

Lansdown Hall and Gallery renovation project consultation 2016 – Analysis

(NB: There are some numerical anomalies where respondents skipped certain questions.)

1. Introduction

The consultation was launched at a celebratory event at the venue on 10th June and closed on 31st July. It was also publicised to all signed up to the mailing lists for Stroud Town Council and Lansdown Hall and Gallery, on the relevant websites and in articles in the press. It was promoted and hard copies were made available at LHG and STC offices, and links to the electronic version were placed on the websites.

1.1 Metadata

50 responses 27 received on paper 23 via website

29 (64%) female 16 (36%) male 5 didn't say

27 (60%) 40-64yrs 12 (27%) 65+ 6 (13%) under 40, of whom 2 under 25

5 disabled respondents, 1 male, 4 female, 1 in 25-39 age group, 3 in 40-64, 1 in 65+.

Two thirds GL5 postcode, several GL6 and 3 others, the furthest being Bristol

46 Hall visitors 10 of these have hired the Hall

47 Gallery visitors 12 of these have hired the Gallery

6 have hired both the Gallery and the Hall

2. Responses on overall experience of the venue

4. In general terms, what is your opinion of the Hall as a venue? You may find it useful to think of it in comparison with other venues that you have attended.

9. In general terms, what is your opinion of the Gallery, as a space for exhibitions or other events? You may find it useful to think of it in comparison with similar places that you have visited.

- It's been very good in my experience, well above average.
- It's been OK, but there is some scope for improvement.
- It has not been a good experience. Please say why:

2.1 Hall

21 selected 'very good in my experience, well above average'

21 said 'OK but there is some scope for improvement'

3 said it was not a good experience. Two gave as the reason the quality and consistency of programme, one of whom also cited poor sound quality; the third

negative respondent did not give any reason. (I suspect that the 'not good' button was selected by mistake as they provided only positive comments in the explanation box.)

2.2 Gallery

34 selected 'very good in my experience, well above average'

12 said 'OK but there is some scope for improvement'

1 said it was not a good experience. (This respondent used the gallery as a changing room for an event and had trouble with loose plaster dust on the walls.)

2.3 Hall & Gallery - disabled respondents

3 selected 'very good in my experience, well above average'

1 said 'OK but there is some scope for improvement'

1 has not used the Hall or Gallery because of the access issues

Disabled respondents comment that access is very difficult, in particular that it is very hard or impossible to climb the (interior) stairs to the Hall. One adds that the Bank gardens door is not very welcoming. It is also pointed out that it is difficult to park close by and that a walk of some 100 yds through the park is impossible for many.

3. Responses on improvements so far

3.1 Hall

5. What is your opinion of the improvements made to the building since the Town Council took over in 2010? For each item, please tick the option that is closest to your view.				
	I haven't noticed any difference	I have noticed but I don't think it makes much difference	I think it is an improvement but it's not that important	I think this has made a significant contribution to an improved experience
New heating system and insulation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Exterior repairs, new windows and cleaning of stonework	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
New extension (green room and store)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improved toilets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Of those who have used the Hall over a period that spans the listed changes, 70% have noticed all of them and see them as improvements, awarding one of the top two ratings. More than three-quarters of those people think that all of these changes have made 'a significant contribution to an improved experience' (i.e. the highest rating).

The most popular change is the external work, including the stone cleaning and new windows (88% rate as an improvement, of whom 86% see it as a significant

contribution), followed by the new heating system and insulation (78% rate as an improvement, of whom 80% see it as a significant contribution). 70% of respondents give the other changes one of the top two ratings.

3.2 Hall hirers only

Improved toilets: rated as a significant contribution by all respondents

Exterior repairs etc: rated as a significant contribution by all but one, the exception saying it was an improvement but not that important.

New heating system: rated as a significant contribution by all but one; the exception hadn't noticed it (perhaps due to the time of year when the Hall was hired).

New extension: rated as a significant contribution by all but two, one saying it was an improvement but not important and one that no difference had been noticed, presumably reflecting the fact that not all hirers need a green room.

3.3 Gallery

10. What is your opinion of the improvements that have been made since the Town Council took over in 2010? For each item, tick the option that is closest to your view.				
	I haven't noticed any difference	I have noticed but I don't think it makes much difference	I think it is an improvement but it's not that important	I think this has made a significant contribution to an improved experience
New heating system and insulation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gallery renovated and redecorated	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Exterior door to Lansdown opened and access ramp installed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Glazed internal door to Gallery installed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improved toilets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Of those who have used the Gallery over a period that spans the listed changes, at least 80% have noticed all of them and consider them improvements, awarding the top two ratings. 88% see the three most popular improvements, (i) the re-opening of the door to Lansdown and installation of an access ramp, (ii) the redecoration and renovation of the Gallery, and (iii) the improvements to toilets, as a significant contribution to an improved experience' (i.e. the highest rating).

The percentage giving the top rating to the glazed internal door and the new heating system is 72% and 68% respectively, increasing to 96% and 80% when those who award the second highest rating are included.

3.4 Gallery hirers only

Redecoration and renovation: rated as a significant contribution by all

External door and improved toilets: rated as a significant contribution by all but one

Heating and insulation: rated as a significant contribution by all but two

Glazed lobby: rated as a significant contribution by all but three who rated it as an improvement but not that important

4. Priorities for final phase

11. Please indicate the importance you attach to each of the suggested improvements.

	1- needs doing urgently	2 - should be done within next 2-5 years	3 - would like to see this done eventually	4 - would be nice but low priority	5 – not needed/no opinion
Renovate remaining windows, including incorporating double glazing where appropriate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Install blackout blinds or curtains in Hall	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Create a dedicated bar area for Hall	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Create a fully accessible main entrance to the Hall	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improve lighting and access through Bank Gardens	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improve Gallery lighting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Upgrade disabled toilets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Install additional disabled toilets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Upgrade female toilets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Install additional female toilets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Upgrade male toilets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Install additional male toilets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improve ventilation to Hall	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improve Hall floor stability to reduce deflection ("springiness")	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4.1 All respondents

An average rating was calculated, weighted according to the level of priority attributed to each option. Based on the views of all respondents, the top 7 priorities of the 14 listed were, in rating order:

- 1) Creating a fully accessible main entrance to the Hall
- 2) Renovating the remaining windows, with double glazing where appropriate
- 3) Installing blackout blinds or curtains
- 4) Improving lighting and access through Bank Gdns
- 5) Improving ventilation to the Hall
- 6) Upgrading disabled toilets

7) Upgrading female toilets

The figures for improvements to the toilets require interpretation as some male visitors may be disinclined to give an opinion on female toilets, and vice versa (and two-thirds of respondents are female). The same may apply to non-disabled visitors with respect to disabled toilets. However, it's clear in all categories that upgrading toilets is rated as more important than installing extra toilets.

Putting aside ratings for additional toilets, the lowest priority, by some way, is for improving the stability of the Hall floor.

4.2 Hall hirers only

When only the priorities of Hall hirers are counted, creating a bar area (ninth overall) moves to the top of the priorities. Perhaps surprisingly, ventilation drops down to eighth, and improving gallery lighting squeezes into the top seven. The other item that drops out of the top seven is upgrading the disabled toilets.

4.3 Gallery hirers only

Gallery hirers nominate the same top seven as Hall hirers, though improving lighting to the Gallery heads the list and creating a bar is fifth.

4.4 All hirers

Combining the ratings of all hirers gives the following seven priorities:

- 1) Improve gallery lighting
- 2) Improve lighting and access through Bank Gardens
- 3) Install blackout blinds or curtains
- 4) Create a dedicated bar area
- 5) Create a fully accessible main entrance to the Hall
- 6) Renovate remaining windows, with double glazing where appropriate
- 7) Upgrade female toilets

4.5 Other sub-groups

Ratings were also analysed for the following sub-groups: male, female, under 40, 40+, disabled.

Creating an accessible main entrance and installing blackout blinds or curtains were the only two improvements that appeared in the top seven priorities for all sub-groups.

Significantly, improving lighting and access via Bank Gardens was the top priority for women. This, together with upgrading female toilets, dropped out of the top seven for men but was rated in the top seven by all other groups. Women are over-represented in the survey as a proportion of the population but this may reflect greater usage of the venue by women.

The two items that made the top seven of hirers but not of all users were creating a bar and improving gallery lighting. Creating a bar was included in the top seven of all categories other than males and over 40s, with whom it came respectively eleventh and ninth. Improving gallery lighting was included in the top seven of all categories other than females and over 40s, with who it came respectively tenth and eighth.

For all sub-groups, improving the stability of the Hall floor achieved the lowest rating or the lowest other than increasing the number of toilets in one or more categories.

4.6 Free text responses (prioritisation question)

Respondents were asked to suggest other improvements, further to those listed in Q.11, and allocate a priority rating to them.

The following were each suggested by two people, with urgent priority:

- ❖ A more visible, welcoming entrance to the Hall
- ❖ A box office of some kind

The following were each suggested by one person, with urgent priority. (Items that were already listed on the questionnaire have been omitted.)

- ❖ Re-surface hall floor
- ❖ Improve ventilation to disabled toilet
- ❖ Install raised seating in Hall
- ❖ Improve stage lighting
- ❖ Sound-proof Hall floor (to reduce noise to Gallery)
- ❖ Improve ventilation to Gallery
- ❖ Remove black outs on round green glass windows.

The following were each suggested by one person with second priority (i.e. within 2-5 years):

- ❖ A cloakroom where outdoor garments can be left in winter
- ❖ A dishwasher and a dumb waiter from hall to kitchen

5. Free text responses (general comments)

Respondents mostly used the comment boxes to make positive and encouraging remarks about the Hall and Gallery, both the works that have been carried out so far and, more generally, their positive experiences of using the venue.

Three respondents commented negatively on access, with one acknowledging that access to the Gallery had been improved by the works.

Two respondents said that they saw the springiness of the Hall floor as a positive feature, good for drama and dance.

Aspects of the improvements so far that were praised by at least one respondent were:

- ❖ The new windows
- ❖ Access to the Gallery
- ❖ Hall lighting
- ❖ Decorative order
- ❖ The extension (green room)
- ❖ Gallery changes generally

6. Conclusions

6.1 Overall significance of results

Based on the figures for June/July 2015 (4,644 users, some of whom will be the same individual visiting on several occasions, such as regular class attenders, regular gallery visitors and so on), 50 responses represents around 2% to 3% of users over the period that the consultation was running. A good outcome for this sort of survey would usually be set at around 5% of the target, so though this response level is not outstanding, it's not negligible. The number of hirers responding (16) can be considered reasonably representative, as can the fact that 5 disabled individuals responded.

The fact that two-thirds of respondents are female, including 13 of 16 hirers, is perhaps reflective of the proportions using the venue, as is, it may be assumed, the figure of 60% in the age group 40-64.

Certainly the response is representative of local people, almost all giving GL5 or GL6 postcodes.

6.2 Where we are now

Responses being roughly equally divided between reporting a 'very good', 'well above average', experience of the Hall and 'OK' but 'scope for improvement' is what might be expected for a popular venue with an improvement project underway. Both enthusiasm for the venue and support for further improvement is in evidence. That the Gallery's ratings are weighted significantly further towards the positive can be said to reflect the greater progress that has been made with the elements of the project that primarily affect the Gallery.

It can be concluded from the responses to the more detailed questions on the improvements so far that they have been overwhelmingly well received by those to whom they are relevant. The few less enthusiastic ratings are likely to reflect lack of

relevance to the particular activities of the respondent, rather than disagreement with the project's goals.

These responses, together with the low number of negative free text comments suggest that the project so far has gone some way to fulfilling users' aspirations for the venue. In other words, the project is on the right track.

6.2 The future

The responses on future works suggest some significant preferences, a number of which may not have been anticipated.

- ❖ Creating a fully accessible main entrance is seen as the most important proposed improvement. Comments, though few in number, indicate that this is about visibility as well as access. Disabled respondents point out that improvements to the entrance will not make the venue fully accessible, given problems with parking and the long walking/wheelchair routes via Bank Gardens.
- ❖ Installing black-out blinds or curtains is rated in the top half of priorities by all users and all sub-categories.
- ❖ Improving lighting and access through Bank Gardens, fourth overall, receives top rating by women.
- ❖ Upgrading disabled and female toilets gets into the top half of priorities for all users. Whilst upgrading male toilets is rated in the top half only by male users, this should not be dismissed, given the lower number of male respondents.
- ❖ Renovating the windows and improving ventilation also appear in the top half for all users.
- ❖ Creating a bar area and improving lighting to the Gallery do not make the top half of the priority list for all users, but are rated fourth and first, respectively, by hirers.
- ❖ Installing additional toilets (male, female or disabled) receives low ratings across the board.
- ❖ Improving Hall floor stability receives low ratings across the board.

7. Appendices (available on request)

- A. Complete listing of all free text answers and comments
- B. Numerical analysis of responses to recent improvements question
- C. Numerical analysis of responses to prioritisation of future works question
- D. Numerical analyses of responses to prioritisation of future works question by category of respondent