



NORTHCHAPEL PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting

held at Northchapel Village Hall

On Thursday 21st May 2026 at 8pm

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

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

There were no members of the public present. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

ANNUAL MEETING BUSINESS AGENDA

1. **Election of Chair:** Nominations for Chair were invited for the ensuing year. Councillor Sharon Holden was proposed and duly seconded. There being no other nominations, it was **RESOLVED** that **Councillor Holden** be elected Chair of Northchapel Parish Council for 2026/27.
2. **Election of Vice-Chair:** The Chair invited nominations for Vice Chair and Councillor Laura Green was proposed and duly seconded. There being no other nominations it was **RESOLVED** that **Councillor Green** be elected Vice Chair for the ensuing year.
3. **Election of Lead Members of Working Parties and Committees:**
 - Village Green – Laura Green
 - Play Area – Jules Fraser
 - Planning – Alex Baker
 - Highways – John Sochovsky
 - Footpaths and Rights of Way – Daphne Trussler
 - Housing – Sharon Holden
 - Village Hall – Sharon Holden
 - Northchapel Youth Club – Laura Green
 - Website – Parish Clerk
 - Winter Plan – Robert Moss (non-Councillor)
 - Allotments – Willie Poste (non-Councillor)

Planning Committee: Alex Baker (Chair), Melvin Greet, Sharon Holden, John Sochovsky and Daphne Trussler

Finance Committee: All Councillors. Signatories: Laura Green and Sharon Holden

Housing Working Party: Sharon Holden, Laura Green and Daphne Trussler

Road Safety project: Laura Green, Russell Lane and John Sochovsky
4. **To fix the dates of future meetings 2026/27**
 - Thursday 23rd July 2026
 - Thursday 3rd September 2026
 - Thursday 5th November 2026
 - Thursday 3rd December 2026 (precept/finance only meeting)

Thursday 7th January 2027
Thursday 4th March 2027
Thursday 6th May 2027 (Annual meeting)

All meetings are held at 8pm at Northchapel Village Hall. Planning meetings are held as and when necessary. Please contact the Clerk for details.

PARISH COUNCIL BUSINESS

27/26 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Parish Councillors Miss Laura Green and Mr Melvin Greet

28/26 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

29/26 Minutes

The Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 5th March 2026 were approved as a correct record and signed.

30/26 Reports from the Chichester District and West Sussex County Councillors

County Councillor Duncton stated there was little to report this time but to assure everyone that it was business as usual at WSCC with all the services continuing as normal. We have had our first get together after the recent elections, just to sign the paperwork and tomorrow, we have the Annual Council meeting when all the political parties will put their committee decisions before the Council. Interesting times. I am hoping to get back on Planning and Rights of Way so we shall see. Obviously being the third Party and with the Liberal Democrats joining with Labour and the Independents, Conservatives only get 14 committee places. That said of course we all have the chance to air our views at Council and I will be doing that and, in my opinion, the best thing we do is work with our communities and you don't have to be on a committee to request say road repairs or raise school issues.

You can be assured that I will continue to work with my parishes as ever. It's the best bit of my work anyway and I also try and get to some village lunches where I meet others from the villages. Please be assured that I will do my best for all my parishes and look forward to working with you for however long it is that this Government says regarding getting on with Unitary Authority development. You will have seen that the present Minister cast aside all our requests for WSCC wanting one unitary so that everyone had the same service in West Sussex, the Districts and Boroughs wanting two which we could live with but would be more expensive and of course two different services. Then there was Brighton and Hove that wanted five thereby putting us in large debt for many years. Steve Read the Minister has now decided after saying he wanted 4 to go back out to consult everyone again at however many millions so there we are. Watch this space.

The Clerk to report the loose drains on the A283 outside Hillgrove Stud Farm and by the Luffs Meadow junction.

Contact details: janet.duncton@westsussex.gov.uk or mobile 07979 152898

County Councillor Janet Duncton left the meeting at 8.05pm

District Councillor Gareth Evans and Charles Toddhunter sent through a written report as follows:

Local Issues

Foxbridge – Despite strong opposition to this and representations from Cllr. Gareth Evans, Plaistow and Ifold Parish Council and three residents the application was approved. However, the planning committee were conflicted but ultimately could not find reasonable grounds to refuse that would stand up to appeal.

Grass at Butts Meadow – A resident at Butts Meadow has been in contact regarding the long grass and claims that Hyde have refused to cut this citing it as private property rather than a communal space. This has been challenged by us, and we hope that Hyde will resolve the situation for residents of the 6 bungalows impacted Planning applications – We have met with several residents in the recent weeks to discuss ways to object or comment on planning applications with focus on material considerations.

CDC Wide

Elections – The County Council Election will be taking place on 7th May. We wish all candidates the best of luck and recognise that it is important for district council to work closely with our West Sussex counterpart to ensure best outcomes for residents.

Consultation on dogs in public spaces – From Friday 8th May residents will be able to share their views on CDCs proposed public space protection order on dog control in public spaces. The public space and protection order deals with issues such as removal of dog mess, keeping dogs on leads when instructed and exclusion of dogs from parks and play areas. To comment please go to <https://app.snapsea.io/p/c/chichester/letstalkdogs> Surgeries

For personal family reasons Gareth was unable to hold surgeries in April. The summer surgery schedule will be published shortly. In the meantime both Gareth and Charles have been and are available by phone or to visit residents ad hoc.

Councillor Lane enquired on the status of the Blind Lane site. A search company has been employed by CDC to find the owners. He asked whether an Order For Sale could be made on the land by the District Council to recover its costs. District Councillor Toddhunter to investigate.

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>

District Councillors Gareth Evans and Charles Toddhunter left the meeting at 8.10pm

31/26 Working Party Reports

- **Allotments:** The Clerk reported all rents had been paid and there were now only two vacant half plots. She thanked the allotment manager for his hard work.
- **Village Green:** The green looks good from a distance but it may be worth considering using a contractor with a gang mower next season. Concern was raised with the grass cutting at the churchyard. Councillors agreed to a request for scattering of ashes of an old resident on the green.
- **Highways including parking issues:** Councillor Holden had contacted the local PCSO regarding continuous parking on the layby at the top of the green. With regard the abandoned cars in Luffs Meadow raised at the last meeting, these had been reported to both Hyde and the Police.
- **Village Road Safety Project including speed reduction proposals and Speedwatch:** Councillor Lane stated the last Speedwatch session was on 28th March and another is needed. Northbound traffic was monitored and recorded 304 vehicles in the session with only 3 going over the speed limit. Speeding seems to be more of a problem at the South entry. Councillor Lane handed out an action plan for the Village Gateway signs. It was agreed to go ahead with the two locations he had identified with two simple sloping white plastic gateways from JACS at each site as these were easily installed and maintained. He would discuss with Mike Dare from WSCC Highways. SDNPA would then need to review the proposal followed by an application

for a 115 licence from WSCC. The Chair thanked Councillor Lane for all his work with progressing this.

- **Play Area:** Councillor Fraser said the play area was currently okay. She had prepared a summary of potential equipment upgrade including quotes (Councillors had seen as Appendix 3a and 3b) for a replacement OXO panel and new pirate ship play item. She would like to see this installed by Spring 2027. Councillor Fraser will speak to Sam Lee at CDC in August to ascertain what grants are available. Councillors thanked her for all her work on this. The annual ROSPA inspection is due to take place in June.
- **Footpaths, Hedges and Rights of Way:** Councillor Trussler said there was nothing much to report. FP588 had been closed due to a broken bridge which a member of public had reported.
- **Planning:** Councillor Baker said there were several outstanding planning applications:

SDNP/26/01393/HOUS and SDNP/26/01394/LIS
Freehold Farm, London Road, Northchapel GU28 9NE
Link and single storey extension

SDNP/26/01280/HOUS
29 Valentines Lea, Northchapel GU28 9HY
Replace 1 no. second floor aluminium window with uPVC window

SDNP/26/01845/TPO
3 Leaside, Northchapel GU28 9HD
Fell 1 no. Oak tree and height reduce 1 no. oak tree

The Clerk had received a call from the residents of Mulberry House regarding the trees at the front of the property. Works to these will need planning permission as the property sits in the Conservation area.

The following planning application had been discussed since March's meeting.

SDNP/26/00335/HOUS
3 Chidfield Barns, Northchapel GU28 9EG
New porch

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

SDNP/26/00534/TCA
Mulberry House Northchapel Nr Petworth GU28 9HP
Notification of intention to fell 1 no. Horse Chestnut tree (T1) and pollard down to approx. 4m (above ground level) on 1 no. Field Maple tree (T3)
Decision: Raise no objection

SDNP/26/00335/HOUS
3 Chidfield Barns, Northchapel GU28 9EG
New porch
Case withdrawn

SDNP/26/00480/DCOND
Grove End Farm Hillgrove Lane Northchapel West Sussex GU28 9EN
Discharge of Conditions 7 (planting proposals), 8 (protection of trees and hedges) and 13 (location of spoil) from planning permission SDNP/24/04563/FUL
Decision: Approved

SDNP/25/04166/HOUS

West Broadlands Cripplecrotch Hill Northchapel West Sussex GU8 4SU

Single storey rear extension, following demolition of existing single storey structures, replacement shed and new car port

Decision: Approved

SDNP/26/00968/DCOND

Grove End Farm Hillgrove Lane Northchapel West Sussex GU28 9EN

Discharge of conditions 3 (Construction Method Statement) 5 (parking and turning) and 15 (sustainable construction report) from planning permission SDNP/24/04563/FUL

Decision: Approved

SDNP/26/01294/DCOND and SDNP/26/01295/DCOND

Gastons Farm Shillinglee Road Shillinglee Northchapel West Sussex GU8 4SX

Discharge of conditions 3 (materials), 5 (Methodology Hanging tiles), 6 (Rainwater Goods), 7 (Opening up - new window ff) and 9 (Service Runs) of SDNP/25/03432/LIS

Decision: Approved

SDNP/26/01607/DCOND

Littlewoods Farm London Road Northchapel West Sussex

Discharge of condition 3 (underpinning) from planning permission SDNP/23/02403/FUL

Decision: Approved

- **Village Hall:** Councillor Holden said there was nothing further to report than that spoken about at the APM.
- **Housing:** Councillor Holden reported that she had been in contact with the Hyde Housing Officer who had had concerns raised to a homeless person in the village. There had been continuing police presence in Luffs Meadow due to ASB. She will try and get an update from Hyde. Hyde will be sending out a consultation leaflet to all residents on their thoughts for improvements to “pretty up” the green areas in both Valentines Lea and Luffs Meadow. Councillor Holden to inform the Hyde Housing Officer about the state and safety concern of a shared passageway in Luffs Meadow and the overgrown rear passage behind 35-39 Valentines Lea. The Clerk to report the overgrown footpath between Luffs Meadow and the main road to WSCC again.
- **Winter Plan:** There was nothing to report.
- **Northchapel Youth Club:** See the APM minutes for an update.
- **Multi-use Games Arena (MUGA) project:** See APM minutes for an update.

32/26 Seaford College Community Day

The Clerk to get clarification from the Sports Club and Northchapel Primary School to the type of help which is required from students at Seaford College on Thursday 25th June so the organisers can prepare the relevant risk assessments.

33/26 SDNPA Local Plan Consultation

SDNPA Local Plan consultation is currently running until 23rd June. It says it is for comments regarding legality and whether it has been soundly prepared rather than content. www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning-policy/new-south-downs-local-plan/

34/26 Financial Matters

- The Council’s current financial position @ £34,515 was noted.
- The Bank reconciliation as at 14th May 2026 (Appendix 4) was noted.
- The schedule of accounts submitted for payment at Appendix 5 was noted. One payment for Sussex Land Services (April’s grass cutting) @ £578 was approved.
- The Budget Monitoring sheet as at 14th May 2026 (Appendix 6) was noted.

- The Clerk had previously distributed the following documents:

1. The Internal Audit report 2025/26
2. Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2025/26
3. Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2025/26
4. Explanation of Variances
5. Income & Expenditure sheet 2025/26
6. Bank Reconciliation at y/e 31 March 2026
7. Notice of public rights

All these documents will be uploaded onto the website.

The Parish Council's 2025/26 financial year started with an opening balance of £12,243. During the year, the Parish Council received an income of £96,632. This consisted of the precept at £30,000, allotment rents, grants, bank interest, the VAT return and the donation from the Sports Club for the MUGA. The Parish Council spent £82,762. This consisted of costs to maintain the Village Green plus tree works around the village, grass cutting at the Churchyard, hedge cutting at the Allotments, bin emptying around the village, Clerk's Salary, Insurance, General Admin plus grants and donation for the year.

This leaves a closing balance as at 31st March 2026 of £26,114 which shows the Parish Council accounts are in a healthy but not excessive state at year end and should keep the external auditors happy. The internal audit has been carried out by Mrs Jean Huggett and she agreed that all internal control objectives have been carried out throughout the year raising no concerns. We have been selected for further scrutiny this year randomly by Moore, the external auditors so extra information is required.

The swimming pool loan stands at £500 as at 31st March 2026 and the o/s PWLB is £17,163.

Councillors considered the Accounts for 2025/26, the AGAR 2025/26 including section 1: The Annual Governance Statement questions and section 2: The Accounting Statement figures.

34/26 sub item 1 Section 1: Annual Governance Statement 2025/26 were duly proposed, seconded and approved, then signed by the Chair.

34/26 sub item 2 Section 2: Accounting Statements 2025/26 were duly proposed, seconded and approved, then signed by the Chair.

35/26 Reports back from meetings attended by Councillors

Councillor Lane attended the CDALC meeting in Boxgrove last week. He highlighted there is a second consultation out on the LGR in West Sussex. The Clerk to find and circulate the email.

36/26 Clerks Report including correspondence

The Clerk had nothing further to report.

37/26 Items to be included on the next agenda

Please inform the Clerk of any items to go on the agenda by Thursday 16th July 2026

38/26 Date of next meeting

Thursday 23rd July 2026 at 8pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9pm

Signed

Date