

Parish Council Briefing

Parish Clerk, John Willcox, rounds up the PC's activity in September

The Parish Council met on 4th September. The meeting proper was prefaced by a statement from the Chairman where he reminded councillors that the PC has a code of conduct and that it would be remiss if this was not adhered to. There followed a discussion on the use of social media when it comes to the airing of PC business and it was agreed that the PC Facebook page should be the vehicle for PC business in future.

Surprisingly, there were no planning applications to consider, albeit it was reported that the application by Malthouse Farm for a stable block and change of use to provide an all-weather area for equestrian use had been refused by the planning authority.

Streetscene

The three villages group are due to meet in the autumn to discuss any progress on the issues raised. In the meantime, the PC are engaging with officers of Wiltshire on a number of matters; brackets for the Speed Indicator Device at the western and eastern ends of the village on the A362, a pedestrian crossing on Corsley Heath and liaising with the Parish Steward on verges and hedges.

Villagers will have noticed that a lot of the road signs have been replaced as part of National Highway's maintenance programme. Following discussion and the circulation of a map detailing the points where permanent equestrian signs could be usefully placed, it was agreed that further dialogue with National Highways on the design and siting of further signs would be useful. In addition, it was agreed that the PC should engage again with the Longleat Estate to try and mitigate the increasing traffic on the alternative entrances to Longleat.

Finance

A report had been circulated detailing the current financial position of the PC.

Detailed discussions regarding the precept for the financial year 2024/2025 will take place in November with a view to the precept being set in early January. The meeting discussed at a preliminary level the areas that might be included in these spending decisions. These included suggestions that the PC might take on, for a limited period, the cutting of hedges and verges in those lanes that the local authority are never going to do; replacement/improvement of the of the two bus shelters at the White Hart and Longhedge; the implementation of the Emergency Plan that had been drafted. The financial implications of these suggestions will be further discussed and built into the budget.

The Wild Flower Meadow is part of the Old School Playing Field and its management is subject to a five-year review. It had been proposed that the agreement that governs the management should be extended for a further five years. This was agreed.

Baytree Close Development – Maud Davis Close

Villagers will be aware that the Baytree Close development has been in the pipeline for some time and may be wondering what has been going on. After making contact with the local authority we can report the following:

The groundworkers are expected to be on site before the end of October, and it may be sooner. In terms of activity, the initial work will be to secure the site (and fence off the route of the path so that this is undisturbed), then the initial work will be the creation of the new road, followed by the drainage and footings for the houses. It is likely that the houses will be delivered to site early in the new year.

Regarding the acquisition of homes – six of the eight will be for affordable rent and will be let via Homes4Wiltshire. Anyone wishing to be considered for these needs to make sure they are registered as in housing need. Homes4Wiltshire will be advised when the homes are nearing completion and will then advertise them on their website for bids. Priority will be given to those with a local connection and with demonstrated housing need.

There are two, two-bedroom homes for shared ownership. These will be advertised via the PC, in local papers and on the website as completion is neared. These will also be prioritised for people with a local connection. Anyone interested in the shared ownership properties is advised to look at the website:

www.wiltshire.gov.uk/article/5346/What-is-shared-ownership

We understand that a lot of people have contacted the local authority about both tenures. At the point that advertising is done these people will be contacted via email and pointed towards the Homes4Wiltshire, or the Shared Ownership page on our website.

Anybody who has a specific circumstances or queries is welcome to contact Christine Brown, the Residential Development Project Manager at Christine.Brown@Wiltshire.gov.uk or on 01225 718771. Christine has indicated that she is happy to answer if she is able to.

Needless to say, as the PC becomes aware of progress we will update the village.

Next meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Parish Council is Monday 6th November – the fireworks will be over by then! We welcome all visitors.