

Here are some brief notes on County work at the moment.

As is normal when a new Council is elected and this time at County with a large number of new Councillors, our time has been taken with a lot of training all on Microsoft Teams of course but we are beginning to have some face to face meetings. Goodness knows if by the time of full Council we will all be allowed into the Council Chamber but I would love to hope so. Some of the new Councillors I haven't yet met. There you are though it's been the same for all. I just so prefer meeting and getting to know my fellow Councillors.

County continues to improve on it's Childrens Services and all Councillors have recently had a briefing from our Commissioner who is keeping a close eye on our progress. He is happy that we are proceeding well and that our Childrens Services will not be taken into a Trust although this will be reviewed in 12 months to make sure that all is going in the right direction.

The 3 Childrens homes in the Worthing area are now ready and very well done for the youngsters that will live there. The next phase is being worked up and that will be in the Crawley area.

Likewise with the Fire & Rescue Service, all the items picked up by HMI for Fire & Rescue have been dealt with and as with Childrens this does not mean we sit back on our laurels there is always much to do.

On the subject of Fire & Rescue. The new Fire Station site at Broadbridge Heath has Planning now and ready to go. This will involve the closure of the Horsham Fire Station which if you know it is right into the edge of town not far from the Hospital. This facility will provide the opportunity for training which means that we will also be able to hire it out to other Fire and Rescue units from anywhere that wants to us it in the Country.

The state of some parts of the Highways is quite unacceptable. I will agree with you but believe me when I say that we are doing our best and I report all road damage like Potholes when they are reported to me or indeed when I see them for myself. What the long term is for all the poor roads I don't know but on the up side there is a new system now for dealing with Potholes which I haven't seen in action but have been told does a much better job. Lets hope.

My other pet hate is white lining especially when it is directional. I did speak to one of the Highway Officers and said about this especially at say Roundabouts. You need to know clearly which lane you should be in. It's alright for those of us who know exactly where to go but for strangers and when we get foreign visitors back in the Country the road signage needs to be clear. My other pet hate at the moment is the dirty state of the signs. Now I know we can do some of these ourselves and I do the big sign as you enter Petworth from the north, not that regularly but when I think it needs it. Probably shouldn't but what do you do it it's not being done. The worst I have seen is in Storrington, a large sign, partly hidden with lots of instructions on it and absolutely filthy. Sorry just a hobby horse at the moment because I think it looks so poor. You can be assured that I have spoken these thoughts to the Local Highways Officer so you never know.

At County it is time to start looking at the budget for 22/23. With this in mind and many new members we started last week with the first of our workshops. Several more to come and us members then find out that some of the things that we wanted to do are not possible or indeed are possible but not in the way we had hoped for. When we set the budget like everyone else our books have to balance so it's a case of you win some you lose some. It's quite a learning curve with the whole turnover being in the region of a billion pounds pa. It can be daunting

For those Parish that I am the District Councillor for I know that Gareth will do you a full report. For my part I would like to add the Chichester District Council have done a really good job of fund distribution during this pandemic. They were top in the Country for the way they dealt with Grant applications etc. Whilst on the CDC the new accommodation for the homeless in Chichester is well on target. Not sure of the finish date at the moment but I know it's doing well.

For those of my Parish's within the Southdowns National Park just a quick word.

Last Wednesday I spent the day with the at the Seven Sisters Country Park in the Cuckmer Valley. Although not yet signed off the SDNP are purchasing the Park and there many idea's for it customer experience including updating the Visitor Centre, providing some holiday accommodation and also improving a converted Barn there for camping by providing an updated facilities block and generally tidying the place up. It is a beautiful site. You need to be quite fit, the hills are very seep in that area but it's worth the effort. It is a beautiful valley.

Should any wish to contact me on either County or District business my contact details are janet.dunton@westsussex.gov.uk or jdunton@chichester.gov.uk and my mobile is 07979152898. Keep safe all of you and hope to see you soon.

Janet Dunton

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