



AGENDA

WESTERN AREA COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Tuesday, 31 August 2021

Time: 7.00 pm

Venue: Newington Village Hall, Off the High Street, Newington ME9 7JJ

Membership:

Councillors Mike Baldock (Chairman), Monique Bonney, Roger Clark, Nicholas Hampshire, Alan Horton, James Hunt, Richard Palmer, Paul Stephen, Sarah Stephen and Corrie Woodford (Vice-Chairman).

Quorum = 3

Pages

1. Emergency Evacuation Procedure

The Chair will advise the meeting of the evacuation procedures to follow in the event of an emergency. This is particularly important for visitors and members of the public who will be unfamiliar with the building and procedures. The Chair will inform the meeting that: there is no scheduled test of the fire alarm during this meeting. If the alarm does sound, please leave the building quickly without collecting any of your possessions, using the doors signed as fire escapes, and assemble in the area near the Scout Hut which is to the left as you leave the entrance of the building. Await instructions before re-entering the building. Should anyone require assistance in evacuating the building, please make the Swale Borough Council Democratic Services Officers aware of any special needs so that suitable arrangements may be made in the event of an emergency.

2. Confirmation of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

To confirm the Chairman and Vice-Chairman for the Municipal Year 2021/22.

3. Apologies for Absence

4. Declarations of Interest

Councillors should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves or their spouse, civil partner or person with whom they are living with as a spouse or civil partner. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships. The Chairman will ask Members if they have any interests to declare in respect of items

on this agenda, under the following headings:

(a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) under the Localism Act 2011. The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared. After declaring a DPI, the Member must leave the meeting and not take part in the discussion or vote. This applies even if there is provision for public speaking.

(b) Disclosable Non Pecuniary Interests (DNPI) under the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council in May 2012. The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared. After declaring a DNPI interest, the Member may stay, speak and vote on the matter.

(c) Where it is possible that a fair-minded and informed observer, having considered the facts would conclude that there was a real possibility that the Member might be predetermined or biased the Member should declare their predetermination or bias and then leave the meeting while that item is considered.

Advice to Members: If any Councillor has any doubt about the existence or nature of any DPI or DNPI which he/she may have in any item on this agenda, he/she should seek advice from the Monitoring Officer, the Head of Legal or from other Solicitors in Legal Services as early as possible, and in advance of the meeting.

5. Minutes

To approve the [Minutes](#) of the Meeting held on 1 June 2021 (Minute Nos. 24 – 35) as a correct record.

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Issued on Friday, 20 August 2021

The reports included in Part I of this agenda can be made available in **alternative formats**. For further information about this service, or to arrange for special facilities to be provided at the meeting, **please contact DEMOCRATIC SERVICES on 01795 417330**. To find out more about the work of the Council, please visit www.swale.gov.uk

**Chief Executive, Swale Borough Council,
Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT**

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Secondary School provision in Sittingbourne and Sheppey - the Administration view

I am grateful to Kent County Council for engaging with Swale Borough Councillors on this topic.

It is a topic that matters to Swale Borough Council:

- Because we are concerned about the difficulties that many of our residents increasingly face in accessing places of choice for their youngsters.
- But also, because Secondary Education plays a vital role in meeting our aspirations for our young people, for the local economy and for our community.

School places:

- There is a problem of shortfall in capacity. It is hoped that this can be met by the opening of the North West Sittingbourne School, but it is not clear to us when this will happen and in the meantime many families face stressful dilemmas each year.
- But the situation is further complicated due to the Academy on Sheppey never reaching its Pupil Admission numbers because so many young people on Sheppey migrate each day to the mainland. This has put severe pressure on places on the mainland, with many Sittingbourne youngsters being offered unwelcome places on Sheppey. It is the administration's view that this is not equitable, nor is it good for the sense of community on Sheppey for so many youngsters to want to go elsewhere for their important education.

Meeting young people's and local needs:

- School places are not the only issue.
- The long term low academic outcomes at the Academy on Sheppey are a matter of concern. It obviously motivates the daily migration to Sittingbourne, and it leaves many young people low on skills and aspirations. We would support any moves to widen the opportunities for young people by providing an option of two schools. However, the future provision of schools is very much in the hands of the Regional office for Academy schools. A two-school solution is supported by the constituency MP.

Vocational and Further Education:

- This, and previous, administrations want to see a Further Education college in Sittingbourne, which would complement the good work being done at Sheppey College and provide more skills needed by young people and by the local economy.

- But we cannot secure Government support and funding because numerically we cannot make a case based on demand. That is because so many youngsters stay in their Secondary Schools after the age of 16. They would plausibly not do so if there were a Further Education college.
- That being the dilemma, the administration at Swale supports any moves to establish more and better vocational education in the schools.
- In supporting the 2-school solution on Sheppey, we would also support one of the schools having a strong vocational bias and close links to the Sheppey College.
- We would support any plans for the new school in NW Sittingbourne to have a strong vocational bias with further education provision for the post 16 age group.

Cllr Roger Truelove
Council Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance

Western Area Committee meeting: Progress on Matters arising – 31 August 2021

No.	Item	Background	Progress on actions
1.	Heritage issues	<p>Cabinet adopted a Heritage Strategy and Action Plan on 18 March 2020. The Action Plan contains a programme of Conservation Area (CA) reviews. It has been suggested by the Cabinet Member that the Area Committee may want to fund CA reviews for areas which are outside of the planned programme of reviews in the Action Plan.</p> <p>In December 2020, the Western Area Committee agreed that £6,270 be allocated to a firm of consultants to undertake CA reviews in Rodmersham, Milstead and Tunstall in line with a quote submitted to members. At the June meeting the Conservation and Design Manager reported they should be adopted early December.</p> <p>The Conservation & Design Manager carried out an assessment to ascertain whether there is any scope for a CA at Iwade and will submit a report to the Area Committee at the September meeting</p>	<p>A verbal update will be provided by the Conservation & Design Manager.</p>

No.	Item	Background	Progress on actions
2.	Conservation issues, including ponds	<p>SBC only has details of the ponds which it manages directly. There is a strategic and heritage, conservation and tourism need for information, including ownership, condition and management of the ponds in the area.</p> <p>Both the Kent Reptile and Amphibian Group and Kent Fire and rescue have confirmed they are happy to work with Swale Borough Council to pull this information together for Swale.</p> <p>This will be considered as part of the wider environmental work and prioritisation of work programme. No work is currently underway on ponds.</p>	Bring back to a future meeting.
3.	Phoenix House	Swale Borough Council have commissioned a survey to understand the immediate needs of voluntary organisations in terms of hiring space and office base in the Sittingbourne area. Another survey has been carried out to identify space available in other community assets in the area, where it may be possible to match organisations. The final results of the survey will be shared with the Area Committee once received.	The surveys are attached to this report, Appendices 1 and 2.

No.	Item	Background	Progress on actions
4.	Run down state of the Western Area	<p>A Member raised concerns about the current general rundown state of the area and highlighted footpaths, litter in hedgerows and road signs as particular issues.</p> <p>Most of the issues raised were the responsibility of KCC and there are well-established processes to report issues on their website. There are also member grants to fund new street nameplates. Village cleans can be arranged for specific areas.</p> <p>At the June meeting the Head of Environment and Leisure advised that Highways England are responsible for major strategic routes which includes the motorways and in the Western area the A249. Officers met with Highways England in June regarding the A249/Western end issues which the Cabinet Member for Environment will attend.</p>	<p>The Head of Environment and Leisure reported a meeting was held in June with Highways England and their contractor Sheppey Route Limited who are responsible from the bridge just past Stockbury roundabout down to Peel Ports entrance. Officers and 2 x Cabinet members attended.</p> <p>There had been three major litter picks within the last 6 months, but they recognised that continuous cleansing was required due to the increased volume.</p> <p>We also commented on Stockbury roundabout itself which is looked after in-house by Highways England and required some cleanses.</p> <p>We also agreed to greater sharing of information. Enforcement cameras will be looked at and the contractor dashcam footage may be able to be used in prosecutions of vehicles committing littering offences.</p>
5.	Noise from the M2 and other roads	<p>A Member raised an issue on behalf of Hartlip Parish Council regarding noise from the M2 and other roads. It was suggested the Environmental Response Team be consulted to see if they have received any reports.</p>	<p>The Head of Environment and Leisure consulted the Environmental Response Team and advised they have received no reports of road noise.</p> <p>Cllr Mike Baldock reported that he had spoken to Highways England to see if the spoil from the</p>

No.	Item	Background	Progress on actions
		Bredgar Parish Council will check to see how they dealt with a similar problem some years ago.	Junction 5 improvements could be used to dampen the sound.
6.	Youth provision in villages	As part of the considerations for priorities and ambitions going forward for the Western Area Committee Meeting, the lack of youth provision in villages was raised as an issue. It was agreed to bring a briefing note back to the next meeting to see what can be done going forward.	Steph Carbutt the Community Services Officer has drafted a briefing note, see Appendix 3
7.	Agricultural Bill	A Parish Councillor asked if the Area Committee could advise where guidance can be found on the Agricultural Bill so that parish councils can engage with land-owners.	Cllr Richard Palmer is making enquiries with KALC to see what guidance is available. Additionally, the Swale Area Committee of KALC is looking into this and is hoping to report back in due course.

Sittingbourne Community Hub Capacity and Demand Report

Venues

Conducted by Swale Community and Voluntary Services
May 2021



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Introduction

Swale Community and Voluntary Services (SCVS) have been commissioned to undertake a survey engaging with the Hirers and Venues in the Sittingbourne area, this survey analysis focuses on the Venues.

This report aims to be beneficial in understanding the level of capacity that Venues have once Lockdown restrictions end and venues begin to reopen. We explore both pre and post-pandemic usage and look at some of the main concerns for Venues when the groups begin to meet again.

With the recent closure of Phoenix House in the centre of Sittingbourne and many users worrying about room hire capacity, we asked the chairman for the reasons behind the closure. He has kindly given us an overview below.

Phoenix House

For almost 30 years Phoenix House was the community centre in the heart of Sittingbourne, providing accommodation and facilities for some 80 community groups and other users to meet and enjoy activities together. Over the last 10 years, however, its financial situation had become increasingly tenuous as costs rose and austerity drove Kent County Council to terminate the grant funding that covered approximately a quarter of those costs. In addition, the building, which is around 100 years old, was deteriorating badly.

Most significantly the central heating boiler failed and the cost of the repair was estimated to be in excess of £100,000, a sum Kent County Council, the owners of the building, could not justify for a building of such poor construction and Swale Community Centres (SCC), the charity that managed Phoenix House, could not afford. Without a functioning heating system, the building could not be used for a large part of each year

These problems were becoming critical as the Covid pandemic hit in 2020 and Phoenix House was required to close. Despite a generous support grant and the furlough scheme, it became clear later in the year that the finances were unsustainable with the building in such a poor state and with great regret the Directors of SCC, decided that it could not reopen.

For many years SCC, concerned by the long term problems, had been working with Swale Borough Council and KCC seeking to identify a replacement for Phoenix House. Although no viable solution was found there was a growing awareness of the importance of community cohesion and wellbeing of affordable facilities for groups to meet in Sittingbourne. The work now being undertaken reflects the strong determination to make provision to meet this need.

Rob Fenton, Chairman

Summary of Key Findings



67.70% of hirers have not hired any spaces during COVID-19

58.3% would feel comfortable in hiring spaces again once lockdown restrictions have been lifted



The most sought after spaces once restrictions are lifted are:



41.9%
Meetings
rooms

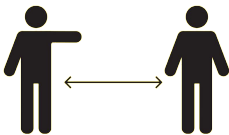


27.6%
Church/Village
halls

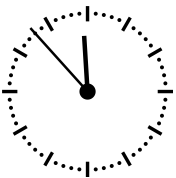


9.5%
Office
Space

59.6 of Venues completely closed their doors during the pandemic



However, 31.2% of Venues have hired out Socially Distanced spaces



70.8% of Venues want to resume their services immediately once restrictions have lifted

88% of respondents want to return back and engage immediately!





Methodology

The questionnaire had 10 general questions and was designed to capture some of the main opinions about future capacity for local Venues in the Sittingbourne region with regards to general room hire and office space. The questions are organised into three thematic blocks. The first one looks into the level of capacity before COVID 19 started impacting these spaces. The second focuses on how these Venues have been impacted and finally, the last set explores the possibility of returning after Lockdown restrictions have been lifted.

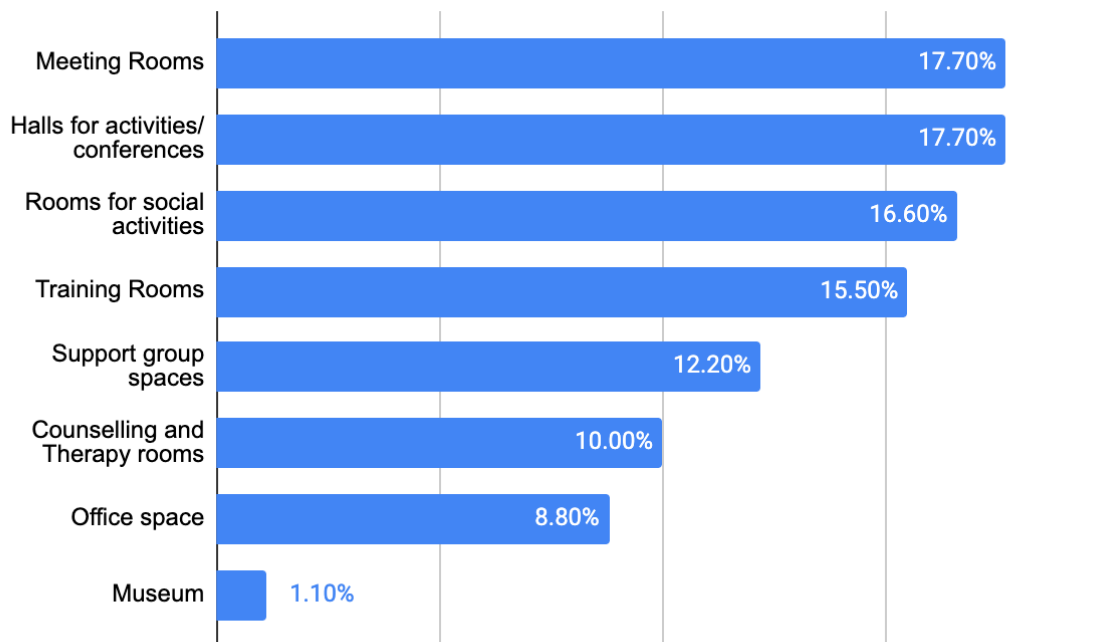
The survey combined open-ended questions and multiple-choice questions with predefined answers offering respondents the possibility to choose. For these questions, an optional space was provided so users can input their own responses if necessary. This open part is considered of great importance for a Survey of this kind as it contributes to improving the interpretation of its overall results and provides additional valuable material.

The survey reached over 320 individuals and the results can be found below.

Detailed Figures

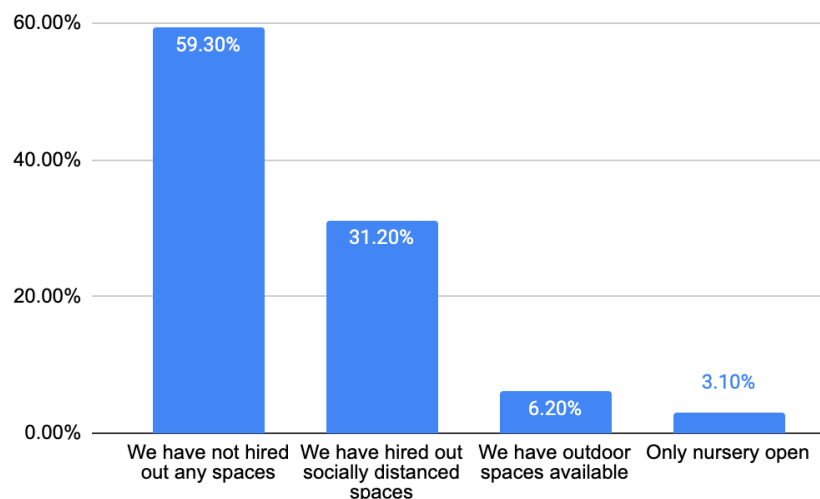
Q1-Q6. Here are some issues the local area will be facing over the next few months as we move towards Lockdown restrictions easing. These questions explore and allow us to compare pre and post-pandemic capacity.

Q1) What type of space for hire did you let out prior to Lockdown, tick all that apply.



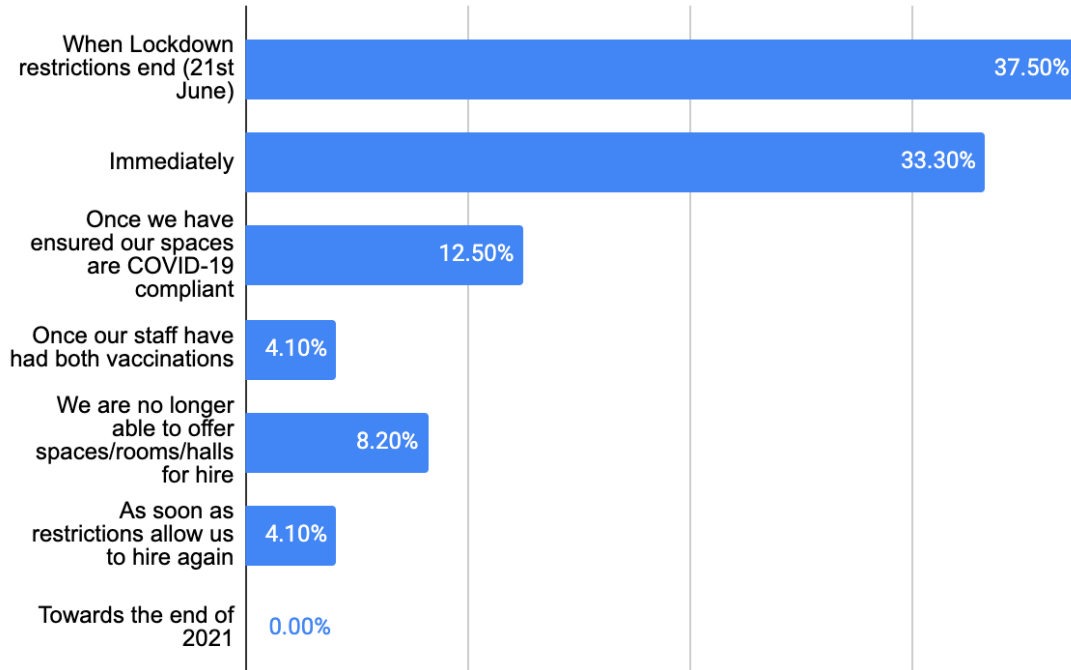
Prior to COVID and Lockdown restrictions Meetings rooms and Halls for Activities had the most capacity 17.70% with smaller rooms ie; rooms for Social Activities 16.60% and Training ranked just slightly less 15.50%.

Q2) What impact has COVID-19 had with regards to your room hire services?



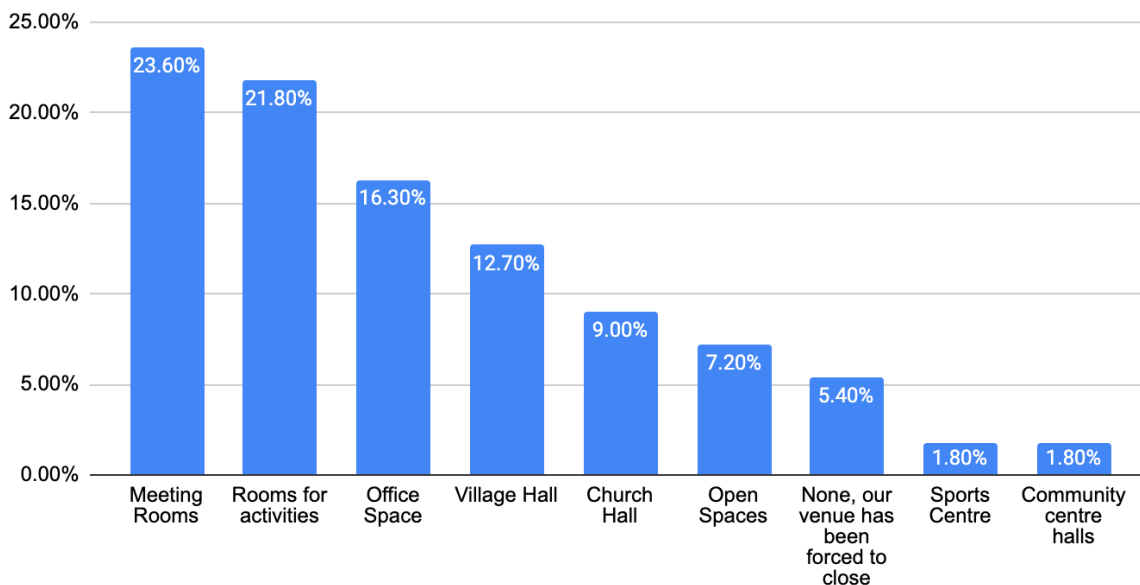
COVID-19 has had a huge impact on Venues hiring out spaces as 59% have not managed to hire out a single room during this period. Surprisingly only 31% have hired out socially distanced spaces meaning that you can infer that 69% do not have that capacity to allow them to engage with the current restrictions in place.

Q3) At what point would you feel comfortable letting out your rooms/halls/spaces again?



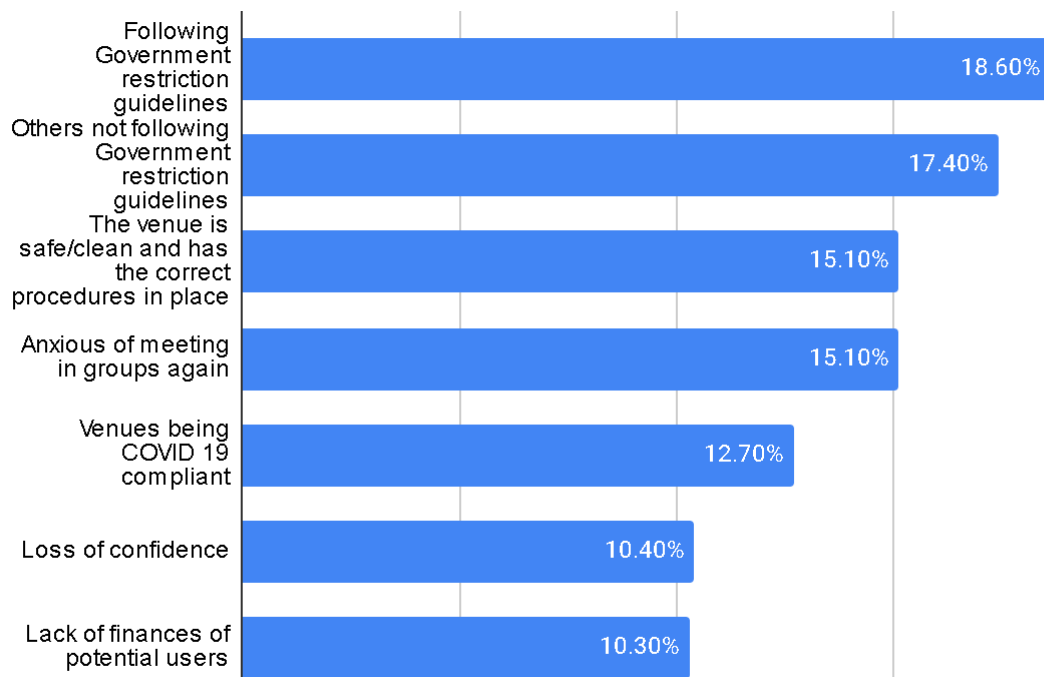
The vast majority of respondents stated that they would be willing to start letting out their rooms/spaces/halls once restrictions have been lifted/immediately/compliant which equates to 83.30%.

Q4) Once restrictions are lifted what spaces would you have available? (tick all that apply)



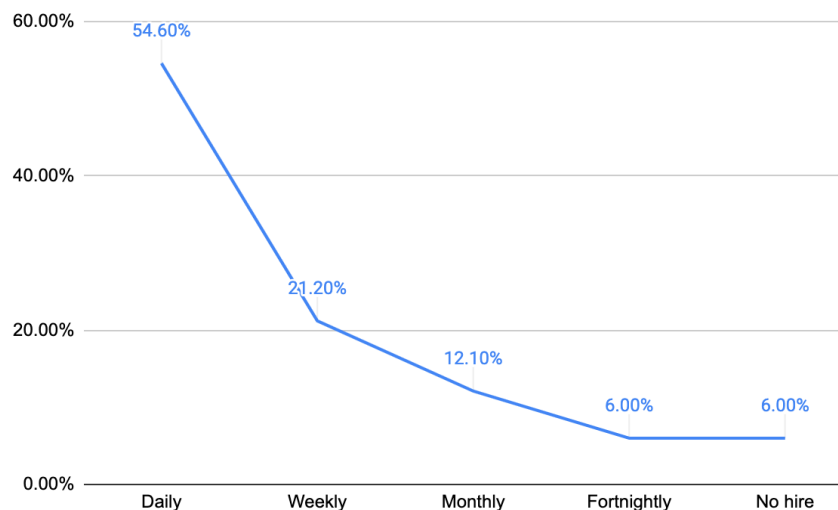
Interestingly it appears that more meetings rooms and rooms for activities have become available following the pandemic if you compare this with question 1. Once again it's clear that Venues will struggle if they are forced to only use Open Spaces if another lockdown occurs.

Q5) What do you feel will be users/hirers' main concerns about attending activities in hired spaces again?



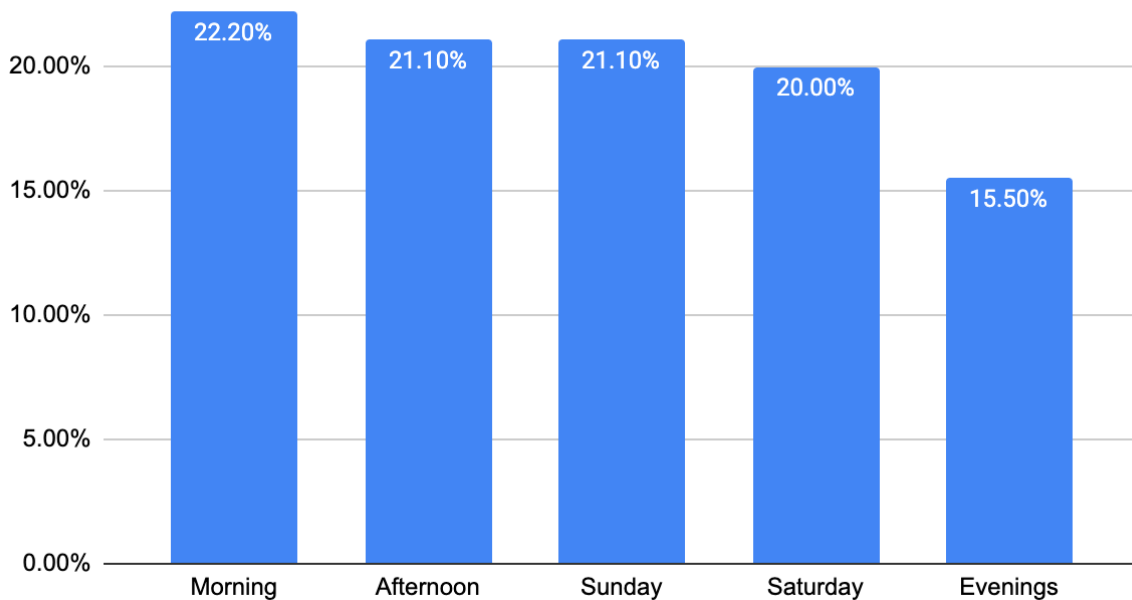
As expected Venues are concerned about following Government guidelines and ensuring that the hirers are following the rules. If you compare this with the Hirers survey it is interesting that 33% believe the Venue being safe/clean is an absolute priority, however, this is seen as a smaller concern 15.10%. It does not appear that the Venues feelings of hirers concerns are consistent with that of the user.

Q6) What will your capacity be once Lockdown restrictions have ended?



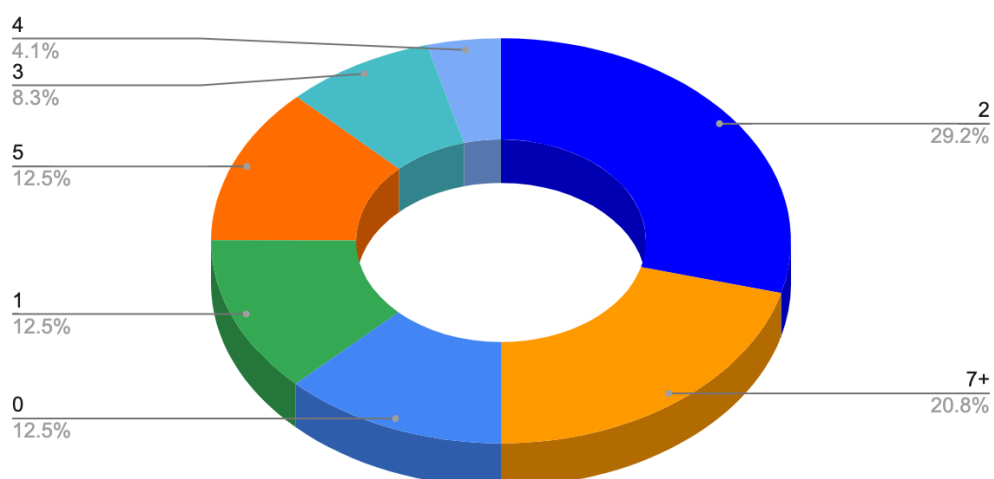
Once restrictions have been lifted it appears that only 54% of Venues will have daily availability, however, it can be seen as a positive that only 6% of respondents have indicated that they will no longer be hiring out their venue.

Q7) What times do you currently have the capacity to hire out your room/hall/space?



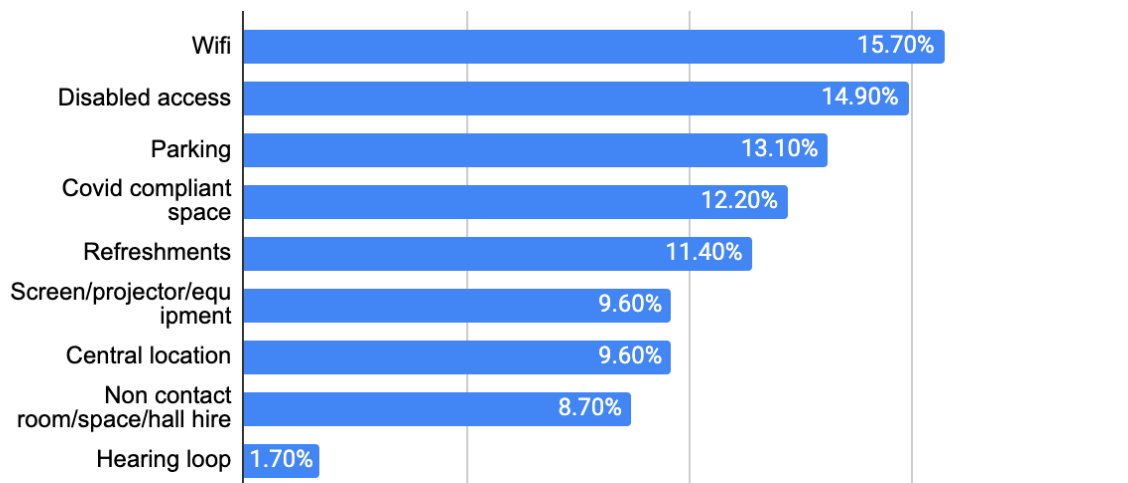
As expected venues are appearing to be very accommodating when discussing reopening which can be seen from the graph above, on average users shouldn't struggle to find a time or day to hire a space (rooms available any time or any day!).

Q8) Looking forward to the roadmap out of Lockdown, how many rooms do you currently have available for hire?



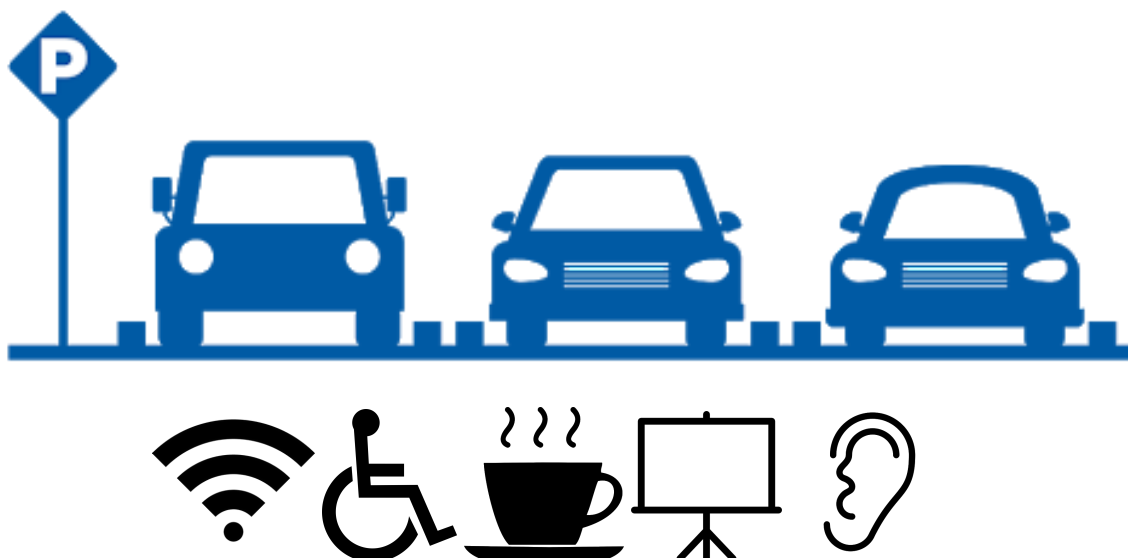
From the respondents that completed our survey, we can see that 29.20% of Venues have at least 2 rooms available, however, 20.80% of Venues in Sittingbourne have over 7 rooms.

Q9) When returning back to hiring out your rooms/spaces/halls what facilities will you have available?

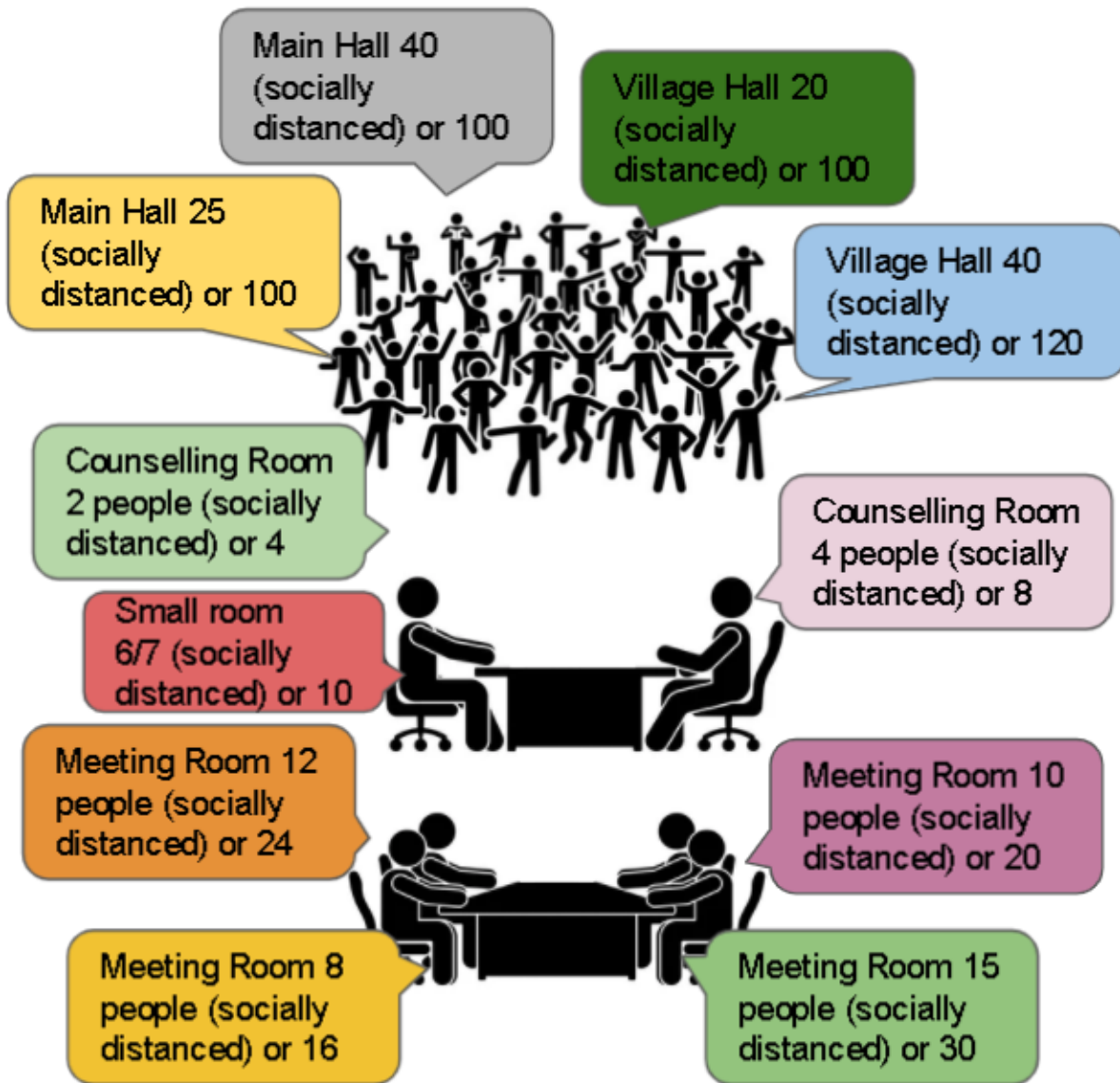


As expected Wifi connection is ranked the highest with almost 16% of Venues offering this, however, this still appears incredibly low in the current climate. One notable point is that less than 15% of respondents from Venues stated that they have disabled access, this is extremely concerning since the latest Strategic Commissioning Analytic Statistical Bulletin stated that 17.6% of residents in Kent have a health problem or disability which limits their day-to-day activities. Even less 1.7% offer a Hearing Loop in their venues.

As parking at Venues was a key concern for hirers it is surprising that it is not more readily available.



Q10) Looking forward to the route map out of lockdown, at this moment in time we would like to find out the maximum capacity of each room including social distancing.



We asked each respondent to tell us to list each of their rooms and let us know their maximum capacity taking social distancing into account. The averages can be found below;

	Meeting Rooms	Small Rooms	Halls
Socially Distanced	12	3	38
Without restrictions	24	6	110

Conclusion and Recommendations

In this section, we present our conclusions based on our research related to the questions presented in our survey,

Impact

It is clear that Venues have particularly struggled during 2020/21 due to the Government restricting what can and can't be delivered because of COVID 19. Almost 60% of our respondents have not hired out a single room in almost 18 months and with the average room, fee equating to about £10.50 an hour, ultimately meaning a lot of revenue that has been lost. The positive is that we only had 6% state that they would no longer be able to hire out rooms, even with these devastating restrictions.

Moving forward

Due to the lack of room hire over the last 12-18 months, our respondents seemed very keen to reopen their doors as soon as possible. 54% of respondents felt that as soon as restrictions are lifted they would be open on a daily basis, however, throughout the whole survey it was clear that Venues would be extremely accommodating moving forward.

Current restrictions

As can be expected Venues are concerned about making sure that their premises are COVID compliant, with the easing of restrictions they felt that following and enforcing Government guidelines was their main priority, however, if you compare this with our User Group survey they believed the ultimate priority was making sure the Venue is safe, clean and has the right procedures in place. With this in mind it important that spaces for hire make this a key priority when beginning to reopen.

Overall to summarise it is very positive for the sector as a whole as people are feeling more confident returning back to delivering and participating in face to face activities after the 21st June 2021. Venues should expect the majority of their bookings to return as almost all the groups that have completed this survey have maintained contact and will resume when it is safe to do so. Even with the advances in technology, it is clear that respondents would prefer to meet in person rather than through a computer screen.

Respondents

Here at Swale CVS, we would like to thank all the respondents that took the time and effort to complete our survey. Your responses will help shape the needs and demand for rooms/spaces/halls for hire in Sittingbourne.



Kemsley Community Centre



Children and Families



GORE COURT CC



Kemsley Community Village Hall

@KemsleyVillageHall · Community centre



Bobbing Village Hall

A number of anonymous responses were also received.

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Sittingbourne Community Hub Capacity and Demand Report

User Groups

Conducted by Swale Community and Voluntary
Services
May 2021



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Introduction

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This report aims to be beneficial in understanding the level of demand and need by user groups once Lockdown restrictions end and venues begin to reopen. We explore both pre and post-pandemic usage and look at some of the main concerns for users when their groups begin to meet again.

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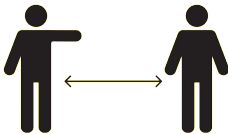


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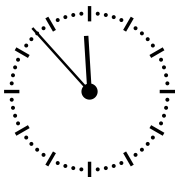


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Methodology

The questionnaire had 20 general questions and was designed to capture some of the main opinions about future demands for local spaces with regards to general room hire and office space. The questions are organised into three thematic blocks. The first one looks into the level of demand and needs before COVID 19 starting impacting these users. The second focuses on how these groups have been impacted and finally, the last set explores the possibility of returning after Lockdown restrictions have been lifted.

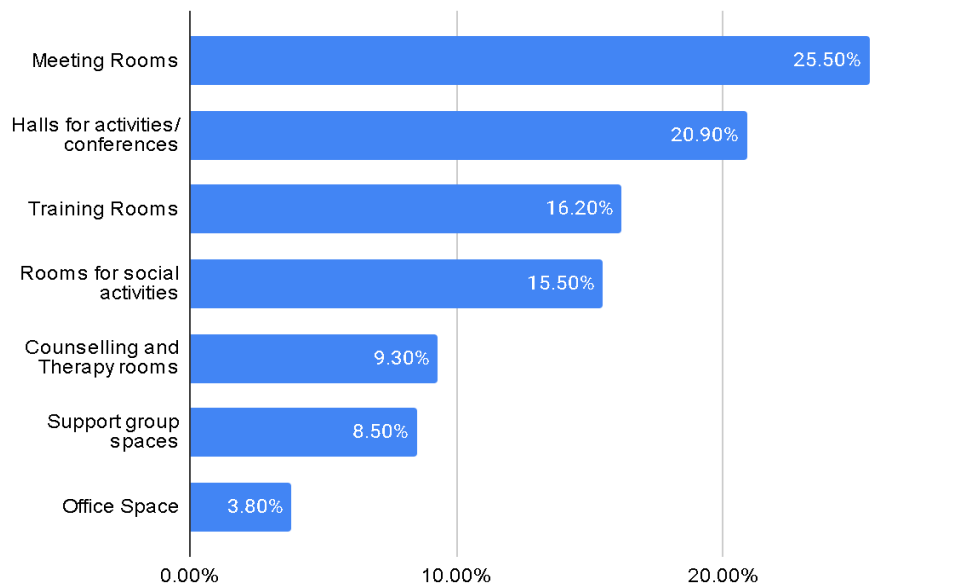
The survey combined open-ended questions and multiple-choice questions with predefined answers offering respondents the possibility to choose and rank among several options or the possibility to grade on a 'not important' to 'very important' scale. For these questions, an optional space was provided so users can input their own responses if necessary. This open part is considered of great importance for a Survey of this kind as it contributes to improving the interpretation of its overall results and provides additional valuable material.

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Detailed Figures

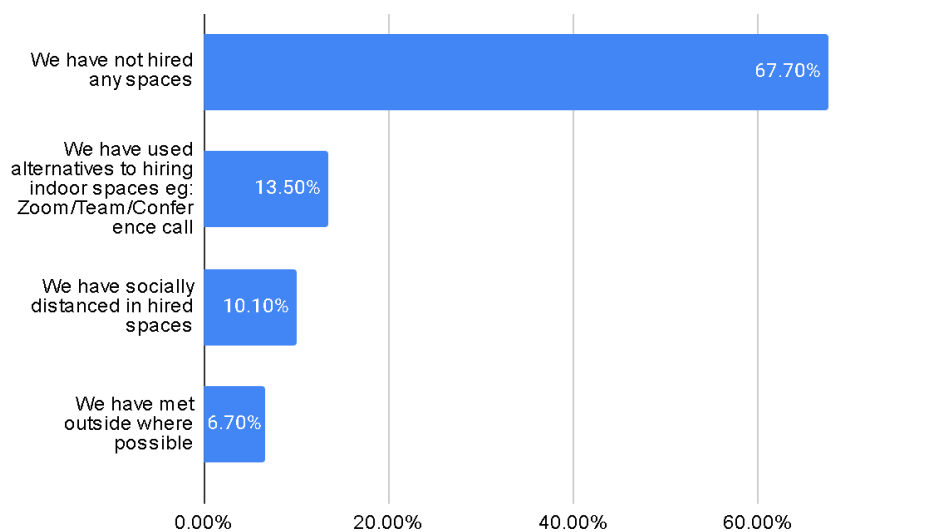
Q1-Q6. Here are some issues the local area will be facing over the next few months as we move towards Lockdown restrictions easing. These questions explore and allow us to compare pre and post-pandemic use.

Q1) What type of space for hire have you used prior to Lockdown?



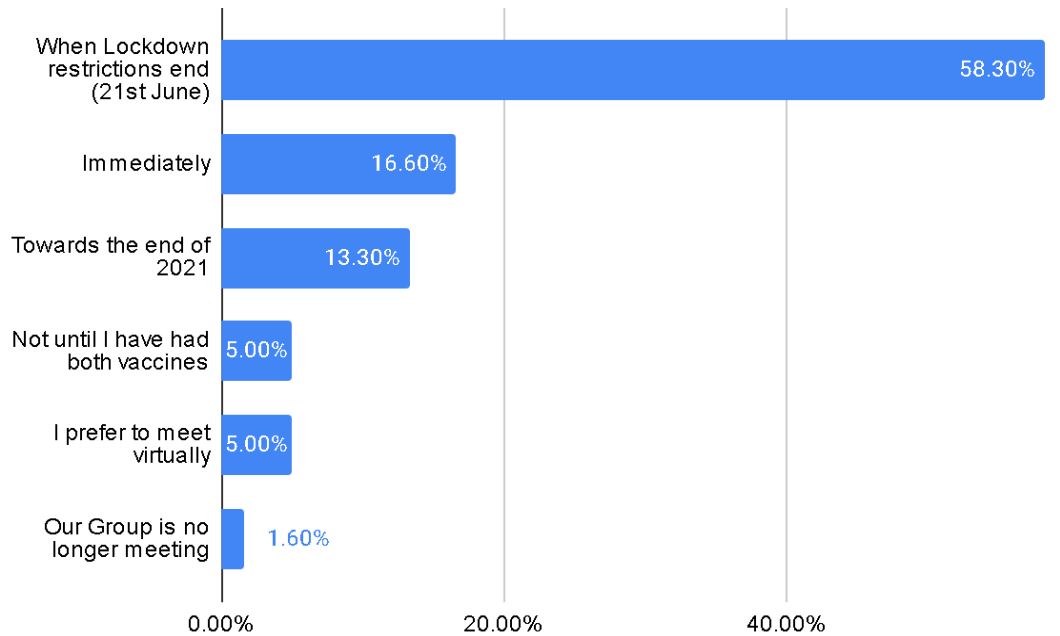
Prior to COVID and Lockdown restrictions over a quarter of all spaces were used for Meeting rooms with only 3.8% were used for Office Spaces.

Q2) What impact has COVID-19 had with regards to spaces for hire that would have been used?



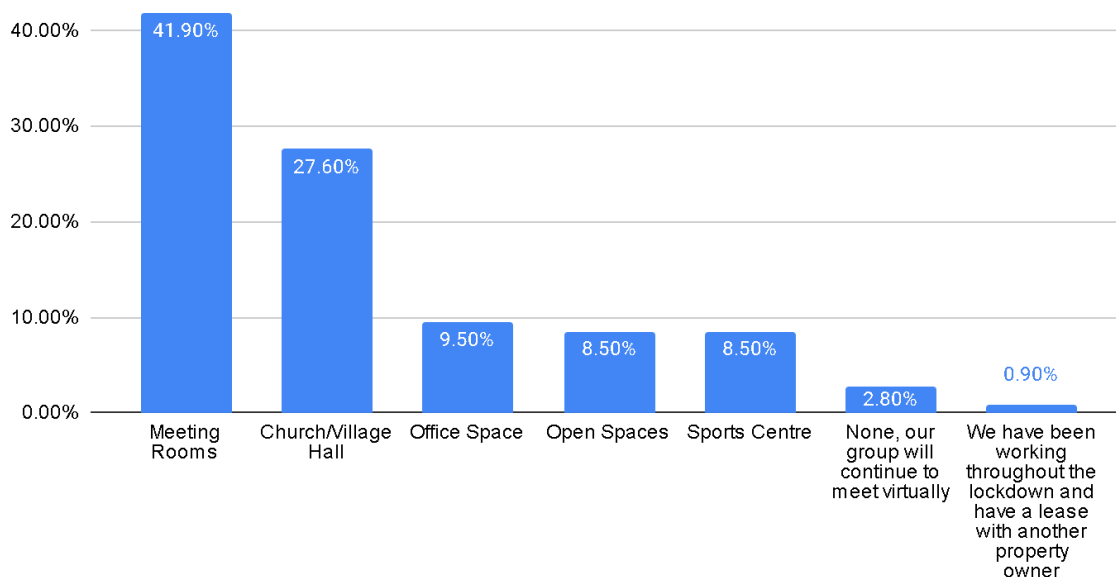
COVID-19 has had a huge impact on hiring halls with 67.70% of users not booking any spaces during this period. The average price of hiring a space in Sittingbourne is £10.75 per hour per room for Community Groups, meaning that the sector as a whole has lost substantial revenue.

Q3) At what point would you feel comfortable in attending spaces/rooms/hall hire again?



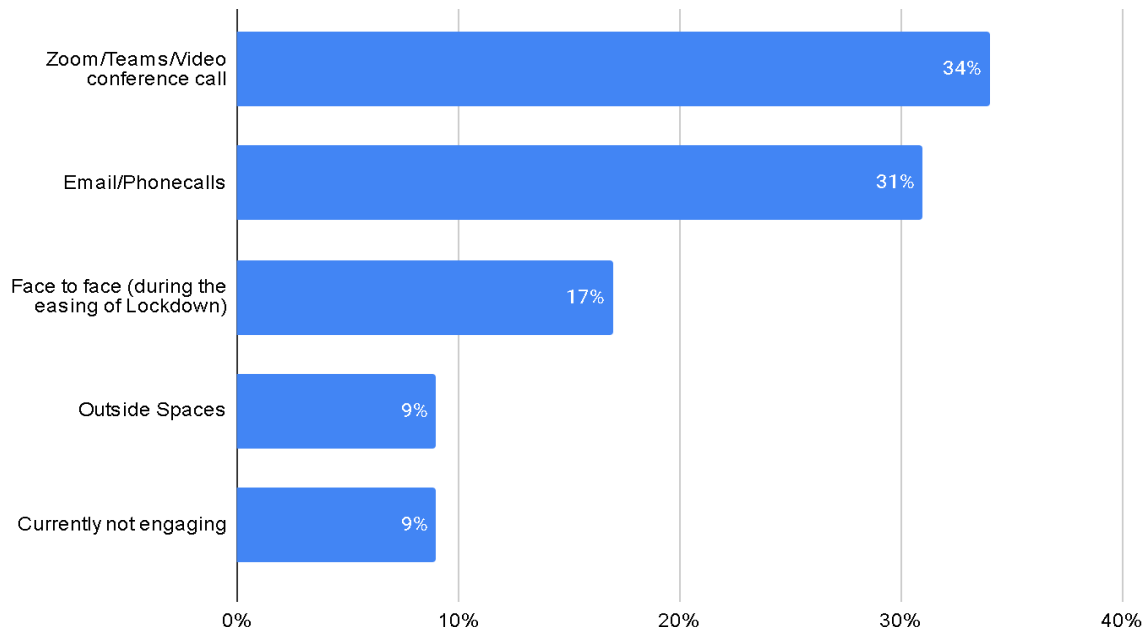
It would appear that the vast majority of hirers either immediately or when the current lockdown restrictions are lifted want to go back to face to face engagement. This is hugely encouraging for halls/spaces that have the capacity to hire out their venue.

Q4) Once restrictions are lifted what sort of spaces would you be interested in using?



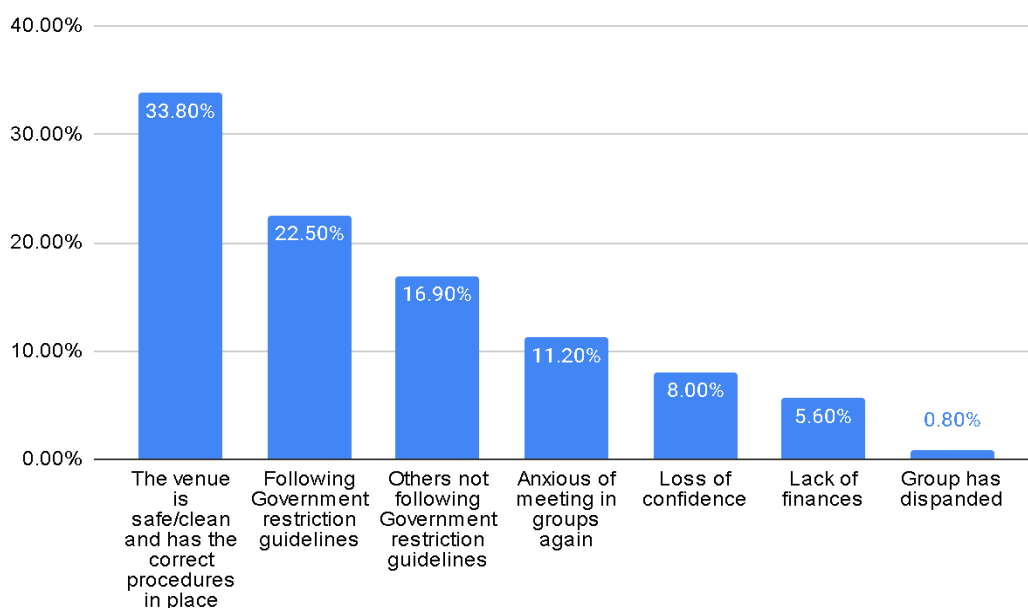
Once restrictions have been lifted it appears the most popular spaces/room for hire are predictably meetings rooms and halls for activities accounting for over 80% of the demand.

Q5) During Lockdown what spaces/technology has your group used or are currently using?



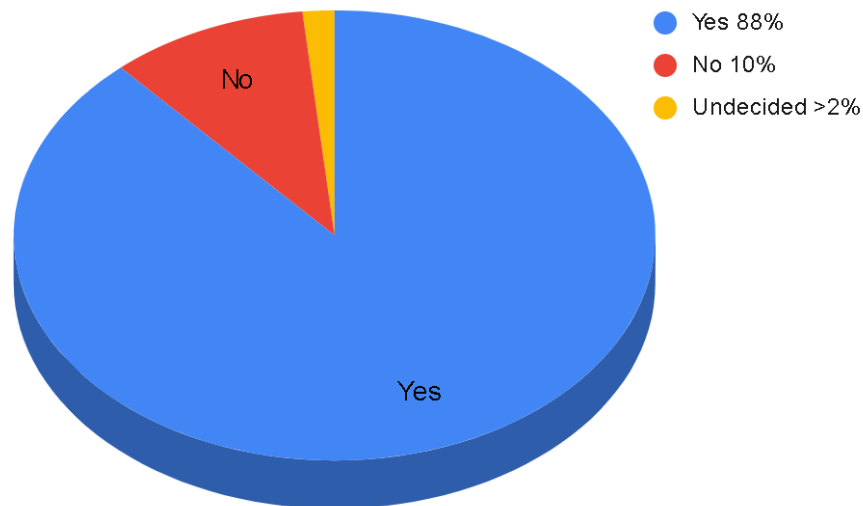
As might be expected the use of technology has been instrumental in allowing hirers to stay connected during the restrictions with 65% of them using zoom, teams, email and phone calls. One might have thought with so many using technology there would be less demand to resume face to face engagement, however, if you compare this to question 3 you can see that 75% of users do wish to return.

Q6) What are your main concerns about attending activities in hired spaces again?



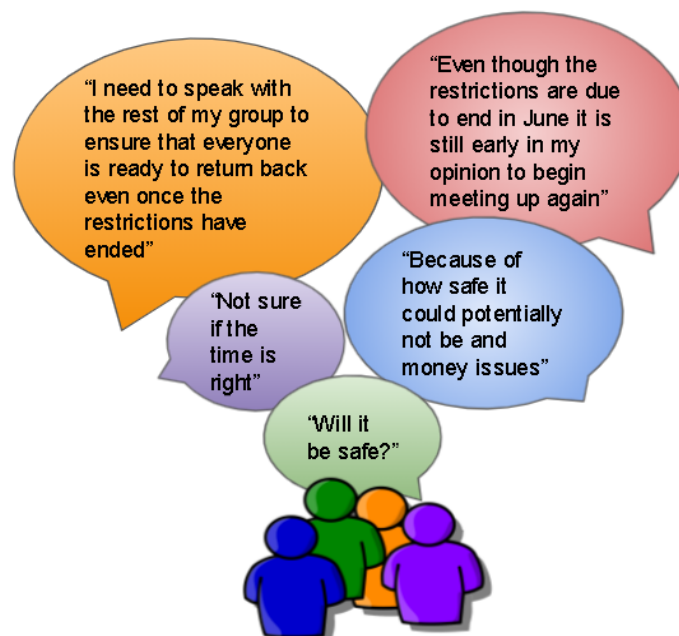
The main concerns are the venue is clean, safe and has the correct procedures in place to reduce any possible risk. Although, 39% of users are concerned about Government restrictions and whether or not others will follow the guidelines.

Q7-Q9. These questions explore and allow us to compare pre and post-pandemic needs and demand with regards to hiring space again in the future once Lockdown restrictions end.

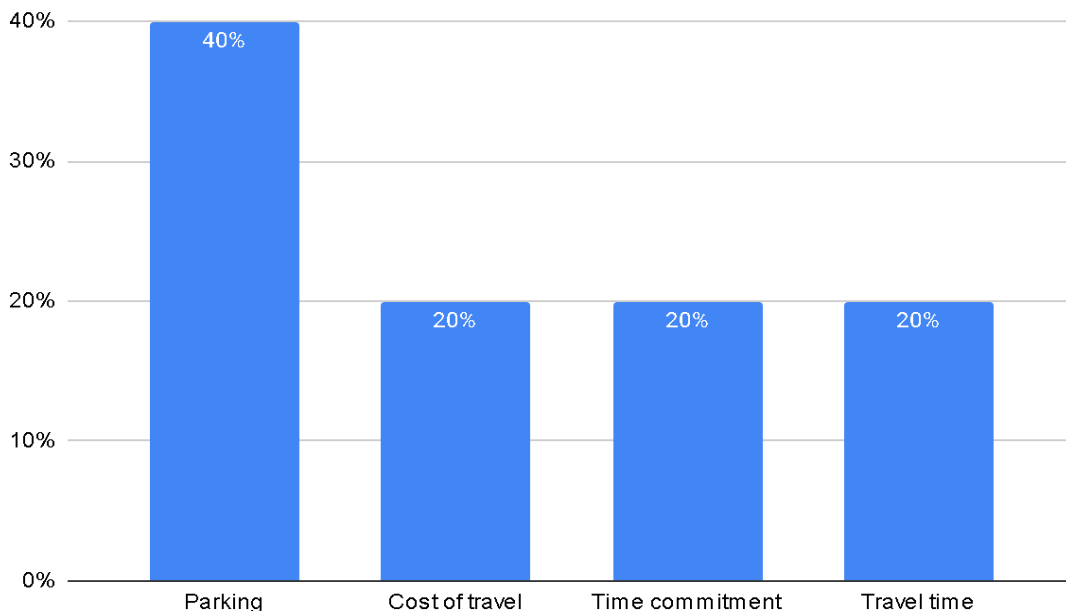


It is very clear that hirers want to return to venues and meet face to face once lockdown restrictions end with 88% of respondents telling us an emphatic yes!

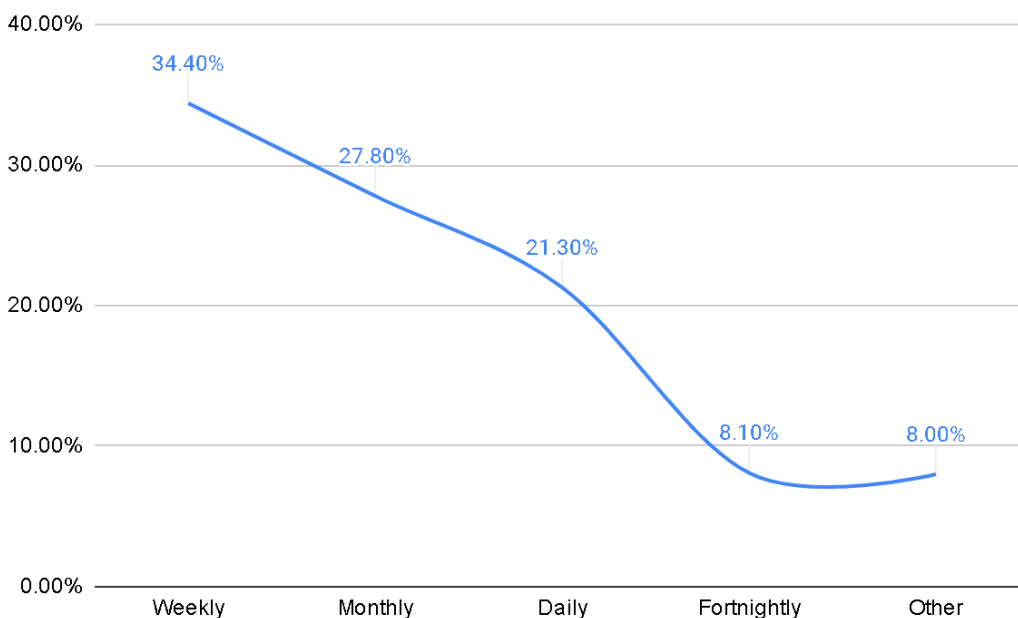
Q7) Will you continue to meet in hired spaces once it is safe to do so? We followed up this question and explored the rationale of why some users might be undecided and here are a sample of their responses;



For those that answered 'No' we discovered that the main reason for no longer wanting to use hired spaces was Parking (40%) with the Cost of Travel, Time commitment and Travel time being 20% respectfully.

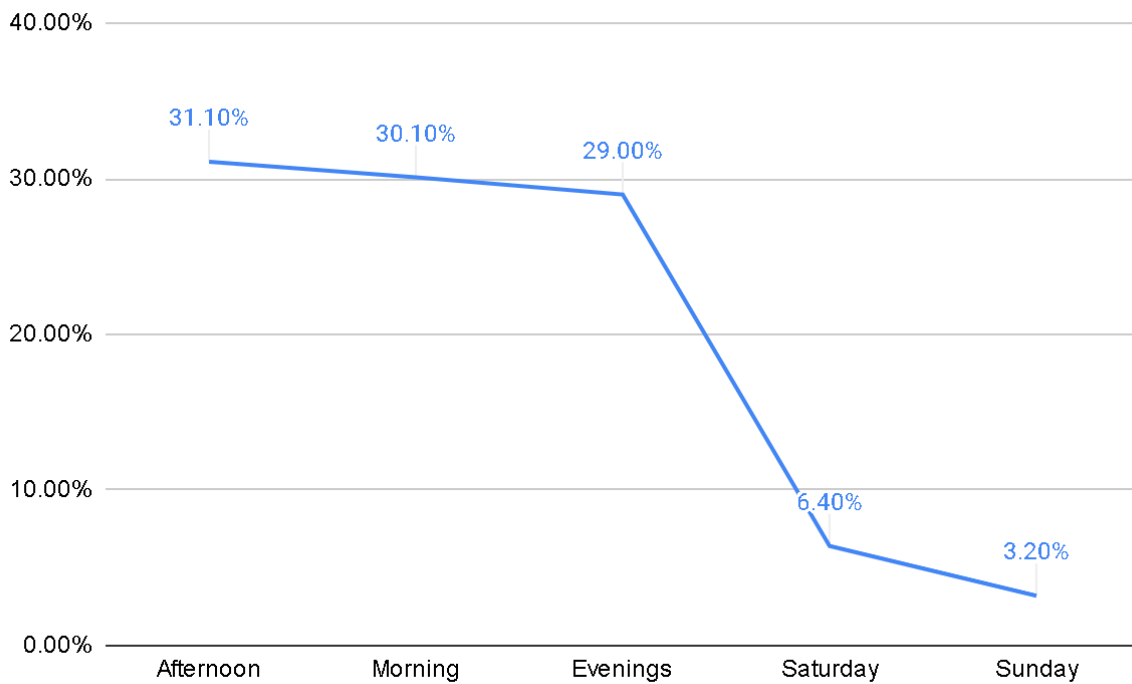


Q10) For those that were interested in returning we asked how often would you be interested in hiring these spaces?



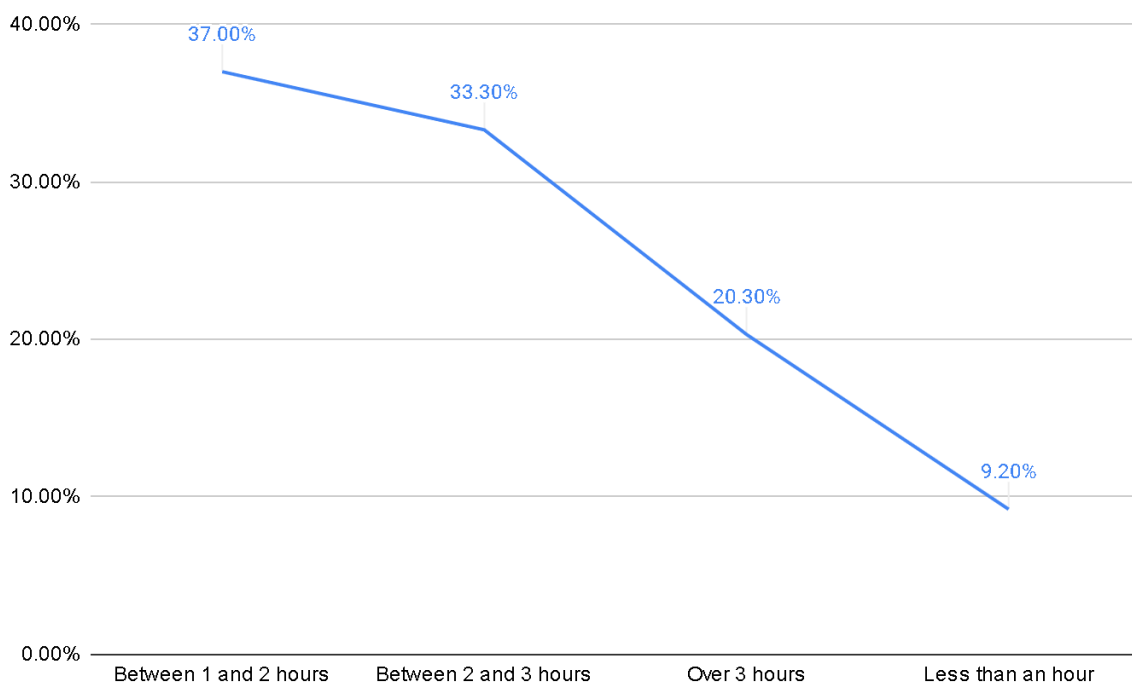
As expected the general demand is split across the requirement of the individual group, however, generally groups in Sittingbourne meet on a weekly/monthly basis which equates to over 60% of respondent comments.

Q11) What times will you require hiring spaces/rooms/halls? (tick all that apply)



When it comes down to specifics, a notable point is that demand at weekends made up less than 10% of the responses, with afternoons, mornings and evenings averaging out at 30% across the whole duration of the day.

Q11) What length of time will you require spaces/rooms/halls in the future?



Focusing more on once the groups have booked a venue the main level of demand is for rooms/spaces that can provide 1-2 hours slots with only 9% needing less than one hour.

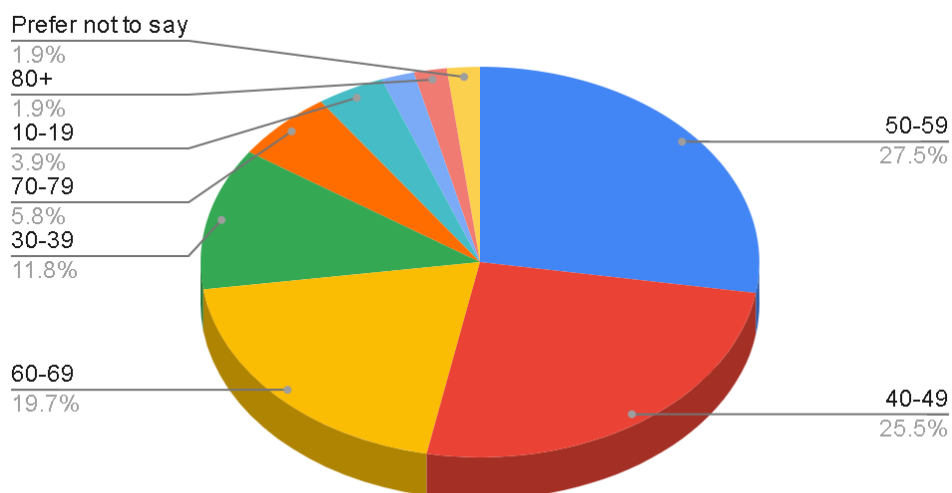
Q12-Q17. Here the survey explores some of the issues facing the entire area. We asked how big of a priority each issue should be. Should it be an extremely high priority, a middle or an extremely low priority for each user group?

	Extremely Important	Important	Not Important
Socially Distancing Encouraged	74%	15%	11%
Socially Distancing (enforced)	74%	15%	11%
Masks available upon request	58%	27%	15%
Masks required (enforced)	52%	23%	13%
Hand Sanitiser available	63%	20%	12%
COVID practise information (venue)	68%	22%	8%
Temperature Checks (enforced)	46%	27%	27%

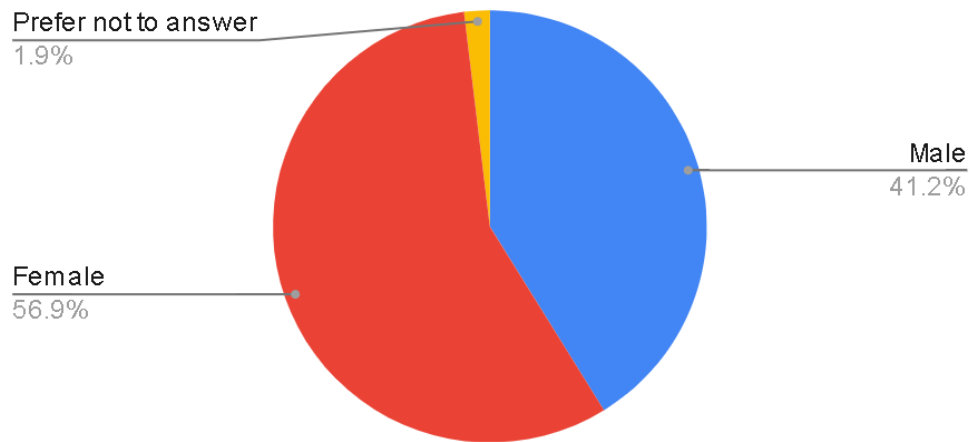
From the information above we can see that User groups find that Socially Distancing encouraged and enforced is extremely important (74%). Venues should make this a priority when planning on reopening their services. However, Temperature checks are considered by the majority as not extremely important.

Questions 18 onwards specified the demographic of the individual completing this survey and those results can be found below:

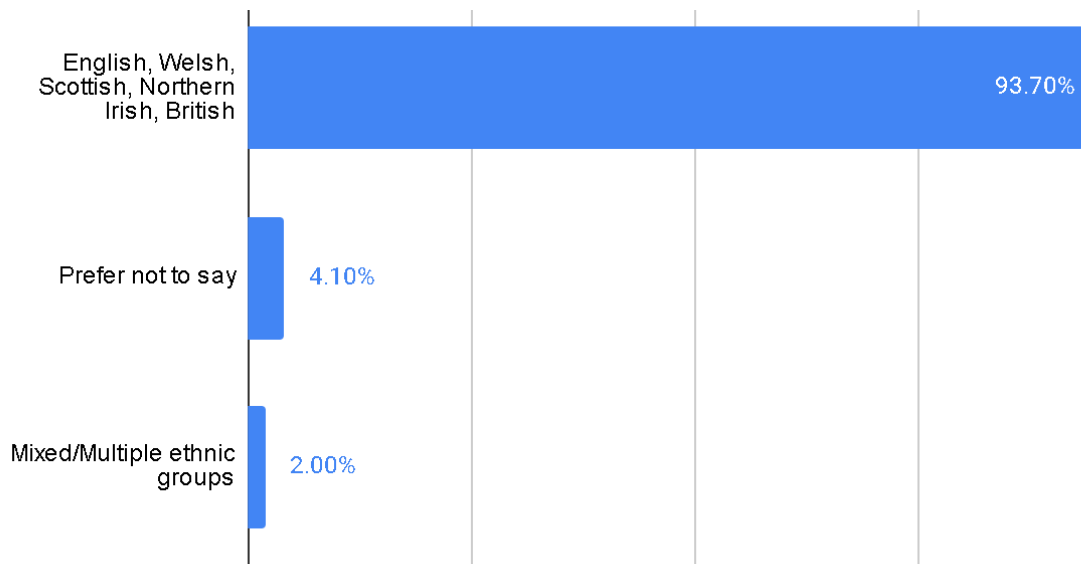
Q18) What is your age range? (optional)



Q19) What is your gender? (optional)



Q18) What is your Ethnicity (optional)



In the first block of questions, in addition to providing their age, respondents were asked to indicate their gender and their ethnicity.

As shown in the graphs above, the majority of respondents were between 50-59 years old which accounted for 27.5% of the sample. 56.9% were female with 93.70% of respondents being from an English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British background.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In this section, we present our conclusions based on our research related to the questions presented in our survey,

Concerns about returning

On the basis of our research, we can see that respondents are very keen to return back to face to face engagements with a huge 88% wanting to meet back immediately or once the current Lockdown restrictions have lifted. However, this will only occur if they believe the Venue is safe, clean and has the correct procedures in place. Ultimately it appears very positive for the sector with engagement levels appearing to maintain at a high level and venues should be ready for a large proportion of their clients returning.

Meeting during a Pandemic

Based on our immediate findings it is clear that most groups have managed to maintain some level of engagement throughout Lockdown with 65% using a variety of different virtual calling tools, although 9% of respondents did state that they're not currently engaging at all. Interesting even though almost 10% of groups have not engaged only 0.8% of respondents that completed this survey have disbanded. Overall groups have been forced to maintain contact across different platforms and methods, however, want to return back to normality as soon as possible.

Future engagement

For those groups that no longer wish to meet in person (10%), it appears that this is due to a variety of different issues with the main reason for no longer wanting to return back to hiring is because of Parking 40% which is slightly surprising as on average a parking spot in Sittingbourne is £1 per hour, therefore you can infer that these parking zones are just not convenient for these groups. Cost of travel (20%), the time commitment (20%) and travel time (20%) all were equally represented with respondents stating that a combination of all these reasons made using online tools more viable for their organisation.

In terms of those wanting to return according to our research, groups would like to meet on a weekly basis (34%), mainly on weekdays (90%) and for around 1-3 hours (70%).



Government restrictions

Even though we are moving towards the end of lockdown restrictions it is extremely important for users to feel that Social Distancing is encouraged and enforced 74%, more research needs to be conducted as we move towards the 21st June 2021. Although it was clear that temperature checks were considered the least important out of all the guidelines recommended by the Government to the respondents that answered our survey.

Overall to summarise it is very positive for the sector as a whole as people are feeling more confident returning back to delivering and participating in face to face activities after the 21st June 2021. Venues should expect the majority of their bookings to return as almost all the groups that have completed this survey have maintained contact and will resume when it is safe to do. Even with the advances in technology, it is clear that respondents would prefer to meet in person rather than through a computer screen.

Respondents

Here at Swale CVS, we would like to thank all the respondents that took the time and effort to complete our survey. Your responses will help shape the needs and demand for rooms/spaces/halls for hire in Sittingbourne.



Companionship at Christmas provides an invaluable service to those who would otherwise be spending Christmas alone.



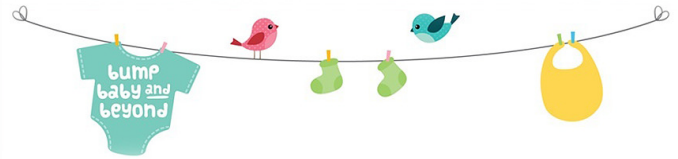
Oare String Orchestra

@oarestringorchestra · Orchestra





New Connections Befriending Scheme



CROSSROADS CARE KENT

Pieceful Patchers



A number of anonymous responses were also received.

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Youth Provision in Swale

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide the Western Area Committee an update on youth provision in the area and to identify opportunities to enhance services for young people in their area.

Current Provision

Youth Services are the responsibility of Kent County Council (KCC), KCC provide the core services as part of the Sittingbourne hub and a virtual offer (available to all Swale young people) and the remainder of services within Swale are commissioned out. The current commissioned provider is Optivo as the accountable body and Brogdale CIC as the managing body providing the main delivery. Sheppey Matters, Creed Outdoor Learning, Optivo and Brogdale CIC through Vibe community their delivery wing all work together as a consortium with other companies adding value as and when needed such as Sateda, Ideas Test and Mind Maidstone.

Activity covering the Western Area Committee areas is shown in table 1 below:

Location	Activity	Provider
Bapchild	None	N/A
Bobbing	None	N/A
Borden	None	N/A
Bredgar	None	N/A
Hartlip	None	N/A
Iwade	1. Youth Club (currently not running due to COVID19 and the village hall being closed) 2. Lego Club (currently not running due to COVID)	Brogdale CIC
Lower Halstow	1. School transition and emotion health & wellbeing activities with the primary school	Brogdale CIC
Milstead	None	N/A
Newington	Youth Club (Wednesday)	Brogdale CIC
Rodmersham	None	N/A
Tunstall	None	N/A
Upchurch	None	N/A
Virtual	Duke of Edinburgh	KCC
	Project 12	KCC
	Chill n' Chat	KCC
	Disability Youth Club	Brogdale CIC
	Siblings Club	Brogdale CIC
	Be You	Porchlight

In addition to the core offer, further outreach work is directed based on an intelligence led approach through a multi-agency group the District Contextual Safeguarding Meeting, which the Council are fully engaged with. Areas where youngsters are deemed at risk or an increase in anti-social behaviour would warrant the group deploying outreach to support youngsters in a proactive approach.

The youth service model although universal does not have sufficient resource to provide services in every location, in addition to the main provision the linkage with voluntary and community sector (VCS) groups is paramount and there are a significant number of groups offering sports clubs, uniformed group, music activities across the borough. If the area committee wanted to look at enhancing activity in their area then building capacity within the VCS and linkage with Parish councils and village halls would be the most pragmatic approach. For example, assisting with volunteer recruitment and training volunteers etc. Funding and the relevant officer resource would need to be identified to progress this approach. It would also need to be agreed as a priority as part of the councils prioritisation process currently being undertaken.

RECONNECT Programme

Kent County Council has committed £10m to its Reconnect: Kent Children and Young People Programme, an initiative that aims to recognise the selfless contribution the younger generation has made to help keep the county's residents as safe as possible throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and to help them reconnect with aspects of their lives that have been affected by it.

Swale LCPG have £266,500.13 as part of the Reconnect LCGP Grant Funding for the life programme, the duration of the programme runs until August 2022. Following the first round of funding applications KCC have awarded this sum of £12,500 to Swale Borough Council (SBC) to provide immediate local provision and summer activity by extending contracts/grants through existing arrangements to local providers. These provisions will need to be delivered between the 26 June to 5 September. Additional awards are yet to be announced however, the next is expected rounds of funding will be in October 2021 and March 2022.

Children and young people in Swale who receive free school meals are being offered the chance to take part in a range of activities to help them reconnect with their lives before the pandemic. Swale Borough Council have been working with local providers to subsidise a range of activities – from swimming sessions to cinema tickets – thanks to £12,500 of funding from Kent County Council's Reconnect programme.

The activities being supported by Swale Council between 26 July until 5 September are:

- Subsidised swimming tickets at Faversham, Swallows and Sheerness pools
- Subsidised activity mornings at The Light
- Subsidised heritage & education tickets
 - Raybel Charters CIC
 - Sittingbourne and Kemsley Light Railway
 - Bluetown

- Medway & Swale Estuary Partnership

Future Provisions

New House is currently the Youth Hub in Swale, the centre is currently close and will not be reopening. KCC will be providing provisions from Milton Court Children's Centre, dates and provisions to be confirmed.

The Reconnect Programme will operate until August 2022 and will help all age groups, from newborn babies and parents who were left isolated through to the end of secondary school. Young people with special educational needs and disabilities will be supported until the age of 24 with employment related activities. The next round of funding is expected to take place at the end of September and we would look to work with Parish Councils to assist with delivery during the life of the programme.

KCC's Youth Service Contract is due for renewal at the end of November 2021.

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Closed Churchyard Report – Area Committees

Where a Church of England churchyard is closed to further burials in accordance with an Order in Council under the Burial Act 1853, responsibility for maintenance may, at the request of the Church, be transferred to the relevant local authority (Parish Council first and then Borough Council). The transfer is compulsory, not dependent on the condition of the churchyard in question, and not dependent on the local authority's ability to meet the additional maintenance costs.

The legislation requires a short time of statutory notice (3 months) although our policy is always to request an informal 12-month period to allow for suitable budgeting decisions. Quinquennial inspection reports are given to us by the Diocese.

Swale currently has 20 Closed Churchyards which are listed over the page. We also have 8 War Memorials and 2 other significant memorials that the Council is responsible for maintaining.

Urgent health and safety related works are covered under the Council's ongoing revenue budget; however, inspections often reveal works that could be undertaken to prevent future serious issues or to ensure heritage and conservation considerations are protected. These latter works often require specialists and are expensive. Recent inspections have shown possible works totalling over £1m.

Members may wish to allocate some of the Area committee funds to a closed churchyard in their area. This could be to achieve improvements or support community activities.

We are aware that there is a growing interest of volunteers to support their local community areas. Therefore, we are looking at opportunities to have 'Days of Action'. You may already have links to groups that are interested or use your engagement to promote opportunities

If you are interested in supporting this programme of works, please contact parks@swale.go.uk stating the churchyard you are interested in.

List of Sites:

Churchyards

- St Mary of Charity, Faversham
- St Peter's & St Paul's, Newnham
- St Peter's and St Paul's, Ospringe
- St Peter & St Paul, Lynsted
- Lynsted Burial Grounds
- Holy Trinity Burial Grounds, Sheerness
- St Catherine's Faversham
- All Saints, Graveney
- St Peter & St Paul, Boughton-under-Blean
- Murston Churchyard
- St Peter & St Paul, Borden
- St Michael & All Angels, Hartlip
- Holy Trinity, Milton
- All Saints, Iwade
- St Michael's, Sittingbourne
- Holy Trinity, Queenborough
- Minster Abbey
- North Road, Queenborough
- Union Road, Minster-on-Sea
- Love Lane, Minster

War Memorials

- Sittingbourne War Memorial, Central Avenue
- High Street Queenborough War Memorial
- Stone Street, Faversham
- Sheerness, Bridge Road
- Muston Memorial, Church Road
- St Peter's & St Paul's Ospringe War Memorial
- Milton Memorial, Holy Trinity Church
- Borden Memorial, St Peters & St Pauls Church

Other Significant Memorials

- Eastchurch Aviation Memorial
- Gun Powder Memorial, Love Lane, Faversham

Western Area Committee – Priorities and ambitions proposal for 2021/22

Work plan – future items

The following suggestions were made for consideration at future meetings and the Chair/Vice-chair propose they should be included in the work plan for the year 2021/22

- Continue with ongoing projects and receive updates.
- Potential positive activities for young people in villages.
- Noise from the M2 and other roads.
- Closed Churchyards.

If the Committee are in agreement, the Chair will instruct the Area Committees Coordinator to schedule these items in for discussion.

Funding proposals

There have been a number of suggestions from Committee Members and groups within the Western area for funding proposals, these are listed below:

- Brown signs proposals for Bredgar and Wormshill Light Railway.
- A conservation area in Hartlip and Bredgar.
- Newington History Group – interpretation boards on footpaths.

The Chair and Vice-Chair note that the majority of proposals seek to improve the appearance, environment and facilities of the area or should benefit residents across the Western area and therefore propose this should be the priority/ambition for the year 2021/22

Criteria for funding applications:

To support this theme, the Chair and Vice-Chair propose that bids for funding submitted to the December meeting should demonstrate they will have a positive impact on the appearance, environment and facilities of the Western Area or benefit residents across the Western Area.

Bids will also be considered that can demonstrate how the initiative or project will contribute to Swale's strategic priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan in Priorities 2 and 3 which are relevant to the Area Committee's ambitions for this year:

Priority 2: Investing in our environment and responding positively to global challenges;

- 2.1 Develop a coherent strategy to address the climate and ecological emergencies, aiming for carbon neutrality in the council's own operations by 2025 and in the whole borough by 2030, and pursue all opportunities to enhance biodiversity across the borough.
- 2.2 Encourage active travel and reduced car use, including through the permeability of new developments, and work with partners to address air quality issues.
- 2.3 Establish a special projects fund to provide much-needed investment in the borough's public realm and open spaces.
- 2.4 Recognise and support our local heritage to give people pride in the place they live and boost the local tourism industry.
- 2.5 Work towards a cleaner borough where recycling remains a focus, and ensure that the council acts as an exemplar environmental steward, making space for nature wherever possible.

Priority 3: Tackling deprivation and creating equal opportunities for everyone:

- 3.1 Undertake targeted interventions to identify our most disadvantaged families and communities, improve our understanding of the issues they face, and develop new ways of working to reduce social exclusion and enhance opportunities and quality of life.
- 3.2 Reduce health inequality by developing more productive relationships with local health partners and making health and wellbeing a central consideration in all relevant council decision-making, recognising especially the link between housing and health.
- 3.3 Develop a communitarian approach to partnership working based on shared objectives with like-minded agencies in the voluntary and community sectors.
- 3.4 Ensure that the council plays a proactive role in reducing crime and antisocial behaviour, including through the modernisation of CCTV provision.
- 3.5 Promote wellbeing and enjoyment of life by signposting and encouraging a wide range of sporting, cultural and other leisure activities appropriate and accessible to each age group.

Scoring of applications:

In accordance with the procedure set out by the Area Committees Review Working Group and agreed by Committee Chairs, a three-step process will be carried out and all applications will be assessed by officers to check the following:

- they meet the criteria set out above;
- they do not cross over with other work being carried out by SBC or other organisations;
- there are no SBC financial/officer resource implications;
- the amount of funding requested is evidenced by quotations/estimates; and
- they do not include any of the exceptions listed below.

Exceptions to funding:

- *Individuals (or where the benefit of the funding will only benefit an individual)*
- *Party political groups or political activities. This includes any Parish Council (or group of), District Councils, or the Kent County Council where any funding would challenge or oppose the democratic functions of that Local Government. Or where such funding would be deemed to risk the reputational standing of Swale Borough Council.*
- *Church or Faith groups who are using the funding to promote religious activity.*
- *Schools and Academies cannot apply for funds towards capital costs; teaching materials; or curriculum delivery (although they may apply for funding towards initiatives or projects that support wider community benefit).*
- *Business/ companies which do not reinvest surpluses for community benefit.*

This Council agrees to ban the use and release of sky lanterns, fire reworks and balloons and the misuse of drones from land owned or managed by Swale Borough Council and at all events organised, supported, funded by (fully or partially) and/or licensed by this authority. This is in the interest of public safety, protection of agricultural land and property, prevention of harm to wildlife, livestock and other animals and protection of the environment.

This Council will not fund any project or organisation that does not act responsibly, in line with the relevant laws and regulations.

Funds should not be used for business costs such as rent and utilities.

The applications will then be scored against the criteria and the area of impact and options for voting will be put to the Western Area Committee to vote on at the December meeting.

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Western Area Committee meeting: Monitoring report on funding allocations awarded 2020/21

Fund allocation awarded	Project completed?	Progress report for incomplete project	Any underspend/overspend? If so how much?	If complete, any comments on how the area has benefitted
<p>Upchurch Parish Council – £4,655.00</p> <p>Replace fencing around Upchurch Recreation Ground</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>The total cost of the replacement fencing was £11,175.60, Western Area Committee gave a grant of £4,655 to match fund the installation. The fencing is now in place and as a result all users of the Recreation Ground are kept safe and there is no hazard to motorists when ball games are taking place.</p>
<p>Newington Parish Council - £4,000.00</p> <p>Refurbish the car park and track at Newington Recreation Ground</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>The total cost of the car park surfacing and refurbishment was £11,900. The work was able to proceed with the support of the Western Area Committee and has been completed. The car park has reduced parking on roads near to the recreation ground which has been</p>

				welcomed by residents, particularly when football is on at the Recreation Ground.
Wyvern Heritage & Landscape – £6,270.00 Conservation Area Reviews for Milstead, Rodmersham Green and Tunstall	No	A delay has been caused by the consultant not completing the work and as a result officers in Commissioning looking to bring in an external consultant to complete the work.	N/A	N/A
WAC001 – Hartlip Parish Council - £1,030.80 Kissing Gate	Yes	N/A	Underspend of £48.36 – the Chief Finance officer advised it was not necessary to return this amount	Hartlip Parish Council advised the work was complete and the gate in use.
WAC002 – Sittingbourne in Bloom - £7,085.41 Sensory garden refurbishment at King George V Playing Field	Awaiting response.			

<p>WAC003 – Member bid Cllr Sarah Stephen - £13,000.00</p> <p>Walking & Cycling Routes</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>This work is being led by Cllr. Sarah Stephen who is forming a Member working group to consider routes ahead of commissioning route planners etc.</p> <p>Officers are discussing with the deputy Cabinet member arranging a meeting to look at potential routes and will look to see what is possible in September.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>WAC004 – Member bid Cllr Mike Baldock - £1,200.00</p> <p>Brown Tourism signs</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The Henge, Sonora Field - the application is currently awaiting verification with Visit Kent and Kent Highways. SBC are sending monthly chasers.</p> <p>Bobbing Church - there is some work to be carried out by the Church in terms of it being a destination but once that is complete they will instruct SBC when/if to proceed with the application process.</p> <p>The Grove - some work needs to take place on putting together a tourism business case. Once that is complete the application process can commence</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>WAC005 – Member bid Cllr James Hunt - £2,758.79</p> <p>Woodland Management Plan</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Order has been placed with White Horse Ecology to update previously drafted management plan. Time frames - to be complete by end of this calendar year.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>

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