

# Evidence Paper Community Infrastructure

## **PRESTON NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2018-2031**

REGULATION 14 CONSULTATION DRAFT

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# Community Infrastructure

## Introduction and purpose of this report

1. This report considers evidence about community infrastructure in Preston Parish and the need to protect and enhance it for future generations.
2. The evidence derives from:
  - Responses by the community to the SWOT and Visioning exercises at the 26 September 2017 village NDP event.
  - Responses to the online community survey.
  - Descriptions of existing infrastructure and observations from the community.

## Planning Policy Context

3. Preston village has a Church, a playing field and the Village Hall which together provide opportunities for villagers of all ages to come together as a community so that they can enjoy social and recreational activities together. There is a strong feeling in the community that these assets require protection and enhancement.
4. NPPF para. 69 states that the planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities. Opportunities for meetings between members of the community are encouraged.
5. NPPF para. 70 encourages planning policies to deliver social, recreational and cultural facilities by planning positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments. It also seeks to guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services and for existing services to be modernized.
6. Saved Local Plan policy 32 states that proposals for the development, expansion or improvement of community facilities will be permitted on sites that are well related to the local community. Loss of existing community facilities where there remains a recognized need will not be permitted without a suitable replacement.
7. Emerging Local Plan policy INF1 sets out the requirements for new development to make provision for new infrastructure and INF2 states that proposals for community facilities where they are proposed or required as part of another development should take account of the facilities and services in the area, including the quantity and quality of provision. Loss of community facilities will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that there is no longer a local need or a replacement is offered.
8. Emerging Local Plan policy INF7 requires development proposals to contribute to existing green infrastructure.
9. The retention and enhancement of existing community infrastructure is clearly supported by Development Plan policies.

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## Responses by the community at the 26 September 2017 village NDP event.

10. The event was attended by 49 villagers and the NDP steering group. The main exercise was a SWOT analysis, followed by a visioning exercise and identification of policy areas for the NDP steering group to consider further. The responses relating to green gaps, village and rural character are reproduced in Evidence Paper: **Community Consultation**.
11. Attendees suggested that the vision for 2028 was that Preston would be a village:
- That had a pub and enough recreational and meeting opportunities to cater for the needs of all villagers and that had a village hall
  - Where there were good opportunities for play for all ages and access to the countryside

## Responses to the online community survey.

12. 60 responses were received to the online survey. Where responders did not wish to respond online, the Parish Clerk entered their responses onto the survey so that all responses could be considered together.
13. The responses relevant to the rural and village character of Preston are copied from Evidence Paper: **Community Consultation**.
14. Q17 asked which of Preston's green spaces you and your family use and their value to you. Using a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 = most valuable and 5 least valuable. 46 people answered this question. The response showed a clear preference for the importance of protecting the roadside verges. The Playing Field and Children's area was valuable to some respondents but almost equally not important to others. It shows that these green spaces are important to only a sector of the community.

Q17	Most valuable (1)	Least valuable (5)
Playing field	12	8
Children's play area	10	10
Allotments	7	12
Roadside verges	20	2

15. Q19 asked whether there are enough litter, dog waste and grit salt bins. 49 people answered this question. The responses showed that there was highest demand for more dog waste bins but that litter and grit bins might also be required. This is a matter for the Parish Council to consider further.

Q19	Yes	No
Litter bins	29	20
Dog waste bins	32	16
Grit/salt bins	31	18

16. Q20 asked where the new bins should be located. The highest responses are set out below.

Litter bins	Village hall, playing field, children's play area, Witpit Lane
Dog waste bins	Play area, allotments, churchyard
Grit/salt bins	Kingshill Lane, Witpit Lane, village hall

17. Q21 asked which village facilities were most important to respondents, on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 = most important and 5 = least important. 49 people answered this question. The village hall is the most important community facility followed by the Church, the playing field and children's play area.

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Q21	Most important (number of responses for "1")
Church	22
Village hall	30
Playing field	13
Children's play area	13
Allotments	5
Other	8

18. Q22 asked how often respondents used these facilities. 48 people answered this question. The village hall was the most important facility identified by the respondents and around half used it weekly. It should probably be the focus for investment and improvement should funding come forward, though most respondents also used the church. Again, the playing field and children's play area is used regularly by a segment of the responders and virtually not at all by about half. Eight people commented that they used the local footpath network for recreation.

	Never	Rarely	Monthly	Weekly
Church	6	23	10	9
Village hall	1	14	9	23
Playing field	14	16	10	3
Children's play area	16	17	8	2
Allotments	32	7	4	0
Other facilities	5	0	4	1

## Description of existing community infrastructure

### Parish Church

19. All Saints church in Preston is part of the Churnside Benefice that also includes the parishes of South Cerney, Cerney Wick, Siddington.
20. The church is situated at the centre of the village and dates from 13th century. The sturdy tower and elegant bellcote were added in the 14th & 15th centuries, while later additions include piscinas in each transept, and stained glass windows honoring past benefactors. It is thought that the ancient font may have Roman origins. It is the oldest building in the village and of significant historical interest.
21. The church holds more than 40 services through the year - 4 per month in summer and 3 in winter, including coffee before family service each month, special services at Christmas, Mothering Sunday, Holy Week, Easter, Harvest Festival and Remembrance Day. The church fulfills its community and religious role by hosting funerals, memorial services, marriage services and baptisms.
22. The church is one of the focal points for the village community, bringing the villagers together for coffee before the Sunday service once a month and for the very popular Harvest Festival dinner following the Harvest Festival service. The annual summer fete held to raise funds for the maintenance of the church sees the community working together and is very well attended.
23. The church bells are rung at the services by an enthusiastic group of campanologists who practice 8- 10 times per year. Volunteers work to clean, maintain and provide flowers for the church services on a rota basis.
24. Past residents are buried in the historic church yard and a garden of Remembrance has been created, dedicated to a member of the village who gave his life during the war.

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<b>Name</b>	Parish Church
<b>Location</b>	SP04408
<b>Description</b>	Late 13th Century Anglican Church. Part of the Churnside Benefice with Siddington, South Cerney and Cerney Wick.
<b>Ownership</b>	Gloucester Diocese
<b>Charitable Status</b>	No
<b>Management Arrangements</b>	Preston Parochial Church Council
<b>Main Users</b>	Residents
<b>Threats</b>	Diocese could close the Church if attendance level drops.

## Village Hall

25. Since its refurbishment in 2009, use of the Village Hall has gone from strength to strength. A committee of eight villagers diligently oversees the day to day running and rental of the hall. The committee meets bi-monthly to ensure the hall's upkeep and to arrange fund-raising events and other activities for the enjoyment of the villagers. The capacity of the hall is set at a limit of 50 people. This number is often realised for village events such as the Quiz, Christmas Party and Theatre productions. There are however, periods when the Hall is little used. These tend to be during school holidays when classes have finished.
26. The Village Hall Committee endeavors to arrange an event every other month. These include The Village Quiz which has become an annual event, regular 'Pub Nights' (attendees bring their own alcoholic drinks as the village hall does not have a license), where friends and locals meet for a convivial evening. For the last two years, the Village Hall has been host to 'Spaniel in the Works' a travelling theatre company specialising in productions for small venues. These events, which include a Fish and Chip Supper have been packed to the rafters. Other activities include Wine Tastings (always popular), The Christmas Party and purely for fund-raising Bring and Buy Sales.
27. Preston Church hold The Harvest Tea every autumn, following The Harvest Festival. The Siddington and Preston WI use the hall several times a year for meetings, talks and demonstrations. A team of local people hold 'Soup Saturdays' three or four times every winter. These soup, roll, cake and tea events have become so popular with upwards of 40 people attending, that we are considering second sittings! The Hall is also host to a number of private bookings. The Art Group holds two sessions a week in term time. These classes, run by a qualified art teacher, are open to anyone from within the village or further afield. The Pilgrim Church group meets every Tuesday evening and Yoga classes are held every Wednesday evening. Art Classes and Yoga classes, especially, are limited to around only ten to a dozen participants. These classes require extra space and the hall is only small.
28. The hall is in demand as a meeting venue and is used regularly by the committee, The Parish Council and The Parochial Church Council. The hall is also used for public meetings. Any subject thought to be of importance to villagers may result in a public meeting. The hall is also a Polling Station, used by the local election office for elections.
29. The hall is available for private functions and is used by villagers and occasionally residents from Cirencester for events such as children's parties, family gatherings and celebrations, dance practice and toddler get-togethers.
30. The Village Hall does have limitations. It is only small and can only accommodate small numbers for classes such as Art and Yoga. There have been enquiries from at least two pilates teachers, and a boxing club considering setting up groups. All have indicated that the hall is too small. Only a very limited number of participants could be accommodated which would result in classes not being financially viable.

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31. The hall owns only the footprint of land upon which it is built. It does not have a rubbish collection and there is no parking other than on the narrow village street.
32. The committee and villagers are continually fund-raising to maintain the integrity of the building which is old and consequently damp and cold in winter. The committee and volunteers from the village help to paint and decorate the hall when necessary. The committee contacts any builders, electricians etc. to help maintain the building. Currently there is a condensation and damp problem in the kitchen area. The committee are taking advice and endeavoring to rectify this.

<b>Name</b>	<b>VILLAGE HALL</b>
<b>Location</b>	In the centre of the Village and to the rear of Pear Tree Cottage, OS Grid Ref: SPO4408
<b>Description</b>	Originally the Village School Room, the small hall has a capacity to accommodate 50 people plus kitchen and storage area, entrance lobby and toilets. It was completely refurbished in the summer of 2009 to a high standard which included new toilets and kitchen together with new flooring and heating. The Parish Council obtained two Public Works Loans totalling £55,000 to finance the works. Secondary double glazing was installed in 2013 with the help of a grant from Cotswold Conservation Board and support from the Parish Council. In 2016 the Parish Council, with a Transparency grant, installed a telephone line, broadband and wifi.
<b>Ownership</b>	Village Hall Trustees – currently 6
<b>Charitable Status</b>	Registered Charity 293929 The provision and maintenance of a village hall for the use of the inhabitants of the parish of Preston without distinction of political, religious or other opinions including use for meetings, lectures and classes, and for other forms of education, recreation and leisure-time occupation, with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants.
<b>Management Arrangements</b>	Village Hall Management Committee of 8 (5 Trustees, 2 residents and 1 Parish Councillor). There is currently one vacant Parish Council position. Minutes of the Management Committee meetings are circulated to the Parish Council in view of its financial interest. The Management Committee maintains a bookings diary, manages maintenance and cleaning together with insurance and appropriate licences.
<b>Main Users</b>	Parish Council, Parochial Church Council and the Community for such activities as: Parish Council meetings, Parochial Church Council meetings, Harvest Supper, Lent Lunch. The Village Hall Committee organises theatre group performances, Soup Saturdays, Pub Nights, Christmas 'Mulled' Evenings and Jumble Sales. Other users include: Village Book Club, Yoga, Pilates, Art Club and Elections.
<b>Threats</b>	It is currently a busy and popular venue for people living in Preston generating enough income to support maintenance and running costs. While there are enough residents to support an active Management Committee there is no threat to the hall. The Parish Council is maintaining a sinking fund to cover any major maintenance issues in the future.

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## Playing Field

<b>Name</b>	<b>Play area and playing Field</b>
<b>Location</b>	OS Grid Ref: SPO4107
<b>Description</b>	Open field of 0.58 HA with goal nets. Includes a children's play area with climbing equipment, swings and slide was refurbished in 2015 by the Parish Council together with grants from Gloucestershire County Council and Cotswold District Council.
<b>Ownership</b>	The site is owned by the Trustees of Abbey Home Farms and leased to the Parish Council. The lease will expire on 20 September 2026.
<b>Charitable Status</b>	No
<b>Management Arrangements</b>	Maintained by the Parish Council who also insure it and arrange regular safety checks (annually by ROSPA). There is no formal booking arrangement and residents are able to use the Play Area and Playing Field at any time.
<b>Main Users</b>	All residents
<b>Threats</b>	Expiry of the lease in 2026 is a major threat and the Parish Council is taking steps to extend it. The Parish Council maintains a sinking fund for on-going maintenance.

## Allotments

<b>Name</b>	<b>Allotments</b>
<b>Location</b>	SP04306
<b>Ownership</b>	The site is owned by the Trustees of Abbey Home Farms and each plot is leased to allotment holders.
<b>Charitable Status</b>	No
<b>Management Arrangements</b>	Managed by the Trustees of Abbey Home Farms
<b>Main Users</b>	Residents – allotment holders
<b>Threats</b>	The owners could withdraw the facility at any time. The Parish Council is taking steps to address this concern.

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## Street Furniture

ITEM	Street furniture
Grit / Salt Bins	On Verge by Kingsway Garages
	On Verge at Junction of Village Road and Witpit Lane
Dog Waste Bins	On Verge at Entrance to Village Farm
	On Verge at Junction of Village Road and Witpit Lane
General Waste Bins	Entrance to Playing Field
	On Verge at Junction of Kingsway and Village Road next to Noticeboard
	Preston House
Seats	Grass Verge at entrance to Village from Kingshill Lane (Kelfield)
	In Play Area on Playing Field
Notice Boards	On Footway near to Preston House
	Village hall
	On Verge at Junction of Kingsway and Village Road net to Waste Bin
Millenium Stone	On Footway Adjacent to Gateway leading to Church
Gateways and Village Signs	Either side of the road at entrance to Village from Kingshill Lane
	Either side of the road at entrance to Village from Witpit Lane
Defibrillator	In Redundant Telephone Kiosk near to Preston House

## Location of bins





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## Conclusions

33. The descriptions in the previous sections indicate that there is scope for improvement should funding become available.

<b>Village hall</b>	The village hall is the most important community asset, but it is too small for some activities and there is no room for expansion. There is also a need to continually manage and maintain the fabric of the building and there are no funds for this. Should any further development occur in the Parish, this village hall would not be able to accommodate the growth in demand and additional/new facilities would be required.
<b>Playing field and children's play area</b>	The Playing field and children's play areas are important for a sector of the community and should be retained and protected. Expiry of the lease in 2026 is a major threat and the Parish Council is taking steps to extend it. Future development, where it significantly adds to usership of either the playing field or children's play area will need to make a proportionate contribution towards ensuring that the facilities are sufficient to meet demand. Assistance with securing the long-term lease for the land would be beneficial.
<b>Allotments</b>	The allotments are important to only a small sector of the community, however, some people place high value upon them. The Parish Council is seeking to secure their long-term availability. Future development, where this significantly adds to the demand for allotment space, could assist by providing long-term allotment space.
<b>Other Facilities</b>	<p>Additional litter bins are needed at the village hall, playing fields, children's play area and Witpit Lane.</p> <p>Additional dog waste bins are needed at the children's play area, allotments and churchyard.</p> <p>Additional grit/salt bins are needed on Kingshill Lane, Witpit Lane and at the village hall.</p>