

LYDIARD MILLICENT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
5 March 2026
held at the Jubilee Club House, Lydiard Millicent
at 19:02 hrs

Councillors Present:

S Westwood, Chairman	S Hill-Wheeler	J Neighbour
M Allsop, Vice Chairman	L Roberts	R Selwood

Others in Attendance: 3 members of the public and Wiltshire Councillor Andrew Matthews

Meeting Clerk: Hayley Graham

Public Question Time:

- A resident asked why Hook Street was closed for 3 days but did not appear to have any works carried out. Wiltshire Councillor Matthews confirmed Thames Water requested the closure for emergency works.

Councillor Question Time:

- Councillor Selwood raised the high quantity of potholes around the parish. Many have been reported and repairs are starting to be carried out; the deep pothole before the traffic chicane at the bottom of The Street has been temporarily repaired today.

MINUTES

25.185 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were RECEIVED from Councillors Bamsey, Coffey and Sprules.

25.186 Declarations of Interest and Dispensation Requests

No declarations of interest were made and no dispensation requests were received.

25.187 Chairman's Announcements

Following the resignation of Councillor Cole, it is anticipated that another vacancy to join the Parish Council will shortly be available which will be advertised in due course. Thanks were given to Councillor Cole for all his work for the Council, in particular his ongoing work on the Neighbourhood Plan.

25.188 Minutes

Members CONSIDERED the minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 5 February 2026. The minutes of the meeting were ADOPTED as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

25.189 Co-Option of New Councillor

Members CONSIDERED applications from two candidates. Both candidates were proposed and seconded before the matter was put to the vote. By majority, Members RESOLVED that Glyn Griffiths be co-opted onto the Parish Council with immediate effect. The Declaration of Acceptance of Office was signed by the newly elected Councillor and witnessed by the Clerk, and the Chairman invited Councillor Griffiths to join the meeting.

25.190 Wiltshire Councillor Update

Wiltshire Council's budget has been set for 2026/2027 with an increase of 4.99%. No appeal to the application to develop land at Meadow Springs has been received to date. A motorway service rest area at Junction 16 has been given outline planning permission. Residents are encouraged to continue reporting potholes on the MyWilts portal. The MyWilts app is currently being reviewed to see what improvements can be made. Councillor Westwood highlighted that at an Area Board about a year ago, she suggested that Parish Councils should be able to access information from MyWilts reports for their parish. This followed a situation where residents were asked to report any flooding issues via MyWilts and then they had to report it separately to the Parish Council to allow us to collate flooding information. This was seen as a good idea at the time, but nothing has come of the suggestion. Wiltshire Councillor Andrew Matthews will take the question away to explore. Wiltshire Councillor

Matthews confirmed that the government inspectors have indicated that the draft Wiltshire Local Plan will be rejected if it is not withdrawn, which will leave Wiltshire vulnerable to development.

25.191 Financial Accounts

- a. Members NOTED the Payments List reference "Finance Report 5 March 2026 – Expenditure" attached as Appendix 7a in the amount of £5,816.98 (ex. VAT).
- b. Members APPROVED payments reference "Finance Report 5 March 2026 – Payments for Approval" attached as Appendix 7a in the amount of £1,710.07 (ex. VAT).
- c. Members NOTED the Income Report to 31 January 2026 reference "Finance Report 5 March 2026 – Income Summary" attached as Appendix 7a in the amount of £97,595.10.
- d. Members APPROVED the Cash and Investment Reconciliation statement for the Unity Trust Bank as at 31 January 2026 with a closing balance of £18,173.34.
- e. Members APPROVED the Bank Statement for the Unity Trust Bank as at 31 January 2026 with a closing balance of £18,173.34.
- f. Members APPROVED the Cash and Investment Reconciliation statement for the Public Sector Deposit Fund as at 31 January 2026 with a closing balance of £72,239.93.
- g. Members APPROVED the Statement of Account for the Public Sector Deposit fund as at 31 January 2026 with a closing balance of £72,239.93.
- h. Members APPROVED the Cash and Investment Reconciliation statement for the Lloyds Charge Card as at 31 January 2026 with a closing balance of £0.00.
- i. Members APPROVED the Charge Card statement for the Lloyds Charge Card as at 29 December 2025 with a closing balance of £66.94.
- j. Members APPROVED a maximum expenditure of £150.00 (one hundred and fifty pounds) (ex. VAT) to purchase materials required for the Handyman to repair the fence at the back boundary of the cemetery. Costs to be met from General Reserves.
- k. Members APPROVED a maximum expenditure of £200.00 (two hundred pounds) (ex. VAT) to print 700 parish newsletters. Costs to be met from the advertising / parish newsletter budget line.

Planning Applications

Members RECEIVED a report from Planning Group B.

25.192a	Application: PL/2026/00632 – Householder Planning Permission Applicant: Mr/Mrs Haywood Address: 4 Cherry Brier Close, Lydiard Millicent, SN5 3NT Closing Date: 5 March Proposal: Proposed single storey rear extension	
	Members RESOLVED to make NO COMMENT	
25.192b	Application: PL/2026/00897 – Full Planning Permission Applicant: Mr Morse Address: Brick Yard at Greatfield Farm, Greatfield, SN4 8EQ Closing Date: 26 March Proposal: Change of use from Agricultural to Commercial storage/office space	
	Members RESOLVED to make NO COMMENT	
25.192c	Members NOTED the following Wiltshire Council decisions:	
25.192d	Application: PL/2025/09798 – Householder Planning Permission Applicant: Mr/Mrs Richardson Address: 30 The Beeches, Lydiard Millicent, SN5 3LT Proposal: Proposed Single Storey Rear, Kitchen Side & Garage Side Extension WC Approved with Conditions	
	Application: PL/2025/09811 – Householder Planning Permission Applicant: Mr Thomas Address: Johannes Close, Lydiard Green, Lydiard Millicent, SN5 3LP Proposal: Proposed demolition of existing garages and erection of single-storey side and rear extensions WC Approved with Conditions	
25.192e	Application: PL/2025/02189 – Outline planning permission: All matters reserved Applicant: Mr/Mrs Hornby Address: Lydiard Farm, The Street, Lydiard Millicent, SN5 3LU Proposal: 1No new build, two storey infill dwelling - with accompanying detached garage WC Approved with Conditions	

25.193 **Clerk's Report**

Members NOTED the report and RESOLVED to close the following items:

25.142 – Jubilee Club House springer replacement

PQT 5 February - Greenhill crossroads

PQT 5 February – Greatfield road sweeper

25.174 – Communications (mobile network “not-spot” reporting)

In relation to 23.204 – trees for planting at Lydiard Green, the Footpath Working Party have confirmed that any of the species options suggested would be acceptable. Councillor Allsop will confirm to the Clerk which species are to be ordered.

25.194 **Communications**

Members NOTED the communication. The Clerk advised that since papers were published, Business Waste have agreed to freeze waste collection prices for 12 months and that the increase will no longer be applied.

25.195 **Training and Development Policy**

Members ADOPTED the Training and Development policy as presented.

25.196 **General Reserves Policy**

Members ADOPTED the updated General Reserves policy as presented.

25.197 **Blue Kite Academy Trust – School Signage Request**

Members NOTED the report and CONSIDERED the request. Councillors were concerned that the addition of road signage would encourage additional traffic along The Butts, exacerbating an existing issue, particularly at school pick up / drop off time. After discussions, Members RESOLVED to respond to Blue Kite to confirm that whilst the Council is supportive of increasing awareness of the school and preschool, additional signage is not a preferred method. In addition, the Council encourage Blue Kite to explore the development of a School Travel Plan in order for the school to be eligible for inclusion in Wiltshire Council's Taking Action on School Journeys (TAOSJ) initiative.

25.198 **Jubilee Club House Booking Terms and Conditions**

Members APPROVED the updated booking terms and conditions for the Jubilee Club House.

25.199 **Common Platt Defibrillator**

Members NOTED the report and RECEIVED an update from the Clerk. Due to staffing issues at the grant awarding body, it is not yet known if the Council's grant application has been successful.

After discussions, Members RESOLVED that the Clerk should correspond with Toomers to establish if the Council could assist in bringing their existing defibrillator into working order.

Local Highway and Footway Improvement Group (LHFIG) Representative

25.200a Members APPOINTED Councillor Griffiths to represent the Council at LHFIG.

25.200b Members NOTED the output from the meeting held on 11 February. Next meeting on 13 May. It was highlighted that the Council's LHFIG priorities for 2026/2027 would soon need to be set. It was suggested that the responses from the household survey carried out earlier in the year could be reviewed to establish any common themes for consideration.

Data Protection

25.201a Members NOTED the report.

25.201b Members NOTED the data audit. The Clerk confirmed the following changes would be made:

Row 32 – administration. Retention period for contact details to be amended to a minimum of 2 years.

Row 39 – meeting agendas. Processing purpose for member contact details to be amended to “meeting agendas and minutes”, and the retention period to be amended to indefinite.

25.201c Members ADOPTED the updated Data Protection policy as presented.

25.201d Members ADOPTED the Privacy policy.

- 25.201e Members ADOPTED the updated Document Retention policy subject to the following amendments:
- addition of Neighbourhood Plan documents and correspondence to be held for a minimum of 6 years for management purposes, to be destroyed once no longer of use.
 - to amend the final sentence to read: Councillors will review their email accounts annually in line with the retention periods in this policy

Cemetery Regulations

- 25.202 Members ADOPTED the updated cemetery regulations as presented.

Safety Concerns – School Traffic and Parking

- 25.203a Members NOTED the correspondence. Standing Orders were SUSPENDED for public comment and REINSTATED before Members discussed further. Members AGREED to ask
25.203b a Member to represent the Council at a forthcoming meeting to discuss the issue (date to be
25.203c confirmed), and to offer the Jubilee Club House as the meeting venue.

Government Consultation on the National Planning Policy Framework

- 25.204 Members NOTED the correspondence and AGREED that due to the short timeframe that a formal response would not be submitted.

Council and Community Representatives

- 25.205 Members RECEIVED the following updates:

Area Board – Councillor Allsop

Funding has been agreed for the Wiltshire Connect minibus service covering Royal Wootton Bassett, Malmesbury and surrounding areas. Its an on-demand service booked via phone or app running Monday-Saturday.

Philip Wilkinson, Wiltshire Police and Crime Commissioner shared that there were 40k crimes reported in Wiltshire in the last year, the lowest of any county but the force continues to be the second-lowest funded in the country.

Community Carers Group – Councillor Hill-Wheeler

Next meeting on 11 March.

Parish Hall – Councillor Neighbour

An extraordinary meeting took place this week to discuss the hall's financial position. Events coming up are: 21 March – Murder Mystery, 28 March – Bingo and 18 April – Wine Tasting, Village Fete - 4 July. The Annual General Meeting will take place in June.

Speed Indication Devices (SID) – Councillors Coffey and Neighbour

Suspected issue with data being captured from the SIDs at Common Platt. The Handyman will swap the positions of the 2 SIDs to establish if the issue remains.

Neighbourhood Plan – Councillor Allsop

Last meeting held on 18 February, where proposals were put forward for non-designated heritage assets, local green spaces and key views. Next meeting on 18 March.

- 25.206 **Exclusion of the Public and Press**

Members RESOLVED that the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the items in Part 2 of the Agenda. This is due to the confidential nature of the items being considered, under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

2 members of the public and Wiltshire Councillor Andrew Matthews left the meeting.

- 25.207 **Land Matters**

Members NOTED the draft license and after discussions, proposed to issue to the prospective licensee with no amendments.

Meeting Closed at 20.59hrs

Finance Report 2 April 2026**Item 7a****EXPENDITURE**

Supplier	Invoice Number	Date	Description	Net	VAT	Total	Paid	Method
Battery Shop	n/a	27 Jan 26	Batteries for Emergency Lights	44.97	0.00	44.97	12 Mar 26	BP
Betterclean	3300	28 Feb 26	February JCH Cleaning	453.58	90.72	544.30	12 Mar 26	BP
B Online	2128095	01 Mar 26	Broadband	31.95	6.39	38.34	13 Mar 26	DD
British Gas	13919935	16 Feb 26	JCH Electricity	92.06	4.60	96.66	02 Mar 26	DD
Business Waste	1968032	01 Mar 26	JCH / Cemetery Waste	76.74	15.34	92.08	16 Mar 26	DD
Business Waste	1953514	13 Feb 26	Cemetery Excess Waste	0.69	0.14	0.83	27 Feb 26	DD
Castle Water	9378937	05 Mar 26	Cemetery Water	5.18	0.00	5.18	19 Mar 26	DD
Corona	19932904	05 Mar 26	JCH Gas	160.45	8.02	168.47	12 Mar 26	BP
EE	2449587002	13 Mar 26	Clerk Mobile	20.66	4.13	24.79	23 Mar 26	DD
ESE Direct	1203545	04 Mar 26	Trough for Holborn Steps	156.75	31.35	188.10	04 Mar 26	CC
Everflow	5252467	05 Mar 26	JCH Water - April	15.40	0.00	15.40	13 Mar 26	DD
Fielder and Jones	26/058	12 Mar 26	Lydiard Plain Licence	200.00	40.00	240.00	30 Mar 26	BP
Firethorn	2504	04 Feb 26	Burials Administration	382.25	0.00	382.25	12 Mar 26	BP
High Speed Training	2762724	04 Mar 26	Training for Staff	129.00	25.80	154.80	12 Mar 26	BP
HMRC	n/a	05 Mar 26	Tax & NI - Feb	430.43	0.00	430.43	13 Mar 26	BP
Inception	405090	15 Feb 26	Jan/Feb Printing & Lease	35.49	7.10	42.59	17 Mar 26	DD
John O'Conner	127468	11 Feb 26	Comm. Field Maint. - Oct	70.83	14.17	85.00	12 Mar 26	BP
John O'Conner	127471	11 Feb 26	Comm. Field Maint. - Nov	70.83	14.17	85.00	12 Mar 26	BP
John O'Conner	127473	11 Feb 26	Comm. Field Maint. - Dec	70.83	14.17	85.00	12 Mar 26	BP
John O'Conner	127475	11 Feb 26	Comm. Field Maint. - Jan	70.83	14.17	85.00	12 Mar 26	BP
John O'Conner	127842	19 Feb 26	Comm. Field Maint. - Feb	70.83	14.17	85.00	12 Mar 26	BP
Lloyds Bank	n/a	26 Feb 26	Charge Card Fees	3.00	0.00	3.00	12 Mar 26	DD
Lydiards Magazine	n/a	09 Feb 26	Annual Magazine Subscription	6.00	0.00	6.00	12 Mar 26	BP
Master Land & Planning	25002/2	16 Mar 26	Stage 2 - NP Consultancy Fees	2,312.00	462.40	2,774.40	30 Mar 26	BP
Microshade	1014016	01 Mar 26	Monthly Hosting Fees	182.82	36.56	219.38	25 Mar 26	DD
Nest	n/a	28 Feb 26	Clerk Pension - Feb	63.05	0.00	63.05	02 Mar 26	DD
Peninsula	5522046	08 Mar 26	HR Services	106.64	20.14	126.78	09 Mar 26	DD
Redlynch	112659	28 Feb 26	Play Area Spring Rocker	1,650.00	330.00	1,980.00	12 Mar 26	BP
SLCC	208949	04 Mar 26	PIALC Qualification Fee	140.00	28.00	168.00	12 Mar 26	BP
SLCC	257363-1	01 Feb 26	Annual Membership Fee	220.00	0.00	220.00	12 Mar 26	BP
Staff	n/a	23 Mar 26	Staff Salaries - March	2,010.45	0.00	2,010.45	30 Mar 26	BP
Three Business Services	44060	14 Feb 26	February Staff SIM Contracts	9.10	1.82	10.92	16 Mar 26	DD
Toomers Garden Centre	166260	11 Mar 26	Trees for Lydiard Green	278.01	0.00	278.01	11 Mar 26	CC
Unity Trust Bank	105-1	31 Jan 26	Bank Service Charges	10.65	0.00	10.65	28 Feb 26	DD

WALC	1200	24 Mar 26	Planning Training - 10 Cllrs	140.00	28.00	168.00	30 Mar 26	BP
Wiltshire Council	92062223	16 Feb 26	Braydon Rd LHFIFG Contribution	702.70	0.00	702.70	12 Mar 26	BP

Expenditure 10,424.17 1,211.36 11,635.53

Payments for Approval

John O'Conner	128791	20 Mar 26	Com. Field Maintenance - March	70.83	14.17	85.00		
Wicksteed Leisure	830953	13 Mar 26	Play Area Inspection	150.00	30.00	180.00		

220.83 44.17 265.00

LMPC Income Summary 2025-2026 Received 28 February 2026

Category	Amount
Cemetery Burials	£1,668.00
Exclusive Rights	£1,706.50
Cemetery Memorials	£584.00
Community Field	£859.20
Cricket	£3,652.50
Defra	£784.92
Field and Hall Hire	£566.00
Football	£7,664.50
Lydiard Plain Rental	£1,000.00
Grants	
PSDF Income	£2,502.93
Wayleave	£12.00

Total £21,000.55

Precept £67,055.00

Vat Refund 24/25 £10,612.39

Total £98,667.94

Lydiard Millicent Parish Council

Bank - Cash and Investment Reconciliation as at 28 February 2026

Confirmed Bank & Investment Balances

Bank Statement Balances

28/02/2026	The Public Sector Deposit Fund	72,472.91
28/02/2026	Unity Bank **873	12,805.48
28/02/2026	Lloyds Charge Card	0.00

85,278.39

Receipts not on Bank Statement

0.00

Closing Balance

85,278.39

All Cash & Bank Accounts

2	The Public Sector Deposit Fund	72,472.91
3	Unity Bank	12,805.48
5	Lloyds Charge Card	0.00

Other Cash & Bank Balances

0.00

Total Cash & Bank Balances

85,278.39

Members are requested to NOTE the report and CONSIDER the recommendations

Public Sector Deposit Funds Transfer

Members are requested to NOTE that a transfer of £5,000.00 (five thousand pounds) was made from the Public Sector Deposit Fund to the Unity Trust account on 5 March 2026.

Fence Stain – Cemetery and Play Area

The fencing throughout the cemetery requires staining, as does half of the fencing at the play area.

It is proposed that 3 x 6l tubs of wood stain will cover the cemetery and 1 x 6l tub will cover the play area. Tubs are available from a local hardware store for £18.00.

Recommendation

Members to APPROVE a maximum expenditure of £72.00 (ex. VAT) to purchase 4 x 6l tubs of wood stain to treat the cemetery and play area fencing. Costs to be met from:

£54.00 – Cemetery Parish Maintenance budget line

£18.00 – Play Area Maintenance budget line.

Defibrillator Pads

The pads for the defibrillator at the Jubilee Club House expire in May. A pair can be purchased including P&P for £68.95 (ex. VAT).

Recommendation

Members to APPROVE an expenditure of £68.95 (ex. VAT) to purchase a pair of defibrillator pads for the JCH defibrillator. Costs to be met from JCH building maintenance budget line.

Speed Indicator Device (SID)– Extended Warranty

The 2 SIDs are coming to the end of their 2 year warranty in July. The manufacturer Elan City offer an extended warranty of £199 per unit per year.

Recommendation

Members to CONSIDER purchasing an extended warranty for 26-27 for 2 SIDs at a cost of £398 for the year. There is no budget allocated from this so would need to be met from General Reserves.

Hayley Graham
March 2026

Members are requested to:

- NOTE the journal movements
- APPROVE the virement
- APPROVE the EMR movements
- APPROVE the set up of a new cost centre for the Community Field, the movement of existing nominal codes to the new cost centre and the set up of a new nominal code for Community Field grass cutting.

Journal Movements

From	To	Amount	Notes
201 / 4101 Cemetery – Grass Cutting	201 / 4111 Tree / Hedge Works	£289.00	Journals for grounds maintenance are for administrative purposes as the invoices received are not broken down by nominal code, therefore journals are done at year end.
301 / 4101 Recreation Field & JCH – Grass Cutting	301 / 4111 Tree / Hedge Works	£550.00	
301 / 4101 Recreation Field & JCH – Grass Cutting	303 / 4101 Play Area – Grass Cutting	£313.00	In addition, an improved breakdown of costs has been received for the first time since contract agreement and as a result, it has been possible to apportion Recreation Field costs more accurately. This will result in 301/4101 looking as though it has come in substantially under budget this year, but grass cutting for cricket and football, and pitch marking for football looking as though they are substantially over budget.
301 / 4101 Recreation Field & JCH – Grass Cutting	304 / 4101 Cricket – Grass Cutting	£1,972.00	
301 / 4101 Recreation Field & JCH – Grass Cutting	305 / 4101 Football – Grass Cutting	£3,734.00	
301 / 4101 Recreation Field & JCH – Grass Cutting	305 - 4126 Football – Pitch Marking	£1,632.00	
401 / 4101 – Highways & Open Spaces – Grass Cutting	401 / 4111 – Tree / Hedge Works	£55.00	

Virement

From	To	Amount	Notes
101 / 4055 Admin - Professional Fees	702 / 4055 Neighbourhood Plan – Professional Fees	£7,435.00	Budget for Neighbourhood Plan professional fees included in general administration professional fees budget in error

EMR Movements

From	To	Amount	Notes
101 / 4022 Admin - Office Equipment	EMR 324 Office Equipment	£500.00	Expenditure on new office computer approved but not yet spent
101 / 4036 Admin - Advertising and Parish Magazine	EMR 325 Parish Projects	£375.00	Expenditure for Spring newsletter approved but not yet spent
101 / 4065 Admin – Events	EMR 325 Parish Projects	£240.00	Invoice for VE Day First Aid support not yet received
301 / 4009 Recreation Field & JCH – CCTV	EMR 323 JCH Repairs / Maintenance	£635.00	Invoice for 2025/2026 CCTV maintenance / support not yet received
401 / 4105 Highways & Open Spaces – Parish Maintenance	EMR 322 Highways / LHFIFG	£2,000.00	Committed expenditure for works not yet complete
401 / 4139 Highways & Open Spaces – Lydiard Green	EMR 325 Parish Project	£500.00	Underspend in 25/26 to be moved to EMR
501 / 4105 Lydiard Plain – Parish Maintenance	EMR 325 Parish Projects	£250.00	Underspend in 25/26 to be moved to EMR

Cost Centres

In order to report on income and expenditure more accurately, it is recommended that a new cost centre is set up for the Community Field (402). It currently sits within the Highways and Open Spaces cost centre (401) but now the field is in use, it should be independent from general open spaces, as is the case with Lydiard Plain which has its own cost centre (501).

It would then be required to move the following nominal codes as below, and to create virements to move the budgets to the new cost centres:

Nominal Code	From	To
4141 – Community Field Rental Income	401 – Highways & Open Spaces	402 – Community Field
4129 – Community Field General Expenditure	401 – Highways & Open Spaces	402 – Community Field

It would then be required to set up a new nominal code of 4101 (grass cutting) under the new cost centre (402) for the Community Field.

LYDIARD MILLICENT PARISH COUNCIL- ASSET REGISTER

At 27 March 2026 the following assets were held:

Assets are defined as land, buildings, vehicles, plant and equipment with a value in excess of £100.

Asset Type	Description	Location	Date Acquired	Purchase Price	Title Deed Reference	Photograph Reference	For Insurance Purposes Only			Additional Notes
							Current Estimated Market Value (EMV)	Date of Last EMV		
Building	Jubilee Club House	Meadow Springs	31.3.2003	330,604.00	-	AR8 AR100, AR101, AR102, AR103, AR104, AR106, AR107, AR108, AR109, AR110 AR73, AR74, AR75, AR76, AR77	330,604.00	May-24		
Contents	Jubilee Club House Contents	Meadow Springs	31.3.2002	5,235.00	-		5,052.00	Mar-26		
Contents	Parish Office Equipment	Meadow Springs	31.3.2016	1,500.00	-	WT455796 - The Mews	1,200.00	Mar-26		
Land	Recreation Field and The Mews	Meadow Springs	31.3.1986	1.00	WT483700 - Rec Field	AR88, AR89	-	-		
Land	O/S Meadow Springs Access Road	Meadow Springs	31.3.1986	1.00	Not Registered	AR87	-	-		
Land	Lydiard Green	Lydiard Green	22.12.1969	-	WT479049	AR27	-	-		
Land	Lydiard Plain	Lydiard Plain	31.3.1985	-	Not Registered	AR38, AR39	-	-		The Council does not own this land, but manages it in perpetuity.
Land	Forge Fields (ex sub station)	Forge Fields	31.3.1998	-	WT172584	AR83, AR84	-	-		
Land	Community Field	The Street	31.02.2013	30,000.00	WT159126	AR30	-	-		
Land	Cemetery	The Butts	31.3.1985	-		AR28	-	-		
Fixed Asset	Cemetery Shed	The Butts	31.3.1986	1.00	-	AR31	TBC	TBC		
Fixed Asset	Telephone Box	Greenhill	n/k	1.00	-	AR41	2,000.00	Mar-26		
Fixed Asset	Telephone Box	The Street	22.2.2018	1.00	-	AR32	2,000.00	Mar-26		
Fixed Asset	Parish Boundary Signs	Parish	01.04.2020	13,000.00	-	AR33, AR34, AR35	6,552.00	Mar-26		
Fixed Asset	Speed Indicator Devices x 2	Parish	01.12.2020	7,500.00	-	AR62	4,495.00	Mar-26		
Fixed Asset	Play Area Equipment - Play Tower	Meadow Springs	31.3.1999	15,000.00	-	AR90	26,000.00	Dec-25		
Fixed Asset	Play Area Equipment	Meadow Springs	01.04.2020	14,500.00	-	AR91, AR92, AR93	17,700.00	Mar-26		
Fixed Asset	Play Area Equipment	Meadow Springs	2023	21,548.00	-	AR46, AR47, AR48, AR49	22,551.00	Mar-26		
Fixed Asset	Bus Shelter	The Street (Church)	31.3.1985	863.00	-	AR58	4,350.00	Mar-26		
Fixed Asset	Bus Shelter	Greenhill Xroads	31.3.1985	863.00	-	AR26	4,350.00	Mar-26		
Fixed Asset	Bus Shelter	The Beeches	31.3.1995	1,720.00	-	AR25	4,350.00	Mar-26		
Fixed Asset	Bus Shelter	Holborn	31.3.1995	1,720.00	-	AR23	4,350.00	Mar-26		
Fixed Asset	Bus Shelter	Chestnut Springs	31.3.1995	1,720.00	-	AR24	4,350.00	Mar-26		
Fixed Asset	Planter/Flowerbed	The Butts Junction	31.3.2013	1,260.00	-	AR59	1,580.00	Mar-26		
Fixed Asset	Planter/Flowerbed	Next to Parish Hall	01.04.2020	1.00	-	AR85	1,580.00	Mar-26		
Fixed Asset	Planter/Flowerbed	Church Place	n/k	1.00	-	AR60	200.00	Mar-26		
Fixed Asset	Planter/Flowerbed	Church Place	n/k	1.00	-	AR61	200.00	Mar-26		
Fixed Asset	Planter/Flowerbed	Church Place	n/k	1.00	-	AR62	200.00	Mar-26		
Portable Asset	EGO MHSC2002E Multi Tool Package Kit & EGO	Meadow Springs	2021	645.00	-	AR81	803.00	Mar-26		
Contents	BCA1000 Multi-Tool Brush Cutter	Meadow Springs	2021	103.00	-	AR45	215.00	Mar-26		
Contents	Kitchen Equipment	Meadow Springs	2021	283.00	-	AR68, AR69, AR70, AR71	318.00	Mar-26		
Contents	Phoenix FS1913K Fire Safe/Cabinet	Meadow Springs	2022	2,920.00	-	AR6	1,290.00	Mar-26		
Fixed Asset	Height Restrictor	Meadow Springs	2022	2,103.00	-	AR9	2,314.00	Mar-26		
Fixed Asset	Removable Bollards	Meadow Springs	2022	1,088.00	-	AR10	1,196.00	Mar-26		
Portable Asset	Wimba Marquee and Storage Bag	Meadow Springs	2022	2,028.00	-	AR79	950.00	Mar-26		
Portable Asset	Platinum Jubilee Beacon	Meadow Springs	2022	490.00	-	AR78	490.00	Mar-26		
Contents	Tall Office Filing Cupboard	Meadow Springs	2022	289.00	-	AR7	330.00	Mar-26		
Fixed Asset	Security Blind Spot Mirror	Meadow Springs	2022	159.00	-	AR21	159.00	Mar-26		
Fixed Asset	Noticeboards x 3	Parish Locations	2022	2,729.00	-	AR55, AR56, AR64	2,811.00	Mar-26		
Fixed Asset	War Memorial Clock - Public Donation	Parish Church	2022	1.00	-	AR63	25,000.00	Mar-26		
Fixed Asset	War Memorial Clock Battery	Parish Church	2022	571.00	-	AR72	590.00	Mar-26		
Contents	4 Drawer Filing Cabinet, 4 Metal Cabinets	Meadow Springs	2023	784.00	-	AR1, AR2, AR3, AR4, AR5	870.00	Mar-26		
Portable Asset	EGO LB5800E 56v Leaf Blower, Battery, Charger	Meadow Springs	2023	349.00	-	AR80	349.00	Mar-26		
Fixed Asset	New Signage at JCH	Meadow Springs	2023	295.00	-	AR11, AR12, AR13, AR22	320.00	Mar-26		
Fixed Asset	New Signage for Lydiard Green and Greatfield	Parish Locations	2023	350.00	-	AR55, AR96 AR65, AR66,	728.00	Mar-26		
Fixed Asset	CCTV System	Meadow Springs	2023	3,526.00	-	AR67	4,000.00	Mar-26		
Fixed Asset	Community Field Fencing	The Street	2023	1,870.00	-	AR29	2,103.00	Mar-26		
Contents	Bonsai Heavy Duty Paper Shredder	Meadow Springs	2024	158.00	-	AR54	117.00	Mar-26		
Fixed Asset	Defibrillator - Donated by Football Association	Meadow Springs	2023	1.00	-	AR14	1,194.00	Mar-26		
Contents	Chairs for JCH Main Room x 28	Meadow Springs	2024	657.00	-	AR16	657.00	Mar-26		
Portable Asset	Roller Display Banners x 5	Meadow Springs	2024	150.00	-	AR42	150.00	May-24		
Contents	Folding Tables x 10 & Trolley	Meadow Springs	2024	905.00	-	AR15	927.00	Mar-26		
Contents	Blinds for JCH Main Room	Meadow Springs	2024	397.00	-	AR40	397.00	Jun-24		
Fixed Asset	Speed Indicator Devices x 2	Parish	22.07.2024	3,999.00	-	AR52, AR53 AR17, AR18,	4,499.00	Feb-26		
Contents	Acoustic Boards for JCH Main Room	Meadow Springs	2024	2,500.00	-	AR19	2,500.00	Aug-24		
Contents	Hearing Loop	Meadow Springs	2024	1,219.00	-	AR20	1,219.00	Jun-24		
Portable Asset	Event Display Boards	Meadow Springs	17.2.2025	100.00	-	AR99	100.00	Feb-25		
SUBTOTAL				477,701.00						
TOTAL VALUE OF ASSETS DISPOSED OF DURING 2025-2026										
Contents	Jubilee Club House Contents	Meadow Springs	31.3.2002	637.00	-					
Fixed Asset	Parish Boundary Signs (Signage at Lydiard Green and Greatfield only)	Parish Locations	2020	1,444.00	-	AR95, AR96	-	-		
SUBTOTAL				2,081.00						
TOTAL VALUE OF ASSETS PURCHASED DURING 2025-2026										
Fixed Asset	Security Door for JCH Outdoor Store	Meadow Springs	2025	1,890.00	-	AR44	1,890.00	May-25		
Portable Asset	3 x Event Display Vinyl Banners	Meadow Springs	2025	118.00	-	AR43	118.00	May-25		
Fixed Asset	Speed Indicator Device Solar Panel Upgrade Pack x 2	Parish	2025	1,166.00	-	AR50, AR51	1,166.00	Sep-25		
Contents	Evacuation Sledge with Storage Bag	Meadow Springs	2025	133.00	-	AR37	133.00	Nov-25		
Fixed Asset	Lion Spring Rocker	Meadow Springs	2026	1,650.00	-	AR36	1,650.00	Feb-26		
Fixed Asset	Holborn Bicycle Trough	Parish	2026	157.00	-	TBC	157.00	Mar-26		Not yet installed as of end March '26
Fixed Asset	Noticeboards x 3	Parish	2020	2,646.00	-	AR57, AR86, AR84	2,811.00	Mar-26		
Fixed Asset	Play Area Equipment - Swing Sets x 2	Meadow Springs	2018	4,481.00	-	AR97, AR98	5,896.00	Mar-26		
SUBTOTAL				£ 12,241.00						
TOTAL				487,861.00						

Earmarked Reserves

Account	Opening Balance	Net Transfers	Closing Balance
320 EMR Footpaths	4,702.41	-3,500.00	1,202.41
321 EMR Handyman Equipment	1,499.83		1,499.83
322 EMR Highways - LHFIG	5,970.40	0.00	5,970.40
323 EMR JCH Repairs	1,592.07	-244.84	1,347.23
324 EMR Office Equipment	2,397.49	-1,500.00	897.49
325 EMR Parish Projects	3,371.00	-935.00	2,436.00
326 EMR St Funiture/Play Equipment	3,157.00	3,500.00	6,657.00
327 EMR War Memorial Clock ONLY	5,732.49		5,732.49
328 EMR Election Fees	1,150.00	-530.00	620.00
330 EMR CIL	5,085.43	-3,087.87	1,997.56
	34,658.12	-6,297.71	28,360.41

10 March 2026

Development Services

Wiltshire Council

Tel: 0300 456 0114

www.wiltshire.gov.uk

PlanningAppeals@wiltshire.gov.uk

Dear Sir/Madam,

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

APPELLANTS NAME:	Mr R & Mrs N McCormack
APPEAL SITE:	Woodside End Stables, Greenhill, Royal Wootton Bassett, Swindon, SN4 8EH
PLANNING APPLICATION REF:	PL/2025/09044
PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:	Erection of 1No new dwelling in lieu of existing stables and welfare facilities
INSPECTORATE REFERENCE:	6006035
APPEAL START DATE:	10 March 2026

I am writing to let you know that an appeal has been made to the Planning Inspectorate in respect of the above site.

The appeal is Against a Refusal in respect of the above site, and is to be decided on the basis of Written Representations procedure set out in Part 2 of The Town and Country Planning (Appeals) (Written Representations Procedure) (England) Regulations 2009, as amended.

Documents relating to the appeal(s) can be viewed on the Council website by searching the application reference at <https://development.wiltshire.gov.uk/pr/s/>

The Planning Inspectorate have introduced an online appeals service which you can use to comment on this appeal. You can find the service through the Appeals area of the Planning Portal – see <https://appeal-planning-decision.service.gov.uk/comment-planning-appeal/enter-appeal-reference>. Alternatively, you can send your comments to The Planning Inspectorate, c/o QUADIENT, 69 Buckingham Avenue, Slough, SL1 4PN, quoting the Inspectorate reference. Comments should be received by **16 April 2026**.

The Inspectorate may publish details of your comments, on the internet (on the appeals area of the planning portal). Your comments may include your name, address, email address or phone number, please ensure that you only provide information, including personal information belonging to you that you are happy will be made available to others in this way. If you supply information belonging to a third party please ensure you have their permission to do so. More detailed information about data protection and privacy matters is available on the Planning Portal.

Any representations received after the deadline will not normally be seen by the Inspector and will be returned. All representations must quote the appeal reference.

Please note that any representations you submit to the Planning Inspectorate will be copied to the appellant and this local planning authority and will be considered by the Inspector when determining the appeal.

Any comments you may have already made following the original application will also be forwarded to the Inspectorate (unless they are expressly confidential) but you may withdraw, modify or amplify them now if you wish. All comments received will be copied to the appellant and will be taken into account by the Inspector in deciding the appeal.

If you wish to receive a copy of the appeal Decision Letter, you should write to the Planning Inspectorate specifically requesting one.

The Planning Inspectorate will not acknowledge your letter unless you specifically ask them to do so. They will, however, ensure that your letter is passed on to the Inspector dealing with the appeal.

Finally, you can get a copy of one of the Planning Inspectorate's "Guide to taking part in planning appeals" booklets free of charge from GOV.UK at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/taking-part-in-a-planning-listed-building-or-enforcement-appeal>.

When made, the decision will be published online at <https://appeal-planning-decision.service.gov.uk/comment-planning-appeal/enter-appeal-reference>.

Yours faithfully,
Head of Development Management

23.204 Footpath Working Group

The hedging that denotes Lydiard Green and the neighbouring farmland has gaps in places. There is no right of access onto this private land at any of these points. There are three pillboxes on/surrounding the Green, only one of which is on the Village Green itself. Once the information boards have been put in situ, it is possible that members of the public may try and access the private land area. Members RESOLVED to spend up to £1000 to plant new hedging and replacement trees, met from Ear Marked Reserves set aside for Footpaths/Lydiard Green. UPDATE: New hedging has been planted by the Working Group. Replacement tree species next to be identified. FURTHER UPDATE: Members RESOLVED to give delegated authority to the Clerk and Footpath Working Group to purchase up to four trees, up to a maximum budget of £717.00 to be met from the ear marked reserve for footpaths. FINAL UPDATE: Trees purchased and were planted on 19 Mar. Recommendation to CLOSE this item.

PQT 2 October – Common Platt Defibrillator

A resident asked for the Council to consider installing a defibrillator in Common Platt as the nearest ones are some distance away (Peatmoor and Lydiard Millicent village). The Council agreed that the Clerk should explore this including approaching Purton PC as a possible joint venture. UPDATE: Purton Parish Council considered the proposal in their meeting held on 13 Oct but they do not have funding to support a defibrillator in Common Platt at this time. Costs for a solar / wind powered cabinet have been received which may be cost prohibitive, so it is now being established if a mains connection is possible next to the parish noticeboard, SSEN are preparing a quote. WC have confirmed the process for requesting approval for installation on the public highway. FURTHER UPDATE: Members AGREED to defer the decision on which option should be taken forward, pending further investigation. Members RESOLVED to give the Clerk the authority to make a grant application to the Hills Landfill Community Fund on its behalf. Agenda item.

25.125 Holborn Footpath Bicycle Access

Members RESOLVED that the Clerk should investigate the feasibility of a bicycle trough being installed at the steps at Holborn. UPDATE: Members RESOLVED to install a bicycle trough on the steps at Holborn, subject to confirmation from Wiltshire Council that no planning obligations are to be met. FURTHER UPDATE: The land is not owned or maintained by Wiltshire Council and as such, there are no planning obligations to be met. Trough is expected to be installed in March / early April.

25.156j - Financial Accounts

Members APPROVED an expenditure of up to £500.00 (five hundred pounds) (ex. VAT) for the Clerk to purchase a new office computer along with any associated new equipment required.

25.160 - Lydiard Plain Tenancy

Members RESOLVED to correspond with the proposed new tenant and AUTHORISED the Clerk to investigate support options for creating a formal lease agreement. UPDATE: Members RESOLVED to proceed with a grazing licence, accepting the quote from agent 1 at a cost of £200.00 (ex. VAT) and to reserve the right to review rental fees on an annual basis. FURTHER UPDATE: License signed and on agenda for noting. Recommendation to CLOSE this item.

25.191j – Financial Accounts

Members APPROVED a maximum expenditure of £150.00 (ex. VAT) to purchase materials required for the Handyman to repair the fence at the back boundary of the cemetery. UPDATE: Works to be carried out in April / early May.

25.191k – Financial Accounts

Members APPROVED a maximum expenditure of £200.00 (ex. VAT) to print 700 parish newsletters.

An important update regarding your cleaning service from April 2026

I wanted to write to you personally to say thank you for trusting us with your premises, for the working relationship we have built together, and for choosing to be part of what we do. It genuinely means a lot to us and it is something we never take for granted.

Our commitment to you has always been straightforward: to deliver a cleaning service that is reliable, consistent, and one that you can genuinely be proud to have in your building. That commitment does not change, if anything, it drives everything we do.

Which is why I want to be open and transparent with you about some changes that will be coming into effect from 1st April 2026.

Cost pressures outside of our control

Like many businesses, we are facing a set of cost increases that have been driven largely by Government legislation and wider economic pressures. These include significant increases to the National and Real Living Wage, changes to Statutory Sick Pay under the Employment Rights Act 2025, and a continued rise in general business operating costs. We will explain each of these in more detail below.

We have worked hard to absorb as much of this as we possibly can, and we have kept the increase to your service price to the absolute minimum that allows us to continue delivering the standard you expect and deserve. We would never reduce the quality of what we provide simply to protect our costs, that would not be fair to you.

Your updated service price from 1st April 2026**Your service price will increase by 7.74% from 1st April 2026.**

This will be reflected on your invoices from April onwards, and we will make sure this is clearly shown so there are no surprises.

The detail behind the increase

We appreciate that you may want to understand exactly what is driving this change, so we want to be as clear as we can:

National Living Wage and Real Living Wage increases

From April 2026, the Government's mandated increase to the National Living Wage and the increase in the Real Living Wage means that the hourly pay rates for our cleaning operatives rise considerably. Our people are the backbone of what we do, they show up every day to look after your premises, and we are absolutely committed to paying them fairly. This is the single largest driver of the price adjustment.

Statutory Sick Pay – Employment Rights Act 2025

Under the Employment Rights Act 2025, Statutory Sick Pay is now payable from the first day of absence, removing the three-day waiting period that previously applied. Whilst this is a positive change for employees across the country, it does increase the cost of managing absence and arranging cover to ensure your service is never disrupted. Continuity of service matters to us and to you and maintaining that now comes at a higher cost.

General business operating costs

The cost of running a professional cleaning operation continues to rise across the board, fuel, equipment, cleaning materials, insurance, and general overheads have all increased. None of these individually may seem significant, but collectively they add meaningful pressure to our costs year on year.

If you have any questions, please do give us a call or drop us an email, we're always here. In the meantime, we look forward to continuing to look after your premises and delivering the service you deserve. Thank you again for your continued custom. We are proud to work with you, and we look forward to continuing to deliver a service you can rely on.

Revamp Your Tank project update

Briefing Note No. 26-02

Service : *Climate and Environment*
Further Enquiries to: Niall Machin
Date Prepared: 06/02/2026
Direct Line / Email: niall.machin@wiltshire.gov.uk

Summary

Revamp Your Tank is a septic tank upgrade scheme delivered by the council in partnership with the Wessex Rivers Trust. Full details of the scheme can be seen here: [Biodiversity and development - Wiltshire Council](#).

We are updating councillors on the status of Revamp Your Tank in your area in order to keep you informed as there are some changes that are affecting the scheme that maybe helpful for you to be aware of.

The council received a grant from Government to help deliver nutrient mitigation projects to improve water quality in the River Avon (Hampshire). This grant must be used to offset the impacts of new housing development in this important river catchment and ensure the development is [nutrient neutral](#).

The mitigation projects meet the [principles set out by Natural England](#). We must also meet the requirement of the Environment Agency, planning regulations and building control, as well as meeting the tight conditions of the grant set out by Government.

Whilst we are aware that domestic sewage systems can impact all parts of the river, the grant must deliver projects that meet Natural England's mitigation principles and, be in the right location of the river catchment to offset new development coming forward.

The initial Government funding, through the Local Nutrient Mitigations Fund (LNMF), which pump-primed the replacement tank projects as well as some other bespoke schemes is required to be replenished by the sale of nutrient credits arising from the improved performance of the new tanks compared to the old ones in removing harmful nutrients from entering the sensitive watercourse.

These nutrient credits are made available for purchase to developers who need to mitigate the impacts of new developments in the sensitive catchment. By selling the nutrient credits, the fund can be re-charged, as per the fund's conditions.

Whilst the council has always reserved the right not to take projects forward at any point before a customer contract is signed, we are aware that some applicants to the scheme are becoming frustrated by the delays to implementation.

The condition of the grant is that it is replenished by the nutrient credits sold and so the pace and location of the new tanks is largely dictated by the need for nutrient credits from developers.

To assist with the understanding of applicants we have updated the website and added more standard questions and answers to the FAQs.

Whilst the nutrient market has already slowed due to the needs of developers, recent changes in legislation arising from the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 may also impact the scheme and further slow down delivery of replacement tanks.

Background

Nutrient Neutrality

Nutrient neutrality (for phosphorus and nitrates) is a legal requirement where there are protected European wildlife sites in unfavourable condition. This is required by Natural England. In affected areas, the only way to permit more housing is to offset the nutrient burdens from wastewater arising from the new dwellings. It is the developers' responsibility, not the council's, to deliver (pay for) mitigation if that development is within the catchment for the sensitive rivers. That is the same for one house or 100 houses. WC has set up strategic approaches to help developers and enable sustainable development.

The main council-led approach to phosphate mitigation is the Revamp Your Tank scheme (RYT), which since its inception has enabled housing growth in key affected area. Other mechanisms include upgrading council owned sewage works and wetland creation.

Planning and Infrastructure Act December 2025 Environmental Delivery Plans (EDPs)

The royal assent of the recent Planning and Infrastructure Act in December 2025 heralds the introduction of Environmental Delivery Plans (EDPs). EDPs addressing nutrient neutrality will be written by NE for 16 areas in the UK including the Hampshire Avon in Wiltshire.

[The Planning and Infrastructure Act \(Royal](#)

[Assent: 18 December 2025\)](#) fundamentally introduced a new mitigation route for developers required to mitigate schemes that are caught by the nutrient neutrality requirement and will change delivery from the current site by site nutrient neutrality approach to a strategic, catchment scale system centred on:

- Environmental Delivery Plans (EDPs)
- A national Nature Restoration Fund (NRF)

Together, these are designed to meet Habitats Regulations requirements without requiring each individual development to demonstrate nutrient neutrality on its own. EDPs will be a new mechanism for compliance which will be prepared and operated by Natural England and apply to defined catchments or protected sites. Once an EDP is in force,

developers no longer need to demonstrate nutrient neutrality individually for impacts covered by that plan instead, they can contribute financially via the NRF should they prefer.

How Councillors can help

- **Raise awareness**

Please share information about the slow down in demand for credits by developers and the resulting slowing of replacement tanks.

- **Direct any queries to the FAQ section of the website**

- **Understand the grant purpose and conditions**

Whilst we understand that there are many reasons that some applicants believe their need for a new tank is greater than other people's, the scheme has strict criteria and is related to environmental benefits. If a resident's tank is failing, we strongly suggest that they do not wait for a replacement through this scheme.

There is no guarantee of tank replacement until an applicant has signed the contract directly with the contractor.

More information

Frequently asked questions for Revamp Your Tank can be found on the following link: [Biodiversity and development - Wiltshire Council](#)

END

Additional information

Work on the first nutrient EDPs is already underway, with implementation expected to be phased through 2026–2027. Upcoming EDPs relating to Wiltshire's sphere of influence as an LPA include:

- *River Avon SAC (for Phosphorus, and interfacing with our Phosphorus mitigation strategy and LNMF-funded mitigation projects)*
- *Solent SAC/SPA/Ramsar (for Nitrogen, and interfacing with Wiltshire's Nitrogen mitigation strategy and mitigation project at Roundbarrow. Also includes consideration of Phosphorus impacts in the River Itchen)*
- *River Lambourn SAC (for Phosphorus, and interfacing with Wiltshire's mitigation strategy and water efficiency requirements for developments)*
- *Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar (for Phosphorus, and interfacing with Wiltshire's mitigation strategy and water efficiency requirements for developments).*

EDPs are intended to speed up planning decisions, improve environmental outcomes and reduce legal risk for authorities. Whilst much of the details are as yet unknown and how it will impact schemes that the council runs and the impact on the Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund grant the council received, we know that in the short term (2026) existing nutrient neutrality requirements and plans remain in force until a relevant EDP is adopted (potentially as early as summer 2026). LPAs must continue to undertake Habitats Regulations Assessments (HRAs) as at present. However, LPAs should begin planning for transition, including: understanding draft EDP boundaries; assessing likely levy implications for viability; and updating Local Plans and guidance.

In the medium term (once EDPs are live), LPAs will no longer need to assess nutrient impacts for covered development where a developer has chosen to use the EDP route and paid the required levy.

Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund – Grant

The council was awarded £9.8m from the Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund (LNMF, from MHCLG) for capital projects to help pump-prime nutrient neutrality mitigation in the Hampshire Avon catchment, as well as a further £100,000 to help with resources. The condition of the funding is that it rechargeable (e.g. selling P credits to fund more council sewage or septic tank upgrades) to deliver further mitigation to continue to support the delivery of housing or other overnight accommodation such as new hotels or care homes. It has been used primarily to pump prime the supply of RYT mitigation projects.

Dear X-Net Hosted Email Customer,

Firstly, thank you for continuing to be a valued customer of X-Net Services Ltd.

As you may already be aware, your annual contract with us for your hosted email service is due to end in the coming month(s). Following the end of this contract; the price of this service will increase to £100 per 10 email accounts upon renewal. This price increase comes from us keeping the same price of £50 per 10 accounts for the last 10 years which we no longer feel reflects the level of support we offer. A single email address account will still stay at £50 per annum.

However, with this price increase, we are upgrading to new infrastructure with a large suite of improvements. These improvements include a built in spam and phishing filter, a modern and efficient webmail client, updated email security measures and a domain admin feature where new accounts can be created as and when required.

We will handle all the transition of emails to the new system, so all that is required on your end would be to log in and start using your new accounts at a specified and agreed time.

If you have any questions, please do give us a call or drop us an email, we're always here. In the meantime, we look forward to continuing to look after your premises and delivering the service you deserve. Thank you again for your continued custom. We are proud to work with you, and we look forward to continuing to deliver a service you can rely on.

13 March 2026



00162
13392

Lydiard Millicent Parish Council
JUBILEE CLUB HOUSE
MEADOW SPRINGS
SWINDON
SN53NH

Customer Reference: 20440751

Dear Customer,

Important update: Price changes to non-commodity costs effective from 1 April 2026

We are writing to give you formal notice that from 1 April 2026 there will be a change to the non-commodity element of your gas charges.

Your contract with us is a fixed commodity product which includes two types of costs:

- (i) Energy Commodity costs (wholesale cost of gas itself), fixed at the start of your contract, and.
- (ii) Non-commodity costs (including Distribution and Transportation) – the costs incurred arising from the charges set by government and/or industry bodies in supplying gas to you.

This change relates only to non-commodity costs. These charges may vary where a third party (such as a government or industry body) imposes a change in the underlying charging structure and/or methodology.

Why this change is happening

The main driver of the increase is the introduction of the OFGEM agreed and approved RIIO-3 Price Control (Revenue = Incentives + Innovation + Outputs), which takes effect from 1 April 2026. Ultimately, the changes under RIIO-3 equate to a change in law to which all energy suppliers must comply. This reform results in an unprecedented uplift to gas distribution & transportation networks charges across the market. The impact of the change has been calculated for the portion of your contract(s) delivering from 1 April 2026, when the RIIO-3 period begins.

Energy networks across Great Britain require major investment to support decarbonisation, system resilience, and reduced reliance on imported gas. RIIO-3 is designed to enable this investment. Although Ofgem has now agreed the allowed revenue for the five-year RIIO-3 period, the approval publication notes that, in order to meet the Government's Net Zero targets and to maintain a safe and resilient gas network while preparing for a lower-carbon future, further increases within this five-year RIIO-3 period may be necessary. Should this occur, we will provide advance notice of any subsequent price changes

Impacted Contracts

Below is a list of your contract(s), together with the associated change in your non-commodity rates from 1 April 2026.

To ensure your bills remain accurate, please continue to provide monthly meter readings if you do not have an AMR or smart meter. You can submit your readings by:

- (i) Logging into [myCorona](#) on our website; and
- (ii) Emailing meterreads@coronaenergy.co.uk with your account number, MPRN, meter reading(s), and date of meter read.

Want to Know More

Further information on RII0-3 is available on our website: <https://www.coronaenergy.co.uk/faqs/>.

We appreciate and value your business at Corona Energy, if you'd like to speak with us, you can call

0800 804 8589

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Maree Henderson'.

Maree Henderson
Head of Customer Experience

Table of Tariff Changes

Contract Number	Tariff Line	Tariff Change
40707223	Unit Rate	-0.0036 p/kWh/meter
40707223	Standing Charge	+78 p/day/meter



Contract Price Increase Notice**Rental Increase:** 6%**Meter Increase:** 6%

Dear Accounts, Thank you for your trust and business during these fluctuating economic times.

Inception is continuing to work hard to maximize our supply chain savings and operational efficiencies, without compromising on the high level of service we provide. As a result, we've been able to minimize the impact of inflation, price increases from our suppliers, and changes in exchange rates over the past year.

While price adjustments are never ideal, we've worked hard to limit the increase to just 6%. This adjustment will take effect on the next price review date of your copier agreement, 25 April 2026.

For customers still within a fixed rental contract, please note that the price adjustment will only apply to the cost per page, in accordance with section 9.1 of our agreement.

We'd also like to take a moment to remind you of the additional products and services Inception offers, which are designed to provide the best value when bundled together with existing services:

- **Managed Print Services** — including hardware, maintenance, print software for 'follow me' printing, and outsourced print for high-volume or complex tasks
- **IT Services** — including Microsoft 365 licenses, laptops, desktops, patch/update management, and our award-winning ongoing IT support
- **VOIP/Telephone Services** — including phone lines, multiple local numbers, full analytics, call routing, call recording, and desk phones/mobile apps
- **Mobile Phones & Sims** — partnering with top providers to offer the best coverage and value for your specific needs
- **Broadband** — including leased lines with guaranteed service levels, short-term solutions like Starlink, and 5G mobile internet options
- **Office Furniture** — a wide range of office essentials, including desks, chairs, storage, and more

We remain committed to supporting your business and ensuring you receive the best service possible. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or need further clarification.

Thank you for your continued partnership.

Kind regards,
Billing Team | Inception Business Technology

A draft plan for Purton was independently examined by Mr Andrew Matheson. Following this examination period the Examiner has submitted his report to Wiltshire Council.

Having considered the examiner's recommendations and the reasons for them, the Council concurs with the examiner's view and has decided to make modifications to the draft Modified Purton Parish Neighbourhood Plan to ensure that it meets legal requirements including the basic conditions as set out in legislation.

The Council is satisfied that the Neighbourhood Plan as modified complies with legal requirements and can proceed to referendum. The full Modified Purton Parish Neighbourhood Plan Decision Statement and the Examiners Report will shortly be available on the following web page: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-neighbourhood-latest-news>.

The referendum date for the draft Modified Purton Parish Neighbourhood Plan will be **Thursday 21st May 2026**.

Members are requested to NOTE the report and CONSIDER the recommendation.

Speed Indicator Devices

The Council purchased new speed indicator devices (SIDs) in 2024, however the old decommissioned SIDs have not yet been disposed of.

There are a number of small parish councils in the UK who are interested in purchasing these devices for a nominal fee and so the Council should consider this option.

The SIDs were purchased in September 2020 at a cost of £6,900 including 4 batteries and fixing kits. Whilst the batteries work, they lose their charge fairly quickly so while we can offer the batteries for sale, they are available new for around £40 ex. VAT.

The purchaser would be expected to arrange and cover the cost of shipping.

Recommendation

Members to AGREE a per item cost for 2. no SIDs for resale.

Hayley Graham
March 2026

Members are requested to NOTE report and CONSIDER if any further comment should be submitted

Update

On 11 March, the following email was received from Wiltshire Council's Democratic Services:

Dear Lydiard Millicent PC,

Within the proposal we have received from Purton PC, there is an element which would impact your parish. We invite you to submit your comments in relation to this proposal and ask that if possible, you do so by next Wednesday 18 March, so that they can be included within the information in the ERC agenda, published on that day. I appreciate that this is short notice for a formal PC decision, so we would except an informal comment at this stage, if possible?

The ERC meeting on Thursday 26 March at 2.30pm, is open to the public. The agenda and subsequent minutes from the meeting will be available [here](#).

The CGR Purton PC proposal details are:

The Council also requests a minor boundary amendment between Purton and Lydiard Millicent Parishes in the area of Ridgeway Farm, to include the area known as Manor Hill Cottage, snippet below. This is proposed as a boundary tidying measure to improve clarity and administrative coherence.



Response

Councillors collectively agreed to submit the below informal response:

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to respond to this. The request is slightly confusing because Manor Hill Cottage isn't in the vicinity of Ridgeway Farm. It is just outside Lydiard Millicent village, close to Stone Lane.

Assuming that the request just refers to Manor Hill Cottage, then we agree that the boundary looks strange on the map, but note that the property is a lot closer to Lydiard Millicent, and its associated facilities, than to the village of Purton. We understand that in general, residents are not consulted for these sort of changes, but as this is a single property, we would like to ask the homeowner to see whether they have a preference if that is allowed. We also understand that council tax rates are not normally a consideration in these types of changes, but suspect that the resident won't appreciate an increase in his council tax purely for improved clarity, without any improvement in facilities.

Recommendation

Members are requested to CONSIDER if any further comment should be submitted.

Hayley Graham
March 2026

Members are requested to NOTE the report.

Background

At the last meeting on 5 March, Members were advised that there is a defibrillator located at Toomers Garden Centre although it was not in use as it needed a new battery. Members requested that the Clerk contact Toomers to see how the Council could assist in bringing this defibrillator into working order.

Update

Toomers have bought a new battery and pads and so the defibrillator is working and registered to The Circuit, the national network of defibrillators.

The defibrillator cabinet is currently attached to the main building and is mains powered. Due to its location, it will not be accessible to the public outside of business opening hours. Toomers are open to repositioning the defibrillator cabinet outside of the gate that is locked after business hours to allow public access 24/7 but would look to the Parish Council to cover the costs in doing so. Quotes are being sought to move the power supply and will be brought to the next meeting for consideration.

Hayley Graham
March 2026

Members are requested to:

- CONSIDER meeting content, delegate elements to Councillors and agree proposed clubs and groups to be approached to provide reports to the Annual Parish Meeting.

Annual Parish Meeting

The Annual Parish Meeting It is open to all electors of the Parish, who have the right to attend and speak on any matter of local interest. The meeting has to be held between 1 March - 1 June and in the parish meeting held on 5 February, it was resolved that this year, the meeting would be take place on Thursday 21 May. This will be held at the Jubilee Club House starting at 7pm with refreshments from 6.30pm.

Possible order of proceedings and content for 2026 Annual Parish Meeting

- Refreshments
- Display boards and content
- Verbal report from the Chairman reviewing the Council's last 12 months
- Verbal report from the Vice-Chairman on the Council's vision for the next 12 months
- Written / verbal report from Wiltshire Councillor Andrew Matthews
- Reports from Cake Break, Bell Ringers, Scouts and All Saints Church
- Q & A session

Recommendation

To CONSIDER the proposed meeting content, AGREE volunteers to take responsibility for elements of the Annual Meeting (to include refreshments, display boards and content) and AGREE organisations to be invited to provide reports for the meeting.

Hayley Graham
March 2026

Members are requested to NOTE the report.

Findings

The annual play park inspection took place on 6 March. The detailed report has been received and the play area overall was given a rating of LOW RISK.

There were no significant items highlighted, however there are a number of maintenance issues which need attention (for example, sanding of splintered wood and re-painting rusting metal works) which the Parish Handyman will work through over the course of the Summer.

It was noted in the inspection that the gate closing mechanisms do not meet the required safety standards which has been noted on previous inspections. This is also deemed to be of low risk, but costs to install gates that meet required safety standards will be brought to Council to consider the expenditure in due course.

Hayley Graham
March 2026

Members are requested to:

- NOTE the 2026/27 meeting dates
- CONSIDER priorities for the forthcoming year
- AGREE the specification of the village boundary gates at the Greenhill crossroads.

Meeting Dates

From the start of the 26/27 financial year, the number of area board meetings held will be reducing from four to three.

To ensure LHFIG has appropriate governance, it has been asked by Democratic Services to reduce the number of LHFIG meetings accordingly. For 26/27 the meeting dates for RWB and Cricklade LHFIG are as follows:

LHFIG	RWB & Cricklade Area Board
13 May 2026	10 June 2026
7 October 2026	28 October 2026
10 February 2026	3 March 2027

Current LHFIG Priorities

As a reminder, below are the current priority schemes and issues raised with LHFIG:

Priority Scheme or Issue	Priority	Update
Priority Scheme	Common Platt safety	Works programmed to commence on 22 June for 3 weeks
Priority Scheme	Greatfield speeding	Scope of works was limited to carriageway roundels which is complete and will be removed from LHFIG tracker
Priority Scheme	Greenhill Crossroads	Initial phases of work have commenced, completion estimated mid-Summer 2026
Priority Scheme	Braydon Road	All sign and lining work is complete. Another Highway Improvement Form (HIF) has been submitted by Braydon PC asking for further improvements. Unclear at this time if this priority will be expanded, or closed and a new priority opened for Braydon PC's request.
Issue	Manor Hill	Priority #1 - feasibility work on speeding at narrowest points of carriageway expected in Spring. No budget allocated at present.
Issue	The Butts	Priority #2 – vehicles driving up The Butts. School suggested to explore Taking Action on School Journey initiative. No action planned at this time.
Issue	Lydiard Green Footway	Priority #3 – initial consultation with residents to establish willingness for free dedication of land, not all affected properties happy. Complex scheme where longer term strategy/agreement required for project delivery. No action planned at this time.
Issue	Church Place	Priority #4 - improved speed reduction measures and pedestrian safety. School suggested to explore Taking Action on School Journey initiative. No action planned at this time.

Members are asked to:

- CONSIDER the issues listed above to establish if they are still to be explored
- CONSIDER any new issues to be submitted by the deadline of 29 April.

Village Gates – Greenhill Crossroads

As part of the works taking place at Greenhill cross roads, the white village gates will be moved further back from the crossroads towards Purton, to line up with the new speed limit boundary. As the existing gates are concreted in, it is unlikely they will be able to be reused and so the LHFIG engineer is asking for the Council to consider the specification of the new gates.

The new gates could be wider (up to 1.5m) which will have a greater impact on approaching drivers. White gates, which would match all other gates around the parish have the most impact but need cleaning periodically to maintain their appearance.

The gates will be furnished with signs as below:



Recommendation

Members to AGREE to request white gates that are as wide as can be accommodated in this location (up to 1.5m)

Hayley Graham
March 2026

Members are requested to CONSIDER submitting an application.

The SSEN Communities Fund is now open. There are two sections:

- Support for Community Resilience - equipment identified in your flood plans, to enable resilience in the event of flooding or other emergency
- Low Carbon Tech e.g. solar panels, battery storage, EV charges think village halls

The fund is open until noon of 21 May 2026.

If you need any help or advice please do contact me, I have been in touch with several of you this year and this is your opportunity to get support.

The link below offers more details and how to apply.

[Powering Communities to Net Zero fund - SSEN](#)

Members are requested to:

- NOTE the report
- CONSIDER engaging the services of Webbpaton for the ensuing year
- APPROVE a maximum expenditure to meet with Webbpaton.

Background

Webbpaton has been the Council's land agent for a number of years and have processed the Council's Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) and delinked payment claims for Lydiard Plain.

These schemes have been phased out, with the Government introducing new schemes to be introduced in 2026.

The one that the land may be eligible for is the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI). Further details can be found on the following link:

<https://ahdb.org.uk/Sustainable-Farming-Incentive>

Webbpaton can explore this scheme on the Council's behalf. In order to do so, the terms of engagement must be signed and a meeting should be held with our assigned agent. For the meeting, Webbpaton will charge a fee on a time spent basis for the work involved, subject to a minimum charge of one hour, plus out of pocket expenses (travelling, mapping costs etc), plus VAT. The Council's assigned agent's fee is £135 per hour plus VAT. This meeting will allow the agent to provide an estimate of costs for them to make a claim, if applicable, on the Council's behalf. £500.00 was included in the 26/27 budget for Lydiard Plain professional fees.

Recommendation

Members are requested to APPROVE the engagement of Webbpaton and APPROVE a maximum expenditure of £160 ex. VAT to meet with Webbpaton. Costs to be met from the Lydiard Plain professional fees budget.

Hayley Graham

March 2026

Our ref: HW/tb
10th March 2026

Good Afternoon

Spring Meetings, Stewardship Claims & SFI Annual Declarations 2026

This is normally the time of year we write to you regarding your annual claims ahead of the 15th May deadline. As you will be aware from our spring meetings in recent years, there is now no longer a requirement to submit annual BPS forms, with the payments now delinked from your land. For 2026, they are capped at a maximum of £600 per farm.

Regardless of BPS disappearing, the 15th May deadline remains in place for Countryside Stewardship and Higher Level Stewardship annual claims, for which we need to confirm details with you, usually this is easiest via a “spring meeting”. Sustainable Farming Incentive annual declarations continue to be required on a rolling basis throughout the year, so the spring meeting is often a good time to finalise these.

In addition, in recent weeks, we have received the much-anticipated announcements for the 2026 schemes, which makes it ever-more important to have our annual meeting to discuss these. There are various schemes due to launch in late March, June, July and September respectively, many of which will only be open until the budget is reached. With previous schemes, the budget has been reached within a few weeks, so it is imperative that we see you **in advance** of the schemes opening, so that we have drafted a scheme and are ready to submit as soon as they open, to give you the best chance of a successful application.

Therefore, as with last year, we believe it beneficial to arrange a spring meeting with a member of our team. Should you instruct us to do so, our meeting will include the following:

1. Preparation and submission of your 2026 annual claim or annual declaration for the following schemes, alongside the necessary supporting information:
 - Countryside Stewardship (CSS);
 - Higher Level Stewardship (HLS);
 - Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI);
 - Forestry/Woodland grant claims.
2. Discussing and advising on upcoming grants including:
 - Farming Equipment and Technology Fund (FETF) – launching late March;
 - Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) – launching June and September respectively;
 - Capital Grants – launching July;

Partners

Mark Webb FRICS FAAV
Libby Hutchinson MRICS FAAV
Becky Farthing MRICS FAAV
Helen Wiltshire MRICS FAAV
George King MRICS FAAV ASAg



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These will be alongside the wider changes across agricultural policy, Higher Tier, Biodiversity Net Gain and other emerging markets.

3. Checking previous payments and raising any inconsistencies with the RPA to ensure you have been paid the correct amount.
4. Checking and updating your cropping and online mapping. This is still important following the end of BPS, as all environmental schemes remain based on your online mapping system and cropping records being accurate. If these are inaccurate, it could lead to delays or underpayments for your environmental schemes.

As with the last couple of years, our fees will be charged on a time basis, subject to a minimum charge of one hour. This will reflect how large and/or complicated your annual claims are plus any other work listed above. Our fees are outlined in further detail in the enclosed Terms of Engagement but will reflect the current charge out rate of the individual at WebbPaton LLP carrying out your work.

We attach a copy of our latest Terms of Engagement to allow us to undertake your scheme-related work for the next 12 months. Assuming you would like our assistance again, we ask that you please sign and return these to us in whichever way you find easiest – online signature, post or email. One of the team will then be in touch with you to arrange a meeting.

If you have any queries, please do contact the member of our team that you usually deal with.

Yours sincerely

The Partners at WebbPaton LLP

Enc

TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT – 2026 SPRING MEETINGS, ANNUAL CLAIMS & GENERAL SCHEME/GRANT WORK

Signing these Terms of Engagement confirms that you wish WebbPaton LLP to undertake work on your behalf relating to schemes and grants for the next 12 months. This will include, but not be limited to: spring meetings, advice, applications and annual claims for Countryside Stewardship, Higher Level Stewardship, woodland schemes, Sustainable Farming Incentive, Capital Grants, Farming Equipment and Technology Fund and any similar grant or environmental scheme.

Introduction

This document sets out the terms on which we accept your instructions and charge for our services as set out in the accompanying letter dated 10th March 2026. Our aim is to provide you with a high-quality service tailored to meet your requirements in a friendly and cost-effective manner, and to develop a close working relationship with you.

Persons Responsible For Your Work

We will inform you of the individual responsible for your work. We will tell you if a different person is dealing with your file, unless they are known to you from previous occasions.

Information and Confidentiality

We rely on the information which you provide to us, and will assume it to be correct unless and until you notify us to the contrary. You will be required to check all information prior to submission to the RPA and to confirm that it is correct to the best of your knowledge. Information passed to us is kept confidential and will not be disclosed to third parties other than the RPA except as authorised by you or required by law. If, on your authority, we are working in conjunction with other professional advisers we will assume that we may disclose any relevant aspects of your affairs to them.

Client's Money

All monies which we hold belonging to you will be placed in a separate client account. Our client account is at Barclays Bank, 28 Regents Street, Swindon. The name of the account is the WebbPaton LLP Client Account. The sort code for the branch is 20-94-04, and the account number is 20026182. On occasion we may place money from the WebbPaton LLP Client Account on short term Treasury Deposit under the name WebbPaton Client. We retain all interest earned to enable us to keep the fees that we charge you as competitive as possible.

Professional Indemnity Insurance

We hold Professional Indemnity Insurance for the work that we undertake in accordance with the appropriate rules of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). We are unable to provide advice in connection with or undertake work covered by the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002.

Professional Standards

WebbPaton LLP is 'Regulated by RICS' which means that we adhere to their required professional standards and codes of conduct. In addition the partners are all qualified members of the Central Association of Agricultural Valuers (CAAV) and we are therefore subject to the standards laid down in the CAAV's bylaws.

Complaints

If at any time you are not satisfied with the way in which we are dealing with your work we ask that you discuss this at the earliest opportunity with the individual handling your matter. If you are still dissatisfied we ask that you write to us outlining your concern and we undertake that we respond to you in writing within 14 days. We will make every effort to resolve the matter with you. However, we appreciate that there may still be an occasion when we are unable to resolve the matter and in those circumstances we suggest complaints of a professional nature are referred by Consumer Clients to the Property Redress Scheme (via postmaster@theprs.co.uk) or to the 'Neutral Evaluation Procedure for Surveying Disputes' (Commercial Clients) via www.rics.org/regulation.

Termination of Instructions

Once instructed, we will normally continue to act for you in that matter until its conclusion. Circumstances may however arise where it is appropriate for either of us to terminate the arrangement, and when this happens, you will be responsible for fees up to

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George King MRICS FAAV ASA



Regulated by
RICS



the date of termination, and any fees and disbursements necessarily associated with our ceasing to act or the transfer of the work to another adviser of your choice.

Regulations

We are unable to accept any responsibility or liability in respect of any losses incurred by you following from changes to regulations or legislation enforced in England, the United Kingdom or the European Union or any other legislation.

Privacy Policy

Our full Privacy Policy can be found at www.webbpaton.co.uk/privacy-policy. In summary your details will be/are stored in WebbPaton LLP's clients and contacts database. We may send communications about rural updates, breaking news, newsletters, the occasional promotional gift and event invitations which may be of interest to you. Your details will not be given or sold to a third party, unless you expressly permit it and only on a case by case basis. If at any time you decide you would like to be removed from Webbpaton LLP's clients and contacts database please tell us. WebbPaton LLP is a limited liability partnership registered in England and Wales with registered number OC447481. The registered office of WebbPaton LLP is The Dairy, Hook, Royal Wootton Bassett, Wiltshire, SN4 8EF. Please note that: (a) the term "partner" is used to refer to a member of WebbPaton LLP, a list of whom is available at the registered office; and (b) "WebbPaton" is a trading name and in using this name we refer to WebbPaton LLP.

Fees

For the spring meeting and annual claim, we will charge a fee on a time spent basis for the work involved, subject to a minimum charge of one hour, plus out of pocket expenses (travelling, mapping costs etc), and VAT. The rate per hour will depend upon the individual fee earner dealing with your work. Please ask us if you are not aware of the current charge out rate of the fee earner you have been allocated. Any additional work, such as future grant applications, will be charged on an hourly basis, again plus out of pocket expenses and VAT. There is no minimum fee to additional grant or scheme applications.

Our fees become payable once you have agreed to these terms in writing. Any special arrangements agreed with you concerning our fees will be set out in a separate letter or email and will override this section of the 'Terms of Engagement'. All bills are for payment within 30 days. We reserve the right to charge interest for late payment at the rate of 8% per annum over Barclays Bank plc base rate.

If we are holding money in our client account on your behalf and WebbPaton LLP have an outstanding invoice for work we have completed for you, we may deduct our fee from your money held in our client account, unless you have previously questioned the invoice you have been issued with. By signing these Terms of Engagement you give WebbPaton LLP written consent to deduct our outstanding fees where necessary from your money we hold in our client account and forward the remaining balance to you.

Value Added Tax

VAT at the applicable rate will be added to our fees and expenses.

=====

I have read and understood the above terms and conditions and hereby accept them.

Signed Date.....

NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

ADDRESS

.....

TELEPHONE MOBILE

EMAIL:

Last Updated: 10th March 2026

Briefing Note No. 26-03 Town and Parish

Service Devolution & Asset Transfer Policy – revision

Service :	Assets
Further Enquiries to:	Mike Dawson
Date Prepared:	23/03/2026
Direct Line / Email:	mike.dawson@wiltshire.gov.uk

Wiltshire Council introduced the Service Devolution & Asset Transfer (SDAT) Policy in November 2018, with a revision approved by Cabinet in September 2022.

In October 2025, the council adopted Our Wiltshire Plan 2025-2035 and the Asset Management Strategy 2025-2035, with it being prudent to ensure the SDAT Policy aligns with these. A revised policy has been drafted and included for reference.

The changes made in the policy reflect the experience of councils in previous SDAT packages and comments made to Wiltshire Council regarding flexibility of the existing policy. The revisions are intended to provide controlled degrees of flexibility and encourage further town councils to engage in the process.

The approach to service devolution has not changed with the desire from Wiltshire Council to devolve the whole suite of services within the town boundary, but flexibility has been introduced. In addition, the opportunity for asset conversations have been widened.

The ask of town and parish councils

Wiltshire Council is seeking informal views on the draft policy to gain an understanding of how the new policy, if adopted, would be received.

On the basis this is seeking informal views, we are not seeking town or parish councils to obtain formal resolutions from their respective committees.

The intention is for the new policy to be presented to Cabinet on 28 April 2026, allowing time for feedback from town and parish councils to be reflected. The feedback will be summarised in the report, with councils not individually identified.

To meet Wiltshire Council's democratic timescales, feedback is being sought via the survey link below which will close at 5pm on Friday 10 April. Due to the relatively

short turnaround time, there will not be an opportunity to hold formal meetings with town or parish council between the close of survey and the Cabinet meeting.

[Service Devolution & Asset Transfer policy engagement](#)

Changes proposed

A summary of the policy changes and reasons behind these are detailed below:

Services change: Specific services may be delegated, such as cleansing activities in line with the Code of Practice for Litter and Refuse, soft grounds-maintenance functions, or other amenity-service provisions such as weed treatment

Reason:

- Recognition that it may not be viable for town and parish council to operate all services.

Services change: The defined geographical areas for services can be defined, provided clearly delineated.

Reason:

- Recognition that it may not be viable for town and parish council to operate services within the whole town or parish boundary.

Assets change: The policy retains the opportunity for a single conversation **and** introduces a timescale for repeat negotiations; creating with a further opportunity six years after transfer.

Reasons:

- To encourage an initial single conversation whilst retaining the option of further discussions.
- Allows for towns that have been through the process to discuss any assets that did not originally transfer.
- Wiltshire Council resources to be used efficiently and not get involved in piecemeal transfers.

Assets change: Single or group asset transfer requests are permitted in this policy, allowing for a case-by-case business decision to be made.

Reasons:

- Opportunity to consider alternate operational models for service-based assets, involving town councils.
- Allows for towns to discuss assets that would be better delivered locally, including where they were not including in any historic package/transfer.

Assets change: In respect of SDAT packages, the opportunity for income producing assets has been included, subject to a (shorter) exemption list. The need to consider strategic reasons for retaining land remains.

Reason:

- Opportunity to offset the costs to be incurred by town or parish councils associated with service-based assets.

Assets change: A reducing financial contribution over a period of three years will be offered in certain circumstances.

Reason:

- Opportunity to offset the costs to be incurred by town or parish councils associated with service-based assets.

Note: Parish Council asset transfers not affected by the revisions, with the Cabinet approval in November 2018 remaining in effect. This resolution allows for up to 10 assets to be transferred provided they are of nominal value.

Service Devolution and Asset Transfer Policy



Contents

1. Introduction
2. Background
3. Service Devolution and Asset Transfer
 - 3.3 Service Delegation
 - 3.4 Freehold Asset Transfer
4. Appendices

This policy can be made available in a range of accessible formats if required.

DRAFT

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Wiltshire is a thriving county with a rich and diverse heritage. We are home to half a million people with around half of the population living in towns and villages with fewer than 10,000 residents. This policy recognises that Wiltshire Council cannot achieve everything in isolation; we need to work ever more closely with our partners and stakeholders.
- 1.2. Our strong and cohesive communities continue to be some of our proudest achievements. The way we look out for each other and handle the challenges we have faced together is what makes our beautiful county the best place to live, work and raise a family.
- 1.3. At the centre of Our Wiltshire Plan 2025-2035 is the empowerment of local communities and this policy is intended to be a method of delivering this.
- 1.4. It enhances the role of Town and Parish councils; enables the use of buildings to be modified to embrace local needs; the ability to seek and secure additional resources from sources not available to Wiltshire Council to do so as well as the ability to deliver and modify services to match the needs and expectations of local communities.
- 1.5. This Policy creates the framework for service devolution and asset transfers to Town and Parish councils.
- 1.6. Single asset transfers to community groups as facilitated by Community Area Boards will continue to be managed by the approved Community Asset Transfer Policy July 2011.

2. Background

- 2.1. Wiltshire Council will promote and facilitate the devolution of appropriate services and transfer of associated assets (by way of freehold or long leasehold) to Town and Parish councils where it is more appropriate for those assets and services to be delivered by third-tier Local Government.
- 2.2. The devolution of services will seek to take a pragmatic approach to provide the local community with the ability to influence the level of service it feels is appropriate and to meet their individual needs.
- 2.3. This policy sets out Wiltshire Council's approach to service devolution and asset transfers to Town and Parish councils, reflecting significant legislative requirements, summarised in Appendix 1.
- 2.4. Wiltshire Council has responsibility for land and buildings through various means:
 - 2.4.1. Owned assets – Wiltshire Council hold either a freehold interest or long lease (usually in excess of 100 years) of the asset;
 - 2.4.2. Dedicated assets – Wiltshire Council has responsibility to maintain land due to a historical contractual obligation but does not have the freehold ownership, for example areas of public open space or play areas under planning agreements; or

2.4.3. Statutory responsibility – Wiltshire Council has the responsibility for maintaining assets and providing services under legislation, for example highway land or closed burial grounds.

2.5. The disposal of assets by Wiltshire Council can be by either:

2.5.1. Market sales – where “best consideration” is obtained, widely interpreted as the best price/market value (as required under s123 of Local Government Act); or

2.5.2. Disposal at less than best consideration – this could either be a transfer for a nominal sum or reduced purchase price but will certainly be lower than the market value. Justification for such a disposal is needed via other socio-economic wellbeing purposes.

3. Service Devolution and Asset Transfers

3.1. The Service Devolution and Asset Transfer package to prospective Town and Parish councils will differ depending on the services provided and the assets held, however the following principles will be applied initially with any additional elements considered on a case by case basis:

3.1.1. Services to be devolved include:

- All Streetscene services within the boundary of the Town/Parish boundary.
- OR**
- An individual service or combination of services from the list below defined either by the Town/Parish boundary or a defined area:
 - Amenity Maintenance – Grounds, trees and vegetation on identified land to include weeds
 - Cleansing – Councils compliance to Code of Practice for Litter and Refuse (CoPLaR) including weeds and dead animal removal Play areas
 - Monuments
 - Parks and Open Spaces
 - Public Conveniences

3.1.2. Assets to be transferred will be the choice of the respective Town or Parish council but be largely based on non-statutory provisions of Wiltshire Council:

- Play areas
- Monuments
- Parks and Open Spaces
- Cemeteries
- Community facilities
- Leisure centres
- Any area for which section 106 monies are held
- Any other assets which are not covered by the exemption criteria in Appendix 2

3.2. The packages will be managed in two ways:

3.2.1 **Service delegation agreement** – transfer of responsibility for delivering services currently performed by Wiltshire Council where Wiltshire Council only has dedicated or statutory responsibility (see 2.4.2 & 2.4.3 above), as there is no asset to transfer.

3.2.2 There may also be strategic reasons for Wiltshire Council to retain ownership of

an asset but are willing to transfer responsibility to provide services. Wiltshire Council will consider the transfer of both statutory and discretionary services; although where statutory services have transferred the ultimate responsibility will remain with Wiltshire Council.

3.2.3 **Freehold transfer** – transfer of total ownership of the service-related assets, subject to certain exceptions. In some cases, a freehold transfer of the assets to Town and Parish councils may not be acceptable to Wiltshire Council due to:

- adjoining / surrounding land not being transferred; and/or
- potential for redevelopment, either with or without Wiltshire Council land, and/or
- historic and/or complex land issues which would make a freehold transfer resource prohibitive to both Wiltshire Council and the Town/Parish Council.

In these cases, (where Wiltshire Council owns the freehold) Wiltshire Council will grant a fixed term tenancy of 7 years (less 5 days) of the asset, subject to an appropriate break clause. (A lease of this length is exempt from s123 “best consideration” tests.)

3.3. Wiltshire Council own a large number of small non-strategic open space land parcels. These are most efficiently and effectively managed via a service delegation agreement only, as it is financially inefficient for both parties to arrange a freehold or long leasehold transfer. Should the Town/Parish council wish to have these legally transferred it will be the responsibility of that Town/Parish council to undertake all the required due diligence and fund all legal costs.

3.4. Service Delegation

3.4.1. Wiltshire Council recognises certain services can sometimes be more appropriately delivered by the local community in which they are required, and that service delegation of these services can be the most appropriate way to ensure this. Appendix 3 and 4 detail the services that can be delegated at a local level. These amenity services are cross cutting with Wiltshire Council, and the service delegation should ensure that the responsibility for delivery of services is transferred to the local Town/Parish.

3.4.2. The decision to delegate services to the Town/Parish council may form part of a package including freehold or leasehold transfers referred to in section 3.5 **or** the service delegation may be taken as a single package approach where either there may be reasons for Wiltshire Council to retain the freehold ownership or the town/parish council does not wish to take on the freeholds.

3.4.3. The delivery of services fall within two categories:

- (1) **Statutory services** – the transfer of service delivery is available but not full statutory responsibility. Wherever Wiltshire Council decides to transfer a statutory function, Wiltshire Council will retain ultimate responsibility for that function. However, responsibility for delivering the service may be transferred to a Town/Parish council under clear contractual arrangements. The Town/Parish council will then become responsible for the delivery of those services in accordance with the terms of the service delegation agreement. In view of Wiltshire Council’s underlying statutory responsibility, Wiltshire Council must be able to terminate the service delegation agreement at any time.

- (2) **Discretionary services** – the transfer of full responsibility, including responsibility for delivery, for services can happen. This type of delegation can only apply where Wiltshire Council has a high degree of discretion about the provision of the service. Wiltshire Council will cease to be responsible and accountable for the delivery of these services. There is also no guarantee that Wiltshire Council would consider taking on responsibility or accountability for the service should a Town/Parish council wish to stop these services. A clear, written delegation must be made by Wiltshire Council and accepted by the Town/Parish council.

3.4.4. In some circumstances Wiltshire Council will only delegate services to Town/Parish councils rather than transfer assets. Examples of where a service delegation will only be appropriate include:

- (1) Wiltshire Council has a statutory obligation, such as highway or a housing authority to provide; or
- (2) Land maintained for the benefit of the community by Wiltshire Council but not owned by Wiltshire Council; or
- (3) Land where commuted sums for the maintenance have been paid to Wiltshire Council; or
- (4) Where there is only a small area of council owned land, which means the cost of the legal land transfer is prohibitive (negated where the local Town/Parish council are prepared to fund the transfer).

3.4.5. However, in the above cases a service delegation on those areas will allow the local Town/Parish to set the standard and deliver the Amenity Maintenance Services within a defined boundary.

3.4.6. Following the date of transfer Wiltshire Council will not be responsible for delivery of any of the services agreed in Appendix 3 and any Services in Appendix 4 within the defined boundary. The Town/Parish council will perform the services within the boundary indefinitely on and from the transfer date to the minimum standards required by any relevant legislation. The decision on enhancement to the legal minimum standard of provision of services will be delegated to the relevant Town/Parish council. The Town/Parish council would take responsibility for all consequences: financial, contractual, safety or otherwise for the services delivered and the management of the amenity assets and their services provided on the highway.

3.4.7. The delegation of services will not affect any rights Wiltshire Council may have to dispose of, transfer, assign, lease or otherwise deal with its amenity land in its capacity as freehold owner.

3.5. Asset Transfers

3.5.1. The preference for asset transfers is that all assets within the locally defined Town/Parish boundary are transferred at the same time, although the transfer either single or groups of assets will be considered.

3.5.2. Where not all assets are transferred to a particular town/parish, Wiltshire Council will not be obliged to facilitate any further transfers within a six year period.

3.5.3. The approach taken may differ depending on whether Town/Parish councils that

have already been through the Service Devolution and Asset Transfer Policy, including earlier versions:

- With a Service Devolution agreement – the opportunity to approach Wiltshire Council for the further transfer of assets; either single or a group.
- Without a Service Devolution agreement – the opportunity to approach Wiltshire Council for the further transfer of assets; either single, a group or all service-based.

3.5.4. In all cases the approach set out in paragraph 3.5.1 will apply.

3.5.5. It should be noted that asset transfers for Parish councils are governed by the Cabinet resolution of 27 November 2018, which will carry forward and remain relevant under this policy. This resolution allows for up to 10 assets to be transferred provided they are of nominal value. The time constraints specified in 3.5.1 regarding possible further transfers will apply.

3.5.6. The freehold transfer will be drafted on the following basis:

- (1) The transfer will not normally include a provision to offer the asset back to Wiltshire Council **if it is no longer needed for community use** (“the reverter”) unless there are compelling legal reasons for doing so.
- (2) If the transfer needs to contain the reverter, Wiltshire Council will not be under any obligation to accept an asset back. However, Wiltshire Council will need to assess at the time if there are strategic reasons that Wiltshire Council should take the asset back.
- (3) If Wiltshire Council decides to take an asset back it will be under no obligation to continue community use of the asset. If Wiltshire Council disposes of the asset at a future date there will be no requirement to provide any of the capital receipt to the Town/Parish council.
- (4) The transfer will include a provision for Town/Parish councils to pay 50% of the capital receipt to Wiltshire Council should they dispose of those assets for non-community uses to a third party.
- (5) In the case of community buildings and land, the permitted community use is defined in the standard lease or freehold transfer.

3.5.7. In some instances, transfer of the freehold would not be appropriate due to adjoining or neighbouring assets. In these instances, 125 year leases will be granted with a break clause for Wiltshire Council to regain the asset should either disposal or redevelopment of the wider area is being considered.

4. Financial considerations

- 4.1. Income producing assets as listed in Appendix 2 remain excluded from any service devolution and asset transfer packages.
- 4.2. Any service devolution and/or asset transfer must be in the best financial interest of Wiltshire Council and generate a saving in costs to Wiltshire Council.
- 4.3. Transferring services and assets to town/parish councils placed a financial burden on

them, and to support this transition an element of financial support could be considered in the SDAT package.

4.4. A reducing financial contribution will be provided in the following circumstances:

- All services within the entire town/parish boundary are being devolved, either with or without assets.
- Where all assets within the entire town/parish boundary are being transferred.
- Where single or groups of assets are being transferred, where a service devolution agreement exists.

4.5. The financial contribution will be based on the revenue savings generated by Wiltshire Council, being 15% in Year 1, 10% in Year 2 and 5% in Year 3. This contribution will not take into account any future / potential cost liability.

4.6. Wiltshire Council will not undertake major or capital works to any assets being considered for transfer; due to potential design and defect liability complications.

5. Governance

5.1. Following agreement with the Town/Parish council, the service devolution and asset transfer package will be presented to Wiltshire Council's Cabinet for a resolution.

5.2. Single or group asset transfers to Town councils will be presented to Wiltshire Council's Cabinet for a resolution.

5.3. Once Cabinet has made a resolution, officers will be delegated to complete the necessary documentation, including any minor amendments to the terms within.

6. Appendices

1. Relevant Legislation
2. Exempt Assets
3. Soft Maintenance Services for devolution
4. Hard Maintenance Services for devolution

Appendix 1 - Relevant Legislation

Local Government Act 1972 (“1972 Act”) – s123 sets out that local authorities must obtain “best consideration” for all disposals, and s101 allows a local authority to delegate certain functions to another local authority (subject to express provisions in the 1972 Act and subsequent legislation).

Local Government Act 1972: General Disposal Consent 2003 (“General Consent Order”) - gives permission for Councils to dispose at less than best consideration provided the value forgone is less than £2m (in capital terms) and the transaction benefits the economic, social or environmental well-being of the area. If the value forgone is greater than £2m approval from the Secretary of State is required.

Local Government Finance Act [1988]

RICS Valuation - Professional Standards (“Red Book”) – defines market value when considering the price obtained from a disposal

Localism Act 2011 – introduced the concept of local communities taking more control of assets in their area.

Public Contracts Regulations 2015 - ensure that public spending on goods, services and works is subject to EU procurement rules. Pure land transactions are exempt from EU procurement rules, but the rules may apply where specified services are provided in exchange for receipt of an asset.

European Commission’s State Aid Rules – may apply to any use of public money and resources which is not subject to EU procurement rules (e.g. asset transfers and grant awards). These rules are intended to avoid state aided subsidies which could distort competition and affect trade between member states.

Transfer of employees: TUPE - There are two different types of transfer of employees under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE) – Service Provision Change or a Transfer of Whole or Part of an Undertaking

Appendix 2 – Exempt Assets

The types and nature of assets and or services that will transfer are set out in the policy. The Transfer of property assets are likely to be associated with transfers of services, where agreed between the parties.

Assets that are exempt for transfer or devolution through this policy are:

Assets held for investment purposes - both assets that generate an immediate net income to Wiltshire Council and those held for future capital realisations
Assets of a rural nature - given Wiltshire Council's roles as a Small Holdings authority
Assets held with Wiltshire Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) - utilised to deliver the statutory housing functions
Vacant land or buildings that can generate a capital receipt in excess of de-minimus level for capital accounting purposes - with capital receipts required to fund the capital programme of Wiltshire Council
Land held for future development of Wiltshire Council or partner schemes, or of strategic importance - as it would not be financially prudent to devolve the land and be required to repurchase in the future
Education and statutory early years premises - due to Wiltshire Council's roles as a Local Authority for education purposes

APPENDIX 3

Soft Maintenance Services		
Task	Comment	Conditions
Litter Picking	• Litter examples include: • Dead animals (road kill) • Dog/ animal faeces • Cigarette waste & cigarette packets • Beverage and drinks containers • Food containers or utensils • Publications, magazines and newspapers • Shopping and other bags • Illegal deposits of bagged commercial and household waste which shall be cleared as fly tipping, see further below • Removal of pigeon droppings from pathways and footways • Removal of fallen branches, wood, metal and plastic objects • Removal of leaf and blossom falls to an approved programme • Other similar waste types up to 1 cubic meter	Must be carried out on both Amenity Land and the Highway
Emptying of Litter Bins		Must be carried out on both Amenity Land and the Highway
Removal of Dead Animals on the Highway		Must be carried out on both Amenity Land and the Highway
Removal of Fly Tipping (but no enforcement related tasks)		Must be carried out on both Amenity Land and the Highway

Removal of Fly Posting (but no enforcement related tasks)		Must be carried out on both Amenity Land and the Highway
Graffiti Removal (but no enforcement related tasks)		Must be carried out on both Amenity Land and the Highway
Shopping Trolley Removal (but no enforcement related tasks)		Must be carried out on both Amenity Land and the Highway
Leaf Clearance		Must be carried out on both Amenity Land and the Highway
Balancing ponds, amenity footpaths, Streetscene assets and water courses	Monitor the condition and highlight any health and safety concerns on amenity footpaths, ponds, ditches and any amenity asset and effect their reasonable repair	Must be carried out on Amenity Land
Park and Highway Furniture	Monitor the condition of the furniture and highlight any health and safety concerns and effect their reasonable repair/replacement (subject on each occasion to WC's permission to repair/replace highway furniture)	Must be carried out on both Amenity Land and the Highway. WC's prior written permission must be given in respect of repairing and replacing Highway furniture.
Grounds Maintenance	Shrub Bed Maintenance, Maintenance of Shelterbelt / Plantation Areas / Hedge Maintenance / Tree / Herbaceous Borders and any soft area maintenance.	Must be carried out on Amenity Land and the Highway. WC's consent to maintain the verges of the Highway is hereby given.

Grass Maintenance	• Sheltered Housing Schemes • High amenity areas • General grass areas • Low Amenity areas • Highway verge areas • Rough grass areas • Flail grass areas • Wild flower/conservation areas	Must be carried out on the Amenity Land and the verges of the Highway. WC's consent to maintain the verges of the Highway is hereby given.
Sports Pitch Maintenance (Football and Rugby)		Must be carried out on Amenity Land
Cricket Pitch Maintenance		Must be carried out on Amenity Land
Countryside	Litter clearance and emptying of litter bins	Must be carried out on Amenity Land
Woodlands and Countryside Site	Scavenging and cleaning and/or maintenance	Must be carried out on Amenity Land
Play Areas, Multiple Use Games Areas (MUGA) and Skate Park Inspection and Maintenance		Must be carried out on Amenity Land

Allotments	General up keep and maintenance including: • Boundary fencing • Gates and Hedges • Tracks • Car parks • Grass areas and • Footpaths	Must be carried out on Amenity Land (allotments)
Open Cemeteries	General up keep and maintenance including memorial testing	Must be carried out on Amenity Land (cemeteries)
Closed Churchyards	General up keep and maintenance including memorial testing	Must be carried out on Amenity Land (closed churchyards)
Car Parks and hard areas maintained by WC immediately prior to the Transfer Date	Maintenance of car parks – grounds and street cleaning (as per contract scope)	Must be carried out on Amenity Land and hard areas subject to the exclusions in Column 1
Centre Litter Picking and Sweeping		Must be carried out on Amenity Land and the Highway
Weed Control (amenity hard areas and highways)	Responsibility for all weeds on the highways and service delegated areas	Must be carried out on Amenity Land and the Highway
Bus shelter maintenance	Litter collection and cleaning (graffiti, fly posting, moss etc. removal)	Must be carried out on Amenity Land and the Highway

Appendix 4

Hard Area Maintenance Services	
Type of Land	
The public open space where the hard asset is managed is:	☐ public gardens; ☐ land used for the purposes of public recreation; ☐ parks; ☐ natural and semi-natural urban greenspaces ☐ derelict open land; ☐ sports pitches; ☐ outdoor sports areas; ☐ play provision; ☐ amenity greenspace; ☐ play areas; ☐ skateboard parks; ☐ outdoor basketball hoops; ☐ and other more informal area (e.g. 'hanging out' areas, teenage shelters); ☐ accessible countryside in urban fringe areas; ☐ cemeteries; ☐ closed churchyards.

For the avoidance of doubt, hard asset management would not be delegated for:

☐ Play & Display Car Parks

☐ Highway assets (without prior agreement – see below)

☐ Campus or Hub areas

☐ Housing Revenue Areas

The concept of the delegation would be for hard asset maintenance to be as an asset transfer.

As such anything on the asset and anything beneath (but not adopted assets) would become the responsibility of the local council.

Hard assets would include: fences; walls; paths; lighting; seats; fixed equipment etc.

Service Devolution & Asset Transfer policy engagement

Wiltshire Council introduced the Service Devolution & Asset Transfer (SDAT) Policy in November 2018, with a revision approved by Cabinet in September 2022.

In October 2025, the council adopted Our Wiltshire Plan 2025-2035 and Asset Management Strategy 2025-2035, with it being prudent to ensure the SDAT Policy aligns with these. A revised policy has been drafted and included for reference in the briefing you've received.

The changes made in the policy reflect the experience of councils in previous SDAT packages and comments made to Wiltshire Council regarding flexibility of the existing policy.

The revisions are intended to provide controlled degrees of flexibility and encourage further town councils to engage in the process.

The approach to service devolution has not changed, with the desire from Wiltshire Council to devolve the whole suite of services within the town boundary, but flexibility has been introduced. In addition, the opportunity for asset conversations have been widened.

Please tell us your views

Wiltshire Council is seeking informal views on the revised draft policy to gain an understanding of how it, if formally adopted, would be received.

On the basis that this is seeking informal views, we are not seeking town or parish councils to obtain formal resolutions from their respective committees.

The intention is for the new policy to be presented to Cabinet on 28 April 2026, allowing time for feedback from town and parish councils to be reflected. The feedback will be summarised in the report, with councils not individually identified.

To meet Wiltshire Council's democratic timescales, feedback is being sought via this survey which will close at 5pm on Friday 10 April 2026. Due to the relatively short turnaround time, there will not be an opportunity to discuss feedback with town or parish council between the close of survey and the Cabinet meeting.

1. What town/parish council do you represent?

2. Did you want to engage in the historic SDAT, but felt the conditions were a barrier to the process?

☐

Yes

☐

No

3. Does the draft revised policy clearly describe the options available for councils?

☐

Yes

☐

No

4. Does the draft revised policy provide sufficient flexibility?

☐

Yes

☐

No

5. Would the draft revised policy encourage you to engage in discussions with Wiltshire Council regarding a SDAT package?

☐

Yes

☐

No

6. Do you have any other comments regarding the draft revised policy? (max 250 characters)