

Annual General Meeting
LAVANT PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Annual Electors Meeting Parish Council
WEDNESDAY 15th September 2021 AT 7.00pm, Lavant Memorial Hall

In attendance:

Councillors Aldridge, Ings, Kuchanny, Goldsmith, Newman, Quest, Pickford, Reynolds, Tucker.
Clerk Dawn Salter, County Councillor Hunt,
Public Present – 17

Agenda Item 1: Welcome by the Chairman and Apologies from Members. – District Councillor David Palmer

Agenda Item 2: To receive and approve the minutes of the Annual Electors Meeting 27th May 2021

On a **proposal** by Councillor Reynolds and **seconded** by Councillor Goldsmith

It was **Resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on 27th May 2021 be accepted as a true record of proceedings. The papers were signed accordingly.

Agenda Item 3. Presentation by PCSO Jason Lemm.

PCSO Jason Lemm gave a presentation on SCAMS to the attendees and gave a booklet to each 'The little book of BIG scams'.

Agenda Item 4 To receive a report from Chairman of The Parish on activities during 2020/2021.

Chairman James Pickford gave his welcoming report introducing councillors to those present.

A parish council is required to look after its endowments (if any), provide allotments for parishioners and little else. This is a simplistic overview of its duties and due to the enthusiasm of our Councillors the Council's interest stretch across many additional activities. This is my first report for 2 years due to the pandemic, as we did not hold an electors mtg. last year. It could have been a difficult time and the Parish Council could have closed but as a measure of its flexibility and adaptation we have managed to have a productive year(s).

- *Neighbourhood Plan.*

This is the cornerstone for our decision-making and over the years since it was made in 2017, we have been able to maintain a consistent development policy. It sits beside the Chichester DC Local Plan and the SDNP Local Plan. If and when either of these plans are updated, which affect our parish we shall have to update our plan. It will give us the opportunity to make amendments in light of experience. Councillor Robert Newman is the custodian of the plan, and he will give an overview of its performance.

Councillor Newman gave a presentation. This document continues to perform for us in Lavant. SNDP asked us to delay its review until they are ready to do their review which means ours will be approx. 9 years in. Elements have come forward due to the work done on the Neighbourhood Plan. Development of our Village is based on this document. When the refresh is required, I hope people will come forward to review the Plan.

- *Lavant Volunteers.*

The volunteers will require no introduction as they are so well embedded in our community that you forget they are a relatively new force. We have two councillors who are regular volunteers Robert and Councillor Tim Aldridge will review the operations of the last two years. – See Appendices

- *Planning*

A key part of the Neighbourhood Plan is implementing its planning policy and we have two Councillors who lead on planning matters, Susan Ings and Louise Tucker. I invite them to give an overview of their work for the parish. See Appendices

- *Traffic.*

To be honest we have made little progress on this topic. The one positive is the Speedwatch team who are active each week and have been trained by the police to act as speed watch officers on their behalf. Their actions are supported by fines and on the third transgression penalty points. On non-police related matter WSCC have published a new traffic policy in draft for comments. Individuals are entitled to comment but the Parish will give its views. The draft plan does nothing for Lavant's problems. I define the problems as East West Rat running, drop off facilities at the school, parking at Yarbrook, highway maintenance and general speeding along the A286. In the latest plan it is apparent that the Chichester Bypass is the major concern and in reality, nothing will be done to improve it for the next 20 years. Minor upgrades are planned funded by developers, which in turn starves minor roads of investment. The maintenance problems do not get a mention and no offer of help for rural communities to plan and finance solutions. We are on our own and we shall have to spend some of our CIL money producing a traffic plan for the next 20 years. The bypass fiasco is a prime example of councillors not following through on its local plan!

- *Memorial Hall.*

The Memorial Hall has had a very difficult time and it is a tribute to their voluntary management team that they have re-opened. Councillor Susan Ings is our council representative and I ask her to share her observations with you.

- *Neighbourhood watch.*

We all take the police for granted as they are a part of our society. We do not see them until we need them but when we do, we want them now. There is a lot of individuals can do to help the police and the council has tried to promote the parishioner's involvement through the Neighbourhood watch scheme. Jenny Goldsmith carries the council's interest in this area.

- *Playground.*

Many enjoy the playground, and the council faces a challenge over the next few years on equipment replacement. It will not be a cheap exercise (c£100K) and we hope that several parents will step forward to help us with the exercise. I am not asking them to pay for this equipment but join the debate and share the decision-making process. Councillor Jenny Quest is our resident sports councillor, and she will outline the problems as well as progress on the new sports field.

- *Environment*

A lot of words were written in our NP underlining its importance for our community. It is correct that the council continues to promote this cause as opportunities arise to improve our village. We have a team of councillors, the two Jennies and Louise who take the opportunity to lose themselves in the wildflower areas they are creating. Councillor Jenny Goldsmith gave a brief report of their activities.

- *Heritage.*

There is a strong link in society between understanding our past in order that we can improve our future. It is often said that we should learn from our history so as not to create the same mistakes in the future. If we do not learn about our heritage, how can we improve our future so Caroline Reynolds is our lead councillor in this area and here is her report?

- *Councillors.*

I would like to mention the two Councillors who have given time to the parish and have retired as councillors during the past two years. They are both well known to you Adrian Blades and Elaine Mallet. We are thankful for their contributions. The Council has been refreshed with two new members. We continue to operate at full strength. It is healthy for the Council to have a steady turnover of its members

and opportunities will arise which I encourage you to think about. If you are interested, you should contact our Clerk. I have made no mention in this report to the many other activities, operating outside of the council, which take place in this village to create a healthy and vibrant community. I could name about 15 groups and still be reminded of some I had miss so a big thanks to you all.

Lastly, I would like to thank the commitment to the parish by our Clerk. It cannot have been the easiest of times to conduct remote meetings and have such little contact with Councillors. I would like to thank her for her diligent work, and may she continue to enjoy contributing to our village for which we are the beneficiaries.

Agenda Item 5: -Report from County Councillor Jeremy Hunt

County Councillor Jeremy Hunt gave an annual report – See Appendix F.

Agenda Item 6: - Report from District Councillor David Palmer – Gave Apologies unable to attend.

Chairman drew the Electors Meeting to a close and carried a motion to move to Full Council Meeting.

Agenda Item 7 To receive report from Planning Team on Planning Applications

SDNP/21/04066/HOUS

Location:6 Yarbrook Lavant PO18 0DF

Application Proposal:Construction of dropped kerb and driveway from road to front garden for purpose of off-road parking.

Resolution: Lavant Parish Council supports this planning application.

SDNP /21/03853/FUL

Location: Land North and West of Greenfields, West Lavant Road, Lavant, Chichester PO18 9AH

Application Proposal: Use of the site and siting of no.8 modular buildings, no.1 refuse store, and associated works for educational purposes.

The proposal had been reviewed by two Councillors (Councillor Susan Ings and Councillor Louise Tucker), who had considered the application in light of applicable policies in the Lavant Neighbourhood Development Plan. The following resolution was proposed:

For all its intrinsic worth, the proposal does not appear to have been developed with due awareness of the policies of the LNDP. It has not given sufficient evidence as to why the proposed plot of land is the **only** suitable location. It is therefore a matter of deep regret to Lavant Parish Councillors that we are obliged to object to the application because it does not comply with Policy LNDP1 of the Lavant Neighbourhood Development Plan. On a vote, the resolution was not carried.

A further recommendation was put to the Council in the following terms:

Lavant Parish Council understood that the application relates to a plot of land that is designated solely for educational use. The facilities being proposed are for that purpose. The design is small scale and sustainable. LPC supports educational development on this site for the benefit of the wider community. It is understood that any development impacts the neighbouring residents and LPC would place the following conditions upon their support.

Limit of 12 pupils on site at any one time

A lease for use of the land be granted solely to Bishop Luffa School and is not assignable

That no subsequent application for change of use for housing or additional facilities would be undertaken by the owners of the land.

It was RESOLVED to approve the proposal

Agenda Item 8: FINANCE Accounts

The accounts for the period ending 26th August 2021 were presented to the delegates of authority and ratified by the councillors

It was **Resolved** to approve the accounts for this period.

- a) To note receipts and resolve to approve monthly payments – **Appendix A**

It was **Resolved** to approve unanimously that the attached copy of the payment report including payments to be ratified and agreed on 15th September amounting to £1,618.44(of which £ 80.55VAT)

- b) To Approve August Bank reconciliation

A copy of the bank statements and bank reconciliation 26th August 2021 was made available to council members at the meeting for monitoring and reconciliation purposes.

It was **Resolved** to approve the accounts.

- c) To record the Clerk and the Chairman of Council has verified the Bank Reconciliations in line with the financial regulations to satisfy the new RFO/Clerk records are balanced.

In line with good practice, the NatWest Bank Statements were inspected and the corresponding balance initialled.

Agenda Item 9: To receive & discuss and vote upon any business raised by Electors of Lavant given by written notice received by Noon 10th September 2021

Chairman confirmed with the Clerk that no business had been raised.

Agenda Item 10. Items for future consideration.

NO items were brought up.

Agenda Item 11. To discuss location of future meetings.

Chairman addressed the Councillors to consider if a return to face-to-face meetings felt comfortable. It was agreed that most Councillors were happy to return however a larger room with more ventilation would be required. The Clerk was asked to investigate the possibility of using the Green Room within the Memorial Hall on Tuesday Evenings going forward for future meetings.

Action: CLERK

Agenda Item 15: DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 12th October 2021

Meeting Finished at 21.00pm

Signed.....Dated.....

Appendices and Attachments

Monthly Income and Expenditure Report

Appendix A

LAVANT PARISH COUNCIL FINANCIAL REPORT PREPARED Sept 2021					
RECEIPTS:		Period: 10TH AUG 21 -15TH SEPT 21			
DATE	REF	PAYER	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT	VAT
10/08/2021	CR007	Sally Austin	Village Green Donation	£ 25.00	
PAYMENTS:		May-21			
DATE APPROVED	INVOICE NUMBER	PAYEE	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT	VAT
15/09/21	FO067	D A SALTER	CLERK EXPENSES	£ 16.00	
15/09/21	FO068	HITACHI - DD	HP TRACTOR	£ 229.00	
15/09/21	FO069	Allstar Fuel Card - DD	Tractor Fuel	£ 78.87	13.15
15/09/21	FO070	Barclaycard - DD	Statement	£ 0.99	0.17
15/09/21	FO071	ScanStation-DD	365 microsoft license	£ 43.68	7.28
15/09/21	FO072	NEST - DD	Clerks Pension	£ 79.80	
15/09/21	FO073	WSCC	Clerks Salary	£ 758.37	
15/09/21	FO074	Lavant Memorial Hall	Bleaches Room Hire Clerk x1daywk	£ 52.00	
15/09/21	FO075	Savills	Peppercorn Rent	£ 0.05	
15/09/21	FO076	A Blades Expenses	Volunteer reimbursement	£ 75.70	12.62
15/09/21	FO077	A Blades	HUB Alarm repair	£ 43.98	7.33
15/09/21	FO078	Moore	External Audit	£ 240.00	40.00
			TOTAL	£ 1,618.44	£ 80.55

APPENDIX B

Lavant Parish Council				
Bank Reconciliation as of 26/08/2021				
Current Account	26 August 2021			£ 75,699.67
			total	£ 75,699.67
opening balance 1st April 20				£ 67,813.23
Add Receipts in the year				£ 18,120.30
Less Payments in the year				£ 10,233.86
	as of 26 AUG 21		Balance	£ 75,699.67
Less				
Reserve @ 33% of Annual Precept of £29637				£ 9,780.00
			Total	£ 9,780.00
Ring-fenced funds				
Lavvoles				£729.45
Let's walk (Footpaths)				£ 1,338.03
Youth project				£ 1,440.38
watershed grant				£ 48.22
CIL SDNP	Allocated 45,000.00	-£ 45,000.00		51362.88
			Total	£ 54,918.96
Total available funds (less ring fenced and reserve)				£ 11,000.71

Lavant Volunteer – Councillor Tim Aldridge

Good evening. My name is Tim Aldridge, and I am responsible for footpaths, I am also one of the tree wardens along with Lindsay Rebbeck and I am also tasked with delivering the new footpath that will run from Churchmead Close, along the river to Marsh Lane as set out in the Neighbourhood development plan. In addition, I sit on the Goodwood Aerodrome and Motor Circuit Consultative Committees.

Robert Newman and I are the Parish Council liaison with the Lavant Volunteers. There are currently nine or ten regular volunteers, supervised by the indispensable Adrian Blades and Richard Sims, who give up one morning a week, usually on a Tuesday, but we would welcome an injection of new blood and any new volunteers would be made very welcome.

I am sure you are all familiar with the work of the volunteers in maintaining the public spaces and amenities, this involves grass cutting, strimming and basic tree maintenance around the village and in the children's playground. We also undertake to keep passable a large section of Centurion Way and several other footpaths around the village. In addition, we repair and maintain the children's play apparatus and we also maintain the bus shelters and will turn our hands to any task within our capabilities.

I would also like to point out that Adrian, often aided by other volunteers, is frequently to be seen working around the village on other days if the workload requires extra hours of toil. This year, thanks to the generosity of Arthur Glaubertus who donated some 1500 tree whips, and with help from other members of the Parish Council, we have planted a native hedge along the western boundary of the village green and that will eventually replace the existing, and now decaying, post and rail fence.

To the footpath. I have now obtained the permission of the Landowners (the Church Commissioners), the tenant farmer and been granted the necessary permission to bridge the river by the Environment Agency. We are in the final stages of designing a suitable bridge to cross the river by the playground in Churchmead Close and we are working to engage a local contractor and to use locally sourced materials with which to construct the bridge.

Appendix D

Lavant Planning Team – Councillor Louise Tucker

Annual Planning Report

Despite Covid, there has been no appreciable reduction in planning applications and activity. In fact, it seems like there have been more (consequence of enforced lock-down perhaps?). In excess of 50 have come before Lavant Parish Council, and all have been examined against the policies set out in the Lavant Neighbourhood Development Plan, by the Lavant Parish Council planning team (myself and Cllr Susan Ings), and consequent proposals voted on in (Zoom) Council meetings. Over the last year we have had delegated authority to register our decisions on the planning websites, but Councillors have still had a chance to see and comment on the recommendations to the Planning Authorities. It is pleasing to report that c. 97% of these applications have been supported by Lavant Parish Council and have then been approved by either CDC or SDNPA.

Applications have run the whole gamut from tree works (felling, crown-lifting and pruning) to meticulous historical renovations of listed buildings – including extensions to create extra bedrooms, granny annexes etc., erection of sheds/conservatories, and lowering of curbs to allow access to off-road parking. Even proposed extensions to electricity sub-stations and water treatment works need planning permission! It has been noticeable that those applicants who have sought pre-planning advice have usually produced applications that tick every box and provide the kind of detail that enables us to make informed and fair recommendations – and saves us from sleepless nights!

Lavant Parish Council now has a Tree Warden, Lindsay Rebbeck, who together with Cllr Tim Aldridge, fields the tree-works applications and provides expert guidance – essential in conservation and/or national park areas and when dealing with trees which are subject to Tree Preservation Orders.

But the major planning event this year has undoubtedly been the breaking of the ground on the old football pitch for the housing development of 18 homes (to be known we believe as Great Elms – the old name for the field). This is the culmination of a fruitful and successful collaboration over several years between LPC and the Developers, Sunley and Crayfern, and we are now at the stage of discharging the various conditions. The whole process has been much helped by the excellent communication with the developers at every stage of the planning process during which issues were discussed and problems dealt with quickly.

Through the generosity of the developers Lavant has acquired a new sports pitch opposite the Lavant Memorial Hall (it will be county standard, and ready for play in the 2022-3 season) and also the field below the housing development. This will eventually become a public open space to include wildflower planting, trees, and seating and will form a delightful transition between the green and the new development, through to the A286.

The development at Maddoxwood has also been successfully completed with 10 new houses now mostly occupied. The footpath along the access road has only just been finished but we have already supported an application for a conservatory to one property.

The third of Lavant's planned developments, on the industrial site at Eastmead, has not fared so well. The developer's plan to build 58 homes was rejected by Lavant Parish Council and refused by the SDNPA, and in December 2020 an Inspector appointed by the Department for Communities and Local Government, Planning Inspectorate, opened the consequent Public Inquiry into the developer's appeal against the decision: we await developments...

The planning team has also registered comments on development proposals in neighbouring parishes, for example on the Screening Opinion to confirm whether or not there was a necessity for an Environmental Impact Assessment in connection with the proposal for residential development of 250 homes on a parcel of land to the north of Madgwick Lane.

Every 10 years or so there is a speculative planning application to build on the 'Daffodil Field', aka the strategic gap to the east of the A286, which forms a buffer zone between Chichester and Lavant. The last 18 months has seen another such, by Berkeley Group to build 140 homes on the southern part of the field. So far these 'attacks' on the vital gap have been successfully fought off by LPC and CDC. The recent announcement in the media of the U-turn by government over its intended deregulation of the planning rules gives us hope of an end to the so-called Developers' Charter whereby speculative and ill-conceived developments threaten our countryside

Traffic. – Councillor James Pickford

To be honest we have made little progress on this topic. The one positive is the Speed watch team who are active each week and have been trained by the police to act as speed watch officers on their behalf. Their actions are supported by fines and on the third transgression penalty points. On non-police related matter WSCC have published a new traffic policy in draft for comments. Individuals are entitled to comment but the parish will give its views. The draft plan does nothing for Lavant's problems. I define the problems as East West Rat running, drop off facilities at the school, parking at Yarbrook, highway maintenance and general speeding along the A286. In the latest plan it is apparent that the Chichester Bypass is the major concern and in reality, nothing will be done to improve it for the next 20 years. Minor upgrades are planned funded by developers, which in turn starves minor roads of investment. The maintenance problems do not get a mention and no offer of help for rural communities to plan and finance solutions. We are on our own and we shall have to spend some of our CIF money producing a traffic plan for the next 20 years. The bypass fiasco is a prime example of councillors not following through on its local plan!

Memorial Hall Overview Councillor Susan Ings

I represent Lavant Parish Council on the Memorial Hall Committee.

The Committee's purpose is to oversee their running of the Hall for the benefit of the village and residents old and young. This proved a challenge during the pandemic as we constantly needed to adapt the way we operated until total shutdown came along. During lockdown our revenues were practically zero, so we took advantage of all the government and local council grants and rebates. Local volunteers helped keep the Memorial Hall ticking over during this difficult time.

Thankfully we have now re-opened for business and our regular hirers are coming back to use our range of facilities and booking revenue is beginning to pick up.

Our regular hirers include:

Local art and crafter groups

Amateur dramatic society

Music groups

Mothers and babies

Women's' Institute

Horticultural Society

Bowls Club

Auctions

Venue for voting at both general and local elections

Exercise classes

Wedding receptions

Birthday parties and many more.....

Recent projects undertaken have been the upgrade of the fire alarm system and a survey of the building fabric and facilities. Thankfully, no big surprises were discovered.

(photo) not a very good one of the new sportsfield still under construction and on a wet day!!!....

Following the sale of the old football field to Sunley/Crayfern and their generous offer to build the new sports field off Pook Lane opposite the Memorial Hall, I am pleased to report that it is on schedule for completion in time for the 2022 /23 season. Sunley have also going to commence work on expanding Hall car park in early in November.

The Management Committee is keen to upgrade and refurbish the current sports changing rooms as they are not fit for purpose and are working towards completion in time for the sportsfield opening next year.

Our aim is to improve local sports facilities and make them accessible to local clubs and groups.

We are always need more funding and continue to search for alternative options to keep the Memorial Hall relevant and accessible.

We are also looking for new membership on the Management Committee. So, if you are interested, please get in touch with me via the Parish Council website.

Commitment would be one evening a month.

Thank you.

Appendix G

Lavant Recreational Trust – Councillor Jenny Quest

Due to prohibitive costs of at least £130,000 a total refurbishment of the playground especially in our current financial climate we have decided to review the plans for moving forward.

We feel a repair, replace and upgrade approach would be the most sensible way to proceed.

Local consultants are providing quotes to support this scheme. Working into conjunction with the Footpath and the river bridge as the consultants are involved with both.

We appreciate local residents to be involved in these matters and are supporting with possible fundraising ventures.

Funds are available from the Parish to partway meet costs.

Aiming for some inclusive equipment to be included roundabouts, picnic tables adapted for individuals with disabilities.

To minimise disruption and costs our hope is to dovetail installations

ENVIRONMENT – Councillor Jenny Goldsmith

Due to climate warming environment issues are high on the national and international agenda. In Lavant a lot of activity has been taking place as we try follow the approach promoted by the Royal Horticultural Society and others that small steps taken by many individuals and local councils can help

Hedge and tree planting

Two new hedges, consisting entirely of native species have been planted – one along the western boundary of the Green and the other on the eastern boundary of St. Nicholas Churchyard. The whips for these hedges were donated by Arthur Gliabertus and Southdowns National Park authority. Hedgerows are immensely important both for wildlife and for helping to reduce carbon emissions, but their loss is an all too frequent occurrence.

As a result of the old football field development new areas of land will come under Parish Council ownership and tree planting in these areas is being actively discussed. Again, planting will be native species, preferably locally grown. The Lavant Valley Allotment Association have agreed to provide a site

for a tree nursery and the Environment Team hope to bring on our own stock of saplings both for the new sites and infilling where new trees are needed. This project will be beneficial both in providing locally grown, native plants and reducing cost for the parish.

St. Nicholas Churchyard

Work to improve the plant diversity in St. Nicholas churchyard is on-going. With the support of the previous incumbent Revd. David Jarrett, the Environment Team have been working for two years on the area between the footpath and the southern boundary wall. Raking out of the aggressive growth of dominant grass and a reduction of the cutting regime has already resulted in the emergent of a tremendous range of chalk downland plants, plus increasing insect diversity.

At the beginning of 2021 the area to the north of the church also passed the management of the environment team and this area is slowly developing.

The work of the Environment Team in St. Nicholas is not an isolated effort, similar activity is taking place in many other churchyards in the diocese – churchyards being acknowledged as part of the ‘green lungs’ of the country, important both in the reduction of carbon emissions and increasing biodiversity.

CDC, WSCC and many other bodies are, like efforts in St. Nicholas, part of a growing movement to reduce regular mowing and the Environment Team regularly consult regularly, with professional bodies involved. All acknowledge that it is a hard task involving re-education as well as physical effort but one which, in the long term increases biodiversity and reduces cost of maintenance.

The St. Nicholas project is part of a wider scheme by the parish council to develop and increase pollinator corridors throughout Lavant. It links physically and logically with Lavant Valley Allotment Association where pollinators are strongly encouraged, and Plot holders are also being encouraged to develop ‘no dig’ methods that have positive environmental benefits.

Environment volunteers

An initiative is underway to try and build up a team of environmental volunteers. The first meeting took place on 3rd September 8 people attending. Monthly meetings are being arranged and it is hoped that we can create a group drawn from across the parish.

A second activity, a Bat Walk led by ecologist Paul Stevens took place on 10th September. Twelve people participated and six different bat species identified.

The River Lavant

Regular pond dipping by two members of the Environment Team has shown the River Lavant to be in good health and teeming with life. It also revealed that the highly protected species, the Great Crested Newt, was present in a number of ponds within the parish. As well as being good news this brings responsibilities, and the parish council must be aware of these.

It is the intention of the Environmental Team to build up their awareness of the presence of protected species of all kinds in the parish as this information is of use for planning as well as environmental purposes.

Heritage – Councillor Caroline Reynolds

A diagram from the Sunley development and the image shown picks out the scheduled monument. Primary consideration from SDNP to give approval for this site was the opportunity afforded to this scheduled monument. Before approval this monument had 'AT RISK' status. After completion of this development this monument will no longer have 'AT RISK' status it will have become a NATIONAL SCHEDULED monument, we in Lavant will be proud of.

It is true to say the initial maintenance scheme proposed by Crayfern was far from fit for purpose. Lavant Parish Council worked really hard with CDC, SDNP, and Heritage England to ensure that the final maintenance scheme was properly fit for purpose. We didn't get everything we wanted; we wanted a far more Parish Council inclusive ecology approach with a few more trees. However, the result is we have a legacy as the site in the future will host school parties who will be able to admire and wonder at this ancient relic the NATIONAL SCHEDULED monument.

Lavant History Project have produced x4 interpretation boards; 1 Sunley estate, 1 St Nicholas churchyard, 1 centurion way and 1 bottom of chalkpit. The original cost of planning permission worked collaboratively with the Planning Authority we managed to get planning permissions for a fraction of the cost. Always things to do on the Lavant History Project for example just this week 18th Century c1748 Milestone. Turnpike Road of A286. Key marker of Lavant Parish

Appendix I

County Councillor Jeremy Hunt Report 2021

• The last year has obviously been very challenging for us all. However, hopefully - and keeping fingers crossed - we are beginning to return to some kind of normality, so let's hope we continue along that path. As far as the CC is concerned, we had to suspend many of our services, such as libraries, registration services and our records office, but others, such as social care, had to maintain their services throughout. We also had to set up a Community Hub, which since it was started in March 2020 has been open from 8am to 8pm seven days a week - including Christmas day. The team were drawn from right across our services. Since opening they have been offering support to all our residents across the county and up to 31st March, the team had:

- Received over 15k calls
- Responded to over 4000 on-line requests for support
- Arranged delivery 4000 food parcels during the first lockdown
- Arranged over 2000 medicine pickups
- And, during the lockdown earlier this year, supported clinically extremely vulnerable residents with 35,000 outbound calls, letters, texts and emails

And that work - supporting our residents - continues to this day and those numbers have continued to increase.

Not only did we face all those challenges, but virtually all our staff had to get used to working remotely - so that was a huge change for them. It was also an enormous piece of work to set up all the necessary IT to facilitate remote working.

However, despite all those challenges our staff responded magnificently and we got through it, maintaining all our essential services.

- As far as finances were concerned, we calculated that the additional costs of Covid were in the region of £86m during 2020/21 - and it is still impacting our finances today. However, thanks to tremendous government support, virtually all our additional costs were covered by grant funding. All the details are set out in our year end outturn **Performance Monitor for 2020/21**, and this report is still available on our website as part of the papers presented at our Cabinet Meeting on 27th July.

Despite us hopefully getting back to some form of normality, we are still facing a number of challenges across the county, particularly around the economy. This will be especially critical as furlough comes to an end which could well lead to an increase in unemployment. As I am sure you are also aware, inflation is rearing its head again and that, combined with recent poor UK output figures, suggests that the pressures on our budget could well start increasing as we go through the year. We realise that we need a strong economy in West Sussex and supporting that economy is one of the key pillars of our new Council Plan, which was published earlier this year. The four key pillars of that plan (which can be viewed at www.westsussex.gov.uk/media/15919/our_council_plan.pdf;) are:

- **Keeping people safe from vulnerable situations.**
- **A sustainable and prosperous economy.**
- **Helping people and communities to fulfil their potential.**
- **Making the best use of resources.**

The 2021/22 first quarter **Performance and Resources Report**, which reports on our financial performance as well as the KPI's supporting our **Council Plan**, was presented at Public Cabinet yesterday. The full report can be viewed as part of the papers for that meeting and are available on our website. www.westsussex.gov.uk/about-the-council/how-the-council-works/committees-and-decision-making/cabinet/ (or just google 'WSCC Cabinet Meetings')

Two current consultations:

- **Help us to shape the future of transport in West Sussex**

Now is the time to have your say on the future shape of transport in West Sussex. The West Sussex Transport Plan (WSTP) is being reviewed to set out the county council's approach to managing and investing in the transport network from 2022 to 2036.

The consultation runs until Friday 08 October 2021 and can be accessed at:

www.yourvoice.westsussex.gov.uk/draft-west-sussex-transport-plan-consultation

I know your chairman has been in correspondence with our highways team over this consultation, especially with reference to Lavant and rat running, but I haven't seen any recent correspondence.

- **Safe against scams**

Join us to find out about useful information and resources to help keep your residents and yourself safe from scams. More than ever before, we have been relying on technology to enable us to work, learn and connect with each other. Inevitably, criminals have exploited and used our increased digital lives to their advantage. The pandemic has seen a rise in scams including telephone, courier and romance fraud which have all become an increased concern in West Sussex. Not only is there the financial impact on victims but the emotional impact can be even more significant.

To help raise awareness of these different types of scams, how to spot them, and what to do if you become a victim, the West Sussex Community Safety & Wellbeing Team alongside Trading Standards have been running free monthly scams awareness webinars for you to attend. There are still two dates available, which are:

Tuesday 12th October 2021: 10:00 - 11:30am

Thursday 4th November 2021: 10:00- 11:30am

www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/staying-safe-online-amp-trading-standards-wscc-33051273661

Local Issue

Just picking up on a few local matters over the last year:

- Firstly, we finally had the new speed restriction implemented on the A286 between Lavant and Chichester, which I know is welcomed by most local people. Hopefully, it has also made it safer around Summersdale Garage, although sadly there are still many motorists who ignore such limits. However, at least it is a step in the right direction.
- Secondly, the Gigabit Broadband scheme for Lavant got the go ahead earlier this year. This means that around 800 premises in Lavant will have the potential to receive gigabit capable broadband. This scheme depended on receiving match funding from the CC and, despite keen competition from other areas, Lavant secured the necessary funding. This was to a great extent down to the time and effort put in by parish councillors, particularly Cllr Newman, in order to get this project off the ground. I'm not aware that BT have yet started the project, but I believe they have a 12-month window.
- Then lastly, we have the more recent issue of the access ramp between Meadow Close and Centurion Way. From my 'in-box' I know that there are a lot of concerned residents. However, I would like to re-assure everyone that our officers are working flat out to get this replaced asap. I can assure you that, as opposed to a number of conspiracy theories aired in some of those emails, we are in no way trying to delay this project. We absolutely understand the importance of this access. So, to update you, our plans

are to replace the existing structure with a permanent reinforced earth ramp. Luckily this had already been planned in outline form and currently our consultants are working on detailed drawings. We do have to cover off some ecological issues as we will need to remove 3/4 trees. So, I believe we are meeting with the arboriculturist this week, as well as checking to see how we re-locate any bat boxes that might be present. So, you can see that in order to provide an access that is fit for purpose, rather than the existing one built by the developer, it is not going to be an overnight job. The provisional timescale for the removal of the existing platform is w/c 27th September. Hopefully we should be able to start work on the new ramp within a few weeks after that. I do realise the inconvenience caused by this closure and can assure residents that I will personally keep behind this project to ensure that it is completed asap. One last point regarding the trees. By law, if we remove any trees, we do need to replace them with new ones elsewhere. I have discussed this with the officer, and I believe it will be possible for the PC to request that those new trees are planted in your parish. I will keep you updated on that.

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