

REPORT: 23.079 LAVERSTOCK AND FORD PARISH COUNCIL SUBJECT: Parish Strategic Plan Report author: Trudi Deane, Parish Clerk DATE: 16th June 2023

1. Report Summary

A report to councillors on the new Parish Strategic Plan.

2. Background

The Parish Plan was drawn up in 2009, following extensive consultation with residents on the issues important to them for the Council to consider. In more recent years, regular interaction with the council has increased through the use of social media and email. The Parish Council now employs a Communications and Community Engagement Officer and has a dedicated Communications and Community Engagement Committee. These seek to interact with residents on a more frequent basis. It was agreed that an update to the Parish Plan would become a more flexible and reactive strategy plan.

3. Summary

The Clerk, in consultation with the councillors and the staff team, building on the principles of the Parish Plan, produced the Parish Strategic Plan, which was presented at the Annual Parish Meeting in May 2023 (attached Annex One). No further updates have been suggested following this event.

4. Recommendations

That the Parish Council adopts the Parish Strategic Plan as attached, to replace the Parish Plan dated March 2009.

Annex One





PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

THAT DEVELOPMENT IN THE PARISH RESULTS IN A THRIVING SEMI-RURAL COMMUNITY WITH EXCELLENT FACILITIES AND HERITAGE ASSETS

Between 2017 and 2022, hundreds of hours were dedicated by councillors and volunteers to draw up the Laverstock and Ford Communities Neighbourhood Plan. Based on extensive public consultation with residents and businesses within the Parish, the Plan strives to protect those areas of significant importance to our communities, protect the heritage within the Parish and to ensure that any future development meets high standards of design, amenities and environmental performance. After many rounds of analysis, consultation and review, the plan was formally adopted by Wiltshire Council in October 2022 which means that it now forms part of the Wiltshire Council Development Plan, and its policies will be given full weight when assessing planning applications relating to land within the parish boundary. The Parish Council is a statutory consultee for any planning and development within the Parish. Our ward councillors consider all applications within their area, with larger or controversial applications considered by all councillors. Councillors are issued guidance with our Planning Policy and guidance documents, and can attend training organised by the local association of local councils. This ensures that all applications are dealt with fairly and professionally, taking into account the views of our residents and the needs of our communities. We continue to work on the projects detailed:

The council devotes a considerable amount of time to major planning applications such as those currently underway in relation to Old Sarum Airfield and Church Road. We seek to ensure community members are aware of such applications and are encouraged to participate in the process and we use our local knowledge to ensure that at every stage of the process issues such as heritage, landscape, traffic and environmental impact are considered.

PLANNING POLICY: Review of Planning Guidance for Councillors

ACTION 1. April 2023 - a review of the current Planning Policy to include a new 'Developer Protocol', together with a review of the guidance document to be presented at next Operations Meeting.

ACTION 2. May 2023 - The Parish Council continues to engage with planning consultants and residents over the possible plans for development on the airfield.

ACTION 3. May 2023 - Working closely with the Land Trust and Wiltshire Wildlife, the Parish Council continues to work towards improving Castle Hill Country Park.



SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

STRIVING TO PROMOTE & SUPPORT SAFE, SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL ACROSS THE PARISH

Through both its Neighbourhood Plan and Environment Policy, the Parish Council strives to promote and support safe and sustainable travel across the parish. It is a member of Wiltshire Councils Southern Local Highways and Footpath Improvement Group (LHFIG), where many initiatives have been progressed, including 20mph zones in Milford, parking restrictions at the schools in Laverstock, and our Speed Indicator Device which is used in Laverstock, Ford and Old Sarum.

SPEEDING

Establish a Community Speed Watch team of trained volunteers to target areas of concern.

ACTION 1. May 2023: Parish Cllr Jones completed training for the Team Leader role. Several other volunteers have now completed training in the use of the equipment. Access has been given to a shared camera with the Milford Speed Watch Group. Work is ongoing with Wiltshire Police to establish appropriate sites in the parish.

Speed Indicator Device SID

ACTION 2. May 2023: Our SID is part of a county project where data from multiple devices is collated and submitted to Wiltshire Police to help inform their interventions. Sites continue to be assessed within the Parish.

CYCLE NETWORK

Working with LHFIG to provide/improve cycle links, in particular links through Ford to connect Old Sarum/Longhedge with the city

ACTION 3. May 2023: Assessment works were carried out by Sustrans in January 2023 and their report/recommendations are expected shortly. A bid to the Active Travel Fund has been made to investigate how access from the Ford Road through to Bishopdown Farm, along Green Lane, could be improved to make this a safe walking and cycling route into the city.

ACTION 4. May 2023 The Parish Environmental Action group are exploring the promotion of cycle and walking routes

ACTION 5. May 2023 The Footpath Warden Group is surveying footpaths for issues and obstacles

LAVERSTOCK & FORD PARISH COUNCIL STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN



CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENT

DELIVERING INITIATIVES TO PROTECT AND IMPROVE OUR ENVIRONMENT
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OTHER AGENCIES

Through careful management of the land, buildings and open spaces that we own, and working with other groups and organisations, the Parish Council strives to introduce initiatives to protect and improve our environment. In 2022 we adopted our Environmental Policy, focusing on reducing pollution and encouraging sustainability. These principles continue in our Neighbourhood Plan, where new planning applicants are encouraged to focus on sustainable energy provisions. We are currently working on the following:

BIODIVERSITY

Our open spaces are managed to protect and enhance bio-diversity, with chalk meadow grassland and dedicated wild flower areas. In January 2023, the council launched the Parish Environmental Action Group who work enthusiastically to help improve our environment.

ACTION 1. May 2023 - 130 whips from Queens Green Canopy project have already been planted at sites on Castle Hill Country Park and Old Sarum Country Park. With significant numbers of trees felled this year due to ash dieback, we continue to investigate suitable species for replanting.

ACTION 2. May 2023 We are considering sewing wildflower strips at Norman Drive Open Space and working with the Land Trust to develop wildflower planting at the Castle Hill Country Park

CLIMATE CHANGE

Emergency Plan and Sustainable Energy:

ACTION 3. May 2023 - during the coming year, the council will be working to create an Emergency Plan, covering flood, drought, power outages etc, and working to identify emergency community resilience hubs providing safe and warm spaces for vulnerable residents.

ACTION 4. May 2023 - the Parish Council continues to work with management committees at our buildings to identify ways to reduce energy consumption and provide renewable energy sources such as the use of LED lightbulbs and the provision of solar panels.

FACILITIES

ACTION 5. May 2023 - The Parish Council have already provided a Community Garden at Longhedge, but we would like to provide allotments for those wishing to grow their own produce. Suitable sites are scarce, but we continue to work with the Land Trust and others to try and facilitate allotment provision within the parish

LAVERSTOCK & FORD PARISH COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN



PUBLIC AMENITY

PROVIDE ACCESS TO HIGH QUALITY SPACES FOR PLAY,
RECREATION, COMMUNITY ACTIVITY AND THE
ENJOYMENT OF NATURE

The Parish Council owns and maintains 23 Play Areas, three outdoor sports courts, trim trail equipment and a skatepark, as well as nearly 40 acres of Public Open Space, including amenity grassland, wildflower meadow and grassland and wooded areas. We have an established programme of regular inspections, working with professional consultants where necessary, to ensure all our facilities meet high standards. In addition, the Parish Council works closely with the management teams on the areas we own, but are leased, such as River Boume Community Farm, Castle Hill Country Park and Old Sarum Community Centre. The projects detailed below aim to ensure a range of high-quality facilities are available to our residents.

PLAY AREAS

Continue to work with developers at Longhedge to progress the transfer of a further 5 Play Areas and an Outdoor Gym, on completion, to the Parish Council

ACTION 1. April 2023 - 4 Play Areas are nearing completion and awaiting final inspection prior to handover. One further play area still to be built. The Outdoor Gym is almost complete and will be opened at the same time as the adjacent play area.

Replace/refurbish the outdated play areas transferred from Wiltshire Council in 2022

ACTION 2. May 2023 - St Judes (Bishopdown Farm) and Partridge Way (Old Sarum) have already been completed. St Peters Road (Bishopdown Farm) and St Lukes Close (Bishopdown Farm) are nearing completion. Contractors have been appointed for Sycamore Drive (Bishopdown Farm) and Drake Close (Bishopdown Farm) with works planned for summer 2023.

FOOTPATHS & RIGHTS OF WAY

As part of the Parish Environmental Action Group, a team of volunteer footpath wardens has been established, to help keep these important rights of way clear and accessible to residents.

ACTION 3. April 2023 - the first wardens were inducted in March and have started work in Laverstock. A process will be established for residents to flag areas that need attention.



PUBLIC AMENITY

PROVIDE ACCESS TO HIGH QUALITY SPACES FOR PLAY, RECREATION, COMMUNITY ACTIVITY AND THE ENJOYMENT OF NATURE

PUBLIC OPEN SPACES

We are developing a Tree Policy to formalise our current inspection arrangements and ensure residents are aware of our ambitions in preserving trees wherever possible.

ACTION 4. April 2023 - Much research has been done to draw up a proposed document, with advice from professional arboricultural consultants. The final policy is to be presented at our next Operations Committee meeting, and then presented to Full Council for adoption.

LONGHEDGE COMMUNITY OPEN SPACE

We continue to work with developers to ensure works completed to specification prior to handover.

ACTION 5. April 2023 - developers continue to work on laying out the Community Open Space but parts have recently been opened. Inspections will be carried out to ensure all pathways, planting and landscaping has been completed to standard and in accordance with the planning specification.

CASTLE HILL COUNTRY PARK

Regular quarterly meetings are held with the Land Trust and new managing partners, to ensure management of the Country Park meets residents needs, whilst protecting the integrity and biodiversity of the site.

ACTION 6. Ongoing with the Country Park Working Group

HAMPTON PARK PAVILION

Following expiry of the lease to Wiltshire Council, we continue to work with the Pavilion owner to secure the long-term future of this community asset.

ACTION 7. April 2023 - The Parish Council have entered into a temporary lease with the existing owner, to enable the Pavilion Trust to continue to operate the building. We continue to work with the owner to negotiate the freehold transfer of the Pavilion to the Parish Council, so securing its future for the residents of Bishopdown Farm.

OLD SARUM COMMUNITY CENTRE

The centre is leased to a charitable incorporated organisation. They have been struggling to recruit more trustees, and several of the current trustees wish to step down.

ACTION 8. April 2023 - The Parish Council have been working with the trustees and volunteers at the centre. An additional Trustee, as well as a new Centre Manager were appointed by the trustees and the Parish Council will be assisting with funding to ensure the continued operation of the Community Centre. The Parish Council continue to work with the trustees and volunteers to promote the centre and identify improvements.

LAVERSTOCK & FORD PARISH COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN



ACCOUNTABILITY

TAKING OUR DUTY TO ACT RESPONSIBLY, LAWFULLY, AND IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF OUR COMMUNITIES

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

The council reviews its governing documents, policies and procedures regularly. It is a member of the Wiltshire Association for Local Councils and the Clerk is a member of the Society for Local Council Clerks. Councillors and Officers undertake training relevant to their roles, and regular and transparent reporting on our actions are posted on the website in the form of agendas, meeting reports and minutes.

ANNUAL REVIEW OF CONSTITUTION, STANDING ORDERS, FINANCIAL REGULATIONS AND SCHEME OF DELEGATIONS

ACTION 1. May 2023 - documents are based on the model guidelines issued by the National Association of Local Councils. Changes have already been made this year to allow for the councils transition to online banking, and legislative changes to contract thresholds. No changes are recommended at the Annual Parish Council Meeting for May 23.

GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE

ACTION 2. May 2023 - in order to apply for the General Power of Competence, the Council must have a CiLCA qualified Clerk and at least two thirds of total councillors/seats (16) being elected. Insufficient elected councillors means this is not possible at this stage. To be reviewed at next elections May 2025

QUALITY COUNCIL AWARDS

ACTION 3. May 2023 - To investigate Quality Council Award Scheme administered by National Association of Local Councils (NALC).

COUNCILLOR RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

ACTION 4. May 2023 - Councillors, Clerk and the Communications

Officer continue to promote the Parish Council and the valuable role councillors play to encourage filling of vacant seats, either by co-option or candidates standing at next elections.

SUCCESSION PLANNING

ACTION 5. May 2023 - Clerk and Councillors to discuss succession planning over the coming year, for committee members, chairs and officers

ASSET REPLACEMENT

Produce long-term asset replacement strategy and financial forecast

ACTION 6. May 2023 - detailed forecasts/cost planning to be done to inform budget requirements