

Little Ouseburn Village Hall CIO Consultation Exercise Summary January 2019

In January 2019 the Trustees of the Little Ouseburn Village Hall CIO delivered to each household in the Parish of Little Ouseburn, Kirby Hall and Thorpe Underwood a consultation document. The purpose of the document was to measure the view of the villages' residents regarding the attractiveness, importance and potential future uses of the Village Hall.

As well as gaining an insight into residents' views the document was intended to give the Trustees a mandate to pursue appropriate funding to support and sustain the Village Hall into the future.

The survey was created after a review of similar surveys carried out in other villages and after a guidance meeting with a representative of Community First Yorkshire.

This summary gives an analysis of the key findings of the consultation. The data it refers to is contained in a spreadsheet that consolidates the responses of each of the residents who returned the survey. This spreadsheet is available for detailed inspection on request within the confines of GDPR .

Findings:

Response rate

- Survey forms were distributed to **139** households in the Little Ouseburn , Kirby Hall and Thorpe Underwood villages.
- Responses were received from **68** households representing a **49%** survey return rate.
- Those responding households have a total of **162** inhabitants, both adults and persons under 18 (138 and 24 respectively). This represents **61%** of the villages' population.¹

The survey questions

The survey asked for a response to 20 ideas for usage of the hall with an indication of interest expressed as 'No', 'Maybe' or 'Yes'. Opportunity was given for those surveyed to suggest additional ideas. Below are charts, which show the comparative interest in these 19 ideas. Other suggested ideas are also listed.

¹ Population 264 – Census 2011

In addition the survey canvassed opinion on the use of the hall's facilities. These responses were received as free text submissions and a summary appears below.

The survey further asked if those responding would be willing to become actively involved in assisting with the Village Hall's running or activities and if they had any specific skills and/or experience which they would be willing to offer.

Finally the survey asked for a view on whether the Village Hall should be retained as a community centre.

Response to questions

If account is taken of only those responses where a definitive 'Yes' was given as an expression of interest in a suggested activity then the chart below demonstrates that only one activity holds interest for more 50% or more of those responding.

Number of responses indicating an outright "Yes" as an interest in the suggested activities	
Fundraising Events	58%
Local History	49%
Live Music	48%
Yoga	47%
Cinema Club	45%
Coffee Mornings	43%
Wine Tasting Club	41%
Gardening Club	38%
Cookery Classes	38%
Keep Fit	38%
Pilates	34%
Dance Lessons	29%
Photography	25%
Lectures	23%
Children's Activities	23%
Senior Citizen's Group	22%
Computer & Phone Tutorials	22%
Foreign Languages	20%
Off road parking at night	18%
Drama	18%

The above results take no account of responses where someone may have a willingness to explore or a curiosity in the activity suggested. If we include into the above responses those who indicated “Maybe” then we see that fourteen of the activities suggested could appeal to 50% or more of those who responded.

Number of responses where both “Yes” and “Maybe” were given as an interest in the suggested activities	
Live Music	85%
Cinema Club	80%
Fundraising Events	78%
Local History	78%
Yoga	72%
Coffee Mornings	68%
Lectures	68%
Wine Tasting Club	67%
Cookery Classes	66%
Dance Lessons	64%
Gardening Club	63%
Keep Fit	62%
Pilates	60%
Foreign Languages	50%
Photography	43%
Computer and Phone Tutorials	39%
Drama	38%
Children’s Activities	38%
Senior Citizens’ Group	33%
Off Road Parking at Night	27%

When asked for alternative ideas for activities and uses for the Village Hall the following suggestions were made:

- Bridge or Whist events
- Badminton
- Therapies or massage
- Transformation into a Gastro Pub
- Stamp Collecting
- Horse Racing
- Book Club, Free Library
- Quizzes
- Transformation into a gastro-pub
- Art Classes
- The establishment of a local trading currency
- Art Classes
- Rural Arts Plays

The response to the survey suggestions of activities is encouraging. Several of the suggested activities are potentially easy to organise and offer, some less so. It is also interesting to know that where responders were asked to indicate where they may be able to provide assistance through their experience and /or expertise there were several matches with those activities offered by both the survey and suggestions offered:

- Wine Tasting
- Contacts who run children's groups
- Horticultural issues
- Marketing and social media
- Fitness Instructor
- Computer & mobile phone tutorials
- Bridge evenings
- Handicrafts

History of usage

In terms of history of usage of the Hall the position was split almost 50/50 with half of responders having previously hired the Hall for parties, events etc., and whilst 50% hadn't used the Hall before 25% would give serious consideration to using it as a venue resource should the opportunity arise and should the Hall be made more attractive as a venue.

The provision of other facilities

A question posed by the survey sought to gain an understanding from the responders whether they thought that the provision of a number of facilities such as a meeting/training room for 12/15 people, internet access or office space would be useful to them. Only 10% responded positively to one or more of these ideas.

Willingness of villagers to take on the organisation of new group activities at the Hall

This area of survey received a lukewarm response with only 15% of responders expressing a willingness to take on an start up role for new activities, however within these small numbers came offers to run a wine tasting club, mobile phone/computing classes, a pop up café, a treasure hunt and bridge evenings.

The importance of the Hall to the village communities

With the exception of one responder, who was unsure, all expressed an enthusiasm to see the Hall thrive and be continue in strength in the future. Their views recognised the desire for the community to gather together and for the hall to be the active focal point. A selection of the 49 comments that were made is listed below:

- *“ Its an issue of history, we would like a place to socialise in the village...”*
- *“The hall provides a focal point in the community and provides a means of meeting others...”*
- *“It’s the only place to meet for various events...”*
- *“It is a critical resource...”*
- *“Yes its important to keep it but only if the community supports it and that is not usually the case...”*
- *“A village needs a hall otherwise its just a group of houses where no-one talks to each other...”*
- *“Yes, the hall should be retained. It brings people together and gives the village a focal point and a heart...”*
- *“If we lose it, we lose it forever. It is important to keep the village community going...”*
- *“I think it is very important as there is no other place to meet, especially when the pub eventually closes...”*
- *“It is the only communal facility in the village. Without it Open Gardens will fold...”*
- *“Yes, it’s the only place left open where the community can come together...”*
- *“As long standing residents we strongly believe that the village hall should be retained for the village...”*
- *“Yes, retain. Its an important building. As a focal point for the village community and a useful asset for private hire...”*
- *“Yes, without a community hub there is no opportunity for people to come together and socialize...”*
- *“If the community wishes, it would be great to have a community centre...”*
- *“Yes, for people to come together, for people to get out and about, to educate, have happy times etc...”*

- *“Yes retain it. I found the Hall very helpful as a newcomer to LO. People have been friendly and welcoming...”*
- *“Yes, in a linear village the hall serves to bring people together; I think that is important...”*

Other relevant comments

There was comment from some respondents that the current state of fit-out and general appearance was in need of some serious attention:

- *“The hall requires serious maintenance and improvement if it is to be a viable and sustainable resource for the village...”*
- *“The kitchen and hall interior need a professional makeover...”*
- *“It needs a new user friendly and aesthetically pleasing layout, particularly the kitchen...”*

Conclusions

The survey response was most encouraging – not only in the number of responses that were submitted but also from the ideas and support that were evidenced. The most predominant message that came across was the strong affection felt for the Village Hall that is held in the villages and the recognition that it must not be allowed to decline and potentially lose its ability to sustain itself.

A number of key messages seem to come forward from the survey:

- There is a need to develop more activities to offer the community, a community that is expressing a willingness to come together.
- The Hall is not as attractive as it could be and this is perhaps not encouraging the community to use the hall as a resource for their own private use or indeed to attract them to events already taking place.
- The décor, appearance and current functionality of the Hall is potentially a disincentive for it to be used as a venue for those outside the immediate community.

The information supplied by those who responded will be closely examined by the Trustees and used to formulate a strategy for the Hall and to prioritise spend and activity. It will also be used as a basis to seek support from organisations like Community First Yorkshire to develop a funding plan to ensure that the fabric as well as the usage of the building is properly cared for and maintained.

Some of the actions going forward should perhaps consider the following:

- How to create a development plan that is responsive to the expressed needs and opinions of the community.
- How to prioritise and schedule the component parts of that plan.
- How best to use the funds already in the Village Hall's possession in the pursuit of the development plan.
- How to obtain funding to enable the more substantial parts of the plan to be realized.
- How to communicate the development process and funding to the community that the Village Hall serves.