
Laverstoke and Freefolk Parish Council

Chairperson – Bob Hough, Longhouse, Freefolk, Whitchurch, RG28 7NW 07990 570035
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Annual Parish Assembly Tuesday 12th May 2015 at Lady Rose Hall at 7.30pm.

Present

Parish Councillors:	Bob Hough, Clare Albert, David Ellis, Charlie Seligman
Borough Councillors:	Cllr Ian Tilbury, Cllr Colin Phillimore
Police:	Piers Ambler
Bombay Sapphire	Nik Fordham, Will Brix
Parish Clerk:	Nicky Nicklin

1. Apologies for absence were received from Jim Marsh & Nixie Graham
2. Minutes of the last annual meeting were signed

3. Bombay Sapphire Report

Operationally BS have had an incredible year taking production from 0 to a record 1.16 million la. They made 500k bottles in 1 month and all the blue bottled gin is now produced here at Laverstoke. They have worked well with the Community, tried to fit in seamlessly, not to interrupt us and be the best neighbours they can. From a sustainability perspective the water turbine is producing electricity to power the equivalent of 2-300 light bulbs per hour. Solar PV is in use and the Biomass boiler is burning sustainable woodchip & botanicals, meaning no composting lorries are required and resulting in the powering of the distillation process. Heat recovery is working for the glass house. To date BS have been in a “ramping & scaling” phase but they are now moving to “normalization”. They intend to continue to work well with village for the future.

From the Visitor Centre perspective it has also been a big year with over 25k guests and visitors having been received. Official public opening was 7 months ago, on 1st Oct. March visitor numbers hit 4000, with 4300 in April and more expected in May. The long term objective is 100k p.a. in 3-5 years. The Web site has had over 350k hits, PR has reached 800million impressions (i.e. people seen pics of Laverstoke!) They are starting to get into tourism marketing & the coach operators. The TV documentary made about the site is going out shortly, having already been aired in Australia (& resulting in 100 Australian visitors already. On Trip Adviser they’ve had over 200 reviews, with over 75% achieving 5 out of 5. Over 90% over 4 and above. Snagging works are ongoing & they aim to finish in the Summer. The garden area at the front by the old main door is being tidied and the skip is

going imminently. Fencing for the Laverstoke Lane car park is coming. A new gin has been launched at Laverstoke recently: Star of Bombay.

4. Police Report

The Neighbourhood team, including Piers Ambler our Beat Officer, have moved to Tadley from Whitchurch. Only a roads unit & a couple of other specialist units now work out of Whitchurch. The 2 warranted officers, Paula Deery and Andy Reed, cover the Southern Basingstoke area. There is a monthly area police report.

3 Policing priorities have been chosen by public poll for Basingstoke – home burglary, non-dwelling burglary, traffic speeding. For us locally the non-dwelling is more of an issue for us because lots of rural outbuildings. Therefore a Stronghold event in Whitchurch recently focused on Locking of outbuildings. Traffic offences are covered by several trained officers. Crime is very low in F&L combined. There were 51 incidents last year (year to April '15) recorded from RTA to suspicious activity to assault/criminal damage and down from 60 the previous year. 11 of these were home office classified crimes i.e one per month (up from only 7 the previous year). This is the safest place to live in Basingstoke area. There has been 1 assault, same as last year, 1 burglary of dwelling, 0 last year, and non-dwelling burglary is down 200% (0 this year & 2 last year)! 1 Public order incident, 6 thefts and 14 suspicious incidents were reported. Residents can join the Hampshire Alert system which we'll publicise in our newsletter. { <https://www.hampshirealert.co.uk/> } Also residents can drop Piers an email { piers.ambler.15808@hampshire.pnn.police.uk } to be added to monthly police report.

5. Borough Councillor's Report

Ian Tilbury introduced Colin Phillimore, Labour Councillor who has been elected as our second ward Councillor and has effectively replaced Paula Baker who has retired after many years' service.

Last year the Borough spent a lot of time considering the never ending local plan. The Planning inspector threw the plan out and the Borough have agreed to increase housing numbers. The M3 local enterprise partnership/zone is creating ribbon development along the M3 and driving growth in business. It is however sucking people into the South, where there is already lots of employment. It is a shame but companies in same industries like to be located together to take advantage of the pull of a ready skilled workforce. Consequently over 270 new houses are to be built in Overton, 350 in Whitchurch and overall 845 new housing must be built in the borough each year. Suitability is based on sustainability. L&F is classed as moderately sustainable, even though we don't have shops etc. due to our being on a bus route. Hannington e.g. isn't for this reason. The 2 primary schools got together and a decision has been made to expand Whitchurch by one full form entry rather than both to expand by half. Indications are that more 4 year old in Whitchurch. It is expected that the Planning inspector will adopt the Local Plan next Spring.

6. Chairman's Report

Bob started by thanking the Councillors who are no longer on the parish council for their commitment and hard work during their tenure, most notably Caroline Jolly for steering the

refurbishment of LRH to completion and managing the relationship between Bombay Sapphire and the local community during their build. Also he thanked Phil Nicklin and Richard Waters for their support whilst on the Parish Council and their continued help in keeping the villages' ship shape. He also thanked his fellow Parish Councillors & Nicky for both attending meetings and the work they do between the meetings.

Much has happened on the community site – Lady Rose Hall is open for business and doing well, with very successful opening in July which over 120 residents attended. We now have 3 regular users and are on the lookout for more. The relationship between the Parish Council and Kingfisher, Whitchurch Tennis club, the Archery club and the Millennium Green continue to be good and we look forward to improving the site for all users.

Bombay Sapphire are now a part of the villages and Bob thanked them for their help painting the community Centre and their kind financial gift which was put towards installing seating in the bus shelter outside the Mill.

Bob reported on the sad news of the passing away of an ex Parish Councillor, Tony New, last month. He had been on the PC for many years and was a great supporter of the village. Working at portals and being a very active bowler, he lived in Laverstoke all life, born at no. 20 Laverstoke Lane and moved only once and within the lane.

The PC have made Grants over the past year to: L&F Senior Citizens (run by Mady Oram & committee), Millennium Green for playground/Insurance & the Churchyard Maintenance of St Mary's.

Other areas that Bob commented on were: The continuing Bullington Cross wind-farm appeal whereby the Parish Council again sought local opinion and submitted their response to the appeal. The delays in upgrading to fibre broadband which unfortunately still persist. The PC have a contact at BT trying to get some concrete information and routes to completion. Skips were a success again this year and should probably become a regular item on the villages' calendar.

Lastly Bob commented that the Parish Council have started to look into alternative uses for the wooden pavilion and that this process will continue.

7. Accounts

Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2015 were circulated.

8. Open Forum

A resident made the following comments which were discussed: Our Sunday Bus service is being reviewed in June, due to lack of use; Watch Lane has been surface dressed; Soil & Ivy on pavement from the Laverstoke Park wall along the B3400 is causing a nuisance especially where the wall is falling down. **Action:** clerk to request street cleaning and also write to Clare Scheckter. Confusing name of our Community Centre bank account should be changed

for clarity. **Action:** clerk to request change to bank account to L&F Community Site. Community Bus –at a recent transport open morning, at the Gill Nethercott Centre in Whitchurch, 5 new Whitchurch people came forward interested in our local round the villages minibus service. They are now hoping to extend this to St Mary Bourne as well to increase sustainability.

The Meeting finished at 8.40pm and was followed by the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council.

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