



Old Hospital Hub – Community Consultation Feedback

Introduction

Over the past two weeks, we have reached out to the local community to gather input on how best to repurpose the ex-nursery space at The Old Hospital Hub. This space holds significant importance and potential, and we wanted to ensure that any future use reflects the needs and desires of our community and meets our charitable objectives. Through this consultation, we aimed to hear directly from residents, businesses, and other stakeholders about how the space could serve Southwold, Reydon and the surrounding area.

We were delighted with the level of engagement and the thoughtful suggestions provided. This summary document highlights the key findings from the consultation and outlines how these ideas will shape the next steps in the decision-making process. Thank you to everyone who contributed their time and ideas to this important project.

Consultation Methodology

To ensure broad participation, we conducted the consultation through both digital and in-person formats. We distributed an online survey to all our supporters, customers, and local stakeholders. The survey was shared via email and social media platforms to maximise reach. In addition to the online responses, physical copies of the survey were made available at The Canteen/Southwold Library where staff were on hand to assist anyone needing help with completing the form.

The consultation period ran for 14 days during which we received 86 responses.

Summary of Key Findings Related to Future Use (Q1/Q2)

An overwhelming majority (84%) agreed that the space should prioritise educational and recreational activities for children and young people. Results from Q2 also indicated strong support for other proposed uses, with employability and skills workshops favoured by 74%, creative workshops by 67%, and general hire by 51%.

Alternative Suggestions for the Space

Twenty respondents proposed additional uses. The most frequently suggested alternatives included:

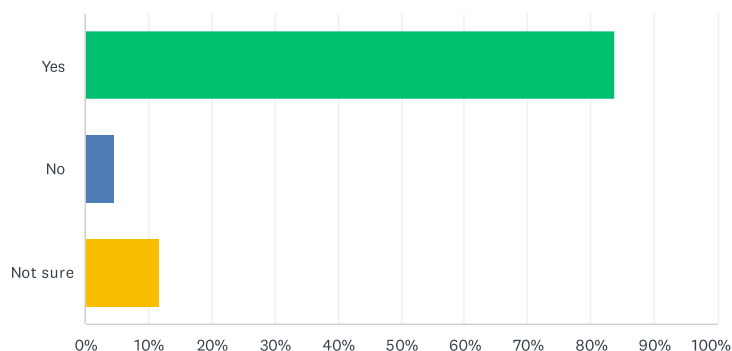
- **Community Meeting Room:** Many emphasised the need for a flexible, accessible area for community groups, clubs, and events.
- **Childcare or Play Area:** Reflecting the building's nursery heritage, some recommended using the space as a childcare facility, soft-play area, or after-school club.

Recurring Themes

- **Accessibility:** Ensuring accessibility for all—including the elderly, families with young children, and individuals with disabilities—was a key priority. Respondents stated the importance of features like easy entry, clear signage, and inclusive design.
- **Multipurpose Use:** Several respondents advocated for a flexible layout that could support a variety of activities throughout the week, helping the space meet the diverse needs of the community.

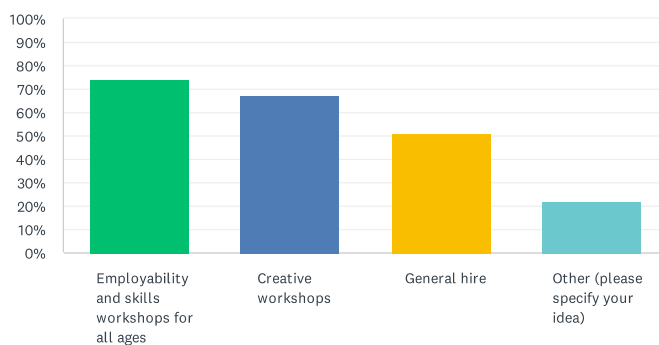
Q1 Do you agree with our proposal to use the space to support educational and other activities for children and young people?

Answered: 86 Skipped: 0



Q2 We have received the following suggestions. Do you agree with them or have other ideas for the space?

Answered: 86 Skipped: 0



Community Feedback Highlights (Q3)

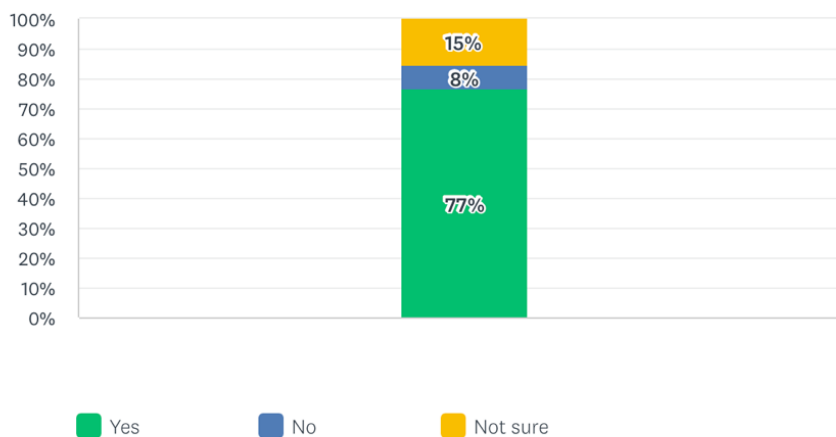
The consultation revealed overwhelmingly positive responses about the impact of The Old Hospital on the community. Key points included:

- **Community Meeting and Social Space:** Many participants praised The Old Hospital for creating a welcoming environment for people to meet, socialise, and enjoy activities like Community Lunches and Family Tea Club. It was widely viewed as a space that fosters social interaction and reduces isolation.
- **Inclusivity and Accessibility:** The space is appreciated for serving a broad range of the community, from visitors to locals, with a strong emphasis on inclusivity and the importance of offering affordable services for all.
- **Support for Families and Children:** Numerous comments highlighted the value of providing activities and facilities for families and children, from community events to educational opportunities.
- **Positive Atmosphere:** The atmosphere at The Old Hospital was frequently described as friendly, welcoming, and warm. Respondents felt a strong sense of belonging and valued the efforts to create a supportive community hub.
- **Quality and Range of Services:** Many respondents applauded the high quality of services and activities offered, with special mention of the cafe, library, and housing, which contribute to the success and sustainability of the space.

This feedback reinforces the importance of ensuring that the ex-nursery space continues to serve the evolving needs of the community while maintaining the inclusive, community-oriented approach that has made The Old Hospital a vital resource to our community.

Do you think that the Old Hospital has made a positive contribution to the community?

Answered: 86 Skipped: 0

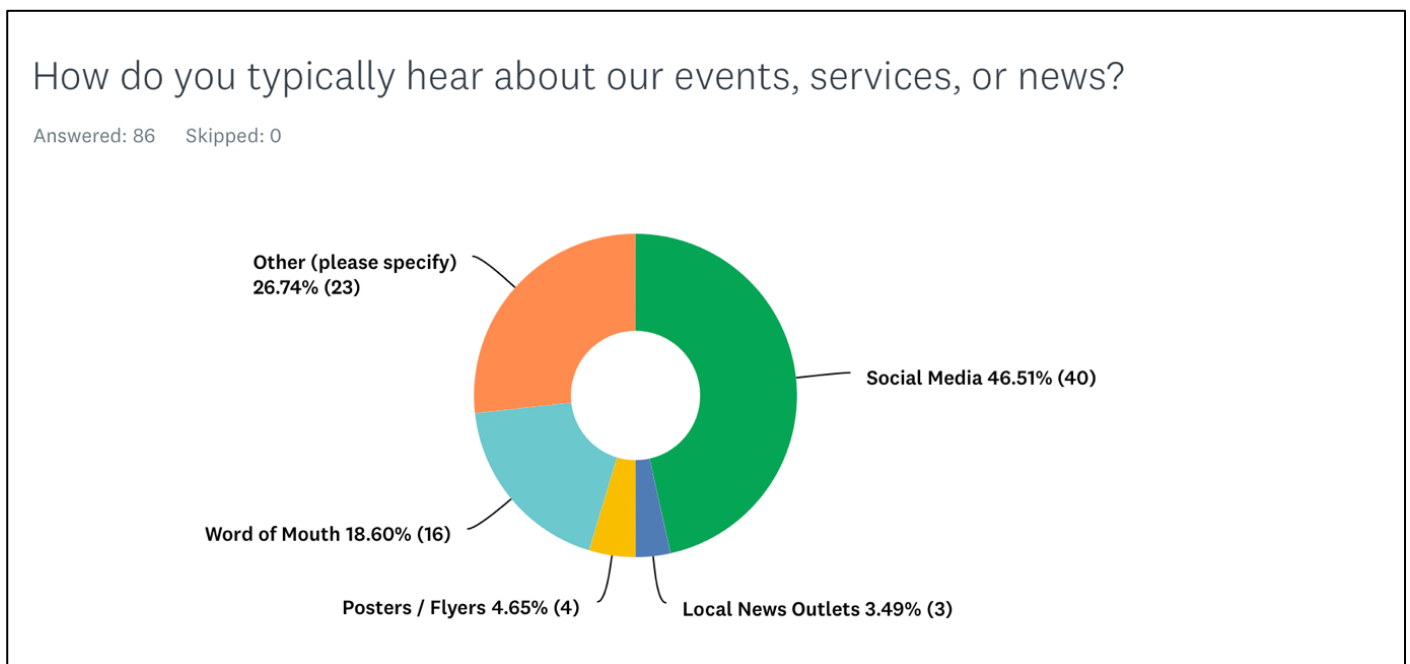


Communication (Q4)

We asked everyone how they hear about our news and events, the results showed a strong majority of respondents indicated **social media** and **email** (as stated in the 'Other' category) as their primary sources of information, with a smaller number mentioning **leaflets** and **posters**.

We recognise that this survey was conducted online and may not fully capture certain audiences. Therefore, we remain committed to using a diverse range of communication methods to reach as many people as possible. However, given the strong preference for social media and email, we will prioritise these channels to ensure timely and accessible updates, while still maintaining other forms of outreach to keep everyone informed. We are always open to new ways to improve communication.

We also want to express our appreciation to everyone who spreads the word about our services. It's clear that word-of-mouth (18.6%) helps us reach more people in the community.



Finally, we sought suggestions on how we could improve our services and activities at The Old Hospital. We appreciate the 44 suggestions received, all of which have been taken on board. There were several common themes among the responses, which we address below.

1. **Adult Education and Employment Skills**

We recognise the importance of helping adults gain new skills and will explore options for offering adult education courses. Supporting individuals seeking employment skills is a priority for our area, and we will seek to investigate potential partnerships with local organisations to provide access to training and job opportunities.

2. **Children's and Young People's Groups**

We understand the value of providing a safe and welcoming space for parents and their young children. We encourage any groups interested in using the space for these purposes to come forward.

3. **Educational Programs**

Education is at the heart of community development. We will continue to seek opportunities to

host and facilitate educational workshops, expanding our current weekly Family Tea Club and free art and food workshops for children. Based on your feedback, we aim to extend this educational support to adults as well, focusing on employability and technology skills.

4. Enhanced Breakfast Offer and Extended Café Hours

We appreciate the feedback regarding The Canteen. We agree that enhancing our breakfast offering is essential! We have recently changed our opening hours to extend our breakfast service from 8:30 AM to 11:00 AM. More excitingly, we are launching our new expanded menu this week, with new additions including fluffy pancakes and The Canteen's Big Breakfast!

We are committed to opening on weekends going forward. However, whether we can extend our opening times to evenings will depend on balancing operational costs with community demand. We will explore all avenues to enhance the café experience and make it more accessible for everyone.

5. Increased Use for Young People

Supporting young people is important, and we agree that offering more activities and working in partnership with others would be beneficial.

6. Affordability and Support for Small Businesses

We understand that affordability is a concern for many in our community. We are committed to making our spaces more accessible to small businesses and individuals with limited budgets as we do with all our community programmes. We currently offer affordable rent to our two tenants, Southwold Library and The Geography Fieldwork Academy, providing them with a home in Southwold. We are dedicated to extending these affordable rates to local start-ups and services that approach us for this space.

7. Reopening of the Nursery

We know that reopening the nursery is close to many people's hearts, including our own. However, we do not plan to reopen the space as a nursery, as it remains a challenging environment with the ongoing national staffing crisis.

8. IT Classes for Older Residents

We see the value in offering IT classes for older residents to help them stay connected and develop essential skills. We will explore partnerships to bring these classes to fruition and ensure they are accessible to all older members of our community.

Next Steps

We have already received interest in the space, and we encourage anyone with proposals—local groups, business pop-ups, educational partners, or individuals—to come forward with ideas that support the finding of our community consultation.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the community for your valuable input during the consultation process.

For inquiries, more information on the space, or to discuss any of the above, please contact Sydney at sydney@southgen.co.uk.

Thank you,
The SouthGen/Old Hospital Team