



BEMBRIDGE PARISH

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at the Village Hall on Wednesday 14th May
2025

MINUTES

1. Introduction and Welcome

The Vice Chair of the Parish Council, Cllr Paul Kenny, welcomed all to the Annual Parish Meeting.

2. Apologies

Received and approved from Isle of Wight Councillor – Joe Robertson.

3. To approve the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 1st May 2024

Approved and signed.

4. To receive the Chair's report

Received. Cllr P Kenny outlined actions and achievements of the Parish Council throughout the year, including successful VE Day celebrations and the accreditation of the Council as Silver level in the Local Council Awards Scheme. Cllr H Brabazon (Steyne Park Regeneration Committee), Cllr S Noyes (Environment & Neighbourhood Committee) and Cllr M Groom (Planning Committee) also provided updates to the parish meeting on events and actions taken by the relevant committees throughout the year.

5. To receive the District Councillor's report.

Received:

Twelve months ago, Isle of Wight Councillors voted to change the organisation of the Isle of Wight Council from a cabinet system to a committee system where a number of "service committees" will make decisions rather than a Leader and cabinet. That decision will only come into effect on 21st May of this year. Residents should not feel a difference to the day-to-day delivery of Council services but it should provide an opportunity for more collaborative working within the Council as cross-party committees will make key decisions rather than single party cabinets.

Island planning remains a key unresolved issue from 2023/24. The Island Planning Strategy was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate last year, after many years of negotiation locally, with a proposal to increase house building to

453 a year, up from an historic average of around 350. Unfortunately, last month the Planning Inspectorate based in Bristol rejected that plan and says that the Isle of Wight should be building 703 new homes a year. It has given the Council two options: amend the current plan accordingly or withdraw the plan and submit a new plan under the current government's preferred "standard method" which would mean around 1,100 new homes a year (3 times our historic average). In my opinion, neither option is remotely acceptable. Even if we did propose 703 homes or more (and I am of the strong opinion that we should not), we simply do not have the builders, materials or infrastructure on the Island to deliver them. This is a very unfortunate example of remote, unelected decision-making trumping local democracy. Councillors will debate the issue at an emergency Isle of Wight Council meeting on 28th May.

Turning to more local issues, I am as frustrated as everyone else by the lack of progress that has been made on improving the surface and drainage on the junction between Station Road and Embankment Road, despite the best efforts of the Parish Council with my support as Councillor. The Isle of Wight Council seems to be saying that a proposal is approved and it is now over to Island Roads to deal with it but nothing has been done. This week, in my capacity as MP, I have requested an urgent meeting with the Council and Island Roads to get the work underway without further delay. I will report back to Parish Councillors as soon as I have news.

Finally, I wish to congratulate all returning Parish Councillors. As a Village we are lucky to have a well-run Parish Council with efficient clerking support. With so many of the same councillors returning after 1st May I feel confident that the Village remains in safe hands.

Cllr Joe Robertson

14th May 2025

6. A short presentation by Mr Tim Wander of the Bembridge Fort Trust on the past, present and future of the Bembridge Fort.
Received.

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)
No items raised.

Meeting closed 7:42pm

All attendees are invited to stay for refreshments

Cllr Paul Kenny – Vice - Chair Bembridge Parish Council

30th April 2025