

St Martha Parish Council

Chair's Report

Parish Council Meeting Thursday 12 February 2026

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

Following the fire on Blackheath Common in August 2025, I have organized a meeting between Marli Holland, Rural Affairs Office for Surrey Fire & Rescue, and a number of organizations responsible for heathland/public open spaces in this part of Surrey. The response has been very good indeed and we will be meeting at Blackheath Village Hall on Monday 23 March 9.30am to 12noon.

Upgrades to the North Downs Line Tangley Crossing

There is no further news to report at this stage relating to the concerns of our residents regarding the crossing - following the North Down Line upgrades. Network Rail is aware of the concerns and has gone away to revisit!

The AGM of the North Downs Line Steering Group is on Thursday 12 March in the Guildford Council Offices from 1.30-3.30pm.

Jessie's Seat

Network Rail 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. Unfortunately, the popular idea of a commemorative wooden seat outside the Station will need to be shelved as GWR says it will cost around £12,000 to cover the safeguarding, risk assessments, asset implications etc for this project. There will need to be a re-think by the Parish Council and other interested parties.

Platform Planters at Chilworth Station

As Alliance for Natural Health are moving from the Old Station House in March, a new person will need to be found to look after the planters on Platforms 1 and 2. This does require GWR training before they can commence because of the safety implications of working so near the railway line. I suggest the PC advertises in the Chilworth Village Magazine to see if there is anyone who might like to support their community in this way. I have asked the Community Rail Partnership if there would be any funding available for plants.

In the meantime, I will see Melissa Smith from Natural Health has enough long-lasting plants to put in the planters before she leaves.

Old Manor Farm Planning Application

The planning application for Old Manor Farm was Refused by the GBC Planning Committee at its meeting on 4 February. Two spoke in favour of the application and two against - a resident and myself on behalf of the Parish Council.

Shalford, Peasmarsh & Chilworth Climate Action Group

Bex Bolland from this Group has been in touch as they are embarking on a project with the Water Rangers and River Wey Trust to carry out some water testing of the Tillingbourne for E.coli. Three test sites have been selected, however Chilworth is not included but they feel it

is an important spot and are keen to fundraise to do additional testing here. They were making enquiries about whether the Parish Council could help with fundraising and I said I would put it to the Council though it doesn't have a lot of spare capacity or funds. Bex has confirmed that they are looking for £1,000 to cover the cost of testing at Chilworth. The Parish Council's thoughts on this would be welcome.

I occurred to me that the PC might consider supporting their fundraising by advertising it at the public Open Day at the Mills on Saturday 5 September and at the event at the Village Hall, all part of celebrating 400 years of the Mills, but I am not sure this is what they have in mind in terms of raising money.

They also mentioned a working group helping to remove any invasive species at the Site and I pointed them in the direction of John Andrews as a first 'port of call' as I don't know if he currently has a group working there. I included Debbie Toynbee in my response to Bex and she is hoping to speak to her in person to gain more information.