WYLAM INSTITUTE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

RESULTS OF INSTITUTE FUTURE QUESTIONNAIRE

SPRING 2026



1. INTRODUCTION

CONTEXT

In July and September 2025 Wylam Institute Community Association ('the Institute') lost two key income streams representing 24% of income (2024-25 accounts). Budget forecasting calculated that expenditure would outstrip income from the beginning of the fiscal year 2026-27.

Analysis of Institute usage in September 2025 indicated the Institute is used 15% of the available time. While the large first floor hall (Munro Hall) is used almost 50% of the available time, the ground floor hall was occupied less than 25% of the available time and smaller rooms less than 10% of the available time.

Research commenced to explore other revenue opportunities and discover ways to encourage greater use of the building. Other village halls and community spaces were visited, many of which have been refurbished to provide modern facilities with funding from multiple sources. Trustees explored a possible change of use for some of the building to accommodate activities that may not be available elsewhere.

In November 2025 the trustees presented three options to the Parish Council and County Councillor:

1. Potential for transfer of activities from the Falcon Centre to the Institute.
2. Refurbishment of the building.
3. Operating the Institute as a community hub.

In January 2026 the trustees agreed to commence consultation and engagement with residents on the future of the Institute. A questionnaire and communication leaflet was prepared, with a simple survey to ask:

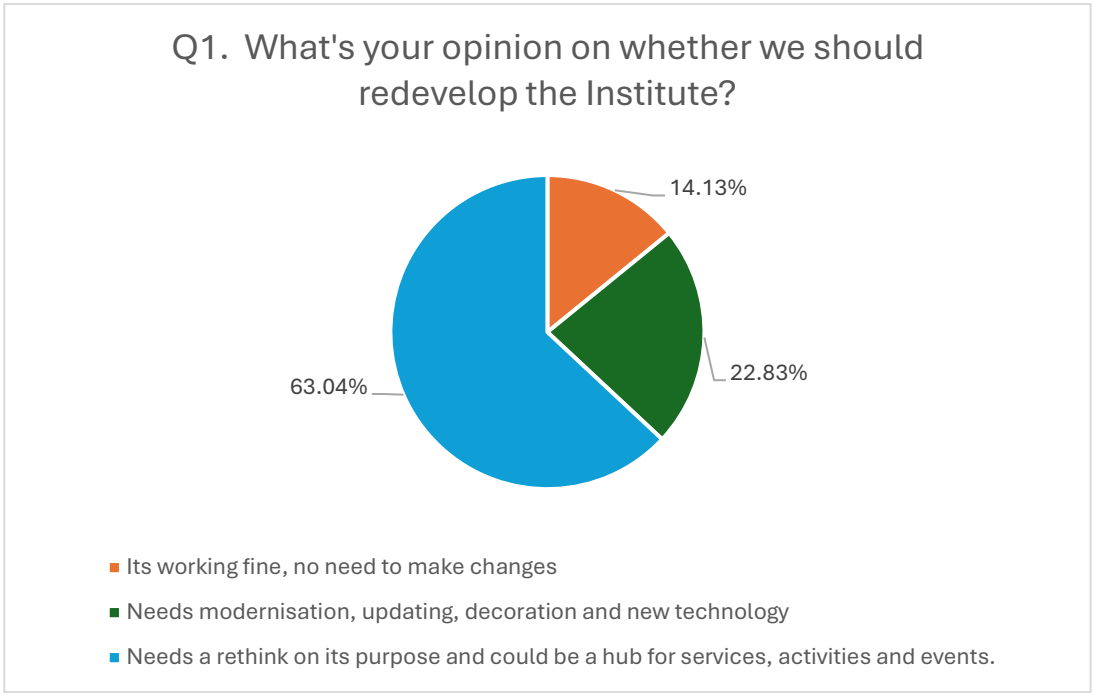
- Should we redevelop the Institute?
- Should we develop as a community hub?
- If you ticked to indicate the Institute should make some changes, please let us know what improvements you think would benefit people in Wylam?

QUESTIONNAIRE DISTRIBUTION

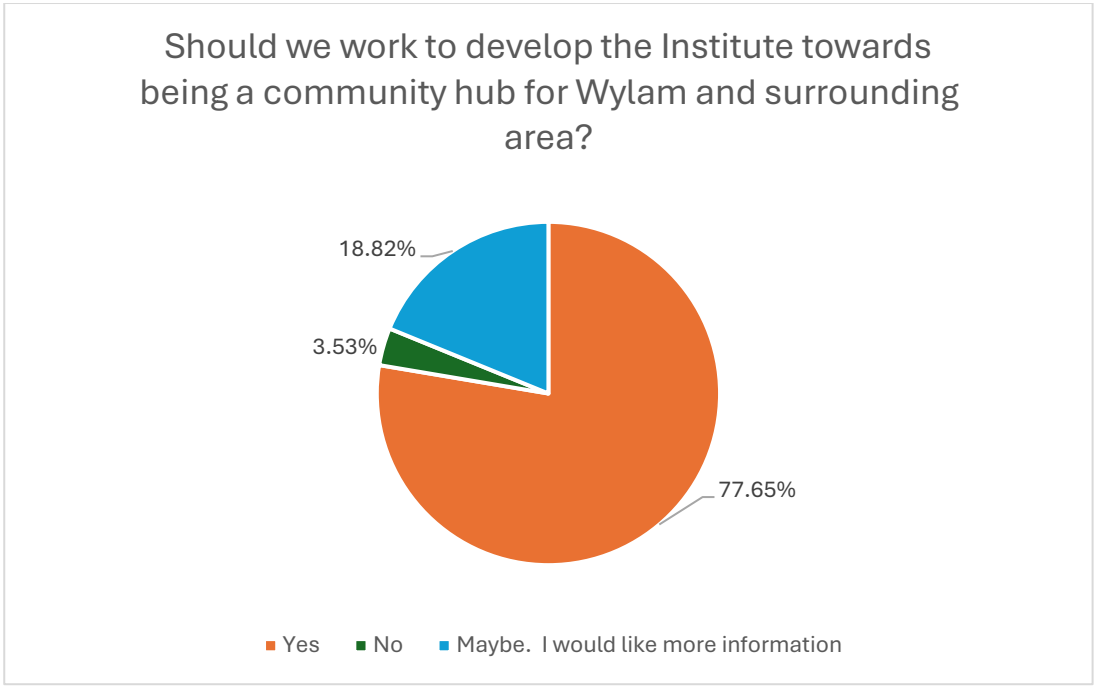
The questionnaire was available online on the website and in paper format. An accompanying leaflet provided background information and encouraged responses. Distribution was initially on the Institute noticeboard and at the Parish Council village event on 21 February. There were conversations at the 130 anniversary event from 10-12 April and encouragement to respond.

In May all households received the leaflet, questionnaire and the first issue of Wylam Whispers, the Institute newsletter. The closing date for responses was 31 May.

2. QUESTION 1: WHAT'S YOUR OPINION ON WHETHER WE SHOULD REDEVELOP THE INSTITUTE?

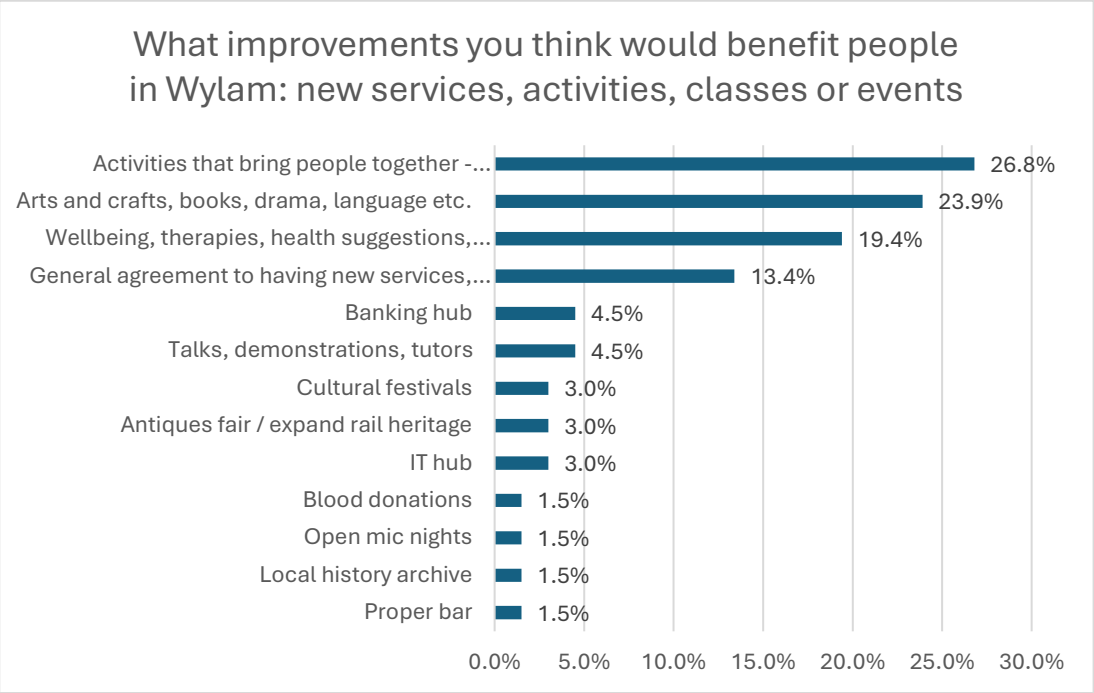


3. QUESTION 2: THE DEFINITION OF A COMMUNITY HUB IS A FOCAL POINT FOR THE LOCAL COMMUNITY, COORDINATING A RANGE OF SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES TO MEET DIVERSE LOCAL NEEDS AND ENHANCE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT. SHOULD WE WORK WITH THE PARISH COUNCIL AND LOCAL AUTHORITY TO DEVELOP THE INSTITUTE TOWARDS BEING A COMMUNITY HUB FOR WYLAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA?

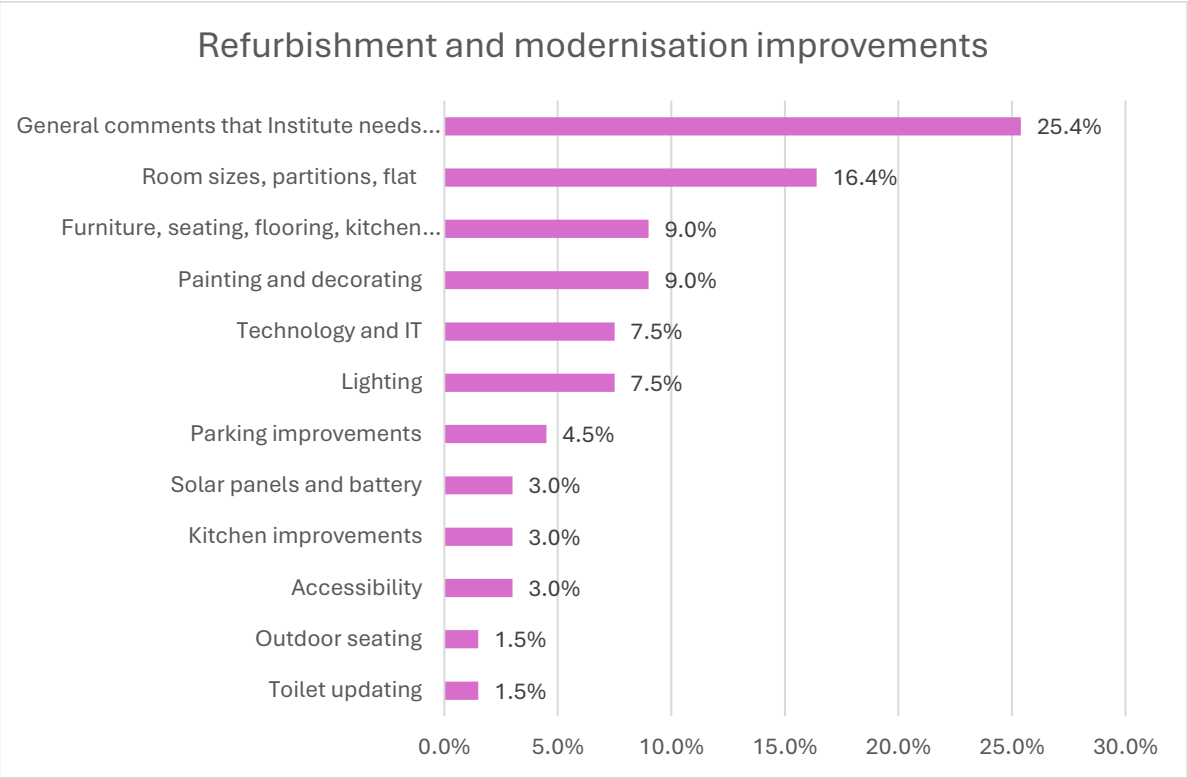


4. QUESTION 3a: IF YOU TICKED TO INDICATE THE INSTITUTE SHOULD MAKE SOME CHANGES, PLEASE LET US KNOW WHAT IMPROVEMENTS YOU THINK WOULD BENEFIT PEOPLE IN WYLAM.

a. NEW SERVICES, ACTIVITIES, CLASSES OR EVENTS

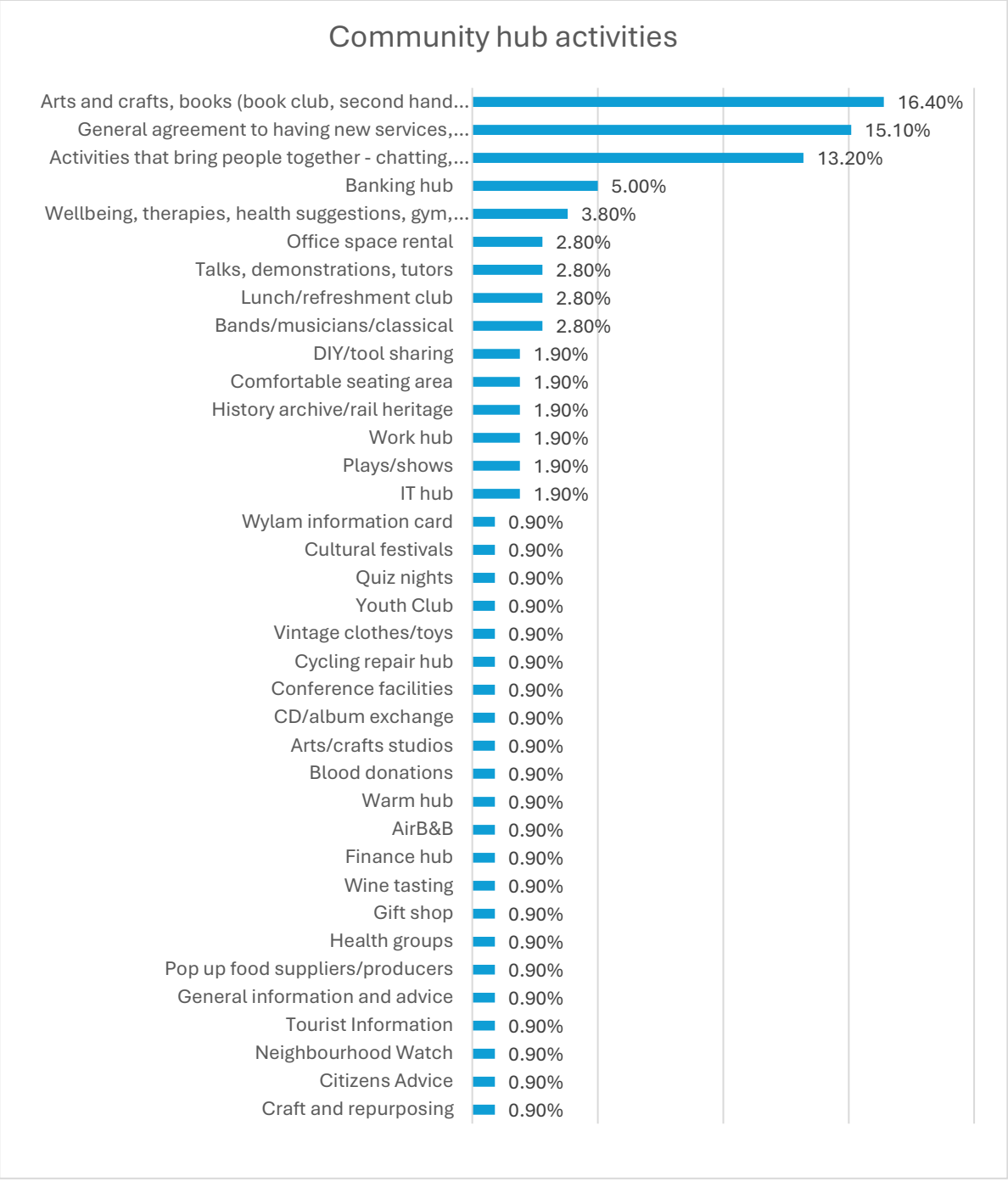


b. REFURBISHMENT OR MODERNISATION IMPROVEMENTS



QUESTION 3c: IF YOU TICKED TO INDICATE THE INSTITUTE SHOULD MAKE SOME CHANGES, PLEASE LET US KNOW WHAT IMPROVEMENTS YOU THINK WOULD BENEFIT PEOPLE IN WYLAM.

c. COMMUNITY HUB ACTIVITIES



FALCON CENTRE, LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

There were 24 responses relating to a community hub at the Institute and the Falcon Centre, library and museum. Comments made were:

- Work together with the Parish Council, Falcon Centre and other venues to ensure the viability of all and the best outcome for the village (8).
- Bring the library to the Institute if the Falcon Centre closes (12).
- Good to have community information all in one place.
- Use the Falcon Centre for off-road parking.
- Second hand books at the library (complement each other) but not the Institute.
- Joint community building insurance.
- Prefer no 'heritage', the museum at the Falcon Centre is enough. Heritage just becomes nostalgic; the village needs to look to the young people and give them more help and support.