



WEST DEAN

Parish Council

West Dean Parish Assembly

**Held at King George's Hall on
Thursday 25th May 2023 at 19:30**

1. Welcome and apologies: Cllr Jane Higgins, Chair of West Dean Parish Council

Apologies were received from PC Harry Murphy.

2. Guest Reports:

King George's Hall Committee.

King George's Hall Committee provided a verbal report.

West Dean Club.

WDPC annual update from West Dean Club – 25th May 2023

West Dean Club continues to be active in our community with over 120 members at the end of March this year; we continue to build our membership base and hope to achieve similar or higher numbers again this year.

We were delighted to host the Romsey Young Farmers charity tractor run again which saw over 150 tractors attend for an afternoon of food and entertainment.

Our Coronation Day event also brought in good numbers, and we were very grateful for Test Valley Borough Council's grant to enable this in our community.

Going forward:

We will be actively looking for funding to convert a small area in our old darts room into a kitchenette area, we need a dishwasher... a luxury for our hard working washing up volunteers!

We are delighted to be working collaboratively with a new brewery (Dark Revolution) and new products such as Thatchers Haze which is proving a great summer staple from the cellar.

Our mobile hairdresser and fish & chip van continue to visit regularly, and we have been delighted to work with local caterers to offer members and corporate hirers excellent food options resulting in lots of returning business.

East Brothers Timber continue their local support with many events including The Green Register events (this is for professionals working with sustainable renewable wood products from registered suppliers). East Brothers are also hosting their family day with us in July.

Our concerns for the coming year are energy and consumables costs:

Our energy costs remain high... With the cellar coolers and fridges running continuously this really is an area that is unavoidable and continues to be a concern; our quarterly electricity bill has almost doubled from £750 to £1,400, like many hospitality businesses this will be a big concern in the coming 12-24 months.

On consumables our prices have remained static but across the board costs have risen 15-40%. The committee are looking to purchase a new Till system so that we can itemise and calculate profit margins on individual products (instead of, as an example, the blanket four pound per pint). Members have stated they are happy to pay more for

premium products and the new Till system should allow us to offer these and also ensure we remain financially stable, take easier card payments and, monitor stock levels much more efficiently.

St Mary's Church.

Report on St Mary's Church West Dean for the 2023 Annual Parish Meeting

This report covers some of the activities of St Mary's Church West Dean for the year of 2022.

After the Covid disruption of 2021, 2022 saw St Mary's returning to a more normal monthly pattern of 2 services in church & 1 'Breakfast Church' gathering in the Village Hall. It felt good to be worshipping together regularly in person. Holding Breakfast Church in the Hall engages a wider group of villagers and is generally well attended, with time for a croissant, coffee & chat before a short service.

In the second quarter, we were delighted to welcome the Reverend Ruth Schofield as our new vicar. Ruth has made a huge contribution to our pastoral and village life in a short time bringing wisdom, learning, and empathy to church and village life. She quickly became visible in the village and hall as well as in church, attending the Safari Supper, Fete & other village and Hall events including leading Breakfast Church.

The 2022 Carol Service, Christmas Day, Easter, and Harvest Services were as ever well attended and joyful. The St Mary's Remembrance Sunday service attracted a congregation of over 60 villagers. Lieutenant Colonel Chris Wild, who had recently come to live in West Dean and is a serving officer, gave a deeply moving address from his own experience of war. After the service, many villagers attended a curry lunch in the village hall. This is an important day of remembrance in the church and village annual calendar.

The church continued with major and minor maintenance for St Mary's during the year. This was planned and managed by a subgroup led by Derek Howland with Brian Livesey providing expert advice and oversight of contractors. The most significant maintenance items were:

- the replacement of the wooden floor in the Nave including joists and with additional ventilation
- a new soakaway and drainage to the North of the church. And some internal replastering of part of a wall together with redecoration of lower sections of internal walls

This maintenance work was only possible through:

- many fundraising events in the village
- the application for and receipt of grants from 3rd Parties
- volunteers working in the church. Brian and Ruth Livesey were foremost in bringing the new floor to a beautiful finish and painting the lower section of the walls.

We are grateful to all volunteers and to the fundraising committee of Derek Howland, Jane Higgins, Patrick Cordingley, Nick Hiddleston, Chris Lucas, Gill Sowerby and Mike Marx who organised or coordinated events & Jane Higgins who managed & completed our grant applications & is our hard working Treasurer.

The Village Hall supported the church in many events including the Safari Supper which ends with coffee at the Hall; lunch in Patrick & Melissa Cordingley's garden where the Hall provided lunch hampers; the Autumn Thanksgiving supper, Breakfast Church & the Remembrance Sunday lunch - all held in the Hall. We thank the Hall Committee for their generous support of the church. We thank the Club who held Christmas Carols with coffee & cake there. Other events included an Organ Recital & a Treasure Hunt.

The largest annual village event is the fete run by a committee ably chaired for many years by Derek Howland. Our fete is a well-established highlight of the village year justly renowned in the local area. It is a model partnership between village & church creating goodwill & community spirit which generates funds for the church, the hall & village projects. The church is extremely grateful for everything that the whole village does to make this such a great day in our village life and such a successful fundraiser.

Mike Marx, Warden, May 2023

Village Fete Committee.

The Village Fete Committee provided a verbal report.

3. Chairman's Report: Cllr Jane Higgins

Chair's report for 2022-3 West Dean Parish Council

This is necessarily a summary. Full minutes of meetings are published on our website at westdeanvillage.co.uk

At the Parish Council meeting in April 2022 it was reported that the referendum held in March 2022 overwhelmingly supported the West Dean and West Tytherley Neighbourhood Plan with a 94.1% to 5.9% majority.

The Council sadly accepted the resignation of Cllr Andy Francis owing to ill health.

The APCM in May saw the re-election of Cllr Harry Urquhart as Chair of the Parish Council and the completion of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).

The Council welcomed Cllr Richard Britton as its representative from Wiltshire Council.

Events were planned to mark the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II including a picnic on the Village Green, a ceremonial planting of a fir tree that will also act as a Christmas tree for the village. The beacon was lit, and a specially formed choir joined with others throughout the Commonwealth to sing a song specially composed for the occasion.

In August we were pleased to co-opt 2 new members to the Parish Council: Yasmin Taylor and Derek Howland. Their membership was ratified when they were present in October.

In October we also noted that West Dean PC had been granted £3,321.43 by the SEN Resilience Fund. We decided to allocate funding for:

- annual maintenance of the village hall generator;
- an industrial quality microwave oven;
- installation of 8 double electrical sockets with USB charging points;
- rechargeable lanterns and radios, (now purchased).
- The draft budget for 2023/24 was reviewed. £500 to the West Dean Wildlife group.

In December the RoSPA report on the playground was reviewed and repairs authorised as necessary. The Council accepted the resignation of Cllr Ben Rowe as he was moving out of the area, and noted the resignation of Cllr Deborah Hook from WT. The budget precept for 2023 was resolved to be £19,000.

During January 2023, the Council received an approach from a developer proposing to modify the extant planning permission on the Glebe Farm site from one very large dwelling to four smaller dwellings (4-5bedroom). The developers presented their initial proposals to a well-attended public meeting on 30 Jan. As the planning representative on WTPC, John Camilleri subsequently had discussions with them for the purposes of clarification, and presented WDPC with an update at their meeting on 16 February. The developers proved receptive to modifying their initial proposals to align with community housing needs and other local priorities as identified in the NDP.

Action was taken to set up a joint West Dean + West Tytherley planning group with two councillors from each Parish Council. Cllr Seabrooke and Cllr Higgins were nominated from WD with Cllr Collier and Cllr Camilleri from WT. Cllr Urquhart attended *ex officio* as Chair of WDPC. This group met again with the developers on 7th and 20th March.

On 4th April, following the publication of a draft proposal for the site which had been widely publicised on the parish website, facebook and the Friends of West Dean email group, another well-attended public meeting was held in the village hall. A wide range of views was expressed, both for and against the proposal presented. The meeting was chaired by Cllr Collier (Chair WTPC) as lead Council on this Hampshire site. She decided to undertake a leaflet drop to all houses in WD village to invite opinions. In due course, the results were duly collected and analysed with 57% broadly in favour of the proposal.

Jobs at the play park were identified for the WTPC lengthsman including:

- painting the goalposts,
- replacing the rope on the tunnel
- putting a new plank on the roof of the train.

The chains on the swings needed to be replaced. Cllr Taylor organised a group of volunteers to distribute the new bark around the playground site.

A WDPC EGM, called for 19 April, invited public comment on the Glebe Farm proposal.

However, the final date for return of the leaflet was 21 April. The meeting was well-attended. The discussion was dominated by the objectors to the proposed development. The outcome was that WDPC resolved to neither support nor object to the proposal until the proper planning application is published before resolving how to respond.

The APCM, held on 11 May 2023, nominated and, by majority, elected Cllr Higgins as Chair of WDPC. Report in next year's APCM.

3. Questions and Comments: members of the public.

The meeting closed at 20:05 to allow the extraordinary meeting to begin.