



CHAILEY ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Draft Minutes

Minutes of Chailey Annual Parish Meeting held on 1st April 2026 at Chailey Parish Hall commencing at 7.30 p.m.

Present: 19 present

1. Welcome.

The Chair of the Parish Council welcomed all those present to the meeting which is an opportunity to meet Parish Councillors and discuss local issues.

2. Apologies for Absence.

Apologies were received from Wendy Jordan and District Cllr Joa Saunders

3. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 21st March 2025

The minutes of the 2025 Annual Parish Meeting were approved and were signed by the Chair. Proposed by Cllr Jordan, seconded by Michael Smith, all in favour.

4. Annual Report from the Chair of Chailey Parish Council

Cllr Berry welcomed attendees to the Annual Parish Meeting and reported on Parish Council activity over the previous year.

Cllr Ina Barnes had resigned due to moving away, and the Chair recorded thanks for her service. Three new excellent councillors had joined: Cllr Jo Smart, bringing experience in community engagement and communications and becoming a Trustee of the Bluebell Federation providing links to Chailey St Peters Primary School; Cllr Patrick Murphy, contributing professional expertise & advice in construction to planning matters; and Cllr Chris Fisher, long involved with Chailey Windmill, who had become Chair of the Planning Committee and was progressing plans for a Rural Life Museum in the Granary. One council vacancy remained.

The Council had continued to consider planning applications, with significant focus on the emerging Lewes District Council Local Plan, consultation of which ended on 28th February. The Chair noted the scale of housing numbers proposed by Government for the district at 15,000 up to 2042. Lewes District Council has identified a need for 8,750 homes, citing the constraints posed by the South Downs National Park and the coast. It was noted that significant growth is likely to be in locations where sustainable transport links already exist, for example, where there is a station or very regular and reliable bus timetables. Chailey does not fall into this category.

Residents' priorities, including protection of the "Green Gap", were reflected in the draft plan, though recent appeal decisions such as Chagley Corner remained a concern. The Council continued to press developers for smaller, affordable homes and local infrastructure improvements, though these requests were often refused.

Work had begun on the South Chailey site behind the Old Swan, awarded on appeal, and the Council had secured commitments including new bus shelters and Real Time Passenger Information.

The Chair reported on an early engagement meeting with Headway regarding potential development at the A272 Chailey/Newick border, noting that no application had yet been submitted. Two further medium sized applications were expected for Mill Lane, full details yet to be provided by the developers. Local opinion that Mill Lane is already a very busy road had been noted by the Council.

Concerns about local services had been raised during the year. The Council met with Judy Acey, the Practice Manager of Wealden Ridge Medical Partnership & discussed appointment availability. She explained how increased patient numbers triggered funding for additional clinical staff. Recruitment for a nursing post was ongoing.

The Council had also worked with Lewes District Council's Environmental Protection Team and Southern Water regarding persistent fly infestations in and around North Chailey and parts of South Chailey. District Cllr Joa Saunders helpfully obtained evidence of sewer overflows in Hazeldene Lane which were reported and addressed. Communication issues with Southern Water remained, and further updates had been requested.

Thanks were extended to village clubs and organisations for their volunteer contributions, including the Bonfire Society, Cricket, Football, Stool Ball, Litter Pickers, Speed Watch, Brownies Guides and Rangers, Chailey Commons Society, The Horticultural Society, The Painting group, WI, Allotments and the Repair Café. Cllr Berry also highlighted the Newick and Chailey Good Neighbours volunteers who give people lifts to GP and Hospital appointments, as well as opticians and hearing centres. They continue to seek additional volunteer drivers, so please get in touch if you can help.

Public thanks were recorded to councillors for their voluntary service, dedication & hard work in helping to continuously maintain and protect the beautiful village of Chailey. The Chair also thanked the outgoing Clerk, Bettina Newell, who took early retirement in February, for her hard work, professionalism and friendly manner. But that she would continue to assist on a locum basis. Nicola Menniss had taken on the role of Clerk and shared with our excellent Financial Officer Emma Reece.

Looking ahead, the Chair noted that the Reading Room required improvements which need to be resolved. The Reading Room was opened in 1898 'to promote the welfare, spiritual, intellectual and social of its members' and by 1913 there was a flourishing Ladies Rifle Club at the back of the building. Requirements included the need to ensure a safe and comfortable working environment and to support potential community use. Issues included poor heat retention and the need to upgrade facilities, including the toilets.

The Chair concluded by encouraging continued community engagement and inviting residents to consider joining the Parish Council.

5. To welcome Nick Belcher, Speedwatch.

Speedwatch reported that two new members had joined the group, although further volunteers were still being sought. Nick advised that Mill Lane East remained the worst road in Chailey for speeding, with recorded non-compliance reaching 67% despite the 30mph limit.

He explained that driver speeding records were held on a national database and accumulated regardless of location. Nick noted that Speedwatch sites were designated by the Police and were required to be a set distance within a speed-limit change.

Also, with a clear 100-metre line of sight and no bends. He further reported that the proposed reduction of the main road speed limit from Newick to Chailey to 40mph would make it eligible for Speedwatch monitoring.

He commented that the effectiveness of flashing Speed Indicator Devices was uncertain, although he had observed a reduction in speeding on Warrs Hill Road.

6. To Receive Reports from Local Representatives.

Cllr Matthew Milligan, East Sussex County Council – Report:

Unfortunately, Cllr Milligan was unable to attend the meeting but sent a written report which was made available to those attending the meeting.

Cllr Matthew Milligan reported that he would be standing down as County Councillor at the May 2026 elections, having remained in post for an additional year to avoid the cost of a by-election. He stated that it had been an honour to serve the division over the past five years.

He noted several projects he had been unable to secure, including a pedestrian crossing in South Chailey, residents' access to West Sussex household waste sites, and a reduction of the A275 speed limit in South Chailey from 40mph to 30mph.

He outlined key achievements during his term, including:

- Leading a successful bid for new road safety signage outside Newick Primary School, introducing advisory 20mph limits at school times.
- Securing enhanced speed-management measures in Barcombe, including new gateway signage, red surfacing, and additional road roundels.
- Achieving resurfacing works on the A275 between Beggars Wood Road and Cinder Hill (2022) and on the B2112 Ditchling Road in Wivelsfield (2023).
- Successfully lobbying for Chailey's inclusion in the Speed Management Programme, resulting in the A272 speed limit in North Chailey being reduced from 50mph to 40mph, and the 30mph limit in Newick being extended westwards.

He noted that the A272 speed-limit changes followed a long-running campaign supported by residents and former District Councillor Sharon Davy.

Cllr Milligan expressed hope that future councillors would continue progressing outstanding projects and that forthcoming local government reorganisation might bring improved resources and services. He concluded by thanking parish clerks and councillors for their support over the past five years.

7. The Chair brought the meeting to a close.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Signed:

Date: