

## WELCOME TANYA! ...



I'm Tanya West – the new Parish Council clerk. For the past 16 years I worked with town and parish councils across Somerset. I'll use that

experience to support the Parish Council and residents of Market Lavington.

Since early March, I've worked closely with Carol and look forward to working with you all to deliver a great service.

I'm a keen gardener and enjoy walks with my dog. I want to explore the public rights of way and areas of open space – so if you see me out and about, please come and say hello. And if there's anything I can help with as Parish Clerk, please get in touch. The email address remains [clerk@marketlavingtonparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@marketlavingtonparishcouncil.gov.uk). The telephone number is now **07770 679697**.

## ... & FAREWELL CAROL!

Working as Parish Clerk in Market Lavington, it's perhaps not surprising that the village has almost felt like my second home! I've met so many wonderful people – it's been a joy and privilege to have served the community!

I shall miss coming over to the village and interacting with everyone, but the time is right for me to step down and leave you in the very capable hands of Tanya.

I wish you all the very best for the future and thank you for making my time as Clerk such an enjoyable and rewarding experience!



## IF YOU BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF DEMOCRACY, THEN VOTE!!

On Thursday 1 May, we elect the members of Market Lavington Parish Council, as well as the Wiltshire Unitary Councillor for The Lavingtons (currently Cllr. Dominic Muns). What's the background?

### THE ROLE OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

- Elected parish and town councils were first established by the Local Government Act 1894. This Act removed all non-ecclesiastical functions from church parish councils and passed them to newly-established local elected bodies, which became known as 'parish councils'.
- There are 10,000 parish and town councils in England and 100,000 councillors serving in these councils. A parish councillor's role serves three main areas:
  - ★ Decision-making — Councillors decide which activities to support, where money should be spent, what services should be delivered, and what policies should be implemented by attending meetings and committees.
  - ★ Monitoring — Councillors ensure their decisions lead to efficient and effective services by monitoring how well things work.
  - ★ Getting involved locally — As local representatives, councillors have responsibilities towards constituents and local organisations.
  - ★ As well as delivering services to improve the quality of life of their residents, Parish Councils in Wiltshire work closely with Wiltshire Council to give a voice to local matters. For example, Parish Councils do not make a decision on planning applications, but they have the legal right to be consulted on a wide range of issues impacting their area, such as planning applications.

### THE ROLE OF WILTSHIRE COUNCILLORS

Wiltshire councillors' responsibilities include a massive range of services delivering both Government-driven policies as well as local, county-driven policies – including education, transport, long-term planning, housing, planning applications, recycling, fire and public safety, social care, libraries, waste management, trading standards, rubbish collection, and Council tax collections. These services are paid for from a draft 2025/26 budget of £527.42m.

## REMEMBER, REMEMBER: 1 MAY, ELECTION DAY

**YOU MUST BE REGISTERED TO VOTE (DEADLINE 11 APRIL) AND YOU MUST TAKE SOME PHOTOGRAPHIC ID WHEN YOU GO TO VOTE. YOU CAN FIND FULL DETAILS AT THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION ([www.electoralcommission.org.uk](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk)).**

# MARKET LAVINGTON PARISH UPDATE

Spring 2025 / ISSUE-2

## FRESH IDEAS & PERSPECTIVES

This issue of Market Lavington Parish Update fits the mood for Spring – getting out and about, ready for new adventures, fresh ideas, linking up with others to pursue favourite pursuits, reawakening dormant ambitions.

Overleaf, we focus on areas where volunteering is making, and will make, a core difference. One is the work being done to clear the miles of footpaths that criss-cross the Parish. Another is the opportunity to boost the Youth Council – giving young people a voice and a chance to put ideas into practice. A third is the setting up of a Flood Group – with a particular remit to cover runoff flooding on roads and from our fields.

Another important focus is volunteering of a different kind. Please check the reminder inside to **VOTE IN THE PARISH AND WILTSHIRE ELECTIONS ON 1 MAY**. If you don't vote, other people get to choose who represents you. And if you don't register in time, you may not be able to vote. Simple as that!

Finally, over the past month, Carol Hackett, our Parish Clerk since 2007, has taken retirement. We'll miss Carol's devotion to the Parish – and it's been a real pleasure to work so closely with her in the past year since I became Chair. Thank you, Carol.

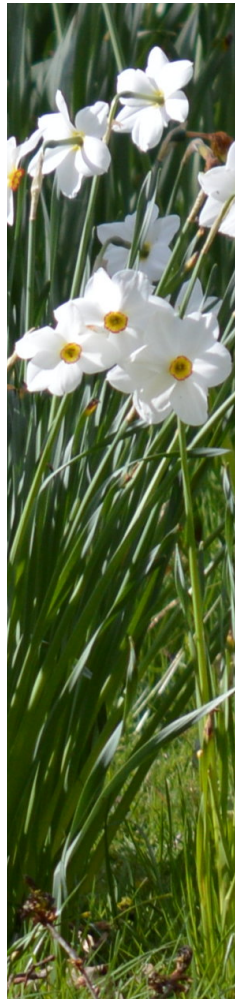
In Carol's place, we've been delighted to welcome Tanya West, who comes with a bucketful of experience working with town and parish councils across the West of England. I'm looking forward to Market Lavington benefitting from that experience!

**CHLOE STEVENS, Chair, Market Lavington Parish Council**  
[c.stevens@marketlavingtonparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:c.stevens@marketlavingtonparishcouncil.gov.uk)

### IN THIS ISSUE ...

**INSIDE: VOLUNTEERING** – One of the keys to delivering a stronger community  
**QUICK GUIDE TO THE BUDGET** — How much will the PC spend this year ?

**BACK PAGE:** Do you believe in the power of democracy ? Then vote!!





# “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world: indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead, anthropologist and humanitarian

In Market Lavington we are fortunate in having a strong body of people who have found the time and energy to get involved. Support for the Museum, the Library, the Gardening Club, the Community Hall, the Friends of Canada Woods, the Neighbourhood Plan, sports and other groups is the lifeblood of what makes Market Lavington such a special place. In this issue of the Parish Update, we focus on two timely examples – and raise the lid on another area in need of support.

### WHOSE RIGHTS? THE FOOTPATHS GROUP HAS A CLEAR AMBITION

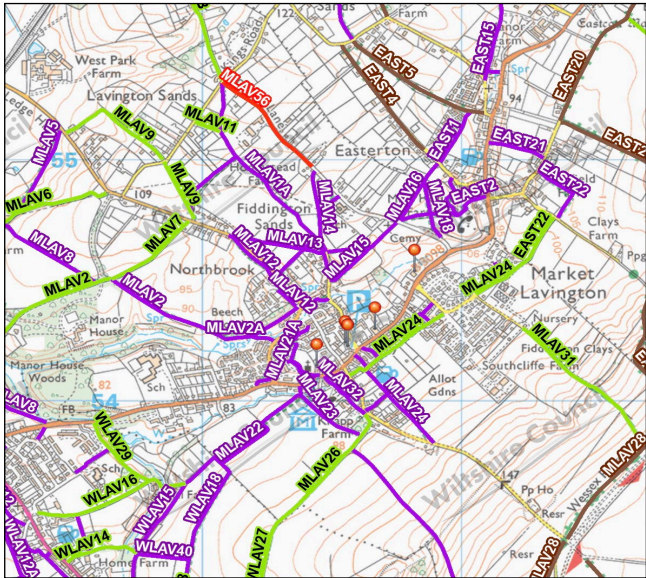
Market Lavington is criss-crossed by some 50 rights of way – footpaths, tracks and bridleways that anyone can use to cross private land. The map below shows the closest ones set out in purple, green and red. Rights of way exist in towns, villages and the countryside and you have a legal right to use them at any time of the day or night, all year round.

But they need looking after if they’re not to become overgrown and impassible, particularly at this time of year.

Last August a small group of four began the task. Today there are 16 stalwarts clearing pathways so we can all use them to get around the Parish and further afield.

There are core priorities: one is to create a network of paths in and around the village that are usable all year – trimmed, drained and with all-weather surfaces – particularly aimed at providing children with a safe, alternative route to school.

In the more immediate future, there are early plans to create a set of walking maps, linking historic and key areas to provide an enjoyable way of exploring our countryside and learning more about our long and eventful history. If you’re interested in joining the Footpaths Group, get in touch through [clerk@marketlavingtonparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@marketlavingtonparishcouncil.gov.uk).



Find this map on Wiltshire Council’s website: <http://bit.ly/4bWRlrl>.

### IT’S THEIR FUTURE – AND THEY’RE USUALLY THE BEST ADVOCATES!

The Market Lavington Youth Council was set up under the auspices of the Parish Council a couple of years ago, with two core objectives:

- To give young people a voice within the Parish Council to push forward ideas for facilities and activities in the village.
- To give them an opportunity to discuss wider ideas, opinions and views about the village, and where necessary research and fundraise for resources.

Membership is open to any young person aged between 10 and 16 years who lives or goes to school in the Parish.

The Chair of the Parish Council, Chloe Stevens, is a strong supporter: “If we want young people to respect the village, we should in turn respect them, and give them a voice. After all, they are the future of the village and we have a duty of care for that future”.

Jane Taylor, who has been involved from the outset and has represented the Youth Council on the Parish Council from the beginning, highlights some of their actions, such as ensuring no smoking in children’s play areas and raising £300 to provide a litter bin at Lavington School gates. They’ve also suggested getting together groups to provide a Spring clean for the village!

The Youth Council is a great resource that deserves our support and is always eager to get more recruits. Interested? Contact [clerk@marketlavingtonparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@marketlavingtonparishcouncil.gov.uk).

### WE ALL NEED TO BE PREPARED FOR A GREATER RISK OF FLOODING

Finally, the Parish Council wants to set up a Flood Action Group to understand flood risks and help our community become more flood resilient. The Group can work with key agencies to manage the risk of flooding, preparing a community flood plan.

A flood action group would be made up of local residents and Parish councillors with the Parish Council’s backing. They would focus on flood resilience, warning and informing and emergency planning, looking out for vulnerable members of the community in the event of flooding and building relationships with key agencies.

They could also tackle issues such as blocked drains, while providing a voice for the community to communicate flood-related ideas and queries to the Parish Council or other appropriate organisations to resolve.

Flooding will affect us all so your actions can go a long way to building a safer and more prepared village. More info from [clerk@marketlavingtonparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@marketlavingtonparishcouncil.gov.uk).

## WHERE DOES MY MONEY GO?

We’ve all just received our 2025-26 Council Tax bill. While most of the charge is from Wiltshire Council, it also includes the ‘precept’, the amount charged by the Parish Council.

### So what is the precept, what is the Parish Council budget and what is it spent on?

The precept is the amount the Parish requires Wiltshire Council to add to the Council Tax to cover its budget.

This year the Parish Council has increased the precept by 7.53%. For the average ‘Band D’ property the new figure is £104.23 (£2 a week).

The Parish Council expects to receive £80,132 in 2025/26 from the precept. It also receives income by hiring out the Old School and Elisha Field plus a small amount of bank interest.

The total income expected for 2025-26 is £84,444. The total budgeted spend is £94,957. The biggest elements are staff costs and repayments to the Public Works Loan Board, for a long-term loan taken out in 2018 for the Old School Restoration Project.

- There also extra costs across the board:
- an increase in the hours required of the Parish Clerk, plus recent higher NI costs.
  - the need to replace/ upgrade operational items, such as the village defibrillators.
  - expenses relating to the local elections need to be budgeted in case Wiltshire Council passes them back to the Parish Council.
  - general cost increases on everything from utilities to maintenance and essential contractor costs.

While every effort is made to keep costs in check, the balance between receipts and payments is covered by a Will Legacy Fund, granted to keep the village neat and tidy.