

Reports for Parish Council and Annual Parish Council Meeting on Wednesday 18th May 2022.

Jeremy Hunt

Firstly, just to update you on our financial position, I'm pleased to say that it looks like we will be closing the last financial year on budget, which considering the pressures we faced with the continuing pandemic, is testament to the hard work put in by all our staff. I would also say that most, if not all, of the additional costs in response to that pandemic were met by support from the Government. Over 2020/21 and 2021/22 we received in the region of £180m of grant funding. A large portion of this was either pass-ported directly to care homes or was applied according to government guidelines in order to contain the spread of covid and to support other public health initiatives. Without this valuable government support, the picture would have been very different.

Of course, I couldn't move on without mentioning the work of the WSCC **Community Hub**. This was set up in **March 2020** to support residents in response to the **pandemic**. The hub is actually still operating, continuing to support residents who find themselves, for whatever reason, in a vulnerable position. It was also very active in supporting the influx of Afghan refugees, many of whom were housed in hotels around Gatwick. These refugees left their whole lives behind them, bringing only 9kg of luggage each for the rest of their lives, so the Communities Team swung into action and over the period of a week or so, sourcing and supplying many basic items. And that work is continuing, with the team now supporting Ukrainian refugees.

But just going back to the work the communities team did, supporting the residents of West Sussex during the pandemic. As an example of their work, over the last two years they have:

- Received nearly 35,000 inbound phone calls
- Made in excess of 60,000 outbound calls
- Responded to nearly 8500 online requests for support,
- Responded to over 750 requests for PPE
- Sourced and delivered hundreds of emergency food parcels
- Delivered essential prescriptions to residents
- Carried out welfare checks where people couldn't be reached by phone
- Worked closely with Public Health colleagues to support the national NHS Test and Trace Service.

I would also like to say a big thank you to the many local groups who got together and supported residents within their own communities. It didn't matter if the support was just keeping an eye on neighbours or groups actually supplying meals and collecting medicines, it was all fantastic work supporting the vulnerable in our communities. A great community effort and something I hope communities will keep going.

From what the County Council has learned during the pandemic, and now working together alongside partners, we are putting in place the support needed by our communities going forward. Our future plans were set out last year, when we launched **Our Council Plan 2021 - 2025**, in which we set out our four key priorities. These are:

- **Keeping people safe in vulnerable situations**
- **A sustainable and prosperous economy**
- **Helping people and communities fulfil their potential; and**

- **Making best use of resources.**

To view this plan, which also contains our key performance indicators, please go to:
www.westsussex.gov.uk/media/15919/our_council_plan.pdf

I am also pleased to say that our Children's services have made great improvements over the last three years. You might remember that following our last OFSTED inspection in 2019 we were told that our Children Services would have to be transferred to a Trust. However, our improvement journey has been so successful that the Department for Education recently confirmed that they have, for the first time ever, removed that threat completely. Much credit must go to our Director of Children's Services, who was brought in by our then new Chief Executive, to turn our service around. So I can confidently say that the children we care for are safe in this county.

Our Fire and Rescue Service has also gone through a period of transformation, and again, following the appointment of a new Chief Fire Officer in 2019, the service is now in excellent shape. Earlier this year, following a public consultation, the Fire and Rescue service published its West Sussex Community Risk Management Plan 2022 - 2026. It contains a lot of useful information and it can be found at :

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/fire-emergencies-and-crime/west-sussex-fire-and-rescue-service/performance-plans-and-reports/community-risk-management-plan-2022-2026/>

Finally, following a lengthy consultation process with all interested parties, we recently launched our new Adult Care Strategy called 'The Life you Want to Lead'. Again, I won't go into details here, but the full report can be found at:

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/news/people-from-west-sussex-set-new-priorities-for-adult-social-care/>

Returning to our budget, this is very much focussed on supporting our four key objectives, as set out in Our Council Plan. However, the costs involved in running all these services continues to rise, and for the current financial year (2022-23) our revenue budget amounts to just under **£650m** - of which nearly 55% goes on social care - both children and adults. This year we are once again investing an additional **£6.3m** in Adult social care, **£8.5m** in children and young people, an additional **£4.8m** into our highways and around an additional **£13m** across our other services, including **£6m** into our learning and skills portfolio. Also, in order to support our ambitions as set out in Our Council Plan, and particularly to support the Council's ambition to be carbon neutral by 2030, we have committed an additional **£100m** to our capital programme. This takes the total amount the County Council is investing in this county over the next five years, to just over **£755m**. And, as I know it will be of particular interest to residents, this includes a projected investment in our highways of nearly £247m. Further details can be found at:

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/campaigns/budget-202223/>

However, although our current budget is balanced, our Medium Term Financial Strategy over the following three years currently shows a funding gap of over £60m. Not only that, but since we prepared and approved this year's budget, we have the looming spectre of rapidly rising inflation, as well as all the other financial pressures. So, I suspect that we - like everybody else of course - are in for some serious financial challenges as the year progresses. I am confident we are in pretty good shape to weather the immediate storm, but we could well have some serious challenges down the line. Which means of course, as with your own budgets, we could well see some serious 'belt tightening' over the next two to three years.

Local Issues.

I was pleased to be able to arrange a site visit by our Area Highways Manager to meet your Community Road Safety Team. We walked through a number of schemes that the team are contemplating and I believe that Mike's input and advice was very constructive. I know the team are progressing a number of projects which I am delighted to be able to support.

I believe that we also finally resolved the ownership of the land in The Leys where the PC have possible plans to enhance the verge parking for both residents and parents dropping off/collecting children at the school.

The issue of improving the verge/lay-by adjacent to the school was also discussed, and some useful ideas were discussed.

Other than that, over the last year there have only been a few small issues to chase up, such as getting drains cleared and some potholes repaired.

Operation Watershed.

Just to remind the PC that Operation Watershed is continuing. I realise that Singleton has already received considerable Watershed funding to improve the flow of the river through the village. This has already reduced the likelihood of flooding, but if you have any further projects, please let me know.

And finally, as a County Council we are very aware that in today's financially challenged world we rely heavily on working closely with the community. Communities are the heartbeat of our society and by working together we can achieve so much more. The community spirit that came out of the pandemic is something we need to ensure we continue to nurture. So, on behalf of myself and the County Council, I would like to say thank you to the Parish Council.

Lastly, a reminder to make sure you read our monthly Town and Parish Newsletter - which hopefully your clerk forwards to you.

We also publish an Environment and Climate Change Newsletter, so hopefully you receive that as well. We also publish our Annual Climate Change Report which can be found at www.westsussex.gov.uk/media/16649/climate_change_annual_report.pdf

Henry Potter

The District Council continued through most of the past year to manage the distribution of further Government funding to small businesses in the area and offering help to the aged and vulnerable. Many more homeless have been helped off from rough sleeping into sheltered housing after the improvements at Westward House and new assisted housing recently opened. Many council meetings continued to be held virtually but gradually reverting to face to face arrangements, planning meetings and Full Council meetings were first last summer and the Overview & Scrutiny hope to have their next meeting 'live'. Planning meetings are less lengthy due to many more decisions taken by Officers under delegated powers. Recently, the norm has been 4 to 7 applications for determination at each monthly meeting, whereas in the past, 8 to 12 was quite usual. More Appeals against refusals of Applications are being lodged but many more are being dismissed by the Planning Inspectorate, much to do with the fact that the Planning Authority (CDC) can now show a 5.3 years supply of housing development land, though we still anxiously await the decision on Old Place Farm in Westhampnett. Serious Gypsy incursions continued virtually

unchecked on private and public land, but planned ditches or earth bunds surrounding public spaces at New Park Road and the Broyle Estate near Parklands will prevent these areas being 'settled' in the future. The lack of clarity and investment by National Highways for the roads infrastructure in the A27 Corridor continues to create worsening traffic stagnation around Chichester and this, of course, is not helped by the increasing development on the coastal plain. The closure of the Oving Road traffic lights has made things worse particularly at the Bognor Road roundabout junction and when the pedestrian bridge is built between The Lakes and the Portfield retail park, the lights will cease to work for pedestrian crossings. I understand that bus services will continue through The Lakes development and not across the A27 as planned using 'bus controlled' lights. It is also quite apparent that the new access roundabout to the new Aldi Store has worsened the eastern approach into the City and this has certainly reduced the air quality on Westhampnett Road. We must also not forget the Southern Water saga which continues throughout the District, it is still not fit for purpose and is of great concern. Sustainably, Chichester and its environs has, I fear, reached breaking point and the Planning Inspectorate's Interpretation and decision on the Local Plan Review when it is submitted, hopefully in the autumn, will be most interesting. As we enter the fourth year of this Council's term of office, with the uncertainties in the World following the Covid 19 pandemic and the energy crisis, I feel the future is a little less than bright. But who knows! I hope for better

Robert Mayne

Henry Smith Charity

The main Henry Smith charity has confirmed the funding for 2022 and advised us that there is an opportunity for us to apply for a Supplementary Grant for this year; we will be advised of the application process shortly.

The funds are used to support local people and organisations.

Relocation of the Defibrillator from the Singleton Telephone Kiosk to the Village Hall

The relocation of the Defibrillator is planned to take place on May 12th.

Roads, Pavements, Potholes in Charlton

Potholes continue to be reported via the 'Love West Sussex' smartphone app and repairs are periodically undertaken by West Sussex County Council Highways Department

Graham Zacharias

IGas

No new developments

Potholes

The Love West Sussex app has been discontinued. Reporting is now through the broader Love Clean Streets app. There continues to be a major issue with the series of extensive and dangerous potholes going up Town Lane, past the entry to the W&D museum. I've reported these more 4 times in the past weeks but all reference seems to have disappeared from the new reporting portal! I have now re-reported these...twice already this week...and we'll see if anything happens.

CHS

Covered in fuller detail in Tony's report. Lots happening....

Finance

Happily, nothing to report.

Tony Marshall

Southern Water

To recap: on 21/9/21, I was told:

“There is a package of rehabilitation works currently with our contractor to progress this year as resource permit. These works have been scoped with reference to the Electroscan results, but also Operations reports and historic CCTV surveys from the past 10 or more years. It is therefore as complete as current knowledge permits. Three of the four lengths identified by Tony are included. In addition the proposed works comprise in total:

9 sewers to be lined, 410m total

11 sewers where patch or dig repairs are to be made, 447m total length

5 manholes to be sealed

8km of further Electroscan survey from East Dean through to West Dean.

The above works represent a planned investment >£200K.”

On 11/1/22, I emailed asked for an update on progress with these – and despite numerous reminders, have yet to receive this.

Following the last PC meeting I sent a further reminder and received a reply (23/3/22) stating:
“I have requested a meeting with the project team this week to understand what work has been undertaken and what is still outstanding. Once I have this information I can schedule a virtual meeting to go through this and agree a more defined schedule of updates on a regular basis. I will contact you again as soon as possible.”

Having still heard nothing, on 9 May I wrote asking them to *“please come out from your bunkers and provide your long-suffering customers with some concrete promises to make measurable progress towards noticeable improvements”*. I have yet to receive a response.

On the plus side, following a relatively dry winter, as far as I’m aware there has been no tanker activity or over-pumping in the parish. And the pollution in the River Lavant, recently much publicised, is well downstream of us – although I did point out in my latest email to SW that *“This is a considerable embarrassment to us who live further upstream because, not only is it our leaky pipes that imbibe all that groundwater, it’s our sewage that then gets flushed out into the river”*

Parish Design Statement

The final draft was submitted to SDNP on 3 May for their comment/approval and we are awaiting their advice on the next steps with this.

Traffic / Community Highways Scheme (CHS)

The senior engineer at Highways has provided his comments on our outline proposals; however, he is/was on the point of retiring, so we are awaiting a meeting with his successor to get his input. In the meantime, we have made good progress drafting the proposal document, which when complete will contain:

An introduction setting out the history of roads in the parish and factors that have possibly exacerbated current problems.

Background as to the input received from various sources when putting together the proposal, along with some of the comments received in the local survey.

An outline of the steps already taken by the Parish Council; and further steps planned where these fall outside the scope of the CHS.

An overview of the parish, showing where the problem areas are and how they relate to one another.

For each problem area:

Bullet point summary of key issues.

Our proposed solution(s).

More detailed narrative explanations as appropriate.

Supporting photographs/data where these are available/appropriate.

Sketch plan of the road, indicating how our proposals would fit in.

General traffic calming proposals that affect the wider area (such as centre line removal and lower speed limits).

Our own appraisal of the Scheme against the Highways Improvement Scheme Priority Assessment Scorecard – demonstrating a strong case for the Scheme to be approved.

Cross references to relevant local government documents to demonstrate compliance with current policy.

Appendices containing more data and reference information, including a summary of the responses to the parish traffic survey.

Heritage Boards

The application for funding has been approved and this is now proceeding to the design stage.

Barry Shrimpton

Playground

Annual playground inspection report (April 2022) - High Risks findings reported for the following pieces of equipment:

Swing - 1 Bay 2 Seat (Flat)

Finding 1 The surfacing is severely damaged - Repair damaged areas of surfacing	Finding 2 The shackles are worn in excess of 40% and require renewing - Replace worn shackles
Finding 3 The chain openings are in excess of the 8.6mm as recommended by BS EN 1176 - Monitor - No remedial work recommended	Finding 4 The swing seat connectors are worn more than 40% and require replacement - Replace swing seat connectors if possible or replace seat
Finding 5 The chain links are worn in excess of 40% and require renewing - Replace worn chains	Finding 6 The seat has minor damage or wear - Monitor for any further deterioration and replace as required
Finding 7 There are splits in the timber running through fixing points and creating some instability in the structure - Replace all affected timber parts	Finding 8 The bushes are showing signs of wear - Monitor for any further deterioration and replace as required
Finding 9 A number of fixing(s) have worked loose - Secure all loose fixings	Finding 10 The timber on this item has severe rot - Remove and replace all affected timber sections
Finding 11 The timber has a number of splits/shakes or air cracks and this may affect the stability or allow water ingress which will accelerate the rotting process - Monitor to ensure the splits do not cross through fixing points of the structure and/or cause any instability	

Swing - 1 Bay 2 Seat (Cradle)

Finding 1

The timber on cross beam has severe rot - Remove and replace all affected timber sections

Finding 3

There is some wear to the shackles. - Monitor for any further deterioration and replace when 40% worn

Finding 5

There is some notable evidence of chain wear - Monitor for any further deterioration and replace when 40% worn

Finding 7

There is some strimmer / machinery damage apparent on the posts, this can penetrate the preservative applied to the timber and accelerate the rotting process - Monitor for any deterioration (rot) and replace as required

Finding 9

There is some evidence of rot in the timber - Monitor for any further deterioration and replace as required

Finding 11

The grass mats are silted up and the soil is compacted; this may have an effect on the impact absorbing properties of the surface - Consider HIC testing impact absorbing properties to ensure the correct surface qualities are maintained for the equipment and replace as required

Finding 2

The paintwork on this item has been damaged or worn exposing the metal underneath which is rusting - Treat any rusting components and repaint

Finding 4

The chain openings are in excess of the 8.6mm as recommended by BS EN 1176 - Monitor - No remedial work recommended

Finding 6

The seat has minor damage or wear - Monitor for any further deterioration and replace as required

Finding 8

The timber has a number of splits/shakes or air cracks and this may affect the stability or allow water ingress which will accelerate the rotting process - Monitor to ensure the splits do not cross through fixing points of the structure and/or cause any instability

Finding 10

There is algae or moss on the surface of the equipment - Clean and treat appropriately

As a consequence, the relevant equipment has been closed to the public, whilst options, such as professional quotations (HAGS) or the option to perform the repairs within the community are being explored. Information to be made available for the forthcoming PC meeting.

Village Clean-Up 14th May.

List of jobs has been compiled and split into various categories. Jobs will be carried on the day, based upon priority and the numbers of volunteers.

Playground Bins

Clearing playground bins will now be carried out by Julie and myself on a fortnightly basis.

Riparian Letter

Riparian communication has been re-written and will be issued to the parish secretary.

Rebecca Trowell

Singleton Accessibility Project – please see the outline documents attached to email.

Progress

- We have secured £21,000 from Rees Jefferys
- We have secured £4000 from Village Hall
- We have secured £2500 from WD
- We are waiting outcome of the CIL funding £35,000
- We have just submitted the funding application for Southdown “trees on the downs”
- We have submitted the planting license

Vivien Nuttall - Clerk

Finances

Balance in Current Account (16/05/22) - £10,761.78
Playground Reserves held in Current Account - £22,900.00
Accessibility Project Reserves held in Current Account - £5,500.00
Balance in Savings Account (14/03/22) – £7,003.33
Money Received
Donation for Playground - £2,500
½ Year Precept Payment - £11,018
Donation to Accessibility from the Weald & Downland Museum - £2,500