

St Stephen by Launceston Rural Parish Council

Chair's Report 22 May 2024

There being no Chair's Report presented at the Annual Parish Meeting in May 2023, I prepared an Audit of Parish Council Business based on the Minutes for Parish Records. See below:

Audit of Parish Council Business June 2022 – May 2023 (In lieu of missing Chair's Report at Annual Parish Meeting May 2023)

Five Planning Applications were received

Two Public Footpath signs were installed

The Clerk and Chair met the MP to discuss parish property matters

A legal letter was received by the Parish Council in July relating to parish land and which required a legal response through the Parish Council's solicitor

Criminal damage to property in Langore was reported to the Parish Council and police

A parishioner erected a wooden bench by the Kissing Gate and Public Footpath above Langore Village Green

A grant was received from Cllr Paynter's Community Chest for a recycled plastic Jubilee bench to be sited on Langore Village Green by the bus stop

The Chair resigned mid-term and a new Chair was elected

Before resigning, Cllr Caudle met with Inspector Harvey re road safety at Dutson. Cllr Caudle obtained a £5000 pledge for road markings from the Community Network Panel. Cllr Curzon obtained Vision Zero funding for safe passage on Public Footpaths/signage

The NALC Pledge of Civility and Respect was adopted on 5 January 2023

The Parish Council bank account was moved from HSBC to Lloyds because of a local HSBC branch closure

Warning chevrons at Cross Lanes/Homeleigh were reinstated

Conservation work was carried out at Truscott Pond

Working party of 2 councillors to maintain Menheniot Crescent flowerbeds on VG629

An Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting called by the Clerk to address legal matters on 23 February 2023 was disrupted by a crowd and events reported to the police

and Cornwall Council – Standards at Cornwall Council has advised the Parish Council on correct procedure

The Parish Council has joined the Open Spaces Society (OSS) on the advice of the Police Legal Team

Joan Heaton 20 May 2023

Chair's Report 22 May 2024

Four Planning Applications were received – three were supported unanimously and one was considered unsuitable for the site by unanimous vote.

We invited Mr Paul Ford to address the Parish Council regarding his work on Launceston Medical Centre Patient Participation Group (PPG) and as a volunteer for Cornwall Air Ambulance. The Parish Council donated £50 to Cornwall Air Ambulance.

We invited Mrs Cym Downing to address the Parish Council regarding her work with Launceston Memory Café which supports those living with dementia and their carers. The Parish Council donated £50 to Launceston Memory Café.

Mr Joe Caudle was appointed Truscott Ponds Monitor by the Parish Council. £200 was allocated for essential pond clearance and maintenance. It was noted that Truscott Pond and the Cornish Hedges backing them were registered by Cornwall Council on the Historic Environment Register.

The Jubilee Bench was sited near the bus stop on Menheniot Crescent thanks to a donation from Cllr Adam Paynter.

Various Parish Policies were agreed – General Privacy; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion; Social Media; Civility and Respect Pledge. An Unacceptable Behaviour Policy has been drafted pending approval.

The 426 bus route has been altered and the Menheniot Crescent bus shelter is no longer on the route. The Parish Council is considering moving the present bus shelter to the main road if possible - discussions pending.

The Langore Cemetery bus shelter needs roof repairs - repair work pending.

Working Parties which were not reporting back to the Parish Council were stood down as no longer active.

The Launceston Area Methodist Circuit has taken on responsibility for graveyards no longer attached to an active Methodist Chapel. The Parish Council agreed to contribute towards the upkeep of the Truscott/Langore graveyard.

There have been issues arising from parking on Menheniot Crescent. The Clerk has raised this with Cornwall Housing.

Drainage issues on Menheniot Crescent were investigated by Cornwall Council Highways and no problems found.

A draft Deed of Variation was presented by the Village Hall Charity Trustees to the Parish Council regarding the lease on the Dog Walking Field (ex-VG666). A revised draft is required from the Trustees.

A speed monitor was purchased for the A388 at Dutson due to fatalities there. Schoolchildren and pedestrians walk along this stretch of highway with no footpath, and traffic is busy and a danger to life. The Clerk has conferred with Cormac and Homeleigh Garden Centre re siting. A Working Party was set up to collect data.

Questions were sent to the Parish Council regarding public liability insurance and signage for the play equipment on Langore Village Green VG630. These were forwarded to the St Stephens Recreation Grounds Charity Trustees who have the responsibility to maintain the recreation grounds and play equipment for the Ancient Parish of St Stephens.

It was noted that St Stephens Recreation Grounds Charity has no public liability insurance to cover motor vehicles on Langore Village Green nor can it attain same.

The Parish Council solicitors, Stephens Scown, requested information from the Parish Council as required by another party. The Clerk duly sent the information.

The Clerk received a response from the Open Spaces Society (OSS) Rights of Way Officer, who advised that it was a criminal offence to drive a mechanically-propelled vehicle without lawful authority on a footpath, bridleway or restricted byway – section 34 Road Traffic Act 1988. Lawful authority would include a private easement or use with permission of the title holder of the land. If a prescriptive easement had been acquired, evidence must be produced to prove that there had been no present or historic challenge. The Parish Council was advised to contact Cornwall Council's Rights of Way Department re management of the footpath that would not obstruct pedestrian access or breach s12 Inclosure Act 1857 and s29 Commons Act 1876.

There were numerous Code of Conduct complaints emanating from the Parish Council which were rejected by Cornwall Council Standards. The Clerk asked councillors not to use the Code of Conduct complaints procedure to further their own interests.

There was anti-social behaviour on Truscott Village Green where a vehicle drove across the green, destroying trees and plants. Residents, including children and grandchildren, had planted and maintained the green over the last 5 years and the Scouts had assisted. A tree planted by the Scouts and reaching about 6 feet was destroyed. The Parish Council has funded and supported the work by residents to nurture the green over the last 5 years.

An anonymous letter was posted through the Clerk's door containing abusive and unsubstantiated claims. The person posting the letter was caught on camera. A disrespectful notice was pinned to the Village Hall post during a Parish Council meeting. There has been anti-social behaviour in meetings. The police have been informed.

The Chair met with the CEO of CALC and received valuable advice on dealing with disruptive meetings.

The Chair took a CALC course at Liskeard on dealing with difficult meetings.

Joan Heaton 22 May 2024