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Description automatically generated with medium confidence

**Interview Consent Form**

**Research project title:** Assessing perceptions of the benefits provided by community woodlands amongst different stakeholder groups

**Research investigator:** Matthew Logan

**Research Participants name:**

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of the above research project. This consent form is necessary for us to ensure that you understand the purpose of your involvement and that you agree to the conditions of your participation.

The interview will take 30-60 minutes. I don’t anticipate any risks associated with your participation, but you have the right to stop the interview or withdraw from the research at any time.

Would you therefore read the accompanying **information sheet** and then sign this form to certify that you approve the following:

* the interview will be recorded and a transcript will be produced
* the transcript of the interview will be analysed by Matthew Logan as research investigator
* you will be sent the transcript if you wish and given the opportunity to correct any factual errors
* access to the interview transcript will be limited to Matthew Logan and academic colleagues and researchers with whom he might collaborate as part of the research process
* any summary interview content, or direct quotations from the interview, that are made available through academic publication or other academic outlets will be anonymized so that you cannot be identified, and care will be taken to ensure that other information in the interview that could identify yourself is not revealed
* the actual recording will be kept until the end of the research project before being erased
* any variation of the conditions above will only occur with your further explicit approval

All or part of the content of your interview may be used;

* In the final dissertation report and subsequent presentation
* In academic papers, policy papers or news articles
* On other feedback events
* In an archive of the project as noted above

By signing this form I agree that;

1. I am voluntarily taking part in this project. I understand that I don’t have to take part, and I can stop the interview at any time;
2. The transcribed interview or extracts from it may be used as described above;
3. I have read the Information sheet;
4. I don’t expect to receive any benefit or payment for my participation;
5. I can request a copy of the transcript of my interview and may make edits I feel necessary to ensure the effectiveness of any agreement made about confidentiality;
6. I have been able to ask any questions I might have, and I understand that I am free to contact the researcher with any questions I may have in the future.

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Printed Name**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Participants Signature Date**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Researchers Signature Date**

*Contact Information*

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Edinburgh University Research Ethics Board. If you have any further questions or concerns about this study, please contact:

Matthew Logan

Tel: xxxxxxxxxxx

E-mail:

You can also contact Matthew Logan’s supervisor:

Marc Metzger

E-mail: xxxxxxxxxxxx

**What if I have concerns about this research?**

If you are worried about this research, or if you are concerned about how it is being conducted, you can contact the Chair of the GeoScience Ethics Committee, University of Edinburgh, Drummond St, Edinburgh, EH8 9XP (or email at ethics@geos.ed.ac.uk).

Semi-structured interview script summary

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Theme | Main questions asked | Rationale |
| Personal involvement | Time involved with CW?  Motivation to join committee?  Has your understanding CWGs changed? | General insight into CWG committee |
| Local community | Define the CWs were community?  Sense of local community spirit?  Are the community aware of the CW? | Inform survey distribution  Insight into local community |
| Communication\* | Sources of information about the CW?  Main challenges to communication?  Have challenges changed over time? | Inform questionnaire design |
| Benefits | Main benefits personally received from CW?  Main benefits community receive from CW?  Are the following benefits provided by the CW? | Address RQ1  Inform questionnaire design |
| CWG work post lockdown\*\* | How has personal use of the CW changed?  How has the work of the CWG changed? | General insight into changes |
| CW usage post lockdown\*\* | How has community use of the CW changed?  Do you think there is now greater awareness or interest in the CW? | Address RQ2 |

Semi-structured interview script full

**Warm up chat – how was your day? How is weather?**

**Introduction to research and confidentiality statement**

Hello, my name is Matthew Logan and I am a student of Ecological and Environmental Sciences at the University of Edinburgh. Thank you for agreeing to this interview as part of my dissertation.

I believe I discussed my research with you when we met, however would you like a brief description of my dissertation project?

**If yes then…..**

My research is aiming to understand how the benefits of CWs are perceived by groups involved with or affected by them. I am hoping that my findings will be useful in informing CWAs on public perceptions of CWs so that they can better engage with communities. I’m interested in your personal experience and involvements with the CW, the benefits you think the CW provides personal and to the community and the main forms of communication used by the CWA. The interview will take about 30 minutes.

I don’t anticipate any risks associated with your participation, but you have the right to stop the interview or withdraw from the research at any time.

There will also be time for you to ask me any further questions about my research at the end of the interview.

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Ethics –**

Can you confirm that you have signed the consent form I provided you with for this interview?

And for procedural purposes can you restate your consent by saying “I, Joe Blogs consent to this interview being recorded”?

**If form has not be signed**

I would like to clarify that I wish to record this conversation. Can you state your consent by saying “I, Joe Blogs consent to this interview being recorded”? I will now start the recording; part of the procedure is to restate your consent-Start Recording-

This interview will be recorded and subsequently transcribed. The transcript will only be accessible by myself, Matthew Logan, and academic colleagues whom I may collaborate with. If you wish you can be sent a copy of this transcript which you can edit to make edits if it doesn’t adequately express your views

Any summary content or quotes from this interview will be anonymised and care will be taken to ensure you are not identifiable.

Participating in this interview is voluntary and you may stop the interview at any point.

Are there any questions you wish to ask at this point?

Are you happy for us to proceed?

**Phase 1 Questions**

* **Personal Experience**
  + When was the last time you used/ visited the CW? (How often do you use/visit the CW? Describe how the woodland was when you visited it?)
  + How long have you been involved with the CWA and what first motivated your involvement? (How many years? Member before committee?)
  + What is your main role on the CW committee? (What does this involve?)
  + Has your understanding of the woodland changed since you first became involved? If so, how has it evolved?
  + How long have you been in the area? Do you think the town has a strong sense of community? In what ways does this community spirit manifest itself?
  + How would you define the community served by the CW? (Is it just the named town/village or does it extend further?)
  + Are there many other community groups within the area? Do you ever feel in competition with these groups? Do you collaborate with these groups?
* **Benefits**
  + What are the main benefits you personally receive from the CW? (Why do you value these aspects?)
  + What are the main benefits you feel the community receives from the CW? (If different, why?)
  + Do you think any of the following are benefits to the community?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Social** | **Environmental** | **Economic/ cultural** |
| Exercise (run, bike, walk, dogs) | Connection with nature | Local produce |
| A space for peace and quiet | Biodiversity (which species?) | Attracts visitors to area |
| Educational experiences | Carbon storage | Historic Value |
| Spaces for the community to interact |
| Art/Cultural experiences |
| Getting involved (committee) |

* + Out of the benefits we’ve discussed which do you feel is the most important?
  + Which benefits does the committee prioritise?
* **Communication**
  + Do you think most of the community in your area are aware such and such is community owned?
  + How do you feel the community appreciates the CW? Do they understand the work that is required? Do they take the woodland for granted?
  + What are the sources of information for community members who wish to learn about of engage with the CW? (How often is information shared? Do you have any way to see how effective communication is?
  + What do you feel the main challenges to promotion and communication of CW are? (Have these challenges changed over time?)
  + Have forms of communication changed over the period of your involvement in the CW? From what to what?

**Phase 2 Questions**

* **CWG Work**
  + When was the last time you used/ visited the CW? (Describe how the woodland was when you visited it?)
  + Have you used the woods more since lockdown?
  + How has the work you carry out with the CWG changed? (New jobs/roles, increased activity, different ways of meeting)
* **CW users**
  + Have you seen a change in how people use the woods since the lockdown?
  + Has this change been sustained?
  + What do you think are the primary reasons people have been using the woods for since the lockdown?
  + Have people been visiting the woods for different reasons/ activities or just more often?
  + Have any new activities begun in the woods since lockdown?
  + Do you think the local community have become more aware of the CW and the CWG since the lockdown?
  + Do you think the community have a better understanding of the work carried out by the CWG?
  + Are people more appreciative of this work or more interested in getting involved?

Great thank you I think I’ve asked everything I wanted to. Thank you very much for your time. Do have anything else you’d like to add or questions to ask me?

**Thanks**

Thank you again for taking part in this interview. Would you like me to send you a copy of the transcript? Additionally, would you like me to send you the outcomes of my dissertation work?

Excerpt from semi-structured interview transcript

R=Researcher, P=Participant

**R**: Great, so I'll just move on to talk about the benefits and impact of the woodland. So what would you say personally are the main benefits you feel you receive from the woodland?

P: There's been a lot in the news lately about getting out in the woodlands and de-stressing. Absolutely. I mean for me personally that's probably been the one thing that helps de-stress. When I'm doing something that I can actually see the result of.

So the benefits I see of just being out in the open air, doing something physical. So I'm not doing it just for the community, I'm doing it for myself initially but with a community view that if we don't get involved we will loose it to development and we will moan when it's gone. So that's my kind of motivation for doing it. Not the personal de-stressor bit but something we can't let diminish any further

**R**: Would you say that's what you feel the most valuable aspect of the woodland is? just the ability to

be able to de-stress and get some peace and quite?

**P**: Aye! Yep. And people doing that by cycling through it, walking their dogs. I'm sure people just enjoy. You can be in our woods and think you're in the middle of nowhere, there are certain bits where you just look up and thing well this is brilliant you know.

**R**: Do you think that peace and quiet aspect is what the community value most about the woods as well? Or do you think they have different things they appreciate about it the most.

**P**: I mean, I don't think that's at the forefront of many people's minds, the mental health benefits but it has been all over the news. I do believe that people just use it to have a quiet walk through.

**R**: So I will just list of a few other benefits of CW that are commonly identified. Could you just tell me if

you also think they're provided by Lochend. Some you've mentioned already like exercise in various ways and peace and quiet. Do you think there's educational experiences to be had through the woods as well?

**P**: Absolutely, well the brownies just asked to use the Pizza oven and another group that are wanting to come down. I'm surprised that we've not had more active involvement. and that's down to us doing the outreach work of getting back to. So educational benefits, absolutely, even just parents taking their kids through. You know it is a peaceful wood.

**R**: and do you think it also offers a space for the community to interact, not only on an educational level but on also culturally, through events maybe?.

**P**: Admittedly the events have weaned slightly, and we need to get back on that but it requires more

volunteers. We can't rely on older committee members to get those things going. We need fresh blood to kind of have fresh ideas to come into that.

Evidence of Common Topics during Semi-Structured Interviews

**Phase 1**

Challenges

“But I think the question of spreading the word is a difficult one as most community members are busy with one thing or another and it’s a very small group.”

“So its always been quite difficult really to get people to sign up. You have to keep putting it in front of them I suppose. That takes quite a lot of time an effort that you don’t always have.”

“But individuals residents its quite hard to get information to everybody and we’re still always picking up feedback from people saying “oh we didn’t know you were there” whether that’s new people who have just joined or our advertising hasn’t gotten through in a way.”

Personal motivation and involvement in Community Woodland Groups

“I was all for rewilding an area of the countryside close to where I live. Right on my doorstep it’s a really nice amenity to have I suppose for my own use and also for the community as well.”

“I’m just reasonably environmental, wanted to give something back to the environmental and the woodland was something that seemed worthwhile and reasonably near my house so that was it.”

“I’d previously been involved in seed collection projects and a project in the boarders. I’d been involved in seed collection and grown trees as well. But that’s quite difficult and it especially was when I had young children so I wanted something that was a bit closer to home and this was the perfect opportunity when it came up.”

**Phase 2**

Personal visiting habits

More often:

“It changed in that the woodlands were one of the few places that I could go to and actually be outside and work so I was actually there more often that I would have otherwise”

“Absolutely more than normal. And again because I had reason with the dog because my wife was working all though the lockdown so I said I’ll take care of the dog. Whereas I would normally be working and only off two days a week. So pretty much five to seven days a week at some point I’d go through the woods because it’s a good short or long walk to get the dog through”

“Lockdown did mean I was home so I could use the woodland more and I was prompted to do so by a dog. So I guess lockdown did mean I was using the woodland more because I was home more.”

Similar frequency:

“Probably not really because although we haven’t had the volunteer days once a month, which is when I would normally be there. I’ve just gone there as a destination for walks probably about once a month. So, I’ve gone there probably about eth same number of times but not as a formal volunteer.”

Less often:

“From when lockdown started, we didn’t actually go to the woodlands at all because you weren’t supposed to drive further than wherever. So to walk to the woodlands from our house it’s not that far but it makes the walk a lot longer. So we went very seldom actually before I got ill.”

“I think personally probably a little bit less. Mostly as we were sticking very local due to guidelines. But I did go up a few times.”

“I was using it less often as it was more busy but the general public were using it more.”

Community Woodland Group Activity

Adjusting meetings:

“Yes mostly emails. We have held one meeting on Zoom because obviously with all of the decisions regarding the group we’ve had to have discussion with other committee members and the Dalgety Bay Community Trust.”

“We have yeah. So we meet once a month as a group and continued to through lockdown virtually. So we used google meetups which worked reasonably well. Yeah it works really well I think people are getting quite used to it as well. But we’ve continued to have virtual meetings.”

Cancelling activities:

“The committee agreed that we shouldn’t be meeting up to do maintenance apart from very essential emergency stuff, obviously if there was a dangerous branch or a tree coming down we’d be obliged to do that. But generally, we took a step back from just doing general maintenance.”

“Well I don’t think so. I mean we accepted that (the lockdown) was the end of the work parties and there was an appeal to start writing about what was going on with the wildlife in the woods.”

“And I personally looked at the forestry Commission guide and saw what they were doing. Because they ceased all essential and harvesting work. So we just took out lead from that.”

Resuming activity:

“But now we’ve restarted the work parties and key art of that is a bit of spiel about distancing and number of households. So they get that with the email saying can you come and give us a hand.”

“Yeah, Yeah. As soon as the restrictions were lessened and people were allowed out more often and outdoor activities could restart we got cracking on various thing. So, work done in clearing the path and the gathering space. There’s been quite a lot done recently about encroachments into residential areas. They’ve been pretty busy actually.”

Changes in visitor numbers and activities

New or different activities:

“I think possibly it’s changed a little in that before dog walking was predominant, but I would say the number of people coming for a walk on their own has increased. I think a lot of people are going there as a quiet place to have some peace.”

“So there has been more use by the mountain bike but we’re just going to encourage them to use the pump track and just check in with them every 6 months or so to make sure they’re keeping on top of it”

“”

Increased visitor numbers:

“I’ve seen quite a number of cars there. Not at the start but over a shot space of time the number of cars at the woods increased.”

“Yeah. Actually, early on in lockdown an awful lot of people where using the woods to walk their dogs or just walk.”

“There’s definitely more visitors with Covid. Almost immediately we started seeing more people. I think that snowballed a little bit to start with in that they would tell their friends. So, March and April we saw a little bit of an increase and in May and June it’s been more again. So maybe double in April and May and doubled again in June and July. And then it’s been a bit stable I think.”

“Huge. Particularly when the lockdown was first announced. When it was so strict, you had 1 hour a day that you could be outside so I think people really felt I have to get out for that hour so we saw a huge increase in the usage of the woodland by the community”

More family activity:

“I would say that you’d see families out and some older people with dogs. I’d noted certainly more family groups out.”

“Yeah seeing families much more than you usually do during the tightest restrictions as I think people were taking that opportunity to get out together.”

“I think that’s probably right as I had noticed, earlier at the start of lockdown, lots of families walking. It was so noticeable! The number of people who were out walking and whole families out walking. That was the really significant thing that I noticed.”

New visitors, increased awareness, and interest

First time visitors:

“It is and I think the one thing I’ve noticed over the last few months is then number of people who are coming for the first time to visit, Simply, because initially people couldn’t go too far away from where they lived. And I think the whole thing has spread through word of mouth more than anything else.”

“No at that early point as I wasn’t seeing many people but recently yes there have definitely been a lot of people who are new to the area.”

“So that is interesting when they haven’t been able to get in their car and go to work, they’ve had to work from home. I do believe a lot more people have started to look around them and where they live and get out and explore it.”

Increased awareness and interest:

“It’s a hard open to say. I think yes in that the awareness is there. There’s a lot more people have been in touch about things.”

“I don’t know whether or not it will have a massive impact on how much involvement people will have. It remains to be seen. As I say a few people have come back into the committee. So people come and people go I suppose.”

“Well now that you mention it. We have had a couple inquiries from people saying “yes I’d be interested in conservation work and what kind of conservation work are we doing”

Anti-social behaviour

“And one downside to that is that the amount of dog waste was a really issue for use. We noticed quite an increase in that just a lot of irresponsible people walking their dog in the woods.”

“I seem to remember now as a vague memory that someone was saying there seemed to be dog-poo everywhere. I know quite a few people have dogs who would normally take their dogs in the car somewhere so this was the first time they had to walk where they lived you know.”

“Well we’ve had an upsurge really in the woods being trashed. A lot of littering and fires, more than we would have before but I think that’s a fairly widespread thing. I mean the beaches are all getting trashed. I don’t know people have got that, well their allowed to do things out doors”