

THE LAVANT NEWSLETTER.

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THE NEWSLETTER.

The Council has had considerable difficulty in successfully delivering the newsletter over the past few months. For a trial period of four editions (one year) it has been agreed that the newsletter be placed on the website www.lavantpc.org.uk, but with hard copies being available free at Summersdale Garage, the Churches, the Hall and both Public Houses. Those without easy access to the above or who require large print copy should contact the Clerk, any parish councillor or Cllr Eric Baldwin (01243 531171, eric@the-baldwins.net). It is planned that, during this respite, the newsletter, while still covering parish events and finances, will become readable, more informative and closer to the issues of the village and will feature your views.

INVITATION FOR TENDERS FOR MAINTENANCE OF PARISH LAND.

The PC is directly responsible for four areas of land within the village. These are:-

- 1) The Village Green and Hall Site (owned in part and the remainder leased on a peppercorn rent from Goodwood Estate). The Memorial Hall management is delegated to a separate committee.
- 2) The Allotment Site operated by the LVAA as a registered charity.
- 3) The Children’s Play Ground purchased for the village by the Lavant Recreation Fund and represented by a committee of users.
- 4) The Football Pitch (top field) is leased economically on an annual basis.

A committee has been formed by the PC, representing the specific interests of each of the users of these facilities and responsible for their continued upkeep to a standard expected by the Village.

Tenders are thus invited for the 2012 maintenance of the Village Green, the top field and the Play Area. Tender documents and detail may be obtained from the Parish Clerk and tenders should be submitted by the end of February.

The requirements within each area will vary – for instance, the Playground specification will include elements of fence and hedging maintenance and regular safety inspections. The Village Green and football pitch maintenance may separate the fieldwork from attendance to the boundaries. All details of requirements are within the tender documents. Payment would be on an incremental basis over the season.

No criticism is implied of the work done by previous operators – the grounds have always been well maintained, and those previously involved would be very welcome to submit tenders. Those tendering may use either their own or Council equipment. The belief behind this is that the process should be as open as possible and that this, a very substantial part of the Parish budget, be spent to provide that results that we want at a price that we can afford.

THE PARISH PRECEPT.

At the PC meeting held in December, Councillors resolved to keep the precept request for 2012/13 the same as in previous years. Councillors were keen to ensure that we did not request more funds than previously, so that no householder in Lavant had an increase in that element of their Council Tax bill. Although the Council are forecasting a small deficit in 2011/12, and again in 2012/13, this will be addressed by use of reserves and prudent financial management.

THE COUNCIL.

There have been several changes in the Council since the October Newsletter. Ed Austin has retired as Clerk and the Council wish to extend grateful thanks for hard work and efforts beyond the call of duty over eight years. We wish Ed a happy and peaceful retirement. Ed has been replaced by Tracy Rowe, who is working part-time from home.

Peter Sabatini has been co-opted in November as a Councillor. As a self-employed carpenter and plumber, Peter is able to bring to the Council some 20 years of experience in dealing with maintenance issues and outside contractors. A member of Lavant Cricket Club, Peter appreciates the role such clubs play in bringing together people from diverse backgrounds within a village setting. Peter is an active member of the village and is aware that there are a wide array of people and personalities who have to be considered in any decisions taken. Peter lives at Myrtle Cottage, Lavant Road, Chichester PO18 0BQ (785072, email: peter [sabatini@hotmail.com](mailto:peter_sabatini@hotmail.com)).

It is anticipated that there will be a further vacancy for a Councillor shortly. Please see information on notice boards and the website. The website www.direct.gov.uk (search for "local councillors") gives useful information about the role of a councillor.

THE MEMORIAL HALL.

The Memorial Hall committee, with the involvement of LPC, are looking at the feasibility of solar panels. The situation is ongoing with the possibility of applying for S106 Community Facility Funds. Flooding remains an issue and is being actively pursued by Tony Bleach, Cllr John Slipper, Cllr Eric Baldwin and County Cllr Mike Hall in conjunction with West Sussex CC Highways department.

SECTION 106 MONIES.

There have been several references recently to "106 money". This money is basically a levy on developers, where they pay a specific sum to the district council to allow for infrastructure improvements made necessary by the consequent population increase. In theory, much of this money is already directed to roads, education and recreational facilities before it gets anywhere near the Parish Council. There is, however, a portion of money available for the enhancement of community facilities, but there are stringent guidelines about what does or does not qualify, and it is almost necessary to check each idea or proposal with the appropriate officer at CDC. The Meadow Close development resulted in some £50000 being available for Lavant community facilities. To date the Parish Council has approved and executed the new drainage system at the Memorial Hall car park and we are currently trying to claim for the consequent resurfacing and marking over the whole area. There is probably some £30000 left and ideas for its use include some financing of solar panels for the hall, increased storage facilities at the hall and keeping a reserve in hand for supporting a new community shop. If any villager wishes to comment on this or add further suggestions, please let us know.

PLANNING.

The Council continues to be actively involved in reviewing, and commenting on, all new planning applications being submitted. Amongst many applications commented on, several major issues have arisen.

The Council issued a strong objection to the development of 20 dwellings at Hunters Rest. Key issues for objection include: the grounds that the application has been submitted subject to the CDC Interim Policy Statement on Housing which has not been subject to public consultation. Therefore LPC states that the application must be refused as premature in the absence of a statutorily required public consultation on changes to the previously approved plan. Also the application should be refused as a significant incursion into the strategic gap between Chichester and Lavant and that other more appropriate sites not subject to gap policies exist elsewhere across the district. A full copy of the letter can be accessed via the CDC website, planning applications, reference LV/11/03912/OUT or via the Clerk. LPC would like to thank Derek Kingaby, Geoffrey Claridge and Trevor Sims for their assistance.

The Council objected to the proposed development of two storey extensions to units 9,16 and 17 to create 6 additional units at Eastmead Industrial Estate. The Council objected for various reasons including: inadequate provision for the effective management of surface water; the 2 storeys are too high; the proposal to plant additional trees for screening will result in serious reduction of daylight to adjoining houses. WSCCllr Mike Hall and WSCC/CDCllr Andrew Smith supported and advised in these respects.

COMMUNITY SHOP.

Parishioners will know that a Steering Group of volunteers have been looking into whether there is interest in a community shop being established in Lavant. The Steering Group were delighted by the strong response to the survey carried out in September with 59% of homes (434 from 735) completing their questionnaire. Of those who replied, 71% felt that a community shop was important or very important for the village and the next step is to take the proposal forward.

A meeting is to be held in Lavant Memorial Hall on 25th February at 11.00am, and all Lavant residents are invited to attend. The purposes are (1) to present the key issues around setting up a community shop and (2) to elect a committee who will take the ideas forward with a view to establishing a community shop in the village. In the meantime, the Steering Group with other volunteers are addressing the following, which will be covered in the presentation at the village meeting.

- 1) A vision for what the community shop might be. The survey showed that people do not want just a shop – they would like a tearoom and a wide range of products and services including a cash point, dry cleaning and shoe repairs, an advertising board and postal services.
- 2) Options for where the shop might be located.
- 3) Funding possibilities including the availability of grants.
- 4) Formation of committee – skills and background of people needed. Without a new committee, nothing will happen and there will not be a shop in Lavant.

For more information, contact one of the Steering Group directly – Caroline Reynolds (Chair)(01243 533475), Philip Hollins, Pam Prescott, Nick Reynolds and Margaret Rhodes – or by email lavantcs@hotmail.co.uk.

PARKING PROBLEMS – MEADOW CLOSE.

Parking problems continue around the entrance to Meadow Close, which led to the recent unwelcome introduction of clamping in the village. The following information has been prepared by Cllr Peter Sabatini, in discussion with other residents attending the on-site meeting held on 5th December.

On Monday 5th December, Mid-Lavant residents of the cottages fronting the Midhurst Road met on site with County Councillor Mike Hall, Chairman of the Parish Council, Alan Dickinson and Highway Officers to consider parking problems experienced following development of Meadow Close. A representative of Affinity Sutton also joined the meeting. Affinity Sutton (owners of the Social Housing within Meadow Close) together with the private owners of houses and the developers, maintain responsibility for the private road including 4 of 7 parking spaces available to the public.

Prior to the housing development, local residents on occasions parked as many as 10 cars on the highway land alongside the former bus stop. The Meadow Close development provided 7 replacement spaces close to the entrance to the development, available to local residents and for public parking. The shortfall of parking space has been met by residents of the cottages parking on the retained areas of highway verge either side of the entrance to Meadow Close. A number of the new residents of Meadow Close have pressed the Highways Authority to install bollards to stop the parking on the highway verge. The County Council Highways officers confirmed at the meeting that the sight lines from Meadow Close to traffic on the Midhurst Road were unaffected by the cars parking on the highway verges. The safety of traffic leaving Meadow Close and on the Midhurst road was not therefore being compromised.

All parties attending agreed that the layout of the 4 “side on” parking spaces off the private road was excessively generous and could be marked out differently to allow a 5th space. The possibility of an access from the western end of the parking to the side of the rear garden of number 4 and perhaps beyond to Cottages 1-3 was raised. If this were to be allowed, the parking problems would be significantly reduced. Permission for such arrangements would rest with individual Meadow Close residents exercising a collective view as owners of the land via their Management body.

The possibility of hardening up space for perhaps 3 or 4 cars on the highway verge, whilst retaining a strip of grass on the frontage to the Midhurst road, was also considered. The Highways Officers agreed to investigate further, not just hardening up but a range from hardening to the setting up of additional bays.

The Highway Officers’ previously notified intention to install bollards to preclude parking on the highway verges adjoining the entrance to Meadow Close, would be held pending the outcome of further discussions with the Meadow Close owners and the possible retention of parking spaces on hard surfaced parts of the highway verge.

The general feeling of the meeting was that reasonable opportunities exist to provide for the additional parking spaces needed. However, the support of a majority of the residents of Meadow Close would be needed in relation to those proposals reliant on access over the private length of Meadow Close. The situation is on-going.