

County Councillor Report from Cllr Janet Duncton, WSCC

First of all we have now distributed our CIL money to the Parish's who requested a Grant and in my division these Grants went to Petworth , Fittleworth and Northchapel/Shillinglee.

Don't forget that if you have a project in your Parish's that has an environmental element to it and fits the SDNP requirements it's always worth applying. This year we had some 3million to distribute but I think it won't be so much next year.

The only other point that may be of interest is that both County and the South Downs National Park are looking for new Chief Executives.

In Counties case the present one is staying until we have filled the position and then she will return to East Sussex full time and in the Case of the National Park the CE only left on the 1st January and it is possible we may not be able to fill the position until at least June.

In the meantime we have the position filled with an interim Chief Exec Tim Slaney who you will know as being head of Planning.

As ever please feel free to contact me at either of my County or District addresses or mobile 07979152898.

Janet Duncton
County Councillor Petworth division
Chichester District Councillor Loxwood ward

District Councillor Report from Cllr John Cross, Chichester District Council –

In the last month I attended a Rother River Summit, which was organised by the South Downs National Park Authority. I attend for three reasons, the river Rother runs through Fittleworth Ward, I am the Chichester District Councillor representative on SDNP Authority and thirdly it greatly interests me to see how and what can be done to not only improve the Rother River water quality, but also the nature recovery that is necessary to have a healthy river.

It was surprising to see so many projects related to the Rother River, from nurturing the first beavers that have made the river their home (as yet no voles reported), to the work some of the landowners are undertaking to improve their patch of the river. There are over 40 schemes already underway along the full length of the Rother, an amazing achievement. Yet more work needs to be done to make the Rother a healthy river again, Arun & Rother Rivers Trust (ARRT) have agreed to take the lead in coordinating. This will be a difficult task as there are many competing projects, and ones that may adversely affects other projects, hence the need for a coordinator body. Currently, there are three major polluters of the river, two are well known, Southern Water and the phosphates that run off farmland, but the third major polluter is the 1600 septic tanks that it is thought are failing and leaching waste into tributaries and water courses that lead into the Rother.

I will get back to this subject when we move things forward.

I also attended a meeting held again by SDNPA for parishes concerning the updating of Local Plans and how parish priority statements/village design statements and Neighbourhood Plans all contribute to the future planning of the park to plan decades ahead for the needs of residents then. The parish councils will have received emails and calls for information from the SDNP officers and those same officers will guide the parishes through the process.

Depending on when the deadline, yet to be set for any authority, is established will determine the pace these local plans emerge.

Happy New Year

Jan 2024

Late last year a government consultation was circulated to Chichester District Council planning committee regarding the easing of certain planning permission for listed buildings. I thought I'd write about this here as I get contacted a lot about planning issues by residents who live in listed buildings, or indeed those that live within a conservation area.

The reason for this consultation is necessary because the government wishes to introduce an energy efficiency scheme for those that rent out residential properties. If the property meets the required energy efficiency the property would receive an energy efficiency certificate. The scheme was meant to be launched in 2026, but the problem of listed buildings and planning regulations had not been considered, so the scheme has now been delayed. The problem was particularly problematic for large estates, but not solely limited to large landowners, with many historic buildings, which are listed that are rented out. These would not meet the new energy efficiency standard and so would not be able to be rented out once the scheme commenced. This would be a considerable problem in rural areas and cause houses to become empty and tenants to be required to move out of their homes. This was clearly not the intention of the scheme and hence why it has been delayed.

The government realised that the strict guidelines on double glazing, air source heat pumps, solar planning, for example, means that these listed building properties have little chance of being energy efficient. So, the consultation is an opportunity for national planning guidance on listed buildings to be updated. The consultation period is over, and it is hoped the new guidelines should be issued in spring or summer. These guidelines will mean that a listed building would be able to have heritage glazing, also known as slimline glazing, amongst other things. There are exceptions, but this will be very welcome to those who live in single paned glazed listed buildings and must pay enormous heating bills to stay warm. If you are thinking of putting in planning permission and listed building consent to change windows or the other measures in the guidelines, then you may wish to wait a few months as things could become easier for you to do so.

John Cross