

Jacobs Wells Baths

Community Engagement Report

Prepared by PLACED
December 2025

PLACED



The Jacobs Wells Baths consultation sessions were made possible with The National Lottery Heritage Fund. Thanks to National Lottery players, we have been able to ensure stakeholder and community voices remain central to the development of the project.

Report Summary

On **20 and 21 November 2025**, PLACED delivered three engagement workshops to gather community feedback on the restoration of Jacobs Wells Baths, a Grade II Listed building. Trinity Community Arts are stewarding the Community Asset Transfer, and the project architects are Ph3.

A total of **34 people attended** the in-person workshops at Grain Barge, which included a site tour and structured co-design activities exploring spatial requirements, phased development priorities, and programming needs. An **online** survey complemented the workshops, attracting **70 responses**. In total, approximately **104 people** participated in the engagement, providing insights into how the venue could serve as a welcoming, accessible, and multi-functional cultural hub.

In-person Engagement Findings

Diverse activity programming

Participants proposed a wide range of activities across multiple functions. Some of these are regular weekly activities serving the immediate community, whereas others were seasonal or one-off, larger events.

Performance and cultural events received the highest number of suggestions, with a range of activities suggested. These included music events, dance and theatre productions, circus activities, art exhibitions, and film screenings.

Community groups and regular classes encompassing dance, yoga, Pilates, fitness activities, craft groups, and various workshops.

Training and skills development activities, health and wellbeing services, socialising / meeting in the café and specialist activities were also mentioned.

The frequent suggestions for youth and children's activities reflected strong demand for dedicated provision for children and younger people.

Functions including weddings and other private hire for events were also seen as opportunities.

Accessibility

Participants emphasised that accessibility and inclusivity need to be embedded from the outset. Lift access to all levels, disabled parking, accessible toilets with baby changing facilities, and breastfeeding friendly spaces were essential rather than optional features for many. Core accessibility features including level access, hearing loops, accessible toilets, and disabled drop-off facilities were fundamental to all activities were consistently emphasised.

Creating a welcoming space was important. This included having a friendly and knowledgeable team – including a duty manager and receptionist – from the beginning. A few participants emphasised that local volunteer opportunities and staff employment should reflect the venue's commitment to the community.

Throughout the workshop, participants emphasised that the venue should feel welcoming, friendly, and well serviced, supporting an ecosystem of complementary activities that would strengthen community engagement and create a sense of ownership amongst users.

Infrastructure and technical priorities

Some attendees highlighted that adequate storage, dedicated meeting rooms, staff facilities, basic operational provisions, loading provisions and consistent staffing were often overlooked operational necessities that would be critical for the venue's success. Whilst cost challenges were recognised, some participants felt that performance infrastructure that enabled flexibility was fundamental to the venue's core function and would enable more ambitious programming. This included requirements such as good acoustic treatment / soundproofing, blackout facilities, flexible stages, tiered or full raked seating, quality lighting, rigging points for weight-bearing equipment and music recording capabilities. Projectors and PA systems were also referenced. Some suggested high level production capacity and versatile in-house equipment as a longer-term ambition.

Additional specialist requirements were identified, such as sprung floors and mirrors for dance, aerial rigging for circus, and workspace with running water for arts activities. A café and community kitchen that would support programming and attract productions and events were suggested by many. Most participants felt that basic hospitality provision with comfortable, flexible seating and tables was a minimum for creating a welcoming environment. Whilst there should be some facilities operational from day one, many felt this could evolve over the years. A bar was suggested by some, although there were discussions about where this should be located. Longer term, facilities capable of mass catering would support larger community gatherings and events were suggested by some.

Spatial requirements

Participants envisioned the venue would need to accommodate multiple activities simultaneously. Attendees suggested corridors or multiple access points into key spaces to enable users to move between them without interrupting activity. The ability to change room functions quickly was highlighted as a priority.

Others mentioned that outdoor spaces, such as rooftop areas, could expand the venue's capacity.

Spatial vision and character

Participants envisaged distinct characters for different areas within the building. Many attendees felt the main hall should function as a highly versatile performance and events space, accommodating music events, dance classes, exhibitions, circus activities, and community programmes.

Several people commented that the South Room should serve as a welcoming entry point with café facilities, with example ideas including a book exchange and a small community shop.

Some participants suggested the North Rooms should cater for different scales of activity, with quieter spaces for smaller groups alongside larger areas for dining and fitness.

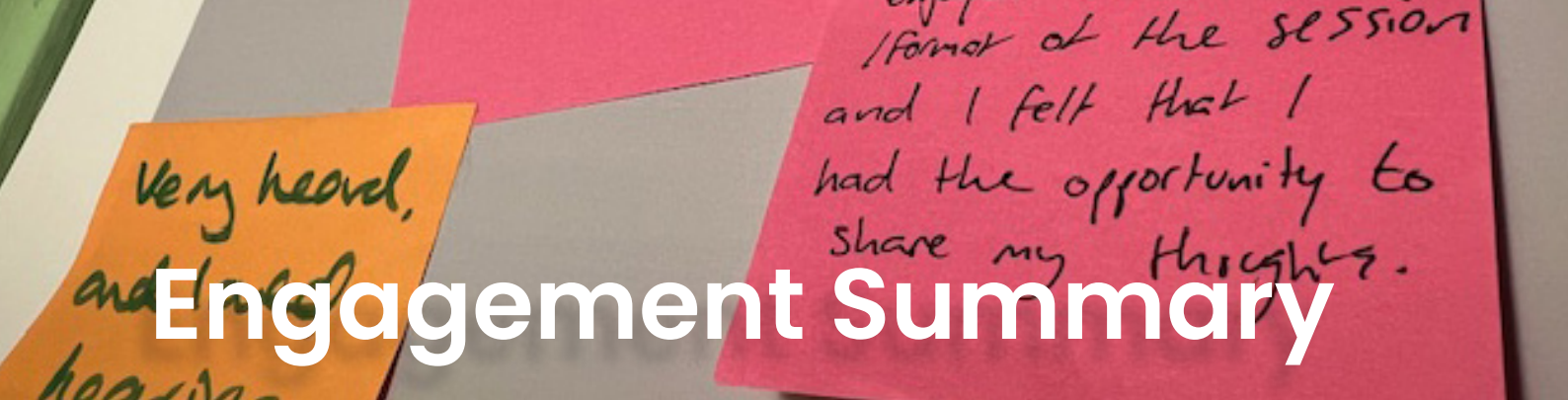
Attendees felt the Pump Room should offer flexibility, with suggestions including a climbing wall, bar, or cosy performance space.

“It's a mountain to climb but everyone getting equipped and visioning the beginning.”

- Workshop participant

“Excited for what it will add to Bristol as a community facility”

- Workshop participant



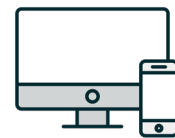
Engagement Summary

4 Engagement Events

3 STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOPS





1 ONLINE SURVEY



104 People engaged

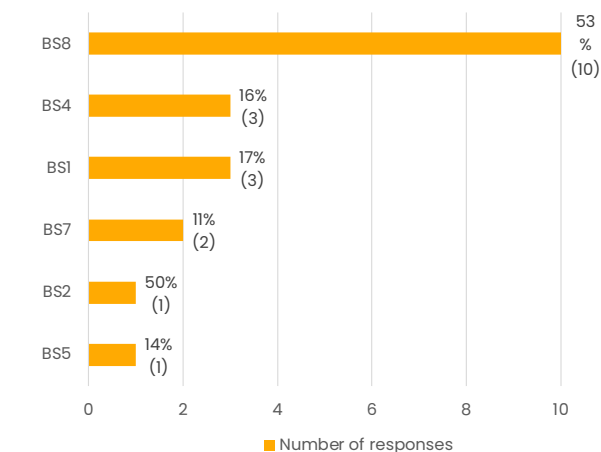


 = People engaged at stakeholder workshops (34)

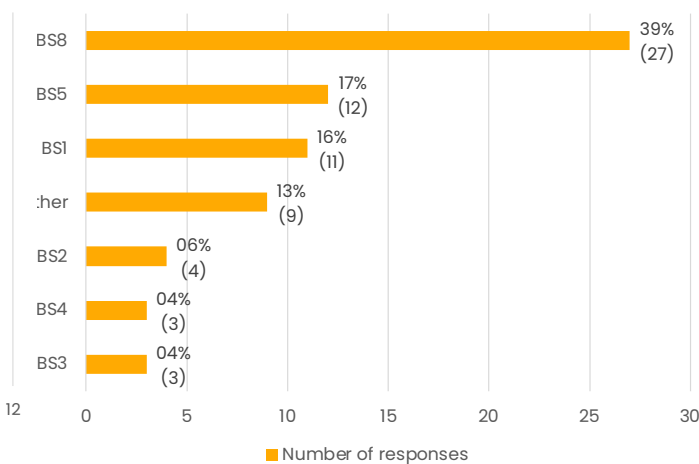
 = Online Survey (70)

Postcode

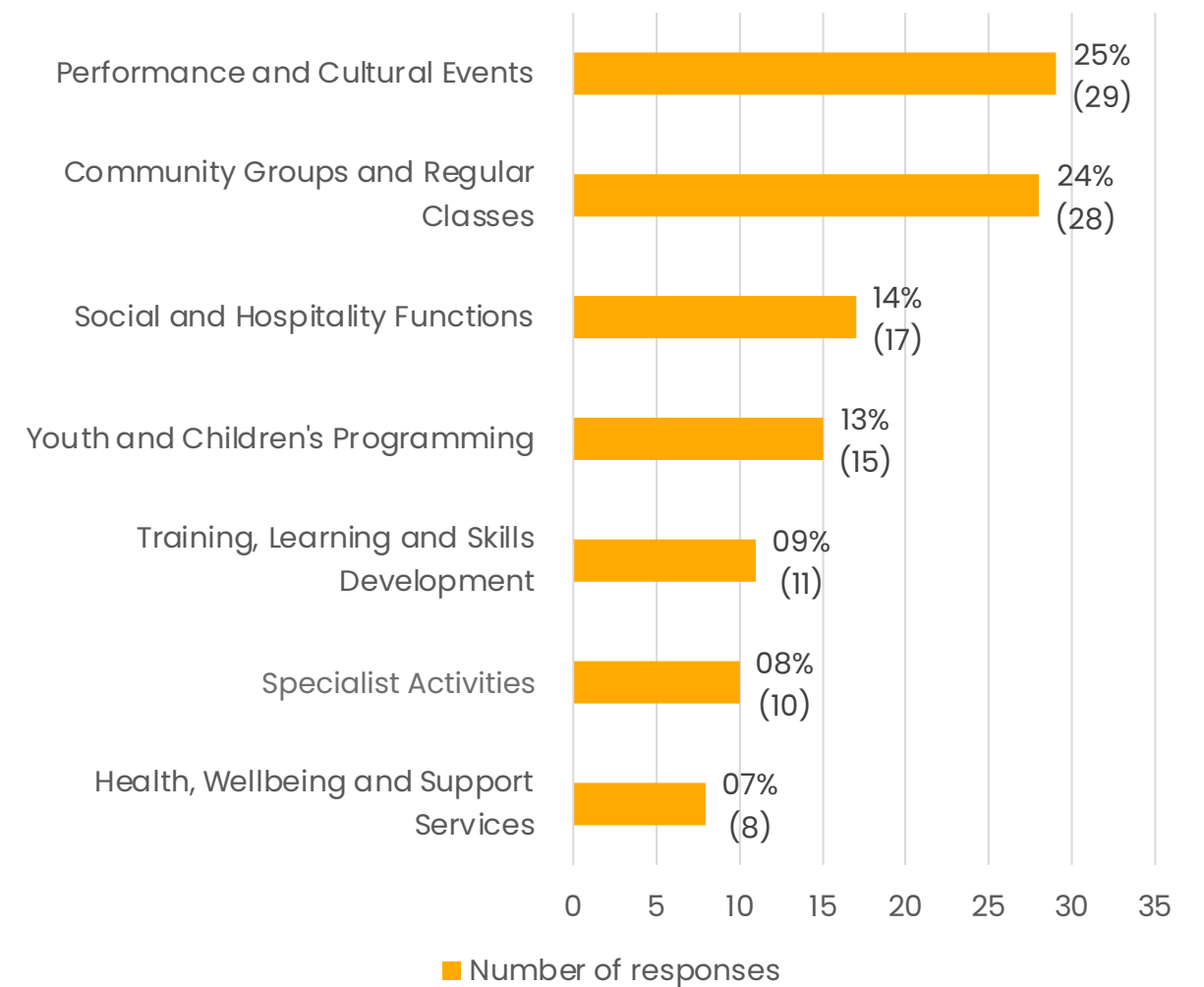
In-Person



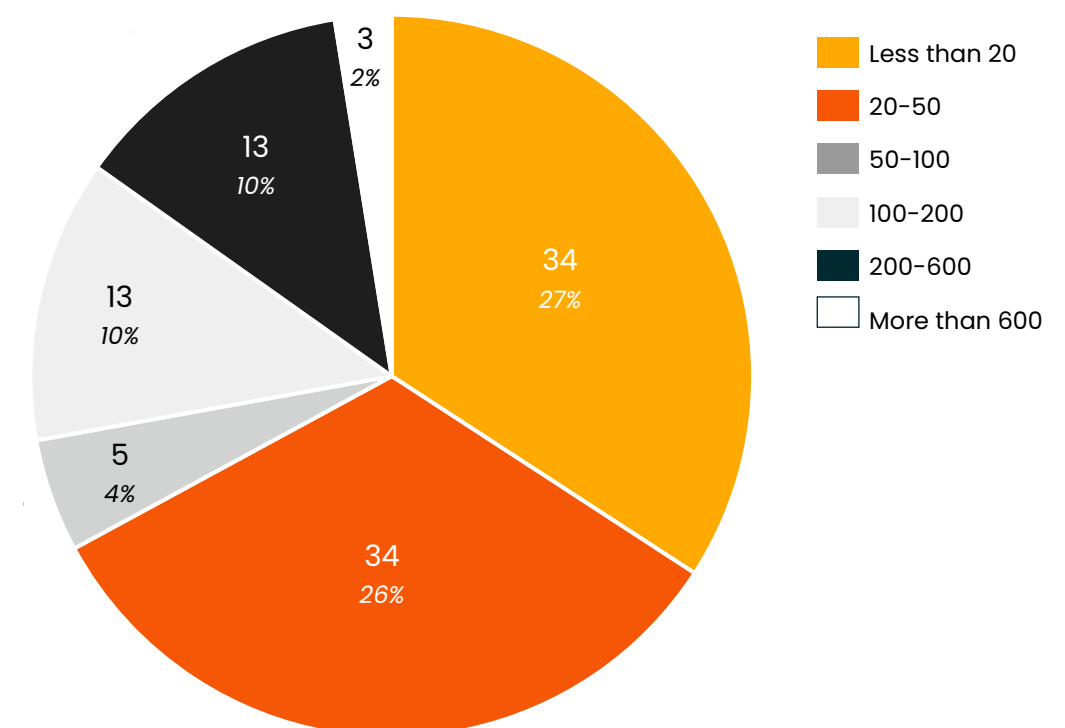
Online



What could the space be used for?



What the group size of the activities should be?



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