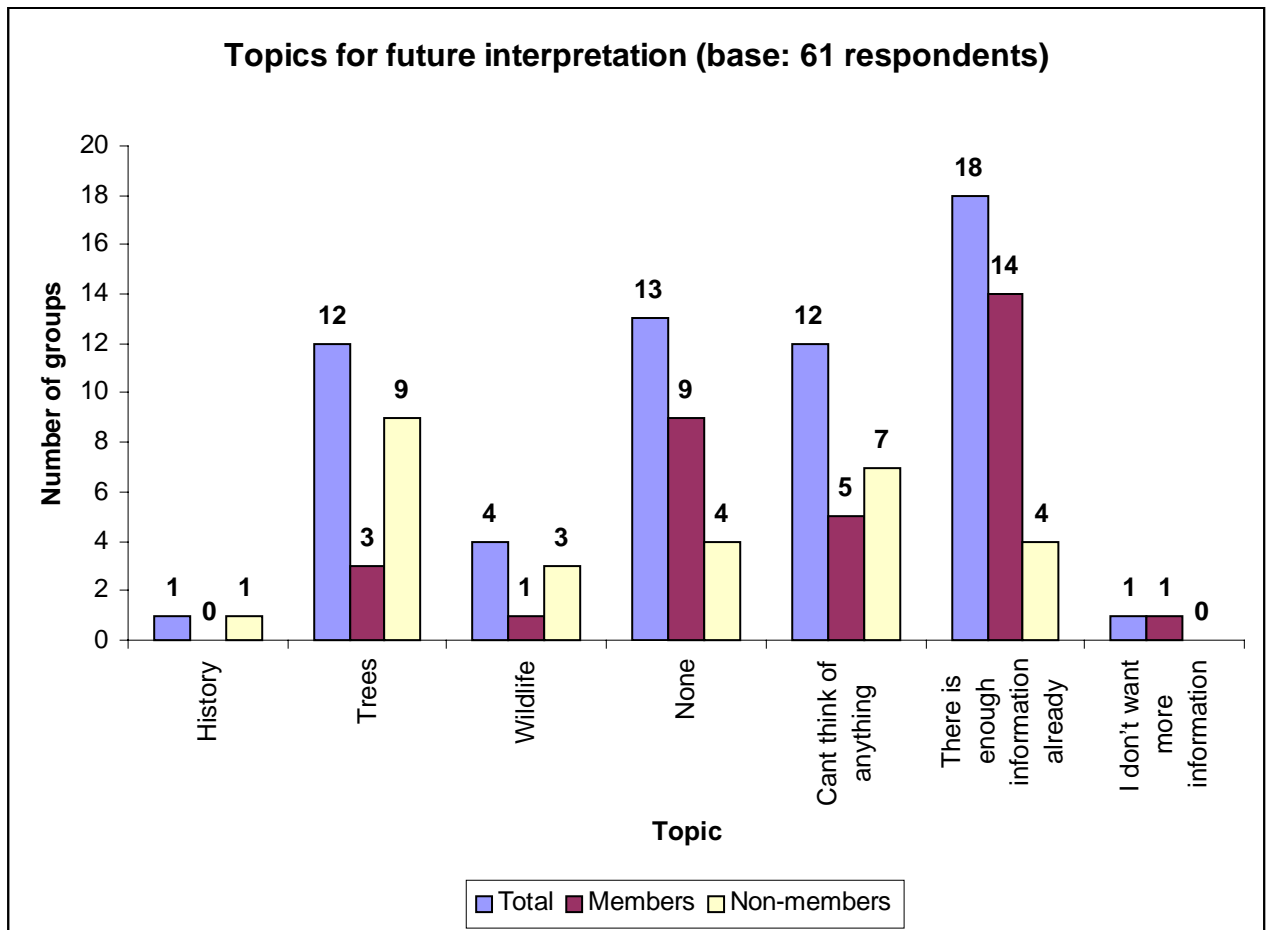


It is clear that to those that use interpretation, interpretation is an integral part of their visit – even if it is not the reason for it – with 75% strongly agreeing with the statement that they would expect to find such

provision at attractions like Westonbirt. Furthermore, just less than 50% considered that learning was a fundamental part of a visit to a site like Westonbirt. Approximately a third (37%) said that providing new interpretation would make them come again.

With regard to key messages, visitors felt our current provision was reasonably successful (but certainly with room for improvement!). Just over half of respondents strongly agreeing that they had learnt about Westonbirt and its tree collection, and that this made them feel differently towards trees and their visit more enjoyable. However, one key area where our interpretation appears to be failing is in giving visitors a better understanding of how the Forestry Commission is looking after the site – with just 12% strongly agreeing that they had learnt more about this aspect. In contrast 46% strongly disagreed.

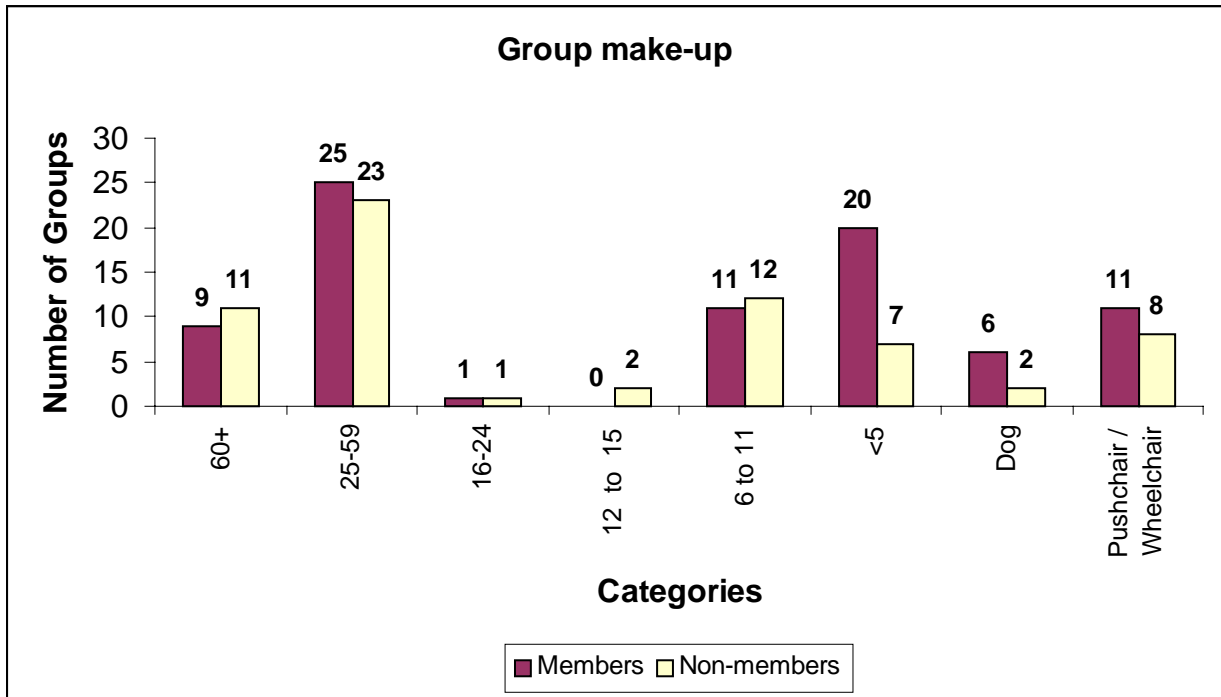
Themes for future interpretation



Groups containing site members were more likely to not want more interpretation (69% of such groups saying 'none' and 78% 'there is enough already'). Information about trees was the most popular topic with 20% of groups wanting more information.

Members vs. non-members

The amended surveys (63 responses) have been split into members and non-members to determine if familiarity with the site influences behaviour. Of these respondents, 33 groups were members (52%), 30



were not.

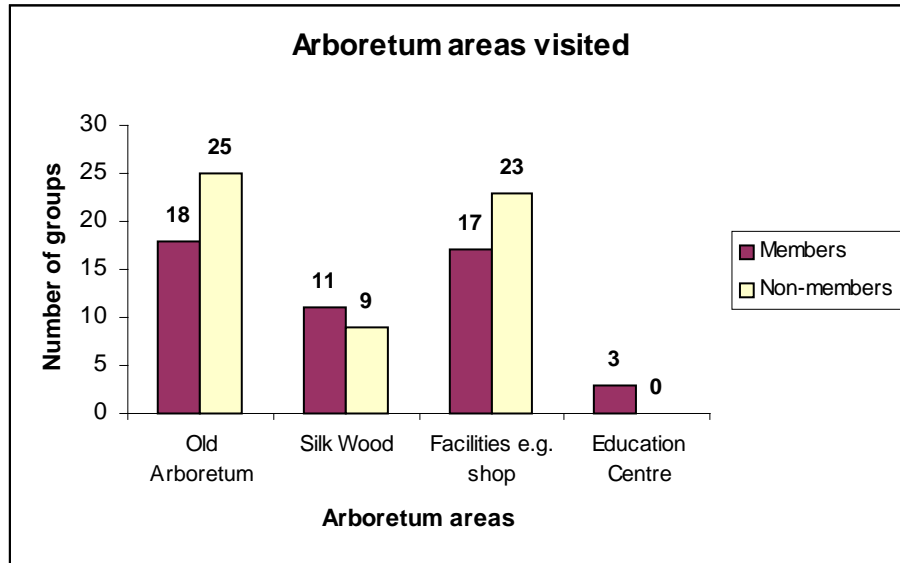
Members were more likely to have children under 5 in their group (60% vs. 23%).

Reason for visiting



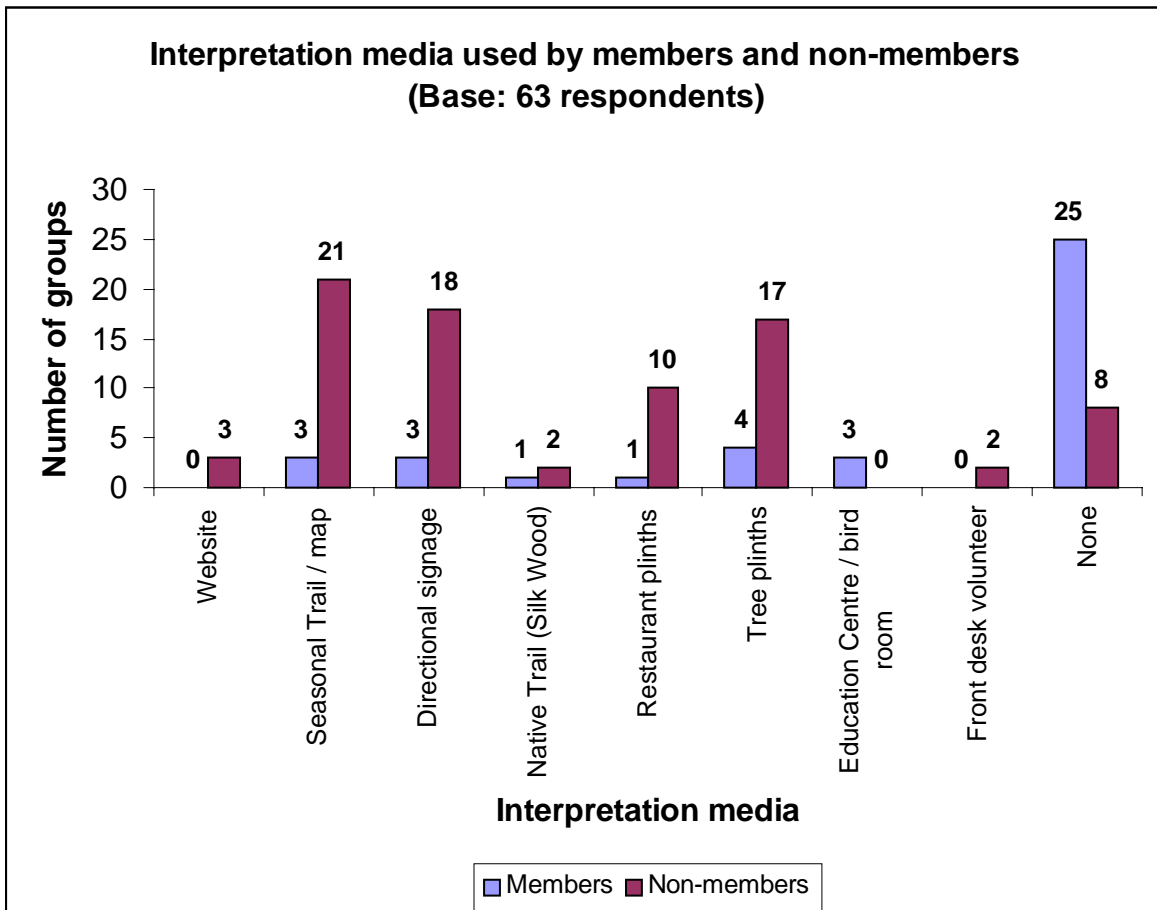
A greater percentage of non-members visited for the tree collection or a seasonal aspect 33% (compared with 9% of members) or to attend an event (13% vs. 3%). Members were more likely to be visiting for a family outing (52% vs. 33%) or a walk (36% vs. 20%).

Arboretum areas visited



A greater proportion of non-member groups visit the Old Arboretum (83%) compared with members (55%). They were also more likely to have used the facilities (77% vs. 52%). No non-member groups used the education centre. Roughly an equal percentage of non-member/member groups visited Silk Wood. Comparing the total number of areas visited (57 for non-members vs. 49 for members) it appears that non-member groups visit more areas than members during their visit.

Use of Interpretation



Three-quarters of members (76%) did not use any interpretation compared with a quarter of non-members (27%). Apart from the education centre, non-members used all forms of interpretation more than members – with 75% of non-members using the seasonal map, 60% the directional signage, 57% the tree plinths and 33% the restaurant plinths. No members questioned had used the web site. When asked for their favourite interpretation, responses mirrored those for the general results (i.e. seasonal newsletter, directional signage and tree plinths).

Reason for using the interpretation

For non-members using interpretation the greatest motivating factor was to find their way around – with 77% of non-member groups using it for this reason. Fewer wanted to learn something (18%) or find out what their choices were (9%).

In comparison the main motivating factor for those members using the interpretation was to learn something (63%). 38% of members were using the interpretation for directional purposes and 13% to find out what their choices were.

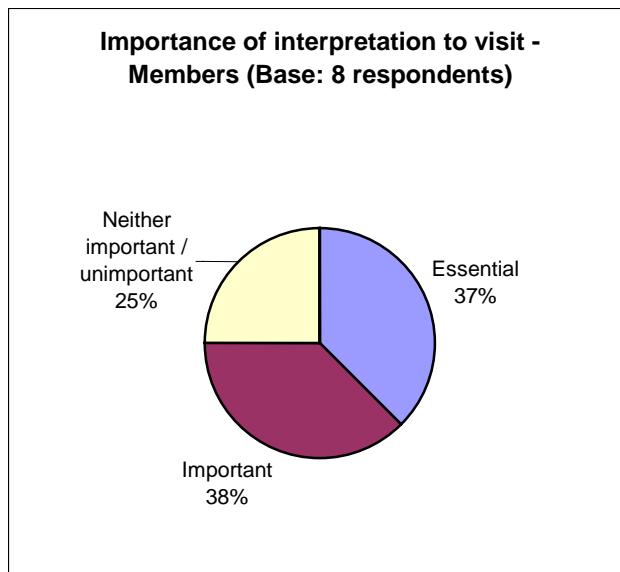
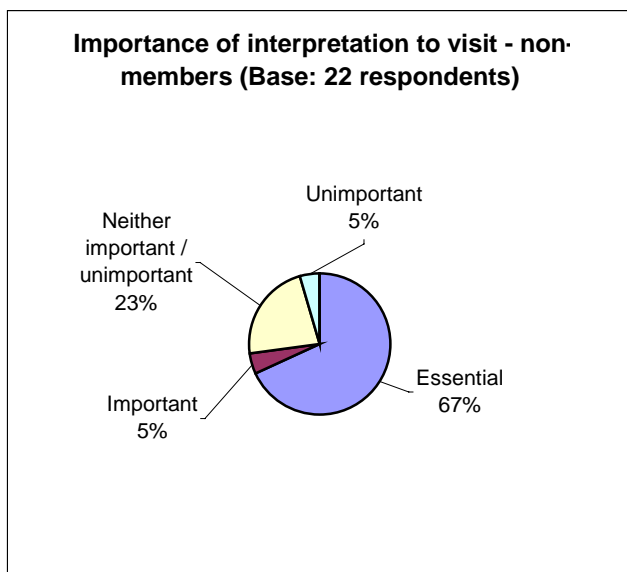
Ease of access

All members using the interpretation found it easy to access. While most non-members also found this to be the case 27% had difficulties.

Reasons for not using interpretation

Members were more likely the non-members to cite the fact that they had seen interpretation before as the reason for not using it during their visit (40% of respondents vs. 13%). Although only a small sample (8 respondents) 50% of those non-members who did not use interpretation said they were 'not interested'.

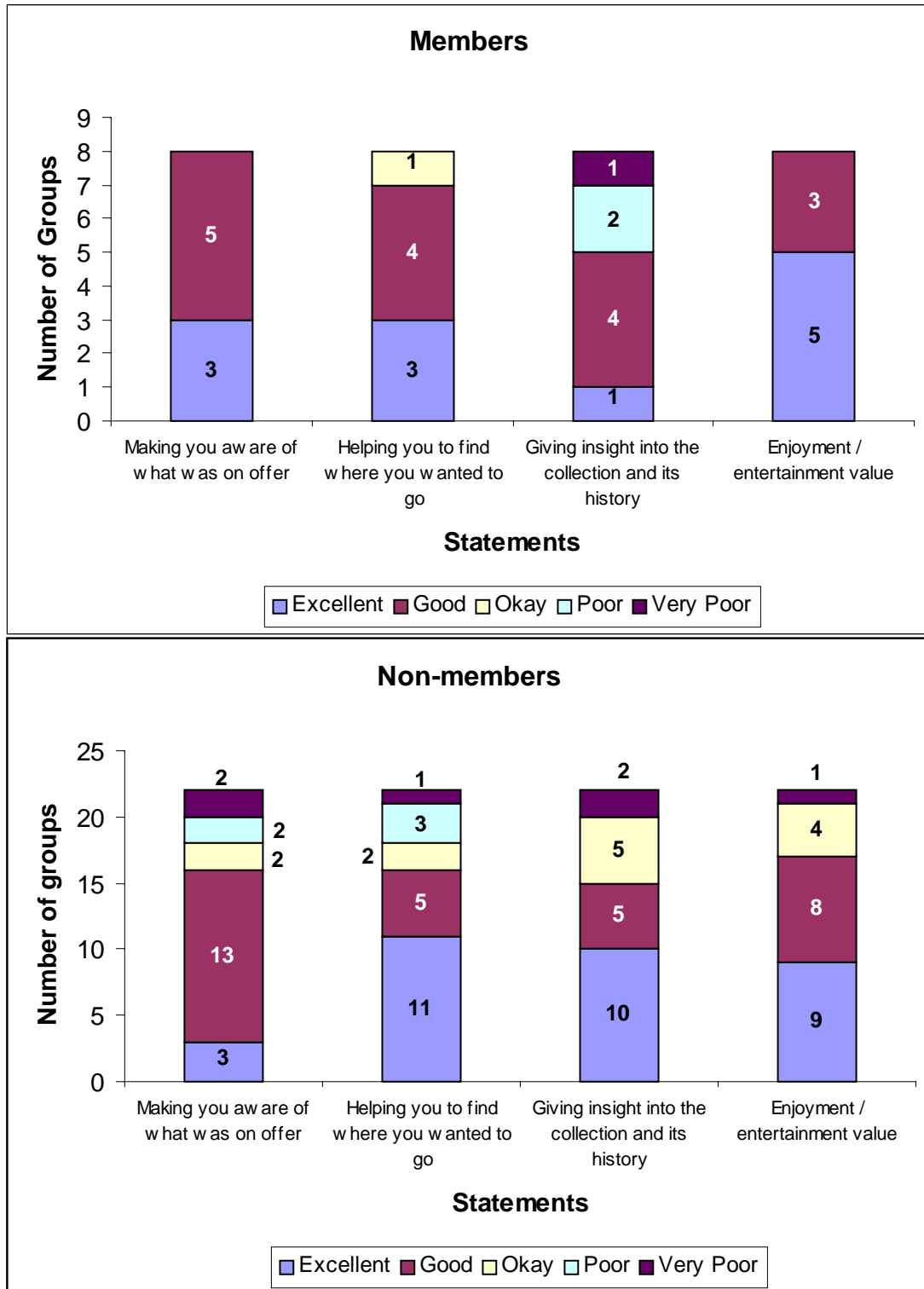
Importance of Interpretation



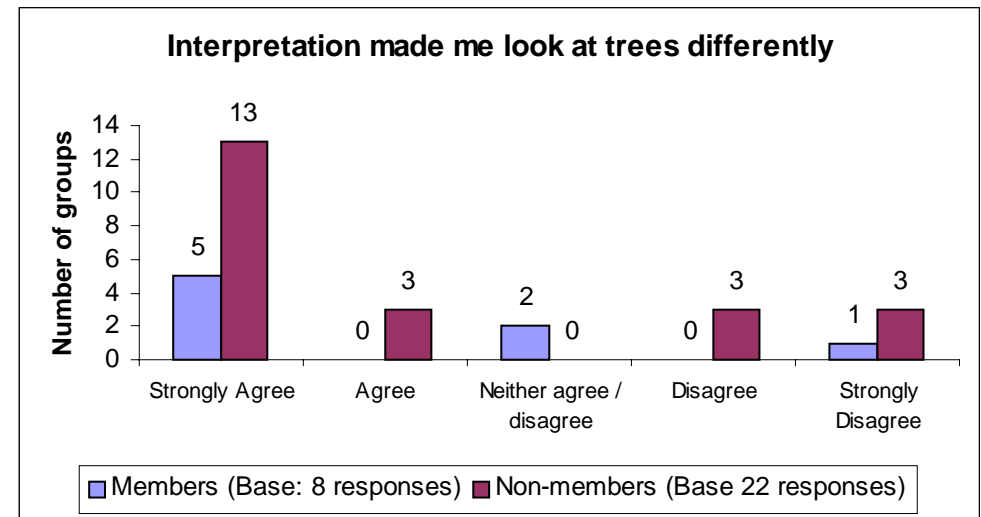
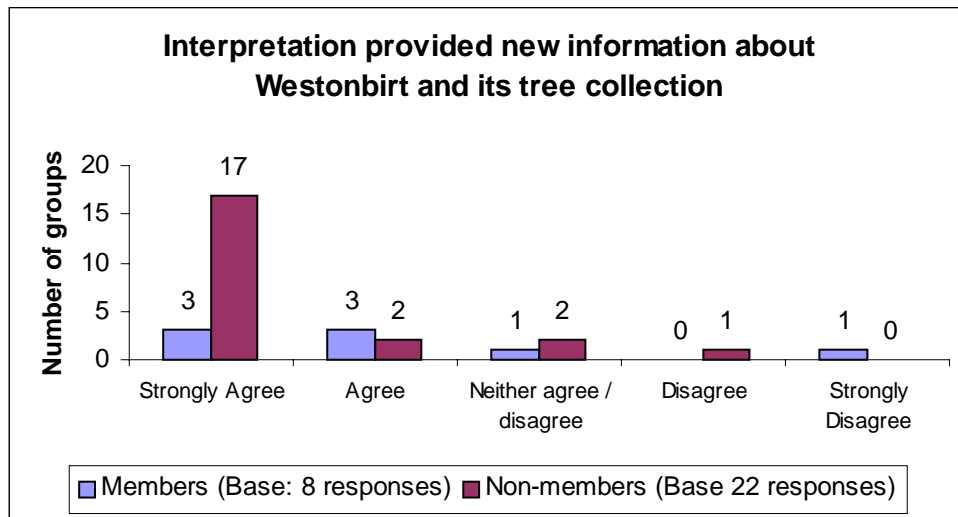
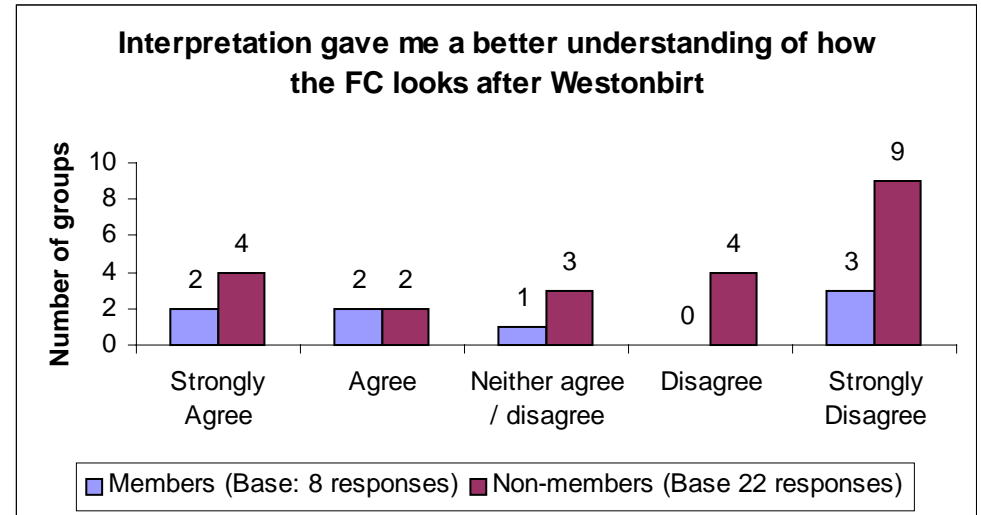
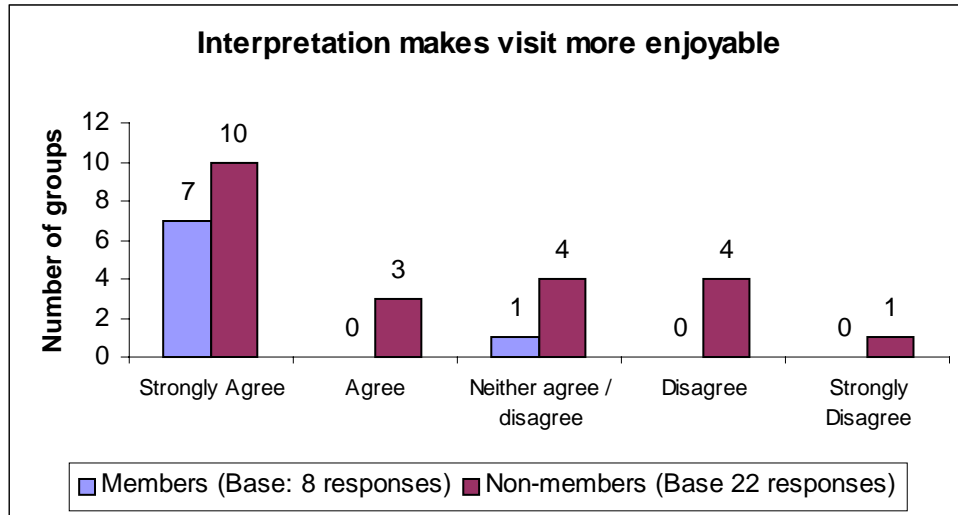
Success of Interpretation

Our interpretation was more successful with groups containing members than it was with groups of non-members with regard to 'making them aware of what was on offer'/'enjoyment and entertaining'. On the other hand our interpretation was more successful with groups of non-members with regard to 'giving insight into the collection and its history'.

Non-member groups were marginally more likely to have a 'very poor' experience.

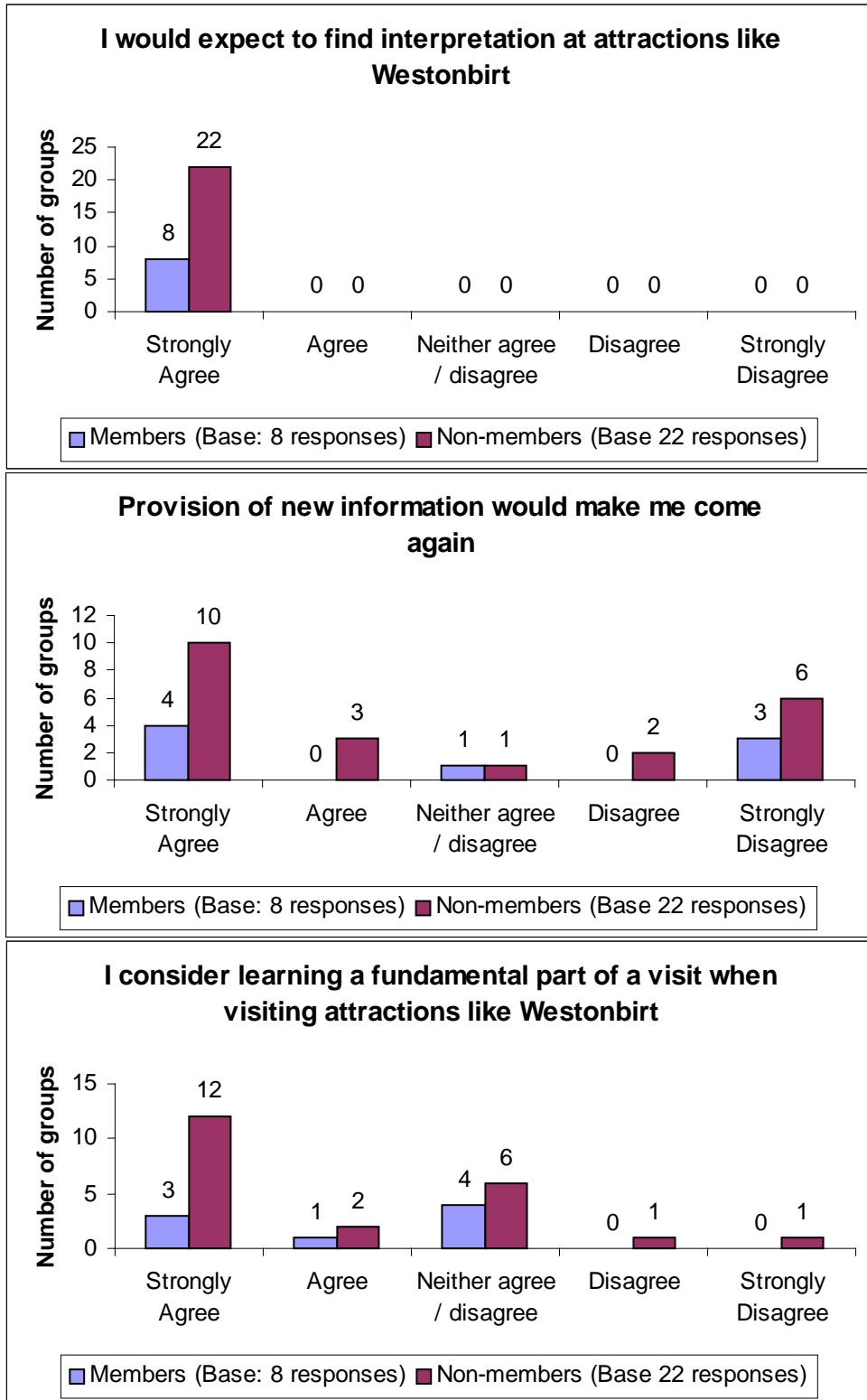


Attitudes to Interpretation



Results for non-member/member groups were roughly similar for 'look differently at trees'/'understanding of the FC's work at Westonbirt'. However non-member groups were more likely to consider the interpretation to have provided 'new information about Westonbirt and its tree collection' than member groups (77% vs. 37.5%). Conversely member groups were more likely to have felt that interpretation had 'made their visit more enjoyable' (88% vs. 50%).

Members/non-member groups shared the same attitudes towards the provision of interpretation.



Discussion

The findings of the survey provide some very important insights into the needs of our visitors, the way they use current interpretation and how they find it and their attitudes to interpretation in general. These conclusions are outlined below and are followed by the implications they have on our interpretation.

General conclusions

- The majority of visitors visit Westonbirt for social outings or walking. From the results it is clear that for the majority interpretation users, interpretation is seen as playing an important supporting role to their visit.
- Comparing the results for the original Q4 and the amended Q4 (interpretation used in planning visit vs. interpretation actually used during visit) it is clear visitors pick up/look at far more interpretation than they actually use. There is particular variation in looking at/using the various trail leaflets. For example 38% of visitors surveyed in the original survey said they had used the native tree trail to plan their visit, yet the amended survey indicates that only 5% of visitors actually followed the NTT. This is similar to the heritage trail
- Although half of all respondents did not use interpretation, for the majority this was not because they were 'not interested'. In fact the feeling that they had 'seen it before' was the most common reason for not engaging. Time available was also an important factor.
- For the majority of users surveyed, our interpretation does deliver against our learning objectives:
 - To increase enjoyment of visit (79% of respondents)
 - To encourage visitors to look at trees differently (73% of respondents)
 - To increase understanding of Westonbirt and its tree collection (81% of respondents)
- However, our interpretation does not provide understanding of how the Forestry Commission is looking after Westonbirt (just 27% agreed while 60% of respondents disagreed).

Interpretation audiences

The results of the survey indicate two distinct audiences for interpretation; members and non-members. Defining characteristics for these groups are outlined below.

	Non-members	Members
Group make-up	Non-member groups are less likely to contain children under 5.	Member groups were more likely to contain children under 5.
Reason for visiting	They are more likely to be visiting the arboretum for the tree collection or a seasonal aspect	They are more likely to be visiting the arboretum for a family outing or a walk.
Areas visited	During their visit they are more likely to visit the Old Arboretum and the facilities. Furthermore non-members were more likely to visit more than one area during their visit	
Use of / satisfaction with existing interpretation	<p>Most non-members will use interpretation during their visit. Non-users are more likely not to be interested in interpretation.</p> <p><u>Users</u> Non-members are more likely to consider interpretation as important to the success of their visit and are more likely to use all forms of interpretation.</p> <p>The main motivating factor behind use is to find their way around the site. Consequently the seasonal trail/map and directional signage are the most frequently used interpretation.</p> <p>Interpretation panels are also important to this group.</p> <p>Generally, non-members are more likely to have a bad experience of our interpretation. Access to interpretation can be an inhibitory factor.</p>	<p>Most members do not use interpretation during their visit. Non-users are more likely to state that they have 'seen it before'.</p> <p><u>Users</u> Members consider interpretation much less important to their visit (probably because they feel they understand what Westonbirt has to offer them).</p> <p>Unlike non-members, for those members using interpretation the main motivating factor is to learn something.</p> <p>Members using interpretation tend to be satisfied that they know how to access it (probably because they know Westonbirt better). However, they tend to be less satisfied about the information provided about the tree collection and are less likely to feel that the interpretation provided new information on Westonbirt and its collection - possibly because they have a higher level of pre-existing knowledge about trees. This said these members are more likely to feel that the interpretation has made their visit more enjoyable</p>

In addition to these, comments made by groups with children indicate that they need a specific interpretation approach that appeals to their children.

Interpretation Conclusions

Central theme realignment

Interpretation themes need to be re-evaluated in light of these results. In particular we must seek to focus our efforts on providing a more consistent/obvious message about the FC's role at Westonbirt as we are clearly failing to put across this message at present. As well as increasing awareness this may also help us to capture 'hearts and minds' thereby reducing negative comments about pricing.

Furthermore we must recognise that our heritage story, while important, is not the one our visitors are most interested in. For both members/non-members 'trees' were the most important topic. Redirecting our focus onto a more trees/conservation message will be more in keeping with their preferences. This focus will also help us promote ourselves as a globally significant arboretum in the 21st century – this will enable development of possible funding streams and ensure our message is relevant to today's visitors.

Audience needs

Interpretative provision must fit with what visitors want to do during their visit. From the results this means

- (a) Providing a collective social experience
- (b) Providing interpretation on-site in the grounds where visitors are walking (although not to the point of intrusion)

In addition interpretative provision needs to take account of the length of time visitors have available and offer a range of options.

Analysis of the results and comments also reinforce the need for interpretation that delivers to specific audiences. These audiences are identified below:

	Non-members	Members	Groups with children
Interpretation issues	<p>Focus on raising awareness of choices available, promoting access and providing clear directional information</p> <p>Less in-depth knowledge</p>	<p>Provision of more in-depth information about the tree collection – particular through web site</p> <p>Obvious regular renewal of information to draw in non-users and raise the perception that there is 'something for us'</p> <p>Use of alternative interpretation – e.g. Westonbirt Magazine both to promote new on-site interpretation to increase engagement and as a means of providing messages</p>	<p>Interpretation that is not just text</p> <p>More active/doing</p> <p>Interpretation that can be done as a family – use of layering to allow messages at different levels</p>

Interpretative developments

Comments made during the interviews indicate a number of new media delivery options worth exploring (e.g. audio) and where existing interpretation requires augmenting (especially with regard to directional signage).

In addition analysis of the results suggest a need to re-evaluate current media provision.

Media

The current open provision of multiple trails around site seems to be ineffective – with many visitors picking up leaflets but not using them. From the results it appears that currently leaflets are used as a means of finding out what's on offer – with visitors picking them up without really knowing what they want to do. Given the fact that resources are limited this issue needs to be addressed.

We should seek do this by

1. helping visitors to make choices to reduce the urge to pick up all materials

- Provide better training to staff and particularly front desk volunteers so that they can provide visitors with information that make choices clear and re-emphasise their role of engaging with visitors.
 - Provide a clear welcome point near the car parks that 'eases visitors into Westonbirt' – highlight choices and emphasises seasonal guide while mentioning that other trails are available on request at the Great Oak Hall
2. providing leaflets in a more structured way by
- Seek to ensure that the seasonal guide is seen as the primary on-site leaflet by providing it at admissions and placing it within leaflet dispensers around the site.
 - Restrict access to other trails by limiting them to particular leaflet dispensers (e.g. Native Tree dispenser at start of trail) and inside the GOH
 - Redesign of leaflet dispensers to clearly label/explain choices
3. seeking to provide more on-the-spot media by increasing the number of sensitive plinths – particularly in the Old Arboretum where the majority of visitors go
- Given the identified need to put across the 'cause' and the obvious use existing panels receive it is recommended that as well as looking to increase the number of plinths we also seek to redevelop existing panels paying close attention to the themes

Updateable interpretation

It is quite clear that the biggest reason for not engaging with our interpretation is a perception real or not that they have seen it before. Greater engagement can be achieved by

- Better sign-posting of what's new for regular visitors
- Use of short term changeable interpretation
- Greater utilisation of the web site to provide downloads to reduce production costs
- Greater focus on provision of personal (live) interpretation which can instantly respond to needs

Accessibility

Many of the comments made highlight specific needs of various groups such as different languages and alternative formats. These should be explored further.

Further work

Improvements to questionnaire

- Make Q3 an open question – rather than providing set responses.
- Remove Q5 and Q6 and expand on Q7 to explore reasons behind taking part in interpretation

Drawbacks and suggestions for ongoing work

One of the drawbacks of the survey is that it is too general to elicit information on the reasons behind the responses – such as why visitors chose the seasonal guide over other trail leaflets or give certain ratings. This in turn is frustrating, as we don't know the 'whys' behind some of the responses. This requires more evaluation of individual media through the use of more specific evaluative methods such as observation coupled with random user sampling.

The survey should be carried out during other seasons and include weekend/event days.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Many thanks to John Weyman for his hard work carrying out this survey on behalf of the Forestry Commission

Appendix One: Original Questionnaire

Hello; I am carrying out a survey on behalf of the Arboretum to learn more about how visitors feel about the level of information provided and where improvements can be made. We would be very grateful if you could spare a few minutes to help us find out how successful we are in this aspect of our work.

1. Are you a Friend of Westonbirt? *Circle One*

Yes 1 No 2

2. What was your main reason for visiting Westonbirt today? (*circle one answer*)

For a walk 1
 Tree collection / seasonal aspect 2
 Family / friends outing 3
 Event: _____ 4
 Learn about... _____ 5

Other: _____

3. Where did you go during your visit (*circle all those applicable*)?

Old Arboretum 1 Silk Wood 2
 Main Facilities area (e.g. cafe / Oak Hall / shop) 3 Education Centre 4

4. Which of the following types of information provision did you use today or in planning your visit? SHOW CARD A (*tick all those applicable*)

5. Which was the most important to your visit? (*tick 1 only*)

	Q5 tick as applicable	Q6: Most important
Telephone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Web site	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seasonal trail / map	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Directional signage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Heritage trail (Old Arboretum)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Native Tree Trail (Silk Wood)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
'What's looking Good' board	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interactive map	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Restaurant plinths (No. read: _____)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tree plinths (Old Arb.) (No. read: _____)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education centre / bird room	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Guided walk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Event	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Front desk volunteer (GOH)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None (<i>Go to Question 13</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments: _____

6. Why was the information provision highlighted in (5) so important to your visit?

7. Why did you choose to read the information?

Find my way around the site 1
 See what I could do 2
 Learn something 3
 Other: _____

8. Was there anything you didn't like about the information provided or the way it was presented?

9. Was the information easy to find / access?

Yes 1 No 2

Comments: _____

10. On a scale of 1-5 (where 1= excellent, 2= good, 3= okay, 4= poor and 5= very poor) please rate our information provision for (*circle one number in each row*):

	E	G	OK	P	VP
Making you aware of what was on offer	1	2	3	4	5
Helping you to find where you wanted to go	1	2	3	4	5
Giving you insight into the collection and its history	1	2	3	4	5
Enjoyment/entertainment value	1	2	3	4	5

Comments: _____

11. On a scale of 1-5 (where 1= strongly agree, 2= agree, 3= neither agree/disagree, 4= disagree and 5= strongly disagree), how strongly do you agree with these statements (*circle one number in each row*) SHOW CARD B:

	SA	A	A/D	D	SD
The information helped me make the most of my visit by telling me where to go / what to do	1	2	3	4	5
The information provided made my visit more enjoyable	1	2	3	4	5
I feel that I learnt new information about Westonbirt and its tree collection	1	2	3	4	5
The information made me look at trees differently (how: _____)	1	2	3	4	5
The information gave me a better understanding of how the Forestry Commission is looking after Westonbirt	1	2	3	4	5
I would expect to find information when visiting attractions like Westonbirt	1	2	3	4	5
I consider learning about a site a fundamental part of a visit when visiting attractions like Westonbirt	1	2	3	4	5
Provision of new information would make me come again	1	2	3	4	5
Comments:	_____				

12. How important is information provision to the success of your day out (*circle one*)?

Essential	Important	Neither Imp. / Unimp.	Unimportant	V Unimportant
1	2	3	4	5

13. If you didn't use the information provided, was there a reason for this (*tick as many as applicable*)?

Not interested 1
 Wasn't aware of choices available 2
 My time was short 3
 Seen it before 4
 Other: _____

14. What one topic would you like to see more information provided about?

History of the arboretum 1
 Information about the trees 2
 Information about wildlife 3
 Landscape 4
 None 5
 Other/specific: _____

15. How would you like information presented?

That's all! Thank you very much for your time.

Group make-up – tick the relevant boxes on completion of interview.

Senior Citizens (Age 60+)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adults (Age 25-59)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Young Adults (Age 16-24)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adolescents (Age 12-15)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children (Age 6-11)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Babies/toddlers (5 and under)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dog	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pushchair / wheelchair	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix Two: Amended Questionnaire

Hello; I am carrying out a survey on behalf of the Arboretum to learn more about how visitors feel about the level of information provided and where improvements can be made. We would be very grateful if you could spare a few minutes to help us find out how successful we are in this aspect of our work.

1. Are you a Friend of Westonbirt? *Circle One*

Yes 1 No 2

2. What was your main reason for visiting Westonbirt today? (*circle one answer*)

For a walk 1
 Tree collection / seasonal aspect 2
 Family / friends outing 3
 Event: _____ 4
 Learn about... _____ 5

Other: _____

3. Where did you go during your visit (*circle all those applicable*)?

Old Arboretum 1 Silk Wood 2
 Main Facilities area (e.g. cafe / Oak Hall / shop) 3 Education Centre 4

4. Which of the following types of information provision did you **actually use** before or during your visit today? SHOW CARD A (*tick all those applicable*)

5. Which was the most important to your visit? (*tick 1 only*)

	Q4 tick as applicable	Q5: Most important
Web site	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seasonal trail / map	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Directional signage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Heritage trail (Old Arboretum)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Native Tree Trail (Silk Wood)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
'What's looking Good' board	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interactive map	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Restaurant plinths (No. read: _____)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tree plinths (Old Arb.) (No. read: _____)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education centre / bird room	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (e.g. guided walk / event) PLEASE SPECIFY:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Front desk volunteer (GOH)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None (<i>Go to Question 12</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments: _____

6. Why was the information provision highlighted in (5) so important to your visit?

7. Why did you choose to read the information?

Find my way around the site 1
 See what I could do 2
 Learn something 3
 Other _____

8. Was the information easy to find / access?

Yes 1 No 2

Comments: _____

9. On a scale of 1-5 (where 1= excellent, 2= good, 3= okay, 4= poor and 5= very poor) please rate our information provision for (*circle one number in each row*):

	E	G	OK	P	VP
Making you aware of what was on offer	1	2	3	4	5
Helping you to find where you wanted to go	1	2	3	4	5
Giving you insight into the collection and its History	1	2	3	4	5
Enjoyment/entertainment value	1	2	3	4	5

Comments: _____

10. On a scale of 1-5 (where 1= strongly agree, 2= agree, 3= neither agree/disagree, 4= disagree and 5= strongly disagree), how strongly do you agree with these statements (*circle one number in each row*) SHOW CARD B:

	SA	A	A/D	D	SD
The information provided made my visit more enjoyable	1	2	3	4	5
I feel that I learnt new information about Westonbirt and its tree collection	1	2	3	4	5
The information made me look at trees differently (how: _____)	1	2	3	4	5
The information gave me a better understanding of how the Forestry Commission is looking after Westonbirt	1	2	3	4	5
I would expect to find information when visiting attractions like Westonbirt	1	2	3	4	5
I consider learning about a site a fundamental part of a visit when visiting attractions like Westonbirt	1	2	3	4	5
Provision of new information would make me come again	1	2	3	4	5

Comments: _____

11. How important is information provision to the success of your day out (*circle one*)?

Essential	Important	Neither Imp. / Unimp.	Unimportant	V Unimportant
1	2	3	4	5

12. If you didn't use the information provided, was there a reason for this (*tick as many as applicable*)?

Not interested 1
 Wasn't aware of choices available 2
 My time was short 3
 Seen it before 4
 Other: _____

13. What one topic would you like to see more information provided about?

History of the arboretum 1
 Information about the trees 2
 Information about wildlife 3
 Landscape 4
 Can't think of anything 5
 There is enough information already 6
 I don't want more information provided 7
 Other/specific: _____

14. How would you like information presented?

That's all! Thank you very much for your time.

Group make-up – *tick the relevant boxes on completion of interview.*

Senior Citizens (Age 60+)
 Adults (Age 25-59)
 Young Adults (Age 16-24)
 Adolescents (Age 12-15)
 Children (Age 6-11)
 Babies/toddlers (5 and under)
 Dog
 Pushchair / wheelchair

Appendix 3: Comments made by respondents

Numbers in brackets represent the number of times a comment has been made.

Interpretation needs – comments on existing interpretation

- Maps showing “you are here”. In particular in Silk Wood (13)
- Sign posts showing “way out” or “exit” from both Silk Wood and the Old Arboretum (5)
- Some tree signs are missing / unclear. All should show Latin and common names (5)
- More directional signage from the car park area, including the new children’s play area and from the café area (4)
- Start of heritage trail was hard to locate (1)
- Seasonal trail was hard to follow. More marker posts required. (2)
- Is the scale correct on the children’s trail (printed from the web)? (1)
- Do the gates have names (re the web trail above)? (1)
- Web site does not specify costs for children? (1)
- More clearer road signage needed (1)
- Intro pack issued at the gate was excellent (1)
- Web site was described as excellent for planning visit (1)
- More emphasis needed on the benefits of membership (1)
- Last years Reindeer trail was described as excellent (1)
- The newly installed finger posts are big and intrusive (1)
- Organised walks were highly praised (1)
- More national coverage on events at the arboretum (1)

New interpretation

- Introduce listening posts (4)
- Introduce hand held audio machines (4)
- Consider an introductory video to run for 10 – 15 minutes every half an hour. This would enable newcomers to the arboretum to gain an insight into what’s on offer (8)
- Introduce more interactive displays like those found in Silk Wood (5)
- Introduce colour coded trails of different distances (2)
- More topical information (i.e. in addition to “What’s looking good”) including information on mammals, birds, fungi, flowers etc (1)
- Infra-red to trigger animal sounds (1)
- Electronic map showing trails (1)

Audience needs

- Run 2 children’s trails / treasure hunts (1 for Pre School, 1 for 5 – 8 yr olds) with coloured handouts (possibly laminated at a nominal charge). Consider using tree trunks with a lid which opens to reveal an animal etc (8)
- On tree plinths (or separate) have a few bullet points aimed at children (6)
- Introduce audio tapes, especially to aid partially sighted and blind people (6)
- Tree plinths / information – this can be confusing to the amateur. The plinth should be under the tree in question or there should be an arrow pointing to the tree or a picture of the leaf and tree to aid identification (4)
- Offer guides in different languages (2)
- Advertise the disabled facilities better (1)
- Talks / walks aimed at pre-school children (1)
- Provide a treasure hunt / trail with questions aimed at adults (1)
- Consider using symbols to aid people with learning difficulties (1)

Themes / story lines

- Information on the management practices of the Forestry Commission e.g. when trees are being felled (6)
- Provide more plinths with information on specific trees, shrubs and flowers. (5)
- Information on the species of tree that would be good in domestic gardens (4)
- More conservation information e.g. about the café roof (2)
- Provide more information about the history of different types of tree including their characteristics and uses (2)
- Information boards on the types of animals that inhabit the arboretum (1)
- Guides on fungi, flowers, fauna found at the Arboretum (1)

- Information on the age of the trees (1)

SURVEYORS COMMENTS

- Many people do not like the idea of introducing audio visual information (numbers not recorded but I would estimate 50% of all respondents)

Other comments made not related to interpretation

- 4 Interviewees used the William Woodworm trail
- One person requested information at the Great Oak Hall on the William Woodworm trail. They were told that they knew nothing about it!
- First Aid was described as good
- Access to electric buggies for the disabled was described as important
- Need more seating areas
- Entrance costs high
- Shop costs high
- There are too many organised events which disrupt the tranquillity of the arboretum
- Café costs high, including comments re dirty tables, attitude of staff, opening / closing hours.
- Toilets near plant centre need modernising
- More dog dispensers needed within Silk Wood
- The new children's play area has received a lot of positive comments