

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

DRAFT Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on **Wednesday, 14th May 2025 at 7:30pm** at the Lardner Hall, The Ghyll, Pevensey Road, Southwater, West Sussex RH13 9XZ

Note this is not a Council meeting, but an Annual Parish Meeting (also known as the Annual Meeting of Electors) hosted by Southwater Parish Council.

PRESENT

Community Representatives: Neighbourhood Wardens, Welcome Club, Southwater Art Club, Southwater History Group, Horsham Community Fridge, Sustainable Southwater, Sussex Green Living, 4Sight Vision, Southwater News, Jubilee Scout & Guide HQ, Southwater Rainbow Brownie & Guides, Southwater Academies, Southwater Youth Project, Southwater Football Club, Southwater WI, Southwater Community Partnership, Southwater Village Hall, Southwater Neighbour Network, Horsham 2 - Re-engage, Conversation Starter Group, Ghyll CIO

Public: 49 persons present in the Lardner Hall.

Minute Takers: Justin Tyler & Julie Crowhurst

1. Welcome from the Chairman and opening of the Meeting

The Chairman (Cllr Derek Moore) welcomed all to the meeting, went through fire safety guidance and gave an overview of the meeting. He highlighted it was a meeting for the Parish, residents and the community and not a Council meeting. He advised he would be acting as a compare.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from:

- Community Groups/Representatives: U3A, Southwater Pet Food Bank, Dementia Active Sussex, Easteds Allotments Association.
- Parish Councillors: N Brown, C Pearce, S Lewis, N Knott
- District Councillors: A Jeffrey

3. Minutes of the previous meeting held on Tuesday 5th May 2024

Claire Vickers proposed approval of the Annual Parish Meeting minutes of 5th May 2024 seconded by John O'Grady both being present at the last Annual Parish Meeting and **AGREED** by those present at the previous meeting who deemed them a fair and accurate record.

4. Chairman's Annual Report

The Chairman of Southwater Parish Council summarised his report as circulated and published to the Parish Council website. He highlighted some of the awards made under the Chairman's Discretionary Fund over the last year as well as some of the upgrades to local facilities that were completed. He thanked all the Parish, District and County Councillors for their time, effort and support to Southwater over the year.

5. Annual report from Southwater Neighbourhood Wardens

Dom and Bettina (Southwater Neighbourhood Wardens) provided an overview of their annual report highlighting some of the following topics:

- Engagement with the community, drop-in sessions, outreach and community events.
- Special projects including the bat walk, SEN group and Roundstone friendship group.
- Providing support to vulnerable residents including welfare checks on residents.
- Anti-social behaviour (ASB) – this continues to decrease in Southwater but working closely to establish professional relationships with under 14s falling short of expectations to provide positive interventions.
- Continued engagement with local businesses who experienced theft and supporting them with contact with the police.

6. Southwater Welcome Club

Deborah Bailey, a representative from the Welcome Club provided an overview of the organisation for people over the age of 55. They highlighted the activities organised by the club including a variety of guest speakers, games and dancing. They also organise the Belfry Lunch Club that meets monthly at The Haldi in Lintot Square and currently has over 30 members.

7. Southwater Art Club

John O'Grady spoke on behalf of the Southwater Art Club and provided an overview of the annual report. He noted they provide two sessions per week with membership costing £25 per year and classes are £5 per session.

The annual arts and crafts exhibition will be held at the Lardner Hall at the Ghyll with support from local businesses and the Parish Council. John confirmed that the club was for pleasure and open to people of all abilities. Whilst no equipment is held by the club, members can assist those who wish to attend for a taster session.

8. Southwater History Group

Gary Little spoke on behalf of the Southwater History Group which was formed in July 2003. The group is responsible for the upkeep of various artifacts of the village. With over 50 members, they meet at 7:30pm on the first Monday of the month at the Village Hall hearing from various guest speakers on a variety of subjects including the history of Brighton and the history of Punch and Judy. Meeting subjects are already planned until end of next year.

They cover historical topics in the Southwater News and currently have three books published by their members which are available in the village library:

- Southwater A-Z a Miscellany

- Southwater Victorians: lives and portraits
- Winning the Clay

Written by Patsy Laker, Catherine Andrews and Joan Francis.

Gary was asked by a Parish Councillor (Cllr G Watkins) if the group would be interested in taking part in the Council's Parish Design Statement where the History Group previously provided helpful input and he advised he will consult the group.

9. Horsham Community Fridge

Maria Aguilar spoke on behalf of the Community Fridge and explained the aim of the group is to save food from landfill, preventing food waste for environmental reasons (not to assist with food poverty). Volunteers collect food from shops to prevent it from going to landfill. She explained the difference between use by vs best before. Use by states the date that item must be used by OR frozen whereas best before means that food can be consumed after that date but might not be the best quality.

The Community Fridges are open on Tuesday and Thursday in Horsham and the pop up in Southwater on the 2nd Saturday of the month at Holy Innocents Church.

10. Sustainable Southwater

Representatives of Sustainable Southwater provided an overview of the organisation which was formed in January 2025 as a result of a climate action planning meeting. They can be found on a pop-up stall outside the Co-op on the 2nd Saturday of the month between 10-12 where they welcome the public to speak to them about making one change. They provide an education service as well as a trial service where a few items can be purchased to trial. They also welcome residents to come and talk to them and share their ideas so they can share more ideas.

They are also able to accept items some items for recycling including small electricals and disposable vapes and can advise on where other items can be recycled.

11. Sussex Green Living

Carrie Cort, founder of Sussex Green Living charity provided an overview of the organisation. They are currently working with villages in Sussex to facilitate initiatives. Recycling is a big aim for the group and Carrie highlighted the recycling points available to Southwater residents including the Church car park and the Sustainable Southwater pop up. Items that can now be recycled including cables, cameras, mobile phones and inkjet cartridges.

They also run the Horsham Repair Café which takes place on the last Saturday of the month.

12. 4Sight Vision

Julie Branson spoke on behalf of 4Sight Vision. As a support organisation, they are on hand to help people coming to terms with diagnosis and living with site loss conditions. In Southwater, 4Sight currently support 26 people. With offices in Bognor Regis and Shoreham, they offer a 1-2-1 service including assessments in the individual's home. They also provide an education service raising awareness at schools and providing training for teachers.

The service they provide is not just for those with site loss – anyone can contact them for support.

13. Southwater News

Julie and Eunice provided an overview of Southwater News. They are a team of 2 – editor and distributor and currently distribute the hard copy news booklet to over 4,500 addresses. The News provides useful information for residents and the ads from local businesses has proved invaluable for residents.

They are currently looking for a volunteer to help them provide an online version of the newsletter so that they can reach a wider audience.

14. Jubilee Scout and Guide HQ

Irene provided an overview explaining how the HQ has been in Church Lane since 1977 on land leased from the Diocese. The lease expired in 2023 and they are currently in discussions about its renewal.

It is home to the 2nd Southwater Scout Group and Southwater Guiding, both run by uniformed volunteers. It is also used weekly by Music Bus and Musical Friends both a baby and toddler class, but the lack of sound reduction is proving too much for the class. They are looking to provide acoustic panels to the ceiling to assist with this.

They are currently in need of a volunteer Premises Manager and a volunteer maintenance person/s to ensure the building continues to be safe and well maintained for the young people.

15. Rainbow, Brownie and Guides

Chris Bradshaw provided an overview on Girl Guiding in Southwater. There are currently 6 units in the village consisting of 105 girls with a further 45 on the waiting list. 5 units are based at the HQ and 1 brownie unit at the Village Hall.

The units took part in multiple activities throughout the year including camps, the annual division canoeing regatta held at the Country Park, visits to the fire station, a farm for lambing season, the Easted Allotments and the panto. They had multiple guest visitors including magicians, dancers, and a circus company and also enjoyed working towards their badges including 75 new badges introduced this year.

Attendance levels are now back to pre-covid levels and a 2nd guide pack has been able to form.

The units would not be able to function without the support of the volunteers and are keen to hear from anyone that would be interested in finding out more about girl guiding and how they can contribute.

16. Southwater Academies

Headteachers from the Infant and Junior schools together with the PTFA Chair provided an overview on the Southwater Academies.

The infant schools takes children from Southwater and further afield. They are a three-form entry school and focus on the early education and support – not just for the child, but the whole family. They provide a forest school, thrive, outdoor learning and benefit from community readers and Christmas singing. They work closely with the Junior Academy to provide a planned transition and ensure strong curriculum links.

The Junior Academy is a 4-form entry with the motto 'Learning for Life' and enjoy taking part in discovery, problem solving, music and gardening as well as taking care of the Academy dog. More information about the latest activities can be found in the news portal on the website.

The PTFA raises funds for both the Infant and Junior Academies and was reformed after COVID. In their first year they successfully raised £23,000. The Summer Fair was a complete success with over 50 stalls and raising £10,000. They always welcome more volunteers to join the team or helping at an event.

17. Southwater Youth Project CIO

Rev Kath Jones, Chair of SYP CIO and Angie Choat, Youth Worker for SYP CIO provided an overview of all the achievements and action taken that year including:

- Moving from Beeson House to the Ghyll to provide a facility that can provide a bigger safe space for more children to attend.
- Family Fun Fest in July with support from many local community teams.
- Providing after school clubs for children that require it allowing confidence building.
- Providing support to teenagers and engagement with them via the secondary schools.
- Various activities and schedule of SYP CIO including Fridays in the Lardner Hall now catering for up to 70 children, Duke of Edinburgh Award, various outings and trips including Wembley football matches and London theatre trips, life skills, teamwork, conversation starters and bridging the gap between schools.
- Importance of volunteers and gratitude to the volunteers and trustees that give up their time to support and assist SYP CIO.
- Thanks, and gratitude to Southwater Parish Council for grant funding, a funded premises to operate, the residents and Southwater Ghyll CIO for their support.

Kath Jones emphasised her appreciation and gratitude to the Youth Worker Angie.

18. Southwater Football Club

James from Southwater Football Club provided an overview of the club. It was formed in 1958 with junior teams forming in the 1970's. This year saw over 21 teams playing made up from 350 players, with 4 reaching their respective competitions' finals. He highlighted the quality of their adult pitches by the Sports Club but explained this came at a cost of £15,000 per year to maintain to this high standard.

The junior teams have played on Phillips Fields for the last 40 years, but the lease ended this year and the landlord is not prepared to renew. A new site has been located at Lawsons Farm situated half-a-mile from the main club home and consists of 18-acres. Subject to planning permission for change of use it is also hoped that this land can also benefit other groups and provide space to grow girls football teams. These pitches are needed to facilitate the junior teams.

The next fundraising event takes place on 9 August 2025 with a SWFC vs Inter Legends FC match. Tickets cost £5

19. Southwater WI

Jackie Pearce (Chairman) and Ilanit Slowly (secretary) provided an overview of the Southwater Women's Institute. They were formed in 2018 and with over 50 members and still growing. They highlighted the committees' members can join including cake, charities, war memorial, Christmas, walking and 'out out', or just attending the monthly meetings which are held on the last Wednesday of the month.

Meeting activities have included from guest speakers, line dancing, murder mystery and paper crafts as well member run nights including guides for a night, quiz night and mindfulness.

They confirmed that there is no age limit to join and a trial can be arranged before joining with membership costing £51 per year.

20. Southwater Community Partnership

Ilanit, a member of Southwater Community Partnership provided an overview of SCP highlighting local projects including:

- Railway Bridge improvements
- Litter picking event
- The Phoenix Tree
- Santa Run
- Christmas fair

New initiatives being considered include a computer club, green gym and walking/cycling routes. More volunteers are always welcome to assist and support with their various activities, events and initiatives.

21. Southwater Village Hall

James Tillier, Chairman of the Village Hall, provided an overview of their report. He highlighted that 11 groups that make use of the hall and recent improvements have included:

- New stage curtains
- New kitchen
- Green room redecorated
- New mirror for dance practice
- Outside repainted
- Major fire alarm system upgrade
- Preschool OFSTED inspection awarded Good
- Main hall floor sanded and resealed
- Sensory shed for preschool
- New solar panels
- Foyer floor replaced

This year marks the Hall's centenary and they are trying to gather as much history about the hall as possible to help commemorate this milestone.

James thanked all the trustees of the Village Hall for their time, hard work and efforts.

22. Southwater Neighbour Network

Nick Longdon, Chair of the network provided an overview of their report. The network was set up to help residents who are socially isolated or have mobility issues. They currently help 45 people in Southwater by providing local transport to the doctors, hairdressers etc, regular transport to clubs, help with shopping and getting prescriptions, befriending, arranging regular outings and running games afternoons.

There are currently 17 volunteers who are all local retirees and have been safely recruited with DBS checks and references, but more are always needed.

Nick reiterated that loneliness is a real issue and to combat this they do their best to encourage their service users to meet up which they will facilitate.

23. Re-engage – 'Tea parties for the elderly'

Emma Fraser from Re-engage provided an overview of their report. Emma works with volunteers who can provide transport to and from a volunteer who is willing to host an afternoon tea or lunch group.

The events taken on the second Sunday of the month. She is always interested to hear from people that would be willing to host or provide transport as well as the elderly who would like to attend.

24. Conversation Starter Group

Shirley Blanch co-founder of the Conversation Starter Group provided an overview of their report. Founded in 2020 with psychologist Dr Tara Quinn-Cirillo to combat loneliness caused by the pandemic.

They offer free walk and talk sessions in Horsham Park and Southwater Country Park every week and have a large male attendance rate with many stating how useful they have found it.

The Southwater safeguarding lead is Richard Hamlin and they meet at 12pm on Fridays at Iggy the dinosaur in Lintot Square and are open to anyone over the age of 18.

25. Southwater Ghyll CIO

Michael Neale, Trustee of Southwater Ghyll CIO, provided an overview of their report. He confirmed that the Ghyll and Laurie Apted Building are managed under licence from the Southwater Parish Council. The Ghyll is home to 8 local clubs and businesses and Michael thanked them for their continued use of the facilities and understanding during the maintenance work.

Michael confirmed that there are four areas available to hire: the hall at Laurie Apted Building, the Lardner Hall and meeting rooms at the Ghyll, and the MUGA facility.

Maintenance works have continued at the Ghyll and have included:

- Lardner Hall – toilet refurbishment to include new accessible facilities, baby change and a shower, new ramp access, and various roof repairs due to leaks.
- Performance Zone gym extension to take over the old kitchen space.
- MUGA – upgrades to the surface were planned.
- Southwater Youth Project – new heating/cooling system.
- Continued replacement of strip fluorescent to LED lighting.

The MUGA flooring is in need of replacement and quotes have been sourced to complete the refurbishment works.

26. Date of next meeting – tbc

The Chairman thanked all those for attending and confirmed if any attendees had further questions in addition to those asked of each of the community groups to follow up directly. Should anyone need assistance contacting any of the various groups, the Parish Council would be willing to assist with providing the contact information.

Meeting ended: 9:45pm