



Chard High Street Heritage Action Zone **Community Engagement Plan**

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SECTION 1: COMMITMENT STATEMENT AND OBJECTIVES

Statement of Commitment

South Somerset District Council is fully committed to positively engaging the Chard Regeneration Stakeholder Group and the wider community in the development and implementation of the whole of the HSHAZ programme, through the 4-year period of the project. We recognise that the wider community includes the full and diverse range of people that live in, visit, own property and work on the high street/town centre, and will strive to work with and meet the needs of a broad range of different community groups throughout the programme.

Community Engagement Outcomes

Historic England have set out eight overarching community engagement outcomes that they wish to achieve through the HSHAZ programme:

- a. The **needs, aspirations and involvement of local communities** are embedded in the design, delivery and legacy of each project
- b. **A broad and diverse range of people** will be more aware, interested and meaningfully involved in the heritage of their high street
- c. **Community wellbeing** will have increased through community participation in heritage programmes and activities
- d. Communities will feel **more invested** in their high streets as places to live, learn, work and visit
- e. **Local community organisations, groups and individuals** will have learned new knowledge and skills
- f. **Local community groups and organisations** will have built capacity, learned skills and become more resilient through involvement in the programme
- g. The local economy will have been boosted through the contribution of local communities to the **economic regeneration** of the high streets
- h. The provision of **local social and cultural spaces and services** to support local communities will have increased through community engagement in high streets projects.

Community Engagement Objectives

SSDC fully supports these aims and has set objectives to work towards them through Chard's HSHAZ programme:

- **Objective 1:** Chard Stakeholder Group, local businesses and the wider community are **kept informed about the programme and are regularly consulted to understand their needs and aspirations** in respect of Chard HSHAZ, with a mechanism in place to ensure this influences programme decision-making.
- **Objective 2:** Members of the community – including young people, traders, residents of the high street, members of the Portuguese and Polish community and those with particular health and wellbeing needs – will have the opportunity to participate in workshops and activities led by local organisations which **develop heritage skills and an awareness and interest in the heritage of Chard's high street**
- **Objective 3:** Members of the community participating in workshops and activities, as well as other community groups, are supported to **become involved in the heritage of Chard high street in ways defined by them** so that they become champions of the high street and shape the legacy of the project
- **Objective 4: Research and knowledge about the heritage of Chard's high street** – including that held by or uncovered by the community – will be shared widely and creatively to reach a broad and diverse range of people and encourage visitors to the high street
- **Objective 5:** A consortium of community-based organisations will design and deliver **a cultural programme** that celebrates what is unique about Chard and brings footfall to the high street
- **Objective 6:** Local community groups and organisations have the opportunity to **build capacity and reach potential new members/volunteers** through involvement in HSHAZ activities and signposting of participants.

The matrix below demonstrates how each of the Chard HSHAZ Community Engagement objectives supports the overarching outcomes sought by Historic England.

Chard HSHAZ community engagement objectives mapped to Historic England desired outcomes								
	A: Community voice embedded in project	B: A diverse range of people involved	C: Community wellbeing increased	D: Communities more invested in high street	E: New heritage knowledge & skills for orgs/ individuals	F: Increased org capacity & resilience	G: Economy boosted	H: Increase in social/ cultural spaces
Objective 1: Informing & consulting	✓	✓		✓				✓
Objective 2: Participatory activities		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Objective 3: Self-defined engagement	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓
Objective 4: Research & knowledge- sharing	✓	✓		✓			✓	
Objective 5: Cultural programme	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Objective 6: Capacity- building		✓			✓	✓		✓

SECTION 2: MAPPING COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS, PRIORITIES AND ASSETS

Understanding Chard

Chard Jocelyn Ward is within the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods in England, with the adjacent Chard Holyrood ward within the 30% most deprived. The town has a diverse population including a longstanding Portuguese community, as well as a more recent Eastern European community. On the Cooperative Community Wellbeing Index, the town scores almost the same as the national average.

- It scores relatively well on: Culture, Heritage and Leisure, Health and Equality,
- It scores poorly on: Education and Learning, Relationships and Trust, Economy, Work and Employment, and Housing, Space and Environment.
- It scores very low on Voice and Participation compared with the national average.

Community Groups

The Chard Stakeholder Group was formed as a consultative group to the Chard regeneration programme and as such their views have regularly fed into decision-making around the town's future including the HSHAZ bid. The current members are: Chard Town Council, Chard One, Chard Library, Chard Museum, Holyrood Academy, Somerset County Council (Highways), Devon & Somerset Fire Service, Essex House Medical Centre, Access For All, local business representatives (Eleos Café, Stuart Bull Antiques), Avon & Somerset Police, Chard Methodist Church and Chard Town Team.

In addition, there are over 120 community groups in the area, which we can reach out to through SSDC's Locality team and partners at Chard Town Council. They range in focus across health to arts, faith to sport. Appendix 10 in our Programme Design provided an initial list.

Community Cultural and Social Spaces

In addition to the outdoor spaces on the streets themselves, there are a number of local cultural and social venues on the high street, which we will seek to use and involve for events and activities. These include:

- Chard Guildhall, Fore Street
- Chard Museum, High Street
- Forefront Community Centre, Fore Street

- Baptist Church, Holyrood Street
- Cafes, including:
 - Saraiva's, High Street
 - Eleos, Fore Street
 - A Bite to Eat, Fore Street
 - The Welcome Bap, Holyrood Street
- Chard Library, at Holyrood Lace Mill
- Chard Rugby Football Club, Essex Close off Fore Street
- Various shops/business premises, Fore Street and Holyrood Street
- Empty shop premises, Fore Street and Holyrood Street
- Courtroom, Manor Court House, Fore Street (privately owned)
- Chard School, Fore Street
- Chard Leisure Centre, off Fore Street.

Local Heritage Organisations

There are a handful of key, local heritage organisations/groups that will need to be at the heart of delivering the community engagement plan if it is to be effective in achieving the objectives and outcomes set out in Section 1. Working with these particular organisations will build local capacity in heritage management and engagement, enabling a long-term legacy for Chard HSHAZ.

1. Chard Museum & Heritage Centre
2. Chard History Group
3. South West Heritage Trust
4. South Somerset Heritage Collection, formerly known as Community Heritage Access Centre (CHAC).

In addition, we will work closely with Historic England, in particular their research and listings teams.

Community Engagement Priorities

In line with the outcomes and objectives above, we will seek to design a programme that invests in the capacity of the local heritage organisations, and pairs their knowledge and skills with community groups to deliver engaging activities. We intend to engage with residents/stakeholders from across Chard and its hinterland but, given Chard's demographics and the specific needs of the high

street, we will have some particular target groups in order to achieve the Community Engagement Outcomes. These target groups are:

1. Young people and children
2. Local businesses based on the high street
3. The Portuguese and Polish communities
4. Residents who live on the high street
5. Adults seeking to improve their wellbeing

To reach these communities, we will work with the most relevant community groups and make use of the most accessible venues or community spaces.

SECTION 3: DELIVERY PLAN

Past activity that informed the development of Chard HSHAZ

Public engagement relating to Chard's town centre regeneration had been under way for 2 years prior to bidding for HSHAZ funds. This included a series of open day events held to seek local views and regular press releases to ensure the local community is kept up to date. Feedback from the community shaped the development of the Chard Public Realm Strategy in 2019, which one part of the HSHAZ seeks to implement.

In addition, regular meetings with workshop sessions were held with the Chard Regeneration Stakeholder Group and local businesses, which included gaining local opinions to ensure that representative organisations and individuals have had a strong input into the development of ideas and plans for the High Street Heritage Action Zone programme, including this Community Engagement Plan.

This work with the wider community was extended through engagement with Chard's Holyrood Academy, where the students were briefed on the regeneration plans. They undertook their own in-school surveys and presented the findings to the regeneration team. This was followed by the development of a Geography A-Level case study on the town's regeneration including the HSHAZ project.

HSHAZ Community Engagement Activity

The task, now, is to continue this level of engagement, and deepen and expand it. SSDC will do this in three ways:

1. Deliver activity ourselves, working in partnership with the organisations listed in Section 2 above, and others
2. Procure/contract out activity to organisations which are best placed to deliver it
3. Offer small grants to organisations to carry out activity that they wish to deliver, in alignment with this Community Engagement Plan.

The table below indicates confirmed HSHAZ Community Engagement activity as of 1st April 2022. Proposals for grant funding should avoid duplicating these existing projects.

Activity	Delivery Partner	Status	Year*	Target Group	Community Partner	Community Spaces
Form Cultural Programme consortium	SSDC	Complete	1	Local organisations	Chard Town Council	N/A
Consultation on Holyrood Street parking	SSDC	Complete	1	General + Local Businesses	N/A	Street
Heritage Open Days throughout the town centre	Chard-based organisations and individuals with heritage to share	Confirmed	2, 3, 4	General	Chard Museum, Chard Town Council	Museum, Guildhall, and other heritage properties
Hidden High Street Histories: town centre heritage walks updated and re-published in print and as sound files, inc. translations	Chard Museum	Confirmed	2-3	Young People & Children, Portuguese & Polish communities, Adults seeking to improve their wellbeing	N/A	Street, Museum
Hidden High Street Histories: town centre heritage walks developed as walking tours – train new walk leaders and deliver guided walks	Chard Museum	Confirmed	2-4	Young People & Children, Adults seeking to improve their wellbeing	Chard WATCH, Somerset Action Sport Group	Street Museum
Hidden High Street Histories (business history project) –	Chard Museum	Confirmed	2-3	All target groups	Local businesses,	Street Museum

research the history of local businesses/shops, photography of current business owners/staff, publication of book (history of street names)					U3A Photographic Group, Others TBC	Shops/Business Premises Museum
Chard Shop Front Design Guide consultation – informal and formal	SSDC	Complete	2	General	Chard Town Council	Guildhall
Local festivals – attend local events to share information, invite involvement & suggestions for further activity	SSDC	Confirmed	2-4	General	Chard Town Team, Chard Town Council, Chard Carnival	Various
Day-to-day public liaison during the public realm works	Alun Griffiths Ltd	Confirmed	2-3	Local businesses, residents/general	N/A	Street
Chard Revealed: historic town centre photography exhibition, with contributions from the community	SSDC	Confirmed	3	General	Chard Museum, Chard History Group (Facebook group)	Guildhall
Enriching the List: add local knowledge and photographs to the online platform for Listed buildings	Historic England	Confirmed	3-4	General	TBC	TBC

* Chard High Street Heritage Action Zone runs from October 2020 to March 2024. Years align with SSDC's financial year, as follows:

Year 1: 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021

Year 2: 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022

Year 3: 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023

Year 4: 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024.

A Note on the HSHAZ Cultural Programme

The Chard HSHAZ Cultural Programme (Objective 5) is a separate strand of work but is closely intertwined with the HSHAZ, and therefore included within this Community Engagement Plan to a certain extent. The consortium that put together the Cultural Programme – known as *Culturally Chard* – are local culture and community organisations who are committed to engaging residents and visitors in the heritage of the high street in creative ways. Forming the consortium was an important step in the Community Engagement for the HSHAZ.

The members of the Cultural Programme Consortium are: Chard Town Council, Somerset Art Works, Chard Museum, Chard Carnival Committee, Holyrood Academy, Chard One Team, Chard Town Team and South Somerset District Council.

The activities to be delivered through the Cultural Programme are set out in the Cultural Programme's Project Design. *Culturally Chard* will follow similar principles of engagement as set out in this document. All the *Culturally Chard* activities will contribute to Objective 5, which in turn contributes to achieving seven of the eight community engagement outcomes (see Section 1).

See www.culturallychard.org