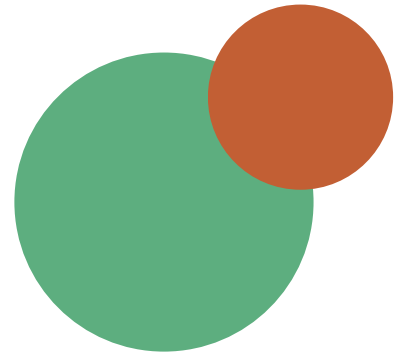




Ilminster Community Review 2022-23

Executive Summary



Supported by



Introduction

In the Autumn of 2022, Ilminster Town Council agreed to the production of a Community Plan in order to understand how the community would like the focus of the council to be directed in the coming years. Residents were given the opportunity through a survey to have their say of what matters most for the community and resources needed to address the issues raised. It looked at how the community can best recover following the Covid pandemic and the current funding crisis. We are very aware that people's health and wellbeing had been seriously eroded within the community and whilst there are limits to what the council can do, it wanted to try to maximise the opportunities which it can avail itself of.

Background

A local Neighbourhood Plan was started in 2018 but due to covid it had been delayed and it has reached the point where the community Referendum can take place. The topics we have chosen have not been covered/ addressed by the Neighbourhood Plan.

We wanted to engage/consult with our residents on matters that are important to them and that we as a Town Council may be in a position to deliver.

What did we ask about?

The topics were chosen for this consultation were:

- Demographics: a bit of background information about those completing the survey.
- Your Town: what you like most and least about Ilminster.
- Community Facilities and Services: what you use, what needs improving and thoughts on specific community projects.
- Retired and Older People: what support may be needed.
- Young People and Children: what is needed for children and young people.
- Additional Comments: an opportunity to raise any other ideas and issues.

Methodology

The survey was live between 18th November and 9th December 2022. It was available online through a link and QR code to Survey Monkey, and hard copies were also made available and the information provided was inputted by Ilminster Town Council. A prize draw of £25 was offered, and contact details were only gathered for those wanting to enter the draw; otherwise the survey was conducted anonymously. The survey was widely promoted at events, through groups, organisations, schools, businesses as well as through social media.



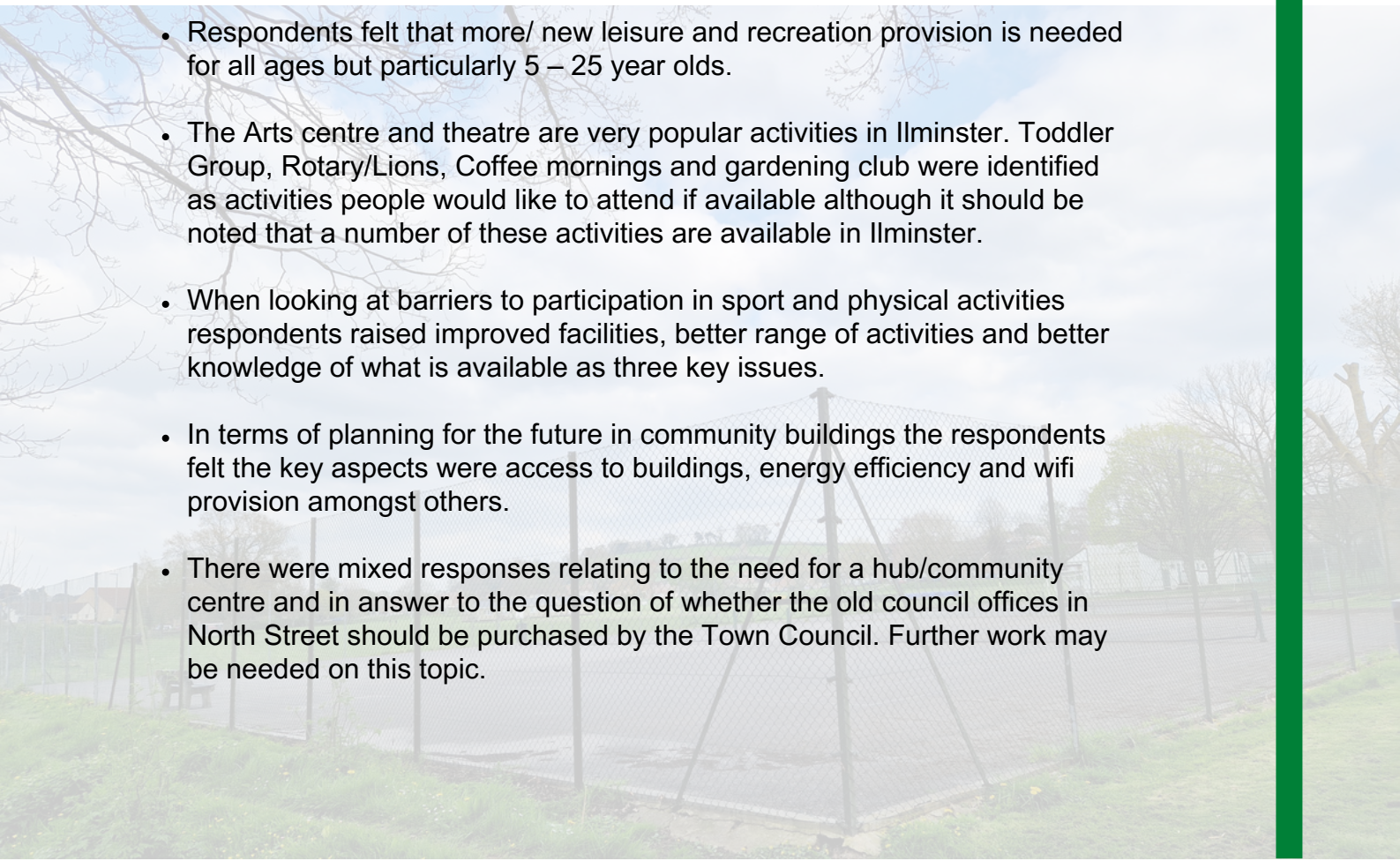
Key Findings

Your Town:

The most liked aspects of Ilminster were the facilities, community life and activities. The least like aspects included some lack of facilities e.g. pubs and issues with public transport.

Community facilities:

- Respondents engage in a wide range of activities especially through groups and clubs.
- Leisure activities and recreation facilities are well supported but many were highlighted as needing improvements.
- Worthy of particular note was the quality of the football pitches which were highlighted numerous times throughout the survey as needing to be improved to be all weather facilities. It was said that more people would engage in football if the surfaces were improved. The public toilets and Multi Use Games Area were also highlighted as needing improvements.
- In terms of resources people would use if they were available swimming was raised a number of times in different answers. Other resources identified included Multi Use Games Area, café on the recreation ground, fitness trail and community orchard/garden.
- Respondents felt that more/ new leisure and recreation provision is needed for all ages but particularly 5 – 25 year olds.
- The Arts centre and theatre are very popular activities in Ilminster. Toddler Group, Rotary/Lions, Coffee mornings and gardening club were identified as activities people would like to attend if available although it should be noted that a number of these activities are available in Ilminster.
- When looking at barriers to participation in sport and physical activities respondents raised improved facilities, better range of activities and better knowledge of what is available as three key issues.
- In terms of planning for the future in community buildings the respondents felt the key aspects were access to buildings, energy efficiency and wifi provision amongst others.
- There were mixed responses relating to the need for a hub/community centre and in answer to the question of whether the old council offices in North Street should be purchased by the Town Council. Further work may be needed on this topic.



- However, ideas were given and very varied responses for potential use of such a building reflecting broad needs.
- Responses regarding the Winterhay and West Crescent playparks highlighted a desire for a variety of equipment and also facilities such as bins and benches.
- A fitness trail is being planned and this is supported and identified in previous questions about new facilities. A range of equipment was highlighted which would offer variety for the user.
- A specific question was asked about the refurbishment of the tennis courts. Overall more people wanted the courts to be refurbished than not.



Older people:

In terms of what could be provided to support older people the most favoured responses involve getting together socially at a community centre/ social club, café or other meeting space.



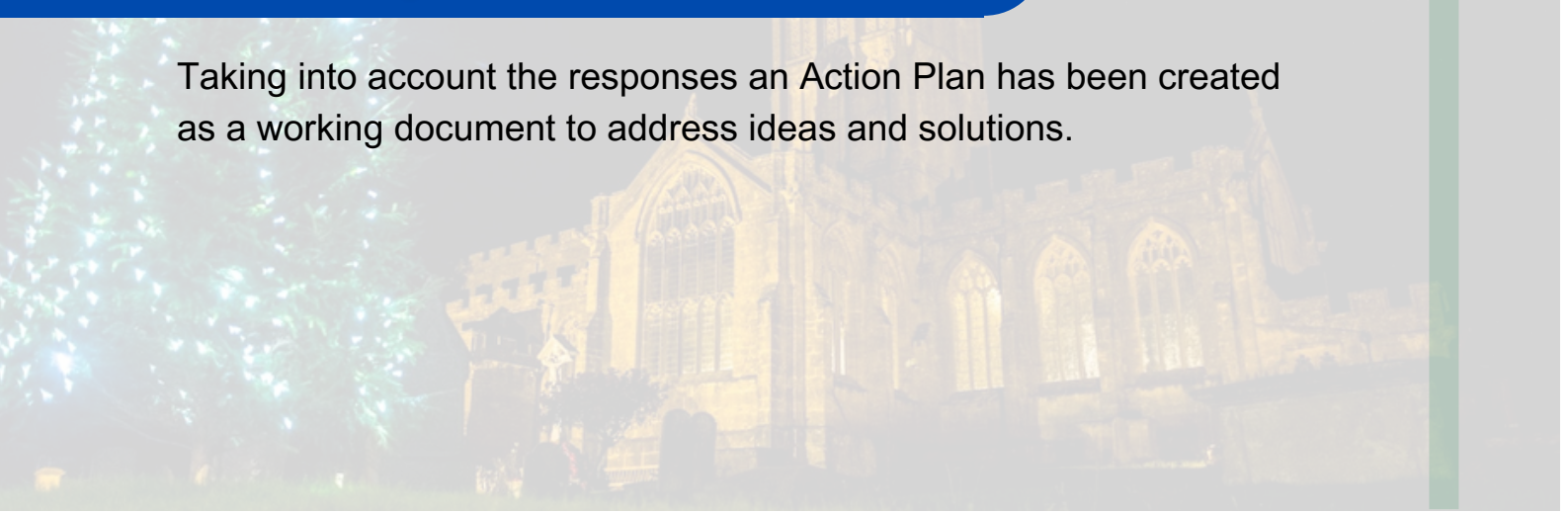
Children and Young People:

The responses to the questions in this section very much reflect the key issues raised throughout the survey. The need for improved football / sports facilities in Ilminster was highlighted as well as new facilities and activities such as a swimming pool, computer/games club, fitness trail and woodland adventure area. Barriers to young people engaging included nothing for specific age groups, parents work patterns, lack of information and cost of activities were all identified.



Next steps

Taking into account the responses an Action Plan has been created as a working document to address ideas and solutions.



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Community *Your future plan* Review

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