

WGRA Westgate Residents' Association

Westgate, Henty Gardens, Mount Lane, St. Bartholomew's Close, Tannery Close



Bulletin March 2024

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Save the Dates!

Please get your diaries out and save the dates for the two upcoming events. Details will follow as soon as we get them.



WGRA Summer Tea Party, Saturday 13 July at the Chichester City Arts Centre



Family Summer Picnic at Brewery Field on Sunday 21 July at 12 noon to 3pm. This is being organized by Transition Chichester together with West Walls, Westgate and Parklands Residents' Associations

Traffic Update

Southern Access Road (SAR)

As most of you will know already, at Chichester District Council's (CDC) Planning Committee on 10 January 2024, the vote went against us despite the formidable number of letters we all wrote protesting about the implications of the SAR. Unfortunately, I could not speak as I had already made my views known at meetings of Chichester City Council's Planning and Conservation Committee.

At the meeting of the Planning Committee (our Secretary was present while I languished in the Members' Room) we learned from West Sussex County Council (WSCC) that the proposed staggered junction will be 'very busy' which is why, beginning now, it is vital that we continue to monitor the 'near misses' – and make nuisances of ourselves to the relevant authorities and that brings us nicely to the next item!

Near Misses

We received twelve reports from WGRA members who had experienced 'near misses' on Westgate itself and on the newly marked-up roundabout at the Westgate junction with Sherborne Road following our plea for reports on Monday evening 4 March 2024. This information enabled us to meet, 'fully armed', with WSCC officers at lunchtime on Thursday, 7 March 2024. The issues are essentially the following:

Cycle defenders and the cycle lane itself

- ☐ defenders still not visible enough
- ☐ cars waiting for oncoming vehicles block the cycle lane
- ☐ there is no clear right of way for cyclists and motorists do not give way
- ☐ the widened design of the chicanes mean cars have to weave along Westgate and drive into the cycle lane
- ☐ further, cars often speed to get through the chicanes when oncoming traffic is waiting
- ☐ cars speed down the centre of the road when there is little traffic
- ☐ where the bike route goes west to east and rejoins the carriageway on Westgate after the roundabout, that point is just by the island and with a pinch point ahead, it is, frankly, dangerous as bikes come onto the road
- ☐ cyclists on the pavements in front of the driveway of No. 78 Westgate. This has already caused a near miss!

Roundabout

- ☐ the 20 mph signs as you enter lower Sherborne Road from the Chichester College roundabout are easily missed when exiting the roundabout
- ☐ therefore, far too many vehicles are entering a restricted zone way over the demanded speed limit and are brought up short by the pedestrian crossings in lower Sherborne Road and Westgate
- ☐ there is **NO** signage to indicate that you are entering a school or cycle priority area

Pedestrian Crossings

- ☐ there is awful confusion over who has the right of way at the crossing as you come off the Chichester College roundabout into lower Sherborne Road
- ☐ there are no warning signs of new zebra crossings on Westgate and Sherborne Road

It is a moot point whether we have been able to persuade WSCC that there are issues to do with the configuration of the roundabout and its related crossings.

On your behalf, we have alerted Jubb, the road traffic engineers who act on behalf of the White House Farm (WHF) developers, Miller Vistry (MV), to these issues and they have informed us that WSCC 'signed the project off' but they have agreed to look at it again in the light of our comments.

We shall report back.

Sarah Quail and Bebette Jones

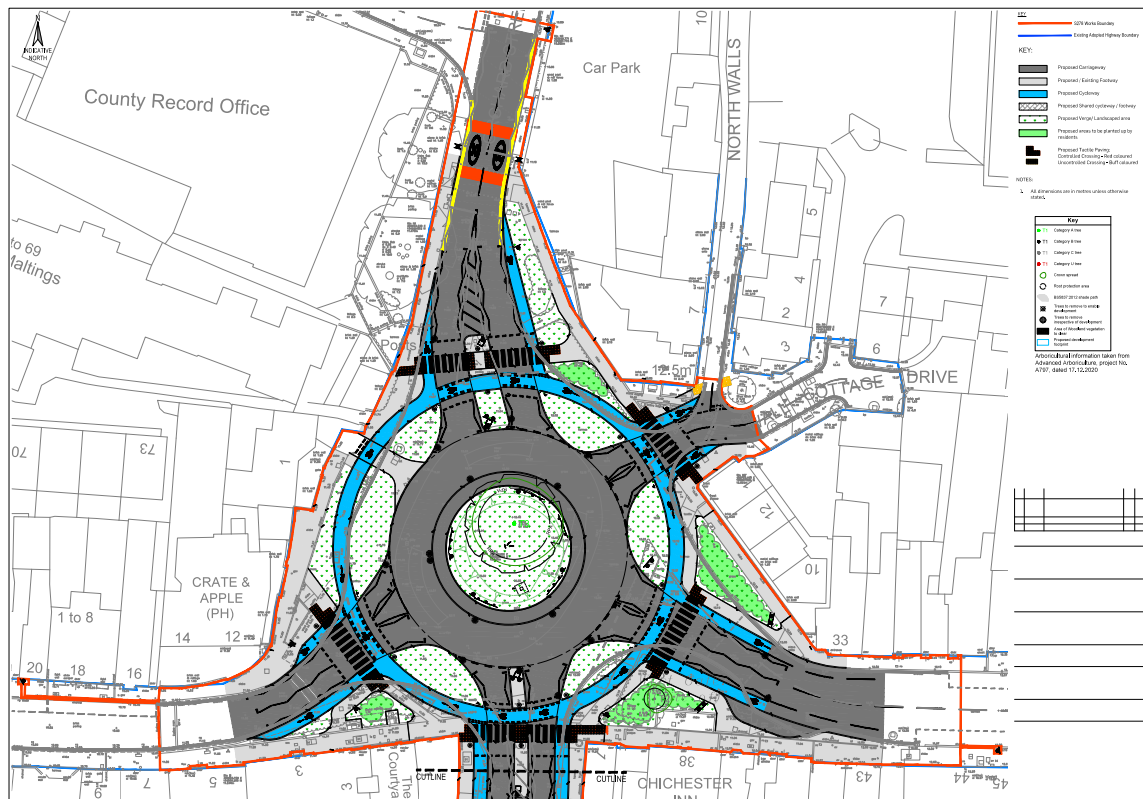
Update on the Westgate Dutch style roundabout (with thanks to West Walls Residents' Association)

Mildren Construction have confirmed they hope to start the main works in April but this date is still subject to WSCC's approval of certain matters. Preliminary investigative work has already been carried out requiring a small number of trial holes on the roundabout and soft verges.

There have been delays due to archaeological concerns (the course of the Roman walls running under the east side of the roundabout) and the archaeology consultants, MOLA, will be keeping a watching brief. Mildren have repeated their assurances about protecting the large tree on the roundabout which will be fenced in by effective metal fencing before the main work begins.

Mildren have promised to update all the local residents by letter drop and on their website www.wocs278.co.uk once time scales and commencement dates have been confirmed. Their website still expects the works to be completed by the end of 2024 although rumours have it that this might be optimistic!

A plan of the proposed new roundabout is attached:



Chichester City Council Annual Awards

We are delighted to report that at a ceremony held at the Assembly Room at The Council House on 13 February 2024 to celebrate the 2023 Chichester City Council Annual Awards, the following were honoured with various awards:



Blue Plaque: Hubert Doggart OBE. Sue Doggart, wife of the late Hubert Doggart, was honoured with the prestigious Blue Plaque, commemorating her husband's legacy as an illustrious test cricketer, historian, and educator, whose residence at the Farmhouse in Westgate left an indelible mark on Chichester's history.

Civic Award: To Lois Cope for her various charity work, community work and her dedication to the Girl Guides and her unwavering support for Chichester's twinning cities, Ravenna and Valletta

Heritage Award: To Ian and Jenny Jackson and Rosie Bell for the transformation of St. Bartholomew's Church into the Chichester City Arts Centre, now the permanent home of the Rosemary Bell Academy of Dance, which underscored their commitment to preserving heritage while fostering artistic expression.

Civic Award: Penny Tomlinson also received this Award in 2022 for her valuable work in establishing Chichester Children's BookFest. Our sincere apologies to Penny for not mentioning this earlier.

The citations read at the 2023 and 2024 Award evenings are included at the end of this Bulletin and I'm sure many of you will find them very interesting.

The 2023 Award winners with Chichester Mayor, Councillor Craig Gershater



[photo: R. Bell]

The 2022 Award winners with Chichester Mayor, Councillor Julian Joy



[photo: Chichester City Council]



19 Westgate



Chichester City Arts Centre



1-4 Mount Lane



The Courtyard
1-3 Westgate

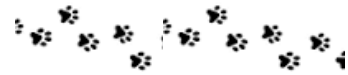


What's On around Chichester

Have a look at www.experiencesussex.com for lots of ideas for Easter Family Fun in and around Chichester.

Goodwoof All about the Dog!

Saturday 18th & Sunday 19th May from 9.30 to 5pm at The Kennels, Goodwood
Enjoy an action-packed day out with your dog. Tickets available at www.goodwood.com



The Chichester Peregrines are back!

Over the years, the peregrine falcons have delighted visitors with sightings from the Cathedral grounds from March until August. The livestream should be starting on Friday 15th March and can be accessed at: <https://www.chichestercathedral.org.uk/chichester-peregrines>



[photo: David Shaw]



Chichester Festival Theatre Festival 2024

A sizzling season of theatre awaits. Have a look at www.cft.org.uk

Arundel Tulip Festival 2024 Runs from mid-April to early May
Tickets available at: www.arundelcastle.org



[photo: Martin Duncan]

Festival of Flowers 2024 5th – 8th June at Chichester Cathedral
Tickets on sale at www.chichestercathedral.org.uk/events/festival-flowers-2024

Chichester Council Annual Awards - Citations

HUBERT DOGGART Blue Plaque Citation given by Sarah Quail

It is my very great pleasure this evening to tell you something of Hubert Doggart OBE. He was 93 when he died in 2018 and was a test cricketer, cricket historian and school master. Chichester City Council will be placing a Blue Plaque on his former home, 19, Westgate in the near future. He lived there from 1982 until 2013 when he and his wife, Sue, moved to a smaller and easier property at 3b, The Priory, Westgate.

Sue and one of Hubert's granddaughters are, in fact, with us this evening. However, to return to Hubert, he captained and played for Sussex from 1948 to 1961; he played for England in 1950; was President of the MCC in 1982 and Treasurer of the MCC 1987 – 1992. He was Chairman of the International Cricket Conference 1981-2 and President of the Cricket Society for fifteen years; he was President of the English Schools Cricket Association for 35 years and Chairman of Arundel Castle Cricket Club for ten years, 1993-2003.

He spent his childhood in Selsey and was educated at Winchester College. The country was still at war when Hubert finished his schooling in 1943. Awarded the Sword of Honour at Mons Officer training, he was commissioned into the Coldstream Guards and further study was put on hold. He remained in the Army until 1947 when, finally, he went up to Cambridge to read History and, in his third year, Latin.

In his maiden first-class match for Cambridge against Lancashire he scored 215 not out, still the highest score made by an Englishman on his first-class debut and mentioned in Wisden. At Cambridge, in his last year, amazingly, he captained the university at cricket, soccer, squash and racquets, and gained a half-blue for rugby fives! Contemporaries included David Shepherd and John Dewes. In 1949, Hubert shared an unbroken partnership with John Dewes of 429 against Essex, then the highest-scoring second wicket stand in English domestic cricket. That same year he again attracted attention with a brilliant 166 against the MCC at Lords. In May 1950 Hubert was selected to lead 'The Rest' against England in the test trial at Bradford. He played for England in the first two tests against the West Indies.

Hubert was first selected for Sussex in 1948. He captained Sussex in 1954 and continued to play for the county until 1961. During this time, he played 210 first-class matches, 155 for Sussex. In 347 innings, he scored over ten thousand runs including twenty centuries. He also claimed sixty wickets and took 197 catches. And he played for Sussex in our own Priory Park, here, in Chichester!

He joined the teaching staff at Winchester College in 1950 where he stayed until 1972. He transformed Winchester into a sporting school. His cricket side of 1959 contained no fewer than seven subsequent county players. He became Headmaster at Kings School, Bruton in Somerset in 1972 where his dynamism, confidence and panache transformed the school. He passed on to generations of young people whether they were academic, sporty, actors or musicians, and to his friends of all ages, his unquenchable enthusiasm for life which was grounded in his strong Christian faith. As Manager, he took an England Under 19 side to the West Indies in 1976 which included Christopher Cowdray as Captain, David Gower, Mike Gatting, Bill Athey and Paul Downton. Mike Gatting wrote to Hubert's wife, Sue, after his death, describing endearingly how Hubert handled this team of talented if occasionally wayward and high-spirited young men in a way that commanded respect and affection equally. Many of them had seldom met anyone like Hubert before.

He was undoubtedly an all-rounder - and a man of formidable intellect. His speeches were always meticulously prepared, and he would address the assembled company with booming voice and arms waving. Wine glasses and nearby guests were in dangerous territory! Microphones were superfluous!

Hubert was very knowledgeable about Chichester Cathedral. When I knew him, he was a stalwart and much-loved member of the congregation. He counted the collection then! His Memorial Service in Chichester Cathedral was packed. There was not a spare seat. The cathedral over-flowed with family, friends, former test cricketers and Sussex players, locals, and Hubert's many former pupils who all wanted to say farewell to the man who had inspired them in so many different ways to go out and face the world.

MRS LOIS COPE Civic Award Citation given by Anne Scicluna

Many people here will know Lois, who always seems to be busy helping others. In fact, it was here in this Assembly Room that she first volunteered to help Girl Guiding in the 1980s. She had never been a Guide or a Brownie, was inspired by the organisation helping young people with their development and enjoyment of so many things and took a huge leap to become Division Commissioner for Chichester City Girl Guides followed by Sussex West County Secretary. Then she became Chairman of our local Trefoil Guild which supports guiding and scouting and later became that organisation's area secretary.

However, Guiding has not been the only way Lois has contributed to the life of our City as she has been closely involved with some of our twinnings. In 1994/5 she joined the new steering committee for Chichester's twinning with Ravenna becoming the Founder Secretary and on the full committee for some six years. In fact, she was present for the signing of the twinning agreement in Ravenna in December 1996, not only was she present as Secretary of the Association, but also representing Guiding. She will remember, as I do, standing in long icy grass for the Italian Guides outdoor meeting early on one December morning.

When the newer friendship with Valletta took place, Lois was again there to take over the job as secretary. Having left the committee a while ago, she was more than willing last year to accommodate the four actors from Malta who came over to Chichester to perform the play 'Star of Strait Street' which took place in this room, thus saving considerable costs for the Friends. The play was a resounding success and a total sell-out. She is now still in touch with those actors, sending over to Malta small gifts when some of the association went to Valletta last year.

She has been secretary and then Chairman of the original Arts Society in Chichester. This was followed by her appointment as Area Secretary for their societies in all of Sussex.

For three years Lois was a governor of Parklands School and recently has been helping a Ukrainian student at Bishop Luffa School with her reading.

Mr Mayor, Lois Cope is a treasure, and we are very fortunate to have her among us as a wonderful member of our community and our city."

CHICHESTER CITY ARTS CENTRE aka ST BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH WESTGATE – Heritage Award Citation given by Sarah Quail

Once again, it gives me great pleasure to read the citation for a Heritage Award for the Chichester City Arts Centre for the simple reason that I live opposite the church!

The Westgate Residents Association was particularly anxious when the church was put on the market by the diocese of Chichester, and we followed the purchase with keen interest. We need not have worried! A family partnership acquired the closed church in May 2022. The partners are Mr and Mrs Ian Jackson and their daughter, Rosemary (Rosie) Bell. They bought the building because they had been looking for a suitable property to be the permanent home of the Rosemary Bell Academy of Dance.

Rosie is a graduate of the Royal Academy of Dance and had been running her ballet school in Chichester for over ten years in assorted church halls. With more than 200 students aged from 3 to 83, she needed that permanent home! When they viewed the old church in 2020, they fell in love with it. The building is early 19th century classical and was built to designs by George Draper between 1825-32. (The previous round church stood on a slight mound to the north of the present building and was destroyed in the siege of Chichester in late 1642.)

The building had been empty for over seven years. It had no heating, no proper water supply and no main sewer connection. Having obtained planning permission and listed building consent, the family set about bringing the building up to the standards expected of an arts and community venue in the 21st century. They employed architects, the Douglas Briggs Partnership, and most of the work was completed by late September 2022 to enable the ballet school to begin using the former church.

The work included a complete overhaul of the original oak floor in the main hall and reception (formerly the nave and vestry); the creation of a disabled lavatory, small kitchen and a utility and shower room beneath the gallery housing the organ, and the original stone and marble font was moved to the new entrance lobby which has been retiled. In addition to the floor in the main hall, two rows of ballet barres were fitted and floor to ceiling mirrors to the new walls under the gallery. A modern all electric heating system was installed and the leaded glass windows were fitted with a secondary glazing system to provide both thermal and acoustic insulation.

The vestry was fitted out as a reception area for students and parents and the entire building was rewired. The former chancel is now separated from the main hall by a new wall but one that allows the painted barrelled ceiling by MacDonald Gill to be seen from the main hall. Living in Chichester on the corner of West Street and Chapel Street and practising as an architect, Max Gill, brother of Eric, designed the vestry and the chancel in 1929.

The building is also equipped with a Wi-Fi network. There is a piano in the main hall too. However, pride of place in the building is the pipe organ. The local community paid for it to be repaired and overhauled last year, and it is played regularly by Alan Thurlow, the former Cathedral Organist.

Outside, the wrought iron gates have been repaired, a disabled parking space has been created at the front of the building and the stone paving at the front re-laid.

Mr and Mrs Jackson and their daughter, Rosie Bell, have brought St Bartholomew's back to life as the Chichester City Arts Centre. It is home to the Rosemary Bell Academy of Dance, but it is also a much-needed community asset. We have seen birthday parties in the splendid, newly restored premises, concerts of all sorts, Chichester Fringe comedy nights, meetings (again, of all sorts), yoga and wedding receptions including that of Rosie Bell herself!

MRS. PENNY TOMLINSON Civic Award Citation given by Sarah Quail

Westgate resident, Mrs Penny Tomlinson, established the Chichester Children's BookFest in 2019 when she was shocked to learn the unacceptable fact that 37% of West Sussex children from disadvantaged backgrounds left school

unable to either read or write well, and despite being the fifth richest country in the world, the UK comes only 14th in international league tables for reading. (For more information see <https://www.childrensbookfest.com/>)

Penny had been part of the founding group of the North Devon Appledore Book Festival which is now a major UK book festival. Penny was widowed in 2013. She decided to make a new life for herself - and moved to Chichester. She resolved now to use the experience she had gained in Appledore to do something about literacy levels here in West Sussex.

Funding the project herself initially, Penny recruited fellow-Chichester resident, Sahra Gott and, between them, they launched the first Children's BookFest in 2019, raising money through grants and sponsorship from local businesses and friends. However, the biggest issue they faced was how to target those children most in need. They addressed this by going into local schools instead of running ticketed events on the usual literary festival model. Volunteer stewards – and I was one of them - took some 19 authors into classrooms to discuss their books with children. Many authors shared their own childhood anxieties; they too, the children learned, suffered with dyslexia, bullying, acute shyness, and low self-esteem. Learning to write, and losing themselves in a story, gave them, the authors, self-belief.

Last year, the third Children's BookFest took place (a year was missed because of Covid). Twenty-six authors were taken into 28 schools and delivered some 57 sessions for both primary and secondary school students. Each child received a signed and dedicated book from their author - paid for by Chichester Children's BookFest. For many children, this will be the first book they have ever owned. In addition, 100 books are taken each month to five local food banks for children whose families use them.

To sum up, Penny and her team which now include volunteer fundraisers, find the funds - some £40,000 - for over 6,000 new books for some six thousand children that they reach. Besides gifts from local businesses and individuals a hugely successful second-hand book sale takes place on Westgate and several notable writers such as Jacqueline Wilson, Rob Biddulph and Richard Coles have given their time and support, speaking at ticketed events in Chichester Cathedral and other venues, thus raising several thousand pounds for the BookFest.

The Children's BookFest grows each year. More schools have come on board and last year, an Outreach Programme was launched with BookFest team members reading and performing at school assemblies throughout the year. These sessions are hugely appreciated by the schools, particularly as team members stay on to work with reluctant readers and give them a copy of the book which has been discussed.

Child literacy is at an all-time low now in the UK. Almost one in five children between the ages of 5 and 8 do not have a book of their own at home according to the latest literacy survey by the National Literacy Trust, the highest figure since 2019 (according to the 'Bookseller' on 5 September 2022).

The rising cost of living is clearly taking its toll; 9 out of 10 parents (87%) say they have less disposable income, and 64% report that the amount they have to spend on books for their children has decreased. Just over half (51%) say books are simply too expensive now. Penny and her team are doing their very best to do something about this!
