Mapping exercise report summary
And conclusion

Completed May 2021
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Accessibility

The majority of facilities have wheelchair access however only half have disabled toilets and only five have a hearing loop / baby changing facilities and while four have plans to make improvements, five have none of the resources mentioned.

91% are on a public transport route however, many comment that this provides is a limited service and a couple state it is not door to door.

All 34 locations have parking but only one specifically mentions disabled parking, however this was not a specific question so there may be others with disabled parking. Access to the building it's self was also not a question covered and one mentions this is a concern.

Communication

Word of mouth and local noticeboards are by far the most widely used methods for communicating. Half are currently using social media and around 40% use a website.

While 40% have said they use a website this varies from having their own dedicated site to having some information on a third party site - in some cases with out of date information, making it a challenge to find the correct details.

Other methods include printed material such as the Glenkens Gazette, flyers / posters (3 out of 5) distributing their flyers door to door suggesting this is mainly to communicate with local residents, as does community email.

Many people stated that they use a mixture of methods.

One mentions poor internet connection as a barrier.

Several have asked for help with communication, which will need to be followed up.

Users / Services

Groups clearly play a significant role, with nearly 85% of the facilities answering 'yes'

The groups listed are varied, although fitness / exercise groups are by far the most popular.

Just under half provided services to their local community (pre-covid) with almost the same number (though not necessarily the same venues) finding new ways to continue to provide a service during covid. The majority of these are online, however with social distancing allowing, some have found other ways of helping.

Two mention a lack of wi-fi as a barrier to their efforts.

90% of venues have been used less during the pandemic but the vast majority are hopeful things will return to normal, at some point.

A minority have learnt something during this time, particularly an appreciation for their community hall.

80% of facilities host regular annual events, many of which are seasonal activities, several sporting events, all could be described as social activities.

Occupancy

There is quite a spread of occupancy rates ranging from two venues only used between 10 and 20 days per year, to others used over 250 days per year. There is a slight majority of facilities used between 101 and 150 days.

The main barrier to increasing use are the number or availability of volunteers.

Nearly 33% have stated they would like help with the areas mentioned (i.e. marketing / advertising, booking system / access or key management / cleaning / volunteer numbers) with a further 39% saying they might be interested in support.

Bookings

25 of the facilities who responded are available to hire however 30 have responded with booking information.

Groups and community events are the most popular types of booking with many taking bookings for weddings / wedding receptions and art / theatre performances.

Around a third of facilities are used for community councils or polling stations. A wide variety of other types of booking are mentioned such as exercise classes, training sessions and bring and buy sales.

Many facilities feel they need significant improvements before being available to hire.

One currently hosts club only events, several mention that for churches or church halls, approval may need to be sought for some bookings.

Structure and Outdoor Space

Facilities across the region vary in size, from being able to accommodate less than 50 people to others who can accommodate over 200 people, one has capacity for more than 400 people.

This naturally gives a range of room sizes also varying widely from 20m² to over 200 m²

Three venues have no toilets, the majority have 2, however, the question ought to have clarified if this was the number of cubicles or separate bathrooms. Looking back to question 1, 17 locations have a disabled bathroom

The nature of construction, of the buildings, also varies considerably across the region. A couple, have modern upgrades, some are 100 year old wooden structures with metal roofs, others are period buildings one with a tower. Most are stone with slate roofs, several are concrete or brick buildings. Some are in a very basic condition while one or two meet current building regulations.

Ages range from the 1700's to the early 2000's. The majority date from the 1800's to 1900's

Most buildings have little to no insulation.

40% of respondents state that they need repairs, only one of these is described as major repair work needed. However, looking at the comments regarding future aspirations, six hope to do major / minor repair work and many facilities feel they need significant improvements before being available to hire.

Over half of those who responded have had a buildings survey and have plans of the site. The majority have had a recent fire risk assessment.

Most of the facilities have a play park / green space / walking routes nearby but only 25% have public toilets close by.

Renewable Technology, Water & Energy Use

Only two facilities currently have some form of renewable technology installed. One will be installing electric car and electric bike charging points in 2021 and one other location is considering installing solar panels.

To heat the main spaces, the vast majority have electric heating, with the rest relying on oil or gas, one facility has a wood burning stove. Most places rely on a separate system to heat hot water.

28 locations are on Mains water, 2 have no running water.

There are 8 different energy suppliers, with charges ranging from 12p to nearly 20p per kW/h. Nobody stated that they are on a green tariff.

Internet Access

Nearly 73% are not connected to the internet, in several cases, the quality or lack of internet access has been mentioned as prohibitive.

Based on the information provided, fibre broadband is only available to 25% of locations.

Assets

The main assets listed were tables and chairs however, there are a wide range of other items in the area people may be willing to share. Over 40% have said they would be happy to do so with another 50% stating they may share.

Most places have shown an interest in sharing assets, within the GDT area.

Legal Structure, Staff / Volunteers

50% of those who responded are registered charities, some come under more than one category.

Number of staff or volunteers, 3 facilities are able to employ 10 + people, however this is perhaps mis-leading considering schools are included in the survey. Of the 39 + people employed 20 + of these are in relation to the schools.

The data shows the high number of volunteers involved with the halls, schools, churches and the other facilities across the area. Considering 34 facilities have participated, this is an average of 4 (ish) volunteers per location, however they are obviously not distributed this evenly.

Skill set some have said they would be happy to share their skills, in particular one location has a member of staff to assist with this. Others mention particular skills such as greenskeeper specialist, solicitor, business knowledge, marketing, sports and book keeping.

Financial situation almost 70% of the 25 respondents feel their current finical situation is healthy, 32% feel their situation is of concern.

Future Investment over half have plans for future investments most of these are upgrades to the buildings structure / fixtures or fittings / heating / or outdoor spaces.

One comments that they need to improve their heating system but doesn't currently have the funds to do so.

Running Costs, nearly all halls have insurance and and energy bills, over half have cleaning bills and around a third have other costs such as phone / internet connection, window cleaning, printing, advertising, maintaining defibrillators or equipment hire.

There are a variety of other costs listed including grass cutting / licences / website maintenance for example.

Half of respondents are aware of new ongoing costs considering Covid again, half of those who responded have concerns about this, half are un-concerned. Perhaps reflecting the lack of certainty about the changing situation of the pandemic.

Many comment that any income generated is often only just meeting expenses.

Future Aspirations & Challenges

Future Goals

Of the 24 respondents, half would like to see increased use of their facility, perhaps in relation to engaging more people or with a younger audience.

6 hope to see major or minor building improvements.

3 are looking to change their legal structure, ownership status or lease.

Some goals are to meet basic needs, such as running water and bathroom facilities, others are more aspirational in hoping to encourage a younger audience into a particular sport.

Challenges

Over 50% are concerned about the workload for a voluntary led team while over 70% are concerned about increased costs. 40% worry about lack of use and changing demographics with funding bottom of the pile at 25%.

It seems in many cases that the buildings are in reasonable condition but lack of use / falling numbers are leading to bigger problems.

Looking at comments made across the surveys many of the churches in particular appear to be reaching a critical point, some due to lack of use,

IN CONCLUSION

There are many facilities across the Glenkens and District Trust catchment area, and they vary widely, in size, construction, condition, use, accessibility and financial situation. They are also spread far and wide geographically, as are the communities they serve, with what seems to be 'limited' public transport links.

The diversity of the buildings are part of the tapestry of our landscape, sadly a few seem to suggest they are reaching a critical point. Lack of use and / or the condition of the building sometimes exacerbating the problem. The churches seem to be particularly at risk and it could perhaps be argued that the crafstmanship and build of these are irreplaceable. Some hope to see these retained as community facilities, should they have to change.

In many cases it seems that the buildings are in reasonable condition but lack of use / falling numbers and increasing costs are leading to bigger problems.

Maintenance of buildings is a common challenge with a minority feeling they need to make significant improvements before being made available for wider use. While the majority have said they feel their financial situation is healthy many have also commented on only just balancing costs with income and have concerns for the future.

A recurring theme is around people - more volunteers are needed as is increased community engagement / use of many of the properties.

Communication methods such as; community email, door to door delivered flyers, word of mouth and local noticeboards, seem to focus on communicating with local residents rather than aiming to reach a wider audience.

It was a challenge to gather all of the correct contact information for every venue, occasionally it was necessary to ask a resident. This could also make it difficult for anyone outwith an area to even know about a venue and very difficult to make a booking. In particular some of the smaller church halls were nearly overlooked because of this. When the correct contact details were found everyone responded promptly which was much appreciated

Internet access is also a common challenge. Poor or no internet connection is mentioned several times as a barrier.

Collaboration to tackle costs, communication to tackle use and community engagement could potentially be next steps towards achieving aspirations.