



# **Review of National Trails and Routes**

**National Consultation 27 Jan 2009**

**Evidence summary and recommendations**

# Definition

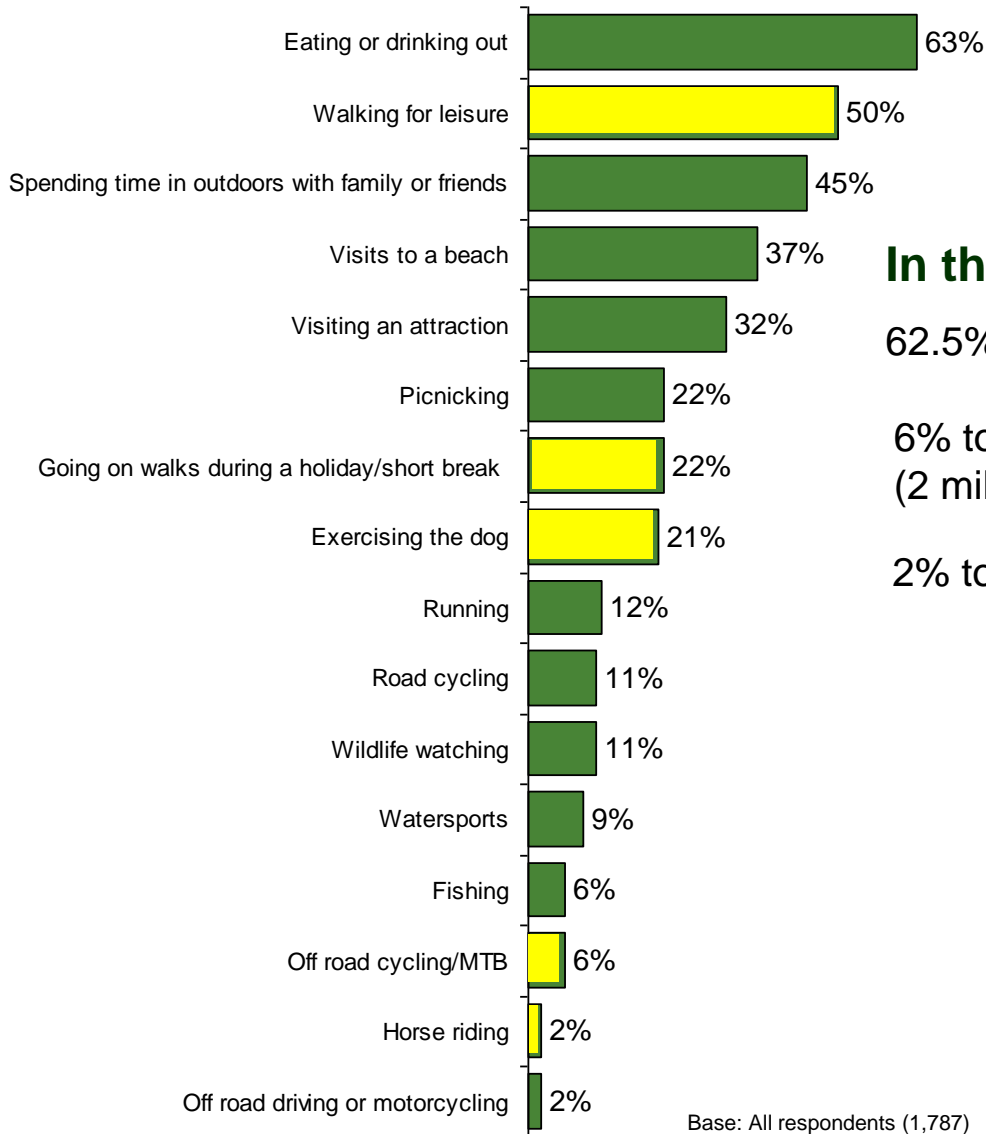
Mainly traffic-free routes for walking, cycling or horse riding that :

- have a name
- can be enjoyed over a series of days as well as for short trips
- are promoted as an attraction to visitors as well as local people
- are managed and promoted as part of the local, regional or national picture for recreation

# Review aims

- Who uses trails and routes and what experiences do they seek
- How to increase and diversify use
- Differences between National Trails and other routes
- Smarter ways of managing and funding National Trails

# Leisure participation: adults



**In the 12 months prior to the survey:**

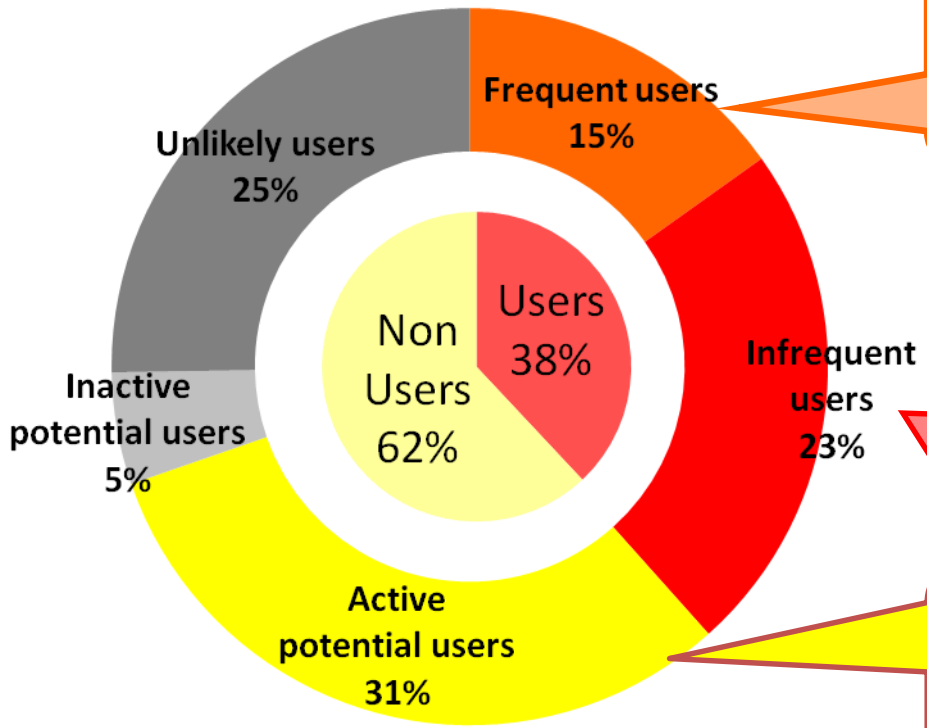
62.5% took part in leisure walking (26 million).

6% took part in off-road mountain biking or cycling (2 million)

2% took part in horse riding (1 million)

Base: All respondents (1,787)

# The Opportunity

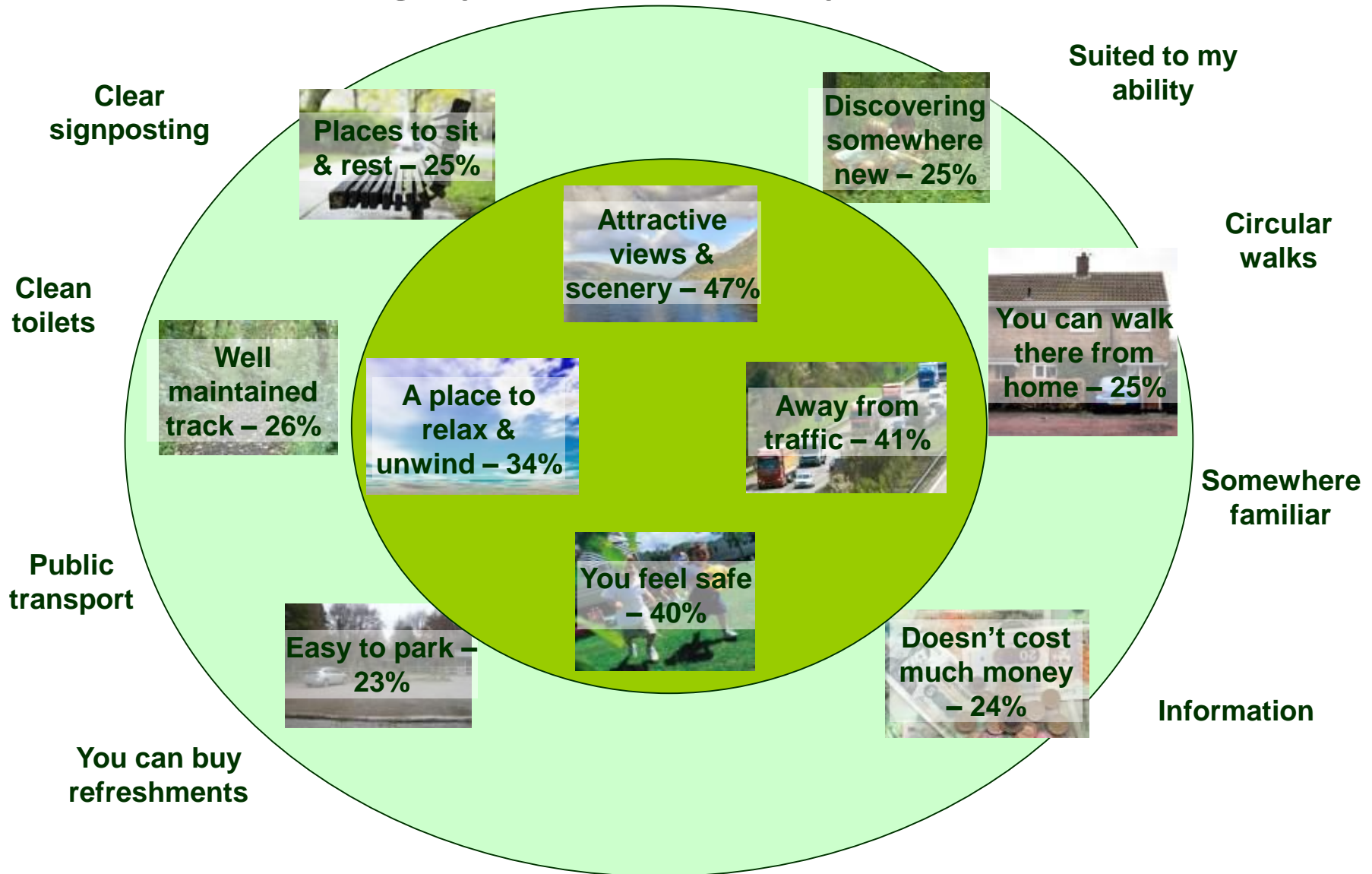


6 million (15%) people could be encouraged to take a trail break or enjoy more routes while on holiday

9 million (23%) people could be encouraged to walk, cycle and ride more often locally and while on holiday

15 million (36%) people could be encouraged to be more active to improve their health as part of their every day lives

# Choosing a place to walk – important factors



# Increasing use

What would make people more likely to use routes in future??



**Increasing local use**

## Users

**Something - 65%**

Improve path conditions  
More parking on paths  
More printed information  
More circular routes  
Better signposting

## Non-users

**Something - 42%**

More printed information  
Better signposting  
Good places to eat & drink  
Better choice of routes in local area



**Increasing use outside of local area**

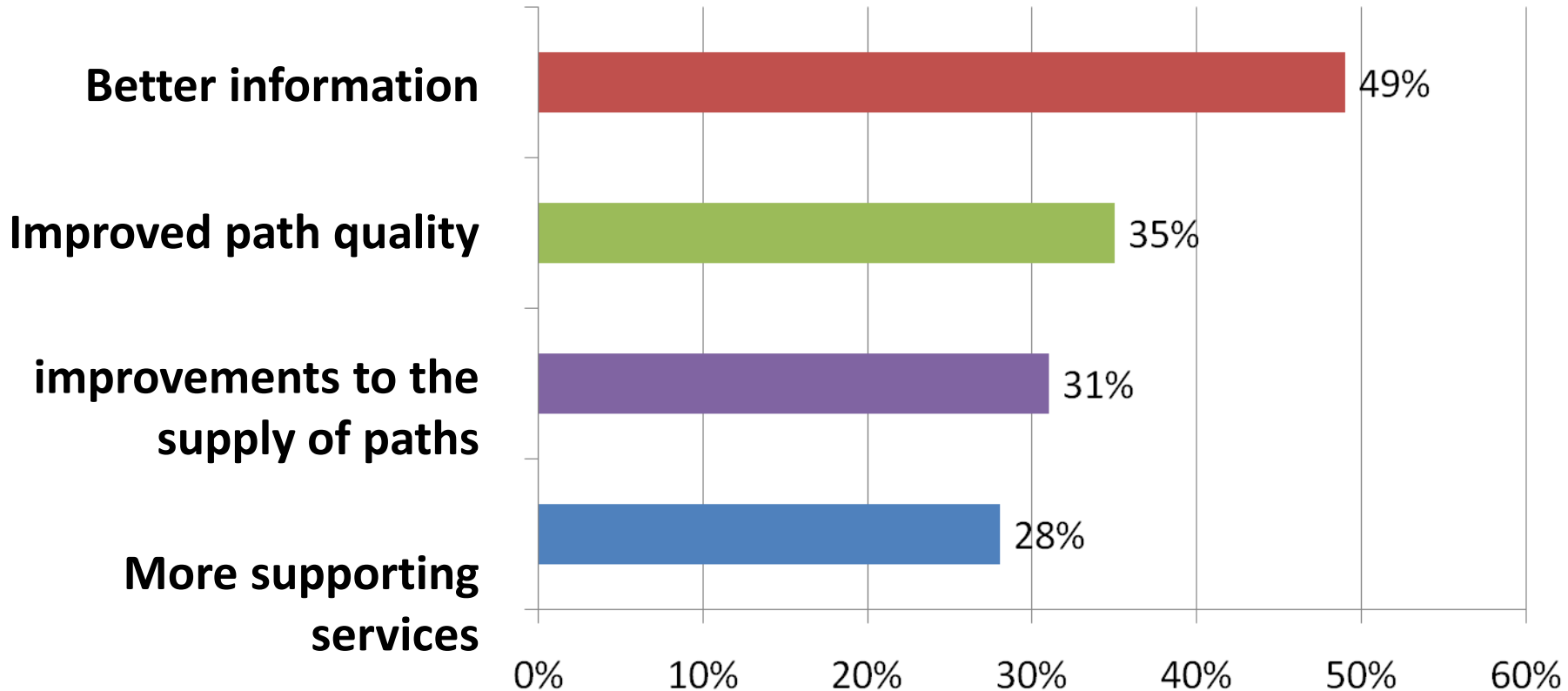
**Something - 51%**

More routes connecting interesting places  
More printed and on-line information about routes and accommodation

**Something - 31%**

More routes connecting interesting places  
More printed and on-line information about routes and accommodation

# People's needs to use trails and routes more

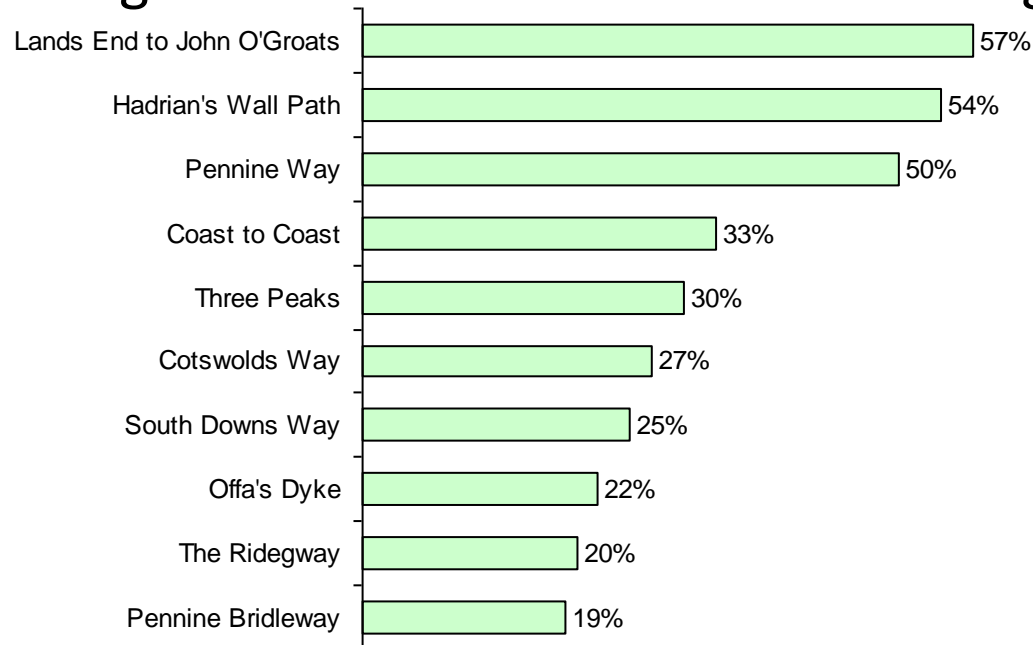




## Awareness of Trails and Routes

- **61%** of adult population are aware that Strategic Recreation Routes exist in England (25 million).
- **52%** expect there to be one or more route in their local area.
- **26%** can provide the name of one or more route. Highest recall of local routes.
- Prompted recognition of the names of routes is higher:

### The 'Top 10'



# The difference between National Trails and other routes

An average of **20p** is spent on National Trails per user

Only **1%** of authorities can relate costs to user numbers

Measure	National Trails	Strategic recreational routes
Quality of environment	★★★	★★
Quality of experience	★★	★
Quality of route	★★	★
Effectiveness of management	★★	★
Value for money	★★	★
Iconic status	★★★★	★
Prevalence to recommend	★★★	★★

**55%** of the land corridor around National Trails is **managed within agri-environment schemes**, national coverage is **44%**.

**77%** of NTs work with **volunteers** to help manage the trail, compared to **13%** of SRRs

# Summary of findings

- 1. There are 15 million potential users of trails and routes who are mainly not aware of them.** They come from all ages, income levels and cultural backgrounds.
- 2. Providing high quality information about trails and routes would increase awareness and routes.**
- 3. Two thirds of highway authorities believe there are enough or too many trails and routes in England.**
- 4. One third of highway authorities think there are too few.** In rural areas concern is for more cycling and horse riding. In urban areas (71% are urban) the concern is routes closer to where people live.
- 5. There are no recognised standards for routes apart from the National Trails Quality Standard.** These are too expensive to apply widely elsewhere.

# Summary of findings

6. **Very few routes other than National Trails support services such as baggage handling and accommodation booking.**
7. **National Trails stand out from other routes in every way, especially in quality of environment, experience and iconic status**
8. **There is little strategic direction in the future management and promotion of National Trails.**
9. **There is potential to improve both the environment, and links to settlements and places of interest, within trail corridors.**
10. **Natural England's grant system causes inefficiencies due to its short term nature.**

# Recommendations: public facing

- 1. The best trails and routes in England.** Develop an accreditation system to identify the best routes in the country.
- 2. Visitor information.** Create and promote a new dynamic website to enable users and potential users to learn about, enjoy and appreciate all routes in England.

# Recommendations: management effectiveness

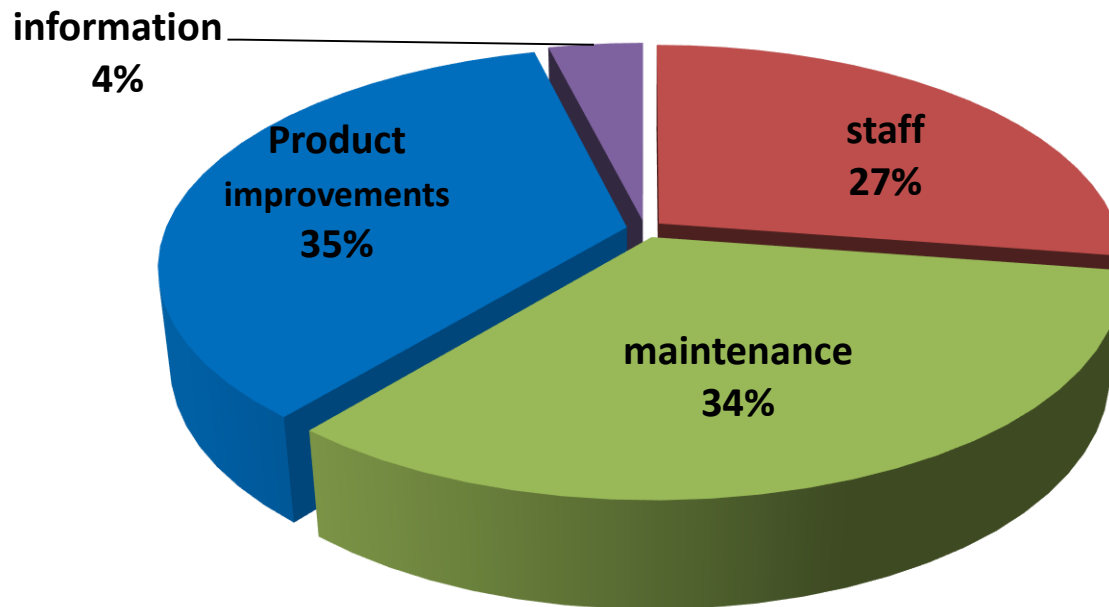
- 3. Management Information.** Establish a national methodology for collecting and sharing evidence on levels of use, satisfaction, costs and economic impact.
- 4. Natural England grants.** Modernise NE's grant system, prioritise the current NT quality standards & link grants more closely to results.
- 5. Volunteering.** Recruit and support more volunteers to assist with the management and promotion of trails and routes.
- 6. Trail & Route staff.** Improve the 'team working' of people managing National Trails.
- 7. A new management model.** Encourage more progression in Trail management.

# Proposed new management model

Construction	Early years	Maturity	Adding Value
There is a plan and resources to construct a trail	Trail is open, signed and promoted	Trail is consistently maintained to a high standard	Trail & corridor improves, other routes are promoted
<b>Priorities</b>			<b>More Strategic Role</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• creating the product</li> <li>• delivery partnerships</li> <li>• management agreements</li> <li>• practical action</li> <li>• launch</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• completing some sections</li> <li>• marketing</li> <li>• maintenance and monitoring systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• maintenance systems in place</li> <li>• most improvements completed</li> <li>• information delivery in place</li> <li>• audits and monitoring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• links to urban centres via public transport and connections with attractions/other routes</li> <li>• promotion alongside other routes</li> <li>• better use of HLS</li> <li>• enhanced volunteer networks</li> <li>• visitor services</li> <li>• innovative projects</li> </ul>

# Natural England's current commitment

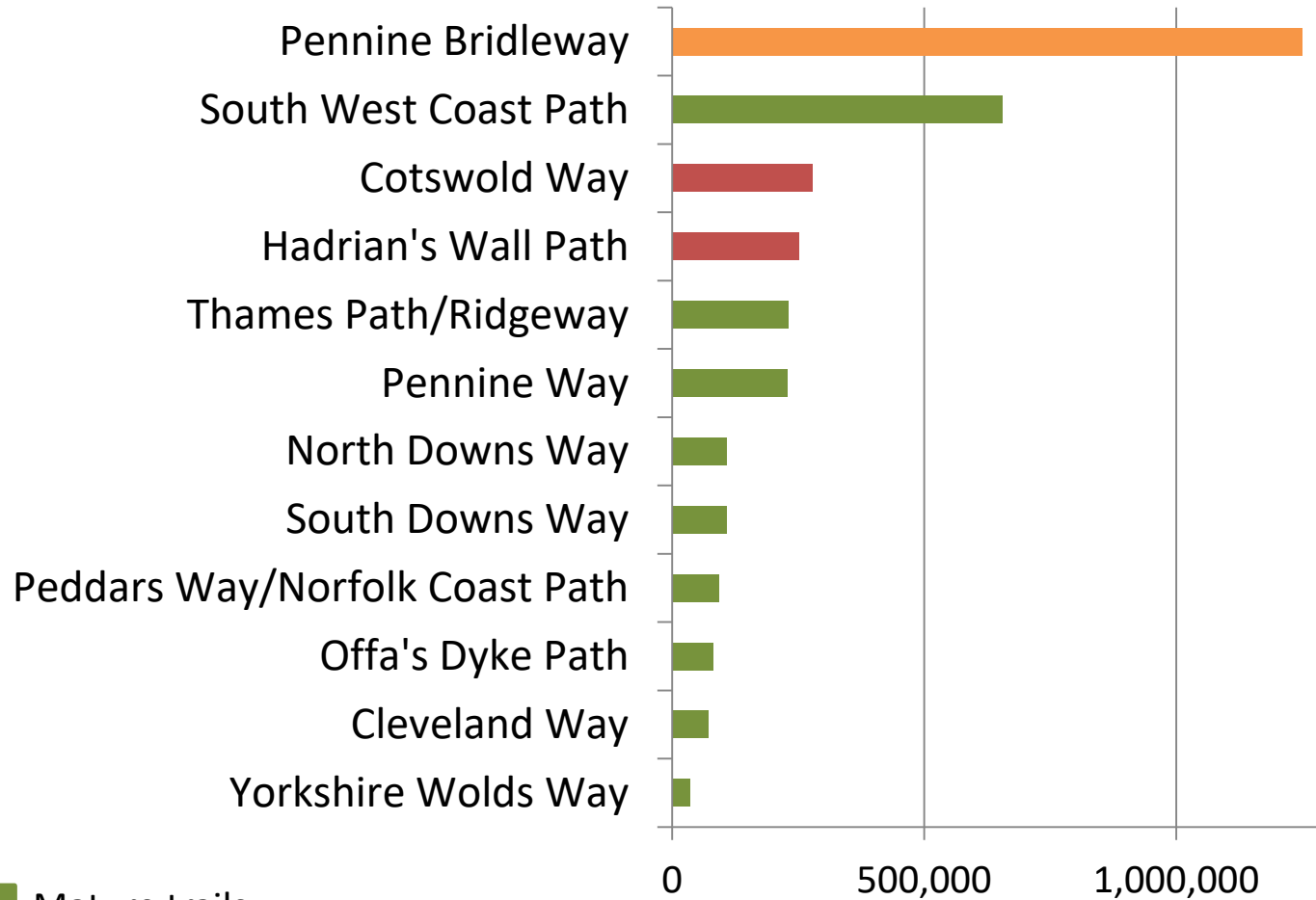
£2.3m per year on 13 National Trails + £1.2m on Pennine Bridleway  
£0 per year on 564 recreational routes






*“National Trails are better known and understood than National Nature Reserves. The public do not generally understand who pays for National Trails - many believe all are owned by the National Trust.”*

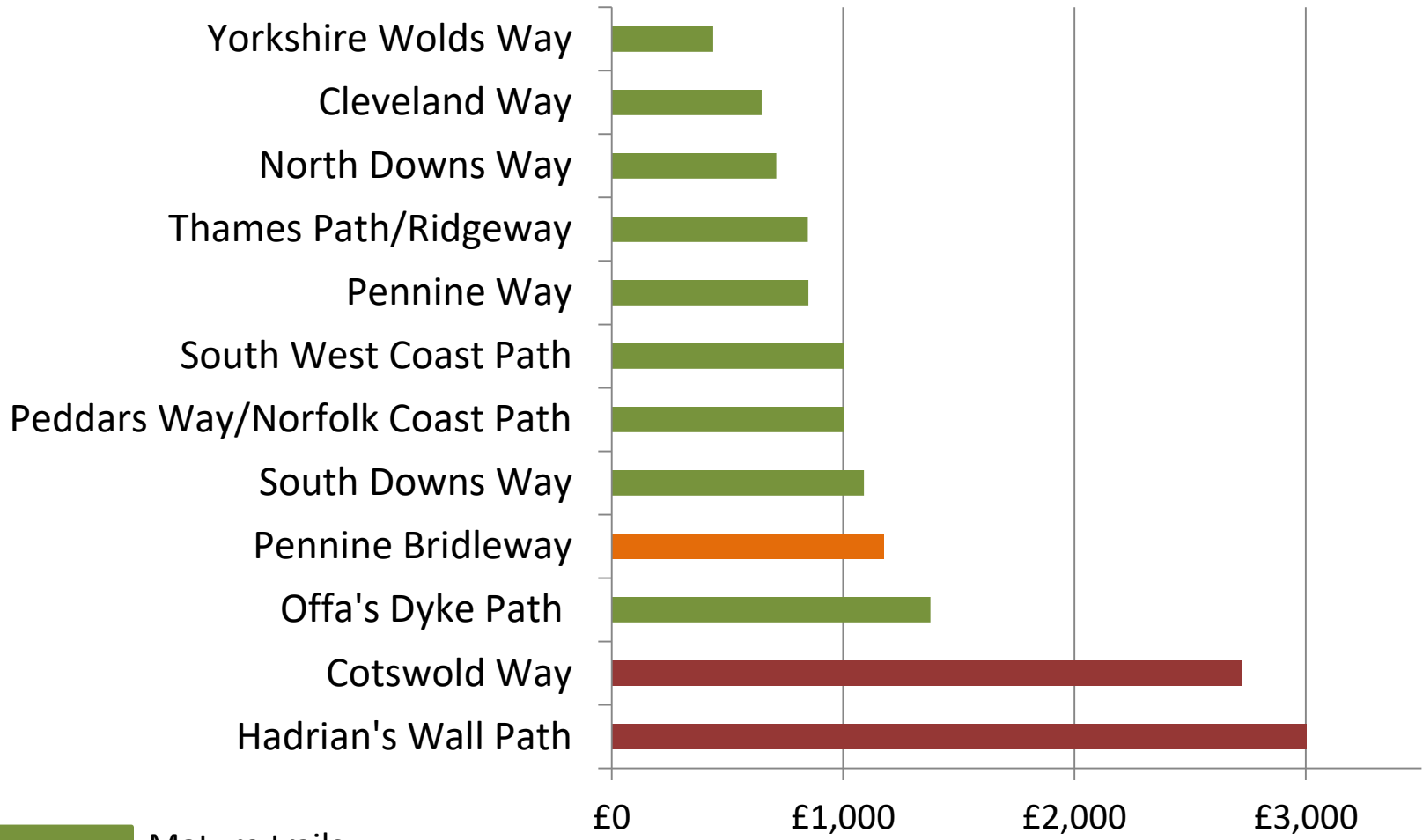





## Natural England contribution by trail 08/09



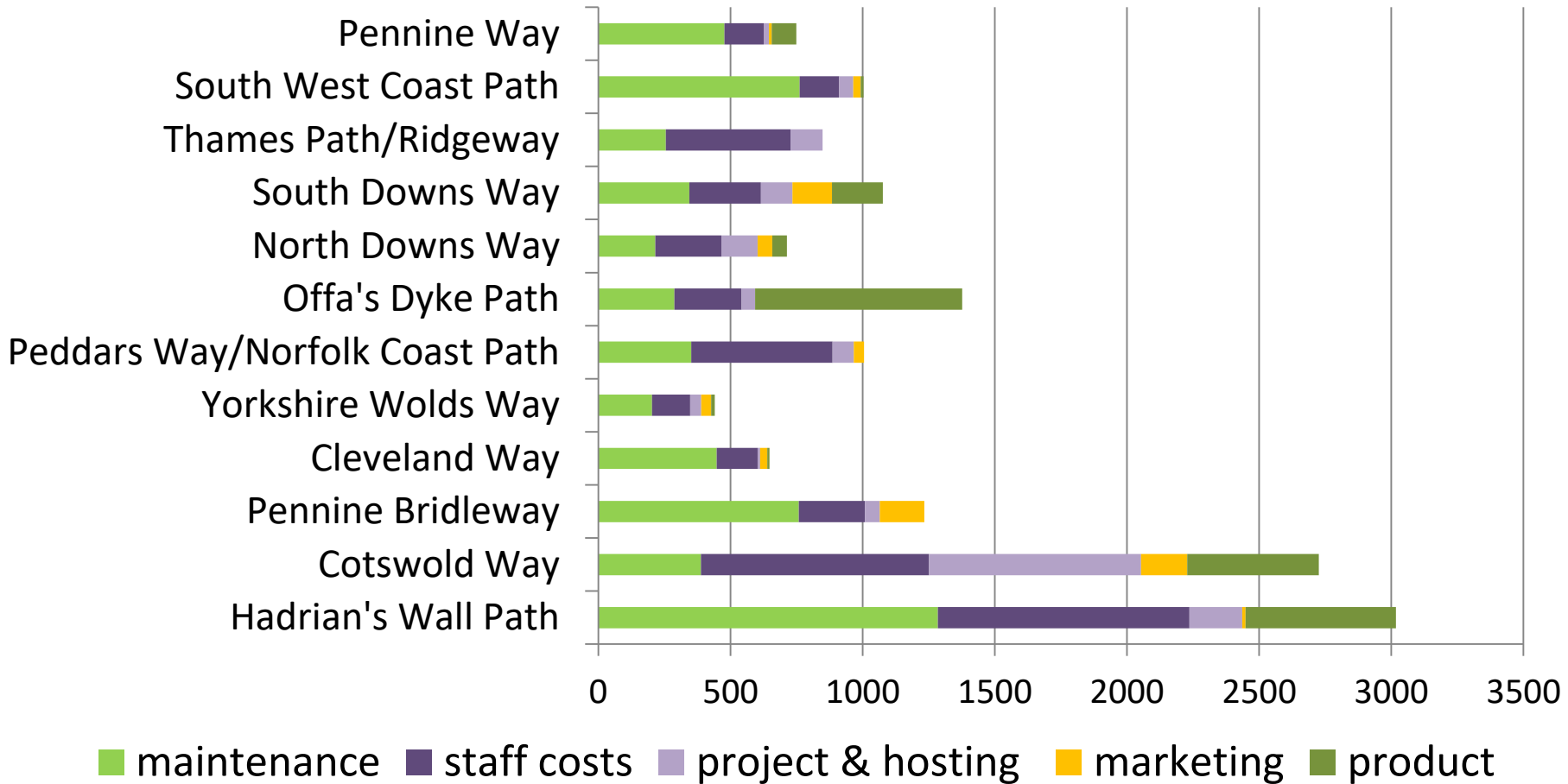
-  Mature trails
-  New trails – includes all costs
-  Early years trails

# Overall costs per mile



-  Mature trails
-  New trails – excludes construction costs
-  Early years trails

# Trail costs per mile



# Discussion time

- 3 groups
- 60 minutes
- Rapporter svp

# The Spanish Inquisition

- Are national trails an outdated concept?
- What justifies national trails getting more funding per mile than other rights of way?
- If we faced a 50% cut in national funding what or where would be the top priority?

# Questions

## public facing recommendations

### 1. Selecting the Best Trails and routes

- a. would it be useful to highway authorities ?
- b. would it be useful to the public ?
- c. How do you think we should identify the best routes ?
- d. How could the public be involved ?
- e. Is Natural England the right body to lead on this ?

### 2. A single source Visitor Information

- a. Would it be useful to highway authorities?
- b. Would it be useful to the public?
- c. How will it complement what you already do ?

# Questions

## management recommendations

### 3. Better management information:

- a. Would a toolkit of monitoring methodologies be useful ?
- b. What would be most useful to you ?
- c. Would access to national data be useful ?

### 4. Improving the grants system

- a. What changes would help you ?
- b. What difference would they make ?

### 5. Increasing volunteering

- a. What are the barriers ?
- b. What action is needed ?

# Questions

## management recommendations

### 6 Staff working on Trails and Routes

- a. How can we share and develop expertise better?

### 7. The New Management Model for National Trails

- a. Do you agree that Trails have different management needs at different stages of their life ?
- b. How can NT staff on mature trails widen their roles to look at corridor and marketing improvements ?
- c. How can you help to attract external funding from health, education, agriculture, the lottery, RDAs, tourism businesses?
- d. How do we get better value for all of our spend on National Trails?