



Scotland's
Young
People's
Forest



Scotland's Young People's Forest:

National Consultation Report
November 2021



This consultation aimed to understand how other young people in Scotland felt about the Scotland's Young People's Forest (SYPF) Project and to gather their opinions on some of the major decisions the project needs to make.

Introduction

To engage with a wider cohort, and to inform the work of the Panel, a National Consultation Survey was designed and delivered by the Panel. This consultation aimed at understanding how other young people in Scotland felt about the Scotland's Young People's Forest project and to gather their opinions on some of the major decisions the project needs to make.

The consultation was launched on the 20th of September 2021 and ran for 5 weeks, closing on the 24th of October 2021.

The consultation consisted of 13 questions, collecting a mixture of quantitative and qualitative answers. Most quantitative questions were multiple choice to encourage as many thoughts and opinions as possible.

Method

The consultation questions were created by the current Young People within the project. The consultation was hosted on Alchemer and promoted through all Young Scot social media and internal basecamps.

Participants

There were a total of 147 responses, with representation from each authority area, and good representation from within the central belt, with the majority of respondents living in Stirling (13%), Edinburgh (10%) and Aberdeenshire (9%). All respondents were between the ages of 11 and 26, with at least one respondent from each age group. The majority of respondents were female (68%) and were of English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British ethnicity (80%). Just over half (51%) were still in full-time school education with a further fifth in full time employment. 61% of respondents described themselves as Atheist, 14% Christian and 11% preferred not to say. Only 12% of the respondents described themselves as a person with disabilities, with the majority (74%) not identifying as such. Around half of the respondents identified as heterosexual/straight, 18% bisexual and 13% preferred not to say.

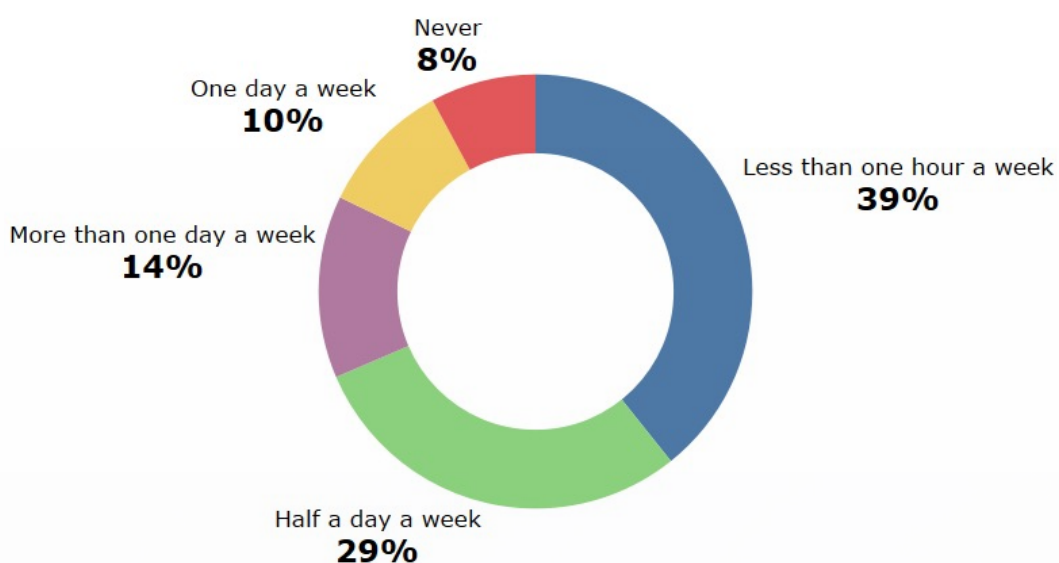


Questions

This consultation consisted of 13 questions, collecting a mixture of quantitative and qualitative answers. Most quantitative questions were multiple choice to encourage as many thoughts and opinions as possible. Below are the questions and their responses.

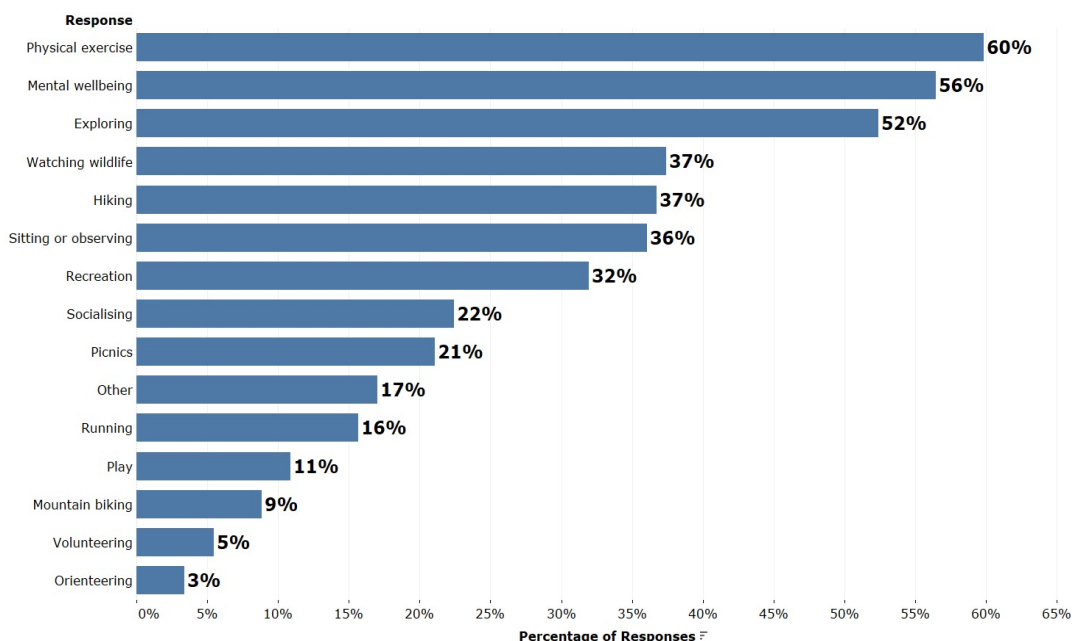
Consultation Questions

1. How much time each week do you spend in woodland areas?



2. If you currently spend time in woodland areas, how do you use them?

This was a multiple choice question with a write in option. The most popular response was physical exercise, followed by mental wellbeing and exploring. These were the primary ways/reasons respondents currently spent time in woodland areas.

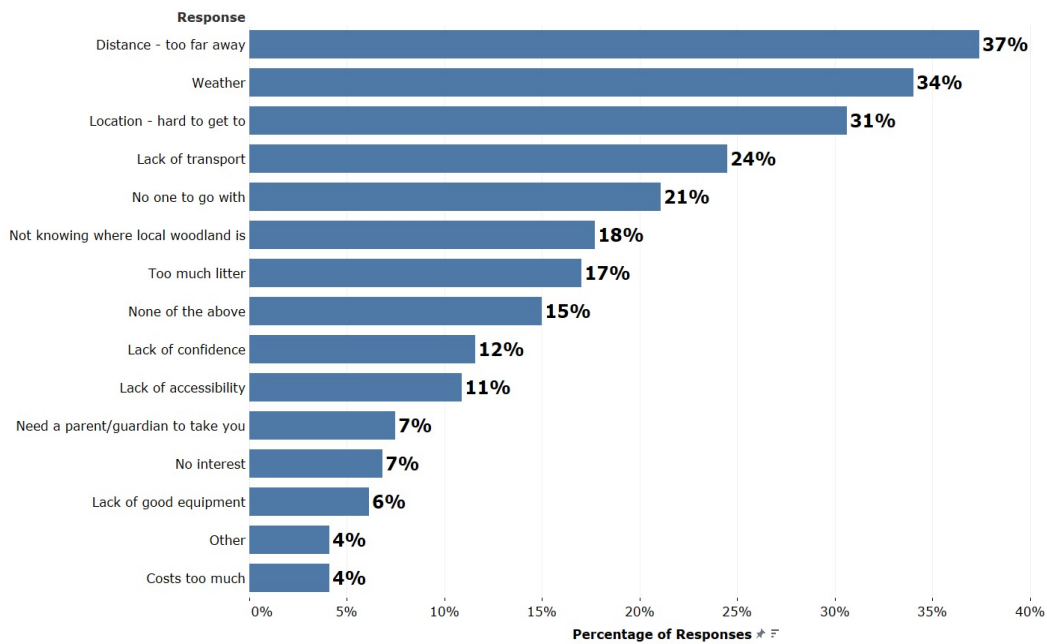


Some qualitative responses when selecting the “other” option included “exercising the dog”, “scouts”, “horse riding”, “photography”, “walking to work/school”, “work” and “sitting and reading”.



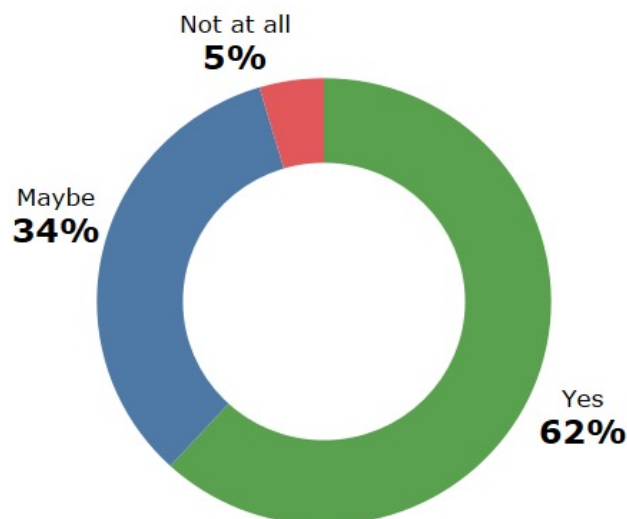
3. Please tell us if any of the following stop you from using woodland areas.

The two most common responses to this multiple choice question were that current woodlands areas are too far away and that adverse weather conditions sometimes proved problematic. Another popular response was that current woodland locations were hard to get to.



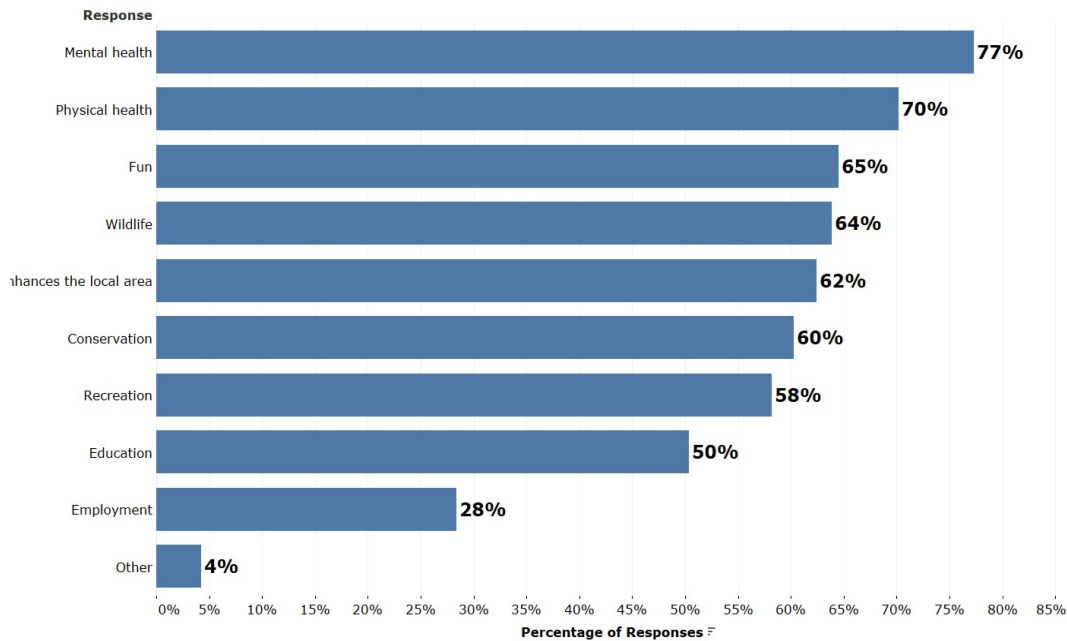
Some qualitative responses when selecting "other" included "harder to use bus service, as there are less points to know where to get off the bus" and "lack of time".

4. Do you think you would benefit from a Young People's Forest?



5. In what ways do you think a Young People's Forest would benefit you and your community?

This multiple choice question was answered by respondents who selected "yes" or "maybe" in question 4. Mental health was the most common response, followed by physical health and fun.



Some qualitative responses when selecting "other" included "community place and spirit", "environmentalism", "engaging more people with nature" and its use as a "safe spot" for young people specifically.



6. Do you have any ideas of how the Young People's Forest could be made accessible?

The responses to this question have been analysed into three separate themes; public transport, accessibility for disabilities, and activities.



Public Transport

- Near or on public transport routes
- Advertising through schools and youth clubs
- Offer buses to take you there from all over Scotland
- Potentially run a community bus free of charge
- Having it within walking distance of communities so it is accessible to both those with and without transport
- Have a bike path leading to it

Accessibility for Disabilities

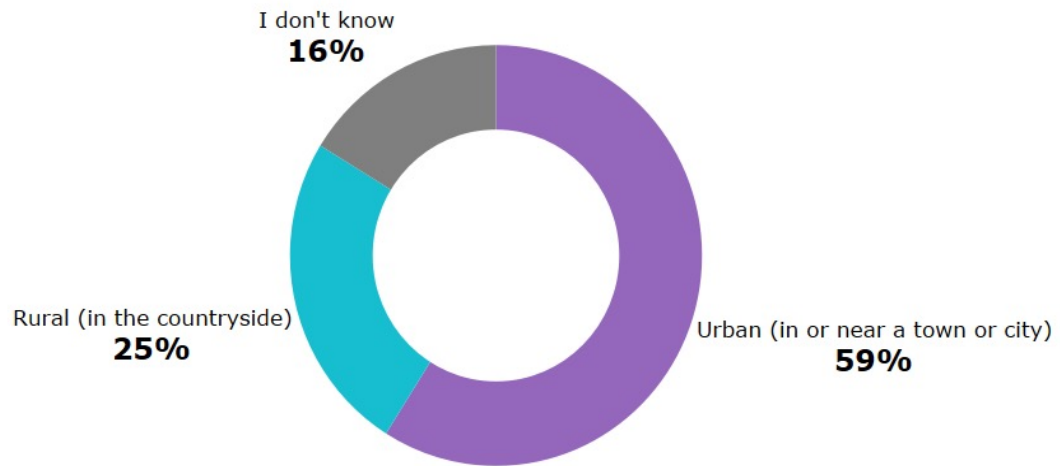
- Ideally it would [...] have good paths
- Different types of walkways that suit a variety of different people
- Wheelchair accessible ramps for wheelchair users
- The best way to make sure it's accessible is to invite disabled people to input
- Make sure there is a variety of different communication formats [...] brail/having maps available in different ways such as digital, spoken, Braille and tactile
- Suitable parking for vehicles with wheelchairs to get out
- Inclusive benches/seating

Activities

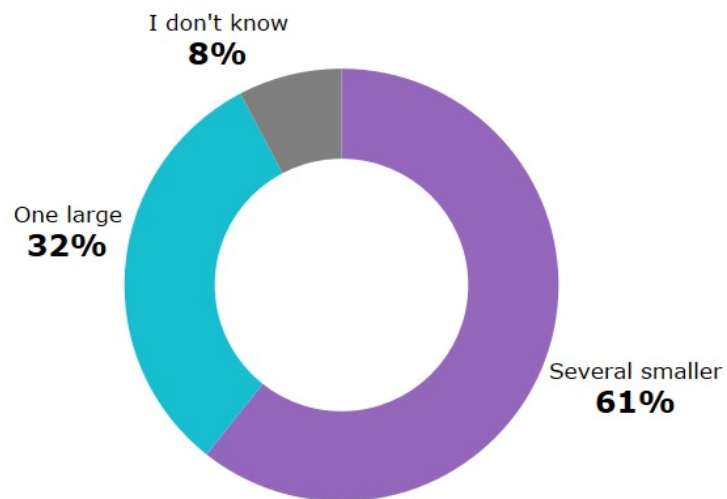
- Weekly day outs, guided bus trip to local woodlands so young people don't have to worry about travel
- Have live video walkthroughs for those unable to go.
- Provide areas where young people can potentially do work/revision as doing work surrounded by nature is more enjoyable
- Different facilities for different users e.g., wildlife spotting parts, mountain biking trails, outdoor classrooms.
- Connect it to existing parks. Have a wellie library - like an honesty box for wellies or waterproofs
- Safe with good sightlines, no litter and anti-social element removed
- Infrastructure wise you could install interpretation in different ways boards, audio clips etc. Follow a core paths plan and make sure there is a maintenance plan to maintain the grade of paths. Make sure

there are disabled spaces in a car park provided. Social media wise I would make sure the word is out there about the young people's forest so that groups can use the facility even by informing BIPOC groups, LGBT groups etc. It would be cool to have a space in the forest for groups to have a snack at and relax for a bit, create a honey pot area intentionally so that it doesn't interfere with the commercial side of the forest (if applicable). To engage with young people who won't be able to travel to the young people's forest you could create short clips of you explaining the type of multipurpose woodland management you have applied as well as how the codesign group has planned it all out and how that shows in the final forest design. I would watch the videos, especially if it was from the young people who designed it all. Or even have a live Q and A session with the group on social media.

7. Where would you like the forest to be?

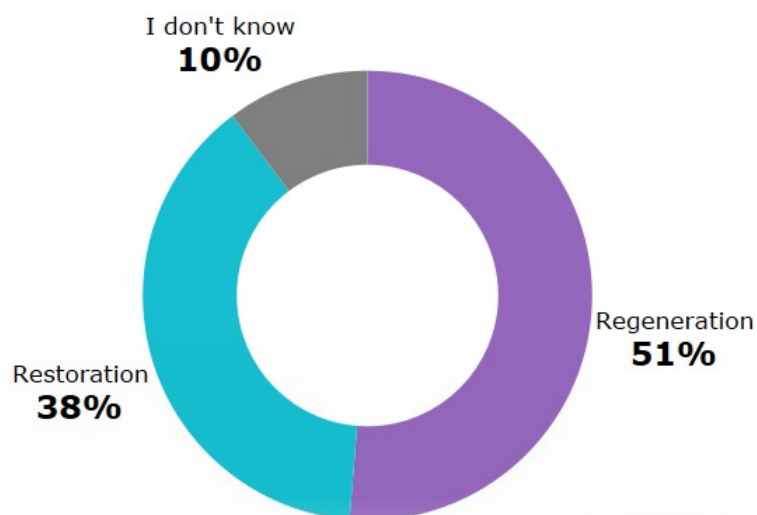


8. Would you prefer one larger forest, or several smaller ones?



9. Where should we start our Young People's Forest?

When asking the above question, the response options were elaborated with restoration referring to expanding on a woodland that already exists whilst regeneration involved an area of land that currently does not have an existing woodland.



10. Which part of Scotland would you most like the forest to be? (You can select up to 5 local authority areas).

Glasgow was the most popular response with 36% of respondents selecting it. This was followed by Edinburgh with 31%, indicating popularity within Scotland's two largest cities. Aberdeen and Stirling were the next most popular responses with 19% each. Overall, the more popular responses indicate that the most appropriate place for SYPF would be in the central belt, however this result may have been influenced by the high number of respondents located within the central belt.

Local Authority

Aberdeen	19%	Highland	12%
Aberdeenshire	17%	Inverclyde	2%
Angus	3%	Midlothian	12%
Argyll and Bute	5%	Moray	5%
Clackmannanshire	3%	North Ayrshire	7%
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles)	1%	North Lanarkshire	11%
Dumfries and Galloway	7%	Orkney Islands	2%
Dundee	12%	Perth and Kinross	5%
East Ayrshire	7%	Renfrewshire	3%
East Dumbartonshire	1%	Scottish Borders	5%
East Lothian	12%	Shetland Islands	2%
East Renfrewshire	3%	South Ayrshire	6%
Edinburgh	31%	South Lanarkshire	7%
Falkirk	10%	Stirling	19%
Fife	9%	West Dunbartonshire	1%
Glasgow	36%	West Lothian	9%

11. If you were to build a forest in your back garden, what would you include, apart from trees?

The responses to this question have been analysed into five main themes; infrastructure, wildlife, art/culture/history, activities, and food.



Infrastructure

- ⦿ Benches, recycling bins, trail signs, wildlife information
- ⦿ Sustainable huts to learn about wildlife
- ⦿ Smoking area
- ⦿ Water features - e.g. pools and waterfalls for forest bathing
- ⦿ Picnic tables
- ⦿ No fences Shallow walkways but nothing too invasive
- ⦿ Treehouses
- ⦿ Trails and viewpoints (or other features that give purpose to a walk)
- ⦿ Picnic areas/fire pit
- ⦿ Maybe signs in the forest to tell you what 6-digit grid reference location you are, to ensure safety and in case of emergency

Wildlife

- Open grass area, log to sit on, somewhere to have a campfire, stones surround, sheltered area, a small lake or pond
- Other native plants, encourage wildlife and keep it as wild as possible
- Benches, Wildlife hides, Info boards on what wildlife can be spotted Viewpoints or areas that are Instagram-able (draw in more people)
- Dirt, a water feature, river
- Vegetables, crops, flowers, herbs, a bug hotel
- Nesting opportunities for wildlife
- I would also specially plant Caledonian pine trees because they are the natural habitats of red squirrels and other wildlife, and they're endangered
- Water features - to simulate the role of a river. Wildflowers - to attract insect
- Beehives maybe
- Logs for bugs, squirrel and bird boxes
- Meadow areas, large ponds, grassland, and areas to sit

Art/Culture/History

- Some kind of art or sculpture (maybe one that animals could benefit from in some way i.e. nest box, bug hotel), some kind of light catcher (like glass or mirror)
- Windchimes
- Benches made of tree trunks
- panels telling people about the trees, the climate crisis, and forests in Scotland - their history, heritage, and contemporary importance

Food

- Trees can be different and have a variety of them that produce fruits for example or have a variety of plants too
- Café
- Several kinds of edible plants
- Veg plot
- Bramble hedges, especially ones that produce fruit

Activities

- ⦿ Some tyre swings, a woodland obstacle course
- ⦿ Walking Trails
- ⦿ Swings made of wood and rope
- ⦿ Sensory activities, play park
- ⦿ There would also be some designated mountain bike trails/Mountain Bike Tracks, Easy-medium-hard
- ⦿ A nature play area for kids, using natural materials. A barefoot path to explore the woodland in a different way
- ⦿ I would include a slack line and some dens as well as some really nice tracks and some areas where you could picnic
- ⦿ Mapped walks
- ⦿ Some form of playground equipment for younger children?
- ⦿ A place for people to camp
- ⦿ I would make a little chill zone with seats around a raised enclosed safe area for fires, and some solar fairy lights. I would have an almost Cork board like wall for the community to inform people of events that were happening in the forest.



12. What would a Young People's Forest mean to you?

The responses to this question have been analysed into four main themes; environmentalism, mental health, community, and physical exercise.

wildlife mental scotland
friends good relax safe enjoy future
escape forest nature
give place live or
space health
young people
great environment accessible access



Environmentalism

- Reminder to look after the planet
- It would feel like an investment in the future, I would love to see rewilding and more conservation efforts across Scotland, and I think this is a great way to make it explicitly about young people
- A place to take in the beauty of this planet and a place to enjoy seeing wildlife in nature
- I would love to be able to engage in nature more. Since becoming disabled, I've really missed being in nature, going on walks, collecting weird rocks! We take things like that for granted until we can't do them anymore.
- A place to meet others and feel encouraged to act on sustainability.
- A Young People's Forest would be a place to explore and relax. It would be peaceful with no loud noises and it would be a place to escape to - away from the city and busy roads. I'd hope it would be a nature sanctuary where animals, plants and trees can flourish, and humans don't litter or disrupt the wildlife. It's be a place to learn about and observe the outdoors, where the air is fresh and it's not too busy.
- An important move towards the rewilding of our chronically deforested country.
- It would mean that there is a part of Scotland that is protected of being built on, it will give other young people opportunities to get involved in the woodlands
- A chance to look after the wildlife, maintain the forest, give back to nature and help people who struggle with outdoor activities
- Signal that young people care about conservation and carbon capture. Evidence that young people can bring about big projects and have the imagination to do so well.
- It would be a place I could feel proud of and a place where I could really be in nature and feel safe and explore with lots of independence
- A bright new earth where the youth had voices heard and a hand in preserving nature and way-showing for generations to come.
- Hope for a future where we care for the environment, and live in balance with it
- Investing in the future
- A place to inspire future generations and educate about the natural environment and man's interaction with it.
- It would be a symbol of hope for young people as it would show you what land management could look like and what we should aspire to have throughout Scotland. Land use needs to become more sustainable and with young people taking the lead and showing the world how it's done it can only have a lasting positive effect to the industry and to young people engaging with the topic of forestry. I find the idea of a young people's forest exciting and revolutionary. It's a great opportunity to demonstrate that young people can effectively work the land and balance social, economic, and environmental demands.
- That Scotland is aware of importance of confronting the climate emergency and the impact this will have for young people. It would be symbolic of a greater investment and change agenda, towards a decarbonised and net zero society.

Mental Health

- A place to relax and enjoy
- A place to be safe
- A place to breathe
- A lot because I could get more young people out and help them with physical and mental health
- It would mean a lot, I'd like to be able to get out into nature more, but I live in the middle of a city so it's hard. If there was somewhere accessible it would improve my mental health
- A place to reflect and just be at peace. I find nature walks, woodlands particularly, to be very grounding if that's the right word
- It would mean I would have access to a place where I could refresh and clear my head while not being intimidated by lack of safety and travel costs
- The time to switch off from phone and enjoy nature
- It means that a lot more young people who previously did not have a forest near them, especially young people in urban areas, would have access to one. This in turn would positively affect their mental and physical health by having a space outside that they can access easily. This means a lot to because when I am feeling down going outside really helps and I want people who live in more urban places than me to have the same opportunity to be outside in nature



Community

- ⦿ I think it'd be a fun place to volunteer / spend time with friends
- ⦿ It will be nice to get on with other people
- ⦿ A means of socialisation and bonding through outdoor adventures where kids can go make friends
- ⦿ I live quite rural so I don't think I would gain much personally but it would enrich the community that it was created nearby. It would provide an enjoyable outside space for people of all ages
- ⦿ It would be helpful to encourage young people to go outside and socialise with friends or family; it could be helpful for young people who need to take breaks from stress or something else
- ⦿ Inclusive, community focus. Sustainable regeneration to allow both nature and humanity to thrive
- ⦿ A forest that is easily accessible and safe and a space where members of the community could come together to enjoy being out in nature, socialising, learning and getting involved with conservation work

Physical exercise

- ⦿ It would give a better chance to get out of the house more and exercise.
- ⦿ I could get me outside more
- ⦿ A place to escape from daily stresses and exercise
- ⦿ I think it would be a GREAT Place to escape.

13. Is there anything else you would like to say?

The responses to this question have been analysed into four main themes; environmentalism, mental health, community, and physical exercise.



- ⦿ Not all young people want to go to youth club. Some want their independence without adults. However, some young people need another adult to access due to disability. Talking seats have become popular and some young people need to talk to others
- ⦿ It would be a good idea to organise a treasure hunt in the forest to attract families with young children
- ⦿ It would be nice to have more forest areas in Scotland. It's quite sad when I go out walking and there are loads of places where trees have been cut down and all the heather is burned. I would like to see more trees that aren't grown just to be cut down and I hope more nature can be allowed to return to Scotland in the coming years.
- ⦿ I think a young people's forest is a really good idea and I would really like to get out and into the forest with my friends
- ⦿ TBF: I don't really mind where it is, whether it's one large forest or several small ones, how you start it or where it is ANYWAY: I KNOW I'm not a part of The Young Peoples Forest, - not at the moment anyway - but the only issue I'd have with GETTING To it would probably be if I was traveling there by myself, so it would be GREAT If I had, at least: One fellow-volunteer/staff-member accompanying me.
- ⦿ Needs to be accessible for all backgrounds
- ⦿ The trees planted need to be compatible with the rest of the ecosystem it's in. Native trees so the wildlife feel at home
- ⦿ To engage young people in a better, more ecological mindset for the future, a forest or as I prefer to say woodland, needs to not be a museum. It needs to engage young people to enter a relationship with it. Through camping in it responsibly but with little restriction. Through getting involved with managing it. Perhaps some woodland management, conservation
- ⦿ Just that I think that having lots of smaller forests could positively affect every young person's and any person's lives. Having lots of smaller forests would mean that more people would have the chance to access a space in nature without having to travel very far
- ⦿ I think that disconnected woodlands offer very little in comparison to extended woodland that gives a corridor of habitat - real habitat that can home biodiversity for long periods of time
- ⦿ Try to include both commercial and native woodland elements as each can convey benefits to climate change, biodiversity, and the economy
- ⦿ Very difficult to choose Local Authorities, tried to select those that would be easily accessible to the most people without long travel times/distances. Great project, good luck!

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