

Chillerton & Gatcombe Parish Council



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF CHILLERTON & GATCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON 5th MAY 2026 AT 6.30PM AT THE VILLAGE HALL, HOLLOW LANE, CHILLERTON

Present: Cllrs Laursen (Chair), Newton, Smith, Bellamy-James & Thomas.

In Attendance: Virgil Philpott (Parish Clerk); three members of the public; guest speaker David Dobson.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Ward Cllr Gladwin.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED: the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 13th May 2025 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. PRESENTATION

David Dobson of the Maritime Volunteer Service gave a presentation on the work of the (newly formed) IW Voluntary Sector Response Forum - comprising 10 voluntary organisations working in concert with the IWC Emergency Planning Team and other statutory agencies. Parish Councils have a role to play in resilience / community response in emergency situations. In David's opinion, eight or nine Parish Councils on the IW have well developed emergency plans, "...but not all by any stretch of the imagination". Bembridge has been successful in raising funds for emergency equipment and might be worth visiting for a fact-finding. David would be able to provide a follow up Flooding training session if desired.

ACTION: Councillors / Clerk to revisit Emergency Plan over the next few months, to seek to acquire Local Resilience Forum leaflets for distribution within the Parish and to make a donation to the MVS in acknowledgement of Mr Dobson's presentation.

4. CHAIR'S ANNUAL REPORT

Cllr Laursen delivered the following report:

Not one to break with our Parish Council's traditional theme of people leaving us, we started my first year as Chair with a fond farewell to John Hobart, then a few months later Peter Whiteman and finally this February our clerk, Debra Faulkner, had to resign for health reasons. Thankfully we were able to fill each of those spaces almost immediately and welcomed Rita Bellamy-James from Gatcombe, Paul Thomas from Chillerton and finally, with great pleasure, the return of our former clerk, Virgil Philpott. With new energy and a drive to get things in order we have been busy sorting out various elements of our meetings and business so that we are all up to date with rules & regulations.

We are really grateful to have been included in the Greening Campaign by Godshill who were accepted for the last space last May. The campaign was first set up by Terena Plowright over on the mainland some 18 years ago and we are now part of this Hampshire & IoW project which provides

us with valuable information and professional support. We are sharing & working on the 5 pillars of this project with the three other parishes in Central Rural Ward, Arreton, Godshill and Rookley.

Through this Greening campaign we have also started working with other organisations on the island who are working and promoting the same greening message, including the Wilder Garden Champion initiative with the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust. Being blessed with a strong Horticultural Society this was a natural fit for C&G and Gillian Belben & Ulrike Henderson have been busy being trained for this initiative. Gillian, along with Michael Terry, is also our trained Tree Warden... we are really diving head first into all things nature and wildlife!

The Greening Campaign connection has furthered our working relationship via our Central Rural Ward Liaison Group, which we 4 Chairs started this time last year and has been invaluable in sharing ideas and giving support to each other. We started off by having a drink together and just giving ourselves space to talk about problems or events, but it has now opened up to other members of our PCs who have time to share thoughts on our various projects.

I am a great believer in helping communities thrive by making connections and helping them feel heard & valued. We certainly are blessed in Chillerton & Gatcombe with many different clubs and associations, especially our CGCA who do so much for our community with running the Village Hall and the Gallybagger.

It was in that spirit of support that I took over managing the Hall's bookings and started working closely with the CGCA. I now do the odd shift at the bar, where we now offer a monthly Saturday Night Take-Away where parishioners can either join us to eat or take their order home, it's slowly building in popularity. I love the opportunity to spend time with and get to know our parishioners better.

Our Village Hall is a wonderful facility for so many events such as the monthly village market, the Horticultural Show and becoming Aunt Sally's Tea Room for the upcoming Scarecrow Festival. It has been redcorated (soon to have new windows and doors) and is a great venue for people to use for family events and parties. We brought back the Bangers & Mash event in January and I can vouch for the kitchen being able to cope with cooking for 40 people! A big thank you to Harvey Brown's for their generous donation - and delicious sausages.

I must at this point give a huge thank you to Debs Goodenough & all those that volunteer to keep our village green, the brook and the churchyard looking so good. And thanks to Dave Trickey for his good service of grass cutting for the playground and village green. There are so many people who make our 2 villages such beautiful spaces to call home, you are all very much appreciated.

One of the elements that Virgil & I have been working on is the development of a new website which we are hoping to launch very soon, we have found a great company who can give the whole thing a fresh and much more user friendly look. We aim to have a calendar on the home page, from where you can click to book sessions at the Village Hall or Gallybagger and to opt in to volunteer for various events. The Parish Cllrs will also all be getting .gov email addresses to bring us in line with legal requirements. The planning portal from the council will also be linked to our website, so there will hopefully be no more difficulties with accessing the County Council's site which has often caused confusion at our monthly meetings.

Other plans for the parish include the soon to start building of another reservoir by Southern Water, this will take the best part of a year with several phases. The first is the removal of the spoils from the last extension to the old reservoir and then the pipe laying to the pumping station here in the village and then finally the digging out of the new holding facility. It will sadly mean a lot of Lorries

going through Gatcombe but maybe this will provide a good starting point for reducing the speed limit through the village.

We have also just received the resulting report from our Wildlife Mapping Walk for Chillerton & Gatcombe which we can start to build interest and plans for implementation. This includes the former Forest School behind our School, so if anyone is interested in volunteering then please get in touch with either myself or Virgil, we need your support!

With all the projects which have started, are due to begin this will be a very busy year ahead so I'll end this report with apologies for anything I have missed and with best wishes for the year ahead.

5. OPEN SESSION

A question was received asking if anybody knew the origins of several extremely loud bangs / explosions that had been heard recently in Chillerton (three over the course of two days)? Nobody knew for sure, but, 'the word in the Gallybagger' was that they were related to the training of homing pigeons and been amplified by the geography of the valley.

The Meeting closed at 6:49pm.