



NORTHCHAPEL PARISH COUNCIL

APPROVED Minutes of a Parish Council Meeting

held at Northchapel Village Hall

On Thursday 4th September 2025 at 8pm

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

In attendance: Mrs Helen Cruikshank, Parish Clerk

Four members of the public were in attendance.

Public Question time

The Parish Councillors and the Clerk all introduced themselves to the parishioners. There were no questions however the members of the public were in attendance to hear about the Village Road Safety Project and Speedwatch under the Working Party Reports 60/25.

PARISH COUNCIL BUSINESS

54/25 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Parish Councillor Mrs Sharon Holden. Apologies also received from District Councillors Gareth Evans and Charles Toddhunter. Also from County Councillor Janet Duncton and PCSO Matt Isles.

55/25 Declarations of Interest

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

56/25 Co-option of Councillor

Mr Russell Lane was co-opted as a Parish Councillor. The Clerk will email him all the relevant documentation.

57/25 Minutes

The Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 24th July 2025 were approved as a correct record and signed.

58/25 Police report

There was no Police report.

59/25 Reports from the Chichester District and West Sussex County Councillors

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

It's always difficult to find items of County work but during August it's even more difficult as meetings stop and mostly, I get information about items via our News releases and my emails with Officers, plus of course any local issues that I need to look into which happen of course at any given time. Trading standards have been busy again. They have prosecuted a Crawley business for selling Vapes to children and stocking illegal Mothballs. Please don't ask me what is an illegal Mothball because I don't know and didn't know there was such a thing. Obviously live a sheltered life!!! In early August OFSTED commended our Children's Services for the quality of the care for children and young people. They also awarded High Trees in Crawley as outstanding and Blue Cove and Bright Star in Worthing as good so all 3 homes are something to be proud of. There is a new flood risk Strategy announced. To learn more about it go to WSCC web site and Local Flood Risk Management Strategy. Fire and Rescue Service have issued a new warning regarding the use of items that

have lithium batteries. You will know there is a fire risk with these. Their advice is that you always charge items on a flat and stable surface and don't leave them charging overnight. Always unplug when fully charged. They can be a high Fire risk. SEND is still causing us many headaches not least because it's underfunded and the Cabinet member and Leader of Council have written to the Secretary of State for Education asking for them to produce the reforms soon which are in the Governments white paper. Of course we need finance for this Service as well. 2 of our WSCC Social worker team have been shortlisted for the National Social Worker of the year awards. I so hope they get the recognition they deserve. Not quite in our patch but Millais School in Horsham is now going to be a co-education, School. Of course not everyone wanted this but after 2 consultations it was approved. A milestone has been reached with our Highways lighting. On the 22nd September the final stage will start in Chichester and then all highway lighting will be changed from Halogen to LED technology. This is, I think a good thing. As ever if you need to contact me it's janet.dunton@westsussex.gov.uk or my mobile 07979152898
Please let me know if there are some issues you want me to investigate and as ever you can contact me via janet.dunton@westsussex.gov.uk or my mobile 07979152898.

In their absence, District Councillors Gareth Evans and Charles Todhunter sent through the following report:
Local Updates

Crouchlands Farm Lagoon 3 – We are very pleased to be able to share that the Environment Agency have recently authorised that the top layer of liquid waste from 'Lagoon 3' at Crouchlands can be spread on nearby fields for the benefit of agriculture. The permit is for 1 year and the local Parish Councils will be consulted before work begins. This is a positive first step in ensuring the lagoon is emptied and removed and the Council will continue to use its powers to ensure the Enforcement Notice is complied with.

Loxwood Budgens – We are also delighted that the Budgens Shop at Nursery Green in Loxwood is now open for business. Please do pay a visit to this much-requested local facility which has received very positive feedback so far!

Land at Loxwood Place – An outline application has been lodged by Martin Grant homes for 223 homes, a children's Nursery and Café at land behind the Old Post Office / Loxwood Farm Place in Loxwood. As Chair of the CDC Planning Committee, Cllr. Charles Todhunter is unable to comment on the application publicly at this time, but Cllr. Gareth Evans has joined locals in objecting to the proposals. Whilst it is recognised that Loxwood has been allocated additional housing in the new Local Plan, the Parish Council has not yet finished updating their Neighbourhood Plan which will allocate the site and the number of homes applied for in this case is far in excess of the village's allocation.

Local Plan - The Local Plan was formally adopted at an Extraordinary Full Council Meeting on 19th August and now sets out the vision for the District's economy, transport and housing needs, environmental and historic protection, community health and wellbeing and cultural development. Officers at the Council are currently working through the implications of the new Local Plan on existing planning applications and we will share any updates when we can.

CDC Wide Updates

Local Government Reorganisation: The Council will meet on 23rd September to vote on its preference for the structure of what our local government will look like in future, once a Sussex Mayor is in place. Following a survey earlier in the year, there look to be two options emerging: a single Unitary Authority that covers all of West Sussex or two smaller Unitary Authorities. Each Council in West Sussex will vote on their preferences in September and then letters will be written to the Government who will decide the next steps.

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 surgeries are as follows:

Saturday 13th September – Kirdford Stores, Kirdford (TBC)

Saturday 27th September – The Stag Inn, Balls Cross

Saturday 4th October – Ifold Stores, Ifold

Saturday 18th October – Old Mill Café, Wisborough Green
Saturday 1st November – Northchapel Club, Northchapel (2pm)

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>

60/25 Working Party Reports

- **Allotments:** There was nothing to report.
- **Village Green:** It was agreed to keep the VE80 bench outside Vine Cottages however it would need setting in. Councillor Sochovsky to check with residents that they are happy with this. Complaints had been received about the widening of the track and a suggestion of putting in ditches to stop vehicles encroaching onto the green further. The Parish Council agreed the track repairs had held up well and it would keep an eye on the state of the track over the winter and consider putting posts along the track in the future. Councillor Sochovsky to discuss with residents about some interim repairs. The Clerk to investigate the possibility of filling in the drain under the BT manhole cover.
- **Highways including parking issues:** The Clerk to check with WSCC Highways when the rest of the road markings and cats' eyes are due to be finished after the new resurfacing works and enquire whether the current faded lights outside the Half Moon PH could be repainted at the same time.
- **Village Road Safety Project including speed reduction proposals and Speedwatch:** Speedwatch volunteers had carried out 10 sessions to date and it was agreed that it is definitely worth doing as multiple vehicles have been caught speeding. More volunteers are required to enable more data to be collected. The Clerk to submit an article into the Parish Magazine to encourage more people to sign up. The concealed signage request at Chidfield Barns has been refused by WSCC as these are not used to help slow down speeds and are used sparingly in the County. A reduction in speed limit on this section of this road would be subject to a successful application through the Community Traffic Regulation Order process. Councillor Green reiterated what had been done to date, what can be done immediately and what the future looks like. She will arrange a separate meeting to further progress and discuss the Village Road Safety Project and prioritise actions from the traffic consultant's report together with the WSCC New Speed Limit Policy. The Parish Council agreed that white wooden gateways should be erected at both ends of the village as part of the project. Councillors Baker and Sochovsky offered to help build these. The Clerk to investigate permissions needed and to ask Straight Line Fencing about supplying the wood to make the gates. It is hoped that this alongside the proposed 20mph limit implementation on Pipers Lane outside the School will raise awareness and show residents that the Parish Council is trying to get things done. Members of the Public were keen to find out how other parishes obtained their 20mph speed limit reductions so will contact the local town and parish councils individually.
- **Play Area:** Councillor Fraser reported Playsafe Playgrounds had returned and filled in the gaps in the new surfacing around the slide. The OXO bars need replacing and in time a replacement for the treehouse is required alongside an application to CDC for a matched funding grant.
- **Footpaths, Hedges and Rights of Way:** Councillor Trussler spoke of a fallen oak tree blocking a bridleway behind Chidfield Barns. The Clerk will report this and the overgrown nature of the footpath behind Oaklea which has been reported to her by a resident.
- **Planning:** Councillor Baker said planning had been very quiet and there was only one outstanding planning application to be discussed tonight:

Lavender Cottage, London Road, Northchapel 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)

There had been no other planning applications discussed since July's meeting and Chichester District Council/South Downs National Park has made no decisions on/given advice on any planning applications.

- **Village Hall:** Councillor Trussler said there had been several parties at the hall and with the Haslemere quilters, village lunches it is being well used. It is hoped with the MUGA now open that more children's birthday parties will be held using both facilities.
- **Housing:** Councillor Trussler reported that there were still two 1-bed flats in St Michaels Close vacant and a flat in Luffs Meadow.
- **Winter Plan:** The Clerk to get a copy of the Public Liability Insurance from Rob Moss and finalise the plan for the winter and feed back to WSCC Communities team.
- **Northchapel Youth Club:** Councillor Green reported Youth Club starts on Tuesday 16th September.
- **Multi-use Games Arena (MUGA) project:** Councillor Green reported that the MUGA is open for use but not fully as she is waiting to purchase a tennis net and storage shed. Floodlighting will then follow. Annual membership monies are coming in and there is a birthday party at the weekend. Website is making progress and there will be a meeting/brainstorming session to move the project forward and discuss how to get more donations coming in to cover the outstanding loan.

61/25 Unauthorised works on Land North of Blind Lane Update

All caravans left the site on 15th August. Chichester District Council (CDC) was informed. Court proceedings are still going ahead on 9th September to secure a full injunction. Once the hearing has taken place CDC will publish a statement.

Update: On the 9th September 2025, Chichester District Council attended the High Court and was successful in securing a full injunction on the above Land. The hearing had been set on the 14 July 2025, however, the judge granted an adjournment until 9 September 2025 to allow the defendants to provide further written evidence regarding their personal circumstances. An interim injunction was secured at this hearing and in place during this time. The defendants did not attend court or provide any further evidence in their defence. This injunction, which was initially applied for and granted on the 9th May 2025, reinforces the Enforcement notice that was also served on that date and both documents outline requirements in that the Land-owner is to cease the use of the land for the stationing of caravans for human habitation, remove the said caravans and all unauthorised structures, items and vehicles, and carry out remediation to the land to its original form. It also prevents further caravans/mobile homes being brought onto the Land for residential purposes and any associated engineering works. The judge also awarded costs of £53,000 to Chichester District Council.

62/25 Manorial Waste Flower Bed

Councillors Baker and Fraser will take a look at the flower bed and discuss with Councillor Holden.

63/25 Parish Plan

Councillor Jules Fraser has kindly started to update the Parish Plan. The document had been circulated as at Appendix 2. She stated it had originally been adopted in 2009 but was now understandably out of date. Parish plans were introduced by the Countryside Agency as part of the Vital Villages initiative. Neighbourhood Development Plans and Village Design statements are promoted now. Parish Plans are a more holistic view of village life and differ from village design statements which are far narrower in their remit and focus on the quality of the built environment. All agreed updating the parish plan was beneficial to the village and thanked Councillor Fraser for all her hard work progressing this. Please feed back any comments.

64/25 Asset of Community Value – Northchapel Village Stores & Post Office

The listing for the Northchapel Stores & PO as a Community Asset has expired after 5 years. Status as a community asset basically allows a community to put together a bid to buy an asset which is of value to the community. It halts any sale for 6 months and gives the community the right to bid on the property. The Parish Council agreed for the Clerk to submit a new application for a further 5 years.

65/25 Financial Matters

- The Council's current financial position @ £28,520 was noted.
- The Bank reconciliation as at 28th August 2025 (Appendix 3) was noted.
- The schedule of accounts submitted for payment at Appendix 4 was noted. The following payment was authorised for payment; WSCC (Clerk's July Salary) @ £643.
- The Budget Monitoring sheet as at 28th August 2025 (Appendix 5) was noted.
- The External Audit report 2024/25 was presented and considered. It has been completed and signed off by Moore.

66/25 Reports back from meetings attended by Councillors

There had been no external meetings.

67/25 Clerks Report including correspondence

Councillor Green stated Northchapel Bonfire and Fireworks would be on Saturday 1st November. The Clerk to transfer £500 as the budgeted donation for the event.

68/25 Items to be included on the next agenda

Christmas tree

Please inform the Clerk of any items to go on the agenda by Thursday 30th October 2025

69/25 Date of next meeting

Thursday 6th November 2025 at 8pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.02pm

Signed

Date