



**Green
Action
Trust**

LIONTHORN POLICY BING Community Consultation Report

Online Survey Report

January 2025

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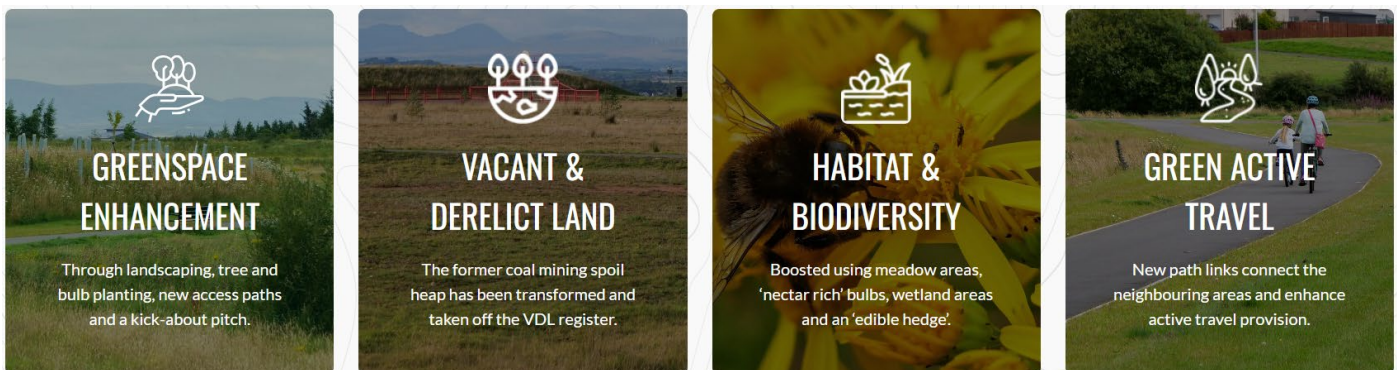
1. Introduction

This report sets out the results of a community consultation exercise regarding work undertaken by the Green Action Trust at Lionthorn Policy Bing. The Trust has been delivering greenspace improvements on this site as part of the Falkirk Open Space Strategy for over twenty years.

Owned by Falkirk Council, Lionthorn Policy Bing is the remains of a coal mining spoil heap lying between the two communities of Hallglen and Lionthorn. The site is an important greenspace asset for local people and wildlife. Within it there is a designated Site of Importance for Nature Conservation.

In partnership with Falkirk Council, the Trust have undertaken work over many years at the site including wildflower planting sessions held with the local school and nursery classes, a network of paths created and improved and the installation of infrastructure such as benches and signage. In recent years, the biggest transformation was to the top of the Bing during 2022. For this phase, in addition to the budget from Falkirk Council, over £500,000 was secured through the Scottish Government's Vacant and Derelict Land (VDL) Investment Programme.

Through this intervention, the project delivered multiple outcomes, across these key areas:



Through working at Lionthorn for many years, on different but linked projects, we have developed a deep understanding regarding the value which local users place on the site. The 2024 survey builds on this knowledge.

In addition, through our analysis of results we can draw upon data gathered from a previous face-to-face site survey undertaken in 2011. Whilst this historic data cannot be considered a robust baseline (from which to make evaluations and conclusions) we believe we can use this information cautiously to shed light on where improvements have been made over the last 13 years. Where appropriate, this information is presented within this report alongside the latest 2024 data.

2. Consultation Scope

The community consultation comprised a series of online and printed posters and flyers available on site, directing the local community to a dedicated webpage and online survey (see appendix 1).

Falkirk Council's Greenspace Team also promoted the survey through their community connections and online news pages.

The dedicated webpage was hosted on the Green Action Trust website (see appendix 2), with the online survey facilitated using Microsoft Forms. The consultation was open for 5 weeks and 2 days, from 16th October to 2nd December 2024.

3. Summary of Findings

In total, 210 members of the local community gave feedback about the proposals through the online survey. It should be noted that this is a remarkably high response rate, as our experience is that a survey of this nature would receive between 30 and 50 responses. This high return rate is a testimony to the degree of engagement that local people have with this site. This observation is an additional important finding from this survey in that people's opinions about their greenspace are strong enough to motivate them to respond to questions.

The profile of site visitors gathered from the results is that generally, users are frequent visitors who have been going to the site for many years. They tend to live locally and access the site on foot. They tend to stay for more than 10 minutes, and many spend up to an hour per visit.

Overall, the responses indicate that this is a popular site with most people using it to for *walking or strolling for pleasure* or specifically for *dog walking*.

The respondents reported that a key benefit they gain from visiting the site is that it is good for their children and that they like the view. People are broadly positive about the quality of the paths, the views and the vegetation. Many respondents note that they visit the site now more often because of improvements that have been made in recent years. Regarding aspects which people didn't enjoy, the most common responses focussed on the lack of responsibility of some dog walkers and the behaviour of some dogs.

Most people think the site facilitates health benefits, encourages active travel and helps to raise pride in the area. It is recognised that these benefits may have positive economic impacts – however, detailed quantification of these potential benefits is beyond the scope of this study.

These findings are positive, and they are broadly in-line with information that GAT Development Officers have gathered from other various rounds of community consultation and speaking with local users on site visits. It is reassuring to note that these results are consistent with other knowledge, giving confidence that the survey results are an accurate representation of local opinions.

The survey results are reviewed in greater detail in Section 4 below.

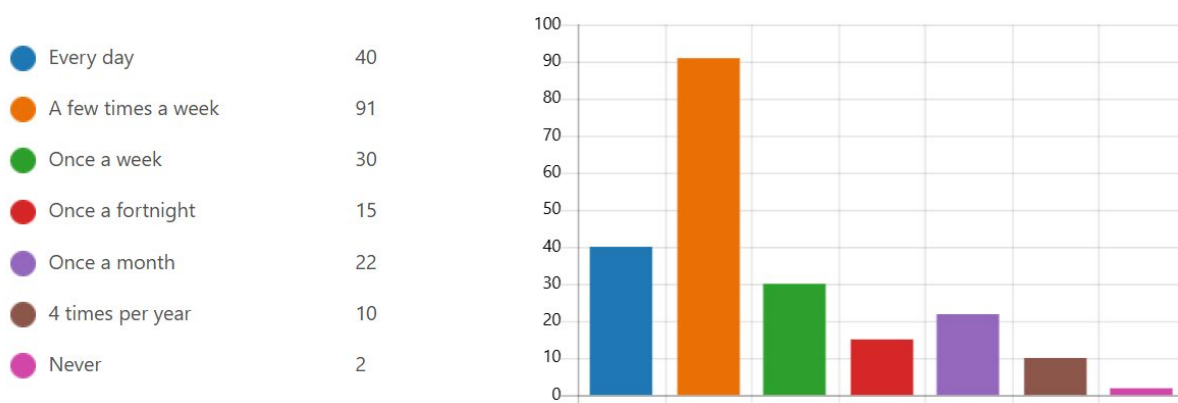
4. Survey Results

A) General information

The survey results indicate that Lionthorn has become an integral part of the local community's daily life, with a significant increase in daily visitors since 2011. Most users are long-term visitors who live within walking distance, demonstrating the site's value as a neighbourhood greenspace. The high proportion of people visiting on foot and in small groups further highlights its role as a convenient and accessible recreational area for local residents.

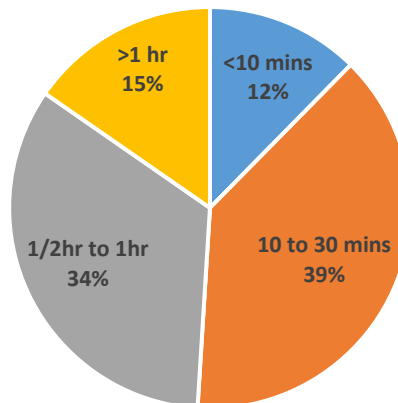
About Site usage

- Only two respondents did not go to the site
- Most people go at least once a week
- 40% of users go every day; this is much higher than the 29% recorded in 2011, indicating an increase in usage since 2011



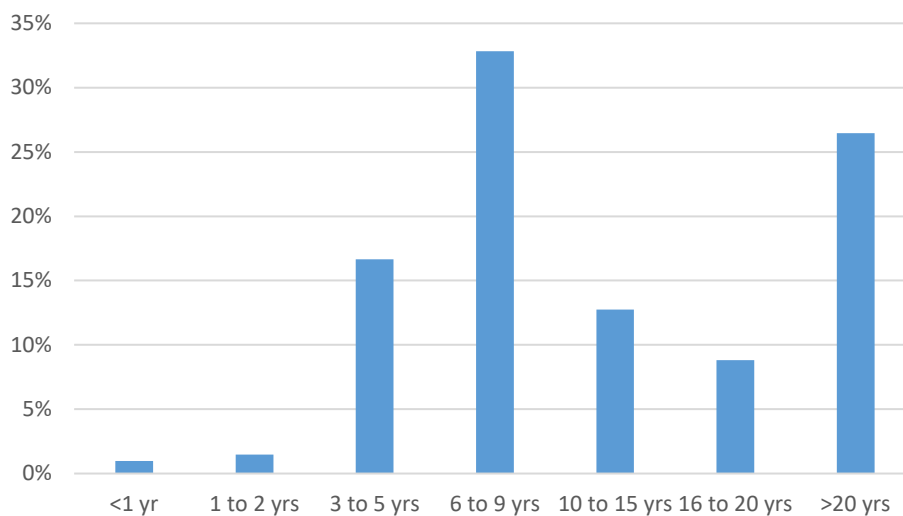
- Most (2/3 of respondents) visits take either 10 to 30 mins, or 30 mins to 1 hour
- Few visits are less than 10mins or more than an hour
- These data are similar to that gathered in 2011

Time spent on site (2024 survey)



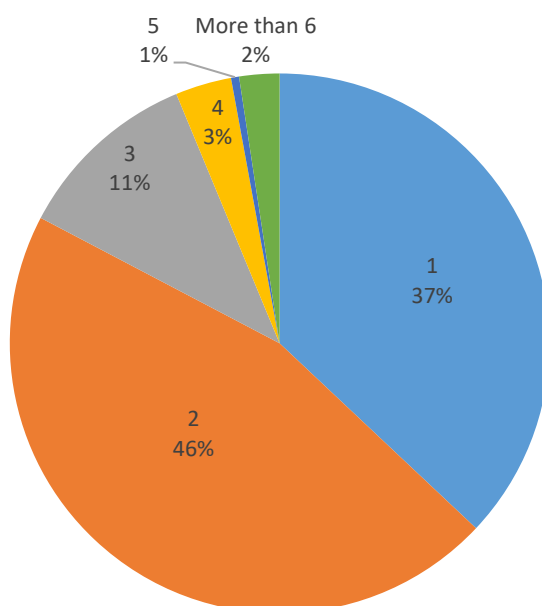
- Considering site familiarity, most people have been visiting the site between 6 and 9 years
- The second most frequently stated time period is more than 20 years; people accessing the site are generally long-term visitors

How long people have been visiting the site



- 9 out of 10 visitors arrive to the site on foot; we can infer that it is primarily greenspace frequented by local people living within around 500m or a 5 min walk of site entrances
- 5% arrived by car; this is slightly less than that recorded in 2011
- People normally access the site in parties of one or two people; this is similar to that recorded in 2011

When you go to the site, how many people are usually in your group (including yourself)?



B) Site Activities and Perceptions

Lionthorn is primarily used for walking and dog walking, with many visitors appreciating the opportunity for exercise, relaxation, and spending time with family. The site's design encourages both physical and mental well-being, as most visitors report health-related benefits such as feeling healthier, more relaxed, and proud of their area.

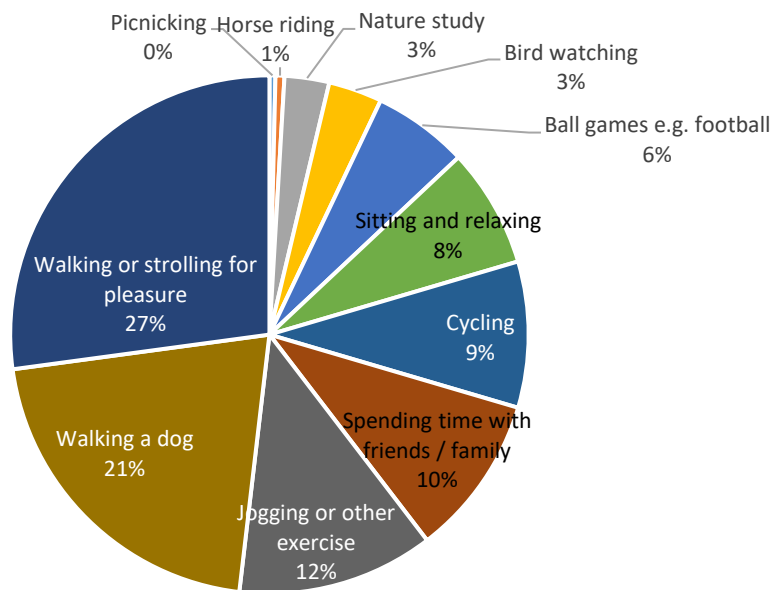
While respondents appreciate the improvements made to the site, several concerns remain, including issues with dog behaviour, inadequate lighting, and limited facilities for younger visitors. Respondents also highlighted the need for better maintenance and enhancements such as more colourful planting, seating, and facilities like water fountains or cafes.

Despite some challenges, most respondents view the site positively, valuing its safe, well-maintained paths, scenic views, and opportunities for observing nature. This feedback underscores the site's ability to enhance community pride and support sustainable travel.

Activities on site

- Regarding the activities people take part in whilst visiting the site, walking appears to be the main reason.
- Nearly half of the respondents say they walk a dog and/or walk for pleasure. These results are consistent with the 2011 survey.

What activities do you take part in (2024 survey)?



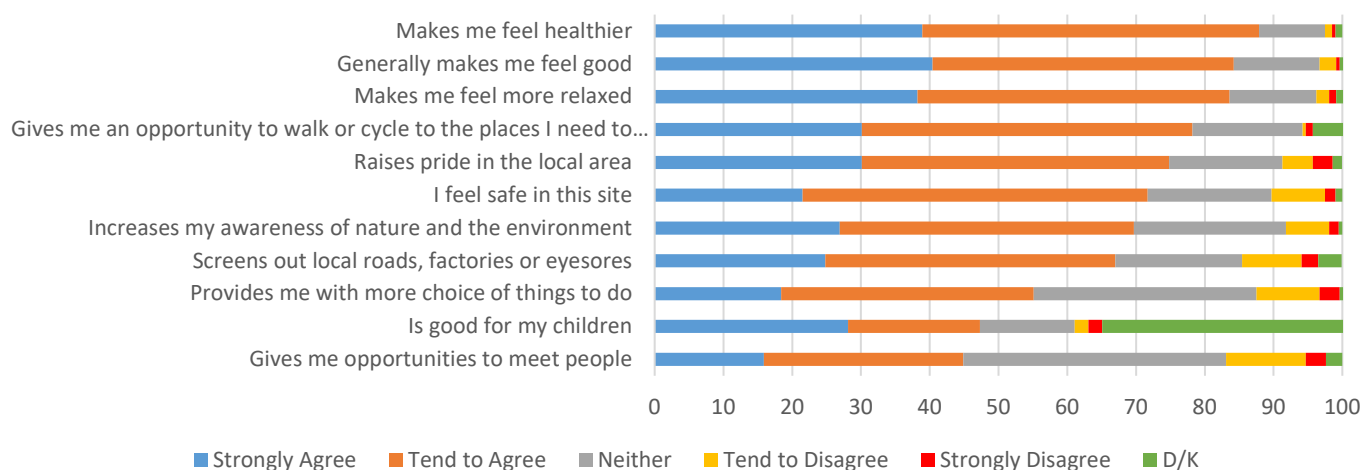
- Other popular reasons for frequenting the site include *exercise*, *spending time with family* and/or *cycling*.
- In the 2011 survey the number of *visitors sitting and relaxing* at the site was relatively high in comparison with other greenspace areas that we have surveyed. This behaviour appears to remain so today
- As regards other activities that were not listed which the respondents defined, most were variants of *walking* and *bike riding*
- In addition to other ball games, *basketball* was specifically mentioned as an activity they took part in on-site
- One person *plays frisbee* on the site and another likes to *spot mushrooms*

The Benefits of Lionthorn to Visitors

- Most people (8 out of 10) agree that the three main benefits of the site are health related. Specifically, people *feel healthier*, *feel good* and are *more relaxed*
- 7 out of 10 respondents also agree that the site enables *active travel*. There are potential carbon savings in this function - especially considering the local links with Falkirk High train station.

- Similarly, 7 out of 10 respondents agree that the site *raises pride in the area*. GAT are aware of potential economic dimensions of this with local house valuation uplift because of the impact of having near-by quality greenspace ¹

Statements on the benefits of Lionthorn



- Although the majority of people feel safe when visiting the site, in comparison with other benefits presented, less respondents *strongly agree* that this is the case.
- Similarity, though there was agreement with the idea that the site *increases awareness of nature* and that it helps to *screen out* local urban features, less respondents *strongly agree* with these statements
- In comparison, there was less agreement in the idea that the site *provides visitors with the variety of choices* that people might want for themselves and their children. Although, it should be noted that very few respondents actually disagreed with this idea.

Best and Worst

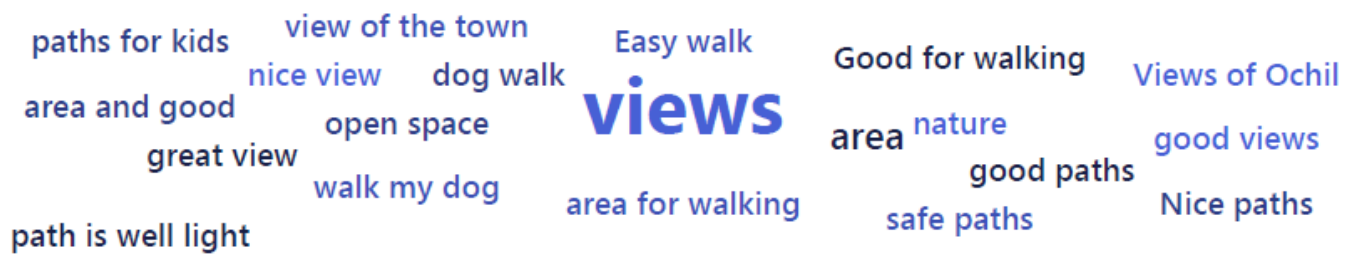
- When asked “What are the best 3 things about Lionthorn” the image on the next page illustrates that many people mention views of the local area over to the Ochil hills in the distance.
- As illustrated elsewhere in the survey, the practical localised benefits of the site for *dog walking* – with *safe and peaceful paths* was also highly rated.

¹ Economic benefits of greenspace. *A critical assessment of evidence of net economic benefits*. Forestry Commission: Edinburgh, Vadim Saraev. 2012. The report notes that having a view of greenspace from your house (versus no view) has a value of between £135–£452 per person per annum

- In fact, the quality of the paths was frequently mentioned – valued for their flatness, attractiveness, non-linear design and there appears to be a variety of routes lengths that suit people’s differing needs.

Responses to “What are the best three things about Lionthorn?”

51 respondents (29%) answered views for this question.



- People also mention they appreciate the opportunity to *observe nature* at the site. One of the more unusual benefits noted by one resident was being able to see the northern lights (in May 2024) by finding a spot without any light pollution.
- Regarding the aspects of the site which people didn’t enjoy, the most common responses focussed on the lack of responsibility of some dog walkers and the behaviour of some dogs.
- A perceived lack of adequate lighting puts some respondents off using the park in the dark – this is especially acute during the winter months.

Responses to “What are the worst three things about Lionthorn?”

27 respondents (15%) answered areas for this question.



- Some disappointment was expressed regarding the lack of variety of colour in the site.

- As reflected elsewhere in the survey, a desire for more features for younger people to enjoy was mentioned
- Some respondents mentioned concerns regarding a perceived lack of adequate maintenance for green infrastructure improvements
- Flooding was also a concern for some respondents
- The impact of antisocial use, namely motorcyclists was mentioned
- Some respondents noted that there appears to be some disruption to the site at the moment due to on-going works carried out by ScotRail

C) Quality of the Site and Improvements

The improvements made over the past 14 years have transformed Lionthorn Policy Bing into a more attractive and functional greenspace, with most respondents recognizing the efforts made to improve paths, vegetation, and overall accessibility. Positive changes include the reduction of waste and safety concerns, and many users feel the site is now a cared-for community asset.

While the site is now more frequently visited and valued, respondents also expressed a desire for continued improvements, including additional lighting, seating, and diverse recreational facilities. Suggestions such as expanding tree planting for wildlife, improving views, and enhancing the variety of flora reflect the community's enthusiasm for making the site even more enjoyable.

Quality Responses

- Nearly all respondents were aware of the works undertaken on the site over the last 14 years.

Are you aware of the improvement works undertaken at Lionthorn over the last 14 years? (0 point)



- The majority of people thought these were positive interventions as illustrated in the image below.

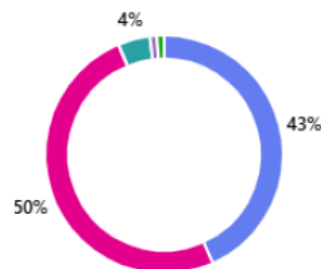
55 respondents (29%) answered good for this question.



- Nine out of ten respondents thought the present quality of the paths was either *good* or *very good*.
- The response regarding the quality of the vegetation was a little more mixed with about two thirds responding *good* or *very good*.
- Responses regarding wildlife quality were less enthusiastic with most people responding ambivalently *neither good nor poor* and less than half of the respondents saying either *good* or *very good*.
- It should be noted that relatively few people said that quality of wildlife was poor.

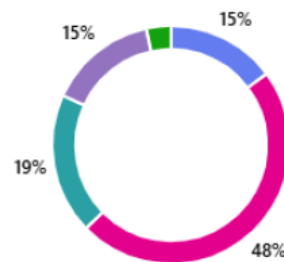
How would you rate the quality of the current paths in Lionthorn Bing? (0 point)

Very good	90
Good	105
Neither good nor poor	9
Quite poor	2
Very poor	2



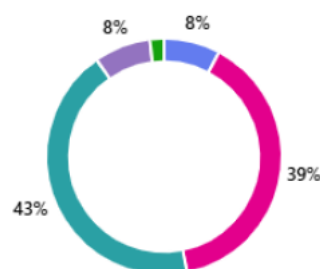
How would you rate the quality of the vegetation of the area including trees? (0 point)

Very good	31
Good	100
Neither good nor poor	40
Quite poor	31
Very poor	7



How would you rate the quality of the wildlife in the area? (0 point)

Very good	16
Good	81
Neither good nor poor	90
Quite poor	16
Very poor	4

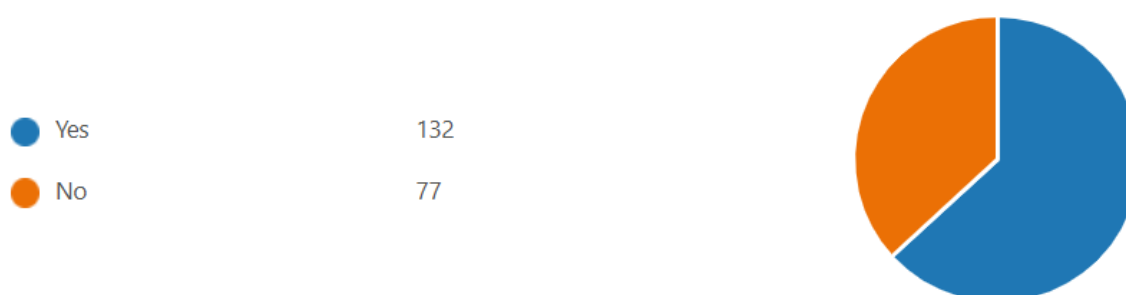


- Whilst there were some respondents who didn't like the surface water management features (ponds) and others who thought the football pitch was too stoney, the majority of the people who provided additional information were impressed with the works undertaken.
- With some reservations regarding maintenance, flooding issues and lighting, most respondents thought the site has been improved significantly:

I think it looks great. It's completely transformed it for the better.

- Others, while appreciating improvements made note that the works need time to bed in (e.g. saplings need to grow) and that there is considerable room for follow-up improvements to be made. Several respondents noted that only half the site had been enhanced.
- Despite some of the misgivings noted above, just under two thirds of respondents say that the improvements have encouraged them to go to the site more often.

Have these improvements encouraged you to go to the site more often?



- When asked to quantify how much more they would visit there was little consistency in the results but broadly half of respondents said about twice as much – typically they are going daily rather than a few days a week. A quarter said weekly rather than monthly.
- The perception of the site since the works undertaken had changed positively for 7 out of 10 respondents.
- The reasons behind this reflected other responses to survey questions. Generally, people feel the site is more cared for now, is safer and a real asset to the local community.
 - *Previously it was a neglected site, with too much broken glass to walk a dog. Now it's an accessible site which I enjoy.*
 - *I have used this site in its many forms since I was a child. It's not always been 'lovely' but it is now*
 - *It is more visually enjoyable now and somewhere everyone in the community can enjoy.*
 - *It used to be just a waste area no longer used. Now it is very nice a well-used.*
 - *It's not as bleak and ex-industrial as it used to be.*
 - *It's greener and more friendly now. More people use it for running cycling dog walking. Chatting. Reading on benches.*
 - *No longer just a place to walk the dog - also good to sit and relax in pretty surroundings*
 - *Was a wasted space before, it's great to have a green space like this a few streets from your home. Gives you pride in where you live.*

Despite the positivity noted above, respondents did indicate that there is still room for improvements to be made. Frequently mentioned was a desire for

- more lighting
- more seating
- more facilities for young people e.g. playpark and outdoor gym
- more bins, especially for dog waste

- somewhere to get a drink e.g. water fountain or café
- more thinning of trees to open views
- more planting of trees for wildlife
- more flowers
- a need for other facilities such as a toilet, BBQ area, shelters

D. Respondent characteristics

The survey achieved good gender representation, but respondents were predominantly older individuals. This highlights an opportunity to engage younger community members by incorporating features and facilities that cater to their interests, thereby broadening the site's appeal.

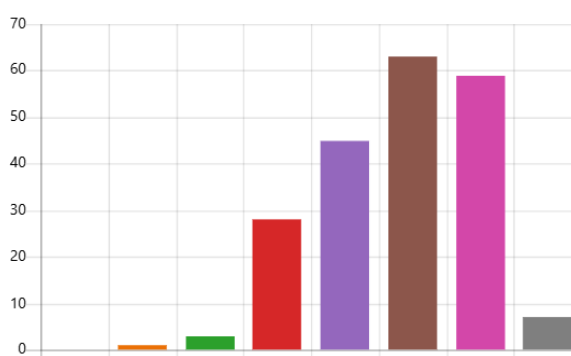
What is your sex?

Male	77
Female	125
Prefer not to say	4



What is your age?

Under 16	0
16 - 19	1
20 - 29	3
30 - 39	28
40 - 49	45
50 - 59	63
60 - 74	59
75 +	7



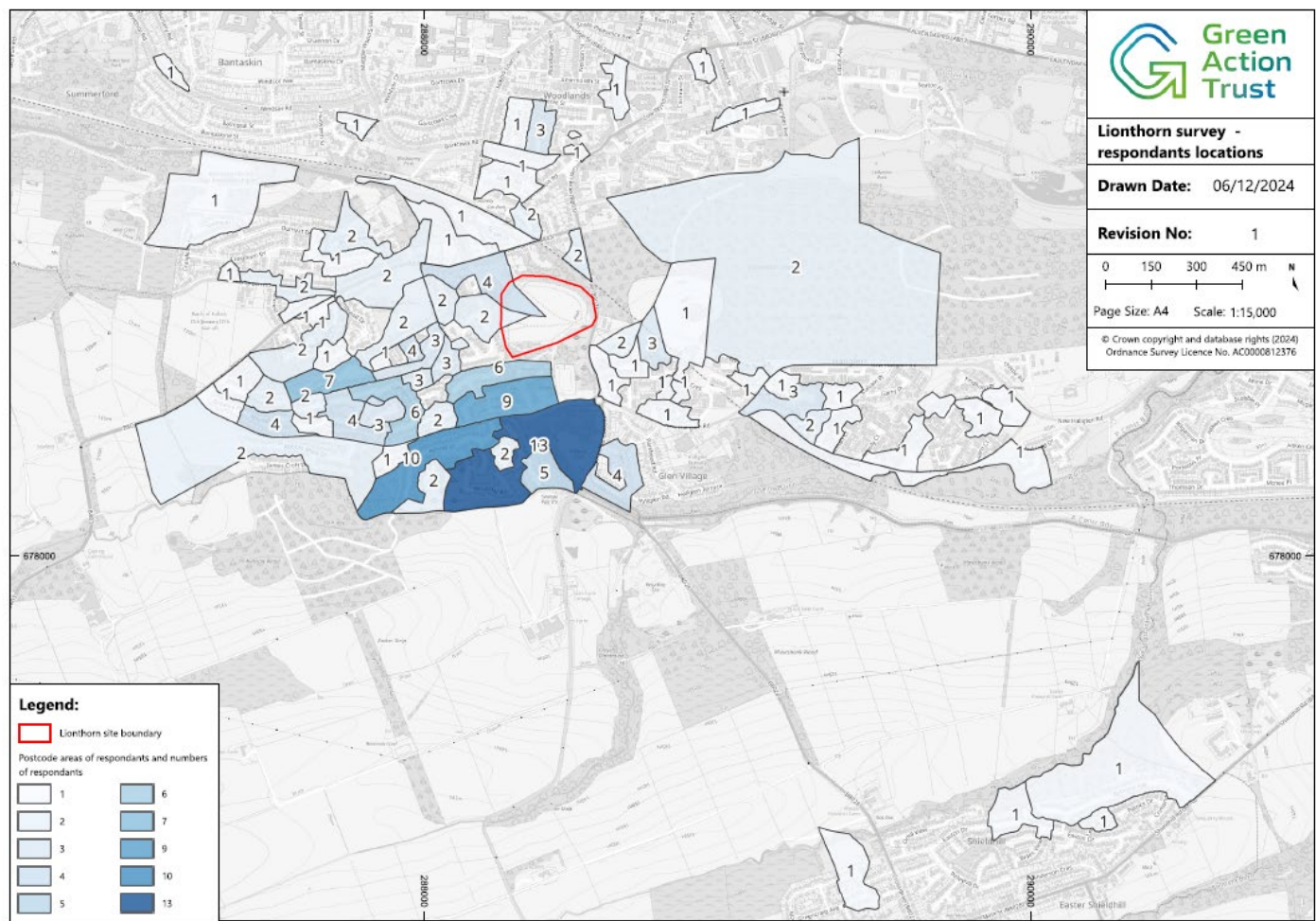
The results also indicate that 13% of respondents have a long-term illness, health problem or disability which limits activities. This is less than the 26% Scottish average as reported in the Scottish Surveys Core Questions.

Do you have any long-term illness, health problem or disability which limits your activities or the work you can do?

Yes	15
No	178
Prefer not to say	12



As shown in the map below, the mapping of postcode data of the respondents supports earlier findings that most site users are local and within a short walk of the site entrance points.



5. Conclusions

A key conclusion which can be made is that the survey itself was a success. The remarkably high response rate is a testimony to the strong level of engagement people have regarding this site.

In general, the survey results highlight the significant value which the local community places on the Lionthorn Policy Bing greenspace, as evidenced by the thoughtful feedback provided. The findings confirm that this site is a cherished resource for frequent local visitors who benefit from its natural beauty, accessibility, and the improvements made in recent years. While the positive aspects, such as its contribution to health and well-being, are strongly acknowledged, there is also a clear desire for better management of some concerns, several of which are related to users with dogs.

Overall, this feedback reaffirms the site's role in enhancing community pride, promoting active lifestyles, and fostering connections with nature. These insights provide a reliable foundation for future planning and underscore the importance of continued investment and care for this valued greenspace.

Lionthorn has evolved into a cherished greenspace, with improvements that have significantly enhanced its usability, safety, and attractiveness. The community's strong attachment to the site is evident in the frequent visits and positive feedback. While the site is now a vibrant, well-used resource, there is clear demand for ongoing investment in infrastructure and amenities to ensure it continues to meet the diverse needs of local residents. These efforts will not only enhance the quality of life but also contribute to the site's long-term sustainability and appeal.

6. Appendices

1. A4 Poster / Social Media Post

Have your say!

The Green Action Trust and Falkirk Council have been working together to make Lionthorn Bing a great place to spend time in nature.

**We would like to know how you feel about Lionthorn,
and welcome your feedback by filling out a short
survey**



SCAN ME

Let us know what you think by
scanning the **QR code or visiting**

<https://bit.ly/4hbZLOe>

**Please respond with your comments
by Saturday 30th November 2024**



Falkirk Council

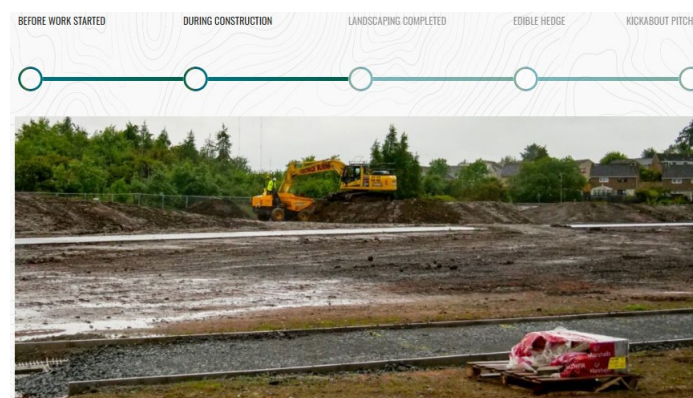
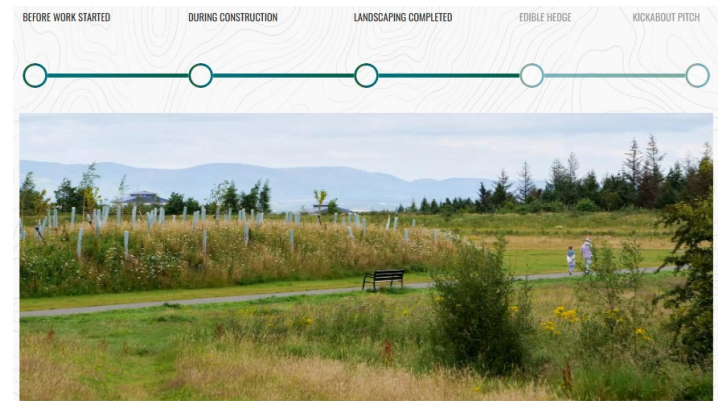
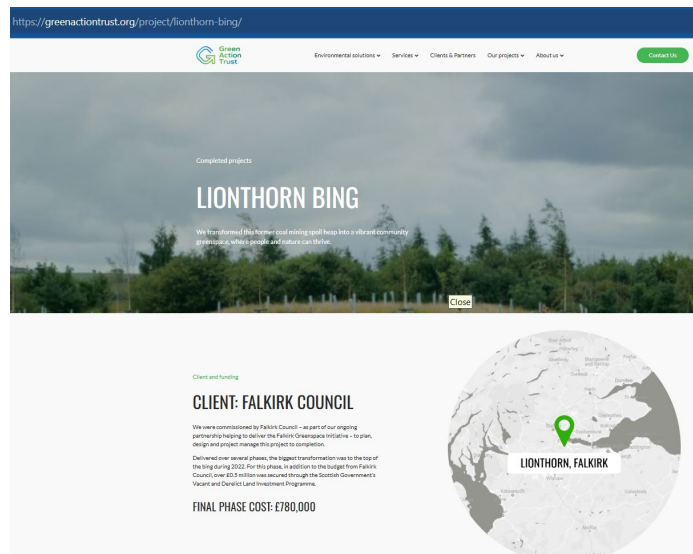


Central Scotland Green Network



2. Green Action Trust dedicated website

<https://greenactiontrust.org/project/lionthorn-bing/>





Green
Action
Trust

POSITIVE CHANGE THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL REGENERATION

Web: <https://greenactiontrust.org>

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