



Technical Appendix 13.1: Ochil Hills Recreation Usage Survey

Windburn Wind Farm

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Windburn: Ochil Hills Recreation Usage Survey 2023

December 2023

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Windburn: Ochil Hills Recreation Usage Survey 2023

The purpose of this survey is to understand better how the Ochil Hills, which straddle an area of Clackmannanshire, Perth and Kinross and Stirling in central Scotland, are used for recreational purposes. This could include, and not limited to, general exercise, wellbeing, or nature investigation.

The basic aim of the survey is to gain an understanding how often the Ochil Hills are used and by how many.

As a biproduct it will also aims to provide a greater understanding on what people's general perceptions are regarding the wind turbines that can already be seen from a number of the key recreational routes.

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The Numbers: - data integrity

Baseline Count data that forms the backbone and the calibration tool for mobile cell-tower data is generated by installing fixed automatic people counters at numerous locations, in this case 11 key locations were identified as master tramways (routes) chosen jointly by ourselves (Parklife) using collected Cell-phone data and the experience of Karen Hencoop, a local countryside ranger with many years of experience of the Ochil's both professionally for her work but also living within the boundaries of the data collection area.

Physical data collection: At the heart of the physical counting solution is a sophisticated Pyro sensor, its passive-infrared technology & precision lens, provide accurate data readings in the capacity of shape & thermal (radiation) signature, that naturally emit from different object categories such as walkers, cyclists, or vehicle.

Mobile/cell phone Location analytics is a hardware-free footfall analysis tool, by accessing publicly and freely available data from Google, Facebook & Foursquare through a search-link (API) "Application Programming Interface" that enables researchers to obtain current and, in many cases, historic occupancies of a given Longitude & Latitude.

To form the baseline to enable the practical use of historic cell phone location data, 90 days of physical data was recorded at 11 key points.

This has enabled, a degree of accuracy, delivering a ±5% variance either side of true, for the extrapolation modelling of a timeline of recreational usage from December 2020 to November 2023 - Further back and the data becomes unreliable.

The Locations for the deployment of the fixed automatic people counters, were identified with the assistance and advice from the local countryside ranger, and were as follows:

- 1. Blackford to Tillicoultry Path South Side
- 2. Dumyat Serifmere road
- 3. Bridge at top of Mill Glen
- 4. Hill Path to Tillicoultry, Blackford Side of Hill
- 5. Lower Glendevon Reservoir
- 6. Menstrie: top of path near plantation
- 7. Dollar: path along-side Burn of Care trail to Glendevon
- 8. Nenit Path
- 9. Menstrie: Jerah Path
- 10. Alva Glen Path
- 11. Glendevon Reservoir next to Turbines

These locations are illustrated in Figure 13.1.1 (appended to this report).

Locations selected along these trails were to be between 20 and 40 minutes walk from the point of origin (carparking or drop off area), and in many cases greater than 40 minutes' walk. An exception was the Dumyat set off point which was 6-7 minutes, this was due to possible restrictions of the landowner on placement of the counter.

The reasoning behind the greater distance from set off points was to better understand the numbers of people that use the Ochil hills for recreation and not just people walking dogs at the lower paths, where there is generally no or limited visibility of the existing wind turbines.

Data modelling.

As part of the data collection process, we have used historic and freely available cell phone data to allow a comparison of the numbers of recreational users of the Ochil hills against the data provided by the automatic installed fixed people counters. This allows us to calibrate the cell phone data against a known and fixed number: for example, if the cell phone data tells us there are 200 people at reference point (A) and the fixed people counters record 180 people at reference point (A), then there is a discrepancy of 10%, so any cell phone data used within the reporting is reduced by 10%.

In short; by implementing the cell phone data overlay and using physical data collected from the people counters deployed, it means that the compiled data is of an accuracy level of ±5% for the purpose of this survey.

Predicting the future.

Under normal circumstances it would be possible to use long term historic cell phone data sets to predict future growth or decline in recreational users of the Ochil Hills. To do this would normally require looking at long periods of data (typically 5 or more years) in addition to other relevant current data sets available, such as population change and the demographics of that population. Which in turn are some of the data sets openly available that we would observe and collect to help understand the influences that predict change going forward.

However, we have determined that external global influences and circumstance that have been observed over the last 5 years or more, have rendered a typical predictive model unstable. These influences include, but are not limited to, the Covid 19 pandemic. This has influenced the normal future prediction modelling to a point that this data is too unstable to use.

Cell phone data

The use of cell phone data in the manner outlined above is unaffected by GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation¹) concerns, as the data collected cannot identify an individual.

Physical Data recorded and collected.

Table 1 below illustrates the results of a 90-day physical counting exercise (using fixed people counters) at the 11 fixed points of measurement mentioned above and shown on Figure 13.1.1. Table 1 shows the number of people that the fixed people counters recorded each month (from September 2023 to November 2023).

Whilst the data in Table 1 is displayed as a single month the data granularity, for the extrapolation comparison modelling was available in single hourly breakdowns.

¹ Note: a greater understanding of GDPR can be accessed via the following link https://www.wired.co.uk/article/what-is-gdpr-uk-eu-legislation-compliance-summary-fines-2018

Table 1: Recorded Physical Data

People Counter Location	No. of People Counted						
	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23				
Blackford to Tillicoultry Path South Side	1621	1252	1002				
Dumyat Serifmere road	11407	7821	8708				
Bridge at top of Mill Glen	1035	886	817				
Hill Path to Tillicoultry, Blackford Side of Hill	1564	1198	1340				
Lower Glendevon reservoir lake	336	202	376				
Menstrie: top of path near plantation	2229	1761	1879				
Dollar: path alongside care trail to Glendevon	1535	1260	1166				
Nenit Path	858	1137	887				
Menstrie: Jerah Path	2879	3571	2895				
Alva Glen Path	3184	1919	1050				
Glendevon Reservoir next to Turbines	441	196	129				
TOTALS PER MONTH	27089	21203	20249				

Note: Dumyat area, in particularly the Serifmere road start off point is recorded as the most popular set of point of all the fixed measurement points, this is considered likely to be due to the ease of parking nearby, and gentle slopes which has been seen as low impact walking.

Recreational Survey Usage of the Ochil Hills: Recreational User Count Data: - December 2020 through to November 2023

The data (count) presented in Table 2 below, shows the number of users (recreational) by location and time; for a period of three years, whilst the data is displayed in monthly breakdowns, the data has been collected and collated from hourly and daily increment.

The data, in Table 2, shown in bold black, is the physically collected data from the fixed people counters, whilst all other data shown (i.e. from December 2020 to August 2023) is freely available anonymised cell phone data.

The data, in Table 2, shown in blue (i.e. from January 2021 to June 2021), corresponds to a period of strict COVID restrictions.

Table 2: Month by Month Count Data over a Three-year Period

	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	12 month Period
Blackford to Tillicoultry Path South Side	777	621	645	1004	1628	1761	1780	2029	2301	1621	1252	1002	16421
Dumyat Serifmere road	7202	6623	6720	8056	9671	12201	14872	15240	13045	11407	7821	8708	121566
Bridge at top of Mill Glen	602	825	803	872	908	1201	1403	1509	1242	1035	886	817	12103
Hill Path to Tillicoultry, Blackford Side of Hill	1145	1171	1201	1281	1328	1302	1638	1921	1781	1564	1198	1340	16870
Lower Glendevon reservoir lake	255	238	179	222	281	325	405	392	493	336	202	376	3704
Menstrie: top of path near plantation	1403	1522	1598	1648	1721	2001	2381	3047	3391	2229	1761	1879	24581
Dollar: path alongside care trail to Glendevon	823	682	902	805	1217	1509	1484	1832	1762	1535	1260	1166	14977
Nenit Path	711	679	823	924	1162	1262	1687	1508	1250	858	1137	887	12888
Menstrie: Jerah Path	1821	2132	1821	1433	1967	2521	2614	3215	3803	2879	3571	2895	30672
Alva Glen Path	756	1101	1403	1571	1972	2126	2341	2908	2975	3184	1919	1050	23306
Glendevon Reservoir next to Turbines	106	57	128	290	412	375	553	821	802	441	196	129	4310
TOTALS PER MONTH	15601	15651	16223	18106	22267	26584	31158	34422	32845	27089	21203	20249	281398
													12 month
	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Period
Blackford to Tillicoultry Path South Side	752	646	671	1044	1252	1458	1851	2239	2189	1686	1302	1042	16132
Dumyat Serifmere road	7490	6888	6989	8378	10058	12689	15467	15820	30910	11863	8134	9056	143743
Bridge at top of Mill Glen	626	858	835	907	944	1249	1459	1790	1524	1076	921	850	13040
Hill Path to Tillicoultry, Blackford Side of Hill	1191	1218	1249	1332	1381	1354	1704	2402	1852	1627	1246	1394	17949
Lower Glendevon reservoir lake	265	248	186	231	292	338	421	692	513	349	210	391	4136
Menstrie: top of path near plantation	1459	1583	1662	1714	1790	2081	2476	4182	3226	2318	1831	1954	26277
Dollar: path alongside care trail to Glendevon	856	709	938	837	1266	1569	1543	1482	1720	1596	1310	1213	15040
Nenit Path	739	706	856	961	1208	1312	1754	1274	1378	892	1182	922	13187
Menstrie: Jerah Path	1894	2217	1894	1490	2046	2622	2719	3770	4161	2784	3714	3011	32321
Alva Glen Path	786	1145	1459	1634	2040	2022	2435	3870	3167	3311	1996	1092	25157
	85	-				390			953				
Glendevon Reservoir next to Turbines TOTALS PER MONTH	16144	16282	106 16845	239 18768	428 22717	27274	575 32404	1484 39005	51592	459 27962	245 22092	134 21059	5163 312145
TOTALS PER MONTH	16144	16282	16845	18/68	22/1/	2/2/4	32404	39005	51592	2/962	22092	21059	312145
	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	12 month Period
Blackford to Tillicoultry Path South Side	702	710	738	1204	1125	1605	1821	1969	2255	1589	1227	982	15927
Dumyat Serifmere road	6928	7087	7190	9021	7652	13055	1541	14935	12784	11179	7665	8534	107571
Bridge at top of Mill Glen	509	883	859	1023	621	958	1501	1479	1217	1014	868	801	11733
Hill Path to Tillicoultry, Blackford Side of Hill	1111	1253	1285	1432	1421	1393	1753	1883	1745	1533	1174	1313	17296
Lower Glendevon reservoir lake	205	255	192	399	301	348	433	384	452	329	201	409	3907
Menstrie: top of path near plantation	1409	1629	1710	1821	1412	2007	2421	2986	3323	2184	1726	1841	24469
Dollar: path alongside care trail to Glendevon	901	730	965	962	1201	1522	1588	1795	1727	1504	1235	1143	15273
Nenit Path	719	727	881	1210	1201	1031	1805	1478	1225	841	1114	869	13100
Menstrie: Jerah Path	1492	2281	1948	1724	2018	2234	2797	3151	3727	2821	2725	2837	29756
Alva Glen Path	552	1178	1501	231	1832	1925	2505	2850	2842	3120	1881	1029	21446
Glendevon Reservoir next to Turbines	118	66	109	1302	336	442	592	709	785	482	169	175	5285
TOTALS PER MONTH	14646	16797	17379	20329	19120	26520	18757	33619	32083	26597	19984	19933	265763

Conclusion of the Recorded Usage of the Ochil Hills for Recreational Purposes: Count Data.

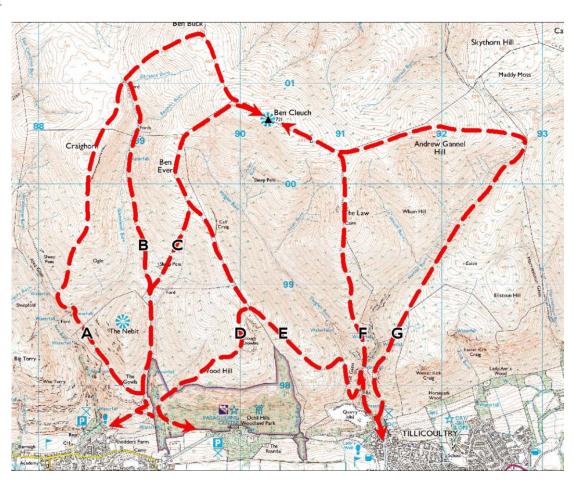
From December 2020 to November 2023 there was a sustained growth in numbers of users within the Ochil Hills by almost 6%. This number is very slightly below the national average² of the recorded growth in recreational figures seen by Parklife Monitoring across 22 other locations.

However, the growth in users seen between December 2020 and November 2022 (end of most pandemic restrictions) was recorded at 17.5%, well above the figures Parklife Monitoring have seen at other locations - some 4% more on average.

Previous Survey: In 2006 a survey of recreational use of the Ochil Hills was carried out and submitted as part of the Burnfoot Hill Wind Farm Environmental Statement. Whilst there have been some differences in approach and methodology of data collection between the 2006 survey and this 2023 survey, there is still an area of the Ochil Hills where direct comparisons in the numbers of recreational users can be made.

Plate 1 below shows the primary routes (numbered A to G) of the 2006 survey of recreational uses of the Ochil Hills.

Plate 1



The 2006 survey, using fixed counters and manual count surveys, approximated 22,073 recreational users travelled trails A to G (shown in Plate 1). However, the 2023 survey, using fixed counters and cell phone data, recorded 32,445 recreational users across a similar area.

If we take in to account the previous limited area survey results taken in 2006 and limit the 2023 data collected to the corresponding areas, we see a growth over 17 years of approximately 47%.

² National average recorded over that period averages out at 32%. Reference data for this growth or decline percentage comes from multiple source, ranging from 21%-51%. This national percentage of growth has been drawn from installed automated people counters and manually recorded site surveys at over 120 location across the UK.

Plate 2



When the data is overlaid with available weather data for the area, this, whilst influencing a single day does not appear to influence recreational users on the whole. During our survey we observed that the majority of users consider themselves local to the area. (Caveat: survey was taken in September 2023, past the normal holiday maker period and after most Scottish schools had returned).

However, we can clearly see the influence of coming out of the final lockdown (Covid 19) July 2021.

The Questionnaire Survey

In addition to the physical people counters that were placed at 11 locations in the Ochil Hills, a questionnaire survey was also carried out to get more detailed information from people using the Ochil Hills.

The questionnaire survey was simple in design and had a limited number of questions. This was to gain engagement of recreational users of the Ochil Hills, rather than hamper their journeys or provoke long responses.

The questionnaire surveys were carried out over 3 weeks in September 2023 for a total of 6 days.

Questionnaire Survey Dates

Questionnaire surveys were carried out on the 7th & 8th September 2023 (being a Thursday & Friday), the 16th & 17th September 2023 (being a Saturday & Sunday), and the 25th & 26th September 2023 (being a Monday & Tuesday).

Questionnaire Survey Locations

The following locations were where questionnaire surveys were undertaken:

- Blackford to Tillicoultry path south side;
- Menstrie Jerah path;
- Nenit Path;
- Menstrie at the top near the new plantation; and
- Dollar path alongside the care trail to Glendevon.

Key Questions

Key questions forming the survey included; Gender, Age, Local or Not, Start & End point of their journey, why they were there, frequency of visit, group size, improvements wanted, if any and thoughts on the existing Wind Turbine projects.

Wind2 Ochil's Walkers - Recreation Survey
Basic Information Male Female Non-Binary Age Range 18 or under 18 -30 30-45 45-65 65 + Local Visitor CAN I ASK IF YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF LOCAL OR A VISITOR TO THIS AREA?
WHERE DID YOU START YOUR WALK TODAY AND WHERE WILL YOUR WALK FINISH? START FINISH
HOW FREQUENTLY DO YOU WALK THIS PART OF THE OCHILS? HOW MANY TIMES PER YEAR?
WHY HAVE YOU CHOSEN TO WALK IN THE OCHILS TODAY? Recreation Exercise Nature Other
ARE YOU PART OF A GROUP, AND IF SO, HOW MANY PEOPLE? < 2 > 2 < 4 > 8 > 8
ARE THERE ANY IMPROVEMENTS YOU WOULD LIKE MADE TO HILL WALKING IN THE OCHIL'S BETTER CONNECTIVITY BETWEEN SETTLEMENTS IMPROVEMENT TO EXISTING PATHS MORE SIGNAGE MORE BINS MORE PATHS OTHER See below
WHAT ARE YOUR VIEWS ON THE PRESENCE OF WIND TURBINES IN THE OCHILS? Good Bad Neither Other Park
Life Activity in the great outdoors Copies of this survey can be made available by email info@parklifemonitoring.com info@parklifemonitoring.com

Questionnaire Survey Sample Size

A total of 86 people were interviewed as part of the survey and their answers and views recorded. Out of the 86 returned, 3 of these were not available for use as they had been defaced due to wet weather which left them unreadable.

Questionnaire Survey Results

Users:

Female 41% Male 59% those identifying as non-binary 0%

Age range:

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(Under 18) 11% (18-30) 27.5% (30-45) 20.5% (45-65) 20.5% (65+) 20.5%
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Local or visitor to the areas: (local was determined as within 10 miles and lived in the areas for more than 9 months of the year)

Local 89% Visitor 11%

Frequency of visit per annum:

Under (2) 2.5% (2-4) 6% (4-8) 30% More than (8) 61.5%

Reason for visit:

Recreation 66% Exercise 31% Nature 12% Other 1%

Group Size:

(Single) 67% (2-4) 18% (4-8) 14% (more than 8) 1% (average group size recorded was 1.63)

Improvement which those surveyed would like to see:

(Improvement to existing trails) 41% (increased Signage) 38% (More Bins) 12% (More trails) 4%

(Other) 5% The other in this case(s) was more seating places

Journey findings:

Start Point/End Point: (52% of the walkers start and end point was the same) seen as low as the majority of surveyed were local.

Start Point/End Point: (32% of the walkers start and end point was within 4-5 miles of their start point).

Start Point/End Point: (16% of the walker start and end point was greater than 4-5 miles of their start point).

Note 1: The most popular start of point record during the survey was Tillicoultry and then Menstrie this may be inherent of available parking at start off point.

Note 2: As the surveying party typically collected data 20-40 minutes' walk from a known start off point and in September when holiday makers are few when compared to the main summer season, the survey data tends to reflect the more determined recreational user of the Ochil Hills.

Views on the presence of the Wind Turbines in the Ochil Hills:

Simple answer: (Good) 46% (Bad) 16% (Neither) 38%

Most people had a view on wind turbines, in the main they considered that there was a need to have them, although several respondents did not necessarily want to have them. However very few people wanted them gone and, in several cases, thought more would benefit all in the longer term.

All comments given by the individuals surveyed have been recorded and are listed (anonymously) as follows:

- 1 Visually unappealing
- 2 Good for the environment
- 3 None
- 4 Needed, can't live off fossil fuels forever
- 5 No Comment
- 6 Keen Walker, kind of like them
- 7 Wind Power Better than Nuclear
- 8 Don't really notice them
- 9 Don't like them, but what else is there
- 10 They're unsightly and make too much noise
- 11 We need more energy, so we must do what we must do
- 12 We need to be independent of oil
- 13 Don't like the mountain bikers that use the tracks
- 14 We need more power, so therefore more Turbines, so it's a must
- 15 Need green Energy
- 16 Green Energy Needed, don't mind them visually
- 17 Needed to reduce carbon
- 18 Hate them with a passion
- 19 Unsightly and noisy
- 20 Unsightly and noisy, want more offshore turbines
- 21 We need them, but I don't like the look. But saving the planet more important
- 22 Ugly, not good for the birds, but properly needed
- 23 Good for the environment
- 24 Helps reduce dependence on Fossil fuels, not sure it helps the wildlife though
- 25 Don't mind them, they have got to go somewhere
- 26 As good as any place to have them
- 27 Reduces Fossil fuels, so thumbs up
- 28 Good for us (3)
- 29 Lots of wind farms around, used to them
- 30 Good for the environment
- 31 They have-to go somewhere
- 32 Needed but ugly
- 33 Bad for the view, good for energy
- 34 Not Pretty
- 35 Needed but there are a lot in the Ochil's
- 36 Needed but not good for the wildlife
- 37 Don't mind them, needed to help the environment
- 38 Help tackle climate change, good for navigation
- 39 Need to go somewhere, Ochil's as good as any
- 40 Don't mind them, used to them now
- 41 Need to reduce CO2 not sure, but I think there bad for birds

- 42 Not Fussed
- 43 I like them, great for the planet
- 44 I used to hate them, but they just don't bother me now
- 45 When I see them, I know I am near home, a sort of landmark
- 46 I do not like them, but if it helps the grandchildren from the need to fear nuclear
- 47 Very ugly and spoil the view
- 49 Climate change is the problem not wind turbines
- 50 It's only a moron that can object to energy without consequence
- 51 The noise is unbearable at night
- 52 Don't care, don't notice them
- 53 My kids like to look at them
- 54 Changes must be made
- 55 Ugly, not good for the birds, but probably needed
- 56 Don't notice them anymore
- 57 Need more offshore, not anymore here it's ridiculous
- 58 Why do we need more here?
- 59 I like them, they are sort of architectural
- 60 I like to watch them they are mesmerising
- 61 If it reduces CO2 I'm all for it
- 62 Wind farms are everywhere now, can't fight them, can we?
- 63 Needed but not good for the wildlife
- 64 Don't mind them, needed to help the environment
- 65 Helps with climate change
- 66 Need to go somewhere, Ochil's as good as any
- 67 Don't mind them, used to them now
- 68 Need to reduce CO2
- 69 Not Fussed at all with them
- 70 I like them, great for the planet
- 71 I used to hate them, but they just don't bother me now that they're here
- 72 I wish there was a better way
- 73 Give me half a chance and I would knock them all down
- 74 May as well face it, we need the power, so maybe this is the best way forward
- 75 I find the noise more offending than the look
- 76 I used to dislike seeing them, but they just don't bother me now
- 77 When I see them, I know I'm almost home
- 78 I do not like them, but if it helps the grandchildren all for it
- 79 Very ugly and spoil the view when I'm out walking
- 80 They are just there, don't bother me
- 81 Climate change is the problem not wind turbines
- 82 Consequence of the past mean that we need change for the future, I'm all for them
- 83 The noise is unbearable at night

Conclusions Reached by the Writer of this Report

Visitor Numbers

From December 2020 to November 2023 there was an overall growth in numbers of recreational users of the Ochil Hills by almost 6%.

Comparative 2006 Survey:

If we take in to account the previous limited survey taken in 2006, and restrain the 2023 data collected to the areas covered previously in 2006, we see a growth in the number of recreational users of the Ochil Hills over 17 years of more than 47%.

Whilst great care has been taken to use a direct correlation against the 2006 survey, some recreational routes have changed/closed, in some instances permanently, while in others temporarily.

In addition, the original 2006 survey was limited to a smaller sample of only three fixed counting points and a smaller sample of recreational users surveyed.

The National Average:

The national average of growth in the recreational usage of hills is reported as 32%³ over the 17-year period between 2006 and 2023. This survey has found that for the Ochil Hills the growth rate is above the national average, at more than 47% between 2006 and 2023.

The national percentage of growth has been drawn from an installed base of automated people counters and manually recorded site surveys at over 120 geographical locations equal or greater in size of the surveyed area of the Ochil Hills.

Average Group Size:

The average group size observed during the 2023 survey period was 1.62 people, which falls in line with other destination walking routes observed over the last two years (data obtained from Parklife monitoring and generated from 22 locations with similar recreational usage).

Reasons for Visit to the Ochil Hills:

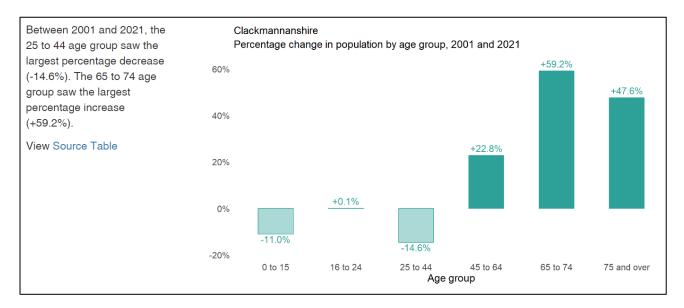
Recreation and exercise feature heavily in the questionnaire survey.

The age range is slightly tilted by the number of visitors from the local university and from the localised ageing population who, typically when asked, advised that they use the Ochill Hills as part of their exercise regime, and visit more often. See Plate 4 below from National records of Scotland⁴.

³ National average recorded over that period averages out at 32%. Reference data for this growth or decline percentage comes from multiple source, ranging from 21%-51%. This national percentage of growth has been drawn from installed automated people counters and manually recorded site surveys at over 120 location across the UK.

⁴ National Records of Scotland: https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files//statistics/council-area-data-sheets/clackmannanshire-council-profile.html

Plate 4

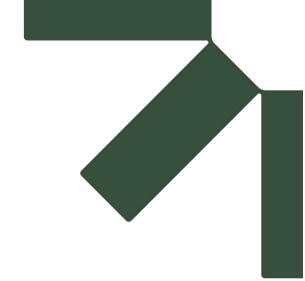


The slight majority of walks at the time of year the questionnaire survey was carried out (September 2023) consisted of less than 4 miles and ended up at the same point of start. This however is not representative when we look at cell phone data during peak summer holiday season where the distance travelled is higher.

Views on Wind Turbines:

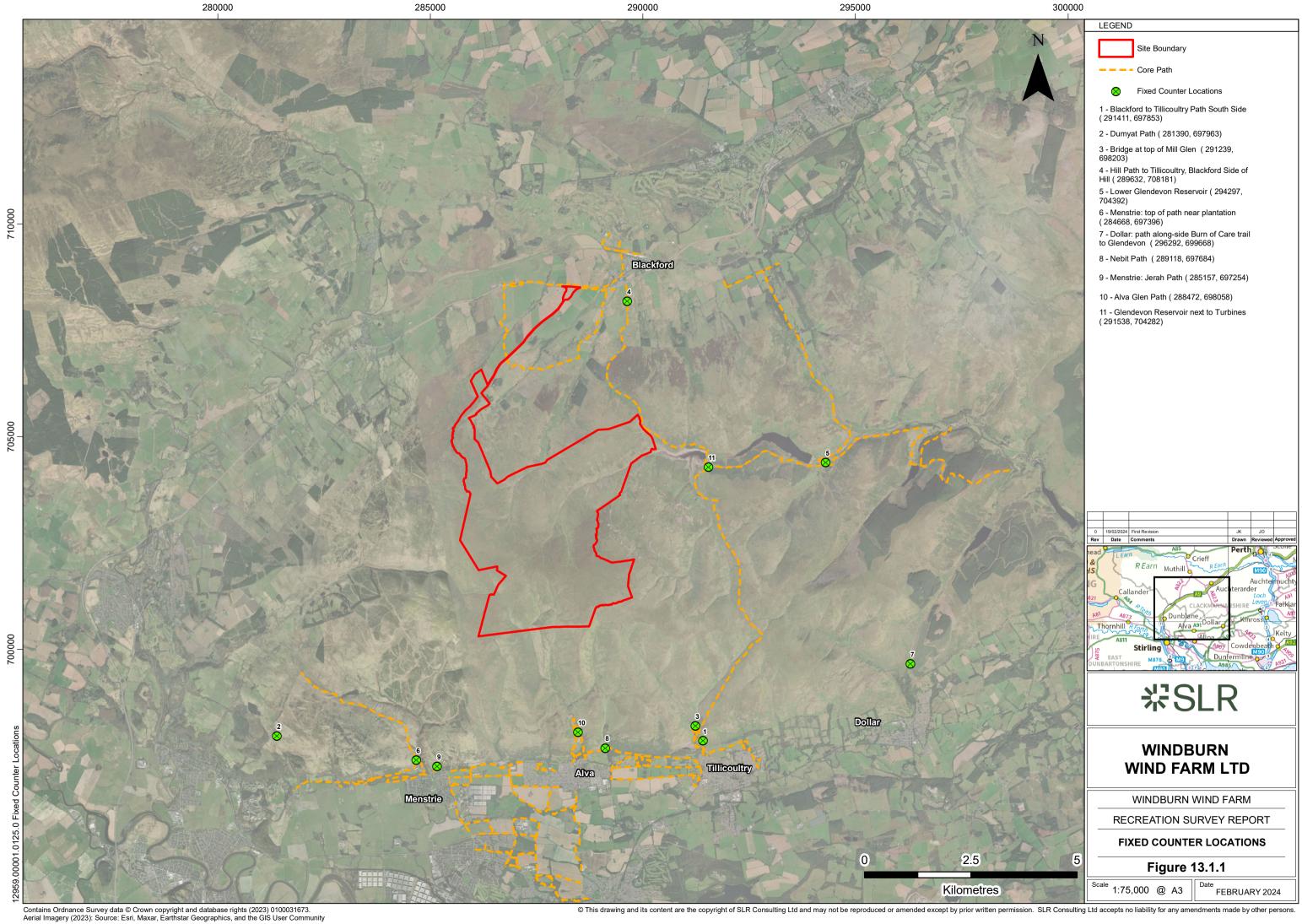
From the recreational users interviewed, most people do not object to, or mind the existence and visual appearance of the existing turbines, although there was several mentions of noise and potential effects on wildlife.

There was some apathy, to the development of wind turbines which is reflected in the survey with 38% of those surveyed giving a neither like or dislike answer, however the most common view expressed (46%) is that people thought they were good, either for the environment or to help with the reduction in dependence on fossil fuels.



Figures







Prepared for and executed for & on behalf of

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