

St Martha Parish Council
Parish Council Meeting Thursday 16 April 2026

Chair's Report

Upgrades to the North Downs Line Tangley Crossing

Sir Jeremy Hunt MP has written to Network Rail after attending a meeting on Friday 13 March at Chilworth Village Hall, arranged by one of the residents of New Road Chilworth. I have also been in correspondence with NT and they have gone away to look further into efficiencies around barrier down times, are talking to Surrey Highways about signage along the road relating to vehicle omissions, and are hopefully actioning lighting issues. They say they can do nothing about the decibel levels of the Yodel alarms as they are set at their lowest allowed setting. They are checking about accidental use of the alarms.

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

The meeting I organized 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 took place on 23 March. 16 attended, including landowners/operators and rangers, the National Trust, Waverley Borough Council, the Albury Estate, Friends of the Hurtwood, Womersley Parish Council, myself and Debbie Toynbee from St Martha PC, 2 Surrey County Councillors and Guildford Borough Councillors. There was a presentation by Surrey Fire and Rescue which included some drone footage of the Blackheath wildfire back in August followed by lots of general discussion. This will hopefully result in closer co-operation, consideration of better strategies, and more effective operations to enhance fire resilience. I will be putting up Surrey Fire & Rescue posters on our Parish notice boards highlighting the dangers of Wildfires and I talked to the top year children at Chilworth School about wildfires on a visit to Blackheath Common.

St Martha Parish Council Emergency Plan

A Parish Council working group met on 31 March to consider a Parish Emergency Plan. Further work on this is now in progress. The Plan will be shared with Surrey County Council, Shalford Community Council, Chilworth Care Committee and possibly others.

Platform Planters at Chilworth Station

Calli Dracos, of Dorking Road Chilworth, now has had training from GWR concerning safety on the railway platforms.

Road Safety proposals for outside Chilworth School

A resident of Dorking Road has written to me expressing grave concerns about the proposed traffic calming measures for outside Chilworth School. I have written to the SCC School Road Safety Team asking that the Parish Council be sent a copy of the design for the proposed layout

as it will have implications for our residents. I also asked about any consultation process. I am awaiting a response.

Farnborough Airport

Below for information is a copy of a recent press release from Farnborough Airport.



We're excited to announce that from July 2026, all flights operating from Farnborough Airport of less than 500 miles distance will be provided by electric aircraft. The airport has long recognised that it should be the pioneer of low emissions flying and its premium customers should bear the cost of making such flights a reality. Given its location at the UK's centre of aviation excellence and the proximity to Farnborough College, it is important that the airport makes such a progressive change.

The airport will operate a fleet of BETA's ALIA CTOL, a battery-powered fixed-wing aircraft manufactured by BETA Technologies, a U.S. electric aerospace company. These are the same aircraft being operated by Loganair providing low-emission, next-generation flights in Scotland¹.

Simon Geere, Farnborough Airport's CEO, says: *"We recognise that 98.4% of flight emissions are from the flights rather than the airport's operations, so our efforts to make the airport "green" really don't make a difference. We've always believed that our ultra-wealthy customers flying from our airport and causing considerably higher annual emissions compared to a resident in Rushmoor should support the introduction of low emissions aircraft."*

The airport also recognises that with the war in Iran and the shortage of fuel across the world, it would be immoral for a tiny percentage of the population to keep flying on fossil fuel powered private jets while the public can't afford to fill their cars to get to see their families.

Gareth Andrews, Farnborough Airport's Sustainability Manager, says: *"We introduced three Renault Zoe's in 2015 to address the emissions impact of the airport's operations². We also promoted Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) as a solution to emissions from our aircraft. But the public realised that there wasn't enough SAF available, it would consume agricultural land needed to grow food, and it wouldn't reduce emissions as SAF produces the same amount of CO₂ as oil-based aviation fuel, so we had to think of something else"*.

The BETA ALIA CTOL is designed to carry five passengers or cargo for up to 290 miles. This means the aircraft will have to land in Paris and recharge when operating to Nice or Palma - Farnborough Airport's most popular destinations. Luggage will also have to be sent by train or by private jet due to the limited payload of the aircraft.

Simon Geere says: *"We are sure our passengers will not mind the minor inconvenience of flying at half the speed of a jet and their luggage not travelling with them. The alternative was to make passengers walk the last part of their journey or reduce the number of flights operating from the airport but our shareholders, Macquarie, did not support this."*

Immediate release – 1st April 2026.

Ends

¹ <https://www.loganair.co.uk/news/loganair-achieves-aviation-history-with-first-all-electric-flight/>

² <https://www.press.renault.co.uk/releases/188>