

**Christmas Bulletin No. 41 December 2019**

Dear Resident,

**AGM**

Thank you to the 55 people who came out on a very damp morning and supported the AGM. Thank you also to the 12 people who sent their apologies. I realise that many people have commitments on a Saturday morning, but it is very gratifying to know that you have thought about the WGRA and send us your support.

This will be a longer Bulletin than usual as it contains an edited copy of my report and a report from the Secretary on the Mayor's speech.

At the meeting, a question was raised as to how I and the Committee can best represent the true opinions of our residents. This has made me think about the future and how best to proceed through these thorny times in terms of development and transport changes. However, having been re-elected unanimously by the meeting, I shall continue to work as Chair, Deo Volente, to help the Committee do the best we can.

The difficulty is that I do not believe there is a single solution or unanimous Westgate opinion, but we have to try and find a best fit. I have agreed that we shall circulate a questionnaire, which I hope will give us more information about residents' views. I have already started working on this and it will be on the agenda for the next committee meeting. In formulating a position there is an elephant in the room in the form of the Southern Access Route. We are not going to learn any more about this for a couple of years, but when it does get built, it is likely to completely disrupt the arrangement of the roads around the Westgate/Sherborne Road junction, possibly even cutting them off from the Cathedral Way roundabout. This could solve the rat running and cycling problems, although some people will not be happy about it. This would make changes we are working for at the moment redundant. There are different groups with different views locally. There are also outside influences such as the local plan, the cycling groups (we do have residents that cycle as well), Parklands residents and people going to Tesco, Fishbourne and Centurion Way and the young students from Bishop Luffa School, who have to be taken into account. We will do our best.

Thank you to those who left comments for the Neighbourhood Plan at the AGM. These have been edited and the draft of a response is attached. If you have ideas to add or things you would like to see changed, please let me know at [chair.wgra@gmail.com](mailto:chair.wgra@gmail.com) within the next 7 days and we will prepare a final version for submission to the City Council. It is very important that we have contributions from the residents, so please let us have anything relevant you can think of. This is our only chance to be heard for this document. It will eventually become a blueprint for the future of our area and will have to be taken into account in future planning decisions.

**Lastly, I hope you will all have  
a very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year**

*Richard Brownfield*

## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT - Summarized from the AGM**

The Chairman reported that WGRA goes from strength to strength and we now have 129 households on our list who receive the monthly bulletin of which over 70 have paid their annual subscription.

We were very sad to hear about the death earlier this month of Brian Cope. Brian was a hardworking and valuable member of the Committee and our thoughts are with Lois.

### **Whitehouse Farm / Westgate Improvement**

It had been another frustrating year with many meetings attended but little achieved as when we raise issues, we are told that the documents have been signed off and cannot be changed. We are particularly interested in the "Off Site Infrastructure" ie. the roads which theoretically are to be altered at the developer's expense to compensate the community for the extra traffic resulting from the new houses. However although we, along with other RA's and the support of our councillors, feel that even though the plans do not represent the best way to spend this money, they are to be imposed upon us.

The preparation and implementation of the s106 plans has now been taken over by a new company, Jubb. They have produced better versions of the plans and the three that affect us are:-

**The Westgate/Sherborne Road Roundabout** which has some minor changes but will have to be completely rebuilt again when the Southern Access Road is completed.

**The Westgate Improvement Scheme** - involves minor changes and does nothing to reduce speed or volume of traffic or to create a safe separate cycle route for the length of Westgate.

**The Westgate/Orchard Street Roundabout** which is to be replaced by traffic lights to make the junction safer for cyclists but this introduces a number of problems to a junction which functions well at the moment and also does not solve the problem of cycle safety along Westgate.

The Whitehouse Farm development is now running 3 years behind schedule and Full Planning Permission was recently granted for the first two groups of houses with the attendant construction traffic. Timetable for work affecting Westgate is:-

Westgate improvements - April 2021

Sherborne Road Roundabout - June 2021

Westgate/Orchard Street Roundabout - April 2022

### **Speed Indicating Device (SID)**

Jeremy Harvard has been working with the Highways Department to get a fixed SID on Westgate, but they have turned down our application as traffic recorded does not show an excessive average speed. We believe the results are skewed by the location of the fixed loop in the road at the entrance to Henty Gardens as well as a speed bump where cars slow down. We plan to use the portable SID to record speeds and show a problem does exist and we need a volunteer to coordinate this as well as residents to do the on line training required to operate the device.

### **Summer Street Party**

This unfortunately had to be cancelled due insufficient ticket sales by the cut-off date.

### **2019 Street Party**

Will take place on Friday 8 May 2020 marking the 75th Anniversary of VE (Victory in Europe) day.

The Chairman thanked all that had supported the Association during the year including the Committee, John Davies, our traffic advisor, The Westgate Beaux-Belles, Sarah Quail, the Newsletter editor, Fin Letts, who keeps the website up to date, and Penny Tomlinson and her team who look after the planters.

### **ADDRESS BY MAYOR RICHARD PLOWMAN - summarised from the AGM**

The Mayor began by commending the Committee and especially Richard Brownfield for all his hard work done to represent the voice of the residents. He mentioned the following issues:-

#### Climate Change

This is the big issue for us all over UK and the City Council has declared a climate emergency and a target of going carbon neutral by 2030. Unfortunately the big disappointment is that the design of the Phase 1 houses at Whitehouse Farm was all done to current specifications. After much debate, some token improvement has been made to these houses. However the Government recently sent through new building regulations for discussion and these specify that new houses will have to meet the carbon zero requirement and this will apply to the second phase at Whitehouse Farm.

Another worry about the second phase involves the southern access to the site and at the moment we have no detail on this at all and how it will connect to the A27. We have been promised a revised timetable - the one they promised us last time is now 3 years out of date and according to that, the first house should have been built yesterday!

#### Local Plan

The Local Plan will be out of date by July 2020 and the new plan is now struggling due to climate change considerations. There are big issues with Chichester Harbour and about the amount of nitrates going into it and that is going to mean some radical re-thinking of the local plan but they have a relatively short time to get that in and fit for purpose for the future as the Government has refused an extension in planning time.

#### Neighbourhood Plan

The Mayor introduced the Neighbourhood Plan which is being drawn up to ensure your wellbeing for the future, to make sure that Chichester is a place that you want to live, feel safe and where you can bring up your children and grandchildren in a good and safe environment.

He stressed that it is a people's plan put together with ideas from the community and the response so far has been excellent. It will take two years to put together and will need to be in line with National Planning Policy and the Local Plan but it does have its own teeth. The plan will have to be inspected and then voted on by you and will need 50% of the vote to be passed into Planning Law and will carry the same weight as the Local Plan so it will have to be considered for any planning applications.

Although it will not be tackling numbers of new houses, the plan will influence the quality of this housing to make sure that all adhere to the zero carbon policy etc. It can also look at the High Street and influence the percentage of shops, offices and restaurants located there as well as issues like roads, pathways, cycling, tree planting, community facilities and the environment.

Initial consultation finishes on 9 December 2019 but there will be another 6 months to put things forward through Residents' Associations. The final plan will be produced in 18 months and will be a very powerful document for what type of city we want Chichester to be in the

future. It will be one of the biggest neighbourhood plans in the country, funding is available and we have a very enthusiastic planning advisor.

*more information on the Neighbourhood Plan and a short survey can be found at:-*  
<https://chichestercity.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plan>  
<http://neighbourhoodsurvey.chichestercity.gov.uk>

### Homelessness

There has been a big increase in numbers of rough sleepers. This is a national phenomenon and in Chichester numbers increased from 15 last year to 35 this year. There are complex reasons behind it and there are several organisations in Chichester including Stone Pillow giving people help, advice and a place to live but the big increase in numbers has meant a problem providing accommodation for all those who need it. The District Council is helping to address this problem. Use of the Food Bank has also doubled reminding us that there are parts of Chichester where people, some with young families, are really struggling.

### Changes in the High Street

A year ago it appeared the High Street was doing quite well in relation to other cities but recently there have been more difficulties, not helped by the closure of the House of Fraser. Happily in the last few weeks more shops have opened which is good news. Chichester will change and will never be the same in terms of the retail units offered and regretfully we have lost some excellent independent shops. The Mayor urged everyone to use and support the local independent shops especially as Christmas is such an important time for them.

### Southern Gateway

This is going through the process of selecting a developer but the Mayor considers that there are two missed opportunities in the master plan. Firstly this is the last chance to do something about the 2 level crossings and it has been shown that a low level underpass is technically feasible and we should press for it. The Neighbourhood Plans submissions so far have shown an overwhelming support for this.

Secondly Chichester needs a large performance space for conferences and fairs which would bring in people from outside the city. We are hoping to get a resolution so we can make the most of these opportunities for the Southern Gateway.

### City Council

The City Council is offering to take on more responsibility and to take charge of some of the things that were given away in the 1974 reorganisation. They are looking at perhaps bringing Priory Park and Bishops Palace Gardens back under the City Council umbrella. There was good news regarding pavements and an engineering study is taking place and the hope is that within a year's time we will have new pavements within the main city streets.

## **OTHER ITEMS MENTIONED AT THE AGM**

### **CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS - REMINDER**

The very popular WGRA Christmas Celebrations take place **next week** at the newly refurbished Marriot House on **Wednesday 11 December** with mulled wine and snacks at 5.45 followed by carols and readings until 7.15. A Christmas buffet dinner follows afterwards at the Crate and Apple with advance reservations necessary - spaces now very limited. Please contact Nikki Clarke, 42 Westgate ([nixclarke@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:nixclarke@hotmail.co.uk)) for reservations and let her know if you are coming to the carols, so we have some idea of numbers.

## **VE STREET PARTY 2020**

Brian Raincock also gave advance details of the exciting Victory in Europe Street Party to be held next year on Friday 8 May 2020 - save the date! The theme will be retro or wartime so get dressed up for the occasion and join the party and sing-a-long medley of wartime songs and favourites and hopefully an opportunity to practise your 'lindy hopping' !

## **CHICHESTER CHRISTMAS FESTIVITES**

Take a look at this website to see details of the many activities and shopping promotions and competitions organised by Chichester BID during December:-

<https://chichesterbid.co.uk/christmas/>

## **TANNERY CLOSE UPDATE**

Louise Goldsmith informed us that plans are now well advanced for residential units for the site. These will be joint development between WSCC and a development partner. The site has some challenges but she hopes that when planning permission is received, it will be an asset to this attractive area.

## **CONCERN OVER CONSTRUCTION TRAFFIC FROM WHITEHOUSE FARM**

Louise Goldsmith also expressed concern over air pollution and traffic disruption created by construction traffic movements to and from the Whitehouse Farm where building of the first phase of houses has begun. There will be 140 movements per day of constructions traffic and the designated route uses Avenue de Chartres, Orchard Street and St. Paul's Road. This will be monitored by GPS but questions arise over enforcement so in order to make sure that there is minimum impact on our communities, residents are requested to keep an eye out for any construction vehicles coming through during restricted hours or rat running outside the route so we can confront the developers with the evidence without which complaints will not be taken seriously.

## **DOG FOULING**

Dog fouling on Westgate pavements seems sadly to be on the increase. Please let the Council and dog warden know if you see any problems and/or are able to identify any offenders:- email address: [environmentalhealth@chichester.gov.uk](mailto:environmentalhealth@chichester.gov.uk) or call 01243 785166

## **Regular events / Notices**

**WGRA Coffee Morning** - Every 1st Saturday morning of the month at the Crate and Apple. Just turn up between 10am and 11am and meet your neighbours. The next one is on Saturday 7 December

**Knitting and Social Group** - Every Monday morning from 10am - 12 noon. Knitter or not, please come along and enjoy a cup of coffee or tea at the Crate and Apple. Organiser: Sally Lowe (sallylowe10@gmail.com)

**"Bavardage au Pub"** Last Monday in the month at the Crate and Apple at 6.30pm. A relaxed hour or so speaking French. All levels welcome. Contact Jane Davies (janedavies31@gmail.com)

**Merry Christmas everyone !**

If you do not wish to receive further communication from the WGRA, click UNSUBSCRIBE or contact the Secretary, Bebette Jones, at 6 Tannery Close ([sec.wgra@gmail.com](mailto:sec.wgra@gmail.com))