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**MINUTES of the Annual Electors Meeting  
for the Parish of Southbourne  
on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2024  
St Johns Church Meeting Rooms @ 6.30pm**

**Southbourne Parish Councillors:**

Amanda Tait (Chair) Tracie Bangert (also CDC) Lucy Meredith, Jonathan Money, Roger Humphrey and Shelly Rosenberg

**Chichester District Council:**

Cllr. Oona Hickson  
Pam Bushby - Divisional Manager for Communities  
Piers Taylor – Community Safety & Engagement Officer

**West Sussex County Council:**

Cllr. Andrew Kerry-Bedell

**Sussex Police:**

PC Fisk and PCSO Ryder,

**In attendance:**

Sheila Hodgson – Parish Clerk  
Maria Carvajal-Neal – Deputy Clerk  
Michelle Banach – Admin Assistant

***The meeting opened at meeting 6.30pm***

**1. Chairmans welcome and introductions of Cllrs present.**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced her fellow Councillors.

**2. To approve the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2023**

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 19<sup>th</sup> May 2023 were **APPROVED** and duly signed by the Chairman.

**3. To receive the Annual Report of the Council**

The Chair read out the following Annual Report:

*Good evening and thank you for joining us for Southbourne Parish Council's Annual Parish Meeting of Electors.*

*This is your Meeting, and we look forward to hearing your views and contributions over the course of the evening.*

*It's been another challenging year, nationally and internationally, as we've continued to watch in despair, the continuing conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza. Our thoughts and prayers remain with those who have so sadly been caught up in these conflicts.*

*Back home, the cost-of living crisis continues to impact so many families up and down the country, including right here in Southbourne and we must all do all we can to help those in need and to support the local charities and organisations that work so very hard to ensure everyone receives the assistance they need.*

*With this in mind SPC are delighted to be able to report that through the Grant Programme they have donated £5k towards several local charities and organisations operating within Southbourne such as:*

- Home Start, who over the last 12 months have supported up to 15 families living within Southbourne, all with at least 1 child under the age of 5;*
- Arun & Chichester Citizens Advice Bureau, who have seen a considerable increase in people accessing their services due to the cost of living;*
- Tylers Trust an organisation that offers emotional support to families of children dealing with life threatening or terminal illness.*

*All these organisations do a fantastic job and deserve our support. But we also get to support fun things and on a lighter note, SPC also donated to the 1<sup>st</sup> Southbourne Brownies so that every single Brownie, regardless of their family circumstances, were able to attend a production of the Jungle Book in December.*

*As Chair of the Council, I sometimes get invited to attend civic and public events. It is always a pleasure, and a privilege, to be able to represent Southbourne at these occasions.*

*The last event was the opening of Marina Farm. SPC are proud to have donated to this project from the CIL funding it receives from local development. A donation of £5,000 was made to assist with the re-wilding and beautification of the area. The work undertaken at Marina Farm is exceptional and I really do recommend a visit.*

*I have also been asked to officially open the new show homes for the new development at Priors Meadow.*

*Other CIL donations this year include £5,800 for Soundproofing the Village hall to help with the noise reduction and echoing and £1,000 toward the running of The Community Transport Bus*

*This year also saw the completion of Neighbourhood Plan 3 for Southbourne. I would once again like to this opportunity to thank everyone who was involved with ensuring the plan was adopted.*

## **BUDGET**

*In January, Southbourne Parish Councillors approved their budget for 2024/25. The Parish Council receive a small proportion of residents' council tax and from 1<sup>st</sup>*

*April 2024, the Parish Council approved a 7.3% increase in their share (equivalent to £0.12 per week).*

*Throughout this financial year Southbourne Parish Council have consciously striven to make savings to reduce its overall cost. The most significant saving has been achieved by joining the West Sussex County Council PFI Scheme for the street lighting supply. With the ever-growing increase for electricity supply, joining the scheme has enabled SPC been able to reduce the budget by 2/3rds from £27k in 2023/24 to an estimated £9k for 2024/25.*

*Through careful investment SPC have also been able to generate an increase in interest on the reserves it holds for capital projects.*

*The actual estimated expenditure for 2024/25 has been reduced by £23,462.00 from last year and the income generated is projected to increase by £11,680. This would normally have seen a much smaller increase on the previous year's precept. However, last year's cost were offset by a £52,000.00 deposit from general reserves There is no capacity to do the same again this year, which is reflected in the costings.*

*It should be noted funds held in Ear Marked reserves are not for general expenses. This money is generated from grants and expenditure is restricted to specific purposes and projects. For instances, Operation Watershed projects, CIL money for infrastructure enhancements and Section 106 contributions that are determined by developers.*

### **Councillors**

*Southbourne Parish Council hold 13 Councillors seats but is currently operating with 9 Councillors. If you think you can spare some time to become a Councillor and are able to give up a few hours a month, please consider joining SPC as a co-opted Member. We need people from all backgrounds and experiences who reflect our community to join the team. Please do give it some thought and if you are interested speak to either the Clerk or any Councillor who will be pleased to give you more information.*

### **D-Day Event**

*Lastly can I please take this opportunity to remind everyone about our upcoming D-Day Event on the 8<sup>th</sup> June. The event is intended to be a day of both celebration and reflection to mark this historic occasion. Whist celebrating what became the turning point of the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, we are also taking some time to reflect and remember all those who made the ultimate sacrifice for freedom. Please take a leaflet with you before you leave which has all the details and we hope to see you there.*

*Before I commence proceedings, I would like to welcome the Chichester District Council's Divisional Manager for Communities, Pam Bushby; CDC's Community Safety & Community Engagement Officer Piers Taylor; from Sussex Police, PC Fisk and PCSO James Ryder and of course our own District and WSCC Councillors, Cllr. Oona Hickson and Andrew Kerry-Bedell.*

*Thank you all for coming and I will now move to the next agenda item.*

#### **4. To receive the Accounts of the Parish Council year ending 31st March 2024 and Budget for 2024-2025**

The Clerk reported that the accounts for year ending 31<sup>st</sup> May 2024 were not yet finalised and in the process of being prepared for audit. However, once they are available details will be published on the Parish Council's website and anyone wishing to view will be able to do so.

#### **5. To consider any Resolutions of which written notice has been given by Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2024**

Mr & Mrs Livett attended the meeting and spoke about an issue relating to a planning application that had been granted for a "change of use" from an Office to a Fitness Centre. Their property backs onto the building in question and the noise that emanates from it is excessive.

Mrs Livett asked if when considering the application had any validity searches been carried out to see what impact such a business would have on the neighbouring properties and on what grounds was the application approved.

The centre operates 7 days a week from 6am – 9pm including bank holidays and constantly plays music so loud it can be clearly heard inside their home even with windows and doors closed. There is no consideration and no respite. The building has no soundproofing and the fabric is not fit for use. Not only is the loud music a problem but when weights are dropped the sound from that vibrates.

Mrs Livett has engaged with the Environment Agency and Gillian Keegan MP and responses from them have been positive. However, will SPC take this issue up at their next meeting and retract their original support.

The Chair responded and explained some of the detail of how the Planning Committee approach their consideration to applications. Once planning has been granted there can be no retraction but this may be something that could be addressed through enforcement. The Chair said the matter would be taken to the next meeting of the Council but felt this would be better served by the Planning Committee to deal with.

CDC Cllr. Bangert advised she would contact the Economic Development Team to see what the decision to approve the application was based on. CDC Cllr. Hickson said she would make some enquiries of the conditions of the application and liaise with environmental health. Cllr. Hickson also spoke privately with Mr & Mrs Livett to see how she could assist.

The Chair thanked Mr & Mrs Livett for raising the issue with the Council and assured them that they would do all they could within their powers to assist.

#### **6. To welcome the Chichester District Council's Divisional Manager for Communities who will give an overview of the role, information regarding the recruitment for a new Gypsy Traveller role and CDC's response to unauthorised encampments and to further welcome the Community Safety & Community Engagement Officer to offer advice on safety**

The Chichester District Council's Divisional Manager for Communities, Pam Bushby spoke about how varied and interesting her role is and gave a brief overview of some of the work being undertaken by her and her team.

#### **Community Engagement Team**

- Oversee Grant Concessions
- Energy Advice Service (not every district council offer this)

- £175k of grant funding available for businesses, leisure and community. (many councils have stopped giving grants to communities)

### **Social Prescribing Service**

- This is a 5 star service that gives people the opportunity to deal with non-medical issues that have an impact on their health and wellbeing such as
- Money, Debt or benefits advice.
- Support getting into work or finding voluntary opportunities.
- Caring for someone and needing a break or some extra help.
- Changes in your home environment.

### **Wellbeing Service**

This service is also supported by West Sussex County Council and concentrates on providing help with issues such as:

- Smoking and alcohol addictions
- Health issues
- Choose work
- Interview techniques
- Help to become digital savvy

### **Community Contact Centre**

This is not a switchboard but a very hands on customer service team. The team will do all they can to resolve customer issues and will spend as much time as it takes. This can impact on call waiting times but also saves time for other service areas. The community contact team can also be accessed online.

There is also a reception centre and waiting area at CDC where you can speak face to face with the reception team. This is another service that is disappearing from many other councils

### **Community Wardens**

Whilst every Parish would love a warden the cost involved would be untenable. Therefore, the political decision was taken that wardens would be deployed in the areas most suffering from deprivation. However, all Parishes have access to support.

### **JAG (Joint Action Group)**

This is a multi-agency group that receives a small amount of funding from the Police Crime Commissioners office. Working with just a small pot of money the group working with the Police have a huge impact on crime and violence throughout the district.

The biggest issue currently is fraud. Statistics show that the demographic most likely to fall victim to fraud are women who live alone aged 65+. There are officers who are willing to come and give a presentation on Scam Awareness.

### **CCTV**

Car Park cameras are gradually being decommissioned. This is because they have proven to be of low value. Instead, investment is geared towards installation of up-to-date cameras on the streets to support public safety.

## **Gypsy Traveller Community**

CDC have approved the implementation for a Gypsy Traveller Liaison position. This is a role that Pam has been pushing for, for some time to help build bridges between the gypsy traveller community and the Police and other authorities. This will be a non-enforcement supportive role primarily to build relationships and provide a single point contact for all. Through this liaison it will enable the community to access services that they don't normally use whilst helping CDC fulfil their duties under the Equalities Act.

Pam then took questions before handing over to her colleague Piers Taylor the CDC Community Safety and Engagement Officer.

## **Traveller Encampments**

Piers gave an overview of encampment numbers and various sites across the district. CDC are installing bunding at open space sites, such as parks and recreation grounds to prevent encampment but this can create displacement to local Parishes. Landowners are advised to take precautions and follow the updated protocol that CDC has issued. The key is to have a plan and ensure all gates and access areas have controls in place.

## **Operation PETRA**

This was an initiative that ran between 2005-2015 involving the district council, Police, British Transport Police and various train operators to address anti-social behaviour on trains and at stations. Over the last 18 months Piers has been looking to "kick-start" the initiative and following recent changes in personal within various rail networks and stations it is beginning to re-ignite. There have been several incidents at the Southbourne crossing so Network Rail embarked on a weeklong presentation at Bourne College to raise awareness of dangers and the impacts of anti-social behaviour. As a result, other schools have since received the presentation and new partners are joining Operation Petra such as Stagecoach and WSCC. There are plans to extend the operation across the district and CDC are encouraged by the renewed enthusiasm by the train companies to take more of a lead. The initiative also looks at issues surrounding safeguarding and working with children being exploited within the rail network.

Following a number of questions from members of the public, the Chair thanked Pam and Piers for their excellent and informative presentations and invited PC Fisk and PCSO Ryder, to give an overview of their roles within the parish.

## **7. To welcome PCSO's James Ryder and PC Fisk to give an overview of his role withing the Parish**

PCSO Ryder spoke of his involvement dealing with a spate of anti-social behaviour at the Mill Pond that crosses the boarder with Hampshire. This included incidents of young people jumping from the bridge. The marine manager has been working with the police to see what steps can be taken to reduce risk.

PCSO Ryder was pleased to report that officers successfully seized an illegal off-road motorcycle in the Westbourne area which had also been driving through Southbourne. Hopefully, this will lead to a stamp down on this type of activity and will lead to more illegal bikes being taken off the road.

Members of the public were keen to ask questions so the Chair opened the floor. Some of the questions included:

- What can be done about cyclists on the harbour paths who blatantly ignore the no cycling signs
- There are continuing incidents of shoplifting at local stores, is anything being done to combat this
- Are there any consequences to the actions of any of the crimes – if there are no consequences it will just continue

Officers gave an overview of the various options the police can take. Most of the crimes reported regarding shoplifting and antisocial behaviour involve minors and there is a reluctance to criminalise young people. However, there are tiers of intervention depending on the level of the crime which the justice team will consider on an individual basis.

PC Fisk urged everyone to report incidents. Last year only 16 incidents were reported to the Police regarding Southbourne and a total of 59 for a 4 year rolling period. These numbers would not indicate to him the need for a full time PCSO presence. Deployment is based on intel so it is important to report every incident every time.

After further discussion, the Chair thanked the Officers for their time and contribution and it was a good opportunity for residents to speak with the Police and raise their concerns.

### **8. Open Forum including questions to Councillors and Attendees**

CDC Councillors Tracie Bangert and Oona Hickson and WSCC Councillor Andrew Kerry-Bedell, all prepared reports for the meeting, copies of which are appended to these minutes.

Cllr. Kerry-Bedell had left the meeting, due to another meeting, but Cllr. Bangert and Hickson engaged alongside SPC Councillors with members of the public on a variety of subjects.

A resident thanked SPC Councillors and staff for their hard work.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and hoped they had found the evening informative and helpful.

The meeting closed at 8.10pm

## APPENDIX

### Report from West Sussex County Councillor Andrew Kerry-Bedell

#### County Councillor overview 2023/24



Whilst we'd love to do everything, everywhere, all at once, A County Councillor's role is one of priorities. We'd love to fix every pothole, support every business, take care of every adult and child's needs and save the planet, but sadly that would take an almost infinite budget.

WSCC looks after 88,000 residents and around 380,000 households and manages 4,000km of footpaths and the same length of rights of way each year. There's an £80m budget for highways, which may sound a lot but it's just 4% of the WSCC budget of £2bn. That's because, quite rightly, three quarters of our budget goes on schools, children's and adult services, the cost of which, since Covid and Brexit, has escalated way beyond inflation.

WSCC has raised Council Tax by 4.99%, to plug the gaps in escalating adult and children's care costs. This year it's also been challenging to deliver other services residents expect, especially in regard to highways and flooding. The challenge every Council faces is the budget each gets from central Government. You may have read eight councils declared themselves bankrupt in the last five years. That's because there's been a 40% cut in relative terms in the budgets of Councils at every level in the last decade. To plug the gap in services they might lose, England's Councils need another £4bn a year, yet government only came up with £600m, 15% of what's required. Because of this lack of funding, in a recent survey 14 Councils said they were likely to declare effective bankruptcy in the next 12 months, with over half saying they would go bust in the next five years without extra funding.

The good news is that not only is West Sussex not cutting services, unlike over the border in Hampshire, but we've kept all key services and still have good reserves in the bank, should times get tougher. We've also even added new services like the Flex It bus service that covers almost all of West Sussex, for free travel on demand for hospital appointments etc. But WSCC has to be even more responsible and smarter with the money we have.

Climate change is upon us, with 2023 having the highest rainfall, 1.1m or 43 inches, since Met Office records began in 1836. However, I've made sure Bourne Parishes have planned ahead with flood mitigation. This is even more important given the heavy rains that flooded Thorney Island causeway and the storm on 9<sup>th</sup> April which flooded Cobnor, Hermitage and Southbourne. I set up the Bourne Flood Prevention Group in summer 2023, with each Parish having a representative. So far this has helped identify all the areas in each Parish prone to flooding from rain and rivers and the harbour. Some of these flood issues will take some time and involve multiple agencies, like the Thorney Island causeway,



Ham Brook and River Street, Westbourne. But what's important is we've now identified areas at risk and can put a plan in place to focus WSCC resources on long term solutions.

For those concerned with potholes, what most of my inbox seems to be about, the good news is we've added another £4m again in 2024/25 to fix them. That's not to say they won't continue, with hotter summers and wetter winters almost doubling the potholes reported over the last five years. But we'll do our best and have two more jet patcher trucks to deal with the biggest potholes too. We've also seen many roads re-tarmaced in almost every Bourne Parish last year, and we'll continue to do this as required where the road surface gets really bad.

Another aspect of concern to almost all residents is speeding. I was on the WSCC speed limit policy panel that changed the rules in 2023 so residents could take more control of the speed limits on local roads. Through WSCC Traffic regulation Orders and Community Highways Schemes the County runs, after local consultation Bourne Parishes have proposed road speed reductions on many key roads. We've also introduced new road crossings, traffic calming, better parking and provided full input into the ChEmRoute cycle scheme, that will create safer cycling all the way from Chichester to Emsworth in the coming years. This is also being applied in Hampshire too.

None of these changes will happen overnight, and WSCC Highways said 40 planned road safety improvements on Bourne roads is ten times what most councillors try and achieve, but that's not going to stop me helping you do it.

The plethora of roadworks is also of concern to all, and I now have the details of all the traffic light management companies and I call them up when the traffic jams get too long. Many times, I've got them to change the light sequences, or add people at unmanned lights, to clear backlogs of vehicles at rush hour. The other good news is that, with 50% of all traffic lights being due to broadband installations, the companies involved like City Fibre and Virgin have nearly reached the end of their cable installation, so the lights should slowly clear from Bourne roads.

Finally, I wish everyone a happy 2024 and I'm here to help you all. Contact me directly via WSCC or via the Parish.

### **Southbourne Parish projects delivered in 2023/24:**

1. Parham Place drainage channel installed to reduce resident flooding
2. Park Road, Manor Road, Manor Way, Manor Gardens and Smallcuts Avenue tarmac relay
3. Stein Road / Manor Road Local Travel Improvement Program (LTIP) for safer school and pedestrian travel
4. Southbourne Rail crossing - reduce wait times and congestion and improve pedestrian and cyclist safety
5. Supported Chidham and Southbourne in successfully fighting off Willowbrook 88 house development
6. Bourne Junior school Wig-wags, yellow lines and 20mph zone to improve school and pedestrian safety
7. Minimising inconvenience to residents and improving safety with the Cooks Lane 200 house development
8. Arranged for Southern Water to pump out sewage flooding north of Southbourne Crossing
9. Working with Parish representatives on planning for speed reduction TROs and research in the Parish
10. EV charging installation at Garsons Road with the option to use these as part of a national car scheme
11. Support for Thorney Island Baker Barracks causeway flooding with school transport and future flood plans
12. Advice on speed reductions, ASB, active travel, policing, sewage, highways improvements and grit bins

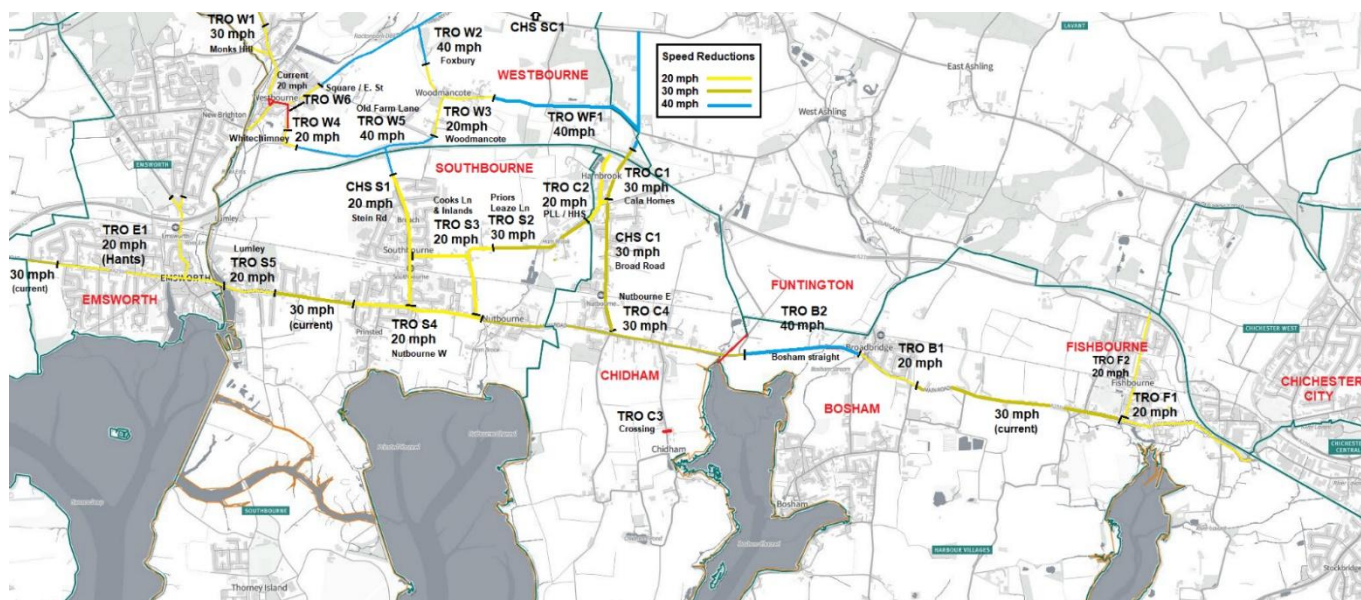
### **Strategic improvements**

1. Represented Parishes on the Road Safety Task and Finish Group that created the new WSCC speed policy
2. Created Bourne Speed Group to review local roads and plan for speed reductions to improve road safety
3. Created the Bourne Flood Prevention Group to tackle higher rainfall and river and coastal flood mitigation
4. Developing school safety QR scan posters and road safety messages with the WSCC Road Safety Group
5. ChEmRoute planning and speed limit reductions to create a safer cycleway from Chichester to Emsworth
6. 4 year fight against government inaction on sewage capacity and work to reduce storm sewage overflows
7. Lobbied Southern Water for DWMP plans now at £28m planned spend for Thornham from 2025 – 2030
8. Helped Parishes defend via planning and appeal support against 1,000+ unplanned new houses in Bourne
9. Drive with Cityfibre / Virgin to introduce Gigabit Broadband into Bourne Parishes and minimise roadworks
10. Bourne Bus first anniversary and now running four days a week and making 2,500 passenger journeys
11. Southbourne Parish section of the Bourne Trail complete to improve heritage awareness and exercise
12. Meeting with Southern Gas Networks to improve utility liaison and ensure better resident communication

13. Work on building options to allow local residents to be able to build their own homes as part of a CLT

## Road safety schemes planned over the next year

Parish	Parish sign	TRO type	Location	Notes
Chid/South	30 mph	Speed	Nutbourne (Chidham & Southbourne)	End of Bosham Straight at village sign through to the Mini garage
Southbourne	Safety	CHS	Stein Road Roundabout to South Lane	Working with WSCC Highways for LTIP 2025 scheme all along Stein Road
Southbourne	30 mph	Speed	Priors Lease Lane	30mph to replace NSL
Southbourne	20 mph	Parking	Inlands Road + Cooks Lane	20mph + double yellows on inlands W side opposite estate
Southbourne	20 mph	Speed	Traveller's Joy to Prinsted Lane	20mph to replace 30mph to support Chemroute
Southbourne	20 mph	Speed	Tuppenny Barn to Emsworth roundabout	20mph to replace 30mph and reduce high incidence of road casualties
Southbourne	Lining	Safety	Bourne Community College	Coach / minibus parking lines, 'no parking at any time' and school gate area
Southbourne	Lining	Parking	Thorney Road East side	Double yellows in two or three sections to aid traffic flow to Thorney
Southbourne	Lining	Parking	Area north of Southbourne rail station	Double yellows to prevent parking near crossing / station bike area
Southbourne	20 mph	Speed	Thorney Road (and One Church access Road?)	20mph to replace 30mph
Southbourne	20 mph	Speed	Prinsted Lane	20mph to replace 30mph



## **Report from Chichester District Councillors Tracie Bangert and Oona Hickson**

Cllr. Bangert

My positions are: Cabinet Member for Communities, Wellbeing and Customer Service; Member of Full Council; Chair of the Community Safety Partnership; Chair of Grants and Concessions; Alternative Chair for Housing and Communities; representative for Chichester on the Police Crime Commissioner's (PCC's) Panel, held in Lewes; representative on the Early Years Panel of WSCC; member of Southbourne Parish Council. For outside bodies: Military Champion for the District; member of the community advisory board for Pallant House; Governor at the Bourne Community College; Chair of Trustees at Tuppenny Barn; Big Trustee at the Oxmarket.

My role in Cabinet:

- Communities – working with officers on the distribution of grants for (a) community, (b) sport and culture, (c) environment and (d) business. Liaison with charities such as Homestart, food bank, Sage House and Stone Pillow. I work with official bodies such as the Police, the PCC, local businesses, Neighbourhood Watch and the Fire Brigade.
- Wellbeing – I work with social prescribers, Choose Work, and the fitness and wellbeing programme
- Customer services – I work with CDC customer services, who provide the initial port of call for enquiries for services offered by the Council.

### **ANNUAL REPORT Cllr. Hickson**

Council elections took place in May 2023.

**The result was:**

**Liberal Democrats 25**

**Conservatives 5**

**Local Alliance (Selsey) 4**

**Greens 2**

\*The Local Alliance and Greens sit as a "Group" and are therefore the official Opposition.

### **Oona Hickson appointed roles**

#### **Committees of the Council**

##### **Full Council**

##### **Overview and scrutiny**

##### **Housing and Communities**

##### **Outside bodies**

##### **Chichester College Overview and Curriculum committee**

##### **Reserve member for Chichester Harbour Conservancy**

- I have spoken at both Planning appeals ( GR Harris) and at Planning

Committee on a number of occasions, on development matters relating to Southbourne.

- I have enabled a motion on the state of the Ems which has resulted in a reply from the Secretary of State in DEFRA [2024-04-11 Response from SoS - River Ems.pdf](#)
- I am a member of the Task and finish group on a new Housing Strategy for the District
- I continue to liaise and campaign in CDC on affordable housing issues.
- I raise at every opportunity issues that are related to this ward and its communities interests.
- Working with everyone active at Bourne, I introduced Pickleball, which now has two sessions a week, and is very popular
- I communicate and press WSCC on the issues such as Highways ( and their state)that really concern residents
- I continue to campaign on the GP offer locally and the fact that Southbourne surgery have not chosen to use allocated CIL.

### **The new Council met on May 17<sup>th</sup> 2024**

Clare Apel (Chichester West) was elected Chair.

Adrian Moss (Harbour Villages) was elected as Leader.

### **Major Issues have included**

#### **The Local Plan**

- This has now been submitted.

#### **Coastal defences and flooding**

- This has come further into focus since the Medmerry Park flooding after the recent tidal surge
- We have a Water event next week and I have raised a question relating to the flooding of the Hambrook and the Ems

#### **Budgets**

- the Council has a stable budget and this has been agreed. Balancing the budget is getting harder and harder.

#### **Midhurst Fire**

- It's also hard to believe it's been just over a year since the major fire in Midhurst. As you know, the council has stepped in to offer significant support to the town with a package of over £300,000, as well as business support on the ground and marketing activities to encourage people back to the town. The funding has been used to provide grants to eligible businesses, pay for a new website to promote the town and to provide coaching from a retail specialist. The Town Team is also developing a new Midhurst Business Partnership.

#### **Temporary accommodation**

- One of the most pressing issues is increasing the amount of temporary accommodation. We must house people who are facing unintentional homelessness.

- Last year the council spent a significant amount of money on nightly paid accommodation, so we are delighted to have secured additional temporary accommodation. We can now place people in more suitable accommodation and reduce the Council's outlay on Temporary Accommodation at the same time.

### **Play Parks**

- Parks and play areas are integral to people's quality of life.
- We have started a project to refurbish play parks on our own land including in Florence Park; Priory Park; Sherbourne Park; and Whyke Oval.

### **Boosting the local economy**

- We've issued more than £220,000 to businesses and community groups from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF). This is from the £1.7 million that we were allocated in 2022.
- The funding has supported a variety of work - from small charities, to growing businesses and community organisations.
- We are also running a range of Markets and Events to encourage people to visit Chichester. Many of you I know attended the Laser show at the canal and others I have seen at the Farmers Market.

### **Supporting businesses and Regeneration Strategy**

- We are providing enabling grants scheme for small and independent businesses; a shop front grant scheme for high street businesses; and an independent retailers grant scheme.
- We've developed the Invest Chichester project over the last three years, which works hard to attract businesses to the district or businesses looking to relocate in order to boost the local economy.
- We are also working on a Regeneration Strategy for the city, which will set the overall direction of travel; work in partnership to influence change and investment in the city; set out potential key areas, strategic land and physical assets; and provide a clear framework for decision making.

### **Food waste**

- We are also starting to prepare for the introduction of a new food waste recycling service. This is a huge project that has to be delivered in 2026 and so we have lots to do between now and then. This includes purchasing new vehicles, recruiting new staff and rolling out the service.

## **Climate Change and the Environment**

- We are starting work on the new Environmental & Biodiversity Plan for the District
- Later this year, we will consult on our revised Climate Emergency Action Plan.

## **Cost of living**

- A key priority for the council is helping local people with the cost-of-living crisis. I am delighted that we have been able to retain our
  - Supporting You
  - Council tax reduction schemes
  - Social Prescribing

## **Coastal projects**

- We are also hoping to bring forward to major coastal and harbour schemes
  - Selsey Flood defence
  - Chichester Harbour Adaption Plan
- We are currently bidding for money on these from the EA and other government grant schemes.