

St Martha Parish Council

Chairman's Report:

Parish Council Meeting Thursday 15 January 2026

Public Telephone outside Chilworth Station

I am delighted to say the public phone has now been re-instated in the kiosk outside Chilworth Station - after a number of months of chasing!

Meeting with Surrey Fire and Rescue to discuss resilience to Heathland Fires

Following the fire on Blackheath Common in August 2025, Surrey Fire and Rescue Service kindly agreed to my request for an on-line meeting with me and Councillor Bob Hughes to hear the result of its report from the incident. As the fire originated within the St Martha Parish boundary, and came close to several residential properties, a further meeting was subsequently held with Marli Holland, Rural Affairs Officer for Surrey Fire & Rescue Service to discuss the outcomes and consider measures to strengthen future resilience. I suggested a meeting with her and interested local landowners/authorities/organizations, in Blackheath Village Hall, in order to reach a wider audience and further the discussion. There has been a positive response to the invitation and the matter will therefore be progressed when a convenient date is settled on.

The meeting will be an opportunity for participation in joint planning discussions to align land management practices with wildfire prevention strategies. This will greatly enhance the fire service's ability to respond swiftly and safely, while also reducing the overall risk to the community and the surrounding environment.

At the on-line meeting with Marli Holland, also attended by Gregory Yeoman from SCC, the question was raised about a Community Emergency and Resilience Plan for St Martha being logged with SCC. It would be useful for SCC to have up to date contact details shared with them and for St Martha PC to think about what action it would take in the event of a major emergency in the Parish.

Disturbance due to Firework Displays

A resident has complained about the stress and disturbance caused by a private firework display in someone's garden over the festive season. Though this isn't something within the remit of a Parish Council but is a Borough Council/Police matter I suggested the PC put something in the Autumn edition of the Chilworth Village Magazine to highlight the importance of keeping within the law relating to firework displays and consider informing neighbours in advance to mitigate any stress to them, their pets, or livestock.

Upgrades to the North Downs Line crossings

Residents of Dorking Road have been getting together to pressurise Network Rail into action to reduce waiting times at the Tangley Level Crossing. They are considering setting up a petition, and possibly arranging a meeting with Network Rail as soon as possible. In the meantime, I am asking NR to urgently put in place promised baffling on the crossing lights, to reduce light pollution, and consider signage asking drivers to switch off their engines whilst waiting in order to reduce air pollution.

Jessie's Seat

Network Rail has organized an on-line meeting on Monday 19 January with the Community Rail Partnership and some members of the North Downs Line Steering Group to discuss next steps regarding Jessie's Seat. I will feed back after this meeting.

Guildford Borough Council Local Plan Engagement Workshops 2026

I have booked to attend the Workshop at Millmead, Guildford on Thursday 29 January, 6-8.30pm.

SALC Forum Wednesday 21 January 7.30pm

I am unable to attend this on-line Forum as I have a prior commitment.