

ST MARTHA PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of St Martha Parish Council held on 11th September 2025 at 7:00 p.m. in Chilworth C of E Infant School

PART I

2025-137 - Present:

Councillors:

Cllr Mrs. P Allen (Chair), Cllr G Brown (Vice Chair), Cllr Mrs. M. Osman, Cllr J. Peake, Cllr Mrs. J. Tantram, Cllr Miss D. Toynbee and Cllr R. Young

Guildford Borough Councillor Danielle Newson
Surrey County Councillor and Guildford Borough Councillor Robert Hughes
Shalford Community Councillor – Adrian Cansell

Three members of the Public

In attendance: Parish Clerk - Anne Tait

2025-138 - To accept apologies and reason for absence in accordance with the LGA 1972, Sch 1 para 40.

No apologies received.

2025-139 - Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs) - by Councillors on any of the agenda items below in accordance with The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012. (SI 2012 No. 1464)

No declarations were made.

2025-140- Declaration of Non-Pecuniary Interests

Cllr Peake declared an interest in any discussions about the Leat behind properties 15 – 18 Halfpenny Close.

2025-141 - Register of Interests

No updates were declared

2025-142 - Minutes of previous meetings:

- a) Minutes of the meeting held on 24th July 2025 – it was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk would correct the wording at minute numbers 2025-127 and 2025-133. The Minutes would then be agreed at the next full Council Meeting to be held on 9th October 2025.
- b) Minutes of the Meeting held on 29th May 2025
RESOLVED: Members reviewed Minute at 2025/90 (b) – as the accuracy had been queried by a Parishioner.

It was agreed that the wording was incorrect at 2025/90 (b) and to change the Minute to:
Footpath 469: It was noted that this footpath is designated as a footpath. The status had been confirmed by John Baker Countryside Access Officer - West Surrey.

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2025-143 - Public Participation

- A discussion took place on the process of reporting blocked drains on the Highway. It was agreed that the Surrey County Council 'tell us' or 'Fix My Street' was most effective method of reporting faults/incidences.
- A resident of Old Manor Gardens confirmed that he would be encouraging the residents to re-submit their original comments to Guildford Borough Council regarding the amended application for 24/P/01821 Old Manor Farm, Old Manor Lane, Chilworth GU4 8NE.

2025-144 - Reports

a) **The Clerk's report** had been circulated to Members via email in advance of the meeting and included details of:

- Forthcoming dates and venue of SMPC meetings up to and including May 2026.
- The PC Website and the use of the CMS – Perch.
- Damage to the Bus Shelter Roof opposite the Percy Arms –

RESOLVED: the Clerk to send Matthew Murray – Zurich Digital Trading Underwriter, the Parish Council's asset register to amend our 'All Risks' cover to better reflect the assets owned by the Parish Council.

Councillors agreed that the Clerk should not complete the Compensation Claim Form from the Network Rail Regional Claims Manager, initiated by Harry Riley regarding the damage of the bus shelter roof.

David Allen will assess the damage and Cllr Miss Toynbee will research into sourcing the tiles.

- Public Access Bleed Control Kits

RESOLVED: the Clerk to enquire about this additional resource from The Defib Shop.

b) **Cllr Mrs Allen's** report had been circulated to all Members via email in advance of the meeting and included details of:

- Fire on Blackheath Common
- Consultation on Rural Speed Limits Area 3 Guildford and Waverley
- Consultation on Local Government Reorganisation in Surrey
- 20mph outside Chilworth School
- Dormice at the Gunpowder Mills Site
- Upgrades the Tangley Level Crossing and Chilworth Station Level Crossing
- New Parish Tree Warden

c) **Councillor's reports from Surrey County Council and Guildford Borough Council**

- The Rural Roads Area 3, Cllr Hughes reported on the findings but was disappointed in the process and arrangements for the consultation.

2025-145 - Planning Matters for consideration

- a) **To discuss and agree** the recommendation to Guildford Borough Council on the following applications:
- **Planning Application 25/P/01018 - Lockner Farm, Dorking Road, Chilworth GU4 8RH**
Proposal: Construction of an outdoor riding arena

It was **RESOLVED:** that the Parish Council comment as follows:

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This application would mean an escalation and spread of development on this site within the AONB.

There is already local concern about the sight lines at the Lockner Farm entrance onto the A248. The proposed tree planting, to give some screening and compensate for loss of biodiversity, could further compromise this. However, it is noted that Highways have made no comment where this is concerned.

There is no reference to lighting for the new arena, which is in a much more visible position than the existing sand school which does have lighting. Lighting would be an impact to residents, wildlife, and drivers along the A248 which is immediately adjacent.

There is no reference to the hours of use of the arena. There would be loss of pasture currently used by over-wintering birds.

The Parish Council would like to see removal of permitted development rights and a clause preventing future conversion to residential.

- **24/P/01821 Old Manor Farm, Old Manor Lane, Chilworth GU4 8NE**

Proposal: AMENDED APPLICATION Erection of 4no. 4-bed dwellings and associated landscaping with access from Old Manor Lane

RESOLVED: to resubmit original comments/recommendations.

Although St Martha Parish Council understands the National and local need for increased housing, and this site has been identified in the GBC Local Plan Land Availability Assessment as a suitable site, St Martha Parish Council wishes to object to this proposed development for the following reasons:

Access to the site is via a single-track unmade lane of loose gravel. It has no passing, or refuge points. It is also a Public Footpath (260a) which is well used for access to the fields and countryside beyond. The ownership of the track appears to be unknown, but the adjacent residents maintain it at their own expense. The track is vulnerable to water leaks and Thames Water was called out 4 times in the past six months. Apart from a short part of the entrance, which is adopted and maintained by SCC, Old Manor Lane is single track dropping to 3.1metres wide in places. At no point can two vehicles pass. Vehicles are required to pull into short drives to let others past. This is even more problematic at weekends and evenings when the very short driveways are full of cars. Delivery vans struggle to navigate the track, which has led to accidents with parked vehicles on driveways and bin lorries have learnt to reverse down it. As the track can easily become blocked, it is difficult to see how construction of the proposed site can safely be carried out. In the longer term, the greater number of traffic movements will impact the residents, those wanting to use the footpath and the track itself which is in a vulnerable state.

As access to the site is also along a Public Footpath, the development will not support the goals set out in Policy D1 (6) Safe, connected and efficient streets of GBC's Local Plan, nor will it support Paragraph 105 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) which states that planning decisions 'should improve and protect public access and rights of way'. The safety of the public using this Footpath is of concern and it is hard to see how the aims of paragraph 105 will be met by this application.

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

The application fails to include a Landscape and Visual Assessment, a critical omission given the site's location within the Area of Great Landscape Value, and within Natural England's area known as Cranleigh Water, which is part of the proposed Surrey Hills (AONB) boundary extension.

Biodiversity Net Gain Report and lack of a Preliminary Ecological Assessment

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Though the applicant has commissioned a biodiversity net gain report, the report appears fundamentally flawed. The desktop survey included a “search for local plans, wildlife strategies, or local policy which may inform strategic significance of the habitats in this assessment”, yet none of the following local plans, wildlife strategies or local policies are referenced:

- Surrey’s Local Nature Recovery Strategy, which despite not being finished has identified the Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs) across Surrey, along with their associated priority habitats and species. This includes the River Wey (& tributaries) BOA, along with the associated priority habitats and species.
- Guildford Borough Council’s SPD Green and Blue Infrastructure webpage, which references P6 and P7 and states that they ‘protect important habitats, including BOA priority habitats’.
- Guildford Borough Council’s Policy P6 Protecting Important Habitats and Species, along with Policy P7 for mitigation measures where appropriate.
- Surrey Nature Partnership Irreplaceable Habitats Guidance. Perhaps as a consequence of not identifying the relevant local plans, wildlife strategies and local policies, the report, (under the heading “Strategic Areas and Priority/Irreplaceable Habitats”, pg. 12), states that “the site is not located within any strategic area and as such, **all of the habitats within this assessment have been input as being of low strategic significance.**” In fact, the site is in very close proximity to the **River Wey (& tributaries) BOA.**
- The western edge of the site, at its closest point is estimated to be only 30m from the BOA (based on footpath 260a being less than 20m from the BOA at this point). The southern perimeter appears to be less than 10m in distance from the marked ditch that feeds directly into the river BOA.
- Priority habitats under this BOA include the river itself along with meadows, rush pastures and hedgerows, with a significant amount of associated priority species. Although Guildford Borough Council have not produced a Green and Blue Infrastructure SPD, the associated webpage states that policy P6 and P7 protect important habitats, including BOA priority habitats.

Policy P6

Policy P6 of the Local Plan identifies development proposals for sites that contain or are adjacent to: irreplaceable habitats, priority habitats, habitats hosting priority species, sites designated for their biodiversity value and all aquatic habitats as requiring the protections set out in Policy P7.

Furthermore, Policy P6 states that irreplaceable habitats will be protected; specifically, not allowing any loss, damage or deterioration to irreplaceable habitats unless “wholly exceptional reasons have been demonstrated”.

Irreplaceable habitats are defined as such if they meet the definition of the NPPF glossary or Surrey Nature Partnership guidance (Irreplaceable Habitats’ Guidance for Surrey’). Although the Local Nature Recovery Strategy will also identify irreplaceable habitats, this has not yet been finished, therefore the only guidance currently available are the NPPF and the Surrey Nature Partnership guidance.

Finally, P6 states that development proposals are required to protect and enhance priority species and habitats, which include species and habitats identified as priorities in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, including wildlife corridors and stepping stones ((i.e. the BOAs listed including the River Wey (& tributaries) BOA)).

Irreplaceable Habitats’ Guidance for Surrey, Surrey Nature Partnership:

Policy P6 states that irreplaceable habitats will be defined as such if they meet the definition of the Surrey Nature Partnerships guidance. Page 6, point 2 of this guidance states: “Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI/Priority habitats) present in Surrey, for which irreplaceability should always be considered” include:

Rivers

Lowland meadows (= dry neutral grassland, as 1.1 above).

Point 1.1 sets out the key criteria for “irreplaceability” for dry neutral lowland grassland. These include being an established permanent grassland of more than 20-30 years old, with no disturbance and appropriate management and presence of species-rich characteristic. Given the Biodiversity Net Gain

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Report fails to identify the relevant local plans, wildlife strategies it is difficult to see how it assesses this site appropriately. The Surrey Nature Partnership Irreplaceable Habitats guidance states that “rivers” are a Habitat of Principal Importance, for which irreplaceability should always be considered. Based on local information and the Biodiversity Net Gain Report, it does appear that at least two of the dry neutral lowland grassland are met because the site has not been disturbed for over 30 years and the neutral grassland is of good quality (minimum of 10 vascular plant species per m²).

Preliminary Ecology Assessment

Not only is the site in very close proximity to the River Wey (& tributaries) BOA, which raises the likelihood of there being protected species on site, but as will be noted in one of the nearby residents’ comments, protected species, such as adders and grass snakes have been observed in their garden.

St Martha Parish Council considers that a Preliminary Ecological Assessment would provide essential information to help consider whether the site is suitable for development and, if so, what mitigation measures, as set out in P7, would be necessary to not only protect the two protected habitats and potential species, but also ensure that the river itself does not become polluted by both the surface water run off if the site was developed, but also from the residents potentially using fertilisers in their gardens.

Although there does not appear to be definitive guidance regarding when a Preliminary Ecological Assessment takes place, we note that Surrey County Council, when considering their own development, use the following criteria to determine when a Preliminary Ecological Assessment should occur.

- If a development is: likely to affect a designated site,
- 0.4h or larger, or
- Within 100m of, or is likely to affect, a priority habitat or priority species The document also states: “For all but the most minor applications, the PEA should include the results of a search from the Surrey Biodiversity Information Centre.”
- (See Annex 3 County Development Regulation January 2024) Mixture of housing types, density and size of properties Paragraph 2 (b) of the NPPF Social objective, ‘sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations.’ Sadly, this proposal does not meet that need as no small, affordable housing is included in the development. Though of good quality, the density and size are more than we would wish to see.

Fenestration

There is concern about light spillage across the AGLV, and the AONB beyond, due to the amount of glazing at the rear of the properties.

Parking and Turning Area

The turning areas and parking for cars is not deemed adequate. This is especially important given that Refuse vehicles currently must reverse into Old Manor Lane. A dedicated turning circle would resolve this issue and without it the reversing distance would be entirely unreasonable.

Highways

Noting what SCC Highways says in its report, the Parish Council still has concerns about access onto and off the A248 as it is on a bend, next to a railway crossing and near the junction with Blacksmith Lane. At busy times of day children and families cross this access point from one section of pavement to another on their way to and from Chilworth School. This safety concern will be greatly increased during construction.

Rights of Way

As stated, Old Manor Lane is a right of way, and the current residents are struggling to maintain it to a sufficiently safe standard. Notwithstanding the main issue, which is how narrow the lane is, so that pedestrians have to stop and squeeze themselves to the side whenever large vehicles appear, the other matter relates to how the right of way can be maintained to a satisfactory standard with the

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two years of works and then ongoing traffic that will inevitably occur with 4 houses, each with 4 bedrooms. The nature of the site indicates that further development could take place and for the access road and footpath this should be an additional consideration.

We remain strongly concerned that increasing vehicle traffic along a footpath by increasing the number of properties that can only be accessed via the footpath will inevitably lead to further conflicts between pedestrians (including children) and vehicles. Whilst vehicular traffic should always give way to pedestrians on a footpath, in reality people needing to make deliveries, for example, are likely to be unaware that they are driving on a footpath.

- **24/P/00749 Flat 3, Oak House, Sample Oak Lane, Chilworth GU4 8QW**
Proposal: AMENDED APPLICATION Proposed conversion of existing flat (flat 3) to provide two self-contained flats with addition of one dormer window and rooflights

It was **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council comment as follows:

The Parish Council have concerns about parking with the potential increase in vehicles parked outside the property and the importance for enough turning space to be available. Cars entering Sample Oak Lane, which is a single-track lane, and allowing for the farm entrance opposite, to be in a forward position.

(a) To receive and note any outcomes from GBC on applications previously reported:

- **Planning Application 25/P/00967 Lake House, Mill Lane, Chilworth, GU4 8RP**
GBC Approved a Certificate of Lawfulness on the above proposed development. **(Further information is available in the Officer's Report on the GBC website).**
Date of Decision: 24/07/2025
- **Planning Application 23/P/00773 South Oaks Caravan Park, Dorking Road, Chilworth GU4 8NS**
Proposal: Erection of three detached dwellings, the retention of existing ten caravan pitches and new access following the rearrangement of the site
WITHDRAWN: 18/08/2025
- **Planning Application 25/P/00414 - The Beeches, Blacksmith Lane, Chilworth GU4 8NQ**
Proposal: Single storey front extension with covered porch
GBC Approved: 01/08/2025

2025-146 - Highways, Footpaths and Rights of Way

It was reported that two individuals are interested in purchasing 'Peter Burt's' field.

2025-147 - Policies, Financial and Regulation Approvals

(a) Proposed list of payments to be tabled at the meeting for approval:

The payment list was presented to the meeting a copy of which had been issued to all Members via email in advance of the meeting – ref Table 1. It was proposed by Cllr Mrs P Allen, seconded by Cllr Mrs J Tantram and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the payments to the value of £625.12 be approved. The payment list was duly signed by the Chairman Cllr Mrs P Allen, during the meeting.

Table 1: Proposed list of payments 11th September 2025

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Budget Head	Date	Description	Supplier	Net	VAT	Total
Clerk's Expenses		Staff excess mileage	Shell	8.10	0	8.10
IT expenses	31/07/25	9 x Licences from Microsoft	BN Info. Security Ltd. Inv: 4187	53.88	10.77	64.65
Zoom	17/08/25	Facility to hold meetings on line 17/08/25 -16/09/25	Zoom	13.99	2.80	16.79
War Memorial Maintenance	04/08/25	Grass cutting on 9 th and 23 rd July 2025	Ian Watson	110.00	0	110.00
War Memorial Maintenance	08/09/25	Grass cutting 6 th and 27 th August 2025	Ian Watson	110.00	0	110.00
IT expenses	07/09/25	Invoice 011913	Alan Oxford	21.00	0	21.00
IT expenses	26/07/25	.uk domain (stmartha-parishcouncil.co.uk)	Cloud Next	7.99	1.59	9.58
IT expenses	18/08/25	.uk domain (stmartha-pc.gov.uk)	Cloud Next	50.00	10.00	60.00
Section 137	25/07/25	Donation for printing Chilworth Village Magazine for y/ending 31/03/26	Chilworth PCC	75.00	0	75.00
Subscriptions	08/09/25	Membership Fee	SLCC	150.00	0	150.00
Totals:				599.96	25.16	625.12

(b) The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) had prepared the bank reconciliation for period ended 31st August 2025 in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations, a copy of which had been issued to all Members via email in advance of the meeting. It was proposed by Cllr G Brown, seconded by Cllr Miss D Toynbee and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the bank reconciliation be approved and signed by the Chairman, Cllr Mrs P Allen during the meeting.

(c) **RESOLVED:** It was proposed by Cllr Mrs Tantram and seconded by Cllr Brown to approve the schedule of payments presented by the Clerk.

(d) **RESOLVED:** Cllr Mrs Tantram will review the timetable to update the St Martha Parish Council Policies.

2025-148 – Items for the next meeting:

- War Memorial – update on repairs
- Tree survey – report on findings
- Roseacre Gardens and traffic along the A248 – update on meeting with SCC re improvements

2025-149 - Date of the next meeting: 9th October 2025 in Chilworth C of E Infant School

PART II

Pursuant to the Admission to Meetings Act 1960 Section 1(2)a in view of the confidential nature of the following business, members of the public and press are to be excluded from the meeting.

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2025-150 - The Clerk's Contract

NALC Annual Pay Awards

RESOLVED: It was proposed by Cllr G Brown, seconded by Cllr Mrs J Tantram to award the new pay rate for the Clerk and AGREED the backdated increase that commenced on 1 April 2025.

Clerk's Appraisal

RESOLVED: It was proposed by Cllr Miss Toynbee, seconded by Cllr Mrs Osman to convene a second meeting with the Clerk and members of the Personnel Committee to compare the Clerk's current contract (dated 01/01/2014) with the NALC model contract.

Working from Home Arrangements

RESOLVED: - It was proposed by Cllr Peake, seconded by Cllr Young that whilst it was acknowledged that St Martha Parish Council does not currently have a 'Working from Home Policy', the Clerk would arrange for Karen Corning to visit, view the arrangements and advise on any changes.