

ONE HOUR OF RAIN ...

We were all happy to celebrate this year's dry and sunny Spring and the Summer's looking good too ... but sure as eggs is eggs, a downpour is always on the cards. And, of course, we needed the rain.

BUT it seems one consequence of climate change is that we get heavier rainfalls – more rain falling more quickly. And unless the street drains are clear and empty, that quickly leads to flooded streets.



This was Parsonage Lane after an hour's hard rain on 12 June – and we know that will happen again on this and other roads.

Of course, Wiltshire Council is responsible for the drains but they can't be everywhere, so the Parish Council is keen to find an action team who would be prepared to keep drains clear to avoid future random floodings. Any takers? If so, please contact the Parish Clerk!

CAN YOU HELP?

One of the Parish Council's themes for the year is accessibility to pathways and open spaces, not just for those in wheelchairs or using pushchairs, but also people with reduced mobility and balance limitations who still want to get out and about. Can you help make this happen? If so, **please contact the Parish Clerk** ... Thank you!

"PEOPLE LIKE YOU MAKE IT ALL WORK, FOR EVERYONE!"

Every May, the Parish Council reports on its work over the past year at the Annual Parish Meeting. On 20 May, Chair Chloe Stevens included an update on **Working Groups**. They installed static cardio and callisthenics fitness equipment in The Elisha Field, made progress with the Canada Woods and Community Park scheme and completed brilliant work in clearing footpaths, byways and rights of way.

"None of this would be possible without the help and commitment of volunteers," commented Chloe Stevens. "Thanks to my colleagues on the Parish Council, all of whom are volunteers ... to the volunteers who make time to attend meetings. Or who wield forks, spades, carry leaflets or put on their wellies, whatever is called for, for various projects. We could not do any of what we do without your support".

THIS IS WHAT WE DID ...

The Meeting was also an opportunity for community groups to present their own achievements and ambitions. They included the **Lavington Guides and Rangers** – celebrating their 50th anniversary this year and planning a summer camp to celebrate. The **Youth Council** highlighted a fundraising treasure hunt and undertaking a spring clean of the village at the end of March this year. They have also had sessions with the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and are working on recruiting new members.

The **Tuesday Club** is a village-based charity providing weekly day care facilities for elderly and/or infirm local residents. Meeting for lunch and entertainment every Tuesday at the Community Hall, the group provides mental and physical stimulation, the opportunity to meet friends and neighbours, helps to combat loneliness and gives some respite care.

... AND THE CHURCH BELLS ARE RINGING AGAIN!!

St Mary's Church has started a programme of maintenance including new heating and repairs to the leaking roof. The Church is also working with the museum to display some artefacts. It is acknowledged that the church needs to remain open, not only for religious purposes but because it is a significant part of the village and offers space for quiet time. It is hoped a new Rector will be appointed in Spring 2026.

Other groups who gave presentations were the **Rights of Way Working Group**, the **Museum**, the **West Lavington Youth Club** (which also covers Market Lavington), and the **Market Lavington Neighbourhood Plan 2 Steering Group**. A full report of the meeting on 20 May can be found on the Parish Council website.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON ANY OF THESE STORIES, PLEASE CONTACT PARISH CLERK TANYA WEST: 07770 679697 / clerk@marketlavingtonparishcouncil.gov.uk

MARKET LAVINGTON PARISH UPDATE

Summer 2025 / ISSUE-3

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

I'm massively grateful to have been given the opportunity of being Chair of the Parish Council for another year. It's a great privilege to be asked to provide leadership as we navigate our way through so many challenges – but most of all, through an equal or greater number of opportunities to enrich our lives and those of others across this fantastic village community.

In this issue of the Parish Update, we focus on three elements: first, the exciting long-term plan for Canada Woods and Community Park – as a biodiversity-rich landscape and one that provides lots of opportunities for play just as much as for mindful moments.

Second, news that we are exploring how we can resolve some of the pressing issues relating to how we move around the village both as pedestrians and drivers, thanks to active support from the developer of the land at The Spring.

And third, a tip of the cap to the scores of volunteers who support and run Parish Council Working Groups and the numerous community groups.

There is much we want to achieve as a Parish Council in the years ahead and we know that there is a growing understanding across the village that individual support and practical help can make all the difference.

Have a great summer and never be shy of getting involved!

CHLOE STEVENS, Chair, Market Lavington Parish Council
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IN THIS ISSUE ...

INSIDE: CANADA WOODS — A woodland, park & play area fit for a bear

BACK PAGE: "People like you make it all work, for everyone!"

A WOODLAND, PARK & PLAY AREA FIT FOR A BEAR ...

We're all aware of the need to look after our natural environment, to encourage diversity and to recognise the importance of nature for our own well-being. The benefits are tangible and real. In the 2021 Neighbourhood Plan, one of nine community actions proposed was enhancement and protection of natural assets. This included caring for green spaces, trees, hedgerows and wildlife. Together with ongoing work looking after our network of public footpaths (see issue 2), the **Canada Woods and Community Park Community Group** was formed in 2023 and is a key part of the Parish Council's determination to deliver.



Most people in the village probably know of the link between Market Lavington and Winnie the Pooh – the fact that in 1914 a Canadian soldier called Harry Colebourn rescued a small brown bear from a trapper in Canada on his way over to England early in the 1914-18 World War. The bear became the unofficial mascot of the troops as they camped on Salisbury Plain (with the artillery spread out between Market Lavington, Rushall and Devizes). Doubtless the bear and the soldiers would have known the wooded slopes surrounding Market Lavington.

Sent to war in 1915, Harry Colebourn asked London Zoo to care for the bear. With a gentle temperament, he rapidly became such a favourite with keepers and public alike that on returning from the war, Harry Colebourn invited the zoo to keep him.

One young boy made frequent visits with his father and developed a very close relationship with the bear. The soldier had called the bear Winnie (after his home city in Canada, Winnipeg). The child was Christopher Robin Milne.

REMEMBRANCE OF TIMES PAST

The links forged with Canadian troops in the First World War – and the link with Harry Colebourn and his bear – are remembered in Canada Rise and CANADA WOODS.

The Woods include a couple of hectares of oak, sycamore, beech, ash, elm, willow, alder and hazel. Starting from a spring in Easterton, Easterton Brook flows through to Semington Brook and joins the Bristol River Avon at Whaddon, five miles upstream of Bradford-on-Avon. There is also an area of grassland beside the Woods, now defined as a COMMUNITY PARK.

MARKET LAVINGTON PARISH COUNCIL TAKES ON OWNERSHIP

The Parish Council acquired Canada Woods from Wiltshire Council in the early 2000s. In December 2021, following the annual woodland inspection, it was decided Canada Woods was in desperate need of a programme of management to provide more sunlight and nourishment both for trees, woodland shrubs, wild flowers and wildlife.

In early 2023, the Parish Council received funding from the national lottery for a new pedestrian access to the river and riverbank repairs.

Cllr Di Fraser led the project from the outset, liaising with a highly qualified consultant and by obtaining a felling licence from the Forestry Commission: "At the outset, the Wood needed thinning, to give more light to the woodland floor and allow an understory to grow for biodiversity and the return of diversity of wildlife. The result has been dramatic, particularly in the Spring, with carpets of snowdrops and bluebells, more birds and new plants coming through".

CORE AIMS AND A FULLY CONSTITUTED COMMUNITY GROUP

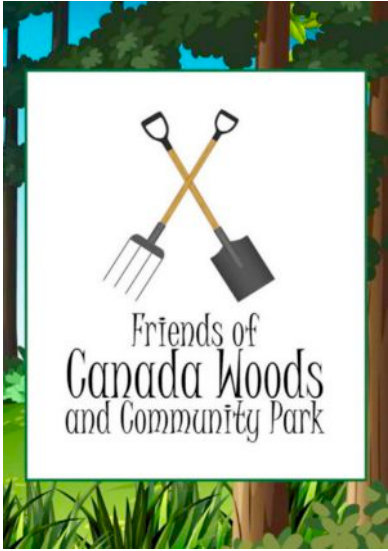
The initial project in 2021 had five core aims: regeneration, accessibility, community space, usability for school, and community projects – while also providing a positive response to the pandemic. Community engagement resulted in wide ranging ideas, including: upgrading access, a wildflower meadow, a community orchard, community events, educational facilities for use by local schools and natural play equipment.

In November 2023, a formally constituted Community Group was formed and an additional core aim was added – to engage a volunteer network for ongoing woodland and land management, working alongside the Parish Council.

Today, the community orchard is established, with apple, plum, pear, cherry and greengage growing apace. The Community Group aims to raise funds to enhance the landscape for everyone – an exercise for improvements that would be outside the general maintenance and repair schedule of the Parish Council but has their support as landowners.

At the same time, some of the volunteers are undertaking specialist training, while all are willing to take on the challenge of enhancing and maintaining Canada Woods and Community Park for future generations to enjoy.

For further information, go to www.friendsofcanadawoods.co.uk. To become a volunteer – or to be involved in any of the Community Group's projects – please send an email to cwcpcommunitygroup@outlook.com.



BALANCING PEOPLE & CARS

A key task facing the Parish Council is to improve the safety of people as they move around Market Lavington – as well managing traffic, particularly through the centre of the village. The importance of this was underlined in the recent community survey for the Neighbourhood Plan.

With more homes inevitably being built in the years ahead, the Parish Council is keen to work with developers both to explore and introduce solutions to new and existing challenges, and to seek financial contributions to costs.

Feltham Properties is set to develop the site off the Spring and they are working with the Co-op for the new store. The Parish Council has met with Feltham Properties and their transport planning and infrastructure advisers, Motion Consultants, to explore several issues and how they might be resolved, including:

- narrow pinch points through the village,
- the absence of a pedestrian only pavement along Parsonage Lane, lack of visibility, and bank slippage,
- narrow pavements elsewhere in the village,
- potential for a new pedestrian crossing to connect the school to the proposed Co-op store at the Spring,
- Retention of a central community hub when the Co-op relocates, to preserve the village's sense of place.

Motion has considerable experience in working with village communities. The first stage is now under way, paid for by the developers but with the full involvement of the Parish Council – identifying where conflicts and safety issues impact both people and traffic. This will provide the evidence to support improvement proposals.