

From: **Jack Lovejoy** <Jack.Lovejoy@westsussex.gov.uk>

Date: Tue, May 26, 2026 at 10:29 AM

Subject: Report for Parishes and Residents Associations for the end of the month of May for circulation

To:

Report begins:

A rather long report due to a lot happening this month. I would like to start by once again thanking everyone who voted for me in the election, and I hope that I will be able to live up to everyone's expectations of the responsibility they have placed on me to represent the community where I was born and raised.

I have thus far attended four of my division's parish councils (Boxgrove, Lavant, Chichester and West Dean) and attempted to attend Westhampnett, but I arrived too late due to it being on at the same time as Boxgrove. I did manage to meet the chair and another couple of members in the car park afterwards and at least managed to introduce myself and discuss a couple of local issues. I would like to apologise for missing your parish council's meeting last month, it would seem you are able to run your meetings a lot faster than we can in Boxgrove. I did meet a couple of members (including your chairman) afterwards and we discussed the allotments and the Madgwick Park playing fields.

At Chichester's Mayor Making (the city's equivalent of the Annual General Meeting) I attended a presentation by the Place Team from WSCC who were talking about the resurfacing of North and East Streets (a program started by the previous administration after extensive financial contributions made by the District and City councils) to remove the bricks and reset the stone slabs to finally make the city centre level and safe, improving access for everyone, but especially people with disabilities and the elderly. They also spoke of a separate project to bring reliable mobile phone signal to the city centre at long last. The project to repave the streets is due to begin next summer and hopefully will be finished by the summer after, while the mobile signal issue is to be resolved much sooner. The City Council unanimously agreed to release £400,000 of CIL money to aid the repaving project to fund street furniture and more trees (which would be lovely to have given the recent weather). I hope that the work will improve the footfall in the city centre and improve the position of the retail local businesses and I will be keeping a close eye on how it develops.

At West Dean's parish council meeting I attended a presentation by Southern Water about the work they are doing to prevent groundwater infiltration into the sewers in the Upper Lavant Valley in the hopes of ending the need for tankers to pump the wastewater away. It was a very interesting, frank and well put together presentation with a high level of technical detail about how the lining of the pipes is done and how they seal the joins between the pipes. I will of course be working with the parish councils to ensure that Southern Water are as good as their word and hopefully the communities can be free of the dreaded tankers. We were told that the work to seal the pipes was about halfway completed and they hope to have it done by the end of the year.

On Wednesday 13th May I attended the planning committee of Chichester District Council and spoke in opposition to a contentious application for three warehouses to be built near the Temple Bar flyover between Boxgrove and Westhampnett. I spoke to how it's not in the local plan, how it contradicts the national policy planning framework, how the proposal to put traffic lights at the junction on the A285 would increase rat running through Boxgrove and how the Temple Bar junction already has three developments ongoing (Maudlin Farm housing development, the Tangmere Strategic housing development and the Rolls Royce Expansion). The agent for the application spoke in favour. The councillors afterwards discussed the matter and raised concerns that the planners at CDC had also raised about flooding, dark sky corridors for bats, potential increased traffic on top of the Rolls Royce traffic that brings the village to a standstill at 2pm every day and the lack of sufficient parking for the size of the warehousing. The committee unanimously rejected the application. Whether they seek to appeal is yet to be seen, but hopefully they understand why it was rejected and that's the last of that.

On Thursday 14th May I was in County Hall to meet my fellow councillors, complete our documentation and have our pictures taken for the website (I have always disliked every picture of me ever taken, and unfortunately this one is no exception). We were given a well-run induction by the staff and then held our first group meetings as negotiations to form an administration were underway.

On 21st May I attended a presentation at Chichester District Council for county, district and city councillors by the West of Chichester developers about the application by said developer to delay the Southern Access Route to Minerva Heights and compensated for that delay by improving the Sherbourne road junction. I am unsure of the application. My constituents in the East Broyle Estate were talking about how difficult that junction is both on pedestrians and those seeking to exit the estate in cars. I am aware many would prefer a roundabout, but as the developers noted, the only roundabout that would work is one with two lane entrances, which would be impossible to do without land that is currently believed to be village green land (which requires secretary of state approval to build on, which is far too slow of a process to get it in place in time for the construction of the houses at Minerva Heights) and some land owned by Hyde. My current belief is that when weighed up between deliverability, speed and cost, the solution presented by the developers would still be insufficient for foot traffic, but if it can be adjusted to include a zebra crossing (as suggested by Councillor Brown) then it'll be the best available option that we can deliver within a reasonable timeframe (were we given far more money and time than another Dutch roundabout or a two lane entry would likely be my favoured option), my constituents need action now rather than waiting for County Council to get the funding together to pay for it, and to go through the secretary of state to get permission to build on a sliver of a "village green".

On Friday 22nd of May I attended the first full council meeting of the current term, where Cllr Donna Johnson (Local Alliance – Selsey) was appointed as Chair and father of the house Nigel Dennis (LD – Horsham Hurst) was made Vice-Chair, there were no objections to either. The outgoing Chair Pieter Montyn (C-The Witterings) returned to the chambers (as he retired as a councillor at the last election) to do the honours of handing over the seat and chain to Cllr Johnson. We also have formed an administration with Jay Mercer (LD – Horsham East)

becoming Leader of the Council with the support of the Greens (who have the cabinet members for the Environment, and Public Health), Labour (who have been given some cabinet advisory roles) and Cllr Donna Johnson. At the insistence of the previous leader of the council, the leader was subject to a vote, where Cllr Mercer was voted in with a number of Reform party councillors voting in favour, hopefully due to them understanding that a stable and collaborative administration is better than the chaos that unfolded in Kirklees in Yorkshire (who had to end the meeting without a leader after one of the group leaders admitted to not knowing what they were doing). No councillors voted against with all opposition councillors who did not wish to support Cllr Mercer deciding to abstain. The final vote was 46 in favour, 17 abstaining and none against. Two members were absent, and Cllr Johnson did not vote due to it not being a tied vote. Four members did not vote in any direction. I recommend watching the webcast of Cllr Mercer's speech about the importance of collaboration for the good of our residents because I thought it was very well put and I wish to add the comment that we will collaborate with all who wish to have good faith discussions because we understand that we do not have a monopoly on good ideas.

I was also approved as the chair of the Planning and Right of Way Committee at the AGM. This is not the planning committee that allows new buildings but is instead responsible for mineral and quarrying planning, planning related to waste disposal, planning proposals made by WSCC and reviving and extinguishing rights of way (i.e. footpaths and bridleways). I will also be sitting on the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee (which I think is self explanatory from the name).

We also received a brief update on the state of the local government reorganisation from Leigh Whitehouse (the CEO of the County Council), who discussed how the government's opening of a new consultation on a proposal that had been previously rejected by WSCC did not make economic sense at the time they submitted their original proposal, but they are re-running the economic modelling due to a change in how funding is allocated to local government since the original economic modelling was run and we will know the results of that in due course.

My personal opinion on LGR is mixed. From a purely selfish standpoint it would obviously be better for me politically to have the government proposal (which would include the entire Liberal Democrat group) and economically it would be better for Chichester due to being with the Gatwick diamond area (Leigh stated that as a council this area would have a huge surplus under even the adjusted local government funding allocation) and not being with the more deprived areas on the coast. With that said, we have strong economic and cultural links to the western side of the Arun district (particularly Bognor, The Six Villages and Arundel) and allowing a council to be formed that would be bankrupt from day one would be deeply irresponsible of our duties to all residents of the county. I am staunchly opposed to the single West Sussex unitary that was the official policy of the previous administration, which I believe would be too large to be responsive to the local needs of the population. This single county authority would see a councillor doing the job of one county councillor plus the jobs of four district councillors (for the Chichester North Division that would be the two in Chichester North, one in Goodwood and the Lavant parish half of the Lavant ward, plus approximately a quarter councillor each of Chichester West (East Broyle) and Chichester Central (Priory Park)). As councillors are only paid as a part time job, I do not think that would be a sustainable situation to avoid burning out local councillors who are not either independently wealthy or retired, unless how councillors work is radically overhauled. I could

not support something that would exclude working people from having our voices heard in the council chamber.

Potholes remain a perpetual bugbear of just about everyone. I have been reporting potholes where I can (I did 20 on Sunday 24th alone), but I can't be everywhere at once. We are hoping to repair an even greater number of potholes this year and we ask that all members of the public report potholes they find here

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/make-an-enquiry-or-report-a-problem-with-a-road-or-pavement/road-and-cycle-path-faults-including-potholes/> so that we can get them fixed. If you can take a few minutes to take a walk in your area to report any local potholes, then we can get them repaired because we can't repair what we don't know about.

I have received a request for a crossing on Summersdale Road from Fordwater School so their students can learn about safe road crossing and access the park in Roussillon Park. I have suggested they seek to form a community highways application and have offered to work with them on this, and would appreciate it if any councillors, residents or residents associations would be willing to help so that the students at the school can access the park with a proper crossing point.

On a final note for this month, I have unfortunately not yet been given a handover from my predecessor (I am hoping he is just letting me get settled in first), if there's any ongoing matters he was dealing with or monitoring then I would appreciate it if I could be sent an email laying them out so I can pick up where he left off.

Looking forward to next month, I have a large amount of training with the county council to get me ready for my new role. I also have my first committee meetings for both the Children and Young People's Social Service Committee and the Planning and Right of Way Committee, along with a trip to the Drayton Highways Depot to meet the Highways team. In addition to my work at County Hall, I have parish council meetings scheduled for Boxgrove, Westhampnett, Lavant, and Singleton and Charlton, along with the East Broyle Residents Association AGM, meetings of the Madgwick Park and Summersdale Residents Associations and the Chichester North ward meeting (n.b. this is the city council ward, not the county division). There are also the Sussex Day festivities on 14th June, I will be attending SussexFest outside the cathedral and then heading up to Singleton to go to the Midsummer Celebrations at the Weald and Downland.

Yours,

Cllr Jack Lovejoy

Member of West Sussex County Council for Chichester North