



Havant
BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Customer Insight:
Allotments Satisfaction Survey**

January 2010

Customer Insight: Allotments Satisfaction Survey

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1. Introduction

This report discusses the results of a questionnaire completed by 399 allotment holders across the borough.

1.1 Background

The council has 553 allotment holders who have plots in the following locations:

Emsworth

- Warblington (89)
- Victoria Road (52)

Havant

- New Barn (15)
- New Road (45)
- Stockheath (38)

Hayling Island

- Gable Head (64)

Waterlooville

- Purbrook East (80)
- Purbrook West (81)
- Plant Farm (84)

1.2 Research Objectives

The objectives of this research were to:

1. measure customer satisfaction with the allotments service
2. find out what we are doing well
3. find out what needs improving
4. measure interest in the self-management of allotment sites.

1.3 Research methodology

553 self-completion questionnaires were posted to all of the council's allotment holders. Allotment holders could either return their completed questionnaire using a freepost envelope or, use a web address to complete the questionnaire online. To maximise the response a prize draw of a £25 garden centre voucher was offered to all respondents completing the questionnaire.

In total, 399 questionnaires were returned, equating to a very good response rate of 72%. A good response was received across all geographical areas where there are allotments in the borough. The following table shows the number and proportion of questionnaires returned from each allotment site:

| | No. of respondents | % of all respondents | % of plot holders responding in the area |
|----------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Emsworth | 99 | 25% | 70% |
| Havant | 72 | 18% | 87% |
| Hayling Island | 48 | 12% | 75% |
| Waterlooville | 175 | 44% | 71% |
| No reply | 5 | 1% | - |

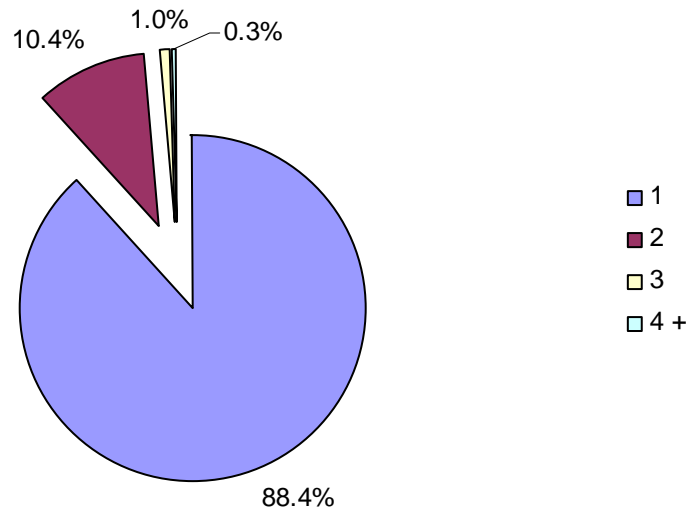
Returned questionnaires were inputted into Snap software. A data verification process was undertaken and responses have been collated and summarised below.

Where percentages do not sum to 100, this may be due to computer rounding, the exclusion of 'don't know' categories or multiple answers.

2. Allotment Use

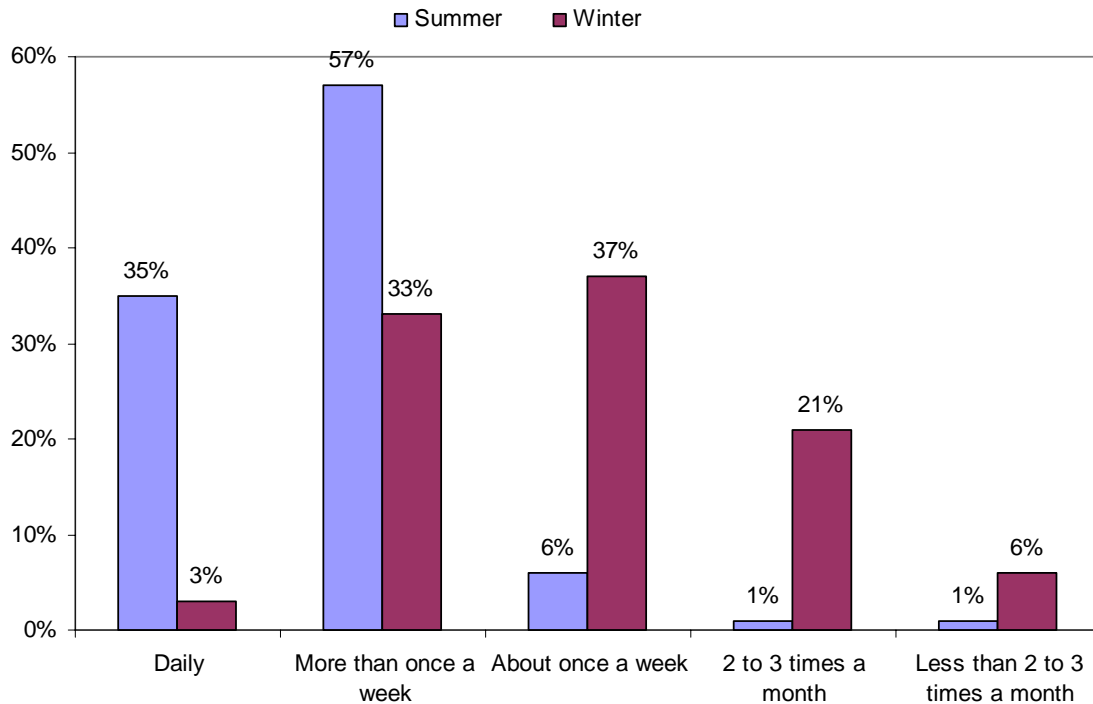
The majority of allotment holders (88%) have one allotment plot. Only one respondent (0.3%) said they had four or more allotment plots. This respondent works their allotment as part of a group.

Q How many allotment plots do you rent?



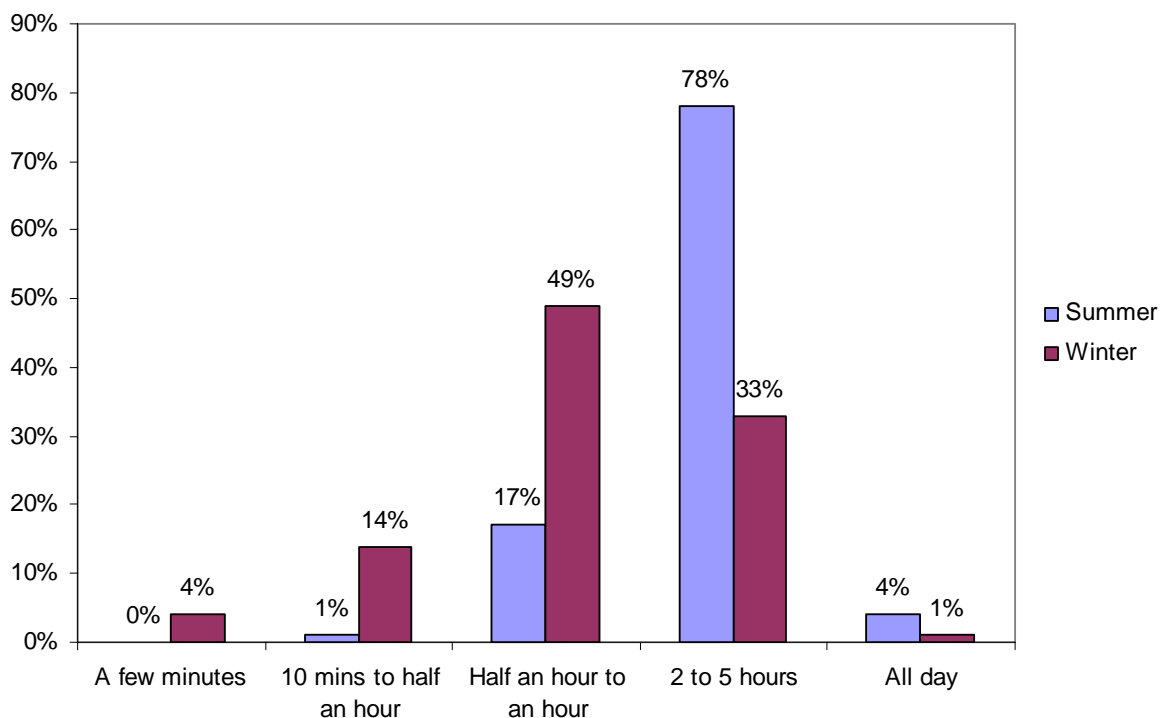
As might be expected, allotments are visited more frequently during the summer than the winter, with 35% of respondents using their plot daily in the summer compared to only 3% in the winter. Overall, plots are most likely to be used more than once a week in the summer (57%) and about once a week in the winter (37%). There are a small number of people who visit their plots less than two to three times a month in summer (1%) and winter (6%).

Q How often do you visit your allotment in the summer and winter?



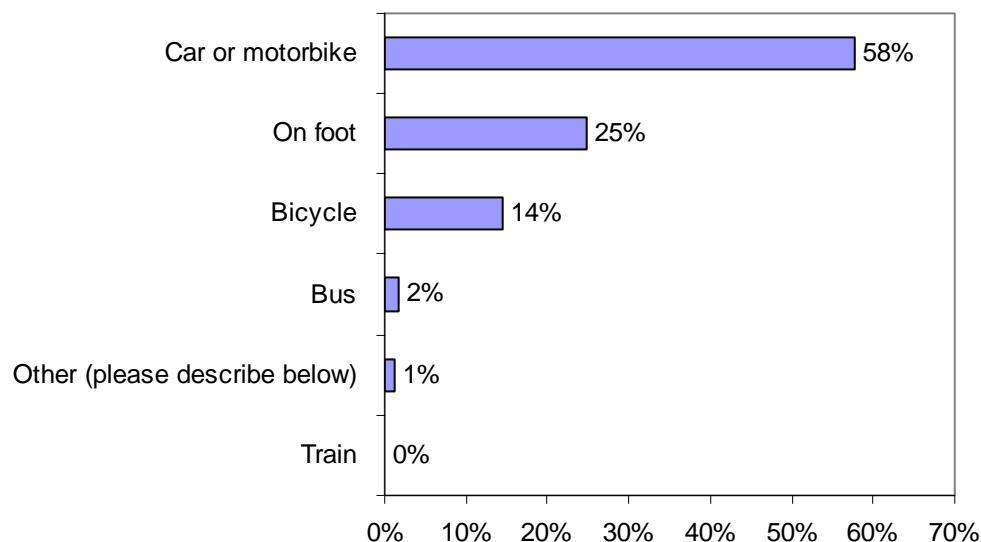
Again, as might be expected, most time is spent on allotments during the summer, with 78% of allotment holders spending two to five hours on their plot in the summer compared to 33% in winter. In winter visitors are most likely to spend half an hour to an hour on their allotment plot (49%).

Q When you visit your allotment how long do you usually spend there?



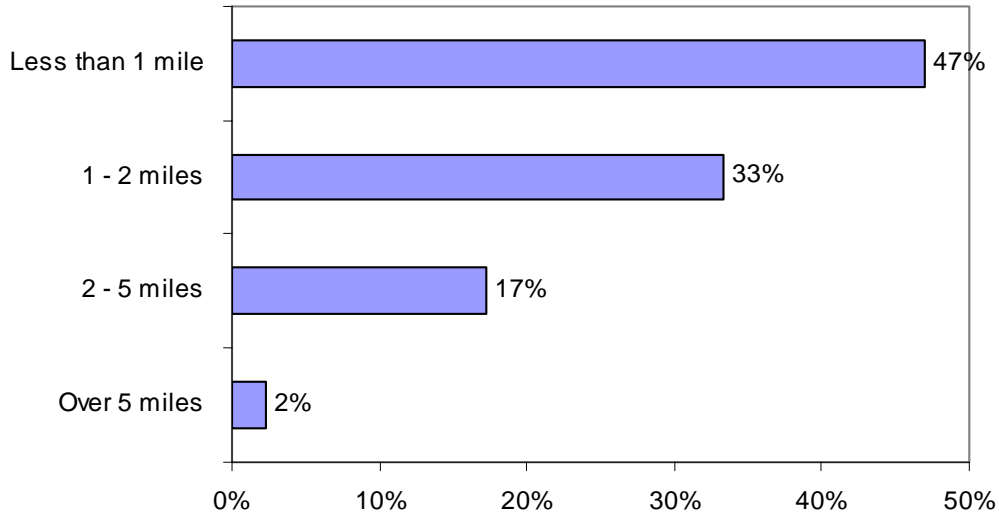
Most allotment holders (58%) travel to their allotment by car or motorbike. However a significant proportion travels by foot (25%) and bicycle (14%). In most of the other responses detailed on the questionnaires respondents commented that they sometimes travel by car or van when they have things to carry or need to dispose of rubbish.

Q How do you normally travel to your allotment?



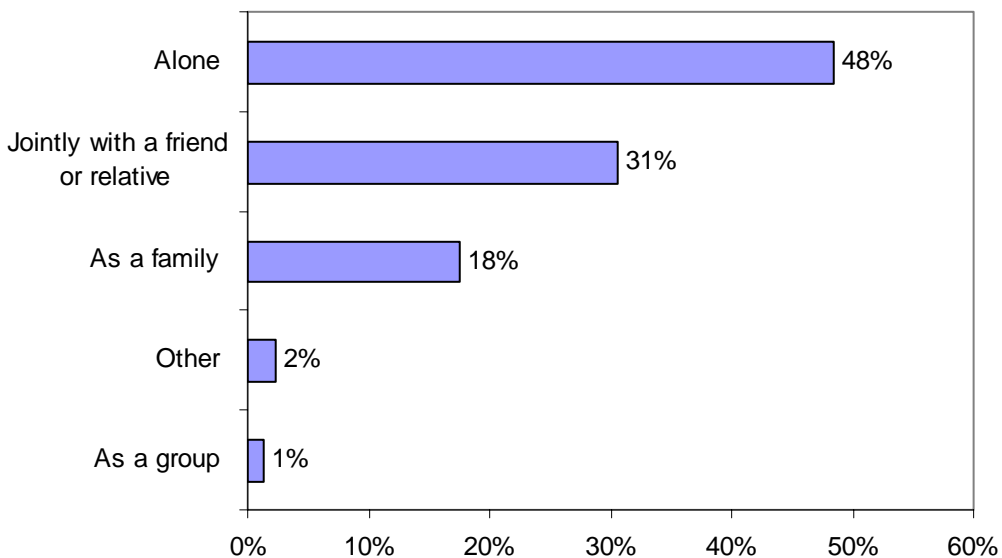
Almost all allotment holders have a plot within five miles of their home, and 47% travel less than a mile. Only 2% (9 allotment holders) travel over 5 miles.

Q How far is your allotment from your home?



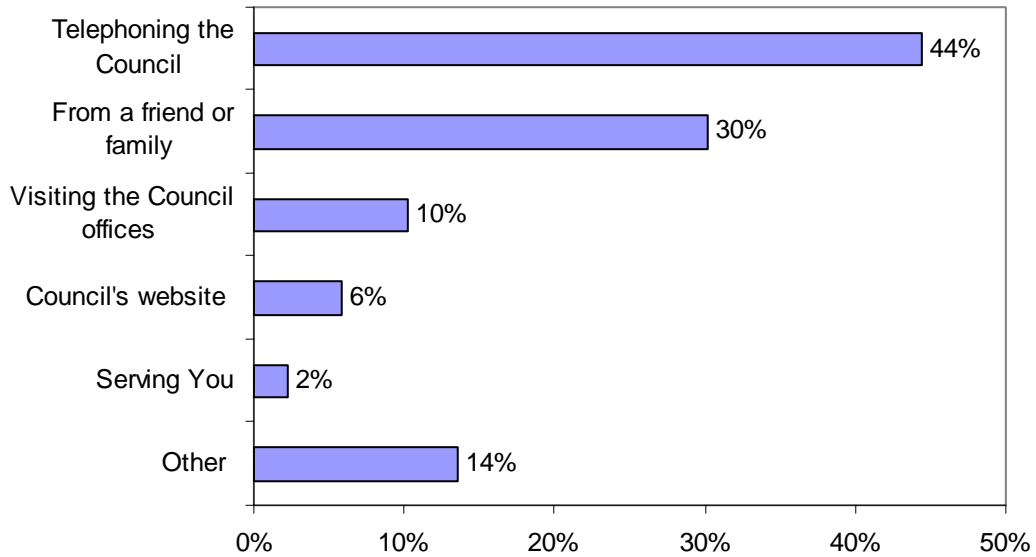
Whilst 48% of allotment holders tend their plots alone 49% work with other people, either jointly with a friend or relative (31%) or as a family (18%).

Q Do you garden your allotment plot...



44% of respondents found out about their local allotments by telephoning the council and 30% from a friend or family member. Only 6% visited the council's website and 2% read about allotments in Serving You. Other responses were mainly that people knew about the allotments because they had seen them, but also from horticultural societies, the Allotments Association, Ratepayer magazine, TV or radio.

Q How did you find out about local allotments?

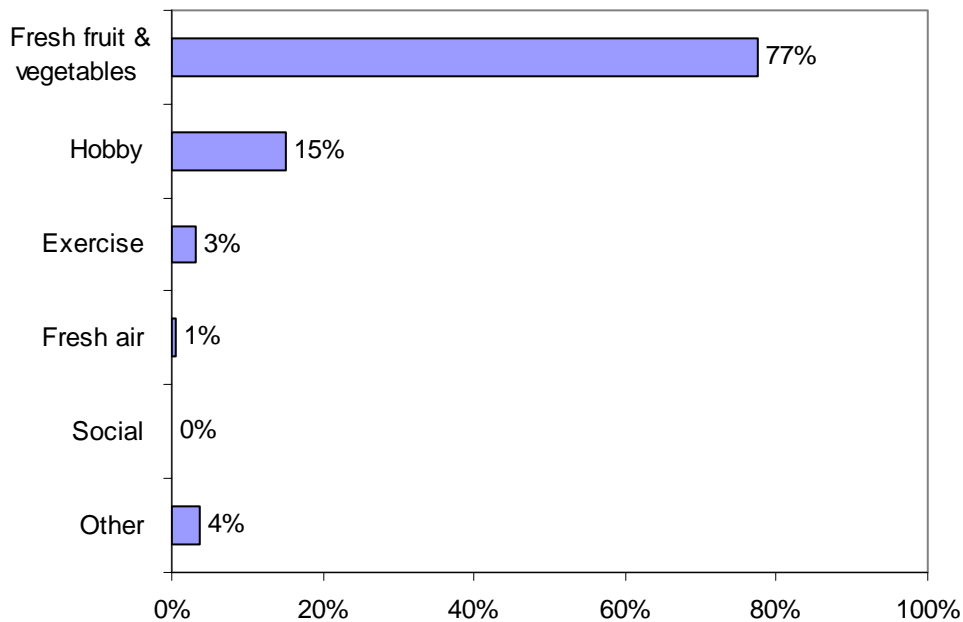


Allotment holders mainly use their allotments to grow fruit and vegetables (77%). The other comments revealed that although this might be the main reason for having an allotment, secondary reasons were for exercise and fresh air e.g. “in reality all of the above”, “all the above and to unwind” and “actually the first 5 are applicable”.

Reasons different to those listed on the questionnaire included different personal and emotional reasons, for example:

- *Helps me deal with depression*
- *To have a garden*
- *Retreat. I work from home*
- *To motivate young people*
- *No garden and one son wanted to grow fruit and vegetables for a hobby*
- *The allotment is a community based project*
- *I live in a flat now and have no garden.*

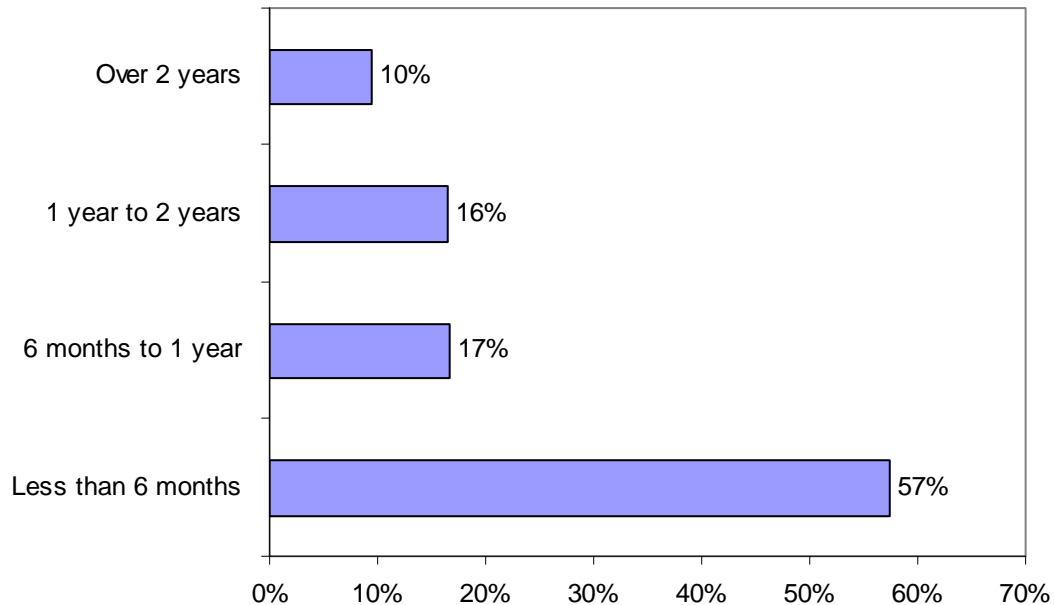
Q What is your main reason for having your allotment?



2. Allotment Management

Positively, over half of allotment holders (57%) said that they had waited less than six months to be allocated an allotment. However this does mean that 43% had waited for over six months and 10% over two years.

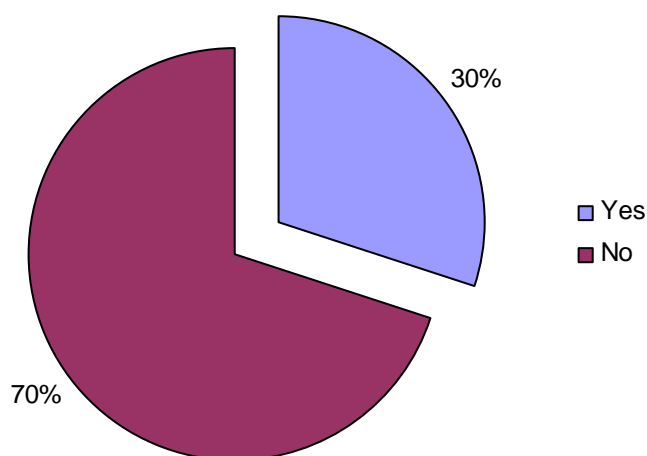
Q How long did you wait to be allocated an allotment?



Nearly a third (30%) of allotment holders have suffered from vandalism. 18% have had equipment stolen from their plot and 27% have had produce stolen.

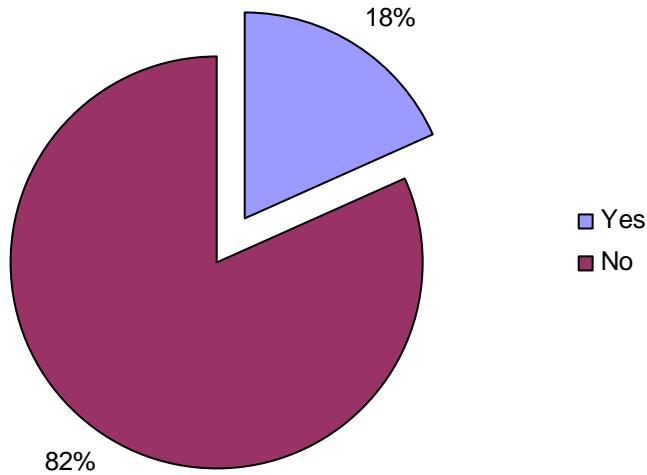
Allotment plots in the Havant area were least likely to suffer from vandalism with 19% of allotment holders in Havant experiencing vandalism compared to 33% on Hayling Island, 33% in Waterlooville and 30% in Emsworth.

Q Has your plot ever been subject to vandalism?



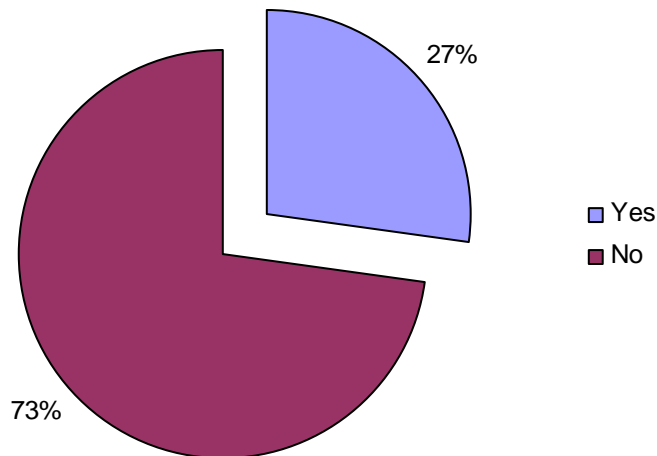
Havant, Hayling Island and Emsworth allotment holders are less likely to have equipment stolen than in Waterlooville. With 23% of plot holders in Waterlooville having had equipment stolen compared to 17% in Havant, 17% on Hayling Island and 14% in Emsworth.

Q Have you ever had equipment stolen from your plot?



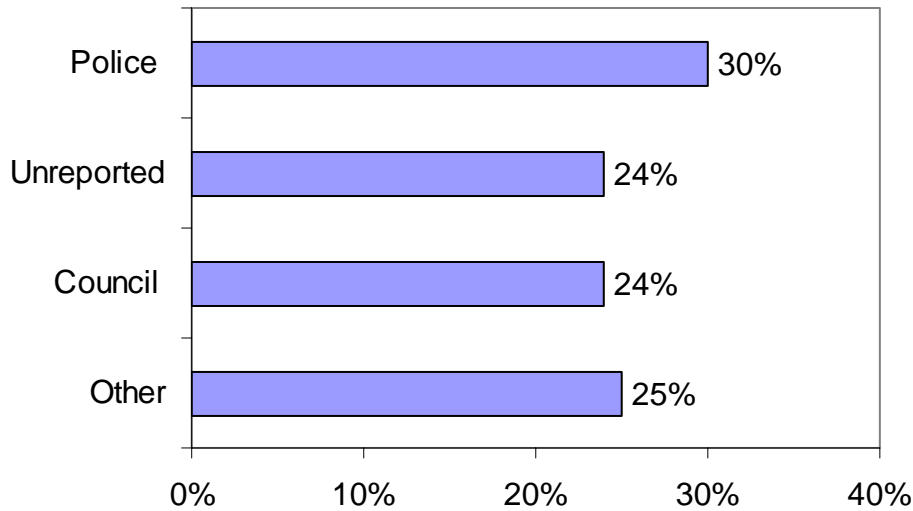
Produce was least likely to be stolen from Havant allotments, with 17% experiencing this compared to 32% in Waterlooville and 27% in both Emsworth and Hayling Island respectively.

Q Have you ever had produce stolen from your plot?



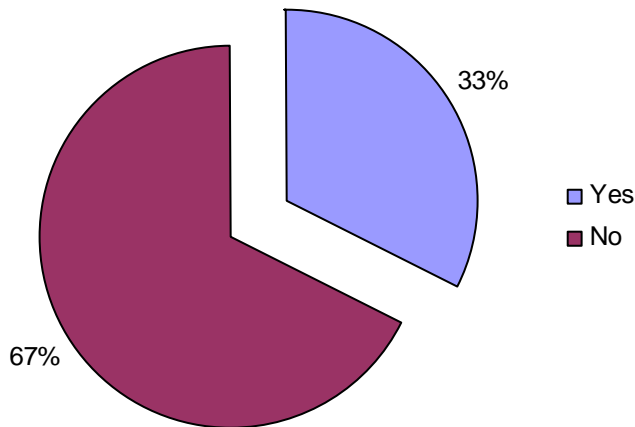
Only 33% of respondents answered this question, reflecting the proportion of respondents who have experienced any of the above incidents. Out of those that did respond to the question more or less equal proportions have either reported the incident to the police or council, or it has gone unreported. Other comments included allotment representative, neighbour or chairman.

Q Were any of these incidents reported to...



One third of allotment holders (33%) agreed that there are regulations or restrictions which would help to improve the management of their site.

Q Are there any regulations or restrictions which you feel would help improve the management of your site?



Respondents were asked to explain what these restrictions might be. Some said that it was a case of enforcing the existing regulations whilst others had alternative suggestions. The comments have been grouped into themes and summarised below with illustrative comments:

Security improvements (5% of respondents). Comments were mainly related to fencing and keeping gates shut.

- *Better security*
- *Better fencing all round the site- lots of children coming in, stepping on plots through gaps*
- *Better secure fencing*
- *Only that the Council repair a broken fence to stop continuing trespass and damage*
- *A tighter control of gates locking/unlocking security is required. Keep the gate shut but this is more for us to self regulate*
- *Ensure allotment holders lock the gate when they leave*
- *Notice regarding locking on locking of gates.*

Unused or neglected plots (3% of respondents). Comments and suggestions were made about unused or neglected plots.

- *The empty plots appear to take a very long time before anyone takes them why?*
- *A length of time a plot can be kept without growing any produce*
- *If a plot is not maintained take it back and reallocate quicker to stop it going into disrepair*
- *It would be nice if neglected sites were reallocated more quickly or if the Council could clean them when they do the pathways*
- *Applicants for allotments could be given some idea as to how much time they would need to spend on an allotment. This may stop people taking on a commitment that they would later find to be too much for them.*

Enforce exiting rules (3% of respondents). Some respondents feel that it's not about creating new rules or regulations but enforcing existing ones.

- *Compliance of allotment rules by all allotment holders especially regarding site tidiness and clearing off accumulated rubbish*
- *A copy of the regulations to be placed on the under used notice board entrance*
- *Be firmer with those regs etc, which you already have.*
- *Enforce the rules of the contract*
- *Reinforcing key policy.*

Restrict the number of plots per person (2% of respondents). Comments related to the number of plots per person being restricted and plots not being sublet.

- *Restrict ownership to one plot only per applicant/household*
- *Max of two plots (four and a half plots) per family. No subletting parts or all of plot*
- *While there is a waiting list existing plot holders shouldn't be allowed to rent another one*
- *Whilst there is a waiting list: Priority for vacant plots must go to people on this list, No one should have more than two plots even when well maintained.*

Disposing of waste (2% of respondents). Some allotments holders feel that help with disposing of garden waste and rubbish from allotment sites could be provided.

- *Council to collect garden waste maybe a skip and bonfire*
- *Need to have a skip on site for garden rubbish which cannot be composted and needs to go to the dump*
- *Once or twice a year rubbish collection (non compostable) i.e. skip provided for a week*
- *The need for a compost area for all site users. An area to compost / put garden refuse*
- *The taking away of unwanted rubbish.*

Ban / control bonfires (2% of respondents). Respondents talked about both banning bonfires altogether or restricting them to specific times.

- *No bonfires at anytime*
- *No bonfires before 6pm in the summer and 3pm in the winter (to reduce smoke nuisance)*
- *No bonfires on weekend I don't want to work in a smoky atmosphere. Unhealthy and unpleasant.*

Inspections (2% of respondents). Some allotment holders suggested inspections would help to enforce the rules and help with under used or neglected plots.

- *More inspections to prevent people bringing junk onto their plots*
- *Regular inspection to ensure allotments are being used and not neglected*
- *Regular visits from a member of the Council like it used to happen*
- *Better supervision by Council Officials plots overgrown and not used plots*
- *Allotment holders should maintain their plot in a tidy state. Council to monitor this.*

Ban / control dogs (2% of respondents). Plot holders asked for dogs to be banned from sites or kept under control.

- *Ban dogs from being on site by anyone*
- *No dogs - other people's dogs foul your plot*
- *No dogs to run around and over peoples plots, to be kept under control.*

Vehicle access (1% of respondents). Respondents made comments about restricting vehicle access to allotment sites.

- *Stop vehicle access to car park in very wet weather*
- *Restriction of cars along main grass path in very wet weather or create hard surface*
- *Restriction of cars to upper car park during winter months.*

Shortcuts (1% of respondents). Three respondents commented about allotment sites being used as shortcuts.

- *If possible prevention of the general public, etc school children using the allotments as shortcuts*
- *Just inside the gate at Hart Farm there is a path between 36A and 37B. The local kids cycle along it and on to our plot. Needs a no cycling sign at end of path.*

Date change (1% of respondents). Respondents suggested that the time of year when allotment rental starts could be changed.

- *Date of allotment "vacation" should be mid winter not spring*

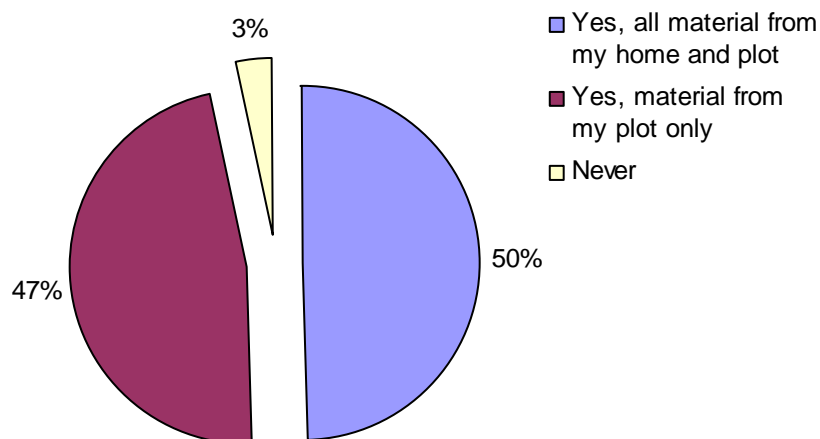
- *Change over allotments to new allotmentees on 1st Jan, April is too late for the new allotmentees to do anything much in the first year*
- *Start the year on Jan 1 or Oct 1.*

Other comments (7% of respondents). Other comments from allotment holders were varied and included the use of hose pipes, pathway maintenance, access to compost, tree pruning and pathway maintenance.

- *Allowing hoses to water would make life easier in dry weather*
- *Being able to share work with others who are on the waiting list for own plot, i.e. plot share scheme*
- *Ban the use of weed killers*
- *Displaying periodically of planned pathway maintenance on gates*
- *Easier access to compost/manure for plot. I collect it in heavy bags from farm 5 miles away*
- *Please, please make the allotment holders keep their section of pitches clear as some have recently filled them in, more flooding.*
- *Prohibit the playing of radios. This is rare but annoying*
- *Pruning of oak trees*
- *Restrictions on some of the constructions put up on sites. One plot has what looks like a shanty on it*
- *Self management requested but refused by the Council*
- *Site Manager*
- *Would like toilet (eco friendly)*
- *Would like to keep chickens on my allotment.*

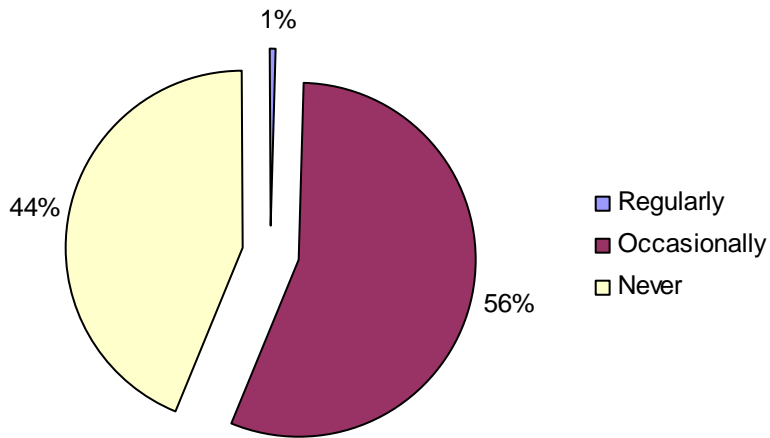
Half of respondents (50%) compost material from home and from their plot, whilst another 47% only compost material from their plot. Only 3% never compost any material.

Q Do you compost material on your plot?



Only 1% of allotment holders regularly have bonfires on their plots, whilst 56% do so occasionally.

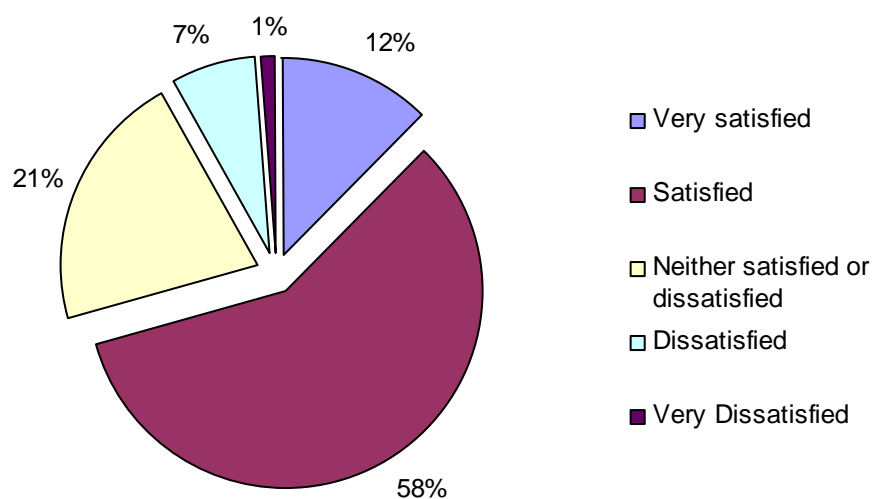
Q Do you have a bonfire on your plot?



3. Satisfaction with the Allotment Service

Seven out of ten allotment holders (70%) are either very satisfied or satisfied with the running of their allotment site. 21% are neutral, whilst only 8% are dissatisfied.

Q Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the running of your allotment site?

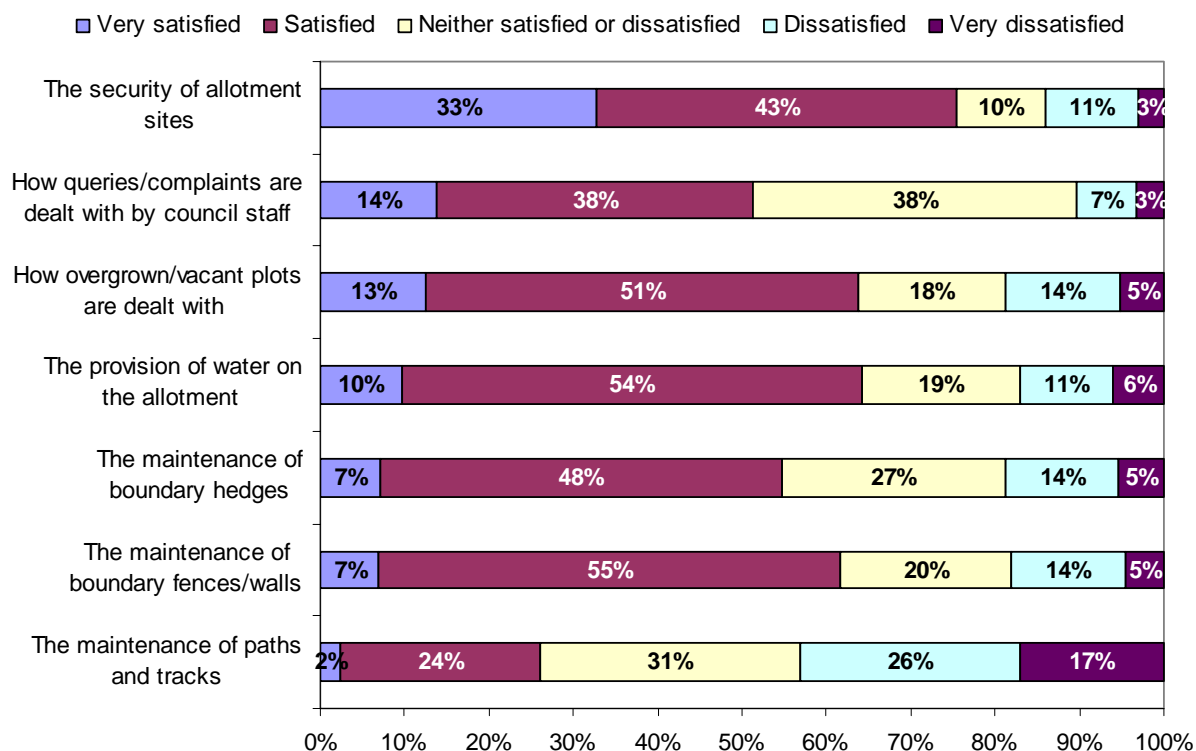


Allotment holders who are either very satisfied or satisfied range from 75% for plot holders in Emsworth to 67% for those holding plots on Hayling Island.

| | Very satisfied | Satisfied | Neither satisfied or dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Very Dissatisfied |
|---------------|----------------|-----------|-----------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| Waterlooville | 14% | 56% | 20% | 10% | 1% |
| Havant | 11% | 62% | 24% | 1% | 1% |
| Hayling | 15% | 52% | 23% | 8% | 2% |
| Emsworth | 10% | 64% | 19% | 6% | - |

Allotments holders were asked to rate their satisfaction with different aspects of the service. One third (33%) of allotment holders are very satisfied with the security of allotment sites, whilst 17% are very dissatisfied with the maintenance of paths and tracks.

Q How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following?

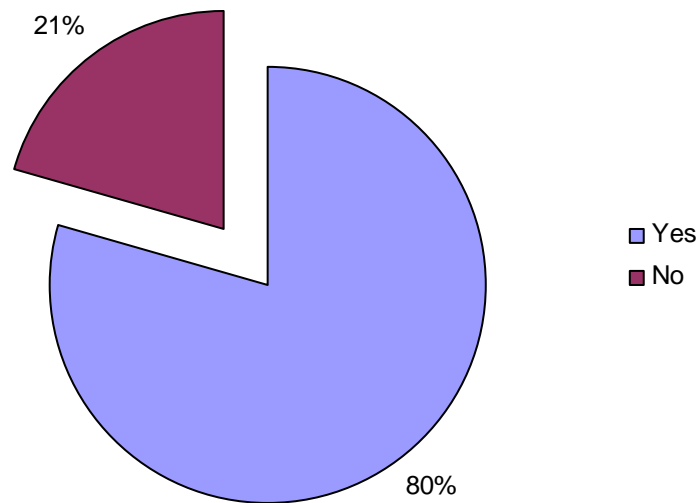


For this question, net satisfaction has been calculated by adding together 'very satisfied' and 'fairly satisfied' responses and 'very dissatisfied' and 'fairly dissatisfied' responses. This shows that three quarters of allotment holders (76%) are satisfied with the security of allotment sites and almost two thirds with the provision of water on their allotment (64%), how overgrown/vacant plots are dealt with (64%) and the maintenance of boundary fences / walls (62%). Satisfaction is lower with the maintenance of boundary hedges (55%) and how queries / complaints are dealt with by council staff (51%), although dissatisfaction is not higher than the previous factors mentioned because a lot of respondents said that they were 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' than dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. The point of most dissatisfaction is with the maintenance of paths and tracks, where 43% of allotment holders are dissatisfied whilst only 26% are satisfied.

| | Net satisfaction | Net dissatisfaction |
|--|------------------|---------------------|
| The security of allotment sites | 76% | 14% |
| The provision of water on the allotment | 64% | 17% |
| How overgrown/vacant plots are dealt with | 64% | 19% |
| The maintenance of boundary fences/walls | 62% | 18% |
| The maintenance of boundary hedges | 55% | 19% |
| How queries/complaints are dealt with by council staff | 51% | 10% |
| The maintenance of paths and tracks | 26% | 43% |

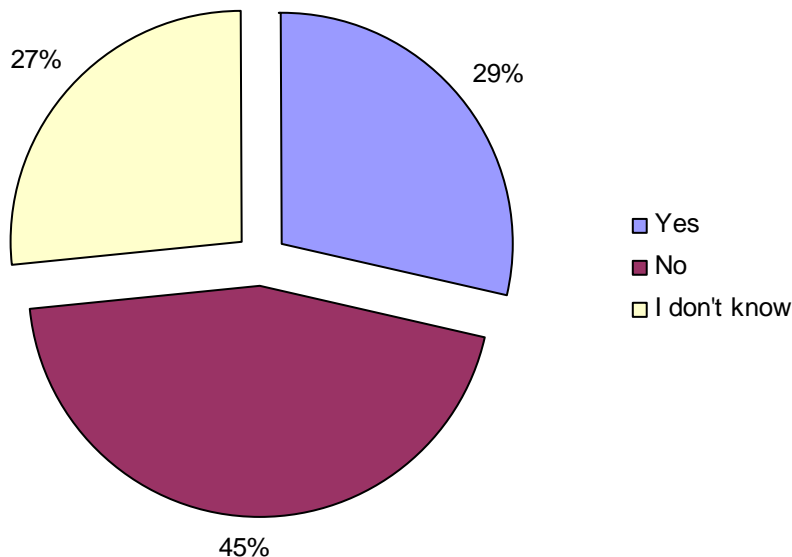
Eight out of ten (80%) allotment holders feel that their allotment offers good value for money.

Q Do you think your allotment offers good value for money?



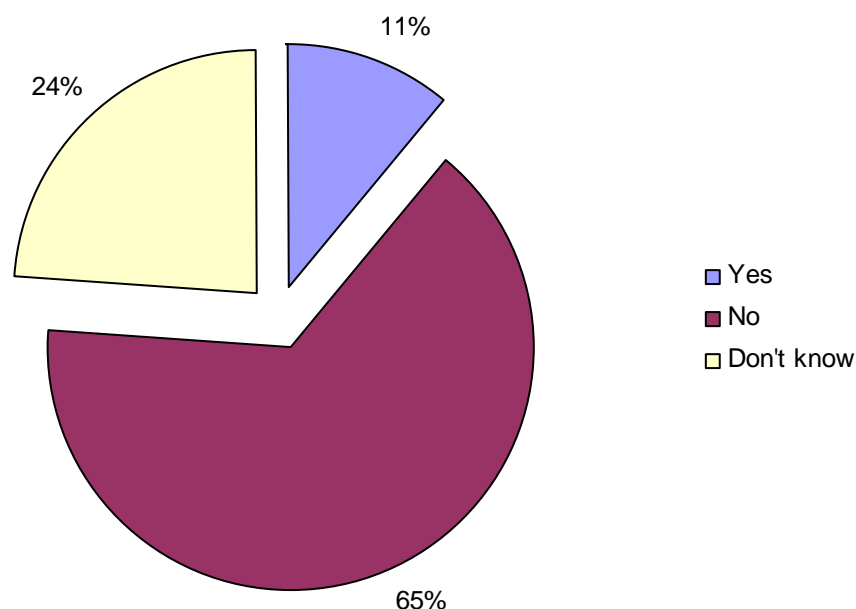
29% of allotment holders are interested in self-management whilst 45% are not. 27% are not sure and may be a group that would be interested given further information and / or encouragement.

Q The National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners recommends some degree of self-management of allotment sites whereby tenants form an association to set charges and take on management and maintenance tasks. Is this something you would like to explore with the Council?



11% (43 allotment holders) said that they would be interested in taking up a position in a self-managed association. 24% don't know and again, given further information or encouragement, they may be persuaded.

Q Would you consider taking up a position (e.g. treasurer, chairman) in a self-managed association?



When looked at by area, respondents with plots in the Havant area are slightly more likely to consider taking up a position in a self-managed association than other areas of the borough.

| | Yes | No | Don't know |
|----------------|-----|-----|------------|
| Emsworth | 9% | 74% | 17% |
| Havant | 13% | 53% | 34% |
| Hayling Island | 11% | 76% | 13% |
| Waterlooville | 12% | 61% | 28% |

Allotment holders were asked if they had any other comments to make about the allotment service provided by the council. Some of the comments were on the same subjects as the comments invited on rules and regulations above. All the comments have been grouped into the following themes described below with illustrative quotes:

Allotment rent (8% of respondents). Many of these respondents feel that allotment costs in Havant are more expensive than in other areas and could be among the highest in the country. Respondents also commented on value for money in respect of the services or facilities they feel they get for their rental money and proposed rental increases.

- *Havant allotments are the dearest in the country*
- *Cost - allotments in Havant are much more expensive than in other local areas*
- *I don't think you do much for the amount of rent you charge*

- *I think it is unfair that there is no discount for those who are on low income and a higher rate for those that can afford more. I live about 1 mile away from my site sadly the Hants/W Border is in between so I have to pay double for my half plot whilst others travel 10-15 miles*
- *I understand that Havant allotment rents are one of the highest in the Country and moves are afoot to increase them. I deem this to be most unreasonable and would therefore advocate a review of such changes*
- *In general I am satisfied with the present service provided, but am concerned at the rental rises in recent years*
- *It does not give any concessions to OAPs, which Portsmouth Council do.*
- *Portsmouth Council have cheaper rent, toilets, supply compost, chipped bank, and supervise allotments to HBC why?*
- *Havant rent is among the highest in the UK. Several Councils in Hampshire give 50% discount on rentals to those aged over 60 years i.e Basingstoke, Eastleigh and Portsmouth. Havant are proposing to increase the rent by 15% in financial years 2010/11*
- *There is considerably room for improving the service given to the allotment holders from the Havant Council considering the very high rents that are charged. (Probably the highest in the country.)*

Maintenance (8% of respondents). A lot of comments were about the maintenance of pathways. Respondents comments saw maintenance issues as the council and/ or plot holders responsibilities.

- *The water tank on my plot has overflowed for 3 years. The drainage of water away is blocked, ditch management and clearing is needed*
- *Gaps still open in bushy areas and fences apparently because of badgers and can't be blocked. Not really the case, more problems caused by dog walkers letting their dogs run loose*
- *Main gate has been difficult to open and close for a long time, possible 2 years. The latch which slides across is out of alignment which makes it impossible to lock into the other gate*
- *Main problem is keeping paths down have not found suitable equipment. Would be happy to pay a little extra for Council moving of paths personally. So can spend time actually gardening*
- *Maintenance of paths and tracks. I put "dissatisfied" because only the grass paths immediately inside the site seem to be cut regularly. More frequent maintenance of tracks/path ways is required*
- *Satisfied with paths and tracks maintained by council, but dissatisfied with the care taken with these by some of my neighbours. The Council does a good job by cutting grass of unused allotments. They also spray and renovate vacant plots to make them more attractive to prospective tenants.*

Unused or neglected plots (7% of respondents). Respondents mainly commented on the management of unused and neglected plots.

- *Council officials need to ensure that plots are well under cultivation, frequently in the summer month, also that weeds etc do not spread to neighbours allotments*
- *Currently I believe it is poorly managed. There are several plots at my allotment that are clearly not being worked, yet there is a large waiting list for these plots. This should be monitored more closely to allow proper use of plots. Derelict plots make nonsense of the waiting list*
- *I am disappointed that it takes such a long time to reallocate/neglected allotments, given the long waiting list. Also more pressure should be applied*

to those who are obviously (in my opinion) not using their allotments to either use them or lose them

- *I feel the council could improve the cleaning of vacant plots as mine was very overgrown when I took over*
- *Overgrown and vacant plots. Allocate if possible during non growing periods before plots become overgrown*
- *When a warning letter is sent to a plot holder to tidy up their plot - is it followed up? The waiting list could be considerably shortened if they were.*

Disposing of waste (7% of respondents). As with the response to the question about regulations and restrictions described above, waste disposal came up as an issue. Respondents suggested that help could be provided to assist with removing waste from allotment sites.

- *Once a year put two skips on site. (Gosport Council do this)*
- *A skip for weeds etc wouldn't go a miss.*
- *Collection of non compostable items (in a skip) would be welcome.*
- *Rubbish and Compost bins provided by Council so that rubbish and problem weeds can be taken away from site.*
- *Composting is a major issue at some times of the year that is far too much green stuff to compost for a small allotment; it would be good to have skips that we could use. The Council then could add to their composting system!*
- *Garden waste collection for recycling could it be offered?*
- *I'm getting rid of unwanted rubbish, Carrying heavy material is quite difficult for ladies. A big skip for rubbish would be helpful, not what is applied at present.*

Compliments about the service or staff (7% of respondents). A number of respondents used this space on the questionnaire to compliment the council on its allotments or to say thank you.

- *Very pleased with the help I had because of my disability*
- *In general the service is good for the money*
- *I have found the office staff to be pleasant and efficient*
- *Elizabeth Road Allotments - Any complaints (e.g. recent fencing) quickly dealt with*
- *Had an allotment for 37 Years, excellent value. Ok other Councils are cheaper but try joining a golf club. Keeps you fit, needs little supervision. Some allotment holders need reminding about their responsibilities to neighbouring site. i.e. keep the clutter and weeds down*
- *Having the allotment has been brilliant for our family. To put one reason for wanting one was difficult because it has helped our family in so many different ways. It is an extremely valuable resource for me, my husband and our three children*
- *I appreciate that this service is provided. I derive a lot of pleasure and exercise and fresh produce from my allotment. Thank You.*

Water / standpipes (5% of respondents). Respondents talked about better access to water through hose pipes or standpipes.

- *Access to water is an issue, hard work, fetching and carrying is very difficult for (A) older people (B) in dry conditions keeping the plants watered sufficiently to thrive*
- *A better water system like a stand pipe*
- *Access to water and the ability to use water is not very good. When one person is using the water others are unable to. Also the removal of tap sockets made use of water ineffective*

- *Could standard hose connection be fitted to the water tanks, as using watering cans during long hot spells, can be very hard work for us old ones*
- *Having a disability myself, it would be helpful if a hose attachment could be fitted to water outlets. I understand why this has not been done before but I don't think it would be abused.*

Road access / maintenance (5% of respondents). Respondents mainly made comments about the quality of roads and parking areas at allotment sites. Some comments were detailed and specific to particular sites.

- *The roads are not maintained.*
- *The second car park has not been cleared*
- *Warblington Road Site. The central track is very rutted at the Northern end, so it is very difficult to get vehicles through. It would be nice to see this improved. It would be nice to have somewhere near the Northern end (vehicles) access gate where large loads of manure/produce/chipped bark could be delivered. As there is not much space on a plot and the plots on the Southern area are as hard to reach with heavy trailer. Alternatively make the access gate from Beacon Square wide enough to get a trailer through and allow dumping in that "no mans land"*
- *On our particular site, often on a good weather day car park is full and there is nowhere else to park. Extra parking spaces are required*
- *On the whole the service is good. It would be nice to have a hard surface and turning point for the car, when your allotment is at the far end it is a long way to carry things.*

Toilet facilities (5% of respondents). Some respondents would like to see toilet facilities made available on allotment sites.

- *A toilet on site would be appreciated have on a number of occasions had to break off and leave. Can be a problem for us oldies*
- *Toilets and tap/running water for hand washing would be very useful and would save on journeys.*
- *I also wish there was toilets in case of an emergency - nothing plush!*
- *Would like compostable toilets.*

Security (3% of respondents). A lot of these comments were very specific about particular bits of broken fence or hedges. Some were about vandalism and problems with young people.

- *Better security in the south west corner and north west corner. Children climb the fence/gate from Glenwood School*
- *Complete the fencing of Purbrook West to stop vandalism and deer from entering site. Cut hedges back and trim trees*
- *It would be nice to have a fence or barrier at the side of the pathway, to stop youngsters that live in near by houses roaming and playing about on the allotments for safety and security.*
- *Why not provide sheds for tenants at a nominal rent. Greater security for tools etc.*

Compost / seaweed deliveries (3% of respondents). Some respondents were in favour of having compost, manure and / or seaweed deliveries to allotment sites.

- *Excess seaweed could be dumped at the site for use (i.e. for Kings Rd Beach Rd area) this would help residents too.*
- *The seaweed delivered to the site was a very good idea. Could other compost be delivered, horse manure etc?*

- *Would like to see seaweed being delivered to the site, when available, would welcome delivery of pro-grow compost to the site for a sensible cost*
- *Can the Council consider delivering compost and/or mulch to the allotment site at a reasonable cost to renters?*

Restrict the number of plots per person (2% of respondents). As above, comments were made about limiting the number of plots per person and reducing the waiting list.

- *Get concerned about people who have several plots and where they distribute their produce as there are people still waiting for allotments. If produce is for personal consumption - how are they consuming so much? I would also like to see a surplus produce collection scheme set up to help homeless people, low income families in the Borough*
- *Having waited for nearly a year to have a plot I object to people having more than one plot, when I know people are waiting for one*
- *Restrict number of plots available to one person when there is a waiting list. One full size allotment is more than enough veg for one family.*

Pest Control (2% of respondents). Respondents commented on specific pest control problems.

- *Complete fence security badger nuisance to crops and now after many years of being rabbit free we now have a population of them*
- *Pest control - pigeons have been an ever increasing problem, most allotments now have large areas of netting which is essential to protect against pigeons. They are unsightly, creating a hazard to Song Birds and other small pigeons. A regular Pigeon shoot would resolve this problem. I am sure it could be organised safely once or twice a year*
- *Too many moles burrowing in soil destroying crops*
- *There is a Rodent/Rat problem on our allotments. Which needs a serious action by the Council.*

Self-management (1% of respondents). Some respondents made positive comments about self management whilst other were against a move towards self-management.

- *Generally very satisfied with the service as a whole. Understanding what should be provided, funds available etc... may provide a better perspective on the quality of service given. The idea of a partnership association could provide this*
- *I am pleased with Rob Hill's management on our allotments. He is always very prompt to his response to an enquiry. I would be worried about someone taking over management because we need someone who is objective or with authority or "loud".*

Date change (1% of respondents). Respondents commented mainly on the time of year when allotment plots are taken over.

- *Go back to allotment year to start Jan 1st. If offered a plot in site which is overgrown new holders will not have time to get site ready for planting and would therefore be put off taking site*
- *Change renewal date to Jan to give new allotmentees time to prepare plot before growing season.*

Ban/control bonfires (1% of respondents). Respondents made comments about banning or restricting bonfires on allotment sites.

- *I am very satisfied in general with the service offered by the council. My main complaint would be bonfires on the plots which are antisocial both to allotment holders and local residents (including a school)*
- *No need of bonfires.*

Other (10% of respondents). Other comments include allotment plots being too big or too small, size of structures allowed, more allotment plots to reduce waiting lists, better use of notice boards and suggestions for equipment share or advice.

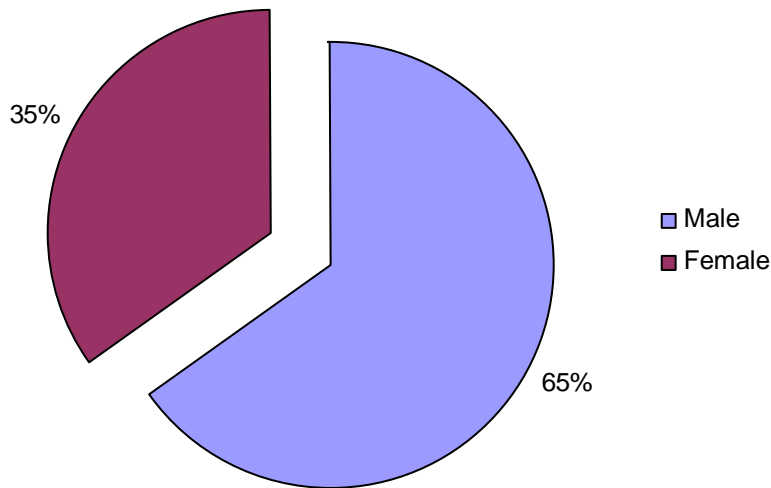
- *The Council should run help clinics to help us learners get the most from our allotments*
- *Facilities to share, borrow or hire equipment like mowers, rotavators etc would be good*
- *I think a lot of people would like a smaller plot to manage say a third of a sized plot*
- *I waited a year to have an allotment - there should be more land available for them*
- *I would like the Council to reconsider "Livestock" rules. I would love to keep bees and hens*
- *More sites please - it's popular and in demand activity. Thank You*
- *The plot I have been allocated is too small for my needs, and the increasing trend to decrease the size of existing plots should NOT continue, regardless of the demand for spaces and waiting lists. New areas should be made available as demand increases*
- *We were told we could not have a structure bigger than 4ft x 6ft and some of the plots have structures bigger than this can you tell me why?*
- *Would like to see a support group set up for when people are unwell and maybe unable to visit their plots. I have suffered to bouts of illness this year, and it would have been a help to know that someone was "checking" on my plot*
- *More use of notice boards - for Allotments/ and council could advertise reclamation materials e.g. stones, wood for use of allotments*
- *The possibility of insurance of equipment, i.e. sheds containing tools etc.*

4. Demographics

Allotment holders were asked a number of demographic questions to help us to understand the type of residents who have plots in the borough.

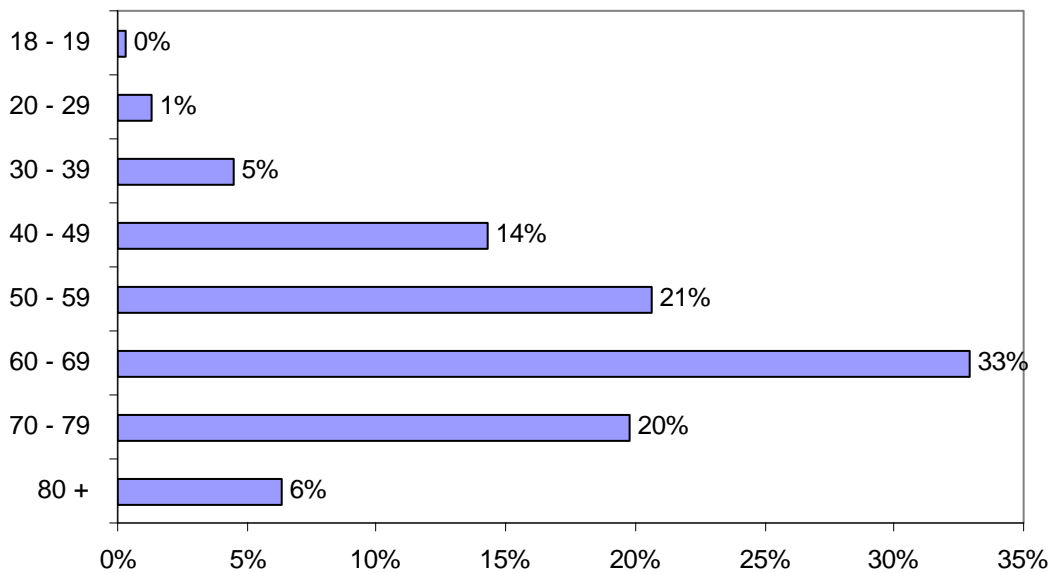
Over two thirds (65%) of allotments holders are men.

Q Are you...



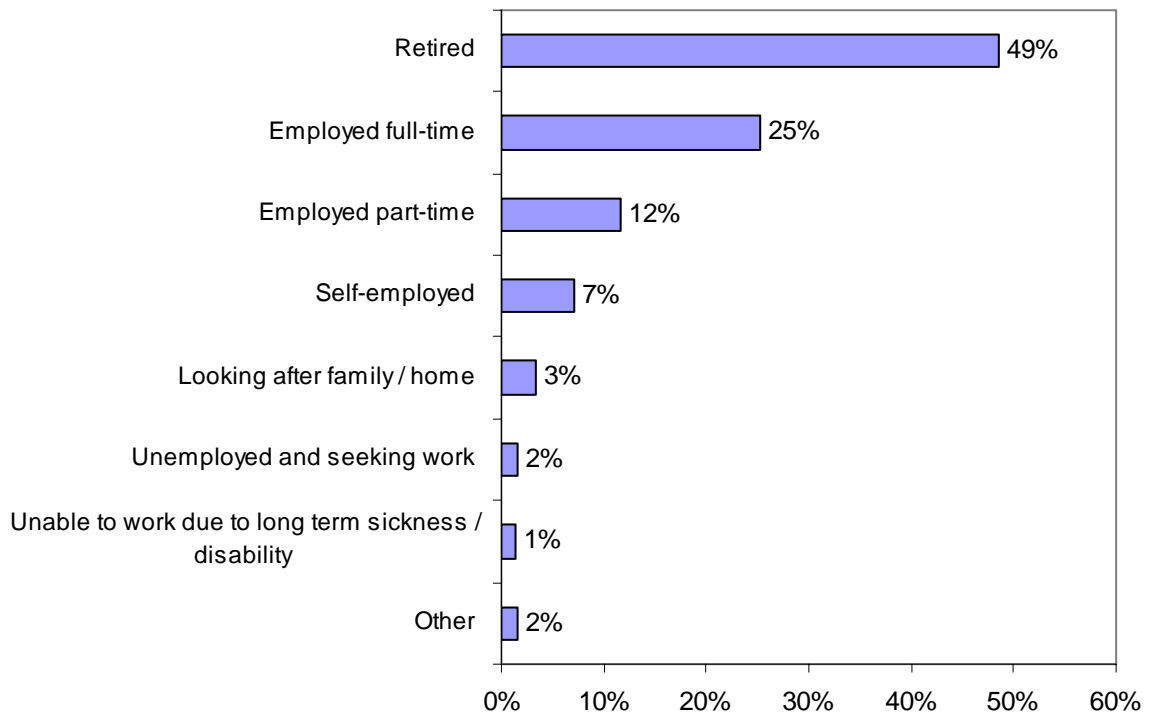
Only one respondent is aged between 18 and 19, whilst the largest proportion (33%) is aged between 60 and 69. Overall, 59% of respondents are aged 60 or over.

Q Which of the following age bands do you fall into?



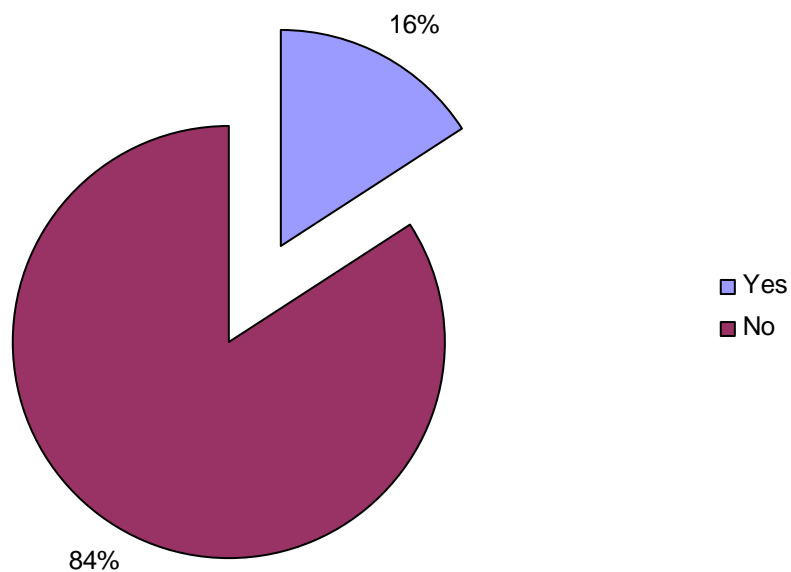
As might be expected, given the age range of respondents, nearly half (49%) are retired.

Q Are you...



16% have a longstanding illness, disability or infirmity.

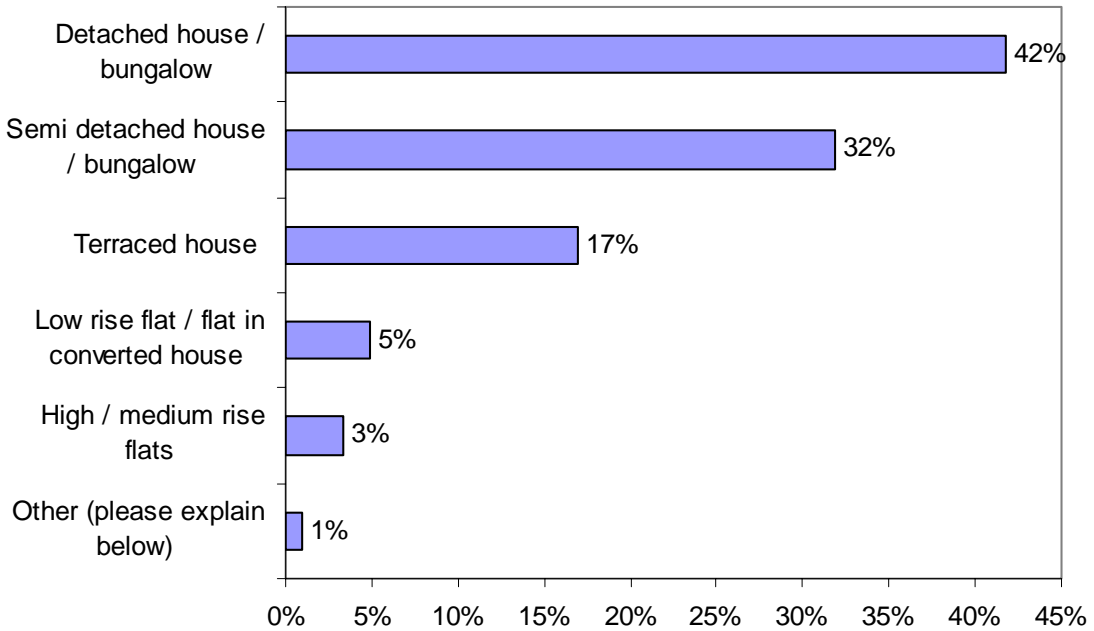
Q Do you have any longstanding illness, disability or infirmity? (Anything that has troubled you over a period of time or that is likely to affect you over a period of time).



When asked to describe their ethnic origin, 99% of respondents described themselves as white British, whilst one person of black or black British African heritage and four from another ethnic group.

Most allotments holders live in a detached house or bungalow (42%) or semi detached house or bungalow (32%). 5% live in low rise flats and 3% in high / medium rise flats where they are less likely to have gardens. Other response included residents living in park / mobile homes, sheltered accommodation or maisonettes.

Q Which of the following best describes your home?



Appendix one: Absolute counts

Allotment Holders Questionnaire

Allotment Use

| | | | |
|-----------|--|---------------|--|
| Q1 | How many allotment plots do you rent? | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3..... 4 4+..... 1 |
| | | 349 | |
| Q2 | How often do you visit your allotment in the summer and winter? | | |
| | | <i>Summer</i> | <i>Winter</i> |
| | Daily | 141 | 12 |
| | More than once a week | 227 | 131 |
| | About once a week | 25 | 146 |
| | 2 to 3 times a month | 3 | 84 |
| | Less than 2 to 3 times a month | 3 | 25 |
| Q3 | When you visit your allotment how long do you usually spend there? | | |
| | | <i>Summer</i> | <i>Winter</i> |
| | A few minutes | 0 | 16 |
| | 10 mins to half an hour | 2 | 54 |
| | Half an hour to an hour | 70 | 195 |
| | 2 to 5 hours | 318 | 132 |
| | All day | 17 | 3 |
| Q4 | How do you normally travel to your allotment? Please tick one only | | |
| | Bicycle..... | 57 | On foot..... 98 |
| | Bus | 7 | Train |
| | Car or motorbike | 229 | Other (please describe below) |
| | Other, please describe | 30 | 5 |
| Q5 | How far is your allotment from you home? | | |
| | Less than 1 mile | 187 | 2 - 5 miles |
| | 1 - 2 miles..... | 133 | Over 5 miles..... 9 |
| Q6 | Do you garden the allotment plot... | | |
| | Alone..... | 192 | As a group..... 5 |
| | Jointly with a friend or relative | 121 | Other (please describe below) |
| | As a family | 70 | |
| | Other, please describe | 30 | |
| Q7 | How did you find out about local allotments? Please tick all that apply | | |
| | From a friend or family | 119 | Council's website |
| | Telephoning the Council | 175 | Serving You (the Council's magazine) |
| | Visiting the Council offices | 40 | Other (please explain below) |
| | Other, please explain | 62 | |

Q8 What is your main reason for having your allotment? Please tick ONE only

| | | | |
|------------------------|----|--------------------------------|-----|
| Fresh air | 2 | Fresh fruit & vegetables | 305 |
| Exercise | 13 | Hobby | 59 |
| Social | 0 | Other | 15 |
| Other, please describe | 49 | | |

Allotment Management

Q9 How long did you wait to be allocated an allotment?

| | | | |
|--------------------------|-----|------------------------|----|
| Less than 6 months | 224 | 1 year to 2 years..... | 64 |
| 6 months to 1 year..... | 65 | Over 2 years..... | 37 |

Q10 Has your plot ever been subject to vandalism?

| | | | |
|-----------|-----|----------|-----|
| Yes | 119 | No | 279 |
|-----------|-----|----------|-----|

Q11 Have you ever had equipment stolen from your plot?

| | | | |
|-----------|----|----------|-----|
| Yes | 73 | No | 326 |
|-----------|----|----------|-----|

Q12 Have you ever had produce stolen from your plot?

| | | | |
|-----------|-----|----------|-----|
| Yes | 107 | No | 287 |
|-----------|-----|----------|-----|

Q13 Were any of these incidents reported to...

| | | | |
|------------------------|----|-------------------------------------|----|
| Police | 36 | Other (please describe below) | 32 |
| Council | 31 | Unreported | 31 |
| Other, please describe | 79 | | |

Q14 Are there any regulations or restrictions which you feel would help improve the management of your site?

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----|----------|-----|
| Yes (please explain below) | 104 | No | 215 |
| If yes, please explain | 126 | | |

Q15 Do you compost material on your plot?

| | | | | | |
|---|-----|---------------------------------------|-----|------------|----|
| Yes, all material from my home and plot | 196 | Yes, material from my plot only | 187 | Never..... | 13 |
|---|-----|---------------------------------------|-----|------------|----|

Q16 Do you have a bonfire on your plot?

| | | | | | |
|-----------------|---|-------------------|-----|------------|-----|
| Regularly | 2 | Occasionally..... | 220 | Never..... | 173 |
|-----------------|---|-------------------|-----|------------|-----|

Q17 How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following?

| | <i>Very satisfied</i> | <i>Satisfied</i> | <i>Neither satisfied or dissatisfied</i> | <i>Dissatisfied</i> | <i>Very dissatisfied</i> |
|--|-----------------------|------------------|--|---------------------|--------------------------|
| The maintenance of paths and tracks | 49 | 199 | 68 | 53 | 20 |
| The maintenance of boundary fences/walls | 37 | 205 | 71 | 41 | 23 |
| The maintenance of boundary hedges | 27 | 179 | 100 | 51 | 20 |
| The provision of water on the allotment | 130 | 169 | 41 | 44 | 12 |
| How overgrown/vacant plots are dealt with | 9 | 92 | 120 | 102 | 66 |
| How queries/complaints are dealt with by council staff | 51 | 140 | 143 | 27 | 12 |
| The security of allotment sites | 27 | 214 | 79 | 53 | 18 |

- Q18 Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the running of your allotment site?**
 Very satisfied 49 Dissatisfied..... 28
 Satisfied 230 Very Dissatisfied..... 4
 Neither satisfied or dissatisfied 84
- Q19 Do you think that your allotment offers good value for money?**
 Yes No 80
 310
- Q20 The National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners recommends some degree of self-management of allotment sites whereby tenants form an association to set charges and take on management and maintenance tasks. Is this something you would like to explore with the Council?**
 Yes 113 No 176 I don't know 106
- Q21 Would you consider taking up a position (e.g. treasurer, chairman) in a self-managed association?**
 Yes 43 No 251 Don't know 92

About you

The following questions will help us to understand who is using our allotments.
 All information will be held confidentially.

- Q22 Are you...**
 Male 259 Female..... 139
- Q23 Which of the following age bands do you fall into?**
 18 - 19..... 1 50 - 59 82
 20 - 29..... 5 60 - 69 131
 30 - 39..... 18 70 - 79 79
 40 - 49..... 57 80 + 25
- Q24 Do you have any longstanding illness, disability or infirmity?** (Anything that has troubled you over a period of time or that is likely to affect you over a period of time)
 Yes 62 No 330
- Q25 Are you...**
 Employed full-time..... 100 Student 0
 Employed part-time 46 Retired 192
 Self-employed 28 Looking after family/home 13
 Unemployed and seeking work..... 6 Other 6
 Unable to work due to long term
 sickness/disability..... 5
- Q26 How would you describe your ethnic origin?**
 White - British..... 388 Mixed - White & Asian 0
 White - Irish..... 0 Asian or Asian British - Indian 0
 Black or Black British - Caribbean..... 0 Asian or Asian British - Pakistani..... 0
 Black or Black British - African 1 Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi..... 0
 Mixed - White & Black Caribbean..... 0 Chinese..... 0
 Mixed - White & Black African..... 0 Other ethnic group 4

| | | |
|------------|---|-----|
| Q27 | Which of the following best describe your home? | |
| | Detached house / bungalow | 161 |
| | Semi detached house / bungalow | 123 |
| | Terraced house | 65 |
| | High / medium rise flats..... | 13 |
| | Low rise flat / flat in converted house | 19 |
| | Other (please explain below) | 4 |
| | Other, please explain | 15 |
| Q28 | Do you have any other comments about the allotment service offered by the Council? | 235 |
| Q29 | If you would like to be entered into a prize draw to win a £25 garden centre voucher please tell us your contact details below | |
| | Name | 323 |
| | Address | 321 |
| | Postcode | 319 |
| | Telephone number | 6 |
| | Email | 5 |

Thank you for your time. Please now return your questionnaire in the FREEPOST envelope provided by Friday 11th December 2009

Appendix two: Percentage counts

Allotment Holders Questionnaire

Allotment Use

- Q1 How many allotment plots do you rent?**
 1 88.4% 2 10.4% 3 1.0% 4 + 0.3%
- Q2 How often do you visit your allotment in the summer and winter?**
- | | Summer | Winter |
|--------------------------------|--------|--------|
| Daily | 35% | 3% |
| More than once a week | 57% | 33% |
| About once a week | 6% | 37% |
| 2 to 3 times a month | 1% | 21% |
| Less than 2 to 3 times a month | 1% | 6% |
- Q3 When you visit your allotment how long do you usually spend there?**
- | | Summer | Winter |
|-------------------------|--------|--------|
| A few minutes | 0.0% | 100.0% |
| 10 mins to half an hour | 3.7% | 100.0% |
| Half an hour to an hour | 30.0% | 83.7% |
| 2 to 5 hours | 94.1% | 39.1% |
| All day | 100.0% | 17.6% |
- Q4 How do you normally travel to your allotment? Please tick one only**
- | | | | |
|------------------------|--------|-------------------------------------|-------|
| Bicycle..... | 14.4% | On foot..... | 24.7% |
| Bus | 1.8% | Train | 0.3% |
| Car or motorbike | 57.7% | Other (please describe below) | 1.3% |
| Other, please describe | 100.0% | | |
- Q5 How far is your allotment from you home?**
- | | | | |
|------------------------|-------|-------------------|-------|
| Less than 1 mile | 47.0% | 2 - 5 miles | 17.3% |
| 1 - 2 miles..... | 33.4% | Over 5 miles..... | 2.3% |
- Q6 Do you garden the allotment plot...**
- | | | | |
|---|--------|-------------------------------------|------|
| Alone..... | 48.4% | As a group..... | 1.3% |
| Jointly with a friend or relative | 30.5% | Other (please describe below) | 2.3% |
| As a family | 17.6% | | |
| Other, please describe | 100.0% | | |
- Q7 How did you find out about local allotments? Please tick all that apply**
- | | | | |
|------------------------------------|--------|---|-------|
| From a friend or family | 30.2% | Council's website | 5.8% |
| Telephoning the Council | 44.4% | Serving You (the Council's magazine) | 2.3% |
| Visiting the Council offices | 10.2% | Other (please explain below) | 13.5% |
| Other, please explain | 100.0% | | |

Q8 What is your main reason for having your allotment? Please tick ONE only

| | | | |
|------------------------|--------|--------------------------------|-------|
| Fresh air | 0.5% | Fresh fruit & vegetables | 77.4% |
| Exercise | 3.3% | Hobby | 15.0% |
| Social | 0.0% | Other | 3.8% |
| Other, please describe | 100.0% | | |

Allotment Management

Q9 How long did you wait to be allocated an allotment?

| | | | |
|--------------------------|-------|------------------------|-------|
| Less than 6 months | 57.4% | 1 year to 2 years..... | 16.4% |
| 6 months to 1 year..... | 16.7% | Over 2 years..... | 9.5% |

Q10 Has your plot ever been subject to vandalism?

| | | | |
|-----------|-------|----------|-------|
| Yes | 29.9% | No | 70.1% |
|-----------|-------|----------|-------|

Q11 Have you ever had equipment stolen from your plot?

| | | | |
|-----------|-------|----------|-------|
| Yes | 18.3% | No | 81.7% |
|-----------|-------|----------|-------|

Q12 Have you ever had produce stolen from your plot?

| | | | |
|-----------|-------|----------|-------|
| Yes | 27.2% | No | 72.8% |
|-----------|-------|----------|-------|

Q13 Were any of these incidents reported to...

| | | | |
|------------------------|--------|-------------------------------------|-------|
| Police | 27.7% | Other (please describe below) | 24.6% |
| Council | 23.8% | Unreported | 23.8% |
| Other, please describe | 100.0% | | |

Q14 Are there any regulations or restrictions which you feel would help improve the management of your site?

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------|----------|-------|
| Yes (please explain below) | 32.6% | No | 67.4% |
| If yes, please explain | 100.0% | | |

Q15 Do you compost material on your plot?

| | | | | | |
|--|-------|---------------------------------------|-------|------------|------|
| Yes, all material from my home and plot..... | 49.5% | Yes, material from my plot only | 47.2% | Never..... | 3.3% |
|--|-------|---------------------------------------|-------|------------|------|

Q16 Do you have a bonfire on your plot?

| | | | | | |
|-----------------|------|-------------------|-------|------------|-------|
| Regularly | 0.5% | Occasionally..... | 55.7% | Never..... | 43.8% |
|-----------------|------|-------------------|-------|------------|-------|

Q17 How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following?

| | <i>Very satisfied</i> | <i>Satisfied</i> | <i>Neither satisfied or dissatisfied</i> | <i>Dissatisfied</i> | <i>Very dissatisfied</i> |
|--|-----------------------|------------------|--|---------------------|--------------------------|
| The maintenance of paths and tracks | 12.6% | 51.2% | 17.5% | 13.6% | 5.1% |
| The maintenance of boundary fences/walls | 9.8% | 54.4% | 18.8% | 10.9% | 6.1% |
| The maintenance of boundary hedges | 7.2% | 47.5% | 26.5% | 13.5% | 5.3% |
| The provision of water on the allotment | 32.8% | 42.7% | 10.4% | 11.1% | 3.0% |
| How overgrown/vacant plots are dealt with | 2.3% | 23.7% | 30.8% | 26.2% | 17.0% |
| How queries/complaints are dealt with by council staff | 13.7% | 37.5% | 38.3% | 7.2% | 3.2% |
| The security of allotment sites | 6.9% | 54.7% | 20.2% | 13.6% | 4.6% |

- Q18 Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the running of your allotment site?**
 Very satisfied 12.4% Dissatisfied..... 7.1%
 Satisfied 58.2% Very Dissatisfied..... 1.0%
 Neither satisfied or dissatisfied 21.3%
- Q19 Do you think that your allotment offers good value for money?**
 Yes 79.5% No 20.5%
- Q20 The National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners recommends some degree of self-management of allotment sites whereby tenants form an association to set charges and take on management and maintenance tasks. Is this something you would like to explore with the Council?**
 Yes 28.6% No 44.6% I don't know 26.8%
- Q21 Would you consider taking up a position (e.g. treasurer, chairman) in a self-managed association?**
 Yes 11.1% No 65.0% Don't know 23.8%

About you

The following questions will help us to understand who is using our allotments.
 All information will be held confidentially.

- Q22 Are you...**
 Male 65.1% Female..... 34.9%
- Q23 Which of the following age bands do you fall into?**
 18 - 19..... 0.3% 50 - 59 20.6%
 20 - 29..... 1.3% 60 - 69 32.9%
 30 - 39..... 4.5% 70 - 79 19.8%
 40 - 49..... 14.3% 80 + 6.3%
- Q24 Do you have any longstanding illness, disability or infirmity?** (Anything that has troubled you over a period of time or that is likely to affect you over a period of time)
 Yes 15.8% No 84.2%
- Q25 Are you...**
 Employed full-time..... 25.3% Student 0.0%
 Employed part-time 11.6% Retired..... 48.5%
 Self-employed 7.1% Looking after family/home 3.3%
 Unemployed and seeking work..... 1.5% Other 1.5%
 Unable to work due to long term
 sickness/disability..... 1.3%
- Q26 How would you describe your ethnic origin?**
 White - British 98.7% Mixed - White & Asian..... 0.0%
 White - Irish 0.0% Asian or Asian British - Indian 0.0%
 Black or Black British - Caribbean..... 0.0% Asian or Asian British - Pakistani 0.0%
 Black or Black British - African..... 0.3% Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi..... 0.0%
 Mixed - White & Black Caribbean 0.0% Chinese 0.0%
 Mixed - White & Black African 0.0% Other ethnic group 1.0%

- Q27 Which of the following best describe your home?**
- | | |
|---|--------|
| Detached house / bungalow | 41.8% |
| Semi detached house / bungalow | 31.9% |
| Terraced house | 16.9% |
| High / medium rise flats | 3.4% |
| Low rise flat / flat in converted house | 4.9% |
| Other (please explain below) | 1.0% |
| Other, please explain | 100.0% |
- Q28 Do you have any other comments about the allotment service offered by the Council?** 100.0%
- Q29 If you would like to be entered into a prize draw to win a £25 garden centre voucher please tell us your contact details below**
- | | |
|------------------|--------|
| Name | 100.0% |
| Address | 100.0% |
| Postcode | 100.0% |
| Telephone number | 100.0% |
| Email | 100.0% |

Thank you for your time. Please now return your questionnaire in the FREEPOST envelope provided by Friday 11th December 2009