

WSSC June Report

As you may imagine there is not a lot to report at the moment. We have had one Council meeting and that is the annual meeting where basically it just tells you who has been put on to which committee so not a lot of interest to you at Parish.

That said I will tell you that I remain on Planning and Rights of Way and I have been put on Health and Social Care known as HASC. I have not been put on this committee before and not sure of my qualifications but that said I will get to grips with it a bit as soon as we meet. Of course I know what it does and what we hope for but I've not been on it so my in depth knowledge is limited at the moment.

I guess it is to be expect that they will replace me on the South Downs National Park Authority about which I am sorry because the majority of my division sits in the National Park and of course it's Statutory responsibility is Planning which does affect us most.

The outside bodies are usually sorted at the next full Council which will be in July so then we will all know our fate.

As I can't give you a lot of news I can give you assurance that everything is going on as it should and I am reporting any issues that arise in my division.

I thought as I don't have a lot to tell you I could give you my take on the updates etc for the new authority proposed by Government.

On the 16th December 2024 the Government sent out their plans for a Mayor and Strategic Authority and the disappearance of District and Borough Councils in West and East Sussex including Brighton and Hove. They wanted us to come up with Unitary Councils and for Steve Read the now Cabinet member for Housing and local Government to consider and decide upon.

To cut to the chase and not go into detail about the amount of work and time that has gone into this which is exorbitant, this is what we came up with and I can assure you the decision was made after much consideration especially about financial implications not least the disparity of Council Tax in all 7 Districts and Boroughs. Do they go up to the highest or down to the lowest. You get the picture.

The County took this into consideration although it would be for a new Unitary to decided but part of County recommendation for one Unitary was that the whole of West Sussex residents would get the same Service and costs. The highways contracts for instance which have already been let for a 10 year period would be the same for all plus all District and County current Services would under one hat be the same for all and on top of that the pay back time was the most favourable. This was all checked out financial and proved to be the best pay back option in time and money.

A few weeks ago all Council Leaders went to meet the Minister and to cut to the chase he told them that West and East Sussex on authority in each area, District & Borough Councils wanting 2 in each area and Brighton and Hove wanting 5 Unitaries were not acceptable to him he wanted 4 and as most of you know Chichester was put in with Horsham, Mid Sussex and Crawley and would be called the Urban Unitary for some strange reason!! They must have

forgotten that they set most of the southern area with a National Park and a lot of the central area is AONB.

Having said that this was his choice he then as you know has gone out to public consultation again for I guess their opinion. The Jury is out and we shall all have to wait and see what finally happens. What I do know is all of us including I suspect the Officers are totally fed up with it and if it's going to happen we need some decisions pretty quickly. They have already delayed the Mayor election to 2028 although I believe the Statutory Authority is in place.

I can only add watch this space.

Sorry I can't be with you Tillington but please let me know if there is some issue I need to be checking on and I have reported the rails etc left at the bottom of Brookfield Lane. As every year I go over to Ranville, Petworths twin village and the first liberated on d day.

Janet Duncton

County Councillor Petworth division