

Community asset ownership

Many communities in Wiltshire are keen to secure the future of much loved local facilities such as pubs and village halls and would like to see the best possible use of other assets such as high street shops and derelict land.

Community asset ownership can be one way of channelling the resourcefulness of local groups to take over and transform properties for the benefit of the whole community.

This leaflet explains what tools and opportunities are available in Wiltshire to help you protect or transform assets that are of value to your community, and what you have to do to get started. It tells you who you need to contact in Wiltshire Council, and what other sources of help and advice are available.



What assets are important to your community?

You may already have in mind the assets that you would like to see preserved for future community use – these could include the last pub or shop in the village, community meeting space or other facilities currently owned by Wiltshire Council or another public body. As well as your local knowledge, there are a number of other sources of information which your local community may already have on valued local assets. This can include any Parish plan or any emerging neighbourhood (spatial) plan.

You may like to ask yourself the following questions:

1. What land and/or buildings in your community really matter to your community? Why?
 - Their current service use (eg a community hall, a park, the last pub in the village)
 - Their potential use (eg a strategically placed derelict site or building, which could become a community hub)
2. Who owns it now?
3. If the building is currently empty, and perhaps has not been used for a while, what is the reason?
4. Do you see ways the asset could be better used for community benefit under existing ownership?
5. If the asset is publicly or privately owned and were to come up for sale, is community ownership viable? For what use? On what terms (e.g. discounted sale or long lease)?

Having considered these questions, you can decide what action to take, based on the tools described in the middle of this leaflet.

Where can you get help?

Wiltshire Council provides dedicated support in the form of Community Area Managers who can advise you on the tools you could use to save valued assets for local people. They can be contacted via the council switchboard or email (firstname.lastname@wiltshire.gov.uk).

Community Area

Amesbury
Bradford on Avon
Calne
Chippenham
Corsham
Devizes
Malmesbury
Marlborough
Melksham
Pewsey
Salisbury
Southern Wiltshire
South West Wiltshire
Tidworth
Trowbridge
Warminster
Westbury
Royal Wootton Bassett & Cricklade

Community Area Manager

Karen Linaker
Peter Dunford
Jane Vaughan
Vicky Welsh
Dave Roberts
Richard Rogers
Miranda Gilmour
Andrew Jack
Alison Sullivan
Caroline Brailey
Marianna Dodd
Tom Bray
Stephen Harris
Mary Cullen
Rachel Efemey
Jacqui Abbott
Sally Hendry
Penny Bell

It may also be useful to start a discussion involving public bodies with an interest in the area, local voluntary and community groups, local businesses and other private landowners. This could involve forums such as the shadow Community Operation Boards (set up to deliver new campuses), Community Area Partnerships, and the Parish and Town Councils. Your community area manager could help you with this.

What other sources of help are there?

In Wiltshire:

- Community Area Managers can be contacted about Area Board grants which might be used to support community ownership of assets.
<http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/council/areaboards/areaboardscommunitygrantsscheme.htm>
- Community First offer practical help, support and grants for setting up things like community owned village shops. Contact Tim Coomer on 01380 732812 or see:
<http://www.communityfirst.org.uk/index.php/local-enterprise/store-is-the-core>
- Wiltshire Community Land Trust can offer advice on establishing local community land trusts to manage property and associated funding. Contact Rose Seagrief on 01380 850916 or via rose@wiltshireclt.org.uk

A wide range of support is also available nationally:

- Locality's My Community Rights website provides details on a range of government grants: www.mycommunityrights.org.uk
- Community Matters offer grants for community centres: www.communitymatters.org.uk
- Community Shares can be an effective way of raising money in the community to take on an asset:
<http://www.communityshares.org.uk/>
- The Plunkett Foundation offer advice and support for establishing cooperative shops and pubs www.plunkett.co.uk

