

'Teen Takeover' events in Chippenham prove popular

A series of events took place in Chippenham recently

Published 8 May 2024

More than 400 young people took part in a range of free events, activities and workshops held in Chippenham last weekend (27 to 28 April) as part of a pilot Teen Takeover programme which was attended by a gold medallist Olympian.

The events were organised as part of a new initiative led by the Local Youth Network (LYN), formed by the Chippenham Area Board, to showcase the current youth provision that is available in the Chippenham area and engage more young people within the local community .

Young people aged 13 to 19 (up to 24 for people with SEND) were invited to take part in a variety of activities and workshops across the town, such as hip-hop poetry photography, youth democracy, martial arts, climbing, mindfulness, music, street dance and stand-up comedy. Participants were also offered a free lunch, provided by Sheldon Road Methodist Church and Chippenham Sports Club.

More than 30 organisations were involved across the weekend including Chippenham Youth Theatre, Rag and Bone Arts CIC, Bargammon's Tavern Board Game Café, Riverbank Studios, The Rise Trust and the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre.

Chippenham Sports Club also hosted a family open day on Sunday 28 April, where attendees were encouraged to try out a range of sporting activities and Team GB's Ladies Hockey Captain, Hollie Pearne-Webb MBE, hosted a hockey and skills taster session.

Wiltshire Council's Cabinet Member for Communities, Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling, said:

"It was great that so many young people were having fun and getting involved in all of the free events and activities happening across Chippenham at the weekend. I'm sure it was inspirational to have a session led by an Olympian and we thank Hollie Pearne-Webb for taking part.

"It's a key priority in our Business Plan to create a strong and cohesive society and by giving our residents good access to leisure, arts, heritage and culture. Our area boards are designed to help make things happen in the local community and to work with our local groups and organisations to put on events such as the Teen Takeover, making a positive difference for residents of all ages. If our young people can also find a new hobby or interest at the same time, this is a great added bonus!"

Cllr Liz Alstrom, co-chair of the Local Youth Network, said:

"Our Teen Takeover weekend was a resounding success! Seeing the participants enthusiastically engaging in the different activities available was incredibly rewarding. With the cost-of-living crisis affecting so many families, we wanted to ensure there was no barrier to participation, which is why it was vital that the activities were free. It's events like these that really does highlight the crucial importance of investing in youth provision. By providing opportunities for our young people to engage in local activities alongside their peers, we're fostering a strong sense of belonging and empowerment, ultimately making them feel like valued members of our community.

"We have already received great feedback, and enquiries from other organisations wanting to take part in the next Teen Takeover, so we do hope to bring this beneficial event back to the young people of Chippenham again in the future.

"My thanks go out to Persimmon and The Chippenham Area Board for providing the funding, and to my colleagues on the Local Youth Network for their support in bringing this event to fruition, with particular mention to my Co-Chair Cllr Kathryn Macdermid, and colleagues in the council's communities team."

Persimmon Wessex Managing Director, Julian Roper, said:

"As a prominent local business with a proud record of delivery in Chippenham, we were delighted to support Wiltshire Council's Teen Takeover through our Community Champions initiative and our partnership with Team GB, which secured the attendance of the brilliant Hollie Pearne-Webb.

"As we embark on a new development at the former Ambulance Station in the town, we're determined to leave a positive and lasting legacy where we build, and we hope our support helped provide a weekend of wonderful experiences for young people in Chippenham."

Funding for the events was provided by Persimmon and a grant from Chippenham Area Board.

To find out more about the Area Boards, what they do and the grants that are available, people can visit [Area Board webpage](#) (opens new window).