



MERCHANT CITY & TRONGATE COMMUNITY COUNCIL



Residents' Survey 2021

July 2021

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INTRODUCTION

MCTCC conducted an online survey between April and June 2021. This was publicised through our social media channels, website, and through inclusion in our email signature and in correspondence with our mailing list. Disappointingly, only 46 people responded – less than 1% of the population of the area, and about 20% of our online following.

As a result of the disappointing response, the findings cannot be said to be representative of the whole of the Merchant City and Trongate areas, but do provide some interesting insights

MAIN FINDINGS

- The main issues affecting the area are:
 - Drug dealing/misuse
 - the amount of drug-taking paraphernalia on the streets
 - visible drug dealing
 - increased visibility of addicts during lockdown
 - Lack of refuse and recycling facilities
 - Parking/traffic
 - Insufficient green space
 - Too many empty shop units
 - Begging
 - Pavement conditions and general mess
- Addressing those would improve life in the area as would:
 - Better healthcare provision
 - More pedestrian friendly streets
- Over half of those who responded said they'd like to see increased pedestrianisation as it would encourage visitors a person friendly area, however there are a number of issues and challenges that have to be considered, including:
 - Full consultation with impacted residents
 - reducing vehicle access will stop people visiting, which will impact on the area's recovery,
 - large numbers of parking spaces have already been removed
 - Spaces for People programme has not been successful for residents
- Other comments:
 - There is too much focus on development and construction of buildings that are not sympathetic to the local environment and that lack architectural aesthetic; profit seems to be the only motive, rather than strengthening the community or adding affordable housing
 - Glasgow City Council should focus on social inclusion, access for all to green spaces, and less on profit and inappropriate developments in the historic centre of the city
 - More engagement needed with the Trongate community

- The condition of High Street/Saltmarket, their historical importance and its integration into the Merchant City are key challenges
- Less than half the respondents have attended a community council meeting in the last six months. A substantial proportion of respondents have never attended a meeting, either because the day/time of meetings is unsuitable, or they found out about the meeting too late

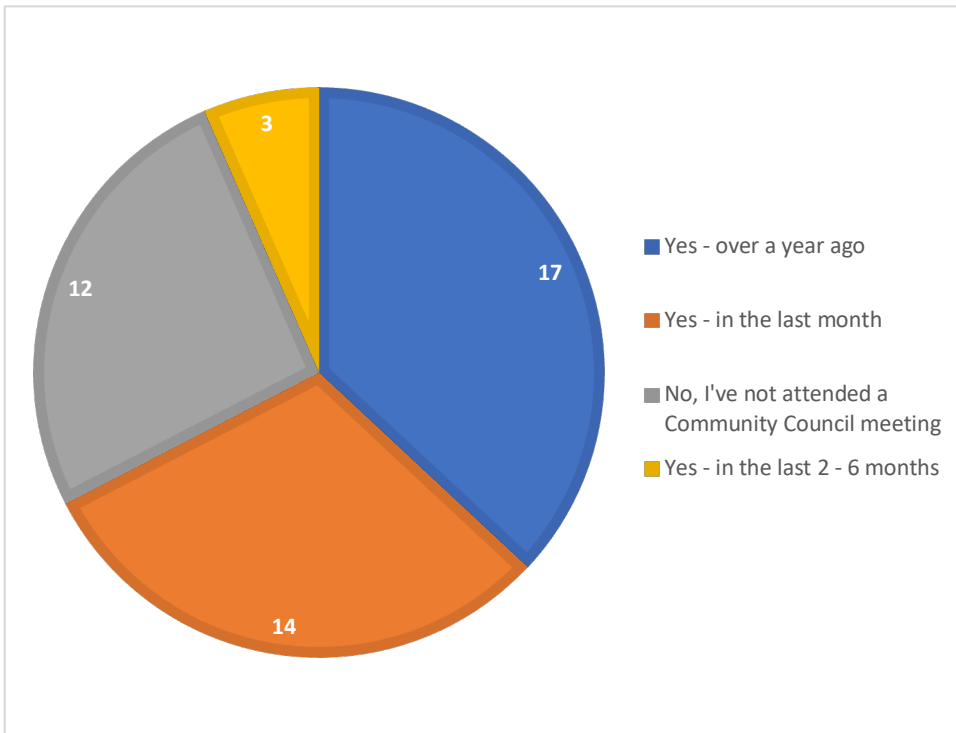
ACTIONS

As a result of this survey, the following actions will be taken:

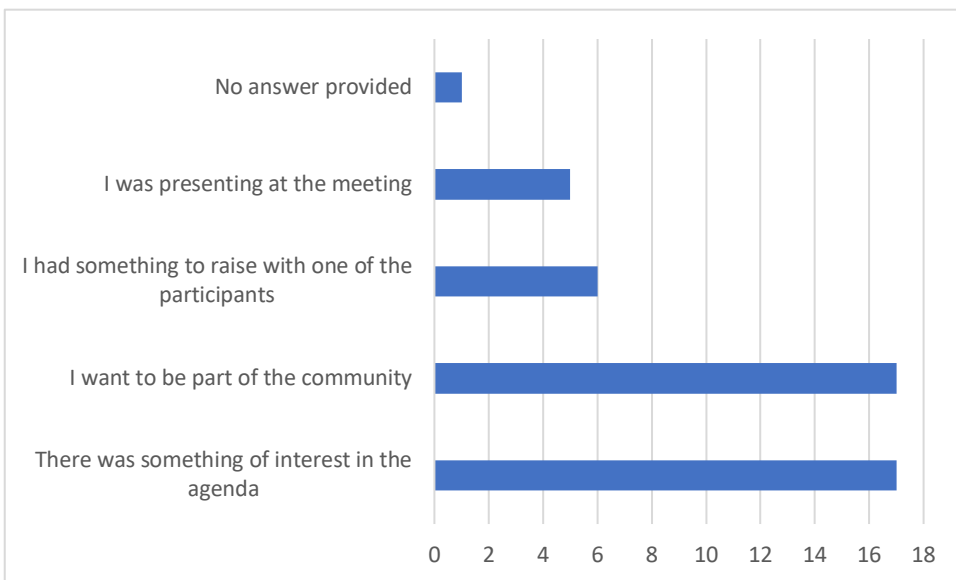
- The survey will be shared with our elected officials and Police, with the aim of feeding back the community's concerns and opportunities for improvement
- We will investigate how best to improve engagement with the community both in terms of raising awareness of the community council and encouraging them to take part in consultations, planning discussions, etc.
- A copy of the survey and agreed actions will be posted on our website

ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONS

Question 1 – Have you attended a community council meeting



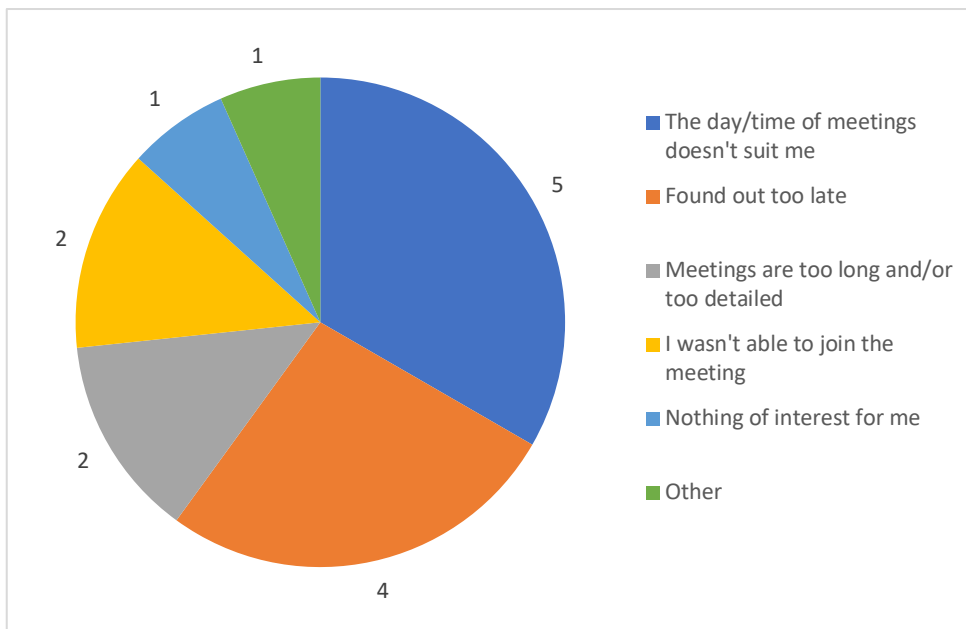
Question 2 – If you answered yes, why did you attend?



Comments

- The Community Council is an excellent way to find out what is happening of relevance to myself and my neighbours, and what the City Council is doing (or not doing). This includes planning applications. It's also useful to see the work of our ward councillors.
- A very open and welcoming forum. Well done MCTCC
- My partner and I with colleagues, attended with the owners of the Tolbooth Bar to present a case of grievances against GCC landlord City Property LLP for the High St crisis of dilapidated retail units and disproportionately high turnover of businesses caused by CP's intransigence towards small business tenants. All candidates in 2017 council election agreed at the meeting to investigate CP if elected, but investigation did not happen.

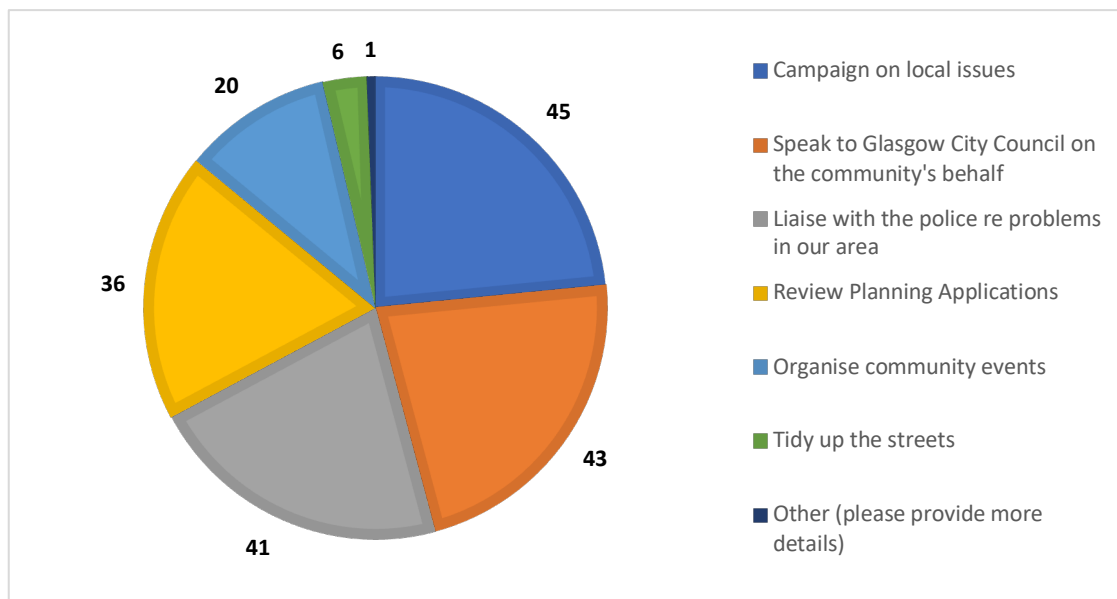
Question 3 - If you answered No, please tell us why you haven't attended one of our meetings



Comments

- I forgot that it was on
- I didn't know these happen
- Information was not readily available

Question 4 – What do you think a community council does

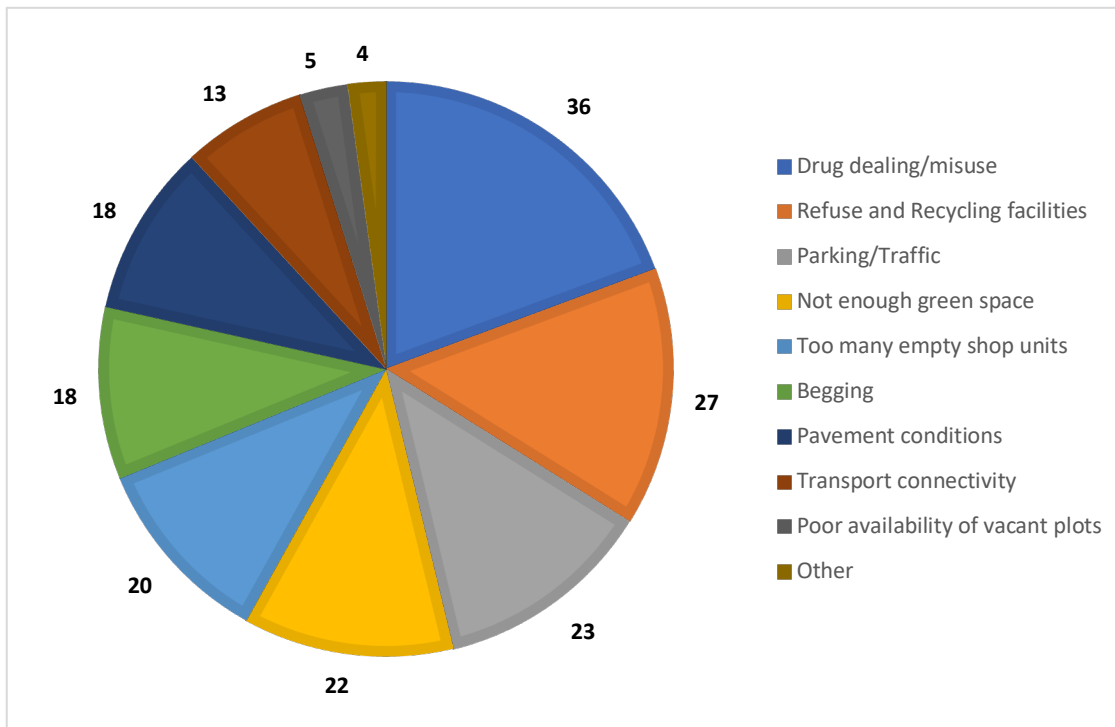


Comments

- Reviews Licensing Applications
- Receives presentations from GCC service providers
- Receives presentation about potential developments
- Liaise with Police
- Create a sense of belonging and community spirit.
- Generate ideas and proposals for consideration by Glasgow City Council

Question 5 – What do you think the biggest issues affecting our area are?

Participants could select more than one option



Comments - Built Environment

- Too much student accommodation in and surrounding the area of Merchant City and Trongate. Need for a GP surgery and other initiatives to increase the permanent resident population. Need for a strategy on utilising all the spare post-Covid empty buildings to create more green space (including the idea of the Merchant City Park on the site of Ingram Street car park), create affordable flats and generally build back better.
- Private Student Accommodation /Flats being built in the city centre with zero consideration for Architectural Aesthetics, concrete steel ugly buildings for profit seems to be the new directive for city centre development. There is zero consideration for affordable housing in the city centre. My allotment is being replaced by more student flats.
- The car park next to my home, near the high Court, is being turned into more student flats. This area is considered to have architectural value, yet there has been zero consideration on how new buildings look and fit into this area. How will the roads and streets handle more transit people living in the city. Appalling decisions by GCC.
- Poor visualisation of the historical importance of the High Street and Saltmarket - should be a destination not left to rot.
- Ongoing crisis stifling Heart Of Glasgow regeneration. Empty retail units blighting the old charm of the area: cause of empty vacant units are historic i.e. damp and rot.

- Inability to make essential maintenance on buildings, such as replace windows due to planning restrictions.
- Dirty streets/street furniture
- Proposed building issues in our area.

Comments - Drugs and homelessness

- The drug dealing and users on Parnie Street is blatant, and nothing ever seems to be done about it. Lived here nearly 8 years and it's always blatantly obvious which flats are dealing and yet each dealer seems to get away with it for at least a year, if not more (currently there is one in the close next door to me who has been dealing since before the first covid lockdown, constant stream of people in and out of that close over all lockdown and shouting up to his window etc).
- Junkies kicking about in the street seems worse since most of the shops have closed, probably as they feel they can do what they want and get away with it. Not enough police presence any more. I see used drug spoons from the King St chemist on the street every time I'm walking on the street and regularly see used needles as well.
- While not under-appreciating the root causes of homelessness much more needs to be done to get beggars off the streets. These are often linked to drugs and other criminal activity.
- The council policy seems to be to house vulnerable people with drug and addiction problems right in the middle of areas known for class A drug dealing and consumption, it seems ridiculous, how will these people ever get out of their situations if they have drug paraphernalia and dealers easily accessible on their doorstep

Comments - Traffic and transport

- Too much through-traffic.
- The increase in lanes and availability of rental bikes have been welcome improvements in the past couple of years but the lanes need to be continuous, not fractured. Many simply disappear after a kilometre or two with no or little notice.
- Air quality, pollution from traffic, noise pollution,

Comments - Community engagement

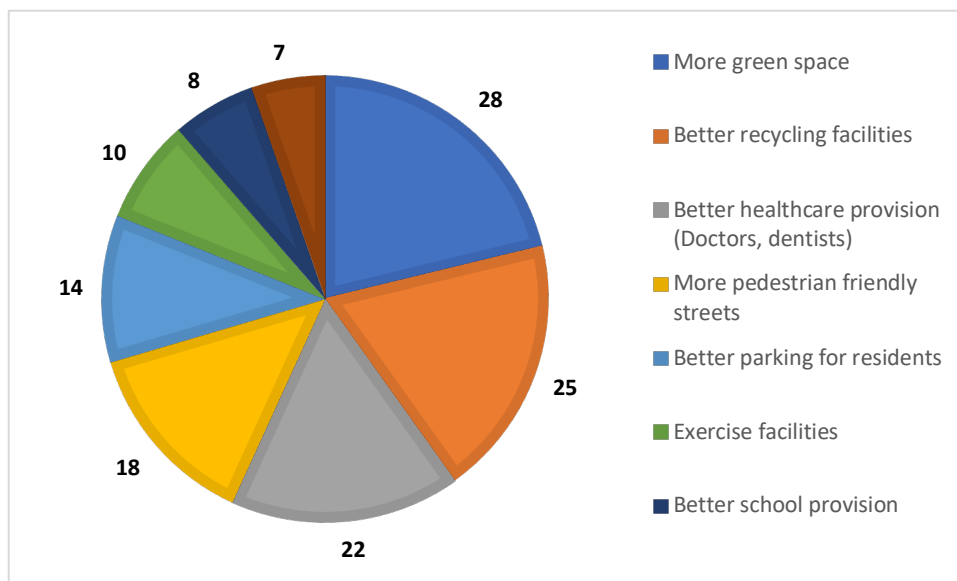
- Building more community engagement, especially in Trongate
- Open up the Ramshorn graveyard and this will help with the lack of green space.
- Green space is the most important factor here
- Noise levels from outdoor bars
- Residents' input

- Some security issues in buildings and anti-social behaviour on street and consequently in buildings too for residents

Comments - Policing issues

- Processions and ineffectuality of the police in dealing with football fans
- City centre policing

Question 6 – What would improve your quality of life in the Merchant City & Trongate area

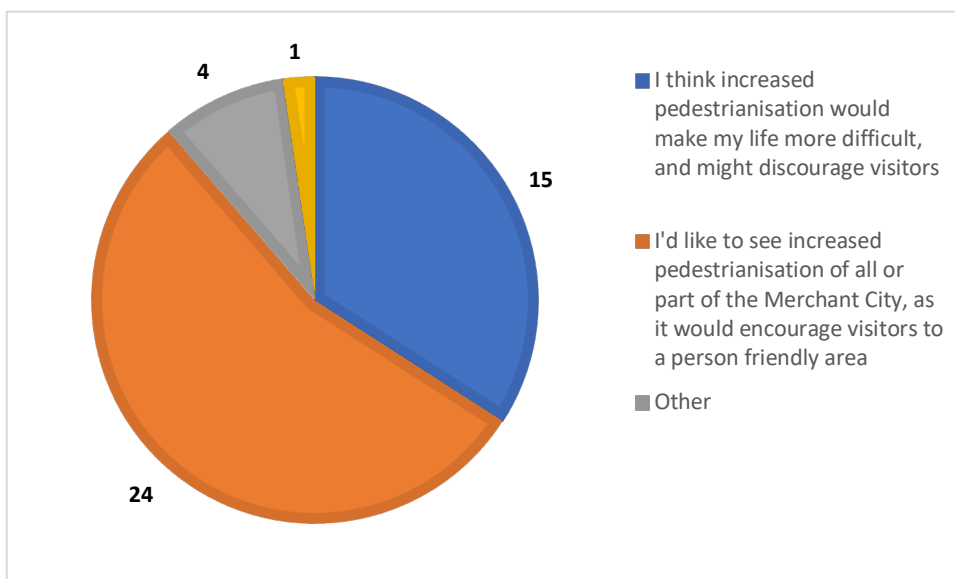


Comments received on question 6

- Cleaner streets, more seating
- Street seating
- A green and accessible place that features the history of the area and showcases the arts and innovation.
- Promotion of the High Street and Saltmarket area as a historical destination joined up to the Merchant City.
- Get the Ramshorn graveyard opened again!
- I was amazed to find there seems to be not a single doctor's surgery in the Community Council area.
- More families living in city centre
- Heal Heart Of Glasgow by transforming it from a graveyard of To-Let signs to the quaint, boho quarter Glasgow needs, by engaging with City Property LLP on behalf of small business tenants and moving forward.
- Deal with drug misuse

- Drug abuse - the streets are littered with drug abuse paraphernalia, including often on my own doorstep
- Less pubs
- Easier ways to maintain owned properties
- Less NIMBYism by residents
- Street parking should be discouraged, not encouraged but motorists should not be ripped off by the likes of NCP.
- All residents should be allowed residents parking permit on street
- No more massive profiteering events in Glasgow Green with zero regard for local people living in the area. Bring back the winter gardens.

Question 7 - What do you think about increased pedestrianisation of the Merchant City area?



Comments received on question 7

- Don't see the point as many, many drivers ignore existing 11am deadline especially private taxis.
- Why Candleriggs have you asked the Residents who stay there?
- Entry to our carpark is via these streets
- Where could family park their cars if my street was pedestrianised?
- I believe the Merchant City, i.e. Bell St, Wilson St could be pedestrianised, or even semi-pedestrianised
- More green space available in back courts, maybe planters or allotment boxes in back courts. More consideration of the new buildings and their function and contribution to the city local community.
- I think it's a good idea to some extent - it would help this part of the city be more desirable for bars, restaurants etc with outdoor seating but traffic will likely be even worse and parking will be impossible. A switch to residents only parking would be better then, there are plenty of public car parks in the area

- Get the cars out and less car exhaust
- Pedestrianisation tends to encourage beggars looking for custom.
- Put a volume limit on how loud musicians can play. Many are excellent and provide great free or cheap entertainment but some can take over entire streets

Question 8 – Please provide any other comments you'd like to share

Roads and access

- I think that Glasgow City Council needs to be very conscious that removing access to the city by cars will eventually result in stopping people visiting. Instead of pedestrianisation they should concentrate on more electric parking bays.
- Two issues that have increased lately are (i) vehicles parking on pavements and (ii) high speed cyclists on pavements causing distress to pedestrians and it is only a matter of time before a serious incident occurs and they have no insurance!
- I think the widening of pavements as part of the streetscaping of the area is sufficient and is comfortable space for people to walk
- A huge number of parking spaces have already been removed. and I think parking charges should be suspended on a Sunday in order to encourage more people to come into the centre to shop and socialise.
- For the sake of business, we need to encourage people to come into the city centre and by discouraging parking we will create a horribly negative effect. The personal car is not going anywhere any time soon (especially with the advent of the electric car). We need to make ample parking available to residents and the public alike.
- The Spaces For People programme has become a nightmare for residents and businesses alike. There are very few spaces available for residents who use parking permits. This causes frustration and I know in the case of at least one of my neighbours causes problems as they have mobility issues and struggle to walk 2-3 streets to their flat.
- Not to mention the environmental impact of everyone driving round looking for spaces - this hasn't been so bad recently due to lockdown but last summer it was crazy.
- The utilisation of the cycle lanes/bus lanes/widened footpaths is very low and you have to question how often this will be the case for the winter months.

Comments – Built environment

- Shame on GCC, profits before communities, too many green lights for offensive high-rise hotels, too many student flats with zero affordable housing in the city, too much focus on how to generate profit rather than social inclusion
- I hope there is some significant change in how GCC approach the development of the city from profit to social inclusion and access for everyone to green spaces and community development

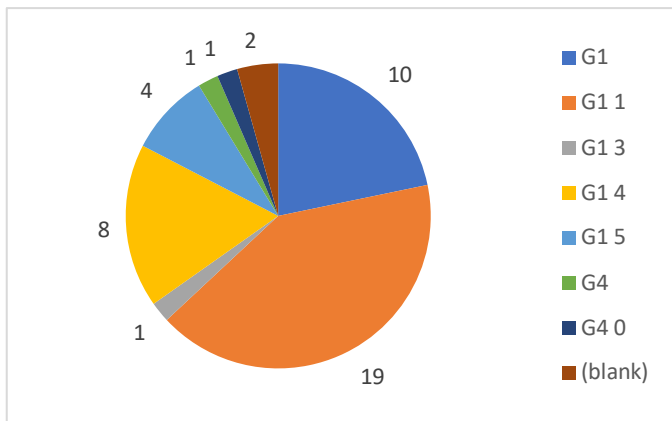
- High Street urgently requires help. A shop has been flooding for over a month causing untold damage to the historic City Improvement Trust Tenements and adjacent businesses. Compounded with the recent fire, disproportionately High turnover of businesses due to an absent, intransigent, publicly critiqued landlord seemingly with a policy of managed decline for Glasgow's Oldest St.
- The businesses who've survived here need support from the MCCC to bring issues to light. All City Property LLP must do is repair shops and let them to tenants sympathetic to old High Street. Please contact: Glasgow High Street Merchants' Association
- Glasgow needs High Street to recover but it's falling back to crisis point in 2017 when there were over 40% vacant units, and for the same reasons. A collegiate voice leading open, transparent discussion on High St crisis is desperately required.
- On the south side of the Clyde, courtesy of a Barclays build a 4 lane road is gone and new green space created. more like this on both sides should be done.
- The whole area needs a good clean

Comments – Community Council

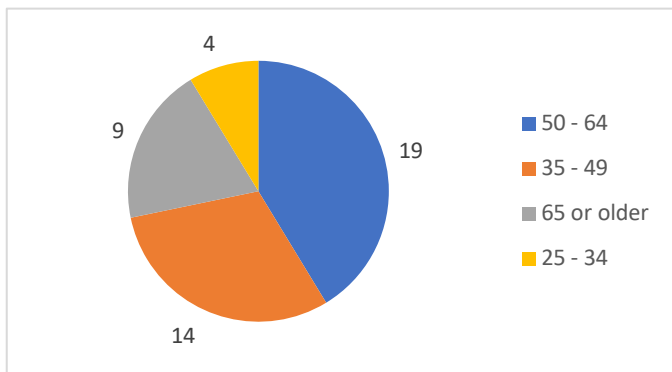
- I think MCTCC is one of the best run CC in Glasgow. I live just outside of the boundary but have interests within the area and have always been made very welcome. A very collaborative community who emotionally connect with the local residents and care deeply about fairly representing their interests. Bravo is all I can say!
- I attended my first meeting on Tuesday, and was grateful to see a caring community and hard-working representatives. I look forward even more-so to living here after seeing such commitment to our area.
- Thank you very much for continuing the good work and all the best to you. I am now living happily in Greece but keep up to date with all you do. It's a special and precious area which needs voices like you. Well done, all of you. I'm proud of you, very proud.
- Very worthwhile survey. Keep up the good work!
- I was signed up until I missed a meeting, 3 meetings ago, since then I have not received invites or minutes despite submitting my apologies for that meeting. I will sign up again.
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DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Respondents by Postcode



Respondents by age range



Respondents by Gender

