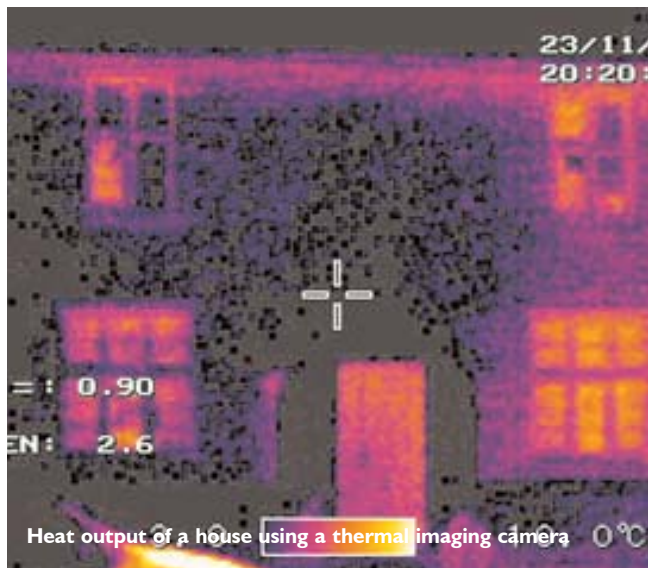


Environmental initiatives in Chippenham



Britain's housing stock is less energy efficient than that of Sweden, wasting more energy despite a milder climate.

In Chippenham and surrounding villages, an environmental group is using thermal imaging cameras to undertake housing energy audits.

The audits are the first stage in helping homeowners to identify cost-effective energy efficiency measures for their homes.

Project

CAVE - Chippenham and Villages Environmentalists - is a voluntary group of people from Chippenham and the surrounding villages who are keen to oil the wheels of environmental change for the future.

Amongst CAVE projects and campaigns are:

- A home energy audit using thermal imaging, with energy saving advice follow-up sessions
- A campaign to cut the use of plastic bags
- A Fairtrade Town campaign
- A Climate change action campaign

Thermal imaging project

The aim is to raise awareness of energy efficiency and provide assistance to householders in taking action to save energy (linked to reducing carbon emissions)

A thermal image is a picture based on heat instead of light. So a thermal image of a house shows warm parts in bright colours (red or yellow) and cold parts in dark colours (blue or black). This shows where the house is losing heat and so wasting fuel and costing money - perhaps even more importantly, contributing to global warming.

With help from Wiltshire Council, and with matched funding provided by Westlea Housing Association, CAVE has been able to purchase a thermal imaging camera and is engaged in producing images of homes to enable residents to see where they are losing heat and how they can reduce these losses.

The first application was Birch Grove in Chippenham, a road of some sixty post-war houses. After informing the residents about the plans, an image of each house was captured and printed. An evening session was held for residents to discuss the implications of their images and, aided by one of Wiltshire Council's Climate Officers, advice was offered on where improvements might be possible and where else to go for advice or assistance. The case studies, when finished, will be published on the



Birch Grove Follow-up session, supported by Wiltshire Council

CAVE website with the aim of stimulating ideas and examples of best practice for other towns to adopt.

With experience gained in Birch Grove, it is planned to tackle Kington St Michael village. This village has about two hundred houses ranging from 300+ years to three years old. The project is proving popular and CAVE have recently received several requests from interested parties, including the head of a local school.

Plastic Bag Campaign

CAVE is working in collaboration with the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust on a campaign to reduce the amount of plastic bags currently used in the area. Melksham Climate Friendly Group is also campaigning to reduce plastic bags, and other towns across Wiltshire are keen to get involved. Wiltshire World Changers are co-ordinating the work of groups in towns throughout the county.

Initially, CAVE and Melksham groups held a Plastic Bag Amnesty Day together with other Wiltshire towns. The aim of the day was to raise



Community Environmental Case Studies

produced with support from the Communities and Local Government Empowerment Fund

awareness about alternatives to plastic bags, and to reduce the amount of new plastic bags issued. Recycling bins were provided on the day for people to hand in their old plastic carrier bags for appropriate disposal, and various bags for life were available.



The plastic bags campaign stall

Local newspaper the Gazette and Herald teamed up with CAVE to offer local primary school-aged children the chance to design a new logo to appear on CAVE's cotton bags.

Project leads

Key contact::

Nick Murry (CAVE Chair)

Thermal Imaging project champions:

Kenn Virr and Gill Wheeler

CAVE is part of the Chippenham & Villages Area Partnership (ChAP), a voluntary group that represents the community of Chippenham and 15 nearby parishes. It is open to individuals, and to representatives of community groups, the commercial community and Parish and Town councils

ChAP's role is to consult the needs of the community, publish them in a regularly updated Community Plan, and champion them with the local authority and other service providers. ChAP also delivers improvements itself through action teams, or 'Special Interest Groups'.

There are ChAP teams for the Environment, Culture & Leisure, Health & Social Care, and Economy & Regeneration.

Location

Chippenham is the largest historic market town in Wiltshire with a population of over 40,000. It is an important centre for employment in North Wiltshire, with its Community Area hosting 47% of total employment in the district (22,600 jobs), and the town alone accounting for 29% of North Wiltshire jobs (some 13,600). Studies indicate the town centre is also by far the most important comparison goods destination within the district, accounting for over half of all the retained expenditure.

Chippenham is designated a Strategically Significant Town (SSTC) in the latest Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for up to the year 2026. As such, Chippenham is expected to receive a housing allocation of approximately 5,500 new dwellings, 6,200 new jobs in the Chippenham Travel to Work Area and provision for 42ha of employment land. With these considerable growth projections comes an essential need to ensure that community and infrastructure developments are managed in such a way as to be positive, sustainable and resilient so that Chippenham and its villages are best placed to benefit from growth economically, socially and environmentally.

Finance

The Thermal Imaging Project has been funded by a 50% grant (£2,299) from Wiltshire Council (Area Board) and 50% from Westlea Housing Association. The project itself is run by (unpaid) volunteers from CAVE.

In order to reduce costs, use of the camera is shared with Westlea Housing Association, who use it to check the thermal insulation of their housing stock.

Timeline

The Thermal Imaging Project started in January 2010, paused for spring and summer and commenced again in the Autumn. It will continue indefinitely as long as there is demand.



CAVE Thermal Imaging team (and staff from Westlea) meet Simon Hughes MP in Chippenham in February 2010.

What works well

The 'joined up' approach - follow-up sessions after the imaging photos were taken were well attended.

CAVE have developed a 'package' approach bringing together initial information/ imaging survey/ follow-up advice.

Further information

Dr Nick Murry, CAVE Chair, e-mail: drnickmurry@yahoo.co.uk
ChAP, e-mail: info@chap-partnership.co.uk



Supporting Fairtrade at the Chippenham River Festival.



Action For Market Towns, 5 Baxter Court, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk. IP33 1ES
t: 01284 756567 e: info@towns.org.uk www.towns.org.uk