



Image: Nathalie Holbrook *Land and Tide* (credit Peter Haring)

An Talla Solais (Ullapool Visual Arts)

Consultation survey

February to March 2020

Responses to our online questionnaire



An Talla Solais Activities Consultation Feb to Mar 2020

Introduction

A consultation was carried out to assess the support for An Talla Solais activities in general and also to gather ideas for future activities. At this time the An Talla Solais Gallery space within the Caledonian Hotel was under threat and the consultation also took into account support for and ideas on how to accommodate loss of the gallery space at the end of 2020.

As well as an online questionnaire paper questionnaires in hard copy were available in 4 venues locally. There were two events where individuals were encouraged to provide feedback, one at the opening of the Dolphin Arts Project *Present* exhibition and one at a regular Light Nights discussion evening. The open events were more focused on the issues around loss of the gallery space. At time of writing this report the notice to quit the space has been withdrawn and the imminent threat no longer a concern. This report is focused therefore on the ideas for new activities ATS could consider.

This report is on the results of the online questionnaire. In particular current and future activities are highlighted as finding alternative gallery space is no longer an issue. However, there were numerous communications direct to staff after the announcement that the gallery would be closing in Autumn 2020. A summary of these emails and social media responses will be available in a separate report in due course.

There were 413 responses to the questionnaire. The majority of respondents used the online Survey Monkey option to respond. A few completed hard copy versions. Hard copy was entered directly into the Survey Monkey software. Many respondents completed the open questions and these have been provided in the appendices and a few quotes listed in the main report.

The findings from the consultation will be used to inform future activity plans for ATS. At time of writing ATS operation is affected by the Covid 19 pandemic. However the programme subgroup continue to meet to discuss and begin to implement ideas for future exhibitions and events. This work will be influenced by the findings from the consultation.

1. Survey Monkey Questionnaire responses

The statistics laid out below show percentages expressed against total respondents. Not all respondents answered all of the questions; however 90% of all respondents completed the questionnaire in full. The 10% not completing appear to have stopped after Qu 6.

Most people, 67%, said they were not members of An Talla Solais. There were 52% who identified as practicing artists. Of the 192 artists 111, 58%, said they were not members.

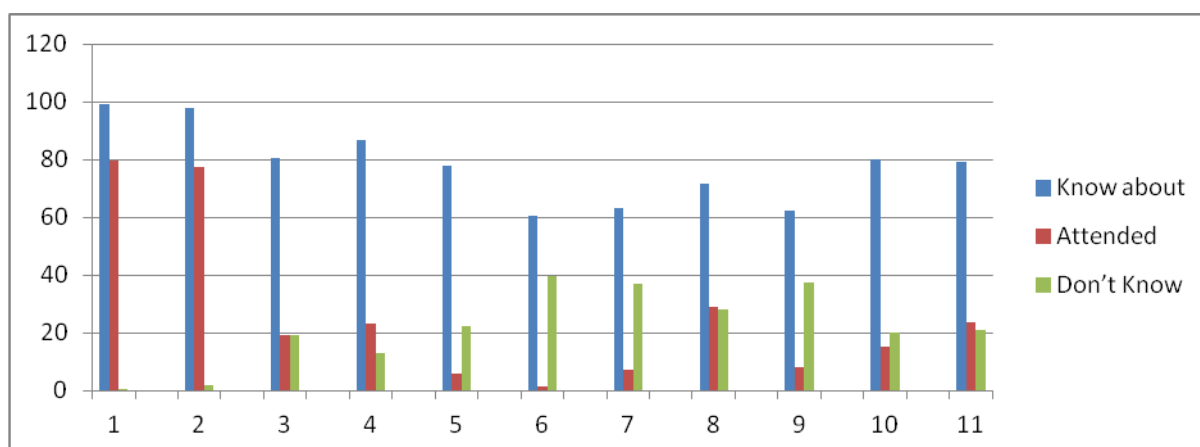
Geographically the majority of respondents, 72%, lived in the Highland Region. Of those that lived in Highland region 36% lived in Ullapool up to 20 miles.

Each question is analysed in more detail below.

Question 1 ATS regularly provide art activities for the whole community. Tell us if you know about these by ticking the appropriate box. Tick the box if you have attended any of these.

Axis no	Type of activity	Know about %	Attended %	Don't Know
1	Exhibitions of art by local artists	99.3	79.7	0.7
2	Exhibitions of art by artists from further afield	97.8	77.2	1.9
3	Drop-in community workshops, eg Menagerie animals	80.6	19.1	19.4
4	Discussions and talks about art	86.9	23.2	13.1
5	Art activities for people living with dementia	77.7	6.1	22.3
6	Art activities within care homes	60.5	1.5	39.5
7	Art activities with primary school and high school students	63.0	7.3	37.0
8	Participation in village events and festivals	71.7	29.1	28.3
9	Hosting different activities in the gallery, eg yoga, dance,	62.5	8.2	37.5
10	Art classes and courses with a fee	79.9	15.0	20.1
11	Creating public art in the community	79.2	23.7	20.8

The results in the table are represented in the graph below. The bottom axis numbers correspond to the axis number in the table above. Numbers 1 and 2 relate specifically to exhibitions in the gallery space in Market Street.



Virtually all respondents know about the exhibitions. However it is interesting to note how many were unaware of some of the activities ATS undertakes, in particular art activity with care homes and hosting events in the gallery.

Question 2 – How important do you think it would be to continue each of the activities listed below in the community? Select 1 if not important up to 6 extremely important.

Type of activity	1	2	3	4	5	6
Exhibitions of art by local artists	4	2	2	12	45	348
Exhibitions of art by artists from further afield	2	3	13	34	75	285
Drop-in community workshops,	3	1	18	38	84	263
Discussions and talks about art	2	8	25	69	83	221
Art activities for people living with dementia	2	2	11	15	52	326
Art activities within care homes	3	4	14	24	59	303
Art activities with primary school and high school	3	4	16	32	70	285
Participation in village events and festivals	3	5	17	40	90	254
Hosting different activities in the gallery,	14	20	63	106	72	128
Art classes and courses with a fee	2	4	22	68	108	204
Creating public art in the community	4	1	14	48	101	242

About 1.5% of people missed answering at least one of the questions above. In the case of “hosting different activities in the gallery”, 2.5% of people did not answer. This reflects the numbers of people saying that they didn’t know about a particular activity.

It is interesting to note that even for those events with a high number that did not know ATS delivered these (see graph for Question 1), the selection of importance of each activity is very high with the majority of people selecting 5 or 6.

Hosting different activities in the gallery was not widely known about and people didn’t generally feel that it was very important with a mixed response to that section in the grid.

Question 3: What ATS activity have you personally enjoyed and why?

This question had the highest response rate of all our open questions with 326 individual answers. The overwhelming majority stated exhibitions at the gallery, usually in a general sense but including some specifics such as Peter White’s Memorial exhibition, As Coastline is to Ocean and Members’ Exhibitions. Also extremely popular were drop-in ceramics activities such as the Menagerie project. Dozens of other activities were also mentioned from life drawing to sessions with people with dementia, art discussions and training for artists in how to write about their work. The social side of activities was also mentioned.

‘Exhibits of art both local and further afield. You are one of the more accessible venues for learning of these wonderful artists and it is great seeing juxtapositions of both.’

‘To have creative opportunities for all ages and abilities to mix has been rewarding... It is also a chance to meet other people from the village that are sometimes not involved with the arts. The discussions are also good as there is no specific outcome... To do this around the theme of art enriches the soul.’

Question 4: Do you have any ideas for other art activities that would be good for ATS to provide?

While many responses on this question stated activities that An Talla Solais already undertakes, this question brought our several new suggestions, notably the repeated suggestion of outdoor / landscape / public art, specifically a sculpture trail or garden, and also a range of ideas related to artist residencies. Themes of dialogue, observation and connection were raised.

‘Providing opportunities for residencies for young artists in Scotland, so they can develop their own artistic voice, mingle with more established artists and contribute to the community.’

‘More public art around the village and wider area – eg sculptures, installations etc in unexpected places.’

Questions 5: Are there any other groups in the community that you think could benefit from dedicated art activities?

Interestingly the answers to this brought out a strong thread of people favouring inclusive, cross-generation activity which mixes people rather than focuses on groups. The point was also made about supporting people who are isolated and lonely, without existing connections or support. In terms of traditional categories, young people featured in particular, including in relation to mental health and those dissociated from school.

‘Working across different age-groups encouraging multiple groups to interact together.’

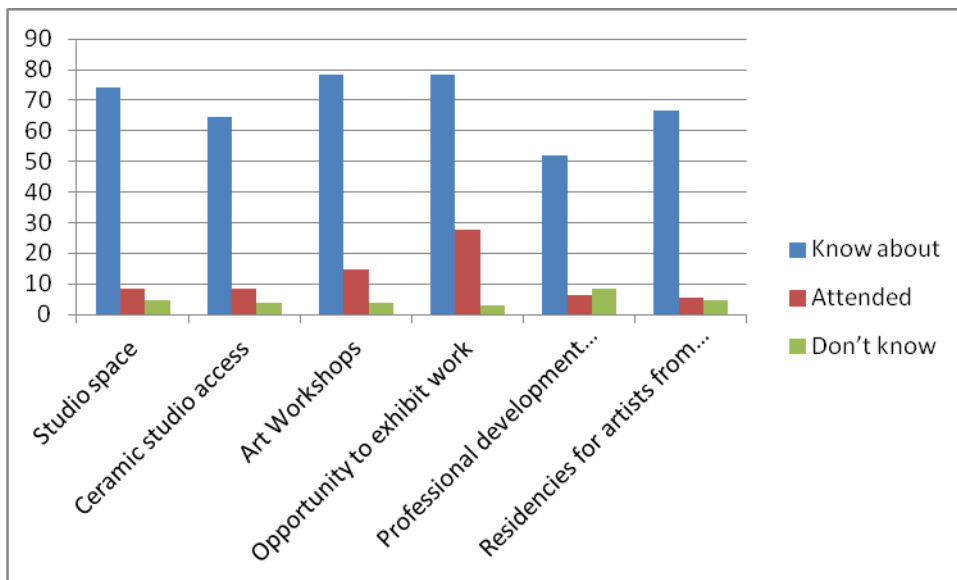
‘Activity designed only for a particular group in such a small community is not necessarily helpful – the beauty of some art activities is that they can transcend differences in age, gender, ability etc.’

‘How we meet and greet our neighbours from whatever circumstance despite difference... there is a whole new housing scheme... maybe people need some friends or a place to make contact with others.’

‘All those who live on the social margins.’

Question 6: ATS provides several services to support the development of artistic talent in our area. Tell us if you know about these and whether you have attended any.

Activity	Know about %	Attended %	Don't know %
Studio space	74.1	8.2	4.4
Ceramic studio access	64.4	8.2	3.6
Art Workshops	78.5	14.5	3.9
Opportunity to exhibit work	78.2	27.8	3.1
Professional development workshops	52.1	6.1	8.5
Residencies for artists from elsewhere	66.8	5.3	4.6



A high percentage is aware of the services offered to artists but many do not use these services. The two services most people used were workshops and an opportunity to exhibit work, which was the most used service.

Question 7: Tell us how important it is to you for ATS to continue to deliver these services. Select 1 for not important up to 6 extremely important.

Type of activity	1	2	3	4	5	6
Studio space	5	5	20	45	56	242
Ceramic studio access	4	5	19	61	77	205
Art Workshops	2	2	10	32	71	254
Opportunity to exhibit work	3	3	6	18	45	303
Professional development workshops	4	7	18	58	83	200
Residencies for artists from elsewhere	5	11	22	47	85	204

The results from Qu6, (see graph and table above), showed that around 5% were not aware of the services for artists. It is interesting to note that although people knew about the activity not many had attended. However when asked how important the activity is to people most responded that they were either important or very important.

Around 10% of people did not answer this question. This may be because at this point people chose not to complete the survey as there was an overall 10% who did not fully complete from Qu 7 onwards.

Question 8 Please tell us if you have any other ideas on how ATS can support artists' practice.

While there were many positive comments about what is already offered in this field ('I think you maintain a dialogue with the artists and practitioners you have worked with and this is a really amazing trait. Thank you for all your support'), there were also a wealth of suggestions from a mentoring scheme to a new graduate prize to social forums. Accommodation for visiting artists was also mentioned several times including in relation to residencies. Emerging artists were also a particular theme.

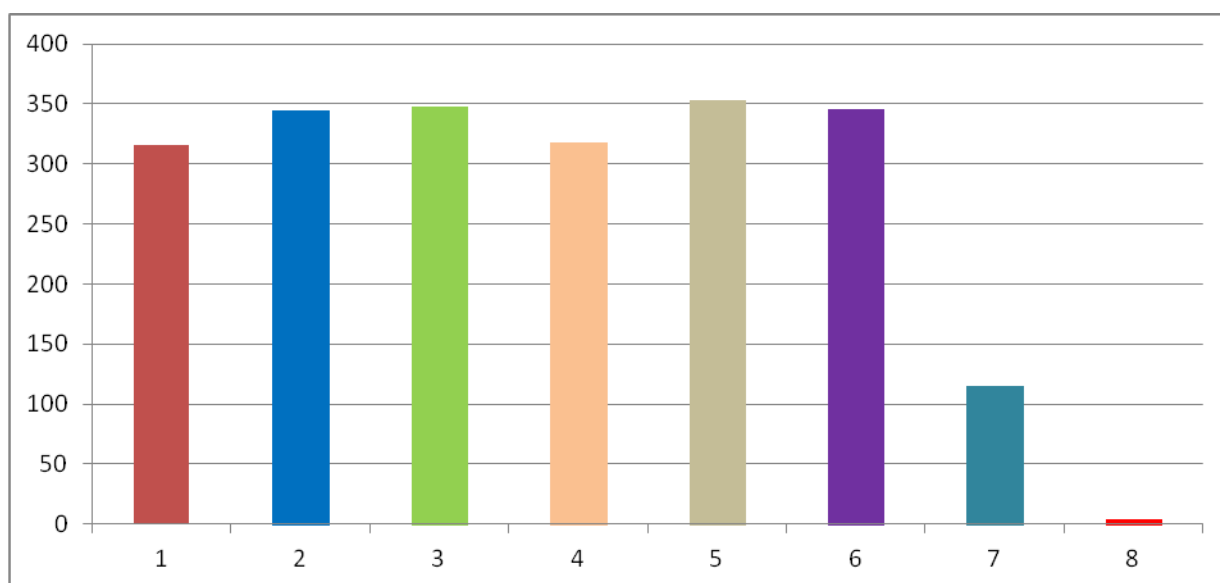
'Provide sponsorship/funded residencies for emerging artists and/or graduates'

'Geographically it makes sense to have a support structure with access to talks, peers, exhibitions, professional development etc. However I also think artists have a real responsibility not to be solely dependent on organisations – that's the balancing act that organisations like ATS have to deal with.'

‘Matching emerging artists on residency and exhibition exchanges could be interesting. The emerging would learn from the established and the established would learn from the emerging.’

Question 9: Why is the gallery important to you? Please tick as many options as you feel are relevant.

Options	Number	%
A gallery helps people feel more at home with art	316	84.27%
It is important to view different types of art	345	92.00%
Children & young people have the opportunity to view different types of art	348	92.80%
It provides a place for tourists to visit	318	84.80%
Having access to art not normally seen in remote areas is important	353	94.13%
A gallery gives the option to local artists to show their work	346	92.27%
I want a place to show my own work	115	30.67%
I don't think a gallery is important	4	1.07%



It is interesting that many people selected most options but the least selected option was wishing to have a place to show their work. Very few felt that a gallery was not important at all.

Question 10: How important is it to you for Ullapool to have an art gallery?

People felt it was very important for Ullapool to have a gallery with 87% selecting this option and a further 10% selecting either 4 or 5 in the rating.

Question 11: Are you a member of An Talla Solais? 356 answered

Answer	Number responding	Percentage of total
Yes	103	29%
No	238	67%
Don't Know	15	4%

Question 12: Do you consider yourself to be a practising artist? 356 answered

Answer	Number responding	Percentage of total
Yes	184	52%
No	172	48%

Question 13: Where do you live? 372 answered

Answer	Number responding	Percentage of total
Ullapool up to 20 miles away	97	26
West Coast including Western isles	73	20
Highland region	97	26
Scotland other	66	18
Rest of UK	29	7
Other parts of the world	10	3

The majority of respondents lived in the Highland region and 36% of those lived in Ullapool up to 20 miles away.

Question 14: Do you have any other thoughts, ideas or suggestions for ATS to consider as we develop our future plans?

As well as exhortations to not give up, many responses here were thoughtful and overwhelmingly supportive of our activities to date. In addition there were reflections on our principles, offers of volunteer support, and ideas of where we might turn for network and funding support.

‘I hope that ATS will prove itself ready to be changed by circumstances and opportunity whilst sticking to its principles of dialogue/connection/conversation.’

‘We’ve seen some amazing exhibitions and collaborations on our frequent visits every holiday. The presence of the gallery underlines that this is a vibrant community, not just a pretty postcard tourist spot.’

‘While it is disappointing to lose the permanence of the gallery site, opportunities to exhibit local artists as well as those from elsewhere can be facilitated using short-term temporary arrangements as they arise, which may not be in Ullapool itself. The activities within the community, and offering opportunities to participate, are I believe more important than displaying interesting works.’

‘I think this is incredibly important for the local community, which is blessed with a huge range of artistic talent.’

Question 15: Enter an email address if you would like us to keep you informed.

175 people left email addresses and the final survey report overview will be shared with them as well as members.