

White Horse

EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP LIMITED



Annual Report 2006

for Wiltshire County Council

Prepared May 2007

1. Organisation Management

1.1 Service Providers



The service provider for the North Wiltshire Schools PFI contract is GSL (UK) Limited, who employs directly the Service Delivery Managers, Cleaners and Schools Services Technicians (SSTs).

The GSL Customer Service Centre provides the initial service response, and handles lettings management.

Pre-planned maintenance is also managed in-house by the GSL facilities management organisation, who provide mobile technicians, and manage specialist subcontracts such as water treatment, window cleaning and lift maintenance.

All activities are supported by GSL central support functions, providing health & safety, procurement, human resource, quality systems and improvement guidance and management, and IT support.



Catering services are sub-contracted through GSL to Aramark.

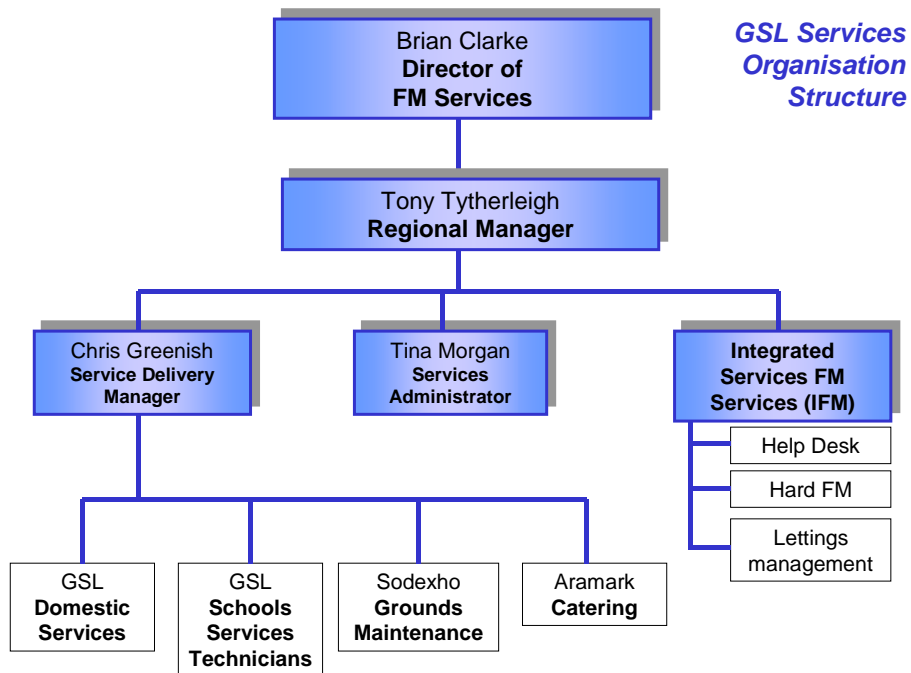


Grounds Maintenance is subcontracted to Sodexho Land Technology.

1.2 Organisation and Responsibilities

1.2.1 Organisational Structure

An outline of the GSL organisational structure, showing areas of responsibility, is shown in the chart below.



HEADCOUNT AS AT END OF 2006					
	SST's	Cleaning Supervisor	Deputy Cleaning Supervisor	Cleaners	
Malmesbury	2	1	0	12	
Wootton Bassett	2	1	1	11	
Abbeyfield	2	1	0	9	
TOTAL	6	3	1	32	42
Total Cleaners inclusive of Supervisors				32	
			Facility Services Co-ordinator		1
			Administrator		
TOTAL GSL HEADCOUNT					43
TOTAL STAFF					43

1.2.2 Service Delivery Managers

Chris Greenish is the Service Delivery Manager for the contract. He is based at our offices in Chippenham.



Chris co-ordinates all aspects of the services, and works closely with the staff at all three schools to ensure compliance with the service level agreement.

1.2.3 Services Administrator

Tina Morgan is the Services Administrator and is also based at our offices in Chippenham. Tina looks after all areas of administration, including procurement and employee matters, and also acts as a vital link between the Help Desk and the operational team to ensure that all reported jobs are dealt with within the service level agreement of the contract.

1.2.4 Schools Services Technicians (SSTs)

There are two Schools Services Technicians (SSTs) employed at each of the schools.

Traditionally known as school caretakers, the Schools Services Technician role has been changed to include a level of handyman maintenance which involves routine pre-planned maintenance as well as traditional caretaking services such as:

- opening and securing of buildings
- routine inspection of plant rooms
- gritting and snow clearance
- distribution of parcels and mail throughout the schools
- planned testing of the fire and security systems
- portable appliance electrical testing
- quick response service to spillages and other incidents
- quick response to plumbing, electrical and fabric damage.



The Schools Services Technicians (SSTs) are also responsible for opening the schools and preparing rooms and areas of the schools for lettings.



1.3 Staff Retention

Services staff were transferred under TUPE at Wootton Bassett and Malmesbury schools. Staff at Abbeyfield were recruited for the new school. Turnover is now stable, and the overall retention level of 75% is better than the national average for similar services.

1.4 Improvement initiatives

GSL have made a commitment to achieve the Investors in Excellence Standard, and during 2006 a company-wide initiative was launched to involve all GSL staff in business improvement, encouraging a cycle of review and improvement through monitoring and feedback.

The initiative provides a framework for pursuing continuous improvement and also provides an umbrella for achievements such as Investors in People, ISO Standards and Charter Mark. Within this framework, we place behaviours, activities and initiatives, which gives us a 'total quality management' approach.

Led by senior management, we are working to encourage reviews and measurements that enable continuous improvement of our business processes, allowing us to identify improvements and efficiencies throughout the contract period and also to respond to our customers' changing requirements, facilitating a partnership approach to service development and performance improvement.

As part of our improvement initiative, we have introduced independent customer satisfaction surveys to monitor perception of our service. These surveys are carried out by our Managing Director, Chris Elliott, and are therefore independent of the team managing the contract on a daily basis. This provides a fresh perspective, and ensures a more objective view of the issues raised. The satisfaction score achieved in 2006 was 74%. We are due to carry out another survey shortly and would expect to improve on our overall percentage rating. An end user survey has also been distributed and once these results have been analysed, we will take follow up action as appropriate to try to continue raising our high level of employee and customer satisfaction.

Our aim is to improve our scores through achievement of continuous improvement in our service delivery, keeping promises and delighting customers with perfect service. We strive to be a growing and caring organisation that achieves the finest results.

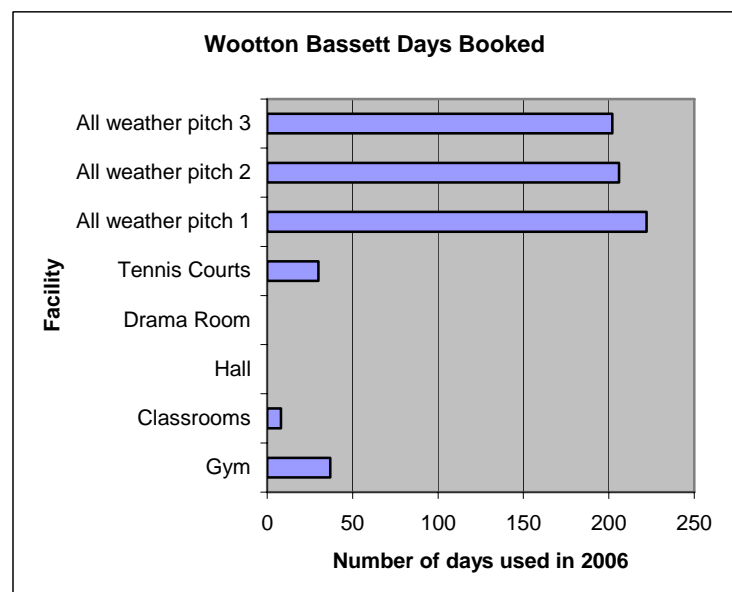
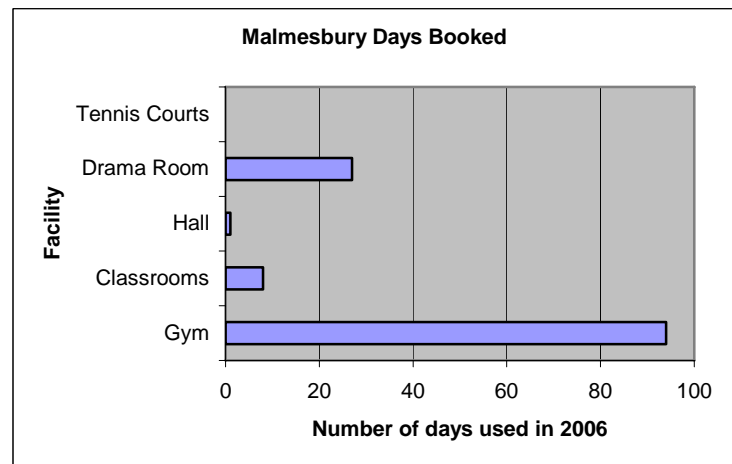
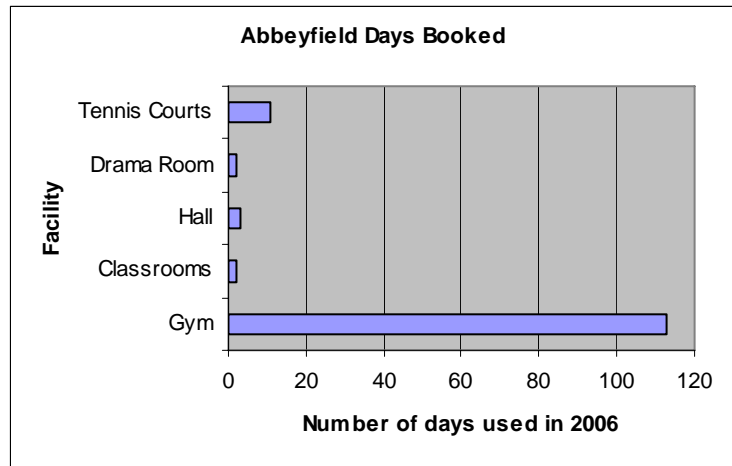
1.5 Community Use of Facilities

Our main priority is to ensure that the facilities are always available to the schools, in accordance with our service level agreement, but the school facilities are made available to the public outside school hours and when regulations and practicality allow.

Summaries of 2006 lettings by school and facility are shown in the charts below.

The requirements of the Public Entertainments Licence, and specific restrictions of usage by our insurers mean that we have to be selective about when we let the facilities, but we do everything we can to maximise these opportunities.

As anticipated last year, it has been necessary to increase lettings costs this year due to the increase in utility costs.



2. Service Reports

2.1 Customer Service Centre

The Customer Service Centre is the hub of information and response within our organisation.



Action requirements are relayed through the Customer Service Centre to our service teams, and monitored to ensure they are addressed promptly and effectively.

Customer Service Centre staff are given specific training in customer service and communications, and present a customer-focused front line response, whether by telephone, or email.

The Customer Service Centre is the focal point of our interface with the schools, ensuring that matters arising receive attention, and providing and collating the statistical information essential for performance monitoring and continuous improvement.

Flexibility has been built into the service, allowing direct contact with the SSTs on site for quick response jobs. The information regarding the job is then passed on to the Customer Service Centre for the purpose of record keeping.

2.2 Building Maintenance

This activity is managed directly by the GSL in-house building maintenance team (IFMS), who employ a team of mobile technicians, and manage a number of specialist sub-contractors from our operational headquarters in Worksop.

Where possible, we employ local suppliers in order to provide the quickest response times possible in the event of breakdown of equipment.

All pre-planned maintenance (PPM) is carried out during half term and holiday times, to avoid noise and disturbance to the schools.

In 2005 all PPM was completed on schedule, with no disruption to school activities.



2.3 Cleaning and Domestic Services

The contract employs 32 cleaning staff over the three schools, including 4 supervisory staff.

These employees are directly employed by GSL UK Limited and report through Cleaning Supervisors to a Service Delivery Manager, who is responsible for monitoring service levels.

Random daily audits are carried out to ensure that the highest levels of cleanliness are maintained.

Independent monthly audits are carried out, with reports sent directly to the Director of Facilities Management Services.

Turnover of cleaning staff for the period January – December 2006 was 30% and GSL is reviewing the pay and conditions of employment to improve staff retention. The high standards of cleaning have been maintained.

Litter dropped by pupils and chewing gum damage continues to be a major issue, and we work with head teachers to address and reduce this problem.



2.4 Grounds and Playing Field Maintenance

GSL are responsible, through their Sodexo subcontract, for the ongoing provision of Grounds Maintenance services over the three schools. As we enter our fourth season we believe we are better placed than ever to offer the best possible professional Grounds Maintenance service available to service the sites. These are consistent, loyal and motivated staff who have proved their absolute commitment to service delivery.



The day to day responsibility for meeting the service specification and taking on board feedback from GSL and the schools themselves rests with the site management team. This team, headed by Tony Wootton and Alan Stevens, ensures a wealth of horticultural experience is available to the sites. Both Tony and Alan are directly supported by Sue Wyatt, the Contract Administrator who continues to be the main contact for all enquiries relating to the grounds.

The Wiltshire contract is fully supported by the Sodexo divisional team who can provide additional expertise in specialist fields:

Regional Director	James Lloyd
Human Resources Manager	Kelly Bater
Training and Development	Alex Howard
Fleet and Plant Management	Pat Dunn and Miles Leach
Health and Safety	Bill Blackborow
Quality Management	Fiona Storrs and Rob Hardman

The service portfolio ranges from the normal day to day routines of grass cutting and shrub bed maintenance, through to more challenging work such as ongoing improvements to the sports field, and the monitoring and removal of dangerous notifiable weeds like ragwort in the conservation areas.

As we commence the summer program of grass cutting, sports marking, ornamental hedge cutting, pruning, select spraying, and summer shrub bed maintenance, we will assess the effectiveness of the past winter maintenance program of sports markings, spiking, harrowing, rolling, leaf collection,

pruning winter shrubs, bed maintenance and field hedge cutting. Each year we re-assess the sites and our programs of works to ensure that we have the right balance. For example, we check the suitability and success of fertiliser for the pitches and that we have the correct maintenance program in place as the sports pitches develop. Insufficient fertiliser will result in a weak grass root system leading to faster wear and tear of the grass pitch surface. Too much fertiliser will burn the grass and can lead to over stimulation of the leaf that cannot be supported by the root system. Maintaining the correct balance can only be achieved by careful management of the pitches to ensure continuous improvements are achieved year on year.



Health & Safety continues to be one of our key strengths and our commitment to the sites remains one of our top priorities. We continue to train our staff and develop our relationship with GSL to ensure we all meet our obligations under Health & Safety. By working in partnership with our clients, we ensure we take an active role in preventing accidents to both the public we serve and our own employees. We bring safe and professional grounds maintenance services to a relationship built on partnership and dependability.

Our ISO 14001 Environmental Management System was assessed again in 2006, and registration retained following the annual assessment by our external registration body.

Our Management System was specifically designed to assist us in protecting the environment on sites like these. It enables us to control the processes of delivering our service effectively, ensuring they have the least harmful effect on the environment at any stage in their life cycle, either by avoiding pollution or minimising the depletion of natural resources. Our commitment to reducing our environmental impact in this area can be seen through our recycling of green waste, and recently the replacement of our entire fleet of commercial diesel vehicles with the very latest cleaner air engines. All of our vehicle engines now comply with the Euro 4 emissions legislation. This means we are achieving 50% reductions in oxides of nitrogen (NOx) and 40% reductions in particulates below the previous stage 3 levels.

To further reduce our carbon footprint in North Wiltshire we have also started a program to identify where we can procure a greater volume of locally sourced products, such as trees and shrubs grown in Wiltshire rather than flown in from the continent or driven great distances. Wherever possible we now source bulk aggregates and general materials from local suppliers further helping to reduce haulage emissions and costs.



We have undertaken many projects to improve and enhance the local environment at the schools, for example:

- Supplying and planting new shrubs in gaps in the shrub beds at Wootton Bassett
- Planting replacement trees at Abbeyfield and Wootton Bassett
- Repairing long jump pits at Corn Gaston and Abbeyfield
- New Practice Cricket frames supplied and erected at Wootton Bassett and Malmesbury schools
- Badger sets fenced off for safety reasons at Abbeyfield School.
- All winter prunings were chipped and put back on to the shrub beds
- Repairing vandalised gates at Abbeyfield
- Repairs to vandalised chain link fence at Corn Gaston.
- Fencing repairs at Wootton Bassett School
- Top soiling vermin holes and rabbit scrapes on playing fields at Abbeyfield and Wootton Bassett.
- Top soiling & seeding wet or uneven surfaces on all fields at Corn Gaston

Learning & Development

In addition to investment in the learning and development of contract staff, we have just made a substantial capital investment in another brand new set of tractor drawn trail gangs. These will be used to cut the larger playing fields and open areas, replacing the existing set. The equipment was delivered in February ahead of this season and their introduction was complimented by on site training given to operators in March by the manufacturers Hayter's. This will create a positive impact by improving our performance in the maintenance of playing fields yet further.

Refresher training has been rolled out again this winter using our Training Manuals to ensure that all our staff are fully re-inducted into the company, are aware of our company core values, receive foundation Health and Safety training and are competent to operate any equipment they use. The ongoing personnel training plans and staff appraisals for all staff will also help us to identify individual improvement targets. Our proactive personnel training plan and staff appraisals for all staff help us to identify individual improvement targets, some such as shrub pruning training has already been done.

Quality & Customer Care

We were successfully recommended for re-certification of our BS EN ISO 9001-2000 Management System following another extensive audit by SGS Yardsley in January 2007. As part of our commitment to improving the overall service we provide to the sites, we gave refresher training on our Training Manuals to ensure that all our staff are fully re-inducted into the systems, are aware of our core values, receive foundation Health and Safety training and are competent to operate any equipment they use.

Customer focus is reinforced by our re-certification to **Investors in People**. This standard sets out good practise for the training and development within our organisation in order to achieve the aims and objectives of the business as set out in our rolling three year plan. The two systems will work alongside each other to ensure we achieve our aims for service delivery on the sites.

2.5 Catering



Catering for the schools is provided by Aramark. The local team have a very positive, open relationship with both GSL and the Wiltshire Schools and have learnt a great deal about the individual tastes and expectations of the children. They intend to continually develop their menus with new products and menus.

Food Choice: Each site continues to provide a range of hot, cold and soft drinks, freshly baked hand held snacks, cereals and fresh fruit at breakfast and morning break. The lunch service includes a salad bar or takeaway salad box, selection of sandwiches / rolls / baguettes and a choice of freshly prepared hot entrées and hot and cold desserts.

The Government introduced new legislation in September 2006 - 'Food Based Requirements for School Lunches' on the recommendations of the School Food Trust. This prohibits the sale of confectionery, 'fizzy' drinks and salty snacks and restricts the frequency that deep fried food, savoury snacks and manufactured meat products can feature on the weekly menu.

We continue to promote and advise on the benefits of Healthy Eating, and ensure a range of healthy options are always available across the range of food choices that are provided. This year we have further developed our 'health by stealth' approach to ensure that our meals and snacks actively contribute towards the 'Five a Day' intake of fresh fruit and vegetables.



Hospitality Catering continues to be provided to each school upon request and this includes beverages, working breakfasts & lunches, buffets and canapés.



Audits: All sites have regularly been audited by ARAMARK covering the key areas of Health & Safety, Food Safety, Procurement and Financial Controls. In addition the Local Authority has visited to undertake a review of the Food Service provision in light of the changes required to meet the new Government guidelines, and to assess each Schools 'Healthy School' status, for which the catering operation is now a fundamental element.

Events & Meetings: School Open Days and Parents Evenings have been attended by members of the ARAMARK Management team. This has allowed Parents to ask any catering related questions and for us to promote the Catering Services in support of maximising uptake.

Julie Lardie, ARAMARK's Dietician, has addressed three assembly meetings at Abbeyfield, attended a Governors Meetings at Malmesbury and reviewed the menus and catering services at Wootton Bassett to ensure awareness and compliance of the new Food for Schools Initiatives. These meetings have been beneficial to keep Governors, Staff and Pupils informed of Catering Developments.

ARAMARK continue to support and sponsor prizes for Food Technology related activities and Celebration of Success evenings.

Staff Training & Development: All Catering staff have received refresher training covering Food Hygiene, Health & Safety and COSHH. In May, all grades of staff from all three schools will be attending the new VRQ (Vocational Related Qualification) Level 1 Providing a Healthier School Meals Service. This is the Gold Standard training qualification recommended by the School Food Trust.



Financial Viability: Implementing the new Government Guidelines on Healthy School Meals has been challenging and continues to be difficult. External competition (from vending facilities in the adjacent Leisure Centres, to local shops and vendors sometimes parked at the school gates), ready to provide students with the food options that we are no longer allowed to serve, has had a negative impact on our sales. In September sales were reduced by as much as 40% at one site. However, through the innovation and perseverance of the Catering Managers, the year on year reduction in sales has been improved to a shortfall of 13% as at the end of March 2007. This is a better than the average result for the sector.

Current Issues: Pressure on Lunch service times together with the already limited seating capacity on each site, continues to put pressure on Student participation levels. These restrictions also contradict Government policy that students should be encouraged to eat a balanced healthy meal and not a quick snack. Discussions continue with Abbeyfield and Malmesbury to agree an acceptable way forward that meets the needs of all interested parties. Wootton Bassett has invested in an extension to the seating area in their dining facility, which was completed in March 2007.

Initiatives: To help compensate the impact of implementing the School Food Trust guidelines we have introduced milk bars at Malmesbury and Wootton Bassett and a Juice Bar at Abbeyfield. These new services have been welcomed and the product range continues to evolve to maximise the sales potential, reduce queuing and maintain interest. With the onset of warmer weather we are introducing fresh fruit pots, fresh yoghurt bars and fruit juice iced lollies. Menus are being posted on school websites to provide parents, staff and students the opportunity to see what is available.



The Cashless System is a 'work in progress' initiative and is expected to be trialled at Wootton Bassett School later this year.

The online packed lunch ordering system which has been trialled at Abbeyfield has to date had limited parental interest. We are considering a makeover of the website prior to a re-launch later in the year.

We continue to work with each School as additional 'New Standards for Food in Schools' are implemented in September 2007 (food other than lunch) and September 2008 (nutrient based standards), to ensure full implementation of these Government policies whilst continuing to highlight the effect that some of these policies may have on the financial viability of the catering service.

2.6 Parents and Staff Questionnaire

At the request of WCC a questionnaire was sent out by WHEP via the three schools newsletters. The aim was to gain an indication of how the schools were perceived, what was good or poor about them and how they compared with non-PFI schools in Wiltshire.

Response overall was very poor and the number of answers could not be seen as statistically viable but some indications were:

- The school buildings were good and designed well
- Cleaning was good
- Changing rooms, toilets, halls were not liked
- Catering provision is good and follows nutritional guidelines
- Outside play area could be better

3. Words from White Horse Education Partnership

WHEP is the Special Purpose Company (SPC) which “owns” and manages the three schools and is in effect the Landlord to WCC. WHEP maintains a presence on site frequently through the SPC General Manager and meets formally six times a year with WCC representatives and the Head Teachers and Finance Managers of the schools.

The relationship between WHEP and WCC is maintained as a contractual partnership. WCC and WHEP both view the standards of the schools against required criteria, with WHEP contracting its Facilities Management partner to provide the services including building maintenance, decoration, repair, grounds maintenance, catering. WHEP must keep the schools and facilities fully available or suffer a financial penalty.

WHEP and GSL also respond to changing requirements in the schools. Many building projects or equipment installations are requested by the schools and WHEP approves and incorporates these changes as well as arranging building contractors to undertake the work, overseeing the quality and ensuring Lifecycle funds are appropriately spent. In this way WHEP assists the schools meet their changing curriculum requirements.

WHEP manages the Lifecycle funds that have been allocated at the beginning of the project and allocates and approves these funds for use by GSL. The Lifecycle funds pay for such things as decoration, carpets and door replacements in the early years along with fencing, ceiling tiles and ceiling decoration and later on playground footpaths, car park, drainage are all catered for as are roofs, boilers, electrical installations, kitchens, heating systems, and all other items, so that the whole is kept in the required condition.

In order to complete the above GSL prepares a rolling five year maintenance plan which is available to WCC and the schools. This is correlated with changing needs and ultimately covers the full 30 years of the Contracted Concession Period. Several millions of pounds will be allocated to keeping the schools at a high standard over the 30 years after which the schools will become the property of WCC.

Items that have been added or changed at schools requests recently are:

- Satellite dishes installed
- Broadband upgrades
- Fire alarm covers (to reduce false alarms)
- New furniture
- Alteration of storerooms to a beauty care room
- Power supply upgrades
- Changing performing arts rooms to music suite
- £1/4 million dining room extension
- Install nurse’s office
- Fit plasma screen
- Install interactive whiteboard projectors

For the future WHEP will work with the schools as the Extended Use of schools programme is rolled out. Already we make the sports facilities available for community use and other community uses are adult education, literacy and numeracy classes, English language training for immigrants, council meetings, and summer schools are all possibilities.

This coming year the Sixth Form extensions at both Wootton Bassett and Abbeyfield are planned. WHEP has approved the schools to build these extensions, utilising funds from the Learning and Skills Council which the schools successfully bid. Building will take at least the full year and will be carefully controlled to ensure the remaining business of the school goes on with the least possible disruption.

Ian Bolden

WHEP General Manager