



Liss Parish Council Annual Parish Report 2025

Chair's Report

The 2024/25 Civic Year has yet again been a busy year, of which more in a moment. As has become the norm, we have published our proposed plan for Parish Council activities for the coming year, which is attached to this report.

Community Engagement

The Parish Council is committed to encouraging effective local community engagement, and to developing relationships between the Council, individuals, and voluntary and community groups. The Parish Office continues to be open every Monday, Wednesday and Thursday. We continue to use the Liss Parish Council Website at www.lissparishcouncil.gov.uk to tell the community about the business of the council. The Council has also continued to maintain its social media presence, via Facebook and X (formerly known as Twitter) and Instagram, to help keep parishioners informed. We host a monthly councillor surgery on the third Monday of the month (the same day as the Council meeting) at the Triangle Centre.

An important form of engagement with the community is that Parish Councillors serve as representatives on a variety of local bodies, for example, the Newman Collard Playing Fields Trust, The Triangle Centre, Crossover and the Liss Forest Residents Association. We have also supported the work of the Liss Speedwatch Group, Liss in Bloom and the Liss Men's Shed.

Each year we also give funding support to a variety of local initiatives. Grants have been made this year to East Hants CAB, the Liss Area Historic Society, the Newman Collard Trust, 1st Liss Scouts, Home Start Butser, Rake Village Hall, LUPIN, St. Mary's Church, The Triangle Centre, Liss Heart Trust, The Liss Lunch Club, Liss Band, the British Legion and the Rosemary Foundation. We would encourage local organisations to submit grant applications if you require additional funding.

Facilities

The Village Hall and the Pavilion both continue to be well used both by community groups and private bookings for a wide range of activities and events.

Our allotments continue to be very popular with high occupancy rates and we are continuing to undertake some improvements to enhance the sites.

All of our recreation grounds continue to be popular and the facilities are all well used. In Liss Forest we have upgraded the play area, including replacing the remaining items in the fenced play area and upgraded the facility. West Liss Recreation Ground now benefits from table tennis, and the Pavilion car park now hosts a parcel locker and visiting food vans. We have undertaken a number of green initiatives, including planting a large number of trees and wild flower areas in our grounds, and Newman Collard Park has seen extensive bulb planting which we can now see starting to bloom. In addition to this, bug houses have been commissioned which the Men's Shed are constructing for us.

The Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) at Newman Collard Park, provided by the Newman Collard Playing Fields Trust, has got delayed by the planning process, but we are hopeful that construction of this facility can begin this calendar year.

I would like to thank the Men's Shed for their continued help with projects throughout the village and of course Liss in Bloom for the tremendous work they do keeping the flower beds and hanging baskets looking so vibrant – they really do bring the village centre to life.

We continue to work with EHDC on management of the Riverside Walk, including the control of Himalayan Balsam and other invasive species growing along the Riverside Walk and at the Andlers Ash allotment site.

Roads and Traffic

Traffic through the village is a continuing concern for residents and the Parish Council has been promoting a number of measures to address concerns, including additional speed indicator devices.

We are aware that there are continued issues with traffic along Forest Road and Andlers Ash Road and we will work with Hampshire County Council to investigate possible solutions (and their funding) to improve the situation but sadly we don't have a magic wand and so solutions are likely to take a number of years.

Village Centre improvements

We commissioned Hampshire County Council to work up proposals for possible enhancements to the village centre to make it a more attractive place for residents and visitors alike. The initial consultations have now concluded and Andy Smith, Chair of our Highways Committee will be updating you further later this evening.

It is important to stress that we are still in the early stages of what will be a major project for the village over the coming years.

Planning and Development

We have continued to provide feedback to the local planning authority, the South Downs National Park, on planning applications across the Parish, and we are pleased that for the majority of decisions, our views have been taken into account. Unfortunately, we don't win them all.

Looking ahead to the coming year, we anticipate plans coming forward for some of the other development areas identified in the Liss Neighbourhood Plan, and taking up the planning issues arising from the Village Centre proposals.

Commemorations

It was great to see a full turnout for the Remembrance Parade in November 2024. Liss has built a good reputation for its Remembrance Sunday event and long may that continue.

2024 was also the 80th anniversary of D-Day and I was pleased to be able to plant a tree in the Memorial Gardens at Newman Collard Park as part of their commemorative event.

This year is the 80th anniversary of VE-Day. Planning of a suitable commemorative event in the village is underway.

Changes to Councillors

This year has seen a few small changes to our councillors. Karen Tordoff has stood down - we thank Karen for all of her hard work, especially on environmental issues (including the Mill Road orchard), getting the new speed indicator devices up and running around the village and also issues relating to the Andlers Wood development. We wish her well for her future. We are delighted to welcome Rebecca Crane on to the Parish Council in Karen's place.

Paddy Payne is now my vice-Chair, Clayre Williams continues as Chair of our Finance Committee, Clive Olley is Chair of the Facilities and Charities Committees, Andy Smith continues as Chair of our Highways Committee, and I have continued to chair our Planning Committee. I would like to extend my thanks to Sue Halstead and Roger Hargreaves, for agreeing to be co-opted onto committees to help us fulfil our duties as your Parish Council.

District Councillors

We welcome our two District Councillors, Roger Mullenger and Ian James and thank them for their work for the village community and their regular appearances at our full council meetings.

County Councillor

At county level, we have Russell Oppenheimer as our county councillor. I would like to thank Russell for his continued hard work at HCC and his regular appearances at our full council meetings.

Running the Council

The work of the Parish Council is totally dependent on our Parish Clerk, Sarah Smith and the support within the Parish office. The office team consists of Sarah, Rebecca Lawrence our Assistant Clerk, Sandra Humphrey our Responsible Finance Officer and Katrina Burns our Projects Officer. Sandra is leaving us soon, and this means we will have a slight adjustment of roles within the office. We also look forward to welcoming Hannah to join the team in the next few weeks.

All of our officers have worked hard to keep the Council going and support initiatives to improve our services, and I would like to express my sincere thanks to them for their commitment and enthusiasm, and for Sarah's continued steadfast leadership during the year.

They have been supported by Jed Deane, our caretaker for the Village Hall and groundsman, and Julie and Pete Ryan, our caretakers for the Pavilion. Pete also supports Jed on grounds tasks. Also of course, I can't forget to mention Michael Jarman, who will be familiar to many as he litter picks around the village. We are very fortunate as a village to have such an excellent team of councillors and officers, and of course I must also thank the many volunteers who work alongside us to help keep Parish Council business and projects running.

External recognition

It is always good to be recognised for the efforts of our officers and councillors, and of course, all of the community of Liss. This year, in an annual competition by the Hampshire Association of Local Councils, we were delighted to walk away with not only Council of the Year 2024, but also Open Space of the Year 2024. We were also close runner-up in the overall competition for Village of the Year.

Cllr K Budden, Chair of Liss Parish Council

Liss Parish Council Draft Action Plan for 2025/26

During the Council year 2025/26 Liss Parish Council will undertake the following actions:

- Maintain, improve and promote the use of recreation grounds, open spaces and the Village Hall and Liss Pavilion.
- Comment on all planning applications which fall within or impact on the Parish.
- Represent the views and promote the interests of the parish of Liss, particularly in relation to East Hampshire District Council, the South Downs National Park Authority and Hampshire County Council.
- Engage with the community, including parishioners, local businesses, community groups and organisations in Liss, including by maintaining an up-to-date website and social media presence in the village, in line with the Community Engagement Policy.
- Listen, investigate and respond to issues identified by the parish of Liss and, if appropriate, signpost to the correct person/ organisation for resolution/ further progression.
- Work with and support local groups for the improvement of the facilities, environment and social and economic wellbeing in the community.
- Deliver speedy and transparent decisions through full meetings of the Council, supported by appropriate committees and working groups.
- Maintain good financial practices, ensuring transparency and value for money.
- Identify and secure sources of funding to advance LPC priorities.
- Promote training and induction and ongoing support for members of staff and councillors.
- Maintain good governance, including continuing to adhere to relevant Silver (previously Quality) benchmarks and striving towards Gold Status of the Local Council Award Scheme.
- Fulfil responsibilities as Sole Trustee to three Charities: (West) Liss Recreation Ground (Charity number 301871), Village Hall; (Charity number 301872) and Parish Allotments (Charity number 237190).

Key projects for 2025/2026 include:

Funding:

- Deciding priorities for the use of CIL funds allocated directly to Liss Parish Council, drawing on previous and future community engagement, and accessing other sources of investment, including SDNPA CIL.

Highways priorities:

- Exploring options for highways improvements with HCC using the Community Funded Initiatives Scheme, in particular on Andlers Ash Road and Forest Road.

Facilities priorities:

- Considering further enhancements to the recreation grounds in line with the vision for each site, working with partners as necessary. Agree visions for the Riverside Walk and Mill Road Community Garden.
- Continue the improvement programme to enhance the allotment sites.

Village Centre Improvement:

- Consulting on options for enhancement of the village centre with Hampshire County Council, East Hampshire District Council and the South Downs National Park Authority.
- Pursuing funding for the railway platform extension.

Environmental issues:

- Contributing to nature recovery through green space projects to enhance biodiversity and protect the environment.
 - Considering the LPC approach to reaching Net Zero by 2050.
- A query was raised as to whether some of the key projects were ongoing, and whether they needed defining more.

Update on Village Centre Improvement

In 2024 there has been a lot of public engagement on designs. Key findings from the consultation and a Pre Feasibility Study are available to read:

- The Pre-feasibility Study Executive Summary - Microsoft Word - Executive Summary final 4 Nov 2024
- Key findings from the Placemaking Liss Part 2 Engagement Findings Report - PowerPoint Presentation

LPC has commissioned Hampshire to work on a feasibility study and preliminary designs. There will be further consultation on final designs. The estimated cost of implementing these is £2.7 million, and there should be detailed costs of each proposal. Funding sources will hopefully include South Downs National Park Authority, mayoral combined authority for Hampshire and national government funding via growth and active travel pots.

Cllr A Smith

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Budget 2024-2025

The precept for 2024/25 was £263,623. Contributions were made to the Village Hall, West Liss Recreation Ground and Pavilion and the parish allotments. These are all registered charities, which are accounted for separately in accordance with financial regulations.

Estimated expenditure for the year is anticipated to be largely in line with budget.

Local organisations and associations supported by Liss Parish Council grant funding during 2024/25 include:

East Hants Area CAB
 Newman Collard Playing Fields Trust
 Liss Area Historical Society
 Liss Scouts
 Home Start Butser
 LUPIN
 HIOW Victim Support
 St Mary's Church
 Liss Community Association (The Triangle)
 Liss Band
 Petersfield Community Radio
 Tyler's Trust
 Rake Village Hall
 Royal British Legion

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts and allocations to date are as follows:

CIL Funding

Total CIL received	£ 428,750
Total CIL spent	£ 182,227
Total CIL allocated	£ 221,829
Total CIL unallocated	£ 24,694

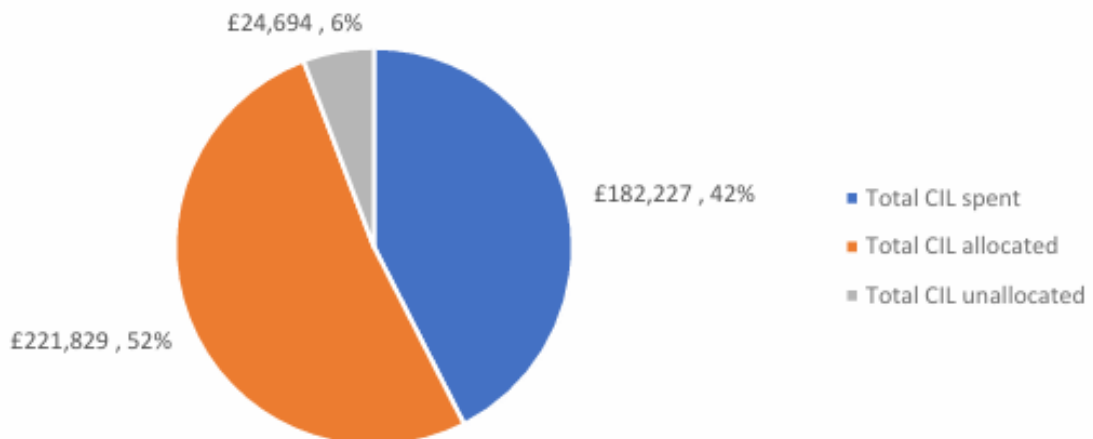
Spent

Liss pavilion - construction and fit out	£ 6,281
Path to new pentanque terrain	£ 2,970
Watering system for village centre	£ 445
Village Hall building maintenance	£ 5,033
Mill Road Community Garden	£ 7,411
Public notice board - village centre	£ 610
Moveable goal posts - WL and NC	£ 3,776
West Liss play area	£ 25,000
Sports wall at Newman Collard	£ 5,585
Floodlight installation fees	£ 1,151
Crossover	£ 5,206
Pump track installation	£ 56,748
Installation of gym equipment at West Liss	£ 950
Table Tennis table at West Liss	£ 5,550
Speed Indicator Device	£ 4,000
Newman Collard MUGA	£ 3,000
Village centre improvements	£ 12,429
Liss Forest recreation ground improvements	£ 34,427
Green space projects	£ 1,656

Allocated

MUGA at Newman Collard	£ 47,000
Village centre improvements	£ 107,572
Green space projects	£ 3,344
Triangle Centre - paving	£ 5,040
Ecological appraisal of all sites	£ 3,300
Liss Forest recreation ground improvements	£ 5,573
Highways Improvements	£ 50,000

CIL Funding



Allocations are provisional and any underspend will be released for future projects.

Budget 2025-2026

Budgeted expenditure for 2025/26 is as follows:

	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	% change
Budget:					
Staff cost	127.7	138.3	156.6	171.3	9%
Insurance	7.2	8.3	8.7	8.5	-3%
General administration	14.9	13.9	15.1	15.4	2%
Grounds maintenannce	30.5	31.9	30.9	30.4	-2%
Village Hall running cost	21.6	26.3	27.1	29.9	9%
Pavilion running cost	21.1	24.8	25.8	19.8	-30%
Allotment running cost	0.0	0.7	5.2	2.0	-161%
Grants to local associations	10.1	10.3	14.5	16.6	13%
Pavilion loan servicing	27.5	27.5	27.5	27.5	0%
Capital projects and provisions	0.0	10.0	20.0	17.0	-18%
	260.6	292.0	331.3	338.4	2%
Funded by:					
Precept	237.4	254.1	263.6	270.6	3%
Interest and other receipts	0.0	0.0	20.0	22.8	12%
Rental incomes	23.2	37.9	43.8	45.0	3%
Transfer to/from reserves	0.0	0.0	3.9	0.0	
	260.6	292.0	331.3	338.4	

Staff costs include all salary, employer's NI and employer's pension cost. Staff costs also include an increase to salaries in accordance with guidelines for public sector pay rates.

Pavilion running costs are expected to decrease by £6k. The decrease reflects expected savings to gas and electricity consumption.

Allotment running costs are expected to decrease by £3.2k. The decrease to these running costs is as a result of a backlog in the regular allotment maintenance program.

Provision is made for capital works in respect of feasibility studies, replacement play equipment and safety surfacing.

The Council has set a precept of £270.6k for 2025/2026 and the charge per Band D dwelling will therefore be £100.38 compared with £98.20 in 2024/2025. This is an increase of £2.18 or 2.22% per Band D dwelling.

Committee

The audit of 2023/24 accounts was carried out in April 2024 by Lightatouch, the independent internal auditor and approved at the Council meeting on 17 June 2024. BDO Legal Law Practitioners, the Council's appointed external auditor, signed the final clearance of the accounts in September 2024.

I would like to thank my fellow committee members – Cllrs Keith Budden, Paddy Payne, Selena Stratford-Tuke, Chris Mort, Clive Olley and Andy Smith – and our Responsible Finance Officer – Sandra Humphries - for their work in the past year.

Cllr C Williams, Chair of Finance Committee