

CHEDWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

PLAN 2012 – 2014

1 THE REASON FOR THE PLAN

The Chedworth Parish Council (“CPC”) is non-political and has no promises or policies to deliver. The CPC wanted to devise a “plan”, anticipating what might affect Chedworth in the next few years and to set appropriate objectives. The new CPC held a consultation with Chedworth in October 2011.

www.chedworth-pc.org.uk

2 THE CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

Four main categories of issues will or could affect Chedworth:

2.1 Localism Act 2011

This legislation has a broad effect on local government but it is the reforms to make the planning system more democratic and effective that could potentially affect Chedworth.

* An initiative known as ‘Neighbourhood planning’ will allow communities (through a parish council or neighbourhood forum) to say where new houses, businesses and shops should go – and what they should look like.

* Parish councils can opt to take over the running of a local authority service

This could provide meaningful opportunities to shape the future of Chedworth; it may also bring significant difficulties. We intend to see what evolves and watch while larger communities with more resources try it first. It is new and evolving but we will keep people informed.

2.2 Other Central Government Initiatives

Other things we are keeping a watch on:

Rural Policy Statement

The Rural Communities Policy Unit (RCPU) will publish a Rural Policy Statement summarising the current government’s rural policy priorities.

Broadband and communications

The government acknowledges broadband's importance for economic and social sustainability in rural communities, and has committed to having the best superfast broadband network in Europe by 2015.

We know that broadband speeds are less than adequate for much of the parish. CPC has appointed Broadband Champions to working on this.

Housing

The government says our rural towns and villages should have the freedom to determine the scale and type of development they want and need. The National Planning Policy Framework contains provisions relating to the rural communities. See paragraph under 'Local Initiatives' below.

Rural economies

Defra is seeking to ensure that broader initiatives designed to support business and the economy are having a proportionate, positive impact in rural areas. We will do whatever we can to ensure that Chedworth benefits from these measures.

Access to services

Thriving rural communities need shops, bus services, Post Offices and village halls. CPC is engaged with local bus companies to preserve or enhance bus services.

Fuel and energy

Many rural households are not connected to the national gas grid and are reliant on other fuels such as heating oil, LPG and electric heating which tend to be more expensive. Many rural properties are old and difficult to insulate. The Government will launch a £15m fund to help rural communities benefit from renewable energy. If this presents opportunities for Chedworth, we will pursue them.

2.3 Local Chedworth Initiatives

We are considering the contribution Chedworth's current population can make to strengthening the fabric of the village whilst retaining the rural look and feel that many value so highly. Openness and transparency is needed to achieve this, an approach to which CPC is committed.

CPC will seize the initiative when a clear benefit to the community presents itself. For example, the provision of the salt spreader to tackle the winter roads and the installation of three defibrillators.

Affordable housing is a major undertaking. It became a CPC project in April 2012.

* Chedworth Community Land Trust ("CLT") was formed in November 2008 to establish affordable housing. In principle CPC supported the aims of the CLT but siting a development has been problematic. The CLT disbanded on 31 March 2012.

* Following the Village Forum on affordable housing held in April 2012, CPC will re-examine affordable housing and address three key issues:

* Is there a need?

* Is there somewhere to put it?

* Is there any money?

* CPC will report what, if anything, can be achieved and then proceed as appropriate.

2.4 The Economy, Business and Potential Cutbacks

Our national economy is stressed and government finances under strain. This threatens to cause cutbacks in local services. None has yet happened but we will monitor the position.

19. Chedworth has enjoyed a large increase in home working and we understand that there are about 150 home businesses based in Chedworth. We suspect most of those are focused on markets and customers outside Chedworth. However, can we help by infrastructure improvements, organising pooling and shared facilities?

3. MONEY AND POWERS

Your Parish councillors are keen, committed and want to do the very best for Chedworth – within the limits of our capability. The CPC has a tiny budget of just over £6,000 consisting of income from our own assets and a "precept" raised by Cotswold DC and then given to the CPC. The CPC comprises seven unpaid volunteers supported by a part time clerk.

4. YOUR FEEDBACK

www.chedworth-pc.org.uk