



DRAFT Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting and Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 3rd June at 7pm

<p>Present: Cllr Mark Rawlings-Smith (Chairman) (MR); Cllr Karen Nash (KN); Cllr Jasmine Hathaway (JH); Cllr Sarah Arnold Pain (SAP); Cllr Richard Arnold (RA); Cllr Emily Lerwill (EL)</p> <p>Also in attendance: Cllr Jack Lovejoy, County Councillor (JL); Henry Potter, District Councillor (HP); Vivien Nuttall Parish Clerk (VN)</p> <p>Clare De Bathe – Weald and Downland Museum and Kate Whitton – Western Sussex Rivers Trust attended the meeting.</p> <p>30 number of members of the public also attended.</p>	
<p>Agenda Item 1 – Apologies for Absence/Resignation – There were no apologies for absence. Philip Maber announced his resignation from the parish council due to capacity issues. He emphasised the critical importance of parish councils as "the very last bastion of local democracy" amid local government reorganisation. He urged residents to consider becoming parish councillors to ensure local concerns can be effectively represented to the new unitary authority.</p>	
<p>Agenda Item 2 – Election of Chairman Mark Rawlings-Smith was unanimously re-elected as Chairman. He formally accepted the office by signing the Declaration of Acceptance .</p>	
<p>Agenda Item 3 – Introductions from individual Councillors outlining their responsibilities</p> <p>Each councillor was asked to introduce themselves (maximum 1-2 minutes each) and explain their areas of responsibility.</p> <p>Jasmine Hathaway Background: Resident for two years; member of parish council for one year Responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaison with local government and community meetings (CDALC, WSALC, All Parishes, Bimonthly police meetings, local Government Reform briefings) • Emergency and resilience planning (working with Sarah) • South Downs National Park liaison (working with Rich) • Playground, Bins and Dog waste bin bags management • Defibrillator management <p>Karen Nash Background: Resident for nine years; elected to council two AGMs ago Responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southern Water liaison • Liaison with Weald and Downland Museum • Roads, Pavements and Pothole monitoring in Charlton • Charlton gates project (working with Viv) • Events coordination (with Emily) • Speed indicator device (SID) contact for Singleton and Charlton <p>Note: Requested additional Charlton representative on council to avoid feeling isolated as sole Charlton voice.</p>	

Sarah Pain

Background: Resident for approximately 18 months; member of parish council since beginning of year

Responsibilities:

- Parish council business plan development
- West Sussex Rivers Trust liaison
- Emergency and resilience planning support (with Jasmine)
- Valley diary updates to keep community informed

HP suggested labelling the CIL application document business plan as "infrastructure" to qualify for National Park Authority infrastructure levy funding.

Richard Arnold

Background: Resident for approximately 18 months; member of parish council since beginning of year

Responsibilities:

- Centurion Way
- Planning
- South Downs National Park liaison (with other colleagues)
- Goodwood Meetings with Mark

Emily Lerwill

Background: Resident for approximately six years (Bankside area); member of parish council since beginning of year.

Responsibilities:

- Singleton School liaison
- Village hall liaison
- Single Fest event organisation (event scheduled for following Saturday, 13 June)

Note: Parish council has donated funds to Single Fest.

Agenda Item 4 – Declaration of Interests/ Dispensation Requests

The Chairman asked all councillors to declare any personal interests in agenda items.

Declarations received:

- Councillors declaring interest: Jasmine, Mark, Emily (all have properties on Bankside/Lays area affected by parking issues).

Agenda Item 5 – Minutes of the last Parish Council Meeting - The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 18th March were approved and signed as a correct record.

Agenda Item 6 – Finance

Balance at Year End 31/03/26 - £16,369.91 of which £4,933.92 held in the reserves.

Reserves – Playground Maintenance – £2,392.68, General Maintenance £1,384.37, Funds from Youth Club - £1,156.87

Balance in Current Account (28/05/26) - £26,546.58

Balance in Savings Account (28/05/26) - £7284.84

2026/27 Reserves to date:

Playground Maintenance – £4,392.68, General Maintenance £404.57,

Funds from Youth Club - £1,156.87

Funds Received since 31/03/26 – Precept £16,064.50, VAT Reclaim £1,401.89, Refund from Village Hall for cancelled Booking £30.00.

Payments for Approval – Clerk Holiday Pay for Holiday Allowance Not Taken - £152.21, Donation to Friends of Singleton School Association - £250.00.

Agenda Item 7 – Annual Audit – Approve Governance Statement (Section 1)

The Annual Governance Statement was reviewed and approved by all councillors. MR signed the document as required by the annual audit process.

Agenda Item 8 – Annual Audit – Approve Accounting Statement (Section 2)

The Annual Accounting Statement were reviewed and approved by all councillors. MR signed the document as required by the annual audit process.

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Agenda Item 1 – Chairmans Annual Report

The Chairman noted that his report covered from March when he took over from Deborah Harwood rather than a full annual report.

Recognition of Predecessors and Resignations

Deborah Harwood: The Chairman formally recognised Deborah's significant contribution as Chairman for 10 years and expressed regret that she could not be present to receive proper thanks. She stood down in March for personal reasons.

Other councillor resignations during the year:

- Graham Zacharias (present at meeting)
- Jeremy Rigby
- Tony Marshall (moved out of the villages)
- Stuart Staples
- Alan Higginson

The Chairman thanked all who had served for various periods and acknowledged the workload and personal reasons contributing to resignations.

Welcome to New County Councillor Jack Lovejoy was welcomed as the new West Sussex County Councillor for Chichester North. The Chairman thanked him for attending and looked forward to working with him.

Themes and Issues

Theme 1: Water and Tankers

Issue: Significant disruption over winter with Southern Water tankers in the village.

Duration: Approximately six weeks (shorter than some previous years but still very disruptive)

Impact:

- Sleepless nights and disruption to residents
- Bathroom access issues
- Property access challenges
- Overall trauma and challenges

Recognition: The Chairman specifically thanked Karen for acting as "the call centre" for several months, being on the front line dealing with daily and nightly challenges from residents and relaying them to Southern Water teams.

Current status:

- Very high on the agenda with Southern Water
- Meetings ongoing with Southern Water
- Plans being developed for upgrading the Singleton relief
- Confirmation of plans to install pumps this year
- Various other upgrade work underway

Future: A public meeting will be held at some point to share progress and plans with the community.

Theme 2: Resilience

Lead: Jasmine, with Sarah assisting

Status:

- Resilience plans being put together
- Village hall consultation showed strong community interest in resilience for the parish

- Collaboration needed to understand how to make the community resilient to future challenges (weather, water, utilities, etc.)

Theme 3: Infrastructure Projects

Charlton Gateway:

- Working hard on implementation
- Surprisingly complex process with multiple compliance requirements, quotes, sign-offs, and tick boxes
- Viv and Karen working on this.

Centurion Way:

- Section has been successfully opened
- Looks fantastic
- Significant involvement from parish council.

Flood Management:

- Ongoing work on flooding around the back of the Lays and the corner of Glebe Field
- Consulting with Hyde, Goodwood, and other agencies
- Safety concerns remain around access
- Work continuing since winter.

River Lavant:

Plans in progress with Rivers Trust and Goodwood to reroute the river

Parish council provided letter of support for the process

CIL bid submitted.

Theme 4: Governance

Recognition: Thanks to Viv for all internal audit work at end of year.

Context: The end-of-year audit work is substantial and often underestimated. Viv completed this work despite significant personal challenges.

Agenda Item 2 - County Councillor Report – Mr Jack Lovejoy, Chichester North Division – WSCC

New Administration

Positive development: West Sussex County Council now has a collaborative administration, even voted for by some members not expected to vote for it. The group leader has been preaching the importance of collaboration for the people of West Sussex.

Street Improvements - North and East Street

Issue: One of the main issues raised on doorsteps during the campaign.

Status:

North and East Street consultation is now complete

- Working with contractors
- Timeline: Work planned to begin summer 2027

What will be done:

- Remove brickwork that is causing people to trip
- Level flagstones to make them easier for people with limited mobility to navigate the city centre
- Councillor noted he has personally tripped over these hazards.

Mobile Signal Improvements

Issue: Lack of mobile signal in city centre

Status: Plan to increase mobile signal coverage in the centre.

Street Furnishings and Tree Planting

Funding: City Council has released £400,000 of "still money" (likely "stilled" or reserves) for:

- Improved street furnishings
- Planting of mature trees to provide shade to city centre
- Context: Currently little shade in city centre; one tree died.

Local Government Reorganisation

Background: 11th-hour decision by government to put a new plan before everyone.

Current proposal:

- Chichester to be grouped with Horsham, Crawley, and Mid Sussex
- Plan was considered by County Council but rejected as financially unviable
- Reason for rejection: Arun, Worthing, and Adur authority was considered financially unviable; they didn't want to create a new unitary authority with that problem.

The challenge:

- County councillors now in a difficult bind
- Must simultaneously represent needs of the county and needs of constituents
- Government plan creates imbalance:
 - Northern unitary authority would have surplus
 - Southern unitary authority would be nearly bankrupt.

Councillor's position:

- Has been going back and forth on the issue
- Honestly has not yet made up his mind
- Acknowledged the complexity: on one hand, people in the county would be in a worse position; on the other hand, it would be better financially for Chichester constituents
- Open to discussion: Anyone with thoughts on the issue is welcome to discuss; he has a more than open mind because he doesn't know at the moment and won't pretend to have all the answers.

Agenda Item 3 – District Councillor Report – Mr Henry Potter, Goodwood Ward

Housing Crisis and Five-Year Land Supply

Current situation:

Received agenda for next planning committee meeting (one week away)

Only two applications on agenda:

- Demolition of bungalow and creation of 18 new dwellings

Concern: This is the fourth planning meeting attended with no new applications for multiple housing.

- Market status: Housing market in very poor state of affairs
- Houses not selling
- Houses not being built
- This threatens the five-year housing land supply.

Affordable Housing Omission

Issue: The 18-dwelling proposal specifically omits affordable housing.

Reason: Developers and planners are so desperate to create housing that will be guaranteed to be built to furnish the five-year housing land supply (which is lacking) that they are allowing developments without affordable housing.

Contradiction: This goes against government national planning policy, which normally requires affordable housing in new developments.

Planning committee process: The reason for deferment to committee is because the officer's recommendation goes against national planning policy.

Local Government Reorganisation - Judicial Review

Essex County Council action: Essex County Council has applied for a judicial review of local government reorganisation in Essex.

Their position: They do not want reorganisation; they consider it:

- Undemocratic
- Flawed in every respect

Impact: This judicial review will slow the process down significantly.

Councillor's hope: He expressed hope that this might result in "Keir Starmer's 19th U-turn" on the reorganisation policy.

Agenda Item 4 – Council Matters

IT Policy - The council adopted a GDPR-compliant IT policy covering email, WhatsApp, and social media use.

Recruitment/Retirement of Clerk

Retirement

The Clerk announced her retirement in July 2027 due to West Sussex County Council pension policy. She will prepare handover materials to ensure smooth transition.

MR emphasised that finding a new clerk is the parish council's top priority, as the council cannot function without one. HP advised allowing at least three months for transition to avoid complications with bank signatories and transfers.

Recruitment

"Singleton and Charlton are special places to live and our communities thrive because local people get involved."

Current situation:

- Three spaces available on the parish council
- Encouraging residents to consider becoming a parish councillor.

Why become a councillor:

- Help shape decisions on local issues
- Ensure the community's voice is heard
- Welcome people from all backgrounds and stages of life
- No experience required

Speak to a councillor to find out more.

Business Plan/Ideas for Village Projects –

SP outlined plans to develop a three-year business plan serving as an action plan for the community.

The plan will:

- Provide visibility of council priorities
- Enable prioritisation and accountability
- Require community input on village projects
- Residents invited to contribute ideas via:
- Forms available at the meeting
- Single Fest event (Saturday, 13 June)
- Direct conversation with councillors

Feedback will be collated and presented at a future meeting.

Agenda Item 5 – Village Matters

Charlton Gates - VN reported progress on Charlton village gateways:

- Planning permission to be obtained from Highways
- Land ownership confirmed

Locations:

- One gate at East Dean entrance (replacing Charlton Village sign)
- Two gates at Knights Hill near 20 mph speed indicator

Design: Matching Singleton gates; will read "Charlton - Please drive carefully through our village"

Timeline: Installation planned for later in 2026.

Southern Water

KN Reported on the disruption:

Duration: Six weeks during winter (shorter than previous years but still disruptive)

Damage: Road and verge damage assessed; promises made for repairs including:

- Verge restoration
- Re-tarmacking of Knights Hill junction
- Structural engineer assessment of flint wall damage

Ongoing coordination:

- Bi-monthly meetings planned with Southern Water and neighbouring parishes (East Dean, West Dean) to develop contingency plans.
- Wetland proposal: Wetland areas could eliminate tanker need; Southern Water supportive but lacks permission.
- Meeting scheduled with Andrew Griffith to explore possibilities.

Kate (Western Sussex Rivers Trust) explained wetland benefits:

- Acts as "sponge" to absorb excess water
- Slows water flow
- Helps prevent sewage overflow
- Feasibility study completed; next stage is community engagement
- Timeline: Work on Goodwood meadow potentially could begin in 2027
- Complexity: Multiple stakeholders involved (Southern Water, Portsmouth Water, Power Company re electricity cables); activity permits required (6-month wait); extensive survey work needed
- The plan is to re-route the river away from the road.

The Leys Parking

There is a high demand for parking with insufficient spaces.

- Initial meeting arranged with Hyde and West Sussex Highways in July

Purpose: Sound out who is responsible for what and explore what can be done.

Defibrillator Training –

The parish has defibrillators in Singleton by the Village Hall and Charlton in the telephone box.

A show of hands was requested to gauge interest in a training session presented by the Communities Heartbeat Trust, there was sufficient interest to arrange a session.

Agenda Item 6 – Public Open Forum

River Maintenance and EA Flood Maps

An MOP raised concerns about river maintenance following previous work. Suggested regular surveying to prevent deterioration. Kate explained the complexity of balancing vegetation (for water absorption) with flood risk management. A Winterbourne guidance document from Environment Agency will be shared.

Speed and Traffic Safety

An MOP suggested additional SID (Speed Indicator Device) posts on Town Lane following the 30 mph extension. Noted a car recently ended up in the Lavant. Kate Whitton offered to check for oil leakage. Concern was raised by residents about hazardous conditions for pedestrians and cyclists. VN reported that Highway would need to be consulted as to whether an additional post for the SID could be erected.

Wildflower Meadow

The same MOP criticised Goodwood's "wildflower meadow" at Charlton Mill Way, which contains only ragwort and dock. Community prefers regular grass cutting for safety and amenity use. A resident is now regularly cutting the area. KN indicated possible progress on this issue but could not discuss details. She also raised the issue of the verges outside the school being left long and causing visibility and access issues for cars.

Speed and Pedestrian Safety

An MOP raised serious safety concerns on the sharp bend outside Pricklows, Fiennes Cottage and Little Yarn.

- No pavement on corner section
- Cars travel at excessive speed (7-9am, 4-7pm)
- Only width for one car safely
- Pedestrians forced to leap into walls or behind posts
- Screeching brakes reported

- Children and adults leaping to safety

MR noted 20 mph speed limit in effect but acknowledged limited legal options for pavement widening due to standard road width regulations. Suggested priority signage might help. It was agreed that this issue would be raised with Highways at a planned meeting in July.

Foxhall Lane – An MOP raise the issue that Sat Nav was directing traffic through the lane to access The Fox Goes Free. He asked that the parish council investigate putting a sign before the lane stating turn right at the T junction. Could this be taken on as a community project.

Environment Agency Flood Map Update

Environment Agency Flood Maps

An MOP raised critical issue: Environment Agency flood maps last updated in early 1990s. Current maps mark most of Singleton as major flood risk despite significant remedial work and improved river management since then.

Impact:

- 8 of 10 insurance companies refused to quote due to outdated maps
- Affects house insurance costs significantly
- Affects property sales
- Maps do not reflect current reality

Request: Parish council to pursue collaboration with Environment Agency to update flood risk maps. Kate Whitton confirmed flood modelling work planned as part of wetland project, funded by Southern Water. Offered to explore sharing information but noted EA may lack resources for wider mapping update. Another MOP added personal experience: Cannot get house insurance; government flood re-insurance scheme has changed; some insurance companies are no longer re-insuring properties.

Noise Concerns

An MOP raised the issue of the noise from helicopters during Goodwood events. HP commented that;

1. Goodwood helicopters circle increasingly further north toward Singleton and Charlton during Festival of Speed (July) and other events. Helicopters should not fly north of grandstand.

Request for parish council action before Goodwood consultation meetings.

MR confirmed he attends Goodwood consultation meetings and will raise helicopter issue again. HP also commented on Motorbike noise;

2. Motorbikes: Increase attributed to Hampshire's average speed checks on A272, which diverted traffic to local roads. Limited solutions available.

Emergency Access and Event Congestion

An MOP raised concern about event congestion blocking emergency services. Ambulance response compromised when traffic is stationary on Bankside. Requested Goodwood station stewards to prevent shortcutting traffic through residential areas. Pook Lane already closed to non-residents but enforcement needed at Knights Hill and Singleton pond entrances. MR to raise with Goodwood.

Agenda Item 7 – Speaker, Clare De Bathe – The Weald and Downland Museum

Claire, Interim Museum Manager, presented on museum developments

Background and Challenges:

- Joined August 2024 as interim manager following leadership instability
- Initial brief: "hold the fort" for six months (within two weeks, staff left and money was spent)
- Challenges: Leadership changes, visitor number decline post-COVID, structural financial losses (2024-2025), funding loss, climate change impacts (flooding, roof leaks)

Community Engagement Initiatives:

- Doorstep Days Campaign:
- Blue Monday (January): £1 entry; 800 residents visited; 30% were first-time visitors
- Ongoing discounted access (£5 adults, £2.50 children) for nearby postcodes

Aim: Overcome price barrier to community access.

Infrastructure Investment:

- £250,000 DCMS funding: Paths, roads, drains, drainage, signage, interpretation, toilet refurbishment, accessibility improvements
- £10,000 Chichester District Council: Woodland play area (8-12 year olds) to encourage site exploration
- Lottery funding: Hamburg Barn conversion to children's activities; new food and beverage offer
- Stay and Play: Free program starting September for younger families
- Home education days: New programme

Audio trail pilot: Two-month pilot (August-September) with community feedback invited.

Membership and Access:

- Membership: £40 annually (under £1 per weekly visit)
- Free parking outside café for café-only visitors

Focus on grandparent market and after-school drop-offs

Food and Beverage:

- Current café generates only £40 in 2.5 hours
- Rebrand planned with new menu ideas
- Seeking community input on offerings

New food and beverage manager to be appointed.

Heritage Skills and Training:

Current programs:

- Sussex Heritage Trust Taster Days (ages 16-24)
- Paid day courses (mostly adults)
- MSc programs in Timber Framing and Building Conservation (accredited by York University; largest cohort in country)
- Gap identified: No intermediate programs between taster days and university courses

Future direction: Youth training programs (16-24 year-olds) addressing worklessness and NEET (not in education, training, employment)

Repair Shop Collaboration

- Challenge: Initial contract terms problematic; filming disrupted visitor experience
- Recent negotiation: New five-year series-by-series contract with Ricochet (Warner Brothers subsidiary)
- Improvements: Saturday/Sunday sneak peeks now available; repair shop exhibition being developed
- Funding: Additional funding secured for exhibition and visitor experience enhancement

Historical model:

Museum founded on YTS-style schemes 55 years ago.

Fundraising Success:

- £680,000 raised in six months from various sources including lottery funding
- Reinvestment in site infrastructure and programming

Marketing and Community Outreach

Challenges: Digital marketing expanded but print marketing stopped (sustainability reasons). older demographics and non-computer-literate residents underserved.

Suggestions from attendees:

- Valley Diary: Praised as effective local channel; museum articles improving
- WhatsApp: Potentially useful for communication
- School newsletters: Reach parents with young children; home education audience
- Facebook: Singleton and Charlton community pages effective
- Printed materials: Essential for older residents (27% of Chichester district are pensioners); advertise in parish magazines; observer newspaper
- Parish volunteers: Leverage volunteers from wide area to spread word

Museum response: Lottery funding includes marketing strategy development, audience engagement and pricing analysis underway.

Safeguarding Policy

Issue raised: 16-17 year-olds cannot visit museum unaccompanied due to safeguarding policy. Noted as unusual; few other European museums impose similar restrictions.

Response: Safeguarding policy set by trustees for ages 16-18.

Future Plans:

- Linkway project: South Downs National Park CIL funding bid (£100,000) for cycling/walking link from Centurion Way through museum; decision October 2026
- Community asset approach: Museum positioning itself as community facility (meetings, events, activities)

Sustainability focus: Heritage skills training and education as a long-term sustainable model.

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: