



CHIPPENHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN_

Chippenham Town Council

Community Infrastructure Topic Paper

Appendix 19



POLICY OBJECTIVE(S)

- Protect or enhance existing facilities, or create new top class facilities, for sporting and recreational opportunities.
- Encourage the community to come together by providing a range of indoor and outdoor meeting places and event spaces.
- Resist the loss of existing community uses and buildings.
- Promote a strong sense of community that is diverse and inclusive
- Protect or enhance existing facilities, or create new facilities, for young people.
- Identify sites or buildings that could be developed or used for community or leisure purposes.

A. INTRODUCTION

1. An enormous diversity of activities currently take place within community facilities in Chippenham. The benefits that accrue from these activities come in promoting health and welfare, education and training, and helping to reduce antisocial behaviour. Some community buildings provide only one type of activity, while others provide as diverse a range as possible in response to the needs of the communities they serve. Some community facilities will serve the local area in which they are located, and others are of borough-wide importance. These facilities also ensure that diverse elements of Chippenham's community have the potential to come together, where this might not otherwise be feasible. Public art also has a significant role in place making, particularly in the town centre.
2. The Chippenham of the future will be larger, and will remain an important urban centre for the surrounding rural areas and smaller towns and villages. The Neighbourhood Plan's Community Infrastructure Topic Group reflected that Chippenham has a strong community offer now, but it needs to improve this and be able to cater to new residents if it is to meet its full potential as a cultural and social hub. Both in the past and still continuing, too often new housing estates on the edge of Chippenham are being built without adequate community infrastructure, yet this is 'the glue' that binds new residents together to form new communities. Against this background some existing community buildings in the town are being lost, or their use changed to more profitable uses, particularly where recent permitted development rights apply.
3. Neighbourhood Plan Policy CI1 seeks to ensure that major new development will fully meet the needs for new community infrastructure generated by a scheme, and where it cannot meet that need, make a contribution towards community infrastructure or

public art provision as a commuted sum. It also seeks to protect large buildings in the town centre being lost that could be used for community arts and culture.

B. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

4. The Development Plan for Chippenham is:
 - a. The Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015)
 - b. Chippenham Site Allocations Plan (2017)
 - c. North Wiltshire Local Plan Saved Policies (2006)
 - d. Minerals Core Strategy (2009)
 - e. Waste Core Strategy (2009)

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

5. The following paragraphs of the NPPF are applicable to community infrastructure:

8(b). ‘a social objective - to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being’

28. Non-strategic policies should be used by communities to set out more detailed policies for neighbourhoods. This can include the provision of infrastructure and community facilities at a local level.

92. ‘Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:

(a) promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other - for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages...’

93. ‘To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:

(a) Plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;

- (c) Guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs;
- (d) Ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community'

Wiltshire Core Strategy

6. The following policies of the Wiltshire Core Strategy are applicable to community infrastructure:

Core Policy 3: Infrastructure requirements

This policy requires applicants to liaise with Town Councils and local stakeholders in order to identify community infrastructure requirements to help establish local priorities as well as develop and implement mechanisms for administering funding collected through Community Infrastructure Levy and planning obligations. The policy also requires applicants to work in partnership with infrastructure providers and other stakeholders to identify requirements for, and provision of new, appropriate community infrastructure.

Core Policy 38: Retail and leisure

This policy encourages leisure uses to be located within town centres.

Core Policy 49: Protection of rural services and community facilities

This policy seeks to protect existing community facilities and sets out stringent tests that must be met before community facilities can be lost to a change of use¹. The policy gives preference to retaining the existing use in the first instance, then for an alternative community use. Where this is not possible, a mixed use, which still retains a substantial portion of the community facility/service, will be supported. Redevelopment for non-community service/facility use will only be permitted as a last resort and where all other options have been exhausted.

¹ Though the policy title mentions "rural services", the policy wording does not refer to rural services and does not exclude the consideration of community facilities in urban areas.

C. REVIEW OF EVIDENCE

7. A major piece of evidence into community infrastructure in Chippenham is the results of Neighbourhood Plan community surveys. Please refer to Section D of this Paper for these results.

Wiltshire Children and Young People's Health and Wellbeing Survey

8. The Wiltshire Children and Young People's Health and Wellbeing Survey (2017) reported that NHS guidelines advise at least 60 minutes of exercise a day for people between the ages of 5 and 18 years old. The results from the survey show that 44% of primary school respondents, 50% of secondary school respondents and 32% of year 12/FE respondents reported being physically active 6 or more hours a week. 77% of primary school respondents, 63% of secondary school respondents and 42% of year 12/FE respondents felt they do enough exercise quite often or always to keep themselves healthy.
9. This survey shows that living a healthy lifestyle is important to young people in Wiltshire and the Chippenham NDP must ensure that ample opportunities for healthy lifestyles are available for existing and future young residents.

The Value of Arts and Culture in Place Shaping²

10. In October 2018 Arts Council England commissioned Wavehill Ltd. to deliver a research project to aid their understanding and help them to articulate if and how the arts and cultural offer within a place can attract and retain individuals and businesses and help to shape its identity.
11. The research indicated that a strong arts and cultural offer makes people feel more content and thus more likely to stay within an area. People who view a sense of community as being important to them were most likely to agree that attending arts and culture events helped them feel part of their community.
12. The research indicates that the local arts and cultural offer is a factor, both for people considering moving to an area and for people remaining within an area. Arts and culture was cited as an equal priority to 'schools' in people's decision to move to, or remain in an area. These findings support a notion that a strong local arts and cultural offer can play a role in attracting and retaining workers.
13. A number of research studies have highlighted the local economic impact of arts and culture, including references to financial return on investment, regional performance or contribution to overall UK economic performance. Strategic partners emphasised the value of a strong arts and cultural offer in helping to attract creative entrepreneurs and enterprises who, given their size, can be more flexible in their location decisions. As the creative industries are characterised by a younger workforce, location decisions are more likely to be influenced by places where the local arts and cultural offer is regarded as strong, vibrant and growing. A strong arts

² Wavehill Social and economic research for the Arts Council, August 2019.

and cultural offer is recognised as playing an important role in attracting and retaining talent, in particular graduate companies in the digital and creative industries.

14. There are positive examples from across the UK of towns and cities that are successfully transforming their high streets through the growth of high-quality visitor experiences, increasing integration of service industries into the retail mix and by fundamentally having a better understanding of people's need to visit towns and cities for far more than just 'shopping.' A strong arts and cultural offer can support efforts to maintain or enhance the attractiveness of retail centres as places to live, work and visit by offering unique experiences for visitors and/or shoppers through the animation of public spaces including art works, live performances and opportunities for local cultural identity to be explored and celebrated.
15. A strong arts and cultural offer is a more influential factor for businesses within the retail sector, in particular given its recognised contribution to strengthening the visitor economy and generating footfall.

Audit of Existing Community Infrastructure



16. Members of the Neighbourhood Plan Community Infrastructure Topic Group compiled a contacts list of community infrastructure providers/stakeholders in the town, within the following categories: arts and culture, children's facilities, climate and sustainability, community halls, health and wellbeing, older people, parks, places of worship, schools, sports clubs, and youth groups. The purpose of compiling this list was so that stakeholders could be contacted to give their views via subsequent Neighbourhood Plan community surveys.
17. **Figures 1 and 2** show the main arts and culture venues in Chippenham³.

³ Thank you to Laura Graham-May for the information in Figures 1 and 2

Figure 1 - Publicly Owned Venues That Continue to Provide a Community Function

		
<p>Neeld Community Arts Centre - Chippenham town council 217 seat venue with proscenium arch for hire. Delivers large scale, commercial music acts, comedy and theatre shows. Available for hire for a commercial fee. home to clogs musical theatre performances</p>	<p>Chippenham Museum - Chippenham Town Council. Art gallery, historic displays, workshops, education rooms, creative workshops.</p>	<p>Yelda Hall - Chippenham Town Council Medieval Hall. Can host small scale touring productions, markets, art exhibitions and choirs.</p>
		
<p>Chippenham Library - Wiltshire Council - talks, groups, workshops, book clubs</p>	<p>Wiltshire Swindon History Centre - Wiltshire Council talks, research facilities, meetings, workshops</p>	<p>St Andrews Church (350 seats) - church venue for concerts and choirs. Home to North Wilts Symphony Orchestra, Chippenham Male Voice Choir, Well Boring Charity</p>

Figure 2 - Halls, Pubs and Clubs in the Town Centre

		
<p>King Alfred Hall At St Andrews (80-100 seater)</p>	<p>Rotary Hall - Station Hill</p>	<p>Chippenham Town Hall</p>



Central Methodist Church



Station Hill Baptist Church



The Cocklebury Club



The Three Crowns Pub



The Gladstone Arms



The Flying Monk Tavern



The Prince Of Wales Micropub



The Rivo Lounge



Grounded



The Constitutional Club



D. COMMUNITY VIEWS

18. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group ran a number of online surveys from 23 March to 27 April 2020, three of which are directly relevant to the identification of community infrastructure requirements, summarised in **Table 1**. Questions incorporated within these surveys were designed by members of the Neighbourhood Plan Community Infrastructure Topic Group. The full survey evidence can be viewed in Appendices 7 (Community Survey), 20 (Community Infrastructure Survey) and 21 (Community Groups and Organisations Survey).

Table 1: Online Surveys Relating to Community Infrastructure Needs

Survey	Number of relevant questions	Responder category
Community Survey	19	Users (members of the public)
Community Infrastructure Survey	18	Providers (public buildings, venues and locations)
Community Groups and Organisations Survey	18	Groups (Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise groups)

19. The surveys were launched a few days before the first COVID-19 lockdown. Due to social distancing, many infrastructure providers and groups/organisations may have not been aware of the surveys though every attempt was made to contact them via direct emails and social media.

20. Planning applicants who have a requirement to provide community infrastructure, including for parks and gardens, should refer to the detailed survey responses which are only summarised here.

Community Survey

21. The Community Survey had an overall response rate of 408 and 158 completed responses to the questions on community infrastructure.

22. The Community Survey respondents were older than the Chippenham age profile and it appeared that the survey was slightly skewed towards 40 - 70 year olds, though they may have been answering on behalf of younger residents.

23. Respondents indicated that the most popular activities were:

- Visiting parks and gardens and individual sporting activities such as tennis, running, walking and cycling. John Coles Park was the clear favourite green space followed by Monkton Park.
- Entertainment, including cinema, museums and live music were also popular and the Reel Cinema and Neeld Community and Arts centre were the most popular of these.
- The Olympiad Leisure Centre was the most popular healthy lifestyle venue.

- For children, there was support for after school clubs and sport and dance activities.
- The most popular organised group sporting activities were running, football, cycling and dancing.

24. Overall, John Coles Park and Monkton Park were the most popular venues of any, and the further provision of quality parks must be provided by major new housing schemes. Appendix 7 sets out the detail of why respondents valued these parks but the overall reason was that these spaces were well maintained and attractive. Families appreciate John Coles Park because of the variety of play equipment and splash pad as well as the space available to play sport, walk dogs and ride bikes. Also cited as a positive was the bandstand, nearby parking, markings for runners and the availability of a café and toilets. Monkton Park was valued as a large, clean, open space with good views and good accessibility for all, plus access to the riverside. The survey also indicated a number of improvements that might benefit these parks. Neighbourhood Plan Policy H2 seeks to ensure that new housing schemes provide good quality open spaces, and they should take these examples as their design starting point. The parks and Olympiad centre are shown in **Figure 3**.

Figure 3: Large Recreational Opportunities in Chippenham



John Coles Park



Monkton Park



Olympiad Leisure Centre

25. The Community Survey gives an indication of how CIL funding could be spent on community infrastructure improvements. The most favoured recipients for CIL and other support would be:

- Entertainment, arts and culture
- Climate change and environmental improvement
- Healthy lifestyles
- Children's activities
- Parks, playgrounds and gardens.

When new housing estates are being planned, and where they have a requirement to provide community infrastructure on or off site, these priorities should be considered.

26. Respondents also suggested that new infrastructure was required for children and young people, community activities and support for them, cycling and cycle paths.

Community Infrastructure Survey

27. The Community Infrastructure Survey was designed to gather information and views from Community Infrastructure Providers (e.g. public buildings, venues and locations) rather than residents or providing organisations. A total of 18 responses was received.
28. Most of the respondents provided space for all age groups and for a wide demographic including businesses, community activities and private events.
29. The responding venues were well established and most had been operating for over 10 years and expected to be operational in 5 years' time. None of them were seeking alternative venues. Around three quarters were charities or community groups, and the remainder were private or religious venues.
30. The majority of venues (63%) were owned outright or with a mortgage.
31. The large majority (87%) of the venues were either operating at full capacity or exceeding capacity.
32. This Survey indicates that new housing schemes cannot rely upon existing capacity to be sufficient to meet the needs of significant numbers of new residents. They will need to provide additional facilities such as community halls or rentable public rooms to meet the needs of new residents.

Community Groups and Organisations Survey

33. This Survey was designed to gather information from voluntary, community and social enterprise groups and organisations based in Chippenham. These organisations were in effect the providers of community services that required infrastructure to be provided. 51 providers responded to this survey across a wide range of types of provision.
34. Similar to the venue providers, most of the services were for all age groups, though around a quarter were specifically aimed at children and young people. The majority had also been operating for 10 or more years and virtually all still expected to be operational in 5 years' time.
35. Around a third of the groups were voluntary or community groups, or other groups that were neither charities nor privately owned businesses which together provided around 40% of the services. This would indicate that many of the service providers had small budgets and would not be able to own their premises. Almost all of the respondents did not own their venue. Therefore, moving forward, it will be necessary to have a supply of venues that could be rented or leased.

36. In a similar way to the venues, around 80% of the providers were either full or over-subscribed, indicating that there is a demand for more community service providers or increased capacity.
37. Around two thirds of the responders would like to move to a new facility or site, the most popular being:
- Sports facilities
 - Dance facilities
 - Facilities for young people
 - Small office accommodation.
38. Cost and availability are the two main factors preventing these organisations from moving to a new venue or site.
39. This Survey indicates that new housing schemes that are required to provide new community venues should ensure that they address unmet needs in the community for flexible spaces that can provide venues for sport and dance but also for organisations that meet the needs of young people. When new facilities are planned, it is important that they also provide back office space to help the organisations maintain their administrative processes.

E. DISCUSSION

40. The Chippenham of the future, will be larger, and will be an important urban centre for the surrounding rural areas and smaller towns and villages. It has a strong offer now, but it needs to improve this if it is to meet its full potential as a cultural and social hub. Good open space, interesting cultural opportunities and flexible and attractive community facilities can attract new residents and visitors, and add a sense of vibrancy and buoyancy that will make people proud to be in Chippenham. Public art also has a role to making a quality place, particularly in the town centre.
41. Chippenham has many arts and culture venues (shown in **Figures 1 and 2**). These range from publicly funded venues to small independent establishments. All have a role to play in Chippenham life, and as the survey data shows, are valued by the residents.
42. The town centre is the location for many of the available arts and cultural activities and research has proven that a strong arts and culture sector will have a positive impact on place shaping. A strong arts scene attracts people to an area and keeps them there. As Chippenham town centre struggles with the pressures caused by changed shopping habits and the impact of COVID-19, it is important to use arts, culture and leisure to provide attractive destinations. This will be an important end in itself, but will also help local retailers because it will help increase town centre footfall.
43. In the town centre, funds raised from the Town Council's portion of CIL and developer contributions should support and augment arts and cultural opportunities.
44. The Chippenham community, venues and providers' surveys showed that there is an active community sector providing valued services to local people but that they are all operating at capacity. To maintain this and allow this sector to evolve alongside Chippenham's growing population, it will be necessary to have a supply of new venues that can be rented or leased and sometimes that serve multiple functions. This means that as new development is realised in Chippenham, particularly at strategic allocations, new infrastructure must be provided to meet the needs of the new communities.
45. High quality public open spaces and good new flexible community spaces will be required to allow community and cultural activities grow and thrive. For old and young alike, living a healthy lifestyle is important to local people, and the Chippenham NDP must ensure that ample opportunities for healthy lifestyles are available for existing and future residents.
46. The Chippenham Community, Community Infrastructure, and Community Groups and Organisations Surveys are good starting points for applicants who are designing larger schemes. The surveys indicate where further provision is required and for which groups. The information about individual providers is also available for applicants to consider and they are strongly encouraged to contact these groups individually or through Chippenham Town Council.

F. CONCLUSION

47. The evidence collected by the Neighbourhood Plan's Community Infrastructure Topic Group, and through its community surveys, indicates that current community provision is at capacity and that new development will need to make further provision for community infrastructure in a growing Chippenham. In addition, the currently thriving arts and culture offer could be strengthened by new development.
48. Neighbourhood Plan Policy CI1 seeks to ensure that major new development will fully meet the needs for new community infrastructure generated by a scheme, and where it cannot meet that need contribute towards community infrastructure or public art provision as a commuted sum. It also seeks to protect large buildings in the town centre being lost that could be used for community arts and culture.