



Laverstock & Ford Parish Council

Incorporating Milford, Bishopdown Farm, Old Sarum & Longhedge

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING **Held at the Old Sarum Community Centre** **At 6.30pm on Monday 17th May 2021**

MINUTES

Chair of the Annual Parish Meeting: Cllr Nick Baker, Chair of Laverstock and Ford Parish Council

The following Parish Councillors were present: Cllr Nick Baker, Cllr Lainey Barker, Cllr Derek Hayes, Cllr Kevin Lynn, Cllr Tom Maskell, Cllr Ian McDonald, Cllr Laura Rigiani, Cllr Alex Tucker, Cllr Lesley Waller.

The following Wiltshire Councillor was present: Cllr Ian McLennan

Four members of the public were present.

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 Cllr Patrick Schneider and Andrew Prince, Clerk to Laverstock and Ford Parish Council.

3. Approval of Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held on 18th March 2019.

Resolved: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 18th March 2019. There was no Annual Parish meeting in 2020 due to the COVID pandemic.

4. Chairs Report

The Chair opened his report by thanking the Councillors, Staff and Volunteers who support the work of the Parish Council. He reported on the work done on considering numerous planning applications, including the current application to build 135 homes on land in Church Road, Laverstock and the numerous voluntary groups they engage with, including Traffic Liaison and COVID groups.

The Chair expressed thanks for the many hours committed by volunteers to developing the Neighbourhood Plan and encouraged everyone to respond to the current public consultation.

The parish population has increased significantly over recent years and the Parish Council engaged external consultants to conduct a governance review, to ensure they continue to meet the needs of residents. The Chair reported on the appointment of two new staff, and the introduction of new governance structures and committees as a result of the review. The Chair reported on the provision of services and facilities. The Parish Council have worked extensively with the Land Trust to develop Castle Hill Country Park into a wonderful facility, protecting habitats whilst providing space to walk, ride and exercise.

The boardwalk at Whitebridge Spinney has also been renewed by the Parish Council. Looking forward, the Parish Council will be taking on management of a further six play areas, the Hampton Park recreation area and other open spaces from Wiltshire Council, bringing back into use areas that have fallen into disrepair in recent years. After several years of consultation, a new Skatepark at Old Sarum is shortly to be constructed. Work is continuing to develop public open spaces and play areas in Longhedge. The purchase of a new Speed Indicator Device is planned to help respond to local concerns about dangerous driving.

The Chair welcomed three new councillors who would be joining the Parish Council following the recent elections and looked forward to the new four year term.

5. Financial Report

As the Parish Clerk was unable to attend, the Chair delivered the Clerks financial report. The total income for the year was £317,414, including a significant recovery of VAT on the construction costs of the Castle Hill Country Park.

Total expenditure for the year was £1,142,873, including the largest single item of £942,494 on Castle Hill Country Park. This included a long term maintenance endowment of c.£714,000. The source of these funds was the developer of Riverdown Park.

The balance of funds held by the Parish Council at the end of the year was £1,292,356, which includes £1,216,457 of earmarked or restricted reserves, used to fund long term maintenance of assets or specific projects.

The budget for 2021-2022 requires expenditure of £285,293. The expanding assets of the Council and increase in staff to support them, together with a fall in interest rates, has resulted in an increase in precept to £221,070 – a Band D increase from £49.21 to £58.65.

6. Neighbourhood Plan Progress Report

The Neighbourhood Planning team were busy during the latter half of 2019, drafting and circulating questionnaires to stakeholders in the parish, including residents, landowners, businesses and schools. The team started to draft the plan based on the responses, together with information from Wiltshire Council. The Neighbourhood Plan required a number of appendices to contain the detailed evidence in support of its policies.

The draft plan and 11 appendices were endorsed by the Parish Council at its meeting in March 2021.

Significant preparation has now taken place in publicising the public consultation on the plan, to ensure that all residents, businesses, organisations, landowners and public bodies have the opportunity to view the documents and provide their comments. The consultation started on 17th May and will continue for 8 weeks.

The feedback from the consultation will be reviewed, and any amendments to the plan or its appendices made, before final submission of the Neighbourhood Plan to Wiltshire Council for approval.

7. Questions from Residents

Cllr McLennan recalled that when he was first elected to District Council in May 1995, the Parish Council Band D precept was approximately £7, which equated to a total income of around £9000 to £9500, and reflected on how things had changed.

There being no further questions or comments, the meeting closed at 6.50pm.