



Laverstock & Ford Parish Council

Incorporating Milford, Bishopdown Farm, Old Sarum & Longhedge

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Held at Greentrees Primary School at 6.00pm on Monday 16th May 2022

MINUTES

Chair of the Annual Parish Meeting: Cllr Nick Baker, Chair of Laverstock and Ford Parish Council
The following Parish Councillors were also present: Cllr Laura Jones, Cllr Tom Maskell, Cllr Ian McDonald, Cllr Patrick Schneider.

The following Wiltshire Councillors were present: WCllr Ian McLennan, WCllr Andrew Oliver

Nine members of the public were present, including representatives from the police, Land Trust and Parish Council staff.

The meeting commenced at 6.15pm.

1. Election of Chair and welcome.

Cllr Baker offered to chair the meeting, which was agreed by all present. The Chair welcomed all present and explained the format of the meeting.

2. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Parish Councillors Lynn, Tucker and Vanstone.

3. Approval of Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting 17th May 2021

Resolved: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 17th May 2021.

4. Chairs Report

Over the past year, the Parish Council has adapted to significant growth within the Parish, including housing development and the acquisition of new assets, including open spaces and play areas. The Parish Council has recruited additional staff and implemented a new committee structure to help cope with these changes. The Chair thanked Councillors for their time and commitment, as well as the volunteers who assist the Parish Council, including the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, the webmaster and those who deliver the Parish newsletter.

The Chair reported on changes within the staff team. He expressed the Council's gratitude to the whole team, including the previous Clerk who had stepped down from the role during the year, and highlighted some of the Clerks significant achievements whilst in post, including the development of Castle Hill Country Park.

The Chair reported on the work of the Parish Council over the previous year, including the refurbishment of Partridge Way and St Jude's Close play areas, at a cost of £50,000.00, and the plans to refurbish another four play areas within Bishopdown Farm. The Parish Council have also taken over responsibility, from Wiltshire Council, for much of the open space in Bishopdown Farm, and the Chair reported on plans to manage these spaces and increase access to Castle Hill Country Park. The Parish Council are also working to secure the future of the Pavilion when the current lease to Wiltshire Council expires next year. The Parish Council adopted a new Environment Policy and are working to set up an Environment Action Plan Group, and the Chair encouraged anyone interested in getting involved to contact the Councils Operations Officer.

A new Speed Indicator Device is now in operation, on rotation between three sites in Ford, Laverstock and Old Sarum, to help combat issues of speeding.

The Parish Council continues to work with Wiltshire Council on the provision and improvement of cycle routes.

Working with local residents, Wiltshire Council and the three schools in Laverstock, much work has been done to find a solution for the problems that school traffic create, and an Experimental Traffic

Regulation Order is planned for introduction later in the year, preventing parking on Church Road and some neighbouring roads from 2pm – 4pm.

In Longhedge the Parish Council, using grant funding from Abri, have created a Community Growing Space, and continue to engage with the developers over community spaces and facilities on the site. A new skatepark has been constructed in Old Sarum, helped by funds raised by the local community. Cllr Schneider is continuing to take the lead in investigations into poor mobile signal in the area.

5. Financial Report

The Responsible Financial Officer RFO delivered the Financial Report for the Parish Council, for the year ending 31st March 2022.

Excluding the major capital projects of Castle Hill Country Park and the play area refurbishments at Partridge Way and St Jude's Close, revenue expenditure increased by 28%. This is mainly due to the rapid expansion of the Councils assets associated with developments in Longhedge and Old Sarum, the increase in staff required to manage these and the long-term liability.

The Precept is the Parish Councils share of Council Tax, and this was increased by 18%, although still the lowest among similar large parishes in Wiltshire. Overall income, excluding developer contributions and VAT, increased by 30% thanks to significant grant funding by Wiltshire Council, the Heritage Lottery Fund and housing associations.

The balance of funds held at the end of March 2022 was £1,310,786. Of this, £1,220,574 are earmarked reserves held for maintenance of public open space and play areas, and some small capital projects.

6. Neighbourhood Plan Progress Report.

A member of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering group provided an update on progress.

A public consultation on the draft plan ended on 2nd July 2021, which included online Q&A sessions. 29 responses were received, reviewed and the plan updated where appropriate.

The amended Draft Neighbourhood Plan was formally endorsed by the Parish Council at its meeting in December 2021.

A public consultation on the final submission versions of the plan and its supporting documents started in February 2022 and ended on 11th April 2022. Eleven further responses were received. Wiltshire Council has now appointed an official examiner who will go through all the documents, responses and comments, to ensure the draft plan meets the legal requirements for a Neighbourhood Plan. The examiner will visit the parish and ask any further questions they may have, before reporting their findings to Wiltshire Council.

Assuming all is in order, Wiltshire Council will organise a referendum, where all on the electoral register for the parish will be invited to vote on their support for the plan. A majority in favour will result in the plan being adopted as one of the documents which must be considered when determining planning applications in the parish.

7. Questions from Residents

The Countryside and Greenspace Officer CGO from the Land Trust provided an update on Castle Hill Country Park.

Wiltshire Wildlife Trust are continuing to run volunteer groups, including wildlife surveys on the park, and anyone interested in getting involved is asked to get in touch. An 'open event' to promote the park and engage with the public is planned for late September.

Wessex Ground Services are managing the day-to-day aspects including maintenance.

A member of the public asked about the maintenance plans and how 'manicured' certain areas would be, in particular Fiander Lane. The CGO confirmed that the area was managed for wildlife and biodiversity and regular cutting was not planned.

There being no further questions or comments, the meeting closed at 7pm.

Signed:

Date: