



West Dean Parish Assembly
held at King George's Hall on Monday 20th May 2024 at 19:00.

Present: Councillor Higgins, Councillor J Camilleri, Councillor M Camilleri, Councillor Seabrooke.
Borough Councillor Richard Britton, Amanda Owen – Clerk & 17 members of the public

1. Welcome and Apologies.

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

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillor Hiddleston.

2. Approval of 2023 Parish Assembly Minutes.

The 2023 Parish Assembly minutes were noted as an accurate record of the meeting.

Proposed by J Camilleri, seconded by Councillor M Camilleri.

All members voted unanimously to accept this resolution.

3. To receive reports from Guest Speakers.

Village Hall Committee - Jayne Francis

Good evening,

It has been another challenging year financially with cost prices affecting everyone, as a committee we took the decision to keep our "offer" affordable and relevant, we knew we had a financial gap to fill following the significant reduction in the fete contribution for 2023, from the committee discussions that followed came our "Open letter" to the village explaining who we are and what we do, especially that the Village hall is a charity in its own right, much to the surprise of many, along with the soon to be launched Friends of King George's Hall. Gift Aid has been introduced on all our ticketed events along with a QR code for ease of car parking payment, this we hope will encourage everyone to pay for their parking.

As an old building, constant maintenance is the norm, we have had to totally replace the drain gulley in the car park as the constant use by heavier vehicles caused us ongoing issues. Storm damage to the fences & flower boxes meant they all had to be replaced or repaired, along with guttering to the shed

Our fundraising events continue Pop up Pubs, Wine tasting, Rugby PUP's, Wreath making, The Christmas Cracker, Race night, Quizzes the list and ideas go on.

We happily support the village and the church in their fundraising efforts with the Harvest Supper, Remembrance curry lunch and are the venue for Busy bees, Pilates, the Village lunches & Breakfast church, and of course the odd election.

Our Christmas events - the ever popular Wreath Making, an immediate sell out, kick started our celebrations and emptied our stock of pink Fizz! Our chosen charity for the Yuletide was "Hope & Homes for Children" and together with the Cracker raffle we raised £316

With Dr David Sutton, packing away his quill, the challenge for "Cracker 23" was taken up by Miriam Higgins, writing & directing Treasure Island, with a huge sigh of relief from the committee and our massive thanks, the West Dean players performed again with their usual aplomb!

It has been a time of change in the hall , we've said goodbye to Hayley, Kevin and Dan who have stepped down with Kevin & Dan moving away from the village, we thank you all for your work & commitment to the Village hall and we welcome Helen Woodward , Chris Wild and John Camilleri to the committee.

On a personal level I take this opportunity to thank the committee for their help and support , after nearly 4 years I have decided to step back from the chairmanship along with Clare Sutton who has been our Secretary for more years than she'd like to remember and whose support during the difficult times was invaluable I'm delighted that Chris Kemp has taken up the mantle of chair along with Helen as Secretary.

The village hall has a hold on my heart so I remain committed the hall.

Lastly a thank you to the committee, every one of you has made it a pleasure.

West Dean Club – Sarah Davis

The Club has yet again had a fantastic year, finishing the year with over 150 members.

There have been numerous functions, thoroughly enjoyed by all. Band nights, Halloween Party, a visit from Father Christmas and the Tractor Run, this year raising over £10000 for local farming charities.

Our New Years Eve Party was a huge success, we welcomed local band 'The Noise' who ensured everyone was dancing the night away.

The Quiz nights and Bingo nights are still very popular.

We are looking forwards to the Fete After Party in a couple of weeks.

Being common amongst other reviews, we too are suffering from increased utility costs. The club is run solely by volunteers, with the committee meeting monthly where we regularly review costs and relevant process.

The plans for the kitchen are well underway, we have the landlord's permission and a design, fund raising will commence shortly, to enable the project to get underway.

At the recent AGM, it was unanimously voted in favour that the West Dean Club transitions into a Community Interest Company (CIC). A CIC will formalize our commitment to serving the needs and interests of our community while providing access to new funding opportunities and grants. This transition will enable us to expand our facilities, enhance our programs, and better serve the diverse needs of our members.

We want to ensure that the West Dean Club remains a true reflection of the values and priorities of our community. Together, we can continue to build a stronger, more vibrant community club for generations to come!

Thank you for ALL for your continued support and we look forward to welcoming you all very soon.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- River Group co-ordinate River Dunn maintenance in the village of West Dean
- Annual maintenance of a world-renowned Test Valley chalk stream
- Frequent flooding events risk damaging property and lives
- Environmentally sustainable, shovel ready, programme to remedy, supported by both West Dean & West Tytherley Parish Councils and Wiltshire Wildlife Trust
- Requires £9,167 additional funds for materials (raised £2,500 against £11,667 total, labour and machinery being donated)
- Project Start April 2025, avoiding breeding season, for completion before bad winter weather

WHO

- River Group were formed to co-ordinate River Dunn maintenance and improvements in West Dean
- Operated as a committee by West Dean Parish Council, subject to their Standard Operating Procedures
- Based in Wiltshire operating from Red Lion House, West Dean
- Membership
Nick Hiddleston, Sally Hiddleston, Matthew Rowe, Julie Rowe.
- Supported by West Dean and West Tytherley Parish Council

WHERE

- River Dunn through West Dean between Moody's Hill road bridge and foot bridge
- 66 metres blue shaded stretch on aesthetically appealing and historic village green
- Wiltshire properties will benefit from improvements (West Dean Parish Council)

WHY

- Severe flooding event 2014
 - Loss of power
 - Many homes flooded requiring evacuation
- River Dunn classic chalk stream prone to silting when flow rates are slow in summer
- Agricultural runoff adds nitrogen to water that encourages weed growth
- Pictures from most recent event Nov 2023 as occurrence of flooding events increase
- Weather patterns becoming more severe and frequent requiring urgent action

WHAT

- Five Rivers Environmental Ltd recommendations following floods in 2014
- Build woody debris mattress to maintain high flow rates and clear channel
- Local contractors donating machinery and labour to project
- Environmentally sustainable whilst protecting wildlife including endangered water voles

Funds Required*	
Raised	£2,500
Required	£9,167
Total	£11,667

* Figures inclusive of VAT

DESIGNS

- Designed by Fiver Rivers Environmental Contracting Ltd (Salisbury)
- The objective of the design is to increase flow rates during low river flow periods to flush out sediment
- Bank reprofiling to create a secondary flood channel in high river flow periods
- Five Rivers Summary
 - Flood prevention effective in all but extreme circumstances
 - Removes need to rebuild footbridge
 - Friendly to environment including endangered water voles

HOW

- Community volunteers annually clear river of weeds supported by:
 - Local contractors donating equipment
 - Local farmers
 - West Dean Parish Council
- River Group
 - Fund raising
 - Commissioned report 2017 from Five Rivers Environmental
 - Permissions from landowners
 - Approval from Wiltshire Wildlife Trust

PROJECT PLAN


- Orders for materials placed January 2025
- Mobilization starts late March 2025
- Digging starts early April 2025
- Construction and planting April-May 2025
- Final Inspection End of May 2025

WHEN

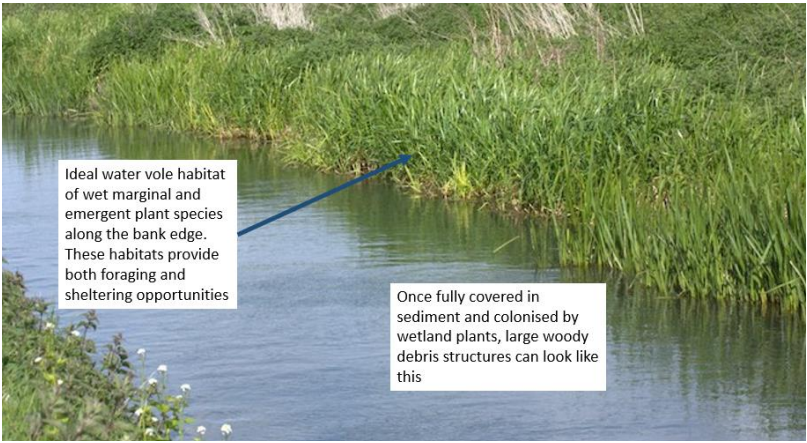
- Maintenance occurs year-round with autumn weed clearing event
- Project elapse time 18 weeks to completion
- Avoiding trout spawning between January and March
- Target start date April 2025, completion before Winter flooding season
- Project is **"Shovel Ready"** awaiting funds

Wiltshire Wildlife Trust



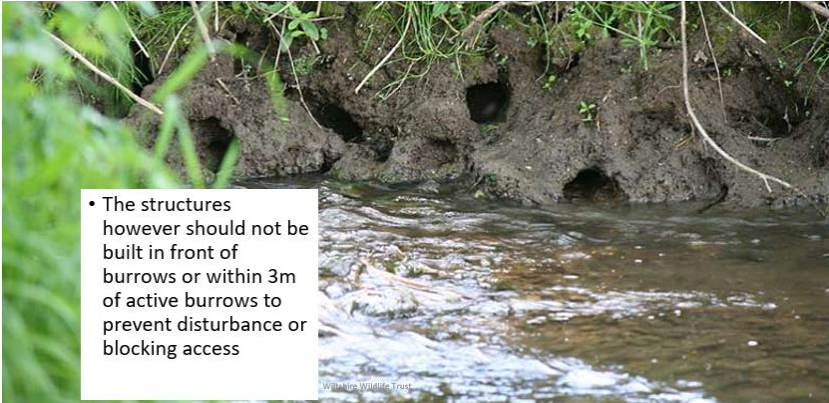


The structures themselves also trap sediment and are quickly colonised by marginal plants. These new wet marginal areas provide fantastic foraging habitat for water voles



Ideal water vole habitat of wet marginal and emergent plant species along the bank edge. These habitats provide both foraging and sheltering opportunities

Once fully covered in sediment and colonised by wetland plants, large woody debris structures can look like this

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- The structures however should not be built in front of burrows or within 3m of active burrows to prevent disturbance or blocking access

A resident thanked the Parish Council for their efforts to help maintain the river.

Councillor Higgins advised those in attendance that the Parish Council and Fete Committee have contributed funds to the project and thanked Councillor Britton for his efforts in assisting with the project.

St Mary's Church – Mike Marx

Report on St Mary's Church for the 2024 Annual Parish Meeting

This report covers some of the activities of St Mary's Church West Dean for the year of 2023.

St Mary's largely followed a monthly pattern of 2 services in church & a 'Breakfast Church' gathering in the Village Hall. The Reverend Ruth Schofield presided over most services. Breakfast Church in the Hall engages a wider group of villagers and was generally well attended, with time for a croissant, coffee & chat before a short service.

Late in the year our Vicar Ruth Schofield announced that she was standing down for health reasons. She had made a huge contribution to pastoral and village life in a short time and we and she were sad that she had to leave us. We thanked her for all she had done for the church and village. She had become known to and liked by many villagers and attended many village events. The vacancy created by her leaving has subsequently been advertised and we are actively looking for a new vicar.

The 2023 Carol Service, Christmas Day and Easter Services were as ever well attended and joyful. We held the St Mary's Remembrance Sunday service by the War Memorial as the church was being repainted inside. About 40 villagers heard Colonel David Scotson of the Gurkha Rifles give an interesting address on the meaning of Memorials and Remembrance from his own experience of war and knowledge of memorials. After the service, a curry lunch was served in the village hall. The service and lunch were beautifully organised to mark this important day and we thank everyone who was involved.

The church continued with major and minor maintenance work. The largest item was the complete re-painting of the interior of the church which required interior scaffolding most of the way to the roof. We also replaced the Halogen

light units with LED units. The new lights are more energy efficient, require less maintenance & the highest have been re-positioned lower to enable safer access.

The maintenance work was only possible through many fundraising events in the village and the application for and receipt of a grant from Community First. We are grateful to the church fundraising committee of Patrick Cordingley, Nick Hiddleston, Jane Higgins, Derek Howland, Chris Lucas, Mike Marx, Julie Rowe and Gill Sowerby. The events were a talk by Kate Adie, the Summer Ball, the Open Gardens, a Safari Supper, lunch on the Hill at the Cordingleys and the Harvest Supper. Thank you to all involved.

We would like to thank the Village Hall Committee for their support of the church in letting us use the Hall for Breakfast Church and events including the Safari Supper which ends in the Hall, and the Harvest Supper and Remembrance Day lunch which are held in the Hall.

We also want to thank the West Dean fete committee. The fete is the 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 churches & the hall and WD village projects. We thank the joint Chairmen Nick Hiddleston, Chris Lucas and Matthew Rowe, the committee, organisers and helpers for the tremendous effort they put in to create another fantastic fete.

Mike Marx, Church Warden St Mary's West Dean, May 2024

Village Fete

Jane Higgins advised that in 2023 over 1100 adults attended the Fete and approximately 2500 people in total. The fete is extraordinary in the terms of people attending and those who help organise. The funds are shared between a vast number of community groups.

Over £20,000 was raised on the day, the profit was £11,977.19. The following distributions were made to community groups:

£1800 to King George's Hall
£1300 to the Club
£4500 to the Church
£100 for the Archive project
£500 to the Chantry group
£400 to the Busy Bees Toddlers' Club
£900 for the river project
£500 for the Rectory Hill pathway future maintenance

Jane thanked those who are going to take part in advance, noting that their actions play an important part in the viability of the Village Fete.

4. Chair's Report.

Report from West Dean Parish Council for APCM 2023-2024

At the APCM on 11 May 2023, Jane Higgins was unanimously elected as Chair and Yasmin Taylor as Vice-Chair. Other seats on the Council were filled by Cllr Harry Urquhart, Cllr Katja Biddulph, Cllr John Camilleri, Cllr Carly Moseley and Cllr Bill Seabrooke at an EGM on 25 May.

Mel Camilleri served out her notice as Parish Clerk until the end of May, overseeing the year-end audit. Applications for a new Parish Clerk were invited and Amanda Owen was interviewed and appointed, attending her first meeting at the beginning of September. In the intervening weeks Jane Higgins acted as Clerk.

During the year Cllrs Biddulph, Taylor and Moseley all resigned because of family responsibilities. Cllr Urquhart resigned as he has become Chair of West Tytherley Parish Council. In the meantime we have welcomed Mel Camilleri and Nick Hiddleston as Cllrs. There are 2 vacancies.

During the year there has been slow but steady progress with the Glebe Farm plans. The S106 agreement is now being finalised by the lawyers for TVBC and the developers. Permission has been received from the landowner, Penne Edwards, to make a permissive pathway through the paddock inside the hedge, north of the Church, then down

through the Churchyard and into the recreation ground. The construction of this path with gates will be part of the S106 agreement. Other details about the management of the green space at the Glebe Farm site are part of the S106 agreement.

Other planning applications this year have included various tree works in the village and Friar's Orchard Barn. The barn conversion went to the Southern Area Planning Committee in November where it was approved. (Cllr Higgins attended the meeting).

Plans for the restoration of the river banks are progressing and becoming more realistic as funds are raised. The PC and the fete have both contributed and applications for grants are in progress with both Wiltshire and Test Valley Councils. The 'river group' is now formally a working party of the Parish Council.

In the recreation ground, works this year have included repairs to the tunnel, new bark and new H&S compliant chains for the swings. Some of the cost of works this year has been reclaimed from WT Parish Council, but we await more help from them in due course. Unfortunately a large branch from a tree overhanging the Wendy house came down in a stormy wind and flattened its roof. The branch was quickly cleared, but the roof needs to be rebuilt. Our thanks to Clive Francis who undertakes the grass and hedge cutting on the Green and in the rec, and keeps the village tidy. We have entered the Best Kept Village competition this year (the first time since 2015).

Villagers made invaluable voluntary contributions in the same cause by helping with the annual river clearance in September and the Spring Clean this month. The PC has provided refreshments after both these events and also at the Carols on the Green and at the Parish Meeting earlier. The village also came together for a picnic on the Green to mark the Coronation last summer and will light the Beacon shortly to commemorate D-Day in 1944.

The Emergency Plan was updated this year and is now better coordinated with King George's Hall Committee. Our rechargeable lanterns and power packs, which can be loaned out in an emergency, are stored at the Hall. We also have 6 walkie-talkie radios.

We are grateful to our Parish Clerk who has quietly and effectively managed our agendas, minutes, budgets and finances this year. She has also re-vamped the PC website and I recommend having a look at westdeanvillage.co.uk. It is much easier to navigate than it was.

5. Questions & Comments.

Following a question with regards to S106 funding relating to Glebe Farm, Councillors J Camilleri, Seabrooke and Higgins provided an overview.

Councillor Higgins thanked everyone in attendance and advised that the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council will commence at 20:00.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 19:48.