

Co-creating spaces for supporting diverse communities to use greenspaces and the countryside

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Aims & Objectives

Chalkscapes is a landscape partnership project developed by the Chilterns Conservation Board (CCB) to inspire people to understand and care for the North Chilterns' countryside.

Diversity and inclusion are a high priority for the CCB, and the aim of the research was to co-create solutions for supporting people from minority background and/or deprived areas to use greenspace and the countryside, and to inform the next stage of the *Chalkscapes* Project.

The objectives for the research were to:

- Ascertain the **current level of engagement** with green spaces and the countryside;
- Understand the **barriers and enablers for accessing greenspaces and the countryside**;
- **Co-create sustainable, scalable activities** which overcome the identified issues/barriers.

Background

The existing evidence base highlights that people from Black Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds and/or those from deprived backgrounds are less-engaged with nature and the landscape.

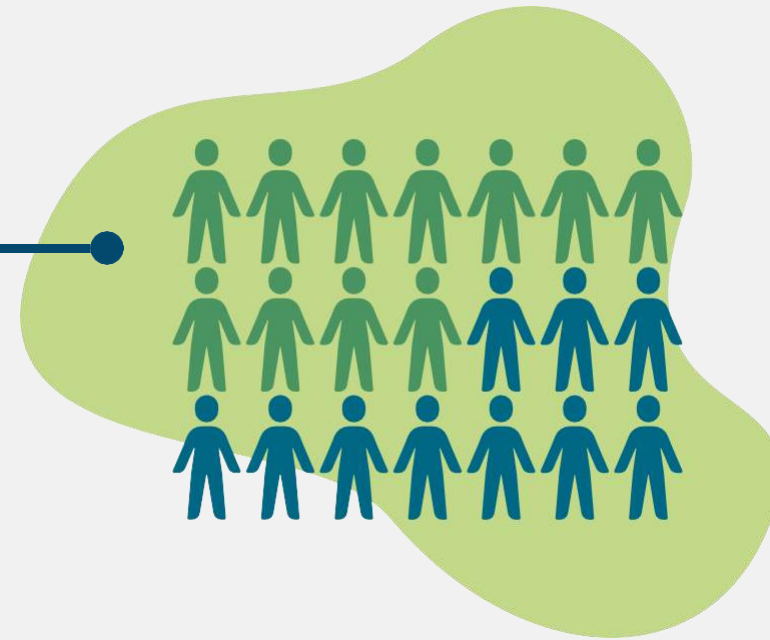


What did we do?

We used a mixed methods approach to carry out the research. The project included:

112 Participants

14 focus groups, totalling 112 participants from our communities of interest.



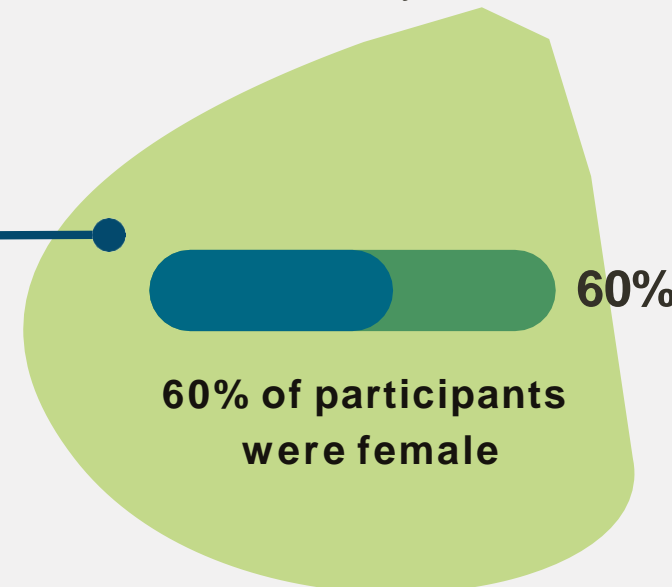
9 Interviews

9 interviews with community organisation representatives who could represent our focussed community views.



906 Questionnaires

906 people completed our community survey. 60% were female and participants were aged between 16 and 94 (avg. of 38 years.)



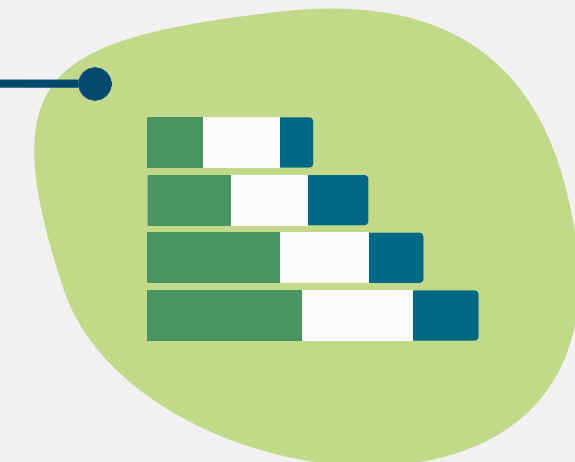
Our communities



Our communities of interest were people who self-identify as Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Indian, Black African, Black Caribbean, Polish, Romanian, Roma Gypsy Travellers, white Irish and white British communities and reflected, self-ascribed identities, generational, gender, linguistic, national and social class differences.

Where and when

Data collection was carried out between March and September 2022 and focus group discussions and interviews were conducted face-to-face or using Zoom.



Supporting details

Ethical approval was obtained from the University of Bedfordshire (UoB) Ethics Committee.

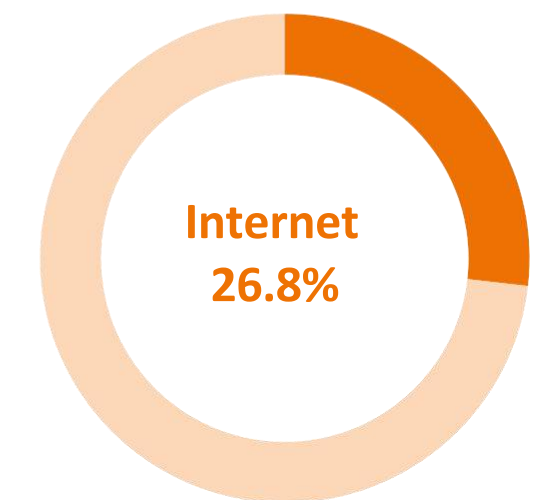
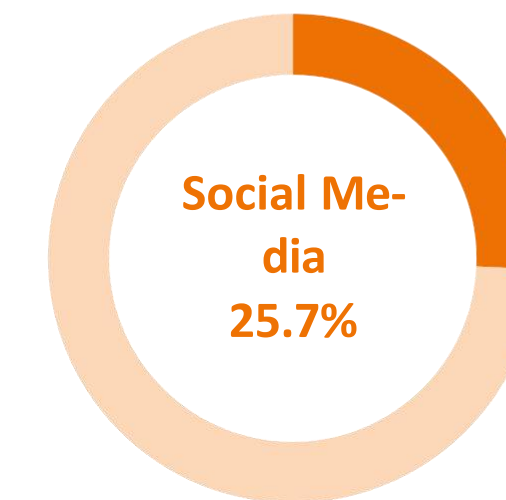
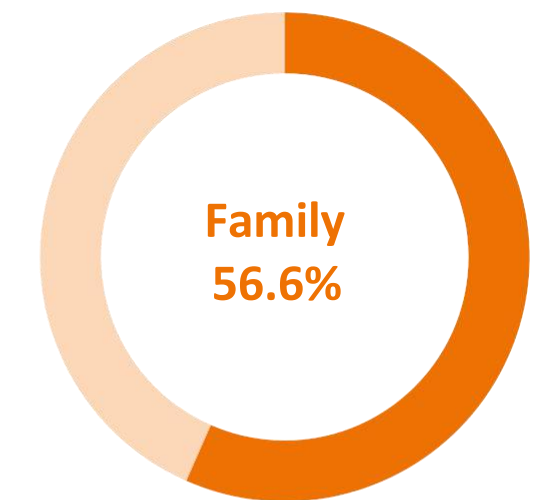
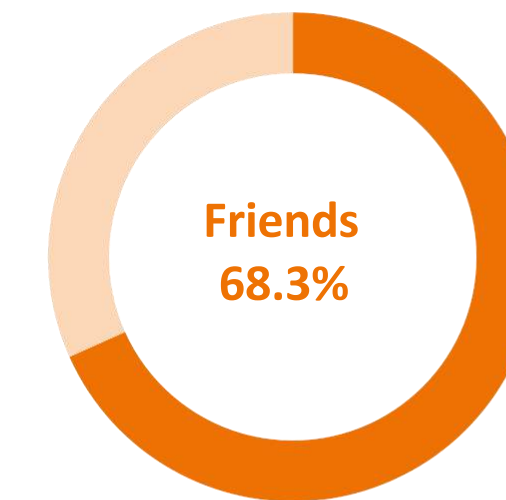
✕ Barriers

○ Limited awareness about greenspaces and the Chilterns countryside

👉 *How familiar are you with greenspaces around where you live?*

- Younger participants (aged 16-30 years) were significantly more aware of greenspaces around them compared to older participants aged 65 years+.
- Participants who were from more deprived communities were significantly less likely to be aware of greenspaces around them, when compared to those from more affluent neighbourhoods.
- Participants who had a disability were shown to be less aware of greenspaces around them, compared to those with no disclosed disability.

How did you find out about the green spaces you use?



✕ Barriers

○ Lack of essential facilities in greenspaces and the Chilterns countryside

...I'd rather drive up to somewhere like Stockwood Park than to go Wardown Park because Wardown Park, the facilities especially things like toilet facilities, things like that are not very good there...we'll go somewhere like Stockwood Park, you can go into the discovery centre, and you know the facilities are clean and better. So, things like that do play a part in terms of where to go, when to go.

(P6-male Pakistani, FG1)



✕ Barriers

- **Ability to travel to greenspaces and the Chilterns countryside**
 - Older participants (aged 65 years and older) had significantly less physical opportunity to use greenspaces compared to younger participants.
 - Those from the most deprived neighbourhoods had significantly less physical opportunity to access greenspaces.
 - White British participants had the highest physical opportunity, significantly higher compared to white 'other', Pakistani, black African and Asian 'other' ethnic groups.
 - Those with a disability or caring for someone with a disability had significantly lower levels of physical opportunity to use greenspaces.



✕ Barriers

- Concerns about racism and discrimination in greenspaces and the Chilterns countryside

More than see it (racism) you feel it... you go there...looks, all that lot, understand. Nobody's blatantly saying [anything] to you but as I said you can feel it, you can sense it, that you are not really wanted here.

(P2-male Pakistani, FG1)



✕ Barriers

- Concerns about health, and safety in greenspaces and the Chilterns countryside

Even as a man, you do (referring to fearing to go to greenspaces at night).

(P5- male Romanian, FG6)



✕ Barriers

○ Anxiety of unleashed dogs

I think, I think if they are covering, they may fear about being attacked and stuff.

(P4-female Pakistani, FG2)





Recommendations

- Increase awareness about greenspaces and the Chilterns countryside
- Improve information on the availability of essential facilities in greenspaces and the Chilterns countryside
- Provide organised subsidised trips to increase access to greenspaces and the Chilterns countryside
- Reduce concerns about racism and discrimination and health, and safety in greenspaces and the Chilterns countryside
- Have clearly signposted areas for dog walking



CTOP 4 Access to Greenspaces and the Chilterns Countryside

- Collaborate with communities to **increase** information and awareness about greenspaces and the countryside.
- Collaborate with communities to increase community **access** and **support** to access the countryside by organising guided walks and countryside trips.
- Collaborate with communities improve **representation** of diversity in publicity about greenspaces and the countryside to reduce discrimination.
- **Evaluate** CTOP 4 Access to greenspaces and the Chilterns countryside.

