**PRESS RELEASE**

**27 November 2022**

**Sustainable Amesbury wins support from Wiltshire County Council leader**

Sustainable Amesbury campaigners received encouraging support from Wiltshire Council leader Richard Clewer on his recent visit to Amesbury, boosting their fight against proposals to rezone for development three local greenfield sites.

The sites are at Viney’s Farm, High Post and Solstice Park, cover more than 800 acres of productive farmland and involve requests to build some 1,340 new homes as well as two new industrial/distribution parks.

Cllr Clewer was at an Ask the Leader event at Stonehenge School on 4 November, attended by about 50 residents. At the event, he acknowledged Amesbury had grown very fast over 15 years and said it would benefit from a pause in development. He agreed that building houses at the proposed Viney’s Farm site, on the town’s south border, would put considerably more strain on the community.

He also expressed strong opposition to a proposal to build a new Salisbury Police station at High Post, on the A345 half way between Amesbury and Salisbury. He said he was particularly concerned about how effective such remote policing would be and supported instead building it within Salisbury itself.

When it comes to new housing in Wiltshire, Cllr Clewer said buiding in comparatively low numbers where there is a real need was preferable to building large estates in a few places.

Cllr Clewer also said the next draft of Wiltshire’s Local Plan, which sets out areas that can be rezoned for development, has been delayed until Q4 2023 at the earliest. It had been expected in Q3 of 2022.

The well attended event was hosted by Amesbury West councillor and Deputy Mayor Cllr Dr Monica Devendran. Much of the time was given over to residents’ questions about the three proposed sites.

They voiced particular concern about:

* damage development would do to the River Avon, wildlife, the environment, recreational spaces including byeways and footpaths and on local archeology
* changing the use of much-needed productive farmland
* additional traffic
* already overburdened medical and dental services
* the lack of school places
* light and noise pollution
* social cohesion.

Guy Leech of the Sustainable Amesbury campaign said: “I would like to thank Cllr Devendran for organising this event, which was seized upon by our supporters to raise our many concerns directly with Cllr Clewer.

“I hope he and the rest of the Council take note of the strength of local feeling against them allocating more than our fair share of new housing to Amesbury. We were certainly encouraged by his answers to our questions. Cllr Clewer appears committed to sustainable development that will protect our public services, infrastructure, environment, and heritage. Just as we are.”

Ends