

Future of Victoria Hall, Radstock:

Summary of Questionnaire results

Contents

Future of Victoria Hall, Radstock: Questionnaire summary results.....	1
Introduction	1
Frequency of use of Victoria Hall.....	2
Uses for Victoria Hall.....	3
Other suggested uses for Victoria Hall from free text box responses.....	4
Offers for uses within Victoria Hall	4
Historic value of Victoria Hall.....	5
Other comments.....	5

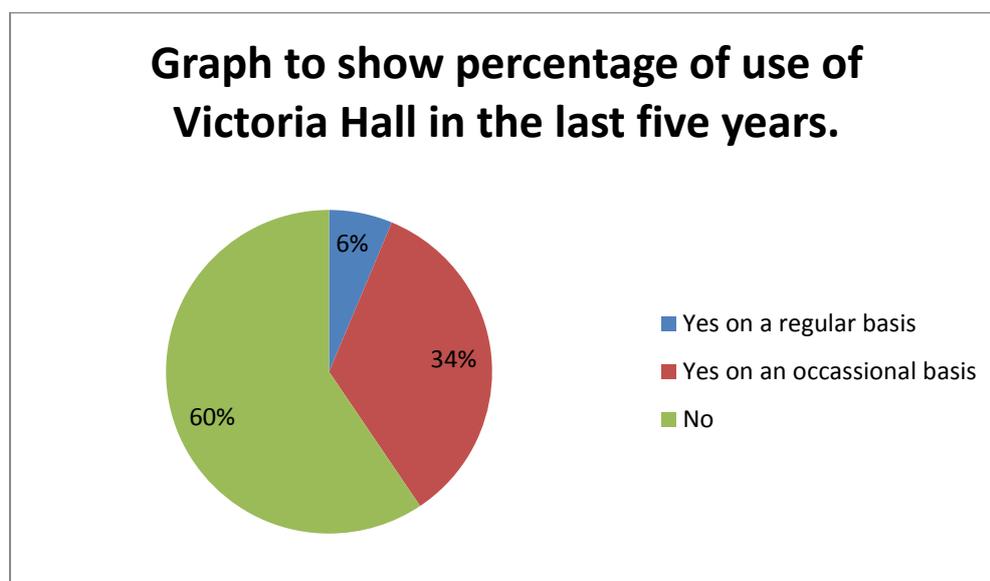
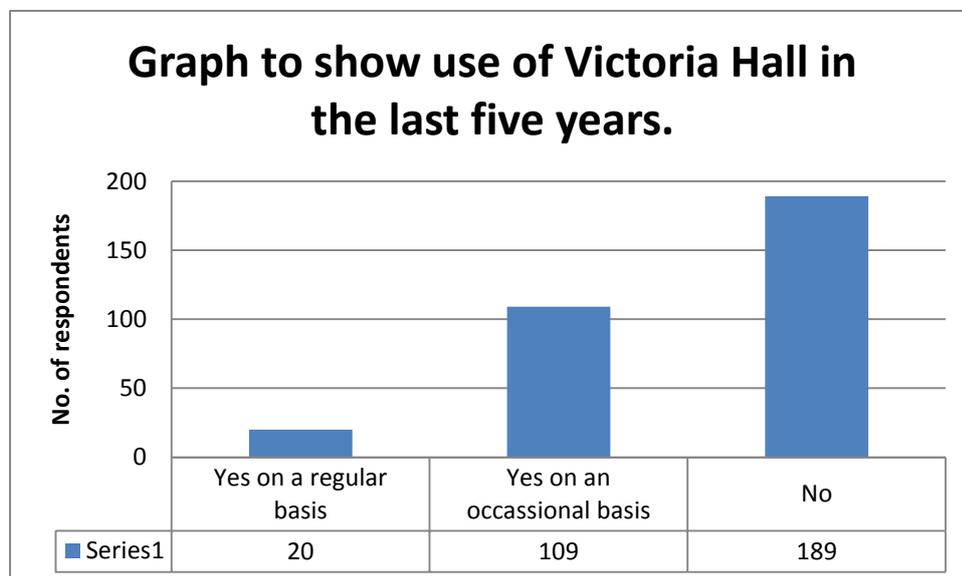
Introduction

In May 2012 Bath and North East Somerset Council launched a consultation on the future of Victoria Hall. The consultation was open from 6th May – 15th June 2012. This document is a summary of the results from the questionnaire (Questions 1 &3). Further analysis is required on the free text answers.

A total for 5240 questionnaires were sent to all residential and business addresses in the wards of Radstock and Westfield. In addition, webpages were set up on the Council's website at www.bathnes.gov.uk/radstockregen. A total of 318 people responded to the survey (231 responded by letter and 87 responded online). This is a response rate of 16.6%. Not all parts were completed in all cases and some questions allowed for multiple answers and text.

Frequency of use of Victoria Hall

Question 1: In the last five years have you used Victoria Hall?



This question was asked to identify the local population’s usage of the Victoria Hall. In total, 20 people (6%) responded to the survey stated that they use the hall on a regular basis, from their comments this appears to be to attend meetings or play snooker. 109 (34%) state that they use the all on an occasional basis, some stating for meetings, dog training or snooker. 189 people (60%) have not used the Hall in the last 5 years or have never used the Hall at all.

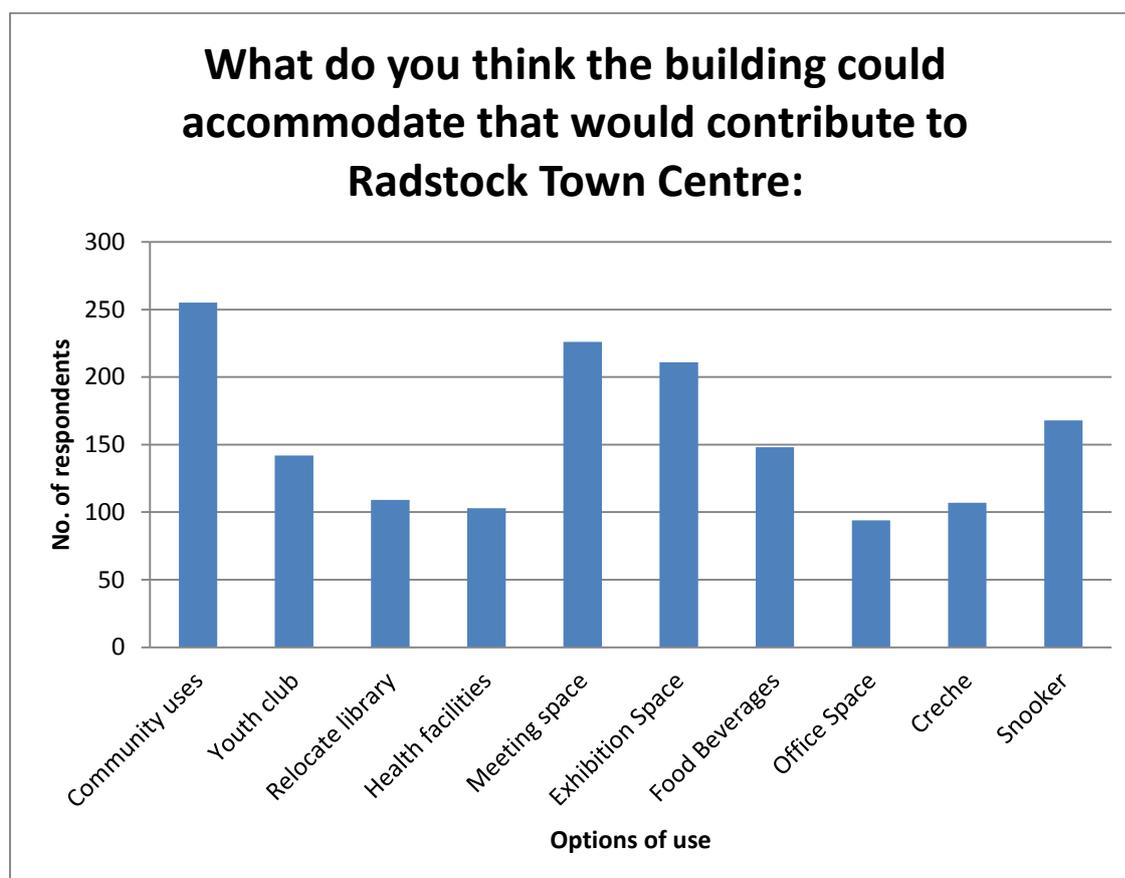
The primary reasons for not using the hall were:

- poor physical access,

- no interest in using the facilities,
- lack of awareness of what the Hall provided/facilities it has.

Uses for Victoria Hall

Question 3: What activities do you think the building could accommodate that would contribute to Radstock town centre?



As respondents could choose as many suggestions as they felt appropriate and could make additional proposals, this graph shows the number of respondents who ticked those options provided on the questionnaire. The majority of respondents selected at least 4 options. Of the respondents 255 (80.2%) indicated that they preferred to use the building for community uses. 94 respondents (29.6%), thought that office use would be desirable; of the suggested options this was the least favoured use. The choices of activity most selected were the use as community facilities, meeting space and exhibition space.

Other suggested uses for Victoria Hall from free text box responses

In addition, to the provided options of activities listed on the questionnaire, an additional comment box was added for 'other' uses. Many comments see the Victoria Hall as a community facility or 'hub', and expanded on this. Feelings were expressed that it should remain within its current form and use, with various changes to upgrade facilities and have more groups and/or businesses using the space. Potential uses, recommended in the feedback, included

- various types of dance classes, targeted at different ages or styles;
- dramatics groups either for amateur dramatics or stage performances;
- music groups or concert venue;
- regular bingo club;
- events such as weddings/parties/conferences/film nights;
- Fitness classes of a variety of types or a variety of different groups of people has been suggested, such as keep-fit, badminton, zumba as well as a gym.
- day-care or turning it into a care home/sheltered housing
- supermarket
- open up a rail link and use part of the Hall to service that as a ticket office area
- a youth club

Often with such suggestions text showed people encouraged a mixed used/multifunctional space, including a café/catering facilities and public conveniences. A café was encouraged to help make use of the space as a meeting area and for events. Various markets were suggested including antiques, farmers, crafts, arts, and jumble sales, to take place on twice weekly/weekly/monthly basis. Such events could also use the Square, weather depending. Some responses recommend demolishing the site for a new purpose built unit. There is a strong feeling that there needs to be more for younger people to do in the town with suggestions for after-school clubs and advice/job centres.

Accessibility is a major issue and suggestions state the need for a working stair lift or a lift in the building, there are a couple of suggestions for a glass lift to be fitted externally with reason including not taking up internal space as well as giving the building a modern feel.

Offers for uses within Victoria Hall

Apart from the few offering their services to help run the place or hold groups in the building, people have not stated whether they will use the Hall if the changes they recommend take place. There is an offer to:

- relocate an existing crèche to the hall,
- help run various clubs/youth groups as well as become caretakers.
- be on committee
- involved in developing an arts centre (like the Old Bakery Arts Project).

- A few people have said they will attend events like dances if they are organised.

Historic value of Victoria Hall

There are many comments on how iconic and beautiful respondents found the building and do not want it removed but preserved or enhanced. Comments often explained how they feel the building as part of the area, or memories from the past to illustrate their view of its historic and cultural importance to Radstock and key feature of the Conservation Area. The building is seen as part of the identity of the area. The building is not listed as many assume. Concerns have been raised about the wanting a thorough consultation, as well as the need to act soon to prevent future disrepair as well as start to make a profit /returns back from the site again.

Nevertheless, others have stated they find it unwelcoming, dreary, cold and dark. They want either large improvements or a new development on the site that is more functional and some recognised the need for it to be viable into the future. This shows that there is a mixture of attitudes towards the site and building. The attitudes to retain or removed the building are difficult to quantify due to the nature of the survey.

Other comments

There are many comments and concerns relating to the infrastructure changes taking place in Radstock. As well as where money has or has not been spent in the past.

Concerns have been raised about funding the repairs and suggestions for community involvement/websites to boost the area whilst raising funds as well as looking at sponsorship from private firms, which could share or occasionally use the space.

Further analysis

Further work is required to analyse and quantify the free text box responses to Question 4 which offered space for 'further comments'.