

Parish Council Report 07 September 2026

Personal Update

Although August is traditionally seen as a quiet month at County Hall, it has been anything but quiet throughout the month. With a new administration and new responsibilities, my focus has been on getting up to speed with county wide issues linked to economic growth and ensuring we have the right people and skills to meet that growth. There is a lot of really good work going on around the county and particularly in the larger towns with various growth deals (see below). I have however instigated a meeting to discuss how we can also focus on growth in rural areas so that opportunities in these vital communities are not neglected. We want successful thriving communities throughout our county, not just in the larger towns. I also want to focus on ensuring we develop as many opportunities for young people in our communities, who are struggling more and more, to get employment.

If you have thoughts/ideas/concerns about these issues in your parishes, I would love to hear from you.

Thriving town centres, greener spaces and better transport links at heart of refreshed Growth Deals

West Sussex County Council has endorsed a refreshed programme of Growth Deals that will invest in the county's high streets, green spaces, transport links and community facilities, helping communities across West Sussex thrive through to 2030.

Cllr Yvonne Gravely, Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills, has formally signed the refreshed Growth Deals on behalf of West Sussex County Council, reaffirming the council's commitment to working closely with partners to deliver sustainable economic growth and investment across the county.

The seven refreshed agreements covering Adur, Arun, Chichester, Crawley, Horsham, Mid Sussex and Worthing, have been updated to reflect current local plans, economic priorities and development opportunities, with a stronger emphasis on the quality of the places people live, work and visit.

Cllr Gravely said: "The refreshed Growth Deals reaffirm our commitment to sustainable growth across West Sussex through to 2030."

"Growth is about more than numbers on a page. It is about creating attractive town centres, greener public spaces, better transport links and the facilities that help communities thrive.

"By working together, we can continue creating opportunities for residents, supporting businesses and strengthening communities across the county."

To find out more about the Growth programme and stay up to date with the latest projects and developments, visit: [Growth Deals - West Sussex County Council](#).

HIGHWAYS Parish Briefings

Virtual parish briefing sessions will recommence in October, beginning with a Winter Readiness on the Highway briefing.

These sessions are designed to:

- provide parish and town councils with the latest highways service updates,
- offer insights to seasonal priorities and preparations
- give updates on key activities for local communities.

A full programme of sessions will be shared in due course.

FIRE SERVICE NEWS UPDATE

Firefighters are urging people not to take part in a dangerous social media trend involving setting fire to aerosol cans.

The warning comes after crews attended a fire at Horsham Skate Park on Wednesday 20 August.

Joint Fire Control received a 999 call from a member of the public reporting a smell of burning. Upon arrival, firefighters from Horsham Fire Station discovered that refuse, wood and aerosol cans had been deliberately set alight.

Fortunately, the fire was small and was quickly extinguished. However, following a summer of record-breaking temperatures and prolonged dry weather, the incident could have easily escalated and spread beyond control.

Fire and rescue services in England and Wales are currently experiencing the busiest year on record for wildfires, and residents are being urged to help reduce the risk of further incidents.

Since the beginning of June, West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service has responded to 123 deliberately started fires, representing a 38% increase compared with the same period last year.

Ian James, Station Manager at Horsham Fire Station, said: "Setting fire to aerosol cans is extremely dangerous and can have serious consequences. When exposed to heat, aerosol cans can explode without warning, causing injuries to anyone nearby and increasing the risk of a fire spreading rapidly.

"While this incident was brought under control quickly, the outcome could have been very different. With vegetation and open spaces extremely dry, it only takes one small ember to put lives, property and the environment at risk.

"We would urge parents and carers to speak to young people about the dangers of copying trends they see online, and we ask everyone to act responsibly and help us prevent unnecessary fires in our communities."

People can reduce the risk of accidentally starting a fire this summer by:

- Fully extinguishing cigarettes and disposing of them responsibly.
- Keeping barbecues at home well away from trees, shrubs, fences and sheds, and placing them on a stable, flat surface.
- Keeping a bucket of water or sand nearby in case of emergency.
- Keeping glass bottles, mirrors and other reflective objects out of direct sunlight.
- Taking litter home and disposing of waste responsibly.

Reablement Support Service

Release date: 21 August 2026

A service helping thousands of people recover following illness, injury or surgery is proving central to West Sussex County Council's work to develop sustainable adult social care services.

Over the past year, the service, which is commissioned by the council and managed by Essex Cares Limited (ECL), has provided more than 2,600 people with short-term support to rebuild their confidence and manage everyday life safely at home. Of those completing the programme, 76% required no further ongoing care needs, while 97% reported a positive experience.

Councillor Richard Bates, the council's Cabinet Member for Adults' Services, said:

"Helping people remain independent in their own homes is an essential part of supporting healthier, more fulfilling lives. It's encouraging to see so many of our residents benefiting from personalised support following illness, injury or surgery."

Referrals increased by 17% compared with the previous year, with those from community pathways almost trebling. Around 126,000 hours of support were delivered during the year.

By helping people do more for themselves and reducing the need for longer-term care, reablement improves individual outcomes while helping the council manage growing demand.

ECL's reablement specialists deliver reablement activity to people using the service, working alongside West Sussex County Council's Occupational Therapy Team, which provides occupational therapy support where needed.

Over the past year, we have supported more than 2,600 people through the service, with 76% completing reablement with no ongoing care needs and have ambitions to support considerably more people in year two. We share the council's vision to provide access to therapy-led community reablement to local people and look forward to what the next five years of the contract bring."

If you could benefit from adult social care support, or know someone who could, contact Adults' CarePoint on 01243 642121 or visit [West Sussex Connect to Support](#).

Angel Update

Whilst there have been some delays over the summer holidays, progress is still being made, and we are hopeful of being able to make a further announcement on next steps in the coming weeks.

The following is the latest update available on the SDNPA website:

Update on Midhurst fire-damaged buildings – August 2026

August 18, 2026

Works are continuing on the site of the former Tuck Shop/Olive and Vine to ensure that all repairs to the neighbouring building are finalised before work starts on the remainder of the site, which includes the former Angel Inn.

The current work started at the end of June and follows the South Downs National Park Authority granting listed building consent for the partial dismantling of the former Tuck Shop/Olive and Vine, next to the former Angel Inn, following an application by the site's owners.

Further progress is now being made on a planning application for both sites. It comes after a project group – which is made up of the site owners, their specialist advisors Manorwood, Cllr Yvonne Graveley from West Sussex County Council and the

National Park Authority – have been reviewing all available options to bring the site back into use.

All reports, surveys and assessments have been commissioned and a number of specialists are working together to provide all the information needed for a full planning and Listed Building application.

The applications will also contain clear details on the phasing of the proposed development – so all can see at what stage the hoarding will be reduced, the pavement reopened, and when changes can be expected to the buildings.

Some of the specialist surveys and documents have taken longer than expected to produce, however, the application is actively being prepared and is expected to be submitted to the National Park Authority in the autumn.

Local Government Reform

I have been advised that an update on what decision, if any, has been made by the government concerning LGR and what it will mean for West Sussex is imminent. I will provide any updates on this as I get it.

Case Work handled during August

- School places for child with special needs
- Complaints about food bins not being collected
- Concerns about a leaning lamp post
- Flooding
- Road Safety following death of a resident in Midhurst
- Parking disputes and problems
- Concern about state of a wall on the Angel site
- Concern about proposed SGN gas works
- Overhanging vegetation
- Concern with some public rights of way
- Re-directing a PROW
- Accident reporting and how it is collated by WSCC

Yvonne Gravely

County Councillor

Cabinet Member Economy and Skills