

Outdoor Partnerships Annual User Survey 2025



Shropshire's
**GREAT
OUTDOORS**

The Shropshire Outdoor Partnerships Service is part of Shropshire Council. The service maintains and develops recreational access, conserves and enhances the natural environment and encourages people to be active outdoors. The annual survey considers the use, maintenance and protection of public rights of way, country parks, countryside and heritage sites, greenspaces and play areas.

The survey ran for 12 weeks between
30 June 2025 and 30 September 2025

675 people completed the survey



97%

Of respondents give 'improve health/exercise' as the main reason for enjoying the great outdoors

99% of respondents use footpaths, bridleways and other rights of way. **83%** visit countryside sites and **22%** participate in outdoor partnerships volunteering activity.

94%

Of respondents say 'walking' is one of their main activities when using outdoor partnership provision.

Other activities include

- Walking the dog (33%)
- Family activity (38%)
- Cycling (36%)
- Park run / running (25%)
- Childrens play (19%)



83%

of the survey respondents use outdoor partnerships provision once a week or more. This has decreased from 86% last year.

64%

use outdoor partnerships provision for 2 hours or more. This has increased from 59% last year.

When respondents were asked if they are involved in an organised group the top three were

- **39%** are members of a local walking group and
- **25%** are members of the Ramblers.
- **21%** are members of a cycling group



87%

of the survey respondents like to undertake **Circular walks**.

Other popular activities include:

- Countryside parks and site walks (73%)
- Admiring the view (73%)
- Watching / engaging with nature (71%)
- Long distance promoted walks (65%)
- Local parks and site walks (64%)
- Town walks (53%)



When people last used Shropshire's rights of way network or parks and countryside sites.....

- **96%** felt better for taking some exercise
- **94%** enjoyed themselves and want to do more outdoors
- **50%** found out more about the community
- **60%** discovered something new
- **40%** of people said they felt less lonely

51% are satisfied with the rights of way network in their area.

59% are satisfied with parks and sites in their area.

16% of people have noticed improvements to the rights of way network and **18%** have noticed improvements to the parks and sites, in their area in the last 12 months.

1% of respondents said they are inactive and **7%** of respondents moderately inactive. This is the same as last year.

59% of respondents said they were either active or very active now. This has increased from **58%** a year ago.

Respondents were asked how they **found out about activities and facilities** within the great outdoors. These included:

- Printed leaflets and guidebooks (43%)
- Social media feeds (41%)
- Local websites (31%)
- Organised groups (28%)

Volunteering is one way to enjoy the great outdoors with **15%** of respondents saying they are involved in volunteering. Volunteer roles include:

- Parish paths partnership
- 'Friends of' groups
- Maintaining and repairing stiles
- Helping keep bridleways and footpaths clear

We asked about **improvements** to encourage more use of rights of way, country parks and heritage sites. Suggestions included:

- Better maintenance of footpaths and stiles
- Better wheelchair access and accessibility
- Improved public transport
- Improved signage, maps and marketing to encourage use

Obstacles to enjoying the great outdoors:

- Overgrown vegetation (55%)
- Lack of signposts/ way markers (35%)
- Littering and flytipping (29%)
- Physical obstructions (30%)
- Intimidating livestock (34%)
- Problems with stiles (38%)



When asked for the specific reasons if **activity levels have decreased** in the last year the main reasons were

- Ill Health (43%)
- Change in circumstances (19%)
- Lack of companion (13%)

99% of people report that getting into the great outdoors has a positive or very positive impact on their **quality of life**.

45% said they knew who to contact to report concerns or issues.

124 people (19%) said they had contacted Shropshire Council to report an issue or concerns in the last 12 months. Of these people **68** said that their issues was unresolved.

Examples of memorable and enjoyable experiences.

“Just this morning we saw a beautiful kingfisher down by the River Severn ”

“Just love the Shropshire countryside, we are very lucky”

“ We have had numerous enjoyable experiences, plotting new routes and discovering new places to run, using public transport to reach our start point and running back. We’ve seen beautiful scenery and wildlife, maintained our fitness, improved our wellbeing and enjoyed some delicious coffee and cake along the way, supporting independent businesses. Our green spaces and ability to use them are so important in so many ways! “