



Laverstock & Ford Parish Council

Incorporating Milford, Bishopdown Farm, Old Sarum & Longhedge

Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 15th May 2023 at River Bourne Community Farm.

MINUTES

Councillors present: Baker (Chair), Hayes, Jones, Lynn, Maskell, McDonald, Rigiani, Schneider, Smith, Vanstone, Waller.

In attendance: Brain (Communications and Community Engagement Officer CCEO), Deane (Clerk), Elder (Operations Officer), Prince (Responsible Financial Officer RFO)

Wiltshire Councillors McLennan and Oliver, Wiltshire's Police and Crime Commissioner Phillip Wilkinson PCC and Chief Constable Catherine Roper CC and PSCO Moss were also in attendance. 13 members of the public attended in person, and two members of the public joined online.

The PCC and CC made a presentation in advance of the meeting and answered questions from councillors and the public. The PCC stated they were near a decision for the new Police Station for Salisbury but could not disclose the location at this stage. Residents were encouraged to engage with the police in dealing with anti-social behaviour. Using data from Community Speed Watch and Speed Indicator devices, targeted action is being taken by Community Speed Enforcement Teams. The CC reported on their efforts for improvements within Wiltshire Police focusing on key priorities of safer public spaces, violence and burglary. No decision has yet been made over the feasibility of a custody suite within Salisbury. The PCC reported on grant funding opportunities including the Safer Streets and Proceeds of Crime funds. The CC outlined how the police respond to domestic violence crimes and the PCC reported on their actions against wildlife crimes. Thanks were expressed to our local police teams for their efforts in our area.

The meeting opened at 8.55pm.

23.057 Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Councillor Baker stated he was standing for the position of Chair. No other candidates came forward.

Resolved: to elect Cllr Baker as Chair of Laverstock and Ford Parish Council

Councillor Maskell stated he was standing for the position of Vice Chair. No other candidates came forward.

Resolved: to elect Cllr Maskell as Vice Chair of Laverstock and Ford Parish Council.

23.058 Apologies

Apologies had been received from Cllr Barker.

Resolved: to accept the apologies received.

23.059 Declarations of Interest

Cllrs Lynn and Vanstone declared an interest in item 23.065 as trustees of Old Sarum and Longhedge Community Centre.

23.060 Approval of Minutes

Resolved: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 17th April 2023

23.061 Matters arising

No matters arising were discussed.

23.062 Planning

20/11598/OUT Land East of Church Road, Laverstock

Following notification of revised plans for this application, Report 23.062 had been circulated in advance of the meeting, detailing the proposed response from the Parish Council. No further changes were suggested.

Resolved: that the Parish Councils response remains as OBJECT to this application. The full response is attached as Annex One.

Planning Log

Resolved: to approve the following responses

PL/2023/02079 Loft conversion with dormer 26 Roger Way, Old Sarum NO COMMENT

PL/2023/02843 Two Storey extension 29 Greenwood Ave, Laverstock NO COMMENT

WCllr McLennan reported that he had requested a motion on the agenda for the upcoming Full Council meeting for Wiltshire Council relating to a Conservation Plan for Old Sarum Airfield.

23.063 Milford Mill Road Traffic Regulation Order

Report 23.063 had been circulated in advance of the meeting, with details of the application.

Resolved: that the council supports the proposals in the interests of highway safety, given the narrow nature of the roads and the lack of pathways for pedestrians at many points.

23.064 Play Areas

Mini Swings Longhedge

Report 23.064(1) had been circulated in advance of the meeting detailing proposals to instal mini swings in 3 play areas at Longhedge.

Resolved: That the council resolves to appoint Wicksteed Leisure to install 3 x mini swings at Longhedge for a total cost of £9,915.14 + VAT

Sycamore Drive Improvements from Public Consultation

Report 23.064(2) had been circulated in advance of the meeting regarding some changes proposed to the upcoming play area replacement at Sycamore Drive, following the public consultation. The changes proposed included the provision of a climbing wall.

Resolved: That the council resolves to approve the additional cost of £3024.78 + VAT to Wicksteed Leisure for the addition of a curved bubbled climbing wall.

23.065 Grant Applications

Report 23.065 had been circulated in advance of the meeting detailing grant applications from Old Sarum and Longhedge Community Centre and Friends of Greentrees Primary School.

Resolved: that the Council grants £5000 to Old Sarum and Longhedge Community Centre towards the cost of employing a Centre Manager under the powers granted by Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972

The RFO noted that this sum would be taken from the Community Centre support budget, and not the normal grants budget.

Resolved: that the Council grants £400 to Friends of Greentrees Primary School towards their Coronation events under the powers granted by Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972

23.066 Review of Financial Risk Assessment

The RFO had circulated the updated Financial Risk Assessment in advance of the meeting.

Resolved: to approve the Financial Risk Assessment dated 15th May 2023 as a true statement of financial risks to the Council.

23.067 Review of Asset Register

The RFO had circulated the Asset Register for the Financial Year ending 31st March 2023 in advance of the meeting, showing a total asset value of **£1,272,557**.

Resolved: to accept the Asset Register as circulated.

23.068 Approval of Insurance

The RFO had circulated Report 23.068 in advance of the meeting, confirming this was the third year of a 3 year deal which had given a 5% discount on premiums. The policy is held with Zurich Municipal, brokered through Community First. The RFO reported that a substantial element of the premium was for cover for the Community Buildings at Old Sarum and Hampton Park. The Clerk will discuss this with trustees and report at the next meeting.

Resolved: to approve the renewal of the insurance policy with Zurich Municipal.

23.069 Membership of External Organisations

The Clerk reported that herself and the RFO were members of Society of Local Council Clerks, and the council held existing memberships of CPRE The Countryside Charity, Community First, Wiltshire

Association of Local Councils and Wiltshire Wildlife Trust. No comments were made on these memberships.

Resolved: to approve memberships as listed

23.070 Review of Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Scheme of Delegation and Committee Membership

The Financial Regulations were updated in February 2023 to reflect changes to spending powers and the councils move to online banking. No further changes to governance documents were proposed.

Resolved: to adopt the Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation unchanged
The Chair reminded councillors that there was a vacancy on Finance and General Purposes committee. No committee chairs or members requested a change to the current structure.

Resolved: to continue with the current committees and membership unchanged.

23.071 Finance

The RFO reported that accounts from Scribe would be presented at the June meeting.

Cllr Waller confirmed that she had checked the monthly accounts in detail and was satisfied all was correct.

Adoption of Monthly Accounts for April 2023

The Financial Statements had previously been circulated in Report 23.071. The total funds held at the end of April 2023 were £1,582,166.89.

Resolved: To adopt the monthly accounts as a true record of the Council's finances.

Authorisation of Payments

The lists of payments had been circulated in Report 23.071. Total cheque and BACS payments in May 2023 amounted to £53,612.19. Debit card and direct debit payments in April 2023 amounted to £1,003.29.

Resolved: To approve the cheque, BACS, direct debit and debit card payments.

Review of Reserves and Treasury Deposit Report

A Treasury Deposit Report had been presented in Report 23.071. A reserves summary was not available for this month. The balance on the 32 Day Notice Account at the end of April 2023 was £440,458.18 including interest of £9,200.27 corrected. (Clerks Note – Total Interest figures in April and May finance reports were incorrect, although total balance figures were correct. Total interest to date in April was £8,574.77). The balance on the CCLAPSDF was £950,061.63 including dividends awarded of £19,117.63. There was a total of £1,391,145.31 on deposit at the end of April 2023.

Resolved: To note the treasury deposit report.

23.072 Clerk's Report and Correspondence

The Clerk reported the Police needed volunteers to set up Streetwatch at Longhedge and Old Sarum. The Clerk reported that thanks had been received from Victim Support, Citizens Advice, St John Ambulance and St Andrews School for the grants provided.

The Clerk reported that Joe Elder had now been appointed as Operations Officer and that a recruitment process was underway for the post of Operations Assistant.

The Clerk reported on problems with litter bin emptying and asked councillors to submit evidence of any complaints.

23.073 Exempt Business – Exclusion of the Press and Public

There was no exempt business.

The meeting closed at 9.36pm.

NEXT MEETING. The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held at 7pm on Monday 19th June 2023 at Old Sarum Community Centre.

SIGNED:

DATE:

ANNEX ONE

20/11598/OUT Land East of Church Road, Laverstock

The Principle of Development on this Site

Having reviewed the further documents submitted in relation to this application, the council remains strongly opposed to this application for the reasons set out in our response of 16th February 2021.

Since our earlier response, the Laverstock and Ford Neighbourhood Plan has been made following a public referendum.

It is one of the key assumptions of the plan that "Laverstock and Ford are classified as small villages, limited to infill development only, unless there is a clearly identified and supported exceptional local need." This is also a key tenet of the Wiltshire Council Core Strategy 2 which states "At the Small Villages development will be limited to infill within the existing built area." Laverstock is defined within that strategy as a small village.

This application further directly conflicts with Policy 2c in the Neighbourhood Plan as it would represent a significant encroachment into the green areas along Cockey Down and connecting this SSSI with the River Bourne.

Given the direct conflict between this proposal and both the Neighbourhood Plan and Wiltshire Council Core Strategy, approval of this proposal would fundamentally undermine the principles of localism and community engagement in the planning process as set out in the Localism Act 2011.

We would also raise the following specific points in relation to the additional documents submitted.

Impact on Cockey Down SSSI and Cockey Down Chalk CWS

We believe that the methodology in the recreational study report is fundamentally flawed and underestimates the potential impact on Cockey Down SSSI and Cockey Down Chalk CWS. The report bases its calculations on surveys carried out on Saturday 3rd December and Thursday 8th December to justify the conclusion in paragraph 5.4 that the development would generate an additional 3 visitors to the SSSI per day. This fails to take into account seasonal variations in the number of people walking on the Down. Our experience is that footfall on the downs is much higher in summer months and school holidays than it is in term times during the winter and that two days when temperatures were on average below 5 degrees Celsius will not generate a representative sample of users and would tend to significantly underestimate the pattern of usage.

Secondly, the inappropriate time period selected skews the sample group significantly to dog walkers who will tend to walk regardless of the weather and away from recreational walkers who will be more likely to use the downs in warmer weather. This therefore undermines the potential for increasing the amount of recreational land on the development to mitigate against the increased footfall as recreational walkers are more likely to prioritise factors such as views and variety of landscape and are even less likely than dog walkers to confine themselves to footpaths around a residential development.

Thirdly, paragraph 3.9 declares an assumption 'that the new residents have similar behaviours to those recorded/observed.' The Parish Council rejects this assumption in the absence of convincing evidence that the demographics of the new residents will correspondingly reflect that of the sample and their closer proximity to the Downs will have no impact on their behaviour.

Lastly, the report authors themselves identify in paragraph 6.3 that their methodology does not take into account the significantly greater proximity of the proposed development to the SSSI compared with the vast majority of existing houses in the village. Many local residents will enter the downs via the footpath from the end of Pilgrims Way and thus have the opportunity to walk across Laverstock Down before reaching the SSSI and many will turn and return home at the top of Laverstock Down before reaching the first of the two survey points used. This would not be the case with residents accessing the downs from the new development. This again suggests that the increased footfall on the SSSI is considerably understated.

Given the various alternative entrances to Cockey Down in the vicinity of the development we do not believe that the erection of a fence behind the development as proposed in the Conservation report would be an effective mitigation and we also believe this is a potential further intrusion into a much valued natural landscape.

In addition to the recreational impact on the SSSI itself, cattle have been regularly grazed on the down and we understand from the landowner that he intends to continue this practice. Therefore one of the additional effects (para 1.11) will be increased contact between cattle, dogs and people resulting in increased risks of injury to all three.

Impact on River Avon SAC

We believe that the methodology used in the Technical Note on Nutrient Assessment and the Shadow HRA are flawed and that the proposed development would still have an adverse effect on the River Avon SAC through an increase in Total Phosphate and also an increase in recreational user impact.

Firstly, the report concludes that 'it cannot be concluded that increased phosphate inputs resulting from the proposed development (in the absence of mitigation) will be unlikely to result in an adverse impact upon the River Avon SAC.' Therefore even in the applicants own terms (which we do not accept) the development would only be acceptable if the proposed offsetting was an effective and appropriate measure. We do not believe it satisfies either criteria.

We do not believe that the proposed offsetting mechanism would be effective to offset in perpetuity the increase in Total Phosphate from the development on the following grounds.

1. Planning undertakings are an insufficient mechanism to ensure that over a period of many decades the land will continue to be managed in a way which will offset the predicted increase in total phosphate and a reporting mechanism is only proposed for five years. Paragraphs 2.15-2.17 of the Fallow Land Management Plan show this is an active process requiring regular intervention such as mowing. We believe that the only effective mechanism would be to transfer ownership of the land to a body such as the Land Trust or the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust along with a financial endowment sufficient to ensure the land is managed effectively in perpetuity.

2. The fact that the Offsetting land is some 20 miles from the site of the development will prevent the local community, who have the greatest interest in ensuring that the planning obligations are maintained, being able to easily monitor the use of the land.

3. It does not take into account future changes in agricultural production over the long term which may reduce the phosphate production of agriculture.

We also do not believe that the loss of high value agriculturally productive land to offset for a housing development on other productive agricultural land is an appropriate strategy to offset Total Phosphate. Given the importance based on Food Security within the Government's 2022 Food Strategy, it would be inappropriate to allow up to 20 Hectares of land to be lost in perpetuity for agricultural production to offset the Phosphate impact of this development. The Fallow Land Management Report does not make clear the precise grading of the proposed land, and we believe that an ALC report should be provided to confirm whether this land is class 3a (I.e. best and most versatile land).

Secondly, the Technical Note on Nutrient Assessment states "Recently released guidance related to on site SuDS systems from CIRIA "Using SuDS to reduce phosphorus in surface water runoff" states that TP reduction is 100% for all infiltrated flows, assuming the site satisfies a number of criteria (CIRIA, 2022). Based on this, it is assumed that the proposed drainage basin on site will reduce TP by 100% for future land use." The report does not evaluate the site against the criteria in the CIRIA report or provide evidence this would be the case in this particular development. The assessment is also unclear whether the SuDS calculations allow for the additional flow of ground water from the slopes of Cockey Down which would previously have been absorbed in the field.

It is also worth noting that we believe the methodology of the nutrient assessment is flawed in using the average occupancy figure of 2.3 persons per dwelling from the South West Census Data. This is based on an average of all housing stock across the South West area which will include a significant number of one and two bed properties, and also a significant number of larger houses which are resided in by couples whose children have now left home. Although the precise housing mix is not specified, the design access statement makes clear that in the mix of housing family homes will predominate. We would submit that the majority of homes are likely to be of at least three bedrooms, and the most common purchasers of these properties would be those who currently require use of at least two bedrooms creating an average occupancy that is likely to be 3.0 or above. (It is worth noting that the applicants' Recreation Study Report uses a figure of 2.52 at paragraph 5.3). This means that the Total Phosphate figure is likely to be understated by a factor of 9.5% using the methodology of the

Recreation Report to 30% or more taking into account the likely pattern of ownership of new homes such as this.

We further believe that the Shadow HRA underestimates the recreational pressure that will be put on the River Bourne. It incorrectly states "No footpaths or PROW routes exist directly adjacent the riverside anywhere within typical walking range of the Site". There are sites where dogs regularly enter the river where it is crossed by the Bishopdown Footpath (0.4 km), behind the Church (0.6km) and an area which is widely used by children and dogs to play at Whitebridge Spinney (1.1km).

Finally, we are concerned that the addition of 135 houses on a road already notorious for congestion at peak times could lead to further congestion on this road, particularly from traffic held up by vehicles trying to turn right into the development. This increases the level of particulate pollution from vehicles impacting the SAC.

Impact on Salisbury Plain SAC

The Shadow HRA acknowledges the potential for air quality impact from vehicles from this site but then discounts it without investigation by saying that it would fall below the 1,000 AADT threshold. We would point out firstly that one of the reasons Laverstock was designated a small village was the lack of employment opportunities or scope to develop these further. Residents of the development would therefore be more likely than average to have to travel out of the village on the major roads neighbouring the Salisbury Plain SAC for employment purposes. Also the sHRA only considers the individual rather than the cumulative impact of this development on top of the development already planned for within the Wiltshire Core Strategy and emerging local plan. We therefore believe that the air quality impacts on Salisbury Plain SAC should not be discounted and have not been sufficiently investigated.

Impact on New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar

In paragraph 4.48 the sHRA specifically acknowledges the sensitivities of the designated features of the New Forest internationally protected sites to increased recreational pressure. In paras 5.31-5.34 the sHRA suggests that the provision of a SANG will mitigate against the impact of this development. We believe this argument is clearly fallacious. As local residents we know that the New Forest is widely used by ourselves and our neighbours as a place of leisure and exercise. Residents value the beauty of the forest, the variety of flora and fauna and the variety of walking, cycling and other activities. The popularity of visits to the New Forest by Wiltshire Residents was demonstrated in the 2018/19 New Forest Visitor Survey where Wiltshire was the third most common local authority for visitors from outside the new forest and where 13.8km was the 75th centile figure for distance travelled by day visitors, bringing this site clearly within the range.

The same arguments we applied in relation to the effectiveness of the SANG to relieve recreation pressure on Cockey Down SSSI apply to an even greater extent in relation to the New Forest. The New Forest Visitor Survey clearly shows that visitors are already prepared to travel at least 13.8km to access the forest. There are a great number of short semi urban paths similar to the SANG nearer than that, not to mention facilities like Castle Hill Country Park. However the New Forest continues to draw visitors past all of these due to its unique characteristics and the proposed SANG is in no way any form of alternative to this. Again we would argue that this development individually and particularly when considered cumulatively in combination with development which has already been agreed within the Wiltshire Core Strategy and emerging local plan will have a negative impact on this highly protected area.

Impact on Traffic

The Parish Council is frequently approached by local residents with concerns about traffic on Church Road and this is one of the most frequent reasons cited by residents opposed to this application to councillors. We would fully endorse the Highway's Officer's conclusion that this development with no supporting employment opportunities or amenities will have lead to a significant net increase in car usage.

The Applicants have removed the originally proposed Car Park which is to be welcomed. That, together with mitigating measures has caused Mark Wiltshire (Sustainable Transport) to remove reason 2 (that the development would encourage significantly increased private car use).

The Parish Council considers the removal of refusal reason 2 to be premature for the following reason. On school days vehicles cause significant congestion on Church Road at drop-off and pick-up times. Parents park along Church Road and in the adjoining streets. The proposed

development will add more adjoining streets to Church Road, thus enabling more cars to park and so encouraging more private car use than is currently the case.

In addition we believe that with a single entrance to this development, there is considerable scope for the flow of traffic to be disrupted (particularly by cars turning right into the development from the Salisbury direction). Church Road is notorious for becoming heavily congested at the start and end of school day and an extra impediment to the flow of traffic would make this worse, delaying journeys, increasing dangerous driving such as driving on pavements and raising pollution levels. The Parish Council therefore urges Sustainable Transport to reconsider the modelling of private car use in relation to the proposed development and believes this is a further ground for rejection of this application.

Landscapes and Visual Impact

Laverstock is designated as a small village and residents value the amenity of its semi-rural setting. The view of the Downs from Church Road at the point of the proposed development is cherished not only by Laverstock residents but also by Salisbury City residents on Seth Ward Drive.

The Landscape Sensitivity Assessment, which forms part of the Neighbourhood Plan, has highlighted the Medium/High sensitivity of the landscape associated with this site. The assessment suggests that if any development is permitted in this area it should be limited to a series of clusters not unlike the two on the other side of Church Road of six properties each.

Were the Authority minded to grant the applicants permission to develop, notwithstanding the objections, the Parish Council would urge the setting of conditions to ensure an unrestricted view of the Downs through the centre of the development.

Impact on Wildlife

The Parish Council believes that the Conservation Report provided by the applicant understates the impact that the loss of the current agricultural fields will have on existing wildlife at a time when we face a catastrophic loss of biodiversity and note with disappointment that no guarantee is provided of achieving a 10% biodiversity net gain.

The executive summary of the Conservation report states that "bird species utilising the site are largely common and widespread species including dunnock, house sparrow, red kite, starling and yellow hammer, typical of the habitat presented on the site." However later on it acknowledges that three of these species are on the IUCN red list, one on the amber list. In addition, the report does not evaluate the impact of the proposed development on the Brown hare population (a priority species under the UK post-2010 biodiversity framework). Brown hares are regularly observed using the field. We would therefore submit that the report understates the biodiversity impact of the loss of the main field area, and that the proposed mitigations would not be sufficient prevent a significant impact on nature.

Potential Conditions

The Parish Council strongly believes that no potential conditions could mitigate against the many reasons why this location is unsuitable for a large scale development. However if approval was to be given it would request consideration be given to conditions around the following areas.

Nutrient Neutrality-

- That an ALC report should be provided certifying that the proposed fallowed land is not class 3a or above.
- If the Natural England Nutrient Neutrality Credit Scheme is in operation for the River Avon catchment by the time that a Reserved Matters application is made that the proposed measures should be certified under this scheme.

Play Areas and amenity land

- That the parish council should be consulted about the design of the LEAP and the location of litter and dog waste bins.

Landscape

- That the master plan should allow an uninterrupted view of Cockey Down through the centre of the development