

st john's hoxton

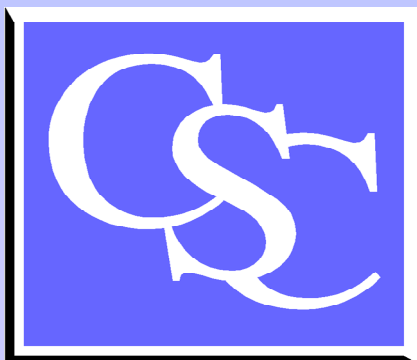
St John's Church, Hoxton:

A Community Audit

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1. INTRODUCTION

St John's Church, Hoxton has commissioned CSC Regeneration to undertake a community audit of people living and/or working in this challenging area of East London. The audit, which was funded by a grant from the National Lottery Awards for All programme, was required to help the Vicar and Parish Church Council (PCC) to develop a Mission Action Plan, which is a required from all Parish Churches in the Diocese of London, and also to help them meet their own local objective of working constructively in the local area. The Parish Church's vision is that is should be:

"A beacon of hope for Hoxton. We're a community of Christians who seek to joyfully extend welcome and hospitality to all.....Whatever your background, we hope you'll find a spiritual home with us in Hoxton."

The remainder of this introduction provides some context for the main body of the document by introducing the area and the objectives of the research, and consists of the following elements:

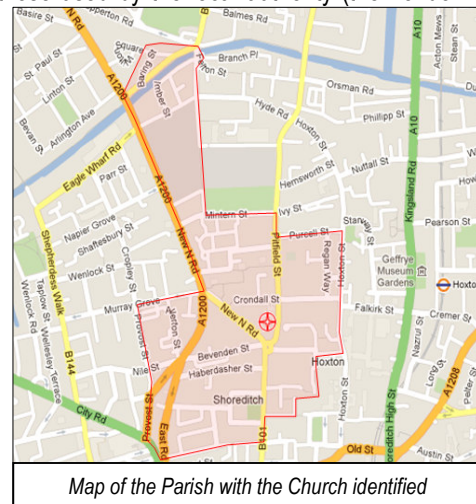
- i. The survey area
- ii. St John's Church
- iii. Audit objectives and methodology
- iv. Structure of the report

1.1 SURVEY AREA

It was decided at the outset of this project to adopt a flexible approach to defining the survey area: the Hoxton Parish Church boundaries are not the same as those used by the local authority (the London Borough of Hackney) for Hoxton Ward. Some members of the congregation live outside the Parish area, but attend partly because St John's is the closest Church to their homes. Hence, it was decided to invite anyone living or working in the wider Hoxton area to contribute their views.

Like most areas of East London, Hoxton is culturally and ethnically extremely diverse, with the majority of the population falling into one of the following categories:

- Indigenous working class families, many of which have lived in the area for generations
- Young professionals who value the area's thriving entertainment sector and its proximity to the City of London and other major employment areas
- Migrants from the Caribbean who settled in the area during the 1950s, 60s and 70s
- Migrants from Africa and the Indian sub-continent who arrived during the 1970s and 80s
- Refugees and migrants from many parts of the world and the latest wave has seen numerous Turkish and Kurdish families arrive over the past 18 months.
- A sizable student population that lives in the area for the duration of their studies, before moving on and being replaced by more newcomers.



Manufacturing developments in the years after the Second World War meant that many of the small industries that had previously characterised Hoxton declined or moved away in the post-War period. By the early 1980s, many industrial lofts and buildings had come to be occupied by young artists as inexpensive live/work spaces, while exhibition space and night clubs occupied former office and retail space from the beginning of the 1990s.

By the end of the 20th century, the southern half of Hoxton had become a vibrant arts and entertainment district boasting a large number of bars, nightclubs, restaurants, and art galleries. This fashionable area centres around Hoxton Square, a small park bordered mainly by former industrial buildings.

By contrast, the northern half of Hoxton, lying around and beyond St John's, consists largely of council housing estates (although many flats and houses are now privately owned) and new-build private residences. The unemployment and crime rates are relatively high compared to most other parts of the borough, and skills and educational attainment rates are relatively low so therefore often insufficient for many younger people to secure quality employment within the local creative industries or in the nearby City of London. Accordingly, many are thereby unable to afford the prices charged by the trendy cafes and shops to the south of the area. As a result, there is a substantial disconnect between the longer established communities and incoming businesses in Hoxton.



Contrasting types of shop at either end of Pitfield Street

1.2 ST JOHN'S CHURCH

The Church is a magnificent Grade II* Listed Church set in its own grounds on the junction of Pitfield Street and New North Road. St John's is the only church built to the design of Francis Edwards, one of Sir John Soane's foremost pupils. The Church was completed in 1826 and retains its floor plan intact as well as its galleries, and has a beautiful painted ceiling, which was executed by the prominent architect Joseph Arthur Reeve in the early 20th century.

In Victorian London, the area benefitted from the presence of the London City Mission and early Vicars of St John's supported and engaged with the work of social reformers such as Lord Shaftesbury and Charles Booth.

Today, the Church offers a range of services to local people, including Kumon tuition, a youth club and a children's play area, although the latter is now in urgent need of improvement.

Since the arrival of the current Vicar, the weekly congregation has expanded rapidly from around 30 to over 100 regular worshippers, and that number is not only drawn from a much wider social and ethnic spectrum than before, but it also includes a significant number of families with small children.



Extract of the Church ceiling

The Church supports numerous social causes in the area, including the Hackney Winter Night Shelter, the Hackney Food Bank and Shoreditch Citizens. In addition, and taking advantage of the Church's beauty and its ample seating at both floor level and in the galleries, St John's has occasionally hosted concerts.

1.3 AUDIT OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

This tradition of working to the benefit of the wider disadvantaged community is being maintained under the current Vicar and PCC, and they wish to work constructively with all in the area – regardless of their faith or cultural background – to help address local priority needs and aspirations.

All Parish Churches in the Diocese are required to develop a Mission Action Plan that defines their strategies for both mission and ministry, and this document will help to define the actions that the PCC might undertake in order to achieve that vision. In an area such as Hoxton, which is densely populated and home to people from a wide range of backgrounds, it is more difficult to achieve a snapshot of opinion on local priorities, and thereby plan how the Church might best support the community as a whole. Hence, CSC was engaged to develop a survey that captured people's views on their families' needs and aspirations and their own vision for the community as a whole.

Having developed a survey document, we worked with the Vicar in recruiting and training a small team of volunteers from the Church who would interview residents and workers in the area. A total of 491 people were interviewed by this team between June and September 2012, which represents around 8 – 9% of the total population, and is therefore statistically valid for the purposes of this survey.

We are very grateful to all those who helped to interview local people and to all those who gave their views.

1.4 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The remainder of this document is structured as follows:

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| Section 1 | Introduction to the document |
| Section 2 | A demographic profile of respondents which demonstrates that the survey is based on a representative sample of opinion |
| Section 3 | Views on the current condition of Hoxton, their home environment and the delivery of local services |
| Section 4 | A report on the extent to which the interviewees engage with the Parish Church either as a place of worship or as a local amenity |
| Section 5 | Interviewees' views on Hoxton's future, and the extent to which they will be willing to play an active part |
| Section 6 | Summarises the key findings and offers some conclusions that can be drawn from the information provided |

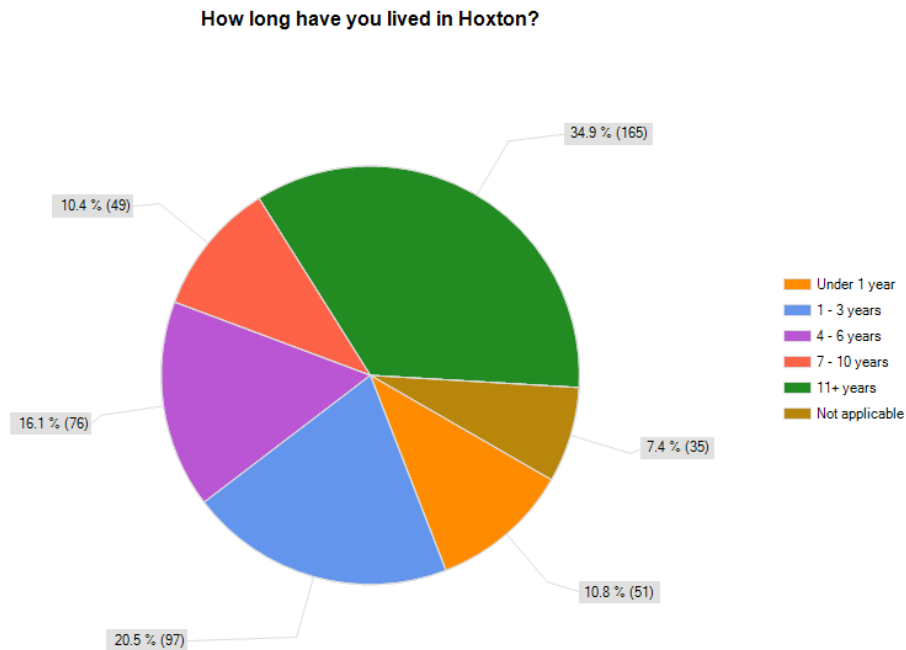
2. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

The interviewees were first asked to answer a few questions about themselves and their immediate families, and their responses are summarised in this section. This allows us to demonstrate firstly that the totality of replies is based on a representative sample of local people, and we shall also be able to identify and comment upon relevant trends of opinion among different demographic cohorts later in the report. The remainder of this section consists of:

- i. Numbers of residents and workers
- ii. Breakdown by gender
- iii. Breakdown by age
- iv. Breakdown by ethnic origin
- v. Family size and take up of key services
- vi. Economic status
- vii. Overview

2.1 NUMBERS OF RESIDENTS AND WORKERS

In order to establish whether it was appropriate for an individual to participate in the survey, they were all asked whether they lived or worked in Hoxton, and those who replied in the negative were therefore excluded. In total, 284 of the respondents live in the area, 93 work there but live outside, and 113 both live and work in Hoxton. Those who live in the area were then asked to say how long they have lived locally, and their replies are shown below.



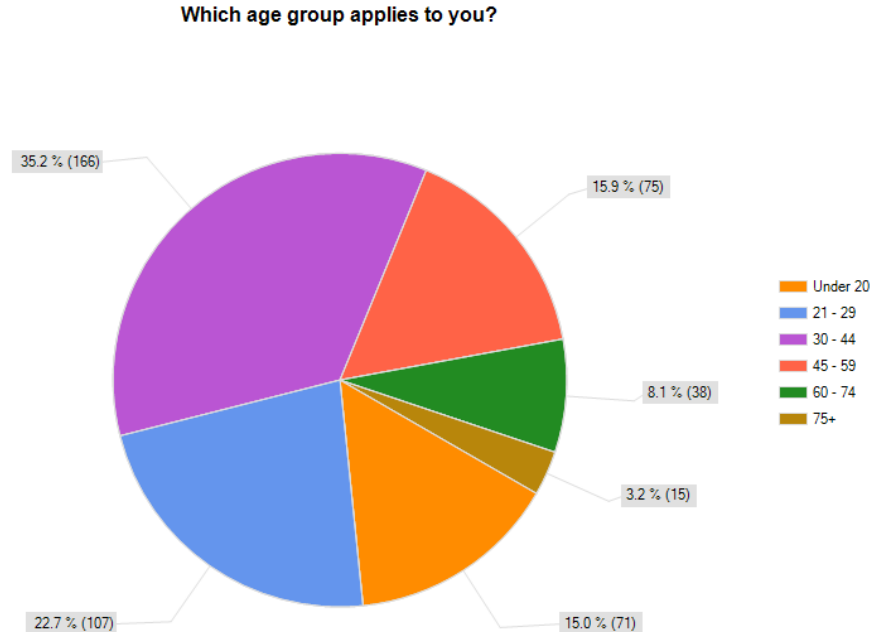
The largest number of residents (165) comes from those who have lived in the area for 11 years or more, and it was clear from the interviews that a good proportion of that cohort have lived in Hoxton for substantially longer than that. However, the figures also reveal that around two thirds of the respondents have lived in the area for much less time and over 150 people (32% of the survey) have lived in the area for less than 3 years, which reflects both the number of students living in the area and the demographic change caused by the number of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers being housed in Hoxton.

2.2 BREAKDOWN BY GENDER

The 2001 census suggested that 51% of people living in Hoxton were female and 49% male, which was about the same as the national average. The results of this survey almost exactly matched that: 51.8% of respondents were female and 48.2% were male. Hence, the survey group is a representative sample in this respect, and both men and women were interviewed in sufficient number.

2.3 BREAKDOWN BY AGE

The table below shows the percentage of respondents that fall within different age ranges:



Nineteen people declined to answer this question. The table above shows that the largest group are those in the 30 – 44 age range, and that almost three quarters of the interviewees were aged 44 or below. Given the high numbers of students in the area, and the large number of family groups, this very closely fits the age profile of the area's population as a whole.

2.4 BREAKDOWN BY ETHNIC ORIGIN

The Borough of Hackney is one of the most ethnically diverse Boroughs in the country, and while this is less true of Hoxton than many of its other Wards, it was important that the survey should reflect the wide diversity of residents' ethnic backgrounds. Their replies to this question are shown below.

HOXTON COMMUNITY AUDIT: BREAKDOWN OF RESPONDENTS BY ETHNICITY							
WHITE		BLACK		ASIAN		MIXED	
White British	206	Black British	58	Asian British	29	White/Black	11
White Irish	19	African	26	Indian	8	White/Asian	4
East European	14	Caribbean	18	Pakistani	6	Black/Asian	5
Turkish, Cypriot	26	Other	4	Bangladeshi	9		
Other	18			Kurd	18		
				Other	8		

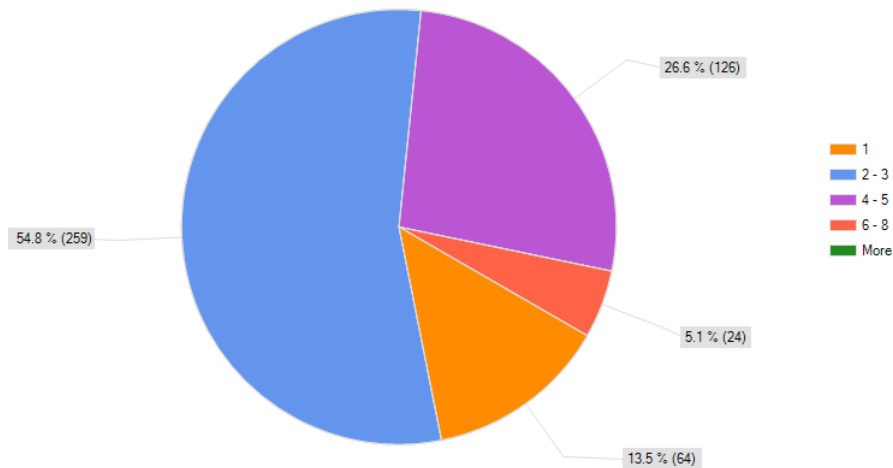
By some distance, the largest number of respondents described themselves as being “White British”, which is consistent with the area’s wider population. The next largest groups described themselves as Black or Asian British. The ethnic groups that have most recently arrived in Hoxton are the Turkish/Cypriot and Kurdish communities and they constituted 5.3 and 3.7% respondents respectively (44 people in total), so their views have been appropriately taken into account.

Overall, the results of this survey broadly match those published in population surveys published by Hackney Council, and so can be accepted as a representative sample of the wider population.

2.5 FAMILY SIZE AND TAKE UP OF SERVICES

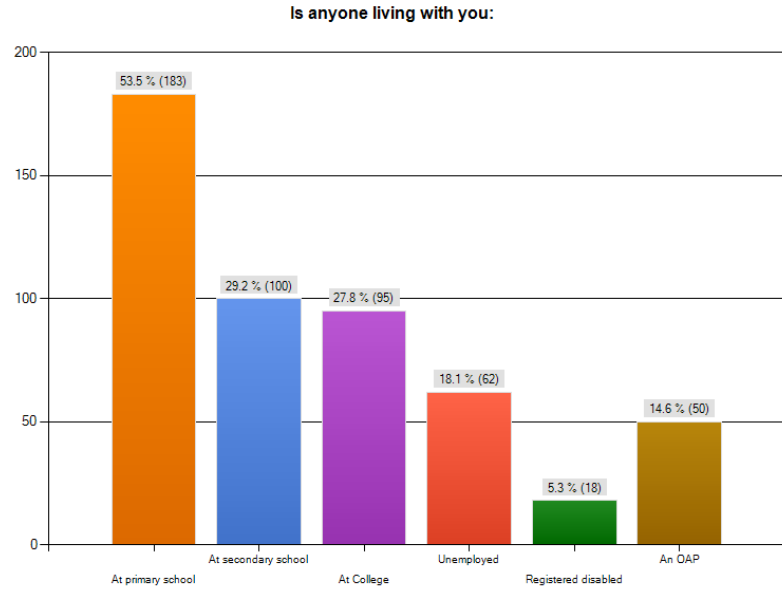
The respondents were also asked to say how many people live in their household, so that we could seek to separately identify the needs and aspirations of people living alone from smaller and larger families; their replies are given below.

How many people live in your household?



Over half of the respondents live in a household of two or three people, but there is again a broad range of replies to this question, showing that all views are being properly considered. Following from that question, interviewees were also asked to say whether anyone in their household fell into any of a number of categories relating to their use of public services; the replies to that question are again shown below.

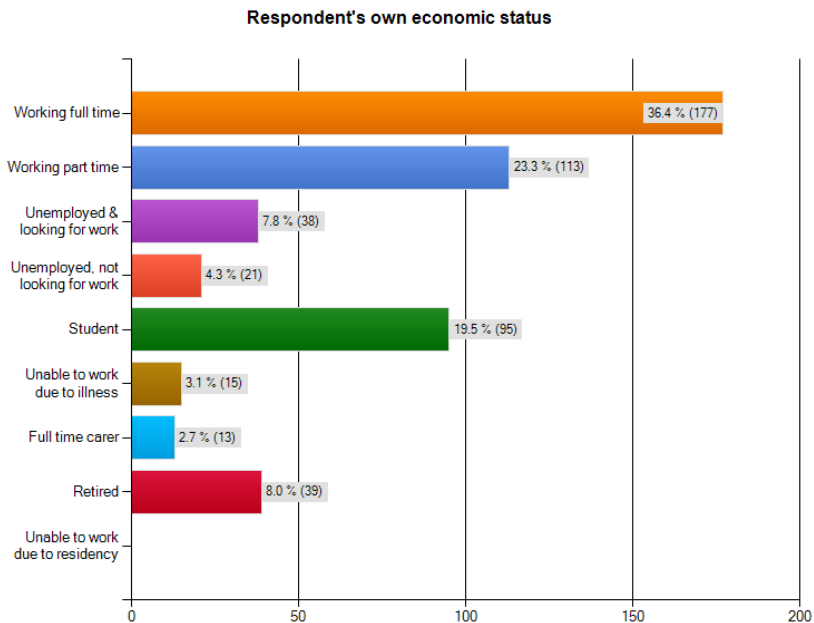




A total of 149 people did not respond to this question, suggesting that none of the above apply to their household. Of those who did reply, over half live with a child at Primary School, and as many have someone at secondary school or in further or higher education. Nearly a fifth of respondents (62 people) have an unemployed person in their household, a smaller number (50) have a retired person living with them, and eighteen people live with someone who is registered disabled; this points to extensive knowledge and experience of the delivery of these social services, which will be used to illustrate key points of later points in this report.

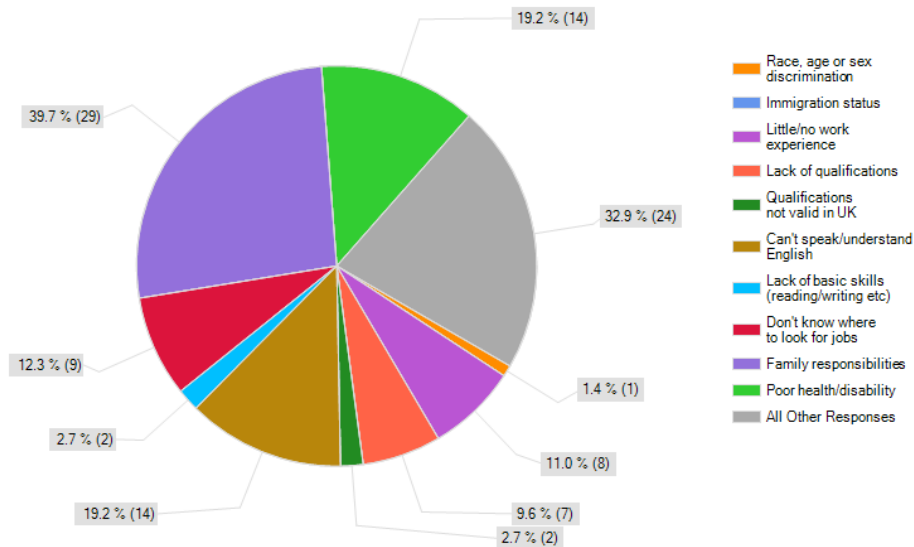
2.6 ECONOMIC STATUS

Having asked about their families' circumstances, the following question asked interviewees to describe their economic status, and their replies are shown below.



Almost 60% of respondents either work full or part time, but 12% said that they are unemployed which is perhaps higher than the rate suggested by Government statistics; 18% of respondents are students which is also a little higher than might have been expected, but it is worth noting that nearly a fifth of the students are aged in the 30 – 44 range and many are undertaking their studies alongside their employment. Those people who said that they were unemployed were then asked to identify any factors that might prevent them from finding work, and their replies are as follows:

If unemployed, which of these stop you from working?



The main impediments to employment identified by the 73 people replying to this question are:

- Family responsibilities: 26 out of 29 people citing this were female
- Poor English language skills: 12 out of 13 were female
- A lack of confidence: 17 out of 24 were male

These are all issues that can be addressed through voluntary activity, and might be something that the Church could consider addressing either alone or in partnership with statutory or other charitable/voluntary agencies. Encouragingly, only one person cited discrimination as a reason for not being able to secure paid employment.

2.7 OVERVIEW

The key points of this section are summarised below in bullet point form:

- The survey reflects the rich diversity of the local population and is statistically valid
- Unemployment rates among the respondents is higher than the Government rates suggest, but many are seeking to broaden their skills and enhance their employability through training
- Family responsibilities, low confidence and a poor command of written and spoken English are seen as the biggest impediments to finding work



3. VIEWS OF HOXTON

The next section of the survey asked respondents for their views on a range of issues concerning living and working in the Hoxton area; this section consists of the following:

- i. Satisfaction with local services and conditions
- ii. The changing face of Hoxton
- iii. The best and worst of Hoxton
- iv. Overview

3.1 SATISFACTION WITH LOCAL SERVICES AND CONDITIONS

Respondents were asked say how happy they were with a number of issues relating to service delivery and everyday life in Hoxton, and their replies are shown in the table below.

HOXTON COMMUNITY AUDIT: SATISFACTION RATINGS						
	VERY UNHAPPY	FAIRLY UNHAPPY	NEITHER	FAIRLY HAPPY	VERY HAPPY	DON'T KNOW
Health, welfare & benefits advice	32	72	64	203	42	63
Advice on employment and training	47	78	69	175	37	69
Advice on nationality and residency	15	38	115	152	37	113
Local schools	19	76	64	188	67	59
My family's housing	40	102	37	200	65	25
The area's environment	40	75	43	226	72	14
Local shops	23	74	40	244	89	5
Entertainment and night life	27	43	79	198	75	50
Advice and support for teenagers	49	106	63	127	26	97
Play facilities for teenagers	39	114	59	158	27	72
Play facilities for younger children	30	87	70	180	48	57
Access to community/social groups	25	53	79	182	58	71
Access to my place of worship	5	12	94	169	117	65

Highest score for each issue has been highlighted

Remarkably, the largest number of respondents said that they were “fairly happy” with all of the issues on this list. The highest net satisfaction rates¹ were scored by the ease of access to a preferred place of worship, which will be of particular satisfaction, and the local shops; the only issue to score a negative net score was the availability of advice and support to teenagers, and that will be addressed in more detail below. Overall, the issues that drew the most positive responses were:

- Local shops
- Local environment
- Access to preferred place of worship
- Entertainment & night life

Over 70% said that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the local shopping facilities but, as will be seen later, there was significant unprompted demand for better supermarket facilities, which may be developed in the near future. Over 60% said that they were happy with the local environment, but this was not so clearly borne out by the unprompted comments where another significant number said that issues such as uncollected litter, dog mess and the lack of recycling facilities were for them the worst thing about living in Hoxton. Some made the point that the area had been “spotless” during the period of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, but things were rapidly declining again now that the media attention had passed.

¹ Calculated by subtracting the total negative votes from the positive votes

Returning to the table above, the issues that drew the largest number of negative replies were:

- Advice and support for teenagers
- The family's housing
- Recreational facilities for teenagers

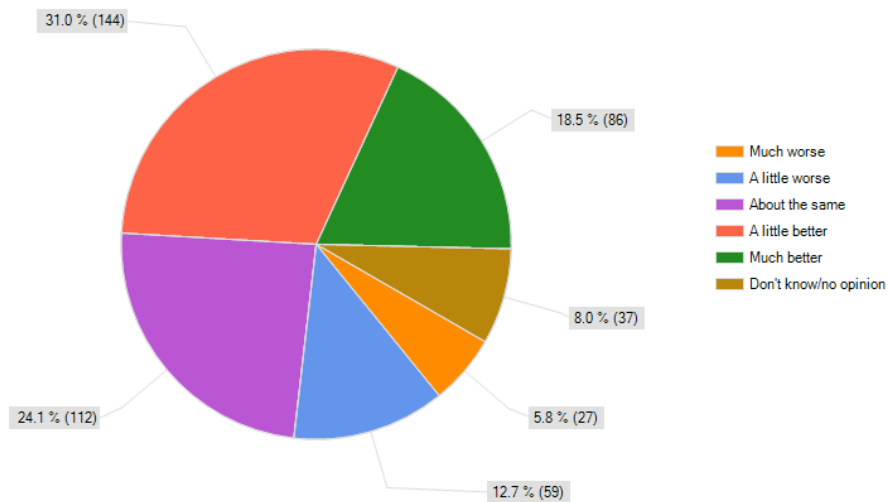
Many of the complaints follow expected demographic lines; for example, the lack of facilities for younger people is most keenly felt by teenagers and younger families, men were more likely to be dissatisfied with advice on employment and training, and women were often unhappier with the availability of family facilities. However, a number of less predictable trends also emerged from this part of the survey:

- Older people (aged 60 and upwards) were also concerned about the lack of facilities for younger people, and this is directly linked to their later comments about a fear of crime, anti social behaviour, street drinking and drug abuse
- Younger people and smaller households are more likely to be dissatisfied with their housing, but it was also the case that people of all ages who have lived longest in the area were also unhappy in this respect
- Although the numbers involved are quite small, Asians were proportionately much less satisfied with the availability of help on employment and training issues

3.2 THE CHANGING FACE OF HOXTON

Respondents were then asked to say whether Hoxton had got better or worse over the past few years, and their replies are shown below:

How do you think Hoxton has changed in the past few years?



In a positive response, almost half of those who expressed a view thought that the area had improved in recent years, and only a small number thought that it had declined. Many referred directly to the development work that had been undertaken in recent years, but some also expressed concern that

older people and longer established families were not always benefitting or being catered for in these changes. Analysis of these returns along demographic lines suggests that:

- White people were much more likely to say that the area had declined than people from a Black or Asian background
- Women were a little more dissatisfied than men
- Older people were much more likely to think that the area had declined in recent years

3.3 THE BEST AND WORST OF HOXTON

In the final question in this section, people were invited to give their own unprompted view about the best and worst aspects of living in Hoxton, and this section summarises these comments.

3.3.1 THE BEST THING ABOUT HOXTON

Over 350 people offered a view on what they most liked about living in the area, and the vast majority of these referred to one or more of the following:

- **A sense of community:** over 200 of our respondents referred to a community where people were friendly, looked out for one another and offered help when it was required; many also liked the fact that Hoxton is a multi-cultural area and suggested that people from different backgrounds were coming together to live contentedly with one another, although there was a significant minority who thought that more work and progress in this respect was needed
- **A vibrant social scene:** many, particularly the younger cohort, suggested that there was an excellent social life in the area and referred to the newly opened cafes, bars and restaurants, but others were unhappy about the amount of litter and vomit on the streets, particularly on Saturday and Sunday mornings
- **Location:** the accessibility of Hoxton to the City, its transport links and accessibility to places of work, shops and Churches was appreciated by many
- **Parks and green spaces:** In an otherwise bustling area, many referred to the sense of peace and quiet that can be gained at Shoreditch Park, the Church grounds and other green spaces in Hoxton, although some thought that the parks were under-resourced in terms of sporting, play and toilet facilities.

Overall, we collected a very positive series of statements, and the following summarises the thoughts of many respondents:

“Hoxton is a very cosmopolitan area and it’s great to mix with people from a variety of backgrounds.”

3.3.2 THE WORST THING ABOUT HOXTON

Again, over 350 people responded to this question, but there was a much more varied range of responses to the question; the main points can be summarised as follows

- **Gangs and gang culture:** some 140 people made interlinked observations relating to the presence of gangs on the streets, and suggested that these made them fearful to go out, especially at night. Older people were particularly worried in this respect, but some parents also expressed the fear that their children might either become victims or be swept up into the gang culture as a result of peer pressure. On the other hand, none of those who said that they

felt intimidated or unsafe in the area actually said that they had been robbed or attacked, which suggests that the fear of crime (though still very real and not to be under-estimated) is worse than the reality.

- **Street drinking and drug abuse:** on a similar theme, the presence of people openly drinking and taking drugs on the streets was a problem for nearly 100 people, with some referring to the problem being apparent during the school run
- **Facilities and opportunities for young people:** the lack of positive recreational activities and job opportunities for young people was specified by over 125 people and many of them related this to the problems of petty crime, vandalism and anti-social behaviour
- **Litter and dirt:** as suggested earlier, over 150 people said that their biggest problem was litter including dog mess, cigarette butts and chewing gum; some also said that they were concerned about a lack of recycling facilities
- **Roads and pavements:** over 30 expressed concern about the poor condition of local roads and pavements, with some of those also making the point that cracks and potholes were difficult for cyclists to manoeuvre
- **Shopping and market facilities:** the final recurring theme was dissatisfaction with the variety of local shops and with a perceived decline in the quality of Hoxton Market.

3.4 OVERVIEW

The key points of this section are summarised below in bullet point form:

- The majority of respondents enjoyed living and working in Hoxton, and are very positive about most everyday aspects of being there
- There is a strong community spirit, and many see it as an upcoming area
- There are particular worries about the local gang culture and associated problems of vandalism, anti social behaviour and drink or drug abuse; many also link this issue to the lack of positive activities and job opportunities for young people
- Dirt and uncollected litter on the streets is also a problem for many people, with some commenting that the area had been kept much cleaner during the period of the 2012 Games

4. RELATIONSHIP WITH ST JOHN'S CHURCH

The next phase of the survey covered the respondents' relationship with the Parish Church. The interview team stressed that this survey was open to all residents and workers, regardless of their beliefs, but as the Church wishes to be open and welcoming to people of different faiths or none, it was important to establish the extent to which local people feel comfortable about coming to the Church. This section consists of:

- i. Awareness of what the Church can offer
- ii. Visiting the Church
- iii. Attitude towards visiting the Church
- iv. Overview

4.1 AWARENESS OF WHAT THE CHURCH CAN OFFER

St John's offers access to community gardens and is also used to host a number of different activities over and above its religious services; the respondents were first asked to say which of these they were already aware of and their replies are as follows:

HOXTON COMMUNITY AUDIT: AWARENESS OF CHURCH ACTIVITIES		
ACTIVITY TYPE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Sunday services	297	91.7%
Special services at Christmas & Easter etc	240	74.1%
Gardens to sit and walk in	230	71.0%
Car parking	189	58.3%
Children's play area	161	49.7%
Charity sales	159	49.1%
Youth group	95	29.3%
Kumon training	89	27.5%
Historically important art work	87	26.9%
A concert facility	78	24.1%

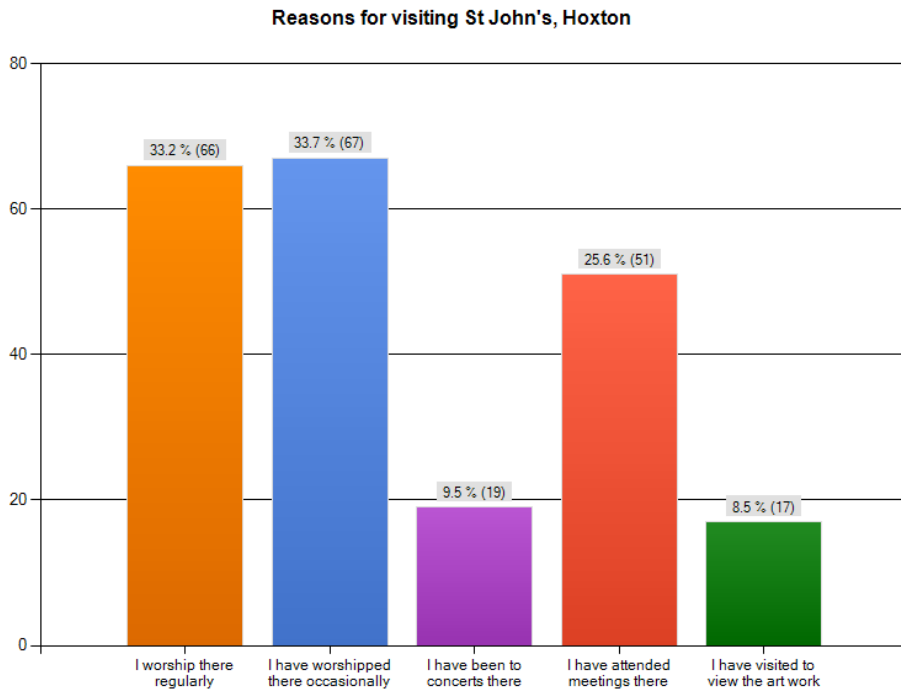
It is no surprise that almost all knew of the regular Sunday services, and there was high awareness of the festival services and the gardens. On the other hand, only a minority – less than a third of people responding – were aware of the charity sales, youth group, Kumon training, concert facility and art works. It will be worth spending time to promote these more extensively as they can be very helpful in encouraging more people to visit the Church, and that in turn will offer an opportunity to build bridges with the wider community. Further examination of these statistics revealed that:

- Younger people (aged 30 or less) were least aware of the social and secular activities run from the Church
- Men were more aware of the gardens and art work, but women generally were more likely to know about the youth group, training and charity sales
- The ethnic groups that were least aware of the full range of non-religious and social activities were Turks and Cypriots, Black Caribbeans and most members of the Asian communities.

4.2 VISITING THE CHURCH

The interviewees were then asked whether they had ever visited the Church for any reason, and a total of 223 people said that they had done so, and a slightly larger number – 237 – had not, although some (mainly students living in the area) said that they considered themselves to be Christian but worshipped elsewhere. Those replying in the affirmative were then asked to say which of a list of possible reasons

for visiting were appropriate to them; the interviewees were able to identify more than one factor, and their replies are shown below.

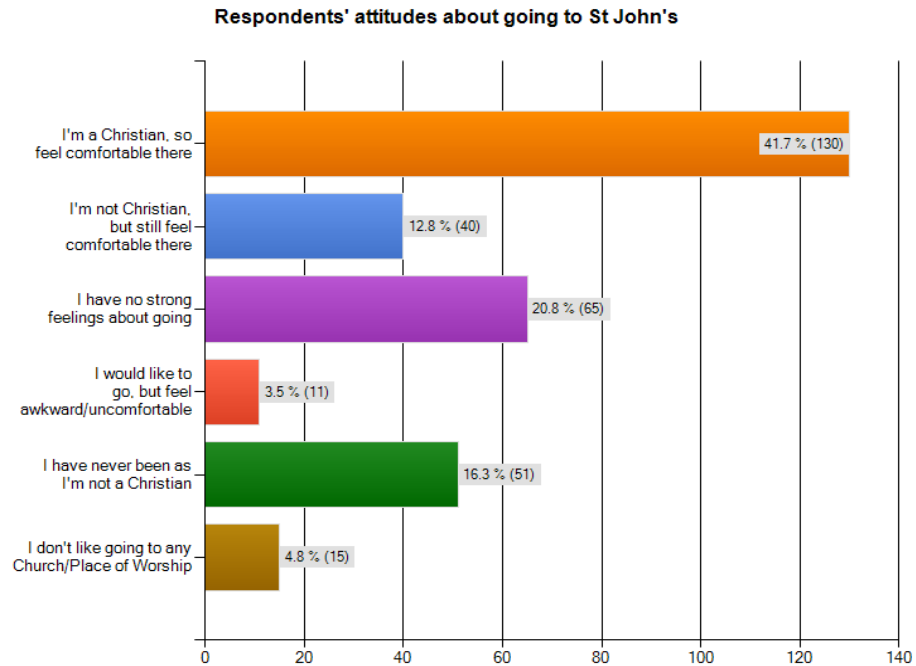


This shows almost identical numbers of respondents identifying themselves as either regular or occasional worshippers, and a slightly smaller number of people have attended the variety of meetings that are hosted at St John's; relatively few had been specifically for concerts or to view the art work.

Fewer than a dozen people in total said that they were both worshippers and had also visited the Church for other purposes, which suggests that people coming specifically to view the art work or attend events such as the concerts and meetings are drawn from a broad spectrum of people, and are not solely those who come to Church anyway, so this is something that can be built on in future.

4.3 ATTITUDES TO VISITING CHURCH

All interviewees were then shown a list of statements on the subject of visiting St John's, and were asked to say which one of these most applied to them, and their replies are shown below.



Well over half of the respondents said that they felt comfortable in the Church, including a total of 40 people who did not identify themselves as Christian, which is an encouraging result. The majority of the people falling into that latter category self-described as White or Black British or Irish, but there were still 11 people of an Asian, Turkish or Kurd non-Christian background who feel happy coming to the Church, and that is again something that can be built upon in building bridges between people of different faith or ethnic backgrounds.

By contrast, 11 people said that they felt awkward or uncomfortable at the Church, and all of those described themselves as British Citizens – half were White British, and almost all had lived in the area for more than four years. This suggests that people are more likely to visit the Church for the first time soon after they have moved to the area rather than after a period of time.

4.4 OVERVIEW

The key points of this section are summarised below in bullet point form:

- There was limited awareness of the full range of the activities and facilities that can be accessed from the Church
- Most people, including many non-Christians, who have visited the Church for whichever reason have felt comfortable and welcome there
- There is a potential for using the Church's resources of the gardens and art work, and the non-religious activities such as charity sales and concerts, to encourage people of different backgrounds to come together and overcome social barriers, but these need to be better promoted

5. LOOKING FORWARDS

The survey concluded with a series of questions about how the respondents thought that the Church might best serve the community in the future, and what role they might themselves play for the greater good by working on a voluntary basis in the area. The remainder of this section consists of:

- i. Voluntary activities delivered from the Church
- ii. Interest in working on a voluntary basis
- iii. Ambitions for Hoxton
- iv. Overview

5.1 VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES DELIVERED FROM THE CHURCH

The respondents were shown a list of activities that might be delivered from the Church building at times when religious services were not being undertaken. From that list, they were invited to identify up to three activities they thought would be of benefit to their own immediate family and then for the community as a whole, and the table below shows which they thought would be of most use to themselves and their families:

ACTIVITIES TO BENEFIT RESPONDENTS' FAMILIES				
ISSUE	1 ST CHOICE	2 ND CHOICE	3 RD CHOICE	TOTAL
Childcare for parents in work	95	19	11	125
Recreation & support for teenagers	75	56	34	165
Support & advice for the unemployed	68	42	33	143
Health advice	52	40	62	154
Social projects for older people	45	35	21	101
Play space for children	41	47	40	128
Parent & toddler activities & support	32	41	12	85
Help with debt/money advice	19	22	31	72
Community arts projects	19	22	26	67
Victim support projects	14	12	9	35
Help with relationships	7	13	7	27
More information on the Church's heritage & history	6	6	9	21
Support & advice for people with addictions	4	9	8	21
Support & advice for refugees/asylum seekers	3	2	3	8

According to these figures, childcare for parents in work received most first choice votes, but the issues that the greatest number of votes overall were as follows:

- Recreation and support for teenagers 165 votes
- Health advice 154 votes
- Support and advice for the unemployed 143 votes
- Play space for children 128 votes
- Childcare for parents in work 125 votes

The demand for recreation and support facilities for teenagers fits very strongly with many of the more negative views about the impact of disaffected and directionless young people on life in the area. When asked about the potential services that might be of greatest value to the community as a whole, the respondents replied as follows:

ACTIVITIES TO BENEFIT THE WHOLE COMMUNITY				
ISSUE	1 ST CHOICE	2 ND CHOICE	3 RD CHOICE	TOTAL
Recreation & support for teenagers	95	69	42	206
Childcare for parents in work	78	15	15	108
Support & advice for the unemployed	77	60	32	169
Play space for children	39	31	33	103
Social projects for older people	38	38	21	97
Health advice	34	27	53	114
Parent & toddler activities & support	27	26	13	66
Victim support projects	23	21	18	62
Support & advice for people with addictions	19	33	27	79
Help with debt/money advice	16	12	40	68
Community arts projects	14	11	24	49
Support & advice for refugees/asylum seekers	5	12	11	28
Help with relationships	5	8	5	18
More information on the Church's heritage & history	4	4	5	13

In this survey, the demand for recreation and support for teenagers received most votes overall and most first choices. There was also strong support for the delivery of childcare, and help for the unemployed followed by play space for children health advice and projects for older people. The top six subjects in both charts were:

- Recreation and support for teenagers (most votes in both categories)
- Help for the unemployed
- Health advice
- Childcare
- Projects for older people

It was perhaps a little surprising that in such an ethnically diverse community, there was little call for help for refugees and asylum seekers, which suggests that the existing services are well received. Interestingly, there was also good support for community arts projects, which fits with the Church's existing activities and can also be a way of encouraging cross-cultural links.

5.2 INTEREST IN WORKING ON A VOLUNTARY BASIS

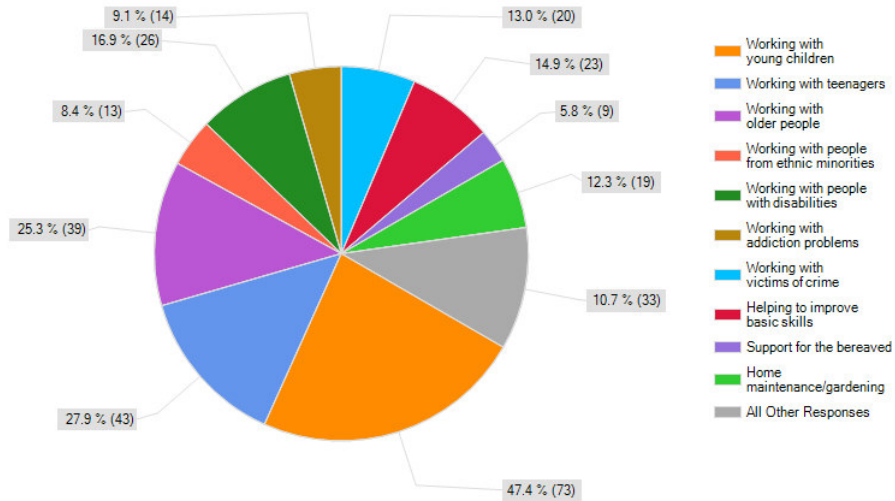
Respondents were next asked about their interest in working in the community on a voluntary basis, and a small majority (268 people, or 56%) said that they were not interested in voluntary work at all, but the fact that almost 45% said that they either did so already or were interested in doing so is consistent with the comments earlier about the strong sense of community in Hoxton. Many local people would have been involved with voluntary activity at the recent Olympic and Paralympic Games, and this return suggests that there is a latent willingness to get involved, and this is something that could be encouraged and nurtured by the Church.

Interestingly, given the negative comments received about young people, 37% of teenagers answering this question said that they would be interested in working in the community on a voluntary basis, and that was the highest percentage of any age group. Of course, teenagers have fewer other commitments than older people, but encouraging the younger generation to serve the community in this way can help to address some negative preconceptions.

Examination of these figures along ethnic lines suggests that people describing themselves as Black (British, African and Caribbean) are most likely to be already working voluntarily or to be interested in doing so in future; the community with by far the least interest is the Asian group.

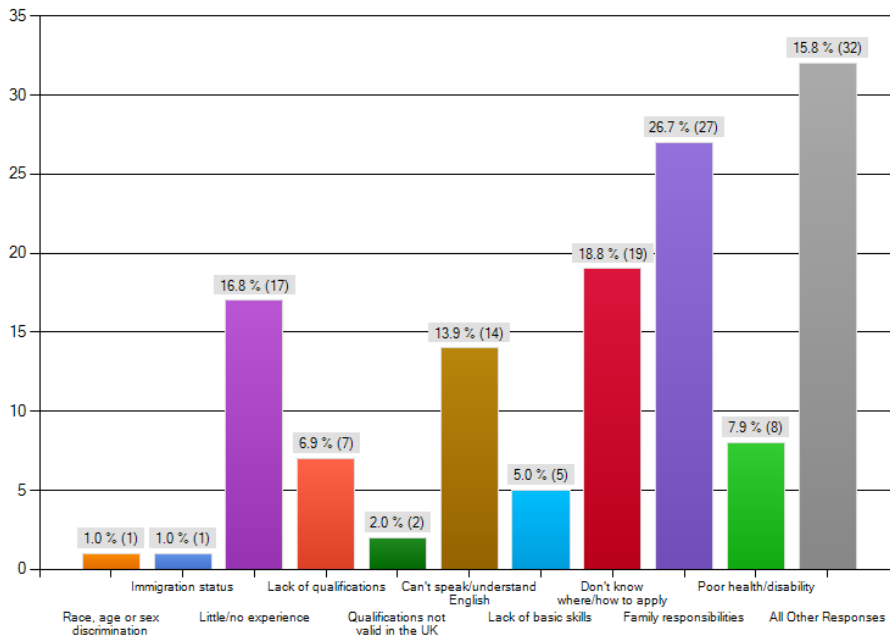
Those who were interested in the subject were then asked to say which areas of activity which most interested them, and their replies are shown below:

Types of voluntary work of greatest interest



Working with children was the most popular subject, but there was also considerable interest in working with teenagers which was, of course, the issue that was identified as the most pressing need for individual families and the whole community. All respondents were then asked suggest which issues would be most likely to impede them from working on a voluntary basis, their replies are shown below:

Barriers to working voluntarily



The largest group cited “family responsibilities” as the main reason why they were unable to offer their time to work on a voluntary basis. Of that group, many were women in the age range of 30 – 44 with primary school age children, so it may be that the provision of additional child care services could not



only help some into employment, but could also enable others to take on some form of voluntary work. Others thought that a poor grasp of English was an impediment to undertaking voluntary work, and both of these issues were given as reasons why unemployed people could not find paid work, so there may again be a role for the Church in hosting or providing tuition. Finally, a significant number of others said that they “did not know how or where to apply”, and so there may again be a role for the Church in liaising with local voluntary bodies to raise awareness generally.

5.3 AMBITIONS FOR HOXTON

The survey concluded with an open question that invited people to say anything they liked about the area, and what they would like to see happen there in the next five years. Over 250 people made a suggestion, and while these covered a wide range of issues, a number of very clear themes emerged:

- **Developing the community spirit:** there was again strong recognition of the existing sense of community, but this was mixed with fear that this was being eroded by recent developments as well as a desire to strengthen it further by integrating longer standing residents with newcomers, whether they are migrants, students or workers in the creative industries. This represents a clear desire for a balanced, cohesive community, and there were calls for both the development of more affordable housing and for activities (perhaps modelled on the Shoreditch Festival) that are designed to bring people from different backgrounds together.
- **Facilities for young people:** the lack of facilities for younger people came from families and teenagers who were unable to afford the more expensive clubs in the trendier areas, and also from people, especially the older generations, who worried that a lack of facilities led to continuing incidences of crime, anti-social behaviour and drink and drugs abuse.
- **Physical improvements and investment:** the desire of more affordable housing units for working class families has already been mentioned, but many also noted the lack of a hospital or other health facilities in the area (echoing the support for the delivery of health services from the Church) and the state of the roads, particularly to the benefit of cyclists.
- **A cleaner community:** there was again substantial evidence of a need to clean the streets more effectively, with litter, dog mess and cigarette butts all being of concern along with the detritus of excessive drinking at the weekends.
- **Improved shops and market facilities:** the current lack of a larger supermarket in the area was a concern for many, but this may soon be addressed through a new development in the area. Others felt concern that some older shops were being lost, perhaps as a result of higher rents that followed the arrival of trendy new outlets to the south of Pitfield Street and around Hoxton Square; on the other hand, several younger people welcomed the change and hoped to see more clothes shops and craft-based stalls and artisan foodstuffs at Hoxton Market.

5.4 OVERVIEW

The key points of this section are summarised below in bullet point form:

- There is a strong demand for the delivery of positive activities for teenagers, and evidence both that these would be used and of the availability of voluntary help to run these
- There was also evidence of demand for additional health advice services, support for the unemployed and childcare and play facilities for younger children
- There appears to be a desire to build on existing community strength through helping to integrate newcomers and engaging with teenagers



6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This research project has demonstrated that there is a strong sense of community in Hoxton, with widespread satisfaction with the majority aspects of everyday life, and a substantial perception that things are improving. That said, there are numerous issues that concern residents and workers in the area, with the gang culture and problems of litter foremost amongst these.

The audit has also demonstrated that St John's is a valued feature of the local area, and that people, regardless of their ethnic origin or religious faith, feel comfortable there. There is a clear interest in using the Church as a base for a range of non-religious activities, and the fact that the majority of those people currently attending such events are not regular Church goers provides a base which the Church can build upon. On the basis of the conclusions of this research, the PCC should consider the following:

- i. **Expanding the range of cultural and social activities:** The Church already runs a number of concerts and other arts projects throughout the year, and although these appear to be well received by those who attend, local awareness of these events seems very limited. As these are an excellent way of encouraging people into the Church, and thereby overcoming any initial awkwardness, these should be expanded and promoted more widely
- ii. **Lobbying public authorities:** This document shows clear evidence of demand for a range of publicly-funded activity, from everyday issues such as road cleaning and police patrols to longer term investments in health services and affordable housing, and the PCC can present this to the relevant authorities in order to encourage targeted support
- iii. **Hosting and the direct delivery of services:** there is sufficient space in the gardens, and at ground floor level and in the basement of the Church building to host a range of cultural and social activities aimed at the whole community or targeted at specific groups. Furthermore, the basement has the potential to accommodate small group and one-to-one support sessions, if suitable structural changes, including the addition of toilet facilities are made. Rather than start too many new initiatives from scratch, the PCC should establish co-operative arrangements with other community organisations, charities (e.g. Age Concern) and statutory bodies that can deliver services from the Church. On the basis of this survey, the areas which are likely to be of greatest value to the community, and also gain voluntary supporters are:
 - Recreational and advisory services for teenagers
 - Childcare and play facilities for younger children
 - Help for the unemployed
 - Social projects for older people
 - Health advice
- iv. **Competing for public contracts:** this is very much a longer term strategy, but under legislation introduced in the Localism Act 2011, communities are able to bid to take over local services they think they can run differently under the Community Right to Challenge provisions. This provision allows voluntary and community groups, amongst others, to express an interest in taking over the running of local authority services, thereby making them more responsive to local needs and delivering better value for money. A range of specialist support has also been put in place to help community groups wanting to take greater control of their community through every stage of the process - from setting up a group and developing a proposal right through to the delivering services on the ground. The Social Investment Business, in partnership with Locality and the Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations will deliver a three year support programme worth £11.5 million. The programme will include a dedicated advice phone line where support and information will be available. It will also include grants to help groups to use the new right and bid to run local public services, resources, and case studies.