

# SINGLETON PARISH COUNCIL

## PARISH COUNCIL REPORT TO ELECTORS 2010/2011

### **Chairman's Report**

The Parish Council has continued this year to respond to the needs of Singleton and Charlton and to maintain and improve the facilities and assets for which we are responsible. We have a very limited budget and this work would not be possible without the time and effort put in by Councillors and our Clerk, Jenny Martin, for which I am most grateful. I would also like to thank Mike Hall, County Councillor, Henry Potter, District Councillor, and Carly Churchill-Wright, PCSO, for their support and guidance throughout the year. And a very big welcome to Christopher Todd as the new Headteacher of Singleton C.E. School, an excellent school and a great asset in the community.

As a Parish Council we endeavour to engage in, and respond to, all meetings and consultations where we believe we should have a voice in shaping decisions that will impact our Parish. This is particularly important at a time when District and County services are being cut back or re-shaped and when the South Downs National Park is about to take over full responsibility for many activities that will affect us, particularly on planning issues. Later in this report you will see that work is ongoing on a "village design statement" which will enable us to more clearly articulate to planners and other service providers the unique characteristics of our villages so that decisions on planning and other services will be better informed and implemented in the right context.

For the second year running, the Parish Council has agreed to keep the Parish Precept (part of Council Tax) the same. This requires that we manage our finances effectively while maintaining the standard of, for example, the Glebe Field and Playground, the Singleton Pond and Green and the Bus Shelters. This year two items required significant expense for maintenance and safety reasons. One, the Richmond Playground is reported on below and the other was the bus shelter on the A286, northbound. Both of these have resulted in the decision to make a contribution from the Parish's own reserves. For the bus shelter we are also grateful to West Sussex County Council for groundwork, a small grant from Chichester District Council and top up funding from Providence Resources UK Ltd.

Maurice Pollock

### **Planning Committee Chairman's Report**

Singleton is a beautiful, rural Parish – now within the new South Downs National Park – and Singleton Parish Council takes its role in the planning process seriously. We do not make decisions but we do comment on all applications in the Parish and any nearby which may have a direct impact on our parish. Members of the public are welcome to attend Planning meetings and are given a chance to speak. Meetings are minuted and Parish Council comments are put onto the CDC planning website for all to see. This year we dealt with 19 applications which included domestic alterations and extensions, tree works and pub signage. There were three larger applications:

Woodstock House Hotel, Charlton, was given permission to change into a dwelling with B&B rooms and 4 self-catering units.

The Oilfield in Singleton was given permission for 4 soundproofed generators to convert the excess gas to electricity. This will reduce light pollution from flaring the gas and will still keep noise below the permitted 33db. The Parish council visited the site to get a full explanation of these changes. We did suggest that the permitted noise level should be reduced back to the previous level of 27db but this was not accepted by WSCC.

Goodwood Racecourse submitted a large planning application, updating the racecourse for the next 10 years. Older buildings in the Lennox enclosure would be replaced, new entrance facilities for the Gordon enclosure and outline proposals for an additional floor on the existing Charlton Stand and new buildings beyond. Again the Parish Council had a site visit – we supported most of the application but had concerns about the additional floor and new buildings. These plans have been deferred and no decision has been made.

From 1 April 2011, the South Downs National Park Authority becomes responsible for our planning. They have delegated most of the work to CDC so we will continue to submit comments as before. However, any “major” applications or those “with significant impact on the Park” will be dealt with by the SDNPA planning team and the Parish will still be involved. There may be some changes, as Chichester DC will have to take account of the National Park’s aims of conservation, preservation and encouraging visitors. We shall see!

Sue Farman

### **Richmond Playground Report**

The Playground continues to be well-used by local youngsters and their friends. Whilst regular Health and Safety checks are carried out by the Parish Council, an independent and professional assessment is made each summer. It is now almost eight years since we opened the playground, so following some suggestions in the 2010 report, it was decided to do some repairs, refurbishment and upgrading. This will cost around £2,500 plus VAT, funded by the Parish Council. This work was due to start on Monday of this week which, weather-permitting, should be completed within a few days. Notices have gone up warning of the temporary closure and further signs will be erected by our contractors. Please be sure to keep youngsters well away from the area whilst work is in progress and in the meantime, hope for a good summer, to enable them to make the most of the improved playground.

Ion Casdagli

### **Village Design Statement**

Having produced a first draft of the Village Design Statement, this was discussed with Mr. Dave Hyland from Chichester DC. In the light of his comments, we decided to build on the existing VDS and add some facts and comment in keeping with his advice. The end result will be a paper which will inform the planners of the views of the Parish. Although the VDS will not be binding on the planners, it will inform them of Parish views and help to maintain consistency in the Parish Council’s responses to planning applications. It is hoped to submit the revised version of the VDS to the Parish Council shortly.

Keith Hope-Lang

### **Financial Report 2010/2011**

The 2010/2011 financial year ends on 31 March 2011, when the Final Accounts will be prepared, but the approximate year-end position is:

#### Parish Council

Balance brought forward as at 1 April 2010	£ 11,547
Overall income 2010/2011, including £11,025 Precept	£ 14,959
Expenditure as at 28/02/2011	£ 11,379
Expected invoices/SOs by 31/03/2011	£ 4,742
Estimated year-end balance	£ 6,637

Expenditure headings are close to budget, with small savings on many.

Income of £14,959 includes £3,150 from the Henry Smith Charity, which the Parish Council receives as a statutory body, but pays back out again in full to the Trustees for distribution.

The Parish Council has undertaken two major projects during 2010/2011: the replacement of the bus shelter on the A286 northbound, and the playground renovation works currently in progress.

WSCC owns the concrete slab and base beneath the bus shelter and bore the full cost of their replacement during 2010/2011. The Parish Council owns and is responsible for the bus shelter. With no WSCC bus shelter grants in 2010/2011 (normally 40 – 50% of project cost) the Parish Council budgeted £2,000 towards the project. With a grant of £999 from Chichester DC carried over from 2009/2010, the Oilfield pledged the balance, which is expected early in 2011/2012. The playground works are expected to cost around £2,900, already included in the £4,742 above. The £4,742 also includes a grant of £900 to the

Village Hall Management Committee towards upgrading heaters and associated electrical works.

Jenny Martin, Clerk to the Council

### **Local Winter Management Plan**

Singleton Parish Council produced a local Winter Management Plan along the guidelines suggested by WSCC as a self-help initiative for the local community. This provided for delivery of bulk bags of salt to two locations in the Parish: near the village hall in Singleton and at the Charlton Road/Knights Hill/North Lane crossroads in Charlton. Arrangements were also made with Mr. Humphries, who farms in East Dean, to plough Charlton Road through to the A286, as our main access route, if conditions required.

The plan has been a significant advance on what has been in place in previous years, although there are always aspects that can be tweaked for the future. Bulk salt was delivered. Unfortunately, the snow plough wasn't ready (after a period of not being used) and Mr. Humphries was unable to plough during the first, unusually early fall of snow. Subsequent falls didn't create depths that warranted ploughing.

#### Improvements for next winter:

More named volunteers are needed to be on call to help spread salt.

Checks on snow plough readiness.

Clearer understanding of what is possible and what is expected of residents. It is important that it is clear that this is a self-help plan. All able residents are expected to help their neighbours and the rest of the community as there is a limit to what councils of any level can do themselves.

Ian Michael

### **Rubbish on Knights Hill**

The increasing problem of discarded beer cans and boxes on Knights Hill has been raised with WSCC, the Police and Goodwood. All are greatly concerned by it and, due to the potential link to drink driving, the Police are particularly concerned. Police patrols have been stepped up. New rubbish is reported to WSCC, who will clear it, and Goodwood Security are also keeping an eye.

To help, please do NOT pick up the rubbish. Evidence is being gathered from it and WSCC need to know the extent of the problem. I know it is against one's instincts to leave it there, but please do! If you can narrow down the time and day it may have been dropped, this can be very useful. For instance, if you go out and return within an hour or so and rubbish has been dropped whilst you were out, please let us know.

Ian Michael

### **SID (Speed Indicator Device)**

Bill Spence, Ion Casdagli, Maurice Pollock and myself have deployed SID around the village at various times of day, four times now.

SID is now being regularly deployed around the village, operated by local volunteers. We have noticed that even if a vehicle is travelling below the speed limit when SID flashes in front of it, the vehicle will still slow down.

Analysing the speeds of vehicles passing through the village: many were under the speed limit, several were only just over, and only a few were over the limit enough to have been prosecuted, had the Police been present.

**We appeal for more Parish councillors and villagers to train in the use of SID.** This takes only a very short time – please let me know if you would like to know more.

Nick Conway

### **Emergency Planning**

#### Winter Maintenance

The County Council introduced a policy to provide salt/grit bags at hazardous locations and requested Parish Councils to identify these. Areas of concern were identified as Knights Hill and Charlton Road, between the school and the A286. Parishioners will have seen that

bags were supplied by WSCC. In addition, arrangements were made for a local farmer to plough the road from East Dean to the A286 during snow conditions.

#### Flooding

The Parish Council has ongoing concerns regarding the potential for flooding from the river Lavant. Subsequent to the last critical event in 2000 and at the request of the Parish Council, WSCC arranged for extensive works in the village, which were estimated to remove some 2/3 of the restriction in flow. Whilst it is pleasing to report that this has not been tested, the Parish Council has identified some constrictions that cause concern and will be discussing these with appropriate Authorities during the coming year.

#### General Emergencies

Chichester DC has introduced a concept of Community Resilience to plan for recovery at local level following a major emergency. This suggests a framework for Parish Councils to use when preparing their Local Plan. The Parish Council has a plan that reflects the needs of our small community. This requires the Parish Chairman to activate an emergency response when requested by the District Council or after a local incident that requires assistance at Parish level. Each Parish Councillor will then be tasked with coordinating the needs and resources available for a particular part of the Parish and feeding these into the recovery planning.

Bill Spence

#### **Goodwood Motor Circuit Consultative Committee**

This met twice in 2010, in June and November.

After a period of low bookings, as a possible result of the general economic downturn, business has picked up with several event days bought by car manufacturers. There is a cycle event planned for 2011 and the management are hoping to put on several driving courses aimed at young people. If these courses are passed, there could be a lowering of insurance premiums.

The circuit is one of the most regulated in the country, with recently installed state-of-the-art noise monitoring equipment. The website now has more event information and there is an informative leaflet coming into print. This is to be distributed among estate agents, and new property areas such as Graylingwell, an obvious new neighbour.

Ion Casdagli

#### **Levin Down Management Committee.**

The committee last met on 14 October 2010. Attending were three members of the Sussex Wildlife Trust, Rosemary and David Staples for Butterfly Conservation, and myself.

The Reserve continues to be well managed by the Trust. The Herdwick sheep are continuing to graze and reducing the scrub growth. A group of volunteers supervised by the Trust have been regularly cutting back overgrown vegetation and felling trees to reduce forestation. The plan is to return the area to correct Downland and encourage wild flower growth. The rabbit population has been successfully reduced by official shoots and also by disease.

The Trust has asked that if any dead badgers are found, these be reported to Goodwood Estate so they can be tested for T.B.

Butterfly numbers continue to be monitored by Ann Griffiths and data collected is sent to the Butterfly Conservation Authority.

Ion Casdagli

#### **Henry Smith Charity**

The Henry Smith Charity, based in London, gives us an annual grant to help "the poor, sick and elderly" of the Parish. The money comes through the Parish Council and is administered by 4 local trustees. Joan Belton stood down as Trustee this year, after many years service and is replaced by Penny Spence, joining Sue Farman, Ion Casdagli and Rev. Richard Woods.

This year, we had £3,170 to distribute. We gave small grants to 47 residents and families, a £200 donation to the residents of The Old Rectory, Singleton, £50 towards Father

Christmas gifts for village children, and a £150 grant to Singleton Village Hall for new disabled access ramps.

Sue Farman, Trustee

#### **CDALC - Chichester District Association of Local Councils**

This is a small subgroup of the Sussex Associations of Local Councils (SALC). It is a group of Parishes in the Chichester Area – we are the most northern Parish – meeting two or three times a year to relay information from SALC and the National Association (NALC) and to discuss/ lobby for local issues.

I have only been able to attend one meeting this year, run jointly with Petworth. This was a useful update on the SDNP (South Downs National Park) and the members of the Authority who will run the park.

CDALC has been rather undermined in the last five years by the District Council's Community Forums and County Local Committees, which seem more attractive to Parishes, although their role is different. However, I think it is important for this Parish to remain linked to this group. SALC is pushing for ever more influence in the South Downs National Park and organising many of the meetings between Parishes and the SDNP Authority, so any Parishes which are not members of SALC could find their views and needs ignored.

Sue Farman

#### **Singleton Relief in Sickness Fund (in Memory of Nurse Harding)**

I represent the Parish on this committee, which has met twice this year to decide on the progress and distribution of this Fund. We gave help to 16 residents. This is mainly done by cheque, but a few elderly residents prefer to receive two free bags of solid fuel.

Sue Farman

#### **South Downs Advisory Forum**

There has been no meeting of the full Forum this year.

Sue Farman

#### **'Pathwatch'**

This group, which meets about twice a year, was set up by the South Downs Joint Committee to keep an eye on the illegal use of public rights of way, particularly by motorbikes. I have been unable to get to the meetings this year but receive minutes. There is still a problem, but mainly on the Downs to the north of our Parish (Heyshott/Graffham). With the advent of the SDNPA, it is not clear whether this group will be continued.

Sue Farman

#### **Tree Warden's Report**

The trees in the village are maintained to a good standard, my responsibility is to report on any planning requests, to inspect on a regular basis the all street trees, and to see that the Queen Victoria Jubilee copse is maintained to a good standard. The trees have got to a size that an under planting would be a proposal I would like to budget a small amount of money to planting Bluebells, this could be part of the celebrations of our present Queens Golden Jubilee.

John Elliott

#### **Report from County Councillor Mike Hall (Chichester North)**

May I thank the Chairman, Members and Jenny, the Clerk, for always making me most welcome and for keeping me updated on current issues.

WSCC

Following the grant settlement from Central Government, WSCC has to make savings of £79 million over 3 years. This has resulted in savings of 80% from back office staff and 20% from front line services. Tough decisions have been made in both Adults' & Children's Services which has resulted in raising the eligibility threshold for Adult Services and £2 million has also had to be saved from Children's Services. Regarding Youth Services in rural areas, discussions are taking place with the voluntary sector, schools and communities, exploring the best way to provide rural youth provision, which will include training, advice, policy guidance and some funding support where it has been identified.

#### National Park

At our meeting of the SDJC Executive on 1 March, we formally agreed the final accounts and transferred governance to the South Downs National Park. I believe that the combined local authorities, firstly as the South Downs Conservation Board, and more recently when joined with the Hampshire Board to form the South Downs Joint Committee, can be proud of their achievement over the past 20 years. In particular, our dedicated staff and volunteers who have given the new National Park a wonderful legacy to build on.

#### Speed Limit

The proposed speed limits for West Dean have been slightly amended. The order will now be advertised within the next 2 weeks and a final consultation period will run from 17 March to 7 April. Subject to there being no serious new objections, I am expecting the confirmation to be made at the next CLC meeting in June.

#### Police Budget

The Police also have to make savings of £53 million before 2015. One of the cost-cutting measures is to form one Division, covering the whole of West Sussex. They are also consulting with staff on a new policy model and planning to reduce both back office staff and Police officers by 550 personnel.

#### Salt Bags

Parishes which received salt bags from WSCC will be required to dispose of them, preferably by recycling, as these will not be collected by WSCC.

Mike Hall

#### **Report from District Councillor Henry Potter (Boxgrove Ward)**

What a year this has been! We began with the designation of the South Downs National Park in March. The designated AONBs were revoked as the Authority came into being as a shadow authority, but not then fully operational. Members were appointed and Mr. Andrew Shaxson was appointed as the District Councillor for Chichester. He has since been elected Chairman of the Park Authority Planning Committee, although Planning matters have been delegated back to the District Council, except in special circumstances deemed by the Park Authority as requiring special determination. The Central Office of the SDNPA was announced as Capron House in Midhurst and signage is already in place indicating Midhurst as "the heart of the South Downs National Park"

In May of last year, I expressed concerns about the Vintage @ Goodwood event and the effect this might have on the surrounding Parishes. This didn't appear to affect Singleton and East Dean as it did at Boxgrove, as the noise was dreadful, and thankfully we don't have to witness another event this year. Goodwood have returned the Licence for the site back to the Council Licensing Officers.

The Duathlon wasn't as successful as expected, so we may have seen the last of those. I do hope that Goodwood will look closer at such proposed events in future.

By far the largest area for concern this past year has been the District Council's Spending Review, or perhaps it should be termed a 'Savings Review', as cuts in spending have had to be very severe. We knew that it would be bad towards the end of 2009, but it has been worse than anyone could have imagined. But, because the Council could see this unfolding throughout the world in 2009, plans were put in place even then, and subsequently, your Council Tax has been frozen. Posts vacated by retirements and resignations have not been filled, work being shared from within. Projects agreed and budgetted for are going ahead, financed from Council Reserves. No new projects are planned in the future, as Reserve Funds have fallen to £5 million.

Our Grant from Central Government has been cut by 44% over the next 2 years, which means we have only £14 million to run the District annually and continue to provide the services which are so important to you. The introduction of parking fees in Selsey, Midhurst

and other places has met with much disapproval and the closure of some public toilets throughout the District is also cause for much concern. Members' allowances are frozen for the third year running and there are many changes to the various benefits that are currently available. Housing Benefit, Tax Credits, Income Support, and other allowances are all under review. But you will still get your bins emptied, the streets cleaned, and Parks and Open spaces will be maintained. Planning Services will continue, although a charge has been introduced for consultations with Planning Officers, the Westgate Leisure Centre will continue, and many more services will be unaffected. All this for £2.65 per week for a Band D Council Taxpayer!

Thank you for inviting me to your meetings and I hope to continue after May 5<sup>th</sup>.

Henry Potter

### **Singleton Village Hall**

The Village Hall Management Committee has continued to maintain and improve the Hall over the past year. With financial assistance from the Duke of Richmond, Singleton Oilfield, two local charities and the Parish Council, new heating and lighting has been provided, together with improved disabled facilities.

With the current financial situation, both hiring income and grant support are under pressure, while the cost of works increases. The Management Committee has of necessity had to amend hire fees and also introduce a slot meter for heating, in order to manage the day to day running costs. Outstanding works are now redecoration and replacement of the roof tiles, so the Management Committee will be looking for outside financial assistance for these. The Parish Council will continue to provide a small annual subsidy towards these costs.

Bill Spence, Singleton Village Hall Management Committee

### **Headteacher's Report from Singleton CE Primary School**

I am writing this by way of introduction as the new Headteacher of Singleton C.E. School, succeeding Marion Barker who retired in December 2010, with many good wishes, after 15 years dedicated service to the school.

My name is Christopher Todd and I am delighted to lead this vibrant and successful school, working with a strong team of staff, governors and parents in order to build upon the many strengths of the school. I have taught in West Sussex for over 20 years and bring a wide range of experience to this post which I hope to put to good use in order to maintain and enhance the current high standards here. I live nearby in Chichester and therefore I have, for many years, been aware of the high regard in which Singleton C.E. School is held locally and I believe this is well deserved and should be celebrated widely.

No school operates in isolation but is part of a community and Singleton C.E. Primary School is no different in this respect. I have previously led a small rural school and have a strong belief that the school is a vital part of the community. I am enjoying getting to know the village and the valley and all who live and work in this beautiful area.

The school enjoys the support, encouragement and challenge of the Local Authority, the Diocese and the Governing Body. We also have strong links with the local area which have developed and grown over time and provide a bedrock of support for the school. We are very grateful for and value this strong partnership and I look forward to many happy years as Headteacher of Singleton C.E. School.

Currently the school has 63 pupils, the highest number on roll for some time, and has three, mixed-age classes. The following report covers the period of January – March 2011.

#### Spring Term 2011

This term Willow class (5-7 year olds) are studying Transport, Beech class (7-9 year olds) are studying Journeys and Oak class (9-11 year olds) are studying World War 2.

The Year 5 and 6 pupils worked with other local schools on the Goodwood Area Schools Opera project 'Rime of the Ancient Mariner'. Led by music professionals and other local schools they developed a piece which was performed at the Chichester Festival Theatre in February. There were various workshops covering music, movement and drama in the run up to the dress rehearsal and performance. The pupils gained a great deal from this project in terms of self-esteem and confidence.

Art, Choir, Cross Stitch, Judo & Board Games after school clubs have taken place this term.

This half term in our assemblies we are exploring the Christian values of 'Respect' and 'Hope' from a variety of perspectives including respect for the environment, for other people and for ourselves and the concept of hope in the lead-up to Easter. Rev. Richard Woods comes into school on Wednesday to lead our worship, further strengthening the link between the school and the community. The Rector, myself and Gill Moss, Headteacher of West Dean School also met to plan Collective Worship themes and activities. At the start of Easter on Shrove Tuesday some Governors and Parents came into school to cook pancakes for all the pupils which were gobbled up and greatly enjoyed! The following day the Rector came into school to talk about the significance of Ash Wednesday.

There are exciting plans for the weeks, months and terms ahead and we look forward to the continued interest and support of the parish council and local community.

Christopher Todd

**Police Report from PCSO Carly Churchill-Wright**

Firstly, I would like to thank the Village Hall Management Committee for letting us use the Hall for a very successful Property Marking session.

In January, there were two thefts of coping stones, one each from Charlton and the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum. In February, timber and tiles were also stolen from the Museum and this month, there has been an attempted break-in to a cabin on the same site.