



**Minute of the Annual General Meeting of West Saint Leonards Forum
Held on Wednesday May 17 2023**

Present: See attendance sheet

Apologies Cllr Tony Collins, Christopher and Ingeborg Smallwood, Kerry Culbert, Hannah Robbins, Steven Hardy, Yolande Laybourne, Diana Bickley, Marisa McGreevy Rose, Karen Samson

1. WSLF Chairperson's Annual report

Virginia Vilela welcomed the 19 members of the public and 6 members of the steering committee to the meeting. She said that the Forum's aims were to develop the identity of an area which had less prominence than other parts of Hastings, in spite of a long and important history, and to enable local residents and businesses to translate their hopes and ideas for the area into reality. One way of achieving this is through the designation of the area as a neighbourhood planning entity, which can work with the local council and influence future projects in the area. Virginia stressed the desire of the Forum to be involved with a range of local activities adding to the cohesion of the area.

To this end, the Forum had set up an exhibition of its history from the dinosaurs to the present day, which drew on local organisations and individuals to contribute their knowledge of the area through maps, photographs, pictures, interviews and heirlooms. The exhibition was supported by Judges and the Electro Studios plus a significant number of cultural organisations and individuals. It took place in the Easter holiday, and attracted 295 visitors, with very positive feedback from the public and coverage in the press. The booklet prepared for the exhibition sold well, enabling us to cover the printing costs.

At the end of the exhibition, we were delighted to learn from Hastings Borough Council that our application for designation as a neighbourhood area for planning purposes had been granted, in spite of two objections to the boundary of the area. The application had involved three surveys of the area with questionnaires and doorstep interviews, compiling the results and preparing the necessary documents

2. Treasurer's Report

Bryan Fisher gave the opening and closing balances in the accounts for the year, and said that the list of expenditure was available if anyone wanted to see it. He explained that neighbourhoods seeking designation can get grants of up to £18,000 from Government money administered by the organisation "Locality" to fund technical help and advice in drawing up a neighbourhood plan, but any unspent funding must be returned at the end of the financial year, and funds granted to achieve designation are subtracted from the total grant. We are waiting for funding for this year to be announced to make an application.

Bryan went on to describe the scope and process of preparing a neighbourhood plan

3. Amendment to the Constitution

During the consultation by Hastings, the residents of Collinswood Drive asked to

be part of the WSLF, which if agreed requires another consultation process by Hastings and the amendment of the constitution. A slide showed the current boundaries, and the proposed change would bring the estimated population of the designated area up to approximately 7,200 from about 7,000.

It was also proposed that the definition of sub-areas should be in the control of the management committee. It is hoped that there should be a member of the management committee for each sub-area to facilitate communications between different parts of the whole neighbourhood area.

The following resolution was proposed, seconded and passed unanimously

"That the constitution of West Saint Leonards Forum be amended as follows

i. Clause 6(b) to read as follows

In electing members to the committee priority will be given to having at least one representative from up to 6 sub-areas which together cover the entire neighbourhood area and are defined by the Management Committee. The representative for each sub-area will be responsible for communicating between the Management Committee and their area.

ii. to extend the neighbourhood area to include Collinswood Drive, as shown on the map annexed, which also contains a list of all the roads within the neighbourhood area."

Proposed by William Ackroyd and seconded by Virginia Vilela

4. Election of a new Management Committee.

Nomination papers were distributed and the following people were unanimously elected, leaving four unfilled posts.

William Ackroyd
Julia Edwards
Bryan Fisher
Lindsay Fowler
Alexia Masardo
Anna Sabin
Virginia Vilela
Patricia Walton

5. Group discussions

The meeting broke into smaller groups to discuss specific topics.

- a. Environment and climate change
- b. Transport
- c. The creation of the local plan.

The fourth proposed group, on housing, will be a subject for a later meeting

6. Reports from the groups

a. Environment and climate change

The group identified 3 priorities -

Flood resilience

Locally owned renewable energy

Reducing car use since transport is a huge source of carbon dioxide.

This led to discussion of water pollution by Southern Water, the legislation for porous surfaces in domestic gardens, and the problem of large gardens being acquired for speculative development.

An alternative, particularly for the elderly, could be sharing gardens for allotments, which are much in demand.

More charging points are needed for electric bikes, and path maintenance is necessary to ensure access.

Air pollution requires regular monitoring, so that residents can work on a street basis to contest this and promote energy reduction. The possibility of a locally owned wind turbine was raised.

b. Transport

The group discussed the train halts at West St. Leonards and Glyne Gap which, if re-opened, might reduce car traffic.

They also reviewed the bus services on Harley Shute Rd. and the access to Silverhill. Bus circulation is hampered by car parking on both sides of narrow roads, and the Edinburgh Road triangle needs to have a single direction with sleeping policemen, so that the playground can be restored.

There are no bus services along the southern half of Harley Shute Road. They only serve the northern half of Harley Shute, stopping at the top of Edinburgh Road and then returning to Silverhill. If you want to go to the beach or town you have to go north, via Silverhill, first. The service used to be complete, north to south, and contributors would like it restored.

A community bus service was suggested now that changes to the Stagecoach bus routes leave some areas with limited services.

On footpaths, it was noted that some require clearing, and that lighting is insufficient. There is a rights of way report, which identifies all the footpaths which should be accessible.

c. Creation of a neighbourhood plan

The group thinks that a timetable for production of the plan is essential, and that consultation should start immediately.

This consultation can "piggy back" on local events, emphasising that the plan is a community effort. Local representatives are key to getting people involved. Leafleting with questionnaires is a useful tool (there was a 10% response to the last exercise).

E-mails to members can be forwarded to friends.

If the funds are available, community notice boards in each of the 6 areas can carry current information, and a regular newsletter will help to disseminate information.

The work undertaken with Sussex undergraduates may produce data on local requirements collected by students.

The local press can also encourage participation.

7. Conclusion

- (a) An invitation from Cllr. Tony Collins to a meeting to plan a celebration of 200 years of St. Leonards in 2026 was noted. It will take place at the Horse and Groom, Mercatoria St. Leonards on Monday June 5th at 7.30 pm.
- (b) The chair thanked the participants and closed the meeting. We also thank the WSL Community Centre for the use of their premises..

signed

dated June 2023

Annex

The neighbourhood area with a list of all the roads within the neighbourhood area.



Roads included in the neighbourhood area:

- 1 Bexleigh Avenue, Hythe Avenue, Abbey Drive, Bexhill Road to the end of Filsham Road, Lovat Mead, Amsterdam Road, Bridge Way, Bulverhythe Road, with Cliftonville Road and Way, Arnside Road, Arnbury Mews
- 2 West side of Harley Shute Road to railway, Haven Road, Asten Close, Field Way, Reedswood Road, Kite Close, Bunting Close, Warren Close, Heron Close, Magpie Close
- 3 Harley Shute Road north of railway and Darwell Close, The Spaldings, Rushmere Rise, Bullrush Place, The Sedges, Fen Court, Newts Way, Meadowsweet Close, Watermint Close, Wishing Tree Lane
- 4 East side of Harley Shute Road to railway, Harley Way, Edinburgh Road, William Road, Conqueror Road
- 5 Bexhill Road from Filsham Road to Bo Peep Pub, Filsham Road to the railway, St Saviours Road, Keymer Close, Finley Close, St Vincents Road, West Hill Road to St Vincents Road, Keats Close, Railway Cottages, Grosvenor Gardens, Seaside Road, Cinque Ports Way
- 6 West Hill Road from St Vincents Road to Archery Road and steps to Saint Leonards Church, Essenden Road, Welbeck Avenue, Cavendish Avenue, Knoll Rise, Tudor Avenue, Boscobel Road (including North), and Collinswood Drive: Grosvenor Crescent, Sea Road, Marina to St Leonards Church, Caves Road, Sussex Road.