



Singleton & Charlton Parish Council

Minutes of the Full Parish Council Meeting

held at Singleton Village Hall at 7.00pm on Wednesday 16th September 2026

Present: Cllr Mark Rawlings-Smith (Chairman), Cllr Karen Nash, Cllr Jasmine Hathaway, Cllr Richard Arnold.

In attendance: Cllr Alexander Tarver, co-opted onto the Council during this meeting (Agenda Item 2). Three members of the public also attended.

Agenda Item 1 – Apologies for Absence / Resignation

No apologies for absence were received; all councillors were present.

The Council noted with regret the resignation of Cllr Emily Lerwill, who has relocated to Cornwall after a year serving on the Council. Members thanked Cllr Lerwill for her contribution and wished her well for the future.

Agenda Item 2 – Co-Option of New Councillor

Following a short introduction from the candidate and a vote of the Council, Alexander Tarver was co-opted as a parish councillor. Members welcomed Cllr Tarver to the Council.

Action: Clerk to complete co-option paperwork.

Agenda Item 3 – Declaration of Council Members' Interests

Cllr Rawlings-Smith and Cllr Hathaway declared an interest in relation to the parking item on the agenda (Village Matters, item 9(d)).

Agenda Item 4 – Minutes of the Last Parish Council Meeting

The minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting and Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 15th July 2026 were taken as read. Members confirmed that the actions arising from that meeting had been completed.

Agenda Item 5 – Chairman's Report

The Chairman reported that the following had taken place since the last meeting:

- Oil site visit (19 August): the Chairman, County Cllr Lovejoy and other representatives visited the Star Energy oil site, prompted by concerns previously raised about fire safety. The site was found to be highly regulated. Star Energy has offered to hold a community outreach event, possibly over the winter.
- Fire safety talk (25 August): West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service gave a well-attended talk, with residents present from as far as Hampshire. Station Manager Matthew Gambling, who is also

involved in national wildfire planning, spoke for around two hours on national and local wildfire preparedness. It was noted that Midhurst holds a store of national wildfire-fighting equipment.

- Oil site update: new generators are awaiting connection of a power cable, delayed by land-permission matters involving Goodwood and other landowners; commissioning is expected by the end of the year. Once operational, the generators will burn around 90% of the site's methane, allowing a smaller flare stack for the remainder, which may reduce visible black smoke.
- Valley Water Group (met 7 September, Singleton Village Hall): Southern Water's sewer-lining project remains paused, reportedly in favour of a wetland scheme for which no formal plans have yet been shared. Southern Water's winter contingency plans include a new relief unit at Singleton (double capacity) and an additional pipe and pumps intended to avoid the need for tankers in Charlton, though all remain subject to budget approval.
- Visit to Lavant Wastewater Treatment Works (2 September): the wetland there has operated successfully for four years, though Southern Water proposes a five-year formal trial, across eight comparable sites, before deciding on wider adoption.
- Cllr Nash continues to liaise with Southern Water regarding repairs at Knights Hill, Charlton.
- Village Hall: Cllr Hathaway has taken over as the Council's representative following Cllr Lerwill's departure. The Village Hall Committee is reviewing the heating system and a flat roof which is in poor condition; parish funds and savings may contribute. Discussions continue with the Village Hall Management Committee on registering the hall with the Land Registry and confirming the Parish Council's role as Custodian Trustee, which will not change current arrangements in practice.
- Village maintenance: thanks were recorded to volunteers Melanie, Joe and Viv for tidying up the Willow House in the playground, and a section of the fence in The Glebe field has been replaced at the Council's expense making safe the area by the sub-station and ditch.
- The village fete was a success; the Council's £100 contribution towards the thank you event for the volunteers was acknowledged.
- Volunteering remains a standing concern; Jeremy Rigby volunteered to repair the pond bench, which now requires sanding before repainting.
- Goodwood Aerodrome Consultative Committee: noise during the Festival of Speed was reduced this year following re-routing of helicopter and aircraft flight paths; no 'no access' signage was observed by Cobblers Row during the Revival, to be raised at the next Motor Circuit Consultative Committee meeting.

Action: Chairman to consider timing of a Star Energy community outreach event over the winter; Cllr Nash to continue liaising with Southern Water on the Knights Hill repairs; Cllr Hathaway to continue as Village Hall representative and report back on the heating, roof and land registration; Chairman to raise the missing signage at the next Motor Circuit Consultative Committee meeting.

Agenda Item 6 – County Councillor Report (Cllr Jack Lovejoy, Chichester North Division, WSCC)

- Local government reorganisation: council elections are expected next year; details remain unclear. Mayoral elections remain on track for the following year, as the strategic authority is already in operation.
- Highways are to carry out further resurfacing on Town Lane.

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

- An update was given on local government reorganisation. No confirmation has yet been received on whether district elections will proceed in 2028. A government decision expected in October has been delayed, with no new timeframe given.

Agenda Item 8 – Council Matters

Insurance Renewal

Members noted that the Council's insurance is due for renewal on 1st October, with the premium increasing by £29.75. The Council agreed to renew.

Action: Clerk to renew the insurance policy ahead of the 1st October renewal date.

Clerk's Annual Pay Rise

Members noted the annual NALC pay-scale award of 69p per hour (a 3.3% increase), backdated to April 2026, and agreed to apply the increase to the Clerk's salary.

Action: Clerk to apply the pay increase, backdated to April 2026.

Agenda Item 9 – Village Matters

(a) Charlton Gates

- An update was given on costs, now estimated at approximately £2,840 for gates, signage and installation. £100 has been donated by The Fox Goes Free and £400 by Goodwood Composites. Further contributions are being sought from other sources and Southern Water. A licence application will follow once funding is confirmed.

Action: The Clerk will continue seeking funding contributions and submit the licence application once funding is confirmed.

(b) Centurion Way

- Cllr Arnold reported on a meeting with the South Downs National Park's area manager regarding a potential cycle link from the Centurion Way extension into the village. Proposals discussed in 2024 did not proceed due to objections from the Cricket Club, a neighbouring resident and Cucumber Farm; circumstances have since changed, and the Weald & Downland Museum has expressed interest in a route through its land. The existing footpath gradient (estimated up to around 7%) is considered too steep for a safe cycle route. Members agreed to explore the Weald & Downland option further and to establish the level of parishioner demand before committing further time or cost.

Action: Cllr Arnold to contact the Weald & Downland Museum and report back to the Council.

(c) Southern Water / Valley Water Group

- Southern Water has indicated it may reduce the frequency of meetings over winter; Portsmouth Water has expressed interest in joining future discussions. Members agreed the group should continue on a broader footing. A joint public meeting with West Dean, Charlton, Singleton and Lavant Parish Councils is arranged for Wednesday 11th November at 7.00pm at Lavant Village Hall, at which Southern Water will present its autumn/winter plans. The repair of the flint wall at the bridge in Charlton, outstanding since April, remains unresolved between the Council and Highways over funding responsibility.

Action: Cllr Nash to attend/organise the joint public meeting on 11th November and continue pressing Southern Water and Highways on the flint wall repair.

(d) Parking in The Leys

- No progress was reported. Both Highways and Hyde Housing have indicated the matter falls outside their remit, and a letter to residents regarding unauthorised parking-space markings has not yet been issued. No further course of action was identified.

Action: Clerk to chase the letter.

(e) Singleton Traffic Safety Issues

- Following a site meeting with Highways, GPS data showed 85% of vehicles travelling below 24mph past the village bend, with an average of around 20mph. Members discussed concerns at length, particularly regarding pedestrian safety where farm traffic passes, but Highways has declined further signage, citing concerns about sign clutter. No further action was agreed at this time. Cllr Lovejoy agreed to discuss with Highways.

Action: Cllr Lovejoy to report back. Council to remain open to suggestions.

(f) Oil Field – Fire Safety

- Covered under the Chairman's Report (Item 5). Members agreed it would be prudent to hold a further, better-publicised fire safety event in spring 2027, ahead of the summer season.

Action: Chairman/Clerk to arrange and publicise a fire safety event for spring 2027.

(g) Bench by the Pond

- Following an offer to fund a memorial bench, Cllrs voted in favour of a solid hardwood bench, in keeping with the character of the village and its conservation area, rather than a recycled composite bench. The donor will meet the cost.

Action: The Clerk to inform the donor of the Council's decision.

(h) Notice Boards

- The notice boards in the village and in Charlton require repair or replacement due to rotten posts. New boards are costly, and a small grant will be sought before proceeding.

Action: Clerk to identify and apply for a suitable grant.

(i) Event 2027 – Sussex Day

- Members noted that 2027 marks a significant anniversary for West Sussex, and that a Sussex Day event is planned for Saturday 12th June 2027. Grant funding may be available for a commemorative item, though not for the event itself. Members were asked to consider ideas ahead of a decision needed in early 2027.

Action: All members to bring ideas to a future meeting ahead of a decision needed in early 2027.

Agenda Item 10 – Public Open Forum

- Members of the public raised the choice between electric and diesel pumps for Southern Water's proposed relief scheme; a decision is expected to be shared at the public meeting on 11th November. Diesel generators are considered more likely at this stage due to cost and the limited availability of electricity supply to the properties affected.
- Continued concern was raised about fire safety at the oil site. It was agreed that a further, better-publicised fire safety event would be held in spring 2027. It was also noted that Chichester District Council is holding an event on 3rd October at which display boards on the oil site would be shown.

Action: See action under item 9(f) regarding the spring 2027 fire safety event.

Agenda Item 11 – Finance

- The Clerk reported a current account balance of approximately £28,398 as at the end of August, before setting aside reserves; usable (non-reserved) funds stood at approximately £12,398 following receipt of the precept. Reserves are held separately in line with the Council's rules. It is forecast that, once budgeted expenditure has been paid by the end of March 2027, approximately £1,500 will remain.
- Members agreed that payment to Keith Goacher for the Village Tidy Up would be made once outstanding work had been satisfactorily completed.
- The external audit for 2025/26 was confirmed as approved on 21st July 2026.
- The Clerk noted that the 2027/28 precept request must be prepared for submission in early January. Clerk to prepare the budget for the November parish council meeting so that a decision can be taken on the Precept request for 2027/28.

Action: Clerk to pay the contractor once work is confirmed complete, and to prepare the 2027/28 budget.

Meeting Closed – 20.25

Date of next meeting: 18th November 2026.

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

Signed: _____

Name & Position: _____

Date: _____