

# GROWING TOGETHER REPORT

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# INTRODUCTION

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Growing Together aims to connect people and communities with UK's heritage. It focuses specifically on underrepresented communities in the Surrey Hills countryside and increasing their connection through nature-based activities that focus on developing skills, improving health and wellbeing, and building confidence.

Working together with three key partners, Surrey Minority Ethnic Forum, Surrey Coalition of Disabled People, and Surrey Choices, Grow Together has set out to achieve the following.

## Project Outcomes

The Growing Together Project set out to achieve three clear outcomes:

- 1** A wider range of people will be involved in heritage.
- 2** Participants will have developed heritage skills.
- 3** Participants will have greater wellbeing.

This marker will be throughout the results of the report to identify which results support these outcomes.



**Outcome  
1**

# WHAT IS HERITAGE?

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**Heritage is comprised of three types:**

- **Built – historical sites, buildings, objects**
- **Natural – native wildlife, woodlands, waterways**
- **Cultural – crafts and skills, literature, dance**

Heritage plays a significant role in creating a sense of community and enhancing individual wellbeing. Engaging with and learning about heritage encourages people to preserve shared traditions and sites that connect them to their history, culture, and place.

In addition such social benefits, heritage contributes to environmental sustainability. Learning about, and engaging with natural heritage encourages the preservation of natural spaces, helping native wildlife, woodlands and waterways. Through engaging community in natural heritage, appreciation for native wildlife can be fostered.

Furthermore, heritage supports the economy by attracting visitors and creating opportunities for days out. The maintenance and promotion of heritage sites creates jobs, volunteering opportunities, and generates income, highlighting the importance of heritage as a economic asset.

# GROWING TOGETHER SESSIONS

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The project evaluated the impact of engagement with a range of heritage activities on participants skills, connectedness and wellbeing.

In total 79 sessions took place between 24<sup>th</sup> June 2024 – 1<sup>st</sup> October 2025. This report focuses on sessions between March and September 2025.

Sessions mainly comprised of natural or cultural heritage. There were fewer built heritage sessions. However, some natural and cultural heritage sessions took place on built heritage sites.

Both natural and cultural sessions focused on skills development. Natural heritage skills included identification skills of plant species, insects, and birds, as well as gardening. The latter was a part of the most frequent sessions carried out at the Denbies Community Hub. Cultural sessions focused on heritage skills such as felting, poetry and cyanotype.

Session Types	Number	% of Sessions
Cultural Heritage	21 Sessions	26.5%
Natural Heritage	56 Sessions	71%
Built Heritage	2 Session	2.5%

# LIST OF SESSIONS

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Session Name	Number of Sessions
Forest Bathing	2
Denbies Community Garden	26
Flower Pressing Crafts	1
Self-Film Storytelling	1
Birding	6
Field Guide to Autumn	1
Fungi Fun	1
Halow Garden Session	8
Honey Talk	1
West Horsley Place Tour	1
Willow Weaving	1
Tree Planting	1
Hedge Planting	1
CRP Online Trip & Planning	1
Woodland & Word Walking	3
Cyanotype	1
Cobbing	3
Diorama	1
Costume and Camouflage	2
Clay Workshop	1
Surrey Hills for Shaws Trust and Migrant Help	2
Try the Train Presentation & Walk	2
4X4 Safari	1
Felting	1
Moth Morning	1
Planter at Dorking Deepdene	1
Intro to Volunteering	1
Nature Calling	1
Rowing	2
Volunteering with CRT	1
Access Audit	1
Woodfair	1
Shalford Ramble	1

# MAP OF LOCATIONS

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Above is a map of the Surrey Hills, with orange pins showing locations of the sessions from the previous list.

# HOW WE MEASURED OUTCOMES

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A survey was created for the study. The questions in the survey were phrased as statements, which participants could strongly disagree to strongly agree with. All were measured on a 5 point scale. The questions were split into four sections: wellbeing during the sessions, wellbeing after the sessions, new skills learned and perceived ease of access to similar places.

Question Sections	No. of Questions
Wellbeing During	7
Wellbeing Post	7
Skills	3
Ease of Access	3

Participants were asked to complete the survey at the efollowing the sessions, completion of the surveys was voluntary.

# RESULTS: PARTICIPANTS

Across the whole project 592 participations were recorded. The table below gives an indication of the characteristics of those participants.

## Total Participation

Group	Number	% of Group
Disability	66	11%
Learning Disability	168	28%
Minority Ethnic Background	229	38%
Mental Health	133	22%

## Survey Participant Information

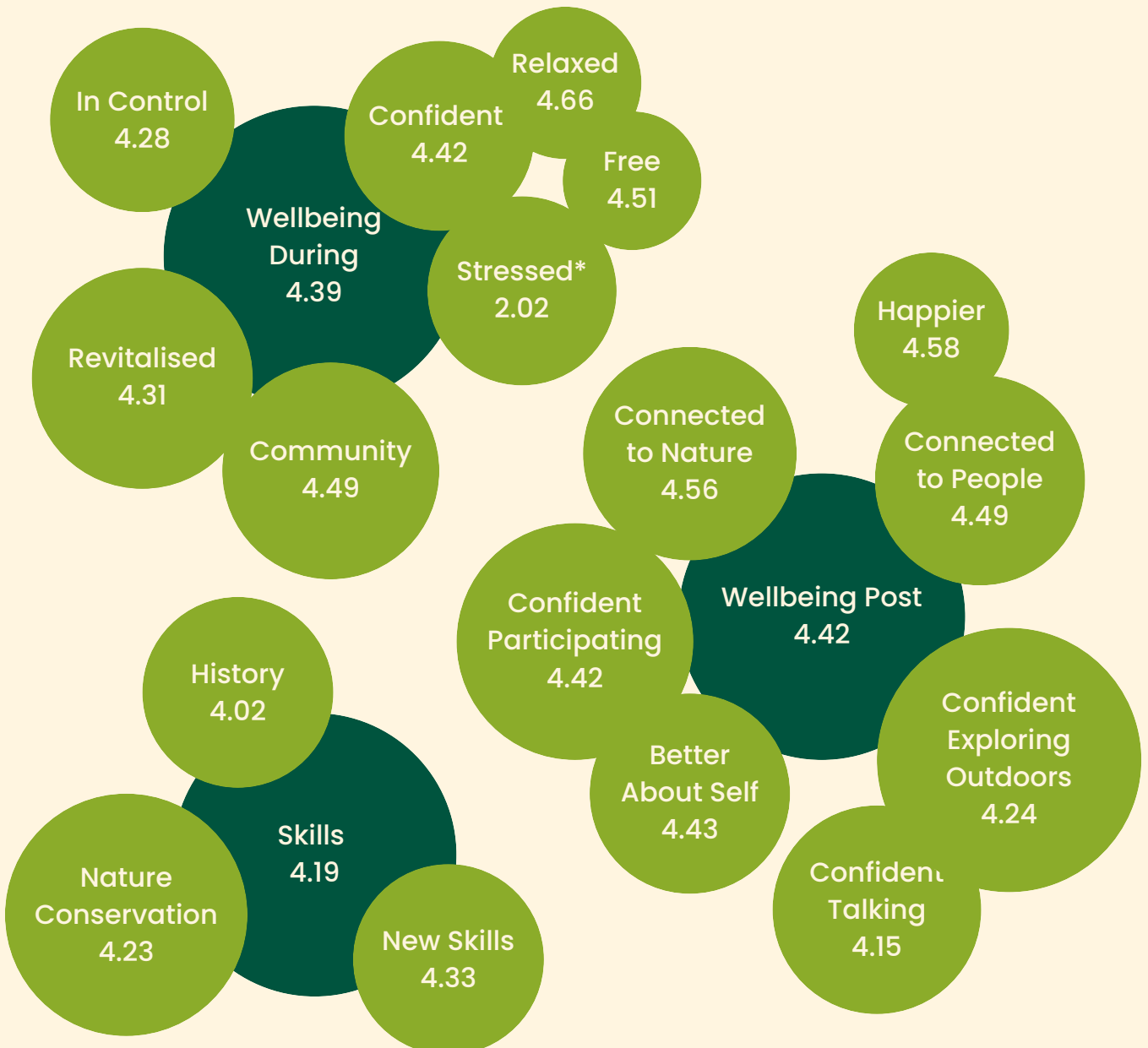
In total 70 surveys were completed. The age range of participants was 18 – 76, demonstrating a broad age range of people were reached. The anonymous data collected does not provide further detail of the participant characteristics.

Gender	Number	% of Group
Female	40	57%
Male	26	37%
Prefer not to say	2	2.8%
Missing	2	2.8%



# RESULTS : DESCRIPTIVES

The figures below show the mean scores out of 5, these can be used as a general overview of how the sessions impacted participants, Further analysis have been carried out to investigate differences between groups, sessions types, and time. Overall, scores are high (1 = lowest, 5 - highest), indicating that sessions support wellbeing during and after sessions, as well as development of skills.



*\*this low score indicates lower levels of stress during the sessions*

# RESULTS: EASE OF ACCESS

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Questions of the access to the space shed light on the ease of access locations (1 = very difficult to access, 5 = very easy to access), and the likeliness that participants would return (1 = very unlikely, 5 = very likely). The below table shows the scores of 10 locations from the survey. They are organised in most to last, based on average of these two scores.

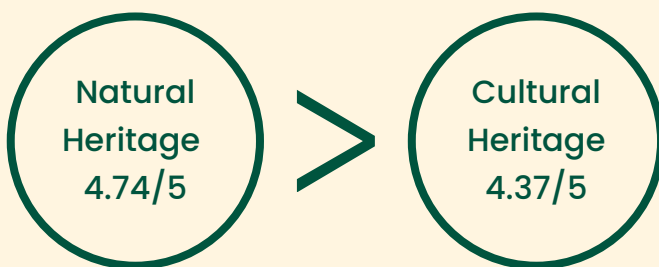
Locations	Return Score	Ease of Access
Nower Wood	5.00	4.40
Frensham Pond	5.00	4.14
Denbies	4.75	4.25
Guildford	4.50	4.20
Fluffatorium	5.00	3.67
Boxhill	5.00	3.50
Watts Gallery	4.25	4.00
Newlands Corner	4.41	3.81
Devils Punchowl	4.40	3.25
Leith Hill	3.83	3.00

# RESULTS: COMPARISON OF SESSION TYPES

Further analyses were conducted to examine if there was a difference in outcomes (wellbeing and skills acquired) between the natural heritage and the cultural heritage sessions. The table shows that natural sessions performed better than cultural, with wellbeing during and post and skills being significantly higher in natural heritage sessions than cultural sessions.

Session Types	Number	Wellbeing During	Wellbeing Post	Skills
Natural Heritage	23	4.86/5	4.86/5	4.67/5
Cultural Heritage	47	4.43/5	4.71/5	4.00/5

These results indicate that there are some differences between the benefits of wellbeing during natural versus cultural heritage session; with the former being more beneficial. However, the differences were small and both types of activities had strong positive effects. It is worth noting that no scores were less than 4 out of 5, aside from stress which has low scores indicating low stress levels.



Additionally, natural sessions were rated more likely to participate in the activity again than cultural, but both mean scores were high.

# RESULTS : COMPARISON OF GROUPS

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Next we explored whether the impact of the interventions on wellbeing and skills development differed between groups of participants, specifically different underrepresented groups. Some of the activity groups included primarily participants with poor mental health, from ethnic minority backgrounds or with registered physical and mental disabilities.

Activities were grouped based on this data. Survey data from participants who engaged in activities where participants came from a mix of backgrounds or where that data was not known were excluded from this analysis. This meant we compared survey data from 54 (out of 70) participants.

Groups	Number
Minority Ethnic Background	16
Mental Health	11
Disability	17

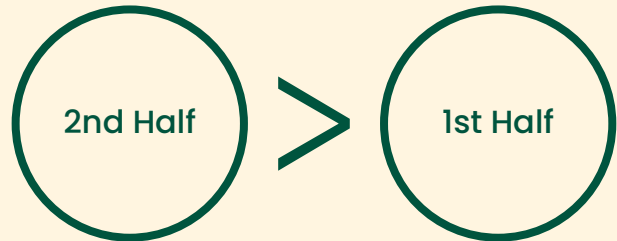
The results suggest that participants who engaged in an activity that included primarily people who with a disability were slightly more positive across all reported experiences than the other two groups. Participants who were part of a group that involved primarily people with poor mental health reported the least positive experiences. However, these differences were small and overall reported experiences were very positive.

	Wellbeing During	Wellbeing Post	Skills
<b>1 Disability</b>	4.86	5.00	4.33
<b>2 Ethnic Minority Background</b>	4.23	4.79	4.17
<b>3 Mental Health</b>	4.14	3.93	4.00

These results indicate that disability groups gained the most for wellbeing during sessions but there was no significant difference in benefits. Indicating that the sessions have had a similarly positive impact on all groups.

# RESULTS : COMPARISON ACROSS TIME

To investigate how the sessions impacted people across time, the first half and second half of the project were compared.



Wellbeing after the sessions was significantly higher in the 2nd half than the 1st. This was the case for all but one of the statements (better about self).

Session Types	Wellbeing During	Wellbeing Post	Skills
1st Half	4.57/5	4.57/5	4.33/5
Second Half	4.43/5	4.86/5	4.33/5

While wellbeing during sessions were slightly higher in the 1st time chunk, compared to the 2nd, the difference was not significant. There was no change in skills across time either.

Post-session wellbeing scores were significantly higher in the later sessions, indicating an increase in reported wellbeing over time. Wellbeing during sessions stayed consistent throughout. Additionally, no change in skills may be due to skills being varied rather than consistently the same. As a result, it's expected that skills wouldn't necessarily increase, but rather new skills developed. This may be indicated by average scores of skills being high in the descriptives.

# OUTCOMES

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## Overall, the project has met the three outcomes:

**1**

**A wider range of people will be involved in heritage.**

The tables on the results page demonstrate that a wide range of groups have been involved in the sessions, indicating the project has met this outcome.

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**2**

**People will have developed skills**

Skills may be the lowest scores comparatively to wellbeing, the high scores still indicate that new skills, and knowledge of natural conservation and history have been developed.

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**3**

**People will have greater wellbeing**

This is indicated by the greater wellbeing scores post activity in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half than 1<sup>st</sup>, and general high scores out of 5 in descriptives and comparisons.

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# REFERENCES

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