

District Councillor July Update

Local Updates

Lagoon 3

Tony Whitty sent an email to Parishes to update on the current progress with the legal team now that enforcement has expired and has agreed to send out a timeframe for this in due course.

On 7th July I attended the Planning Committee meeting and one agenda item was for committee members to note the report on Lagoon 3
<https://chichester.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s20422/13.0%20Crouchland%20Farm%20Enforcement%20Report.pdf>

I also took the opportunity to publicly raise questions that had been sent to me from Kirdford Parish and Plaistow and Ifold Parish. These also represented the questions many residents have raised with me. I felt it important that at this recorded public meeting that the communities' voices were heard. I was given a strict three minutes to speak and although tight managed to get all questions asked. Lagoon 3 was agenda item 13 and was heard at around 2pm so is some way into the recording which will be updated here
<https://chichester.nucast.live/> (please note it was not there at the time of writing)

The questions I asked were as follows:

1) With reference to paragraph 6.1 of the report.....

6.1 A site visit on 24 May 2021 – three days after the expiry of the compliance period – showed that Lagoon 3 remains intact on site with no indications within the site that any works of compliance had been attempted or that they were imminent. The visit did however confirm that the Crouchland Farm site [under the management of Artemis] was compliant and that works required under the extant enforcement notices on land in its control had been carried out.

Q – Has CDC definitive proof that all the underground infrastructure has been removed as per the enforcement notice? Could this be shared with the district and parish councillors?

2) Now that the enforcement notice has expired could Kirdford and Plaistow and Ifold Parishes (and the communities they serve) be provided with a clear and concise timeline as to what happens, by when and by whom

3) If there are no assets of value with the current owner for enforcement, then what happens?

4) What is the point at which CDC will take over responsibility for the site - it is not reasonable to let the site exist in the current state beyond a reasonable time frame. What is that timeframe?

5) If the contents of lagoon 3 are allowed to be spread locally - what is the annual limit allowed to be distributed on the land to comply with the nitrate levels and knowing this, how long would it take to empty the lagoon? - is this reasonable?

6) Who holds the liability for pollution?

7) CDC have already confirmed with the help of the EA that the lagoon is not “contaminated” therefore , can the council confirm that any future owner will have an obligation to return the site to Agricultural land. ** we want this minuted**

8) In the meetings with the local Parishes and Ward councillors, CDC have confirmed that there will be no “backdoor” agreement with any would-be buyer of Lagoon 3, to permit building on the site in exchange for the site being cleared. - can we have that again confirmed and clearly minuted

9) At two of our previous meetings with CDC and Multi Agency members I requested that the contents of Lagoon 3 be tested in order to reassure residents that the contents are not dangerous. I was informed that this was not necessary as the contents were unlikely to be hazardous yet the PROW around the lagoon remains closed and has done for several years. Can WSCC be asked to open these back up and if the reason they remain closed is because they believe the site remains a risk why not conduct a test to determine this once and for all and to allow residents access to these PROW? How much longer should residents expect the PROW to be closed?

Churchfields Application, Wisborough Green

To advise the applicant has withdrawn this application

Land south of Townfield, Kirdford

Ongoing and expected for determination in early August.

Blackhall development, Loxwood (including shop)

Currently in limbo due to issues impacting other developments in the community connected to the Hardham water integrity issues of demonstrating Water Neutrality. This is also what impacted the Wisborough Green Application

CDC Updates

Local Plan

The CEO, and Leader of the Council, along with Gillian Keegan MP, met with the Minister for Housing to discuss the complex issues facing our Local Plan and to request that we are treated as an exceptional case. The request was not agreed. It was made clear by the Minister that if CDC believe that the evidence they collect shows that they cannot meet their full housing requirements, then the Local Plan may be submitted for examination on that basis. However, the Inspector assessing CDC’s plan must have evidence that demonstrates, in planning terms, what can and cannot be achieved. This also needs to demonstrate that all available options have been considered.

Meeting with OFWAT

The CEO and the Leader of the Council also attended a meeting with Jonson Cox, the Chairman of OFWAT, in response to the letter that the council sent in late November which was a motion put forward by my group. Representatives from the Environment Agency, Natural England, Chichester Harbour Conservancy and Chichester Harbour Trust also attended. They discussed the declining condition of Chichester Harbour and the problems of nitrates entering the harbour, which have been caused mainly by coastal background and agricultural runoff. They all agreed that they need to work collectively to improve the condition of the Harbour. A second water summit is due to be held in July to formulate an action plan, which will set out short and longer term actions with timescales, and determine which organisation will lead on this project. CDC’s planning policies already require any new development that drains into Chichester Harbour to be Nitrate Neutral. The new Local Plan will also require higher environmental standards to make sure that the Harbour continues to

be protected. In the longer term, CDC need to consider looking at creating new habitats and potentially allowing some managed realignment along our coastline to help the Harbour recover. Meetings with the Environment Agency and Coastal Partners have started to take place to consider how CDC can further progress this work.

Customer Service Reception – East Pallant House

For awareness this reopened on Monday 21st June for members of the public to have face to face support.

Local Plan Newsletter

A reminder that the residents can sign up to the Local Plan newsletter to be kept abreast of developments. This can be done via this link www.chichester.gov.uk/localplannewsletter

Full Council Meeting

The next full council meeting takes place on Tuesday 20th July at 2.00pm and will also be livestreamed for residents to follow.

Surgeries

With the lifting of all restrictions on the 19th July I will be returning after the summer to my regular surgeries. More details on this will follow however I will also be happy to offer online ones for anyone who would rather or needs to socially distance. In the meantime if you would like to contact me about anything please call me on 07958918056 or email gbevans@chichester.gov.uk I am happy to come to you (socially distanced of course) or organise an online meeting/telephone call.