



NORTHCHAPEL PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of a meeting held at the Village Hall on Thursday 15th January 2026 at 8pm

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

The Chair thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and wished all a Happy New Year.
There were no members of the public in attendance.

PARISH COUNCIL BUSINESS

1/26 Apologies for absence: Apologies were received from District Councillors Gareth Evans and Charles Toddhunter, County Councillor Janet Duncton and the Parish Clerk, Mrs Helen Cruikshank due to a family bereavement.

2/26 Declarations of Interest: Councillor Holden declared an interest in agenda item 8/26 as a member of the Village Hall Management Committee. Councillor Green declared an interest in agenda item 6/26 Working Party Reports and 8/26 Finance: MUGA as secretary of the Sports Club.

3/26 Minutes: The Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 4th December 2025 were approved as a correct record and signed.

4/26 Reports from the Chichester District and West Sussex County Councillors
County Councillor Janet Duncton sent through the following report:

A very happy new year to all of you. I do really appreciate all the help and information that I receive from you all. In fact, I don't think I could do a proper job without your help. It's really funny at County because us rural County Councillors have Parish and Town Council meetings to attend and although it isn't mandatory I don't think I can do a proper job without listening to my Councils as you all know what's going on and what needs attention in your own patch and obviously, I can't be in all the parishes all the time. Not complaining but my fellow Borough Councillors don't have parishes except I think in Arun they have a couple but not eleven like myself. We do our best between us though I think and it's good to catch up on what is happening in the parishes.

As you can imagine there isn't a great deal to update you on at the moment, not even devolution because we are still waiting for the Government to let us know if there will be elections in West Sussex on 7th May. Hopefully next month we will know what position we are in so I won't bore you all with it at the moment.

Scrutiny committees are about to start again and so the year begins. Tomorrow I am attending a committee called HASC which I do not sit on. It's a committee that deals mainly with health issues and tomorrow there is an item on mental health issues among children and young people. I am attending to listen to the discussion because I am vice Chairman of the Children and Young People Scrutiny committee so hopefully it will inform me on this issue.

Always a difficult time for Highways, well I guess it's a year-round problem keeping roads in good condition but the possibilities and actualities of bad weather do make the job even more challenging. We're not doing too badly at the moment and I'm probably speaking too soon as it's likely we will have much more bad weather yet.

Fire and Rescue as ever have been busy. You will know that a large part off their job is RTA's or road traffic accidents as we know it. We are hoping to be able to do more of the 'Safe Drive, Stay Alive' in 2026. It is so beneficial for the several thousand young people coming up to the driving age and hopefully they see some of the problems and what to do and what not to do once they get behind the wheel or indeed on 2 wheels.

Trading standards also have extra work at this time of the year, they are kept busy making sure that shops and businesses are doing what they should be doing and selling the proper goods.

OFSTED came in December and as yet I can't give you the result of their visit. I am sure there will be some things that we will have to improve on but that said, I think they will find huge strides forward have been taken and implemented since that dreadful inspection 5 or 6 years ago.

As ever my email is janet.dunton@westsussex.gov.uk or mobile 07979 152898

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

Local Updates

Local Government Reorganisation – As you will be aware, the Government has confirmed that the mayoral elections that were scheduled for May 2026 have now been postponed until May 2028. They have also invited Councils who were due to have Local Elections in May 2026 (e.g. West Sussex County Council) to set out their views on potentially postponing these too. It is our view that these Elections should go ahead as planned as they were already delayed by one year in 2025. CDC have confirmed that we are ready and have the appropriate resources to run these elections, whilst continuing to deliver to the Government's LGR timeline.

CDC Wide Updates

Development Management Team (Planning)

Following the Development Management Service Review that took place in 2025, work is continuing to implement the resultant action plan. This includes a restructure of the Development Management service into two area-based teams. Instead of teams covering 'Major' or 'Minor' applications, teams will now cover either the East or West of the District. For capacity reasons, the 'West' team will also cover the North of the District, including Loxwood Ward. In addition, following the recent resignation of Katie Stephens, Jeremy Bushell has been appointed to the role of Development Manager.

Household Support Fund

Residents of Chichester have been allocated up to £100k to help vulnerable households struggling with the rising cost of living. Support is available for school clothing, energy bills, crisis prevention (white goods, furniture, emergency food) and rent arrears. Support is provided in the form of vouchers to be used to help with these costs. For full details of eligibility and to apply, visit the following West Sussex County Council web page: <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/leisure-recreation-and-community/household-support-fund/> or telephone 0330 222 7980

Food Waste Collections

Preparations for our new food waste collection service are well underway. Five new vehicles have already arrived, and we've been busy keeping residents informed through regular communications. In February, we will be placing information directly on residents' bin handles – explaining what residents can expect when the service launches in spring 2026. We also encourage people to download our Chichester District Council app, which will provide live updates during the service roll out, including container delivery and collection start dates.

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:

January: Saturday 10th, Onslow Arms Loxwood, Saturday 24th, Kirdford Stores
February: Saturday 7th, Northchapel Club, Saturday 28th Stag Inn Ebernoe
March: Saturday 7th Wisborough Green (Old Mill Café)

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 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>

5/26 Police report: There was no Police report. Clerk to request an update.

6/26 Working Party Reports

- **Allotments:** There was nothing to report. Councillor Greet stated the hedges have been cut.
- **Village Green:** There is an issue with the recent grass cut. Please may the Parish Council be informed when it is cut aside from the contractors as complaints have been received. Councillor Sochovsky stated that the ditches are holding up well this year so far. Councillors will keep an eye on these going forward with more rain forecast.
- **Highways including parking issues:** There was nothing to report.
- **Village Road Safety Project including speed reduction proposals and Speedwatch:** Councillor Lane reported that he had met with Mike Dare from WSCC Highways to look at potential locations for the new Village Gateways. He has a report which he handed out to all Councillors. The next step would be to decide a location and the design, size of the gateways and font size. Councillors Holden and Sochovsky offered to be involved with this along with Councillors Lane and Green. They will meet, discuss and report back to all Councillors.
- **Play Area:** Councillor Fraser reported the OXO play panel has deteriorated and needs removing. Everything else is alright.
- **Footpaths, Hedges and Rights of Ways:** Councillor Trussler said she had no concerns raised.
- **Planning:** The following planning applications have been discussed since November's meeting:

SDNP/25/04166/HOUS

West Broadlands Cripplecrutch Hill Northchapel West Sussex GU8 4SU
Single storey rear extension, following demolition of existing single storey structures, replacement shed and new car port

SDNP/25/04670/HOUS

Mulberry House A283 Luffs Meadow To Pipers Lane Northchapel West Sussex GU28 9HP
Single storey rear extension with associated increase to ridge height, rear extension to annexe, erection of new pool building/yoga studio with landscaping

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

SDNP/24/04563/FUL

Grove End Farm Hillgrove Lane Northchapel West Sussex GU28 9EN
1 no. single-storey residential dwelling
Decision: Approved

SDNP/25/04146/TPO

4 Leaside Northchapel West Sussex GU28 9HD

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

Decision: Approved

SDNP/25/04718/APNB

Land South West of Copygrove Cottage Valentines Hill Northchapel West Sussex

Shed for storage of tractor and forestry equipment

Decision: Objection

SDNP/26/00330/CEP

East Broadlands Cripplecrouch Hill Northchapel West Sussex GU8 4SU

Consultation on Environmental Permit Application - EPR/PP3721LB/A001

Decision: Unknown

- **Village Hall:** Councillor Holden reported the hall was very damp at the village lunch club today.
- **Housing:** Councillor Holden reported on the two vacant flats in St Michaels Close. Number 19 is due to be signed up by a proposed tenant on Monday, a nomination which adheres to the local connection. Number 21 was advertised back in September 2025 and is potentially going to a person from Chichester as there were a couple of previous refusals/rejections. The property had 44 bids on it. Clerk to ask for a further update. There is an elderly resident in Northchapel who would like the property. More liaison by CDC with the Parish Council would be appreciated for the s106 connection properties in St Michaels Close.
- **Winter Plan:** There was nothing to report.
- **Northchapel Youth Club:** There was no report.
- **Multi Use Games Arena (MUGA):** The final balance of the Sovereign invoice is to be paid by the end of January.

7/26 Approved Budget/Precept 2026/27

Following the Finance meeting in December where the precept had been set at £30,000, Clerk circulated the approved figures for 2026/27 as at Appendix 2. Clerk to send figure to CDC confirming precept 2026/27.

8/26 Financial Matters

- The Council's current financial position @ £31,346 was noted.
- The Bank reconciliation as at 8th January 2026 (Appendix 3) was noted.
- The schedule of accounts submitted for payment at Appendix 4 was noted and payments were approved for Northchapel Primary School @ £300 (Annual Donation 2025/26 @£300, Northchapel Village Hall @ £750 (£500 Annual Donation 2025/26 and £250 for Village Lunch Club). Other annual donations and grants 2025/26 for Petworth Cottage Nursing Home (£100), Royal British Legion Petworth Branch (£50), Kent, Surrey & Sussex Air Ambulance (£300), Friends of Chiddingfold Surgery (£200), 4Sight (£170), Chichester Foodbank (£100) and Tylers Trust (£200). Additional payments for Direct 365 (Dog litter bin emptying) @ £57, Northchapel Village Hall (Youth Club hall hire) @ £825 and WSCC (Clerk's December Salary) @ £664 also approved.
- The Budget Monitoring sheet as at 8th January 2026 (Appendix 6) was noted.
- The Clerk to speak to the School regarding the Swimming Pool accounts and the latest financials from the Sports Club to be sent to all Councillors as Councillor Trussler was not able to read properly at the meeting. It would be useful to have more visibility to help improve events and ultimately monies raised. Councillor Holden to find out whether Petworth Surgery has a Friends of Society.

9/26 Reports back from meetings attended by Councillors

There had been no external meetings since the last meeting.

10/26 Clerks Report including correspondence

SSE have confirmed they will attend March's meeting to discuss parish issues. There had been several power cuts in the village.

All Parishes Meeting – Monday 2nd February via Zoom at 5pm

11/26 Items to be included on the next agenda

Please inform the Clerk of any items to go on the agenda by Thursday 26th February 2026

12/26 Date of next meeting

Thursday 5th March 2026 at 8pm. Councillor Trussler sent her apologies for this meeting.

Councillor Green arrived at 8.25pm due to working late.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.30pm

Signed

Date