



# PERFORMING ARTS

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# CONTEXT

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Nestled in the heart of Cornwall along the banks of the River Fowey, Lostwithiel embodies a hub of community spirit amid the picturesque landscapes of the county. Positioned in the Fowey River valley, Lostwithiel is strategically located between the A390 road from Tavistock to Truro and the upper tidal reaches of the river. This historic town, characterised by its medieval architecture, winding streets and surrounding woodlands is conveniently connected by the Lostwithiel railway station, a vital link on the Cornish Main Line from Plymouth to Penzance.

With a population of 3,070\*, Lostwithiel maintains a locally rooted community. Unlike many Cornish towns and villages that face challenges from the impact of second homes, Lostwithiel has successfully navigated these pressures. This resilience is, in part, attributed to the presence of amenities for local people, including two primary schools, a doctor's surgery, dentist, pharmacy, library, museum and a variety of independent shops. These essential services contribute to the town's vibrancy and have played a role in maintaining Lostwithiel as a thriving and self-sustaining community. The Lostwithiel Community Centre stands as a vital component of this social infrastructure, providing essential services and cultural amenities that foster connection and cultural enrichment for residents and visitors.

\*ONS 2021

# A HAVEN FOR PERFORMING ARTS & COMMUNITY

The Lostwithiel Community Centre is more than just a building; it's a lifeline for people in Lostwithiel and the surrounding villages and towns. Purpose built in the 1980's this versatile space has been a haven for performing arts activities, providing a stage for local talent to shine, and nurturing a sense of community. From theatrical productions and musical performances to weekly ballet, tap, street dance and drama classes, it is a vibrant hub of artistic expression.

Notably, the Kate Mooney School of Dance, based at the Centre, is a registered British Ballet Organisation (BBP) dance school. The Community Centre, also a registered BBO exam Centre, meaning other BBO schools can utilise the Community Centre for their exams. Together, they play a crucial role in the community by providing quality dance opportunities for individuals of all ages and skill levels.

Beyond its role in arts and culture, the Centre serves as a multifaceted

community hub by offering essential rural services like a post office and mobile bank. It provides meeting rooms for local groups, hosts craft fairs, facilitates parent and toddler groups, and offers fitness and wellbeing classes.

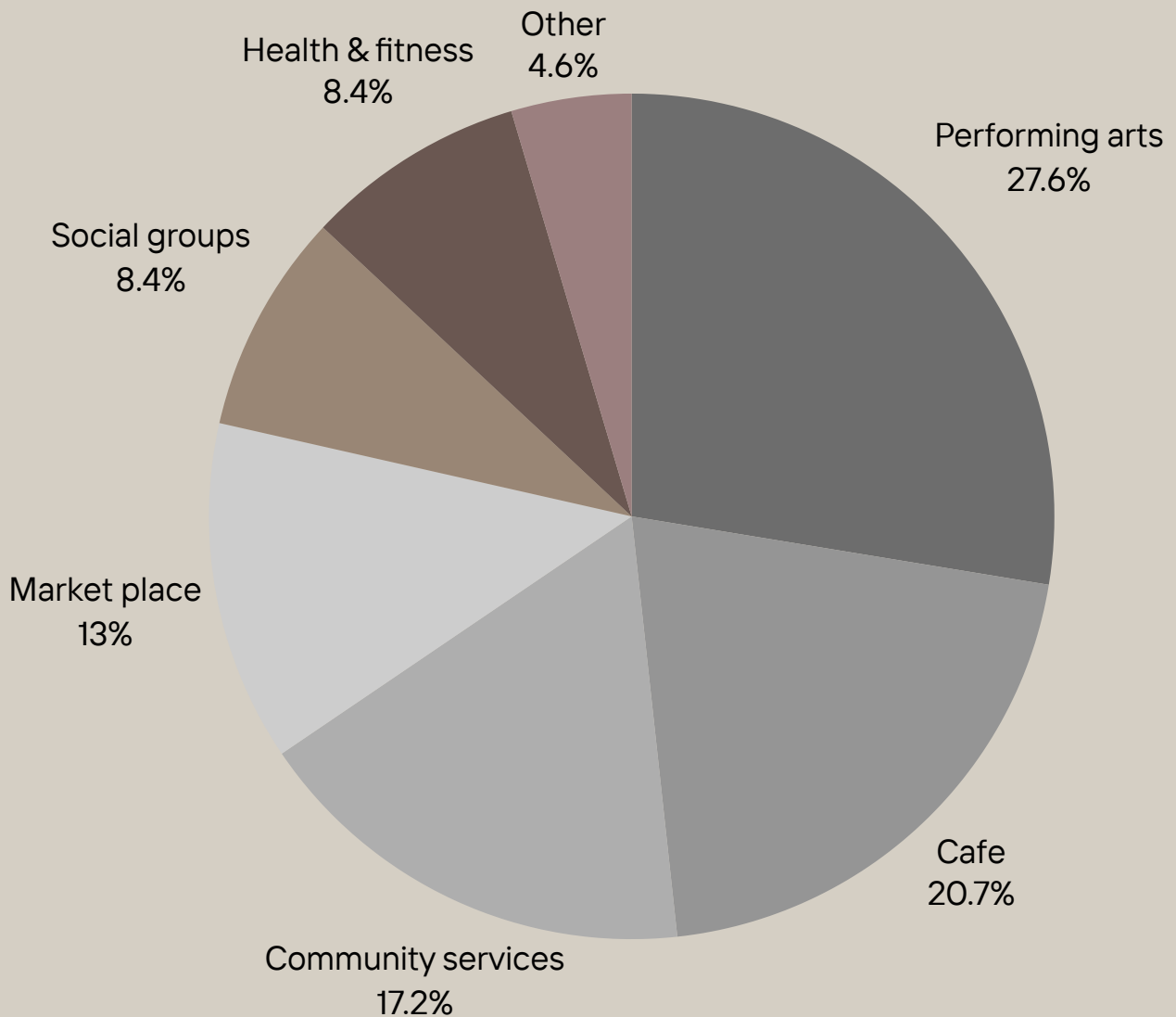
With a popular café as an added feature, the Centre is an indispensable part of daily life for the entire community. It also serves as the site from which many local creatives run their businesses, contributing to a vibrant local economy. Notably, it is the only building of this size and scale in the town and surrounding area, further underscoring the essential role it plays for the well-being and connectivity of the entire community.

*“Apart from the incredible range of activities and facilities offered at the centre, it feels like the heart of the community and has a wonderful atmosphere. I would miss it if it wasn't there and I think it would make a big difference to the community in Lostwithiel.”*

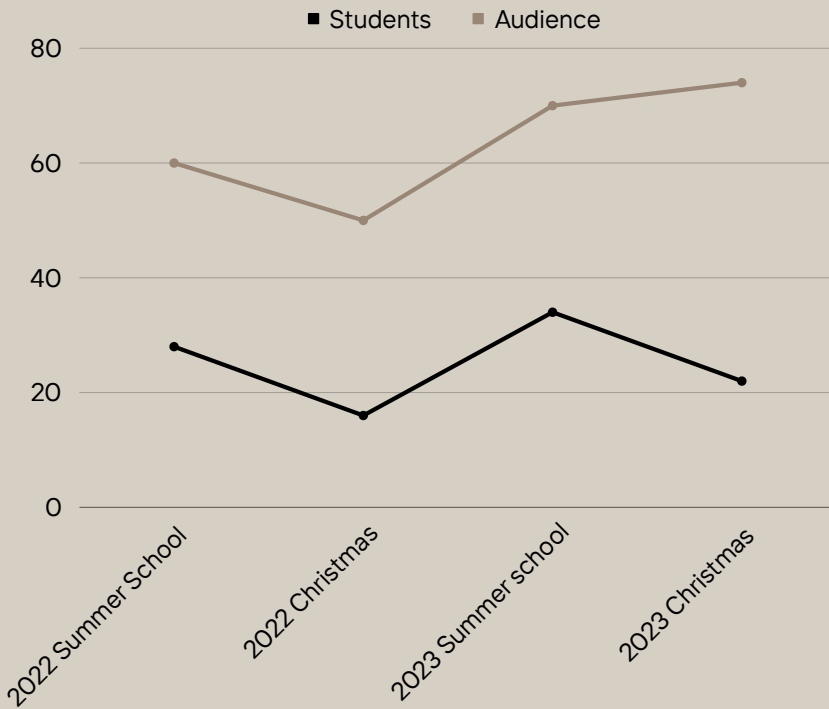
However, the future of this cultural and community hub is uncertain due to rising costs and necessary repairs. Preserving this vital part of Lostwithiel is not just about safeguarding a building; it's about preserving the very essence of a community.

# SERVICES & ACTIVITIES

The table presents an overview of the array of activities people access at the Community Centre.



The Community Centre's main draw is the performing arts programme, followed by the cafe and community services, marketplace activities, health and fitness sessions, and social groups. The data highlights the Center's dynamic nature, with visitors frequently participating in multiple activities, showcasing a seamless integration of experiences like attending a performing arts session, enjoying coffee in the cafe, and exploring marketplace offerings.



## STATISTICS

There has been an increase in both student participation and audience size for Drama and Singing performances since 2022. This upward trend suggests a growing interest and engagement in performing arts within the community.

# OVERVIEW OF PERFORMING ARTS

The performing arts programme at Lostwithiel Community Centre is designed to be comprehensive and inclusive. Weekly Home Ed performing arts classes for juniors and seniors, alongside the Drama and Singing sessions, provide opportunities for artistic development. The ballet programme, spanning pre-primary to grade 2, accommodates 58 students, instilling classical dance skills from an early age.

The school places an emphasis on accessibility, recognising the importance of reaching students in rural communities. Initiatives like Ballet Boppers and Preschool Ballet make the programme accessible to children as young as 9 months to 4 years.

Tap and Jazz, Street Fusion, and Adult Ballet classes further diversify the offerings, ensuring a broad range for ages 4 to 75.

In addition to fostering a passion for the performing arts, the Theatrical Productions add dynamism. The growth seen in Summer School and sharing performances further highlights increased participation and audience engagement.

\*All quotes are from surveys - 98 completed by users and 11 by activity organisers as of 07/01/24.



# 208

The current enrollment of 208\* students, ranging in age from 4 to adult, in weekly performing arts classes underscores an appetite for artistic development and a keen interest across diverse age groups.

# £4.90

Priced at a weighted average of £4.90 per session, the performing arts classes provide high-quality yet affordable arts education. This cost is below the UK average, showcasing a commitment to accessibility for all.

# 38%

The number of students participating in Drama and Singing performances experienced a growth of approximately 38% from Christmas 2022 to Christmas 2023.

# 48%

The audience attendance for Drama and Singing performances saw a rise of about 48% between Christmas 2022 and Christmas 2023.

\* 208 positions may not represent a unique count of students, as some people may be enrolled in multiple classes.

# USER PROFILE

## 1-4 PER WK

88% of survey participants use the Community Centre 1-4 times a week, and an additional 6% used it 5-10 times a week. 4% use it monthly. This underscores the significant role the Centre plays in providing regular activities and services for its users.

## £7.82 PER WK

On average, people spend £7.82 per week at the Community Centre. This not only shows the value they place on the services and activities but also contributes significantly to the local economy.

## DISTANCE TRAVELLED

42% of users live in walking distance of the Community Centre, 20% live less than 5 miles away. 30% travel between 5-10 miles and 8% travel within 11-20 miles to access services. This highlights how the Centre serves hyper local residents, as well as the wider rural community.

\*Findings from surveys, with 98 respondents as of 07/01/24.



# IMPACTS ON USERS

The Lostwithiel Community Centre generates cultural, social, economic, and place-making impacts. This is supported by surveys completed by both community centre users and activity organisers. These are emerging findings.

**75%**

**INCREASED  
OPPORTUNITIES TO  
SOCIALISE**

**54%**

**WELLBEING  
IMPROVED**

**53%**

**MORE HEALTHY  
& FIT**

**57%**

**MORE CONNECTED TO  
COMMUNITY**

**53%**

**LEARNED  
NEW SKILLS**

**43%**

**GREATER ACCESS  
TO KEY SERVICES**

*“The centre has literally been the centre of the community for half a century-roller discos, brownies and guides, parties, extra-curricular activities and fayres of all types have been held there. It is a life line for some of the older and more isolated in our society and allows the community to come together to celebrate en masse. No other venue in Lostwithiel has the ability to offer such a variety of experiences or seat as many spectators. It is a vital resource that we need to protect for generations to come.”*

# COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

*“The community centre is the heart of the Lostwithiel community - we absolutely love the ballet class and would be lost without it each week, it's where my daughter and I have made some lovely friends and made to feel part of the community, please keep it open.”*

*“I think it's a fantastic centre accessible to so many! The heart of the community with a variety of activities for older and younger generations.”*

*“I am retired and find my weekly classes a wonderful way to meet up with people, keep fit and socialise. I look forward to it each week and don't think I could find a similar class within an acceptable distance.”*

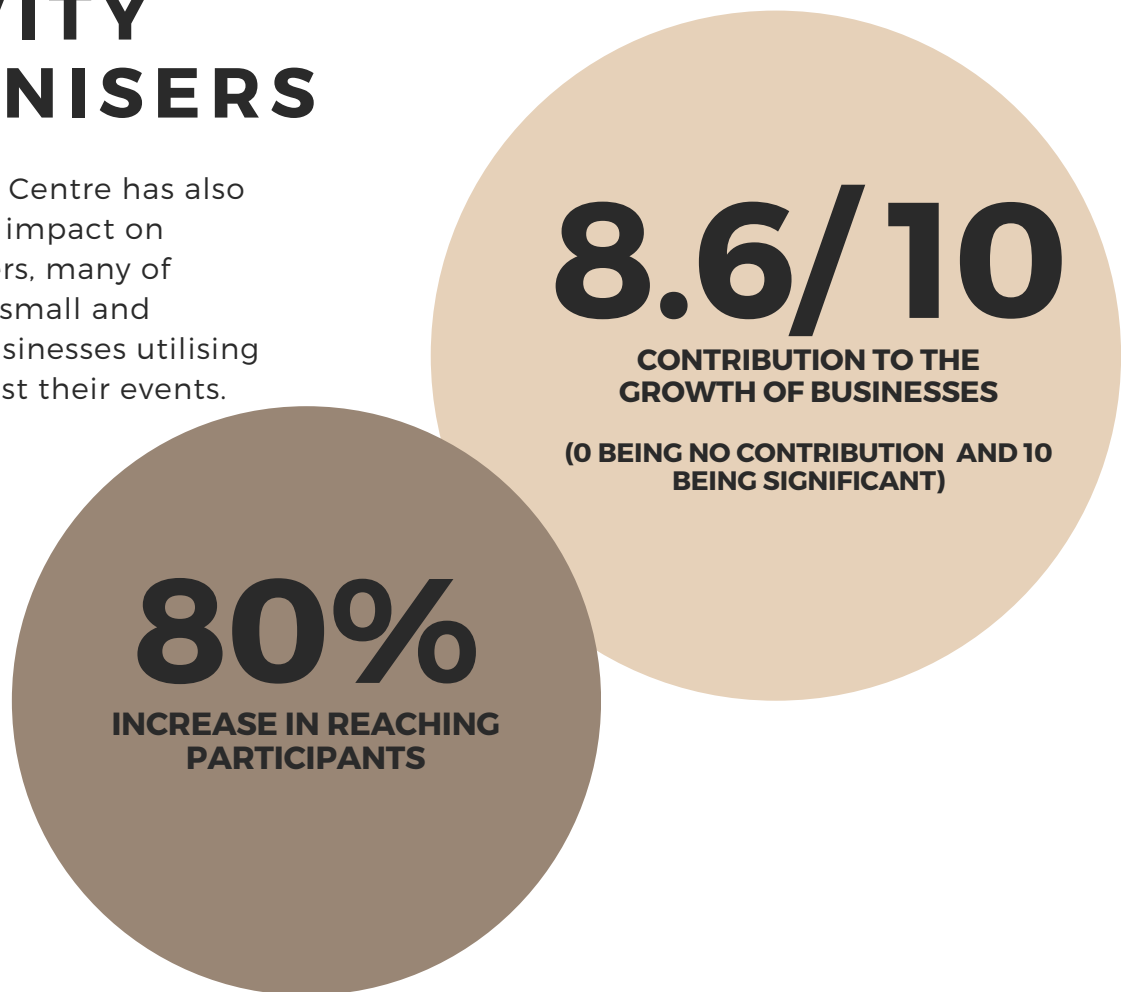
*“The home ed performing arts group has been of great benefit to my son. He now has a group he feels comfortable with and where he can express himself. His confidence and independence has increased significantly..”*

*“It's an amazing community facility which I appreciate a lot... it has enabled us to hold functions at a reasonable cost which we otherwise wouldn't have been able to. It enriches Lostwithiel, socially, culturally and economically.”*

*“There are very few facilities of this size in the area. Least of all in Bodmin, where we travel from. Its loss will have a big effect on the region.”*

# IMPACTS ON ACTIVITY ORGANISERS

The Community Centre has also made a notable impact on activity organisers, many of whom are local small and independent businesses utilising the center to host their events. These include:



## EFFECTS OF IMPROVED FACILITIES

- **66%** increase the quality of services
- **55%** growth the number of participants

## EFFECTS OF CLOSURE

- **60%** consider closing business or reduce services
- **20%** find a venue in Lostwithiel
- **10%** find a venue in another town
- **10%** unsure
- **0%** explore online option

# EFFECTS OF CLOSURE ON USERS

- **30%** would not be able to attend activities or access services.
- **29%** reduce activities and services that I attend and use
- **24%** look for activities or services in a nearby village or town
- **11%** other or unsure
- **4%** find other activities or services in Lostwithiel
- **1%** explore online options

*“We would try and find another home ed performing arts group but would struggle as we already travel 40mins to access this one.”*

*“Our children would definitely suffer. This is such an important space for everyone. Within walking distance of most of our homes and perfect venue for after school clubs.”*

*“Great loss of social contact!!!”*

*“I would go to Kate Mooney’s classes wherever we held them but it would be a real shame if she could not find a facility at a location I could drive to within 30mins and then we would have to stop going which would be a huge loss to my children.”*

# URGENT REPAIRS AND UPGRADES

There is an urgent need for £1,000,000 to address crucial repairs. Out of this amount, £20,000 is specifically required for the refurbishment of the performing arts space, addressing critical needs such as heating, a new ceiling, lighting, floors, and mirrors. While the building sustains itself financially through the activities and services it provides, funding is indispensable for a much-needed refurbishment, as it hasn't been upgraded since its initial construction. Successful fundraising efforts have already secured funds for viability plans, architectural drawings, and surveys, all of which are completed and poised to bring this much-loved and frequently used space into the 21st century.

*“The floors swell up leaving a large bump in the middle of the room. When it is bad we have to dance around the bump, but this is difficult as it’s in the centre of the room. It’s about 1.5 ft wide and 4ft long when it’s at its worst. When the bump is at its worst I am unable to run exams in the studio.”*

*“The ceiling is in disrepair. The old insulation is hanging out of the old plasterboard which is dangerous if it were to fall into the studio... There is no heating in the studio which means we are forced to use expensive electric heaters to heat the space in the winter.”*

# NEXT STEPS

The Lostwithiel Community Centre is seeking to raise £20,000 to refurbish the performing arts space.

## BUDGET:

ITEM	AMOUNT
New sprung floor	£9,000
Mirrors	£3,000
Black drapes	£2,000
Heating improvements	£2,000
Painting and decorating	£1,000
Roof and ceiling repairs	£3,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£20,000</b>

