



Welcome to the March 2024 edition of our Residents' eNewsletter, featuring the latest news and updates from your county council.



New Chief Executive appointed

Leigh Whitehouse has been appointed as our new Chief Executive.

Leigh will be joining from Surrey County Council where he is currently the interim Chief Executive, acting up from his substantive role of Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of Resources.

Current Chief Executive, Becky Shaw, will continue in the post until Leigh is ready to join West Sussex.

[Read our news release](#)



Egg-xactly what you need to know this Easter!

Where can you find fun and local things to do over Easter for family members of all ages?

[Experience West Sussex](#) has Easter baskets full of ideas right on your doorstep.

Our libraries have a farmyard fun theme running over Easter – so head to your local library for some 'hay-larious' stories and 'a-moo-sing' crafts! All activities are free, but [booking a place is essential](#).

Need to get in touch with us over the Bank Holiday? Check out our opening times and emergency contact numbers.

Easter opening times and emergency numbers



Prioritising pothole repairs

As you will be well aware, we have experienced unprecedented levels of rain and named storm events over the autumn and winter months.

Over the past five months (October- Feb) we had more rain than we would normally have in a year, with February seeing the highest level of rain since records began.

Then in the first week of this month (March), we experienced a month's worth of rain. These conditions are a big contributing factor in potholes forming so it is unsurprising that we are now seeing a large number of issues on the network, and we are experiencing very high numbers of customer reports.

Reports of defects this March have reached almost 7,400, and with over a week to go, we are on course to have one of the highest volume of new enquiries/reports ever recorded in one month.

In fact, in the past year, we have seen an overall record number of potholes and other safety defects being reported to us and we have also completed a record number of repairs.

We would like to reassure you we are doing all we can to manage the volume of enquiries and to address these increased numbers, to provide a road network we can all be proud of.

The county council has approved an additional £4 million as part of its revenue budget in 2024/25 to support highway maintenance activities and repairs, plus an additional £7 million of capital funding, which will increase our budget for carriageway resurfacing and treatments to over £20 million this coming year.

Right now, we are focussing on the high priority work of repairing safety defects, using additional resource, machinery and techniques to ensure longer lasting repairs.

Please keep reporting defects [via our website](#) and thank you for your patience whilst our teams prioritise and work through the backlog.

[Read more about our road repairs](#)



Put a healthy spin on spring!

British summertime arrives on Easter Sunday (31 March) and now's the time to focus on our health and make the most of the longer days.

'Gro Health' is a free digital service that's available to anyone who lives or works in West Sussex and who wants help to manage their weight. [Check your eligibility and sign up before the end of March.](#)

There are [plenty of walks in West Sussex](#), taking in spectacular views of the coast, countryside towns and villages and our guide on [14 easy walking trails](#) is ideal for leisurely strolls, wheelchair users, and families with pushchairs.

Visiting a farm this Easter? Remember there's a risk of infection from some bugs naturally carried by farm animals. [Know the risks and stay safe.](#)



Common Blue © Paul Marten - Sussex Wildlife Trust

Get involved in a new initiative to help nature recover in Sussex!

Here in Sussex we're fortunate that our county is home to much iconic and wondrous wildlife, including some of the rarest natural habitats in the world. But nature is in trouble. [One in six of our UK species is at risk of extinction](#), and urgent, locally coordinated efforts are needed to reverse this decline.

Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) are a new initiative being rolled-out across England to help with this. In Sussex there will be two strategies - one covering West Sussex and another for East Sussex and Brighton & Hove.

At the heart of every LNRS will be environmental issues that are most important to local people. If you live or work in Sussex you can have your say by taking the residents' survey below.

You can also visit [Sussex Nature Recovery](#) for more information and details of events including webinars, workshops, briefings and more.

Take the residents' survey



Clean up this spring!

Planning a trip to one of our 12 Recycling Centres over Easter?

Remember you now need to book an appointment before you set off.

We are also moving to longer spring and summer opening hours from Easter Monday - 1 April.

[Find out more about our Recycling Centres](#)



Expansion of childcare support

The help you can get when paying for childcare is expanding for working families.

There are significant changes coming to the 15 and 30 hours childcare support in England.

- From April 2024, two year olds could be eligible for up to 15 hours.
- From September 2024, children over nine months old could be eligible for up to 15 hours.
- From September 2025, all children aged nine months to statutory school age could be eligible for up to 30 hours.

[Find out more about the new childcare offers](#)



Help and support with council tax bills

This month you'll receive your council tax bill and the amount of you pay depends on the band your property is in.

The increase in the county council's share of an average Band D property will be £81.54 per year, which is £1.57 per week.

Council tax is [paid to your district or borough council](#), who have information about help to pay council tax, including discounts and eligibility for exemptions.

If you are struggling, further financial help, advice and practical support is available on our [cost of living](#) pages.

[Find out more about our budget](#)

More news



Head to our [Newsroom](#) to find all the latest news:

- Next year we will hold a whole-council election so now is a good time to think about becoming a county councillor. We are currently holding [information events](#) across West Sussex. [Watch our video to find out more](#) about being a councillor.
- Senior West Sussex leaders have held a summit to discuss [water issues including flooding, water quality, sewage outflows, and scarcity](#) at a strategic intervention level.
- We have a vacancy for an [independent member of our Regulation, Audit and Account committee](#). This voluntary role provides independent and impartial advice and would suit someone with accounting or auditing experience.
- Our West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service is urging e-bike users to act responsibly and be [aware of the risks e-bikes pose](#), following a significant fire in Pease Pottage.

Did you know?



Our successful ['food rescue' scheme](#) which last year prevented over 37 tonnes of food going to waste will continue for another year.

Did you receive this eNewsletter from a friend? [Sign up here.](#)

Reminder: We have more than 40 eNewsletters on a wide variety of topics including Environment & Climate Change, Walking & Cycling, Highways & Transport, Recycling, Weather Alerts and Staying Safe Online. [View all topics here.](#)

Our Council Plan, budget, and Council Tax changes 2024/25



[Click here for details](#)