



BEMBRIDGE PARISH

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at the Village Hall on Wednesday 1st May 2024

MINUTES

1. Introduction and Welcome

The Chair welcomed all to the Annual Parish Meeting.

2. Apologies

Received and approved from Cllr J Robertson.

3. To approve the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 3rd May 2023

Approved and signed.

4. To receive the Chair's report which will include a presentation by Cllr Adams on the Bembridge Community Resilience Project

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to this Annual Parish Meeting.

This Meeting is a legal requirement which must be held in the Parish each year between 1st March and 1st June. Importantly it is not a Parish Council meeting but is an opportunity for residents to learn through my report as Chair of BPC & the report of Cllr Joe Robertson, Bembridge's District Councillor, some of the issues that have concerned the council over the last 12 months.

Last year I reported that the Section 19 Flood Report had been adopted by IOW council. Sadly there is little progress to see from the recommendations that were highlighted in that report, although with the help of Cllr Robertson the PC continues to lobby Island Roads for improvements to drainage especially at the bottom of Kings Road with junction of Station Rd and at Steyne Cross.

Shortly after this council was elected in May 2021 there were 2 major flood events in the village, these events have led to a great deal of work being undertaken to prevent flooding in the future. At the APM in May 2022 there was a presentation on Flooding and Emergency Planning, leading to the formation of the Bembridge Flood Group. In 2022 the IOWC joined with the Environment Agency, to provide funding for a 5 year scheme (PFR – Property Flood Resilience Scheme). Bembridge has been selected for year 2, which commenced in January 2024, of this scheme. This will lead to up to

10 properties which have been flooded being surveyed, with owners then advised on what action can be taken to protect their property from future flooding such as flood doors or flood bricks, expenses covered by this scheme. Unfortunately the scheme does not cover businesses. Under the leadership of Cllr Chris Adams the Flood Group has now grown into the Bembridge Resilience Project.

Chris is going to give a short presentation in a minute to update you on the work this group has been doing as his slides will be much more illuminating than my report.

The PC Sustainability Working group has been meeting regularly. Some of you will have seen the new information boards that have been installed by the Beach Café at Forelands to give an idea of the many diverse plants and fish that can be found on or adjacent to the beach. There are 2 further boards ready to be installed on the back of the toilet block by the Life Boat Station, this is just waiting for the wall to have a coat of paint.

In July 2019 the IOW council declared a Climate Emergency. Following this their Plastics Forum became the Environment and Sustainability Forum. This change allows a wider focus on a broader range of climate and environment related issues. Cllr Marianne Sullivan has been attending this forum since the beginning. So in September BPC resolved following a recommendation from the Sustainability Group to also declare a Climate Emergency and delegate to the group to prepare a Climate Action Plan, this was followed in February by a resolution to sign up to a Plastic Free Communities initiative.

Bembridge is exceptional in that it is surrounded by a mosaic of protected areas, Solent Protection, Ramsar, SSSI, AONB (now National Landscape). Given the work of the Sustainability Group, I am delighted that Theo Vickers, underwater photographer of the year 2023 is going to give us a presentation, shortly, to raise awareness of the marine and natural history in the seas of the Isle of Wight and Solent and to support the marine conservation community.

Bembridge has a Neighbourhood Development Plan that was made in 2014 to assist with responding to planning applications. When/if the new draft Island Plan is approved, which might be as soon as this evening, Bembridge will need to revise or renew its plan so that our policies agree with the DIPS.

All these reports, Section 19 Flood LCWIP adopted by IOWC in 2022, The Housing Needs Survey 2024, hopefully adopted in next few months, Climate Action Plan are all the essential tools needed to assist in producing new Neighbourhood Plan for Bembridge.

The most important task I have tonight is to say thank you, to all of you for coming to this meeting and being interested in the work of the parish council, but far more importantly it is to thank the myriad of people who give of their time over & over again to contribute to enhancing the daily life of this amazing village that we are all so lucky to live in. The Community Gardeners were awarded a prize for the War Memorial Garden at Island in Bloom in June, their group meets every Wednesday and looks after the War Memorial and village planters and they fully deserve their awards. The Community Action Morning on Saturday in this hall was a snap shot of just some of the groups & organisations, none of which would exist without the wonderful volunteers. There are also many unsung heroes, who quietly get on with picking up litter either on the organised beach/litter picks or when out walking. Thanks also to The Parish Lengthsmen, who work so hard to trim, mow acres of grass, cut hedges, paint changing rooms & look after the benches, pick up litter and unblock toilets.

I would also like to thank my fellow councillors for the hours they put in attending meetings to serve their community. The Council said Goodbye to Julia Shorrocks, it's clerk in March and has been very pleased to offer Mark Rochelle, who had been working as RFO for the last 18 months, the combined role of Clerk and RFO. Mark has obtained the CILCA, clerk's qualification this year and has worked hard to produce a 3 year business plan for the council. As I mentioned last year BPC is now, I'm delighted to say in a position to reapply for Quality Status.

I commend this report to you –

5. To receive the District Councillor's report

Over the last year, local issues have been dominated by planning, flooding and roads. Unfortunately, planning consent was granted for fields on the land between Hillway Road and Steyne Road, however at the time of writing, the draft Island Planning Strategy, which seeks to expand Bembridge's settlement boundary with nearly 200 extra homes, has not been approved.

Together with the Parish Council and the Environment Agency, I have been working through mitigation schemes for flooding. Most recently, the Environment Agency have offered up to 10 homes specific flood mitigation work such as self-closing air bricks and flood doors. I also managed to get Island Roads to enlarge the gully adjacent to the Pilot Boat which was in the wrong place and failing to catch rain water running down Kings Road and into Station Road. I continue to make the case for a bigger scheme across the junction of Station Road using the Section 19 Flood Report however Island Roads are proving hard to engage with. I am also pressing as hard as I can for resurfacing work to the High Street and Howgate Road but Island Roads claim that neither road meets the threshold for resurfacing which cannot be right considering they have resurfaced Kings Road and done substantial patching to Swains Road and Lower Green Road in St Helens.

Responding to a request from the Chair of the Parish Council, I arranged for Police and Crime Commissioner Donna Jones to visit the village and meet with residents to discuss speeding, particularly along Embankment Road. Following her visit the police have visited at least twice to monitor speeding.

I have been unable to attend a number of Parish Council Meetings over the last year as they generally coincide with Isle of Wight Council meetings but I maintain regular contact with the Parish Council, largely through the Chair and Clerk. I have the highest attendance record for Isle of Wight Council meetings among the 36 Councillors elected in 2021, at 97 per cent. I continue as a member of the Health and Adult Social Care Policy and Scrutiny Committee and over the last year I have served as Chairman of the Council's Corporate Scrutiny Committee. If Councillors vote through a new Committee system to replace the Cabinet system on 15th May then the scrutiny committees will be replaced by service committees which will do the job of cabinet and scrutiny.

Cllr Joe Robertson

1st May 2024

6. A short Presentation by Theo Vickers, an award winning, underwater photographer and marine biologist who is passionate about marine life of the IOW & Solent. Theo is from the IOW and uses his camera to spark interest in and promote marine conservation in the island's communities.

Presentation received and thanks were given to Theo Vickers for a thoroughly informative and entertaining presentation.

7. Public Forum – To invite members of the public to raise items of interest

This is an opportunity for parishioners, to raise any matters of concern or suggestions for projects re future improvements to the local community.

(If a vote is taken by a show of hands only those on the Bembridge electoral roll may vote)

Parishioner Sean Burrows raised an issue with a lack of adequate litter/dog waste bins particularly around access points to local beaches.

Members of the Parish Council agreed to take up this issue with the Isle of Wight Council.

Meeting closed at 7:31pm

All attendees are invited to stay for refreshments

Cllr Liz White – Chair Bembridge Parish Council

18th April 2024