



## Bembridge Groups and Organisations

**Reports for Annual Parish Meeting**

**Wednesday 1st May 2024**

## **BEMBRIDGE VILLAGE HALL**

Bembridge Village Hall has been at the heart of village life and the centre of activities for many long-standing village organisations including the Art Society, the Horticultural Society, The Friendship Circle, Wight Island Players, the Heritage Society and Bembridge Little Theatre Club to name but a few. There are also regular art classes, dance classes, speech and drama classes, fund raising table top sales, coffee mornings and art exhibitions. More recently a regular Craft Fair has been established, and the founding of a Gilbert and Sullivan production company two years ago has added a new genre to the hall's excellent theatrical output with annual productions of a G & S operetta and an annual carol concert at Christmas time, supplementing the annual pantomime from Wight Island Players and plays from Bembridge Little Theatre Club.

The running of the hall is managed as a charitable trust by a committee consisting of 4 members who are elected annually, together with a number of co-opted members who can offer expertise to assist with running the hall such as maintenance, electrical work, compliance with health and safety regulations and utility supply management. All committee members are registered as trustees.

Over the years there have been a number of alterations and improvements made and the latest include new wi-fi, blue tooth sound system and upgrading of the kitchen facilities in both halls. Bembridge Little Theatre Club have also upgraded and modernised their theatre lighting rig.

The Committee has also recently purchased new chairs for the back hall and will be installing new curtains in the hall including new stage curtains later this year. Cleaning and upgrading of the stage area is also planned.

All of this means that the hall is developing a reputation as a go to venue for parties, wakes, one-off performances etc. as well as the more regular users outlined above.



**Bembridge Youth  
& Community  
Centre**

## **Bembridge Youth & Community Centre** **Report 2023/2024**

Another full year at the Bembridge Youth & Community Centre. Classes are held during the day and evening every day in the week. These are Dance Fitness, Burlesque Chair Dance, Art Group, Karate, Line dancing, Tai Chi and Petanque. Also, the WI hold meetings once a month. All ages are welcome.

We are welcoming Alzheimer Café, starting in June, once a month and a weekly class Keep Active Move More Class in May.

At the moment we have 7 Bembridge Youth Football teams who train on Saturdays and compete on Sunday mornings. Two more teams train and have friendly matches. Bembridge Adult Football have 3 teams.

To raise money for the Bembridge Youth & Community Centre Bryan Jones our chairman organises two runs a year. The Trail 5 in the summer and runners compete for trophies and medal. In December is the Soup Run, which is for fun, and runners receive a mug and a big Christmas Raffle and this only possible due to the generosity of local businesses. We have over 100 runners for each event and is growing every year.

Other fund-raising events are Quiz nights held in the lounge bar. Firework night which was unfortunately cancelled due to the weather.

The Bembridge Youth & Community Centre is available for private hire. We have had a number of children's parties, wedding reception Christening, adult birthday parties of all ages etc.

Bembridge School run a stop off station for the annual Randonnee cycle event using the hall and kitchen. And raising funds for the school. Bembridge Parish Council have their annual Community Chest event in the hall.

We look forward to another successful year and providing a facility that is available to the local community and all areas across the island.

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## **Bembridge Heritage Report 2024**

With grateful thanks to our loyal members who total 218, it has enabled us to attract approximately 600 visitors a year to our Heritage Centre in Weavers Yard. A rota system is used with the help of volunteers to staff our limited opening hours. Also we have and continue to host either a coffee morning or lecture event on alternate months. The coffee mornings provide refreshments and opportunities to purchase local books and to access our huge data base detailing historical and local information. The event lectures are very popular wide-ranging subjects from the island's early history through wartime to present day.

We partake in major village events such as the annual Bembridge fair, royal events and other celebrations.

A constant today is history and can never be changed. Unfortunately, documentation can be lost so we see it as an obligation to continue to act as custodians to preserve our history of our wonderful and unique village for future generations.

We welcome new members and volunteers who can help us.

The Bembridge Heritage Committee.

## **Bembridge Community Library**

**report from 01/04/23 to 31/03/24**

For the last couple of years the library has been responsible for the total running of the library as well as the maintenance of the building. Given the lack of attention to the building over the previous decades, when the Isle of Wight council were responsible, there have been many challenges in getting the building 'into shape'. Of particular concern is what to do with the 'rear extension' which was previously used by Bembridge Heritage (BH). When BH, quite rightly, moved out due to ongoing damp and space issues, the library was compelled to reluctantly take over responsibility for the rear of the building. However, the library has no specific need for this space apart from accessing the toilet. Nevertheless, the Trustees agreed to spend £2k on filling in the large hole in the floor left by the removal of the Pluto engine. Further thought about what to do next and a builder's quote for repairs convinced us that the best course of action might be for the extension to be demolished and rebuilt. To this end talks have started with BH to see if this can be done using grants etc as BH would prefer a central location in the Village to their current industrial unit. Watch this space to see what happens next!

Last April a small group from Men in Sheds obtained and upcycled a new kitchen. The old kitchen was probably installed in the 1950's so the upgrade is a huge improvement for the volunteers. Further contracted work is scheduled for 2024-25 to improve the Community room.

The library hosts events for others so the 2nd Bembridge Rainbow unit had an evening in the library and the library hosted an exhibition for the IOW Photographic Society. A children's craft event run by an Isle of Wight author was hosted in the library. The library's community room was also used by Age UK as a contact place for their information.

We now have regular 'author of the month' promotions and were pleased to work with BH to promote a book written by a local author.

In terms of presenting itself to the community, the library was fully involved with the annual Bembridge Street Fair and had a table at a BH coffee morning. Our annual Easter Coffee Morning and Christmas Coffee Morning and Raffle events took place as usual and were well attended, raising vital funds to help keep the library open. Also to help raise funds a representative from the library attended the annual Community Chest event and was successful in obtaining funding for a new A3 laminator which is now available for use.

Library volunteers visited the local schools to inform the children about the Summer Reading Challenge which took place over the summer holidays. The library also supported a colouring competition on behalf of World Animal Day. In March this year we hosted a visit from the local pre-school.

Bembridge library is open from 9.30am to 12.30pm on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday mornings plus Friday afternoons from 1.30pm to 4.30pm. As well as offering access to the whole of the Isle of Wight library book catalogue our services include:

- Book and jigsaw sales
- Photocopying
- Printing
- Laminating (A4 & A3)
- Tourist point for tourists and local events
- A large community room for hire
- The free use of public computers
- Computer lessons (1-2-1)
- General information on services across the Isle of Wight

The library welcomes donations as well as unwanted books and puzzles.

Alison Austin and Ian Graham (Trustees - Bembridge Community Library)



*Bembridge Men in Sheds (independent charity no. 1194908).*

*Update April 2024*

Our activities over the past year (April 23 to March 24) can be broadly categorised into three groups i.e. helping others, raising funds and social activities. Highlighting the main activities under these headings we have:

Under helping others, we made 2 refectory tables for Newport Minster and Holy Trinity Bembridge (HTB) using old pew seats. Also for HTB we renewed 3 signs for the Cloisters plus refurbished an umbrella stand, replaced the flower shelves, made 12 candle holders and installed a camera stand.

We built and located a Toy Library at Paddock drive for general use and will reinstall it later this year for the warmer months. Bembridge Primary School got 2 new benches made from old Windmill stocks wood and 3 storage boxes for external use.

For the Parish we refurbished the Village Hall signs, rebuilt the #8 Culver Trail sign and made and installed 5 new memorial apple tree plaques at the cemetery.

In order to raise funds we made a few bespoke items for local residents including several high level garden planters, a dog training gate, table lamps and a bird feeder refurbishment. We also received some income from Newport Minster for making items using old pew wood which the Minster then put on sale to help pay for the Newport Minster refurbishment which should complete soon.

A generous donation from HTB was gratefully received for the work we had done for the church, although all we had asked for was reimbursement of our actual costs. We also were successful at the Community Chest event in getting 50% funding for a new electric cutter.

On the social side we held a summer BBQ and a Christmas meal as usual. Also, now regular events, were 10 pin bowling in Ryde, pitch and putt golf at Browns and grass bowls at Sandown. The members got into pancake making on Shrove Tuesday, had a walk followed by lunch at the Harbour View cafe and had an 'open gardens' visit. New to this past year we've been running a photographic competition on subjects as diverse as 'Beaches' and 'Expressions'.

Highlights of the year were visits to the East Cowes and then Poole lifeboat building operations. These tours of the facilities were expertly led by RNLI volunteers and the inclement weather in Poole added context to the challenging role of the RNLI. We also went over to the updated Mary Rose exhibition in Portsmouth, another excellent trip.



***Bembridge Men in Sheds (independent charity no. 1194908).***

***Update April 2024***

Members themselves gave a range of talks including: 'A Visit to Pitcairn', 'Life in Canada and a Trip to Hudson Bay', 'A Trip to St Kilda', 'Tintype Photography', 'Life in the Navy', 'Guernsey – Observations on another Island', while Penny's Pilates gave us an overview of 'Chair Pilates plus Balance and Fall Techniques'.

If you are interested in joining us, either as an active participant in woodworking or just for the social events, we always welcome new members – ladies included!

Contact us via [bembridgemis@gmail.com](mailto:bembridgemis@gmail.com)

Ian Graham





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**Bembridge Parish Council**

## **Windmills Annual Report 23-24**

Windmills Preschool has been at the heart of the Bembridge community for several decades; 2023 saw the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our incorporation as a limited company and a not-for-profit educational charity but the preschool had a childcare legacy in the village for many years prior to this date. Windmills continues to provide a nurturing environment combining quality childcare with a varied Early Years curriculum for children aged 2 to 4 & following our most recent Ofsted inspection in June 2023, continues to be graded consistently “Good” in all areas of provision. Our close links with Bembridge Primary school help to give the children a smooth transition across to Reception after preschool.

The preschool remains committed to supporting families in the community and operates an open-door policy for all our families; this year the preschool became an Early Help Champion working closely with The Family Hub in Ryde (Barnardo’s) to ensure all children have the best opportunities to thrive by identifying needs, triaging & signposting to various interventions provided locally. As part of our ongoing diverse curriculum which is specifically tailored each week to meet the needs of the children in setting, our normal enrichment activities continue ; visits from the children to our intergenerational friends at Inver House, outings to the park & beach, visits to the RNLI boat house & to the local village library help to give the children a real sense of their community & the world around them. Our end of term graduation in July 23 for our school ready children saw the sunny preschool garden host a wonderful family celebration with the presentation of books & gifts to the children by the Primary school headteacher.

The preschool operates as a not-for-profit voluntary director run professional educational establishment. We are in receipt of government funding which is dependent on the number of children attending each term. This funding partially covers the costs of employing a fully qualified, experienced staff team; we have been grateful for the financial support of the BPC throughout the years, most recently for a Community Chest grant from the BPC towards a new front gate which has enhanced our new front garden environment. The annual opportunity to bid for monies from the BPC allows the preschool to purchase resources for the children that it would otherwise be unable to fund.

As we approach the final term of this academic year, the preschool is full to its capacity of 28 children per day, with 47 children on roll. We have a busy curriculum planned exploring science, the natural world, beach & forest school, our wonderful bodies, life cycles & our world, as well as offering additional school readiness groups for our older children focussing on speech & language, mark making & preparations for the exciting new chapter which is “big” school! We are pleased to report that the coming year looks equally as busy.

Windmills staff team are always happy to welcome members of our community to our mobile classroom & value the ongoing support shown by the village.

Rachel Clark

On behalf of the Voluntary Directors, staff team & children

Windmills Preschool Limited

# **Bembridge RNLI Guild**

## **report to Annual Parish Meeting 2024**

2023 was a highly successful year for all areas of the RNLI Guild, with record takings in our shop, record numbers visiting the boathouse and record donations. In the summer, our weekly public launches have gained in popularity and we frequently welcome 'full houses' on these occasions. We also ran weekly children's activity mornings during the main summer holiday period and these were well attended by visitors and locals alike.

As we move into the RNLI's highly anticipated bicentenary year, we expect 2024 to be even busier. It has started already, with a special gathering of 200 extremely resilient children from our Primary School and Ryde Prep School on our walkway on a very cold day in early March and the signing of the national scroll as it came to our station two weeks later.

We are now looking forward to the rest of the events planned for our special year. In the week of the May half term, there will be a range of activities both locally and at the Inshore Lifeboat Centre in East Cowes. Here in Bembridge, we will, as ever, be out in force at the Street Fair, providing lifejacket advice at our Inshore boathouse, welcoming children for special activities in the Offshore boathouse and throwing wellington boots for fun on the beach (always highly competitive!) The highlight of the week will be the public launch of our all-weather boat one evening, followed by a sausage sizzle in the Inshore boathouse. Plans are also afoot for a very special Open Day on 24<sup>th</sup> August, to which everyone will be most welcome.

Currently we have nearly 100 members of our Guild, whose activities range from fundraising to volunteering in the shop, to welcoming visitors to the boathouse and providing water safety advice. New members are always welcome.

Deborah Meadows  
Lifeboat Visits Officer

## **Bembridge Community Gardeners.**

The Spring of 2023 started with a great show of red tulips. (Kindly paid for by a local resident) Spurred on by this success this year we added a further 60 large red tulips and some later flowering shorter varieties. It paid off with a colourful start to the Spring season. As well as the Memorial Gardens we also look after the border at the top of Foreland Road, the Village Hall planters and the boat on Kings Road. The border at the top of Foreland Road, called "the long border" by us, is difficult to maintain as it is flooded in Winter and very dry in Summer due to it being very shallow soil on top of heavy clay.

Last year we missed out in the Best Kept Memorial Gardens class of the Isle of Wight in Bloom competition as we were put in a class along with professional organisations. However we still came second with Alan Titchmarsh presenting the award at Albert Cottage in Cowes. Perhaps this year, in the correct class, we can be winners again! However we did win the "Winter Cup" in the Bembridge In Bloom competition.

Recently one of our volunteers Nick Thornton left to return to the mainland so we are looking for extra help in the gardens. We meet, weather permitting, on Wednesday mornings (9.30) during the growing season, and as necessary during the Winter.

If it would be of interest to you to join us I can be contacted on 873768 or at Barnfield, 113. Howgate Road, Bembridge. ( [barnfield113@talktalk.net](mailto:barnfield113@talktalk.net))

You would be very welcome.

Arthur Robinson

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Bembridge Rainbows**

### **Report for Annual Parish Meeting 2024**

2<sup>nd</sup> Bembridge Rainbows continues to meet weekly at the Methodist church hall. We've had another busy year, including attending the village Remembrance Service and parade, visiting Santa at the Steam Railway, attending the Girlguiding showing of 'Wish' at the Commodore in Ryde, visiting the library, visiting the lifeboat station, having a Coronation tea and a Christmas party with the village Brownies, and having fun on the beach in some wonderful sunshine last July. We have continued to pursue activities through our regular programme, such as a wide variety of crafts, playing games to encourage teamwork and individual resilience, and learning new skills such as BSL, basic cooking methods and respecting our environment. We also took part in the annual Birdwatch survey and made simple bird nests to help care for our feathered friends.

We were very grateful to receive another grant from the Parish Council last autumn, allowing us to purchase a set of brightly coloured neckers to wear on activities away from our meeting place thus making the girls more easily identifiable in a crowd, and also some uniform items to lend to new members. The neckers had their inaugural outing to the theatre, when we attended a panto, and were much admired by other members of the audience. The girls loved wearing them and enjoyed the fluorescent green colour!

Deborah Meadows  
Leader, 2<sup>nd</sup> Bembridge Rainbows

## **1st Bembridge, St Helens & Seaview Sea Scouts.**

Many small, mostly unnoticeable changes have been occurring at the Scout HQ over the last year; we now have an amazing Wight Fibre WiFi installation that helps us provide more online material for the Young People in this ever changing digital world.

We have been slowly reorganising our stores and making sure the building is clean and tidy but there is much more work to be done!

We currently have 60 Young people across our Beaver, Cub and Scout sections with preparations for summer adventures and Camps well underway.

These are led by 8 Adult volunteers spread across the sections, and 5 Young Leaders (age 14 to 18).

We currently only have 2 Trustees (in addition to those leaders who act as trustees) and we are always looking for more volunteers to help out not only running the sections, but help out behind the scenes.

We are hoping to make some upgrades to our HQ this year, namely our Kitchen and Toilet/Shower facilities, plus much needed maintenance to the building and grounds.

We will always welcome help to get these jobs done so do get in touch if you are able to help!

We will again have a stall at the Street fair, so do pop along and say hello!

Get in touch via:

[bembridgegroupscoutleader@outlook.com](mailto:bembridgegroupscoutleader@outlook.com)

## **Holy Trinity Bembridge Annual Report for APM**

Holy Trinity Church lies at the heart of our beautiful village, and we are so blessed to be a part of our wonderful community. The church feels in a good place as it is experiencing a gentle increase in the size of our congregations, a rejuvenation in our membership, and growing warmth of welcome and embrace for all. Our purpose as a church is to wholeheartedly love God, our community, and our world. These three values are shot through everything that we do. Our life together is rich and varied: we come together on Sundays to seek and celebrate the presence of God in our lives, but we also meet in many smaller groups too. You will find full details on our website, but here is just a flavour of some of the things we do:

Trinity Church Mice is a nurture group for pre-school children and their families. It is a delightful environment for children to play, pray, praise and have fun. Trinity Church Mice meets in The Cloisters on Wednesday mornings during term times. A warm welcome, cup of coffee and cake guaranteed!

The Bereavement Triangle offers friendship and support to anyone who is bereaved either recently or long ago. They gather on a Thursday morning in The Cloisters.

Another popular group, open to all, meet for Coffee in the Cloisters on Tuesdays and, again, good conversation, coffee, and cake are always present.

As part of our desire to love our world, we have partnered with four organisations who share our sense of purpose, who are able to do things that we cannot do, and with whom we can build a meaningful relationship. The four groups of people that our PCC have chosen to support in partnership run: a food bank in Ryde, support for war-torn Ukraine, seek to relieve poverty in Uganda, and work to reduce our environmental impact.

The Friends of Holy Trinity Bembridge continue to be an important part of our life together. The Friends are a group of people who want to help us maintain our beautiful building. In 2023, The Friends have helped us to repair stonework, remove some pews and replace them with chairs, and upgrade our Audio Visual system. We are enormously grateful for their practical support. Similarly, Weaver Brothers have carried out numerous maintenance and improvements at St Luke's chapel. This generous support and can-do philosophy from our village has been one of the major encouragements in our church's life.

## **Bembridge Methodist Church**

Report to Bembridge Parish Council –April 2024

Bembridge Methodist Church aims to proclaim the Love of God to the whole community and to share the good news of Jesus Christ through word & action

Our Minister is Rev. John Izzard who is the Circuit Superintendent for the whole Island

Sunday services for Worship are held each week at 10.30am except on the first Sunday of the month when we meet at 5pm & have Communion. Rev. John Izzard takes the 5pm service. Everyone is welcome to any of our services.

We have a ukulele group, open to all. We meet every fortnight on a Wednesday evening 7pm-9pm.

Each week we have “Sing Up” led by Hanna Nixon who is a professional actor who has taken part in films on the Island & various Village productions. We meet on a Thursday morning 10.30 – 12.30. Everyone is welcome.

Our Craft Group meet on a Tuesday afternoon, once a month & create many items for good causes.

The Church also organizes “Movies at the Methodist” once a month from October to April, raising money for our chosen charity. We have other social events during the year and we join with the community for the Street Fair, Remembrance Sunday, Walk of Witness, Lights of Love and this year the D Day celebrations

Our premises are well used by the local community for various meetings. The RNLI meet once a month. Townswomen’s Guild meet once a month & Right at Home meet once a month serving care in the community & Girl Guiding meet weekly ( please see Girl Guiding website for more details)

We also Garage the Friendship Circle Mini Bus to keep it safe for its many uses.

Jane Chubb ( Senior Steward)

## BEMBRIDGE TOWNSWOMEN'S GUILD 2024

Our Guild meets monthly in the Methodist Church hall in Foreland Road.

Recently we have changed to an afternoon meeting, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month, starting at 2pm.

Some meetings are with speakers and some more social - enjoying quizzes or games!

In July we usually have a garden party in Dot's garden, with a raffle for Mountbattern Hospice.

Inbetween the monthly meetings we go out for coffee to different places and sometimes do crazy golf or bowling, or visit places like the Donkey Sanctuary, The Roman Villa or Havenstreet Steam Railway.

We have had craft/crochet sessions (also between meetings) and made many warm gloves, hats and scarves for the Tidal Family Support in Ryde.

There is a regular report of our meetings in the Parish Magazine (Our Bembridge).

Any questions please contact Dot on 872992



## **Bembridge Belles Wi**

Formed in January 2019 we now have over 40 members meeting at the village hall on a monthly basis (1400 - 1600 on the second Tuesday).

Over the past year we have had a variety of demonstrations and speakers on subjects ranging from red squirrels and carnival masks to Indian head massage and marriage through the ages. Members have also taken part in activities including Zentangle, Decoupage, Singalong and Curling.

We have run several sub-groups including French Conversation, Gardening, Ukulele, Craft, a book club and a walking group.

We ran successful stalls at both the Bembridge May Street Fair and heritage craft event and hosted a Christmas Fair.

Our chosen charity for the year was young carers for whom we raised £862. Thanks to the Bembridge Community Chest we were able to obtain a card machine for use at our fund-raising events.

We welcome visitors who are able to attend three meetings before deciding whether they wish to join us.

For further details contact Catherine on 07711183724 or 01983-472664.

## **Bembridge Football Club**

Season 23/24 has been another good one for Bembridge FC which has not yet finished.

This season we once again have 3 teams, First Team, Reserve Team and A Team.

Our First Team are sitting mid table in the islands top league Division 1. We reached the Challenge Cup Semi Final losing 1 - 0.

Our Reserves had a change of management mid season but have had a solid season and again will be mid table.

The A side have been outstanding, and going into the last game they are still in with a chance of winning the league title and also have reached the Junior B Cup Final.

We will have a break over the summer and come back in pre season looking to build the club even stronger.

Thank you

## **Bembridge Youth FC Season 23/24 Review**

During the 2023/24 season we have had 7 teams training year round and participating in the IoW Sunday League from u7 up to U15 level equating to c130 young people in and around the village. In addition, we've continued to nurture young players with our Mini Kickers sessions on Saturday mornings and support social teams helping to champion and build girls participation in the game.

In March, 30 children from the village were lucky enough to take part in an inspiring trip to St. Georges Park – the home of England Football – a trip that will live long in the memory!

The Club has recently been successful in applying for much needed grant funding for a pair of new Futsal goals which will help more children to participate in football in indoor facilities particularly during the winter when so many training sessions and games are called off due to waterlogged or frozen pitches.

The club has continued to invest in its thriving volunteer base to develop coaching, safeguarding and first aid related skills. We are delighted to announce Bembridge Youth FC was recently awarded England Accredited Club Status confirming it as an accessible, safe and sustainable club dedicated to quality standards of youth football development: [See County Press Article](#)

James Hendy, Chairman @ BYFC said: "Beyond evidencing our commitment to providing a quality, safe and inclusive environment for young people to learn and love the game, we expect this milestone to help us continue to attract community support and investment, to develop the club further, including much-needed sports facilities".

The Club continues to play an active role in the Steyne Park Working Group to champion the development of local sports facilities in the village. Working with the Parish Council & East Wight 3G Project we can achieve great things for young people across local communities.

## **Bembridge Bowls Club, Mitten Road**

With a membership of over 100 these being Playing and Social members, of which most are from the village. We enjoy a full yearly program.

Our winter months from October -April consist of Sunday lunches monthly, coffee mornings monthly, and evening social events. Card afternoons and Craft mornings once a week.

Summer End of April through to September is our outdoor bowling season, whereby we play league matches against the other IO clubs on the island. We have club competitions, County competitions. We also have IO Tourist matches, this consist of players and their guest visiting the island and requesting to play against Bembridge in a friendly bowls match,

We manage to keep our members active, giving them all an interest all year round. With our full program.

I would like to mention that we are a self-supporting club through subscriptions and fundraising. We have also contributed almost £6000.00 to local charities over the last five years.

Jenny Juby  
President

23/4/2024

Friendship Circle Report  
Annual Parish Meeting May 2024

FC has met every first Saturday of the month, except in August. Our coffee morning in December was entertained by the Ukulele group, accompanying the carols, which was much enjoyed.

At the end of July Liz Mitchell retired as Chairman as she was moving to the mainland. We are very grateful for the time and effort she put into running the Friendship Circle and wish her well on the mainland.

As reported last May the Bembridge Sailing Club chose The Friendship Circle as their 'Charity of the Year' and this April we received a cheque for £1495 plus £49 from tin collections during the year. The Community Bus brought some Lunch Club guests to the presentation.

The Community Bus continues to be used by several Village groups and even went to Guernsey with the IOW Golf Team participating in 'The Islands Golf Tournament'.

Our thanks go to Karen, Mick, Paul and Neil for all they do to make sure the bus is maintained and ready for use. All our drivers give so generously of their time and it is much appreciated.

The coffee mornings are well attended and we have new volunteers so we can create a rota of helpers.

Our 'Coffee Team' do a great cheerful job and have made some excellent cakes.

We are so grateful to Warburton's for their continued support of the Coffee Morning.

Rosamond Poncia  
Chairman

# Bembridge Houseboat Owners Association

## Report 2023/24

This past year has been a quieter one for us as a group.

We have had one derelict boat removed, in line with all the standards for environmental and bird protection of the area met. A replacement will be put in this summer with some changes to the sea wall as recommended by the Environment Agency.

Another boat Rijnstroom, was replaced by St Vincent.

We have had an active campaign on road safety along the Embankment, productively joining with the Parish Council. This resulted in a meeting with the Hants and IOW crime commissioner, the establishment of a speed check group, the possible purchase of equipment to help speed checks, the presence of police speed checks, the cutting back of overgrown plants on the footpath and various proposals to establish further speed controls.

We have resolved the issues we had with the routing of the proposed bridleway along the old railway line. This facilitated the finalising of that path route and hopefully the reopening of it at the Southern (Bembridge) end. Despite assurances, this is taking longer than anticipated. As far as we know, the funding was agreed by the IOW council and all it needed was the signing off of the legal papers by the harbour owners. We have been assured this has now been done and has been back with the council for a while. It needs chasing again.

Members of the association have been instrumental in the campaign to establish a visitor centre, bird hides and nature walk on the Harbour Farm site opposite us. The site is currently owned by the Environment Agency. This gained a huge amount of public support culminating in a great deal of positive press coverage and a demonstration of 60 + people.

Our efforts gained the promise from the EA of a public consultation after the summer. We are still awaiting a promised letter from the Parish Council (promised at the January meeting) indicating whether they support the proposal or not and whether they would support the idea of hosting a public forum on the matter.

We have worked more productively with the EA over their proposals for repairs to the embankment, shoring up our flood defences. Surveys have shown repairs are very much needed. This year's recent spring tide, saw the highest levels anyone has ever seen, with water half way across the road at dustbin corner. If one was needed, this signals that flood defence work (ie raising the height of the Embankment), instead of repairs, will be needed as soon as possible.

We have worked on reducing pollution in the harbour, being hit on the one hand, by thousands of hours of discharge from the river, the incoming tide bringing additional sea discharges in and some boats without treatment plants in the harbour. Attempts to get the harbour water tested and obtain a liability to get something done if tests fail have so far been unsuccessful, oddly meeting some local opposition. It is hoped work with the council's Sustainability Group may enable some testing in the future.

Talks with Southern Water have reassured us works at the Roud treatment plant, one of the worst offenders, should reduce outflows there. Given their sewer storm overflow spilled 127 times for a total of 2,026.51 hours last year this is welcome news. However, the biggest offender is our local St Helens one with 142 spills for a total of 2,613.96 hours. Add in the other 10 sewage outfalls along the river and you see the problem.

The Harbour has repeated their aim of paying for treatment plants on the few houseboats still without one (this came about from an original clause in our leases that had sewage plans in them that were never enacted), but this offer is conditional upon new houseboat plots being agreed and none are even proposed. There is a concern that other houseboats elsewhere in the harbour that do have treatment plants do not have the ability to empty them as they are too far away from the road.