ANNUAL REPORT

2024

2025

Great Chart with Singleton Parish Council

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GREAT CHART with SINGLETON Parish Council

LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME QUALITY GOLD

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Foreword

Parish Overview and Annual Report Introduction

Located on the south-western edge of Ashford, Great Chart with Singleton Parish is home to 7,294 residents (ONS, 2017). The parish borders Bethersden to the west, Hothfield to the north, Kingsnorth to the south, and Shadoxhurst to the southwest. To the east lies South Ashford, currently an unparished area.

Figure 1 Great Chart with Singleton Parish Council boundary

The Chilmington Green development, which falls within our parish boundary, continues to progress steadily, with over 400 homes now occupied. The Chilmington Management Organisation is gradually taking responsibility for managing the open spaces as they are transferred from the developer. While Chilmington currently sits within our parish, the growing size and population may prompt the community to consider forming a separate parish council in the future.

Great Chart with Singleton Parish Council works collaboratively with neighbouring parishes, Ashford Borough Council, and Kent County Council to enhance and improve the area for all residents.

Despite facing some staffing challenges over the past year, the council is proud to report another productive period. We have remained focused on delivering quality services and maintaining key local amenities.

Throughout the year, a range of community events were held—many of which have become valued fixtures in the parish calendar. These activities continue to play an important role in building community spirit and encouraging engagement.

This report provides an opportunity to reflect on the past year's work, with updates from both the Chair and Clerk. It includes an overview of the council's financial performance, along with highlights from local clubs, societies, and organisations that contribute so much to the life and vibrancy of our parish.

Chair's Annual Report

FOREWORD

I'm delighted to write the foreword for this year's annual report.

2024 – 2025 has been a significant year for the parish, achieving the National Association of Local Councils Gold Award. To put this in perspective, there are around 10,000 councils in England and Wales and of these around 60 have achieved the gold standard. This is split roughly 50/50 between town and parish councils, which means Great Chart with Singleton falls within an elite 0.5% of councils with this accolade, a fantastic achievement!

Your parish council is made up of volunteers who give their time for free, and this foreword gives me the opportunity to thank them all for the time they give so generously. To support the elected members, we are fortunate in having a clerk and deputy clerk that both work very hard to engage with residents and provide events and services that benefit the community. Our two big summer events, the Colour Run and Big Lunch have both proved successful in past years and will be held again this year.

Looking after the parish on a day-to-day basis are our two stewards who fulfil many projects across the area. Grass cutting, litter-picking, cutting back vegetation, inspecting and maintaining the play parks, and cleaning signs are just a few of the tasks they undertake.

This year has seen the change of surfacing beneath the 'spider web' climbing apparatus at Cuckoo Park (opposite John Wesley school), with a much more durable and user-friendly surface replacing the sand that was there. We contributed £10,000 towards the project to improve the path around Singleton Lake, providing an all-weather walkway that doesn't become submerged during the winter.

On a more sombre note, it has been sad to record the passing of two members of our local community. In October, we lost Great Chart's oldest resident, Marjorie Brissenden. Marjorie was 94 and had lived in the village her entire life. In February we lost Charlie Simkins, one of our long-time Kent County Councillors. They will both be missed.

With the upcoming local Government Reorganisation taking place in Kent, we enter an uncertain future, but you can be sure your parish council will continue to work in the best interests of its residents.

We are always interested in what you think and welcome members of the community to our monthly meetings. Get involved!

Malcolm Wiffen
Chair, Great Chart with Singleton PC
June 2025

Clerk's annual Report

Welcome

Welcome to the Clerk's annual report. I hope you will enjoy reading this report on 2024-2025 year. Over the next few paragraphs, I will provide a brief overview of the work undertaken over the past year, highlighting key projects, achievements, and community initiatives.

The Council

I would like to begin by sharing some good news: the Parish Council has been awarded the Quality Gold Award. This is a prestigious recognition that celebrates excellence in governance, engagement, and council performance. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributed to this achievement, council employee's and member's hard work and the community's support made it possible.

Parish Council meetings and Committees

The Parish Council meets once a month to discuss and decide on key issues affecting our community. In addition to these meetings, our committees regularly convene to work on various topics and projects.

The main committees include:

- Finance
- Staffing
- Environment
- Planning

These committees work tirelessly to bring projects to fruition that benefit our community. Their dedication ensures that the council continues to make positive changes and support the needs of all our residents.

The Team

The Parish Council employs a small team dedicated to carrying out its services and statutory duties, as well as maintaining the local area and amenities. Our team currently includes the Clerk, Deputy Clerk, and two Parish Stewards. In March 2025, we welcomed Stuart as the new full-time Parish Steward, following the departure of the previous postholder.

Additionally, the Parish Council supports the education team at Singleton Environment Centre, forming a partnership that provides educational activities to our parishioners, and allows us to support various activities across all age groups.

Improvements around the parish

The Parish Council is responsible for managing several key areas and amenities within the parish, including:

- **Cuckoo Park**
- **Great Chart Play Park**
- **The Viewing Point**

- **Various street furniture**, including benches and dog poo bag dispensers

Our Parish Steward, Stuart, is still settling into his new role and familiarising himself with the parish. However, since starting, he has already made significant contributions. There are several other projects in the pipeline that the Steward will be working on to further enhance our community.

As part of our ongoing commitment to enhancing biodiversity within the parish, the Parish Council continues to collaborate with The Bumblebee Conservation Trust, Ashford Borough Council, and the Aspire team. We are excited to expand the successful biodiversity project to other parts of the parish.

We are proud of the progress made so far and look forward to seeing the positive impact of these efforts on our local ecosystem.

The Singleton Community Fridge project, funded by the Parish Council, is now in its second year and continues to support residents.

The Community Fridge has:

- Helped reduce food waste by redistributing surplus food.
- Provided access to free food for residents in need, fostering a sense of community support.

Community Engagement Events

We held our first meeting at the Chilmington Cabin, marking a milestone as the development continues to grow. Alongside this, we held our Pop-Up Café—at the cabin to engage with the growing community and strengthen local connections.

In Great Chart, we installed a new Book Stop, offering residents a convenient and free way to access reading materials. In Singleton, the much-loved rocket book stop was repaired.

We introduced a Tree Trail, encouraging residents to explore and learn more about the incredible trees in our area and the many benefits they provide to our environment and wellbeing.

One of the more poignant projects was the cleaning and repair of the War Memorial, which made a visible and meaningful difference as we gathered to remember those who gave their lives in service.

We also continued to enhance our Community Orchard, planting additional fruit trees to improve biodiversity and provide a lasting green space for all to enjoy.

In partnership with Kingsnorth Parish Council, we celebrated VE Day with a shared event that brought both communities together in recognition and remembrance.

Of course, our popular annual events—the Colour Run and the Big Lunch—remained highlights in the community calendar, drawing residents of all ages for fun, celebration, and togetherness.

Finally, a heartfelt **thank you** to everyone in our community. Your continued support, participation, and generosity make this parish a better place to live for all.

Other News

The annual KALC Community Award has been presented to Hannah Morris, a resident with a real heart for people and community, working hard for the Make Lunch project and founding and leading Singleton WI.

Thank you.

I would like to thank all the members of the Parish Council for their hard work and dedication over the past year. Every Councillor brings unique skills and qualities that help the council achieve its objectives, and your contributions are greatly appreciated.

I would also like to thank our Council employees for their commitment and hard work. Your dedication plays a crucial role in the smooth functioning of our council and the betterment of our community.

Aniko Szocs

Parish Clerk

& RFO

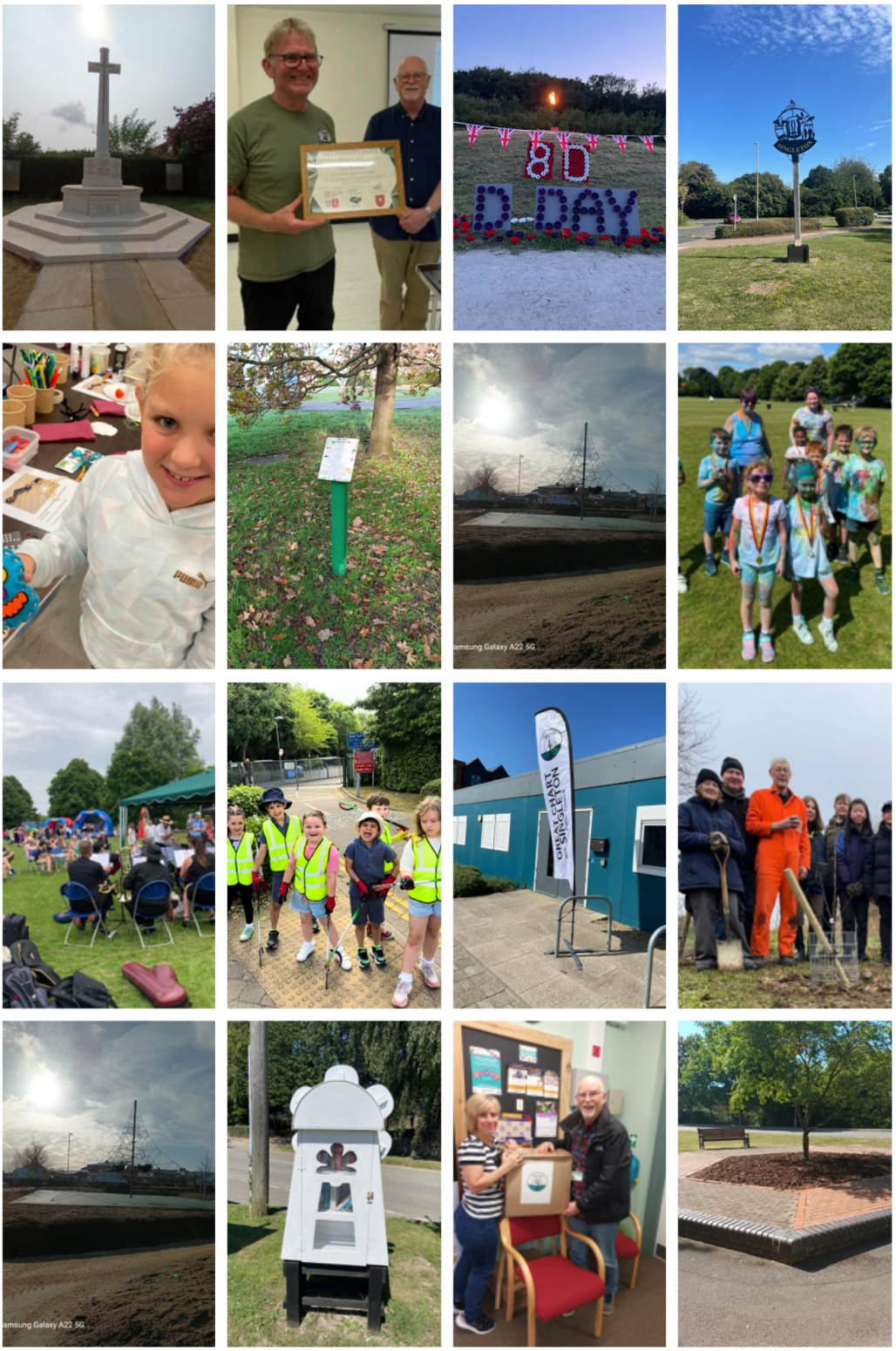

Figure 2 Community events and activities

Great Chart Village Hall- Chairman's report 2025

It is pleasing to be able to report that the hall has seen an increase in children's party bookings along with an increase in regular hirers booking the hall for their meetings and social activities. The kitchen has proved to be very popular with hirers requiring catering facilities for party bookings at the weekend, helping to maintain and increase the number of weekend bookings. This has had a beneficial effect of allowing the trustees to maintain very reasonable hiring fees for local community groups using the hall.

During the course of the year the trustees were busy tackling maintenance and updating tasks to ensure the hall was welcoming for all users. The kitchen lights have been replaced with brighter more efficient LED strip lights. We are also in the process of having various random, old electrical cables checked and removed or replaced as necessary to keep the hall in a fully serviceable condition.

As the hall parquet floor is unique feature and adds to the character of the hall the trustees will arrange for the floor to be checked to ensure if the surface needs to be professionally prepared and resealed again. We are fortune enough to have two excellent cleaners who have looked after the floor and facilities and report anything that needs attention after each hiring. I should also like acknowledge the commitment of Derek in keeping the grass and hedges so neatly trimmed.

A major expense this year will be to replace some of the old chairs with some new more comfortable green ones. We would also like to get the ceiling cleaned repainted once all the extraneous electric cables and wires have been sorted.

The finances are looking secure, we are starting to be able to build up some reserves, as with any older building repairs tend to be more expensive to rectify.

I would like thank my fellow Trustees, the parish council and ABC, along with the local community for their continued support to allow this Great Chart Village Hall to be so successful.

Paul Tate
Chairman GCVH

Great Chart Playing Fields Association

It has been another busy and productive year at Great Chart Playing Fields, with ongoing efforts to improve and enhance the facilities for our users and visitors.

One of the key improvements this year has been the installation of Wi-Fi, making the venue more versatile and ideal for meetings, training sessions, and other hire opportunities.

We also resolved a long-standing issue with the disabled toilet, which had been incorrectly installed. The necessary corrections have now been made, ensuring full accessibility and proper functionality for our disabled visitors.

The fire alarm system had posed a few challenges, but we are pleased to report these have now been resolved. Additionally, the safety light switch—which was previously located over 3 metres high—has been relocated to a more accessible height, making it easier for all users to operate.

Throughout the year, we hosted a number of well-loved events, including:

- Pilgrims' two-day tournament and presentation day
- The Parish Council's Colour Run and Big Lunch
- The annual Gurkha Walk
- A volleyball tournament
- The vibrant Nepalese Food and Music Festival

As always, the Great Chart Playing Fields Association extends sincere thanks to the Parish Council for their continued help and support. These improvements and events would not be possible without their partnership.

Dave Gathern
Chair – Great Chart Playing Fields Association

Singleton Village Hall

I would like to pay special tribute to the Trustees for all their voluntary work, without which the halls would not function, also special thanks to both the Booking Secretary and the Financial Administrator for copying extremely well with the users of the hall that do not readily comply with the rules laid down for payments and the use of the hall.

Once again plenty of renovation work has been undertaken throughout the year to maintain the halls in a good state. The Main Hall has been re-decorated, and thanks to the generosity of the Parish Council we have been able to replace the stage curtains and are about to replace the large screen.

Work has been started on extending the car park, by putting in an access up to the hedge line and the initial laying of a second bund to the right had side of the green space. Ashford Borough Council have objected to the work without giving explanation as to why. Consequently I have started a petition to present to the council requesting that the extension go ahead. In its early stages we have already exceeded 300 signatures.

Sound proofing has been installed in both the upstairs and downstairs extension halls and this has greatly improved the acoustics.

Work is continuing to seal the solar panels to remove the nesting pigeons and reduce the amount of excrement which has been blocking the gutters.

The hall bookings are looking good for the coming year and despite our increased expenditure the hall is still operating within our expected parameters.

My thanks again to everyone who has contributed to the successful running of the halls for another twelve months, and also the Parish Council for their generous support.

Geoff Darvill
Chair- Singleton Village Hall

The Bean Fund

It is a small local Charity set up ages ago for the benefit of retired farm labourers and their families - it's linked to our Parish, Kingsnorth and the Ashford Parish - we meet one a year to distribute the interest on the Charity funds usually just before Christmas!

At present we only have 2 beneficiaries and they each got £250 last year.
I suspect that once we lose these two the Chairity will close and those still involved will have to decide what to do with the funds within the limits of the Trust Deed - this may happen before our next PC term starts!

Ian McClintock
Chair – Bean Fund

Great Chart Primary School

Annual Community Meeting- Great Chart Primary School- May 2025
The Governors of Great Chart Primary School have been working hard to ensure our school continues to move forward and caters for the needs of the children, now and into the future.
Our school values are really important to us and we thrive to demonstrate them at school, at home and in the wider community. Our teachers help and support us with this by focusing on a different one each term with the theme of respect running through all of them.

The School Council has been busy this year. We started the new academic year by rolling out action points raised in the GC general election in the previous July. It was agreed that all SC wear their lanyards to meetings but felt these were not practical to wear everyday so we now wear yellow SC badges. A suggestion box has been placed in the reception area and we are trying to promote children to use this for their ideas. Items were purchased for children who like quieter play times such as mindful colouring, top trumps, playing cards, dot to dot and word search books.

The Eco Warriors' focus this year has been very much on creating a Sustainability Working Group to create, and begin working on, our Climate Action Plan; the children are an integral part of this and are supporting us to move this forward. This includes appointing Switch Off Ambassadors who

ensure lights are switched off when we leave the room and windows and doors are kept close in inclement weather. They have also played a massive part (particularly in KS2) in gathering data for our Living Streets Active Travel campaign. We have signed up to Pickerpals this year and KS1 have been the first to start taking litter picking materials home for the weekend - this helps to clean up our local environment as well as being an interactive way to involve parents in our sustainability action plan. The Eco Warriors have been instrumental in organising our Power Down Days - these are days where, school-wide, we will not be using any form of technology or electricity to support our learning and will encourage learning to take place outside if possible. Finally, the Eco Warriors have been active in helping out planting, weeding and organising the garden.

Remembrance Day is always a very important part of our school calendar, remembering those who were killed or injured in conflict. We also remember those who keep us safe today. Y6 showed their respect for the fallen by visiting the war memorial and laying a wreath. They also worked with Paul Puttick and Stuart Neeves from Kent Libraries looking at the letters from and to Mrs Elizabeth Strout, who kept in touch with local soldiers during WW1. We also asked those children who represent the different guide and scout organisations to wear their uniforms to school. From special Assemblies, the 2 minute silence and taking part in a variety of activities we will remember. We also commemorated VE day with activities and Assemblies.

We were asked by St Mary's Church to contribute to the time capsule which was being added to the church during their renovation project. Each class added a different page to our book from A day in the life….. to our hopes and dreams for the future. On the 10th December we were invited to take part in the positioning of the time capsule. We met with the committee responsible for planning the renovation and chatted to them about our book and they showed us their book too. We then positioned our time capsules into the floor. We were honoured to be part of this event. Many Thanks to Rev Cathie for involving us.
We have a very passionate and dedicated team who make up the Friends' Association. They have put on a wealth of events for the children this year:

- Teddy bears picnic for our new children
- PJ party and discos
- Coffee mornings
- Something special sales
- Elfridges sale
- Doughnut sales
- Frozen Friday sales in the Summer
- Leavers' Party

They have also put on some community events which have been extremely well supported:

- Firework Event
- Christmas Fair
- And are planning the Summer Fair

Thank you to the community for supporting these events. We are very grateful to the support the Friends' Association gives to the school.

Thank you to the Parish Council for supporting us to purchase some new benches for both our playgrounds. We have a new friendship bench in our KS1 playground and lots of new benches for KS2, all in our different house colours.

We would also like to thank Bill Barrett for supporting us to purchase some picker pal sets. We are helping to protect our environment by asking children and their families to take part in litter picking activities.
Thank you for inviting us once again and for listening to our report.

Mrs Wendy Pang
Headteacher

Friends of Singleton Lake (FoSL)

Although it has been a relatively quiet year for the Friends of Singleton Lake, a great deal has been happening behind the scenes. The group has been working closely with Ashford Borough Council and Great Chart with Singleton Parish Council to enhance the lake and its surroundings.

Thanks to funding from the Parish Council, the old, worn-out boardwalk has been replaced with a new concrete path, making the lake accessible to residents all year round. Additionally, the bridge connecting the car park to the lake has been replaced, a major improvement made possible with the support of Aspire.
Looking ahead, the group hopes to organise and deliver more community events around the lake to help celebrate this local beauty spot and bring people together.

We are always looking for volunteers, so if you're interested in getting involved, please get in touch—we'd love to hear from you!

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank Paul Stone, who stepped down from the committee, for his contributions and commitment during his time with the group.

If you have suggestions on how to improve Singleton Lake, or would simply like more information about our work, don't hesitate to contact us.

Angus Willson
Chair- Friends of Singleton Lake

Singleton WI

Singleton, WI, has had a fantastic year, full of energy, creativity, and connection. We are fortunate to hold our meetings at the welcoming Singleton Environment Centre, where each month brings a fresh opportunity to learn, share and enjoy one another's company.

Over the past year, our members have enjoyed an incredible variety of talks, hands-on crafts and engaging activities, all designed to bring women in our community together. Whether it's learning a new skill or simply enjoying a drink and conversation, our meetings are always filled with warmth and friendship.

This year also saw a significant transition, as our Founder President, Hannah Morris, stepped down to embark on an exciting new career. Hannah has been the heart of Singleton WI, guiding us with her caring spirit and exceptional organisational skills. Her leadership laid the strong foundations we continue to build upon, and while we will greatly miss her presence, we are so proud of the new path she's chosen.

We are delighted to welcome Yolanda Barker as our new President, with Emma Bain stepping into the role of Vice President. Together with our dedicated committee, they are committed to leading Singleton Wi into its next chapter with shared enthusiasm and teamwork.

Our group continues to thrive as a vibrant and diverse mix of women from all walks of life. In addition to our monthly meetings, we also enjoy a lively book group and a creative craft group. There is something for everyone.

Singleton WI is about more than just activities; it's about building friendships and forging community spirit.

We look forward to another exciting year ahead!

Yolanda Barker
Singleton WI President

The Repair Café at The Singleton Environment Centre (SEC)

The **Repair Café** has enjoyed another fantastic year, welcoming a wide variety of much-loved and well-used items through its workshop doors, all in need of a little TLC.

Thanks to our dedicated team of skilled volunteers, many of these items have been given a new lease of life. Their ability to repair a broad range of items—combined with their passion, knowledge, and commitment—continues to be the heart of the Repair Café's success.

Growing Capacity
As the initiative continues to grow, so too has the need for additional space. To help alleviate pressure on our workshop and storage areas, we were pleased to install a new container, providing much-needed room to support our expanding operations.

Learning and Engagement
In addition to repair work, the group took part in several social and educational activities. A highlight was a visit to a local recycling centre for small electrical items, where volunteers learned about the recycling process and what happens to materials after collection. It was an informative and inspiring visit, reinforcing the value of our work in reducing landfill waste.

Acknowledgements
We extend our heartfelt thanks to all our volunteers for their time, expertise, and dedication. Without them, the Repair Café would not be possible. We are also grateful to the Singleton Environment Centre for hosting and supporting us, and to Great Chart with Singleton Parish Council for their continued support and encouragement.

We look forward to another year of fixing the fascinating—and sometimes not so fascinating—items, and continuing our mission to keep valuable materials out of landfill.

Barrow and Spade Brigade

HILLCREST ALLOTMENTS: THE YEAR OF THE WATER TANK

The Barrow and Spade Brigade has had another productive and successful year, marked by significant improvements and strong community spirit.

Infrastructure Improvements

One of the key achievements this year was the refurbishment of the storage container, which has received a fresh coat of paint and a new roof. This upgrade not only improves the appearance but also supports rainwater harvesting, contributing to a more sustainable allotment site.

The water storage capacity has been significantly increased, a crucial development that ensures better access to water during the dry season. This enabled the installation of a new tap further down the allotments, making water more accessible to all plot holders.

In addition, the committee invested in three new wheelbarrows, making it easier for plot holders to transport tools and equipment around the site.

Community Engagement

The annual tidy-up day was another highlight, bringing plot holders together to complete maintenance tasks and improve the overall appearance of the site. Volunteers were rewarded with a communal barbecue, which added a fun and social element to the day.

A Moment of Remembrance

We would like to take a moment to remember Glyn, who sadly passed away this year after a battle with cancer. Glyn served as an excellent Secretary and played a vital role in our committee. He is deeply missed by all.

Ongoing Commitment

The committee remains committed to continually improving the site and making gardening as accessible and enjoyable as possible for all members.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to Great Chart with Singleton Parish Council, as well as to our borough and county councillors, for their ongoing financial and moral support. Thanks to their contributions, we are able to maintain a vibrant and thriving growing community.

Dan Jenner
Chair of the Barrow and Spade Brigade (Hillcrest allotments)

Singleton Environment Centre (SEC)

Great Chart with Singleton Parish Council has continued to support the educational events that take place at Singleton Environment Centre. The money the Parish Council contributes on a monthly basis goes towards the cost of staffing and resources ensuring that the centre does not need to include these costs in the ticket pricing. The financial support provided allows the events to be run at a reasonable cost to participants thereby making the events accessible to a wider audience. Regular feedback from participants is that the events are an incredibly reasonable price and excellent value for money.

The events provided have included family sessions, adult workshops, a regular pre-school group and drop and leave children's sessions. The events include learning about nature and environmental issues in a fun and engaging way. Normally nature crafts are included whether that is as a natural resource or inspiration point. As well as providing factual information and understanding about the local environment the events provide access to the outdoor space at the centre and have a positive impact on well being for all participants.

Over 1,000 participants have attended an educational event at Singleton Environment Centre between April 2024 and March 2025. Many of those who attended are regular participants who enjoy the events so much that they return to future events. The Buggin' About pre-school nature group, which runs every Friday in term time, has an average of 15 attendees on each session.

Helen King
Education officer, Singleton Spaces

Toke and Streeter Almshouse Charity – Chairman's AGM Report 06/2025

All has been going well with the Charity. We have enough money in the accounts to continue. The Residents all seem to be happy with their homes and there have not been any issues or complaints raised with us. My thanks to Lin Briscall and Tony Tolhurst for undertaking an inspection of the properties on the 1st April 2025. The spreadsheet that they produced gives us an excellent template for future inspections. We have offered to replace the bathroom, undertake work in the kitchen and redecorate the rest of the property of No 3, but the resident is reluctant for us to do this work at the present time. The Charity have the funds ready to undertake this work if anything changes. The builder has filled some of the holes in the plaster of the porch to No 3. The resident of No 2 has painted the porch of No1/2 and this now is looking much better.
Tony Tolhurst has cut new front door keys for No 2 and 3 and made a fine job. We have not located an original key for the door of No 1. I hold the spare keys for the properties and for the lock for the gate to the field.

Following repairs by the builder, there has not been any sign of the water leak that we had previously experienced to the rear of No 3.Externally everything looks ok and the lawns are being maintained well by the resident of No 2. Ivy is growing over the wall of No 3 as noted in the inspection report and this needs to be removed before the wall is damaged The field is currently being rented by the residents of Chart House. We still have not been able to cut the field hedges as the contractors that promised to undertake this work have not turned up.
I would like to thank all of the trustees for their continued support

Gary Perry
Chairman

Report from St. Mary's Great Chart

First of all, on behalf of the congregation of St. Mary's, I would like to thank the Parish Council for their continued support in helping to keep the churchyard mown and looking tidy. It is much appreciated as it a space used by many in the local community. I am sure many have noticed and appreciated the new gates, church path and disabled access into the church which completes the second phase of the church renovations. The next phase will be the tower, fundraising for this will begin very soon. St. Mary's will be hosting a Parish wide service on 8th June when theBishop of Dover - Bishop Rose will be joining us to celebrate Penticost (Witsun).
Thank you again for your support

Revd. Cathie Aldis - Saunders (Associate Priest - Ashford Town Parish)

Singleton Community Church

We continue to focus on being a welcoming church for people of all ages, regardless of background or stage of faith.

Our congregation is growing steadily, particularly among children and young people. We run regular Sunday children's groups and host three activity mornings each year (at Easter, Christmas and Halloween), each of which are attended by over 70 people from Singleton and the surrounding area.

These activities are made possible by a dedicated team of volunteers. Building on this strong foundation, we are currently fundraising and applying for grants to employ a Family and Youth Worker. This role would enable us to expand our work with children, young people, and families, and explore further community outreach opportunities—such as establishing a youth club.

We continue to welcome members of our local cub and scout groups into our church for St George's Day and Remembrance Sunday services. It is a joy to mark these occasions with them.

In October we held our first pet service where well behaved pets were invited to celebrate all creatures, as pets, or as service animals. We donated the collection from this service to The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association. Two years ago, we launched a weekly Friendship Group at Lily's Café, in partnership with Imago, to help tackle loneliness in Singleton. The group has consistently welcomed 10 or more people each week, providing a warm space for conversation and connection over a hot drink.

Following the success of this initiative, the manager of Singleton Barn invited us to start a similar group on their premises. This new group, Community Cuppa, began on 1st May and is already being well received.

At the end of last year, we ran a 10-week Alpha course. This is a free course which introduces people to the core principles of Christianity and includes a hot meal. The course was successful and was attended by new members of our congregation as well as folk from the local community. We will be running a similar course again this year.

Our family-friendly services are held every Sunday at 10:30am in Singleton Village Hall.
To see our events and updates, please visit our Facebook page or our website at www.ashfordtownparish.co.uk/singleton

Flora the Singleton Giant

As we prepare for the upcoming Big Lunch 2025, excitement is building for what promises to be the most successful event yet. Scheduled for 13th July in Folkestone, this year's theme centres around British Folklore and Ritual Traditions. The event continues to grow year-on-year, and we are proud to be part of it once again.

Community Engagement and Appearances

Charivari 2024
After last participating in 2008, we returned to the Folkestone event with great enthusiasm. Due to the challenging route—beginning at the harbour and ascending the steep Road of Remembrance—we joined the procession at the top, continuing on to the bandstand atop the Lees Cliffs. This marked the second consecutive year of participation in the opening day of the carnival, which also included a parade of giants on the scenic Government Acre overlooking the sea.

Kings Grove Festival, Pippingford Park
At the end of August, we attended the well-loved three-day festival at Kings Grove near Nutley. This annual event continues to attract fellow parishioners and community supporters. Flora, our village giant, was warmly received, with many festival-goers enthusiastically joining the celebration—some even in themed costumes, as seen in photos shared on social media.

Calais Visit – International Appearance
In September, we took Flora to Calais to help celebrate the 5th birthday of Francisco the Giant. The event saw over 20 giants in attendance, drawing large crowds. Although initially expected to be a static display, it evolved into a short parade followed by dance performances. Special credit goes to Matthew, who expertly performed all three dances consecutively with minimal recovery time—an effort that is captured in a video posted on Flora's Facebook page.

Milestone and Support

Flora Turns 19
Last month marked Flora's 19th birthday—a testament to the enduring value and community spirit behind the Singleton Giant Association. The ongoing activity and care for Flora would not be

possible without the essential support of the Parish Council, particularly in covering the insurance necessary to maintain and exhibit such a unique community asset.

Legacy of the Kent Giants Project

Since the original Kent Giants art project in the early 2000s, nine giants have been created by Strange Cargo. Flora remains the most active and visible of them all. Of the others, one is no longer in use, two are in the process of being restored, and the status of the remaining giants is unknown.

Local Commemorations and Events

VE Day 80th Anniversary

Flora also played a role in commemorating the 80th anniversary of VE Day. She stood in quiet tribute while local residents created lanterns, which were later placed at the Great Chart War Memorial.

Medieval Festival Connection

Flora continues to build connections with the community. During the VE Day commemoration, she was reunited with a family she met earlier in the year at the Medieval Festival—highlighting the reach and memory she inspires among residents.

The continued presence and engagement of Flora the Giant in both local and international events is a source of pride for our community. We remain deeply grateful for the ongoing support of the Parish Council, whose commitment allows us to preserve and share this cultural icon.

We aim to participate in as many parish events as possible, believing that such efforts enrich our local area and foster a stronger, more connected community.

Contact Details:

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She can also be reached on Facebook page@Florathegiant
Facebook Group: https://www.facebook.com/groups/156875087695939
Or visit her website at www.singletongiant.org.uk

Peter Barker
Chair – Flora the Singleton Giant Association

Finance Report

Finance Officer's Report

The Parish Council begins its annual budget-setting process in October, using six months of actual expenditure data as a foundation for financial planning. The 2024–2025 budget was developed in line with this established process. The Finance Committee undertook a thorough review of income, expenditure, and ongoing projects before preparing a draft budget for consideration by the full Council.

For the 2024–2025 financial year, the precept increased by £64,800. While the majority of budget lines remained broadly consistent with the previous year, certain areas received additional funding. Notably, the Events budget was increased to support growing community engagement, and the amenities budget was raised to £33,000 to support local facilities.

We are particularly proud to continue supporting the outstanding work of the education team at the Singleton Environment Centre. This partnership enables the delivery of a wide range of activities for residents of all ages. The Parish Council provides a regular monthly contribution to help ensure these opportunities remain accessible throughout the year.

The Council also remains committed to supporting local organisations through its grant scheme. The application process has proven to be both effective and accessible—providing Councillors with sufficient information to make informed decisions, while being straightforward for applicants to complete. A small contribution from each household collectively creates a meaningful fund that supports a broad range of groups and services that benefit our community.

Independent Auditor's comment

Over the past nine years, the Parish Council has appointed the same internal auditor to review not only the Council's finances but also to ensure that all governing documents comply with current legislative requirements. This process has been a vital part of maintaining transparency, accountability, and sound governance.

Recognising the importance of regular, independent scrutiny, and to strengthen the effectiveness of the internal audit process, the Council decided to appoint a new internal auditor this year. A fresh perspective helps ensure that governance practices remain robust and up to date.

The findings of the internal audit are available to the public on the Parish Council's website under the Finance tab. The auditor concluded that "in general, the Council has competent arrangements in place to satisfy itself that its systems of internal control are transparent and effective." - Helen Broughton, Internal Auditor

Grants allocated in 2024-2025

The parish council was pleased to support the following groups with grants:

Organisation	Grant amount awarded
1st Singleton Scouts Group	£942- new flags
The Friends of Great Chart Primary School	£2,460- towards new seating
Great Chart Pre-School	£6,000 towards running of the pre-school
Askes Court	£139 – towards lawn
United Church Ashford	£250- towards activities
Senior Club	£250 – towards craft materials
We are Beams	£250 – towards support of local residents
Ashford Borough Council	£10,000 – towards raised path at Singleton Lake
Air Ambulance	£500 – towards operational costs
Barrow and Spade Brigade	£717.20- new tap
Accessible Coders	£1,100 – towards coding project
Great Chart Cricket Club	£1000 donation towards a plaque for the late Marjorie Brissenden
Repair Café	£1500 – New container
Ashford Community Woodland	£50 – mulch around fruit trees
Total:	**£25,158.20**

Earmarked and Reserved Funds

Some of the PC's reserves are earmarked for various projects: -

Account	Opening Balance	Transfer	Closing Balance
Contingency Reserves	£110,000	£5,000	£115,000
EMR - Cuckoo Park	£118,999.87		£118,999.87
EMR - The Viewing Point	£33,135		£32,288
EMR-PFA Play Park	£20,000.00		£20,000.00
Yellow Land Play Equipment	£18,000		£18,000.00
Parish Building	£15,000.00		£15,000.00
	£310,134.87	£5,000	**319,287.87**

The Finance Committee regularly monitors the Parish Council's finances to ensure that all spending remains within agreed budget lines. Where necessary, funds may be reallocated to maintain a balanced budget. As part of this ongoing oversight, the Committee recommended an increase to the Council's contingency reserves to reflect the Parish Council's continued growth and responsibilities.

Cuckoo Park remains an active project. In addition to routine maintenance, the Council recognises the importance of planning for the future and has established a fund to replace play equipment when it reaches the end of its usable life, estimated to be around 20 years.

The Yellow Land reserve is designated for the upkeep of The Viewpoint and the land located to the rear of Singleton Village Hall, ensuring these valued community spaces are maintained to a high standard.

With the Parish Council's operations expanding, there is an increasing need for a larger and more functional office space. It is the Council's ambition to build a purpose-built facility that would include office space, a meeting room, and a dedicated community area. The Parish Office reserves have been established to help support this long-term goal.

Year-end accounts

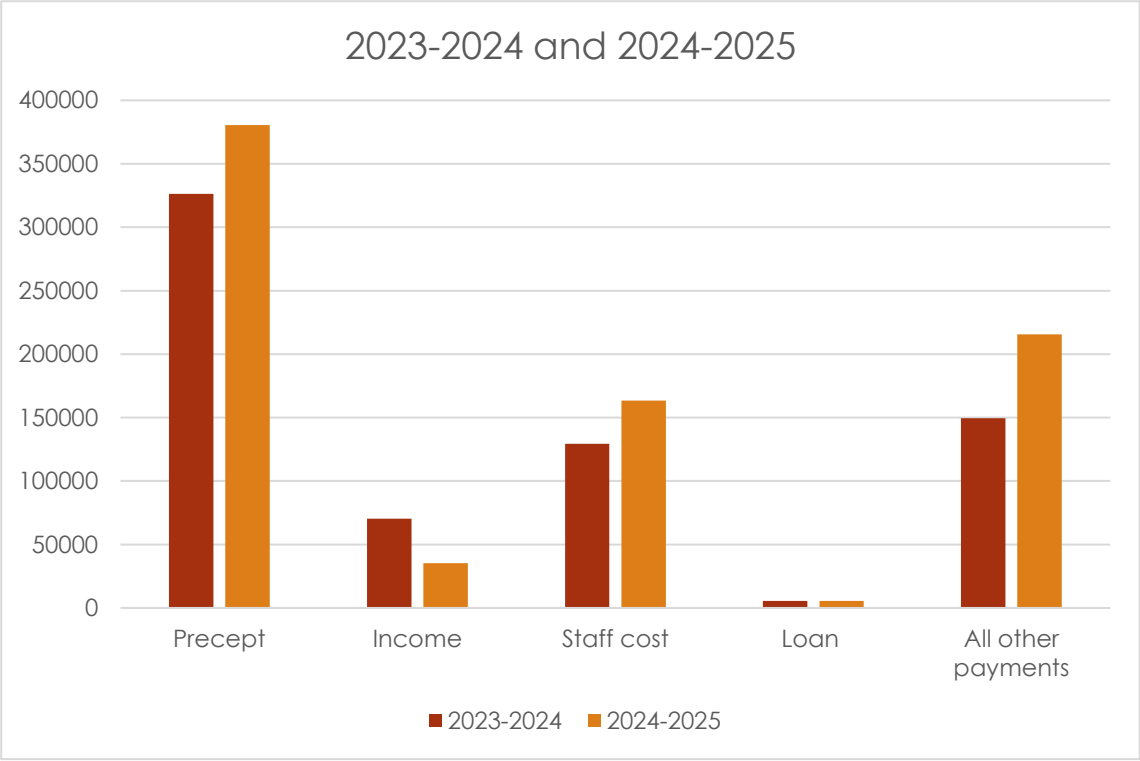
A copy of the Year-End Accounts for the financial year is available on the Parish Council's website, along with details of the findings from both the External and Internal Auditors. These reports form a vital part of the Council's governance and transparency framework.

The following section provides a summary of the Parish Council's income and expenditure, outlining key areas of spending and sources of income. The primary source of income continues to be the precept.

Income and Expenditure 2024-25

	Great Chart with Singleton Parish NEW **Income and Expenditure Account for Year Ended 31st March 2025**		
	31st March 2024		31st March 2025
		Income Summary	
	326,412	Precept	380,411
	326,412	Sub Total	**380,411**
		Operating Income	
	70,385	Income	21,972
	396,797	Total Income	**402,383**
		Running Costs	
	178,916	Administration	234,453
	3,357	Caretaker	11,124
	38,078	Maintenance	76,882
	35,859	Projects	61,976
	5,000	PFA	0
	20,000	Singleton Environment Centre	0
	3,349	Events	0
	284,559	Total Expenditure	**384,434**
		General Fund Analysis	
	217,737	Opening Balance	325,822
	396,797	Plus : Income for Year	402,383
	614,534		728,205
	284,559	Less : Expenditure for Year	384,434
	329,975		343,771
	4,153	Transfers TO / FROM Reserves	5,000
	325,822	**Closing Balance**	**338,771**

Income and expenditure compared to the previous financial year.



As shown in the graph above, income for the last financial year was higher than usual due to the receipt of Section 106 (S106) funds. Staff costs have also increased slightly, which reflects the decision to extend the working hours of the Parish Steward to better support local needs.

Additionally, overall payments are higher this year, primarily due to the resurfacing work carried out beneath the large climbing frame at Cuckoo Park.

Budget 2024-2025

Parish Council Budget 2024–2025: Investing in Our Community

The Parish Council has set its budget for the 2024–2025 financial year, ensuring continued support for local services, community projects, and vital amenities. This year's budget totals £380,411, funded entirely through the Parish Precept.

Where the Money Comes From:

£380,411 in total income, all from the Precept

No additional funding from grants or council tax support this year

How We're Investing in the Parish

Administration – £238,411

This includes core operations such as staff salaries (£175k), pensions, training, and office running costs.

Parish Grants (£20k) and Events (£7.5k) also fall under this category, helping to support local groups and bring the community together.

Maintenance – £53,000

A key priority is keeping our public spaces safe and pleasant:

Play Park Maintenance: £21k

Equipment Replacement Fund: £12k

Maintenance of the churchyard, village hall, and other assets continue as before.

Projects – £61,500

A new £25,000 capital fund has been created to support long-term infrastructure, including the Parish Office project.

Funding continues for environmental projects, village halls, and community initiatives.

Community Support

Singleton Environment Centre receives £16.5k to continue offering year-round activities.

A new £2,000 fund will support the maintenance of the War Memorial.

This budget reflects the Parish Council's ongoing commitment to maintaining services, enhancing local amenities, and supporting our vibrant community. Thank you for being part of it.

You can view the full breakdown and year-end accounts on our website under the "Finance" section.

Bank reconciliation 2023-24

Great Chart with Singleton Parish NEW Bank - Cash and Investment Reconciliation as at 31 March 2025 Confirmed Bank & Investment Balances Bank Statement Balances					
	31/03/2025	Metro Bank Current Account	9,130.37		
	31/03/2025	Metro Bank Instant Access	15,907.39		
	31/03/2025	Metro Bank Credit Card 6934	-16.66		
	31/03/2025	Metro Bank Credit Card 8589	0.00		
	31/03/2025	NatWest Current	100.00		
	31/03/2025	NatWest Reserve Account	101,834.97		
	31/03/2025	Nationwide Business 1 Yr Fixed	192,393.67		
	31/03/2025	Dudley	114,730.00		
	31/03/2025		99,998.80		
	31/03/2025		100,000.00		

				634,078.54	
	Receipts not on Bank Statement				
				0.00	
	Closing Balance			**634,078.54**	
	All Cash & Bank Accounts				
	1	Metro Bank Current Account		9,130.37	
	2	Metro Bank Instant Access		15,907.39	
	3	Metro Bank Credit Card		-16.66	
	4	NatWest Current Account		100.00	
	5	NatWest Reserve Account		101,834.97	
	6	Nationwide Business 95 Day		192,393.67	
	7	Dudley Building Society		114,730.00	
	8	Barclays		99,998.80	
	9	RedWood Bank		100,000.00	
		Other Cash & Bank Balances		0.00	
		Total Cash & Bank Balances		**634,078.54**	

Great Chart with Singleton Parish Council

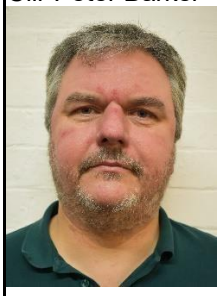
Contacts

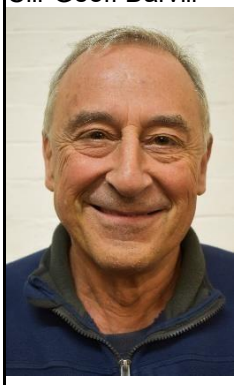
Chilmington Ward	
Cllr Ian McClintock 	Tel: 07919 278828 Email: ian.mcclintock@greatchartsingleton-pc.gov.uk • Finance Committee • Planning Committee • Singleton Spaces • Complaints Committee • Staffing Committee

Great Chart with Singleton North Ward	
Cllr Paul Tate 	Tel: 07850 082023 Email: paul.tate@greatchartsingleton-pc.gov.uk • Finance Committee • Great Chart Village Hall – Chair • Toke and Streeter Alms Houses Trust • Planning Committee

Singleton East Ward	
Cllr Steve Herring 	Tel: 01233 616923 Email: steve.herring@greatchartsingleton-pc.gov.uk • Environment Committee

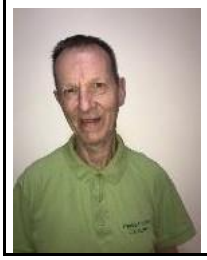
Cllr Janet Sullivan 	Tel: 01233 645400 Email: janet.sullivan@greatchartsingleton-pc.gov.uk Joint Vice Chair of the Parish Council also member of: • Staffing Committee • Planning Committee • Stronger Communities
Cllr Malcolm Wiffen 	Tel: 01233 635016 Email: malcolm.wiffen@greatchartsingleton-pc.gov.uk Chair of the Parish Council also member of: • Finance Committee • Singleton Spaces - Chair • Planning Committee • Staffing Committee – Chair • Great Chart Playing Fields Association – Treasurer
Cllr Dave Gathern 	Email: dave.gathern@greatchartsingleton-pc.gov.uk • Staffing Committee - Chair • Environment Committee • Stronger Communities • Friends of Singleton Lake (committee member) • Great Chart Playing Fields Association - Chair

Singleton West Ward	
Cllr Peter Barker 	Tel: 01233 610241 Email: peter.barker@greatchartsingleton-pc.gov.uk Joint Vice chair of the Parish Council also member of: • Finance Committee • Environment Committee - Chair • Planning Committee

Cllr Yolanda Barker 	Tel: 01233 610241 Email: yolanda.barker@greatchartsingleton-pc.gov.uk Vice chair of the parish council also member of: • Staffing Committee • Planning Committee – Chair • Complaints Committee • Stronger Communities – Co-chair
Cllr Geoff Darvill 	Tel: 01233 642357 Email: geoffrey.darvill@greatchartsingleton-pc.gov.uk • Finance Committee - Chair • Singleton Village Hall – Chair • Complaints Committee
Cllr Barry Mercer 	Tel: 07851 071248 Email: barry.mercer@greatchartsingleton-pc.gov.uk • Environment Committee

Washford Ward	
Cllr Ashley Heathcote 	Tel: 07846831199 Email: ashley.heathcote@greatchartsingleton-pc.gov.uk

Parish Council Staff and Contact details

Aniko Szocs 	**Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer** Tel: 01233 616923 Email: TheClerk@greatchartsingleton-pc.gov.uk
Paula Cowperthwaite 	**Deputy Clerk** Tel: 01233 616923 Email: paula.cowperthwaite@greatchartsingleton-pc.gov.uk
Stuart Lund 	**Parish Steward**
Robert Heath 	**Assistant to Parish Steward**

Great Chart with Singleton Parish Council would like to thank its partners

Ashford Borough Council
Ashford Community Woodland
Ashford Repair Café
Ashford Volunteer Centre
Aspire
Barrow and Spade Brigade
Beavers & Explorers
Chilmington Management Organisation
Chilmington Primary School
Flora The Singleton Giant
Friends of Singleton Lake
Godinton and Great Chart WI
Great Chart Cricket Club
Great Chart Playing Fields
Great Chart Primary School
Great Chart Scouts
Great Chart Village Hall
John Wesley Primary School
Kent County Council Kent Police
Pilgrims Football Club
Singleton Community Church
Singleton Environment Centre
Singleton Spaces
Singleton Village Hall
Singleton WI
St Mary's Great Chart with St Francis Church, Cryol Road
Suez
The Bumblebee Conservation Trust
The Wyvern School
Toke and Streeter Alms House Trust