

Returning to ‘a place to hang out’: Leisure behaviours, experiences and expectations of rural youth in Somerset 1998-2011



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1.1 Executive Summary

1.1.1 Background

Somerset Rural Youth Project (SRYP) is a charitable organisation offering a range of services to support young people. These include advocacy and advice, volunteering opportunities, social, educational and recreational activities and facilitating 'community participation'. SRYP's vision of Somerset is as a place where young people feel they belong and are not limited by access to opportunities and services.

To tailor services to the young people living in the area, over the past 15 years SRYP has worked in close partnership with the University of Exeter. Research was carried out in 1998, 2003, 2007 and 2011 to identify the social, cultural and economic characteristics of rural life in Somerset, and the educational, employment, and training needs of young people living in the area. This report compares the survey data produced during each research phase (1998-2011) to identify trends as well as the changing circumstances of young people. In particular, the research in 2011 focused on the impact of the UK economic crisis (2008-date) on young people's opportunities and aspirations.

1.1.2 Purpose of the research

The research examines the socio-economic attributes of rural Somerset, and the leisure behaviour, experiences, and expectations of rural youth. The findings presented below are based on data from the same questionnaire survey carried out in 1998, 2003, 2007, and 2011, examining the personal and household characteristics of participants, their leisure activities, and attitudes towards living in the countryside. To augment the data and provide greater insight, during each research phase in depth discussion groups were held with local young people. This project is the only longitudinal study of its kind and offers invaluable insight into the experiences of young people living in Somerset across generations.

1.1.3 Research Aims

- To examine whether and how the experiences of young people living in rural Somerset have changed since 1998.
- To identify young people's barriers to social, cultural and economic participation in rural areas.
- To investigate the aspirations and leisure behaviour of rural youth.

1.4 Key Findings

1. Over the past decade socio-economic and gender inequalities have widened in rural Somerset.

- **The findings suggest that the number of women employed in professional or managerial roles has declined since 2007, while the number of men has increased.**
- **In general unemployment has risen in rural Somerset since 1998.**
- **The unemployment rate for men is below the national average, while the rate for women is above.**
- **Since 2003 rising numbers of young people between the ages of 13 and 16 have no income.**
- **Since 2007 there has been a decline in the availability of part-time work for Under 16s.**

2. Increasingly young people have less freedom from adult supervision.

- **The leisure activities of young people in rural Somerset have not altered significantly since 1998.**
- **Gender differences are evident in the leisure behaviour of young people. Young men prefer formal and informal sports activities, young women prefer socialising and formal sports activities.**
- **Since the original research was carried out there has been an increase in the provision of formal activities, while young people's movements in informal spaces are monitored and restricted.**
- **As a result young people in rural Somerset still need places to 'hang out'.**

3. Increasingly young people do not feel a valued part of rural society.

- The young people's feelings towards living in the countryside were mixed – many young people view living in the countryside to be a positive experience due to the environment, they also feel however isolated and cut off from amenities.
- An increasing number of young people feel that they do not have a say in their village.
- At the same time there has been a decline in interest amongst young people to take part in local decision-making.
- Gender differences are evident however – a higher percentage of girls reported wanting a say and being involved in local decision-making than young men.
- Increasingly young people feel that their choices of occupation in the countryside are limited.



1.2 Introduction

When most people think of the 'countryside' they picture village life offering calm, space and freedom away from the crowds of city living. According to Layton & Leyshon (2011: 1) however, the increase in wealthy commuters and retirees moving to villages to start 'a new life in the country', means that – "rural England is continuing to experience a huge displacement of its young people". This, the Commission for Rural Communities (CRC) suggests, is "the greatest threat to the future viability of our rural communities" (State of the Countryside Report 2009). Yet, while a great deal of attention has been paid to the experiences of children and young people living in urban areas, less has been said about rural youth. The small amount of work carried out by academics focuses on structural barriers, such as the lack of housing, employment, and transport facilities. Instead, by placing young people at the heart of the research process, we suggest that it is possible to rethink the nature and extent of youth marginality in the countryside.

A number of academic studies reveal very uneven patterns of wealth and opportunity in the countryside, and have identified serious 'pockets' of deprivation in what often appear to be affluent areas (Shucksmith et al 2009; Bosworth et al 2011). Due to high levels of job insecurity and the types of employment available (for example seasonal farming and catering jobs), those living in the countryside are also more vulnerable to downturns in the economy (CRC 2012). Although, as a result of the recession the percentage of young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs) is greater in cities, according to a recent report published by the Commission for Rural Communities "the speed in which levels have increased is greater in rural areas" (2012, p. 6). At the same time, the withdrawal of public sector services and uncertainty regarding the capacity of private, voluntary and community groups to fill the gaps is likely to see widening disparity in terms of the support available to young people (CRC 2012). To help address these concerns and to ensure that services are targeted to meet demand, the research examines the experiences, opportunities and aspirations of young people.

The original research carried out in 1998 and 2003 set out to gather empirical data on the lifestyle choices and leisure activities of young people living in

Somerset. These reports examined levels of participation in organised clubs and groups, young people's involvement with local decision-making and access to training and careers advice. This was intended to provide greater insight into how youth services, leisure provision and participatory schemes could be improved. While these original aims remain central to the project, due to the changing socio-economic context they have been up-dated. By comparing the survey data produced by different generations of respondents, the research also examines how the current recession has impacted on young people living in rural Somerset.

The purpose of the research is therefore fivefold. First, it prioritises the voices of young people living in rural Somerset to capture the variety of experience. Second, it identifies consistent themes and investigates the changing circumstances of rural youth by comparing the views of successive generations. Third, it provides insight into the experiences of young people so that services are better able to support them. Fourth, the project contributes to existing academic and policy knowledge by offering the only longitudinal study of the changing circumstances of rural youth. Finally, it is important for academic research to be informed by the experience of policy makers and practitioners on the ground. The SRYP should be confident that their collaborations with the University of Exeter have contributed to the improved understanding of rural youth culture and citizenship.

For example, the research contributes to wider debates on the condition of rural youth service provision. The main audience of the work of the SRYP is young people of school age. Leyshon and Fish (2011) and Pykett et al (2010: 491) argue that targeting young people, through committing resources to develop soft- and hard-skills and provide spaces in which to hang out, represents a social investment in "young people's perceived potential to change society for the better". Pykett et al offers two reasons why developing young people as agents of change can be successful. First, young people are considered to be more open to new ideas and to changing their established opinions and beliefs than adults. Mitchell (2006: 390) argues that young people "are particularly impressionable 'subjects' whose formation in schools and families has historically been of great interest to hegemonic powers

worldwide". The downside of this is that young people are potentially malleable and hence most vulnerable to neoliberal acts of persuasion, which can be countered with the development of appropriate soft-skills. Second, young people are capable of diffusing their newly learnt systems of 'virtuous' ethics in the home, working towards change in the attitudes of their parents via pester power or "the ability of children in many families to gain access to the products they desire by wearing their parents down so that they give in and purchase" (Handsley et al 2009: 8). 'Pester power' is enjoying a renaissance as a means for young people to enact attitudinal and behavioural change via processes of wearing down. Indeed, young people have been identified as key actors in initiating attitudinal and behavioural shifts in the UK (Nerlich et al 2010), particularly in relation to ethical consumption (Pykett et al 2010) and environmental change (Measham, 2006). The SRYP is a participatory organisation that generates 'hope' by empowering young people to change their lives and influence future generations. Rural youth harbour the potential to become not just the moral arbiters of family consumption practices, but more generally the moral guardians of future social conditions in the countryside.

The longitudinal study here undertaken also contributes to work on citizenship. The work of the SRYP over the period of the data collection can be situated within a 'citizenship framework', introduced into secondary schools in England in 2002. This educational reform focused upon potential literacy, community involvement, and social and moral responsibility (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority 1999). The policy emerged at a time when the social and cultural context of the UK was perceived as changing rapidly. As Straeheli and Hammett (2010) argue, society was seen to be fragmenting and losing some 'traditional' markers of national identity, notably the countryside as a defining feature of a quintessential Englishness located in a green and pleasant land. New Labour's response was to promote cultural belonging through citizenship education. This policy was predicated upon "the foregrounding of concepts of justice, advocacy and representation, and of identity and diversity – introducing ideas of 'community cohesion', changing identities and interconnectedness of people within the UK and beyond" (Pykett 2009: 804). Citizenship is about fostering "a sensibility that links the

elements of citizenship such that individuals can imagine themselves at local, national and global levels” (Straeheli and Hammet 2010: 674). Osler and Starkey (2005) suggest that the policy placed emphasis on helping young people not to focus on their ‘difference’ to others, but instead on the shared similarities that exist between them and those citizens positioned as different. By working together in a ‘learning society’ a sense of global citizenship can be cultivated (Roman 2003). Citizenship therefore represents a driving force of policy and service provision to educate young people as ‘active citizens’. Intended to extend outside the regular pedagogic spaces of the school, this ethos sought to improve the health of communities as coherent, inclusive spaces through providing opportunities for young people to participate in community led initiatives as well as decision-making activities. The SRYP is a participatory project that enables young people to find the space and time to work and rework their competencies and capabilities and empower them to develop their future selves through directing knowledge, experience and activities. The project throws a spotlight on young people and the journeys they make in life as a necessary part of forging identity. The SRYP helps young people to realise, through providing spaces oozing with the possibilities of life, that not only “the future can be different from the present, but that the past might have unfolded differently” (Bennett 2007: 458).

1.3 Methodology

The findings presented below are based on the analysis of participants' responses to the same questionnaire survey carried out in 1998, 2003, 2007 and 2011. To augment the survey data and provide greater insight, during each research phase in depth discussion groups were held with local young people. The methodology was implemented as follows:

- Questionnaire survey and follow up
- In-depth discussion groups
- Comparative analysis

The chosen methodology was determined by a number of key criteria:

- The need to collect background information on the characteristics, lifestyles and experiences of young people in rural Somerset.
- The project's wish to base responses on a wide body of recent evidence.
- The importance of communicating directly with young people.
- The wish to identify whether and how the circumstances of rural youth have changed over the past 14 years.

1.3.1 Research design and implementation

The same survey was used across the research period.¹ The 1998 data sample was made up of 203 respondents. In 2003 there were 152 respondents, and in 2007 and 2011, 119 and 200 respectively. The initial survey carried out in 1998 looked at the experiences of young people between the ages of 13 and 16, and 16 and 25. In 2003 due to problems recruiting older participants, rather than dividing the sample in two, the experiences of young people aged between 13 and 19 were examined together. This approach was taken on account that the vast majority of the sample were aged between 14 and 16 and therefore it was not considered possible or necessary to disaggregate the research sample into two categories. The identified exception, in the 1998 survey, was the difference between the mobility and financial resources of younger and older

¹ Appendix 1 – Questionnaire

respondents and this has been taken into consideration when presenting the findings below. The age range of the 2007 and 2011 samples is 13 to 16. Therefore, to help establish consistency and identify the changing circumstances of rural youth over the past fourteen years, the responses of participants aged between 16 and 25 included in the 1998 report have been omitted from the findings. Although the 2003 data set includes respondents between the ages of 16 and 19, due to their low number this does not have significant sway over the research findings. The report therefore primarily examines the experiences of young people aged between 13 and 16 living in rural Somerset.

A brief description of the different ways in which respondents were recruited has also been included because this may have influenced the data. In 1998 and 2011 the young people were contacted through local schools and asked to complete the questionnaire during school time.² In contrast in 2003 and 2007 young people were recruited through local youth services. These included Somerset Rural Youth Project, Somerset County Youth Service, Young Somerset, Young Farmers Club, and the Diocesan Youth Service. This is considered significant when investigating the leisure behaviour of rural youth, as the different ways in which respondents were recruited may skew the response rate and the data on youth group attendance, access to services and involvement in participatory democracy schemes. This inconsistency is also taken into consideration when comparing and presenting the data on leisure activity.

During each research period focus groups were recorded with local young people to augment the questionnaire data,. To ensure the key themes of the research were addressed and to establish consistency, the same semi-structured guide was used for each.³ The guide however was intended to be flexible to allow participants to explore previously unidentified themes.

² In 1998 secondary schools in Minehead, Wiveliscombe, Huish Episcopi and Cheddar were approached.

³ Appendix 2 – SRYP focus group guide

1.3.2 Analysis

Analysis of the data began in March 2012 once the 2011 surveys had been returned and the focus groups carried out. To produce the longitudinal study below, the findings of secondary analysis of the 1998 and 2003 reports was compared with preliminary analysis of the 2007 and 2011 data sets. To establish consistency and facilitate comparative analysis, when organising the 2007 and 2011 survey results the original analytical framework and index code were used. However, some variation was unavoidable. For example, for questions 1a,b,c, 2, 10c and 23 extra codes were added because that the answers supplied did not easily fit the existing categories. These inconsistencies when they occur are explicitly referred to in the text.

Using SPSS, frequency tests and cross-tabulation were carried out on the 2007 and 2011 data. The criteria for choosing which tests to run was determined by the findings of the previous reports. However, once the preliminary analysis had been carried out further tests were run to investigate emergent themes. Content analysis of the focus group transcripts was not performed. Instead, participants' responses have been selected to contextualise the survey findings and develop understanding by painting a picture of experience.

The research is the only longitudinal study of its kind. However, caution should be exercised when publicising the findings, as they are not generalisable due to the small sample sizes. Nevertheless, a number of key trends related to the changing opportunities and aspirations of young people in Somerset have been identified from the data. It is suggested that these require more in-depth and rigorous investigation to capture the current circumstances of rural youth and the impact of the recession.

2.0 Findings

The findings of the report have been divided into three main sections. The first examines the changing circumstances of rural youth, by comparing the household characteristics and personal finances of respondents during the different research phases. The second section looks at the leisure behaviour and expectations of young people living in rural Somerset, and again compares the findings taken from the different samples. The final section

deals with respondents' attitudes towards living in the countryside, and explores their views on the opportunities and barriers they experience.

2.1 Socio-economic characteristics

The split between girls and boys across the different samples was roughly the same. A breakdown of the gender of respondents has been included nevertheless, as later on the report compares the leisure activity of boys and girls and their different opportunities and aspirations.

Table 1: **Gender of Respondents**

1998	43% Female	57% Male
2003	58% Female	42% Male
2007	46% Female	49% Male
2011	46% Female	44% Male

Across the different generations of young people involved, the majority reported that they had lived in the countryside for 5 or more years. In 1998 the figure was 52%, in 2003 60%, in 2007 74% and 2011 67%.

Due to the age of the young people involved in the project, the majority were still at school. In 1998 all respondents in the 13-16 category attended school. The inclusion of young people over the age of 16 in the 2003 sample meant however, that 80% were at school, 11% were employed and 2 of the young people claimed to be unemployed. All those who took part in the survey in 2007 and 2011 were at school.

In 1998, it was reported that the majority of respondents were mobile. Seventy-five percent travelled to school by bus, 22% walked and 19% were given a lift.⁴ Comparison of these results with the 2007 and 2011 data suggests that over the past fifteen years there has not been a significant change in the ways in which young people travel to school. In 2007 it was reported that 39% travelled by bus, 13% walked, and 20% were given a lift by a parent. Amongst those who took part in the research in 2011, 54% took the bus, 19% walked, and 12% were given a lift.

⁴ Originally the 1998 and 2003 reports included information on car ownership. This question however was omitted from the 2007 and 2011 surveys. This action was taken by SRYP who felt that the reported high number of cars per household was misleading, creating a false impression of the socio-economic circumstances of many families in rural areas.

In 2003 the focus of the study was slightly different. The authors looked at access to transport. They reported that 28% of respondents claimed to encounter transport problems on a daily basis and a further 61% had occasional problems. Based on their observations of the focus groups, the authors also note that –

Whilst the majority of young people recorded having transport problems they also spoke at length during in-depth discussion groups about how they negotiate lifts with parents and friends. This research shows that rural youth do not feel themselves to be exclusively marginalised or indeed isolated in this manner, as they become skilled negotiators (Leyshon & Little 2003, p. 14).

Amongst those who took part in the focus groups in 2011, views of public transport were mixed. On the one hand it was reported that getting to Taunton by bus was relatively easy '*you've just got to know the timetables*'. On the other, the same participant pointed out that public transport was expensive '*it would be nice if they were cheaper – from mine to Taunton it is 7 quid*'. Participants also identified a number of general problems with public transport. These included, for example, the infrequency and timings of buses, the amount of time they took to complete what were relatively quick journeys by car, patchy public transport networks, as well as the cost. In line with the findings of previous reports, a number of participants explained that they managed transport problems by asking parents or friends for lifts, as the following conversation illustrates:

Researcher: *Do you take buses and trains?*

Participant: *I haven't got many buses since I've been here.*

Researcher: *How do you get about?*

Participant: *I either walk or give my Dad petrol money.*

These results suggest that recent claims in a report published by CRC – that “the high cost and low availability of public transport in rural areas is a significant challenge for young people” and “young people in rural areas are more dependent than their urban counterparts on public transport” – may not be universal experiences (CRC 2012, p. 7). Instead the research findings suggest that young people's experiences of 'getting around' are more mixed.

Therefore it is argued that, while improvements to public transport would undoubtedly increase the mobility of young people in rural areas, other unique barriers serve to inhibit rural youth, as explored in more detail later on.

2.1.1 Household Characteristics

The research suggests that there has not been a significant change in the composition of families living in rural Somerset over the past fifteen years. In 1998, 82% of respondents lived in families with 2 parents. Seventeen percent lived in single parent households, primarily with their mother. In 2003, 96% of respondents lived in families with 2 parents and only 4% lived in single parent households. Amongst respondents who took part in the 2007 and 2011 survey, around a quarter reported that their parents were not together. Across the different samples however, the proportion of single-parent households remained low, as parents had settled with new partners. In 2007 the figure was 8% and in 2011 11%. The research data suggests therefore that the proportion of families headed by a lone mother in rural Somerset is well below the reported national average of 20% (ONS 2011, p. 2).⁵ Further, in contrast to the national pattern, the findings suggest that there has not been a significant rise in the number of single headed households in the area since the original research was carried out in 1998.

During the survey, respondents were asked to list family members and their occupation. These were numbered from 1 to 5. The majority of those who took part in the 2007 and 2011 research listed their mother first (62% and 57% respectively). In 2007, only 25% listed their fathers first and in 2011, 22%. This suggests that amongst the 13-16 years old included in the research the mother was viewed as the head of the household.

2.1.2 Parental Occupation

The research findings suggest that since 1998 occupation structure in Somerset has changed significantly. In 1998, the authors reported that the occupation of respondents' parents tended to be polarised between managerial and professional occupations and unskilled manual jobs. Table 2 (below, taken from the original report) compares the findings of the Somerset research with the national occupation structure of the time. The table reveals

⁵ This figure was taken from data collected in 2009.

a significant difference between the pattern in Somerset and the national picture. This led the authors to suggest that the occupational structure in Somerset was similar to other rural areas and the result of “higher levels of professional and managerial workers, often commuters, living in the countryside” (Little & Leyshon 1998, p. 8). On finding that “the Somerset sample was characterised by particularly high concentrations of men in professional occupations and women in unskilled manual jobs”, the authors also argued that the research findings confirmed existing evidence that women’s employment in rural communities is disproportionately concentrated in work requiring low levels of skill.⁶

In 2003, in 60% of households both parents were in paid work, 22% were homemakers (women only) and no parent was recorded as being ‘unemployed’. In contrast to the national picture, the recorded occupations were more heavily weighted towards the managerial and professional roles. These earlier findings reflect those of other research projects carried out at the same time examining rural lifestyles (for example see Cloke et al 1997), which suggested that some rural labour markets were skewed in favour of either professional workers or manual workers – in this case the professional ‘classes’.

Table 2: Occupational Classification 1998

Occupational Classification	Managerial/ Professional	Intermediate non-manual	Skilled & semi-skilled manual	Unskilled manual
National* (%)	19	34	40	6
Somerset (%)	41	20	18	21

*1995 General Household Survey HMSO⁷

Table 3: Occupational Classification 2003

Occupational Classification	Managerial/ Professional	Intermediate Non-manual	Skilled & semi-skilled manual	Unskilled manual
Somerset (%)	35	30	22	13

⁶ It is important to note that at the time the authors’ stressed that the responses provided during the survey were sometimes incomplete or unreliable, therefore although the ‘overall pattern was clear `[...] within this the detailed ‘real’ figures varied slightly’.

⁷ In 2008 the General Household Survey became the model of the Integrated Household Survey (HIS). In recognition, the survey was renamed the General Lifestyle Survey (GLF/GLS) in 2008. According to the Economic and Social Data Service website after consultation in Jan 2012 the Government decided that the GLF/GLS would be discontinued (www.esds.ac.uk).

Similarly, the authors of a more recent report published by the Office for National Statistics in 2011 have suggested that:

Rural areas have slightly higher proportions of people in higher managerial and professional occupations, 12% of people aged 16 to 64 compared with less than 10% in urban areas, and lower proportions of people who have never worked (which includes students) than urban areas (ONS 2011, p. 27).

The figures produced from the 2007 and 2011 data appear to support this claim, although the results suggest that the proportion of adults in ‘Higher Managerial / Professional Occupations’ is slightly higher in rural Somerset at 13% and 14% respectively.⁸

Table 4: Occupational Classification 2007

Occupational Classification	Higher Managerial/ Professional	Intermediate Occupation	Routine Occupation	Unemployed
Somerset (%)	13	26	17	5

*30% of respondents did not list their parents’ occupation

Table 5: Occupational Classification 2011

Occupational Classification	Higher Managerial/ Professional	Intermediate Occupation	Routine Occupation	Unemployed
Somerset (%)	14	26	7	5

*34% of respondents did not list their parents’ occupation

Comparison of the data produced during the different research phases suggests that over the past 15 years occupational structure in Somerset has fallen into line with the national picture – although in general the proportion of those in managerial or professional roles remains slightly higher. The research reveals further changes when one ‘drills down’ and analyses the data by gender.

⁸ When analysing the 2007 and 2011 data on parental occupational, the classifications were modified as it was perceived that the originals were outdated. The category ‘Higher Management/ Professional’ remained the same, ‘Intermediate non-manual’ was replaced by ‘Intermediate Occupation’, ‘Skilled & Semi-Skilled and Unskilled Manual’ replaced with ‘Routine Occupation’ and an ‘Unemployed’ category introduced.

Comparative analysis of the findings produced during the different research episodes suggests widening inequalities in Somerset over the past 15 years. By running cross-tabs on family set up and occupation and comparing the 2007 and 2011 samples, the data suggest that during this period the number of women employed in higher managerial or professional roles dropped from 18% to 12%.⁹ During the same period, the number of men employed in managerial or professional roles in the region appears to have doubled (14% to 32%). The findings also suggest, as demonstrated in the Tables below, that in general unemployment levels are rising in rural Somerset.

Table 6: Occupational Classification by Gender 2007

Occupational Classification	Higher Managerial/ Professional	Intermediate Occupation	Routine Occupation	Unemployed
Men (%)	14	36	21	0
Women (%)	18	33	17	7

*21% of respondents did not list their father's occupation
 ** 23% of respondents did not list their mother's occupation

Table 7: Occupational Classification by Gender 2011

Occupational Classification	Higher Managerial/ Professional	Intermediate Occupation	Routine Occupation	Unemployed
Men (%)	32	33	6	3
Women (%)	12	37	12	9

*16% of respondents did not list their father's occupation
 ** 21% of respondents did not list their mother's occupation

In 1998, only one respondent reported that their parents were 'unemployed'. In 2003 no parent was recorded as being unemployed, although 22% of women were reported to be homemakers. In both 2007 and 2011 5% of parents were unemployed. This suggests that in rural Somerset levels of unemployment have increased over the past fifteen years. This figure is below the national average of 7.7% published by the Office for National Statistics in May 2011 (ONS Statistical Bulletin May 2011). The tables also show however that when occupation structure is broken down according to gender,

⁹ The apparent inconsistencies between figures looking at general occupational structure and those broken down according to gender, is due to calculating the percentages according to the number of men and number of women separately.

unemployment rates are higher amongst women than men. In 2007, no men were recorded as being unemployed while 7% of women were without jobs. In 2011 the unemployment rate for fathers was 3%, for mothers the figure was above the national average at 9%. Further it is important to note that a significant number of respondents did not list their parent's occupation. Although it is impossible to provide any tangible evidence, the proportion of non-respondents suggests that the unemployment rate in rural Somerset is likely to be closer to the national average, while levels of unemployment amongst women living in the area, is likely to be significantly higher.

These findings suggest increasing gender inequalities in rural Somerset. It is important to note however that due to the small size of the samples, these figures should be treated with caution. Instead it is recommended that further research is required to examine the extent and causes of gender inequalities in rural areas as well as the long-term implications.

2.1.3 Personal Finance

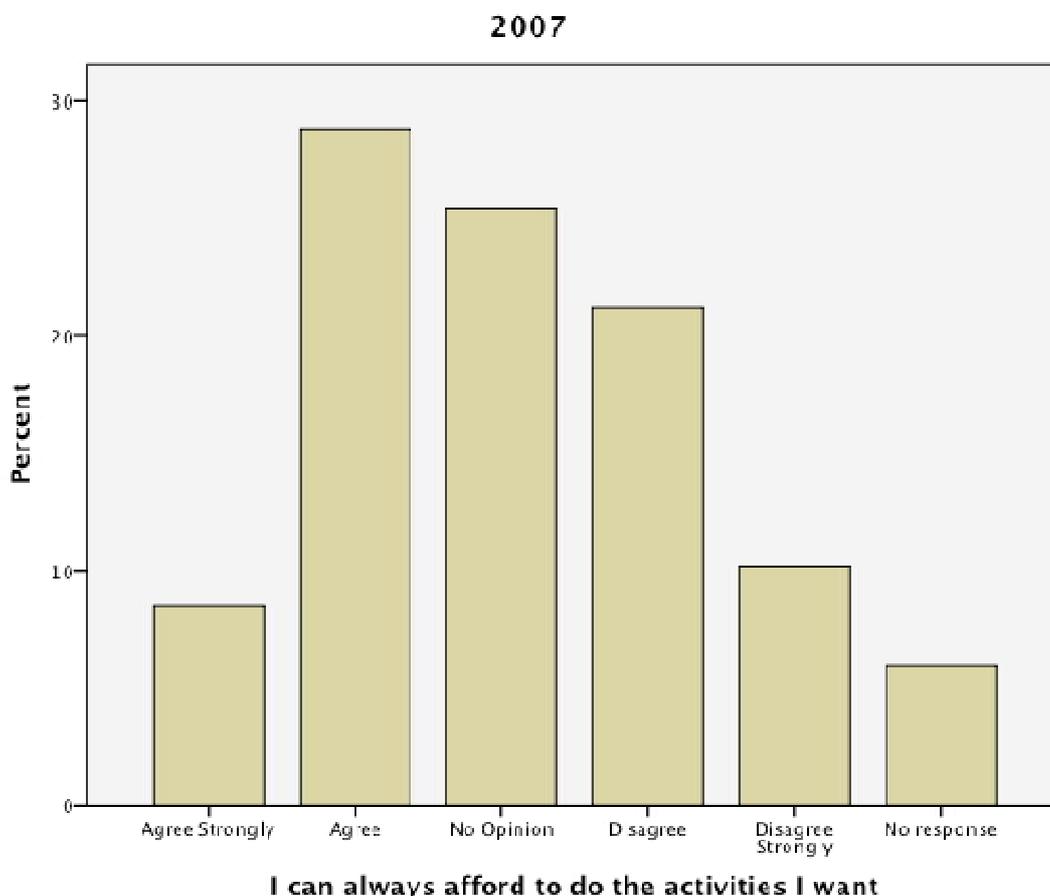
During the survey respondents were asked questions about pocket money and part-time work. Comparative analysis of the data suggests that since 2003 increasing numbers of young people living in rural areas have no form of income.

According to the authors of the 1998 report, 40% of respondents received £5 or more pocket money a week, and over 50% of the 13-16 age group had a paid job, only 20% claimed to receive no form of income (Little & Leyshon 1998, p. 20). The sorts of work undertaken by respondents varied from working on parents' farms to waiting on tables or doing a paper round. In 2003, 95% of the under-16s received pocket money or an allowance and 52% received money from part-time employment. Only 5% had no form of income (Leyshon & Little 2003, p. 15). The majority of respondents reported that they received less than ten pounds a week, while 35% claimed to receive more than ten pounds.

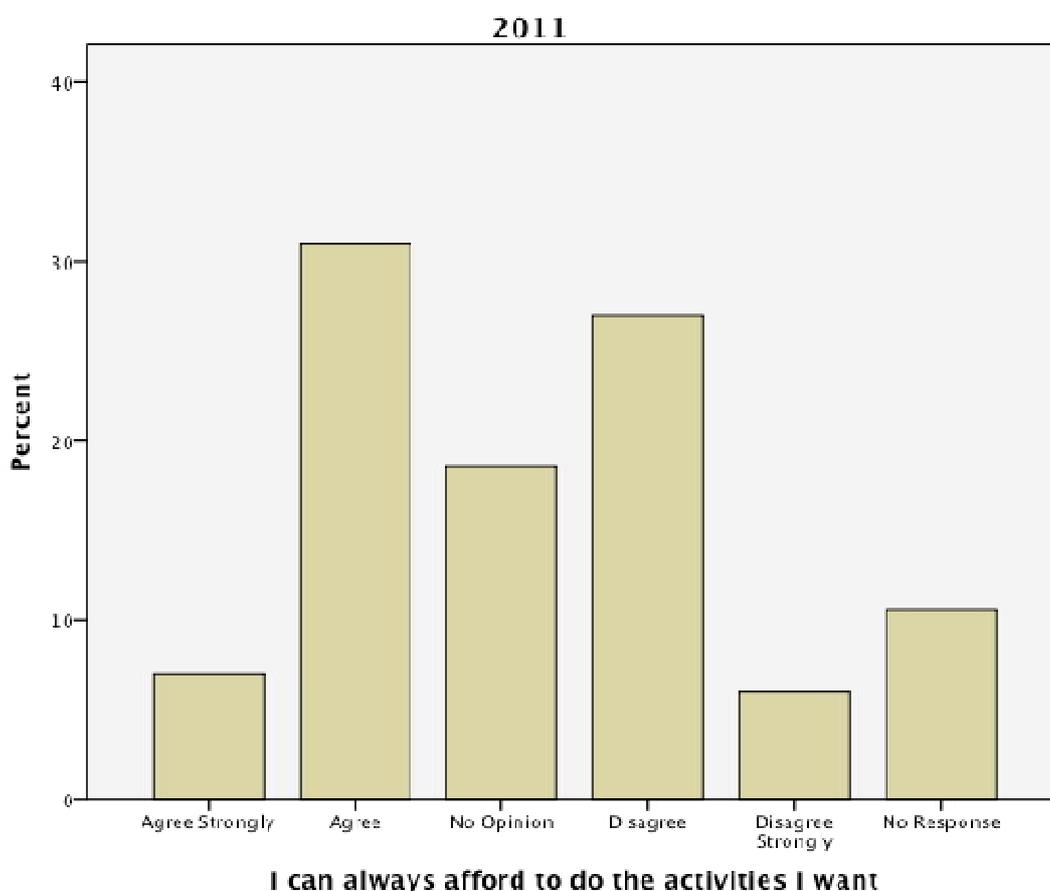
Corresponding with the findings in 1998, in 2007 47% of respondents reported receiving pocket money. Similarly in 2011 the figure was 49%. In 2007, alike to previous years, it was also reported that 48% of young people had a part-

time job. However, in 2011 this figure had dropped significantly – only 21% reported receiving money from part-time employment.

Further analysis of the data reveals that increasing numbers of young people have no form of income. In 2007, 15% of respondents received pocket money and had a part-time job. Twenty-five per cent did not receive pocket money but had a part time job, 31% received pocket money and didn't have any part-time work and 19% had no form of income. According to the data produced for 2011, 10% of respondents received pocket money and had a part time job, 11% had just a part time job, while 37% received just pocket money. Amongst this generation, over a quarter claimed to have no income (26%). Since 2003, when it was reported that only 5% of respondents were without funds, the research findings suggest that an increasing percentage of young people have no income. This result is reflected in the graphs below, in which a comparison of 2007 and 2011 data suggests that increasingly young people feel that they do not have enough money to do what they want.



In addition to the increasing number of young people with no form of income, the above findings also suggest that in Somerset, since 2003, there has been a decline in the availability of part-time work. This, it is suggested, is the direct consequence of the on-going recession and corresponds with statements made by the Commission for Rural Communities – that rural areas are more vulnerable to downturns in the economy and that the number of NEETs has increased at faster rate than in cities (CRC 2012). It is suggested that this has important implications for young people still at school, as a shortage of work experience restricts their opportunities, choices, and activities.



2.1.4 Key Findings

Over the past 15 years socio-economic and gender inequalities have widened in rural Somerset.

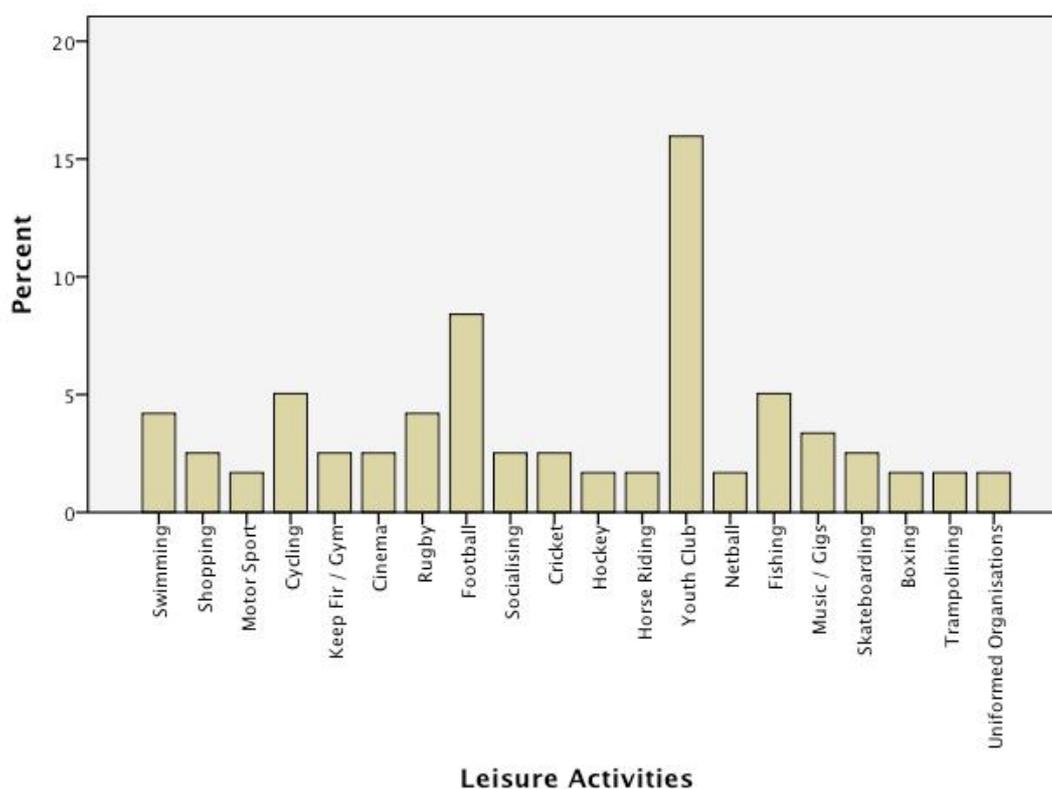
- **The number of women employed in professional or managerial roles has declined since 2007, while the number of men has increased.**
- **In general, unemployment has risen in rural Somerset since 1998.**

- The unemployment rate for men is below the national average, while the rate for women is above.
- Since 2003 rising numbers of young people between the ages of 13 and 16 have no form of income.
- Since 2007 there has been a decline in the availability of part-time work for Under 16s.

2.2 Leisure Behaviour & Expectations

Like the earlier studies this report also looks at the leisure behaviour and expectations of young people living in Somerset. At the beginning of the survey respondents were asked to write a list of the activities they were involved with.

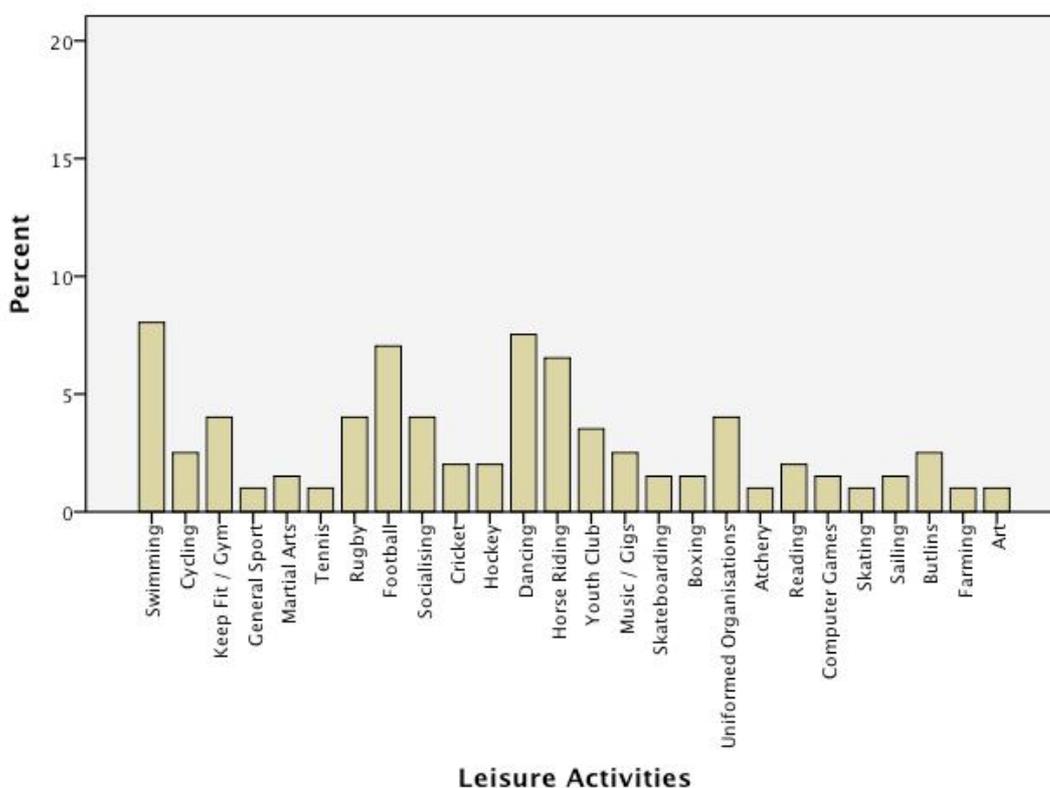
Favourite Leisure Activities 2007



By comparing the responses of participants across the different survey generations, it is apparent that the leisure behaviour of young people in the area has not altered significantly over the past fifteen years. Similar to the earlier findings, amongst respondents who took part in the 2007 and 2011 surveys, organised sport, youth clubs and socialising all scored highly. Some

variation is evident however when you look at the ordering of popular activities. In 1998, hobbies, the cinema, organised sport and computer games were the most popular. In 2003, it was organised sport followed by youth club and then shopping. The Young Farmers, horse riding, hobbies, hanging out, mountain biking and the cinema were also cited regularly. Amongst those who took part in 2007, youth club was the most popular activity. This was followed by organised sports such as rugby and football. Fishing and cycling also scored relatively highly. In contrast, in 2011, swimming, football, dance and horse riding were the most popular, while youth clubs were less so.

Favourite Leisure Activities 2011



Rather than providing insight into the changing leisure preferences of young people however, the apparent popularity of youth clubs amongst respondents in 2003 and 2007, is due to how the data were collected. As previously pointed out in the methodology, in 1998 and 2011 respondents were contacted through local schools. In 2003 and 2007, they were approached through local youth clubs. The popularity of clubs amongst respondents in these samples it is therefore assumed is the direct result of the recruitment process. As a result it is suggested that the 1998 and 2011 data provide a

more accurate picture of the leisure behaviour of young people in rural Somerset.

Comparison of the 1998 and 2011 figures suggests that the popularity of youth clubs has remained more or less consistent over the fifteen-year period, with around 5% of respondents listing them as their favourite activity. These figures however do not reflect the variety of services provided or the importance of clubs for those who attend. During the focus groups participants were asked to comment on the benefits of clubs.

- Participant 1: *'It's nice to do something different'*
- Participant 2: *'You feel supported'*
- Participant 3: *'They help with so many problems, like when my friend died'*
- Participant 4: *'I joined the green activity project run by the environment team. I thought it would be fun and I got four or five of my friends to come along and they got a small qualification'.*

These responses suggest that while the number of young people attending youth clubs in the area remains relatively low, for many, clubs provide invaluable support, training, advice and the opportunity to socialise.

2.2.1 Hanging Out

The survey was also designed to investigate informal leisure activities. Respondents were asked how often they saw their friends and what they liked to do. In 1998, Little & Leyshon reported that “the vast majority of respondents claimed to have friends living both in their home village and outside. These friends they saw on a daily basis or once every two days. The sorts of activities they tended to do with their friends were informal tasks such as shopping or cycling” (1998, p. 10). This pattern was repeated across the different generations of survey data. The young people also reported that when socialising they were less likely to meet up with friends at an event or organised activity and instead preferred to ‘hang out’ at each others houses, around the village or the nearest town (see Little & Leyshon 1998, p, 10: Leyshon & Little 2003, p. 19). These themes were repeated in the more recent focus group discussions, when the young people were asked what they liked doing.

Researcher: *So what do you like to do in your spare time?*
 Participant 1: *Don't get much!*
 Participant 2: *Go round a mates and watch films.*
 Participant 3: *Sleep*
 Participant 2: *Friday and Saturday get drunk. Go out with mates. Don't do much else cause there is not much to do. Go to Cinema.*
 Participant 4: *I go to the gym and I am on a diet.*
 Participant 5: *Usually I just go out in town, go shopping or let someone spend some money on me.*
 Participant 2: *Typical woman!*

Where the young people liked to 'hang out' changed with the seasons, as Tables 8-11 below demonstrate. In the summer respondents reported hanging out around the park, at home or different friends' houses. In the winter they tended to meet up indoors.

Table 8: Where do you like to meet your friends? Summer 2007

Gender	Boys	Girls
1.	Park/Rec	Park/Rec
2.	Bus stop/Phone box etc.	Home
3.	Home	Bus stop/Phone box etc.

Table 9: Where do you like to meet your friends? Summer 2011

Gender	Boys	Girls
1.	Park/Rec	Park/Rec
2.	Home	Town
3.	Town	Home

Table 10: Where do you like to meet your friends? Winter 2007

Gender	Boys	Girls
1.	Home	Home
2.	Friends Houses	Youth Club
3.	Bus stop/Phone box etc.	Friends Houses

Table 11: Where do you like to meet your friends? Winter 2011

Gender	Boys	Girls
1.	Home	Home
2.	Friends Houses	Friends Houses
3.	Town	Town

Study of the tables above suggests however that the number of places young people routinely inhabit may be diminishing. Comparison of the 2007 and 2011 data indicates that rather than 'hanging out' in informal spaces in and around the village increasingly young people are hanging out in 'town'. One of the reasons for this identified during the in depth discussion groups is that young people assembling in groups is seen to be problematic. One male, teenage participant explained:

There aren't enough places to hang out, so they end up crowding round and people think it is bad, but there is no where else to go.

Later on, another participant reported:

We used to hang around in the car park, and we went there because there was nowhere else to go and it was easy to get there. And then the Police started turning up saying that there were too many people there.

Similarly during the second discussion group, one of the older male participants reported that when hanging out with friends they were often treated suspiciously and the Police routinely stopped them.

The people I go out with, if we hang out on the street corner we're going to get stopped by the Police, because they think we are up to something... The other day I was walking down the lane – it's not very safe there I mean there are no streetlights and it is pitch black – the Police stopped me because they thought I was up to something. But I was just walking down the lane with a couple of mates and I wasn't up to anything I was just walking home.

In addition to the mistrust young people reportedly experience, participants referred to a variety of other factors which inhibit their movements. These included: misunderstanding between generations, the lack of freedom granted by parents, vandalism in the park or rec, zealous health and safety precautions, older youths drinking or taking drugs, and the lack of facilities, amongst others. Further, when visiting town one girl explained that the recession and recent cuts had further impacted on the choices available to young people.

It is getting more limited in town. You either wander around trying to find something to spend your money on, or you are going to friends' houses. We had a pool but they closed it. We had bowling but they closed it. Now all you have are mobile phone shops – it's like all they want us to do is hang out on our phones all day!

These findings suggest that increasingly for young people living in rural areas their movements are restricted and options limited. This is partly due to increased adult surveillance, partly the recession and partly the on-going need for informal spaces to meet. Leyshon (2010) has identified similar trends in young people's leisure behaviours elsewhere, arguing that adult regulation of young people's spaces is reducing their capacity to meet and hang-out. He also warns that this may have in the long-term, a detrimental effect on many young people's sense of belonging within their communities.

2.2.2 Leisure Expectations

To identify gaps in provision, during the survey respondents were asked to comment on the clubs available and what activities they would like. Analysis of these data suggests that over the past fifteen years the provision of formal activities has increased.

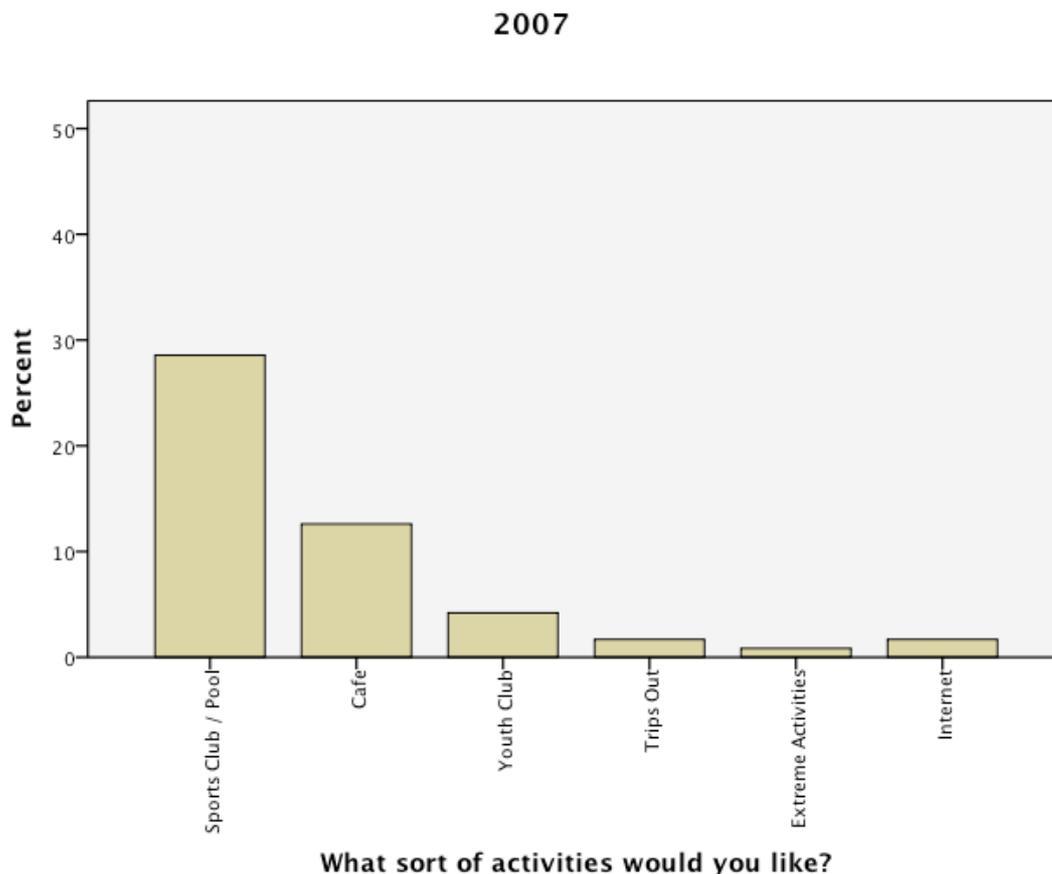
In 1998, according to respondents there were relatively few organised activities for young people in villages, with 50% of respondents claiming that they didn't have access to a local group or club. In 2003, Leyshon & Little reported that 51% of activities took place in nearby towns, 36% in villages and 11% at school. In 2007 however, 56% of respondents answered yes to the question 'Are there activities in the village?' and in 2011, 47%. This suggests that over the course of the research there has been an increase in the organisation of formal activities for young people in villages.

A number of respondents across the various research samples however, claimed not to use existing services explaining that they found them boring or dull, while a smaller proportion reported that problems with transport and the cost prevented them from getting involved.

When asked what sort of activities they would like, Little & Leyshon (1998) reported that most young people in the 13-16 group favoured an informal, unsupervised space such as a club or café where they could meet and socialise with friends. Typical responses included:

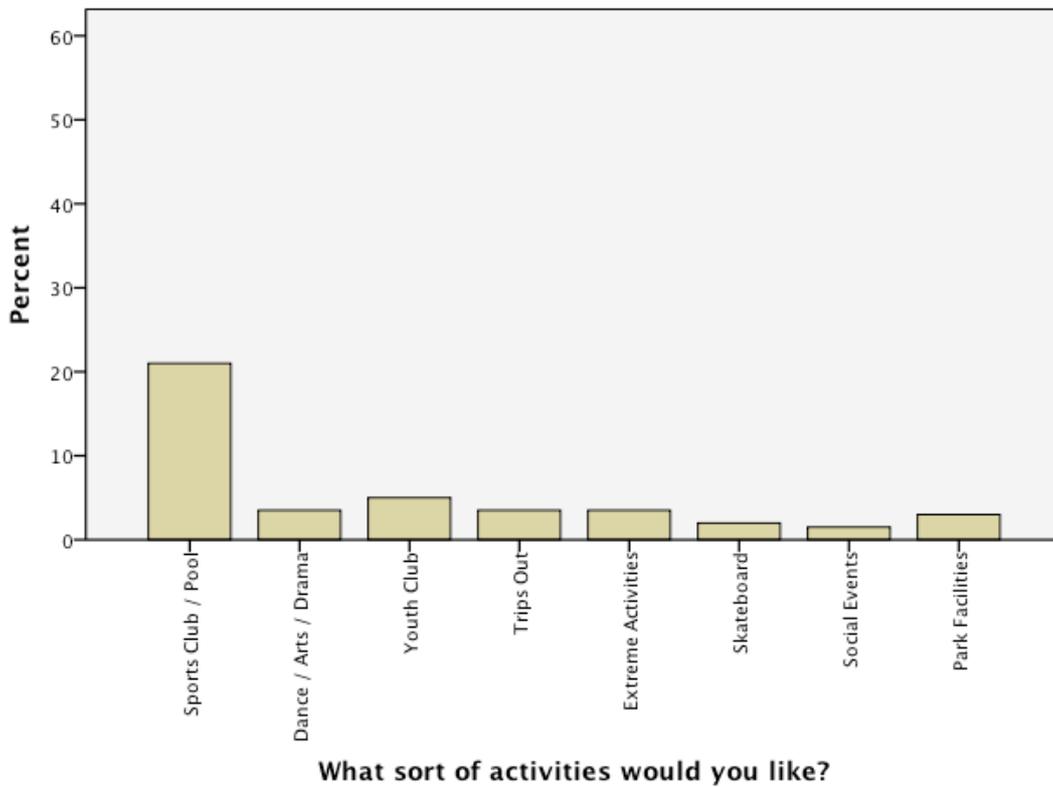
*A place where older kids in our village can go because all there is, is a park for little kids.
Cyber café, Internet and coffee in one shop. Local games and video access lending store.*

Mentioned less often were organised events or structured activities. This led the authors to recommend that the leisure requirements of young people at the time were best summed up by the quote '*A decent place to hang out*'.



Similarly in 2003, somewhere to meet and youth club were the most popular answers. Skateboard parks and BMX tracks were also frequently cited. However, according to the 2007 and 2011 data there has been a shift in the preferences of young people. The graphs below and above show that 'sports facilities' was the most popular response to the question 'What sort of activities would you like?' Although cafes and youth clubs still feature, there appears to have been a drop in demand.

2011



In 2011, a significant proportion of respondents listed a swimming pool in answer to the question 'What activities would you like?' The increased popularity of sport facilities in general, and pools in particular, it is speculated is due to the recent closure of a number of public swimming baths in the area. At the same time, it is suggested that the absence of requests for a café amongst the 2011 respondents is due to the widespread proliferation of chain coffee houses such as Costa or Starbucks. Correspondingly when asked during the in depth discussion groups, where they liked to go in town, one female participant replied: *Thank goodness we have Costa Coffee. I usually go there. I spent three hours in there yesterday.*

Consistent themes and new trends may be identified from the different generations of data looking at the formal and informal leisure activities of young people and their expectations. The research suggests that, despite an increase in the organisation of formal leisure activities in villages, young people still feel that they lack somewhere to 'hang out' and talk to friends. This remains an important issue for many young people living in rural areas for, as

one participant eloquently explained, *'I like the atmosphere of being away from home and parents. It feels more free'*.

The findings above also reveal, however, that since the original research was carried out in 1998, the ways in which young people inhabit the countryside around them has changed and increasingly their movements are restricted. The research has identified some of the barriers, which limit young people in rural areas, however due to the lack of detailed information it is recommended that further in depth investigation should be carried out. This should examine how both external (political, social, economic) and internal (behavioural and cultural) factors influence the ways in which young people interact with, and in, their local environment.

2.2.3 Gender Differences.

When looking at the leisure preferences of respondents the data were also broken down by gender. The results however were mixed. In 2007, male respondents listed football (23%), cycling (9%), and youth club (9%) as their favourite activities. In 2011, football (16%), rugby (11%), cycling (6%) and cricket (6%) were the most popular. Amongst female respondents in 2007, youth club (32%), shopping (7%), cinema (7%) and keep fit (7%) were the most popular. These findings are in line with the previous reports, which led Leyshon & Little to conclude that "young men predominately list sports as their favourite activities" while "young women conversely... list more social activities" (2003, p. 18). In contrast to this however, in 2011, swimming (19%), dancing (14%) and horse riding (14%) were the favourite activities amongst young women.

Responses to the question 'What activities would you like?' were also analysed according to gender. The results paint an uncertain picture. In 2003, according to Leyshon & Little there was a clear divide:

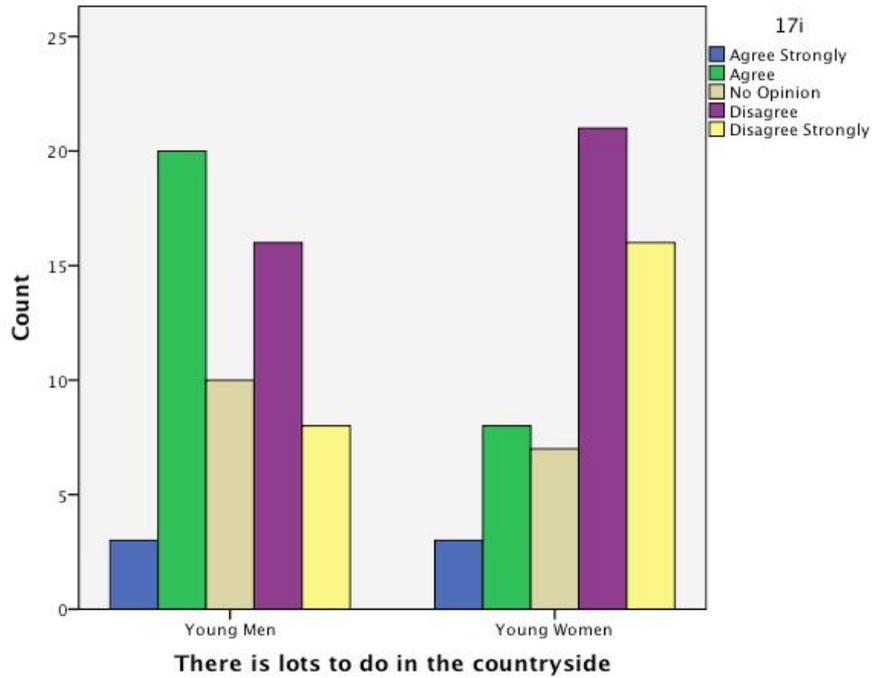
Young women want[ed] more informal spaces and activities such as somewhere to hang out, discos, or shopping trips, as well as organised facilities such as youth clubs and more sports facilities. Young men prefer[ed] purpose build sports facilities such as skate board and BME tracks, as well as organised sports such as football, shooting and bowling (2003, p. 22).

According to the recent data, however, the leisure interests of young men and women are more difficult to separate. When asked what they would spend the money on if they were put in charge, in 2007, 29% of boys chose park equipment, 21% sports facilities and 14% facilities/activities. In 2011 the pattern was similar, 27% chose sports equipment, 16% park equipment (skate ramps etc.), and 11% a place to meet. However, in contrast to the previous results, in 2007 the girls made similar choices. Twenty-three per cent chose sports equipment, 17% chose facilities/activities and 15% chose park equipment. In 2011 amongst female respondents a swimming pool was the most popular choice (23%), followed by a place to meet (19%) and then park equipment (14%).

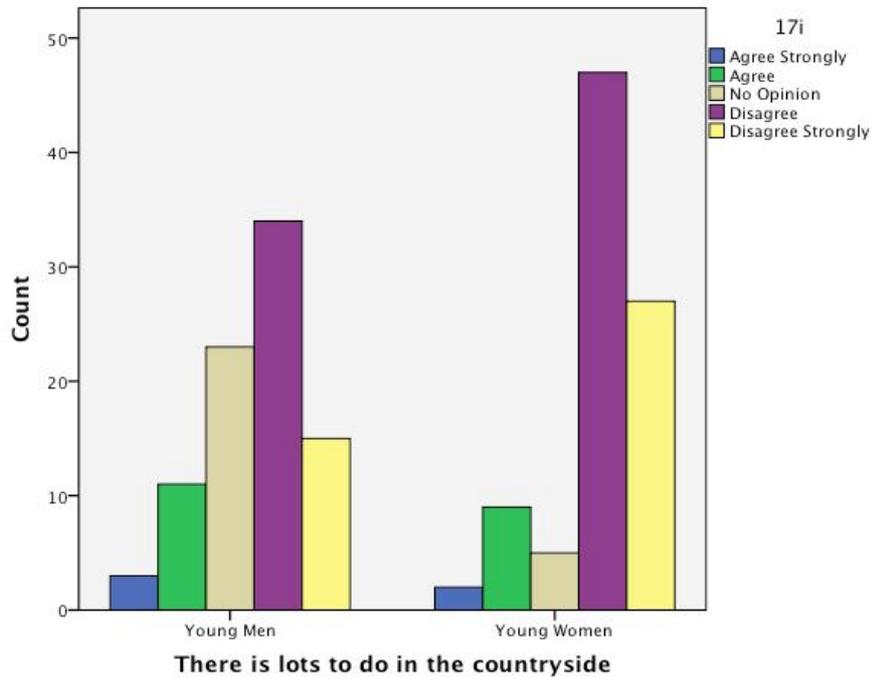


It is impossible to draw any conclusive observations about the different leisure preferences of young men and women from these results. However previous research carried out by Leyshon (2010) suggests that young men are more likely than young women to want 'formally managed' sports that are either provided in the shape of facilities, such as sports equipment, or arranged for them via club activities, such as a youth club. Young women are more interested in maintaining social contact with friends by indicating a consistent preference for a place to meet. The research also suggests that young women like to talk with their friends rather than undertaking specific activities. Further, as the figures below illustrate young women and to a lesser extent, young men, view the countryside as a place that increasingly does not service their social needs.

2007



2011



These results present distinct challenges to youth service providers as young people appear to be becoming increasingly disaffected with rural places. It is suggested that this may in part be due to increased adult surveillance of public spaces in which young people congregate.

2.2.4 Social Media

Surprisingly, the 2007 and 2011 survey data indicate that significant technological advancement over the past 15 years, increased access to computers, the Internet and smart phones has not had a significant impact on the leisure behaviour of young people.¹⁰ In contrast however, the focus group discussions revealed that computer games and social networking sites were extremely popular amongst participants, as the following exuberant discussions demonstrate.

- Researcher: *Do you use Facebook to contact your friends?*
Participant 1: *I got rid of it. My Mum made me get rid of it to get an early Christmas present now I just use Twitter.*
Participant 2: *I'm on it constantly.*
Participant 3: *I got addicted to it.*
Participant 4: *My Dad says he is going to bin my computer – but then my Dad is on it all the time.*

Similarly, when asked whether they liked to play computer games, the same group responded with the following remarks.

- Researcher: *You said earlier you like to play the X-box. Do you often play computer games?*
Participant 1: *Yeah*
Participant 2: *Yeah*
Participant 3: *We play it constantly.*
Participant 1: *We were up all night last night from 10 till 4.*
Researcher: *Goodness.*
Participant 3: *I didn't have any sleep last night. I was playing PS3 and Facebook. I've been up since 2.*

When asked if on-line gaming, social networking sites or chat rooms had become a substitute for socialising with friends face-to-face one participant joked '*It's better than going to see them – but it's boring*'. These findings suggest that on-line resources and digital media have become integral to the social lives of young people living in rural areas.

Further, current research by Leyshon et al (2013) demonstrates that in the last 20 years mobile phones have become an important component of the way young people produce place through communicating and encountering the world. More specifically they argue, first, that GPS mobile phones encourage young people to explore new territory by providing both spatial

¹⁰ In 1998 only 35% of respondents had access to the Internet in contrast to 100% in 2011.

information and a 'lifeline' to security. Second, that the plethora of spatial data available, especially wayfinding directions, reduce the need for young people to try new routes and to memorize landscape features. Third, and perhaps most significantly, parents are increasing surveillance of their children's activities and movements through mobile monitoring software embedded in their mobile phones.

2.2.5 Key Findings

Increasingly young people have less freedom from adult supervision.

- **The leisure activities of young people in rural Somerset have not altered significantly since 1998.**
- **Gender differences are evident in the leisure behaviour of young people. Young men prefer formal and informal sports activities, young women prefer socialising and formal sports activities.**
- **Since the original research was carried out there has been an increase in the provision of formal activities, while young people's movements in informal spaces are increasingly monitored and restricted.**
- **As a result young people in rural Somerset still need places to 'hang out'.**

2.3 Lifestyle, Opportunity & Aspiration

When the original research was designed the authors felt that it was necessary to look at the lifestyle and attitudes of young people living in Somerset, to understand their needs and preferences. In the words of the authors 'an attempt [was] made to appreciate the context in which young people make choices about leisure' (Little & Leyshon 1998, p. 14). Some background information has already been considered in the earlier section examining socio-economic characteristics. This next section now looks at young people's views on how they experience rural life and see their futures.

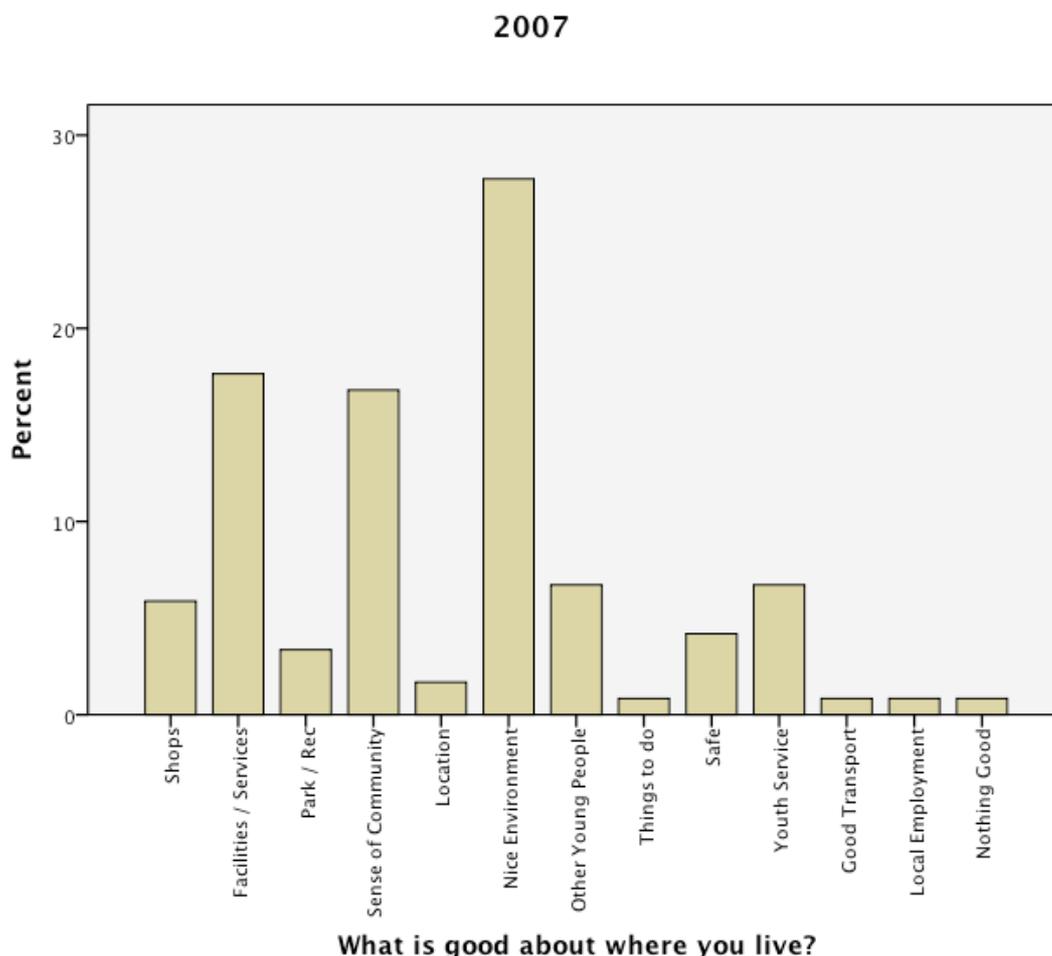
2.3.1 Lifestyle

To develop understanding of young people's attitudes toward living in the countryside, the survey asked respondents to list three 'good' and three 'bad' things about where they lived. According to the authors of the 2003 report the

most important, positive aspects respondents listed, included: ‘friendly, quite, youth club, low traffic, no townies, picturesque qualities and open spaces’ (Leyshon & Little 2003, p. 24). From these findings and focus group observations, they went on to surmise:

The young people firmly locate the village as the key site in the mediation and production of rurality. Importantly, though, the fields, woods, hedgerows, farms and lanes beyond the village, listed under ‘open spaces’ by the young people on the questionnaire and discussed in-depth during discussion groups, provided the context for leisure activities, often beyond the view of adults in and around the village (Leyshon & Little 2003, p. 24).

Consistent with these findings, analysis of the 2007 and 2011 data suggests that being in a ‘nice environment’ was perceived to be the most beneficial aspect of living in the countryside by respondents, while in 2011 they also frequently referred to the landscape. In both 2007 and 2011, the strong ‘sense of community’ also appeared to be an advantage, while facilities and services, the presence of other young people, youth club, and feeling ‘safe’ were other popular factors.



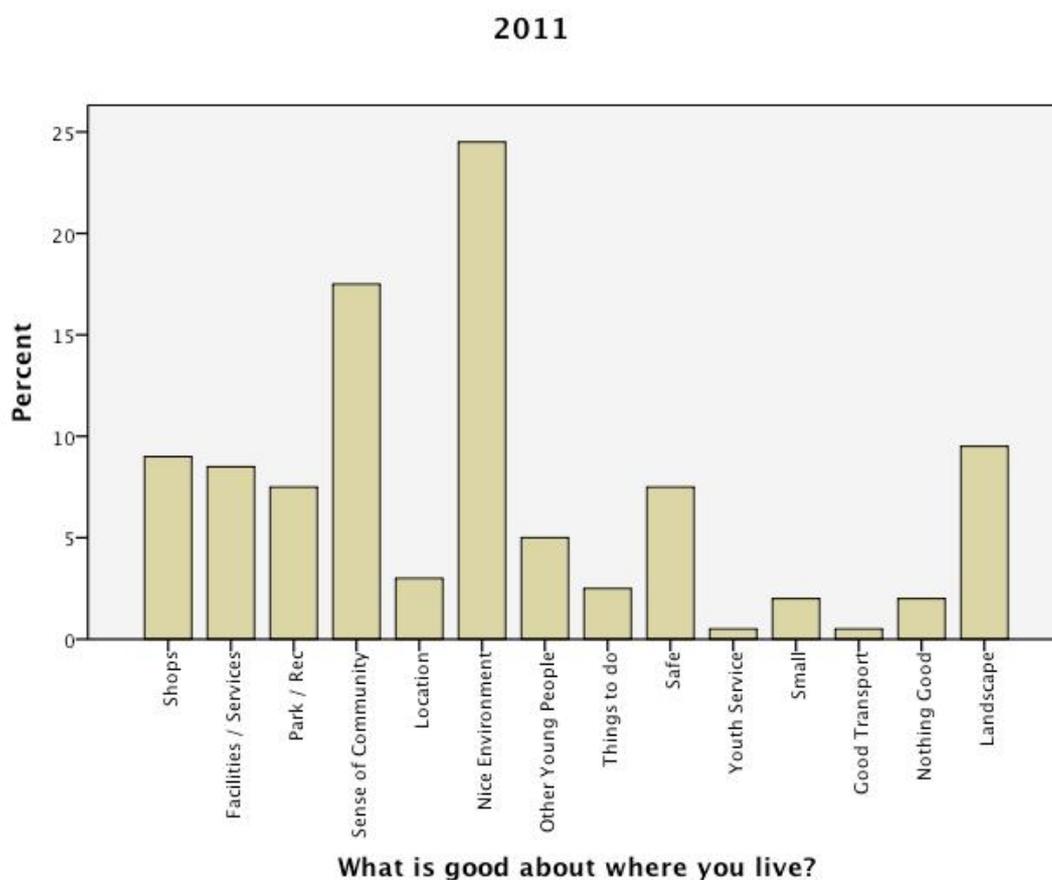
During the in-depth discussion groups, participants repeated these themes. For example, when asked what they liked about living in the countryside, one female participant replied: *'It's a quiet area, everybody knows each other, everybody knows each other's business. And it is local and quite nice'*.

Similarly, another participant who had recently moved from the city suggested:

It's much quieter here. I didn't like living where I was before. I didn't feel safe walking down the street by myself. I feel safe now.

Another participant explained that they liked living in the countryside, as there were many things to do.

I like going to the Mendip Hills. So in summer going on picnics with friends, hiking and walking, so it is much more active than hanging out in just once place.



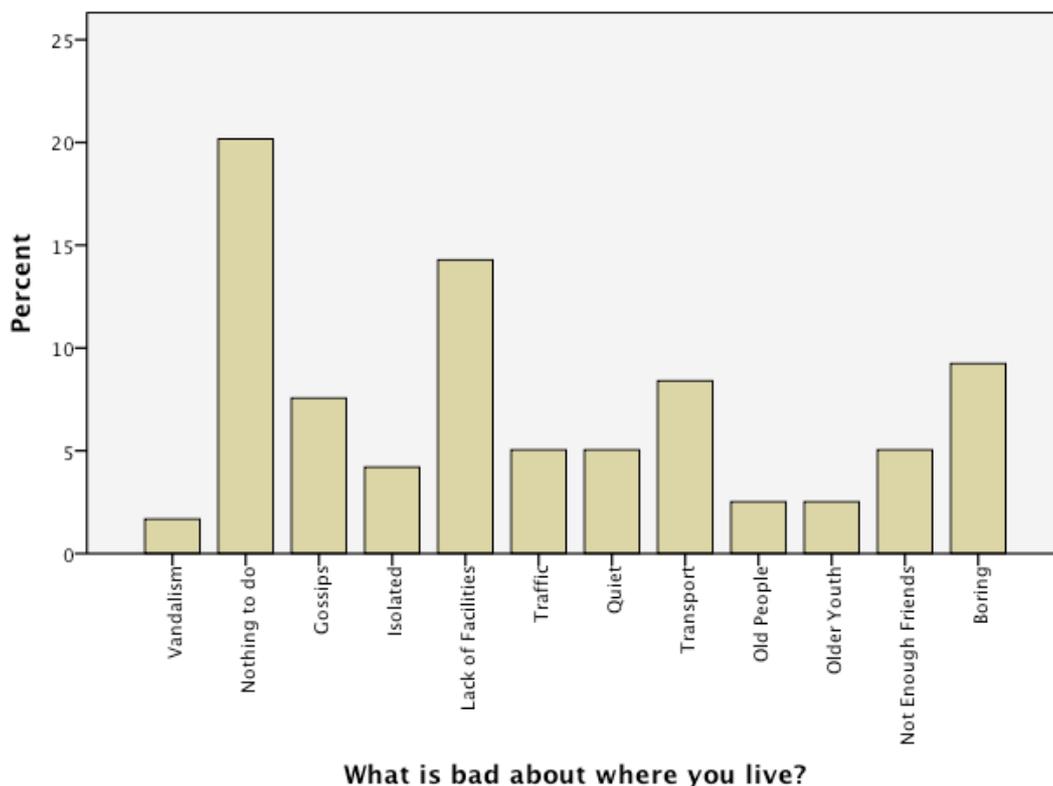
It was also evident however, from both the survey data and discussion groups, that opinion was mixed and often contradictory and many young people hold negative views of living in the countryside. For example when

asked to comment on their experiences, participants during one of the discussion groups gave the following assorted answers.

- Participant 1: *Awful really!*
- Participant 2: *Good*
- Participant 3: *Boring*
- Participant 4: *I like it because I can keep all my animals*

After analysing respondents' answers to the question 'What is bad about where you live?', Leyshon & Little (2003) reported that the major issues facing young people in rural Somerset included boredom, lack of transport, isolation, lack of shops, conflict with adults and nowhere to meet (Leyshon & Little 2003, p. 25). The findings taken from the recent data suggest little has changed. In 2007, nothing to do (20%), lack of facilities (14%), boring (9%) and problems with transport (8%) were reported to be the main issues. In 2011, the most popular answers were nothing to do (17%) and lack of facilities (12%), followed by not enough friends (9%) and traffic (7%). An increased number of respondents also reported that vandalism was an issue. Contrary to the findings of similar research, however, amongst the 2011 respondents transport was not perceived to be a primary issue.

2007



During the discussion groups, participants also identified negative aspects of living in the countryside. These included problems with drugs, anti-social behaviour, loud or difficult neighbours and feeling unsafe due to poor lighting. For example when asked about where they lived one participant explained:

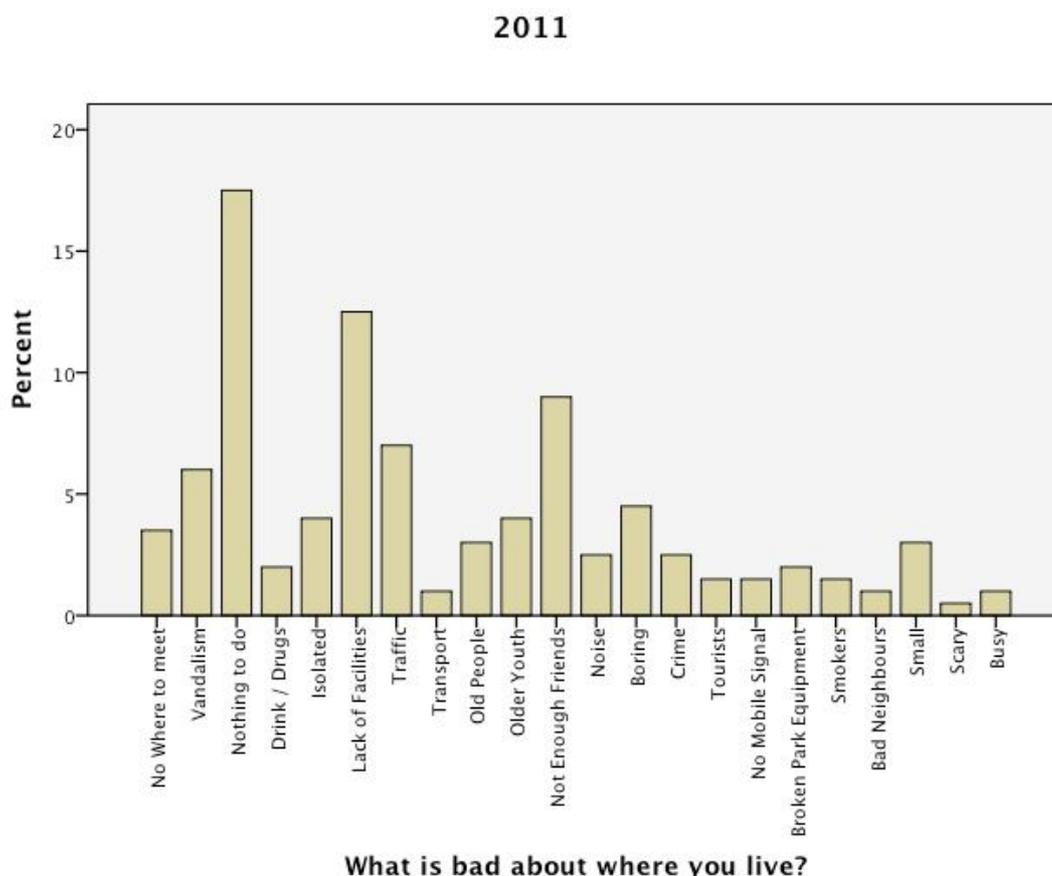
I hate where I live because there are loads of druggies. There is a drug dealer who lives down my road and it is too noisy. Music all day and all night. I just hate them all.

In response to this, another participant replied:

Ours is the opposite we are surrounded by boring old people and there are not enough young people.

One participant went on to suggest that it wasn't living in the countryside that was problematic but the socio-economic issues in the area.

I like living in the countryside but not this countryside – I know it don't make much sense but I just don't like living in this area.

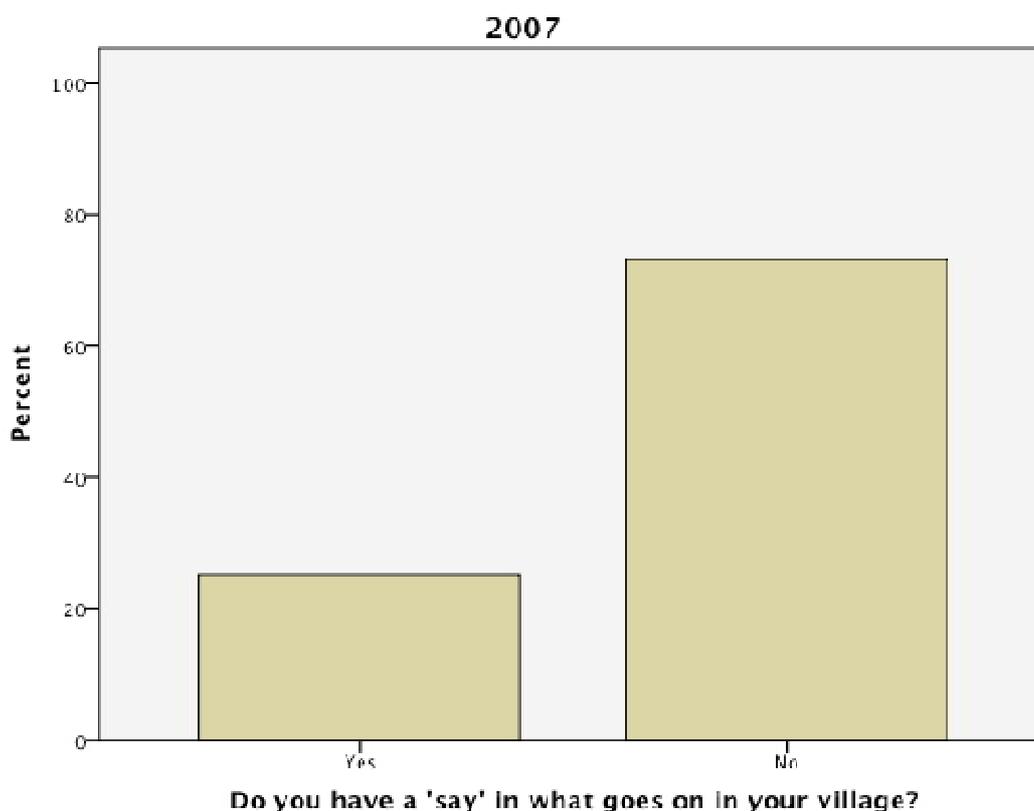


The above findings suggest that while many young people view living in the countryside to be a positive experience, they also feel isolated and cut off from friends, amenities, and cultural activities. Further, in contrast to the

stereotypes of idyllic or privileged country living, the research reveals that poverty and the extent of associated self-destructive behaviours means that some young people in rural areas feel unsafe.

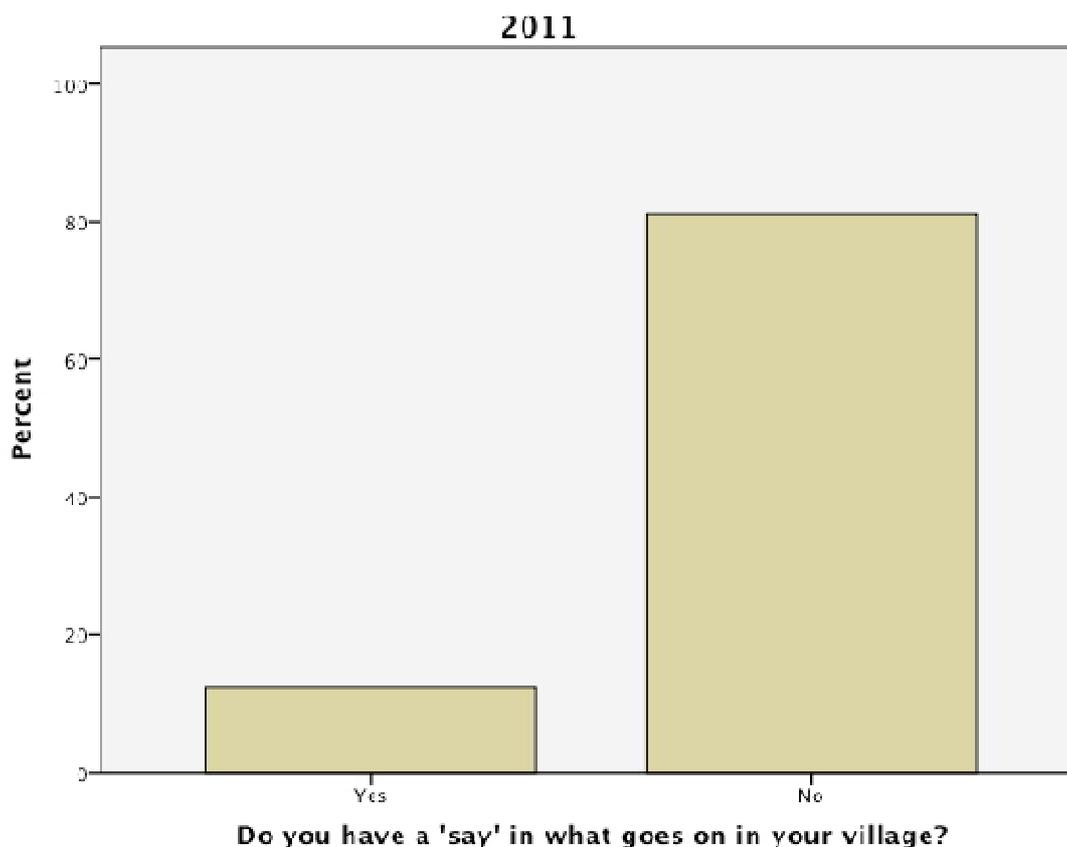
2.3.2 Public Participation

The original research also set out to investigate the involvement of young people in local decision-making. In particular, it looked at – if and how young people want to be represented and whether they have any influence over the decisions, which affect them.



In each of the surveys respondents were asked if they had a say in what goes on in their village or town. In the original 1998 survey 91% claimed not to have a say. In 2003 the figure was 77%. In 2007 a similar figure was reported 73.5%, but by 2011 the number of respondents had risen again to 85%. The discrepancies in the data, it is suggested, are due to the different ways in which the data were collected, as previously reported. Nevertheless, the consistently high number of respondents who claimed not to have a role in local decision-making suggests that the previous government's attempts to

encourage public participation and active citizenship did not see the successes anticipated.



When asked why they did not get involved, amongst the 2007 respondents 13% suggested that meetings were only for old people, 9% said nobody asked them, and 9% said that those at the meetings were 'too posh'. In 2011, the pattern was slightly different. Twenty-nine per cent said nobody asks us, 11% said they're only for old people and 9% reported they did not know how to get involved. During the in-depth discussion groups, participant came up with similar responses.

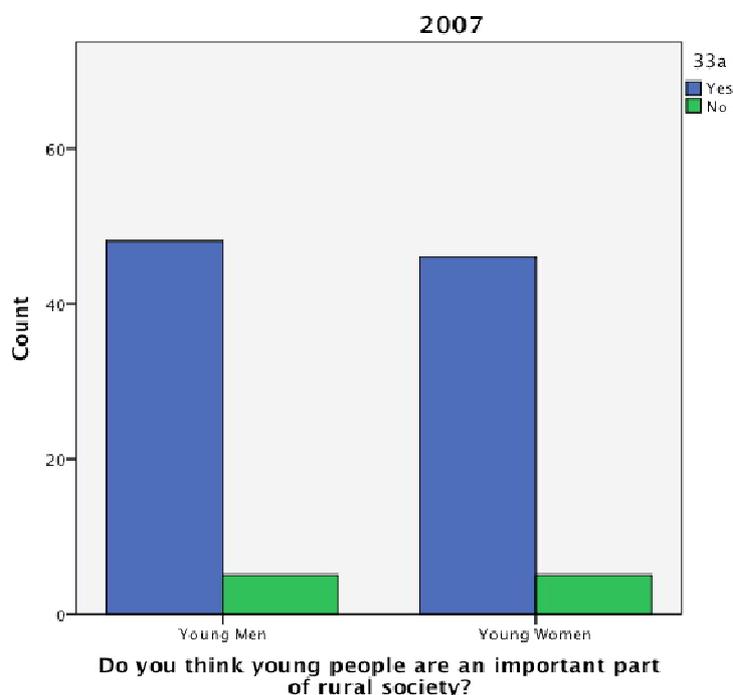
- Researcher: *Do you feel that you have an opportunity to influence the decisions that affect you?*
- Participant 1: *To be honest it is just older people who are really snobby.*
- Participant 2: *They don't listen to us.*
- Participant 3: *What I hate is that you get loads and loads of old people who have a go at you if you do something bad.*

When asked whether they would like a say, in 1998 nearly 70% of respondents answered affirmatively. In 2003 the figures was 78%, however by 2007 the figures had dropped to 61% and by 2011, further still to 50%. These findings suggest that despite intervention, the last fourteen years have seen

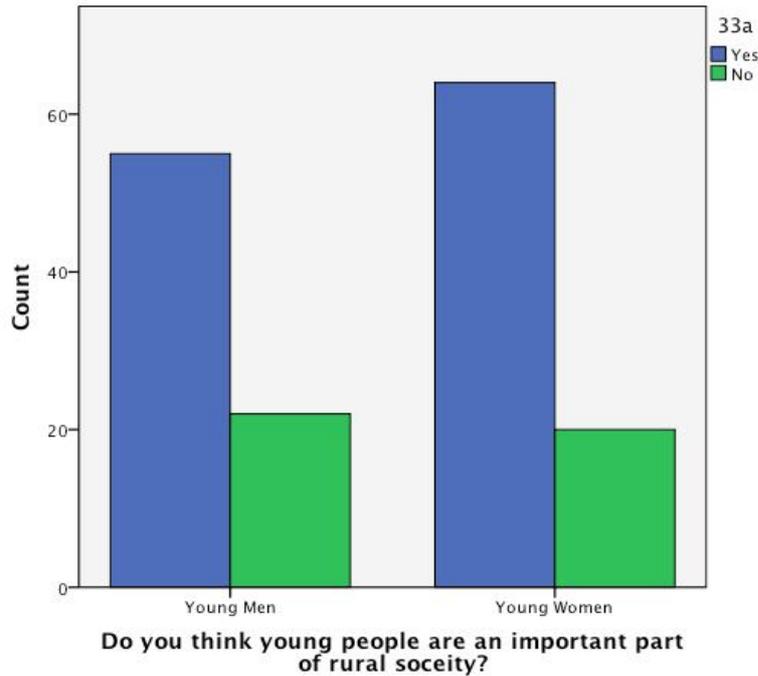
increasing levels of disengagement amongst young people in rural areas with participatory democracy schemes. However, the findings also indicate a slight variation between the attitudes of young men and young women. Across both the 2007 and 2011 samples, a higher percentage of girls reported wanting a say and being involved in local decision-making.

2.3.3 Opportunity

The majority of respondents felt that they were a valued and important part of rural society. Between 2007 and 2011 however, there was an evident drop in numbers. In 2007, 84% of young men and 88% of young women felt a valued part of society. By 2011, the figures had fallen to 63% for young men, and 70% for young women. This suggests that an increasing number of young people feel that their local community does not value them. These findings correspond with claims made in a recent report carried out by YouthNet, partly looking into the experiences of young people living in rural areas in the South West of England. YouthNet reported that “there was an underlying perception within the group that people of their age were somewhat neglected, with the focus of support being either children or older people” (2011, p.20).

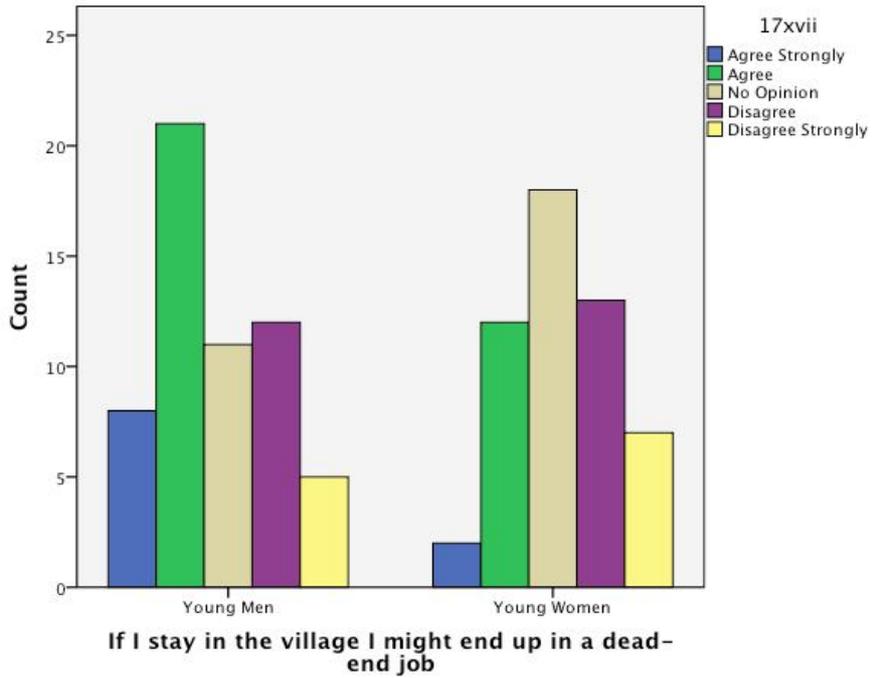


2011

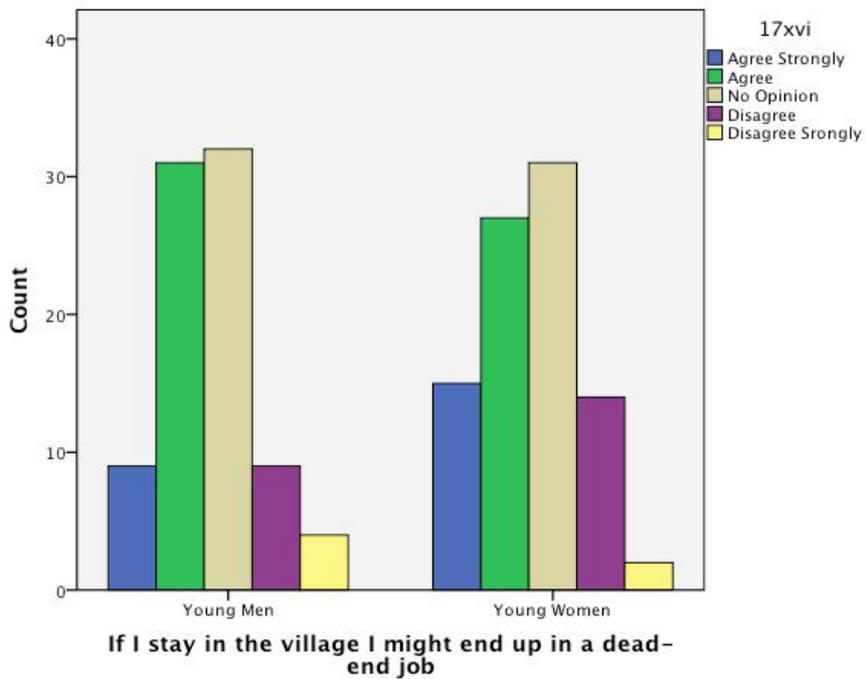


The questionnaire also attempted to capture the young people's perceptions of their future, "in particular the extent to which they saw their future as compatible with rural lifestyles and opportunities" (Leyshon & Little 2003, p. 30). In order to earn a living, in 2003, 73% of respondents anticipated moving to the town or city. In 2007, 60% of young men and 75% of young women expected to move. In 2011, the figures were similar. Sixty-seven per cent of young men and 59% of young women anticipated moving to a town or city. Although there appears to have been a drop in the number of young women expecting to move from the countryside, these findings correspond with observations made earlier in the report that the countryside is perceived to be a place with limited opportunities. These findings are also confirmed by the graphs below, which show that an increasing number of young people in rural Somerset feel that if they 'stay in their village they will end up in a dead-end job'.

2007



2011



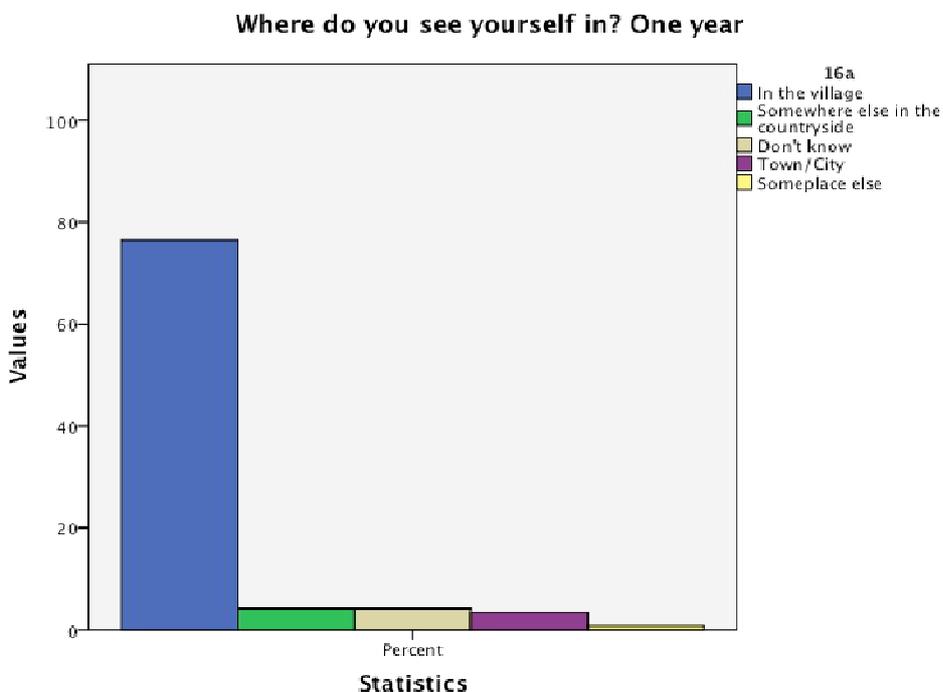
Amongst the minority who anticipated staying in the countryside when they were older, a range of possible vocations were listed, the majority of which evidently reinforced gender stereotypes. Female respondents, for example,

listed roles such as photographer, farming, forces, journalism, nurse, nutritionist, teacher, shopkeeper, vet, veterinary nurse, or working with animals or children. In contrast the young men listed vocations such as antiques dealer, architect, carpenter, doctor, farmer, cook, marine biologist, plasterer, motorbikes and tree surgeon. These findings suggest that gender stereotyping is prevalent and it is anticipated that rising socio-economic and gender inequalities in rural Somerset will have a long-term effect on the opportunities and aspirations of young women living in the area.

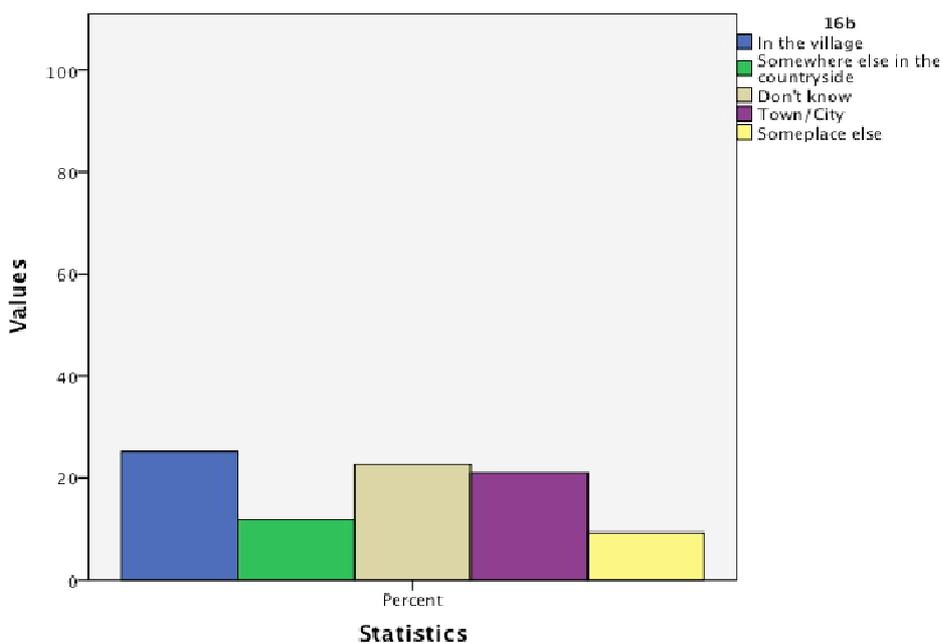
2.3.4 Aspiration

In 2003, the Leyshon and Little stated that many young people have aspirations to live in the countryside, albeit in a rather distant and hazy future. The survey findings illustrated that the young people could imagine a place for themselves in the countryside. During the focus groups they discussed the notion of becoming a ‘returner’, leaving imagined morally bankrupt cities and towns to move back to the country to raise families in a safe and ‘friendly’ environment. The 2007 and 2011 surveys however, indicate a very different picture.

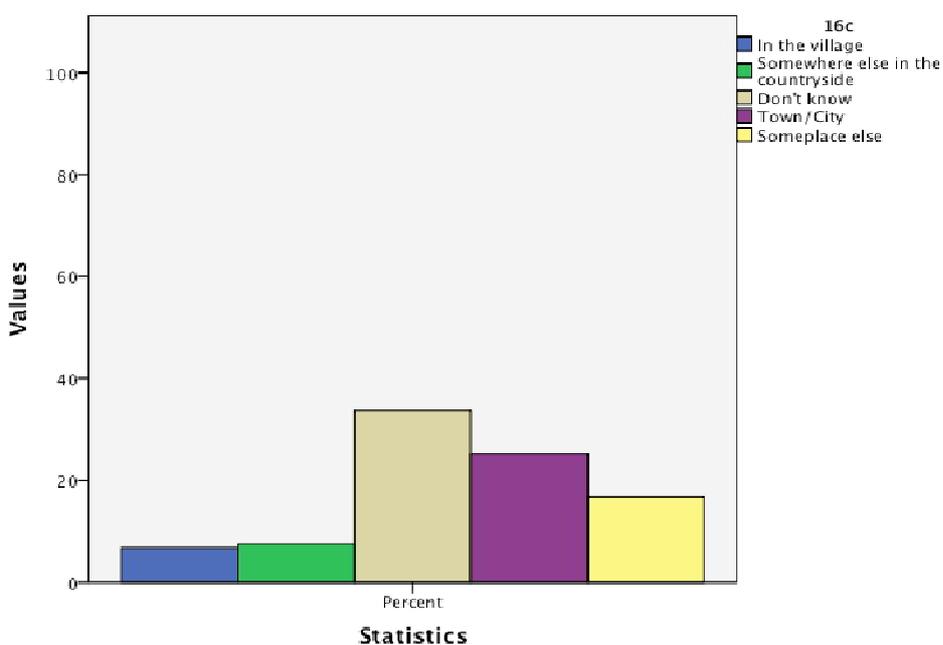
2007



Where do you see yourself in? Five years



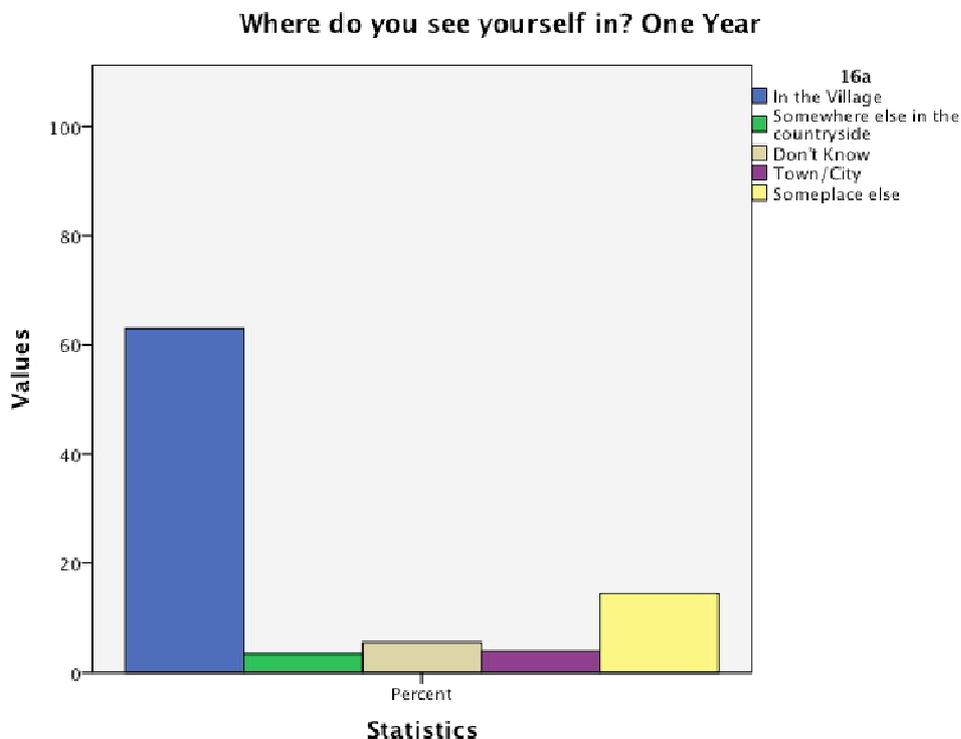
Where do you see yourself in? Ten years



In the immediate future, one to five years, the above two diagrams demonstrate that young people feel that they have a place in their local area – not surprisingly given the majority of respondents were still living at home with parents. In the longer term however, they expect to lose the connection to their local area. This ‘loss’ of connection and sense of belonging appears to widen from one survey to the other. Whilst in 2007 the ‘don’t know’ category is

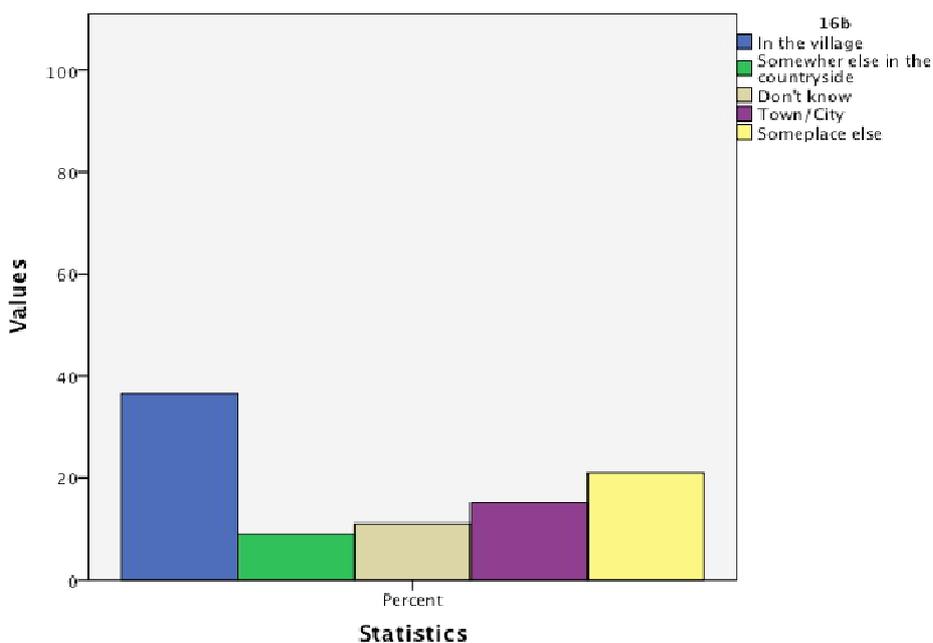
quite significant, suggesting a degree of reflective uncertainty about how young people see their future, by 2011 this has changed and the vast majority (60%) see themselves living elsewhere.

2011

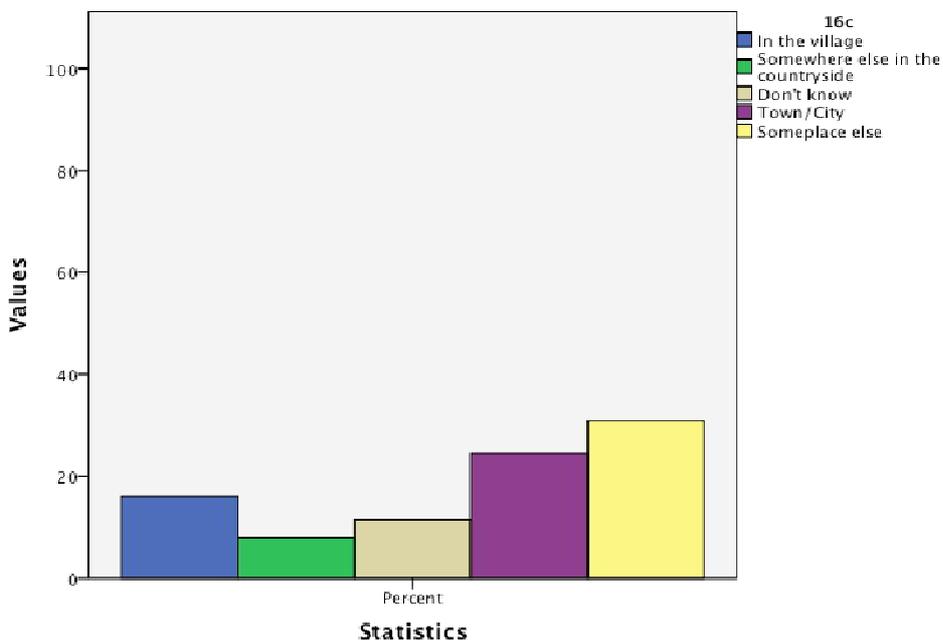


It is worth noting here that the differences between young women and young men in regard to where they see their future. In 2007 only 10% young men and 6% young women saw themselves staying in their local environment after 10 years, whilst 42% young men and 50% young women saw their future elsewhere. By 2011 a very different picture is starting to emerge in that young men and women are clearly bifurcating into a few who wish to stay and the vast majority who expect to leave. For example, 20% young men and 13% young women (twice 2007's data) see themselves staying in their local environment in 10 years time, whilst 69% young men and 76% young women saw their future elsewhere. This is further supported by evidence that roughly three quarters of young people expect to earn their living in towns/cities.

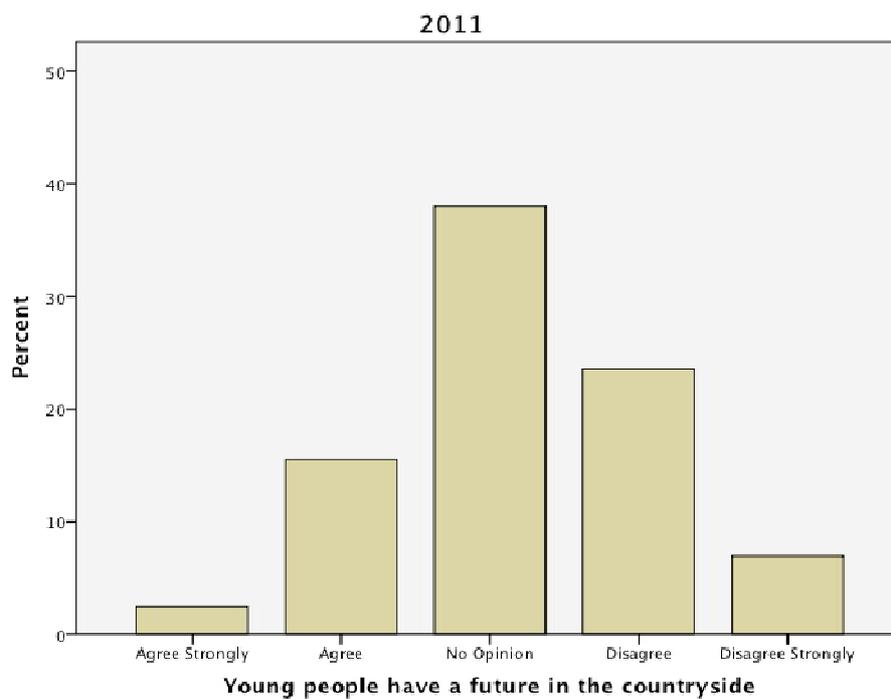
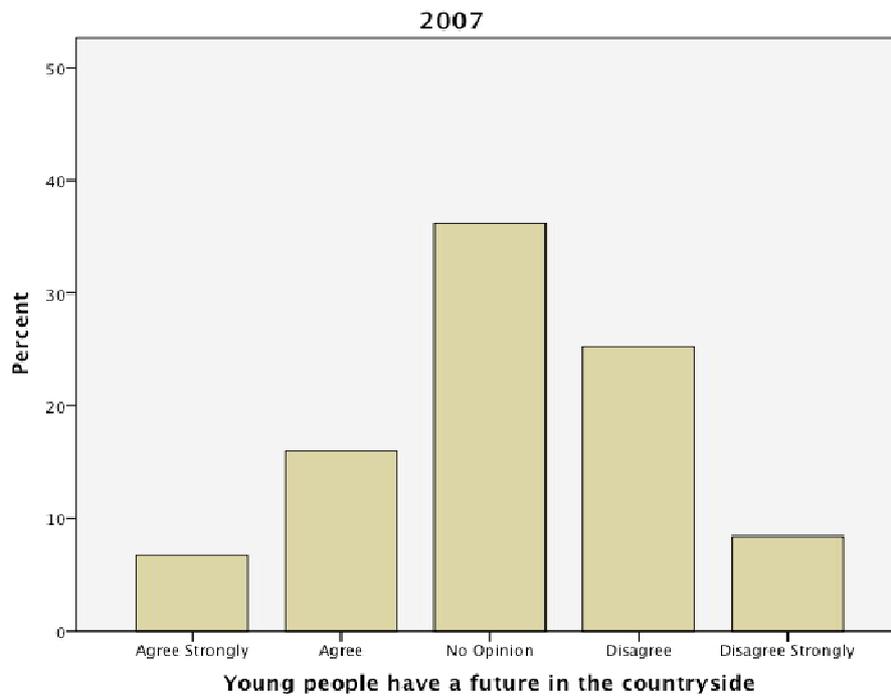
Where do you see yourself in? Five Years



Where do you see yourself in? Ten Years

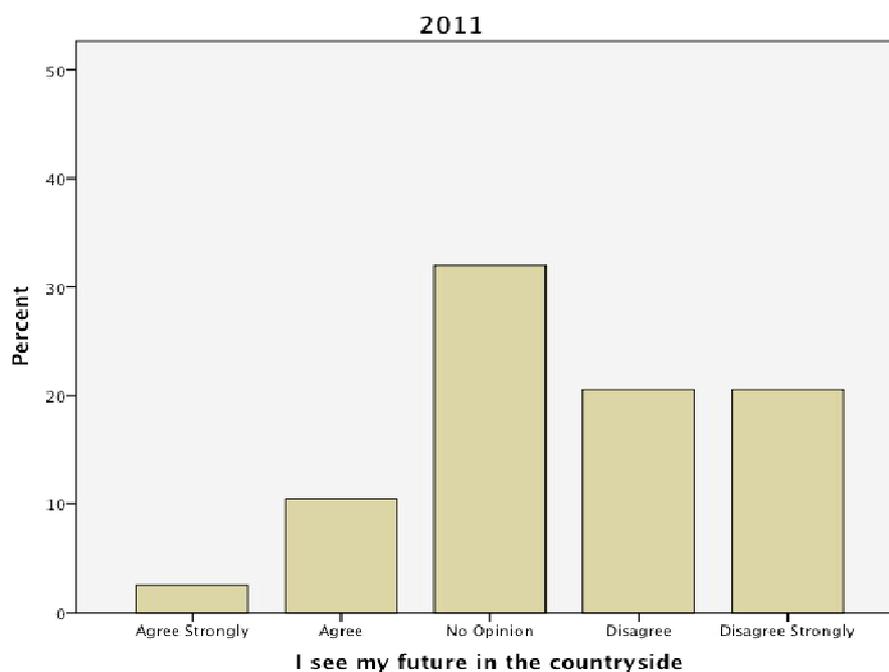
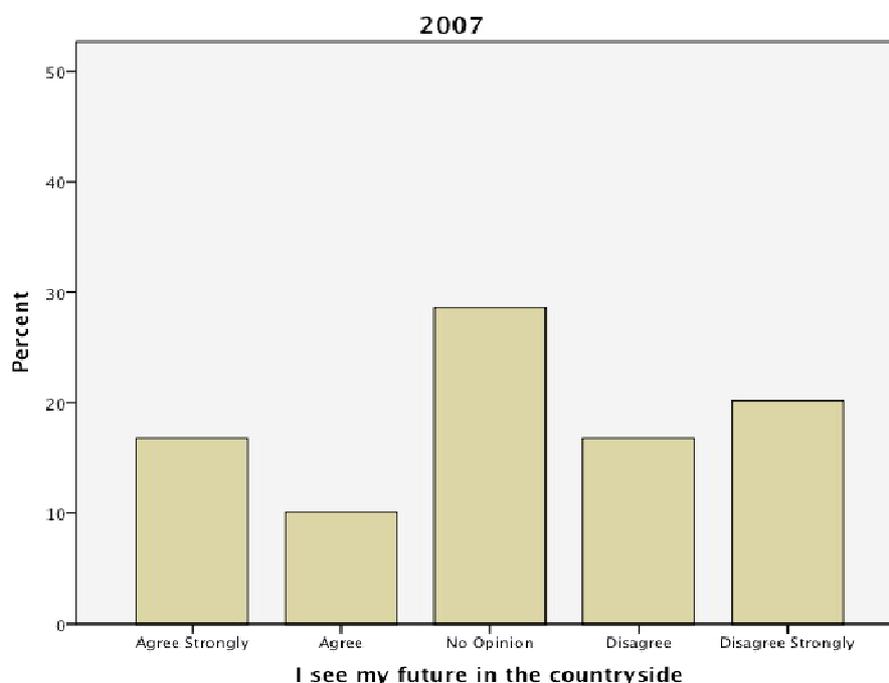


Further evidence for rural youth’s declining aspiration for rural living can be seen in attitudinal data from the survey. When asked whether ‘young people have a future in the countryside’ in 2007 (diagrams below), 6.7% strongly agreed with this statement, however by 2011 this had fallen to just 2.5%.



Similarly, when the young people were asked the extent to which they see their future in the countryside in 2007, 16.8% strongly agreed and only 7.6 strongly disagreed with the statement. However by 2011 only 2.5% strongly agreed and 20.5% disagreed strongly. The data represents a significant shift in young people's perceived place in the countryside. It is worth noting that the difference between young men and young women in this regard was

negligible. Further, a narrative of losing their sense of belonging to the countryside was constantly reiterated in the focus groups, phrases such as “I don’t see my future here” and “there’s nothing for me [in the countryside]” encapsulate young people’s ‘contradictory’ predicament – i.e. feeling that the countryside is a good place to be, whilst at the same time recognising that it holds no future.



2.3.5 Key Findings

Increasing numbers of young people do not feel they are a valued part of rural society.

- **The young people's feelings towards living in the countryside were mixed – many young people view living in the countryside to be a positive experience due to the environment, they also feel however isolated and cut off from amenities.**
- **Increasingly young people feel that there are limited opportunities in the countryside in terms of future occupation.**
- **An increasing number of young people feel that they don't have a say in their village.**
- **Young people are increasingly disinterested in taking part in local decision-making.**

3.0 Tackling Low Aspiration

Young people's aspiration for a rural life is at an all time low. This is particularly acute amongst young women. Contemporary research demonstrates that young people view living in the countryside as limited to a privileged few and that communities are becoming older and thus less relevant for them (Leyshon 2010). These findings, coupled to the data in this report, raise two important but interconnected questions. First, is there a future for young people in the countryside, and second, in what ways will future rural youth services need to adapt to the changing lifestyles of rural youth? Various UK policy instruments, such as the CRC report on the State of the Countryside, seek to raise awareness of these issues and address them in integrated and participatory ways that include the needs of all rural young people. However, there are a number of ways in which these policies overlook and fail to address the full complexity of the concerns of these young people.

3.1 Young People and Low Aspiration for Rural Living

The evidence presented in this research illustrates that young people who grow up in the countryside are very positive about the rural environment and recognize the benefits to growing up in small communities. Indeed the data show that the overwhelming majority of rural youth would like being in the countryside but no longer see it as a site for their future. Therefore we should expect the majority to out migrate post-18 years of age. The extent to which

they return in later years is largely unknown, but what can be discerned in the data is that many will leave to access opportunities in towns and cities – usually to attend university or college courses, start apprenticeships or move into full-time employment. However, about a fifth of rural youth do not leave, and they often end up living with their parents or friends, with few being in full-time employment and with little hope of achieving their life goals of securing a future in the countryside.

The current 2011 data indicate that young people intend to leave the countryside as they see little or no future for themselves in rural communities. Three quarters of rural young people, for example, say that they thought there was a risk that they would end up in a dead-end job if they relied on local employment, further virtually all rural youth thought they would never be able to afford a house in the countryside. This level of recognition of the basic problems faced by young people in relation to jobs, housing and the rural economy is significant – this could be a result of recent difficulties faced by the agricultural industry and an acknowledgement of the lack of future in traditional rural occupations, especially farming.

The question then is how should rural youth workers respond to this situation? Effective mechanisms through which the participation of young people can be promoted in local communities are often difficult to determine and even harder to implement. Young people themselves are often ambivalent about the best way to promote their interests further as evidenced above, while rural youth services often struggle to accommodate young people in a non-tokenistic manner. Although projects aimed at promoting youth inclusion in rural communities are laudable, it will take time and effort before young people might see them as a positive strategy. It is clear from this research, however, that young people value the skills of an adult youth worker, who can act as an advocate for their needs and an intermediary with the rest of their community. This suggests that adults might need to be much more proactive in eliciting youth input rather than just relying on the organizing and political skills of young people themselves.

Affordable housing provision and long-term career prospects in the countryside are becoming an increasingly intractable problem especially for

young people. Enabling a future for young people in the countryside in part revolves around addressing these issues. Rural youth workers therefore need to see their role in more holistic terms of both enabling young people to realize their potential within the constraints of a changing rural economy, as well as encouraging communities to support those aspirations. Youth workers should promote the needs of rural young people, as the future of rural communities will ultimately require their presence to function. As property ownership conveys some level of legitimacy in terms of community citizenship, housing aimed at young people can be an important mechanism for validating the participation of young people in community life. Equally the successful anchoring of young people in rural communities can only be possible if some attention is given to employment opportunities and how they might afford to live there. Jobs for young people in rural areas tend to be poorly paid and often seasonal and therefore do not generate enough income to allow for the purchase of increasingly expensive rural housing. In the absence of better paying jobs in the countryside, rural young people will increasingly move out or face long commutes. On the other hand, young people from urban areas might seek out rural centres for the quality of life they can offer. Thus, the young people who will choose a rural residence in the future might not necessarily be the ones that grew up there. In order to further a more inclusive and sustainable rural population, the promotion of a countryside socially inclusive of all young people, regardless of their rural or urban backgrounds, could be given greater consideration – an idea that does not yet appear in rural policy documentation. Indeed, as a number of commentators have recently observed, current definitions of sustainable rural communities in the UK planning system lack a coherent vision for implementation that includes all young people who may wish to live in the countryside.

3.2 Youth Work and Low Aspiration

Another question that seems to be evermore pressing and requires further consideration is, what is the remit of rural youth agencies? Rural youth workers must place young people at the centre of their efforts, and seek to work with young people within the wider context of their lives. This may mean working with young people and regeneration agencies to try to stem the wider

changes taking place within the countryside. Further it may require rural youth work based upon the principles and practices of rural development work and working with whole communities and not just young people. In the context of the challenges facing rural youth raised by this report and the emergence of the Big Society agenda, how can thinking and practice in youth work be incorporated into a more holistic approach?

Current youth service priorities are often centred on 'acute' issues in order to provide safeguarding for children and to avoid a repeat of the Harringey tragedies. However the challenges facing young people in the countryside centre on 'chronic' issues, such as a lack of facilities or leisure spaces and social exclusion taking place over a span of years. Current thinking seems to be very heavily based upon delivering services where the need is greatest and centres very much upon the individual – in youth work this is typified by a personal development approach assessed through accredited outcomes. Rural youth work does not have this luxury as resources are so thinly spread. Therefore to address the issues facing rural youth requires a different approach, in which youth workers apply a 'community focused' approach. For example, the village or regeneration agency should gain the accreditation in a rural-proofed model – not the individual young person. In this way the aim is to build a socially inclusive rural society in which young people have a clearly defined place.

4.0 The Big Issues

Since 1998, the UK has changed significantly. When the research began New Labour had recently won a General Election, the economy was expanding and there was a general sense of optimism. Fast forward to the present and we are entering the fifth year of recession, and experiencing unprecedented cuts to education, public services and voluntary and community budgets. According to Clare McNeil of the Institute for Public Policy Research, the slashing of funding has disproportionately affected children and young people (2011 in www.guardian.co.uk). In 2013 many more will experience further constraints when the housing benefit budget is cut for Under 25s. Set within the rapidly changing context of the past fourteen years, this research has examined the leisure behaviour, experiences and expectations of rural youth,

and focussed particularly on how the recession has impacted on them and their families. However, the report does not attempt a comprehensive evaluation of rural youth or paint a picture of all the needs and demands of young people. Instead it offers a glimpse into the lives of a few young people living in rural Somerset.

Similar to the previous reports, the findings suggest that young people living in rural areas still experience a range of issues tied to the infrastructural problems of servicing the countryside. These include poor transport, lack of jobs, the cost of housing and inadequate facilities, amongst others. We do not expect these issues to change, especially as the State further withdraws the provision of services for disparate communities. Furthermore, as austerity measures place pressures on Councils to prioritise services, regrettably we will see further cuts across the nation, for organisations offering support to rural youth. As a result this report has attempted to show the barriers young people encounter as well as the effects of the recession – both the spatial (differential) and material impacts on young people – so that providers are better able to focus delivery.

4.1 Impact of the Recession

Due to the prominence of seasonal industries – particularly farming and tourism – rural areas are more susceptible to downturns in the economy. Correspondingly, the research suggests rising unemployment in the region and widening socio-economic and gender inequalities. The recession not only affects families but also has direct consequences for young people. In addition to government cuts to education and services, the research indicates that on the ground the choices and opportunities available to young people have diminished. In particular the research reveals that increasing numbers of young people have no form of income, partly it is assumed due to dwindling parental budgets and partly, as the research indicates, the reduced availability of part-time work. It is anticipated that this will have long-term implications in rural areas, by limiting the experiences and opportunities available to young people, while intensifying feelings of isolation and lack of independence.

The current Government's austerity measures are affecting the third sector's ability to deliver services. The further withdrawal or scaling back of rural youth

services, due to financial constraints, will make a material difference to young people's lives and influence how they see their futures. We are concerned that this will contribute to young people feeling increasingly marginal in the ebb and flow of rural life, as villages and hamlets become increasingly gentrified by 'older' communities. These concerns are already evident from the research, which show that increasingly young people feel undervalued. This report therefore challenges conventional wisdom that 'home' place provides a sense of belonging. That is not to say that many of the young people who took part in the research didn't feel a sense of attachment to the countryside, but rather we are suggesting that for many, living in a village can be a marginalising experience. Indeed those young people who remain, may find it increasingly difficult to integrate as they fluctuate between feelings of inclusion and exclusion. It is therefore suggest that further research is required here to ascertain the degree in which young people's wellbeing is changing over time and how understandings of happiness and a sense belonging can be fostered within the lives of young people

4.2 Opportunity and Aspiration

According to a report produced by YouthNet, the young people who took part in their research "resented the attitude people 'over 30' had towards teenagers", going on to suggest that "the negative behaviour of some young people was often a reaction to, and consequence of, older people's negative perceptions and expectations" (2011, p. 20). Corresponding with these observations, the research reveals that increasing numbers of young people feel that they are not a valued part of society, while more and more their movements and activities are monitored by adults. Despite the implementation of schemes intended to empower young people, an increasing number feel that they don't have a say in their village. At the same time however, due to a mixture of apathy and feelings of neglect young people are increasingly disinterested in taking part in local decision-making. As a result the research suggests a growing perception amongst young people that future opportunities will be limited in the countryside.

4.3 Gender Differences

According to the survey data the majority of 13-16 year olds consider the mother to be the head of the household. At the same time the research suggests widening gender inequalities in rural areas due to a decline in the number of female professionals, the disproportionate number of women in routine occupations and rising levels of unemployment. This it is anticipated has important implications for both mothers and their children for whom they are role models. These findings it is suggest raise a number of important questions for further research, including what long-term impact these circumstances will have on the opportunities and aspirations of young women living in rural areas.

4.4 Marginality and Active Citizenship

We believe that rural youth marginalisation occurs and is felt differently at a variety of scales, locations and degrees. We would like to reemphasize the comments of Leyshon and Little who stated in the 2003 (pg. 48) report “we can only understand this and develop appropriate policies and practices to address it by investing time and effort into hearing the voices of young people themselves”. Only through a process of continued and sustained engagement with rural young people will we be in a position to meets the future demands and challenges of the countryside as a society. This report draws attention to some very fundamental questions. For instance, is the countryside lost to young people already? Is rural regeneration, even with the support of youth workers, strong enough to reverse out-migration? Is there the political will to make it strong enough? Are youth work agencies in a position to provide regeneration partners with the support they need? Can the voluntary sector make the move into more political and strategic areas of work (perhaps developing some of the Young Farmers Clubs projects)? Can the statutory sector see beyond safeguarding and properly support this form of participation work?

Our final point is about equal opportunities for rural young people – especially those who live in more remote communities and may never see a youth worker. Equally, where does this leave rural youth work itself? Is the role to accept that that the countryside will soon be socially exclusive of young people, and that their work is now to help rural young people make the often

difficult transition to urban futures? Our feeling is that to build sustainable and vibrant communities requires young people. However we have a rapidly closing window of opportunity to engage young people and encourage them to believe that they have a future in the countryside. This is especially true for youth work where the challenges are stark and clear.

In terms of building active 'rural' citizens we believe that youth service provision needs to place considerable emphasis upon cultivating amongst young people an affective sense of belonging to their community. This is a significant challenge and one that requires services like the SRYP to negotiate and provide spaces in which young people can practice their active citizenship. Here solidarity is forged and divisions reduced. Young people have the capacity to be attitudinally malleable and open to processes of change, but this will only be possible if young people are included in the daily lives of rural communities.

4.5 Recurrent Challenges

The research conducted on behalf of the Somerset Rural Youth Project over the last 14 years demonstrates that the demands and needs of young people in rural Somerset have not greatly changed. The first report in 1998 argued that a coordinated approach to identifying and addressing the needs of rural youth was clearly required as issues effecting their lives were only being partially addressed by youth agencies in the county. Indeed, 14 years on, rural youth still want better facilities for young people, more say in what goes on in their villages, access to youth workers and youth agencies, improved transport links and employment opportunities. The SYRP has risen to these challenges through providing a youth service, often in marginalized remote rural communities, tailored to the needs of young people. They have materially changed the lives of considerable numbers of rural youth for the better. However, with every new cohort of young people familiar but intractable problems present themselves and to neglect these problems is to diminish the life chances of an entire generation and the sustainability of a rural way of life.

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6.0 Appendices
Appendix 1

Youth Questionnaire



Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research project. We are interested in what it is like to be a young person in today's world and to help us gain an understanding of your lives we would like you to fill in this questionnaire. This survey focuses on your lifestyle - who you are, where you live, your personal finances, leisure interests, future self and sense of community. You can be assured that all answers will be treated in complete confidence.

Leisure, Lifestyle & Your Neighbourhood

1. (a). Please could you give **3** good/positive things about your neighbourhood?
 - i.
 - ii.
 - iii.

- (b). Please could you give **3** bad/negative things about your neighbourhood?
 - i.
 - ii.
 - iii.

- (c). What are the **'big'** issues that affect your life in your neighbourhood?
 - i.
 - ii.
 - iii.

Leisure Activities

2. Please list your favourite leisure activities (e.g. memberships of clubs and societies, sports etc.) and how much money do you spend on them in an average month. Please could you put the one you enjoy most at the top and the one you enjoy least at the bottom. Don't worry if you do less than five, just list what you do in order of preference.

Activity	Cost per Week
i.	
ii.	
iii.	
iv.	
v.	

.....

 Go to q.9
 (f). If you do not get involved in these activities, why don't you? (Please list your reasons, e.g. perhaps they might seem boring or dull or maybe there are things you would like to do but cannot because you need transport)

9. (a). Are there any activities in nearby neighbourhoods/towns that you would like to participate in?
 Yes Go to q.9(b) & (c) No Go to q.10 Don't Know Go to q.10

(b). What are they?

i.	iii.
ii.	iv.

Go to 9(c)

(c). If you feel you are prevented from taking part in these activities please tell me why?

10. (a). Do you think that there are enough activities for you and your friends or people of your age group in your neighbourhood?
 Yes Go to q.11 No Go to q.10(b)

(b). Would you like activities/events provided for you?
 Yes Go to q.10(c) No Go to q.11

(c). What sort of activities would you like? Please list:

i.	iii.
ii.	iv.

11. If you were in charge of the money for providing leisure facilities in your neighbourhood, what would you spend it on?

.....

In Your Community

12. (a). Do you feel that you have a say in what goes on in your neighbourhood?
 Yes Go to q.12(b) No Go to q.12(c)

(b). How are you involved in having a say in your neighbourhood?

.....
.....
Go to q.13

(c). Could you explain why you don't have a say in what goes on in your neighbourhood?

.....
.....
Go to q.12(d)

(d). Would you like more say in what goes on?
Yes Go to 12(e) No Go to q.13

(e). How would you like a say? (Please could you number which is your preferred choice e.g. 1=favourite to 7=least favourite)

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Be invited to adult meetings | <input type="checkbox"/> | Have meetings for young people | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Fill in a questionnaire | <input type="checkbox"/> | Talk to a researcher/youth worker | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Invite adults to your meetings | <input type="checkbox"/> | Establish a youth council | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other? | <input type="checkbox"/> (please | | |
| explain)..... | | | |

13. (a). With the exception of your parents do you feel that other adults in the neighbourhood care about *local* young people and their issues?
Yes Go to 14 No Go to q.13(b)

(b). Why do you think this is so?
.....
.....

Future Plans

14. (a). Do you know what you want to do for a future career?
Yes Go to q.14(b) No Go to q.15

(b). What do you want to do?
..... Go to q.14(c)

(c). Do you think you will be able to live and work in your neighbourhood?
Yes Go to q.14(d) No Go to q.14(d)

(d). Have you had advice from anyone about this?
Yes Go to 14(e) No Go to q.15

(e). Who?
.....

15. (a). Do you know what sort of qualifications and/or training you need for future employment?
Yes Go to 15(b) No Go to q.16

(b). Which qualifications?

16. Where do you see yourself in ...? (please tick which box best describes where you see yourself in the future)

When (years time)	Countryside	Suburbia	Down Town	Someplace else	Don't Know
One					
Five					
Ten					
Fifteen					

Life in Your Neighbourhood

17. Read the following statements and tick which response best describes your own views.

	Agree Strongly	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
There's lots to do in my neighbourhood					
I can easily get a bus into town					
If I stay in my home place I might get a good job					
I'm always bored in where I live					
I never have enough money to do what I want					
Farming is the backbone of the rural economy					
Its good that everyone where I live knows each other					
Young people have a regular meeting place					
I can easily get back home from town at night					
It would be good to have some new things to do					
Living in the countryside is better than living in the town					
There are more things to do in my neighbourhood than in the town					
I'd like to live in a town/city when I leave school/college					
I can always afford to travel to town					
Rural areas would be more prosperous if they attracted new industries					
If I stay in my neighbourhood I might end up in a dead-end job					
I can always afford to do the activities I want to do					
There's more to do in towns for people my age					
Young people aren't taken into consideration enough					
There's nothing for young people to do in my neighbourhood					
Its healthier living in the countryside					
Towns and cities are dangerous places to live					
I'm freer in my neighbourhood than I would be in a city					
Adults in the rural/suburban areas give support to young people					
I have a say in what goes on in my neighbourhood					
I'm happy to live in my neighbourhood					
In the future I would like to live in a city					
I feel isolated in my neighbourhood					
Its peaceful in the countryside					
I have time to think in my neighbourhood					
I have a say in what goes on in my neighbourhood					

Young people are always taken into consideration in my neighbourhood					
There is a stronger sense of community in my neighbourhood than in the town/city					
Young people have a future in my neighbourhood					
People are more friendly in my neighbourhood than in the town/city					
I'm a better person for living in my neighbourhood					
Its safer to live in a town/city than in the countryside					
I see my future in my neighbourhood					

About You & Where You Live

18. How old are you? years

19. Are you? Male Female

20. Where do you live?

21. How long have you lived there? year(s) month(s)

22. Do you live?
 at home with parent(s)/guardian(s) with relatives with friends
 by yourself with others (e.g. travelling community)
 in shared/rented accommodation

23. Who lives with you?

Relationship to You e.g. Father/Mother/Sister/house mates	Age	Occupation
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

24. (a). Do you own or have the use of a vehicle?
 Yes Go to q.24(b) No Go to q.25

(b). What sort of vehicle is it? (you can tick more than one box)
 Car Motorbike Bike Other

School/College/Work

25. Are you?
 @ School Go to q.26 Unemployed Go to q.28
 @ College Go to q.26 Employed Go to q.26
 @ University Go to q.26
 on a Training Scheme which

26. How do you usually get to school/college? (please only tick your principle mode of transport)

- Walk Motorbike Bus Bike
 Train
 Taxi Parent's Car Friend's Car

27. How long does it usually take you to get to school/college/work?
 (hrs/mins)

Personal Finance

28. (a). Do you receive pocket money/an allowance?
 Yes Go to q.28(b) No Go to q.29

(b). How much do you receive? £/\$ per week/per month (delete as appropriate)

29. (a). Do you have a full time (F/t) or part time (P/t) job?
 Yes Go to q.29(b) No Go to q.30

(b). What do you do? (please indicate F/t or P/t)

.....

(c). Where do you work?

.....

(d). How many hours do you work per week? hours

(e). How much are you paid? £/\$ per week/per month

(f). Do you see this job becoming your future career?

Yes Go to q.29(g) No Go to q.29(g)

(g). How do you get to and from work? (please tick your principle mode of transport)

- Walk Motorbike Bus Bike
 Train
 Taxi Parent's Car Friend's Car

(h). Do you experience problems travelling to and from work?

Yes Go to q.29(i) No Go to q.31

(i). Why?

.....

Go to q.31

30. (a). Would you like to have a part-time job?
 Yes Go to q.30(b) No Go to q.31

(b). Why?

.....

.....

31. (a). Where do you expect to earn a living in the future?
 Town/City Suburb Rural Area

(b). In the future would you like to work in a rural area? If yes doing what?

.....

32. Do you think opportunities exist in the countryside to enable young people to live and work there? How could these opportunities be improved?

.....

.....

33. (a). Do you think young people are an important part of rural society?

Yes Go to q.33(b) No Go to q.33(c)

(b). Explain your answer

..... End

(c) Why not?

..... End

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire.

Appendix 2

SRYP: In-depth Discussion Group Schedules

In-depth Discussion Group: Young People and Neighborhood Life

The Neighborhood

What is it like to live around here?

- (a). What's good about your neighborhood?
- (b). What's bad about your neighborhood?
- (c). What are the 'big' issues that effect your lives in your neighborhood?

Community

Is there a sense of community in your neighborhood?

Do you think that it's a good place to grow up?

Having a say

Do you think that young people have a say in neighborhood life?

What sort of support do young people receive from adults? E.g. Youth club, events etc..

Would you like a youth council or support from a youth worker/adult to help you have a voice.

Tell me about your contact with the Youth Project – is it good/bad? Could their service be improved? [this is an optional question – if you would like the feedback]

Young People's Places

Who do you hang out with?

Where do you hang out?

What do you usually do?

What sort of problems do you encounter when meeting up with friends?

Do you feel part of a group in your neighborhood? If yes, who is in that group?

Do you have friends in the neighborhood and/or beyond (where)?

How would you define your group of friends? (e.g. chosen, enforced due to no one else, specific types of identity (based on music/fashion/cultural tastes)

Transport

What's it like getting transport to places you want go? Any problems?

Employment

How hard is it to get a job around here?

As a young person?

As a young adult? Career opportunities?

Housing

Can young people afford to live around here?

Future Places

Hopes and aspirations for the neighborhood.

What do you think the neighborhood will be like in, five, ten and fifteen years time?

What sort of changes, if any, do you envisage?

What sort of changes, if any, do you think will happen in the countryside in this time period?

Where do you see yourselves in, five, ten and fifteen years time?

Do you feel as if you belong in the countryside?

Additional Questions

Defining Young People

Does anyone feel like a local/incomer?

Does anyone feel like an insider/outsider?
Does anyone feel isolated living in the countryside?

Questions Only for Rural Areas

What is the countryside for?
What is the countryside like where you live?
What is the countryside for?
What do you think the future of the countryside is?