

WSSC Report February 2024

It's no surprise to any of you that with a budget spend of just over a billion pounds a year there is an awful lot of work to be done and see what we can continue doing, what we can improve, what we can do differently and indeed where we can find extra money to put in.

Our biggest spends at County are Adult Care and Education and Children Care and of course we are finding the best ways to deal with situations as they arise regarding both of these subjects. I haven't got an exact figure at the moment but I know that extra money is once again going into Highways. In particular I have been asking that they look at the smaller but no less important things and not only the famous Potholes but cleaning road signs and doing white line paintings etc. Things arise that you did not expect or if you did you couldn't judge exactly when and anyway most of the things in both education and adult care change constantly. However we have professionals and we work together and hopefully we will have got it about right.

We try not to delve into our reserves unless it's to borrow from them when we know we can replace the money used at a later date. It's a balance that has to be found sometimes.

From last weeks Cabinet meeting it looks almost certain that the Council Tax will increase including the 2% for adult care extra by 4.99%. This may alter at Council.

I probably told you last week that Becky Shaw our great Chief Executive is now going back full time to East Sussex. She has done an amazing job and has agreed to stay until we have appointed a replacement.

I also told you that the Chief Executive from South Downs National Park was retiring and he departed on the 1st January. We now have a capable interim Chief Exec in Tim Slaney who you will know from his being Director of Planning at the Park. Mike Hughes will step up as interim Director of Planning. It could well be into autumn before we have a new Chief Executive at the Park and I am on a small committee that will be working with an outside company to make sure we know the sort of person that is needed then it's the advertising and the sifting of possible several hundred applications and then of course the interviews and finally the appointment. It all takes months.

I haven't been made aware of any in Loxwood but in other parts of my division I seem to have had a spate of collapsing Banks and fallen trees. In fact in Tillington I had 2 large fallen trees and it took about 3 day to clear and although the road is open and passable it needs repair to make it properly safe again and the Bank needs more in depth inspection because it could slip into the road more. I am sure you will have heard that the whole country is celebrating d'day the 6th June. It's the 80th anniversary of the d day landings. I have a special interest because I don't know if you know but Petworth is twinned with a village in Normandy called Ranville and it's just over the famous Pegasus Bridge and the first village to be liberated.

For some 30 years I have been going over for the D day celebrations and was planning to go this year but I guess most of my Parish's will be doing something on the day and I seem to be involved with the Petworth organisations. It should be a good day. I've been told that Fish and Chips will be playing a big part but not sure of all the details as yet.

Janet Duncton
County Councillor Petworth division
Mobile 07979152898
Janet.duncton@westsussex.gov.uk