

Notes and Reports for Parish Council Meeting 21st March 2022

Item 3 - Crime Report from PCSO Neil Billingham

Introduction.

As we head into spring, can I ask that all dog owners be aware of any lambing going on in their area? At this time of year, heavily pregnant ewes react very badly to loose dogs. They can injure themselves trying to get away or even abort their lambs. Please ensure dogs are kept on leads in the countryside, especially if there are sheep in nearby fields.

Incidents of Note.

It appears that several of our local dialling codes are being heavily targeted by scammers at the moment. The most common is one claiming to be from a banks fraud department, with a request to either withdraw and post cash or transfer money into a designated account for "safe keeping". A similar one involves someone claiming to be from a neighbouring Police force.

Neither the banks, nor the Police will ever ask anyone to transfer money, so please do not take action on this other than to hang up and report it.

If there any local groups that meet on a regular basis (or about to return to them following Covid), my colleague PCSO Moorey is happy to attend a give a full scam talk around this. Please let me know and I will pass details on.

Calls this month in the areas mainly related to trees down and alarms going off in the storms.

PCSO Activity over the next month.

As the weather improves, we will be looking to increase patrols and relaunch Operation Downsway, targeting anti-social motorbike riding across the area.

DON'T LET THEM MAKE YOU A VICTIM OF CRIME. IF YOU SEE IT, REPORT IT!

NEIL BILLINGHAM

Police Community Support Officer

[Arun and Chichester Neighbourhood Policing Team](#) | [Chichester Police Station](#) | [Kingsham Road](#) | [Chichester](#) | [West Sussex](#) | [PO19 8AD](#)

Item 4 – Report from WSCC Councillor Janet Duncton

It's been a busy time at West Sussex County Council, mainly because we have been dealing with a budget and it's extremely complex which I couldn't begin to explain. I have attended all the Workshops we have to make our budget and it gives me the opportunity to put forward my priorities.

Well at last it's done at both County level and at District Council so by the time you read this we all know our fate for the coming year.

County first. The rise in West Sussex will be 2.99%. One percent of this is a specific for Adult Social Care which is Counties biggest budget. We have also added an extra 21million plus to the

Highways budget for over the next 5 years. I don't have to explain to residents that there is constant need for expenditure on the roads.

At Chichester District Council the rise is £5 and this has also been arrived at by a fairly long process so that we continue to provide the Service that residents expect of us.

Both County and District budgets balance the books which they legally have to do.

The West Sussex County Council Cabinet Member for Highways has set up a Task & Finish Group to look at several subjects including Speed limits, Quiet lanes, road and signage markings and the one that is of a lot of interest to Parish Councils, Traffic Regulation Orders or TRO's as they are referred to. My hope is that this group will look to make the getting of a TRO easier for Parish's. Of course they will still have to be vetted by Officers because there are endless rules and regulations associated with our highways but all my Parish's I know would appreciate a quicker method of obtaining TRO's. These control items like for instance getting Speed Limits changes and many other highways issues.

With Spring and Summer not too far away some residents are concerned about some traffic going through their Parish's either at speed or very noisy and sometimes both.

I know it always sounds like passing the buck but all though County does it's best to keep the roads safe with the infrastructure it is actually only the Police who have any powers to fine or indeed arrest when people break the rules of the road.

That does not mean that we don't work closely with them and Villages like Wisborough Green have Speed watch in place which is very dependant on volunteers. They obviously don't have the powers to stop and fine road users but what they can and do do is take number plates and report to the Police. A road user who's number plate appears on several occasions on the Police files will in all probability find a Police Officer on their doorstep. Lets hope they get better and adhering to the rules of the road and don't roar through the villages but I suspect there will still be work for Speed Watch for some time to come.

As you know it is the Platinum Jubilee of our Queen's accession to the Throne. Everyone is making arrangements to celebrate this wonderful event and I hope to be able to at least to pop in to some of my Parish events. I do have 11 Parish's so it's not possible to get to all. If I don't make it I am sure they will be memorable events and all will enjoy in the community.

One more word on Chichester District Council work. I may have told you before what a good job CDC have done housing street sleepers over this long Covid period. Work doesn't stop and in March another 17 units of accommodation have been built in Chichester for families who lose the homes. These are fairly state of the art, small units that are very high standard insulation etc. Such a sad thing to lose your home but at least in some small way this will help people to hopefully get back on their feet to look into the future and a permanent home.

Keep safe and hope to see some of you soon.

Janet Duncton

County Councillor Petworth division

Chichester District Councillor Loxwood ward.

Item 5 – Report CDC Councillor Alan Sutton

Alan Sutton, Report to Parishes March 2022

Chichester District Council Budget 2020-23

My thoughts are with the whole world facing the prospect of war and uncertain times. My approach to this, indeed my whole philosophy, is in my own small way to work with everyone for the benefit of our residents and to put aside party differences to achieve real benefits. Actions still speak louder than words.

I have been elected (from 1st April 2022) as a public governor for the Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust. I still hold roles as a Research Champion for the Sussex University Hospitals Trust and a public engagement role at the new Nursing School at Chichester University. These are all non- political roles

My focus this month is the 2022-23 Budget which was passed at our special council meeting on the 8th of March. The budget was passed with all party support and builds on the maintenance of services and improvements to sustainable ways of working brought about through changes and lessons learned from the pandemic.

My report gives you the thrust of our priorities and some information about the way we use **your** money.

Although we collect **ALL** your Council Tax the Chichester District Council share is under 10% of your bill (Around £3 per week on average depending on the Council Tax Band of your property), for which we deliver over 80 services

As always, I will be happy to answer any questions on this or any other matters.

Alan

Alan Sutton

Fittleworth Ward Member

Cabinet Member for Housing, Licensing, Communications & Events

March 2022

The budget is the financial plan that delivers our corporate priorities. This budget not only enables us to continue to deliver our highly valued services but also allows us to invest additional monies in our five Corporate Plan core priorities.

Priority 1 Financial Prudence – managing the Council’s finances prudently and effectively (Peter Wilding, Cabinet Member)

- Despite the Covid 19 pandemic severely affecting our finances we have closed the budget gap from £2.1m last year to less than £600k this year. This is due to delivering on our efficiencies saving programme approved by Council last year. The savings and additional income that have been achieved have meant that we have not had to cut any front-line services and that we have been able to accommodate significant cost pressures, including over £1m of additional staffing costs. It has also meant that we are able to invest in new priority services.

- Due to our prudent financial management over the years, we have been able to fund this year's deficit from reserves. However, we intend to close the budget gap over the next five-years using the Future Services Framework approved by Council in January.
- We continue to take a more targeted approach to Treasury Management and our returns have significantly exceeded our targets. Due to our successful management and control of our Treasury Activities we have now built in an additional £800k of income into the base budget.
- Next year we will be spending £5.4m to ensure our assets are fully maintained.

Priority 2 Homes for All – a broad range of homes available for residents of all ages. (Alan Sutton, Cabinet Member)

- Later this month we will be opening a brand-new building at Freeland Close to add to our existing temporary accommodation at Westward House. This short stay accommodation offers 17 new flats for single people, couples and families who find themselves homeless. This fantastic new facility comes with excellent eco-friendly credentials, including solar panels to generate renewable electricity for the building, electric charging points, water efficient appliances and bird and bat boxes to support wildlife habitats. In addition to providing much better accommodation it will also reduce the amount we pay in B&B accommodation.
- During the pandemic we brought all our rough sleepers in off the street and supported them into settled accommodation. We have successfully bid with our partners for funding from the Rough Sleeper Initiative receiving grant funding of £324k. This will help us to continue this important work into next year. We have also received funding to help ex-offenders who may be at risk of sleeping rough and for the “protect and vaccinate” scheme to help ensure anyone sleeping rough are offered a Covid vaccination.
- We have £3.7m available for spend through various housing capital grants, including disabled facilities grants and affordable housing grants.
- **We have yet again agreed to maintain our Council Tax support Scheme at 100% for the most vulnerable, meaning they are not affected by any increase in Council Tax.**
- We have agreed with WSCC to jointly fund a further Council Tax hardship fund for working age claimants of CTR so that their Council tax bill will be reduced by up to £150. This scheme is worth £300k to our residents on low incomes. And is in addition to the government funded energy rebate scheme.

Priority 3 Thriving Economy – Encouraging new business investment and sustainable growth across the district (Tony Dignum, Cabinet Member)

- Inward investment and helping local businesses to grow and thrive is a key priority for us. We are doing a huge amount of work in this area – from encouraging businesses to relocate and directly developing to increase our business accommodation:
 - We are halfway through the building works at St James, a £6million business development in Chichester to offer 30 new industrial units due to be completed this summer. We know quality business accommodation can make a big difference in whether a business relocates in the area.
 - We have recently approved a further £71k to fund another year of business support grant. These grants help with economic growth and new jobs in the district. These grants will continue to help businesses fund a range of projects including apprentices, new websites, purchase of new equipment etc.

- Despite the Pandemic our return on commercial investments remains strong: The Council's Enterprise Centre, which provides affordable accommodation to new or small businesses, is nearly fully occupied; and the Council's Ravenna Point Business units are fully occupied too. The returns we receive from our commercial premises help us to maintain vital services to our communities.

- Many Councils are closing their public toilets, but this Council places a high priority on retaining them. We believe it is very important that people have access to good quality modern toilet facilities so we will invest £1.2m to refurbish 9 toilets across the district to bring them up to modern environmentally efficient standards.

- Working with our partners we will be delivering a season of culture - Culture Spark 22. This is an exciting season of events, performances, live entertainment and community projects. Culture Spark aims to give everyone - including every child in the district - the chance to participate in an amazing cultural experience. It also celebrates multiple milestones of some of our cultural organisations recognising 60 years of Chichester Festival Theatre; 40 years of Pallant House Gallery; 30 years of Chichester Cinema at New Park's International Film Festival; 10 years of The Novium Museum and the Festival of Chichester; and even more impressively, 200 years of the Canal Trust! This is a fantastic opportunity to showcase and celebrate what our cultural organisations and partnerships offer. We are so lucky to live in a location that has such a rich and diverse offering of cultural and heritage experiences, as well as internationally renowned organisations.

- After what has been a very challenging couple of years, we are hoping that these events will bring a spark of excitement to the district." Recognising the importance of events not only in economic benefit to the

district but also community cohesion we have allocated an additional £44k into the base budget so that we are able to continue to support the event programme including the successful 'Market, Cross and more'. **(Alan Sutton, Cabinet Member, Events)**

Priority 4 Supported Community – To Support our residents, of all ages and ability, to live healthy and fulfilled lives (Roy Briscoe, Cabinet Member)

- We recognise the positive contribution of private, voluntary and community sectors and support them through our grants and concessions policy. To help our communities thrive we have continued to make an on-going provision of £175k in our budget for grants. Organisations can apply for funding for projects supporting our economy, improving community places and spaces, and for projects supporting our residents who are greatest in need.
- We have also agreed to continue to fund for the next three years the successful 'Chose Work' programme that helps individuals back to employment.
- We have been successful in achieving funding for a two-year pilot project to develop a young person's Social Prescribing service to support young people who need support due to the impact of Covid 19.

Priority 5 A cared for Environment – to protect our environment as we move towards a low-carbon future (Penny Plant, Cabinet Member)

- We have invested over £100k of additional resources in the Development Management service to ensure we can continue to provide good quality and high performing planning services.
- We have negotiated a new 3-year agency arrangement with the SDNPA to continue to provide development management services on their behalf, fully recognising the success of the partnership with the park authority.
- We have added significantly to the funding available to the Local Plan Review process to ensure that the evidence work required can be completed and the Plan finalised for submission for examination as soon as possible this year.
- We continue to deliver the innovative DEFRA funded (almost £300,000) Trees Outside Woodlands pilot project to provide significant additional tree planting in the district and help combat climate change.
- We will also be employing an apprentice tree officer to supplement the growing demands on this service.
- We completed the refresh of the Air Quality Action Plan and finalised our Chichester City Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan which means

looking forward we are very well placed to bid for government and other forms of grant funding for projects to reduce air pollution and enhance the existing network of cycle and footpaths in the district.

- We have provided an extra £50k towards fly tipping cost removals
- We have made great strides in moving towards the targets in our climate change action plan. We are investing considerable amount of existing and new funding next year to help us achieve our targets, including new funding for:
 - £800k of capital funding to purchase two new electric refuse freighters
 - £1.3m capital funding towards the decarbonisation of the Westgate Leisure Centre
 - An extra £56k base budget funding for additional staff in the Environment Strategy unit.

In summary I believe we provide great value for money to our Council Tax-Payers as we continue to invest in new priorities as well as delivering over 80 different services at a cost of less than £4 per week to a Band D council taxpayer.

Eileen Lintill, Petworth Ward Member, Leader of the Council.

Parish Clerk Report – 21st March 2022

CloudyIT are now the service provider for emails, Microsoft 365 licences purchased, and all data transferred on 14th March 2022. This should solve the email issues we have had with the Netwise service, that wasn't suitable for the volume of emails and data we use. All Councillors now have a fittleworth-pc.org.uk account for Council Business and have had instructions on how to access their new emails. There will be a training session for Councillors on 365 shortly.

Changing the Nat West Mandate and contact details for Fittleworth PC has finally been completed, now need to do the same for RGC

A new mobile phone arrangement is in place and the Parish Council number is 07385 175198. The website has been updated and there is a voicemail set for when the Clerk is not in the office.

I have been preparing for the Financial Year End and the Internal Audit on 19th April 2022.

At a meeting of the Jubilee Working Party on 22nd February 2022, it was agreed that a recommendation be made to the Parish Council to support events over the bank holiday period of 2nd-5th June 2022, to commemorate the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Friday 3rd June - 'Tea at the Palace' event in the Village Hall, Recreation Ground and Sports Club from 1.30pm. Tea and cakes in the Village Hall, Picnics and Children's games and races on the Recreation Ground, Best decorated Garden competition, and Live Music and Barbeque at the Sports Pavilion.

There will be no cost to the Parish Council as expenses are being covered by the Sports Club and Village Fete surplus.

Saturday 4th June – Opening ceremony of Commemorative planters at The Millennium Arch

Financial Regulations and Standing Orders documents have been circulated. The Financial Regulations have been updated to remove the scheme of delegation agreed in April 2020 as a response to the Covid pandemic and replace them with the scheme of delegation agreed at the Parish Council Meeting on 17th January 2022.

The review of Standing Orders has not identified any changes required.

The online banking arrangements in place were reliant on the previous Parish Clerk having an online account at Nat West, so there has been no online access since October 2021. Payments are currently being made by Cheque and statements are sent monthly.

We have 4 accounts with Nat West, who offer online banking to Community Organisations, but if you need more than one signatory it is not a free service.

Nat West Bankline will meet the Parish Council's requirement for online access with more than one signatory. It allows unlimited transactions per day and allows account management such as online statements. There will be greater flexibility for making payments and obtaining statements for example, without a loss of security. To continue banking with Nat West will allow for uninterrupted access to the Council's account. The initial set up requires The Clerk and one other signature, once it is in place then the other signatories can be added.

The monthly service fee for 1-5 accounts is £20 a month. This can be funded from the IT costs budget.

The Parish Council needs to use a contractor for Village maintenance. Grasstex Ltd have been providing Grass cutting, hedge and shrub maintenance, and leaf clearance on the Recreation Ground, Centenary Garden and Alley Dick for some years. This arrangement was due to be reviewed in 2021, but due to the Covid pandemic the review was postponed. This year, due to the gap between the resignation of the previous Clerk and appointment of a new Clerk, there has not been an opportunity to review the Grasstex Contract. As we are already in March and the grass is starting to grow, the Parish Council needs to appoint a contractor without further delay

A quote has been obtained from Grasstex to continue these functions in 2022. The total cost, if they complete all operations, is £4296.08 Excluding VAT which can be paid from the 2022-23 Maintenance budget.

It was noted in at the Parish Council meeting on 17th January 2022 that.

‘The committee structure is confusing and could be clarified with clear terms of reference and understanding of committees and working groups. The Hesworth Common Group would particularly benefit from a more defined remit. It should be clear what the roles and responsibilities are including finance and budget management which currently do not comply with financial regulations but this can easily be rectified by ensuring policies reflect that workings of the group rather than the adoption of generic regulations without customisation.’

The Clerk has reviewed the structure and terms of reference for the Hesworth Common Management Committee and its purpose is better served by amending it from a committee to a working group.

The proposal is to rename it as Hesworth Common Management Working Group and to amend the terms of reference to reflect the scheme of delegation agreed on 21st January 2022.

The Sports and Social Club Licence expires on 31st March 2022. Approval is required for the Sports and Social Club licence to be renewed for another year on existing terms.

**TRAFFIC GROUP
REPORT TO PARISH COUNCIL FOR 21st MARCH 2022**

Only a short report this month:

Progress has been made in purchasing the SID for the village. The Westcotec has been ordered but this will not be with us for a few weeks. The installation of it has been planned.

With regard to traffic calming, the design for the planters which will surround the Millennium Arch uprights has been received. A notice is going out to the village asking for support in this project which will coincide with the Queens Platinum Jubilee. A grant of £250 has been awarded to us from CDC which we will use for a Jubilee plaque on the planters.

We have had a report of an on-going problem with very inconsiderate parking opposite St Richards Cottages. Often three cars are parked on the pavement/footpath.

We are still logging lorries through the village and now the weather is warming up, we will start Speedwatch again.