

Suffolk County Council

Healing Woods survey – summary of results

Survey took place between 21st October and 25th November 2020

Only complete responses have been included in this summary. Where results are expressed as a % this has been rounded up or down to the nearest whole percentage.

Who responded?

There is a total of 698 responses of which 510 are complete.

88% of the responses are from individuals, with 33 (7%) on behalf of organisations. These include voluntary organisations, parish council's and health and environmental groups.

95% of responses are from residents of Suffolk, with 12% running a business in the county. 65% of respondents say they have environmental interests, and 62% say they have health and well-being interests.

When asked how they, or people they knew, had been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, 67% said it had impacted on their mental health and well-being, and 46% said it had affected their employment, income, business or education. 28% of respondents said they or someone they knew had been affected by illness or death following a positive COVID-19 test, with 29% saying they had been affected by other health issues linked to the impact of the pandemic.

Overall support for the idea of Healing Woods

91% (463) of respondents support the idea of creating Healing Woods in recognition of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Suffolk's communities, offering people the opportunity to quietly reflect in a natural setting.

When asked their MAIN reason for supporting the idea, 34% (168) say it is to provide more natural greenspace for people and 34% (171) say it is to increase tree cover and help wildlife. 19% (94) identified providing a place for reflection as their main reason, whilst the remainder (13%) either declined to choose a main reason, emphasising all were important, or suggested another reason.

3% (15) of respondents did not support the idea, with 44% (7) of those giving the main reason as there being more important things to focus on.

Where should Healing Woods be created and what should they be like?

Respondents were asked to rank the importance of different things in deciding where Healing Woods might be located and what Healing Woods should be like. The ranking was between Not Important, Important and Very Important. All percentages are of the total responses to that specific question.

67% (327) feel it is important or very important that Healing Woods are located close to communities that have been affected by the pandemic, whilst 92% (453) feel it is important or very important that they should be distributed across Suffolk close to where people live.

95% (462) feel it is important or very important that Healing Woods are easy for people to reach on foot or bicycle, whilst 97% (476) feel they should be accessible to people with limited or restricted mobility.

84% (403) feel it is important or very important that Healing Woods are predominantly (80%) new or existing woodland, with 96% (473) saying it is important or very important that they have a mixture of trees, natural features and other habitats.

68% (326) feel it is important or very important that Healing Woods are only accessible to people on foot (or with mobility aids). 70% feel it is important or very important that they are large enough to allow for a range of uses, with 87% (428) saying it is important or very important they are managed for other benefits, such as education or carbon capture.

How should Healing Woods be created and who should be involved?

Respondents were asked to rank the importance of different things in deciding how Healing Woods might be created and who should be involved in doing so. The ranking was between Not Important, Important and Very Important. All percentages are of the total responses to that specific question.

100% (491) feel it is important or very important that Healing Woods are created on a permanent basis, but 50% (241) did not feel it is important that they are only created on publicly owned land.

71% (350) feel it is important or very important that there is evidence of local support for their creation, with 80% (389) saying that it is important or very important that there is local stakeholder/ community commitment to this.

62% (259) feel it is important or very important to take an opportunistic rather than a targeted approach, with 60% (289) saying it is important or very important to focus on establishing a couple of exemplar sites.

75% (366) feel it is important or very important that Healing Woods aim to be financially self-supporting over time.

Next steps

Suffolk County Council will be using the results of the survey to help inform the development of plans with interested parties for the creation of Healing Woods in Suffolk from 2021.

Suffolk County Council

December 2020