

TRIMLEY STATION BUILDINGS

Community Views



October 2010

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1. SUMMARY

Five different questionnaires were issued during September 2010 in order to obtain local community views on the suggested usage of Trimley Station's buildings. Questionnaires were also issued to establish whether the suggested uses genuinely meet the needs of residents, community groups and local businesses.

Information obtained from the completed questionnaires will be fed into a Business Plan which will be submitted to Network Rail to forestall the Station's demolition. By submitting a high quality Business Plan it is hoped that the Friends of Trimley Station, Suffolk Coastal District Council, Trimley Parish Council and Felixstowe Futures can demonstrate that there is a high level of community support and involvement giving Network Rail a plan that they will be able to support.

Distribution of Questionnaires

- 1,599 questionnaires were sent to residents of Trimley St Mary – 395 were returned - 25%
- 98 questionnaires were sent to local community/ voluntary groups and organisations (Appendix A) – 28 were returned – 28%. Six organisations are looking for a premises to hold meetings.
- 60 questionnaires were left at Trimley Station for travellers (non Trimley St Mary residents) – 9 were returned – 15%
- 8 questionnaires were sent to Estate Agents – one was returned.
- 3 questionnaires were sent to people who had expressed interest in running a café at the Station – two responded.

Resident Information

- 61 residents want to be a member of the Friends - 56 provided their contact details.
- 171 residents wish to receive more information about the Friends – 172 provided their contact details.
- 211 residents would attend a meeting about the future of the buildings at Trimley Station – 165 provided their contact details.
- 212 residents would like to receive a newsletter about the activities of the Friends – 192 provided their contact details.
- 199 residents would like to receive a copy of the results from the residents questionnaire – 176 provided their contact details.

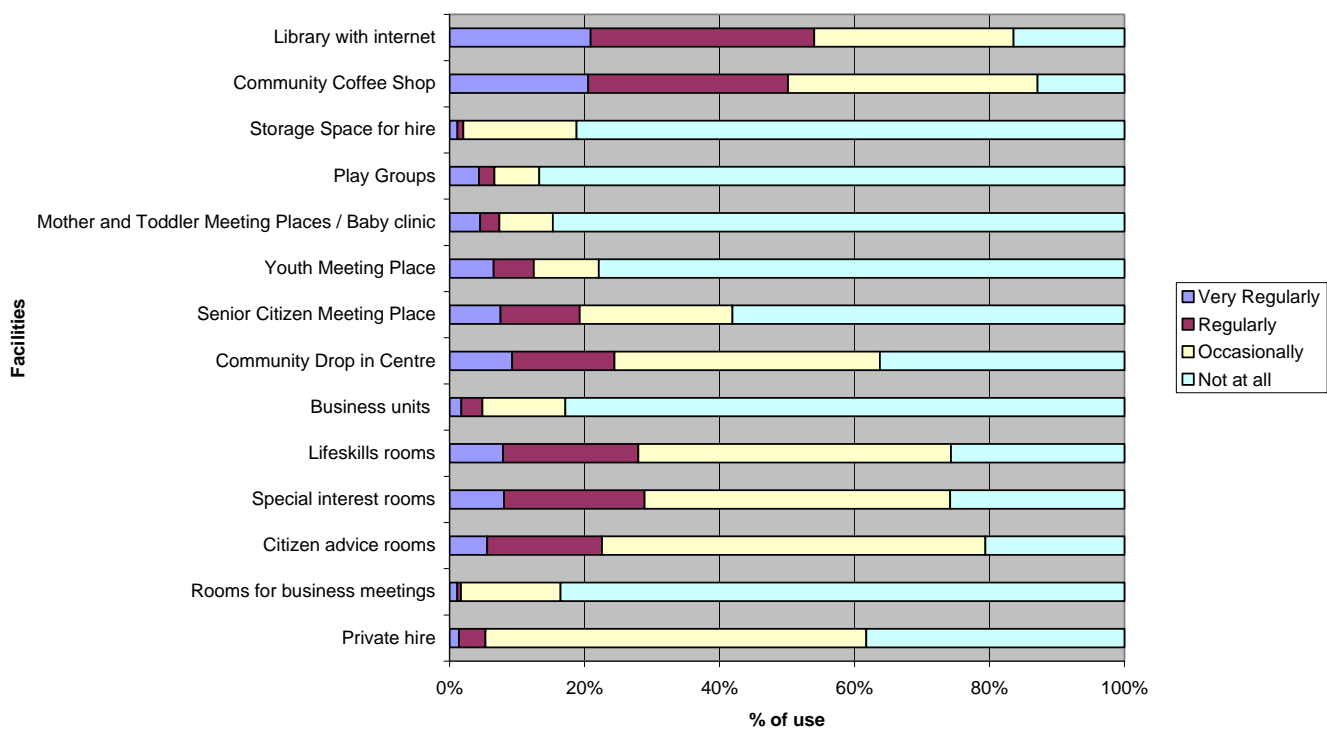
Resident Views

The Friends obtained wide ranging opinions on the future of the Station's buildings. The general consensus however was that Trimley St Mary's train station's buildings are a great asset to the town and as such should be treasured and invested in. The top five high priority suggested uses for the buildings at the Station were:

- Youth meeting place (50%) of respondents
- Community coffee shop (44%) of respondents
- Senior Citizen meeting place (40%) of respondents
- Library with internet (39%) of respondents
- Rooms for information/citizen advice (39%) of respondents

When asked how regularly they would use the above facilities, respondents stated that attendance would mainly be on an occasional basis – refer graph below. It should be noted that the age groups of the respondents do not fall into the age group category of people who would attend youth clubs, hence the usage would be far higher than recorded via the questionnaires.

Use of Suggested Facilities



CAFÉ/ Community Coffee Shop

Two expressions of interest have been received for running a café/ community coffee shop at the Station.

Community Groups/ Voluntary Organisations

Six organisations are looking for premises at which meetings can be held.

2. BACKGROUND

Work is being undertaken by Suffolk Coastal District Council, Felixstowe Futures, the Friends of Trimley Station and Trimley Parish Council to try and establish a long term use for the buildings at Trimley station with the intention of producing a Business Plan for the station building to submit to Network Rail to forestall its demolition.

For the Business Plan to be successful, it is important that the proposed usage of the Station's buildings genuinely meets the needs of residents, community groups and local businesses. Questionnaires were issued to residents, local community groups, travellers and estate agents to obtain feedback for the Business Plan.

3. QUESTIONNAIRES

3.1 Brief

The Researcher was instructed to investigate and research evidence for local need/demand for the following uses:

- Storage facilities
- Office space
- Open community space
- Learning facilities
- Café
- Commercial office or retail space
- Visitor centre
- Meeting rooms

Further, to investigate local demand in order to provide an evidence base to inform a Business Plan by contacting the following:

- Area-based agents to determine local demand for office, retail and storage space
- Private individuals who have made expressions of interest in operating a café franchise
- Whitehouse Foundation which has made expressions of interest in operating a café franchise
- Suffolk Wildlife Trust to determine interest in visitor centre or information point
- Local groups and organisations to determine local demand for community-based use of office space and meeting space

The researcher was also to investigate railway passenger footfall and potential interest in café facilities (by survey).

The appointment was from 23 August until 17 September 2010 and was subsequently extended to incorporate responses returned to the Council post the deadline date for responses and production of an Addendum to the report with further information.

3.2 Promotion

It is appreciated that generating interest and involvement in Trimley Station consultation amongst local residents, and attracting sufficiently high numbers of responses largely depended on the promotion of the hard copy questionnaire. A press release was issued by Suffolk Coastal District Council and a poster was placed in the shelter at Trimley Station.

3.3 Distribution of Questionnaires

Five types of hard copy questionnaires with return pre-paid envelopes to the District Council were issued as follows:

- Residents Questionnaire – 1,599 questionnaires were posted to households in Trimley St Mary
- Community/voluntary group or organisation – 96 questionnaires were issued.
- Traveller Questionnaire – 60 questionnaires were left in the shelter at Trimley Station - for the attention of rail travellers (non Trimley St Mary residents).
- Estate Agent Questionnaire – 8 commercial property estate agents were sent questionnaires.
- Café/ community coffee room – 3 questionnaires were sent to people who had expressed interest in running a café.

The closing date for consultation for questionnaires sent to residents was 10 September and it was agreed that for the remainder of the questionnaires that the deadline be extended to 17 September.

Feedback could also be submitted by emailing conservation@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Resident / Rail Passengers

The responses for completed questionnaires from residents and travellers have been amalgamated together.

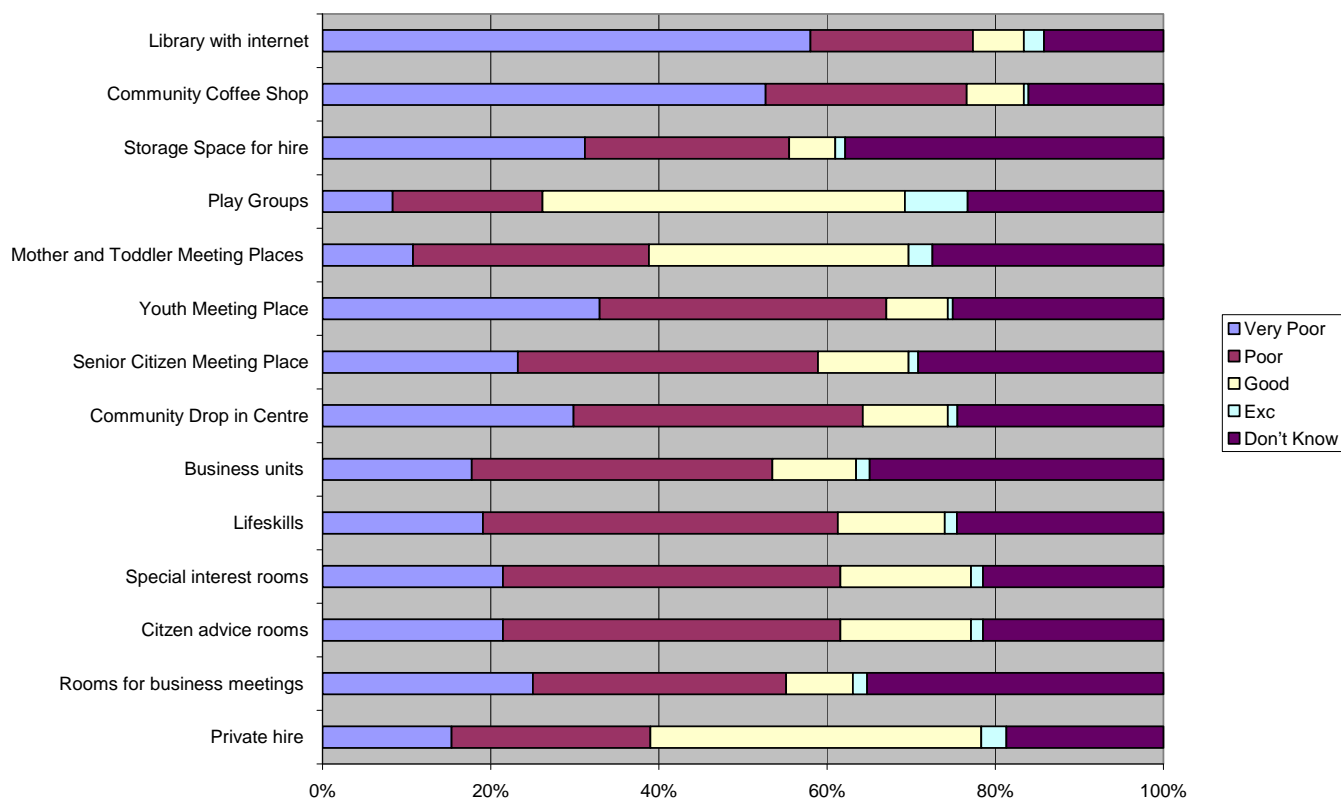
4.1.1 How do you rate the current facilities in Trimley St Mary

Residents have responded that the top five “very poor” facilities in Trimley St Mary are as follows:

- Library with internet - 52% of respondents
- Community coffee shop - 50% of respondents
- Youth Meeting Place - 31% of respondents
- Storage Space - 29% of respondents
- Community Drop in Centre - 29% of respondents

Play groups were recorded as being the highest excellent facility - 7% of respondents

Resident responses to current facilities in Trimley St Mary

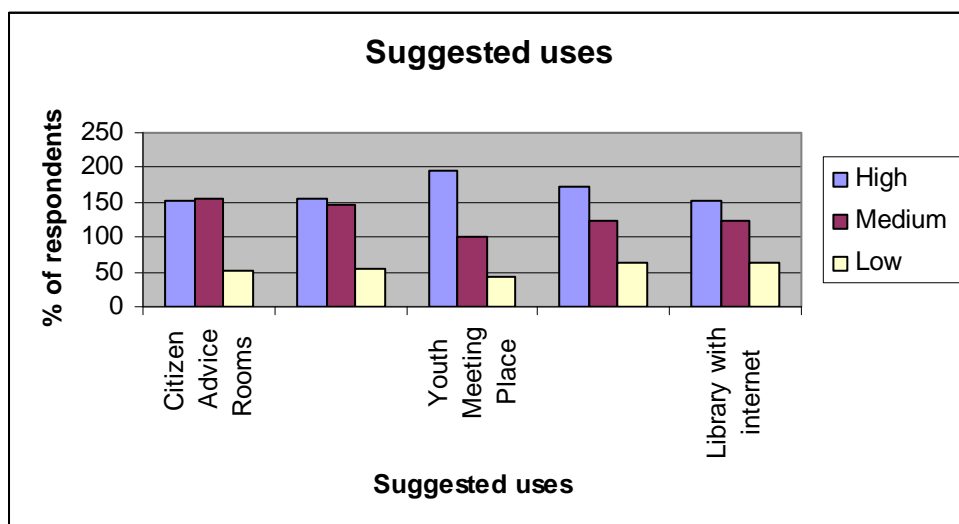


4.1.2 The level of priority a resident would give to suggested uses for the station building.

The five top highest suggested uses are as follows:

- Youth meeting place - 50% of respondents
- Community coffee shop - 44% of respondents
- Senior Citizen meeting place - 40% of respondents
- Library with internet - 39% of respondents
- Rooms for information/citizen advice - 39% of respondents

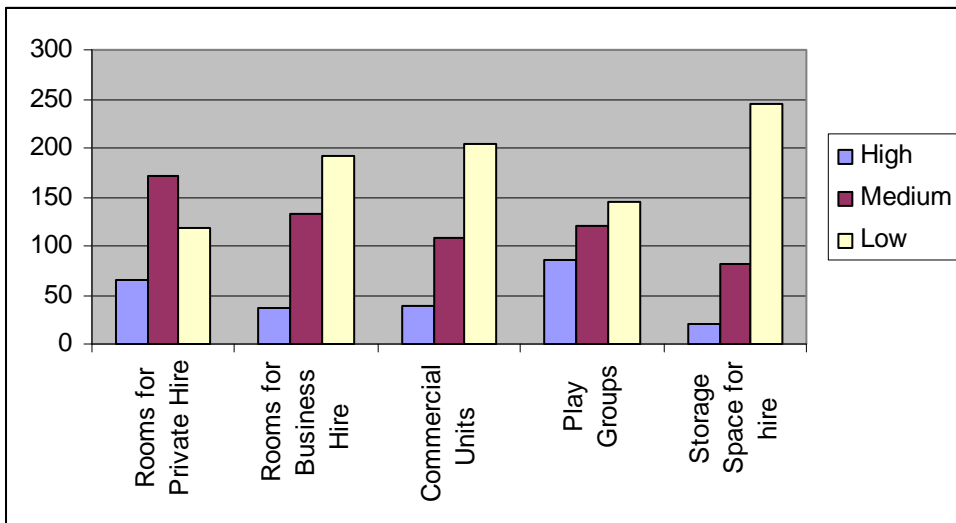
Top five suggested uses for the buildings at Trimley Station



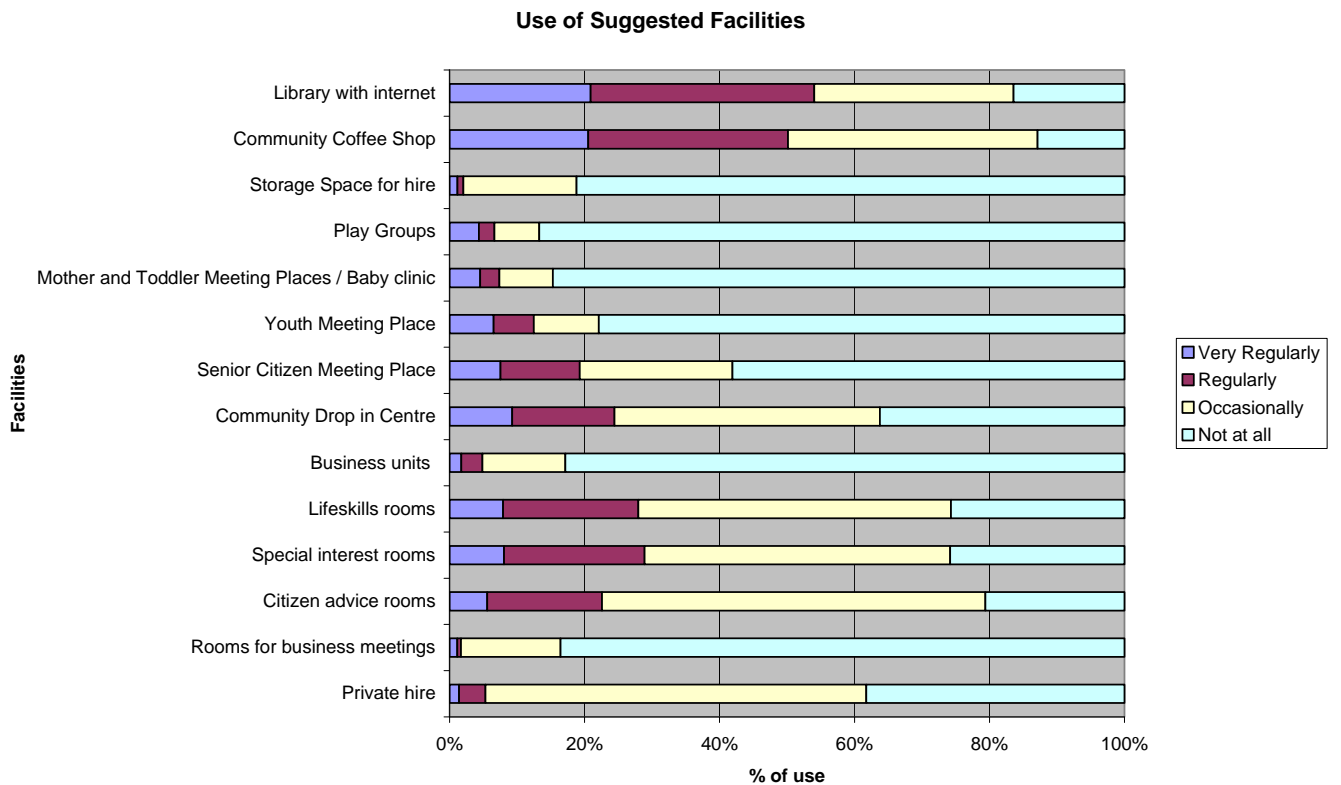
The least popular five uses for the buildings at Trimley Station were as follows:

- Storage Space for Hire - 62% of respondents
- Commercial and light industrial business units - 52% of respondents
- Rooms for corporate/business hire - 49% of respondents
- Play groups - 36% of respondents
- Rooms for private hire - 32% of respondents

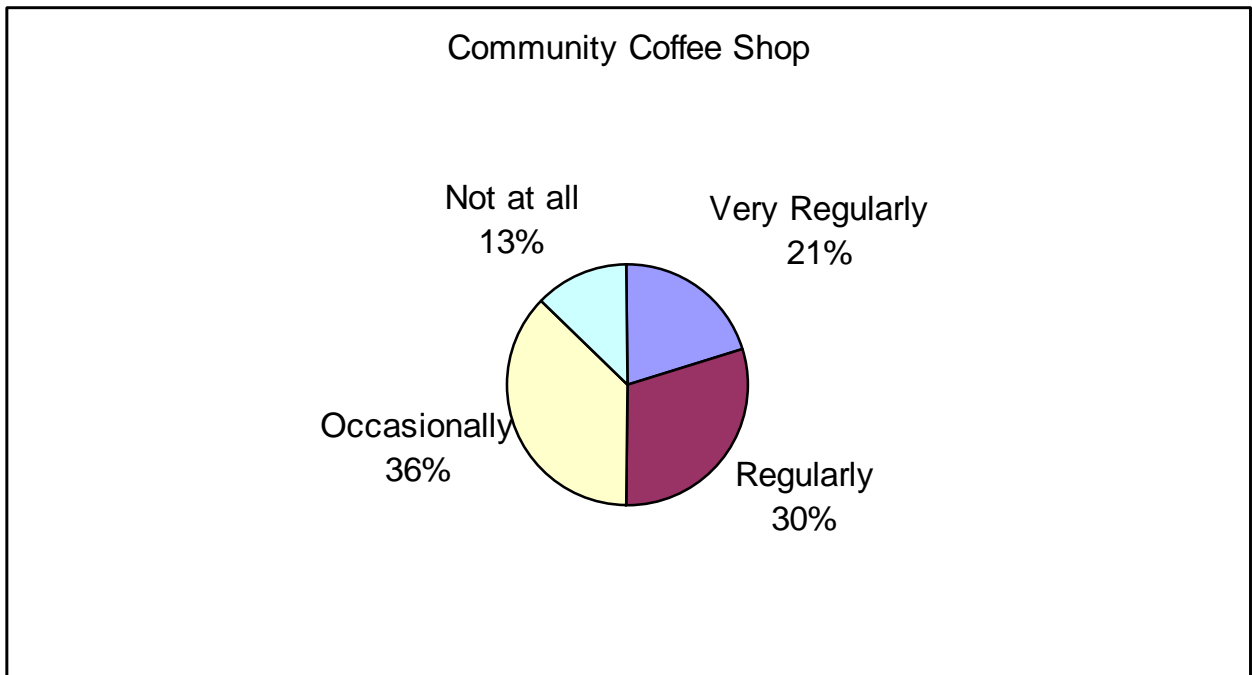
Top five lowest suggested uses for the buildings at Trimley Station



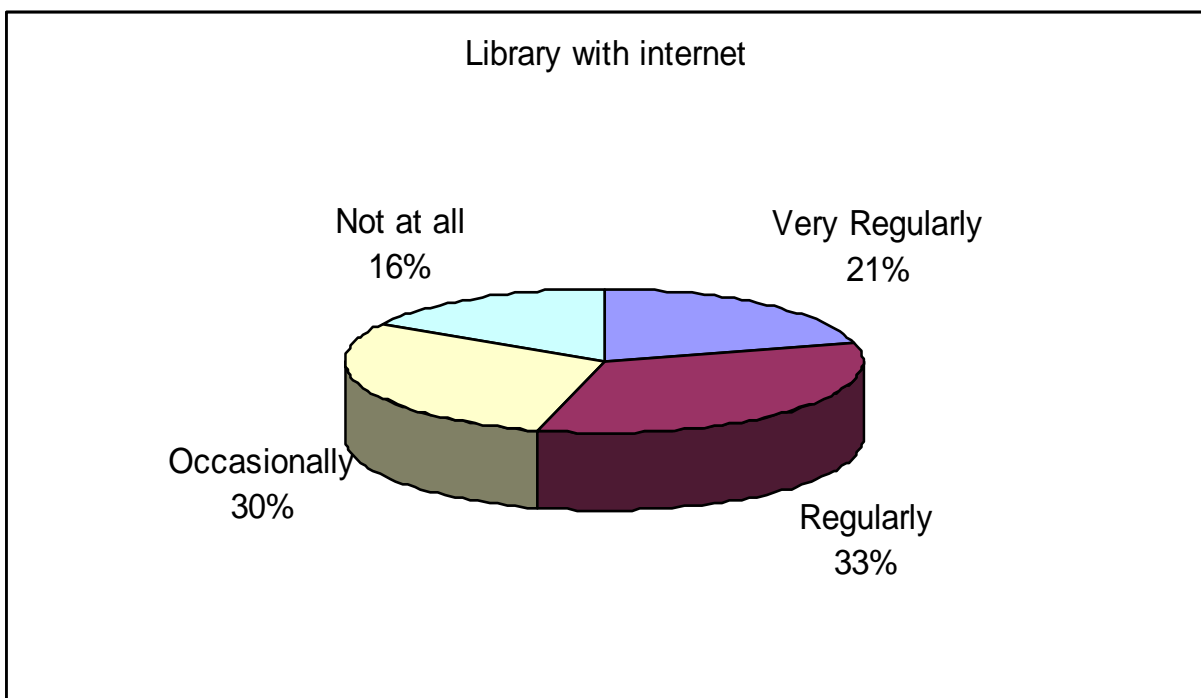
4.1.3 How regularly residents would use a list of suggested facilities if they were located in the buildings at Trimley Station



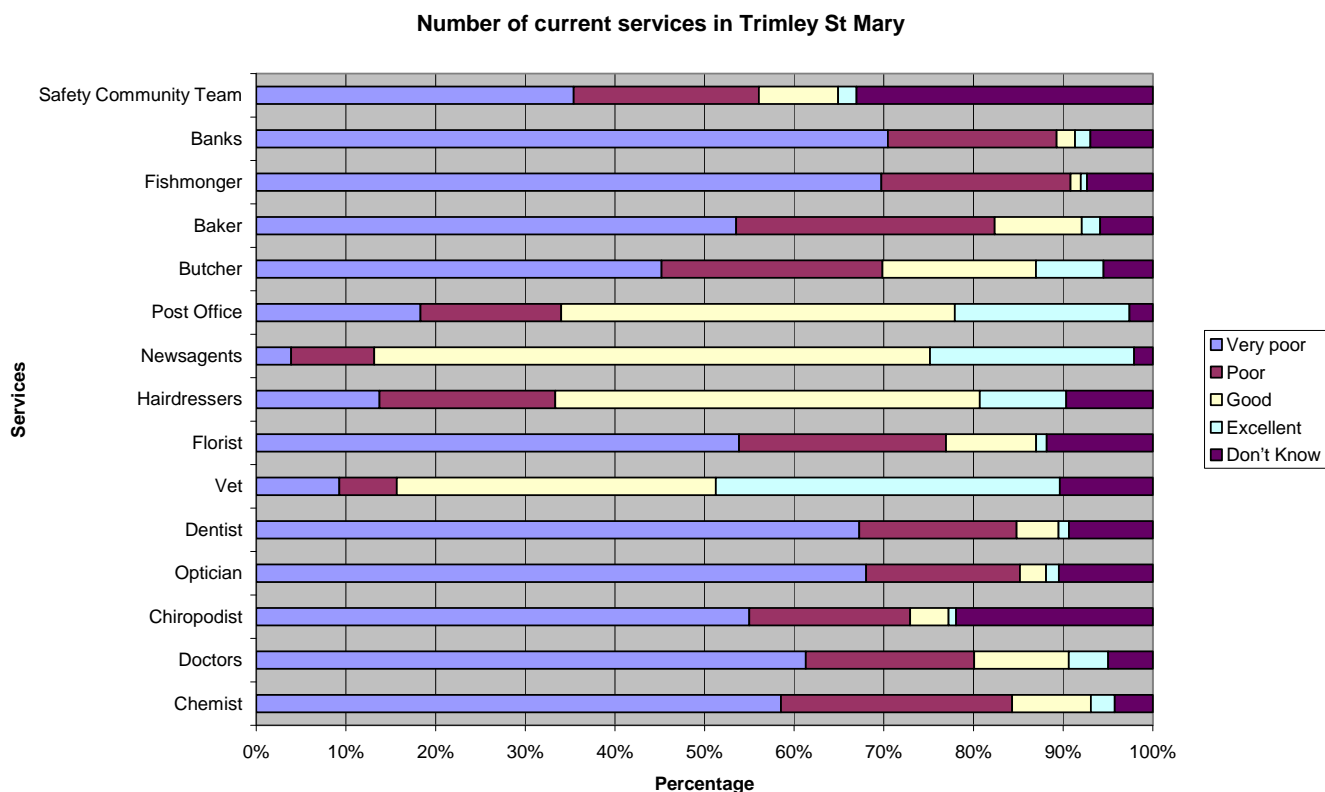
How often people would use a Community Coffee Shop



How often people would use a library with internet facilities



4.1.4 How residents rated the number of current services in Trimley St Mary



4.1.5 Residents who are involved with a community group/ small business that wish to find out more about the facilities.

- The issue of the household questionnaires resulted in some further interest either from community groups not originally targeted or from businesses. The timeframe for the research did not allow for such interest to be subsequently followed up as yet, however, there were 6 expressions of interest.

4.1.6 When a Café/ community coffee shop at Trimley Station would be used

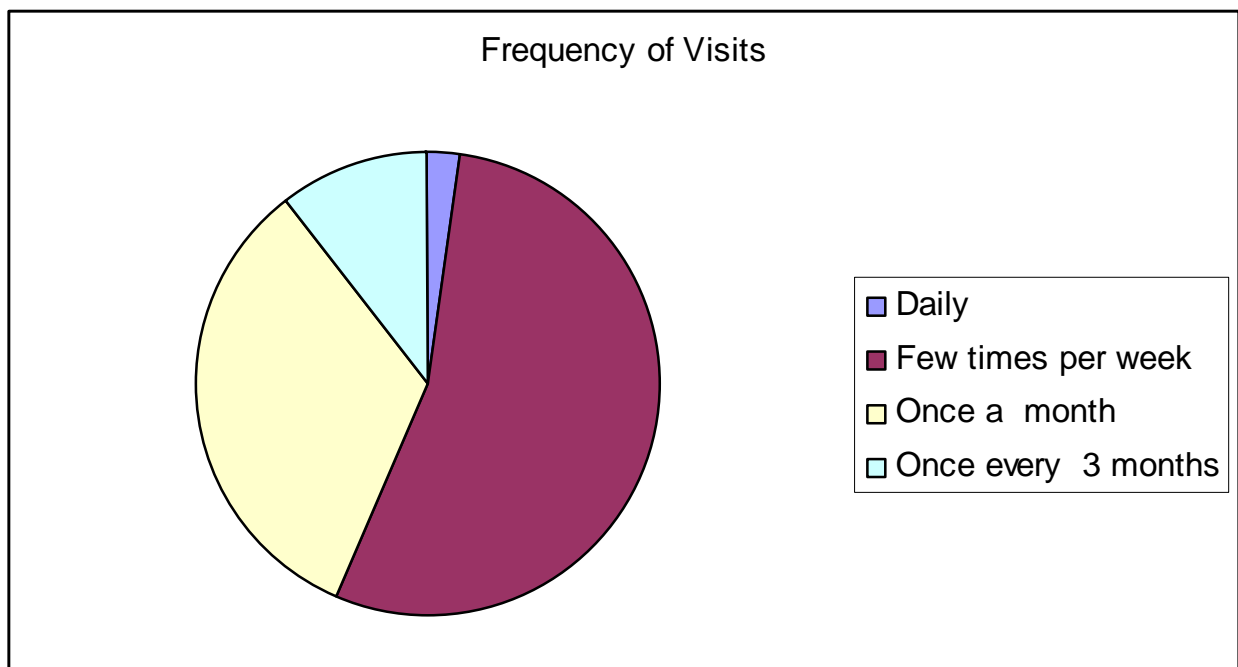
- 231 people said that they would visit the café on week days (58% of respondents)
- 172 people said that they would visit the café on weekends (44% of respondents)

4.1.7 Times when people would wish to visit a café/ community coffee shop



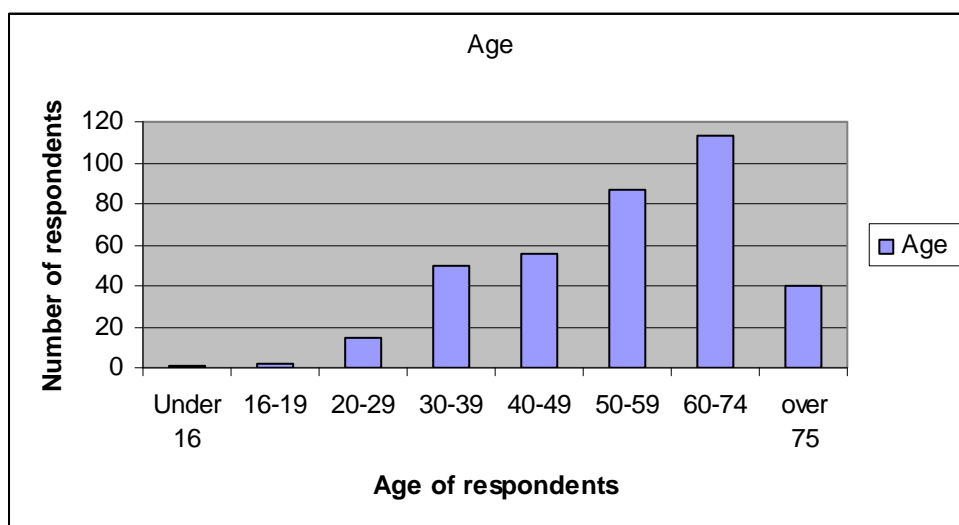
The table above shows that residents would support the café and visit at all times – greatest time being 10am to noon – 50% of respondents.

The table below shows that residents would mainly visit a café/ community coffee shop a few times a week – 42%



4.1.7 – Respondent Information

- Respondent information provided - 146 males / 229 females
- Ages of respondents is shown in the table below.



4.2 Community Groups /Organisations

Six organisations confirmed that they were looking for somewhere to hold meetings. Five out of the six organisations are looking to hire a room for a couple of hours at a time, with two of the organisations interested in half day hire, with some requiring ad-hoc room hire for occasional events. Two of the organisations would be interested in morning / afternoon bookings with some evening bookings, and the other four were mostly interested in evening bookings. One organisation would require a storage cupboard.

Payment to hire a room

- Payments made presently for these organisations varied greatly, from using volunteers homes to hold meetings to as much as £15 per hour.

How much would the group be prepared to pay to hire a room




- Responses from the 6 organisations were as follows:
- £10-£20
- £25-£30 for a 3 hour session.
- Minimal amount as a “not for profit” organisation
- No more than £10.20 – we are a charitable voluntary organisation.
- £15 an hour.
- Approx £180 per year for one evening per month.

Requirements

The following were listed as equipment that would be needed in the meeting rooms:

- Internet connection
- Flipchart stand
- Panel display boards
- TV & DVD player
- Refreshments and catering via cafe
- Projector & screen
- Storage space

A review of current rooms for hire at nearby libraries was undertaken and the following ascertained:

| Per session (9am-1pm or 1pm-5pm including clearing up time) | Capacity | Equipment and services | Non-Profit making | Profit making | Accessibility |
|--|-----------------|--|------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <u>Felixstowe Library</u> | 8 | Flip chart; Catering via library cafe | £12.50 | £25 |   Lift available |
| <u>Felixstowe Library</u> | 40 | Flip chart; Catering via library cafe; Kitchen (for use when cafe closed) | £20.50 | £41 |   Lift available |
| <u>Woodbridge library</u> | 25 | Flip chart; Tea/coffee available; Display boards; Exhibition space | £17.50 | £35 |   |
| <u>Other libraries</u> | Varied | Varied | £12.50/£17.50 | £25/£35 | Varied |

SAVO meeting rooms also offer the following office equipment to hirers

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------|
| Digital Projector | £15/day |
| Projector Screen | £5/day |
| Overhead Projector | £10/day |
| Induction Loop System | £10/day |
| Flip Chart Stand | £7.50/day |
| Panel Display Boards | £5/day |
| TV and Video Combination | £10/day |

4.3 CAFÉ / COMMUNITY COFFEE SHOP EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Two people have expressed an interest in running a café/ community coffee room at the Station. Both were interested in a lease for three years, one on a profit share arrangement (to be discussed). The hours suggested by both were weekdays and weekends 7.30 am – 6 pm.

Equipment required would include:

- Refrigeration
- Mechanical extracts
- Food preparation counters
- Display cases
- Duel sink
- Service counter
- Dry storage facilities
- White Goods.

4.4 Estate Agents

A questionnaire together with proposed plans for the buildings at Trimley Station was sent to eight estate agents who specialise in commercial properties. The questionnaire asked for information on the following:

- The demand in Felixstowe during 2009/2010 for units for light industrial (B1 users), small businesses and office work space
- The average square metre rental for light industrial (B1 users), small businesses and office work space in Felixstowe for 2009
- The demand in Felixstowe during 2009/2010 for self storage units for individuals and small businesses?
- The annual rental in Felixstowe during 2009/2010 for self storage units?

The following advice was given on different plan options for room layouts:

- Scheme 1,2,3 for example with smaller units, would be more expensive to convert, but higher rent per sq ft, more affordable to individual local occupiers, so more likely to get a good spread of tenants doing a variety of things, much like a craft centre or similar, but more likely to come and go and be management intensive.
- Scheme 4 and 5 would attract a more substantial quality of tenant who would be likely to stay longer, but overall rent per sq ft would be less. With the location being off the beaten track so to speak, it may be hard to secure a single retail type tenant to this sort of location / premises, unless they are primarily a food related operation.

The proposed layout options have advantages and disadvantages:

- Trimley Station is a niche location away from other similar commercial units, so it is very much a tertiary location as far as any retail or other occupation is concerned, which would require an element of passing trade and which would put a limit on achievable rent.
- It has however, a certain amount of charm and character, access and parking next or near to the site is easy, and is the sort of thing people would travel to visit so there is a definitely a draw there, which can only really be exploited with good marketing.

Comparing different uses, rental and demand (Costs as at December 2009):

Office use /Start up Units

- There is currently an awful lot of choice about in the town, with York House in town, 5 out of 8 similar offices sitting empty above HSBC / WH Smith in the town centre, the Ip-senta near the dock and other privately owned short term individual units etc available and sitting empty.
- Office rents in Felixstowe for larger self contained offices on long leases, are anywhere between £10 and £12.50 per sq ft today achievable, on top of which tenants would pay business rates, contribution to buildings insurance, utilities, and take responsibility for building maintenance and fitting out to suit own requirements. There are some start up barn style units at Toad Hall in Nacton being offered at between £15 and £20 per sq ft but there hasn't been a rush from what I can see.

Storage Units

- A typical garage in town will rent for £30 to £40 per month so compare to that i.e. £10 a week. Just be careful what is being stored. Ideal for private uses e.g. -archives, bikes, wine, or books but not commercial e.g. - builders materials as it would spoil the image of the rest of the scheme, depending on where the storage part is and how it is accessed. Probably of more value being included with one or more of the offices as archive storage is always a problem.

Cafe

- Notional rental value would in theory be similar to the offices.

4.5 Rail Passenger Numbers at Trimley Station

The annual rail passenger usage (based on sales of tickets in stated financial year(s) which end or originate at Trimley are shown in the table below.

| Annual rail passenger usage | |
|-----------------------------|----------|
| 2004/05 * | 21,837 |
| 2005/06 * | ▲ 25,802 |
| 2006/07 * | ▲ 30,153 |
| 2007/08 * | ▲ 42,413 |
| 2008/09 * | ▼ 40,714 |

Source: Office of Rail Regulation statistics

The office was contacted on 19 August 2010 and again on 16 September 2010 for the 2009/2010 figures and no response was received by the deadline of 17 September.