

District Councillor Address (June)

Local Updates

Queen's Platinum Jubilee, Loxwood Ward

A huge thank you and congratulations to the Parish Council and all the community volunteers who worked tirelessly to ensure this was a great event for all residents to enjoy! I think it is fair to say you all did the community proud and I am sure they are very thankful for all the hard work that went into this. Thank you

Loxwood Claypit application, Loxwood

As I am sure you know by now this went to the WSCC planning committee on the 18th May 2022 and in line with the officers recommendation was unanimously refused. A huge thankyou to the Stop the Claypit group whom I helped form and whom I worked alongside the last two years. Thanks, should also go to the WSCC officers and councillors for the work they put into scrutinising this to ensure that the application was refused on legitimate grounds.

I attended the meeting and spoke on behalf of the community. I have copied and pasted the speech I gave at the bottom of this report. I am also in the middle of distributing a letter to the community to ensure everyone is updated on this.

Land South of Willets Way, Loxwood

Several residents have contacted me with concerns over this application. I have been in regular contact with the planning officer and have raised my concerns over this as well as submitting my own written objection. The planning officer has promised another site visit prior to determination, however could not confirm when this would take place

Traffic Speed Issues, Loxwood

Several residents have spoken to me about concerns over traffic speed in Loxwood. I know that Charles has been publicising the need for local volunteers and I have been pushing this as well. Off the back of Charles's recent post on behalf of the Parish Council appealing for volunteers I will be happy to volunteer as well for some traffic monitoring sessions.

Land South of Townfield, Kirdford

The planning meeting between applicant and planning officers to discuss the solution to the Water Neutrality issue which was due to take place on 5th May was rescheduled to 23rd May. I was promised an update as soon as the meeting took place and once again have not been provided this and have had to chase again. I will update on this as soon as I get the promised update.

Lagoon 3, Plaistow and Ifold and Kirdford

The next scheduled meeting is due to take place on Thursday 7th July at 2pm

Foxbridge Golf Course, Plaistow and Ifold

I attended the consultation on Wednesday 18th May at Kelsey Hall to see the proposals for this application. Since then, I have received a number of emails from residents who are concerned about this. Some of these I too share and await the true detail once the planning application is made public. I will read these proposals carefully and listen to the residents to ensure your voices are heard.

Should you have any questions or concerns about this proposal please email me gbevans@chichester.gov.uk or call 07958918056

Chichester District Wide Updates

Initiatives +

For monthly updates from Chichester District Council you can now sign up at www.chichester.gov.uk/newsalerts

The Hyde Group Update

Following the signing of a new Partnership Working Agreement with Hyde, the Housing Delivery Team along with representatives from Hyde have started work in earnest.

The driver for this work is Hyde's Strategic Plan 2050 with a focus on evaluating options to bring about improvements to the housing stock, community and place.

The options being discussed include regeneration, redevelopment and also new development.

The Strategy has 10 key objectives which include:

- ✓ ensuring all standards for building safety and decency are met by 2030.
- ✓ reviewing high priority clusters and estates that have been identified for intervention.
- ✓ completing studies across key estates to understand the investment needed.
- ✓ facilitating capital investment into the district by providing more homes.

Full details can be found here:

<https://chichester.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s20372/Contract%20amendments%20Hyde%20Large%20Scale%20Voluntary%20Transfer%20LSVT%20-%20Appendix%202.pdf>

Local Plan Update

CDC are continuing to work closely with National Highways and West Sussex County Council to establish whether they can gain support for the revised distribution of development that Members agreed for testing in January 2022.

In addition, and in partnership with a number of other councils across the county and the South Downs National Park Authority, CDC have commissioned a water neutrality study which covers the northern part of our plan area. This study is crucial to the plan to enable them to complete the Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) and provide them with solutions in relation to water consumption to allow new homes

to be built. The outcome of this study will not be available until after August and therefore an HRA cannot be completed until after the summer.

This piece of work is necessary to be completed before the Council can submit its regulation 19 Local Plan for examination. Separately, CDC are working through how they can best accommodate the identified Gypsy and Traveller need within the district. Officers and consultants working on behalf of the council have worked options up to a point now that required member input into various options. This will be the subject of an all member session in the coming months.

Financial help for residents <https://www.chichester.gov.uk/helpwithfinances>

The council's Communications team are doing some sterling work in promoting the financial support measures that the council offers and it would be great if this can be shared by Parish Councils as well. The webpage above includes financial help, debt management advice along with a range of other services.

Surgery Dates

My next round of District Councillor Surgery dates are as follows:

Sat 11th June (11-1pm) Old Mill Cafe, Wisborough Green

Sat 25th June (12-2pm) The Onslow Arms, Loxwood

Saturday 2nd July (11-1pm) The Coffee Cup, Ifold (village shop)

Saturday 23rd July (12-2pm) The Half Moon, Northchapel

Should these dates not be suitable, or you are unable to visit in person I am always happy to visit residents at their homes/alternative venue or arrange a telephone call/zoom conversation. I can be contacted by phone 07958918056 or by email gbevans@chichester.gov.u

Speech Delivered at the WSCC Planning Committee

Good Morning. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak in firm opposition to this planning application. As way of introduction, I am Cllr. Gareth Evans and I am one of the District Councillors for the Loxwood Ward. I am here today to speak up for the many concerned residents that I represent who have contacted me in opposing this planning application and to encourage members of this committee to vote in line with the planning officer's excellent report and recommendation to refuse this application.

Having grown up in the Loxwood area and lived here most of my life, I understand first-hand the concern and horror that residents have been expressing about this application ever since I first was made aware of it back in mid 2020. As a youngster I had the chance of walking and playing in these stunning woodlands with my friends and family. Many here today will know how beautiful and tranquil this woodland is and they most certainly would have enjoyed seeing the array of natural habitat and wildlife nestled between parts of ancient woodland. They will have observed how many enjoy walking through these woods and the obvious benefit it has on wellbeing in the community. This was even something our own MP observed when they visited the site. It is a community asset and to lose it, as we believe permitting this application surely would, is quite simply a devastation. At a time when councils up and down the country have declared both climate and biodiversity emergencies this type of planning application is not only non-sensical but utterly tragic.

Whilst I was considering the impact that this form of development would have on the community, I was moved by one resident who wrote to say that he has been walking the woods for 70 years stating that *“if the site were allowed to go ahead not only would it ruin an area of outstanding beauty it would diminish vastly the enjoyment of walking through the woods, I have walked through most of life”* These comments got me thinking that were this application to be approved that the experience of these woods in their current tranquil state would be lost to future generations who would never get to the chance to share this.

Several residents spoke in their objections about the range of wild and ancient flowers that spring up in the woods throughout the year, like the Bluebells and Primroses. They also spoke about frequent sightings of Bats, Badgers, Birds of Prey, and this is just the tip of the iceberg and only this week nightingales were heard in the woods— it really cannot be downplayed how beautiful of a setting this is and how treasured it is by residents.

Whilst on environmental issues it was noted by many that this site would require a wheel washing facility which given the potential volume of daily traffic movement would need to be a rather extensive operation. There is currently a requirement for all planning applications to prove water neutrality therefore I am struggling to see how this application would be able to conform to this.

There are also numerous concerns about the traffic and safety impacts that would result were this application permitted. Many residents feel that the increase in HGV movements poses significant safety risks for other road users and that this could cause potential damage to the many listed buildings surrounding this area. Congestion will increase impacting local villages and there are concerns over the safety along Loxwood Road from high passing speeds on a restricted width of the carriageway.

Regardless of the devastation that this planning application would inflict on an area of natural beauty, several residents have highlighted, as has the excellent planning officer's report that there is no demand for additional clay as there are reserves in West Sussex lasting more than 25 years. This is backed up in the latest WSCC

Mineral Monitoring report. Regardless of the unsuitability of the location – there is no justification for a development of this nature.

In closing I want to make it abundantly clear that in speaking today I am not speaking for myself but as a community representative who has been inundated with concern over this application which does not conform either to the Loxwood Neighbourhood Plan or the Chichester District Plan for development in a rural area. It is not sensitive to the setting. It will do the opposite of enhancing, protecting, or complimenting the rural character of the area and the natural environment and it offers no benefit to the local community only potential destruction.

In short, I hope that you have read carefully the reports and supporting evidence and will follow the planning officer's recommendation in refusing this planning application.

Thank you for your attention.