

WGRA Westgate Residents' Association

Bulletin – March 2021

working for:
Westgate,
Henty Gardens,
Mount Lane,
St Bartholomew's Close, Tannery Close

CONTACT US:

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From the Treasurer - Vince Waldron

I would just like to remind Members that an annual subscription of £10 per household is due, covering the year from 1 November 2020 to 31 October 2021. Your 'subs' cover the running costs of the Association and insurance for maintaining the planters, the street party etc and, amongst other things, help us to build a fund for taking action over issues of traffic speed and road safety in our neighbourhood – for example, over time, we might be able to buy our own Speed Indicating Device or collaborate with the other Residents' Associations if we need legal advice, as has happened before. Paying a 'sub' also gives households the right to vote at this year's AGM, in November.

The fact that we have not been able to meet face to face at the AGM and elsewhere has obviously had an adverse effect, as at these gatherings we would have received a bigger 'harvest' of cheques and £10 notes! However, we are able to receive money directly into our account by electronic banking (which is our preferred method). If you cannot remember if you have paid your sub this year or not, feel free to email the treasurer on waldronbiz@live.co.uk

Our account details are as follows:

Account name: Westgate Residents Association

Bank Sort Code: 30-90-28

Account number: 69382160

Reference: your name and/or address (so that we can identify who the payment is from).

You can still pay by cash or cheque if you wish - just put your offering in an envelope with your name and address on it and put it through my door at 72 Westgate. Alternatively, if that is not convenient, Sarah Quail at 44 Westgate or Bebette Jones at 6 Tannery Close would be able to receive your offering in the same way.

Just to add, additional donations are also always welcome!

The Tannery development

We have heard from WSCC that they are in the process of selecting a partner for redevelopment of this site and a partner is due to be appointed this month.

We will, of course, let residents know when we hear anything further on what the development proposals might be.



Mental Health

There has been much talk in the media about the struggles with mental health that people from all walks of life are experiencing at the moment. We thought it might be useful to give you some guidance to local organisations that could help if you are one of these people.

The **Chichester Wellbeing** website is an extremely useful source of help that can guide you to the right support for you or your loved ones.

<https://chichester.westsussexwellbeing.org.uk/topics/healthy-mind/help-support>

The **Richmond Fellowship** service for mental health referrals and peer support volunteers

(<https://www.richmondfellowship.org.uk/sussex/chichester-outreach/>) is a part of **Pathfinder West Sussex**, supporting people with their mental health and wellbeing. Pathfinder is an alliance of organisations providing a single point of access to mental health support across West Sussex. To find out more, visit www.pathfinderwestsussex.org.uk

Speed Indication Device (SID)

Huge thanks to all the Westgate residents who pledged money to a local crowd-funding campaign to purchase a second SID for Chichester City, to work alongside the first SID that the City Council agreed to fund at the end of 2020. The hope had been to purchase a second device, but the £5000 target was, unfortunately, not met in time. No money will be taken via the website for those who pledged and the campaign is now closed.

The good news is that one SID will be available soon. This is not a speed camera or a speed gun - but a device mounted on a lamppost that measures the speed of approaching vehicles and displays the measured speed and a smiley or frowning face. The plan is that the Chichester City SID will be moved around locations in due course and WGRA have volunteered to be involved with Parklands in helping get the SID protocols written and getting a turn on Westgate in due course. Watch this space!



Save the Date – 26th June

The possibility of some kind of street party is under active consideration. More details to follow when the lifting of restrictions is clearer. In the meantime, the Crate and Apple is hoping to open its doors again in the first week of May.

Latest vaccination information

Please find the latest daily vaccination update through the link below:

<https://www.sussexhealthandcare.uk/keep-sussexsafe/sussex-covid-19-vaccination-programme/>

The central Chichester vaccination centre at Westgate is now open and being run by the Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust (SCFT). The trust had been open to feedback throughout and had made a number of changes to the service as a result. General feedback on the vaccination process had been excellent.

There is an enquiry email sxccg.vaccineenquiries@nhs.net and telephone number 01273 238 725.

ChEm route

The Highways England (HE) plans for the Chichester to Emsworth cycling upgrade have been published and initial consultation took place last month. WGRA were able to attend. In short, however, there is growing opposition to the ChEm route proposed plans, which will cost £5m. Although welcome changes include a 20mph speed limit in Fishbourne and Nutbourne, large parts of the scheme rely on creating shared paths for pedestrians and cyclists along pavements, not a separate, segregated cycle route. The proposals do not comply with Boris's unveiled cycling plans (LTN/120) which provide detailed guidance for Local Authorities and Developers in designing and promoting cycle schemes and road infrastructure. Concerns have also been voiced about the elderly or disabled village residents who would have to share the pavement with two-way cycle traffic, and for cars, too, there are safety risks on this busy road if cyclists are not segregated. There are also 150 driveways and side junctions that cross the shared use pavement between Emsworth and Fishbourne.

WGRA were also disappointed to learn that the proposals stop at the railway bridge so make no provision for a busy section of the route up to the Cross and that the plans do not propose enhancement of Fishbourne Road East up to the A27 flyover.

Given the housing proposed along the A259, ChEm route was proposed as an enhanced route for commuters, students and leisure cyclists given the flat direct route through the harbour villages. There is a risk that confident cyclists will still use the road, given the stop/start nature of the shared pathway, and the on-road sections and narrow pavements mean that young people, children and less confident leisure or commuting cyclists will still feel no safer and the route will not achieve the step-change in usage that is desired.

If you are interested, more official information is at this link <http://chiaction.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Chemroute-factsheet-v2.pdf> and if you want to complete a 4 minute HE survey (which was launched in response to the criticisms raised at the consultation) then please complete this survey even if you are not a regular cyclist but know the A259 route well and are concerned that more provision is not being made to segregate cyclists safely along Westgate. The deadline is 17 March at 12 noon. https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=sp9QKa9_i0-3ojL5bsXebMYroPecMI1JjBnAOHGofrZUN0tMOFRRRVNORVdQQ1dLTEgxNTBaN1VJOS4u

Westgate Highway works – Cycling provision and the 'Narrows' road surface

As reported in the last bulletin, West Sussex County Council had agreed with the Whitehouse Farm developers to commute these works into a lump sum payment of £90,000. The works relate largely to the improvement of the existing cycleway along the central section of Westgate. The intention was to spend the commutation money on more comprehensive cycling improvements along Westgate as part of the Highways England ChEm route scheme.

We have since been informed that Westgate is no longer included in the Highways England ChEm route proposals on the basis that this part of ChEm route is the responsibility of the White House farm Developers and WSCC.

Having discussed the position with WSCC, it seems that there is no certainty around timing and availability of alternative funding sources for a more comprehensive cycling upgrade. We have, therefore, asked WSCC not to proceed with the commutation so that the Developers will carry out the cycling upgrade envisaged by the existing Section 106 Agreement. Their response on this is awaited.

The Westgate highways works also include making good the existing tiled paving at the eastern end of Westgate. As residents will be aware, this section of roadway is in a bad state of repair and the existing paving has been patched up in places with black tarmac. As a result, it is unsightly and adjoining residents are affected by traffic noise.

Given the need for this surface to be resilient to heavy vehicles such as buses, as well as the difficulties of keeping the tiled paving in an acceptable state of repair, we are intending to discuss with WSCC/the Developer's highways engineers the possibility of replacing the tiled paving with a quieter and more long-lasting surface such as asphalt. We would however be interested to hear residents' views on this. Please send your comments to: planning.wgra@gmail.com

Open Letter from the Mayor, Richard Plowman (abbreviated)

In an earlier letter, I described the pandemic as a runaway train. The vaccines seem to be applying the brakes and working well, even if Chichester did not have the best of starts and we had to fight for a central city site. The engine driver, the Government, has decided on a very cautious approach. The train is slowing, but the big dilemma is when to get off.

Having once had to jump from a moving Orient Express at Paris Austerlitz station (it's a long story), I can confirm that the only safe time to disembark is when the train has come to a complete halt. We still have some way to go, as the infection is still out there. So, once again, we must continue to follow the rules. Thanks to all your efforts we in Chichester are nearly there. Current rates of infection are very low and St Richard's is no longer under pressure. The light at the end of the tunnel is growing brighter. Strangely enough, although I feel relief and protected after receiving the first jab, I do not yet feel *safe*. By the time I have my booster, more will be known about how effective the vaccines are proving and whether we are immune from infection, new variants and spreading the infection to others.

Many of you have contacted me with concerns about your second jab, partly because of the parallel systems of GP practice centres and NHS mass-vaccination units. If you chose to go to the latter, such as Brighton or Portsmouth, or were invited to go to St Richard's, you should already have your second appointment.

The same applies at Chichester's Westgate Centre, which has been set up as a mass vaccination centre, administering the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine.

Many of those in the first four priority groups, particularly the over 80s living in the city, found the journey to the centres in Selsey and Tangmere quite challenging. I have been working with the NHS to see if the second dose – mainly of the Pfizer vaccine - can be given in Chichester itself. Although we await confirmation, the Tangmere centre will close at the end of March and its activity will move to a central GP practice.

I also understand the vaccination roll-out has been going so well that you may be called by your surgery to report after a nine-week interval rather than the original 12 weeks.

This is all good news and, after a slow and less-than-satisfactory start, Chichester is now ahead of the game. Our thanks should go to the staff and volunteers at the centres for the great work they are doing.

Finally, I wonder what the legacy of the pandemic will be. I hope the altruism, and the community working together, will persist. The lockdowns have highlighted how important family and friends are to us. Perhaps, too, our priorities towards the environment have changed, along with a clearer perception of the need to protect those special areas, such as the Harbour, which are in decline.

Meanwhile the **Mayor's Hardship Fund** (Telephone: **07740 621812**) continues to recognise those on whom the pandemic has had a devastating financial impact. Fundraising has been stepped up and if you can contribute, or need help yourself, please contact me.

I remain optimistic for the future. We now have a date of 30th September for that party I promised: it will be called 'Over the Rainbow'.

If you do not wish to receive further communications from the WGRA, please contact the Secretary, Bebette Jones, at 6 Tannery Close or email sec.wgra@gmail.com