

Reports for Parish Council Meeting – Wednesday 15th July 2026

Mark Rawlings-Smith

Meeting with Andrew Griffith MP

Met with us on 12 June; myself together with Jasmine Hathaway, Karen Nash, and Chris Tias (Chair of East Dean Parish Council). We covered two main topics — the Southern Water wetland proposal and the Singleton oil field.

Southern Water Wetland

We had a robust discussion about Southern Water's proposal to create a wetland at the site of the current Singleton relief facility. The council supports pursuing a wetland as a means of managing high water levels, stormwater, and the inundation of the sewage pipes down the valley. The obstacle is that Southern Water say the Environment Agency (EA) will not permit it, on the basis that the wetland cannot meet the EA's criteria. Chris Tias made the key point that this is not really about the regulation itself, but about the *interpretation* of it — the metrics Southern Water are required to design to are, to all intents and purposes, impossible to meet, so no wetland can ever be approved. We asked Andrew to support us in approaching the EA to revisit that interpretation, which is currently blocking any wetland discussion. In the meantime, Singleton & Charlton Parish Council has written to Southern Water along these lines. I'm happy to share a copy of the letter with anyone directly interested.

Oil field — Grid Connection

The oil field has installed generators that will use methane from the field to generate electricity and has laid a new cable down the hill to the main road. They are now waiting to connect that cable to the National Grid. The cause of the delay is not entirely clear. There are well-documented national problems connecting projects to the grid and we believe (not verified) there is also a capacity issue at the nearest substation which cannot take the additional load. Running the generators is expected to reduce flaring, and with it the unsightly black smoke that causes distress to many residents. Andrew agreed to request a meeting with Star Energy, the owners of the field, to pursue this.

Aquifer Re-Categorisation

Jasmine raised, as a longer-term matter, our wish to see the aquifer re-categorised from Category 3 to Category 1. Our concern is that permitted re-injection of waste materials into the wells, deep into the earth, with the risk of contaminating the aquifer.

Valley Water group & Southern Water

We have formed an informal group, Valley Water, bringing together four parish councils — East Dean, Singleton & Charlton, Lavant, and West Dean — alongside representatives from Southern Water, Goodwood, and the Western Sussex Rivers Trust and the support of Jack Lovejoy. It is intended as a collaborative forum to align common interests around supply, waste, river and aquifer along the valley. We also plan to invite Portsmouth Water to the group.

Our first meeting was given over to Southern Water setting out, in considerable detail, the case for wetlands to cope with inundation — the same proposal for the Singleton relief site described above. It was a good and informative evening.

Our first bi-monthly update meeting is on 13th July, where we will hold a roundtable of updates from each of the parishes, Goodwood, and the Western Sussex Rivers Trust, together with a progress report from Southern Water on their sealing works and their other plans for the coming winter. Southern Water have also agreed to attend the Singleton Summer Fete on 8 August.

Drainage ditch & Hyde Housing

We have been pursuing Hyde Housing for a number of months to meet their responsibility to clear the drainage ditch behind The Leys. This ditch became blocked last winter and caused flooding in Church Way. Following a site inspection today (7 July), I am pleased to report that the ditch has been cleared, and a cage has been fitted across the front of the culvert to prevent large debris — logs and the like — entering the pipe to the River Lavant and causing further blockages. A good result.

Karen Nash

Southern Water Activity

Mark and I met with SW AGAIN on site on Knights Hill on the 23rd of June after they had made a very poor job in trying to fix the verge with some topsoil and grass seed. Hannah and Callum both agreed that this was a waste of time and not acceptable and agreed with us that the road from the junction to just beyond the meadow field gate needed re-tarmacking. On Friday 3rd July I saw the road being marked up; however, they had not marked up the whole length so I have reported to this to Hannah, who will contact them. Hannah confirmed that the tarmac quotes were raised the following day and they are just awaiting a confirmation date for the repair.

Regarding the survey to the damaged bridge, this job is being chased by Callum and Floyd, with no further update at this time.

On the 12th of June, Mark, Jasmine, myself along with Chris Tyas from East Dean met with MP Andrew Griffith to discuss SW wetlands as well as the oil field. It was agreed with the support from Andrew that Mark would write a letter to SW requesting a full wetland proposal by the end of July. This letter was written and sent to SW (Joff Edevane) the pathfinder Delivery Lead – Wetlands & Harbours on the 23rd of June.

On 6th July, Joff Edevane replied to confirm that he has a meeting on this week as they need to fit in wetlands with the other network plans, they have, therefore they would not be able to complete a study by the end of July but once he has had the meeting the picture will become clearer and he will update us.

The first general bi-monthly round-table meeting with SW has been confirmed for Monday 13th July at 6pm, to run through all the latest progress and planning from SW, including winter plans and any decisions relating to preparations.

Charlton and East Dean Gates

Quotes received, awaiting SDNP response about planning permission. We need to review the funding and apply for the 115 licence.

Emily Lerwill

Events

Singlefest

Was a fabulous day for the weather and turnout.

We had an array of sporting activities for all the children available.

Around 300 residents and school children attend which was a fabulous amount.

With the fabulous turnout we managed to raise a total of around £1,300 to help us pay our final instalment for the shepherds' hut which is due to now be delivered beginning of October. A great achievement.

Thank again to the Parish council for giving us the £250.00 to help pay for the community sports available on the day for the children.

School Liaison

The school are planning on putting up new fencing higher fencing on the public footpath side of the school to help safeguard the children when at school.

Finance

Finance Report

Balance in Current Account (30/06/26) - £24,389.87

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

2026/27 Reserves to date:

Playground Maintenance – £4,392.68, General Maintenance £154.57,

Funds from Youth Club - £1,156.87

Funds Received since 03/06/26 – Payment from VN for APM unused wine - £20.00

2025/26 Annual Audit – More information requested on variations, this has been supplied, awaiting approval.

Jack Lovejoy

I spent a lot of this month in training; I attended 15 training sessions this month in total. I think I spent more time at County Hall than in my own home.

I also attended Boxgrove, Lavant, Chichester City and Westhampnett Parish Councils, Chichester North Ward Public Meeting for the City Council, Singleton and Charlton Annual Parish Meeting, the East Broyle Residents Association AGM, the Summersdale Residents Association and the Madgwick Park Residents Association AGM. I also chaired my first meeting of PROW (there were meant to be two, but the latter was cancelled due to a lack of business, so we had a training session on planning instead) and attended the other committee I'm on (Children and Young People Services Scrutiny Committee) where we scrutinised the performance of the council's Children, Young People and Learning department.

At Singleton Annual General Meeting, we had a very interesting speech from the director of the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum Clare De Bathe, about what the museum

has been doing since she took over recently after her 12 years at the Chichester Community Development Trust. I was pleased to hear about the work they're doing with national government and lottery funding to improve accessibility at the museum (for those who are unaware, my father has limited mobility up one side, so disability access is something close to my heart), to bring in audio guides from this autumn and improve signage and information boards, as well as the work they do with home educated children and reduced cost days for people in certain post codes. They're also improving the café to improve the menu and made it so that people don't have to pay for museum entrance to eat at their wonderful café overlooking the lake. I have also been in discussions with Clare about organising a visit to the museum for local children in care, this is now in the early stages. This is an area close to my heart because I work with children in care and I hope to be able to make this a chance for them to have fun and be kids (which is sadly something that is sometimes forgotten about when handling them).

It wasn't just the meetings and training; I have been enjoying the Festival of Chichester (which runs until July 19th and has a lot of interesting events). I also went to the Cathedral's Festival of Flowers, SussexFest on the Cathedral Green, the Midsummer Celebrations at the Weald and Downlands, the Chichester Gala and toured the Rolls-Royce factory at Maudlin. Sadly, my visit to the Highways depot at Drayton has been delayed due to the severe heat.

I also attended the first Lavant parishes water forum session, which was kindly organised by Cllr Rawlings-Smith, the chair of Singleton Parish council. We received a very interesting presentation about the proposal by Southern Water to reduce the need for tankering in the valley through a two pronged approach of lining the sewers (which is ongoing and has lined the sewers in Singleton, Charlton, East Dean and half of West Dean thus far) and through using wetlands to improve the quality of water that's "dumped" in the river when there's high ground water and storms. It was interesting to hear about the maze of regulation that they have found themselves in where the two regulators (The Environment Agency and OFWAT) are pulling them in opposite directions and won't even approve something they've approved in the past for a different water company (who cleverly left the word wetland out their permit applications, something the EA are now wise to). I contacted Chichester's MP, Jess Brown-Fuller (who represents the Lavant and West Dean parishes, I was aware Singleton and Charlton were about to discuss the matter with Andrew Griffith, who represents Singleton, Charlton and East Dean) and she confirmed that she has been aware of the issue for over a year now and has already had several meetings with ministers and environment agency lobbying them to update the regulations so nature-based solutions can be prioritised over expensive tankering. I have suggested to the Southern water biologist that he and his team liaise with her office to coordinate their efforts. I will remain actively involved in the forum and hope that we can work to end the scourge of tankering in the valley.

I reported The Leys to WSCC and had a Highways marshal come up and have a look at it due to the severe potholing; I'm of the opinion it probably needs resurfacing but the marshal who attended did not agree.

At your chair's request I have sent a request to Highways to have a look at Town Lane as he is concerned about subsistence of the road into the hill. The marshal has scheduled some repairs work on the road now. I also asked them to look at the Charlton Road along Bankside due to concerns your chair had about erosion by the Lavant, the marshal did agree and has raised a job to repair 55 metres of the road.

I sent a query on the flood risk maps to the Flood Risk Management team at County Hall, they have confirmed that they are not using the Environment Agency maps and they informed me that the Environment Agency updated their maps last year. I sent enquiries to the clerk and chair about whether they could find out what the specific problem was cited by the insurance companies, so we could seek to tackle it. Your clerk informed me that your former chair told her that the issue around home insurance seems to be due to a system used by the insurance companies called LexisNexis, I have contacted the company in question and asked them for more information, I will keep the parish informed if I have updates.

I have had a resident contact me upset by the state of the footpath up to Cucumber Farm (which is overgrown with weeds), which makes it difficult for them to walk into the village. I have requested for Highways to clear it, but they are not likely to be as fast as the resident would like. If anyone could clear the path with a strimmer (or similar), I'm sure that would also be much appreciated.

LGR is still as clear as mud (that's my position, not the county council's). The County Council leader and several West Sussex district council leaders (Chichester, Arun, Horsham and Mid Sussex) have requested the government provide the data they used to justify the government's new footprint for reorganisation that they consulted on, but the government have not provided that data at time of writing. I have asked for permission to release the full letter that the leaders sent, but I haven't received permission from the district leaders yet. The consultation on the proposal that we don't have the underlying data for has now ended without us being able to make an informed decision and we're now waiting for the results, which is believed to be coming out over the next two months, when the reorganisation part can actually begin ahead of elections to the "shadow" unitary authority/authorities next year.

I wish to correct something in my last report, I misheard something the place team said to me about the scheme to fix the city centre. The York Stone pavers are not being reset, they are instead being replaced entirely to ensure a level surface. The old pavers have been sold onwards to partially finance this. I would like to thank my predecessor who corrected me on this, I am sorry for this mistake, it does mean the scheme is even better value for money than I first thought.

I also want to add a note to my report to congratulate the wonderful Cllr Clare Apel (LD – Chi West) from Chichester City and District councils, who has been awarded a very well-deserved MBE. Clare is an inspiration for everyone in public service, having served for nearly 40 years as a councillor at City and for just under 30 years at District level for Chichester West. She is also the Chair of the District Council (and likely to be the last ever Chair of the District Council) as well as being a founding trustee of Stonepillow (which I work for, when I'm not being a councillor) and until recently the Chair of Chichester Marks Holocaust Memorial Day (who always put on amazing and thought

provoking events every year, I attended the very moving “Music Inspired by the European Holocaust” on 24th June). She’s also been involved with Chichester Singers, Amnesty, The Oxmarket Gallery and more besides that I likely forgot. Clare’s contributions meant that while most people are only cited for one reason for being on the list, she was on there for three “For services to the Voluntary Sector, to Local Government and to Holocaust Education”.

In what I think will become a recurring note for my reports, some links for reporting highways issues, it’s always faster to report it directly to highways than to me, but feel free to get me involved if Highways don’t respond in time:

Please report any potholes you find that are over 15cm (about 6 inches for old money, or one standard biro) in diameter and 4cm (about 1.6 inches, or a golf ball/ping-pong ball) in depth to Highways: <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/make-an-enquiry-or-report-a-problem-with-a-road-or-pavement/road-and-cycle-path-faults-including-potholes/>

You can also report a blocked pavements (unless the blockage is a vehicle, then it becomes a police matter) <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/make-an-enquiry-or-report-a-problem-with-a-road-or-pavement/obstructions-on-road-pavement-or-cycle-path/>

Faded Lines or Damaged Signs <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/make-an-enquiry-or-report-a-problem-with-a-road-or-pavement/faded-lines-or-damaged-signs/>

Vegetation issues (including grass growing through pavements) <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/make-an-enquiry-or-report-a-problem-with-a-road-or-pavement/trees-hedges-weeds-and-grass/>

Blocked footpaths, bridleways and G-class highways: <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/land-waste-and-housing/public-paths-and-the-countryside/public-rights-of-way/report-a-problem-with-a-right-of-way/>

Street Lights and Traffic Lights: <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/make-an-enquiry-or-report-a-problem-with-a-road-or-pavement/streetlights-and-traffic-lights/>

Pavements and Verges: <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/make-an-enquiry-or-report-a-problem-with-a-road-or-pavement/pavements-and-verges/>

Additional Information

I think the only update I have since then that’s of any importance is that we’re expecting to hear about LGR on 16th July (if nothing changes at central government). I asked our executive director of finance today and he said there’s no sign of the date changing from central gov.

Henry Potter

June was a very quiet month for CDC, a couple of meetings cancelled, one the Development Plan and Infrastructure Panel, an important Panel to steer future development in the District, but the enforcement by Government to begin work on a new Local Plan clearly rendered the meeting unnecessary. Another meeting involving a visit to the Anaerobic Digester over at a WSCC depot near Horsham was cancelled due to the intense high temperatures experienced last week. This AD plant is where all our

food waste ends up to rot down, create combustible methane gas which in turn fuels a generator to produce yet more electricity. You may have read that CDC have suspended the use of Hydrogenated Fuel Oil which the current fleet of diesel vehicles are powered by due to the inflated price as a result of the strife in the Middle East. When the decision was made to switch to HFO the ADDITIONAL cost was £85,000 per annum! Clearly this increase in oil prices burst the budget. I've been assured that if prices fall to normal, HVO will continue to be used.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee met last week, Tuesday 30th and received their Annual Report of various duties of the Council. The Deputy Leader reported on his responsibilities and objectives and answered questions particularly relating to the Councils Climate Change Policy. These were supported by Mr Tom Day, our senior Environment Officer, who outlined future forecasts for the environment. The committee also received reports from the bodies which receive grant funding, the Festival Theatre, Pallant House Gallery and Everyone Active, Chichester at the Leisure Centres. Included within the report was an update from Andrew Parker describing the performance and provisions of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities assessments, the cost to the WSCC Budget is quite alarming!. Areas to be included in the O&S work programme for '26- '27 monitoring the Climate Action Plan, the annual report from the Business Improvement District (BID) the Annual Budget Scrutiny, Planning Enforcement and the Chichester Regeneration Strategy.

On the subject of Planning, the Planning Committee Agenda for Wednesday 1st July, included just one application and this for the repair and refurbishment of the decayed sea defences at West Beach, Selsey. These works are essential for the protection of the shoreline and numerous properties beyond. These works are financed, this was secured at the June Cabinet Meeting, but it does require planning permission and Approval by the Marine Management Board, a government quango. Hopes are that this work will be completed before bad weather arrives in October/ November. It is alarming that there are so few applications for housing in the district of late, this is the fifth meeting in succession, with just two applications, one for a gypsy and traveller site, the other for a housing extension.

If this continues it could have a dramatic effect on the Councils 5 YHLS. But as I've mentioned before, if housing is not selling, new homes will not be built. This may be exacerbated by the recent announcement by Steve Reed, the Minister for Housing that housing must not be permitted UNTIL the Water Infrastructure is in place to accommodate more housing. He refers to Supply as well as Treatment of our water. After the Planning meeting we held a Planning Workshop when we learnt of yet more proposed changes to the NPPF even though the ink is hardly dry on the December'24 revised Framework. It is anticipated that the automatic Planning Committee consideration of applications objected to by PC's will be withdrawn except those considered by planning officers to merit Committee decision, and the Red Card procedure is to be scrapped altogether!! If this isn't yet another threat to democracy? What next?

However, our Planning Management team are planning more training sessions for PC planning sub committees, online or in person, plus greater involvement of PC's in pre applications with Officers and Developers. A circular to all PC's covering this will be circulated in the near future. I must add that Development Planning is in a mess never before witnessed, not just in Chichester District but throughout the whole of the South. Following her election to WSCC Tracy Bangert has stepped away from being a Cabinet Member and is replaced by Cllr. Rhys Chant who is the CDC Member for Chichester East, his portfolio is for Communities and Wellbeing. He was elected to the Council at the 2023 Elections.

I have just read today that Andy Burnham, the incumbent Labour Prime Minister is set to increase the speed of transition to Mayoral and Unitary Authorities under the LGR Act if he steams into Number 10 in July. This is not good news as speed is not the essence, it is care in making all the right new and necessary changes demanded by the Act that is needed. This is one area which should not be rushed, mistakes will be made!

Finally, I want to mention the Award of an MBE to the Chair of CDC. Clare Appel, not just for her outstanding work as a Councillor, but for her charitable work in the Community and the inauguration of the 'Chichester Marks Holocaust Remembrance Day' in 2015 something Clare is passionate about because of the horrors witnessed by her ancestors. During the Second World War. Clare is a truly honourable lady.