

Gledhow Valley Road Green Fair Survey Report

September 2024





Introduction

In July 2024 a partnership of local community organisations in Chapel Allerton came together to organise the first ever closure of Gledhow Valley Road for a green fair. 3,137 visitors attended the event, involving the closure of 1 Km of Gledhow Valley Road for 9.5 hours

The stated purpose of the green fair was to:

- Give the community the opportunity to experience Gledhow Valley Woods traffic-free for the day.
- Encourage more active travel in the area.
- Bring the local community together for a fun and inspiring day.
- Raise awareness of local environmental challenges and the community's responses to these.
- Initiate a debate on how the road might be better configured to benefit both people and nature.

The Green Fair organising partners – The Friends of Gledhow Valley Woods; CA Spaces; CAN plan; Gledhow Valley Conservation Area Group; Chapel Allerton Allotment and Gardens Association and Chapel Allerton Arts Festival – sought the views of visitors to the event and possible future improvements to the area they would like to see.

164 people attending the Green Fair completed our survey.

Design and photography by *Balbir Singh Dance Company*





Words from Natalie Tharraleos, Collaborator

We used a variety of approaches to ensure that the Green Fair was representative of the different communities surrounding Gledhow valley woods.

These included working with schools in Chapeltown, Harehills, Chapel Allerton and Gledhow, ensuring stall holder representation from all surrounding communities, and developing a programme of activities and events that would have the widest possible community appeal.

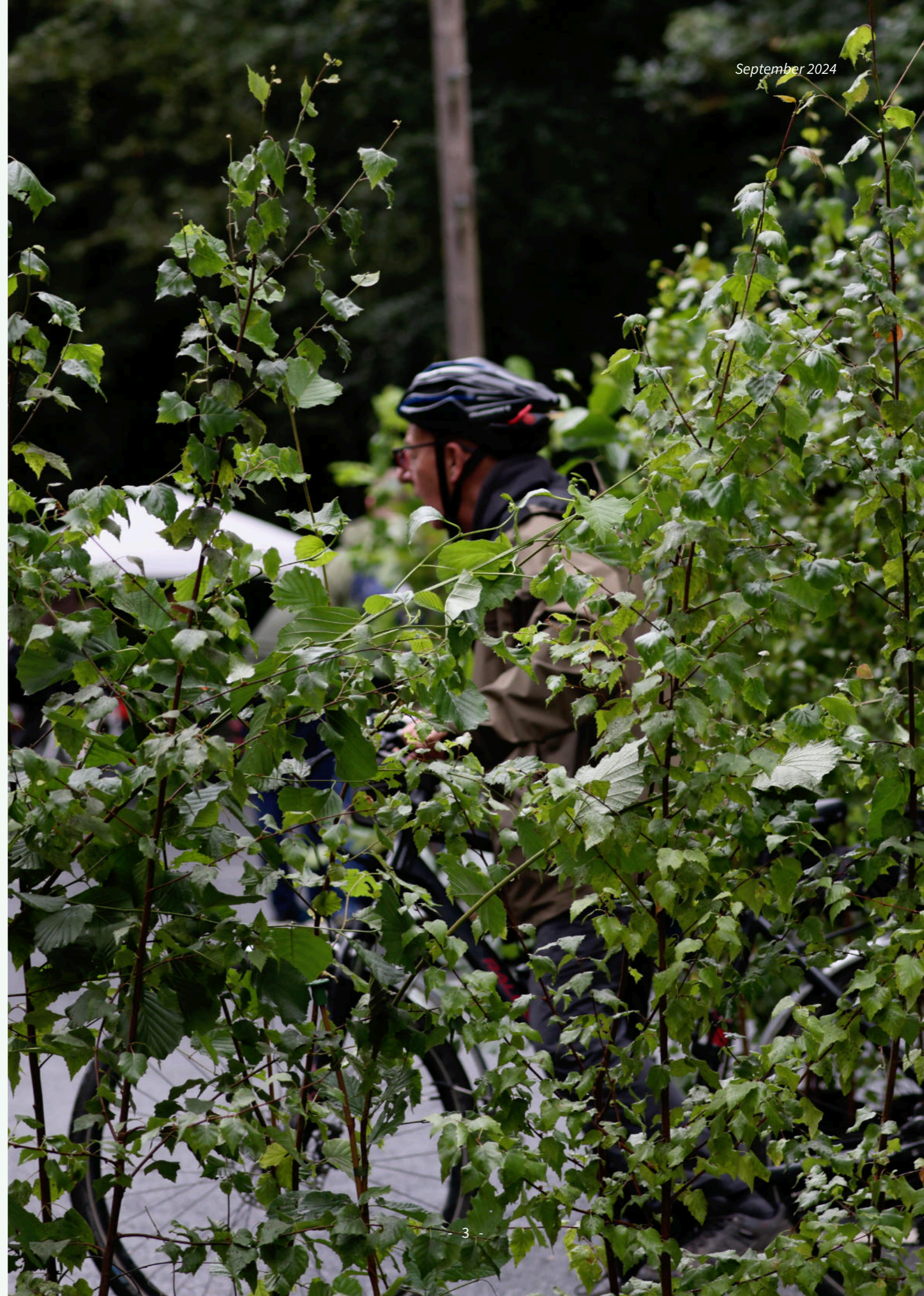
The event was advertised widely among surrounding communities.

The event built on the work we have done over the last few years to improve access to this amazing green space; working with Balbir Singh Dance Company, TCV / The Conservation Volunteers and the former Toast Love Coffee.

We have already developed new and exciting collaborations with Harehills Action team, esustainable fashion and The Performance ensemble in 2024.

Words from Balbir Singh, Collaborator

Having worked with the Friends of Gledhow Valley Woods on projects such as Social Prescribing: On the Trail Of series and Roots and Routes, it was a great pleasure to return and help plan the day's activities. I had the chance to photograph the event and to work with fashion designer Goodness Woodhead, community creative consultant Natalie Tharraleos, and Balbir Singh Dance Company dancers on the theme of fashion and environmental connection. We're increasingly using green spaces to engage new audiences, promoting mental health, wellbeing and resilience. The day was full of smiles, sari dressing-up, a fashion walk and a vibrant, family-friendly atmosphere.





Visiting Gledhow Valley Woods

1. How often do you normally visit Gledhow Valley Woods?

First visit	4%	(8)
Regularly, at least once a week	60%	(97)
Occasionally, about once a month	25%	(41)
Rarely, less than once a month	10.5%	(17)
No response provided	0.5%	(1)

2. How did you get here today?

On foot (walking)	89%	(146)
On a bike/ e-bike (cycling)	3%	(5)
By car (driving)	7%	(12)
By bus (or other public transport)	1%	(1)
Other	0%	(0)

3. Your views on the road closure

Today is the first time Gledhow Valley Road has been shut for an event. Do you support today's road closure?

Yes	96%	(159)
No	1.5%	(2)
Unsure	1.5%	(2)
No response	1%	(1)

4. Would you support future road closures?

Once a month closure	46%	(75)
Quarterly closure	20%	(32)
Annual road closure	6%	(10)
Occasional	7.5%	(13)
Permanent road closure	18%	(29)
Would not support	0.5%	(1)
Not sure	1%	(2)
No response provided	1%	(2)

5. Listed below are some statements about the road closure. Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement. *The road closure has:*

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
Made me realise how beautiful the woods are	56% - (92)	30% - (49)	8% - (13)	0	0	6% - (10)
Made the air feel cleaner	68% - (113)	18% - (28)	11% - (17)	0	0	3% - (6)
Made the woods feel more peaceful	86% - (141)	10% - (16)	2.5% - (4)	0	0	1.5% - (3)
Made me more likely to travel on foot or by bike	54% - (89)	19% - (31)	19% - (31)	4% - (6)	1% - (2)	3% - (5)
Made me feel safer whilst using the woods	55% - (90)	19% - (31)	20% - (33)	1% - (2)	0.5% - (1)	4.5% - (7)
Made me better understand the conservation work being done	55% - (91)	26% - (43)	11% - (18)	1% - (2)	0	7% - (10)

6. Listed below are some statements about today's event as a whole. Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement. *Today's event has:*

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
Been fun	41% - (68)	38% - (62)	3% - (4)	0	0	18% - (30)
Made me feel more connected to the neighbourhood	52% - (86)	32% - (52)	8% - (13)	0	0	8% - (13)
Helped connect me with friends and family	37% - (61)	27% - (44)	25% - (40)	2% - (4)	0	9% - (15)
Made me more likely to visit the woods again	45% - (74)	30% - (49)	15% - (25)	1% - (2)	0	9% - (14)
Made me want to help improve the woods	45% - (74)	35% - (57)	12% - (19)	0	0	8% - (14)

Other comments on the Green Fair:

Great event-bringing community together	I love it! I hope it develops further. 4 seasons would be good. It inspires me to appreciate my local landscape at a different level	Good idea and nice to walk around the road. My only concern about permanent road closure is pushing traffic into surrounding streets
Very positive. More please!		
Fabulous thank you		
It's such a novel experience, great for children	More publicity needs to be made about the history of the area + bath house would be great to be restored and reopened	New to neighbourhood great to see community come together. Use the road a lot for car travel. Good to see it closed as a pedestrian
Confirms that improvements are ongoing and nice to see former FGVW members	What can I do for a permanent closure of the road for cars and motor bikes	A great example of community engagement and of putting people and the natural environment ahead of road traffic
Strongly support it. Council should be made to close the road more	Great event and a great idea. Love the peace + quiet the road closure has allowed	Its been brilliant being able to walk on the road feeling the woods all around and the quiet
Thank you for organising		
We live on GVR and love the idea of today	More music would have made it more fun. Also if more stalls were unavailable a more concentrated area would have been better	I enjoyed the peace and quiet
Great community project		More help to maintain woods is always needed
Can you arrange better weather? A regular event would be great for the community	It's great to have these occasional events	It was the best day ever
Just really enjoyed it	It was great for young children. Much safer and more sociable. We've seen several people we know	Peace
Wonderful and important community event	It's so nice	Golf buggy to give people lifts?
More stalls would've been good - including food and drink?	The best thing was seeing the road without cars which highlighted the peace of the woods	Thank you for organising, so lovely to connect with the community and learn about everything going on! Amazing event!

It made me feel at peace	It's a shame about the rain earlier	Closing the road affects residents who need the road not able to bike and walk. Will displace more traffic into Roundhay Road + Harrogate Road
Forest was best bit but hide Belisha beacon lights!	The quiet and peacefulness without the very noisy road used as a too fast race track made me want this to be a permanent thing	Lovely event to bring the local community together
Maybe a bit too spread out for some? Keep it to Little Switzerland to Bath House?		
Great to see commitment to close the road for this event!	Feels great to walk down the road!	Great event! Do it again
Has made the whole area feel really peaceful	Very restful, connecting, peaceful	Working here as a volunteer today. Great to see the clear love for this wild space
It's fab	Great organisation and well done to you all	Opportunity to volunteer
I live on GVR and would love to be more involved in FGVW + see more events like this	Absolutely fabulous	Would be fantastic if could stop polluting the beck
	Need good food	
It's a really positive vibe	Signed up to volunteer with one of the charities, glad finally got to the Bath House!	Emphasises how wonderful Leeds green spaces are and how we need to value and celebrate them
More please and I hope other areas in Leeds do the same. As a pedestrian even the pavements aren't safe, with e- bikes and scooters	Lovely having road closed so peaceful	Prefer here to previous events held near Aldi
	Happy	It's been amazing
Absolutely brilliant, very grateful to all involved. More hot food stalls and community engagement next time e.g. Gledhow Primary dance	Love 'no traffic' zone	It would be great if the road was closed permanently
Great event, bringing community together	If Arium trees are used again, put note to say they are borrowed and will be replanted in parks	Fabulous idea and fully supported by local residents. Wonderful to see so many people out even on a soggy day. It would make me feel much more at peace and relaxed if the road was closed permanently
Sense of community and shared love for the wildness	Felt powerful to walk on the road. Really good to feel agency, ownership of my local area	

7. Your views on Gledhow Valley Woods

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
The woods are very important for nature	90% - (148)	7% - (11)	0 0	0	0	3% - (5)
The woods are very important for local people to be active in	85% - (139)	9% - (16)	2% - (2)	0	0	4% - (7)
The woods are important for people to relax in	87% - (142)	8% - (14)	0.5% - (1)	0	0	4.5% - (7)
The woods are important for people to socialise in	70% - (114)	20% - (33)	7% - (12)	0	0	3% - (5)
The woods have a positive impact on my mental health	78% - (129)	13% - (21)	6% - (9)	0	0	3% - (5)
The woods are well cared for	57% - (93)	30% - (48)	9% - (15)	1% - (2)	0	3% - (6)



8. What changes would you like to see in Gledhow Valley Woods?

- Improvements to water quality in Gledhow Beck and Lake **82% (135)**
- Improvements to air quality in Gledhow Valley **64% (106)**
- Better foot paths and cycle paths to promote more active travel **68% (113)**
- Opening up the sections of the Gledhow Beck currently piped underground **63% (103)**



Other changes mentioned:

Continuation of all the fantastic improvements which have been made over the last decades

More stuff like this

It would be nice to have better footpaths as I see lots of runners and walkers

Footpaths on South Side of GVR

Bird and wildlife conservation projects

Traffic lights at Gledhow Valley Road- Gledhow Lane cross roads

Add an eco sauna to Gipton Spa. Prevent space pollution eg plastic bottles

Repair existing steps and paths around the woods away from the lake

The speed bumps help with speed of cars

Opening up beck-only if this benefits the environment first

Better footpaths and cycle paths-Its great as is

Cycle paths please!

Address the motor bikes that race through the woods please

I've noticed a huge improvement at the lake

Have regular maintenance and clearance of the lake. Limit the extant expansion of wetland in the artificial 'designed' C18 landscape

Opposite the Bath House, where path has disappeared put in a cycle path

It would be amazing to swim there. (Gledhow Lake)

Water quality is vital. Should become a designated nature reserve

Water quality is vital. Should become a designated nature reserve

Regular opening of Gipton Bath House

Fish in the lake

No more dog waste less

Definitely would like a dedicated cycle lane on the road

More widely advertised nature walks

Grateful to FGWW for their long- term work on maintaining and improving the woods. And getting funding. Look forward to meadow development

More signs about nature and history. Wood carving/ sculpture trail

Consider clearing footpath on south side of GVR opposite where path on north side always gets muddy after rainfall - approaching Roundhay Rd

Permanent road closure or blocked to through traffic

Speed limits and traffic control on GVR- too many cars speeding and doing dangerous overtaking. More crossings too would be welcome

Cycle path alongside road

The lake is generally full of pollution and how poor water quality, likely due to run off from the surrounding residential areas

The dream would be to close the road

Better cycling facilities. I cycle along the road everyday and it often feels unsafe

Lake smell

Speed limit repeater signs

More car free days. I absolutely support this

Keeping paths along the woods/ road clear of leaves and mud

Closing the road to motorised traffic

I am against commercialisation of the woods eg car parking, cafes, playgrounds. This is a unique environment

Disabled access

Not cycling in the woods - road yes

Not many weeds

9. The Green Fair Partners would like to see more active travel (e.g. walking/cycling/wheeling) in the Gledhow Valley. What would help you do this?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
All weather roadside paths and better maintenance of paths	52% - (85)	25% - (41)	7% - (11)	0 - (0)	1% - (2)	15% - (25)
A segregated cycle path	51% - (83)	20% - (34)	9% - (14)	4% - (6)	0.5% - (1)	15.5% - (26)
Better woodland paths	40% - (66)	25% - (41)	18% - (28)	1% - (2)	0.5% - (1)	15.5% - (26)
Better signage	25% - (41)	15.5% - (26)	33% - (54)	3% - (5)	1% - (2)	22.5% - (36)
More safety features (could include priority for walkers/cyclists, crossings etc)	53% - (87)	21.5% - (35)	11% - (17)	1% - (2)	0.5% - (1)	13% - (22)

Other comments on the Green Fair:

More car free days

Love all the winding paths that have been opened up

Slower speed limit. Financial help to buy a bike and secure storage for it. Electric bike hire point nearby

I would absolutely support the permanent closure of GVR from the bath house to where the houses start again. Its a significant green space in a dense urban area. Re-uniting the 2 halves of the wood would make such a difference to people and wildlife. More regular closures then permanent please!

A segregated cycle path along the road would be great

As a cyclist I feel vulnerable on the road. The road would make such a good accessible path for prams, bikes, wheelchairs etc. Well done for today and thanks!

I think the road is really good for cycling already (I consider myself to be a confident cyclist so maybe someone less confident would prefer a separated lane

Slow traffic, enforced 20 mph limit. Speed cameras

Have some support for people with walking difficulties

More limitations on driving speed especially night and early mornings, limits on non-local car access

Close road to traffic permanently

Agree with more safety features of crossings and priorities for walkers/ cyclists

I agree with (active travel) but not if it takes away grass verges

Don't know if segregation is answer-slower and limited traffic

A dedicated cycle path away from cars due to air pollution

Too many bikes using the woods- ruining pedestrian pathways. If you attract them with a cycle path at the bottom-it would be worse unless banned from using the woods.

Bicycle logos printed in the middle of road lanes. Its done near Ambleside in the lakes and is just paint

Close the road to cars except for resident access- definitely

I love the 'wildness' of it and wouldn't like to see too much neatness or change

Would be even better to have a safe cycle path that connected to a segregated path through Harehills / Chapeltown into the centre of Leeds and /or up to Roundhay Park

Too many signs not a good idea-unless wooden and maintained

Paths are already nicely maintained

Liked it better as a wood-parkification has been going on for some time

Lower traffic speeds (20mph) if vehicle traffic is retained

Road closed permanently

Id like to see an annual roller skate up and down the valley road :)

A segregated cycle path from Gledhow to the city centre

I would never have come here alone. Firstly I didn't know there was so much in the woods to enjoy. Secondly I was able to enjoy them because we came as a group where I felt safe as a woman and a person of colour, because I trust the people with me to protect me from being racially abused or left vulnerable as a woman.

Personal Details



10. What best describes your gender?

Male	54	Female	74
Self-describe	3 (Non-binary)	Rather not to say	3
No Response Provided	30		

11. What is your age?

Under 18	9	18 - 24	1	25 - 34	11
35 - 44	22	45 - 54	24	55 - 64	29
65 - 74	28	75 or over	7	Rather not say	33

12. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

Yes	12	Rather not say	2
No	116	No Response	34

13. What is your postcode?

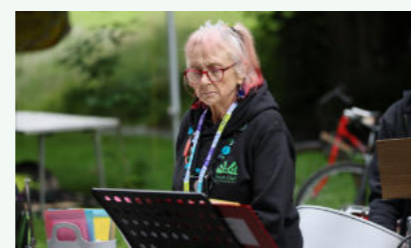
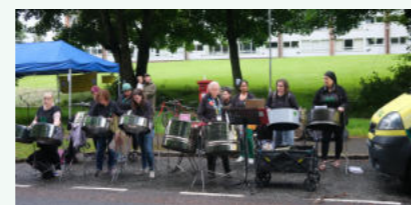
LS4	1	LS6	1	LS7	43
LS8	43	LS9	1	LS14	1
LS17	20	LS28	1	LS29	1
CH7	1	M18	1	YO30	1
None given	49				

14. What is your ethnic group?

Indian	2	Pakistani	2
Chinese	2	White English	112
White (Other)	11	Caribbean	1
USA	3	Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	2
Eastern European	1	White and Black African	2
Australian	3	Any other ethnic group	1
Swedish/English	3	Rather not say	1
Hungarian	1	None given	28

Conclusions

1. The Green Fair could not have been delivered without the active support of the Partnership of local voluntary groups working together. All the partner organisations are keen to continue working together to deliver another event in summer 2025.
2. There is widespread Support for active travel improvements in the Gledhow valley to create better infrastructure for walking, wheeling and cycling.
3. 80 people volunteered their time on the day to make the event a success. The Green Fair would not have been possible without this level of local support and we are extremely grateful to all our volunteers. A further 40 people who attended the event expressed an interest in volunteering with one or more of the partner organisations.
4. Both survey and social media feedback indicates widespread public support for further one-day closures of Gledhow valley Road for events such as the Green Fair.
5. There is widespread public support for improvements to fresh water and air quality and the paths network in the Gledhow Valley. Monitoring and research is ongoing with university partners on local air and water quality and initial findings will be publicised shortly.
6. The survey highlights the high value placed by the local community on Gledhow Valley woods and the work of the Friends of Gledhow Valley Woods. Survey respondents particularly value the woods as a haven for wildlife, a place to exercise, socialise and recognise its contribution towards improving their mental health.
7. There is a strong demand from surrounding communities, where there are less opportunities for people to feel safe and welcome in local green spaces, for more events and activities in Gledhow Valley woods. We will explore ways in which we can do this working with community advocates and partners to ensure access to the woods by all under- represented groups.



Thanks

This event would not have been possible without the support of the following individuals and groups to whom we are immensely grateful.

Friends of Gledhow Valley Woods	Madison Wright and Gabriela Lopez Gonzalez – water@leeds	Nick Gardiner – Senior Traffic Engineer Leeds City Council
CA Spaces	Balbir Singh Dance Company	Harriet Shaw – West Yorkshire Police
CAN plan	Natalie Tharraleos – Community Advocate	Les Webb, John Barber, Allan Luxton, Barry Hughes – Leeds Cycling Campaign
Chapel Allerton Allotment and Gardens Association	Jenny Woodward – Leeds Beckett University	Louise Gibson – Ranger Leeds City Council
Gledhow Valley Conservation Area Group	Dr Jim Parker – Leeds Beckett University	The Residents of Gledhow Valley Road
Councillor Jane Dowson	Anwyn Beier – Anwyn Illustration	Our Sponsors – Fowler and Powell, That Leeds Magazine, ASDA
Councillor Lisa Martin	James Mc Kay- University of Leeds	
Councillor Mohammed Rafique	Sustrans Leeds	
Our team of 80 amazing volunteers	The event planning group	
Climate Action Leeds		



BalbirSingh
dancecompany



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

