



## **LISS PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2023**

### **CHAIR'S REPORT**

It has to be said that the 2022/23 civic year has been one of mixed emotions. We had the joy of celebrating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June last year, followed of course by the sadness of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's funeral in September, and the accession to the throne of His Majesty King Charles III. For us locally, it has been a busy year, of which more in a moment. As has become the norm, we have published our plan for Parish Council activities for the coming year. It should be recognised of course that this year the action plan has to be treated as provisional since we have Parish Council elections on 4<sup>th</sup> May this year, and the incoming administration may have different priorities.

### **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 [lissparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://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 Twitter and Facebook and most recently Instagram, to help keep parishioners informed.

Our main consultations this year have been thoughts about the pump track and regarding possible plans for the enhancement of Liss village centre. Cllr Andy Smith will speak about this project later in tonight's meeting.

An important form of engagement with the community is that Parish Councillors serve as Trustees and 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**

The weekend of 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> June saw four days of events here in Liss to mark the Jubilee, with something for all ages.

One of the main attractions over the weekend was the temporary pump track installed at West Liss Recreation Ground which proved to be popular with people of all ages. More about pump tracks later...

### **The death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the accession of King Charles III**

It was my honour and solemn duty to proclaim the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the accession of King Charles III. My sincere thanks to everyone, from Liss and beyond, who came along to the two events held at the War Memorial for the proclamation and also the commemoration of the Queen's funeral.

### **King Charles III coronation**

Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> May will see the coronation of King Charles III at Westminster Abbey. The weekend will be one of celebration, both nationally and locally.

There are a number of public events planned for the weekend. Please keep an eye on social media, noticeboards and local media as the plans for the weekend develop further. It is really heartwarming 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.

### **New Liss Infrastructure**

There are to be two significant additions to the village leisure facilities this year, one provided by the Parish Council and one provided by Newman Collard Playing Fields Trust (with funding from the South Downs National Park Authority).

The Parish Council development is to be a new pump track at West Liss Recreation Ground. Following the successful trial over the Jubilee weekend and the positive responses expressed in the consultation which followed, the Parish Council committed at its February meeting to proceed with a planning application for a Lawful Development Certificate, and subject to planning permission being granted, to commission the construction of a permanent pump track. If everything goes to schedule, the pump track will be open for public use during the school summer holidays this year.

The second development is a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) at Newman Collard Playing Fields. We congratulate the Newman Collard Playing Fields Trust on securing funding for this facility and welcome its addition to the leisure facilities for all ages throughout the village.

### **Facilities**

The Village Hall and the Pavilion both continue to be well used both by community groups and private bookings for parties and events. You will hopefully have noticed that we have fully redecorated the Village Hall and our thanks go to our caretaker, Jed, for all of his hard work and the excellent results.

Our allotments continue to be very popular with a high occupancy rate and we are undertaking some improvements to enhance the sites.

After a lengthy pause while some legal issues were resolved, we have now recommenced work on the Mill Road Community Garden which will provide a community space and play area on the green space along Mill Road next to Woodbourne Close. We have also recently planted one of two community orchards in the village at the new Community Gardens.

The Pétanque court continues to be well used at Liss Forest Recreation Ground.

The installation of new play equipment at the children's play area at the West Liss Recreation Ground has now been completed and has proved to be very popular. It was my pleasure to welcome Vanessa Rowlands, Chair of the South Downs National Park, accompanied by Doug Jones, Hampshire Parishes Appointee to the SDNPA, to formally open the facility earlier this week.

I would like to thank the Men's Shed for their continued help with projects throughout the village.

We continue to work with EHDC on the control of Himalayan Balsam 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. We (with Hampshire County Council) have delivered two pedestrian courtesy crossings on Station Road by the Liss Pavilion and a further crossing at the Business Centre.

The new village gateways have now all been installed at entrances to the village and Liss Forest (even if one was stolen within 24 hours of installation!).

HCC have also completed work to deliver improvements to improve the environment and discourage speeding around the Liss Infant and Junior Schools.

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 more on this later this evening.

It is important to stress that this is only the first step in what will be a major project for the village over the coming years.

## **Planning and Development**

Andler's Wood, the new Cala Homes development on the former Hilliers land at Andlers Ash Road has now seen construction completed, but there are several issues related to the development which we continue to pursue with the developers and the South Downs National Park Authority.

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. One notable exception you will probably be aware of is the development of a detached house right next to the Village Hall. Despite strong representations from the Parish Council and your local District Councillors, the development was given planning permission. 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**

We successfully co-opted a new councillor during the year, Clive Olley. We welcome him 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. The Project Review Group ceased operation during the year, with its responsibilities being absorbed into the Finance and Facilities Committees. I would like to extend my thanks to Roger Hargreaves, for his diligent work as Chair of the group.

## **Parish Council elections**

Following the Declaration of Election on 17<sup>th</sup> March, elections for the Parish Council are due to take place on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> May. If you are interested in joining us as a Parish Councillor, please speak to any of the existing councillors and either our clerk Sarah Smith or our assistant clerk Lizzy Keeling.

You can obtain a complete set of nomination forms from the Electoral Commission website at <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/media/5016>

Once you have completed your nomination forms, you must book an appointment with the elections team at Penns Place to deliver your nomination papers. You can book your appointment via the EHDC website at <https://www.easthants.gov.uk> Please note that nomination papers must be physically handed in at Penns Place, you cannot submit them by post or email. However, someone else can deposit the papers at Penns Place on your behalf if getting to Penns Place during working hours is not convenient.

We are a Parish Council of 13 councillors, so if there are less than 13 people who complete and hand in their nomination forms to the elections team at Penns Place, then all those nominated will be automatically elected and there will be no ballot papers for the Parish Council election.

## **District Councillors**

For the last four years, Russell Oppenheimer and I have had the honour of being your District Councillors. I believe we have both worked hard to promote the interests of the people of Liss during our term of office.

There will be an election to select your District Councillors from 2023-2027 on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> May. This year's elections are the first at which you must have photo ID with you when you vote. There are a large number of acceptable photo ID documents you can take to the polling station or you can apply for a free voter ID – you can do this at <https://voter-authority-certificate.service.gov.uk/> You must do this by April 23<sup>rd</sup> 2023 to vote in the May 4<sup>th</sup> elections.

If you wish to stand as a district council candidate, please consult the EHDC website for details.

## **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, Lizzy Keeling the Assistant Clerk, Sandra Humphrey our Responsible Finance Officer and Katrina Burns our Projects Officer.

All have worked extra hours to keep the Council going and to 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. I must of course also congratulate Sarah as she has been awarded Clerk of the Year by the Hampshire Association of Local Councils.

They have been supported by Jed Deane, our caretaker for the Village Hall and Julie and Pete Ryan, our caretakers 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, ably assisted by Jed when needed. 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.

I am aware that some of my councillor colleagues may be choosing to not continue as Parish Councillors at the May elections. I would like to end with my heartfelt thanks to every one of them for their work and dedication as Parish Councillors. You can all be proud of what you have achieved.

Thank you.

**Cllr Keith Budden, Chair of Liss Parish Council**

## LISS PARISH COUNCIL DRAFT ACTION PLAN FOR 2023/24

The Chair advised that the Action Plan for 23/24 was a draft and would be subject to views of the new Council following the elections in May.

### During the Council year 2023/24 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, to 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, continuing to build 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.
- 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 2023/2024 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:
  - Completing the school zone proposals.
  - Exploring options for highways improvements using the Community Funded Initiatives Scheme, in particular on Andlers Ash Road and Forest Road, following delivery of the gateways project, school zone works on Hill Brow Road and addition of two courtesy crossings on Station Road.
- Facilities priorities:
  - Completing delivery of the Mill Road Community Garden.
  - Delivering the pump track at West Liss Recreation Ground
  - Working with partners on pitch improvement programmes and drainage improvements at Newman Collard, West Liss and Liss Forest recreation grounds.

Renovating the children's play area at Liss Forest.

Undertaking an improvement programme to enhance the allotment sites.

- Developing proposals for enhancement of the village centre with Hampshire County Council, East Hampshire District Council and the South Downs National Park Authority.
- Contributing to nature recovery through green space projects to enhance biodiversity and protect the environment.
- Liss Neighbourhood Plan: working with the SDNPA to review and refresh the SDNPA Local Plan and Liss Neighbourhood Plan.

## KEY PROJECTS

### **Village Centre Improvements Project**

- The project's aim is to address issues identified in the Liss Neighbourhood Plan which highlighted the need scope for improvements to the village centre, improving the street scene and tackling traffic management.
- Following approval of the design brief, Hampshire Services were appointed in May 2022 to undertake the Liss Village Centre Project and identify potential improvements to Liss village centre using the Health Streets design methodology <https://www.healthystreets.com/>.
- A public consultation exercise was carried out in summer 2022. Key findings included: traffic issues with the rail crossing blocking traffic flow when the barriers were down with resulting pollution, issues regarding the appearance of the village centre such as lack of green infrastructure, issues regarding poor and illegal parking and perceived issues of anti-social behaviour.
- The full outcome of the consultation process had been published on the LPC website earlier in the day and could be found at [www.lissparishcouncil.gov.uk/](http://www.lissparishcouncil.gov.uk/) Community Consultation and Engagement / Village Centre Project.
- Concept Design proposals were being finalised by Hampshire Services which would be presented to the new Council in due course, with further public consultation and engagement.
- Phase 1 of the project is a proposal to extend the London bound platform to accommodate longer trains to prevent them blocking the road and keeping the barrier down longer than necessary. This would in turn unlock other infrastructure and public realm improvements to reducing traffic congestion and improving air quality.
- A joint bid with Network Rail and South Western Railway had been submitted to the SDNPA and EHDC to fund the platform extension from CIL.

### **Cllr Andy Smith**

**Chair of the Highways Committee and lead councillor for the project**

### **Recreation facilities in Liss – a strategy for the 2020s**

- The village recreation strategy has been regularly updated and is available on the LPC website at [www.lissparishcouncil.gov.uk/](http://www.lissparishcouncil.gov.uk/) Community Consultation and Engagement / Recreation Strategy. The most recent version in January 2023 saw an extension of the strategy to cover environmental projects.
- The strategy goes wider than provision on LPC managed grounds and therefore relies on partnership working. For example, the Newman Collard Playing Field Trust have been working to deliver the Multi-Use Games Area as part of provision for teenagers and has been successful in securing funding from the SDNPA. The Trust are also working with the football club to deliver drainage improvement at the site.
- Similarly there has been partnership working with the Liss Forest Residents Association to agree ambitions for enhancing the Liss Forest Recreation Ground. This has also included drainage works informed by the Grounds Management Association,



replacement of some of the existing equipment in the fenced play area and enhancing provision for teenagers, including moveable goals at the site.

- Progress at West Liss Recreation Ground included a fully refurbished children's play area part funded by a successful application to the SDNPA, plus the recent decision to proceed with the installation of a pump track primarily aimed at providing a facility for teenagers but suitable for all ages, as well as all wheels. The decision was made to proceed following a trial track as part of the Queen's Jubilee celebrations and a consultation exercise which showed overwhelmingly support for the project. Cllr Wilson extended thanks to the Crossover for advocating for their young people and assisting in the project.
- Consideration of provision for adults, such as outdoor exercise equipment, would require further consultation to ensure that whatever was delivered would be well used. The Newman Collard Playing Fields Trust had already secured some funding for this purpose from the SDNPA.
- Other developments have included the planting of the Community Orchard at the Mill Road Community Garden. A full lease to enable LPC to complete the Mill Road Community Garden project was expected to be agreed shortly with works expected to re-commence in the spring.

**Cllr Nick Wilson**

**Chair of the Facilities Committee**

## REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

The precept for 2022/23 was £237,435. 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 2022/23 include:

East Hants Area CAB  
Crossover  
RVS Luncheon Club  
Liss Historical Society  
1st Liss Scouts  
Newman Collard Playing Fields Trust  
Liss AFC – Juniors  
Rake Village Hall  
LUPIN  
HIOW victim support  
Liss Heart Charity Trust

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

<b>Total CIL received</b>	<b>£ 406,666</b>
<b>Total Spent</b>	<b>£ 61,295</b>
<b>Total Allocated</b>	<b>£ 330,000</b>
<b>Total Unallocated</b>	<b>£ 15,371</b>
<b>Spent</b>	
Liss Pavilion - Construction & fit out	£ 6,281
Path to new Petanque Terrain	£ 2,970
Watering system in village centre	£ 445
Village Hall Building Maintenance	£ 5,033
Mill Road Community Garden	£ 11,595
Public noticeboard, village centre	£ 610
Moveable goal posts, WL & NC	£ 3,776
West Liss Play Area	£ 25,000
Sports Wall at Newman Collard	£ 5,585
<b>Allocated</b>	
Floodlight installation fees	£ 2,500
MUGA at Newman Collard	£ 50,000
Pump track installation	£ 100,000
Village Centre Improvement	£ 120,000
Crossover	£ 7,500
Liss Forest recreation ground improvement	£ 50,000

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

Budgeted expenditure for 2023/24 is as follows:

	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	% change
<b>Budget:</b>				
Staff cost	105.7	127.7	138.3	8%
Insurance	7.2	7.2	8.3	13%
General administration	19.9	14.9	13.9	-7%
Grounds maintenance	28.6	30.5	31.9	4%
Village Hall running cost	8.8	21.6	26.3	18%
Pavilion running cost	17.3	21.1	24.8	15%
Allotment running cost	0.0	0.0	0.7	100%
Grants to local associations	15.7	10.1	10.3	1%
Pavilion loan servicing	27.5	27.5	27.5	0%
Capital projects and provisions	4.1	0.0	10.0	100%
	234.8	260.6	292.0	
<b>Funded by:</b>				
Precept	224.3	237.4	254.1	7%
Interest and other receipts	0.2	0.0	0.0	
Rental incomes	12.4	23.2	37.9	39%
Transfer to/from reserves	-2.1	0.0	0.0	
	234.8	260.6	292.0	

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 increase by 18% and Village Hall running costs are expected to increase by 15%, largely as a result of the increase in energy cost. The increase to these running costs will be somewhat offset by a 39% increase in rental income.

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

The Council has set a precept of £254.1k for 2023/2024 and the charge per Band D dwelling will therefore be £95.11 compared with £90.40 in 2022/2023. This is an increase of £4.71 or 5.21% per Band D dwelling.

The audit of 2021/22 accounts was carried out in April 2022 by Lightatouch, the independent internal auditor and approved at the Council meeting on 27 June 2022. PFK Littlejohn Legal Law Practitioners, the Council's appointed external auditor, signed the final clearance of the accounts in September 2022.

**Cllr Williams**  
**Chair of the Finance Committee**

## REPORT ON ATTENDANCE OF COUNCILLORS

The Clerk, Sarah Smith, reported that since the last scheduled Annual Parish Meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2022, the Parish Council has met formally a total of 10 times.

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Cllrs Linsley and Williams attended all 10 meetings.

Cllrs Budden, Baker, Baldwin, Deacon, Hargreaves and McDonald attended 9 out of 10 meetings.

Cllr Smith and Tordoff attended 8 of the 10 meetings.

Cllr Wilson attended 7 meetings and Cllr Jerrard 6 meetings.

Cllr Olley attended a total of 6 meetings out of 7 since his co-option in June 2023.

**Sarah Smith**

**Clerk to Liss Parish Council**