

SINGLETON PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

March/April 2010

Welcome to Ian Michael

We are delighted to welcome Ian Michael onto the Parish Council, who takes over from Diane Snow. Ian was born and brought up in West Sussex, has lived in Charlton for the past eight years, and takes great interest in the countryside and local affairs.

Goal Post

We are extremely grateful to Jason Snow for his kind offer to look after the goal post. He will put it out and take it in at weekends and at other times on request.

Annual Parish Meeting for Electors

The 2009/2010 Annual Parish Meeting took place on Wednesday 24 March 2010, but only two of you came along. As attendance has been so poor in recent years, we are happy to consider a new format and would welcome your views - would you like an outside speaker and if so, what sort of topics would interest you? Is it at the wrong time? We normally start at 7 o'clock. Would you prefer it to be combined with a more social occasion, perhaps with light refreshments? Above all, the Annual Parish Meeting is an opportunity for us to tell you what we have been doing on your behalf at the close of each Council Year, and for you to give us some feedback and tell us what you would like us to do for the Parish community in the coming Council Year. Any thoughts, please, to your local parish councillor, our Chairman, Maurice Pollock (811260) or Jenny Martin, Clerk (266092).

Annual Report 2009/2010 Council Year

Chairman's Report - Cllr. Maurice Pollock

I would like to thank everyone for their valued support in contributing to a wide variety of consultations and activities which impact on our small rural community.

When Chichester DC issued its Core Strategy for the Local Development Framework in 2006, Singleton was assessed as an urban settlement. The painstaking work of the Parish Council resulted in re-designation as a rural settlement, highlighting the importance of planners recognising our planning needs in the correct context. Keith Hope-Lang is leading the development of a Village Design Statement, to define the Parish to ourselves, to developers, and to planners.

Chichester DC is now working on the new LDF, but from April 2010, the South Downs National Park will make the transition from interim authority to full authority status in April 2011. The National Park Authority will assume responsibility for the LDF (or equivalent) and become the ultimate decision-maker on planning matters. The Parish Council is participating in briefings and workshops, to keep informed and to contribute where possible, to represent parish needs.

Traffic management and speed control has been an ongoing problem. Progress has been made this year by getting a Traffic Regulation Order approved by the County Local Committee (currently out for consultation) to improve the positioning of the A286 signage and road markings. Implementation could be deferred, as funding is diverted to pay for road repairs resulting from the severe winter weather. The VAS (Vehicle Activated Sign) on Budds Hill, triggers at 30mph and above, flashing "30mph" and "Slow Down" to alert traffic of the sharp bend ahead. We are grateful to County Cllr. Mike Hall for initiating discussion with Providence Oil to seek their support for traffic management measures for both Singleton and West Dean. I followed this up with a request to Providence for specific financial support, on behalf of both parishes, and Providence generously offered up to £6,500. Another VAS has been installed near West Dean School.

Still on the subject of traffic and road safety, the Parish Council was told that Mass Participation Events Limited planned a Duathlon (run-bike-run) on 9 May, based on Goodwood Motor Circuit, with the bikes going through Charlton and East Dean villages before returning to the circuit. At a meeting with MPE and Goodwood, both Singleton and East Dean Parish Councils raised serious issues on the expected disruption caused by lack of access to properties and businesses, and road safety in and around the narrow lanes.

Properties most affected were leafleted by MPE, followed by a public meeting to enable residents to voice their concerns. Few objections were raised to the race in principle, but residents felt the organisers should find a route which effectively avoided closing access to Charlton and East Dean. As a result, MPE chose an alternative route avoiding the village centres, but this will be reviewed for the 2011 Duathlon.

Much of the maintenance of Parish Council assets has done by volunteer Councillors, falling on a few individuals. This includes the Playground and Glebe Field, The Plantation along Grove Road, the Village Pond and Green, notice boards, benches and bus shelters. To lighten this load and keep the villages tidy, some tasks are now being contracted out, where economic.

During 2010/2011, we hope to replace the bus shelter on the A286 opposite Grooms Yard. A structural assessment is needed, but having been awarded £999 towards the project by Chichester DC, we have also applied to WSCC. Other sources of funding are being investigated, with any shortfall funded from Parish Council reserves.

The whole Lavant Valley has been badly affected by sewers surcharging with the exceptional levels of groundwater, causing problems throughout the system. Pumps have been running continuously to keep the water level down, with a steady stream of yellow tankers extracting water and discharging elsewhere. County Mike Hall is working hard to resolve the problems with Southern Water and the Environment Agency.

I thank, once again, my fellow councillors for all their good work and support in many ways over the past year. We were sorry to accept Diane Snow's resignation from the Council on health grounds and wish her well for the future. Particular thanks to Jenny Martin, our Clerk, for her help and support to all of us. Also, special thanks to our District Councillor, Henry Potter, and our County Councillor, Mike Hall, for always being available to help us, not just by regularly attending our meetings, but by taking issues forward through District and County to good effect.

Planning Committee - Cllr. Mrs. Sue Farman

We are very lucky to live in a beautiful parish, already an AONB, and now in the new South Downs National Park. Whilst the villages have changed and evolved over the years and will continue to do so, it is important that this is done sympathetically and in scale with what is already there.

The Parish Council takes its planning role very seriously, commenting on all applications within the Parish, and any nearby which might have a direct impact. Planning meetings are advertised on notice boards in both villages, with applicants and members of the public always welcome to attend and speak. Meetings are minuted, with Parish Council comments normally posted on the Chichester DC's planning website for all to see. This year, the Committee has considered 29 applications, including repositioning of a telegraph pole, porches, conservatories, 2 large two-storey extensions, applications for increased activity at Haredown Mountain-Boarding and the Goodwood Motor Circuit and, being a Conservation Area, numerous applications for work on trees. Objections have been made to only 3 applications. The Planning Committee has also commented on strategic planning documents from the District and County Councils: most recently one from Chichester DC about sites for new houses in the district 2010 - 2026.

This year, the Committee followed with interest the creation of the new South Downs National Park which will, from April 2011, become the Planning Authority for the area. It has not yet been confirmed how this will alter the planning process, but the Parish Council will continue to be involved and help to preserve and enhance our very attractive Parish.

Glebe Field and Richmond Playground - Cllr. Ion Casdagli

I am delighted that the playground continues to be an excellent and popular amenity. We made enquiries about replacing the little-used teenage shelter with a cantilever swing, but had to abandon this due to the very high cost. If there is support for re-forming the Richmond Playground Management Committee, comprising councillors and local people interested in doing some fund-raising, this could be looked at again.

The Glebe Field has been greatly enhanced by the hedge and tree works carried out over the past year or so, which have opened out the area and will grow into a much more attractive boundary. A new dog waste bin has been installed to encourage visitors to clean up after their pets, and the two litter bins are well-used. The grass-cutting has been contracted out, so the sit-on mower will be sold as soon as it had been serviced.

Financial Report 2008/2009

Balance brought forward as at 1 April 2009	£ 6,649.38
Overall income 2009/2010, including £11,025 Precept	£ 13,600.03
Expenditure to date 2009/2010	£ 7,008.18

Approximate year-end balance:

Parish Council	£ 10,825.00
Richmond Playground	£ 855.10
Total:	£ 11,680.10

Expenditure headings are close to budget, with savings of over £200 on the Parish Council's insurance premium, thanks to shopping around for a better like-for-like quote. Chichester DC's decision to charge for emptying the litter bin by the pond resulted in unforeseen expenditure, because this service was previously been provided without charge, and we were not forewarned of the change in policy. Reserves are healthy, with plenty of scope for projects in 2010/2011, such as the bus shelter o the A286.

Sussex Police – PCSO Carly Churchill-Wright

A number of local homes, farms, and Goodwood Racecourse, have fallen victim to thieves siphoning off oil. Some have not realised this until supplies have unexpectedly became low or run out. Poaching, especially of fallow deer, has also increased significantly. Most activity takes place in twilight hours, with a number of suspicious vehicles, especially 4x4s, seen in the area. Illegal motorbike and quadbike activity is expected to increase with the better weather.

Please be vigilant and report any suspicious activity immediately on: **0845 60 70 999**.

Singleton CE Primary School – Mrs. Marion Barker

We were very sorry to hear that Marion Barker is leaving in the summer but wish her a very long and happy retirement. The school, judged "outstanding" in all areas by both Diocese and Ofsted, continues to go from strength to strength, being top of the West Sussex 'league table' for Year 6 test results for Summer 2009. With new pupils starting in September, the number on roll is expected to rise to nearly sixty.

Village Hall Management Committee – Cllr. Bill Spence

The AGM is yet to take place, but it has been a successful year, making a small profit, with well-patronised cream teas in the summer. The monthly Lunch Club has gone from strength to strength, attended by 37 people on 24 March. About £8,000 will be carried forward to 2010/2011, the refurbishment of the kitchen and toilets having been successfully completed. Our aim is to upgrade the heating, lighting and decoration over the next 18 months or so, grants permitting. The new amenities have already increased demand to hire the Village Hall, which is expected to continue, with charges being kept to a minimum to ensure that the facility is affordable to all local residents.

Henry Smith's Charity – Cllr. Mrs. Sue Farman, Trustee

A further £3,150 in 2009/2010 had been awarded to Singleton and Charlton. This had been distributed just before Christmas to five local families, thirty-nine residents, a £200 donation to our neighbours at The Old Rectory, and £50 towards Mr. Wilson's distribution of Christmas gifts to local children. £105 had been retained, in case of need during the year. The Trustees had opened a Barclay's Bank account, which now enabled most grants to be distributed by cheque.

More detailed reports made at the Annual Parish Meeting on 24 March 2010, have been placed on the notice boards and on www.valleydiary.org, along with all our minutes.

**Next Parish Council meeting: Wednesday 5 May 2010, at 7pm at the Village Hall.
All meetings open to the public, who are invited to speak during the Public Session.**