



# Aberdeen 2021 Christmas Village Research Evaluation Results

Prepared for: Aberdeen City Council, JCPF Ltd & Aberdeen Inspired

Prepared by: The Research Chamber, Aberdeen & Grampian  
Chamber of Commerce



21 April 2022



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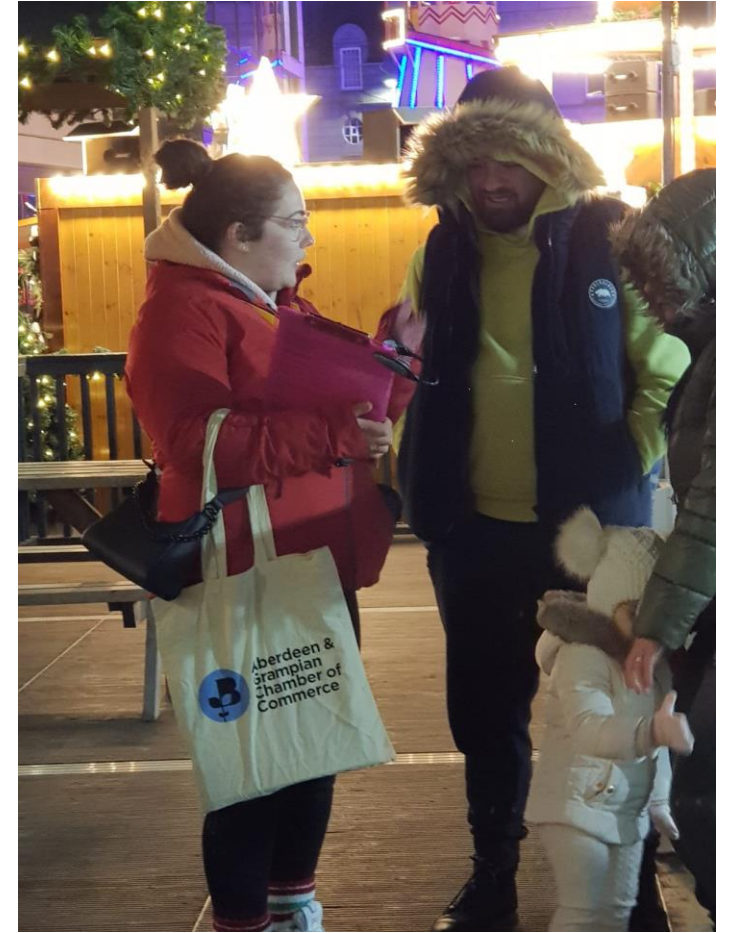
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# Why this project matters; measuring the success of the 2021 event, part of the City's continued recovery

The Aberdeen Christmas Village event can play a key role in the City's continued recovery from the past eighteen months. The event has, in previous years, brought a vibrancy to the City, offering visitors a range of attractions (including ice rink, fairground rides, food, drink, local market, live music, community entertainment). It has brought the festive season to life for the visitors and for local businesses.

Aberdeen City Council/JCPF Ltd/Aberdeen Inspired are eager to evaluate the success of the 2021 event with a focus on visitor and business experience.





Who we  
talked to



## Research with three groups, village visitors, village vendors and with City Businesses

Who	Village Visitors	Village Vendors	City businesses
How Many	227	30	30
How Surveyed	Personal interviews at the Village	Mailed by Aberdeen Inspired	Canvassed by Codona's Management team
	Range of times/venues/days during the event + by QR code, publicised/distributed at the Village	59 vendors invited to participate, mailed throughout the Village	30 City Businesses invited to participate, via Codona management team

Note: Village attendance/interviewing/footfall at times impacted by poor weather, covid restrictions

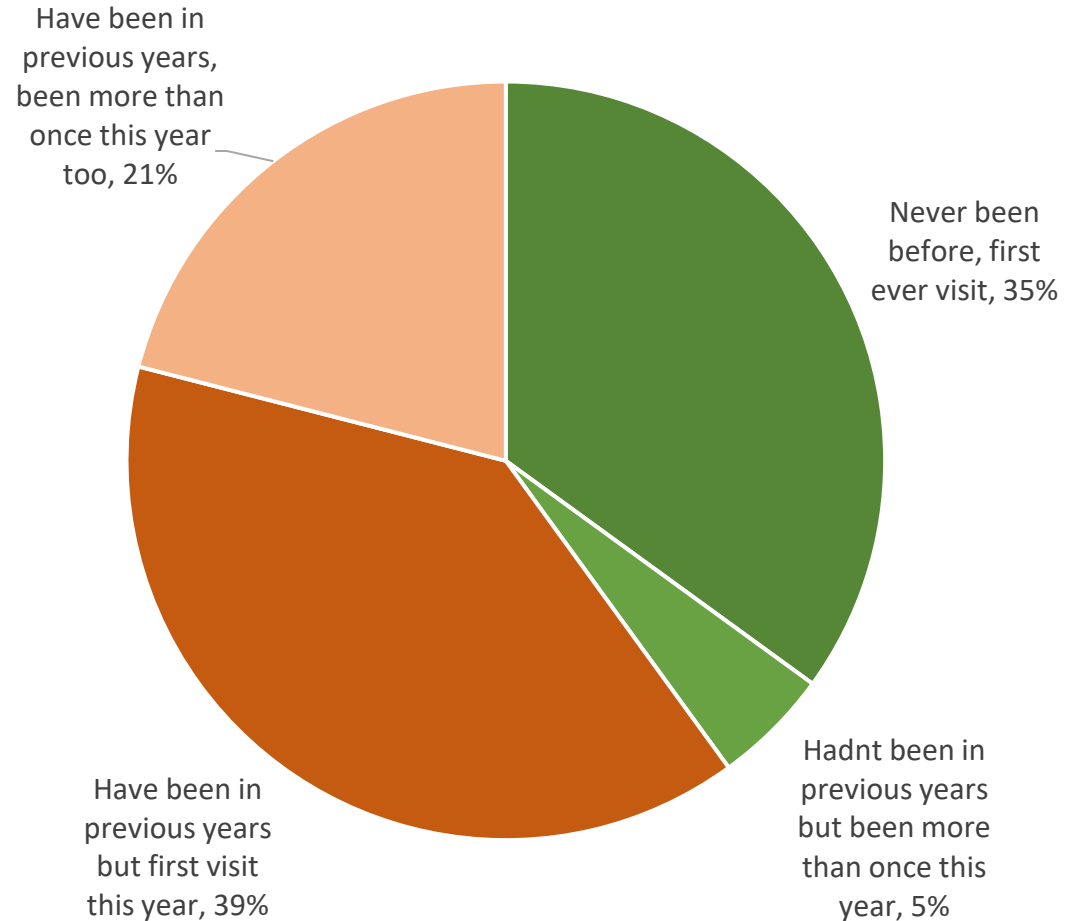




What they said,  
the fifteen key  
facts



# 1. Similar to previous years, the typical Village Visitor was young woman from the City who had been to the Village in previous years but this was their first 2021 visit.



<i>Age</i>	68% 16/34
<i>Gender</i>	63% Women
<i>Postcode</i>	83% City 10% Shire 7% Other
<i>Group Size</i>	Mode was 2 Mean was 3 30% of groups included children

Source: 226 Village Visitors

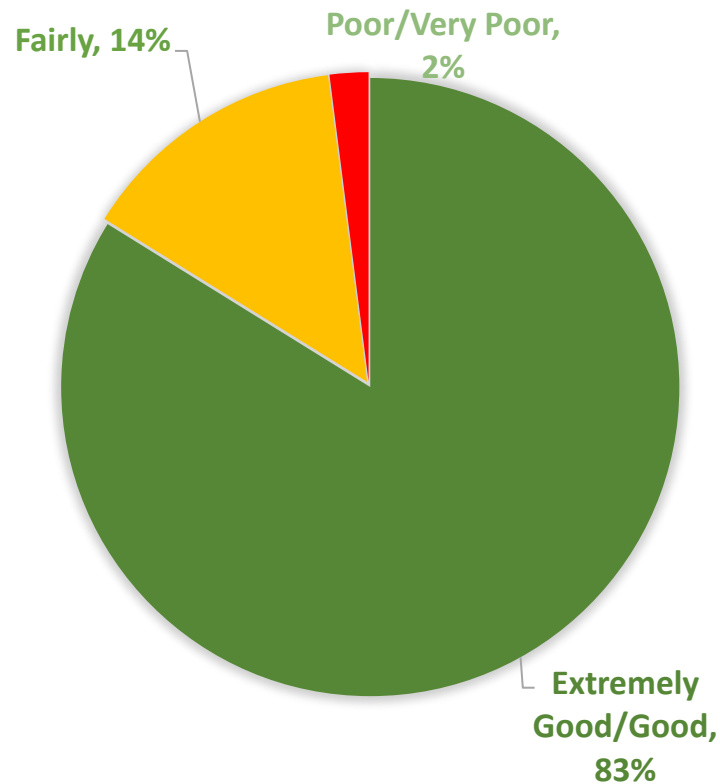
Qs: Is this your first visit this year? Have you been in previous years?





## 2. Highest ever survey ratings for 'overall experience' and 'like it to be repeated'. Nearly all said it felt like a safe environment.

Overall Experience Rating



	Disagree	Neither /nor	Agree
The Christmas Village felt like a safe environment	0%	3%	98%
I would like the Christmas Village to be repeated in Aberdeen next year	0%	1%	99%



Source: 227 Village Visitors

Q: How would you rate your experience of the Christmas Village?, To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statements below?

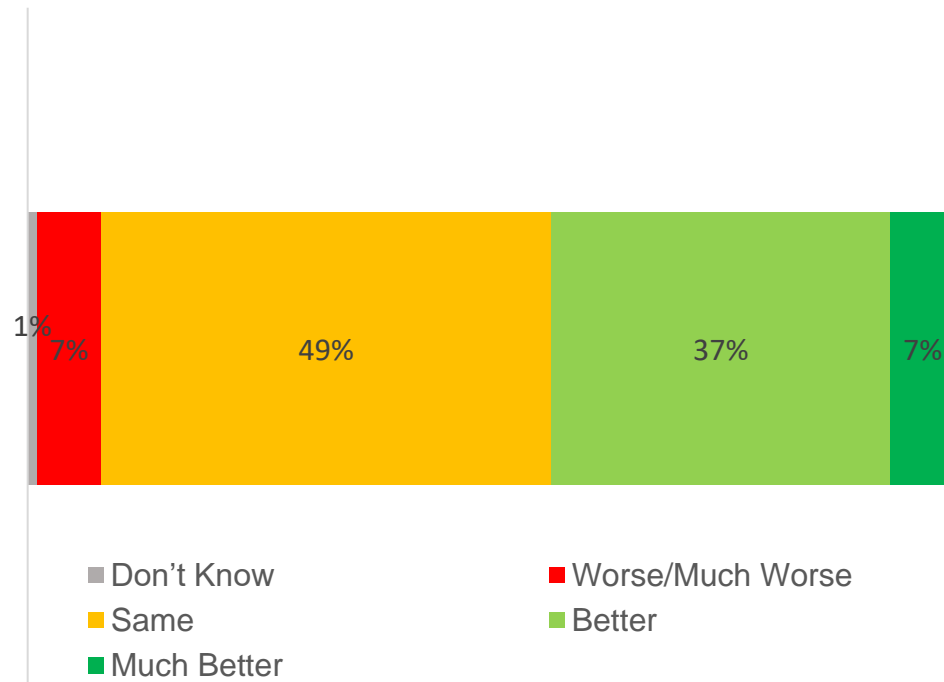




### 3. Village seen by most as good, if not better than previous years and enhances perception of the City

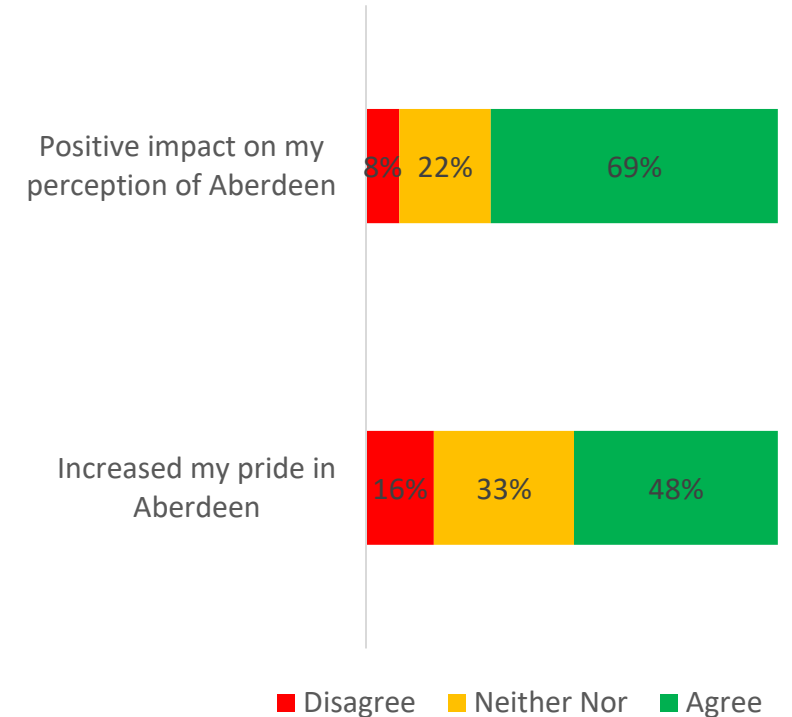


Comparison with previous years



Source: 136 Village Visitors who had been in previous years  
Q: How does this year's Christmas Village compare to when you went in previous years?

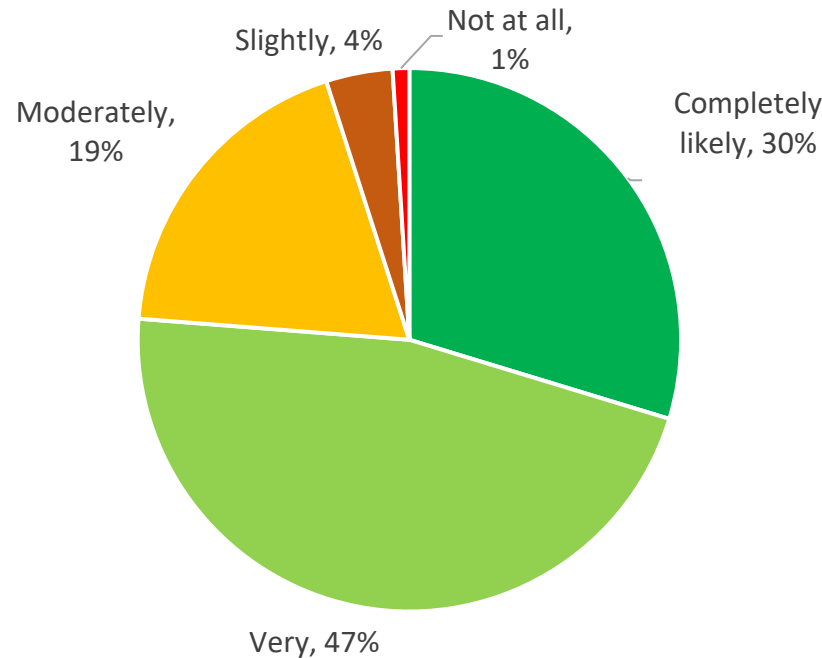
Village Impact on City



Source: 226 Village Visitors  
Q: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statements below?



## 4. Over three quarters of Visitors are completely/very likely to recommend the Village to friends & family...something to do/suitable for all & gets you into the Xmas spirit



Source: 225 Village Visitors  
How likely or unlikely are you to recommend friends and family to visit the Christmas Village in the future?  
Why did you say that?

### **Something (different) to do**

*Because it's fun and something to do.  
A good opportunity to socialise and try different things.  
The variety of things to do, pancakes and ice rink stood out.  
Nothing too special but still worth coming to try out.*

### **Suitable for all**

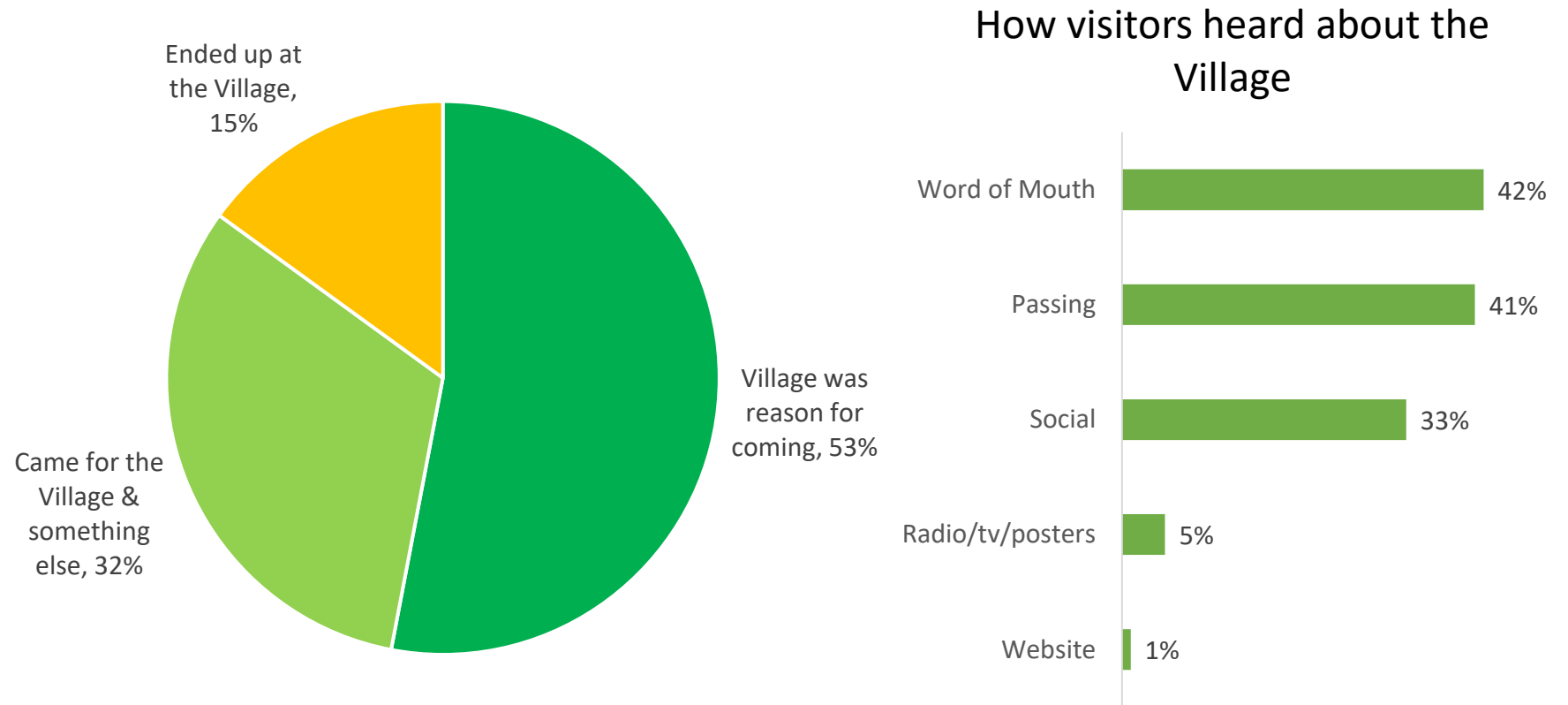
*Great chance to spend time with family and friends and have fun  
Good place for children to spend the day.  
Nice lighthearted atmosphere.*

### **Gets you into the Xmas spirit**

*The environment is really nice and puts you in a christmas mood.  
I think it's perfect to stop by when you are in the city centre / doing some Christmas shopping.*



## 5. Vast majority of Village Visitors came to the town for the Village, the main reason for more than half – most had heard about it through word of mouth/in passing



Source: 225 Village Visitors

Qs: Which of the following statements about coming is most true of you? How did you hear about the Christmas Village this year?

## 6. Clear reasons for people coming to the Village



*Wanted to catch up with a friend and we decided to have some mulled wine there.*

Main reason for coming		
For the Village features	Food/drinks	<i>Good food and drinking</i>
	Skating/rides/market	<i>Ice-skating and rides. Check out market</i>
For the Village Benefits	Family time	<i>Take the kids out and provide a nice experience for them</i>
	Feeling Festive	<i>Because it's almost Christmas!</i>
	Social	<i>Friends took me on a day out :)</i>
	Something interesting to do	<i>Finished an exam so wanted to explore.</i>

Source: 210 Village Visitors

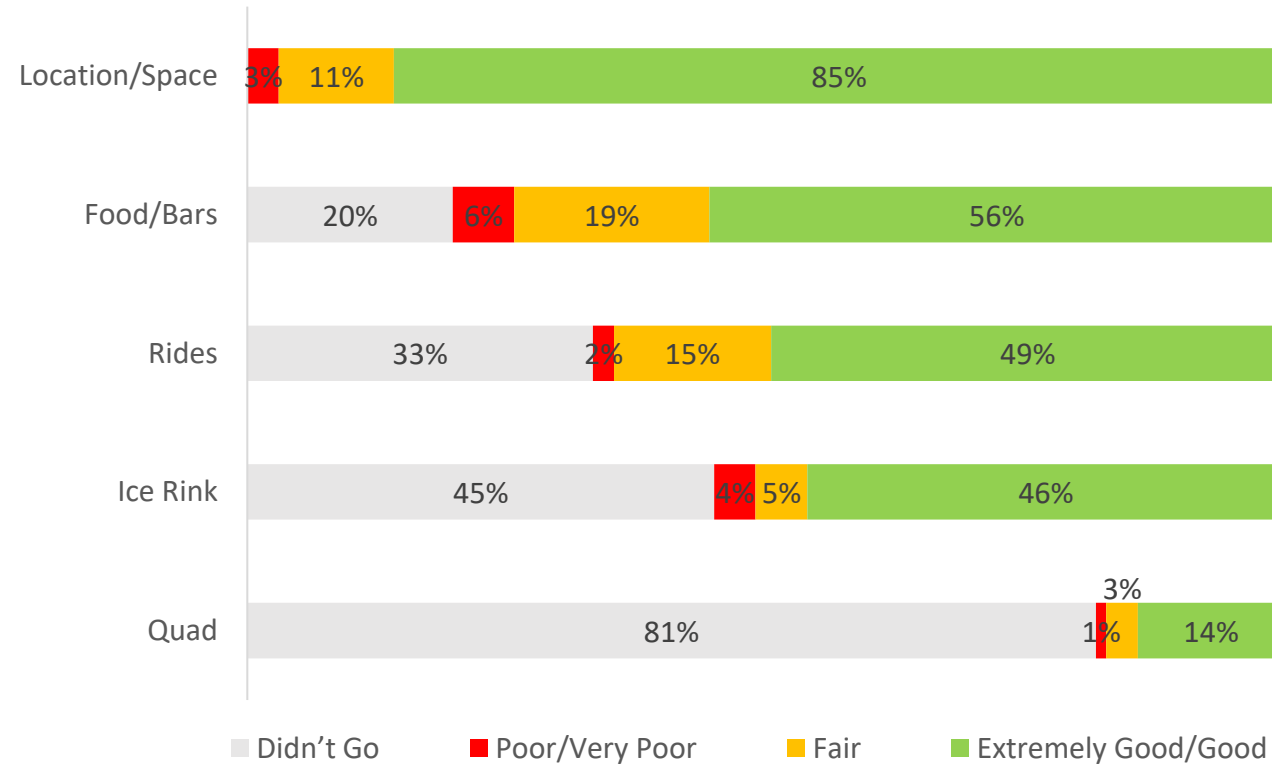
Q: What was your main reason for coming to the Aberdeen Christmas Village today?



## 7. Positive response to Village features, but some less well used



Village features, Experiences



Source: 226 Village Visitors  
Q: How would you rate your experience of the Christmas Village?



## 8. Village Visitors have ideas to make it bigger & better

Bigger	Better
<p><i>A bigger ice rink. More Christmas stalls like gifts. Have more space on the streets for other things to do, more stalls in different areas. More rides...there are only two. Markets to buy other Christmas things or even typical fun fair things such as candy floss/toys More space and music e.g live band...A Christmas Parade</i></p>	<p><i>A better area to have drinks under some shelter. Heaters don't provide warmth. Better food options would be nice with cheaper prices. Better pricing. More shopping opportunities. Better facilities like toilets/bins.</i></p>
<p><b>Get More/More Value for Money</b> <i>Would make it bigger so you could get more for your money/wristbands etc I feel the costs overall for food and rides are far too high</i></p>	
<p><i>Could it move to the Union Terrace Gardens when they open - a wonderful location in the making?</i></p>	

Source: 141 Village Visitors  
Q: Please let us know if you have anything else to add, or anything you would like to see at the Christmas Village in the future:



## 9. Visitor total spend was up versus previous years, driven by spend in the Village itself

<i>Spend per 'party group'</i>	<i>2016/18 average</i>	<i>2021</i>	<i>Difference 2021 v 2016/18</i>
Total City Spend	£34	£42	+£8
Inside Christmas village	£11	£20	+£9
Outside Christmas Village	£23	£22	-£1 *
<i>Local travel, i.e. to get to Aberdeen City Centre</i>	£1	£1	£0
<i>Food, drink outside the event</i>	£7	£8	+£1
<i>Other shopping/anything else like parking</i>	£15	£13	-£2
<i>* Note: Outside Village spend is down; worth taking into account impact of the restrictions?</i>			

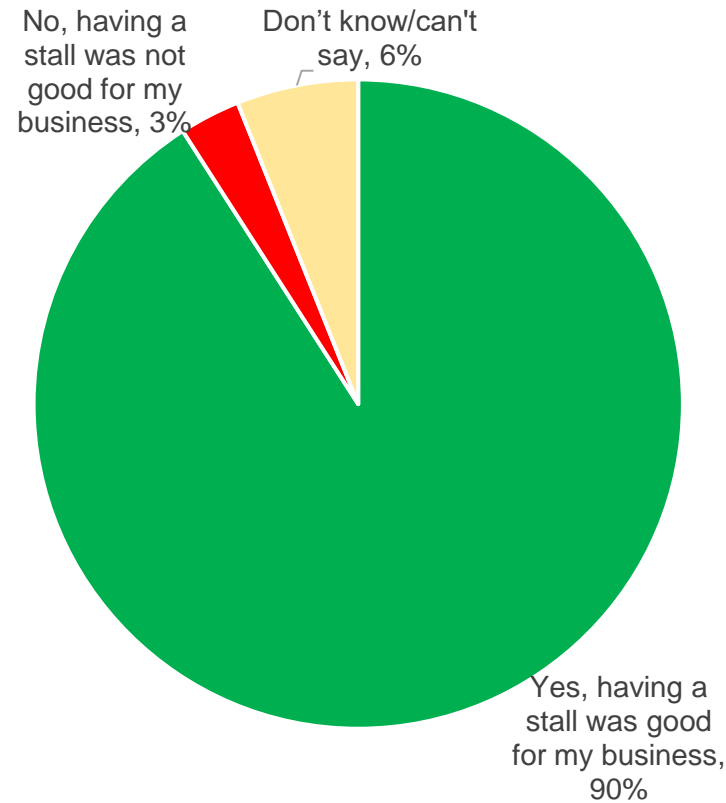
Source: 203 Village Visitors

Q: Approximately how much do you expect to spend today on the following:(please include any spending you made on behalf of all party members in your group i.e. your partner, children, etc.)



## 10. Vast majority of Village Vendors believed that having a stall was good for their business

*Having a stall has brought my business back to life*



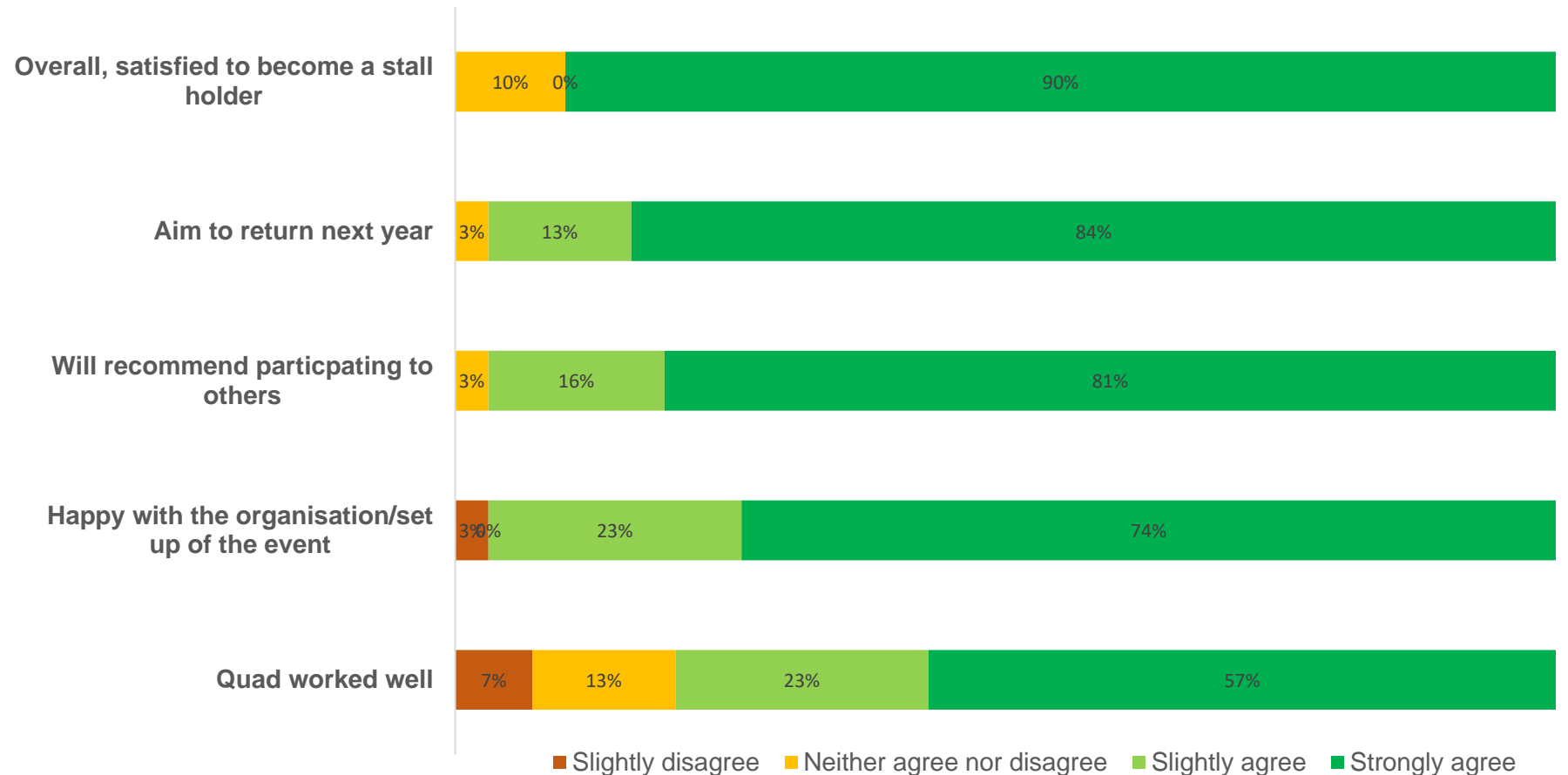
Reach new customers	<i>Because it helped new customers sample our products</i>
More exposure for business	<i>It's great exposure to our local customers and a chance to reconnect after two years of disruption.</i>
Other	<i>The footfall was positive but did not lead to direct sales. I think an extended opening time /more social media advertisement...would be beneficial</i>

Source: 31 Village Vendors  
Question: Was having a stall at Aberdeen Christmas Village market good for your business?





## 11. Vast majority of Village Vendors were happy



Source: 30 Village Vendors  
Question: How much do you agree or disagree about these Christmas Village stall holder statements?



## 12. Largely positive feedback from Vendors, only a handful of issues

Thanks	Village set up/logistics	Village Promotion/Expansion
<p><i>The management and security provided were very helpful and they did an excellent job all way through.</i></p>	<p><i>The only thing i would suggest is that the stalls were maintained or upgrades parts are missing and the condition of the shelving in some of the stalls is a disgrace</i></p>	<p><i>I think the Christmas Village works well as a venue for the market. The only criticism I would make (and it's the same every time we've done it) is that it is not terribly visible from outside. If people don't know the market is there, it's not obvious. A tough one to fix though!</i></p>
<p><i>Darren and council workers who dismantled my hut were absolutely brilliant. They were all so helpful.</i></p>	<p><i>It would be nice to have cheap parking and toilet's just for stall holders.</i></p>	<p><i>Make it bigger! Allow larger seating for people to come in and sit with their food and drinks. Allow some food and beverage vendors inside the square.</i></p>
<p><i>We have had such a successful event so far that we intend to extend on this next year.</i></p>	<p><i>The cabins and the set up of location were fantastic</i></p> <p><i>I feel more signage at eye level regarding the location of the market is required</i></p>	<p><i>Make it bigger! Allow larger seating for people to come in and sit with their food and drinks. Allow some food and beverage vendors inside the square.</i></p>

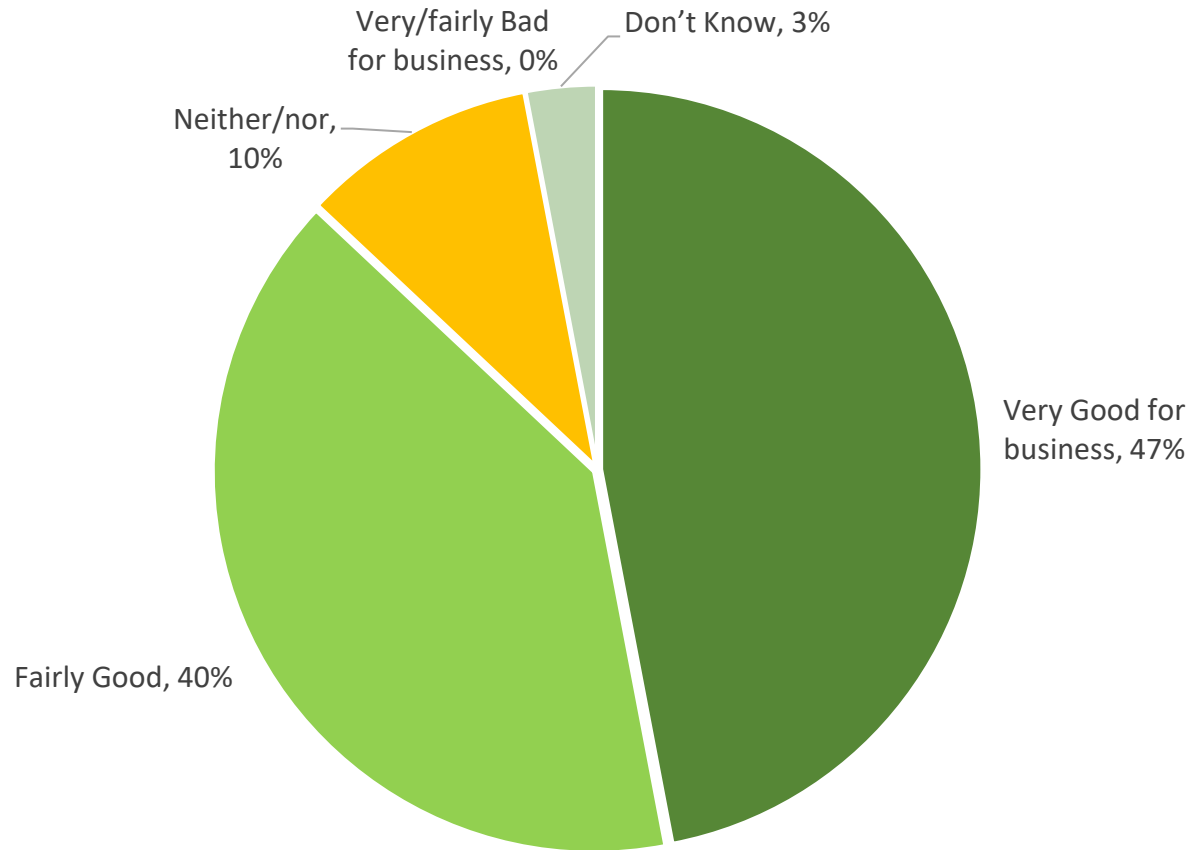


Source: 30 Village Vendors

Question: Please let us know if you have anything else to add, or anything you would like to see at the Christmas Village in the future.



# 13. Most City businesses saw the Village as good for business



### Why did you say that...

#### Drives footfall

*Brought footfall to the area, and gave people a reason to come into the city centre that might have otherwise stayed away*

#### Supports the area

*Flags up this area. Poorer cousin to the likes of Union Square.*

#### Low impact

*Very few customers mentioned having been to it. I felt no bump in footfall from it.*

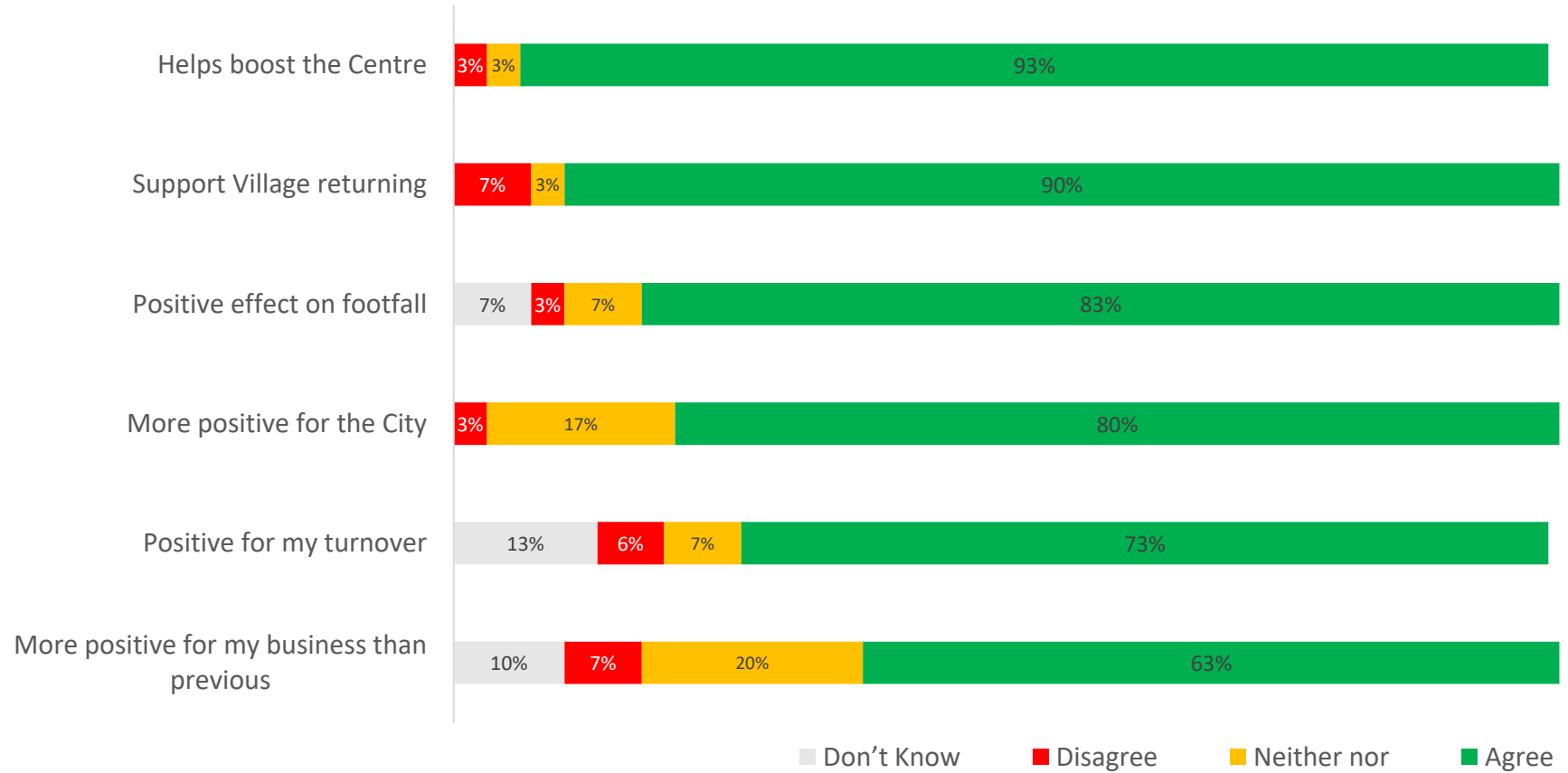


Source: 30 City Businesses

Question: Thinking of your business, would you say that the Aberdeen Christmas Village was... Why do you say that?



# 14. Largely positive views of the Village from City businesses



Source: 30 City Businesses  
Question: How much do you agree or disagree about these Christmas Village City business statements?



# 15. City Businesses want to see it bigger and better

Make it bigger	Make it better
<p><i>All helps bring more people but can we get something on the scale of Edinburgh to really drive people to come to the North East!</i></p>	<p><i>Bigger and different place</i></p> <p><i>Quad market open all week</i></p> <p><i>Needs more things at it.</i></p> <p><i>Quad market open all week</i></p>
<p><i>We need all the help we can get.</i></p> <p><i>Want to shout about it more</i></p>	

Source: 24 City Businesses

Question: Please let us know if you have anything else to add, or anything you would like to see at the Christmas Village in the future.





# Summary: Nine key Village Visitor facts from the research

## Key Facts

1. Similar to previous years, the typical Village Visitor was young woman from the City who had been to the Village in previous years but this was their first 2021 visit.
2. Highest ever survey ratings for the overall experience and liking it to be repeated next year. Nearly all said it felt like a safe environment.
3. Village seen by most as good, if not better than previous years and enhances perception of the City
4. Over three quarters of Visitors are completely/very likely the Village to friends & family...something to do/suitable for all & gets you into the Xmas spirit
5. Vast majority of Village Visitors came to the town for the Village, the main reason for more than half – most had heard about it through word of mouth/in passing
6. Clear reasons for people coming to the Village
7. Positive response to Village features, but some less well used
8. Village Visitors have ideas to make it bigger & better
9. Visitor total spend was up versus previous years, driven by spend in the Village itself





## Summary: Six key Village Vendor/City Business facts from the research

Who	Key Facts
Village Vendors	10. Vast majority of Village Vendors believed that having a stall was good for their business
	11. Vast majority of Village Vendors were happy
	12. Largely positive feedback from Vendors, only a handful of issues
City Businesses	13. Most City businesses saw the Village as good for business
	14. Largely positive views of the Village from City businesses
	15. City Businesses want to see it bigger and better





# Conclusions & Thoughts for Next Actions





# Conclusions & Thoughts for Next Actions

<b>Conclusions</b>	<b>Village Visitors</b> The Village attracted people to the City Centre who would not have come otherwise, despite mainly non-paid for promotion  When they got there, the vast majority enjoyed the experience; spending more than in previous years  They were keen for it to be even bigger & even better next year	<b>Village Vendors/City Businesses</b> The Vendors saw coming to the Village as a worthwhile experience, helping them reach new customers and do more business  The City Businesses saw it as a footfall driver for the Centre. A small minority saw it as getting in the way.  The Vendors were keen for the Village to iron out the handful of logistics issues and to make it bigger next time
<b>Thoughts for Next Actions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Continue to run the Christmas Village in 2022</li><li>2. Make it bigger; consider ways to increase its footprint, consider ways to promote it</li><li>3. Make it better; iron out the handful of vendor issues</li></ol>	



# Data Tables



# Thanks from your Research Chamber team



Who	Andrew Pyke	Samira Heshmatzadeh
Focus	Research Chamber Manager	Research across markets
Career summary	30 years in insight spanning a range of sectors, joined the team last year from the Scottish Football Association.	10 years of experience in data collection, situation analysis and desk research. Research across markets including The Middle East, Sweden, Hawaii as well as business/marketing projects in Scotland.
Contact	<a href="mailto:Andrew.pyke@agcc.co.uk">Andrew.pyke@agcc.co.uk</a> T: 07597 576 767	<a href="mailto:Samira.Heshmatzadeh@agcc.co.uk">Samira.Heshmatzadeh@agcc.co.uk</a> T:07970 645 481
Website	<a href="http://www.researchchamber.co.uk">www.researchchamber.co.uk</a>	