



Community Facilities Research



West Linton Community Council
and
Scottish Community Action Research Fund



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Background to the Proposal:

There is anecdotal evidence of pressure on space, size and lack of services which limits the activity of the many of the village groups and organisations. With a new house building programme scheduled it is vital that we define the needs and aspirations of residents of our changing community.

The Community Council agreed to volunteer their time to engage the community in this process to ensure that any future development meets specific needs and is sustainable.

Aim of research:

1. To use research methods that will include and involve stakeholders.
2. To discover the positive and negative experiences of local groups in their use of community facilities: to define what groups want to achieve and to find out if this is being compromised by the space they use. (Different groups will have different space requirements relating to numbers of members, levels of noise, need for storage, type of activities and so on.)
3. To identify what individual residents feel is missing locally and what the priorities in terms of facilities, services and activities are.

User Survey

A list of clubs and organisations was drafted and from the 49 user groups identified 36 responses were received.

The result of this survey establishes a perception amongst the users of halls and rooms within the village that the current space is inadequate for a vibrant and growing community such as West Linton.

- 33 Positive about a new community space
- 3 felt that existing space was adequate with some refurbishment and renovations.

Open Vision Event:

Of the 30 groups invited (6 respondents had indicated they did not want to take any further part in the project and it was assumed the non-returns felt likewise), 28 individuals attended representing 23 groups.

As well as offering an opportunity for general feedback, discussion on the day covered:

- Ownership and management
- Location
- Priority Facilities (There was mention of external space, mainly for sport)
- Size of a proposed building
- Vision for the project.

Residents Survey:

The survey was distributed widely around the village by the SCARF committee who hand delivered copies to each household. In addition to the volunteers returning to collect the completed forms, returns were also encouraged to the named contact's home or to any member of the Community Council. This extensive method resulted in a return of 328 completed surveys, 41.2 % of those distributed, slightly above the

target level. The analysis considers the data from each section of the survey and ends with a summary of key findings.

The largest proportion of people use village facilities weekly (29.6%) but there is a fair spread between weekly, monthly and yearly showing a range of kinds of groupings and organisations who need space.

Users of these facilities were asked to grade their general views of the spread of facilities in the village. It is clear the majority are not satisfied with current provision.

Reasons for these responses were requested and the vast majority of reasons recorded were negative or requests for improvements. They can be summarised as follows;

- too small for larger events
- too limited in terms of range of space
- this was linked to the potential growth of the village and projected increased demand
- not fit for purpose
- too inflexible
- need space for cultural and sport with appropriate adaptations
- old-fashioned
- drab and un-welcoming atmosphere
- poor heating
- no storage
- nothing appropriate for young people
- poor parking including for disabled

Having evaluated their reaction to existing facilities, people were asked their views on what would improve the life of the village. A direct question was asked whether people would, in general terms, support the development of an additional facility.

85% of those who responded to this question supported the idea. 8% did not.

Summary of Findings:

- 56% said they used local facilities. This is a relatively high proportion of the community showing a demand for community involvement
- In addition, this also indicates a significant margin for growth of usage.
- There is a clearly demonstrated view that facilities are either poor or only adequate (89%) and therefore a demand for better and more facilities in the village.
- The most common negative comment was related to the size of the facilities with a larger space needed that was welcoming and modern to attract young people, new residents and additional local users. This will ensure people do not go out of the village to use facilities.
- 85% of people who responded supported a new facility.
- Existing facilities should be maximised as well as plans for a new one.
- Activities for youth, older people and sport were the most demanded areas for new services.
- There was a feeling that any new hall should be managed by the local community

Findings and Recommendations:

- The community desires a new hall.
- The new hall should be large however it should also be flexible to allow different groups to use it at the same time (a form of acoustic partitioning is suggested).
- The new hall should be suitable for sports and keep fit and usable by all members of the community, regardless of age.
- The new hall should be bright and welcoming; it should have storage space and a community notice board.
- The new hall should be managed BY the community and to improve efficiency in space utilisation a central point of contact should be set-up to manage bookings for all halls in the village.