



NORTHCHAPEL PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of a meeting held at the Village Hall on Thursday 16th January 2025 at 8pm

Present: Councillors Mr Alex Baker, Mrs Jules Fraser, Miss Laura Green, Mrs Sharon Holden (Chair), Mr Melvin Greet, Mrs Samantha Jones, Mrs Daphne Trussler and Mr Ed Warren

In attendance: Mrs Helen Cruikshank, Parish Clerk

The Chair thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and wished all a Happy New Year.

There were two members of the public in attendance.

A member of the public spoke about her recent planning application for a proposed single storey residential dwelling for an older person on land adjacent to her current house. The land is not in the settlement area but it will release up a family home. If the application is refused by Chichester District Council, she will have to leave the village as there is no suitable housing available and the community loses a valuable member of the community.

Another member of the public was in attendance for the discussion on the Village Road Safety project and a request for Parish Council support for concealed entrance signs on the A283 before Chidfield Barns due to the high speed of traffic travelling in both directions and numerous accidents. This was discussed under 6/25 Working Party Reports: Village Road Safety Project.

PARISH COUNCIL BUSINESS

1/25 Apologies for absence: Apologies were received from District Councillors Gareth Evans and Charles Toddhunter, PCSO Matt Isles and Parish Councillor John Sochovsky.

2/25 Declarations of Interest: Councillor Green declared an interest in agenda item 6/25 Working Party Reports: MUGA as secretary of the Sports Club. Councillor Holden declared an interest in agenda item 8/25 as a member of the Village Hall Management Committee.

3/25 Minutes: The Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 5th December 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed.

4/25 Reports from the Chichester District and West Sussex County Councillors

County Councillor Janet Duncton sent through the following report:

- First of all, a Happy and good 2025 to you all. This first report for 2025 is full of don't knows and uncertainties as you will all know from the reports you have read on the Governments devolution plans. Nothing I can tell you is as yet set in stone so I will just give you brief outlines on what I know so far and say the situation changes almost daily so it means keeping your eyes on press reports and apologies in advance if things I say don't come to fruition or turn out to be different. It's hard to keep up at this point in time. What I know so far in broad terms is that the Government is bringing in devolution and Councils need to put forward their plans for what type of Strategic or Unitary Governance they want. The County Cabinet is meeting on the 9th January because they have to make their submission by the 10th. As you can tell with the Christmas period, it doesn't allow much time and I can only tell you that

there have been quite a lot of on-line chats over the previous few weeks. If you are interested the Cabinet meeting on the 9th is webcast so you can look in. The agenda will contain 3 items and in brief to ask the Government to join its priority programme for devolution and consider a mayoral combined authority for Sussex. To discuss preparing to develop plans for Unitary councils across Sussex if invited to do so and to invite Government to postpone County Council elections in May 2025 so that proposals can be worked up. The Government can only delay elections by one year legally and if it happens, they need to delay for 2 years so I think they will need new legislation. However, it's watch this space and please don't hold me to account if things change. I can only report what I know so far. It looks like all change though.

- The West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service is now open for applications for full time applicants to this Service. If you know of any who are interested apply now.
- Obviously as you are all aware it's difficult over the Christmas period but everything has to be kept going. You can imagine with all the wet weather how difficult a time it is for Highways in particular. Saturated land means more likelihood for trees to fall and drains to block cause flooding and I know several roads that have had to close if only for short periods because of the danger of flooded roads. Be careful if you're out and about. When we get the ice, the gritters are ready and acting as necessary. They have been out several times already.
- The new Chief Executive at South Downs National Park has hit the ground running and although he knows quite a lot of the area, he has 100 miles to get to know a lot more and importantly getting to know all the departments and staff that work for us. I have every confidence that he will succeed with this heavy workload and soon come up with his ideas for us all to consider. Along with everyone else we are not expecting more Government money so thank goodness the South Downs National Park Trust which I sit on is able to obtain funds to carry on with environmental work in the South Downs.
- One of the smaller items at the moment is a fund to help communities with litter picking. Individuals can apply for funds for equipment as can Parish and Town Councils. If a Council applies the amount is more than if an individual applies.

Please let me know if there are some issues you want me to investigate and as ever you can contact me via janet.duncton@westsussex.gov.uk or my mobile 07979152898.

District Councillor Charles Toddhunter and Gareth Evans had sent through the following report:

Local Updates

Lagoon 3 – Just before Christmas the CDC legal team let us know that the owner of Lagoon 3 has withdrawn the appeal against his conviction for failing to comply with the Council's enforcement notice. We will be working closely with officers to understand what the next steps are that we can take as a Council to pursue the removal of the lagoon.

Loxwood Shop – Construction of the retail unit at Nursery Green continues and in November the shop owner submitted a licencing application to CDC.

Planning and Environmental Health – Gareth and I are currently in touch with several residents across the ward who have reported Planning Enforcement or Environmental Health issues to us.

CDC Wide Updates

Local Plan and revised NPPF – A full report on the December 2024 changes to the NPPF is due to be presented to the Development Planning and Infrastructure Panel on 21st January. Officers are hopeful that there will be no impact to the emerging Local Plan, although we await the Inspectors' definitive comments to be certain.

Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation – In December the government published a paper outlining plans for both devolution and the reorganisation of local government. This will introduce Strategic Authorities with an elected mayor across England, so that Government can hand more powers down from Whitehall. Separately The government wants all areas to have unitary councils across with each serving a minimum of 500,000 residents. West Sussex covers a total population of 900,000, so, the government could decide to create one or two unitary authorities within our area. This would mean all of the existing

District/Borough and County councils merging into the new unitary council (or councils). Parish Councils would not be affected. It is very early days, but we will keep you informed of any progress.

Surgeries

Cllr. Gareth Evans is available to meet residents face to face via one of his regular surgeries. Gareth will be available at the advertised venues from 12pm-2pm:

Saturday 11th January, Kirdford Stores, Kirdford, 12 to 2pm

Saturday 25th January, Plaistow Stores, Plaistow, 12 to 2pm

Saturday 8th February, Stag Inn, Ebernoe, 12 to 2pm

Saturday 1st of March, Old Mill Café, Wisborough Green, 12 to 2pm

Saturday 15th of March, Northchapel Club, Northchapel, 12 to 2pm

Should the suggested dates not be suitable for you or there are any other reasons preventing you from attending then it is possible to arrange home visits, telephone calls or zoom meetings.

Contact details are:

Cllr. Gareth Evans, email gbevans@chichester.gov.uk or telephone 07958918056

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/GarethEvansLoxwood>

Cllr. Charles Todhunter, email ctodhunter@chichester.gov.uk or telephone 07500 577 777

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Charles4Loxwood>

5/25 Police report: PCSO Matt Isles is not able to attend tonight. If there are any emerging issues, please let the Clerk know so she can inform him. Since November, there has been a total of 5 reports in the Northchapel area. One was ASB and the rest were “other” category including welfare checks and road obstructions.

6/25 Working Party Reports

- **Allotments:** There was nothing to report. The Clerk had recently received an enquiry about allotment availability from a new resident.
- **Village Green:** The flag on the Village Green keeps getting caught in the tree so it needs cutting back. The Clerk to contact Apples & Pears and AJ Stemp for a quote. The Christmas tree lights will be taken down at the weekend and the tree then removed.
- **Highways including parking issues:** Councillors are keeping an eye on the village parking issues. School buses are still causing problems on the main road. Councillor Baker kindly offered to take a look at the pothole by the Church car park entrance as it is not WSCC Highways land but part of Manorial Waste, owned by the Parish Council. Emergency works to repair damaged ATC loops is happening tonight 7.30pm-11pm. The Parish Council was not aware of this until the meeting.
- **Village Road Safety Project and Speedwatch:** Councillor Green reported that the fourth Speedwatch session has been carried out. It is a difficult time of year to carry out sessions as it cannot be done in the dark. Several more places in the village have been identified as suitable locations however more people need to offer to do sessions and a person to potentially input data if they are allowed to.

Councillor Green said the proposed 20mph zone outside the school is progressing. Since the development of Chidfield Barns in 2019, there has been no change to the road. When turning into the driveway, residents frequently have vehicles overtaking and tailgating causing near misses or close calls with oncoming traffic. Every incident and accident needs to be reported to the Police. Safer Sussex Road Partnership suggested that an application be submitted for Concealed Entrance signs to WSCC by the Parish Council. The Clerk to investigate and speak to County Councillor Janet Duncton to understand the process. Councillor Green will look at the next steps suggested following the Traffic Consultant report.

- **Play Area:** Councillor Fraser said the new slide is on order and will be replaced mid-end January along with the rope swing repairs. It was agreed that a working party will carry out a clean out in the spring.
- **Footpaths, Hedges and Rights of Ways:** No footpath issues have been reported to the Parish Council. The hedge on the footpath from Luffs Meadow to the Village Shop is still causing some concern.
- **Planning:** Councillor Baker reported there were no outstanding planning applications in the parish. The following planning applications have been discussed since November's meeting:

SDNP/24/04563/FUL

Grove End Farm, Hillgrove Lane, Northchapel GU28 9EN
1 no. single storey residential dwelling.

SDNP/24/04778/HOUS and SDNP/24/04779/LIS

Gastons Farm Shillinglee Road Shillinglee Northchapel West Sussex GU8 4SX
Replacement single storey rear extension and associated works. Installation 1 no. roof light and secondary glazing throughout.

Since the last meeting, Chichester District Council/South Downs National Park has made the following decisions on:

SDNP/24/03483/CND

Fisher Hill Flat Fisher Street Northchapel West Sussex GU28 9EJ
Demolition of existing flat and garaging (Fisher Hill Flat) and its replacement with a two storey, 3 no. bedroom ancillary residential annexe, garage and bin store, together with a plant room for the adjacent cottage - Variation of Conditions 2 and 5 of Planning Permission SDNP/22/04264/FUL for amendments to the proposal and fitting of manual blackout blinds to first floor windows on the north and west elevations.
Decision: Approved

SDNP/24/02196/FUL

Telecommunications Installation A283 Valentines Lea to Valentines Hill Valentines Hill Northchapel
Installation of a 35m slim lattice tower on concrete foundation, 6 no. antennas, 4 no. equipment cabinets, 3 no. 600mm transmission dishes and development ancillary thereto, alongside the relocation of 1 no. existing 600mm transmission dish, 1 no. existing equipment cabinet and the removal of the existing 27m monopole, 3 no. existing equipment cabinets and any redundant ancillary development.
Decision: Refused

SDNP/24/04778/HOUS and SDNP/24/04779/LIS

Gastons Farm Shillinglee Road Shillinglee Northchapel West Sussex GU8 4SX
Replacement single storey rear extension and associated works. Installation 1 no. roof light and secondary glazing throughout.
Decision: Refused

- **Village Hall:** Councillor Holden reported the hall is being used more with enquiries for children parties and potential whole day booking for quilting. There are now 3 dog training sessions and a new fitness class.
- **Housing:** Councillor Holden reported that she and the Clerk are still chasing Hyde regarding an update on the two empty properties in Valentines Lea. Concern was once again raised about ASB in one of the flats in Luffs Meadow.
- **Winter Plan:** Reports of misuse of grit in the parish grit bins has been reported. Clerk to write to the offender and add a piece in the Parish News reminding residents that the grit is only for the public highway and pavements, NOT driveways or private land.

- **Northchapel Youth Club:** Youth Club is back on Tuesday evenings in the Village Hall. 15 children at the last one but volunteers are still needed!
- **Multi Use Games Arena (MUGA):** Councillor Green reported that enough money has been raised for the groundwork and structural work. It is hoped that the works will start in March/April. She is hoping for a big injection of money from within the community to help the project. Surveys are complete, Sovereign will be installing the MUGA and three quotes for the groundworks are being obtained. Floodlighting will be done at a secondary stage.

7/25 Approved Budget/Precept 2025/26

Following the Finance meeting in December where the precept had been set at £30,000, Clerk circulated the approved figures for 2025/26 as at Appendix 2. Clerk to send figure to CDC confirming precept 2025/26.

8/25 Financial Matters

- The Council's current financial position @ £36,285 was noted.
- The Bank reconciliation as at 9th January 2025 (Appendix 3) was noted.
- The schedule of accounts submitted for payment at Appendix 5 was noted and payments were approved for Northchapel Primary School @ £1,532 (Annual Donation 2024/25 @£300 plus additional request for WSCC library subscription and Maths subscription @ £1,232), Northchapel Village Hall @ £1,500 (£500 Annual Donation 2024/25 and £1,000 for pothole repairs to car park). Other annual donations and grants 2024/25 for Petworth Cottage Nursing Home (£100), Royal British Legion Petworth Branch (£50), Kent, Surrey & Sussex Air Ambulance (£300), Friends of Chiddingfold Surgery (£200), 4Sight (£130) and Tylers Trust (£100). Additional payments for Pawsome Solutions Ltd (Dog litter bin emptying) @ £102 and Business Stream (Allotment water) @ £47 also approved.
- The Budget Monitoring sheet as at 9th January 2025 (Appendix 5) was noted.

9/25 Reports back from meetings attended by Councillors

There had been no external meetings since the last meeting.

10/25 Clerks Report including correspondence

The Clerk said there were some meetings coming up over the next few weeks or so and she had sent round an email about various Councillor training sessions for those interested.

CDALC meeting - Tuesday 14th January at 7pm via Zoom.

SDNP planning policy meeting – Wednesday 22nd January 4-6pm at the South Downs Manorial Hall in Midhurst. Councillors Baker and Greet to attend.

WSALC Chair Forum – Thurs 23rd January at 7pm via Zoom

All Parishes Meeting – Monday 3rd February via Zoom at 5pm

11/25 Items to be included on the next agenda

Please inform the Clerk of any items to go on the agenda by Thursday 27th February 2025

12/25 Date of next meeting

Thursday 6th March 2025 at 8pm.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.50pm

Signed

Date