



Lytham Institute: Charitable Objects

Analysis of responses to
public consultation

July 2021



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Background.

Background.

Fylde Borough Council is the sole corporate trustee of the Lytham Institute Trust.

Based on the indenture dated 1917, the current 'charitable objects' are to: 'maintain the said premises and the buildings now or hereafter erected thereon for public use under the provisions of the Public Libraries Act 1901 and the Museum and Gymnasium Act 1891 or any acts re-enacting or amending the said acts or any of them'.

The charity has maintained and managed the Lytham Institute building and has ongoing arrangements with several community groups. Activity has been limited following the library operator ceasing its activities from the building. Lytham Heritage Group and the Civic Society occupy rented space on the first floor of the premises. After Lancashire County Council relinquished the User Rights following the decision to relocate the library service in Lytham Assembly Rooms, the future of the Institute needed to be reviewed.

After considering legal advice, the council registered the Institute as a charitable trust, a process that was completed in 2019. The 2017 assignment did not include any governance arrangements and left the council as the sole Trustee.

After seeking advice and support from the Charity Commission, the council identified the need to revise the purpose of the Trust and develop a scheme of governance.

The following revised purposes for the Trust (based on the Charity Commission's model purpose for community centres) were approved for consultation on 9 March 2020:

"To further or benefit the residents of Lytham and the neighbourhood, without distinction of sex, sexual orientation, race or of political, religious or other opinions by providing facilities in the interests of social welfare for learning, recreation and leisure time occupation, including cultural and art exhibitions, with the objective of improving the conditions of life for the residents. In furtherance of these objects but not otherwise, the trustees shall have power to maintain or manage or co-operate with any statutory authority in the maintenance and management of the Lytham Institute building or other appropriate premises for activities promoted by the charity in furtherance of the above objects."

The consultation.

The Trust followed Charity Commission advice and undertook a public consultation to obtain the views of anyone who has an interest in the revised purpose.

An online link was posted on the Fylde Council website. The initial consultation was suspended due to the coronavirus pandemic, however this was reopened on 2 June 2021 for a period of 28 days, ending on 30 June 2021.

The following statement was posted on the consultation website from the Leader of the Council, Cllr Karen Buckley, said:

“Lytham Institute’s future is still to be determined and the decisions will be informed by local people. This consultation is about the purposes of the charity rather than the use of the building and needs to be settled before we can move forward.

“Anyone who submitted a response before the consultation was suspended last year can be assured that these have been retained, however, if an organisation or individual wishes to make further comment there is no restriction on how many submissions can be made.”



The consultation posed three questions:

- Do you feel that the proposed objects are appropriate for the Lytham Institute Trust? (Yes/No answer)
- If NO, then please provide additional feedback on what you would change? (Open text answer)
- Do you have any other feedback you would like to share on the proposed objects for the Lytham Institute Trust? (Open text answer)



66

Responses to the consultation were received

- 65 via the online feedback form
- 1 paper copy from the Friends of Lytham Institute

It should be noted that much of the feedback received does focus on the **use of the building**, and that some respondents disagree with separating out the purpose of the charity and the use of the building. All responses have been analysed and this report includes a summary of the key themes amongst these responses.

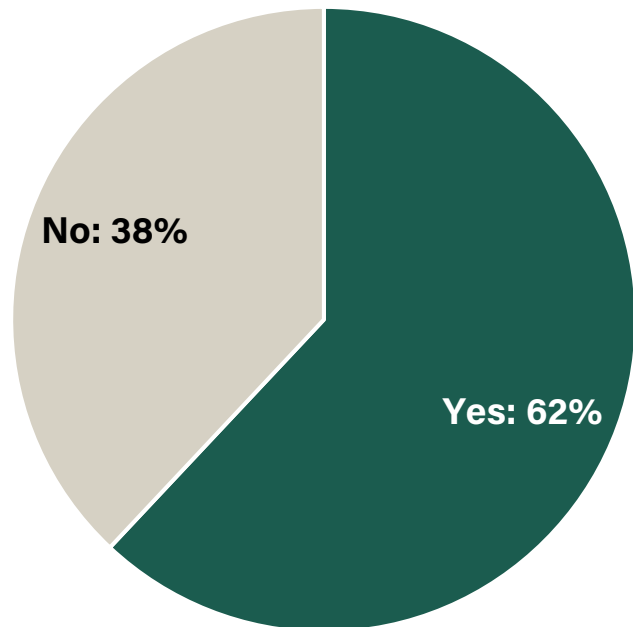
Overall views on the proposed Objects.

3 in 5 feel that the proposed Objects are appropriate.



66

Responses to the consultation in total



62%

Feel the proposed Objects are appropriate for the Lytham Institute Trust



38%

Do not feel the proposed Objects are appropriate for the Lytham Institute Trust

Q: 'Do you feel that the proposed objects are appropriate for the Lytham Institute Trust?'

The main feedback from those in support is the Trust should provide a space that the whole community can use.

8 in 10 (33) of those who feel the Objects are appropriate gave further feedback



Of these **the majority (45%)** reiterate that, in the spirit of the original gift, the purpose of the Charity should be to **provide space within the Institute for the whole community to use**

- For the use of community groups and events
- For the use by the whole of the community

- 3 respondents feel that the purposes should mention how it will be economically viable
- 3 respondents feel it should have remained/be reinstated as the Library, and that the purposes should reflect this

“

The Trust has to be in the interests of people now that have changed from those of 100 years ago. It has to have a use and a purpose for all, not just a few and those who shout loudest.

”

“

There is not much for the younger people and I agree that the Institute should be a hub for arts, culture and learning. The Trustees should be reminding of the original intentions: it was supposed to be for the whole community and not mostly to serve the vocal third age residents.

”

Suggested possible changes to the proposed Objects.

The most frequently suggested change to the Objects is to remove the phrase 'and other premises'.

23 respondents **did not agree** that the Objects are appropriate, although not all suggested changes/feedback which relate to the purposes of the Charity.

Of the feedback given by these respondents that relates **specifically to the Charity's Objects:**

- 7 respondents would like to see the phrase '**and other premises**' **removed** from the Charity's Objects

Other suggested changes (mentioned by a smaller numbers of respondents) include:

- The **provision of a library** in the Objects (as specified when the building was originally gifted)
- Some mention of how the building can be used to bring in **income/be economically sustainable**
- A specific reference to the provision for the storage of and public access to the **Archives**
- A specific reference to '**heritage**' and the preservation of an historic building

“ Library provision should be included in the aims...The Lytham Institute scheme should aim to provide wide community library facilities including a reference library and community information desk. ”

“ Please delete 'or other appropriate premises'. The Institute building and what should be happening inside it are linked together and activities should not be transferred to other premises. ”

Feedback on wider issues and suggestions for use.

People found it difficult to **separate out the uses of the building and the purpose of the Trust** and some felt this separation is not appropriate.

“

The charity purposes inherently include on-going use of the LI building. The trust relates to the maintenance and management of the LI building and to its provisions for and use by the people of Lytham and surrounds. The Trust cannot be separated from the building.

”

“

‘Purposes’ and ‘use’ are inextricably linked and it is illogical to deal with them separately.

”

Whilst not specifically part of the consultation, much of the feedback reflected on possible uses for the building.

The majority of respondents commented on **the emphasis of the Charity's purposes and how it could fulfil these purposes**, in particular that it should:



- Focus on **recreation and learning** by becoming an **inclusive community hub**:
 - Offer adult learning, including for people with disabilities
 - Offer provision for the youth in the area
- Become a **multi-purpose arts and cultural centre**, providing space for cultural events, art and exhibitions
- Provide spaces and facilities for the community to hire at a reasonable price

“ The nature of the different rooms in the building are suited to the establishment of a multi purpose arts centre, serving the community with a range of cultural activities not available at present. Opportunities for visual arts exhibitions, artists studios to hire, music rooms for instrumentalists, choirs, and study groups would create a hub of activity. ”

“ In these times of high street demise and an alleged increased adoption of online interface, I feel it is vital for a facility gifted to Lytham to remain open to all, community focussed, inclusive and educational. ”

Many gave specific ideas as to how the building could be used to fulfil the Charity's purposes.



Specific ideas for how the Charity could fulfil its purposes including using the Lytham Institute to house:

- A community café/kitchen area
- A town centre Tourist Information Office
- Registrar Services
- A flat for a custodian to address social housing need
- A Food Bank
- A centre for the NHS/LA to provide health and well-being education
- Bookable rooms to hire for meetings, events, classes and lectures

And specific suggestions for how the space could be used by the community include:

- Children's facilities, e.g. a games room for young people, Sure Start initiatives
- An exhibition space for local artists and photographers
- Youth groups, mums and babies/toddler groups

Other feedback focused on the consultation itself and governance of the Trust.

i **Almost a quarter of responses** (15) mentioned the **consultation approach**, in particular that it should have:

- Been more specific in how the Objects are consistent with the original spirit of the gift
- Provided more information
- Been easier to understand
- Been publicised more widely
- Offered more ways of providing feedback

8 responses refer to the need for **governance to be transparent**, and that some of the Trustees should come from the community.

5 specifically mentioned being **opposed to the sale** of the Institute.

3 also mention that **accessibility** needs improving.

“

It is not clear what 'objects' are and with such a vague proposal, the public cannot know if the use of the Institute will be well run.

”

“

Recruit capable Trustees (a minimum of three) from the Lytham community with appropriate skills and knowledge.

”

Summary of feedback received from key stakeholders.

Summary of response from **Friends of Lytham Institute**, a recognised stakeholder in the Lytham Institute (LI).

Comments on the consultation process

- The consultation should concern both the aims of the charity and the use of the purpose-build Institute building to facilitate those aims.
- A wide-ranging public consultation exercise is still needed.
- The Friends of LI propose that a roundtable of interested parties takes place.

More transparent and open governance

- Work needs to be done on legal and governance practice, engaging with communities of place and interest, working out the potential uses of the building and costs of making it fit for modern purposes.
- They are not in favour of 'closed' governance and feel that a wide and engaged membership will be vital in making a success of the Institute.

Preserve the LI for community use

- The Aims should include library provision, and the wording should not restrict community usage.
 - They are opposed to LI activities being transferred to 'other premises' as suggested in the consultation.
 - They are opposed to the sale of the Institute.
- Agreement with the St Annes Civil Society that:
- It should be far more specific as to the main charitable objects consistent with the spirit of the gift
 - The potential beneficiaries of the Charity should include both residents and visitors.

Potential activities and uses

Potential activities and uses are suggested (not listed here) that are considered in keeping with the aims of the original give, i.e. a focus on education and social interaction for the whole community.

Summary of response from the **LSA Civic Society**.

The Society feel they are a key stakeholder

- Concerned with building conservation in the area
- Currently rent a room in Lytham Institute (LI)
- Invested in the process that established that the Council holds the Institute as Charity Trustee

Need for transparent and open governance

- Must respect the wishes of the original trustees
- The Lytham Institute is not an asset of the Council

Preserve the LI for community use

- Continue to use the LI as a community asset and a catalyst for regeneration of the town centre
- Strongly oppose any part of the site being sold
- At least 50% of the space should be dedicated to furthering the aims of the charity, with the remainder let to commercial tenants and as a hub for general public

Give more consideration to funding

- The Civic Society propose using a similar model as per the Lytham Baths and Assembly Rooms
- Consideration needs to be given to both initial funding and ongoing sustainable funding – a feasibility study and business plan are needed
- Funding support from the Local Authority is expected
- The response also included suggestions for specific possible funding avenues to consider (not listed here).
- Proposed model would require a salaried manager and could not rely solely on volunteers.

Create a town centre hub

- As a base for the creative arts and community use, the LI would enhance the area and enhance the development of the visitor economy and serve as a focus in the town centre
- LI should house the Tourist Information Centre
- Many potential uses suggested (not listed here)

Summary of response from the **Lytham Heritage Group**.

Concern over specific omissions from the revised Objects of the Institute

- **No specific mention of heritage**, which is a fundamental Object from Lytham Heritage Group (LHG)'s Constitution and is only inferred, not specified, in the revised Objects of the Institute
- **No mention of preserving the Grade II listed structure** - preservation, protection, development and improvement of historic buildings and architecture is an Object from the Lytham Heritage Group's Constitution

Some of the revised Objects of the Institute fit with the Lytham Heritage Group objects

- The Archive and an annual keynote address in a 'room for hire' in the Institute would fulfil both organisations' Objects

Future input of LHG may be limited

- LHG is a small group and would struggle to take a more active role, such as in organization and administration of the Institute.

Particular uses

- There is a need for an additional display space to fulfil the cultural aspects of the Objects.



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