

Community Centre Survey (August 2021) – Results

Conclusions:

The survey was well-received with most responses from an older demographic (64% of respondents were 55+), female (58%) and local to The Charltons (81%). That said, young people (10-17 years) were well represented (12.6%).

The pandemic certainly affected use, with The Community Centre closed for much of 2020. Even pre-Covid, the majority (52%) only used it for special occasions such as school events or parties but sport (pickleball) and youth club attracted 37% to the venue at least once a week. Conversely The Memorial Playing Field was used more. It was an invaluable place to meet outside, play and get away from working at home: more than 85% used it the same or more than usual, with 18.5% there every day and 37.8% at least once a week.

There is no doubt that The Community Centre and Memorial Playing Field are highly valued but the state of the building – described as cold, leaky and ugly – diminishes its position in the heart of The Charltons and puts people off using what is, overall, an excellent space. Improvements to make it warm, welcoming, flexible and attractive are top priorities.



Designed as a sports hall, this remains its primary use and villagers want this to continue – alongside making it a more flexible space with added facilities such as an extra smaller hall, community cafe, publicly-accessible toilets and refurbished car park. The showers and changing rooms are virtually unused and can be seen as wasted space, but some believe sports teams should be attracted back to use the full facilities. The majority, however, view it as time to reassess the facilities based on current and desired uses, and to refurbish to meet those needs, now and in the future.

Headlines:

Responses: 119 surveys from people aged 10 years-old to 75+: 58% female, 81% resident in The Charltons. Older profile exceeds 2011 census – 64% compared with 48.5% in the census.

Current use:

- 52% use the Community Centre less than four times a year, mainly for special occasions, but 37% use it once or twice a week.
 - The most popular activities are school events (17.4%), private parties (16.4%) or fundraisers (15.7%).
 - Sport (Pickleball and Badminton) account for 10.2% and youth club 6.8%.
 - The sports hall was used most regularly (38% of respondents used it at least once a month), closely followed by the kitchen (29%) and youth club/pool table (15% and 11% respectively).
- Conversely, 56% (67 people) use The Memorial Playing Field more than once a week and 23.5% used it more than usual in lockdown.
- Of the existing facilities, the sports hall was used most regularly (38% of respondents used it at least once a month), closely followed by the kitchen (29%) and youth club/pool table (15% and 11% respectively).
 - Only seven people used the changing rooms at least four times a year – and only five ever used the showers.
 - The main restrictions to using The Community Centre are the leaking roof, the cold and unappealing space, a lack of publicly accessible toilets and the potholed car park.

Values:

- The Memorial Playing Field was most highly valued of all the facilities for a third of the 112 people who answered this question.
 - 16% put the sports hall at the top of their list and another 16% the accessibility, including parking. For 14% it was top as a meeting place and for 12.5% as a safe place for children to play.
- Residents of The Charltons most valued the sense of community, friendliness and beautiful rural surroundings.
- Currently The Community Centre is seen as tired, cold, old, big and ugly – but it's also fun.
- In future people want The Community Centre to be a welcoming, warm, attractive, modern, multi-purpose sports and community hub.

Future facilities (112 people, 94% of respondents answered this question):

- Most people would like a Community Cafe (72 people, 64%).
 - Almost half also want public toilets (48%), smaller flexible space (45.5%) and exercise classes (38%), and a third want more outside: a youth area (29%) and adult trim trail (29%).
 - Other suggestions include a skate park, more trees, a gym, monthly market, improved function room and kitchen, community notice board and better car park.
- 46 people used the comments field to make the following comments:
 - Nine people wanted The Community Centre to become a community hub and village hall, with an extra hall (two people), the full height sports hall (three) and a better exterior (three).
 - Three people wanted it to stay 'as is' while another three believed sports teams should be attracted back to fully use the existing facilities.