

Rudgwick Parish Council

Weekly Clerk's Update: 14th – 20th February 2026 (Agenda March 2026)

To: Parish Councillors

c.c: Christian Mitchell (West Sussex County Councillor)
Richard Landeryou (Horsham District Councillor)

From: Anna Clayton

The weekly update provides information regarding:

- Announcements/delegated decisions by the Clerk
- Planning information
- Correspondence/communications from parishioners
- Correspondence/communications from outside organisations

List of organisations that communicate with the Council on a regular basis.

- AIRS (Action in Rural Sussex)
 - APCAG (Association of Parish Councils Aviation Group)
 - CAGNE (Communities Against Gatwick Noise Emission)
 - CPRE (Campaign to Protect Rural England)
 - HALC (Horsham Association of Local Councils)
 - HDC (Horsham District Council)
 - NALC (National Association of Local Councils)
 - WSALC (West Sussex Association of Local Councils)
 - WSCC (West Sussex District Council)
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Clerk's announcements/delegated decisions:

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GENERAL REMINDER: If you wish to speak face to face to a member of staff, please contact the Clerk on 07927 702321 during her office working hours (Monday – Wednesday 9.30 – 15.30).

Applications for noting at Rudgwick Parish Council Meeting

Applications for noting at Rudgwick Parish Council Meeting 9 th March 2026	
Application No: DC/26/0195 04.02.2026	Response/Comments:
Applicant: 12 The Marts, Rudgwick	
Reason for Application:	

Erection of a first floor side extension with pitched roof and gable, and installation of a pitched roof over lounge at ground floor.	
Official Response Date: 10.03.2026 / Determination 01.04.2026	
Application No: DC/26/0210 06.02.2026	Response/Comments:
Applicant: The Bungalow, The Haven	
Reason for Application: Erection of a single storey rear extension, erection of a front porch, conversion of roof space to create first floor with habitable living space, installation of a rear dormer and 11no. front and rear rooflights, extension of the existing roof to create 2no. covered terraces, and alterations to fenestration.	
Official Response Date: 10.03.2026 / Determination 03.04.2026	
Application No: DC/26/0273 17.02.2026	Response/Comments:
Applicant: Havenhurst Farm, The Haven	
Reason for Application: Prior Notification for the erection of 2no. agricultural buildings.	
Official Response Date: Not available / Determination 01.04.2026	
Application No: DC/26/0122 16.02.2026	Response/Comments:
Applicant: Windacres Farm, Church Street, Rudgwick	
Reason for Application: Removal of Condition 2 of previously approved application DC/20/0549 (Retrospective	

application for the retention of a lean-to agricultural storage building) relating to use purpose.	
Official Response Date: Not available / Determination 13.04.2026	
Application No: DC/26/0271 18.02.2026	Response/Comments:
Applicant: Sussex Topiary, Naldretts Lane, Rudgwick	
Reason for Application: Permission in principle for the erection of up to 9no. self-build park homes.	
Official Response Date: Not available / Determination 25.03.2026	
Application No: DC/26/0187 03.02.2026	Response/Comments:
Applicant: The Blue Ship, The Haven	
Reason for Application: Conversion of stable into a 1 bed holiday unit with associated works. (Full Application).	
Official Response Date: 12.03.2026 / Determination 31.03.2026	
Application No: DC/26/0188 03.02.2026	Response/Comments:
Applicant: The Blue Ship, The Haven	
Reason for Application: Conversion of stable into a 1 bed holiday unit with associated works. (Listed Building Consent).	
Official Response Date: 12.03.2026 / Determination 31.03.2026	

Applications for consideration at Rudgwick Parish Council Meeting

Applications for consideration at Rudgwick Parish Council Meeting 9 th March 2026	
Application No:	Response/Comments:
Applicant:	
Reason for Application:	
Official Response Date:	

Decisions

HDC Council Decisions – Rudgwick Parish Council Meeting 9 th March 2026	
Application No: DC/25/1923	Response/Comments: Refused / RPC objection The application is to replace a building set next to a dwelling which was given deemed consent under a class Q C3 change of use application from agricultural use to dwelling in 2016. This deemed consent does not permit extensions or outbuilding to be added to a class Q conversion, without a full planning application being submitted. The building presently in situ, does not appear to have been granted any planning permission and is stated to have been there since 2019. There is no record of any application to erect an outbuilding, therefore this application to replace a building erected without planning permission is not valid and should be refused. Even if a planning application was deemed valid, this application would be in breach of HDPF policy 28, as the replacement building is three times the footprint of the existing building and also its position near to the road, scale and the materials being suggested would not be in keeping with the neighbouring dwelling. The applicant states that the site is not viewable from the public footpath but this is not
Applicant: The Old Stables, Guildford Road, Rudgwick	
Reason for Application: Erection of an implement store for equestrian use.	
Official Response Date:	

	the case, as the whole site can be viewed from the Downslink Path. Therefore, a large new building could be viewed as a blot on the landscape. The submitted block plan is misleading as it shows the new structure having a similar footprint to that of the existing, whereas in reality it is much larger.
Application No: DC/25/1981	Response/Comments: Permitted / RPC no objection.
Applicant: Southdown House, The Summer House, Church Street, Rudgwick	
Reason for Application: Use of ancillary accommodation as part holiday let/part annexe (retrospective).	
Official Response Date:	
Application No: DC/25/2019	Response/Comments: Permitted / RPC no objection.
Applicant: Hornshill House, Guildford Road, Rudgwick	
Reason for Application: Erection of tennis court and pavilion.	
Official Response Date:	

Applications going to Committee

Applications going to Committee – Rudgwick Parish Council Meeting 9 th March 2026	
Application No:	Response/Comments:
Applicant:	
Reason for Application:	
Official Response Date:	

Appeals Lodged / Appeals Determined

New Appeals Lodged / Determined – Rudgwick Parish Council Meeting 9 th March 2026	
Application No:	Response/Comments:
Applicant:	
Reason for Application:	
Official Response Date:	

New Planning Compliance Issues

New Planning Compliance Issues – Rudgwick Parish Council Meeting 9 th March 2026	
Application No: EN/26/0063 19.02.2026	Response/Comments: Pending consideration
Address: The Old Stables, Guildford Road, Rudgwick	
Nature of Complaint Alleged: Erection of additional outbuilding to a Class Q converted building without planning permission.	
Official Response Date:	

Parish Councils Website

Rudgwick Parish Council's New Website is now live!

<https://rudgwick-pc.gov.uk>

Correspondence

Email dated 19.02.2026 from NALC
Chief Executives Bulletin

Events

- Our latest sold-out event explored how smaller parish and town councils can access practical, achievable funding options. Many smaller parish and town councils need funding options that go far beyond the precept. The event looked at how to find additional income to protect and deliver projects for their communities. You can [read more about the event](#) on our website.

Meetings

- Our [Policy Committee met on 17 February 2026](#) to discuss several matters, including climate ethical pensions, planning applications and its work plan.

Political and parliamentary engagement

- Peers in the House of Lords continued their scrutiny of the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill, raising concerns about the government's proposals for neighbourhood governance and [emphasising the need to protect and strengthen parish and town councils](#) as the most local tier of democratic representation.

Resources

- [In this week's blog](#), Aubergine explores what website accessibility compliance looks like in practice, and the steps parish and town councils can take now to confirm compliance on the Annual Governance and Accountability Return form for 2025/26.
- We have [published an updated advice note on planning for parish and town councils](#) to clarify the role of parish and town councils and the point that they must be informed of all planning applications and any amendments to those applications within the parish if they have asked to be informed.

Support

- We have [supported the proposed introduction of a new scale fee of £4,900 for the limited assurance review](#) of smaller authorities with income or expenditure over £6.5 million and below £15 million by the Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments.
- We are [pleased to announce that we have successfully achieved Cyber Essentials accreditation](#) for the fourth consecutive year, reinforcing our commitment to strong cybersecurity and the protection of member data.
- We are [pleased to endorse a new free online course](#) from the Association of Electoral Administrators to help anyone thinking of standing as a parish or town

councillor, explaining what prospective candidates need to know about parish and town council elections.

From across the sector

- [PoliticsHome has published an article by Zoe Franklin MP](#), which draws on a report by the Surrey Association of Local Councils to show how Surrey's parish and town councils are investing over £11 million annually in local services, and offers a practical model for effective devolution and calls for closer collaboration as local government reform moves forward.

Email dated 19.02.2026 from WSCC

Royal recognition for West Sussex County Council home where 'children thrive'



news release

Royal recognition for West Sussex County Council home where 'children thrive'

Staff at a children's home run by West Sussex County Council have received royal recognition as the home is rated 'outstanding' for a third year in a row.

Ofsted inspectors praised the 'exceptional skill, compassion and commitment' of staff at Orchard House in a [report published recently](#).

The hard work and dedication of staff was also recognised by the King at a celebration event for local government workers at St James's Palace, which was attended by the home's manager.

Orchard House provides short and long-term care for up to 14 children aged between five and 18 years with learning disabilities.

Councillor Jacquie Russell, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning, said: “The outstanding recognition for Orchard House reflects the extraordinary dedication of our staff, who work tirelessly to create a safe, nurturing environment where children are supported to grow in confidence, independence and happiness. It demonstrates our commitment to keeping children and young people safe and ensuring everyone can thrive and achieve their full potential, no matter what challenges they may face.

“It was also wonderful to see this long record of excellence recognised by the King. This honour is testament to the remarkable work happening every day at Orchard House and across our social care services. I am incredibly proud of all our teams, who ensure every child receives the very best care, opportunities and protection.”

Outstanding experiences and progress for children

Inspectors found that children benefit from ‘outstanding’ care that helps them thrive socially, emotionally and academically. Staff were praised for their strong understanding of each child’s communication needs, creating a culture where children feel genuinely heard and valued.

Ofsted noted that children enjoy a variety of creative and community-based activities that build confidence and belonging. Highlights included taking part in local events, such as winning first place for their float at a community parade, helping children develop independence and pride.

A safe, supportive and protective environment

The home also received an ‘outstanding’ judgement for how well children are helped and protected. Inspectors found staff to be highly attuned to children’s emotional and physical needs, offering calm, consistent support, quiet spaces, and well-managed routines that help children feel safe and secure.

Parents and families described the service as invaluable, praising staff for their unwavering dedication in meeting complex needs.

Exceptional leadership and management

Leadership and management were judged ‘outstanding’, with Ofsted praising the home’s stable, experienced team and its long-standing record of excellence. Inspectors highlighted the strong child-centred culture, personalised care planning, and the exceptional professionalism of staff.

Recent refurbishments were also managed sensitively, with children involved in decisions, helping reduce anxiety and enhance their sense of ownership and comfort.

Royal recognition

Orchard House’s continued success was also recognised by King Charles, who invited Residential Home Manager Sue Wadey to St James’s Palace for a reception honouring outstanding local government service.

The full report is available to read on the [Ofsted website](#).

Email dated 18.02.2026 from HDC

Community Governance Review - Horsham District

Thank you for your email and making us aware of these concerns. I have sent the content of your email to the members of the Governance Committee, and have shared with them my responses to your queries. We are keen to work with the parish councils on the community governance review process, and would like to offer a briefing next week to all parish clerks to discuss any concerns. We have booked a meeting for 3pm on Wednesday 25 February, and will send you a Teams link to join shortly. We will circulate notes following this meeting for any not able to attend. My response to your concerns are as follows:

- The CGR has been scheduled as Government guidance is that it is best practice that a CGR is undertaken every 10-15 years and the last review concluded in 2013, therefore it has been 13 years since the conclusion of the last review. There are reasonable concerns that the new unitary authority would not have capacity to undertake such a review for a significant number of years following its creation.
- There have also been a number of parishes, and residents, that have raised concerns about specific issues in their area, mostly as the result of new development. They have the option to trigger a CGR through a petition, but they have been advised that a full CGR was scheduled to take place, prior to the 2027 elections and have therefore not submitted a petition/request to undertake a separate CGR.
 - As part of the review, all responses must be considered – which will include those of parish councils, as well as any representations made by individual parish councillors
 - Each response will be assessed on its own merit, and must take into account the impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion, and the size, population and boundaries of the parish
 - The Governance Committee will consider the responses in this spirit, and is not a political exercise. There is no specific weighting or metrics that can be applied, as all submissions to the initial consultation will be qualitative in nature, and must be assessed as to the suitability of the proposal
- The legislation requires that HDC undertakes the CGR process, parish councils do not have the power to do so
- The CGR will not necessarily result in changes to any of the parish boundaries – this will be led by any responses received, and any proposed changes will be considered, and if considered suitable (i.e. meets the requirement for community cohesion and effective community governance), then it would be included in the draft recommendations, and subject to a second period of consultation
- There has not been any information about benefits/not of redistricting, as this is not being proposed. The initial consultation is an open consultation to understand whether interested parties, and/or residents, believe the current community governance arrangements are suitable, or whether there are any changes that could be made. This could include

increasing/decreasing the number of councillors, or creating parish wards, and is not necessarily about re-drawing parish boundaries.

- Each consultation period will be 6 weeks

Kind regards,

Aisha Nottage

Democratic Services and Elections Manager

Deputy Monitoring Officer

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Email: Aisha.Nottage@horsham.gov.uk



Email dated 18.02.2026 from HDC

Community Governance Review - Horsham District

I am emailing to let you know that at tonight's meeting of the Governance Committee, Councillors are being asked to approve the [terms of reference](#) for a community governance review of Horsham district. Full details are contained within [the report](#).

Once we have timescales for the consultation periods, I will send these over to you to enable forward planning, should your parish wish to submit a response. Parish councillors will also be able to submit their own individual responses, with further details to follow.

We will be looking to publicise the review process across the district, and hope that you can support us by displaying posters that we will provide to you, and sharing our social media posts on your own pages, which again I will share directly with you.

If you have any questions/concerns at this stage, please do let me know.

Kind regards,

Aisha Nottage

Democratic Services and Elections Manager

Deputy Monitoring Officer

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Email: Aisha.Nottage@horsham.gov.uk



Email dated 16.02.2026 from HDC
TO ALL PARISH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD COUNCIL CLERKS

As some of you may already be aware, a new Inspector, Mr Jonathan Bore, has been appointed to conduct the examination of the Horsham District Local Plan. Mr Bore has now written to the Council setting out the next steps in terms of how he envisages that the examination will be conducted. Further information is set out in the [attached](#) press release.

I am aware that a number of parishes put forward representations (comments) on the draft Local Plan and had registered to attend examination hearings. You may also be approached for advice by residents. It is worth noting that the precise format of the examination is a matter for the Local Plan Inspector rather than the Council. Therefore, we advise that if anyone has any direct questions on the procedural arrangements, we recommend any queries are directed to our programme officer. Her details are available on our FAQ page, together with some other general information about the local plan examination process. [Local Plan Examination - Frequently-Asked-Questions](#)
Best wishes, Barbara

Barbara Childs

Director of Place

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Email dated 17.02.2026 from WSCC

West Sussex County Council Statement on Election Deferment Decision



NEWS RELEASE

West Sussex County Council Statement on Election Deferment Decision

A spokesperson for West Sussex County Council said: "We submitted our preferred option for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in September and clearly explained to the government the impact that continuing with local elections in 2026 would have on the ability to deliver the government's policy objectives of devolution and LGR on their requested timetable.

"Based on our submission, ministers decided the threshold for deferring local elections had been met. They have since changed their position. This indecision has heightened the level of difficulty, creating significant uncertainty.

"The risk we face is not whether we have new arrangements in place in 2028, but the extent to which we can be confident those arrangements will be put in place without adversely affecting people that rely on the vital services we deliver. We will now take some time to digest this news and assess the impact on the LGR timetable."

[Future of local government in Sussex](#)

Email dated 19.02.2026 from WSCC

Free wellbeing support in West Sussex libraries



news release

Free wellbeing support in West Sussex libraries

Join your local library in West Sussex and you'll have year-round free activities, services, and resources to improve your emotional, physical, and mental wellbeing.

In addition, to celebrate Wellbeing Month in March, West Sussex County Council Library Service are holding special 'Live Well for Longer' events at the following locations:

- Littlehampton Library – Tuesday 3 March 10am-2pm
- Chichester Library – Thursday 12 March 10am-2pm
- Horsham Library – Thursday 19 March 10am-2pm
- Crawley Library – Wednesday 25 March 10am-2pm
- Worthing Library – Friday 27 March 10am-2pm

At these events you'll be able to get a health and hearing check, pick up helpful advice from local organisations, get information on future independence and care as you age, and even pick up a new pair of safe, comfy, slip-free slippers (subject to availability).

Also in March, some libraries will be adding new regular activities to the range of free sessions available, including Tea and Chat, Relax with Colouring, and Chess.

All year round you can borrow blood pressure monitors to check your heart health at home, reminiscence packs to help with dementia care or to delve into history, and access booklists for information about menopause, bereavement, neurodivergence, and to support your mental health and wellbeing.

And of course, there are tens of thousands of books and eBooks to borrow as reading for pleasure is proven to reduce stress and boost your wellbeing.

Councillor Duncan Crow, Cabinet Member for Community Support, Fire and Rescue, said: “Our libraries offer a vast array of clubs and activities, free of charge, all year round, that support people’s wellbeing in a wide variety of ways.

“We have 36 libraries located right across the county, plus the eLibrary, and volunteers who can deliver books to your home if you are unable to visit a library or use it online. Libraries provide a vital service to the people of West Sussex and fulfil one of the county council’s key aims which is helping people and communities fulfil their potential.”

Councillor Bob Lanzer, Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing, said: “I’m delighted Wellbeing Month is taking place again, building on the success of previous years. With lots of events and free resources, I really encourage people to visit their local library to find out more.”

For more information on Wellbeing Month visit [Wellbeing Month | West Sussex Libraries](#).

It’s [free to join](#) the library if you live, work or study in the county.

[Find your nearest library.](#)



Email dated 16.02.2026 from Transport for the South East
What's New in South East Transport



Transport for the South East's rail strategy agreed by our partnership board this month.

Transport for the South East's (TfSE) [Rail Strategy](#) sets out the challenges and opportunities associated with improving passenger and freight rail services in the TfSE area and the wider South East. It builds directly on the Transport Strategy Missions, published last year, to establish a shared vision for the future of rail for the first time in the South East.

It provides a strategic framework to guide investment decisions on radial and orbital rail corridors in the South East over the coming decades and contains a detailed evidence base.

Aligning with the Secretary of State's Long Term Rail Strategy it enables TfSE to provide advice to the Secretary of State on Regional priorities. It supports Great British Railways understand the priorities for our local authorities and helps address both the challenges and opportunities for the region.

With the imminent arrival of Great British Railways, the approval of the strategy is timely and provides an opportunity for TfSE to present a clear and collective voice on the future of rail priorities across the region.



TfSE Scheme Development Funding Advances Plans for the A259 corridor

TfSE scheme development funding helps West Sussex County Council develop a Strategic Outline Case (SOC) for A259 Chichester to Bognor Regis Corridor Improvement Scheme.

The multi-modal corridor enhancement is designed to improve the performance of the A259 for all users. It is a short-term priority in West Sussex County Council's (WSCC) Local Transport Plan, the West Sussex Transport Plan (2022–2036) and identified as a regional investment priority in the TfSE [Strategic Investment Plan](#).

The Strategic Outline Case (SOC) sets out the work needed to support a Department for Transport grant application and prepare for preliminary design. TfSE helped to initially prioritise this scheme to government and funded a new data collection process to better understand existing travel demand, alongside modelled transport user benefits.

With TfSE's support, the SOC leaves WSCC well placed to progress the scheme as suitable funding opportunities arise.

A full case study for WSCC SOC can be found on TfSE's [Centre of Excellence](#).



Freight, Rail and Net Zero: TfSE at the Pathways to Net Zero Conference

Kate Over, Transport Strategy Manager, represented TfSE at the recent *Pathways to Net Zero Conference* in Birmingham.

The conference highlighted how integrated transport planning and policy can accelerate the decarbonisation of the UK's surface transport network.

Kate, who leads TfSE's rail and freight strategy delivery, spoke on an expert panel about net zero freight, highlighting how better planning by regional and local authorities can deliver cleaner air, safer roads, less congestion, and a stronger economy.

After the conference, Kate highlighted the importance of a collaborative approach to this issue. “Freight underpins so many of the outcomes authorities are trying to deliver,” she said, “from new homes and a sustainable economy to better air quality and less congestion.”

“To achieve those goals more effectively, planning, transport and economic development teams should understand freight and work more closely together with the freight sector. At TfSE we can provide training, regional evidence and coordination to help support this.”

This aligns with our planned Freight Awareness e-learning programme and our recent [Intermodal Rail Freight Interchange](#), [Warehousing Provision](#) and [Lorry Parking Studies](#), which highlight the need for better freight infrastructure to support efficient supply chains, sustainable growth, connectivity, decarbonisation and resilience.



Transport Issues Facing the South East Discussed in Parliament

The South East’s transport issues were the subject of a Westminster Hall debate this month, secured by Chichester MP Jess Brown-Fuller and attended by MPs from across the region.

MPs focused on strategic capacity and connectivity challenges across the transport system in the South East, including: congestion on key corridors such as the A3, A27 and A259; the importance of bus networks in connecting people to jobs and services; Isle of Wight ferry services; international rail connectivity in Kent; and rail capacity constraints on major routes, particularly the Croydon bottleneck.

MPs also raised concerns that current level of transport funding does not fully reflect the region’s growth, economic contribution or future demand.

Many of these challenges are set out in Transport for the South East's Transport Strategy and Strategic Investment Programme, which provide an evidence-led framework for improving connectivity, resilience and economic opportunity.

Responding for the Government, Local Transport Minister Lilian Greenwood highlighted the intention to take a more integrated, long-term approach to transport planning across all modes in the future.



Email dated 13.02.2026 from WSCC

Thousands of drains cleared as council works to keep roads moving following severe weather



NEWS RELEASE

Thousands of drains cleared as council works to keep roads moving following severe weather

West Sussex County Council Highways Teams are making progress responding to the impact of the severe weather on our roads.

Since the start of February, crews have cleared more than 3,000 drains and repaired more than 1,800 potholes. This builds on their work through January to prepare as much as possible for this recent period of rain.

High levels of standing water are having a detrimental effect on road surfaces and we're seeing sharp increase in pothole reports coming through.

We have increased resources to respond to safety defects throughout the week, evenings and weekends and brought in an additional drainage jetter to clear blocked drains and remove standing water.

We are managing to keep the vast majority of our road network open and moving and we will continue this work with more rain and colder weather predicted.

Longer term, we are reviewing our resurfacing works programme to ensure roads impacted by the weather get additional focus.

A29 Shripney Road

The road will re-open by 5pm on Friday 13 February.

Works to reduce flood water on the A29 Shripney Road have continued, with over 12 million litres of water (the equivalent of 5 Olympic swimming pools) being pumped from the highway into a nearby ditch following agreement with the landowner.

Now the standing water on the carriageway has been significantly reduced, we will monitor the site and continue to pump as and when required.

There is a risk of the temperature dropping below freezing in the coming days so a reduced speed limit of 20mph will be in place through the area to ensure safety.

While the pumping appears to have had a positive impact on the carriageway flooding, there is a risk that, should the area receive another period of heavy or sustained rainfall, the outlets we are using will be full and we will be unable to pump the water anywhere. Should this be the case, and the level of standing water rises again, we will unfortunately need to re-shut the road.

At a meeting today with agencies including Arun District Council and the Environment Agency, we are putting forward proposals to lead on and fund investigative works with support from our partners to identify long-term solutions to this recurring and complex issue.

This will build on previous investigations into the causes of flooding and the challenges of responding that we undertook following similar incidents in the winter of 2023 to 2024.

We propose to commission a detailed review of the reasons for flooding in the area and establish the opportunities for reducing the extent and risk of further flooding and improve the resilience of the roads.

Sack Lane, Shripney

Our contractors have installed a temporary ramp over the flooding at Sack Lane to enable vehicle access for all residents.

This will remain in place until the weather conditions improve, and the road is clear of flood water.

B2141 Chilgrove Road

The road is closed from the junction with the A286 through to Binderton Lane due to groundwater flooding.

Lower Bognor Road, Lagness

The road is closed from Chalcraft lane to Pagham Road due to flooding.

Sidlesham

Highleigh Road, Sidlesham is now clear of flood water and has reopened. Nearby Keynor Lane is also open although some flooding remains, we advise drivers to pass through with caution.

We have identified that the main cause of the flooding in this area is the overflow of the neighbouring rife, and we continue to work closely with the Environment Agency to find a resolution.

We are aware that roads in the area have been damaged by the high levels of water. Our teams will repair the potholes caused once the weather has improved enough to allow us to do so.

[Further information on the council's work responding to the severe weather](#)

Email dated 16.02.2026 from Sussex Police
The devastating impact of romance fraud



**Sussex
Police & Crime
Commissioner**
KATY BOURNE OBE



When love becomes a lie...



**"A romance fraudster left
me penniless and sleeping
in my car"**

Click to hear Tamsin's story



For the past 10 years, I have provided funding for two specialist fraud caseworker roles at Victim Support Sussex. They follow up on referrals from Operation Signature - Sussex Police's pioneering response to identify and support vulnerable victims of fraud.

The caseworkers deliver tailored one-to-one support to victims like Tamsin* (not the victim's real name, to protect her anonymity).

Throughout their two-year relationship 'Mike' constantly lied to Tamsin - even claiming he had terminal cancer before faking his own death.

Tamsin calculates she paid out more than £50,000 in total throughout the relationship. She is still trying to comprehend how someone she thought was so nice turned out to be so callous.

You can listen to Tamsin's story on my [YouTube channel](#).

Victim Support Sussex supported Tamsin for a year after she fell victim to romance fraud. Using a blend of regular phone calls and face-to-face visits, Victim Support worked with Tamsin to help rebuild her emotional resilience and appeal for the return of her financial losses.

I'm pleased to share that, thanks to this support, Tamsin is now in a far stronger financial position and feels increasingly confident about her future.

Anyone can experience this type of fraud and it's on the rise. Victim Support Sussex has seen a 5.5% increase in romance fraud referrals from Sussex Police in the past year, up from 310 referrals in Jan-Dec 2024 to 327 referrals in Jan-Dec 2025.

Romance fraud is particularly cruel and, in cases like Tamsin's, victims are left emotionally and financially devastated, grieving for a relationship they believed was genuine and loving.

Far too many victims suffer in silence, unsure where to turn after such a profound breach of trust.

That's why Victim Support's specialist fraud caseworkers are so crucial in Sussex. They offer the time, expertise and compassion needed to help victims rebuild their confidence, navigate complex financial issues and start to recover from what is often a deeply traumatic experience. Their support is genuinely life-changing.

Celebrating Safer Internet Day

Our Sussex Youth Ambassadors gathered at my office this week to celebrate Safer Internet Day with a packed agenda focused on internet safety.

Claudia Wilson, Digital Safety and Fraud Prevention Officer for West Sussex, led a session on how to stay safe online including practical tips to give to others.

The group then split into interactive break-out sessions where they learnt about Virtual Reality, TikTok and storytelling through voice.

The day concluded with a dedicated session on Artificial Intelligence (AI) delivered by Yanika Quinn from The Breck Foundation, which encouraged the Youth Ambassadors to interact and share their views on AI in relation to safety and its potential risks.

It is vital we give young people the skills and confidence to navigate the digital world safely. I hope our Youth Ambassadors took away some essential learning, which they can continue to share with their peers.



Katy Bourne OBE
Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner

FRIDAY FORCE FOCUS

Combatting female genital mutilation

The 6 February marked the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) - a global campaign led by the United Nations to protect girls and women from harm and to encourage communities to speak out together.

Sussex Police joined partners, including local authorities and victim advocates, at Gatwick Airport to deliver important safeguarding advice and raise awareness of this deeply harmful practice.

FGM is defined as any procedure involving cutting or altering female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It affects millions of women and girls worldwide and is illegal in the UK, where it is recognised as a serious form of violence against women and girls, even if it takes place abroad.

Facilitating open, safe conversations is crucial to tackling FGM in our communities.

Sussex Police work closely with local community organisations, faith and cultural groups, health and social care partners, survivor advocates/charities, schools and specialist support teams to understand this sensitive and complex issue.

If you feel you or someone you know is at risk, you can speak to Sussex Police confidentially and without judgement.

The Force is committed to supporting victims and their families with compassion and cultural respect, ensuring girls are kept safe without criminalisation.



[SHARE WITH A FRIEND](#)

Email dated 13.02.2026 from Keep Britain Tidy

Litter-pickers at the ready! Make your #GBSpringClean pledge today!



Join us for the 2026 Great British Spring Clean!

We know that you are working hard 365 days a year for the good of your communities – thank you for everything you do.

The Great British Spring Clean will take place from **13 to 29 March 2026**. This is a great chance to encourage residents to get involved with our mission to tackle litter.

Will you join us and help residents show they love where they live?

Your town or parish council can sign up below, and once you've filled in your form, you'll receive our free digital #GBSpringClean kick-start kit.

You can also tell us any information you want us to make available to your resident volunteers, such as if you will provide equipment.

[Sign up now](#)



City council staff set the standard

The Great British Spring Clean Awards recognise outstanding efforts to tackle litter and care for communities.

Well done to Lancaster City Council's Engagement & Development Assistant, Kathryn Taylor, who is shortlisted for our **Outstanding Organiser** award.

Kathryn organised a staff litter-pick with her team joined by departments including Finance, Executive Support & Wellbeing, Health & Safety, and Environmental Protection collecting 20 large bags around Morecambe in two hours – and some staff went on to pick in their own time.

With Engagement & Development Officer Helen Brister they spread the word to council staff, volunteer litter-pickers and volunteering groups by email, regularly posting on their Parks & Open Spaces Facebook page to showcase good work by volunteers and to advertise the campaign.

She said: "This was the first year I had any involvement with the Great British Spring Clean, and I'm proud of everyone's efforts – I can't wait to see what we can achieve next year!"

This year's award nominations will open in March, so keep your eyes peeled for a deserving Litter Hero and be sure to nominate them [here](#).

[Join us](#)



"It's...an act of national renewal. Working people, coming together, to do their bit for community pride. Black bin-liner, by black bin-liner, helping to build a better Britain."

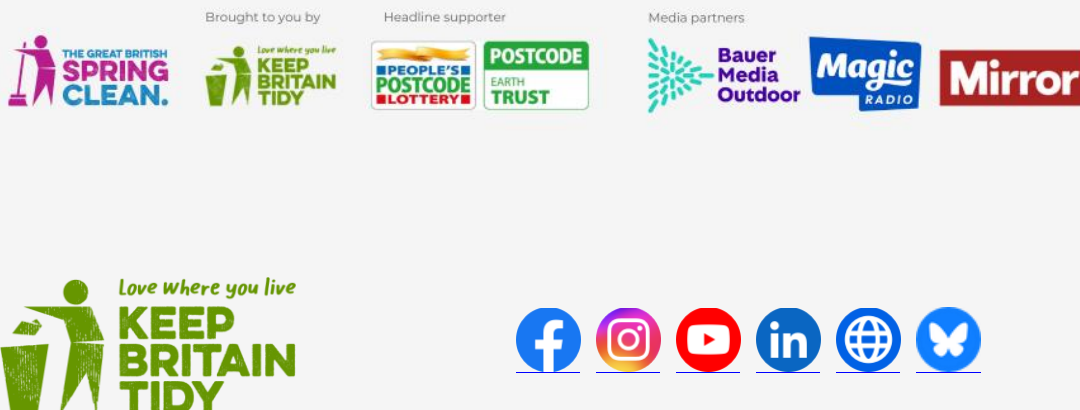
PM Keir Starmer speaking about the 2025 campaign (credit: Keir Starmer ©House of Commons)

How to navigate the purdah period

We are aware some councils may be affected by the purdah period ahead of the May 2026 elections and that this may impact how and when our local authority partners choose to communicate about the campaign, and that limited communications for an extended period may pose challenges.

We understand purdah begins around the end of March, which means there is the pre promote period – and the first week of the campaign – in which officials and local authorities observing purdah can participate in the campaign.

We therefore encourage organisations affected by purdah to use the time before the campaign, which starts on 13 March, to promote it.



Email dated 13.02.2026 from WSCC

West Sussex County Council commits to a fairer future for people with care experience



news release

West Sussex County Council commits to a fairer future for people with care experience

People who have been in care will receive stronger support, fairer treatment and better opportunities under a new West Sussex County Council strategy designed to tackle discrimination and stigma.

[The Ending Discrimination for People with Care Experience in West Sussex Strategy 2026–2031](#) sets out how the council and its partners will work to ensure that care-experienced children, young people and adults who have lived in care for a period of their life are recognised, valued and supported to thrive, and not judged or limited because of their past. It builds on a 2023

council motion recognising care experience as a protected characteristic locally, meaning council decisions must consider the needs of care-experienced individuals.

The strategy was co-produced with care-experienced young people and developed alongside partners including and Sussex Police, ensuring it reflects real experiences and needs across West Sussex.

The new approach sets out to ensure:

Fairness in public services, including housing, health, education and employment, by challenging unconscious bias and outdated assumptions. This includes addressing situations where individuals might be treated differently because of harmful stereotypes, such as assumptions about trauma related behaviour or the likelihood of criminality.

Greater support into adulthood, ensuring young people leaving care can access the help they need to live independently, pursue education, find work, and maintain their wellbeing. At the end of April 2025, West Sussex County Council was supporting 986 children in care and 709 care leavers up to age 24.

A community that better understands care experience, helping employers, service providers and residents recognise the challenges care-experienced people may face and the simple changes in approach that can make a meaningful difference.

Councillor Jacquie Russell, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning, said: "People who have been in care should not be defined by their past, but by their individual potential, resilience and contribution to their communities.

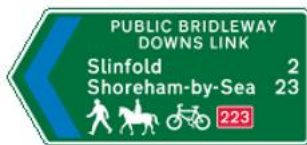
"This strategy is about making sure that every care-experienced person in West Sussex has the support, stability and fair treatment they deserve so they can achieve their full potential. Our commitment is to remove barriers wherever we find them, challenge stigma, and help create the conditions in which everyone can thrive."

The strategy is available to read in full on the [council's website](#).

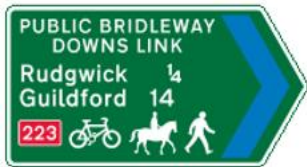
Email dated 12.02.2026 from WSCC Country Side Team Leader Downs Link Signage Improvement Project

Below are images of the signs for the Downs Link either side of the A281. We are currently in dialogue with our Highways Improvement Team and hope these signs can be installed at the same time as any proposed scheme developed by them for this area of the Downs Link.

South side of A281



North side of A281



Kind regards, Jackie

Jackie Lewis

Countryside Team Leader

Highways, Transport and Planning

West Sussex County Council