

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF SAVERNAKE PARISH COUNCIL 10TH MAY 2022

MEETING HELD AT ST KATHARINE'S CHURCH, SAVERNAKE

PRESENT

Guy Singleton (Chairman) (GS)	Councillor
Nikki Boutal (NB)	Councillor
Nigel Eayrs (NE)	Councillor
Andrew Smithson (AS)	Councillor
Suzie Singleton (SS)	Parishioner & Secretary

Speakers:

Rob Cullen - Forestry England (RC)
Tom Savernake (TS)
Sgt Gareth Cole - Wiltshire Police (SGC)

Approx. 18 parishioners and 26 members of the public

ITEM		
0	WELCOME GS welcomed everyone to the meeting and the councillors introduced themselves.	
1	APOLOGIES Martin Phipps Anne and Tony Ashpitel Lawrence Timpson	
3	APPROVAL OF MINUTES The minutes of the previous Annual Parish Meeting held on 26 th May 2021 were approved. A copy will be uploaded to the SPC website.	
4	FINANCE REPORT NE went through the Parish Council's income and expenditure over the last 12 months, a copy of the report is attached at Appendix A	
5	UPDATE ON PARISH COUNCIL ACTIVITIES Guy Singleton gave an overview of the works carried out by the Parish Council since the last Annual Meeting in 2021. A copy is at the end of these Minutes at Appendix B.	

ITEM		
6	<p>STATEMENT FROM THE TRUSTEES OF THE SAVERNAKE ESTATE</p> <p>GS read out a statement as the Trustees were unable to be present. This is attached in Appendix C.</p>	
6A	<p>PRESENTATION BY TOM SAVERNAKE</p> <p>Tom Savernake, who is one of the beneficiaries of the Trust, gave a presentation with slides and videos, relating to some of the problems encountered by those who live in, work in and visit Savernake Forest.</p> <p>He suggested that the level of crime has increased significantly during the COVID lockdown, with a huge increase in visitor numbers. He reported to the meeting that he was aware of many crimes which had taken place within the forest, including rape, sexual assaults, violent assaults, threats on children, drug dealing, prostitution, unlicensed guns & organised dog theft. He believes that 90% of the crime occurs on the Grand Avenue and that if it were to be closed it would prevent a lot of the crime. He noted that one road within the Forest, Three Oak Hill Drive, had been closed and the serious crime there had since all but stopped.</p> <p>Tom stated that he believed that the fact that Marlborough Police Station was no longer manned 24 hours a day and the lack of police resources were partly to blame as he believed that criminals had too much time to escape due to the time it would take the police to arrive from Devizes.</p> <p>He showed photos and video of vehicles travelling at speed along the Grand Avenue noting that the level of dust spread by this affected the trees and rare lichens in the SSSI. Also that fences had been broken and fires had been caused by disposable barbecues.</p> <p>Tom displayed a spreadsheet listing various crimes that he was aware of, but that they did not all appear to show on the police records. It appeared that not all these crimes had been reported or recorded by the police.</p> <p>He then highlighted an assault on someone who lived within the Forest about 18 months ago and was concerned that that the police had not yet arrested anyone for this.</p> <p>Tom completed his talk with some suggestions for the future in order to try and reduce the problems:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - That the Grand Avenue be completely closed at night, when most of the crime occurs - That electronic gates and number plate recognition be used at both ends of the Grand Avenue and that secure car parks and CCTV be provided. 	

ITEM		
	<p>He did note that such works would cost a lot of money and said that this could be raised by greater commercialisation, including ice creams, a tea shop and possibly entrance fees on car parks.</p> <p>In subsequent discussions it was made clear that any decision on these types of matters will be made by the Trustees, hopefully in consultation with the various interested parties.</p>	
<p>7</p>	<p>PRESENTATION BY ROB CULLEN, BEAT FORESTER, FORESTRY ENGLAND</p> <p>Rob Cullen gave a presentation explaining that the document which had been shared online and had roused so much debate, was in fact, a few pages of possible ideas for consideration in discussions between FE and the Savernake Estate. These had been taken out of context, and then treated as decisions made - rather than possible options to be considered over the long term.</p> <p>He gave an overview on the relationship between The Savernake Estate and Forestry England, noting that The Savernake Estate owns the Freehold of the Forest and retains the Sporting Rights across it, whereas Forestry England has a Lease over the Forest for managing the woodland, including care of the veteran trees and wildlife as well as having the responsibility of maintaining the Grand Avenue and other roads.</p> <p>He mentioned that the Savernake Forest is private property and that access to it for leisure and recreational purposes is allowed by the Trustees of the Savernake Estate.</p> <p>His presentation slides are attached in Appendix D.</p>	
<p>8</p>	<p>WILTSHIRE POLICE</p> <p>Sgt Gareth Cole provided information on the number and type of crimes which had been recorded from the Savernake Area within the last 12 months.</p> <p>In response to comments about crimes being reported but not recorded he stated that all crimes which are reported will be recorded as there is a legal duty to do so. Also that the Marlborough Police station is still in use and officers are often located there rather than at Devizes so may be closer to the Forest should they be needed.</p> <p>Crime figures reported are listing in Appendix E.</p>	

ITEM		
	<p data-bbox="280 237 435 264">Q&A SESSION</p> <p data-bbox="280 320 1249 465">Rob Cullen and Sgt Gareth Cole then took several questions from the floor, a few from parishioners but the majority were from visitors to the meeting. Several times questions were repeated, albeit in different ways. A summary of the main points covered were as follows:</p> <ul data-bbox="331 488 1278 1995" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="331 488 1262 555">• The mains concerns related to the ideas circulating online that the forest was due to be entirely closed, and that visitors would need to pay to park. <li data-bbox="331 566 1262 757">• RC reaffirmed that these were merely some of various options that would be considered in due course when making decisions on how best to protect and support the Forest long term, and that any ultimate decisions would be made by the Trustees for the Savernake Estate, not by Forestry England. <li data-bbox="331 768 1254 925">• There had been many changes to Savernake Forest and the way it is used in the 80 years since the Forestry Commission first took the Lease, many more people owning cars made it easier for people from further away to access it. <li data-bbox="331 936 1270 1093">• Visits to the Forest had increased greatly since the Covid lockdowns and continued to increase, but unfortunately many of the visitors did not show the concern and care of the area that most parishioners and other local people did. <li data-bbox="331 1104 1254 1384">• The Grand Avenue had previously been tarmacked but this had been removed about 10 years ago, rather than continuing the upkeep of the deteriorating road surface. Forestry England were currently re-surfacing again but need to consider the cost of its ongoing maintenance. It should also be accepted that if the Grand Avenue is resurfaced, this could exacerbate the problem of speeding within the forest, an aspect that the current poor surface does inhibit to an extent. <li data-bbox="331 1395 1262 1630">• Speeding vehicles through the Forest were a big problem, particularly when vans, large vehicles and even articulated lorries used the Grand Avenue as a cut through when the A346 in particular was busy, an increasing occurrence these days. Speeding vehicles and the multitude of vehicles parked at the sides of the Grand Avenue created a lot of dust and damage to the verges which affected and damaged the plants and lichens. <li data-bbox="331 1641 887 1675">• There were also problems with fly-tipping. <li data-bbox="331 1686 1278 1995">• People were concerned that gates could be put at either end of the Grand Avenue preventing any access but RC said that this was by no means a firm proposal. It was reported that when Three Oak Hill Drive had barriers installed it was enough to stop people damaging that area, and the thought was that something similar would benefit the rest of the Forest, without it needing to be barricaded at both ends. This was still a matter for discussion and, ultimately, a decision for the Trustees of Savernake Estate, it would not be a unilateral decision made by Forestry England. 	

ITEM		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cameras have been used in some areas but these were often vandalised, as were areas of fencing that had been installed. • One question, repeated in different ways by a few people was whether other car parks would be set up and, if so, where they would be, and would they be charged to park? Would locals have to pay to park as well as visitors from other areas? Local people currently able to visit the Forest a couple of times a day to walk their dogs would be adversely affected if they would need to pay for parking each time. Concerns were raised that if parking in Savernake Forest was limited to paid car parks then areas such as St Katherine and Durley would be likely to suffer from cars parked on the verges and blocking other areas. • RC said that this was still to be reviewed, and that the final decisions will be made by the Trustees. 	
8	<p>MATTERS ARISING</p> <p>The councillors agreed to make a contribution of £40.00 to Church funds for the use of the premises for the meeting.</p>	

Signed ... Guy Singleton

Date ... 23rd May 2024

Name ... *Guy Singleton*

Appendix A



**Savernake
Parish Council**

AGENDA FOR THE ANNUAL SAVERNAKE PARISH MEETING

St Katharine's Church, Savernake Forest

10th May 2022

7.30pm – 9.00pm

- | | | |
|---|---|-----------------|
| 1 | Welcome | Chair |
| 2 | Apologies | Chair |
| 3 | Approval of Minutes of previous Annual Parish Meeting. (A copy of these are on the Parish website, www.savernake-pc.org) | Chair |
| 4 | Finance Report | NE |
| 5 | Update on Parish Council Activities over the last year | Chair |
| 6 | Statement from the Trustees of the Savernake Estate | Chair |
| 7 | Presentation from Forestry England. | Rob Cullen |
| 8 | Wiltshire Police – Report on crime in the Parish and Savernake Forest | Sgt Gareth Cole |
| 9 | Any Matters Arising & Close | Chair |



**Savernake
Parish Council**

Savernake APM – 10 May 2022

Finance Report

Agenda

1. Income & Expenditure – Precept Account
2. Income & Expenditure – CIL Account ('Community Infrastructure Levy')
3. Bank Balances
4. 2021-22 Project Expenditure
5. 2022-23 Forecast
6. Summary

1. Income & Expense accounts

	Item	Sub-total	Total
A Precept Account			
Income			
	Precept	£ 1,300.00	
	Interest	£ 2.09	£ 1,302.09
Expenses			
	Audit Fee	£ 84.00	
	Information Commissioners Office	£ 35.00	
	Insurance	£ 180.40	
	Postage	£ 15.60	
	Room Hire - Meetings	£ -	
	Training	£ 87.57	
	WALC Subscription	£ 115.97	
	Website	£ 179.00	£ 657.54
	Surplus / (Deficit)		£ 644.55
B Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Account			
Income			
	Wiltshire Council CIL funds	£ -	
	Interest	£ -	£ -
Expenses			
	Bus stop maintenance (Cadley - Boarding)	£ 297.00	
	Highway white gates - installation materials	£ 122.33	£ 419.33
	Surplus / (Deficit)		£ 419.33
C All Accounts			
	Surplus / (Deficit)		<u>£ 225.22</u>

2. Account reconciliations

	Precept	CIL	TOTAL
A Internal Accounts			
Opening balance (Accounts)	£ 5,147.69	£ 2,654.80	£ 7,802.49
Surplus / Deficit (Calculated)	£ 644.55	£ 419.33	£ 225.22
Closing Balance (Calculated)	<u>£ 5,792.24</u>	<u>£ 2,235.47</u>	<u>£ 8,027.71</u>
B Bank Accounts			
Opening balance (Statement)	£ 174.58	£ 7,627.91	£ 7,802.49
Surplus / Deficit (Calculated)			£ 225.22
Closing Balance (Calculated)			<u>£ 8,027.71</u>
Balance as at 31 March (Statement)	£ 27.59	£ 8,000.12	£ 8,027.71
Difference			<u>£ -</u>

3. Fixed Assets

	Opening Balance	Change	Closing Balance
Bus stops (Cadley and Savernake Hospital)	£ 1,100.00	£ -	£ 1,100.00

4. Notes

- A The Precept continues to fully cover the Council's recurring expenses.
 B Reserves are currently more than adequate to cover all known future non-recurring projects.
 C The Council is confident of its 2021-22 budget and foresees no risk of being unable to fulfil its financial commitments.

Position	Name	Signature	Date
Treasurer	Nigel Eayrs		11/05/2021
Chairman	Guy Singleton		20/05/21

Annual Internal Audit Report 2020/21

Savernake Parish Council

www.savernake-pc.org PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

During the financial year ended 31 March 2021, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2020/21 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process, progress against the budget was regularly monitored, and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked, and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	N/A		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	N/A		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2019/20, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2019/20 AGAR tick 'not covered')	✓		
L. The authority publishes information on a website/webpage, up to date at the time of the internal audit, in accordance with the Transparency code for smaller authorities.	✓		
M. The authority, during the previous year (2019-20) correctly provided for the period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (evidenced by the notice published on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2019/20 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).	✓		
O. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			N/A

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

20/05/2021 23/05/2021

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

ANDREW RICHARDS WILLIS ROSS

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit



Date

23/05/2021

*If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

**Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned, or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

Savernake APM – 10 May 2022

Finance Report

1. 2021-22 Precept Income & Expenditure

• Precept from Wiltshire Council + VAT Refund + Interest	+ £ 2,128
• Expenditure during the year	<u>- £ 2,601</u>
• Balance drawn down from reserves	- £ 473
• Reserves at the start of the year (01 April 2021)	+ £ 5,792
• Drawdown from reserves to supplement the year's precept	<u>- £ 473</u>
• Reserve funds at 31 March 2022	+ £5,319

Finance Report

2. 2021-22 CIL Income & Expenditure

- The CIL ('Community Infrastructure Levy') can be levied by County Councils on developers for funding necessary infrastructure to support a particular building project
- SPC received £2,795 from WC in 2018 and £1,448 in 2021 (Total: £4,243)

- **Utilisation of funds:**

• Hospital bus stop maintenance (2019-20)	- £	140
• Cadley bus stop maintenance (2020-21)	- £	297
• Installation materials for white roadside gates (2020-21)	- £	122
• Supply of white roadside gates (2021-22)	- £	3,684
• Funds remaining at 31 March 2022	£	0

Finance Report

3. Bank Balances

• Precept reserve funds	+ £ 5,319
• CIL remaining funds	<u>£ 0</u>
• Total funds at 31 March 2021	+ £ 5,319

- SPC bank balances have been unusually high in recent years (peaking at over £8,000)
- Historically funds would average £ 3,500 - £5,000 at year end
- They have been high for 3 main reasons:
 - a) Receipt of the once-off CIL funds
 - b) No major project expenditure during the period 2015-2020
 - c) Accumulated savings from the Precept funds received, adding to Reserves each year
- Following project spend in 2021, year-end bank balances have now returned to historical levels

Finance Report

4. 2021-22 Project Expenditure

- SPC focused in 2019-20 on developing projects to improve road safety

- These came to fruition in 2021 with the following expenditure:

1. Supply of white roadside gates and signs - Cadley x4, Forest Hill x3	- £ 4,307
2. Supply and installation of 'Children Crossing' signs at Cadley	- £ 738
3. 25% contribution to a traffic speed survey at Forest Hill	- £ 625
	<u>- £ 5,670</u>

- This expenditure was funded as follows:

1. From the CIL funds received from Wiltshire Council	- £ 3,684
2. From SPC's reserve funds	- £ 1,986
	<u>- £ 5,670</u>

Savernake APM – 10 May 2022

Finance Report

5. 2022-23 Forecast

• Precept received from Wiltshire Council	+ £ 1,300
Recurring expenses	- £ 900
Project expenditure (Clench Common)	<u>- £ 700</u>
Funds drawn from reserves	- £ 300
• All reserves at the start of the year (01 April 2022)	+ £ 5,319
• Deduct the deficit arising from the year's expenditure	<u>- £ 300</u>
• Forecast reserve funds at 31 March 2023	+ £ 5,019

Finance Report

6. Summary

- The Precept continues to fully cover the Council's recurring expenses
- Reserves have returned to historical levels following major project spend in 2021
- The Council is confident of its 2022-23 Budget and foresees no risk of being unable to fulfil its financial commitments.



**Savernake
Parish Council**

As Trustees for the Savernake Estate we have a responsibility to ensure the judicious management of the Estate (including the Forest), as a whole, for the future benefit of the land, the beneficiaries, the local community and those with wider interests in the rare, fragile and precious environment and heritage of The Forest. As you are aware, this management responsibility is shared with Forestry England as part of their lease. Any changes to the current terms of the lease and the parties responsibilities will require detailed negotiations and consultation with other interest groups.

We are acutely aware and increasingly concerned that The Forest is being used in a way(s) that are having a materially negative impact. We believe change is needed to halt and reverse this trend.

As is inevitably the case with places of importance that mean so much, to so many, for such varied reasons; finding the right balance between competing interests is not easy. To preserve heritage and habitat one needs to control access; to allow leisure pursuits to take place one needs to permit access etc. There are, however, some common themes:

- All legitimate activities are negatively impacted by antisocial and criminal behaviour – sadly, an issue of increasing prevalence and impact.
- Implementing proper control / policing and management is costly in terms of time and money.
- The interest of the whole is often best served by compromising the interests of individuals.
- Delivery of a holistic solution requires a focused, well-articulated and supported plan.

At this stage, there are no fixed proposals for any plan; just a recognition that one is needed and that this will need to be developed in conjunction with our lessee, Forest England and in consultation with all key stakeholders.



**Savernake
Parish Council**

APPENDIX B

I would like to welcome everyone to the Savernake Parish Council Annual Meeting, this is a meeting that all Parish Councils need to hold once a year, and it gives us an opportunity to let Parishioners know what the Parish Council has been doing over the last 12 months. Before moving on with the agenda, I also should inform you that the meeting is being recorded.

Parish Council Update APM 2022

In terms of the Parish Council Activities over the last year, our main focus has been on trying to reduce the speed of traffic in the three residential areas of the Parish - Forest Hill, Cadley & Clench Common.

We have been trying to reduce the speed limit at Forest Hill for the last 8 years, and it has been somewhat frustrating. This has to be done through a Wiltshire Council body, known as CATG. We had received grant funding via the Marlborough Area Board, for a traffic speed survey. Unfortunately for our purposes Atkins, who carry out the survey on behalf of Wiltshire Council, have reported that the road does not comply with the rules for a 40mph limit. We are going to contest this, and also ask that Wiltshire Council look at the guidelines to which Atkins are working, this is an all too common response to similar requests elsewhere within the county.

We have however had some success in that, with the agreement of Wiltshire Council, we have managed to install the White Gates at either side of Forest Hill and Cadley, these do help to reinforce to drivers that they are entering a residential area.

We are now looking at doing a similar thing at Clench Common where we have had increasing reports of speeding drivers. We are told that we have little chance of getting a speed limit imposed, so are looking into installing White Gates and possibly also road narrowing signs. So far we have had quite a positive response from both Wiltshire Council Highways and from the Ramsbury Estate who own the land at the southern end of the hamlet where the White Gates would be installed.

The other main activity, for me at least, has been the Marlborough Area Neighbourhood Plan, I have been on the Steering Group, and the process is now nearing completion. The plan has been with an Examiner who checks it over to ensure compliance with the various rules; the examiner has almost completed his deliberations and will shortly be reporting back to Wiltshire Council and Marlborough Town Council who are the qualifying bodies.

One of the main reasons for the creation of a Neighbourhood Plan is that once it has been adopted it limits the possibility of developers being able to apply for consent on land outside the current development boundaries, this is especially important as Wiltshire does not currently have a 5 year land supply as required by Government Policies, which makes it easier for developers to get consents where they otherwise might not have done.

APPENDIX B

The next stage for the Plan will be for it to go to a referendum, I suspect that this will be in September, but this will depend on Wiltshire Council who will set up the referendum. I would urge that you look at the plan when it is published in its final form, and do please vote, it is important that those who support it, even if not strongly, do vote. In a comparatively small referendum it is easy for those who object to it to get a disproportional number of votes as supporters do not necessarily make the effort to vote. Although some aspects of the plan may not suit everyone it has taken a long time to get to this stage and having it in place should benefit the area.

Within the Parish there are two Platinum Jubilee Celebration, on Sunday 5th July, one being at Cadley on the green in the centre of the village, start t 12.00 until around 3.00 and take the form of a bring your own BBQ – we will provide a large BBQ, please bring everything else. The other being at Clench Common where residents ae planning a 'bring your own' Jubilee Party from 2pm to 5pm at Martinsell Farm, Clench Common an invitation which will be posted through the doors of properties in the area over the next few days.

Are there any questions on these matters?

I will now move on to the reason that I suspect many of you are here, the question of access to and within the Savernake Forest.

I am grateful for The Savernake Estate, Tom Savernake, Forestry England and the Police for their input and attendance. I have lived in Cadley for almost 40 years, and over that time access to the Forest has changed, with now, most of the internal roads and tracks closed to vehicles, and whilst this has been an inconvenience for some there was not any great outrage, as it was clearly for public safety as too many drivers do not take others into consideration.

Unfortunately this continues to be the case and there having also been an increase in crime which is largely vehicle dependant and has now led to a question about continued vehicular access along the Grand Avenue.

The Forest is managed by The Trustees of the Savernake Estate and Forestry England and is I believe unique in being the only privately owned Forest in the Country. This split of ownership and responsibilities does give rise to problems, especially as the world has changed significantly since the Forestry Commission took the lease on the Forest just before World War 2, then very few people had leisure time – or cars.

APPENDIX B

When preparing for this meeting we asked if along with others, The Trustees would like to attend the meeting, they could not do so, but have asked that I read out a statement on their behalf.

Following the statement Tom Savernake, who is one of the beneficiaries of the Trust would like to say a few words on the problems which have occurred over the last two years within the Forest. He will be followed by Rob Cullen of Forestry England, Rob is the local beat forester, and we have primarily asked him to attend to update us on works which are planned over the next 12 months within the Forest, he is fully aware of the recent public debate regarding access to the Forest, you should be aware that he is not responsible for the static plan or the recent survey undertaken by Forestry England. Rob will be followed by Sergeant Gareth Cole from Wiltshire Police. After this there will be an opportunity for questions.

In the interests of time-keeping I am going to restrict this to one question per person – without a follow up, and initially to Parishioners, and if time permits to the General Public.

The statement from the Trustees is as follows:

Appendix C

Guy Singleton
Savernake Parish Council

By email only guy@savernake-pc.org

9th May 2022

Dear Guy,

Thank you for your kind invite to attend the Parish meeting. We would like to make the following statement:

As Trustees for the Savernake Estate we have a responsibility to ensure the judicious management of the Estate (including the Forest), as a whole, for the future benefit of the land, the beneficiaries, the local community and those with wider interests in the rare, fragile and precious environment and heritage of The Forest. As you are aware, this management responsibility is shared with Forestry England as part of their lease. Any changes to the current terms of the lease and the parties responsibilities will require detailed negotiations and consultation with other interest groups.

We are acutely aware and increasingly concerned that The Forest is being used in a way(s) that are having a materially negative impact. We believe change is needed to halt and reverse this trend.

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- Implementing proper control / policing and management is costly in terms of time and money.
- The interest of the whole is often best served by compromising the interests of individuals.
- Delivery of a holistic solution requires a focused, well-articulated and supported plan.

At this stage, there are no fixed proposals for any plan; just a recognition that one is needed and that this will need to be developed in conjunction with our lessee, Forest England and in consultation with all key stakeholders.

Yours sincerely,

Simon Nuttall & Michael Cash
Trustees of the Savernake Estate

Savernake Forest - Where are we?

Rob Cullen - Beat Forester for the Bristol, Mendips and Savernake Beat.



Who is responsible for the Forest?

Savernake Estate

- Freeholder
- Countryside Stewardship grazing scheme
- Retains sporting rights

Forestry England

- Forestry Lease
- Partnership working for wood pasture management
- Maintenance responsibility for Grand Avenue and other roads/rides

Documents at play



- Sets out long term vision for Savernake
- Brings together six ‘principles of land management’
- Sits above the Forest Plan
 - Corresponding level of detail
- Thorough consultation

Documents at play

Savernake Forest A Way Forward?

- Discussion document
- Written to address legitimate concerns over issues associated with public access
- Produced at the request of Savernake Estate
- Discussion at early stages
- Consultation?

Why consider change?

What makes Savernake Special?

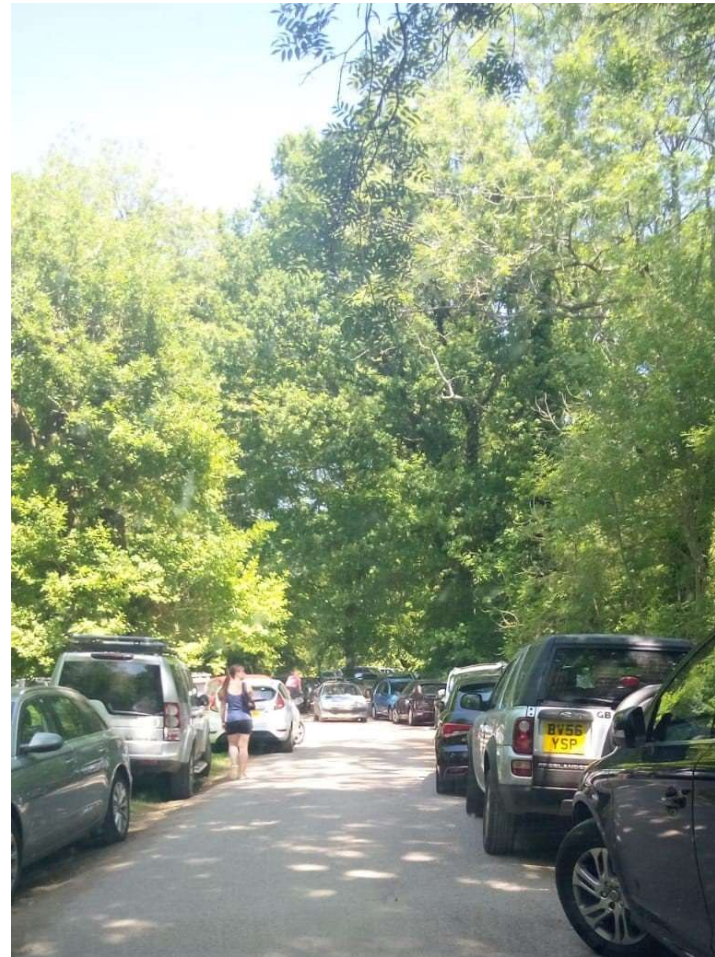
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- 4000-7000 Veteran Trees
- Ancient Woodland
- Wildlife
- Historic Landscape
- Valued local amenity



Why consider change?

What does the future hold?

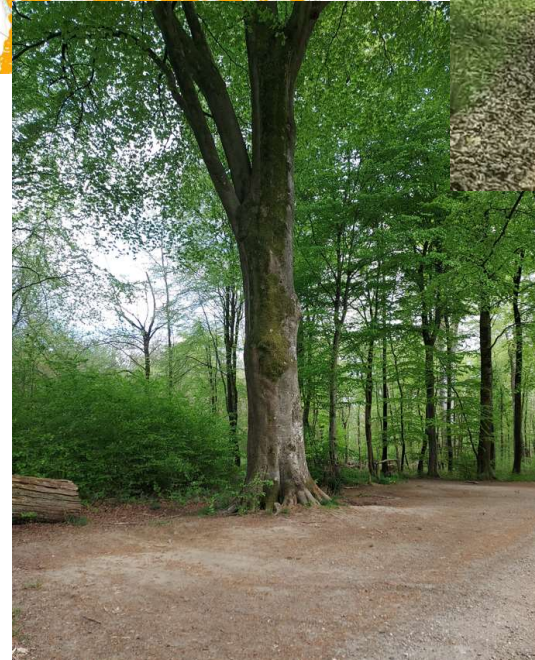
- Savernake has changed over the past 80 years
- Number of visits to woodlands is set to continue increasing
 - Increasing interest in trees and woodland
 - New residential developments in Wiltshire
- Lockdown snapshot



Why consider change?

Impact on trees and wildlife

- Damage to Veteran Tree roots
- Impacts of uncontrolled dogs on wildlife
 - Biodiversity crisis
- Dust clouds on Grand Avenue



Why consider change?

Other impacts

- Inappropriate use as an alternative to public road network
 - Speeding
 - Damage to road surface
- Antisocial behaviour and crime

Barriers?

Discussion will continue. Decision lies with Savernake Estate as the Landowner and Landlord.

Various options that need consideration, each with associated merits and implications

Postern Hill?

Concerns

- Inappropriate location
- Outdated facilities
- Waymarked trails - missed opportunities
- Not future-proof

Discussion in early stages

APPENDIX E

Crime Reports in Savernake Parish

In relation to the crimes mentioned I'm unable to comment on any specific incidents but have broken down crimes relating to the forest recorded on our systems. I've gone back 3 years as 2020 can be an anomaly in terms of crime recording due to it being when 2 national lockdowns occurred =

01/04/21 – 27/04/22 = 16 Crimes recorded, broken down as follows =

9x Thefts from unattended vehicle

4x Assaults (3x dog bites on humans & 1x human on human)

1x Road Traffic Collision (RTC) – Car hits and kills dog

1x Sexual offence

In recognition of the increase in beauty spot vehicle break ins, Wiltshire Police ran a proactive Patrols operation between 15/06/21 and 20/10/21. This increased Police Patrols of the area in addition to the standard patrolling as part of our wider patrol strategy. A further proactive patrols operation commenced on 12/04/22 in response to community concerns raised through the town council.

01/04/20 – 31/03/21 = 4 Crimes recorded, broken down as follows =

2x Thefts from unattended vehicle

1x Seizure of uninsured vehicle

1x Public order (Forestry worker subjected to verbal abuse from member of the public)

01/04/2019 – 31/03/2020 = 6 Crimes recorded, broken down as follows =

4x thefts from unattended vehicle

1x Assault (dog bite on human)

1x Animal (4x deer carcass' located by forestry worker)

As you can see the predominant crime type is thefts from parked and unattended vehicles where people have left items on display. The numbers are low (single figures) with no pattern to the offending times/locations, which makes it difficult to predict when other offences may be committed and therefore limits our ability to put preventative measures in place. Nearly all of these crimes are closed down without police attendance due to the remote nature of the location, absence of witnesses and forensic opportunities, making further enquiries impossible. With the estate being such a popular area for walkers though we do of course visit the area as part of our wider patrol strategy referred to earlier.

Slight increases in beauty spot crime is a trend we are seeing across the county and hasn't been isolated to specific areas. I completed the same search for Silbury hill, which is also part of our sector, and this showed 12, 6 and 4 crimes recorded during the periods specified above.