

Report of County and District Cllr. Janet Duncton

There has been quite a gap between my last notes and this coming weeks Parish Council meetings so I thought perhaps a few extra notes would be good.

Last Friday (14/10/22) was County Council. The first since the summer break and there were a lot of items so I have hopefully picked out those most relevant.

We had 2 presentations at the start of the meeting; the first from the Cabinet member for Children's Services. It was a re-assurance for us all with regards a problem we had in one of our children's homes in Crawley. This home has, for many years now, been OFSTED inspected and always been outstanding which shows how quickly a problem could arise. I won't go into details as it was a case of personalities and situations not handled quickly enough. It was over a short period of time around I think April / May or thereabouts and was handled quickly. The OFSTED inspector has returned unannounced to see what had happened and I am glad to say was happy with the actions taken and is no longer concerned.

I am sure you can appreciate that some, but not all, of the children in our care often arrive because of traumatic and difficult situations and sometimes things can go wrong, but fortunately quick action was taken to sort things out so now all well. Children's Services are continuing their journey and have overall had a small OFSTED inspection which went well and of course we are expecting the big OFSTED sometime early in 2023. I think we all feel pretty hopeful with the direction we are travelling so I am sure it will continue well.

Fire and Rescue has also had HMI (now of His Majesties Inspectorate) and are also satisfied that some of the things they felt needed attention have been attended to. Of course, as ever one of the things we struggle with is getting enough Retained Fireman. If you know anyone that is interested in becoming a retained Fire & Rescue retained Fireman, please encourage them to get in touch with the department at County Hall.

Fire and Rescue are now up to date with their home safety visits and these are proving valuable to keep people safe in their own homes.

The not such good news is of course the budget at County. Although not easy we are pretty sure that we will get a well-balanced budget for 23/24, but those that know do warn us that it will be more difficult in the years after that. We are continuing to have member workshops on the budget so that we all get the opportunity to say what is important to our residents. Some we win and some we lose.

Last Friday (14/10/22) I proposed a motion at Council which was actually quite simple. It was for the whole Chamber to vote their support to the Leader and the Cabinet member for adult Services to write to the department in Government and ask for clarity on the new rules governing people going into Care. You will know that the rules are changing and when a resident who is paying for their Care gets down to £86,000, they can ask the Council to take over and often move them and pay for their Care. You can imagine that this will cost County many millions and although of course the Cabinet member and Leader have been in touch with the Government department they still don't have the answers so we thought that if they were backed up by a vote from all Councillors it may help. I am glad to say it was unanimous by all those in the Chamber.

Many Parish Councillors will remember CLC. We stopped these some time ago and introduced another member forum method which we called Community Forums. Sadly, these did not work well and the Governance committee proposed a recommendation to Council that we discontinue with this service. This was also passed at Council. This will also save Council money and Staff time which we hope to put to better use.

We had a report from the Armed Services Covenant which I think I have said before we were awarded a Gold Award. We could not do this without the support of the Districts and Boroughs in West Sussex all of which have Armed Services Covenants.

We aim to help Veterans on leaving the Services with whatever help they need like for instance getting on housing lists, help with writing CV's for jobs and many other things besides.

On a Chichester District note for those Parish that I also represent there has been a lot going on. Once again, the rough street sleepers only number 4, sometimes 5 in Chichester. We have a very active team at District that watch the situation continually. Of course, the numbers fluctuate but these number are up to the middle of October.

One last item. You may have heard of 'Sparks'. This is really all about the cultural heritage of the District. Events took place throughout the Summer in Selsey, Chichester, Midhurst and Petworth and it also included celebrations for Pallant House Gallery celebrating 40 years and of course the Chichester Festival Theatre celebrating 60 years. We are so very lucky in this part of the world.

As ever if you need to contact me it's janetdunton@westsussex.gov.uk or jdunton@chichester.gov.uk or mobile 07979152898

Keep safe
Janet Dunton



County Councillor Petworth division
Chichester District Councillor Loxwood ward