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Derwenthorpe Residents' Association

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Thinking About Derwenthorpe

A 2020 residents survey, focussed on community activity.

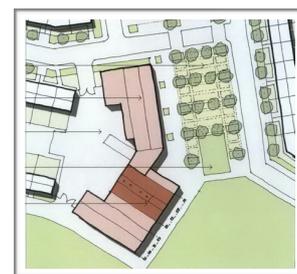
This is a draft copy. The final draft will include appendices with additional detail on some items.

Background

Derwenthorpe Residents' Association (DRA) is an association of the 481 households on the Derwenthorpe housing estate. Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust (JRHT) built the estate in four "Quarters", centred on an Energy Centre (EC) which provides district heating and community meeting facilities: one large room, above two smaller rooms, a single toilet and a small kitchen. The larger of the small rooms is currently used by JRHT as an office. From the beginning, JRHT have been committed to developing Derwenthorpe as a community, not just a housing estate. To that end, they have provided some community facilities, and staff who have helped to provide some of our events.

However, the original plans for the estate envisaged very much more extensive community space (see sketch). In 2019, a group of residents met to consider the feasibility of developing some of that space, and decided to survey residents to explore the question of whether such a project was needed.

Note that the Energy Centre is also referred to as the Super Sustainable Centre (SSC), but this report uses the term Energy Centre.



2006 concept for community space (pink)
around the Energy Centre (brown)

Survey method

In February 2020, we (the DRA) knocked at every house on the estate. If there was no reply, we left a copy of the survey form that could be returned to an address on the Quarter. Alternatively, respondents could complete the survey online, at SurveyMonkey. Because the flats are difficult to access, JRHT delivered survey forms to the flats, at our request.

If a knock was answered, we asked residents to complete the survey within half an hour, and leave it in their letterbox for collection. Alternatively, they could drop it off later at an address on the Quarter. Or they could complete the survey online.

We also advertised the survey by email, and in a paper newsletter. More details of the methodology are in appendix 2.

Survey returns.

123 surveys were completed in all, 44 on paper and the rest online. This represents about 25% of the 481 households. We consider that a strong response, particularly given that we'd not chased non-respondents. Table 1 (below) shows how these returns were broken down by paper vs online, for each Quarter.

Table 1 - where surveys were completed.

Quarter	Properties	Paper returns	Online returns	Total returns	% online	% returned addressed
1, Stephenson	64	6	9	15	60%	23%
2, Lotherington	123	21	7	28	25%	23%
3, Seebohm	228	13	11	24	46%	11%
4, Rowntree	66	4	4	8	50%	12%
? Unknown	0	0	48	48	100%	
Total returns	481	44	79	123	25.6%	15.6%

Responses

Q1 What do you like about living at Derwenthorpe?

Responses were free form. Almost all were positive. We used SurveyMonkey's "tagging" facility to label responses relating to the topics listed table 2. There were 2.5 tags per respondent, after discarding the 3 "negative" tags and the 5 "untagged" tags.

These results show three clearly distinct themes that were widely appreciated: the community, the green space, and the housing. To a lesser extent transport options, location, and quietness were also appreciated.

Table 2 - what people like about Derwenthorpe

Tags	Number	Per cent	
Community	75	61%	Incl neighbours, "people"
Green space	69	57%	Incl lakes, and wildlife
Houses	54	44%	Incl internal utility and external appearance.
Transport	28	23%	Incl cycle route 66, buses, and access to A64
Quietness	27	22%	
Location	24	20%	
Sustainability	17	14%	
Safety	9	7.4%	
Untagged	5	4.1%	(No response)
Diversity	4	3.3%	
Negative	3	2.5%	
EC	2	1.6%	

It's notable that there was little enthusiasm for the community facilities provided in the Energy Centre, despite the fact that (as we shall see) most respondents had attended multiple events there. Indeed, only two people mentioned the community facilities ("EC" tag) positively here.

Q2 What community events have you attended in the last 12 months?

We asked people to tick up to 26 different event types (examples are given in table 3), 15 of which are generally held at the Energy Centre. Free text responses indicated that we'd missed five more types of event!

A total of 523 events were ticked: an average of 4 event types per respondent. We separately analysed popularity of "EC" and "non-EC" events. 88 people had attended at least one Energy Centre event, and 84 people at least one event elsewhere.

Graph 1 shows the number of types of event that respondents had attended, on average, from each Quarter. This might be viewed as a measure of community engagement, but we must be careful with interpretation here. The "high" engagement from Stephenson Quarter might be explained by this Quarter having been occupied first, and several years in advance of the rest. But the "low" engagement of Lotherington Quarter is unexpected: it is possible this is due to differences in survey technique, and that the high returns from this Quarter indicate improved returns from otherwise less engaged members of the community. Alternatively, this Quarter had a higher proportion of paper returns than other Quarters, and perhaps the difference lies there.

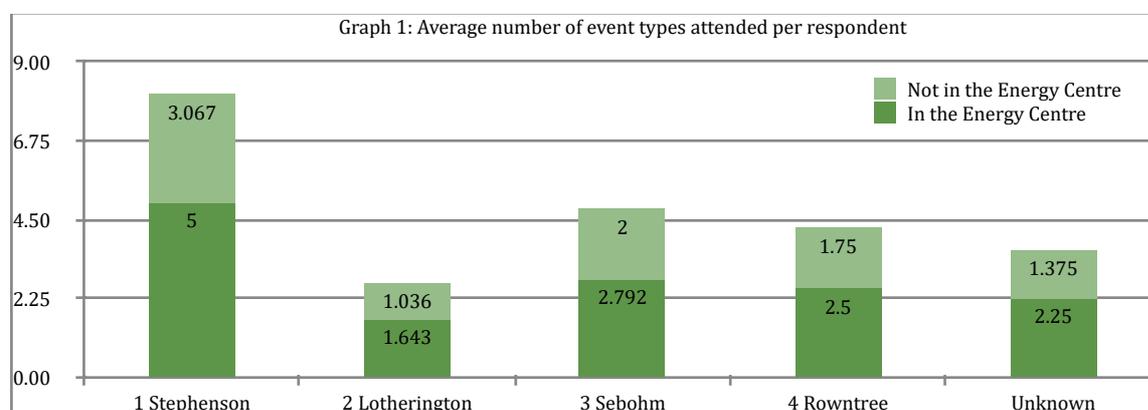


Table 3 - top five events

Event	Number of respondents who had attended
Farm Shop	55
Open Gardens	53
All Residents' Meeting (EC)	50
Coffee Morning (EC)	44
Big Picnic	38

Q3 The SSC, Energy Centre, is our only 'Community space'. To create a true community building, which of the following are needed? Tick all that apply

A majority considered we were in need of each of the facilities that we asked about.

The survey indicates some abuse of residents parking spaces by Energy Centre users, identifiable by the locations of the people who mentioned parking: 11 of 21 on phase 2, and these concentrated near the Energy Centre. Some people specifically mentioned Energy Centre users. They included these comments came from Lotherington Mews: "People driving

to SSC are using resident's parking spaces", and "people attending events park outside my house".

Table 4 - What community facilities are required?

Facility	Ticked	%
Kitchen	93	75.6%
Toilets	88	71.5%
Storage	58	47.2%
Larger Meeting Rooms	62	50.4%
Process for Booking	85	69.1%
Disabled Access	69	56.1%
Parking (not offered online)	21	17.1%
Other (write in, excl "parking")	49	39.8%

Free text responses can be categorised as easy, hard, or intermediate.

Some requested facilities could easily be added to the current building: hearing loop, lighter furniture, improved a/v, better booking facilities. Indeed the a/v facilities have been upgraded recently, but (for example), it might be useful to have video conferencing facilities.

Others could be added at intermediate cost, or incorporated into a larger scheme: wooden sprung dance floor, a second fire exit which would increase capacity of current meeting space, perhaps even a "welcoming entrance".

Substantial requests included better connection of indoor with outdoor space, a cafe or shop, "more" or "more flexible" meeting spaces. The large meeting room is upstairs, so it's hard to arrange an event that uses the large meeting room and also the outdoor space. The small meeting room doesn't connect directly to outdoors. The medium room does connect to outdoors, but is currently used as an office.

A few people asked for facilities that don't seem connected to the Energy Centre. For example: toddler swings, and allotments.

Four people mentioned that they felt the community facilities are adequate, citing the availability of other spaces nearby. Those would be the Burnholme Centre, which has meeting rooms that are quite expensive to hire, and quite distant from parts of the estate, and the Osbaldwick Sports and Social Club, again quite distant from other parts of the estate.

Q4 How many live in your household?

Just two households did not respond. The remainder reported a total of 232 adults in the 123 households, and 82 children in 48 of those households (1.7 per household).

The breakdown in table 5 does not tell us about the demographics of each Quarter, but does tell us where we were reaching households with children: Seebohm and especially Lotherington. Whether that is because there are more families in these Quarters, or an artefact of the survey methods is an open question. However, there is a feeling in the DRA that we are not reaching families, perhaps because due to the mix of events on offer. That's supported by some comments in the responses.

Table 5 - household composition.

	Respond- ents	Adults	Age 0-3	Age 4-10	Age 11-1 6	Total Children	Average Children per respondent
1, Stephenson	15	29	2	3	0	5	0.33
2, Lotherington	28	52	7	16	3	26	0.93
3, Seebohm	24	47	3	10	2	15	0.63
4, Rowntree	8	14	0	2	1	3	0.38
? Unknown	48	90	10	14	9	33	0.69
Total	123	232	22	45	15	82	0.67

Q5 What Activities would you and or your children like to see?

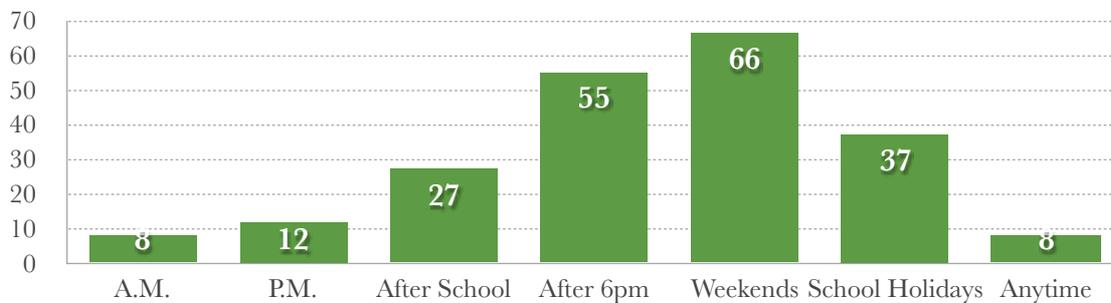
78 free text responses, ranging from "more of the same", to specific activities including sports, exhibitions, external speakers, play groups, kids events. 32 of the 78 mentioned children's activities of one sort or another, which somewhat vindicates thoughts that families are under-served by current community activities.

A detailed examination of the responses is merited.

Q6 What times suit you best?

These results in Graph 2 suggest that daytime activities are not much in demand, but evenings and weekends are.

Graph 2 - best times to hold events.



Q7 Do you have the time to support events in any way currently? If yes, let us know how in the box below! Arranging and organising, facilitating or just being an extra pair of hands on the day, it all helps!

55 positive responses, including 12 who already do participate. These will need to be followed up.

Q8 If you have children over the age of 11 please engage with them too on this survey. It would be really helpful if you could share any ideas they have for events and whether they would like to get involved in a Youth Steering committee for Derwenthorpe, to make sure the youth of our development have a voice and a say in the events we hold and the way we operate as a community.

Just nine responses were received, but included one offer of help "youth participation ... is part of what I do at work". Ideas included showing sporting events, holding revision workshops, and climate activism.

Q9 Have you anything else you'd like to add?

Seventy free text responses were received. A further four people complained about inconsiderate parking at the Energy Centre. Again, detailed consideration of the responses is merited, but there were no obvious themes emerging. Ideas included creating a local shop or café, more family events, fewer family events, more parking, fewer cars, and so on!

Summary

We were very pleased by the number of the responses, and their positive nature. We feel they provide strong evidence that there is a demand for additional built community facilities. We have some steer as to what sort of facilities are required, and when they most need to be available to the community.

Since March, the DRA have met with JRHT who have expressed support for the concept of providing space, so we feel we now need to press on with developing more detailed plans, and thinking about how the plans might be realised.