

Since the New Year it's been busy times but not so much that would interest you in at the moment like budget workshops and of course not only at WSCC, CDC and SDNP all of whom are making their budgets balance.

Nearly there and by late March we will know what Council Tax will be asked for next year 2023/24. The Chichester District Council Local Plan is now out for Reg19 public consultation. This went through at a special CDC Council and of course many concerns were discussed and eventually the Plan was voted through for public consultation.

At our second Council at CDC on the 31st January we also passed some important issues. We agreed to purchase an electric Street Sweeper for Chichester, approved the Infrastructure Business Plan which had been out for consultation, provided some financial support for Pallant House Gallery as Arts Council was not funding them this year, passed procurement for some extra homeless family accommodation, received notification of Government allocation for Rural England Prosperity Fund of an anticipated £718K. We also noted the progress being made with the Climate Emergency Action Plan. You will be able to see outcomes on the Chichester District Council Website.

There is always a battle between not wanting to flood our beautiful countryside with development and the other side that want houses to live in. It's a matter of really trying to get development in the right places where we want it to go and without a Plan of course the developers are free to try for wherever they want. We must have a Local Plan so that we make the decisions.

I am sure you all understand very well the amount of houses being asked for in the Parish but sometimes there is some confusion about numbers for Parish's and especially about the minimum amount of houses that sustainable Parish's are asked to take.

Of course this Local Plan runs from 2021 until 2039 so the numbers are spread over these years which does make the figures somewhat more understandable and going from 2021 it means that some of the applications have already been through the Planning system. It will be good to get this Local Plan done and of course once you finish one you start on the next one. It never stops.

I have mentioned that I wanted the northern Parish's to provide any questions they have when we get to meet an Officer from Southern water and one or two have done this. I have sent these in to my contact name and I have now asked her for some dates.

You know that at County Council the Planning and Rights of Way committee refused the Loxwood Clay Pits application. Sadly as was to be expected they have now gone to appeal and this again will take a lot of valuable Officer time but of course it is their right to do so.

One or two general items as you are probably aware the Pulborough bit of the A29 is still closed and may be for some time. Just one of the problems is that the collapsed banks are mainly in Private ownership and this is always complicated and time consuming.

For Loxwood I did let the Clerk know that he was in talks with the owner of Brewhurst Bridge to try and find a way forward and perhaps get some quotes for doing the work.

It is impossible for me to update you on Strikes at the moment and you are really better informed to check on the News channels for up to date information.

Yesterday we got some clarity on the new ID for voting that is coming in with the May elections. You will know there are several different photographic ID's you can use even an old Passport if you still look like the photo and if you don't have anything you can contact the election office at CDC and they will sort it out with a form you will need to fill in.

All that said if you are a postal voter you do not need ID.

I hope to be able to attend the meeting so if there is something specific you need perhaps you can let me know then.

Janet Duncton

County Councillor Petworth division

Chichester District Councillor Loxwood ward