

REPORT PC26.117 Community Governance Review

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1. PURPOSE

To inform the Parish Council of Wiltshire Council's Community Governance Review (CGR), consider the issues raised by Wiltshire Council for comment, review feedback received from councillors, and determine the Parish Council's formal response.

2. BACKGROUND

Wiltshire Council launched a Community Governance Review on 12 August 2026.

Parishes under review include: Alderbury, Allington, Britford, Cholderton, Clarendon Park, Coombe Bissett, Downton, Firsdown, Grimstead, Idmiston, Landford, Laverstock & Ford, Newton Tony, Odstock, Pitton and Farley, Redlynch, West Dean, Whiteparish, Winterbourne, Winterslow.

As part of the review process, Wiltshire Council has invited parish councils to comment on a number of matters relating to parish governance arrangements, including:

- Parish boundaries.
- Parish council size and representation.
- Parish meeting arrangements.
- Parish warding arrangements.
- The effectiveness of existing governance structures.

Wiltshire Council has requested responses by 1 October 2026 and has advised that where no views are submitted, proposals affecting an area may be considered without the benefit of the parish council's comments.

The questions issued by Wiltshire Council were circulated to all parish councillors on August 25, with councillors invited to provide comments in advance of this meeting to assist in preparing a formal response.

3. MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

Question 1

Are there any issues regarding your external boundaries?

Wiltshire Council has requested information regarding:

- Streets or estates divided by parish boundaries.
- Settlements that may have stronger links with a neighbouring parish.
- Boundary anomalies affecting properties or communities.
- Potential alternative boundary arrangements.

Draft Position

LFPC is content with the existing Parish boundaries and has no arguments to offer in favour of any alternative arrangements.

Question 2

- Is the current number of councillors appropriate?
- Wiltshire Council has asked whether:
- The current number of councillors remains suitable.
- The council experiences difficulties filling vacancies.
- An increase or reduction in councillor numbers would be appropriate.

Draft Position

LFPC does not wish to make a case for either an increase or a decrease in its councillor number. We consider that our current seat allocations are sufficient.

Question 3

Parish Meeting arrangements

This question applies to parish meetings rather than parish councils. Not applicable to Laverstock & Ford Parish Council.

Question 4

Would a Parish Meeting arrangement be more suitable?

Wiltshire Council has asked whether a parish meeting structure would provide more effective governance.

Draft Position

LFPC sees no advantage in adopting a Parish Meeting structure rather than a Parish Council one. While there are councillor vacancies, there are nonetheless sufficient councillors to operate effectively, and the parish is large and growing

Question 5

Parish warding arrangements

Wiltshire Council has asked:

- Whether the reasons for existing warding arrangements remain valid.
- Whether warding should be altered or removed.
- Whether councillor allocations between wards remain appropriate.

Draft Position

Laverstock and Ford Parish Council believes that the reasons for the existing warding arrangements remain valid. As one of the most populous Parishes in Wiltshire warding ensures that communities are served by councillors who can focus on the needs of a specific area. The three wards within the parish broadly reflect communities who have specific identities within the parish and common issues due to geography, age of housing etc.

However, the village of Ford has its own unique identity and similar geographical connections to both Laverstock and Old Sarum. Moving the existing houses between the wards would be a neutral act, neither leading to a significant impact improvement not significant harm to the representation of the residents.

Question 6

Representation across the Parish

This question applies to unwarded parishes. Not applicable to Laverstock & Ford Parish Council.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Community Governance Reviews are undertaken by principal councils under powers contained within the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

The purpose of the review is to ensure that community governance arrangements continue to reflect:

- The identities and interests of local communities; and
- Effective and convenient local government.

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

Failure to provide a response may result in Wiltshire Council considering potential governance changes affecting the parish without the benefit of the Parish Council's views. Submission of a considered response will help ensure that local knowledge and community interests are represented during the review process.

Parishes neighbouring those being reviewed can also contribute to the process and may wish to submit their own views on parish boundaries.

6. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Full Council:

RESOLVES:

- To agree the Council's responses to Questions 1 to 6 as set out within this report, subject to any amendments agreed at the meeting.
- To authorise the Parish Clerk to submit the approved response to Wiltshire Council on behalf of Laverstock & Ford Parish Council before the published deadline of 1 October 2026.

ANNEX ONE - Wiltshire Council Community Governance Review Questions

1. Are there any issues regarding your external boundaries? Eg, streets/estates divided by a parish boundary, settlements with closer connection to your parish despite being located in another, anomalies such as a border going through a property etc. If yes, do you have any suggestions for a more effective and convenient boundary? Have you had any discussions with other parishes on these issues? OS Map Link & Electoral Boundaries Map Link
2. Do you believe the number of councillors able to be elected for your parish council to be appropriate? Do you struggle to recruit to the places, and would a reduction make sense? Has there been an increase in electorate and would an increase be appropriate?
3. If you are a Parish Meeting, how often do you meet and are you active? Would a parish council or grouping with another parish provide a more effective arrangement and still be appropriate for the community? If not, why?
4. If you are a Parish Council, would a Parish Meeting arrangement be more suitable due to your scale? How would this ensure effective governance?
5. If your parish is warded, what is the reason for the warding and does that reason still apply today? Would a different arrangement be more suitable? Eg more wards, no wards, rebalancing the number of councillors per ward
6. If your parish is unwarded, do you feel the council appropriately represents all parts of the parish? Would warding be suitable?