

## **Reports for Singleton and Chalton Parish Council Meeting – Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2025**

### **Karen Nash Southern Water**

The water butts have been received, decision needs to be taken as to where they are going and who is installing them. Work is continuing in Singleton.

### **Mark Rawlings-Smith**

**Planning** - nothing to report.

**Goodwood** - Aerodrome Consultative Committee 31st July - attended. Much of the agenda is not relevant to this Parish and revolves largely around planning applications directly affecting or affected by Aerodrome operations. Goodwood Festival of Speed was discussed, having just occurred. Around 700 helicopter flights operated through the event. I raised the fact that many of the flights went directly over Singleton. Goodwood promised to review this.

**Village Hall** - The VH continues to struggle to find enough regular bookings to ensure a financially confident position. Nevertheless, through exceptional generosity and effort from those involved, we have had a successful cream tea season and have very recently been immediately oversubscribed with another willow weaving event. The VH continues to review ongoing costs and banking arrangements to ensure efficiencies where possible. Maintenance has, again through generosity, been done by Jon to repair the side door which was rotting.

### **Jasmine Hathaway**

#### **Devolution Update**

- All Parishes Zoom Meeting held on Sussex Devolution 5/8/2025.

The purpose of this meeting was to provide an update on Sussex devolution discussions and hear views from parishes.

#### 1) Context,

Overview of current national policy encouraging county-level devolution. Sussex exploring a devolution framework to gain greater local control over services and funding.

#### 2) Key Proposals Discussed,

Transfer of powers relating to housing, planning, transport, skills and environment. Funding arrangements were discussed, but concerns were raised about whether or not resources will match new responsibilities. Governance options included establishing a combined authority, mayoral leadership mentioned but not confirmed.

#### 3) Parish Concerns and Opportunities,

Importance of parish representation in decision-making was emphasised. Rural and smaller parishes raised worries about being overshadowed by larger councils. Recognition that devolution could enable more responsive and localised services if properly structured.

#### 4) Questions and Issues Raised,

Clarity sought on whether new funding would be ring-fenced and how accountability and transparency would be ensured under new structures. Safeguards for rural and coastal areas were also requested.

#### 5) Next Steps,

Ongoing consultation with parish councils. The draft proposal to be refined during the autumn. Parishes are encouraged to submit feedback for inclusion in the county-level submission to government.

- Public Engagement survey 17th July 2025 to 13th August 2025

The Purpose of this survey was to invited residents, businesses and community groups across West Sussex to share views on how councils are structured and how services are delivered.

Specifically exploring the creation of a new unitary council model to replace the two-tier system

with a single authority .

There were approximately 4,500 responses and detailed results have not yet been published. Councils have stated that responses are being analysed to inform the business case, which is due to be submitted by 26 September 2025. Keep an eye on council communications and the 'Shaping West Sussex' hub for more information, results of survey and what comes next.

Devolution/MCCA, the formal pathway is advancing legislation later this year and the Government's decision on the proposal is expected in spring 2026, leading to the first mayoral election in May 2026.

If approved, shadow authority elections will occur in 2027, with full implementation 'vesting day' in April 2028.

- With regards to Singleton and Charlton Parish Assets, the Chichester District Council Asset Register does not have any entries listed for our parish.

### **Alan Higginson**

#### **SDNP Liaison**

Nothing to report – attending my first meeting 1<sup>st</sup> October

**Playground maintenance and Dog Poo bags** – Checks completed July and August and bags filled up last week in August. Nothing to report.

#### **Singleton Defibrillator**

August checks completed and fault on the village hall one has now been rectified. All in good working order.

#### **Glebe Field Activities**

I am struggling to find any coaches for this due to it being peak football season. I have investigated possibility of doing yoga and breathe easy class for the village hall during winter months and maybe looking at the field again for the summer months.

So far costings would be:

Leaflets and advertising £85-£100 – can get leaflets designed and printed.

Coach cost £25-30 per hour

Equipment - another goal post and footballs - £100

Yoga instructor £25 for an hour for village hall activity.

There is also a company called Vitae Vi who specialise in Wim Hof Method and reflexology. With this they also provide breath work classes designed to help people relax (similar to yoga type classes). This could be an idea to put on once a month in the summer and they would charge a cost £75 per session. This would be free to residents.

### **Philip Maber**

#### **Singleton Roads, Potholes and Pavements**

Bankside, Leys entrance and Trundle Potholes were reported to WSCC and quickly repaired.

The Bankside Pothole will be re-reported as a significant ridge/ wet weather puddle remains.

The narrow, A286 roadside, Drovers (northbound) bus with steep slope behind has been reported.

The narrow Singleton A286 Pavement (from Bus Stop northwards) cannot be easily resolved but certainly not given up ... with thanks to Tony Marshall for copying me his previous correspondence with WSCC.

Other ongoing issues include the two unmarked pedestrian and cycle A286 crossings, and whether WSCC intend to leave the white road markings as they are now - to mostly wear down

and disappear - evidence that removal of white lines (as in Rogate etc) slows traffic and improves road safety.

### **Centurion Way**

The long-awaited to Hat Hill section, including Singleton Station, opened in August. YAH !! The next section to link into the South Downs Way (top of Cocking Hill) should be opening next year (2026); and then on to Midhurst, and beyond.

Effectively linking Singleton Village for cycling and wheelchairs etc., is of high priority, but may yet take a little longer to achieve. I recently had an informal meeting with our very supportive, Local SDNPA staff at their Office at the W&D Museum, providing more insight to the potential routes and challenges. Further meetings are planned.

Another important aspect is to provide alternative modes of transport for those visiting the Weald & Downland Museum and West Dean Gardens, remembering that Simon Wardell (then Director of the Museum) gave a presentation to our January 2020 Parish C. Meeting outlining plans for facilitating active travel. That followed the terrible car parking issues of the very wet 2019 Museum Christmas Market. Unfortunately, the Goodwood Shuttle Bus has [temporarily] usurped active travel as a priority for the Museum. The many benefits of active travel will be made.

### **Community Oil Field Working Party**

Good News, and I am privileged to be a part of our, newly established Parish Council and Community Working Group Chaired by Jasmine.

Our community is increasingly concerned about the polluting black smoke from the, now over 30 years of flaring the mixture of waste gases produced on site. Generally still unseen are the vented and fugitively emitted gases released to our atmosphere - plumes of methane become clearly visible with a Flir (infra-red recording) Camera - as clearly demonstrated on visits by the European Clean Air Task Force, over many years. Less obvious too, is the ever growing threat of forever contamination of our chalk aquifer from the high pressure injection (dumping) of toxic waste liquid into the Ashdown Sandstone Aquifer.

A lot is going on with a growing network of volunteers investigating and sharing information. It's a huge challenge making a meaningful case to the Environment Agency, SDNPA and other regulatory authorities.

### **Valley Youth Club (East Dean, Singleton, West Dean)**

Dormant funds are in the process of being transferred to our Parish Council Account to be ring-fenced for Youth activities.

### **Parish Councillor Training 29th July 2025**

Inspiringly led by Trevor Leggo (Chief Exec Sx. Parish Councils) , who touched on Statutory Powers, and Corporate Mandatory and Discretionary roles.

Further information on Planning Law at the Amex Centre, Brighton on 4th November, 2025.

### **Bi-Monthly Parishioners' Meeting 11th September 2025**

Dave Lyons started the meeting with a whistle-stop tour of the itemised Police crime data and rolling trends: Most categories have shown a reduction (improvement) and are below the West Sussex Average. Exceptions being Robbery and Drug Offences, the rise in numbers is due to increased Police Numbers facilitating more detection of offences.

Other topics included e-motor bikes and e-scooters where Police Policy has been modified to seizure (and non-return) of illegal vehicles when used on road and public space.

Many Parish Councils raised issues of particular concern in their areas - Preparations for Remembrance Sunday being one.

I raised the issue of a few cars flagrantly ignoring the speed restrictions through Singleton - which will be followed up by a Police Officer contacting me. (My living away from the road means a reliance on information).

### **Vivien Nuttall**

#### **Finance Report**

Balance in Current Account (12/09/25) - £26,353.92

Balance in Savings Account (12/09/25) - £7,251.62

2025/26 Reserves to date:

Playground Maintenance – £2,392.68, General Maintenance £1576.01.

Funds Received since 14/07/25 – Precept £15,299.50

Significant Payments since 14/07/25 – Laptop for the clerk - £579.00

VAT not claimed - £1,214.97

### **Henry Potter**

Consultation between the West Sussex Local Authorities continue to finalise a business plan for the Devolution of Power Bill and the introduction of Unitary Authorities which will be considered and agreed by the Full Council on 23/09 before a Plan and covering letter will be sent to the Home Secretary's Office on the 26th. It will then be a wait until March next year for a decision on the proposals in the Plan. The next step after that will be the election of a Mayor for the whole of Sussex and the designation of the Unitary Authorities. There is unlikely to be a Local Election in 2027 so I may be in office for a further year. If the timetable slips none of this may happen anyway.

You will all be aware that the new Chichester District Local Plan was approved by the Planning Inspectorate with some main modifications which were agreed by the Council, and adopted by the Council at its meeting on the 19th August. This plan supersedes the previous Plan and covers the period 2021-2039. The preparation of the review of the Plan spread over a considerable period of time and the Planning Officers were congratulated for the diligent attention to so many constraints the District faces.

Because of these constraints, The Inspector, in his report, has allowed initially for a delivery figure of 575 Homes per annum, for about 5 years, increasing as progress is made gradually to achieve the delivery of 11,484 new homes during the Plan period. Unless dramatic improvements to the A27 are made I fear that any increase may not be achievable. Only time will tell!

On the subject of delivery, it is becoming apparent that there is a distinct lack of enthusiasm among Registered Housing Providers/associations to come forward and adopt the 30% affordable homes within certain developments. Last Tuesday 02/09, the Cabinet took the decision to recommend to Full Council that £950,000 be awarded to Worthing Homes in order to provide 19 affordable and or shared ownership homes on a permitted site in North Mundham when no RHP was prepared to adopt the 6 low cost/affordable homes. In this proposal there are to be no Market Value houses provided. £533,000 will come from a 'Commuted Sums' fund and the balance of £417,000 from General Reserve Funds. I questioned if this was a wise idea and might it set a precedent for future small to medium sized developments. This grant will be dependent on a £1 million grant from Homes England towards the total cost, if this is not forthcoming then the proposal cannot go ahead.

Another issue the Cabinet agreed to was the cessation of the trial roadside collection of textiles, small electrical items and coffee pods. This trial began in July 2021 and the running costs were met by a 'one off' grant from WSCC Recycling Improvement scheme and an annual contribution by Podback funding. Podback have given notice that their funding will cease from January 2026 and due to the poor collection volumes and the annual cost of the service at £58,300 it will cease totally on 30/11/2022

And finally, at long last, something is about to happen to the rather tardy site in West Street that was once Morants, then Army and Navy until the House of Fraser brought about the final demise. I attended a public exhibition of proposals for the site in The Vicars Room at the Cathedral on Wednesday 10th last week. Proposals are for four independent retail outlets on the ground floor and 88 'high end' apartments on the floors above and new development to the rear, some unnecessary, unsightly buildings will be demolished to enable this. There will be a small area of community open space in the centre courtyard. So, a bit of good news in the plans to regenerate West Street and not before time.

The opening of the latest extension of the Centurion Way path from West Dean to Cucumber Farm has been very well appreciated but there is disappointment that access down to Singleton is very restricted for many of the users but I dare say this will be addressed before too much longer. Next steps are for further progress through Littlewood Farm where there is a bridge under the railway line which requires rebuilding then Southdowns Way, here we come!