

# LITTLE SOMERFORD PARISH COUNCIL

## Annual Parish Meeting Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2025 held Little Somerford Village Hall

| Minutes       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                    |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Present       | Cllr P Cameron<br>Cllr R Simmons<br>Cllr D Orchard<br>Cllr Taylor                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Cllr A Beer<br>Cllr S Orchard<br>Cllr Bowles                       |
| In Attendance | R Nuttall (Clerk)<br>Cllr Threlfall (Wiltshire)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Representative of Wiltshire Police<br>Representative of SWP School |
| 25APM/1       | All Present                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                    |
| 25/APM/2      | No declarations of interest                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                    |
| 25/APM/3      | The Minutes of the last APM held 14 <sup>th</sup> May 2024 were approved and signed as a true record of the meeting.<br>Proposed: Cllr Cameron; Seconded: Cllr Simmons                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                    |
| 25/APM/4      | Cllr Cameron gave the <b>Chair's Report</b> , 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.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                    |
| 25/APM/5      | The 2024/254 figures are currently with the auditor for review. They will be put to the Parish Council for formal approval next month. The Council made an in-year surplus of £3643 and ended with £24062 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 Parish Council had committed to verge repairs near to the Post Box, the invoice for this was not paid until April 2025, therefore the surplus will be reduced to £3000. The Parish Councillors agreed to carry over £643 to accounting year 2025/26. Proposed: Cllr Cameron; Seconded: Cllr D Orchard<br>The Council has set a £4614 deficit budget for 2025/26 to allow it to invest in improvements to public spaces including the play park. The Precept has increased by £500 to £12000 which equates to £3.37pa extra per band D household. |                                                                    |
|               | <b><u>Public Bodies</u></b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                    |
| 25/APM/6.1    | Wiltshire Council – Following a recent election, there is currently no majority party at Wiltshire Council, although the Liberal Democrats hold the most seats. It is likely that they will join with the independents to form a majority. The deadline for finalising this is 20 <sup>th</sup> May 2025.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                    |

Wiltshire Council is currently in a good financial position, adult social care and children's services are the largest expense. The Council are investing in leisure centres and libraries. Substantial changes will be made to waste services with an expected five different containers for collection. This is a legal requirement determined by Government policy. Local road issues are slowly being sorted including Seagry, Lyneham Banks and West Street, Great Somerford. The Government has increased the requirement for new houses which could impact locally. Renewal Energy is also high on the Government's agenda, again this could have a local impact including Lime Down.

25/APM/6.2 Wilshire Police

Wiltshire Police Community Officer 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 fines. The crime figures for the Malmesbury Villages area are very low, with the highest incidences being for violence, theft and burglary.

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.

- 25/APM/7.1 Somerford's Walter Powell School – The school is now part of The Blue Kite Academy Trust, which is resulting in lots of positive activity and providing good support to the school. A full report on the school is attached to the end of these minutes. There is currently an issue with the Pre-school building, the school asked for a representative of the Parish Council to join a working group, the Parish Councillors happy to do this, the clerk will be the point of contact.

- 25/APM/8 **Public Question Time**  
No public questions.

## Chairman report May 2025

Firstly a big thankyou to Elizabeth Threllfall (Wiltshire Council) for all her hard work over the past year. Your help working on controversial planning issues has been so valuable and for generally helping getting issues such as flooding highlighted to W.C. Congratulations on holding onto your seat at the recent elections.

We welcomed Claire Bowles and Rob Taylor to join the Parish Council this year to make a full council. Our other members are Samantha Orchard, Dave Orchard, Alice Beer, Rob Simmons and myself. Our clerk Rachel Nuttall continues to keep the Council running well.

**Planning applications over the year** There has been various Planning applications including Tree surgery, House extensions, Cabins, Agricultural barns & Dwellings.

**Communications** We now have a lot of residents signed up to a mailing list making it easier for us to get communications out to everyone. Residents without email are encouraged to contact the Clerk who can send out paper communications. The website is maintained and kept up to date for information.

**Paddock & Cemetery** The small paddock in Meadow Lane became vacant again and as yet no one has come forward wanting it. The Roadside hedge has been cut during the winter and the paddock will be kept tidy in case we have anyone wanting to rent it.

The Cemetery has had 4 burials this year. Wild flowers continue to be encouraged along the cemetery fence and wall to return year on year. The snowdrops along Mill Lane side in the Cemetery were amazing this year. The unused side of the cemetery grass will only be cut and collected at the end of the season and the wild flowers are really starting to come through now. For the first year there was a good amount of cowslips at the far end. This is a truly peaceful and calm place sit.

**Allotments/Community Orchard** The annual allotment holders meeting took place in April and all the allotments are being used productively. Network rail and the brambles are as usual a concern. The water to the allotments was turned off for the winter to prevent freezing and pipes bursting. The Community Orchard trees are growing well and have flowered well this year so hopefully that means a good crop. Paths in the orchard will be cut so that the fruit can be accessed.

**Footpaths** All but 1 of the 10 self closing gates purchased have now been installed on footpaths 7, 9 & 10 and we have had positive feedback about how good they are and the best thing about them is that they will continue to give good access to the footpaths for years to come. Thanks to Rob Simmons for working hard to get these done. Letters will be sent out to landowners who need to make their footpaths and styles more accessible. Full footpath report has been completed by Alice.

**Playpark** The playpark has had its yearly Rospa report which was very good, the wood chipped areas have been dug over and the bark refreshed again. Small maintenance jobs and regular checks are ongoing throughout the year. Its always lovely to see so many children playing football at the play park. A bug hotel in the corner of the playpark continues to provide a home for insects and the left hand edge of grass is to left to grow to increase the biodiversity in the play area. We did have 2 incidents of someone burning books there during the year but hopefully this has stopped.

**Litter Pick & keeping our village tidy** There has been 2 very successful litter picks this year. Over 20 bags of litter picked up and rescued from our hedges and ditches back in the autumn. We encourage people to report litter on the My Wilts App for areas outside the 30mph zones for W.C to pick up.

Thankyou to all who helped out at the litter picks and those who continue to pick up litter on a regular basis, I'm sure our village would not look this good without these people as it comes back on a daily basis.

**Book Exchange** The book exchange continues to be used, bring a book/take a book. Every now and then there are things left that should not be but otherwise there are some interesting books in there.

**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 village sign heading to the village from Gt Somerford has been moved to past Field View, it is hoped it will help drivers to recognise the start of the village and that people will adhere to the 40mph better. A post has been put in there so that the Speed Indicator Device can be placed there as well. A sign to recognise Mill Lane before the bridge has also been placed to make drivers more aware of this lane and help people to get out of Mill Lane safely.

We tried to move the 30mph on Dauntsey Road to the other side of the railway bridge to reduce speed on entering the village but this was rejected. The village sign may get moved to help cars to understand they are entering the village but this all comes with a cost.

The S.I.D can now be moved around the three points, The Hill, The Street and Field View and after a while by the playpark is now situated on The Hill. It is certainly is a good reminder of the speed that we are doing.

The pull in at the Post Box was at last completed in March with the help of funding. The post box can now be accessed without getting wet and muddy feet.

**Millenium Green** Grounds maintenance continues with Greenscape and the grass continues to be all mown on a regular basis. The Christmas tree on the Green was grown & donated by Sam & Dave this year. Thankyou to all the residents involved in setting up the Christmas tree and getting the lights up as it looked lovely lit up again this year. The small one is doing well for the future generations. Carols on the green took place in the village hall this year due to bad weather. The Salvation Army band played carols for us all, and took some requests, it was a beautiful evening and our sincere thanks go to them for playing for us. A collection was made on the night and raised £172.30 for their Christmas appeal in support of their valuable work.

The Green was used for 2 events during the year – The Garden Club plant sale and Teddy Bear Trail.

**Village map** The Council have agreed to fund a history trail map of Little Somerford suggested by local historian Arlene Bishop. This is being drawn by local artist Marilyn Trew and when completed will be available in both digital and printed form.

**Defibrillator** Defibrillator training was held in April where an informative and interactive evening took place. The defibrillator as far as I know has not been required which is good but can I ask anyone passing it to always check that the green light is flashing as this means all is working well and is ready to go if needed. Theres a link on the website to a training video which is a good learning tool.

**Donations** The Parish Council has supported the Signpost with a £100 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. Also Malmesbury Food Bank with £100 for the vital work they do.

**Wildlife Friendly Village** This long term project to increase the biodiversity in our village. The grass cutting regime to encourage and increase biodiversity continues in the Cemetery and Community Orchard encouraging our green areas to become less fertile and wildflowers to come back with

pathways cut through. The long grassed areas were cut and cleared at the end of the growing season. The wild flowers are coming through which is great to see.

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

Pauline Cameron (Chair person)

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|                                           |                 |                    |                    |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Little Somerford Parish Council</b>    |                 |                    |                    |
| Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025 |                 |                    |                    |
|                                           |                 |                    |                    |
|                                           |                 |                    |                    |
|                                           | <b>2023/24</b>  | <b>2024/25</b>     | <b>2025/26</b>     |
| <b>Income:</b>                            | <b>Actual</b>   | <b>Actual</b>      | <b>Budget</b>      |
| Precept                                   | 11000           | 11500              | 12000              |
| Grants                                    | 250             | 0                  | 0                  |
| Allotment                                 | 160             | 160                | 180                |
| Burials                                   | 1045            | 2065               | 400                |
| Paddock Rent                              | 170             | 0                  | 100                |
| VAT Refund                                | 1532            | 1564               | 1390               |
| Donation from MGT                         | 0               | 0                  |                    |
| Other                                     | 0               | 0                  | 0                  |
| Bank Interest Received                    | 89              | 95                 | 50                 |
|                                           | <b>£ 14,246</b> | <b>£ 15,384</b>    | <b>£ 14,120</b>    |
| <b>Expenditure:</b>                       |                 |                    |                    |
| Wages and Salaries                        | 2470            | 2747               | 2999               |
| Clerk Employ't Exp & mileage              | 200             | 166                | 280                |
| Admin and Office Equipt                   | 232             | 154                | 400                |
| Website                                   | 84              | 159                | 291                |
| Chairman's/Counsellor exp                 | 0               | 0                  | 250                |
| Staff Training/Subs                       | 128             | 0                  | 0                  |
| Audit                                     | 260             | 270                | 250                |
| Hall Hire                                 | 140             | 140                | 175                |
| Grants/Donations                          | 200             | 0                  | 200                |
| Insurance                                 | 426             | 437                | 481                |
| Insurance Millennium Green Trust          | 264             | 261                | 287                |
| Repairs, Maint & Defib                    | 69              | 329                | 900                |
| Grass Cutting                             | 3687            | 4461               | 4800               |
| Cemetery                                  | 30              | 152                | 342                |
| Allotments, Paddock inc Water             | 814             | 83                 | 1290               |
| Play Area                                 | 504             | 488                | 650                |
| Capital Project                           | 2585            | 772                | 3500               |
| VAT                                       | 1564            | 1123               | 1339               |
| Election Costs                            | 0               | 0                  | 300                |
|                                           | <b>£ 13,657</b> | <b>£ 11,741</b>    | <b>£ 18,734</b>    |
| <b>Surplus/(Deficit)</b>                  | <b>£ 2,668</b>  | <b>£ 3,643</b>     | <b>-£ 4,614.00</b> |
|                                           |                 |                    |                    |
| <b>Bank Balances at 31 March 2025</b>     |                 |                    |                    |
| Current Account                           |                 | 15,483.55          |                    |
| Deposit Account                           |                 | 8,579.25           |                    |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                              |                 | <b>£ 24,062.80</b> | <b>£ 19,448.80</b> |

**Approved .....Chair ..... Date**

## **Report from Somerfords Walter Powell Primary School**

### **1) Transition to The Blue Kite Academy Trust**

We officially joined The Blue Kite Academy Trust on 1st January, following a supportive transition period that began in September. Throughout this time, we've received regular guidance from the Trust, with the Director of Education working closely with our new co-headteachers. Support includes monthly leadership meetings, weekly school visits, and targeted training. All staff also took part in a joint Teacher Development Day with colleagues across Blue Kite schools. Our leadership team feel incredibly well supported, and we're already seeing the positive impact of being part of a wider network.

### **2) Strategic Planning for Next Year**

As is the case every year, we are currently reviewing our school structure for the next academic year, which is shaped by pupil numbers. At present, we have a preschool, an EYFS and KS1 class, and separate Year 3/4 and 5/6 classes. We have three new Reception children joining us in September, and seven children in our preschool. While plans are not yet finalised, our continued aim is to grow the school and ensure high-quality provision across all year groups.

### **3) Preschool Building Update**

As part of our transition into the Trust, an external survey was carried out on our preschool building. Sadly, it revealed serious structural issues with the flooring and roof that cannot be repaired. While this is disappointing, we've maintained continuity of provision by moving preschool children into the main school building, where they are continuing to thrive. Discussions with the Trust are ongoing about the building's future, and we are also in talks with external companies about how to further enhance the outdoor space for our youngest children.

### **4) School Trips and Enrichment Activities**

Our children have taken part in a variety of exciting trips and events. KS1 visited Westonbirt Arboretum and 'We The Curious' in Bristol, while KS2 explored the Wiltshire Museum as part of their Stone Age topic. We also hosted an Ancient Egyptian experience day for all three Vine schools at Somerfords', giving children hands-on learning with visiting experts. Year 5/6 are preparing for a residential trip soon, and our Pupil Parliament leaders will be visiting the Houses of Parliament at the end of May — a fantastic opportunity for them.

### **5) PINs Programme and SEND Support**

We've partnered with Wiltshire Council through the PINs programme to support families of children with SEND. This has included valuable opportunities for parents to network and share strategies. We also hosted the Autism Reality Bus, which gave both parents and staff a chance to experience sensory challenges that autistic individuals might face — an excellent training and awareness opportunity for all involved.

### **6) Wrap-Around Care – Current Provision and Future Plans**

Providing wrap-around care remains a challenge due to small numbers. While our provision continues, we are exploring a shared model across our three Vine Schools to make it more viable. External providers often require a minimum of 12–15 children, which we currently do not meet. We would welcome any local support or community partnerships to help provide breakfast or after-school clubs.

## 7) Community Involvement

We remain committed to being an active part of our village community. It was lovely to informally meet with community members last Friday and discuss upcoming VE Day celebrations in the community room. We are grateful for all the support we receive — whether financial or simply through your regular check-ins. Our children attend church for key events like Harvest, Christmas, and Easter, and we're fortunate to have the support of local clergy, who also lead worship in school. We'd love to increase our presence at local events, such as village fetes, and build stronger connections across the community.

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