The Parish of Laverstock and Ford with Hampton Park and Old Sarum

A group of glazed medieval baluster jugs from the pottery kilns at Laverstock
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PARISH PLAN

March 2009
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Welcome to our Parish Plan
The plan is about the aspirations of people who are residents of the Parish of Laverstock and Ford with Hampton Park and Old Sarum. It also includes part of the small neighbourhood of Milford.

Over a period of almost two years our Steering Group of Parish Councillors and residents has surveyed and studied what residents told us was important; what was good and what was bad. They told us what they would like to keep and what they would like to change.

At a time when some people feel that public administration is becoming increasingly remote, our Parish residents told us that they want to retain control over their own lives; they want a Parish Council which has a local presence and can be seen, communicated with and held accountable.

The Parish Council has endorsed this Parish Plan document and is committed to pursuing the Action Plans we have prepared.

The Steering Group has taken the view that the Parish Plan should not be just a one-off snapshot of the views/opinions in the parish at the time of asking; it must be a dynamic document; one that changes to keep up with new challenges. It may take us some time to achieve all the Actions, but we should make a commitment to revisit the document at least annually. Circumstances change so the Parish Council must be prepared to re-convene the Steering Group and, when appropriate, go back to residents for further consultation.

How to use this document
The substance of the plan is contained in the Key Issues (chapter 6) and Action Plans (chapter 7). The Steering Group has identified 9 Key Issues and through a process of consultation with residents it has been refined into 40 Actions. The Actions will help to turn parish residents’ aspirations into reality.

Whilst the Parish Council has overall responsibility for delivering the Parish Plan, the Steering Group firmly believe that the best way forward is to harness the experience and enthusiasm of local people to move the Issues forward. We have therefore proposed that special task groups are set up to develop and implement the Actions. All the task groups will benefit from the continued patronage of the Parish Council.

A full description of the consultation process followed by the Steering Group is enclosed in Chapter 5.
A summary of results from the consultation data is available in chapter 9. The complete source data from the various consultation exercises will be available as an appendix to the Parish Plan document.

Thank you for taking an interest in our Parish Plan,

4Sight

Steering Group.
Chapter 2

History of the Parish

The parish of Laverstock and Ford is, in fact, a parish of four distinct and separate communities, each with its own history. The community of Old Sarum has the nearby ancient monument of Old Sarum itself which was, in fact, once inside the parish. Whilst Hampton Park is a development of about twenty years, it was built round the older concept of a village green. Nearby Ford has the old Roman road running through it. Laverstock, on the River Bourne, can trace its history back further than its now larger neighbour of Salisbury (New Sarum)

Old Sarum

The old Roman road called the Portway runs from the Old Sarum monument through the current Old Sarum settlement on its way to ancient Winchester. Alongside today is one of two surviving, working World War 1 grass airfields with a grade III listed Belfast hangar, adjacent to the more recent industrial units providing local employment opportunities. The area is currently providing the location for a large expanse of housing – with two phases of new homes totalling over 1000 earmarked in a sustainable development.

Hampton Park

The name Hampton Park means ‘Home Settlement’ in Old English. It is a development of about 500 homes built on a greenfield site within the old parish boundary.
Ford
The full older name is Winterbourne Ford as it lies on a crossing of the River Bourne and other small winterbournes. Winterbournes are so named as the streams often only flowed during the winter when there was sufficient groundwater to provide flow. It lies on another old Roman road that linked Old Sarum to Clarendon Palace and on to Winchester. At times marching soldiers must have had great difficulty passing through the area as it is very susceptible to flooding. Today it is a small rural village with no services other than a bus.

Laverstock
Like Ford, Laverstock has developed in the valley of the River Bourne. It is separated from its larger neighbour, Salisbury, by the railway line and 17th/18th century water meadows which are still actively farmed. It is also bounded to the east by the delightful Cockey Down and to the north finishes at St Thomas’s bridge, named after the murdered archbishop Thomas Becket, who probably walked this way on his journey from Salisbury to Clarendon Palace where he had meetings with Henry II. Its name is from the French word Laferce (skylark) and stoc or settlement partially enclosed by a stockade. Laverstock’s history has witnessed continuous activities from the earliest of times, there being evidence of Neolithic flint mining on Burrough’s Hill, through to today. It had very active pottery kilns in medieval times sufficiently distinctive to be known as Laverstock Ware. One unusual claim to fame for the village is the establishment of a mental asylum in the 19th century which became one of the largest private asylums in the country, pioneering some unusual treatments. Huge expansion in recent times has meant that the village has had to fight hard to retain its own separate identity from nearby Salisbury.
Chapter 3

Laverstock & Ford Parish Council

The Parish of Laverstock & Ford, formed in medieval times with the original Saint Andrews Church, has grown in importance and, as over the centuries more building took place, a Parish council was formed in 1894 to manage its affairs. The number of Councillors was set by law at eleven, but due to an increase in population, more recently in the Hampton Park development, a further four Councillors were added so that today we field a Council of thirteen members. At the annual public meeting, a Chairman and Vice-chairman are elected by council members to serve for the ensuing year.

As the Parish continues to attract more housing developments, especially in the Old Sarum area, perhaps we will need to expand the Council again. We could ultimately see the Parish Council become a Town Council as it is the fourth largest in the old Salisbury District Council. It is larger than Downton, Mere, and Wilton. Geographically it extends from neighbouring Clarendon, Milford, through Laverstock and Ford, Hampton Park and Old Sarum to the Woodford Valley.

The Council’s philosophy is to control change for the benefit of all residents, to maintain the rural character of the Parish, and where possible, to improve facilities for all age groups. To this end we vet all planning applications, taking control of any assets which they may bring, and use any such financial gains to provide and maintain leisure areas.

From the Ordnance Survey 1896 revision of the one inch to one mile map. The modern civil parish boundary has been superimposed.
An example is the development of a riverside park with a boardwalk, seating and a small children's play area at Whitebridge. There are plans to develop a community farm in the near future. There is funding for a small children's play area at Hampton Park, which we will address shortly, and the Duck Lane development in Laverstock has provided funds for an all weather surfaced ball park, and also a young children's play area, both of which are almost completed.

Developments at Old Sarum are progressing slowly, but there are plans for a primary school, shops and surgery, and a community hall, as well as play areas for both young and older children, and an area for quiet recreation.

The Boardwalk Laverstock

The Council meets Monthly, and both sets, and controls the precept, which is collected centrally along with all Council Taxes. As more responsibilities are delegated in the future, the Council may have to employ more people. Currently we directly employ only the Parish Clerk and a part-time handy-person, but contract out small works to local tradesmen where possible.

We communicate with our residents by displaying information within notice boards throughout the Parish, a bi-monthly published newsletter, and our own website www.laverstock-ford.co.uk.
Chapter 4
The Four Communities

Laverstock

Laverstock - ‘the fenced land where the larks fly’ – is possibly the oldest settlement of the four communities forming Laverstock & Ford Parish. An alternative theory for the derivation of the name very recently posited by local archaeologist Alex Langlands, is that Laverstock might come from the word 'laefer' meaning rush or reed. This was mentioned in a charter of 949 which described an area of land in the area of 'winterburne'. Certainly Neolithic people inhabited the area and possibly even Palaeolithic (Old Stone Age). Settlement has been continuous to the current day when it is now classified as ‘a large village’. The village is defined by very distinct boundaries. To the west, north and south the railway embankments defend the village from predators. The northern boundary is completed by the A30 which separates Laverstock from Ford and Hampton Park with Old Sarum to the far north of the parish. The southern area of Laverstock also encompasses a small area of Milford – the ‘Ford by the Mill’. Potters Way takes its name from the medieval pottery called ‘Laverstock ware, mentioned earlier. The eastern border is the beautiful Laverstock Downs, which include the SSSI Cockey Down a site for rare orchids and butterflies and the famous Wiltshire chalk figure, Laverstock Panda, which is 40 years old in January 2009.
There is also a Wiltshire Wildlife Trust reserve at the northern end of Cockey Down. Over the downs lies the Clarendon Park estate which includes the remains of the once majestic Clarendon Palace.

One long road runs through the village. It is named Riverside Road and Church Road, separated by The Green and St Andrew’s Church. The latest church building is 150 years old exactly (2008), although a church has existed on the site since Saxon times.

New closes and estates have been built on the grounds of large manor houses until only Burrough’s Hill remains in its own grounds, high above the village. Today, Laverstock, with its Milford element, contains 1150 properties most of which have been built since the 1960s.

As well as the village primary school, St Andrew’s, Laverstock also hosts three church secondary schools serving a wider population. St Edmund’s School (C of E girls), Wyvern College (C of E boys) and St Joseph’s (R/C Co-Ed) cater for 1800 11-16 year old children. Whilst the pupils are welcome in the parish, parent traffic, litter and an ever expanding campus which eliminates views to the downs are challenges to overcome.

Business premises are limited to Murphy’s factory (world renowned for engine instruments and controls) which houses a mini recycling centre. There is also a model shop, a machine sales shop, a Chinese takeaway and a convenience store. The Post Office closed, after almost 150 years, owing to a callous national axing of services.

Recreation and leisure facilities are available in abundance with hosts such as Laverstock & Ford Sports and Social Club, The Duck Inn, the newly extended village hall and the school buildings. Together they host many sports teams and many clubs and societies, as well as providing venues for social recreation and evening adult education opportunities. The village also has recreation areas to cater for all ages. Duck Lane recreation area has a new all weather sports pitch in addition to the green space and a smaller children’s playground. Whitebridge has a small children’s playground, green space for ball games and a boardwalk, woods and river trail with seating at intervals. A network of cycle and footpaths and bridleways link all areas of Laverstock and other parish communities. More are approved as part of the efforts to reduce car traffic.

Housing development is set between the downs, school playing fields and farmland to the east by the river. There are meadows and farmland to the west. These green spaces define the village and these areas need to be preserved from development. Plans for a community farm are underway enabling public access to previously private land. The past, present and future for Laverstock is a healthy one.
Ford

Ford is a village to the north of Salisbury set amongst water meadows and downland. The original name was Winterbourne Ford indicating the place where the River Bourne was forded during the winter when rain had heightened the river. The name Ford was first used in around 1605 but the original name was still in common usage until 1896. The Bourne has recently had such an improvement of water quality that salmon are returning to spawn and otters have been seen at Ford Mill.

There is no central point such as a pub or village shop but a strong sense of community exists and most locals know each other well enough to pass the time of day. Green Lane forms a crossroads in the middle of Ford and provides a walking and cycle way linking Partridge Way in Old Sarum and Bishopdown nearer the city. Old Sarum airfield on the north side of the village is one of the oldest grass airfields in the world and has been recently granted conservation area status. The airfield was used for SOE operations during WW11 and many of the original WW1 hangars still exist. There are around 180 households spread roughly along the main road with a mixture of predominantly private housing with a few officer quarters remaining in Merrifield Road.

Ford

The main road running through the village is the original Roman road that linked Old Sarum and Winchester and there is considerable evidence of early settlement in the area. One source suggests that Thomas a Becket lived locally when he was a parish priest in Winterbourne Dauntsey and would have regularly walked over the local
One of the oldest properties in Ford is The Mill which was built in the 18th century. It still has all its working machinery and occasionally has open days demonstrating its use.

Ford is surrounded by arable, pig and sheep farms and is criss-crossed by public footpaths and bridle ways. A strategic gap has been maintained between the new development at Bishopdown and Hampton Park which has helped Ford to maintain a separate identity. Some of these fields are owned and used by a livery stables, farms and private individuals. This has helped to keep a rural feel to the area. The centre of the village is low lying water meadow which is prone to flooding during the winter months which attracts many water birds. Wildlife is frequently seen; including deer, foxes and badgers.

**Hampton Park**

Hampton Park comprises phases two and three of the Bishopdown Farm development, with phase three being named “Sarum Ridge”. It is surrounded on three sides by green space with gently sloping hills to the south and west. To the north the green space separates the development from the village of Ford and is a much treasured area of green belt forming a “strategic gap”.

There are 490 homes in Hampton Park, comprising affordable, social and private housing with flats, terraced, semi-detached and detached properties. External features in styling and design vary, as a number of building companies developed separate plots within the area. There are 95 properties maintained by housing associations.

From 1998 to the present an active residents’ association has been working to enhance facilities and the environment. As a result Hampton Park gained a post-box, benches on the green, litter bins, a bus service and a recycling centre. It was also instrumental in preserving the green space to the north and the delivery of a primary school at the heart of the community.
A large cricket green cum public open space is situated at the heart of Hampton Park with a smaller green space in the area named Sarum Ridge. There are regular cricket matches during the summer and junior football takes place in the winter. The green is also properly marked out for the local school sports day and is used by pre-school children for sport and recreation. Occasional community events take place on the green. There is a well-maintained children’s playground by the green and one in a housing association area.

Serving both as a cricket pavilion and community centre is The Pavilion, run by a volunteer management committee. It hosts a pre-school five days a week, Guides and Brownies meetings, and has various fitness and sport classes. Two churches also hold meetings there and a Youth Club, supported by local residents, meets on Friday evenings.

There is a neighbourhood centre which comprises a “One Stop” convenience store with generous opening hours, a veterinary practice, a doctors’ surgery and a dental practice, all with dedicated car parking. The centre’s facilities are well used by both residents and people from further afield. A parish notice board is located here. On the same site is the neighbourhood recycling centre, again well used. Wilts and Dorset bus number 73 runs an hourly service to town during the daytime, and a new City Park and Ride facility lies within a mile of the community.

Greentrees Primary School opened in September 2002 on land in the heart of the community. It is an 8-form school and provides for children from the Foundation Stage up to 11 years. The majority of the children live in Hampton Park. Greentrees has provided employment for local residents and also welcomes volunteers in many diverse roles. The award winning design of the school settles very well into the landscape thanks to consultation between the design team and residents. With outstanding Ofsted results the school enhances further the appeal of Hampton Park.

Old Sarum

The community of Old Sarum lies just outside the city boundary and clustered around the Portway. Once a Roman road, the Portway led from London to Weymouth via the ancient settlement of Old Sarum castle which was the original site of Salisbury Cathedral.

The western approach, off the A338, passes the ‘Bee Hive’ Park and Ride site and along an assorted collection of businesses; a coach company, the Shaw Trust garden centre and also Sarum House, a residential home. The south side the Portway is made up of a vast industrial estate – Castle Gate Business Park, Sarum Business Park and Old Sarum Business Park. The area is home to nearly one hundred businesses varying greatly in size and diversity and providing many employment opportunities for local people.

The military history of this settlement sitting on the edge of Salisbury Plain goes back to nineteen seventeen when the land called Ford’s Farm was requisitioned by the War Department for the use of fighter and training aircraft. In the years since then the name has changed to Old Sarum Airfield and it has been a busy site for various sections of the armed forces from both home and abroad. The army camp itself was
officially closed in 1979, but in 1992 the airfield was once again in use with the formation of Old Sarum Flying Club. It is said to be the oldest airfield in the country still in use. The flying club makes use of an historic hanger reputedly built by German prisoners of war, now used for the storage and maintenance of light aircraft and protected with a preservation order.

The only area maintaining a military connection is the original camp headquarters building. It is now home for B squadron the Royal Wessex Yeomanry, a branch of the Territorial Army, a detachment of the Wiltshire Army Cadet Force and also the Air Training Corp 1010 Salisbury Squadron.

On the north side of the Portway is the first of three residential communities. Partridge Way Estate was built in the 1990s following the demolition of the old barracks formally used to house military personnel. The community is now home to over 200 residents in both private and housing association owned dwellings. Beyond Partridge Way to the north is the home of Salisbury City Football Club. The stadium and the roads in the surrounding area become very congested on match days.

Further along the Portway on the north side there are two more clusters of dwellings, around 40 residents, known as Westside Close and North Portway. To the South of the Portway near Green Lane and adjacent to the airfield there are a 100 dwellings which were once the married quarters of the military camp. The former Officers’ mess, Throgmorton Hall, a very imposing building, houses 15 privately owned apartments.

There are plans for a very different Old Sarum in the future. A first stage building development promises 600 houses with 35% being ‘affordable housing’. We are promised a school, community centre and shops. The Parish Council see this major development as an important opportunity to put right the long period of neglect suffered by the Old Sarum communities. It is hoped that the surrounding countryside, will remain farmland and open space. The airfield is already protected as a designated conservation area and home to a range of furred and feathered wild life. It is still within easy reach of the city for work, shopping and recreation but with direct access to open green countryside.
CHAPTER 5

The Parish Plan Process

The government's Rural White Paper 'Our Countryside – The future' published in late 2000 proposed the introduction of Parish Plans. The initiative, supported by the Countryside Agency, sets out to empower communities to take more control over their neighbourhoods.

Laverstock and Ford Parish Council took up the challenge to support a Parish Plan and early in 2007, the Parish Plan Steering Group was convened under the chairmanship of a nominated parish councillors. At this early stage Annie Scadden, a Community Development Officer with Salisbury District Council, was assigned to assist us with the process.

The Process
There is no set template prescribing an approved manner of developing the plan however there are key features in the process which must be met:

- Parish Council must take the lead responsibility
- Whole community must be involved
- The plan must be consistent with local government related policies
- The plan should be based on information gathered through consultation and community participation

How we did it
The Salisbury District Council team was invited to lead our first Open Meeting held on the 24th April 2007 in St Joseph’s School, Laverstock. The meeting was advertised by public notice in the Salisbury Journal and a personal message via the Parish Newsletter. Getting the message out to everyone of the 2000 households in the four communities has remained an important objective for the Steering Group throughout every stage of the Parish Plan process. Our Parish Newsletter, well read and much appreciated by residents, is delivered to every household bi-monthly. A number of articles were written explaining the importance of the Parish Plan. At the same time local businesses, including all the firms on the Old Sarum industrial estate, were sent a personal invitation to one of our meetings.

The Steering Group, which became known locally as the 4Sight group, met first on the 18th June 2007. It was convened from amongst volunteer residents who attended the initial Open Meeting. Further Public Meetings were held at the Football Stadium, Old Sarum on the 16th July and at the Pavilion Hampton Park on the 27th July. On each occasion the residents of the areas targeted were personally invited to join the steering group.

At every stage of the process we have been supported and encouraged by our two District Councillors Ian McLennan and John King. A regular link was also set up and maintained with the Parish Council and this continued throughout the development of the plan. This link was particularly helpful when the Steering Group was seeking and securing funding grants from Salisbury District Council and Community First.
Project Plan
In October 2007 our project plan was approved by the Community Development Officer and this enabled the team to apply for grants from SDC - £500 and Community First (DEFRA award) £3472. The Parish Council committed itself to contribute 5% towards the cost of the project.

Initial Fact finding
At the three Open Meetings the residents of the Parish were invited to put forward their likes and dislikes about living in the Parish. They also told us about their own ideas for the future.
From the information gathered we were able to construct a broad idea of the issues which occurred most frequently.

Questionnaires

Parish wide questionnaire
Nine key issues were drawn from the data gathered at the Open Meetings. These became the substance from which a questionnaire was constructed. Residents were identified by the community from which they came. We were already aware that the four communities were different and their priorities must be separately identified.
The Parish Plan Questionnaire was printed and delivered to every household in the parish. A copy of the questionnaire was made available on the parish website. To assist with collection of the completed questionnaire, the booklet carried a list of household addresses distributed throughout the four communities where returns could be posted. Collection points were set up in local shops to make it as easy as possible for residents to return their completed questionnaires.

Schools Questionnaire
A second questionnaire was prepared for our schools with the help of a number of pupils from each school. The Laverstock community includes an unusually large number of schools and the impact of these in the parish is known to be considerable. It was agreed to question the students about their concerns when coming to school in the parish. 1152 completed questionnaires were returned.

Community Questionnaire
A third questionnaire was prepared targeted at the significant number of community groups meeting in the parish. Over forty groups were asked for their concerns and how the parish might better support their particular organisation. There were over 50% returned.
Final Stage - The Roadshows
During the summer of 2008 the Steering Group went on the road with the results from their questionnaires. The roadshow events staged at Hampton Park and Laverstock attracted considerable interest with over seventy residents taking part. It enabled the Steering Group to reach residents who might not have found the opportunity to contribute earlier. Using the data from the questionnaires the team gave residents coloured spots to indicate how the key issues might be taken forward. How, for example, the key issue of community safety might be turned in to actions which would deliver a safer community. The roadshows were also another opportunity to question residents as to whether the passage of time had revealed new issues; important matters which required the team to take a fresh look at their priorities.

In due course the final Parish Plan document will be submitted to the Parish Council for its approval and summary copy will be distributed to every household. Making the Parish Plan happen will require a longer term strategy. The Steering Group will recommend to the Parish Council that the Plan be considered as a dynamic document which will attain its full usefulness only if it is reviewed at regular intervals of time and revised to meet new challenges.