

District Councillor's Report

November 2021

The district council has launched the Chichester Youth Hub, which support 18-24 year olds to gain the skills and confidence they need to enter the working world. Working with local businesses, The Chichester Youth Hub supports clients into finding employment, work experience, apprenticeships or Kickstart roles. The Kickstart programme is a government scheme that provides young people with six months paid work placements to gain key skills and experience that will help them to find long-term employment.

The first stage of a project to increase the amount of much-needed short stay accommodation for people facing homelessness is now complete, with three refurbished flats now ready for use. Work is progressing well at the Freeland Close site (Chichester), which will provide a further 17 flats.

CDC's public toilets have also been recognised as some of the most accessible in the country. Overall, we were ranked fourth in the country and they also won a national award for having the best online parking services.

The pandemic has had a financial impact on the council. Last year CDC produced a three year plan to save nearly £2 million. The council is making good progress towards this target. Over £900,000 has been saved this financial year with a further £864,000 of planned savings to achieve over the next couple of years. This has been achieved through reducing costs and bringing in additional income.

The council has an upcoming exhibition, Brick Wonders at the Novium, which will open on Saturday 4 December. Brick Wonders will take visitors on a global journey of wonders old and new, recreated from 500,000 LEGO Bricks. Beginning with the seven wonders of the ancient world, the exhibition includes

sights such as the Grand Canyon, Old London Bridge, the International Space Station and an installation of the Great Barrier Reef – complete with underwater lighting and sound effects!

A number of projects are in the process of being delivered using the Government's Welcome Back Fund to continue to deliver initiatives which support the district's recovery from the pandemic. These included extra cleaning of public conveniences and extra litter picking plus increased hours of Foreshores staff to help with the higher numbers of visitors to our coast over the summer. Further projects to improve the public realm across the district are underway – these include signage and planting. The fund is also being used to support events and markets in the district.

The latest vacancy rate figures: Chichester 11.7%, East Wittering 0%, Midhurst 8.3%, Petworth 4.5%, Selsey 5.4%.

The Housing Standards Team has been successful in a joint bid for funding with Arun District Council to launch a project to improve the energy efficiency rating of privately rented accommodation. The funding will be used to employ dedicated staff to identify properties that are failing to meet the minimum energy efficiency standard. Once identified, landlords will be given the opportunity to improve their property to the required standard. However, if they fail to undertake the required works within a reasonable timeframe enforcement action will follow. It is worth noting some properties qualify for an exemption to the regulations, this includes many listed properties where it is not possible to retrofit energy efficiency measures.

The Household Support Fund which allows vulnerable households across the country to access a new £500m support fund to help them with essentials over the coming months as the country continues its recovery from the pandemic. The new Household Support Fund will support millions of households in England and will be distributed by councils in England, who know their local areas best and can directly help those who need it most, including for example, through small grants to meet daily needs such as food, clothing, and utilities.

Cash will be made available to Local Authorities in October 2021. CDC is working with West Sussex County Council on the criteria for this scheme who are responsible for the administration of the Household Support Fund. As soon as the scheme is developed the website will be updated to reflect this. For further information in the meantime please visit

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/governmentlaunches-500m-support-for-vulnerable-households-over-winter>

The new walks programme for November – January will be published at the end of October; the council be also celebrating 20 years of Heart Smart walks by introducing some new short beginners' walks: Meeting at The Grange, Midhurst, on 9 November at 11am. The group will also be encouraged to stay for coffee afterwards.

On 1 October 2021 the Council successfully prosecuted Ms Larna Black for non-payment of a fixed penalty notice for littering. The case was proved in the defendant's absence and magistrates found her guilty in her absence and fined her £150, a contribution towards costs of £200 and a victim surcharge of £34. CDC employs East Hants District Council (EHDC) to deliver littering enforcement. The service provides two EHDC officers four days a week and over the previous three years the service has been revenue neutral to the council. The service covers the whole district and more than 4,000 FPNs were issued 2017 – 2020.