

## **Reports for Parish Council Meeting – Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2026**

### **Mark Rawlings-Smith**

#### **Chairman's Report**

This report covers the period since the Council meeting of 15 July 2026. Where a matter is being led by another councillor it is noted here only briefly so the detail can be given under their own item.

#### **Councillors and Recruitment**

Cllr Emily Lerwill resigned from the Council on 19 August. The Council thanks Emily for her contribution. With Sarah Payne's resignation in July this leaves the Council very light.

We are actively recruiting with some success, though I would like a little more success.

#### **Clerk and administration**

- The NJC pay award of 3.3% for 2026/27 is tabled for approval by the Council at this meeting.
- The West Sussex Pension Fund valuation has reduced the employer contribution rate.
- The Clerk and Chairman have trialled AI assisted transcription for the minutes. Experiments continue with the aim of reducing workload all round.

#### **Star Energy Oil Site and Fire Safety**

Following the concerns of fire safety raised by Mr Mabey, the Chairman, Cllr Jack Lovejoy (WSCC) and Chris Tyas (Chair, East Dean Parish Council) visited the Singleton oil site on 19 August at the invitation of Star Energy. The visit was a closed, information-gathering meeting for the two councils and our WSCC Member to understand the operational and regulatory environment Star Energy operate the site within. The site is regulated and inspected, and Star Energy has indicated it will consider an outreach event and educational material for residents. To the extent to which the Council can affect any outcome, and notwithstanding the fact the site is in a forest, the visit did not present any immediate fire safety concerns.

West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service confirmed it is content with the safety measures on site. On 25 August Station Manager Matthew Gamblen gave a well attended talk at Singleton Village Hall on wildfire prevention and response, arranged with Cllr Jasmine Hathaway and Cllr Lovejoy. A written summary has been circulated to councillors and to residents on the parish mailing list.

The oil site new generators are ready to be commissioned. They are awaiting the connecting up of the new power cable on site. This in turn is waiting for land owner legalities to be finalised. The new generators are designed to burn up to 90% of the current methane output. For the remaining methane, the existing flare stacks will be retired (but not decommissioned) and a new, smaller flare stack with air injection will be installed. It is fully expected that this will see an end to the black smoke which is a result of partial combustion in the current old stacks (with no air injection).

#### **Southern Water, the River Lavant and the Valley Water Group**

The Valley Water Group, bringing together Singleton and Charlton, East Dean, West Dean and Lavant parish councils with Southern Water, the Western Sussex Rivers Trust, Goodwood and now Portsmouth Water, met on 7 September at Singleton Village Hall. The summary of the July meeting has been circulated. Headlines from September, extracted from the meeting:

- Sewer sealing remains paused this winter, with Southern Water pursuing the wetland solution instead.
- A new eco-filter and UV treatment unit has been ordered for the Singleton relief pumping site, to be installed by the end of the year. This will have double the previous throughput.
- For Charlton, Southern Water's winter plan is an underground pipe (estimated at around £35,000, funding being sought) with above-ground pumping as the fallback.

- A public meeting for residents of all four parishes is planned for early November. Cllr Karen Nash is coordinating the date and venue with the other parishes.

Councillors and neighbouring parishes visited Lavant Wastewater Treatment Works and the wetland site on 2 September. Southern Water has offered a further visit for those who could not attend. Andrew Griffith MP's office continues to be kept informed. Southern Water also placed a statement in the August Valley Diary, reviewed by the Chairman and the East Dean Chair before publication.

Cllr Nash leads on the repair of Knights Hill in Charlton. Southern Water carried out its scoping visit on 3 September and a report and quote are awaited. West Sussex Highways has said it has no funds for the verge repairs, and liability for the bridge wall remains disputed. The Chairman has put three possible legal angles to Cllr Lovejoy; Highways' view is that the relevant Road Traffic Act provision is enforceable only by the police. Cllr Nash will report in more detail under the Southern Water item.

### **Village Hall**

The Village Hall committee is registering the hall with the Land Registry. The 1956 deed already places the Parish Council in the position of custodian trustee, so registration formalises the existing arrangement rather than creating a new one. Councillors have confirmed support by email. The Village Hall trustees met on 1 September and are commissioning asbestos and energy surveys.

### **Village Maintenance and Volunteers**

Sincere thanks to Melanie, Joe and Viv, who gave several hours of hard work tidying up the willow house in the playground. Thanks also to Keith Goacher for the village gardening, completed just in time for the Fete. Both made a visible difference. We have also had the fence in the playground replaced and made safe.

The Singleton Village Fete on 8 August raised more than last year. Southern Water attended to take questions from residents. The Council's £100 contribution to the volunteer thank-you event was approved in July and acknowledged gratefully by the Fete Committee. A massive thank you to all the many volunteers involved.

### **Parking, Traffic and Gateways**

- Hyde and WSCC Highways have agreed a joint letter to residents of The Leys, Bankside and Church Way confirming that parking spaces are not allocated to individual properties. The Council asked that Bankside be included.
- Highways has supplied GPS-derived speed data for the bend near Corner Cottage. Their view is that there is little more that can be done to make the corner safer. Councillors may wish to consider whether to pursue this further.
- Highways has confirmed no planning permission is needed for the village gateways. Placement is to be finalised on site with Gary Jannaway.
- Town Lane was closed on 1 September for patching works.

### **Benches and Charlton gates**

A resident has offered to fund a memorial bench by the pond, which would replace the damaged bench at no cost to the Council. The Council needs to decide on the material. The councillors who have responded so far prefer wood as more in keeping with the conservation area than recycled plastic.

The Clerk has obtained costs for the Charlton gates of £2,840 plus VAT, against £500 of donations received so far. The Council will need to decide how to fund the balance.

### **Other Matters**

- The Local Government Reorganisation decision for West Sussex has been delayed. The Clerk has circulated the latest briefings.

- Chichester District Council has begun scoping its Local Plan 2045. The parish is within the South Downs National Park so its relevance to us is limited, but the papers have been circulated.
- A defibrillator training session is being arranged for October and will be publicised in the Valley Diary.
- Litter at the Trundle has been reported to the PCSO; Goodwood already litter-picks the site and bins have previously been vandalised.
- Fraudulent emails have been sent in the names of the Chairman and the Clerk. Anyone receiving an unexpected message asking whether they are free, or asking for a favour, should ignore it.
- The Sussex 1550 celebrations next year have been suggested as a theme for a village street party.

### **Volunteering**

Much of what appears in this report only happens because people give their time: the willow house, the village gardening, the Fete, the fire safety evening, the Village Hall and the long running work on Southern Water. With a smaller Council and a growing list of outside meetings, the Parish Council is unable to do everything we would typically do.

The Chairman is working with others across the village to better coordinate volunteering, to make it easier for people to see what needs doing and to put their hand up for a job that suits them. A clearer proposal will come to a future meeting. In the meantime, anyone willing to help, however occasionally, is asked to speak to any councillor or the Clerk.

### **Consultative Committees**

#### **Meetings in the period**

Goodwood Aerodrome Consultative Committee (GACC): Thursday 30 July 2026. No Goodwood Motor Circuit Consultative Committee (GMCC) meeting took place between the July and September Council meetings.

#### **Festival of Speed Flight Paths**

Following the noise concerns raised by residents after previous year's events, Goodwood changed its flight routing for this year's Festival of Speed:

- Helicopter pleasure flights were kept south of the Racecourse stands, so they no longer tracked north of the Downs over Singleton, Charlton and East Dean.
- Fixed wing arrivals on Runway 14 were routed west of Chichester, so villages to the north and north-east of Goodwood were not overflowed by descending aircraft.
- Northerly helicopter departures were able to climb faster on leaving the airspace, reducing departure noise.

Helicopters still route via the Trundle Gate reporting point, so some aircraft will continue to be seen and heard. The Parish received no complaints during the event, other than one lodged in advance. Other committee members also reported noticeably less disturbance. Goodwood has agreed in principle to keep the new routing and has asked for feedback from residents. Mark Gibb, Head of Aviation, has offered to attend a Council or public meeting if useful.

### **Other Points**

- Aircraft movements are around 15% down on 2025 year to date, attributed to weather and fuel prices. All Section 52 limits are comfortably within permitted levels.
- Complaints across the whole committee area fell 27% (19 against 26). None came from Singleton or Charlton.
- The Revival will have no fireworks this year. Flying displays are limited to short Spitfire and vintage aircraft slots.
- A revised GACC constitution was adopted, adding East Dean and Oving Parish Councils as members.

## **Recommendation**

The Council notes the report and invites residents to feed back on helicopter noise at the Revival so the Parish can respond to Goodwood before the November GACC meeting.

## **Karen Nash**

### **Southern Water Activity**

Frustratingly since the last PC meeting, we are no further forward with the repairs to Charlton, despite weekly emails to all concerned at SW.

Floyd Cooper confirmed that the scoping visit for the verge reinstatement was carried out on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of September and that the next step is for the production of a report/quote of which he doesn't have any timings as yet.

Regarding the flint wall, Southern Water has declined liability despite the surveyor attributing the damage to tankers, and WSCC Highways has indicated it has no funds to put towards the repair. However, Lloyd has confirmed that SW have a contractor carrying out a scope W/C 7<sup>th</sup> September and he has passed a copy of the structural survey report to them. This is to be discussed further at the Valley Water Group meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup> September.

### **Charlton and East Dean Gates**

Viv has confirmed that the cost of the new gates will be £2,840 plus VAT. So far, the PC has received £500 of donations (£100 from the Fox and £400 from Goodwood Composites. I emailed Clare de Bathe at the W&D on the 4<sup>th</sup> September to ask if they would like to make a contribution similar to the £2,000 they donated to the Singleton gates.

## **Jasmine Hathaway**

### **Defibrillator Training**

Defibrillator training will take place on Wednesday 7th October at 6pm in Singleton Village Hall. Residents are encouraged to attend this valuable practical session and learn how to respond confidently in a cardiac emergency.

#### **The parish has two public-access defibrillators:**

1. Outside of the Singleton Village Hall, Charlton Road, Singleton, Chichester, PO18 0HR
2. Inside the red telephone box on Foxhall Lane, Charlton, PO18 0HX.

Please call 999 in an emergency.

### **Sussex Devolution Update September 2026**

The Sussex and Brighton Strategic Authority began operating in April 2026, bringing together East Sussex, West Sussex and Brighton and Hove councils to advance devolution across Sussex. The Authority is working with partners, residents and businesses to develop priorities for transport, housing, skills, employment, economic growth and the environment.

Sussex has secured access to £117 million in initial government funding, alongside a £1.14 billion investment fund available over 30 years. This funding will support long-term investment and help deliver projects that strengthen local communities, improve connectivity and create opportunities across the region.

A further £564,000 government grant is supporting work to explore improvements to bus services across Sussex. This includes considering how services could better connect communities, support access to employment and education, and provide more reliable and sustainable travel options.

The Authority is continuing to establish its governance arrangements and develop a shared programme for Sussex. Further details will be announced as plans progress.

The first directly elected Mayor for Sussex and Brighton is expected to be elected in May 2028. The Mayor will provide democratic leadership for the Authority and help shape the region's future priorities, working alongside councils, partners and communities across Sussex.  
Local Government Reorganisation Update

The Government has again delayed its decision on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in West Sussex.

A final decision is now expected by October 2026.

Chichester District Council continues to support a two-unitary model, with the Government having considered a modification that would place Chichester, Crawley, Horsham and Mid Sussex in one authority, with Arun, Adur and Worthing forming the second. The existing two tier system will eventually be replaced by unitary councils responsible for all local government services.

Elections for the new authorities are expected in May 2027, with the new councils becoming operational in April 2028. Until then, it remains business as usual.

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#### **Report on fire service talk on Wild Fire Strategy and Prevention by Matthew Gamblen. Talk was held at Singleton village hall, 7pm 25th August.**

This 106 minute session provided a comprehensive update on wildfire strategy, response capabilities, prevention initiatives, and national trends from a UK fire service perspective, with a focus on West Sussex. The speaker, a National Wildfire Lead, detailed wildfire classification criteria, resource mobilization protocols, climate impacts, and tactical innovations. Emphasis was placed on inter-agency coordination, landowner engagement, technology use (including drones and thermal imaging), and a volunteer-based wildfire adventure patrol program to detect early risks. Updates were given on national statistics, vehicle fleet modernization, training frameworks, and suppression tactics such as backburning and firebreak creation.

The presentation transitioned chronologically from definitions and criteria to national and regional data, followed by operational capabilities, prevention programs, and future planning. Throughout, the speaker highlighted the increasing frequency and severity of wildfires due to climate conditions and human activity, while showcasing proactive measures being

implemented across the southeast and nationally. The session concluded with a Q&A on lithium battery safety, fuel management, public education, and risk mitigation.

#### Key Points

- Wildfire is classified nationally if it involves at least one hectare (2.47 acres), has flame lengths exceeding 1.5 meters, requires four or more emergency appliances, or poses a serious threat to property or infrastructure; only one criterion must be met.
- 2022 was a record year for UK wildfires with 994 incidents; 2025 is on pace to exceed that, driven by dry conditions, drought, and human causes such as campfires, fireworks, and barbecues.
- The National Resilience Wildfire Capability is now in a pilot phase as of June 2026, with five specialist teams (including from West Sussex, South Wales, and London) deployable nationwide to support major incidents.
- West Sussex has developed tactical wildfire plans in collaboration with landowners (e.g., Forestry Commission, National Trust) for high-risk areas, including pre-sectorized maps, numbered access gates, and rendezvous points to accelerate response.
- A volunteer based Wildfire Adventure Patrol was launched three years ago and now includes about 70 participants who report hazards like illegal campfires, fly tipping, and burning school books during routine activities, helping target prevention efforts.
- All West Sussex firefighters receive annual Level 1 wildfire training based on national standards, including the LACES safety model (Lookouts, Awareness, Communication, Escape)

#### **Richard Arnold**

##### **Centurion Way**

I met with Tom Garriock, the SDNP Area Lead Ranger in August to reconnect the Parish Council with SDNP in relation to the Centurion Way and a Singleton Link in light of the time that has passed since conversations were last held. There have been a number of changes since the previous discussions such as Parish Council member changes and the expressed ambition of The Weald and Downland Museum to facilitate cyclists and pedestrians through their site to connect with the Centurion Way at Singleton station to name a few. As a result there is an action to restart work on the project to go back and determine what is really desired and what is actually achievable.

#### **Vivien Nuttall - Clerk**

##### **Finance Report**

Balance in Current Account (31/08/26) - £24,389.87

Balance in Savings Account (31/08/26) - £7284.84

2026/27 Reserves to date: Playground Maintenance – £4,392.68, General Maintenance £0,

Funds from Youth Club - £1,156.87

**Total Useable Funds in Current Account (Funds minus reserves) - £28,398.83**

Funds Received since 15/07/26 – Balance of Precept - £16,064.50

Invoices Awaiting Payment – Keith Goacher – Village Tidy Up - £500 + VAT, Clerk Salary August - £1,259.26, Data Protection Fee - £52.00

2025/26 Annual Audit – Approval was received on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2026.

#### **Jack Lovejoy**

I will be away from the 18<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> September to Monday 14<sup>th</sup> 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 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> September and 25<sup>th</sup>/26<sup>th</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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](mailto:frs.cptt@westsussex.gov.uk) if you're interested.

I organised with Star Energy for myself and the chairs of Singleton and East Dean parish councils to go to the Oil Site at Singleton to discuss the concerns of our residents when it comes to the risk of fire from the site given the dry conditions recently. The representative I spoke with mentioned that recently they've had the Environment Agency, the Health and Safety

Executive, the Fire and Rescue Service and the Police for site visits and they are satisfied with the running of the site.

He discussed how the site has long caused concern for local residents. We had a very in-depth discussion of the extremely strict regulations they have to comply with, the testing that's done and how failsafe the site is against fire. The site is designed to shut down at the first hint of a fire, or if the monitoring equipment is damaged, and because they oil can only be extracted by forcing it out, that shut down means that everything will stay in the ground. We also looked at the new generators that they've installed and the struggle they're having with legal wranglings to get the cables connected due to the complexity of the ownership of a small strip of land. When the generators are connected, he assured us that it would mean the flaring chimneys currently in use will be made mostly redundant and they will be installing a smaller one that is approximately 10% of the size of the existing one and that will burn much more cleanly.

We also discussed the issue of naturally occurring radioactive material (NORMs), which some people have written to me about. The site does not produce any NORMs, they are independently tested for them, and they have never had any make an appearance out of the well, bananas in the local shop are probably more radioactive. The other issue that has been of concern to some people is concern about the water they inject into the wells entering the local water table. He explained that their wells are surrounded by three layers of impermeable material to ensure they don't contaminate the groundwater. They also carry out extensive water testing around the site to make sure that their procedures are working properly. The testing is sent off to an independent laboratory for analysis and then onwards to the Environment Agency to check it.

I am very displeased to see that someone decided to make a hoax call to the fire service about the oil site, this is an egregious misuse of our fire service's time at any time, but it's especially disappointing to see it happen when we're in the middle of a very difficult time for the fire service with the number of fires that have been happening recently.

I worked with the Singleton and Charlton Parish Council and Cllr Tracie Bangert (Cabinet Member for Communities and Fire and Rescue) to host an open event at Singleton Village Hall to discuss the local fire risk up there to try and dispel some of the concerns that had been raised, I was delighted to see how well attended it was and would like to thank everyone who came along (including one fellow who came from Hampshire). It was fascinating to hear from Matt Gamblen, who is one of our station managers and one of the UK's experts on tackling wildfires as he spoke about the local and national situation, the work the fire service have been doing to prepare for the worst case scenarios and the importance of farmers and land managers in both preventing and tackling wildfires. We are very lucky to have an expert like Matt in our local fire service. I hope the assurances that he gave have alleviated the concerns that many have over the situation locally. We need to be watchful but not panicked.

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 5<sup>th</sup> 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.

31<sup>st</sup> 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.

5<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto: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 Chi 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.

Following a report I raised with Highways flagging the poor state of the road markings on the A286 in the centre of Singleton I have been told that there's work instructions to see them properly repainted. There is not yet a definitive timescale for this to occur though. I will keep the parish informed when I know more.

A West Sussex resident from outside my division raised questions about the Selhurst Park Road and East Dean Hill junction, which the road safety team have confirmed they are working on, having identified it as an area where we have seen clusters of accidents in recent years. Part of the issue is caused by a blind corner where the hedge of Number One Pilleygreen Lodge obstructs vision to the west when travelling northbound up East Dean Hill. I have confirmed the hedge and associated property is not owned by Goodwood and Highways cannot do anything about the hedge as it is on private land and well maintained (i.e not spilling onto the road). The scheme they are looking at will see the narrowest section of the bend widened to reduce head on collisions (which is apparently an issue). There will also be additional early warning in the form of road markings and signage. It is aimed for implementation in the third quarter of the 2027/2028 financial year.

The SGN emergency works around market avenue in the city centre are on track to end in the week beginning 14<sup>th</sup> September, the roads will then be fully resurfaced with all the works due to end on 22<sup>nd</sup> 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 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> September

Next University Hospitals Sussex NHS Trust Board of Governors Meeting: 1<sup>st</sup> October

Next Full County Council Meeting: 16<sup>th</sup> 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 9<sup>th</sup> September – Children and Young People Services Scrutiny Committee (I am a member of this committee).

10:30 10<sup>th</sup> 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 17<sup>th</sup> September – West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board  
10:30 18<sup>th</sup> September – Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee (I am a substitute, so I might be attending this in the absence of another member).  
10:30 22<sup>nd</sup> September – Cabinet  
10:30 25<sup>th</sup> September – Fire and Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee  
10:30 29<sup>th</sup> September – Planning and Rights of Way Committee (I chair this committee).

**Non-public facing meetings for September at WSCC:**

14:00 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 14<sup>th</sup> September – Governance Committee

**Cancelled public facing meetings:**

10:30 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

**Henry Potter**

August is regarded as the ‘holiday’ month so few meetings were scheduled last month.

The Planning Meeting on Wednesday 9th August dealt with just one application for 9 dwellings in Halnaker, which was refused after which a task and finish group of five Members considered and formulated a response to the latest Government Development Management Planning Reforms and a NATIONAL (one size fits all) Scheme of Delegation. As a result of the T&F group consultation the Cabinet, on Tuesday 1st of this month, agreed to recommend to Full Council to approve the National Scheme of Delegation. This, the government insists is necessary to speed up the delivery of “much needed housing”! They don’t appear to have noticed that houses simply are not selling, the housing industry is flat and will be until the economy rights itself. This Scheme will sweep away many of the options for commenting on / objecting to applications dependant on the size, the Red Card procedure is withdrawn completely but we are assured that PC’s and elected members will have easier access to Planning Officers to comment on applications. Some live or online meetings are planned for PC Members to attend to better understand these changes so I encourage some of you to attend.

Also at the recent Cabinet meeting, agreement was reached to release further sums of money, some from reserves but mostly from a government grant allocation of £1,622,328 for a resettlement programme, to purchase further housing on the deflated housing market to ease the pressure on homelessness in the District. One such 3 bedroomed property has been negotiated at £280,000. Because of the flat housing market, further opportunities are being explored. The occupation management of these properties will be in conjunction with The Hyde Group and CDC Housing Officers.

The Draft Infrastructure Business Plan 2027 - 2032 for the District will be published shortly for consultation by City, Town and Parish Councils and this runs from 14/09 through to 30/10. Some of the proposals include reconfiguration and improvements to the Waste Transfer Station here

in Westhampnett, the provision of an “Active Travel” Path across Oaklands Park from Oaklands Way to Wellington Road, and several other gap filling of active travel routes, and at last the planned improvements to the paving and the amenity area of North and East Streets in the city. We have been assured that the poor internet conductivity in those areas will also be drastically improved.

I attended the presentation by the Southern Rivers Trust in conjunction with the Goodwood Estate at East Dean VH and replicated at Singleton, showing proposals for a flood relief scheme that will create a “sponge” effect in the field between Charlton and Singleton with deviating river channels hopefully extending the flows of the river course, but I’m not too sure of the effect once the “sponge” is at capacity. Funding is being explored to carry out this plan so fingers crossed.

Finally I had a e note from a resident in Charlton at the end of July expressing concern about the large number of motor homes and caravans which had accumulated on the triangular car park at the top of the Trundle. I contacted the Estate and was assured that as it is an open free car park they weren’t unduly concerned and that their security officers kept a very close eye on who is using it. They had dispersed before the start of the Goodwood Festival meeting. My dealings with the security has shown them to be very proactive from dealing with fly tipping and loose livestock on the roads. Fear ye not!