

Wiltshire Council

Chippenham Area Board

10 September 2013

Item 8 – Chippenham Skate Park Task Group Report

Alison Lewin, Chippenham Resident

Question 6

As Monkton Park users with small children and grandchildren, my friends & I are horrified by the prospects of the imposition of a skate park into what is such a delightful, peaceful & restful area for relaxation . We are especially worried about the proximity & scale of such a facility adjacent to the toddlers play area. It is bound to be worrying for those who go to the play area with small kids, as the noise and language would often be quite frightening & to some intimidating. Why has more weight not been given to this issue, especially since proximity to a children's playground was given earlier as a main reason not to go ahead with a different site? Why can't the Bristol Rd site be used when this would not cause any such problems?

Response

The park is already an active space used by a large number of people from a range of backgrounds and the evidence is that it's beneficial to all groups if we can encourage the whole community to share space and get to know each other. The issue of proximity to the toddler's area has been considered and in fact it can be seen as a positive reason for setting the skatepark adjacent to the play area. Skateparks have a history of older skaters actually supporting and encouraging younger skaters and it can be a very collaborative experience. In addition the ages of those using skateparks can run from 8 upwards so there will already be a mix of ages using the facility. Part of the reason why some people find some young people "intimidating" is that they don't know them and by having children, young people and adults sharing the same space the hope is that they can all get to know each other, break down barriers and build good community relations. There is no evidence that skateparks have a greater incidence of poor behaviour than other facilities and the expectation is that the skaters will manage the behaviour of other users as it's in their interests to ensure that everyone using the facility behaves in a reasonable manner. The Area Manager for the Integrated Youth Service confirms that he has no evidence and is unaware of any published research which supports the position that putting children's and young people's facilities close to each other is detrimental to either group.

See Skatepark report 2.4

Charter Road (2) site - "The existing play area owned by Chippenham Town Council would have to be moved" – this note was made by the STG because of insufficient space, not because of anticipated issues between the age groups.

Bristol Road has been considered by the STG.

See Skatepark report 1.4.12.5.5 & 4.5