



Public Opinion of Forestry 2009, Wales

11 June 2009

This publication contains provisional findings for the 2009 Public Opinion of Forestry survey for Wales. The findings present respondents' views on a range of subjects including the benefits of forestry, use of wood fuel, purchase of wood products, visiting woodlands and community engagement.

The survey was carried out between the 6th and 18th March 2009 as part of Beaufort Research's Wales omnibus survey in which 1,002 respondents were interviewed across Wales. Summary findings are presented below.

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Benefits and Disadvantages of Forestry and Woodland

- When asked about the benefits that woodlands provide for the local community, around four fifths of respondents agreed that they “provide places for wildlife to live”, while seven in ten agreed that woodlands “provide places for recreation” and “improve the landscape”. Six in ten respondents also recognised that woodlands “provide places for relaxation and stress relief”.
- When asked if any issues relating to woodland disadvantaged their local community, over half of respondents (57 per cent) thought there were none. However, a fifth of respondents (17 per cent) thought local woodlands provided a place for criminal activity and one in ten thought they could not control what happened in them.
- Respondents were asked about what they like and dislike about their local landscape. The most popular features were “open hills/mountain or moorland” (65 per cent of respondents), followed by “trees” (63 per cent), “open space e.g. parks” (61 per cent), “woodland or forest” (59 per cent) and “water e.g. sea, rivers, lakes canals” (56 per cent).
- When asked what they disliked about their local landscape the most frequent answer was “buildings e.g. churches, houses etc” with 13 per of respondents quoting this. Over two thirds (69 per cent) said there was nothing they disliked about their local landscape.

Use of Wood Fuel

- 14 per cent of respondents reported using wood as a fuel in their home.
- Of those who reported using wood as a fuel, 51 per cent said that they were regular users and 18 per cent said they used wood as their main fuel. Most respondents either obtained their wood a few bags at a time (43 per cent) or gathered it themselves (39 per cent), rather than getting it by the truck/ van load (11 per cent).
- For those who did not use wood as a fuel, two fifths stated that they were happy with their existing system. A further 35 per cent said that it was not practical for their property.

Purchase of Wood Products

- Respondents were asked if they had purchased wood products in the last 12 months. Over half of respondents (56 per cent) had, with “furniture” (30 per cent), “other timber for DIY products” (17 per cent), “flooring” (13 per cent) and “gardening furniture/tools” (12 per cent) being the most commonly purchased.
- Respondents were also asked if they recognised the Forestry Stewardship Council (FSC) and Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) logos. Over a third of respondents (36 per cent) recognised the FSC symbol, while 12 per cent recognised the PEFC one.

Visiting Woodlands

- Nearly two-thirds of respondents (63 per cent) said they could get to forests or woodlands easily without using a car or other transport. Of these, 28 per cent visited these forests or woodlands at least once a week, 26 per cent visited at least once a month but less than once a week, 28 per cent visited less than once a month while 18 per cent never visited.
- Two thirds (65 per cent) reported that they found “peace and quiet” and “attractive scenery” important when choosing to visit a woodland. Other factors such as “wildlife”, “good for exercise” and being “in close/easy reach” were also rated highly, with over half of respondents identifying them as important.

Community Engagement

- Five per cent of respondents reported having been consulted about plans for creating, managing or using woodlands in their area. When asked if they would like to be consulted in the future, around a third (32 per cent) of all respondents said yes.
- Of those who said they had been consulted in the past, one half felt they had influenced decisions about creating, managing or using woodlands in their area. Of those who said that they would like to be consulted in the future, just over half (53 per cent) felt they thought they would be able to influence decisions.
- Respondents were asked if they or anyone in their family had attended an organised learning activity or event to do with woodlands in the last 12 months and 19 per cent indicated that this was the case. Events attended included school trips (11 per cent of respondents or their families), guided walk or talk (7 per cent),

organised course or training event (4 per cent) or a tree planting event (3 per cent).

- Three per cent of respondents said they had been involved in voluntary work in connection with woodlands in the last 12 months. Similarly, three per cent of respondents said they are involved with a community group that is involved in the conservation and/or management of local woodlands.

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Background

The Forestry Commission has conducted similar biennial surveys of public attitudes to forestry and forestry- related issues since 1995. This report presents provisional findings from the 2009 Wales Public Opinion of Forestry survey undertaken between 6th and 18th March 2009.

Final detailed results will be published in autumn 2009.

Data Collection

The 2009 survey was undertaken by the market research company Beaufort Research in their Wales omnibus survey. The omnibus sample is designed to be representative of the adult population resident in Wales aged 16 and over. The unit of sampling is the electoral ward and 68 interviewing points were selected with probability proportionate to resident adult population after stratification within unitary authority. Interview quotas were set to reflect the demographic profile of Welsh residents for age, social class and gender and the interviews were conducted face to face in the homes of respondents.

Data Tables

Tables presenting the full findings from the survey are available in pdf format along with this release.

Other publications:

Findings from previous public opinion surveys are available from the statistics pages of the Forestry Commission website: <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-5zyl9w>

Official Statistics:

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