



LISS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Project Review Group held on 26th July 2021, 6pm

MEMBERS

*R. Hargreaves (Chair) *K. Budden *S. Baldwin *H. Linsley * G. Lowe
*L. McDonald *A. Smith *C. Williams *N. Wilson

*Present, in addition to Cllr R. Baker
Clerk: Sarah Smith

12/PR21 Election of Chair

Cllr Hargreaves was elected as Chair of the Project Review Group for the ensuing year (proposed by Cllr Smith and seconded by Cllr Wilson with all in favour).

13/PR21 Apologies

None received.

14/PR21 Declarations of interests

There were no declarations of pecuniary interests. Cllr Budden noted his position as a councillor at EHDC.

15/PR21 Approval of the minutes of the Project Review Group meeting of 25th January 2021

Resolved: That the minutes of the Project Review Group meeting of 25th January 2021 be accepted as a correct record, subject to correction of a small typo (proposed by Cllr Linsley and seconded by Cllr Williams with all in favour).

16/PR21 Matters arising

10/PR21: Cllr Wilson reported back on progress regarding a possible project on intergenerational issues. He advised that a meeting had taken place with a large number of stakeholders. This had been well received and participants were enthusiastic to meet again. A note of the meeting had been circulated with a number of actions for follow up including the possibility of a Partnership Action Group focused on Liss. Cllr Wilson noted that there were no direct financial implications arising from the actions arising so far but some might emerge down the line. As regards tackling loneliness as a possible project, Cllr Wilson advised that work on this had yet to begin but it remained on the “to do” list.

There was some discussion as to whether LPC was best placed to lead such work. Cllr Wilson advised he intended this work to provide a catalyst for action to be led elsewhere. If pump-priming funding were to be required, he envisaged this lasting for perhaps three years at, say, £5,000 p.a. per project. The Chair invited him to come back to the Committee with specific proposals in due course.

Cllr Lowe joined the meeting at this point.

17/PR21 Funds available and general approach to allocation – CIL/reserves/external funding

CIL: The Clerk had circulated a paper identifying the total amount of CIL funding (which would be passed to LPC to spend directly) at £316,500 following the second large payment arising from Andlers Wood expected in October 2021.

The Chair highlighted the need for the RFO to look at investment options for the CIL funds to ensure a favourable return.

Reserves: The Clerk clarified that the total general reserves for Liss Parish Council stood at £131,166.20. As regards the total general reserves for the charities a figure of £77,716.99 had been highlighted. However, the RFO was undertaking some further checks to ensure this was correct. The Clerk advised that advice from the auditor was that 6 months' worth of running costs should be held as a general reserve. This meant that the general reserves should be treated as two pots of funds with a reserved element and an element available to spend. It was noted that earmarked reserves were held in addition to general reserves which were for specific purposes. Cllr Williams advised that 6 months' running costs would likely be in the region of £50,000 to £75,000. Members welcomed the greater clarity that the new finance software was able to provide.

S106: Cllr Smith advised that there was a sum of approximately £83,000 in SDNPA s106 funds for highways projects. Following approval at Council (Resolution 12/21), the funds had been applied for to ensure they were ringfenced for the agreed priorities of a) delivering village gateways to 7 sites in Liss, b) delivering the Hill Brow Road school zone community infrastructure and c) delivering Phase 2 school zone works. The Highways Committee were pursuing these projects. The Clerk clarified that there were no other s106 funds available to LPC as these had all been applied for and spent on open spaces/recreation/environmental projects.

PWLB loan: Members noted that there had been a commitment to considering partial repayment of the PWLB loan from the Pavilion build, should it make financial sense to do so at the time.

The Clerk reported that the PWLB loan had been drawn down in three chunks as follows:

- 1) £120,000 in February 2019 (running to August 2043) at 2.6% Fixed.
- 2) £160,000 in April 2019 (running to October 2043) at 2.89% Fixed.
- 3) £220,000 in June 2019 (running to December 2043) at 2.5% Fixed.

The Clerk clarified that at the time the loan was taken it was calculated that this would mean a rise on each household's precept of around £10 a year.

Cllr Smith added that parishioners voted overwhelmingly in favour of taking out the loan to finance the Pavilion build in a referendum which was required to apply for the PWLB loan.

The Chair requested that Finance Committee consider the following:

- a) the sums held in general reserves and earmarked reserves;
- b) the sum required to ensure 6 months running costs held at all times;
- c) a review of allocated reserves;
- d) an assessment of the financial case for partial repayment of the PWLB loan for the Pavilion from CIL funds, including any redemption penalties.

Cllr Wilson noted the importance of consulting on partial repayment of the PWLB loan as opposed to investment in new infrastructure which he favoured.

Cllr Budden noted that although there was no cap on increasing council tax at present, should this change levels of reserves would become more important and so it was worth keeping this in mind when considering levels of reserves.

In terms of the general approach to spending from different sources, Members felt that reserves should be used for maintaining existing assets, but that CIL should generally be spent on enhancing and new infrastructure and possibly some social initiatives. However, retaining some flexibility on allocation of CIL versus reserves was deemed important.

18/PR21 Priorities for the future – an investment strategy based on existing commitments and community consultation

Cllr Wilson reported back following the creation of a working group (Cllrs Wilson, Bennett and Smith) which looked at key priorities and possible projects. This included the following key points:

- Options for village centre redesign an early priority.
- CIL investment plans and options as a second major focus.
- The development of a pipeline of projects, including social projects.
- The need to consult on future requirements for recreation grounds and facilities.

Key points arising from subsequent discussion were:

- The need to look at existing commitments first, including those arising from the LPC Action Plan and the Liss Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- A public consultation exercise which stated existing commitments as a starting point with some options for additional investment.
- The need to consider the outcome of the recreation strategy consultation and allocation of funds to deliver a package of measures arising from the strategy.
- That consultation would need to focus on two levels, on both the strategic priorities and on the detail. For example, there was an existing commitment in terms of priorities to deliver the West Liss Play and Leisure and Village Centre Re-design projects. However, as and when funding was confirmed, there would need to be consultation on the detail of what this should be spent on. This might require a number of consultation exercises.
- The possibility of allocating some funds to social projects by way of a grant system to encourage applications for small environmental projects or projects which target loneliness or intergenerational issues.
- The importance of retaining some funds for match funding for bigger projects for which external funding was sought.
- The value of using existing networks such as local groups to explore options in particular area, e.g. the Crossover Youth Centre and youth issues.

Cllr Hargreaves undertook to draft a paper on the general approach to how to establish priorities, including the approach to consultation, for the allocation of funding and cross-referencing to commitments in the Neighbourhood Development Plan, to ensure that everything that had been committed to is being delivered.

Cllr McDonald noted the need to refer to the LPC Community Engagement Policy.

19/PR21 Review of established and planned projects

The Clerk clarified that the reference to the SDNPA 75% CIL related to the funding pot held by SDNPA which LPC could apply for, whereas the reference to the 25% CIL was the proportion which came directly to LPC to spend. The Clerk also clarified that funding stream 1 was the target funding stream with funding stream 2 an alternative possibility.

Members discussed the various established and planned projects – an updated version of the table prepared by the Clerk is at **Annex A**.

Members noted the need to check any other established priorities contained within the Liss Neighbourhood Plan. The Clerk noted that the Neighbourhood Plan advocated improved walking routes to link various aspects within the village.

20/PR21 Liss village centre redesign project: Report from Cllr Smith and next steps

Cllr Smith presented his paper which had been circulated prior to the meeting along with the Village Centre Redesign Brief (approved by Council on 15th February 2021) and the Placemaking – Liss proposal from HCC.

Members noted that the Council were already committed in principle but that the project could not be taken any further without employing specialist services to scope it. The proposals would then turn a stated ambition into deliverable chunks and assist in securing external funding for delivery.

There was a general consensus among Members to recommend that Council appoints Hampshire Services as the specialist partner to work with Liss Parish Council to develop detailed proposals for village centre improvement and to allocate a further sum of approximately £30,000 from CIL/reserves to the £10,000 already allocated to the scoping of the project.

21/PR21 Extension to the meeting

During the above agenda item Members agreed to extend the meeting by no more than 30 minutes (proposed by Cllr Hargreaves and seconded by Cllr Williams with all in favour).

22/PR21 Community consultation

Issues surrounding community consultation had already arisen under the item of priorities for the future, including the need for a variety of consultation exercises to inform strategic priorities and the detail when it came to delivering these projects. Cllr Wilson highlighted the need to employ a variety of consultation methods to reach as many different groups as possible. With some approaches – e.g. a “drop-in-day”, mail shot and something aimed at the new residents of Andlers Wood possibly in the CALA welcome pack – it might make logistical sense to include a number of key priority areas in the consultation. This would also have the benefit of avoiding the suggestion that the village centre was the only focus of attention. Consultation issues would be explored further in the paper to be drafted by Cllr Hargreaves.

The meeting closed at 21h00.

Date of next meeting: tbc

Signed..... Dated.....

Project	Priority	Funding stream 1	Funding stream 2	Status
PROJECTS IN HAND				
West Liss Play and Recreation Equipment	1 – In Action Plan 2020/21	SDNPA 75% CIL	25% CIL from CALA development	Application submitted (for the third year) for SDNPA 75% CIL by 31/1/21 deadline. Outcome will be know Autumn 2021.
Mill Road Community Garden	1 – In Action Plan 2020/21	Funding obtained (EHDC s106 funds)	N/A	Project to commence August 2021.
Courtesy crossings at West Liss	1 – In Action Plan 2020/21	Funding obtained (SDNPA s106)	N/A	One crossing in place. Second to follow as requires road closure of Station Road.
Village Gateways	1 - Commitment in Action Plan 2018/19 and 2020/21 (part if tackling speeding initiatives).	S106 funds available.	N/A	Design of gateways and location being finalised at Highways Committee, with subsequent consultation of residents.
Hill Brow Road school zone improvements phase 1	Established as LPC priority.	S106 funds available.	N/A	Application to be made to secure the s106 funds held by SDNPA. Consultation complete – recommendation to commission to go to Highways Committee.
Hill Brow Road school zone improvements phase 2 - crossing	Established as LPC priority	S106 funds available		Application made to secure s106 funding. Feasibly study required – will cost c£10,500 to undertake – to discuss at Highways priory to potentially coming to full council for approval to commission.

Village Centre Improvements	1 – In Action Plan 2020/21 as part of implementing Neighbourhood Plan and tackling speeding	tbc	tbc	Council to approve allocation of funds for scoping of proposals.
Millennium Mosaic renovation	Established LPC priority	Council approved up to £5,000 from general reserves (62/21)		Works to commence in September.
Village Hall renovation	Maintaining existing assets – Action Plan commitment	LPC budget 2021/22 for phase 1 works (as identified in building survey report) and budget provision made for 2021/22 for phase 2 works.	Application for LPC reserves if any shortfall.	Woodborer infestation treatment completed January 2021. External redecoration works completed June 2021. Roof works to commence 9 th August.
Community allotment	Established Facilities Committee priority	Minimal or no costs involved.	N/A	Interest from Liss Environmental Guardians.
Recreation strategy for Liss				NW along with RB is undertaking an audit of existing facilities within Liss.
PROJECT NOT YET SCOPED				
Forest Road Improvements	1 – Tackling speeding in Action Plan 2020/21	tbc	tbc	Project not yet scoped. Highways Committee to consider.
CCTV enhancement	2	Possible candidate for 25% CIL from CALA development		Project not scoped and on hold as low priority.
Village Hall restoration		tbc	tbc	Project not yet scoped. Low priority but important to bear in mind that internal redecoration works required in next year or so.

Creation of additional open spaces				Dependant on availability of land.
Social and environmental projects.				NW exploring options.
COMPLETED PROJECTS				
Reinstating Pétanque Terrain	Commitment given by facilities Committee in response to request from LFRA.	Funding obtained (SDNPA s106 environmental funds)		Project completed December 2020. The need for a path was highlighted and subsequently installed in March 2021 (funded by LPC CIL).
Village Hall Toilet Refurb	1 – In Action Plan 2020/21	Funding obtained (SDNPA CIL with LPC match funding).	N/A	Project completed September 2020.
Improving drainage at Newman Collard (improvements to water flow under Centenary Gardens)	2	Funding obtained (SDNPA s106 environmental funds)	N/A	Project completed August 2020.
Use of Groundsman's Hut, Newman Collard		No cost involved.	N/A	Responsibility for the Hut passed to NCPFT in Autumn 2020 for dual use by Liss Men's Shed and Groundsman.