

<b>Report to</b>	<b>Chippenham Area Board</b>
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>July 4th 2011</b>
<b>Title of Report</b>	<b>Graffiti Wall Project for Chippenham</b>

### **Purpose of Report**

To ask Councillors to consider supporting the proposal for a designated graffiti wall in Chippenham.

### **Officer Recommendations**

Officers recommend that Chippenham Area Board supports the proposal for a six month pilot for a graffiti wall to be designated on the walls under the Gladstone Road Bridge in Chippenham. This will be run in conjunction with Chippenham Town Council, Wiltshire Council Highways and Wiltshire Police.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1. There has been an increase in graffiti attacks around Chippenham. The Police have recently caught an offender, who will as part of his punishment be cleaning his tags from around the town.
- 1.2. The Police have suggested that an area be designated as a graffiti wall, where the young people could express themselves in exchange for not graffitiing property around the town. Inspector Cox has provided a statement in support of this initiative.
- 1.3. Consultation at the bridge centre was used to confirm that young people would welcome an official site so that the artists can spend more time devoted to creating art. This will in turn create higher quality images without risk of arrest.
- 1.4. If this could be in place by the Summer Holidays Wiltshire Police can then add this as good news, to a press release about Graffiti generally, citing the recent arrest and clean up requirement, but also a positive way forward to address the issue.
- 1.5. A charter will be posted up alongside the wall to be adhered to by all using the wall. (See Appendix 1). This will be agreed in consultation with young people.
- 1.6. Approaches have been made to Chippenham Town Council, Wiltshire Police and Wiltshire Council, Highways, and Youth Services, to gauge opinion. This was generally positive, dependant on an appropriate location.
- 1.7. The Police and Wiltshire Council Community Safety staff have visited three possible sites around the centre of Chippenham.

## **2. Main Considerations**

- 2.1. The first site considered was the rear of the Millennium Wall.
- 2.2. This does not have any graffiti on it currently as it has been recently restored, and was therefore not thought to be suitable to use. It also does not provide any shelter and is already a piece of art in its own right.
- 2.3. This leaves two sites for consideration by the Area Board
- 2.4. The first site (Appendix 2) is under the Westmead Bridge, over Avenue La Fleche. Both sides are currently heavily adorned with graffiti. This site is on the outskirts of the town.
- 2.5. Both sides of the bridge wall have footpaths and with guard rails, and the area is undercover.
- 2.6. The second site (Appendix 3) is located under the first road bridge off of Avenue la Fleche into Gladstone Road, by the Weir (Gladstone Road Bridge).

- 2.7. The walls under the bridge by the river already have graffiti on them and the Police patrol in this area as part of their normal patrol, so can keep an eye on the area and build up a rapport with the artists.
- 2.8. There is a pavement running alongside this wall and the area is undercover.
- 2.9. A wide variety of people already use this area including people walking into town, cyclists, fishermen and current graffiti artists, providing "Capable guardians".

### **3. Risks**

- 3.1. The Police feel that the first site is more difficult area to patrol than the second one, due to a more rural location.
- 3.2. Any increased threat to the wildlife at either site, compared to what is currently faced is deemed to be low as people already use both areas. Graffiti artists should not be deviating from the laid tarmac footpaths.
- 3.3. Both sites are susceptible to flooding in cases of extreme bad weather. The second site is set much further back from the river, but in a worst case scenario would be off limits until the water levels subsided again.
- 3.4. Care would need to be taken after a period of flooding due to the sloping banks being slippery, but evidence of use in this area already indicates people can cope with this risk.
- 3.5. Trespass on the actual bridge structure could risk significant harm. However this risk is present, regardless of an agreed graffiti wall. Graffiti artists would be encouraged to follow the charter attached.

### **4. Other Research**

- 4.1 Other parts of the Country have had successful graffiti projects including Bristol and Aberdeen See Appendix 4.

### **5. Environmental & Community Implications**

Graffiti is normally a criminal offence. The idea is to allow people to use the wall where they will not be charged with criminal damage, in exchange for agreeing not to graffiti elsewhere in town. This would be seen as a two way mutual respect agreement and fits with the principals of Local Resolution, and also encouraging community participation in addressing issues. The Police will then crack down on any graffiti that they find in town, signposting artists to an agreed graffiti site.

### **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1 There are no financial implications directly related to this report although a future

bid to the Area Board has been cited as possible, to provide for an Art competition if pilot is successful.

## **7. Legal Implications**

- 7.1. We are not aware of any specific Legal implications related to this report, however the Highways Bridge Engineer has been asked to consider this proposal in respect of any liability due to Wiltshire Councils ownership of the bridge.

## **8. HR Implications**

- 8.1. There are no specific HR implications related to this report.

## **9. Equality and Inclusion Implications**

- 9.1. There are no equality and inclusion implications related to this report.

## **10. Officer recommendations**

Officers recommend that Chippenham Area Board supports the proposal for a six month pilot for a graffiti wall to be designated on the walls under the Gladstone Road Bridge in Chippenham. This will be run in conjunction with Chippenham Town Council, Wiltshire Council Highways and Wiltshire Police.

<b>Appendices:</b>	<b>Appendix 1 Graffiti Charter Appendix 2 Photographs of Westmead site Appendix 3 Photographs of Gladstone Bridge site Appendix 4 Summary of other local authorities examples</b>
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**No unpublished documents have been relied upon in the preparation of this report.**

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