

St Martha Parish Council

Parish Council Meeting Wednesday 1 July 2026

Chair's Report

St Martha Parish Council Emergency Plan

Councillor Debbie Toynbee and I met on 23 June to discuss the simple location map to go with the St Martha Parish Council Emergency Plan. The plan as it currently stands, without the map, has been shared with Surrey County Council, Surrey Fire & Rescue, Shalford Community Council and Albury Parish Council. Since the meeting Debbie has kindly finalized the map which will now be circulated.

Subsequent to this, Geoffrey Yeoman, Community Resilience and Data Officer for SCC, has contacted Albury, Blackheath and Chilworth Village Halls and the Percy Arms Pub to see if he can visit to discuss them becoming a Community Emergency Information Hub. A place where people can go in times of crisis to get support, where help is offered, and reliable information given. A hub can also act as a safe shelter, cool or warm hub, or assembly point for the community during an incident or emergency. The aim is to establish a network of hubs in the community in venues such as village halls and community buildings. Some of the halls and our pub have already indicated to me that in principle they would be happy to be part of this network.

400 Years of the Chilworth Gunpowder Mills

Plans to mark this event at the Site on Saturday 5 September are well underway and were further discussed by myself and Debbie Toynbee at our meeting on 23 June.

Traffic calming and road safety outside Chilworth School

The Health and Safety Governor of Chilworth School, Andi McCann, has been in touch about possible concerns residents might have relating to proposed traffic calming measures outside the School. Andi asked me to share my thoughts – which I did. He was going to discuss these with the School leadership team.

No copy of the final traffic calming proposals has been seen by the Parish Council.

Commemorating Jessie's Seat and Visitors' Map and Lectern

Discussions have been on-going about the place to put the Visitors' Map at Chilworth Station. Surrey Highways are being consulted about placing it on their land opposite the Percy Arms Pub, near the bus shelter. Due to various reasons, it has proved impossible to get permission from GWR/Network Rail to put a commemorative seat or the map at the Station. In the meantime, I have been working with the Community Rail Partnership to install a large printed copy of the map on the back notice board of the Station Bus Shelter. The notice board faces the Station itself. It would go on the central panel backed onto board and the plan is for it to be installed by David Allen.

Yodel Sirens at the Chilworth and Tangley Crossings

When I was asked by residents if the Yodel Sirens could be changed at either of these crossings, as has happened at the Brook crossing, Network Rail made the following response:

Following consultation with the crossing team, no new standard was created for rural sites as a result of our work at Brook level crossing. The sounder at Brooks was installed under a derogation — a trial of a non-compliant siren against the existing national standard. A bespoke risk assessment was undertaken specific to Brook, accounting for background noise, pedestrian footfall and road traffic. Analysis of all three factors made the risk tolerable. Tangley crossing presents too high a risk across these three factors to be considered for a similar approach, and Chilworth has significant footfall due to its proximity to the station and platform access. Our position therefore remains unchanged; we are unable to alter the alarms at either crossing. However, Andi McCann, an Albury Parish Councillor who has been involved with the Brook crossing, is still asking Network Rail to use the same risk assessment for the crossings in Chilworth as was used for the Brook crossing to ensure parity.

This risk assessment would be more applicable to the Chilworth Station crossing which crosses an unclassified rural lane.

Ambles & Rambles Podcast Launch

Councillor Debbie Toynbee and I attended the celebration gathering on 4 June to launch the new podcasts created by Whistlestop Arts. The reception was held at Pippbrook House Dorking to celebrate the new podcast series of 4 gentle audio walks through the Surrey Hill National Landscape – all accessible by public transport. It was very well attended by a raft of organizations and dignitaries and clips highlighting Chilworth, with Debbie and I talking about the area, were shown. Posters advertising the podcasts are now on our notice boards and something will be added to the Parish Council website.

Blackheath Common Management Plan and Wildfire Management Plan

A Consultation has been launched by Waverley Borough Council on these 2 documents and it will run until 10 August. Reference to the Consultation is now on the News section of the Parish Council's website. St Martha Parish Council has been discussing whether a response to the Wildfire Management Plan would be submitted from this Parish Council. I have checked with Waverley BC and they would prefer a response via the Consultation platform but would accept a separate response from St Martha via email should that be needed. Residents in St Martha Parish who live in Blackheath, near the area where last August's fire started, have various concerns which I think it would be good for us to raise. I have already asked the National Trust, on their behalf, to comment on these concerns and share their own thoughts as the landowner. I have also put notifications of the Consultation through the doors of those in our Parish that weren't covered by the mail drop from Waverley.

In the meantime, Wonerish Parish Council has been keen to facilitate a Blackheath village meeting to assist in people's better understanding and to help inform its own response. Waverley BC has responded that it won't be possible for them to attend such a meeting before 10 August. However, depending on the consultation responses and considerations, there may be a second shorter consultation period for people to view and comment on the final Wildfire Plan and Waverley BC may hold a drop in event in Blackheath around September/October time.