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PLACED Community Engagement for the refurbishment of the Arncliffe Sports and Community Centre

Final Report
November 2022

Introduction

PLACED were commissioned by Halewood Town Council to complement work being completed by Harrison Stringfellow Architects to deliver engagement on the refurbishment of the Arncliffe Sports and Community Centre (Arncliffe Centre) in Halewood. Engagement work was also envisaged to offer light support to the preparation of a neighbourhood plan for Halewood.

The aim of engagement was to understand whether local people support this project, and which design ideas, activities and services they thought would make the Arncliffe Centre more attractive and better used. Engagement also asked some wider questions about community services in Halewood and services and facilities which might be missing.

We delivered three engagement pop-up events:

- 30th July, Halewood Carnival, Hollies Hall,
- 14th August (morning), Arncliffe Centre, and
- 14th August (afternoon), Leathers Lane shops.



Figure 1 shows a photograph from a pop-up event at Halewood Carnival

We also ran an online survey that ran between 22 July and 12 September.

We then a final pop-up at the Arncliffe Centre on 8 September to provide feedback on the previous engagement stages.

This report presents our findings from the pop-up events and the online survey.

Who participated?

Participation figures

- **74 people** completed the online survey,
- **75 people** attended the pop-up at Halewood Carnival,
- **30 people** attended the pop-up at Arncliffe Centre, and
- **20 people** attended the pop-up at Halewood shops.



Figure 2 shows a photograph from a pop-up event

Spatial distribution of survey respondents

This was an optional question on the online survey. A total of 62 people answered the question, some with their full postcodes, while others answered with the first letter or the first three digits of their postcode. Answers are summarised in the table below.

Although not everyone provided their postcode, those that did do give us a good sense of where respondents live. The majority of people who answered this question were local to Halewood (Knowsley Council area) or nearby residents (Liverpool City Council or Warrington Borough Council areas).

During our engagement we heard from many people who use the Arncliffe Centre who told us about the quality of the events they attended and the excellent on-site staff and the services they provide to visitors. Through our engagement we've been able to explore the experiences and views related to the Arncliffe Centre in more detail, and some wider views about Halewood.

| Postcode | Count |
|----------|-------|
| L25 9 | 10 |
| L26 1 | 10 |
| L26 7 | 9 |
| L | 7 |
| L26 9 | 6 |
| L26 0 | 5 |
| L26 | 4 |
| L25 0 | 3 |
| L26 6 | 3 |
| L18 3 | 1 |
| L25 | 1 |
| L26 2 | 1 |
| M | 1 |
| WA7 2 | 1 |

Table 1 shows the postcodes of survey respondents indicating the spatial distribution

Findings – facilities usage

Facilities usage in and around Halewood

We asked participants, at our pop-up events and online, which facilities they used in the area and why. Respondents could select multiple answers.

The graph below summarises combined answers from online survey respondents and people who attended our pop-up events in Halewood. That the Arncliffe Centre was the answer selected most often shows its popularity but is also perhaps related to our focus broadly being on the Arncliffe Centre. However, participants also indicated that they were using Halewood Leisure Centre (Volair Halewood), Hollies Hall, and some of the other local community facilities.

It was said however that for some the opening times made it difficult to access activities, for example, for those who might try to access activities after their working day. Also, we heard that some people felt that communication could be improved to ensure residents know which activities are available. Some participants who do not use the centre said it was because its location was too far from their home.

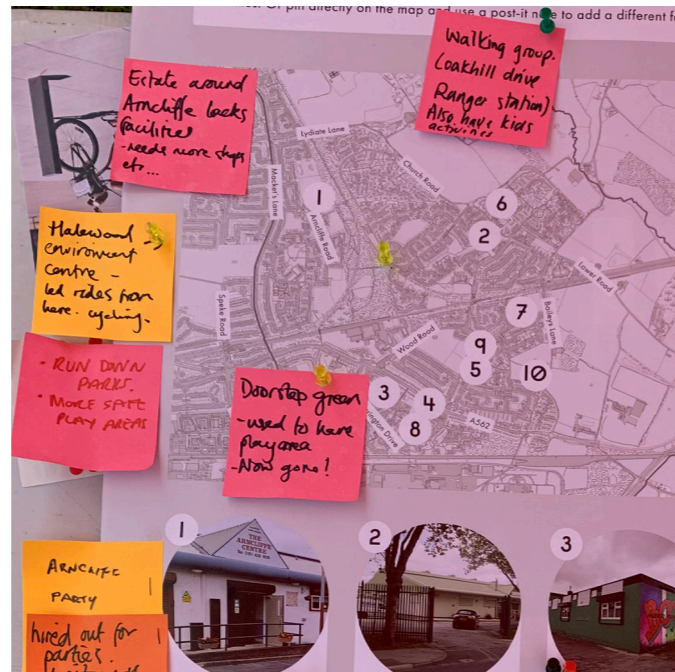


Figure 3 shows a photograph of participants' facilities usage in the area, from a pop-up event

Why do people use the Arncliffe Centre?

The following pie chart summarises factors that influence why respondents use the Arncliffe Centre. The question we asked was 'What influences which facilities / spaces you and your household use?' and the participants were given a set list of answers to select from. It was possible to select multiple answers. Figure 4 shows answers that specifically related to the Arncliffe Centre.

The most important factor, which represents almost 3/4 of answers, was the 'Activities on offer'. This proportion is much higher than it is for the other venues, where 'Activities on offer' represents only half of the answers (see 'Other facilities', p17).

Answers that were not selected at all were 'Good travel options' and 'Family have always gone there'. Issues with transport links were brought up throughout engagement, which can explain why this answer did not feature in the results.

Discussions and comments made across our engagement tools also revealed that the main reasons people use the Arncliffe Centre are:

- for its range of activities, in particular kids' activities,
- to hire rooms for meetings or parties, and
- for its surrounding park / green space.

Which community facilities do you and your household currently use in and around Halewood?

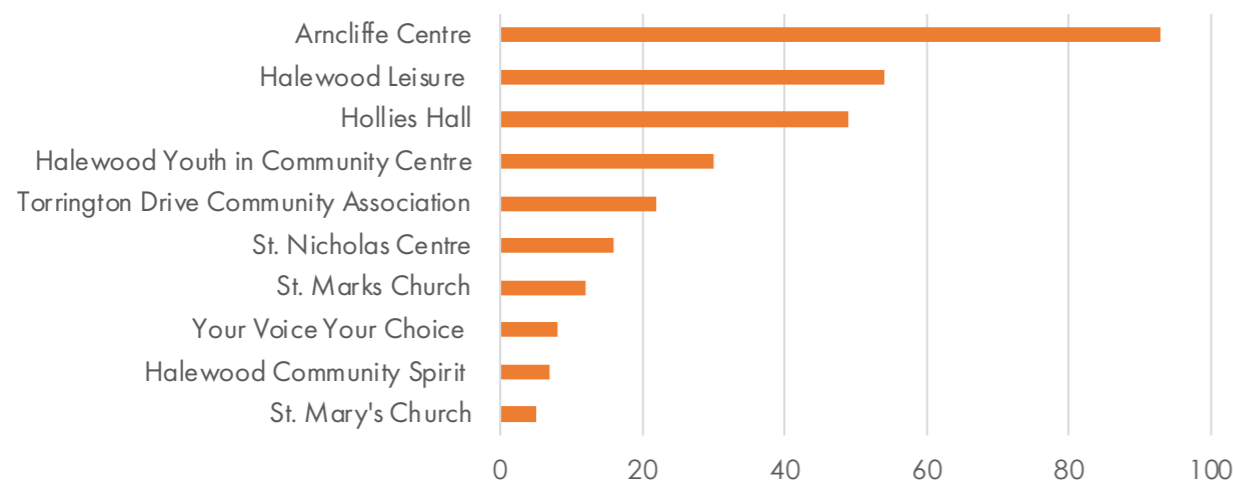


Figure 4 shows a bar chart representing current facilities usage in the area

Reasons for using the Arncliffe Centre

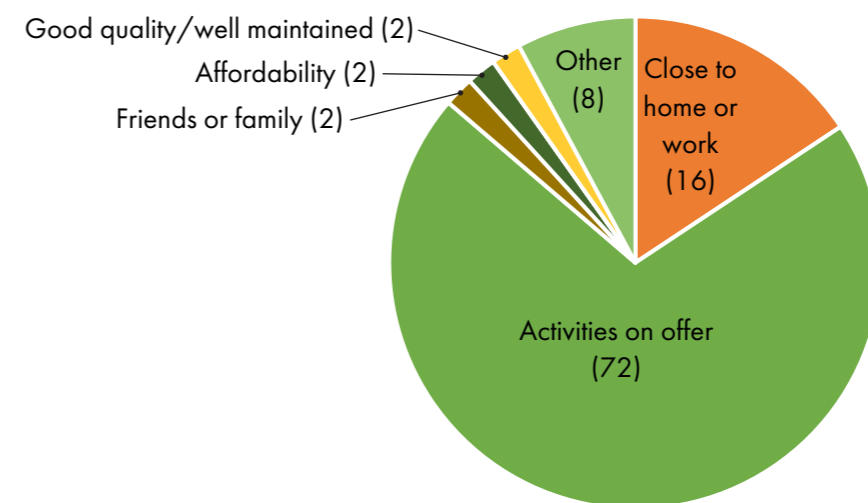


Figure 5 shows a pie chart representing survey respondents' and pop-up participants' reasons for using the Arncliffe Centre and the number of responses given in brackets

What facilities, activities and services would you like to see at the centre?

Answers to the question 'What facilities, activities and services would you like to see at the centre?' gave a range of ideas, including:

- **Facilities:** A café that is of high standards and that has good opening hours, a space for functions, a toilet that is well kept, some bike stands, to retain the kitchen, and the need for the space to be accessible.
- **Services:** A youth club, children's activities, and care and support services for isolated and vulnerable people, older people, and disabled people.
- **Sports:** Some participants thought the project should be ambitious and include the creation of a gym or a pool.
- **Classes for adults:** In particular, cooking, DIY, budgeting classes and exercise groups.

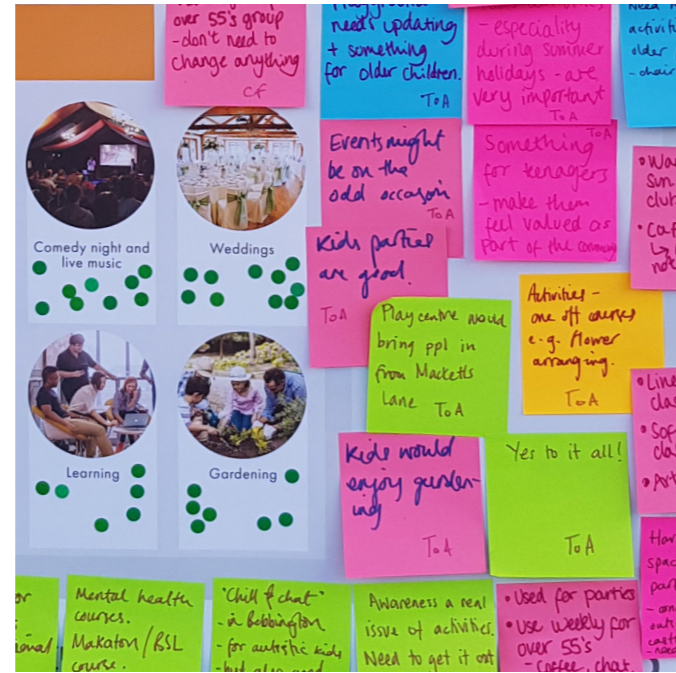


Figure 6 shows a photograph of participants' ideas for activities at the centre, from a pop-up event

Findings - facilities

Current needs in Halewood

In a multiple-choice question, we asked survey participants 'What community facilities, services or spaces do you think are currently missing in Halewood?' (Figure 8). The most popular answer was 'Places to meet friends', followed by 'A clear village centre'.

The discussions we had at our pop-up events give more insight into these answers. Various common themes could be identified in people's contributions:

- **Public facilities:** People mostly talked about the area missing health facilities, a primary school and sixth form college. Others asked for recycling points and a cycle route.
- **Public services and activities:** People thought the area needed more activities for young people, along with social support services for domestic abuse survivors and drug and alcohol misuse.
- **Commercial services:** Respondents wished for Halewood to have more pubs, a café and more retail options.

- **Amenities:** It was brought up that the parks in the area needed updating. People wished to have access to places to play sports, places to meet and event venues (e.g., for family events, weddings, etc.). A need for a stronger cultural offer was also identified and people wished to have a space for this offer, in particular for music, dance and theatre. Alongside these contributions, a general feeling was conveyed that more facilities are needed to support the new housing developments.
- **Transport:** People thought the current public transport provision was poor and asked for better bus routes and services.
- **Sense of community:** People spoke about the divide that exists between areas in Halewood and their wish to see efforts to bring them together.
- A few people thought that the Hollies Hall also needed renovating.



Figure 7 shows a photograph of the current Arncliffe Centre

What's missing in Halewood?

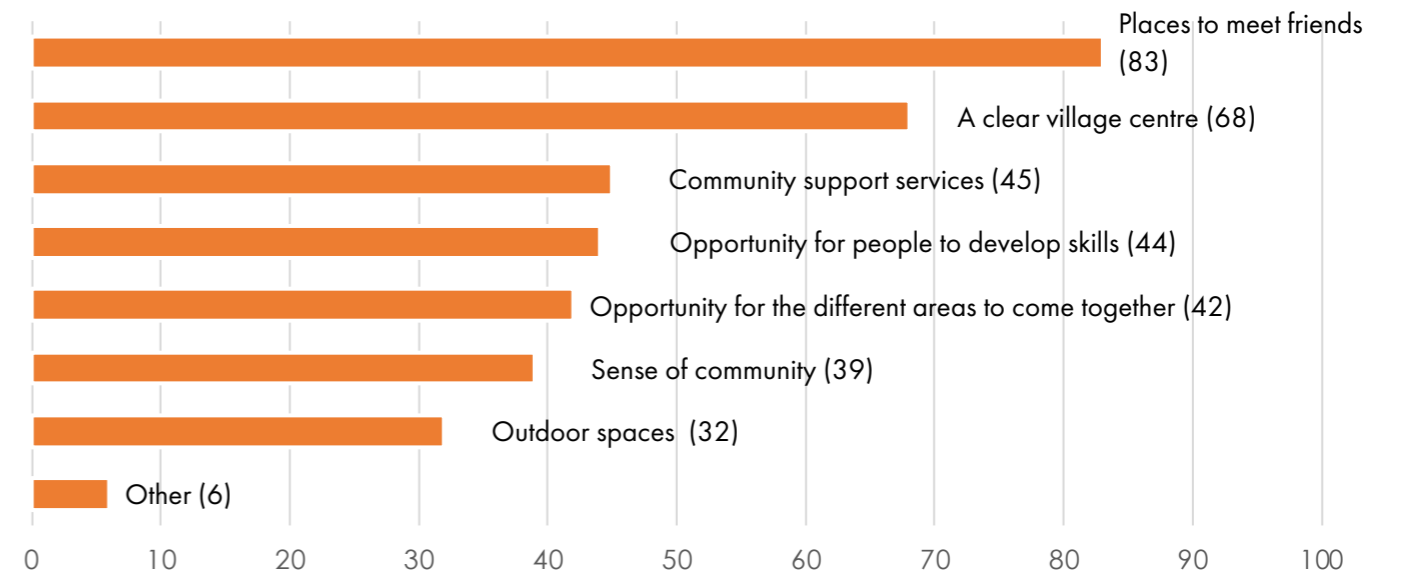


Figure 8 shows a bar chart representing survey responses to the question 'what's missing in Halewood?' and the number of responses given in brackets

Who is underserved?

We asked survey respondents which groups of people they thought were currently under-served in Halewood. The top three answers were older people, young people aged 15+ and young people aged 12 - 15 years, each answer receiving the same number of votes (27). However, this does suggest that young people, particularly teenagers, are considered to be the most underserved group.

This was echoed by the comments and answers to other questions, where the need for more activities and services for young people, older people, and children was often brought up.



Figure 9 shows a photograph of engagement during a pop-up event

Are there groups in Halewood who you think are currently underserved?

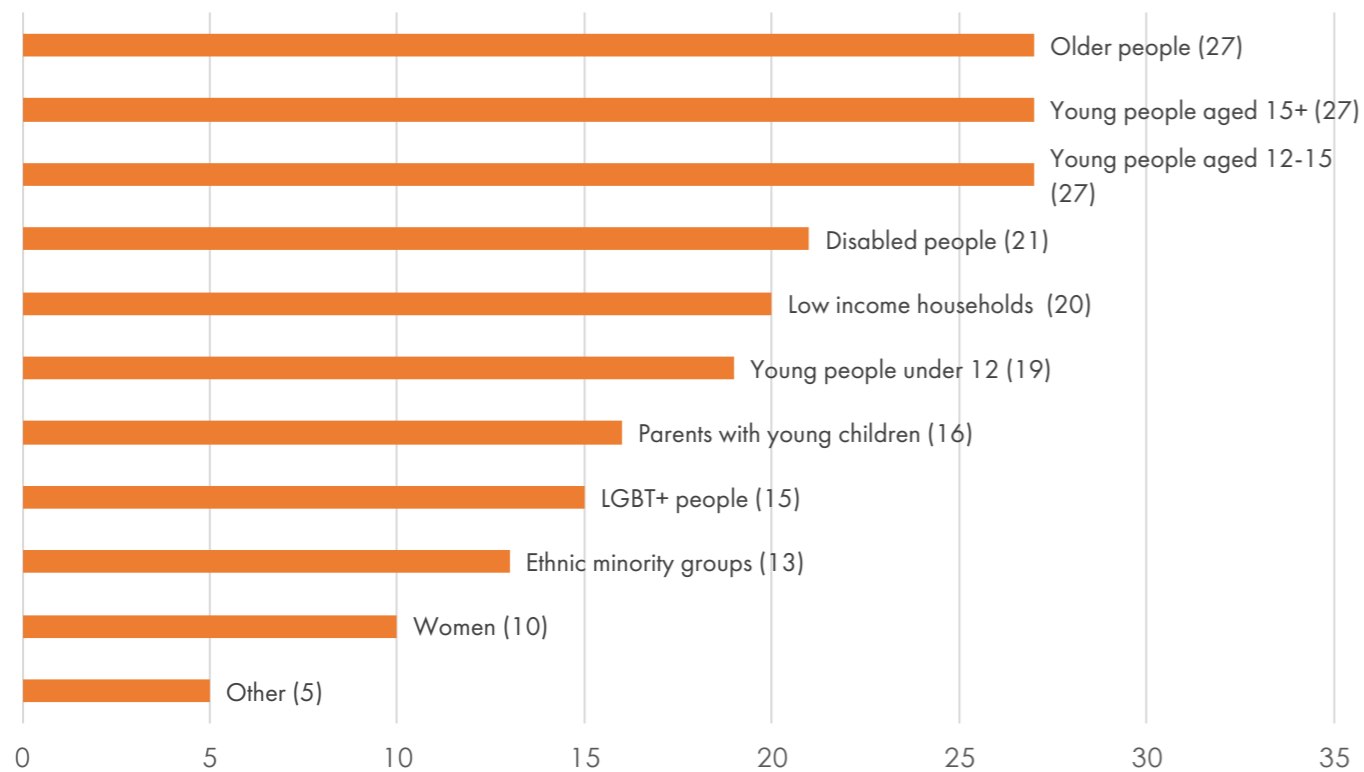


Figure 10 shows a bar chart representing survey responses relating to underserved groups in Halewood and the number of responses given in brackets

Voting preferences

At our pop-up events, we presented participants with a selection of precedent images, organised into categories that they could vote for or downvote using green or red stickers. The images represented ideas for the Arncliffe Centre. Mostly people preferred to vote for images using green stickers only. The following shows responses for each category.

- dementia friendly design, and a sensory room,
- internet access and technology, and
- dog enclosure / dog park.

Facilities

'Café' was by far the most popular idea, and the most voted-for across all categories. Other suggestions included:

- cycle parking, secure cycle storage (near to door and CCTV),
- connection to loop line/trans Pennine trail, outdoor space generally,
- updated play equipment / football pitches,
- community kitchen, retail, trading spaces,
- party hire space (with kitchen)
- refurbished and accessible toilets,
- inclusive design, including access for disabled people (improved circulation spaces)



Cafe



Informal spaces



Community kitchen



WC's

Figure 11 shows the most popular images of facilities chosen by participants during pop-up events

Centre facilities

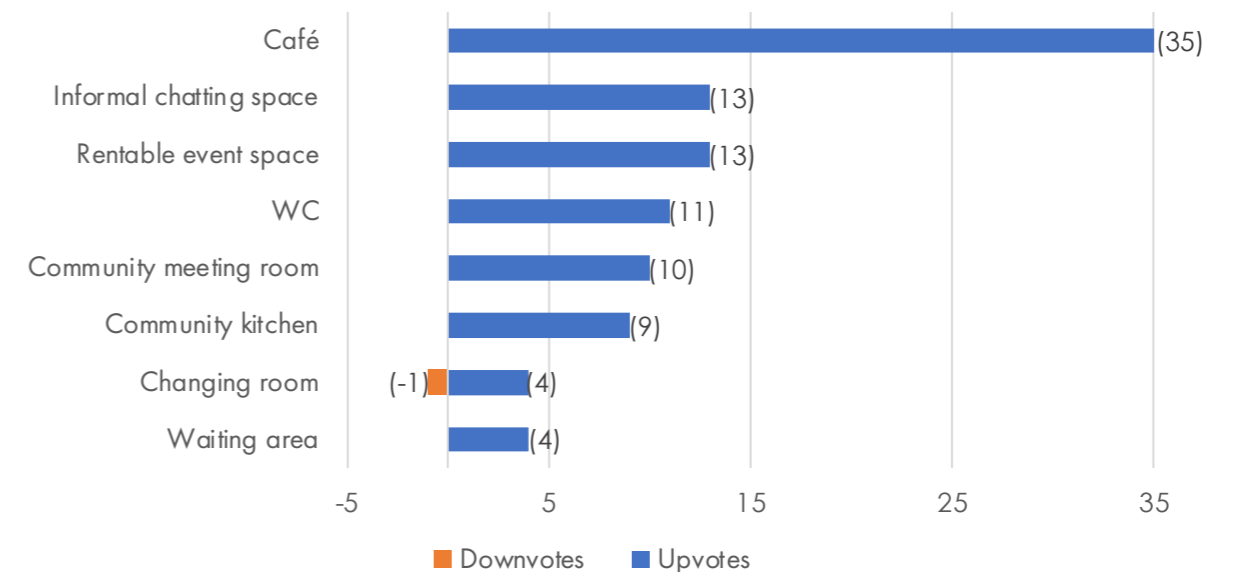


Figure 12 shows a bar chart representing pop-up participants' votes for centre facilities and the number of responses given in brackets

Activities

'Older people's groups', followed by 'Young children's groups', were the most popular ideas. From discussions, other suggestions were:

- food growing or an allotment,
- groups for babies, and children of all ages,
- support groups for neurodivergent people, older people, disabled people, women, domestic violence survivors, drug and alcohol support, men, weight management, health, and job hunting,
- social club or pub,
- bingo, games and entertainment,
- music activities,
- art classes,
- library space and book exchange club,
- chess club,
- education services, including foreign languages, English as a second language, cooking and sewing,

- sports, including outdoor sports like tennis, indoor sports like a boxing gym, exercise classes for older people, and
- start and end point for walking and cycling groups.



Figure 13 shows most popular images of activities chosen by participants during pop-up events

Types of activities

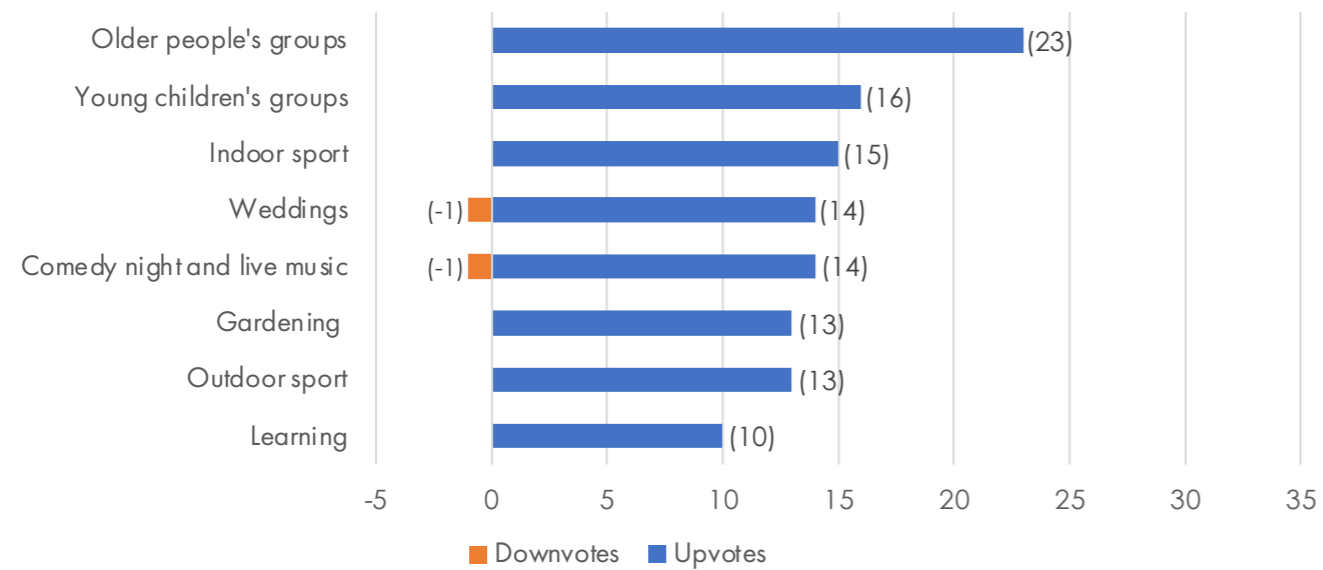


Figure 14 shows a bar chart representing pop-up participants' votes for centre activities and the number of responses given in brackets

Design ideas - external

To inform the centre's refurbishment, we asked participants for their views on some design ideas, covering both internal and external features.

To have a 'bright and welcoming' space was the most popular idea. Other comments were:

- the car park surface is uneven,
- connection to outside space is poor,
- hard to watch over the kids playing (e.g., out the back of the centre on a hired bouncy castle),
- covered external space would be good,
- landscaping could be more than just grass,
- face the street, connect with the green space, loop line/Halewood Park Triangle,
- fences are intimidating/off-putting, cycle barriers are a problem,
- climate change and sustainable design features, such as solar panels, improving energy efficiency, and rainwater harvesting,

- signage from other places (e.g., train stations, Halewood Park Triangle), and
- some people felt that the outside of the building was not a priority and simply needed to be 'smartened up'.

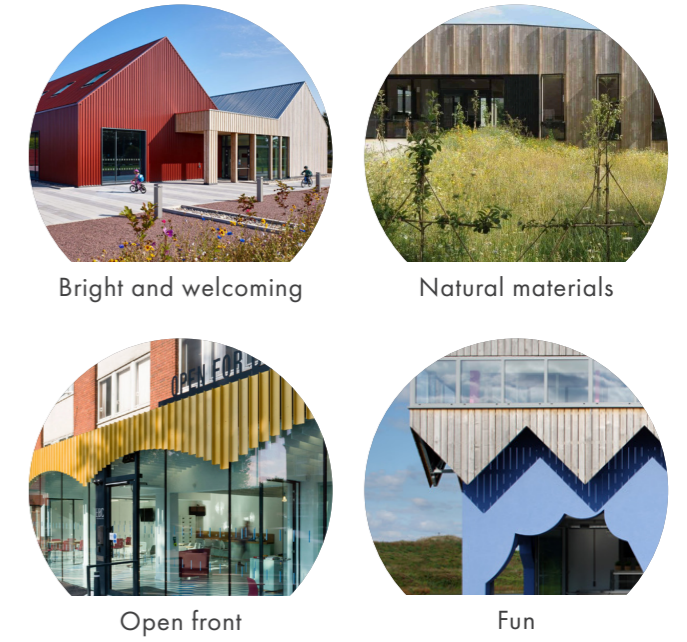


Figure 15 shows most popular images of external design ideas chosen by participants during pop-up events

Design ideas - external

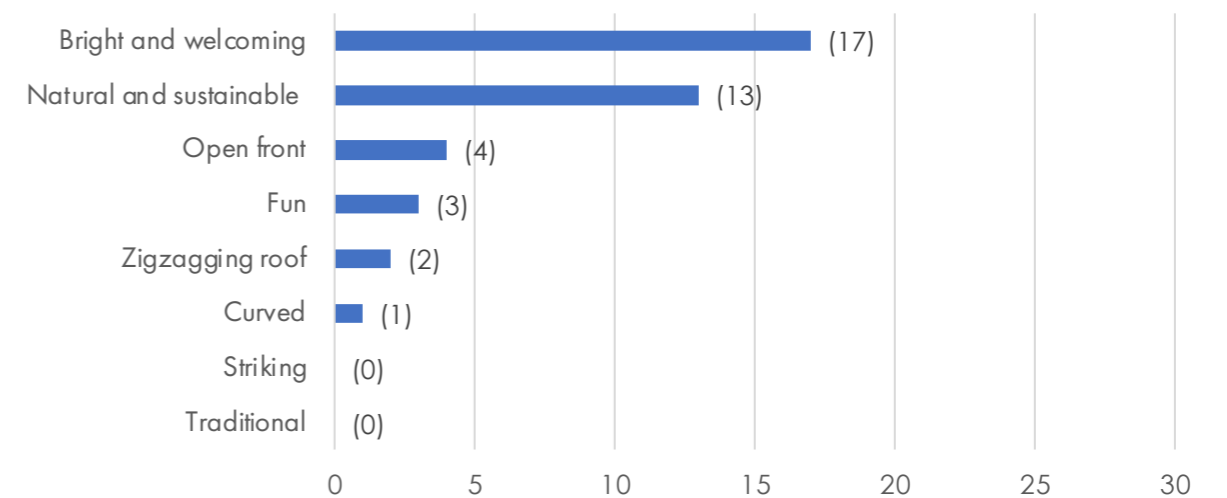


Figure 16 shows a bar chart representing pop-up participants' votes for external design ideas for the refurbished centre and the number of responses given in brackets

Design ideas - internal

'Natural light' came out as very important to participants. Other discussion points were:

- inclusive design, including calmer spaces for neurodivergent users and visitors,
- dementia friendly design, including easy to follow internal signage,
- bigger function space,
- improved views out were popular, for example from the cafe. At the same time, some expressed a concern about overlooking and privacy (e.g., for yoga class),
- internal spaces were seen as feeling tight, low and poorly laid out,
- storage is really important for success,
- flexible spaces,
- energy efficiency, thermal comfort is considered to be low currently, and
- communications – notice board/community wall to help people see what's on offer.

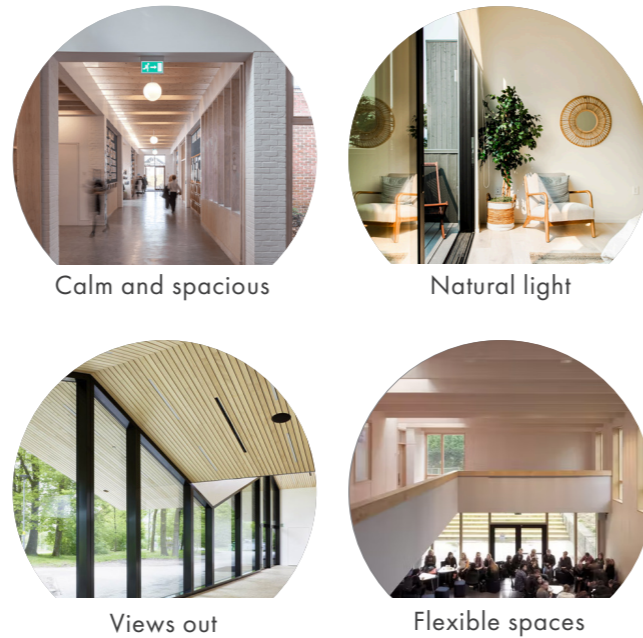


Figure 17 shows the most popular images of internal design ideas chosen by participants during pop-up events

Design ideas - internal

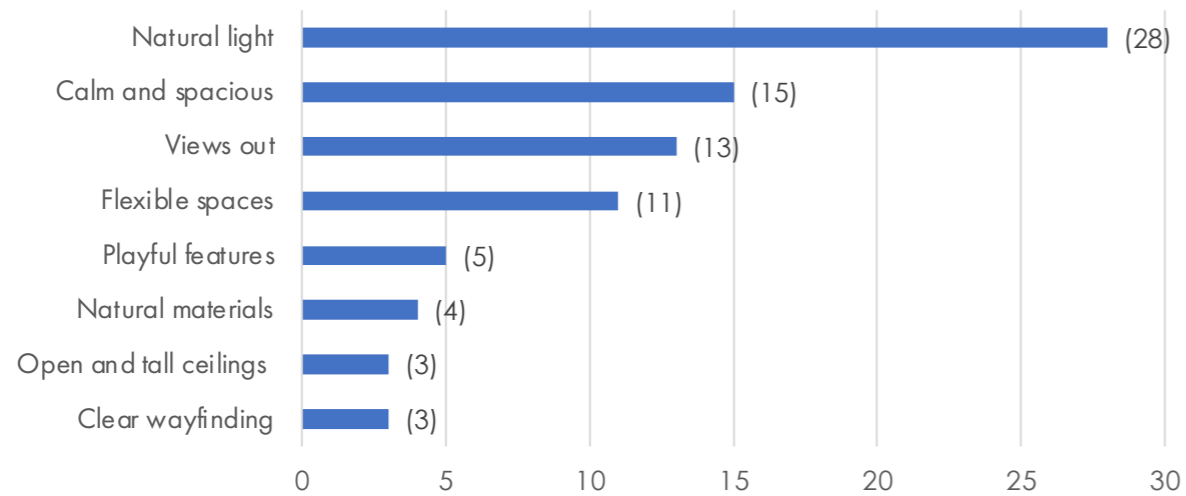


Figure 18 shows a bar chart representing pop-up participants' votes for internal design ideas for the refurbished centre and the number of responses given in brackets

General feedback

We asked both survey respondents and pop-up event participants to rate their support for the project on a scale including the options 'very bad idea', 'bad idea', 'don't know', 'good idea' and 'very good idea'. We found that over two thirds of respondents were in support of the project, with 87% of them thinking it was a good or very good idea. This is based on 157 responses.

General comments about the project and the Arncliffe Centre were made across all engagement tools. People who were not in support of the project considered that the centre is good as it is, that they could not identify pressing issues and thought the expense was not needed.

From our feedback event in September, we found that people responded positively to the developing ideas that we presented, and they agreed with the data that we found in our interim data snapshot (presenting early responses up to 16 August).

In particular, people thought the creation of a café was a great idea. They were also happy with the ideas presented for the car park as they felt more car parking spaces were needed than what is currently provided.

About the design concepts for the centre, participants thought the space should feel even more open, bright and welcoming. They also wished for the park to be more open.

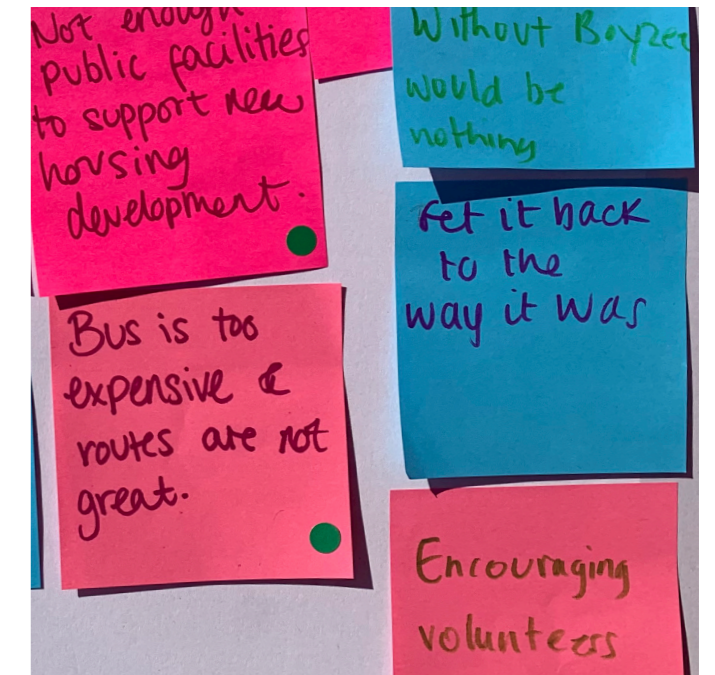


Figure 19 shows a photograph of general feedback from a pop-up event

Overall, is investing in the Arncliffe, to make it 'fit for purpose', a good idea?

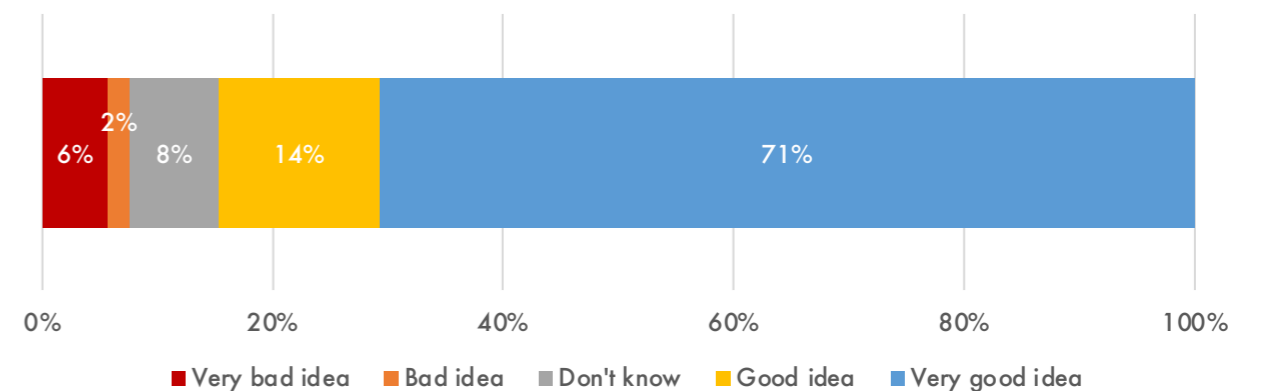


Figure 20 shows a bar chart survey representing survey respondents' and pop-up participants' views towards investing in the Arncliffe Centre

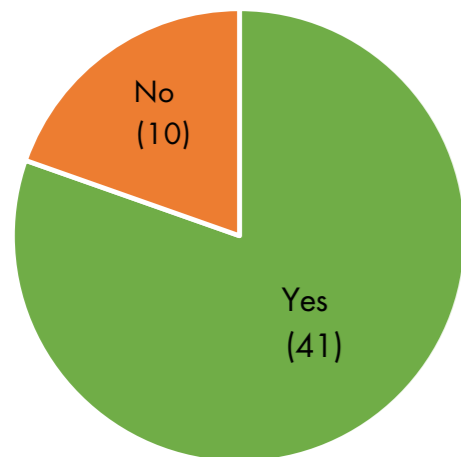
Impact on future use

To understand the impact of the project on potential future use of the centre, we asked a series of questions to survey respondents covering:

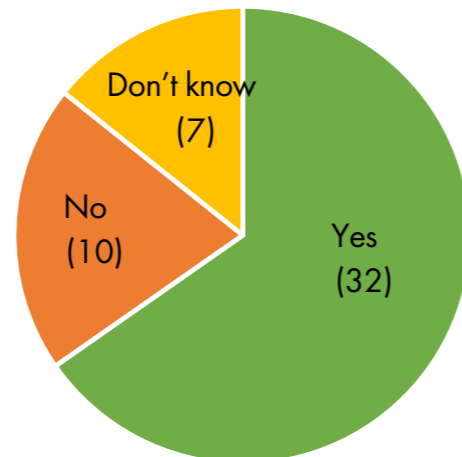
- the impact of additional group activities,
- the impact of building improvements, and
- the impact of building improvements that would give access to additional activities and services.

From these questions, it appears that an increased offer in activities and improvements to the building would lead to a more usage. However, the pie chart showing responses to 'would you regularly use the Arncliffe if there is no change to the current services or building?' shows that over half of the respondents would still use the centre if no changes were made, suggesting a mixed picture in terms of the connection between refurbishment and increased use of the Arncliffe Centre.

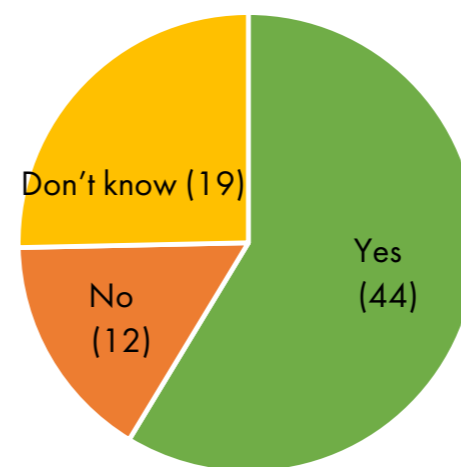
If plans for additional groups/ activities, a café and improved community facilities were realised, would you use the centre more?



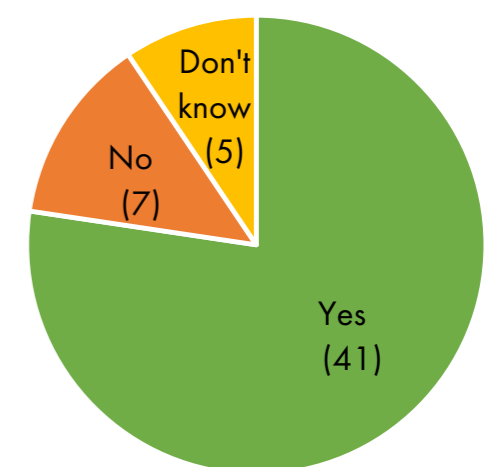
Would you regularly use the Arncliffe if it provides the same services as it currently does, but the building receives investment and improvements?



Would you regularly use the Arncliffe if there is no change to the current services or building?



Would you regularly use the Arncliffe if the building receives investment which means it can provide additional services that may be missing in the area today?



Figures 21-22 show pie charts representing survey responses to multiple questions about the Arncliffe Centre refurbishment and the number of responses given in brackets

Figures 23-24 show pie charts representing survey responses to multiple questions about the Arncliffe Centre refurbishment and the number of responses given in brackets

Concerns

From our discussions, the main concerns shared by participants were as follows:

- There are some misconceptions and limited understanding of what's on offer.
 - The centre isn't visible, literally as the centre is hard to see from the street but also because many people do not see the centre as 'for them'.
 - Inside/outside connection and general connection between the building and the outside space is poor.
 - Different uses to manage within the centre create some things to balance between spaces, e.g., views out/views in.
 - Different users to accommodate – inclusive design should help to ensure the centre is welcoming to all users.
- Discussions from the feedback pop-up event we held in September revealed concerns from nearby residents. The concerns related to privacy and in particular:
 - Car parking by the houses near the centre should be discouraged by placing planters in front of the houses.
 - No pedestrian access should be given in front of these houses.
 - Finally, people wished for the wall separating the Arncliffe centre from the houses to stay, to preserve privacy.

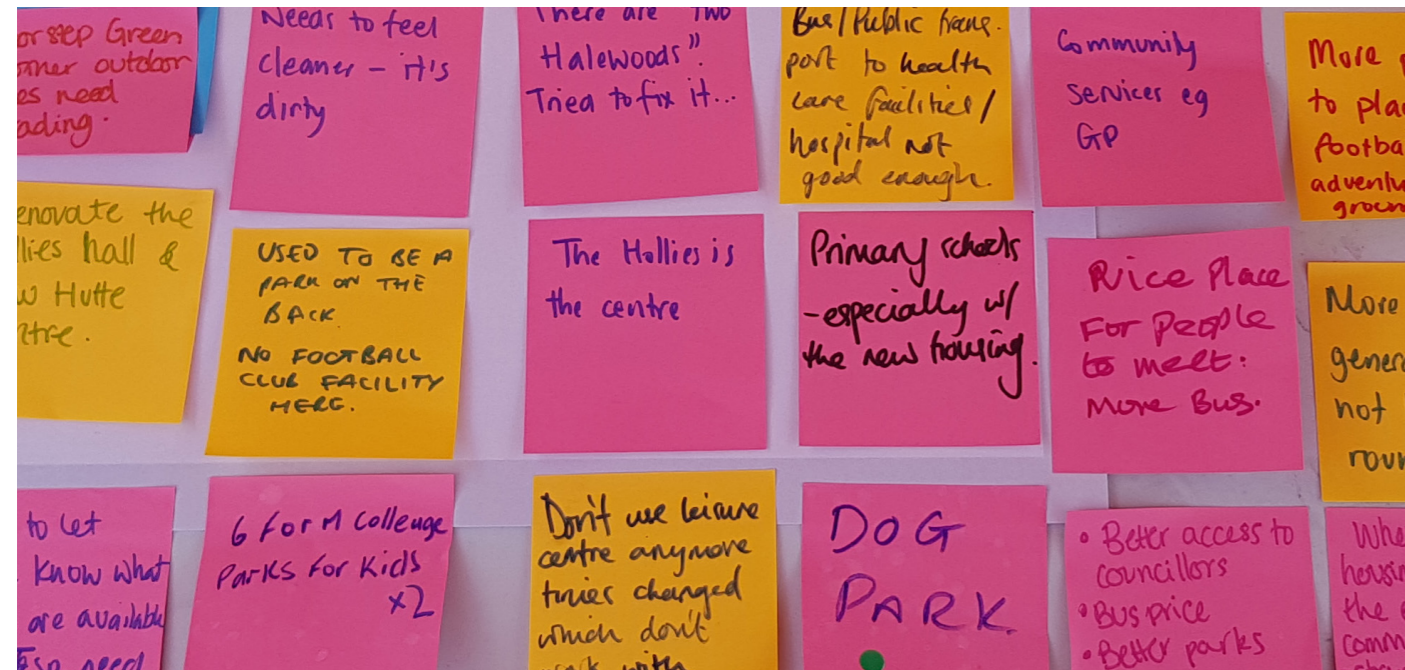


Figure 25 shows a photograph of general feedback from a pop-up event

Other facilities

We separated survey answers that were about the Arncliffe Centre and answers about other facilities in Halewood. In order to be able to identify common themes, we have grouped the data for all these venues into one category. These venues include:

- Hollies Hall,
- Halewood Youth,
- Your Voice Your Choice,
- Halewood Community Spirit,
- St Nicholas Church,
- St Marks Church,
- Torrington Drive,
- St Mary's Church, and
- Halewood Leisure.

These are some of the comments about why people use these other facilities and venues:

- Activities on offer: interest groups and sports events.
- Venue characteristics: the venue is bigger, the stage is great, it is easier to watch the kids (The Hollies in particular).
- Location: people who indicated using other venues than the Arncliffe said the facility is closer to where they live.

Reasons for using other community facilities than the Arncliffe centre

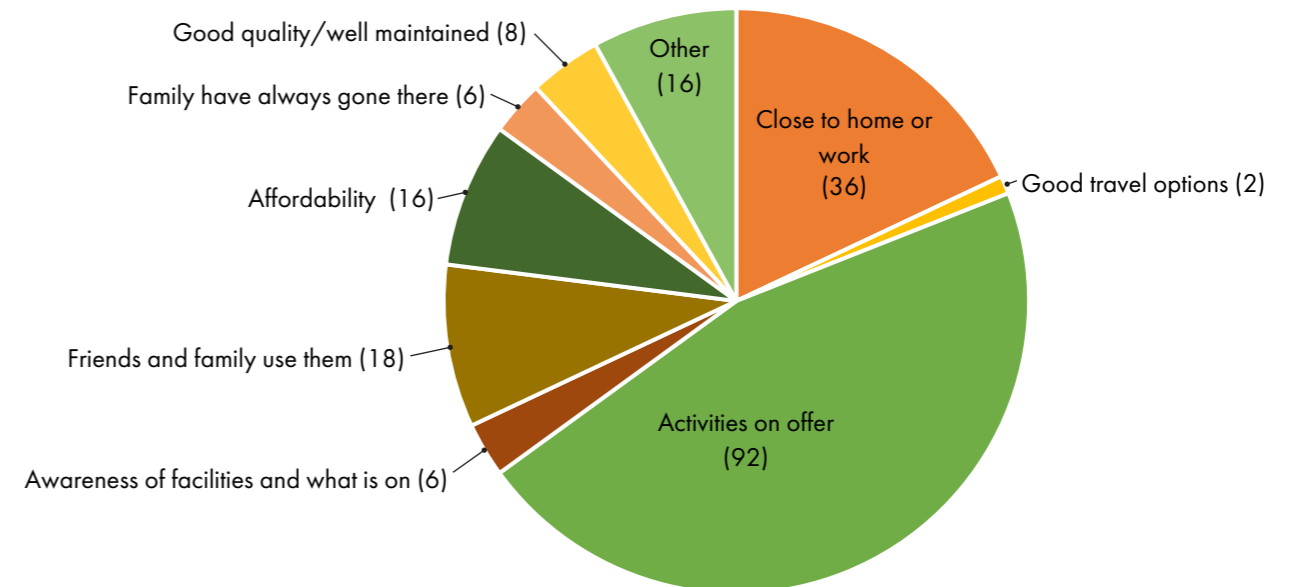


Figure 26 shows a pie chart representing survey respondents' reasons for using other community facilities and vote numbers in brackets

Conclusions and next steps

The refurbishment of the Arncliffe Centre is seen as a 'Very good idea' by 71% of respondents and a 'Good idea' by 14% of them. In total, this means that 85% of participants support the project. A majority of respondents also indicated that they would use the centre more if more activities were on offer and if the building was refurbished. Although respondents also indicated that they would continue to use the centre if no changes were made.

The main reason for people to visit the Arncliffe Centre were the activities on offer. This offer makes the centre attractive even if people do not find the facility easy to access by public transport.

The main wishes for the centre were a café, a kitchen, activities for children, young people and older people, opportunities to do sports, and classes for adults.

In terms of design, participants wished for the Arncliffe to feel bright and welcoming, with natural light, and made in materials that are natural and sustainable.

The main concerns that were raised related to the centre's accessibility, both in terms of transport and inclusive design.

Moving forward, we recommend that, alongside the ideas shared in this report, special attention is given to transport and routes to the centre, as well as making sure the centre is accessible to all, including those who are vulnerable and disabled people.

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