

TOWN REGENERATION PARTNERSHIP

The Town Regeneration Partnership exists to represent those who have an interest in Wotton-under-Edge and its future. It is a partnership between the Town Council and members of community organisations in the town. The Partnership was instrumental in producing the first Community Plan and, taking account of public desire expressed at the 2013 Annual Parish Assembly for the plan to be refreshed, has been heavily involved in the update activity.



PROGRESS TO DATE

Despite the country having been impacted by the global financial crisis for almost a decade, good progress has been made in a number of areas against the five action plans set out in the 2005 Community Plan. This is to the credit of the efforts of local people and the Town Council.



Parking Action Plan

The parking action plan recognised that inadequate parking provision was a constraint to achieving many of the Community Plan's desired outcomes and sought improvements.

Progress:

Parking provision remains a problem throughout the town. Previous Stroud District Council (SDC) planning policies, which permitted housing developments with insufficient off-

street parking, have exacerbated the situation leading to an increase of on-street parking on all main highways. The Town Council has continued to press the Local Planning Authority (SDC) to observe the current policy requiring two parking spaces per property for new developments but Wotton remains a difficult place to pass through by car and to visit. Wotton's parking problems were confirmed in a car parking survey carried out for SDC in 2011¹. Clear passage for the emergency services is a growing problem.

Discussions on parking times and charging have been held with SDC who manage the Chipping Car park but, to date - in the absence of any local consensus - no changes have been made.

More recently, discussions have taken place between the Town Council, Chamber of Trade & Commerce and a local developer on a proposal which would create additional public parking

¹ Car Parking Survey Report for Stroud District Council, Future Focus Research, September 2011

facilities in the town. Formal plans have not yet been received and public consultation has yet to take place.

Economic Action Plan

The economic action plan focused primarily on the need to encourage new business to improve economic vitality and make Wotton a more attractive place to shop.

Progress:

One of the most significant early outcomes was the re-establishment of a Chamber of Trade & Commerce for Wotton. Since its re-formation in 2005 the Chamber of Trade has been organising events and communicating with shops, businesses and the Town Council, and now has over eighty members, including local entrepreneurs.

The Town Council has opposed use of the town's industrial areas for housing development but, despite these efforts, it has not been possible to preserve these sites for employment use. As a result, both the Potters Pond and Water Lane industrial sites have been lost to housing development, although the continued expansion of nearby Renishaw plc provides significant local employment opportunities.

Like many market towns Wotton has seen a reduction in local banks with the closure of NatWest and Barclays. A second 24 hour ATM is still needed in the town.

The Stroud District Local Plan² produced by the District Council has identified Wotton as a local service centre for its surrounding communities and supports many Community Plan aspirations:



“Wotton-under-Edge itself will continue to be a town with commercial activity and local employment, meeting the everyday needs of its surrounding rural communities. High street vitality will be maintained, with a varied and well-used range of shops and services in its pretty town centre. This will be supported by strong community input into cultural and leisure facilities, such as the Picture House³”

Wotton has lost two pubs since 2005 but continues to benefit from a good range of cafes and other eating places, as evidenced by the Falcon Steakhouse becoming the Gazette “Pub of the Year” in 2015 but little progress has been made in providing more overnight accommodation for tourists and walkers.

² Stroud District Local Plan – adopted November 2015

³ Stroud District Local Plan Vision 1.7: Vision for Parishes around Wotton-under-Edge