

Bonnington Community Centre Association

Report on Survey

Commissioned May/June 2016

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Aims of the survey:

- To find out more about who uses the Bonnington Centre and Bonnington Café.
- To find out how much local people and users know about the Centre and Café.
- To find out how much the Centre and Café meets the interests and needs of current users and local people.
- To seek out volunteers for maintaining and developing the BCCA.

Summary

1. This survey of the Bonnington Café/Bonnington Centre users and local people received a good response, including many positive comments, useful suggestions and offers to volunteer.
2. 80% of respondents did not live in the immediate area (Bonnington Square, Vauxhall Grove and Langley Lane).
3. 92% of respondents had eaten in the Café often or sometimes. The most popular Centre activities were the annual festival, taking classes and the winter solstice event.
4. Many Café users were not local (81%) and the Café age profile included many more people between 22-34 years than the Centre. Centre users were more evenly split between local and non-local.
5. There were many positive comments about the atmosphere and ethos of both the Café and Centre, and also about the locality ('an oasis') which was seen as an important element in their success. But there were a small number who were more critical.
6. 8% of all respondents felt the Café/Centre did not reflect their needs/interests, and 29% said 'don't know' to this question.
7. Many Café users were unaware of the Centre's activities.
8. Many suggestions for improvements were made, emphasising the risks of changing too much but pointing to the need to improve facilities nevertheless. Several asked for extended access/opening hours, and others suggested ideas for a wider range of activities.
9. Feedback from local people included a call for both Centre and Café to reflect the local community more closely.

Overview

The BCCA organised the survey in order to find out more about who currently uses the different activities of the Centre and Café, to find out how much local people and users know about both of them, to what extent they meet their interests/needs, and to seek out volunteers in maintaining and developing further. It arose because significant changes to the BCCA's governance arrangements were being considered and because of a growing perception that change was needed in the way the BCCA and the Café Users Group related to each other and the local community.

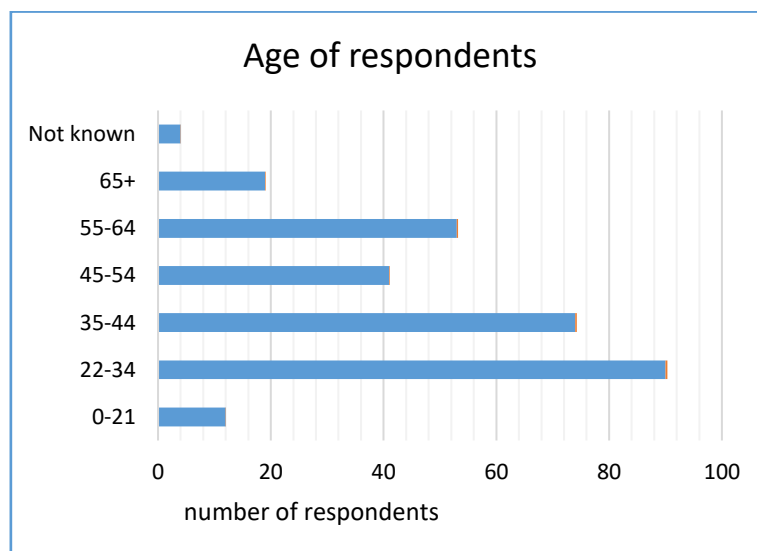
The survey was undertaken in May/June 2016. A total of 1,000 paper questionnaires were distributed both to properties in Bonnington Square, Vauxhall Grove and Langley Lane, and also made available in the Café, the Centre, and Italo (a delicatessen/café in Bonnington Square). Links to a Survey Monkey online survey were posted on the Centre/Café website (with an unknown number of hits) and Facebook group (which reached 98

people). The paper questionnaire also directed people to the online questionnaire through the BCCA website. The online survey was not identical to the paper survey, having fewer questions (for details, see appendices). A total of 293 forms were completed, 236 (81%) on paper and 57 (19%) online, representing an excellent return rate estimated at 25%. An initial analysis of one-third of the data was presented to an Open Forum in June 2016.

Users of the Café and Centre

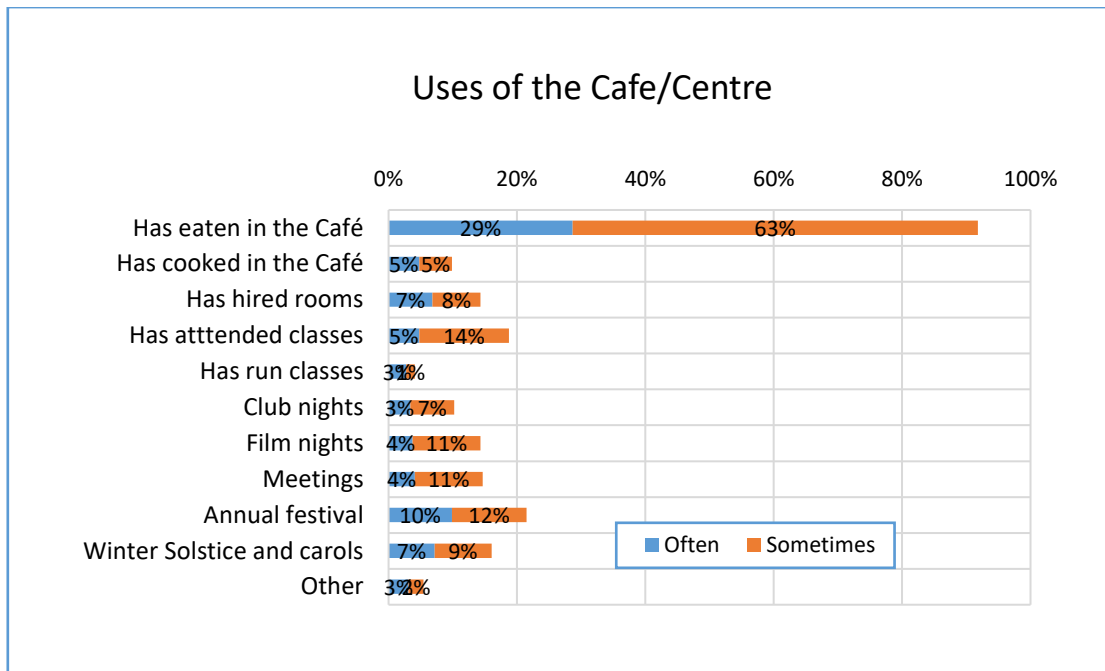
A large majority of those responding (80%) did not live in the immediate area of Bonnington Square, Vauxhall Grove and Langley Lane, although there were indications from the online survey and the comments that some of these did not live far away. Comments indicated that some were visitors from across London or further away, including tourists from outside the UK.

The users of the café/centre came from all ages, with the largest group in the young adult range.

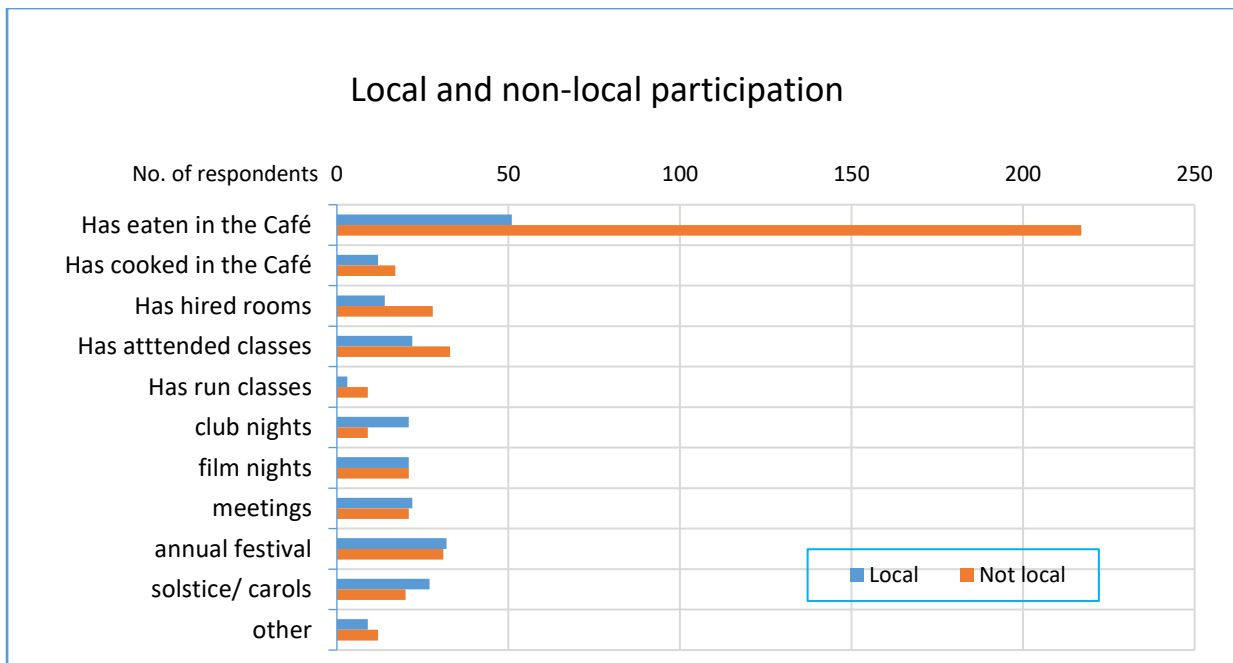


What are the Café and Centre used for?

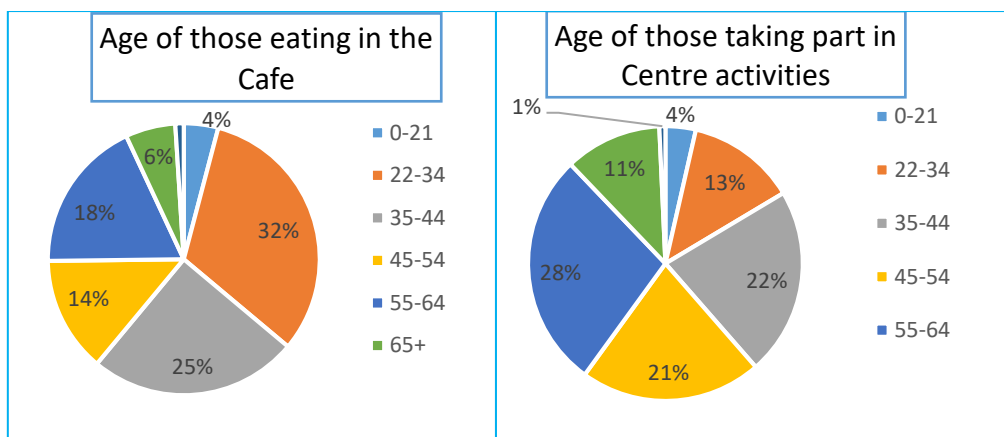
Eating in the café was by far the most common reason for using the premises (92% did so sometimes or often), and for 156 respondents (53%) this was their only activity. However, many others reported that they participated in other activities, the most popular being the annual festival (22%), going to classes (19%), and the winter solstice and carols event (16%).



There were significant differences between local and non-local participation. There were far more non-locals who ate in the café than locals (81% non-local and 19% local), but other activities were more evenly balanced between local and non-local respondents.



There were also differences in the age profiles between those eating in the Café and those participating in other activities, such as classes, festivals, etc. with a much larger proportion of younger people eating the Café.



How much do people know about the Centre?

Only 60% of respondents said they knew what happens at the Centre, with locals a bit better informed at 69%. Awareness that upstairs rooms can be hired was also low at 53%. There were quite a few comments saying that the questionnaire was the first time the respondent had heard about the Centre's activities.

Are the Café and Centre welcoming?

Most of those who had visited the Café agreed that they felt welcome (91%), and this was also true for the Centre (87%). There were many positive comments, for example:

This is a very welcoming and inspirational place to me. The world is losing a sense of community and warmth; ... Thank you.

The café is lovely, as is the garden and square. Very welcoming to non-residents.

However, there were a few negative comments about feeling unwelcome, for example:

The café has an unfriendly feeling.

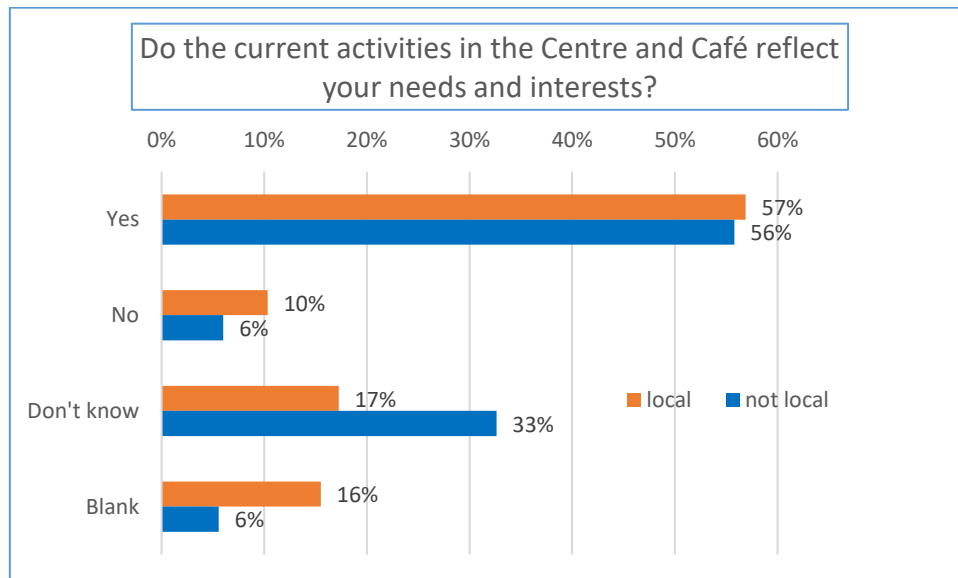
I am ignored when I arrive on my own, which is particularly when you need to be made to feel welcome.

I was (still am) very keen to get involved in the café, and went along to one of the meetings to try and put my name to the list. I felt very unwelcome there - completely put off trying again.

Maybe "unwelcome" is too strong, but there is a vibe that everyone knows each other, and frankly, it doesn't seem to be very diverse.

Do the current activities in the café and centre reflect the needs and interests of respondents?

Only 61% of respondents answered yes to this question, with 31% answering that they didn't know enough about what happens, and 8% answering no. More non-local respondents than locals said they did not know about current activities (but more locals did not answer the question at all), while more locals said that their needs/interests were not reflected.



Getting involved

There were 65 people (22%) who offered to volunteer. Of these 20 were local and 45 were non-local, although these probably included people who live nearby. A total of 83 people left contact details. Paper surveys included a question asking about involvement in the Café/Centre, with 12% saying they had been involved in the Café, and 13% in the Centre and 33% expressing a wish to become involved.

Relationships with the local community

A number of people spontaneously commented positively on the local setting and ambiance, with 7% of all comments including this point.

There were a range of comments about the relationship between the café and the local community from local respondents:

For the café, I'm not sure it reflects the community. Friends in square/grove who want to cook have been made unwelcome.

...the café doesn't [reflect needs/interests] because the food isn't great, and it should be!

I'd prefer the café to be locally run. ... Disconnect between square/grove = cooking. ...I remember when cooks were mostly from this area.

And general comments from non-locals:

... [I] feel like the Bonnington has quite an established identity that isn't really my scene. BUT it is the scene of a lot of other people, so, that's not to say it should change. It could probably do with becoming more inclusive though

...it's far too dippy hippy Reiki bullshit

There were calls for a management which is more community led and sensitive to local conflicts of interest. In particular, several comments pointed to a need to ensure there are more local chefs. There were also comments that the Café should more closely reflect the diversity of the local community.

Suggestions for the future

One significant theme was that things should be left as they are, as much as possible.

The Bon is amazing. Change nothing!

... Please don't 'upgrade' it too much.

Don't change too much/too fast.

There were many practical suggestions for improvement, including:

- A wider choice of food in the café
- More toilets, and on the ground floor
- Refurbishment of the building
- Café open longer hours, in the day and at night; for breakfast, coffee, etc.
- Tea and coffee facilities for the Centre
- Online room booking (and paying) facilities
- Bookings to include gaps for changeover time
- Access to the Centre without going through the café (e.g. a code system on the door)
- Activities offered at more different times of the day/week
- Make room bookings available in exchange for contributing to the Centre

- Better equipment in Centre rooms
- Better heating
- Hours of person in office displayed.

A number of new or expanded activities were suggested, including yoga, language classes, drama workshops, art exhibitions and exhibitions of work by those using the centre, music, exercise classes, strumming workshop, more benefit nights, and a craft fair.

There was a plea for the café to be more involved in the politics of food e.g. vegetable growing in allotments and spare ground or cooking waste food from supermarkets. Another suggestion was to reach out to younger people by inviting them to run new activities.

There were several broader suggestions about how to manage the Café/Centre. Several people pointed out the need for more publicity for Centre activities, with suggestions such as an online newsletter, online community noticeboard, and a more sophisticated use of Facebook.

Bonnington Centre Survey 2016: Appendix 1: Tables

Please note: There were some differences between the questions asked in the paper and online surveys, so the results for some questions were not comparable. Some of these have been excluded from this appendix.

Surveys completed

Surveys completed	Number	%
paper surveys	239	82%
invalid	3	1%
valid paper surveys	236	81%
online surveys	57	19%
Total valid	293	100%

Question 1: Do you live in Bonnington Square/Langley Lane/Vauxhall Grove?

Q1: Do you live locally?		
Bonnington Sq/Vauxhall Gr/ Langley La	58	20%
elsewhere (including locally in Vauxhall, Oval or Kennington)	233	80%
blank	2	1%
	293	100%

Paper surveys included a question asking how long people had lived in the area, but not many responses were given (50 responses, 20%). Online surveys did not include this question.

Question 2: How old are you?

Q2: Age of respondents		
0-21	12	4%
22-34	90	31%
35-44	74	25%
45-54	41	14%
55-64	53	18%
65+	19	6%
Not known	4	1%
	293	100%

Question 3: Do you know what happens at the Bonnington Centre?

Q3: Know what happens at Centre		
Yes	174	59%
No	108	37%
Blank	11	4%

This data was analysed by residence:

Q3: Know what happens at Centre - local/not local						
	local		not local		blank	
Yes	40	69%	133	57%	1	50%
No	13	22%	95	41%	0	0%
Blank	5	9%	5	2%	1	50%
	58		233		2	

Question 4: Do you use, or have you ever used, the Bonnington Centre for...?

Q4: Used the centre for:									
	Often		Sometimes		Never		Blank		
Has eaten in the Café	84	29%	185	63%	23	8%	1	0%	
Has cooked in the Café	14	5%	15	5%	253	86%	11	4%	
Has hired rooms	20	7%	22	8%	239	82%	12	4%	
Has attended classes	14	5%	41	14%	228	78%	10	3%	
Has run classes	8	3%	4	1%	267	91%	14	5%	
Club nights	10	3%	20	7%	250	85%	13	4%	
Film nights	11	4%	31	11%	239	82%	12	4%	
Meetings	12	4%	31	11%	236	81%	14	5%	
Annual festival	29	10%	34	12%	218	74%	12	4%	
Winter Solstice and carols	21	7%	26	9%	232	79%	14	5%	
Other	9	3%	7	2%	184	63%	93	32%	

This was analysed by whether respondents were local or non-local:

Q4: Used the centre for: local/not local				
Often or sometimes used	Local		Not local	
Has eaten in the Café	51	88%	217	93%
Has cooked in the Café	12	21%	17	7%
Has hired rooms	14	24%	28	12%
Has attended classes	22	38%	33	14%
Has run classes	3	5%	9	4%
club nights	21	36%	9	4%
film nights	21	36%	21	9%
meetings	22	38%	21	9%
annual festival	32	55%	31	13%
solstice/ carols	27	47%	20	9%
other	9	16%	12	5%

It was also analysed by age group for broader categories of activity:

Q4: Used the centre for: by age group								
	Total	0-21	22-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	not known
Has eaten in the café	269	4%	32%	25%	14%	18%	6%	1%
Has cooked	29	0%	10%	41%	17%	28%	3%	0%
Has run activities	54	0%	15%	13%	26%	22%	24%	0%
Has done activities	280	4%	13%	22%	21%	28%	11%	1%
Other	21	10%	24%	10%	24%	19%	14%	0%

Question 5: Do you know that the upstairs rooms are for hire?

Q5: Know upstairs rooms are for hire?		
Yes	154	53%
No	138	47%
Blank	1	0%
	293	100%

Note: This was question 7 in the online survey.

Question 6: Do you know how to access the facilities either in person or online?

Q6: Know how to access facilities?		
Yes	110	47%
No	123	52%
Blank	3	1%
	236	100%

Note: This question was not asked in the online survey.

Question 7: Do you feel welcome in the Café and the Centre upstairs?

Q7: Do you feel welcome?		
Yes, I feel welcome in the Cafe	268	91%
No, I do not feel welcome in the Cafe	7	2%
I have never visited the Cafe	13	4%
Blank	5	2%
Yes, I feel welcome in the Centre	104	35%
No, I do not feel welcome in the Centre	15	5%
I have never visited the Centre	126	43%
Blank	48	16%

Note: This was question 6 in the online survey.

This data was analysed by residence:

Q7: Do you feel welcome at the café? – local/not local					
	Local		Not local		Not known
Yes	50	86%	217	93%	1
No	3	5%	4	2%	0
Never visited	4	7%	8	3%	1
Blank	1	2%	4	2%	0
Total	58		233		2

Q7: Do you feel welcome at the Centre? – local/not local					
	Local		Not local		Not known
Yes	37	64%	68	29%	0
No	4	7%	11	5%	0
Never visited	11	19%	114	49%	1
Blank	6	10%	40	17%	1
Total	58		233		2

Question 8: Have you ever tried to get involved in the Café/Centre upstairs?

Q8: Tried to get involved café/centre		
Yes - café	29	12%
No	196	83%
Blank	11	5%
Total	236	100%
Yes - centre	30	13%
No	192	81%
Blank	14	6%
Total	236	100%

Note: This question was not asked in the online survey.

Question 9: Would you like to be involved and have input into the Café/Centre activities?

Q9: Want to be involved café/centre?				
	Cafe		Centre	
Yes	77	33%	78	33%
No	133	56%	131	56%
Blank	26	11%	27	11%

Note: This question was not asked in the online survey.

Question 10: Are you interested in volunteering?

Q10: Want to volunteer?		
Yes	65	22%
No	205	70%
Blank	23	8%
Details provided	83	28%

Question 11: Do the current activities in the café/centre reflect your needs/interests?

Q11: Activities reflect your needs/interests?		
Yes	164	56%
No	22	8%
Don't know	85	29%
Blank	22	8%
Comment provided	44	15%

Note: This was question 5 in the online survey.

This was analysed by residence:

Q11: Do you feel the centre reflects your interests/needs? – local/not local					
	Local		Not local		Not known
Yes	33	57%	130	56%	1
No	6	10%	14	6%	0
Don't know	10	17%	76	33%	0
Blank	9	16%	13	6%	1
Total	58		233		2

Question 12: Do you have any other comments?

Q12: Comments?		
Comment given	148	63%
Blank	88	37%
	236	100%

The comments were further analysed:

Number of comments and suggestions		
About the café food	46	23%
About the café generally	86	42%
About the centre	43	21%
General	28	14%
	203	100%

Comments about food		
good	45	98%
poor	1	2%
	46	100%

Nature of Comments							
	Café		Centre		General		
positive	64	74%	13	30%	19	68%	
neutral	1	1%	4	9%	1	4%	
negative	12	14%	1	2%	2	7%	
suggestions	9	10%	25	58%	6	21%	

Comments were also analysed by residence:

Differences in comments - local and non-local				
	local		non-local	
positive	13	32%	81	71%
neutral	0	0%	6	5%
negative	11	27%	4	4%
suggestion	17	41%	23	20%
	41		114	

Appendix 2: List of comments

Note: Most comments about the quality of food in the café, and general comments about the service and ambiance of the café are not included.

A. From paper forms:

1.	Please don't close this centre. I love the atmosphere. It needs refurbishment. I happy to get involved to volunteer. Plus there are some many ideas we can try and raise money for the refurbishment.
2.	Didn't know there was a centre, only know the café. Love the café. Interested in the centre and would like emails.
3.	first time
4.	Don't change too much/too fast.
5.	Keep it going - it would be great if it stayed open later.
6.	A place to be treasured and kept going
7.	Café a lovely find. Square an oasis.
8.	...definitely going to tell more friends who'd like to eat and/or volunteer here.
9.	Sorry I don't live locally ... I am organising a study tour with Oxfam with students from Japan and am planning to bring the participants here for lunch during the program and to learn more about the centre.
10.	... Would love to come cook sometime!
11.	...it's my favourite restaurant in London.
12.	...I'll be spreading the word.
13.	1. Tea and coffee for the rooms being hired in the centre. 2. Better condition of equipment available in the rooms, i.e. massage equipment, CD player. 3. Gap between bookings - so not interrupted.
14.	I had no idea there was a centre for public use - I live on South Lambeth Road.
15.	The centre needs improvement. Better entry system for facilities i.e. a code for entry, not reliant on café. Tea & coffee cups etc. when using centre. Better booking system - online booking. Better equipment provided in rooms, i.e. CD player, massage bed, etc. Better heating.
16.	Tea and coffee would be nice when using the centre. Better equipment provided. Have 15 minutes gaps between bookings, to avoid interruption.
17.	Tea and coffee and cups would be nice when using the centre.
18.	Very welcoming suitable space. Tea and coffee facilities for room hire would be good. Better conditioning equipment (some is very good) (or regularly checked). Allow turnover time between room bookings.

19.	Tea and coffee cups when using the centre; better condition of equipment
20.	Is there a Facebook page? Saw café advertised in trip advisor
21.	I like what is available but language classes would be a good addition. A very valuable resource. It is affordable and does not interfere with my events - both very important. Through the centre, I bring people into Vauxhall.
22.	I've only been for a meal and don't know what else is done here.
23.	Love the music nights in café especially Sunday with?? on piano
24.	more food choice please
25.	It is only through my own research that I am aware of what happens in the Centre. You can and should promote it more in the café.
26.	I would like the café to be open for coffee/tea during the day. Also in the morning for breakfast. A payment system on-line for paying for room booking, where we could also get a receipt for payment. I feel this Centre is an amazing resource that should be supported, and am very grateful to those volunteers that keep it running and am willing to contribute to maintain and improve this little treasure of a place. Thank you.
27.	Booking rooms on line would be excellent.
28.	Whatever happens some people may need help for places to go and things to do.
29.	How to involve people in fundraising and improving the lovely building. I believe there is refurbishment fundraising in progress. I have in past volunteered in painting the walls.
30.	I'd rather there were toilets on the ground floor.
31.	For the café, I'm not sure it reflects the community. Friends in square/grove who want to cook have been made unwelcome. If we have new management for the café, it needs to be community led. And we must avoid conflicts of interest with other local commercial concerns (i.e. I would not want to see Italo manage the cafe).
32.	The café has been there for a long time. Would like local people to have more input i.e. cooking days. I feel local people would use the café much more, if there was friendly faces cooking.
33.	I would like more workshops relating to drama. Both café and centre are great! Wonderful places!
34.	I used to love the 1970s décor. It reminded me of being a student. Please don't 'upgrade' it too much.
35.	Why can't Charlie Boxer run it?
36.	The café has an unfriendly feeling.

37.	Would like to get involved in the café, but feel it is a closed shop. Also feels very unfriendly at times. Would only go in when one of the locals are cooking or if they cook.
38.	I have had the impression that changes may be occurring in the running of the café. I fear that people are showing interest on the café purely for lucrative reasons. I fear that in that case the café will lose its soul and spirit that was built over the last 25 years! So sad.
39.	I'd prefer the café to be locally run. Local cooks. Don't think the cooks are from round here. Good: Very reasonable priced food in café. Centre hire v. reasonable. Bad: Disconnect between square/grove = cooking. Didn't use to be like that. I remember when cooks were mostly from this area. SHOULD BE REINSTATED - LOCAL MANAGEMENT & COOKS.
40.	Both café and esp. Centre are great resources for the community which I wouldn't want to see change too much. Although perhaps funds for renovation (gradual_ of the Centre are possibly required.
41.	Café door should always be open - welcome. More toilets needed. Times of person in office should be shown on main door. I love it all.
42.	Could there be opportunities for groups using the centre to exhibit their work?
43.	More publicity about what events are going on would be good. Emailed newsletter or use 'street life' the local community noticeboard.
44.	Could be more music and more exercise classes and café could be more open in its management.
45.	...the café doesn't (reflect needs/interests) because the food isn't great, and it should be! I'd like to see a more cohesive café community that produces really good (vegetarian) food and is involved in the politics of food be it production or consumption, e.g. vegetable growing in allotments and spare ground, and more events with the people who cook waste food from supermarkets, etc.
46.	I visited the centre once for an art exhibition which I loved. On a couple of occasions I tried emailing people regarding classes, mainly yoga, and never heard back. I was (still am) very keen to get involved in the café, and went along to one of the meetings to try and put my name to the list. I felt very unwelcome there - completely put off trying again. Would like to see the cafe being more open to locals.
47.	Our centre is a real asset. If something is wrong please tell us. If something is needed, tell us. We will act when we know the score.
48.	not really aware of which activities are available

B. Comments from online responses:

49.	I would like to see a wider range of local groups using the centre.
50.	I would like to see the benefit nights in the café used more. Would like to have a strumming workshop.
51.	I feel the café is mostly used by people from outside the local area and rarely use it these days. I feel the centre is much more of a community resource with a wide range of activities. ... Re the question on volunteering I would be when I have more time but afraid not possible at the moment. (Re feeling welcome) - For the café sometimes. I have always felt welcome at the centre for activities and events run by local people, I tried to attend a course run by an external person attended by all external people and I was very clearly made to feel that I was not welcome. Thank you for doing this survey and consulting
52.	Art exhibition (suggestion for other activity). I would love to go to more classes but they are a bit too expensive for me. It would be great to have a life drawing class there again!
53.	craft fair (suggestion for other activity)
54.	I don't know what they're doing these days. Maybe "unwelcome" is too strong, but there is a vibe that everyone knows each other, and frankly, it doesn't seem to be very diverse
55.	Yes the centre does a great job. As for the cafe. I feel it needs to be more for the community it needs to change. Because at the moment people in the community do not use the café
56.	Didn't know about all these things actually! Would be interested in updates. Just don't know about them all...
57.	I love the pianos
58.	I'm not really sure what happens in the centre above the cafe!
59.	Love the nights with music and piano!!
60.	I am ignored when I arrive on my own, which particularly when you need to be made to feel welcome
61.	Didn't know about a lot of the activities even though I visit the restaurant a lot!
62.	The food can be very variable. it's far too dippy hippy Reiki bullshit
63.	I don't know what they are - receiving the flyer through my door this week was the first time they had been brought to my attention, other than knowing of the cafe. I've not yet looked at your website which I shall do now. Perhaps more marketing is necessary? I've lived at Clun Terrace on the corner of the Grove for 10 years! I'm afraid I can't attend the meeting on 19 June as I'll be overseas. I've provided my email address below!
64.	Generally yes, but some of the activities are only offered during the day on working days - while I can only make it to the centre on weekends and some evenings.