

Results of the Survey on the Swords Civic and Cultural Centre



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Contents

Executive Summary	Page 2
Results:	
Section 1: Profiles (age, nationality, household)	Page 4
Section 2: Attitudes	Page 7
Section 3: Attendance and usage	Page 9
Section 4: Comments from respondents	Page 15

Results of the Survey on the Swords Civic and Cultural Centre

Executive Summary

Introduction

Fingal County Council has identified a potential site for a Civic and Cultural Centre in Swords, to accommodate a library and facilities for the arts, including performance and exhibition spaces. As part of the Council's consultation process, the public was invited to respond to an online survey on the proposal over a 6 week period, from the 31st August to the 5th October 2015. The survey was created in English and Irish, using the Council's new Online Consultation Portal. Councillors were emailed a link to the survey in advance. The Arts Office sent a mailshot to over 2,000 individuals and groups, library users received the link by email and the Council's Twitter account and Facebook page were used to advertise the Survey. Advertisements inviting people to respond were placed in the Fingal Independent and North County Leader. Posters and leaflets advertising the Survey were distributed to the Council's public buildings, including libraries, arts and community centres.

The Survey asked 25 questions about attendance at arts events, library usage, and support for the proposal. 651 members of the public responded to the Survey, the results of which will help to inform further consultation in the form of focus groups, to be held before the end of 2015.

Main results

- The majority of people to respond to the Survey (27.7%) are aged between 36 – 45, and 61.5% of them live in the Swords area.
- The vast majority of respondents (97.2%) think that the proposed Centre would be beneficial to the people of Swords and 97.5% feel that it would enhance their quality of life and that of visitors.
- When asked what facilities they would like to have at the Centre, a theatre/music venue ranked the highest among respondents at 89.2%, a café at 83.3%, a library at 79% and a community meeting space at 73.6%.
- The majority of respondents (61%) travel to the library by car, with 29.3% walking, and 4.9% cycling or taking public transport.

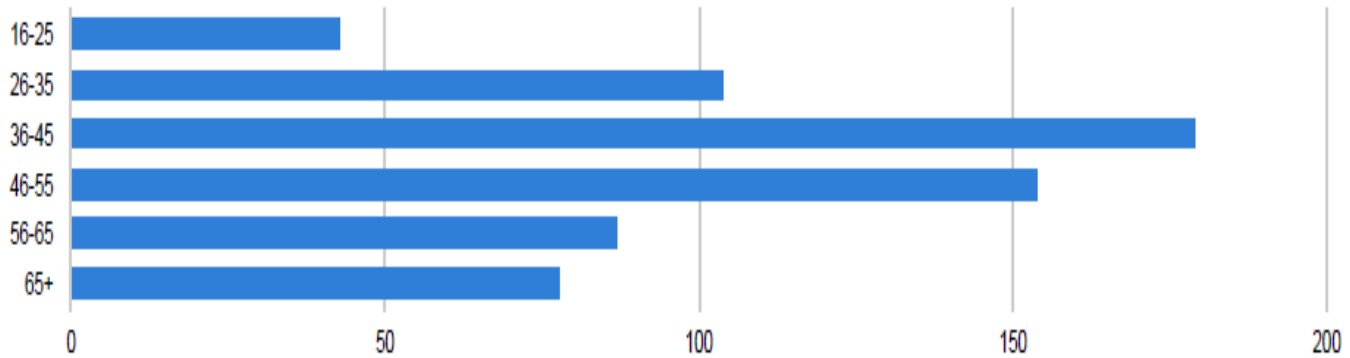
- Exhibitions are the most popular arts event with respondents at 47%, followed by music gigs at 41.4% and arts festivals at 36%.
- When asked about the type of shows they would like to see, plays are the main preference of respondents at 79.4%, followed by live music at 77.5%.
- Having a quiet area in a library emerges as 'very important' to the majority of respondents at 38%. This is closely followed by wi fi at 37.5% and parking at 37.3 %.
- Just under 87% of respondents are supportive of the idea of arts facilities being located within the library and 86.4% of them would make use of them.
- Almost 92% of respondents are very positive about the Centre acting as a mechanism for participation in the arts.
- 79.7% of respondents are willing to pay for arts events.

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Section 1: Profiles

The majority of people to respond to the survey (27.7%) are aged between 36 – 45. The next highest respondents are in the 46 – 55 age group at 23.9%. The 16 – 25 age group account for 6.7% of the responses.

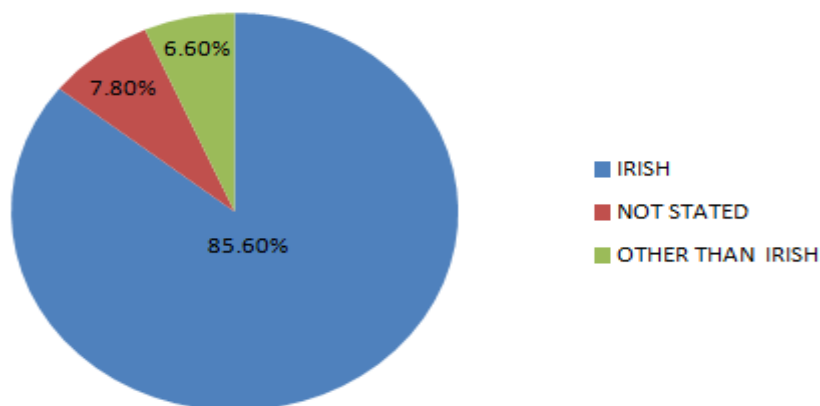
Q1. What is your age?



Number of responses: 645

85.6% of respondents state their nationality as Irish, 6.6% give their nationality as being other than Irish and 7.8% give no nationality

Q2. What is your nationality?



Number of responses: 651

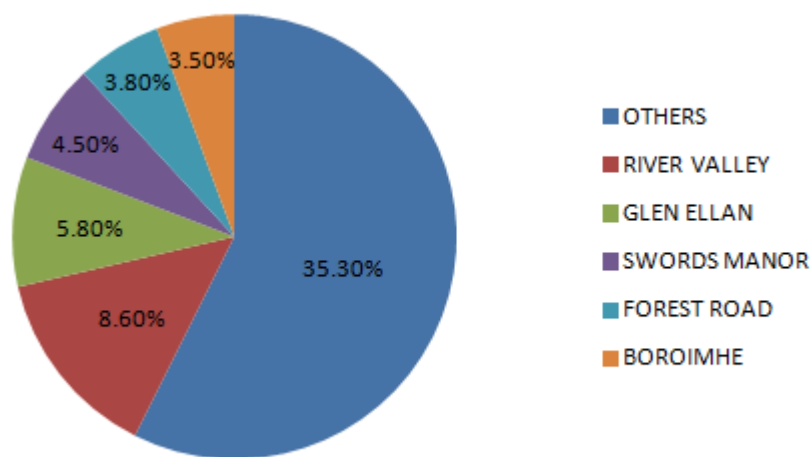
As expected the majority of respondents live in the Fingal area with 61.5% living in the Swords area. Of this 61.5%, 8.6% live in River Valley, 5.8% in Glen Ellan, and 4.5% in Swords Manor.

Q3. Where do you live?



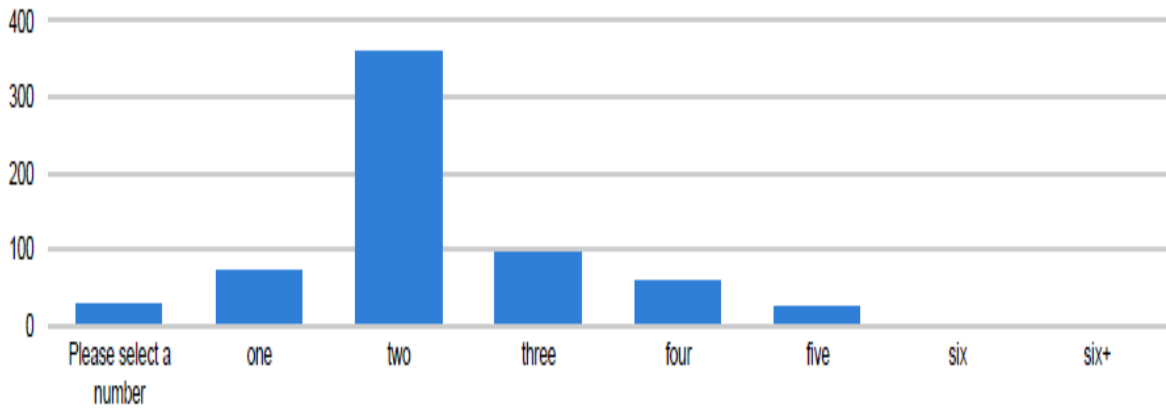
Number of responses: 642

Q4. If you live in Swords, please enter your street or estate name



Number of responses: 395

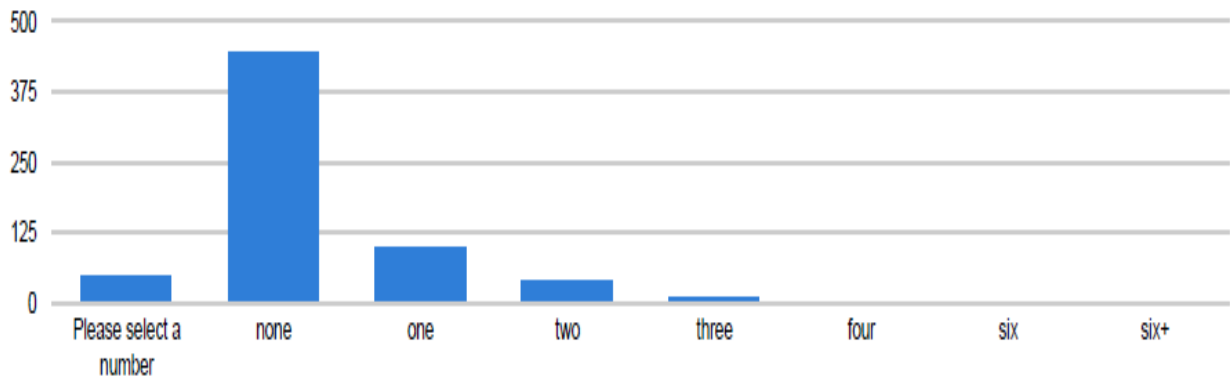
The majority of respondents (55.4%) live in households with two adults. 68.7% of households have no young people between the ages of 12 and 18 and 59.6% have no children below the age of 12.



Q5a. How many adults above the age of 18 are in your household?

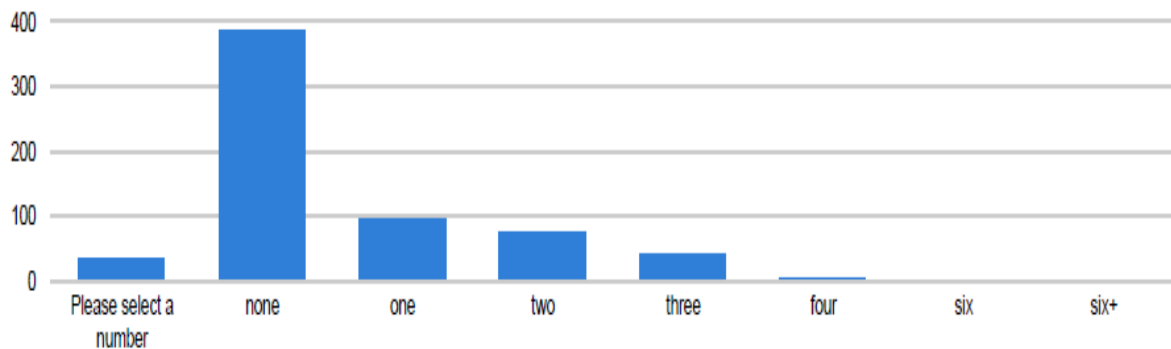
Number of responses: 651

Q5b. How many young people between the ages of 12 and 18 are in your household?



Number of responses: 651

Q5c. How many children below the age of 12 are in your household?



Number of responses: 651

Section 2: Attitudes

The vast majority of respondents (97.2%) think that the proposed Centre would be beneficial to the people of Swords and 97.5% feel that it would enhance their quality of life and that of visitors.

Q6. Do you think that a Civic and Cultural Centre would be beneficial to the people of Swords?



Number of responses: 639

Q10. Do you believe that such a facility could enhance the quality of life of residents and visitors?



Number of responses: 634

92.8% of respondents see the potential in the proposal being a landmark design.

Q9. Do you support the potential for this space to be a landmark design for Swords?



Number of responses: 640

98.1% of respondents believe that the Centre should have multiple uses.

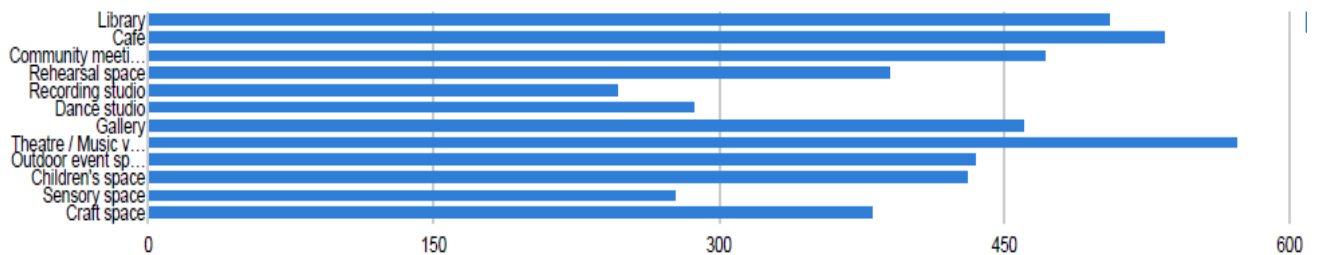
Q7. Do you support the view that the Civic and Cultural Centre should have multiple uses, eg. community space, theatre, rehearsal space, library, gallery?



Number of responses: 639

When asked what facilities they would like to have at the Centre, a theatre/music venue ranked the highest at 89.2%, a café at 83.3%, a library at 79% and a community meeting space at 73.6%.

Q8. What facilities would you like to see in the Civic and Cultural Centre?



Number of responses: 641

Word of mouth is the most common way, at 61.3%, that respondents learn about upcoming arts and cultural events. Local newspapers at 53.1% are the next most popular way, followed by the internet at 46% and social media at 40.7%.

Q11. How do you learn about upcoming arts / cultural events?

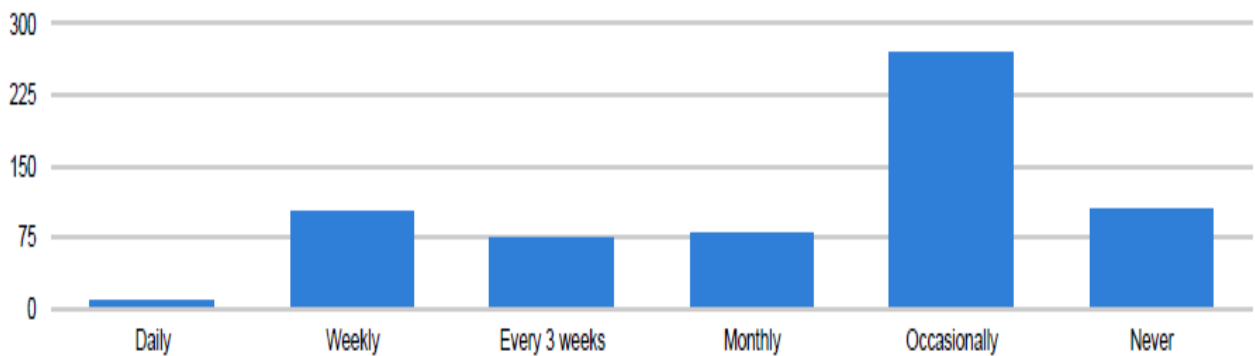


Number of responses: 644

Section 3: Attendance and usage

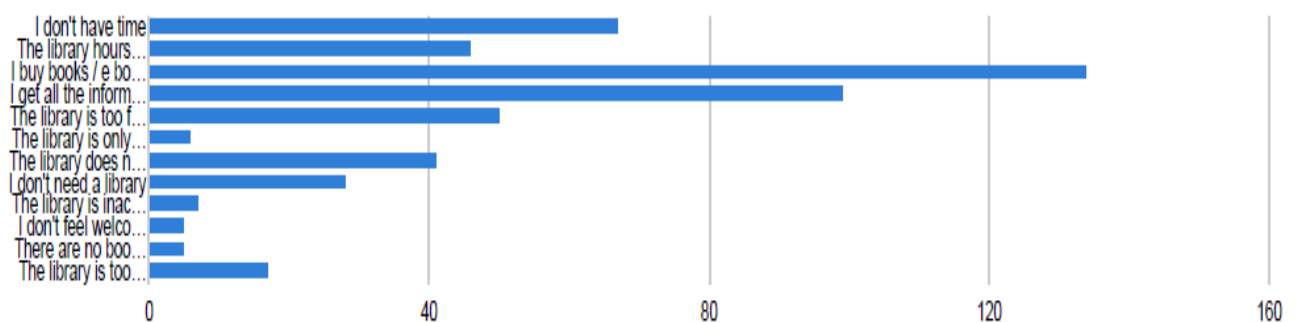
42% of respondents only visit their local library occasionally, 16% weekly, 12.8% monthly and 12.6% every 3 weeks. 16.3% of respondents never go to their local library. When asked why they have not paid a visit within the last year, the most popular responses from respondents were that they buy books, either hard copy or e books (42.7%), they get all their information from the internet (31.5%), or they don't have the time (21.3%).

Q12. How often do you visit your local public library?



Number of responses: 644

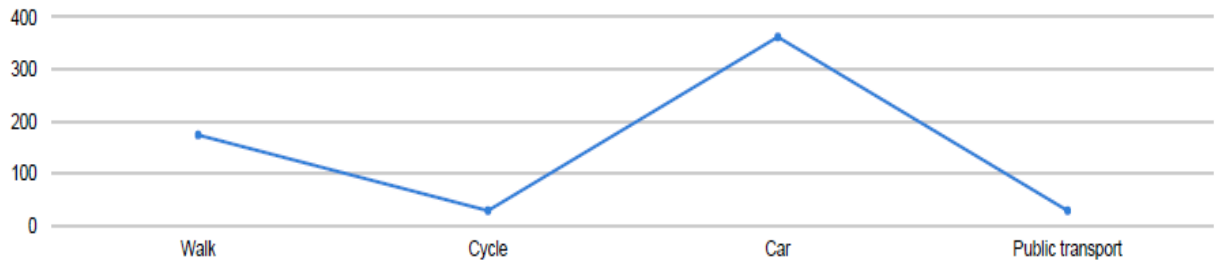
Q13. If you have not visited the public library in the last year, which of the following reasons describes why?



Number of responses: 314

The majority of respondents (61%) travel to the library by car, with 29.3% walking, and 4.9% cycling or taking public transport.

Q14. How do you normally travel to the library?



Number of responses: 594

The weekend at 27.6% is the most popular time for respondents to visit libraries, followed by the afternoon during the week at 24.1%. Early evening at 14.5% is the least popular time with respondents.

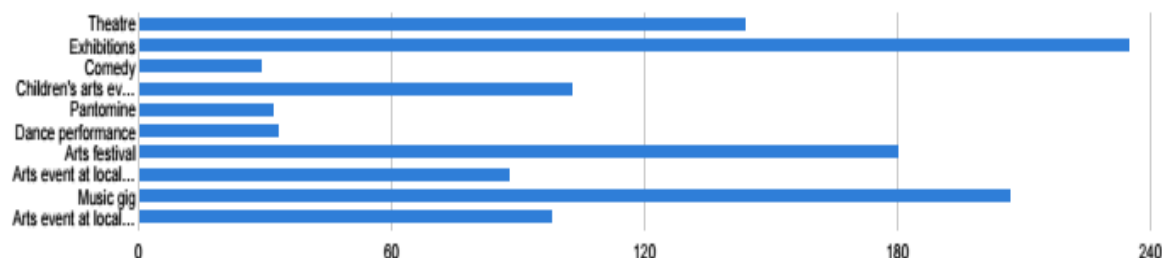
Q15. When are you most likely to visit the library?



Number of responses: 586

Exhibitions are the most popular arts event with respondents at 47%, followed by music gigs at 41.4% and arts festivals at 36%.

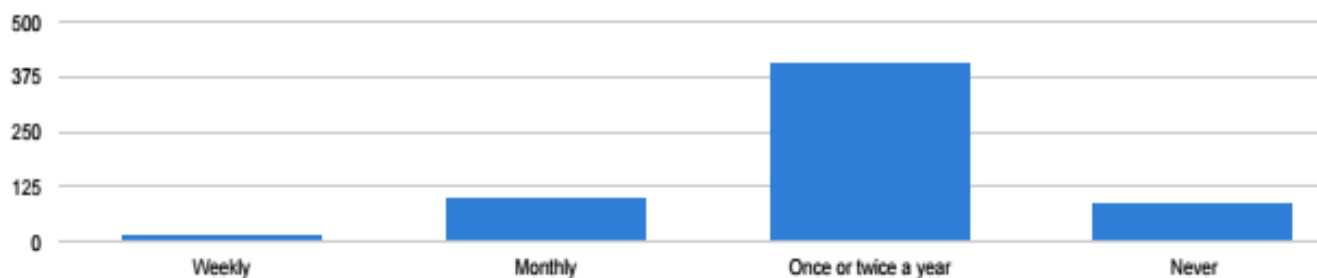
Q16. Have you attended arts events in Fingal in the last year?



Number of responses: 500

66.3% of respondents go to arts/cultural events once or twice a year, 16.4% monthly, and 14.2% never attend such events.

Q17. How often do you attend arts / cultural events in Fingal as an audience member?



Number of responses: 620

When asked about the type of shows they would like to see, plays are the main preference of respondents at 79.4%, followed by live music at 77.5%. Comedy at 60.8% and children’s arts events at 47.9% are the next most popular.

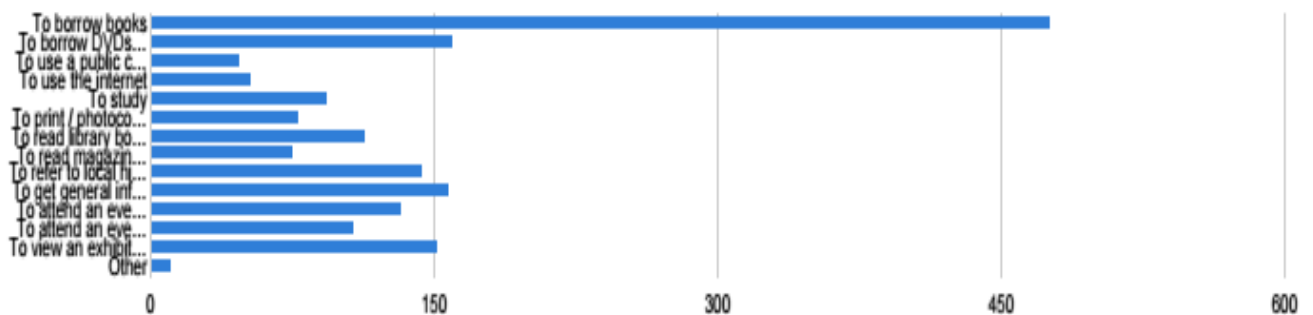
Q18. What type of shows would you prefer to see at a theatre in Swords?



Number of responses: 631

The most common reason among 84.5% respondents for using a library is, not surprisingly, to borrow books. Borrowing DVDs and looking for information are the next most common at 28%.

Q19. If you use a public library, what are your reasons for doing so?

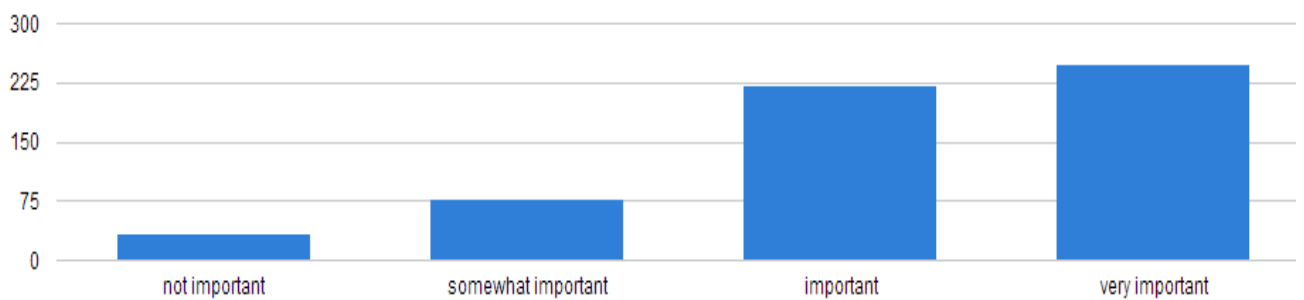


Number of responses: 562

Respondents were asked to rank the importance to themselves of extended opening hours, study and meeting spaces, reading and quiet areas, exhibition space, children's and adult areas, PCs, internet, wifi, a cafe, parking, self-service, events, exhibitions and online resources. Having a quiet area emerges as 'very important' to the majority of respondents at 38%. This is closely followed by wi fi at 37.5% and parking at 37.3%, which is not surprising given that the majority of respondents travel to the library by car. Events such as author visits and a leisure reading area are ranked as 'important' by 46.3% and 44.1% of respondents respectively. 41.3% rank exhibitions as 'important'.

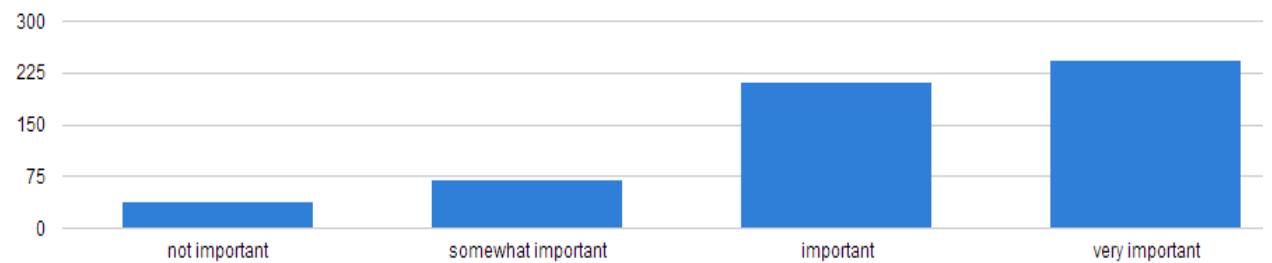
Q20. How important to you are the following aspects of a public library?

Quiet area



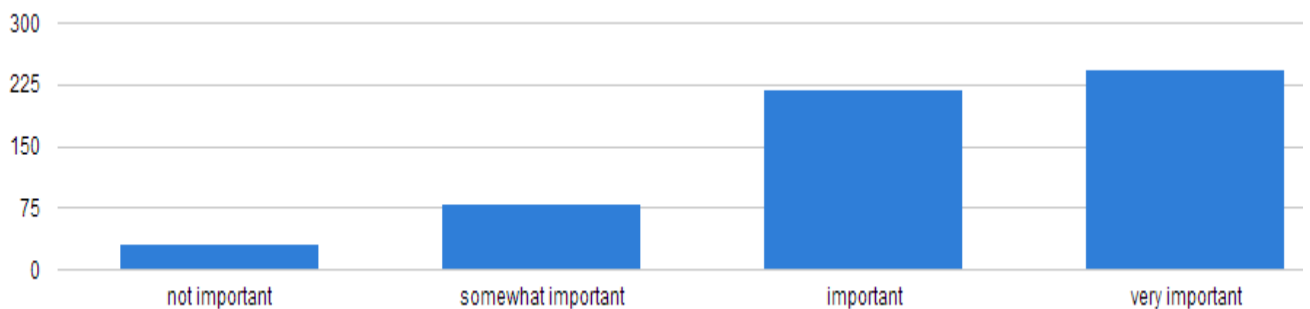
Number of responses: 581

Wifi



Number of responses: 566

Parking



Number of responses: 575

Just under 87% of respondents are supportive of the idea of arts facilities being located within the library and 86.4% of them would make use of them.

Q21. Are you supportive of the idea of a theatre / exhibition / gallery located within the library at Swords?



Number of responses: 636

Q22. Would you attend such a facility?



Number of responses: 639

Almost 92% of respondents are very positive about the Centre acting as a mechanism for participation in the arts.

Q23. Do you believe that such a facility could act as a mechanism for local people to participate in the arts?



Number of responses: 632

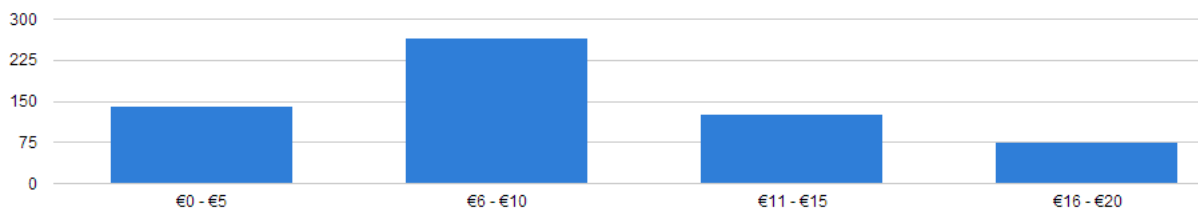
79.7% of respondents are willing to pay for arts events. 43.8% of these would pay up to €10, 20.6% up to €15 and 12.3% up to €20.

Q24. Are you willing to pay to attend arts events in Swords?



Number of responses: 627

Q25. What contribution would you be willing to make?



Number of responses: 610

Section 4: Comments from respondents

Below is a random sample of comments on the proposed Centre which respondents were invited to make.

Q26. Have you any further comments to make on the proposed Swords Civic and Cultural Centre?

The arts in Swords have been flourishing elsewhere. An arts centre would provide a home for all lovers and makers of art.

This is the most important thing that can happen in Swords. Please do what you can to help it along and so will I.

Lack of suitable parking at the venue.

I think it would be a huge benefit to Swords. I recently visited St John's Castle in Limerick and they had a lovely café, shop etc. there and it was a very enjoyable experience. If we had something similar in Swords it might make people more willing to visit and spend money in the town.

Great idea for enhancing the community!

Am not sure if proposed site has parking facilities. I think a library without this would not be well attended.

Swords as a large town is badly in need of a civic space. The Draíocht is great but it would be wonderful to have such a space in Swords. There are a number of groups who would benefit from this space especially schools and youth groups.

This would be a truly great asset to the town of Swords and the surrounding areas in Fingal.

Don't cut corners - Do it properly and on a significant scale that will transform the town - be ambitious if you are creating a building capable of enhancing and setting a new standard for the architectural landscape in Swords.

I think that Swords really needs its heart back. I feel something like a civic and cultural centre can really bring all ages together.

Great idea, MUST happen...The council needs to make this happen, it could become the cultural, artistic and social centre of Swords.

I think parking would be very important especially for the elderly / children.

This would be a very important centre for Swords and its location would help to revive this part of the town.

I think a cultural centre/theatre is badly needed and the bigger the better.

I think it would enhance the area and encourage more people to participate in different activities in Fingal.

Swords desperately needs to have a Civic & Cultural Centre. This is the capital of Fingal and it needs to have a facility worthy of this. It needs to be a place that you want to go to and where you feel happy to spend time in, regardless of whether there are activities going on.

I feel this venue is long overdue in Swords and I hope there will not be a long delay in construction, this is needed immediately in Swords.

With a community like ours, very diverse, it is essential that we have a centre for a variety of performing arts. I hope this project gets off the ground as quickly as possible.

The Axis building in Ballymun reaches out to everyone with everything from rehearsal space to a café to the theatre and meeting rooms and the creche and a recording studio. It encourages people to get involved in the arts, be it attending events,

exhibitions, plays etc. or to actively get involved. Swords needs and deserves a similar space. I myself am involved in the arts through performing and writing and would love a performance space in Swords, my home town as I always have to go elsewhere to perform.

Swords is a thriving town with fabulous civic offices right next to a terrific amenity in Swords Castle. Restoration is not yet complete, and already the castle is attracting visitors. Let's hope our Cultural Centre is the final piece of the jigsaw.

This is an excellent idea and would be a very welcome redevelopment for the north part of the town.

It's a great opportunity to bring people to our town. Swords is really on its feet at the moment and has plenty to offer. Let's get on the map with this, the icing on the cake.

I would not like the new proposed building to block the view of Swords Castle.

Brilliant idea - badly needed. Dying to attend my first play in it! Maybe I'll write one specially for it!

This is desperately needed in Swords and would be a fantastic resource..

Needs to have parking, a huge issue in Swords.

I think such a facility should be a attraction for people coming to Swords.

Parking in swords is a major issue. Current library is accessible by car and nearer to house by foot.

Libraries should be open, bright and welcoming spaces with access to the best reference materials and reading for adults and joyful areas for children which encourage reading and creativity. Spaces where children get hooked on books and even for some children a space where they can come to get away from the stresses going on in their worlds.

If done correctly it will become a civic destination and focus for participation in the community. In line with the population expansion it will hugely support community integration

.... it would be amazing to see a show, play or panto here in Swords and also give local theatre, drama and dance groups a venue to showcase. Also a cafe located near a library with reasonable prices would allow the local community groups and people somewhere to meet, use a space and then have a coffee... All of this would have the added bonus of producing more jobs in the area.