



NORTHCHAPEL PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of a Parish Council Meeting

held at Northchapel Village Hall

On Thursday 6th November 2025 at 8pm

Present: Councillors Mr Alex Baker, Mrs Jules Fraser, Mrs Sharon Holden (Chair), Miss Laura Green, Mr Russell Lane and Daphne Trussler.

In attendance: Mrs Helen Cruikshank, Parish Clerk
County Councillor Janet Duncton
District Councillors Gareth Evans and Charles Toddhunter

There were no members of the public were in attendance.

Public Question time

There were no questions.

PARISH COUNCIL BUSINESS

70/25 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Parish Councillors Melvin Greet and John Sochovsky.

71/25 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Green declared an interest as secretary of Northchapel Sports Club.

72/25 Co-option of Councillor

There was no co-option. There is still one vacancy on the Parish Council.

73/25 Minutes

The Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 4th September 2025 were approved as a correct record and signed.

74/25 Police report

There was no Police report.

75/25 Reports from the Chichester District and West Sussex County Councillors

County Councillor Duncton had sent through a written report as follows:

You will remember what dire straits our Children's Services were say 5 years ago. Well I am pleased to say that things have moved onwards and upwards and we expect an OFSTED visit in the not-too-distant future. Our Children's homes have been judged either Good or Outstanding and that's something to be very pleased with. I am hopeful that the rest of the Service will get the same results. On the same theme we took on and trained many new Social workers and one of them has recently been awarded an accolade in a national Social Worker competition. Absolutely great. They are doing a wonderful job for many that need help and their getting it. Fire and Rescue is also performing very well. I am particularly pleased with the number of visits that they have achieved to people's homes to make sure they know what is needed to keep themselves safe in their own homes. Of course this doesn't mean that other parts of this Service get neglected. What it does mean is that we work with our Adult Services department as well and it often enables residents to live safely in their own homes which is most of their choices before Adult Services have to step in with help. In my mind that's a win, win.

We would still like to reach out to any who would like to consider Fire and Rescue as a career or just as a retained Service. Our retained Service is a very valuable asset and we are always short on numbers. To give you an example at Petworth retained Station we have 8/9 retained and we really need about 14. If you know of anyone who would be interested tell them to get on line and apply. It's a great career or extra as retained and it's fully inclusive for diversity.

Of course we still can't give a definite on devolution and I am sure you know as much as I do but to be clear. I think I said last month that Counties opinion for West Sussex (The Mayor is of course for the whole of Sussex), that it needs one Unitary authority. County already do 80% of local Government work so it is only 20% extra that those elected have to take on and would require 90 Councillors instead of 146 if there were 2 Unitaries for West Sussex. I can't tell you how many would be required if Brighton & Hove's suggestion that they have submitted for 5 Unitaries was chosen by DEFRA but imagine many more Councillors and a very costly return time to balance the books and hopefully save some money. The decision will be with DEFRA With regards to elections at this moment in time the Minister has said that there will be elections in 2026 BUT, isn't there always a but? There is another rumour that those few of us who are looking at new Mayor's for election in May next year and of course Unitaries the year after that they may and it is may at the moment cancel the 2026 County elections. If they don't whoever is elected will only have one year and then the County Council disappear and the Unitaries take over. I say one year because for 2026/7 they will be shadow Unitaries and County, District and Boroughs will still be in situ for 26/27 and from 27/28 they become the shadow authorities with the new Unitaries taking over and the rest disappearing in 2028. I hope that's clear. It's the best I can do at the moment.

Janet added that there would be some highways realignment work carried out at Fisher Street/Shillinglee junction. She had no further details to share. The wonky sign is on the list to be repaired. Watch this space!

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.

She congratulated the village on its marvellous bonfire and fireworks event. All agreed it was a fabulous evening and well-supported. Thanks were given to all those who helped organise.

County Councillor Janet Duncton left the meeting at 8.05pm

District Councillors Gareth Evans and Charles Toddhunter spoke about the following:

Local Updates

Blind Lane, Northchapel – Following the Council obtaining a High Court injunction against the owners of the land, which required them to remove all caravans, vehicles, hardstanding etc. from the land, the date of compliance has now passed. Planning Officers inspected the site on 21st October and, as no work has commenced to return the site to its original state, the Council will now proceed to consider further action against the landowners for contempt of court.

Lagoon 3, Crouchlands Farm – Spreading of the contents of the digestate lagoon began in October and, in line with the Environment Agency permit, has now finished as the season has ended. Spreading is expected to resume in the first quarter of 2026 and subsequent spreading permits will then be applied for over the coming years.

Local Shops – We are incredibly lucky to have many excellent Local Shops in our villages. Gareth and I encourage everyone to support these local businesses that are a real lifeline for some of our residents.

Water Neutrality – On 8th October DEFRA made an announcement that affects how we deal with Water Neutrality requirements in planning in the North of Chichester District. Southern Water have agreed to reduce the amount of water that they extract from the below ground aquifer at Hardham and a series of ecological enhancements will also be undertaken by the Environment Agency. The full impact of this announcement has yet to be analysed by Council Officers, but ultimately, upon withdrawal of the position statement by Natural

England, applicants will no longer need to demonstrate water neutrality as part of their planning applications. Any changes to information required to be submitted with planning applications, and the wider impact of this announcement will be shared as soon as possible.

CDC Wide Updates

Food waste collections are coming soon! Preparations are well underway for the introduction of weekly food waste collections across the District, which are scheduled to begin in Spring 2026 for residential households. Communal properties that share bins will follow later in the year. The winter edition of Initiatives magazine will feature a double page food waste article, providing detailed information about how the service operates, what can be recycled, and the environmental benefits of separating food waste. FAQs will be included to address common queries and support positive engagement, along with regular updates on our dedicated web page: www.chichester.gov.uk/food-waste Additional pre-launch communications will be issued to all households from early next year, ahead of the phased delivery of containers.

Former Grange Site, Midhurst - The Estates service are now actively marketing the former Grange Leisure Centre site in Midhurst. Offers are invited from developers and registered providers for a mixed-use scheme that includes a 100% affordable housing element. Details can be found on the Council website.

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. The next series of surgery dates will be published shortly. Please check Gareth's Facebook page for updates. If these dates and times do not suit it is also possible to arrange home visits, telephone calls or zoom meetings.

Our contact details are:

Cllr. Gareth Evans, email gbevans@chichester.gov.uk or telephone 07958 918056

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>

76/25 Working Party Reports

- **Allotments:** The Clerk referred Councillors to Appendix 2 and the three quotes obtained for the hedge cutting at the allotments. It was agreed to go ahead with Apples & Pears. The Clerk stated that allotments should be self-funding and given the current high cost of water and maintenance, the Parish Council must consider whether to increase the rents or continue to financially support with money from its reserves.
- **Village Green:** Councillors agreed for Apples & Pears to go ahead with planting a new tree on the Village Green (to replace the Horse Chestnut which was felled on the main road) as per the quote on Appendix 3. The Clerk to ask the Contractors to cut the churchyard and to clear the leaves on the Green and from the surrounding ditches as soon as possible.
- **Highways including parking issues:** The Clerk has reported the pothole on the road adjacent to the Working Men's Club – it has been raised as a defect and is on the list to be repaired by WSCC Highways. Parking in the layby at the top of Green appears excessive at the moment, Councillors to keep an eye on this issue.
- **Village Road Safety Project including speed reduction proposals and Speedwatch:** Councillor Green reported that there are two sessions in the diary for Speedwatch this month. Regular sessions are imperative but at this time of year, even once or twice a month shows willing. She and Councillor Lane had met to discuss the Road Safety project. Councillor Lane gave an update on the proposal for the installation of the white gateways at both ends of the village. He and the Clerk have been liaising with Mike Dare, the Assistant Highways Manager in the area. It is not a simple process with licences and permissions required from several organisations. Councillor Lane will meet with Mike Dare to identify a suitable location so the

project can progress. The Clerk to write to Andrew Griffith, MP requesting that as part of the Safer Road Initiative that WSCC consider installing Average Speed Cameras along the A283 in Sussex as Surrey County Council has done in Chiddingfold and Witley.

Finally, good news - the 20mph speed limit application for Pipers Lane has successfully passed the Public Consultation stage and has the go ahead for implementation. Exact date yet to be given.

- **Play Area:** Councillor Fraser reported all is good at the play area and she continues to check it regularly. It does need a good clean and tidy. Need to revisit the possibility of some matched funding from Chichester District Council to help with replacing the shelter which was removed. This will be discussed at the Finance meeting in December.
- **Footpaths, Hedges and Rights of Way:** Councillor Trussler said there was nothing much to report. A large branch is down on a footpath which she will find out details of and officially report. The Clerk stated that the footpath behind Oaklea had been cut back and was now accessible.
- **Planning:** Councillor Baker said there were no outstanding planning applications to be discussed tonight.

The Parish Council discussed the following planning applications since September's meeting:

SDNP/25/03431/HOUS and SDNP/25/03432/LIS

Gastons Farm Shillinglee Road Shillinglee Northchapel West Sussex GU8 4SX

Internal and external alterations including replacement porches, rear extension and enhancements to fenestration

SDNP/25/04146/TPO

4 Leaside Northchapel West Sussex GU28 9HD

Reduce west and south-west sectors (property facing side) by 3-4m and crown lift west and south-west sectors (property facing side) by up to 5m (above ground level) on 4 no. Oak trees (T1-T4) subject to NC/97/00727/TPO

Chichester District Council/South Downs National Park has made decisions on/given advice on the following planning application:

SDNP/25/03344/CND

Lavender Cottage London Road Northchapel West Sussex GU28 9EQ

Change of Use of adjoining field to be included as part of garden. (Removal of condition 5 of permission NC/98/00407/COU)

Decision: Approved

- **Village Hall:** Councillor Holden said general bookings are good with more children's parties at this time of year.
- **Housing:** Councillor Holden stated that the Luffs Meadow flat has now been filled but there still remains an empty flat in Valentines Lea. Councillor Trussler added that there are two vacant flats in St Michaels Close. The Clerk to report an issue to Hyde regarding the state of an alleyway in Luffs Meadow.
- **Winter Plan:** The Winter Plan has been submitted to WSCC Communities team.
- **Northchapel Youth Club:** Councillor Green reported Youth Club started again this week. There are two new volunteers which is great as this brings fresh ideas. The last session of the term will be on Tuesday 16th December and then there will be a 3-week Christmas break.
- **Multi-use Games Arena (MUGA) project:** Councillor Green reported that the Sports Club has until the end of January to pay off the remaining balance with Sovereign. She is aiming to talk to the Village Hall Committee in January about combining the hiring of both venues. She hopes to run some sports holiday clubs with some low-cost/free sessions to encourage people to use the MUGA. A parishioner has kindly offered to help with these as a coach. The tennis net will

come once the loan has been paid off and it is hoped the floodlights will be installed by this time next year.

77/25 Christmas tree

Councillor Baker kindly offered to supply the Village's Christmas tree once again. This will be located at the top of the Village Green with the same set up with lighting as last year.

78/25 Manorial Waste Flower Bed

Huge thanks to Councillors Baker and Fraser who have cleared the flower bed and replanted with new bulbs. All agreed it looks really nice and a huge improvement. Councillor Fraser said it is a work in progress but she has had some really positive comments from residents.

79/25 Parish Plan

Councillor Fraser said there was no update to report.

80/25 Financial Matters

- The Council's current financial position @ £36,545 was noted.
- The Bank reconciliation as at 30th October 2025 (Appendix 4) was noted.
- The schedule of accounts submitted for payment at Appendix 5 was noted. The following payment was authorised for payment; WSCC (Clerk's October Salary) @ £664, Direct 365 Supplies (Dog litter bin emptying) @ £57 and Sussex Land Services (Grass cutting in September) @ £615.
- The Budget Monitoring sheet as at 30th October 2025 (Appendix 6) was noted.
- Applications for grants and donations for 2025/26 should be submitted to the Clerk by close of play on Monday 1st December.

81/25 Reports back from meetings attended by Councillors

Councillor Lane had attended an online Councillor training session and the All-Parishes Meeting at East Pallant House. Both of which he had found useful and interesting.

82/25 Clerks Report including correspondence

The Clerk had nothing further to report. She had submitted the application for the nomination of the Village Shop as an Asset of Community Value.

83/25 Items to be included on the next agenda

Please inform the Clerk of any items to go on the agenda by Thursday 8th January 2025

69/25 Date of next meeting

Thursday 4th December 2025 at 8pm (Finance and Precept only meeting)
Thursday 15th January 2026 at 8pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.45pm

Signed

Date