



## DRAFT Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at 7pm on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2024

<p><b>Present:</b> Cllr Graham Zacharias (GZ); Cllr Tony Marshall (TM); Cllr Jeremy Rigby (JR); Cllr Mat Chesshire (MC); Cllr Sam Cox (SC); Cllr Jo Ward (JW); Cllr Jeremy Hunt (JH WSCC); Cllr Henry Potter (HP CDC) 5 members of the public also attended.</p>	
<p><b>Agenda Item 1 – Apologies for Absence – PW</b></p>	
<p><b>Agenda Item 2 – Chairman Update</b> – PW has taken the decision to resign due to the fact that he is spending more time in France and is unable to attend meetings. The council are grateful for his past efforts and should his situation change, he would be welcome to rejoin the council. This means that we now have six councillors, leaving three vacancies. There was no response from the advert in the Valley Diary. However, Pete Gattrell has spoken to the Clerk and has shown some interest in being elected on to the council, GZ said that he would be very welcome to join and it is hoped that he will agree to be co-opted on to the council at the AGM in May. GZ asked that recruitment be kept front of mind when talking to friends in Singleton and Charlton and if anyone shows some interest, please mention it to GZ or VN. GZ mentioned that after his break due to illness, he has been catching up on parish council business, so has nothing more to report at this time.</p>	
<p><b>Agenda Item 3 – Declaration of Interests/ Dispensation Requests</b> - There were no declarations of interest or dispensation requests.</p>	
<p><b>Agenda Item 4 - Minutes of the last Parish Council Meeting</b> – to approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2024. It was <b>Resolved that</b> that the minutes were correct, JR proposed and MC seconded, GZ signed the minutes.</p>	
<p><b>Agenda Item 5 - County Councillor Report</b> – Mr Jeremy Hunt, Chichester North Division – WSCC  <b>The Revised Council Plan and Budget 24/25, which I</b> updated you on in January, was approved by full council on 16th February That also included approval of the increase in your WS share of CT by 4.99% (2.99% Core services + 2% ASC Precept) An increase to an average Band D tax payer of £157 per week.      In 2024/25 WSCC will be investing just over £2bn in the county - including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>£961m - managing schools and education</li> <li>£507m caring for adults (both elderly and working age) &amp; keeping people healthy</li> <li>£204m children’s social care and supporting young people</li> <li>£91m protecting the environment, recycling and waste disposal</li> <li>£83m maintaining our highways</li> <li>£38m running the F&amp;RS</li> <li>£22m supporting local communities</li> <li>£3m supporting the local economy</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Adult Learning goes mobile with the Multiply bus roadshow.</b> West Sussex County Council’s Adult Learning team are taking their Multiply bus on a roadshow across the county, encouraging more</p>	

people to find out about free training and learning opportunities available to help people improve their maths skills.

The county council is offering free local courses and activities for adults (aged 19+) who do not already have a GCSE grade c/4 or higher in maths and want to improve their numeracy skills. The programme's focus is to support residents to engage in free training and activities including:

Increasing number confidence

Improving money management

Confidence to help your children with their homework

Gain maths skills to help you with employment/career progression

Learning new skills in your local community

Helping your small business go greener

Unfortunately there are now only two 'local' destinations where anyone can drop in and visit the

Multiply bus between 10am and 4pm on the following dates are:

Wednesday 20 March, Chichester College, Westgate Fields, Chichester

Wednesday 27 March, Making Theatre Gaining Skills, 50-60 Longford Road, Bognor Regis

Jacque Russell, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People, Learning and Skills, said: "Maths is so important for everyday life and an area where many of us can lack confidence and the necessary skills. Helping people and communities to achieve their potential through learning is a priority for West Sussex County Council. I would encourage anyone interested to visit the bus and find out more about what is on offer."

If you would like to find out more about Adult Learning and Multiply in West Sussex please [visit our webpages](#), email [adult.learning@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:adult.learning@westsussex.gov.uk) or telephone 0330 2224400

**WSCC is encouraging all householders and landowners to check if they have a responsibility to keep a local watercourse free flowing and to help vulnerable areas of the county from flooding.**

If a watercourse, ditch, stream, river or culvert runs adjacent to, through or under your land or property (even if it does not fall within your property boundary as set out by your Title Deeds) then you are likely to be what is known as a "riparian owner". In short, you are responsible for the maintenance of the watercourse to ensure that water is able to flow freely into and along it, so that it doesn't pose a flood risk. The legal responsibilities of a riparian owner are to:

ensure the flow of water is not obstructed or polluted

maintain the bottom and sides of the watercourse (including managing any trees and vegetation growing on the banks)

remove any obstructions, such as rubbish, fallen branches or garden waste

maintain any structures (such as rubbish screens, culverts, weirs and mill gates).

You are more likely to have a responsibility if you live in a rural area due to there not being as widespread a drainage system as in urban areas, particularly alongside roads. Rural roads are especially affected when groundwater levels are high and surface water runs off neighbouring land and property onto them. It is essential that roadside ditches in these areas are kept clear for the water to flow into before it reaches the road and causes surface flooding or even damages the road surface.

Cllr Joy Dennis, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport at West Sussex County Council, said: "Residents can play such an important role in combatting flooding by maintaining the drainage assets they're responsible for, but we're not expecting them to spend a lot of time or money; simply spending half an hour each month clearing debris and removing any blockages to allow water to flow freely is usually more than sufficient and will really make a difference.

To further help reduce flooding incidents across the network, we plan to deliver £1.9m of drainage works this year. We have also doubled our number of jetting vehicles in response to extreme weather and have four vehicles available to attend affected sites to clear flooding or investigate issues. Our

drainage gangs continue to work proactively to clear gullies and a ditch clearance programme is operating at sites identified as having an impact on the highway. We also have approximately £500,000 of small-scale drainage schemes on schedule to be delivered by the end of this month. To find out more about the responsibilities of a riparian owner and our flood prevention works visit our FAQ Document: [Riparian Ownership: Frequently Asked Questions](#)

**Local Issues:**

**Charlton 20mph Scheme** - I have now had discussions with our officers and they have confirmed that extending the scheme to Charlton as a whole would be too extensive for just a TRO scheme. It would therefore need to be a Communities Highways Scheme application. They have agreed that they will accept a TRO scheme to cover the main road through the village, and the village section of Knights Hill. As a CHS will take a long time - and we already have quite a number even though the closing date isn't until July - my suggestion is that for now you put in an application to cover those two roads. Eventually, once that scheme has been implemented, you can always then apply for a further TRO to cover the side roads, although knowing how narrow they are I suspect that even 20mph is an unlikely speed.

TM commented that he was concerned that the small roads in the village that would not be designated as 20 mph would have signs at the junctions stating that the speed limit was 30 mph, this doesn't make much sense. JH said that he would pick this up again when Mike Day returns from holiday.

**Singleton Communities Highways Scheme** - The latest update is that I have recently been asked for my support for the TRO element of this scheme, which I have obviously given. The detailed design has been completed and the we are now looking to take this scheme into the delivery phase, with planned construction in the 2024/25 financial year. Due to required vegetation clearance and the pending TRO, the scheme will likely be delivered early in 2025. I understand that you have rejected the proposed pedestrian safety works at the village green, so currently these will be omitted from the scheme. However, once this plan moves forward it will be too late to make any changes so, whilst you still have a chance to change your minds, I just wanted to make sure that you still wanted to omit these safety enhancements. The council confirmed that was the case, however TM mentioned the re-design of the entrance into the village from Midhurst and was unhappy about the fact that the kerb couldn't be lowered to the current level. TM asked for a drop kerb, however JH pointed out that you can't have a drop kerb on one side of the road and nothing on the other because it could be confusing for disabled/sight impaired pedestrians.

**SW Pumping/overflowing sewage** - TM and I are having a meeting on Monday afternoon with one of GK's (MP) representatives to discuss the ongoing issues. I'm sure TM will update the PC at the PC meeting. An MOP raised the Water Summit being held on 8<sup>th</sup> February and asked if JH could elaborate on it. JH said that he couldn't as there hadn't been a briefing published yet, he will enquire if there is going to be a document and then pass the information on to the clerk.

**Finally, please don't forget to keep an eye on our website, especially our news and campaigns page where you can keep up to date with all our latest news.**

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/about-the-council/news-and-campaigns/>

**Agenda Item 6 - District Councillor Report** – Mr Henry Potter, Goodwood Ward

At the Full Council Meeting on 27th February the Budget for the year 24/25 was agreed and will in fact show a surplus, but the increase in the precept is kept low at 2.99% which equates to £5.42 per annum, a modest 10 pence a week. Cumulatively, including the precepts for WSCC, Sussex Police and your Parish Precept this results in a Annual Council Tax Bill for a Band D property in Singleton of £2,258.07. The Council has been very successful at managing its financial affairs with no borrowings,

and has made many income generating investments over the past few years, we must hope it continues under the new Membership.

The recent flooding certainly tested our resilience to the limit with almost the entire District suffering, though much less than the Lavant Valley. Needless to say Southern Water have failed miserably. I have been looking at the SW Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans and they aren't very encouraging. For a start these Plans were published a year ago, March '23 and all appear to require further investigative work plus agreement and promise of funding from OFWAT. It will be some time before any long term measures can be implemented.

Reading the Technical Summary and Programme Appraisal accompanying the Report, I found it quite depressing with very little hope of much success. If anyone has the time and desire to learn more of, what I can only describe as, an impossible situation which needs URGENT attention, Fuller details can be found by searching 'Southern Water - Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans'. The situation in East Dean is as bad as ever, if not worse, and additional emergency measures were put in place last Wednesday and in Charlton and Singleton not much better, though the Watershed investments to the River Lavant by WSCC a few years ago seems to have alleviated the past flooding of the road through Singleton.

HP reported that Southern Water are doing a lot of work updating their treatment works. It would appear that there is no plan to improve the situation in the local villages until 2028. There was a discussion about what is happening in East Dean and Charlton and the fact that the Environment Agency have had to give permission to pump into the river to avoid sewage entering houses.

Despite a question from Mat Cheshire regarding the Centurion Way to the Meeting with Parishes last Wednesday, the response was a little vague. Announcing that they are still investigating routes to circumnavigate the tunnels, I find that the route from behind West Dean School down a ramp to the Motor Road with NO pavement, to the footpath alongside the A286 as far as the Station Approach Road, then up the approach road into the disused Station Yard has been agreed. This is all detailed in the Planning Application SDNP/24/00520/DCOND the discharge of conditions to SDNP18/05920/FUL. A check of this latest Application shows it has been decided and approved! Yet they say 'we are still looking at alternatives'. Again, the route through Cucumber Farm is still not confirmed. So much work has been done to the old Railway Line near Hat Hill at great expense, yet it is almost inaccessible and goes nowhere. Seems odd to me, so disjointed and poorly thought out.

MC reported that at the meeting that there was a new lady who is responsible for landscape and strategy who was very vague, she agreed to obtain more information. With regard to the route from Cucumber Farm, it would appear that the National Trust favour the original route which has planning permission. JR said that the Rook Wood option had been suspended. With regard to the tunnels, the SDNP are still awaiting bat surveys. The route from West Dean will involve cyclists and walkers to go along the pavement on the A286, SDNP recognise that this is not the best route but the only option at the moment. JH mentioned that at the West Dean Parish Council meeting Ian Graham from West Dean Estate who is also a Councillor, said in strong terms that in the long term the route would not need to go along the road. JR reported that the Hat Hill access was not a priority as the main aim was to get the Centurion Way open. However, it would appear that there could be other options which would involve talking to the NT and West Dean Estates. It is important to be constructively engaged in discussions with SDNP as they are trying to do the right thing.

**Agenda Item 7 – Public Open Forum**

An MOP inquired if there was any information on when the SID would be returned from repair. VN will chase.

<p>Another MOP raised the damage created by Southern Water to the verges, edges of the roads and the hedge opposite Bankside. VN did raise it with Chris James, Stakeholder Manager for Hampshire when he phone because he was providing out of hours cover but VN was not optimistic that this would make any difference. JH said that he had contacted Highways with the same concern and asked them to visit the sites so that they were aware of the damage, he will keep behind Highways to ensure that they are aware of the situation. VN reported that she intended to approach SW with regard to obtaining a contribution towards the school parking project, due to the state of the site. There was also a question as to whether we could apply to Operation Watershed for funds to mitigate the situation e.g. sustainable drainage systems to take excess water away, JH will ask some questions of the necessary people. JH suggested that SW should be the experts in this field and would be the ones to come up with solutions. Goodwood are working with Arun and Rother River Trust (Artr) are looking at flood mitigation measures, however, there is some concern that if the meadow between Charlton and Singleton is allowed to flood there would be implications with the potential of water flooding onto Charlton Road again.</p>	
<p><b>Agenda Item 8 - Village Matters</b></p> <p>Southern Water – TM reported that he and JH attended two meetings today, one with the Trust Manager of Artr and the other with one of Gillian Keegan’s team working out of the Chichester Office. Joseph from GK’s office reported that there was a Water Conference being held on 22<sup>nd</sup> March, this is a GK initiative. TM will be attending. JR suggested that three questions should be raised – what is the intended mitigation against pollution, infrastructure damage and resident/business disruption? The current mitigation is inadequate. It was also felt that the Environment Agency until recently have not taken enough interest in the pollution issue. An MOP raised the issue of sewage spillage in the ditch at the back of The Leys which has been an issue for many years. VN reported that there was a blockage through the run of pipes in that area and that SW had blasted the drains to clear the blockage.</p> <p>Events – D Day Celebration – GZ reported that the idea has been raised and that an annual event for our two villages brings together residents and reinforces our community. There is some doubt as to whether there will be a Village Fete this year, due to the previous organising committee being disbanded. If this doesn’t go ahead, it seems a good idea to hold an event either for D Day or later in the year. A discussion took place, concerns were raised about who would organise the event. GZ suggested we form a working party to explore ideas and organise the event.</p> <p>Centurion Way – Covered in Agenda Item 6.</p> <p>School Parking – VN reported that we need to raise £50,000, this will provide concrete grasscrete along the length of the grass verge to the end of the playing field. Fundraising has started, our application for £20,000 from the UK Prosperity Fund has been accepted for consideration, should hear early April. CIL application for £15,000 is being completed, submission date 12<sup>th</sup> April. Star Energy application for £2,000, will hear by end of March. VN will be contacting other local businesses and Southern Water. There was a discussion about how to encourage parents to use The Leys parking. MC reported that there is a scheduled meeting with the headmistress to update her and this situation will be raised with her but in his experience all that can be done is to make parents aware of available parking but parents will at the end of the day park where it is most convenient for them.</p> <p>CHS Update – VN contacted the project manager for an update. Consultation with the police has begun for the 20mph speed limit on the A286 and through Singleton Village. The start date is scheduled for Nov/December 2024. The damaged chevron by the café will be repaired at this time.</p> <p>Charlton Gates – images of the style of gates has been circulated, it was agreed that they didn’t need to be the same design as the Singleton ones. All agreed on the preferred design and funding has been secured.</p> <p>Village Clear Up – It was agreed to schedule a date in July at the May Parish Council Meeting. There was a suggestion that a board is provided for people to give suggestions of jobs that need to be covered. An MOP mentioned overhanging bushes on the track from Charlton War Memorial to the</p>	

<p>Racecourse. The Chichester Volunteers have scheduled a job to clear the path alongside the W&amp;D and at the bottom of Town Lane for July and the W&amp;D have been approached to ask if the debris can be deposited on their compost heaps. Dog Bins, it is not possible to install any new bins because CDC do not have the resources to empty them, however, VN will enquire if the bin at the bottom of Levin Down in Charlton could be moved to North Lane. An MOP reported a broken finger post at Knights Hill end of the meadow, VN will report it.</p> <p>Village Design Statement – It doesn't carry any weight now but the SDNP said that they would not give consideration to them. It was agreed that VN would publish on the website with a view that residents could view recommendations if considering submitting a planning application. TM to supply a copy to VN.</p>	
<p><b>Agenda Item 10 – Finance</b></p> <p>Total in Current Account (15/03/24) – £6,193.82</p> <p>Current Reserves (held in the Current Account) – Playground Repairs £1,982.00. General Maintenance £471.00</p> <p>Balance in Savings Account – £7,098.37</p> <p><b>Funds Received since 12/01/24</b></p> <p>Interest on Savings Account - £26.45</p> <p>Barclays – Compensation for bad service - £75.00</p> <p>VAT to be Claimed - £1775.86</p>	
<p><b>Agenda Item 13 – Planning</b></p> <p>Reports have been circulated, posted on the notice boards and website.</p>	
<p><b>Meeting Closed – 21.00</b></p>	
<p><b>Confirmed that these minutes are a true and accurate record of the meeting.</b></p> <p>Signed: GRAHAM ZACHARIAS</p> <p>Name &amp; Position: CHAIRMAN</p> <p>Date:</p>	