

Bustardthorpe Allotments Association CIO – 2026 Plot Holders Survey Results

Response rate: 98 responses, representing almost one third of plot holders, an excellent response, showing a high level of interest. This is also a statistically significant sample, i.e. we can take these answers as indicative of the views of most plot holders.

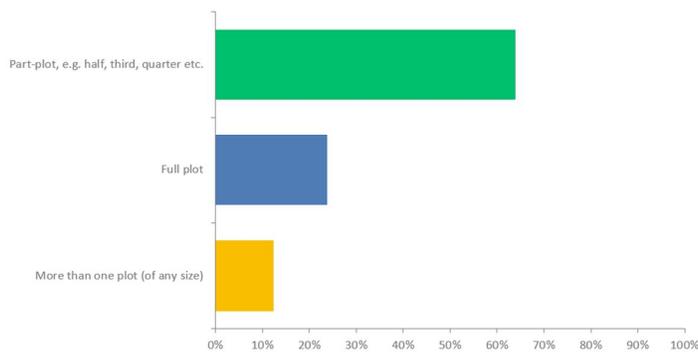
Key Findings:

- The responses show a high level of positivity about how the site is run, and appreciation of the work of the Trustees.
- For most people their allotment is important to them, which is linked to the fact that the majority of plot holders (75%) do not have much if any growing space at home. This confirms that the site and how it is run is making a positive contribution to the local community.
- Regarding the questions on age groups and length of tenure on their plot, these answers don't tell us much in isolation, so the survey would need to be repeated to identify if we have an ageing community of plot holders, or a healthy level of new plot holders.
- The shop and plant sales are important to about half of plot holders, and there is a theme both in the comments about the shop and general comments at the end, suggesting that regular opening hours would help it to be more successful, which is one for consideration.
- Provision of a hot drinks making facility seems to be something that only about 20% of plot holders would want, with most happy to bring their own drinks to site.
- Several people have put their names forward as being interested in volunteering opportunities of various kinds. Another suggestion would be to form a volunteer database so that we make the most of this interest.
- There are a couple of comments about communications, so it could be useful to look at the frequency of these and whether alternatives can be explored.

Detailed questions and answers

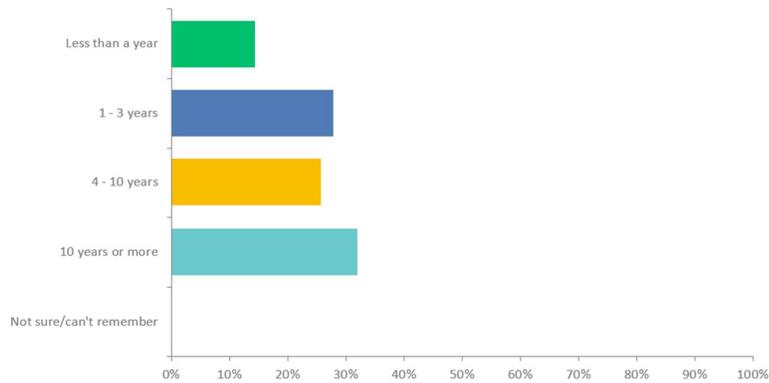
Q1: What kind of plot/s do you have?

Answered: 97 Skipped: 0



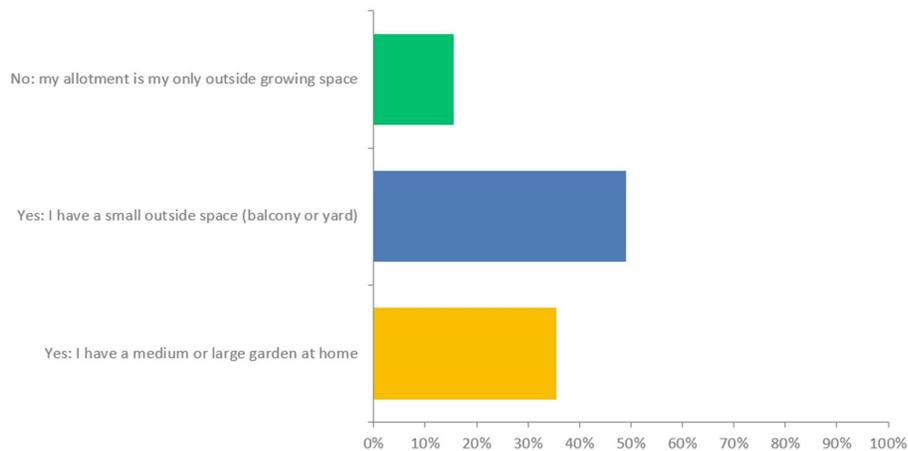
Q2: How long have you had your plot?

Answered: 97 Skipped: 0



Q3: Do you have a garden or outside space at home?

Answered: 96 Skipped: 1



Q4: How important would you say your allotment is to you?

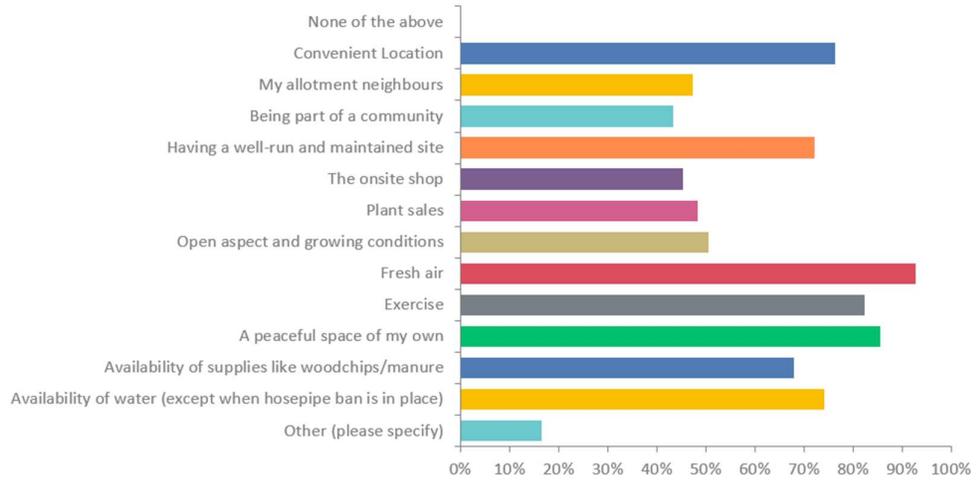
Answered: 92 Skipped: 5



The average score was 20, which means that 80% of plot holders are saying their allotment is between fairly and extremely important .

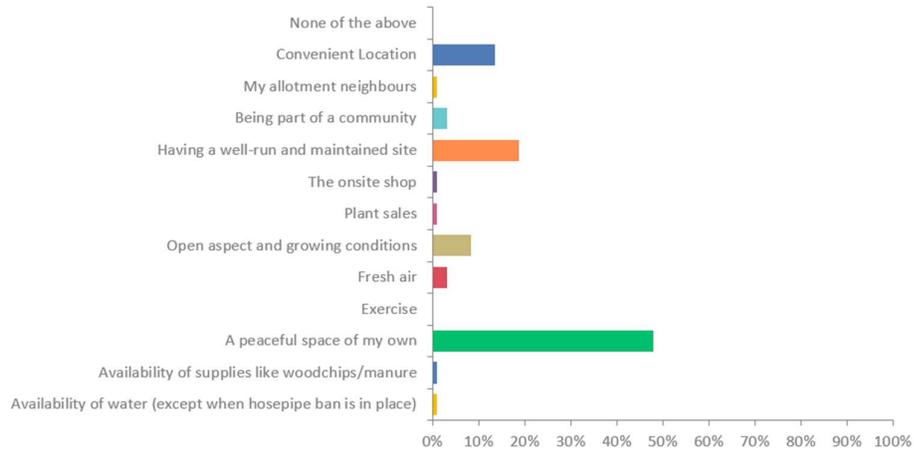
Q5: What do you particularly like about having an allotment at Bustardthorpe? (tick as many as apply)

Answered: 97 Skipped: 0



Q6: And can you tell us which which one of these is the most important? (tick one only)

Answered: 96 Skipped: 1



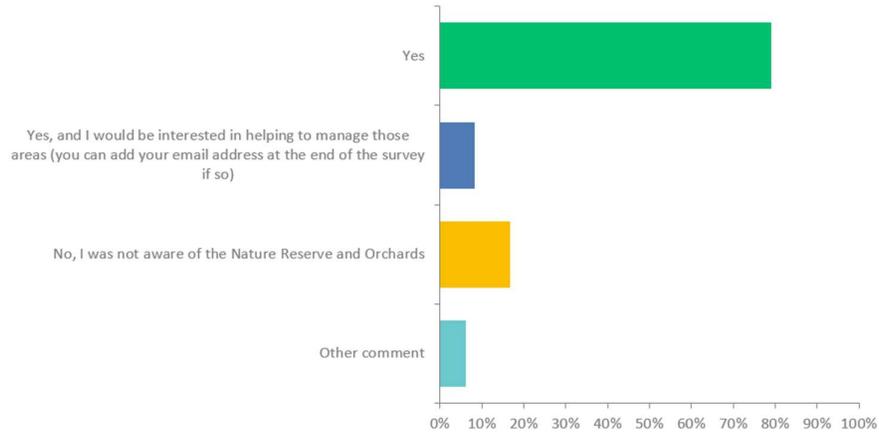
Questions 5 & 6 are giving a very clear indication of what people want from their allotments – *peace and quiet, and a well-run site, which is exactly what they get.*

Additional comments about things people like about Bustardthorpe Allotments:

- *Friendship and community sharing of knowledge*
- *Getting some sun. We have a small balcony with no sun, so it's nice having my own space that gets sun and gives me vitamin D*
- *bird visitors*
- *Having the opportunity to grow with my children which we don't have space for at home.*
- *It's my haven*
- *I love all of these, with not having a garden it has been great to have a space to use as a family to immerse ourselves in nature. It has been brilliant to learn about gardening but also to see all the wildlife on the site and enjoy researching species with the children. I work freelance for the field studies council so having the allotment has been a great source of inspiration for my work delving into the natural world.*
- *The general ethos of the site, sense of community and ownership. I appreciate the relative freedom plot holders are given to use the space in a way that is beneficial for them.*
- *Being near the Knavesmire and views across it.*
- *The beauty of the location (and views); the charm and sense of history.*
- *Trees nearby*
- *Properly segregated plots, ability to build structures on the plot with approval of the committee, the friendly committee, the relatively hands off approach to date from the committee, the reasonable plot fees (to date)*
- *Growing my own food*
- *What more can I say, we love it*
- *Prolific nature and awareness of changing seasons*
- *Away from housing*
- *It's a creative/learning project for me*
- *Enjoying eating what I grow*
- *Family time!*
- *It is hard to choose. I appreciate how well run the site is, however it is nice also to appreciate the peace and solitude of gardening and the ability to be creative with growing. It is nice to have lovely neighbours but more important to have a break from the world.*

Q7: Do you know about the Nature Reserve and Orchards that we have on site?

Answered: 96 Skipped: 1

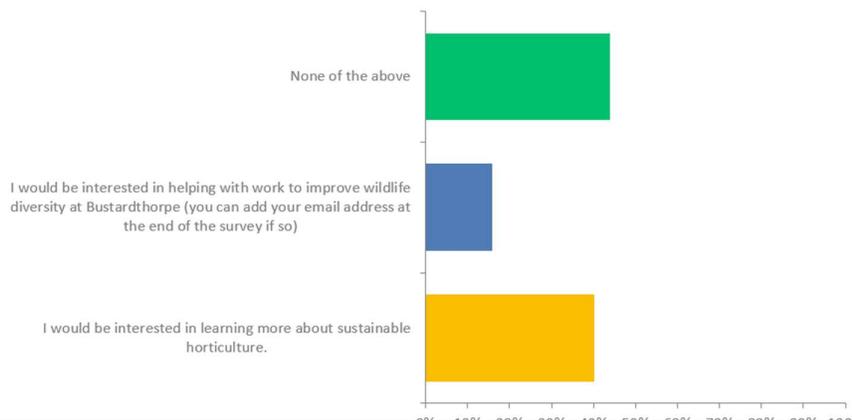


Additional Comments:

- *I do not visit them.*
- *Only vaguely aware*
- *At present I am not in a position to do regular volunteering*
- *I was aware of nature reserve but only been once. I was not aware of orchards.*
- *I am in principle most willing to help with various things, I'm an experienced gardener and love the sense of community on this site....*

Q8: One of BAACIO's purposes is "To promote, for the benefit of the public, the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment, in particular through the conservation of natural resources, the improvement of wildlife diversity, and providing opportunities for learning about sustainable horticulture."

Answered: 82 Skipped: 15

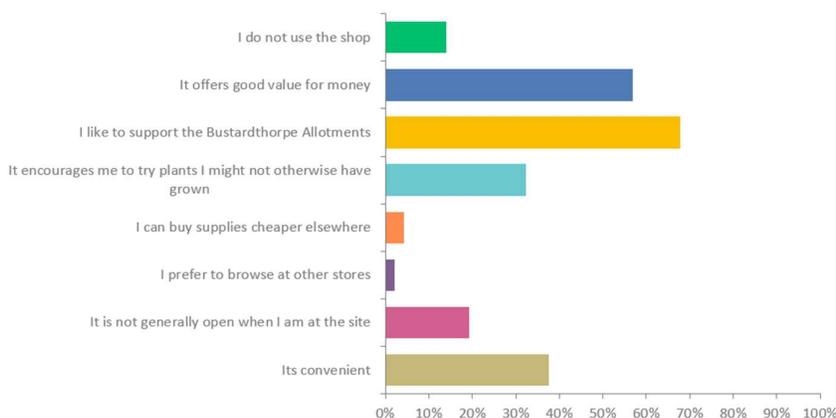


Additional Comments.

- *Sorry, 20 years ago I would have been glad to help (and did, on another site)*
- *I am passionate about sustainable horticulture and wildlife diversity but only have enough time to do this on my own allotment*
- *As above, in the future I would be very keen to support more diversity of wildlife and ecology on the site. I do what I can on my own plot.*
- *I have always tried to practice both sustainable and aware of wildlife.*
- *I am also interested in working to improve bio diversity and natural soil improvement*
- *Considering that a lot of tenants spray their plots with chemicals, I don't think the conservation of natural resources can be said to be one of the purposes of Bustardthorpe Allotments. - **we continue to try to guide plotholders with alternative ways of managing their rather than immediately reaching for chemicals however we can not be responsible for personal choices.***

Q9: Please tell us your thoughts about the Allotment Shop, including plant sales (tick all that apply)

Answered: 93 Skipped: 4



Additional Comments

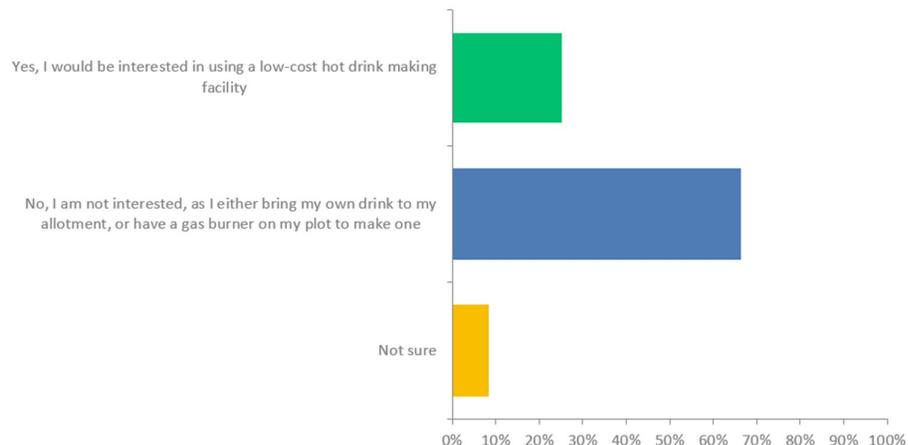
- *Being a newcomer to the site in May 2025 I am so appreciative of the shop/plant sales and free manure/woodchip, it made all of the difference in starting off my plot. None of these things were available at my last allotment and it's such a bonus here at Bustardthorpe*
- *Haven't been at Bustardthorpe long enough to see the shop*
- *The honesty box is great as I'm not usually there when the shop is open.*
- *I generally start most of my plants from seed so tend not to use the shop much however I do use it to plug gaps and like to support it where I can.*
- *I really appreciate it.*
- *The shop used to be available to me on a more regular basis but over the last year I have not been able to purchase the items I need. I have had to resort to buying online which is disappointing. Can there be core hours that the shop will be*

guaranteed to be open? Even if just 2 hours per day, that way people could plan around this. Part of the reason I liked this allotment site was the shop and I haven't been able to benefit from it.- **We require volunteers to be able to provide this.**

- It used to provide excellent supplies at virtually cost price with minimal mark up for the good of the plot holders, who effectively funded the shop. Since the change of management, the prices of remaining stocks have been raised to ridiculous amounts with mark ups over original cost, ranging from 54% to 117% (including 90% on compost). The shop is no longer there to benefit the rent paying plot holders. **This comment is factually incorrect we would ask the member to contact the treasurer for clarification.** We used to be a council run site, we are now responsible for all financial management, hence extra care is required on expenses, site and stock. The previous management marked up prices by 43% on some stock items. The prices have not been increased since 2024 for 11 items, 1 item has been reduced and only 5 have been increased in 2026. Between 16-33% depending on the item and the multi buy offering. Baacio's prices are still way under market prices. Members are free to purchase items where ever they feel they obtain best prices

Q10: We currently don't have an area where plot holders can access facilities to make a hot drink. Would that facility be of interest to you if it was made available?

Answered: 95 Skipped: 2



Additional comments:

- *I'm not sure how it could be done, but tea/hot chocolate for the kids could be a winner!*
- *I either bring a flask of hot water or use a camping cassette stove in summer....*
- *But it would be good to be more sociable.*
- *Nice idea, but I quite understand it's asking a lot! Happy to bring sandwiches....*

Q11: Due to increased costs, allotment rents have been increased by 50% this year. What do you think about the rent you pay?

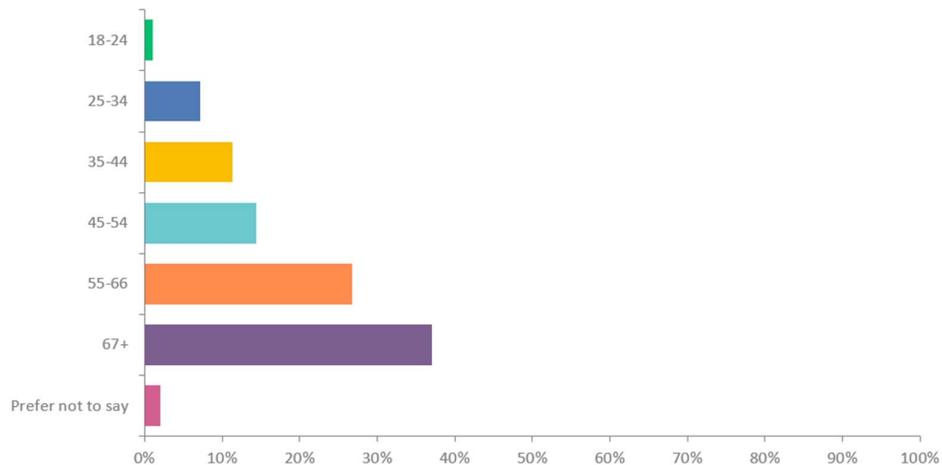
Answered: 96 Skipped: 1



Most people (53%) think the rents are reasonable, even after the increase this year.

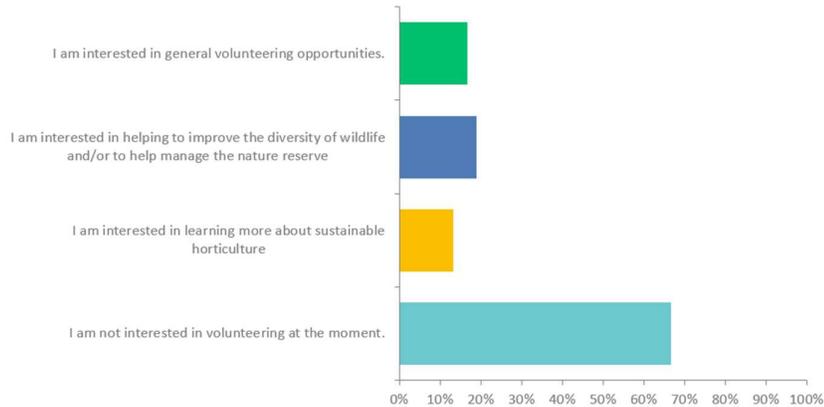
Q12: What age range are you

Answered: 97 Skipped: 0



Q13: Did you know that the Bustardthorpe Allotment site is managed, maintained and run by volunteers? Would you be interested in volunteering? It's a great way to meet other plot holders, and you can do as much or as little as you like. The survey is anonymous, but if you would like the Trustees to contact you about volunteering opportunities you can add your email address below, with no obligation at this stage. Alternatively, you can contact us via: bustardthorpeallotments@gmail.com

Answered: 90 Skipped: 7



Q 14 Finally, do you have any other comments or suggestions that you would like to share with the Trustees?

Suggestions to be considered & comments from the Trustees

- *Full set of accounts to be circulated to all plot holders within 2 months of the end of an accounting period. - It was mentioned in the EGM we would aim to share the reviewed accounts with in 2 months of the accountant approval, we will share at the AGM in March and circulate with the minutes for those who can't attend.*
- *Price increase should have been communicated to all before bills were sent. – Rent increase was communicated in the EGM and in the minutes, going forward rent increases will be communicated at the AGM (at least 6 months before they change)*
- *A skip or area where rubbish could be collected. - we have tried this in the past and people do not respect the guidelines on what is allowed in the skip, resulting in extra expense to the site. We will review how in the future we can do this and avoid issues.*
- *Shop to have regular opening times which are shared with plot holders - we need volunteers to do this, if interested please contact the secretary*
- *Online way of contacting a handyman for maintenance issues – details in the shop and outside the shop, contactable by phone.*
- *A WhatsApp Group for anyone that wants to be involved – we do, we have the WhatsApp group, please contact the secretary to be added to the group.*
- *More openness to different approaches to growing food and different types of people – we have put on several gardening courses and encourage different approaches*
- *More forward planning on work parties and information on what's expected – since Jan 26 more planning in place to match skills with jobs and are looking at ways to continue to improve, any ideas welcome.*
- *A ban on firearms – tenancy agreement clearly states no firearms if any spotted pls advise the trustees.*
- *Level out some tracks and make some tracks one-way – volunteers required to be able to carry this out and we will look into the one-way options and benefits.*
- *Plot holders who leave overhanging plants to be fined for damage to cars. – not sure how this could be implemented, but will consider options.*

- Sadly neglected plots should be addressed – **they are, and the lettings officer is regularly in contact with plot holders, however we are supportive of plot holders who may be having difficulties.**
- *Frequency of emails can become confusing (eg missed the rent email in amongst emails about courses) – we aim to keep them to a minimum but are looking at ways to keep members informed and not overloaded, the new website will help with this and other options being looked at.*
- *Have a newsletter – great idea which we have considered but we don't currently have enough volunteers to manage this consistently. If you are interested in helping with this please contact the secretary.*

positive comments and feedback from members

- *I think you do a great job and it's a wonderful place. Thank you.*
- *Keep up the hard work.*
- *We've always found the allotment a special place and hopefully it will remain a warm welcoming community*
- *Thank you for all your hard work. We have had a pregnancy last year and the resulting baby this year - we look forward to spending much more time at the allotment this year now things have settled down!*
- *Thanks for all your work looking after the allotments. It is very much appreciated. When I have more time on my hands I am looking forward to volunteering myself.*
- *Thank you very much to all the volunteers and trustees for all you do*
- *We love the allotments in general, and our own in particular. We've had a very warm welcome and are looking forward to the coming year.*
- *We have neighbours who had a plot at Scarcroft allotments in York and had problems with anti-social behaviour. They gave it up as it no longer felt safe. I'm glad to say I've never felt unsafe at Bustardthorpe, it's friendly and open and there is a nice sense of community. Thank you for all that you do to promote this. I'm sorry that my job means I can't volunteer hopefully this will be possible in future.*
- *Thank you for all that you do, the management of the site is a huge job and we appreciate all the hard work that is going in to keep it going.*
- *A very big thank you.*
- *We have volunteered for many years, but now that we are over 80 we feel the need to cut back - sorry! We have been very impressed by the approach taken to introducing the CIO - thank you.*
- *I wouldn't change much from where we are currently. The level of involvement from the committee to date I think has been good, I don't believe more needs to be done or further involvement is required.*
- *Various friends with allotments elsewhere have remarked on how well looked after the overall sight is compared with their own.*
- *Thank you for all that you do. We have been plot owners for a year and get so much from the site. I imagine it must feel like a thankless job sometimes but please let me take the opportunity to say thank you! The joy we and our new allotment friends get from working the land is enormous. Thank you*
- *Thank you for all the ways you make the site possible.*

Thank you for all the members who took time to complete the survey.