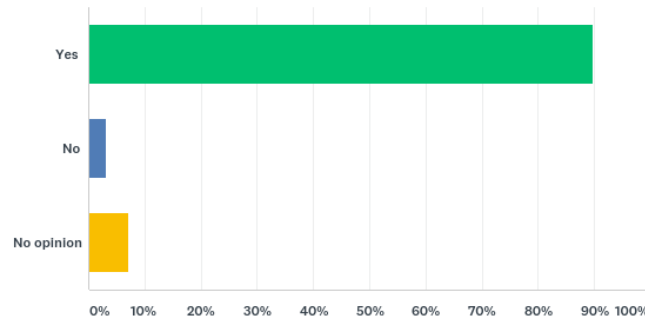


West Linton Village Centre Trust – Community Consultation Report (28 October 2019 version)

Summary

Q9 Do you think the community should make a community asset transfer application to retain the Village Centre in Raemartin Square?



Introduction

A community-wide consultation exercise was carried out in September 2018. It took the form of a questionnaire that was distributed as a paper version (see Appendix 1), and as an electronic version (using the online service SurveyMonkey).

Over 1000 paper copies were made available in many public spaces and shops in West Linton village including the health centre, the post office, commercial shops. Copies were also given to clubs and societies (e.g. WRI) during the month of September 2018. The link to the electronic version was advertised on the West Linton facebook group, via email to people who had given permission during early public meetings about the Village Centre, and via posters. Paper copies were also delivered by volunteers to most streets within the West Linton Community Council area.

132 responses were received: 79 electronically and 53 on paper. The paper responses were entered manually into the SurveyMonkey platform so that the entire data set could be analysed as one. Note that not every respondent answered every question.

The data are in Appendix 2.

Analysis

The questionnaire had three sections, the first asking about the use of public halls (in West Linton) generally among the residents, and the second asking specifically about the Village Centre. The third section gave respondents the opportunity to supply their personal contact details if they wished.

Are you a regular user of any hall or facility in West Linton? (e.g. Graham Institute, Primary School, New/Old Church Hall, Bowling Club) Please don't include use of the school for school events.

83/127	Yes
32/127	No

How often do you use a local hall or facility?

41/124	Weekly
58/124	Monthly
6/124	Never

It is stipulated that the Village Centre had been underused since its function as the Registrar's Office ceased (as discussed in the Business Plan) and the vast majority of local people had never been inside it. (Recently-arrived residents didn't even know it was a publicly-owned space.)

Thinking specifically about the Village Centre in Raemartin Square, how often have you used the Village Centre in the last 12 months?

35/127	Monthly
36/127	Have not used the Village Centre
50/127	It was a 'one-off'

The figure for monthly usage is inflated by the timing of the survey; the Village Centre working group had been holding monthly meetings since January 2018.

The single key question of the consultation process was this one:

Do you think the community should make a community asset transfer application to retain the Village Centre in Raemartin Square?

114/127	Yes
4/127	No
9/127	No opinion

A potential source of bias is that respondents were likely to be individuals belonging to groups that already use the Village Centre. Nevertheless, there is massive local goodwill towards retaining the Village Centre for the community. The actions of the community in booking and using the venue since the working group began running it is detailed elsewhere in the CAT application.

The questions in Section Two of the questionnaire were constructed after brainstorming with the groups of interested local residents who had attended preliminary meetings. From their input a range of possible uses for the Village Centre emerged, some achievable with little or no modification and some more visionary. Elements across this spectrum were included as suggestions in Section Two in order to stimulate thoughtful responses.

What types of community activities would you attend if they were available in the Village Centre in Raemartin Square? (Put these in order of preference.)

Activity (top five only; see Appendix 2 for all data)	Number of times this was selected as first choice	Total number of times this was selected in any position
Art & cultural events	29/125	112/125
Community cinema	22/125	97/125
Cafe/bistro	14/125	87/125
Learning & training	six/125	84/125
Keep fit/yoga/pilates	28/125	82/125

Among the least frequently chosen options were *Activities for young children* and *Activities for teenagers* (each was selected 56/125 times). It is likely that this reflects the demographic that answered the questionnaire: 2/131 were under 18 years old and 45/131 were 65 or over.

Several questions asked for qualitative responses. One asked how the Village Centre could be improved. Most of the responses commented that the main room is cold and asked for improved heating (and insulation). Many other comments asked for tea-making / kitchenette facilities. These responses have informed the business plan and priorities of the now-established West Linton Village Centre Trust.

The responses that were received were full of helpful comments about the possible activities that could be held in the Village Centre. This qualitative data were used by the working group to inform the charitable purposes applied for: that is, the group decided to apply to be a venue that made itself available for community activities.

Conclusions

From an estimated population (residing within the West Linton Community Council area) of 2500, 132 responses were received. Assuming there are 1000 households, the response rate to the questionnaire was a maximum of 13%. We do not hold comparative data to determine whether this was a good response rate.

The responses that were received were overwhelmingly supportive of the idea of community ownership of the Village Centre (89% in favour). It is important to acknowledge a possible source of bias, namely that people who were not interested in community activities may have been less likely to take the time and effort to participate in the consultation. Nevertheless, the response to the explicit key question of whether a CAT should be attempted was overwhelmingly in the affirmative.

One Year On

There is no intention to run another survey before submitting the CAT application, but there are proxy measures that illustrate the viability of the Village Centre and its contribution to the life of the community.

The table below shows the groups that used the Village Centre before the Trust's one-year lease began in April 2019 and since. The items marked * are entirely new groups that did not previously use any other local venues. The others may or may not have used other venues in the past, but we don't have that information.

Before April 2019		From April 2019	
		NB These new users are in addition to the ones in the first columns	
Community council	Monthly	*Love to Sing	Weekly
Whipman	Monthly	*What Matters Hub	Monthly
Yes Linton	Monthly	*Antique pop-up shop	Monthly
First Responders	Monthly	Tennis Club AGM	Annually
Follies	Yearly	The Smithy Residents Association	Annually
Alice Hamilton Trust	Yearly	Concert Platform	Bi-monthly
North Tweeddale Paths Group	Quarterly	Tweeddale SNP	On two occasions
Historical Association	Weekly	SB Carers Group	On two occasions
Art & photography exhibitions	2 per year	*Pentlands Regional Park	An exhibition
		*Sustainable West Linton	Monthly
		*Wee Gigs	3 or 4 per year
		SWRI	Montly
		*Meditation group	Week
		*Guest speakers	Twice
		Over The Lyne Comedy Club	Once

		*Yoga class	Six sessions
		*Private birthday party	Once
		*Change Works Roadshow	Once
		CC planning exhibitions	Twice
		*Art group	Occasional
		*Craft fairs	Three