# Residents' Survey
# Summary of Findings
# November 2026

***This survey was commissioned to better understand Oxfordshire residents' relationship with the county's visitor economy. The results are based on a sample of 416 responses to a structured online questionnaire from recipients, living within the county, who are registered to participate in a national online panel.***

## Who responded to this survey?

Residents responding represented all Oxfordshire districts:
26% Cherwell
24% Oxford City
22% South Oxfordshire
17% Vale of White Horse
11% West Oxfordshire

## What did we learn about the local Oxfordshire audience?

- 61% stated their gender was female and 37% male. Respondents represented ages brackets between 18 and over 65 with the highest proportion falling within the 65+ range (28%) and an equal spread across the other age brackets offering a good cross-section of viewspoint across the demographics (17%, 35-44; 17% 45-54; 19% 55-64; with a slight lower 12% for 25-34 and 7% for 18-24).

- 66% of respondents are working (including 12% working part-time and 5% self-employed) and 24% of respondents are retired. 64% have no children under the age of 16 in their household.

- When asked about the current cost of living 48% said they were being cautious with their spending while 19% have been hit hard with no option but to cut back. 21% said their spending had not been affected and 3% said their situation had improved.

- 42% said that this year they would spend the same as last on leisure activities. 34% said they would spend less.

- 24% were spending less on eating out; 22% were staying closer to home; 21% were more likely to holiday in the UK; 21% were cutting back on spend whilst on holiday; 20% revealed they would reduce the number of holidays they take

## What do residents think about Oxfordshire?

When asked which tourism associations they would attribute to Oxfordshire, most residents associated the county with history (Historical, 48%; Heritage, 43%); culture (Museums & Galleries, 35%; Arts & Culture 35%) and open spaces and attractive countryside (Attractive countryside, 41%; Walking & cycling 28%).

When asked to rate Oxfordshire on a scale of 1-5 (where 1 is poor and 5 is excellent) against a set of requisite destination attributes, residents' identified the county's five as: a general feeling of safety

(4.2); cleanliness of public spaces (4.1); range and quality of hospitality (4.1) and the quality of the cultural scene (4.1). Residents rated the Overall visitor experience highly at 4.1.

### How appealing is Oxfordshire as a destination?

- 47% of respondents found Oxfordshire quite appealing as a destination and 23% find it very appealing. 26% were neutral with 3% finding it quite unappealing and 1% not at all appealing.

- When asked to compare their county with a list of other destination within the UK, however, Oxfordshire residents acknowledge the appeal of the area and found it more appealing as a holiday destination than all destinations listed bar Devon & Cornwall and the Lake District which were thought more appealing by a small number of respondents. Dorset and the New Forest were seen as equally appealing.

- 40% of respondents would actively recommend Oxfordshire to a friend; 39% were satisfied but less likely to champion the destination and 21% would be unlikely to recommend Oxfordshire to a friend, family member or colleague as a place to visit.

### What activities do respondents engage in?

The most popular activities within Oxfordshire were visiting a pub/restaurant/café (49%) followed by sightseeing and exploring areas (35%); visiting attractions including historic houses, theme parks etc (27%); visiting friends and relatives (25%); speciality shopping (21%); went to an arts, cultural or entertainment experience (17%).

Outside of Oxfordshire, the top three choices for shopping trips were London (50%), Blue Water (26%) and Reading (22%).

### Which towns in Oxfordshire were the most visited by respondents?

54% Oxford
32% Bicester
18% Banbury
18% Henley
12% Chipping Norton

### How do residents view the visitor economy?

Most respondents, 78%, recognise the importance of tourism in contributing to the local economy. (44% very important and 34% important) with only 6% considering it unimportant.

42% of respondents feels it benefits the **quality of life in the county**, compared to 17% who see a negative effect and 34% who see no noticeable impact.

Only 18% of respondents saw tourism as having a negative impact on the **local environment**, with 37% seeing no clear effect and 38% holding positive, views significantly overshadowing the negative perception.

**Traffic & infrastructure**, 37% hold the opinion that tourism harms road networks, 31% see actual benefits and a further 27% see a neutral impact.