
Report for Parishes and Residents Associations for the Month of August

1 message

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I will be away from the 18th to 22nd of September, please feel free to email me during that time for anything you need help with, but be aware that I won't be responding to emails in that time as I won't have my council laptop with me.

The Chichester Library is about to undergo essential improvement works to the first floor from Tuesday 1st September to Monday 14th December, this will see the replacement of the carpet tiles, repainting the public area and office space, rewiring, relighting, the creation of meeting rooms and refurbishing the furniture and shelving. This will refresh the reference section, teenage section, computer area and local studies. This is being funded mostly by a Section 106 developer contribution. The ground floor will remain open in this time except for a full closure on 7th/8th September and 25th/26th November. The rewiring is because the current system is steadily failing and far beyond its intended lifespan, making it both a health and safety hazard and a fire risk. If you attend a regular event at the library (such as Baby Rhyme Time and Knit and Natter), please contact the library service to find which local spaces they have been relocated to. No events have been cancelled.

The library service is also running a series of events called "Go All In" at the various libraries around the county, most are aimed at teenagers and include dungeons and dragons, writing workshops and author talks, have a look here. Obviously, Chichester library has a reduced number of events due to the refurbishment, but Bognor, Littlehampton and Horsham all have lots of events on: <https://libraries.westsussex.gov.uk/go-all-in-festival#>

The Emergency Services, Armed Forces and Community Day on 2nd August was absolutely fantastic, I loved seeing the old fire engines and police cars, and the air ambulance. There were fantastic performances from the rock choir, magicians and others, as well as live demonstrations of police and fire service techniques, including chip pan fires and search and rescue dogs. There were also entertainers wandering around, including Spiderman, Gangsta Granny and The Ghostbusters. There were also a large number of charities, both those related to the Armed Forces and Emergency Services, and others that provide vital community support like the food bank, community harvest and the hygiene bank. It's lovely to see how vibrant our local community is when it comes to supporting people in need. I was delighted to see so many people of all ages out and about, enjoying themselves even with the heat. Chichester has long suffered from a lack of events catering to families and younger people, so I'm glad to see something that is suitable for everyone, because everyone can get a little excited at least by a fire engine. I hope everyone will join me in congratulating the Chichester Fire Station Manager Anton Mezzone for a very well organised event.

On the theme of the emergency services, I would encourage that anyone who walks in nature a lot (for example, as a dog walker) to sign up for the West Sussex Fire and Rescue Wildfire Prevention Patrol. I will be circulating information about it to all the parishes and residents' associations. It provides vital information to the fire service and helps create a network of people who can flag up concerns as they arise. It comes with training, support and a snazzy high viz jacket for your dog that says "Wildfire Prevention Patrol". We're not asking you to put out the fires or even go out of your way, just to report things that could pose a risk, like burnt out campfires or bonfires, fly-tipping flammable material, large numbers of cigarette butts or anything else that might start a fire. The prevention patrol has been so successful that it's been copied in other counties as well. Please contact frs.cptt@westsussex.gov.uk if you're interested.

The next event I'd like to mention is the Chichester City Council's 800 year anniversary! That's right, 800 years since the first City Council was convened at the Guildhall, they're celebrating with a number of events (for more details and events, please check the city council website):

September 5th 10am-5pm, the city will have a Medieval Market around the Cross and on Cathedral Green (or Cathedral Brown, as the weather has now made it), it will demonstrate medieval crafts like spinning, weaving, butter churning, felt hat-making, medieval bread-making using historic recipes, medieval surgery (without a live demonstration), blacksmithing, coin making and a medieval relic seller promising "genuine" devotional items, badges and relics of saints. There will also be a set of stocks (no news on rotten vegetables yet), a ratcatcher, a gravedigger

along with traditional goods, medieval markets, storytelling and have-a-go archery. Booking is not required and the event is free to enter.

31st October Procession and Proclamation, the City Council are reviving a centuries old tradition where the Mayor will lead a procession through the city using lanterns and the 'municipal moon' to guide residents and visitors alike. It will be preceded with a lantern making workshop at the council house in the days leading up to the event (days for this are to be confirmed). The event is for all ages, but under 16s must be accompanied by an adult for safeguarding reasons.

5th August saw the rare instance of a councillor appearing before the Chichester District Council Planning Committee to support housebuilding, when I spoke in favour of a site that was in the emerging Boxgrove Neighbourhood Plan that the district planners objected to. The site (known as The Folly) was proposed for nine houses, but the planners wanted more (while simultaneously complaining about the site being too cramped, please make that make sense). I spoke on how the reasons for objection stated by the planners were not in line with the design and density of the rest of the village and were not consistent with their own previous decision making on a site on the opposite side of the road from The Folly site. I support common sense development where it makes sense and this site made sense, it has housing on three sides already, it has good infrastructure (including active travel) and it has local support. It's sad that the planners want the housing to be packed like sardines even in a rural area rather than retaining local character with how the housing is built. The Planning Committee rejected the application in the end, which was disappointing. I was gladdened to hear the issue wasn't the site in principle or the low number of houses, instead they were not pleased by the mix of housing that was proposed (even though the mix was similar to the housing that has actually sold in the parish recently, rather than an idealised on-paper exercise of what the village should look like) and the bat corridors proposed being not wide enough. I hope we will be able to find a solution that's viable for both the parish and the landowner, who has stated a lack of desire to build more than nine houses on the site in order to maintain the rural nature of the site. I want to thank Cllr Henry Potter and Mr David Leah of the Boxgrove Neighbourhood Plan Working Group for speaking in favour of the development with me, and the strong attendance by members of the community, which is unusual for a meeting held early in the morning on a weekday.

County Council are also investing in the county's schools, if you go on the county council's planning portal you will see a large number of planning applications from the county to expand the county's schools, this includes the expansion of St Anthony's. These were started under the previous administration and show that once again, education is non-partisan. I can't comment on the planning applications individually in case any end up before the PROW committee, I will say I'm glad to see the amount the county is investing in improved facilities for the schools, it's a shame the national government won't give the schools enough funding to make maximum use of those facilities we are building for them.

The county has also begun seeking a provider of Educational Psychology assessment services to support the delivery of Educational Health and Care Needs Assessments to try and help us deal with the backlog of Educational Health and Care Plans that the county has long failed to clear, with only about 15% completed within the legally required timeframe, both East Sussex and Brighton and Hove manage a rate over three times that.

We have had the summer results seasons and congratulations to those who got the grades they wanted. The county council runs a free careers service for young people ages 16-24 who are not in education, employment and training and who want a little support, please feel free to contact them via email: careersadvice@westsussex.gov.uk, or call: 033 022 22700 for advice and support.

As a quick aside on the environment, £750,000 has been approved as capital expenditure for nature recovery projects, partner organisations will be allowed to bid for funding up to £100,000 to use in projects to restore and enhance our natural environment.

I wanted to include this snippet from a Highways news release from the end of July (<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/news/better-roads-council-stepping-up-action-to-protect-west-sussex-roads-from-extreme-weather/>):

Since 1 April 2026, the council's highways teams have focused on repairing the damage caused by winter weather, including:

- More than 13,200 potholes repaired
- Over 34,000 drainage assets cleared
- 16,790sqm of carriageway patched
- Targeted works on roads most affected by winter conditions

[End quote]

Locally you will have noticed a number of improvement works going on; New Road has had extensive treatment works, as has the Cocking Road from Singleton and the Westhampnett Road in Chichester to name but three. I understand that Town Lane in Singleton is also on the list of works, as is Pook Lane in East Lavant. I am aware there are still many roads that need work (The Street in Boxgrove and the pavements around West Dean being the two that I've been pushing the most). The heat has delayed a number of the resurfacing works that were scheduled because the material is unable to bind properly when it gets too hot, the tarmac in some places has been recorded at 70°C. The dry conditions have aided us by reducing the grass growth, so we have redeployed those teams to clean signs, improve road markings and clear non-grass vegetations that have been on the backlog (some vegetation I reported months ago on the Old Arundel Road in Maudlin has been cleared, for example). I also noticed that the drains in Boxgrove and Halnaker have mostly been cleared.

The SGN emergency works around market avenue in the city centre are on track to end in the week beginning 14th September, the roads will then be fully resurfaced with all the works due to end on 22nd September. The road will then not be allowed to be dug up for routine utilities maintenance for two years after that.

Our riparian drainage team have also been working hard with landowners to keep the drainage channels free to prevent the highways drainage system from being overwhelmed. I would like to ask the parishes and residents associations to please keep us informed if you spot any blocked or damaged drainage assets/ditches. We don't want to see flooding like we saw on the A285 last winter, which saw one and a half lanes rendered impassable. You can report them using the WSCC website, using the same process as one uses to report a pothole, but selecting "Flooding" instead. Please ask any questions about the flooding before the rains come, these things are easier to resolve when they're not under a foot of water and leaves. If I don't know the answer, I'll know who to ask.

Highways have launched a Highways Rangers scheme; I have already circulated the press release for this to the parishes and residents associations, it's also linked at the bottom of my report; this successfully began with a pilot in Worthing this month and has now rolled out to the rest of the county. They will be coming to Chichester approximately once every three weeks. It will allow communities and volunteers to assist in managing minor issues that are a nuisance or unsightly but that are not safety issues, so they aren't dealt with by highways contractors. The aim is to group together a number of issues that can't be effectively solved by themselves to make them viable to be resolved when linked together.

I often complained about the lack of joined up thinking when I campaigned, so I'm glad to see this come to fruition. Their duties will include cutting back vegetation, cleaning signs, clearing debris from drainage features, removing illegal advertisement signs off street signs and lampposts, weeding, clearing the edge of pavements, minor repairs to street furniture and decluttering. Please inform me of any areas you want them to focus on, I have raised a couple I know of already, such as Brandy Hole Lane, which has some of its signage obscured. Parish Clerks can also contact highways directly on the dedicated email address for highways that they have. Please include a map and photo of the problem you want resolved so highways can assess the issue before they arrive and make sure they have the right equipment.

I am aware that this is something many parishes do already (Boxgrove, Lavant and Westhampnett being the most organised in my division as far as I'm aware), but they can be hampered by needing to work out the boundaries of their jurisdiction with the Highways department as well as some may have been acting in a legally grey area (e.g. alongside a busy road).

I am pleased also to see that the national government's free bus travel for under 15s this August has been so successful, it has approximately doubled the usage of the buses in West Sussex in that time, I am gladdened to see people using the buses to get out and about to see friends and engage in what the community has to offer.

The final highways news is that WSCC are investing some of the money paid by utility companies to dig up the road into a number of projects, including the extension of the SDNPA's Centurion Way to Cocking, this will add another connection in the county's 4,000 km of public rights of way, the Centurion Way extension will mean we have a connection from the Salterns Way (Birdham to Chichester) to the South Downs Way at Cocking, which runs across

the entire width of the county from Worthing to the Hampshire border, the South Downs Way connection will allow walkers and cyclists to go via the Lipchis Way and Serpent Trail to Midhurst and then via the Sussex Diamond Way to Petworth.

The second of the projects that are being run using the money are to tackle the unacceptable abuse hurled at contractors working on roadworks by using new styles of fencing and sitewide CCTV, I don't understand why people feel the need to abuse contractors, they don't make the decisions on which roads to close to do works. The third investment is the use of a new style of exploration to allow SGN to test their pipes in a less intrusive manner, reducing the amount of times they have to dig up the roads and the length of road that has to be dug up.

We have had a quiet time on LGR, the government have informed the council that the Arun-Worthing-Adur coastal unitary would be financially viable. They have not explained their working on this, and we don't know how they have worked that out given that every scenario we've run has it being effectively bankrupt. This is deeply infuriating, and raises serious worries for our staff and residents in the south of the county. If it is viable as the government claims then I would fully support our inclusion in the Northern Unitary as I believe it has the most similarities to our district, being mostly a mixture of rural and semi-rural market towns/city and villages, along with the West Sussex Weald and most of the South Downs, rather than the urbanised coastal conurbation formed by Arun, Worthing and Adur. I also understand that the leader of Worthing Borough Council has expressed opposition to the inclusion of Chichester in the southern unitary (despite previously supporting it).

County Council are currently running a consultation on our climate change strategy, and we want to hear from communities about our climate strategy and how we mitigate climate change related issues, such as the extreme rain and drought we've seen this year. That link is here: <https://yourvoice.westsussex.gov.uk/climatesurvey>.

I wanted to end this report by flagging our newsletters, WSCC maintains a number of newsletters that can be tailored to your interests: <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKWSCC/subscriber/new>

Our newsletters are customisable and cover:

- Council News (Note, these are our main press releases)
- Highways, Transport and Planning
- Cycling and Walking
- Buses
- West Sussex Recycles
- Environment and Climate Change
- SEND and Inclusion
- Youth Cabinet and Youth Parliament
- Youth Consultations
- Mental Health
- Holiday Activity and Food Programme
- CANS and Helping Hand (n.b. this is support for bus users who need extra assistance)
- Extreme Weather and Air Quality
- Sussex Police and Crime Panel
- Staying Safe Online and Fraud Prevention
- Community Safety
- Library Reading Groups
- West Sussex Reading Challenge
- National Year of Reading
- History and Heritage (Records Office)
- Alerts for Food Businesses
- Alerts for Farmers
- Green Business News
- Jobs and Opportunities
- Any WSCC Committees (each has their own, separate newsletter)
- WSCC Cabinet
- WSCC Full Council
- West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board
- Elections
- Forward Plan of Key Decisions (any decision that must be made in the next four months)
- Executive Decisions

Important Upcoming Dates:

Goodwood Revival 18th-20th September

Next University Hospitals Sussex NHS Trust Board of Governors Meeting: 1st October

Next Full County Council Meeting: 16th October

WSCC Press Releases for the month of August:

[West Sussex 'lane rental' funding to improve journeys and highways workers' safety - West Sussex County Council](#)

[A fresh look for West Sussex streets as the Highway Ranger pilot launches - West Sussex County Council](#)

[Residents invited to help shape a greener, more resilient future for West Sussex - West Sussex County Council](#)

[Thousands attend Chichester's Emergency Services, Armed Forces and Community Day - West Sussex County Council](#)

[Advice for West Sussex students receiving A-level results - West Sussex County Council](#)

[Celebrating Shoreham's thriving food hub partnership - West Sussex County Council](#)

[County Council and partners deliver bus shelter improvements through pilot programme - West Sussex County Council](#)

[Growing Sussex helps protect vulnerable calves from heatwaves - West Sussex County Council](#)

[Helping West Sussex students take their next steps after GCSE results - West Sussex County Council](#)

[West Sussex Council leader goes for growth in Crawley - West Sussex County Council](#)

[Reablement support helps thousands regain independence and strengthens adult social care in West Sussex - West Sussex County Council](#)

[Firefighters urge public to avoid dangerous aerosol fire trend - West Sussex County Council](#)

[Summer celebration honours achievements of care leavers in West Sussex - West Sussex County Council](#)

[Thriving town centres, greener spaces and better transport links at the heart of refreshed Growth Deals - West Sussex County Council](#)

[E-bike fire sparks fresh fire safety warning - West Sussex County Council](#)

[Compassion, innovation and dedication: West Sussex social care staff celebrated in national awards - West Sussex County Council](#)

[Cabinet and Scrutiny Committee get tour of fire service training facilities - West Sussex County Council](#)

[Body worn cameras to support safer school journeys across West Sussex - West Sussex County Council](#)

[West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service testing uncovers 102 unsafe electric blankets - West Sussex County Council](#)

Public Facing Meetings for September at WSCC:

10:30 9th September – Children and Young People Services Scrutiny Committee (I am a member of this committee).

10:30 10th September – Communities, Highways and Environment Scrutiny Committee

10:30 14th September – Regulation, Audit and Accounts Committee (I am a substitute, so I might be attending this in the absence of another member).

10:30 16th September – Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee

10:30 17th September – West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board

10:30 18th September – Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee (I am a substitute, so I might be attending this in the absence of another member).

10:30 22nd September – Cabinet

10:30 25th September – Fire and Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee

10:30 29th September – Planning and Rights of Way Committee (I chair this committee).

Non-public facing meetings for September at WSCC:

14:00 3rd September – West Sussex Economic Growth Board (note, this committee is missing two representative members to represent the business community)

10:30 11th September – Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (I am a member of this committee).

14:00 15th September – West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service Local Pension Board

14:15 14th September – Governance Committee

Cancelled public facing meetings:

10:30 1st September – Planning and Right of Way Committee – Cancelled due to lack of items for the agenda.

Please note, that committees can have their dates and times changed at the last minute for a number of reasons. All public facing meetings except for the Regulation, Audit and Accounts Committee are broadcast on the WSCC website and the recordings remain on the website.

Yours,

Cllr Jack Lovejoy

Member of West Sussex County Council for Chichester North

Covering: Boxgrove, Eartham, East Broyle, East Dean, Graylingwell, Lavant, Priory Park, Singleton and Charlton, Summersdale, Upwaltham, West Dean and Westhampnett

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