

# Annex 2: 'Flagship' Case Study Report 2009/10

Birches Valley Forest Centre  
Monitoring & Evaluating Quality of Life for CSR07

Jake Morris & Kieron Doick

# Contents

Chapter	Chapter title	Page
<b>1.</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
	1.1 Introduction to report chapters	<b>3</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Birches Valley's event profile (2009)</b>	<b>5</b>
	2.1 Event profile	<b>5</b>
	2.2 Resourcing	<b>6</b>
	2.3 Delivery of policy objectives	<b>6</b>
	2.4 Accident record	<b>7</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Headline indicators</b>	<b>8</b>
	3.1 Engagement	<b>8</b>
	3.2 Quality of experience	<b>8</b>
	3.3 Personal benefits	<b>9</b>
	3.4 Social benefits	<b>9</b>
	3.5 Volunteering	<b>10</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Birches Valley's 'visit profile'</b>	<b>12</b>
	4.1 Visit characteristics	<b>12</b>
	4.2 Visitors' experiences at Birches Valley	<b>15</b>
	4.3 Additional benefits	<b>21</b>
	4.4 Barriers to visiting	<b>21</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Birches Valley's visitor profile</b>	<b>22</b>
	5.1 Socio-demographic profile of visitors	<b>22</b>
	5.2 Socio-demography and engagement, quality of experience, benefits and barriers	<b>27</b>

For more information contact

Kieron Doick [kieron.doick@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:kieron.doick@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)

Jake Morris [jake.morris@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:jake.morris@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)

# 1. Introduction

This annexed report presents the results of research undertaken in 2009 at Birches Valley Forest Centre (hereafter 'Birches Valley') to establish values for indicators related to the Quality of Place and Quality of Life objectives set out under Aim 4 of the Strategy for England's Trees, Woods and Forests (ETWF) and Forestry Commission England's (FCE) corresponding Corporate Plan.

Birches Valley Forest Centre is located on Cannock Chase in Staffordshire, close to the towns of Rugeley, Cannock, Lichfield and Stafford. Cannock Chase is the smallest mainland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) at just 64 square kilometres and is situated within 30 minutes drive of 4 million people including the diverse communities of Birmingham and Stoke on Trent.

The research took place during the second year of a three year project 'Monitoring and Evaluating Quality of Life for CSR 07' delivered by Forest Research (FR) and funded by FCE. The indicator values presented in this report can be compared with baseline values established through research conducted in 2008 and constitute part of an ongoing programme of monitoring and evaluation of activities at Birches Valley to measure the impact of scheduled interventions on the site. As a 'Flagship' case study site, results from Birches Valley will also be used to measure changes in use, engagement, quality of experience, personal and social benefits as part of an evaluation of national delivery (England) against Quality of Place and Quality of Life objectives.

During 2009 the following research activities were undertaken at Birches Valley to produce the results reported:

1. On-site surveying of visitors to Birches Valley to establish quantitative values for indicators relating to engagement, quality of experience, personal and social benefits. A total of 166 visitors were interviewed between July and September 2009.
2. An Activities and Events<sup>1</sup> database was established at Birches Valley to record the diary of programmed events, associated finance, attendance, and related information. A total of 13 Activities were held at Birches Valley between April and December 2009. A total of 25 Events were held at Birches Valley between April and December 2009.

---

<sup>1</sup> An 'activity' is defined as: organised and led by a group or an individual from outside the Forestry Commission (FC) on FC land. The group, or individual, request permission (a permit) to hold the activity on FC land.

An 'event' is defined as: organised and led by FC staff. May take place on or off of FC land.

## 1.1 Introduction to report chapters

Section 2 draws on data from the events database to present a profile of the organised programme of events at Birches Valley, including data on the range of events held, staffing and resourcing, contribution to policy objectives and reported accidents.

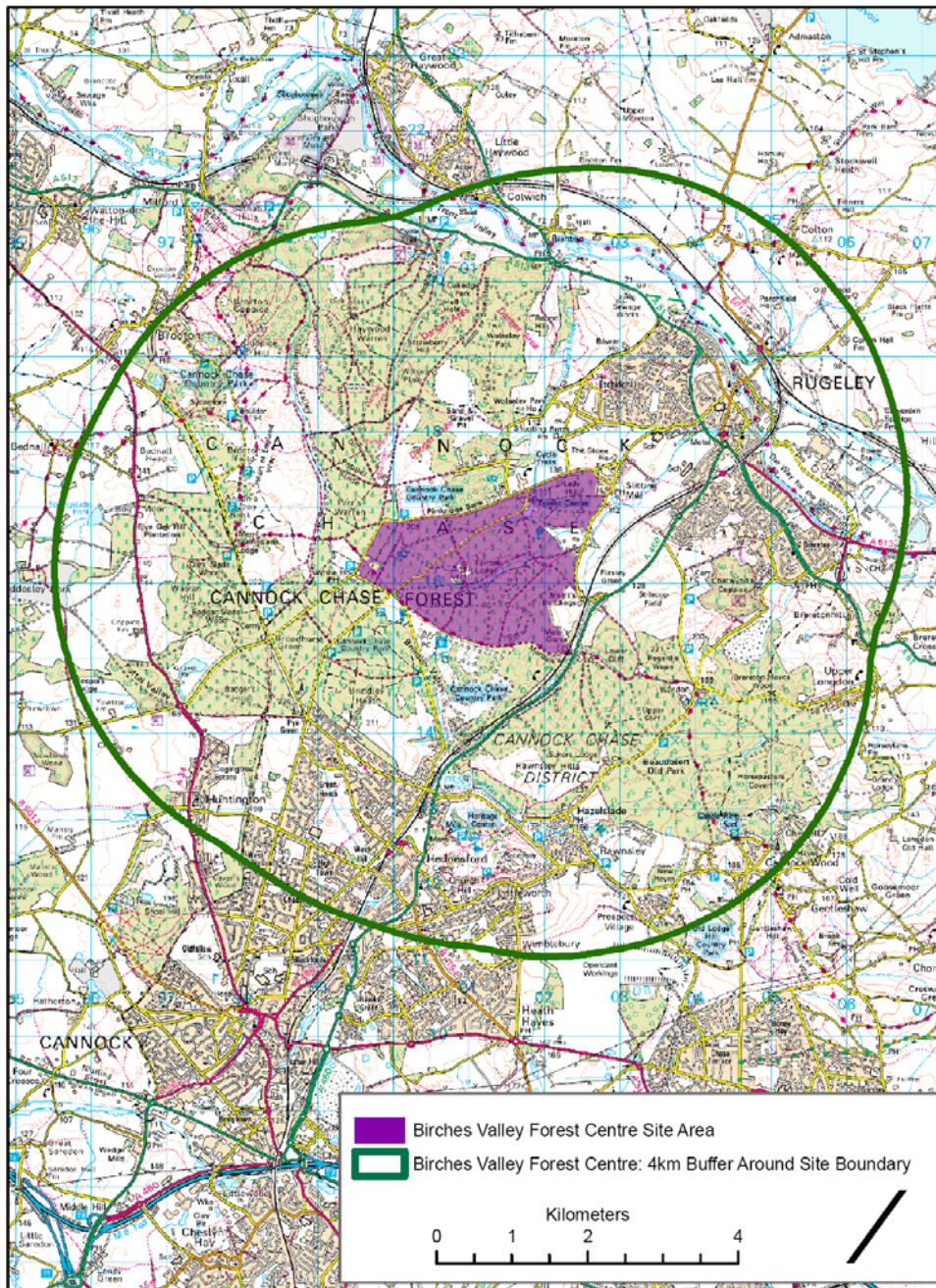
Section 3 presents values for headline indicators relating to engagement, quality of experience, personal and social benefits. The results are from on-site surveying and the events database.

Section 4 represents a detailed 'visit profile' for Birches Valley, drawing on results from the on-site surveys and from the events database, to present data relating to frequency and seasonal variation of visits, distance travelled, mode of transport, activities, and barriers to more frequent use. A detailed analysis of quality of experience on-site is also presented, followed by a more detailed analysis of personal and social benefits derived during visits to Birches Valley.

Section 5 represents a detailed, baseline 'visitor profile' for Birches Valley, presenting an analysis of the demographic make-up of visitors to the site and showing how different categories of visitors respond to questions about use, engagement, quality of experience and benefits. The section also draws comparisons between the demographic make-up of visitors (as revealed by the on-site surveys and the events database) and the demographic make-up of Birches Valley's catchment population (as revealed by the catchment profiling work conducted in 2008). This comparative analysis of visitor and catchment profiles addresses questions about the 'representativeness' of visitors to Birches Valley and reveals whether certain sub-sections of the site's catchment population are under-represented.

Figure 1 (below) shows the site, its location, and the 4km catchment area defined as part of the catchment profiling exercise. The definition of the catchment enabled the calculation of Birches Valley's total catchment population at 54,976 persons, on the basis of data from the 2001 Census.

Figure 1: Birches Valley Forest Centre and 4km catchment area



## 2. Birches Valley's event profile (2009)

Drawing on data from the activities and events database, this section provides a profile of the organised programme of events held at Birches Valley between 1<sup>st</sup> April and 30<sup>th</sup> November 2009. Data on staffing and resourcing are also presented in order to highlight Birches Valley's inputs to promoting use, engagement, personal and social benefit.

### 2.1 Event profile

The activities and events database categorises events according to whether they are, firstly, a ranger led event or a self-led group activity and, secondly, whether the primary focus is community, education or recreation (i.e. community events may have an engagement plan and/or specific objectives to encourage participation, feedback or consultation on a site; education event may have a lesson plan and/or learning outcomes; and, a recreation event may have an event plan to manage people safely).

Twenty five ranger led events were held at Birches Valley in the current reporting period. All of these had an educational primary focus. Attendance ranged from 12 to 250 participants. In total, 1,194 persons participated in an educational event at Birches Valley in the current reporting period. In addition, permissions were granted for 6 community, 2 educational and 5 recreational group activities.

The Activities and Events database shows that, in this reporting period, 0 (zero) events were held specifically related to managing the site. No planning or consultation events were held. No formal health events were recorded in the events database. Twenty five led and two self-led learning events were held. The number of cultural events was 1 (one) and the number of events held to enable people to volunteer on site was 0 (zero).

**Table 1: Event profile at Birches Valley (1<sup>st</sup> April through to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2009)**

Event type	Specific type	Other	Quarter								Totals	
			1		2		3		4		No. of events	No. of partic
			No. of events	No. of partic.	No. of events	No. of partic.	No. of events	No. of partic.	No. of events	No. of partic.		
Event - education	Other						1	20			1	20
Event - education	Other	talk/walk	1	38							1	38
Event - education	Programmed	full day			7	323	14	761			21	1084
Event - education	Programmed	half day			1	40	1	12			2	52
	<b>Event - education - Total</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>793</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>1194</b>
Permission - community	Other	Candle Sales					1				1	0
Permission - community	Other	Christmas					1	3			1	3
Permission - community	Other	commercial					1	1			1	1
Permission - community	Other	Family support					1				1	0
Permission - community	Other	Team Development					1	20			1	20
Permission - community	Training/skills						1	2			1	2
	<b>Permission - community - Total</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>26</b>
Permission - education					1	22					1	22
Permission - education	School						1	33			1	33
	<b>Permission - education - Total</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>55</b>
Permission - recreation	Other	chainsaw			1						1	0
Permission - recreation	Other	commercial					1	1			1	1
Permission - recreation	Other	Craft Sales					1	1			1	1
Permission - recreation	Physical activity						2	268			2	268
	<b>Permission - recreation - Total</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>270</b>
	<b>Grand Totals</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>385</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>1122</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>1545</b>

Quarter 1 = April, May, June; Quarter 2 = July, August, September; *etc.*

## 2.2 Resourcing

Events at Birches Valley are principally organised by the Education team, comprising of two education assistants, two education rangers and one education manager. A community ranger, recreation manager and environment manager also work from the Birches Valley offices and provide additional staffing support at events as required.

A charge is made to attend an educational event at Birches Valley. The events database demonstrated that £35.00 income was generated from programmed half day educational events, £3,321.60 from programmed full day educational events and £49.50 from un-programmed school visits.

Including permissions, a total of £6,282.10 income was generated at Birches Valley in the current reporting period. Estimates of expenditure per event was not recorded in the database in the current reporting period.

## 2.3 Delivery of policy objectives

Each event can be assessed for its contribution to one or more of the following the objectives: physical activity, sport, healthy eating, natural play, enjoyment, climate change, community, culture and heritage, natural environment, diversity/equality, skills/employment. Each objective relates to a principal policy statement within A

Strategy for England's Trees, Woods and Forest and its associated Delivery Plan. The assessment may be undertaken by the ranger leading an event or, in the case of permission activities, by the organiser.

During the current reporting period, 0 (zero) activities or events were assessed for their contribution to policy delivery.

The majority of activities and events held at Birches Valley are ranger led educational events (25/38). By inference, therefore, these events contribute to skills (learning) and the environment.

## 2.4 Health and safety record

No accidents were reported during any ranger led event at Birches Valley in the reporting period.

## 3. Headline indicators

In this section, values for headline indicators relating to engagement, quality of experience, personal and social benefits are presented, based on data from the on-site survey conducted in 2009 and events database

### 3.1 Engagement

Respondents to the on-site surveys were asked about their involvement in management-related activities at Birches Valley in the last 12 months, including being involved in or consulted about plans for the site, organised tree planting events, or voluntary work.

The results indicate that 5% (n= 8) of visitors to Birches Valley have been involved in management related activities. This is very similar to results obtained through the 2008 on-site survey which showed that 4% of respondents had been involved in management related activities.

There were 0 (zero) formal events at Birches Valley in the reporting period April to December 2009 to promote engagement in management of the community woodland.

### 3.2 Quality of experience

98% of survey respondents said they would either 'definitely' (86%), or 'probably' (12%) recommend Birches Valley as a place to visit to friends or family. Given that only 2% of respondents were 'detractors' (those saying they were only 'fairly likely', would 'probably not', or 'definitely not' recommend the site), Birches Valley's net promoter score can be calculated at 84%. This can be compared to a net promoter score of 71% in 2008 (derived from on-site and catchment survey results), signifying a significant increase in the quality of experience of those visiting Birches Valley during 2009.

#### 3.2.1 Quality of experience at events

Quality of experience can also be measured via event feedback forms. Pertinent questions include:

- How would you rate the value for money of today's event?
- How would you rate your impression of today's event overall?
- How would you rate the facilities at Birches Valley?
- How would you rate the site overall?
- Would you recommend our site to others?

The question "Have you been to this site before?" may also be used as a proxy for satisfaction with a site.

Feedback forms incorporating these questions were not used at Birches Valley in the current reporting period.

### 3.3 Personal benefits

Respondents to the on-site survey and the events feedback forms were asked about ways in which Birches Valley is important to them personally. Respondents were asked whether they strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed or strongly disagreed with statements relating to different categories of personal benefit; the results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Personal benefits at Birches Valley (on-site survey)

Categories of personal benefit	Strongly agree / Agree	Disagree / Strongly disagree	Don't know/ not relevant
It helps me to earn a living or make ends meet	1%	18%	81%
It's a place where I can relax and de-stress	94%	2%	4%
It's a place where I can exercise and keep fit	99%	0%	1%
It's a place where I can have fun and enjoy myself	99%	1%	0%
It's a good place to socialise	85%	4%	11%
It's a place where I can learn about the environment	72%	8%	20%
It's an important place for wildlife	92%	2%	6%
It brings the community together	62%	9%	29%
It makes this area a nicer place to live	82%	2%	16%
It gets me involved in local issues	31%	16%	53%
It's a place where I feel at home	76%	10%	14%

Visitors attending Birches Valley events may also be asked about ways in which the site is important to them, using event feedback forms. Feedback forms incorporating these questions were not, however, used at Birches Valley in the current reporting period.

### 3.4 Social benefits

Respondents to the on-site survey were asked about ways in which Birches Valley is important to the local community. Respondents were asked whether they strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed or strongly disagreed with statements relating to different categories of social benefit. The results show that visitors feel strongly that Birches Valley delivers a range of benefits to the local community (Table 3). For example, 100% of visitors feel that Birches Valley is a place where people can exercise and keep fit, and have fun and enjoy themselves. 99% feel that Birches Valley contributes to the local economy and makes the area a nicer place to live.

Table 3: Social benefits at Birches Valley (on-site survey)

Categories of Social Benefit	Strongly agree / Agree	Disagree / Strongly disagree	Don't know/ not relevant
It contributes to the local economy	99%	1%	0%
It's a place where people can relax and de-stress	99%	1%	0%
It's a place where people can exercise and keep fit	100%	0%	0%
It's a place where people can have fun and enjoy themselves	100%	0%	0%
It's a place where people can learn about the environment	97%	3%	0%
It's an important place for wildlife	99%	1%	0%
It brings the community together	91%	9%	0%
It makes this area a nicer place to live	99%	1%	0%
It gets people involved in local issues	91%	9%	0%

### 3.5 Volunteering

Volunteering is an indicator of personal and social benefit. Volunteering is measured two ways through the Activities and Events database:

- number of events promoting volunteering on site and attendance at these events
- contribution of volunteers through support in the running of events.

The number of events promoting volunteering on site for the reporting period April and December 09 was 0 (zero). One volunteer assisted in the running of 1 permissions community activity and 2 volunteers assisted in the running of 2 permissions recreation activities in the current reporting period (Table 4).

Table 4: Volunteering contribution at Birches Valley

Activity and Event type	Birches Valley	
	No. of events	No. of volunteers
Event - community	0	0
Event - education	0	0
Event - recreation	0	0
Permission - community	1	2
Permission - education	0	0
Permission - recreation	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>No. of volunteer days</b>	<b>44</b>	

The contribution made by volunteers at Birches Valley, in this reporting period, was 44 person-days (based upon a 7.4 hr working day or a 37 hr working week). In monetary terms, the value of volunteering contribution equates to £2,200 (or an estimated £3,300 per annum), based upon the Heritage Lottery Fund's 'Guidance for Landscape Partnerships' unskilled labour rate of £50 a day.

## 4. Birches Valley's baseline 'visit profile'

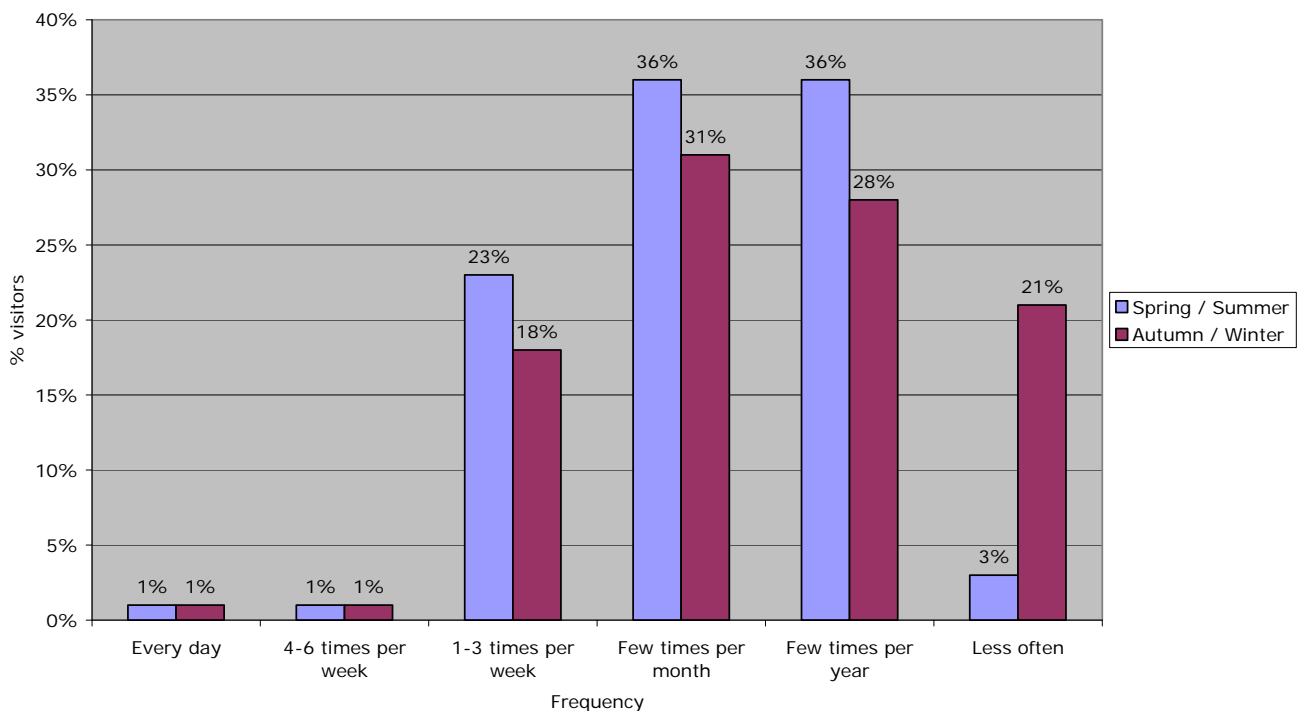
In this section, results from the on-site survey are used to present a detailed 'visit profile' for Birches Valley. In a first sub-section (3.1), survey responses relating to basic visit characteristics are presented, such as frequency and seasonal variation of visits, who people visit with, activity types, distance travelled, mode of transport, and barriers to more frequent use. The second sub-section (3.2) presents an analysis of visitors' actual experiences on-site, focusing on feedback provided in relation to particular features, facilities and other factors that shape the visitor experience, thereby complementing the results relating to quality of experience presented in Section 2 (above). Sub-section 3.3 looks at barriers and presents an analysis of responses to questions about factors which prevent more frequent use of Birches Valley.

### 4.1 Visit characteristics

#### 4.1.1 Frequency / seasonal variation of visits to Birches Valley

On-site survey respondents were asked how often they visit Birches Valley in spring/summer and autumn/winter. Results are shown in Figure 2, below, and reveal that visitors tend to visit less frequently in autumn / winter. A minority of visitors (25% in spring/summer, 20% in autumn/winter) make weekly visits to the site.

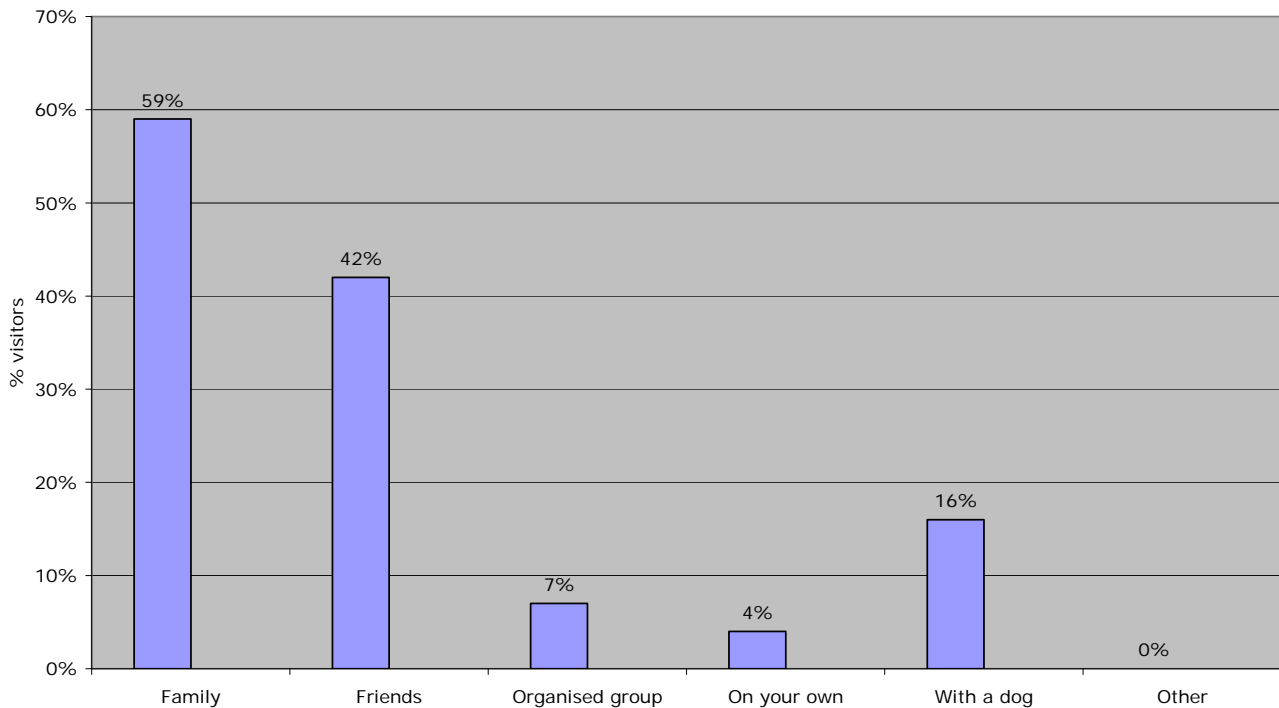
Figure 2: Frequency / seasonal variation of visits to Birches Valley (on-site survey)



### 4.1.2 Who do people visit Birches Valley with?

Survey respondents were asked who they tend to visit Birches Valley with. The results are shown in Figure 3, below. The results show that visiting with family, friends, and with a dog are most popular. As was the case in 2008, unaccompanied visits are relatively rare, with only 4% saying that they visit alone.

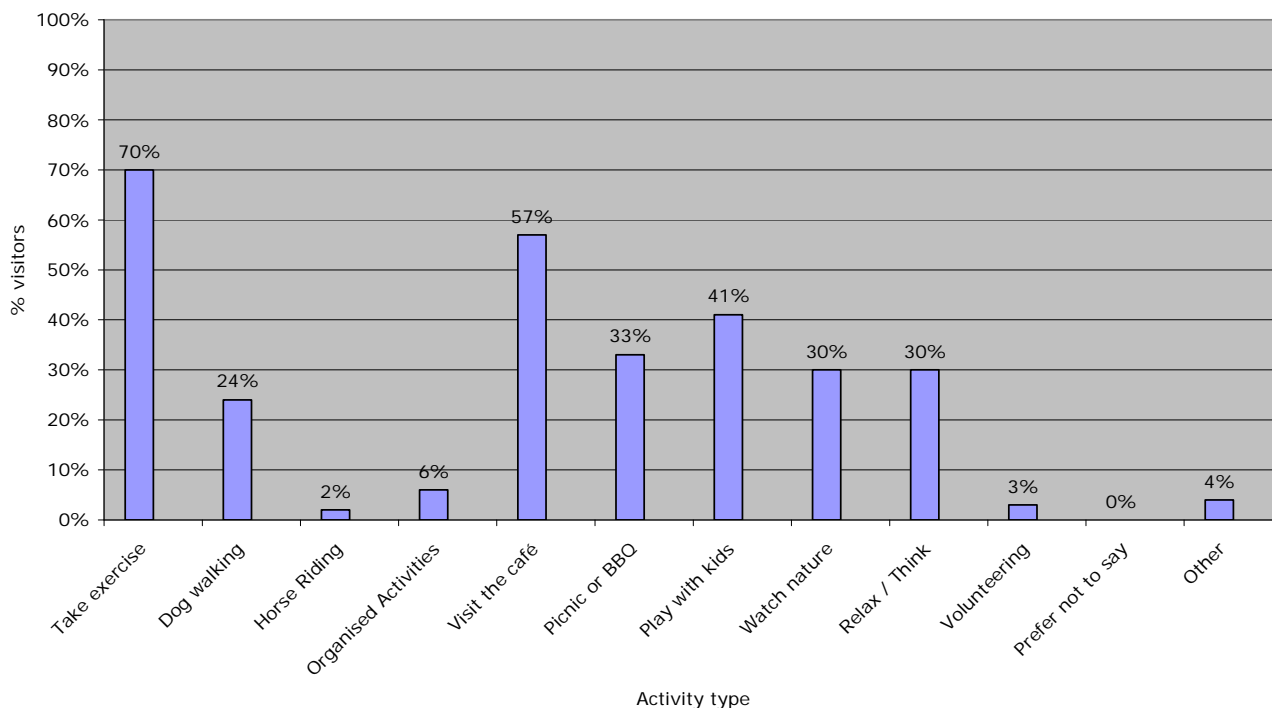
Figure 3: Who do you visit Birches Valley with?



### 4.1.3 Activities at Birches Valley

Respondents were asked what they tend to do at Birches Valley. The results show that taking exercise, visiting the café, and playing with the kids are the most popular activities (Figure 4). Picnicking, watching nature and relaxing/thinking are also popular.

Figure 4: Activity types at Birches Valley



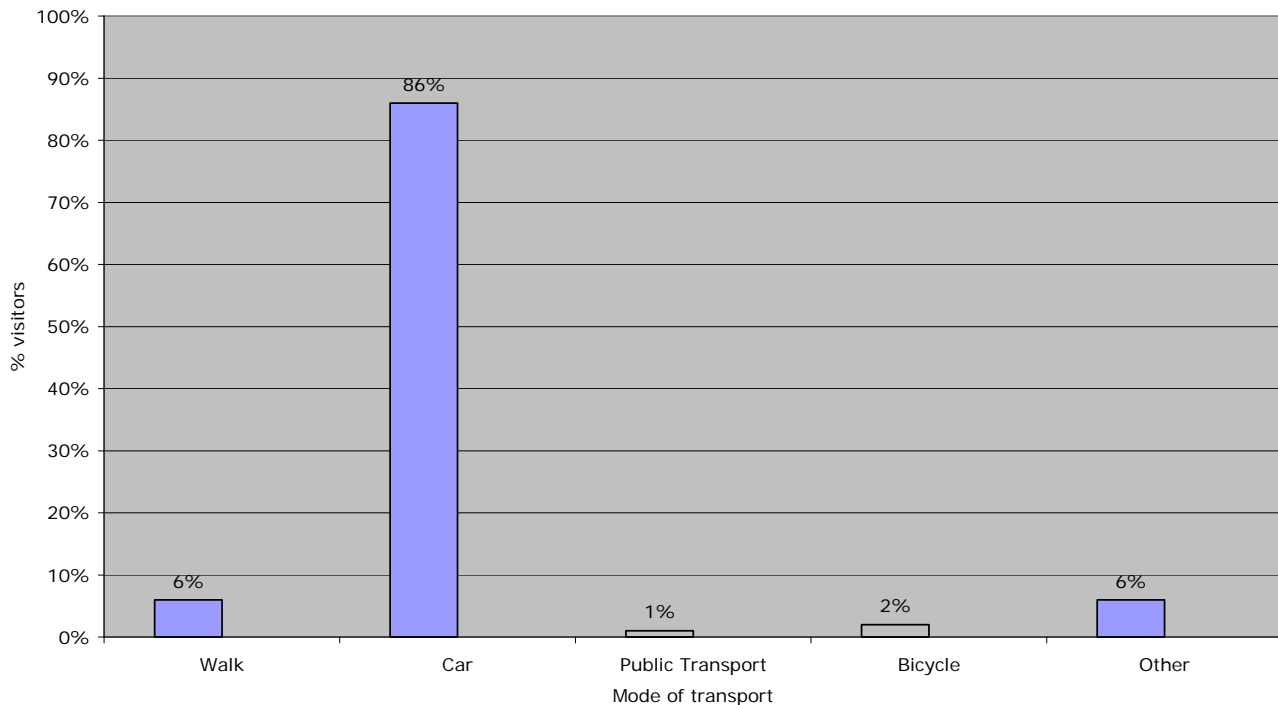
### 4.1.4 Duration of visits to Birches Valley

Respondents were asked how long a typical visit to Birches Valley lasts. The results show that visits typically last quite a long time, with the mean length of a visit being 2 hours, 38 minutes. For 4% of visitors, a typical visit lasts up to 1 hour, 25% visit for between 1 - 2 hours, 62% between 2-4 hours.

### 4.1.5 Travelling to Birches Valley

Respondents to the on-site survey were asked how they had travelled to Birches Valley. The results in Figure 5 (below) show that the vast majority (86%) of visitors come by car. Respondents were also asked how far they live from Birches Valley. The results show that the majority (92%) of visitors live more than 2 miles of the site. This shows that most visitors live outside the catchment, in fact 3 to 20 miles from Birches Valley.

Figure 5: Travelling to Birches Valley



#### 4.1.6 Groups that visit Birches Valley

Twenty five ranger led educational events were held at Birches Valley in the current reporting period. These events were not targeted at a specific group. It was not specified within the database whether groups attending the educational events were visiting for the first time.

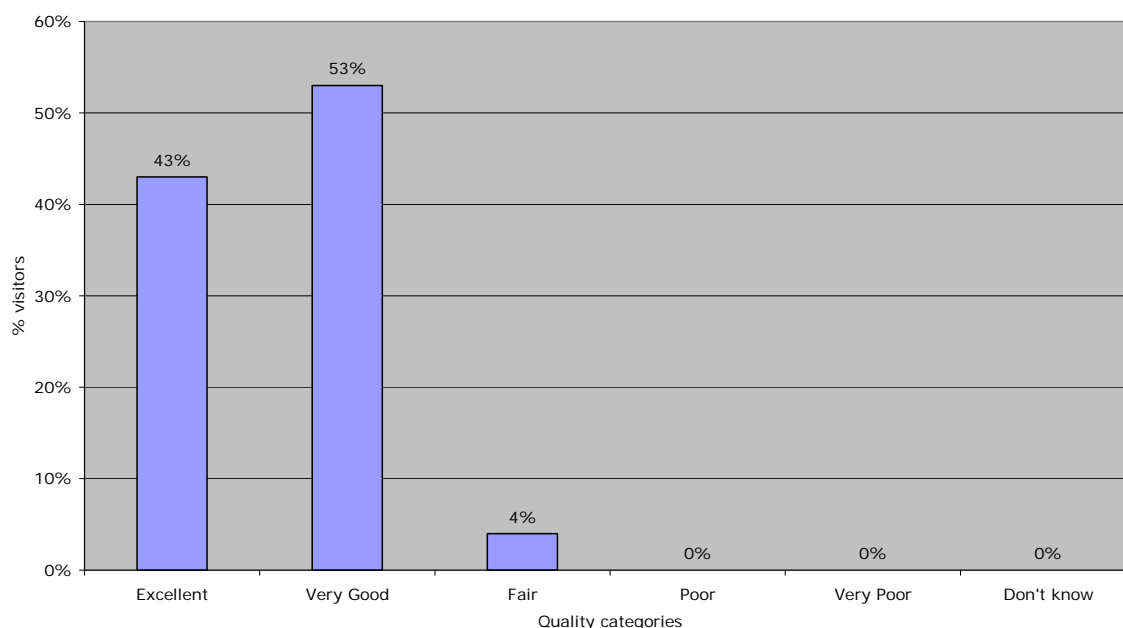
Thirteen groups requested permissions to hold a group activity at Birches Valley in the current reporting period. 3 were broadly categorised as community groups, 2 were schools, 7 were 'Other-commercial' and 1 was 'Other-HM Forces'. It was not specified within the database whether groups attending these events were first time visitors.

### 4.2 Visitors' experiences at Birches Valley

#### 4.2.1 Birches Valley's quality rating

Visitors were asked to give an overall quality rating for Birches Valley as a place to visit, using the following quality scale: Excellent, Very good, Fair, Poor, Very poor, Don't know. The results in Figure 6 (below) show that 96% of visitors rate Birches Valley as either 'excellent' or 'very good'. No visitors gave a negative overall quality rating.

Figure 6: Overall quality rating for Birches Valley



To understand what aspects of the site might be contributing to the overall quality ratings, visitors were also asked to rate the quality of individual features and facilities at Birches Valley, using the same quality scale. Mean scores for each feature / facility were calculated, where a score of 1=Excellent, 2=Very Good, 3=Fair, 4=Poor, 5=Very Poor. The results in Table 5 suggest that trails and paths, site maintenance, nature conservation, kids facilities and sports facilities are largely responsible for the overall high quality ratings shown in Figure 6 (above). Significantly, no features or facilities ended up with a mean negative quality rating (3 and above).

Table 5: Quality ratings for facilities / features at Birches Valley

Facilities / features	Mean quality rating
Car Park	2.3
Design of site	2
Site Maintenance	1.9
Trails and paths	1.7
Visitor facilities	2
Nature Conservation	1.9
Kids Facilities	1.9
Sports Facilities	1.9
Info Available	2.4

### 4.2.2 Negative aspects

On-site survey respondents were asked about problems that had impacted negatively on their enjoyment of Birches Valley. Respondents were asked whether a range of potentially problematic aspects had 'affected a lot', 'affected a little', or 'did not affect' their enjoyment. If respondents did not encounter the problem, they could state this as a response. The results for each potentially problematic aspect are shown in Figures 7 to 13 (below). The results reveal that, for 14% of visitors, dogs and dog dirt affected a little the enjoyment of Birches Valley.

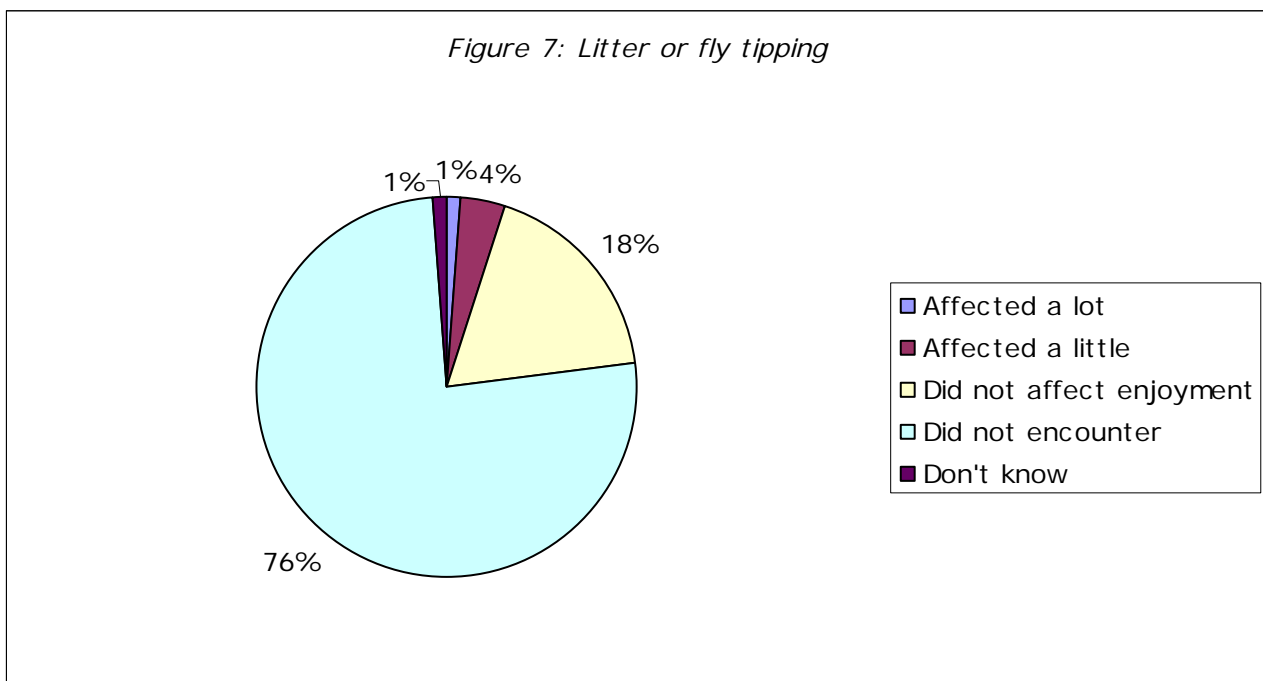


Figure 8: Dogs and dog dirt

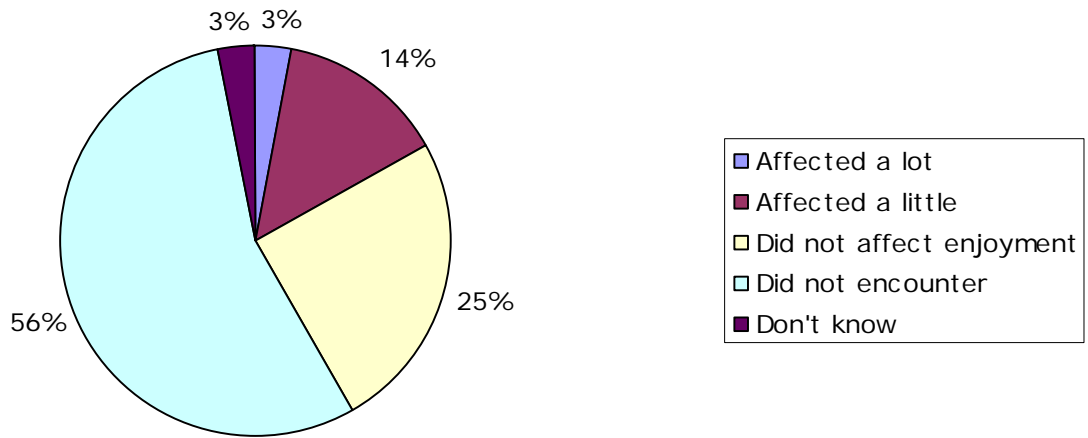


Figure 9: Muddy tracks

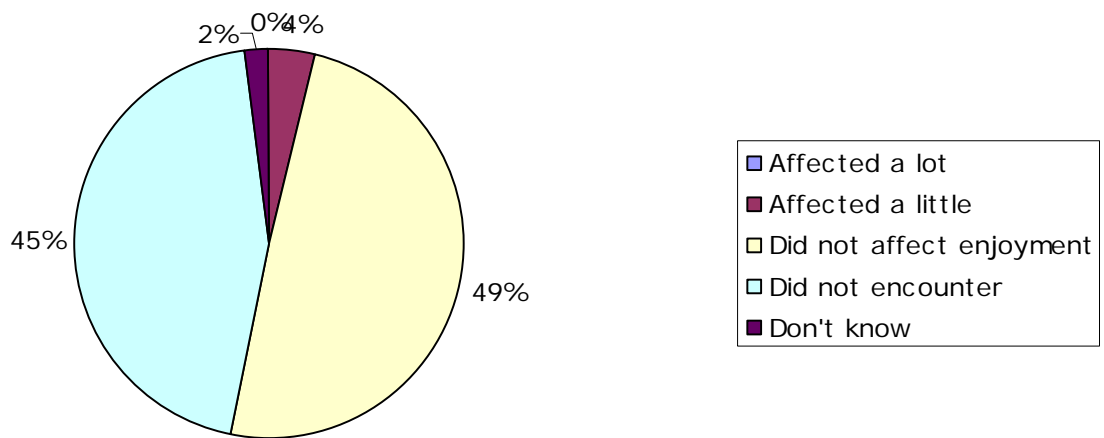


Figure 10: Vandalised or missing signs

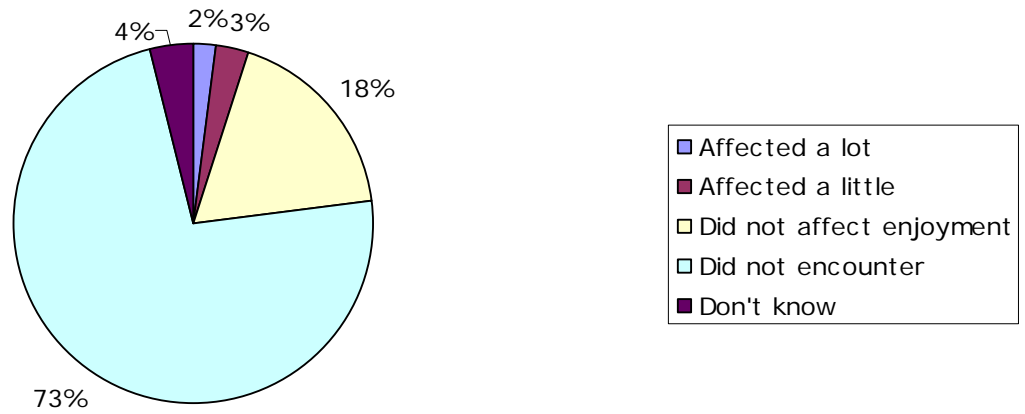


Figure 11: Forestry operations e.g. felling

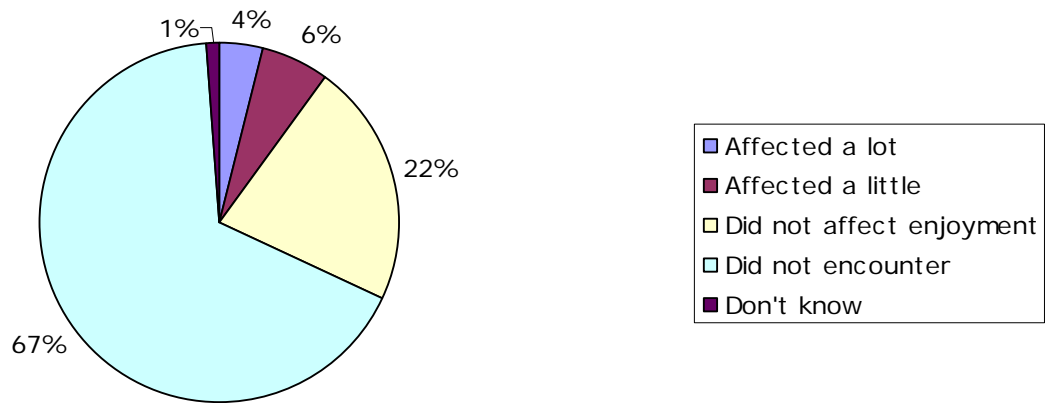


Figure 12: Motorised sports

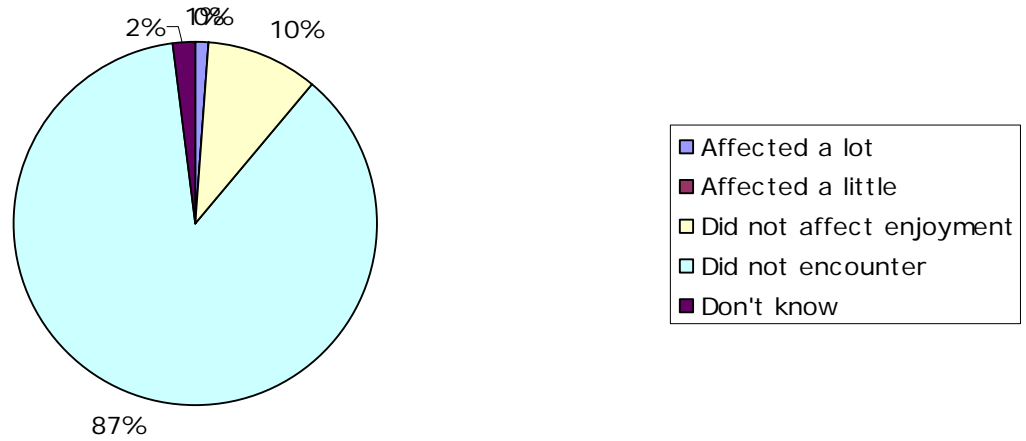
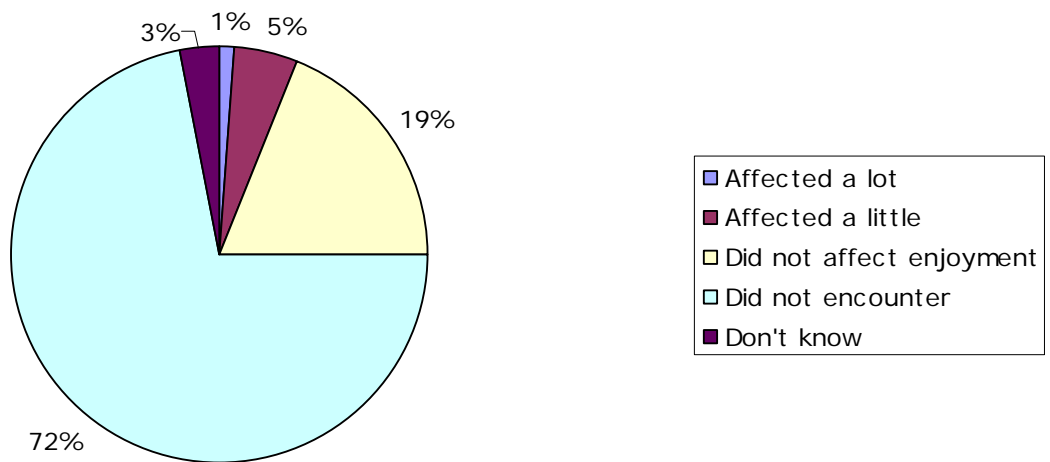


Figure 13: Disturbance from other users



### 4.3 Additional benefits

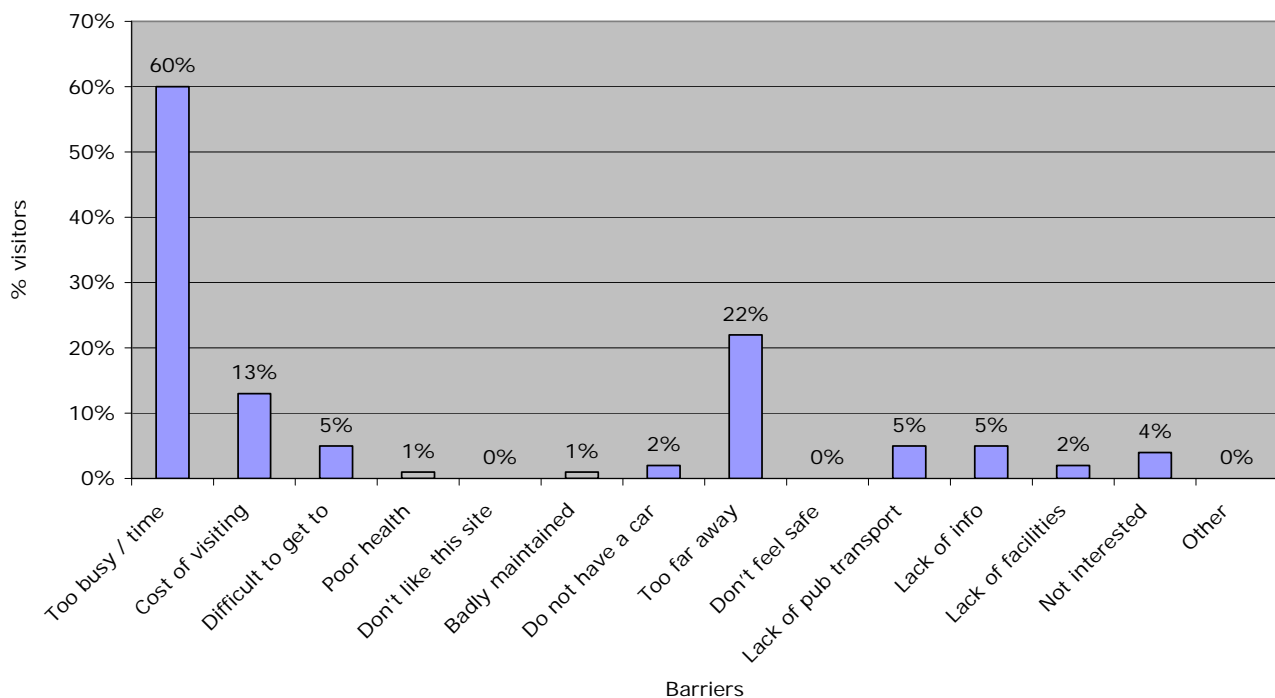
In addition to the closed list of personal and community benefit categories, on-site survey respondents were given the opportunity to state other types of benefit that they felt they had gained through visits to Birches Valley. Responses included:

- Somewhere for the kids to experience nature and wildlife;
- It keeps my mind active & always changes with the seasons;
- Quality time with my family without distractions from TV etc;
- How trees/environment helps wildlife and climate change;
- It is somewhere the whole family can enjoy.

### 4.4 Barriers to visiting

Respondents to the on-site survey were asked about factors that prevent them from visiting Birches Valley more often. The results in Figure 14 (below) show that for many visitors, lack of time (60%), distance (22%) and the cost of visiting (13%) prevents them from visiting more often.

Figure 14: Barriers to visiting Birches Valley more often



## 5. Birches Valley's baseline visitor profile

In this section, results from the on-site survey and the analysis of management data returns are used to present a detailed 'visitor profile' for Birches Valley. Sub-section 5.1 presents an analysis of the socio-demographic make-up of visitors, focusing on gender, age, household income, employment status, disability and ethnicity. For each socio-demographic category, comparisons are made between the visitor profile and the profile of Birches Valley's catchment population carried out in 2008 to assess the 'representativeness' of the visitor profile. In sub-section 5.2 the socio-demographic disaggregation of visitors to Birches Valley is then used in a re-analysis of the headline indicators presented in Section 2 to reveal whether there is any significant relationship between the demographic categories and engagement, quality of experience, personal and social benefits, and barriers. Analyses are only presented in those cases where there is a statistically significant relationship between the socio-demographic category of visitors and responses to questions in the surveys – in other words, where the research results warrant the conclusion that socio-demography has an influence over quality of experience, benefits, or barriers.

### 5.1 Socio-demographic profile of visitors

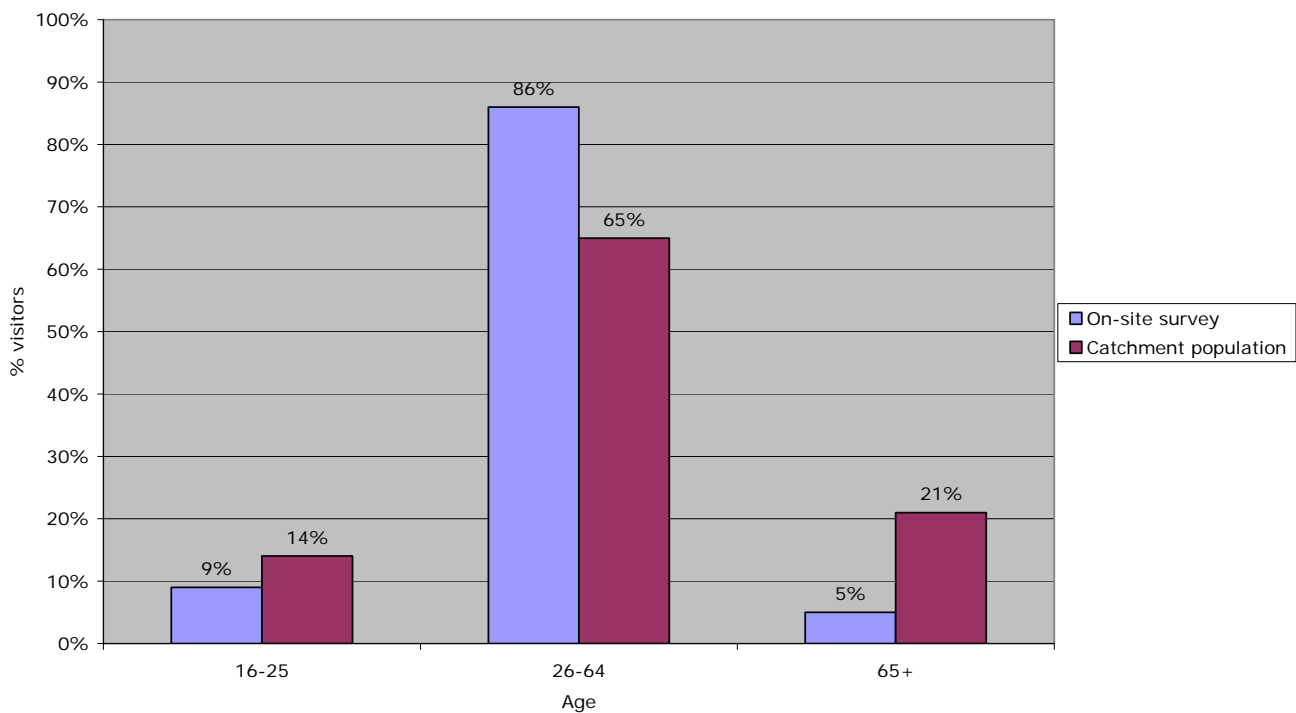
#### 5.1.1 Gender profile

The on-site survey results show that male visitors (60%) outnumber female visitors (40%) at Birches Valley. However, there is a slightly higher representation of females when compared to the results of the baseline survey carried out in 2008, which also revealed that males (67%) outnumbered females (33%). The profiling of Birches Valley's catchment population (also carried out in 2008) revealed that females (51%) slightly outnumber males (49%). As such, the 2009 survey results suggest that, during this survey year, female visitors were again under-represented at Birches Valley.

### 5.1.2 Age profile

The 2009 age profile of visitors (see Figure 15, below) shows that most visitors (86%) fall within the 26-64 yrs age category. Figure 15 also presents the age profile of the catchment population (adjusted to exclude the under 16 yrs category) and shows that, as was the case in 2008, representation of 16-25yrs and 65+yrs groups at Birches Valley is slightly lower than in the background population. The results of the research indicate that these age groups may be slightly under-represented amongst visitors to Birches Valley. This is significant because these age groups are often targeted by specific interventions and policies aimed at increasing their use of greenspace, usually as a means of addressing health problems.

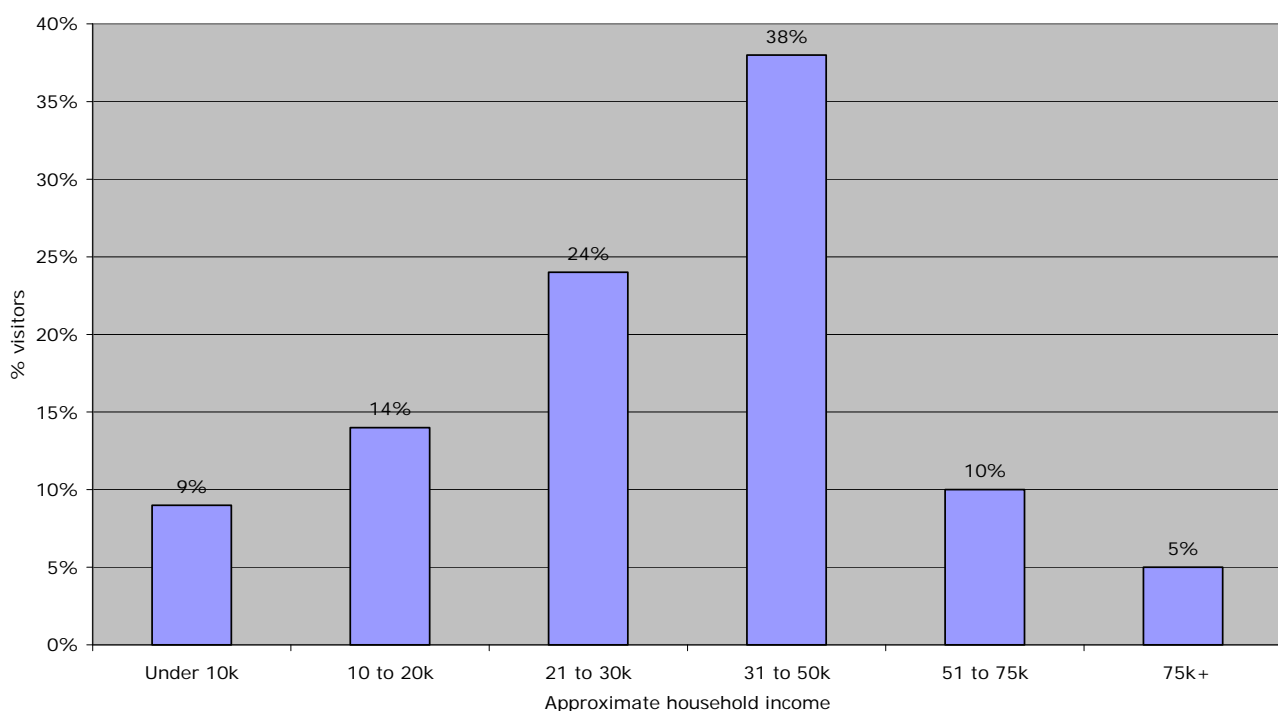
Figure 15: Age profile of visitors to Birches Valley



### 5.1.3 Income profile

Of those respondents who answered the survey question relating to household income (90%, n=129), 23% are from low income households (20K or less) (see Figure 16). The profiling of Birches Valley's catchment population in 2008 revealed an average household income of £30,539. Given that at least 47% of respondents to the on-site survey recorded a household income lower than the average for the catchment, the research results provide a strong indication that people from low income households are well represented amongst visitors to Birches Valley.

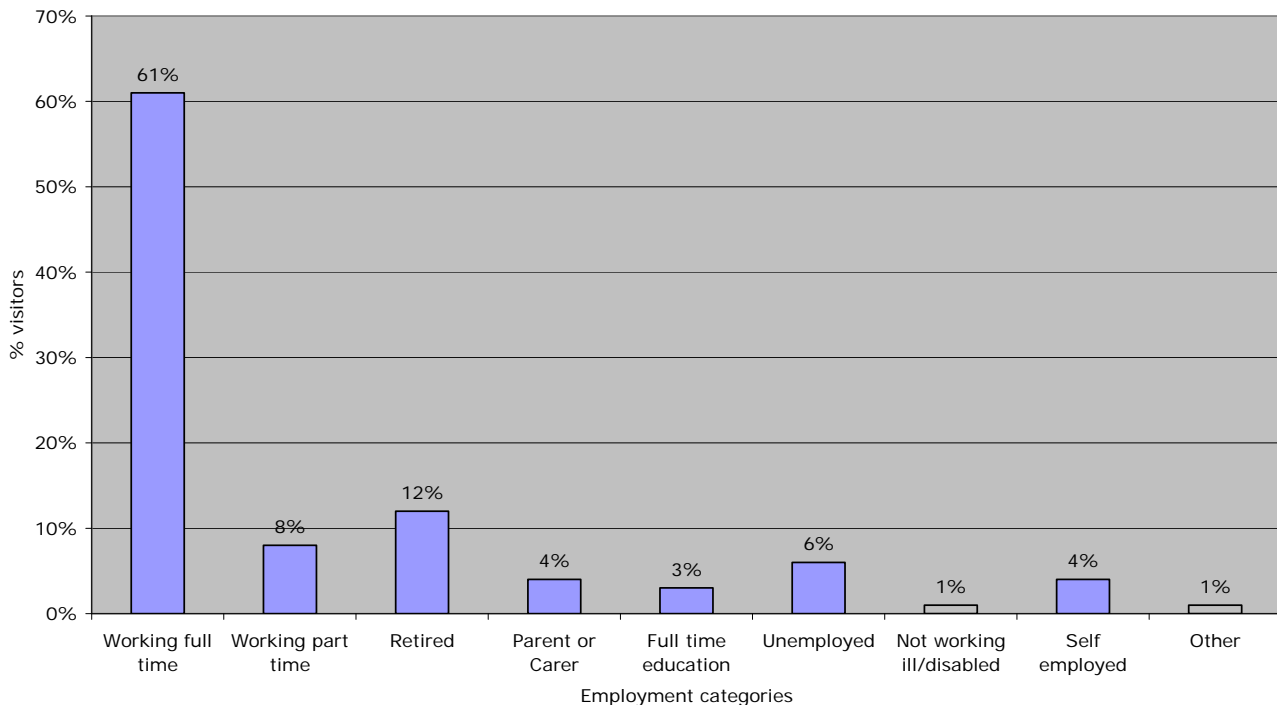
Figure 16: Income profile of visitors to Birches Valley



### 5.1.4 Employment profile

The employment profile of visitors to Birches Valley is presented in Figure 17, below. The results reveal that 61% of visitors to Birches Valley are in full-time employment. Retired (12%) and unemployed people (6%) account for 18% of visitors to Birches Valley. The results of the catchment profiling revealed that about 15% of the catchment population fall within social grade 'E', which includes unemployed people, pensioners and all people on state benefits. The results of the research suggest, therefore, that unemployed and retired people are well represented amongst visitors to Birches Valley.

Figure 17: Employment profile of visitors to Birches Valley



### 5.1.5 Disability profile

On-site survey results show that 5% of visitors to Birches Valley are disabled. Disabled respondents to the on-site survey fell within the following categories of disability: Mobility (n=3), Visual impairment (n=2), Hearing impairment (n=1), Mental health (n=1), Physical health (n=1), Other (n=1). The socio-demographic indicator 'Disability' was not used to profile the Birches Valley catchment, so direct comparisons with the catchment profile are not possible. However, the catchment profiling did show that about 20% of people living within the catchment suffer from limiting, long-term illness. The research allows a tentative conclusion to be drawn, therefore, that people with disabilities are under-represented amongst visitors to Birches Valley.

### 5.1.6 Ethnic profile

93% of visitors surveyed categorised themselves as 'White British', with 7% falling within other ethnic categories. The ethnic profiling of Birches Valley's catchment population shows that people falling within the 'Other ethnic background' category account for about 1% of the catchment population. The research results indicate, therefore, that minority ethnic groups were well-represented amongst visitors to Birches Valley during 2009.

### 5.1.7 Diversity profile for activities and events

Total attendance at Birches Valley events in the current reporting period was 1,545 persons (Table 1) or 2.8% of the catchment population. To provide an indication of the representativeness of diversity to events relative to the catchment population the data was aggregated by Event type. Grand totals were also generated (Table 6) and representativeness was considered relative to ethnicity, age and gender, and disability.

Of the 38 activities and events held at Birches Valley between April and December 2009, ethnicity data was collected from 2 education events. Age and gender was collected from 3 education events (Table 6). The low percentage of events for which diversity data is available for analysis can be related to the flexibility granted to participants to parttake in the monitoring programme. Feedback forms included the option to tick the box if they “do not wish to assist us with monitoring”.

**Table 6. Diversity of attendees at Birches Valley events (April-December 2009).**

Event type	Ethnicity				Age												No. of events*		
	White British	White other	Non-white	No. of events*	N/s		5-11		12-15		16-25		26-59		Over 60			Total	
					M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		M	F
Event - community	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Event - education	56	0	0	2 (25)	15	15	13	13	0	42	0	0	0	0	0	0	28	70	3 (25)
Event - recreation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Permission - community	0	0	0	0 (6)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 (6)
Permission - education	0	0	0	0 (2)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 (2)
Permission - recreation	0	0	0	0 (5)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 (5)
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2 (38)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>3 (38)</b>

N/s = not specified

\* = number of events that data is based upon

# = number in brackets is total number of events for current reporting period

Diversity monitoring data gathered at the 2 education events show that attendees were White-British (100%) (Table 6). The ethnic profiling of Birches Valley’s catchment population shows that people falling within any other ethnic background category account for about 1% of the catchment population. The research results indicate that minority ethnic groups were under-represented amongst event participants during 2009.

Gender diversity data was recorded at the 3 education events; participants were 29% male and 71% female. These results are skewed in favour of female attendance due to one all female event, otherwise attendance was 50:50 male: female.

Diversity monitoring was undertaken at educational events for school aged children. Data therefore represents under 16 year olds only. The socio-demographic indicator 'Age' showed that within the catchment 11,795 (21%) persons were under 16 years and 6,116 (11%) were aged 16 to 25 years. However, it is not possible to draw reliable conclusions on the representativeness of event participants with regard to age as the number of event participants for which diversity data is available (n=70) is not a representative portion of the total number of attendees at events (n=1 545).

Disability data was recorded for 3 of the 25 education events. Of the 362 participants to the 3 events, 5 (1.4%) recorded a disability: hearing impairment (n=1), learning impairment (n=1), physical health (n=1), other (n=2). Comparison to the catchment is not possible as the socio-demographic indicator 'Disability' was not used in the profiling.

## 5.2 Socio-demography and engagement, quality of experience, benefits and barriers

In this sub-section, the relationship between socio-demographic categories of visitors and responses to the questions about engagement, quality of experience, benefits and barriers are analysed to discover whether there is any significant relationship between the demographic categories and respondents' perceptions and experiences of Birches Valley. As stated above, analyses are only presented in those cases where there is a statistically significant relationship between the socio-demographic category of visitors and responses to questions in the surveys – in other words, where the research results warrant the conclusion that socio-demography has an influence over quality of experience, benefits, or barriers.

### 5.2.1 Socio-demography and benefits

Statistical analysis reveals that responses to questions about personal benefits are gendered. For example, males are more likely to strongly agree that the site is a place for fun and enjoyment ( $p < 0.01$ ). Age also appears to have an influence, with older people more likely to strongly agree that the site is an important place for wildlife, that it brings the community together, helps them to become involved in local issues and is a place where they feel at home (all  $p < 0.01$ ).

In terms of social benefits, minority ethnic groups are more likely to strongly agree that the site benefits the community in terms of fun and enjoyment ( $p < 0.01$ ), whilst older respondents are more likely to strongly agree that the site brings the community together ( $p < 0.01$ ).

### 5.2.2 Socio-demography and barriers

Perhaps unsurprisingly, disabled respondents were more likely to cite poor health as a factor that prevents them from visiting the site more often ( $p < 0.01$ ).

