



DRAFT Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at 6pm on Wednesday 15th July 2026

Present: Cllr Mark Rawlings-Smith (Chairman) (MR); Cllr Karen Nash (KN); Cllr Jasmine Hathaway (JH); Cllr Richard Arnold (RA)

Also in attendance: Jack Lovejoy, County Councillor (JL); Henry Potter, District Councillor (HP)

Parish Clerk – Vivien Nuttall (VN)

9 Members of the public also attended

Agenda Item 1 – Apologies for Absence and Resignation

Apologies were received from Emily Lerwill (EL). The Chair reported, with regret, that Cllr Sarah Payne (SAP) has resigned from the Council owing to work commitments. The Council thanked Sarah for her contribution and noted she will be missed.

Agenda Item 2 – Declaration of Interests / Dispensation Requests

The Chair and Jasmine Hathaway declared a personal interest in the parking in the Leys item. No other declarations received.

Agenda Item 3 – Minutes of the Last Parish Council Meeting

The minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting and Annual Parish Meeting held on 3rd June 2026 were put forward for approval, they were approved by all councillors present and signed by the Chairman.

Agenda Item 4 – Chairman's Report

Andrew Griffith MP meeting

The Chair reported on a meeting with Andrew Griffith MP, attended by Jasmine Hathaway and Karen Nash, to which Chris Tyus (Chair, East Dean Parish Council) was also invited given shared interests. Two matters were discussed:

- The newly formed “Valley Water Group” (a stakeholder group covering the river, wastewater, aquifer and water supply) was introduced to Andrew Griffith. Southern Water presented plans on 11th June for a wetland to help process excess wastewater, likely sited between Singleton and West Dean, but progress is blocked by the Environment Agency's and DEFRA's current interpretation of the regulations. Andrew Griffith agreed to raise this with the EA.
- The oil field (Star Energy): the generator-to-grid connection at the site remains incomplete, reportedly linked to wider national grid connection delays and a substation capacity issue; Andrew Griffith agreed to raise this with Star Energy. Jasmine also raised concern that permitted injection of waste material back into the well which could affect the aquifer, and that re-categorisation of the aquifer is being explored as a protective measure.

Drainage Ditch – the Leys

The Chair reported that, after a prolonged period of communication, Hyde has cleared the ditch and installed a grill over the drainage pipe. They have also put the clearing of the ditch on a regular schedule, this should avoid any further flooding issues. They are also installing new gates on the substation and the path.

Southern Water – Charlton

The Chair thanked KN for her continued work chasing Southern Water on the restoration of Charlton's roads following tanker damage, noting this remains a near-daily effort.

Agenda Item 5 – County Councillor Report

Jack Lovejoy, Chichester North Division

Full report available on the Parish Council website – singletoncharlton-pc.gov.uk

JL reported that WSCC has committed to repair 55 metres of road surface along Bankside and have scheduled repairs to Town Lane.. On flood risk mapping, he confirmed WSCC does not use Environment Agency maps for insurance purposes (the EA maps were updated last year and are considered by WSCC to be unreliable for this purpose); insurers instead rely on a private data provider, which told him it does not set methodology but relies on data supplied to it. He advised he has reached the limit of what he can resolve on this as a County Councillor.

He also reported a six-week-long unresolved footway obstruction near on the A286 alongside Cucumber Farm, now escalated within Highways as a safety priority (pedestrians are being forced onto the road), with a management plan requested to prevent recurrence and the matter has been taken to the Highways Service Director.

He confirmed the Local Government Reorganisation announcement on the future unitary model was expected the following day, with no indication of delay.

Agenda Item 6 – District Councillor Report

Henry Potter, Goodwood Ward

Full report available on the Parish Council website – singletoncharlton-pc.gov.uk

HP reported from that day's planning meeting that the five-year housing land supply has fallen to 4.56 years. With the new 20% buffer requirement, the housing number the new Local Plan must accommodate rises to approximately 900 (up from 735). The Chief Planning Officer has indicated the two-year statutory timeframe for producing a new Local Plan may not be achievable, compounded by uncertainty over which authority will be responsible once Local Government Reorganisation takes effect.

Agenda Item 7 – Village Matters

Weald & Downland Living Museum

KN reported that the Museum's Open Air Theatre season began on 15th July and that the Museum has offered a 20% ticket discount to Singleton residents, confirmation to be confirmed that this also includes Charlton residents. The Museum is also running a summer family activity programme and has café changes planned from August.

Village Maintenance and Responsibilities

The Chair noted that the Council's routine responsibilities, combined with the volume of external meetings, are stretching the Council's capacity given its reduced number of councillors, and that additional volunteers and councillors are needed. A walk-round identified a list of outstanding maintenance items (footpaths, nettles, weeds around the parking bay, a damaged bench by the pond, and fencing at the field housing the play area, hide and substation.

Approved: a one-off exceptional payment of £450 to Keith Goatcher for village tidying, this is an addition to the standard grounds contract. The council will also spend up to £1,400 for new fencing and repair of the bench, subject to a second quote being obtained for comparison before work is confirmed.

Action: *KN to obtain a second quote (from “Cliffy”) for the fencing and bench repair, for comparison against the existing £1,400 quote.*

The Chair raised the possibility of establishing a more organised approach to village volunteering, noting this is not yet developed.

Action: *MR to bring a clearer proposal on the scope of a council-coordinated volunteering effort to a future meeting.*

The Village Fete Committee requested a Council contribution towards refreshments at its post-fete volunteer thank-you event, noting that fete proceeds are committed in full to charity (this year split 50/50 between the Village Hall and the church) and cannot be used for this purpose.

Approved: a £100 contribution towards refreshments for the fete volunteers thank-you event, to be administered via the Village Hall bank account.

Centurion Way

RA reported slow progress in arranging a meeting to establish the current status of proposals for an access route for cyclists and wheelchair users to and from Singleton and the Centurion Way. The option via West Dean, emerging from the Weald & Downland Museum's, is considered preferable on gradient and accessibility grounds and would create a circular walking route, but requires the agreement of two landowners who have indicated support informally. SDNPA has indicated it will not fund or deliver a Singleton access route itself, meaning delivery would fall to the Council, which RA noted is unlikely to be achievable given current capacity. Jack Lovejoy offered his help and is available to attend daytime meetings.

Action: *RA to organise a meeting with the relevant SDNP [A](#) representative.*

Southern Water

KN reported ongoing near-daily engagement with Southern Water. Following the third village walkabout, Southern Water has agreed to properly reinstate the verges to their original line (rather than the temporary topsoil-and-grass-seed repair carried out previously), re-tarmac the road at the entrance to Knights Hill. There is also a bridge survey taking place. A replacement pipe across the meadow will be installed this will be a wider pipe to join up with the pipe of the same size, it is believed that this should solve the issue of blockages in his area. As part of a contingency plan aimed at reducing, though not eliminating, the use of tankers in the village this autumn/winter, pumps will be installed in November. The siting of tankers will be reviewed with the aim of keeping them out of Charlton.

The Council noted that a recent Southern Water communication implying sealing work had ceased was inaccurate; resealing of chamber tops, manhole cover replacement and leak investigation are ongoing. Southern Water is to provide written clarification. The Council also noted the departure of Kate Whitton of the West Sussex Rivers Trust and thanked her for her support. Southern Water has offered councillors a tour of the sewage treatment works,

Action: *KN to continue Southern Water engagement, including monitoring progress on verge reinstatement and pipe/pump works ahead of November.*

Parking in the Lays

Following a meeting with Hyde and Highways, it was confirmed that no funding is available for additional parking, and that parking spaces in the Lays, Bankside and Church Way are not allocated to individual houses, contrary to some resident's belief. Highways confirmed that residents placing bollards in spaces is illegal and can be enforced, though officers but noted this is unlikely to resolve the underlying issue. Long-wheelbase vans parking on the road were also raised; a previous attempt to get these vehicles to park on the parking area at the beginning of The Leys was discontinued after break-ins.

Action: *Hyde and Highways to jointly issue a letter to residents of the Leys, Bankside and Church Way clarifying that parking spaces are not allocated to specific properties.*

Traffic Safety

Concerns were raised about vehicle speed on the sharp bend near Corner Cottage, where there is no pavement. A representative from Highways has proposed removing bollards and instead using road markings and a pedestrian symbol to indicate a walking area, subject to confirming the road is wide enough; sign clutter and the discontinuation of road humps limit other options. Highways will also review GPS-derived speed data for the location to establish actual vehicle speeds over time and consider a pedestrian warning sign.

Action: *Highways to confirm feasibility of road markings for pedestrian safety at the Corner Cottage bend, and review GPS speed data for the location.*

Agenda Item 8 – Public Open Forum

A resident raised the poor condition of the tarmac on Town Lane, describing it as a cycling hazard, and asked whether Highways' cycling strategy addresses this, given ongoing work on the SDNPA Centurion Way project and the interest in linking Singleton to the Centurion Way via Town Lane.

A resident raised wildfire risk at the oil field site, noting the two on-site water storage tanks have trees growing out of them and querying whether they remain fit for purpose, along with the age and condition of the three fire hydrants at the site entrance. The Jack Lovejoy confirmed a fire response plan exists but noted service reductions over the past 20 years may have affected response times, and that he has asked the Chief Fire Officer whether this affects the existing plan. The Chair questioned whether Star Energy is subject to routine fire and health and safety inspections and past instances of cigarette butts near no-smoking signage near methane venting.

Action: *Philip Maber (MOP) to send photographs of the overgrown water tanks to the Chief Fire Officer, report back on whether service cuts affect the existing site fire response plan and establish whether Star Energy is subject to routine fire and health and safety inspections.*

A resident asked to join the Valley Water Group; the Chair agreed to discuss this by email given the group's early stage. A further resident raised concern about historical long-term injection of saline waste into the aquifer, with no clarity on where this may eventually surface.

Action: *MR to follow up by email with the resident requesting to join the Valley Water Group.*

Agenda Item 9 – Finance Report

Balance in Current Account (30/06/26): £24,390

Balance in Savings Account (30/06/26): £7,290

Reserves to date:

- Playground Maintenance – £4,392
- General Maintenance – £154 (largely committed; the village tidying and fencing/bench spend approved above will need to be found from the wider budget underspend)
- Funds from Youth Club - £1,157

The external audit query remains open pending further information supplied to the auditors; no further response has yet been received.

The annual playground inspection returned a clean bill of health with some low-risk items noted; wear in wooden play equipment may require future budget provision.

Action: *Clerk to monitor for the auditor's response following submission of the requested variance information.*

Meeting Closed – 18:20

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

Signed:

Name & Position: CHAIRMAN

Date: