



## Life after lockdown

Have our individual experiences during lockdown changed how we feel about the natural world and how we should approach the recovery phase? At Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust (GWT) we want to contribute to discussions about the priorities for investment in recovery in Gloucestershire, where the natural world is at stake.

We set out to find the answers to these questions and hoped to give people in Gloucestershire a voice, by creating a survey. We're delighted to report that 1,200 people completed the survey and while they cannot represent everyone in the county, this does represent the voices of people who are enthusiastically concerned for nature.

The survey was distributed online for six weeks via social media, and asked people to share their experiences during lockdown, how their behaviours might change in the future, key concerns for nature and the priorities for local and national authorities.

Between 28 May and 10 July 2020 a total of 1,201 people responded, of which 70% are members of GWT and 42% have children.



**“I am likely to stay at home more and enjoy my garden and immediate surroundings rather than dashing off all over the place every weekend.”**

**68%**  
were  
willing to make  
more journeys  
on foot

**62%**  
want councils to  
do more to tackle  
the nature and  
climate crises

### What changes do people want to see in Gloucestershire?

During lockdown 74% of respondents spent more time in nature, many citing an improvement to their physical or mental health as a result. More than half of respondents are planning to spend more time outdoors with friends and family during the recovery period. Following lockdown, people were also more likely to buy wildlife-friendly food and 68% were willing to make more journeys on foot.

The responses demonstrate significant concern for the future of Gloucestershire's nature. The top worries were the loss of nature to housing and roads (86%) and insufficient wildlife-friendly farming and food production (82%). There is a strong feeling that local and national authorities need to show stronger leadership and have plans to combat our nature crisis and create more wild areas.

Tackling the climate and ecological emergencies was overwhelmingly the top priority for the post-covid recovery, with 85% rating it as a high priority compared to 65% for social issues and 21% for economic growth.





**51%**  
said they wanted  
to buy more  
wildlife-friendly  
produce

**"Our wildlife organisations need to work with farmers and government to ensure environmentally friendly farming practices become the norm."**

**"I would love to cycle but lack of good, safe cycle lanes in Cheltenham stops me."**

### **What behaviours are people keen to change?**

There was a significant desire to reduce car use in the county, with 53% of respondents saying they would and many more saying they would choose to if public transport and active transport infrastructure was better. Some people highlighted that continued home working would help with this.

51% said they wanted to buy more local, wildlife-friendly produce and 40% said they wanted to create a new wildlife space in a garden or local green space.

During lockdown 46% of respondents discovered new local green spaces and over a third wanted further investment in parks and local green spaces.

### **Build back better, build back greener**

GWT will be using the results of this survey to feed into plans in the county to build back better after COVID-19.

We want to see all new housing developments meet our Building with Nature standard and new green spaces created close to where people live, so that more people can enjoy the benefits of nature that have been so important during lockdown.

We want to convince decision makers to back a green recovery, invest in natural solutions to tackle climate change, and devote 30% of land for nature's recovery. If you agree, write to your MP with this survey and let them know how the nature and climate crises need to be at the heart of decision making about the future.

### **What should be the priorities for local and national authorities?**

The top change saw 62% of people wanting councils to have plans and targets to reduce pollution and combat our climate and nature crises. 57% said councils should leave wilder areas in parks and on roadside verges and 56% of people wanted more space in our county dedicated for nature's recovery.

**53%**  
said they would  
reduce their  
car use

**"I would hope that promoting economic growth and tackling climate change are not mutually exclusive. This should be treated as a win-win. The economic impacts of not protecting the environment should also be given greater precedence, as should the benefits of the natural world on mental health."**