



Community Engagement and Consultation Research

Introduction



Previously Re-JIG, we have evolved to suit Islay's changing needs and circumstances.

We are now Islay Development Initiative. Our purpose is to help protect Islay, to keep it as people like it – which doesn't mean simply doing nothing, as the constant pressure from marine litter illustrates.

Having been criticised in the past for not doing so, in order to focus future efforts on the most relevant initiatives, we ran an online and paper-based survey in order to gather community views. The findings have already helped us revisit and redefine our purpose and make the most of our limited resources – focusing on a series of existing and new initiatives designed to benefit the island as a whole.

This report summarises the responses to the set of questions put - some of the questions were ours, others were suggested to us for inclusion.

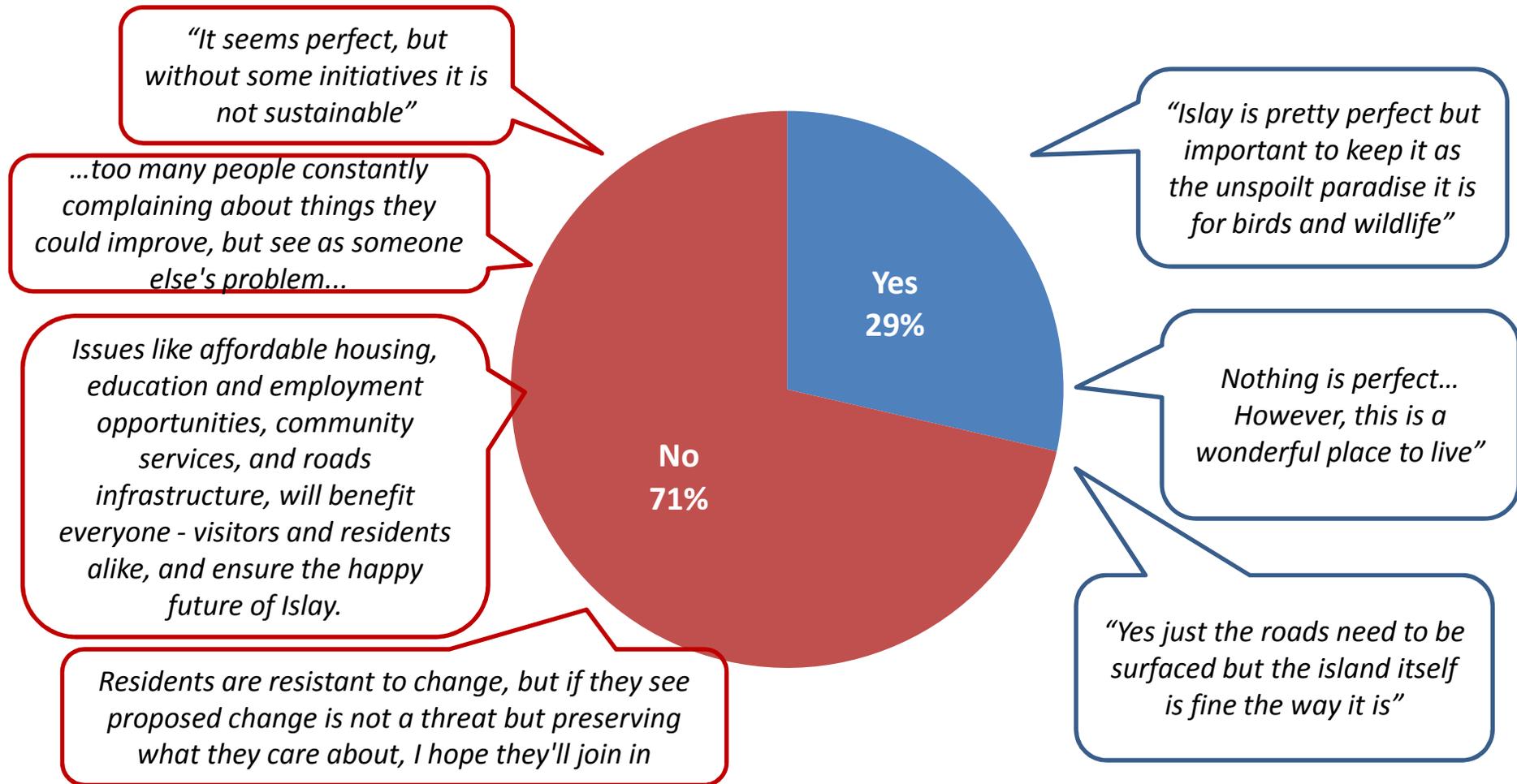
If you would like to know more, please let us know.

Rab Smith, Chairman

Overall, there is desire for improvement: most disagreed with the statement that *'Islay is perfect, exactly as it is'*



Q1 - "Islay is perfect, exactly as it is" if yes, why? If not, why, what would you like to see improved?



There were a range of desired improvements – with transport infrastructure top of the list



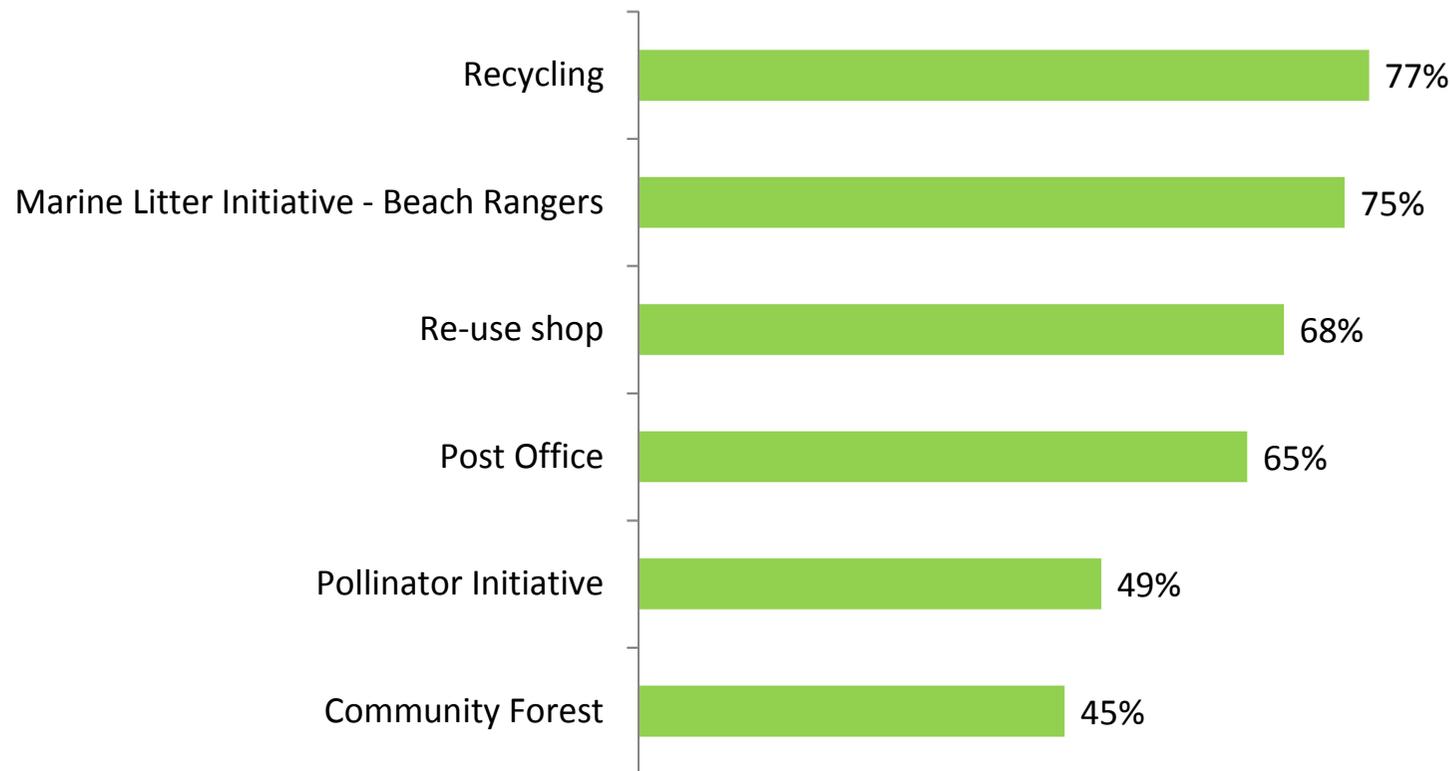
Q1 - "Islay is perfect, exactly as it is" if yes, why? If not, why, what would you like to see improved?

- 71% of respondents disagreed that '*Islay is perfect, exactly as it is*'.
- Overwhelmingly, people referred to transport and road infrastructure as the top priority for improvement. Frustrations with poor roads and ferry links were mentioned by most
- Residents were also likely to focus on the need for affordable housing, jobs for young people, and other infrastructure and support services
- Where the whisky industry was mentioned, it was in a relatively negative light: concern about saturation, and an increase in visitors compounding infrastructure and litter issues
- Those who agreed with the statement praised Islay's wildlife, and the peace and quiet of the landscape; however a few still commented that 'nothing is perfect'
- Over 70% felt that Islay is not perfect, so there is appetite for appropriate change



Of the various initiatives managed by Islay Development Initiative, Recycling and Beach Rangers are best known

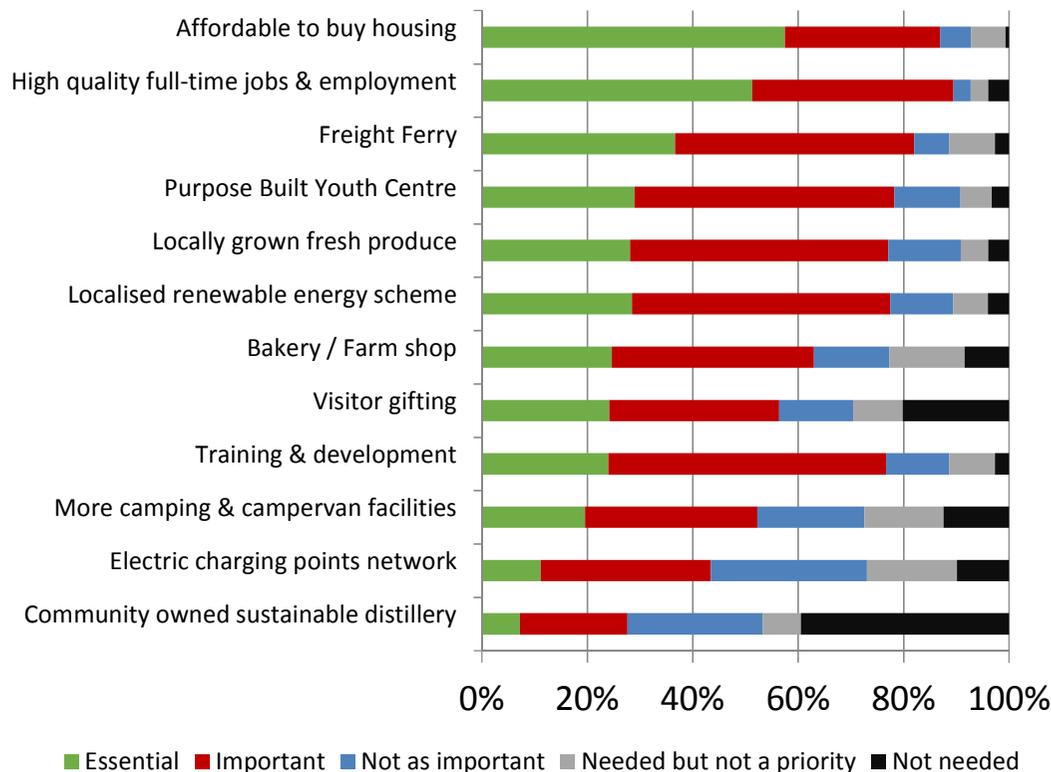
Q2 - Islay Development Initiative (previously Re-Jig) is working on a series of initiatives designed to help Islay be more sustainable, protect our home and its future. which of these initiatives have you heard of?



Responses collected 2018: Survey Monkey (n=135), paper (n=20), total base = 155

When shown potential initiatives, only the community-owned sustainable distillery was seen as ‘not needed’

Q3 - Please have a look at the following initiatives which have been flagged as areas needing developed by our community so far (all initiatives will be community owned and run).

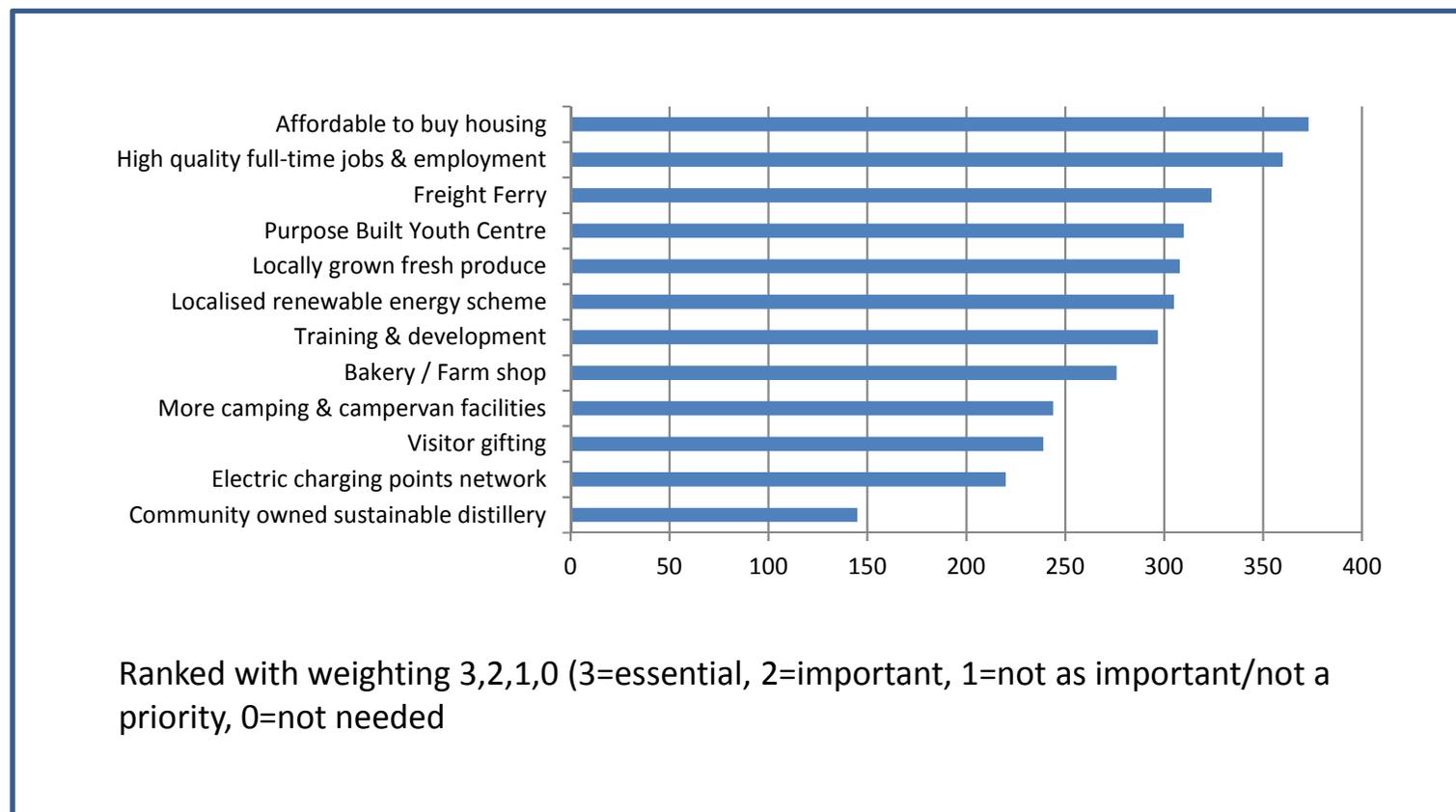


- People were largely open to all the initiatives proposed. They were most positive about infrastructure-related initiatives – housing, jobs, transport
- All initiatives were seen as ‘essential or ‘important’ by over half of respondents, except two –the community owned delivery and electric charging points network
- Islay was not felt to need another distillery by over 40%: *“another distillery would not be productive as Islay is at capacity”*



Another look at the potential initiatives data, with responses ranked by importance

Q3 - Please have a look at the following initiatives which have been flagged as areas needing developed by our community so far (all initiatives will be community owned and run).



Responses collected 2018: Survey Monkey (n=135), paper (n=20), total base = 155



Concerns included a lack of money, the impact of tourism, and the need for consultation with the local community

Q4 – Do you have any concerns about how any of these should be addressed, before they go ahead?

- Lack of funds: *“The only concern is as each year passes less money is been given to every council”;*
- Tourism and environmental impact: *“I am concerned about the increasing number of camper vans, their tendency to park up near beaches and leave litter”*
- Employment and housing: *“We have full employment at present so where will the employees of the new initiatives come from?”; “Difficulty in getting land for affordable housing” “Ensure that affordable houses are made available for the community who currently live on Islay.”*
- Transparency around plans: *“Viability, costings, transparency to all”*
- Consultation with the local community: *“Everything needs public consultation, or the island will be up in arms”; “Locals should be in agreement for any large scale projects”*
- The ideal role for IDI: *“IDI should be here to help the community flourish, support local businesses which have started, being going for years or are in the thinking stages”*
- The wording of the question irked some: *“It sounds from this question as of the decision has been made to go ahead with these projects”*
- Impatience: *“No, we need to start a.s.a.p.”*



Two initiatives were mentioned as ones to actively avoid: the community-owned distillery, and charging points

Q5 – Are there any we should actively avoid? if so why?

The distillery was mentioned most often:

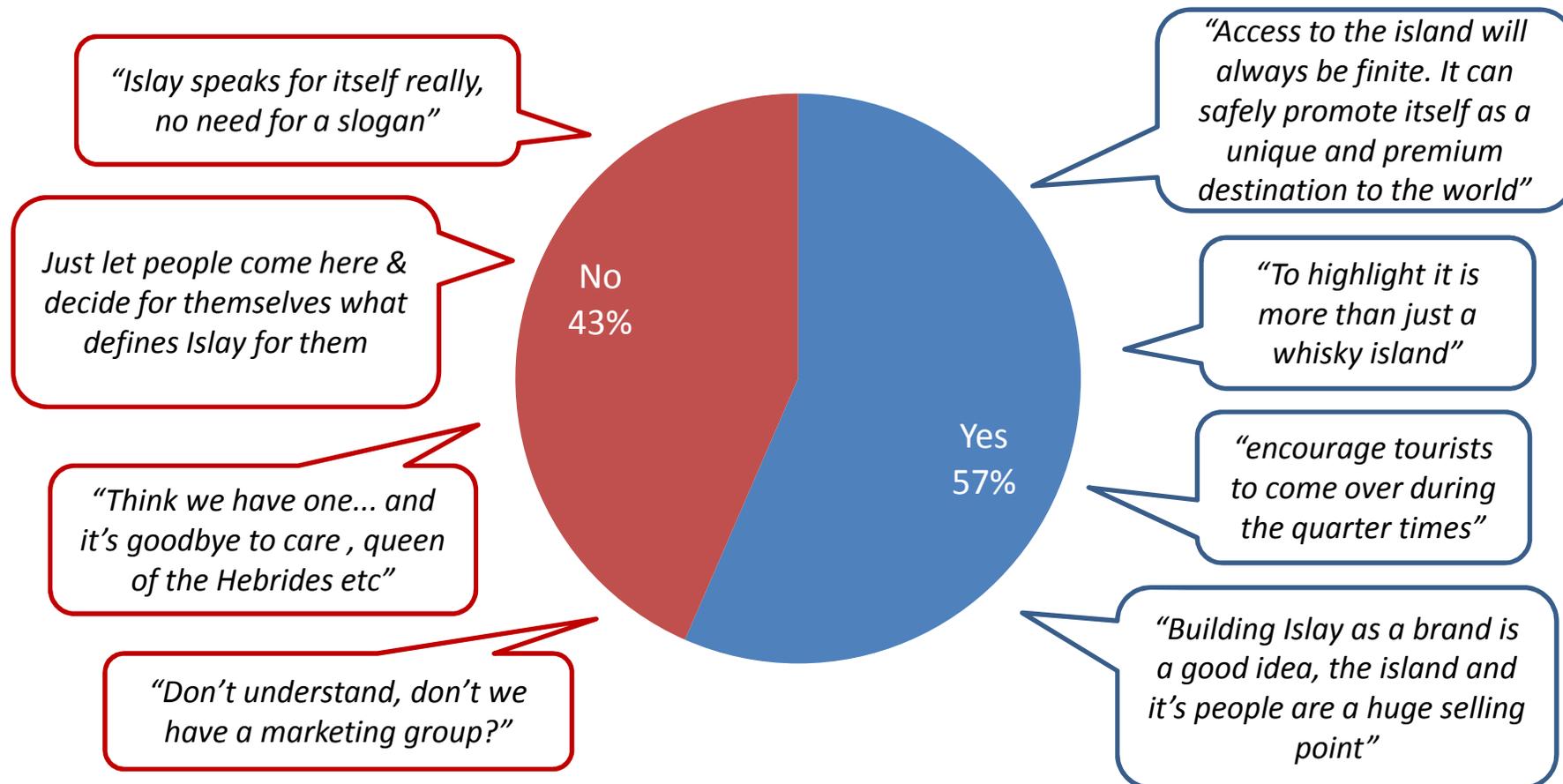
- *“There are plenty of distilleries already and the infrastructure can't cope with the lorries, visitors etc”*
- *“Distillery. Economic Diversity. We have seen this industry falter many times in history especially during times of expansion and over production”*
- *“More than enough provision. Public money should not be used for this”*

Charging points were also unpopular:

- While I can see the attraction of travelling in a camper van, I think there should be definite controls over the size, numbers and where they can safely go
- I'd be cautious about making too many motor home facilities. Not great for road congestion and don't contribute as much to local community.

Respondents were slightly in favour of a branded message and 'house style' for Islay, with 57% agreeing

Q6 – Other destinations that people visit for holidays have branded messages and a defined 'house style', such as Visit Orkney, Love Loch Lomond, Arran Time, Explore Mull & Iona. Should Islay have one?



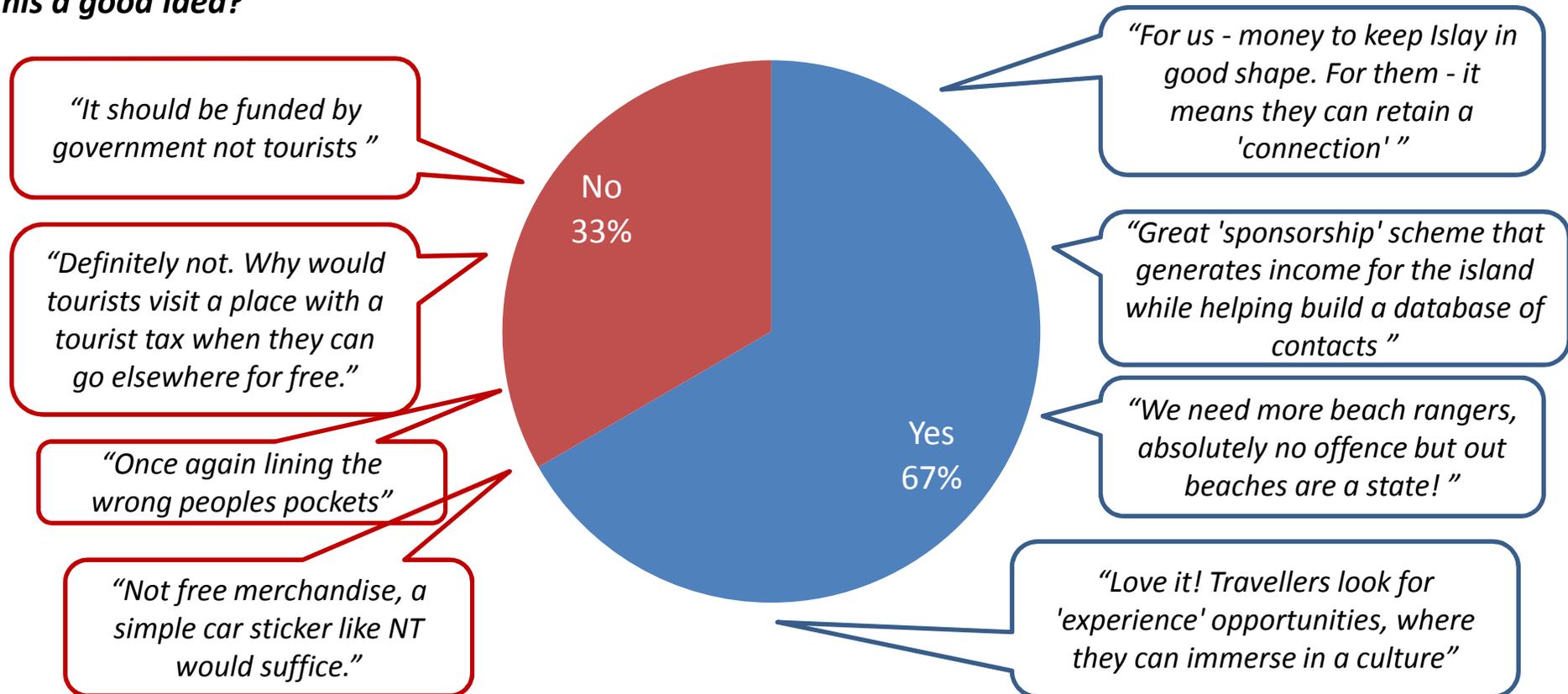
Respondents felt it would be most useful for visitors to be able to search online for accommodation and places to eat

Q7 – Islay attracts a huge amount of visitor web traffic, people look for information to plan their stay, which of these things do you think might be good for them to find out about and maybe book online more easily?



Two thirds of respondents feel that the visitor gifting scheme, as described below, is a good idea

Q8 - Our proposed Visitor Gifting scheme gives visitors an option to 'join' Islay, similar to how people join the National Trust - paid membership with Gift Aid, generating funds for initiatives such as Beach Rangers. Members would get updates on what is happening on 'their' island along with some free merchandise, is this a good idea?





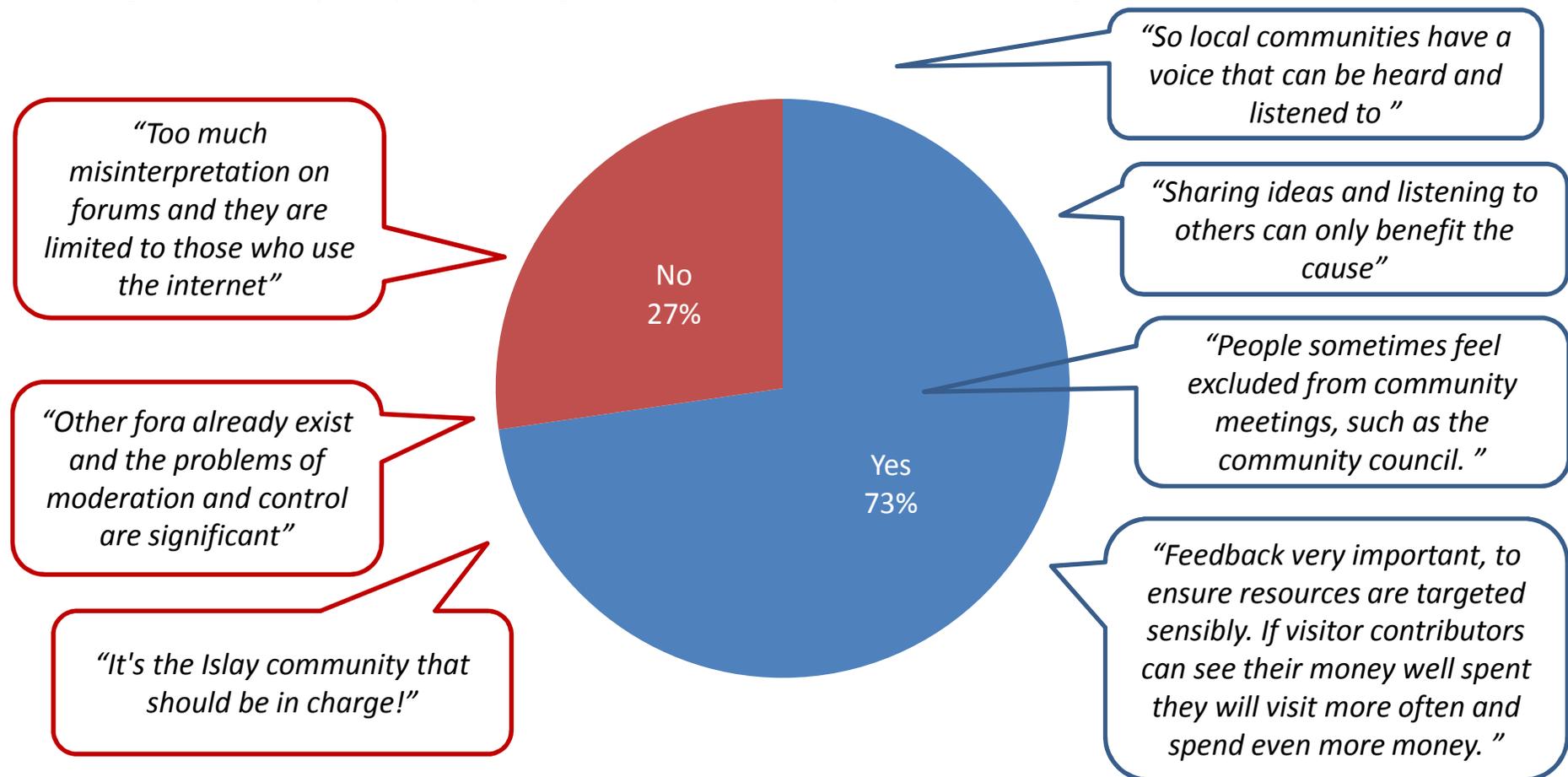
The main benefits would be to raise funds, and to promote a sense of connection with Islay

Q8 - Our proposed Visitor Gifting scheme gives visitors an option to 'join' Islay... is this a good idea?

- Two thirds of people believe the visitor gifting scheme is a good idea. The main benefit would be to raise funds for community projects
- People also appreciated the idea of creating an emotional connection, and increased visitor engagement with the island. It is seen as tried and tested in other places
- Some expressed reservations about free merchandise, but were keen on the idea of information updates being provided
- For the third of respondents who did not agree that gifting was a good idea, there were challenges around transparency and decision-making: *“Similar community benefit schemes e.g. the wind turbine fund are not transparent”*
- There were concerns that Islay is an expensive place to visit already, and that if anyone should pay to support community projects it should be distilleries

Almost three quarters of respondents agreed that a community forum is needed as part of the new website

Q9 - As part of the Islay Development Initiatives website development, we've been asked for a community forum to provide an open space for important community discussion, do you think this is needed?



Q10 comments



Q10 - Is there anything else you would like to comment on, to help Islay Development Initiative work for Islay, it's community and its future?

- Support: *"Just to say thank you for doing this." "Keep up the great work" "I think this is a great idea. I offer my support to the IDI and commend them for introducing forward thinking initiatives to sustain Islay." "Keep going as you are." "Take time to get it right and it could be fantastic, thanks." "Well done." "No, just to say I thought this was an excellent & well-constructed survey."*
- Opposition: *"I think the initiative is not for Islay it's a vehicle run under the guise for Islay but it's another layer of commercialisation." "I am concerned that rejig has now expanded its role too widely." "This is only for some of islay and its certainly NOT for the whole community, LISTEN to what people are saying" "This is a very poor survey and it is hoped that the results will be used in a responsible manner."*
- More ideas: *"I would like to see visitor friendly, 'how to drive on Islay roads' and reminder of uk drink driving laws etc." "I suggest a board at every beach/campsite with a poster, please pick up at least 3 pieces of plastic off the beach, keep Islay beautiful"*
- Distilleries' role: *"Perhaps the distilleries who are financially benefiting could be contributing more to the island's challenges"*

Q10 comments



Q10 - Is there anything else you would like to comment on, to help Islay Development Initiative work for Islay, it's community and its future?

- Politics: *“The best thing that could happen to Islay would to be removed from the jurisdiction of Argyll and Bute Council. They are too far removed to understand the needs of islanders, funding is continually used for mainland projects.” “Great to see IDI to the fore but it is not Scottish Government, HIE, Visit Scotland, A&B Council, HES, NHS etc.”*
- It’s for everyone: *“Make sure that younger residents are involved, it is their future which really matters” “Just to say let's be clear this should be for the island, not for a clique, or a demographic, or for overseas shareholders.” “I think we are lucky to have a development company covering the whole island. The old Islay Development Co was plagued by infighting.” “Don’t be a clique, involve young people”*
- Communicate: *“Tell people what the results of consultation are, also what has been achieved.” “Listen. Progress is good, but you need to keep a balance with old and new.” “Keep informing all in detail what’s happening, regularly”*

Summary of overall findings



- Overall, there is warmth and interest in the initiatives and the idea of a Visitor Gifting Scheme. The benefits (raising funds, increasing engagement) are understood, and examples elsewhere are cited by respondents.
 - Positivity about a community forum, somewhere – a place to exchange ideas, provide feedback...although caution is advised in terms of moderation
 - There is however a ‘resistant core’ of islanders who are not yet convinced by IDI and it’s rationale.
 - Some of this seems to stem from lack of understanding about IDI, and fears about change on the island. Comments received in the survey suggest some ways to address concerns:
 - Define scope for IDI to address concerns about breadth of reach
 - Rationale for initiatives to be clearly explained to those who are resistant – the more info the better!
 - Website developments will likely address this, also consider social media and local newspaper
 - ‘Suggestion box’ section on website for ongoing feedback
 - Funds raised should be positioned as belonging to the island and spent in consultation with residents
 - With a clear process and transparency on finances
 - Language of ‘preservation’ may resonate more with some than ‘development’, consider in communications
 - Initiatives need supporting info / detail for some respondents – this will be addressed by new website
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