

WSCC - Parish Council Report October 2026 – Yvonne Gravely

Personal Update

This past month has been very busy.

Since my last report, in addition to attending parish council meetings, Cabinet meetings, and Cabinet scrutiny meetings, I have:

- Met with Midhurst Vision to establish how I can help them achieve their aims for Midhurst
- Met with Midhurst Hub Founder to discuss how we can improve information locally for our older residents to help them live long and happy lives
- Met with Chief Executive of Chichester Foodbank to understand the importance of the work they do locally including in Midhurst division.
- Met with Gatwick Noise Management Board to understand my role on the board
- Met with the new Chair (Henry Powell) of West Sussex Economic Growth Board, (of which I am Vice Chair) to agree our priorities for the coming year. One of them will be to ensure we have focus on our rural as well as town/city economies and how they add to our visitor/tourist economy.
- Spoke as a panel member at a Chamber of Commerce event.
- Held a surgery for residents with Dom Merritt District Council in Midhurst
- Met with representative of NFU to understand the challenges farmers are facing in West Sussex
- Attended meetings for Chichester Growth Board, Crawley Growth Boards and WSCC/CDC Regeneration Growth Board
- Attended an SDNPA induction day – learning more about the work they do
- Attended SDNPA P&R Committee meeting
- Met with Chair of SDNPA to discuss how WSCC and SDNPA can work collaboratively on many issues, especially visitor economy.
- Attended Lib Dem Conference
- Visited a major grower to understand how much they contribute to the local economy as guest of West Sussex Growers Association
- Visited Alexandra Arts Centre in Bognor Regis to review progress on their redevelopment.
- Attended training session on Data protection, Briefing by Water Authorities, Briefing on Local Government Reorganisation.
- Met with organiser of Speedwatch Midhurst and Dom Merritt District Councillor for update on progress
- In my role as Whip of the Lib Dems, held 10 1-1 meetings for new county councillors to ensure they were happy in their new roles.

Local Government Reorganisation

I'm afraid currently the question is will they/won't they? We still do not know definitively whether the Government will want LGR to proceed in West Sussex or not, and if it does, what the final configuration will look like. Or indeed, if it doesn't proceed in May 27, whether it will proceed in May 28 or even at all. The Government have indicated they will let us know this month. In the meantime, everyone is preparing for District Council elections to proceed in the absence of LGR in May 27. I'm afraid it is a case of watch this space.

Administration Update

The new alliance administration at WSCC is working well. Some highlights from the various portfolios:

- **Environment and Waste** – WSCC is bringing back its Waste Prevention Community Grant Fund – with £50,000 available for community organisations and grants of up to £5,000 per project. Applications are open for projects in 2027/28. The previous round funded 10 community projects which collectively prevented more than 90 tonnes of material from becoming waste. The wider results show the projects reached more than 560,000 people, involved 100 volunteers and saved enough energy to power more than 300 homes for a year. The application portal will close on 3rd November. [Waste Prevention Community Grant Fund - West Sussex County Council](#)
- In September WSCC launched the 'Stop the Spark' campaign to reduce fires caused by batteries, vapes and electrical items being put in household bins. 40 fires linked to batteries and electricals have already occurred during 2026 at recycling facilities and in waste vehicles.
- WSCC has been working with District and Borough Councils to produce the first Countywide climate strategy – looking at how it will mitigate climate change and adapt to its affects across West Sussex. The consultation had 890 responses. Next steps will include stakeholder mobilisation workshops.
- **Adult social care** – new support has been introduced to help residents understand, plan and pay for future care including an updated West Sussex Care Guide. With care-home costs averaging around £1450 a week, the aim is to help families plan earlier and support people to remain independent at home for longer. [Care Guide - West Sussex County Council](#)
- **Community Support – Fire and Rescue - Trading Standards enforcement** – WSCC secured its first ever Restricted Premises Order after repeated sales of vapes to children in a Crawley shop. The premises are now banned for one year from selling tobacco, vapes and other nicotine products.

- Six new on-call fire fighters completed their initial training and joined stations across West Sussex including Horsham, Arundel. Shoreham and Bognor.
- Between Jan and August – WS fire fighters attended 22 wildfires, 21 other large outdoor fires and 677 smaller outdoor fires. The service is procuring eight multi-purpose 4x4 vehicles to strengthen wildfire and water-rescue capability.
- **Economy and Skills** - to improve digital inclusion WSCC announced free library sessions to help residents to get online and use services including the NHS APP. An estimated 98000 West Sussex residents do not have a smartphone, 131000 do not have a lap top and 14% lack essential digital skills for work.
- Applications are open for the next fully funded FUTURE CEO programme providing intensive leadership development for a selected group of 8-10 West Sussex business leaders through the county's growth hub. [West Sussex business leaders invited to join exclusive Future CEO development programme - West Sussex County Council](#)
- WSCC launched the Open Digital project in Chichester installing infrastructure designed to improve poor mobile coverage across the main streets in Chichester, supporting visitors, business owners and residents. [OpenDigital - West Sussex County Council](#)
- **Highways** - West Sussex County Council is trialling new artificial intelligence (AI) technology that could help make highway inspections safer and more efficient. The multi-year trial will see dashboard-mounted cameras installed in eight highway inspection vehicles across the county. The cameras automatically capture road conditions and use AI to identify defects such as potholes, cracking, surface deterioration and faded road markings. [New AI technology trial aims to make West Sussex road inspections safer and more efficient - West Sussex County Council](#)

Case Work

This included a wide range of issues summarised below:

- Issues with road works and road closures
- Adult Social Care problem – accessing support
- Advice on applying for temporary road closure
- Concern about school crossing
- Road safety concerns
- Diversion of a PROW
- Further concerns about a tree
- Car Parking
- Planning permission
- Missing footpath sign