



DRAFT Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at 7pm on Monday 20th January 2024

<p>Present: Cllr Graham Zacharias (GZ); Cllr Jeremy Rigby (JR); Cllr Karen Nash (KN); Cllr Peter Gattrell (PG) Cllr Jeremy Hunt (JH WSCC); Cllr Henry Potter (HP CDC) 5 members of the public also attended.</p>	
<p>Agenda Item 1 – Apologies for Absence – DH, TM</p>	
<p>Agenda Item 2 – Declaration of Interests/ Dispensation Requests - There were no declarations of interest or dispensation requests.</p>	
<p>Agenda Item 3 - Minutes of the last Parish Council Meeting – to approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting and Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 18th November 2024. It was Resolved that that the minutes were correct, all councillors agreed, GZ signed the minutes.</p>	
<p>Agenda Item 4 – District Councillor Report – Henry Potter, Goodwood Ward</p> <p>Little to report this month except the deep concern regarding the Government proposal to implement Unitary Authorities throughout England by amalgamating County, District and Borough Councils into single Devolved Authorities with the potential to have an elected Mayor. It is early days yet but there appears to be a sense of urgency attached to this proposal and rushed decisions are seldom good for democracy. Diane Shepherd, our Chief Executive, has issued a statement which I have recently circulated to you. Diane will be giving a further update to the Meeting of All Parishes which is being held on line via the Zoom platform on 3rd of February.</p> <p>The other thing I can mention which will affect Your Parish to a small, degree, on Monday 06/01 a meeting of the Development Plan and Infrastructure Panel considered requests from various Authorities for allocations of District Council held CIL Funds, which are considerable. Sussex Police have requested for consideration £117,000 for the phased introduction of ANPR Cameras at 13 locations throughout the District. Two of which I’m happy to say are, one on the A 285 in Halnaker and the other on Lavant Road, Chichester. The precise locations are not known at the present moment. At the meeting on Monday, it was unclear if Sussex Police are aware that funding for this proposal is available, if Full Council approve the DPIP recommendation next week there is little reason for this scheme not to proceed forthwith without a ‘phased’ approach. All members of the DPI Panel agreed the sooner the better for our residents benefit, not just to cut speeding but to track criminals as well. Our Officers will engage with Sussex Police to progress the schemes as soon as possible.</p> <p>Finally, I’ve noticed in the latest published list of Planning Applications, Star Energy are applying to install cabling to enable the on site electric power produced at their site in the forest to enter the National Grid. This can only be a good thing for our energy resources.</p>	
<p>Agenda Item 5 – County Councillor Report – Mr Jeremy Hunt, Chichester North Division WSCC</p> <p>Council Budget and Priorities. The council has now finalised its budget for 2025/26 and once again, despite the ever-increasing pressures, mainly around social care, we are presenting a balanced budget. Not only is it balanced, but we are putting in just under £60m of additional funding, meaning more money in frontline services, with no cuts to services. The County Council is expected to spend just over £2.2bn on day-today services (including schools) and just over £118m through capital investment into areas such as roads, highways infrastructure, schools, Fire and Rescue service, and digital infrastructure. After taking account of grants, fees and charges and other contributions, our net revenue budget 2025/26 is proposed to be £827m. The proposed budget will be presented to the Performance & Finance Scrutiny Committee on Wednesday 22nd January, Public Cabinet on</p>	

Wednesday 29th January and finally presented to full council on Friday 14th February. All these meetings will be webcast and obviously the papers will be available on our website.

The Government's Devolution Proposals. The government has published its white paper on devolution and the implementation period is extremely challenging. Basically, the proposal is that areas will become Mayoral Strategic Authorities (with a minimum population of 1.5 million). There were two choices, either you put forward a plan to become a mayoral area or the government would introduce legislation to achieve this aim. Those County Councils, or Unitary authorities, wishing to be on the priority programme were asked to register their expressions of interest to be a Priority Scheme Mayoral area by Friday 10th January. Following approval at their respective cabinet meetings, West Sussex, together with East Sussex and Brighton and Hove, subsequently submitted their combined expression of interest on Friday 10th January. It was made clear in the white paper that if authorities did not choose to do this then the government would enact legislation to force them to go down the devolution route by May 2028. The proposal is that for the areas on the priority list (confirmation is expected end January/early February) will have elections for a mayor in May 2026. Any decision about the elections will be made by the Government Minister not the County Council.

A Mayoral Area will cover a minimum of 1.5m people, and the mayor will eventually (not all at first) have powers such as:

Economic development and regeneration;
Environment and climate change;
Health, wellbeing and public service reform;
Strategic Planning (roads and infrastructure);
Transport & Local Infrastructure;
Economic development; skills & Employment Support;
Fire and Rescue and Police.

Running parallel with - but separate from - devolution there will be Local Government Reform (LGR). The proposal is that current two tier areas (CC plus D's & B's) of E & W Sussex will become individual Unitary authorities with one tier of government. B&H is already a unitary authority, so our Strategic Mayoral area will be made of three separate Unitary Authorities - E. Sussex, W. Sussex and B&H. The government will be publishing a paper on LG reform shortly and the CC, together with the D's & B's will be required to put forward our plans by this Autumn.

If our bid to be included in the Priority Scheme is successful, then the Minister has suggested that in order to meet the demanding timetable of both Mayoral elections and LGR - and to avoid any disruptions to the process - he is minded to lay secondary legislation to postpone local elections from May 2025 to May 2026. Both E. & W. Sussex, together with B&H have requested the deferral of elections, as have our immediate neighbours, Hampshire, Kent and Surrey.

The proposal is that in May 2027 there will be elections for a shadow Unitary Authority which will run in tandem with the CC and the D's and B's until May 2028. At that point, the CC and the D's and B's will cease to exist and the shadow unitary will take over full control. In the Devolution White Paper it is made very clear that localism is very much to the fore of these plans and engagement with parish and town councils is planned to increase, devolving more powers to local areas.

The Devolution White Paper can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-devolution-white-paper-power-and-partnership-foundations-for-growth/english-devolution-white-paper>

It was considered that as a Parish Council there were two main areas to keep in focus: what the local representation would be - would the nominated unitary councillor(s) have sufficient capacity and a realistic geographic area of responsibility to be able to understand local issues and, if there were to be more responsibilities/commitments placed on Parish Councils would Singleton & Charlton Parish Council have the capacity to be able to absorb them effectively.

Local Issues:

Charlton 20MPH Scheme - The public consultation is currently running and will close on 6th February. Following a review of the consultation, assuming there are no objections, it will be signed

off and go forward for implementation. If there are any objections it will be passed to me to review those objections and then make the final decision. VN was informed by TM that there have been quite a few comments from East Dean residents about the scheme and he has asked all residents that they make these known via the consultation.

Singleton CH Scheme - I'm delighted to see that this is now being implemented on the ground. Hopefully not causing too much disruption to local residents, but I'm sure it will be worth it in the end. A great result for all the work put in by the PC road safety team.

Southern Water - delighted to see that extensive lining works are currently going on in Charlton and will shortly be extending down to Bankside. I visited the works in Charlton recently and was impressed by both the extensive work going on, as well as the helpfulness of the engineers that I spoke to. JH reported that he asked if the pipe across the meadow would be replaced, it will not be, however, it is hoped that the re-lining that is applied at great pressure may straighten the pipe.

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/>

Also, a reminder that all our public meetings are webcast live and are also archived, so you can always view them later. <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/about-the-council/how-the-council-works/watch-county-council-and-committee-meetings-online/>

Agenda Item 6 – Public Open Forum

Kate Whitton introduced herself as the Chalk Stream Resilience Office for the Western Sussex River Trust, she is responsible for the River Lavant and the Aldingbourne. Her role is to look after the rivers, via restoration and enhancement. A report has been commissioned of the River Lavant from East Dean Pond to the top of Lavant. She will be working with landowners and riparian owners to restore the Lavant to a healthy river. She would like to talk to riparian owners on how they can help with this. A document produced by Norfolk River Trust for riparian owners and the report on the River Lavant will be sent as attachments to the minutes and are also on the parish council website. She is happy to receive emails, her email address is kate@arrat.org.uk. GZ asked what resources she had, Kate said that CDC are funding the project for three years. There are also talks and film nights which are also posted on the parish council website. JR asked how healthy the Lavant is from 1 to 10, 10 being good. Kate reported that there is life in the river, however, at present the river is close to 1.

A member of the public asked if the parish council had been asked to comment on the planning application from Star Energy regarding Construction of a below ground cable connection to the local distribution network, to allow for the exportation of electricity generated on site, to the National Grid VN reported that the parish council have not received any information. It was reported that the permits from the Environment Agency and Planning expire in 2031. The MOP will forward information to the Clerk.

Agenda Item 7 - Council Matters–

Grass Cutting Contract – Three quotes were circulated to the councillors and the decision was taken to award the contract for the next three years to Keith Goacher. JR suggested that we highlight taking care when strimming around the wooden playground fences and equipment.

Jubilee Gardens - A quote for £140 has been received to tidy up the trees and bushes, however, Josh Collins has offered to do it for free. It was agreed to give Josh a deadline to do the work and if he finds he doesn't have time, then VN will instruct the contractor who has quoted to do the job.

Agenda Item 8 – Village Matters

School Parking – It was agreed via emails to install some more robust fencing to protect the grass area outside the playground, this is still a temporary measure until we are able to raise the £50,000 required to install a purpose-built parking area. Lawns and Hedges will start the work at the beginning of February. All materials and a very small figure for labour have been paid for out of the parking reserves. JR raised the fact that the parking problem for school drop off and pick up will and has moved elsewhere. Temporary fencing has been installed outside the Leys properties that face onto the track that leads to the gate into the meadow. There was a suggestion that the school could help

by staggering drop off times, however, the school have been approached with various suggestions of how to alleviate the parking problem but unfortunately, they are not interested.

EV Chargers – JR reported that six 7.5KW chargers will be commissioned next month, they will take 5-6 hours for a full charge. The chargers are owned by Connected Kerb and it is their responsibility to maintain them. The installation of the chargers was one of the terms for receiving the grant from Rees Jeffreys. There is no restriction to parking in the area, however it was agreed to avoid confusion to purchase some signs saying, ‘unrestricted parking’. JR will source the signs.

Southern Water – KN explained that the two units situated in the meadow near the road are highly efficient filtering units. The frequency of emptying the containers will be less and the water released into the river will not be contaminated. This equipment was initially going to be sited further down the meadow, however, SW didn’t realise the weight of these containers and it was not possible to crane them in to the original position. It is hoped that with all the work being done by SW these filtering units will not be needed. It has been confirmed that if generators are required, they will be positioned further down the meadow. SW are communicating well, a weekly report is on the parish council website – singletonparishcouncil.co.uk and progress is progressing well with sealing the private laterals in Charlton and the manhole covers are being sealed in the meadow. They will be moving on to Bankside once Charlton is completed and residents have received a letter explaining about the sealing of the private laterals. They are then hoping to move straight on to the rest of Singleton, however, this depends on bringing the funding forward. If this is not possible the work will begin in April.

Centurion Way – JR’s report was circulated prior to the meeting and is also available on the parish council website. SDNP have engaged with landowners to come up with a solution to create a path from Singleton Railway Bridge to the Cricket Pitch, bypassing Hat Hill, the new path would join at the bottom of Hat Hill by the little bridge, they have also identified some sources of funding. There are concerns from various stakeholders regarding his suggested path as to the access to and from Singleton Village. There are a number of routes being considered and stakeholders will be involved with any decision. It is anticipated that it will be at least 2 years before any work would commence. They have identified stakeholders who would be involved in any decisions. There was going to be a meeting of the stakeholders at the beginning of January, however, it was cancelled due to illness and is going to be rescheduled.

CHS – Work commenced on the 7th January, to date the courtesy crossing outside the museum has been upgraded and the junction at the end of Town Lane with the A286 has been modified and they are currently working on the courtesy crossing by the cricket club. Following that they will move on to the bus stops, this is the most challenging part of the scheme and then the courtesy crossing at Little Drove Mews. Following that work will take place on new road markings. It is anticipated that the whole project will take 6 weeks to complete.

Agenda Item 9 – Finance

Total in Current Account (17/01/25) – £9,689.11

Payments – Unexpected invoice from TEEC for website hosting for 2023-24 and domain name 2022-24 - £413.97.

Receipts – Received Donation of £100 from Moon Ball Productions who are producing the Dr Who documentary in Charlton. This will go into the General Maintenance Reserve.

VAT to be claimed - £2,110.16

Current Reserves (held in the Current Account) –

Playground Maintenance - Payment has been made for the roundabout surface, this has reduced the reserve to £392.68 (There was a £500 contribution from Goodwood for the surface).

General Maintenance £1,018.00.

School Parking – £580.86, (£1,519.14 paid to Lawns & Hedges for the fencing).

Total Reserves - £1,991.54

Balance in Savings Account – £7,178.31

AOB

Village Event – PG suggested that the young people of the village could organise the event. JR suggested that PG identify people who will be willing to get involved and suggest ideas before the next parish council meeting in March. PG also suggested that it might be an idea to have a regular social event to include councillors from East Dean and Singleton and Charlton Parish Council, one

suggestion was a valley pub crawl (not all the pubs on one day but perhaps one a month). It would enable the councillors to get to know each other and may spark some new ideas.

Recruitment – Three parishioners have indicated that they have an interest in possibly joining the council. DH has already started a conversation with one of the people and GZ will talk to the other two to gauge their interest.

Village Hall – GZ explained that the management committee now has some new members who are keen to organise more events in the hall in order to raise money to enable the hall to cover their costs. It was suggested that the Western Sussex River Trust could hold a talk, it was felt that parishioners may like to get involved and understand the aims of the trust.

Meeting Closed – 20.31

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

Signed: GRAHAM ZACHARIAS

Name & Position: ACTING CHAIRMAN

Date: