

# LITTLE SOMERFORD PARISH COUNCIL

## Annual Parish Meeting Tuesday 9th May 2023 held Little Somerford Village Hall

### Minutes

**Present** Cllr P Cameron Cllr S Orchard Cllr D Matthews  
Cllr D Orchard Cllr J Fairbairn

**In Attendance** R Nuttall (Clerk) 20 members of the  
Cllr Threlfall (Wiltshire) public

23APM/1 No Apologies for Absence received.

23/APM/2 No declarations of interest

23/APM/3 The Minutes of the last APM held 10<sup>th</sup> May 2022 were approved and signed as a true record of the meeting.  
Proposed: Cllr D Orchard; Seconded: Cllr S Orchard

23/APM/4 Cllr Cameron gave the **Chair's Report**, a copy is appended to these minutes. The Parish Councillors expressed their thanks to Councillor Cameron for her hard work as Chair over the past year.

23/APM/5 The 2022/23 figures have been signed off by internal audit and will be put to the Parish Council for formal approval next month. The Council made an in-year surplus of £582 and ended with £19830 in the bank. The main source of income is the Precept. The main expenditure is on salary for the Clerk (15 hours per month) and grass cutting.

The Council has set a £3767 deficit budget for 2023/24 to allow it to invest in self-closing gates on 3 footpaths and in a Speed Indicator device. The Precept has increased by £500 to £11000 which equates to £2.70pa extra per band D household.

#### Public Bodies

23/APM/6.1 Wiltshire Police Community Officer Juliet Evans gave a report. We are a very low crime area, a very safe area. The Speed enforcement officers had recently been in Little Somerford, and there was an above average incidence of speeding, some of whom will be receiving letters from the police. One crime that was highlighted was the nationwide increase in theft of keyless cars. Car owners are encouraged to invest in a key safe box to prevent their keys being scanned.

Members of the public are reminded to use 999 if they suspect a crime in progress or 101 to report a crime that has already happened.

23/APM/6.2 Wiltshire Councillor Elizabeth Threllfall gave a report. Potholes are currently a big issue, a hot summer followed by a cold and wet winter plus a change in highways contractor have all contributed to a backlog. Members of the public should keep reporting potholes using the MyWilts app. Councillor Threllfall commended the Speedwatch team, their efforts and recording of data helps to prioritise the Police Speed Enforcement locations. Wiltshire Council is working with Little Somerford Parish Council to install self-closing gates on 3 of the Public Rights of Way. The Public are reminded that bus journeys are capped at £2 per journey. Malmesbury Primary School have received a large financial grant from Dyson which will increase its intake, Wiltshire Council are looking into ways to minimise any negative impact on village schools.

23/APM/7.1 The Speed watch report is appended to these minutes. Thanks expressed to Mrs Free for co-ordinating the team.

23/APM/7.2 Somerfords Walter Powell School – numbers are slowly increasing; the school celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> birthday this year.

23/APM/8 **Public Question Time**

1. The footbridge on footpath 11 is in a poor state of repair, the Parish Council will liaise with the landowner on this matter.
2. Can the large potholes / verge area by the post box be repaired ? The Parish Council will consult with Wiltshire Council Highways on this.

## Parish Council Chair Report May 2023

Thank you to Elizabeth Threllfall (Wiltshire Council) for her support on matters throughout the year and her help in resolving them.

We welcomed David Matthews to the Parish Council this year and we have had 1 Councillor leave, thanks to Caroline Minshell for all the support and time given to the Parish Council whilst on the Parish Council.

### Internal Audit

LSPC internal audit was completed in April 2023 – with positive responses to all relevant objectives.

2 recommendations which were to review our standing orders and financial regulations in line with NALC model and confirm correct way to record MG trust expenditure with WALC.

Planning applications over the year

Trees, House extensions, Stables & Stores.

### Paddock & Cemetery

The small paddock in Meadow Lane was re let to a local resident for another 2 years. Trees in the paddock hedge were heavily reduced to reduce the risk of falling and remain in-situ as a good source of food and shelter for insects.

The Cemetery has had 3 burial plots purchased and 4 burials throughout the year. The fence between the Cemetery and paddock was replaced by Willis Brothers. Wildflowers continue to be encouraged along the cemetery fence and wall to return year on year. 2 bird boxes have been installed and we are asking for children to adopt them and keep an eye on who may have moved in.

We have had the wooden edging around the Memorial Garden replaced and a few boards on the path as these had all rotted away.

### Allotments/Community Orchard

The fencing and gates to the Allotments and Community Orchard were replaced by Willis Brothers with grants from Malmesbury Area Board and Community First to help with the costs. The gates provide better access for all.

All the allotments are being used very productively. The annual allotment holders meeting took place in April where there was a lot of positivity and love for the calm quiet space that the allotments provide. Network rail and the brambles were as usual a concern, Network Rail have been contacted several times and they have said that the brambles have been cut back but it has not.

The water sustained a break in the freezing weather. We have added a reminder to turn water off at the end of the season to prevent this in future.

The Community Orchard trees are growing well, and the raspberries have been cut back so hopefully we will have plenty of raspberries and blackberries this year. A path has been mown to make the fruit more accessible to pick this year.

### Footpaths

We are working with landowners to install self-closing gates on footpaths 7, 9 & 10. We have been successful in getting a grant towards some of the cost of these gates. We will need volunteers to help with putting them in place.

### Playpark

The playpark has had its yearly RoSPA report, the wood chipped areas have been dug over and refreshed. Small maintenance and regular checks are ongoing throughout the year. We were successful

in gaining a grant to replace the very much used goal posts, thank you to Sue & Chris Reynolds for this and for setting them in place.

### **Litter Pick & keeping our village tidy.**

There has been 2 very successful litter picks this year. Many bags of litter picked up and rescued from our hedges and ditches. Unfortunately despite robust risk assessments, using the right equipment and bags of common-sense Wiltshire Council say that as a Parish Council we cannot ask anyone to litter pick outside of 30 mph areas. Unfortunately, that is most of our village. We encourage people to report litter on the My Wilts App. Thank you to all who helped out at the litter picks and those who continue to pick up litter on a weekly basis, I am sure our village would not look this good without these people.

### **Book Exchange**

Problems with books and other items left on the floor do on occasions still happen. Please be reminded it is a book exchange and can only accommodate so many books.

### **Highways Matters**

The list of jobs is updated on a monthly basis of things such as potholes, drains needing clearing, sign cleaning, strimming etc for the Parish Steward to complete.

The Parish Steward has worked hard to address any flooding issues and resolved the flood on the corner by the church.

### **Millennium Green**

The Christmas tree on the Green was donated by Hortico at Sherston. Thank you to all the residents involved in collecting and setting up the Christmas tree, it looked lovely lit up again this year. The small one is growing well for the future generations.

Carols on the green took place in the village hall this due to the freezing temperatures. The Salvation Army band played carols for us all, thanks go to them, and I know they appreciated being warm. A collection was made on the night and raised £77.31.

The W.I planted a tree on the green for the Queens Green Canopy – A Malus Red Sentinel giving pink buds in spring followed by white scented blossom and red fruits through autumn and winter. Bulbs were planted under the tree, and they were lovely to see earlier in the year.

Bird boxes have been installed on the green on two trees and we are asking for children to adopt them to keep watch on them and update us with who may have moved in.

### **Speedwatch Group**

The Parish Council would like to thank the Little Somerford team for all their work. The Speedwatch report is attached. We are currently looking at getting a Speed Indicator Device set up in the village.

### **Defibrillator**

We have had a couple of times when the defibrillator has been out of action, we are able to take it out of use by Facebook, putting a note on the cabinet and removing it from the list of available defibs that the ambulances use. It was rectified quickly but can I ask anyone passing it to always check that the green light is flashing. A successful defibrillator training session was held in April run by a member of the police, this was very informative for all that attended and helps to remove the fear of using a defibrillator in an emergency situation.

### **Donations**

The Parish Council has supported the Signpost with a donation. It is a vital source of information for our residents and we as a Council use it to print minutes and meeting dates etc.

### **Wildlife Friendly Village**

This is a long-term project to increase the biodiversity in our village, first discussed in October 2020. Claire and Kit Beazley on the Hill are a great example of how a wildflower meadow can work alongside a general garden of vegetables and flowers. The grass cutting regime continues as per last year encouraging our green areas to become less fertile and wildflowers to come back with pathways cut through.

“The Walk This Way” project to refurbish the raised walkway between the two villages has been shelved. Although residents in both villages were very much in support of this we have been unable to get any funding despite huge efforts on this.

The long grass on the green and Cemetery was cut and cleared at the end of season, we had a lot of help to rake out the long grass and then seed kindly donated was spread over these areas to encourage more wildflowers this year.

We are planning to build some bug hotels in the near future.

Thank you to all the Councillors and our Clerk for the help they have given the Parish Council over the last year.

### **Speedwatch**

During the year ended 31/12/22, we carried out 24 sessions of one hour each at various sites in the village 30mph zone. These covered 3234 passing vehicles of which we reported 134 vehicles speeding in excess of 35 MPH.

These figures show an average for each session of 135 passing vehicles out of which 5.6 (4.15%) were caught speeding; these averages turn out to be very similar to those of the previous year.

**Little Somerford Parish Council**  
Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Income:	Actual	Actual	Budget
Precept	10000	10500	11000
Grants	666	1083	0
Allotment	160	220	160
Burials	1135	1390	400
Paddock Rent	100	100	100
VAT Refund	1035	1081	1600
Donation from MGT	0	0	0
Other	31	0	0
Bank Interest Received	1	16	50
	£ 13,127	£ 14,390	£ 13,310

<b>Expenditure:</b>			
Wages and Salaries	2055	2145	2544
Clerk Employ't Exp & mileage	200	200	280
Admin and Office Equipt	152	270	400
Website	93	133	270
Chairman's/Counsellor exp	0	39	250
Staff Training/Subs	159	127	200
Audit	235	245	255
Hall Hire	95	75	175
Grants/Donations	200	200	200
Insurance	500	378	420
Insurance Millennium Green Trust	215	210	250
Repairs, Maint & Defib	487	500	900
Grass Cutting	3180	3635	3800
Cemetery	117	238	265
Allotments, Paddock inc Water	74	1348	1290
Play Area	595	374	650
Capital Project	1021	1409	3500
VAT	1081	1532	1428
Jubilee	0	750	0
	£ 10,460	£ 13,808	£ 17,077

<b>Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	£ 2,668	£ 582	-£ 3,767.00
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**Bank Balances at 31 March 2023**

Current Account		11435	
Deposit Account		8395	
<b>TOTAL</b>	£	19,830.03	£ 16,063.03

£3500 Capital Project SID and Gates  
£250 Grant received for Goals and Seeds