

CHILBOLTON PARISH COUNCIL
Draft Minutes of the 2025 ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY held on
Tuesday 22 April 2024, Chilbolton Village Hall, 20:00

PRESENT: Cllr Tony Ewer (TE) (Chairman), David Griffiths (DG) (Vice-Chairman), Julian Hudson (JH),
Sue Larcombe (SL), George Marits (GM), David Hall (DH), Debbie Collis (DC)
Gill Bulpitt (GB) (Clerk)
Members of public: 10
Apologies: Cllr Emma Noble

TE welcomed everybody to the meeting. The Annual Parish Assembly is held once a year and we decided to use this meeting to discuss and obtain feedback on subjects that are of interest to the community.

1. To sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 22 April 2024: These were agreed and signed as an accurate record of the meeting.

JH advised that regarding all the utilities being used by the village there is a certain amount of information we know but equally a lot we don't. We want to understand what the issues are and try and seek some solutions which may involve lobbying and it will take time as there are no quick fixes.

The slides used by JH can be found by clicking [here](#)

2. OPEN CONVERSATION REGARDING SEWERAGE - identifying the problems and seeking solutions

JH explained the first three slides which are maps of the sewer system that have been provided by Southern Water (SW) and are from 2014, explaining parts that are a gravity system and parts that are pumped. It is clear from the information presented that there are records missing for areas of the village and we do not have all the facts. The overall problems are groundwater infiltration to the sewer pipes and the existing pump house adjacent to the Abbots Mitre is inadequate.

A discussion took place with the residents about how we can get hold of up to date and accurate information. A resident explained that it can cost £80 per house to get information. A resident advised that SW is required to keep a statutory sewer map. Some records maybe lost but there has been a big effort by SW to get the maps up to date.

The new development at Test Valley Farm, SL understands that TVBC would prefer to see the new houses on mains sewerage which will have an additional impact.

DH explained that he personally knows the CEO of SW and DH will contact him and ask for the up to date information as well as an offer to come and talk to the Community. The CEO is willing to come and talk at a public meeting but requires some advanced notice. TE summarised that the following information would be useful:

- What is the capacity at the treatment plan?
- How much capacity is being used? Split between Wherwell and Chilbolton?
- Can we have updated sewer plans?
- Have they any plans to improve, or even expand, the existing system?

GM explained that there is a lot of infiltration into the system of ground water called 'leaky laterals' which is a major problem. A lot of the sewer pipes are old and leaky. One solution that has been used is pipe lining (tubogel) but SW does not have enough money to do all the pipes and so are doing what they can to reduce the leaky laterals. SW is also endeavouring to get the funds approved from OFWAT. Technically it is the householders responsibility to fix a leaky lateral pipes on their property.

A resident commented that Village Street has been flooded 15 times this year already and has sewage in their garden. The pump house is the problem as it is failing. If it is upgraded then there are concerns that the pipes would

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not cope, which would result in more temp pump vehicles/trucks. Apparently it cost £2,000 per lorry; surely it is more cost effective to increase capacity at the pump house than use trucks?

TE advised that these comments about the pump house should be added to the questions to ask SW. TE understands that Chilbolton has been identified as an area for investment by SW but knows nothing further. A comment was made that should Wherwell have a separate waste system?

JH also highlighted the Parish Council has been investigating the possibility of providing a small housing development off Drove Road. Some people have expressed concern regarding the impact this could have on sewerage, but given the site location on higher ground, it should be possible for a competent engineer to design a scheme which ties into existing gravity sewerage, so that this development does not require pumping from Village Street, and would have no impact on the existing sewerage challenges which need to be resolved in the lower parts of the village. A resident was concerned that any new development would affect groundwater and JH explained this would be covered in the next section.

JH summarised the existing problems appear to be groundwater infiltration to sewer pipes and the existing pump house adjacent to the Abbots Mitre is inadequate. There may be a number of solutions required/available and the first call is to contact SW to get detailed information.

3. OPEN CONVERSATION REGARDING WATER MANAGEMENT - identifying the problems and seeking solutions

JH explained the slides on water management and the flood risk from rivers in Chilbolton between 2036 and 2069 taken from the Government's flood mapping service. Chilbolton is not considered at great risk of flooding from the river, in part due to the presence of the Common. From the same Government source, there are limited areas at risk of flooding from surface water, there are several notable areas of increased risk, including the low point in Branksome Close, the bottom end of Drove Road, and perhaps less surprisingly, the bottom end of Joys Lane, and parts of Village Street.

JH highlighted the main other risk for flooding is from Ground Water. This happens when sub-surface water emerges from the ground, potentially as a result of persistent rainfall that recharges aquifers until they are full (bedrock flooding). There are no publicly-available groundwater flood risk maps, but it is known to be a risk in Test Valley.

JH gave some examples that could help reduce this flood risk such a greywater recycling, rainwater harvesting, green roofs, ponds and water butts. One resident gave the example of rainwater harvesting, with a 5,000 litre rainwater storage tank under the garden which collects all the water from the roof. As well as for use in the garden, this is pumped back into the house to flush the toilets and for use in the washing machine. Storing and using water in these ways slows the flow, and also reduces water usage (and therefore bills). Other attractive examples are curb side rain gardens.

A resident commented that the fallen leaves in autumn block the drains. DG explained this is Hampshire County Councils responsibility but the Parish Council relies on volunteers to dig some of them out each year. This is perhaps something the Lengthsman could do?

DG advised there are now two houses where there used to be a village pond. JH posed the question 'could we reinstate a pond somewhere?'

TE commented that it is an interesting topic about harvesting grey water and a resident asked if the PC know of any grants/subsidies to install such systems in private houses. The PC will take this away to investigate.

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A comment was made by a resident that the mains water pressure is low in some areas of the village. TE said we will add this to the SW questions.

Debate about the removal of nitrates from the water and the treatment of water depends upon where the water is sourced from.

A question was asked about the fire hydrants and it was advised that it is the Fire & Rescue Service responsibility to test all hydrants.

4. OPEN CONVERSATION REGARDING VILLAGE POWER – needs, supply and possible solutions

JH showed a snip from the Open Infrastructure Map with the locations of the power lines around the area, and also several of the existing Solar Farms in the wider area. There will be another Solar Farm on the hill above Wherwell. The village has growing power needs, and insufficient power supply. According to the SSEN website, planned works at the Andover Bulk Supply Point will be completed by December 2026 (including installation of a third Bulk Supply transformer). The Andover BSP routes from a Grid Supply Point at Melksham, the other side of Wiltshire. There are many substations in the village but where exactly does our electricity come from? We do not have a full answer to that question.

TE commented that when there is a power failure it affects the whole village – is there an option for another feed into the village?

DH asked if the PC needs to have a similar conversation with SSE (like the one probed with SW) and arrange for SSE to come and talk at a public meeting?

JH explained that another part of the issue is the increasing number of electric vehicles. However could part of the solution be domestic solar panels on roofs and battery storage in lofts or garages? While these are expensive, installation costs have fallen significantly in recent years, and the amount of time required to recoup the installation costs through savings on energy bills has fallen to generally less than ten years. However, it is also understood that there are downsides to solar energy, including question marks over long-term efficiency and sustainability of the panels.

A resident commented that solar is not necessarily going to resolve the issue, it will help in the summer months, but in reality it needs a holistic approach including hydro, wind and solar. There may not be an appetite for people to have wind turbines in the village.

Another comment from the public was ‘Is it a question of having a reliable supply or capacity going forward?’ This is a similar question to the capacity of water and one that could be posed to SSE.

5. OPEN CONVERSATION REGARDING VILLAGE COMMUNICATION - needs, supply and possible solutions

JH explained that as Chilbolton is a rural location there are definitely some issues. It is believed that the Observatory site has a number of sensitive instruments which can be affected by mobile telecommunications in close proximity and this is one of the reasons why we cannot have improved mobile telecoms in parts of Chilbolton. The other reason is that nobody is likely to volunteer to have a large mobile mast in their garden. Apparently, the church once investigated whether they could mount equipment on the tower, but this was turned down.

Question asked if a mast can go near The Observatory? Is this a myth or fact? We need to find out. Also are there other places in the village that could have a mast?

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DC asked if there are any providers that are a particular problem? A resident explained that EE has increased its coverage more than any other provider but coverage still an issue in some places.

As set out in the Neighbourhood Plan, JH highlighted, broadband infrastructure was vastly improved by the Virgin Media fibre network in the village. However, when there are interruptions to supply, we are left with limited options in terms of phone and internet access and full fibre options tend to be expensive for the consumer.

A resident suggested talking to full fibre companies as most have community partnership schemes that might be worth looking into. There are no plans on the Open Reach website to improve services in Chilbolton.

JH summarised the biggest issue as mobile phone coverage. Especially as Open Reach will no longer maintain the copper network in 2027 with the impact being if there is no broadband then there will be no home phone service. He asked the question 'do we need more mobile phone solutions (masts?) for the lower points of the village? TE asked if we would be allowed to put a mast next to the Pavilion which is of course parish land. DG advised this could be investigated with Natural England.

6. UPDATE ON VILLAGE GATEWAYS AND SPEED INDICATOR DEVICES - obtain residents views on these projects

Village Gateways

Slide detailed the quotation of £5,471.79 to supply the village gateways via HCC. Whilst the opinion was sought of the attendees, there are only 10 residents and would not be an accurate representation of the village. There were opinions given that the design is attractive but it does seem expensive. A question was asked what evidence that the gateways helps slow down traffic. JH explained that it was more to encourage the lower 20 speed limit and also to make drivers more aware they are entering a 20 zone. DH advised there may be grants available to support the installation.

Resident also commented that the gateways do give a sense of place but it was not felt that they are effective at speed management on their own. JH stated that the gateways are not as effective as say infrastructure traffic calming (speed bumps) but they may help.

A Question was raised about the cost and perhaps having 2 gates rather than 3? JH will consider and discuss with the contractor the different cost options. We have to use the HCC approved contractor.

TE summarised that the gateways will a) remind people this is a 20mph zone b) shows the main boundary to the village c) give a sense of place

Speed Indicator Devices

JH explained these cost circa £2,000 per sign to purchase and a contractor who currently manages SIDs in Sutton Scotney for a monthly fee has offered to do a similar thing for £1,800pa. HCC charge £250 for checking and approval of signage locations.

DH asked if we could get grants for them? TE asked views of the audience. A resident (who was a Somerset Parish Councillor) ran a similar scheme for a number of years. In his opinion the SID's were unlikely to make a real difference to speeds. However it might make some people feel better about speed and that the village is taking some action. It could be seen as the PC is trying to do something at least. His scheme did not have an annual charge but used volunteers to manage the SID's. The key is where you locate the devices.

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A final question was raised about what is the % growth of the village and what impact this will this have on all the services? DH advised there are 450 houses and approx. 980 population and since the Second World War, the number of houses have increase by 200, about 2/3 per year. It is an interesting question as population growth will have an impact on services and everyone needs to be mindful of this.

TE thanked everyone for attending and participating in discussions.
With no further business to discuss the meeting was closed at 21:35.