

WESTGATE HELPERS NEWS

A weekly newsletter brought to you during the Covid-19 crisis

ISSUE 13

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Top stories in this newsletter



Library services re-opening



Gigabit vouchers available



West Dean and English Heritage re-opening



St. Bartholomew's for sale



Drive-in Movies open

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A sign that life is returning to normality is the re-opening this weekend of our beloved 'Crate and Apple' Pub.

Lisa, the Manager, says *"We will have slightly different procedures in place and will be starting with a reduced menu but we will be able to offer take away from this menu. There are many restrictions and guidelines for us to adhere to, so it would be advisable that, even if only coming in for drinks, people book in advance, but of course people can still just turn up and they will be seated if we have space."*

As lockdown eases, you may feel nervous about what you can or can't do, or simply about re-entering the wider world and your personal safety. Many people are feeling this, so don't be worried about getting in touch if you would like company on your first foray out of your home. We are still here to help you.

Centurion Way Survey

The SDNPA is carrying out a study to understand the benefits of the Centurion Way shared use path and the potential additional benefits to the local economy that would come from extending the path to connect with the South Downs Way at Cocking.

We want to hear from existing users and potential new users who may visit in the future. We'd like to hear how you use the path now and how you would like to see it improved. We invite you to take part in a short Survey which explains our plans to extend the existing Centurion Way and to improve two public paths linking Cocking with the South Downs Way. Your answers will help us apply for vital funding to carry out the necessary works.

Click on the link here - www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/CenturionWay to take part in the Survey. Survey closes on **13 July 2020**.



Select and collect at the library

Libraries in West Sussex will be starting a phased reintroduction of services from Monday 6 July with a Select and Collect option from the front doors of all 36 library buildings.

We have reopened our library catalogue for reservations of specific titles but we realise that not everyone knows exactly what they want to borrow and so we are offering two different **free** services:

Customer Select – using the library catalogue for customers to reserve specific titles in the usual way online or by phoning their nearest large library. This includes existing reservations made before Monday 23 March.

Staff Select – allowing customers who may not know exactly what they want to borrow to ask for a more general selection of books, chosen by one of our expert staff. Customers can complete a simple online form, or phone their nearest large library.

Whichever option you have chosen, when your items are available we will let you know, by phone or email, and arrange for you to collect them during our more limited library opening hours.

West Sussex Libraries has also been delivering books to customers over the last three months via our Essential Delivery Service. This service is still available for anyone who cannot visit the library and would like to borrow a selection of stock or request specific items. (<https://arena.westsussex.gov.uk/web/arena/currentoffer/wellbeing-resources>)

There are currently no overdue charges for outstanding items, so please do not worry if you are unable to return your books at this stage.

More chances to return your books

At the following times you will be able to return any borrowed items (books, audiobooks or school Project Loan boxes) to the door of your local West Sussex library:

- Tuesday 30 June, 2.00pm-4.00pm
- Thursday 2 July, 10.00am-12.00pm
- Saturday 4 July, 10.00am-12.00pm

There will continue to be no charges on any items that have not been returned during this time. It also doesn't matter if your books were borrowed from a different library to the one you return them to, or if someone else drops them off on your behalf.

Local suppliers and organisations

To find out what local food suppliers and supermarkets are offering to support residents of West Sussex with the delivery of essential goods, go to:

www.westsussex.gov.uk/fire-emergencies-and-crime/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-and-information/local-suppliers-and-organisations/

West Dean Gardens & Weald and Downland

The Gardens have now reopened for everyone, while the Museum reopened to Members from 22 June and will open to the wider public from 6 July. Please note that entry to both is now only through timed, pre-booked tickets. For more information visit www.westdean.org.uk/gardens and www.wealddown.co.uk

Broadband boost for rural homes and businesses

Residents and small and medium-sized businesses in rural areas of West Sussex can now benefit from the fastest and most reliable broadband connectivity if they choose to 'go gigabit'.

County, District and Borough Councils in West Sussex have worked together to jointly invest in topping up the Government's Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme to enable it to go further for our residents and businesses. Now rural eligible premises can claim up to £4,000 each towards the installation cost of gigabit-capable broadband, when part of a group of premises.

Gigabit-capable broadband enables internet download speeds of up 1000 megabits per second (mbps), much faster than current superfast speeds of 30 mbps. This next-generation connectivity has the potential to revolutionise rural communities, making them more attractive places to live, giving people the freedom to live and work more flexibly and helping develop thriving digital economies.

The additional funding will mean that customers will be able to use the voucher to pay for up to £4,000 of installation costs when they get a connection from a supplier that is registered on the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme. In most cases, the voucher fully covers the installation costs and the resident or business will only need to pay for the ongoing broadband connection package, in the usual manner.

To be eligible premises need to be within a rural eligible postcode, only have speeds of less than 100mbps available to them, apply in a group of two or more premises and sign up to a broadband connectivity package of at least 30mbps for 12 months.

The deadline to apply for a voucher is 31 March 2021. For more information and to check eligibility visit the DCMS website at: <https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/>. Alternatively, contact broadband@westsussex.gov.uk for more information, help and assistance.



Support Local Campaign

Chichester District Council have just finished producing a short video as part of their Support Local campaign, which they are delivering in association with the Chichester Observer and Midhurst and Petworth Observer. The video features businesses from around the district welcoming shoppers back and highlighting the incredible amount of work that has gone in to making premises as safe as possible. Watch the video at www.chichester.gov.uk/supportlocal

An open letter from the Mayor – 22 June 2020 (abridged)

Let me start by offering warmest thanks to all those who wrote saying how they find my open letters to be honest, reassuring and helpful. In this I take inspiration from the very personal style of the late Alistair Cooke and his weekly 'Letter from America' on the radio. Listening figures for radio have increased dramatically during the pandemic – further justification for our fight to save the local station, Spirit FM.

One day Alexander Armstrong asked listeners on Capital FM about their experience of losing access to a hairdresser. Some of Armstrong's listeners said they had taken matters into their own hands and several new styles have emerged: the highland cattle; the urchin, for those who didn't know when and where to stop, and, for gentlemen slightly thin on top, the 'Albert Einstein' or 'Ken Dodd'.

I am afraid my last letter was considered by some cyclists to be adversarial. That was not the intention: my priority is the safety of all. It did, however, prompt a useful discussion with the Chairman of the Chichester Cycling Forum and we shall be working closely together on cycling schemes and training.

Long before the coronavirus struck, one of the great attractions of Chichester for those moving here was that they felt safe. Some of us have now enjoyed the first taste of freedom in meeting other members of our family or friends, and I have witnessed many joyous reunions between grandparents and grandchildren in Priory Park, where social distancing and litter-removal have been admirably observed.

The city centre has opened up for non-essential retail and the shops have made a real effort to ensure you are safe from the virus. The windows are attractive, with many good offers, but the early evidence suggests we customers are reluctant to return. Why? The data shows that Chichester is probably one of the safest cities, thanks to the community obeying the guidelines and looking after the most vulnerable; but some, especially the elderly, have had their confidence eroded by the Government advice and actions, which they find confusing.

The truth is we will probably not feel 100 per cent confident until there is a cure or vaccine. However, it remains vital to observe the advice on social distancing and follow any advice and guidance given to you, especially in the shops, to minimise risk and to keep it that way.

It is imperative that we return to our fine, historic city centre and support local businesses, especially the independents, which were having a rough time even before the coronavirus hit. To wear a face-covering while shopping is wise and is now compulsory on public transport. At the market cross, Rotary has 'planted' a tree of colourful homemade masks which are available for a voluntary donation to the **Mayor's Hardship Fund** (Telephone: **07740621812**).

The fund has now helped many who were left with nothing as a consequence of the virus. If you need help, please do not be too proud to call: we are all in this together. And if you wish to donate, there is an opportunity at: GoFundMe: <http://mayorshardshipfund.chichestercity.gov.uk>

Remember, for information or advice, do contact the **WSCC HUB** (Telephone: **033022 27980**). The new Chichester Community Network has identified people of all ages who are excluded because they lack access to the internet, so a scheme is being set up where you can help by donating your old smartphones, tablets, laptops. These will be refurbished and distributed to those in need. I have at least two old tablets and a smartphone in the cupboard . . .

Please stay strong, safe and well. With luck, it won't be long before I join you in the patient, socially-distanced queue for the hairdresser.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Richard Plowman

The Mayor of Chichester

Water Safety over the coming summer

We are already seeing an influx of beach goers in the past few weeks. In a normal year the RNLI, alongside other water safety partners, help thousands of people who end up getting into difficulty in or close to the water. However, due to the ongoing coronavirus outbreak they have not been able to engage with school communities to educate young people as normal.

- **Help us to promote our Water Safety from Home Resources** (<https://rnli.org/youth-education/water-safety-from-home>) Educating young people about how to keep safe, in on and around water is fundamental to saving lives at sea and a core part of the RNLI's water safety activity. This term we have put together two downloadable packs of resources focusing on **keeping safe this Summer**.
- Please help by **sharing the RNLI & MCA's Beach Safety Campaign** (<https://rnli.org/pages/beach2020>) with parents, guardians and your wider network.
- Our **beach safety resources** are also available for download to use on social media and online at: <https://rnli.org/pages/beach-safety-resources>



Sites re-opening

Bookable arrival time slots have been introduced and they are limiting visitor numbers by about a third. You'll need to book your visit in advance and show your booking confirmation when you arrive. Only book if you're sure you can make the date and time of your visit.

The first six sites will be followed by around 45 more on Saturday 4 July, and from Saturday 1 August, every English Heritage site will once again be open for you to explore and enjoy. Around two hundred free-to-enter sites are already open, including places like Iron Bridge, Caister Roman Fort, and many parts of Hadrian's Wall. There's no need to book your visits to free-to-enter sites.



St. Bartholomew's Church for sale

The former **St. Bartholomew's Church** in Mount Lane has been put up for sale (www.sprattandson.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/St-Bartholomews-Mount-Lane.pdf).

There is local interest in acquiring and retaining this asset for community use locally and more generally in Chichester, but the WGRA notes that any outline proposals should be financially sound so that it does not become a burden in the future. There is also the effect on those living locally and the need to control issues such as noise, parking and access.

At present the opportunity is being pursued actively through a small group which is being formed for this purpose. If anyone would like to become more involved in the project, please contact Brian Raincock (01243 539138 or braincock@clfl.co.uk)

Movies and Music weekend – Aug bank holiday

Chichester Festival Theatre and Chichester Cinema at New Park are working together to produce a Drive-In Cinema in Northgate car park over the August Bank Holiday weekend (28 – 31 August), alongside other outdoor events in Oaklands Park.

The plans are subject to government guidelines permitting large gatherings outdoors, at a social distance, in three months' time. Arrangements will be put in place for the necessary social distancing, and all rules and guidelines prevalent at the time will be strictly adhered to throughout the event.

The Movies and Music Weekend will screen a programme of popular and classic movies to appeal to family and general audiences, who will watch them from their vehicles with the sound coming through their car radios (provision will also be made for bicycles and motorcycles).

All being well, tickets will go on sale from 30 July at www.cft.org.uk and www.chichestercinema.org when the full programme for the weekend will be available.

The **Drive-in at Goodwood** is another brand-new event created to bring a much-needed dose of fun into our lives and allow us all to come together again, even while we're apart.

Head to Goodwood Motor Circuit this summer to experience an immersive drive-in experience, with interactive pre-screening performances, delicious American diner-style food and luxury ice-cream delivered to your car and, of course, some of your very favourite films.

Extra dates and films for 'The Drive-in' have been announced, including; Le Mans '66 (Ford vs. Ferrari), Rush, Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back, Avengers: Infinity War, Bohemian Rhapsody, Die Hard, Frozen and more.

To book tickets please go to: www.goodwood.com/experiences/secret-cinema/