



The Christchurch Conversation (October 2018): Report back

1. Executive summary

- a) The Christchurch Conversation demonstrated that there is an appetite for increased partnership working to identify the gaps in community provision and to address them collaboratively in order to improve the quality of life for all residents.
- b) It also showed that there are a significant number of groups and organisations, including social enterprise, local charities and trusts, and public and private sector organisations, running a wide range of activities (the discussion groups identified 187) including many addressing major issues like social isolation and loneliness, community transport, and homelessness.
- c) **The lack of youth provision** was the primary issue mentioned in the discussion groups – and the proposal is that this would benefit from a separate **Youth Conversation** involving young people themselves, as well as the organisations and agencies working with them.
- d) **Social isolation and loneliness** were the second most commonly identified areas; again, right across the age spectrum. Is there a need for a community-wide solution rather than the very good, albeit limited provision currently on offer through befriending schemes? This is a national issue rather than a local one so perhaps we can also benefit from exploring best practice elsewhere?
- e) **Mental health support** requires a similar focus; as this is also a major issue across the whole demographic in Christchurch, including young and older people, and to which there is no simple solution.
- f) The consensus was that the Conversation needs to lead to action and that it is better to do a few things well rather than try to do everything. There are several potential ‘quick wins’ eg a suggestion scheme to teach young people to drive in exchange for volunteering hours; further discussions around an integrated community transport system; and getting plans underway for a Youth Conversation for 2019.

This report will be considered by the Steering Group convened for that purpose and feedback from all parties is welcomed. It is proposed that an update is circulated to all parties in Spring 2019 to update on the progress being made.



A conversation with purpose leading to



Building a Better Christchurch Together

2. What was the Christchurch Conversation (see Appendix 1A)

Ian Jones from Bournemouth University acted as facilitator for this event which was sponsored by the Christchurch Community Partnership.

Attending were 103 people representing over 64 different groups and organisations, including elected representatives in addition to businesses, social enterprises, independent local charities, trusts and charitable foundations, church representatives, voluntary groups and statutory services.

Guest speakers included a Senior Council Officer, the President of Christchurch Chamber of Trade, and Senior Officers from both the Police and Fire & Rescue as well as a local Head Teacher, representing the Christchurch Learning Federation, comprising all of the schools in Christchurch.

- It had three purposes which were to:
 - o **Celebrate** the excellent community activities already happening in Christchurch
 - o *Work together to identify the major **gaps** in provision,*
 - o *Come up with possible **solutions** (and offers from attendees) to fill them.*

3. What are seen as the major gaps in provision (see Appendix 1C)

The group discussions identified these top 6 issues

- **Social Isolation**, loneliness, lack of human interaction or any link to inter-generational activities. This was identified across the age and socio-economic spectrum and there is a particular lack of support for those of any age who are caring for family members
- **Young People**: lack of provision and career prospects for young people.
- **Community transport** the lack of which restricts access to groups and activities particularly for those who are already isolated
- **Housing & homelessness**, lack of emergency accommodation, affordable housing, young vulnerable people in supported accommodation
- **Mental Health** across the age spectrum but especially the increasing concern around mental health issues in children and young people, including those as young as 6.
- **Lack of resources** – not only funding, but volunteers, venues and most of all the lack of joined up thinking which has possibly resulted in ineffective use of the resources available
- **Communication** - there was recognition of the need for greater awareness of what currently exists and some kind of central hub where information and services could be easily accessed by the wider community.

 ***Can you think of any other major gaps in provision?***

4. What are the potential solutions (see Appendices 1D & E)

The discussion groups identified potential solutions in the following areas that mirror some of the major issues raised above:

- **Communications and Information.** This was raised by every group and there were some suggested solutions. For example: development of a portal, mapping what is already there to avoid duplication but offering partner organisations the option of amending their own entry; this would also enable signposting and sharing local good practice. Also raised on most tables was the provision of a town centre community hub as a one stop shop to find out what is available and also as a drop-in access to organisations and some statutory 'outreach' services.
- **Partnering.** Sharing resources and working collaboratively. Using 'hubs' to provide outreach services (CAB/DWP) as well as housing admin for voluntary organisations (CCP/Food Bank etc).
- **Isolation:** Identify gaps and provide appropriate activities but also build community. For example: additional ADaPt Cafés; lunch clubs; Men specific activity- e.g. men in sheds; Carer support groups. Develop 'community connector/buddy' schemes to reconnect the isolated to activities and groups in the community.

5. What will happen next?

In the last 8 weeks, a core group, including representatives from Christchurch & East Dorset Council, Prama, Help & Care, Skills & Learning, the Co-op, Public Health, and the CCP, has reviewed the feedback, analysed the data and proposed some project areas to act on this conversation.

The following actions are proposed from that:

Quick Wins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gathering the appropriate groups and individuals to begin planning a Youth Conversation for 2019 - Set up themed steering groups around identified priorities to focus on actions to address them
Specific areas for more conversation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue discussions regarding a town centre community hub - Work with Help & Care who are leading the work with partners to identify the best way for organisations and the public to access the information they need: without duplicating resources or adding to the complexity of the already crowded landscape. - Further proposals to address social isolation – including additional lunch clubs, and providing transport for activities already available - Developing an integrated community transport scheme - Exploring opportunities for intergenerational projects/activities - Look at increasing provision for Carers

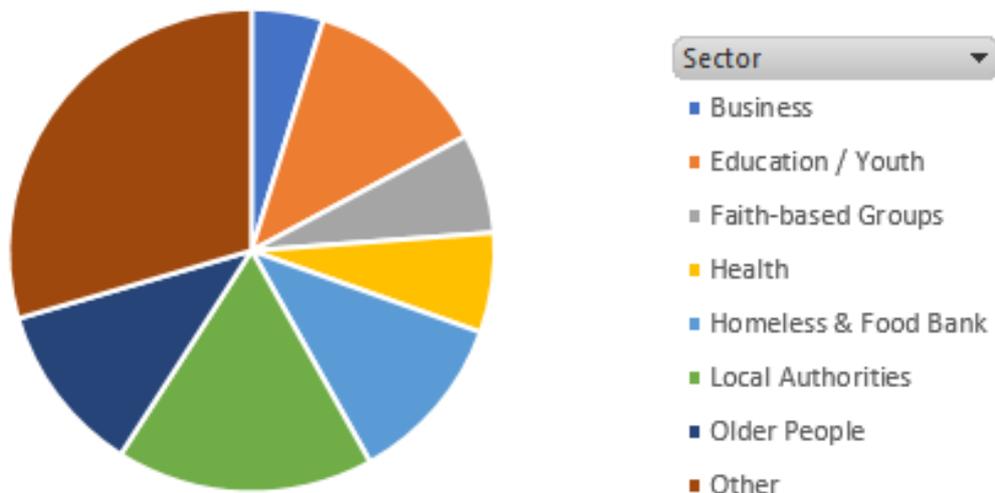
The core group are asking for feedback on whether this summary resonates with your own understanding of the debate so that your feedback can be incorporated going forward.

What are your thoughts and suggestions on other solutions?

Appendix 1: Christchurch Conversation

A. What it was and who was involved

- The Christchurch Conversation was designed to be a “community consultation with results”
- It was facilitated by Ian Jones from Bournemouth University for the CCP
- Sponsored by the Christchurch Community Partnership and involving many partner agencies in the planning and delivery including C&EDC; Bournemouth University; and the CCP.
- 103 people attended from public, private, voluntary and faith sectors



- Speakers included the C&EDC Head of Community & Leisure, Chair of Christchurch Learning Federation, Senior Officers from Dorset Police, and Fire and Rescue, and President of Christchurch Chamber of Trade & Commerce
- A celebration of the brilliant activities already happening in Christchurch which add value and bring hope to communities
- An opportunity to work together to identify the major gaps in provision, the possible solutions and what attendees from the different sectors had to offer

💡 ***Were there any other groups you would have liked to have seen at the event?***

The following press release summarises the day:

Thursday, Oct. 25 saw the first ever 'Christchurch Conversation,' which was billed as 'a conversation with purpose, leading to action!' The event, organised by the Christchurch Community Partnership and hosted at Twynham School, brought together 125 people representing around 50 different organisations and groups from the statutory, voluntary, faith, and business sectors, who are all passionate about their community.

The purpose of the Conversation was to highlight and celebrate the many positive initiatives that already exist in Christchurch, identify the gaps and challenges, and come up with creative ways of collaboratively addressing these issues through facilitated discussion groups and conversations with key stakeholders from the Borough Council, the Police, Dorset Fire & Rescue, the Chamber of Trade, and the Christchurch Learning Federation.

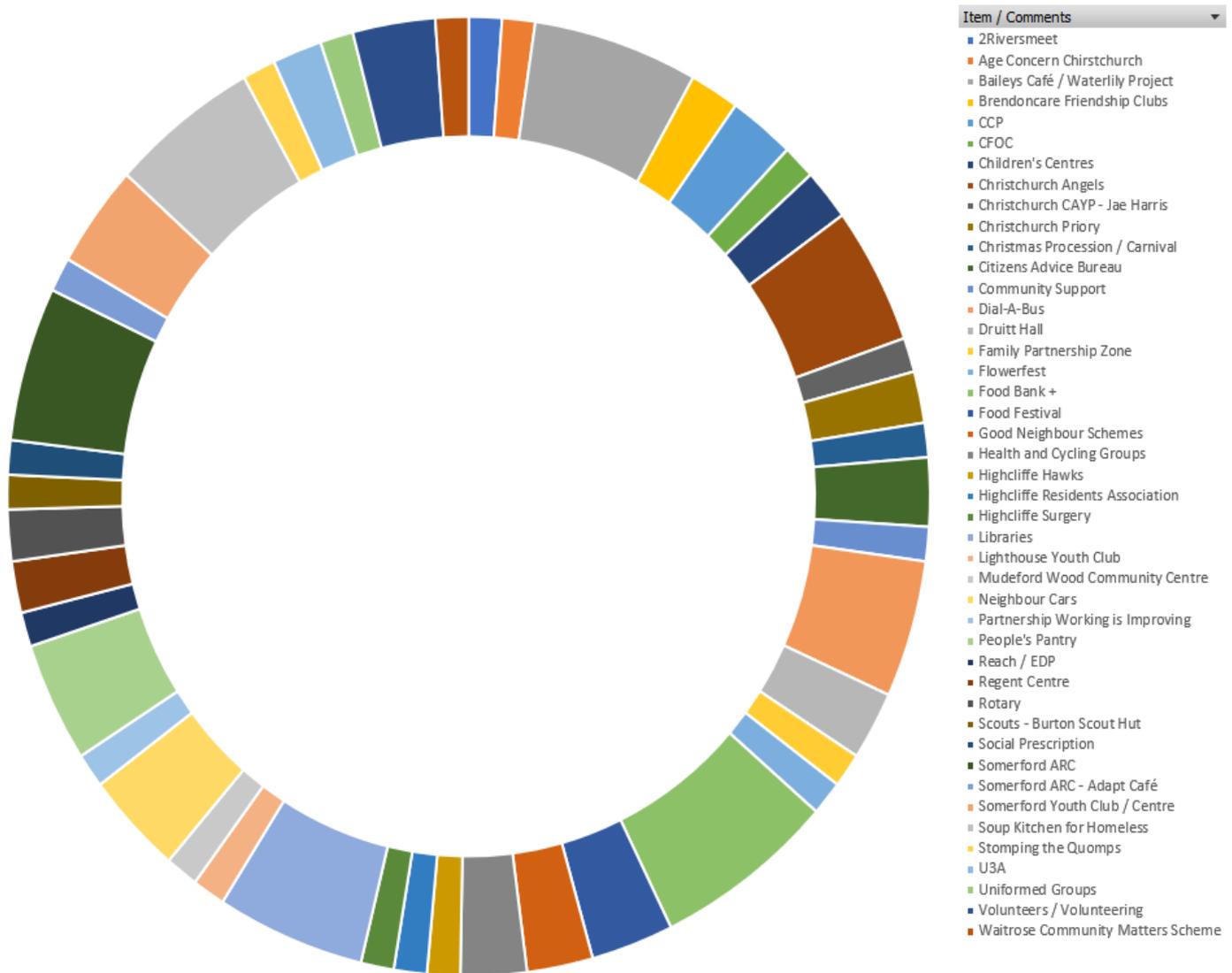
All present applauded the huge range of activities and projects being delivered, many by the voluntary sector - and some by local people at street level - but recognised the challenges around recruiting volunteers, communication of what was available, lack of youth provision, and inadequate community transport. Amongst the solutions suggested - both through a practical exercise with maps and post it notes, and focused questions - were the need for a town centre community hub, to provide a single point of contact, a 'volunteer bank,' early and increased support for mental health issues, and help for the homeless.

The issues of major concern reflected national trends, with mental health, loneliness and social isolation across the age spectrum, and community transport being at the top of the list from the 15 small groups and the five key stakeholders.

CCP chair Rev Sandra Prudom said "We were really encouraged by both the number of organisations attending and at the level of engagement. It goes to show that the people of Christchurch are invested in our community and want to be part of the solution". Guest facilitator, Ian Jones, Head of Regional Community Partnerships, from Bournemouth University also told those gathered that this was only the beginning of a process – Poole had held its 3rd Conversation recently, and several positive new initiatives had already resulted from them. The next stage is to publish the report and the Steering Group will continue to meet to move the recommended actions from it forward.

B. What was celebrated

The first exercise the work groups were tasked with was to identify the brilliant things which are already taking place in Christchurch and what it is about them that makes a difference. The groups identified a staggering 187 community activities and events. The following image depicts the items which got mentioned more than once:



 **Are there activities/events or groups that are missing?**

C. What were the key subjects that people talked about?

The following detail is a subjective grouping of the responses written up down by table facilitators:

Category	The number of groups who raised the issue	Breakdown of the Issue
Transport	9	Community transport - lack of drivers
		Shortage of transport - private & charity
		Large empty buses - the further out the worse it is
		Public transport - infrequent and inadequate
		Access to transport
		Mobility issues including health and safety requirements re giving lifts
		Transport - Burton, St Catherine's Hill, Mudeford
		Integrated transport system
Social Isolation & Loneliness	11	Social isolation
		Cultural isolation
		Lack of communication with some sectors - creates isolation
		Isolation for elderly people
		Loneliness (Elderly)
		Carers
		Lack of support for carers
		Elderly carers and isolation
Homelessness / Housing	4	Respite for carers
		Growing homelessness
		Affordable housing
		Homelessness
		Homelessness / B&B / Impacts of change in benefits system
		Homelessness - exacerbated by Bournemouth, Poole and New Milton
		Housing - Social
Mental Health	7	Affordable housing (realistic)
		High level of poor mental health
		Young people's mental health
		Mental health - CAMHS - long wait for people in crisis
		Mental Health / Depression

Category	How Many Groups Raised Issue the issue	Factors Arising
Lack of Resources	8	Lack of money, volunteers and physical resources (buildings)
		Duplication of services - misuse of resources
		Lack of volunteers - quantity & quality
		Lack of funding for community activities
		There is no central point to find out what is out there
		Certain services do not have capacity
		Empty buildings - alternative uses
		Educational attainment in some local schools. Need volunteers to listen to reading etc (could join Somerford Residents as volunteers)
		Lack of funding
		Cost / money / budgets
		Volunteers - some groups have too many
Youth	12	Youth crime (eg buses being catapulted - small groups)
		Children's centres
		Youth offending team
		Lack of youth facilities
		Youth needs
		Places for young people to "hang out", what do they want?
Carers	3	Number of carers increasing rapidly
		Lack of support for carers
		Elderly carers and isolation
		Respite for carers
Lack of communication & awareness of what exists	11	Communication - social media / age profile
		Directory of volunteer groups and charities
		Joined up information in form to suit all audiences (eg homeless)
		Lack of information on what's available and how to do things
		Lack of central hub to improve communication/volunteering opportunities

D. Analysis of the Data

Reviewing the categories and factors arising enabled the identification of ‘issues’ to focus on, they were considered against various criteria such as cost, value to the community and resource demands. This approach is very subjective and the scores are just a rough guide to objectivise the process. There will be other factors which would change the order of priority, including the community’s view on the desirability of one project over another or whether there is an opportunity to collaborate with another organisation already addressing an issue. For example: Help & Care are already commissioned to produce a directory of services and groups available. There is also another organisation developing a proposal for a town centre community hub which could facilitate a partnership approach. The matrix below is therefore illustrative rather than a definitive proposal for the direction of travel.

FACTORS		ISSUE: Produce a Community Transport Strategy	Collaborate on a community-wide strategy for social isolation	Create a simplified process for volunteer recruitment and management	Explore support for carers	Work with other agencies to address Homelessness	Focused conversatin on Mental Health	Youth Conversation planned for 2019	Develop a Community Hub Strategy	Collaborate on an online platform on what is available	Strategy for improving Interagency Cooperation
Cost	Is the Project relatively expensive to implement? Not expensive = 10; very expensive = 1	7	5	8	5	5	5	8	1	8	8
Community Value	How important/valuable is the Project to the local community? Extremely Important = 10; other projects more Important = 1	10	8	10	8	7	10	10	8	4	4
Time to Deliver	How quickly can this project be implemented? Very Quickly = 10; may take some time = 1	8	4	5	4	3	3	6	2	8	8
Level of Risk	What level of risk associated with delivery? Very low risk =10; very high risk = 1	7	3	10	2	3	5	5	2	9	9
Resource Required	The scale of resources required to deliver the solution - volunteers? Fewer resources = 10; relatively high resource requirement = 1	6	5	8	3	3	2	5	2	7	8
TOTAL		38	25	41	22	21	25	34	15	36	37

- Order of Prioritisation:**
1. Create a simplified process for volunteer recruitment and management
 2. Produce a Community Transport Strategy.
 3. Strategy for improving Interagency Cooperation
 4. Collaborate on an online platform on information on what is available
 5. Youth Conversation planned for 2019
 6. Collaborate on a community-wide strategy for social isolation
 7. Focused conversation on Mental Health
 8. Explore support for carers
 9. Work with other agencies to address Homelessness
 10. Develop a Community Hub Strategy

E. What solutions were proposed?

The following detail is a subjective grouping of the responses written up down by table facilitators:

Solution area	Example solutions suggested
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charity website run like Wikepedia – anyone can put up a page • Get universities to help with community resource development • Christchurch Directory (live and accurate) • Interagency Cooperation - form working group to identify weak areas and make recommendation early 2019 • Community Hub - single point of contact
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inventory of what community transport needs are • Talk to transport providers (CCP/Age Concern/Schools/Bus companies) • How many vehicles/drivers are there currently • Plan for integrated community transport scheme • Recruit retired bus drivers/firemen • Share drivers amongst existing
Isolation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at Lunch Clubs • Single point of contact where folk can speak to someone (Hub?) • Bring young/old together in projects/activities
Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train volunteers as youth outreach workers • Survey YP to find out what they want • Fund / get young people to create better volunteer bureau, especially through social media • Day for young people / youth conversation / more youth led projects and provisions
Inter-generational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intergenerational activities/projects • Find ways to engage younger volunteers • Community hub would allow different age groups and activities to mix • Lunch clubs where knitters / crafters could teach other age groups who have limited knowledge • Church choirs, scouts, sports all build self-esteem and friendship • Working group to look at ways to engage younger volunteers
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christchurch Volunteer Centre (as Volunteer Centre Dorset) • Skills audit across voluntary groups and the sharing of this - use of a hub plus digital access • Groups be more willing to work effectively together - service delivery and cost effective • More flexible volunteering opportunities – single application/references • Local firms to release staff for volunteering • Ask local businesses / community groups to offer help in kind (eg IT business) and universities/businesses to help with training • Make volunteering simpler and use volunteer bank (time banking?)

F. Survey Feedback Summary

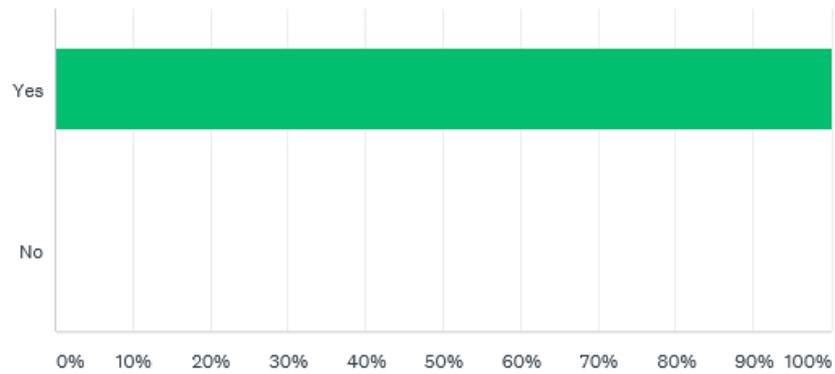
Following the event, a questionnaire was sent out to participants via Survey Monkey and the results are captured below

Q1

Was the venue suitable for the event?

Answered: 36

Skipped: 0

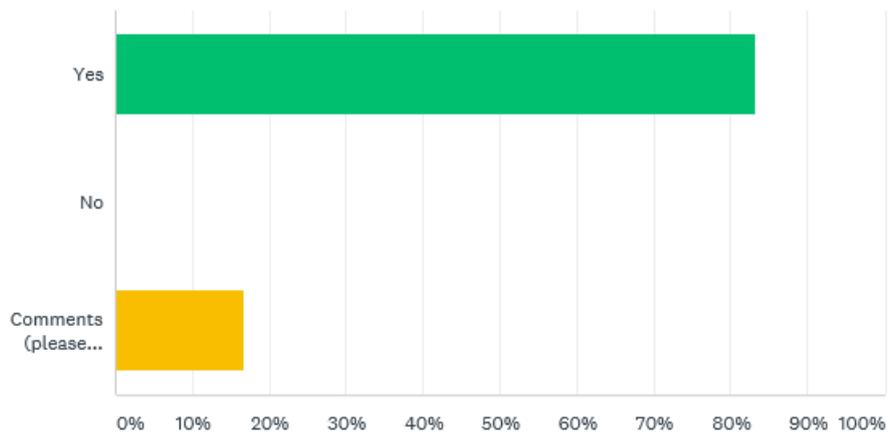


Q2

Did you find the event valuable?

Answered: 36

Skipped: 0



Q3

What did you find least helpful?

Answered: 21

Skipped: 15

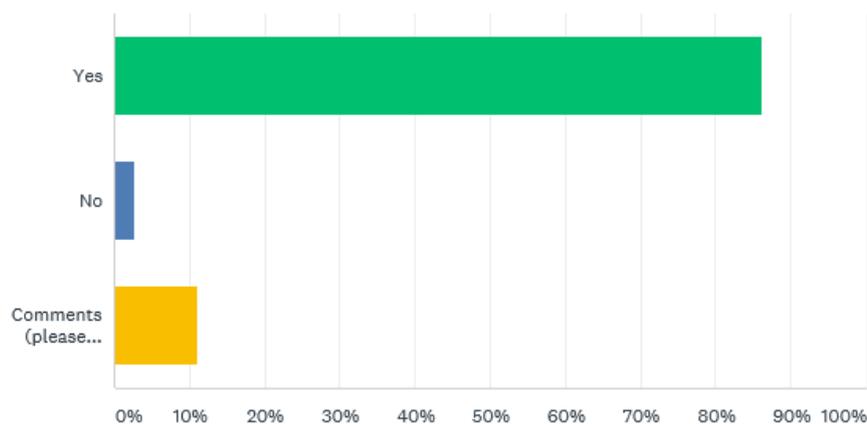
- All ok
- We came away not knowing much more than what we knew previously. The interaction things on our table were helpful but it would be great if these were collated and we were able to look at them
- It was all interesting
- It was all good for a first session.
- Timing - it was during half term
- It did feel a bit rushed due to time constraints
- Not enough time to find out what various groups do
- Key Note Speakers
- Dominate person on our table. With very fixed mindset.
- No negatives at all
- Simply more time would have been preferable but recognise it would have been tough
- A member of our group spoke way more than anyone else and the facilitator didn't even seem to notice let alone have the skills to intervene. He was someone with influence so the best way would have been to make a few ground rules at the start.
- Nothing!
- Rushed
- Not sure the session with the panel at the end added anything
- Some people tend to go off on a tangent a bit on problems they've been battling with for years, while there is not much time for that, it's important to stay solution - focused and openminded to be able to think outside the box
- Comments on bin collections!
- Hearing what's going on in Christchurch
- Nothing, everyone was positive and good community atmosphere.

Q4

Did it improve your knowledge of what is available in Christchurch?

Answered: 36

Skipped: 0

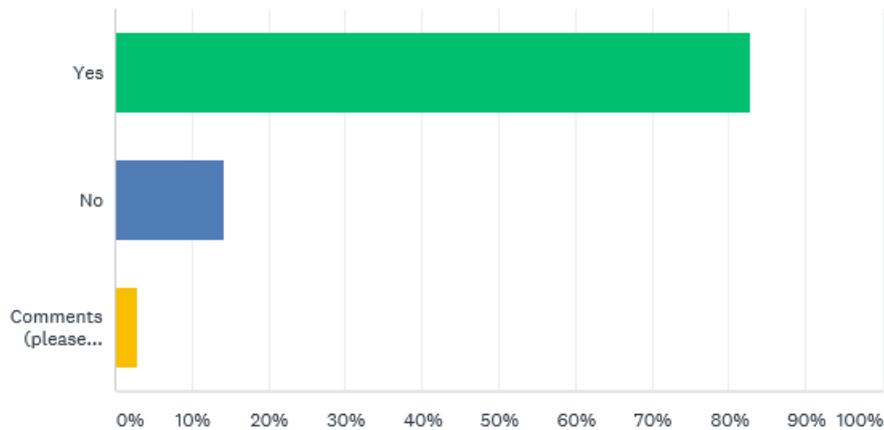


Q5

Did you make some useful connections?

Answered: 35

Skipped: 1



Q6

What do you perceive as the major gaps in provision?

Answered: 27

Skipped: 9

- Homeless night support
- Available, affordable housing. Available affordable rental properties. An available list of all services
- Digital ways to find out about other organisations and events
- some things are more fashionable than others, and seem to get the most attention
- Central point for information on charities and groups in Christchurch
- Somewhere that young people can participate and be involved in decisions and planning for events and attractions in Christchurch. Company, activities and engagement for older people outside of 9-5 weekdays. Inter-generational activities to use the resources and skills that people can offer.
- 1 on 1 care for social isolation - getting into people's homes
- Mental health support Housing support
- isolation and loneliness - lack of the old fashion community spirit looking out for and helping your neighbours
- People are unaware of what everyone is doing. I didn't realise that there was an online directory. It would be good if this could be updated and maybe incorporated with Bournemouth and Poole with the new changes coming into place.
- Central communication of what is available in the area
- Buildings in which to offer help or support or accommodation
- Transport and a central point/portal for information
- organisations working more closely together
- Access to transport for some elderly residents. Lack of varied provision for young people.
- The lack of a central hub where residents of Christchurch can find everything that's happening in and around Christchurch.
- Partnership/joined up working. Directory of information/resources - there are some fantastic services already available but greater commitment is needed from everyone to assist in maintain directories
- A community hub and a safe place for rough sleepers
- Communication. Getting stakeholders together
- Drivers for the elderly. Befrienders for the elderly. Police budget means less visibility.....maybe a 'Christchurch Rangers' Service would fill the gap and ensure people feel safe when they are out and about. Could also be dementia trained.
- Mental health - all age groups
- Communication Carers support.
- Tackling loneliness in elderly and vulnerable people
- Youth
- Finances and grant funding for non-charitable organisations
- Joined up working Recruitment Funding

Q7

Is there anything you would have liked done differently?

Answered: 22

Skipped: 14

- Chance to see more of the different charities' services etc available
- No. it was run well in the time given
- at the event, no
- No
- healthy snack alternatives available. a lot of cake. i like cake but still.
- List of those attending so you could be specific about your networking.
- No
- Not had Key Note Speakers
- More time
- More networking time
- Have more concrete ideas about how to find solutions to the problems that were raised by participants.
- No
- No
- No
- Grouped by interest / type of work
- NA
- perhaps a big map could be created where people can write down where all the facilities are, and a 'visual digital space' created as well. A bit of a mindmap of all the facilities that are there now and which ones may need to be developed
- Less feedback from ea table where comments were so long winded it robbed us of group discussion time at end.
- No
- No
- No
- No

NEXT STEPS

Once the report is published, we will seek feedback on the findings and any further comments or suggestions. Attendees have been offered the opportunity to join a themed Action Group focused on one of the identified priorities; which will then look at developing a plan for implementing achievable recommendations in that area.

For example: a group will be commissioned to take forward the planning for a Youth Conversation during 2019.

We thank everyone who has engaged thus far with the process but this was the first step so let's keep the conversation going to effect meaningful improvement for our community. We look forward to receiving your feedback through the ccp.conversation@gmail.com address.