

LAVERSTOCK AND FORD PARISH COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN

As a public body, funded through precept, the Parish Council strives to ensure that it meets, and where possible exceeds, the needs, expectations and aspirations of its community. The Laverstock and Ford Parish Plan, first drawn up in 2009 after extensive public consultation, identified residents key issues for the parish - local transport and traffic, local facilities, character, environment, young people and schools, safety and community. The subsequent development and adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan addresses many of those issues. The Strategic Plan sets out our key priorities and projects that seek to deliver our core objectives outside of the Neighbourhood Plan and is used in the budgeting process to plan activities.

The Laverstock and Ford Parish Strategic Plan is a live document that is reviewed quarterley. Achievements against the objectives will be reported annually at the Annual Meeting in May.

Where	How	Update
Public Amenity - To provide access to high quality spaces for play, recreation, community groups and enjoyment of nature		
The Parish Council owns and maintains 28 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, wild flower 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 the highest standards. In addition, the Parish Council works closely with the management teams on the areas we own, but are leased, such as River Bourne Community Farm, Castle Hill Country Park and Old Sarum Community Centre. We continue to work on the projects detailed below to ensure a range of high quality facilities are available to our residents.		
Play Areas	Transfer of Play Areas at Longhedge	Final Play Area accepted in December 2023
	Replace/refurbish the outdated play areas transferred from Wiltshire Council in 2022	December 2023 - St Judes (Bishopdown Farm) and Partridge Way (Old Sarum) completed 2022. St Peters Road(Bishopdown Farm) and St Lukes Close (Bishopdown Farm) completed Spring 2023. Sycamore Drive (Bishopdown Farm) and Drake Close (Bishopdown Farm) completed Autumn 2023.
	Old Sarum MUGA	December 2023 - in order to improve facilities at Old Sarum/Longhedge, the Operations Committee are looking to provide a Multi Use Games Area. Sites are being discussed and costings estimated. Invitation to Tender to be issued early 2024.
	Replacement of Whitebridge Play Area	December 2023 - the Play Area at Whitebridge has reached the end of its useful life. Invitation to Tender to be issued early 2024.
Footpaths and 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	December 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 Open Space	Develop a Tree Policy to formalise our current inspection arrangements and ensure residents are aware of our ambitions in preserving trees wherever possible	December 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 for adoption December 2023.
	Longhedge Community Open Space – work with developers to ensure works completed to specification prior to handover.	December 2023 - developers continue to work on laying out the Community Open Space with some parts open to the public. 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	Continue quarterly meetings with Land Trust and new managing partners to ensure management of the Country Park continues to meet residents needs whilst protecting the integrity and biodiversity of the site.	December 2023 - Ongoing with Country Park Working Group. CHCP now registered as a Bio Diversity Net Gain site.
Hampton Park Pavilion	Following expiry of the lease to Wiltshire Council, work with the Pavilion owner to secure the long term future of this community asset.	December 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, to secure its future for the residents of Bishopdown Farm.

Old Sarum Community Centre	The centre is leased to Old Sarum Community Centre Charitable Incorporated Organisation.	December 2023 - The Parish Council continue to work with the trustees and volunteers to promote the centre and identify improvements. A Centre Manager has been contracted by the trustees and the Parish Council have been assisting with funding, to ensure the continued operation of the Community Centre.
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Planning and Development - To ensure that development in the parish results in a thriving semi-rural community with excellent homes,

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 our 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 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. Our councillors are issued guidance with our Planning Policy and guidance documents, and can attend training organised by our 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 below.

Planning Policy	Review of Planning Guidance for Councillors	December 2023 - a review of the current Planning Policy to include a new 'Developer Protocol', together with a review of the guidance document to be undertaken
	Wiltshire Draft Local Plan	Dec 2023 - in July 2023, the Parish Council received notification that the draft Wiltshire Local Plan, setting out their vision for housing and infrastructure for the next 15 years, would be opening for public consultation. The consultation period ran for 8 weeks from the end of September 2023. Due to the significant impact of policies directly affecting Laverstock and Ford, the Parish Council took the unprecedented step of seeking legal advice from a specialist property barrister. The advice received helped structure the Parish Councils response to the consultation which was submitted in November 2023. Wiltshire Council are now reviewing responses to the consultation.
Heritage	Old Sarum Airfield	Dec 2023 -Following notification of planning application PL/2023/07368 in late September, for 315 dwellings on the airfield, the Parish Council spent much of October and November engaging with local residents to discuss the application. At it's meeting in November 2023 the Parish Council resolved to object to the application on various grounds including the impact on the small village of Ford and concerns over the heritage value of the site and surrounds. Wiltshire Council continue to review the application at this stage.
	Castle Hill	December 2023 - Working closely with the Land Trust and Wiltshire Wildlife, the Parish Council continues to work towards improving this valuable community asset

Community Resilience - To make the parish a place where everyone feels part of a safe and supportive local community

Our staff team and councillors work hard to engage with, and listen to, our residents. With the help of a team of volunteers, the Parish Council Newsletter is produced bi-monthly and delivered to every house and business in the Parish. In early 2023 we launched a new website, meeting the latest standards on accessibility for all and providing a wealth of information. Social Media pages have also been introduced, in our efforts to reach all members of our community. We continue to support local groups and initiatives through our grants programme, and have helped fund youth activities, the community farm and improvements to community centres, as well as some of the larger groups such as Victim Support, Citizens Advice and St Johns Ambulance.

Love your Parish	An ongoing campaign to engage with the community and raise awareness of the work and scope of the Parish Council, through public events, meetings, Parish Newsletters and other communication channels	December 2023 - The Parish Council attended community days and events during summer 2022 and 23. Articles continue to appear in the Parish News
Newsletter and Press	Improve written communications via the Parish Council newsletter. Build relations with external press, such as Salisbury Journal, and create press releases to promote the work of the council.	December 2023 - The Communications and Community Engagement Officer has been working to build a network of external contacts, with articles published by Salisbury Journal amongst others. Success continues to be reviewed at the Communications and Community Engagement Committee meetings.

Youth Provision	To ensure that access to youth facilities and activities are available to all	Dec 23 - Working with Wiltshire Councils Southern Area Board, the Parish Council are supporting the Youth Club in Old Sarum and have set up a new Youth Club, from November 2023, in Bishopdown Farm. The success of these schemes will be evaluated in 2024, with a further scheme to be investigated for Laverstock.
AntiSocial Behaviour	To work with partner organisations to address the issues that cause most concern for our residents, including littering and anti-social behaviour.	December 2023 - The Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable attended the Annual Parish Council meeting in May 2023, and the Parish Council continue to meet regularly with the local Police team. Meetings have been held, or are planned, with local housing associations, community groups and community safety officers from Wiltshire Council, discussing how the Parish Council can help address such problems. An anti-social behaviour survey has been conducted at Old Sarum to identify the specific issues concerning residents. A Community Clean Up day at Old Sarum is planned for Spring 2024 and the Parish Council continues to support community litter picks throughout the parish.

Sustainable transport - To support safe, sustainable and efficient 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, 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, Milford and Old Sarum.

Speeding	Establish a Community Speed Watch team of trained volunteers to target areas of concern. Speed Indicator Device SID	Dec 2023 - Parish Cllr Jones has 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. Dec 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.	Dec 2023 - Assessment works have been carried out by Sustrans. 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.

Climate Change and Environment - To help our community respond to the issues of climate change and loss of bio-diversity

Both through 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. 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, led by Councillor Barker and volunteers, who work enthusiastically to help improve our environment.

Trees	Tree Planting	Dec 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.
Climate Change	Emergency Plan Sustainable energy	Dec 2023 - the Operations Officer is leading the development of a Community Resilience Plan, working with officers from Wiltshire Council. Volunteer co-ordinators from within the community are attending training sessions and working to establish a network of volunteer emergency wardens. The Resilience Plan will cover flood, drought, power outages etc, and identify emergency community resilience hubs providing safe and warm spaces for vulnerable residents. Dec 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 solar panels. Lighting has been changed to energy efficient LEDs at OSICC, with funding from the Parish Council and Southern Wiltshire Area Board.

Facilities	Allotments	Dec 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.
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Accountability - To work professionally and with integrity to provide residents with value for money and opportunities to be heard and participate in decision making

As a body funded by the public purse, the Parish Council takes its duties to act responsibly, lawfully and in the best interest of our communities seriously. 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.

Policies and Procedures of the Parish Council	Annual Review of Constitution, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation. General power of competence Quality Council Awards Councillor recruitment and retention Business Continuity Plan Succession Planning	Dec 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 were recommended at the Annual Parish Council Meeting for May 23. Dec 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 Dec 2023 - To investigate Quality Council Award Scheme administered by NALC. Dec 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. Several new candidates are hoped to stand for co-option in January 2024. December 2023 - in order to protect the functions of the Parish Council, a Business Continuity Plan is under development and will be presented early 2024. Dec 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.	Dec 2023 - detailed forecasts/cost planning to be done to inform budget requirements. With the introduction of Scribe Accounting this year, it is hoped reports from this software can assist.