

Jacobs Wells Baths

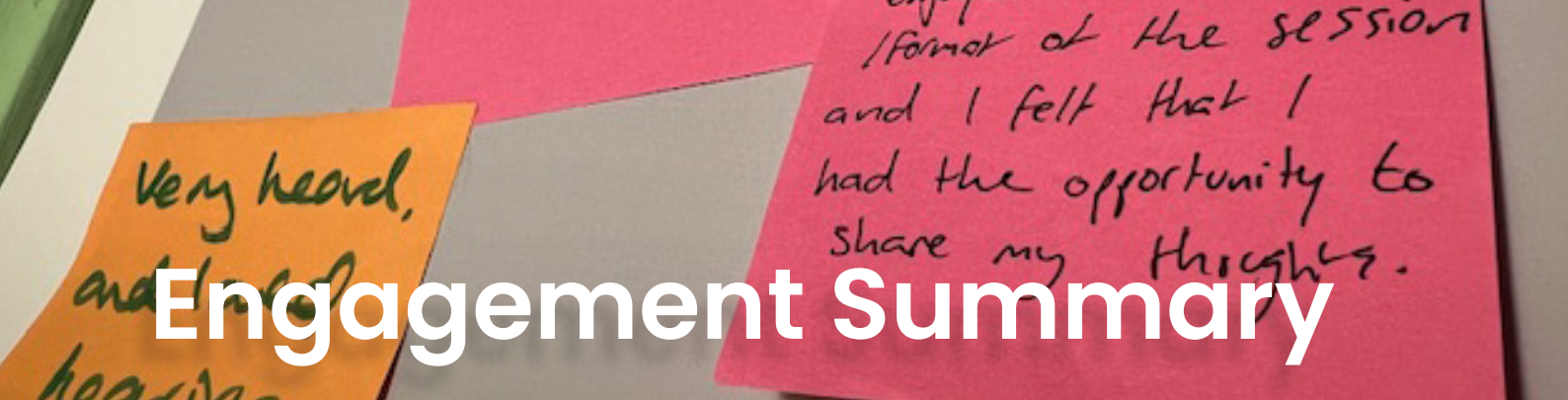
Community Engagement Report

Prepared by PLACED
December 2025

PLACED

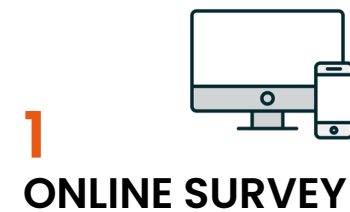


The Jacobs Wells Baths consultation sessions were made possible with The National Lottery Heritage Fund. Thanks to National Lottery players, we have been able to ensure stakeholder and community voices remain central to the development of the project.

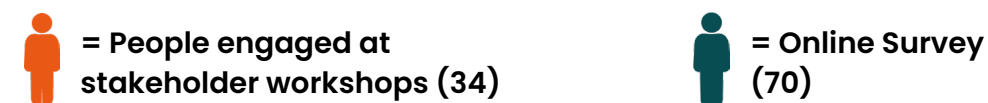


Engagement Summary

4 Engagement Events

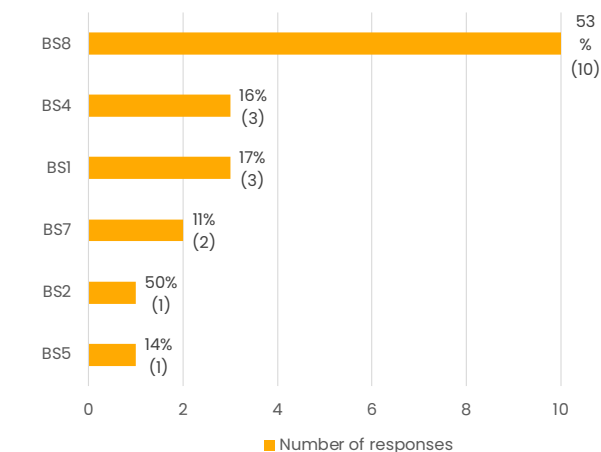


104 People engaged

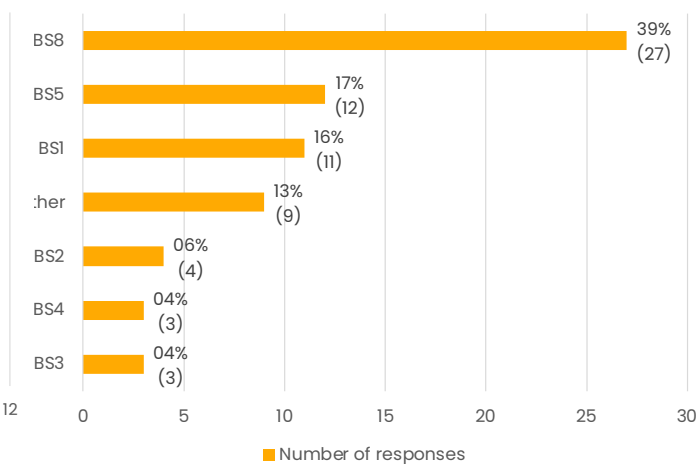


Postcode

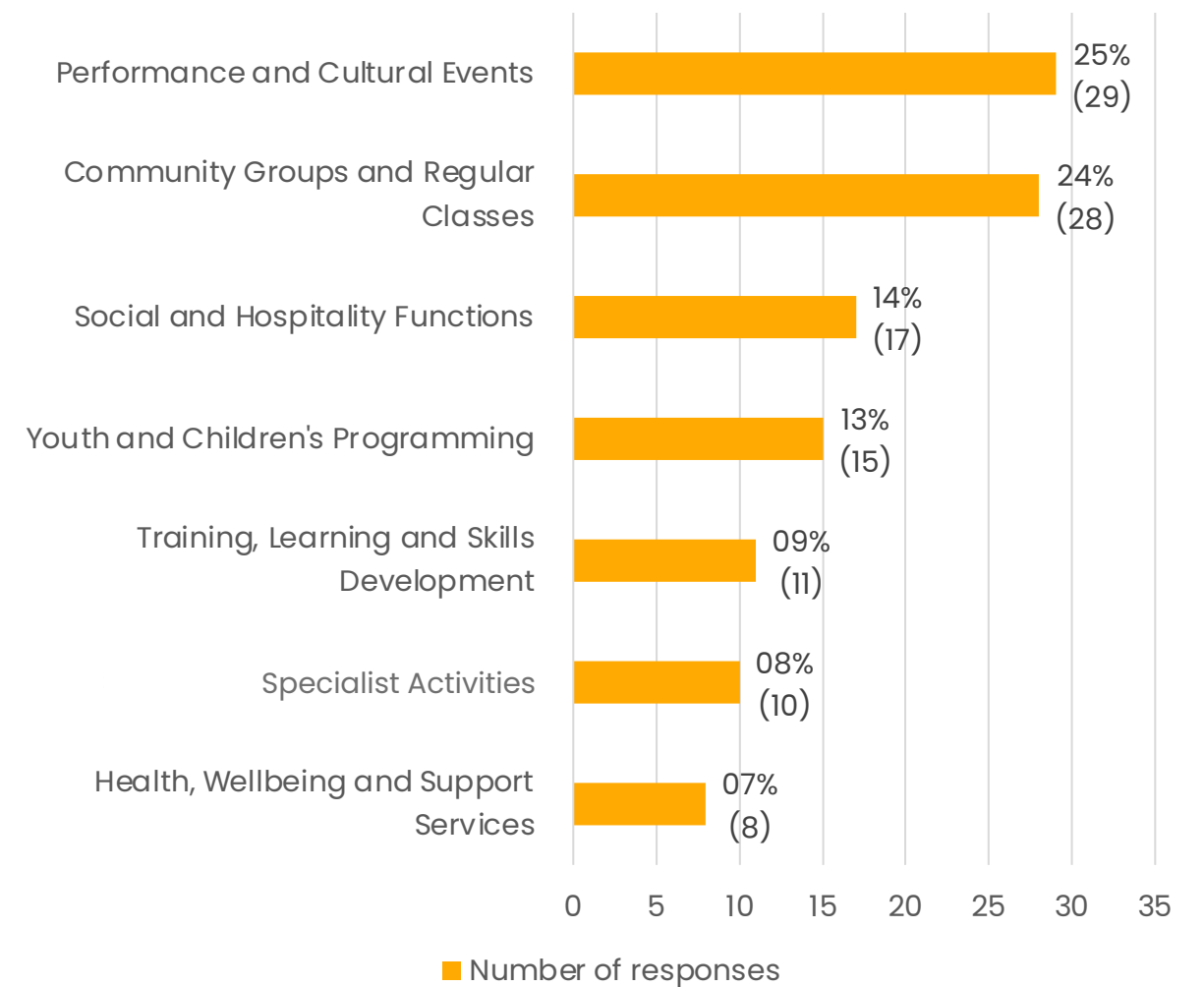
In-Person



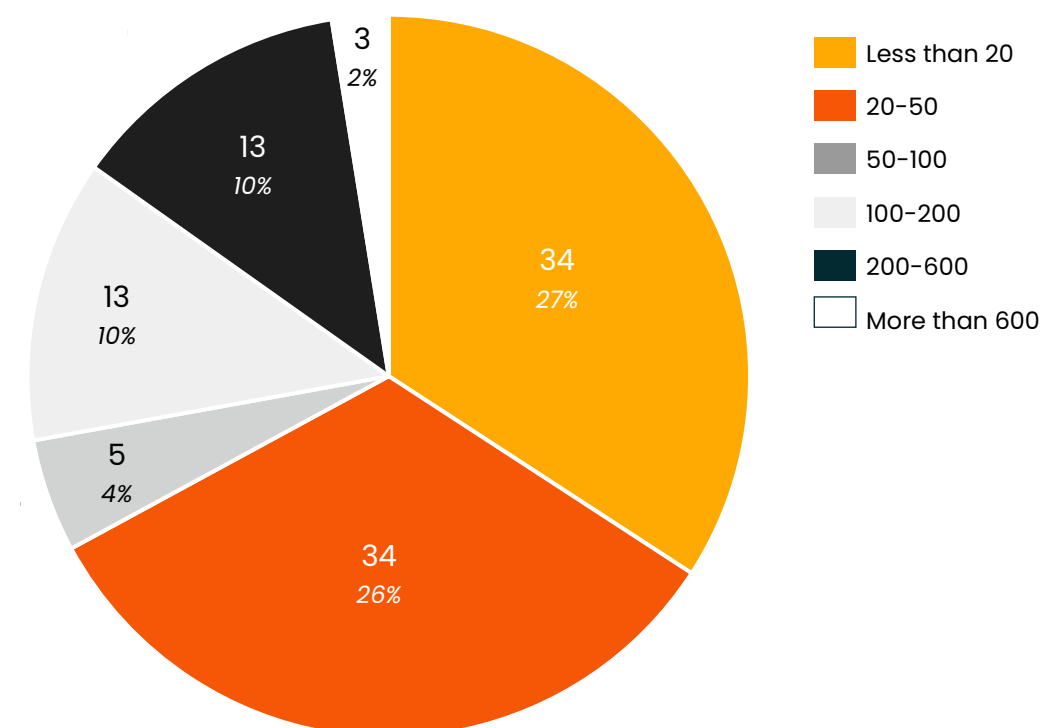
Online



What could the space be used for?



What the group size of the activities should be?



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

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Jacob Wells Baths Floor Plan
*Approximate capacities.
Not to scale.*



Introduction

Jacobs Wells Baths is a Grade II Listed community asset being preserved and restored with Trinity Community Arts stewarding the Community Asset Transfer.

Community engagement was undertaken to understand stakeholder aspirations and needs, build consensus around the building's evolution, and develop a phased approach that could flex according to available budget. Conversations were structured to feed into the emerging architectural designs being developed by Ph3, and support funding applications.

PLACED was commissioned to deliver engagement workshops to understand how the community and stakeholders envisaged using the building, what would be needed to make spaces functional, and how different activities could be programmed over time.

This report presents the findings from these workshop activities and reflects the community's vision for Jacobs Wells Baths as a welcoming, accessible, and multi-functional cultural hub for Bristol.

Engagement Overview

The Jacob Wells Baths engagement workshops took place on **Thursday 20 November and Friday 21 November 2025** to gather feedback from stakeholders and communities. PLACED delivered three workshops to engage various stakeholders to understand priorities for the building. Held at the Grain Barge, the workshops began with a building tour of Jacobs Wells Baths, allowing participants to understand the physical space and its potential. Attendees were then guided through a structured co-design process facilitated by PLACED, working in small groups to encourage collaboration. The workshop consisted of three key parts:

- Participants considered what activities they would like to see in the space, who would attend and when it would be delivered.
- Participants identified what the essential provision and ideal requirements were in the space to enable the activities to happen. They mapped these onto a timeline to establish development priorities.
- Finally, participants visualised their ideas by creating models, demonstrating how different activities could coexist within the building's various rooms.

Additionally, an online survey was compiled and circulated by Trinity Community Arts, complementing the in-person workshop by reaching an audience. Respondents indicated their interest in different types of activities, identified which features would make the venue attractive to them and indicated their view of the value of the space as a unique asset. This dual approach ensured that both detailed, collaborative broader understanding of stakeholder needs and aspirations for the venue.

Approximately **104 individuals** were engaged either through the workshops or online.

Demographic information

Stakeholder workshops

Total number of attendees: 34

- Thursday 20 November 2025, 1:00–4:00pm & 6:00–9:00pm
- Friday 21 November 2025, 9:30–12:30pm.

It is important to note that the demographic data presented here relates solely to those participants at the workshop who chose to provide this information.

Age

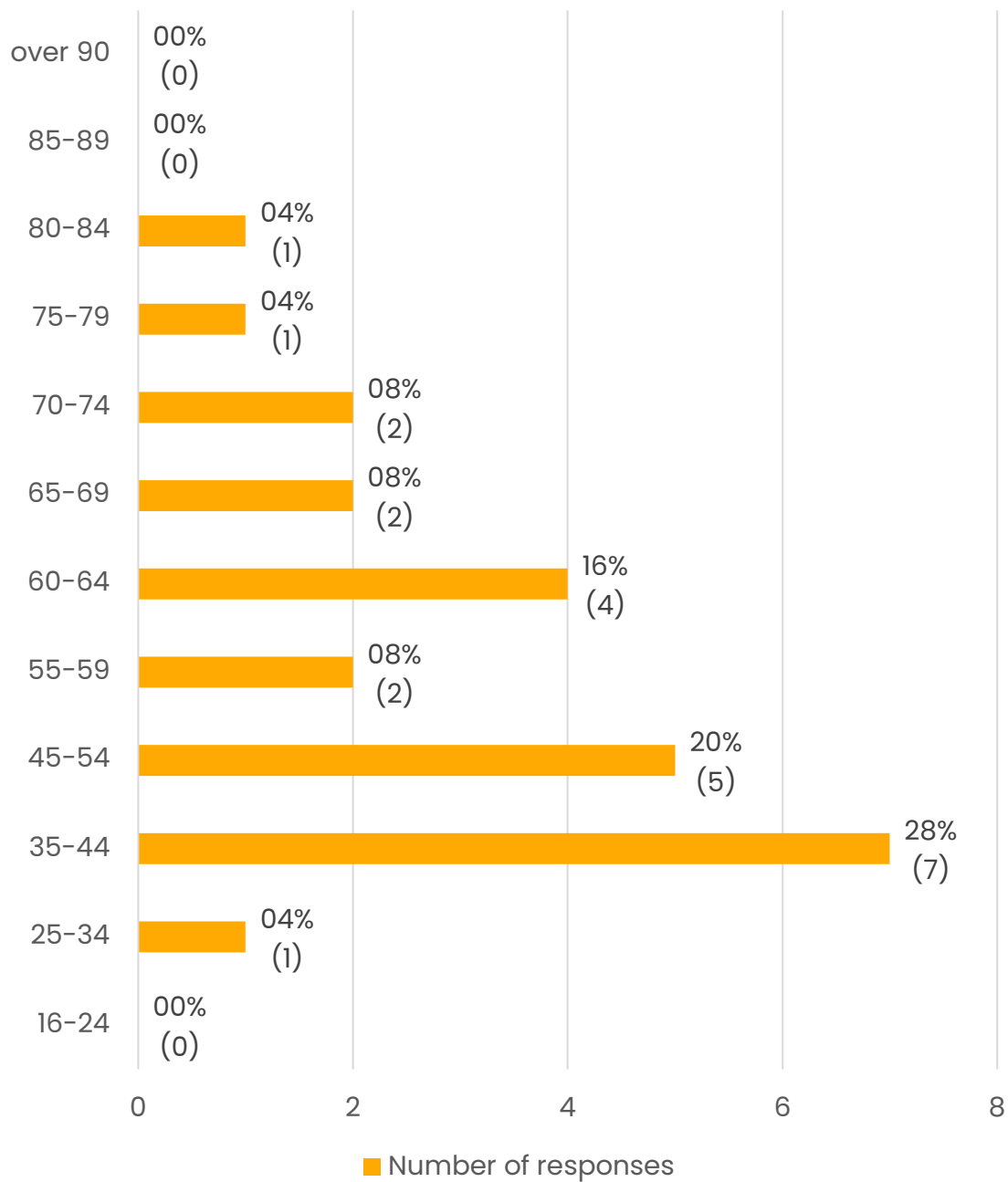


Chart 1: Above chart shows responses to the question 'What age bracket do you fit into?' Among the participants who choose to answer, the largest group of participants were those aged 35-44.

Ethnicity

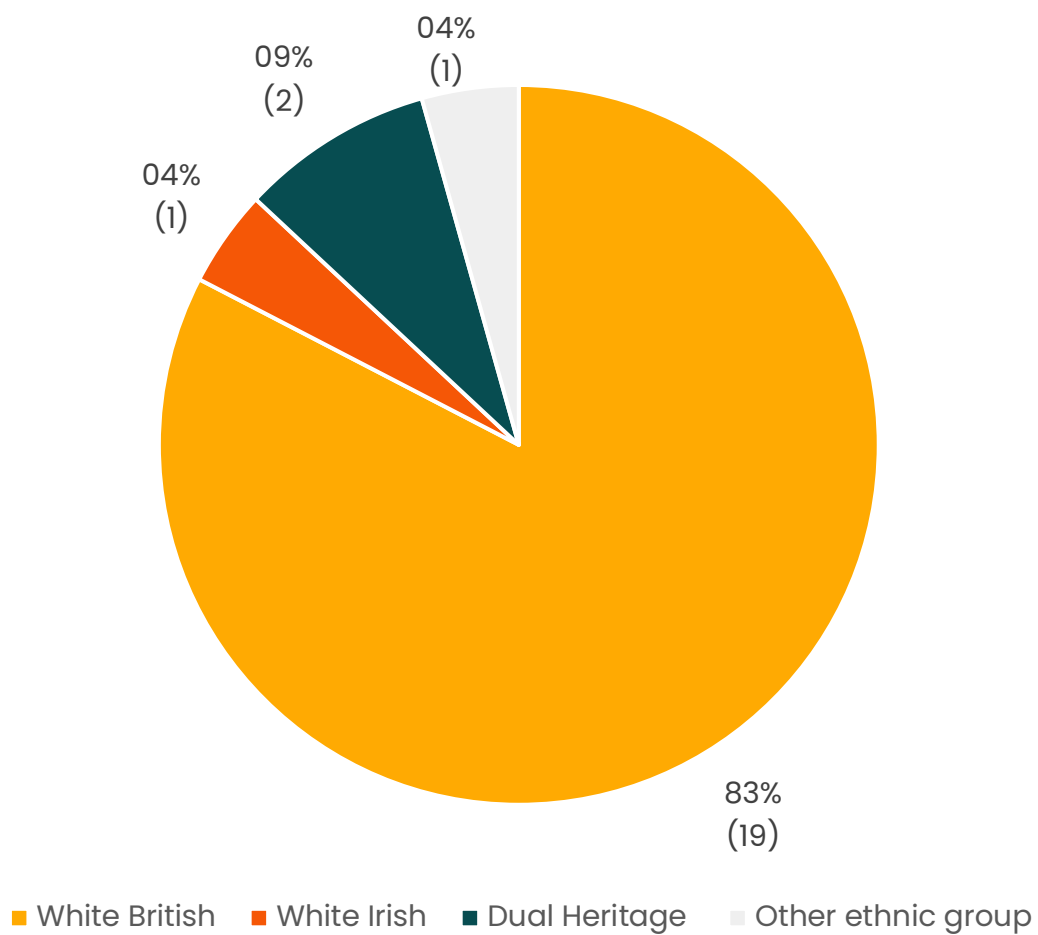


Chart 2: Above chart shows responses to the question 'What is your ethnicity group?' Most workshop attendees who answered the question were from 'White British' ethnic background.

Postcode

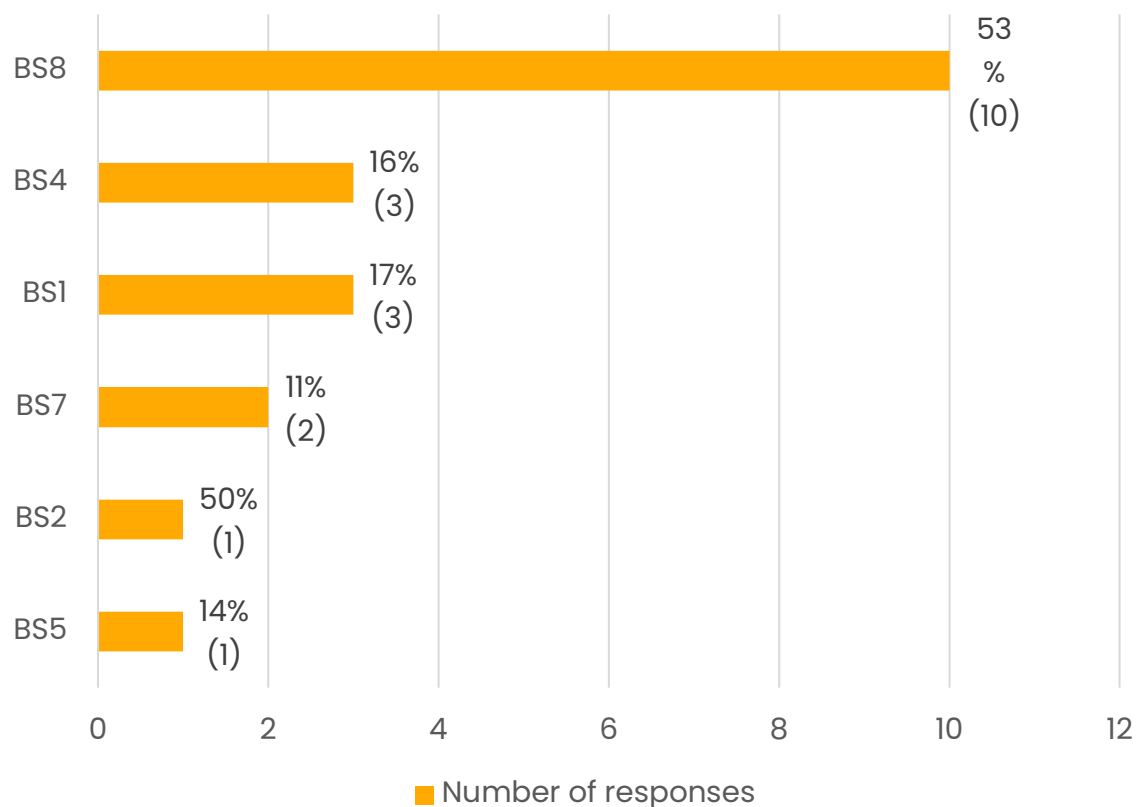


Chart 3: Above chart shows responses to the question 'What is the first part of your postcode?' Workshop attendees who choose to answer this question were mostly from BS8 post code.

Online engagement

Total number of respondents: 70

Demographic information was not collected as part of the online survey process, meaning the ethnic identity and age of contributors are unknown. The survey focused on specific community affiliations, gathering views about preferred activities, venue features, space preferences, and perceptions of the venue's potential value to the local area and Bristol.

What best describes you?

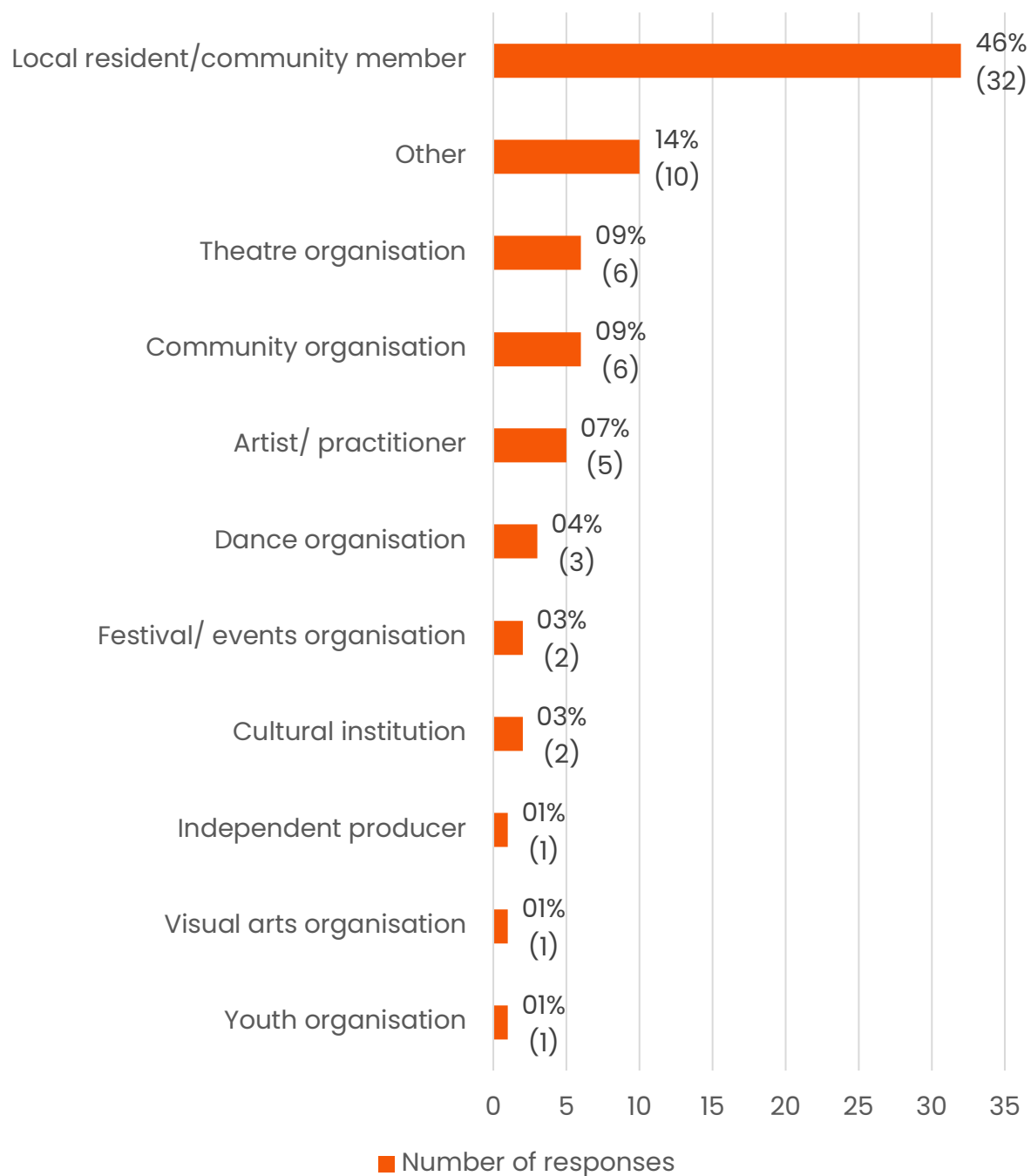


Chart 4: Above chart shows responses to the question 'What best describe you?' Most of the online responses selected Local residents or Community member.

What describes your organisation best (if applicable)?

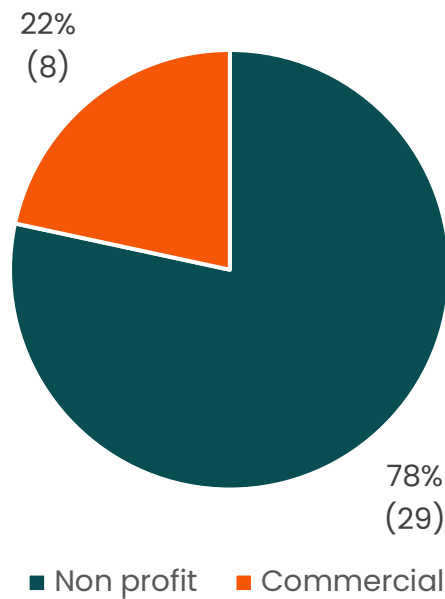


Chart 5: Above chart shows responses to the question 'What describes your organisation best?' Most online respondents were from non-profit organisations.

What is the first part of your postcode? (online)

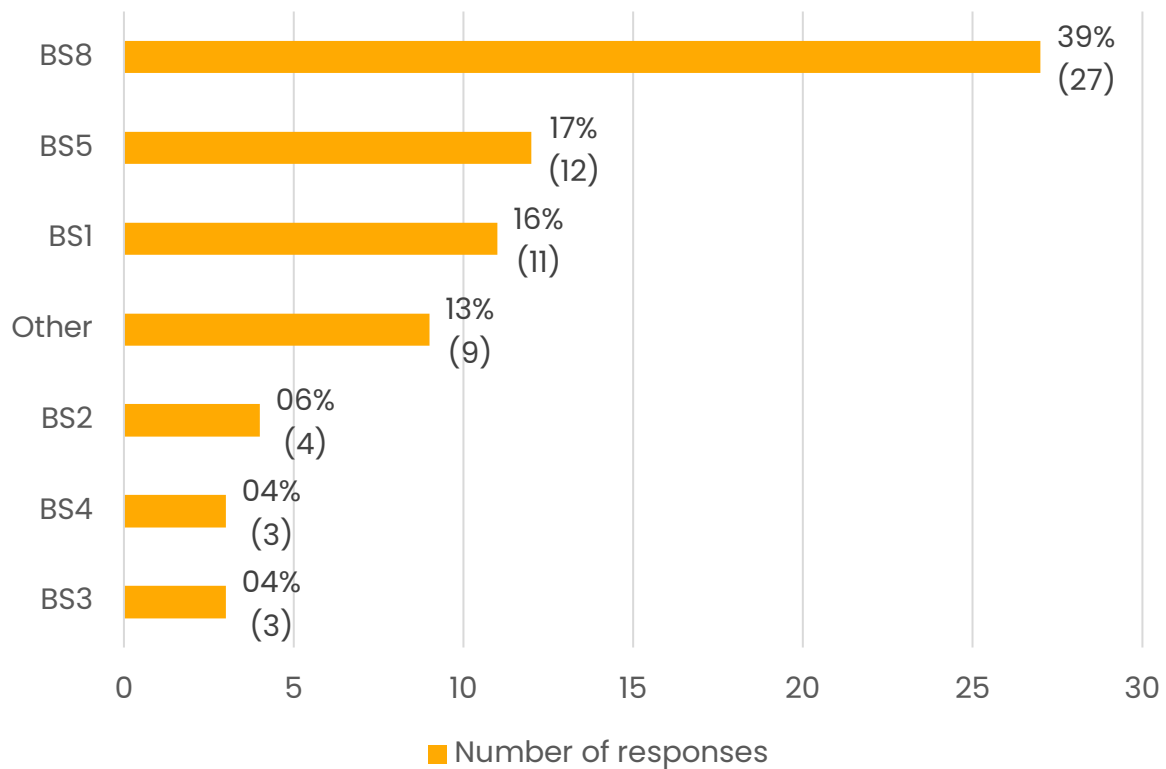


Chart 6: Above chart shows responses to the question ‘What is the first part of your postcode?’ Online attendees who choose to answer this question were mostly from BS8 post code.

Engagement Findings

The following are the common themes and comments received from the workshop. Ideas and comments have been grouped within charts to show common themes. It is important to note that this represents the views of only those who participated.

Throughout this report, the frequency of comments has been assessed to reflect the weight of opinion amongst participants. To provide clarity and context,

- When a suggestion was mentioned by more than 40% of participants, phrases such as ‘many participants / attendees’ is used.
- For comments raised by approximately 20–40% of participants, terms like ‘several’ people is used.
- When comments came from approximately 10–20%, phrases such as ‘some’ participants or attendees is used.
- For ideas or suggestions raised by fewer than 10% of participants, language such as ‘a few’ participants or ‘a small number of’ attendees is applied.

This approach is to ensure that the report reflects the relative weight of different opinions and priorities within the engagement activities, making it clear which themes generated broad consensus, and which represented individual perspectives, whilst maintaining readability and ensuring the language remains relatable and contextual to this specific project.

‘Inspirational’, ‘Excited’

- Workshop participants

Workshop findings

What could the space be used for?

Participants were asked to consider what activity they would like to see delivered in Jacob Wells. This included considering what the activity would be, when it would be, who would attend. They were then invited to map out how activities could take place within the framework of a weekly programme.

Activity type

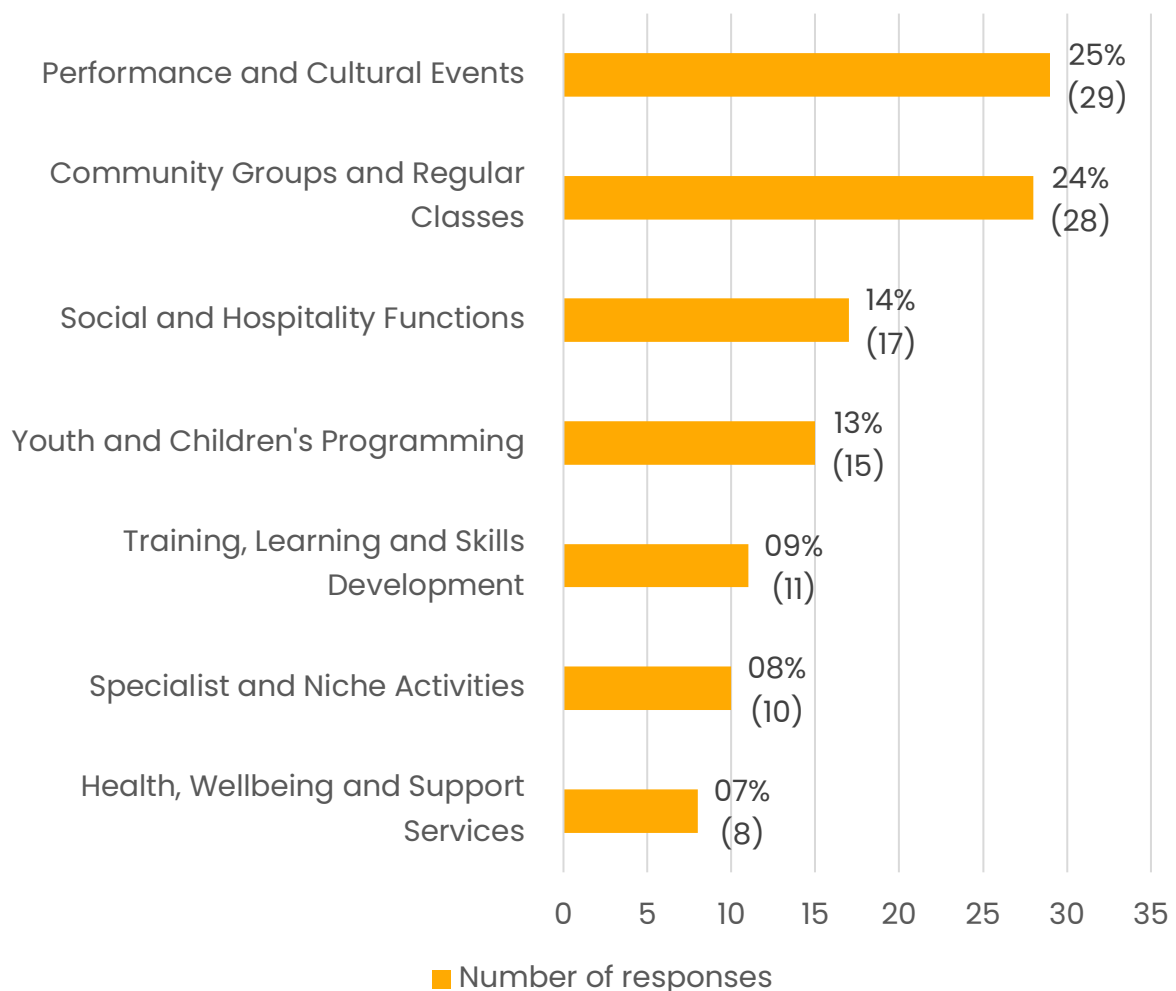


Chart 7: Above chart shows responses to the question 'What activities people would like to see at Jacob Wells Baths?' The most frequently mentioned performance and cultural events followed by community activities and classes.

Performance and cultural events

A broad range of performance-based events were identified. This includes music, dance performances, theatre productions, film screenings, circus activities, poetry competitions, children's theatre shows and physical performance. A few participants mentioned art exhibitions and installations.

Participants noted that performance spaces could host local, national, and international acts. Some specifically highlighted that independent producers, musicians, and theatre practitioners should have access to affordable rehearsal and performance space.

A few people commented that the venue could accommodate events such as rave nights, balls, and alternative cultural events.

Others suggested that local history talks, photography shoots using the building as a location, and film or video screening could diversify the programme.

Community groups and regular activities

A significant number of participants reported that the venue should support regular community group activities and meetings.

Many attendees mentioned fitness activities that would appeal to various age groups including dance classes, yoga sessions, Pilates classes, and judo classes for toddlers and adults, and healthy activity sessions.

Others felt that consultation and public meetings, community workshops, and markets would strengthen civic engagement. Some suggested craft groups, book clubs, and creative co-working spaces for artists.

A few attendees mentioned business breakfast sessions, conferences and talks with speakers as valuable programming.

Some people commented that drop-in coffee mornings and stay-and-play sessions would support informal community building.

Youth offerings

Several attendees suggested youth sessions focusing on mental health, dance, and community activities, youth clubs, homework support, and gaming opportunities for older young people. A few felt that afterschool clubs and coding lessons would provide educational value.

Some participants commented that mum and toddler groups, children's parties, and Saturday film or play clubs would serve younger families.

Social and hospitality functions

Several attendees mentioned weddings, birthday parties, and private hire opportunities as key opportunities.

Some commented that a café should operate as an open, accessible social space where people could meet informally, and mentioned that affordable coffee and snacks should be available throughout the day. Some felt that bar services for functions and celebrations would be necessary.

A few participants suggested that warm drop-in spaces – including space to sit for free – for reducing isolation, meeting people and working from laptops would support flexible community use.

Learning and skills development

A wide range of skill-based activities were suggested, including adult classes in music, dance, writing, and art. Others suggested business training and skills sessions, public speaking training and crime prevention workshops. Others felt offers such as training in circus skills and rehearsal space for performers would enhance the venue's educational offering.

A few participants mentioned networking events, artist gatherings, and professional development opportunities would support creative practitioners.

Health and wellbeing

Some attendees mentioned health drop-in sessions and group wellbeing initiatives, including mental health support for youth.

A few people commented that the space could support older people's activities and meetings for people living locally or experiencing loneliness.

Some participants suggested that community-day takeovers and cultural gatherings would strengthen social cohesion and wellbeing.

Group size of activities

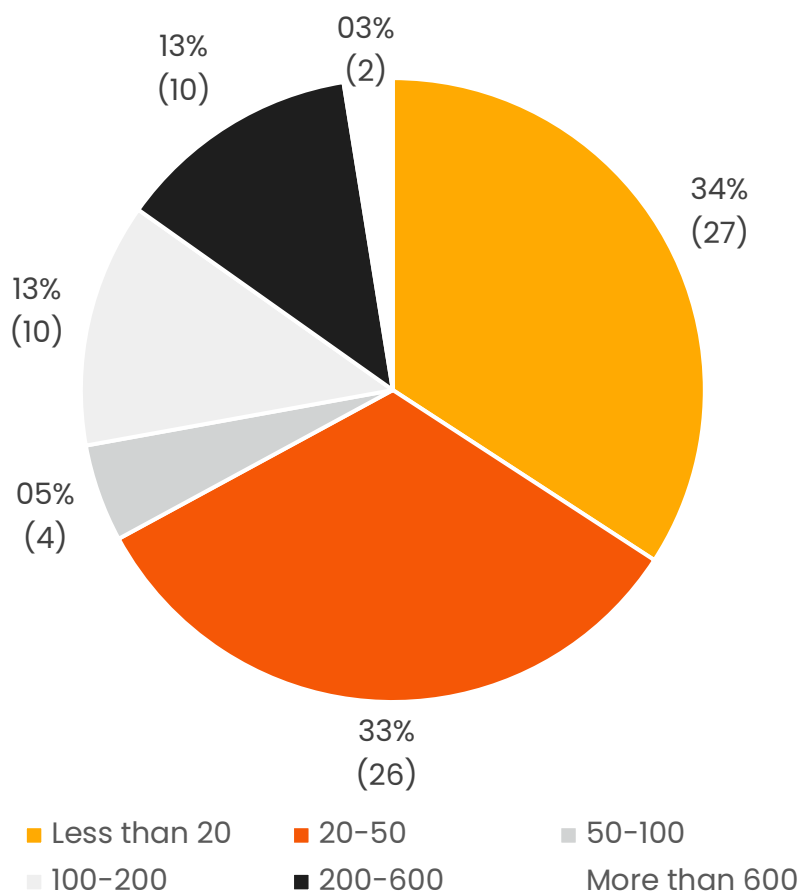


Chart 8: Above chart shows responses to the question ‘What would be the size of groups participating in the activity?’ The most voted option by participants were 2-50 groups size activities.

Essential provisions for activities

Accessibility and amenities

Participants mentioned that level access, hearing loops, and data projectors were necessary as standard.

Several people commented that accessible and non-gendered toilets, disabled drop-off facilities, and inclusive spaces were required throughout. Some highlighted the need for safe, accessible changing facilities and baby changing areas, whilst others felt that storage for pushchairs and personal belongings was important.

Several attendees reported that heating, cooling, and water access were basic requirements that needed to be reliable across all spaces.

Flexible spaces and technical equipment

Many attendees mentioned that projectors, PA systems, microphones, speakers, and Bluetooth connectivity, AV equipment, and Wi-Fi connectivity were necessary for activities like meetings, presentations, and film screenings.

Several people commented that lighting equipment, including adjustable and blackout capabilities, sound systems, and 360-degree sound, box office facilities, and security systems, would enhance performance quality. It was identified that stewardship support would be needed for larger events.

Many mentioned that dance activities required sprung floors, mirrors, barres, and adequate space for dynamic movement. Comments included that safe, clean floors with good acoustic properties were essential for various physical activities.

Some attendees suggested that reformers or mats were necessary for Pilates classes, whilst others felt that storage for equipment such as yoga mats was important.

A few participants felt that aerial rigging, vinyl mats, poles, and crash mats were needed for circus and acrobatic work. Others mentioned that art activities required large tables, art resources, running water, and exhibition space.

Hospitality needs

People commented that café spaces, bar facilities, and catering kitchens would support both casual socialising and formal events and would also encourage informal community use. Many felt that tables, chairs, and access to hot drinks, tea, and coffee were fundamental requirements.

A few attendees highlighted that hospitality areas where parents could wait, with access to refreshments, would be particularly valuable. Others mentioned that kitchen equipment, food preparation areas, and delivery access were necessary for catering functions.

Operational and storage needs

Several participants mentioned that adequate storage for resources, equipment, and materials was essential for regular users. Others mentioned that loading bays, bike storage, and breakout spaces would support diverse operational needs.

Some people commented that dedicated meeting rooms, small rehearsal spaces, and private rooms without walk-through access were needed for certain activities. A few participants felt that dressing rooms, costume storage, and changing areas were important for performance activities.

Some attendees emphasised that having the right staff consistently present, along with reception facilities and organisational support from residents and housing associations, was fundamental to the venue's success.

Activities frequency

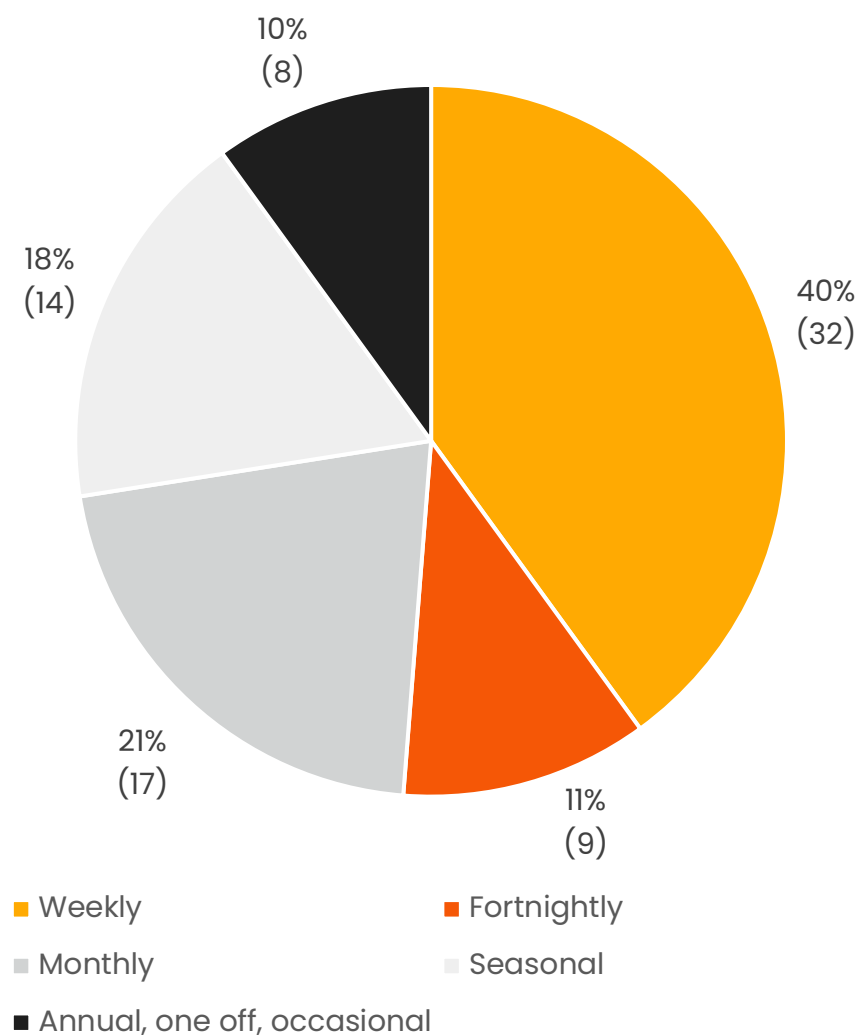


Chart 9: Participants were asked to consider when activities could happen, and how frequent these activities would be. Above chart shows suggested frequency of the activities. Weekly activities were the most voted options by participants.

Activities time

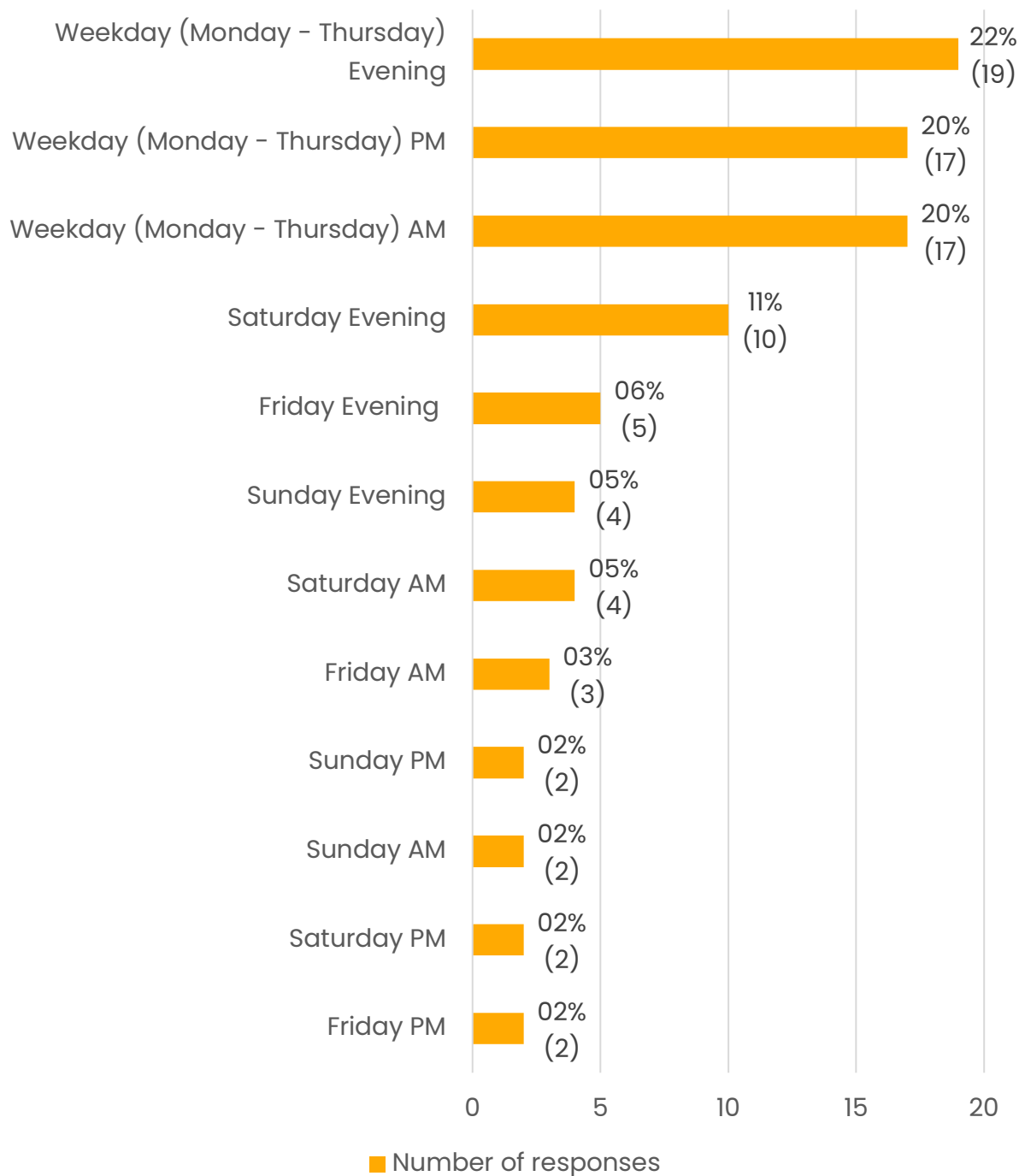


Chart 10: Above chart shows suggested timing of the activities. Participants mentioned several numbers of weekday activities for residents and communities.

What is needed for the space and prioritisation

Once participants had identified the activities they wanted to see delivered in the building, they were asked to consider what would be needed to enable activities to be delivered.

Whilst the previous activity saw many needs identified, they were not prioritised. This activity was therefore intended to look at practical requirements in more detail and encourage people to consider what the 'minimum' requirements were for the space to operate, through to the 'ideal' at a timeframe suggested as ten years in the future.

The following is therefore intended to help inform the evolution of the building and prioritisation of investment.

Day 1 Requirements: What is needed from when the building opens

Staffing and operations

Some attendees reported that a duty manager and receptionist should be in place from day one, with others suggesting that a bookings manager would be essential.

Several people felt that volunteers could be incentivised through a credit system that could be spent at the venue.

A few participants mentioned that staff facilities, including a staff room, meeting room, kitchen, and toilets, needed to be provided.

Accessibility and inclusivity

Participants emphasised that full accessibility needed to be in place from the outset. Many highlighted the importance of lift access to all levels, disabled parking available directly from the street, and viewing points throughout the venue.

Several people commented that toilets should cater for diverse communities and guests. Some participants mentioned the need for baby changing facilities and breast-feeding friendly spaces, along with buggy parking.

The consensus amongst those who raised accessibility was that disabled access was essential rather than optional.

Hospitality and social spaces

A significant number of participants felt that café and bar facilities should be operational from day one, and that these spaces should be open to the public.

The importance of affordable pricing for both food and events was highlighted.

A few participants mentioned that a community kitchen would be beneficial for hosting parties and events.

Some suggested a dedicated space where parents could wait for their children when at activities.

A few attendees commented that the venue should accommodate both café and performance functions as primary uses of the space, with these being flexible spaces to suit different needs.

Performance and activity infrastructure

Those who discussed performance requirements spoke of the need for flexible seating arrangements, with some suggesting basic chairs that could be rearranged as necessary in the short-term.

Several attendees highlighted the importance of good acoustic treatment and blackout facilities combined with quality lighting. A small number of participants commented that mirrors, barres, and appropriate lighting were essential for dance spaces. Some people felt that rigging points for weight-bearing equipment would be important from the outset.

Aesthetic and environmental features

Attendees felt that nice décor, flexible lighting, and attractive plants would create a welcoming environment.

Participants commented that the building should look inviting and friendly from the outside, with some suggesting that internal lighting could signal activity to passers-by.

A few people mentioned the importance of heating and cooling systems, with some specifically suggesting underfloor heating. Others reported that lighting design should prioritise maximum flexibility.

Practical facilities and storage

Some attendees mentioned that storage lockers like those found in museums would be useful. Others highlighted the need for storage space for craft clubs and activities.

Several people commented that a cleanable floor with appropriate cleaning equipment was necessary. Some attendees mentioned that equipment such as mats for yoga would be needed.

A few participants felt that a sink for art activities would be valuable.

Information and communication

Some attendees commented that free Wi-Fi provision was important, whilst others mentioned that technology equipment such as laptops, projectors, and white walls for projection would be needed.

A small number of participants suggested that a large chalkboard displaying 'what's on' information would be helpful for visitors.

Around 2 Years

Design quality

Some attendees felt that – even by this stage – the venue should be aspiring to become a cultural landmark for Bristol. A few participants commented that the design should blend the best of the old with the best of the new, suggesting that the heavy, formal masonry of the Victorian building could provide a backdrop for modern, light, decorative structures and stage sets.

Attendees felt that the entrance should be welcoming with minimal barriers between the building and street.

Venue capacity and multi-use functionality

Participants reported that by year two, the venue needed to accommodate full capacity events, with several emphasising the importance of sufficient toilets for larger gatherings.

Participants felt that the ability to change the function of spaces quickly would be important, whilst others highlighted that multiple rooms for simultaneous rehearsals would be valuable.

Many commented that spaces should be capable of being used simultaneously, with some suggesting that multiple access points were necessary so visitors would not need to pass through one event to reach another. Some reflected on the importance of private spaces which did not enable people to pass through.

Performance and creative spaces

Some attendees suggested that by this stage, more specialised facilities could be developed, including music recording capabilities and raked seating options. Several commented that a flexible stage with tiered seating would be useful for events from film clubs to live performances. Others felt that rigging points and full blackout facilities with projection capabilities were needed. A few mentioned that, alternatively, hiring raked seating and lighting equipment would be an option.

One participant suggested that a climbing wall could be an interesting addition.

Acoustic and technical infrastructure

Those who discussed acoustic requirements reported improved sound management and soundproofing between spaces would be needed as usage increased. Some participants also mentioned the importance of addressing hard reflective surfaces and implementing hearing loops.

Storage facilities and access for equipment

Many participants emphasised that accessible, easy-to-reach storage would be increasingly important for regular users such as yoga and Pilates classes.

A few people commented that washing-up spaces for crafts would be valuable.

Several participants noted that the venue should be easy to access for loading and unloading sets and equipment and that parking and loading spaces would be necessary.

Community and hospitality

A significant number of participants felt that the café should continue to develop as a community hub, with some suggesting it could also function as a working kitchen that could be used by various groups.

Several attendees reported that a dedicated community kitchen with tables and workspace would support social events and that a gathering space or bar for when people arrived would create a welcoming atmosphere.

Some participants expressed that it would be ideal if there were spaces – such as the café – that the local communities could use free of charge.

Accessibility

Participants commented that accessibility should extend beyond basic provision, and include level access and hearing loops.

Several participants highlighted the importance of clarity in how to navigate and use the space.

Dedicated / private spaces

A few specifically mentioned the need for a prayer space or private room. Several participants commented that these private spaces should have their own toilet facilities.

Others felt that dedicated spaces for specific activities, such as performance halls with mirrors, would enhance the venue's offering.

A small number of participants mentioned that outdoor spaces, such as rooftop areas, could be developed by this stage to expand the venue's capacity and appeal.

Several people emphasised that the spaces should be community-focused and youth-focused.

‘Elated and grateful of the organisations that are leading this feel confident it’s going to be brilliant for the city’

- Workshop participant

Around Five Years

Cultural development

Participants envisaged that by year five, the venue should have established itself as a cultural hub for arts and performances.

A few people commented that the venue should support local volunteer opportunities and staff employment, reflecting its commitment to the area.

Enhanced technical and production capabilities

Several participants reported that high-level production capacity and versatile rigging systems should be developed by this stage. Others mentioned that improved technical capacity overall would be necessary to support more ambitious programming.

Some suggested that in-house equipment would be beneficial, reducing reliance on external hires.

Participants emphasised that soundproofing would become increasingly critical as the venue hosted multiple simultaneous events. Some attendees felt this would be essential for maintaining quality experiences across different spaces.

Seating and space configuration

Some participants commented that full-space raked seating could be considered by year five, offering greater flexibility for performances and events, and suggested that this infrastructure would enhance the venue's ability to host professional productions.

Catering and hospitality expansion

Several people felt that kitchen facilities should be capable of mass catering by this point, supporting both regular café operations and the ability of the venue to host larger community gatherings and celebrations.

Community programming

A small number of attendees suggested that craft clubs and other regular activities should be well-established features in the programme by year five.

Additional facilities

A few participants mentioned that shower facilities for public use, staff, and performers could be considered, though this was noted as desirable rather than essential.

Some people suggested that temporary staying facilities and local market opportunities might be explored as the venue's role in the community evolved.

Ten Years: Developing a long-term vision

Income generation

Participants felt that by year ten, the venue should prioritise features that maximised income generation. For example, several people felt retractable seating would offer the greatest opportunity for generating revenue through increased versatility. Some commented that a removable stage could reduce the need for permanent raked seating, offering similar benefits.

Advanced technical infrastructure

Some participants suggested that a motorised truss systems would represent a significant upgrade to the venue's technical capabilities. A few attendees mentioned that theatre lighting rigs in smaller spaces would enhance programming options. Others felt that blackout blinds on roof spaces would enable theatrical performances in areas with natural light.

Hospitality enhancement

A small number of participants envisaged that a rooftop bar could be developed by this stage, offering both a unique venue feature and an additional revenue stream.

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

- Workshop participant



Photos taken by:
Shamphat pro
Instagram [@shamphat](https://www.instagram.com/shamphat)
Website <https://www.shamphat.co.uk/>

What will the space look like? Modelling the vision.

After thinking about what they wanted to happen in the space, and considering the requirements of activities, participants worked in groups to create visions of the space, before sharing with other attendees.

The following is a summary of the ideas communicated through the models and associated presentations across the three sessions.

Main hall

Models showed the space as a highly versatile space capable of accommodating multiple uses. Models suggested it should host music events, dance studios and classes, circus performances, sporting events, and other performances.

There was discussion as to whether there would need to be a bar in this space. Some felt it was essential, whereas others thought spillages and associated smells would be a deterrent to other activities e.g., children's dance classes.

Movable levels and pulleys, raked seating, and a stage were featured in several models, with participants feeling these would be valuable features for theatrical performances.

Some participants explored how the space could be divided, with one suggesting rigging provided opportunities for suspending fabric would make it more flexible. Another suggested using Japanese-style space dividers.

Other activities shown through models included children's physical activity programmes, community activities and an exhibition area for art installations.

One suggested that a climbing wall could be incorporated.

South room

Models showed the south room as a welcoming entry point to the venue and as a space for hospitality. Some attendees suggested it should feature café tables and operate as a coffee and snack space, whilst others mentioned it could include a reception desk. A few people felt it should combine café and bar functions to serve different times of day and types of events.

Model Ideas included plants, a book exchange or small shop. Presentations highlighted that this space should act as a meeting place to draw people into the building, creating an inviting first impression.

Pump room

Many participants envisaged the Pump Room as a flexible, multi-purpose space. One group suggested it could house a climbing wall, whilst other models showed it as a bar that could be opened to support events in the main hall, or a smaller performance-based venue space or for film nights.

This was felt as a key space in the building, with a unique atmosphere. Models reflected this, with people discussing how it would work well as a cosy but substantial performance space, adaptable for different events and atmospheres.

North rooms

Models showed the north rooms catering for different scales of activity. Some showed office spaces, whilst several indicated spaces for food based activities, fitness classes, or smaller groups engaged in quieter activities, providing contrast to the more energetic main hall and more open south rooms.

Overall venue character

During presentations, it was clear participants felt the venue should be welcoming, friendly, and well-serviced throughout.

Models showed the building supporting an ecosystem of performances, classes and activities that complemented and reinforced each other, with a diverse programme that would appeal to different community groups.

Participants emphasised that the venue should facilitate social connection and community building, enabling people to develop their social networks and supporting multigenerational activities.

During the model making process, participants discussed the balance between serving the local community and regular users, and generating additional income from attracting visitors from further afield for one off events. During presentations, there appeared to be broad agreement that bigger events that brought others in had to be sensitive to the local community. Creating a sense of ownership amongst regular users was key.

A small number of models showed outdoor spaces being integrated into the venue's offering. This included some highlighting practical considerations such as loading access and cycle storage, and logistics for larger events, specifically questioning how crowds would arrive and leave safely if gigs attracted significant numbers.



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Online findings

Online respondents indicated their interest in different types of activities, identified which features would make the venue attractive to them, expressed preferences for specific spaces within the building and shared their views on whether Jacobs Wells Baths would be a unique resource for the local area and Bristol more widely.

What activities would you be most interested in holding at Jacobs Wells Baths?

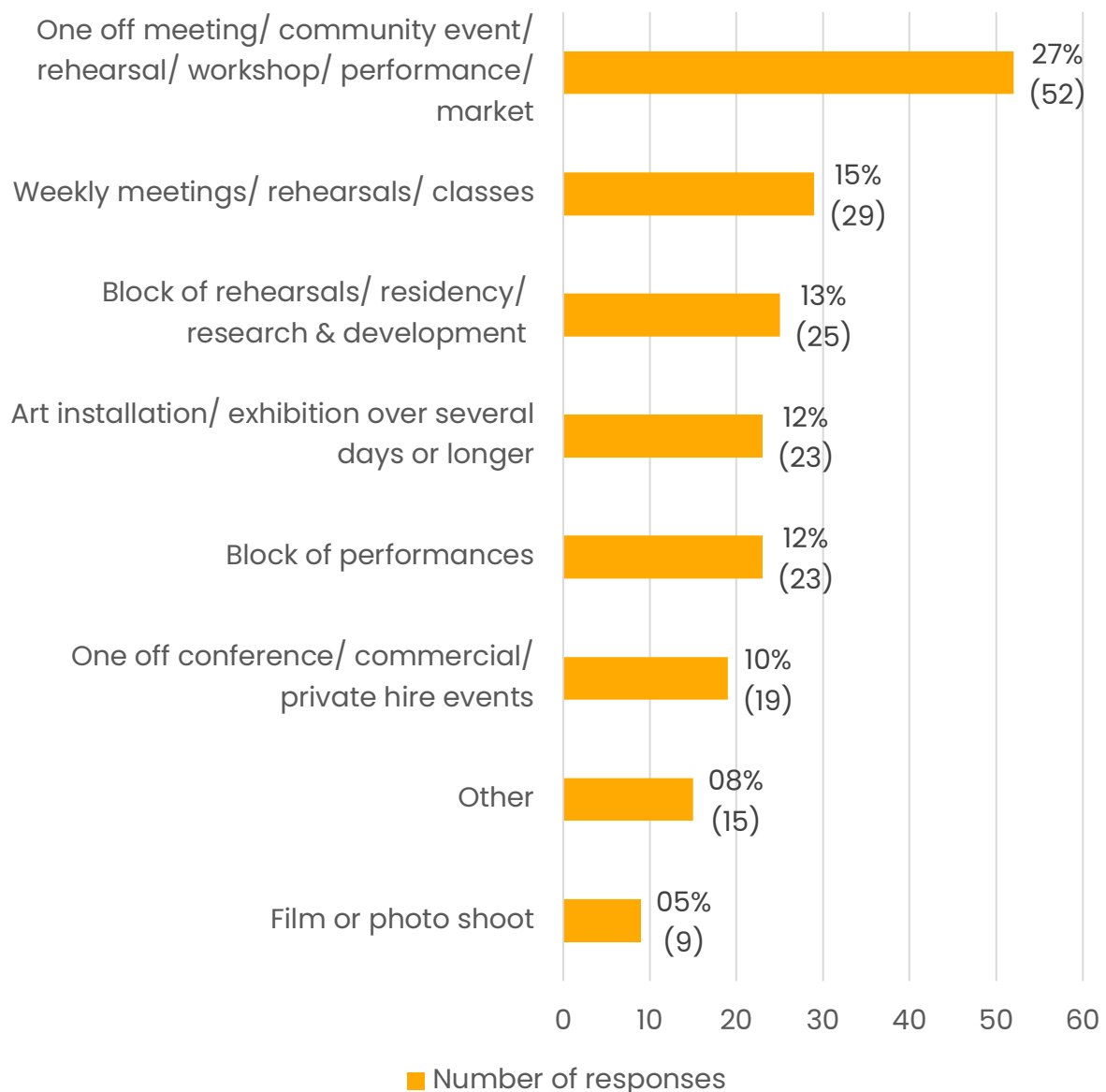


Chart 11: Above chart shows responses to the question ‘What activities would you be most interested in holding at Jacobs Wells Baths?’ Community events and performances were the most voted option.

What would make Jacobs Wells Baths an attractive venue for you?

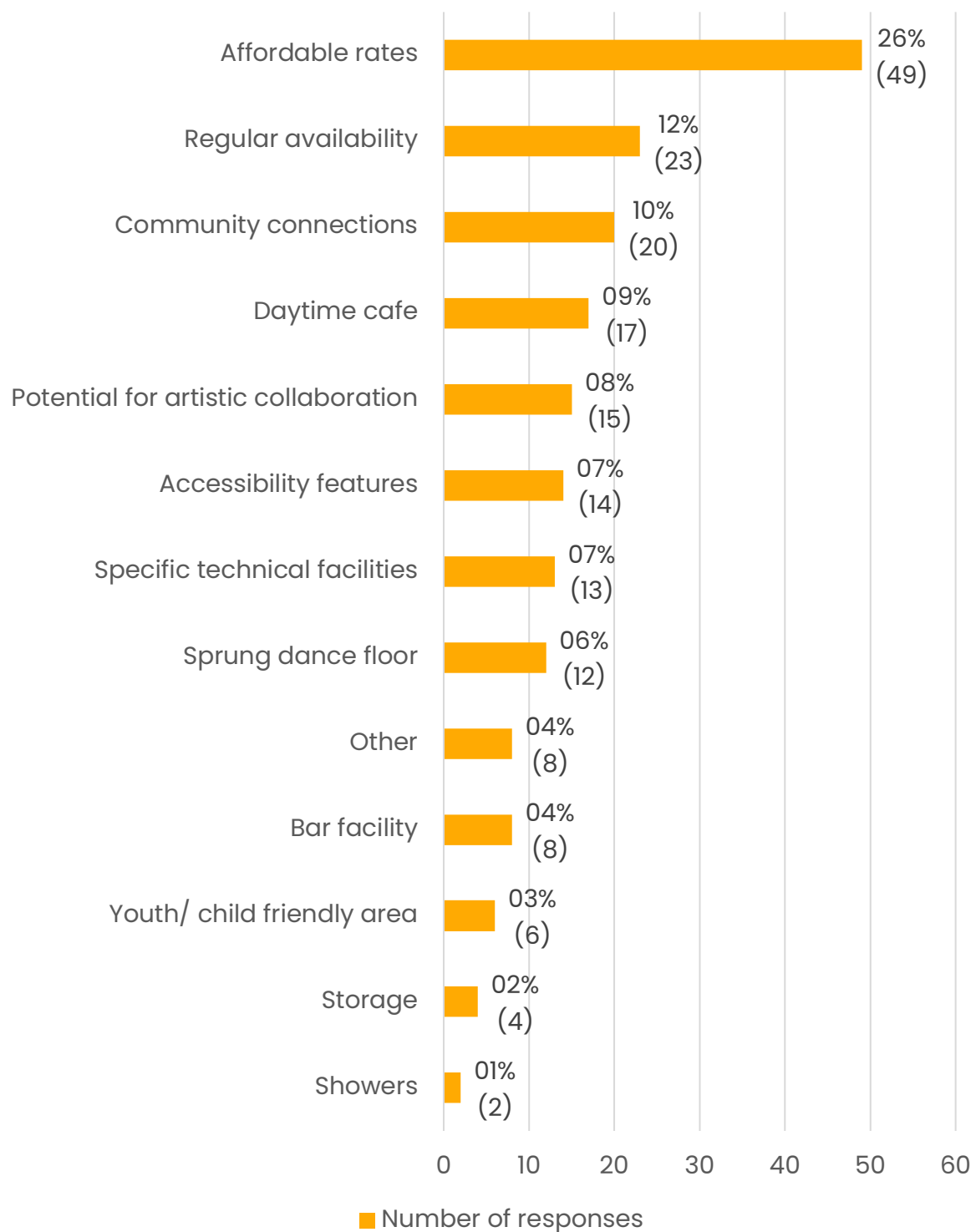


Chart 12: Above chart shows responses to the question 'What would make Jacobs Wells Baths an attractive venue for you?' Respondents mostly voted for affordable rates.

Which spaces would suit you best?

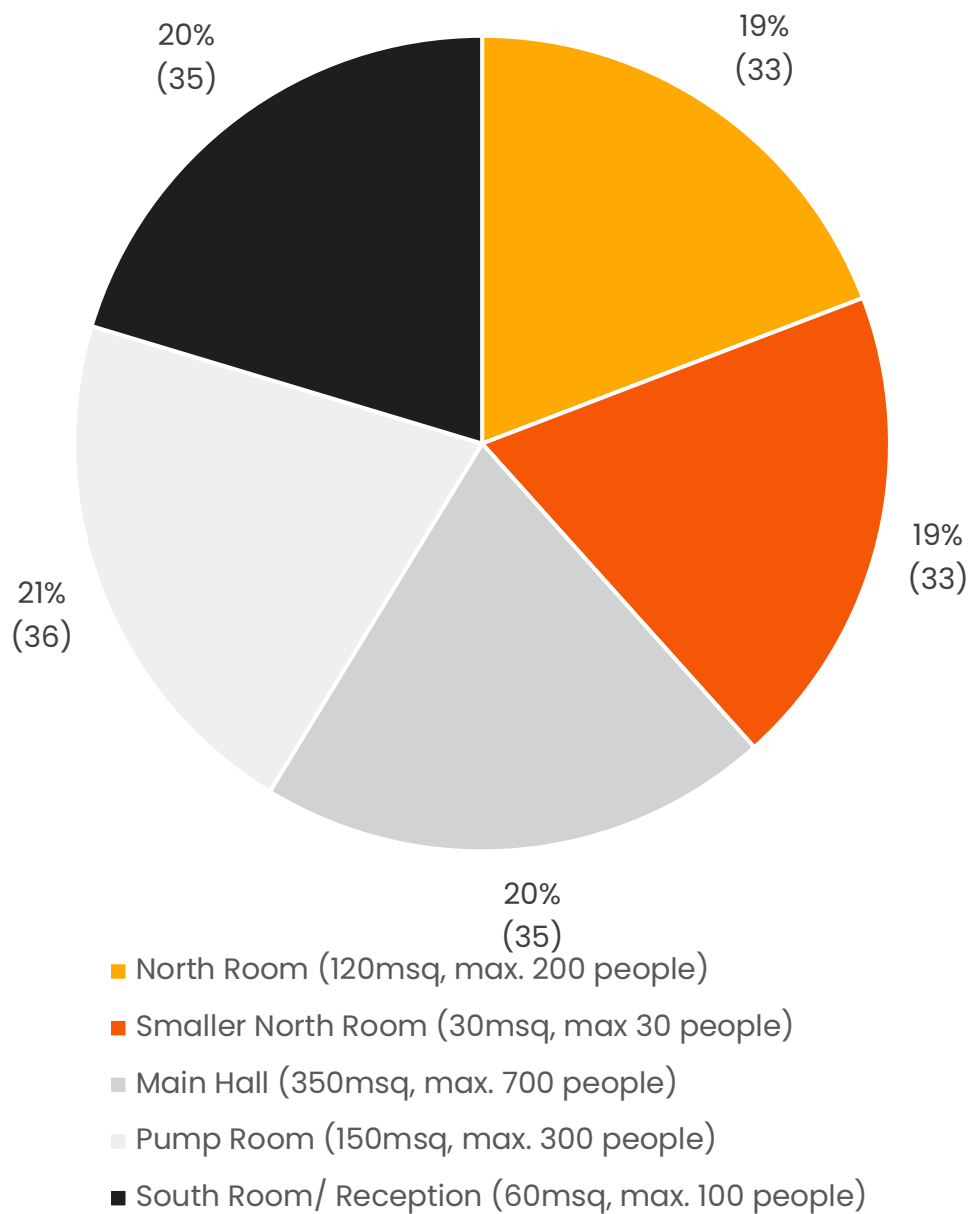


Chart 13: Above chart shows responses to the question 'Which spaces would suit you best?'

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

- Workshop participant

Jacob Wells Baths would be a unique resource

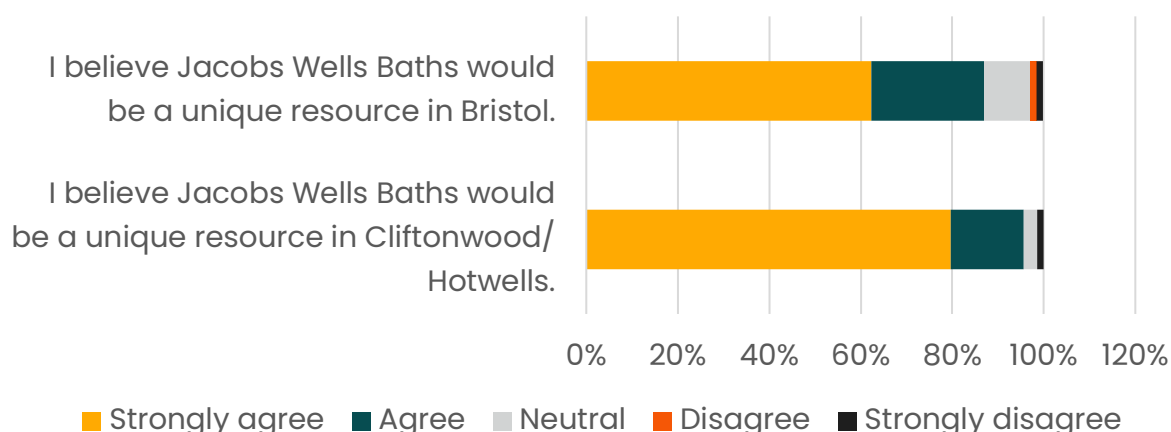


Chart 14: Above chart shows responses where participants responded to a question about if they think Jacob Wells Baths would be a unique resource in Bristol or in Cliftonwood / Hotwells

The online survey findings were largely reflective of the in-person engagement, demonstrating alignment across key themes.

Community connections and regular availability ranked highly in the online responses, mirroring the in-person emphasis on community groups, regular classes, and creating a sense of ownership amongst users.

Performance, rehearsals, workshops, and community events appeared prominently online, alongside strong interest in exhibitions, film screenings, and one-off hirings. The importance of a diverse programme of activities aligned with the in-person suggestions for varied programming.

The online survey revealed a particularly strong demand for one-off meetings, community events, and performances. This could suggest that casual or occasional users were more prominently represented online compared to those at the in-person sessions, where there was a greater focus on regular activities.

The online data also showed that all spaces within the building attracted relatively equal interest, whereas in-person participants articulated more distinctive visions for how each space's character and use should differ. This is likely due to those completing the online engagement being less familiar with the building and the individual spaces, whereas those in the workshop visited the building on the day.



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Conclusion

The engagement process revealed strong community support for Jacobs Wells Baths to become a welcoming, accessible, and multi-functional cultural hub for Bristol. There is real ambition for what the building can offer, both in the short and the longer term.

Participants emphasised that affordability, accessibility, and community connections needed to be embedded from the outset, with flexible spaces capable of accommodating diverse activities simultaneously.

The range of proposed activities spanning performance and cultural events, community groups and regular classes, youth programming, social functions, training opportunities, and health and wellbeing services reflected the community vision for a venue that would serve multiple generations and diverse needs. There appears to be clear demand for activities, and the potential for a full and rich programme for a wide range of audiences.

The co-design process enabled stakeholders to articulate not only their aspirations but also the practical requirements necessary for activities to run successfully, from technical equipment and specialist spaces to hospitality provision and adequate storage.

Both the in-person workshops and online survey confirmed that participants believed Jacobs Wells Baths would be a unique resource locally and across Bristol, a loved heritage site and a cultural landmark.

These findings provide a strong foundation for informing architectural designs, phasing decisions, and future funding applications, ensuring that the restoration of Jacobs Wells Baths remains rooted in genuine community need and ambition.

Thoughts and feelings about the project

All participants who provided feedback reported feeling heard and able to express themselves during the workshops. Attendees commented that the sessions were very welcoming and inclusive, the facilitation was very accessible and excellent. A few participants felt that the workshop created opportunities to exchange ideas in a collaborative environment. One

attendee noted it was the best local consultation they had attended so far this year. Comments included:

- Yes, I really enjoyed the workshop. I felt that I had the opportunity to share my thoughts
- Yes, very welcoming and inclusive
- Yes, good conversations and shared ideas

Participants expressed overwhelmingly positive feelings about the project following the workshops. Many attendees reported feeling excited about what the venue would add to Bristol as a community facility, with several people commenting that they wanted to be more involved and couldn't wait for the building to be ready. Some participants described the project as inspirational, whilst others felt elated and grateful to the organisations leading the work, expressing confidence that it would be brilliant for the city. Whilst a few attendees acknowledged that it represented a significant challenge, describing it as 'a mountain to climb,' they could see everyone was getting equipped and beginning to envision the possibilities.

Did sharing your views make you feel valued and included in planning or decision making?

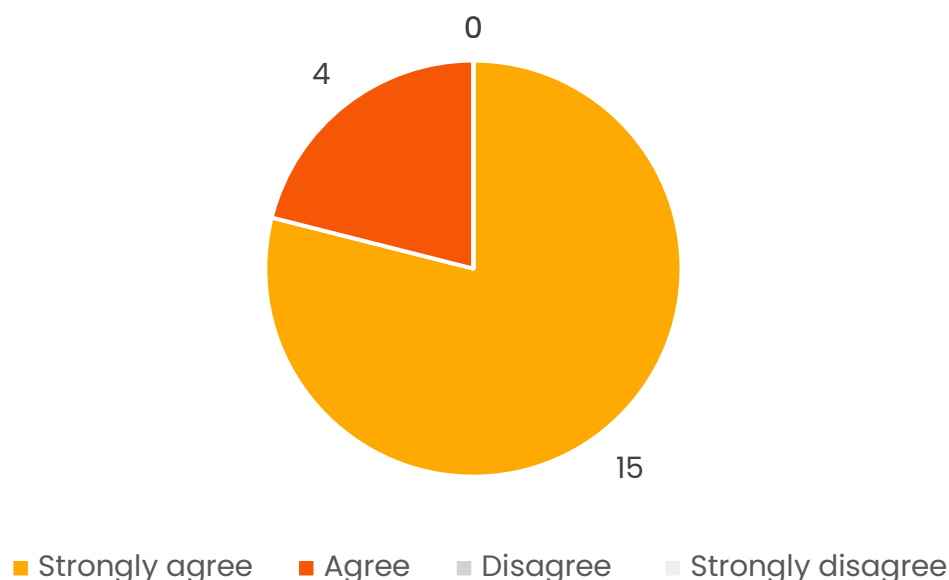


Chart 15: Above chart shows responses where participants responded to the question about if they felt included in the planning or decision making.

LISTENING TO LESS HEARD VOICES AND DELIVERING MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT

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