

Meeting Record –Summary of meeting 2026 08 03 - 4:30pm - Pavilion

Compound and Car Park Project – Phase 2 Detailed Design Discussion

Present

Cllr Gary Blandford-Hull (GBH)	Cllr Chris Harrison (CH)
Cllr Maria La Femina (MLF)	Cllr Charlotte Blackman (CB)
Cllr Pete Edge (PE)	Cllr Alex Boyd (AB)
Pete Blackman (Chair FaRMAC) – (PB)	Town Clerk – (BL)

Absent - Cllr Claire Forbes

BL provided a comprehensive update on project progress, including the delays associated with Marshway Construction's trial holes, the requirement for a percolation test, and the ongoing development of the car park and compound design. Input from all Project Group members was noted as part of the continuing design process. GBH provided an update on the emerging draft plan, confirming that amendments arising from the meeting held on 30 June, had been incorporated into the updated emerging draft plan.

- **Trial Holes and Percolation Test:** BL reported that Marshway Construction, represented by Dave Marsh, was unable to complete the trial holes the previous week but was aiming to do so the following week, with a percolation test planned if weather permits. This activity is considered crucial for the project's next steps.
- **Communication Delays:** BL explained that there was a delay in contacting Dave Marsh due to his holiday and lack of an out-of-office notification, but communication has now resumed and progress is back on track.
- **Design Plan Updates:** GBH was tasked with updating the emerging plan to reflect group feedback. It was noted that GBH has produced a site plan to show the current layout for council review. The updated plan spaces parking bays at 5 metres apart, following recommendations for open car parks.
- **Next Steps and Recommendations:** BL clarified that the project group does not make final decisions but provides recommendations, and that further updates will be provided once the trial pit and percolation tests are completed. The group will reconvene after these results are available.

Car Park and Compound Design Considerations: GBH and other participants discussed technical aspects of the car park and compound design, including bay spacing, lighting, disabled access, vehicle circulation, and compliance with national planning policy.

- **Bay Spacing and Layout:** GBH updated the group on the decision to space parking bays 5 metres apart around the perimeter, aligning with recommendations for open car parks. The plan also considers the increasing width of vehicles over time.
- **Lighting and Safety:** The group discussed lighting options, including the use of single-direction aluminium lights, shields to prevent light spill, and the need for additional lighting at gateways and pedestrian areas. The importance of ensuring safe access for all users, including service and emergency vehicles, was emphasised.
- **Disabled Parking and Access:** It was confirmed that two disabled parking bays are included in the emerging plan, with considerations for their location and access. The group also discussed the need for clear pedestrian pathways and the extension of tarmac to improve accessibility.
- **Vehicle Circulation and Emergency Access:** Discussions covered the importance of vehicle manoeuvrability, including turning circles for emergency vehicles, and the avoidance of marked bays. The plan aims to ensure safe entry, parking, and exit for all vehicles.

Flood Risk Assessment Consultant Selection: Quotes from two civil engineering consultants, Clive Onions and Steph Howard, for the flood risk assessment, were reviewed with input from PB, MLF and others, and outlined the process for final selection via a group poll.

- **Consultant Quotes and Experience:** The group reviewed comprehensive quotes from Clive Onions and Steph Howard, both recommended by Marshway Construction. Clive Onions was noted for his detailed submission and existing work on another council project, while Steph Howard's team had conducted a recent site visit.
- **Evaluation Criteria:** Participants discussed the importance of consultants' familiarity with local flood modelling data, previous experience with similar projects, and the thoroughness of their proposals. The group considered the implications of desktop studies versus site visits.
- **Decision-Making Process:** BL proposed conducting a poll among group members to determine the preferred consultant, with the final recommendation to be submitted to the council. The group agreed to compare both submissions before making a decision.
- **Next Steps:** Once the poll results are in, BL will include the recommendation to the council for approval. The selected consultant will then receive all compiled data to proceed with the flood risk assessment.

Ecological and Biodiversity Considerations: BL presented findings from the Wessex Ecology report and informal advice from ID Verde and Dr Appleyard, leading to a group discussion on habitat loss, legislative changes, and future biodiversity enhancement measures.

- **Wildflower Area Loss and Replacement:** The Wessex Ecology report identified the loss of an existing wildflower area and recommended habitat replacement if works proceed. The group discussed whether to retain, relocate, or remove the wildflower meadow, considering its ecological value and maintenance history.
- **Legislative Changes:** BL highlighted recent legislative changes exempting sites without priority habitats from mandatory biodiversity net gain, which applies to the project area. The group agreed for BL to seek clarification from Wessex Ecology.
- **Alternative Biodiversity Sites:** Participants discussed other local sites, such as Minster Street and Pound Meadow, as potential areas for biodiversity enhancement, and the possibility of including these in the new ground's maintenance contract.
- **Future Grounds Maintenance Contract:** The group agreed that the upcoming grounds maintenance contract presents an opportunity to prioritise biodiversity and sustainability, with plans to go out to tender in January and incorporate lessons from current maintenance practices.

Electric Vehicle Charging and Infrastructure Planning: The group explored the feasibility and challenges of installing electric vehicle charging points, including power supply limitations, cable routing, and future-proofing considerations.

- **Charging Point Usage and Access:** The group debated whether charging points should be reserved for pavilion users, Wilton residents, or the general public, and discussed the complexities of managing access, payment, and enforcement.
- **Technical and Infrastructure Challenges:** GBH raised concerns about the adequacy of existing power supplies, the need for heavy-duty cabling, and the potential requirement for a substation to support multiple charging points, especially for disabled bays.
- **Future-Proofing and Installation:** The group considered the pros and cons of installing cabling in advance for future charging points, noting the risk that future technology changes could render early installations obsolete.

Next Steps and Meeting Timeline: BL summarised the agreed actions, including issuing a summary of discussions, conducting a poll for flood risk consultant selection, and scheduling the next meeting for late August to finalise recommendations before council consideration.

- **Summary and Communication:** BL will circulate a summary of the meeting and provide updates once the trial pit and percolation tests are completed.
- **Poll and Council Approval:** A poll will be conducted to select the preferred flood risk consultant, with the outcome to be submitted to the council for approval.
- **Timeline for Final Decisions:** The group will reconvene in late August to review final design details, with the aim of presenting recommendations to the council in September.

Follow-up tasks:

- **Trial Pit and Percolation Test Updates:** Send a further update to the group once the trial pit holes and percolation test are completed, especially if it rains. (BL)
- **Flood Risk Assessment Poll:** Send out a poll to the group to select between the flood risk assessment consultants and include AB in the poll. (BL)
- **Flood Risk Assessment Recommendation:** Include the flood risk assessment poll results to council for approval once responses are received. (BL)
- **Lighting Plan Revisions:** Add additional lighting to the plan as discussed and issue the revised plan to the group for review. (GBH)
- **Clarification on Biodiversity Legislation:** Contact Wessex Ecology to clarify the legal requirements regarding the wildflower area in light of the recent legislative exemption. (BL)
- **Feedback on Flood Risk Consultants:** Contact Britford Parish Council to gather feedback on their experiences with the flood risk consultants under consideration. (BL)
- **Future Grounds Contract and Biodiversity:** Contact the Environment Agency to understand the requirements and possibilities for local management of areas currently under their responsibility, in preparation for the new grounds contract. (BL)