

Melksham Community Area



Cllr Jon Seed – Chairman

Working for the Community

Since 2009, local people have submitted 264 issues to the Area Board for action.

223 of these have been resolved and 41 are under active consideration at the time of going to press.

Working with People who have experienced Stroke

The Melksham Area Board has been working with the Stroke Association to develop a Voices project with a focus on people who have experienced a stroke. The project sets out to capture the views and voices of people who either do not or cannot participate in civic life. The project started in the Summer of 2011 with a stakeholder event that brought together agencies working with people who have experienced a stroke. There followed a series of workshops and activities with people from all over Wiltshire that culminated in the Life after stroke film produced by BAFTA Award winning film makers True Vision.

So far the film has been shown to a series of groups who have developed an action plan, both for themselves and for the organisations that work with stroke survivors and their carers. One of the most important outcomes that the groups identified is to share their experiences with others who have newly been affected by these issues. They identify common difficulties, such as problems with speaking, walking and getting around, transport, returning to work, finances and relationships. More importantly, the film demonstrates the many strengths and positive messages for practitioners and those new to strokes.



Consultation at Melksham Food Festival

Focusing on priorities

During the Autumn 2011 and also in 2009, the Area Board and the Community Area partnership ran a Community Conference that attracted people from all walks of life. They spent the evening discussing the Joint Strategic Assessment for the area and identifying key priorities.Safe cycling, young people and alcohol, building capacity in volunteers, empty housing and rural social housing allocation, creating tourism in Melksham, making better use of the community bus, celebrating the excellent education in Melksham and linking the canal to safe routes to work and school

Melksham Area Board also piloted a Community Budgeting event “More information: More Influence” and developed an action plan focusing upon- reducing anti social behaviour-encouraging more responsible dog ownership-and improving the street scene.

These locally set priorities, together with the Melksham Community Plan provide the focus for local working groups, developing projects to address the local priorities.

Grant funding

Many of the working groups are supported by funding from the Area Board to support their work, such as providing bags in the park to support responsible dog ownership and street based youth services.

Over 40 community groups have been supported by the Area Board over the last 4 years with over £120,000 awarded in sums ranging from £200 to £5,000. From Alzheimers Support to Wilts and Berks Canal Trust, the grants have enabled the community to work together towards locally agreed priorities, providing opportunities to support young people and older people, people with disabilities and active volunteers. Some of the projects supported by the Board are set out below:

- Sukosta Theatre Company – workshops for the elderly
- Great Hinton Memorial Hall - defibrillator
- Bowerhill Village Hall – gas boiler
- Golden Fleece Cricket Club – new club pavilion
- Atworth Village – gateway system
- AFC Melksham – coaching days for young people
- Bowerhill Residents Action Group – picnic area
- Bowerhill Busy Bees Patchwork Group – new equipment
- Melksham – counseling services for children
- Melksham Council of Community Service – new bus engine
- Lowbourne Neighbourhood Centre - IT equipment
- Atworth Youth Club – camping equipment
- Keevil Parish Council - War memorial renovation
- Melksham and District Young Farmers Club – outdoor education trip
- Movement for the Mind project Alzheimers Support
- Poulshot Village Trust – restoration of Poulshot pond
- Seend Parish Council - War memorial renovation
- The Golden Fleece Cricket Club – new cricket field

- Wilts & Berks Canal Trust – towpath enhancements
- Shaw Village Hall – wheelchair access disabled toilet
- Beanacre Cricket Club - Cricket club roller
- Melksham Splitz Support Service - support group
- Melksham – CCTV
- Semington Village Hall - suspended ceiling in main hall
- Melksham – dog poo bag dispensers
- Melksham Adventure Centre - kitchen
- Melksham – Does Art project SPLASH
- Great Hinton Memorial Hall – purchase of defibrillator
- Melksham Community Area Partnership - Cycle Safety Scheme
- Bowerhill Village Hall – gas boiler

Participatory Budgeting

Melksham have piloted a new method of allocating funds through Participatory Budgeting. A successful event was put together in 2011 where young people presented their projects asking for funding and then the groups and the Area Board decided who should get the funding. A second event took place in Melksham in November 2012, working in Partnership with Extended services, the “You Decide” event combined an awards ceremony - enabling young people to be rewarded for their awesome achievements, with the participatory budgeting - where young people and members of the community decided how funding would be allocated.

Campus

The original proposal that was considered by the Melksham Area Board was to develop a campus facility on Council-owned land adjacent to the Melksham Oak school; however having consulted widely and listening to local people’s views the Area Board asked that Wiltshire Council consider any other sites in a more central location if local landowners come forward with options.

An advert was placed and Cooper Tires, who owned the Melksham House site, came forward and offered the site to the Council. Other sites also came forward but an appraisal of the sites identified that the Melksham House site met the requirements of the Campus project.

The Wiltshire campus programme is now well underway. The Melksham business case was agreed by Wiltshire Council’s Cabinet in December, funding having been allocated in the financial plan. The campus is being considered for the 13.9 acre Melksham House town centre site, purchased last September from Cooper Tires. The initial proposals for the campus included a commitment to provide the following facilities on the Melksham House Site;-

- Library with ICT facilities
- Youth centre facilities
- Swimming pool plus learner pool
- Sports hall, squash courts & fitness suite
- Multi activity rooms
- Indoor bowls
- Multipurpose training suite/meeting, office & resource rooms for use by the community, council, partners and others.

- Soft play area
- Café facilities.

The AreaBoard on 10th October considered the plans in detail and moved this exciting project forward

A year of celebration

The Area Board threw its full support behind the Queens Diamond Jubilee celebrations, The Olympics and the Paralympics. A tent showcasing all of the great things that happen in the Area was on display in Salisbury Cathedral Close for the Queen's visit, an event that attracted over 25,000 people. The tent was the product of joint working with Melksham Community Area partnership and town and parish councils and displayed many exhibits. The Board also welcomed the [Olympic flame](#) to the area and supported Melksham Town and Parish Council's celebrations.



The Seend Shuttle

Transport and highways

The Melksham Community Area Transport Group has been active during the last 2 years and has delivered many local highways projects, including: footway improvements, gateways and Community Speedwatch groups. The Community Area Transport Group is a new way of working together, where sticky issues are raised by people or groups in the community and relevant partners get together to resolve them in a new and creative way.

Working with partners

The Area Boards has formed very strong links with Melksham Community Area Partnership (MCAP) and helped to support a major community survey that has helped to inform the new community plan for the area.

In summary

Melksham Area Board has had a major impact in the local area and is well supported by the local community. It has worked hard to listen to the views of local people from all walks of life, supported local groups to do more for themselves and tackled some of the big issues facing the area. The Board continues to go from strength to strength.