

WINCHELSEA NEW HALL SURVEY 2016

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (6 June 2016)

A survey of Winchelsea residents and Winchelsea New Hall users was carried out in April 2016, using the online survey system LimeSurvey (see Appendix 1 for results). The aims were to: understand the future needs of the hall; find areas that will increase usage; see if there were any factors stopping people using the hall; collate problems which need addressing; make sure everyone's voices are heard; to generate interest in the hall; and to encourage people to attend follow-up consultations.

The limitations of the survey mean that answers do not necessarily give the whole picture and do not allow for nuances, so care must be given when reading the results.

There were 74 respondents, of whom 71 completed the survey. Overall the response was largely positive, with most of the hall's attributes considered okay or good. There was no clear definition of okay, so there is some ambiguity with this word option. Of particular significance to the New Hall Management Committee is that cleanliness had a majority response of 'good' and the most 'excellents' (8) in any section - weekly cleaning is a significant expense for the New Hall. However, on the negative side there were a few respondents who thought it was poor and listed it as a deterrent so this needs to be investigated in more depth, but it is likely to be easily resolved given the number of positive views.

There were a large diversity of problems and improvements noted and it is easy to understand how a management committee may become overwhelmed by such disparity of needs and wishes. The most significant problems listed were accessibility issues, including: hearing problems, wheelchair/walker accessibility through the front door and to the toilets. The most diverse area was the kitchen, where people varied between happy with it, wanting a spruce-up, or fundamental changes. Limitations of the survey mean we do not know if those who are happy or discontent are kitchen users or not.

In terms of future use of the hall, badminton and table tennis had a number of representatives. Other than this, there were not many specific items listed which could be used to generate new hirers. Most people felt fundraising events were the best way to raise money for the hall. Some people showed an interest in becoming members of the hall and these people need to be followed up. Although many people said they would support an increase in hire costs, it is not known if they are hirers (who may have a different view), especially as two people listed hiring cost as a deterrent.

Inhibitors to people using the hall (ordered by most number of responses) include: equipment, which can be equated to the sound system and hearing issues; the temperature being too cold and the look and feel of the hall; the kitchen facilities; car parking; cleanliness; seating; accessibility; hall price and booking system; and licensing restrictions.

Section 4 of this report (and appendix 4) gives details of future actions which could be considered by the Management Committee and notes problem areas that have already been addressed, such as a new sound system and hearing loop, grab rails in the toilets, and a clean and tidy up.

So in summary, people are generally pleased with the hall as an asset. There are issues with accessibility, the kitchen and decoration. Other than these there are a large range of issues which could be resolved, some more easily than others, to improve the hall for users and encourage more use. A number of people would like badminton/table tennis to be available in the hall.

WINCHELSEA NEW HALL SURVEY

FULL REPORT

A survey of Winchelsea residents and Winchelsea New Hall users was carried out in April 2016, using the online survey system LimeSurvey.

1. Introduction

Winchelsea Town is a historic settlement with approximately 250 houses, with a mix of full-time and part-time residents. Although officially a town, it's size is similar to a village. There are several villages surrounding Winchelsea, all with their own village hall, and to the east is the port town of Rye. The Rye and surrounding catchment area is unusual, in that it mixes both ends of the wealth strata.

In November 2015 an amended constitution and operating procedures were ratified for Winchelsea Village Hall (known as Winchelsea New Hall). A majority change of members of the management committee occurred. One of the new management committee members was a retired architect and able to assess the building and understand upcoming repairs which would be necessary. There was a need to increase usage of the hall to pay for general upkeep and repairs; and also a need to fundraise for substantial costs, such as up-coming roof repairs.

The management committee was aware of issues that generated debate. A questionnaire, followed by consultation, was considered an inclusive way to assess all the towns wishes. Benefits of this approach included: transparent process; identification of problems; potential solutions; inclusivity; and providing the management committee with a useful steer.

Aims of the survey included:

1. To understand the future needs of the hall
2. To find areas that will increase usage
3. To see if there were any factors stopping people using the hall
4. To collate problems which need addressing
5. To make sure everyone's voices are heard
6. To generate interest in the hall
7. To encourage people to attend follow-up consultations

2. Methodology

Parameters

The survey was carried out in two formats: online and paper. A letter was put through the letterboxes of all Winchelsea residents to let them know about the survey. People were encouraged to complete the survey online or to pick up a paper survey from the local shop or hall while attending events. Other users were included where possible eg. via their hall user group. Completed paper surveys could be returned to the local shop and these would be input manually by the promoter.

Limitations

Quantitative surveys are limited in the quality of information they retrieve and rely heavily on the quality of the questions. Initially this questionnaire was restricted to 10 questions by the online survey's free service. However frustrations with this led to the survey provider being changed at the

last minute. This enabled additional questions but retained the limitations of the original survey, eg. age not being included. A couple of minor inaccuracies also crept in at this stage: the printed version included 'space' as an option to grade, but not in the online version. Any 'space' responses from completed paper questionnaires were not inputted into the survey database.

Limitations of the survey include not reaching potential hirers; or groups which don't normally use the hall, as they felt no vested interest in the hall to complete the survey. The biggest identifiable group in this category is families. Most of the hall users are retirees.

A management committee member went to the local church market and encouraged people to complete the form, over tea and coffee and a chat. Many people expressed an unwillingness to complete the questionnaire for a variety of reasons: they had no problems with the hall; they only used the hall very occasionally so did not feel it was worth their time; and they did not like completing surveys. Of those that attempted the survey three were incomplete because they stopped as soon as they encountered a question which was not relevant to them.

So the survey is more likely to reflect users who have specific problems which they wish to address. This is also reflected in some small scale lobbying which was evidenced.

Questionnaire

Questions focused on the following areas:

1. The level of satisfaction with different areas of the hall
2. Improvements which would encourage usage
3. Additional facilities/activities which would encourage usage
4. The ways and willingness of people to aid funding improvements
5. Raising awareness and attendance of a follow-on consultation process

A mixture of approaches was taken: simple yes/no tick boxes; matrices; graded responses (excellent, good, ok, poor and bad); open and closed lists; open questions for suggestions.

These were produced using an online tool: LimeSurvey. Each question was presented on it's own page, with a 'next' button progressing respondents through the survey. A copy of this was turned into a two-page paper questionnaire and left in the local shop and on display and in the hall.

Respondents were asked to leave their address details if they wanted to attend the consultation or would like details of being a 'friend' and making an annual donation.

3 uncompleted on-line surveys have been included, because although the submit button hadn't been pressed, two people said they had abandoned the online survey as soon as they found a question which did not relate to them, so it was felt valuable to include the answers they had contributed.

3. Results

No of respondents: 74

No of fully completed: 71

No of uncompleted: 3

(See Appendix 1 for a summary of results.)

Question 1. Location

80% of respondents were residents; 8% were non-permanent residents; and 11% were non-residents.

Question 2. Usage.

The majority, 26 (35%), of users who responded to the survey used the hall monthly. 21 people (28%) used it quarterly; 17 people (23%) use it weekly; and 7 people (9%) used it annually. 1 person had never used the hall.

Question 3. Future funding.

The majority, 49 people (67%), would like to attend fundraising events for the New Hall. 26 people (36%) thought hire charges could increase; and 17 people (23%) would like to make a donation through membership. Other responses included applying for grants/to trusts; charging non-winchelsea residents more; using residents donated professional expertise; encouraging legacies; and setting up a lottery with someone who will act as a New Hall Ranger to generate sales and administer.

Question 4. Future events. (A multiple suggestion question)

The top two picks were stage entertainment 68% and celebrations 61%. A further 6 suggestions ranged from 44% to 50% in popularity.

Space was given for people to make their own detailed suggestions. 17 people responded with a wide range of interest areas. The most common suggestion was badminton (5). Other areas included: table tennis, gardening, culture, music, theatre, art, keep fit, travel, dance (salsa, discos), snooker/billiards, cinema. (See Appendix 2)

Question 5. Inhibiting factors. (A multiple suggestion question)

The biggest factor stopping/deterring people from using the hall was equipment, affecting 11 respondents. The limitations of the question mean we do not know definitely what was meant by this. We do know that two of three respondents who listed equipment and accessibility as a problem deterring them, stated in 'other' that hearing was a problem.

8 respondents listed the temperature (too cold) and the look and feel of the hall as deterrents. Other deterrents include: kitchen facilities (7), car parking (6) cleanliness (5), seating (4), accessibility (3), hall price (2), booking system (2) licensing restrictions (1).

Question 6. Rating the hall. (A fixed value matrix)

(See Appendix 3)

Cleanliness

The majority, 36 (51%), listed the **cleanliness** of the hall as **good**. 21 people (30%) said it was okay; 8 people (11%) said it was excellent; 4 people (5%) said it was poor; and 1 person said it was bad.

Decoration

The majority, 34 people (48%), thought the **decoration** was **okay**. 19 (27%) people thought it was good; 10 people (14%) thought it was poor; 4 people (5%) thought it was bad; and 2 people (3%) thought it was excellent.

Lighting

The majority, 36 people (51%), of people thought the **lighting** was **okay**. 21 people (30%) thought it was good; 9 people (13%) thought it was poor or bad. Specific reasons for the latter were given for this in feedback areas: a light in the kitchen, and the hall lights at the side semi-blocked.

Sound equipment

There was a mixed response. 19 people (27%) thought the **sound equipment** was **good/excellent**, while 17 people (24%) thought it was **poor/bad**. 12 (17%) said it was okay; and 23 people (32%) did not answer this question or said it was not applicable. This reflects feedback elsewhere that the sound system was limiting for those with hearing impediments.

Sprung floor

The majority, 23 people (31%), thought the **floor** was **good**; 16 people (23%) thought it was okay; 5 people (7%) thought it was excellent; and 1 person thought it was poor. 26 people (36%) did not answer or ticked not applicable.

Temperature control

The majority, 30 people (42%), thought the **temperature** was **okay**. 20 people (28%) thought it was poor; 13 (18%) people thought it was good; 2 people (3%) thought it was excellent; and 1 bad. 5 people did not respond.

Question 7. Rating facilities. (A fixed value matrix)

(See Appendix 3)

Exterior

The majority, 37 people (52%), thought the **exterior** was **okay**. 19 people thought it was good (26%); 10 people (14%) thought it was poor; and 1 person thought it was excellent. 4 people did not answer.

Kitchen

The majority, 25 people (35%) thought the **kitchen** was **okay**. 18 people (25%) thought it was good; 12 people (17%) thought it was poor. 8 people (11%) thought it was bad and 2 (3%) people thought it was excellent. 6 people did not answer.

Main hall

The majority, 32 people (45%), thought the **hall** was **good**; 30 people (42%) thought it was okay; 4 people (6%) thought it was poor; and 2 (3%) people thought it was excellent. 3 people did not answer.

Stage

The majority, 38 people (54%), said the **stage** was **okay**. 18 people (25%) said it was good; 3 people (4%) said it was poor; and 1 person said it was excellent. 11 people (15%) did not answer.

Toilets

The majority, 38 people (54%), said the **toilets** were **okay**. 21 people (30%) said they were good; 7 people (10%) said they were poor; and 1 person each said they were bad and excellent. 3 people did not answer. This reflects feedback elsewhere that the toilets were limiting for people with mobility difficulties.

Q8 & Q9 Improvement and additional facility suggestions

(See Appendix 2)

A brief summary of the collation is given here:

Question 8 asked what you would most like to improve about the hall. **Question 9** asked if there was anything you think would be a good addition to the hall. Two spaces were given for each question. The answers are collated and attached separately (Appendix 2), along with the answer to **Question 4b**.

There were 36 listings for 8 different *accessibility issues*, the main one being hearing. Others included wheelchair/walker access to the hall and toilets; grab rails; parking; lighting; and heat.

There were 69 listings for *improvements/new facilities*, of which 47 were about improvements or

new facilities for the kitchen. Others included improving/adding: toilets, stage lighting, visual projection facilities, cloakroom, bar and sound system. A significant number (12) people suggested improving the sound system, and may reflect the number of people who felt the hall equipment was poor (Q5 inhibiting factors).

There were 34 listings for improvements/new facilities to *improve the appearance* of the hall. 9 listings each were given for improving the decoration and new blinds/curtains. Other mentions include improved cloakroom, seating, bin area, decking and exterior landscaping.

Sport. There were 9 listings for badminton and 5 for table tennis, with mentions for dance, keep fit, basketball and snooker/billiards.

Event suggestions had 12 listing and were mainly general and very varied with none attracting more than two recommendations.

A section labelled '*other*' reflects a diverse range of desire for improvement/facilities with 30 mentions spread over 18 items. Most had one or two mentions with the largest number being 8 for improvements to the front doors for either accessibility, noise or heating.

Question 10 Consultations

24 people said they would like to participate in the kitchen consultation. 15 people each said they would like to participate in the main hall and other facilities. 12 people said they would like to participate in the stage consultation. Of those that said they were interested some did not leave contact addresses.

Question 11 New Hall membership

22 not answered. 38 people (54%) expressed an interest in becoming a member of the New Hall. 14 people (20%) said no; and 18 people (26%) did not answer.

4. Interpretation & Action

(See Appendix 4 for summary of action points.)

We know from experience that most hall users are mature local residents and the hall is used for a range of activities on a weekly, seasonal and one-off basis.

Future fundraising

The majority of people would like to support the hall through attending specific fundraising events. Although many people said they would be happy to see hall hire costs increased, it is unknown if they are actual hirers of the hall and whether hirers views are different.

Future action: Look at various methods of increasing income from events. Explore hirers views of increased costs, particularly as 2 respondents viewed cost as an inhibitor to using the hall.

Future events

Stage entertainment and celebration events need to be considered as a way forward for maximising use of the hall. This information could benefit local fundraisers who organise events and stage-based companies/organisations. Questions 8 & 10 had a group of people list badminton and table tennis as new facilities they would like.

Future action: Provide information to attract relevant areas; investigate badminton and table tennis; ask the community to include the New Hall as a beneficiary of fundraising events; hold specific fundraising events.

Inhibitors

Accessibility is a fundamental issue. The hall has a majority of mature users, with many retirees. Abilities such as eyesight and hearing deteriorate gradually from the age of 40yrs and this is reflected in the survey responses. Other factors include less mobility and consequently self-generated warmth, making access, parking, seating and heating all issues.

Future action: A full accessibility audit. Accessibility is seen as a priority and as such the management committee have:

- 1. installed a hearing loop and accompanying new sound equipment*
- 2. programmed the heating on a weekly basis, with the heating due to come on two hours before usage.*
- 3. installed grab rails*

Other areas which need to be investigated include:

- 1. improved lighting*
- 2. accessible entrance doors*

Other inhibitors include the kitchen (addressed elsewhere) and the booking system (to be addressed with a new website)

Rating the hall

Cleanliness

An overwhelming number of people thought the cleanliness of the hall was good, ok and excellent. 5 respondents graded the cleanliness of the hall as poor (4) or bad (1). This corresponds to 5 people listing cleanliness as a deterrent.

Future action. Investigate issues that create a poor and bad review? Improve cleanliness from okay to good?

Decoration

The majority of people thought the hall decoration was ok or good. A few people were at either extremes of bad or excellent and 8 people listed the look and feel of the hall as a deterrent.

Future action: A designer has been sourced to offer advice.

Lighting

The majority found the lighting okay or good. A significant number of people (9) had issues with lighting and this involved two areas: kitchen area 1, closest to the main door, which has poor lighting that hinders washing up; and the main side lighting in the hall is partially obscured by a metal pole which affected indoor bowls.

Future action: resolve two areas of lighting problems.

Sound equipment

A significant number of people (17) were unhappy with the sound equipment.

Future action: A new sound system and hearing loop has recently been installed to address this problem.

Sprung floor

The vast majority of people thought it was okay to excellent, with only one person valuing it as poor.

Future action: maintain in good working order.

Temperature

A significant number of people (21) had a problem with the temperature of the hall. 8 people also listed the hall being too cold as a deterrent.

Future action: The temperature control is now prefixed every week, coming on two hours before booked usage. This needs to be maintained throughout the winter months.

Rating the facilities

Kitchen. The diversity of opinion on the kitchen was shown in the results, with 45 people thinking it was okay, good or excellent and 20 people thinking it was poor or bad.

Future action: consultation and prioritisation of actions.

Main Hall. The vast majority of people thought the hall was okay, good or excellent.

Future action: consultation.

Toilets. Although most people were happy with the toilets, of those that weren't happy accessibility was an issue.

Future action: consultation; accessibility audit

Consultations

Future action agreed: give people details of relevant consultation as and when fixed. Put details on noticeboard for those who did not leave details or did not complete a questionnaire and may still want to attend.

Membership

38 people said they would like to donate to the hall through membership. It is not known how many are already donors.

Future action: send out letter to yes people.

5. Summary conclusion

The results show a largely positive response the New Hall and a desire by respondents to retain and improve the facility. The problems listed were diverse and the survey provides a single reference point for disparate needs. Two areas showed higher levels of concern:

1. Accessibility showed consistent problems which need to be addressed. Winchelsea has a mature population and consideration needs to be given to the factors listed.
2. The kitchen reflected a diverse opinion within the community: some people wish to have commercial kitchen facilities; some want general improvements, while others are happy with it as it is.

Two main areas suggested to increase usage/income and fundraise for improvements are:

1. Badminton and table tennis.
2. Running fundraising events and/or gaining support from the community staging fundraising events on behalf of the New Hall.

The follow-on consultations will address in-depth issues raised by the survey and aim to find common ground.

THANK YOU

To everyone who took the trouble to complete and return the survey and to the Little Shop who facilitated the paper survey.