

Report of County Councillor Janet Duncton
12th July 2023

Chichester District

We recently had a locality day for the members representing divisions in the Chichester District and some interesting trends were in it since the 2021 Census. There is a tremendous amount of data but one or two interesting items.

One discussion was about the refugee situation in West Sussex and the current trends. This is mainly for Afghan and Ukraine refugees.

Originally, we had some 2,500 Ukrainians with sponsors, that number is now about halved for various reasons. Some of the host only committed to the 6th month period, some decided to go back to Ukraine or indeed other Country's not all in Europe. It's difficult to know exactly because some known as tourist visitors do come and go back several times.

I don't have a lot of information on the Afghan refugees except that some are doing really well especially when they have medical training. They are taken on and trained in our way for medical care and then can go on as Doctors, Nurses etc.

One more slightly scary figure for us is the average house price in Chichester District which is now some £700k. The most expensive place is apparently Wisborough Green.

WSSC

We are very aware at County that the state of the roads is of great concern to many residents, and I can assure you that this will play a prominent part in the forth coming budget meetings. We have already agreed several more millions in the current budget so that works on the roads can be continued.

Lots going on at the moment as ever trying to get things done so that we can have some free time during August. Usually, the only meetings actually in the diary for August are the Planning and Rights of way meetings and it's the same this year although there is only one application this coming month and that's for a rights of way application but not in our area.

Hopefully you will have seen that the new Fire, Rescue and Training Centre at Broadbridge Heath is now up and running. It is now names as Platinum House and is already taking 999 calls as well as bookings from all over the Country for training purposes. It has been recognised as state of the art and considered the best facility in the County at the moment. Quite a feather in our cap and a lot of the thanks go to our Chief Fire Officer Sabrina Hatton-Cohen.

When she arrived with us she immediately set to work on this project and has produced something that the Council and indeed the whole of West Sussex can be proud of. She is an exceptional Chief Fire Officer and has the respect of all who work with her.

For once I don't have a report on Children's Services and you can be assured that the required improvements are going ahead as planned. Another Service that we have worked hard on to make all the improvements required of us and we've done. Nothings perfect but it's a continuing process and it will be as good as it can be so that the young people in Care get all the help they need.

You know all about the Midhurst and Pulborough road situation and to add to things last month I also had a sink hole in Middle Street Petworth. It sounds dramatic but it was quite small in diameter but inspection showed it to be 1.2mtrs deep. I have a suspicion which could be right as pipe that probably once carried water was found, that one of the many underground tanks in Petworth built in the time of the third Earl on of which is situated under the present British Legion building in Petworth probably had pipes laid to supply public pumps in the town and my guess would be that this is one of them. However, whatever the history it has been dealt with for now and hopefully for some time to come.

That is most of the items for this month, but I will of course take back any issues for County that may arise at the meeting.

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