

A Great Place to Live, Work and Play

Vision 2020 and Beyond



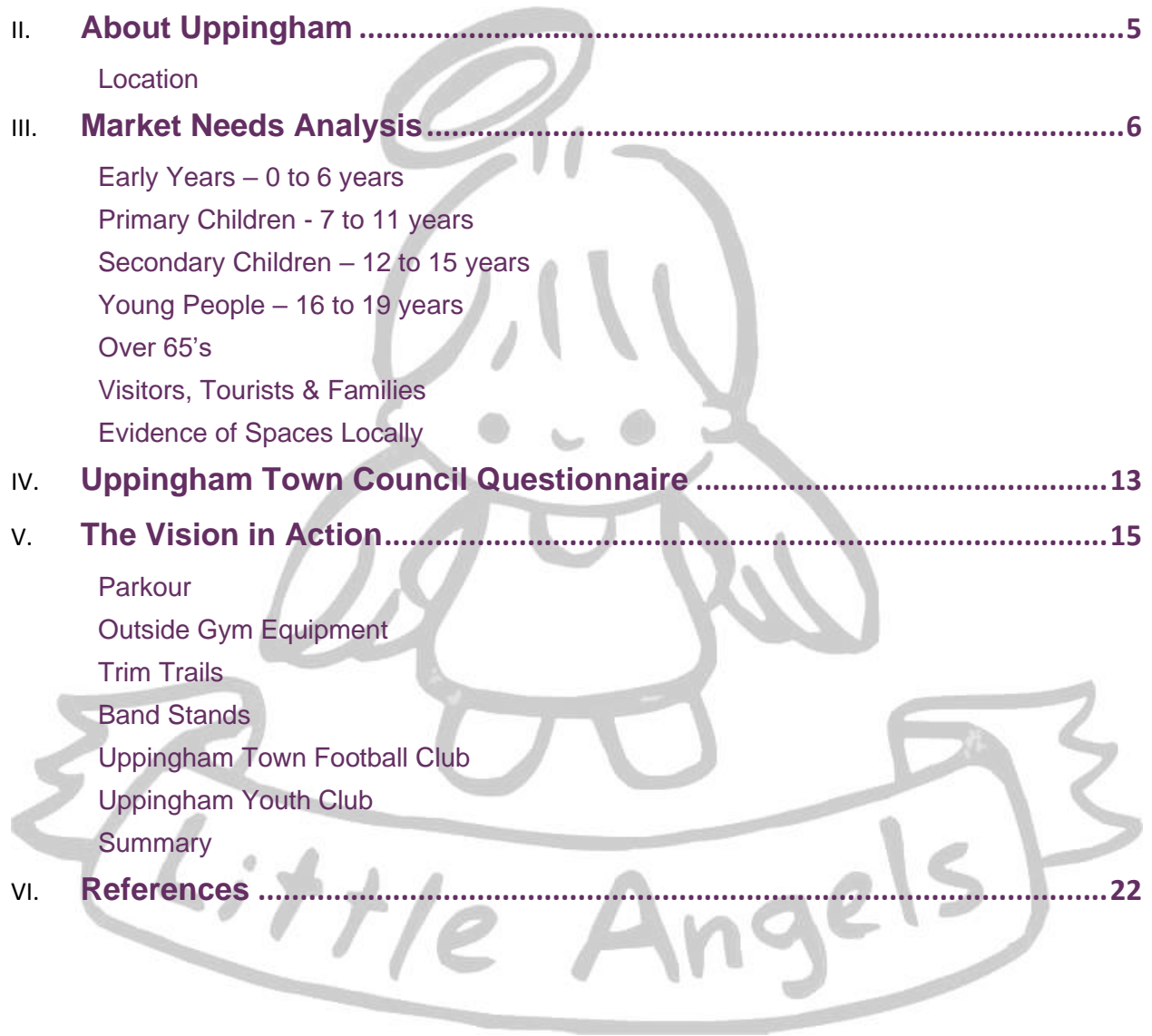
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September 2019

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Executive Summary

Children and young people are growing up in an age very different from their parents. The internet and social media have transformed how young people communicate and live their lives. More time is spent behind the screen of a phone or tablet than in the awe and wonder that the world around can offer.

Some children live with severe disadvantage due to life circumstances and this can undermine their development and limit their social mobility. There are decreasing opportunities for people at the lower end of the socioeconomic spectrum to improve their financial circumstances, this exaggerated in rural areas that have inadequate transport links to larger towns and cities.

At the time of writing there is much distrust amongst people regarding politicians, government promises and the state of the nation. Brexit has overshadowed the work carried out by local authorities who work tirelessly to deliver front line services to growing populations on diminishing budgets.

The theory behind the vision for Uppingham is to start at home. The people of Uppingham working alongside key stakeholders such as the Uppingham Town Council, businesses and investors to provide a town that understands the challenges faced by the wide spectrum of residence and makes bidding and spending decisions that work inclusively for the entire town. The challenge to “It is what has always been done” is welcomed by all parties and everyone has a voice and is listened too. Decisions are made democratically to support the vision. Goals are set along the way so that progress is tracked – thus making the Vision for Uppingham an holistic, all-inclusive working document that delivers!

Dramatic improvements in lifelong learning, behavior and health are not only achievable but also essential for a thriving and sustainable society. The writer would like to invite all those who share this sense of constructive dissatisfaction with the status quo to join us in a journey of discovery to create a pioneering rural town that is the very best place to live, work and play – whatever your age!

Objectives

The objectives of this vision are to explore the current needs of the people of Uppingham. However, the writer has a particular interest in improving the lives of children and young people as she has dedicated the last decade to educating the very young and providing care for all ages of children. Key areas of exploration that have been considered are:

- To gain a deep understanding of what the people would interact with in the town, what facilities they would use, how they would like to spend time when they are not in school.
- How the different ages can work co-operatively in limited space that does not impede each other.
- To give the children and young people of Uppingham the ingredients for a healthy and active life so that better outcomes are achieved.
- Making the investment before issues arise rather than attempting to fix problems.
- Putting at the forefront of decisions makers and investors minds the understanding of how effective, preventative interventions at community level will actively reduce stress inducing burdens on families and the pressure that puts on local services.

The key driver within this project will be gaining the appropriate mix of strategies from a variety of stakeholders that capitalises on existing strengths and address specific needs across a diverse community need.

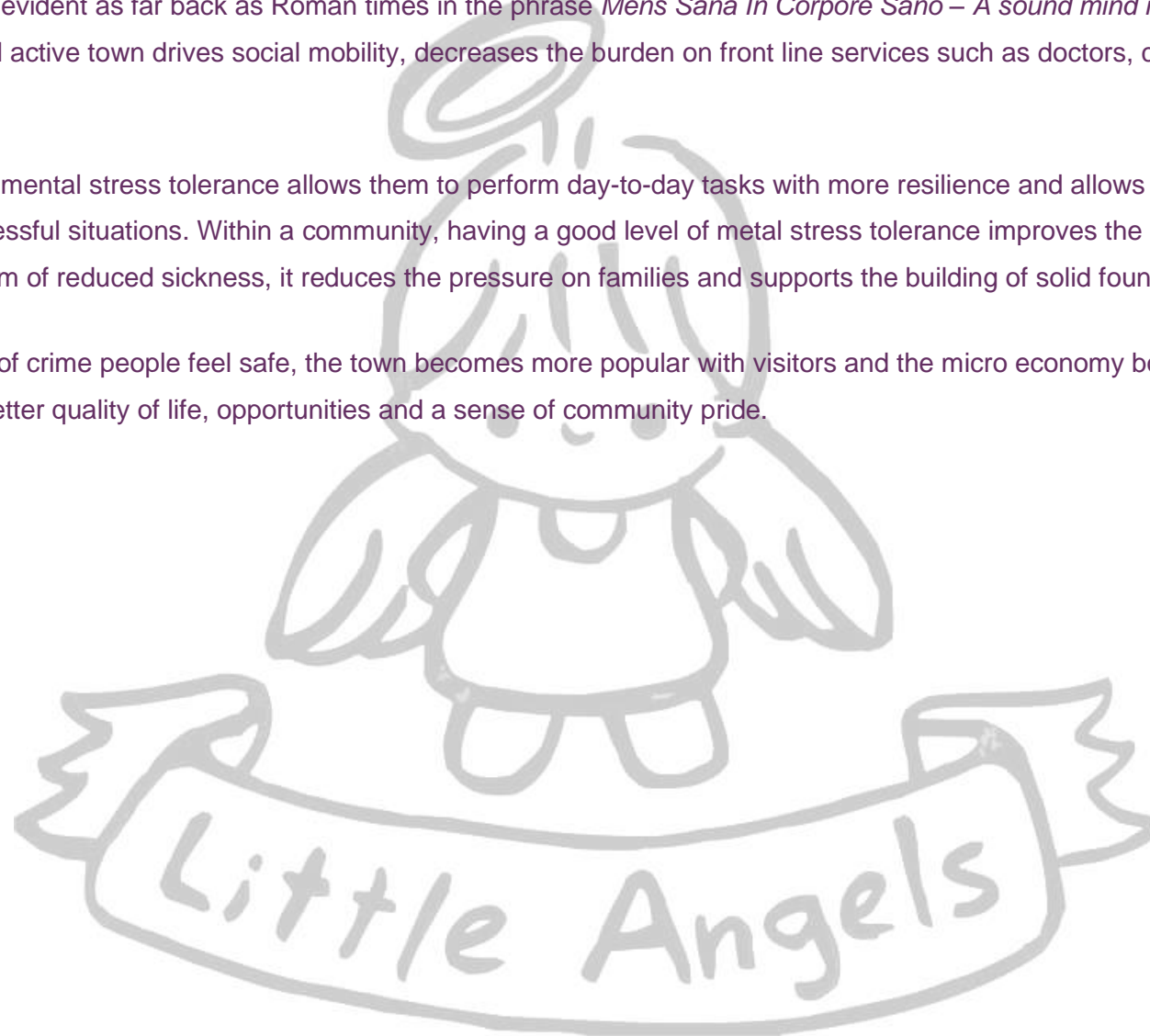
Keys to Success

The success of this project would be evident in the number of people using recreational spaces. In turn, this increase in usage will be echoed in the footfall in the high street. Tourism to the town would be increased by creating multifunctional spaces that is inviting to those who live and work locally as well as to those who do not live in the local area. There would be a significant reduction in crime and antisocial behavior from not only more facilities to occupy residents but by having a busier town the opportunities for mindless vandalism, litter and general nuisance are reduced.

Physical activity improves mood, confidence and mental stress tolerance across every age group, the very young to the very old benefit from being active. This is evident as far back as Roman times in the phrase *Mens Sana In Corpore Sano* – *A sound mind in a healthy body*. Having a healthy and active town drives social mobility, decreases the burden on front line services such as doctors, counsellors and social services.

Improving a persons mental stress tolerance allows them to perform day-to-day tasks with more resilience and allows them to cope better and recover from stressful situations. Within a community, having a good level of metal stress tolerance improves the outcomes for businesses in the form of reduced sickness, it reduces the pressure on families and supports the building of solid foundations for life.

With lower incidents of crime people feel safe, the town becomes more popular with visitors and the micro economy booms – booming economies lead to better quality of life, opportunities and a sense of community pride.



About Uppingham

Location

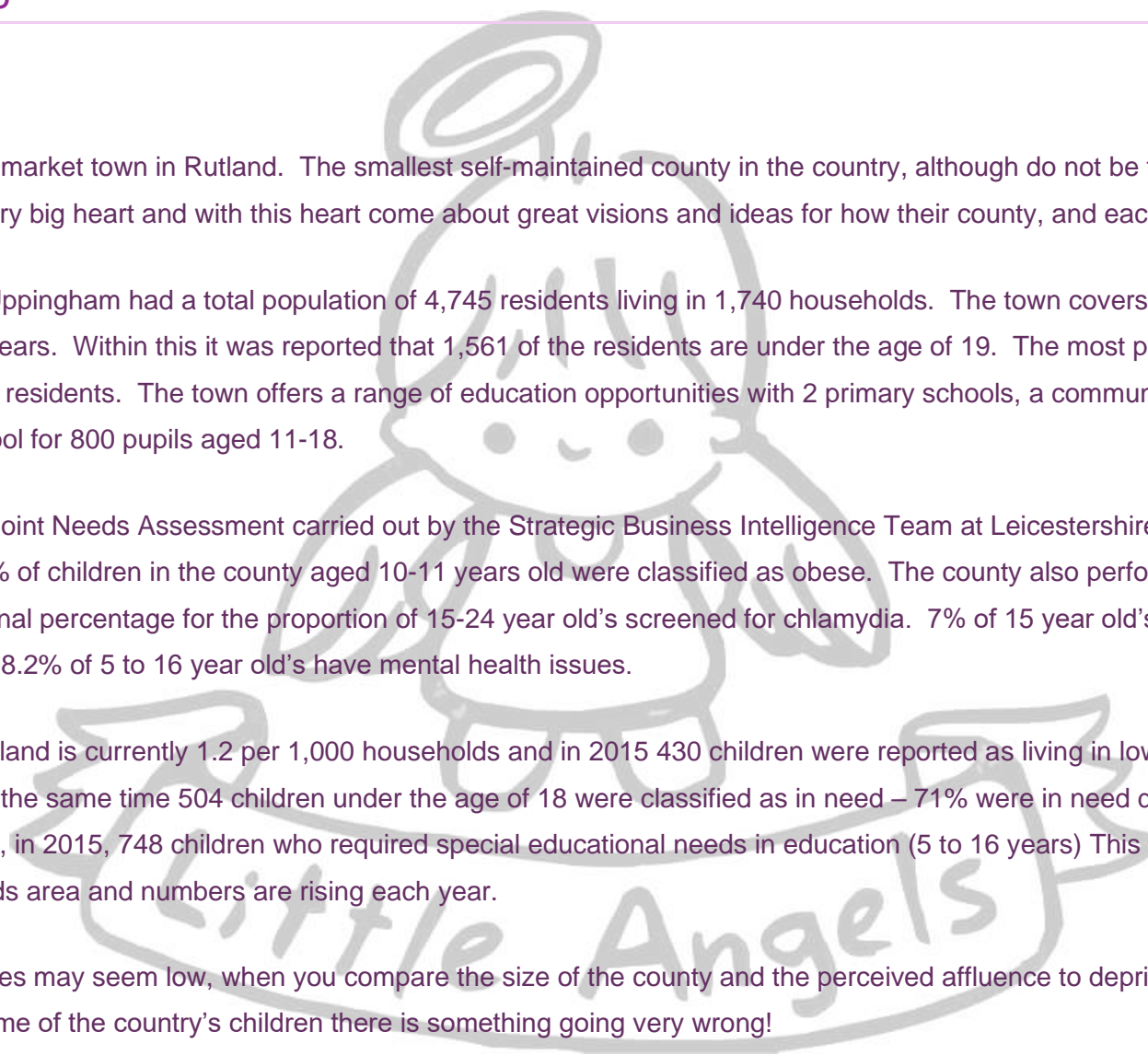
Uppingham is a rural market town in Rutland. The smallest self-maintained county in the country, although do not be fooled by the size, Rutlanders have a very big heart and with this heart come about great visions and ideas for how their county, and each town could be.

At the 2011 census Uppingham had a total population of 4,745 residents living in 1,740 households. The town covers 778 hectares and has a mean age of 38.1 years. Within this it was reported that 1,561 of the residents are under the age of 19. The most popular age group was 45 to 59 which is 800 residents. The town offers a range of education opportunities with 2 primary schools, a community college and a full private boarding school for 800 pupils aged 11-18.

In the 2018 Rutland Joint Needs Assessment carried out by the Strategic Business Intelligence Team at Leicestershire County Council, it was stated that 25.4% of children in the county aged 10-11 years old were classified as obese. The county also performs “*significantly worse*” than the national percentage for the proportion of 15-24 year old’s screened for chlamydia. 7% of 15 year old’s say they consume alcohol regularly and 8.2% of 5 to 16 year old’s have mental health issues.

Homelessness in Rutland is currently 1.2 per 1,000 households and in 2015 430 children were reported as living in low income families within the county. At the same time 504 children under the age of 18 were classified as in need – 71% were in need due to abuse and neglect. Rutland had, in 2015, 748 children who required special educational needs in education (5 to 16 years) This is significantly higher than the East Midlands area and numbers are rising each year.

Whilst the percentages may seem low, when you compare the size of the county and the perceived affluence to deprivation the numbers are alarming! For some of the country’s children there is something going very wrong!



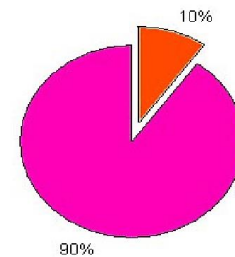
Market Needs Analysis

According to the Sports Council, sedentary lifestyles are considered the fourth primary risk factor for coronary heart disease and stroke with around 40% of middle aged to elderly population taking part in infrequent or no moderate activity. The public burden of inactivity is high and Morris (1994) suggests that engaging mixed populations in physical activity that is enjoyable and sociable can provide a cost effective strategy for public health improvement.

Depression is one of the most prevalent psychiatric disorders that, according to research, will affect at least 1 in 5 people during their lifetime. It is now evident in children as well as adults. The cost of treatments has increased year on year. It was reported that 26% of absenteeism in young men was due to mental health issues. Over 2 decades ago, in a white paper *Saving Lives: Our healthier nation (1999)*, the Department for Health recognised that well-being was about an all rounded notion of good health and not just the absence of physical disease.

Research has also shown that there are many benefits of play in the natural environment, however there are some startling facts:

- 21% of children play outside today compared to 71% of their parents
- 64% of children today play outside less than once a week
- 43% of adults think children shouldn't play outside alone until age 14
- More children admitted to hospital for falling out of bed than trees
- 25% of primary school children walk home from school compared to 86% in 1971.
- The distance children stray from their home has shrunk by 90%.



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Early Years – 0 to 6 years

Some play based activities may start from the interests of the child and require input from the adults to develop the skills a child needs to grow developmentally. The activity, the thinking, accessing new materials, introducing new vocabulary, extending ideas, introducing new concepts and inspiring enthusiasm and motivation all come from the *more knowledgeable other* (Vygotsky, 1934). For most children this can be a parent, sibling, primary care giver or a mix of all of them. Together the child learns new skills in positive, social interactions.

Risky play can be defined as a thrilling and exciting activity that involves a risk of physical injury, and play that provides opportunities for challenge, testing limits, exploring boundaries and learning about injury risk (Sandseter (2007; Little & Wyver, 2008).

Risk allows children to children to push themselves to the limits of their capabilities and allows them space to progress. It allows children to feel in control of their actions, learning and play. Taking risks and learning boundaries in a safe, secure environment where they can be supported directly or indirectly by adults. There is a vast difference between what children can do indoors and what they can do outdoors, what are the differences and potential for learning.

The current provision for this age in Uppingham has a gated play area on Todd's Piece. There are 2 swings and a small climbing frame behind the football club changing rooms and bar. During the football season this space is not usable for children as the pitch takes up almost the entire green space. Residents have also commented that the language from both supporters and players for the duration of the game is not suitable to children or young people to be near.

The housing estates in Uppingham have built small scale play spaces. The Beeches, Hornbeam and The Firs all host very limited play equipment that the builders were made to include in their development plans to ensure that they received permission to build. These spaces are often unkempt, small and dark. They are not in reachable distance for most children and are not family friendly spaces.

Primary Children - 7 to 11 years

In a project for a London suburb, Boyce and Peel (2015) looked at the children that lived around a woodland park and how often they used this space. Of the 3,000 children that lived no more than a 15 minute walk from this space none of them were using it – the wood was empty. 2961 5 to 12 year old's had access to the awe and wonder of the outside, in a space ideal for playing and exploring and not one was in it. 642 children the same age lived just a short 5 minute walk and they were cooped up, inside!

“Children have the potential to be more resilient, capable, creative and able to learn than we give them credit for. Yet their lives are becoming ever more scheduled, controlled and directed.” - Tim Gill

Uppingham offers a very limited space for this age group. Todd's Piece has 4 pieces of play equipment that is for this age that includes a zip wire. However, the maximum capacity for this space is circa 15, it is next to a busy road and at the weekends the town football club use the space to play their games which takes up 70% of the grass.

Secondary Children – 12 to 15 years

As children make the transition to secondary school the way they socialise and interact with their peers changes dramatically. Climbing trees and bike riding are now “not so cool”. Research like that above is showing that teens are spending more time inside engaged in computer games and social media rather than meeting with friends in the community. In Uppingham there is no space for teens to meet. There has been a surge in antisocial behavior such as litter and graffiti which could be argued is a result of lack of stimulation and belonging. The town has an excellent sports centre that is owned by Uppingham School. Young people can play sport here, at a cost. There is a skate park

AN EMPTY WOOD – NEARLY 3000 CHILDREN COOPED UP



Map drawn by Peter Boyce and Charlie Peel for the London Essays © Crown copyright and database rights 2015 Ordnance Survey 100019153 and adapted from data from the Office for National Statistics licensed under the Open Government Licence v.3.0.

which is free, however, both of these activities are specialised or costly. At the time of writing there is no youth provision in the town that is actively engaging young people, despite Oakham, our neighboring town, having an excellent youth provision, centre and council.

Young People – 16 to 19 years

Further education in Uppingham is non-existent. To continue studies passed year 11 young people must travel out of the town, often out of the county to receive training, go to school or college or for an apprenticeship. There are very few job opportunities and the opportunities to socialise with peers does not occur. Young people of this age can be socially isolated and feel vulnerable.

Over 65's

Loneliness and not enough exercise is an issue for people as they get older. In rural locations such as Uppingham, this problem can be exasperated by poor transport links for families to reach their relatives if they live further away. Social isolation can cause mental health issues and cause feelings of loneliness, vulnerability and cause rapid decline in health.

There has been a plethora of research recently into the benefits of intergeneration spaces in the community that allow for the older generation to exercise, meet and even play!

In Uppingham specifically, Grandparents are making up for a high percentage of the child caregivers as their own children return to work and utilise their parents to provide care for the children (RCC, 2018). Having adequate spaces where older people can meet with their grandchildren with other likeminded people creates a sense of community and is a valuable support network for everyone.

Studies have proven that by exercising and being outdoors there is a reduced need for hospitalisation for the elderly as exercise and physical activities can help improve mobility, flexibility and balance. 25% of the town's population in Uppingham are over the age of 65 (Census, 2011) at and the time of writing there is only a very small number of facilities that support this population age. These are currently a members owner Bowls club, an Age Concern charity shop with café and the church rooms which operate occasional activities and events.

The town has 2 large care homes with residence who live there and receive end of life care. There is also suitable homes for the elderly close to the town, yet these are in short supply.

In recent years, Asia and Europe have seen an increase in the number of recreational areas for the elderly intertwined with play spaces for the young – these multigenerational spaces are a great use of small and limited space. Children and the elderly interact more affordably with each other and studies have shown that these environments are having high social, positive and invigorating effects on communities.

“Play is a great connector for adults and seniors and the children in their lives. In addition to the cognitive and physical benefits of play, it can also reduce stress in adults and is proven to help combat toxic stress in kids,” said Sarah Pinsky, Director of Client Services at KaBOOM!

Visitors, Tourists & Families

When a town, city or village has a story to tell people make visits to it. However, in modern society a town cannot rely on this to generate visitors. As tourists become more fastidious and look for unique experiences, towns must think outside the box and create spaces that provide a niche or exciting reason to travel. Considering a small market town as a dynamic place and ever evolving to meet tourist needs will ensure that people visit.

“For many tourism is a cornerstone of a policy of urban development that combines a competitive supply able to meet visitors’ expectations with a positive contribution to the development of towns and cities and the well-being of their residents” (EDGTU, 2000:9)

Green spaces fulfil different functions within a town: -

- An environment improvement and conservation function as they purify the atmosphere, reduce pollution and have a moderating effect over the urban microclimate
- A social function as they create natural surroundings with relaxing effects

- A leisure function developed as a consequence of the limited spare time of the working people who prefer to spend it in the open, but within the city or very close to it
- An aesthetic function as their purpose is to embellish buildings and to highlight their architecture (Ana F Iliescu, 2003:91-104); -
- A touristic function reflected by the number of visitors that come to such sites because they are attracted by the historic heritage of gardens and parks, design style, flora, entertainment facilities, etc.

Whist Uppingham does have a heritage trail and Uppingham School history to draw in visitors there is a lack of open space and opportunities for visitors to explore more than what initially enticed them to the town. The high street is working hard to bridge this gap, however the issue is wider and expands beyond the high street into our streets, green spaces and recreational space.



Evidence of Spaces Locally

Place Visited	Positives	Age Range	Comments
Lyddington Park	Clean, open space with equipment for different ages that includes sports, sunken trampoline, sandpit	Young children below 13	Limited parking, no toilets, hard to find
Oakham Park	Large multiuse space – enclosed, excellent diverse use of equipment and space Bandstand, close to amenities, parking, toilets close by	Any age from 0 to 100+	
Loughborough	Parkour, trim trail, skate park, outside gym, zip wire, bandstand, rugby post, benches, toilets, close to shops, car parking	Any age from 0 to 100+	
Stanwick Lakes	Water adventure, open ended resources, car parking, café,	Any age from 0 to 100+	Large space needed
Wickstead Park	Open ended equipment, space, rides	2 to 17	Cost to enter, large space needed,

Uppingham Town Council Questionnaire

Recently, Uppingham Town council sent out a survey to local residents to ascertain their opinion of the drawings made by 3 park equipment companies. 182 residents responded. It could be argued that the findings of this questionnaire were biased from the outset, since respondents were only given the option to state positive and negative factors in comparison for three pre drawn designs. A more open, ethical approach would have been to ask respondents to give their suggestions openly, or for them to identify their needs from a *blank canvas* perspective rather than a preconceived choice.

The designs have been made by park equipment companies who driving factor is to sell equipment. The community has not been consulted with and no needs analysis carried out to determine what a broad spectrum of recreational users would want from a shared community space. Of the three options option B was the preferred with 41% of respondents (n=76) choosing this one. However, option A had 31% (n=57) and C 27% (n=49) which shows no clear “winning” design.

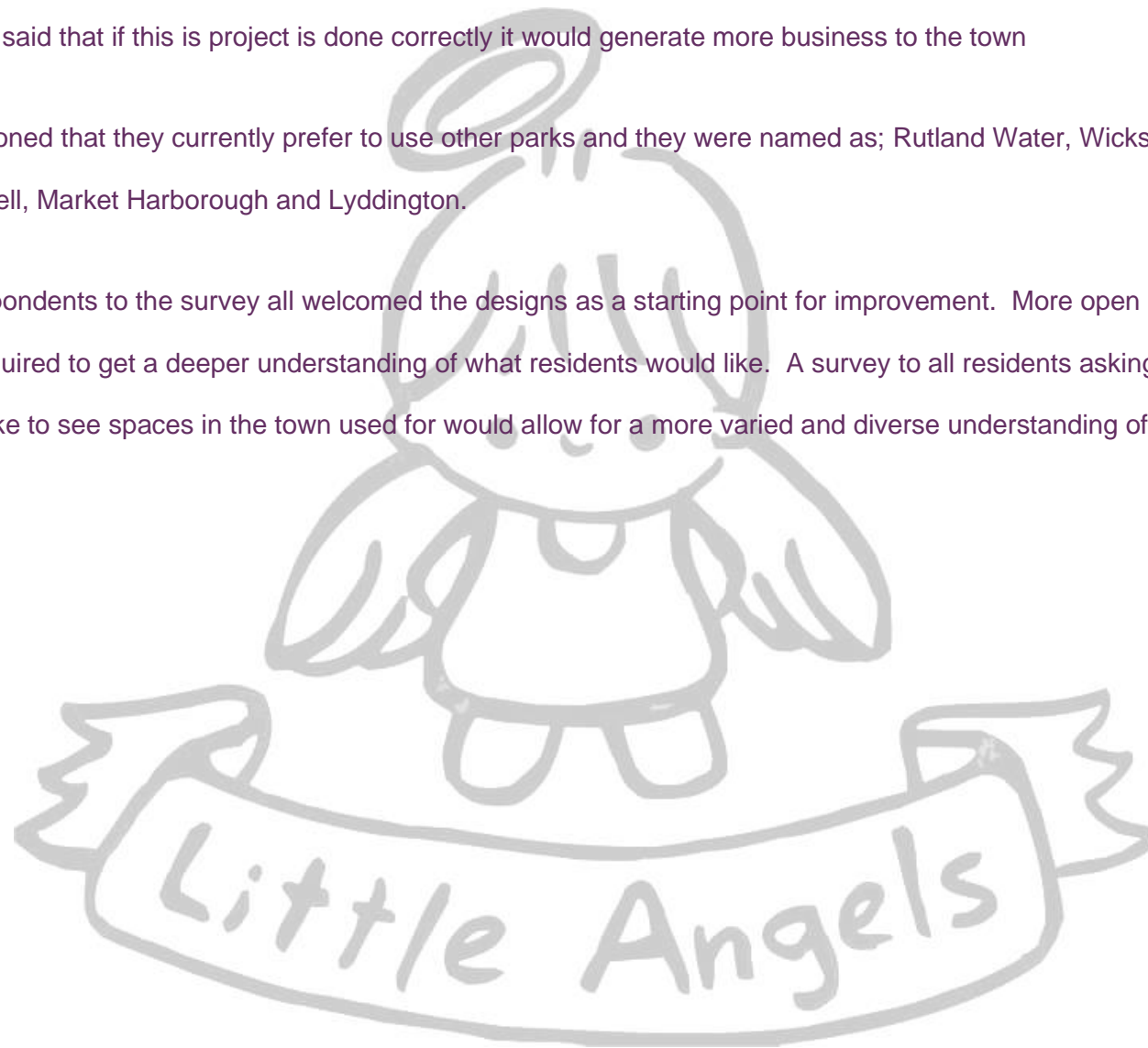
Respondents were then asked “*Please use this space to tell us what you liked most about the scheme you have chosen and any other thoughts you have about the play area*”. The findings suggested the following:

- 62 respondents said space is needed for older children
- 40 respondents said that aesthetics and materials used is important and must be natural and in keeping with the towns look
- 16 respondents said they would like to see educational/open ended resources with over half mentioning sand
- 11 respondents would like to see inclusive equipment for all abilities
- 6 respondents would like to see more space and picnic areas
- 5 respondents would like to see more for children and adults to do
- 4 respondents would like to see CCTV to reduce crime and vandalism

- 2 respondents would like the surface to be addressed so it is safe to use all year
- 1 respondent said that if this project is done correctly it would generate more business to the town

6 respondents mentioned that they currently prefer to use other parks and they were named as; Rutland Water, Wickstead Park (2 respondents), Whitwell, Market Harborough and Lyddington.

In summary, the respondents to the survey all welcomed the designs as a starting point for improvement. More open ended questioning and needs analysis is required to get a deeper understanding of what residents would like. A survey to all residents asking them to share ideas of what they would like to see spaces in the town used for would allow for a more varied and diverse understanding of the population of Uppingham.



The Vision in Action

Having explored the local area within a 25 mile radius there are many amazing parks, green spaces and community areas that are improving the lives of residents not too far from home. Children, elderly people, families and visitors sharing multiuse spaces, as united communities. How could we bring this to our town?

Here are some of the options:

Parkour

What is Parkour / Freerunning / Art du Deplacement?

Parkour / Freerunning / Art du Deplacement is the primarily non-competitive physical discipline of training to move freely over and through any terrain using only the abilities of the body, principally through running, jumping, climbing and quadrupedal movement. In practice it focuses on developing the fundamental attributes required for such movement, which include functional strength and fitness, balance, spatial awareness, agility, coordination, precision, control and creative vision.

Parkour is an ageless activity that allows people of all ages to explore their own gross motor skills and fitness – Loughborough have a number of organisations that meet regularly at their local park to practice and even compete in the discipline of Parkour. Sports England recognises it as a sport reporting that almost 100,000 people are participating in Parkour activities throughout the country. Coaching courses are available at training centres across the UK and participation in the sport is exploding. In 2018 Dr Timothy Yu became the first Chief Medical Officer to be appointed to represent the sport.



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Outside Gym Equipment

An increasing number of public parks are installing outdoor gym equipment to the benefit of both the park and locals who use it. Whereas once outdoor gyms were something unusual and were rarely used when installed, today they are becoming more common and often become one of the busiest areas of parks. If you are thinking of installing outdoor gym equipment in your park but are still undecided, these benefits might help impact your decision:

Modernise parks

Parks need to offer modern equipment to stay relevant and continue to attract locals to use their facilities. One easy way of keeping parks relevant and modern is by adding gym equipment. Outdoor gym equipment is specifically designed and manufactured to withstand changeable weather conditions, as well as constant use; this means that it is ideal for public parks as it will be able to withstand the wear and tear of public use.

Free exercise equipment

Offering free exercise equipment will enable those in your area who do not have the money for a gym membership to exercise. Free exercise equipment is also an ideal way of encouraging those who have never worked out before to give it a go. Outdoor gym equipment is designed to be simple and easy to use so that it won't result in injury even without a personal trainer on hand, meaning that it provides a risk-free way for people to exercise. It could also be argued that exercise is a low cost risk alternative to mental health problems as the general population reap the positive effects.

Mixing cardio and strength

The space available in parks means that they are ideal for combining cardio and strength workouts. While cardio can easily be achieved through running or jogging, equipment such as rowers and bikes provide an alternative cardio exercises. Strength training is vital for building muscle and helping to tone-up. Equipment such as leg presses and pull-downs enable people to exercise different areas of the body. Research has shown that combining cardio and strength workouts are the best way to lose weight and build muscle. As well as this, strength



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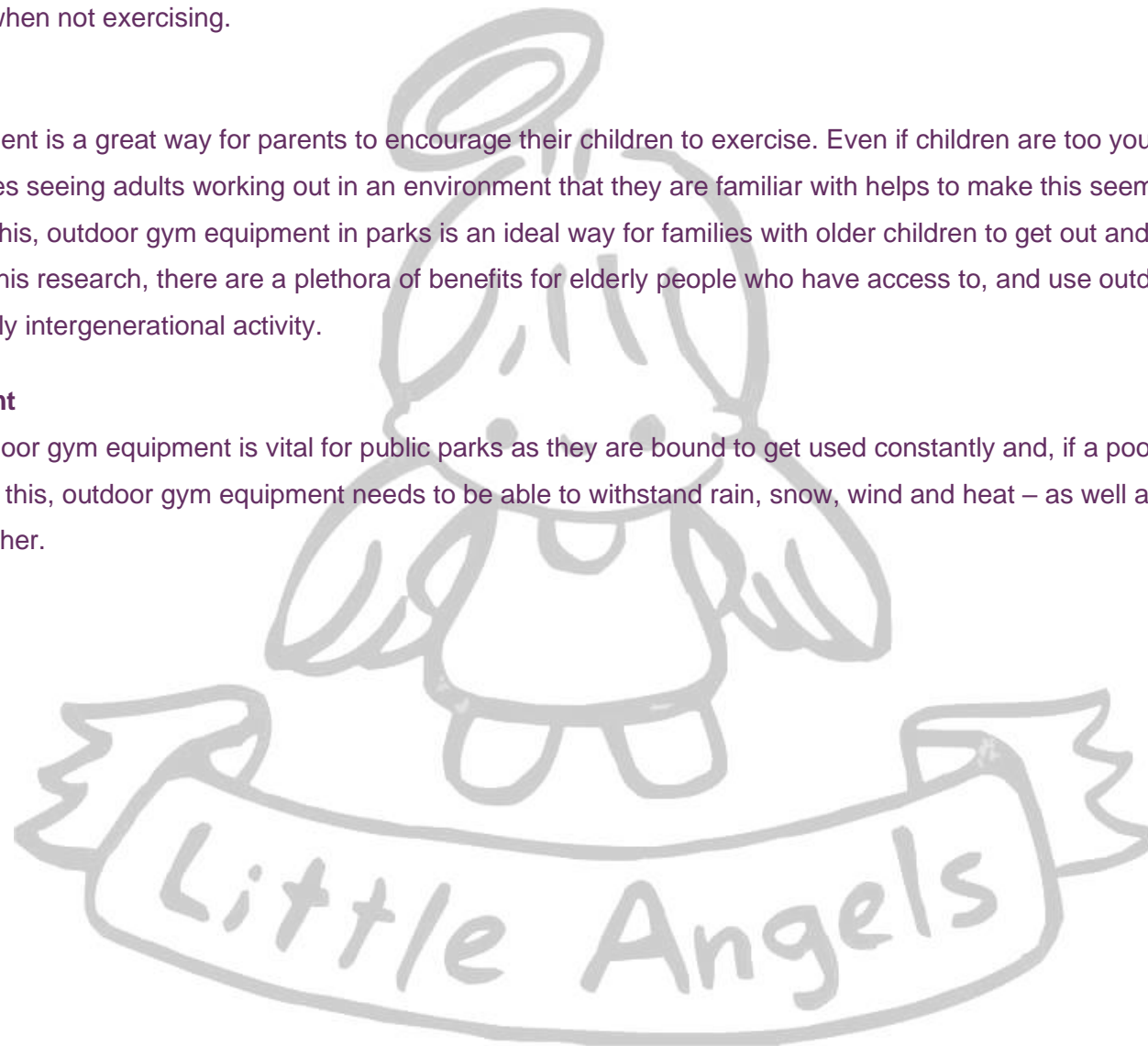
training is vital, even for women, as muscle burns more calories than fat – so the more muscle you build the more calories your body will burn naturally even when not exercising.

Family friendly

Outdoor gym equipment is a great way for parents to encourage their children to exercise. Even if children are too young to use the equipment themselves seeing adults working out in an environment that they are familiar with helps to make this seem like a natural part of daily life. As well as this, outdoor gym equipment in parks is an ideal way for families with older children to get out and exercise together. As discussed earlier in this research, there are a plethora of benefits for elderly people who have access to, and use outdoor gym equipment also – making it a truly intergenerational activity.

Durable and resilient

Installing quality outdoor gym equipment is vital for public parks as they are bound to get used constantly and, if a poor quality, will easily get damaged. As well as this, outdoor gym equipment needs to be able to withstand rain, snow, wind and heat – as well as being safe to use no matter what the weather.



Trim Trails

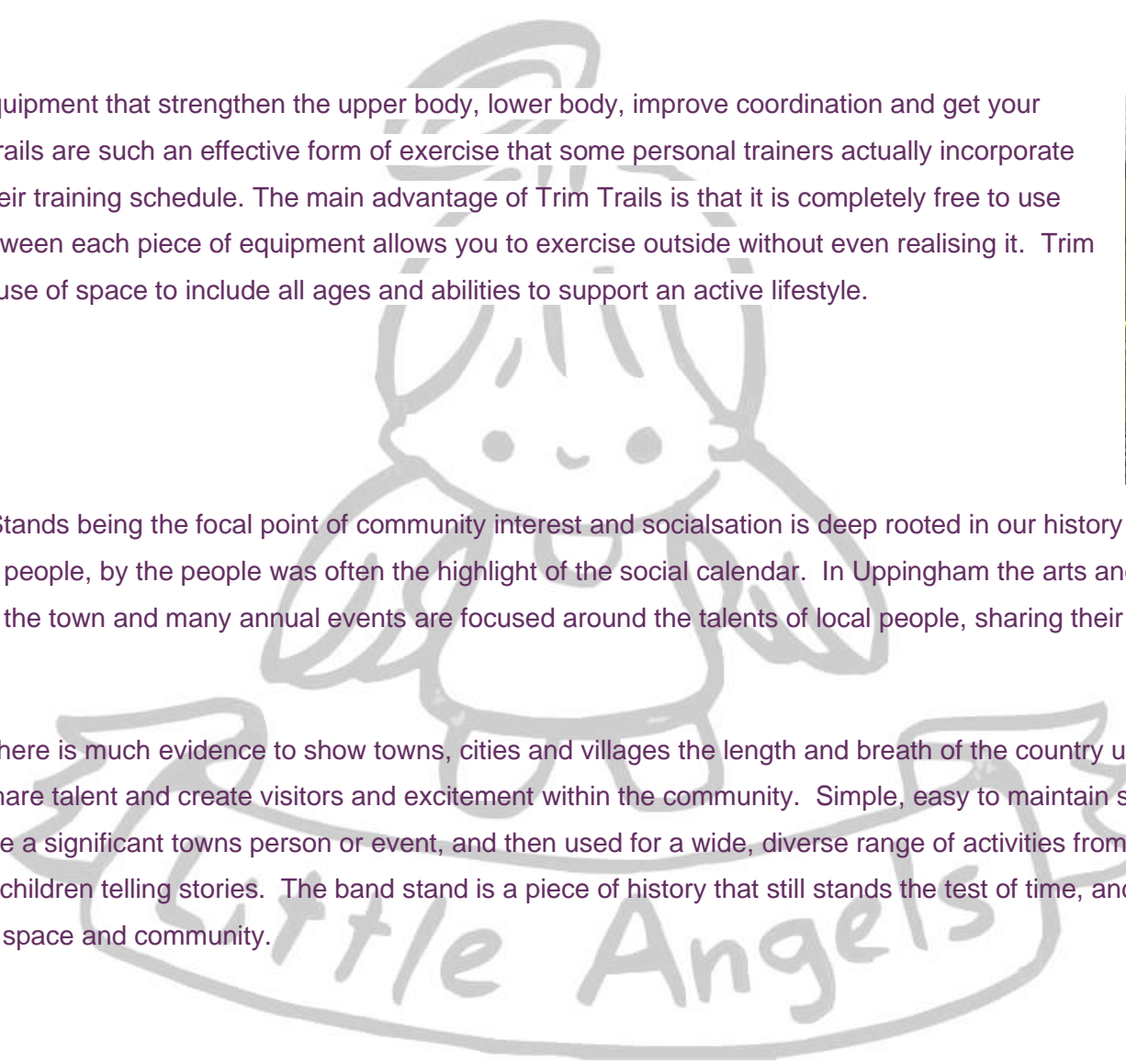
Trim Trails include equipment that strengthen the upper body, lower body, improve coordination and get your heart beating. Trim Trails are such an effective form of exercise that some personal trainers actually incorporate the equipment into their training schedule. The main advantage of Trim Trails is that it is completely free to use them and walking between each piece of equipment allows you to exercise outside without even realising it. Trim Trails are a fantastic use of space to include all ages and abilities to support an active lifestyle.



Band Stands

The history of Band Stands being the focal point of community interest and socialisation is deep rooted in our history as a country. Entertainment for the people, by the people was often the highlight of the social calendar. In Uppingham the arts and music are still very high on the priority of the town and many annual events are focused around the talents of local people, sharing their skills and creativity with fellow towns folk.

During the research there is much evidence to show towns, cities and villages the length and breath of the country using band stands to unite communities, share talent and create visitors and excitement within the community. Simple, easy to maintain structures are built, often to commemorate a significant towns person or event, and then used for a wide, diverse range of activities from performing arts, singing and performances to children telling stories. The band stand is a piece of history that still stands the test of time, and if utilized, can become an asset to any open space and community.



Uppingham Town Football Club

With 2 senior teams and a veteran's team, Uppingham Town football club has been at the heart of the town for many years. Recently the youth team has folded with children and young people now having to travel to Oakham, Corby or even further to join teams. Kristian, a football coach from Stamford did hold his training camp FDS at Uppingham Community College which was affiliated with West Bromwich Albions. Football is still a well-supported community sport and one that deserves to have a ground that encourages players of all ages to join.

The ground currently used is not ideal for the sport. Dog feces is a common issue with players having to use a spade before matches to remove it from the pitch. The goals have to be set up at packed away after each game and the teams have no where to train. In the winter, teams and supporters have no rest bite from the harsh winter weather and poor light and drainage issues often mean games are postponed or cancelled.

Uppingham has much pride in the purpose build cricket ground that was built for Uppingham Town Cricket Club. This build has lead the way and shown what is possible. The interest in youth cricket is a testimony to the club with over 300 junior members attending each week during the season and both girls and boys being selected to represent Leicestershire County Cricket Club.

This too could be possible with state of the art football facilities – flood light pitches, car parking, club house and changing rooms. With these facilities comes the option to reinstate the youth side, attracting young children from neighboring towns and counties to play for Uppingham Town. Showcasing community pride and passion for the nations favorite game.

It has also been noted, that during match days, the use of the park to other people in the community is no longer possible. Car parking spaces are taken up by both home and visiting players and the green space full of fruitful language and footballs.

Uppingham Youth Club

Uppingham has very little for its young people to do after school and during the holidays. In the survey carried out by Rutland County Council (RCC) it was noted that there is no provision of care for key stage 3 (ages 11 to 13) children in Rutland. The Youth Council at RCC did ask the young people what they wanted in the form of a youth provision – to which there was very little interest. However, the question asked were very leading and without ever having experience of a well ran Youth Club, like Oakham has with Jules One Stop – how can the young people know what they are missing?!

A space where they can go to hang out, where zero tolerance to anti social behavior is managed well by a team of volunteers and youth workers co-providing support and space for young people to socialise. Computer consoles, pool and snooker tables as well as access to karaoke, disco music and other exciting activities allows the young people to take ownership and pride in their space.

During school time, the building could be used by other residents in the community to create a community hub. Coffee mornings, knitting clubs, health visitor drop in, citizens advice and other front line services that add depth and value to communities – all in one space, working in the community, for the community.

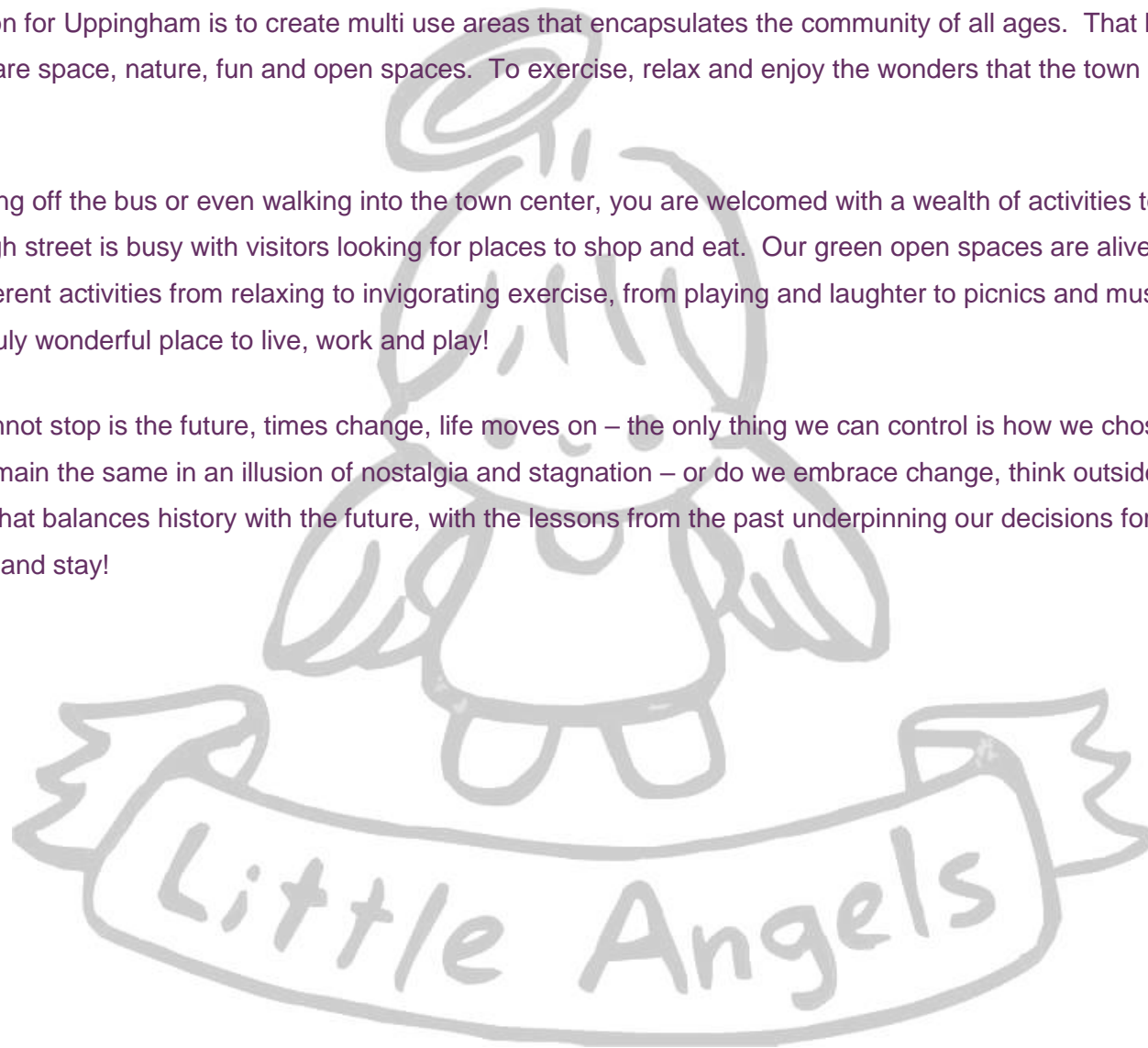


Summary

In summary, the vision for Uppingham is to create multi use areas that encapsulates the community of all ages. That brings together the old and the young, to share space, nature, fun and open spaces. To exercise, relax and enjoy the wonders that the town of Uppingham has to offer.

Parking the car, getting off the bus or even walking into the town center, you are welcomed with a wealth of activities to ensure you have an exciting day. The high street is busy with visitors looking for places to shop and eat. Our green open spaces are alive with people of all ages engaged in different activities from relaxing to invigorating exercise, from playing and laughter to picnics and music – a town alive with diversity in unity, a truly wonderful place to live, work and play!

The one thing we cannot stop is the future, times change, life moves on – the only thing we can control is how we chose to move with it – do we allow things to remain the same in an illusion of nostalgia and stagnation – or do we embrace change, think outside the box and become the pioneering town that balances history with the future, with the lessons from the past underpinning our decisions for tomorrow – where people come to visit, and stay!



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