



**West Dean Parish Assembly**  
**held at King George's Hall on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at 19:00.**

**Present:** Councillor Higgins (Chair), Councillor Hiddleston, Councillor J Camilleri, Councillor Lee, PC Kelvin Ramsey, Amanda Owen – Clerk & 14 members of the public.

**1. Welcome and Apologies.**

Councillors Higgins welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending.

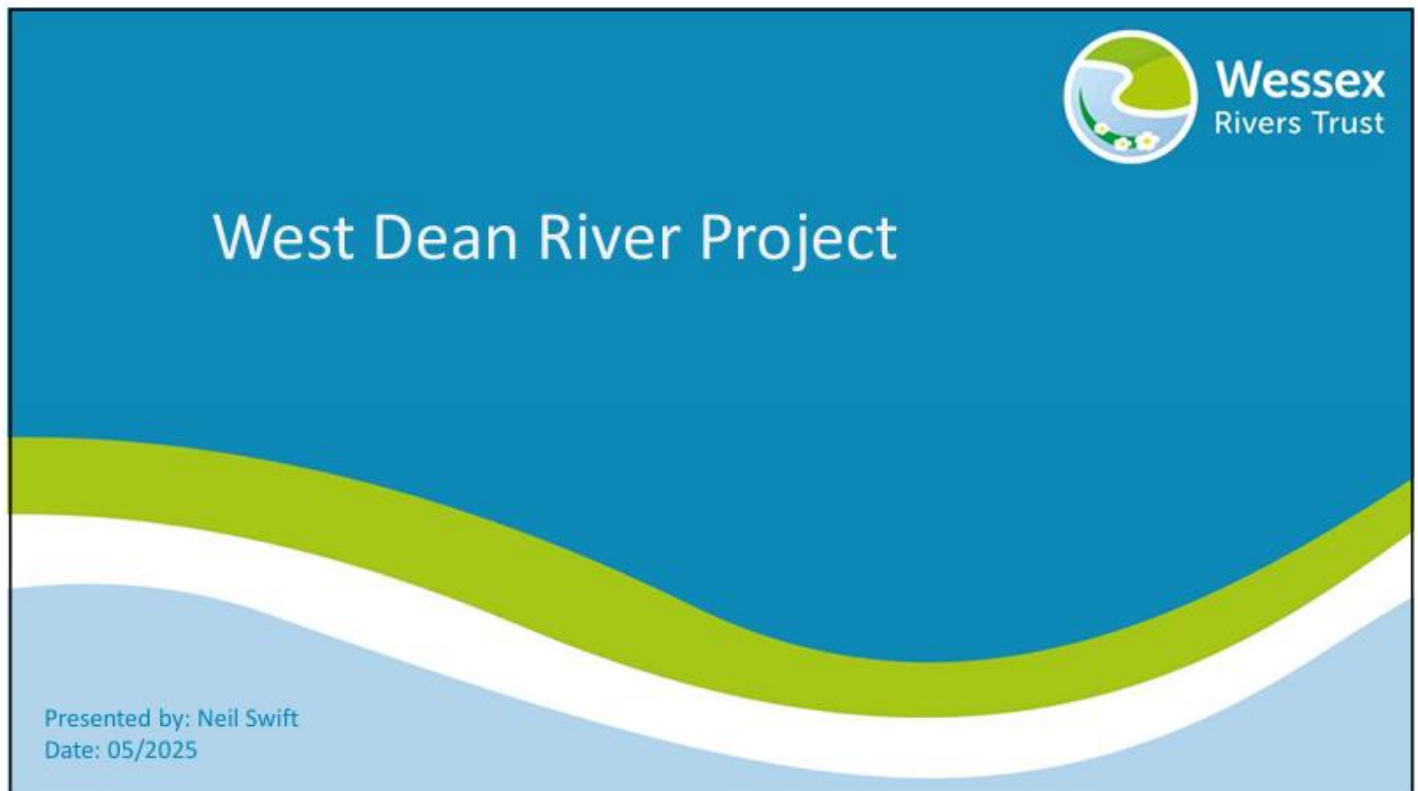
**2. Approval of 2024 Parish Assembly Minutes.**

The 2024 Parish Assembly minutes were noted as an accurate record of the meeting.

**3. To receive reports from Guest Speakers.**

**Wessex River Trust**

Neil Swift from Wessex River Trust provided the following presentation:



## Who are we?

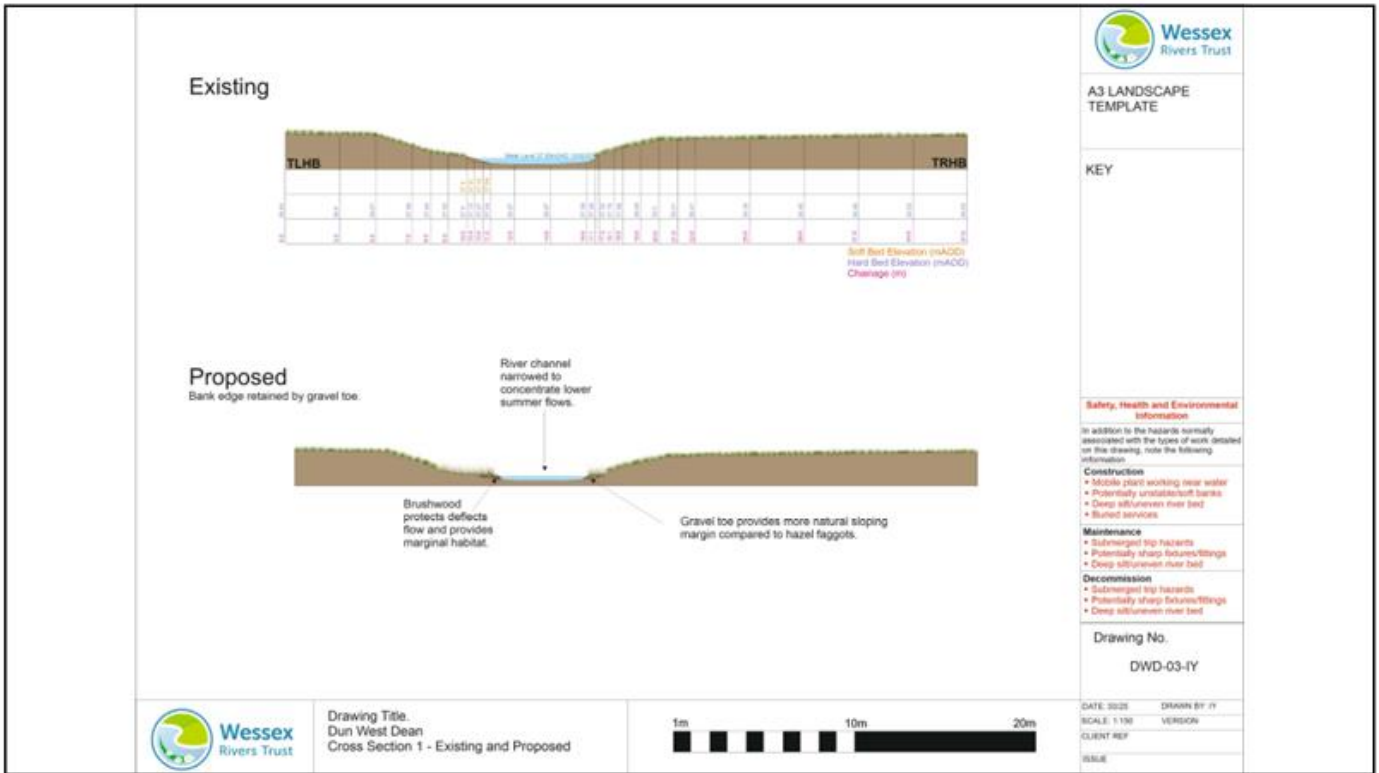
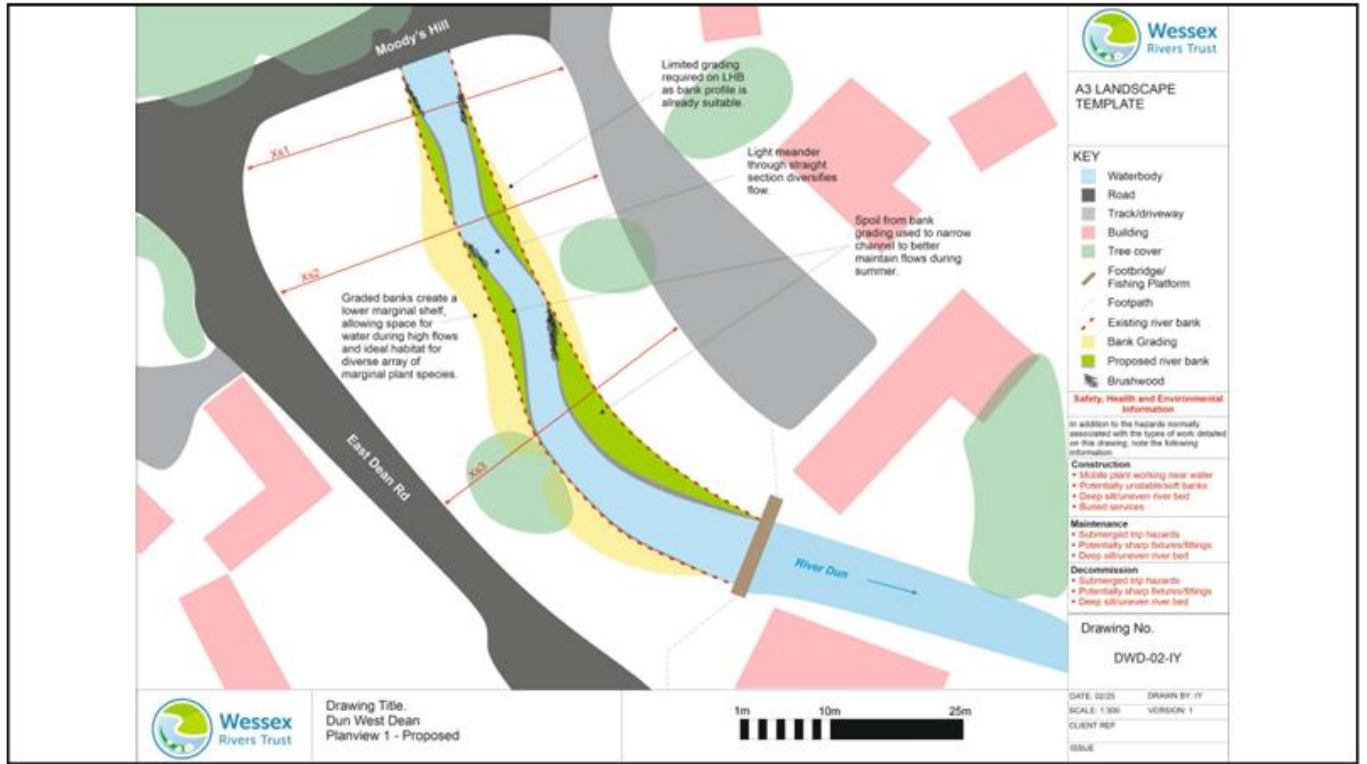
- Wessex Rivers Trust
  - We're an environmental charity dedicated to the conservation of chalk streams and rivers in Wessex, working towards healthy rivers for wildlife and people
  - Part of the wider Rivers Trust movement
  - From the Stour in the West to the Meon in the East

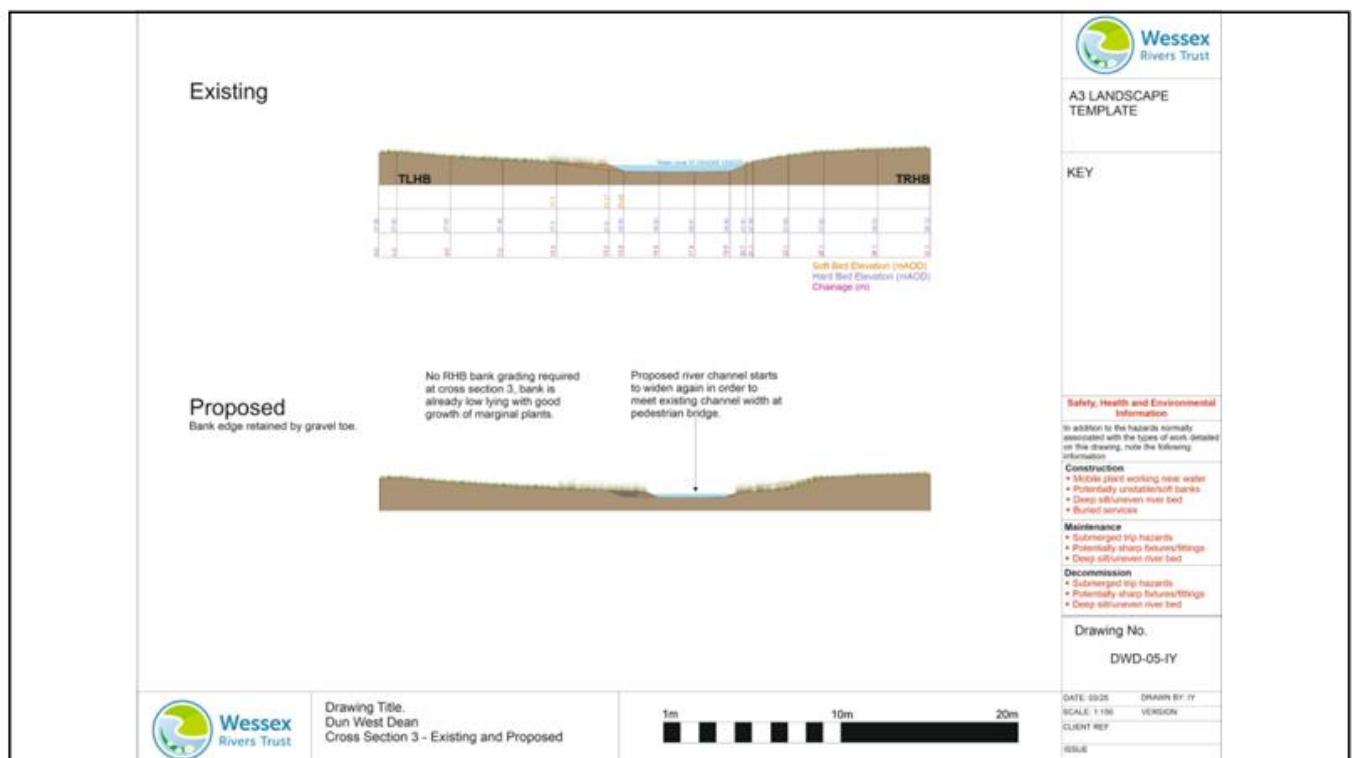
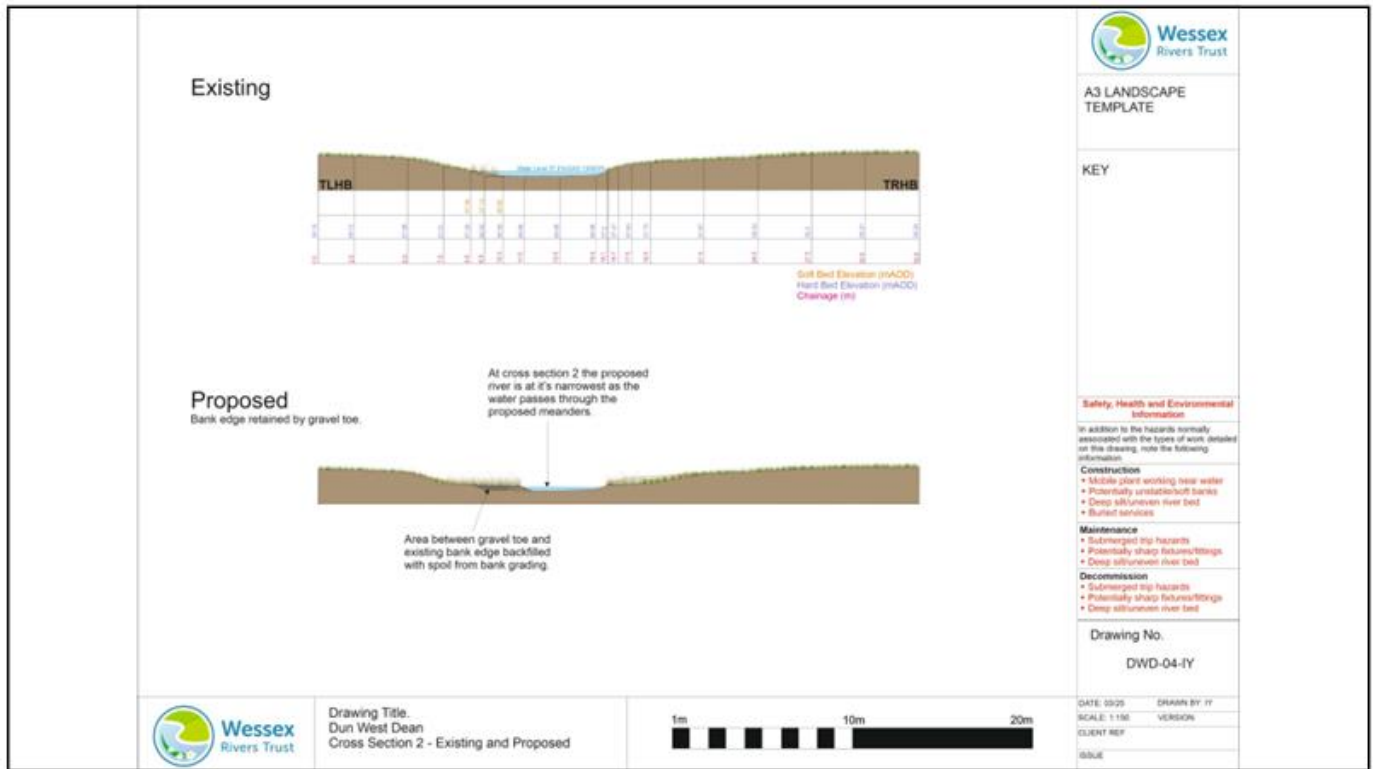


## Aims

- Review 5Rivers report
- Undertake topographic and protected species survey
- Present design ideas to Parish Council
- Deliver a project that:
  - Improves in channel habitat
  - Decreases need for watercress removal
  - Does not increase flood risk







## Timeline

Dun West Dean Project Plan	2024		2025										2026						
Task name	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
Design																			
Review existing data and SFI design																			
Channel survey (await suitable river conditions)																			
Design																			
Review and revise design																			
Parish Council Approval and Meeting																			
Consenting																			
Prepare FRAP documents																			
Submit FRAP																			
Determination Period (21 weeks)																			
FRAP granted																			
Delivery Preparation																			
Tender process for plant machinery work																			
Acquisition of materials																			
Prepare site documentation																			
Delivery (on site 5-10 days during this time period).																			
Site Mobilisation																			
Installation of gravel toe																			
Bank Grading																			
Installation of woody structures																			
Site Demobilisation																			
Planting/Seeding																			

Healthy Rivers for Wildlife and People

## St Mary's Church Report

In many ways the past year has been a difficult one for the church.

Unfortunately the vacancy for a team vicar following the departure of Rev Ruth Schofield has not been filled leaving the team ministry short of clergy. As a result one of our monthly services has temporarily been dropped. However, St Mary's has followed a monthly pattern of a Eucharistic service & either Morning Worship at St Mary's or Breakfast Church in the Village Hall. Breakfast Church was generally well attended, with time for a bacon roll, coffee & chat before a short service.

Mike Marx stepped aside from the role of church warden due to his health – we all send our prayers and love to Mike for his journey to recovery. Derek Howland took on the role of Church Warden. Jane Higgins is PCC Treasurer and St Mary's Organist, and we thank her for all the hard work she does selflessly for the church. Also thanks go to Ruth and Brian Livesey who do a huge amount for the church, often 'behind the scenes', including organising the flowers and cleaning, safeguarding, maintenance and organising Breakfast Church. It's with real pleasure that we welcomed Libby and Jim Garnham who have joined the PCC.

During the second half of the year we said a sad farewell to three great friends of the church. The funeral services for Thelma Holland (a long serving Church Warden), Dick Gruzelier and Pat Hargrave all being held in St Mary's Church.

The Remembrance Sunday commemoration is always a moving and well attended service in the village. Last year's service held at the war memorial in the churchyard and in a packed church was a particularly moving occasion. The address, written by Brigadier Pat Hargrave, was read out on his behalf a few days after his sad passing.

The 2024 Carol Service, Christmas Day and Easter Services were as ever well attended and joyful events. It's always a pleasure to see the church full of villagers and friends.

Financially, the past year has been one of stabilising our cashflow after 2 years of major maintenance projects which could not have been completed without the amazing support of the village community. During the year we completed the repayment of a £20K loan from the Salisbury Diocese. The coming year will hopefully see the completion of a few outstanding maintenance items.

The West Dean Fete is a highlight of the village year and is widely renowned. The partnership between church and village creates goodwill and community spirit and is our largest fundraiser, generating funds for our church, the village

hall, the Social Club and WD village projects. We thank the committee, organisers and helpers for the tremendous effort they put in to create another fantastic fete.

The church fundraising committee which included villagers Nick Hiddleston, Chris Lucas, and Julie Rowe organised a Safari Dinner and a Summer Ball, and our thanks go to this group.

To those of you who do not regularly step inside St Mary's, a message. Please take a few minutes now and then to visit your beautiful, newly decorated, church often decorated with glorious flower arrangements. It's a wonderful place for moments of peace, reflection and contemplation in our busy lives.

Derek Howland, Church Warden, St Mary's West Dean, May 2025

### **Wiltshire Police**

PC Kelvin Ramsey addressed the meeting and advised that he has been in the Police since 2003.

Kelvin, and his colleague PC John Taylor look after West Dean and eight other Parishes. Kelvin advised that the community spirit is strong in West Dean. Recently, most time has been sent in the Landford / Whiteparish area where most crime has taken place recently.

Thankfully, crime and antisocial behaviour (ASB) are a rarity in West Dean, to summarise:

January – crime free, no ASB.

February – Peaceful, no crimes or ASB

March – No crimes or ASB

April – Two crimes, a shed & garage in Ashmore Lane broken in to and a leaf blower was stolen and secondly, an unknown suspect stole copper cable from a generator.

May – at time of speaking, no crime or ASB

At present, crime trends are occurring in car crime, eg. the taking and swapping of number plates.

Kelvin reiterated that he and his colleagues patrol throughout West Dean, both during the day and at night.

Kelvin advised that quad bikes, plant or farm machinery are also in favour at present. Smart DNA kits are available for marking property. If you have something valuable, keep it secure, take photos of it for reference should it be stolen.

PC Ramsey advised that Community Neighbourhood Watch WhatsApp groups are a good way to keep in contact with each other to advise of suspicious individuals / vehicles. It's important to remember that crime prevention is better than a crime investigation.

### **King George's Village Hall Committee**

#### **Chairman's report**

#### **History and purpose of the Hall**

This hall was donated to the village in 1946 by Ellen Singer and her late husband Washington Grant Singer esq of Norman Court for use of the inhabitants of the parish of West Dean. This was intended to be not only a memorial to the late King George V but also to Captain Grant Allen Singer who was killed in action in 1942. The land and building was given to the Trustees (the rector, the farmer and the postmaster). These trustees were then required to register the hall as a charity and appoint a committee to run the hall. The management committee are now the Trustees as defined by the charity commission.

The purpose of the hall is for the 'physical and mental training and recreation and social, moral and intellectual development for the benefit of the parish of West Dean. The monies are to be spent on repairing and insuring the premises, furniture, games, books, newspapers and other literature and to otherwise pay for the upkeep and improvement of the premises'.

The current Trustees are bound by this covenant and the roles and responsibilities defined by the charity commission.

## **2024**

### **Hall activities**

#### **Social**

The hall has produced a wide variety of social events for the local residents. These included pop up pubs usually around the Rugby 6 Nations in the Spring or the Sunflower competition in late summer. We have had a Race night, 2 Quiz nights, an Olympic-French themed night, a Beacon and Bangers night, a Burns night, Christmas Wreath making and of course the infamous Christmas Cracker!. These events are mainly for the purposes stated in our deeds, but of course all contribute towards the costs running of the hall.

#### **Charity**

We also host events to raise money for charity including the Remembrance Day Curry lunch for the Poppy Appeal, various raffles this year for the Salisbury Hospice, Hope and Homes and for Kidney research.

#### **Others**

The hall hosts a regular lunch for the over 60s which is much appreciated (I'm looking forward to being eligible). There is a weekly toddlers group (Busy Bees). The Church uses the hall for breakfast churches, the parish council hold their meetings here and we have regular resuscitation training sessions. There are pilates classes and a recently formed children's theatre class on a Saturday morning. The local business hub has met at the hall in recent weeks and we will be hosting a monthly coffee and cake afternoon from April. The Village Hall and it's committee also provide a vital role for the hugely successful annual village fete.

#### **Private hire**

The hall is available for hire to private individuals for meetings, parties, family celebrations and other events.

#### **Hall Maintenance**

New anti flood air bricks, repairs of the fence and garden boxes, car park drains and guttering. Plans for redecoration, replacement lighting, improved fire detection and reducing our fuel bills as possible. Our old petrol lawnmower gave up the ghost and we're investing in an electric replacement. The garden is attended to by the committee as required. We may need to tackle the mole, though I hope it will get bored of our lawn soon.

#### **Emergency Refuge**

The village hall is part of West Dean's Emergency Plan, in particular during our not infrequent power cuts. In 2017 the hall bought a large generator (with grant funding) that can provide power for heating water, making meals, charging phones, heating, refrigeration, working from home etc. We also house the Parish Council's lanterns and power packs for use of villagers who cannot get to the hall or who are in need. The PC is responsible for the emergency plan but the hall committee forms part of the emergency group for power cuts and have all had training in use of the hall and the generator in such events. There are of course limits to what we can all do but the plan is to have the hall open for periods of time during the day during prolonged power cuts (communication to the village will be via Facebook).

#### **Exciting plans for improving our sustainability**

In September 2024, the village hall committee applied for a grant from SSEN as the first stage of a longer term net zero project. Our application was successful and at the end of January 2025 we were awarded nearly £20k to begin

this exciting journey. After requesting competitive bids, we decided to proceed with Contact Solar which is owned by EDF. The first phase can be done under Permitted Development rights and will consist of installing solar panels (on the river-facing roof), together with a Tesla Powerwall battery. We are currently awaiting the onsite inspection survey to finalise the detailed arrangements of the installation, which could commence in April.

The solar panels and battery are expected to save around £735 p.a. on our electricity bill (with lifetime savings of around £11k) and will also improve our resilience in the event of power cuts, because the battery will be topped up and power will switch over automatically. When the installation is complete, there will be an information day at the hall for residents to learn more about it.

We are also looking at other net zero use cases such as efficient lighting, but in the next phase of the project we will also consider whether the heating system can be decarbonised (eg air source heat pump) and whether to install EV charging, if further funds can be secured.

### **Friends of King George's Hall**

After some thought the committee launched a 'friends' concept to the village. We are very grateful to those that agreed to be our Friends (15 households so far) and their offers of practical and financial support are much appreciated. If any other villagers would like to become our Friends please let any member of the committee know.

We are also very grateful for those unofficial friends of the committee who help out on a regular basis (Chris Lucas, Brian Kemp and Chris Woodward in particular).

### **Finances**

These relate to 2024: the hall's income was a healthy £16,137 with outgoings of £12,269. Our incomes come mainly from events, hall hire, car parking and an annual set percentage of the Village Fete proceeds. Our outgoings are on maintaining the hall, insurance, cleaning and utility bills. One of the drives for the solar panel project is to reduce our substantial electricity bills. The Parish Council contributes towards the running of the generator by paying for it's service, fuel and insurance costs.

### **The Committee**

We are currently 14 trustees: my huge thanks to everyone!

Chris Kemp, Chairman

Helen Woodward, Secretary

Peter Coupe, Treasurer

Lucy Allen, Deputy Chairman

Tamara Lucas, Bookings, car park and hall monitor

Derek Howland, Church representative and Advertising

David Allen, Event organiser, barman

Chris Mundy, Social Club representative and advisor on buildings maintenance

John Camilleri, Parish Council representative and Net Zero Team Leader

Chris Wilde, Data analyst, event organiser and barman

David and Clare Sutton and Jayne and Andy Francis have stood down from the Committee as of the AGM. We are all very grateful for all their hard work, loyalty and support for the Hall and all its endeavours to do for the village.

(We have appointed 3 new members since the AGM: Nicola Musto, Rob McKay and Barbara McKay.)

Christina Kemp.

Chairman, King George's Hall

## **West Dean Club**

### **Pete Dawkins Chair of West Dean Club**

Pete addressed the meeting and advised that there is a new committee of five. At the club's recent AGM the Treasurer shared that they had made a profit for that financial year.

The current committee have been making attempts to refresh the Club, with painting, rearranging the furniture, and also the hanging of pictures.

The Club has several events in place, which include:

Live music

Bingo & Dave's quiz (once a month)

Darts

Crib

Skittles

Tractor run

After party for village fete

Pete reiterated it is a community club and that everyone is welcome to come along. As with many social clubs it is a case of 'use it, or lose it'. The current committee is making a real effort to welcome everyone. Help is as always needed, particularly with the Treasurer role. Currently the Club is open Friday, Saturday & Sunday.

Councillor Hiddleston echoed Pete's comments noting it is a welcoming place, the decking is perfect to sit on and enjoy the atmosphere.

### **Village Fete Committee**

Nick Hiddleston addressed the meeting and advised he has been involved since 2012, and is now co-chair with two other members. Currently there are 15 committee members, each and every one works hard to ensure that the fete comes together. As Fete day is getting close, maps and poster boards are up. It's a real team effort to pull everything together.

West Dean Fete has evolved in to one of the best fetes in the area and our village can be proud of. Approximately 1500 people attended last year. The fete requires a minimum of 160 volunteers to see it work. Without the time and support it wouldn't happen.

Last year 10k given to various village groups, Church, Village Hall and the club. The Community grant scheme started a couple of years ago where small groups can apply for funding. Last year, £3000.00 was awarded between Busy Bees, The Chantry and Over 60's club. Do come along and join us at the fete on 31<sup>st</sup> May. There will be a spitfire flying over.

## **4. Chair's Report.**

The year's work was dominated by the Glebe Farm development and the river restoration project as well as the usual tree works and other planning. A summary of this year's meetings follows. Full minutes available on our website: [westdeanvillage.co.uk](http://westdeanvillage.co.uk)

14/5/24 Annual assembly

Visitors included our Wiltshire Councillor - Richard Britton

Our community policeman PC Kelvin Ramsey from July 2024

11/6/24

Discussions re S106 re what we would like in it

Environmental plan, Rectory Hill pathway, areas of site re maintenance and footpath maintenance, how the site will be managed

Eligibility for affordable housing

Land ownership

9/7/24

Planning Dean Hill house garage, greenhouse Shardeloes

Noted Wilts Council put in £5m for repairs on class C and unclassified roads

Gypsy and traveller plan proposed. One more pitch at Dillon's farm

24/8/24

Agreed our Heads of Terms for the S106 including asking for Discount Market Housing so that we had a modicum of control over inviting local (ie NDP area residents) the first option to buy the houses.

16/9/24

WT PC also agreed with us and passed the S106 requirements at their meeting on 9/9/24

Winter preparedness – requests to fill grit bins

Successful conclusion of the Best Kept Village – best Newcomer in area and runner up in the County

Planning – timber framed office at Yew Tree Cottage

Tree works at Little Thatch and Snowdrop Cottage

Agreed VH committee could light the beacon on 2 Nov

Consider quotes for playground repairs

4/11/24

Planning – tree works on Village Green. Sadly the diseased chestnut had to be felled. Also a dead scots pine at the VH

We had a look at the budget for 2025-26

16/12/24

RoSPA Play Safety report. Actions to deal with urgent issues and thanks to Greg Gent and Brian Livesey who came to the rescue when a tree come down in the playground

Agreed the budget for 2025-2026 and set the precept for WD PC at £19,760.00

Updates from the Housing and Planning offices of TVBC. The Housing Department was concerned that the 'affordable' houses at Glebe Farm were too expensive. The developers had since gone back and changed all the houses into 2-bed houses, so that now there will be 5x2-bed houses instead of 2x2-bed and 2x3-bed. The plans are available to view on the TVBC planning website.

On a recommendation from Kevin Harrington, we got in touch with the Wessex River Trust to discuss the river restoration project. We had met Neil Swift and agreed that the WRT would produce the plans and act as a Project manager

Agreed the terms and conditions of the SSEN grant for the river restoration

After a particularly trying power cut, the VH committee and the PC have plans to work together over the implementation of the Emergency Plan for the village.

Planning. Tree works. 17 dying trees had to be felled on the track down to Railway Cottages

20/01/25

Progress had been made on the implementation of the Emergency Plan, which had been updated during the previous month. A WhatsApp group of VH committee and PC has been formed. All members have been given training in starting the generator. The lanterns and power packs had all been re-charged for use when necessary. The PC will decide whether and when the hall will be open in an emergency. Staffing will be by available volunteers from either the PC or the VH committee.

We agreed to Co-opt Martin Lee to the PC

The amended plans for Glebe Farm were officially approved by us. They are out for consultation again

17/02/25

No updates for Glebe farm, except that WT has also issued a letter of support for the plans.

Neil Swift (WRT) had been to take cross sections in order to produce plans for the river restoration.

Plans for a Monterey pine to be felled at Quill Cottage.

17/03/25

A holding meeting.

River ongoing. A new quote for the groundworks had been received from Tri-Counties

Glebe farm – still waiting

Planning – lime trees at Dean House to be reduced

22/04/25

We said goodbye to Cllr Britton on his retirement

Glebe Farm – still waiting for the S106

River Group. We had received the plans and agreed the second option to use a gravel toe in the river instead of hazel faggots. Project funded by a grant from Wilts Council, the SSEN resilience fund and our own savings.

We decided to light the beacon on VE Day

Planning – an extension and a porch at 2 Hillside Close.

06/05/25

Local Elections held on 1 May. We welcomed our new Wiltshire Councillor - Gregory Cooper

We also welcomed Cllr Brian Livesey. We now have a full PC and because the number of nominations equalled the places available there was no need for an election for WD PC.

I was elected Chair again and we allocated areas of responsibility to Cllrs.

Cllr John Camilleri – Vice-Chair and Planning, Cllr Bill Seabrooke – Planning, Cllr Mel Camilleri – South Wilts Area Board, Cllr Martin Lee – Footpaths, Cllr Brian Livesey – the Playground, Cllr Nick Hiddleston – River restoration

These areas are not exclusive, but allow Cllrs to focus on their area, and bring forward ideas to other members. We are, as ever, grateful for the ongoing work of our Parish Clerk, Amanda Owen.

## **5. Questions & Comments.**

There being no other business or questions asked, the meeting closed at 20:38.