



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine

Public Attitudes Survey on Forestry

November/December 2021



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Introduction

This report details the findings from a market research survey undertaken for the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine. The Department is in the process of developing a new Forest Strategy and the decision was taken to field a survey of the general public to better understand attitudes to forestry, and exploring wider perspectives of forestry and trees in Ireland.

The research was undertaken by Behaviour & Attitudes on behalf of the Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine following the agencies selection based upon an open tender process.

The survey undertaken was designed with significant input from the Forestry Policy Group, comprising a cross-section of forestry stakeholders, and drawing upon questions asked in similar studies fielded in other countries.

The decision was taken to undertake the survey face-to-face, as opposed to online. Face-to-face survey research is somewhat more expensive, but much better represents remote and rural populations, and ensures that all constituencies and interests have an even chance of interview. Conversely, online studies, even where nationally representative, are undertaken among members of survey panels and invariably present a more urban or metropolitan view. There are rural respondents within online samples, but they tend to live much closer to cities and towns, by virtue of the uneven distribution of rural broadband.

Conversely, a face-to-face survey is undertaken in a manner which ensures that remote rural areas are as likely to be represented as busy urban centres. Fieldwork was undertaken at 63 randomly selected sampling locations, albeit with these being selected within a precise geographic template, which ensures the correct number of interviews in each of the following regions: Dublin, Rest of Leinster Urban, Rest of Leinster Rural, Munster Urban, Munster City Boundaries, Munster Rural, Connaught/Ulster Urban, Connaught Ulster Rural.

Sampling locations were chosen within each of these regions, drawn randomly from a list of all possible DEDs within that geographic region. Interviewers are assigned a demographic quota with specific numbers of male and female respondents, and close guidelines for each interview in respect of precise age and social class targets. When all of the interviews from the 63 sampling points are taken together, the aggregated sample mirrors the national population profile of adults aged 16 and over based on the latest census of population.

Given that the selection of the sample and the use of quotas closely conforms with the guidelines set, the data from the survey can be deemed accurate to within plus or minus 2.8 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. In other words, the rules of sampling suggest that a figure of 17% will lie within a range of 20% and 14% 95 times out of 100.

Fieldwork on the survey was undertaken between 22nd November and 3rd December 2021, with all fieldwork being completed by trained and supervised members of Behaviour & Attitudes face-to-face interviewer panel. Back-checking of completed interviews and authentication of respondent data is undertaken using a combination of postal, online and telephone based methods.

At the time of the survey Ireland was approaching its second pandemic Christmas with newly introduced restrictions on dining, socialising and working as Omicron became a looming threat. As such consumer confidence and the national mood was a little lower than it would normally tend to be immediately prior to Christmas.

Executive Summary

Many Irish adults believe that they live in close proximity to woodlands or forests, with 42% suggesting that they live within five kilometres of one. Indeed those living in urban areas indicate they live as close to woodlands on average as those who live in the countryside. This is presumably explicable by the number and range of well developed urban parks with forested/woodland landscaping (Phoenix Park, St. Anne's Park, Marlay Park, all being good Dublin examples.)

General attitudes to forestry are particularly positive with three out of four wanting to see more forests planted in their own county and with broad and general interest in the planting of more trees in urban areas generally. Given a choice there is a slightly greater preference for planting more forests on public rather than on private land, but many – the majority – feel that more forest could be planted in either setting.

There is general enthusiasm for planting trees on roundabouts, in parks and in other conventional urban settings, with as many as half interested in greater planting in and around industrial estates and office parks. This lower level of interest is probably explicable by this being a more unfamiliar concept in Ireland.

Forests are a very important facet of the Irish rural landscape for the vast majority of the people. A majority indicate that they would ideally like to see a balance between agriculture and forestry, with comparatively small numbers favouring an agriculture-dominant landscape, with forestry in a more limited or subsidiary role. In effect, there is strong support for more widespread afforestation, and this is apparent across all regions and demographics. Even among farmers and their dependents there is support for more widespread afforestation.

When given a choice between broadleaf or coniferous trees, most indicate that they are happy with either, whereas the relatively small group who express a preference one way or the other, are slightly more likely to opt for deciduous rather than evergreen. Nonetheless the majority perspective is that both types of tree are acceptable/liked.

58% have visited a forest in the past year, with these more typically to rural forests, although up to half of all forestry visitors have been to urban forests as well.

Half of all adults wouldn't make any changes to forests, although there is some support for the possibility of providing better access, and in some instances parking, toilets, signage and guides about trees and planting.

Middle-aged and middle-class adults and those with young kids are more likely to have visited a forest, but those over fifties who do visit forests are much more likely to be frequent visitors generally.

Exercise and recreation are the key visit drivers but most acknowledge that we benefit from forests addressing climate change and removing CO₂, while also acknowledging their contribution to mental balance, their enhancement of air quality and their ultimate contribution to habitats for plants and wildlife.

Not surprisingly, seven out of eight (88%) feel that forestry is a benefit to its local community. Just a third reference the economic benefit, and this aspect of forestry tends to be much less front and central. Indeed there is comparatively limited awareness of media commentary or stories about forests and woodlands and where referenced, most tend to talk about their amenity value and reference climate change, CO₂ reduction etc.

Just 10% of the population indicate that they live in a wood-built home, although up to a quarter more of the population say that they would like to do so. Although this is an encouraging level, it needs to be noted that the majority are more tentative about wood-constructed buildings, and there is an evident need to communicate a more appealing vista of what this might entail.

Use of wood for fuel is limited with most relying on gas or oil for home heating. There is some view that use of wood for heating is not environmentally sensitive and again there may be a need to reframe public perspectives of wood use and its environmental appropriateness or fit.

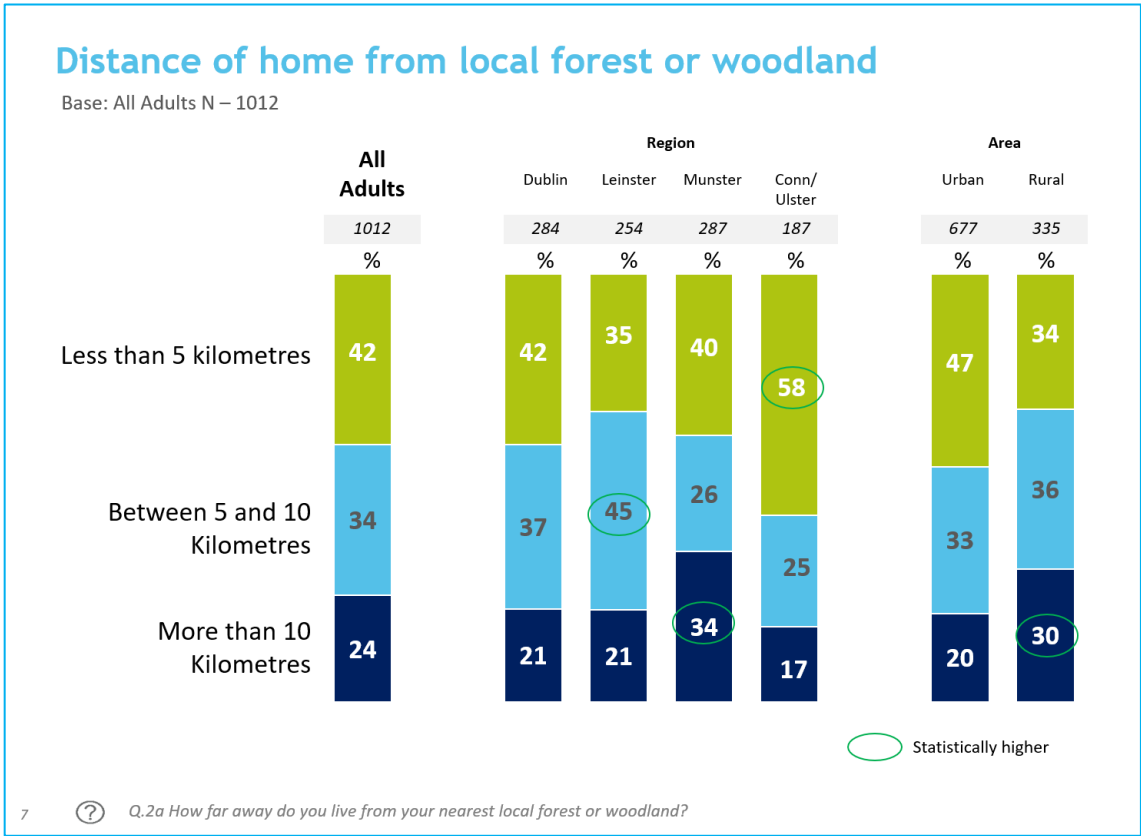
Awareness of media coverage of forests is comparatively limited. Given general and near-universal positivity towards forestry, it seems likely that many would be keen to read about them. Media commentary may be a worthwhile way to reframe sceptical views in respect of use of wood for heating or building.

Chapter One – Forest Visiting

Proximity to forests

In excess of two in five Irish adults believe that they live less than 5 kilometres from forestry or woodland. A third live 5-10 kilometres from a forest and the balance, one in four, live further than 10 kilometres from a forest.

Interestingly, there is no substantial variation by region, although a greater proportion of those living in Connaught/Ulster feel they live very close to a forest whereas a higher proportion in Munster than elsewhere suggests that they live more than 10 kilometres from a forest.



Perhaps the most interesting finding is that those living in an urban area, an area with more than 1,500 people living in their district electoral division, are more likely to suggest that they live within 5 kilometres of forestry than those who live in a rural area. This would tend to suggest that urban forests, or forests adjacent to urban areas, are relatively plentiful, and indeed that city and town-dwelling adults have a greater sense of the proximity of forests than those who live in the countryside.







Visiting forests

Ultimately just under three in five adults have visited a forest or woodland in the past year. Middle-aged adults, and those from more affluent or well-to-do backgrounds, are somewhat more likely to have been forest visitors, whereas elderly adults and those from so called working class or farming backgrounds are marginally less likely than average to have been forest or woodland visitors in the past year. Differences by region or indeed by area of residence (urban/rural) are limited. Equally there is no significant gender-based difference.

The data also serves to highlight a very direct, positive correlation between proximity to forests and likelihood of having visited one in the past year. Almost seven in ten of those who live less than 5 kilometres from a forest have visited one in the past year, in comparison with just a third of those who live over 10 kilometres from a forest.



When we analyse the same data by “lifestage”, we see that adults in the so called ‘Pre-Family’ or ‘Family Pre-School’ lifestages (i.e. no children or children at pre-primary stage) are more likely to have been forest visitors with single adults the least likely to have visited a forest.

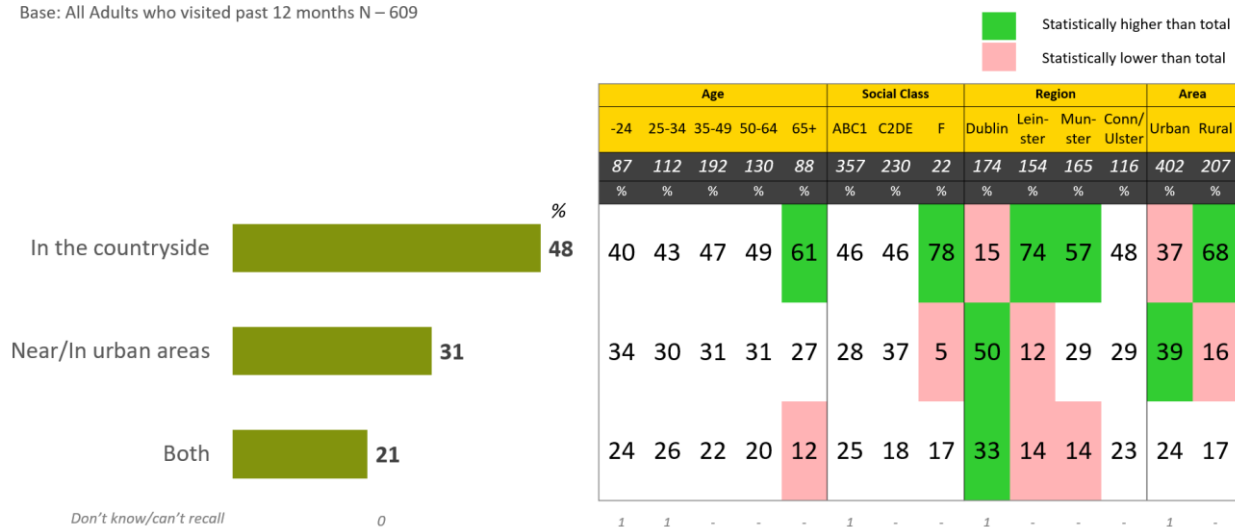
Visit Forest or Woodland x Lifestage			
		Base	Yes
			%
	All Adults	1012	58
	Single	344	50
	Pre-Family	61	76
	Family Pre-School	129	67
	Family Pre-teen	135	62
	Family teen	64	60
	Empty Nester	279	56

Type of forest visited

Focusing on adults who visited a forest in the past year we can see that almost half of them say they visited a forest in the countryside, just under a third visited one in an urban area, while a fifth have visited one in either setting.

Country or city forests visited

Base: All Adults who visited past 12 months N – 609



10 ? Q.2c And did you visit forests or woodlands in the countryside or in and around towns / urban areas?

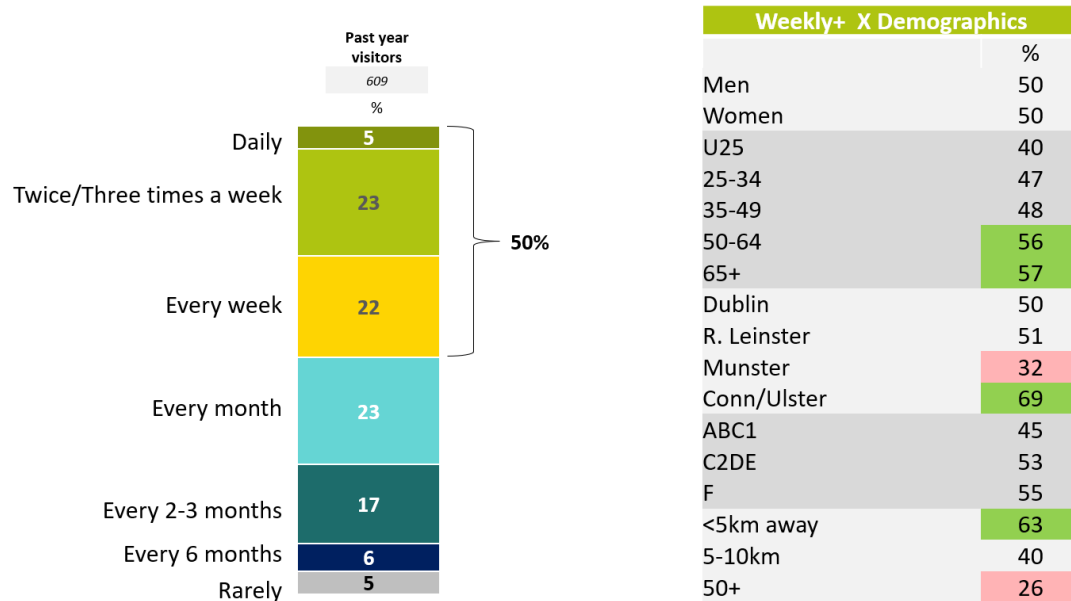
As can be seen, this means that 52% of all adults have been in an urban forest in the past year and 69% in a rural forest. Among Dubliners, 83% have been in an urban forest, whereas in Leinster 86% have been in a rural forest, a similar proportion in Munster and 77% in Connaught/Ulster.

Frequency of visiting

Of those who have visited a forest in the past year half of them indicate that they do so weekly or more often. Conversely, roughly a quarter indicate that they regularly visit a forest on a monthly basis, and another quarter somewhere between two and six monthly.

Frequency of visiting forests or woodlands

Base: All Adults who visited past 12 months N – 609



11 ? Q.2d And how often do you normally visit a forest or woodland?

Although adults aged over 50 are somewhat less likely to have been past year visitors to a forest it is interesting to note that those older adults who do visit become much more frequent forest-goers.

Likewise the most frequent forest goers are in Connaught/Ulster whereas those living in Munster are much less likely to be weekly forest visitors.

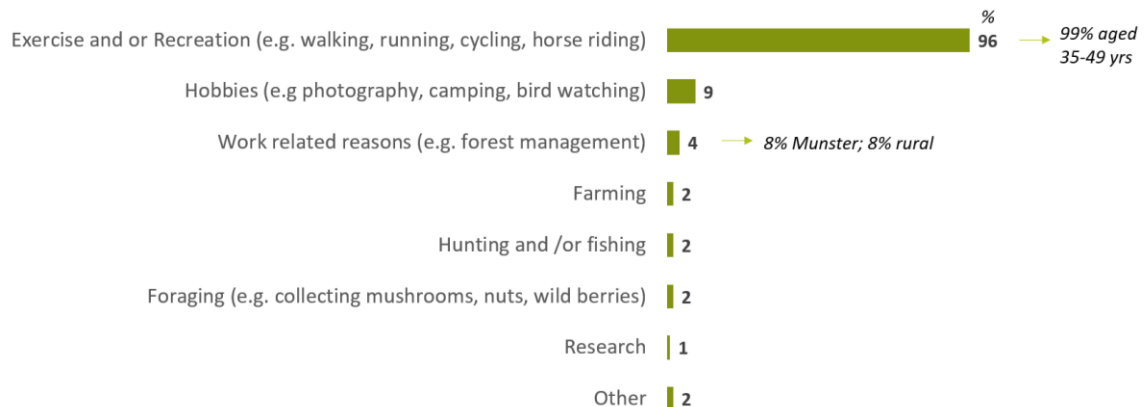
Again there is a strong correlation between proximity and weekly or more frequent visiting; almost two-thirds who live close to a forest tend to visit them weekly, in comparison with just a quarter of those who live more than 5 kilometres from one.

Chapter Two – Attractions of forests

Invariably, when asked why they visit forests or woodland, the tendency is to indicate that it is for exercise or recreation, with small numbers nominating aspects such as hobbies, work-related reasons, farming, hunting and foraging.

Reasons for visiting forests or woodlands

Base: All Adults who visited past 12 months N – 609

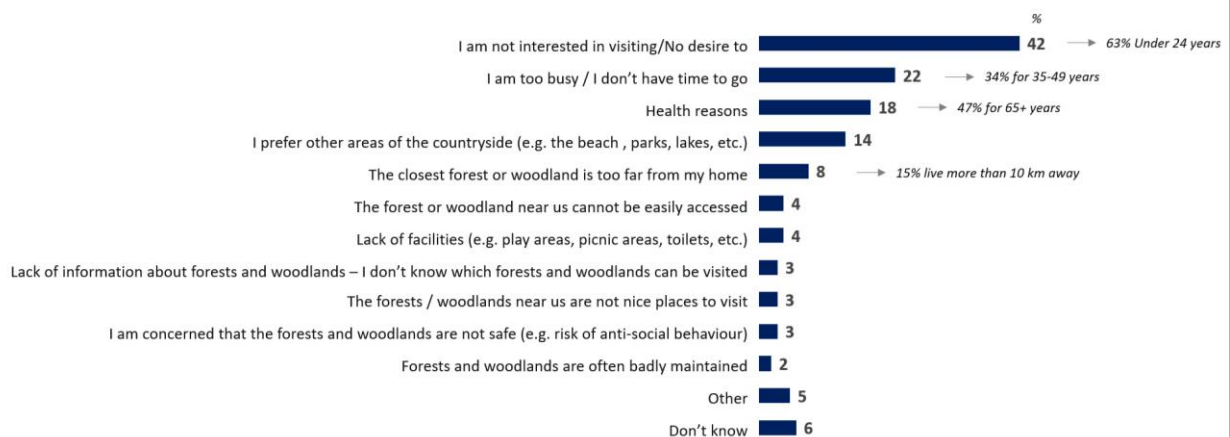


12 ? Q.2e Why do/did you visit a forest or woodland?

Non-visitors to forests predominantly indicate that they are either not interested or potentially too busy to do so. Just under a fifth of them are unable to do so for health reasons; these are predominantly older adults. One in seven suggest that they prefer other elements of the countryside, such as beaches, lakes and so forth, ahead of forests.

Reasons for not visiting forest or woodland

Base: All Adults who have not visited past 12 months N – 403

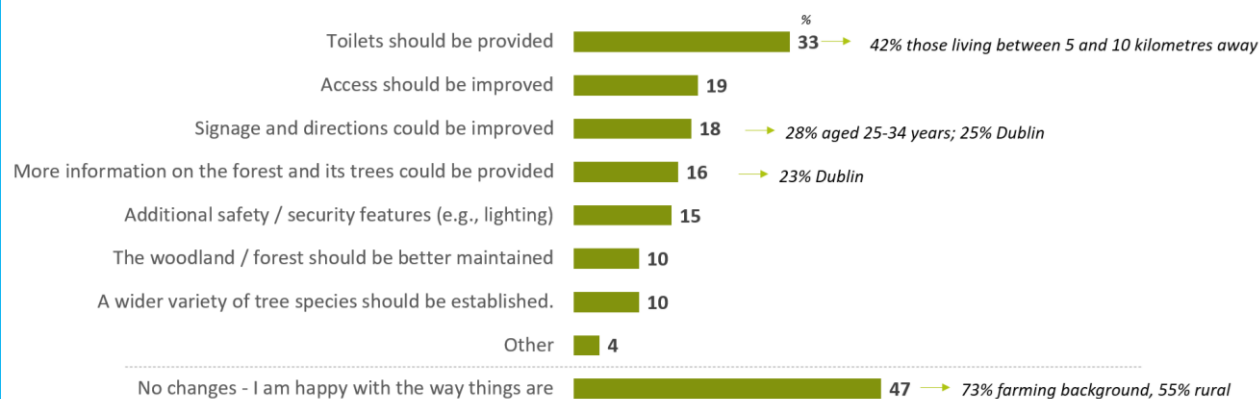


15 ? Q.2g Why have you not visited a forest or woodland over the last 12 months?

When queried about aspects they would like to see changed in how forests and woodland are managed a range of suggestions were made. Firstly, it should be emphasised that just under half of all respondents are happy with the way things are and feel that no changes to forest or woodland management is required.

Changes would like to see in forest/woodland management

Base: All Adults who visited past 12 months N – 609



13 ? Q.2f Are there any changes you would like to see on how forests / woodlands are managed?

The main suggestion is that toilet facilities might be provided, albeit followed close behind by improvements in accessibility, the addition of directional signage, provision of more information about the forest and the species planted and potentially the enhancement of safety with lighting and other security features.

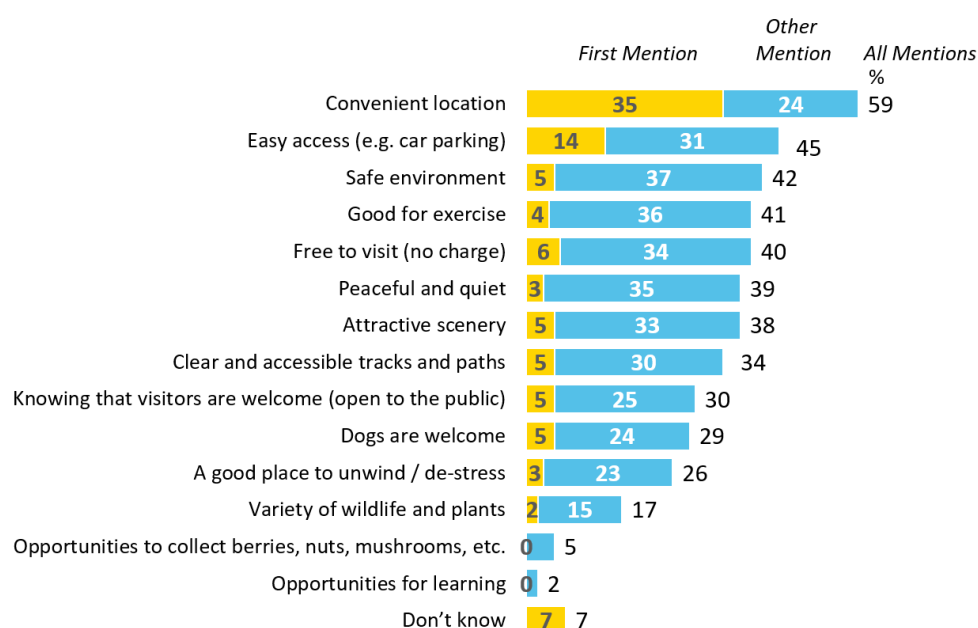
Nonetheless, most of these suggestions should be interpreted in the context that a substantially larger number are happy with forests as they are, believing that additional changes are not required

Chapter Three – Choosing a forest to visit

The key factors when it comes to deciding which forest to visit tend to be the convenience of its location, followed by ease of access, a safe environment, that it would be good for exercise, free to visit, with peace and quiet and attractive scenery. Just under three in ten are keen that dogs would be welcome, while a sixth are motivated by the variety of wildlife and plants present at the location.

Most important factors when choosing a forest/woodland to visit

Base: All Adults N – 1012



17



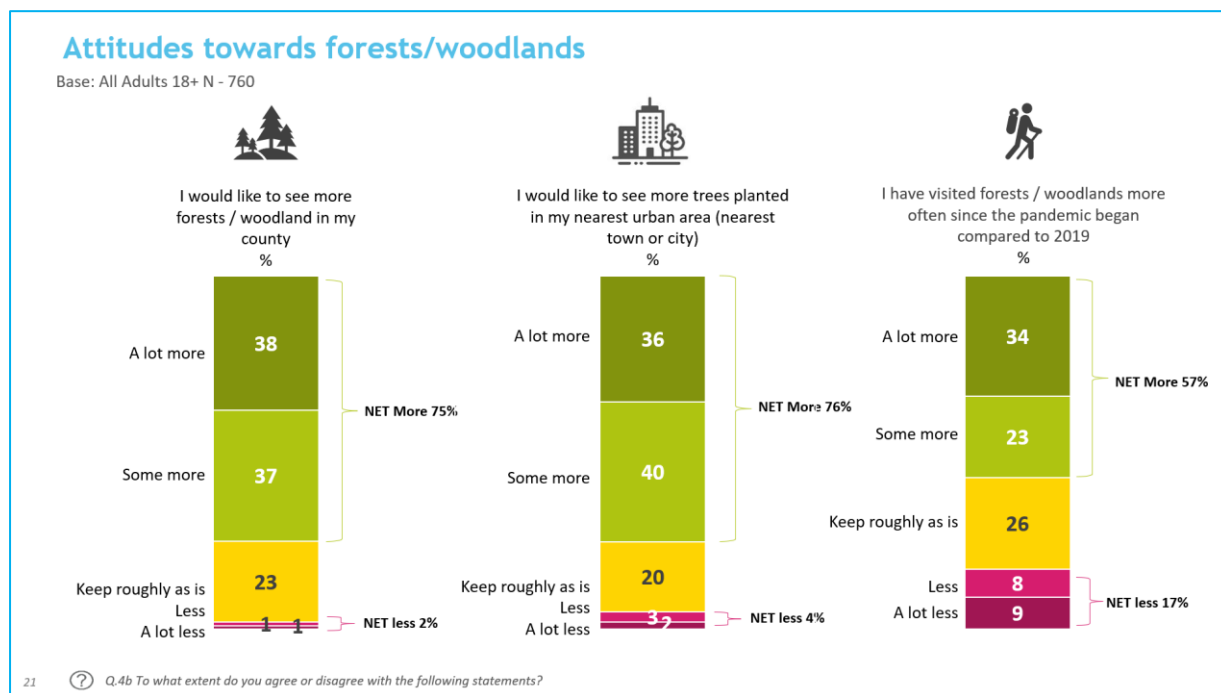
Q.2h Which, if any, of the following factors are the most important to you when choosing a forest / woodland to visit? Please select up to five of the factors from the list that are most important to you.

Nonetheless the key decision criteria is the convenience of the location of the forest, and this perhaps lends some weight to the possibility of enhancing parking and accessibility as a means of motivating more to visit forests.

Notably those living closest to forests placed particular weight on the convenience of its location, whereas rural dwellers emphasised the importance of being allowed to bring a dog, while considering the safety of the environment as a much more limited or unimportant priority.

Chapter Four – Perspectives of Forests & Woodland

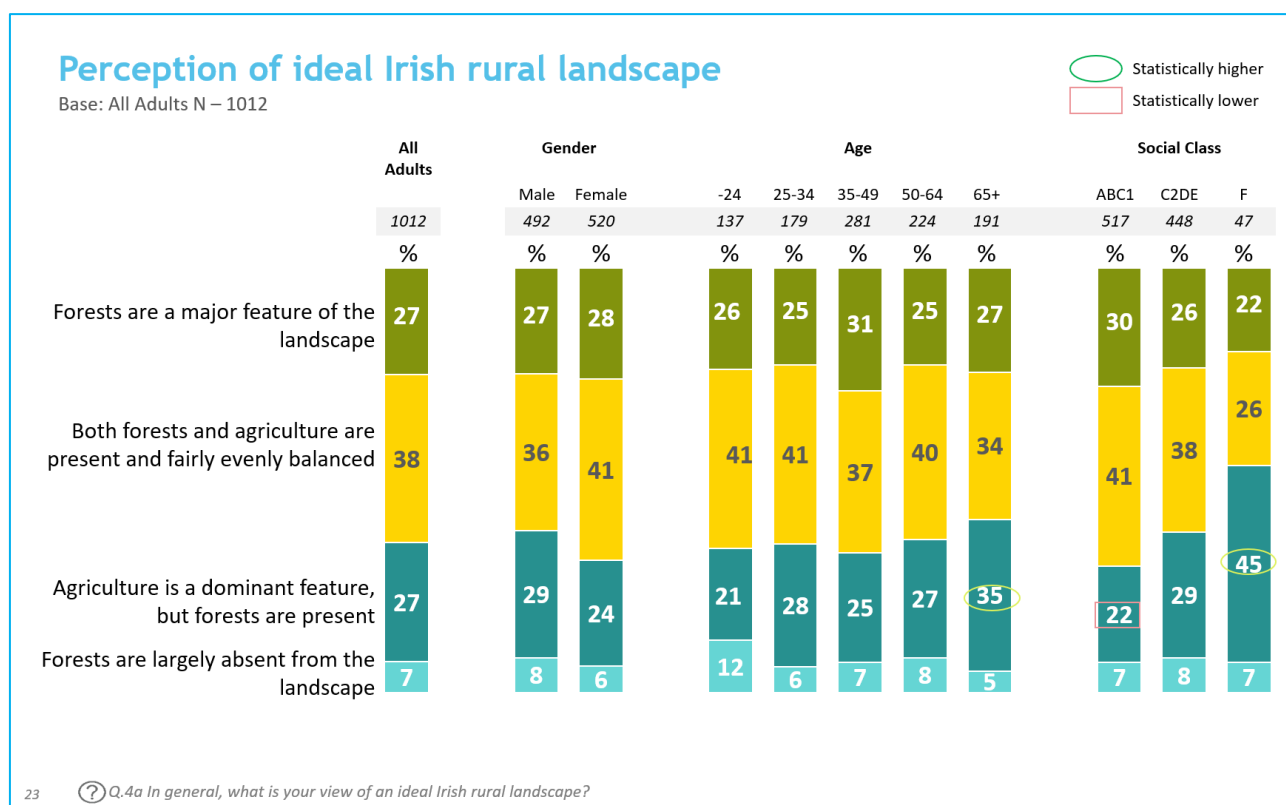
Encouragingly three out of four adults would like to see more forests or woodland in their counties, with a similarly large majority expressing a preference to see more trees planted in their nearest urban area (i.e. town or city).



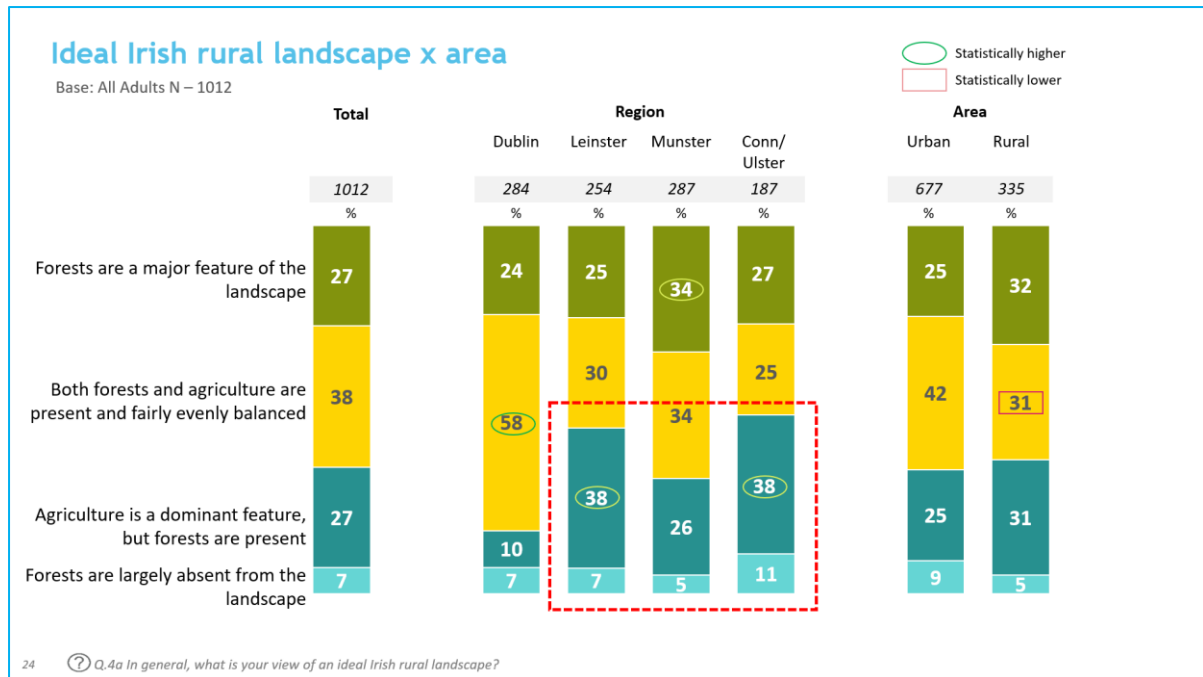
Almost three in five adults feel that they are visiting forests more frequently since the pandemic started, although a sixth (17%) say that the contrary is the case and that they are going to forests less often than they had been before the restrictions. Nonetheless, a substantial 'net majority' would imply that there are more people in forests and woodlands now than there had been prior to the pandemic. This would support other survey findings that highlighted greater focus on the outdoors and nature, coinciding with the restrictions in movement and distance limitations introduced early in the pandemic.

Positive attitudes to forests and forestry are more characteristic of those from what are classified as middle-class backgrounds and indeed are slightly more prevalent in Dublin as well. This may be a function of accessibility, having access to cars or influenced by a range of different facets.

When asked to describe the ideal Irish rural landscape, slightly more than a quarter (27%) indicated that forests would be a major feature of the landscape. Conversely, a similar proportion suggested that agriculture should be the dominant feature but forests would be present as well. The largest group therefore would be the 28% who say that both forests and agriculture should be present and relatively evenly balanced. Only one person in sixteen suggest that forests should be largely absent from the landscape.



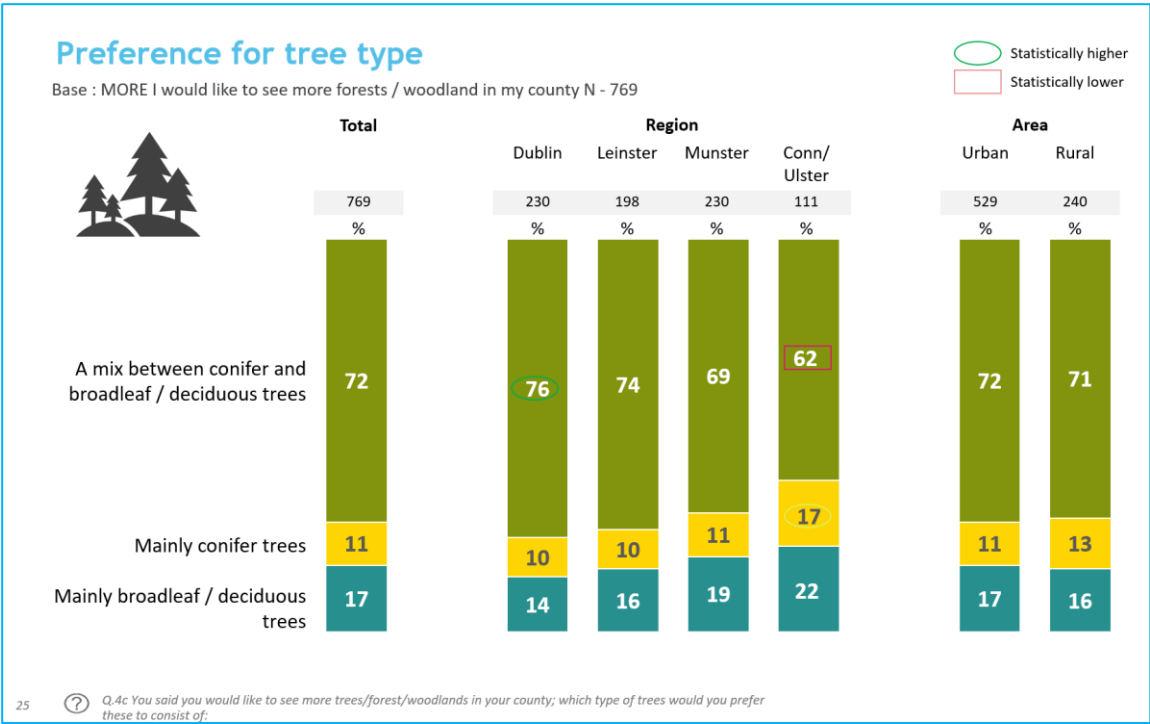
A perspective that agriculture should dominate forests is more prevalent among older adults and, to a slight extent, among men rather than women, but equally is more apparent of those who are from farming origins. Just 5% of the adult population are now classifiable as farmers (or their dependents) and although these veered somewhat more towards an ‘agriculture-dominant’ perspective, it should be noted that as many as 48% would opt for a relatively even mixture of forestry and agriculture, within which nearly a quarter would prefer forests to be the major feature of the rural landscape.



Studying this response by region is interesting and we note that Dubliners are the most likely to favour a relatively even balance, albeit tending to verge on the side of forests more so than agriculture, whereas the majority in the other regions have a marginally greater interest in agriculture ahead of trees, although the Munster response is very similar to the national one.

Chapter Five – Focus on Trees

When given a choice between planting broadleaf or deciduous trees, or alternatively, coniferous or evergreen, there tended to be comparatively even preference. A slightly greater number who expressed a preference for one type or other nominated broadleaf, but nonetheless the vast majority felt that a mix between conifer and deciduous was preferable.



This slightly surprised the researchers; we perhaps naively assumed that there might be a greater preference for broadleaf, but ultimately this was not born out by the research, with most content to say that they like *either type* of tree, not preferring one ahead of the other.

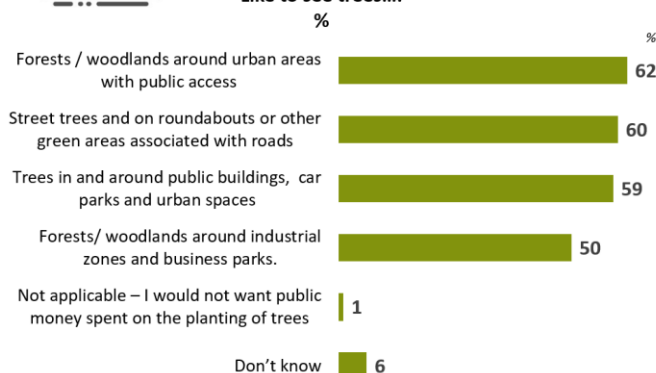
Turning to where trees might be planted in urban areas, there was broad support for all of the outlined options, albeit with marginally greater enthusiasm for planting in accessible public areas, followed by on streets and roundabouts and around public buildings, car parks and in urban spaces.

Support for trees in urban area via public funding or planning guidelines

Base: MORE would like to see more trees planted in my nearest urban area N - 773



Like to see trees....



Statistically higher than total
Statistically lower than total

Region				Area	
Dublin	Leinster	Munster	Conn/ Ulster	Urban	Rural
237	207	224	105	525	248
%	%	%	%	%	%
73	56	56	60	64	58
66	53	64	53	63	55
61	59	63	49	62	55
55	39	57	49	51	49
1	1	2	1	2	1
3	6	7	8	5	8

26

Q.4d If you would like to see more trees planted in your nearest urban area, which of the following should be supported through public funding or planning guidelines / specifications?

The most limited support, but still half of the sample who would like to see more trees in urban areas, was for planting around industrial zones or business parks. Undoubtedly the latter is less common in Ireland and more in evidence in continental Europe. The lower score may simply be reflective of a lack of familiarity with planting around industrial zones in particular.

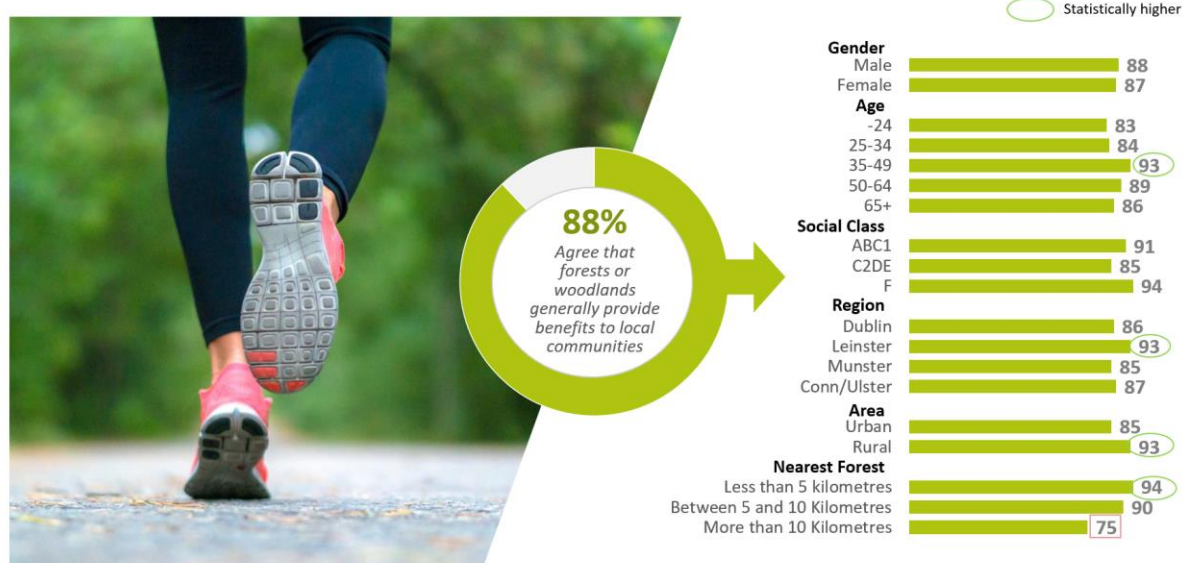
Chapter Six – Benefits to the community

When asked to indicate whether forests and woodlands generally provide benefit to their local community or not, the vast majority – seven out of eight – agreed that they are of benefit.

The response is similar across all demographic categories, albeit marginally more enthusiastic amongst those living closest to woodlands and forests, and less so (just three out of four) among those living further away.

Perception that forests/woodlands provide benefits to local communities

Base: All Adults N – 1012



27 ? Q.3a Do you think that forests or woodlands generally provide benefits to local communities?

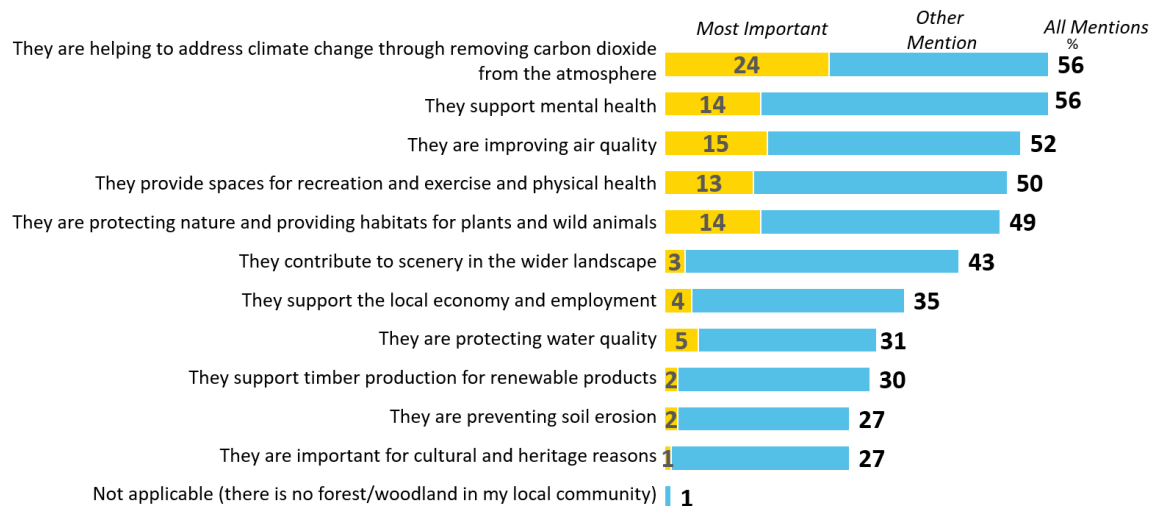
It has to be said that it is unusual to see as unambiguous a response in survey research; the Irish population is decidedly enthusiastic about the benefits of forests to the community.

When asked to indicate the ways in which forests benefit the community a wide variety of facets are mentioned, with the ability of forests to address climate change by removing carbon dioxide most commonly cited. Thereafter, there is a view that they support or promote mental health, improve air quality and provide access to spaces for recreation and exercise. Many are of the view that they protect nature and provide habitats for plants and wild animals. Likewise they are felt to contribute to scenery in the wider landscape.

Just one in three felt that they are of benefit to the local economy and employment; most are much more likely to mention scenic or environmental benefit, with thought of economic advantage more ancillary.

Most important benefits that forests/woodlands provide to local communities

Base: All Adults agree forests/woodland provide benefits to local communities N - 894



28



Q.3b If yes, what benefits do forests / woodlands provide to your local community?
Q.3c And which of these are the most important?

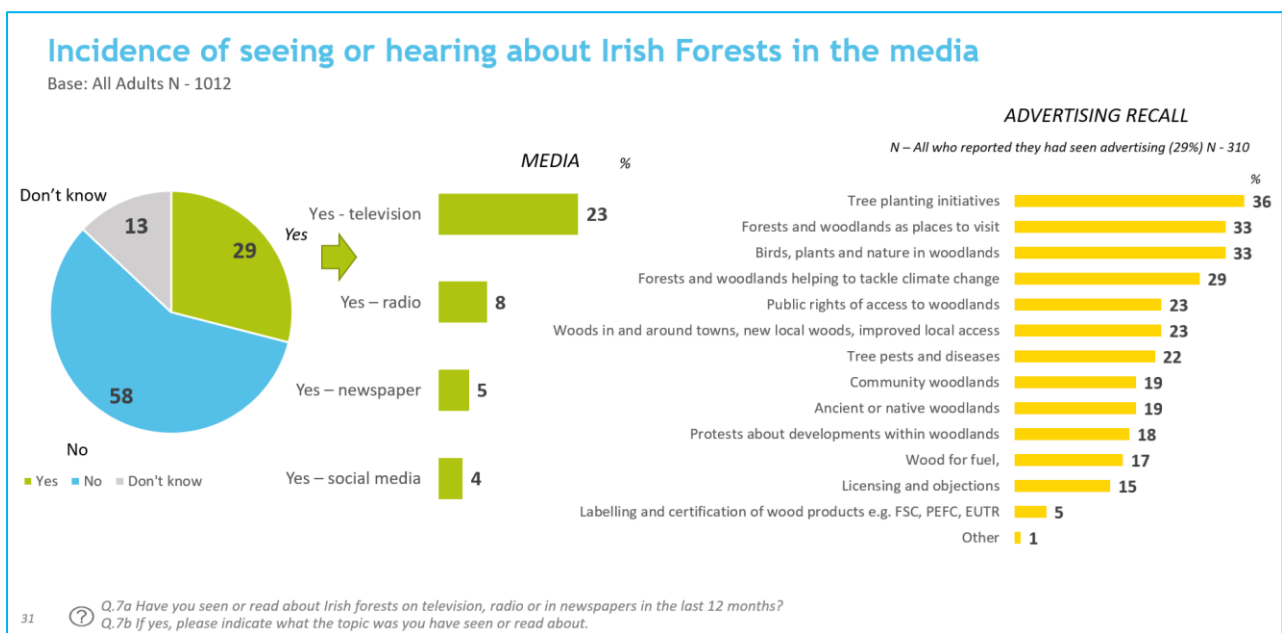
A very small proportion, just 3%, suggested that forests and woodland do not provide benefit to their local community. The disparate reasons mentioned include their not providing sufficient jobs, the inaccessibility of forests to them in their own locality, that the presence of forests might present a blockage to building or development, or indeed that forests might bring too many visitors and create noise pollution.

Nonetheless these objections are all expressed by very small numbers, while more than nineteen in twenty are of the view that forests offer a positive contribution to their local community.

Chapter 7 – Forests in the Media

Just over one in four feel they have seen or read something about forestry in the media with the vast majority (58%) indicating that they have not.

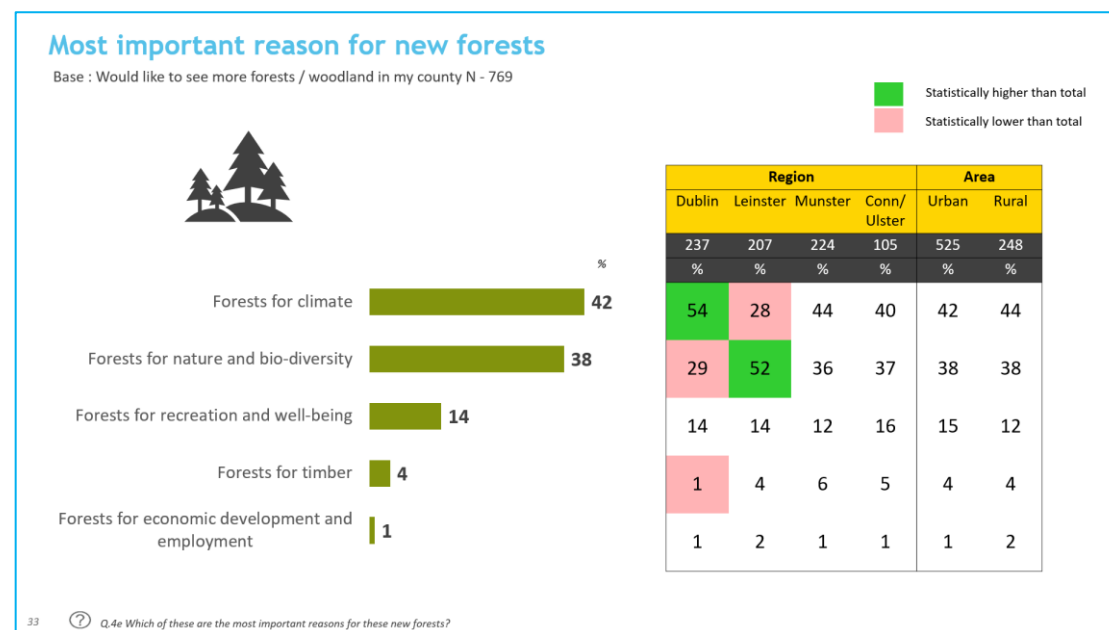
Predominantly those who have seen references to forestry perceive that they have probably seen these on television, with references to radio and press more limited. Indeed this is not unusual in the context of perceptions as to which media influenced people; there is a tendency for people to be more likely to cite television than other media.



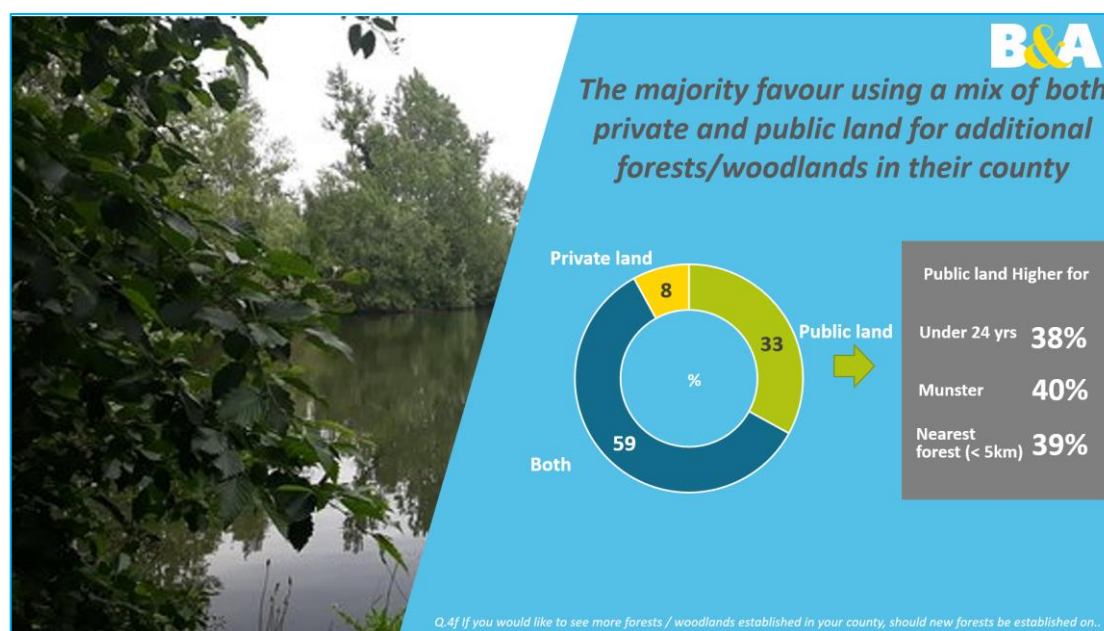
A wide range of content or stories are mentioned, albeit predominantly in respect of the amenity value of forests or around tree planting initiatives.

Chapter 8 – The Role of Forests

When those in favour of planting more trees in their area were asked to describe the key reasons for planting forests, they predominantly focused on their impact on climate, as well as their benefit to both nature and biodiversity. Additionally one in seven mentioned their role in recreation and wellbeing, while comparatively small numbers referenced the production of timber and the economic stimulus and employment benefit.



When asked to indicate whether they felt forests should be developed on public land, private land or both, a majority suggested that either would be appropriate, but of those who chose one or other, the predominant preference – on a four to one basis – was in respect of planting on public rather than on private land.



Given the high number indicating that both are appropriate, this would tend to suggest that most don't see limitations on where forests might be planted.

The key objectives that would be achieved by planting more forests or woodland in one's own county include the provision of new habitats for wildlife, the combating of climate change, again, to provide places for relaxation, followed closely by locations appropriate for recreation and/or tourism.



Again, it should be noted that a more modest number referenced the economic benefit, and fewer again, the provision of timber and the development of self-sufficiency in timber and wood products.

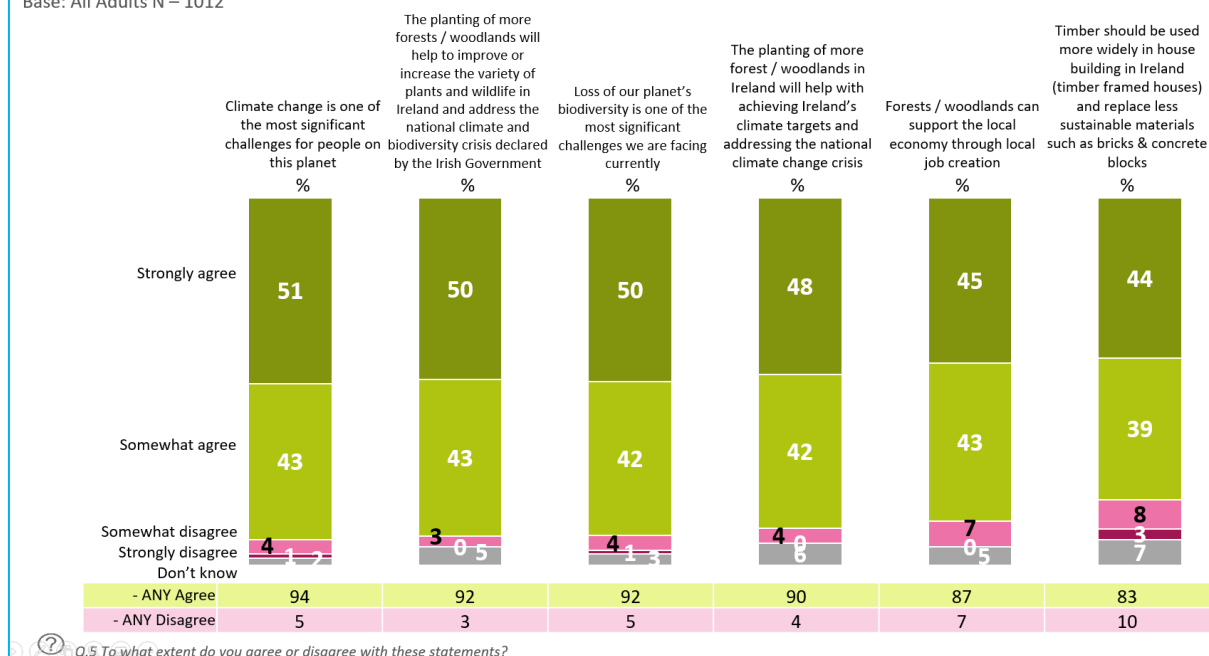
In respect of all of these motivations there is little or no demographic variation of response; Dubliners are more likely to mention the provision of more places for wildlife to live, while those in Connaught/Ulster more often referenced the enhancement of the landscape or the countryside.

In other respects, however, attitudes are very similar by gender, by age, by social class, and it should be emphasised that this is quite unusual in public opinion research. Views are remarkably even or homogenous.

There is almost universal agreement that climate change is one of the most significant challenges for people on this planet and equally that the planting of more forests and woodlands will help to increase the variety of plants and wildlife in Ireland and address climate change and biodiversity issues. Across this series of six statements there is generally almost universal agreement, with just one in eight disagreeing that timber should be used more widely in home building, replacing less sustainable materials such as bricks and concrete blocks.

Attitudes towards climate change and the planting of forests & woodlands

Base: All Adults N – 1012



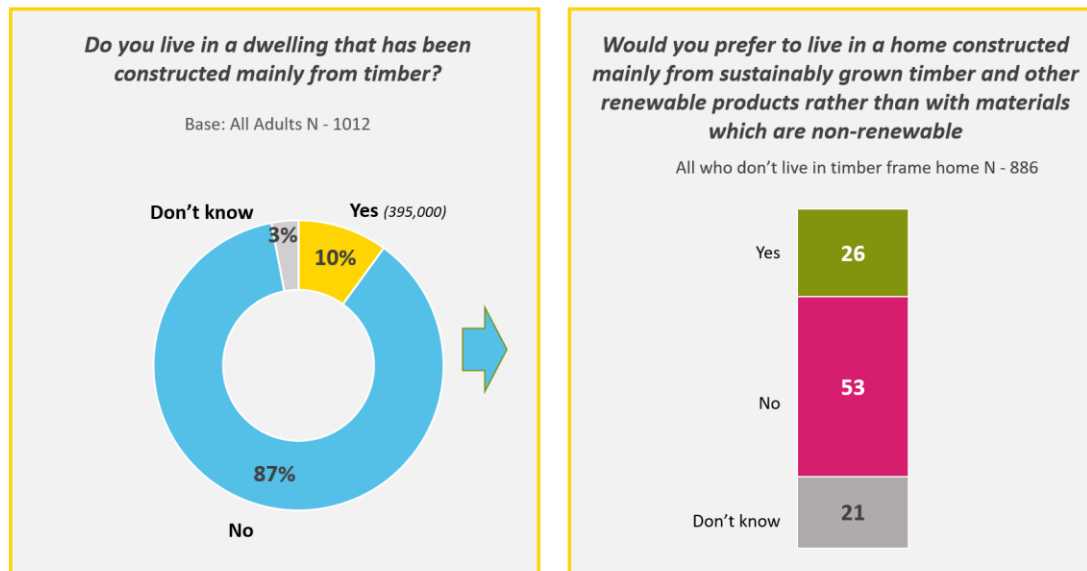
Nine out of ten agree that the planting of more forests and woodland in Ireland will help with achieving Ireland's climate targets and addressing the national climate change crisis.

The principle demographic difference in response across all of these statements is in respect of a significantly higher level of strong agreement among adults from middle-class backgrounds, Dubliners and those who have visited a forest within the past twelve months. All of these groups are more likely to strongly agree with the majority of positive/support statements in respect of forestry.

Chapter 9 – Use of Timber & Wood

10% of Irish adults believe that they live in a house that was constructed mainly from timber. This equates with a population group of almost 400,000.

Timber frame houses



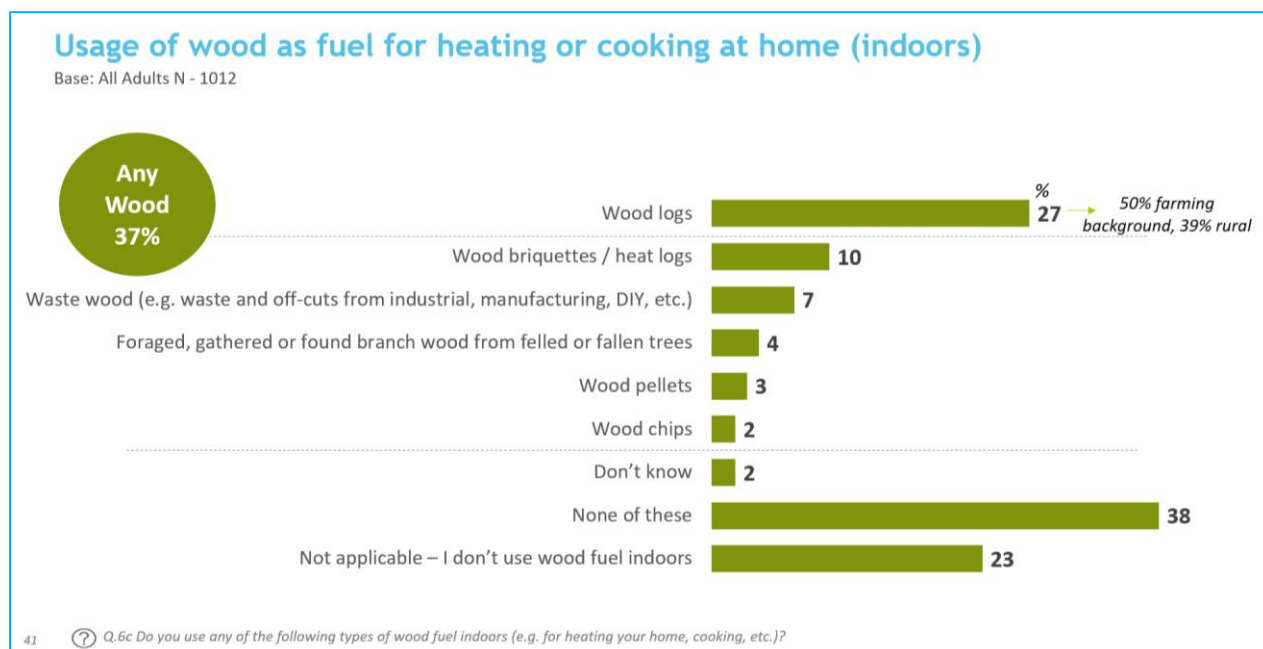
40 ? Q.6a Do you live in a dwelling that has been constructed mainly from timber? (e.g. timber frame house)
Q.6b Would you prefer to live in a home constructed mainly from sustainably grown timber and other renewable products rather than with materials which are non-renewable

Of the remainder, a quarter indicate that they would like to live in a home that has been mainly constructed from sustainably grown timber and other renewable products, rather than materials which are non-renewable.

Although this indicates a substantial desire to live in a wood built home, the corollary is that a very large number would be opposed or wary in this regard. Evidently people need much more knowledge around the integrity, durability and other characteristics of homes constructed predominantly from wood.

Chapter 10 – Use of Wood for Fuel

37% of adults indicate that they burn or use wood for fuel indoors, whether for cooking or home heating.



The use of wooden logs is the most likely and this is common place among adults from farming backgrounds and those living in rural areas. Apart from logs, there is widespread use of wooden briquettes, waste wood and indeed foraged wooden branches from already-felled or fallen trees.

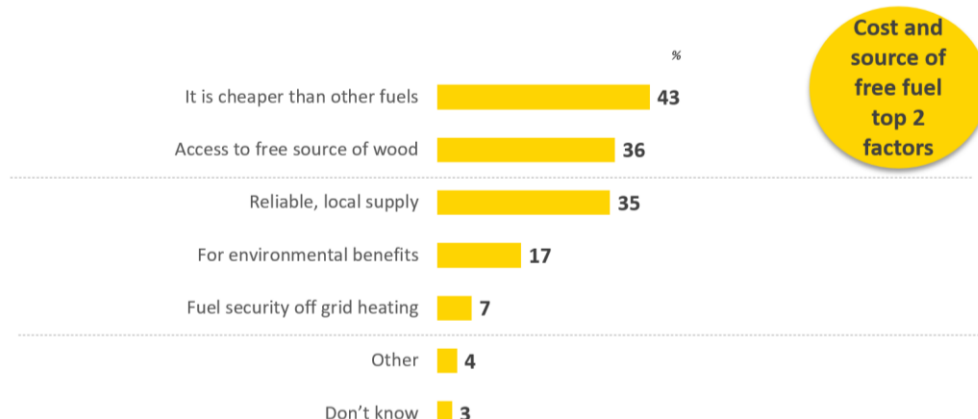
The demographic differences are interesting with just a quarter of adults from middle or working class backgrounds burning wood logs, but the figure rising to half of all from farming backgrounds. Regional variation is significant too, ranging from as low as one in eight using wood logs in Dublin, to as high as a third in Munster or Connaught/Ulster and just slightly less (31%) in the Rest of Leinster.

In line with the ban on smoky fuels in Dublin we note that just 16% of Dubliners indicate that they burn wood in the home at any level, in comparison with figures of 46%, 44% and 44% in the Rest of Leinster, Munster and Connaught/Ulster.

Wood is predominantly used because it is cheaper than other fuels, users have access to a ready supply, and it can be sourced locally. About one in six cite the environmental benefits and 7% specifically mention that they are effectively off-grid (presumably not connected to the National Gas grid etc.).

Reasons for using wood fuel indoors

Base: All Adults who use wood as fuel indoors N - 375

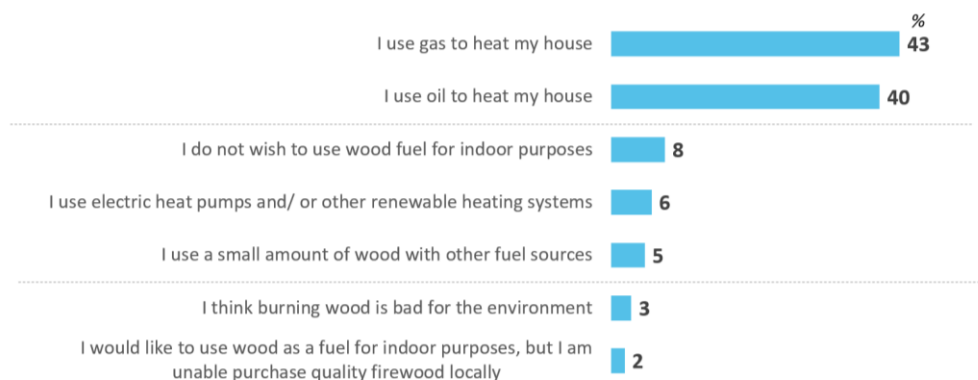


43 ? Q.6d If you are using wood fuel indoors, why are you using it?

Those who don't use wood predominantly indicate that this is because they are users of gas or oil, with 8% saying they prefer not to use wood indoors, 3% suggesting that it is bad for the environment, and 2% saying that they are unable to source a reliable wood supply locally. In effect, most non-users have a workable alternative.

Reasons for not using wood as fuel indoors

Base: All Adults who do not use wood as fuel indoors N - 637



44 ? Q.6e If you are not using wood fuel indoors, which of these statements apply to you?

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SURVEY Questionnaire

Attitudes to Afforestation in Ireland, 2021 ASK ALL +18
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Now, we would like to ask you some questions about your attitudes to forests and woodlands.

Q.2a How far away do you live from your nearest local forest or woodland?

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Less than 5 kilometres | 1 |
| Between 5 and 10 Kilometres | 2 |
| More than 10 Kilometres | 3 |

Q.2b Have you visited a forest or woodland over the last 12 months?

- | | |
|-----|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

IF YES AT Q.2b, ASK

Q.2c And did you visit forests or woodlands in the countryside or in and around towns / urban areas?

In the countryside	1
Near/In urban areas	2
Both	3
Don't know / can't recall	4

IF VISITED A FOREST IN PAST YEAR AT Q.2b, ASK

Q.2d And how often do you normally visit a forest or woodland?

Daily	1
Twice/Three times a week	2
Every week	3
Every month	4
Every 2-3 months	5
Every 6 months	6
Rarely	7

IF VISITED A FOREST IN PAST YEAR AT Q.2b, ASK

Q.2e Why do/did you visit a forest or woodland? MULTICODE

Exercise and or Recreation (e.g. walking, running, cycling, horse riding)	1
Work related reasons (e.g. forest management)	2
Farming	3
Research	4
Hobbies (e.g photography, camping, bird watching)	5
Hunting and /or fishing	6
Foraging (e.g. collecting mushrooms, nuts, wild berries)	7
Other (please specify)	8

IF VISITED A FOREST IN PAST YEAR AT Q.2b, ASK

Q.2f Are there any changes you would like to see on how forests / woodlands are managed? SHOW SCREEN

No changes - I am happy with the way things are	1
Access should be improved	2
Signage and directions could be improved	3
More information on the forest and its trees could be provided	4
Toilets should be provided	5
Additional safety / security features (e.g., lighting)	6
The woodland / forest should be better maintained	7
A wider variety of tree species should be established.	8
Other (please specify)	9

IF NO AT Q.2b, ASK

Q.2g Why have you not visited a forest or woodland over the last 12 months?

MULTICODE.

Health reasons	1
The forest or woodland near us cannot be easily accessed	2
The closest forest or woodland is too far from my home	3
Lack of facilities (e.g. play areas, picnic areas, toilets, etc.)	4
Lack of information about forests and woodlands – I don't know which forests and woodlands can be visited	5
The forests / woodlands near us are not nice places to visit	6
I prefer other areas of the countryside (e.g. the beach , parks, lakes, etc.)	7
I am concerned that the forests and woodlands are not safe (e.g. risk of anti-social behaviour)	8
Forests and woodlands are often badly maintained	9
I am too busy / I don't have time to go	10
I am not interested in visiting/No desire to	11
Don't know	12
Other	13

Q.2h Which, if any, of the following factors are the most important to you when choosing a forest / woodland to visit? Please select up to five of the factors from the list that are most important to you. **CODE UP TO 5, RECORD FIRST MENTION SEPARATELY.**

SHOW SCREEN

	1 st	Other
Convenient location	1	1
Easy access (e.g. car parking)	2	2
Knowing that visitors are welcome (open to the public)	3	3
Free to visit (no charge)	4	4
Clear and accessible tracks and paths	5	5
Attractive scenery	6	6
Dogs are welcome	7	7
Peaceful and quiet	8	8
Good for exercise	9	9
Safe environment	10	10
A good place to unwind / de-stress	11	11
Variety of wildlife and plants	12	12
Opportunities to collect berries, nuts, mushrooms, etc.	13	13
Opportunities for learning	14	14
Don't know	15	15

Q.3a Do you think that forests or woodlands generally provide benefits to local communities?

- Yes 1
No 2
Don't know 3

IF YES AT Q.3a, ASK

SHOW SCREEN

Q.3b If yes, what benefits do forests / woodlands provide to your local community?

MULTICODE

IF SELECTED MULTIPLE CODES IN Q3b, ASK

Q.3c And which of these are the most important? Please rank up to 5, with 1 being the most important. **RANK UP TO 5, RECORD FIRST MENTION. SHOW THE LIST THEY SELCTED AND ASK TO RANK UP TO 5.**

	All	Top 5 (Code 1to5)
They are helping to address climate change through removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere	1	
They are improving air quality	2	
They are protecting water quality	3	
They are protecting nature and providing habitats for plants and wild animals	4	
They are preventing soil erosion	5	
They support the local economy and employment	6	
They support timber production for renewable products	7	
They provide spaces for recreation and exercise and physical health	8	
They support mental health	9	
They are important for cultural and heritage reasons	10	
They contribute to scenery in the wider landscape	11	
Don't know	12	
Not applicable (there is no forest/woodland in my local community)	13	
Other (please specify)	14	

IF NO AT Q.3a, ASK

Q.3d Why do think forests/ woodlands do not generally provide benefits to local communities? (Please select all answers that apply.)

Forests / woodlands don't provide enough local jobs	1
The forests / woodlands near us cannot be accessed	2
The forests / woodlands don't have enough variety of wildlife	3
The forests / woodlands get in the way of developments around the community (e.g. the building of new homes, etc.)	4
We can't control what happens in our forests / woodlands	5
Forest / woodland operations and visitors create noise pollution	6
The management of forests / woodlands can contribute to air, water or soil pollution	7
The forest does not have enough variety of tree species	8
Don't know	9
Not applicable (there are no woodland related issues in my local community)	10

Q.4a In general, what is your view of an ideal Irish rural landscape?

Is it one in which:

Forests are a major feature of the landscape.	1
Both forests and agriculture are present and fairly evenly balanced.	2
Agriculture is a dominant feature, but forests are present.	3
Forests are largely absent from the landscape.	4

Q.4b To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Question:	A lot more	Some more	Keep roughly as is	Less	A lot less
I would like to see more forests / woodland in my county?	1	2	3	4	5
I would like to see more trees planted in my nearest urban area (nearest town or city)	1	2	3	4	5
I have visited forests / woodlands more often since the pandemic began compared to 2019?	1	2	3	4	5

IF CODES 1 OR 2 IN Q.4Bi, ASK

Q.4c You said you would like to see more trees/forest/woodlands in your county; which type of trees would you prefer these to consist of:

A mix between conifer and broadleaf / deciduous trees	1
Mainly conifer trees	2
Mainly broadleaf / deciduous trees	3

IF CODES 1 OR 2 IN Q.4Bii, ASK

SHOW SCREEN & READ OUT

Q.4d If you would like to see more trees planted in your nearest urban area, which of the following should be supported through public funding or planning guidelines / specifications? MULTICODE

Street trees and on roundabouts or other green areas associated with roads	1
Trees in and around public buildings, car parks and urban spaces	2
Forests / woodlands around urban areas with public access	3
Forests/ woodlands around industrial zones and business parks.	4
Don't know	5
Other (please specify)	6
Not applicable – I would not want public money spent on the planting of trees	7

IF CODES 1 OR 2 IN Q.4Bi, ASK

Q.4e You said you would like to see more forests / woodlands established in your county. Which of these are the most important reasons for these new forests? Please choose what you believe to be the three most important reasons. **CODE UP TO 3, RECORD ORDER OF MENTION/IMPORTANCE.**

ROTATE ORDER OF EXPOSURE	Ranking (please choose the three objectives you consider to be most important and rank from 1 – 3 with 1 being the most important objective)
Forests for climate	
Forests for nature and bio-diversity	
Forests for timber	
Forests for recreation and well-being	
Forests for economic development and employment	

IF CODES 1 OR 2 IN Q.4Bi, ASK

Q.4f If you would like to see more forests / woodlands established in your county, should new forests be established on..

Public land (e.g. land owned by Local Authorities, OPW, NPWS, National Transport Authority, Irish Rail, Ports, ...)	1
Private land	2
Both	3

IF CODES 1 OR 2 IN Q.4Bi, ASK

Q.4g If you would like to see more forests / woodlands established in your county, which of the following objectives should be supported by funding initiatives e.g. includes public and private funding. Indicate all the reasons that are important to you.

Q.4gi Now please indicate the 5 most important to you (where 1=most important, 2=second most etc.)?

SHOW THE LIST THEY SELCTED IN Q.4g AND ASK TO RANK UP TO 5

To provide places for wildlife to live	1	
To provide places for recreation and tourism	2	
To provide places for relaxation and mental health	3	
To combat climate change	4	
To improve the countryside landscape	5	
To support the economy and employment in rural areas	7	
To provide places for learning and education	8	
To provide timber and renewable products	9	
To make us more self-sufficient in timber and wood products	10	

Q.5 To what extent do you agree or disagree with these statements?

Statement	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Climate change is one of the most significant challenges for people on this planet	1	2	3	4	5
Loss of our planet's biodiversity is one of the most significant challenges we are facing currently	1	2	3	4	5
The planting of more forest / woodlands in Ireland will help with achieving Ireland's climate targets and addressing the national climate change crisis	1	2	3	4	5
The planting of more forests / woodlands will help to improve or increase the variety of plants and wildlife in Ireland and address the national climate and biodiversity crisis declared by the Irish Government	1	2	3	4	5
Forests / woodlands can support the local economy through local job creation	1	2	3	4	5
Timber should be used more widely in house building in Ireland (timber framed houses) and replace less sustainable materials such as bricks & concrete blocks	1	2	3	4	5

Q.6a Do you live in a dwelling that has been constructed mainly from timber ?(e.g. timber frame house)

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

IF NO IN Q.6a, ASK

Q.6b Would you prefer to live in a home constructed mainly from sustainably grown timber and other renewable products rather than with materials which are non-renewable (e.g. concrete). (Sustainably grown timber is harvested from forests that are managed, and restocked responsibly).

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

Q.6c Do you use any of the following types of wood fuel indoors (e.g. for heating your home, cooking, etc.)? **MULTICODE POSSIBLE.**

Wood logs	1
Wood pellets	2
Wood chips	3
Wood briquettes / heat logs	4
Waste wood (e.g. waste and off-cuts from industrial, manufacturing, DIY, etc.)	5
Foraged, gathered or found branch wood from felled or fallen trees	6
None of these	7
Don't know	8
Not applicable – I don't use wood fuel indoors	9

IF ANY WOOD FUELS (CODES 1-6) IN Q.6c, ASK

Q6.d If you are using wood fuel indoors, why are you using it?

It is cheaper than other fuels	1
For environmental benefits	2
Access to free source of wood	3
Fuel security off grid heating	4
Reliable, local supply	5
Other (please specify)	6
Don't know	7

Q.6e If you are not using wood fuel indoors, which of these statements apply to you?

I do not wish to use wood fuel for indoor purposes.	1
I use oil to heat my house.	2
I use gas to heat my house	3
I use electric heat pumps and/ or other renewable heating systems.	4
I use a small amount of wood with other fuel sources.	5
I would like to use wood as a fuel for indoor purposes, but I am unable purchase quality firewood locally.	6
I think burning wood is bad for the environment.	7

Q.7a Have you seen or read about Irish forests on television, radio or in newspapers in the last 12 months?

Yes - television	1
Yes – radio	2
Yes – newspaper	3
Yes – social media	4
No	5
Don't know	6

IF ANY YES IN Q.7a

Q.7b If yes, please indicate what the topic was you have seen or read about.

MULTICODE

ROTATE ORDER	
Tree planting initiatives	1
Forests and woodlands as places to visit	2
Forests and woodlands helping to tackle climate change	3
Birds, plants and nature in woodlands	4
Community woodlands	5
Public rights of access to woodlands	6
Protests about developments within woodlands	7
Ancient or native woodlands	8
Woods in and around towns, new local woods, improved local access	9
Tree pests and diseases	10
Wood for fuel,	11
Labelling and certification of wood products e.g. FSC, PEFC, EUTR	12
Licensing and objections	13
Other (please specify)	14



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