

Outdoor Partnerships Annual User Survey 2026



Shropshire's
**GREAT
OUTDOORS**

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

The survey ran for **10 weeks** between 20 July 2026 and 27 September 2026

378 people completed the survey



92%

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

98% of respondents use footpaths, bridleways and other rights of way. **70%** visit countryside sites and **19%** participate in outdoor partnerships volunteering activity.

93%

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

Other activities include

- Walking the dog (33%)
- Family activity (23%)
- Cycling (22%)
- Park run / running (15%)
- Childrens play (11%)



73%

of the survey respondents use outdoor partnerships provision once a week or more. This has decreased from 83% last year.

64%

use outdoor partnerships provision for 2 hours or more. This has not changed since last year.

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

- **40%** are members of a local walking group
- **27%** are members of U3A
- **23%** support community or volunteer countryside maintenance
- **17%** are members of walking for health



84%

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

Other popular activities include:

- Watching / engaging with nature (72%)
- Admiring the view (68%)
- Countryside parks and site walks (67%)
- Long distance promoted walks (54%)
- Local parks and site walks (52%)
- Circular bridleways (49%)



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

- **96%** felt better for taking some exercise
- **90%** enjoyed themselves and want to do more outdoors
- **55%** discovered something new
- **41%** found out more about the community
- **27%** of people said they felt less lonely

54% are satisfied with the rights of way network in their area.

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

21% of people have noticed improvements to the rights of way network and **20%** have noticed improvements to the parks and sites, in their area in the last 12 months.

1% of respondents said they are inactive and **8%** of respondents moderately inactive. This is very similar to last year.

59% of respondents said they were either active or very active now. This has remained the same as last year.

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

- Social media feeds (39%)
- Printed leaflets and guidebooks (31%)
- Local websites (31%)
- Organised groups (25%)



Volunteering is one way to enjoy the great outdoors and **13 people**, or **4%** of respondents said they are already volunteering with Shropshire Great Outdoors.

An additional **30 people**, when asked, said they would like to also become involved in the work we do and/or would like to volunteer.

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

- Better maintenance of footpaths and stiles
- Better wheelchair access and accessibility
- Responsible dog owners (dog mess and walking on leads)
- Improved signage, maps and marketing to encourage use

Key Obstacles to enjoying the great outdoors include:

- Overgrown vegetation (50%)
- Lack of signposts/ way markers (31%)
- Littering and flytipping (31%)
- Intimidating livestock (29%)
- Physical obstructions (28%)
- Dog mess (27%)



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

- Ill Health (47%)
- Change in circumstances (9%)
- Lack of companion (6%)

99.5% of people report that getting into the great outdoors has a positive or very positive impact on their **quality of life**.

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

64 people (17%) said they had contacted Shropshire Council to report an issue or concerns in the last 12 months. Of these people **40** said that their issues was unresolved.

Examples of memorable and enjoyable experiences.

"Autumn early morning walks with glorious sunrises"

"Church Stretton offers so many wonderful walks and a good number of styles have been replaced with gates. "

"I treasure The Mere at Ellesmere."

"Reabrook walking. Green corridors through towns are critically important for general population health and well being"

"Riding is a wonderful past time for lots of people of which there are many who say it helps with their mental health"

"My grandchild and I have enjoyed many of the activities arranged by rangers at SVCP and appreciate the effort put in to make them so enjoyable."