

**Trywydd** Iach

Cysylltu pobl â'r awyr agored

**Outdoor** Health

Connecting people with the outdoors

# **Trywydd Iach – Outdoor Health School Survey Machynlleth, July 2021**

**Report by Dr N. Simons, Arfon Hughes & Sian Davies**

**July 2021**



## Table of Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Introduction .....  | 3  |
| Method .....  | 3  |
| Sample group .....  | 4  |
| Results – Active Travel .....   | 5  |
| Conclusions – Active Travel.....  | 7  |
| Results – Outdoor Activities.....   | 8  |
| Key Findings .....  | 8  |
| What type of Activities Interest Young People? .....                            | 9  |
| Preferred activities per year group .....                                       | 10 |
| Preferred Activities by Gender.....   | 11 |
| What other Activities are young people interested in?.....                      | 12 |
| What creative ideas have young people got for new places for young people?..... | 13 |
| What barriers do young people face that might stop them from taking part?.....  | 14 |
| What do young people consider to be the benefit of increased activities?.....   | 14 |
| What type of health issues do young people have?.....                           | 15 |
| Conclusions – Outdoor Activities .....  | 15 |

## Introduction

Trywydd Iach – Outdoor Health Project is a partnership project led by Eco Dyfi and Coed LLeol with funding from the Big Lottery Fund. The project aims to streamline social prescribing to outdoor health and explore ways to improve Active Travel<sup>1</sup> in the Dyfi Valley area.

The Dyfi Valley area holds an abundance of green spaces but not all are accessible to the wider community or used for organised activities that bring people together for learning, physical health and wellbeing. The Trywydd Iach project works with GP surgeries, health professionals and outdoor health activity specialists to identify accessible areas and support people living in the Dyfi Valley to access and take part in a variety of outdoor health activities. The activities include walking groups, animal-assisted therapy, woodland activity groups, gardening groups and outdoor Qi Gong.

Trywydd Iach is keen to work with people of all ages in the Dyfi Valley area to provide outdoor activities that reflect community needs. Pre-teens and Teenagers are a key target group that are often harder to engage. Consultation with this group is vital to understand their needs, target suitable activities and address any barriers that this age group might face. The report summarises a consultation survey distributed to a sample of 164 eleven- to fifteen-year-olds from a school in Machynlleth (Welsh-medium and English medium)

## Method

A paper survey, available in English or Welsh, was distributed to one class from each year group in Ysgol Bro Hyddgen. 164 young people completed the survey. 35% completed the survey in Welsh and 65% in English. Data was transferred and analysed using Excel.

The aim of the survey was:

### Active Travel

- To establish current levels of active travel to and from school
- To explore any barriers young people face around transport/active travel.

### Outdoor health Activities

- To examine which outdoor activities interest young people (11-15 years)
- To explore whether young people would like to be more involved in outdoor activities
- To establish whether the young people feel that there is enough to do in Machynlleth and surrounding areas
- To explore any barriers young people might face in joining outdoor activities
- To examine what benefits young people might see in taking part in outdoor health activities

---

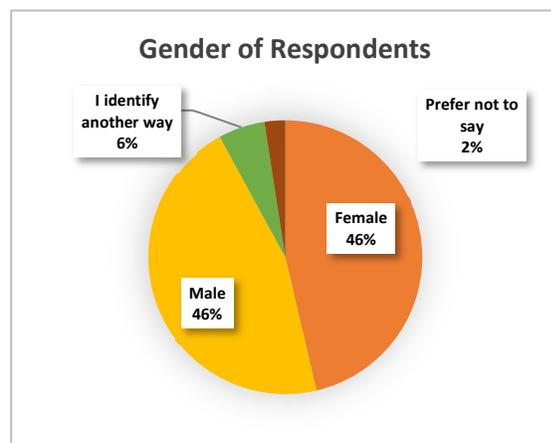
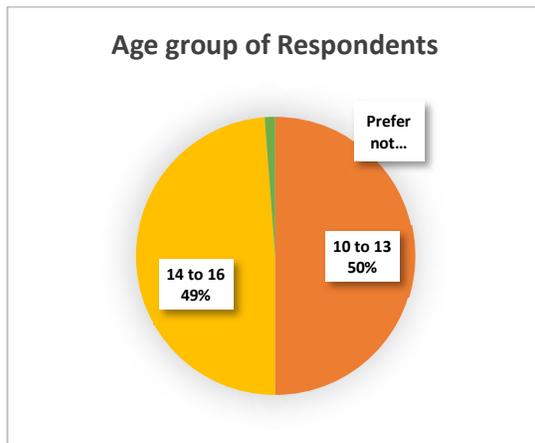
<sup>1</sup> Active Travel is any means of travel that includes physical activity – ie. Walking, cycling, horse riding, running and jogging

## Sample group

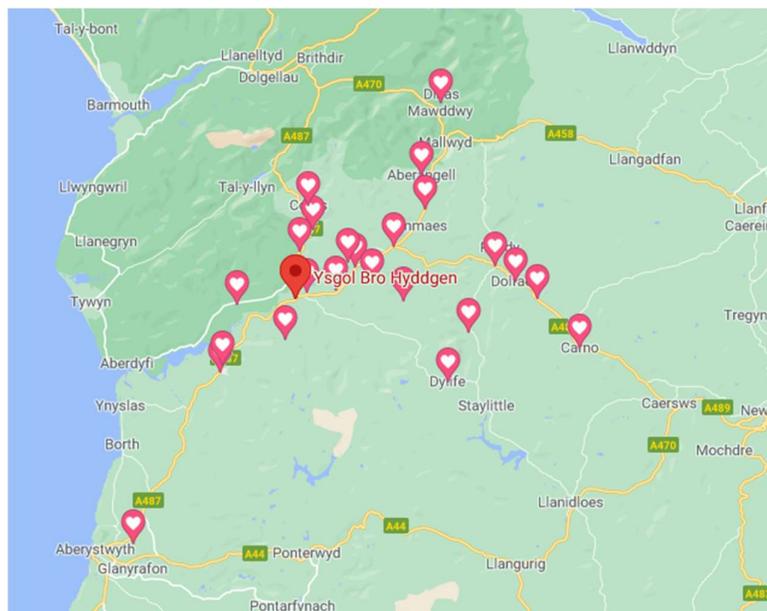
### Year Group & Age

The sample group had an even spread by year groups and genders. The number collected represents a good sample from the whole school population of 470 (confidence level 95%, Margin of Error 6%). The table and charts below illustrate the sample group for the survey.

| Year group | Number of responses per group |
|------------|-------------------------------|
| Year 7     | 28%                           |
| Year 8     | 20%                           |
| Year 9     | 27%                           |
| Year 10    | 25%                           |

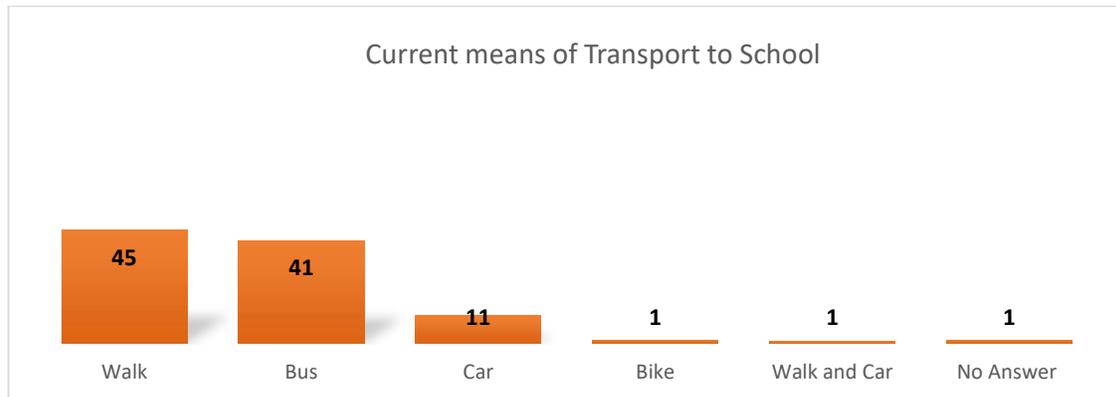


The young people who responded to the survey came from both urban and rural areas. Just under half (48%) live in Machynlleth. 66% live in Machynlleth or the surrounding area (5 miles or under). 34% of the young people who responded to the survey live over 5 miles from the school, with some living as far as 12 miles. The map below shows the distribution of the young people,

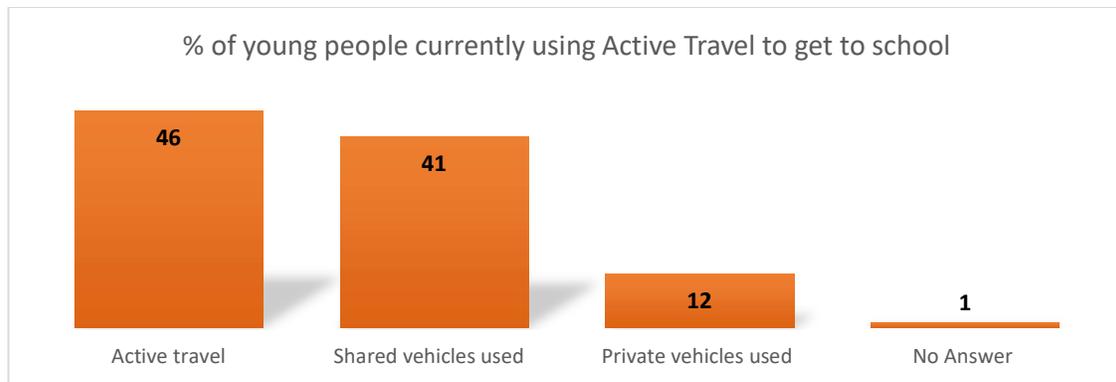


## Results – Active Travel

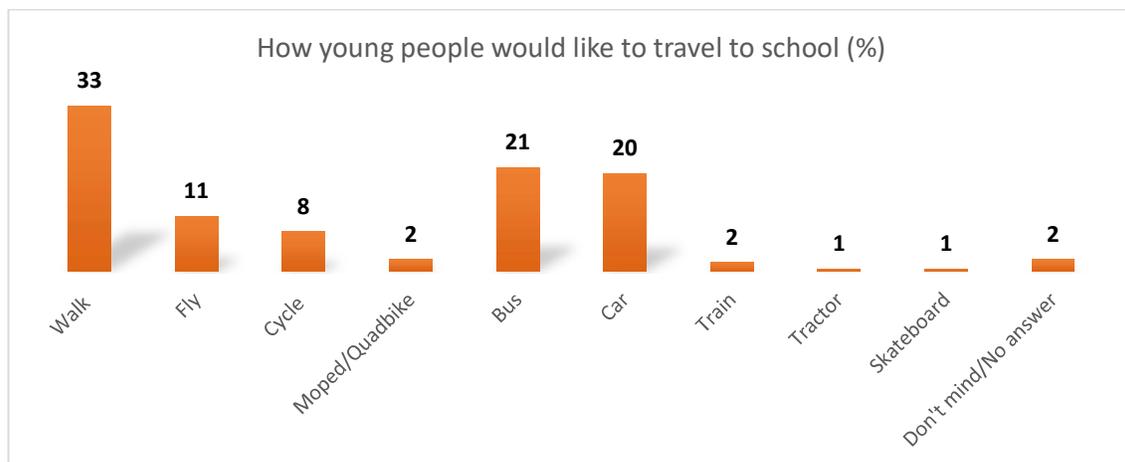
The young people were asked how they currently travel to and from school. Most of the young people, because they live close to the school, walk to school (45%). A large percentage catch the bus to school (41%). Very few of the young people who were surveyed cycled to school (1%). The chart below illustrates the means with which the young people currently travel to school,



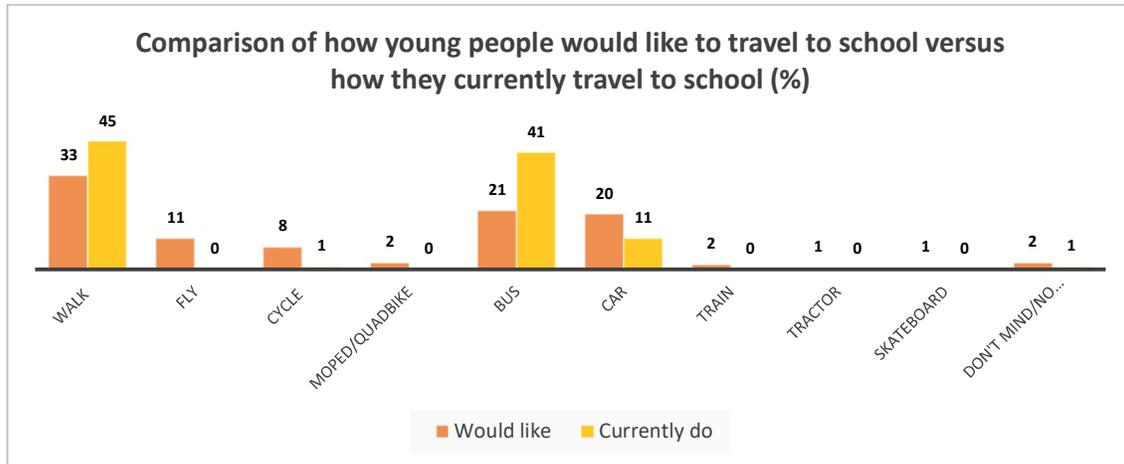
Synthesis of the data shows that currently, 46% of the pupils used active travel to get to school.



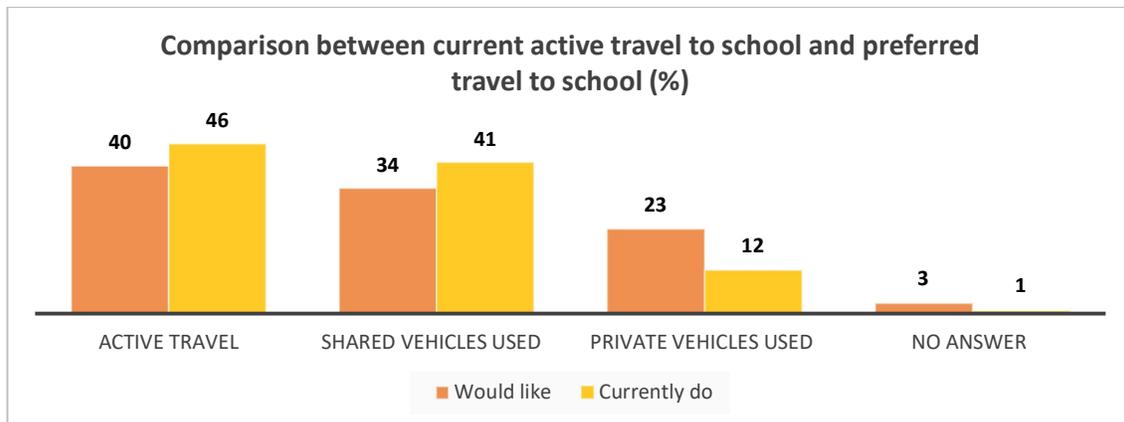
The chart below shows how the young people who responded to the survey would like to travel to school if they had the choice.



Comparing this data with how the young people currently travel to school (below) indicates that the young people do not have a huge appetite for active travel to school with decreases seen in 'walking' and increases in 'by car', however, those requesting cycling saw a small increase of 7% (note: some students listed 'joke' answers such as 'by jet').

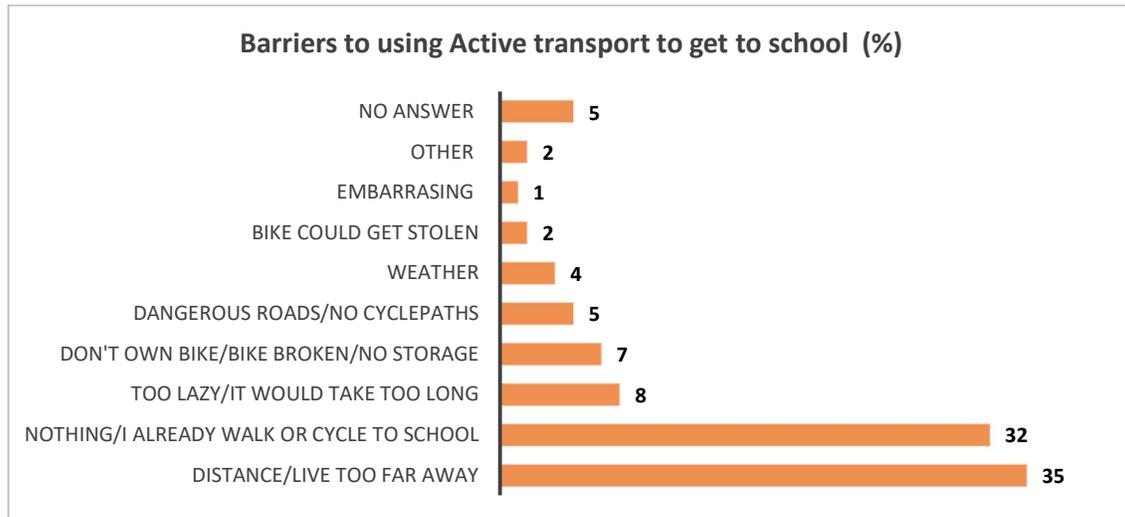


Comparative data for active travel (chart below) shows that the young people surveyed have less desire for active travel than they currently action,



Further analysis of the data shows that of the 40% of young people who would like to do active travel to school, 32% *already* used an Active travel method to get to school. This means that only 8% of the young people who don't currently use Active travel preferred an Active travel method when asked (14 pupils). However, out of these 14 young people, 13 felt that they lived too far away to use an active travel method to get to school and 1 listed the weather as a barrier.

The young people were asked what barriers they faced that might prevent them from walking or cycling to school. Distance was cited as the greatest barrier, as many of the young people live in rural villages that are over 5 miles in distance from school (see map above). A few of the young people cited other reasons, such as being too lazy or that the journey would take too long or not owning a bike or fear of getting their bike stolen. Weather and dangerous roads were also mentioned in lesser numbers. The chart below presents the barriers faced by the young people,



## Conclusions – Active Travel

In conclusion, increasing the number of Active Travellers to school faces several structural and behavioural barriers. The main barriers being the distance some of the young people live from school making Active Travel more difficult. Moreover, free school buses provide a good alternative to many of the children who live in the rural villages. Most of the young people both live in Machynlleth and walked to school, but few showed an appetite for using active transport to get to school when asked. There was a small proportion of pupils interested in cycling to school, but distance and lack of cycle paths were cited as a reason for those young people not to attempt this.

## Results – Outdoor Activities

### Key Findings

**65% of the young people surveyed would like there to be more activities and things to do for young people in Machynlleth (4% were not sure, 13% said 'no' and 18% did not answer).** The young people who would like more activities were asked an open-ended question about why activities or having more things to do was important to them. The responses were themed into the following,

- Improve physical health (32%)
- To give more to do in local areas/at weekends/for our age (31%)
- To have fun/make us happy (29%)
- To provide more social contact/opportunities (23%)
- To curb boredom (23%)
- To be outdoors more & not on technology (11%)
- Learn new things (10%)
- Improve mental wellbeing (10%)

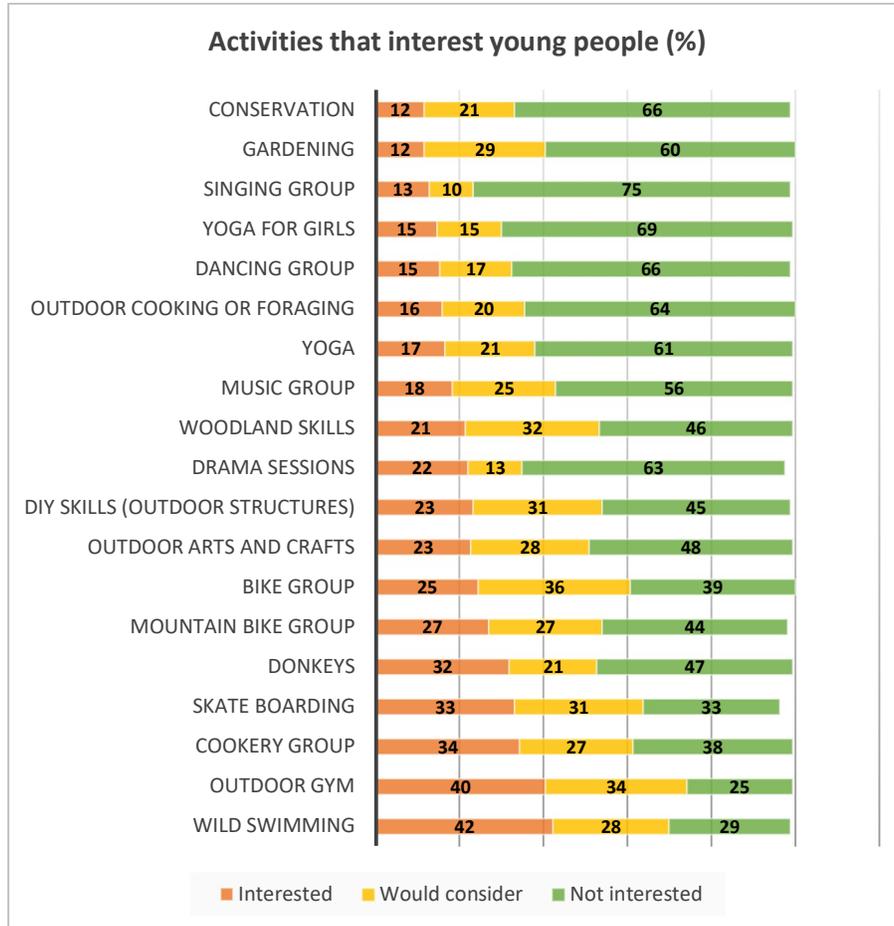
**Over half of the young people were not sure or didn't think that there were not enough places for themselves or other young people to go when they were not in school (23% = No, 32%= not sure 41% = yes).**

**90% of the young people would like there to be more spaces for young people to use in Machynlleth (73% were positive about this, 17% were not sure) Only 4% did not want more spaces for young people (6% N/A)**

**22% of the young people gave contact details to get involved in future activities**

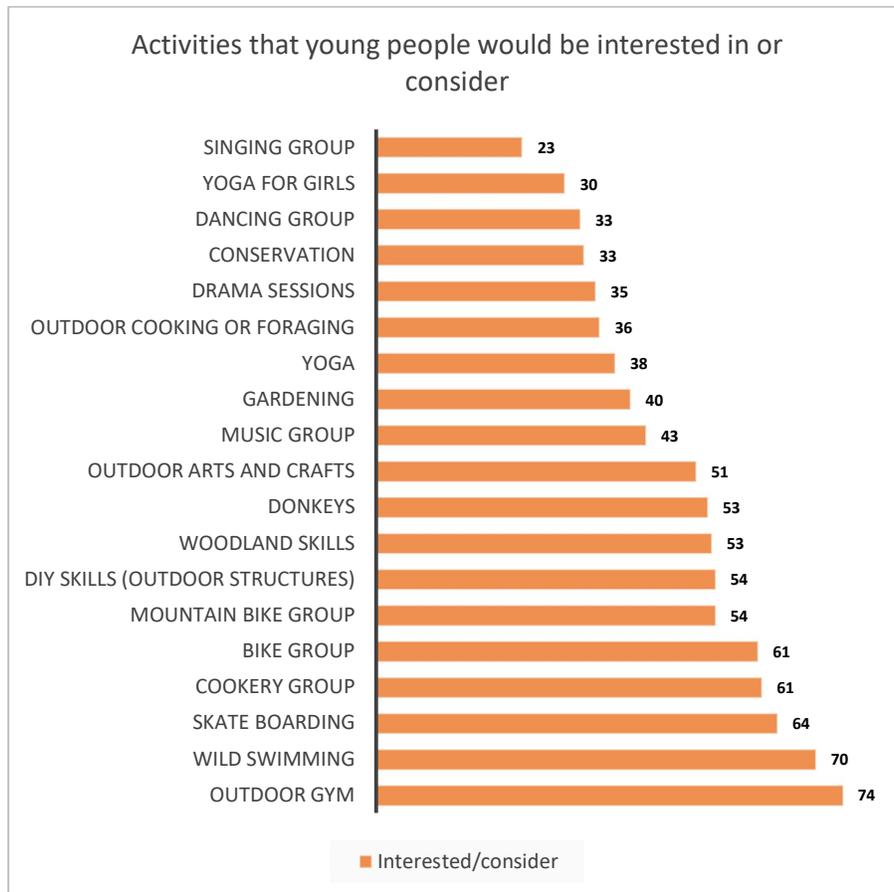
## What type of Activities Interest Young People?

The young people were asked which activities (from a list) that they would be interested in doing, would consider doing and would not like to do. Overall, the young people expressed the most interest in wild swimming, outdoor gym, cookery groups, skateboarding and spending time with donkeys/animals. The results are presented in the chart below,



The above chart shows that the young people were the least interested in conservation activities, gardening, singing or dancing groups, foraging and yoga for girls.

The below chart shows the activities that the young people would be 'interested in' or 'would consider'. Slight changes in levels of interest are shown, with Outdoor gym, wild swimming, skateboarding and cookery group and then bike group the top five respectively. Singing, Yoga for girls and dancing and conservation groups were the least popular choices.



### Preferred activities per year group

The top five activities that each year group selected are presented in the tables below,

| Year 7: Interested        | Year 7: Interested/would consider |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Outdoor Gym (54%)         | Skate boarding (87%)              |
| Skate Boarding (52%)      | Outdoor gym (80%)                 |
| Wild swimming (50%)       | Cookery Group (78%)               |
| Cookery Group (50%)       | Bike Group (71%)                  |
| Mountain bike group (41%) | Wild swimming (71%)               |

| Year 8: Interested        | Year 8: Interested/would consider |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Mountain bike group (39%) | Outdoor Gym (73%)                 |
| Cookery Group (39%)       | Cookery Group (73%)               |
| Outdoor Gym (36%)         | Bike Group (67%)                  |
| Wild Swimming (33%)       | Woodland Skills (64%)             |
| Woodland Skills (33%)     | Wild Swimming (64%)               |
| Bike Group (33%)          | x                                 |

| <b>Year 9: Interested</b> | <b>Year 9: Interested/would consider</b> |
|---------------------------|--|
| Wild Swimming (41%)       | Wild Swimming (75%)                      |
| Outdoor Gym (34%)         | Outdoor Gym (75%)                        |
| Donkeys (30%)             | Woodland Skills (59%)                    |
| Skateboarding (23%)       | Skateboarding (57%)                      |
| Cookery Group (18%)       | Bike Group (52%)                         |
|                           | DIY Skills (outdoor structures) (52%)    |

| <b>Year 10: Interested</b>            | <b>Year 10: Interested/would consider</b> |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Donkeys (45%)                         | Outdoor Gym (68%)                         |
| Wild Swimming (43%)                   | Wild Swimming (68%)                       |
| Outdoor Gym (35%)                     | Donkeys (60%)                             |
| DIY Skills (outdoor structures) (30%) | DIY Skills (outdoor structures) (55%)     |
| Cookery Group (30%)                   | Cookery Group (53%)                       |
|                                       | Bike/Mountain Bike (53% respectively)     |

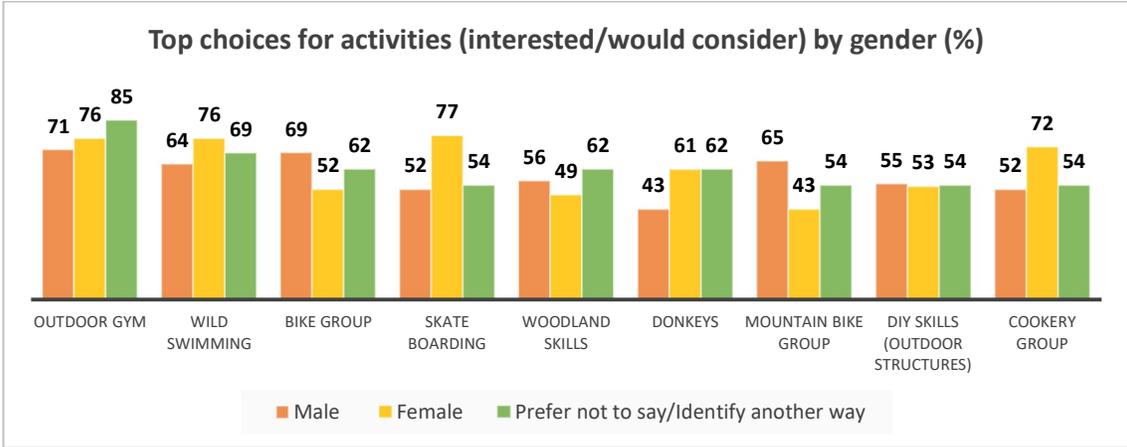
From the tables above the year 7 students were the keenest on taking part in activities (this group showed higher percentages of 'interested' and 'interested/would consider').

### Preferred Activities by Gender

When analysed by gender there were slight differences in preference. A greater number of female students showed an interest in the top activities than the male students ((this group showed higher percentages of 'interested' and 'interested/would consider). Over 10% more girls showed an interest in wild swimming and nearly twice as many girls showed an interest in a cookery group than boys.

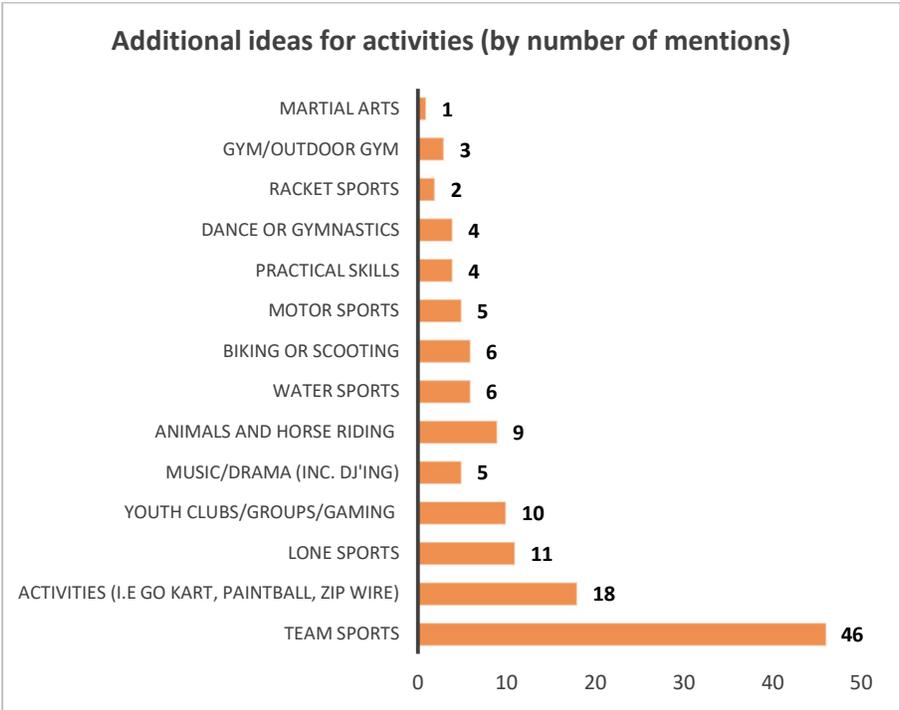
| <b>BOYS: Interested (top 5)<br/>n=75</b> | <b>GIRLS: Interested (top 5)<br/>n=75</b> | <b>PREFER NOT TO SAY/IDENTIFY<br/>ANOTHER WAY: Interested (top<br/>5) n=13</b> |
|--|---|--|
| Outdoor Gym (39%)                        | Wild Swimming (49%)                       | Woodland Skills (46%)  |
| Wild Swimming (39%)                      | Cookery Group (45%)                       | Bike Group (38%)   |
| Mountain Bike Group (33%)                | Outdoor Gym (43%)                         | Outdoor Gym (38%)  |
| Bike Group (25%)                         | Skate boarding (43%)                      | Donkeys (38%)  |
| Cookery Group (24%)                      | Donkeys (39%)                             | Cookery (31%)  |
| Woodland Skills (24%)                    |   | Arts and Crafts (31%)  |
| Donkeys (24%)                            |   | Skateboarding (31%)  |
| Skateboarding (24%)                      |   |  |

The top nine choices with combined 'interested' and 'would consider' are presented below by gender, outdoor gym, wild swimming, and bike groups are the top three choices that appeal to all genders.



### What other Activities are young people interested in?

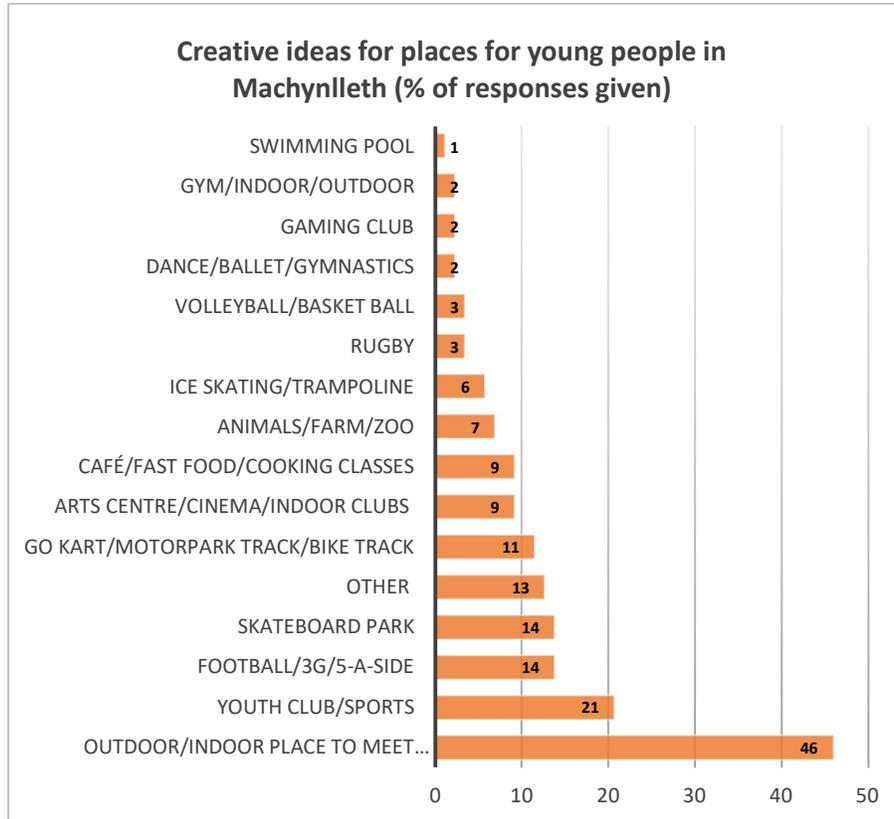
The young people were asked whether there were any activities that they were interested in that were not listed in the survey. 97 of the young people responded to this question with several listing more than one activity. All choices were themed and the total number of mentions for each is presented in the chart below,



Most of the young people suggested some type of team-based sport such as football, rugby, volleyball, or hockey – these may already be available in school, so this might indicate the need for these activities to happen independently of school. Others were more ambitious and wanted to take part in paid activities such as go-carting, paintball or zip wires. 10 young people suggested a youth club for social activities such as gaming or crafts or general sports.

## What creative ideas have young people got for new places for young people?

90% of the young people felt that more spaces for young people in Machynlleth were desirable (73% definite/17% not sure), The young people were then asked to be creative in their ideas for spaces for young people. 87 of the young people presented suggestions. Below are the ideas that they came up with (% of responses given),



Most of the young people simply wanted a safe independent space (either indoors or outdoors with a shelter) where young people could hang out and have fun. It was unclear from some of the responses whether this was a place only for young people, rather than being 'led' or 'organised' by adults. One young person commented,

*"Just somewhere sheltered with benches and tables where there is no adult supervision"*

And another,

*"Ardal i gwrdd / siarad /cael partis - an area to meet, talk and have parties"*

And another,

*"Rhywle lle allwn ymlacio, cael hwyl a bod o gwmpas mond pobl oedran ni. Somewhere where we can relax, have fun with people the same age as us".*

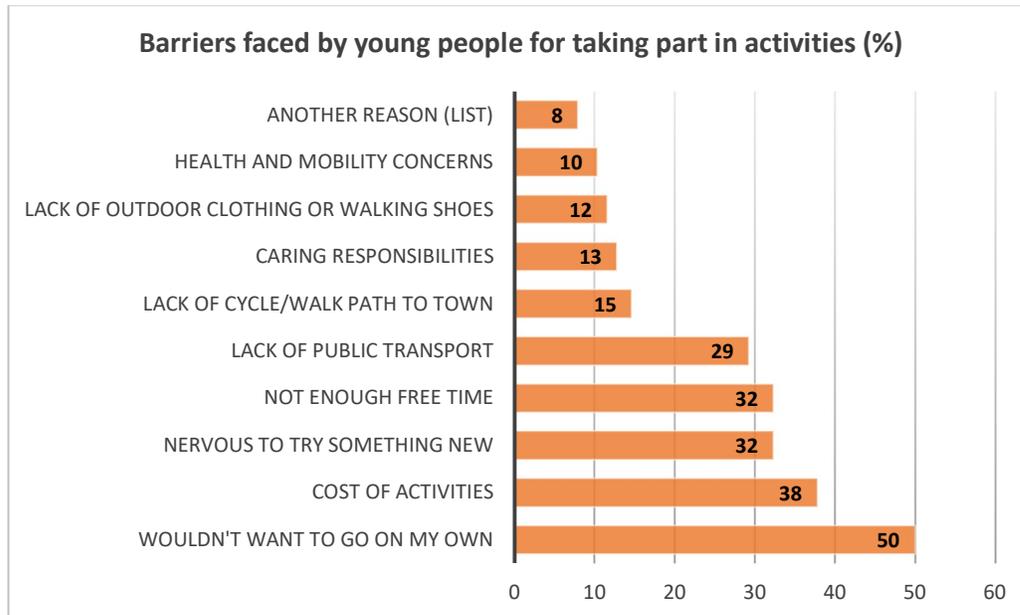
Others requested more places for sports or a youth club,

*"Lle i wneud llawer o chwaraeon yn yr un lle. - A place to do a variety of sports in the same place"*

Both indoor and outdoor football (including 5-a-side) was a popular choice as well as a skateboard park (tying into their interest in skateboarding above).

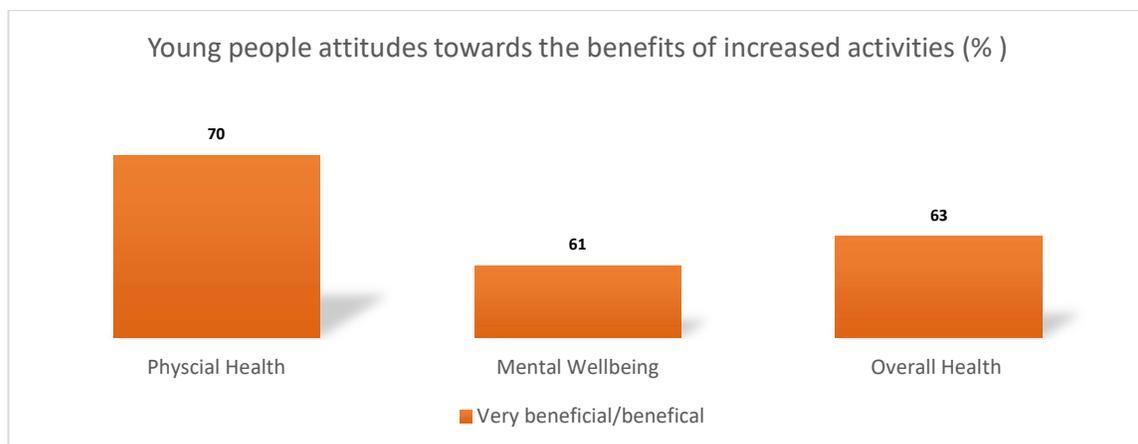
### What barriers do young people face that might stop them from taking part?

Most of the young people didn't feel that they had any barriers that might stop them from taking part in the activities. However, for some young people, the social anxiety of going on their own/trying something new and the cost of activities were seen as the main barriers. The chart below lists all the barriers cited,



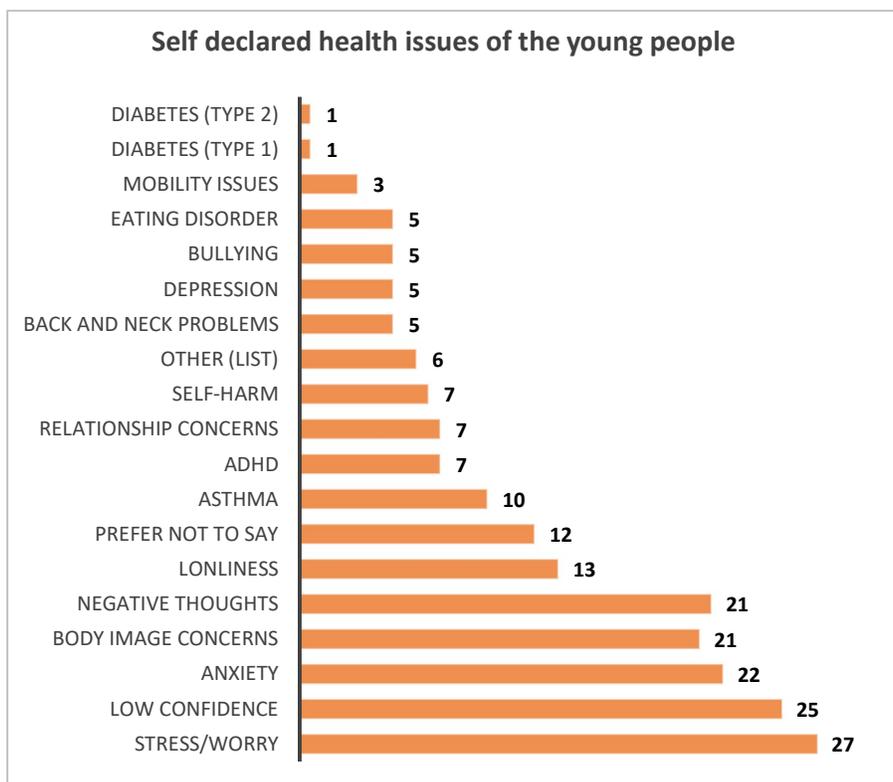
### What do young people consider to be the benefit of increased activities?

The young people saw the main benefit of an increased number of activities in their area to be on their physical health, this reflects the dominance of sport-related interest from the young people. 70% of the young people felt that an increased number of activities would benefit or strongly benefit their physical health, 61% felt they would benefit or strongly benefit their mental wellbeing and 63% felt that they would benefit their overall health. This is illustrated in the chart below,



## What type of health issues do young people have?

58% of the young people listed at least one mental or physical health issue. Mental health issues affected young people more than physical health issues, stress, low confidence, anxiety, body image concerns and negative thoughts impacted around 20%-30% of the young people (note: some of the young people listed more than one option). These are shown in the chart below,



## Conclusions – Outdoor Activities

The survey showed that 65% of the young people felt that there was a need for more activities in the local area and 90% thought that there was a need for more spaces for young people to go in the area. Interest in the listed outdoor activities varied, although there was a high desire across all year groups and genders for an outdoor gym, wild swimming, a bike group, a skatepark/skateboarding group, and cookery lessons (popular especially in year 7 and year 8). The year 7 students and female students were the keenest on the suggested activities. When asked for other ideas, sports dominated the open-ended choice for most students (team games, lone sports such as sailing, canoeing, boxing) although there was a healthy interest in activities such as go-karting, trampolining and paintball. Although many of the young people expressed an interest in the activities, only 22% gave contact details through the survey indicating that additional measures, including targeted activities based on these results and trust-building, may be needed to encourage further take up from this age group.

The young people, above all, desired an independent covered space where young people could hang out and socialise – this could be indoors or outdoors (with a shelter). Sports facilities were also desired as places where young people could go, keep fit and socialise. Skateboarding and a skatepark also formed a key interest and desire for the young people.

The young people listed both structural barriers (cost/public transport/lack of suitable clothing/lack of cycle or walking route) as well as psychological barriers (not wanting to go alone, fear of the unknown) to taking part in new activities and these need to be addressed in any activity selected.

The young people saw the benefit in the activities principally on their physical health (70%), although a high percentage of the young people also suggested that increased activities could impact positively on mental wellbeing (61%) and overall health (63%). This is significant, as 58% of the young people listed at least one physical or mental health issue, with mental health issues dominating. One of the main barriers listed by the young people was connected to social anxiety (not wanted to go alone or nervous to try something new). This indicates that further support to engage may be needed to approach specific social anxiety barriers that young people face.

This survey has provided a good basis for understanding young peoples active travel and activity needs.