

ST LEONARDS & ST IVES PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly
14th April 2021 7.00pm
Held virtually on MS Teams
 Present: Chairman of the meeting Cllr A Davies

Cllr B Goringe, Cllr Mrs M Goringe, Cllr M Dyer, Cllr N Hindmarch, Cllr JW Parker
 Cllrs Mrs S Marshall, Cllr Mrs U Lucas

In attendance: Clerk Mr Jonathan Ross.

1. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish Assembly of St Leonards and St Ives. The agenda, minutes of the previous meeting and accounts summary for the year had been circulated to those present. The Chairman then read out a note of condolence from St Leonards and St Ives Parish Council to the Queen and members of the royal family on the sad passing of Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. A minutes silence was then held.

2. Apologies were given by Cllr R Bryan, Cllr K Gawler, Cllr Mrs K Neale, Cllr J B Parker, Cllr Mrs B Waugh

3. The Minutes of the Parish Assembly held on 22nd May 2019 were agreed unanimously as a true and accurate record. Proposed by Cllr M Dyer and seconded by Cllr Mrs S Marshall.

4. Matters arising - none

5. Chairman's Report:

Ladies and Gentlemen, as you will be aware, this is the first Annual Parish Assembly we have been able to hold since 22 May 2019. Last year's Assembly had to be cancelled because the 1st Covid lockdown, commencing 23 March 2020, prevented any gathering of such kind, and since then we have had to meet by holding Virtual meetings like this one today. Soon, we may be allowed to meet face to face again, but until then, this is the medium we use.

Over the past 12 months the Parish Office, the Youth Club and the Nursery have had to be closed, but parish work has continued within the office using telephone and email to communicate with the public. However, the Coronavirus Act 2020 allowed Council meetings to be conducted via Zoom and Microsoft Teams, and this has been very successful, showing great potential for use in the future. The democratic process has continued despite all the restrictions.

Last year we had a change of Parish Clerk. Ann Jacobs retired from the Clerk's position to re-join us as Assistant. We thank Ann for her 16 years of dedicated service to our community, and we look forward to continuing our association for many years to come. On 1st July 2020, Jonathan Ross took over as Clerk, bringing with him a wealth of experience of local government, IT systems and project management. Together, both Ann and Jonathan make a formidable team, and they have already applied their talents to good effect.

Over the last year we have been engaged in improving facilities in the parish buildings:

- A new heating system was installed last August together with a new Fire Alarm System and operating panel. Also, the security alarm response is being improved by the addition of new software; this will facilitate contacting responsible persons more efficiently.
- Improvements to the parish council's website have been introduced to conform with new local government website standards, and we have started posting on Facebook under the name "Parish Clerk" using the 2 Saints Homewatch Facebook page. This has given councillors a better visibility of matters concerning residents and allows the parish council to respond.
- Changes have been made to introduce more modern procedures in our financial transactions. Payments by cheque have ceased and on-line payments introduced. We have also introduced standardised document formats for all our communications, and we have also acquired new Zetasafe software to enable all asset inspections to be carried out using a tablet or phone on-line. This negates the requirement to use and keep paper documents and will improve retention and management of our records.

Many of our residents have complained about speeding traffic passing through the parish. We have responded by setting up a Speedwatch initiative, working with the police, to monitor vehicle speeds using handheld equipment. Two teams have been trained and, despite Covid restrictions, a number of successful sessions have taken place. We have also acquired a Speed Indicator Device (SID) which is already mounted in one location and will be transferred to another as required.

Projects undertaken last year include replacing the timber benches located around the playpark, with rainbow coloured recycled plastic ones which, coincidentally, help to acknowledge our debt to the NHS in these Covid times. We also have undertaken to fully refurbish the Playpark; work commences in May at an estimated cost of £120K. It is hoped to have it open in time for the school summer holidays. I would like to thank the Sub Committee for all their hard work, and there have been many positive messages received by the Clerk via Facebook and email regarding the refurbishment design.

Throughout the year we have made efforts to persuade residents to cut their hedges back from the pavements to facilitate pedestrians using the footpaths whilst applying social distancing to stay safe; this has met with some success and the verges look much smarter.

Remembrance Day last year could not be attended by the parish council in the usual way, but a council wreath was laid by the Chairman privately to acknowledge our collective debt to the fallen.

We also said farewell to Ann Warman last year after 40 years of service to the community. We wish both Ann and Bob the best of luck and appreciation for both their contributions.

We presently have a full complement of 13 Councillors, five of whom are ladies. Councillor Beverley Waugh was co-opted as a new councillor during the year. We are fortunate to have three Dorset councillors, and they give valuable advice and guidance which benefits our decision making.

As we can see from our Statement of Accounts the Parish Council is in a good financial position, and we can look forward with confidence. To maintain this favourable position the precept was raised by 3% but will be kept under review each year.

There is no doubt that the future of the parish looks bright. The Planning Committee received more than 100 applications to approve the building of new properties, refurbishments, and extensions. Some may say that these changes have brought a vibrancy to the area and prove that people are keen to live here. Uppermost in our minds though is the need to care for the environment and protect the interests of our existing residents; this we attend to with a real sense of responsibility and in all seriousness.

Finally, I would like to thank all the volunteers in our community who make extraordinary efforts to help others and make what our parish is today, including my fellow councillors. The events over the past year have been traumatic, but through perseverance and dedication, progress is being made, and with goodwill all round there is a bright future ahead of us. Thank you for your attention.

6. Annual Summary of the Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2021 – Copies had been circulated with the agenda. There were no matters raised.

The Chairman reported:

The Councils accounts show a healthy balance which should stand us in good stead to meet the challenges of the future.

The Council continues to support groups by way of annual grants this year these were to:

- Village Hall
- CAB
- Greyfriars Minibus
- Age Concern
- Youth Club

No questions were raised on the annual summary.

7. General Forum –

Cllr JW Parker raised the issue of vehicles being advertised for sale whilst parked on the grassed area by the side of the A31 adjacent to the St Leonards roundabout. He said they presented a distraction to drivers. The Clerk said that a recommendation for a TRO in this area will be taken to the Annual Parish Meeting on 5th May 2021.

The meeting closed at 7.30pm



Chairman

