



Lechlade-on-Thames Vision for the future



What is the Community Plan?

How it all began

Sometime in 2001, it was becoming clear that local parishes could no longer count on their District Council to fund projects within each parish and that the Government had a desire to place funds for such work in the hands of Regional Assemblies. It was also being suggested that money would only become available to those who could show that the community was involved in making decisions regarding the future of the town. It was already clear that some sources of funding were not open to elected bodies such as the Town Council. A small number of interested individuals representing different parts of the community, decided to set up a Trust that would take on the role of fundraising for projects to enhance the appearance and vitality of the town and gain the support of the community. At the same time, the Countryside Agency were urging small towns to undertake an in depth survey of its needs and so the 'Healthcheck', which we now call "The Community Plan" was born.

Introduction

The first step was to identify the projects within the town. The Countryside Agency produced 200+ questions, which a small team of volunteers sought to answer after intense research. From this a questionnaire was produced and delivered to every household in the town. Nearby villages were also invited to complete this questionnaire. Three public meetings were held, all very well attended, enabling an action plan to be put together. Whilst the community plan identifies various aspects of the town that could be improved, new projects require money. Hopefully funding to enable these ideas to be carried through can be found but, will inevitably take time. We have therefore tried to separate those projects that may be achievable in the short term from those that will take much longer. Some projects will be outside our control and we can only press those responsible for action. The success of ongoing projects will depend upon new volunteers to continue the work started by the current team.





Benefits and Sustainability

The plan will help by:

- Kick starting urgent and achievable projects using local talents and expertise
- Boosting the local economy
- Improving pride in the appearance of the town
- Continue to stimulate further projects

The main concern resulting from our surveys is the retention of shops and other facilities. It is clear that more money must be spent within the town to ensure survival and the most likely way for this to happen is to make the town a nice place to live and work and spend our leisure time. We also want to make Lechlade-on-Thames an attractive place to visitors who will be happy to stay, make use of local walks and historic sites; and spend their money in our shops, restaurants and public houses.



Achievements

The following are examples of what can be achieved by enthusiasm and effort by groups of people:



Skateboard park and youth shelter



Market Square Sign



New Memorial Hall



Slipway at Free Wharf



Pedestrian crossing



All weather court

Ongoing

Here are some of the projects highlighted by the recent community plan and already being acted upon:



Provision of Cashpoint facility



Youth and Community building



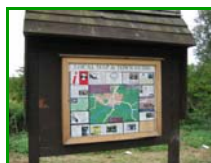
Improve appearance of roundabouts



Production of Walks booklet



Feasibility study on footbridge over river



Historical information display board



Improve signs

Action Plan

Strengths and Weaknesses

Economy

- ◆ Visitor potential
- ◆ Local retail facilities
- ◆ Encourage more visitors
- ◆ Promote the town more efficiently



Social & Community

- ◆ Wide range of clubs and societies
- ◆ Excellent medical centre
- ◆ Welcoming and friendly community
- ◆ Lack of affordable housing
- ◆ Additional facilities for the young
- ◆ Policing and security resources



Traffic & Accessibility

- ◆ Free parking
- ◆ Hospital car service
- ◆ Parking congestion at peak times
- ◆ Traffic calming
- ◆ Heavy Goods Vehicle congestion
- ◆ No evening public transport



Environment

- ◆ Good general environment
- ◆ Proximity of River Thames
- ◆ Historical interest
- ◆ Tidiness and general appearance
- ◆ Improve entrances to the town



Details of actions planned

Eeconomy

- ◆ Promote the town more extensively, through the website, networking and publication materials
- ◆ Maintenance of historic buildings and sites
- ◆ Upgrade existing visitor boards
- ◆ Investigate support network for provision of units and facilities for small businesses
- ◆ Improve appearance of gateways to town
- ◆ Investigate Hidden Britain Scheme
- ◆ Undertake parking survey, establish and promote use of existing sites, investigate alternative sites
- ◆ Investigate establishing a working party between retailers and tourist establishments
- ◆ Investigate residents passports to encourage local shopping

Traffic & Accessibility

- ◆ Lobby CDC and GCC to improve and maintain roads and pavements
- ◆ Investigate methods to slow traffic
- ◆ Survey use of bus service and lobby operators to maintain vital services
- ◆ Ensure removal of railway bridge as part of planning consent for new development





Social & Community

- ◆ Discuss possibility of providing easier access to Medical Centre, eg automatic doors
- ◆ Investigate transport provisions for young people
- ◆ Extend Neighbourhood Watch scheme
- ◆ Investigate future provision of affordable housing
- ◆ Install CCTV Scheme to cover main areas of the town
- ◆ Provide street lighting in areas which are currently unlit, eg Wharf Lane to St John's Priory Park

Environment

- ◆ Investigate additional refuse collection points, particularly in town centre and increase awareness of litter dropping throughout the parish
- ◆ Maintain footpaths and link surrounding villages via cycle routes
- ◆ Encourage greater participation in "Lechlade in Bloom"
- ◆ Investigate provision of additional seating in Market Place
- ◆ Provision of Farmers' Market
- ◆ Plant trees to retain green spaces within the town
- ◆ Tidy the large number of signs in the Market Square
- ◆ Create new bird hide around wildlife lake



Volunteers needed

In order for these projects to be progressed it is essential that we encourage volunteers to help continue the work already started. If you feel you are able to help with any of the projects, please let us know by telephoning The Town Clerk (252338) or Don Gillard (253738) or by email to clerk@lechladeonthames.co.uk.

Further information

A comprehensive booklet is being produced giving full details of the community plan including the 200+ questions and answers used to produce the plan. This booklet will be available to purchase from the Town Office. A reference copy will be available in the Library.

Thanks

Thanks go to the many people of Lechlade who have contributed in one form or another to progress the community plan to this stage. Especial acknowledgement goes to the Gloucestershire Market Town Forum, Gloucestershire Rural Community Council and Cotswold District Council, in particular the Market Towns' Officer.

Thanks also go to a number of individuals who have made major contributions; too many to mention by name.

Front cover: aerial shot by courtesy of Seeba Films

