



DRAFT Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at 7pm on Wednesday 18th March 2026

Present: Cllr Mark Rawlings-Smith (Chairman) (MR); Cllr Karen Nash (KN); Cllr Jasmine Hathaway (JH); Cllr Philip Maber (PM); Cllr Sarah Arnold Pain (SAP); Cllr Richard Arnold (RA); Cllr Emily Lerwill (EL)
Also in attendance: Cllr Jeremy Hunt, County Councillor (JHunt); Henry Potter, District Councillor (HP); Vivien Nuttall Parish Clerk (VN)
Representatives from Goodwood Estate and the Western Sussex Rivers Trust also attended the meeting.
11 number of members of the public also attended.

Agenda Item 1 – Apologies for Absence – DH, AH

Agenda Item 2 – Appointment of New Chairman – It was unanimously agreed to appoint Mark Rawlings-Smith as Chairman.

Agenda Item 3 – Declaration of Interests/ Dispensation Requests - Chair and JH declared an interest in the Parking at The Leys agenda item, due to residence in that area. No other declarations received.

Agenda Item 4 - Minutes of the last Parish Council Meeting – The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 7th January 2026, were approved subject to Agenda Item 8 the word ‘extinct’ be changed to dormant and that the funds are being ring fenced for ‘youth activities’ not leisure activities. It was agreed that these amendments be made.

Agenda Item 5 – Chairmans Report – The Chair paid tribute to Deborah Harwood, who stepped down after 10 years of dedicated service. Key achievements recognised:

Parking scheme for The Leys
Playground upgrade and school fencing
The Community Highways Scheme
Village meeting consultations and community engagement
Emergency planning coordination during COVID-19
Numerous projects and behind-the-scenes work

It was agreed that a gift be arranged as thanks for Deborah's service.

The Chair also acknowledged Alan Higginson's diligent work during his tenure and thanked him for his contributions.

Flood Assistance

The Chair expressed particular thanks to Jeremy Hunt for his immediate response during recent flooding, appearing on a Sunday afternoon to provide assistance and "kick things into action."

Upcoming Developments

Responsibility allocations to be discussed below following resignations
New parish councillors have joined in recent months
Planning underway for Annual Parish Meeting (APM)
Developing a parish council plan for coming months

Two parish councillor vacancies to be filled; volunteers sought ahead of AGM

Village Hall

The Chair clarified confusion regarding village hall ownership and responsibilities:

Thanks extended to Graham Zacharias and Viv for legal work

Significant behind-the-scenes work completed on paperwork and registration

Foundation now in place for moving forward with hall management

Survey response was overwhelming; meeting scheduled for next week to report the responses

Encouraged attendance to support the village hall team

Agenda Item 6 - County Councillor Report – Mr Jeremy Hunt, Chichester North Division WSCC

Full Report was circulated prior to the meeting and is available on the parish council website.

Budget. WSCC has a balanced budget for 2026/27 with a gross budget of approximately £2.3 billion.

The government's 'fair funding review' and council tax equalisation will result in £30 million being removed from WSCC's frontline funding over the next three years, adding to financial pressures.

Social Care and Children's Services. Some 60% of WSCC's expenditure is on adult and children's social care. The Care Quality Commission rated adult social care as 'good'. Children's services are performing well, with all seven children's homes rated 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted. The significant and rising cost of care placements for children with complex needs was noted.

Services. Other items noted included: a rollout of LED street lighting across the county; landfill reduced by 45% since 2017; fly-tipping down for a fourth consecutive year; and the library service awarded the top ranking in the South East, with 36 libraries maintained and 2.2 million visits in the last year.

Local Government Reform (LGR). The government's announcement on whether West Sussex will become one or two unitary authorities is anticipated imminently, likely before Parliament goes into recess. The devolution bill is expected to come into being from May. Parish councils will become increasingly important as the local voice under the new structure.

Bus Shelter – Lavant Road Surgery. JHunt confirmed that, following discussions with the City Council, a report recommending that CDC pick up the Lavant Road bus shelter project (including licensing and funding for the shelter) is going before the CDC Planning Committee the following week. The Clerk was not yet aware of this.

A286 Cable Works. Cable works associated with the Singleton oil well are planned along the A286 between the oil well entrance and Midhurst/Pendean. Traffic management (one-way working with traffic lights) will be required in stages. Works need to be completed before the A286 resurfacing, planned to start from 2 June. Official notification to parishes will follow once the two-week notice period is reached.

Drains – The Leys. JHunt is following up with Highways on whether the drains in The Leys were jetted during the flooding. Mapping indicates the relevant manholes are stand-alone sumps, and he will confirm whether they were pumped out.

Action: JHunt to follow up with Highways on drain maintenance and report back.

Parking Scheme Recognition

Jeremy highlighted the Community Highway Scheme for Singleton as a notable achievement:

It was the first scheme of its kind for WSCC

Deborah instrumental in raising funding (initially thought impossible)

Collaborative effort with contractors and highways officers

Commended as excellent piece of work

Elections & Closing Remarks

Jeremy confirmed he will stand again for the May 7th elections but may not be present after that date pending election outcome. Expressed appreciation for working with all parish councils, particularly Singleton, over his tenure since 2013.

Supplementary Discussion – Children's Homes and Local Government Reform

Children's Homes Costs - It was noted that approximately four years ago, one case of a complex child care was costing £4,000 per week (£200,000+ annually). Jeremy confirmed costs have now risen to approximately £16,000 per week for similar cases, highlighting financial pressures on council services.

Local Government Reorganisation - it was reported that information from Adrian Moss that an announcement regarding unitary authority arrangements expected within two to three weeks, or before end of month if not made earlier.

Jeremy clarified distinction between:

Devolution: Creation of East/West Sussex and Brighton strategic authority laid before Parliament, expected to be signed off this week, likely to run into early May.

Local Government Reform (LGR): More significant change – abolition of two-tier system, creation of unitary authorities. This will have biggest impact on parish councils, as they will become more important as a local voice in the single-body structure.

Agenda Item 7 – District Councillor Report – Henry Potter, Goodwood Ward

Full Report was circulated prior to the meeting and is available on the parish council website.

HP was present and confirmed no additional items to add beyond what had been covered. The report covered: the CDC draft financial settlement; local elections; local government reform; the gates and fencing at the Grove Road property; and the Matchbox Stables planning appeal.

Agenda Item 8 - Council Matters

Councillor Responsibilities - The Chairman read through the list of agreed responsibilities. The following allocations were confirmed:

- CDALC Meeting (District Association of Local Councils) – JH
- All Parishes Meeting – JH
- WSALC Meeting (West Sussex Association of Local Councils) – JH
- Bimonthly Police Meeting – JH
- GMCC and GACC (Goodwood Motor Circuit and Airfield Consultation Committees) – MR, with RA as back-up
- Valley Diary (bimonthly parish article) – SAP
- Village Appearance and Maintenance – PM (PM noted he wished to discuss this further with the Chairman)
- Southern Water Liaison – KN
- Charlton Roads, Potholes and Pavements – KN
- Singleton Roads, Potholes and Pavements – PM (PM noted he wished to discuss further)
- West Sussex Rivers Trust Liaison – SAP
- Weald and Downland Liaison – KN
- Planning – RA with support from MR
- Village Hall Representative – EL
- Local Government Reform / Devolution – RA (JHunt confirmed LGR now encompasses devolution)
- Singleton School Liaison – EL
- Emergency Plan and Resilience – JH and SAP
- Speed Indicator Device (SID) – Volunteer position; James Axtell is currently managing rotas on a temporary basis with Richard Pailthorpe. KN agreed to check what is involved and confirm whether she is willing to take on the Council liaison role.
- South Downs National Park Liaison – RA, working with JH
- Centurion Way – RA
- Playground Maintenance and Dog Bag Replenishment – Unallocated; PM noted it was not practical for him given his distance from the village
- Singleton Defibrillator (Village Hall) – MR (monthly checks)
- Charlton Defibrillator (Phone Box) – MR (monthly checks)

- Glebe Field Activities – EL

Website/Reports - VN reminded all that the parish council website (singletoncharlton-pc.gov.uk) contains up-to-date news, policies and reports. Anyone wishing to receive reports by email should add their email to the circulating sheet. VN recommended monthly checking of the website.

National Planning Framework (NPF). MR reported from a recent meeting that a consultation on changes to the NPF is underway. Notable potential changes include: a reduced role for local plans in favour of the national plan; restrictions on who may contribute to planning appeals (limited to material previously submitted); and likely disruption to planning departments as they adapt to the changes.

Email Security. Councillors were reminded to be vigilant about phishing and spam emails, which have been received since the move to gov.uk email addresses. If in doubt, contact the Clerk.

Speaker for AGM - It was suggested that Claire de Bath, the new director at the Weald and Downland Living Museum, be invited to speak at the AGM about how the museum engages with local villages. KN agreed to contact her

Action: *KN to contact Claire de Bath re AGM speaking invitation.*

Emergency/Resilience Plan -JH and SAP reported that they are working on a comprehensive community emergency resilience plan, covering a wide range of scenarios including severe weather, power outages, cybersecurity and household preparedness. Plans will be published on the parish website once agreed, with physical dossiers held at the village hall and with key individuals. The plan will also address the government's guidance on household preparedness. Fundraising for additional community equipment may be required. JH noted the importance of knowing the location of vulnerable residents, subject to GDPR compliance, a list exists but will need updating. The forest fire risk in Singleton and Charlton was also noted as a significant consideration.

PM noted that Ian Guppy, the WSCC Resilience Officer, has been offering to visit parishes and set up local resilience hubs. JHunt confirmed this and agreed it would be worth arranging for a visit, with the Village Hall as a potential hub.

Action: *JH/SAP to continue developing the resilience plan and arrange a visit from the WSCC Resilience Officer*

Climate Event. PM noted that on 16 April at 7pm there is a public screening in Chichester (Assembly Rooms, North Street) of a national emergency climate briefing, with a Q&A panel. Tickets are free. Councillors are encouraged to attend.

Agenda Item 9 – Village Matters

Village Consultation Meeting. It was agreed in principle to hold a community consultation meeting (similar to previous successful events) to establish what parishioners want the parish council to prioritise. A face-to-face format was preferred. The Council will look at dates and how to organise this.

Action: *MR to progress planning for a village consultation meeting.*

Summer Party / Village Event. It was noted that no budget has been allocated for a village party this year, as it was agreed to hold events every other year. However, if there is enthusiasm to organise something, funds could potentially be found. EL expressed interest in a school-linked summer event. The Clerk noted the village fete was taking place on the 8th August. The Council agreed to discuss further and agree a date.

Action: *MR/EL to follow up on village summer event and circulate proposed dates.*

Village Clear-Up. The Council agreed to organise a village clear-up. It was suggested this take place in late May or June. Tasks typically include the playground willow house, cleaning village gates and signs, cutting back overgrown bushes and general tidying. It was agreed to agree a date and publicise via the Village WhatsApp and Facebook to attract volunteers. New volunteers are particularly welcome.

Action: *MS to circulate proposed dates for the village clear-up.*

Signs for The Leys Parking. RA reported that four parking spaces in The Leys have EV charging points, but residents are avoiding them believing they are reserved for charging only. It was agreed to install two signs (estimated cost £60–70) on the existing wooden fencing, clarifying that spaces are available for general parking when not in use for charging.

Action: *RA to arrange installation of signs at The Leys EV parking spaces.*

Flooding – The Leys and Glebe Field. VN reported that the source of the recent flooding was a blocked pipe running from the corner of the Glebe Field through to Town Lane. The responsibility for clearing the pipe is disputed between Goodwood and Hyde, and the matter is currently with their respective legal teams. In the meantime, temporary Heras fencing has been erected around the substation area where a gate had fallen off and a fence broken down, to prevent access to deep flood water.

Action: *VN to continue liaising with Goodwood and Hyde to resolve responsibility for the blocked pipe.*

Oil Field Update - It was agreed to remove the oil field from the standing responsibilities list, as it is not a continuous day-to-day responsibility. The Council will remain informed and whether any specific action as a parish council would produce a useful outcome. A public information meeting at the village hall, with invited speakers, was suggested as an option to help keep the community informed

Parking – The Leys and Bankside. There is growing concern about parking pressures at the far end of The Leys, with vehicles parking on grass verges. A meeting will be arranged with Hyde and West Sussex Highways to clarify responsibilities and explore options. Parking issues on Bankside near Hyde properties were also raised and will be included in discussions.

Action: *VN to arrange a meeting with Hyde and West Sussex Highways regarding parking in The Leys and Bankside.*

Agenda Item 10 – Public Open Forum

Western Sussex Rivers Trust – River Lavant Restoration Project. Representatives from Goodwood Estate and the West Sussex Rivers Trust presented plans for a river restoration project on the River Lavant. A River Condition Assessment conducted by South Downs National Park Authority ecologists found the river to be in ‘ecologically poor or very poor’ condition along its length. The project aims to improve ecological health, slow the flow and reduce flooding by working with landowners on the upper catchment, including the creation of ponds, wetlands and enhanced vegetation, and by moving the river channel further into the field at a key location near the village. A feasibility study has been produced (funded by Southern Water), and a detailed design phase is now underway (also funded by Southern Water, to be completed pre-April). A funding application to the CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) is to be submitted by the end of March, with a decision expected within six months. If successful, works could begin approximately a year from now, subject to surveys, modelling and regulatory approvals. The Council was asked for a letter of support for the funding application.

The Council raised no objections and agreed unanimously to write a letter of support. The same letter will serve both Goodwood and the Trust.

Water Quality. In response to a question about sewage, it was confirmed that Southern Water is not discharging sewage into the river. Tankers are removing waste. The filtration unit visible in the meadow field is part of the existing treatment process. Water quality monitoring (phosphates, nitrates, ammonia) is ongoing and published on the Cartography website.

Action: *VN/MR to draft a letter of support for the CIL funding application on behalf of the Parish Council and send to Kate / Goodwood Estate.*

Agenda Item 11 – Finance Report

Balance in Current Account (15/03/26) - £17,897.86

Balance in Savings Account (15/03/26) - £7,272.78

2025/26 Reserves to date:

Playground Maintenance – £2,392.68, General Maintenance £1,384.37.

Funds from Youth Club - £1,156.87

Total Reserves £4,933.92

Anticipated Useable Funds at End March'25 (Balance less expected expenditure -Reserves) - £9,542.00

£1.500 is included in this figure for pruning of the trees in the Jubilee Garden.

Update - Planning permission has been applied for to reduce the seven trees in the Jubilee Garden, Grove Road, by two metres. Work must be carried out within a set window. Subject to SDNPA approval, works will proceed promptly.

Action: *VN to monitor SDNPA decision on Jubilee Garden tree works and instruct contractors accordingly*

VAT not claimed yet- £1,337.04

The Savings Account has been moved to Hampshire Trust Bank.

Meeting Closed – 21.00

Confirmed that these minutes are a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Signed: MARK RAWLINGS-SMITH

Name & Position: CHAIRMAN

Date: