



Review of the Scottish Forestry Strategy

Consultation Process: Focus Groups

Final Report
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This project was undertaken as an exercise to widen the consultation base for the Review of the Scottish Forestry Strategy (SFS). The objectives of the project were:

- a) To ensure that the SFS is informed by views of people from a wider range of backgrounds and contexts than is evident from responses to the First Public Consultation
- b) To assist FC Scotland in reviewing the SFS in the context of its obligations and commitments in relation to Disability Discrimination and Race Relations legislation.
- c) To ensure that SFS is informed by views representative of stakeholders whose input may not best be obtained by a process such as that used for the First Public Consultation, including 'hard to reach' groups who may require targeted efforts to elicit a response.

A series of five focus groups were undertaken from the following populations, with an average of eight people per group:

- a) People from a remote rural area, based in Dumfries and Galloway
- b) Blind and partially sighted people based in Edinburgh
- c) Women from black and minority ethnic groups in Edinburgh
- d) People with a range of disabilities, including mobility impairment and mental illness, based in East Lothian
- e) Young people from an urban area of social deprivation, based in Glasgow.

Key Points from Focus Groups

- The response people have to woodlands is mostly very positive - trees, parks, meadows, green spaces, waterfalls and canals, wildlife, tranquillity, beauty, pleasure and relaxation – but for some there are concerns about inaccessibility and fear for safety
- Forestry Commission Scotland's name and rôle is not well known to most people, although it has some positive resonances with management and good walks for a few; for those who are more familiar with FCS activities, there is some concern that their commitment to the local community and their needs is not as it should be
- No-one in the focus groups had heard of the Scottish Forestry Strategy, even though one rural community was very familiar with FCS activities and forestry in general. There was little awareness of many aspects of forestry policy and current forestry practices, and some negative perceptions (and misconceptions) about modern forestry and the role of FCS.
- There are three important barriers to people getting as much access to woodlands as they would like:

- Lack of reliable public transport (especially important for blind, visually impaired and other disabled people and for BME women)
 - Poor access within woodlands – lack of signs, information and well-maintained paths are barriers, especially to blind and partially sighted people, and good signage and information are important to everyone. Fear of getting lost and lack of rangers to help are also important factors.
 - Fear of other people in woodlands - many were fearful of undesirable people and activities in woodlands; BME women felt particularly vulnerable in dense woodlands and in rural areas in general.
- People believe that woodlands can make a difference to their lives in a number of positive ways, including recreation and opportunities for days out, providing a tranquil environment in which to 'get away', contributing to physical and mental health and well-being, opportunities for education and coming close to wildlife and providing a valuable natural resource.
- The potential personal benefits from woodlands are also seen as potential community benefits. However, there are cultural barriers that make it harder for certain groups to see benefit – for some BME groups, visiting woodlands is not part of any cultural tradition and therefore not seen as particularly attractive, although one person from this group mentioned gathering berries in woodlands, the only one to do so in any group. For many young people, visiting local woodlands is not valued as part of their culture
- The importance of visiting woodlands for children was highlighted by many and concern raised about restrictions and regulations, as well as funding barriers, that limit school or other organised access for children. It was considered important to overcome this, through school trips, initiatives and government/FCS funding
- Most groups recognise the economic benefits that woodlands can bring, including timber processing, fuel and industrial energy (although there was a negative view of clear felling), as well as jobs associated with tourism and recreation. Young people in an area of urban deprivation were, interestingly, the only group to mention the potential for woodland to raise the amenity value of housing areas.
- The environmental issues associated with woodlands are complex – they are seen as contributing to fresh air, noise reduction, and helping to battle global warming and climate change, but are also seen as places where activities with negative environmental consequences take place, from fly tipping to dog fouling.
- 'Forestry' was often associated with dense, unpleasant coniferous plantations, as opposed to 'woodlands', which were more often seen as attractive, open places with deciduous and native trees.
- Well maintained paths for people to use woodlands are very important - keeping them open and attractive and with seating for less fit people, while maintaining a balance that does not compromise the naturalness of the environment.
- Good facilities such as accessible information, toilets, car parks are very welcome in woodlands.

- For rural dwellers in communities close to large areas of forestry, issues of improved community consultation and real engagement with local issues are vital.
- Improvements to woodlands preferred by most groups would include:
 - more native broadleaves or mixed woodlands rather than conifers
 - better public transport and regular trips for communities (and especially children) to woodlands
 - measures to alleviate fear in woodlands, especially fear of personal attack which is common across many disadvantaged groups – rangers are favoured to address issues of safety, information and guidance.
 - creative ways to manage woodlands and link with the local community as well as with recreational and volunteer activities.

Further Recommendations

FCS needs to be more effective in getting its message across to ordinary people on issues of policy, environment, management of the landscape, etc. The use of television advertisements (noted by the young people of Castlemilk) would be one way; leaflets or information dissemination, interpreted for black and minority ethnic (BME) groups whose English is not good, would be another.

FCS could build on existing provision to pioneer what access to the countryside means under the new legislation, e.g. for BME groups, for disabled people, for children and young people.

There is a real sense of urban deprivation, a lack of access to attractive natural environments, for young people in inner cities. Woodlands are also recognised as giving young people somewhere to go, to get away from trouble - a place of their own. These are opportunities to build upon in the SFS.

There is a demand for a better and more continuing relationship with local communities, especially in a rural context. There needs to be a partnership and (crucially) power sharing.

People appear to be very interested in wildlife and the environment but often don't have direct experience of what this means in their daily lives; there is an important potential rôle for FCS in making this link, both practically and in terms of education and information exchange and dissemination.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This project was initiated in the context of the consultation process for the Review of the Scottish Forestry Strategy (SFS). A critical review of the process and results of the First Public Consultation identified the following shortcomings and areas to be addressed:

- Many of the questions were difficult to answer without a professional or expert knowledge of current forestry/land use policy and practice
- Some of the questions were leading and might have elicited a biased response
- The consultation document did not make it easy for individuals or groups to contribute to a different agenda for forestry, arising out of their basic needs and perhaps very different perspectives from those of FC Scotland
- Of the 180 responses to the first consultation, the vast majority, whether from individuals or groups, appeared to be from people with a background in forestry, woodland or countryside issues, many of whom are professionally employed in that capacity
- There appeared to be only one response from a young person. i.e. under 20 years old, and only one mentioned the needs of disabled people
- There was no evident response from or relating to people from minority ethnic groups

Some organisations, agencies and community group/trust responses indicated a sensitivity to the needs of urban dwellers but it is unclear how many of the responses represented an urban-dweller's perspective, particularly a lay view.

In the light of these points, and taking into account the obligations and commitments of FC Scotland in relation to the Disability Discrimination and Race Relations legislation, this project was proposed as an exercise to widen the base upon which consultation is undertaken, within the limits of time and resources available under the SFS Review programme.

The project has taken account of the research undertaken by FR, in the English context, in relation to the FC Race Equality Scheme, and on the primary evidence-base supporting the social agenda for forestry.

2. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Objectives

The objectives of the project were as follows:

- a) To ensure that the SFS is informed by views of people from a wider range of backgrounds and contexts than is evident from responses to the First Public Consultation

- b) To assist FC Scotland in reviewing the SFS in the context of its obligations and commitments in relation to Disability Discrimination and Race Relations legislation.
- c) To ensure that SFS is informed by views representative of stakeholders whose input may not best be obtained by a process such as that used for the First Public Consultation, including 'hard to reach' groups who may require targeted efforts to elicit a response.

2.2 Methodology

A series of five focus groups were undertaken, with an average of 8 people per group. Within the constraints of available resources, the following groups were targeted as likely to yield responses from diverse perspectives.

- f) Minority ethnic group – women over 25 yrs of age
- g) Disabled group – adults with mobility impairment
- h) Disabled group – adults with visual impairment
- i) People from areas of social deprivation – adults from remote rural area(s)
- j) People from areas of social deprivation – young adults, aged 16-24, from inner urban area(s)

Contacts and local facilitators known to OPENspace research centre were used to identify potential locations and participants for groups. The final location and composition of groups is shown in Table 1, in the following section.

Invitees were able to make an informed choice about whether to participate and were given some recompense for their time and contribution. There is a commitment to ensure they receive feedback on the findings of the research.

In addition to taking notes at the time, the researchers took audio recordings of the focus groups, with participants' permission, and the recordings were transcribed (see Appendix A) to allow for a fuller analysis of the findings.

Format of the focus group discussion

The focus groups used the following framework for discussion, with a certain flexibility to allow for exploration of some issues in greater depth as and when they appeared important. The term "woodlands" was used as the all-embracing term, to include all types, from small woodlands to large "forests".

- a) What do woodlands mean to you? *(Get people to describe the value of woodlands and what they think use of woodlands, and work associated with woodlands, offers)*
- b) What does the Forestry Commission Scotland mean to you? *(Name recognition, what does FCS do, what do people think it ought to do for themselves and others. Has anyone heard of the Scottish Forestry Strategy and if so, does it mean anything to them?)*
- c) Can you get as much access to woodlands as you would like? If not, what is the problem? *(How far has anyone travelled to visit a woodland – was it easy/difficult and why?)*

- d) Are there other ways (i.e. other than access) in which woodlands could make a difference to your lives? *(Probe for issues in relation to people's personal lives and the challenges in their lives, cf the more explicit questions about sustainability under (e), (f) and (g) below).*
- e) What do you think forestry and woodlands have to offer your community/society as a whole? *(If not volunteered, draw out what people think woodlands have to offer in terms of education and health. Also, draw out what interest there is in engagement with the management of people's local woodlands – either “hands on” or in decision making).*
- f) What do you think forestry and woodlands can offer in economic terms, to you personally and in terms of the wider community? *(Do people feel that timber production is a good thing? What other economic opportunities might interest them? Do they feel that tree planting has led to a “better” neighbourhood, more investment e.g. in housing or jobs?).*
- g) What do you think forestry and woodlands can offer in terms of environmental issues today? *(If not volunteered, tease out the various strands of environmental issues, e.g. visual, air quality, noise screening, climate change, litter, wildlife, etc.)*
- h) What do you feel about the way woodlands and forests are managed today? *(get first impressions and then probe for positive elements and criticisms)*
- i) Do you have any suggestions for how things could be improved? *(If not volunteered, draw out issues of type of woodland, such as species composition and size and configuration of woodland, compared with how woodlands are managed).*

3. ANALYSIS OF DATA

3.1 Profile of Focus Groups.

There were a total of 41 focus group participants. The composition of the groups was as shown in table 1.

Table 1: composition of focus groups

Target Group and Venue	No. total	No. Male	No. Fem	Comments
Adults from a remote rural area from Dumfries and Galloway. Venue: Glenluce	8	3	5	Approximate age range 25-60 yrs
Adults with visual impairment, Lothian Blind Ramblers and the Phoenix Ramblers. Venue: RNIB Edinburgh	9	4	5	6 blind people and one with visual impairment, plus two people with normal sight who often accompany group on walks
Adult women from Black and Minority Ethnic groups	5	-	5	2 Jamaican, 2 Bangladeshi,

Venue: Edinburgh College of Art				1 Indian, aged 30s – 70s, urban dwellers
Adults with mobility impairment and other physical or mental disability. Some were members of various clubs or disability organisations in East Lothian Venue: Tynepark Resource Centre, Haddington	11	7	4	1 visually impaired person, 1 support worker from the community centre; 3 people with physical impairments; 6 people with mental health problems. Age 35 - 70
Young people from inner urban areas, members of a drama group at Castlemilk Youth Complex, Glasgow. Venue: Castlemilk Youth Complex	8	2	6	One male group worker and one female group worker, both mid 20s, all others aged 15-19 years

3.2 Key Points from each Focus Group

The key findings from each focus group are shown under headings relating to the main questions in the focus group framework. The full transcriptions can be viewed in the Appendices.

3.2.1 Focus Group 1 - Glenluce: remote rural area

a) The meaning of woodlands

Woodlands are associated with pleasure and relaxation, work, the natural world, beauty.

However, even rural families are fearful of letting their children play freely in woods

For some, woods are more welcoming and offer more adventure and freedom than open countryside. Paths make a difference to feeling confident about not getting lost – they make people use a woodland or forest more.

b) Forestry Commission Scotland

Perceptions of the Forestry Commission are mixed, for some perceived as being more interested in facilities for tourists than for locals. Consultation is seen as an exercise that is done for the sake of fulfilling a requirement; participants claim that there is little evidence of results emanating from consultation

Issues of power and control between landowner and community need to be more open, literally and metaphorically. It's important to obtain the views of a fair cross-section of the community and allow the community to take more control.

c) Access to woodlands

Woodlands are used for a number of purposes by tourists but not so much by the local communities for several reasons:

- Available free time is used in family-related pursuits rather than in visiting woodlands
- Local schools may not visit local woodlands due to lack of funding
- Tourism and some of the sports associated with woodlands, such as shooting, only benefits a certain economic sector
- Some of the sports in which local people may be interested are not catered for (e.g. circuits for all-terrain vehicles)
- The previous point was contested - seen by others as defeating the purpose/function of a woodland

d), e), f) and g) Benefits and problems

Dog fouling seen as one of the problems in woodlands close to towns, along with rubbish, fly tipping and elements of anti-social behaviour. Conifers are seen as a species that do not contribute to the quality of woodlands. People would like to see more designed forest; more broadleaf species; conifers are seen as having a negative impact on water courses.

The health benefits of woodlands are recognised, mental as well as physical - "it gives me a sense of my place in the scheme of things" - but access is unequal at present. People also like the idea of using wood as biofuel.

In general, there were a number of conflicting elements or tensions: tourist industry/local community; woodland as an economic resource/visual aspect of the forest; woodlands as areas of relaxation/for noisy or rugged sports.

h), i) Recommendations

Commitment to the local community is important, especially where there used to be forestry villages;

"There's a need for a partnership group, with the community, with the Forestry Commission, with private land owners, some kind of group that can get together and work out some of these problems"

It seems likely that good design and management of footpaths would make a significant difference to access and use.

3.2.2 Focus Group 2: Edinburgh – blind and visually impaired people

a) The meaning of woodlands

Woodlands mean birds, trees, walks, smells, animals, mystery, mud. Forests are also seen as good for a 'comfort stop'.

b) Forestry Commission Scotland

A number of forest sites were praised - generally the FC is associated with good maps and forest walks. Glentress is considered a good place for ramblers with visual impairment; Galloway forests were popular, especially because of information on wildlife and for people with disabilities. The Kielder centre was

also highly praised. Generally there was good knowledge of FC and what they do among this active, ramblers group.

c) Access and facilities

There is a keen desire for more knowledge through signage or audio information accessible to blind and visually impaired people. There is much interest in birds, in particular. There is a recognition that Braille readers may be in the minority, even among non-sighted people, so audio or tactile experience is valued to give knowledge of the forest, e.g. forms, shapes, and sculpture with wood

Parking and facilities such as toilets, café, or visitor centre for the start of walks are important. Public transport would make a difference for people who can't drive – a lack of public transport is the biggest barrier for people, like blind or non-sighted people, who can't drive themselves.

Awkward fences and stiles are disliked. Graded walks (in terms of difficulty and surfacing) are popular, e.g. in Galloway, but churning up of tracks by vehicles is very unpopular. Information about the condition of paths is vital, especially if there are temporary logging activities, because muddy and rough trails can be a real hazard. There is also a need to think about guide dogs getting through gates/stiles.

d), e), f) and g) Benefits and problems

Many benefits were mentioned - health, tranquillity, a place for wildlife, for children, to get fresh air and exercise,

h), i) Recommendations

Audio guides on wildlife and the environment, combined with more opportunities for tactile interpretation, were recommended, as were graded walks to inform people what to expect in terms of difficulty and condition. It is important to be able to have experiences by oneself, e.g. pushing buttons as a way to access information was emphasised.

Public transport for access, and mobile telephone/radio contact to reassure and help people if they get lost, would make a big difference

3.2.3 Focus Group 3: Edinburgh – Black and Minority Ethnic Women

a) The meaning of woodlands

The group had positive associations with woodlands: trees, old trees, meadow, park, countryside, canals, waterfalls. Getting away from urban life, and a natural environment were seen as valuable

b) Forestry Commission Scotland

Although the FC was not familiar to the group, it was understood as having a principal rôle to play in terms of access to woodlands. . Culturally, the awareness

and use of woodlands appeared more related to experience of 'home' (in countries of origin), rather than to local woodlands in or near Edinburgh.

c) Access to woodlands

Access at present is very much in relation to urban and urban edge parks, e.g. Lauriston (?Castle) and Corstorphine Hill. This was the only group to mention gathering food in woodlands - picking berries.

There is a cultural difficulty for many from minority ethnic groups in including woodland visits as part of their life styles. Activities like going to woodlands, walking, or camping are most unlikely to be part of eastern cultures. However, it was suggested that the future generation is more likely to include woodlands in their lifestyles in a way similar to the rest of the local population.

Ethnic minorities considered themselves more at risk than others walking alone, and the countryside is seen as a more racist environment. *"As a black person you really don't feel comfortable in the countryside". "Most black minority people have always felt safer in the city centre, rather than out there near the forest or a wooded area"*. There is a fear of other people in woodlands. For some groups, weather, lack of public transport, and lack of knowledge about where to go where they would feel safe all are deterrents. Language is also a barrier because in many households there may be no one or few who can read the relevant information about where to go and what is available.

Forests are seen as less accessible and more restrictive than woodland.

d), e), f) and g) Benefits and problems

Woodlands are seen as good for "getting away", for walking. They are also seen as cleansing the air, protecting wildlife, providing protection from noise, and good for children.

Dog dirt is seen as a deterrent. Other barriers were safety (see above), climate, language, appropriate food and concerns about way finding. There was some concern that children from black and minority ethnic groups might not get introduced to woodlands by their family and, because of more restrictions on school trips, might miss out on visits through school as well.

h), i) Recommendations

There was a desire to have woodlands managed to keep a balance between an open and safe feeling and yet keeping it natural. Rangers would be popular, and there was enthusiasm for school children to be given more access. There is an opportunity to provide information in minority languages and perhaps promote walking groups to encourage BME groups to feel confident using woodlands. Facilities available in the woodlands should allow use and activities that conform to BME groups' cultural practices.

3.2.4 Focus group 4: Haddington – Disabled People

a) The meaning of woodlands

Woodlands were associated with pleasure, peace and quiet, wildlife, but also inaccessibility. There is an idea that forests must be wild, big and at a certain distance; that nearby small ones are not worth visiting. They are considered good for relieving stress and for walking with the children and grandchildren.

b) Forestry Commission Scotland

The Forestry Commission is associated with land being sold off. FCS's role is seen as growing trees and providing access for tourism (e.g. Queen Elizabeth Forest Park chalets). There was much emphasis on removing native trees and planting spruce, or simply felling for commercial reasons. There is very poor knowledge of the real purpose and activities of FCS and the Scottish Forestry Strategy. Using wood for biofuel seen as negative and polluting; the group was also unaware of any action over acid rain and pollution/carbon sequestration. Many associations with forestry were negative, e.g. the visual unacceptability of clear felling, the straight lines of forestry tracks or fire breaks.

c) Access to woodlands

There is little knowledge and many doubts about the new rights to roam in relation to privately owned forests, especially where there are keepers (whose potential presence makes people feel they are trespassing and unwelcome). There is seen to be a need to actively encourage people to access woodlands. *"There's nothing there to entice, nothing to get them interested or put the idea in their mind - new experience - no advertisements to say 'this is... feel free to use it'"*.

Woodlands are also associated with fear, although it was only men who mentioned fear for women's safety; they seemed much more concerned about danger, especially for women, than women did.

This group believed you need to have a car to access woodlands, and therefore good car parks are necessary. This group travels quite far by car to get recreational access.

d), e), f) and g) Benefits and problems

Woodland benefits are relaxation, peace, exercise, learning and using woodland skills. There is concern about local woodlands, especially shelterbelts, being neglected or becoming inaccessible. Woodlands are appreciated but there is concern about forests/woodlands masking good views and much interest in good visual design of woodlands.

h), i) Recommendations

There is a desire for well designed and managed native and deciduous woodland, and a strong dislike of conifers. It's believed that woodlands shouldn't

be solely for commerce, the commercial side of forestry should be kept to more inaccessible areas. Instead, woodlands should offer education about wildlife and woodland skills.

To access woodlands, people need good car parks and good, comfortable toilets. There appears to be a need to correct many misconceptions about forestry and access and to advertise the positive things FCS do much more effectively.

3.2.5 Focus group 5: Castlemilk – Urban Youth

a) The meaning of woodlands

Woodlands mean trees, hedgehogs and squirrels, providing oxygen, walks. They are also associated with being scary – where criminal activity might happen, or people getting drunk. Countryside woodlands, and woodland use, are seen as likely to be very different from the urban experience – cleaner, nicer.

b) Forestry Commission Scotland

FCS is linked in young people's minds (through television advertisements) with the new access legislation and the countryside access code.

c) Access to Woodlands

There were fond memories of going up a local hill in earlier times. Participants thought woodlands should be “open plan” for accessibility. Pollock Country Park is very much appreciated for its attractiveness and the variety of things to do. The idea of a map telling you what's on offer was appealing. The participants feel intimidated by other young people using quad bikes etc, or gangs drinking, lighting fires, etc., “up the braes”.

There is a real sense of deprivation because the group lives in the city, a lack of access to woodlands and flowers and nice walks, etc., which they imagine country dwellers have.

d), e), f) and g) Benefits and problems

Woodlands are considered nice to look at; they combat pollution, are good for health and longevity and for relief from stress. “*The more woods there is, the less roads there is, the less pollution there is.*”

There were fond memories of going to woods in primary school. There is a recognised need for a local facility for people to ride quads and bikes close by, so that other places don't get “wrecked”.

Woodlands and fields are considered to make a place more attractive to live in, and possibly increase the house values. On the downside, woodlands are seen to cause pollution because that's where people dump things and burn things. Keeping places tidy and litter free would make people more keen to use local woodlands and open space.

Woodlands are recognised as giving young people somewhere to go to get away from trouble, and it is important to give young gangs a place of their own. The impact of ASBOs means young people can't hang about on the streets any more.

h), i) Recommendations

Having people hired to manage woodlands (e.g. at Pollock) was seen as very beneficial. There is an interest in having attractive and well managed woodland nearby.

Suggestions for dealing with gangs who go up the braes drinking, etc, was to give them more to do, e.g. giving the Youth Centre a grant, putting some money into working with young people. Woodlands were seen as places where young gangs could be and it would be okay.

3.3 Common Themes across Groups

The results of the focus groups are gathered under headings relating to each of the main questions in the focus group framework. The individual transcriptions give more details as they pertain to each target group and can be viewed in the Appendices.

a) What do woodlands mean to you?

The most common associations with woodlands were very positive and also quite literal ones. These included: trees, parks, meadows, green spaces, waterfalls and canals, and wildlife. However, among the participants who were more familiar with woodlands, the associations became more abstract – pleasure, relaxation, relief from stress. The blind and partially sighted group (B&PS) were members of walking groups that made regular excursions to the countryside, and so were familiar with woodlands. Their associations with the word included: good walks, muddy paths, timber, tranquillity and smells, 'comfort stops', mystery and getting lost. Participants from the remote rural area also touched on some of these, as well as beauty, pleasure and relaxation, recreation, and fear (of deviance and getting lost). This latter was the only group that made associations with tourism (a way to regenerate tourism), the economy (as an 'economic reserve'), energy (a source of renewable energy) and the tension between having forests for industrial exploitation and for recreation and heritage. The group of disabled people were the only ones who made an association with inaccessibility (through expectation and experience) and accessibility in terms of private land. Fear was something this group associated with woodlands.

b) If I say Forestry Commission Scotland, what does that mean to you?

Most of the participants had very little knowledge of the Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) and, in two of the groups (the Castlemilk and BME group), almost none of the participants knew what it was, except one young person from Castlemilk who had seen an advert about the FCS and one person in the BME

group, who guessed that it could be a management body. Everyone in the B&PS group had heard of the FCS, but there were very few ideas about what it was, except a few positive associations ('good maps and walks' and 'a brilliant organisation', from a participant who used to work there). There was very little knowledge of the FCS in the Haddington disabled group; planting trees and dealing with tourism and some negative perceptions of tree felling were mentioned.

Once again, the adults from the remote rural area had the most developed ideas and opinions of the FCS, which is unsurprising given their circumstances, experiences and dealings with the organisation. One participant felt totally confused about 'who is who' in the FCS, but other contributions included: management and tree growing, the importance of the FCS for information, advice and support (including financial) for organisations and communities who want to do things in woodland areas. One male participant, who seemed very knowledgeable on government issues, discussed IT and funding. A female participant who had lived in the area most of her life perceived FCS's engagement with local communities to be fairly recent and limited in its effectiveness, considering the size of the organisation. She argued that FCS projects an image of being more community friendly than it actually is, and whilst she didn't see them as hostile, she felt that in order for anything to be achieved, the community has to take the initiative and keep pursuing them, rather than there being any 'permanent engagement'. Examples raised in the group were community initiatives such as reinstating footpaths in the woods and having a village composting scheme, which she felt would fall off the agenda if the community did not pursue it. She also felt that the FCS is more likely to make changes for tourists than individuals and sees it as a case of 'the corporation vs. the individual'.

There was also some discussion of the FCS being afraid of 'losing control' or of things happening beyond their control. One farmer felt that the FCS could do some stupid things, giving an example of drainage jobs, and he had some bad experiences with contractors. There followed a discussion of the use of off-road vehicles in the forest by youngsters and the refusal of the FCS to give young people access to land. The need for an area for quad bikes to be used was also discussed amongst the young people from Castlemilk. These activities involve some liability and there are questions about where and how far people can go 'with these vehicles' and access implications for other people using the woodlands. Some participants felt this was not the responsibility of the FCS whilst others disagreed, and thought that the FCS could be shelving the problem in order to bypass the bureaucracy that a resolution would entail. However, there was agreement that some resolution was needed to ensure the safety of everyone using the woodlands and avoiding the issue wouldn't make the problem go away.

When discussing what the FCS does it became clear that many people in all groups are not aware of recent changes in policy and still think that FCS is in the business of planting lots of conifers only for timber production. People suggested things that FCS might be doing and asked the facilitator whether SFS does this or that. The facilitator was unable to answer these questions within the discussion but it showed that FCS is failing to get its message across on issues of policy, its commitment to the environment, management of the landscape and wildlife etc.

c) Have you ever heard of The Scottish Forestry Strategy?

Nobody in any of the groups had heard of the Scottish Forestry Strategy (SFS), although a few participants made some guesses as to what it might be. One guess hazarded by two participants in different groups (Castlemilk and BME), was that the strategy had something to do with access and that places are now open to the public if people respect them (in one case was informed by a TV advert). Another guess was that the SFS is to do with the management of trees.

d) Can you get as much access as you would like?

Some of the participants felt that access to *local* woodlands could be OK but, in most of the groups, access to woodlands was considered to be problematic in various ways. There was a lot of discussion in many of the groups about the barriers preventing access to woodlands (and many of the same topics were touched upon). These ranged from lack of accessible public transport and barriers to access within woodlands, to fear and cultural barriers. They are set out in more detail below:

(i) Transport

Firstly, there was a feeling in most of the groups that transport was a major factor determining access to woodlands for themselves and for others. Many of the participants in the BME, disabled and, particularly in the B&PS group, felt there was a lack of reliable public transport from town centres to take and fetch them to woodland areas. These were generally people who couldn't drive themselves, but who would make excursions more regularly in small groups should services be provided. Participants in the B&PS group felt that this would give them a degree of freedom that they didn't currently have (as they wouldn't have to wait for organised trips to be able to go on walks) and there was agreement that this was the main issue preventing them from visiting woodlands as much as they would like.

"If you've not got a car, you're stuck"
(Participant in Castlemilk Group)

Knowledge of local geography and confidence to explore new places was seen by one BME participant as crucial for accessing woodlands. She had been taken on several trips to the countryside by her son and felt that

second generation Asians possessed the knowledge and confidence to make such trips, which she thought was almost as important in accessing woodlands as the transportation itself.

The disabled participants assumed that a car would be required in order to make a trip to the woodlands, given poor local public transport. Participants from the remote rural area felt that public transport to woodland areas was as much a problem amongst local people as urban dwellers, although it didn't seem to be a problem they experienced personally.

"Woodlands aren't accessible by public transport and in this area public transport is a big problem all round."
(Participant in disabled group, female)

(ii) Access within woodlands

A theme which came through strongly in the B&PS group, but which was also expressed in other groups (adults from the remote rural area, BME group, Castlemilk group), was access within woodlands, as well as to them.

Access to greater sensations and experiences within woodlands was of great importance to the B&PS group. This group expressed some feelings of 'isolation' and 'exclusion' from the experiences of sighted people when visiting woodlands, particularly the experience of seeing birds. When discussing ways of overcoming this, the themes which came out most strongly were the desire for information and facilities, and they had well formed ideas about what might help. In terms of information, suggestions included tree names in Braille and audio equipment. The preference was for an audio device that combined touch and sound, and so could give visually impaired people information about trees, birds and wildlife. Furthermore, they felt they would benefit from having some of this information in advance of their trips. Wooden statues and other things to touch, both out in the woodlands and in visitor centres were also valued, especially for children.

The importance of information was raised in all of the other groups, in particular signage and information about trees and wildlife and about directions, and coded walks, as many people felt uncertain about which routes/land they were allowed to walk on.

Facilities in the woodlands were mentioned in several groups, but were of the utmost importance for the B&PS group, for whom it contributed hugely to the experience of visiting woodlands. Good car parks, visitor centres and toilets were all seen as being integral to the experience. Toilets were also considered to be very important to the disabled group, alongside car parks which were not too far away from the woodlands.

The state of paths/tracks was another aspect of access within the woodlands raised in several groups (but again most frequently in the B&PS group). Awkward (or barbed wire) fences to climb over were seen as problematic and fences with no space or gates for dogs to pass through posed difficulties as dogs had to be carried over fences. Whilst participants understood that work had to be done which would make paths muddy, paths which were difficult to traverse (“*mud up to people’s knees*”) caused problems. In several groups these were thought to be caused by the tracks of 4X4s that created ditches which then filled with water. One man in the B&PS group had fallen in a ditch and had almost broken his leg; anxiety about having an injury on a dangerous path was evident in this, and the BME group.

The fear of getting lost in the woodlands was mentioned in several of the groups, and although it was often not enough to put people off visiting woodlands, there was certainly a desire for more information. The B&PS participants needed to be accompanied on walks by sighted people (several of whom attended the group) and one participant felt that although some easier graded walks should have been possible alone, there was a fear of injury/getting lost. Although many walks are ‘waymarked’, this was of little help to them. There was also an interest in having rangers, with whom they had positive associations from previous experiences, as they had been very helpful in planning walks. Rangers/ patrol police or some other type of professional based in the woodlands to provide help and information was felt to be important for information as well as protection in all of the groups except the Castlemilk group.

(iii) **Safety and Fear**

This leads on to a discussion of fear, and concern over security and safety, which emerged as major psychological barriers to accessing woodlands in all five groups, albeit in different ways. Fear of verbal or physical attack within woodlands was a theme raised in several groups, but discussed with particular regularity in the BME and the disabled people’s group. In the latter group, this fear was expressed most strongly on behalf of women (and children) by men, even though some of the women didn’t share this fear. In the BME group there was more consensus about this fear. Many of these participants felt that going to the woodlands was an unsafe activity *per se*, but was particularly dangerous for BMEs. It was unclear in the BME group, whether this fear was a result of experiences of prejudice in the UK or if they were cultural preconceptions, as it was often unusual to visit woodlands or go camping in their countries of origin (or a mixture of the two). Many of the participants felt that they would be safer if accompanied by a white person, just as participants in the other groups felt they would be safer with a big dog or a weapon (disabled group).

“Everybody’s at risk but ethnic minorities are more at risk walking alone”

(BME participant)

These fears expressed seemed to be fear of humans and their activities in the woodlands rather than of woodlands themselves. Concern was raised in all groups (except the B&PS group) about 'who you might meet' and what they could be capable of (theft, verbal or physical attack, alcohol or substance abuse, vandalism and general criminality were all mentioned). The young people from Castlemilk were not afraid of woodlands *per se* and felt that woodlands in rural areas were probably quite safe, but stressed the dangers within their local woodland area. Three people had been stabbed in these woodlands and the young people were afraid of being attacked, mugged or encountering any of the gangs who used the woodlands as a place to gather and drink. The adults from remote rural area recognised the potential danger, mystery and fear of woodlands when discussing associations with 'woodlands', but did not appear to have personal fears about woodlands, except regarding the state of tracks and paths. However, they did recognise this fear on the part of visitors from the city, who would stick to the visitor centre or the periphery of the woodlands, but who felt intimidated by the more dense woodlands and the possible threats within them. Indeed, the density of woodlands was an issue mentioned in several groups, but in the BME group it was highlighted in relation to fear, the feeling being that woodlands become more frightening the denser they are, and the less you can see.

"Too dense to enjoy because of fear"

(BME participant)

d) Are there other ways woodlands could make a difference in our lives?

Almost all of the groups thought that woodlands impact positively on their lives, identifying: recreation, environment, education, health and well-being, wildlife and natural resource, as contributing factors. In terms of recreation, day trips, picnics and family days out were mentioned with positive associations in most of the groups. Local clubs like bird watchers clubs were mentioned, and woodland skills, such as crafts and hobbies, were raised by a disabled participant. Woodlands were also thought to be beneficial to people as a resource for fuel and heating, and was a major point for discussion amongst the participants from the remote rural group, who used wood as a resource for heating houses. Participants in all the groups also felt positive about the environment, stressing pleasing scenery and the importance of woodlands for wildlife (birds, squirrels and deer in particular).

"They're nice to look at. I'd much rather look at that than a block of flats, or whatever or a wee factory or whatever."

Participant, Castlemilk Group

In many of the groups there was a sense that woodlands can offer an escape from everyday city life, and the tranquil environment of woodlands can help to 'get away from it all' and away from other people (in the B&PS group). Alongside this theme of 'escapism' was that of the freedom that people sometimes feel when out in the woodlands.

There was a feeling in all of the groups that woodlands helped to relieve stress, assist relaxation, improve self-esteem and confidence and was important generally for health and well-being. For one participant, being in the woodlands helps her 'moods' and gives her perspective. Other participants mentioned longevity, exercise and benefits for people with physical, mental health problems or weight problems amongst the benefits that woodlands can offer. They were also thought to help improve quality of life (see section on Economy below).

e) What do you think woodlands/forestry have to offer you/your community?

(i) General community benefits

Most of the benefits of woodlands to individuals discussed above were also considered to be beneficial to the participants' communities and to society as a whole. For the BME group however, whilst they recognised these benefits (particularly health and escapism from the city), many of the participants did not see these as incentives for them to visit the countryside because visiting woodlands were not culturally familiar activities (especially for participants from Africa and Asia). Bangladeshis in particular were far more likely to engage in urban activities, such as shopping or visiting relatives. Going for picnics was deemed acceptable, but camping was viewed as potentially dangerous and at times regarded with some horror!

"No, but with the climate, what's the point of going and shivering all night, you don't get to sleep, and it's all wet, what kind of holiday would that be?"
(BME participant)

"Woodlands, for the Bangladeshi community, this is the last thing on their minds."
(BME participant)

Culture therefore, could be seen as another barrier preventing people from visiting woodlands, including culture of urban dwellers as well as people from other countries. Several of the BME participants were put off by the perceived 'mentality' of landowners and rural dwellers, which some felt hadn't changed/progressed, and they suspected an underlying element of racism (however, one participant also admitted that this could be down to their own preconceptions). This problem was compounded by the fact that

many felt they lacked knowledge about public access and were unsure of where they were permitted and where was safe to walk – a concern shared in the B&PS group (and discussed in the section on Information, above).

Factors such as language (essential for reading maps and finding out about places to visit), lack of public transport, expense of transport and logistics all exacerbated this (one participant felt she needed to take the rice cooker with them, should they go camping). However, it was recognised that second generation children were more interested in visiting woodlands and one participant felt that they could sometimes miss out because their parents weren't interested. Several of the BME participants had taken their children to visit woodlands but admitted this was done grudgingly and if the weather was bad they would persuade them to choose an alternative trip!

Lastly, another barrier to visiting woodlands discussed and related to culture is lifestyle. Participants in the Castlemilk group felt that local people didn't value their local woodlands, but would appreciate them if they were further afield. They also thought that in the countryside, young people would use woodlands in a different way. However, participants in the remote rural area group felt that lifestyle and daily routines (work, TV, home, church) got in the way and people rarely visited woodlands. Further, they felt a generational change had occurred and children no longer explored woodlands so much, mostly because of greater protection of behalf of the parents and children being less adventurous.

(ii) The benefits of woodlands to children and for their education

The benefits of woodlands to children and for their education were mentioned in almost all of the groups, alongside a concern that children don't get as much access as they should. School trips, learning about nature and family days out are all viewed as important for children (and one participant felt that usage in adulthood could be partly determined by childhood usage). However, several barriers to these were raised. One school teacher in the BME group felt that restrictions and regulations mean that many BME children have not visited woodlands, often when their parents are not interested. Funding was another barrier identified, and even rural dwellers felt that there were children who went to school close to woodlands but would be unable to go on organised walks due to the expense. However, there was a feeling that it was important to overcome this, through school trips, initiatives and government/FCS funding.

f) What do you think forestry can offer in economic terms?

All of the groups recognised economic benefits of woodlands for themselves and their communities and several of the groups hinted at the complexity and interconnectedness of the economic benefits. Timber processing, wood (and firewood), fuel and industrial energy were amongst the economic benefits mentioned. However, in the disabled group, timber felling was viewed quite

negatively and was thought to be best if confined to inaccessible areas. Tourism was seen as important for the group from the remote rural area, and mountain biking, shooting and walking were given as examples of recreational activities that tourists came for. However, problems had arisen for tourists hoping to walk on farmland, as these tracks are dangerous and “intensively banned”. Locals were thought to be less likely to enjoy these and other outdoor activities on their doorsteps. Employment was mentioned in several groups, including the employment of rangers in local woodlands to give information and set trails. Similarly facilities and recreation were mentioned, and in the B&PS group, one participant thought that these were more lucrative than the sale of timber (given the current low price of timber).

Besides the health benefits, woodlands were also thought to help improve quality of life. In the Castlemilk group there was some discussion about how one end of the Castlemilk scheme, next to woodlands and fields was a more pleasant environment to live in than the other area without woodlands and fields. They also referred to the affluent villages in the countryside and made a connection between the nice houses and woodland areas. However, this was not a connection made by people who lived in a rural area.

g) What do you think forestry/woodlands offer in terms of environmental issues?

Further environmental benefits of woodlands mentioned included helping to hide 1960s architecture. However, one participant in the Castlemilk group thought that woodlands can impact negatively on health and the environment as people burn their rubbish there, which creates air pollution. Fly-tipping and fires were also seen as a problem by remote rural dwellers in woodlands close to settlements. Dog fouling in woodlands was seen as a nuisance by several groups.

h) What do you feel about the ways woodlands/forests are managed today?

Opinions on the management of woodlands varied - some felt unable to comment and one participant felt it was poor, but the overall feeling from the groups was that there was definitely room for improvement. The problems with maintenance which were raised included consequences of tree felling, especially flooding, closed or cluttered paths and the effect on the scenery (bare).

There was a lot of discussion about the state of paths and tracks more generally (also in Section on ‘Access within Woodlands’ above) and the importance of well maintained paths for usage. Participants in the Castlemilk group had quite wide experiences of both local woodlands and going on trips to woodlands. However, most of them hadn’t visited their local woodlands (‘The Braes’) for many years, partly because of safety and security fears, but also because of poor management and the overgrown walkways and paths that didn’t seem to lead anywhere. Many in this group felt that more local people and families would visit these woodlands should some effort be made with the maintenance, such as

making paths accessible, providing facilities and some seating (also raised in the disabled group) and they suggested the council could be employed to do this.

However, this (and other) groups also didn't want too much interference with the woodlands, for fear of compromising the naturalness and wildness of the environment and ending up with a park. Indeed, a participant in the disabled group felt she would be less likely to visit woodlands which were more local and managed. This theme of getting the balance right – between maintenance/intervention and wilderness was also raised in the BME group when discussing having facilities and rangers in the woodlands. The same concern was shown for not intervening too much.

"I don't think they should be interfered too much because otherwise they lose their whole nature, there shouldn't be too much interference, but again, they do need to be managed. There has to be a balance, getting the right balance."

(Participant, BME group)

There were also varied responses to the question of whether participants would like to be involved in the management of woodlands. The B&PS group responded most positively to this, but were unsure of what this might entail. Suggestions included tree planting (including memorial trees) and adopting trees. The Castlemilk group would be interested if they could relate to the outcomes/rewards that involvement might bring, but thought that going out with shovels was not very 'cool'. The disabled group also liked the idea of being involved, both in helping out in the woodlands (planting trees, making bird boxes etc.) and through management committees, although they identified some potential problems with the latter.

For the remote rural dwellers, the topic of involvement in management led to a heated discussion about consultation and the flaws they perceived as inherent in the process. Many of the participants felt that the community needed further engagement in management but there was some scepticism about the consultation process and it was seen by some as an exercise to fulfil a requirement rather than a way of listening to the public's interests concerning woodlands. There was also felt to be a lot of 'bogus consultation' being conducted (e.g. by the Boundaries Commission) and a feeling that it should be done by an independent body, with people properly informed of the topic prior to the consultation and including people who are not so skilled at communicating. Lastly, they felt that liability was a problem with involvement in management.

i) What would improve things?

(i) Species composition/mixture

Many of the participants had opinions on the amount of conifers and deciduous trees and how woodlands and forests were managed. In several groups, conifers were thought to make the forest very dark – a problem discussed in the section

on fear. One of the participants from the remote rural area raised the issue of the environmental impact that conifers have on water courses and discussed landscaping forests and planting of broader leaves. For some participants in the disabled group, there was not enough access to the right type of woodlands. These participants preferred more native woodlands to conifer woodlands. They felt that more deciduous trees should be planted, but that there should also be a mix of conifers and deciduous trees. This also reflected the opinions that many people expressed, i.e. that conifer trees are still being planted widely for timber production – it was clear that FCS has failed to get the message about changes in practice out to the public.

(ii) Access

Access was a major issue and there was strong support for more public transport to and from woodlands. The participants from the remote rural area suggested monthly community run trips to the woodlands for local people and children as a way to overcome this problem. Other groups suggested reliable public transport and a car pool scheme.

(iii) Fear

Safety and security and fear were important issues for the BME, disabled and Castlemilk participants in terms of personal attacks and for the B&PS participants in terms of getting lost or injured. Rangers were suggested in four of the groups as a way of providing information, protection and recreation in woodland areas.

(iv) Management

Rural remote dwellers felt that there was a need for creative management and suggested linking holidays with conservation projects as an example. A disabled participant suggested summer camps.

4. CONCLUSIONS

There is generally a very positive association with woodlands – trees, wildlife, pleasure and getting away from urban life.

There is very little knowledge of FCS and what its current role is. Although some people associated FC sites with good walks and positive experiences, there were some very negative perceptions (and misconceptions) about FCS role in felling and its association with unattractive coniferous plantations. It seems that, by and large, FCS is failing to get its message across on issues of policy, its commitment to the environment, management of the landscape and wildlife etc.

There is a demand for a better and more continuing relationship with local communities, especially in a rural context. There needs to be a partnership and (crucially) power sharing.

Although no-one appears to know about the Scottish Forestry Strategy (SFS), some key positive suggestions (mostly guesses) as to its rôle, especially from the BME group and inner city youth, was that it was responsible for delivering increased access to the countryside. This perception is an opportunity to be built upon. BME groups, in particular, would appreciate walking groups and literature promoting access for BME groups – FCS could be a pioneer for what access to countryside means generally for BME groups.

Lack of reliable public transport was a major barrier to access to woodlands for many groups, especially the BME group, the disabled people's group and the B&PS group. Given that private cars are the principal means of access at present, there is a need for good car parks. Good facilities such as toilets are also important for many groups.

The importance of information was raised in all of the other groups, in particular there was a desire for signage, information about trees and wildlife, and clear directions and coded/graded walks, as many people felt uncertain about which routes/land they were allowed to walk on. For B&PS people, information in audio format is very important.

Fear of getting lost or having an accident is an important factor; rangers or patrol police would be welcomed by many to alleviate this. Fear of verbal or physical attack is also a problem for many people and particularly for BME groups, who consider themselves much more vulnerable in the countryside than in towns. Again, the presence of rangers could alleviate this.

On the positive side, there is a widespread sense that woodlands can offer an escape from everyday city life and the tranquil environment of woodlands can help to 'get away from it all' and to relieve stress. The benefits of woodlands to children for play and education were mentioned in almost all of the groups, alongside a concern that children don't get as much access as they should. The expense, and health and safety requirements, were problems limiting school visits.

All of the groups recognised some economic benefits from woodlands, for themselves and/or the community, and several of the groups hinted at the complexity and interconnectedness of the economic benefits.

There was some recognition of the environmental benefits and problems associated with forestry but these were mixed, often confused, and occasionally erroneous (e.g. the pollution associated with biofuels). Negative comments were made on the visual impact of clear felling and Sitka spruce planting; 'forestry' was often associated with dense, unpleasant coniferous plantations as opposed to 'woodlands', which were seen as open, deciduous, attractive places.

Good management of woodlands, to keep tracks in a good state of repair and to keep places open and well-maintained, was important to most people. There is a recurring theme of the need to get the balance right – between maintenance/intervention and keeping a natural or wild feel to the place.

People are interested in wildlife and the environment but often don't understand, or are misinformed, about the details of how those ideas and interest relates to the places they can access or come across in their daily lives. It seems to be part of the modern condition that there is a disjunction between what people know (e.g. about climate change or internationally endangered species) and what people have direct experience of – there is an important potential rôle for FCS in making this link, both practically and educationally.

The FCS could also advertise its policies and strategy much more effectively (including use of television). There is much misinformation on forestry in Scotland and the work of FCS

There is a real sense of urban deprivation, a lack of access to woodlands and flowers and nice walks, etc, for young people who live in Castlemilk. Woodlands are also recognised as giving young people somewhere to go to get away from trouble, and it is important to give young gangs a place of their own. The impact of ASBOs means young people can't hang about on the streets any more. There is a potentially significant role for FCS here too.

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APPENDIX: FOCUS GROUP TRANSCRIPTS

APPENDIX 1: GLENLUCE: REMOTE RURAL AREA, 11/1/06

Date: Wed 11th January, 19.35

Venue: Glenluce, Dumfries and Galloway

Area: Rural

Moderator: Simon Bell, assisted by Alicia Montarzino

Participants: 8, 3 males (approximate age range 40 to 55), 5 females (approximate age range 25 to late 60)

M: Moderator, P: Participants, f: Female, m: Male.

M: *What do woodlands mean to you?*

Participants, roundtable:

- Pleasure and relaxation (f1)
- Work and shooting (m1)
- People and their environments and the natural world (f2)
- Beauty (f1)
- A lovely gathering...(f3)
- Timber lorries on (narrow roads) (f)
- Shelter for cows (m1)
- Mystery (f)
- Mysteriousness, mystery (S)
- Recreational opportunities (f)
- Facilities, recreational facilities, activities (m2)
- Potentially dangerous (f1)
- An economic reserve which we should be protecting, potentially, not for the simple thing of producing timber or wood, we should be finding other ways...(m3)
- Opportunity for renewable fuel source (f3)
- Habitat (f)
- Opportunities to regenerate tourism (f)

P (f4): I think there's a huge tension between the industrial side of forestry and the tourism and recreational side to forestry and also in the heritage side of forestry, so a lot of trees seem to be valued for their heritage and therefore can't be chopped down but they're at the end of their life and ready to fall down or whatever and not be replaced, so there's tensions.

P (f5): One thing people aren't aware of is the existence of communities like Glentool Village; where I live at Clachaneasy Forestry Commission Village, which now doesn't set a focus, which they will need, and the communities are going to be abandoned - the focus has gone, and the community's still there, it'd be interesting to re-focus.

P (m3): I think we can be c... between promoting use of woods, and certainly some of the communities who live very close around them don't want the larger community using the facility as they see it as a threat to where they live, and I'm doing some of that work at the moment on that, I'm doing some what's called the 'participatory appraisal of the community'. I'm doing some work presently on that

and it's very much a mixed view, a very wide view of what they feel, we were asking questions such as "what do you like about here?" just sort of specifically to a certain wooded area and we got quite a variation of answers to that, what they would like, ideas for bird sanctuary boxes, rest areas, and look to the other side where "we don't want people round here because we're going to get the wrong type of people here and they're going to damage our land". So there was quite a diverse range of people who are using the facility, but I think it's also important that we do have people contend, especially in the ... times where people don't have; we need to promote the opportunity for people to use the woods, even for walking or health and well-being, anything, I think that needs to be addressed more, to improve the use of woodlands.

M: So you're suggesting that in some places communities identify strongly with a wood as being 'their' wood?

P (m3): Yeah, if you have communities who are on the boundary of the woodland and picking up those, because to them it's like a security area, for their home area, so it secures them, so if you're going to use it for community use and facilities, they see it as a threat to their peaceful back area. Not all, it's a mixed view, but you do have it.

P (f4): I think it's open to exploring, there's a wealth of knowledge to be gained, you know, from exploring the woods, from the ancient woodland that's still around but also potential for them to be destroyed if they're explored too much

M: So you think of them as being somewhat vulnerable?

P (f4): Yes, they're potentially vulnerable if there's going to be too many people or too much activity going on in the woodland, you know there's a balance to be met. And exploring them and retaining the required peaceful areas.

P (f5): I think it's important to retain the wildness of it and at the same time to protect the trees and the place where they're all dying, the old ones

P (f4): The nature as well, there are a lot of squirrels and different animals that are there but if they're explored too much, and if we encourage too many people at the one time too quickly...Sensitivity to be exercised.

P (f): I think it's the exercise, I think it's important to get a balance, like what you were saying about the uses of all the shooting and the cows, and having ideas about the beauty and mystery I think it's important to see that there are different ways of looking at it.

P (m1): I have a lot of use for the woods because basically we're surrounded by them

P (f): Where are you from?

P (m1): Bilbaggen, from Flar.

M: So you live in the middle of the forest in a way?

P (m1): No, sort of stay quite close to the main road but the boundary of the farm is on one half of the Bareagle forest

P (m3): I think there's also a bit of education on the wildlife needs people see and perceptions, some people have perceptions of deer shooting as being cruel and survival of responsibility, if they do survive, but then again, if you're damaging the woods or taking away the wood areas then you're having an effect on the animals that live there as well. So there's quite a lot of different viewpoints and

variations on what we should do with our woods and it's not just about putting it on the table, there's all the different reasons of what we want to do with woods. I think it's about getting very much a balance and defining what we're going to do with our woods. It's a difference between very high ground forestry and to something that's more close by, community woods, it's getting that balance right and making people understand that.

P (f): We're talking about woodland in the broadest possible sense, I mean non-specifically just the kind of woodlands that forestry commission cultivates

M: No, no, exactly yes, the widest

P (f): Because we have an ancient woodland here in Glenluce that I walk round and it's a very central place, I think it doesn't matter where I've been, I always feel better than when I've been on one of the trains

P (f): There are a great number of people, though, who are very frightened of woodlands and are less inclined to go and visit the woodlands because to them, perhaps they've grown up in a town or a city and because it's not familiar to them, they find it scary and daunting and the many people who visit centres on the outskirts and periphery of the woodland, and they only walk a hundred yards from the centre and have a cup of tea in the shop and don't explore further.

M: Do you think there's a difference then, for people living in this area, in a more rural area, that you don't have that sense of ...

P (f): No you do... Yes you do because of lifestyle now and also other people's limitations, whether it's the emotional, social or financial help that they can't get to, if they don't have access to a car, or perhaps don't feel physically well enough or confident enough to go to a woodland, or perhaps their social health is poor, they don't have anyone to go with, so the opportunities aren't there. So, no, I think it is as much rural areas, if you were to go down the street and knock on each door and ask people "when was the last time you walked through a woodland?", it would be pretty rare, and "would you walk through a woodland?" I had somebody with me, or I had a big dog, so it still retains that mystery about it here.

P (m3): That's funny, I would think as well that this method, there is a difference between highland woodlands and open woodlands and rural areas, unless you're ... that's your life. So basically we're all the same whether it's ...house or Easter Avenue, you go from your house to your car to your television to your church to your work, that's it.

P (f): But it's lifestyle as well because I grew up in a large town but, as a child, I would go out into the fields and be among... and take risks running across the field for a *bull*, but with my children, who are next generation, there is no way they would go out and explore the woodlands because there's no protection there; the children nowadays are supervised more, and are less inclined to be as explorative as my generation is.

P (m2): I think psyche has changed and had an effect on that, criminal deviants and everything else has an effect on how families are and, in the old days, people would be quite happy to have children go and play in the woods and nowadays it's because of the criminal content and drug content and people with little kids now, some people won't even let them round the corner or on the

streets to go and play because the risk is high. When we did the training last Sunday, we did this appraisal, we spent a few hours out and we were doing, not just using the wood, we actually had people out on the peripheral wood area who walked round with their dogs and one or two said 'do you ever come through', there's a clear pathway right through the centre of the wood which is commonly used, it's classed as a common pathway and there were a few who said "no we won't go down there", and I said "why?", and they said "you never know who you're going to meet" and that was one of the answers to that. It was varied, and on the day there were a lot who did use it, again people with horses want to use the rural pathways through the woods for that, which I was quite surprised upon, because the road I'm talking about is right on the perimeter of the community and I actually, in two hours, met four different families with horses walking up through the pathway, I was quite surprised in two hours, and about thirty families with dogs walking through in that two hours.

P (f): It's quite a relatively short walk though isn't it?

P (m2): Yeah but they also use the other side of that road which goes right out towards this way and a lot were saying they want that bit to be more developed. They're keen for some development to be done, the pathways been cleared out so a more defined route through the wood, whereas on the northern side there's no pathway, just a dirt track. It's a pity they couldn't develop that better because people would use it more. Promote the communities to use.

P (m3): Children ran curiously through the wood...twice during this standoff, you know, ten years or whatever...childhood

P (f): I used to take rounds of ... in the forest park and I never found any of them frightened of that and this might be a reason why: its because in Galloway forest park there are defined paths so that you know you're not going to get lost, even to a child if there's a path you've got one way on a path you can come back the same way and you're not going to get lost. I also used to take them occasionally into Kilstew forest before the path was developed there, so it was much more of a wild experience, then they were frightened and it was the fear of getting lost, going round a corner and then not knowing your way back. That was fun because they were with an adult.

P (f): But children are less inclined to explore these days. You were talking about criminal deviants but today I would say that I was more criminally deviant when I was a child, and I came from a nice middle class family. You know I ran along the back lane of my house where there were great apple trees and grapes growing out of people's greenhouses, and jumped over the walls and nicked them, for what I don't know, just for the thrill of it. Nowadays the police get phone calls because the kids are playing football outside, so there is this, because people don't communicate anymore, because people don't talk to each other anymore, so there's a lack of communication between people, so children don't have that freedom to explore.

P (m3): But that's what I was thinking of with woods and forests is that they give me this tremendous sense of freedom, that there was a reason for me being in the forest. I always felt that I could come into the woods because they welcomed

me. Whereas I wouldn't walk into somebody's field because they'd shoot me. You know what I'm saying, even as a wee boy...

P (m): You were just born chancers

P (f): What would you do nowadays if a couple of young lads were wandering through your field?

P (m3): Nothing

P (f): Would you not think?

P (m3): Nothing, never ever sent anybody off the field other than if they're in the road

P (f): Would you not think 'they must be up to something'?

P (m3): ...stones and caused drainage problems, that's about it.

P (f): See my brother used to go out for a whole day with a pair of binoculars as a young lad and explored all the fields and what not, and I mean this was in Ayreshire, quite a built up area, but anywhere he could he'd go out looking for birds and things, but that rarely happens now.

P (m3): ...Five miles away, because of the line of fire, you know and because...because we couldn't do that anywhere else

P (m2): You're saying that and I've been up on the islands, so very barren islands, and in the early days there weren't a lot of trees on the island and the focal area was called the castle grounds as you come in the bay and on a Sunday the whole inhabitants of the island and the town were in the forest because that's where all the fun and the play was. That's now obviously more developed there because they've put the large forest and planted the large forest right through the island, but even then it was boys, even my nephew "I'm going fishing, I've got my bike." "Where are you going?" He'd show me the map "through this forest" and that's all the adventure of going through the woods.

M: I'll draw this part of the discussion to a close. What about the Forestry Commission Scotland? What does that mean to you?

P (f): They manage the woodland. Every sixty years they cut down trees and they grow new ones. (f)

P (f): Total confusion as to who is who.

P (m2): I see them as pretty much information, I mean that just for myself, and information technology for myself, advice, in a way support in the community, funding in the community in regard to forestry issues. So that's how I see them.

M: And you think that they're important for that?

P (m2): Very much so... I think they're very important, they play a role, they do play a role in the responsibility for the forest, they not only develop the forestry they support organisations and communities who want to do things, and again those organisations who want to protect what's in the forest, they give them advice and support, and financial support in the development side, so there's quite a wide spectrum of what the forestry commission can do.

P (f6): Private resources and options...to use the woodlands as private resources, so yes, they're quite happy to ... Organisations which compete with them obviously by offering other options, better funding...transport costs

M: The woods are just too far and it's difficult to get transport?

P (f6): Obviously there are woods very close to schools but to take children to a place where there's organised woodland walks, that'd be quite expensive.

P (f): I feel that they sometimes project an image of being more community friendly than they actually are. I think you have to lead them quite hard and quite frequently to engage with them and even ... that community that is there because of that organisation. I think it's perhaps the climate improving a bit, but I certainly have an impression that if the communities don't keep knocking on their door they are not likely to go out to the communities really.

P (f): Well we hold a wealth of resources...

There are huge government funded, huge government funded organisations, that have a huge wealth of resources; financially, you know their skills, the knowledge and they manage a huge area of land but its only been relatively recently that there has been a push for them to become involved in communities and to work in partnership with communities when they're developing, and it has started, but I think there's a big distance to go yet. I think the size of the organisation and what they do, with the huge wealth of resources that they have, they need to share that with the local communities to a greater extent.

M: You've lived in Glentroll for quite some time have you?

P (f): Yes although I've lived in and belonged to this area since childhood I've lived in Glentroll for nearly twenty years.

M: Now have you noticed changes in the relationship between the Forestry Commission and the community from when it was a forestry village, to how it is now,...how have you seen those changes?

P (f): Even by the time I went, the employment of foresters in the village was declining, but it was a source of employment, obviously. It operated ten of the houses as Forestry Commission owned houses and it had a park and so on, then it started to divest itself of things to do with the village and we had to fight to persuade them to sell some of the houses that went on the open market to the housing association, so that we could retain a sense of affordable rent of housing in the village, try to keep the school which was there. It depended partly on whether you had, at the time, a sympathetic district manager, some are more community orientated than others. Then they really started selling off the land around the village. Unfortunately, at this time local authority budgets were starting to be cut back so really people didn't want to know much, they now own none of the houses, they don't own the caravan park, that has gone, the community had to intervene to see if T... community woodlands could take over the caravan park; they're still fiddle-faddling about what they're going to do about the house that's on that. We've approached them about a number of things, they're never hostile, that I will say, but you just have to keep going and going and going at them. Things like trying to reinstate footpaths in the immediate woods which local people use, they'll do it for tourists but they won't do it for local people. I mean I'm particularly interested because I'm just now trying to make a push for it. The latest was that for the last 6-8 months we've been speaking to them about wanting a village composting scheme and I'm always having to go back to them to say "where are we getting to this?" "Oh yes, yes, I'll go back and see", so there isn't any kind of permanent engagement; it always has to be the

community. And very often you think something's happening but it has just trickled into the sand somewhere.

M: Is that fear of losing control? Do you not get that feeling?

P (f): I think that possibly is.

P (m3): Mine has been one of the problems; it seems that individuals, and the Forestry Commission, I would say, generally have to control all, are really frightened by anything that's going to happen that's beyond their control. And they're worried, so therefore all this problem of the community perception seems to be that they're terrified of the responsibility that they have to the landowner, so that could have a compost scheme...

P (f): Yes

P (m3): Until, they don't seem to be opening up

P (f): No, uh-huh, as I say they're not hostile, but they're not open and they're not proactive in the community.

M: And is the Forestry Commission a neighbouring landowner of yours?

Uh-huh.

M: And what do you think of them from that point of view, as your neighbours and in the area, from your point of view of being a farmer?

P (m1): We don't have any real problems... fences...but some of the jobs they do are pretty stupid, unbelievable. Some of the neighbours have had some terrible problems with them with drainage schemes And the contractors that come in and do the work have done....just a total nightmare, and again I don't know, the people that are dealing with it are not actually concerned with doing that kind of work, just like ahh, what do you call them – nutcase. (m1)

P (f): Does that have to do with liability or just fear in general?

P (m3): I think its just fear in general, you know, partly corporate, and partly individual, the individual can't fit into the corporate structure, they're frightened, both for themselves and the corporate, corporate fear as well, about losing control.

P (f): ...use and abuse - off-road vehicles off track and so that we could undertake an activity which is an up and coming sporting activity, and at the moment they're doing it illegally because the Forestry Commission hasn't allowed them access to the land and so, I mean, its just a nice example. I don't know the rights and wrongs of the sport and what it would do to the environment. I've no doubt there are issues there, but there are lots and lots of these activities coming up for people, recreational activities and perhaps there's a reluctance on their part...

P (f): Maybe just all the red tape you know that they have to go through, it's an extra work load for them, I mean I don't know what their workforce is like...

P (f): Depending on the activity itself it might put other users of the forest off

P (f): I spoke to a couple of other people who wanted to come along and unfortunately working tonight and one of the things, just to go on from your point, was that we see a lot of these many motors in the village, and I think the young people want to go and ride their bikes and get a thrill and things like that and I think, you know how you were saying about the environmental impact of these things, but there was a track that was used for that, so that maybe you could

reduce the harm and give them access to some of the forest on their bikes, or set certain, you know we were talking before about balance, so that they can have access to the forest and the benefits of that on their bikes.

P (m2): Happened to me personally, in that I know the chairman of this group, actually, I met him and he said that what they're doing is they're closing down some ...for nearly two years, two years they've been talking to the forestry saying "can we have a specific area that we can have this for these bikes, which means we are reducing the risk and the danger by people being stray by running round the forest and the fence, and if we have that we'd be happy", and they wouldn't allow it so what we're unfortunately going to do is go back and do all the dangerous stuff which is crazy, because you're not helping out, you're not tackling the issue in the head, how can we realistically solve this problem by blanking it and saying no you can't do it?

P (f): In fairness I think a lot of the objections are not coming from the Forestry Commission, I think it has been the objections from the residents.

P (m2): Yes, right, right.

P (f): I mean I don't think you can blame the Forestry Commission for that one.

P (m2): But we need a resolution to it

P (f): I mean this is a recreational activity. Let me see the young people, the kids in the area, and if there was an allowable area for them to enjoy their right to the forest then that would be...

P (f): I just don't feel that, I mean there are things we can blame them for...

P (m3): Should the Forestry Commission have to deal with this? You know, why can't it be..? (name illegible) or you know why can't it be somebody else? Does it have to be Forestry Commission? Then this is the other problem about the state and the state employees being involved here, they're employed by... And therefore they have to consult them

P (f): Well at the end of the day it's public land though isn't it, being managed by the Forestry Commission? They manage it, they own it. So we should have a say in how it is used and if there is a large demand then the government have to provide them with enough resources to manage it. If there is a demand, it could be that there is a lot of red-tape, perhaps there is a lot of things to consider before we put in a track, like getting archaeological experts in so that they're not destroying anything, there could be huge implications to be putting it in. So you know if the demand is there then, perhaps, the Forestry Commission land don't have enough resources to manage something like that, but I would say that, yeah, it should be Forestry Commission's land that's used, as opposed to a private farmers land, because that's public.

P (m1): Depends how much they're willing to pay

P (f): Well you could sell your land to the Forestry Commission

P (m3): Dead money

P (f): But you can't do anything with your land either, unless you get planning permission and what not, so there's still red tape if you wanted to put a track in.

P (f): It's still a liability, if you say the track is suitable for this and something happens.

P (m2): think that's the focal point...

P (f): If you make it safe enough would the kids want to use it? I think they wouldn't (f)

P (m1): ...a successful youth club and they actually disbanded because they couldn't get insurance to allow the children to skateboard on that car park by the mall.

M: Have any of you actually heard of the Scottish Forestry Strategy before I said the purpose of this was part of the consultation on it?

P/roundtable: No.

P (f): I imagine that there'd always been one, I never expected to catch sight of it and become involved in it in anyway.

M: Can you get as much access to woodlands as you'd like? Have you come across any problems of getting access to woodlands, not just Forestry Commission woodlands, but any woodlands?

P (f): I spoke to someone before I came tonight and she was saying that there's an issue in some of the more wild forest areas, where there's a question as to whether you're allowed in vehicles to get to at least an accessible area before you can walk to those wilder places. There's empty forest roads everybody knows and usually, on a Sunday, what are you able to drive to, the best hill to walk and the question is always, maybe, maybe not.

P (f): No signs or information available

P (f): No, no.

P (m3): I'd actually suggest that since November this year, looking at a project...surprised, not only did they offer me a wood, they offered me two woods...quite surprised that they were keen to say 'yeah anything we can do for the community we want to do'.

P (f): That was Forestry Commission then?

P (m3): No it wasn't, that was private land that belongs to (name illegible).

M: Apart from access, are there other ways in which woodlands can or could make a difference to your lives?

P (m3): I think it makes a lot of difference. You need to define health and wellbeing and how it affects individual people. Somebody who is disabled, for someone to be able to take them for a walk through a wood, can benefit their health, self esteem confidence and feel-good-factor. Local clubs who may be bird watchers (would benefit from) a facility to put up some signs up for birds. It improves it, it brings people out of the houses, into activities and resources. Again, it all has an ongoing effect on health and wellbeing. It's quite wide across, you can go to something that we're looking at the momentkind of exercise which if you look at people, who come from, for example, low incomes, who may be suffering from obesity, don't want to use modern facilities maybe want to use acquired fitness by walking through the woods, which is always good and improves health, which improves confidence, improves self-esteem, that comes away even to the point with people who are suffering mental health issues, that if you go and talk to one of the local doctors up in, you know, the (name illegible) discussing the fact that, if some of the clients he had had these facilities, they may come away from the medical side that they have to have and that's

improving lifestyles. So I think it has a wide approach for the community, to have access to the woods.

P (f): Except you've got to get there and most of the woods aren't on easily accessible routes, unless you've got a car to be able to get there, and then you've got, obviously, social implications if you've got a family, you really have a bubble of time when you can get all that family together and then after that, there's one going one way, one going the other way, one wants to...

P (m3): I suppose you are quite right in saying that's a criteria, there are other parts of the community, there is people who don't have access, quite right and that is a community problem, and how do we have transport, how can we deliver it to them to allow groups to go? How do we get all age groups, who only come to the community centre, because it's the only place they can come to, why don't we have a community resource where we can say we can access and support, one day a month, a trip to the woods? We need the Forestry Commission to be able to make the places accessible. We need to have facilities in the woods, for the groups to use, but it goes back to the first point in the beginning, depending on how the access to that is.

M: And these are beginning to be more kind of benefits for community and the society at large but what about you personally?

P (m): I clean my house with waste wood from the forest

P (f): Feels warmer

P (f): ...consider somewhere like Kielder, which has a bio-fuel plant from the sun which is heating a number of public and private buildings in the village, and cheaply for about half the cost of oil

P (m): but that's a direct benefit I get, you know, I've invested money in proper ... and it's something that I get very cheaply

P (f): I don't get any direct benefit. I burn wood, like I burn the old farm buildings

P (f): Only the thing is that it creates a nice environment, to know that you're around, which is good for your wellbeing and doesn't it give us nicer air and all that produced from the trees and don't we need them for that?

P (f): I think that it always makes me feel better when I've been in one of my moods, know that I'll feel better for it and also what I like about being in the woods is that it gives me a sense of my place in the scheme of things

P (f): It provided me with a project for a job that I did. It has provided me with an opportunity to take other people into the wood and explore and learn and invite people to tell us things and share their knowledge about the woodlands, so that's the opportunities that it has provided for me.

M: Do you get shooting out of the wood?

P (m1): No. That's called poaching.

M: Do you have a wood? Say, you have a wood of your own. Don't you get some pheasants living in it pigeons or...

P (m1): We do, we do.

M: So there's loads of game?

P (f): But isn't that just someone else's pheasants that have just strayed onto your land?

M: If they're on your land, they're your pheasants.

P (f): Oh, right.

P (f): We run a successful scheme here that was a partnership between criminal justice service and age concern, and that was to provide pensioners with logs in the wintertime.

P (f): I didn't know that scheme was still on the go.

P (f): No, no. It revived in Lincolnshire last winter and this winter so far north are getting to hear about it, so there's more people.

M: And this firewood is coming from the Forestry Commission letting these people use waste wood residues?

P (f): Not only the Forestry Commission, but other areas of woodland.

P (f): But there are fewer and fewer people who are having solid fuel heating in their houses, you know, I mean, with the housing partnership, now that it is local authority houses, all the solid fuel heating systems are being replaced. So it's not something that's going to be necessary in ten years time.

M: But what do you think about gas prices going up massively, oil prices going up massively?

P (f): Supplies are...

M: But there's plenty of log and wood up in the forest yeah?

P (f): But it's not going to be enough to keep us all warm. All of us.

P (f): Well it was ... it's unsustainable

P (m2): ...I don't have a tractor, I don't have a chainsaw

P (f): but there's the issue of your whole street.

P (m2): My whole house

If your whole street, if your whole village

P (m2):...Walls, six rooms...Christmas, because I spent money on the stove, so that's the trick, it's not just burning

P (f): No I'm saying, is there enough for that to sustain a whole community? And Stranraer is a very large town. So you reckon it is?

P (m2): I would think so, yeah, don't know the figures, but I would be confident it could be done.

P (f): And what would that do to the environment and the?

P (m2): It's carbon neutral.

P (f): Burning wood is?

P (m2): As long as you re-plant, it's carbon neutral.

P (f): Next to no noise, next to no residue, but it's physical. It's physical, so there's only a certain amount in the community that can do it.

P (m2): Unless, unless, and this is what I think, there is an opportunity, an opportunity for a local business because one of the things about, I mean I'm defending forests here as you may gather, but one of the things that has always been on the go is that you'll get benefit for the village, you know, just the rumbles of the lorries, you know, the benefit there? Well this is one of the ways there, that I think it could be done, provided it's organised and properly. Why doesn't what's his name, that worked at the...?

P (f): So...

P (m2): ...the contract for the woods as well, you know, so that...

P (f): I didn't realise that they would check those only...

P (f): ...fifteen years now. We came from Calderdale, where we had oil, no we had gas there... 'oh this is great', we can go out and cut our wood and get right back to nature and we done that for fifteen years and then we thought '... just got a bit too much, we'll go back to work, we got things to do'.

P (f): and do you have to go out and light all those fires every day?

M: I think if we can stop talking about firewood

P (m2): ...personally I get my Christmas dinner from the wood because the ...sell me a ... every year

P (f): really? How much does that cost you?

P (m2): Thirty pounds.

P (f): Can you get one for me? (f)

P (f): One of the most beautiful sights I've seen in the past few weeks was two deer in the Highglen forest at the top of the hill, across the field, on a lovely winter day, just the two deer, and you know last week one was lying dead on the side of the bypass.

M: What about a further engagement in the actual management of the woodlands, having a say in the management of the woodlands...what would you think about those kind of opportunities?

P (m3): I mean, I to be honest, I've no real link up with the forest management but I think if they're giving us, the more there is involvement with partnership work and understanding each other's issues, you know, rather than... We should be questioning, is it the forest because they don't feel that they can trust each other, or are they scared, we're not really knowing exactly what is the problem and I think there's a need for a partnership group, with the community, with the Forestry Commission, with private land owners, some kind of group that can get together and work out some of these problems and so there's a clearer picture.

P (f): I thought the forestry consulted a panel? Though I don't know to what extent the subsidiary comes on board with the views that are expressed...the forestry consulted a panel, but I don't know that there are any, just community representatives on that. I was only on it with the tourist board and that was years ago, and I'm only aware of people who are not there. Well yes, I suppose we have one of the councillors on, but I don't think they're a community councillor.

P (m3): They've changed it now recently to forest for and ... centre Scotland and it's advertised on all the new, you know, on public property. It's advertised and people wonder why and what for and I guess it put people off.

M: But that's for the south of Scotland?

P (m3): But normally they'll be up north...

P (f): But they do occasionally have a strategic plan for such an area....but again, really, there isn't an awful lot of, you know, it's very...for me to speak about...

P (f): ...of consultation which is telling you what they're doing.

P (f): yes, yes.

P (f): But, like all government funded bodies now, they must consult the local community. Yeah, but they're having to evidence their consultation processes, and they have to evidence it now, so it's becoming far more strict. Now that they actually get the process of the consultation exposed, and they have to speak to a wide cross-section and there are independent bodies, rather than the Forestry

Commission themselves consulting, you know they may do, but every four years they should bring in an independent body to ensure that their consultation process has been carried out and, like all other bodies, like the NHS and all that, you'll see more and more now that the Scottish Executive insists that the consultation processes are carried out adequately enough.

P (f): I still think that despite this, there's still a lot of bogus consultation.

P (f): Of course.

P (f): ...and the boundaries commission are just about a classic example of bogus consultation, and you could ask every individual and they'd say this is rubbish...

P (f): But these procedures have been tried and tested, you know, and consultation, and I think you know that as they're being used they'll create equal opportunities for you to share your own views and what not. It'll be finely tuned in time, I hope.

P (f): I think it's really important, then, that when people are consulted - it's this imbalance of information - that people are fully informed about what's going on and they come to the table confident that they can express their views and they have time...

P (f): But there's a lot of people, I mean you know yourself, you know you go to a meeting and I'm sure that there are lots of views being held by people but they're not able to share them, as some people are better at communicating than others and so it's not just about, you know, talking to the people that can communicate well, it's about the minority groups and people who have disabilities, and that will have to be evidenced.

P (m): Would you manage, would you power a committee, suppose somebody said to you 'let's manage the woods'....want the whole committee to...would you sit/settle on it? That's the point and that's the problem. (m)

P (f): No because those who settle on it would be the ones who would be more inclined to have the confidence to share their views and instill their opinions, or influence the process. However, it's still the duty and responsibility of that government funded body, not only to take the views and opinions of those who are willing to give them, but to attempt to obtain the views of a fair cross-section of the community, and there are many other ways in which people can do that... Focus group, which I handpicked, to provide views and opinions like this one tonight, you know, is not necessarily a fair way to put views and opinions together, you know you can do it in many different ways, and good practice will show in time that there will be creative ways in which organisations and ... but these skills are being developed and the organisations that will be set up to go through that process on their own.

P (m): I think you're going to find that there is, in this point of consultation and evaluation, this participatory appraisal which the Scottish Execs are pushing forward now, is being pushed forward in Scotland now, that's going to have a major input on how taking a much wider, clearer indicator of how they're valued and how they're feeling and what they think and it could be down to group type. We all need our personal view, I mean the community as a whole, it would stand valued properly and it's done in a way that, you know, you might start off with a

focal area that you talk about, then proceed in a wider circle and involving everybody: organisations, clubs, communities, individuals, you know a wide spectrum of that, and getting that collated evidence – that will give evidence as to what people really think.

P (f): It's very difficult though because what we're talking about here is consultation; what you were asking us about was management and that's more about people actually making decisions than just saying their views and taking the responsibility of the tensions and, yeah, that might be fine but, meanwhile, how is that going to affect somebody else and their views?

M: So you're nervous about that idea?

P (m): I think sometimes people...I think we were discussing it in a different context, but sometimes when you say, yeah, we'll take the responsibility of managing but we're managing on the basis of hoping to be supported by everybody else but if something goes wrong it's your fault...standing up there and be supportive and get that going, so that does happen.

P (f): No, I think the Forestry Commission are paid to manage the forestry and should do so, they should manage it because they are paid to do so but to do that in consultation with the people, so it ensures that the aspirations, the views and opinions, the needs, the demands of the local community are met in doing so. They're paid to do it, so they should do it; it's not a job for us.

P (f):...It's not just Forestry Commission land though is it? A mixture of owners ... farmers all around this area

M: What other economic aspects do you think forestry and woodlands offer, to you yourselves, or to the wider community?

P (f): Tourism

P (f): Adding value with things like timber processing, which, unfortunately, doesn't happen as minutely in this area as one might like it to, as a lot of it goes out of the area to be processed, and I suppose the non-forestry things such as the national cross, an example if people are going to buy that craftwork and so on, then there could be economic potential in that kind of thing. Don't ask me...

M: So, in terms of other economic opportunities, you think there ought to be more processing of timber in the local area? Not just to be taken by lorries up to the...

P (f): Seem to know more about it than I do... protection from the environmental point of view

P (f): yes that's true, people always want more jobs...

P (f): I think it creates recreational opportunities, which don't directly have economic benefits but, if you to look at a local community that builds a sports centre, the cost of the building, the cost of the staff, heating it, maintaining it, covering all the health and safety aspects of it and what not. You put two members of staff out into a forest, for example, and have a track; you could provide a great wealth of recreational opportunities with minimal resources in an environment there that could potentially gain as much benefits from the amount of money which was spent within a town.

P (f): ...rangers who take children round on guided walks...don't know how economically viable they are, but certainly valuable to the people

P (f): The Ryan centre in Stanraer did have members of staff who took walkers out, for example, but that has stopped now. I mean they did successfully...you know (something) park had staff out there for the summer, where they had recreational activities that they organised there. I don't see why we can't have staff adequately trained enough to provide good quality recreational activities in a rural area or a woodland, a country setting.

P (f): ...bus through

P (f): Yeah but I think it also needs to be creative enough to attract and I don't think it is creative enough

P (f):...provided for, and I've got to say it's tourists that come in for it

P (f): yeah but it's not sold to local people.

M: how much, what level of contribution to the tourism attractiveness of the area do you think the forests have?

P (f): A lot

P (m): Yes

M: Is it a major reason why people come to the area?

P (f): Oh yes

P (m): I think so (m)

M: And if the forest wasn't here, like the Galloway Forest Park and so on, do you think that would be a negative effect?

P (f): Yes, absolutely. It's one of the tourist boards' main plugs - outdoor activity, that's what they advertise.

P (f): That's what people come for. It's actually a problem that we have, because I'm from right down the bottom of the Maccas and we're in a tourism environment where people come in wanting to walk and be surrounded by farmland that we can't get walks on, because it's intensively farmed and it's dangerous. So we've got people, and I manage the visitor centre, so I've got people coming in asking me where they can off road walk and I've got very few places to send them.

P (f): Isn't that the way of your lifestyle now? People don't know their own backyards but will travel a hundred miles to go walking in somebody else's, you know, I mean that happens, we don't know our own local area. I think maybe you go into town...I think it could be promoted a bit better.

P (f): Often, where people live and work is very often where they have the least time at their disposal and therefore they may be quite willing to do it, but if they do not have the time, they'd rather do the shopping, or take the kids here...

P (f): But by being creative enough, because I had to be creative in the role that I played recently, was creative in attracting people out into the countryside, people that would be least inclined to go out into the countryside, to attract them there, and build their confidence in returning, and actually playing a part in learning and planting and the like. It's about being creative and it can be done on a tiny budget. The huge value that it has been to a number of people with very little money, and it was about people, contact with people and bringing in people to talk to them. So, you know, if you wanted young people to spend some time in the woodland, as opposed to going to a large recreational centre, you know to play squash or whatever, if you're creative enough, and you promote it enough it will happen, and it doesn't take a huge amount of money.

P (m): There's a national implication in force, in my mind. It is a national reserve, potentially an economic national reserve and the problem, what it is a definition of economics. We are not economists, so therefore we've all got a view that the wood should be...if my neighbour sells me a tree, that's fine economics but it's not. The tree goes to a sawmill that's owned by someone who turns it into paper and sell it to someone...

P (m2): It's really great in a way that it's another form of economy for the community, or people who are in the community, and the private estates who have the forests, there are big links to tourism, tourism for people who come in for shooting from all over the country, and it's highly expensive, the income involved in that. That being said, the employment to the community brings in tourism. But again, some of that money is then ploughed back into the forestry, or the land, to the upkeep and survival of some of the...people tend to think that they just shoot deer and that's it, but it's not, there's money to feed these beasts and that. So there's that as well, but it only fits into a certain part of the economy, doesn't fit to everything.

P (m): The money is all around, that's the problem. This is the issue isn't it?

P (f): Yes, uh huh.

P (m): The wee stuff goes up the way to the paper mill which involves a lot of labour...so there's a lot of complication. Last year it was a PR job, it's a two stream thing because of the national economy, and wood's renewable so it will always be there, to make something, to turn money around, but there's also local problems and that's the issue we face, that there used to be 104 people employed at one time in the 50's and 60's, and now there's nobody. That's the issue...

M: Can I move on then from economics? We talked about social, so what about environmental issues and what parks and woodlands offer?

P (m2): Again I guess from the comments we had last week about one of the things people, affects how they feel, I know everybody's going to laugh about it, it's a major issue we have down in the community, but dog fouling. The amount of people dog fouling in the woods, it's a major, major problem. It's true, it's an issue people who use the woods ... just feel that it's ignorance, you know, people just leave their dogs fouling everywhere.

P (f): I have two dogs and I walk the woods quite regularly and I take a plastic bag and I remember thinking 'I'm in the woods, picking this stuff up, I'll stop talking about it in a minute, putting it in a plastic bag'. So now what I do is I just get my wellies and I backheel it off the pathway where people are walking and I think that's more environmentally friendly.

M: Do you find there are other problems, with what we might call in a general term, of mess and litter and those kinds of things, I mean is that an issue?

P (m): Certainly within woods close to communities. Again, part of the evaluation I did of it was to take photographic evidence of the area. And I was quite surprised when I went through the whole wood that I actually found, I was finding fires with solvent cans that young people had used in the woods. It's a hidden area...

P (f): Is that the area behind the...

P (m): They tip it, because there's an access to it: "well nobody can see us so we'll just tip it in here".

M: Flytipping?

P (m): Yes. Flytipping. So they would...people building fires, tinderboxes, but because it's out of sight, out of mind, no one could see it.

P (f): And contractors can sometimes leave a mess where they've been working... ..again it's striking a balance between providing opportunities and humanity...

P (m): it's a bit of ownership

P (f): there is also the environmental impact that conifers can have on water courses, and steps are being taken now to try and counteract that. Landscaping forests and designing them to a much, planting the broader leaves and things like that.

M: And are you aware of these kind of efforts that are being made as you just said? Are you just being told about these things or are you actually seeing for yourselves that these things are taking place?

P (f): We're seeing.

P (f): Project undertaken by...give children fish eggs to hatch, take out to woods somewhere, so they can see...

P (m): "Now we know where the bream came from"

P (m2): ...effect on the visual landscape...although there's all the other stuff that everyone talks about, it's the visual impact

P (m): I found, just my personal opinion, going back now four years ago when they did that major cutting in Galloway forest, the procedure should be you cut a tree, you put one up. I just found that instead of that, the priority was to get the income, get the trees down and they actively destroyed massive areas and it looks such a mess. For somebody looking at that, it looks terrible, you know?

P (f): Some of these areas, I think it was because they weren't ready to come down, so what happened was that throughout Dumfries and Galloway they didn't start the planting process, which meant that a number of trees were falling down and needed to be felled. So there was big areas where they're trying to create where, as one area grows, another is being planted because, yeah, they didn't manage it well enough to start with and planted them all together.

M: How do you feel about the way that woodlands are managed? Do you think they're managed well, neglected, badly managed, could be managed better?

P (f): Yeah they could be managed better. There are some areas where there are trees that are falling down and they're not safe to walk through. More could be done with them.

M: You were saying about the expanses of felling, do you think they're felling too big areas at a time? That seemed to be your impression

P (m2): Many years ago, in previous employment, I used to take a lot of kids on a school trip and I'd take them up into the Galloway forest regularly, and I just felt that this was too large an area, too great, it made it look ugly. To me, it's not only that, but some of the paths that we used to take, it was frustrating, that we used

to take up to some of the lochs, they were blocked off and padlocked. They can go up, but nobody else is allowed to go up there and, again, the frustration of that, and again I had some children who were, who had medical conditions who couldn't walk long distances, so that was it, the trip, all the way back down because the trip's now not available. So that was it. I mean, I think there's a lot of work getting done to create pathways and making things accessible, so personally I have no real major grind about it, but certainly as far as in the early days...

M: Do you think management has improved over the years? You were talking about the water and landscape design and that kind of thing.

P (f): I don't know if others are aware, in Gleneagle forest, the residents, I was told by a resident, be grateful that somebody actually came and asked them...

P (f): You were saying the standard of workmanship was quite poor in maintaining fences and things

P (m3):...don't know what it's like

P (m): somebody who plants wood privately plants it for loads of reasons...and the encouragement of grants to do this. One of the main reasons for planting is to tie up money to create a reserve and therefore management put there in that situation is minimal...I think again the whole thing that I see about forestry...you go to the website and there's loads and loads of information there, but who reads it?

P (m2): It's funny you say that, going back a few years, I'm a keen fisherman, and Muirland there's quite a lot of black m...and there's a loch. Every year, I used to go to about two mile off Loch Lamuir, and of course when they dig the banks, trying to walk over that is absolutely horrendous, nobody thought "oh hang on. we'll give you an area through it that you can walk through" that people can walk across, but now they just block it off...You think they would've thought, well people do go up there regularly, so maybe we need to leave a gap area, but they didn't and it was a good two mile stretch.

P (f): ...drive Galloway forest park, two times I went back and got completely and utterly lost, the road systems, not a signpost anywhere

P (f): Sorry, I was just thinking what came to mind there, with some creative management, and I know that there's some areas the Forestry Commission working in partnership with BTCV and green gyms, where conservation parties go out to do a piece of work which provides people with a cheap holiday activity, opportunities to meet other people socially and I'm currently trying to get somebody to arrange someone with mental health problems to go on one of these holidays so they would play their part in conservation and most probably on a Forestry Commission site somewhere in the north of Scotland as part of a group and that's managed by BCTV. So there's lots of creative opportunities, you know, that's one example.

M: Rounding it up how about suggestions of how it could be improved? For example, what about the type of woodland the type of species, conifers or broadleaves or whatever, big woods or small woods, more woods, less woods.

P (f): Diversity

P (f): Yes

M: Do you think there's capacity to expand woodland? Would you like to see more woodland in this area?

P (f): I think not more, you know, sort of, blanket conifers or anything like that, certainly not.

P (f): But it's moving away from that.

P (f): Yes it is.

P (f): ...to a certain extent can't it...back to economics. At the end of the day, there's got to be some money near to pay for it and if that money is in sitka, then there's got to be sitka somewhere.

P (f): I want to see trees everywhere.

P (m): ...fern trees...seen enough

P (f): I don't have enough knowledge on what should be planted

P (f): Apple trees.

M: Well, thank you very much. That has been excellent.

Ends.

APPENDIX 2: EDINBURGH: BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED PEOPLE, 8/2/06

Date: Wed 8th February, 2006

Venue: RNIB

Participants : 10

Moderator: Catherine Findlay, assisted by Alicia Montarzino, Sucharita Srirangam

Participants: 9 (4 male, 5 female): 6 blind people; one visually impaired person; 2 sighted participants (often accompany the other panel members in walks). Most members of the panel belong to two ramblers groups: Lothian Blind Ramblers and the Phoenix Ramblers

M: Moderator, P: Participants, f: female, m: male

M: Just to get things started, if I say the word 'woodland', what does that mean to you?

P: Birds

P: Trees

P: Walks

P: Good walks

P: Muddy paths

P: Steep sloping ground.

P: Shade

P: Managed trees. Not just trees but managed trees.

M: Right, so it's not wild. Anything else that woodlands and forest mean to you?

P: Birds

P: Timber

P: Tranquillity

P: 'Tis a workplace

P: Smells, forest smells

P: Mystery

P: Animals

M: What kind of animals?

P: Squirrels

P: Deer

P: Guide dogs

M: So do you think of woodlands in a positive way?

P: Yes

P: Oh yeah

P: Yes when you're looking for a comfort stop when you're out with a walk.

P: You know if you're doing a day's hike, you know, you have a loo before you start, sometime during the day you'll be looking for somewhere to answer the call of nature again.

M: You associate that with woodlands?

P: I'm afraid, yes.

P: No traffic.

M: Is that good or bad?

P: Good.

P: Oh yes.

P: Fantastic.

P: Because you can hide behind the trees and bushes.

M: For your comfort stops?

P: You're not a rambler.

M: No I thought you meant to jump out at people.

P: No.

P: Oh no.

P: We like to be hidden.

P: We're actually looking for sighted guides on the walking group.

M: So, I should've asked at the beginning; you're all part of a walking group?

P: Yes, some, some.

P: Yes.

M: Which walking groups are you part of then?

P: There are two.

Lothian Blind Ramblers.

M: And do you meet quite often?

P: Once a fortnight.

M: Do you have favourite places that you like to go to for your walks?

P: Pubs.

P: It's a long walk to them, that's the trouble.

P: Edinburgh is very blessed that way with a lot of wood sides all around, and we have grown up with, well if you don't go at the weekends, going up as far as

Bashir

P: Peebles.

M: Peebles? You've visited Glentress?

P: Oh yes, Glentress definitely.

P: They've been a big help with actually guiding a walk. The people down there were very helpful in actually taking me and my friend round when I was sussing out the walk for the group to do. They spent hours helping us. They were excellent.

M: Is that typical, a typical experience when you go places?

P: Yes.

P: I think it's always good when there are rangers about associated with the place. I've been in one that was guided by rangers, although that was out in the Bale Park and from the point of view of I like going out to r... it's good to have the rangers about.

P: I could get everybody lost. If you hadn't *reckoned* it before hand, you could get everybody lost.

M: So you've given me a few things about woodlands, what they mean to you, a few experiences, so you normally go to woodlands for a walk?

P: Woodland as well.

P: Seashore.

P: Hills.

P: Coastal as well.

P: Visitor centres as well.

M: So you've given me some good ideas of what woodlands means to you. Have you heard of Forestry Commission Scotland?

P: Yes.

P: Uh-huh.

M: What does that mean to you? What does that sum up to you?

P/roundtable

P: A place to work, I used to work there. Brilliant organisation.

P: Good maps as well, forest walks.

P: Yes.

P: That's for sighted people, of course, and the walks are way marked, but of course, again, you have to be able to see.

M: That's a difficulty.

P: Well it is, you need a sighted person.

P: Signs need braille for visually impaired people.

M: So who has heard of the Forestry Commission? Has everybody heard of them?

P: Yes.

M: Has anybody not heard of Forestry Commission?

P: No.

M: If I said Scottish Forestry Strategy, would that mean anything to you?

P: What was that?

M: Scottish Forest Strategy.

P: Never heard of it.

P: Could put two and two together.

P: Couldn't tell you what it was but I'd probably say it was to do with management of trees, for removals, pine forests as opposed to deciduous trees.

M: Right. So you have heard of it, heard something about it?

P: Scottish Forestry Commission, is it not the same thing?

P: The strategy.

M: Scottish Forest Strategy. Not the commission, but forest strategy.

P: I've not heard of it, but it seems a sensible idea. The Forestry Commission are such sensible people, that they would be involved in it. Is it government?

M: I don't know much about it. I'm just trying to see what your awareness is.

P: I think it's one of these things with the Forestry Commission since they have a financial stake in it.

P: Planted thousands of trees locally haven't they?

P: Have they?

P: Oh yeah.

P: They come up with ideas do they?

P: Could be.

M: So if I talk about access, what would you like to say about access to woodlands? Now you've mentioned already about the maps and the signs

P: Well no, you need somebody to be able to guide you with those maps, etc, and signs. Access, I suppose you mean, first and foremost, how to get to the forest and good parking facilities for the vehicles that bring you there. So you're talking really about a forest centre at the start, within the forest, so that you can assemble, and then go from that point to whatever activities you want to indulge in.

M: What about you (name)? What does access to the woodlands mean to you?

P: Well, like he says, if you're visually impaired you need somebody to be your guide, to tell you where you're going and also I find it difficult because you can't see so you don't know the names of trees, whereas if you have a guide, they tell you, I don't know if they could put sort of labels, like Braille or something, on the trees, so that if you're interested you could know the trees, you could feel, like tactile you know, like at the sea life at North Berwick, they've got a lot of tactile, it's just touch and you hear all the birds, you know, and it tells you all the birds, Bass Rock, or something similar to there.

M: More information?

P: Yes.

P: Because I like birds but I can't see them, some of them I try, like the curlew. I think is a lovely bird, but I can't see it but you just hear it cry, and people say "oh look at that lovely bird just there" and you feel you miss out because you can't see it.

M: What about you (name)? What does access mean to you?

P: I think to find somewhere to park, the main thing is for parking, toilets and perhaps a coffee shop, as well as an information centre. I'm thinking of the David Marshall Lodge, that's brilliant to take people to, but we don't always take blind people there, do we though?

P: No.

P: I think the walking group might've been there once though and I'm sure they said it was brilliant. Parking and toilets.

M: What about you (name)?

P: Just sort of thinking that one of the main problems we have is lack of information. We don't necessarily know about these places in advance; you may happen to be part of a group that's interested in doing a visit or something like that, but may not necessarily know about it yourself, except through someone else. Its sort of...I don't know the answer to that, it's generally you don't find out about things quite so easily.

M: What about you (name)?

P: I would like to know more about, you know when we talk about access, on top of what (name) and (name) talking about parking, I would like more access, maybe by buses and that as well, so for those of us who have some sight, but not enough to drive, so we could get a bus, go and you know be able to come back.

M: That's a good point. What about you (name)?

P: From the access point of view, there shouldn't be awkward fences to climb over and barbed wire fences. And if there are stiles, they should be substantial, not a shoddy piece of wood to balance precariously on and fall over and that'd be in the forest as well around the roads.

M: What about you (name)?

P: I was thinking much the same as (name) about the birds and, you know, just thinking that we've been on a holiday a couple of years ago, a few miles out of Castle Douglas and Galloway area, and of course with a lot of children with us, but there are lots and lots of super forest walks. And what they had, like they had walks for people in wheelchairs, walks for people with buggies, slightly steeper walks for everyone, and really more strenuous walks for the more adventurous. Almost all the forests that we visited were like that but a problem that I find sometimes, a week last Saturday I was walking with a friend from Walkerburn, over the hills to Innerleithen, and we were coming through the Caberston forest I think it is, Caberston, and coming down Pirneylow and, I mean I know it's a working forest so you don't expect everything to be flat, level and even, but the path was just non-existent, you were just up to your knees in mud – the worst I'd seen it for a long time. Really, really, it was about a half a mile of really, really tough, mucky, dirty walking, you know. But also sometimes we find that the four by four, is that what you call them?

P: Uh-huh.

P: These vehicles that go up into forests and, you know what I mean, you get tyre tracks there and you end up, it's like two ditches... (f)

P: Yes. (f)

P: ...filling with water when there has been a lot of rain... (f)

P: ...full of water.

P: ...and it makes walking two abreast difficult.

P:... but often they're full of water as well and it's just a bit squidgy. (m)

M: That's a good point. Was that the marked path that was like that?

P: Yes, yes. On the map. Normally it's an excellent path but my friend could see, you know, trees had been felled and work had been done. So you expect the path to be a bit...but oh my goodness, there was just no path!

M: What about you (name)?

P: Well a few of the points have been raised. The stiles, one of the things too, I'd make a point of on the stiles, is that, if at all possible, some sort of gap under it, or a small gate that you can open to let the dog through. Letting your dog get through mud is not always particularly easy.

M: Are you talking about for the guide dogs?

P: Yes.

P: I mean, I have seen some stiles where there has been a gap underneath and the dog can just squeeze through and that has been fine but other ones I've had to lift the dog over. Also, I agree that most times forests are only accessible by t... and car parks, but it would be nice if you could get public access, public transport I should say; and the other thing too, if the walks were graded and they had enough information, then maybe some of the easier grade walks, might be possible, maybe better metalled because there are dangers in the forest. I've

gone into a ditch myself and nearly broke my leg once. So there are dangers if you come off the path, too high a grade path, without a sighted guide, but some of the easier paths should be possible without a sighted guide.

M: That's a good point. What about you (name)?

P: I'm agreeing with (name) and also something that (name) said. You were talking about the 4x4's causing the mud, do you remember the walk that we did, near Innerleithen where it had been *wrecked* the week before, and it was a nice wide forestry road which was used by a lot of forestry lorries, but there had been a lot of felling in the week in between and rain, and it was the muddiest half mile we've ever had, terribly muddy half mile that day. Really, because they have to work, we know that. We know they have to work and fell. The other thing, it follows on from what (name) said, now that same walk I think it was, out Innerleithen way, it's great, there's a terrific car park, there's toilets and there's an information area and it has got lots of information about various things, but it doesn't include the birds and it doesn't have anything in Braille. So I would agree with you.

P: Remember though, that all blind people don't read Braille. There are places like the castle, where you can get a CD player which has numbers on it and you can type in the number that tells you what you're meant to be looking at. Something like that might also be at better advantage than just Braille.

P: Yes.

M: So what formats would you prefer to have your information in when you're going on a walk?

P: Audio.

P: You could have earphones.

M: So let us take a count. Who would prefer audio? One person. Two, three, four.

P: Audio's great but if it's raining it's not very practical.

M: You would like audio?

P: It would be useful to sighted people.

P: Yes.

P: Oh yes.

P: And children too.

P: Oh yes.

P: Can I just say, the point I meant to make first, about the birds and again in some of the Galloway forests they had like I think a box, and you pressed a button and a voice said and you were told what it was and a wee bit about it and then another button and it told you about squirrels and wildlife. It was really excellent, excellent, you learned a lot.

M: So it was a combination of touch and sound? How many of you, just out of interest, actually use Braille? Two, three, four, five, so five of you out of the group use Braille. What about moon? Does anybody use moon? Not any more.

P: That's quite a high percentage I would've said, because I know we were on holiday once with a group of thirty, and only two young people knew Braille, of all the non-sighted people.

P: I think it's interesting though, to be honest with you. If you're blind *letter*, then you won't have, but if you've been to school here, to a blind school here, or in Mowbray.

P: Yes. Uh-huh.

P: Apart from the odd individual who has...

P: But we don't want Braille to die you see. Braille should be kept alive.

P: Yes.

P: But, I mean, they're not going to read Braille much when they're walking around and stuff like that.

P: ...audio

P: Well, no, that's right.

P: ...kids had that as well, you know, where you just touch, in the Belgray (Vogrie?) Park and they tell you...I think it's good because it tells you everything you're wanting to hear. I know the sea life place at North Berwick it's brilliant, you just touch it and it tells you all the birds that are on the Bass Rock, you know people say "oh there's a bird" but for us we can't see that, so I think to touch something and it comes up and tells you, it's good.

P: I think if information is being produced on audio, then it would be good if you could actually get hold of it, before you started out.

P: Yes, it would be useful.

P: Aye.

P: Also too, I want to point out, a few years ago the RNIB did do a survey of the audio facilities in various museums and historical buildings, which they probably ordered some guidelines for; that would be worth looking at if you're interested, though it will be different in the forest to a historical house but nevertheless there might be some guidelines as to the best way to do it.

M: When you go to a woodland, would you only go with a walking group? Would you ever go by yourselves?

P: No.

P: If the access was good yes, and as I said, graded walks, you know, if you knew the walk you were going to be on was in a reasonable condition, a reasonable path, you're not going to fall into a ditch or over a precipice or something like that. Other than that, yes, no, go with sighted.

P: I suppose that's why we said if there was more access to public transport then it doesn't need to be necessarily with a walking group, two or three of us, especially on a nice day, you know, you feel "well, let us go out and get some fresh air".

M: So there are issues which stop you going to woodlands as much as you'd like to?

P: Yes.

P: Absolutely.

M: And it's to do with transport. Would you say that is the biggest issue?

P: Oh yeah.

P: Yeah.

P: And certainly if it was dangerous or if the paths were poor.

M: And information as well?

P: Conditions of paths.

P: Yes.

P: The weather.

P: Terrain.

P: Well more that you'd just have to pick your day wouldn't you?

P: Yes, that's right.

P: If you can pick your day.

M: If we talk about forests and woodlands more generally, do you think that there are benefits to the community and society as a whole?

P: Oh yeah.

P: Definitely.

P: Yes.

M: In what way? How would you think it benefits?

P: They're a resource. We use wood for many purposes so from that point of view, and also trees I believe are wonders of the world, so we keep being told.

P: And they're good for a family day out. More so, I think in latter years, you see young families out more than ever.

P: You do.

P: Yes.

P: Good for the children to be brought up that way.

P: Health.

P: Also I suppose a lot of our wild animals would actually just disappear if it wasn't for the woodlands; squirrels and badgers and things like that would soon disappear.

M: What type of advantages?

P: I was going to say my friend and I, my next volunteer, we walk every other Saturday, and I what I particularly like is the silence, I mean like you get the birds as well, the forests that we go through, you hardly meet a soul, but we're quite happy, we like it like that and we just enjoy the peace...

P: Tranquillity.

P: ...that's right, the tranquillity and just being away from people, until some cyclists come along, and sometimes they can be a wee bit of a pain, although I know there are many more paths now for cyclists, dedicated paths, like in Glentress and so forth but we do just enjoy the silence, the peace, just being away from people, you know.

P: So you're anti-social?

P: Afraid so.

P: So it's not a good idea to make it more accessible.

M: What other benefits do you think there are from woodlands and forestry? So you've mentioned environment, timber...

P: Health. Your own health.

P: Fresh air.

P: Well, going out, getting fresh air, exercise.

P: I think if you live in a town, people don't walk and I feel some children don't get out and play in the fresh air, they're playing computers or playstation. Used to be

on a Sunday you know you'd get up and go out for the day, I don't know if many people do that now.

P: Because it's freezing.

P: If I can rewind a bit, something that has just occurred to me too is, in the forests, how good is coverage for mobile phones? I was just thinking if you did wander off yourself in the forest, how would you summon help if you did get lost?... It's just something that occurred to me now, that if I was walking along the forest and I found myself lost and night's falling, where am I, kind of thing and I don't know where I'm at, I did set out from wherever. I do know that sometimes in hill walking, people can't get signals with their mobile phones, I just wondered how well covered the forests are and how big of an area they cover.

P: I wonder if they could use the technology?

P: Phone for help and nobody's answering.

P: Something anyone will tell you...if you go forwards you will get...

P: But then mobile phone companies wouldn't think that was commercial, would they? To put phone masts up in the forest, it's all money to them.

P: But if it adds coverage for other people as well...

P: They used to have a radio system. Now whether that's something they should develop...

P: You need picking up at the radio station or something like that.

P: We'd have employment, you know, country, rural employment.

M: And you think that's important?

P: Oh yeah.

P: Yes.

M: What other benefits do you think there are? We've had health, employment, recreation, environment and wildlife.

P: Good for the children and the schools.

P: To go out.

P: Education, yes.

P: Haven't mentioned holidays.

P: I was just wondering about holidays. Holidays with cabins and was in Kielder when we went to k... they had quite a few, wee cottages there.

P: There's quite a few now yeah. Strathearn is another one.

M: Have any of you been on a forest holiday?

P: Yes.

P: Kielder. Kielder forest. It was brilliant, lovely.

P: We went with the blind. '97 wasn't it?

P: No. I thought it was later, '98.

P: You were horse riding weren't you?

P: Yes.

P: We were actually very well looked after by the forestry rangers weren't we?

P: Yes. That was a lovely holiday.

M: So, now (name), you mentioned about jobs and very briefly someone mentioned about economy. Would anybody like to say more about that? Or is that not so important for you?

P: Well, the price of timber is very low, so, in fact they were saying, at one of our meetings recently, last year, that they get more from the facilities and recreation money coming in than they do for the sale of timber at the moment.

M: What do you think about the way trees are planted? Sometimes, some people think there are too many conifers. Would you agree with that or...?

P: It's changing.

P: Like the Trossachs.

P: Especially where people see them.

P: I think what's worse is when they cut them down and it's so bare.

P: But that's management. That's management, they've got to do that.

P: The thing with conifers is that they give an absolute covering with the canopy so it makes it a very dark forest, so deciduous trees are better that way.

P: They are.

M: Would any of you be interested in getting more involved in local woodlands? In decisions affecting them.

P: Yes.

P: What would that involve?

P: Planting trees though that's the thing.

P: No planting trees.

P: We could all adopt a tree.

P: We could have an adopt-a-tree...

And give it a name.

P: Edinburgh parks allow you to put up memorial trees, I wonder if the Forestry Commission do that?

M: What do you think the best benefits are to the environment, having forests?

P: Solar ozone. Protects from that. It's meant to, as I understand it, to control oxygen levels, the take up of carbon dioxide.

P: I think it's nice to have trees, you know out in the country I think it's nice, you know, maybe you don't get it so much in Edinburgh, in different places, but it's quite nice to walk through the forest with the old trees, really old trees that were planted years ago and it's quite interesting to see that they're still there. Some trees have got dates on them, when they were actually planted. I quite like nature, and I think even in the woodland, the animals that come out at night, it's amazing what goes on at night time, it's interesting.

P: I don't know if the Forestry Commission's involved in it but there's a new power station being built that's going to be using timber to generate electricity. I think it's more sort of scrub than full standing timber but again it's another thing that can be done with the timber industry.

P: Another thing too, with the environment, if you live in Edinburgh or round about, there are so many new houses being built in the tiniest areas and it's very important that the Forestry Commission keep their land so that the whole of the country doesn't get eroded with houses, houses, houses, there must be countryside, there must be woodlands.

M: Protect woodlands from development?

P: Yes. I would think so.

P: ...Dalkeith where you're protecting?

P: No.

P: Political, depending which party's in power.

P: Paying party.

P: When the Tory's win, they're selling off the land.

M: Now would you like to say anything about how you feel about how the trees are being managed nowadays? Do you think it's alright or are there problems in the way that forests are managed?

P: I'd just like to say, last Saturday I was with the walking group and we were walking in the Clyde Valley, by the falls of Clyde, and there obviously had been some tree felling but the sighted friend that I was walking with noticed that they'd left a lot of branches lying, you know sort of, across the path. Not big branches but enough so that they were getting in your way. So maybe could've just left it more tidy you know.

P: That doesn't usually happen in forests.

P: Well a lot of the floodings have been caused by the trees being removed willy-nilly, and I think they realise now that if they plant trees, they can kind of reduce that a little bit. Trees hold water back.

P: You don't see the trees growing for several years. Usually when they fell them, usually within the next season they replant them.

M: To finish off with, if you had a wish about something that could be changed about the woodlands, how it could be improved, what would that be?

P: I suppose just better access to everything. More on public transport or better roads to give you access to the woodlands.

P: And also, following the practice in the Galloway forests where it's a learning experience as well, that you're learning about the wildlife and the different birds and what they sound like.

P: Access (m)

P: Yeah, the same?

P: The same as (names), access and knowing what is happening, those birds...just to sum it up, just as much as, a little bit more as what sighted people are getting out of it by seeing it at the moment, so if we get more information, at least partially we'll be better off I suppose (f)

P: I'd agree with that (f)

P: I would like to see more wooden statues in the forests ...Because I think it's lovely for the children to go up and us as well, to go up and feel them. I mean you like even that feeling, that Hawaiian guy...(f)

P: Oh aye aye. You're telling all my secrets.

P: No I just think it's lovely to see. I was thinking wouldn't it be nice, say in the information centre there were wooden shapes of the leaves of the trees because with blind people, you know, when we've been out I say 'it's a sycamore' and 'have a feel' but it would be nice if would be wooden, I think...where was it? Was it Thetford forest there was a lot of wooden..? (f)

P: Windermere.

P: I mean we've got plenty of wood to do it, we just need the manpower to do it. I mean, you've only got to watch these guys at the highland show, and they're so quick with a chisel, to get out an owl or something.

P: What some forests should do is encourage students from the art colleges to put up sculptures and paintings and things like this in the forest.

P: Another thing that occurs to me to is that there's a growing habit of just going out into the woodlands, hillsides, whatever, and scattering ashes. It'd be nice to have some scrolls of that so you're not wading through the ashes of a dear departed as I have done.

P: That's a good point.

P: People put up memorials and everything now, some of them are quite tacky if you like.

P: Like (name) says, you know, cut out shapes of animals and just better access for the visual impaired. You know, access, toilets and a coffee shop – which is important (f).

P: Well I think what is needed is more publicity to the general public, perhaps in the form of television adverts and then making transport available from various centres, to get into the forest, because they are quite a distance from town centres etc. so until you've got those things people aren't aware of what's going on and how to get there (m).

P: Well I would very much agree with (names) about having the push button things where you're told quite a lot and also the sounds of the birds. I mean, that would help lots of people because not many people know the sounds of birds (f)

P: And you don't feel left out if you know.

P: That's right.

P: Sometimes you feel a bit isolated; you go out with people and they say 'oh I see that' and you go and touch but you're getting the information yourself about what you're going to do and what's there.

M: Anybody else like to say anything else to finish off about woodlands or the Forestry Commission?

P: We mentioned Kielder. Now Kielder there was an activity centre and it wasn't the Forestry Commission, but it was within the forestry area. Perhaps that's something, if they could be expanded in other forest areas, it would encourage groups of young people, handicapped people to go to those centres and then they would get to know the forests, as well as the activities that are going on in the centres.

M: Thank you all very much. It has been very interesting listening to all of you and your views.

Ends

APPENDIX 3: EDINBURGH: BLACK AND MINORITY ETHNIC WOMEN, 9/2/06

Date: Wed, 9 February, 12.30-1.30

Venue: Edinburgh College of Art, Grassmarket

Participants: 5 (female) (2 Jamaican, 2 Bangladeshi, 1 Indian, aged 30s – 70s)

Participants' ages: 30s-70s

Living in: Edinburgh

Area: Urban

Moderator: Sucharita Srirangam

M: Moderator, P: Participants

M: To begin with, if I say woodland, what does it mean to you?

P: Woodland to me means forest, trees

P: Meadow, park

P: Wide trees

P: ...countryside, the canals, spaces for people to enjoy I suppose

P: nearer to the waterfalls as well

P: woodlands come into my mind, you know, like old trees, tall trees

M: Do you mean old trees like in the urban land or in the countryside? Which comes into your mind?

P: Could be both. It's like you know sometimes when you go for a walk and there's a hermitage park, you know, I would consider that's a woodland thing. Go for walks in woodland. Could be either urban or rural or both.

P: Used to go in Lauriston Castle, lots of trees and...always take the children for a walk, for the experience of waterfalls as well you know

M: But if it is like in the urban area then it is a part of everyday life, or ... somewhere to go to on holidays?

P: In urban areas it's part of everyday life, but open land is where I would go, I would say, for relaxation, just want to get away from everything. Go for a walk in woodland in urban area, but in rural areas it is part of life, because I'm sure living in that area you get so many things from woodland, I'm sure people get ... go by in their house. So that is part of everyday life for people in rural areas, but it is getting away from hustle and bustle of city life.

M: You mentioned about rural woodlands, is that like you would go to on holidays or how would you get that?

P: I am one of those people who still go camping so...I do like going to places like Glen(a), which is totally wild and taking the opportunity, places like Loch Lomond and the Pentlands, getting out of the madness of city living and just, you know, relaxing by the fire.

M: Okay, thank you. If I say Forestry Commission Scotland, are you familiar with it or what does it mean to you?

P: Never heard of it before but yeah, they could be an organisation or something like that. We need somebody to look after or to manage forests, so there has to be a commission, or some body.

M: So that means you're assuming there would be something like that when I say the proper name?

P: Yes, yes.

Okay. The next question is, would you know, or have you heard of Scottish Foresters Strategy?

P: No.

P: No.

P: Is it to do with access? If it's about access then I think I have heard about it. Basically there are places are now open for people to go if they respect them but before it was a no-go area or something like that.

P: The strategies about how do they include the woodlands, into the life of the people, so they take the woodlands forward for the next century and the further.

M: Ok, coming onto access, can you get as much access to woodlands as you would like? To get access as you would like to woodlands.

P: Some part of woodlands, yes, you can go easily, no need to take...Corstorphine woodlands, there are lots of blackberries and raspberries. We used to take children to get raspberries and we'd bring the raspberries to make into jam but some of them have free access, for schools or for elderly, anyone can walk as far as they can see you know, Lauriston as well.

P: Where was the place you mentioned before Lauriston?

P: Costorphine.

P: Costorphine Hill?

P: Yes.

P: Thank you.

P: Yes, Lauriston, there are nice waterfalls there and ways to ride in a boat as well and listen to the waterfall as well. Easy access.

P: Personally, at this moment, I don't feel very secure to go to any woodland areas. Security.

P: Different kind of...I saw some programme on the TV, if anyone walks around in the dark and things like that, and also you know the black people, and alone ...I don't feel secure to go.

P: I agree. Well not agree, everybody's at risk but ethnic minorities are more at risk walking alone.

P: Because when my daughter, she is twenty now, when she comes down the walk from Edinburgh University to come home, I always advise her you know, when in the dark and after six o'clock don't walk through [the] Meadow[s] on your own, with your friend is fine but if it is you, take two buses to get home, don't come by yourself. I don't find it very secure to walk through the woodland alone.

P: About security again, in the countryside as well, I don't, I have to have a white person with me to feel secure. It's like the way it has always been, we don't really know a lot about public access...it's like going back to that programme where that Korean family is having a picnic and then a farmer coming and shooting them and running away...in the countryside is still there...as a black person you really don't feel comfortable in the countryside because the mentality is different.

P: And one incident happened to us as well, in London; my relative, he is forty years: one way he is going to the mosque every day, sometimes once, sometimes twice a day, forty years he was walking on that path, and after 9/11 he was at our home and he'd been attacked in the middle of the park, abused by all the names. So after that we are very, very scared to go anywhere and it is not very secure to go to the woodland.

M: Are there ways in which woodlands could make a difference in your life, other than access? Would you like to say anything else about woodlands which would give more access to you or would make you go more frequently?

P: No, I think people go to woodlands so it's easier to relax because they are not man made thing, they are natural, that's why you get peace of mind or something there; but if people get involved and have more security, it will be good in a way, but again, there are too many people and it won't have the same impact, it'll just become like a park. Yes, so it is very difficult to say, it'll be good, but again it will lose its effect.

P: Yeah, it is like something you said last night. You said you go to woodland you don't know who you're going to meet?

P: That's the security thing, but on the other hand I think if the woodland area is interfered with too much then it becomes too artificial. So basically you're saying you go there to experience something that we don't get on a day-to-day basis. You know you can get wildflowers and the wild berries you do enjoy seeing all this walking along the side of the road.

P: You see something different.

P: You see something different and if they're managed too much then that will not be there, you will be walking in an area which is too artificial not really giving the experience that you're looking for.

P: Nature.

M: What do you think forestry and woodlands have to offer your community or society as a whole? Do the woodlands have something to offer you in your way of life?

P: Yes, they're great to get away. Gives us opportunities

P: Do you mean in your quality of life?

P: Yes, yes, yes.

P: Walking.

P: Good for walking.

P: For different reasons.

P: The things with forests and pine trees and all that is that sometimes it becomes too culturally difficult for people to go there. So I don't know if maybe there should be more open. It can be enjoyable but it is very scary, you know for me, someone who has come from Africa, I like to be in the forest with the deer running away but I still have the security thing because I can't see. So I don't know, it's very, very difficult, you know you are enjoying this but is there another person behind those trees and what's in their mind? It is the fear of humans rather than nature.

P: Another thing is the Bangladeshi community; in this country, Scottish forestry, they don't believe that much because of the weather, number one is weather. It doesn't suit them to go there and, secondly, they don't know where it is, the forest, and where they feel safe to walk. They're very scared, very scared and thirdly, transport is a big issue because if you want to go to Callander, but put stealing(?) on top of the Callander, but how many people can go to the Callanders you know, you have to see the expense and they have a problem with the language, there are lots and lots of variables to go to the woodlands. This is the last thing in their mind; to go to the woodland. You know if they can afford, they will go to the b... for shopping, they will go buying all this stuff, you know...

P: They go see their aunties or uncles...

P: Rather than woodlands

P: Woodlands, for the Bangladeshi community, this is the last thing on their minds.

M: You mentioned about the barriers, tell me more about the barriers. One is transport, the other is economical affordability, what else?

P: Language is also a barrier as well because we can't read the paper to see where is the woodland, where is the nice one, where is the touristy area and things like that, the knowledge of where they are. Like we are doing a trip...we take a few bus full of...when we take a few people, they are looking after them, guiding them there, but we don't have that guidance there in the house all the time. You can see that sometimes there are whole houses of people who don't speak the language at all, or one who doesn't speak the language at all, husband, wife, children are young, mother in law, father in law, they don't speak the language. So it's very difficult for them to make a plan like that, to travel to the woodlands and forest and things like that. Also, if they go for a day, I think they find it difficult to....something.

P: Yes, it's not part of our culture...

P: Camping is not part of our ethnic minority, like Asian, Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi, camping is not part of our culture. We go for picnics, during the day time, as long as you come back during the same time, the same day, but camping and living in a tent, it's not part of our culture.

P: Our children are doing it now but nobody can stop them now.

P: But again, because they are born, brought up here, they are second generation, but people like us who come from India, Pakistan, or Bangladesh, because we've never seen something like this back in our countries. Maybe there are things like that but they've never been exposed.

P: There is a type of woodland, we go to in Bangladesh, we used to go to a picnic in wintertime, in the woodland, in the forest, but obviously not camping, we come back same day.

P: Yes, come back same day.

P: If it was India, just go there and come back.

P: It is the same for Africans, there are few... 'do you go camping'... so they don't have as much restriction here as we do. Most of the people still feel unsafe when camping, or being in the middle of the forest and stuff like that. So kids will go into the greenhuts(?) and have a picnic.

M: So for the children's sake, maybe, would you be interested in going to woodlands?

P: Things are changing, everything's becoming globalised. I mean we are here at *western*... if the children are saying, like go to the woodlands for a holiday...

P: I would avoid, but if I have to I will.

P: You'll restrict to a particular time?

P: Oh no, no, not restriction, but you know like I'd rather say to them 'ok, lets go somewhere else than camping', when it starts to rain, or get wet.

P: I'm not camping, under this kind of way. Might go to the north, every summer I go to the north, but they say this is a very nice place to go and stay in a hotel, or a bed and breakfast, and two days we'll explore more north, but not under this kind of...

M: So the climate is...?

P: Yes, because we are not used to the climate here.

P: No, but with the climate, what's the point of going and shivering all night, you don't get to sleep, and it's all wet, what kind of a holiday would that be?

P: ...exposed to sand.

P: Another thing. Like my husband I am talking about, if I go for a holiday, I have to take the rice cooker.

P: Yes.

P: Food thing, yeah.

P: Very difficult, you know, some people don't like outside food.

P: You know, if it's like the camping, for example, I think it's a really great place to be, the whole thing is to be out there, because it's so huge, but again, it's transport, is the biggest issue. If you don't have your own transport then it's not easy to get there.

P: Transport...we...I was young when I came to this country, me and my husband was travelling everywhere, but still, we have some barrier or so, because we came from a different country and my son is born here, and when he was, you know could drive himself, he took me so many places we never seen before, because you know of all his knowledge...

P: Confidence.

P: ...confidence and he knows where to go, how to go and we don't have that knowledge and confidence.

P: Recognition, I mean, exposure of the local geographies is a barrier.

P: Yes, well that's right.

P: 'Don't go there, too high, too high' but still he knows where he is driving and going, he knows where he's going.

P: It depends on the job the head of the family doing, also depends upon the number of years you have been here.

P: Yes.

P: Yeah.

M: What do you think forestry and woodland can offer in economic terms?

P: Like to people? To us individuals?

M: I mean to individuals and the community, anything is welcome. What comes to your mind?

P: Forestry, mainly for economy...

P: Gives jobs to people, forestry creates jobs.

P: I think again, it's likely, rather than being so tight, that most of the forest, it makes a huge space, but they are so difficult to penetrate, so that's something you can see from a distance, but you never feel a part of it, because it's just too...especially if there are pine trees, I think the main thing in Scotland. But if it's a woodland, like a natural one, that's totally different, that's great if it's left on its own, but pine trees, they are slightly restricting because you can't penetrate them, although there are rules but they still...on the other side, so I don't know. Perhaps if they...

P: It's something to do, if they knock the forest, to have transition, to use the trees as a design element.

P: If they find tall pine trees, hide in the way from here, where would you locate them? That's what your interest is?

P: No, I think it's just the way the forestry, the trees are grown so close to each other, and that way, it's very, very difficult to actually walk amongst them, you know, within the forest, just because they are so tight, so you can't see something...

P: Condensed.

P: ...Too dense to enjoy because of the fear. If they were maybe spaced a little, then that's perhaps a little more secure but I don't know if that would be good for the economy.

M: What else come to your mind when I say 'economic aspect', from the forest?

P: Wood, wood. I think it's very expensive this country, compared to our country – it's much cheaper.

P: And you see, the fuel industry.

P: Timber.

P: Paper made out of wood.

P: Yeah again, paper is made out of wood.

P: So it supports so many sections of economy.

P: ...pine trees, they grow quicker.

M: So, we're almost at end. So what do you think forestry and woodland can offer in terms of environmental issues today? Environmental issues.

P: Woodlands is easy access to everyone but forest, I think, is much restricted area. Influence woodland and forest, you know, woodland is much easier access to everybody, and forestry has restrictions, you know.

M: What kind of restrictions?

P: Like, I think in my mind, in our country you can't go walk in a forest...

P: It's dangerous.

P: ...yes dangerous, and the implications...it's not easy access to...you are not allowed to cut any of the trees...or even they put their special number on each timber...so it's not easy access.

P: In my mind, I would say they are good because they keep our environment clean and it must be...EFP? So we need that on one side. You know, like if there were no woodlands, no trees, if there were houses everywhere, it would be

very difficult to live in city centre all the time. Environmentally they're good because they give us fresh and clean air.

P: Rainforests, all the trees for cutting...

P: Yes and it's good for wildlife.

P: To make...something

P: It's visual, and air quality.

P: Noise, maybe. Screen the noise.

P: ...woodland is better for them, can live quite long...

P: it's good for wildlife.

P: ...rainforests disappearing.

M: So what do you feel about the way woodlands and forests are managed?

P: Don't know much about it, so can't comment.

P: ...community...how much we watch the TV and things like that. Is nowadays, disappearing woodland, you know, people are cutting the big, big trees to make things, to build, like come into our cities and there is cutting quite a lot in the woodland area.

P: So it's not managing very...

P: I think in terms of forestry, there is, the management is geared towards economy. Whereas with woodland areas and woodlands, it is less economically viable, more natural, so and I think we said this at the beginning, it's...space...I think things have improved quite a lot because I think Edinburgh now, many years ago...walking there, it just feels so calm...I think I've lost the plot here.

M: You were saying how you think things have improved, the water of Leith and it is cleaned up, and we've got the canals.

P: And I think public is more aware now than they were 15-20 years ago. I think there is more awareness now and I think awareness comes from media, for like the general public. So I think media and government has a big rôle as well. You know, they need to publicise more and just cover this particular issue of woodland, of good or bad, whatever, so needs to come out more in the knowledge of people, so that people are more aware.

P: Woodlands, they should consider people's health because, you know, it's another way of intelligent people to improve their health, you know, walking. So if the woodland is not there, people will be exposed to the noise and the traffic and everything, so the management of this...

P: I think it's much more secure, the people think it is a secure place to go, then people will use more.

P: But, you know, security, but I think what we should be concentrating on again is the woodlands are much better if they are left to be natural. I don't mean like brambles everywhere to the point where you can't move in the woodlands, but you know try to...

P: Yes. Balance.

P: So it needs preservation. Man-made preservation.

P: I mean, last year, at the water of Leith, there were Japanese Knotweed... or something like that, and another species, which were taking over the place, so I think that's managing it, because there needs to be some other species. It's

amazing, because I have never seen so many flowers because all I could see most of the time was pink, I think it's called Rhododendron. I don't mind it so much, but it totally takes the whole space and nothing else can grow. So once it's cut then there are other flowers coming and it's so pleasant to walk there during the spring time and the autumn time, just because the management has got rid of this weed that was preventing the other plants or flowers to thrive.

P: So we do need managing of woodlands. We can't just leave it. We do need some input for the woodlands. You want this natural thing, but you do need to manage it.

M: Do you think, in any other way, the management could help minority ethnic women to visit, like solutions like patrolled police to increase more security?

P: It's not just for ethnic minority. I think it should be available for everybody.

P: You know, like the more information about the city is important as well.

M: So, what with transport?

P: Transport is okay if there's a room full of people who can go to see the woodland and to walk, it's good for everybody to walk...if we have car pool facilities, people, then we can go there and visit the park and exercise.

M: To finish with, would you say anything for improvement of woodlands?

P: I don't think they should be interfered too much because otherwise they lose their whole nature, there shouldn't be too much interference, but again, they do need to be managed. There has to be a balance, getting the right balance.

P: I agree with what you're saying. There should be a balance of management to encouraging other...

P: Respect. We need to respect the wildlife.

P: Wildlife, yes.

P: Depends on the people, you know, the how they are bringing up their children. Sometimes we go to the park, sometimes we go to the woodland for walk...

P: I think it needs to be more advertised, you know so you can have good times in woodlands as well, but again, it depends on people to people. Personal choice – some people like that sort of thing, some people don't.

P: This is the healthier choice, to go, to use more woodland, to go to the woodland and children should like that.

P: On the other hand, I don't mean to be a pest, but sometimes I find cyclists so selfish because if you are trying to walk along the canal and they're like 'beep, beep, beep, beep'. I need to be here too, so why is everybody 'beep, beep, beep, beeping' at me too. I need to get from here to where I want to go. It's like they seem to say that people aren't the priority.

P: Cycling should be the s... movement.

P: And to provide security. Like somebody should be there if somebody attacked you. You might find a traffic warden, you might find the police but in woodland, if somebody attacked – you would die.

P: If you had an accident or something...

P: Some kind of professional, like provide a job for them, for somebody to look after walkers and make sure who's walking, that they are safe, you know, or little

girl could be running and maybe lost and mum and dad are stuck. So a kind of help, you know.

P: And the other thing that I think creates, with water and things like that, people who have dogs...

P: Dogs, yeah.

P: Dog dirt.

P: Pick it up. If people were picking it up then we could enjoy it more.

M: Do you think forestry or woodlands are much relevant to children and their life, healthier life?

P: Yeah.

P: Yeah, it is healthier life but they have to be used to it, from childhood.

P: I think, working in a school and just looking, thinking we hardly take our children from school to woodland because there are so many restrictions these days, or you're not allowed to take children here...you can't do this, you can't do that. So again, I think it has to come from government, from education, they need to know, because I'm sure there are some ethnic minority children that have never been exposed to woodland because parents are not interested...

P: Cultural value.

P: ...Culturally, okay at home, they are not exposed. You know, before with school trips, you could take children to the beach, but nowadays you're not allowed to take children to the beach, because there's water there, there are health issues, because there are health and safety reasons. So they need to be introduced, all these activities. Government need to decide how they are going to bring woodland into peoples lives.

P: ...doing a project on it...

P: yeah they do have projects but again, they're very tight and very restricted.

P: Again, the restriction is something to do with safety.

P: Health and safety issues yes.

M: You were talking about, well, what I would describe as a ranger idea. Do you think it would be a good idea to have somebody to act as a sort of safety and access point or ranger, information points, for example along the water of Leith, with somebody there?

P: Yes somebody there.

P: Yes, some information.

P: Because you feel more secure, you know if you're lost, like in D...hill (?) Garden if you're lost, walking and lost, there is some information, but woodland, if you're lost, nobody's there, nobody will come back. I don't go myself, because we went so many times, with the school group, with the children, I don't go by myself because nobody's there and anybody could attack me and the dog is big issue, you know, not proper trained, nobody has bothered to pick up the dog dirt.

M: Do you take the children, schoolchildren, to woodlands which have some activity centres?

P: We used to take them but not anymore.

M: Would you propose an activity centre in every woodland?

P: In school we do take them to, what's that place called, Hopetoun House, and they have their green areas, so we do take kids to Hopetoun House, but that's the only place we go.

M: Is it becoming a requirement have an activity centre to take..?

P: Yes because they do different projects. They do projects on woodland, there is a school project for small children, like let's go and look at the different creatures that they'll find, the millipede, insects, they do a project on insects, so that's why they go and find different insects in woodland. So that's why we don't want too much interference of these areas, but again, they need to be managed.

M: You said in South Asian culture, the woodland is given the least priority, least cultural value, could you tell me why?

P: I think as I mentioned before, is the weather, is the whole climate, they don't like to go in the winter, in the cold, to walk in the woodland. And secondly is the lack of information, lack of language, they don't have any confidence, hardly they come out of the house and visit, there is nothing in their mind to go to the woodland to walk. This is the thing mainly.

P: Is it something to do with religion?

No. I don't think in Bangladesh community religion is a factor to go out at all. It's not a factor in Edinburgh.

M: I think religion, what I'm meaning is activities, practices where associated with water...

P: No, no, no. Nothing to do with that, not affecting at all...use the woodland, walk in the woodland, or stay outside all day, it's not affecting at all.

P: ...reluctance for people from ethnic minorities to go out into the woodland, or the countryside, unless they have an escort. A little bit to do with racism I think. I can't explain it but I think that most black minority people have always felt safer in the city centre, rather than out there near the forest or a wooded area.

M: You think it is ladies, or anyone?

P: Anyone because, to begin with, the countryside I don't think it was that much accessible to minorities because there was no access and I think, most of the time, I'm not sure, but I think now even like parents ... respectfully maybe something to do with the...what is it?

P: Forestry Commission.

P: ...right, Forestry Commission. That, in a way, has relaxed ideas. People now know that...I think in general, it's not as it used to be...people are aware that just because somebody's not white they have to understand...it's difficult for me to explain, but you know, even for example, people in black and ethnic minorities do care about the environment, for example if there is a ...belt, people have always said to me 'how come you don't see black people there?' and I'm like 'that's because I don't know who is next to me, it could be someone who is...' because sometimes there are people who are concerned about the natural habitat...

P: Conservation?

P: Conservation. Most of the people who are into conservation are slightly...I don't know. Conservation, there is something in it which is, I don't know, it's hard to explain.

M: You think there's something, that whole environmental conservation movement, you think there tends to be a certain type of person who tends to be a part of that, who doesn't necessarily quite fit with your ideals or what?

P: We have something in common, we are both concerned with environment, but on the other hand, as a black person, they may not welcome me being there because they have other things on their mind like 'just because you like the environment that isn't going to make you a decent person', or person who is respecting other cultures, so there is always that fear there, which again...not that I'm saying that just people who live in the countryside are racist. I think that, in my mind, there is a connection between it.

M: That makes the access much restricted?

P: Much restricted to you as a black person, to you as a person who isn't white. I mean, it doesn't necessarily have to be the landowner, it is maybe just the perception of you only as a black person. It is like the countryside has never been accessible to us, because it is like...people always talking about racism, but in a way, rural areas, have always not been a part of it.

M: So, if you stretch that idea a little bit, if you, if for example, like I'm a member of a conservation organisation called the John Muir Trust, the Dunbar man who went out to the States. So it's all about preserving land in Scotland. Would you feel that that would be something, a kind of organisation, a ramblers association, or any kind of walking group...

P: I like the ramblers.

P: They ramble because they don't have anywhere to go; they're in the same boat as me. The Trust as well I don't have a lot problems with that but there are other, I don't know, I still feel like this fear in me is still standing back from when the countryside was not accessible basically because people in the countryside didn't really have the same kind of *mentality* as people who live in the city.

P: Yeah, I'm with you.

M: Is a walking group a good idea? Walking in groups.

P: Walking groups are a really, really good idea, as long as it's not on a main road, you know, where it promotes well-being and you are calm and away from the traffic, away from these things, away from all these things.

P: Away from the cooking.

P: I hope we've been some help.

M: Thank you very much.

Ends

APPENDIX 4: HADDINGTON: DISABLED PEOPLE, 11/1/06

Date: Fri 24th February, pm

Venue: Haddington

Participants: 11 disabled people (7; males, 4 females) of whom: 1 visually impaired 1 support worker from the community centre; 3 physically impaired and 6 with mental health problems.

Moderator: Simon Bell, assisted by Alicia Montarzino

M: Moderator, P: Participants, f: female, m: male

M: So, I'll just start with a very basic sort of question; what do woodlands mean to you?

P: Pleasure (m)

P: Peace and quiet (m)

P: Wildlife (f)

P: I've been to a woodland down near the border, near a place called *Sunjack* (?) that place is so relaxing it's unbelievable, it's a fantastic place. The woodlands. There was also art, artefacts in there as well. I suppose it's a realisation that it's a museum as well and you've got to go looking for these things and I've never seen any of that in Scotland, never seen any in Scotland. (m)

P: Inaccessible. (m)

P: ...trees (m)

M: Is that every woodland? Or is that a general expectation that it's got to be inaccessible?

P: General expectation, plus my experience....(m)

P: The Pishwanton Project, up at Gifford, has an access path that's designed for wheelchairs. I helped to make it and when you make these access paths it is advisable to get them done properly to the specifications. There's another project in Scotland that deals with accessibility and they have a design templates for paths, and you have to think about the maintenance of these as well. There's no good making something up and then nobody's going to do anything when it falls apart, due to whatever might happen to it. (m)

P: Which woodlands are we talking about? Private as well? (m)

M: Any woodlands really yes. Does that make a difference?

P: Nobody wouldn't in a private wood normally. (m)

P: How do they know which wood's public and which is private? (m)

P: Going to Pencaitland just up the road there and wander around...gamekeepers and things like that. (m)

M: So there's still an idea, do you think there's still an impression that private woods keep out trespassers, keep out that kind of thing?

P: Yes. (m)

P: If you come across anyone, they're never going to say anything but I know from personal experience that gamekeepers, if they see a car park they're going to take an unusual interest in it. (m)

P: That's your past experience in the working world. (m)

P: It is about ownership. I mean the Amesfield Park which is just east of here now has paths put in by the council and by the volunteers there, but whether they're actually accessible for people like Allan, I'm not so sure. Certainly the one the volunteers put in it might be a bit tricky because it's sort of got a curve on it and it's rather narrow. (m)

P: I think it is a bit inhibiting if you don't know who the property belongs to. You know when you've got that right, or you're still not sure. (f)

P: Wandering about. (m)

P: I think maybe the people who are interested in wandering in these places would be up on the laws regarding them. I haven't seen anything advertised to interest people who have never done it before. You get my drift? There's nothing there to entice, nothing to get them interested or put the idea in their mind. A new experience...no advertisements to say 'this is... feel free to use it'. Something I've been thinking about myself, something I'm going to do, places that are easy to wander round and accessible, plus, I think a lot of these places now have stiles and the like but for the disabled as well, they're inhibited in that manner as well because they can't be legalised. (m)

P: And you have to go through some sort of property to get to maybe an advantage viewpoint. Sorry, it's hard to put this into words, it's just coming out of my head now. (m)

M: Don't worry about it.

P: Had there been those facilities when the interest was planted in my mind by advertising then I may have taken more interest in the past. (m)

M: And you said earlier that you found the Sunjack was a very relaxing place, so would you like the opportunity to visit woodlands locally for that relaxation?

P: Oh yeah. The advantage of being somewhere that's wild and you've got the wildlife out and about you, maybe a deer, rabbits, different kinds of birds that maybe you've never seen before and you could just be wandering along, your mind somewhere else and you see some wildlife and I think that's maybe where the relaxation comes in, so it's a change of mind, a change of thought process when you're in the woods. I mean you don't wander though the woods like you're at your desk, you know, you're not thinking about your noisy neighbour, you're wandering about and your mind just starts to wander. I spend quite a bit being out in a boat as well, I get the same relaxation being on the water as I do in the woods. (m)

M: So you feel it really does take your mind off your troubles?

P: Oh absolutely. (m)

P: Yeah I've had the same experience. (m)

P: It's very good for getting rid of stress. It's very beautiful when you look all around you. (f)

P: Women say that when they're in shops. (m)

P: My wife and I have four grandkids and she likes to go for a walk. It's hard for me to walk because I have pains in my legs but it's good to walk with the kids. (m)

P: No, no, I love going into the woods with my kids. It really is good for children being in touch with the nature side and I think if you can get children involved in nature...(f)

P: That's the general issue with kids, you don't allow them, too many games and TV and whatever, and kids are dealing with...Musselburgh and Leith area, never cause damage because they're never out in the woods, never hear about them causing any damage in the woods, you never see kids going out in the woods but you can't stop them, as long as they're not causing any damage. (m)

P: Protective parents point of view. (f)

P: ...grandkids unless I was there. (m)

P: That's a good point, because how many times would you come across them today? ...(m)

M: Now this aspect of you worrying on behalf of your wife, or generally feeling worried, do you think that's a perception or a reality that woods would be dangerous places?

P: You take it that there's a lot of single women out there, who through no fault of their own are bringing up kids on their own and they are doing a lot for their kids i.e. taking them swimming, going on woodland walks, taking them down the beach, they're doing everything a man would do with their kids. (f)

P: But how many times have you heard of a girl or woman who have just been walking their dog, in the last few years, and have been murdered, there was a woman...(m)

P: But you can't base your life on being scared. (f)

P: Of course you can't but people want to be safe when they're walking, it doesn't matter where...(m)

P: But that goes for men as well, men want to be safe as well. (f)

P: I think it's an individual thing. I don't know what the statistics are but I think you're sensing the perception is different to the reality. I don't know if the media makes it appear more like we are. (m)

M: Well I'm asking that question, whether you think more people get murdered in woods than anywhere else or whether you think for example, the press are taking it out of all context.

P: I don't know the stats, I assume it's not nearly as much as everyone thinks, I'm sure, when I walk through the woods personally (m)

P: ...concepts of little red riding hood (f)

P: We run a whole support group and we try and get the women to be more assertive in themselves, and once you are really aware of your situations you can virtually handle yourself and walking in the woods is enjoyment. (f)

P: I don't think you perceive danger if you're walking with your wife or something like that in the woods, I don't think it's a thing I think about...(m)

P: I've never ever thought of danger, even walking myself, I don't think of danger. (f)

P: I think you're unusual. My wife, she has a dog, an Alsatian ...park behind my house, banking environmentally friendly, dunno what he's saying! (m)

P: Mind you, I'm just thinking at the moment, that we've had the car for a service one time, I can't remember the name of the place that we had the car, there's a

small woodland area along by the garage and they got a sort of gully and I went for a wander through there while the car was being serviced and I felt fine, I felt great. I spend a lot of time in Sheffield where there are no woodlands you know and I really enjoyed that. Well, anyway, on the way back I saw somebody else coming toward me and apprehension set in immediately, I had a walking stick with me so I don't see why. I must admit, someone else walking toward me in that wooded area made me feel apprehensive. So there you got the two scenarios where you're walking through there and enjoying it and as soon as I saw somebody else the mood changed. (m)

P: ...carry something in case someone attacks you (m)

P: If you're really scared of going through the woods, why bother going through the woods, you know? (m)

P: ... One time I watched a programme on the television that said tell them if they're scared to carry a tin of something that's not open in a strong carrier bag and if anyone attacks you, just hit them with it. (m)

M: Can I move the discussion on a little bit? What does the Forestry Commission Scotland mean to you?

P: Being sold off. (m)

P: Not an organisation I've had contact with. (m)

M: Have you heard of it?

P: Oh yes. (m)

P: Yes. (m)

M: Everyone has pretty well heard of it, okay. Right. What do you think it does?

P: Wouldn't have much of a clue. (m)

P: Grows trees and provides access for tourism. (m)

M: Anything else?

P: Don't know much about what they plant but certainly have seen a lot of hillside that has lost its native trees and covered in spruce. (f)

P: Don't think they've advertised themselves as much as they could. (m)

P: I think they've changed forestry over the years to more commercial aspects than anything else. They've actually cutting down forestry; hopefully they've been planting it. It all seems to be commercial type trees in the re-planting, rather than natural wild type trees. Where I come from originally in Renfrew, don't know if you know the area, there's a big area called *Lyeswood*, a big estate, that used to be a big wooded area and that was all knocked down and now there's a golf course on it, a t..., an industrial estate but that was a long time ago now you know. (m)

P: Highly commercial trees (f)

P: Well I used to play in them as a kid, and the fact that the Forestry Commission are planting the commercial type trees in the woods that they mowed down, there were all types of trees, including Rhododendrons, there was a lot of wildlife in there, there was also farm and cattle, the farm was all surrounded by the woodlands, and the woodland cut through the farm as well you know. All that beauty has been cut down for commercial reasons and never to be replaced. (m)

M: So are you noticing a lot of tree felling in the landscape as you go through Scotland? Is that something you're noticing?

P: Yeah because it's all road-side. Easy access for the machinery and Lorries and they leave so much rubble lying around and branches... (m)

P: It means a lot of the woods would be privately owned as well, rather than Forestry Commission, so you wouldn't know if it was a Forestry Commission wood or not. (m)

P: Well that's true but the Forestry Commission also oversee what the landowners do with their timber as well. (m)

P: Yes, yes. (m)

P: I think they've got a lot to say about that. (m)

P: That's just a pre-preservation order and I can't see them having anything to do with that. (m)

M: What do you think the Forestry Commission in Scotland should be doing, particularly of things that would be of benefit to you?

P: Looking after our native, natural woodland, managing it, I think you know, there's obviously a lot concerned with managing any woodland, preserving it. (f)

P: Regenerate it. (m)

P: I think it'd be good if we had someone from the Forestry Commission who told us what their actual purpose was. (m)

M: So you've heard of them, you know they're involved in planting trees and cutting trees down, but you don't know much else, they're not a very visible organisation then?

P: ...could be more physically accessible. (m)

P: Are they not cutting down trees and burning them in the power stations then? (m)

M: That's starting to happen yes.

P: It's not starting, it has started. Fifty percent of what they're burning is wood, making coal. (m)

M: Do you think that's a good thing?

P: No, I don't think it's a good thing. (m)

M: Why?

P: Why? You've just got to look at the chimneys and see what's coming out of the chimneys, it's black. (m)

P: ...greenhouse gases that convert them back into wood again. (m)

P: It's contributing to global warming. (m)

M: Right, okay. Has anybody, apart from when I introduced it, heard of the Scottish Forestry Strategy?

P: Scottish Forestry Strategy? (m)

P: Forced upon them by the Thatcher government. (m)

M: Okay. That shows what you know about the Forestry Commission, which doesn't seem to be very much, which is what they want to know, you know, the fact that not many people seem to know about them, therefore they need to improve that kind of thing.

P: Also don't know if the FC take action over acid rain. Are they active...as you drive through Scotland you see a lot of trees that have been killed by acid rain.

It's so obvious, patches in the middle of the forest when you go in, you know, are they active in contacting the people causing the pollution that's causing the acid rain? Should they be active in that kind of thing? Is that a feasible point? I don't know. (m)

P: I've heard of the Queen Elizabeth forest park when I've been on holiday and I've heard about chalets you can hire from the Forestry Commission and I haven't heard much more beyond that. (m)

M: So you wouldn't know anything about how the Forestry Commission can give grants for Pishwanton wood? For trees there and preparation of infrastructure.

P: Yes. Yes, yes in fact, there's a different person handling the trees up there and I'm not sure whether the path has actually got funding for that as well. (m)

M: The question is 'can you get as much access to woodlands as you would like?'

P: Parking...not having to park the car so far away to get access. (f)

P: It's usually pretty good at picnic sites. (m)

M: The comment about the car park, you suggest that you expect to have to drive to woodland? Is that, do you always expect that?

P: Yes. Woodlands aren't accessible by public transport and in this area public transport is a big problem all round. (f)

P: I don't have a car. (m)

M: Yes and there are no woodlands that you think would be close enough to walk to?

P: Not that I'd want to go to. (f)

M: Why wouldn't you want to go to them?

P: I think because I appreciate it more, and there's a conflict there, obviously, with people, because I want my countryside to be well and perhaps at times not accessible, because obviously we need areas that are a decent surface, is fully accessible for everyone, which means part of the enjoyment ...a wilder type of countryside. (f)

M: I see. So the ones closer to home are too managed and more park like? It's not to do with rubbish and negative things that stop you going, it's more the fact that you like a wilder place?

P: Yes, but it could be both. Sometimes a woodland is very readily accessible, then people trample on it. (f)

P: I think that was the thing, apart from it being a lovely place to be and all these art artefacts all through the place, they were all the same type of tree, they were all conifers. I don't know what type of conifer but they were all conifers, as opposed to this *lysewood*(?) that used to be...that was all natural woodland...(m)

P: Hardwoods are getting replaced with conifers. (m)

P: Yeah, chestnut, oak, rhododendron bushes, mouldy pathways, there's probably every type of tree that you could think of in Scotland in that wood. (m)

P: You would think if they cut down one type of tree they would replace it with a like tree. (m)

P: That's what they need to do because I don't think the woodlands should be solely for commerce, there should be a woodland for the natural aspect as well as... (m)

M: So you prefer, you think that in a sense the problem with access is the wrong sort of woods, you'd like to have access to more native woodlands than conifer woodlands, is that what you're saying?

P: Yeah absolutely. (m)

P: Every time you mention forestry you think of the forestry track which has got big stones on it and is dead straight and goes for miles. (m)

M: Do you think there's a difference then between the word 'a woodland' and the word 'forest'? Does that conjure up something different?

P: Yes. (f)

P: Yeah. (m)

P: My perception of a forest isn't so much that it's just so dense and so dark undergrowth, there's no way you could even get yourself through it for commercial gain. (f)

P: You can't walk through a plantation (m)

M: Right. What about the distance then? If you wanted to go to a woodland and there was transport and that kind of thing, how long would you want to spend making an effort to go to a woodland if you wanted to go to one?

P: To travel to one? (m)

P: To take a car or a bus? (m)

M: Or to walk. What would make it easy to get to a woodland, in terms of the time and that kind of thing?

P: If it didn't take more than an hour to get there. (f)

M: As much as an hour. Okay.

P: I would say less. Less than an hour. An hour's drive to go for a walk kind of defeats the purpose. (m)

P: It depends where you want to go, there are walks that you do on a regular basis and other ones where you might want to go and see a woodland for the p...for example, so it depends upon the purpose of what you want to do, rather than just going to see a woodland. (m)

P: I drive to the country park quite a lot, it's a good walk through there, and it's a good wee distance away you know. With nearer woods, for example Innesfield Park, for example, that doesn't appeal to me. (m)

P: What about Vogrie? (f)

P: ...people parking about. (m)

P: ...disabled gets it. (f)

P: Vogrie you got to pay for parking, so much that it's annoying.

P: Obviously the countryside. (m)

P: It's run by the council. (m)

P: You used to be able to walk up a shelter belt beside here but because the dual carriageway has gone up across, I don't know how many people ever do that now, up the garden hills. (m)

P: The pine plantation... (m)

M: Other than access, are there other ways in which woodlands can make a difference to your lives? Not people in general but you personally.

P: I think just what (name) said about relaxation, peace. (f)

P: Change of mindset. (m)

P: Exercise. (m)

P: Learning woodland skills actually. (m)

M: To you personally?

P: I mean I've learnt woodland skills up to a point and that's one thing a woodland can offer you, and hobbies and crafts and all that sort of thing but then you need a woodland centre and somebody to train you. (m)

M: Yeah and what about the wider community or society in general, other than access, the things woodlands could offer? In other words, if the Forestry Commission was to completely change and offer different uses for woodlands, what do you think it should be offering that would be of value to society?

P: Learning about trees. (m)

P: Wildlife. (m)

P: Education. (f)

P: You don't have summer camps here. That's one thing the forestry could do. (m)

M: What about the involved...in the management of woodlands in the locality?

P: Yeah and the snowball's a community woodland that's run by a trust and I know there's another on down in Dunbar and they're trying to appreciate a new, a private housing scheme. Community woodlands, they find that people are really involved and it can be difficult things because you have people joined together and people are different and can disagree a lot, and you get people who dominate so it can be a tricky thing to do, but it has been tried in East Lothian several times and they tried to buy that...but they failed because they couldn't get the money. (m)

M: Do you think in general that's a positive thing?

P: Oh yeah, I think so. Owning, you get ownership of your countryside. (m)

P: I think when you put a lot of people on a committee to manage an area then it can become too complicated and I'm thinking of the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park. I've just recently registered my boat there and I know the ... go there all the time and there wasn't really any rules or regulations, just common sense but now you have to register and there are all these rules and regulations, including putting a sticker on the side of your boat, with a number, an identification number on it which just ruins the look of the boat. This is where I think the management goes mad. (m)

P: Legislation for legislation's sake..(m)

P: I think it can be over managed. (m)

M: What about being involved, not just in a management committee or something like this, but actually doing things in woods; helping to plant trees, making bird boxes, clearing rhododendrons, do you think that's a good thing?

P: Yeah. In a way it's a shame that the Millennium Forest Scotland Project didn't continue and if the Forestry Commission are looking for something to do on that lines, maybe they should take up what happened with the Millennium Forest Scotland because that provided grounds for Innesfield and Pishwanton...so if they're looking to have something continuous like that they should look at Millennium Forest Scotland experience and see if they could develop it. (m)

P: They're actually already doing all this with woodlands, putting up bird boxes and all the rest of it and that's really only happened since they've started to manage areas, you didn't hear about all that years ago when the wildlife was there naturally and there was natural holes in trees, all that came naturally. It's since it has become managed that it has become necessary to bring all the wildlife back. (m)

P: Another thing I'd like bring up is the natural orchids? I believe there is one in Corstorphine but in the borders they've been trying to locate and find establish and that's another thing the Forestry Commission...(f)

P: Are these a good idea because anyone could murder someone and put them in there and nobody would know where? (m)

M: What about economic aspects of forests? You've already mentioned comments about timber production for example. Do you think timber production from Scottish forests is a good thing or a bad thing?

P: It depends on what's being...obviously you're going to need timber to make things or whatever but they could do that on the wilds of Scotland, where there's no desire for access, except maybe for the few, but certainly for the more accessible areas, where there's more access for people; myself, the disabled, I think they should keep the commercial side of things away. (m)

P: Depends where, areas subject to cording, what you read about in the newspapers or television, forest landslides have killed people, it's best just to leave the trees alone. And that's all happening by roadsides, population, villages, places that have been eroded. (m)

P: Sometimes it's better to keep the trees where they are, rather than chop them down. (m)

P: I think they should keep the commercial side of logging to the more, say, inaccessible areas and even there they should leave areas natural. I don't know how well I'm making sense right now. (m)

P: It makes sense to us. (f)

M: And do you think that planting trees, whoever plants the trees, wherever they've been planted leads to better neighbourhoods and more investment in areas at all?

P: You look at housing estates and buildings in these areas. (m)

P: Yeah you can restore. A lot of the woodland that's local here is shelter belts that have been totally neglected for about a century, you could say yes. (m)

M: You think they should be managed and restored?

P: I do. I think it could be done with hardwoods, most of them are hardwoods, but the conifer, when more of them became accessible, all these estates which had all these hardwoods, they shut down, they got out of business. (m)

M: And what about forestry and woodlands and environmental issues? What do you think they're offering?

P: Fresh air. (m)

P: Well they are the recycling agents and they've knocked down enough of the Brazilian forest to make it serious. Yeah, I mean, Scotland was covered in forests until the industrial revolution came and they cut down all the wood for housing, and they've never been re-planted since then. I mean, there is a campaign to re-forest Scotland. (m)

P: ...to camouflage 1960's type architecture (m).

M: What about noise? The effect of noise. Do you think trees help there?

P: Oh definitely, airports and busy motorways. (m)

M: What do you think about role of trees in Scotland to do with climate change?

P: The more trees you have the more you can stop the climate change. (m)

M: And what about the visual appearance of forests and woodlands in the landscape? You made some criticisms of conifers and felling and the remains of felling, any other aspects to do with visual appearance?

P: It's nice to see woods...(m)

P: Not just attractive trees, a variation. (m)

P: ...plantations are, far more attractive to look at it than just plain heather, I think anyway. (m)

P: There is one thing that really annoys me. When you're driving in the highlands, you know, that beautiful countryside you can barely see, when you're driving past lochs and there's just a narrow band of woodland and it's impossible to see the scenery because of it. So I think that's one aspect where the management might come in. (m)

P: They could arrange it so the trees become part of the landscape, rather than through it. (m)

P: ...one of the biggest land owners...not accessible to the public...a shame. (m)

M: So, in general, how do you think woodlands and forests are being managed at the moment?

P: Not a lot of it going about in this area is there? (m)

P: Myself, I don't know much about it. Don't know much about the woods, apart from it looks nice and there are trees and that's about it. (m)

P: I mean, I think there's an awful lot of neglected woodland, usually by private owners, because councils are a bit more responsible, but land owners can get away with not doing anything. (m)

P: ...a hundred years, two hundred years for a tree...(m)

P: I mean, you do see signs of coppicing around, I mean that might come. (m)

P: What's that? (m)

P: It's a system of getting wood on a regular basis by chopping the tree down at a certain age and a certain type of tree, so when it sprouts and it grows again and then you chop it down. It's when people want poles and things and all that. You'd need a certain amount of land for it so that you go round in a cycle every five years. That's a system of getting wood but because it's so easy to cut the conifer and shape it in a sawmill, nobody bothers with it anymore. (m)

P: What's it called again? (m)

P: Coppicing. Coppicing and people used to supply all their local wood needs locally as a result of... (m)

M: So let's move onto the last point then which is about what you think could be improved, For example, would it be good idea to have more forests in Scotland...?

P: Yes. (m)

P: Definitely. (f)

M: And if so, what kind of forest?

P: Natural... (m)

P: Deciduous. (m)

M: And would you like to see lots of little woods? Lots of big forests?

Mixed? Forest on farms? Forests next to towns? What kind of places and what kind of amounts should be good for society?

P: Depends on the area doesn't it? (m)

P: I think a mixture... (f)

P: Yes. (m)

P: ...you know, between small, to wilder, larger areas (f)

P: I'd say an area the size of East Lothian. At least one very large wood or forest. I don't have a very clear picture of the difference between a wood and a forest but I think there should be at least one the size of East Lothian, or one the size of West Lothian. If you have one large area where you can go for that kind of thing and then smaller ones round about the area. (m)

And should they be more closer to where people live, in general?

P: Close enough... (m)

P: Where they're readily accessible. (m)

P: ...male can't understand

M: As part of recreational facilities?

P: ...forest...much that you can drive through...Kielder forest and that's really good. One controversial point I did mention once is that in the States they've got vantage points and quite often...how peaceful is it to say...toilets (m)

P: Oh absolutely. There's a lack of toilets everywhere. Plus in East Lothian, you need the toilet before 5 o'clock in winter and 9 o'clock in summer (m)

P: You know, compost toilets that are comfortable. (m)

P: Well yeah I know, because the one up Pishwanton isn't comfortable (m).

P: Which one was that? (m)

P: Pishwanton. Go have a look when you're up there. (m)

P: ...hard to find a car park (m)

P: ...have a wee rest. Rest areas around the woodland, made from natural timber from the woodland. So it blends in, as opposed to a bench you could take to a blacksmith, you know. (m)

M: Any final points that anyone has thought of?

P: There's one thing that's on my mind is this thing for the conifer aspect. The place that springs to mind is top of the Rest And Be thankful - have you been up there? As you're looking down...it's all beautiful woodland but it's all the same,

it's all conifer, so regimented. Had that been deciduous wood, it would've been so much nicer, but again, it's commercial and there are a lot of other places in Scotland that are like that. Although it's more pleasing to the eye, than say, heath land, it would be better with deciduous woodland for the tourists, not just the Scottish residents, but for the tourist, which would bring money into Scotland as well because the landscape isn't a commercial landscape. (m)

P: What ... says as well, bringing information of access of woodlands, how to look for trees and what to look for. Sometimes you get some of the guides, up at Falkirk you've got the rangers and they try and encourage youngsters what to look for in the woodlands. I think information in that aspect would be so beneficial, not only to children but for everybody. (f)

P: The trouble with the forestry is that they have a certain number of trees they grow commercially and that's it. How are they going to do more than that, I don't know. Should they be expected to do more than that or not? I mean are they going to change themselves from being a commercial outfit that supplies us with wood when we can't get it from abroad, to something a bit more environmentally friendly, making a lead in growing trees throughout the whole country? (m)

P: Of course there might be a way to strike a balance between the two. (m)

P: That's what you really need because no one's going to a spruce wood for example, because there's nothing there but spruce trees, so you wouldn't go in there naturally. I think I look to see which woods you could go into, and which one's you couldn't go into, because some are privately owned. Although you've got that freedom to roam, the last thing I would be doing is going to a wood with a keeper going about... (m)

P: ...advertised, wasn't explained in great detail was it? (m)

P: I used to go for walks across the south riverside bank and once it became privatised the golf course, the keepers, the green keepers started putting all the grass cuttings on the walk to discourage you from walking along the footpath, so that shows you what can happen in the change from council to private. (m)

P: ...interaction, activity, traditional wind and water sports (m)

P: I mean the woodland crafts use hardwoods more than anything else so it's difficult for the forestry to get into that but maybe there's ways for them to do that. (m)

P: Retreat lodges. (m)

M: Well I think that's a good point to finish.

Ends.

APPENDIX 5, CASTLEMILK: URBAN YOUTH, 1/3/06

Date: Wed 1 Mar, 6.30-8pm
Venue: Castlemilk Youth Centre
Participants: 8 (6 Female)
Plus: Centre manager (F)+Dep mgr (M)
Participants' ages: 15-19
Living in: Castlemilk, Glasgow
Area: Urban
Moderator: Simon Bell, assisted by Anne Boyle

M: Moderator, P: Participants, CM: Centre manager, DM: Deputy Manager

M: What do woodlands mean to you?

Participants, roundtable:

- Trees
- Hedgehogs
- Squirrels
- Forests ... bushes ... trees
- Bark of trees

M: What's the value of woodlands?

Participants, roundtable:

- For animals, like squirrels
- Trees give oxygen
- Nice to look at
- Good for wee walks 'n' stuff

M: Do any of you use woodlands yourselves?

P: Just walked through it.

M: On the way here?

P: Uh-huh.

P: Bit scary

M: You wouldn't go there by yourself very much?

P/roundtable: No

Centre Manager: Do you think that's to do with where we live, this area or do you think if you were on holiday ...[it'd be different?]

Ps: It'd be different.

P: My dad took me camping about a couple of months ago or something, and it was away up, like past Fort William and there were loads of trees and stuff and I was scared because obviously, it was pitch black 'n that and it was only 7 at night and it was really dark ... we went a walk and it wasnae really that scary but I think if you were walking in the woods in Castlemilk, you'd be going like that [looks to R & left/behind] it would be quite scary ... oh, we're no' supposed to say that, are we no', so it does depend on the area ... that's just my personal opinion, but...

M: You've mentioned the woodlands around Castlemilk, what good/value do you think they have for the area?

P: Good for the criminals to mug a lot of people.

M: Do you hear of that happening?

P: Last year a guy ran up at 7 o'clock and stabbed 3 people.

M: In the woods?

P: Alcoholics sit up there as well and drink their drink.

P: It's a kind of gathering place for groups of young people and older people who are under the influence of alcohol.

P: They know they can get away with it.

P: Hide from the police.

M: Do you think that's a good thing or an appropriate thing?

P/roundtable: No, no' really.

P: It's just breeding crime

P: You'd find in the inner city, young people use the woods for things like that but if you went out to the countryside and that, you'd find young people would use it in a totally different way from what we do.

P: A lot of people appreciate the value of nature but they look elsewhere, no' here.

M: So they think the woods somewhere else are valuable but these woods here not here?

P: They don't appreciate it.

CM: Do you think that's true of all kinds of cities or just here?

P: Probably, aye.

M: Right, if I said the name Forestry Commission Scotland, would that mean anything to you?

P/roundtable, [most]: No.

M: You've heard of it?

P: I think I've seen that on an advert recently, 'cos there's been a lot of adverts, more about the outdoors, telling you about new laws and all that. I think that's the only way I've seen it.

M: New laws about ...?

P: About the outdoors, rule and regulations, basically ... there's plenty of stuff to do in the outdoors but you've got to abide by the rules.

M: That's the new Scottish access legislation ... where were those adverts?

P: TV. 'Cos there's horses going through woods and stuff like that ... a bit bizarre ... but apart from that it's quite a good advert.

M: You've been to Fort William camping, were you aware of the Forestry Commission in that part of the world?

P: No

M: You don't remember seeing any signs ... visitor signs or picnic signs?

P: No, just signs saying to watch out for cows and stuff [Much laughter] ... but apart from that ...

P: I remember going up in summer time to The Flagpole* for picnics 'n stuff but, like, that was years ago.

P: Aye, a well-known hangover cure.

P: Aye. Like all the families would get together and go for picnics and stuff and it was quite cool but I probably wouldna' do that now but years ago, it was quite

nice.

M: How many years ago are we talking?

P: About ten year ago, twelve year ago, something like that.

M: The Flagpole, where's that, local?

P: Aye, it's just like the peak

CM: Aye, it's just at the top of the hill ... the outskirts, between Castlemilk and East Kilbride.

M: Right, and people would go there with families and picknicking and things like that?

CM: Yeah. And when I was younger, it seemed to be that it was kept differently ... more open spaces ... there was a walk, a walkway but that's no' the case now ... it's all overgrown ... I don't know ...and there's a path they've put up the hill but it doesna' actually go anywhere. It just kinda stops at the top of the hill and I think it was the intention to use that as some kind of space ...

P: Aye, 'cos that was the path ... the flats ... loads of wee walkways and if you were staying in the flats, ... remember? [to the other participants] ... you could use the walkways and it took you straight up the hill. Loads of people used it but no' now, I don't think.

P: 'Cos right at the top of Castlemilk Drive, there was path that led up to a waterfall-type thing..."the bridge" but it's no' like that any more.

M: What should be done in this area to make it more friendly for people to go?

P: I think it needs to be more open plan and I know it maybe sounds ridiculous when you're talking about forestry and that, but the pathways need to be more accessible, I think.

P: There isn't any, like an area that you could target to go and sit.

M: Back to the Forestry Commission, what do you think the FC does?

P: Deals with plants, cuts the grass down [much laughter].

P: Does it have anything to do with trees getting chopped down and stuff? And keeping it alive?

M: Uh-huh and you were saying about making new forests. Anything else? Providing recreation?

Dep Manager: Walking. [v softly spoken chap but supplemented from AB's notes:
- DM goes to QE Forest, hillwalking.]

M: You mentioned the Queen Elizabeth Forest, do you go there a lot?

DM: [assents to M's Q.]

M: [to all the participants]: So you've already been talking about getting access to these woods and going for picnics and things like that ... [referring to DM]: you would go some distance ... how would you normally go there?

DM: Car

M: By car. You'd never try public transport to get somewhere

DM: I do some walking with organised groups ... by bus but some of the other places, public transport's no' ideal. If you've not got a car, you're stuck.

M: So you think it's important to have woodland/recreational areas close by to where people live?

P: Yep.

M: Have you thought about the problems of the woods near here?

DM: Something like Pollok Country Park is very well used and looked after... I go down there in the morning ... use the cycle paths and it is like a bit of the country in Glasgow.

M: What do you think helps to make a place pleasant/good for access?

P: Like in Pollok Country Park there's loads of tennis courts and horses and ...

M: Is there anything else about the woods around here that puts you off going there?

P*: They're no' very well kept and like [CM] was saying, they're really overgrown and stuff, whereas in Pollok Park, like, it's **beautiful!** And there's loads of stuff to do and it's probably one reason why it's really well kept is that there's people hired to keep it well kept, do you know what I mean?...what was the point I was getting...?

M: So if something's well kept and managed ...?

Same P*: Aye, I think that's why the [she names local spot] is a pure riot 'cos it's just been left to do what it wants. There's nobody there ...

P: There's no plants, or anything.

Same P*: You know how sometimes you'll get the big billboard and it'll have a wee map of all the wee paths and it's all coded 'n all that, do you know what I mean? If they did something like that ...

M: And are there any signs of vandalism or damage or litter or things like that?

P: [roundtable assent]

M: And is that something that puts you off?

P: Aye, it's quite intimidating.

P: You also find in cities, young people use motorbikes and quads so that'll put a lot of older people [off] ... they're 'feart to go up a path in case motorbikes or quads come flying by ...

[Roundtable whizzing m/bike noises, to much laughter.]

P: And all the gangs hang out up the braes at night so you dinna' really want to ... well, I dinna' want to take my dog up in case something happens 'cos they're all drinking and they've actually set fire to some of the bushes and stuff.

M: Other than access to woods, what ways are there maybe that woodlands could be important to you personally, rather than to the community or society as a whole?

P: They're nice to look at. I'd much rather look at that than a block of flats, or whatever or a wee factory or whatever.

P: And people take more interest in nature and stuff as well. 'Cos obviously, like ... at primary school they teach you all that stuff but as you get older ...

P: For picnics.

M: So if you haven't got anything particularly personally, associated with that, what about to the community? What values are relevant to the community?

P: There used to be ... remember? [to the group] that wee park at the sports

centre, the Chinese gardens. I was on a project that made that a place for remembrance ... you could do stuff like that if it was a nice area.

M: Do you think health and well being could be associated with woodlands?

P: Aye, 'cos if there was more woods, there'd be less pollution and we'd all live a hell of a lot longer.

DM: Stress reliever. Meditative, quiet place. You get away from the hustle and bustle ...

P: [Inaudible/fast response.]

M: What about being involved in managing the local woodlands, do you think you would be interested in doing that, in the same way that you [referring to participant] are joining in the management of the youth complex in a similar sort of way?

P: Like, maybe older people would be interested in that 'cos it's no' very cool to go and shovel with spades ... [much laughter]

P: Aye, but if there was something coming out of it, you probably would but for people just to go and shovel ...

P: But like, it's something for primary schools as well, 'cos I can remember at primary schools going up to the woods and picking up big leaves and painting them. [to the whole group]: Did you ever do that? Printing them on the paper and all that. And I remember going with my teacher and picking up acorns and stuff like that and these people love to get out the class anyway so that...

P: Aye, you could go a wee nature trail ...

CM: Who was it ... you and Karen ... we run a competition every year – a nationwide video competition and the 2nd place video was about young people converting a piece of wasteland into a skate park – and if it was young people in this area and if, as (name) was saying, there was a big quad culture happening, you could definitely see young people being more interested in it, like what (name) was saying, if they could see a product at the end of it. That's definitely something that would help, I think.

P: I think but, in places like the Braes, they should make a facility for quads and bikes because the nearest one is Rutherglen, isn't it but there's no' a lot of tracks ... so any wasteland [local] gets used [by quad bikes] and just gets wrecked.

M: And do you think there's any economic values from woodland for the community? [Silence] **What do you think comes out of forests?**

P: [to much roundtable laughter] Paper!

M: Not directly but timber. Do you ever make the connection between the fact you use paper, and wood ... it has to grow somewhere, come from a forest?

P: You never actually think about that but you know that's what happens.

M: And do you think that it's important we grow our own timber in Scotland?

P: Aye, 'cos if you're going to have to import it, it's going to cost money ... it'll improve Scotland's economy.

M: So that's one thing. Round here, do you think [woodland] creates a

better neighbourhood, somewhere where there might be more investment in housing, more jobs or results in a better neighbourhood through the presence of trees and woods?

P: I think it does, because when you go into the countryside, there's lots of lovely wee houses, trees, it's dead clean 'n that, do you know what I mean? But when you come into the city, there's hardly anything, it doesna' look as nice as it would, do you know what I mean?

[General discussion – inaudible - but the jist of it is: comparison of 2 different parts of Castlemilk: 1) with woodland/fields, 2) without woodland, and the significance of both for the community. The woodlands/fields seem to be regarded as better]

M: So if the place is nicer, people might, pay more for houses there, they might want to live there for work, that sort of thing?

CM: There is a lot of young people who use it and it's interesting to work out what the differences are from that end of the [Castlemilk] scheme to the other end. And it might be about one side being quite open. The forest and woodland is on the right-hand side as you're looking at it so ... Dunno, it's interesting why...

M: Now what about environmental aspects of woods and all the things that are of concern at the moment. Some of you have mentioned creating oxygen/having a nice view, that sort of thing, what other environmental problems are you aware of that woodlands might be helping?

P: People's health?

M: In what way?

P: 'Cos whenever there's a woodland area, people dump stuff there and it gets burned.

M: Oh, I see, so you think it might be a negative. What about pollution? What about climate change?

P: I know the sea's rising. There's a massive block of ice melting off the North Pole. It was on the Discovery channel. Because of all the pollution and climate change, we're getting warmer winters, milder winters so, there's blocks of ice breaking off. So certain parts of land are being covered with water so they say in a good few years, a good lot of land will be covered with water.

M: And do you know anything about the role that forests have to play in all that?

P: Here in Scotland, well in Britain, they'll play a role in helping it but then when you go to Australia or America, there's that much forest and people no' looking after it right there, with forest fires ... that it prevents it in one way

M: And what about wildlife. Is that important?

[Lots in input but inaudible – much laughter and regular reference to 'squirrels']

M: Well, if we're talking about any woods being managed, what do you mean?

P: People actually being hired to look after them, do you know what I mean? Like [DM] was saying about Pollok Park which is just **beautiful** and it's **so**

nice to go there in the summer and people go there and keep it nice because it's so well managed, and there's people hired to look after it, do you know what I mean? And if they did the same with the Braes, I'm sure that could be just as beautiful if they made a wee bit more effort, do you know what I mean?

P*: Aye, is it the Council that has gardeners. Is that no' what your brother does?

P: Aye, he cuts the grass but that's about it.

P* [same as above]: Aye, but if somebody was to go up and do up all the Braes and they hired in the people from the Council to keep it tidy, if it was only once a fortnight, once a month to cut the grass, pick the litter out, it might make a bit of a difference. You might actually want to go up and spend time with your family, up with the weans, a wee picnic, do good stuff.

P: Is there no' a conservation order ...

M: No, not necessarily. You can do certain things. It depends what you are trying to do. Somebody mentioned about making open spaces, clearing out some trees, do you think that would be part of management?

P: Aye. They don't have any benches. They don't have anything at all up there [the Braes]. That's how people, all the gangs cut down trees to sit and they've got a bit for a fire, 'n all that carry-on ... all that jazz.

M: Do you think there should be more woodland in Scotland?

P: Aye. The more woods there is, the less roads there is, the less pollution there is.

P: I think there's millions of woodlands in Scotland, millions and millions of them, but because we're from the city, we don't have them. We used to go away up ... do you know the Rest and Be Thankful ... and we used that a lot to go away for weekends. And we used a good couple of outdoor centres. I think if there was all them round about, maybe...

P: We used to go to Rouken Glen or whatever.

M: And any ideas of what kind of woodlands you'd like to see?

P: I think anything with flowers in it because that's the difference. In Rouken Glen it's all nice and there's flowers and the pond and all that carry-on. I think they would be more attractive if there was flowers.

P*: It doesn't have to be over the top. A few wee benches, wee bridge and wee walks coded and stuff like that, do you know what I mean? It's all you need.

M: So you don't want it to be too managed?

Same P*: No

M: So not like a park?

P: No, because then it just becomes ... what's the word ... manufactured. It would just be too manufactured and ... I've lost what I want to say ... there'd be more people going to do indoor bowling or whatever than to walk about, actually be outside, do you know what I mean?

P: Aye, it wouldn't be like nature.

M: So you'd like to see, more facilities with better looked after woods but not too much managed and not too much like a park. Keep some naturalness and that kind of thing.

DM: I think the idea is not like Rouken Glen park but like Pollok Park, like a

country park. A balance. It still keeps a countryside feel.

M: Now you've mentioned the way the woods are used by groups of lads who go drinking, do you think there's a major issue of trying to get the woods more managed and these kinds of people using them. What do you think about how to solve those kinds of problems?

P: I was going to say they should give the Youth Centre a grant and keep it open. If more people would come there, there'd be less gangs on the streets. I think they should give young people more facilities. I would rather have more people enjoy themselves here than sit up the Braes with a bottle of Buckfast. Bit pointless, I think.

CM: It might be that the Forestry Commission could work a lot more with street workers rather than with facilities. I don't know if there was some joint venture that could happen where a woodland area could be taken over and some money was put into working with young people – in effect, you're taking their space. But working with them and creating what it might be.

M: Young people and these lads, they need to go somewhere, don't they and is a woodland less of a problem than other spaces, corners or bus shelters?

P: Yeah. The policemen don't go up but if they do, there's too many places to hide.

CM: Do you think if a group of youth workers worked with the young people who hang about on the bridge and got them to design a seat and got them to work on how the bridge or that bit of land, that swing park, 'cos it's all vandalised ... it's a mess. But if they got the chance to say what it would look like, do you think they would still go ahead and vandalise it?

P: If they got a say in what it would look like, maybe, because it would be theirs, do you know what I mean?

P: They're trying to get away from trouble.

[Discussion re where people would drink even if had had input into re-creating woodland areas. DM told story of impact of ASBOs and fact police can move on 2+ people on the streets. Young people have to have somewhere to go. Some of this group felt it was better that they did their hanging out/drinking together in the woods, expressed by the following:

P: They've not got anybody to hassle, there's no' much that they could damage, is there?

P: No, but there should be an area for the young gangs to hang about. I know it's no' pleasant if you're out with your dog or something but they should have their own space 'cos ... here I come again ... when we used to walk through there, there was a park along there where gangs used to hang out but they got booked for loitering, which I think was a bit stupid because there was a park bench and that was what it was there for and they sat about on. I dunno but I think they need their own space.

M: So do you think it would be a good idea to work with the police as well, identifying the places that they could go

P: I'm sure, like, if the police knew that they'd kinda worked together and that that space was created for them, then they wouldna' feel they needed to go

up and say ... 'cos obviously, they felt they were in the wrong, do you know what I mean?

DM: Yes, it goes back to what [CM] was saying. You've got to work with street workers. Young people need to be consulted. And in a lot of cases, young people don't get a say in anything at all. We say: we're adults, we know what's best for you... We've just got to talk and find out what they want.

P: You find that a lot of people are hanging about because of the new anti-social behaviour bill that came into place. If there's more than 2 young people you can get charged for hanging about on the streets, even if you're no' doing anything, because of the new anti-social behaviour bill that came in. You find a lot of young people won't hang about on the streets now. They'll go and hide out so they don't get criminal records 'n that so I think the Parliament needs to look at that.

DM: [Very softly spoken man. - He argued that in his experience, young people used the woods as a den – to make their own space and simply hang out together; that they weren't harming anyone. Simply got together, some drinking, then went home.]

P: And they always say there's safety in numbers.

P: But it's one of these things for older people. Even if you're no' doing anything ... it can be quite intimidating. And that's probably the big issue, why it's happened [ASBOs].

P: But then if people are no' doing anything; they're just walking about, talking. In that case, it should be the same for everyone, why are they not getting charged?

P: I think they should try and get younger people involved in the planning. I think there's a planning group somewhere in the area for here. I was at a conference with a lot of older ladies [much laughter] and we were saying about areas for young people to go. And they were moaning it costs money to cut the grass. So they're moaning about young people hanging about on the streets but they're also moaning about costing money to cut the grass so I think they're just wanting us all locked up.

P: It takes more effort to get the police to pull you up than it does to cut the grass, so ...they need to get a grip of themselves.

DM: [Mentioned getting Glasgow healthier initiatives and how good it would be to have cycle pathways locally but the need is to get young people involved in the planning of such projects.]

CM: We always say it would be great to take a group of young people out biking but there's no really anywhere to do that.

P: We've all been very chatty tonight, I have to say.

DM: And that's not like you, is it!

Ms: You have and you've been great.

Ends.