

Meanwhile Space

Ten Years in Practice



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SPACE

Meanwhile Space: Ten Years in Practice

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Preface

By Emily Berwyn and Eddie Bridgeman

The journey of Meanwhile Space has been a fast paced, sometimes rocky, but ultimately rewarding one.

Back in 2009, both local authorities and landlords thought we were completely crazy when we suggested temporary uses of space. We were told no one would ever allow it to happen because it was too risky. We were laughed out of the room when we suggested it should be on a rent free basis in return for covering costs, and delivering activities and security for the building.

But with a bit of naivety and lots of enthusiasm, constantly questioning the status quo of the property industry, we convinced a few people of the opportunity, rolled up our sleeves, got stuck in, took risks and ran in 5th gear for many years. We have always been aware of our limited knowledge in the property industry, but have been very good at navigating the barriers others see as fixed. It has resulted in over 60 spaces brought back to use, but very limited analysis of those projects on a collective basis. Each project reported on different outputs, depending on funder requirements, and we were so busy dealing with floods and break ins and pest control issues we never had a chance to compare the collective data and draw any conclusions. Our 10 year anniversary has been a good push to do this and we hope this report contributes a piece of research that can be used to develop and grow Meanwhile uses further.

The ethos of promoting the opportunity to fail has been core to the company. We are inherently risk takers and in the beginning we had nothing to lose. We hardly ever get it right and we don't expect others to either! But we keep evolving, learning, adapting. This report is evidence of that constant evolution, learning lessons from those mistakes, and documenting the achievements. It gives us some reassurance it hasn't all been in our increasingly exhausted heads! Despite working with a very passionate and committed staff team, it has always been a small team, with very limited resources and we have always had to collaborate to get anything done. We certainly don't always agree with partners, or each other, but we respect we all have different approaches, skills and drivers, and that we are all in it for the same reasons – that is not to let buildings and space that could be used, go to waste, and to help those who have ideas for doing something, make it happen.

The trajectory from banging a drum of the concept of Meanwhile use, to 'hey this works', to 'oh dear it doesn't always work', to how do we make this sustainable has been immense. How we carry on pushing the boundaries of what is possible is what drives us. We will always push those boundaries, looking around to see problem needs solving next, though we hope we now have had the sense to surround ourselves with others who have learnt from our mistakes to settle on a replicable model.

As the pioneer of Meanwhile use, Meanwhile Space has always sought to lead the way for others to follow, strengthen and grow the concept of Meanwhile use within the UK. This has been the case with the Meanwhile industry and we hope this report provides the framework for other Meanwhile operators and partners to record and document the impact of Meanwhile projects. Using this knowledge and as frame of reference for planning and implementing projects will only build and strengthen the industry, continue to demonstrate its worth and benefit more places and the people who live and work in them.

Ethos

It has always been quite a simple ethos – any waste of land or underused buildings is a wasted opportunity. People want access to visible space at more affordable rates, and there is and will always be, a glut of space not doing anything at any one time. This space is costing money and creating hassle for the landlord. If commercial space is kept exclusively for chains and already established brands, how do normal people with great ideas but no financial backing ever get there? What a missed opportunity; for people to see their skills and passions flourish, for creating jobs, for interesting services and activities that people actually want to use. And what a boring place our high streets were, and have, become.

What is there to lose? And why is it shrouded in such complicated, risk averse bureaucracy? If people fail, so what? If the project fails, so what? At least something has been tried and lessons learned, people have come together, activities have taken place, fun has been had, and something different from the norm has been given a chance. Something that has come from local people, and is special to that area.

When it works, it creates pride, a sense of achievement, a can-do approach, and a more vibrant, interesting place for the people that live and work there, now and long into the future. That's the real power of Meanwhile use.

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Executive summary

Meanwhile Space: Ten Years in Practice is an effort to put forward a timely review of empirical evidence that Meanwhile Space Community Interest Company (CIC) has accumulated during their ten-year trajectory in enabling and establishing a process for temporary or interim use of vacant spaces in the UK context. The report aims to reflect on the experience of mobilising 'meanwhile uses' as a social enterprise and to evaluate the drivers, performance and achieved impact for key stakeholders – tenants, landlords, local communities, local authorities, and operators. To our knowledge, this is the first systematic attempt to characterise UK-based meanwhile use projects by using historical evidence from practice. This is not to suggest that this report is an exhaustive assessment of the field, given the multiple ways in which temporary use manifests on the ground. However, the review benefits from insights coming from a diverse set of spaces and business models that Meanwhile Space has operated, tested and delivered.

The objectives of the *Meanwhile Space: Ten Years in Practice* report were to:

- Examine the socio-economic context of meanwhile uses as illustrated through Meanwhile Space's locations.
- Characterise meanwhile use practice based on measurable evidence.
- Introduce a process for monitoring impact for key direct stakeholders.
- Develop an understanding of opportunities and challenges based on Meanwhile Space tenants' experiences.

- Provide insights for achievements and shortcomings, as well as guidance on potential future directions of meanwhile use practice and research.

Technical summary

Three sets of data are examined in the report, collected by Meanwhile Space:

- Information, including numerical data, about Meanwhile Space projects, such as the location and duration of projects, total business rates' savings per project, and number of tenants and employees per space.
- Results from direct stakeholders' surveys, which consisted of online questionnaires addressed at past and current tenants, and landlords and partners in the period between March 2018 and March 2019.
- Indirect stakeholders' surveys which were distributed at the sites and local areas of example Meanwhile Space projects and were addressed at the local community and the wider public.

According to Meanwhile Space's archives, a total number of 897 tenants have used their meanwhile spaces. Locations currently active have hosted 512 tenants as of March 2019. The total number of responses received during the online survey adds up to a survey sample of 78 tenants (8.7% of the population size). Given that there is no prior statistical information on the profile of meanwhile tenants, it is difficult to evaluate whether the survey sample is representative of the tenant population.

Meanwhile Space's portfolio of projects includes project delivery, set-up and management of properties and/or consultancy. Survey respondents came from the first two project

categories, from 9 different projects, out of 34 in total (excludes consultancy activities) – namely, the survey sample includes experiences from one third of Meanwhile Space projects with tenant involvement. The location of projects was mainly the metropolitan area of London.

Female representation within the survey sample (53.8%) is significantly higher compared to figures from the Small Business Survey (SBS) 2018¹ which identify for the UK that 23% of small businesses with no employees was majority-led by women (DBEIS, 2018, p.i). The SBS statistical descriptions represent the 'small and medium enterprises' (SMEs) in the UK non-financial sector and include micro-businesses of 1 to 9 employees. The profile of SMEs participating in meanwhile use projects is not statistically defined and therefore we do not have an accurate statistical description of the meanwhile tenant population. We also do not have data on the female to male representation in the entirety of Meanwhile Space's tenant population. The same is the case for ethnic minorities. The reader should take into account these limitations when reviewing the datasets and interpretations presented in this report. The author, Dr. Garyfalia Palaiologou was not involved in the data collection process – the analysis of the Meanwhile Space datasets was conducted by the author independently from the data collection process.

Effectively, this report is an attempt to share empirical data on meanwhile use projects collected by one UK operator, Meanwhile Space, so as to initiate a process for an evidence-informed understanding of interim use of vacant assets as a growing practice in the UK.

¹DBEIS (Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy) (2019), 'Longitudinal Small Business Survey: businesses with no employees – UK, 2018.' 24 May 2019. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/803641/L SBS_2018_non-employers.pdf [Accessed 10 June 2019]

1

Introduction

'Meanwhile uses' refer to interim occupation of vacant premises, for example, during periods of redevelopment or until the landlord secures a new tenancy agreement or lease. The term was introduced by Meanwhile Space CIC during the Department for Communities and Local Government's (DCLG) Meanwhile Project² in 2009, the first central government programme on meanwhile use. It describes a process of "*intelligent use of unproductive empty buildings and underused land*"; a process which bolsters local liveability by fostering business innovation and experimentation. Meanwhile Space's approach is distinct in its ethos, in that it encourages low-cost community investment by providing access to cheap floorspace for local small businesses, community care projects and start-ups. By investing in local communities and developing capacity building platforms, Meanwhile Space has promoted, during a decade of practice, a shift in the failing perception of classifying meanwhile projects as frivolous efforts to place-making and urban regeneration. Core principles of affordability and flexibility coupled with a strong drive for systematic engagement with local networks and agency has led Meanwhile Space to its biggest achievement: the advocacy and validation of the deployment of meanwhile uses within the UK local planning framework. The 'Open Doors pilot', a recent government initiative, aims to promote meanwhile uses as a mechanism for high street revitalisation.³ For the pilot's implementation, the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) works in

collaboration with Meanwhile Space CIC and The Meanwhile Foundation.

This intervention could not have been timelier. Vacancy rates is a pressing issue for town centres and neighbourhoods in the UK, while the impact of austerity leaves local authorities increasingly reliant on local income. Specifically, in the context of the UK high street, the potential for meanwhile uses to contribute to local well-being has been identified since the Portas Review into the future of high streets,⁴ published in 2011, and earlier in 2009 by DCLG in its report 'Looking after our town centres.'⁵ Acting in synch with its time, Meanwhile Space followed grass-roots international movements of 'temporary urbanism' which were manifesting in Germany, France, Denmark and elsewhere, and were claiming the right to cheap, small-scale interventions in urban space for the improvement of urban life through active citizenship and participation.

While Meanwhile Space and other UK-based meanwhile uses operators have been active for years, a UK-specific modus operandi for meanwhile projects is yet to be identified. Since *Temporary City* in 2012,⁶ where Bishop and Williams introduced the planning context and multifarious ways temporary use manifests in the UK cities (amongst other case studies from Europe and North America), an effort to advance our understanding of interim use initiatives remains moderate or fragmented. Certainly, the input from practice has been limited. Unlocking underused space in the UK is far from a resolved process, not only in terms of implementation but also in terms of research and reflective practice. There

are voiced caveats and concerns on the drivers, purpose, and long-term viability of temporary urbanism and meanwhile projects.⁷ In light of this, the aim of this report is to contemplate on the past and the future of meanwhile use practice in the UK, through an examination of evidence collated and provided via Meanwhile Space's ten year engagement with meanwhile projects on the ground.

The report is not aspiring to contemplate on the theoretical premises and limitations of temporary urbanism, nor to speak on behalf of and for a common ethos and unequivocal values of temporary use as a collective movement. It considers practice-based elements, which are specific to Meanwhile Space's approach, as these have been raised and experienced during the delivery of meanwhile projects in the UK context. Subsequently, the adopted lens for this discussion is that meanwhile use practice differs across operators and depends on the adopted approaches and the local context of operation. Furthermore, a survey of opinions coming from direct stakeholders of meanwhile projects is not available to date for UK-based practice. Meanwhile Space's efforts concentrate on *an accessible and flexible approach to utilising vacant assets for the benefit of local stakeholders* – it is upon this basis that the report reviews the company's practice by examining empirical evidence and feedback provided by tenants and landlords engaged in the process.

Report structure

The report is structured in four chapters. The first three examine different facets and factors of meanwhile use projects in order to characterise Meanwhile Space's approach in relation to the UK context.

Chapter 2 – Unlocking underused space provides an overview of Meanwhile Space's practice focusing on the socio-economic background of the spaces of intervention.

Chapter 3 – On the ground engagement reviews the performance and characteristics of meanwhile uses' business sectors.

Chapter 4 – Opportunity to flourish/test/fail identifies key opportunities and challenges as these are experienced by direct stakeholders, i.e. tenants and landlords.

Chapter 5 – Echoes of change attempts a user-needs assessment for future practice by reflecting on key takeaways from the Meanwhile Space record of achievements and gaps.

² <https://www.meanwhile.org.uk/>

³ MHCLG (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government) (2019), 'Britain opens its doors to communities in need.' 10 April 2019. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/britain-opens-its-doors-to-communities-in-need> [Accessed 10 June 2019]

⁴ Portas, M. (2011), 'The Portas Review: An independent review into the future of our high streets.' 13 December 2011. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-portas-review-the-future-of-our-high-streets> [Accessed 10 June 2019]

⁵ DCLG (Department for Communities and Local Government) (2009), 'Looking after our town centres.' 14 April 2009. Available at: <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/towncentres> [Accessed 10 June 2019]

⁶ Bishop, P. and Williams, L. (2012), *The Temporary City*. London: Routledge.

⁷ Ferreri, M. (2015), 'The seductions of temporary urbanism.' In *Ephemeria* 15 (1):181–191.



2

Unlocking underused space.

Underpinning drivers and threads

Meanwhile Space kicked off in 2009 as the project delivery partners for the central government Meanwhile Project. The team lobbied, built networks, campaigned, developed and shared toolkits and template leases to enable meanwhile uses; and later, they delivered projects that accessed space, and made them available for creative and community uses. The vision was fundamentally shaped by the Executive Directors' approach on the problem of vacancy, which they addressed as a challenge that encompasses *conceptual*, *practical* and *ethical* dimensions.

Foremost, the task involved a change in the perception of 'meanwhile use' from a foreign and untrustworthy concept into a synonym for social engagement and innovation. Fostering a culture of trust amongst landlords and tenants in the UK context has been a major undertaking which requires constant effort – and, despite the visible substantial progress, it still remains a challenge. As a practical endeavour, the process of unlocking access to vacant, neglected or underused spaces takes various forms and is responsive: from the negotiation and mediation for acquiring spaces; to discovering, creating and setting up low-cost habitable spaces with DIY means. Finally, the underpinning ethos for establishing a process for meanwhile use projects stems from a cultural and social commitment to inclusive and accessible cities. This suggests an appreciation of profit and impact beyond the business-driven lens of economic activity. The cultural and social implications of vacant assets are numerous, both for the well-being of local communities and from

a general perspective of using and recycling urban resources efficiently. Simultaneously, the increasing loss of affordable premises coupled with risk-averse investment and the lack of seed funding for start-ups, jeopardises the unique nature of cities as places of opportunity. Opportunity here is not simply considered in economic terms, but in the broader sense of human encounter, community organisation and participation in local life. Business and trade is seen as a historically cultural activity, inasmuch as it is fundamentally an economic one. By considering meanwhile use as a cultural, social and economic opportunity, Meanwhile Space set off to create the conditions for people to address their local needs, test ideas locally, gain experience on different audiences, grow and build confidence in running a community project or a creative enterprise.

Beneficiaries as co-creators

The audiences and beneficiaries of Meanwhile Space are a diverse set of citizens and private and public actors who are invited to embrace co-creation as an approach to local well-being and innovation:

- Landlords of underused space;
- Local people and business;
- Other businesses, charities, foundations and private investors;
- UK local authorities and national government.

A common understanding for those participating in this process is the willingness to take risk, adopt a trial and error approach to business making which encourages reflection, and be able to tackle uncertainty by operating in a responsive manner.

Overview of practice: the 2016 peak

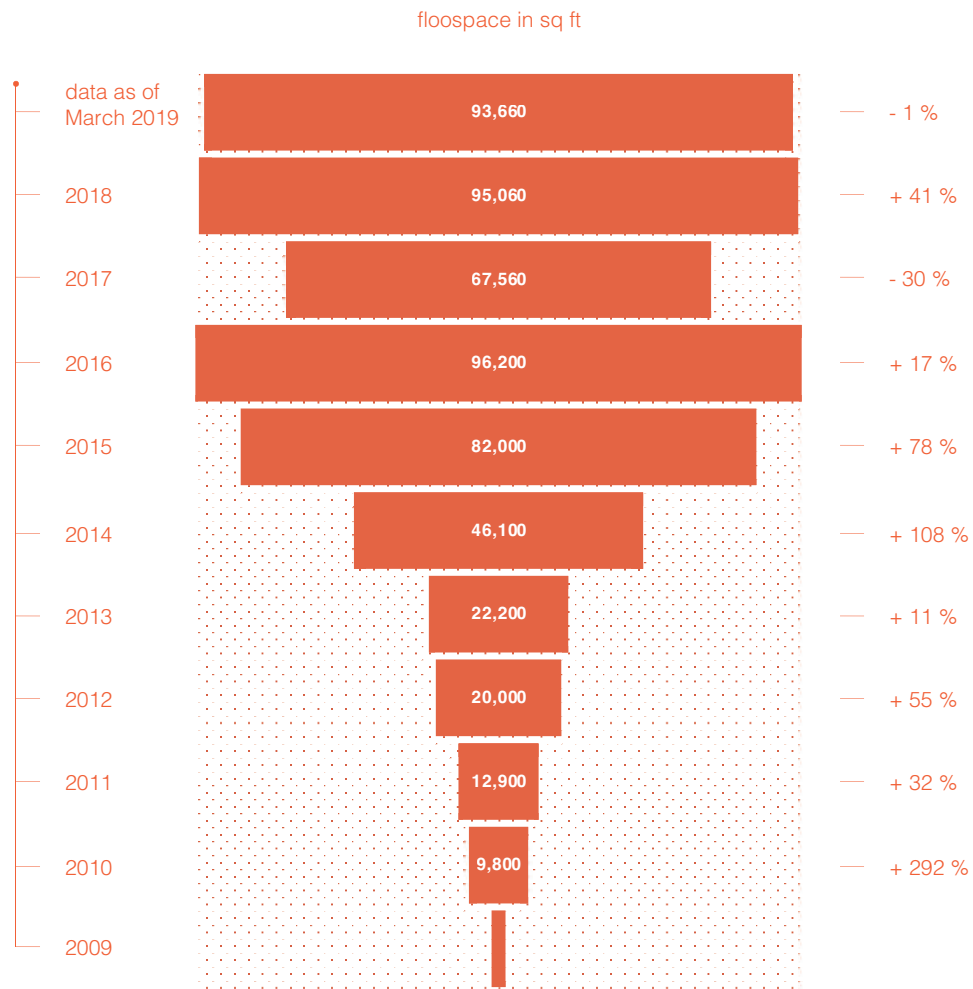


Figure 1. Timeline of increase/decrease in floospace area managed by Meanwhile Space since 2009 and as of March 2019.

In 2009, the first meanwhile project by Meanwhile Space, *Nomad*, was set up on a space of 2,500 sq meters, in Hastings. In 2014, Meanwhile Space expanded its area of activity to the provision of affordable and flexible workspace and businesses incubation. Following substantial progress and increase in the amount of floospace managed year by year, the practice reached its peak in 2016.

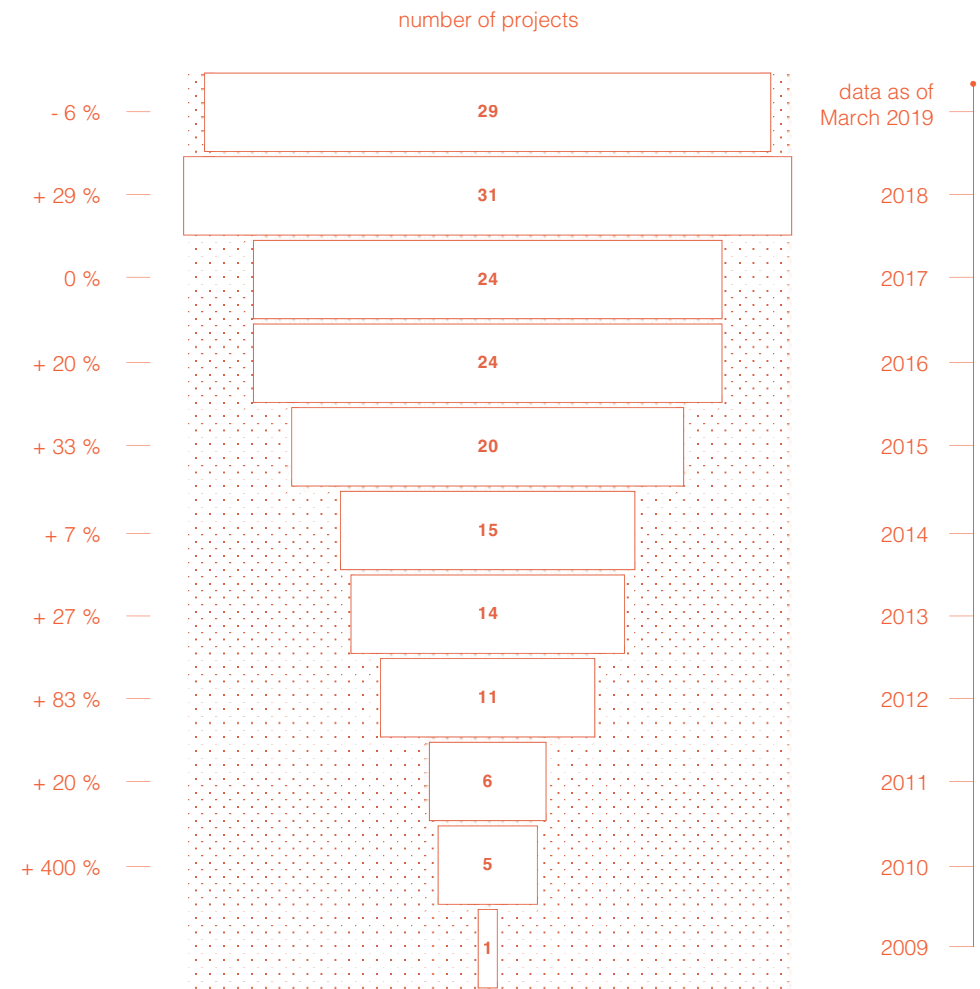


Figure 2. Timeline of increase/decrease in the number of locations managed by Meanwhile Space since 2009 and as of March 2019.

When considering the total area of floospace managed (Figure 1) in relation to the number of locations, it is understood that a trend of gathering meanwhile uses in singular larger sites is introduced in 2015 and 2016. Larger scale projects, namely *clusters* of meanwhile uses, continue to prevail as business models in 2018 and as of March 2019, which indicates demand and their appeal to the market.

List of projects

- 01. Northwood Hills, Hillingdon
The Shed
- 02. Manor Ward, Hillingdon
Meanwhile in the Manor
- 03. Rayners Lane, Harrow
Start Here, Harrow
- 04. Marlborough, Harrow
Start Here, Harrow
- 05. Wembley Central, Wembley
Chesterfield House
Coming Soon Club
Dorinda Hats - CSC
Ujima House (active)
- 06. Tokyngton, Wembley
Cottrell House
- 07. Willesden Green
Electric House
New Windows on Willesden Green
Queens Parade (active)
- 08. South Kilburn
Carlton Kitchen
- 09. West Hampstead
O2 Finchley
- 10. St. James's, Somerset House
Vault 14
- 11. Hatton Garden, Holborn
MS Office
Seasider Shop
- 12. Clerkenwell
Exmouth Market
- 13. Bishop's, Waterloo
Granby Place (active)
- 14. Spitalfields & Banglatown
Meanwhile in Whitechapel
- 15. De Beauvoir, Hoxton
Meanwhile in Hoxton
- 16. Stoke Newington
Stoke Newington
- 17. Woodside, Wood Green
Blue House Yard (active)
- 18. Higham Hill, Walthamstow
Uplands (active)
- 19. Hoe Street, Walthamstow
Central Parade (active)
- 20. Cathall, Leytonstone
Leytonstone
- 21. Lewisham Central
Place/Ladywell (active)
- 22. Coldharbour, Loughborough Junction
LJ Works (active)
MS Office (active)
Network Rail arches (active)
The Platform Hub (active)
- 23. Brixton Hill
Tripod (active)
- 24. St. Helier, Sutton
You Are Here
- 25. Nonsuch, Sutton
You Are Here
- 26. Castle Ward, Hastings
House of Hastings
Nomad
Rock House (active)
- 27. High Town, Luton
High Town Art For All
- 28. Craigavon, Northern Ireland
Meanwhile in Craigavon

Former sites
 Sites active in April 2019

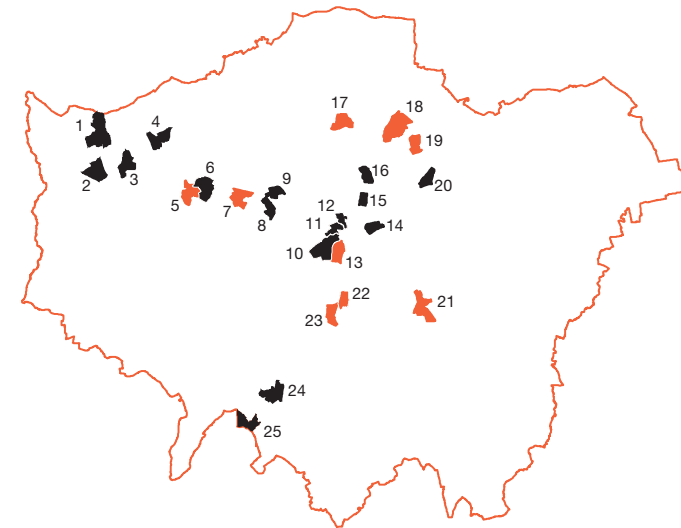


Figure 3. Showing in black colour local areas where Meanwhile Space has operated spaces in the past and in orange areas with active projects in 2019. Contains Ordnance Survey Boundary-Line data © Crown copyright and database right 2018, reproduced under the Ordnance Survey OpenData Licence.

Since August 2009, Meanwhile Space has operated spaces in twenty-eight different local areas, primarily concentrated within the London M25 boundary (outline shown in the figure above, in orange colour). Ten of these local areas have currently active spaces in March 2019, with one of them being outside London, in Hastings on the southeast coast of England.

Local impact

This section looks at the socio-economic profile of local areas where Meanwhile Space has utilised vacant spaces. The statistical description for each local area is based on the 2011 Census key statistics, provided by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) for England and Wales. The characteristics of people and households which are considered for the purposes of this report include the following information:

- *Area demography*, including: millennials at the time of the Census; population over 65 years old; ethnic diversity, which was calculated using the Shannon's equitability (EH) (evenness); and tenure, looking at the percentages of people renting versus owning a property.
- *Economic activity*, focusing on the ONS category of 'economically active' usual residents, including the following sub-categories: full-time and part-time employees; self-employed population; unemployed population; and full-time students.
- *Hours worked* for female and male usual residents aged 16 to 74, distinguishing between part-time and full-time employment.

These characteristics were selected because of their relevance to information collected by Meanwhile Space between March 2018 and March 2019 through a tenants' online survey. A review of the areas' profiles, alongside the testimonies of a sample of *active tenants* during the survey (62 survey participants) about their daily life as entrepreneurs in meanwhile spaces, offers an opportunity to understand the performance of meanwhile uses against their socio-economic context.

The focus of Meanwhile Space on local communities is depicted in Figure 4, which shows the distribution of meanwhile use spaces in relation to statistics on relative deprivation in small areas in England according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), available for year 2015. Out of fifty-eight meanwhile use locations, a majority of 44.8% of projects is located in areas ranked amongst the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country. Over two thirds of the total number of locations (70.7%) is found within areas ranked amongst the 20% most deprived.

While the effort to generate meanwhile uses in places that are lacking resources is clear, there is still limited evidence to validate a measurable impact on local life. The ethnography indicated by current tenants who participated in the online survey suggests that there is greater scope for the meanwhile space platforms to become more inclusive, accessible and integrated in local business networks. The ethnic diversity within the tenants' sample (0.48 equitability, where a value of 1.0 assumes complete evenness) is lower than the average values for the 27 local areas (0.68 equitability; the sample excludes Craigavon in Northern Ireland due to different available datasets). In terms of generating employment, less than one third of the survey participants (23.8%) confirmed having commissioned a local business to support their enterprise (Figure 6). However, it is evident that they do contribute to the local economy, with more than one third (37.1%) spending over £ 25 weekly on local shops, and another third (33.9%) spending over £ 50 (Figure 5).

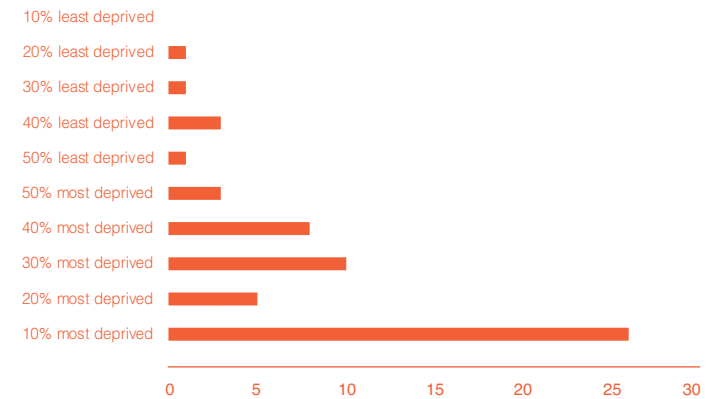


Figure 4. Showing statistics on relative deprivation in local areas where Meanwhile Space has operated spaces, according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), c. 2015.

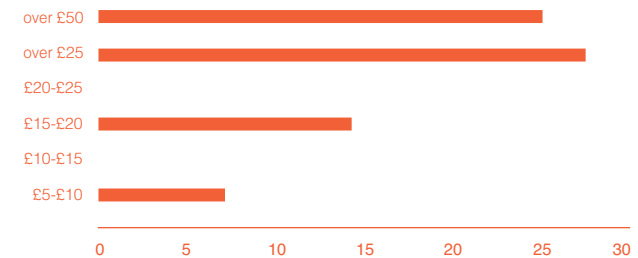


Figure 5. Showing indicative weekly spending by Meanwhile tenants on local shops.

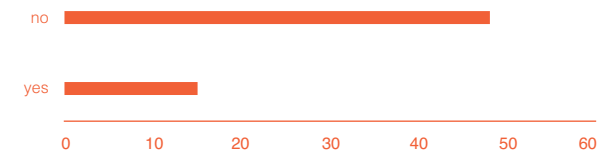
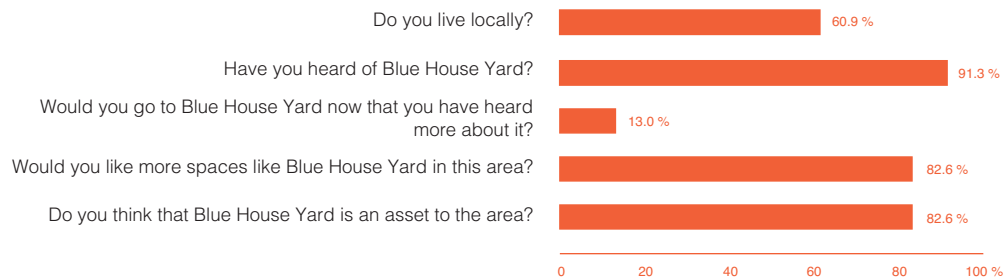


Figure 6. Showing indicative proportions of Meanwhile tenants who have commissioned a local business in the last 12 months of their operation.

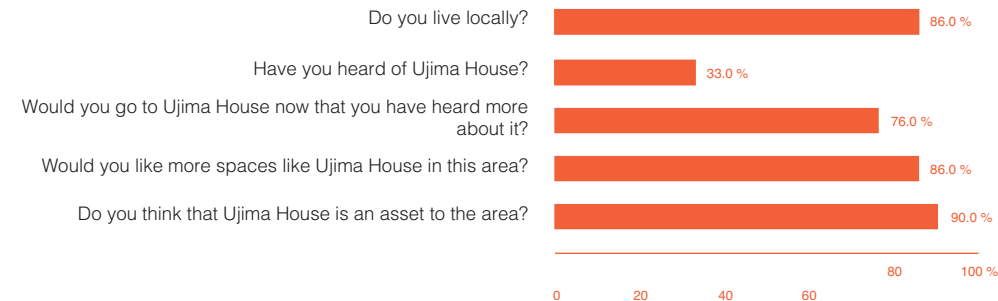
Blue House Yard, Wood Green, 21 February 2019

(23 surveys completed)



Ujima House, Wembley Central, 22 February 2019

(21 surveys completed)



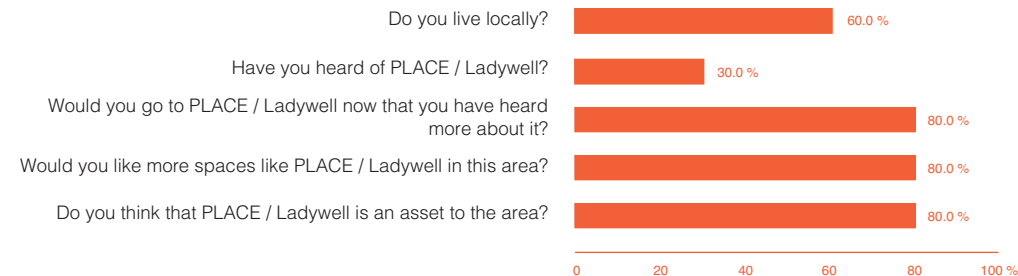
Central Parade, Walthamstow, November 2018

(50 surveys completed)



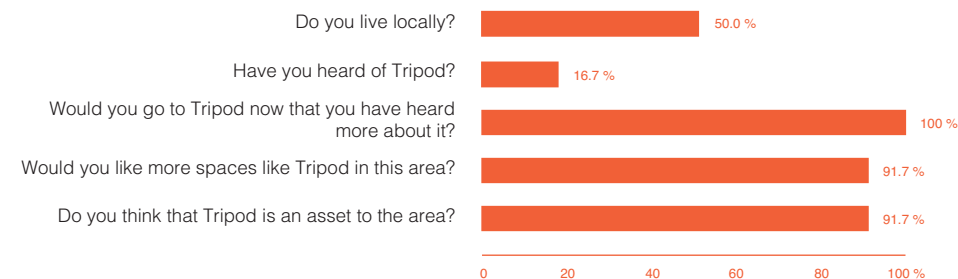
PLACE / Ladywell, Lewisham Central, 27 February 2019

(10 surveys completed)



Tripod, Brixton Hill, 27 February 2019

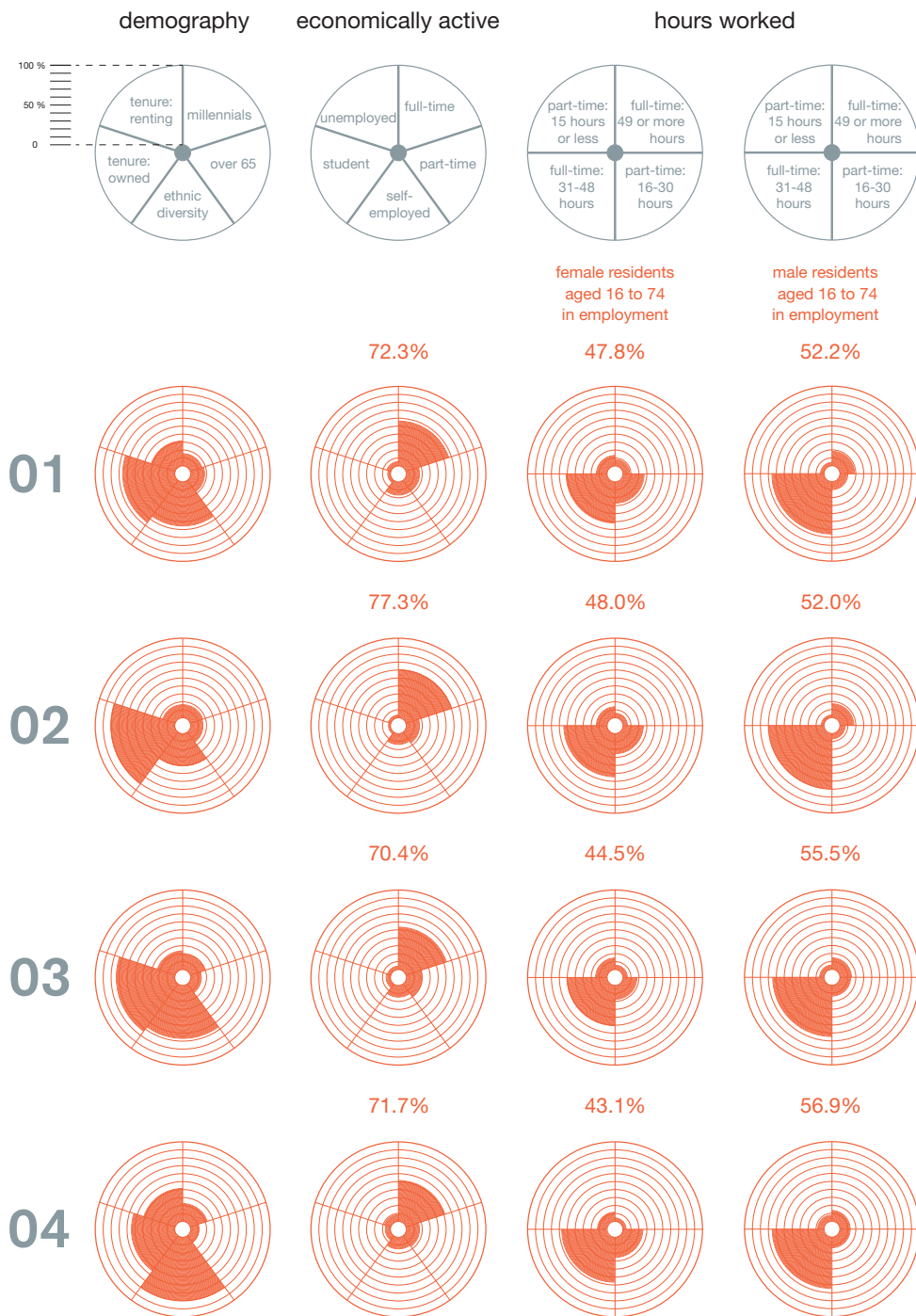
(12 surveys completed)



These surveys are a first attempt to understand the engagement of local audiences with meanwhile use projects. More extensive surveys, at different times in the week and day, would be of great value to monitoring local impact.

Figures 7–8. Showing indirect stakeholders' responses (local community and the wider public) to survey distributed in Wood Green in 2019, and in Walthamstow in 2018.

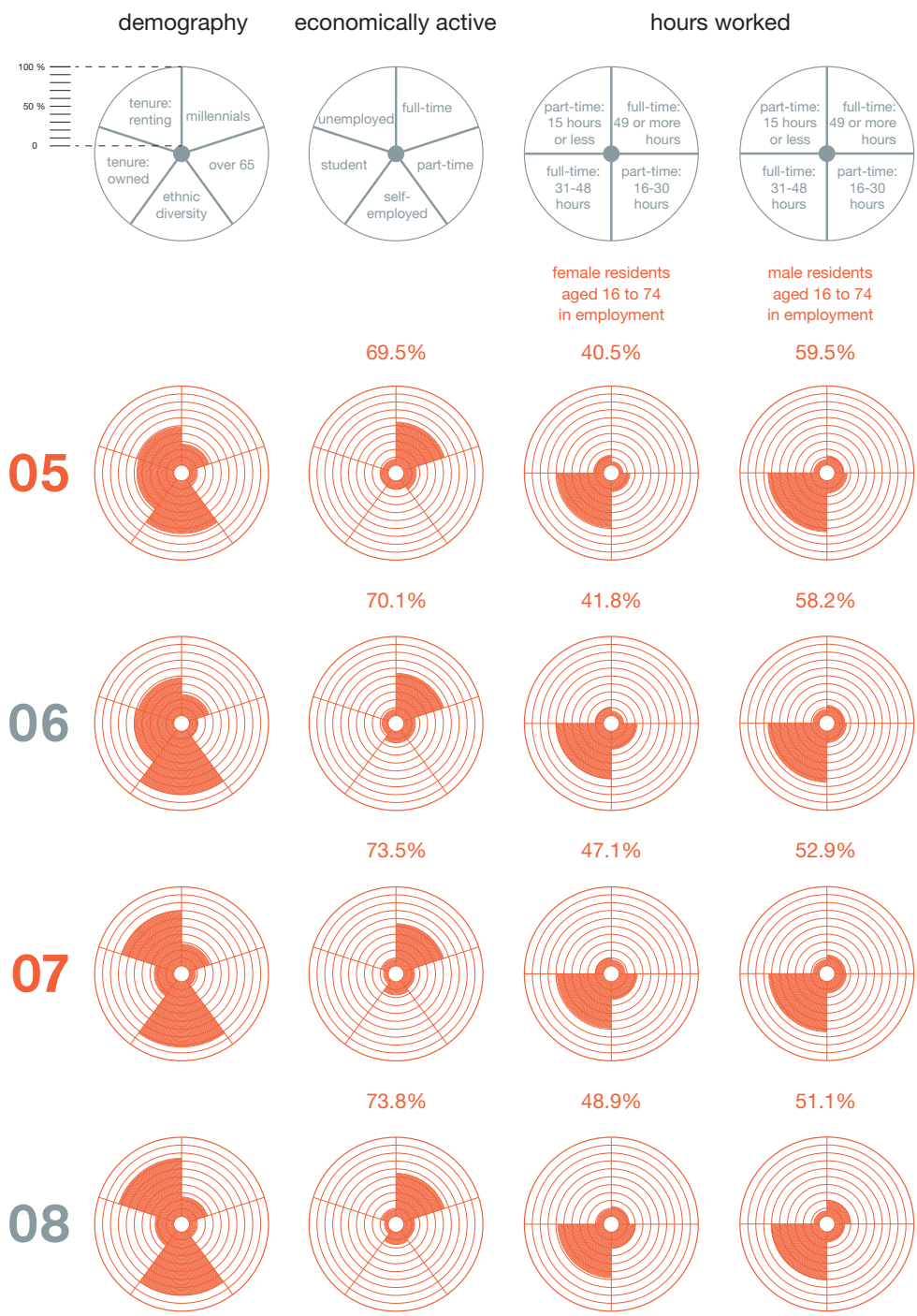
Figures 9–11. Showing indirect stakeholders' responses (local community and the wider public) to survey distributed in Wembley Central, Lewisham Central and Brixton Hill, in 2019.



Local area (ward)	01 – Northwood Hills, Hillingdon	02 – Manor Ward, Hillingdon	03 – Rayners Lane, Harrow	04 – Marlborough, Harrow
Number of projects	1	2	1	2
Total floorspace sq ft	800	1,800	8,300	1,500
Total rates saved*	up to £ 5k	£ 5k – £ 10k	£ 20k – £ 25k	£ 5k – £ 10k
Total number of tenants	7	-	30	12
Total number of employees	2	-	8	16
Total tenancy length until April 2019, in months	5	8	11	22

*Savings include three months rates holiday after occupation

Figure 12. Showing ONS statistics for local areas where Meanwhile Space has operated spaces: 01 – Northwood Hills, Hillingdon (past); 02 – Manor Ward, Hillingdon (past); 03 – Rayners Lane, Harrow (past); 04 – Marlborough, Harrow (past).



Local area (ward)	05 – Wembley Central, Wembley	06 – Tokyngton, Wembley	07 – Willesden Green	08 – South Kilburn	09 – West Hampstead
Number of projects	4	1	3	1	1
Total floorspace sq ft	42,000	3,000	8,300	1,200	3,000
Total rates saved*	over £ 500k	£ 50k – £ 100k	£ 400k – £ 500k	up to £ 5k	£ 5k – £ 10k
Total number of tenants	101	79	70	7	12
Total number of employees	79	9	72	8	3
Total tenancy length until April 2019, in months	51	20	96	7	5

*Savings include three months rates holiday after occupation

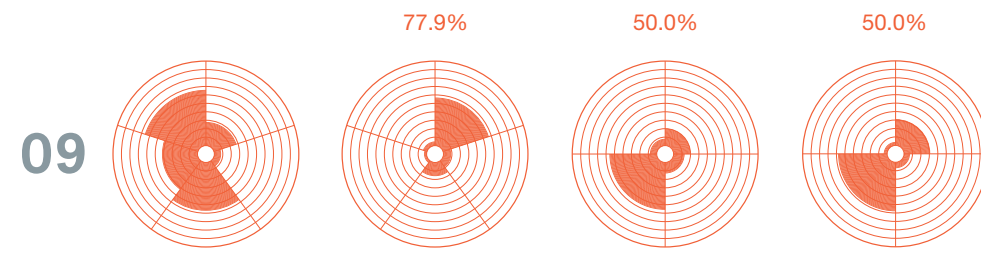
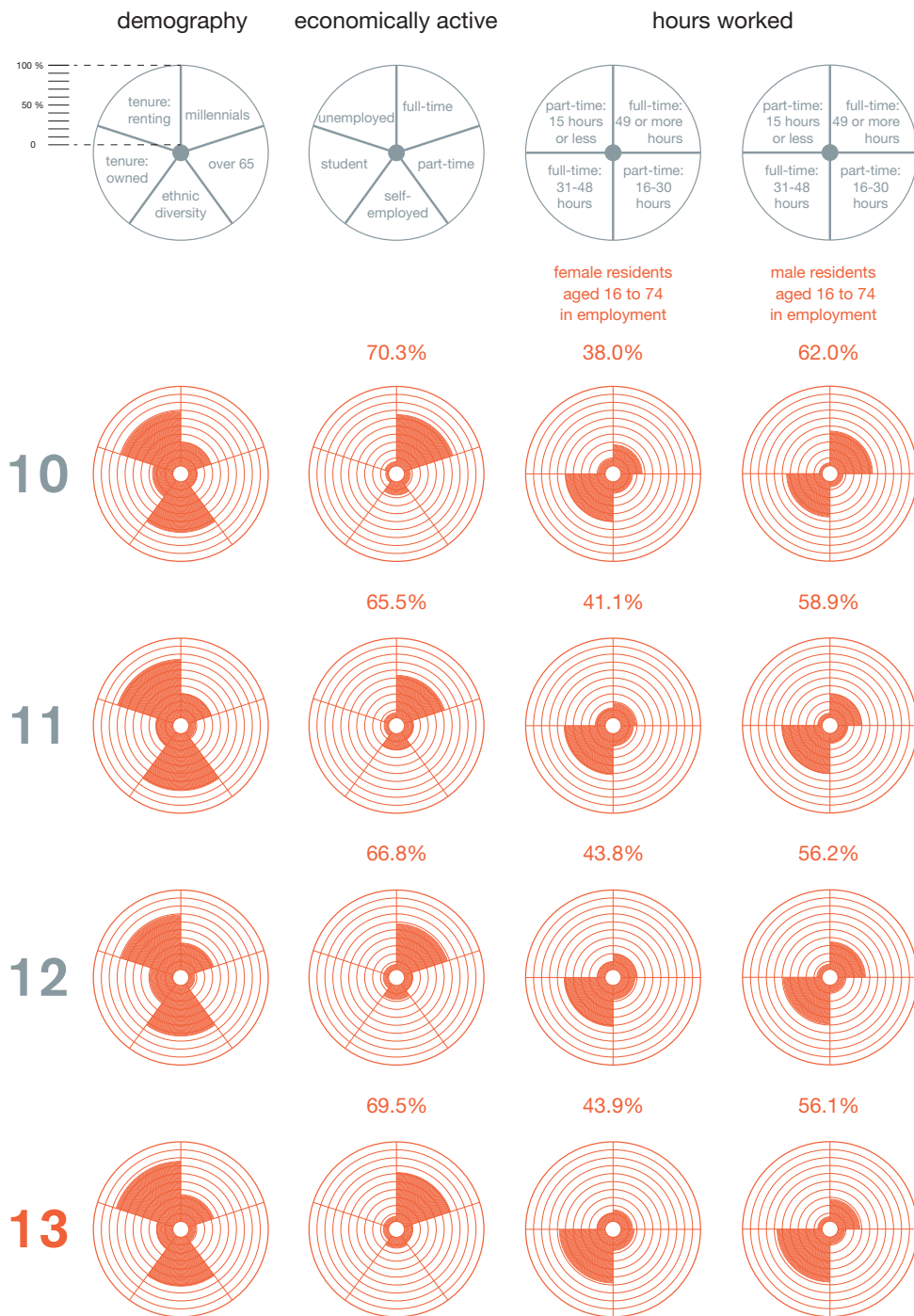


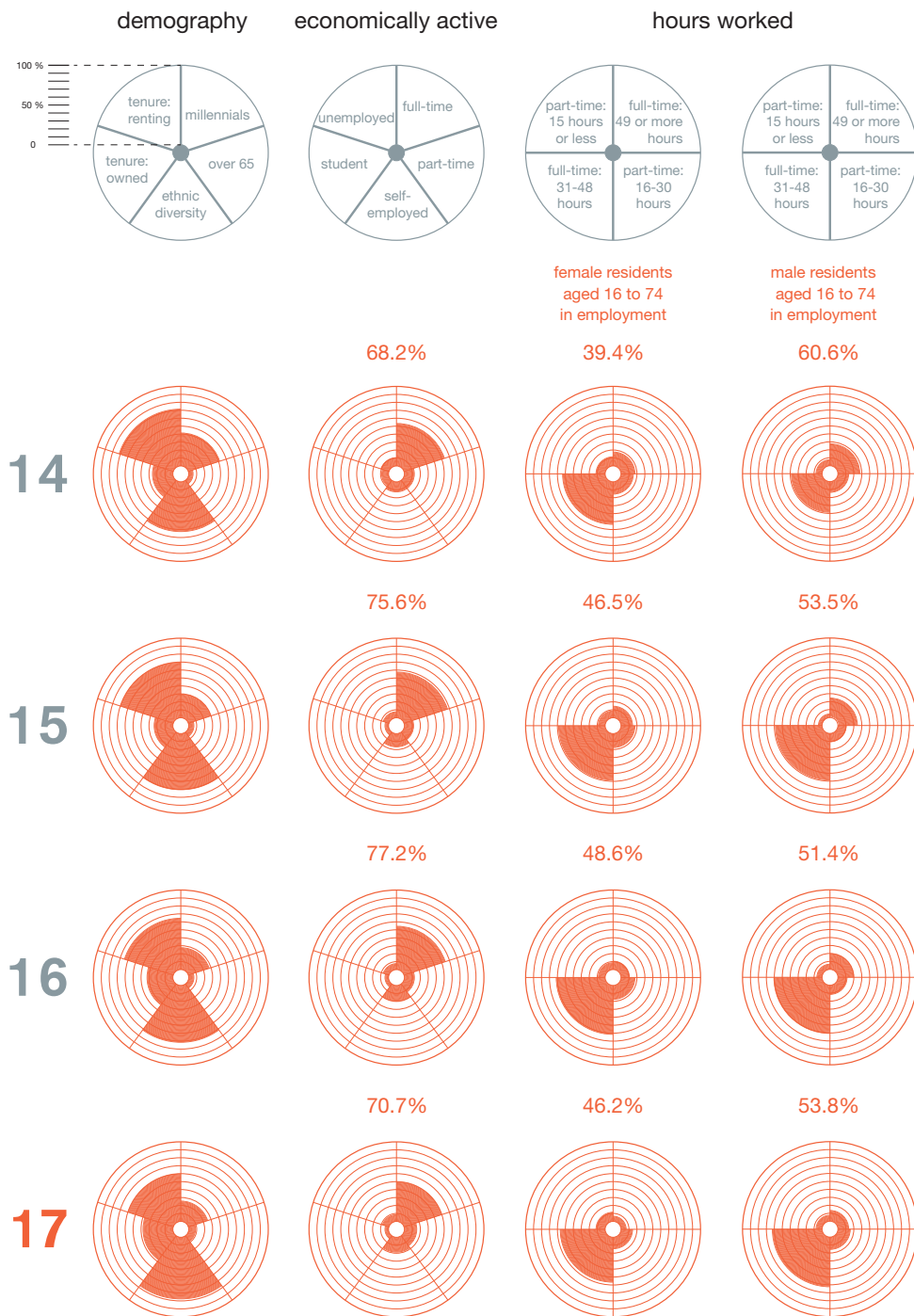
Figure 13. Showing ONS statistics for local areas where Meanwhile Space has operated spaces: 05 – Wembley Central, Wembley (active); 06 – Tokyngton, Wembley (past); 07 – Willesden Green (active); 08 – South Kilburn (past); 09 (page right) – West Hampstead (past).



Local area (ward)	10 – St. James's, Somerset House	11 – Hatton Garden, Holborn	12 – Clerkenwell	13 – Bishop's, Waterloo
Number of projects	1	3	1	1
Total floorspace sq ft	700	2,500	900	1,312
Total rates saved*	£ 10k – £ 15k	£ 10k – £ 15k	£ 5k – £ 10k	£ 40k – £ 50k
Total number of tenants	3	3	15	20
Total number of employees	2	-	14	26
Total tenancy length until April 2019, in months	19	9	7	30

*Savings include three months rates holiday after occupation

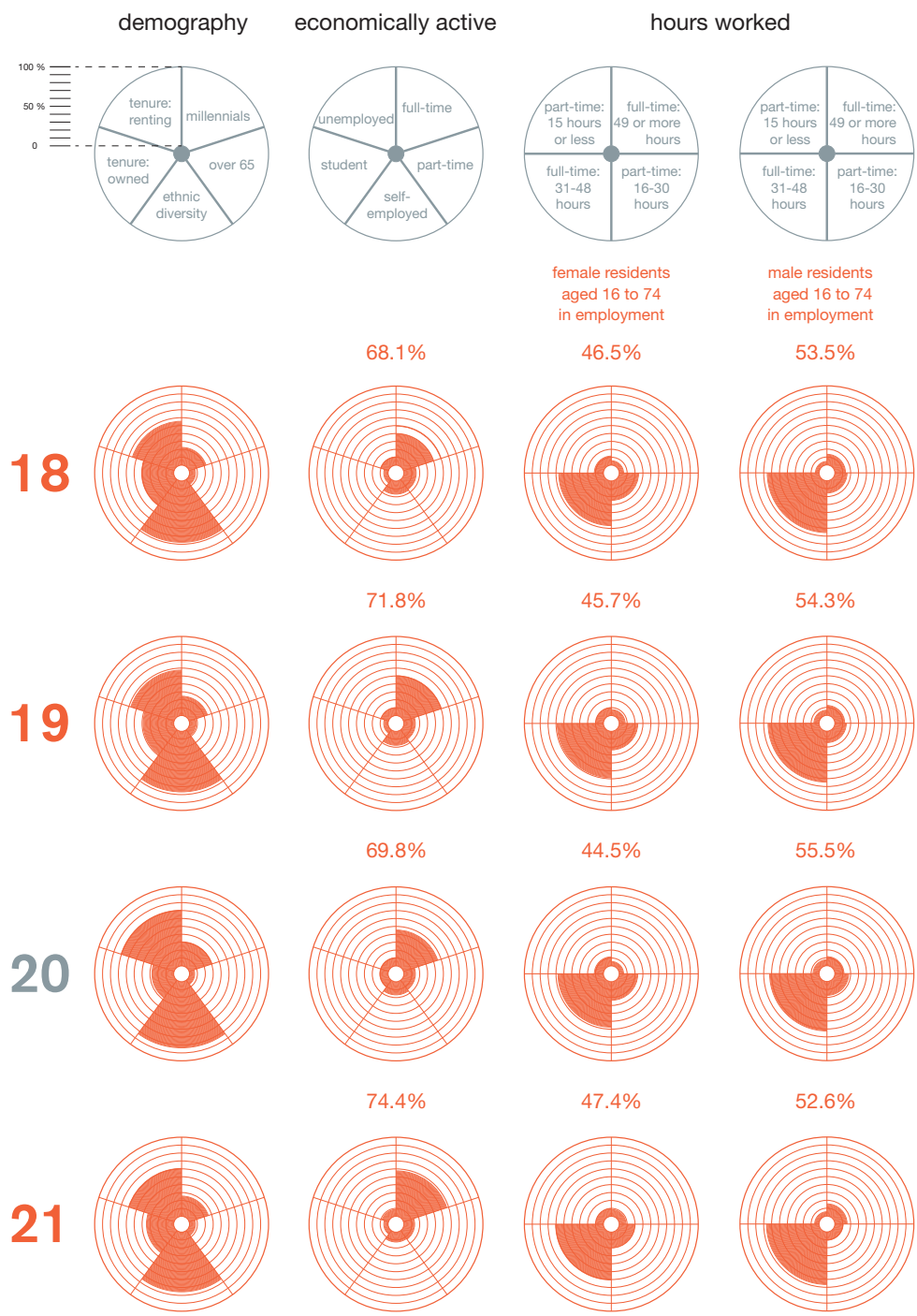
Figure 14. Showing ONS statistics for local areas where Meanwhile Space has operated spaces: 10 – St. James's, Somerset House (past); 11 – Hatton Garden, Holborn (past); 12 – Clerkenwell (past); 13 – Bishop's, Waterloo (active).



Local area (ward)	14 – Spitalfields and Banglatown	15 – De Beauvoir, Hoxton	16 – Stoke Newington	17 – Woodside, Wood Green
Number of projects	1	1	2	1
Total floorspace sq ft	3,500	800	2,000	3,660
Total rates saved*	£ 10k – £ 15k	up to £ 5k	£ 15k – £ 20k	£ 200k – £ 300k
Total number of tenants	46	8	14	83
Total number of employees	14	2	5	80
Total tenancy length until April 2019, in months	3	2	6	25

*Savings include three months rates holiday after occupation

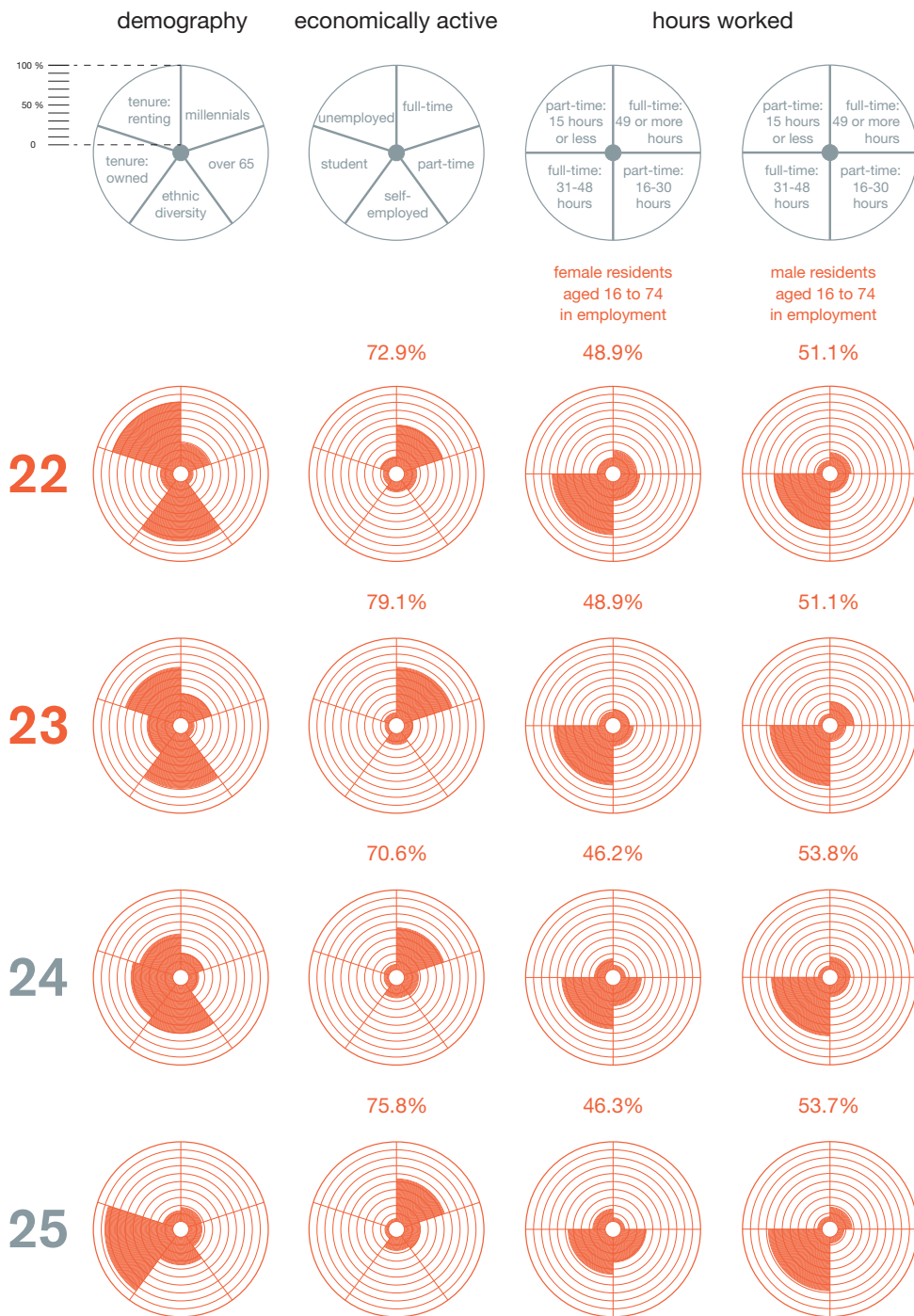
Figure 15. Showing ONS statistics for local areas where Meanwhile Space has operated spaces: 14 – Spitalfields and Banglatown (past); 15 – De Beauvoir, Hoxton (past); 16 – Stoke Newington (past); 17 – Woodside, Wood Green (active).



Local area (ward)	18 – Higham Hill, Walthamstow	19 – Hoe Street, Walthamstow	20 – Cathall, Leytonstone	21 – Lewisham Central
Number of projects	1	1	1	1
Total floorspace sq ft	6,000	7,082	500	4,506
Total rates saved*	£ 50k – £ 100k	£ 200k – £ 300k	up to £ 5k	£ 100k – £ 200k
Total number of tenants	18	70	6	66
Total number of employees	29	40	12	25
Total tenancy length until April 2019, in months	21	33	6	31

*Savings include three months rates holiday after occupation

Figure 16. Showing ONS statistics for local areas where Meanwhile Space has operated spaces: 18 – Higham Hill, Walthamstow (active); 19 – Hoe Street, Walthamstow (active); 20 – Cathall, Leytonstone (past); 21 – Lewisham Central (active).



Local area (ward)	22 – Coldharbour, Loughborough Junction	23 – Brixton Hill	24 – St. Helier, Sutton	25 – Nonsuch, Sutton
Number of projects	21	1	1	1
Total floorspace sq ft	26,000	3,500	900	800
Total rates saved*	£ 100k – £ 200k	£ 100k – £ 200k	up to £ 5k	£ 5k – £ 10k
Total number of tenants	77	42	11	-
Total number of employees	61	53	13	-
Total tenancy length until April 2019, in months	789	12	5	5

*Savings include three months rates holiday after occupation

Figure 17. Showing ONS statistics for local areas where Meanwhile Space has operated spaces: 22 – Coldharbour, Loughborough Junction (active); 23 – Brixton Hill (active); 24 – St. Helier, Sutton (past); 25 – Nonsuch, Sutton (past).

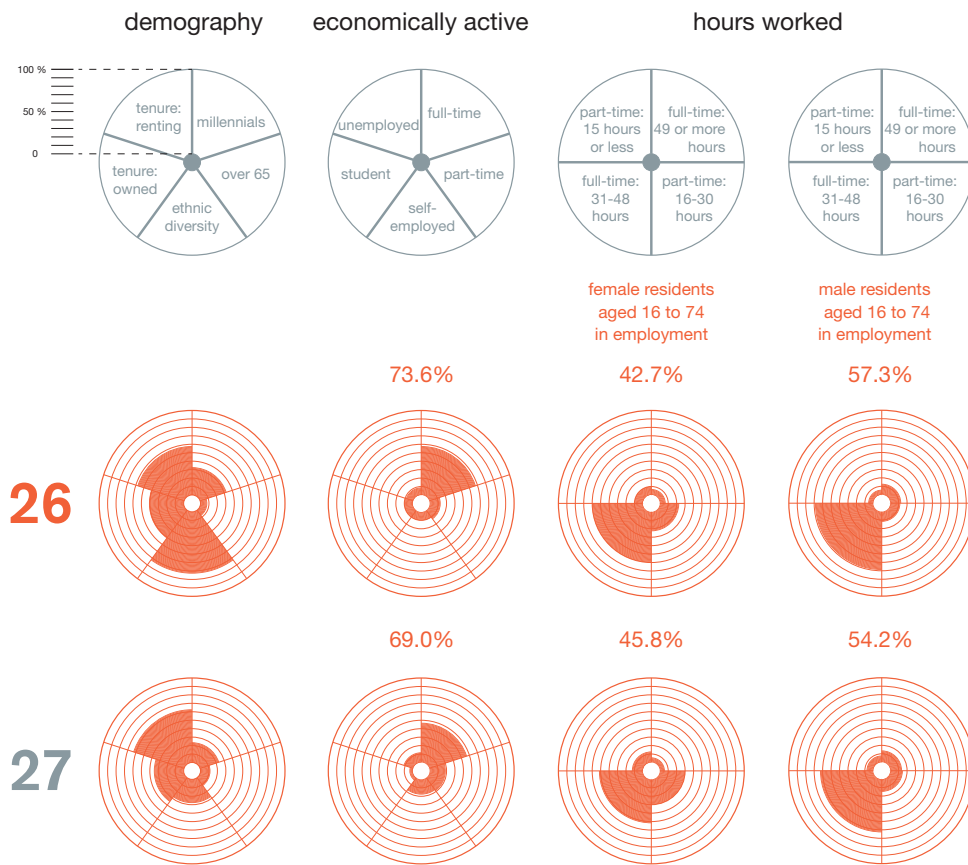


Figure 18. Showing ONS statistics for local areas where Meanwhile Space has operated spaces: 26 – Castle Ward, Hastings (active); 27 – High Town, Luton (past).

Local area (ward)	26 – Castle Ward, Hastings	27 – High Town, Luton
Number of projects	3	1
Total floorspace sq ft	36,500	1,600
Total rates saved*	£ 30k – £ 40k	up to £ 5k
Total number of tenants	65	29
Total number of employees	14	1
Total tenancy length until April 2019, in months	76	1

*Savings include three months rates holiday after occupation

Working outside London

The presence of Meanwhile Space locations in outer London areas confirms the long-standing need and capacity of the metropolitan market to support affordable and creative use of vacant space. In contrast, operating meanwhile uses outside the capital and across the UK appears to be a difficult task, which can be justified by Meanwhile Space's limited capability to maintain continuous and direct on-site involvement of staff, away from the company's base. This constraint could compromise the core underpinning value for local knowledge and participation and can only be overcome through the development of and engagement with strong local networks. Meanwhile Space projects in Hastings (Figure 18) have been an achievement in expanding practice to include areas outside London.

Hours of work

According to the pattern of hours of work as summarised by current Meanwhile Space tenants, 73.8% refers to full-time employment compared to 23.8% for part-time occupation. There is a fairly equal representation of male and female tenants in the survey sample, with a slight majority of female participants (53.8%) over male (46.2%). Hours of work as described by tenants correspond to the general trend observed across the examined local areas. Female tenants (Figure 19) appear to undertake 3.9% more part-time employment than men (Figure 20). Full-time employment is the predominant nature of occupation, measuring 71.9% for females and 75.8% for males. In general, meanwhile uses appear to be encouraging female participation and accessibility to both genders.

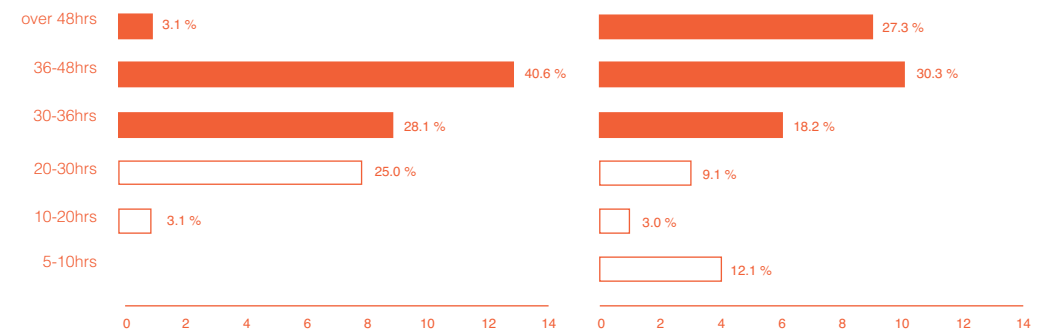


Figure 19. Showing average hours worked per week by female tenants in currently active meanwhile spaces. (Survey sample = 32 entries; when a participant has listed more than one answer, all options have been considered.)

Figure 20. Showing average hours worked per week by male tenants in currently active meanwhile spaces. (Survey sample = 33 entries; when a participant has listed more than one answer, all options have been considered.)

Size of spaces: local employment

Interesting insights are revealed when looking at the creation of local jobs through meanwhile uses in relation to the size of utilised vacant spaces. The analysis here considers four categories of space size:

- *small spaces*, with a maximum area of 1,000 sq feet;
- *small-medium spaces*, taking up an area between 1,000 and 5,000 sq feet;
- *medium-large spaces*, ranging from 5,000 to 10,000 sq feet;
- *large spaces*, which extend over 10,000 sq feet.

Whereas the total count of employees and tenants who work in large spaces is higher, when considering the duration of tenancy, it becomes clear that employment turnover is lower. In these bigger spaces, a new person is engaged approximately every two and a half months. Highest turnover of space users is observed in medium-large spaces, where a new person is introduced every 10 days on average. Small-medium spaces follow, with people turnover every 15 days on average; and finally, small spaces show a slightly slower pace of change, every 38 days. Counts are based on data from Meanwhile Space records.

On the one hand, high turnover suggests the development of platforms which are accessible to a wider audience and which offer employment opportunities, business experience and networking to a higher number of local residents. On the other hand, low turnover means that tenants and employees have the benefit of occupying spaces for longer periods

of time, which might relieve them from the stress of looking out for new spaces while allowing for greater outreach and stronger bond with the local business market. Both the upsides and downsides of short-let spaces and high employment churn is something that tenants experience on the ground (see for example, *Central Parade* tenants' comments on the next pages).

It can be argued that each category serves different purposes in terms of desired business goals. For example, large spaces show, comparatively, a higher representation of tenants who suggested that their business is in the 'seed and development' stage (Stage 1) (Figure 25). Namely, tenants who are still setting up a business might prefer locations where they can collaborate and cluster with other businesses to increase attractiveness. Further investigation on the patterns of allocation of meanwhile uses in spaces of different sizes could potentially identify ways to optimise performance.

Size of spaces: economic returns

Savings from business rates is an incentive for meanwhile uses which is of significance, especially for landlords. A similar analysis for the four different space size categories was applied, this time looking at Meanwhile Space records for estimated rates saved (calculations include three months rates holiday after occupation).

Figure 22 shows economic profit from rates' savings, normalised for square foot per day. This creates a comparative measure across the four categories. It is observed that small-medium and small spaces give the highest returns from rates' savings.

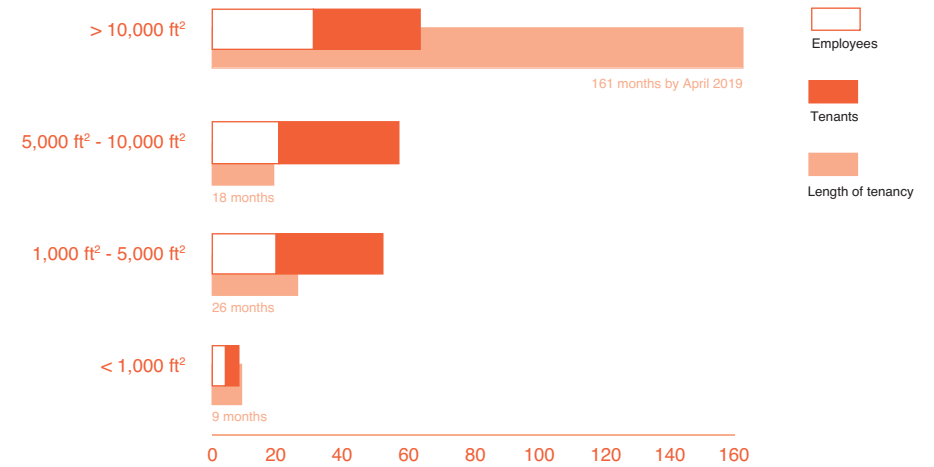


Figure 21. Average number of employees and tenants engaged in small, medium range and large size spaces, in relation to the duration of meanwhile use projects.

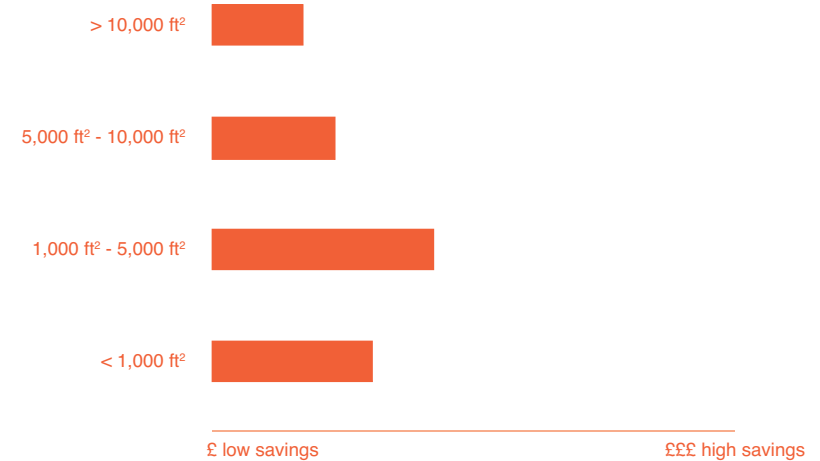


Figure 22. Average rates saved per day, per square foot for small, medium range, and large size spaces.

“ If the project spaces were for 12 months rather than 6. We would have had enough revenue to move to another shop space.

But unfortunately after 6 months our revenue was not great enough to pay commercial rents elsewhere. ”

*Central Parade tenant,
20 February 2019*

“ Meanwhile Space has given us some security and allowed us to minimise our overhead while we relocated our production space and attempted to address a difficult period in our business. This has been very valuable. ”

*Central Parade tenant,
14 August 2018*





Figure 23. Indicative spread and diversity of meanwhile uses based on past and current tenants' businesses. (Survey sample = 78 tenants)

Business sectors

The identification of meanwhile uses' business types presented in this section is based on results from the online survey, including replies from both former and current tenants (a total of 78 questionnaires were submitted). Participants were asked to identify the sector or industry for their business activity. As shown in Figure 23, the majority of the survey sample (49%) came from the creative industry. Retail start-ups follow with almost half the number of cases (24%). Tech spaces (9%) show a minor advantage over community/social uses (8%). Food and beverage is the least represented category in the survey sample (4%). A small number of tenants did not identify themselves with any of the above sectors (6%). These incidents referred mostly to services, such as finance and legal consulting.

Business sectors and size of spaces

The spread and diversity of business sectors involved in small, medium range and large size spaces highlights a couple of interesting relationships. Given that this analysis is reliant on survey results in order to match sectors to spaces, the most reliable observations are those for the medium size space categories due to a greater majority of replies received. Looking at results for the small-medium and medium-large spaces, it is understood that meanwhile uses foster, in general, a diverse set of activities. Due to the small number of replies for large spaces, we cannot draw any conclusions on whether clustering of sectors or industries occurs in spaces of bigger size. However, the dominance of retail in the smallest spaces may indicate typical high street activity.

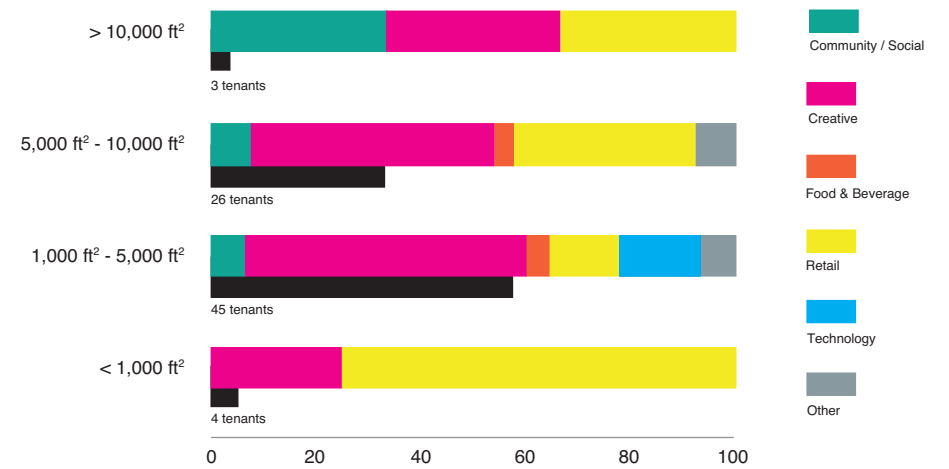


Figure 24. Type of meanwhile uses (for a sample of 78 tenants) considered for small, medium range and large size spaces.

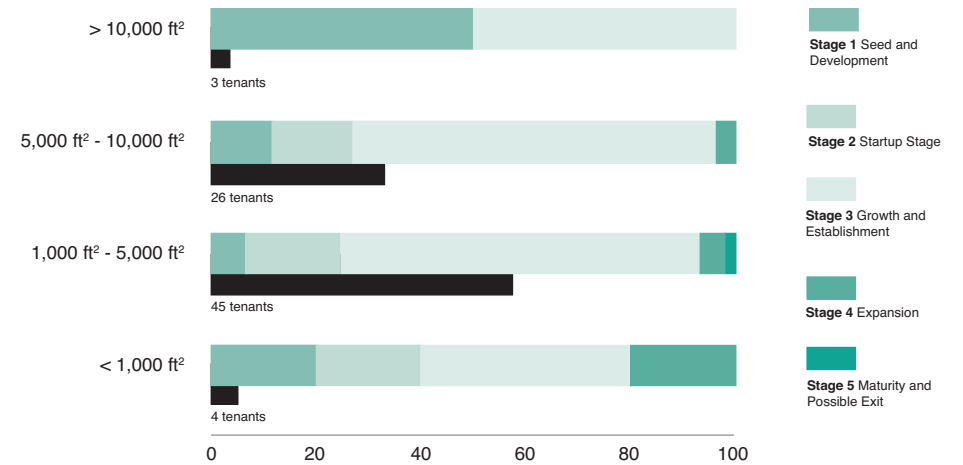


Figure 25. Phase of the business cycle (same sample of tenants as above) considered for small, medium range and large size spaces.

Conclusion

Chapter 2 examined the evolution of Meanwhile Space practice since 2009, in relation to the company's aspirations for local community engagement and participation. In addition, the analysis introduced a basic characterisation of meanwhile use spaces by exploring the potential impact of space size on the adopted business models and in relation to business goals.

The socio-economic context of Meanwhile Space projects suggests a strong effort to enable deprived communities to develop their capability for enterprise and charity, and to improve their local environment. Over two thirds of Meanwhile Space's activity has taken place on areas ranked amongst the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods according to the IMD for England and Wales. This could also suggest that vacant units are mostly available in these areas and landlords are more willing to participate in meanwhile use schemes. Further research on this area would be beneficial to understand the context of meanwhile practice.

The pattern of occupation in terms of hours of work and female/male engagement aligns with employment trends in local areas, but also shows very good engagement of female population. Meanwhile use tenants appear to contribute to the local economy through their weekly spending, but there is more scope to encourage greater integration in terms of generating local business networks and increasing more diverse ethnic representation.

Categorising spaces in terms of size is proposed as a useful comparative mechanism that can give insights on economic returns from rates' saving and prevailing business models (considering the business sector and the phase of the business cycle) and which deems further investigation. Medium sized spaces appear to support greater population churn and diversity of uses; large spaces encourage clustering and seem to appeal to seed and start-up entrepreneurial activity.

Image copyrights, Jan Kattein Architects Ltd.
Blue House Yard, Wood Green. 2017-2022



3

On the ground engagement.

The Meanwhile Space business model

Having originally started as a government project in 2009, the company has firmly established the Meanwhile Use of space as a widely accepted part of the property industry, and many new businesses have formed to realise the potential in recent years. The founder directors, Eddie Bridgeman and Emily Berwyn own the trademark for “Meanwhile” and have carved a niche for the company to provide affordable space for local people to start and grow their idea.

From 2010 to 2014, Meanwhile Space delivered pioneering projects on behalf of local authorities and landlords, primarily on a fee basis. This was limited to around two key locations at any one time, and the project spaces were not necessarily required to be financially sustainable. Outputs were geared around numbers of visitors, types of use, numbers of events and activities. In more recent years the business model for Meanwhile Space has focused on turning the business around to generate 95% of income from affordable rental payments from tenants, with the remaining 5% income from consultancy work delivering feasibility studies for buildings or neighbourhoods, or urban design based meanwhile use strategies. Outputs now focus on the individuals using the spaces to test and grow a creative or social start-up, the number and kind of employees, as well as events to activate a space for local people.

This change in business direction was necessary to ensure sustainability as funding for fee based projects was drying up, and turning the business

around has resulted in two anticipated loss making years. In 2015 the directors were celebrating a third year of steady growth and profitability. However it was considered that this was built on a precarious source; fees from local authorities for delivering Meanwhile projects commissioned by the GLA. It was felt this type of commission may well cease to exist and so to avoid getting caught without a principal source of income the directors decided to build on their experiences over the past six years and create the foundation for a stable and innovative business. Since 2016 the primary source of income has been an affordable rent from tenants in properties Meanwhile Space acquires on a meanwhile basis. A three year plan was enacted to transition the main source of income, whilst also developing new strands of the business for further opportunities.

Whilst the income changes were correctly identified by the directors, and indeed the fee income did dry up, one of the unanticipated challenges was that the contract conditions of acquiring meanwhile spaces would change. Increasingly Meanwhile Space is required to contribute a capital sum towards refurbishment to enable properties to be ready for tenants. This has totalled over £330,000 and has been funded principally through cash flow reserves and a small loan from Big Issue Invest. The company has found many lenders will not loan to a CIC limited by shares and so in response has created Meanwhile Space Social Enterprise as a company limited by shares with the same social commitment as Meanwhile Space CIC locked in its Mem&Arts. This new company will

enable Meanwhile Space to raise money more easily from more competitive sources but raising investment remains a barrier to growth of the company, and number of projects.

Meanwhile uses as local resources

Amongst the core values advocated by Meanwhile Space practice is direct engagement with local communities for the creation of locally sourced and place-specific approaches to social and creative enterprise. This is particularly evidenced by projects which involve training programmes to support local start-ups and bolster local innovation and regeneration. Prominent examples include: *Start Here* in Harrow, a two-year programme which combined mentoring and space provision for enabling local enterprise (active between 2015 and 2017); and the *Platform Project* in the Loughborough Junction Network Rail Arches, a charitable scheme for training and subsequent space allocation for graduates (active between 2014 and 2018). The Platform Project promoted the establishment of a pivotal collaboration with the local community, the local development steering group and Lambeth Council. Co-ordinated efforts amongst all partners and local stakeholders, as well as the successful previous experience of meanwhile uses in the Arches, led to a subsequent urban regeneration initiative, *LJ works*, funded via the Mayor's London Regeneration Fund.⁸

By encouraging and enabling local residents to actively engage in the improvement of local life the sense of community and social responsibility is strengthened. *Rock House* in Hastings is an example of how the vision for securing 'long-term affordability' gave birth to a unique hybrid model of work-live 'co-habitation' which is developed and managed by a neighbourhood organisation (Meanwhile Space is a third shareholder).⁹ White Rock Neighbourhood Ventures (WRNV) is a counter-action to gentrification and works to cap rent prices and generate employment for local people.



Central Parade

“ Meanwhile Space have been an excellent partner on the Central Parade Creative Space project, working through various challenges at design and refurbishment stages as well as during the operational phases.

This has been a high-profile meanwhile project in our major town centre and has had a beneficial impact on the use and perception of the high street as well as supporting local start-ups to establish themselves and grow on to new spaces. We have found their pragmatic, problem-solving approach very beneficial in making this new space successful. ”

Zoe Sellers
Programme Manager, Regeneration
London Borough of Waltham Forest

⁸ Lambeth Council (2017), 'LJ Works.' 4 September 2017. Available at: <https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/housing/regeneration/loughborough-junction-masterplan/lj-works> [Accessed 10 June 2019]

⁹ WRNV (White Rock Neighbourhood Ventures) (n.d.), 'Long-Term Affordability.' Available at: <https://www.rockhouse.org.uk/about/long-term-affordability/> [Accessed 10 June 2019]

“ Being able to test my concept at Central Parade, was an exciting catalyst in my personal and professional growth.

Opening my little shop for six months was a crucial stepping stone to leave my job and become self-employed, developing a business that I am proud of, that continues to grow in ways I never imagined.”

*Central Parade tenant,
13 February 2019*

“ It gave me the chance to try out my mini shop to the locals to see if it works for me and I had a good success. This gave me the confidence to open my shop in the same area with following up customers from my pop-up shop. ”

*Central Parade tenant,
12 February 2019*

“ A fabulous opportunity in a setting with great footfall to meet the local public and increase our profile, sales and commissions.

By having guest potters we will also grow the collective and hopefully be in a position to have a permanent space in 2019. ”

*Central Parade tenant,
25 July 2018*

Central Parade: timeline of steps & process

Total project cost: £ 430,000

- **Summer 2015 :** LB Waltham Forest secure GLA funding for a meanwhile creative enterprise hub at Hoe Street, Walthamstow
- **September 2015 :** Meanwhile Space commissioned to develop engagement and business model
- **December 2015 :** Business model approved to proceed
- **January 2016 :** Design team commissioned
- **February 2016 :** Building renovations commenced
- **April 2016 :** Tenant recruitment process
- **July 2016 :** Project launched and tenants move in
- **July 2018 :** Building listed, redevelopment plans altered. 2 year rent-free lease extended by 3 years on profit share basis to transition to rent-paying model in 2021.



The Platform/Network Rail/ /LJ Works

“ Renting an arch from Meanwhile Space made it possible for me to learn the skills and materials I now use every day for making bespoke furniture.

It’s so flexible that I could take on the space at a really early stage and not feel like I was taking on a huge risk with it. And it was cheap. ”

*Network Rail Arches tenant
21 March 2018*

“ Lambeth Council works with Meanwhile Space on a number of affordable creative workspaces across the borough, and values their expertise in space activation and workspace management.

Their approach to community engagement, tenant recruitment and management results in a productive and collaborative balance of organisations within each space. The team are professional, dedicated and a pleasure to work with. ”

*Nathan Vasey
Principal Business, Culture and Investment Manager
London Borough of Lambeth*



Loughborough Junction : timeline of steps & process

Total project cost: £ 2.2m

Meanwhile Space contribution: £ 80,000

- November 2013 : JP Morgan Chase Foundation commission Meanwhile Space and Meanwhile Foundation to set up *The Platform*
- January 2014 : Template lease agreed with Network Rail
- May 2014 : Lease of 2 Ridgeway starts
- June 2014 : *The Platform* programme commences
- August 2014 : 6 Arches leased (2 for *The Platform* project, 3 for creative tenants)
- June 2015 : 7 further arches leased for Meanwhile tenants
- December 2015 : Meanwhile Space included in Lambeth Council's bid to GLA for affordable workspace on LJ Farm site
- March 2016 : London Regeneration Fund bid successful for £1.8m
- May 2016 : Funded *Platform* project comes to an end having supported over 60 people. Arches and 2 Ridgeway continue to support Meanwhile uses.
- September 2016 : Architecture 00 commissioned as architect for *LJ Works*
- July 2017 : Architectural competition launched to design solution to worst condition arches
- November 2017 : Planning Permission granted for *LJ Works*
- August 2018 : Two tenants transition to commercial Network Rail tenancies
- December 2018 : 5 further arches leased
- January 2019 : *LJ Works* contractors start on site
- March 2019 : Architectural competition pilot space complete
- May 2019 : The Farm Café transition to commercial tenancy on 2 Ridgeway
- Summer 2019 : *LJ Works* launches



Network Rail Arches tenant, Loughborough Junction, 2018

“ I was able to use the space free of charge which allowed me a reasonable space to exhibit a new body of work that I had just created.

Without this space and opportunity that would have been a lot harder to organise and would have cost considerably more. ”

*Network Rail Arches tenant
21 March 2018*

Rock House

“ Rock House is an incredible space; the building has been saved and converted into affordable work and living space.

It is community-led and I work alongside many fun, talented, community-minded and environmentally conscious people.

If you're interested in community regeneration or worried about how to combat gentrification, take a look at how Rock House works! ”

*Izzy, Plastic Shop
Rock House, Hastings*

White Rock Neighbourhood Ventures Ltd and Trust
Rock House, Hastings. 2015-ongoing



Rock House: timeline of steps & process

Total Project costs: £ 940,000

Meanwhile Space contribution: £ 320,000

- Summer 2013 : Meanwhile Space take meanwhile lease of basement for community activities and engagement
- May 2014 : Meanwhile Space purchase Rothermere House with a grant from Homes and Communities Agency
- June 2014 : Form community development company White Rock Neighbourhood Ventures (33% Meanwhile Space, 33% Jericho Road, 33% White Rock Trust)
- September 2014 : Tenants begin to move in – 30% full
- October 2014 : Big Issue Invest agree loan of £250,000 and development commences
- April 2015 : Residential tenants move in - 70% full
- December 2016 : Power to Change take over shares from White Rock Trust
- February 2019 : Rock House remortgaged to purchase the Observer Building
- April 2019 : Heart of Hastings CLT take over shares from Power to Change
- May 2019 : Basement renovations complete – Community kitchen moves in



Rock House, Hastings. 2015-ongoing

These examples, however, suggest how every project requires a tailored, bespoke effort. The previous chapter identified common threads and patterns across different local areas and the various models of meanwhile uses. These adhere to and are the outcomes of common parameters guiding the projects, such as: *local context* (demographics, employment, tenure, land value, etc.); the *size of available spaces* for temporary use and the length of tenancy; the existing economic activity and *local demand* which can vary, ranging from community and social spaces to food and beverage markets, creative workshops, hi-tech incubators and retail start-ups.

Such factors, interchangeably and in combination, create to lesser or greater degrees singular contexts of operation. Because the programmatic aim of Meanwhile Space is to support local communities, the development of each project is a response to specific conditions, it largely depends on local needs and priorities, and therefore, a singular solution that can be applied or put forward as a recipe remains beyond the scope of meanwhile uses. This is reflected in the variety of projects that Meanwhile Space has developed during these ten years (see appendix for a project list). The following pages illustrate an effort to identify the profile of meanwhile use by grouping spaces based on business sectors.

Community / social spaces



Figures 26–29. Showing online survey responses from tenants who run community / social businesses.



Ujima House, a community uses hub, is the project with the highest rates' savings per day and ranks second in absolute rates' savings per sq foot per day

Ujima House, Wembley Central. 2018-2021

Out of tenants who completed the Meanwhile survey, only 8% was engaged in community and social activity. Therefore, the results presented in Figures 26–29 are indicative of the sector's performance in meanwhile projects rather than conclusive.

Two thirds (66.7%) confirm that this is their first time renting a space and exactly half of the participants (50%) are registered on Companies House. However, half of the businesses (50%) claim to be at the 'expansion' phase (Stage 4), followed by an equal representation of earlier stages (1–3).

There is a majority of male tenants who participated in the survey (60%) and the prevailing pattern of work

is part-time employment of 20 to 30 hours per week. This is unsurprising considering that community uses are primarily operating on a volunteering basis. As an example, the project *Ujima House* in Wembley Central has a team of 600 volunteers.

Weekly local spending varies from £15 to over £50, and the same appears to be the case with business turnover, with a slight majority of businesses (33.3%) earning more income, between £250k and £500k a year.

Tenants confirm a range of benefits from meanwhile uses. 'Outreach' is the most acknowledged benefit (28.6%), and 'funding' is, as expected, the biggest struggle (42.9%).



You Are Here, North Cheam, Sutton. 2012-2013

Creative spaces



Figures 30–33. Showing online survey responses from tenants in the creative industries.



The creative sector who appears to appreciate knowledge exchange more compared to others
Start Here, Harrow. 2015-2017

Creative industries are the most represented uses in the survey sample (49%), which allows for a more confident understanding of their performance.

There is an almost equal spread amongst participants who have prior experience in renting a space for their business (47.4%) and first-timers (52.6%). Little over half are not registered on Companies House (57.9%). The vast majority of the businesses (73.7%) are at the 'growth and establishment' (Stage 3), followed by those starting-up (Stage 2) their business (18.4%).

Female participants are the most engaged in this sector (63.2%). The pattern of work varies from part-time to full-time, with a majority of over one third

(38.2) of the sample working full-time for 36 to 48 hours per week, followed by those working from 30 to 36 hours per week (26.5%).

The creative sector shows the second highest percentage across all sectors of tenants who contribute to the local economy with a weekly local spending over £50 (38.2%). Turnover in this sector is the most equally distributed across all bands compared to other sectors, hence, it varies a lot.

Similarly, the most diverse range of opportunities and challenges across sectors is observed, suggesting the uniqueness of the creative industries. The most acknowledged challenge is 'managing growth' (20.4%).



Place-making and regeneration resource
Seasider Shop, Holborn. 2010

Creative force and the gentrification debate

Debates on the connection between artistic forces in the city and gentrification date back to 1980s, when the Lower East Side of New York was turned into a real-estate playground by capitalising on the commodification of art.¹⁰ In 2002, Richard Florida celebrated gentrification from an economic perspective by pushing forward the idea of urban regeneration through the empowering of the 'creative class' of young creatives and tech workers.¹¹ The investment on the creative class and its rise as a transformative agent in the city, was followed by the creation of new clusters of wealth and urban inequality – an overpowering cycle of urban transformation, similar to that of the Lower East Side. The deadlock which emerged for urban practitioners is between inaction or gentrification – a politicised debate around urban regeneration and development. On the one hand, this debate is necessary and raises awareness on the political and socio-economic implication of urban practice. On the other hand, reality on the ground cannot wait. The focus of these discussions is often sidetracked from bigger issues with the property industry which controls the urban landscape, to targeting small-scale local interventions. An identification of the gentrification process with local place-making initiative risks failure to address the needs of local places or puts them on hold.

The reality for meanwhile use practice is highly complex. In cases where meanwhile uses capitalise on urban sites which are about to be

redeveloped by providing temporary access to affordable workspace, they argue to give local communities an opportunity to increase their income, with the hope they will afford the upcoming, inevitable change. In cases of vacant derelict locations where the real estate market has not moved yet, the creation of vibrant local hubs can be argued to accelerate the process of commercialising urban places. A key variable in this process is the role of local communities and their involvement. In this sense, the struggle is to enable change which benefits the local community. The fear of real estate forces should not impede the right of local communities to claim and improve their immediate surroundings.

Meanwhile uses are by definition interim solutions to locally-specific urban conditions. Their appeal is akin to their flexible, low-cost nature but also to the fact that they respond to a pressing need. Meanwhile Space received between 2017 and 2018 via its online application portal 23 tenant applications on average per month. This excludes an excessive amount of applications received via email. While a gap is addressed, the viability of meanwhile uses as a solution to local needs which involves the local community is highly dependant on funding and landlords' support - effectively, the provision of affordable space. The results, successes and shortcomings of meanwhile uses, as well as their potential to be a long-term solution and the relation to gentrification, are yet to be defined and are in need of evidence to allow for an informed understanding of this highly complicated urban practice.

¹⁰ Deutsche, R. and Ryan, C. (1984), 'The Fine Art of Gentrification.' October, 31, 91-111. doi:10.2307/778358

¹¹ Richard, F. (2002), *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life*. New York: Basic Books.

Food & Beverage spaces



Figures 34–37. Showing online survey responses from tenants who run food and beverage businesses.



Image copyrights, Cakesandladders
Blue House Yard has hosted over 80 tenants who, in turn, employed over 80 people
Blue House Yard. 2018-2021

Tenants working in the food and beverage sector are the least represented in the survey sample (4%), with only three people contributing replies. Results cannot be considered conclusive and appear highly diverse, suggesting mostly personal experiences rather than trends. Therefore, the commentary here discusses only instances where a unanimous view is observed.

All participants had rented a space before and were registered on Companies House, suggesting that they had prior experience in running a business. This is also indicated by the fact that all three businesses were at the 'growth and establishment' phase

(Stage 3). Two tenants were occupied part time for 20 to 30 hours per week and one full-time for over 48 hours weekly. Two were female and one male.

The fact that the survey did not return high results might have to do with the employment turnover observed in this sector. *Blue House Yard* in Wood Green, which was developed in collaboration with Haringey Council, is an example project where a food market and a 'bus-café' sit alongside a retail and workshop cluster of uses. This suggests the complementary nature of food and beverage besides other industries, while the temporary nature of food markets can indicate a frequent change of tenants.



Incubator tenant in Central Parade, 2018

“ I feel very lucky to be part of such a great community of like-minded, creative people.

We all look after each other and support each other’s businesses.

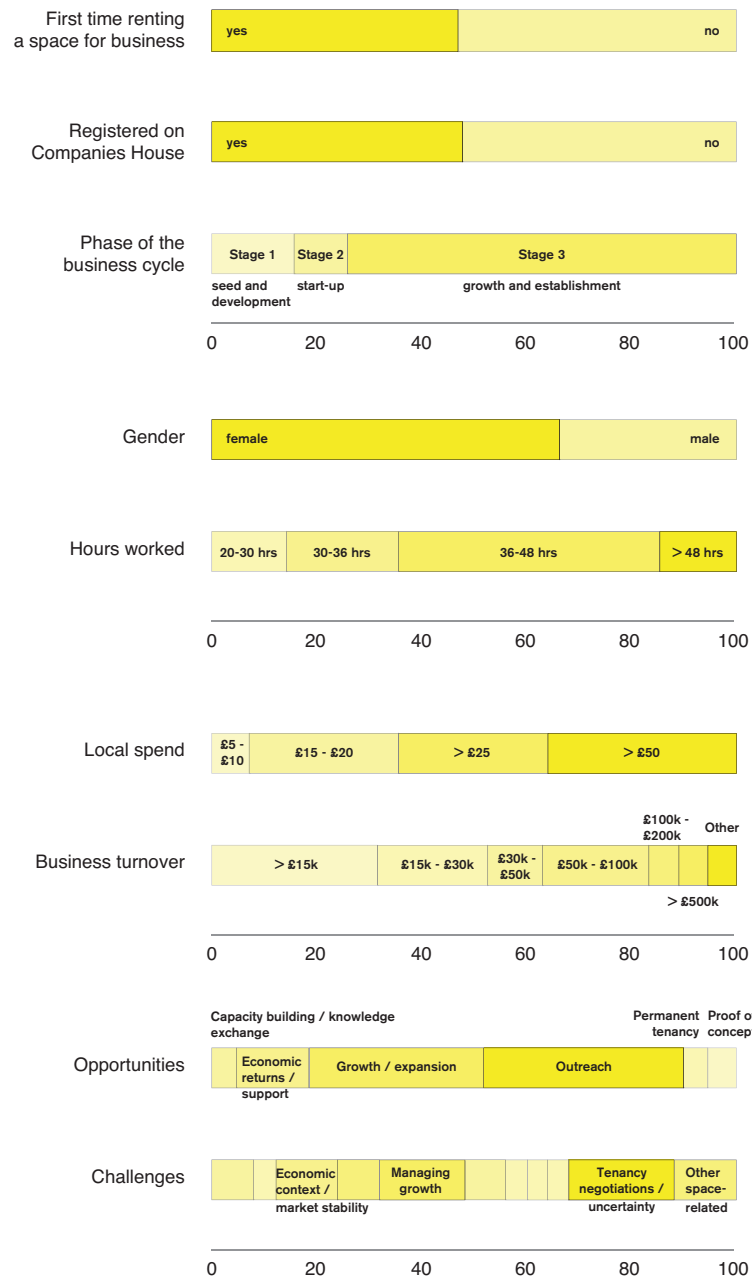
I am also delighted to see the impact that Blue House Yard is having on the local area in which I live - most of the tenants live within a 5 or 10 minute walk, so we are all invested in the area and want to see it thrive. ”

*Blue House Yard tenant,
21 August 2018*

Cottrell House, Wembley. 2013-2014



Retail spaces



Figures 38–41. Showing online survey responses from tenants who run retail businesses.



Image copyrights, Blaque Ink
Stoke Newington. 2012-2013

Retail is the second best represented sector in the survey sample (24%) after creative industries, which enables a useful discussion and conclusions.

In terms of experience and phase of the business, the sector is very similar to creative industries. There is an almost equal spread amongst participants who have rented a space before for their business (52.6%) and first-timers (47.4%) (but in inverse percentages compared to creative uses). Also here, little over half are not registered on Companies House (52.6%). Exactly the same percentage of businesses as in the creative sector are at the 'growth and establishment' phase (Stage 3) (73.7%). However, in retail we observe a higher proportion of businesses in 'seed and development' (Stage 1) (18.4%),

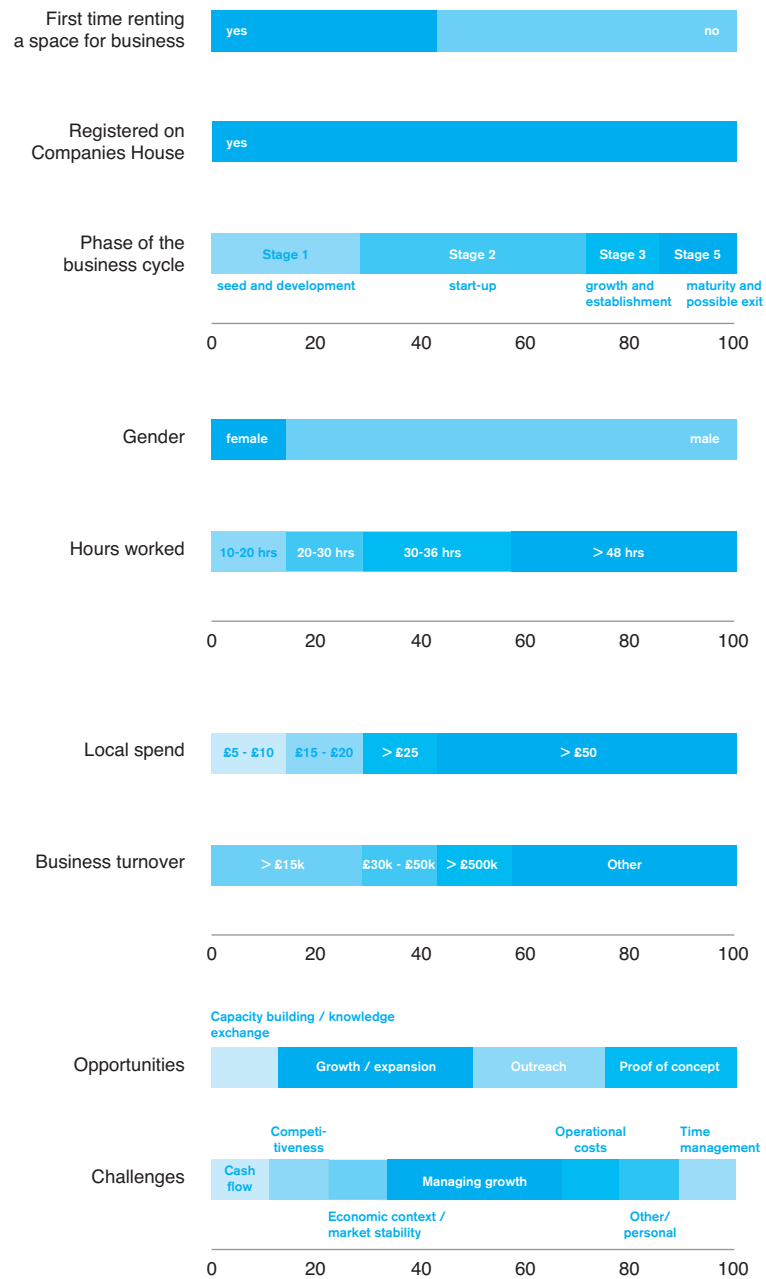
by a difference of 10.5% compared to creative. Female participants prevail (66.7%), along with full-time employment. Half of the tenants (50%) confirm working 36 to 48 hours weekly.

One third of business turnover (31.6%) falls in the most modest category of less than £15k annually. Low turnover in the retail sector might justify why tenants appear to most appreciate 'outreach' (38.1%) as an opportunity given to them by meanwhile projects. It also confirms the stress of securing a location: retail is the only sector that highlights tenancy negotiations and uncertainty as its biggest challenge. Retail tenants describe the sector as "tougher than ever", a "fully fledged business"



Queens Parade, a sociable space for retail, is Meanwhile Space's longest project
Queens Parade, Willesden Green. 2012-2019

Tech spaces



Figures 42–45. Showing online survey responses from tenants in the technology industry.



Tripod ranks first in absolute rates' savings per sq foot per day amongst all projects
Tripod, Brixton Hill. 2018-2023

Tenants involved in the technology sector take up 9% of the survey sample, higher only by one participant compared to community projects.

The majority of tenants (57.1%) have rented a space for their business before and all participants were registered on Companies House. Tech projects are, across all sectors, the most represented businesses at the 'seed and development' phase (Stage 1) (28.6%) and the 'start-up' phase (Stage 2) (42.9%). Also, this is the only industry with tenants at the final 'maturity and possible exit' phase (Stage 5) (14.3%).

The survey sample confirms general employment trends in the tech sector which suggest low gender diversity, with

85.7% being male tenants. This is also the most demanding industry across sectors in terms of long hours worked: 42.9% works over 48 hours per week.

Tech start ups contribute the most to the local economy compared to other sectors, with 57.1% of the tenants spending weekly on local shops more than £50. In their majority (42.9%), participants did not disclose their annual turnover and so results here are not representative. There was, however, the highest representation across sectors in the category with business turnover higher than £500k annually (14.3%). 'Growth and expansion' is both the most appreciated opportunity (37.5%) and greater challenge (33.3%).

“ Tripod provides a beautiful workspace close to home and my son’s school, which has proved transformative to my creative practice.

Whether I’m hot-desking or accessing excellent meeting space in an upbeat, inspiring environment, where I can confidently meet with collaborators and clients (without having to travel and waste time), Tripod has given me the headspace to develop new creative strands to my work. ”

*Sarah Ardizzone,
Literary Translator and Live Events Curator*



Conclusion

Chapter 3 examined activity within business sectors to further understand how the concept of meanwhile use as 'social enterprise' is materialised on the ground. It introduces a process for monitoring impact across industries and helps to develop an assessment of opportunities and challenges associated with different business sectors.

Creative industries and the retail sector are the most represented in the survey sample, therefore, insights are more useful in these cases. Considering all sectors comparatively, community projects and food and beverage tenants are the least experienced in renting a space for their business, followed by the creative industries. This is a very important outcome as it justifies the need of these sectors in gaining access to affordable floorspace. Meanwhile projects appear to have also supported substantially tech start-ups. The technology sector is found to give the highest returns to the local economy in terms of money spent weekly in local businesses.

Results in terms of business turnover are inconclusive. Further research on the location of meanwhile uses and the associated footfall and turnover for businesses could give better insights on this topic. Survey results confirm how retail projects are struggling in terms of turnover compared to other sectors, also pointing out that retail tenants' biggest challenge is an anxiety over insecurities associated with renting a space.

4

Opportunity to flourish/ /test/ /fail.

Focusing on direct stakeholders

In this final analytical chapter, the report focuses on opportunities and challenges facing meanwhile tenants, as well as it presents a review of tenants' feedback to Meanwhile Space about the company's practice. The discussion also looks at the views of landlords who are a key stakeholder group, and yet it still remains largely an enigmatic one.

Results presented in this chapter combine the views of former and current tenants, totalling up to a survey sample of 78 tenants. As mentioned previously, the online survey was conducted by Meanwhile Space in the period between March 2018 and March 2019. The survey was designed in a semi-structured format, involving both closed and open-ended questions. Tenants' experience with Meanwhile Space was addressed in two ways: at a general level, where tenants were asked to reflect on their practice while being a tenant in a space operated by Meanwhile Space; and at a specific level, where tenants were asked to evaluate their experience in working with Meanwhile Space. In both cases, there was the option of providing open-ended replies.

In reflecting on their practice during a meanwhile project, tenants were asked two key questions:

- *"What are the top two opportunities facing your business over the next 12 months?"*

- *"What are the top two challenges facing your business over the next 12 months?"*

For former tenants, questions were adjusted to refer to their practice over the 12 months following involvement in

Meanwhile Space projects. Given the open-ended nature of the question, tenants' replies were analysed thematically to identify common threads.

Opportunities

In relation to opportunities facing their business in the imminent future during or shortly after working with Meanwhile Space, the themes identified in tenants' replies were (in alphabetical order):

- Capacity building / knowledge exchange;
- Economic returns / support;
- Employment / fixed income;
- Growth / expansion;
- Outreach;
- Permanent tenancy;
- Proof of concept;
- Other.

Challenges

In terms of challenges facing businesses in the imminent future while being a Meanwhile Space tenant or shortly after, thematic analysis exposed the following themes (alphabetically):

- Business viability;
- Cash flow;
- Competitiveness;
- Economic context / market stability;
- Funding;
- Increase turnover;
- Managing growth;
- Marketing;
- Operational costs;
- Other / Personal;
- Skills shortage / recruitment;
- Tenancy negotiations / uncertainty;
- Other space-related (including the sub-themes: affordability & sociability; flexibility; location & footfall);
- Time management.



Interview

*With Vanessa Mulholland /
/ PreFound Fabrics*

Vanessa is the colour and pattern lover behind PreFound Fabrics, located in a studio at Central Parade, Walthamstow. She makes soft furnishings and window dressings for people who want to express themselves in their interior décor – and encourages them to “feed your indecision”.

Vanessa works at Central Parade, where her studio gives her the space to make her cushions and curtains and to stash her treasure trove of fabrics, and where she is part of a creative business community. We asked her a few questions about her business and her inspirations.

What makes your product unique or special?

The first thing that makes my cushions special is that customers can mix and match the two sides of their cushion to reflect different or conflicting aspects of their interior style identity in a semi-bespoke manner. The second thing is that although many of my fabrics are unused they are excess from a previous transaction and so no additional fabric has been manufactured to supply a purchase.

Describe a typical day for you.

A typical day might include making a curtain or cushions, meeting with or corresponding with clients, updating estimates and quotes and ordering stock to fulfil orders.

If you could interview one person in your industry, who would it be and why?

Justina Blakeney, Instagram star and head of interiors lifestyle company Jungalow, as I love her design aesthetic. It is complete, idiosyncratic and beautiful. I admire the way she has marketed her company to be incorporated into media devices such as the Design Home app and how she has grown into a whole retail enterprise. Also, it's good to have heroes.

Vanessa Mulholland / PreFound Fabrics
Central Parade, 2019



Interview

*With Linda Ersbacken /
/ The Adventure People*

Linda Ersbacken is Head of Content at The Adventure People, based in a studio at Tripod, Brixton. Originally founded in 2015, this world-wise company serves as a platform for adventure holidays and tours, bypassing large tour operators by connecting people to local people, guides and adventure providers. On their website you can browse a range of adventures, from surfing to safari, and learn more about the different destinations they cover through in-depth travel blogs and videos.

What do you or your team do?

The Adventure People is a platform for adventure holidays. We work with leading adventure operators around the world and feature their adventure trips on our website.

At theadventurepeople.com you can search between thousands of adventure holidays, and book at the best prices.

What makes your business unique or special?

We work directly with local tour operators around the world. This is great for the customers as we can keep the prices down by cutting out the middlemen, and it's great for the local communities as we support local employment.

Describe a typical day for you?

I'm the Head of Content Marketing, and we're focusing a large part of our marketing on our Youtube channel. Day to day I'm responsible for deciding which videos to record, often we answer customer's questions or interview adventurers. I then film everything in our little in-office studio and edit it together. We want to create really engaging content which we think sets us apart from our competitors.

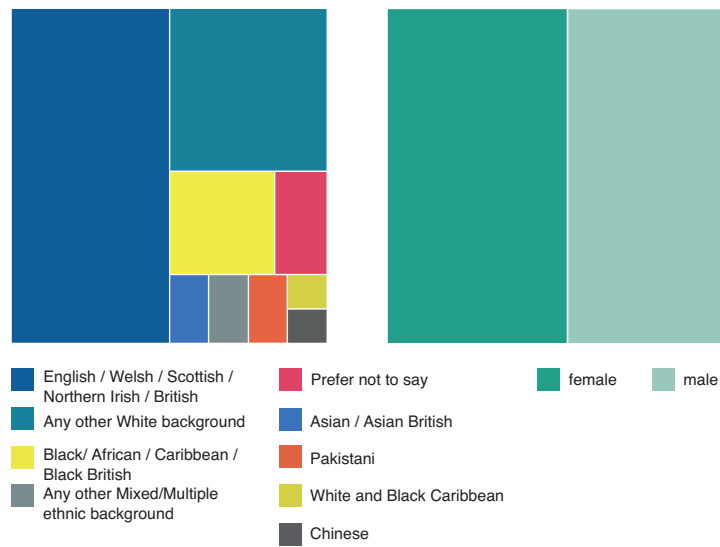
If you could interview one person in your industry, who would it be and why?

We interview a lot of cool adventurers already, people who have climbed Mount Everest and swam the English Channel for example. But if there's one I'd love to interview it's probably Alastair Humphreys. He's written a book called *Grand Adventures*, which is all about how anyone can start going on adventures. It'd be so inspiring, I think our viewers would love it!

The Adventure People
Tripod, 2019



Tenants' survey



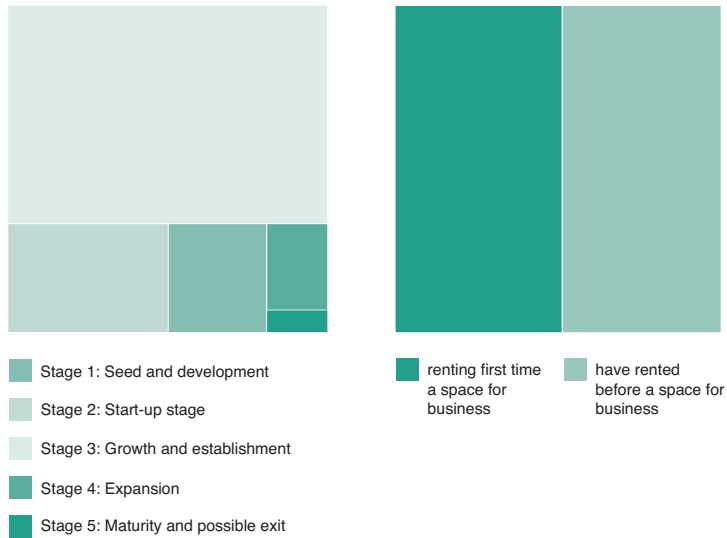
Figures 46–47. Showing the ethnic background of survey participants (left) and gender (right).

Survey participants: ethnographic profile

Before examining in detail the results from the tenants' survey, it is useful to understand the profile of participants. As discussed in Chapter 2, ethnic diversity does not appear to be particularly high within the survey sample. Figure 46 shows a clear majority of 'English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British White' (50%) and people of 'any other white background' (24.4%). However, the remaining participants represent greater ethnic diversity. Figure 47 indicates a slight majority of female participants (53.8%) over males (46.2%). Because these results are based solely on replies received, they are not conclusive of the overall tenancy profile.

Survey participants: experience in running a business

There is an approximately equal representation of tenants who declared having prior experience in renting a space for their business (48.7%) compared to those renting for the first time (51.3%), with a slight majority in favour of the latter category (Figure 49). Most tenants classify their business as being in the 'growth and establishment phase' (66.7%). Given the number of people who have not rented a space before for business, we would anticipate instead a higher representation of the early stages (1 and 2) of 'seed and development' (10.3%) and 'start-up' (16.7%). This might imply tenants' prior engagement with online business or a general need for more affordable space.



Figures 48–49. Showing the phase of the business cycle for survey participants (left) and prior experience in renting a space for business (right).

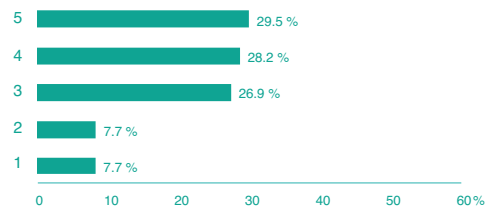


Business growth

Tenants experiencing business growth

Business expansion or growth is the second most acknowledged opportunity identified by Meanwhile Space tenants. However, as explained in the next paragraph, this judgement most likely refers to an increase in turnover, rather in staffing levels. Specifically for current tenants, business growth is the most significant advantage (34.2%). Former tenants, however, highlight 'outreach' by a majority of 35.3% and mention business growth far less (5.9%) compared to current tenants. Business growth is also appreciated more than other opportunities by those renting a space for business for the first time (36.4%). The majority of tenants with businesses in the 'growth and establishment' phase (Stage 3) (35.6%) and in the 'expansion' phase (Stage 4) (40%), as expected, also mention business growth as the foremost opportunity. Finally, one third majority of small-medium spaces' tenants refer to business growth as an opportunity in their immediate future (33.3%).

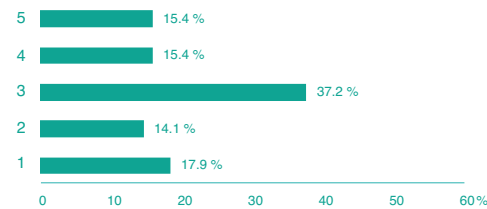
Meanwhile Space has helped me grow my business - income/turnover.



Growing income vs. staffing levels

Figures 50 and 51 suggest that tenants feel more confident that Meanwhile Space has helped them increase their business income turnover and relatively modest in suggesting an increase in staffing levels. This confirms the observation made earlier in Chapter 2 about greater scope for further integration with the local economy, as less than one third of current tenants (23.8%) had commissioned a local business to support their enterprise (Figure 6), based on the survey results. However, the majority of survey participants were located in medium size spaces (57.7% in small-medium and 33.3% in medium-large) and these spaces are found to experience the highest churn in terms of employment (see earlier discussion around Figure 16). In turn, this suggests that it would be difficult for those tenants to recruit more people during the short period of time in which they were operating their business from a Meanwhile Space location.

Meanwhile Space has helped me grow my business - staffing level.



Figures 50–51. Showing tenants' feedback by ranking Meanwhile Space on its performance on helping them to grow their business, where 5 is the highest score and 1 the lowest.

Opportunities: Current vs. former tenants	Current tenants (percentage %)	Former tenants (percentage %)	Total number of survey participants (percentage %)
Capacity building / knowledge exchange	17.1	17.6	17.2
Economic returns / support	9.2	17.6	10.8
Employment / fixed income	1.3	-	1.1
Growth / expansion	34.2	5.9	29.0
Outreach	28.9	35.3	30.1
Permanent tenancy	3.9	11.8	5.4
Proof of concept	5.3	5.9	5.4
Other	-	5.9	1.1

Opportunities: Space size	< 1,000 sq ft (percentage %)	1,000-5,000 sq ft (percentage %)	5,000-10,000 sq ft (percentage %)	> 10,000 sq ft (percentage %)
Capacity building / knowledge exchange	25.0	20.4	12.5	-
Economic returns / support	25.0	7.4	15.6	-
Employment / fixed income	-	-	3.1	-
Growth / expansion	25.0	33.3	21.9	33.3
Outreach	25.0	29.6	28.1	66.7
Permanent tenancy	-	1.9	12.5	-
Proof of concept	-	5.6	6.3	-
Other	-	1.9	-	-

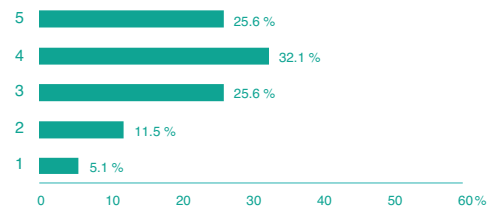
Capacity building

Across the overall survey sample, 'capacity building and knowledge exchange' is the third most mentioned opportunity facing businesses in their immediate future while/after being Meanwhile Space tenants. This is an opportunity acknowledged across all the first four phases in the business cycle - ranking mostly in the third place, after 'growth / expansion' and 'outreach'.

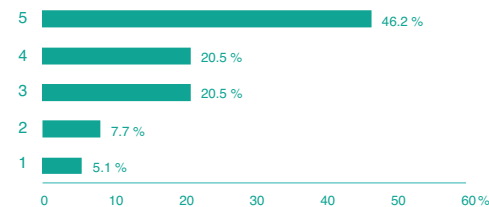
In relation to capacity building, tenants were asked to rank Meanwhile Space services in terms of: (a) skills' improvement, confidence and ambition;

(c) reducing stress; and (d) giving an option to fail. According to its tenants, Meanwhile Space is best performing well in helping them to test their business (b) (73.1% gives a score of 5 or 4), while reducing stress (c) (66.7% gives a score of 5 or 4). However, tenants are not so generous when it comes to confirming having improved their skills, confidence and ambition. This can be explained by the fact that tenants feel that they are struggling with 'managing growth'. This topic is examined further in the following discussion on challenges.

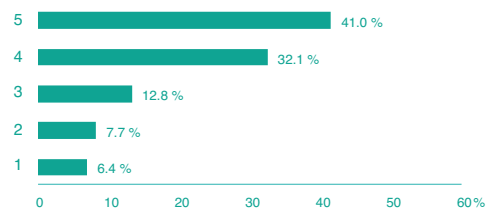
Meanwhile Space has helped me improve skills, confidence and ambition.



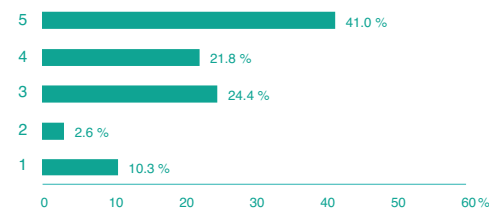
Meanwhile Space has helped me test and refine my business.



Meanwhile Space has helped reduce some of the stresses and worries of being a small business owner.



Meanwhile Space the option to fail without getting into a lot of debt.



Figures 52–55. Showing tenants' feedback by ranking Meanwhile Space on its performance on offering capacity building and the option to fail, where 5 is the highest score and 1 the lowest.

Opportunities: First time renting a business space	Yes (percentage %)	No (percentage %)	Total number of survey participants (percentage %)
Capacity building / knowledge exchange	13.6	20.4	17.2
Economic returns / support	11.4	10.2	10.8
Employment / fixed income	-	2.0	1.1
Growth / expansion	36.4	22.4	29.0
Outreach	31.8	28.6	30.1
Permanent tenancy	2.3	8.2	5.4
Proof of concept	4.5	6.1	5.4
Other	-	2.0	1.1

Opportunities: Phase of business cycle	Stage 1 (%)	Stage 2 (%)	Stage 3 (%)	Stage 4 (%)	Stage 5 (%)
Capacity building / knowledge exchange	18.2	17.6	16.9	20.0	-
Economic returns / support	18.2	5.9	10.2	20.0	-
Employment / fixed income	-	5.9	-	-	-
Growth / expansion	9.1	17.6	35.6	40.0	-
Outreach	36.4	29.4	28.8	20.0	100.0
Permanent tenancy	9.1	5.9	5.1	-	-
Proof of concept	9.1	11.8	3.4	-	-
Other	-	5.9	-	-	-

“ Meanwhile Space have given me the opportunity to test and grow my business in my immediate community.

I have enjoyed the experience enormously. I have shared it with others who are at the same stage as me, and we have learnt from each other as well as our customers.

The team at Meanwhile Space have been supportive and enthusiastic throughout. ”

Central Parade tenant, 26 July 2018



“ Before Meanwhile Space, I thought that getting my paintings on the high street, in view of everyone, was what would get me to sell.

During Meanwhile Space, I realised that the location is important, as well as half a dozen other things that I never thought about. Since Meanwhile space, I stopped worrying about getting into Art galleries, and I decided to focus on my online presence instead.

Now I have a fully operational website page where I display my artworks and don't have to worry about marketing as much as before. Now I can concentrate on what I love to do most. I owe this to Meanwhile Space.

So thank you. ”

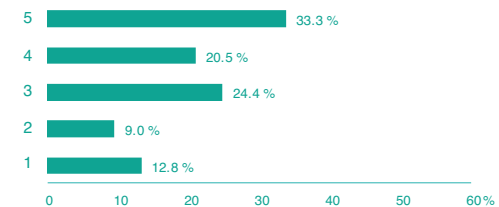
Start Here tenant, 19 February 2019

Affordability and flexibility

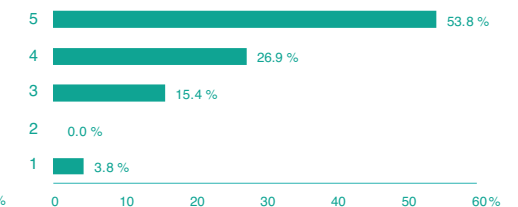
Meanwhile Space services are confirmed by tenants' views as being affordable and flexible, with more than 80% of replies ranking performance within the highest bands (a score of 5 or 4). Considering how Meanwhile Space promotes meanwhile uses as a 'social enterprise', it is understood that affordability and flexibility are key qualities. For community uses in particular, funding was identified by tenants as the foremost challenge (see earlier in Figure 29), which suggests that Meanwhile Space is enabling this sector

in finding an outlet. Although positive ranking is not as vocal as with the other two questions, still, one third of tenants (33.3%) suggest by a definitive score of 5 that Meanwhile Space gave them the opportunity to access a space, which they would not have had otherwise. When adding counts of a score 4, this proportion rises to 53.8% of the survey sample. Namely, more than half of the tenants who participated in the survey are strongly positive that Meanwhile Space is filling a gap in the real estate market.

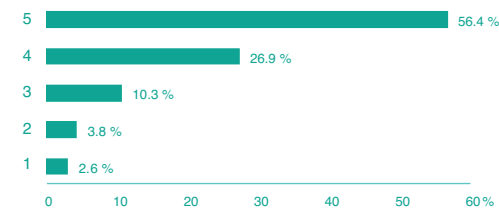
Without Meanwhile Space, we would not have been able to access office/workspace.



Meanwhile Space is affordable.



Meanwhile Space is flexible.



Figures 56–58. Showing tenants' feedback by ranking Meanwhile Space in terms of providing them with accessible services, where 5 is the highest score and 1 the lowest.

Challenges

The majority of tenants identify issues associated with 'managing growth' as the foremost challenge. This challenge appears to be a logical sequence from the most acknowledged opportunity, 'growth / expansion', which was discussed in the previous section. Similar to patterns from tenants' views on opportunities arising from meanwhile uses, challenges also appear to differ according to various groupings. For example, former tenants appear to be more preoccupied with tenancy issues (30%), such as negotiating rent

and securing a space, more than with 'managing growth' (15%). This can be justified by the fact that former tenants were primarily in the early stages of the business cycle while being a Meanwhile Space tenant (40% in Stage 1, 40% in Stage 2 and the remaining 20% in Stage 3). Current tenants, who are mostly concerned about 'managing growth', run in their majority (77.8%) businesses that are in Stage 3 of the business cycle. This suggests how there is scope in tailoring services and capacity building according to different business needs.

When grouping tenants' replies based on the size of meanwhile space that they occupied, 'managing growth' is still identified as the most prominent concern - besides for small spaces, where stress about tenancy prevails. This result appears indeed to be size-related; first, because current (50%) and former tenants (50%) are equally represented in the small-spaces, and second, because these tenants run businesses in different phases in the business cycle (25% in Stage 1, 25% in Stage 2 and 50% in Stage 3).

“ This is a blessing and a curse as if we take on too much too fast, we will not be able to deliver. We must choose who we work with carefully and grow gradually.

We must hire carefully as we grow to preserve our company culture.”

*Tripod tenant,
5 February 2019*

Challenges: Current vs. former tenants	Current tenants (percentage %)	Former tenants (percentage %)	Total number of survey participants (%)
Business viability	5.7	5.0	5.6
Cash flow	10.2	-	8.3
Competitiveness	4.5	-	3.7
Economic context / market stability	9.1	-	7.4
Funding	5.7	5.0	5.6
Increase turnover	5.7	-	4.6
Managing growth	23.9	15.0	22.2
Marketing	3.4	10.0	4.6
Operational costs	6.8	10.0	7.4
Other / personal	6.8	15.0	8.3
Skills shortage / recruitment	5.7	-	4.6
Tenancy negotiations / uncertainty	2.3	30.0	7.4
Other space-related	6.8	10.0	7.4
Time management	3.4	-	2.8

Challenges: Space size	< 1,000 sq ft (%)	1,000-5,000 sq ft (%)	5,000-10,000 sq ft (%)	> 10,000 sq ft (%)
Business viability	25.0	4.8	5.3	-
Cash flow	-	11.1	5.3	-
Competitiveness	-	1.6	7.9	-
Economic context / market stability	25.0	7.9	5.3	-
Funding	-	7.9	2.6	-
Increase turnover	-	4.8	5.3	-
Managing growth	-	23.8	18.4	66.7
Marketing	-	3.2	7.9	-
Operational costs	-	9.5	5.3	-
Other / personal	-	6.3	13.2	-
Skills shortage / recruitment	-	7.9	-	-
Tenancy negotiations / uncertainty	50.0	4.8	7.9	-
Other space-related	-	4.8	10.5	33.3
Time management	-	1.6	5.3	-

Experience in renting a space for business does not appear to have an impact on tenants' views on challenges. The issue of 'managing growth' is mentioned particularly by tenants with businesses in Stages 1 to 3. This is not unexpected, as during these early stages, and particularly at their interface – i.e. when transitioning from one phase of the business cycle to the next – tenants are expected to either manage new requirements and tasks in which they do not necessarily have prior experience, or manage an increasing number of clients, projects and of staffing levels. It is then justified how

tenants do not feel more confident or ambitious in this process, as discussed earlier in Figure 47. On the contrary this can be an overwhelming period. Increasing the offer of opportunities in capacity building and knowledge exchange could be a vehicle for tenants to navigate through this transitional and challenging period while being in a meanwhile space.

Finally, in the table below, it is interesting to observe how tenants with businesses in the 'expansion' phase (Stage 4) mention 'funding' as the foremost challenge. This is explained by the fact that 75% of these tenants are

operating community / social projects, for which funding is the most significant concern (also shown earlier in Figure 29). Retail is another sector where tenants feel particularly challenged by the current economic context and market trends (see earlier, Figure 41). Outreach and location are important factors for successful business in the retail sector. Concerns in managing growth and expanding outlets via online interfaces are picked up by *PLACE / Ladywell* tenants' comments when asked about challenges.

“ Being able to step up from the incubator scheme into another retail space was a challenge. There is not an intermediate option between, incubator and high street shop. ”

13 February 2019

“ Transition between a high street visibility to online only. ”

20 February 2019

Challenges: First time renting a business space	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total number of survey participants (%)
Business viability	9.3	1.9	5.6
Cash flow	7.4	9.3	8.3
Competitiveness	3.7	3.7	3.7
Economic context / market stability	5.6	9.3	7.4
Funding	7.4	3.7	5.6
Increase turnover	1.9	7.4	4.6
Managing growth	20.4	24.1	22.2
Marketing	1.9	7.4	4.6
Operational costs	9.3	5.6	7.4
Other / personal	9.3	7.4	8.3
Skills shortage / recruitment	5.6	3.7	4.6
Tenancy negotiations / uncertainty	9.3	5.6	7.4
Other space-related	5.6	9.3	7.4
Time management	3.7	1.9	2.8

Challenges: Phase of business cycle	Stage 1 (%)	Stage 2 (%)	Stage 3 (%)	Stage 4 (%)	Stage 5 (%)
Business viability	-	6.7	6.5	-	-
Cash flow	-	6.7	10.4	-	-
Competitiveness	9.1	6.7	2.6	-	-
Economic context / market stability	9.1	-	9.1	-	-
Funding	9.1	-	3.9	66.7	-
Increase turnover	-	-	6.5	-	-
Managing growth	27.3	20.0	23.4	-	-
Marketing	9.1	6.7	3.9	-	-
Operational costs	9.1	6.7	7.8	-	-
Other / personal	9.1	6.7	7.8	-	50.0
Skills shortage / recruitment	-	-	6.5	-	-
Tenancy negotiations / uncertainty	9.1	13.3	6.5	-	-
Other space-related	9.1	20.0	3.9	33.3	-
Time management	-	6.7	1.3	-	50.0



“ Meanwhile has given me a wonderful opportunity to launch my business, in a fantastic unit close to my home.

Starting up is extremely demanding both physically and mentally, the constant worry about cash flow can take it's toll, however, Meanwhile offer very affordable rates taking the stress out of having to find the huge amount of rent required in other places.

Queens Parade has been a wonderful springboard to the next step of developing and expanding my business. Also being able to work next door to other like minded people who are also starting out has been really comforting and also been great to share experiences.

Thank you. ”

Queens Parade tenant, 22 November 2018



Landlords and partners

Survey background

The online survey of landlords and partners did not return a substantial number of replies, therefore, the discussion here is mostly an indication of the experience these key stakeholders have had throughout their collaboration with Meanwhile Space. In total, four collaborators have responded and three of them represent local authorities. Namely, the opinions presented here mainly represent one type of landlord and Meanwhile Space's engagement mostly with the public sector rather than the private.

Similar to the case for tenants, the survey was asking participants to evaluate their collaboration with Meanwhile Space on a scale from 1 to 5, where 5 was the highest score for an excellent experience / performance. The questions or criteria included the following:

(Q1) *"The Meanwhile Space project has increased the value of my property";*

(Q2) *"Meanwhile Space is trustworthy";*

(Q3) *"Meanwhile Space deliver their promises";*

(Q4) *"Working with Meanwhile Space has helped my organisation save money";*

(Q5) *"Working with Meanwhile Space has helped my organisation raise its profile in a positive way among the local community";*

(Q6) *"We would recommend Meanwhile Space to other landlords";*

(Q7) *"Working with Meanwhile Space is something we would do again".*

The survey also included open-ended questions for further comments, feedback and clarifications.

Results

Participants value Meanwhile Space's trustworthy ethos, with all of them giving the highest score of 5 for Q2. It follows that Q3 on delivery of promises is also positively rated, at 50% on each of the highest scores (4 and 5). The same percentages stand for Q5, where participants confirm that projects with Meanwhile Space have benefited the profile of their organisation amongst the local community. As discussed, the 'organisation' for three out of four participants is a local authority. Based on these testimonies, Meanwhile Space seems to be delivering on their aim to prioritise and enable the improvement of local life by helping local authorities to raise their profile and respond to local residents' needs. Questions which relate to asset value and economic profit were not as highly rated. In response to Q1, two participants show a confidence of score 3 in seeing an increase in the value of their property after a meanwhile project, followed by two more confident replies - one at score 4 and the other at score 5. Results are also more dispersed in relation to Q4; whereas two participants suggest a positive score of 4, the other two give a moderate score of 2 and 3. However, it needs to be highlighted that only one participant's organisation has performed an economic assessment for the project; this participant gave a positive score of 4 in both Q1 and Q4. This implies the need to push forward a systematic impact assessment on the economic performance of meanwhile use projects.

Overall, participants confirm a positive experience (scoring 4 or 5) which they would recommend to others (Q6) and do again (Q7).

" Meanwhile Space have provided us with the opportunity to try something different, grow our charity in an uncomplicated way in terms of accommodation. There is freedom and a sense of shared responsibility to make it work which makes the tenant-landlord relationship more collaborative and reciprocal. "

PLACE / Ladywell tenant, 26 February 2019



“ PLACE / Ladywell has been a lovely place to work. A supportive relationship with their staff and friendly people using the space have made it conducive to work. Flexible opening hours and regular social events make it feel like you’re part of a community. ”

*PLACE / Ladywell tenant,
5 December 2018*

Conclusion

Chapter 4 explored the opinions of tenants who have been residents in Meanwhile Space projects. The aim was twofold; first, to develop an empirical understanding of opportunities and challenges involved in the process of running a business from a meanwhile location; and second, to reflect on the performance of Meanwhile Space services in relation to tenants’ needs. The discussion also examined the views of a small group of landlords / partners, primarily from the public sector. Both these accounts, from tenants and landlords, are pivotal to provide constructive feedback which comes from direct stakeholders, on the benefits and shortcomings of meanwhile projects – specifically, in relation to Meanwhile Space’s practice.

Tenants suggest that, following access to affordable floorspace through meanwhile projects, their businesses face primarily opportunities for growth and outreach. The counter-side is that business growth brings along a requirement for management skills, often within a short period of time given the duration of tenancies, for which tenants are not necessarily prepared or equipped. In other words, the pace of potential success during meanwhile use practice can overwhelm tenants. The benefits of exposure and business growth suggest how tenants are likely to undergo transition periods between the phases of the business cycle. What appears to be most valued is that Meanwhile Space allowed them to test and refine a business idea, while lowering the stress and economic risk, as well as operating locally.

The shared and collaborative

approach which is fostered in Meanwhile Space projects is seen as being fundamental in tenants’ experience. The projects seem to have enabled a *meanwhile community* which gives immediate support to small businesses. There appears to be scope for further development of capacity building activities such as training, workshops and consultancy to address the specific needs of business sectors (e.g. marketing and funding), local context (e.g. footfall and local resources), and personal development of the business owners (e.g. confidence building and recruitment).

The positive impact of a strengthened sense of place-based communities can also be identified in the feedback from local authorities who have partnered with Meanwhile Space. Meanwhile projects have contributed to local authorities raising their profile amongst the local community. With the social impact acknowledged, the next step would be to establish a process for the systematic assessment of economic impact to encourage local authorities and the private sector to more actively participate in operationalising meanwhile use efforts. Meanwhile uses address a tangible demand in the real estate scenery to meet the local needs of small business owners, artists and charities. This approach is more inclusive and promotes the claim of local residents on the assets of their local community. For these efforts to be maintained, a collective approach to strengthening local life would require contributions from all meanwhile players, in terms of asset provision, funding and capacity building.



5

Echoes of change.

Meanwhile Space: Ten Years in Practice is a collection of experiences from UK-based practice explored through an examination of empirical observations collected by Meanwhile Space since their establishment as Meanwhile use operator in 2009 through a central government funded project. Similar to the inherent ambiguity of interim use projects, this report acknowledges the limitations of the observations presented here, given that they are based on the mode of practice of one UK operator, they mostly refer to projects in outer London, and illustrate modest survey samples. Nonetheless, this report has merit in its effort to reflect on the challenges and achievements of meanwhile use projects in the UK and expand the discussion surrounding temporary urbanism beyond theoretical narratives, with evidence from practice and on the ground engagement.

The aim of this report was twofold: on the one hand, to understand the evolution of Meanwhile Space's ten year trajectory by looking at their portfolio of practice; and on the other hand, to interrogate the nature and performance of meanwhile use projects in relation to existing types of vacant spaces as well as in terms of direct stakeholders' views, such as meanwhile tenants and landlords. The projects that Meanwhile Space has delivered are particularly informative due to their diversity in terms of space size, tenancy length, local context, and type of use. Effectively, Meanwhile Space's portfolio of practice confirms the flexibility and capability of interim use projects to accommodate numerous possibilities that are place-specific and respond to the various needs of urban entrepreneurs and

local charities with different levels of experience. There are a number of important takeaways that the Meanwhile Space dataset offers:

- The significance of understanding the benefits and downsides of high tenant turnover vs. longer term tenancy opportunities. As discussed in Chapter 2, there are audiences for both models of interim use, as these seem to respond to different needs.
- The relationship between space size and tenants' experience and stage in the business cycle. Clusters of similar uses or mixing of uses in bigger spaces vs. smaller spaces in prime footfall locations appeal to different industries and to tenants with different levels of experience. A further examination of the effect of the meanwhile use model on tenants' capacity building is necessary in order to optimise positive returns from meanwhile projects for tenants and their endeavours.
- Regardless success or failure tenants are appreciative of the opportunity to test ideas and be exposed to different audiences. While in a meanwhile space, they grow a sense of belonging tied to the meanwhile community of these places. The sense of support confirms tenants' need to build confidence and face challenges in a collaborative spirit. There is greater scope for capacity building and knowledge exchange to help tenants go through the multifarious transitions of the business or charity cycle.
- Through the limited feedback from local authorities who acted as partners/landlords, it is understood that meanwhile projects have raised their profile within the local community.

This raises the issue of the need for regeneration that caters for local residents and creates opportunities for place-making which is not exclusive. Whilst meanwhile uses are seen as temporary means to achieve lively and vibrant neighbourhoods, by safeguarding and promoting local participation they can become an organised and resilient support mechanism for alternative and inclusive urban strategies.

- Information currently captured in terms of the economic impact of meanwhile use projects for landlords, local authorities and local economy, is limited. As much as the social and cultural benefits are understood and appreciated, lack of economic-related incentives can be an impediment to securing funding and participation. Landlords continue to be the most enigmatic group of stakeholders and further research on their motives and barriers is necessary.

Foremost, this report confirms how the need for impact evidence from meanwhile uses is critical for any situated discussion on this type of temporary urban projects to occur. It is easy to dismiss meanwhile projects as pointless temporary solutions when ignoring their timeliness and pressing high demand for affordable and flexible space – evidenced in the number of applications and requests received by Meanwhile Space day to day. It is equally easy to romanticise meanwhile use practice as a straightforward DIY project and dismiss the challenges facing operators, tenants and landlords. Mostly, it is easy to forget how, like every other community-focused initiative, the lack of funding and

resources remains the biggest issue. At the very minimum vacant spaces are assets awaiting an opportunity, a life – at least in the present, if not in the future.

Despite progress and the familiarisation of the real estate industry with interim use of vacant space, which is largely owed to the efforts of responsive and responsible operators such as Meanwhile Space, meanwhile practice still faces multiple challenges, with its viability being put to test continuously. The aspiration is not just to access vacant space, but to meaningfully utilise it for the hope and benefit of local communities. Local engagement suggests how the reaction from local communities is appreciative of these efforts, treating them as positive echoes of urban change towards more accessible urbanities. The reaction from urban practice in turn, both public and private, needs to be one of shared responsibility for local life.

This report encourages a culture of sharing and learning from precedents, and reflects on the fluidity of meanwhile projects in order to consolidate and optimise, without compromising, a creative, affordable and flexible approach to place-making – an approach with the capability to continuously reinvent itself in response to local needs by utilising local assets and skills. It is our hope that this report will initiate a wider and systematic process of collecting and interrogating evidence on the potential impacts of unlocking underused space for the benefit of local communities, in the UK and elsewhere, for the short-term and long-term futures.

6

Appendix/ /list of projects.

Project Delivery & Managed Properties

1	Meanwhile Project	May-09	Apr-10	Project Delivery	Central Government project building Meanwhile network, trouble shooting, sharing knowledge, developing toolkits and templates.
2	House of Hastings	Jan-10	Mar-11	Managed property	Setup and operation of short term Meanwhile use available for events / activities / workspace.
3	Meanwhile in Craigavon	Jan-11	Sep-11	Project Delivery	Rolling 6-week capacity building programme funded by Craigavon Council (NI) supporting new enterprise and job creation with space in 1 building, providing events and mentoring.
4	Whitechapel	Feb-11	May-11	Managed property	Short term Meanwhile use available for events / activities / workspace
5	Exmouth Market	May-11	Dec-11	Managed property	Setup and operation of short term Meanwhile use available for events / activities / workspace.
6	Finchley Road 02	Oct-11	Mar-12	Managed property	Setup and operation of short term Meanwhile use available for events/ activities/ workspace.
7	New Windows on Willesden Green	Oct-11	Mar-12	Project Delivery	High Street project for Brent Council with Architecture Foundation, engaging shopkeepers and public, delivering window display competition, negotiating and renovating anchor shop, public activities.
8	Queens Parade	Jan-12	Nov-19	Managed property	Setup and operation of Meanwhile use available for events/activities/workspace, including capacity building workshops and mentoring

9	Coming Soon Club	Jan-12	Sep-14	Project Delivery	Rolling 6 week capacity building programme funded by Brent Council supporting new enterprise and job creation with space in 3 different buildings, providing events and mentoring
10	Mentrestant Barcelona	Apr-12	May-13	Managed property	Setup and operation of short term Meanwhile use available for events/ activities/ workspace. Conversion of UK approach to Spanish law/ policies.
11	You Are Here	Sep-12	Jun-13	Project Delivery	Rolling 6 week capacity building programme funded by Sutton Council supporting new enterprise with space in 2 different buildings and mentoring
12	Electric House	Oct-12	Jun-13	Managed property	Setup and operation of short term Meanwhile use available for events/ activities/workspace
13	The Manor	Oct-12	Apr-13	Project Delivery	Rolling 6 week capacity building programme funded by Hillingdon Council supporting new enterprise with space in 2 different buildings and mentoring
14	Stoke Newington	Nov-12	May-13	Managed property	Setup and operation of short term Meanwhile use available for events/ activities/workspace
15	Carlton Kitchen	Aug-13	Apr-14	Managed property	Setup and operation of food incubator workspace, events and community kitchen.
16	The Platform	May-14	May-19	Project Delivery	Rolling 6 week capacity building programme funded by JP Morgan Chase Foundation supporting new enterprise with space in 3 different buildings and mentoring.

17	Rock House	Jul-14	no end date	Project Delivery	JV delivery with Jericho Road Solutions and White Rock Trust (WRNV Ltd) who own the freehold. Mixed use 9 storey building with residential, workspace and community space.
18	Loughborough Junction Arches	Aug-14	August 2020	Managed property	Strategic partnership with Network Rail for 15 arches for designers/makers/startups.
19	Chesterfield House	Jan-15	Mar-16	Managed property	Creative mixed use workspace – setup and operation.
20	Start Here	Apr-15	Apr-17	Project Delivery	Rolling 6 week capacity building programme funded by Harrow Council supporting new enterprise with space in 3 different buildings and mentoring.
21	Wembley Park Drive	Sept 2015	Sep-17	Project Delivery	JV delivery with Jan Kattein Architects (High Street Works). GLA project with Brent Council delivering shopfront improvements, business support, open design competition and forming a trader group.
22	Central Parade	Jul-16	Jul-21	Managed property	Creative mixed use workspace – setup and operation
23	Place/Ladywell	Sep-16	April-21	Managed property	Creative mixed use workspace – setup and operation
24	Granby Space	Oct-16	Feb-20	Managed property	Creative mixed use workspace – setup and operation
25	Blue House Yard	Feb-17	Sep-21	Managed property	Creative mixed use workspace – setup and operation
26	Switchboard Studios, Blackhorse Lane	Apr-18	Jun-19	Managed property	Creative mixed use workspace – setup and operation
27	Ujima House, Wembley	May-18	2021	Managed property	Creative mixed use workspace – setup and operation

28	LJ Works	Dec-18	2023	Managed property	New build mixed use workspace – operator
29	Brixton Town Hall	April 2018	2023	Managed property	Creative mixed use workspace – setup and operation
30	Ebury	2019	2022	Managed property	New build mixed use workspace – operator
31	Albion Street	2019	2026	Managed property	New build mixed use workspace – operator
32	Elephant Arcade	2019	2029	Managed property	Mixed use retail – setup and operation

Consultancy

1	Victoria House	Jan-12	Apr-13	Other / Consultancy	Competition and commission for large scale public art intervention on derelict building.
2	Wembley is Where?	Sep-13	May-14	Other / Consultancy	Research/engagement study to support funding bids for Brent Council. Involving multiple engagement events, shopfront improvement programme and business support.
3	Interlude	Jan-14	Nov-14	Other / Consultancy	A consortium of Urban Space Management, Bow Arts Trust and Groundwork, which explored the viability and business plan for interim uses on the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.
4	Porters Lodge	Sep-14	Mar-15	Other / Consultancy	Feasibility and engagement for workspace
5	Cu-Cu	Jan-15	May-16	Other / Consultancy	Developed prototype App funded by Innovate UK matching vacant spaces with projects.

6	Pop Brixton and Impact Hub Brixton Review	Apr-15	May-15	Other / Consultancy	Independent review of Pop Brixton and Impact Hub Brixton financials and business plan for Lambeth Council.
7	Wembley Digital High Street	Jul-15	Sep-15	Other / Consultancy	Research report along Wembley High Street assessing business' skills and ambitions for digital support.
8	Aylesbury Estate	Sep-15	May-16	Other / Consultancy	Research report on non-residential space and meanwhile opportunities on Aylesbury Estate.
9	Carnegie Library assessment	Nov-16	May-17	Other / Consultancy	Independent assessment of applications from an operator perspective for asset transfer of Carnegie Library for Lambeth Council.
10	Beddington Workspace	Jan-17	May-17	Other / Consultancy	Business plan feasibility study (led by RCKa) for Sutton Council.
11	Waterloo West	Mar-17	May-17	Other / Consultancy	Urban Design study (led by Metropolitan Works) on enterprise and Meanwhile opportunities in Waterloo West area for Lambeth Council.
12	Albion Street	Sep-17	Feb-18	Other / Consultancy	Design and feasibility study in partnership with IF DO architects for Southwark Council to deliver options for new build Meanwhile use project on vacant site.
13	Banbury Park Forum	Jan-18	May-18	Other / Consultancy	Design and feasibility study in partnership with Jan Kattein architects for Clarion Housing to deliver options for recently completed community and office building.

Meanwhile Space team



Meanwhile Space staff 2019

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About the author

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character. Driven by a passion for historical urban landscapes, her post-doctoral research looked at the spatial heritages of UNESCO World Heritage cities to promote the cultural identity of streets as everyday sociable places. In 2017, she co-organised the Historic Urban Landscape Forum (hulforum.org) networking initiative, under UNESCO patronage. Falli's current research interests focus on urban regeneration, the challenges facing urban heritage and community well-being. | twitter: @falli_p

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