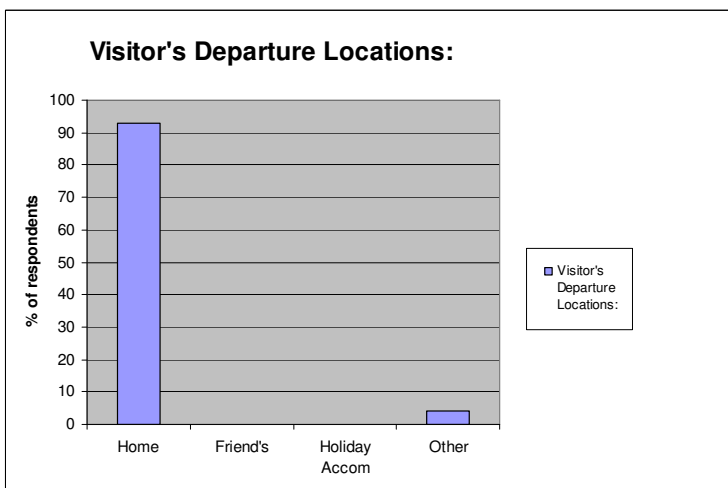


## Summary of feedback data from Questionnaires – June 2010

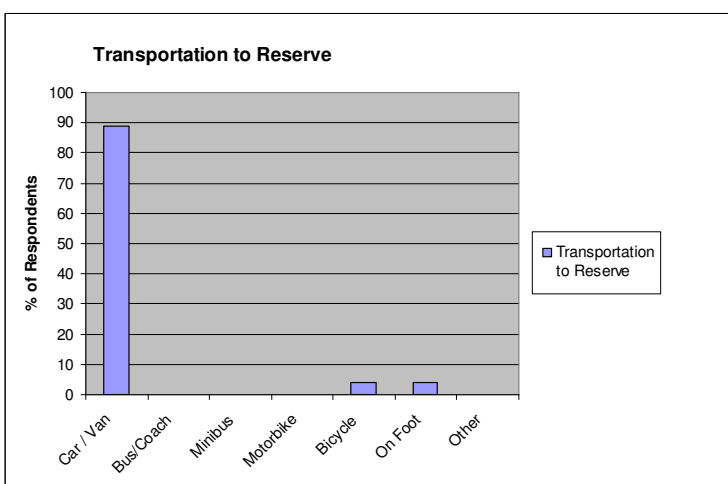
The feedback provided by the Lound Bird Club members has been very helpful and very positive and I would like to thank all those that took part in the survey. The result of the survey is set out below and where the question asked for a response these have been evaluated and answers provided for a number of the queries raised. I hope from this response that you will notice changes on the Idle Valley Nature Reserve that will bring about a positive improvement both in terms of the wildlife value of the site but also the way in which people are able to enjoy their experience of the site.

I must thank Di Fisher (Volunteer publicity Officer) for helping me in compiling this report. Also I must thank Gary Hobson for being so supportive in providing me with all the address details to make this survey possible.

Questionnaires were distributed to approximately 60 members in April of this year. I received around a 50% response. The collated results are represented in the following charts:

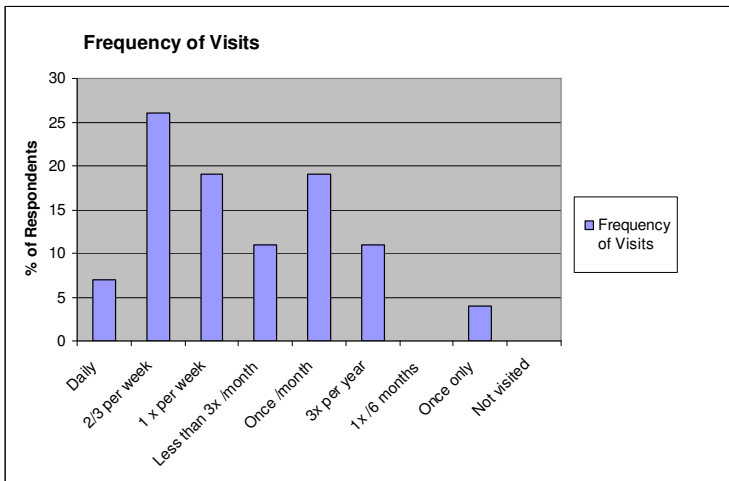


This chart shows that over 90% of respondents visited the reserve or learning centre straight from home.



Similarly, over 89% of respondents used 4-wheeled transport to get to the reserve, and only 4% used pedal power (bicycle) and 4% walked.

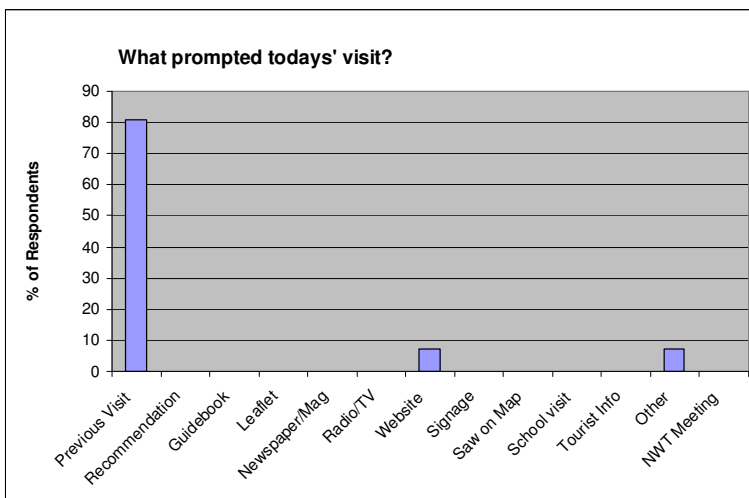
*Note: All respondents had already visited the reserve on at least one previous occasion.*



Approximately half of the respondents visit the reserve at least once a week.

Over 90% of respondents had noticed changes to the site in the last year, namely:

- Landscaping
- Reed planting
- Viewing screens
- Habitat maintenance
- Pathway improvements



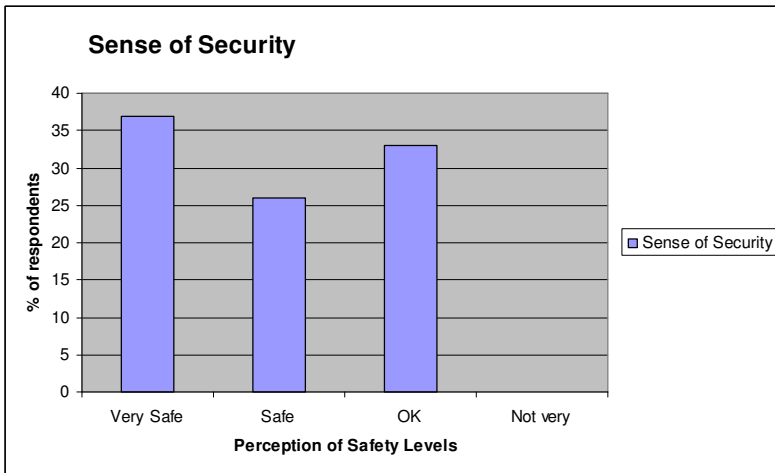
Reasons and prompts to visit the reserve:

- 80% returned because of previous pleasant visits
- 2% discovered the reserve via the internet
- 2% came to site because it was the venue for a local group meeting

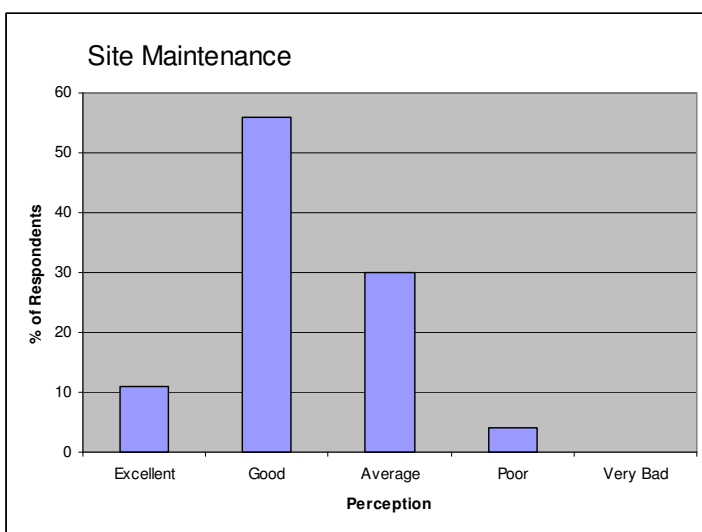
Note: Approximately half the respondents came to visit the reserve and the other half came to visit both the Learning Centre and the reserve.

**Ratings were compiled regarding media and facilities on the reserve:**

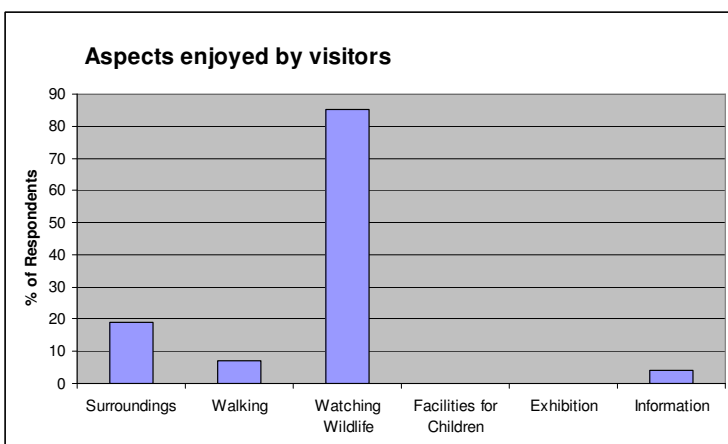
	<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Good / OK</b>	<b>Poor</b>
Signage to the Rural Learning Centre	5%	☺ 50%	☹ 25%
Signage to the Nature Reserve	10%	☺ 25%	☹ 30%
Interpretation on the site	10%	☺ 25%	☹ 20%
Information about events	20%	☺ 55%	☹ 10%
Routes around the site	10%	☺ 55%	☹ 20%
Site Management	40%	☺ 45%	(nil)
Cleanliness of Toilets	45%	☺ 40%	(nil)



It was important to establish how visitors felt about their own levels of safety while visiting the site – it was pleasing to discover that everyone felt safe and unthreatened which indicates good site management in public areas.



It was also pleasing to note that nearly 70% of visitors felt the site is well-maintained.



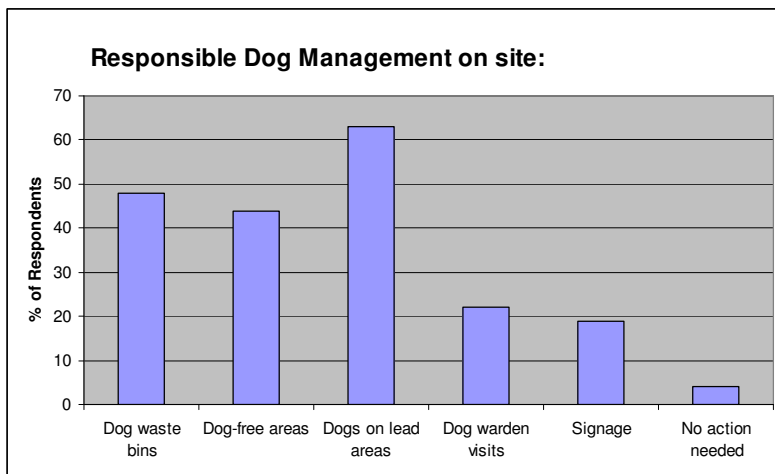
The chart graphically shows that watching wildlife is an important and extremely popular factor for visitors.

Another important fact that the chart shows quite alarmingly, is that there are no facilities for children to enjoy.

When asked about changes that visitors would like to see, there seemed to be a strong indication that fishing/angling was viewed as something that should not take place on the reserve.

## Dog Handling / Walking on Site

Interestingly, although only 20% of respondents owned dogs, nearly all of them seemed to have strong views about how dogs are managed on the site:



It is clear from the chart that visitors want clearly designated areas for dog-free zones and areas where dogs must be on a lead.

Waste management is also a concern and the likelihood of success in this somewhat sensitive area of dog ownership might be increased if waste bins are provided on site.

## Suggestions to improve the site for disabled visitors:

- More paths
- More seats

## Feedback

### Seats

More seats will be provided around the reserve. These will be fairly basic/rustic but hopefully provided a much needed resting spot or alternative place to enjoy the views. I plan to get these features in place in August/September. I have installed a seat at the new Neatholme Screen and adjusted the viewing gaps.

### Feeding stations

I would like to see at least a further two feeding stations put in. Currently we have one in full operation located near the Idle Valley Rural Learning Centre. However, we have to be careful where these are situated for a number of reasons, such as vandalism, vermin control, accessibility to be topped up and also to be located near to scrub/woodland.

### Viewing screens/hides

A very popular request is to see more viewing areas erected around the site. I am trying to incorporate this feature with a firmed up plan of all the access routes across the Nature Reserve. At present there are two planned to go in: one around Bellmoor Lake and one to go in overlooking Neatholme Pit.

There is a real opportunity to increase this to a few more around the Reserve. I also would like to see some modifications to the existing screens to ensure that they are safe and have a reduced impact on disturbance.

### Other

There were a number of specific points raised which I will briefly answer here, as follows:

- We are working on a reserves map and further maps showing the access routes around the site. Please see the first newsletter for the site which shows the outline of the current Reserve. This will change, in particular, as more land will be added to the reserve.
- There is a demand for more parking. Currently we are trying to devise an opportunity to open up a car park at the Idle Valley Rural Learning Centre at weekends. To the north this is more challenging due to a number of reasons such as the quiet nature of the area and also the ability to monitor any parking facilities against fly tipping and vandalism.
- Security across the main access points is very difficult as these are Public Rights of Way which cannot be blocked. Nottinghamshire County Council are also very firm on not putting in barriers where there have been none before. However, where they are not PROW we have more control and I intend to put more barriers in. But ultimately it will be the user of the site that will help safe guard the reserve against unwanted users by reporting incidents to myself and the wardens team and/or the police.
- The Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust website in relation to the Reserve is lacking in terms of detail but this is being worked on to provide more information, which I hope over time will become a useful place of reference.

### **Management**

Wader scrapes is something that is mentioned fairly often and can be combined with many of the other issues such as water levels and willow control. I would therefore like to answer these queries collectively.

The lack of grazing in the past has allowed willow to develop, in particular around the fringes of the water bodies. Currently a lot of work is going into removing this willow and then maintain the newly cleared areas. This will be an on-going challenge but we plan to tackle this in a number of ways. The willow firstly needs removing, last year approximately 8 hectares of willow scrub was removed and I intend to follow this up with something similar this coming winter. Once the willow has been removed grazing needs to be introduced to keep on top any re-growth. Also you may have notice a number of gauge boards in around the site, currently there is a monitoring programme of all the water bodies to the north of the site. The plan is to control the water bodies by raising the water during the winter and lowering during spring and summer. This I hope will also help control the willow as newly cut willow will be flooded over winter killing it off and then in spring exposing newly cleaned off areas of bare ground.

This site is particularly challenging for scrub as the site is surrounded by willow and as the seeds are wind blown any bare soil will allow for further willow germination. Therefore it will be a case of finding out what works for this site.

In terms of new wader scrapes being created, one area is going to be developed specifically for this purpose known as Tiln North. This area is currently being worked on for sand and gravel on the eastern side of the river Idle. Plans are currently being worked up with Tarmac to design an area of plenty of marginal habitat and draw down zones.

### **Reedbed**

There have been a couple of comments about the reed bed aspect of the project on Neatholme Fen. Reed bed nationally has been heavily affected with the loss of about 45% since 1945 and many reed beds are in decline due to fragmentation, succession and neglect. Quarry sites across the country have become a key part to increasing the areas of reed bed nationally as they provide the bare substrate and hydrology to be successful.

However, it is clear from the experience from other reserves that there is an element of trial and error in order to find what works and to combat the three aspects that impact on the success of reedbed establishment, which are grazing by wildfowl, wave action and completion from other species.

A lot more effort has gone on this year to get the fencing right and in total I have planted up over 1000m<sup>2</sup> . Also the team has propagated some 10 000 new reed plugs to be planted out at the end of this year and the beginning of next. Thanks must go to the Lound Bird Club for helping me to monitor the impact of the work on schedule 1 and other nesting birds in the area.

#### Disabled Access

I received, very latterly, a response regarding disabled access, which at present is not particularly clear. But I would like to take the opportunity to thank the individual's response as these kind of comments can lead to small adjustments which can make a big difference to improve the experience of disabled visitors.

If you would like to make further comment please do write to me at: Idle Valley Rural Learning Centre, Great North Road, Retford, DN22 8RQ or e-mail [jsimpson@nottswt.co.uk](mailto:jsimpson@nottswt.co.uk)

Many thanks

James Simpson  
Idle Valley Reserve Officer

## Appendix – Comments

### Seats

- A seat near wildgoose farm
- Embankment at south east corner of walters lane pit
- River Idle Flood bank – One overlooking the willows and one between there and chainbridge Lane.
- Bottom of Neatholme Lane (seats/bird hides)
- Back of Parish pond overlooking Scrape (seats/bird hides)
- Seats a must to sit and ponder
- Seats and hides overlooking water
- At regular distances all over the site (feeding stations as well)
- More seats around all of the site in suitable areas. Simple in design and minimal cost.

### Feeding station

- Feeding station next to Linghurst lake
- More winter feeding areas anywhere
- Near RLC
- Bellmoor Scrub by the River and off Chainbridge Lane
- I expect feeding to resume in the willows
- Feeding stations near view points
- Feeding stations viewed from hides
- The willows – bottom of Neatholme Lane
- Feeding stations need to be easily accessible to the general public and preferably in front of a full screen/hide.

### Viewing screens/hides

- Viewing screens on either side of Cross lane overlooking Nearly cleared area and Neatholme scrape
- Viewing screens along Cross Lane Marsh
- More shallow water, some good dense hedgerows
- North Shore of Neatholme Fen
- North corner of Neatholme Scrape
- Chainbridge/neatholme hides or covered screens
- Bird hides would be nice but vandalism maybe a problem.
- The existing ones are very useful and more would be a plus
- Improvement of access by bicycle it's the only way a person can get around. There are places where you have to negotiate fences.
- Viewing screen to be placed in the NE corner of Neatholme Scrape and SE of Neatholme Pit and Cross Lane Marsh.

### Other

- A reserve map showing all the footpaths
- Car park a must with access
- Raised area overlooking Blaco at the northern end of Neatholme Pit
- Security and gates/fences across main access tracks.
- Paths (preferably circular) from Chainbridge Lane around Cross Lane and Back via river to Chainbridge Wood.
- The NWT website is very poor regarding info about the reserve.

### 3. More management

- More willow scrub removed
- Where possible water levels to be lowered to expose muddy margins to attract wading birds
- Manage water levels, wader scrapes
- Lowering of water levels generally, or at least on one pit, to make site attractive to waders as it used to be.
- Ability to adjust water levels on some areas of Neatholme Pit.
- Tern rafts/islands
- A specific wader scrape on one pit. Water levels lowered on all pits.
- Less pruning of hedges – only for safety i.e. telegraph wires.
- Notice boards and maps to inform general public . The LBC website is great – but only if you are a birder in the club – visitors may not know about website.
- More policing regarding motorbikes
- Continued grazing of all areas
- Removal of willow coppicing
- More wader habitat
- Keeping motorcycles away and stop fly tipping
- One Pit where the water levels can be controlled for wader habitat
- Just more of the same, especially willow clearing round the edges of lakes
- Dog management
- More permnant full time staff
- Enroll a volunteer to run a weekend facility for visitors i.e. shops/ Café

7

- I think you are doing a great job but you must not overdevelop the site like Potteric Carr!
- The only viewing screens where the slots are big enough and in the right position (for me!) are the old Chainbridge Scrape and the one at the corner of Neatholme Lane, the rest are no good.
- I have been in the Rural Learning Centre one. I want to know:
  - a) Can I park there any time or does a barrier get closed when no staff are present?
  - b) Can I just walk into the building and use the facilities?
- Would it be possible to produce a map of the site with correct names of scrapes and paths for ref for members.
- Idle Valley reserve dosent seem to be known nationally (whe we meet other birders) or locally. They need signposts too please.
- There is still lots to do but I have confidence in you and your team to make Lound/IVNR a fantastic nature reserve. Keep up the good work.
- I think James has done some good work over the whole site in the time he has been here. Unfortunatly some of the work has over run which potentially affecting breeding activity.
- I would like to see less felling of mature trees unless the y propose a safety hazard.
- I think the attempts at a reed bed are ill conceived.
- I think the members should report incidents
- Disabled access is none existent you would have to improve access like at potteric carr or Attenborough to open the site up to disabled visitors and maybe parking area along Chainbridge for disabled visitors.
- I would like to congratulate you on the improvements in recent times.

- I believe attention to detail is required when providing physical barriers to motorcyclists.
- I think that reeds will develop naturally without introduction at Lingham Pit. This has recently been the best wader habitat prior to water levels being allowed to rise.
- If the level of water is lowered (which could be facilitated by reducing the level in the outfall ditch at Wildgoose) this area would again be attractive to waders/terns.
- The introduction by NWT of grazing animals is a giant step forward in controlling willow growth.
- The access should be left in a reasonable state on completion of works notably Blaco boundary.
- Work done so far is of a good standard.
- There is lots of simple improvements still to be done. An example is access to viewing screens. The one on Chainbridge Lane needs widening and better seating to replace the poor seating.

#### 16. General

- Hopefully the recent improvements will continue and the improvement in maintenance is ongoing
- Some very good work done at Lound looks better each time I go.
- In the main you have done a good job around the site. Ponds could do with being a little more wader friendly.
- Don't want to see too many facilities, it should be more about habitat management
- Overall James has done a great job in a short time – illegal fishing has been greatly reduced, the introduction of livestock around various pits is very welcome and there appears to be more birdwatchers regularly visiting the site now
- Have access to toilets and opportunity to sit down in warm with a hot drink
- I feel it needs a central location for an information centre/hut i.e. Chainbridge Lane Area.
- There is a need of one pit as a wader scrape. More work needs to be done lowering water levels throughout the site.
- Notice boards and maps round whole place for visitors, bird sightings board etc. Better paths for all.
- More deterrent put in place to prevent motor cyclist accessing the site.
- Control of water levels
- Better and more signs giving directions.
- A purpose built, free standing notice board in a central location.
- There needs to be a visitor facility and the rural learning centre is I believe suitable for this purpose at weekends. This was a key point raised in the feasibility study and still not delivered.