AN OPEN LETTER TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF MARKET LAVINGTON

Something important is at risk, and we want to work with you to protect it.

Following police advice, we have to consider closing the youth shelter at the Community Hall. Recent incidents around the shelter involving damage, broken glass, and poor behaviour by a small number of young people have troubled local residents and puts the future of the shelter in question. But it's the last thing anyone at the Community Hall or the Parish Council wants to see happen.

Most young people in Market Lavington are respectful, thoughtful, and simply want somewhere to spend time with friends. You deserve spaces where you feel welcome, safe, and included. We want to help provide that and we are committed to supporting you.

CAN YOU HELP DRIVE CHANGE?

We want to create opportunities across the village—from improved seating and shelters to sports equipment and even skate facilities. But this takes time, investment, and trust from the wider community.

You *can* help lead that change—so we want to hear from you. What would you like to see? What would make a space feel like it truly belongs to you? How can we work together to ensure it works for everyone?

This is your village, and your voice matters. If you care about spaces for young people now and in the future, please talk to us. Share your ideas. Send me an email, and help us show what's possible when we work together.

Cllr CHLOE STEVENS
Chair, Market Lavington Parish Council
c.stevens@marketlavingtonparishcouncil.gov.uk

MADE BY OUR PAST, NOW ENRICHING OUR FUTURE

Much is heard about "community engagement". Sounds simple, but what do we mean by the phrase? Many will know the comment attributed to the US anthropologist Margaret Mead: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

At the Annual Parish meeting on 13 April, some 70 parishioners came along, not only to hear reports from the Parish Council about its work over the past year, but also to hear from those representing a wide range of community groups – groups that provide opportunities for people of all ages in the village to meet and enjoy others' company, learn new crafts, exchange ideas – maybe even change the world!

A COMMUNITY OF COMMUNITIES

We are fortunate in Market Lavington in having what amounts to a community of communities. For example:

- The 'custodian' of our past, and perhaps guide to our future, is the **Museum** – and a packed Community Hall was treated on 24 April once again to hear a feast of stories about the village at the Museum Miscellany. There is so much to learn from the Museum about our history and those who lived here over the centuries. It's now open Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday afternoons through to the end of October.
- Meanwhile, the widely popular **Retro Relics Games Café** in Woodlands Yard, started by the present owners back in 2024, has built a community of all ages with its focus on board games, specialty coffee and award-winning cakes. From "Toddler Groups" to "OAP drop-ins", "Tea & Hope Crochet" and" Family Game Day", there is pretty much something for everyone.
- When Trinity Church decided to sell their church building and move to the Community Hall in 2012, they were determined to continue their legacy of community work. The result was **St Arbucks Café**, at the junction of White Street and Church Street. Open since 2013, the café has become a firm favourite for people across the village and is seen by Trinity "as a practical way that Trinity Church along with St Mary's and St Joseph's can be of service to our community".

THESE EXAMPLES

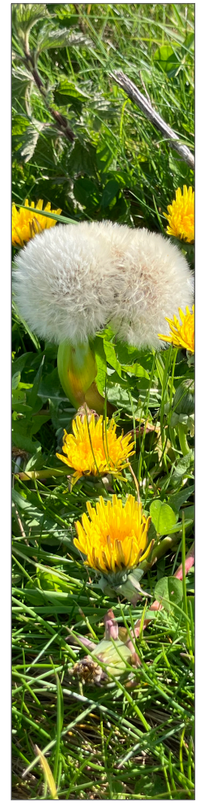
These are just three examples of strong community-based ventures. Another time we'll explore the thriving mix of community groups and events that also help define us, bind us together – and offer an opportunity to broaden our interests and friendships.

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

MARKET LAVINGTON PARISH UPDATE

Spring/Summer 2026 / ISSUE-6

THE FUTURE **IS** BRIGHT!



Despite so many uncertainties across the world around us, as the sights and sounds of Spring and early Summer settle across Market Lavington, there's a real sense of energy in our community.

I'm sure I'm not alone in finding that longer days and brighter mornings seem to bring fresh momentum — and it's wonderful to see so many people out and about, enjoying our shared spaces and getting involved in local life again.

This was evident from our inspirational Annual Parish Meeting on 13 April, when a packed Old School heard updates from a wide range of community groups across all age groups and interests.

Looking ahead, there is much to be positive about. A number of projects are taking shape, each aimed at strengthening our village, supporting residents, and creating opportunities for people of all ages to connect.

From improvements to local facilities to upcoming events and initiatives, the Parish Council remains committed to working alongside residents to ensure our community continues to thrive for the benefit and happiness of everyone!

As always, your ideas, feedback, and involvement play a vital role, and we look forward to what we can achieve together in the months ahead. In the meantime, please don't hesitate to contact either myself or our Clerk, Tanya West (details on the back page) with any questions or comments.

CHLOE STEVENS, Chair, Market Lavington Parish Council
c.stevens@marketlavingtonparishcouncil.gov.uk.

IN THIS ISSUE …

INSIDE: Making sense of budgets and projects — a quick guide.
ALSO: Made by our past, now enriching our future

MAKING SENSE OF BUDGETS & PROJECTS

What exactly is the role of a Parish Council? How much does it cost householders? What vision does it have for the future of the Parish? With the Annual Meeting of our Parish Council taking place in mid-May, it's a good time to explain what the Council does, how it's funded and how it's looking forward to the future.

WHAT DOES THE PARISH COUNCIL DO?

The Parish Council has three core tasks:

1. Representing the community

The Parish Council:

- speaks on behalf of residents,
- is legally entitled to comment on all planning applications in the Parish,
- raises local concerns with higher authorities such as Wiltshire Council,
- helps shape how the Parish develops in future years.

2. Delivering and maintaining local services

The Parish Council supports services such as:

- Play areas (e.g. Broadwell, Elisha Field),
- Local events, youth activities and community groups,
- Public benches, bins and noticeboards,
- The Old School,
- Some footpaths and open spaces.

3. Improving local wellbeing

The Parish Council has the authority to lead or support projects involving:

- Traffic calming and road safety
- Biodiversity and tree planting
- Climate and sustainability initiatives
- Heritage and conservation
- Community resilience and emergency planning.

The Parish Council also has the authority to employ staff, own land and assets, co-ordinate grants and partnerships for local improvements, and raise money through the parish precept, which forms part of Council Tax (see below).

HOW MUCH DOES THE PARISH COUNCIL RAISE?

For the year April 2026–March 2027, the Parish Council has agreed a budget of £98,679. Most of that is raised from the precept, which forms part of the Council Tax we pay to Wiltshire Council.

Wiltshire's Council Tax has four components. Most goes to pay for Wiltshire Council's own services, but also includes the 'precept' – the amount set by the Parish Council – and the running costs for the fire & rescue and police & crime organisations.



For 2026–27, the total Council Tax payable on an average-sized Band D property is £2,489.36. Smaller properties pay less and and larger properties pay more. For a Band D property, the amount going to the Parish Council is £112.99 for the year, or just £2.17 per week.

For the 2026–27 Parish Council budget of £98,679, the precept delivers £87,288. The balance comes principally from a proportion of a planning charge made by Wiltshire Council on new development (the community infrastructure levy) totalling £7,000, and income from users of The Old School. A recent one-off legacy from a former resident of the village has also been placed in the Reserves held by the Council.

WHAT DOES THE PARISH COUNCIL SPEND THIS ON?

On the spending side, the 2026–27 budget is set at £81,830 – plus £23,949 placed in the Reserves account for future projects (see below).

Two-thirds of the budget covers a wide range of administration costs. They include the salary of the part-time Clerk (Tanya West), as well as the Council's part-time handyman and a range of required costs from insurance to audit fees and technology equipment.

Also included are repayment costs to the Public Works Loan Board, a Government body that lends money to Councils over long periods (up to 50 years) at fixed relatively low interest rates for new infrastructure and capital projects. The loans were taken out many years ago to support the restoration of the Old School, used by community groups and the library. The annual repayments are £12,965 with one loan completing in 2029 and the other in 2043.

Other costs cover the administration and running of The Old School (owned by the Parish Council) and for the care of a range of public areas, such as footpaths, the playgrounds, Elisha Field and care of trees in public spaces (e.g. Canada Woods).

WHAT ABOUT FUTURE PROJECTS?

The Parish Council has the authority and capability to undertake a wide range of projects designed to enhance the daily lives of everyone in the village, no matter how young or old.

But resources and funds are, as always, limited. So care needs to be taken to push forward with ideas that can be implemented quickly and effectively, just as much as bigger, more ambitious proposals that need exploring, nurturing and carefully managing when it comes to implementation. Underpinning every project must be public understanding, acknowledgment and support.

The Parish Council is preparing a list of short, medium and long-term projects, extending to some 40 ideas (see column right). They vary from improvements to public areas to potential opportunities for significant new outdoor leisure facilities.

In future editions of this newsletter, we'll be sure to headline progress and explain how parishioners can get involved. They will be projects to enrich all our lives.

WE WANT TO HEAR YOUR IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE OF ML

We've talked (left) about the list of some 40 potential projects that are being discussed by the Parish Council. Some can be done relatively easily and quickly. Others will take long-term planning and funding. Some examples:

SHORT TERM:

- Information board for Canada Woods.
- Repairs to the Old School.
- Remembrance Day knitted poppy display (see Update Winter issue no. 5).
- Repairs and improvements on Elisha Field.

MEDIUM TERM:

- Launch of the new neighbourhood development plan for the village.
- New entrance signs to the village.
- Resurfacing and enhancement of Broadwell car park & play area.
- Review and improved signage on all public footpaths, with access upgrades wherever possible.

LONGER TERM:

- Traffic calming and highway infrastructure improvements focused on Church/High Streets + scoping of potential extra parking.
- Various projects related to Canada Woods, including how it can help flood management.
- Youth provision, possibly including climbing wall, skate park etc.

We are open to ideas from everyone in the village, from small, quick wins to longer-term ambitions. They need to be practical and achievable, to the benefit of the village as a whole. Send your ideas to the Parish Clerk, Tanya West, at the email address overleaf. We'll report back in future issues of this newsletter.