

District Councillor's Report

January 2023

A new parking strategy has been approved, which covers plans and ambitions for the next four year and takes account of the changes in the way people shop and use the high streets in the district following the pandemic. Key schemes include consideration of the release of around 120 car parking spaces in Chichester's Cattle Market car park to create a permanent market / events space; introducing additional electric vehicle charging bays in car parks; carrying out a feasibility study for redesigning Northgate car park in Chichester to help improve its connection to the city centre and surrounding visitor attractions; carrying out a feasibility study of options for Bosham car park to help improve layout, traffic flow and make it a more welcoming area; and reviewing parking payment options across all of the district's car parks to ensure they reflect customer needs and the latest technology.

Proposals have been developed for Midhurst Vision with the aim of making the town greener, more pedestrian and cycling friendly with better wayfinding - linking all areas of the town centre. The proposals are focused on North Street and the Grange car parks and their links into the town centre, North Street, West Street and the entrance to Midhurst outside of the police station. The Midhurst community were consulted about the proposals from 5 October until 15 November 2022, with an exhibition at the Grange, supported by an online

presence and the opportunity for the public to feedback either on site or online. Nearly 600 people completed the survey, and the overall feedback has been very positive.

Detailed feedback has been analysed and a summary report produced. The findings will be presented and discussed with the Midhurst Vision partners in early January which will help inform and prioritise the next steps for the projects. Funding opportunities will also be discussed. Feedback to the community will also take place. The meeting is on Thursday 12th location and time to be announced and parish councils in the area should try to send a representative.

Midhurst Foodbank continues to fire on all cylinder and donations (Tesco or Sainsburys) is welcome.

The Courts in Chichester continue to operate as Nightingale courts. The MOJ will assess the national and local requirements to continue Nightingale courts in the new year.

Nine applications for Independent Retailers Grants have been approved to be allocated funding. The total amount allocated to these businesses is £27,279.15. Two of these businesses are based in Selsey, four in Chichester, one in East Wittering, one in Midhurst and one in Petworth.

CDC started delivering the 'Helping SME Businesses prepare for a low carbon economy' project earlier this year. It is led by WSCC and involves a small steering group with officers from Coastal West Sussex Partnership, Chichester District Council and Mid Sussex District Council. CDC's Economic Development Manager was on the steering group and this involvement will now continue through the Growth & Sustainability Officer. A Green Business Advisory group with representation from businesses in each District and Borough met in the spring to advise and shape direction, and a Low Carbon Business in West Sussex You Tube video series has been launched with more than 1,200 views in the first month and excellent reviews. A wider support programme for enterprises will launch in the coming months. The majority of funding will be used to deliver a Green Business Champions programme, to support businesses who have yet to take action or who are unsure of their first steps to becoming more sustainable.

The Green Champions will:

- Promote the benefits and business opportunities of low carbon business through existing business networks, including in person at business breakfasts and business networking events.
- Offer 1-1 support to businesses who are unsure of how to take their first steps.
- Deliver peer-to-peer networking opportunities to groups of businesses who want to take early-stage steps.

WSCC currently have this work out to tender. Additionally, the programme will deliver a series of events, virtual and in-person, to help businesses at the early

stages of their sustainability journey to learn from the early innovators and from those who are already on their green journey.

A programme on 'Advanced Digital Skills' will launch to residents and businesses in the new year to help boost advanced digital skills in the county to meet an identified skills gap. The programme will link with training providers and the Sussex Local Skills Improvement Plan.

The project aims to kickstart:

- Raising aspiration and delivering exciting new opportunities for those considering building an advanced digital career in the county
- Giving West Sussex SMEs creative new ways to showcase future employment opportunities and opportunities for direct conversations with jobseekers, career pivoters, young people, mature workers and those reconsidering a London commute.
- Strengthening partnerships, joining up and enhancing existing initiatives, networks and engagement programme

Programme delivery will be from January 2023 across three spatial geographies (Coastal, Rural and Urban) and will feature a substantial media and social media communications campaign. It will deliver activity in each of the district and borough geographies through pop-up information hubs and roadshows. It also plans to deliver a digital futures symposium in the autumn.

