



NORTHCHAPEL PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of a Parish Council Meeting

held at Northchapel Village Hall

On Thursday 23rd July 2026 at 8pm

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

In attendance: Mrs Helen Cruikshank, Parish Clerk
District Councillor Gareth Evans

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

PARISH COUNCIL BUSINESS

39/26 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Parish Councillor John Sochovsky and District Councillor Charles Toddhunter.

40/26 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Green declared an interest in agenda item 43/26 Working Party Reports/MUGA as secretary of the Sports Club. Councillor Holden declared an interest in agenda item 44/26 New Electronics Communication site as a member of the Village Hall Management Committee.

41/26 Minutes

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 21st May 2026 were approved as a correct record and signed.

42/26 Reports from the Chichester District and West Sussex County Councillors

County Councillor Janet Duncton had sent through the following notes:

It's hot again but I guess we shouldn't complain but my goodness when you go to County Hall for a meeting it's been stifling at times. Still we are having a lovely summer on the whole. Each season brings its troubles and one around with the heat is that some tarmac likes to soften and can be a problem on the highways. I am not sure of all the reasons but just recently several of the roads around me have been resurfaced and I have to say they look great. You always have the problem of loose gravel but the machines that go slowly down the roads often in pairs have done a great job in picking up the loose gravel so I should hope that there has been less damage to cars who forget to go slowly.

We still, along with everywhere else in the country are having trouble with our SEND children in getting them properly assessed. Of course all agencies play their part but one of the obstacles is the specialist type of physiatrist that is required to assess. These are a bit in short supply but slowly slowly we are able to help with children that need help. It's just a slow process.

There has been quite a lot of work on the building of County Hall. The time had come when windows need replacing and things like that so it's all being done at the moment. I always have a bit of a moan about the state of the steps as you enter County Hall. In my opinion they need jet spraying and a bit of paint. To my surprise this has recently been done and now the entrance for visitors to County Hall does look as though we care. First impressions and all that.

A brief word on our Fire and Rescue Service. It is going along well as ever and has recently been able to recruit Retained Officers. In case you didn't realise the statutory body that will take both Fire and Rescue and Police eventually has already been set up although the Mayoral elections don't take place until 2028. This will mean that as of 2027 the Fire and Rescue Service will no longer sit with the County Council but move to the new Statutory body.

Since the elections there have been endless training sessions. Quite right of course because those who have just taken up the role of County Councillor need to know how everything works and as you know this includes how you handle Planning and the Code of Conduct. I attended one recently on Governance. I know about Governance and when Chairman of the County I chaired that committee but, you can always learn something at these sessions and of course Governance deals with any changes to the constitution etc. You never know it all. There isn't a lot of new items to let you know about. Everything is going along pretty much as ever.

One thing of course we are all waiting for is the Government decision on Unitary Council. There is a though that it could be as early as the middle of July but nothing is concerned and it will be interesting to know if the Minister has listened to and of the consultees is or pushing ahead with his own idea which was of course the 4 Unitaries putting Chichester, Horsham, Mid Sussex and Crawley into what he called the Urban Unitary.

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

District Councillor Gareth Evans reported on the following:

Local Updates

No local planning updates at this stage that adds to the last report.

CDC Wide Updates

Food waste recycling

Since the roll out of the food waste service was launched in March, over 880 tonnes of food waste have been recycled, alongside a 21% reduction in general waste volumes compared to last year. These are very encouraging results, and CDC will continue to share updates on the impact of the service is having on recycling performance over the coming months. If you would like a member of the team to deliver a talk, visit a school, attend a local event, or provide further information, please contact: waste.prevention@westsussex.gov.uk

Sustainability Grants

Chichester District Council is offering £105,000 in sustainability grants, with businesses able to apply for up to £7,500 (50% match funding required) to support energy efficiency, low-carbon technologies and waste reduction projects. Available to businesses with 2–40 employees, the scheme aims to reduce costs, improve resilience and support greener growth. A new Giki sustainability platform will also provide expert guidance and tools to help businesses develop climate action plans and cut energy use. More information is available at www.chichester.gov.uk/sustainable-support-grant

Chair of Chichester District Council

Congratulations to Cllr. Clare Apel who was awarded an MBE in the recent Kings Birthday honours list for her outstanding work in the voluntary sector, local government and Holocaust education. Clare has served the Chichester District community for 40 years and was first elected as a councillor in 1987. She has been Chair of Chichester District Council since 2023.

Central Government Planning Reforms

The Government's planning reforms aim to speed up decisions, increase consistency and support housing and infrastructure delivery. A new national scheme of delegation will see most applications determined by planning officers, with committees focusing on major, strategic or contentious proposals. Smaller applications will be decided by officers, while committee referrals will require a national gateway test and defined criteria. Councillor "red card" call-in powers will end, and planning committees will be limited to 13 members. Additional changes include local control of planning fees, new Spatial Development Strategies for strategic

planning, and Environmental Delivery Plans to streamline environmental requirements while maintaining protections. What will happen next is the Government consulted on the draft regulations and guidance between March and April 2026. In June 2026 draft regulations were laid in parliament. It is expected that the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) will be updated to support the implementation of the changes, and the Planning Advisory Service is expected to provide supplementary advice. Workshops and training for Parish Councils will be arranged after the summer period once final decisions by Government have been taken.

Full Council Meeting

The next full council meeting will be held on Tuesday 14th July at 6pm

District Councillor Surgeries

Cllr. Gareth Evans has the following surgeries running this month and beyond. Residents are reminded that should the publicised dates not work then it is possible to arrange calls or meetings outside of these publicised times. Please feel free to call 07958918056 or email gbevans@chichester.gov.uk

18th July, Kirdford Stores, (12pm-2pm)

22nd August, Old Mill Café, Wisborough Green (12pm-2pm)

5th September, Plaistow Stores, Plaistow (12pm-2pm)

19th September, Northchapel Club, Northchapel (2pm-4pm)

Councillor Lane asked for an update on the Blind Lane site. The owners can still not be found. District Councillor Evans to find out what the next stages are including the consideration of a forced sale.

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 Councillor Gareth Evans left the meeting at 8.10pm

43/26 Working Party Reports

- **Allotments:** There was nothing to report. Councillor Greet stated there had been a water leak at the allotments but it was sorted now.
- **Village Green:** Councillor Green said there would be no Northchapel football team this year but she was in conversation with Petworth Youth Football club who are interested in using the village green for training which would be good.
- **Highways including parking issues:** Parking near to the church car park entrance remains a problem with cars blocking sightlines for those trying to exit onto the main road. The Clerk to report the lines which have been re-painted in the layby opposite the shop as being too tight.
- **Village Road Safety Project including speed reduction proposals and Speedwatch:** Councillors Green and Lane stated that all the paperwork for the TRO application for the speed reduction in the parish was done and ready to be submitted by the Community Speedwatch group. The proposed boundary changes are as follows:
 - South of the Village
Reduce the current 60mph national limit to 40mph from the southern village exit to Chidfield Barns, and to 50mph from Chidfield Barns to a point at least 500m past Streels Lane.
 - North of the Village
Extend the 30mph limit northwards to absorb the current transition zone, shift the 40mph transition past the Fisher Street crossroads, and introduce a 50mph buffer to seamlessly match the Surrey speed limit at Ramsnest Common.

The Parish Council fully supports the application and thanked Councillors Green and Lane for all their hard work. The Clerk to write a letter of support to accompany the application. Councillor Lane said the Village Gateway signs project was on-going. Unfortunately it seems that no companies produce white gateways which are passively safe over 30mph. He is meeting with Mike Dare from WSCC Highways to walk the sites again and get agreement for a revised location Southbound.

- **Play Area:** Councillor Fraser said the ROSPA annual inspection had been carried out and the report distributed as Appendix 2. Minor repairs and maintenance tasks are required. It was agreed a working party should be organised to clean the equipment. She is looking for funding opportunities for new equipment and has sourced a number of trusts to try and gain grants from. The Parish Council can then apply to CDC to help financially as their grants are all matched funding.
- **Footpaths, Hedges and Rights of Way:** Councillor Trussler said the WSCC Access ranger and volunteers had replaced the broken bridge on FP588 leading off the Hillgrove Road. The Parish Council and residents are most grateful for the works carried out. The Clerk to write to residents of Old Well House and Mulberry House as complaints have been received about restricted pedestrian access due to encroaching hedges along the road.
- **Planning:** Councillor Baker said there was one outstanding planning application which he would email round details of for discussion:

SDNP/26/02141/HOUS

Pathfields, A283 Luffs Meadow to Pipers Lane, Northchapel, GU28 9HW
Erection of open car port to side of existing property

The following planning applications had been discussed since May's meeting.

SDNP/26/02225/TCA

Walnut Cottage, A283 Pipers Lane to Valentines Lea, Northchapel GU28 9HW
Notification of intention to fell 2 no. Lawson Cypress trees

SDNP/26/01588/HOUS

The Owl Barn, Pheasant Court, London Road, Northchapel GU28 9LJ
New window on south elevation

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

SDNP/26/01280/HOUS

29 Valentines Lea Northchapel West Sussex GU28 9HY

Replace 1 no. second floor aluminium window with uPVC window on north and west elevations

Decision: Approved

SDNP/25/02448/HOUS

218 Hammer Cottage Pipers Lane Northchapel West Sussex GU28 9LA

Detached Garage, driveway and associated works

Decision: Approved

SDNP/25/02449/LIS

218 Hammer Cottage Pipers Lane Northchapel West Sussex GU28 9LA

Internal and external alterations

Decision: Approved

SDNP/23/02136/SCREEN

Northchapel Waste Water Treatment Works London Road Northchapel Petworth West Sussex GU28 9EG

Screening opinion under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (EIA Regulations) - upgrade Northchapel Waste Water Treatment Works (WTW)
Decision: EIA Not Required

SDNP/26/02225/TCA

Walnut Cottage, A283 Pipers Lane to Valentines Lea, Northchapel GU28 9HW

Notification of intention to fell 2 no. Lawson Cypress trees

Decision: Raise no objection

SDNP/26/01845/TPO

3 Leaside Northchapel West Sussex GU28 9HD

Fell 1 no. Oak tree (T8). Reduce height by 4m, reduce east and west sectors by 2m and deadwood on 1 no. Oak tree (T7) subject to NC/97/00727/TPO

Decision: Approved

SDNP/26/01588/HOUS

The Owl Barn, Pheasant Court, London Road, Northchapel GU28 9LJ

New window on south elevation

Decision: Approved

SDNP/26/01393/HOUS and SDNP/26/01394/LIS

Freehold Farm London Road Northchapel West Sussex GU28 9NE

Link and single storey extension

Decision: Approved

SDNP/25/04670/HOUS

Mulberry House A283 Luffs Meadow To Pipers Lane Northchapel West Sussex GU28

Single storey rear extension with associated increase to ridge height, erection of new pool building/yoga studio with landscaping

Decision: Approved

- **Village Hall:** Councillor Holden reported that Pilates and Youth Club have stopped for the summer but there are now three dog training weekly classes. Bookings will improve in September.
- **Housing:** The Clerk to chase Hyde on an outstanding query on one of the flats in Luffs Meadow. Residents need to report any incidents to the Police and Hyde. Councillor Green asked whether the Parish Council would help support a resident who currently lives in a 2 bed who now meets the 3 bed criteria as a suitable property is due to come on the bidding system.
- **Winter Plan:** The Clerk will carry out the Grit bin audit and submit to WSCC by the deadline of Monday 10th August.
- **Northchapel Youth Club:** Councillor Green reported Youth Club had finished for the summer.
- **Multi-use Games Arena (MUGA) project:** Councillor Green reported the tennis net has been installed and is being used regularly including tonight. The online booking system is nearly up and running. She is hoping to organise a free 2hr session over a summer weekend to encourage residents to use and sign up to membership. Currently it is £5 per month per family. She stated the floodlights are now 65% funded.

44/26 New Electronic Communications site

The Village Hall Management Committee was contacted by Beacon Communications who complete works on behalf of MBNL. They have been tasked to find a suitable location for a new electronics communication site to replace an existing site in Frith Woods which they are losing. The proposed site is behind the MUGA near the trees adjacent to the Village Hall car park. The land in question is not Village Hall land but Parish Council land. Whilst the Parish Council has many concerns and questions about the proposal, it agreed to give permission for a non-intrusive survey to be carried out.

45/26 Financial Matters

- The Council's current financial position @ £33,187 was noted.
- The Bank reconciliation as at 16th July 2026 (Appendix 3) was noted.
- The schedule of accounts submitted for payment at Appendix 4 was noted. One payment for Business Stream (Allotment water) @ £208 was approved.
- The Budget Monitoring sheet as at 16th July (Appendix 6) was noted.

46/26 Reports back from meetings attended by Councillors

No external meetings had been attended since the last PC meeting.

47/26 Clerks Report including correspondence

The Clerk had nothing further to report.

48/26 Items to be included on the next agenda

Christmas tree

Please inform the Clerk of any items to go on the agenda by Thursday 27th August 2026

49/26 Date of next meeting

Thursday 3rd September 2026 at 8pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.55pm

Signed

Date