

VISITOR SURVEYS 2016

Two informal surveys were undertaken of people visiting Ross. One was undertaken during Drop-in 1 by the team on duty during that event. The other was undertaken by Town Guides. Results as follows:

DROP-IN 1 INTERVIEWS

It was a last minute decision to try to use the first Drop-in event on 30th April/1st May to ask some questions of visitors to the town (and/or the River Festival). 8 questions were drafted, as below. These had to be asked quickly because those being asked were not local residents with an interest in the NDP. Not all were asked on each occasion (those not asked shown as N/A below). 13 people (mostly pairs) were 'interviewed'.

The answers to each question (A to H below) were:

A. What brought you to Ross-on-Wye today?

1. Visit relatives, River Festival
2. Booked hotel, found Festival was on, just visiting
3. Friend at canoe event
4. Looking for place to live, Ross in on the shortlist
5. Knew about River Festival
6. Staying at local hotel (in Weston-under-Penyard), knew about Festival
7. Son came a few years ago and liked it
8. Family nearby
9. Regular shopping but here overnight
10. Shopping
11. Weekend away, chose local B&B
12. With a group of 7 or so, caravanning
13. Came camping long time ago and remember liking it

B. Have you been here before?

1. A couple of times
2. No
3. No but drive past
4. Yes, couple of times
5. Loads of times – use the gym
6. No Other than 20 years ago
7. Yes – 2nd or 3rd time
8. Yes, many times
9. Weekly
10. Every weekend
11. No
12. Only passed through
13. Yes but long time ago

C. What for on that/those occasions?

1. As per A above
2. N/A
3. N/A
4. Day trips
5. Shopping (rather than Gloucester)
6. N/A

7. Moved nearby, wanted to see new places
8. Walking
9. Shopping
10. Go to bank, meet friends in cafe, mooch around
11. N/A
12. N/A
13. N/A

D. How did you travel here? Where from?

1. By car to relatives then lift
2. Car from Berkshire
3. Car from Malvern
4. Car from Kington
5. Car from Hereford
6. Car from north of Cardiff
7. Car from Malvern
8. Car from Reading
9. Car from Torfaen
10. Car from Mitcheldean
11. Car from Exeter
12. Car from Worcester
13. Car from Northampton

E. If by car, where did you park?

1. Sports Centre car park
2. N/A
3. N/A
4. By the theatre
5. By river
6. Car park by Aldi
7. N/A
8. Car park by Aldi
9. Car park by Aldi
10. Dante's car park
11. By Police Station (2 hours max.)
12. On caravan site – close to centre
13. Sainsbury's

F. What makes Ross an attractive place to visit?

1. Picturesque
2. Easy journey, picturesque, pretty, first town in area off main road, nice river, Festivals, lots of independent shops
3. Looks lovely, seems to have lots to explore, quite compact
4. Close to great countryside, river, small market town, facilities, location/access (M50 etc.)
5. Smallish town, more personal, place for walks (in area around), independent shops, quieter, more rural, attractive, concise
6. Country feel, independent shops, quaint, compact, bijou. Church spire is a landmark
7. Independent shops
8. Not too strung out, good place to stop for breakfast, liked the old bakery (now gone?)
9. Quality of shops, food/cafes, good selection, jewellers – and independent
10. Friendly people, shops
11. Seems nice, river, walks
12. Market town, pubs, restaurants, clean and tidy

13. Nice to walk in, nice lanes etc., walks in countryside, lovely town, close to the Forest of Dean, independent shops, (refreshing without nationals), feeling of Englishness

G. Are there things that are less attractive about it?

1. One-way system
2. N/A
3. N/A
4. Sound of A40
5. N/A
6. Narrow streets for cars
7. Hills
8. 6. Car park by Aldi
9. Occasional lout
10. Parking outside of town, costly in centre
11. Not really
12. Lack of street signs
13. N/A

H. What would make it better for you as a visitor (other than as answered above)?

1. Clear parking in town centre, pedestrianisation
2. N/A
3. N/A
4. N/A
5. Nothing – it keeps reinventing itself
6. Not much needed
7. N/A
8. Keeping the local character
9. Keep the architectural character –the town's soul
10. More regular events/activities in the centre
11. N/A
12. N/A
13. N/A

TOWN GUIDE INTERVIEWS

Over a series of days in June 2016, voluntary Town Guides asked 3 simple and quick questions of 185 visitors to Ross. The questions asked people to:

1. Provide their postcode
2. Say how long they were staying for
3. Say what they were doing in Ross

With quick questions and a sample of only 185, full analysis (eg. by postcode) was not appropriate. Some respondents were together so naturally gave similar or identical answers. Some would also have been couples but only one person filled in the form. Some might have been contacted at the very start of their visit so were as yet unclear about what the town was like and what it offered. There are also some specific cautions about the results from each question as explained below. (NB. numbers do not always add up.)

WHERE WERE PEOPLE FROM?

NB. The work of the guides focuses mainly on genuine visitors rather than local people who happened to be in town as residents in Ross or nearby, though some of the latter responded as well.

- 9 came from overseas: Spain, Australia (5), France (2) and Switzerland
- 12 came from HR9
- 8 came from other parts of Herefordshire.
- The remainder (c. 156) came from other parts of the UK.

The latter included relatively local people (eg. from Gloucestershire), some from within day trip distance (eg. from Oxford, Birmingham, Bristol) and some from further away (eg. from Exeter, Coventry, Slough).

HOW LONG DID THEY STAY?

This was a general question so it is not clear if this was understood to be, or answered as, 'stay in Ross' specifically. Although the list below sub-divides between responses stating half day and 1 day, people may have answered 1 day when the trip to Ross comprised all of their day out but in fact took only half a day! It also seems reasonable to assume (a) that those spending just an hour or two were relatively local or passing through on their way to somewhere else and (b) those staying 2 nights or more would have been exploring the whole area around, not just exploring the town.

- 7 people stated 1 hour
- 15 people stated 2 hours
- 18 people stated 3 hours
- 27 people stated half a day
- 45 stated 1 day
- 18 people stated 2 days (or 1 night)
- 16 people stated 3 days (or 2 nights)
- 10 people stated 4 days
- 9 people stated 5 days
- 9 people stated 1 week
- 3 people stated 2 weeks
- 1 person stated 8 weeks!

WHY WERE PEOPLE IN ROSS?

Some people listed just one activity (eg. shopping) when they may well also have stopped for refreshments. The main reasons (people often mentioned more than one) were:

- Visiting the area (which presumably also included the town): 50 mentions
- Visiting the town (perhaps also the area): 35 mentions
- Refreshments of various sorts: 36 mentions
- Shopping: 38 mentions
- Walking (by the river mainly): 26 mentions
- Visiting friends/family (and also the town etc.): 22 mentions

Other reasons included cycling, canoeing, cinema, hairdresser, picnic, photography, attending a meeting.

OPINIONS

Although people were not asked to judge anything, 22 offered spontaneous positive comments, mainly about the ('excellent') food and drink but also about the service and the town itself.