

Annual Parish Meeting Reports, Laverstock & Ford Parish, 2023

REPORT 01.

Laverstock & Ford Parish Council,

Given by Nick Baker, Chair of the parish council.

The purpose of the Annual Parish Meeting is to give residents a say in the life of the parish and the work of the parish council. My thanks to the parish council staff team (and the River Bourne Community Farm) for making it both possible and more accessible to residents.

Role of the parish council.

Currently the outstanding request from residents is to consider providing allotments. We have supported a Community Garden project to set-up in Longhedge and The Land Trust is looking at starting a Community Garden at Castle Hill Country Park.

The purpose of the new Parish Strategic Plan, which is to provide a focus for our work and make it easier for residents to engage with us on what we are (and aren't doing).

In this report I'm going to look at some of the highlights of last year and some of the key items on the agenda for the coming year. I have included a report from our Operations Officer, Joe Elder.

I won't be able to mention all of those who give their time, energy and skills to build up the life of our community. You know who you are, and on behalf of the Parish Council can I thank each and every one of you.

Community Resilience

Our parish is made up of at least five distinct communities of different ages, and the depth of community life and resilience is reflected in those differences

We have tried to work hard to build up our collective sense of community through the following-

- Work of Communications & Community Engagement Officer, on producing the Parish News and a new website.
- Supporting events such as the Castle Hill Country Park Community Day, and partner campaigns in Old Sarum and Longhedge with Abri Housing and Selwood to highlight issues around littering, and to bring in other local groups.

We have witnessed incidents of anti – social behaviour, vandalism and graffiti. The Operations team records and reports incidents such as these to Wiltshire Police and we are fortunate to have a very good relationship with the local Community Policing Team (CPT), led by PC Rachel Gunn. We have set up bi-monthly meetings between the CPT at the council offices and we are seeing benefits of this in our lines of communication and providing information to the CPT to enable them to respond to incidents. (More on this later in our dialogue with the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable).

We have been working hard to provide alternatives to engage young people at Old Sarum and Longhedge. Last year we ran a Graffiti Art Skate-Park project and we plan to make future investment in regular youth work across the Parish, which sees the Parish Clerk working with Community First and Karen Linaker, from Wiltshire Council and other community groups.

Planning and Development

In 2022 our Neighbourhood Plan was officially approved. This was a huge achievement. Many people were involved, Vic Bussereau, Jim Boardman, Kevin Martin, James Robertson, Ron and Sarah Champion, James Robertson to name but a few, whose tireless efforts to formulate this plan resulted in both a plan and website.

Of note, is the work of councillors reviewing and commenting on every local planning application.

On the radar - Church Road and Old Sarum.

As a parish council we recognise the need to balance new houses with local planning needs and the provision of adequate infrastructure and facilities, and the protection of the environment and wildlife habitat, the plan by a developer to build 135 houses is being carefully monitored and residents views sought.

Sustainable Transport

SID in operation. SID provides a visual warning, allowing monitoring of data. The data from our SID device is forwarded each month for analysis on the police database and will contribute to the identification of speeding hotspots not only within our parish but around the south of the county and thereby contributes to road safety initiatives within our parish.

Community Speedwatch- Cllr. Laura Jones has undertaken training and is currently building a team of volunteers to help address issues of speeding across the Parish.

Continuing to work on cycle networks, Old Sarum to Salisbury, Ford through to Bishopdown. The PEAG are developing templates for walks and cycle routes as featured in the Parish Newsletter.

We now have eight Footpath stewards – these volunteers are making a visible difference to our parish.

Church Road- much delayed, report going to Cabinet Member at the end of month.

Climate Change and Biodiversity

The Parish Environmental Action Group (PEAG) - led by Cllr Lainey Barker have planted 130 new trees and members have attended a climate change conference hosted by Wiltshire Council and the Centre for Sustainable Energies.

We are exploring the sowing of wildflower meadows

We have instigated a new mowing schedule in Linden Close

We are developing a Flood resilience strategy

Our contribution toward the response to critical incidents is recognised as being a part of the overall strategic approach of Police, Fire, Ambulance, WCC and the Environment Agency. The operations team are linked in to resilience forums at county level, such as our response to incidents of flooding. Internally, work is currently underway to develop our own Business Continuity Plan to ensure that the parish council maintains the ability to function and meet its statutory obligations both during and after a critical incident affecting the parish or neighbouring parishes.

Public Amenity

Play Area's

During the past year the Parish Council has worked tirelessly to bring about major improvements across all areas of the parish. We are justly proud at the delivery of three flagship projects that have culminated in modern, inclusive designed play areas at St Luke's Close, St Peter's Road and an award of a contract at Sycamore Drive. These three play areas include some of the most up to date equipment, designed for children of all abilities. In addition to these flagship projects we are also working hard to modernize some of our older play area's to bring them up to date in terms of their inclusivity and play value. Over the next three to six months we will take over the responsibility for the maintenance and management of a further five play area's at Longhedge estate. In all the Parish Council will have a total of 33 play areas across all parish wards.

We are grateful for the work of Joe Elder, Operations Officer. A new post is being recruited for an Operations Assistant to support his growing workload which includes un-planned issues such as dealing with a rise in vandalism of parish assets and monitoring the collection of waste bins.

The Parish Council recognise the value of our natural environment and the need to protect those valuable assets for the long term future benefit of parishioners and visitors to the parish. We are currently working through the recommendations from a comprehensive tree

survey to manage our tree stock to ensure, firstly that trees are in a safe condition and that, where we can, we take remedial action to save the tree, only felling when necessary on the grounds of safety and to allow the natural development of other trees within the vicinity.

Longhedge – Country park, community growing areas, outdoor Gym.
Partnership with Abri

Community Centres (*see reports 2 & 3*) - thanks to all committees. We worked in partnership to keep them open through the energy crisis and continue to support them in finding new ways of working. We are supporting OSCC with funding a centre manager post. Following withdrawal of Wiltshire Council from Hampton Park Pavilion, we worked with the landowner and the Pavillion charity to find new legal structures and funding mechanisms to allow it to keep serving the community.

Accountability

Role of all Councillors

We meet once a month and have 3 sub-committees. Councillors are active within their wards (Bishopdown Farm, Ford, Old Sarum & Longhedge, Laverstock & Milford) and active in community groups such as Neighbourhood Watch and the Parish Environmental Action group. Their contacts are listed in the parish newsletter and on the parish website www.laverstockford-pc.gov.uk. From sorting out post boxes, to dealing with housing associations who have let public areas become run-down, to liaising with the Community Police team, organizing community events and supporting community spaces, councillors are not only at the heart of their communities but take time to provide vital checks and balances over the way we designate resources and manage finances to get best value for our communities. There is a growing need for more councillors at Bishopdown Farm (including Riverdown Park).

Work of staff team - contribution of Trudi Deane (Parish Clerk and Andrew Prince, Responsible Financial Officer).

Our thanks to Amy Cavendish for her tenure (now ended) as Operations Officer.

Nick Baker

Chair of Laverstock & Ford Parish Council

May 09, 2023

PLEASE NOTE:

1. This report incorporates the Operations Annual report by Joe Elder, Operations Officer for Laverstock & Ford Parish Council
2. There is a separate report from our Community Centres – the Hampton Park Pavilion and the Old Sarum & Longhedge Community Centre. (Attached to this document for your convenience - see next page)

REPORT FOR ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 02.

Hampton Park Pavilion

This past year has been a bit of a waiting game whilst the transfer of ownership of the freehold to building is transferred to the Parish Council and additional sources of funding can be more easily accessed. As trustees we had a management agreement with Wiltshire Council and that has now been reborn under similar terms with Laverstock & Ford Parish Council via Licence.

We have two main focusses as present:

- 1) To improve the energy efficiency of the building (for environmental reasons whilst also in the process helping to keep hiring rates lower than they would otherwise be)
- 2) Encouraging increasing community access and use of the building.

We are very grateful for all of our users/hirers but would just mention 2 in particular who are making a big contribution to the local community:

Firstly, the Café of the Green open on Thursday mornings with a focus on mothers and toddlers. Secondly, the Circus Group, on Monday evenings with a focus on connecting with youth.

We expect to help host another fun day on the Green in August (do put Monday 28th August in your diary) and finally, we would wish to see a new youth club/group start again operating on a regular basis, There has been a good indication of demand from the 2 “Pop-Up” youth events held recently, with a further date planned for June.

Charles Dew-Jones
Chair of Trustees

REPORT FOR ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 03.

Old Sarum & Longhedge Community Centre

The Old Sarum and Longhedge Community Centre (OSCC) has just engaged a centre manager to run the centre to give the time, focus and attention the centre needs to grow as the heart of the community. Duties will include supporting the Toddler group in an admin role, keeping the centre clean and well maintained and supporting the Community Pantry.

The Centre Trustees receives grant support from the parish Council, and two parish councillors sit on the board of Trustees which is run as a CIO (charitable incorporated organisation). The centre is currently looking at energy efficiency and sustainability, and obtaining quotes for LED lighting and solar panels, and applying to relevant grant funds to action this.

OSCC are still urgently searching for a secretary for our board of trustees - if anybody would like to volunteer the Trustees would be very grateful.

Income was £38,693 vs expenses of £32,960 resulting in an increase of £5,733.02, however this doesn't account for any unspent grants etc. of which £4,300 is for the Community Pantry due to launch on May 17th, 2023.