

The main news for all residents is that the County's Council Tax increase is set for 2.99%. One percent of this is specifically for Adult Services. The other 1.99% for our other duties.

It's always trying to balance what you can do and what could be done differently, what must stay and occasionally what can we increase.

Well, the good news is that we have included an extra 21 million over the next 5 years on top of the Highways budget. Highways have got to tackle highways issues like the never-ending potholes situation to improve our road network and I am sure you wouldn't disagree. Not only potholes but general maintenance of the highways etc.

By far the largest budget is for Adult care, especially in our ever-increasing ageing population. Isn't it great that we are all living longer, but of course some as they age need more care than others and we must try and cater for this.

On top of this there has been over 2 years of pandemic and we have to say the Government have generously reimburse the majority of our outgoing on Covid. There is of course another side and that is the extra work involved in, for instance, working with the NHS to see that those that could be taken out of Hospital have a suitable place to go.

We have also had to work with other Counties and the Government to provide accommodation for refugees and un-accompanied young people. We are not in this alone, but we are an active partner. One last thing to cope with is of course having to make provision for the increase in National Insurance. This has all been taken into account.

Sorry it's all been about the budget but be assured it is a balanced budget which to be legal it must be and it's not going to get easier in coming years.

A quick note for the rest of County business.

Our Children's Services have continued to improve and once again there is no intention to take West Sussex Children's Services into a Trust. We still of course have an OFSTED in some months' time but feeling quite confident.

On a happy note, also one of our Social workers Vivian Okeze-Tirado won overall Social Worker of the Year and the Social Justice gold award at the national Social Worker of the year awards. I think we should all be proud of her achievements. She attended Council and we presented her with a bouquet and lots of praise. Huge achievement.

The Queens jubilee draws nearer, and most Parish's have made announcements with their plans. I do hope I will be able to attend some of them but for those I don't get to I hope your Plans are going well and please keep me informed so that I can visit at least some of my Parish's. I am sure you can appreciate that with 11 Parish's in my division it's not possible to be everywhere.

I am always happy to try and solve issues and just to refresh if you need help at either County or Chichester District level my county e-mail is janet.duncton@westsussex.gov.uk or jduncton@chichester.gov.uk.

Keep safe

Janet Duncton

County Councillor Petworth division

Chichester District Councillor Loxwood ward