

Reports for Parish Council Meeting to be held on Monday 18th March 2024

Graham Zacharias

Given my recent prolonged absence, there is really not much for me to say. I have, however, reported 4 potholes, all bad, in the past week. I suspect the repair people are currently overwhelmed by the sheer quantity of problems reported so it may be a while before our issues are addressed.

Jeremy Rigby

The Leys Parking Project

The bicycle posts are being fitted this Saturday. EV charging remains an aspiration and is addressed elsewhere.

Tree Planting

The Lord Lieutenant of West Sussex conducted a ceremonial tree planting of the Coronation Commemorative tree on Friday 16th February opposite the village hall and unveiled a plaque, with the assistance of some children from Singleton Primary School. This was reported in the [South Downs News](#)

School Parking

Applications for funding are being made by the Clerk, although access to CIL and significant infrastructure funding is challenging given the leaning towards funding projects that reduce vehicles or generate income locally – neither of these apply to this project since it is for visitors and the school. Decisions will be made on the 1st April on our application for 20K from the UK Prosperity Fund. A CIL application will be submitted by the 12th April, the application will focus on parking for visitors to the SDNP as it is believed we might stand more chance of success, the application is for 10K. There are also challenges in gaining official approval to progress the scheme without incurring significant administrative cost and delay, Jeremy Hunt is working with the Clerk on resolving this situation. It is looking increasingly unlikely that this will be able to be commissioned this year, a more likely date would be Easter next year. However, to maintain momentum and refine plans, a meeting has been arranged with the Head Teacher of the school to discuss their thoughts on the issue and school preferences. Some residents have suggested making the verge inaccessible to vehicle with posts but this would then potentially increase risk to pedestrians getting out of vehicles, particularly children, and cause traffic congestion at school drop off and collection times.

Centurion Way

No correspondence has been received initiating a proposal to change the line of the cycle path from the already approved route, beyond Cucumber Farm, around the edge of Rooks Wood. I am advised that the National Trust are sympathetic to avoiding any new route that goes directly through the copse but have not had any official confirmation to this effect. The NT prefers to engage directly with SDNPA. Local residents remain very concerned about the

Aspirations to develop a new access route to the Centurion Way between the cricket club and Hat Hill ramp remain but have not been progressed since the last meeting.

Emergency parking for residents

As agreed at the previous PC meeting I have submitted a formal request to the Weal & Downland Museum to give access in principle to Singleton residents for car parking on the event of an emergency – eg flooding. This would only be prior agreement at the time.

Tony Marshall

Charlton village gateways and 20mph

The principle of installing village gateways for Charlton was approved as part of the Community Highways Scheme. Part-funding by the PC was approved at the November 2023 meeting. I have since had a pledge of £100 from The Fox Goes Free and a pledge from Goodwood Composites (who manufacture in Charlton Mill Way) to meet the rest of the cost. The purpose of this report is to gain PC approval for the design, which differs from those in Singleton.

Having become aware of a preference for something with a more rustic style, I created mock up images based on the '5-bar gate' style, which I posted on the Charlton WhatsApp group. The 14 responses included 'Excellent', 'brilliant', 'blooming marvellous', 'really great', 'very smart'; there were no negative responses. There followed a meeting with Mike Dare at Highways, who approved their locations: on both sides of the road coming in from the east and, due to visibility issues at the junction with Charlton Mill Way, on the left as approached from the south.

The updated mock ups are attached, showing their locations on a satellite view map, designed to be at the start of the proposed 20mph area.

However, I promoted the gateways as part of the plan to get the 20mph limit in Charlton and having submitted the TRO application for 20mph on 18/11/23, on 21/2/24 I received a response suggesting it was more suited to a CHS. So I've replied pointing out that it was originally part of the CHS, but was removed in order to increase singleton's chances of success; I also wrote to Mike Dare for his help with this. I'm awaiting a further response.

Southern Water

Having established that there is a problem with the pipeline across the Leys Meadow, in December the temporary pipeline was set up because the EA had banned SW from pumping into the river. However, in mid-January SW declared that it was an 'emergency' and started pumping into the river. On 21 February, I suspect in response to the scathing press release issued by the Arun and Rother Rivers Trust, which gained coverage in local newspapers, they stopped pumping into the river and set up a pump at the bottom of North Lane, Charlton, to enable steady and quieter extraction into tankers. However, due to complaints from a local holiday accommodation business, this was removed three days later. Then on 6 March the situation became so bad that the same business was being flooded by water coming up from the sewers – so the pump was reinstalled. Then 2 days later, SW declared it 'an emergency' once again removed the pump from North Lane and restarted pumping into the river. The manhole between Bankside and the school is leaking raw sewage on a regular basis and each time SW sends someone along to clean it up. The situation seems to be changing daily, so I hope to be able to provide more information at the meeting.

On 26 February, along with Neil Georges, Chairman of East Dean PC, I was interviewed on BBC Radio Sussex about pumping into the river. Again, I believe this was prompted by the ARRT press release. I felt we got our points across, but I was extremely unhappy when they followed our interviews by reading out what I believe to have been a deliberately misleading statement from Southern Water, which suggested we were making a lot of fuss about just two occasions that pumping took place. We were given no opportunity to respond to this, despite the fact that when the researcher who first contacted me read it to me, I had explained that it was referring to the village of Lavant, not the river Lavant; I said then that I thought it was deliberately misleading. However, having expressed my unhappiness in no uncertain terms after the interview, they have promised to keep up with the story; and having predicted that SW would declare another 'emergency' and restart pumping into the river, I was able to pass on to them the email from SW last Friday informing us of this and they are talking about revisiting the story this week or next.

I have a meeting with Aimee from ARRT on the morning of the 18/3 and one with Luke Carr, Gillian Keegan's representative, in the afternoon. I'll report on these at the PC meeting.

Dog waste bin in North Lane

The subject of a waste bin at the bottom of North Lane has been raised before and I've resisted this, because (a) we don't have a problem with litter in that area and I've no wish to create one by encouraging people to do other than take their rubbish home and (b) dog walkers have the bin at the bottom of the Levin Down footpath, giving the dog time to work up to it...

However, my neighbour in North Lane has spotted that many dog owners seem to be tossing their bags into the laurel bush opposite her driveway (by the little brick pump house on the verge), presumably as they approach the lay-by coming down the lane. She has suggested that a bin on the verge between the laurel and the fence to its right would be a good idea. This is a matter of meters from the layby, clearly visible to dog owners walking up or down the lane, but should not attract litter from those wanting to clear out their cars in the layby. My neighbour is content that it would be opposite her driveway. I attach some photos showing the location.

Sunnyhurst drainage

On 11 March 2024, commenting on the application for the alternative scheme, the EA commented that *'the proposed scheme has not correctly identified the presence of the [Source Protection Zone] SPZ3 and therefore may not have made an accurate assessment of the risk to principal aquifer. We would encourage the use of some attenuation or pollution prevention measures should be present in the system. We recommend that the applicant ensures that the surface water is free of pollutants before reaching the infiltration basin as this location is within a Source Protection Zone 3 with shallow groundwater'*.

On 12 March 2024 the application was formally refused on the grounds that *"The Local Planning Authority has received insufficient information to determine whether the proposed alternative surface water drainage scheme would result in an acceptable form of drainage for this site.... In the light of the applicants failure to agree to an extension of time to enable the continued assessment of the application the LPA has no alternative but to refuse planning permission."*

CHS Scheme

Feedback received from the project manager:

We are now ready to start informal consultation with the Police re the speed limit proposal, so we can proceed with the formal advertisement of the TRO (Traffic Regulation Order). I will advise with dates when the time comes.

The scheme is part of our 2024/25 planned delivery with proposed construction November/December 2024 (programme still not finalised).

I would also like to advise that I have agreed with the maintenance team to replace the damaged chevron at Cobblers Row as part of the scheme and realign the intermittent edge markings at Number 4 Grooms Yard to better align with the existing solid edge line to try and direct traffic away from the building

Mat Chesshire

Meeting attended of the SDNP.

Summarised the range of projects undertaken across the park, including educational outreach projects, volunteer groups, amongst others.

Key points that were being pushed currently:

CIL funding - Parish Councils are sat on £1 million worth of funding that needs to be spent on local projects. The Park Authority need this to be spent.

Take the Lead campaign needs promoting. We are approaching lambing season, so it is requested that parishioners are reminded through the usual avenues that they should have their dogs on leads where there is livestock.

There is an ongoing project looking at the impact of deer on protected natural sites. This will look at how this can be mitigated and the population be managed.

If there are shared aims between parishes, the weight that they carry would be increased with councils working together on these issues.

Village Design Statements were discussed. The Government reforms of planning make these virtually redundant. They can still be held and then considered as part of a supplementary design paper, which means that the SDNP would still consider them as part of this process. It would be a material consideration. The SDNP has to restart its own document which will be called a Park Planning Code. They were not looking forward to doing it.

A question was asked about the tunnels on the Centurion Way. The answer given stated that they were not looking to go through the tunnels at this stage. They said that the Singleton tunnel was bypassed in a suitable way and they were looking at alternative ways around the West Dean and Cocking tunnels. A question was further asked about bats and the response was that nothing would be done without taking into account research. They have commissioned this and hope for this to be completed before the end of next year. I asked them for further details with respect to timings. They couldn't be more specific but said that progress was being made with tricky discussions, including those with the landowners involved. Two of their management team replied, one who is new to the role who said she would explore further and respond in more detail offline.

Sam Cox **EV Charging**

Following the recent parking project, a number of discussions have been held with WSCC & Connected Kerb, for inclusion of the parking area in their community EV scheme. A recent site visit suggests that the site is a suitable one and we are awaiting feedback from the project team as to whether it can be included in phase three of the rollout, which would mean installation later this year. The chargers are provided by way of central funding and offer an ability to charge EVs for people that don't have either workplace or home charging. As the rollout of EVs becomes more prevalent, this should help our rural community to remain independently mobile. We would likely receive 4 charging points at this stage, and the spaces wouldn't be restricted to EVs at this point, although in the future when EVs are more prevalent, such restrictions would be likely to enable easy access to the chargers.

Maintenance

Following enquiries on both WhatsApp groups, The Valley Diary and the last Minutes, we haven't received any requests for maintenance/clear up projects in the villages, beyond the pavement clearing on the A286, which we are talking to Chichester Volunteers regarding. As such, the maintenance day on the 23rd March has been cancelled - I am conscious that there have been a number of ad job projects which people have supported over the last few months, and thus understand the lack of requests. A small group will perform a few basic tasks such as village gate cleaning at a time to be arranged separately.

Jo Ward **Weald and Downland**

The museum have agreed in principle to support the parish residents in event of severe risk such as from flooding for vehicle parking. Formal letter been sent to the museum to progress.

Henry Smith Charity

I am now the chair as well as a trustee.

Vivien Nuttall – Clerk

Bulbs – We will be receiving some daffodil bulbs from Goodwood once they have finished flowering outside the race track. I suggest they are planted around the Leys parking area, however, I am not yet aware of how many we will receive. We will need some volunteers to plant them.

Finance Report

Total in Current Account (15/03/24) – £6,193.82

Current Reserves (held in the Current Account) – Playground Repairs £1,982.00. General Maintenance £471.00

Balance in Savings Account – £7,098.37

Funds Received since 12/01/24

Interest on Savings Account - £26.45

Barclays – Compensation for bad service - £75.00

VAT to be Claimed - £1775.86

Jeremy Hunt

The Revised Council Plan and Budget 24/25, which I 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:

£961m - managing schools and education

£507m caring for adults (both elderly and working age) & keeping people healthy

£204m children's social care and supporting young people

£91m protecting the environment, recycling and waste disposal

£83m maintaining our highways

£38m running the F&RS

£22m supporting local communities

£3m supporting the local economy

Adult Learning goes mobile with the Multiply bus roadshow. West Sussex County Council's Adult Learning team are taking their Multiply bus on a roadshow across the county, encouraging more 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

Jacquie 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 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.

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 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.

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.

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/>

Henry Potter

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.

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 Rly. Line near Hat Hill at great expense yet it is almost inaccessible and goes no where. Seems odd to me, so disjointed and poorly thought out.