



LISS PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2022

Chair's Report

It has been another challenging year. Covid-19 thankfully seems to be more under control and we, like communities across the UK, have adapted our ways to work around the Covid impact. We have a plan for all of our 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 has now fully reopened.

The Liss Parish Council Website at lissparishcouncil.gov.uk has been used to tell the community about the business of the council. A Covid-19 webpage was set up in March 2020 and has continued to provide up-to-date links to the latest information as well as sources of help and practical support for those who have needed it, making use of local links as well as more formal schemes. The Council has also continued to increase its social media presence during this time, such as Twitter and Facebook and most recently Instagram, to help keep parishioners informed.

We have carried out a number of recent consultations, including those on the village gateways, outdoor exercise equipment and the West Liss children's play area.

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 and the Liss Men's Shed. Each year we also give funding support to a variety of local initiatives and we would encourage local organisations to submit grant applications if you require additional funding. Please contact the Parish Office for more information.

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee

This year sees the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. The weekend of 2nd – 5th June will see four days of events here in Liss to mark the Jubilee, with something for all ages, including a beacon lighting on the school playing fields as part of the nationwide chain of beacons to celebrate the Jubilee.

One highlight of the weekend, will be a pump track at West Liss Recreation Ground. The hire of the pump track has been funded with the help of grants from our District Councillors and the National Lottery, this will be a great fun facility – pop along and try it out.

Please keep an eye on social media, noticeboards and local media as the plans for the weekend develop further. It is really heart-warming to see so many groups across the parish wishing to take part and I thank Clayre Williams and the other volunteers who are working incredibly hard to bring all of this together.

Investing in Liss

The Parish Council has the ambition to provide better facilities throughout the village. Roger Hargreaves, the Chair of our Project Review Group will be giving you more details on some of the projects we have in mind in a few minutes time.

Nick Wilson, Chair of the Facilities Committee and Richard Baker have been working on a new recreation strategy for the village and they will also be updating us on their progress later in the meeting.

Facilities

Following the reopening of the Village Hall and the Pavilion after Covid, bookings for both have been picking up, with the Pavilion being extremely busy recently. All of our play areas are also now fully open.

We have carried out some external repairs and improvements to the Village Hall and our caretaker, Jed, is starting preparatory work for the redecoration of the interior of the hall.

While there is a regular usage of the Petanque terrain by the petanque club, we would encourage others to give it a try. We now have an accessible path to the Petanque court and it is open to residents of all ages to use.

Our allotments continue to be very popular with a high occupancy rate.

We have started work on the Mill Road Community Garden which will provide a small community park and play area on the green space along Mill Road next to Woodbourne Close. Agreement with EHDC who own the land over a licence to use it has not proved as

smooth a process as we originally hoped, but we continue to dedicate our efforts to resolving necessary issues and are working with EHDC to proceed at pace with getting the licence agreed.

We unfortunately did not get the full grant we applied for to the South Downs National Park for improvements at West Liss, but we did receive sufficient funding to redevelop the West Liss children's playground. We held a successful consultation on Saturday at the Liss Pavilion to get the views of local children and parents and we hope to have a contractor starting work on the new playground before the summer.

Working with the Men's Shed and the Newman Collard Playing Fields Trust, we now have a new garage and equipment store for our groundsman, while the old groundsman's hut has been converted into a great new facility for the Men's Shed. If you've not yet seen it, do pop along and have a look.

We continue to work with EHDC on the control of Himalayan Balsam growing along the Riverside Walk.

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. We (with Hampshire County Council) have delivered a pedestrian courtesy crossing on Station Road by the Liss Pavilion and we continue to work on delivery of a further crossing at the Business Centre in Station Road,

The new village gateways have now been designed and will be installed at entrances to the village and Liss Forest in the coming year.

Work will also take place this year to deliver improvements to improve the environment and discourage speeding around the Liss Infant and Junior Schools.

We are aware that issues continue with traffic along Forest Road and we will work with Hampshire County Council to investigate possible solutions (and their funding) to improve the situation.

We thank Liss Speed Watch for their continued efforts across the village. We know the impact their work is making to make the village safer for drivers and pedestrians alike.

Village Centre improvements

We have 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. Please keep an eye out for various consultation events and questionnaires over the next year as HCC work with us to gather all of the information required and produce a vision for the village centre which has the support of the majority of the Liss population.

Andy Smith, Chair of our Highways Committee will be updating you more on this later this evening.

This is only the first step in what will be a major project for the village over the coming years. Please do take every opportunity to have your input to shape the future of your village.

Planning and Development

Andler's Wood, the new Cala Homes development on the former Hilliers land at Andlers Ash Road is now approaching completion.

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. As much as Covid-19 restrictions have allowed we have kept a careful eye on developments across the village and reported any concerns to the planning enforcement team at East Hampshire District Council for investigation and action where appropriate.

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.

Changes to Councillors

During the year due to changing personal circumstances we were sorry to say farewell to Ginnette Lowe, Rob Finn and Jenny Bennett. We thank them all for the time they devoted to the Parish Council.

We have successfully co-opted three new councillors, Richard Baker, Karen Tordorf and Phil Deacon. We welcome them all to the council.

Nick Wilson has been my able vice-Chair and Chair of our Facilities Committee, Clayre Williams as Chair of the Finance Committee, Andy Smith as Chair of our Highways committee, and Liane McDonald as Chair of the Review Committee, and I have continued to chair our Planning Committee. Due to the CIL funding and number of projects, our previous Chair, Roger Hargreaves, has kindly taken the Chair role for a new Project Review Group.

District and County Councillors

Since elections in May 2019 Liss has been represented on East Hants District Council by two councillors, Russell Oppenheimer and myself. Russell is also our County Councillor with Hampshire County Council. We are both fully committed to Liss and the Parish Council and we look forward to continuing to work together in the coming year.

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, Lizzy Keeling the Assistant Clerk, and Sandra Humphrey our Responsible Finance Officer. Due to the number of projects planned for the next couple of years, they will also soon be joined by our new Project Support Office. The whole team have been under enormous pressures over the past year, having to adapt their way of working and carry on serving the community from their homes and then adapting to our new hybrid method of working. Sandra has smoothly implemented a new financial planning and accounting system for the Council and I'm sure all of my colleagues on the Finance Committee will agree that the new Financial Reports give us a much clearer view of the Council's finances than was possible from our previous system.

All have worked extra hours to keep the Council going and to support initiatives to improve our services and I am so impressed by their commitment and enthusiasm and particularly by Sarah's continued leadership during this year.

They have been supported by Jed Deane, our caretaker for the Village Hall and Julie Ryan, our caretaker for the Pavilion. Also, Michael Jarman, who will be familiar to many as he litter picks around the village and Paul Knibbs our invaluable groundsman. We are very fortunate as a village and I am very fortunate as their Chair to have such an excellent team of councillors and officers.

Thank you.

Cllr Keith Budden

Chair of Liss Parish Council

Liss Parish Council Draft Action Plan for 2022/23

During the Council year 2022/23 Liss Parish Council will undertake the following actions:

- Maintain, improve and promote the use of recreation grounds and facilities such as 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, to signpost to the correct person/ organisation for resolution/ further progression.
- Work with key local groups for the benefit of residents.
- 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, building on the reporting capacity of the new finance software.
- 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 adhering to relevant benchmarks to achieve Quality Status of the Local Council Award Scheme.

Key projects for 2022/2023 include:

- Covid-19: helping the village recover and learn from the experience of Covid-19, in consultation with the community, using our services and funding and through support to and from other organisations, such as the district and county councils and local voluntary groups.
- Funding: Deciding priorities for the use of CIL funds allocated directly to Liss Parish Council, using extensive community engagement, and accessing other sources of investment.
- Highways priorities:
 - Delivering the village gateways project;
 - Delivering the school zone proposals.
- Facilities priorities:
 - Delivery of the refurbished children's play area at West Liss Recreation Ground;
 - Complete the Mill Road Community Garden;

Pursue options and funding for creating provision for teenagers and adults at West Liss Recreation Ground;

Work with partner organisations and local residents to develop and implement a village wide strategy for recreational facilities.

- Developing proposals for enhancement of the village centre with Hampshire County Council.
- Exploring opportunities with local groups and organisations for enhancing the social welfare of the village.
- Liss Neighbourhood Plan: working with the SDNPA to set up arrangements for the implementation and monitoring.

Key Projects

CIL

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding

Due to development in Liss a large sum of CIL funding had been received with approximately £331,000 currently being held by LPC. This amounted to 25% of the levy paid by developers with the other 75% going directly to the SDNPA for allocation across the Park which LPC could bid into. For example, £50,000 had been awarded following a successful application for funds to replace the children's play area at West Liss Recreation Ground.

As the LPC budget provided running costs alone, all projects would be funded from CIL and other external grant funding.

Current projects being developed included village centre improvements, projects arising from the recreation strategy, highways related schemes, social infrastructure and anti-social behaviour projects.

Local groups and organisations would also be able to bid for CIL funding. Details on how to apply for CIL funding would be placed on the website in due course.

Consultation was key in allocation of CIL, from a broad level down to a more detailed level for individual projects. A new Project and Community Engagement Officer had been appointed on a two-year fixed term contract to help manage that process.

Cllr Roger Hargreaves

Chair of the project Review Group

Update on village gateways and school zone

Cllr Smith updated the meeting on the implementation of both sets of proposals, which had been the subject to recent consultation with residents.

The consultation responses on both gateways and school zone had been positive – with residents supporting the improvements.

Funding for both from S106 developers' contributions had been secured. Work was underway to commission Hampshire County Council to install the gateways and implement both schemes. It is difficult to pin down an exact timeline due to supply issues – but there is optimism that the improvements can be made asap.

Cllr Andy Smith

Chair of the Highways Committee

Village Centre Design work – next steps

- Village Centre improvement is a priority for residents in Liss, and for Liss Parish Council. The Liss Village Neighbourhood Development Plan, which was approved by referendum in the parish on 9 November 2017, with 87.2% in favour, on a turnout of 30% said:

“Much of the centre is within a conservation area. It is an area well used by the local community. However, some of the more recent development within the centre is unattractive and not in keeping with the character of the village. Some of the area of Station Road is cut off by the level crossing from the main part of the centre and is rundown and in need of sympathetic redevelopment. **The street scene is poor, with a clutter of posts and signs, some poor pavements and a lack of green planting.** Parking for the centre is increasingly difficult with car parks close to capacity. **Not all of these problems can be tackled through the development process. The Parish Council is committed to working with the community to enhance the vitality and viability of the centre.**”

- At Full Council 15 Feb 21 (25/21) **Village Centre redesign brief approved (brief available on our website)**
- **Developing proposals for the enhancement of the village centre** is a priority in Liss Parish Council’s 2021/2022 Action Plan, adopted by Full Council on 5 May 2021.

Principles LPC has adopted:

- **Deliverable:** what is designed must be deliverable – while proposals can be ambitious – LPC must be confident that relevant authorities (ie Network Rail, Highways England, Hampshire County Council as Highways Authority) will agree to the schemes.
- **Ambitious:** nothing is off the table. Partners should be ambitious for Liss, seeking to deliver the ambition for a thriving village centre contained in the Neighbourhood Development Plan and design brief, not piecemeal. This isn’t a project about highway improvement – it is about the vibrancy of the village centre (including seeking to design out opportunities for anti-social behaviour)
- **Owned by the community:** Residents and businesses are involved and feel ownership for the proposals, key partners (Network Rail, Local Enterprise Partnership, SDNP, EHDC, Police, HCC, etc) are bought in
- **Value for money:** any delivery partner will have a track record, and can evidence how development of a master plan has leveraged in funding for delivery of infrastructure projects; Liss Parish Council will need to be assured that it is getting value for money for residents

Next steps

- We are partnering with Hampshire County Council – and are just finalising the detailed timetable to engage with the residents, community groups, businesses and other stakeholders to kick off this work.
- The work will be developed using the Healthy Streets Approach, which is a human-centred framework for embedding public health in transport, public realm, and planning.
- The Healthy Streets Approach has 10 Indicators that inform transport and public realm design:
 - Everyone feels welcome
 - Easy to cross
 - Shade and shelter
 - Places to stop and rest
 - Not too noisy
 - People choose to walk and cycle
 - People feel safe
 - Things to see and do
 - People feel relaxed
 - Clean air

(more at healthystreets.com)

- The process will last several months – and community engagement and feedback will be key as we develop detailed proposals – so we'll be asking for everyone's contribution and views soon!

Cllr Andy Smith

Chair of the Highways Committee

Recreation facilities in Liss – a strategy for the 2020s

Liss Parish Council (LPC) is committed in its 2022-23 Action Plan to work with partner organisations and local residents to develop and implement a village wide strategy for recreational facilities. Following discussions with key partners, including Newman Collard Playing Fields Trust, the Crossover Youth Centre, 1st Liss Scouts, Liss Athletic Football Club and Liss Forest Residents Association, we have prepared this summary for wider consideration.

A strategy is needed because:

- A prime objective of the Liss Neighbourhood Plan is to enhance community life through community and sports provision.

- With 150 planned new households, we must provide for a growing and changing population.
- More housing in the village means a chance to invest from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which housing developers pay to the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA).
- Some of this CIL funding comes to the Parish Council and we need to prioritise how to invest this on behalf of the village - on both recreational and other improvements, including particularly improvements to the village centre.
- Most of the CIL funding stays with the SDNPA and the strategy will help LPC and partner organisations compete to receive some of this funding.

We think that the strategy should be based on the following principles:

- We will achieve more if key partners work together, rather than each working in isolation.
- We should aim for a fair balance between each area of the village and different groups in the local population, and for inclusivity and sociability.
- New facilities must be consistent with the design principles set out in the Village Design Statement and the Liss Neighbourhood Plan.

Things are already happening:

- Renewal of the dilapidated children's play area at West Liss is about to get under way (paid for from SDNPA and LPC CIL funding).
- A new Petanque terrain has been created at Liss Forest Recreation Ground.
- Moveable football goals have been installed at West Liss Recreation Ground and are on offer to Newman Collard Playing Fields.
- Liss Athletic Football Club have put together a funding package to replace the floodlights at Newman Collard.
- A new sports wall for basketball and football is about to be installed at Newman Collard.
- Installation of a Trim Trail as phase 1 of creating Mill Road Community Garden, with a play tunnel to follow.
- Existing recreation facilities and open spaces are being publicised and promoted and we plan to do more of this.

Projects in the pipeline - all subject to consultation, funding and more detailed planning - include:

- **A Multi Use Games Area (MUGA)** for people of all ages being planned by the Newman Collard Playing Fields Trust to include a multisport pitch for football, basketball and hockey, 'free-game' equipment for the younger age range (3+) with a 'surprise basketball goal' and fenced pitch area with goals for all-age football and hockey, 'Sunshine Cricket', outdoor activities for nursery children, walking football and other reablement activity for elderly and disabled people.

- **Outdoor fitness equipment areas** for adults and older teenagers at both West Liss Recreation Ground and Newman Collard Playing Fields to include to include ‘workout’ equipment such as a vertical climbing wall/net, hurdles, monkey bar, balance beam, over/under bars, double turbo challenge and suspension multi training system.
- **Informal recreational facilities for teenagers** at West Liss Recreation Ground to be co-designed with young people themselves with support from the Crossover youth centre, informed by people’s reactions to a pump track which LPC is hiring for the Platinum Jubilee weekend.
- **Extending Liss Forest Recreation Ground’s basketball area** which has been proposed by the Residents Association.
- **Improving playing fields drainage** at both Newman Collard and Liss Forest.

This pipeline of projects reflects what we’ve previously heard from the community:

- Outdoor exercise facilities for both adults and young people were identified as a gap in provision during consultation to inform the 2013 Liss Parish Plan.
- Consultation in 2016 to inform recreational provision in the village identified lack of provision for teenagers, and also opportunities for social interaction.
- Recent discussions with key stakeholders have confirmed the need to fill gaps in provision for both teenagers and adults. In particular, discussions with the Crossover, Bohunt School, family support services, the police and others have identified a need for more informal recreational facilities for young people.
- In a recent poll of local residents, an overwhelming 88% supported installation of provision of outdoor fitness equipment, with 75% of those saying they would use it.

Both Newman Collard Playing Fields Trust and LPC have put in applications to the SDNPA for this year’s allocation of CIL funding. We should hear the outcomes in October and LPC will then decide what to invest from the village’s own CIL funds to create the necessary funding packages. Projects which get the go-ahead will be the subject of more detailed consultation. **In the meantime, we would welcome views on the strategy as it is evolving.**

Cllr Nick Wilson

Chair of the Facilities Committee

Finance Report

The precept for 2021/22 was £224,250. 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 2021/22 include:

East Hants Area CAB

The Triangle Community Centre

Crossover

RVS Luncheon Club

Liss Historical Society

1st Liss Scouts

Newman Collard Playing Fields Trust

Liss AFC – Juniors

Rake Village Hall

LUPIN

HLOW victim support

St Mary's Church

King's Arms Young Carers

Liss Village Club

Liss Mens Shed

Liss Heart Charity Trust

Contributions from S106, community organisation grants and Councillor grants of £21,786.51 have been received to be invested largely in the development of the Mill Road Community Garden. Community Infrastructure Levy funding in respect of the Andlers Wood development of £162,171.53 has been received and will be used on various projects in consultation with the community.

The audit of all 2020/21 accounts was carried out in April 2021 by Lightatouch, the independent internal auditor and approved at the Council meeting on 5th May 2021. PFK Littlejohn Legal Law Practitioners, the Council's appointed external auditor signed the final clearance of the accounts in September 2021.

Budgeted expenditure for 2022/23 is as follows:

Summarised Budget	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	% Change
Budget:				
Staff costs	102.3	105.7	127.7	17.2%
Insurance	7.2	7.2	7.2	
General administration	16.8	19.9	14.9	-33.8%
Grounds maintenance	23.2	28.6	30.5	6.2%
Village Hall running costs	11.4	8.8	21.6	59.4%
Liss Pavilion running costs	14.9	17.3	18	3.8%
Grants to local associations	15.8	15.7	10.1	-55.4%
Liss Pavilion loan servicing	27.5	27.5	27.5	
Capital projects and provisions	14.2	4.1	0.0	
	233.40	234.8	257.7	
Funded by:				
Precept	218.2	224.3	237.4	4.3%
Interest and other receipts	0.2	0.2	0.0	
Rental incomes	17.1	12.5	20.1	46.3%
Transfer to/from reserves	-2.1	-2.1	0.0	
	233.4	234.8	257.7	

Staff costs include all salary, employer's NI and employer's pension cost as well as a new post at 20 hours per week to co-ordinate project work. Staff costs also include an increase to staffing cost in accordance with guidelines for public sector pay rates.

Rental incomes at the Village Hall and Pavilion are expected to return to pre-Covid levels.

Liss Parish Council is expected to make grant payments of £10.1k to local organisations and associations – a decrease of £5.6k or 55% from the previous year.

All capital works are expected to be funded with Community Infrastructure Levy receipts in accordance with the Liss Neighbourhood Plan and in consultation with the community.

The Council has set a precept of £237.4k for 2022/2023 and the charge per Band D dwelling will therefore be £90.40 compared with £86.69 in 2021/2022. This is an increase of £3.71 or 4.26%.

Cllr Clayre Williams
Chair of LPC Finance Committee

Report of attendance of cocouncillors

Since the last scheduled Annual Parish Meeting on 17th March 2021, the Parish Council has met formally a total of 10 times.

Cllrs Budden and Williams attended all 10 meetings.

Cllr Baker attended a total of 8 meetings out of 9 meetings since his co-option in May 2021.

Cllrs Baldwin, Hargreaves, McDonald and Wilson attended 8 out of 10 meetings.

Cllr Linsley attended 7 of a possible 10 meeting, Cllr Jerrard a total of 6 out of 10 meetings and Cllr Smith a total of 5 out of 10 meetings.

Cllr Deacon attended both meetings and Cllr Tordoff 1 of 2 meetings since joining the Council in February.

Cllr Bennett attended 3 out of a total of 9 meetings prior to her resignation this month.

Cllr Lowe attended a total of 3 out of a total of 5 meetings and Cllr Finn a total of 2 out of 5 meetings, prior to their resignations in October.

Sarah Smith

Clerk to Liss Parish Council