

Draft Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 26th May 2026 7.15pm at Siddington Village Hall

Part 1 Public and press present.

Present

Cllr. A. Meadowcroft (Chairman)

Cllr. Peter Wain (Vice Chairman)

Cllr. D. Furness

Cllr. B Smart

Cllr. D. Billington

Cllr. B. Carbutt

Cllr. S. Forster

Mrs. E Worrall (Clerk)

Cllr. Lesley Smetham (Ward Councillor)

Absent

Cllr. Paul Wain

Public Forum

No members of the public were present.

APM2601 To receive and approve apologies for absence

Cllr. Paul Wain was absent.

APM2602 To receive any declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

APM2603 To approve the draft minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 25th March 2025

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes.

APM2604 Chairman's Report - Councillor Andy Meadowcroft

This marks the end of my first year as Chair of Siddington Parish Council having been appointed in May 2025 and I have pleasure in presenting the Annual Report of our activities for the 2025/26 Local Government Year.

I'm immensely grateful to our dedicated Councillors who have served throughout the year. In particular I must express my gratitude to my Vice Chair, Councillor Peter Wain for his wise counsel and our Parish Clerk, Elizabeth Worrall for her expertise and guidance on the many and varied Council related procedural matters.

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 26th May 2026

Signed

Dated

A Parish Council plays an essential role in Local Government. Our Councillors undertake their role on an entirely voluntary basis and with the shared objective, where possible, of trying to protect the rural character of our village and its distinct identity. The Parish is fortunate to have an excellent range of skills and local knowledge represented on the Parish Council.

I will endeavour to provide a summary of the past 12 months and some thoughts on what lies ahead.

A total of 6 Parish Council meetings were held in the financial year 2025/26 in addition to the Annual Parish Meeting. We finished the year as it started with a full complement of Councillors with no changes in personnel.

I will now turn to finances, village projects, highways and other matters.

Finances

I'm delighted to confirm we received an excellent audit report for 2025/26, and my sincere thanks go to our Parish Clerk for her hard work in this regard. There is significant work involved in maintaining meticulous records throughout the year, evidencing necessary policies and procedures and in the audit itself. The checks and balances for a small Parish Council are no different as for those parishes significantly larger in size.

As a parish with approximately 350 residents, we receive a modest annual precept (which is collected via the council tax), in this financial year amounting to £4,500. This does present its challenges as many of our fixed costs are similar as those borne by bigger councils with larger precepts. Furthermore, as those fixed costs rise the impact on us is commensurately higher than on others. In addition, the list of assets we (as opposed to Cheshire East) are required to maintain has increased over recent years. We have had to increase the precept, but we have kept this to a minimum and for context the precept was £40.90 per annum per household, Band G equivalent in this financial year. In the past year our expenditure did modestly exceed our income, but we were mindful that some of the work we carried out will not need to be repeated for a number of years. We continue to maintain sufficient cash reserves.

Village Maintenance Projects

We replaced the four boundary signs across our parish. This was necessary as one had gone missing and two were badly damaged. We were pleased to be able to donate one of the old signs to the Redesmere summer fete silent auction raising money for Siddington Church.

We installed some warning signs at Redesmere lake to try and get motorists to slow down and reduce the number of duck fatalities on Redesmere Lane and an additional "no litter" sign at the lay-by on the A34 near the Marton boundary which had seen some unpleasant litter being deposited over recent months.

Councillor Billington arranged for the broken bench at the lake to be repaired and he kindly re-installed it.

We regularly receive requests for memorial benches at Redesmere Lake. Councillors have always acknowledged that the lake is a special place for many people and recognise the reasoning behind such requests. Unfortunately, space is at a premium so councillors decided the best compromise would be to fix a plaque to the repaired bench with the words "in memory

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 26th May 2026

Signed

Dated

of all those for whom this was a special place". This will hopefully be of some comfort to anybody who wishes for a quiet moment of remembrance.

We continue to maintain regular weedkilling of the A34 pathways which also falls to the Parish Council to maintain. That said we were very grateful to our Ward Councillor, Councillor Smetham and Cheshire East Highways who managed to secure funding for the siding out of the A34 pathways through Siddington (and surrounding parishes). This work was long overdue and was completed in November 2025. The pathways are now a safer width for pedestrians to walk along. The cost of this work would have been well beyond the budget of the Parish Council.

Councillor Furness has arranged for one of the two original milestones to be powder coated and it's just awaiting some finishing touches before being re-installed. Residents might also have noticed the village sign at the Siddington crossroads has been missing. For those who aren't aware this sign was skilfully made by the late Peter Robinson at Siddington Smithy, and he kindly donated it to the village, but it has become in need of some restoration. Councillor Furness has therefore also had that sign powder coated, and Councillor Smart is currently utilising her artistic skills to bring the colour back to its former glory. The sign will then be re installed.

Councillor Forster continues to monitor the defibrillator at the village hall to hopefully ensure it remains in full working order. This is an important facility to have in the village.

The parish notice board has passed its useful life and requires replacement. We are currently obtaining quotations.

Highways

We maintain dialogue with Cheshire East Highways over the most pressing issues.

The regular flooding on A34 at Conneygreave remains a problem. Highways are fully aware of the issue but there is currently no budget to undertake the significant remedial work required to permanently resolve the issue. In the meantime, the soakaway tanks are cleared to remove some of the silt build up on an ad hoc basis, but this is of limited benefit. We believe this section of road remains a risk to road users during and after heavy rain. We can only try and ensure this remains on the radar of Cheshire East Highways.

We've regularly chased Highways regarding the poor state of Siddington Crossroads. We've finally had confirmation work will shortly begin to re-surface and re-line the crossroads. This work is long overdue for what is a busy junction.

Pedestrian access through the compound near Monks Heath traffic lights had been blocked for some months making it dangerous to navigate this stretch of the A34. We've finally had success in getting Highways to clear a pathway through the compound and we'll look to ensure this remains the case in future.

There is some talk of average speed cameras being installed on the stretch of A34 between Monks Heath and Siddington Crossroads, but discussions remain ongoing between Police and Highways.

I can't finish on Highways without mentioning potholes. Potholes are a problem everywhere and Siddington is no exception. Councillors report those we know of but in the first instance our

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 26th May 2026

Signed

Dated



reporting is logged in the same as for anybody via the TRACE portal on the Cheshire East website. It's relatively easy to navigate and I would encourage everybody to log any pothole issues they see rather than wait for somebody else to do it.

Other Matters

The Parish Council arranged the annual village litter pick on 14 March 2026. Whilst turnout was a little disappointing, we managed to clear the verges on the A34 across the entire length from Capesthorpe to the Marton boundary. The amount of rubbish collected is always sad to see but highlights the importance of such events. I would like to thank all the volunteers and equally important thank all those parishioners who litter pick various stretches of our lanes throughout the year to help keep our parish looking as tidy as possible.

Capesthorpe Hall hosted its inaugural Lapland UK event across November and December 2025. It was a high-profile event with visitors coming from far and wide to enjoy this impressive Christmas attraction. It was very well managed to ensure traffic disruption was kept to a minimum for residents for which we thank the organisers.

Cheshire Wildlife Trust have approached various local Parish Councils including Siddington to see what opportunities there might be for extending wildlife corridors. Those discussions are at an early stage and we await their thoughts.

The Parish council website (www.siddingtonpccheshire.co.uk) is regularly updated by the Parish Clerk. Local government regulation now requires all Parish Councils to have a "gov.uk" website domain and this is currently in hand. Details of the new website will be provided in due course.

Looking Ahead

There are four main things that come to mind for the forthcoming year.

The need to maintain sufficient cash reserves whilst continuing to try to maintain and improve the village will remain a priority for myself and fellow Councillors.

The cycle for re-election of Councillors falls due this financial year. I sincerely hope we retain a full complement of Councillors.

Cheshire East is currently forming a new Local Plan to meet the significantly increased new home target set by Central Government. There has been a "Call for Sites" due to Cheshire East having an insufficient pipeline of suitable sites. We will be watching developments here with interest and any impact from the new "Grey Belt" definition and how these matters might impact our Parish.

The combining of the Warrington, Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester Councils has been approved. The public vote for a Mayor who will preside over the combined authority is scheduled for the first half of 2027. Whilst significant new investment is promised from Central Government the detail is yet limited. We don't therefore know how this reorganisation will impact rural parishes such as ours.

This concludes my first annual report, and I will just finish where I started by thanking my fellow Councillors and Parish Clerk for their hard work and support throughout the past 12 months. Thank You.

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 26th May 2026

Signed

Dated