



LISS PARISH COUNCIL

The Annual Meeting of Liss Parish Council took place at 7pm on 5th May 2021 via Zoom.

Members

*Mr K. Budden (Chair), *Mrs S. Baldwin, *Mrs J. Bennett, *Mr R. Finn, * Mr R. Hargreaves
*Mr D. Jerrard, *Mr H. Linsley, *Mrs G. Lowe *Mrs L McDonald, *Mr A. Smith,
*Mrs C. Williams and *Mr N. Wilson

* Present, in addition to Russell Oppenheimer (District and County Councillor) and Nichola Court (Chair of Liss Area Historical Society)

Clerk: S. Smith

44/21 Apologies

There were no apologies.

45/21 Election of Chair

Resolved: Cllr Budden, proposed by Cllr Williams and seconded by Cllr McDonald, was unanimously elected as Chairman for the ensuing Council year.
Cllr Budden signed the acceptance of office form.

Resolved: That a formal vote of thanks be extended to the outgoing Chair, Roger Hargreaves (proposed by Cllr Linsley and seconded by Cllr McDonald with all in favour).

46/19 Election of Vice Chair

Resolved: Cllr Wilson, proposed by Cllr Williams and seconded by Cllr Linsley, was unanimously elected as Vice-Chair for the ensuing council year.

47/21 Declarations of interests

There were no declarations of interest.

48/21 Chair's announcements

The Chair advised that:

- a) RFO Liz Ford leaves LPC on 28th May. The new RFO, Sandra Humphrey, starts in post on 1st June. Members wished Liz well in her new post as Clerk/RFO to Selborne Parish Council.
- b) The Clerk and Assistant Clerk will both be on leave week commencing 31st May. Measures will be in place for contacting an officer if needed during this week.
- c) The Clerk and Assistant Clerk are due to commence a phased return to the office week commencing 7th June. The office will then re-open to the public on 21st June in line with Government guidelines, returning to the previous opening hours on 10am-2pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Officers intend to continue to work flexibly between the office and home and so should a councillor wish to meet with an officer outside of office opening hours this should be arranged in advance.
- d) There will be no formal meetings of Council or committees in the period 7th May (when legislation for meeting virtually expires) to 21st June (when restrictions should be lifted) unless essential, in line with HALC guidance. It is envisaged that all meetings after 21st June will take place in the Village Hall to allow for Covid-secure meetings to take place.

- e) LPC has received a large sum of CIL money (just under £156,000) and so a meeting of the Project Review Group will be set up after 21st June to consider priorities and consultation for allocating this sum.

49/21 Update from the County Councillor

County Councillor, Russell Oppenheimer, advised that there would not be a full update due to the election purdah. He expressed a vote of thanks to outgoing Chair Roger Hargreaves.

Looking ahead Cllr Oppenheimer expressed a desire that the successful candidate in the County Council elections would prioritise climate change and nature recovery for the following four-year term. He noted the positive working relationship which had got underway with Cllr Bennett on climate change and said how pleased he was that the Mill Road Community Garden was getting underway as a great example of nature recovery.

Cllr McDonald expressed her gratitude to Cllr Oppenheimer for grants to the Crossover Youth Centre for which she was the LPC representative.

50/21 Presentation by Nichola Court, Chair of the Liss Area Historical Society

A copy of the presentation is at **Annex A**.

Members welcomed the informative presentation.

Cllr Budden noted his thanks to former LAHS Chair Mike Jordan. He advised that in terms of funding District Councillor grants could only be used for projects and not running costs.

Cllr Smith asked about the potential for collaboration with Petersfield Museum and Nichola noted a good working and supportive relationship, including housing and display of items, which could be built on.

Cllr Wilson noted the potential for social media to assist with the recruitment for trustees to the LAHS and welcomed the collaboration on the project with the Crossover Youth Centre as an example of promoting intergeneration working and harmony.

Nichola Court left the meeting at this point.

51/21 Update from the District Councillors

Cllr Budden advised that after two years in post his role as Chair to EHDC had come to an end and expressed his good wishes to his successor Adam Carew and deputy Sally Pond.

Cllr Oppenheimer expressed a vote of thanks to the EHDC Elections Team who faced additional challenges administering the election during the covid pandemic. He also noted the much higher proportion of postal votes this year.

52/21 Appointments to committees

Resolved: That appointments to committees be approved as at **Annex B** (proposed by Cllr Williams and seconded by Cllr McDonald with all in favour).

Clerk's Note: This document has been further updated since the meeting to reflect that the Chair and Vice-Chair sit on all committees. Further committee appointments will be approved throughout the Council year as required.

Members noted the need to consider the Standing Orders in relation to chairmanship and the limits imposed.

53/21 Appointment of representatives to outside bodies and champions

Resolved: That appointments of representatives to outside bodies and champions be approved as at **Annex B** (proposed by Cllr Linsey and seconded by Cllr Finn with all in favour).

54/21 Minutes of the meeting of 15th March 2021

Resolved: That the minutes of the Council Meeting of 15th March 2021 be accepted as a correct record, following an amendment to show Cllr Bennett as being present at the meeting (proposed by Cllr Linsley and seconded by Cllr Finn with all in favour).

35/21: Cllr Wilson noted that the deadline for funding decisions for the Supporting Communities Fund was in fact the end of May rather than April as was reported at the last meeting.

55/21 Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

56/21 Responsible Finance Officer's Report

Resolved: That the payments and receipts recorded in Responsible Finance Officer's Report be approved (proposed by the Cllr Finn seconded by Cllr Williams with all in favour).

57/21 Reports of committees:

Resolved: That the reports of the Planning Committee of 10th and 31st March 2021 be noted.

Resolved: That the report of the Facilities Committee of 22nd March 2021 be noted.

58/21 Year end financial close arrangements

- a) **Resolved:** That Liss Parish Council approves the Accounts for the 2020/21 financial year and the Chair to sign the bank reconciliation (proposed by Cllr Williams and seconded by Cllr Smith with all in favour).
- b) **Resolved:** That Liss Parish Council approves the Annual Governance Statement for 2020/21 for signing by the Chair (proposed by Cllr Williams and seconded by Cllr Finn with all in favour).
- c) **Resolved:** That Liss Parish Council approves the Accounting Statements for the 2020/21 financial year for signing by the Chair (proposed by Cllr Williams and seconded by Cllr Bennett with all in favour).
- d) **Resolved:** That Liss Parish Council notes the updated Asset List (proposed by Cllr Williams and seconded by Cllr Hargreaves with all in favour).
- e) **Resolved:** To confirm the level of allocated reserves and the total general reserve as of 1st April 2021 (proposed by Cllr Williams and seconded by Cllr Smith with all in favour).
- f) **Resolved:** That Liss Parish Council approves the updated Financial Regulations (proposed by Cllr Williams and seconded by Cllr Finn with all in favour).

Cllr Hargreaves noted the need for the Asset Register to be updated with land holdings and also the completion of the registration of all land with the Land Registry.

Cllr McDonald enquired as to whether we were still subject to the European Union Public Contracts Directive referred to in the Financial Regulations. It was agreed that this aspect needed checking and that it was possible that a further revision would be required to the Financial Regulations in light of any changes.

59/21 Action Plan 2021-22

Resolved: That Liss Parish Council approves the draft Action Plan for 2021/22 (proposed by the Chair and seconded by Cllr Smith with all in favour).

60/21 Delegated arrangements

Resolved: That following the Government decision not to extend the regulations to allow Parish and Town Councils and Parish Meetings to continue to meet remotely and the recommendation from HALC that meetings should be kept to a minimum during the period 7th May 2021 to 21st June 2021, the Chair, Vice-Chair and Chair of Finance shall have delegated authority collectively to make decisions on behalf of the Council where such decision cannot reasonably be deferred or must be made in order to comply with a commercial or statutory deadline. This will be carried out where possible in consultation with Members by electronic means or telephone. The delegation does not extend to matters expressly reserved to the council in legislation or Standing Orders or Financial Regulations. Any decisions made under this delegation must be recorded in writing and must be published in accordance with the relevant regulations. This delegated authority ceases upon the first meeting of the Council after the Council meeting at which the delegation was put in place.

The Chair noted that such a scheme of delegation had been strongly advised by HALC and the Internal Auditor.

The motion was proposed by the Chair and seconded by Cllr Williams with all in favour.

In response to a question from Cllr McDonald the Chair clarified that any decisions made under this derogation would be fairly limited and any decisions made where councillors could not be consulted would be reported to all councillors.

61/21 Mill Road Community Garden

Resolved: That Liss Parish Council a) notes the plan for the Mill Road Community Garden, b) delegates authority to sign the Licence with EHDC for use of the land to the Clerk following approval by the Chair and Chair of Facilities, and c) allocates the sum of £5,000 from CIL funding (£1,370 to make up a shortfall in funds and 15% of project costs at £3,600 for a contingency fund).

The motion was proposed by Cllr Wilson and seconded by Cllr Baldwin with all in favour.

62/21 Restoration of Millennium Mosaic

Resolved: That Liss Parish Council allocates general reserves for the sum of up to £5,000 to undertake the works required to restore the Millennium Mosaic, noting the need to adhere to any future maintenance programme as recommended by the tiler (proposed by Cllr Wilson and seconded by Cllr Williams with all in favour).

Cllr McDonald noted the possibility of involving local school children in the project and Cllr Wilson undertook to investigate.

63/21 Roof repairs to Village Hall

Resolved: That Liss Parish Council allocates general reserves for up to the sum of £10,000 to undertake the works required to the Village Hall roof, in line with the recommendations contained in the independent survey undertaken and subject to the requirements as set out in the Financial Regulations (proposed by Cllr Wilson and seconded by Cllr Williams with all in favour).

64/21 New bin on the Riverside Walk

Resolved: That Liss Parish Council allocates general reserves for the sum of £396 for the purchase of a litter bin for installation in front of the old railway platform on the Riverside Walk (proposed by Cllr Wilson and seconded by Cllr Baldwin with all in favour).

Cllr Wilson expressed a note of appreciation to the new Liss Environmental Guardians for their voluntary litter picking efforts to complement the work of the LPC litter picker and suggested a meeting between the two to ensure that their litter picking efforts were complimentary.

Russell Oppenheimer left the meeting at this point.

65/21 Matters of concern from councillors

Cllr McDonald enquired who owned the bin which required repair outside the Sue Ryder shop. The Chair advised it was EHDC and the Clerk noted that it had been reported and was pending repair.

Cllr Jerrard enquired about the status of the CTCG; the Clerk undertook to check on this.

Cllr Wilson noted some concerns reported about anti-social behaviour to the rear of the new location of Oasis. Cllr Finn noted the need for residents to report issues on 101 rather than simply posting on Facebook as this was required to inform intelligence led policing.

Cllr Budden put out a plea for those leaving fire extinguishers in various locations around the village to please return them to where they came from. Cllr Budden added that some of the perpetrators of the anti-social behaviour in Liss were youths from nearby villages traveling to Liss and not necessarily residents of Liss.

66/21 Exempt Session

Resolved: That the following item be treated as exempt due to the sensitive nature of the business (proposed by Cllr Williams and seconded by Cllr Wilson with all in favour).

67/21 Exempt Session: Councillor Co-option

Resolved: That Richard Baker be co-opted to fill the councillor vacancy for the Liss ward with a simple majority of the votes (Clerk's Note: There are no exempt minutes for this item).

The Chair closed the meeting at 20.58 hrs.

Next meeting: Monday 21st June 2021 in the Village Hall.

Signed:.....Dated:.....

Presentation by Liss Area Historical Society

Introduction

Recently there have been some changes to the LAHS Committee and we have a major new project underway; in light of this we thought it would be good to update the Liss Parish Council councillors and inform residents who may not know about us.

I [Nichola Court] am the new Chair and our outgoing Chair, Ron McCann, is now the Archivist, replacing Mike Jordan who has retired from the role after many years of service, including as Chair. I am an archivist by training and profession and work at West Sussex Record Office, so have a background in heritage.

This evening I will give you a bit of background about the Society and our purpose / aims; our activities; our current projects; and what the future might look like – specifically, including the challenges we face.

Background

LAHS was founded in November 1985 by a group of local enthusiasts. There was already a Liss Collection of ‘archives’ and LAHS became its custodian. The Liss Collection moved to the Triangle Centre after it was established in 1997 and we have maintained a strong association ever since. We have nine committee members; our constitution allows for ten and we are actively seeking someone to fill this remaining space, specifically to take on publicity and promotion.

Purpose/aim

The constitution states that our aim is ‘the advancement of public education’. We seek to achieve this by promoting and recording the history of the area, fostering an interest in research, publicising our findings, and maintaining, preserving and making the Liss collection available. Our current ‘mantra’ is ‘to explore and explain the history of Liss’. We include the surrounding villages within our remit where no other group is already established – so we could collect items related to villages like Greatham or Hawkley, for example.

Activities

We conduct social and educational activities for our membership and the wider public. Our monthly meetings are our main activity. We host eight a year, one of which includes our AGM, and our programme runs from September-April. These meetings feature a talk, usually historical in nature – but rarely about Liss! These have been held via Zoom since November 2020 but we hope to return to the Triangle in September. We are now on our summer break, until September. We usually run a summer outing and sometimes residential trips as well, although this was not possible in 2020. We also hold a Christmas social; again, this was not possible in 2020.

We host occasional exhibitions, usually held at the Triangle. These relate to the history of the village or a specific event / commemoration, for example World War I. We aim to publish our journal, Liss Histories annually; this usually features research articles relating to Liss and the surrounding area, although our most recent edition was a tribute to Ray Swift, a lifelong resident of the village.

We also support and collaborate with other organisations. Recent examples include a collaboration with Liss Station Adoption Group and East Hampshire Community Rail Partnership to improve Liss Station; we produced a series of award-winning vinyl panels which feature old photographs of Liss. Our Archivist has also produced some very concise historical vignettes of Liss for Petersfield Museum; and this month we have provided more old photographs of Liss and contextual information for the Crossover Youth Centre, to take part in the Local and Community History Month which is taking place throughout May.

Projects

Our major project is to work on the Collection. The Collection is extensive and is housed in two rooms and a cupboard at the Triangle. It comprises archives (primary and secondary sources – lots of original records), a library and many objects, some of which are housed offsite due to their size. The archives include material relating to – for example – the Women's Institute, Liss Brownies, a fine collection relating to Sidney Sedgwick (the vicar of Liss in 1920s), and many other village groups, businesses, and individuals. The library includes publications of local interest as well as national or general historical books. The objects are many and varied, and include signs and signposts, a large triptych from St Saviour's (the former 'tin church' in Liss Forest, now demolished), bottles, and an array of typewriters - including a Victorian specimen. Some objects are very large and very heavy, for example signs from the Longmoor Railway. Many of the objects require specialist advice – for example, a beautifully embroidered 1920s WI table cloth, which is in wonderful condition – to ensure that they are being cared for properly and will survive into the future.

The Collection has been well cared for and is arranged very well but needs 'proper' cataloguing or indexing so that it can be better utilised. Our plan is to make turn it into the asset it could and should be and to make it accessible to the membership and beyond. We plan to engage the membership with the cataloguing but a lot of preparatory work is required before we get to this cataloguing stage; as such, the Archivist and I are undertaking broad surveys and pilot work at the moment.

Our Archivist has recently created a Collections Policy. This is a key document which will help guide us with our project and ensure that future deposits are relevant to the Collection. We will be developing a Disaster Recovery Plan in the coming months.

This project includes a number of **challenges**:

- although the storage areas at the Triangle are secure and broadly stable in terms of conditions such as temperature, humidity and light, they are cramped and space is limited. Access is difficult, via a narrow, steep staircase and narrow corridors to access the rooms;
- the storage rooms can just about accommodate two people but it is tight and there is limited space to work, meaning that we will have to hire additional space once we get the cataloguing project underway;
- the rooms as they are mean that cannot accommodate or supervise researchers, so all enquiries have to be answered by Committee members;
- we will also require archive-friendly storage boxes at some point, especially for photographs - any other documents that are in standard plastic wallets or white paper envelopes will also need to be re-housed - and this will incur costs.

The future (challenges)

Membership

Our membership is relatively stable at around 70 (including five life / honorary members). We lost a few members due to Covid and meeting restrictions, as not all members wished to or were able to Zoom, but conversely we also gained some throughout the lockdown – probably because of our switch to Zoom and maintaining some kind of programme. We are always happy to welcome new (or returning) members to ensure LAHS continues to thrive.

Publicity

As mentioned, we are looking for a new Committee member to manage publicity. We have an excellent and dedicated Committee who give a great deal to the Society and lead busy lives away from it. It would help to have someone with a remit to promote the Society, in order to raise awareness, increase the membership, promote our activities, and to get us going on social media (after two failures on that front!).

Finances

Our most significant challenge is presented by our finances. Our fixed costs are significant; the archive storage costs over £150 per month (£1848 p/a), and this is where our money goes.

We also have speaker fees. It is important to attract engaging speakers for our monthly meetings and their fees can vary from £60 - £80 plus expenses, although it is important to acknowledge that occasionally, people are generous enough to share their time and knowledge with us for free. We paid for a Zoom licence for four months of this year (with the previous two meetings being covered by the speakers' own licences); the licence is more expensive than hiring Triangle Centre but on the positive side, it meant there were no speaker expenses to pay.

Our membership fees are only £12 p/a or £23 for two members living at the same address. This earns us around £750 p/a (roughly). We may need to increase the fees in the near future but we have to be realistic about the impact of any raises, in terms of the members themselves and the additional income it would raise; would it be worth increasing the fees for an extra £70 p/a? Whereas a more effective raise, in terms of covering our fixed costs, might deter members from joining or maintaining their membership.

In terms of other income, we are **very grateful to Liss Parish Council** for our annual grant, which was £300 in 2020. We usually generate incidental income from fundraisers such as raffles (held at monthly meetings), cake sales, etc, but we have no means of generating this for over a year now.

Summary

I am keen not to end on a negative note! As a Society, we do face challenges: these challenges are not insurmountable, but we cannot ignore them.

However, as a Society, we have a lot going for us, namely:

- an active and engaged membership;
- an active and engaging programme of activities – we've had some really excellent speakers since I joined last autumn, on a diverse range of subjects (with my personal favourite being scurvy!);
- we have embraced challenges of Covid by Zooming, showing that we are willing to embrace new technologies and have been prepared to move with the times. This has enabled members from Devon and Canada to join our monthly meetings;
- we have a dedicated Committee who give a lot of their time to run the Society for our members (but yes, we do need that tenth person to manage publicity!);
- and finally, we hold an extensive and strong historical collection which reflects the history of the village and the people who live / have lived here, which has been well cared for: **this a great asset to have and one which we very much want to share.**

Any questions – please do ask.

Nichola Court

Chair, Liss Area Historical Society

www.lissareahistorical.co.uk