

Reports for Parish Council Meeting – 18th March 2026

Mark Rawlings-Smith

Planning Report

Notes from the Chair's Meeting, Tuesday 24th Feb 2026

This 71-minute meeting focused on significant upcoming changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which will introduce nationally binding policies that override inconsistent local and neighbourhood plans. Steve Tilbury explained that the revised NPPF will take effect mid-2026, fundamentally altering how planning decisions are made by prioritizing national policies over local ones. Key concerns were raised about reduced local control, the impact on neighbourhood plans, changes to the appeals process limiting further representations, and implications for housing development, greenfield vs. brownfield building, and environmental protections. Participants discussed the importance of staying informed, preparing for new delegation rules, and understanding how these changes will affect parish councils' influence. The meeting concluded with questions about agricultural development, parking standards, and the role of future mayoral authorities in spatial planning.

Early in the discussion, technical issues with audio feedback and muting were resolved. Steve then detailed the structural shift in the NPPF, emphasizing that local policies conflicting with national ones will lose weight in decision-making. Midway, participants expressed frustration over perceived developer-friendly policies, loss of local identity, and challenges with the five-year housing land supply metric. Later, concerns were raised about the impact on protected landscapes like the South Downs National Park, the effectiveness of current appeal outcomes, and fiscal tools like land development taxes. The conversation also touched on the upcoming unitary authority structure and its implications for planning governance. Throughout, attendees sought clarity on how to respond, whether to pause neighbourhood plans, and how to maintain local influence under the new framework.

Key Points:

- Steve Tilbury introduced himself as a planning consultant working with EASALP and WASALP, providing support to parish councils on planning matters, and emphasized his expertise in local plan work and policy representation across southeast England.
- The core focus was the consultation on the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), closing March 10, 2026, which represents a fundamental shift from guidance-based to policy-based decision-making, with numbered national policies (e.g., S4-S6) taking precedence over conflicting local or neighbourhood plan policies once implemented, expected mid-2026.
- Under the new NPPF, local planning authorities and parish councils must align their practices with national policies, as inconsistent local policies will carry little to no weight in planning decisions, regardless of when the local plan was adopted, requiring all stakeholders to become familiar with the new framework.
- A major procedural change involves the appeals process: starting April 1, 2026, written representations appeals (comprising ~19,000 of 20,000 annual appeals) will no longer allow additional submissions from any party after the initial response, making initial representations from parish councils critically important and final in most cases.
- The government plans to standardize committee delegation across all local planning authorities with a single national scheme, likely reducing elected councillors' involvement in planning decisions to streamline the process and minimize refusals deemed unjustified by central government.
- Concerns were raised about the impact on protected areas like the South Downs National Park, with committee members noting a decline in appeal success rates (from 90%+ to 64% in 10 months), suggesting inspectors are being directed to approve more applications, potentially

undermining local environmental protections.

- Participants questioned the lack of fiscal mechanisms like a land development tax to incentivize builders to develop permitted sites, with Steve explaining that past attempts have been abandoned due to risks of sterilizing development; instead, the industry's current slowdown is attributed more to market affordability than planning constraints.
- The new NPPF will prevent local authorities from setting higher standards than national ones, including on energy efficiency (e.g., M4-2 regulations) and biodiversity net gain (capped at 10%), eliminating local flexibility to require 20-30% gains or stricter building standards, which sparked strong opposition from attendees concerned about climate goals.
- Parish councils were advised not to rush to update neighbourhood plans in response to the NPPF changes, as it's unclear which local policies will be deemed inconsistent; instead, they should wait for their local planning authority to gain experience applying the new national policies before revising their plans.
- The upcoming unitary authority structure in Sussex will not subsume the South Downs National Park, which will retain its independent planning authority status and continue producing its own local plan, though it must align with the mayor's future spatial development strategy.
- The mayor-led spatial development strategy will guide housing, infrastructure, and business distribution across Sussex, allowing planning beyond current district boundaries, but will still need to respect geographical constraints like the National Park, floodplains, and transport corridors such as the A27.
- Parking standards will be reinforced in the new NPPF, mandating local authorities to adopt formula-based requirements (e.g., X spaces per bedroom), which Steve criticized as outdated but acknowledged aligns with the government's push for a rule-based, binary compliance system to reduce developer uncertainty.
- Attendees expressed frustration over the government's perceived developer-friendly approach, loss of local identity due to standardized housing, and the contradiction between declaring climate emergencies and overriding local environmental policies, with some calling for producer-responsibility-style financial models to incentivize brownfield development.
- The meeting highlighted challenges with the five-year housing land supply metric, which is based on completions rather than permissions, causing supply to collapse when markets slow, undermining local plan viability and leading to a surge in speculative applications during planning gaps.

Action Items:

- Steve Tilbury will conduct a training session on Thursday, February 26, 2026, at 6:30 PM via Zoom to delve deeper into the NPPF changes; registration is available for £40.
- John Barnes (Chairman of ESALC) will consider whether to place the NPPF consultation on an upcoming agenda, though consensus across East and West Sussex's 260+ parishes is acknowledged as difficult to achieve before the March 10 deadline.
- Parish councils are encouraged to review the South Downs National Park's online committee meeting and agenda to understand their specific concerns regarding the NPPF's impact on protected landscapes.
- Local planning authorities are expected to begin assessing which policies in their local and neighbourhood plans are inconsistent with the new NPPF, though no formal guidance will be provided by the government.

Karen Nash

Southern Water Activity

As we are all aware the tankers have been back in the valley's busy pumping since the beginning of February due to the continuous heavy rain. The ground surface water rose to it's highest level since 2014 and they found the surface water had got into many of the chambers

Due to the noise and disruption to the Woodstock Suites, I arranged for SW to crane a pump onto North Lane with an acoustic barrier surrounding it. When I do a village walk around with SW I will discuss a contingency plan with them for next year to see if the pump and tanker could be sited in the field alongside North Lane to prevent further disruption and mess to the Woodstock Suites and Tony Marshalls property.

Foxfield (Sue Hermans property) also had an ongoing issue with sewage coming up in their garden, finally last week they found the blockage which was isolated to her property and no further issues have been reported.

Charlton End also had an issue with sewage coming up and their downstairs toilet not flushing, but now the levels have dropped again no further issues reported. The same for Cobblers Cottage (Sue Martin) in Singlton.

Many drains were reported to be overflowing on the roads in Charlton and Singleton but upon inspection many were BT points so basically a hole in the ground that the pipes run underneath, so when the hole gets full of water it has to flow out somewhere.

Danny Sole at 26 The Leys has damage to his grass verge due to the tankers pumping the meadow field. Daniel my onsite point of contact for SW is hoping to meet with Danny with a contingency plan for next year if we need the tankers bank.

I also reported damage to the bottom of Knights Hill at the junction of North Lane where the road has subsided due to the heavy tankers, SW have ordered some hardcore to fill as a temporary measure.

I have spoken to the onsite manager of the tankers that bases himself at the junction of north Lane and requested that no more than two tankers are parked on Knights Hill at one time, I requested that one can wait on the gravel area at the entrance of Charlton Mill Way and one at the top of Goodwood in the triangle Car park. Some Charlton residents were worried with the tankers by the junction they may cause an accident, so SW have now put out signs in the road to alert drivers.

After numerous reports to the onsite manager and Daniel from SW that tankers were leaving their engines running, this has now stopped.

I am aware of a lot of verge damage around Charlton and Singleton due to the tankers, so when they have finally left the village, I will organise a village walk around with SW so they can put everything right like they did last year.

Charlton and East Dean Gates

Myself and Viv have a meeting with Gary Jannaway the Assistant Area Highways Manager for Arun and Lavant on the 24th March to look at the position of the new gates and size etc.

Jasmine Hathaway

Chichester District Association of Local Councils (CDALC)

Meeting 10 March 2026

• South Downs National Park Authority Update

Alun Alesbury (SDNPA) was unable to attend but provided a written update. The Authority has approved a new five-year Partnership Management Plan, an aspirational framework setting out priorities for improving the National Park through collaboration with partners such as landowners, local authorities, and public bodies. Work is also progressing on the submission version of the new South Downs Local Plan, which will guide future development policies and will later be examined by a government inspector. National planning policy changes currently under consideration may affect National Parks. Additionally, £1.9 million in Community Infrastructure Levy funding has been awarded to 31 local community projects.

• CHC Report from Cllr Ivan Western

Representatives discussed key issues affecting parish and town councils, including planning consultations, financial pressures on local government, and the need for continued collaboration with Chichester District Council. The meeting highlighted training opportunities for councillors and clerks, along with examples of good practice in community engagement. Concerns were raised regarding housing development pressures, infrastructure capacity, and maintaining essential local services. CDALC continues to play an important role in sharing information and representing parish council interests.

• Devolution Update

Members received an update on the Sussex devolution proposal. Sussex has been accepted into the Government's Devolution Priority Programme, with proposals for a Sussex Mayoral Combined County Authority covering West Sussex, East Sussex, and Brighton & Hove. The authority would focus on strategic functions such as transport, housing, economic development, and skills, while existing councils retain local service responsibilities. Further consultation and legislative steps are required.

• Emergency Planning and Resilience

The meeting also focused on Parish emergency preparedness. Parish Councils were encouraged to develop clear emergency plans, strengthen communication with emergency services and residents, and identify local resources and volunteers. Training opportunities and improved coordination during incidents were also discussed to enhance community resilience and recovery.

South Downs National Park, Parish and Community Meeting

Wednesday 4 March 2026

Representatives from parishes across the South Downs National Park attended the Parish and Community Meeting on 4 March 2026 to discuss current policy developments, funding opportunities and issues affecting local communities.

The meeting highlighted several matters that may require consideration or action by Singleton and Charlton Parish Council over the coming months.

A key topic was the launch of the South Downs National Park Authority's new Partnership Management Plan (PMP), published in January 2026 following consultation with over 2,000 participants.

The plan sets out seven long-term priorities for the National Park: nature recovery, climate action, clean water, young people, welcome and access (including dark skies), arts and culture, and thriving communities.

These priorities will guide the Park's strategy through to 2060 and may be useful for parish councils to reference when developing local planning policies or community initiatives.

The new South Downs Local Plan is progressing through the approval process and is expected to receive full National Park Authority sign-off on 20 March 2026. Public consultation on the draft plan is scheduled for May 2026. Parish councils are encouraged to review the consultation documents and submit formal responses where appropriate.

An important planning update concerns Village Design Statements (VDS). New government regulations introduced on 4 March 2026 mean that no new Supplementary Planning Documents, including VDS, can be initiated after June 2026. Any parish considering preparing a VDS should therefore begin the process before this deadline. Existing statements will remain valid while the current Local Plan is in force.

The meeting also highlighted several funding opportunities available to parish councils. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding continues to support local projects, with nearly £1.9 million distributed across the park in 2025, including £300,000 for parish-identified initiatives. Parishes are encouraged to actively identify suitable projects and submit bids. In addition, Sustainable Infrastructure Levy (SILL) grants are currently open for applications until the end of March 2026. Solar panels for village hall roofs were specifically mentioned as an eligible project type and may be a potential opportunity for Singleton and Charlton.

Several initiatives aimed at young people and education were also discussed. The Outdoor Learning Grant continues to support school visits to the National Park, while the Junior Rangers programme offers free conservation and access-improvement activities for young people aged 13–16, with travel expenses reimbursed.

Finally, the meeting noted the potential implications of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) across Sussex and Hampshire. The possible removal of the district council tier could increase responsibilities for parish councils, and smaller parishes may wish to consider closer collaboration with neighbouring communities to ensure their interests are effectively represented.

Further updates and presentation slides from the meeting have been circulated by the South Downs National Park Authority.

All Parishes Meeting

2nd February 2026

At the All Parishes Meeting on 2 February 2026, officers provided updates on the Renters' Rights Act and new food waste collection plans. The briefing explained that the Act will strengthen protections for tenants, including changes to tenancy arrangements and landlord responsibilities, and councils are preparing for its local impact.

Members also heard about forthcoming weekly household food waste collections, part of national recycling reforms aimed at reducing landfill and improving sustainability. Parish representatives were encouraged to share information with residents and support local awareness as the council prepares for implementation of both measures across the district.

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Philip Maber

Singleton Roads, Potholes and Pavements

Grove Lane and Charlton Road have minor potholes quickly repaired.

Bankside, A cast iron structure in the verge has split tyres when cars pull over to avoid oncoming traffic. There is a new, long and deepening pothole, which because under flowing water is taking WSCC to repair. This stretch of road has had multiple repairs.

Further challenges followed the roadside hedge cutting.

A286 Main Road, A pothole on the Corner by Hannah's Cafe was quickly repaired, before it became really dangerous. A noisy manhole near the Old Rectory is now quiet, but with further repair work anticipated - WSCC confirmed it is thier access to a road drain.

A roadside drain by Drovers (southbound) was starting to break out again but this tme quickly repaired. The roadside verge damaged by the sewage tankers will be repaired when conditions improve.

Town Lane The uneven road surface going along towards the Museum Entrance is considered not urgent by WSCC (I also reported a loose kerb stone and debris on the footway). Suddenly appearing potholes right up to Triangle Car Park are a recurring problem to look out for.

Church Way A replacement Sewer Manhole has been fitted alongside the footpath up to the Church. More recently that footpath became slightly flooded when the Rectory Playing Field flooded - however only for a day or so. I visited the flooded car park over several days and spoke with several residents and initially with WSCC, before handing over.

Our thanks to WSCC Highways and Southern Water.

Centurion Way A footpath linking from around the southern end of West Dean Tunnell to the Station has recently opened (very muddy). It is planned to upgrade for wheelchairs and bikes in 2027, so avoiding the busy A286.

The link Singleton Link with Centurion Way continues to be a challenge.

The Oil Site 2 new gas-powered generators are installed, together with a heavy duty cable laid down to the main road. The commissioning date for this mini-power station is unknown, but believed to be awaiting a new cable being connected to the transformer station at Pendean.

Sussex Resilience Group The Resilience and Emergencies Team from WSCC and Chichester & Arun District Councils gave a talk in Chichester recently - They Plan to visit every Parish Council in West Sussex to offer advice, including setting up a Hub. Booklets published: *Preparing for an emergency* will be available.

This is especially important for us including with fire risk of Singleton and Charlton Forests.

Richard Arnold

Parking sign for The Leys Report

I have recommended the following and am awaiting feedback that there is sufficient agreement with this proposal to take it to the next stage of discussing how to order.

Height: 75mm

Length: 600mm

Material: 2mm rigid plastic - A white High Impact Polystyrene (HIPS) plastic in thicker 2mm material. Stronger material for more durable applications which can be drilled.

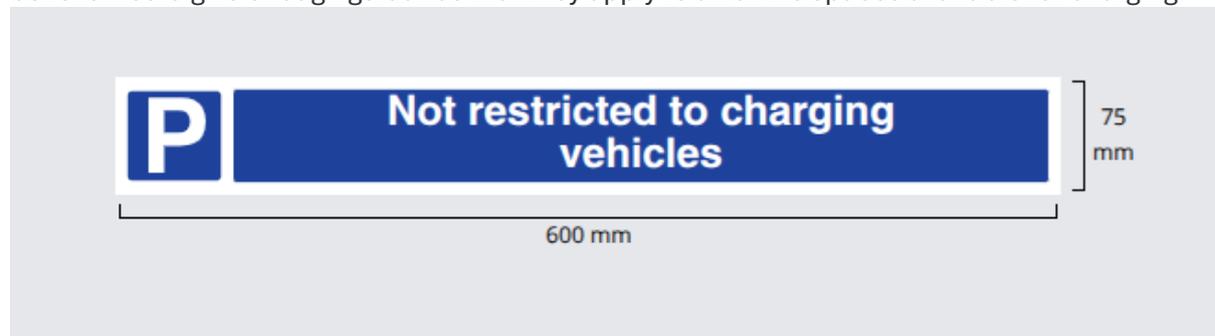
Text: Not restricted to charging vehicles

Symbol: Standard parking sign 'P'

Price: £15.90 each

Notes:

Proposal is for 2 signs to be attached to the 2 horizontal wooden bars behind the spaces which I believe would give enough guidance that they apply to all of the spaces available for charging.



Vivien Nuttall

Church Close Flooding/Ditch Update from Hyde

I can confirm the clearance of the pathway has been completed and the debris boom installed.

We met with our contractors on site again on Tuesday and are waiting an update from them on the clearance of the pipe and some legal issues in regard to the responsibility of this are still ongoing.

On our site visit we were pleased to note the water has receded significantly away from the substation however we are very aware that action needs to be taken on the pipe.

I can confirm that SSE advised that the gates are their responsibility and that they would be repairing these.

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.

VAT not claimed - £1,337.04

The Savings Account has been moved to Hampshire Trust Bank.

Jeremy Hunt

Just a few brief updates this month, following an extensive report last month.

First of all, following my update giving details around our proposed revenue budget of £883m, it was finally approved at full council on 20th February. At the council meeting I am delighted to say that the budget was approved unanimously, with all parties either supporting it or abstaining. A part of that budget is an £850m capital programme, where we are investing in your county, to support you, our residents, and to ensure the future for generations to come.

Just as a reminder, this is a balanced budget, with additional funding for frontline services, including highways - despite the Government taking away £30m of our funding to give to other counties, mainly in the Midlands and the North. We also received an unexpected £2.4m of additional funding in the final local Government Finance Settlement. We have therefore committed that additional money - over and above the extra money we have already committed - to highway maintenance, to try and address the damage that has been done to our highways by this really challenging winter weather, with record rainfall in many areas.

As I said last month, we provide over 300 services across the county, so too many to list here. However, I will just reference some of the services where this County Council is clearly supporting our residents:

- Adult Social care - our service was inspected by the Care Quality Commission last year and we were awarded 'GOOD'.

- Our Children's services are performing really well, with some good OFSTED results from targeted inspections. This includes our 7 children's homes that are all rated by OFSTED as 'good' or 'outstanding'. In fact, one home - which has received three consecutive 'outstanding' OFSTED reports - was recently recognised by The King and Queen, by inviting the senior manager to a reception at Windsor Castle to celebrate the contributions of professional and unpaid carers across the UK.
- Also, our children's teams and individuals, have received no less than six national awards over the last four years.
- We are just about to start a roll-out of replacing all our street lighting with LED technology, thereby not only protecting the climate by reducing our carbon footprint, but also by saving money for the residents by reducing the cost of running these lamps.
- Landfill reduced dramatically from 45% in 2017 to under 2% in 2025 — one of the most significant reductions in the country. Our booking system at the amenity tips has also been a great success and is praised by many people. And fly-tipping in the county is down for the fourth consecutive year — bucking the national trend.
- Finally, West Sussex County Council is very proud of its Library Service. This council has maintained all 36 libraries, when many of our neighbours are having to shut theirs. We have no plans to do that - but maybe others see these precious hubs as a quick win for making savings. Did you know that 70% of our residents live within 30 minutes walk of a library? Last year there were 2.2m visits to our libraries. In fact libraries are much more than a place to borrow books. They are now effectively community hubs - supporting families, providing a digital hub, providing employment and business advice. Also, you can borrow blood pressure monitors to check your heart health at home, reminiscence packs to help with dementia care or to delve into history, and access booklists for information about menopause, bereavement, neurodivergence, and to support your mental health and wellbeing. And of course, there are tens of thousands of books and eBooks to borrow as reading for pleasure is proven to reduce stress and boost your wellbeing. So our libraries provide a vital service to the people of West Sussex and fulfil one of the county council's key aims, which is helping people and communities fulfil their potential.

So, in summing up, and despite what you might read or hear from others, your County Council - unlike many other LA's - is in very good shape. Going forward we are financially sound, as is clearly demonstrated by setting a balanced budget for 2026/27, with additional funding going into frontline services, including highways. Yes, this current year is challenging, but we have more than adequate reserves to address any overspend. We are providing you, the residents, with many excellent services that - as I have highlighted above - are in good shape. As we move forward to Local Government Reform it is essential that we continue to protect those services and, to do that successfully, we need continuity with as little disruption as possible.

Local Issues: Chichester City Centre - One key issue that is not so local, but impacts us all, is the state of the pavements in East and North Street. This is an issue that I have been campaigning on for many years, and this campaigning is now coming to fruition. I am delighted to say that our teams at West Sussex - in consultation with both the District and City Councils - have been working on this for the last twelve months - including extensive public consultation - and within the next week to ten days we will be signing off the decision to proceed with the work. There is still a lot of preparation work to do, so you are unlikely to see any results before 2027, but the important thing is that it is at last underway.

Bus Depot - Secondly, I understand that Chichester District Council are still keen on developing the bus depot and parking all the buses on the Avenue De Chartres. Personally, I believe this is a huge mistake. Yes, I accept that the present depot is not somewhere you really want to spend much time. However, I believe Chichester deserves a proper, effective and welcoming transport hub, with buses and trains co-located as they are now. A proper gateway to those arriving in Chichester by public transport. Not a place where buses are randomly parked on a road that is already heavily congested at peak times, making driving around Southgate even worse. This fine City deserves better, and I intend to continue campaigning against these plans. I believe, from both speaking to residents, reading their comments on-line and in the papers, many of you will pick up agree with me.

Food Waste - Just to confirm that when food waste collections start, the waste will not be handled through the Westhampnett site. It will be transported to a collection site in Ford. And just in case you read the misleading article in the Observer recently, CDC

were not going to be financially disadvantaged, because I understand that we had already agreed a 'tipping away payment' with them. This means they will be reimbursed for any additional fuel and staffing costs. And just for your interest, the District and Boroughs have received additional government funding to support food waste collection, but the County Council - who will pick up the transfer and disposal costs - have received no additional funding.

Henry Potter

The Council met last on 03/03 at 6 pm after a Cabinet Meeting at 2 pm. Consideration and approval was given to the council's Treasury Management and Investment Strategy, the Capital Strategy and the Budget Spending Plans for the coming year.

The net Budget requirement of £18,133,500 was approved and the CDC share of Band D Council Tax to be increased by £5.74p from £192.06 to £197.80p for the financial year 2026-27 Agreement was given from Members, to support the provision of 15 Social Rented Homes at Birdham. This entails a contribution of £500,000 to be funded by £41,000 from Commuted Sums (derived from other developments) and £459,000 from the Rural Housing Fund, this being a Rural Exception Site specifically for those with a strong connection to the area.

Also on the Agenda was the adoption of a revised Housing Enforcement Policy. This revision is a result of the new Renters Act which came into force last year, 2025. This Act has serious implications for Landlords offering far stronger security to tenants, the ending of fixed term tenancy's and the provision of far higher housing standards. Also it will involve recruiting more staff to the Housing Team to carry out investigations of complaints, another cost to be absorbed by the Council, I see this as the carrot which will encourage private landlords to sell up and leave the market. Yet another cause of the loss of much needed housing which this Government is so keen to increase.

And finally, it was proposed, and agreed, to update the Councils Constitution with regard to the Complaints procedure Policy. For example, a racist complaint will now be regarded as of a discriminatory nature. The distinction of what is and what is not a Complaint, and the three stages of how complaints are dealt with. All details of the amendments can be found in the Full Council Agenda 03/03 which can be found on the Councils website.

I think we can agree, all of the remedial work carried out in the Valley by Southern Water hasn't been as successful as we all hoped and the damage to the roadside verges by the newer oversized tankers being deployed is a disgrace. East Dean Hill is about 2 feet wider but the edges are just mud, it is awful!

On Thursday last week, the 12th, I attended a presentation by Portsmouth Water Company, and a most interesting informative and positive meeting it was! Serving 324,000 homes and businesses supplying 183 MILLION LITRES of water PER DAY. They are currently working up

plans to ensure the continuing safe supply of our water for the next 50 years without threatening the environment. They are currently studying the River Ems which came close to drying up last year prompting the Westbourne PC to appeal to the Environment Agency to restrict the extraction licence but they are not permitted to apply such restrictions. However, there are few fears for the abstraction of water from the well at north Lavant beside the river, though they could restrict abstraction to the winter months, personally I don't think this will achieve much saving. One Member suggested that hose pipe bans be introduced sooner, before levels reached low limits but we were told that hose pipe bans in the PW area would only save 4% of consumption. Overall, the answer is to reduce consumption. In that direction government guidance is that all new housing should be geared to water usage of 120 litres per person per day and PW have begun fitting 'smart' water meters which will enable them to increase the charge per litre for consumption over 120 l/p/p/d. 7,500 smart meters have already been fitted to homes in the Portsmouth area, we can expect them in the Chichester area in 2028/29. The Company is the smallest water supply company in England, employs only 145 operational staff and is the cheapest supplier in the land. All very encouraging!