

## **Chairman's report to residents at the Annual Parish Meeting held at Old Sarum Community Centre**

"This might seem obvious to old timers like me but for many of our new residents it will be a new revelation that they reside in our wonderful Parish. Just remember that is the Lucky Seven Parish of South Wiltshire, near Salisbury but not in Salisbury and steeped in natural and historic heritage. We will have some of the longest-lived ladies in the land and us men know how to enjoy ourselves albeit over a slightly shorter lifespan.

We remain one of the busiest Parish Councils in Wiltshire when it comes to planning with four major planning developments in the Parish in various stages in the Planning Process. Old Sarum Airfield has gone to Public Inquiry, Longhedge Village is starting to take shape, Riverdown Park is established but the Country Park and Play Parks are yet to be build and Old Sarum still has much to do to secure all the facilities owed by Developers.

Some of our successes this year include securing £700,000 to manage the 55 Hectare Country Park at Riverdown Park in perpetuity with help from our Land Trust partners together with a similar sized sum to create the Country Park AND commitments from the Developers to build out 6 play parks and landscape the spoil areas at their own expense. We also secured the Green outside this Community Centre and project managed our fabulous play facilities – more of that later, and we have just seen our first play park at Longhedge opening.

We embarked on our Neighbourhood Plan this year. From my perspective it has been a joy to see the energy and enthusiasm that the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group have thrown into this work. Neighbourhood Plan Boundary established, Aim and Objectives drawn up and most recently project planning structure put into place.

I have a feeling that this period of history in the Parish will come to be known as the Play Park Epoch. I make no excuse for our focus on these valuable community facilities – just have a look at the Play Park by the Green and you will see community spirit in action with young and old having fun and growing an ever-stronger community spirit This is the lifeblood of this Parish and we need to work as hard as possible to make sure it continues to grow. You will hear from Andrew in a minute or so that our budget this year includes a significant sum to take on Wiltshire Council owned Play Parks and save them from dereliction. Finally I would like to thank Parish Councillors and the Executive for all their hard work over an extremely busy and productive year ."

The meeting concluded with questions from the floor.