

CHAIR PERSONS REPORT FOR ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Aren't we lucky to live in a community where we have so many people that give their time and enthusiasm to help make Stithians the great place it is?

PARISH COUNCIL

Just after Christmas my thoughts turned to the meeting tonight and the expectation that I would need to stand here and talk about the Parish Council. I also started thinking about the Star of Stithians Award, and after having a bit of a spring clean and taking the Chairmans chain out of its box to give it a clean, I realised that the Parish Council is also an organisation that has contained numerous members also worthy of a Star of Stithians Award for their work over many decades to help shape and protect Stithians.

I started to do some research on the formation of the Parish Council and began to reread the Stithians History books. In reading them it reminded me of some "famous" Stithians people such as Albert Collins and the Knuckey Brothers who found acclaim abroad, and also of those who dedicated their lives to Stithians, such as Janie Hellings and Jack R Williams.

At the Feast Sunday service last year Rev Warner spoke of how important Feast and the Show and Stithians is to Stithians people, and if you were to cut a Stithians person in half they would be like a stick of rock with Stithians written through the middle.

Just recently we lost a valued member of the community, Margaret Ramsey, who did so much for Stithians and probably fits the stick or rock analogy.

Also David Pascoe who latterly helped to distribute the Snooker Club funds which has helped so many organisations in the Parish.

I did not have to look too far to find out about the origins of the Parish Council. In the “Always Something Interesting- Aspects of History in Stithians book published in July 1980”, there is an article by Mr Frank Bolitho (himself a Parish Councillor), on the formation of the Parish Council 131 years ago. In his article he reports:

It was formed as a result of the Local Government Act of 1894 which stated all parishes should have an “elective council”.

The election process was as follows:

- *In late November 1894 a meeting was held in the Board School to elect a waywarden and to suggest names of suitable gentlemen to be nominated as parish councillors.*
- *It was proposed that the parish be split into 11 areas and 1 man from each area nominated. No agreement was made on who the 11 should be.*
- *On Tuesday 4th December 1894 another meeting was held and 13 nominations were received. A vote was taken and 11 were elected.*
- *Each voter had 11 votes and 718 votes were cast.*

The first meeting of Stithians Parish Council was on 18th December 1894.

How similar the first parish council is to the parish council today:

11 members and the topics discussed could well have been last months meeting rather than circa 100 years ago.

And also, how different: no women.

Achievements of the Parish Council

Since 1894 the Parish Council has achieved a lot. They even helped to create the local history group in 1975 that wrote the books which have been the source of the information tonight. Part of that first

group was my great grandfather Stanley, and the daughter of the first Parish Clerk, Mrs L Ford.

And often the best way of looking forward is to look back and see what has gone before. And as we look forward to the forthcoming year and our plans for the playing field we have looked back at how the Playing Field came to be.

With money donated to the Parish of Stithians by Albert Collins the Playing Field was purchased from the Glebe, and on my wall at home I have a copy of a bye law passed by Stithians Parish Council in 1936 regarding the creation of the playing field. It sets out the rules of the playing field and amongst them are some interesting ones such as you are not allowed to beat your druggett on the playing field. A druggett is a rug. Nor dry your clothes. And the fine: £2

What fantastic things has that Playing Field seen:

- 88 years of children playing
- Rugby matches
- Bowls matches
- Tennis matches
- Children riding bikes, runners and walkers
- Community events- tea treats, car boots, fayre days
- Tree planting
- Stithians Show

And the current Parish Council continue to be trustees of the playing field and you may have noticed our latest improvements of a basket ball net and new equipment.

And this week we have submitted a planning application for the Albert Collins Community Hub

So in the spirit of looking back to be able to look forward lets look at what we said we were hoping to achieve at last years meeting.

- *Stithians Football Club training and playing home matches on the “rugby field” – from April 2024*
- *20 mph zones rolled out across Stithians- by end of 2024*
- *Crossing point at Longdowns – by April 2025*
- *Road safety improvements near the Spar shop- by April 2025*
- *Resurfacing of the tennis court*
- *Decision on DMMO at Kennall Vale or creation of alternative route*
- *Funding for a new Pavilion building*

And in 2024/2025 we have achieved:

- *Successful Scarecrow Festival organised in conjunction with Stithians Show*
- *Relaunched the play equipment fund and purchased new equipment*
- *Funding to support a planning application for a new pavilion on the Playing Field*
- *Set up a group of volunteers to help maintain Meadowside cemetery*
- *Installed new signs and bollard at Meadowside*
- *Reviewed the Environmental Management contract to better suit the Parish’s needs*
- *Trimmed some of the trees in the playing field*
- *Added an extra step to the stile by the skate park*
- *Obtained Plant the Gap grant funding to plant 8 trees on the playing field with Stithians School and Pre-School.*

- *Planted two oak trees in the football field*
- *Explored alternative entry points to Kennall Vale.*
- *Continue to maintain the speed sign*
- *Maintained membership of MVRG and Community Network Area*
- *Supported SEG and started to reinvigorate our climate emergency plan*
- *Attended Feast service and Remembrance Sunday*
- *Written to Royal Mail to complain about the postal service in Stithians*
- *Engaged with SWW to understand the flooding issues at Hendra – work being carried out Summer 2025.*
- *Gave away free trees at the Produce Market.*

And a few things we would have preferred not to have to have done:

- *Fenced off the old Pavillion and installed CCTV to deter vandalism*
- *Cleared up broken glass from the toddler play park*
- *Repainted the youth shelter to cover grafitti*
- *Agreed to plant trees in the carpark to mark the head of the parking bays to stop people getting stuck*
- *Renewed “Keep your Dog on a Lead” signs in the Playing Field*
- *Erected a fence by the BMX track to deter unauthorised jump creation*
- *Repairs to the public toilet due to vandalism*

Thank you very much for attending and I'd now like to open the meeting up to any questions.

Helen Downing

Chair of Stithians Parish Council

April 2025