

East Lavington Annual Parish Meeting

Minutes of the Annual Meeting Of THE PARISH OF EAST LAVINGTON held on Monday, 19th May 2025 at 18.15pm in The 6th Form Cafe, Hollington Centre, Seaford College, Lavington Park

Present: Charles Britton, Barry Gosden, William Yates, Patrick Limpus and Simon Longman
In Attendance: Amy Harte (Clerk), Cllr John Cross (District Councillor),

Apologies: Cllr Tom Richardson (County Councillor)

1. Opening

Charles Britton opened the meeting at 18.20
Cllr Yates joined the meeting

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

The Minutes of the Annual Meeting of 20th May 2025 were approved. They were duly signed as a correct record by C. Britton.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes of the Annual Meeting 2024

No matters arising.

4. Chairman's Report

A copy of C. Britton's report is attached as Annex A

5. Parish Council Finance Report

A copy of the finance report is attached as Annex B

**6. District Councillor's Report:
Fittleworth Ward; District Councillors Report**

As of the beginning of April Chichester District Council (CDC) commenced its Grants and Concession budget for the coming year. The budget has been increased, and the amount for each grant has also been increased too. To be eligible, you should be a parish council or charity, do see the exact criteria on their website under grants and concessions. A small grant of under £2000 can be processed relatively quickly, and generally they are for the community's benefit, such as a new lawn mower or new facilities for sports clubs, village halls etc... Larger grants of up to 25K, and in exceptional circumstances up to 50K, need to be submitted to the Grants and Concessions Panel and the decision is made by that committee when it sits. Should you be interested in the latter you would be wise to contact CDC and discuss the application in advance and they can help you with the process.

I have written about Local Government Review (LGR) several times, a short update, we are now waiting on the Government to come back to District Councils and give clear guidance on many points that make it difficult for local authorities to make an informed decision about how to proceed. So, until then we wait. As a side to LGR, CDC has reviewed its asset register and has also put together an asset transfer policy. CDC has many assets that historically, for many reasons, has come into the ownership of the Council. These assets the Council is open to transfer to a relevant local body, Parish Council, Clubs, and Village Halls. The Council cannot just give away its assets, it has to

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demonstrate 'best value' but should there be an asset on its register that is of interest to your organisation, register available on CDC's website, then it is happy to discuss the asset in question. Finally, in some areas of the Ward, there has been an increase in fly tipping. To help reduce this we should all be conscious of the builders and workers that we employ for different tasks. First before you employ them ask for their 'waste carrier license' or search for it on environmental.data.gov.uk/public-register/view/search-waste-carriers-broker or call 03708 506506. If they do not have a license then you shouldn't be using them, if they do have a license ask to see it and take a note of their vehicle registration number. Also ask for a waste transfer note and keep that with the other information. Should anyone get caught fly tipping, and its your waste they are tipping, you are likely to be fined as well as the fly tipper.

John Cross

Fittleworth Ward, Chichester District Council

Prosperity funding has been released late, intended for the rural community. Only about 6 weeks to apply for this. Intended for diversification of rural businesses or community organisations.

Local Government review. WSCC ESCC & Brighton agreed to set up a strategic authority. District councils are involved to see how this might work. Guidance has been sought from government but they don't have any. 3 ideas for unitries WSCC Sussex West, flaw that less than the required number of people. East West Split. North south divide – Horsham North Chichester, mid sussex then the south, the coastal strip. Using the reserves of the solvent councils to support the bankrupt ones.

S. Longman – Any idea of when this devolution will filter down to Parishes.

A unitary would have been 4 parish councils merged perhaps. He confirmed that there was that direction of travel.

Cllr Britton reported that process to be approximately 3 years away.

Is it beneficial to be proactive? They would have to act on it if the members of the parish wanted to start a Community Governance Review.

How do you petition members of the parish? Use the Electoral Register, the Parish Magazine, email.

7. **County Councillor's Report:**

No report presented – Cllr Richardson sent his apologies.

8. **Parish Council Organisation:** The concept of merging local Parish Councils.

As a Councillor S. Longman created a business case and the council decided not to consult at that time. A number of Residents present at the meeting wanted to be consulted. Minimum vote should be 50% of the population. The risk of doing it and not getting a majority means you have to wait 2 years. Opening of the gate to the School has increased the freedom of movement. Sense of being two clubs but need to be one club.

A comment was made that the School are taking ownership of the chapel and are perceived as 'an island'.

From Graffham Parish Council there hasn't been an update since March.

John Bracey stated that GPC was in favour of a merger, and the resulting pooling of resources would benefit both Graffham and East Lavington. GPC are looking at village plan. The business case produced by Cllr Longman showed the potential financial benefits. Stated they do feel like one community and should move forward as one.

Cllr Yates was asked about the Schools' view and stated that the headmaster had no view.

It was stated by one of the visitors that this needs a broader consultation and asked how this can be achieved. Another wanted to hear what the next steps are going to be and stated that the council are

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here to represent the people. Cllr Britton stated that the Parish Council is a corporate body. One resident felt that spending the majority of the precept of the Clerk was not what they would want. Cllr Gosden advised that he had written a further business case and this was being discussed with the one already presented to allow the council to conclude a position.

Residents should be asked, prior to the decision of the Parish Council. Cllr Limpus summarised the situation regarding consulting the residents and engaging with both sides. What is the negative impact of merging? Why are two Councillors against it. Formal approach was discussed, Graffham said that it was on hold until the Village Plan was done. John Bracey stated that he had updated the situation and that GPC were in a position to discuss the merger. Cllr Britton stated that he would want to see a formal invitation to discuss the merger. Cllr Britton stated that he was waiting for the Chair of GPC to start discussions on this.

John Bracey's points:

New Chairman Gillian Charlesworth will be presenting her 3-5 year Business Plan at our Graffham Village meeting on Wednesday – all welcome.

The Plan indicates that GPC is in favour of a merger with ELPC and believes the resulting pooling of resources would benefit both communities [which from a practical standpoint is one community anyway] and initiates a long term plan for the maintenance & improvement of the whole area GPC views the prospective merger not as a takeover but as a joining of Councils with councillors from respective councils forming the combined entity.

Simon Longman has produced an excellent document outlining the business case in favour of a merger which clearly shows the financial savings that can be achieved.

The merging of County Councils & District Councils will undoubtedly set in motion eventual merging of Parish Councils so we feel it is far better to choose a local favourable solution than one later imposed by Central Government.

9. Speed Limits in East Lavington Parish

Cllr Richardson had not updated Cllr Limpus on this yet.

10. Question Time

None

11. Conclusion of the Meeting

The meeting closed at 19.13

These minutes are an accurate record of the meeting.

Signed

Chairman, East Lavington Parish Council

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Annex A

**East Lavington Parish Council
Chairman's Annual Report
May 2025**

I am pleased to say that the composition of the Council has not changed since last year. We still have the same five councillors who were elected in 2023, and we still have Amy Harte as our Parish Clerk...thank goodness.

We also greatly appreciate the support and interest we have had throughout the year from John Cross our District Councillor, and from Tom Richardson our County Councillor. Both Councillors attend our meetings whenever they can, and generally provide excellent written reports.

East Lavington is a small parish of slightly under 2,000 acres lying wholly in the rural area of the South Downs National Park. We have around three hundred residents, although not all of them are on our electoral register.

As in most years planning applications have taken up a lot of our time. You can't build a new house in the rural area of the National Park but it possible to demolish and replace an existing dwelling or to extend one, subject to compliance with the rather stringent SDNP planning policies.

Our Planning Authority is the South Downs National Park, but nearly all applications are dealt with by Chichester District Council under an agency agreement with SDNP. As a statutory consultee we are invited to comment on quite a few applications in most years.

Another important topic for us is Public Rights of Way, (PROWs), since the parish has an extensive network of footpaths, bridleways and restricted byways.

All rural PROWs are inspected by the Highways Department of the County Council, with assistance from volunteer inspectors. Fortunately for us, our inspector happens to be Councillor Gosden who covers an agreed area each year, and keeps us well up to date on the subject of paths, stiles, gates, finger posts and markers!

Highways are responsible for the clearance of surface vegetation, but side and overhanging vegetation are the responsibility of the landowner.

Early last year a councillor with our neighbouring parish council in Graffham stated that he thought that Graffham Parish Council should merge with East Lavington Parish Council. That idea was soon being discussed at our council meetings, with some councillors supporting the idea and others remaining a bit dubious about it. It remains an open topic for discussion.

Finally, I thank my fellow councillors and Amy for all their support this year.

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Annex B

East Lavington Parish Council Finance Report 19th May 2025

The 2024/25 financial year ended on 31st March 2025 and the final accounts have been prepared.

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Financial Report 2024-2025

| | |
|-------------------------|--------|
| Balance b/fwd at 1/4/24 | £2091 |
| Precept | £3700 |
| Receipts | £0 |
| Expenditure | -£3697 |
| Balance c/fwd | £2094 |

Expenditure

| | |
|---------------------------|-------|
| Clerk Salary and expenses | £3157 |
| Insurance | £214 |

Amy Harte, Clerk & RFO