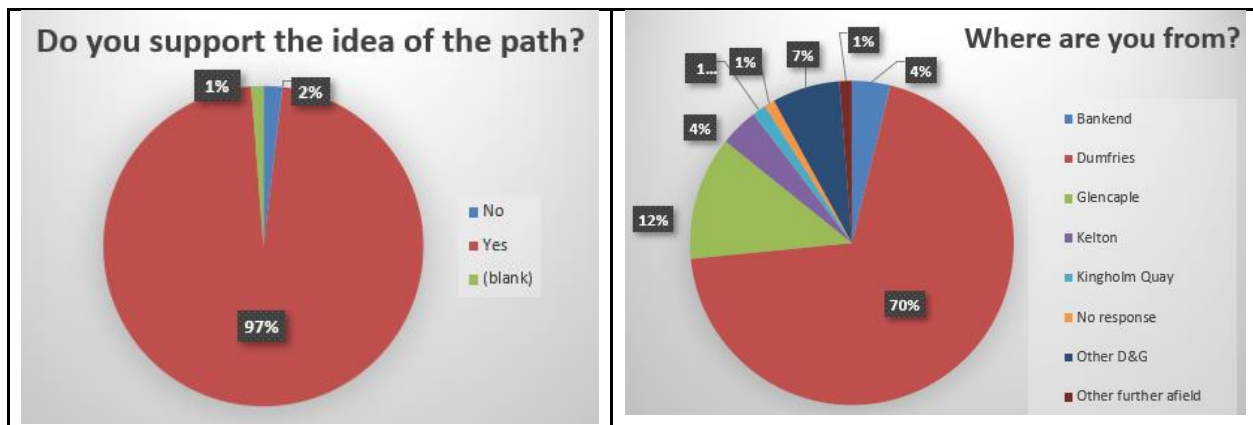


Glencaple path survey – an update

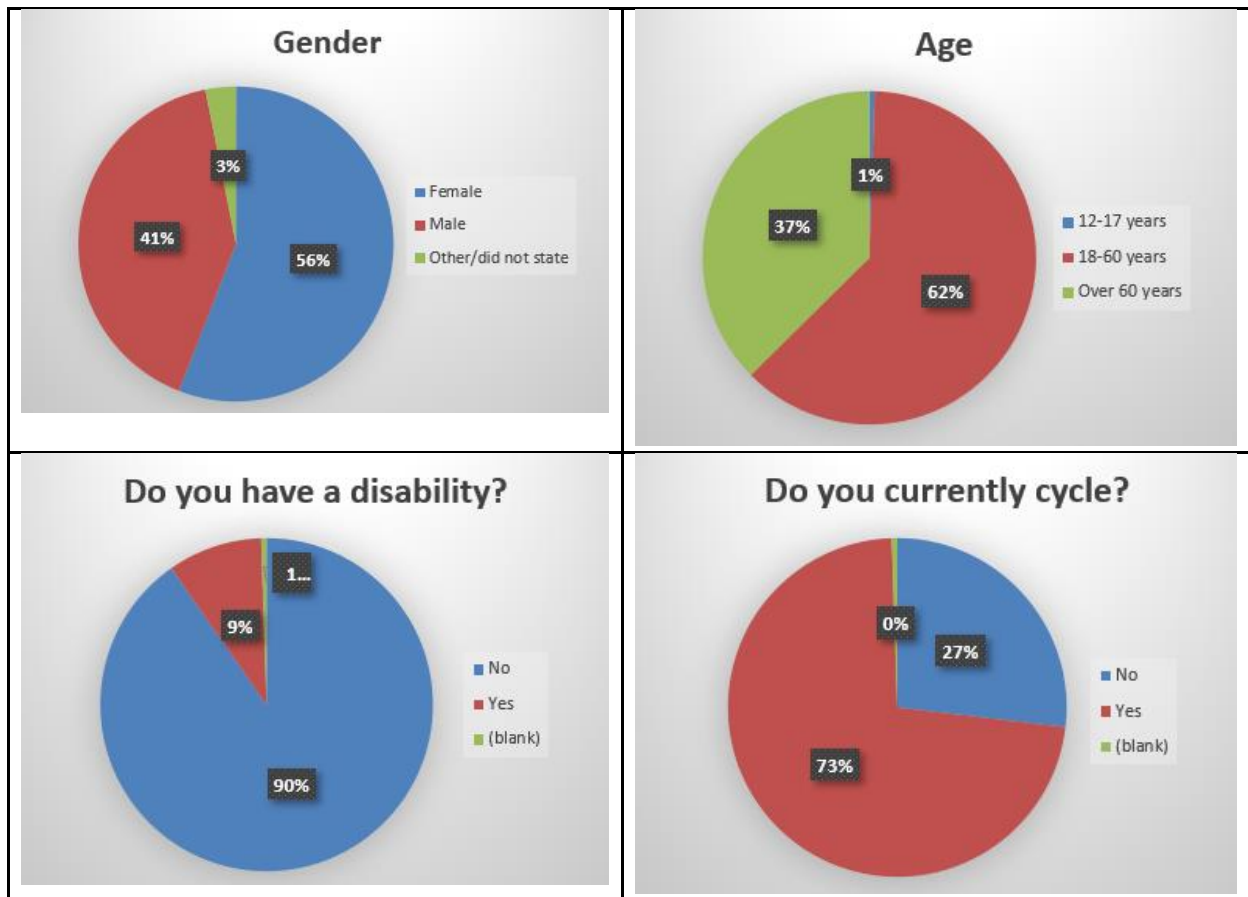
Who responded?

A big thank you to the 576 people who took the time to respond to the survey. The response to the survey was overwhelmingly positive: only 2% of respondents (11 out of 576) said they did not support the idea of a path. A similar number said they wouldn't use it if it were built (not all the same people though).

The bulk of the respondents were either from Dumfries or the communities within the Caerlaverock Community Association area or where the path would be built (Glencaple, Kelton, Bankend, Kingholm Quay). Around 6% (39) were from other communities in Dumfries and Galloway, and there were 7 responses from outside the region altogether including Carlisle, Lancashire and Edinburgh.

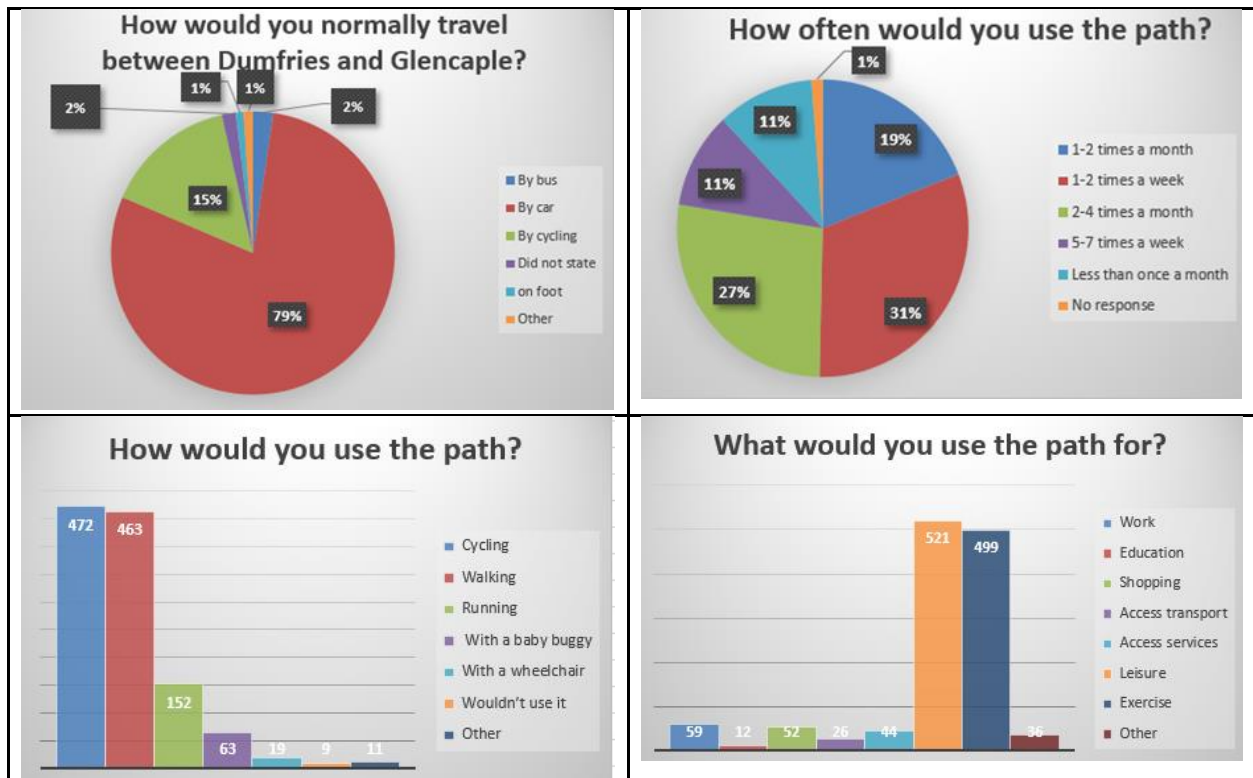


More women than men responded, and 37% of those filling in the survey who gave their age were over 60. Unfortunately, we only had 3 responses from people under 18, the age group who might be considered to have the most to gain from a safe traffic-free path as they will largely not be of driving age. Nine percent of respondents reported having a disability. Over a quarter of those responding say they do not currently cycle, suggesting that the presence of the path might encourage some new cyclists - of these 156 people, 64 said they might use the path for cycling if it was built.



How would the path be used?

The survey showed that there was good potential for the path to enable people to replace at least some car journeys by more active and sustainable modes. Almost 80% of journeys between Dumfries and Glencaple were usually done by car, with only 15% (85) of people saying they would normally go by bike, and just 14 (2%) saying they use the bus. If the path were there, respondents expected to make frequent use of it: 42% saying they would use it at least weekly and a further 46% at least monthly. Almost as many people would use it for walking as would use it for cycling.



The path would seem to offer good accessibility – as well as the expected uses of walking, cycling and running, 19 respondents say they would use it with a wheelchair (and a further 3 indicating they would use a mobility scooter under ‘other’), and 63 with a baby buggy (respondents could choose more than one option). The path would not just be for those on two legs either – horse riding and dog walking were also given under ‘other’.

The bulk of the use would be for leisure and exercise – with both having the potential for significant positive impacts on health and well-being. The path also has potential as a transport link, with a total of 112 people (19%) saying they would use it for one or more type of practical journey: 59 would use it to get to work, 12 to attend education, 52 to go shopping, 44 to access local services and 26 to reach onward transport links (people could select more than one option). Education might have had a larger response if the survey had reached more young people. Among the ‘other’ options were visiting friends and family, dining (with particular mention of the Boathouse), visiting Caerlaverock Castle and birdwatching or generally enjoying the wildlife and views. This suggests that the path could have a small positive impact on tourism in the region, as well as making existing tourism more sustainable.

Were there any concerns?

While the survey format did not allow people to make any additional comments, we have had some concerns expressed on social media and in emails. These include concerns over environmental impacts via disturbance to the river bank/merse and the ecology and wildlife, as

well as the loss of a sense of 'wildness' if an obtrusive tarmac path is created. We should point out that the route of any future path has not been decided, and these sorts of concerns will be paramount in discussions around that. Other concerns were about the hazards involved when cyclists and dog walkers share the same space, and disruption caused during the building of the path. We will make sure these concerns are all raised and addressed as discussions move forward and that the community is kept involved and informed.

Conclusions

It is important to note that this was just a casual online survey, with no attempt to reach a representative share of the population, shared largely via social media. However, the large response and overwhelming support for the path among those who did fill in the survey suggest that there is general support for some sort of traffic-free active travel link between Glencaple and Dumfries.