



CITY
OF
LONDON

Epping
Forest

Registered Charity

Epping Forest Visitor Survey 2014

Results Report



This is one of
14 green spaces
managed by the
City of London at
little cost to the
general public.

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1. Introduction

Now into its fifth year, the Epping Forest Visitor Survey continues to produce significant findings which help the City of London to manage the landscape that makes up Epping Forest. It allows us to observe the pressures and impacts visitors have on the Forest and better manage the delicate balance between the wildlife that lives here and the people who visit it.

The survey is made up of two parts:

- The Observation Survey enables us to compile objective visitor data at different sites across the Forest; this in turn allows us to find out who is visiting as well as calculate how many visits are made to the Forest annually.
- The Questionnaire Survey is an opportunity for our visitors to feed back to us how they feel about the Forest and how we manage it.

2. Observation Survey

Throughout the summer of 2014, volunteers and staff mapped the location of 2560 visits across ten sites around the Forest. The surveyors followed a set route, plotting visitor location and other details such as age, gender, ethnicity and activity. Eight surveys, each approximately an hour long, were carried out on each site totalling over 80 hours. These occurred both at weekends and on weekdays as well as during and out of the school holidays. Using these statistics we then worked out an estimate of the number of annual visits per site, using a year round figure of 12 hours a day as time available to visit. This year marked the completion of surveying the whole of the Forest and we now have baseline data for all individual sites within the Forest (Table 1). Totals for each individual site surveyed this year have been added to the totals estimated from the previous four years of surveying, which gave us a total figure of 3,939,024 visits per annum across all sites. To this figure we then added additional visitor data gathered across the year from events and activities (Table 2) to give us a final estimate of total number of visits to the Forest each year of **4,271,398**.

2.1. Observation Data

Table 1: Estimate of Total Forest Visits at end of 2014

Site Name	Observed visits pa	Survey Year	Region	% of total visits
Hollow Ponds	429,420	2011	South	11
Connaught Water*	330,698	2013	Centre	8
Wanstead Flats (Aldersbrook Site)*	298,357	2014	South	8
Woodford Green	283,270	2013	Centre	7
High Beach/Pillow Mounds	279,062	2010	North	7
Wanstead Flats (Bush Wood)*	250,604	2014	South	6
Chingford Plain	229,376	2010	Centre	6
Wanstead Park	216,906	2010	South	6
Bury Wood	166,680	2011	Centre	4
Strawberry Hill Pond Area	147,749	2012	Centre	4
Barn Hoppitt*	137,615	2014	Centre	3
Fairmead Bottom & Almshouse Plain*	126,612	2014	Centre	3
Lords Bushes & Knighton Woods	116,404	2012	Centre	3
Chingford Golf Course	86,958	2014	Centre	2
Gilbert Slade	76,663	2013	South	2
Ambresbury Banks	74,547	2010	North	2
Walthamstow Forest	73,957	2014	South	2
Whitehall Plain & Hatch Forest	72,818	2013	Centre	2
Highams Park	72,528	2012	Centre	2
Loughton Camp	63,195	2011	Centre	2
Warren Hill	57,408	2014	Centre	1
Great Monk Wood	56,403	2014	North	1
Hangboy Slade & Jacks Hill	56,176	2013	North	1
Honey Lane Quarters	54,203	2013	North	1
Wake Valley	41,364	2013	North	1
Pole Hill and Yardley Hill	41,129	2012	Centre	1
Warren Plantation & Epping Thicks	33,757	2014	North	1
St Thomas's Quarter	32,654	2013	North	1
Lower Forest	30,540	2011	North	1
Fernhills & Trueloves	1,971	2014	Centre	<1
TOTAL	3,939,024			

*Site surveyed for a second time

Table 2: Visitor Statistics for 2014

Event type	Number of participants		
	2012	2013	2014
Events from Events Diary	13,090	13,651	13,924
Visits to the Field Studies Centre	22,141	22,304	18,470
Visits to Suntrap	12,794	12,766	12,350
Events led by the Centenary Trust	3,358	1,508	13,084
Discovering Epping Forest sessions (project ended in 2012)	4,500	0	0
Family Learning Events (nine events a year)	3,011	3,514	1,892
Visits to the Chingford Hub	36,573*	73,762	69,106
Visits to the Epping High Beach Visitor Centre ^	19,702	10,255	10,412
Visits to The Temple	10,906	10,037	10,319
HLF Forest Introduction Events (minimum of 12 events a year)	692	360	518
Visits to Chingford Golf Course	26,629	21,408	22,498
Football (pitch numbers reduced in 2012)	65,604	68,245	52,890▲
Additional sport on Wanstead Flats Δ	0	0	10,928
Web sessions	18,801	113,774	148,873
TOTAL	201,228	351,584	332,374

* The View visitor centre closed for 6 months in 2012 for redevelopment

^ Visitor Centre hours reduced to weekends only in 2013

▲ Eight weeks of pitch bookings had to be cancelled due to waterlogging of the pitches

Δ Includes school sports days, rounders, archery, health walks and cross country running events

3. 2014 Observation Survey Results

When looking at all of the sites, several factors have to be taken into consideration before any recommendations can be put forward:

- **Ecological value:** is this a special place for animals and or plants? How can we keep it this way? The Forest is protected by law and as its Conservators we have a duty to protect the wildlife that lives here.
- **Community benefits:** should this be promoted as an area for visitors to enjoy more? Does it have sufficient transport links and facilities, before it is promoted to the community?
- **Financial implications:** how much will the improvements cost? How will they be funded? Epping Forest is a Registered Charity run on donations mainly from the City of London, who, like all Local Authorities, are experiencing ongoing budget cuts as a result of the economic down turn.
- **Resources:** can the improvements fit into the existing programme of work use existing resources, machinery and equipment? If not, how will this be achieved?

Taking all of these factors into consideration the team of volunteers who worked on the Observation Survey put forward a series of recommendations for each site.

3.1. Fernhills and Trueloves

Fernhills and Trueloves are situated in centre of Forest standing alone between West Essex Golf Course and farm land. It is a remote site, not connected to the main body of Forest and access is difficult as it is boggy throughout most of the year with rutted dry tracks during the summer. There are no car parks in the area and no bus routes along Lippitts Hill, the road bordering it.

Figure 1: All visits recorded at Fernhills & Trueloves



The site is a mosaic of scrub and grassland with a good range of native wild flowers such as ragged robin and ox eye daisy. This in turn provides an important nectar source for insects. It is also a good site for birds within the Forest where various song birds, barn and tawny owls can be spotted.

This was a very quiet site with visitors only recorded on three out of the eight survey sessions, which were all at weekends. The results give an annual visit estimate of **1,971**. It is important that small remote sites are still surveyed to fill in all the missing pieces and build up a whole picture of the Forest.

It is difficult to analyse the data with only a total of four visits recorded but the results show that all visitors recorded were walking, three out of four had a dog with them and half of the visitors were in a group together while the other two visited alone. Probably due to the difficult terrain, all of the visitors were recorded sticking to the paths.

Recommendations

This area is a valuable wildflower rich area and should be conserved accordingly. Terrain makes it difficult and costly to install formal trails across the site and a lack of facilities nearby would not make it the ideal place to encourage a higher level of visitor use. It is a wilder and more tranquil part of the Forest and it is important for wildlife that sites like this remain undisturbed. The recommendation is to seek to sustain this through carrying out essential maintenance work with minimum disturbance to the area.

3.2. Great Monk Wood

Situated in the north of the Forest, Great Monk Wood is bordered by the busy A104 to the north. It has the Forest attractions of High Beach Forest Centre and Loughton Camp nearby and is well serviced by a number of car parks. There is also the Beech Trail, one of nine way marked trails on the Forest,

which starts at the southern end of this route, but then goes off in the opposite direction.

Figure 2: Cyclists and all other visits at Great Monk Wood



It is a relic of wood pasture habitat and is largely dominated by beech trees with scattered heather. It is an important site within the Forest for beech pollards and the species they support such as rare fungi, bats, and insects. Great Monk Wood provides a valuable habitat for the Forest's deer. It is also one of only three sites in the country that has the rare Forster's knothole moss.

With annual visits estimated at **56,403** it is one of the quieter sites in Epping Forest. Perhaps due to the busy road bordering it, only 11% of visits recorded included a dog, a lot less than the Whole Forest Data* (18%). Cycling, on the other hand, accounted for 34% of all visits, compared to 11% WFD.

* **Whole Forest Data** (WFD) is the average calculated Visitor Survey results for the whole Forest, from the last five years. See Table 3

Visitors mainly stick to surfaced tracks; very few were recorded along the muddy desire line that runs through dense woodland parallel to the Epping New Road (A104).

Recommendations

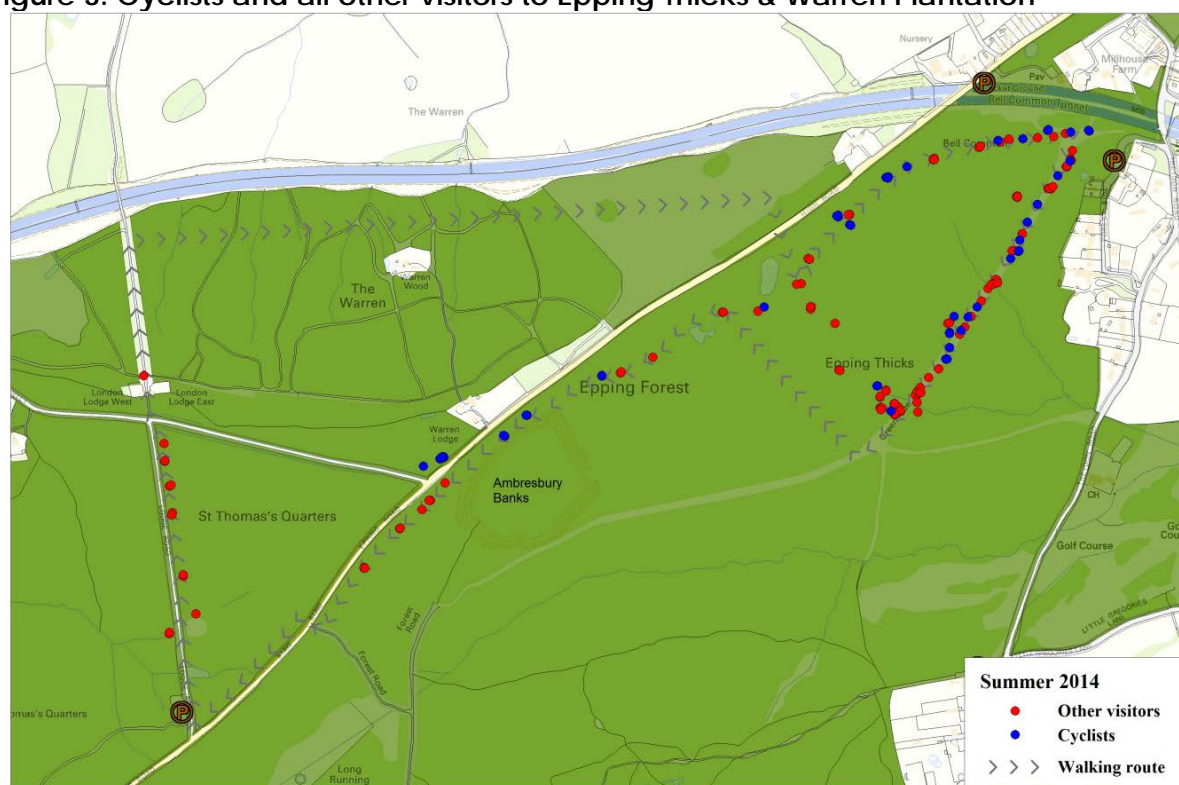
Great Monk Wood is a valuable site not just for the wildlife that lives there but also the landscape it provides. It is a wilder and more tranquil part of the Forest and it is important for wildlife that sites like this remain undisturbed. The recommendation is to seek to sustain this through carrying out essential maintenance work with minimum disturbance to the area. Due to the high level of cyclists within the area it would seem an ideal location in which to engage with this user group through targeted outreach.

3.3. Epping Thicks & Warren Plantation

Located in the north of the Forest, these two sections are next to St Thomas's Quarter and close to Great Monk Wood. They are sandwiched between the M25 and the busy A104 and the village of Theydon Bois lies to the south. The attraction of Ambresbury Banks is on route and the Oak Trail, one of our nine way marked trails, follows some of the route through Epping Thicks. The area can be reached via local bus service, but no other forms of public transport serve the area.

Epping Thicks is an area of relic wood pasture. It is important for the beech pollards which dominate the area. Warren Plantation is an arboretum that is part of the old Copped Hall estate. It is made up of planted native and non-native trees which are a mixture of both broad leaf and coniferous trees. The whole area is an important site for deer in the Forest. Pedestrian access to Warren Plantation is via a gated entrance; although access is always available, the gates may still provide a visual barrier making the site less welcoming to visitors.

Figure 3: Cyclists and all other visitors to Epping Thicks & Warren Plantation



With an annual visit estimate of **33,757** it is one of the quietest sites on the Forest for visitors, mirroring its neighbour, St Thomas's Quarter (32,654 visits per annum). The area closer to Theydon Bois, and part of the Oak Trail, is busier and the level of cycling is still very high (30%) compared to the WFD (11%). The site is very wet, even during the summer, which may be the reason why the majority of visitors stick to the surfaced tracks.

Recommendations

Epping Thicks and Warren Plantation are valuable sites for the wildlife that lives there. It is a wilder and more tranquil part of the Forest and it is important for wildlife that sites like this remain undisturbed. The recommendation is to seek to sustain this through carrying out essential maintenance work with minimum disturbance to the area. As with Great Monk Wood, both sites lend themselves to potential engagement with cyclists due to their high usage by this group. Surveys of both of the Forest's Iron Age Hill Forts (Ambresbury Banks and Loughton Camp) will be taking place in 2015 and decisions will be made regarding their future management.

3.4. Warren Hill

Warren Hill can be found in the centre of Forest sandwiched between two busy roads (A104 and A121) and lies between the urban areas of Buckhurst Hill and Loughton. It is well serviced by public transport and a car park is situated at either end of the site.

Figure 4: All visits to Warren Hill



The area has a diversity of habitats, including scrubland and grassland and has good examples of large oak pollards within its mixed woodland. It also contains a relic heathy patch on the top of the hill which has a lovely display of heather. It is made up of steep slopes and dense woodland blocks.

With an annual visit estimate of **57,408**, Warren Hill is another relatively quiet Forest site. It has a value as an amenity site for the local community with family activities higher than the WFD for walking (44%), dog walking (27%), running (7%) and horse riding (2%). The results showed a fairly even density of visits around whole route, with a slight increase at the access points to Loughton and to the Cricket Club Car Park.

Recommendations

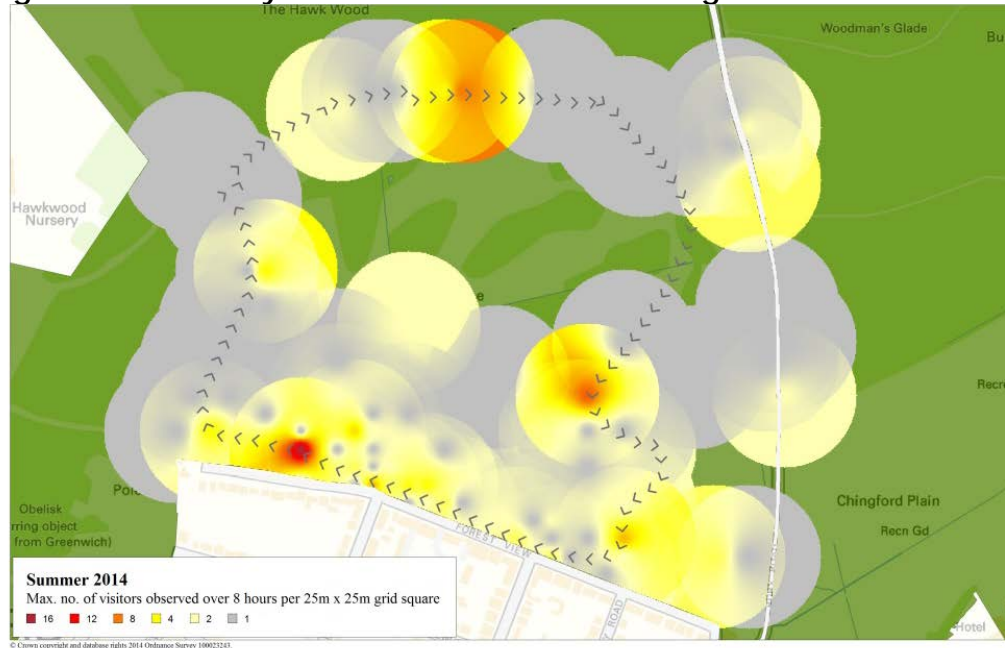
Warren Hill is well used as an amenity site by the local community. This should be sustained through the routine management of the area. Any opportunity to improve areas for visitors should be directed to more popular sites where more people would benefit.

3.5. Chingford Golf Course

Located in the centre of the Forest, Chingford Golf Course is less than five minutes' walk from Chingford High Street and station with houses lying in between. It is well serviced by all forms of public transport. The Chingford Plain site is to the east which includes The View Forest Centre, Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge and Butlers Retreat Café. Along with Hawks Wood to the south west and Yardley Hill and Yates Meadow to the north, Chingford Golf Course makes up a small island of Forest cut from the main body by Bury Road.

The habitat is mainly made up of short mown grass with roughs of long grasses. The northern boundary nestles into Hawk Wood which has a large number of veteran hornbeam pollards.

Figure 5: The Density Distribution of all visits to Chingford Golf Course



The Chingford Golf Course site had an annual visit estimate of **86,958**. This does not include golfers using the course, which totalled 22,498 in 2014 and are added into the calculation that creates the estimated annual number of visits per annum (Table 2). The neighbouring Chingford Plain site receives 229,376 visits per annum. When comparing local census data, the ethnicity of visitors recorded at Chingford Golf Course is very similar. This would be expected so close to an urban area. Also expected around urban areas would be a high level of family and social activities. 44% of visits at Chingford Plain included a dog compared to the WFD (18%) and instances of play almost double at 5.4% compared to the WFD (3%). About a third of the route was 'cross country' not sticking to surfaced tracks. The results show a good spread of visitors both on and off the tracks even though they were walking across an active golf course.

Recommendations

Chingford Golf Course, as the name suggests, is a public golf course. This should remain the site's main focus and any day trippers visiting the Forest should be directed to nearby sites such as Connaught Water and Chingford Plain. The recommendation is to install signage at key entrance points informing visitors they are entering a golf course and suggesting alternative local areas to visit. Chingford Golf Course is well used as an amenity site by the local community, especially dog walkers. This should be sustained through the routine management of the area. If engagement with local dog walkers was required, this would be an ideal location to do it due to the high numbers present here.

3.6. Walthamstow Forest

This area straddles the South / Centre Forest boundary with the busy A406 as its southern boundary. It is not a peaceful part of the Forest with the sound of traffic constantly in your ear, as the A104 also borders it to the east. Housing surrounds the site from the east and west as it sits between South Woodford and Highams Park.

It is an oak hornbeam mixed woodland with a large number of hornbeam pollards interspersed with dense holly stands.

Figure 6: Density Distribution of all visits to Walthamstow Forest



Halfway through the survey season the footbridge over the A406 was closed for repair. Although the survey route did not cross the bridge it may have affected the final four surveys as the visits recorded dropped by approximately 40%. With that in mind, Walthamstow Forest received an annual visit estimate of **73,957**. Its function as an amenity site for the surrounding houses is evident as walking and dog walking make up almost 80% of activities recorded. 42.7% visits included a dog, more than twice the WFD (18%). When compared to the local census data, the visitor survey results show a good correlation across the ages.

The site is underrepresented in only the 0-5 year olds category which would be expected given the nature of the Forest and 45-64 year olds. The ethnicity data shows that 96% of all visits to Walthamstow Forest were by white people. When comparing this to the southern (70%) and central (76%) area BME visitors are currently underrepresented,

Recommendations

Walthamstow Forest is well used as an amenity site by the local community. This should be sustained through the routine management of the area. Any opportunity to improve areas for visitors should be directed to more popular sites where more people would benefit.

3.7. Barn Hoppitt

Barn Hoppitt is within ten minutes' walk from the town of Chingford and the public transport links it provides. Separated only by Rangers Road, it sits next to the busy Chingford Hub where The View and Butlers Retreat draw 229,376 visits per annum. Housing surrounds it from the east and west sides. It sits in a prime location to be used by the local community, with numerous local attractions.

Formerly wood pasture, Barn Hoppitt has a large number of veteran pollarded oak trees. It is one of the top 20 sites for pollards within the UK, making it an ecologically important site on a European scale especially for insects that like dead and decaying wood. Barn Hoppitt in its own right, without the rest of the Forest, would be of international ecological importance and in the top ten sites in the UK for the number of pollarded trees.

First surveyed in 2012, Barn Hoppitt was resurveyed in 2014. Observed visits per annum at Barn Hoppitt dropped from 177,484 in 2012 to **137,615** in 2014, a drop of 22%. This may be due to the draw of The View Forest Centre across the road and promotion of nearby features such as the way marked trails and Connaught Water. Resurveying Connaught Water last year showed an increase of 60% which may also explain the drop in numbers at Barn Hoppitt.

Reduced visitor pressure at Barn Hoppitt is seen as an ecological benefit to the area. It is another example of the Branching Out developments helping to conserve the wider Forest. By improving our honey pot areas such as Connaught Water and providing benches, paths and interpretation, for example, we are attracting our visitors to them and away from more sensitive and ecologically valuable sites such as Barn Hoppitt.

Figure 7-1: Change in observed activity at Barn Hoppitt 2012 to 2014 (Chart)

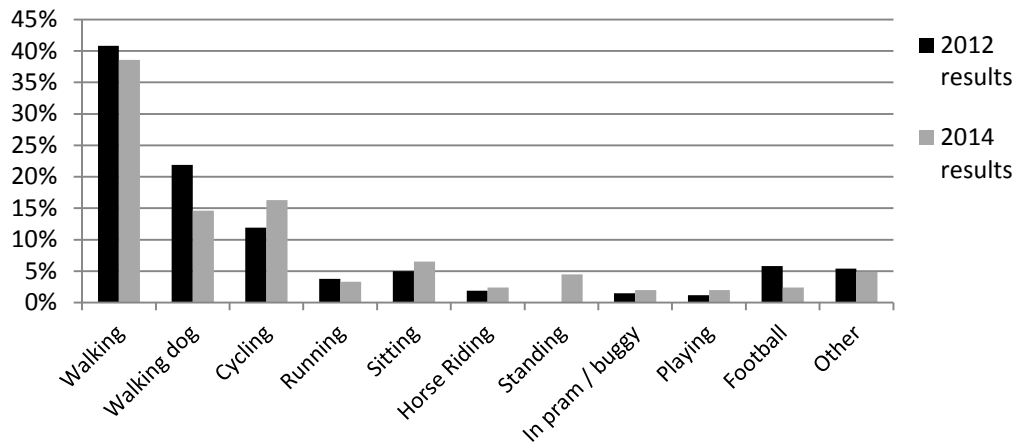


Figure 7-2: Change in observed activity at Barn Hoppitt 2012 to 2014 (Table)

Activity	Recorded visits in 2012	Recorded visits in 2014
Walking	40.8%	38.6%
Walking dog	21.9%	14.6%
Cycling	11.9%	16.3%
Running	3.8%	3.3%
Sitting	5.0%	6.5%
Horse Riding	1.9%	2.4%
Standing	0.0%	4.5%
In pram / buggy	1.5%	2.0%
Playing	1.2%	2.0%
Football	5.8%	2.4%
Other	5.4%	4.9%

Figure 8: All Visits to Barn Hoppitt, 2012



When comparing the visits recorded at Barn Hoppitt in 2012 to 2014 (Figures 8 & 9) the pattern of use is very similar. The majority of visitors to Barn Hoppitt still congregate near the facilities on Rangers Road, as would be expected. Warren Pond also still remains popular, more so in 2014.

The car park at Barn Hoppitt was still observed to often be over-flowing with cars parking along the verges of Warren Pond Road, even when the summer overflow car park was opened. The redevelopment of the car park at Barn Hoppitt did not increase its footprint so this level of use is to be expected especially with the improved nearby visitor attractions.

Recommendations

Barn Hoppitt is an extremely valuable site for the wildlife that lives there and it is important that sites like this remain as undisturbed as possible. The recommendation is to seek to sustain this through carrying out essential maintenance work to the area and the continued promotion of nearby attractions such as Connaught Water and Chingford Plain. Signage should be installed at the busy Barn Hoppitt car park informing visitors about the summer overflow car park and also alternative places to park, such as Bury Road Car Park.

3.8. Fairmead Bottom & Almshouse Plain

This area is in the central part of the Forest, just south of the centre/north boundary. It is bordered to the east by the busy A104. It is bordered on all other sides by Forest with the honey pot site of Connaught Water lying to the south. It is bisected by Fairmead Road which was closed to vehicular traffic in 2012, just after Fairmead Oak Car Park (half way down). The area is serviced by a number of car parks but has no public transport links.

Fairmead is former wood pasture with acid grassland which is grazed by our cattle during the summer months. It contains one of the most flower rich wet meadows on the Forest where species such as lousewort can be found.

First surveyed in 2011, Fairmead was resurveyed in 2014. Throughout the survey season, the retendering process of Hill Wood Tea Hut was taking place. Due to sensitivities around this issue, limited data was recorded, excluding information on ethnicity, age or additional statistics collected across other survey sites. As the same methodology was not followed, the two years of results are not comparable.

Figure 10: All Visits to Fairmead Bottom & Almshouse Plain 2011 & 2014 Results



The recorded visit figures dropped from 570 in 2011 to 404 in 2014. This includes the numbers recorded at the tea hut and brings the estimated observed visits per annum to **126,612**. This may be due to the redevelopment of nearby attractions such as Connaught Water and The View. Figure 10 not only shows the number of visits situated around the Tea Hut has but also shows the spread of all visits. The area around Fairmead Oak Car Park appears less busy in 2014 but the car park counts show an increase in figures from 17 in 2011 to 21 in 2014.

Ethnicity, gender, age or activity cannot be compared as the full data set is not available. However looking at the data we have for 2014 and comparing it to the local census data, all age groups are well represented with lower numbers of 0-5 year olds, as expected with this environment and almost double the numbers of 45-64 year olds (31% of all visits recorded) and almost double the number of 65+ year olds (15% of all visits recorded). Ethnicity is predominantly white (98%), which does not reflect the local community when looking at the census data for the central area (88% white) or even the nearby northern area (92% white).

Again the data for 2014 shows cycling is a popular activity, 30% of visits, almost triple the WFD (11%). It is an area where dog walking (14%) is lower than the WFD (18%).

Recommendations

Fairmead Bottom & Almshouse Plain is a valuable site for the wildlife that lives there and it is important for wildlife that sites like this remain as undisturbed as possible. The recommendation is to seek to sustain this through carrying out essential maintenance work with minimum disturbance to the area. As with Great Monk Wood, due to the high level of cyclists within this area, if engagement with this user group was required, this would be an ideal

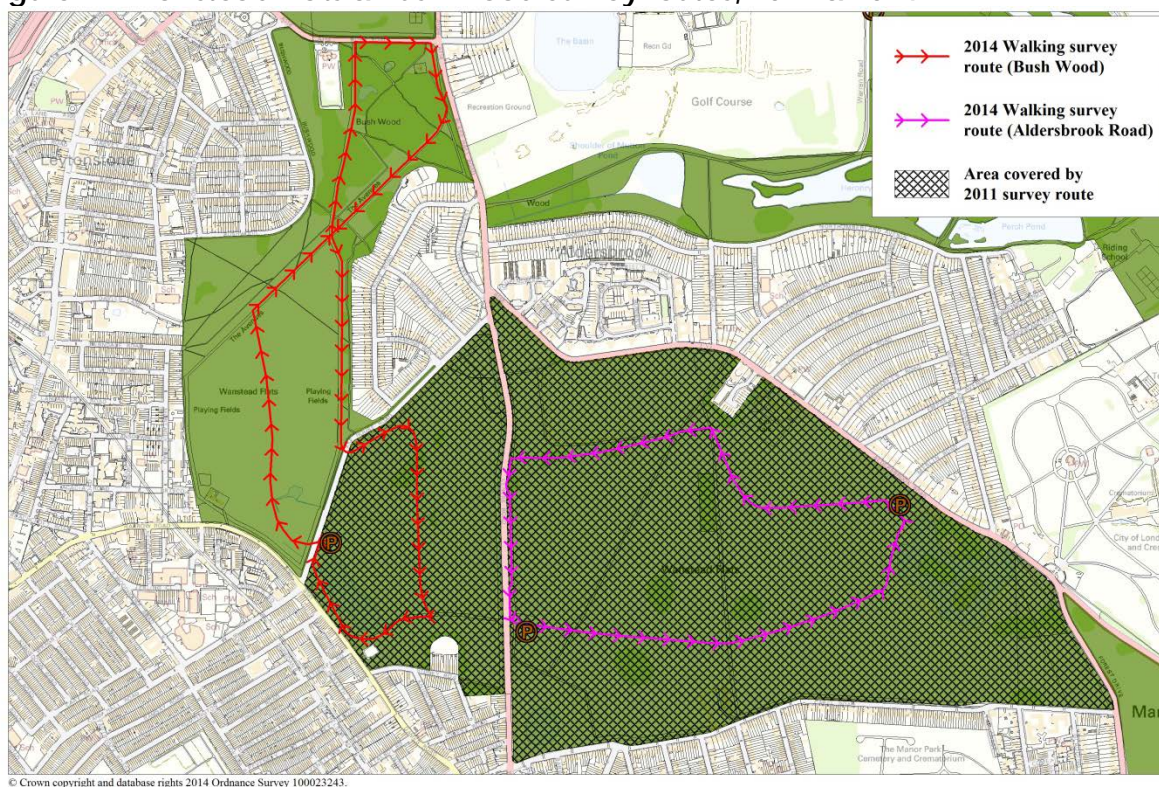
location to do this.

3.9. Wanstead Flats (Aldersbrook Site)

Wanstead Flats is the most southerly point of Epping Forest. This area is surrounded mainly by the dense housing that makes up Forest Gate and the Aldersbrook estate. The City of London Cemetery lies to its north east, linking the Flats in a green corridor to Wanstead Park. Wanstead Flats has numerous transport links including bus stops, rail and tube stations all nearby. It also has three car parks and a way marked trail. The newly redeveloped Jubilee Pond, with an accessible path, pond dipping platform and natural play area, reopened in 2013 lies along its southern edge. Above Jubilee Pond is a small triangle of SSSI acid grassland but the main focus on this site is football and sport with two changing rooms and 45 football pitches. 2015 marks 125 years of football on Wanstead Flats. Football was not formally played during the survey season, however additional data recorded during the football season is added to the visitor statistics to give the estimated total number of visits per annum (Table 2).

The majority of the Flats is made up of the short mown grass of football pitches. There are areas of scrub and acid grassland which provide nesting grounds for skylarks and meadow pippits.

Figure 11: Wanstead Flats & Bush Wood Survey routes, 2011 & 2014



First surveyed in 2011, the site provided an almost overwhelming task for the volunteers involved and the decision was made to split the site for resurveying in 2014. This meant that Bush Wood could also be resurveyed (Figure 11) and two more even routes could be created – Wanstead Flats (Bush Wood) and Wanstead Flats (Aldersbrook).

For comparison purposes, this has required the data to be added together for the two 2014 survey sites and then split via area, not route (Figure 11).

The visit numbers recorded for the Aldersbrook site have changed from 395,263 estimated annual visits in 2011 to **298,357** estimated annual visits in 2014 (Figure 12). This 25% decrease (and indeed the variations on the other resurveyed sites) may be down to the natural fluctuation of visits to the area. Visits can be affected by any number of outside factors, such as weather, other attractions in the area, events at that time etc. The figures for the Aldersbrook site may have also become more accurate since the route was shortened. It doesn't necessarily mean that there has been an overall reduction, as we are only comparing eight survey days out of the year. What it does show is that more than two data sets are required to effectively see patterns at one site. As the Visitor Survey continues and more data sets are added for each site, patterns and trends will become apparent.

Figure 12: Comparing All Visits from 2011 and 2014 Data at Wanstead Flats (Aldersbrook)



When comparing the two years of data, the 2014 results better reflect the census data than the 2011 results across all age brackets except 0-4 where it has increased from 9.9% in 2011 to 16.3% in 2014 (census data 12%) and +65 bracket where it has decreased from 2.1% in 2011 to 1% in 2014 (census data 8.9%). When comparing ethnicity across the years, the spread has improved; they are closer to the census data, except white bracket which increased from 53% in 2011 to 63% in 2014 (census data 37.5%) and also the Chinese bracket which dropped from 0.2% in 2011 to 0% in 2014 (census data 1%).

Figure 13: 2014 Survey Results, All Visit and those Sitting on Wanstead Flats (Aldersbrook)



When comparing the primary activity data from the two years, there are minor fluctuations with most of the activities. The most noticeable changes are incidences of standing which dropped from 4.7% in 2011 to 0% in 2014 and football which dropped from 15.9% in 2011 to 7.9% in 2014. Incidents of play increased from 6.9% in 2011 to 12.8% in 2014, which would tally with the rise in 0-4 year old visits and the introduction of a natural play area during the redevelopment of Jubilee Pond in 2013.

Looking at the 2014 results, the age ranges are similar to the census data and the ethnicity data is similar for Asian (21.6%) and black (15%) visits. This is to be expected when a site is in an urban setting. However white visits (63%) are still a lot higher than the census data (37.5%).

When studying the primary activity data, walking (25.7%) and cycling (3.8%) are lower than the WFD, as is dog walking (5.8%). The family social activities such as playing (12.8%) and football (7.9%) are high, as are recorded incidents of sitting (17.2%). When looking closer at the data it can be seen that this was mainly at the new seating around Jubilee Pond (Figure 13), an indicator of the success of the redevelopment of the area.

Recommendations

The area had a low number of +65 year olds. The recommendation is to increase the promotion of Jubilee Pond, with its accessible path and improved seating through events and activities to attract this age group. This site is very popular with families and young children, if engagement with this section of the community was required, this would be an ideal location to do this.

3.10. Bush Wood

Bush Wood lies just north of Wanstead Flats. It is surrounded mostly by the housing of the Bush Wood estate, the Green Man Roundabout and the A12 border it to the north. Leytonstone High Street is a short walk away with tube, rail and bus links.

It is made up of 15 short mown football pitches to the south and a small block of mixed woodland to the north. This woodland was part of the formal gardens of Wanstead House and has hidden avenues of mature trees

between dense stands of holly. There are a few very impressive sweet chestnut trees, probably remnants of the original plantings in the 1600's.

The Lime Trail follows the route of this survey, one of nine way marked trails on Epping Forest, and the Harrow Road Sports Pavilion is at the southern end of this route but it is only open during the football season and for organised events.

The estimated annual number of visits for Bush Wood is **250,604** compared to **167,908** in 2012 when it was first surveyed.

Figure 14: Comparing Bush Wood Ethnicity Data from 2012 to 2014 and the Census Data

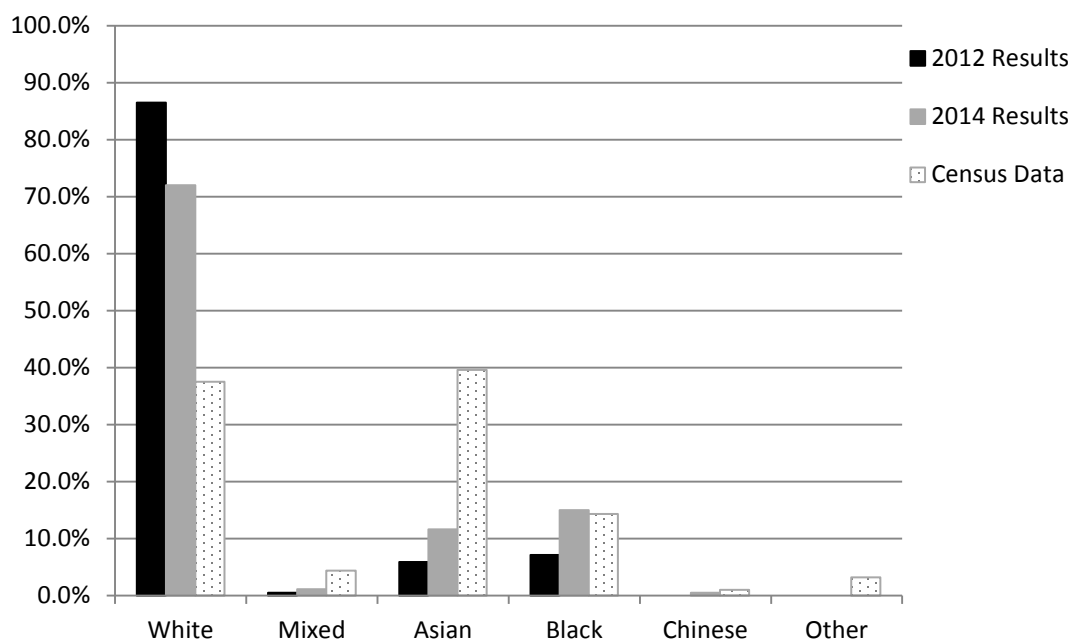


Table 3: Comparing Bush Wood Ethnicity Data from 2012 to 2014 and the Census Data

Ethnicity	2012 Results	2014 Results	Census Data
White	86.5%	72.0%	37.5%
Mixed	0.5%	1.1%	4.4%
Asian	5.9%	11.6%	39.6%
Black	7.1%	15.0%	14.3%
Chinese	0.0%	0.5%	1.0%
Other	0.0%	0%	3.2%

Diversity in ethnicity has improved (Figure 14 & Table 3), a drop in visits from white people and increase in all other ethnicities brings the visits to this site closer to the census data – there is still a long way to go before visitor data reflects the local community. Regarding age groups, all age brackets have improved and are closer to the census data. There has been an increase in the 16 – 19 bracket from 20.9% in 2012 to 22.3% in 2014. The sport and training possibilities at this site appear to attract young people from further afield than the local community as the census data shows that only 6% are young people. Looking at the primary activity data, cycling, running and football have all decreased since 2012; this may have been a knock on effect from the end of the Olympics. There has been an increase in less formal activities such as sitting from 5.4% in 2012 to 13.2% in 2014 and play from 1.2% in 2012 to 6.8% in 2014 which shows that the use of the site has diversified since 2012.

Figure 16: All Visits and those Aged 16-19 to Bush Wood



Looking at the 2014 data, the age range of visitors to Bush Wood is similar to the census data, over represented in the 16 – 19 bracket (Figure 16). Looking at ethnicity, the local population is well represented by the visitor data but still more than double the number of visits from white people (72%) than recorded through the census data.

When studying the primary activity taken place during visits, walking in Bush Wood (34.2%) is similar to the WFD (36.1%) and it is one of the few sites where dog walking (15.7%) is below the WFD (18%). Family social activities such as football (12.5%), playing (6.8%), using a buggy (2.3%) are all more than double the WFD. This is to be expected when surrounded by urban development.

Recommendations

Bush Wood is another very busy area of the Forest where different age ranges and ethnicities are well represented. It is an important amenity site for the whole community and appears to be particularly attractive to teenagers. If engagement with this section of the community was required, Bush Wood would be an ideal location to do this.

Table 4: Observation Survey – what people were observed to do on a visit?

	Year	Nos. observed	Walking	Walking dog	Cycling	Running	Horse Riding	Standing	Sitting	In pram / buggy	Football	Playing	Fishing	Other
Whole Forest Data (WFD) Average weighted by numbers	2010-14	11144	36.6%	17.5%	10.6%	5.8%	1.3%	4.6%	11.5%	1.3%	3.1%	3.2%	0.4%	4.2%
Great Monk Wood	2014	252	34.5%	42.7%	10.9%	2.7%	0.0%	1.8%	3.6%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.7%
Warren Plant & Epping Thicks	2014	174	29.3%	20.7%	30.5%	14.9%	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.3%	0.0%	1.1%
Fernhills & Trueloves	2014	4	0.0%	75.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Warren Hill	2014	252	44.0%	27.4%	10.3%	7.1%	1.6%	4.0%	4.0%	0.8%	0.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Chingford Golf Course	2014	167	37.1%	43.7%	4.8%	2.4%	1.8%	0.6%	4.2%	0.0%	0.0%	5.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Walthamstow Forest	2014	110	34.5%	42.7%	10.9%	2.7%	0.0%	1.8%	3.6%	0.9%	0.0%	2.7%	0.0%	2.7%
Wanstead Flats (ALD)	2014	732	25.7%	15.8%	3.8%	4.6%	0.1%	0.0%	17.1%	1.4%	7.9%	12.8%	0.0%	10.7%▲
Wanstead Flats (BW)	2014	440	34.1%	15.7%	4.1%	6.4%	0.0%	0.0%	13.2%	2.3%	12.5%	6.8%	0.0%	5.0%
Barn Hoppitt	2014	246	38.6%	14.6%	16.3%	3.3%	2.4%	4.5%	6.5%	2.0%	2.4%	2.0%	2.4%	4.9%
Fairmead	2014	183	32.2%	13.7%	30.6%	7.1%	2.7%	0.0%	13.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Connaught Water	2013	615	58.9%	11.2%	5.7%	4.9%	0.5%	4.2%	9.8%	2.4%	0.0%	1.8%	0.0%	0.3%
Hatch Forest & Whitehall Plain	2013	138	17.4%	29.0%	39.9%	11.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.2%
Woodford Green	2013	343	46.9%	9.3%	3.2%	2.9%	0.0%	4.4%	14.3%	2.9%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	15.2%Δ
Highams Park	2012	151	36.0%	36.7%	10.0%	5.3%	0.0%	0.0%	4.7%	5.3%	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%	0.0%
Lords Buses / Knighton Wds	2012	157	19.7%	33.1%	5.1%	4.5%	0.0%	14.0%	2.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	21%*
Bury Wood	2011	383	32.7%	20.9%	20.1%	7.8%	5.7%	3.9%	7.6%	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%
Chingford Plain	2010	466	44.2%	25.5%	10.3%	2.8%	4.3%	2.4%	3.0%	0.9%	1.3%	4.7%	0.0%	0.6%
Connaught Water	2010	459	48.6%	18.7%	11.1%	5.0%	4.6%	0.2%	5.7%	1.7%	0.0%	2.4%	0.0%	2.0%
Hangboy Slade	2013	88	15.9%	6.8%	33.0%	17.0%	3.4%	2.3%	4.5%	0.0%	0.0%	14.8%	0.0%	2.3%
Honey Lane Quarter	2013	91	31.9%	5.5%	35.2%	4.4%	6.6%	0.0%	16.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Wake Valley	2013	150	33.3%	5.1%	9.0%	0.0%	1.3%	2.6%	35.9%	2.6%	0.0%	0.0%	3.8%	6.4%
St Thomas Quarter	2013	72	40.3%	8.3%	22.2%	8.3%	15.3%	1.4%	4.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Pole Hill and Yardley Hill	2012	88	17.0%	55.7%	9.1%	8.0%	3.4%	0.0%	5.7%	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Strawberry Hill	2012	322	42.9%	18.3%	9.9%	8.1%	0.3%	11.5%	7.8%	0.3%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%
Loughton Camp	2011	146	43.2%	14.4%	23.3%	7.5%	3.4%	0.0%	4.8%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.7%
Lower Forest	2011	63	50.8%	11.1%	1.6%	3.2%	0.0%	6.3%	9.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	17.5%	0.0%
Ambresbury Banks	2010	171	35.7%	19.3%	22.2%	11.1%	2.9%	4.1%	0.0%	1.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.5%
High Beach & Pillow Mounds	2010	611	47.1%	10.8%	8.2%	0.7%	0.5%	4.7%	9.7%	1.0%	4.9%	5.7%	0.0%	6.7%
Gilbert Slade	2013	78	24.5%	28.0%	18.0%	5.0%	0.0%	5.3%	8.0%	0.7%	0.0%	6.0%	0.0%	4.7%
Bush Wood	2012	406	40.9%	17.0%	13.3%	18.2%	0.5%	1.5%	5.4%	1.0%	0.0%	1.2%	0.0%	0.7%
Hollow Pond	2011	851	35.4%	9.0%	6.5%	3.3%	0.0%	12.9%	17.4%	1.3%	0.5%	3.3%	0.1%	10.2%^
Wanstead Flats	2011	1025	28.7%	16.5%	3.3%	6.3%	0.1%	4.7%	13.7%	1.2%	15.9%	6.9%	0.0%	2.5%
Wanstead Park	2010	903	40.2%	24.6%	4.3%	7.0%	0.0%	4.2%	12.0%	1.8%	0.0%	0.8%	1.6%	3.6%

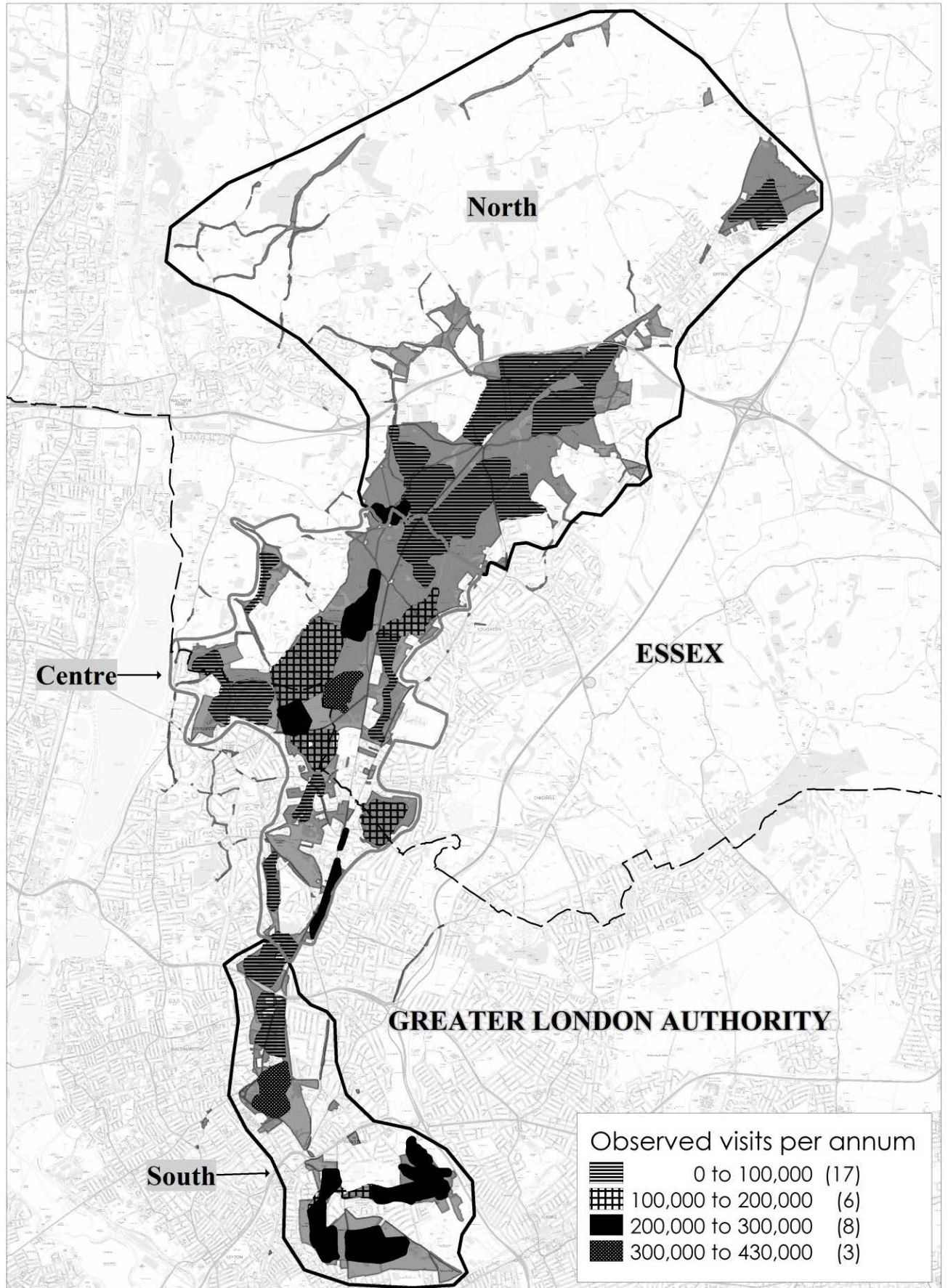
^ rowing boats

* pond dipping

Δ cricketers

▲ school sports day

Figure 17: Visit Estimates per Annum on Each Site



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3.11. Whole Forest Data

The last five years of survey data can be combined to show estimated visits per site (Figure 17). The south of the Forest is generally busier than the more remote north of the Forest. This would be expected with the increased public transport links and generally denser population around the south of the Forest.

The honey pot sites in the north and central parts of the Forest (High Beach, Connaught Water and the Chingford Hub) are also very popular more than likely due to the increased opportunity of facilities and activities for visitors that they provide.

Looking closer at the three areas the Forest is split into, the south receives more than half (55%) of all visits per hectare (Table 5).

Table 5: Visits per hectare across the Forest

Area	Size (hectares)	Total visits per hectare	% total visits per hectare
North	995	662	12
Centre	1044	1853	33
South	437	3083	55
TOTALS	2476	5658	100

The honey pot sites across the Forest (Wanstead Flats, Bush Wood, Wanstead Park, Hollow Ponds, Connaught Water and High Beach) receive 52% of all visits to the Forest. This popularity proves our success with visitor management at these sites. By managing these areas we are also ensuring the protection of the more environmentally sensitive sites. Drawing people to honey pot sites with facilities such as seating, car parks and interpretation keeps the sensitive sites quieter allowing the wildlife to flourish undisturbed.

When comparing the primary activities carried out in 2013 and 2014, there are no major changes, with minor fluctuations (<1%) across all activities except sitting, which dropped by 1.3% to 11.3%. Active pursuits across the whole Forest (cricket, cycling, running and football) have increased from 21.2% in 2013 to 28.7% in 2014 proving the Forests continuing value as a resource for improving health and fitness.

4. Observation Survey Visitor Profiles

Previous surveys have shown that 95% of all visitors live within 2km of the edge of the Forest. Looking at the 2011 census data for wards with at least 75% of their area within this 2km boundary, the data can be divided into the south, centre and north boundaries on the Forest. This can be used to compare ethnic diversity and age range of each sector and compare it to the results from the last five years of visitor surveying (Table 6). There are large variations between the communities within each of these areas; probably the most noticeable is that the total population of the south, which is five times larger than in the north.

4.1. Visitor Profile Data

Table 6: The 2km Census data catchment profile (2011)

	North (Census)	Centre (Census)	South (Census)	Whole (Census)	2010-14 (Observation Data)
Male	48.9%	50.3%	50.2%	50.1%	58.7%
Female	51.1%	49.7%	49.8%	49.9%	41.3%
0-4	6.4%	6.6%	8.1%	7.5%	4.4%
5-15	11.5%	12.2%	12.3%	12.2%	11.3%
16-19	5.8%	6.2%	6.0%	6.0%	9.0%
20-44	33.1%	34.2%	45.8%	41.3%	49.1%
45-65	26.8%	25.4%	18.9%	21.5%	19.7%
over 65	16.5%	15.4%	8.9%	11.5%	6.4%
White	92.0%	76.3%	37.5%	64.7%	83.2%
Mixed	2.2%	4.3%	4.4%	3.7%	1.9%
Asian	2.0%	8.8%	39.6%	20.2%	7.8%
Black	3.0%	7.8%	14.3%	8.6%	6.1%
Chinese	0.4%	0.7%	1.0%	0.8%	0.6%
Other	0.4%	2.0%	3.2%	2%	0.5%
Disabled/limited by illness	16.7%	16.0%	14.0%	14.6%	0.5%
Total Population	62,634	124,743	307,961	495,338	N/A

The census data can then be compared with the data from the ten sites surveyed in 2014 to see if the visitor profile matches the profile of the local community (Table 7).

Table 7: User profiles from the Observation Survey Results

Site	Gender split Male : Female	% with a dog	Age + ethnicity spread
Great Monk Wood	61:39	11	Age groups and ethnicity fairly similar
Epping Thicks & Warren Plantation	54:46	22	Ethnicity is similar. Age groups are underrepresented noticeably for 16-19 (2.3%) and 45-64 (13.8%) brackets. Higher levels of 20-44 (76.4%) bracket.
Fernhills & Trueloves	75:25	75	Difficult to compare with so few records. Underrepresented in most age groups and ethnicity except 20-44 bracket and white.
Warren Hill	51:49	29	Overrepresented in 20-44 (64.3%) and 45-64 (18.3%) bracket. 5-15 year olds similar records to census. Ethnicity dominated by white visitors (93%) and overrepresented by Asian visitors (6%)

Chingford Golf Course	58:42	44	Very similar age brackets, only slightly overrepresented in the 16-19 (13.2%) bracket. Ethnicity is quite diverse, with white visitors (78%) underrepresented and black (10%) and Asian visitors (11%) overrepresented.
Walthamstow Forest	68:32	44	Well represented by all age groups except, underrepresented by 16-19 bracket (6%) and overrepresented by 45-64 bracket (25%). Ethnicity is dominated by white visitors (96%). Underrepresented by all other ethnicities.
Wanstead Flats (Bush Wood)	66:34	14	Ethnicity is similar for black visitors (15%) but over represented in white visitors (72%) and underrepresented in Asian visitors (11%). Age ranges are similar over represented in 16-19 bracket (22.3%) and underrepresented in the 65+ bracket (0.2%).
Wanstead Flats (Aldersbrook)	68:32	17	More than double the white visitors (63%) well represented by Asian visitors (21.6%) and over represented by black visitors (15%). Age ranges are similar, over represented in the 5-15 bracket (16.3%) and 16-19 bracket (16.8%). Underrepresented in the 65+ bracket (1%)
Barn Hoppitt	52:48	15	Similar ethnicity to the census data. Also similar when comparing the age range data, underrepresented by 16-19 (3.3%) and 45-64 (12.2%) brackets though.
Fairmead	57:43	16	Overrepresented by the older age brackets 45-64 (31.7%) and 65+ (15.3%) and underrepresented in all other ages. Ethnicity predominantly white (98%)

There are minor fluctuations across all of the sites but nothing that shows major segregation. As discussed earlier, the survey method only compares eight survey days out of the year and these differences in the data may be down to the natural fluctuations of visits to the area. What it does show is that more than two data sets are required to effectively see patterns at one site. As the Visitor Survey continues and more data sets are added for each site, patterns and trends will become apparent.

The predominance of white visitors on the two Wanstead Flats sites is surprising. However, the demographics of the surrounding area is changing rapidly, the gentrification of Forest Gate 'Village' with coffee shops, gastro pubs and house prices rising by 18% in 2014 alone could have an effect on the visitors using Wanstead Flats and Bush Wood and may account for the higher number of white visits. More up to date census data would provide more accurate data to compare.

The other two more urban sites, Chingford Golf Course and Barn Hoppitt, reflect the census data more closely, as expected. Walthamstow Forest is also a more urban site but lies on the boundary of the south / centre so it is difficult to work out exactly what the demographics of the area should be. The remote northern sites of Epping Thicks and Warren Plantation Great Monk Wood show similarities to the census data with regards to ethnicity.

Some sites seem more popular with different age brackets. Wanstead Flats and Bush Wood seem to be popular with 5-15 and 16-19 year old brackets which may be due to the high level of sports and training carried out on these sites. Fairmead appears to be popular with the older age brackets 45-64 and 65+.

When studying the primary activity data for 2014 data, cycling appears popular on the wilder, more remote sites of Great Monk Wood, Epping Thicks and Warren Plantation and Fernhills and Trueloves. Maybe the terrain of these sites pose more of a challenge for cyclists than the flatter sites of Wanstead Flats, for example, where the number of cyclists recorded is very low. The frequency of play has increased across some of the more urban sites of Aldersbrook, Bush Wood and Chingford Golf Course, which have recorded some of the highest figures for playing throughout the five years of surveying. This could hopefully be a sign of changing times and the national movement to get more children and young people enjoying the outdoors. Future surveys will show if this is a continuing trend.

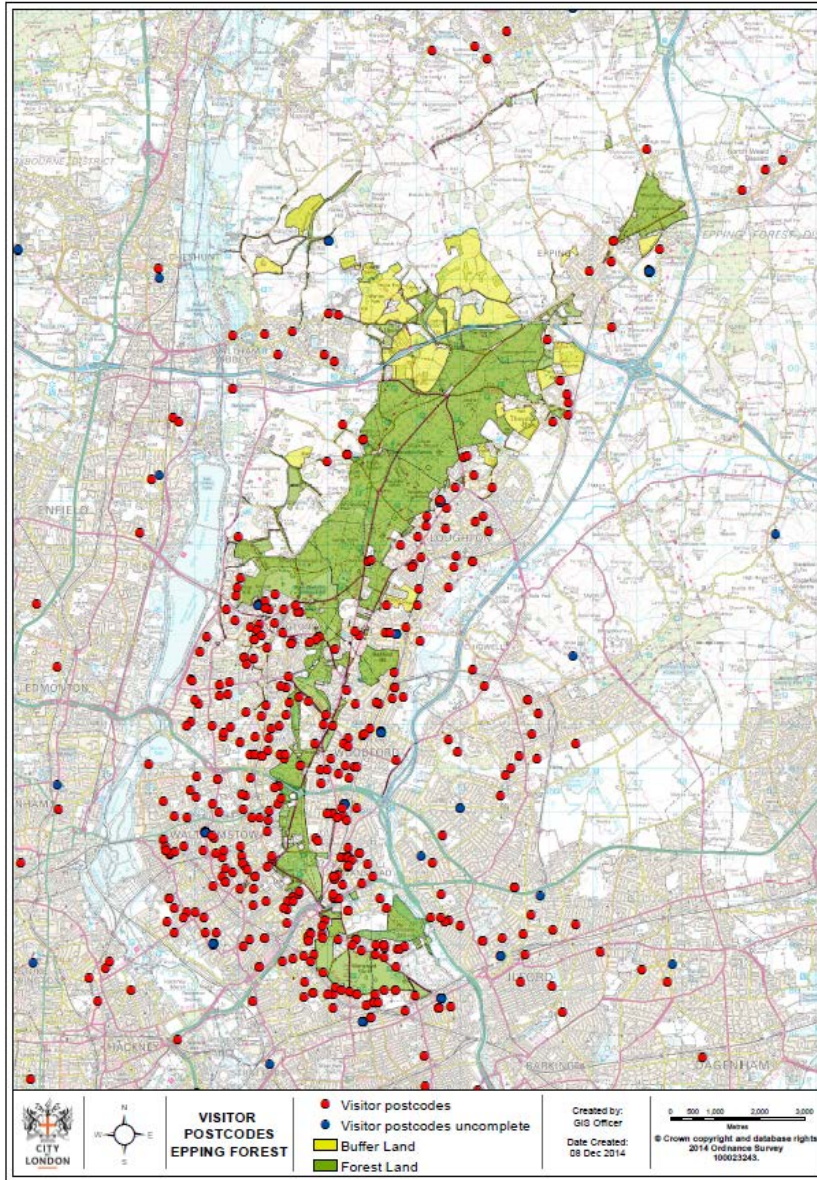
5. Questionnaire Survey

In 2014, 885 Questionnaire Surveys were completed, falling short of the 1000 target set. This was due to technical problems with the new online system used to host the survey. The surveys could be filled in online, at our Forest Centres or were collected from face to face interviews by our staff and volunteers during the summer months.

Figure 18 shows that most of the surveys collected were from people living in the centre and south of the Forest. As the southern part of the Forest represents 60% of the population of those living within the 2km boundary of the Forest, we must increase the number of surveys collected from the south of the Forest in future years to reflect this. When this is the case the Questionnaire data is likely to match the Observation data better.

5.1. Residential Data

Figure 18: Where Respondents Live (Postcode Data)



5.2. How often people visit Epping Forest

The results showed that the majority of visits are still either daily or weekly, suggesting that these visits are made up of local and amenity users such as walking the dog or exercising. The less frequent visits suggest day trippers or people using the Forest as a leisure facility and compared to 2013 these numbers have stayed the same or increased, showing Epping Forest's importance as a growing tourist attraction.

Figure 19: How Often People Visit the Forest

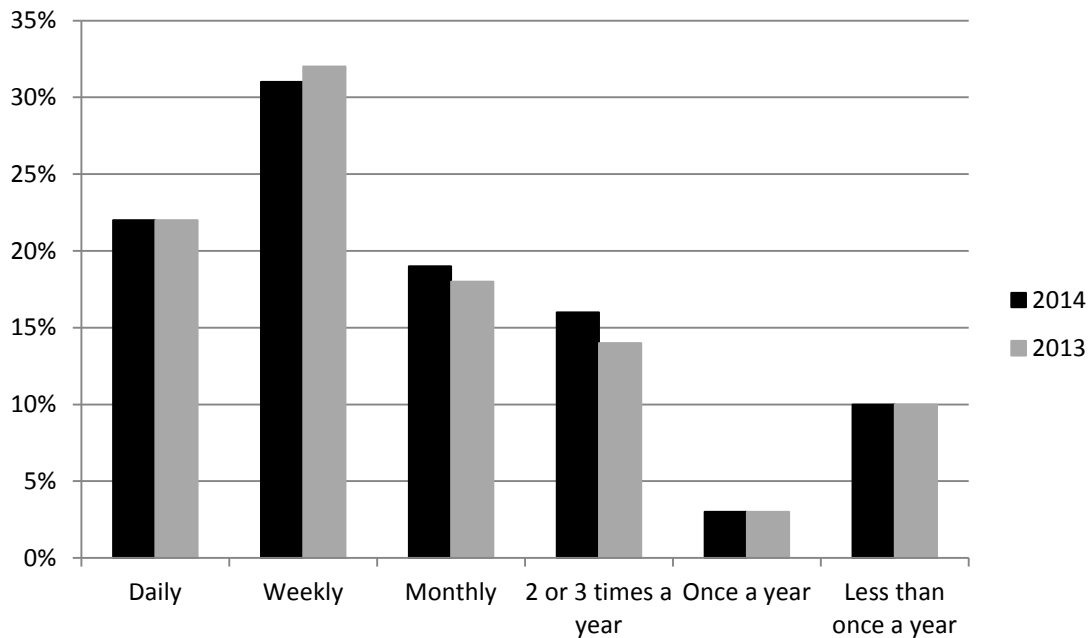


Table 6: How Often People Visit the Forest

Frequency of visits	2014	2013
Daily	22%	22%
Weekly	31%	32%
Monthly	19%	18%
2/3 times a year	16%	14%
Once a year	3%	3%
Less than once a year	10%	10%

5.3. Rating Access

Figure 22: Responses to how people rate 'Finding their Way' on the Forest (2010-2014)

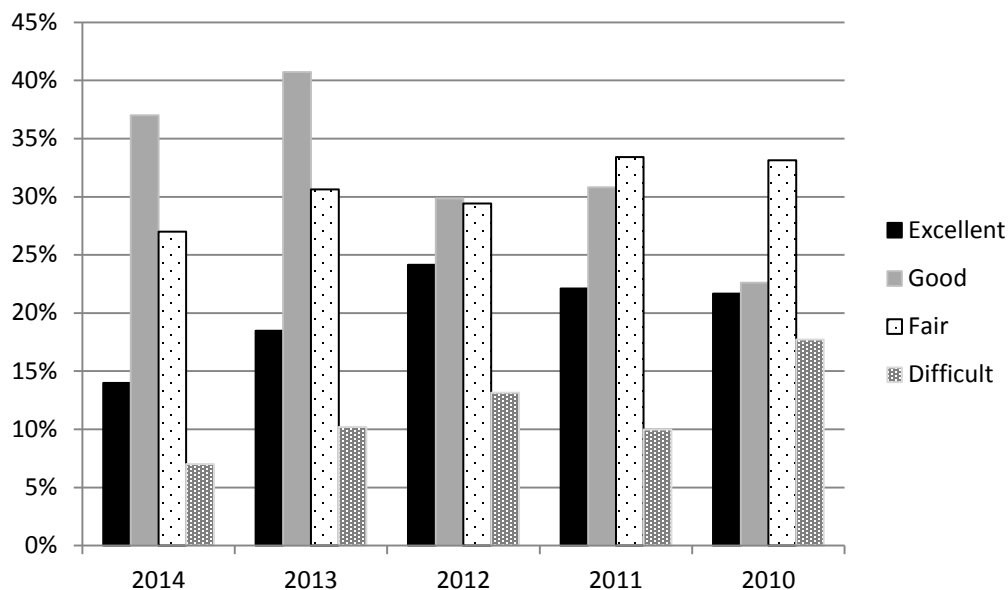


Table 9: Responses to how people rate 'Finding their Way' on the Forest (2010-2014)

Rating	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
Excellent	14%	18%	24%	22%	22%
Good	37%	41%	30%	31%	23%
Fair	27%	31%	29%	33%	33%
Difficult	7%	10%	13%	10%	18%

Looking across the five years of surveying, the general trend shows a positive perception regarding access to the Forest. Closer examination of one of the responses reveals that people have found it increasingly easy to find their way (Figure 22). The rating of excellent appears to have peaked in 2012, the year when most of the development projects from the Branching Out project took place: way marked trail installation, improvement of hub areas. This trend of peaking in 2012 appears to follow with the part of the question that asks about 'using the car parks'. However the two other parts to this question relating to 'travelling along paths' and 'taking a rest' show a slight decline across the five years (Figure 23 & Table 10) but for both parts there is an overwhelming positive response.

Figure 23: Responses to how people rate 'Travelling Along Paths' (2010-2014)

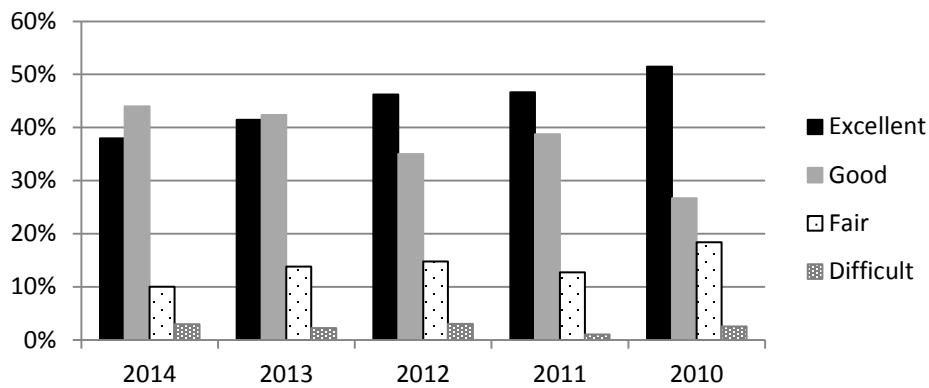


Table 10: Responses to how people rate 'Travelling Along Paths' (2010-2014)

Rating	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
Excellent	38%	42%	46%	47%	51%
Good	44%	42%	35%	39%	27%
Fair	10%	14%	15%	13%	18%
Difficult	3%	2%	3%	1%	3%

5.4. Rating of Organisational Activities

As with last year, the majority of responses to the questions regarding organisational activity (Figure 24 & Table 11) were positive. Respondents' first impression and opinions on the care and maintenance of both our heritage and natural features all rated very positively with over 75% of respondents rating them 'excellent' or 'good'. Over 70% of respondents rated the cleanliness of the Forest and its Health & Safety as 'excellent' or 'good'. The figure of only 40% of respondents rating the promotion of the Forest as 'excellent' or 'good' shows there is still work to be done in this area, as with the concept of management planning with 45% of respondents saying they 'don't know' about it and 22% rating it as 'fair' or 'poor'. Developments with the new Management Plan project in 2015 should hopefully address this.

Figure 24: Rating of Organisational Activities

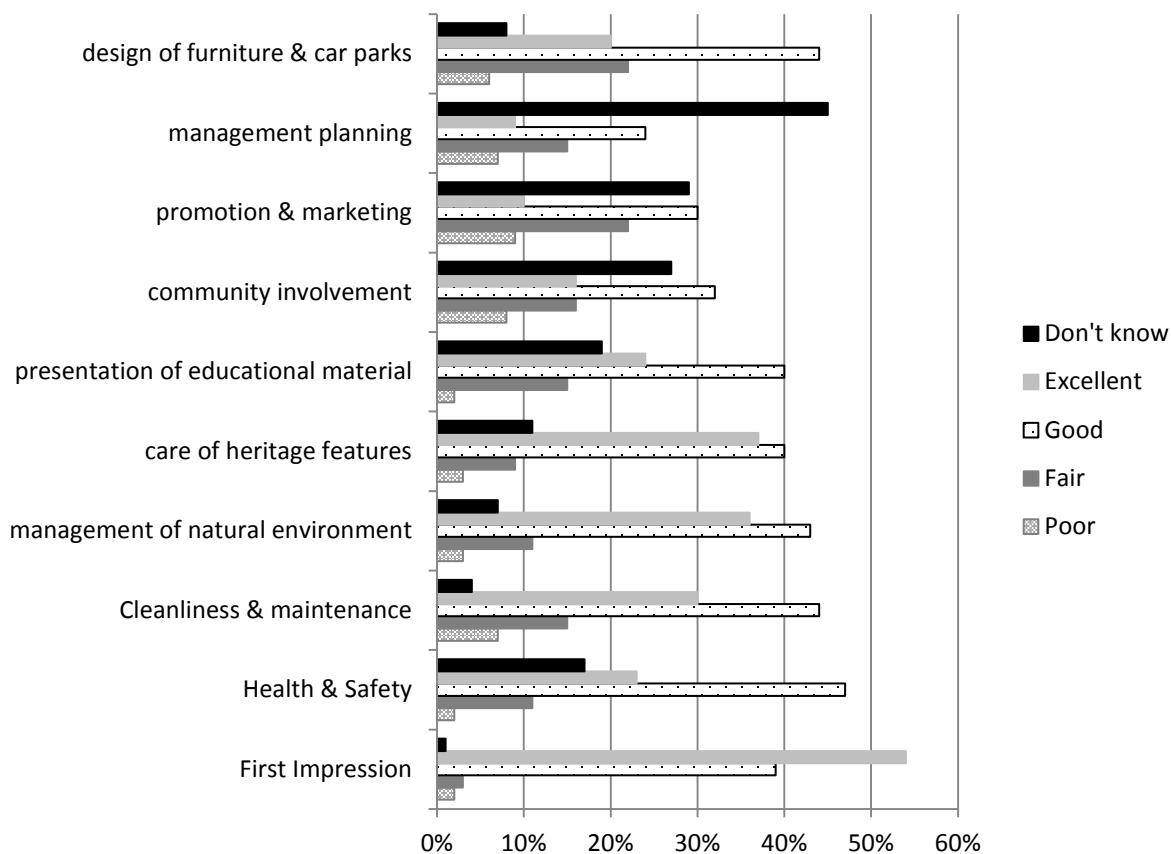


Table 11: Rating of Organisational Activities

Rating	First Impression	Health & Safety	Cleanliness & maint.	management of natural env.	heritage features	presentation of educational material	community involvement	promotion & marketing	management planning	design of furniture & car parks
Poor	2%	2%	7%	3%	3%	2%	8%	9%	7%	6%
Fair	3%	11%	15%	11%	9%	15%	16%	22%	15%	22%
Good	39%	47%	44%	43%	40%	40%	32%	30%	24%	44%
Excellent	54%	23%	30%	36%	37%	24%	16%	10%	9%	20%
Don't know	1%	17%	4%	7%	11%	19%	27%	29%	45%	8%

5.5. Rating of Facilities

Facilities were also rated very highly with 80% or more of respondents rating the Forest Centres, children and family facilities and visitor safety as 'excellent' or 'good' (Figure 25 & Table 12). More than 70% of respondents rated food and beverage outlets and information provided as 'excellent' or 'good' and more than 65% rated the sports facilities and events provided as 'excellent' or 'good'. The favourite food outlet was recorded as Hill Wood Tea Hut, High Beach (32%) with Wanstead Park Tea Hut (20%) rated as second favourite and Butlers Retreat (17%), last year's favourite, coming third.

Figure 25: Rating of Facilities on the Forest 2010 - 2014

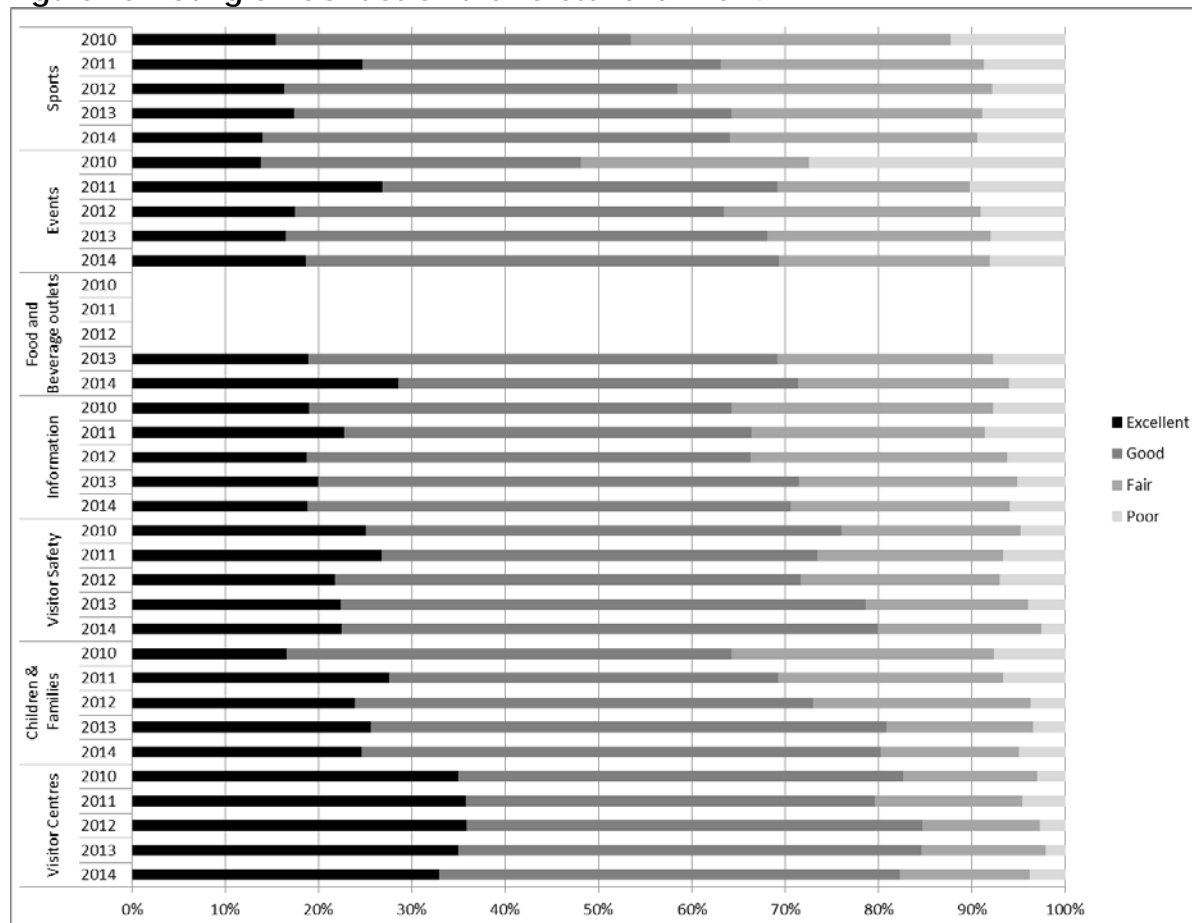


Table 12: Rating of Facilities on the Forest 2010 – 2014

Facility	Year	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Visitor Centres	2014	26%	39%	11%	3%
	2013	35.0%	49.6%	13.3%	2.1%
	2012	35.9%	48.8%	12.6%	2.7%
	2011	35.8%	43.8%	15.7%	4.6%
	2010	35.0%	47.7%	14.3%	3.0%
Children & Families	2014	20.0%	45.0%	12.0%	4.0%
	2013	25.6%	55.3%	15.7%	3.4%
	2012	23.9%	49.1%	23.3%	3.7%
	2011	27.6%	41.7%	24.1%	6.6%
	2010	16.6%	47.7%	28.1%	7.6%
Visitor Safety	2014	18.0%	46.0%	14.0%	2.0%
	2013	22.4%	56.2%	17.4%	4.0%
	2012	21.8%	49.9%	21.3%	7.0%
	2011	26.8%	46.7%	19.9%	6.6%
	2010	25.1%	51.0%	19.2%	4.7%
Information	2014	16.0%	44.0%	20.0%	5.0%
	2013	20.0%	51.5%	23.4%	5.1%
	2012	18.8%	47.5%	27.5%	6.2%
	2011	22.8%	43.6%	25.0%	8.6%

	2010	19.0%	45.3%	28.0%	7.7%
Food and Beverage outlets	2014	24.0%	36.0%	19.0%	5.0%
	2013	18.9%	50.3%	23.1%	7.7%
	2012				
	2011				
	2010				
Events	2014	14.0%	38.0%	17.0%	6.0%
	2013	16.5%	51.6%	23.9%	8.0%
	2012	17.5%	46.0%	27.5%	9.0%
	2011	26.9%	42.3%	20.6%	10.2%
	2010	18.4%	45.6%	32.5%	36.5%
Sports	2014	9%	32%	17%	6%
	2013	17.4%	46.9%	26.9%	8.9%
	2012	16.3%	42.1%	33.7%	7.8%
	2011	24.7%	38.4%	28.2%	8.7%
	2010	15.5%	38.0%	34.3%	12.2%

5.6. Transport

The majority of visitors still arrive at the Forest either by car or on foot (85%) (Figure 26 & Table 13). Since 2012, visitors arriving by car has stayed the same at 53%. Last year this figure dropped slightly to 52%. In 2014, 9.6% of visitors travelled by public transport, an increase from 7% in 2013. Cycling has halved from 9% in 2013 to 4% in 2014 as has arriving by horse back from 3% in 2013 to 1% in 2014. Walking to the Forest has increased from 26% in 2013 to 32% in 2014.

Figure 26: Modes of Transport and Journey Times

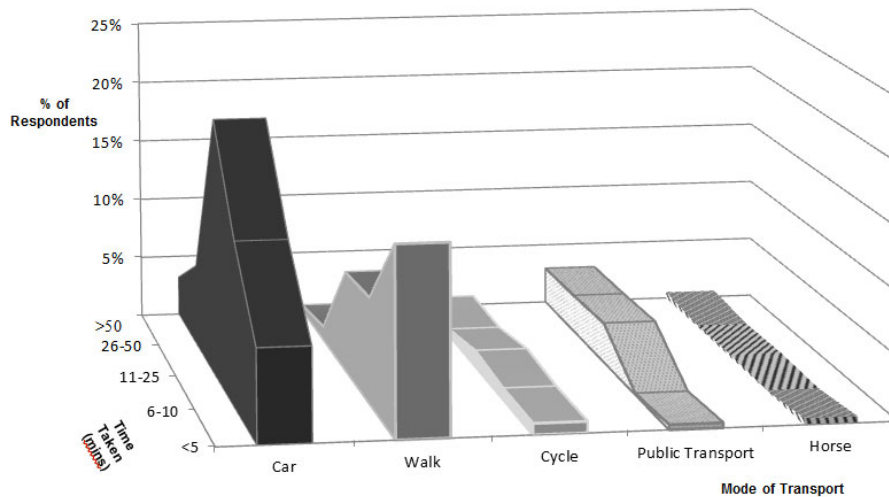


Table 13: Transport Modes and Journey Times

Mode / Time Taken	> 50mins	26-50mins	11-25mins	6-10mins	<5mins
Car	3.2%	6.6%	20.8%	13.3%	7.5%
Walk	0.4%	1.1%	8.1%	8.5%	15.1%
Cycle	0.7%	0.5%	1.3%	0.9%	0.9%
Public Transport	2.9%	3.0%	3.2%	0.1%	0.4%
Horse	0.5%	0.1%	0.2%	0.0%	0.5%

5.7. Encouraging Visitors to Return

For this question, respondents could tick up to three answers (Figure 27 & Table 14). A third of all responses rated that they are happy with the current provision in the Forest (33%) with more events (29%) appearing second on what would encourage visitors to return. The Events Diary which covers the whole of the Forest and is available online or in paper is diversifying all the time.

Figure 27: What would encourage you to return to the Forest?

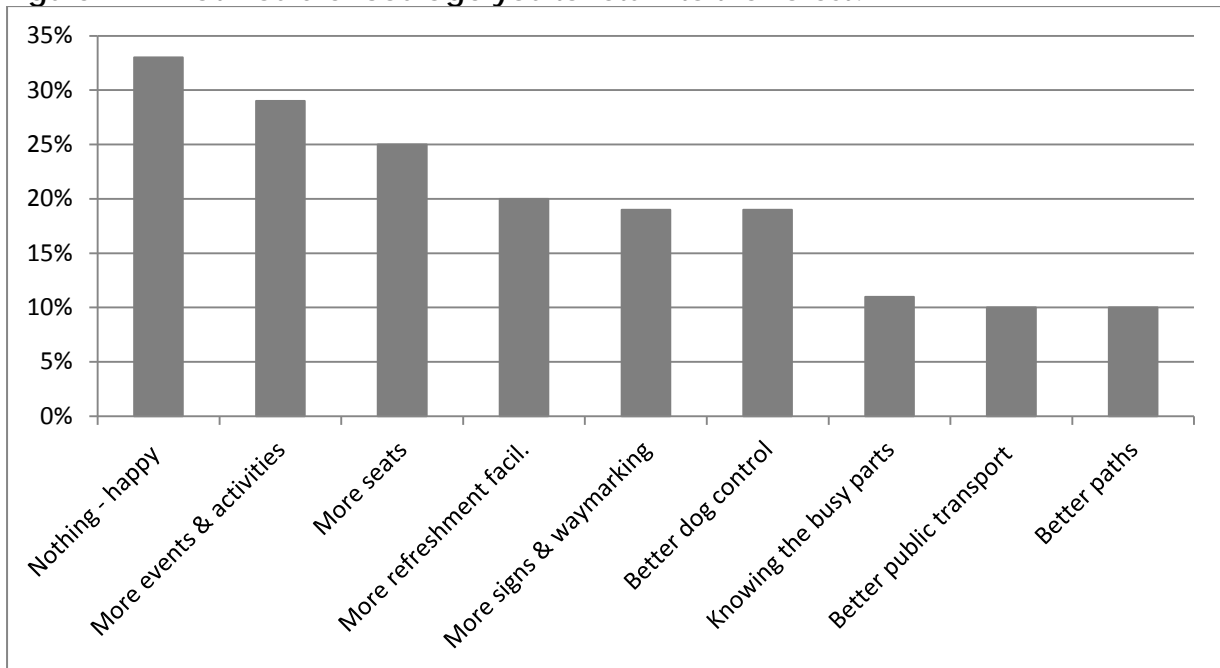


Table 14: What would encourage you to return to the Forest?

What would encourage you to visit more	2014 Responses
Nothing - happy	33%
More events & activities	29%
More seats	25%
More refreshment facilities	20%
More signs & waymarking	19%
Better dog control	19%
Knowing the busy parts	11%
Better public transport	10%
Better paths	10%

5.8. Sources of Information

Most visitors still find out about the Forest through word of mouth (51%) with the website (28%) coming second. These figures have remained the same since the 2013 survey. Social Media (15%) has doubled in popularity from 8% in 2013 and is showing a steady increase across the years. This may also be due to the increased presence and dedicated Twitter Team at Epping Forest. The Forest Centres (18%), Forest Focus magazine (15%) and the Local Free Newspaper (15%) still remain popular.

5.9. Other Comments

The survey allows people to add additional comments about the Forest at the end of the survey and this contained both positive and negative views on a variety of topics:

- *'I think the Forest is well kept and maintained.'*
- *'I dislike some of the 'improvements' made to certain areas as they now come across as a bit too pedestrianised and not rural enough.'*
- *'I really enjoy walking in Epping Forest and it is very well managed. However, the paths could be better signed - I often get lost!'*
- *'Forests are natural places and sometimes it is nice to be lost. It would be a shame to have too many benches and signs.'*

- *'I have taken immense pleasure from regularly using a slice of paradise at my back door. As a youngster living in Hackney (50's/60's) we used to have to get a bus to see trees and parks. My children have grown up loving the forest walking our dogs or running cross country with our club The Orion Harriers, without whose help I would not have completed my marathons. I was brought up to believe that the forest is a gift to us commoners, to be respected and treated as we would our own homes.'*
- *'You are doing fine without my input'*
- *'It's a forest. It should be left as natural as possible. Health and safety have no place here. You can't wrap trees in bubble wrap'*
- *'Brilliant to see how well the Hunting Lodge is used. The View gives an excellent 'platform' (in all senses) for our forest'*
- *'Epping Forest has been & still is one of my greatest pleasures'.*
- *'Very friendly survey staff.'*

6. The Future of the Visitor Survey

The visitor survey for the last five years has been managed by the Community Liaison Officer, through the Branching Out project. The HLF funding for the project and Community Liaison Officer post ended in 2014. The visitor survey has proven valuable in all strands of work carried out across the Forest and plays an important role within its management, from building confidence in public speaking about the Forest – we now have facts, to informing operational management – trees in busier areas are now identified and checked more regularly. However, with resources cut for this project any visitor survey work carried out in future years must be streamlined to fit within the existing framework of Epping Forest.

For 2015 an Observation Survey will be carried out at Wanstead Park, as proposed upcoming developments require more up to date baseline data sets. This will allow us to resurvey once the work has been completed and use both sets of data as a method to record the project's success. In future years, more sites will be surveyed with recommendations for Chingford Plain and High Beach carried out as a priority to assess the success of the Branching Out project developments that took place there.

Over the past five years volunteers have carried out the data collection for the Observation Survey and, along with staff, have collected and inputted the Questionnaire Surveys. The success of this project would not have been possible without them and we are indebted to them for their time, hard work and dedication over the last five years. In 2014 alone, they contributed over 80 hours of time, mapped 2560 visitors and helped to gather 885 Questionnaire Surveys.