

Introduction

Romsey Future, in partnership with Test Valley Borough Council, commissioned a Citizens' Assembly be held on the future provision of community facilities in the town. The first phase of the Assembly was held in July 2024. Prior to the first Phase, Romsey Future consulted with a wide variety of interest groups in Romsey and the surrounding areas during May and June 2024 to understand the requirements for future community facilities in the town, to meet the needs of residents now and in the future.

As part of the consultation with interest groups, these groups were:

- Existing users of the Crosfield Hall
- The U3A
- The Chamber of Commerce
- Multifaith groups
- Disabled People's Partnership
- Test Valley Borough Council
- Older People
- The Romsey and District Society
- Young people (aged 11-15)

On 9th and 13th May 2024, Romsey Future hosted a workshop with existing users of the Crosfield Hall in the Crosfield Hall. This report summarises the questions that

were asked and the outcomes raised during the workshop with the existing users of the Crosfield Hall.

'If the Crosfield Hall is not retained, adequate community facilities need to re-provided. The facilities that Crosfield Hall provides are valuable to the local community. If the building itself is no longer fit for purpose or inefficient, it is most important that enhanced community facilities are re-provided in a location or locations that are accessible and convenient.'

- The Masterplan, on the future of the Crosfield Hall (page 28)

Background

Between 2018 and 2020, extensive community engagement took place in Romsey which resulted in the creation of the South of Romsey Town Centre Masterplan. The Masterplan presented a series of development opportunities for the South of Romsey Town Centre area.

For the Crosfield Hall site, the options were for car parking, retail, or residential uses to come forward on the site. However, this would only be realised if community facilities were re-provided elsewhere prior

to the removal of the current facility.

Existing Users of the Crosfield Hall Workshop

In response to question 1, (what do you currently use community facilities for?), there were a total of 161 answers, identifying a variety of different uses, including vaccinations, meetings, fayres, art society and yoga. Below is a wordcloud featuring the most popular answers:



In response to question 2, (What is good about the community facilities you use?), the five most common answers were:

1. Location

- People wrote that the location of existing facilities (the Town Hall, Crosfield Hall) was central to the town.
- Comments included “central to town” and “walking distance from centre”

2. Room variety

- People responded that having different rooms, of different sizes was very positive.
- Comments included: “multi-room” and “reasonably sized rooms”

3. Parking

- People responded that the parking at the Crosfield was useful.
- Comments included “dedicated parking” and “parking available”

4. Stage

- People responded that the stage was an asset.

- Comments included "CH and others – stage"

5. Staff

- People wrote that the staff at existing facilities (the Town Hall, Crosfield Hall) were great.
- Comments included "helpful staff" and "good staff"

In response to question 3 (what are the challenges, if any, in using these community facilities?), the five most common responses were:

1. Parking

- People responded that issues with parking made facilities harder to use.
- Comments included "limited parking" and "parking used as overflow for the town"

2. Kitchen

- People wrote that the kitchen facilities could be improved.
- Comments included "limited catering facilities" and "kitchen could be improved"

3. Accessibility

- People responded that existing facilities were not especially accessible.
- Comments included "no audio loop in annexe" and "steps at entrance"

4. Facilities

- People commented that facilities could be better.
- Comments included "poor facilities" and "lighting and heating not great"

5. Size

- People wrote that existing facilities were not the right size.
- Comments included "additional rooms" and "lack of space"

In response to question 4, (what should be included in any community facilities that are provided in future) the five most common answers were:

1. Facilities

- People felt excellent facilities were crucial for future facilities.
- Comments included "adjustable lighting" and "efficient heating"

2. Room variety

- People wrote that the a variety of rooms was an important feature of any future facility.
- Comments included “diversity and flexibility in room sizes” and “flexibility of rooms”

3. Toilets

- People responded that having high quality toilets would be valuable.
- Comments included “up to date toilets” and “disabled access toilets”

4. Stage

- People wrote that a stage was an important factor.
- Comments included “stage kept in some format”

5. Accessibility

- People responded that accessibility was significant and should be considered for any future facility.
- Comments included “fully accessible for all”

In response to question 5, (if you wish to retain the existing facilities, how would you improve them?) the five most common responses were:

1. Toilets

- People responded existing toilet facilities should be improved
- Comments included “increased toilets” and “improve toilet facilities”

2. Environmentally friendly

- People responded that the hall should be more environmentally friendly.
- Comments included “retrofitted to the best environmental standards” and “Eco-friendly”

3. Kitchen

- People wrote that the kitchen should be upgraded.
- Comments included “update kitchen” and “improve kitchen”

4. Modernise

- People responded that the hall should be modernised.
- Comments included “general redecoration” and “modernise the look”

5. Acoustics

- People wrote that the acoustics could be improved
- Comments included “sound proofing” and “better acoustics”

Citizens' Assembly – July & September

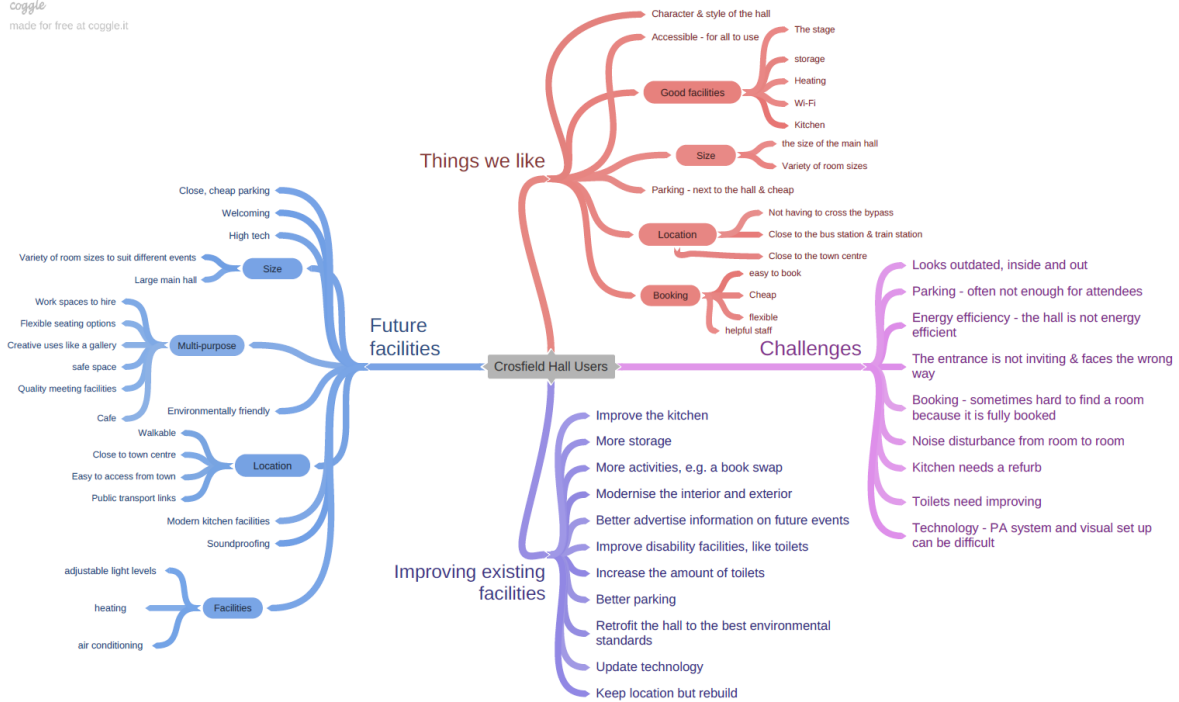
Two sessions were held at the end of July to open the Romsey citizens' assembly 2024. The citizens' assembly were asked to deal with the following question:

What should be included in the improved community facilities that meet the needs of Romsey now and in the future?

The 36 participants took part in workshops and received presentations highlighting the current community facilities in Romsey. The group was randomly selected to ensure the citizens' assembly was demographically representative of the town. The assembly were asked to discuss Romsey citizens' needs, desires, and expectations for community facilities in the area south of the town centre.

Speakers from different community interest groups, including the existing users, were invited to present the discussions from their pre-engagement workshops to the citizens' assembly. The outcomes of the pre-engagement workshops were turned into mind maps which visually represented the points that were raised during each workshop. This was an opportunity for the citizens' assembly to learn more about the different needs and experiences of interest groups in respect of existing community facilities in the town.

Below is the mind map made from all of the comments raised at the Existing Users of the Crosfield Hall workshop.



In September, the Assembly met again to discuss options for future community facilities and where they might best be located to serve the needs of the town. They were reminded of the requirements and preferences of the lived experience groups and heard from design specialists on what might be possible in different locations across Romsey. The Assembly worked together create preferences which will be given to Councillors, to form a crucial part of their decision making.

Conclusion

Thank for you speaking to us about your views and experiences on existing community facilities in the town, and for sending representatives along to speak to the assembly.