

ST LEONARDS & ST IVES PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly
Wednesday 31st May 2023 7.00pm
Held in the Village Hall

Present: Cllr A Davies (Acting Chair), Cllr K Gawler, Cllr C Johnson, Cllr M Dyer.

In attendance: Clerk Mr Jonathan Ross.

1. The Chair 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.

2. The Minutes of the Parish Assembly held on 1st June 2022 were agreed unanimously as a true and accurate record. Proposed by Cllr M Dyer and seconded by Cllr K Gawler.

3. Matters arising - none

4. Chair's Report:

WELCOME

The Chair welcomed everybody to the Annual Parish Assembly and thanks Cllr John B Parker for his year as Chair of the Parish Council. He has decided to stand down as Chair but will continue as Vice-Chair for the coming year. Cllr Barry Goringe has been elected by members of the Parish Council as his successor. We have also seen the retirement of Ann Jacobs who has been our Assistant Clerk since July 2020 when Jonathan Ross took over as Clerk. She completed a total of 19 years dedicated service as Clerk/Asst Clerk. Members of the Council expressed their thanks and appreciation at a recent Full Council meeting. The Assistant Clerk role has now been taken over by Kelly Baker who started in May, and we wish her every success in her new appointment.

2022/2023 ACTIVITY

The past year has seen the PC return to normality after the Covid disruption. Full face to face committee meetings were undertaken, and many members of the public have been in attendance throughout the year, especially when contentious planning issues have been discussed. However, a decline in the numbers of people visiting the Clerk's Office has been noticed, but this could be due to some members of the community still being reluctant to meet in public areas and offices.

During the year, more work was done to improve the Play Park Zip Wire area by removing the gravel which was found to migrate to other areas and cause damage. A new rubber surface was installed under the wire which, together with new grass areas, has been very successful in stopping gravel from spreading, and it is now safer for children using the equipment.

The issue of dogs on/off leads in the recreation area has been a contentious topic of discussion. There have been reports of dog mess not being picked up, and problems of uncontrolled dogs bothering other park users. A working Group was established to investigate the matter and come up with recommendations on how the safety and

enjoyment of all who use the park could be improved. We await the final recommendation at the next full council meeting on 28th June 2023.

FUTURE PROJECTS

Several projects are in hand to enhance areas of Council property and to provide better facilities for members of the community:

The Function Room is due for an upgrade and work is planned to refurbish the kitchen which is showing signs of age and looks very tired and needs replacing. A design will be produced in house, and tenders sought later in the year. Work should commence later this year or early next year. Additional work will be done to enlarge the storage cupboard in the Function Room to provide enclosed space for tables, chairs and cleaning equipment which can then be properly put away. This will free up other areas and allow the whole Function Room to be used by the Nursery and the Parish Council for meetings and events. Quotes are also being progressed to replace the corridor lighting with energy efficient LED lights that are movement controlled which will reduce energy costs and provide a better light. The room will be newly redecorated and a 1 m high washable vinyl surface provided to protect the walls, which will enable the Nursery to mount pictures and art work without scuffing the paintwork. The overall effect is to add colour and interest in the room.

Several other projects are under consideration which could be funded using Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) money. There is a £42k sum available in the budget and the following projects are being discussed by the parish council:

- The purchase of a second Speed indicator Device (SID).
- The provision of a defibrillator near the One Stop Shop and the Trailway.
- A communications board located at the Play Park which can assist those with reading difficulties to enhance their play experience.
- The creation of a tarmac footpath across the Braeside Recreation area to link Braeside Road and Lions Wood. It would provide a firm surface for use by pedestrians and wheelchair users, including a suitable gate which is wheelchair accessible.
- The enlargement of the existing tarmac Basketball Court to make it full-size with appropriate markings and posts to suit.

PARISH BUSINESS

The clerk continues to write to residents advising them of hedge cutting obligations to prevent pavements and footpaths becoming narrow and impassable. This has worked well up to now and will continue to be actively pursued.

The Parish Council supports about 14 volunteer litter pickers who collect from around the parish operating individually in their respective areas.

The Tennis Club has continued to be very successful, and its well-maintained courts are used extensively by all age groups. The club showers, toilets, and their function room were completely refurbished a short while ago, and improvements were made to the court surfaces and the boundary fences.

The Nursery continues to operate from the parish Function Room and despite low numbers experienced for a while after the pandemic, the take up of places has improved of late, and the facility is now thriving.

The Scouts and Guides operate from the Scout Hut, and the Parish Council continues to work closely with them and all our site users, helping and supporting where possible to improve the facilities and encourage new users.

PLANNING

Several planning issues have arisen over the past year which have proved to be controversial despite PC objections. Three applications continue to be at issue:

Surf Park – This large-scale project has been of great concern to parish residents and is still under consideration by Dorset Council.

We await the outcome of their deliberations.

Convenience Store – This proposal is to develop a local shopping complex on the Horton Road near Emerald Close, and it continues to raise concern among residents living nearby. Despite the first application being refused. A second application has now been received which will be discussed at the next Planning Meeting on 15 June 23.

Flats at 184 Ringwood Road – This application was for the erection of 15 flats and has been refused by Dorset Council.

COUNCILLORS

Councillor Ulrike Lucas has resigned as a councillor and her position is currently being advertised. We have 12 councillors in all, 3 of which are elected Dorset Councillors who play an important part in representing local interests at County level.

Councillor Noel Hindmarch was recently presented with an award by PC members to commemorate his 40 years dedicated service to the Council. We also thank him for his continuing service.

CHAIRMAN'S THANKS

Finally, on behalf of the Chair I would like to thank all the volunteers in our community, including Councillors, who make extraordinary efforts to contribute their time and help others, in order to make our parish a better place to live and work. Recent events have been quite upsetting for some, but, through perseverance and commitment, some progress has been made. With goodwill and increased participation by our residents, we can provide for a bright future together.

Thank you for your attention.

Alan Davies (Acting Chair)

5. Annual Summary of the Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2023.
Copies had been circulated with the agenda. There were no matters raised.

The Chair 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 or a donation this year these were to:

- CAB
- Greyfriars Minibus
- Ringwood Foodbank
- The Warm Hub
- The Village Hall
- Ukrainian Families living in the parish.
- RBL Poppy Appeal

6. General Forum –

No questions

The meeting closed at 7.20pm

Chair