



Attitudes to Clackmannanshire in 2009
Sixth Survey of the Clackmannanshire Citizens' Panel
Summary Report

by



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Summary of Key Findings

Clackmannanshire's Image

- There is a widespread belief among Panel members that Clackmannanshire has an effective tourism industry and has attractive natural and historical attractions
- Virtually all Panel members (97%) recognised the Ochils as a main visitor attraction in Clackmannanshire, with 74% also mentioning the area's historical attractions. Town centres and places to eat and drink were not regarded as major visitor attractions by many Panel members (8% and 18% respectively)
- Most Panel members (80%) do not think Alloa is an attractive town centre and there is significant support to improve it through a greater variety of shops (78%) and a smarter appearance (78%), while approximately half would like to see improvements to make it safer and cleaner and to provide better/more places to eat and drink
- Panel members have mixed views on whether they feel the built and natural features within the Ochil Hills and Hillfoot villages are being adequately cared for. For example, the largest group (44%) said they 'weren't sure' while 35% felt they were not
- Relatively few Panel members (12%) said they get involved in Community Planning events to give their opinion on what goes on in the Ochils and Hillfoot villages. Significantly, of those who do not, almost two thirds (62%) said they do not feel they have had enough opportunity to get involved
- Panel members would like to have a say on three main issues about the Ochils and Hillfoot villages; enhancement projects (44%), conservation projects (44%) and community involvement and participation (41%)
- Just under one in ten Panel members (9%) get involved in volunteer projects with the area of the Ochil Hills and Hillfoot villages. There is also a significant core of those not currently involved who would like to get involved, particularly in nature conservation
- There is a high level of support for public art to be displayed in public parks and gardens. Almost two thirds (62%) agree with this, while only 19% disagree.

- The importance of green space to Panel members is reflected in the fact that a very high proportion (82%) agreed with the statement: **'Open spaces and facilities contribute to my quality of life'**

The Effects of the Economic Downturn

- Over half of all Panel members who are currently in employment say they would not be confident they could get another job if they were made redundant
- A third of Panel members stated they are financially worse off now compared to three months and a year ago. Most (60%) expect to see no change to their financial circumstances in the next year, although 26% expect to be worse off
- There is a more positive outlook among Panel members when comparing their experience of the recession with that presented in the media (55% feel their personal experience is not as bad)
- Between a third and half of Panel members said they are now spending less compared to a year ago, particularly on the following; luxury goods (53%), entertainment (45%) and home improvements (40%)
- Conversely, a significant number of Panel members are now paying more for; bills (63%), supermarket shopping (58%) and home energy consumption (53%)
- A significant proportion of Panel members (51%) spend 10% or more of their income on energy and only a quarter (26%) say they do not need home energy advice
- Almost three quarters of Panel members (71%) described their general mental or emotional well being as either 'very happy' or 'fairly happy' and only 8% said they were unhappy (in the Improving Clackmannanshire survey undertaken in December 2008, the comparative figures were 81% and 7% respectively)
- Awareness of where to get assistance for a mental health problem is relatively high (70%), although the proportion not aware rises to 37% of those living in the regeneration areas

- Supporting businesses and getting people back into work as well as dealing with crime and the fear of crime were singled out by Panel members as two key priorities for Clackmannanshire now that there is a recession

Training and Improving Skills

- Almost a third of Panel members would consider undertaking training, retraining or updating their skills at their local education college
- Flexible learning material sent to the home was the method preferred by the largest group of Panel members (29%), closely followed by evening classes (22%) and part time at college (19%)

Communications from Agencies

- Fewer than one in five Panel members (17%) are aware who their local community constable is, falling to only 9% in the regeneration areas. Awareness of the community constable's website is also low (9%). However, more than half of this group (59%) would consider using the website in the future
- Local newspapers are the principal source of information for Panel members on crime and anti social behaviour (89%), with television (33%) and national newspapers (24%) serving as secondary sources
- The vast majority of Panel members have smoke detectors fitted to their home (93%) and more than half (53%) are aware of the home fire safety checks programme run by the Fire Service
- Being able to report a problem (41%) and making an application (20%) emerged as the two most popular features Panel members would like to see added, improved or expanded on the Council's website, while the ability to use a message board (19%), a library function (16%) and making payments (13%) also emerged as important developments
- In relation to a number of performance areas, Panel members are most interested in getting information on two in particular; planned improvements (49%) and information on local facilities (43%). Just over a quarter are also interested in information on how the Council is meeting its targets (29%) and the educational performance of schools (27%)

- How Clackmannanshire Council compares with other Councils would also be of interest to a significant proportion of Panel members (62%)

- Mixed views were recorded on Panel members' perceptions of the Council. However, the two main concerns raised were:
 - 46% felt they should be consulted more on how local services are delivered

 - 30% are not satisfied with the opportunities for participation in local decision making by the Council

- In relation to perceptions of Clackmannanshire, very positive views were recorded for its outstanding natural environment (71%), developing transport infrastructure (71%) and improving accessibility (60%)

- Conversely, the most negative perceptions related to it not being perceived as a safe community (36%), where health is not improving (27%) and not benefitting from economic revival (25%)