

# Parish Council Briefing

Chair, Neil Carpenter, rounds up the PC's activity in March

The most recent meeting of the Parish Council took place on 11th March.

In addition to the Parish Councillors the meeting was attended by 16 members of the public, our County Councillor, Bill Parks and Michael Kalvis, the Residential Development Project Manager responsible for the delivery of the houses at the development on Maud Davies Close. Mr Kalvis had been invited to the meeting by the Parish Council and updated the meeting on the progress being made and also outlined the process for those wishing to rent/purchase the properties when they are complete. Mr Kalvis took questions from councillors and the members of the public who were present. (Copies of the slides used in Mr Kalvis presentation can be made available – contact John Willcox, Clerk to the Parish Council.)

There were a number of key messages that came out of his presentation:

- It is expected that the properties will be completed and available in September.
- The rental costs will be considered as affordable. The definition of affordable is 80% of local rent costs. Mr Kalvis was pressed on what area they would be taking as local as rents in Corsley, with many properties owned by Longleat are much higher than Warminster for example. At this stage he did not have an answer. It is best to describe the mood as disappointing that we are still not clear what the rents will be but we will follow up to try and get this figure.
- The shared ownership will be sold at full local value (again a lot of disquiet about this) with purchasers buying a share of the home and then having to pay rental on the rest of the value at a rate of 2.6% (to be confirmed). If purchasers then can afford to buy more of the property, it will be re-valued to get an up to date cost of that additional share.

*NOTE: it was not made clear if when the property was revalued the rentable cost would increase as well (to that new value).*

- It was raised by villagers that they had tried to contact Homes4Wiltshire by phone to find out how to apply, but nobody had answered the phone.

*NOTE: Mr Kalvis has provide the number below to contact Homes4Wiltshire and be put on the housing register. Alternatively there is an electric form that can be found on the homes4wiltshire website. The full address for this is:*

*<http://www.homes4wiltshire.co.uk/content/AboutHomes4Wiltshire/Howtocontactus>*

Villagers were also struggling to understand what their chances were of getting a property (was it worth replying or cancelling current rentals to get one of these). Once again, it was not clear when properties would be available, at what cost and for shared ownership how long legal would take with the council, i.e. a lot of risk associated with getting one of these properties for families.

After the meeting we received this from Mr Kalvis...

*“As mentioned at the meeting, once the properties are in place, we will be able to establish their open market value and calculate their rent. I appreciate that homes in your area may be expensive to buy and rent. However, Shared Ownership is a practical way for people to get a foothold on the property ladder and social rent will be significantly less than an equivalent market rent in the area”.*

*Advice on the Homes 4 Wiltshire website says: “If you want to make a new application to join the Housing Register, please call our Housing Solutions team on 0300 456 0106 9 am to 5 pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday (2 to 5 pm on Wednesdays)”.*

*I am sorry to hear that some residents have had difficulty contacting the Council by phone – I have passed on this feedback to the team.*

There is also an explanation of the shortlisting process which emphasises the importance of a local connection:

When bidding for a property, applicants are prioritised in shortlists in the following order:

- applicants with local connection to the parish or town in which the property is locate
- then by band - ordered 1, 2, 3, 4 and Open Market Register, and
- within each band, effective date - the date applicants are placed in the band or on the Open Market Register.

To explain these bands:

Band 1 Emergency need (the Council has a legal requirement to find accommodation for them)

Band 2 High need (social care need, urgent medical or welfare need, sick or injured Armed Forces)

Band 3 Medium need (no fixed abode, temporary accommodation, seriously overcrowded)

Band 4 Low need (lacking or shared facilities, overcrowded, Armed Forces).

Open market register

Low cost home ownership, older people accommodation, specialist accommodation for those with specific needs.

Personally, having just read this banding, I cannot believe that nowhere to live is Band 3 or that being elderly or disabled with needs is considered open market, but this is clearly the state of the housing need currently.

The Parish Council will continue to follow up with Homes4Wiltshire and let everyone know anything we find out.

## Planning

The meeting considered one planning application:

**PL/2024/01977** Detached garage/store/home office at: 79 Lane End, Corsley, Warminster, BA12 7PE

It was agreed that the PC would have no objection to this application and that it be recommended to the planning authority that the building in question cannot be severed from the host property or occupied as a standalone dwelling.

## Streetscene

A report had been circulated by David Ball, the PC member responsible for all matters roads. Villagers will probably have been aware of the flooding that had taken place on the A362 and various lanes south of the A362. A number of blocked drains were cleared by Wiltshire Council (thank you Councillor Parks for raising this to the priority needed to get the work done). There remain other issues across the village and the PC will be engaging with both Wiltshire and the Longleat Estates to try and achieve a long term solution to what could be an ongoing problem with climate change making winters wetter.

Traffic monitoring at several points on the A362 in response to the PC request for a 40mph limit throughout the whole length, instead of the six different speed limits currently in place is imminent. Watch this space! Hopefully the highways authority will take on board the wider road safety issues there are with this stretch e.g. the 12 junctions, 12 bus stops, 10 field entrances, 2 pubs, Cley Hill car park, etc.

Further to the discussions on Emergency Planning it was agreed that a container be purchased to store equipment and the PC are grateful to Longleat and the Royal Oak for their permission to site the container in the Royal Oak car park.

## Rights of Way

Villagers will have noticed that they are wet, some very wet! Unfortunately there is very little the PC can do about this, so bear with us.

## Orchard

Significant work has been done at the orchard by volunteers with flowers and blossom all now coming out. The Parish Council thanks them for all their hard work.

## Next meeting

Subject to confirmation, the next scheduled meeting of the Parish Council is Monday 13th May. We welcome all visitors!

*Meetings to be held in the Lower Room at Corsley Reading Room and will begin at 7 pm)*