

Lacock Parish Council – written update May-September 2024

In May, Louise Heren and Simon Wise were appointed chair and vice chair respectively. Key areas for us to address in the forthcoming half-year to April 2025 are:

Public Consultation on pedestrian safety in Lacock. National Trust figures indicate that 250,000 tourists visit the Abbey and other amenities which sit behind their pay-barrier. From a play park survey conducted in 2022 which indicated that approx. 50% of visitors come to the village for amenities not offered by NT, we estimate that we receive tourist/visitor numbers in excess of 500,000 per annum. Additionally, there are the daily visitors who use the village's commercial premises and school. We need to address public safety in collaboration with Wiltshire Highways so that the public remains safe; our village and parishioners enjoy an environment that is not just parked cars in the village's key streets; we future-proof the village in anticipation of increasing numbers of visitors to NT property and village facilities. LHFIG may be able to help and we have sought their advice as well as Highway's advice for suggestions for immediate implementation as well as longer term interventions and improvements.

The Lacock Traffic Group (LTG) conducted a parish-wide and public survey investigating the possibility of a residents' parking scheme. Once online and paper returns were analysed, it was apparent that the majority of villagers were not in favour of a residents' parking scheme and by a wider margin neither were the majority of ad hoc visitors to Lacock. We will publish the results of the survey in our October Parish Magazine. The matter of residents' parking remains open to further suggestions for LPC to explore.

LPC assisted NT with a simple car-count over a week-long period in August, including Bank Holiday Monday, to ascertain which days and at what times of day that parked vehicle numbers were at their greatest; where streets were at capacity and where empty spaces were available; how the NT carpark was used. While the village remains free for anyone to park, residents have stickers in their cottage windows and cars which request visitors to consider that residents' have priority parking. This system is not enforceable and there is a perception on some of the village streets that visitors are taking up spaces in front of cottages that some consider should be 'residents only'. Once NT analysis of the data captured is available, LPC will work with NT to address any improvements to be made.

There is the ongoing issue of planning permission at the Carpenters' Arms which is in the press.

Revisions to lease held with NT and LPC to rescind responsibility for the play park to NT and address historical revisions to our original 1949 lease which have not been incorporated into a Deed of Surrender and Variation to date are underway. We aim for this to be completed before January 2025. The play park will remain outside NT's pay barrier, which is stipulated in the revisions to the lease and remains free to use for all parishioners and visitors.

Lastly, progress has been made with the provision of dog poo bins at Corsham Road with Green Square Accord, cleaning of the bus shelter and a new village noticeboard is forthcoming. To assist residents at Corsham Road with access to the village, the Parish Steward has dug back a section of embankment that had fallen over the public footpath. This has been completed, and Highways has also repaired the damaged Whitehall traffic lights pedestrian island barrier. Thanks to DW for persevering with this for us.

Dr Louise Heren

Chair, Lacock Parish Council – working with our community