

Reports for Parish Council Meeting to be held on Wednesday 1st February 2023

Graham Zacharias

IGas

No developments to report

Potholes

The recent wet then freezing weather has, predictably, played havoc with the roads and road surfaces. I have reported four major defects on Town Lane alone. Others, notably on the A286 heading north, are urgently awaiting repair.

CHS

Covered under Tony Marshall's update

Finance

The budget for the current year and corresponding precept have been agreed. However, our precept continues to leave us woefully short of surplus funds, after deduction of fixed costs, to address major projects involving infrastructure spend or improvements to the villages' facilities.

Tony Marshall

Charlton Road Flooding

As I write this, more than a week after the last significant rainfall, floodwater is still flowing freely along Charlton Road between Bankside and the school. This water is not directly threatening properties because channels have been dug (opposite the school) to direct it back into the river before the bridge. However, that's not to say it's harmless: it inevitably causes disruption for residents and, with a string of very cold nights, has led to a build up of ice on the road and the footway.

Perhaps more seriously though, the wash created by vehicles is further eroding the verge separating the river from the road – and since the vast majority of the flood is river water escaping onto the road, this erosion increases the risk of greater problems in the future. In particular, the more water that flows freely along the road, the more likely it is to reach properties in Singleton centre.

Furthermore, it's clear that sections of hedge have already started to collapse into the river, which can only make matters worse: it weakens the verge further and, by blocking the river and impeding the flow, increases the amount escaping onto the road (to avoid the blockage). It seems likely that this water will also have undermined the road in places, which will lead to more potholes and danger to cyclists / motorcyclists.

While this flooding is being described as the worst since 1993/94, we have no way of knowing if and when it will recur – so it's clear that something must be done, to avoid greater problems in the future. I propose to put something together to persuade Goodwood to clear the river and reinforce the hedgerow – and would appreciate input from other councillors, initially in the form of a discussion at the forthcoming meeting.

CHS proposal

Nothing more heard from Highways since the communications with Mike Dare, reported at the September meeting, in which we agreed to limit the proposal to exclude the school parking and Charlton proposals, in order to improve the chances of the work on the A286 being approved.

Town Lane TRO

The TRO to apply for a 30mph speed limit in Town Lane, to just past the museum entrance, was finalised and submitted at the beginning of January. As the objectives align precisely with those

within the CHS proposal, Graham agreed that it was not necessary to get the final proposal document approved in Council. In December, WSCC agreed a new Speed Limit Policy, which puts the needs of vulnerable road users first – so we're optimistic.

20mph Proposals

The 20mph proposal for Singleton is still 'open to debate', due to the proposal to impose this limit on the A286 past the bus stop - so I feel we need to see how this plays out before pressing separately for 20mph within the village. However, the 20mph proposal for Charlton is completely separate – and as this has been discarded from the CHS (to increase the chances of getting the A286 work approved) I propose to reconfigure it as a TRO specifically for the Charlton speed limit.

Southern Water

In view of the fact that they started pumping out the sewers almost immediately the water table rose, I emailed SW asking to see their assessment of the effectiveness of the recent repairs. Of course, the water levels have since been exceptional, but clearly there were problems even before this. I'll report back if/when I hear anything.

Glebe Field Footpath

The contractor returned to have another go at improving this. The result seems to be satisfactory, within the limitations of the material that had been laid, but it would be good to get further feedback on whether we need to take further action, such as adding a layer of finer stone on the top.

Robert Mayne

Henry Smith Charity

The Annual General Meeting of the local Henry Smith charity was held in November. The distribution of the grant was agreed and completed in December. This included a contribution of £1,000 to the playground project.

The funds are used to support local people and organisations.

Singleton Phone Box

Disconnection of the Singleton Telephone Kiosk from the electricity supply. We are still waiting for BT's contractor to complete this task.

Roads, Pavements, Potholes in Charlton

In December, West Sussex County Council launched a new process for online reporting of problems with roads and pavements. This system is described as 'mobile friendly'. There are separate classifications for: Flooding; Road and cycle path faults (including potholes); Pavement and verges; Trees, Hedges, weeds and grass; and Obstructions on the road, pavement or cycle path. This can be accessed through the West Sussex County Council website under 'Roads and Travel' through the link 'Report a Problem With a Road or Pavement'.

It is intended that this new system will replace the 'Love West Sussex' App, although they will run in parallel until April 2023.

Repairs are periodically undertaken by West Sussex County Council Highways Department.

Pete Williams

On the A286 we have a blocked drain (which caused very icy pavements recently with cars splashing through). We also have a rapidly growing pothole. Both of these have been by me and others, yet no apparent action. There is also a raised manhole cover (which Maurice tripped over last November) which has been repaired twice.

You may be aware that the Love West Sussex App is no longer the correct way to report these kinds of problems, although the app will take your submission, it won't do anything with it. Reports should now be made via this online link, where full details can be submitted along with photographs -

[Report a problem with a road or pavement.](#) This leads you to:-

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/make-an-enquiry-or-report-a-problem-with-a-road-or-pavement/>

You can also report by phone - 01243 642105 then option 1, then 1 again, then 1 yet again. This number is advised for anything that is dangerous, and with both the online and phone options you will be given a reference number, allowing follow up.

He also checked the outstanding matters above. The blocked drain is in a queue to be repaired, no estimated timescale. The pothole has been fixed. The raised manhole has been repaired, so he's given me the email for Thomas King who deals with these, and I have emailed him a complaint that the repair has not been successful, every time we get heavy rain it raises up again.

Vivien Nuttall – Clerk

Finance Report

Finance Balance in Current Account (30/01/23) **Not including Reserves below** - £5,157.01

Playground Reserves held in Current Account - £6,292.86 (plus VAT to be claimed of £4,811.86)

Accessibility Project Reserves held in Current Account - £5,500.00 (plus £21,000 grant from Rees Jeffreys that has not been received yet)

Donation from Sussex Martyrs - £2,000.00

CIL Money - £4,198.54

Total in Current Account – £23,148.41

Balance in Savings Account (18/07/22) – £7,005.24

VAT Not Claimed - £6,131.94

Jeremy Hunt

Our proposed budget for 2023/24, including our draft Medium Term Financial Strategy through to 2026/27, our five year capital programme and our Treasury Management Strategy have now been published. The draft budget was approved by public cabinet on 31st January and will now go forward for final approval by the full County Council on Friday 17th February. The draft budget papers can be viewed on our website under Cabinet Meeting agendas - or follow this link:

<https://westsussex.moderngov.co.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeed=134>

For your interest, our proposed total spend across all our services in 2023/24 will be just under £1.9bn. However, after deducting grants, including the Dedicated Schools Grant (approx. £780m which we passport straight through to schools), fees and charges and other income, our proposed net revenue budget is just under £709m. That is an increase of approx 9.25%, or £60m in real money, over the current year. Again, the largest part of our budget - just over 55% - is spent on social care (34% on Adults and 21%on Children and Young People).

With reference to Council Tax, when the Government calculate the level of core funding for local authorities, they make an assumption that we will raise council tax by the maximum permitted amount. They then deduct that amount (whether you increase CT or not) from the final amount they award us. For 2023/24 the government have raised the referendum limit for core council tax from 2% to 3%, and from 1% to 2% for the Adult Social Care precept. Therefore, to maintain our funding levels in order to meet our ever increasing costs, we are reluctantly proposing to increase the WS core council tax by 2.99% and the ASC precept by 2%, giving a total increase of 4.99%. For an average Band D taxpayer this equates to £77.76 per year, or £1.49 per week. In order to balance our

budget, the alternative to raising council tax would be to implement cuts to our frontline services - something we want to avoid and are currently not proposing to do.

Obviously highways are often top of most peoples agenda - especially after the recent flooding which has caused a lot of damage to road surfaces. In the last nine months of 2022 we filled over 25,500 potholes, but unfortunately the floods, followed by freezing conditions, has undone a lot of that good work. As part of last years budget we allocated an additional £21m capital funding to highways maintenance, spread over 4/5 years. For 2023/24 we have added a further £4.5m for specific highways projects, which means that, across both capital and revenue projects, we will be investing over £80m next year in our highways network across the County.

Local Issues:

Reference your application to provide enhanced parking in The Leys. I understand that our officer made some recommendations to you before Christmas and he is currently awaiting your response.

As far as your Communities Highways Scheme is concerned, I understand that it is currently with our improvements team for feasibility and design 23/24 and if no issues arise e.g compliance with policy and National Guidance (design specifications) then it should be delivered in 24/25.

Lastly, regarding sewage issues in the Lavant Valley, Southern Water - after nearly a year of asking - recently attended a Lavant PC meeting. However, the person attending was unable to answer a number of detailed questions, which wasn't very helpful. He did however produce a Lavant Infiltration Reduction Update report - again it doesn't say a lot - but I will bring a copy to the meeting. One suggestion he made was that in another area a number of parishes had got together and arranged a joint meeting, which was very helpful. I have agreed to try and facilitate that going forward, so I presume you would be interested in joining that meeting. Currently I am flat out with budget work, so it is likely to be a little while before I can get that arranged.

Finally, please don't forget to keep an eye on our website, especially our news and campaigns page where you can keep up to date with all our latest news. <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/about-the-council/news-and-campaigns/>

Also, a reminder that all our public meetings are webcast live and are also archived, so you can always view them later. <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/about-the-council/how-the-council-works/watch-county-council-and-committee-meetings-online/>

Jeremy Hunt – West Sussex County Council Member for Chichester North

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Henry Potter

The review of the District Local Plan is now complete and was put to Cabinet and then to Full Council last week on the 24th for endorsement, it was agreed and will now be open for public consultation for six weeks, beginning 03/02.

It will then go to the Planning Inspectorate for approval and, hopefully, adoption. Recent Government Planning Statements by Michael Gove have resulted in some last minute changes to the review which may prove to be helpful in reducing House building targets. This reviewed Plan, if approved by the Inspectorate, will be for the period to 2039.

The next All Parishes Meeting Agenda has been circulated, it is scheduled to be a Virtual Meeting using the Zoom Platform at 5.30pm on the 6th February. I'm afraid the Agenda doesn't appear very

exciting, a discussion concerning the Local Elections in May, and a presentation by Tony Whitty elaborating on the completed Local Plan and the opportunity to ask Questions, not necessarily on agenda items, but anything of concern. These could be tabled in advance of the meeting.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on Tuesday 17th and invited Senior representatives from OFWAT, the Marine Advisor from Natural England, the CEO of Southern Water and the Area Director of the Environment Agency for the Solent and Downs. Never before can I recall a gathering of such top officers of Organisations involved in the issues faced by our District in connection with Sewage treatment and Flooding. So many questions were tabled in advance, and it was a lengthy meeting. It was a Virtual Meeting but it could have been accessed via the Councils website, and the recording of the meeting can be seen on the Councils web site. The many questions concerning flooding and infiltration to sewer systems were answered but many of the 'planned' works to remedy the faults are forecast to be years hence. Personally, I see it as still a gloomy picture.

Locally the flooding of Charlton Road this year is a rare occurrence, due to the river course not being cleared as it should! I can't recall the river overflowing it's bank, flowing down the road, then re entering the course some yards further down stream. It is good however to see the Southern Water Public Warning Notice re potential contaminants in the river. And now much of the flooding is receding, the damage to the road surface in many places is colossal. Many old pothole repairs have simply lifted out of their holes. How WSCC will cope with these I dread to think. I cannot stress enough now, the need to drive more slowly and carefully.

Finally, a late item has been added to the Council Meeting on 31/01 because extensive damage has occurred to the Seacroft sea wall defences at Selsey. A urgent decision was needed to authorise spending £440,000, this was taken by senior Officers and the Leader of the Council on 25th January but must now be endorsed by Full Council. Though the District Council is responsible for Sea Defences, it is possible that the monies can be recovered from Government Grant Funding but this must be applied for retrospectively. And, this is not guaranteed.

Two other items to be resolved at Tuesday's meeting are, to agree the spending of £200,000 to purchase of a Electric Powered Small Street Sweeper for the City Centre. The second decision to be ratified is the continuation of Council funding to support Pallant House Gallery for the coming year to 2024. The Council has for a number of years given grant funding to the Gallery and without this, the Gallery couldn't access Funding from the Arts Council. However, the Arts Council has chosen to withdraw their offer of funding in the future which puts the Trustees of the Gallery in a parlous position regarding its future.

This concludes my report.