



Longford Village Hall Community Needs Survey

Taken over the period 10 Aug – 31 Oct 2019

Conducted by

The Longford Village Hall Committee

10 November 2019

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Background

Longford Village Hall is a community run facility for the Parish of Longford and the surrounding area. The Hall is run by a committee of volunteers, many of whom have served the Parish in this capacity for many years. It has acted as a place of safety throughout its life, most notably in the 2007 floods.

The Parish of Longford is quite large covering a wide geographic area as shown in Figure 1 (circled in red as the area surrounding the number 240). The population has expanded in recent years with the building of the Whittington Park housing estate to the North of Longford Lane. As a condition of planning a relatively large sum of money was lodged with Tewkesbury Borough Council for the improvement to the Village Hall.

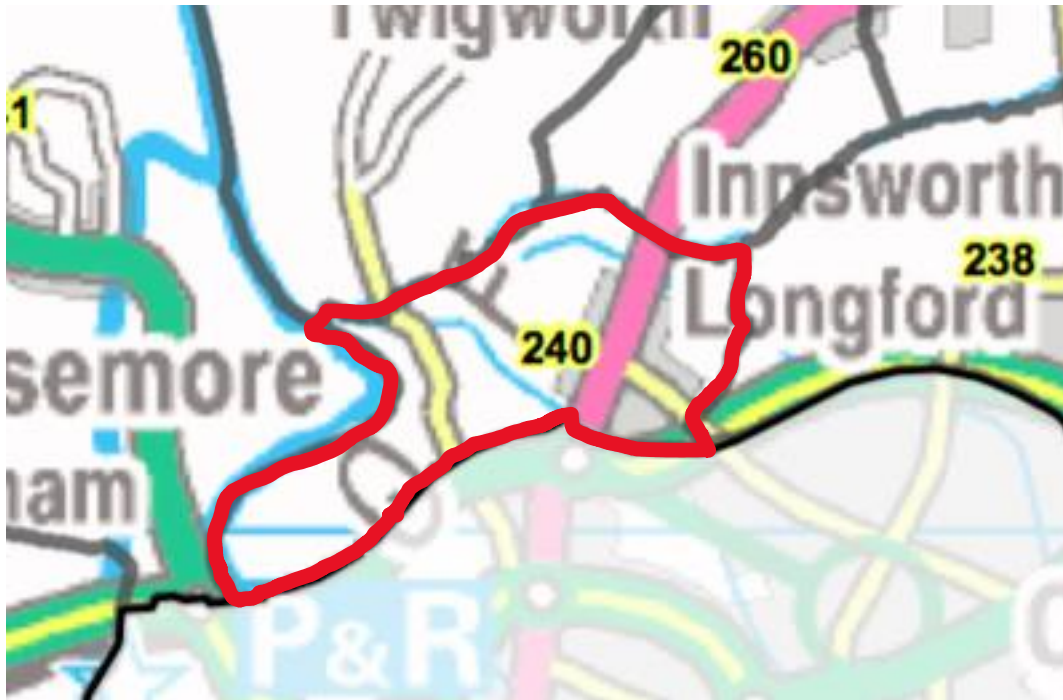


Figure 1 - Longford Parish

In order to ensure that the money will be spent wisely and for the benefit of Longford residents a joint consultation committee has been set up between the Parish Council and Village Hall Committee. In order to ensure that the widest range of opinions could be gathered it was decided that the joint committee would commission Community Roots CIC to undertake a survey in the parish by starting conversations with residents to understand what people's concerns were and what they wanted to see in terms of community improvement. Their report is available as a separate report from this one and will be published on the Village Hall. website once finalised.

The Village Hall Committee devised a separate mainly internet-based survey, to focus questions more on what residents wanted from the Village Hall, this report is the results of that survey with a section to discuss the similarities in Community Roots' findings and our own.

Aims

- To gauge the level of community support for refurbishment of the Village Hall.
- Identify what facilities will be needed in the improved facility.
- Explore what activities and groups people would like to see offered in future at the Village Hall and measure the level of interest in hiring facilities.
- Establish which activities people attend outside the Parish and what the barriers are that prevent taking part on these activities in the Parish.

Methodology

The survey was designed and published on a free survey service, [Survey Hero](#) and a small number of paper copies were completed (3) at a Table Top Sale that took place in the Village Hall on 20 September 2019. The survey went live on-line on 10 August 2019 and closed on 31 October 2019.

The on-line survey received 414 views with 183 responses (44.2%) of which 134 people completed the whole survey (73.2% of those that started the survey). All of the completed responses to each question have been taken into account in these published results.

The survey was advertised on the Village Hall website, the Parish Council Noticeboards (using a QR code for fast access) and regularly promoted on the Longford Community Facebook page. It was noted that there were 'spikes' in responses after each advertising effort on Facebook, as shown in Figure 2.

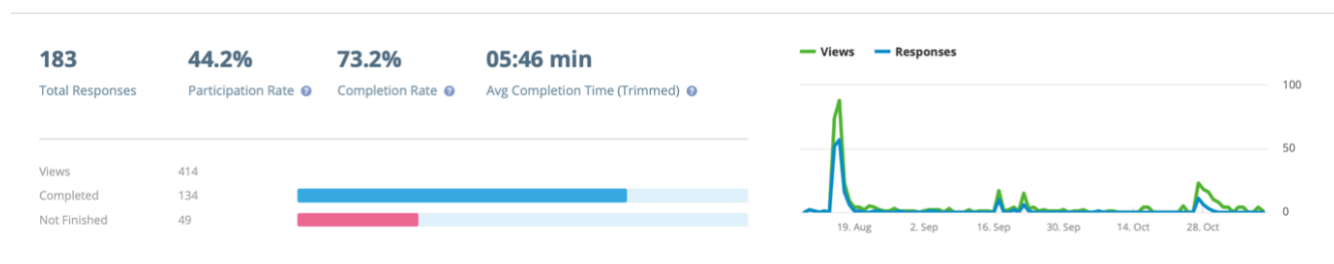


Figure 2 – On-Line Survey Response Summary

Longford Village Hall Survey Summary

Demographic Data for the Survey

- There were 116 answers to the question about the use and ages of users of the hall, this represents **423 household members overall**. From anecdotal evidence a 44% response rate is a good community response for a single use consultation.
- The majority of respondents live in Longford Parish (81%) with 25 respondents living elsewhere, there was no data gathered about where outside the parish they live.
- Looking at overall household composition the majority are adults 18-60 (207), with the next largest group children (138) broken down as to pre-school children (51); primary school students (62) and secondary school children (25). The smallest group was seniors of 60+ (78).

Summary of Results

The survey represented a reasonable enough proportion of the Parish that we can suggest that we have a statistically significant set of responses with which to plan the future refurbishment of the Village Hall. The Committee did not get unanimous votes of approval, in fact there were a number of criticisms that have been addressed in full later in the report. Headlines were:

- Poor communication with those who want to hire the Hall.
- Not responding to complaints.
- Taking too long to spend the money for the refurbishment.
- Poor marketing and advertising events.

In addition, we recognise, as a Committee, that we have not necessarily done enough to advertise the fact that the Committee has had new members and that we have not been able to update residents of the achievements of the last year. However as the majority of new Committee members only started in Sep 18 it has taken a year to 're-group,' gain an understanding of issues and 'tighten up' in some areas that were lacking ready to move forward in the next year.

The majority of respondents believe that a high-quality community facility is important and would be sorry if the Village Hall were not there.

There were lots of requests for activities that are currently limited in scope such as fitness classes (only once per week with Zumba) or do not currently take place, such as craft, language or finance classes and baby and toddler groups. There was also a suggestion to run a luncheon club for the community.

Of the respondents only approximately half actually attend the Hall with many suggesting that they would if there were activities of interest at the right time of day for them and if there were more community events. The majority of people would prefer to attend the Village Hall during weeknight evenings and weekend mornings.

Almost 1/3 of those that responded suggested part of the reason they do not attend activities in the Village Hall is that the facilities are not suitable or are better elsewhere.

The survey provided the opportunity for respondents to add text to their answers which provided a number of suggestions that would improve the Hall, in terms of infrastructure, such as:

- Better toilet facilities
- A bar or pop up pub/social club
- Better storage
- More flexible space
- Better kitchen facilities

All of these suggestions and others provide the Village Committee and the Parish Council with a number of suggestions that can be used to instruct a professional to produce new drawings or for us to look at the existing drawings to identify the one(s) that best fit the needs of the community and to move forward with the necessary planning permission and work.

There was quite a groundswell of opinion that the Car Boot Sales had been great events and that they ought to be brought back in the summer months. This has been scheduled for discussion in the New Year with a view to re-starting them. This type of activity may also help to generate some income for any period that the Hall is closed.

Encouragingly almost half of those that completed the survey suggested that they may be able to assist the Village Hall and Committee in some respect, suggesting that there is a real interest in ensuring that the facility continues to operate into the future.

Findings

The survey had 15 subject areas, although there were more than 15 questions, some of them provided the respondents the opportunity to make suggestions and, in some cases, provide critique on the way that the Village Hall has been and is being managed by the committee. The section following this provides some answers to that direct criticism. Of the remainder of the text items the author has, where possible grouped them into subject areas to provide clarity, all comments for all questions will be published in Appendix 1 at the back of this report.

Each question will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

Question 1: Longford needs a high-quality community facility in the form of a Village Hall. To what extent do you agree or disagree that this facility is needed?

Number of responses: 178

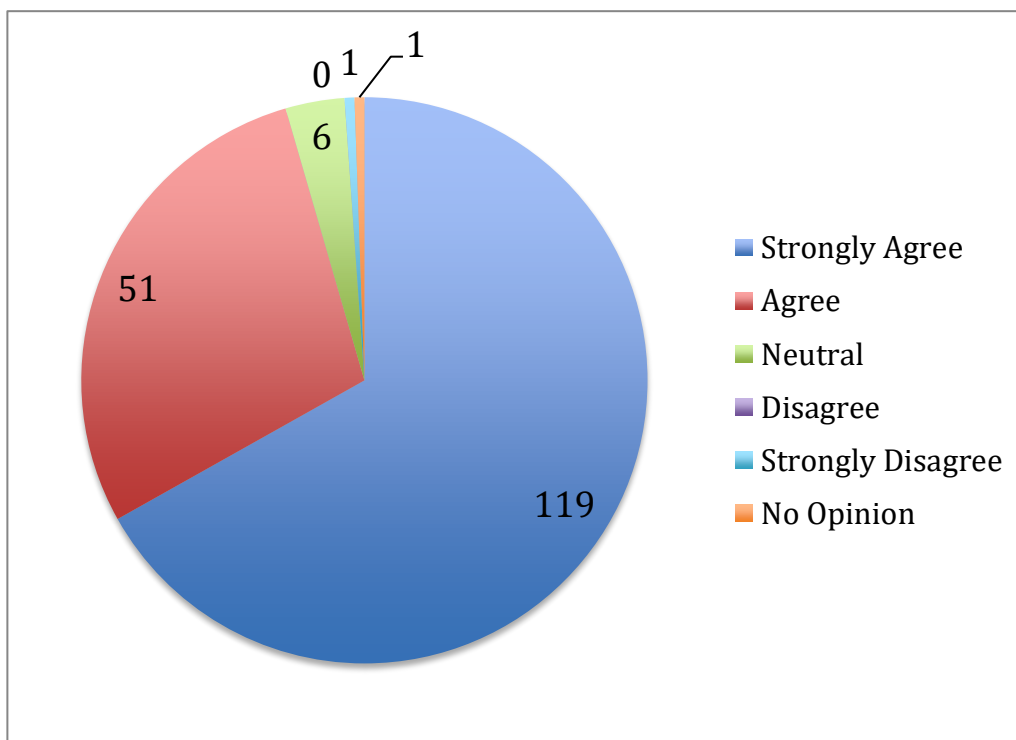


Figure 3 - Question 1 Responses

The overwhelming majority of respondents strongly agree that the community needs a high-quality Village Hall (66% - 119 respondents) and approximately 1 in 4 agree (29% - 51 respondents). A small number of respondents are ambivalent (0.3% - 6 respondents) and only 1 person strongly disagreed.

This can only be interpreted as a 'green light' to make the necessary changes to the Village Hall to bring the standards up to 'high-quality' and to 'get on with it' as has been suggested in a number of responses to other questions.

Question 2: How often do you use the Village Hall?

Number of responses: 176

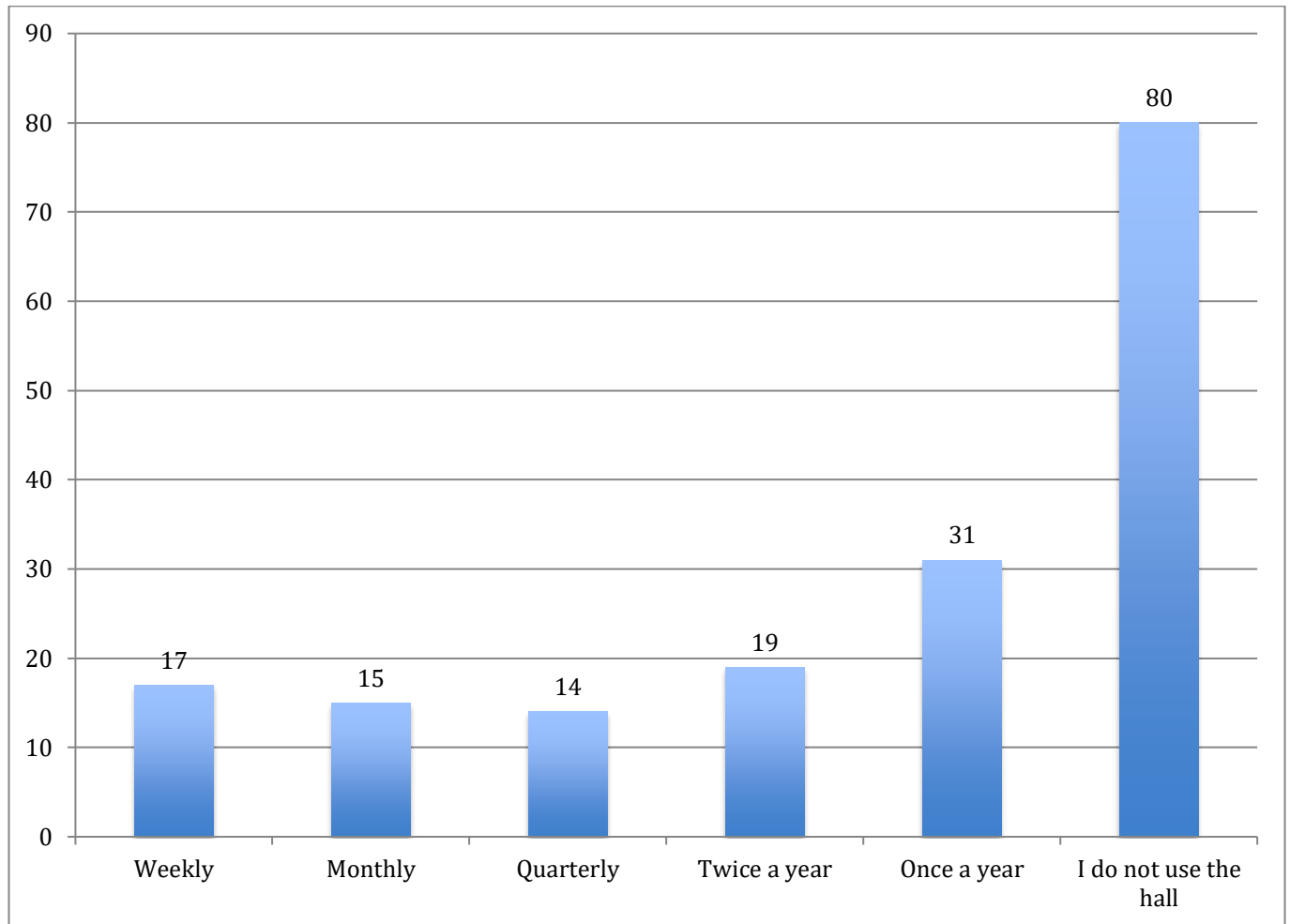


Figure 4 – Question 2 Responses

More than 9 in 10 (95%) of respondents answered the question although the result was almost evenly split between those that use the hall (55%) and those that do not (45%). There was no follow up text response required and it is therefore difficult to fully assess the reasons for not using the Hall, although using information from other answers in the survey the two most probable reasons are:

- The timings of regular events do not suit the respondent's pattern of life (work, children etc.)
- There are not activities in the Hall that the respondents would be interested in attending.

Question 3: In the last year, have you hired or been to an event in the Village Hall?

Number of responses: 107

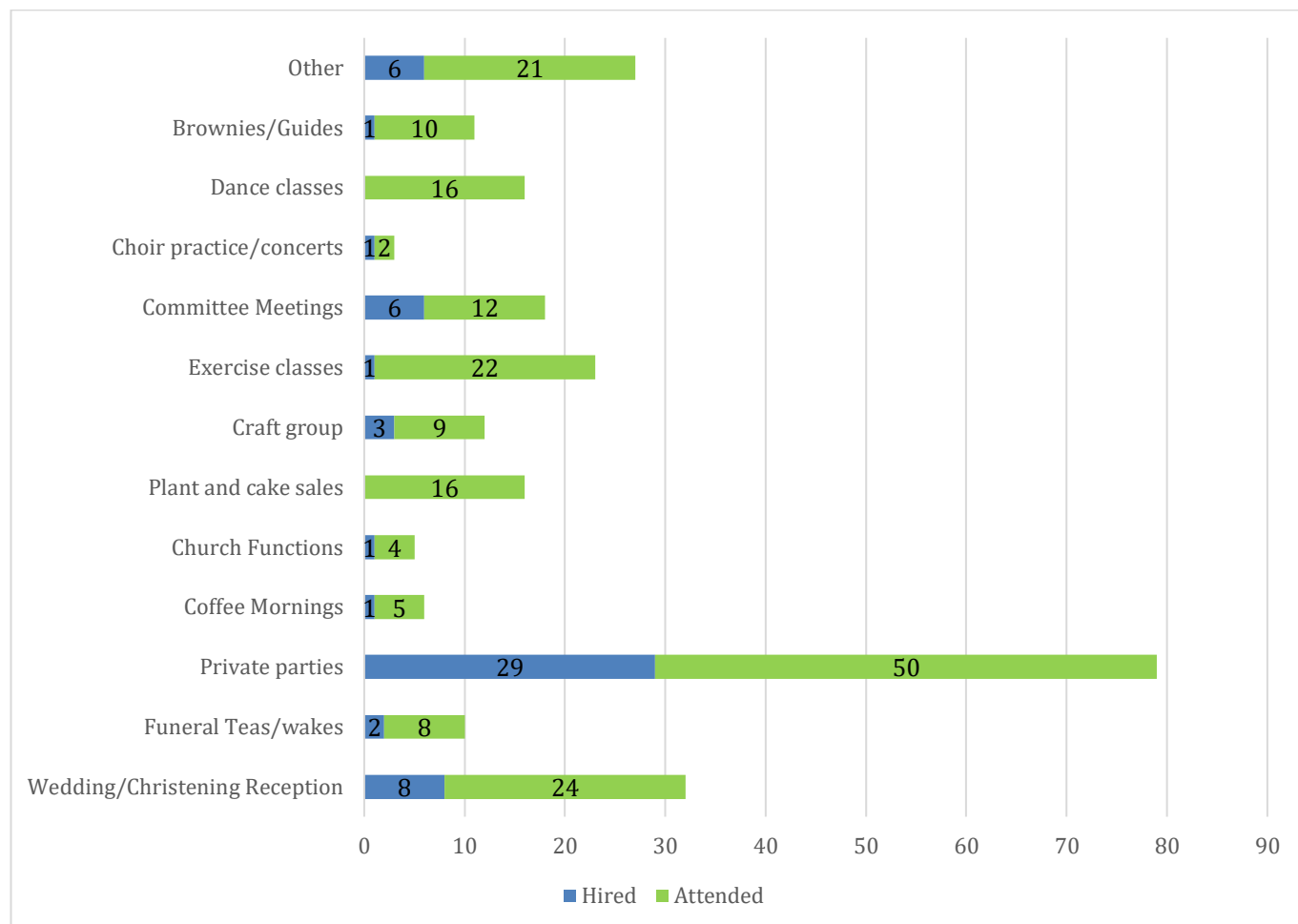


Figure 5 - Question 3 Responses

The respondents had either hired or attended events in the Village Hall a total of 258 times in the last year, with attendance at events rather than hiring being the predominant reason for being in the Village Hall (77%).

The most attendance came from hiring or attending private function in the Hall (89 events – 31% of total events). The next largest reason for attendance was wedding and christening receptions (32 events – 12%) whilst ‘Other’ represented a significant proportion (29 events – 11%).

The text answers for those that chose ‘Other’ varied with training events (first aid etc) and regular user meetings (WI etc.) having 5 responses each; sales events and voting (the Hall is the local Polling Station) having 4 each and the Easter Egg hunt 3.

Of the remainder the most popular activities were exercise classes (23 events – 9%), committee meetings (18 events – 7%) with dance classes and plant and cake sales having 16 events each (6%).

Question 4: What type of activity would you or a member of your household be interested in attending at the Hall?

Number of responses: 147

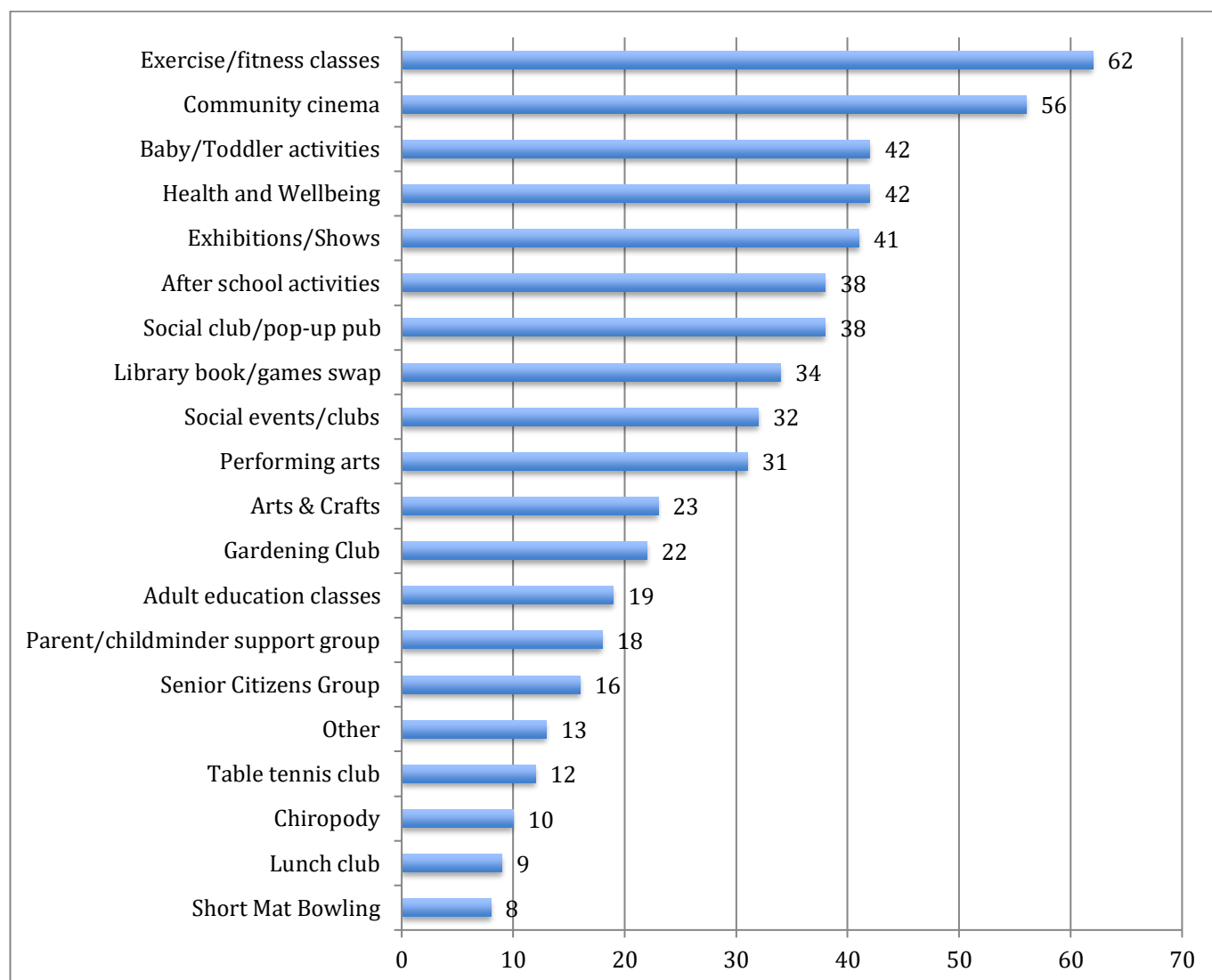


Figure 6 - Question 4 Responses.

This proved to be a popular question with the 147 (77% of all respondents) providing 566 different requests for activities, showing that there is significant interest in attending activities at the Village Hall.

Exercise and fitness classes were the most popular with 62 (42% of respondents) requesting and a community cinema coming a close second with 56 (38%). Also popular were baby/toddler activities and health and wellbeing activities with 42 (29%); exhibitions and shows 41 (28%); after school activities and social club/pop-up pub shared 38 (26%); library book/games swap 34 (23%) and performing arts 31 (21%)

Smaller numbers showed interest in arts and crafts (16%); gardening club (15%); adult education classes (13%); parent/childminder support group (12%) and senior citizens groups (11%).

Table tennis (8%); chiropody (7%); lunch club (6%) and short mat bowling (5%) all fell below 10% of the total number of respondents, however that does not mean there is no merit in investigating their potential.

Of those that chose 'other' and completed the text boxes, the predominant responses were for what the author has described as skills classes (18 suggestions) which include general house

maintenance, language and craft classes, with car boots sales (6 suggestions) and live music and fitness/sports sharing 5 suggestions each.

Question 5: What would make you more likely to attend activities/events in the Hall?

Number of responses 149

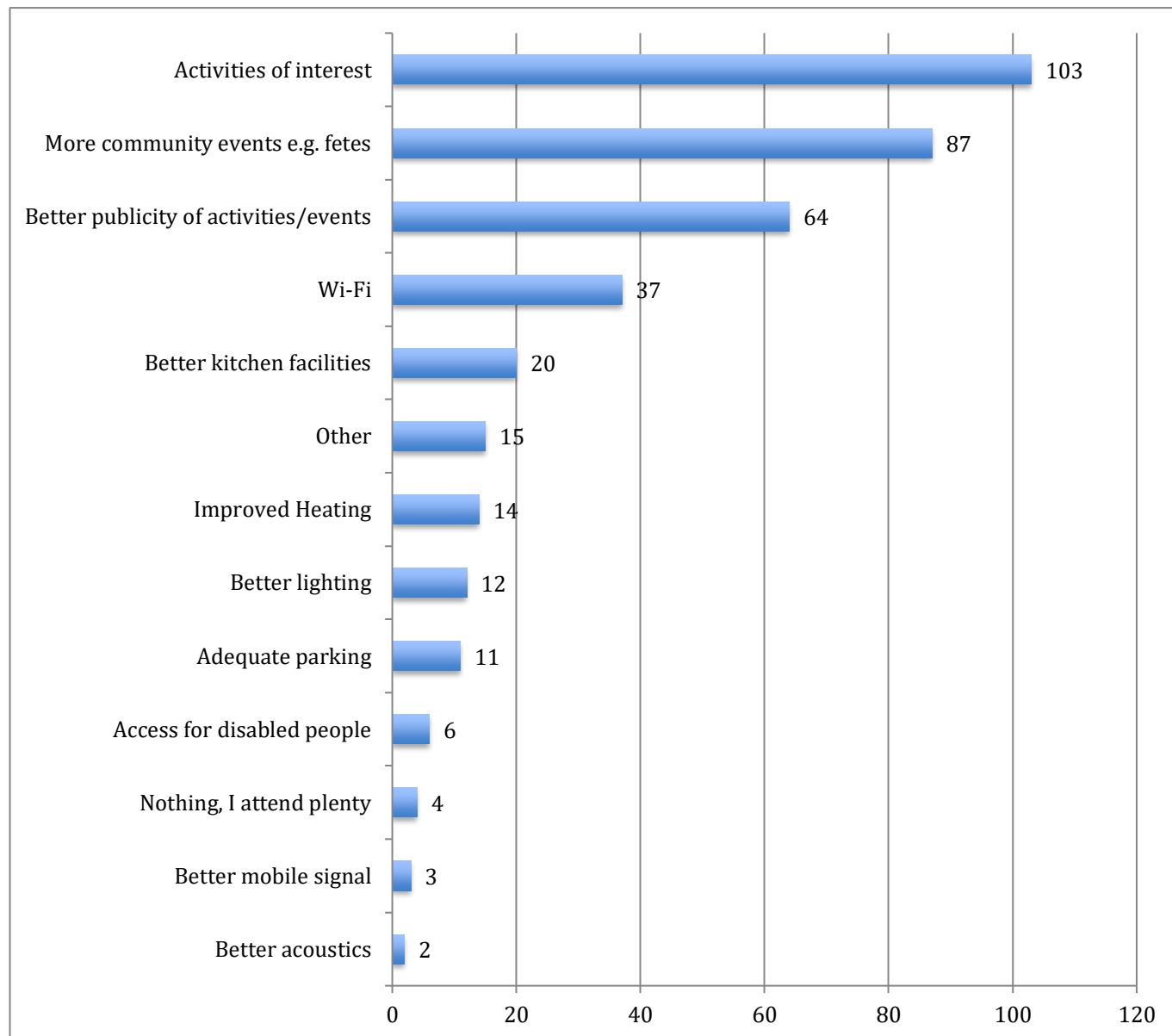


Figure 7 - Question 5 Responses.

More people would come to the hall if there were more activities of interest (69% - 103 respondents). Additionally, large numbers would be more likely to attend if more community events (58%) were available and better advertised (43%). Wi-Fi is seen as a concern with 37 (25%) of respondents citing it as a reason to attend the Hall more.

The responses dealing with shortcomings of the current infrastructure represented in total 63 (42%) of responses, with better kitchen facilities coming top with 20 (13%) responses, followed by improved heating (9%); better lighting (8%); adequate parking (7%) and access for disabled people (4%)

Of those that provided answers in the text associated with the 'other' response, better facilities had 3%; better communication with staff 2% and advertising 1%. The remainder (live music, car boot sales a bar and more flexible spaces each represented 0.67% of the total responses.

Analysis and Response

Taking the answers from Question 4, there do appear to be a number of activities that might help to increase attendance at the Hall, however this needs to be balanced with the times of day that the Hall is currently available, there is generally at least one activity booked for most weekday early evenings as can be seen on the [website calendar](#), however there are some gaps that may be of use to anyone wishing to establish a class (at least one respondent did express an interest in this).

The Committee has a much closer working relationship with the Parish Council than was perhaps the case in the past and there are currently plans to hold at least one Community event in the near future, this will be advertised as widely as possible on the [website](#), local community Facebook sites and the Parish Noticeboards.

Wi-Fi was a recent discussion at the Village Hall Committee meeting; however, it was decided that the installation of a phone/broadband line would need to wait until a decision has been made on any refurbishment plans because there is currently no way to secure the equipment.

Facilities were an obvious concern to a significant proportion of respondents. The Committee does have available funding to do a limited amount of work and some activities have been conducted or are in the planning stages to make very minor improvements. The issue that we have is that there is no point spending money on improvements that may not have a life of more than a few months once we can agree on what improvements to the Village Hall will look like.

There has been an improvement in communication in recent times, both in terms of advertising events and being more available to people to be able to make bookings for the Hall, however please remember that the committee are all volunteers and it may take a little time to get back to you. The website calendar has a form for enquiring about bookings and the homepage has a general 'contact us button' both of these link to the email (lvh.friends@gmail.com) which is checked daily.

Question 6: Thinking about activities in the hall, what days and times would suit you best to attend events?

Number of responses: 129

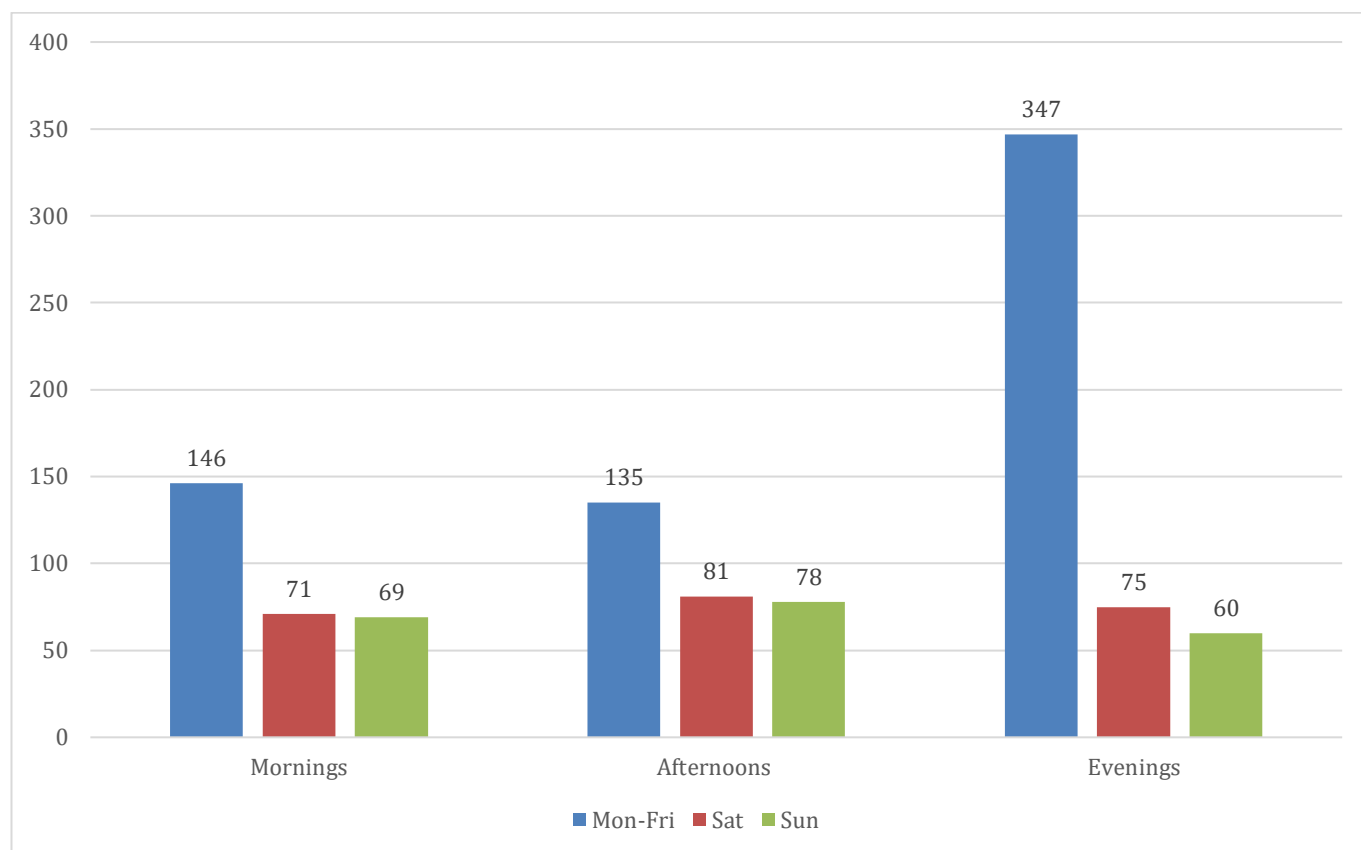


Figure 8 - Question 6 Responses

Most respondents gave an indication of the best time for them to use the village hall (69%). The outstanding majority would prefer to use the Hall during the week (59%) with the strongest preference being for the evenings (33%).

Saturday and Sunday are almost equal (21 & 19% respectively) with no particular preference shown for the time of day.

Analysis & Response

There are a number of regular activities most weekday evenings, with Zumba and Guides weekly and other events spread throughout the month on various nights of the week. Many events in the early evening are complete by 8.00p.m. and therefore exist opportunities for other activities later in the evening.

Question 7: What activities/groups do you attend outside Longford?

Number of respondents: 65



Figure 9 - Question 7 Responses.

There were a wide range of responses with 24 categories of activities (as assessed by the author) attended outside Longford. These are shown in Figure 9, the larger the text the better the response. The majority (39% - 26 responses) were sports and fitness activities with yoga and pilates adding another 10% (7 responses). Activities included; Netball, Zumba, gym classes, Field Hockey and Golf. Baby and toddler groups/activities also proved popular (19% - 13 responses) as well as Guiding and Scouting for all ages (18% - 12 responses).

1 respondent commented that a lack of transport prevented them from attending events and activities outside Longford.

Question 8: What prevents you from attending this kind of activity in Longford?

Number of responses 89

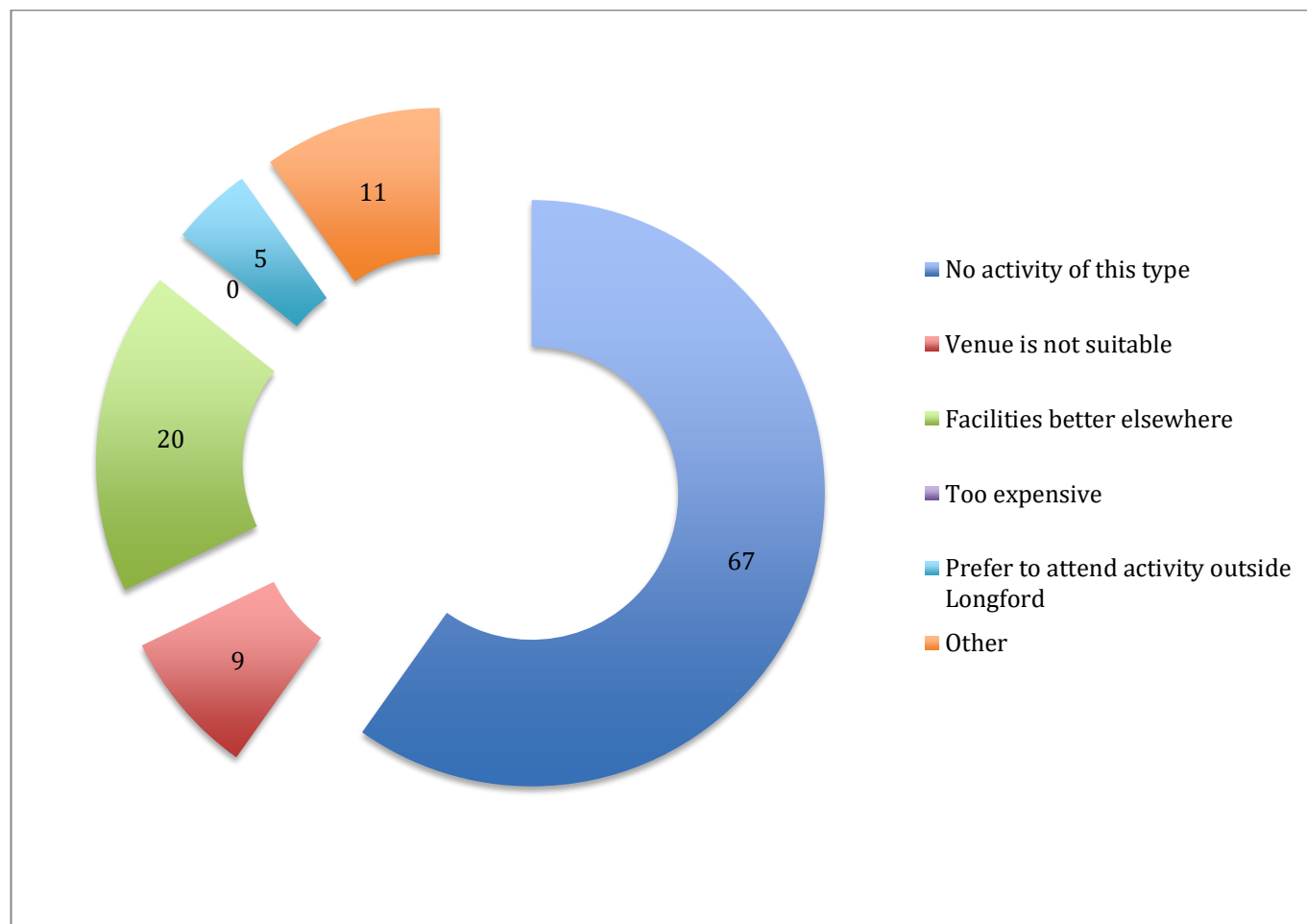


Figure 10 - Question 8 Responses.

For 3/4 of respondents (75% - 67 responses) there are not activities of the type they want to attend in Longford. 22% (20) feel that the facilities are better elsewhere and 10% (9) feel that the venue is not suitable. Only 6% (5) preferred to attend activities outside Longford and no respondents thought that activities were too expensive.

Of the 12% (11) that chose 'other' and made additional comments 3 stayed with previous groups after moving; 3 suggested that timings did not fit their schedules. The following comments received 1 each; work; unable to book; not aware of events and no events that are of interest.

Question 9: Would you be likely to hire the Village Hall for any of the following?

Number of responses: 104

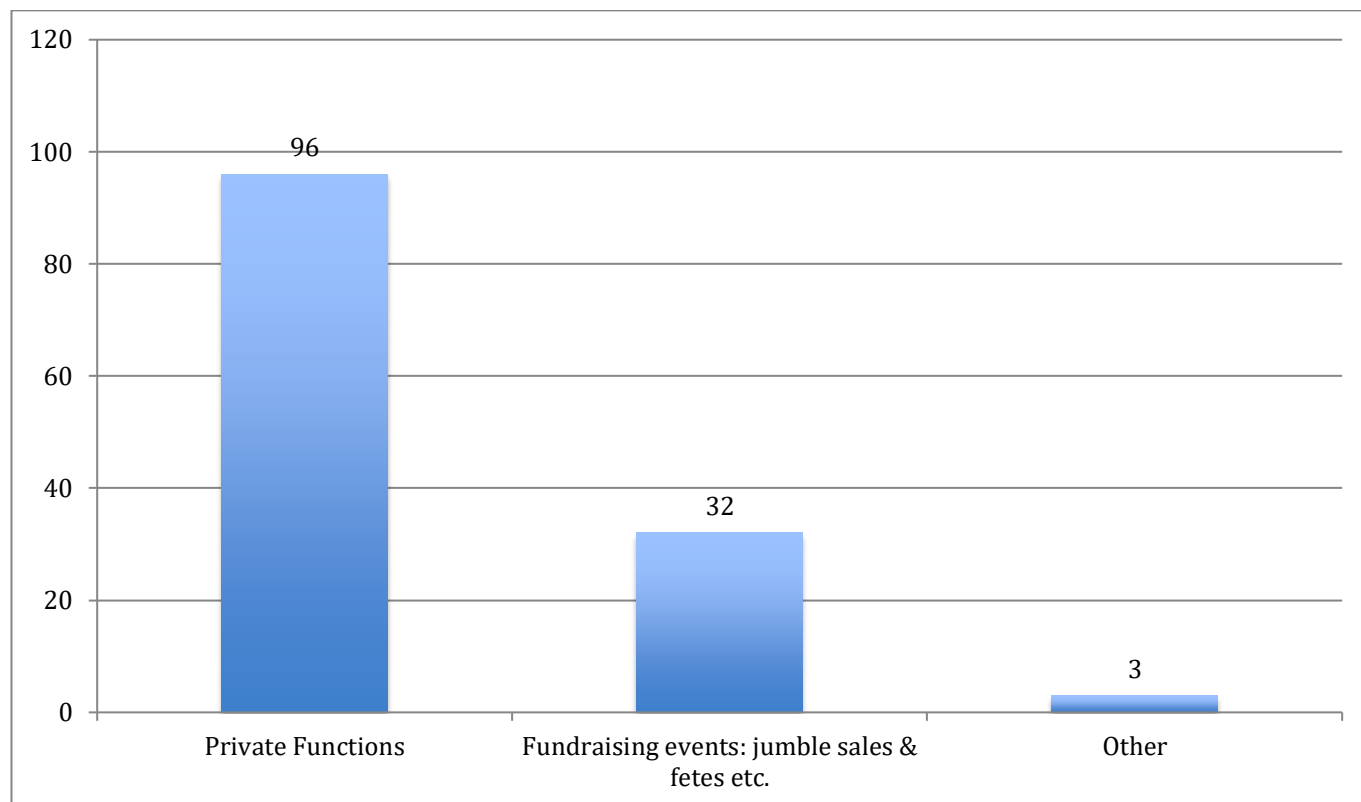


Figure 11 - Question 9 Responses.

Having set the scene in the introduction to the survey regarding the possibility of refurbishing the Village Hall and given the previous line of questioning, it is thought that respondents responded about hiring the Hall post any refurbishment, not in its current condition.

Approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ of those taking part answered this question (56%) and the outstanding majority (92%) would hire the Hall for private functions and almost 1 in 3 (31%) would hire the Hall for fundraising events.

There were 8 comments raised of which 3 were complaints, which will be dealt with in the sections below. The comments were about putting on events such as car boot sales, music events, school events and starting a luncheon club.

The final comment was that the Hall was too expensive to hire.

Question 10: Would you be willing to run, help run new activities/events using your skills experience and interests?

Number of responses: 125

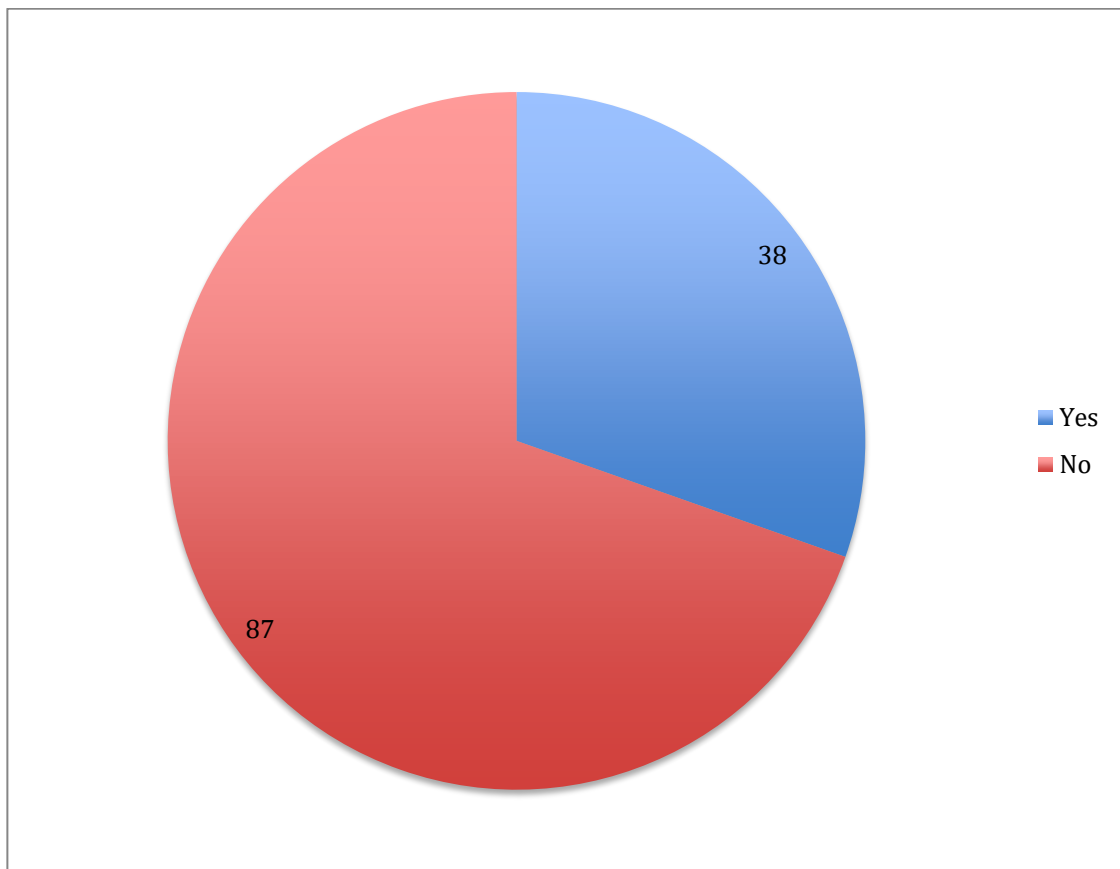


Figure 12 - Question 10 Responses.

Of the 67% of respondents that answered the question almost 1 in 3 were willing to run or help run new activities and events. Of those that answered in the positive 18 expanded upon their answers as shown in Figure 13 below (the larger text indicates more responses).



Figure 13 - Question 10 Expanded Answers.

Question 11: If you run a local business or work for an organisation or group, would you be interested in hiring the hall for any of the following?

Number of responses

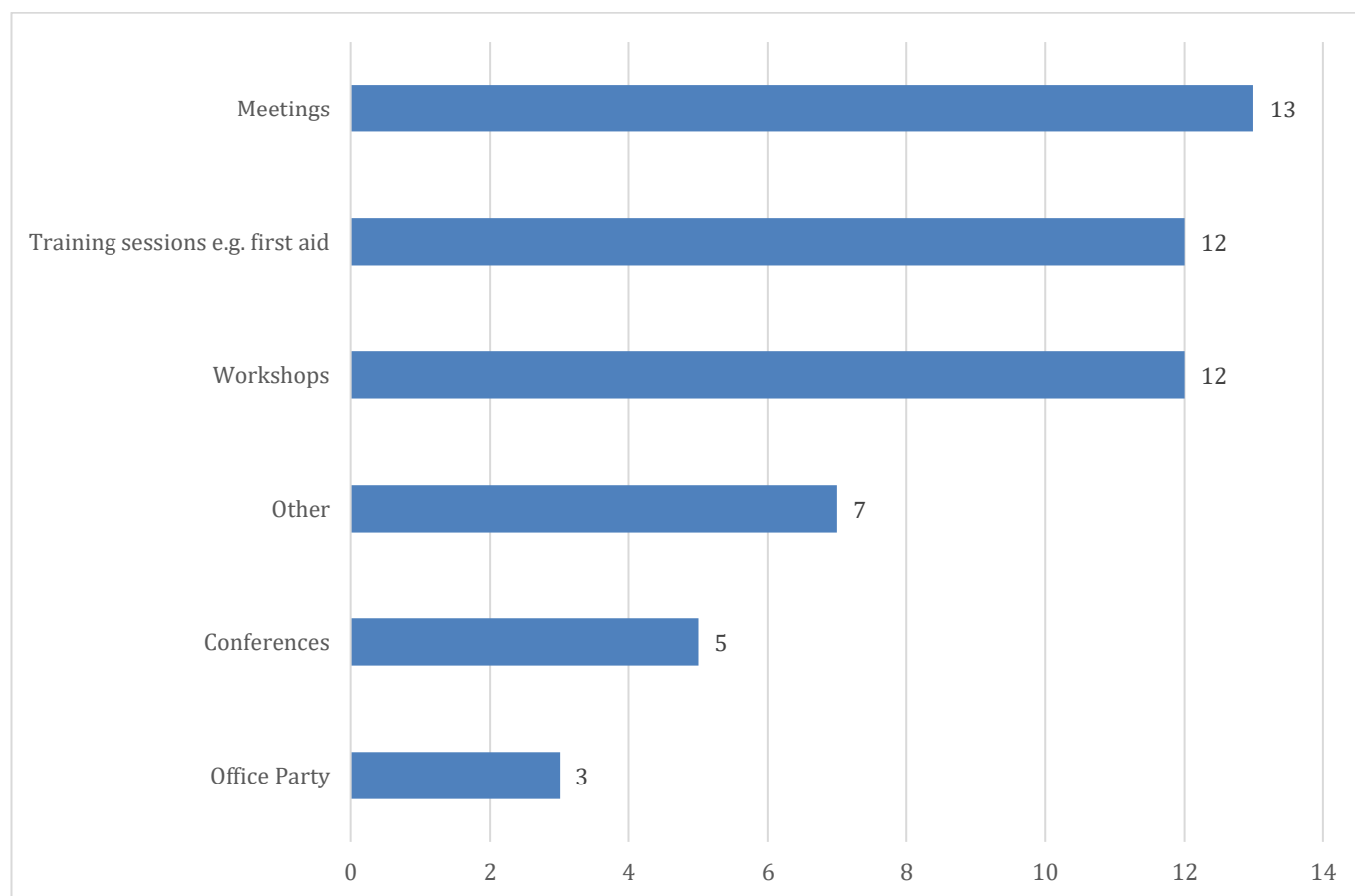


Figure 14 - Question 11 Responses.

This question was only answered by 16% of those that took part in the survey, the 3 largest responses were Meetings (43%) and training sessions and workshops both with 40% of all respondents selecting them.

Conferences and Office parties received 17 & 10 % respectively.

For those that responded as other or added comments (8 responses) live events and office space received 2 comments each whilst special birthday party, car boot sales, pop-up beauty salon and community event received 1 comment each.

Question 12: What help might you be able to provide to the Village Hall and the Committee if you have any free time to volunteer?

Number of responses 88

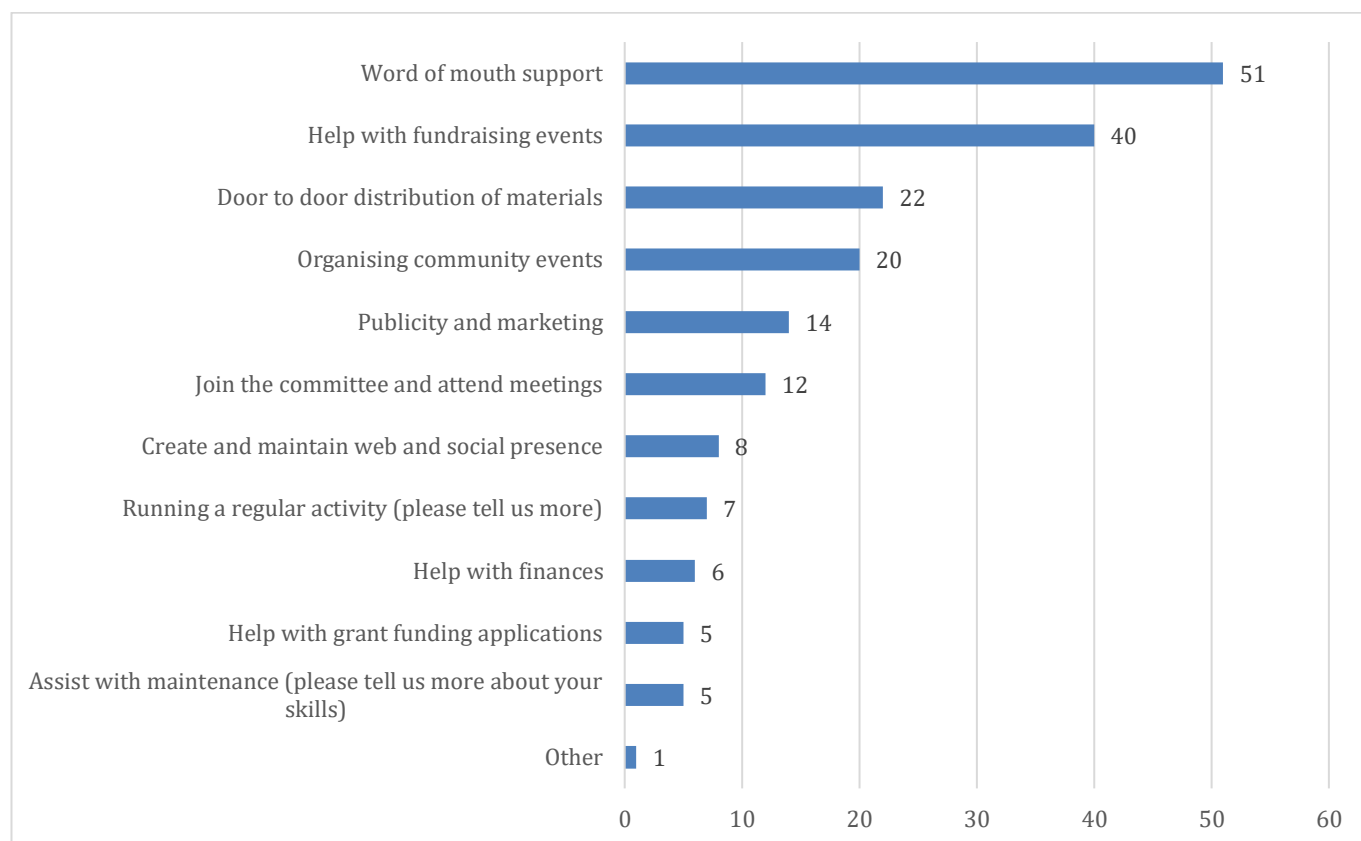


Figure 15 - Question 12 Responses

Almost half (47%) of respondents are willing to assist the Village Hall and Committee in some capacity, which is really encouraging. Of those the majority (58% - 51 responses) are willing to support by word-of-mouth and almost half (45% - 40) to assist with fundraising events.

Half of respondents would be able to help with raising awareness including; door to door distribution of materials (25%); publicity and marketing (16%) and creating and maintaining the web and social presence (9%).

There are almost 1/3 (32%) of respondents who wish to assist with or run events, including; organising community events (23%) and running a regular activity (9%) (this includes the 1 'other' answer 'baby and toddler group').

Financial help is also well represented; help with finances (7%) and help with grant funding applications (6%).

There is a not insignificant number (14%) who would like to join the committee and attend meetings with 6% able to assist with maintenance.

Question 13: Would you miss the Village Hall if it were not there?

Number of responses: 132

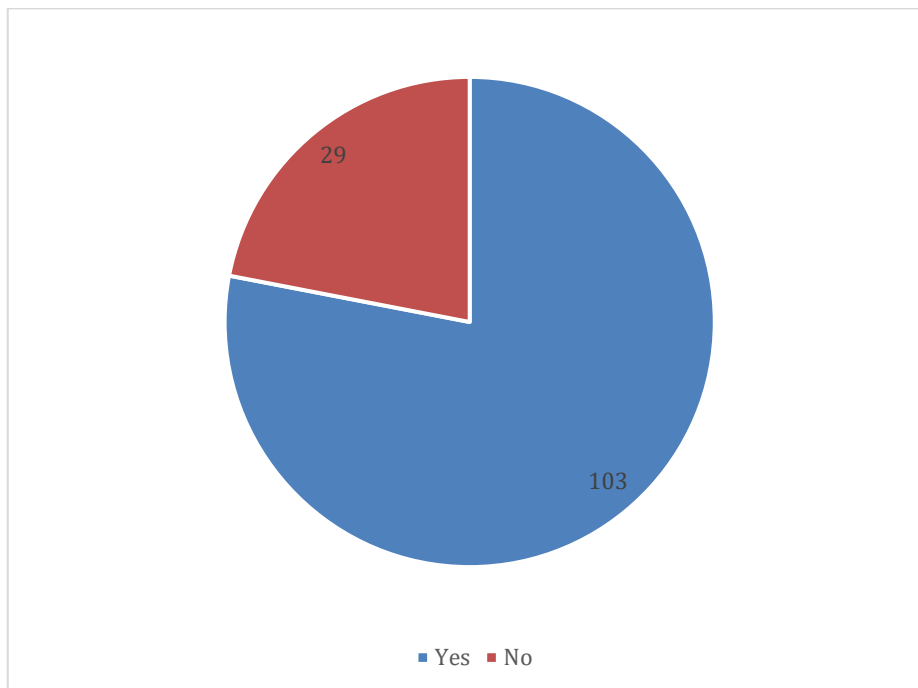


Figure 16 - Question 13 Response

It is very encouraging that 78% of respondents would miss the Village Hall if it were not there.

Question 14: Do you live in Longford Parish?

Number of responses: 135

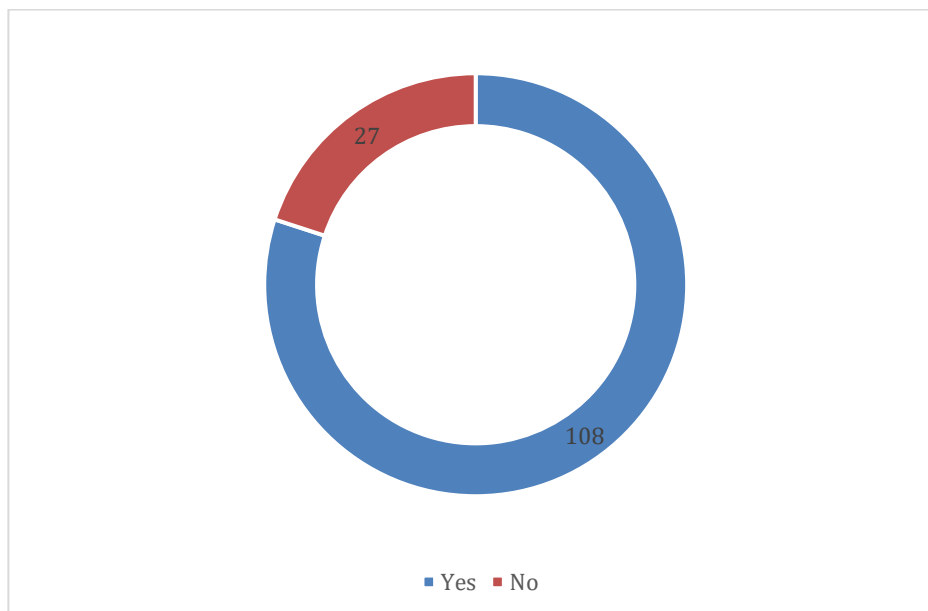


Figure 17 - Question 14 Responses.

80% Of respondents live in Longford Parish, which allows the Village Hall Committee and Parish Council to go ahead with starting to plan improvements in the knowledge that there is a reasonable proportion of residents who have commented and provided ideas for any refurbishment of the Hall.

Question 15: How many people in your household fall into the following categories and USE the Hall?

Number of responses: 119

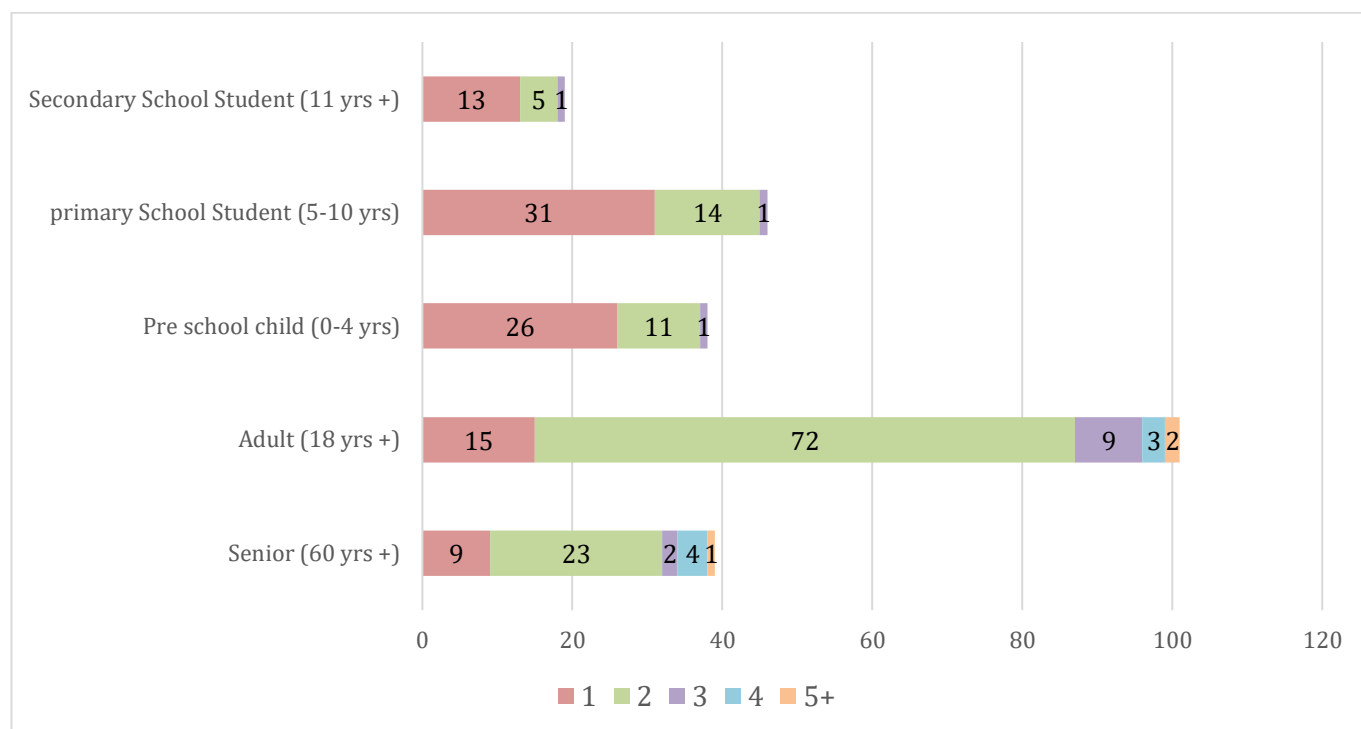


Figure 18 - Question 15 Responses.

The responses received represent 429 people that use the Hall and again this provides encouragement that the comments received represent a reasonable proportion of residents and users from outside the parish.

The demographic breaks down to:

- 82 seniors (60+)
- 208 adults (18+)
- 26 secondary school children (11+)
- 62 primary school children (5-10)
- 51 pre-school children (0-4)

Question 16: If you have anything to add that will assist in making the Village Hall more accessible to your needs please feel free to comment below:

Number of responses: 18



Figure 19 - Question 16 Text Responses.

Figure 19 shows the responses, broken down into groups of responses, the actual text responses can be seen at Appendix 1.

Almost half of the comments (44%) related to improvements to the Hall's facilities; 28% suggested refurbishing the Hall; 10% suggested more storage space and 6% want more rooms and better use of the space.

16% of respondents suggested more advertising and community support to the Hall and 11% better access to book the Hall. This has been an enduring theme throughout the survey and will be addressed in the next section.

More daytime and evening fitness classes and car boot sales were both suggested by 6% of respondents.

The remaining comments each represent 6% of respondents:

- New committee – this will be responded to in the next section
- Upgrade facilities in the park – this is not the responsibility of the Village Hall Committee, but the Liaison Committee includes Parish Councillors who will be able to see these results.
- Place of safety – the Village Hall has for a long time been a place of safety, most recently during the floods of 2007. This will always be taken into account by the Committee when planning any refurbishment.

Village Hall Improvement Quotes

There have been several comments from respondents that have suggested improvements to the Village Hall, they are spread throughout the text responses in the survey and have been quoted below:

- *No bar facilities*
- *Its not something that I currently use, but if the facilities were to be improved there would be more of an incentive for people within the community to utilise it.*
- *Blinds/curtains*
- *Toilets being better*
- *Better toilets.*
- *A licenced bar.*
- *Make place look a bit more loved.*
- *More flexible use of space.*
- *I have ticked off Wi-Fi and better mobile because that may improve the Hall's facilities but does it bother me, not really.*
- *At our regular meetings we regularly have visiting speakers who like to show slides/video. The feedback received from the speaker and members is that the Hall desperately needs some blackout curtains to enable day time meetings.*
- *No Bar Facilities*
- *From past experience of being on the Village Hall Committee it was difficult to get people interested. The changing rooms were a disgrace and the Hall needed a modernisation. Would it be possible to extend behind the stage for chairs etc. Maybe have more events such as those that [name redacted] ran as part of the St George's day group.*
- *Better changing rooms for sport*
- *Bring back the car boot sales, was such a community spirit. Also upgrade the park to include things for older children and more exciting things like the new park*
- *Ventilation. Storage for equipment, kids toys that could be brought out for clubs (Hardwicke is a great example of this). Refreshed facilities.*
- *Adding another room to maximise the availability during the day for more than one group from the community to benefit.*
- *Better lighting (outside)*

No Bar Facilities

The current kitchen is equipped with a large glass door fridge which could be used, along with the serving hatch as a bar facility. It is acknowledged that this is not ideal but a bar area may be one of the considerations for the refurbishment of the Hall.

Licencing is a different issue, we are considering functions where we apply for a temporary alcohol licence for each specific function. There are limits on the number of times that a licence can be applied for, currently it is 15 times per year for a single premise with events not totalling more than 21 days. This information was taken from a [government web page](#).

There has also been an offer from the owner of the Queen's Head to run bars, however any profits would not necessarily be returned to the community, but it is an avenue to bear in mind.

We must also bear in mind that the Village Hall needs to be a 'good neighbour,' there are a number of houses close to the Hall and it is a fact of life that serving alcohol may lead to more noise late in the evening and there are times when it leads to other disturbances.

Blinds/Curtains

There have been a number of users who use the Hall for video and photo display, their main criticism is that there are no blackout curtains and the current curtains are too thin to effectively block out light. The current committee is aware of this and are currently looking at alternatives. The most likely solution in the short-term is to purchase blackout lining to go behind the current curtains which will go some way to alleviate the issue. The Committee are reluctant to invest in a more 'bespoke' solution as the refurbishment plans are not yet in the design phase and any alterations to the windows may render that expense worthless.

Better toilets

This is an acknowledged shortfall of the current hall and it will be an area that is addressed by any refurbishment plans.

More flexible use of space

There are several ideas to make better use of the space, these include:

- Making the Hall larger to allow for more rooms. This has not been discussed with the Parish Council who own the park but will be an agenda item for any refurbishment planning, but it will obviously be subject to planning permission.
- Splitting the current large area into 2 with a divider to allow more than one event to take place at a time.
- Creating a storage solution in the current space.

Wi-Fi and better mobile service

This has been considered and BT have been engaged to assess the costs, which are not unreasonable. However in the current Hall there are no facilities that are secure to lock the equipment away.

Better lighting outside

This has been discussed with the Parish Council and plans are in place to provide low level lighting on the driveway, but these have been put on hold until the refurbishment to get all the work, particularly electrical, carried out at the same time.

Responses to Direct Critique in the Survey's Text Field Responses

Background

The Hall was run for a number of years by a Committee that in some cases were becoming quite elderly and were doing it out of loyalty and a strong desire not to see the Hall close. Over the last 2 years new Committee members have volunteered and are trying to bring the facility and its management forward to a more modern standard. Those new members are all recent 'incomers' to the parish and not only from the new estate.

We came after the Committee put out an appeal for new members and have joined with them to maintain this valuable resource. This allowed some of the more senior members to retire and we thank them for their dedication and continued support (in a lesser capacity) to the community.

The Committee is all volunteers some of whom still work full-time and so have limited capacity. The Hall is registered charity and in accordance with the Hall's constitution and Charity Commission regulations take no monetary benefit from our involvement.

The Committee is still quite small and would welcome as many willing volunteers to assist us as possible to spread the workload and allow us to make this a facility that Longford can once more be proud of.

Throughout the answers that responders were able to write comments there were a number of criticisms of the current running of the Village Hall. This is welcomed as, in the main, it was constructive criticism and in the spirit of openness, this report will respond to a number of the statements. We cannot necessarily answer every person, but this section will look at the criticism in subject areas and use direct quotes from the survey that best provide points that need to be answered.

It has taken too long to use the available money

It has taken far too long to use the available money for the benefit of the hall. A consultation exercise was carried out several years ago and nothing was done as a result of that. The hall is drastically in need of refurbishment.

This is an absolutely true statement for which we can only apologise. There are historical reasons for there being an impasse between the Village Hall Committee and the Parish Council, which are not a subject that this report will discuss.

The previous consultation exercise undertaken did put forward a number of alternative designs, however it is the Author's understanding that, even following attempts to engage the community the 'quorum' that voted on the changes was 15 people from the parish. Most people will agree that this is not a representative sample.

The survey that we have undertaken has provided suggestions that can now inform the Liaison Committee and hopefully be used to instruct an Architect or similar to provide new designs. These will be shared with the community before any final decision is made.

We must be aware that the funds are limited and that during any refurbishment there will be a loss of revenue to the Hall and some of the regular users may not return post any works which will further reduce income going forward. On the upside, a new facility with more flexible space and better storage facilities may attract new users and allow more than one activity to take place at the same time.

Complaints from neighbours not answered

Complaints from neighbours not answered.

How is the Hall bookings system monitored? Who actually checks the reasons for hall booking? A formal complaint was made over a party held at the Hall. There were drugs being smoked, in ruling [assume unruly] children, fighting, we did not receive an acknowledgement to this complaint. We are neighbours of the Hall.

For this we can only once again apologise. Users of the Hall are asked what they require the Hall for, and we do reject a number of applications for various reasons. We do need to bear in mind that the Hall is a community facility and we must not have any prejudice when hiring the Hall. We do ask that if the Hall is being used for parties for younger people that responsible people are present. However, the volunteers are exactly that and cannot 'police' every event, they have their own lives as well.

We have to place some trust in the people that hire the Hall to respect the local community and to police their own events effectively. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. We do have more robust communications channels and would like to think that this kind of incident will be responded to in a more robust manner in the future.

There are other avenues if you cannot get in touch with the committee, such as local council noise abatement officers and Police Community Support Officers who may be able to assist.

Perhaps some of those that have said they are willing to join the committee and/or assist in other ways may wish to come forward and assist us in keeping up good relationships with the Hall's neighbours.

Difficulty booking the Hall

A more approachable owner!

Being able to contact someone who actually answers their phone. We have gone to other Village Halls instead. I have also attempted to book the Hall for business meetings, on the dates I need I'm told the Hall is booked. To date I've not seen anyone use the Hall when it has been apparently booked

Found it difficult to find availability to hire hall and book it

Past experience of hiring or trying to hire the Village Hall have been difficult, I have lived in Longford Lane for 36 years now and I attended the opening day in 77 so I can confidently say things have changed for the worse over the past few years, I don't think I could recommend hiring it to friends either.

Would hire the hall but can never get hold of anyone to book it.

In the last year we have made steps to improve our communications and assist potential users in getting in touch. We now have a [website](#) with an events calendar and booking system, this allows you to see if the Hall is available at the time that you want it and send an email to make the booking. We are in the process of replacing the mobile phone with a more modern one that allows the booking clerk to access all of the functionality of the booking system from one place.

It should be appreciated however that we are all volunteers, some of us work full time but we will try and get back in touch with you within 48 hours even if it is just an acknowledgement of your query.

Expensive

Find the Hall expensive hire Innsworth community centre for a lot less.

We have carried out some market research and believe that the Hall is very reasonably priced. We have recently increased the refundable deposit in order to ensure that the facility is respected and to cover the costs of any additional cleaning that the committee has to undertake if the venue is not left in a fit state for the next hirer. None of the committee take any recompense for the additional work and it is put back into the funds that help support the Hall.

Comparison with Community Roots' Survey

Throughout the late spring and early summer Community Roots CIC (CR CIC) carried out a community consultation by knocking on doors and engaging residents in conversations to understand what they love about living in Longford as well as their concerns; vision for the future of Longford; how much they felt they had a say in Longford's future and to gather project and activity ideas. Their report (currently in draft but likely to be published by the Parish Council and Village Hall Committee) had a number of parallels with this report which will be discussed below. The CR CIC survey and report were jointly commissioned by the Village Hall and Parish Council, only those areas relevant to the Village Hall are discussed here.

LOVES: Things that can be built on:

CR CIC noted that *'The Village Hall is thought to be a good venue for parties and wedding receptions. One section of the community appreciated being able to use it as some people discriminate against them when they know who they are. Residents enjoy the events at the Village Hall especially family events like the Easter Egg Hunt.'*

This aligns with the wishes of the Committee; we are committed to providing a facility for all to use without prejudice. We would like to be able to provide more community and family events and are starting to discuss ideas that will bring the community together, such as decoration of the Hall for Christmas, a potential Jazz in the Village event and the restoration of the car-boot sales during the summer. We need people to assist us in organising and running events, so please if you said you would on the survey, come forward with your ideas and together we can make them happen.

CONCERNS: Things that need tackling/addressing:

Many of the comments received in this section relate to matters that the Parish Council are in a better position to address, however two quotes are relevant:

'.....because there wasn't enough for young people to do to blame for the rise in unacceptable behaviour and criminal damage.'

'Comments were recorded about the length of time it was taking to spend the 106-planning gain funding and there were concerns that it would be lost to the area if it wasn't spent soon.'

Taking each comment in turn:

There are a number of activities in the Village Hall for young people, including Guides and dance classes, however there is always more that can be done and again, we would encourage all those with ideas for youth activities to come forward. Together we may be able to alleviate some of the 'boredom.'

We agree that it has taken too long to spend the 106 monies, however the Parish Council and Committee are actively engaged in moving forward and will make every effort to ensure that the monies are spent. Again we need your engagement in the process; once we have agreed upon the 'shopping list' of requirements for the refurbishment of the Hall and some solutions to address them there will be a further consultation with the community to reach a consensus on the best way ahead.

VISION: What people want Longford to be like in the future

Two responses were of relevance to the Village Hall:

'They wanted to see the Village Hall upgraded so that more activities could be held there so the space was used more.'

'That Longford would lose the Village Hall if a community centre was built on the new development and then the land would be sold for more housing.'

We all want to see the Village Hall upgraded and now that we have received your welcome responses, we believe that we have been given the evidence that we need to go forward with plans that will be communicated to you for approval.

As far as the Committee and I believe Parish Council are concerned, the Village Hall has a future and will continue to serve Longford well into the future. The land that the Hall stands upon and the surrounding park are the property of the Parish Council and therefore held in trust for the community of Longford. It is highly unlikely that the land will ever be sold for the development of housing.

OWNERSHIP: Do people feel they have a say in Longford's future

Again there were 2 responses of relevance to the Village Hall:

'Very few residents knew of the Village Hall website and those that did said they had problems getting through to the number on it in the past.'

Residents also said if they knew of events they would support them by attending especially if they were family events, the Easter Egg Hunt has been very popular and it was mentioned many times.'

We have made efforts to advertise the Hall and its website, the site has only been up and running for a few months and I am the web master but I do not do this for a living. Keeping it up to date is not always as simple or regular as it could be. If there is someone who suggested they would be happy to assist with web presence and social media, we would welcome your assistance.

Coupled with the website and social media is the advertising of events, we do have a page for upcoming events and have advertised on the Parish Council noticeboards and Longford Facebook page. In addition there is a page that describes the regular events in the Hall such as Zumba, Dance classes, Oxtalls WI and Brownies and Guides to name a few. Advertising will continue but if there are residents out there with better ideas of how to advertise and can spare some time you are more than welcome.

ACTIVITY AND PROJECT IDEAS: Ideas for community action

This section of the CR CIC report was split into a number of areas:

All Ages

'The most popular idea for the whole community, residents of all ages was a café, the Village Hall should be a community hub with a paid worker to oversee the management of the space and developing community ideas and actions.'

This is a great idea but there are a number of obstacles, which are not insurmountable, but must be considered:

- The current space and kitchen facilities are not necessarily the best for this kind of activity. The café could only be open when other activities are not taking place because with only a single room the opportunities are limited.
- The current committee are either retired or work and therefore cannot spare the time, if someone were to come forward and we could reach agreement about rental and/or an equitable split of profits there may be an opportunity.
- As a charity, we are bound by rules about how much of a income can come from commercial activities and therefore we may have to split off a commercial arm to cater for this. It is not impossible and has been successful for a number of Village Halls.
- We do not currently generate enough income to pay for a paid member of staff to develop ideas and organise activities. This is a catch 22 situation, which again could be overcome with some negotiation and/or starting as a volunteer and transiting to a paid position once the income starts

None of the issues above are insurmountable, however this may be something for which a more permanent solution would have to wait until after any refurbishment. That is not to say that someone could not identify times to create a 'pop-up' café at any time.

A permanent employee would alleviate the issue of having the committee having to do a lot of the organising and may well make the Hall a more responsive service to the community.

'Tabletop sales and car boot sales were also repeatedly suggested with a lot of residents remembering how nice it was to walk around them and see their neighbours for a chat.'

These ideas are under consideration with an agenda item for the January meeting being the revitalisation of the car boot sales. These do however take a lot of organising and do rely on people coming forward to assist with putting sellers on their pitches and supervising car parking etc. In addition, the Village Hall has in the past raised considerable sums from running a café for these events.

We did have a tabletop sale at the end of September, which did raise a little money but was not that well attended by the community. We acknowledge that the timing may not have been ideal (Friday evening) and we will be looking at putting on more events as time permits.

Families

There were a number of suggestions for family-based events, some of which had been covered by the survey, others that had not. The comments were:

- *Parent toddlers and baby groups*
- *Quizzes and social evenings*
- *After school homework clubs*
- *Children's arts and craft groups*
- *Affordable holiday activities*
- *Activities for children with diabetes and to raise awareness of childhood diabetes*

All of the above are viable activities that could be run, however as with all events they need people to volunteer to run and assist. It should be noted that for any event involving children there may be requirements for organisers to be checked by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to ensure they are suitable to supervise children. The Village Hall will facilitate these events but the responsibility will for supervision and safeguarding will be that of the organisers.

We recognise that we have a duty to have a safeguarding policy for the Hall which is currently on our 'to-do' list.

Health and Well Being for the community

'Residents of all ages would like to see dance, keep fit and yoga....'

Suggestions for refurbishment in this area included upgrading the floor and a separate yoga area. Whilst we have recognised that the floor will require attention, we cannot necessarily make specific provision for single use areas. If that were possible, the Village Hall will need a lot more floor space that would need to be negotiated with the Parish Council for additional land and get planning permission. That is not to say that an extension is out of the question but it does need to be discussed and agreed as a viable and justifiable option.

'A gardening club for flowers and vegetables and to make the exterior of the Village Hall look nicer.'

Brightening up the exterior and making the Hall appear more welcoming is certainly on the list of requirements and will be considered. But it will need volunteers to ensure that the space is kept tidy and to 'do the weeding.'

Other community activities suggested include:

- *Community BBQ*
- *Tea dances*
- *Lunch clubs*
- *Whist & beetle drives*

All of which have been suggested in the on-line survey.

Village Hall Committee and Parish Council

'The Village Hall Committee should advertise the Hall effectively to attract bookings for children's parties as most parents said it was a good size for a party and the kitchen was well equipped although for some the deposit was a bit high and meant they were excluded from hiring the Hall.'

The Hall is booked regularly, particularly at weekends for private functions and other activities, this is the most popular time for bookings and although there are some regular users who book the Hall at the weekend there are often times available most weekends. As stated earlier in this report, we believe that we offer a fair rate for hiring the Hall and the deposit is simply there to cover any damage or cleaning that has to be done post any event.

There was also a request to have a licenced bar occasionally, which has been considered and there are plans to potentially request a licence for the Jazz in the Village event next year. Please see the earlier section with respect to how many times a year we can request a Temporary Events Licence.

'It was suggested that the car park could be opened and charging for parking on home match days [Gloucester Rugby] could raise money for the Village Hall.'

Whilst reasonable, the car park is often used at the weekend for private events and when Longford Football Club play at home. The car park is not large and although people do park on the grass at the side of the pitch it would be difficult to differentiate between rugby supporters, party goers and footballers.

Other suggestions for capital expenditure were all covered by the on-line survey and include:

- *The Hall made bigger*
- *Create separate rooms with a room divider*
- *Update the changing rooms*
- *Spring flooring to attract lettings by dance and ballet class providers*

Next Steps

Village Hall Refurbishment

There will be an event on 14 or 15 December to review the findings of this survey, gather more evidence and opinions and share a little Christmas cheer with all that want to attend. This will include the results of this survey and the work carried out by Community Roots CIC over the summer.

Prior to that, and at regular intervals thereafter the Liaison Committee between the Village Hall and Parish Council will continue to meet in order to begin to put together a 'wish list' of the items that need to be covered by the refurbishment. This will form the basis of instruction to an architect or architectural designer if the plans that were previously created do not meet the requirements.

Once completed we will probably have a further engagement process with the community to ensure that the plans meet your requirements before gaining a consensus between the Parish

Council and Village Hall Committee. This is a necessary step, particularly if the plans or decisions made mean that the footprint of the current Hall need to change (the PC own the land).

At this point we will ask for quotes at the same time as planning permission is applied for with Tewkesbury Borough Council.

If the refurbishment is affordable within the funding that was donated when the new estate was built, we will plan to go ahead. If it is not affordable, we may have to wait whilst funding applications are submitted to various organisations to ensure we can afford to go ahead.

Community Support

The next parts of this process are really up to the community, we need you to help us to get the best out of the facility that we have and to support it going forwards. For those of you that answered the survey and suggested that you can support in some way, please come forward. Over the next few months the Committee would appreciate it if you could assist by attending any events that are planned to discuss the future and provide your valued opinions.

The more money the Village Hall can make from rental income and community events to boost the refurbishment funds the better we can make it and if we do not need to wait for grant allocations the quicker. So please, if you suggested that you could run activities check the diary on the website, identify a suitable time and commit to providing the community with more opportunity to use the Hall.

Conclusion

Thank you to all those that took the time to complete the survey, your answers, opinions and critique are all very welcome.

We believe that the results of the survey provide us with the necessary evidence to move the refurbishment of the Village Hall forward and make a better, more up to date, flexible facility for us all.

Please, all those that suggested they can help, come forward and start to make a difference. We cannot make the Hall a better facility without you assisting and all of us taking the community forward to a place where we are proud of Longford and our Village Hall.

Phil Leach

Chair, Longford Village Hall Committee

Appendix 1: Comments Taken from the Survey

Question 3

In the last year, have you hired or been to an event in the Village Hall?

Training events x2

I hired the Hall in April 2018 to run a workshop which finished with a short pilates session for a small group. I am currently looking into the availability of the Hall with a view to setting up some new fitness classes and further workshops.

Table top sale

Sale

Regular meeting for NFOP

MONTHLY MEETINGS FOR UNISON RETIRED MEMBERS, SHIRE HALL WINE SOCIETY AND THE OXSTALLS W.I.

No bar facilities

Family party. Unison meeting

Have not attended any classes or functions

Community events held by Friends of LPPA. Voting purposes.

Polling station.

Oxstalls Women's Institute

Longford school Easter Egg Hunt

Poll station

Election

Longford Park School event

Karate club

Birthday Party

Easter trails.. been there for children's parties also.

School PTA hired for a community Easter egg hunt!

Attended training courses - -eg first aid

polling station AGM Training event - community capacity building

Community Consultation Course

Question 4

What type of activity would you or a member of your household be interested in attending at the Hall

Car Boot

Live music, originals bands and tribute bands

Live music

Community day and fun dog show

Puppy training classes

Something for children aged 5 - 11 to do

Coffee, tea and cake

Dementia cafe

Community. Working with school. Village show!!

Tai chi classes

Would love a local craft fair at the hall

It's not something that I currently use, but if the facilities were to be improved there would be more of an incentive for people within the community to utilise it

I am currently researching local venues to set up Kettlercise classes (kettlebell training), circuit training, core conditioning classes and abs classes and small group essential oil workshops.

Knitting class would be good

There seems to be a lack of performing arts adult singing and dancing in this area or something g like that you could do with the whole family

Don't live near Longford so would not attend any of the suggested meetings.

Music nights

Language classes,

Maybe yoga or exercise classes for mum's where you are able to bring your child/children. Craft sales. Knitting/crochet classes for beginners.

Car boot, private party ... Lots of my friends having 60th parties but no one ever thinks of this venue L

Live music on weekends. I have a 3 month old baby and would love more groups closer. Maybe car boots on a Saturday or Sunday morning.

The monthly Summer [only] Car Boots on the field on Saturdays was very popular. It's demise was the usual cause, that the concept was good, but volunteers were thin on the ground. We tried re-locating the Boot to Hempsted, but it would not transition. We offered to run the Boot at the Village Hall and share the profits, but the offer was declined. Perhaps an appropriate time for a re-think?

I think general DIY helpful hints basic tiling, carpet laying, electrics, plumbing etc. If nothing else things you can and can't do.

I work along side many bands and also have many contacts that could get bands in.

Love to do entertainment there

Beading groups and sales

Car boot sales

Fitness- Pilates or bodypump type class

Dance lessons Zumba or line dancing . Art sessions or craft sessions for 4 years and up

Events for the older children 14 plus to meet other peers, learn a skill.

Kung fu classes (adult & kids) Circuit classes Yoga classes Knitting classes Embroidery classes Painting/drawing classes Adult language classes (mandarin) Adult classes for using internet Kids social club

I think the main problem is lack of publicity. I weouldnt know if there was anything in that I might be interested in.

My workplace has people come in and do sessions for well being. Good idea if can be set up well enough. Adult education is great idea. Help mums build up skills for going back to work, help non technical build up some technical skills, etc A show from a touring group would be great.

Having a bar would benefit private bookings and increased revenue from all clubs.

It would be great to see more going on to accommodate different types of interests.

Village Quiz night

Excercise / dance class

Baby/ toddler Class would be lovely as well as stall maybe to swap games / clothes

Any

Bridge Club Coffee mornings Tea Dance Basket Weaving Carpentry Mosaic workshop Painting/Sculpting - fine art classes

Trying to do this as an outsider and ticking the boxes that may interest me but if they were up and running would the times suit me that is the question.

Sign Language

Question 5

What would make you more likely to attend activities/events in the Hall?

Better/more advertisement of what is going on

Blinds/Curtains

Toilets being better

A more approachable owner!

Live music

Car boot sales were fantastic

Being able to contact someone who actually answers there phone. We have gone to other village halls instead. I have also attempted to book the hall for business meetings, on the dates I need I'm told the hall is booked. To date I've not seen anyone use the hall when it has been apparently booked.

Week end events

At our regular daytime meetings we regularly have visiting speakers who like to show slides/video. The feedback received from, the speaker and members is that the hall desperately needs some blackout curtains to enable daytime meetings.

Scouts

Better toilets

Found it difficult to find availability to hire hall & book it.

A licensed Bar.

Linked to better publicity - knowing the cost and timings of events as this may impact if I am able to attend.

Make place look a bit more loved.

Timing, in currently pregnant but once I've had the baby I would love to attend some exercise class w.g the zumba

more flexible use of space

I have ticked wifi and better mobile because that may improve the hall's facilities but does it bother me, not really.

Question 7

What activities/groups do you attend outside Longford?

Sandhurst Friday night club community bar in village hall

Local gym

Gym

Dance

I attend a friend's bodyweight HIIT circuit class at Coopers Edge and HIIT circuits classes at CLC Health & Fitness Centre in Cheltenham where I also teach.

Toddler groups

pilates

Baby groups, soft play

Daughter goes to brownies

Bounce/ Read & Rhyme Longlevens Library

Pagan moot
 Ballet class, soft play, messy play
 Netball and tap dancing
 As I live quite a distance from Longford all of my activities are in the area that I live.
 Baby groups
 Bootcamp
 Cinema/theatre
 choir
 Baby groups
 Choir Tewkesbury
 Gym, music, car boot, social gatherings,
 Zumba, choir
 Live music groups. Beer festivals.
 Garage sales fetes jumble sales flower gardening events
 Car Boots
 Baby groups, sports groups, youth clubs
 Field hockey
 Live music around the country
 Love music
 Scouts
 Potter and water colours
 Baby group
 Beavers (Church Hall), taekwondo (Innsworth), Clubbercise (Tommy's)
 Tots Tennis, pj drama, stay & play, Pilates
 Toddler group
 Baby groups
 Dance
 Slimming world
 Beavers (kids), swimming (kids), committee meetings, school events, family mandarin class.
 None
 Dog walking group.
 Choir
 Gym
 Numerous children groups
 Gym
 Children's based for babies or rainbows for children
 Cubs , rainbows, ballet
 Brownies, Beavers, Drama club, Tutoring, Exercise classes.
 Exercise Class, toddler groups
 Health/social
 Fitness/ baby - toddler .crafts. Bring and buy sale
 Pilates/yoga at Longlevens community centre
 Sports club

Scouting, army cadet force, excelsior band.
 Zumba in hucclecote, toddler grps all over
 Exercise, baby & toddler
 Pilates yoga Zumba
 Whist Drives
 None due to transport
 School events, ballet, ballroom, gymnastics, brownies
 commun ity choir, tai chi class
 Tai Chi, Pilates, social coffee group, cinema/theatre
 Golf, Skittles, Gym, Horse Racing, Motor Cycle, Football at Longford and elsewhere
 None at the moment
 Flower arranging

Question 8

What prevents you from attending this kind of activity in Longford?

Lack of Resource
 Work
 Times
 Working until 6pm and then busing home from Innsworth, most groups start at 6pm and I don't get home until 7pm.
 Unable to book
 Not aware of what going on here
 If the event is something I want to attend the day or time time would not matter.
 Work shifts
 Was a member of these organisations/groups before moving to longford and have stayed with that same group
 Ballroom class is in Longlevens. We travel to Quedgeley for other dance as facilities and dance school are incredible. Brownies are not on the night we can do
 Tai chi/pilates - established teachers elsewhere
 Only the football can I do at Longford.

Question 9

Would you be likely to hire the village hall for any of the following:

Car Boots
 Past experiences of hiring or trying to hire the village hall have been difficult , i have lived in longford lane for 36 years now and i attended the opening day in 77 so i can confidently say things have changed for the worse over the past few years , i dont think i could recommend hiring it to freinds either
 Special birthday celebrations, music events
 Find the hall expensive hire innsworth community centre for a lot less
 Would hire the hall but can never get hold of anyone to book it
 How is the hall bookings system monitored? Who actually checks the reasons for hall booking? A formal complain was made over a party held at the hall. There were drugs being smoked, in ruling children, fighting, we did not receive an acknowledgement to this complaint. We are neighbours of the hall.
 School events (pta)

would like to be involved in starting a luncheon club

Question 10

Would you be willing to run, or help run, new activities/events using your skills, experience and interests?

Not at present but maybe in future

I am a Level 3 qualified CIMSPA Personal Trainer, Biomechanics & Wellness Coach and a Holistic Therapist and coach group fitness classes (Kettlercise and Circuit Training) so I combine all my skill sets into a complete package. I am currently researching local venues to set up some fitness classes and essential oil workshops.

Not sure what skills I would have to run something in particular but happy to be a part of something

Would like to but a) don't have special skills b) sadly commitment difficult as have aged parent taking up much time

Mobile07792185410

Qualified in early years level 3

see previous

Live tribute acts and bands

Photography

Kids clubs

Craft, language, youth club, emotional support

Not currently but would be in the future

Depending on the type, interest

Possibly as a volunteer

Possibly arts and crafts stuff (sewing, knitting, crochet, jewellery making, baking)

If I was approached and able I would help with events that I felt able and went with my skill set

Photo shoots.

I'm a fully qualified bookkeeper so for example adult education around finance I could help with

Maybe if the group was what I was interested in

Only because my time is already spread thinly

luncheon club, as previous question

Yes I would be willing to help in any way I could, sporting events or car boots.

Assist the LVH Committee

Have run craft groups in the past, now would only help run that type of group

Question 11

If you run a local business or work for an organisation or group, would you be interested in hiring the Hall for any of the following?

One off special birthday party

Car Boots

Live events

I'm a mobile Beautician and would be interested in holding a pop up salon quarterly

Office space

Live music discos for kids live tributes bands etc

Office space

Community events with school

n/a

Question 12

What help might you be able to provide to the Village Hall and the Committee if you have any free time to volunteer?

Baby and toddler group

Question 15

If you have anything to add that will assist in making the Village Hall more accessible to your needs please feel free to comment below:

Final comment - I have lived on the new estate for over a year and have never used the village hall but think this is a shame and think the community should know more about it/ support it more.

Storage so a toddler group could run from the hall

I would like to see more fitness classes in the day and evening and also would be great to have baby/ toddler groups held at the hall

I have been trying to contact the hall re booking it and can never get through

Our members come from throughout Gloucester, Cheltenham and Stroud area. Longford is a convenient central point for our monthly meetings.

A much changed committee would be a good start, fresh faces and ideas could kick start a new feeling towards the hall and getting it used again, weddings ,funerals ,parties etc , a local person i know can supply a mobile bar for functions too.

It has taken far too long to use the available money for the benefit of the hall. A consultation exercise was carried out several years ago and nothing was done as a result of that. The hall is drastically in need of refurbishment.

From past experience of being on the village hall committee it was difficult to get people interested. The changing rooms were a disgrace and the hall needed a modernisation. Would it be possible to extend behind the stage for storage for chairs etc. Maybe have more events such as those that David Lynham ran as part of the St George's day group.

Better changing rooms for sport

Active on social media to promote events

Live in Longlevens

Gloucester civic trust I think use gala club. Could ask groups like that what would draw them to the village hall

Bring back the car boot sales , was such a community spirit . Also upgrade the park to include things for older children and more exciting things like the new park

Great difficulty in contacting Les Bailey or others re: hiring hall etc. Also, activities are not advertised enough especially as no presence on social media.

If the hall was to close and the football club sold, will the land be sold for development? Our deeds of our property state that the field can not be sold to development

Ventilation. Storage for equipment, kids toys that could be brought out for clubs (Hardwicke is a great example of this). Refreshed facilities

Adding another room to maximise the availability during the day for more than one group from the community to benefit

We must never forget the village hall is a place of safety to be used in an emergency