

**LISS PARISH**  
**ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**  
**22nd March 2023**

The Annual Parish Meeting was held on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2023 in Liss Village Hall. 12 members of the Parish Council and 17 parishioners attended. Mr Keith Budden, Chair of the Parish Council, presided. Also in attendance was the Parish Clerk Mrs Sarah Smith and County Cllr Russell Oppenheimer. Apologies were received from Councillor Deacon.

**PRESENTATION OF THE VILLAGER OF THE YEAR WARD 2023**

The Chair presented the Villager of the Year Award 2023 to Tom Collard and Iain Neasom. Both have a long history of voluntary activity within the village - Tom contributes so much to the upkeep of The Newman Collard Playing Fields and other tasks around the village, always ready and willing to get involved and help out. Iain was awarded the title for his amazing work in heading up the Scouts, Cubs and Beavers in the village, where his commitment is second to none.

Certificates were also awarded to Bob and Gill Elmer for their fundraising for The Rosemary Foundation - Hospice at Home and Emma Glazier for everything she does for the Liss Athletic Football Club Juniors. Penny Tapp was noted for her weekly visits on behalf of St. Mary's Church to East Hill House Residential Home and Georgina Leigh for her previous service to the young people of Liss whilst at the Crossover Youth Centre, Liss.

Thanks to the two young people who had come forward to judge the Young Villager of the Year Award – Constance Taylor and Sam Viel,

**PARISHIONERS' QUESTIONS**

The following issues were raised:

a) **Speeding and the status of the LPC Speed Indicator Device (SID):**

Cllr Smith advised that the SID was still being deployed at key locations in the village and that the Council meeting immediately prior to this meeting had just approved funding for two further SIDs. The new SIDs would have removable ground posts which would fit into ground sockets to be installed at key locations. He added that Andlers Ash Road, highlighted by a resident present as an issue, would likely be a key focus, alongside Hill Brow Road, Station Road, Forest Road and Farnham Road. In addition, Cllr Budden added that EHDC were making 10 sets of three cameras available to East Hampshire communities where residents felt that speeding was an issue. Cllr Smith also highlighted that other options to reduce speeding were being explored by HCC under the Community Funded Initiative scheme.

Cllr Tordoff advised that the Liss Speedwatch Group had diminished in terms of volunteer capacity but that having multiple SIDs around the village would help to deter speeding.

b) Parking on pavements:

In response to a query about what could be done to prevent vehicles parking on the pavement and causing an obstruction to pedestrians, Cllr Budden advised that this was not an offence unless white or yellow lining was present. However, if a car was totally blocking the pavement and therefore causing an obstruction this should be reported to the EHDC Traffic Team.

Cllr Smith encouraged parishioners to report such incidents as and when they came across them and noted that HCC would be taking over management of parking and traffic management from 1st April 2023. He added that if a vehicle was considered to be parked dangerously this could also be reported to the police.

c) Light pollution:

In response to a question about light pollution from the SIDs, Cllr Budden advised that the SIDs would be solar operated and would not be an infringement of the Dark Skies Policy.

d) Village clutter:

In response to a concern about additional poles being sited around the village contributing to signage clutter, Cllr Smith advised that the poles for the new SIDs were movable and would be placed into special sockets in the ground.

As regards other perceived clutter Cllr Smith advised that a decluttering exercise had been carried out by HCC as part of the remit for installing the village gateways and that remaining signs would therefore be required.

e) Village gateways:

One resident expressed concerns that the village gateways were over the top, in particular the ones at the top of Hill Brow Road were perceived as too large and questioned the siting of a second sign in the central reservation and expressed dissatisfaction that the Liss Forest gateway had been placed in front of the planter (as you enter the village).

Cllr Smith responded that a public consultation exercise had been carried out on the works and all feedback following installation of the new gateways to date had been positive.

Cllr Wilson advised that the Liss Forest Residents Association had plans to install a new planter to replace the old one and so appropriate siting would be considered. As regards the two signs in some locations, it was thought this would have a beneficial impact of reducing speed coming into the village.

Another resident questioned why the new school signs were only added in one direction.

Cllr Smith advised that these were placed coming down Hill Brow Road to alert drivers that they were coming into a more urban area and also to prevent people parking on those areas. Another resident welcomed the new signage to reduce speed in the school area.

f) Lack of accessibility at the new crossing on Hill Brow Road serving Andlers Wood:

Cllr Budden advised that LPC were conscious of the issues with the new crossing and had been working hard to push for a satisfactory resolution, including at a meeting with the SDNPA and EHDC which LPC had called the previous week to discuss various issues of concern regarding the Andlers Wood development.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF 21<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2022

The minutes of the meeting of 21<sup>st</sup> March 2022 had been circulated. Proposed by Cllr McDonald and seconded by Cllr Wilson with those present in favour, they were agreed and signed as a correct record.

## MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising from the minutes or the 2022 Annual Report.

## CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair, Cllr Budden, provided the following 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.

## **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.



## PRESENTATIONS ON KEY PROJECTS

### **Village Centre Improvements Project**

Cllr Smith, Chair of the Highways Committee and lead councillor for the project, presented the following information:

- 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 tacking 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.

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

Cllr Nick Wilson, Chair of the Facilities Committee, gave an update on the recreation strategy for Liss as follows:

- 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.

#### REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Cllr Williams, Chair of the Finance Committee, provided the following report:

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:

Total CIL received	£ 406,666
Total Spent	£ 61,295
Total Allocated	£ 330,000
Total Unallocated	£ 15,371

**Spent**

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

**Allocated**

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

### 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. 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.

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.

### COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT TO PARISHES 22-23

County Councillor for Petersfield Hangars, Russell Oppenheimer, had submitted the following report:

This annual report has been prepared for Annual Parish Meetings taking place between March and May 2023. As usual I will try to attend as many of the APMs as I possibly can!

#### A memorable year for Hampshire

The historic and emotional events of the last 12 months will live long in the memory. It has been an eventful municipal year with the monarchy at the heart of it: The County Council celebrated the Queen's Platinum Jubilee across its services during the summer of 2022. The lighting of a beacon at QE Country Park was a very well attended event, along with events at other country parks and libraries. I also attended a moving Jubilee Citizenship ceremony held in the Great Hall in Winchester, directly underneath the Round Table. All Parishes held their own Platinum Jubilee events which were joyous community occasions.

The sad death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth in September 2022 came as an enormous blow and all of Hampshire was greatly affected. Hampshire was always close to the Queen's heart. Hampshire was the place where the Queen spent her honeymoon and the County to which she came often to visit Her Armed Forces. The County Council helped residents to pay their respects to the late Monarch by providing public books of condolence at the Great Hall.

HCC was then responsible for the co-ordination of the proclamation of King Charles III outside Winchester's Great Hall, as well as live-streaming the event to allow people to watch online.

As the municipal year ends in May this year, HCC will put on a number of suitable events across the County to enable people to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles on 6 May 2023.

The ongoing war in Ukraine has been unsettling over the last year. I am proud that Hampshire has played an important role in supporting Ukrainians fleeing from the conflict. We have taken in the third highest number of refugees of all the English counties, not a bad record. This is predominantly thanks to the generosity of the Homes for Ukraine hosts, to whom we are all very grateful. HCC is providing extra support to Hampshire residents hosting Ukrainian guests as part of the Government's Scheme, with an additional £200 per month beyond the funding already provided by the Government.

HCC has also worked hard to help our Ukrainian guests to integrate. We launched a Ukraine Connects initiative at all our libraries and we have helped to develop language classes and skills support.

The severe weather has had an impact over the last year. We have seen a massive increase in flooding incidents across Petersfield Hangers, and a number of sewage overflows which are very distressing. The rain and freezing temperatures have also taken their toll on road surfaces. I think Hampshire Highways have done a great job in the circumstances.

The severe weather is likely to be a feature of our climate over the coming years. We have to learn to live with it. It is a reminder of the negative impacts of climate change, and we need to redouble our decarbonisation efforts. It is great to see community energy schemes springing up across the Petersfield Hangers division.

#### The last 12 months for me

Back in May 2022 I was delighted to be appointed to the Countryside and Regulatory Services portfolio within the HCC Cabinet. I am responsible for five country parks, five National Nature Reserves, two farms and 81 countryside sites. I am also responsible for Trading Standards, Ceremonies and Registration, Hampshire Records Office and Hampshire Scientific Service. So there is plenty to keep me busy.

One of my passions is tree planting and I am delighted to be championing the Hampshire Forest Partnership. We have an ambitious target to plant one million trees by 2050, and we have made great strides over the last year. Ongoing support from Parishes is critical to ensure we keep up momentum.

Apart from boosting nature, storing carbon, preventing flooding, and improving natural beauty, tree-planting can also bring communities together. Young and old alike can get stuck in and then enjoy watching the trees grow with a real sense of pride. Our project officer at HCC would be pleased to hear from any Parish Council that would like to develop a tree-planting programme in their Parish. You can contact her at [treeplanting@hants.gov.uk](mailto:treeplanting@hants.gov.uk)

In my HCC Countryside role, I have been proactive on the BOATs front (Byways Open to All Traffic). I am determined to restore the safety and tranquillity of our green lanes. At HCC we are developing an innovative new policy framework which will be published for scrutiny later this year. New gates, secure noticeboards and technology will be deployed under the new approach.

I am pleased to say that collaboration with the SDNPA on the BOATs issue is gathering pace now. We are anticipating being able to get some funding from their CIL pot and establishing joint working mechanisms amongst the Ranger teams. I met the SDNPA Chair Vanessa Rowlands last week and we were very much on the same page in our desire to keep up the momentum and make a difference. We are awaiting certain Government policy announcements on this issue, which I hope will also give us more tools to protect the byways which are so important in terms of maintaining access to the countryside for everyone.

#### Funds available for projects

May I take this opportunity to remind everyone that HCC has two funding streams available for Parish Councils. I would encourage Parishes to take advantage of these funds whilst they still exist by making applications in the coming year.

The Rural Community Fund supports Parish Councils, groups and organisations in rural Hampshire and small market towns. The fund can provide contributions of up to £5,000, with at least 50% match funding required. The grant fund provides support under the following four areas:

Climate Change Resilience (including Flood Alleviation);

Countryside (we want to help rural communities improve their local natural environment, enhance biodiversity or increase access to the countryside);

Rural Economy and Business (we want to help Rural Businesses and Community Enterprises grow, increase their productivity, and ultimately improve the services that are offered to communities);

Other – we are keen to support any other projects or initiatives that will help build community resilience and/or encourage self-help in rural areas.

The Parish and Town Council Investment Fund can provide up to £30k investment.

The funding can support schemes which:

Respond to local needs and which can demonstrate an easing of pressure to County Council Services.

We have a particular focus on improvements to Community Buildings to address carbon reduction and climate change resilience. E.g. Solar panels and insulation for village halls.

#### HCC Performance Highlights

I know that the financial crisis affecting local government is well understood by all Parish and Town Councillors. The increased cost of care and the increase in the number

of elderly adults needing care has put pressure on budgets. In Hampshire we are lucky to have a County Council that is in a relatively strong position. We have a great team of officers who deliver for residents – day in, day out. We have substantial reserves which enable us to invest. And we continue to be able to prioritise young people by focusing on schools and skills.

There is a lot of other good stuff which goes on behind the scenes, some of which does not make it into press notices. I thought it would be worthwhile to take the opportunity to list some highlights from the last year at HCC which you may not have heard about:

Hampshire Futures, which provides career guidance and support to young people, being awarded the Matrix Quality Standard for a third time. The service's delivery of information, advice and guidance was described as 'exemplary,' and the service's objectivity, impartiality, client focus and aspirational nature was also praised.

The County Council investing in projects to help people dependent on alcohol and drugs, by increasing the capacity of the Criminal Justice and Substance Misuse Teams, commissioning a new specialist Alcohol Team for community-based treatment, and continuing its support for the harm reduction team.

100 library staff, across 10 Hampshire libraries, receiving 'Safe at Home' training to enable them to provide guidance and conduct sensitive conversations with victims and survivors of domestic abuse. Library stock and IT resources in libraries were also updated to support victims of domestic abuse and direct them to other resources available to assist them. The project was nominated for a Police and Crime Commissioners Victim Services Award.

The County Council launching its 'Keep Warm Keep Well' scheme to protect vulnerable people who are struggling with their day-to-day bills. The support available includes guidance on claiming free school meals and getting advice on managing finances, and links to warm spaces in Hampshire open to residents who may struggle to pay heating bills over the winter.

All five of the County Council's Country Parks being re-awarded Green Flag status for 2022, plus a new Green Flag being awarded to Wellesley Woodland.

Completion of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme, delivering solar energy collection, building insulation, and boiler conversions at hundreds of schools, care homes, libraries, outdoor centres, and other publicly owned buildings across Hampshire.

Shortlisting of Micheldever's highways materials recycling and reprocessing facility for Carbon Project of the Year in the 2022 Construction News Awards. It was praised for its approach to reducing the carbon cost of highways construction and maintenance.

I hope this gives a flavour of the progress that we are continually making at HCC, despite the financial challenges.

#### Grants awarded by me during the municipal year 2022-23

I always include a grants summary in my annual report. Please find overleaf a table showing all grant awards by me over the last year. I always do my best to achieve a

geographical spread. I really appreciate it when Parish Councils put good projects to me, please keep it up!

I look forward to working with you all as your County Councillor over the 12 months ahead.

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Project Description</b>	<b>Amount Awarded</b>
Steep & Stroud Newsletter	Keeping communities informed and engaged	This application relates to the production of an enhanced monthly newsletter, distributed freely to the residents of the villages of Steep & Stroud in East Hampshire, and closely adjoining residents.	£400.00
Froxfield & Privett Parish Council	Parish Verge Cutting	To take on the verge cutting in the Parish of Froxfield & Privett with a view to cutting at a time to improve the biodiversity in the area.	£1,000.00
Home-Start Butser	Safeguarding Training	To provide Safeguarding Training for Home-Start Butser volunteers	£1,000.00
Petersfield Musical Festival	Petersfield Musical Festival 2023	Ten concerts in March, involving local choirs, orchestras, bands and schools, rehearsing and performing alongside professional musicians of local, national and international standing.	£500.00
Hawkley Parish Hall	Hawkley Playground Renovation	The current equipment was installed over 20 years ago and now requires complete replacement due to degradation of the wooden structures. The severity of the damage necessitates work starts in 3 weeks.	£1,000.00
Sheet Village community trust (Winter warmer cafe)	Sheet winter warmer cafe	To provide a free of charge Winter warmer cafe Friday pm in Sheet village hall throughout the coldest months.	£150.00
Energise South Downs	Solar PV for Bridge Meadows Liss	The aim of this project is to carry out a feasibility study for solar PV on 6 blocks of flats which house 39 households.	£750.00
Liss Parish Council	Map of Liss village	The aim of a bespoke map of Liss is to signpost people (both visitors to and residents of Liss) to local facilities and showcase what the village has to offer.	£700.00
Newman collard playing fields trust	LED lighting upgrade to pavilion	To upgrade lighting installation in the pavilion building to led	£900.00
Stroud Parish Council	Playground refurbishment	Playground maintenance and ongoing improvement	£700.00
Ropley Parish Council	Improving Ropley Footpaths	Replace stiles with kissing gates to improve access to local footpath network. This is in line with Ropley Neighbourhood Plan	£900.00
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>£8,000.00</b>



## UPDATE ON EAST HAMPSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cllr Budden, District Councillor for Liss, began with an apology to everyone present on behalf of EHDC for the problems residents had endured with refuse and recycling collections, due to issues which arose during the decoupling from Havant Borough Council. These problems had now hopefully been resolved with an improved pay offer for drivers and loaders, and improvements to the fleet management regime.

Cllr Budden informed everyone that the decoupling was now complete and EHDC was now performing well as a standalone authority. The move from Penns Place to New Barn was going well and the feedback from staff had been that they are looking forward to working in the new offices.

Cllr Budden explained that although EHDC council tax was increasing by 2% this year, the money raised from this would be ringfenced and used for welfare activities to help people in the EHDC area through the current cost of living crisis.

Speaking of issues related to the war in Ukraine, Cllr Budden explained that a number of refugee families from Ukraine had now been found homes in the District, and that thanks to additional funding from the Government, this had been done without impact on the existing demand for social and affordable housing from East Hampshire residents.

Cllr Budden reminded everyone of EHDC's climate promise to plant a tree for every person in East Hampshire (approx. 120,000 trees). Progress was being made to meet this target with some 56,000 trees having now been planted (including 500 on the EHDC owned land behind West Liss Recreation Ground).

Cllr Budden concluded by thanking the Parish Council and all residents for supporting him over the last four years and reminded everyone that the elections on 4<sup>th</sup> May would be the first time that Photo ID would be required for voters to vote in person.

Cllr Williams expressed a vote of thanks on behalf of LPC to Cllr Keith Budden for serving as Chair to Liss Parish Council and to Cllr Nick Wilson for serving as Vice-Chair.

## CLOSE OF MEETING

The Chair thanked residents for attending and the meeting was closed at 21.40hrs.