

Laverstoke and Freefolk Annual Parish Meeting 14 May 2024 Minutes

1. Jo Probut, PC Vice Chair, chaired the Annual Parish Meeting and welcomed everyone.
Councillors in attendance: Jo Probut, Andrew White, Julia Chedgey, Diccon Harvey, Jayne Hudson, Jim Marsh. Apologies: David Ellis

2. **Minutes of the last Parish Assembly 12 May 2023** – signed by Jo Probut

3. **Annual Police Report.** PCSO Hannah Clapham standing in for Andy Jones:

Basingstoke rural Police operate from Tadley Police Stn and cover a patch of 250 sq miles (same size as the IOW). The area is split into 3. B'stokes South is managed by PCSO Jones & PC Holdsworth and comprises of almost 50 Parishes including Laverstoke, Whitchurch, Overton, Steventon, Oakley, North Waltham, Upton Grey, The Candovers, Old Basing, Newnham & Mapledurwell. PS Evans manages a team of 7 PCs & 2 PCSOs at this time. Abstractions from the rural to assist in other areas are unfortunately a daily issue due to various reasons.

In general theft of cars, mostly keyless entry is high, a number of motorcycles being stolen are also on the increase especially the off-road style. Faraday type bags are promoted by Police. By keeping your car key when not in use in this bag it prevents the signal being transmitted from escaping and being intercepted by criminals.

Assault without injury x 1: On 26 Jan 24 a driver of a vehicle on Laverstoke Lane felt he was forced to pull over after road rage from another. During the incident the collar of the aggrieved was grabbed. No Police follow up due to a lack of available resources at the time.

Burglary x 2: Between 13 & 15 Aug a water pump was stolen from a locked shed situated on a Farm. No LOE for Police follow up.

Between 18 Dec & 10 Jan a garage door to a residential property was noticed to be damaged by the owner. They believed it was an attempt to gain entry to the premises. Time frame was too long to allow police to investigate.

Criminal Damage x 4: 2 damage reports refer to land being driven over causing damage to crops (Op Galileo) related in Laverstoke. A window was smashed of the Kingfisher Day centre, initial reports suggested it was a BB gun that had caused the damage. It appears that a ball bearing was located at the scene so Police believe that a catapult was responsible for damage. These type of items are commonly used in rural communities in particular to cause damage by criminals.

A similar incident on 23 Dec was reported in Freefolk after windows in Manor Cottages were broken and a ball bearing found at the scene. If someone is carrying a catapult with intent to cause injury, they may be likely to prosecution under section 1 of the Crime act 1953. IT IS AN OFFENCE TO CARRY AN OFFENSIVE WEAPON IN PUBLIC WITHOUT LAWFUL AUTHORITY OR REASONABLE EXCUSE.

Impairment x 2: On 31 Jan a car had been reported to have crashed into a wall. The driver of the car had made off on foot prior to Police arrival. Police intercepted a male whilst walking to their home address where the vehicle was registered. Full admission from the driver that he was in charge of the vehicle at the time of the incident and provided a positive breath test for alcohol (66) 35 is the maximum legal limit in the UK.

Police also attended after a white Transit crashed. Driver provided a positive breath test of 79 (Double the legal limit)

Missing person x 1: A male was reported missing after an argument at home address and concerns raised for his welfare. Male located safe & well.

Road related incidents / RTI; 29 Nov Police made a proactive stop on a vehicle which was drug related. As part of the stop the vehicle was noticed to have a number of defects, some serious. Prohibition issued.

20 Jan a driver of a car reported a large pothole which had blown his tyre on his car. That could cause injury to a motorcyclist.

16 Nov a report was received that damage had been caused to another car and then driven off from the scene of an accident.

Theft x 1: Between 31 Oct – 8 Feb a builder working on Laverstoke Mill reported tools and paint having been stolen. Time gap too long to investigate

Theft from vehicle x 2: A Mitsubishi L200 was broken into overnight 16/17 Jan whilst parked outside the owners house.

31 Dec Tractor parked in field overnight in Freefolk. Returned to find that the front linkage, top link hydraulics and battery had been stolen.

Other incidents: Domestic x 1, Harassment x 1, Hare coursing x 1, Malicious communications x 2, Stalking x 1, Suspicious vehicle / person x 2

Hampshire Alert [Home Page - Hampshire Alert](#) continues to be promoted by the Police. By creating an account, which is free of charge, you can be kept in the loop when Police are asking for witnesses etc. You can also make contact with your local Beat Officers for the area directly.

4. **Bombay Sapphire update** - Helen Coles & Lucia attended. The visitor centre will be open during half term and cinema nights are now underway for the summer. There is a big focus on the 10th Anniversary celebrations on 22 October. Portals will be joining and there will be a cocktail afternoon/evening for local people. Following previous discussion of ideas with PC there will be an opportunity to visit the production and other areas that the paying guests don't usually see. The distillery has also been awarded a worldwide Wetland award for its river restoration work which it shall formally receive in New Orleans in June. The production team spent yesterday engaged in maintenance works for the community including clearing the bus shelters, cleaning playground equipment, cleaning the road bridge and a litter pick. This was followed by tea and cake in a local garden. Jo thanked Bombay Sapphire for their hard work for the L&F community on this 'InSpirit' day.

5. **Millennium Green Trust update** – Phil Nicklin Chairman

The Trust provides and maintains the Laverstoke and Freefolk Millennium Green for the benefit of the community as an area which can be used for informal recreation and as place for community events. The Millennium Green is open and available to local inhabitants, the general community, and visitors to the area.

Activities

The Trust has continued to successfully maintain and develop the Millennium Green as an attractive recreation area for the local community with periodic maintenance days.

Work has continued to the pond area with anti-slip strips added to the Pond Platform.

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We have obtained permission from the landowner to extend the access along the stream with the provision of a Permissive Path. Provision of a grant to cover the works required is being sought.

The Trust has continued to maintain the playground equipment and the general area, with new trees and hedging planted through the Shoots Along the Routes scheme. This was funded by Hampshire Forest Partnership and organised by Gill Baker with Jayne Hudson. Fortnightly Playground Equipment Site Safety Inspections are now being carried out by the Trustees.

The Green was used to celebrate the Coronation with a village party and games. The bar organised for the celebrations and supported by Bombay Sapphire and Bordeaux Index raised funds for the Millennium Green. Fund raising is an important issue with a small number of families donating regularly. We urge people to donate using this method and details can be found on our web site: <http://laverstokeandfreefolkmillenniumgreen.org.uk/>

The main fundraising event is the Annual Quiz night which was last held in November 2023 and was again a great success. It is to be held this year on a date to be confirmed.

The circular wooden bench has been repaired and we are looking to source a reasonably sized Oak Tree to install it around. We have carried out works clearing the old Trim Trail area to facilitate the Parish Council clearing of the car park area to address the rodent issue. Additional works will be required to the dividing fence to enable the works to be completed. The fallen tree in the wood adjacent to Batts Row has been felled and the logs are available to collect.

Michael Jordan was welcomed onto the Millennium Green team joining Craig Beckingham and Cat Clark as Trustees.

Ongoing Works to Pond and Stream: Maintenance works are being scheduled to clear fallen trees, improve water flow and remove invasive plant species in conjunction with The Watercress and Winterbournes group (part of the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust). Proposed Dates:

1. Thursday 20th June 2024 09:30 – 12:00
2. Tuesday 16th July 09:30 – 12:00
3. Thursday 15th August 14:00 – 16:30
4. Thursday 3rd October 14:00 – 16:30

Other ongoing works: New oak tree to be sourced for circular bench. Additional seat (currently in storage) to be installed in an agreed location. The playground logs (situated the Lady Rose Hall end) are also available for residents to collect and then remaining logs will be removed in the near future by an outside contractor. Works to be carried out following the recent tree survey.

6. **Chairman's report** – Jo Probut PC Vice Chair reported as follows:

- Welcome everybody. I am delighted you all could come along to our Annual Parish Assembly.

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- Our thanks to Juliet Henderson, PCSO Hannah Clapham from Hampshire Police, on behalf of Andy Jones, Helen Coles and Lucia from Bombay Sapphire and Phil Nicklin for their reports for the County Council, Police, Bombay Sapphire & Millennium Green respectively.
- Drew Mechen – Community Safety Patrol Officer (CSPO) – Basingstoke & Deane BC was invited but sends his apologies. Borough Councillor Karen Watts also sent her apologies.
- We congratulate Colin Phillimore on his re-election as Borough Councillor and thank Colin for his support and updates on wider issues within the 'Overton, Whitchurch and Laverstoke' ward. Also, in his the new role of Deputy Mayor for Basingstoke and Deane.
- We thank Lucia and the Bombay Sapphire team for all their hard work tidying up the area for their 'Inspirit' day and also for the 'treat' they've bought along this evening (for after the meeting)!

- We live in very special and beautiful villages and a fantastic community. We appreciate the many facilities and organisations that are part of them. It's a wide range: the community centre with the Kingfisher Centre, nursery & village hall, the Tennis club and Archers & Men's Shed. The beautiful churches, Watership Down pub and Hardy's nursery in Freefolk and the gin factory, Bombay Sapphire. The PC is pleased to have supported or been supported by many of these organisations during the year.

During the year, the PC has:

- Had a very successful celebration of the **Coronation of King Charles III** on the 3rd June 2023 Although this seems a long time ago now.....

Grants were kindly provided by Basingstoke and Deane BC and we were supported by Bombay Sapphire. We had games on the village green and photos to try to recreate the photograph from 1923 when George V visited Laverstoke Mill. We visited Bombay Sapphire and were joined by His Worshipfulness the Mayor and his wife for more photos. Thanks for all those who were able to join in the festivities and to those who gave their time to make it such a memorable day. In fact, we have just received an official photograph of King Charles III for display.

- Assisted residents in the successful application for the Watership Down Inn to be listed as an 'Asset of Community Value'. It's hoped that in securing this title, residents will continue to support the pub and the pub will benefit from increased local support.
- **The condition of the Pavilion building has been a concern and issue for the council. We have supported its use by Test Valley Men's Shed** with the financing of legally required surveys and the provision of a Porta-Loo. Since May 2022 this has cost the PC over £6000. We are pleased that the Men's Shed have been very successful with fund raising to repair the drains. The Men's Shed have been very active on social media and I know their garden trellis and birdboxes are highly sought after. We continue to work with our solicitor on preparing the draft lease for use of the Pavilion by the Test Valley Men's Shed.

- We have continued to seek an agreement with the **Whitchurch Tennis Club** to find a way forward with the unapproved lights which balances use with the interests of the Parish community. Disappointedly this has, so far, been elusive.
- Worked with the **Millennium Green Trust** to replace hedging and plant new hedges and trees after successful application by Jayne Hudson and Gill Baker to the HCC '**Shoots along the routes**' initiative. Residents of all ages worked together to plant the hedging which is already blossoming and looks fantastic.
- We are also working with the Overton Heritage Society on their Portals Heritage and Memories project. Laverstoke and Freefolk are an important part of the history of the Portals story with Laverstoke Estate, the Mill, housing and recreation. If anyone has any memories of Portals they wish to share, please let us know.
- We are delighted to see that funds have been raised to repair the roof and maintain the beautiful historic churches in our parish.

Looking to the future: What do have for the year ahead?

- Continuing to move forward with projects such as new footpaths and old walking routes. The Millennium Green trust has obtained permissive footpath agreement alongside the stream at the back of the field to reach the field gate.
- We currently have an issue with rats in the rough car park area so following professional advice, we have cleared the undergrowth to remove a 'home' and also scraped the beech nuts which are a food source. Scraping work will continue on Thursday and Friday this week. Thank you to those who have moved vehicles.
- Along with the Millennium Green Trust, there will be some tree works taking place following a recent tree survey. Gill Baker is our voluntary Tree Warden and we look forward to working with Gill and taking advantage of her experience and expertise.
- Working to secure the future of the site as there are now only 11 years left on the agreement with Portals/De La Rue.
- A challenge for the village is the sewer leak into the River Test in Freefolk. Southern Water are still having to pump out the water, which is the reason for the road works. We hope Southern Water can resolve this issue with much needed investment of the infrastructure for the sake of the river and the residents.
- Look forward to the commemoration of Bombay Sapphire's 10 year anniversary, in October

AND FINALLY:

- I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Parish Council (including David our Chair, who cannot be with us this evening). The time, commitment and expertise they volunteer to the parish is so important in keeping the wheels turning – albeit sometimes frustratingly slow. Alongside this, I am extremely thankful to Nicky who undertakes the role of Parish Clerk with great dedication and commitment.

7. Open Forum

- a. A member of the Millennium Green team reported that when recently chipping the trim trail 10 alders were lifted which are in pots awaiting replanting. It has been suggested that a good spot would be the boggy unused part of Batts Meadow and in the inside edge of the archery area rough area (orchid area). This would absorb some of the excess water. **Action:** Mill Green to ask Batt's Meadow landowner and PC to ask archers to consider.
- b. A resident expressed their interest in a book library (book swapping) for L&F. They use one in Steventon, housed in an old phone box. It would need to be waterproof and can't be inside a building. There was lots of support from the public and councillors for the idea. Ideas discussed included shelving one side of the thatch bus shelter at Manor Cottages, a box somewhere in the church yard, contacting BT for an old phonebox, amongst other suggestions. **Action:** include on June PC agenda.

The meeting was concluded and Cheese and Wine served, along with some cocktails (thanks to Bombay Sapphire).