



## **LISS PARISH COUNCIL**

### **COUNCIL MEETING**

A meeting of Liss Parish Council took place at 7pm on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023 in the Village Hall

#### Members:

\*Mr K. Budden (Chair), \*Ms S. Baldwin, \*Mr I. James, Mr D. Jerrard, \*Mr C. Olley, \*Mr P. Payne, \*Mr A. Smith, \* Mrs S. Stratford-Tuke, \*Ms K. Tordoff, \*Ms C. Williams and Mr N. Wilson

\* Present

Clerk: S. Smith, in addition to County Cllr Russell Oppenheimer District Cllr Roger Mullenger.

#### **147/23 Apologies**

Apologies were accepted from cllrs Jerrard and Wilson.

#### **148/23 Declarations of Interests and Role as Charity Trustee**

Councillors were reminded of the following:

- i. Their responsibility to declare any pecuniary interest they may have in any item of business, no later than when that item is reached.
- ii. That when discussing Charity business, any decision must be made in accordance with the Charities' governing documents, rather than for the benefit of LPC as a whole.

No interests were declared.

#### **149/23 Chair's announcements**

The Chair advised the following:

- a) That this year's Remembrance Sunday Commemoration would take place on 12<sup>th</sup> November. He highlighted that it was traditional for Liss Parish Councillors to walk in the parade and encouraged members to attend the parade and service.
- b) That The Temple Inn pub in Liss Forest was due to re-open; a lease had been signed and the new landlord and landlady were busy working on the interior and the menu with a view to re-opening before Christmas.
- c) That EHDC Development Manager in Planning Services, Nick Upton, would be delivering planning training via Teams on the evening of 16<sup>th</sup> November and encouraged members of the planning committee to attend.
- d) That the railway line between Petersfield and Guildford would close between 21<sup>st</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> October for rail improvement works. A replacement bus service would be in place, however the journey would take longer and so he encouraged people to plan accordingly. He also encouraged people to bear with Network Rail as regards any inconvenience experienced as the closures were to undertake improvement works which should pay off in the long-term.

#### **150/23 Adjournment for public participation**

No members of the public were present and so no period of adjournment was required.

#### **151/23 Update from the County Councillor**

Cllr Oppenheimer had submitted a written report (**Annex A**).

Cllr Oppenheimer highlighted the need to address the HCC budget gap whilst being faced with increased demand for protecting vulnerable people alongside rising costs. He also praised Liss Parish Council as a very proactive council in relation to tree planting projects with the Hampshire

Forest Partnership.

No questions were raised.

*Cllr Payne arrived at this point in the meeting.*

### **152/23 Update from District Councillors**

Cllr James advised the following:

- a) That the Liss Conservation Rangers were still operating but looking for some administrative support; Cllr James had requested some support from EHDC.
- b) That EHDC would make a decision on the future of the Liss Business Centre at the EHDC Cabinet meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> October. It was thought the outcome would be disposal despite efforts of Cllr James and Mullenger to the contrary based on its current state of repair and insufficient occupation of the building.
- c) That a report was being prepared on making the council's services carbon neutral by 2035; the report would issue by the end of the month.
- d) That the first District Councillor surgery had been held with 12 attendees in attendance. He reported that most queries raised were related to speeding in the village and crossing points. He urged LPC to raise the possible repainting of the courtesy crossing outside the bakery with HCC.

Cllr Smith enquired as to whether waste collection was in scope to be carbon neutral by 2035. Cllr James advised that collection was in scope but that disposal was not. He also raised the intermittent nature of the collection service. Cllr James advised that EHDC were aware of the issue.

*District Councillor Roger Mullenger arrived at this point in the meeting.*

Cllr Smith undertook to report that the courtesy crossing in the village centre needed repainting on the HCC reporting system.

Cllrs Budden and Payne expressed disappointment about the possible closure of the Liss Business Centre and the lack of consultation with LPC. Cllr Payne felt that the motivation was purely financial. Cllr Mullenger added that as the provision of the facility was not a statutory requirement and he felt that EHDC did not wish to continue to provide this. Cllr Smith asked what LPC could do to assist and it was agreed that he would draft a communication to the portfolio holder.

Cllr Budden asked about progress on staff moving to the new EHDC premises as the move was supposed to have been completed by now; he noted that completion of the move would help with reducing EHDC's carbon footprint.

Cllr Olley requested an update on the Riverside Walk Management Plan and Cllr James replied that he had not been able to secure a firm timeframe. Cllr Payne highlighted that LPC was supposed to have been consulted on this and felt this should be before EHDC produced the draft. Cllr Mullenger advised that LPC would be consulted on the draft plan once in place later this autumn.

Cllr Mullenger added that the bus timetable was also an issue raised at the District Councillor surgery, in addition to the need to repaint the courtesy crossing. Cllr Oppenheimer advised that HCC no longer supported coloured crossings due to budgetary pressures, but that he would raise the possibility of this particular crossing being repainted and report back.

Cllr Mullenger highlighted the following:

- a) That he had attended the wildflower planting at Newman Collard on 11<sup>th</sup> October and advised that he still had some funding available in his District Councillor grant pot which needed to be spent on an environmental project. Cllr Tordoff asked whether the funds could be allocated to the watering station for the orchard at the Mill Road Community Garden and Cllr Mullenger encouraged an application to be submitted.
- b) That he continued to comment on most planning applications and noted the application for retrospective permission for a large barn at Lyss Place, but would not be commenting being a neighbour.
- c) That a site selection meeting had been held at EHDC for areas not within the SDNP which had proved helpful in bringing out local information. He would ask if a similar meeting might take place for areas within the Park.

d) That a presentation would take place by the lead for waste collection at EHDC.

### **153/23 Minutes of the meeting of Council of 18<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the Council meeting of 18<sup>th</sup> September 2023 be approved as an accurate record (proposed by Cllr Williams and seconded by Cllr Olley and with all in favour).

### **154/23 Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

### **155/23 RFO's reports on payments and receipts for the period 12<sup>th</sup> September 2023 to 10<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

**Resolved:** That the receipts and payments reported in the Responsible Finance Officer's Report for the period 12<sup>th</sup> September 2023 to 10<sup>th</sup> October 2023, for both Liss Parish Council and the Charities' accounts, be approved (proposed by Cllr Olley and seconded by Cllr Williams with all in favour) as at **Annex B**.

### **156/23 Report of the Planning Committee of 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

Members noted the minutes of the Planning Committee of 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

### **157/23 Report of the Facilities Committee of 25<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

The Clerk noted that issues arising from the Facilities Committee of 25<sup>th</sup> September, including the draft visions for the three recreation grounds, would be brought to the November Council when Cllr Wilson was due to be present.

Members noted the minutes of the Facilities Committee of 25<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

### **158/23 CIL Update and allocation**

The Chair highlighted that, due to the National Lottery funding award for the pump track, a sum of approximately £50,000 would be returned to the CIL pot for allocation to other projects.

The Clerk added that a sum of £10,744.02 was due to issue from the SDSNPA to LPC later in the month and so the unallocated CIL pot would therefore stand at around £80,000.

### **159/23 Matters to report**

Cllr Williams advised that she had attended two meetings at the Triangle and an AGM and highlighted the significant level of building works facing the community centre. She reported that 7,000 spring flowering bulbs had been planted at Newman Collard and the Petersfield Post and Shine Radio had attended the formal ceremony at which local children took part in the planting. Cllr Williams had also attended the SDNPA Parish Meeting on Dark Skies and recommended viewing the footage which both she and the Clerk had circulated.

Cllr James suggested that LPC consider what it can do to contribute to the net zero target by 2050, highlighting that, following initial investment, actual costs would reduce. He proposed a professional carbon survey or a local energy plan to inform the community where carbon monoxide generation could be reduced. He also suggested that solar energy could provide thermal efficiency in the Village Hall. The Chair responded that it had previously been advised that solar panels could not be placed on the Village Hall given its location in the Conservation Area, but noted it was possible that the position could have changed since then.

Cllr Tordoff advised that an environmental group consisting of herself and Cllrs Olley and Williams. However, they were already at full capacity with existing higher priority green space projects and would need input from other councillors to deliver any additional projects.

Cllr Payne highlighted that closing the Liss Business Centre would have a negative effect on carbon emissions as users of the facility would likely have to travel further afield. He added that being able to work locally was an important issue for localism.

Cllr Smith echoed Cllr Tordoff's point that councillors needed to come forward to take on projects if they wanted to see these delivered due to limited officer capacity.

Cllr Oppenheimer added that the Energise South Downs and Solar Together were two key initiatives which could help contribute and suggested LPC promote the scheme as the 27<sup>th</sup> October

deadline was approaching. Cllr Smith undertook to explore the possibility of a collaboration with Energise South Downs.

Cllrs Mullenger and Oppenheimer left the meeting at this point.

**160/23 EXEMPT Item: Councillor co-option**

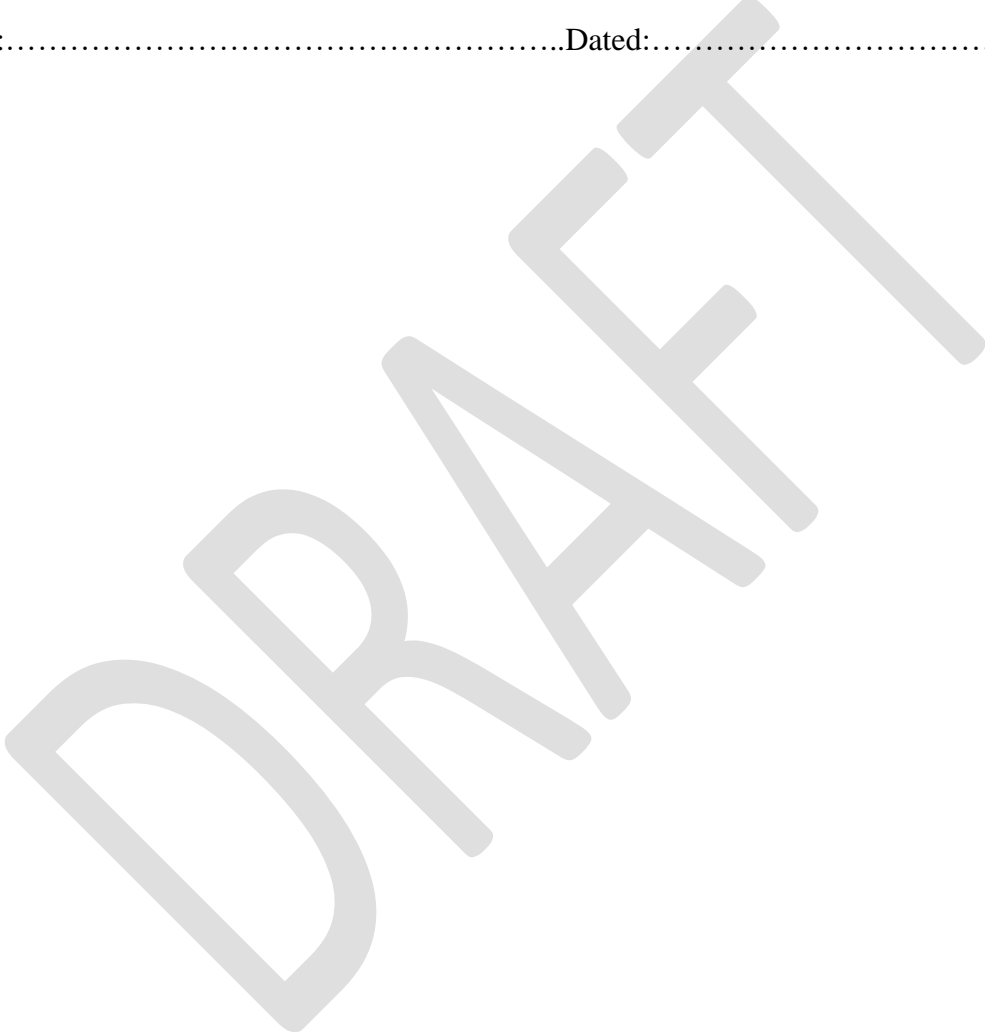
**Resolved:** That Robert Smith be co-opted as a Liss Parish councillor for the Liss ward (with 9 votes in favour).

**Resolved:** That Christopher Mort be co-opted as a Liss Parish Councillor for the Liss Forest ward (with 8 votes in favour and 1 abstention).

The Chair closed the meeting at 20:13 hrs.

Date of next scheduled meeting: Monday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023, 7pm

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



**COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT  
TO  
ALL PARISH COUNCILS  
IN PETERSFIELD HANGERS  
2 OCTOBER 2023**

1. Budget planning process for 2025 commences

Following the consultation process which took place over the Summer, September 2023 saw the start of the County Council's budget planning timetable.

A total of 2,935 consultation responses were received. The results show that people agree with the way we have been managing Hampshire's public finances in response to over a decade of financial pressures. Residents agree that we should continue to focus the money we do have to help the most vulnerable people in Hampshire. Residents have also told us they agree that it is central Government that needs to step in to help us balance our budget in future. We are stepping up our lobbying tactics accordingly.

We still have to address the projected 2025 budget gap of £132m which needs to be bridged. Savings proposals will be considered by individual Cabinet Members over the coming weeks. Recommendations will then go to the Cabinet in October before a final decision is made in November by the full County Council. Subject to agreement by Cabinet and the Full County Council, some proposals may then be subject to further, more detailed public consultation.

HCC costs have risen dramatically because of factors outside of our control. Inflation has pushed up prices across the board. Demand continues to rise for core public services like social care for vulnerable children and adults. Highways have suffered due to increasingly extreme weather events.

Hampshire is in a better financial position than most other county councils, and while our finances are stable until 2025, we do need central Government to fundamentally change the way that local government services are funded, or reduce what councils are legally required to deliver.

2. HCC's Hampshire Forest Partnership goes from strength to strength

I am delighted that the HFP team are now working with Ropley, Sheet, Steep, Stroud and Liss Parishes in Petersfield Hangers on tree-planting projects. Our partnership now extends to 35 organisations including the Tree Council, EHDC and the Woodland Trust, who have proved to be keen partners. We have won a grant of £180,000 through

the Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund which has meant that we have been able to recruit two more members of staff so they are now a team of three. If you would like to get in touch with the team please email [treeplanting@hants.gov.uk](mailto:treeplanting@hants.gov.uk). I would like to let you know about two new HFP initiatives which we have launched in September:

- **Shoots along the Routes.** We're offering saplings, funding and advice for tree planting projects that will create green corridors along some of Hampshire's main roads, including the A272 and A32. Tree circles, miniforests, linear woodlands, hedgerows and orchards will all be considered within 2km of the roads. Applications for planting this winter are now open. If you are interested, please send an email to the above email address.
- **Young Tree Growers Guide.** The idea behind this guide is to get kids involved in gathering seeds and planting trees. In my experience, children find this a fun and rewarding activity. Each page of the guide can be printed out or read on a mobile device. Please share this guide with schools, scouts and anyone else you know who may be interested! Here is a link: <https://treegrowersguide.org.uk/ytgg/>

I think that most people these days understand that trees are important for biodiversity (mammals, birds and insects) and are also good for climate change (by locking up carbon). But that is not all! Here is a list of other benefits which you are welcome to use in your newsletters. Some additional beneficial effects of trees are:

- Reducing both noise pollution and air pollution coming from the roads
- Alleviating flood risk – absorption from trees reduces run-off during heavy rain.
- Air cooling (and reflection of heat) to mitigate heat from roads (albedo effect)
- River cooling and shading for fish. Green corridors help cool river water.
- Reducing road run-off of pollutants such as oil spill residue, and tyre and brake wear from vehicles into rivers and watercourses
- Improving soil health – planting trees improves soil structure.
- Increasing visual amenity value and enhancing the landscape character.
- Improving mental health and wellbeing –by reducing stress and cortisol levels.

### 3. Broadband Update

In September I organised what has become an annual update meeting with the Hampshire Superfast Broadband Team for our MP Damian Hinds. It is important to understand what is meant by superfast broadband. Superfast means speeds above 30 Megabits per second (MBps), according to OFCOM. Many of us in East Hants currently have “fibre from the cabinet”, which means we have speeds of around 16 MBps. So we are due an upgrade.

Under the Government's £5bn Project Gigabit programme, a contract for Hampshire has been awarded to a company called City Fibre. Implementation should get underway in 2024. We will know when we start seeing City Fibre vans around the place.

Meanwhile, Openreach will continue with their commercial rollout which includes most of Petersfield. This is also slated for 2024.

It is widely rumoured that Virgin Media will buy City Fibre as they have reportedly bid £3bn. Virgin Media is owned by Liberty Global and that group now includes O2 following the merger in 2021. I am optimistic that the competition between the emerging two giants (BT/Openreach and Liberty/Virgin) will be good news for rural communities.

#### 4. HCC further increases monthly payments to Homes for Ukraine hosts

You may remember from earlier reports that HCC has been topping up the government grant to Homes for Ukraine hosts over the last two years by £200. HCC has now decided to increase that top-up to £400 which means the hosts will now receive £700 per month.

The UK Government and Hampshire County Council are doing everything we can to help Ukraine to win the war. I think we can be proud of the fact that the Longmoor Range in our area is playing a crucial part in the war effort with thousands of Ukrainian soldiers being trained there already this year and more in progress.

#### 5. Funding for rare orchids in East Hampshire

The chalkland areas of the East Hampshire Hangers and nearby woodlands already provide a home to some of the UK's scarcest helleborine orchids, but their numbers have been in decline. You may be surprised to hear that the red helleborine (*Cephalanthera rubra*) is considered one of the UK's most threatened orchid species with an overall population of fewer than 20 plants recorded each year. Here is a photo of the red helleborine:



The long-leaved helleborine (*Cephalanthera longifolia*) is also very rare. It is thought to survive at only 25 sites in England. Here is a photo of that one:



HCC has plans to preserve rare orchids on County Council sites and these plans have now been backed by Natural England with a £98,000 grant. This project will put in place measures to protect these fragile locations and nurture the threatened helleborine orchid back from the brink of extinction. Conservation work such as this is a key priority for the County Council enabling us to preserve our precious natural landscapes for wildlife, develop resilience to climate change, and ensure that the delicate ecosystems can spread and survive.

The nature recovery project aims to increase numbers of both red and long-leaved helleborines. The decline of the species in recent decades is linked to a range of factors including woodland loss, trampling by humans and deer, and grazing by molluscs. Plans to reverse the loss of the orchids include vegetation clearance to provide more space, light and air for the plants to grow; protection for adult plants; ‘artificial’ hand pollination; and the introduction of measures to help seeds to germinate. The aim also is to involve a group of volunteers to assist with the project.

#### 6. BOATs Update

As Executive Member for Countryside and Regulatory Services, I am responsible for the Countryside Service. The Service is working hard at the moment to develop a new approach to managing Byways Open to All Traffic (BOATs). The strategy will be published on 20 November 2023 in advance of the Universal Services Select Committee meeting on 27 November, where the paper will be scrutinised. Deputations can be made at that session. This Select Committee is chaired by Cllr Robert Mocatta who represents Petersfield Butser Division.

I will also be meeting with SDNPA Chair Vanessa Rowland shortly and I will discuss the BOATs strategy with her, including opportunities for joint working and joint lobbying of Government. I will update Parishes again on this issue in my December report.

**RUSSELL OPPENHEIMER**  
**County Councillor for Petersfield Hangers**



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