



Welcome to the January 2025 edition of our Residents' eNewsletter, featuring the latest news and updates from your county council.



Step forward in plans for Sussex Mayoral Authority

West Sussex County Council and our partners have put ourselves forward to be at the forefront of plans for historic changes to local government across the country.

Together with East Sussex County Council and Brighton & Hove City Council, we're bidding to create a combined authority for Sussex that would be led by a mayor.

The government hopes plans to create more Mayoral Authorities in England will bring funding and local decision-making powers down from Westminster.

[Council Leader Cllr Paul Marshall said:](#) "This is the time to make the most of the opportunity for devolution and be among the first to access the benefits we need to help the whole of Sussex prosper now and for future generations."

Read more in the link below, including separate plans on local government reorganisation.

[More information](#)



Our proposed budget for the year ahead

Proposals to deliver a balanced budget for 2025/26 and provide support for vulnerable residents in line with Council Plan priorities were examined by our Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee yesterday.

You can watch a [webcast of the meeting](#) online.

We are proposing to spend more than £2.2 billion on day-to-day services to meet increasing demand pressures and cost of services.

The pressures facing us outweigh the funding received from government and a balanced budget is proposed by increasing council tax by 4.99% and spending reductions of £12.3m.

The Cabinet will consider feedback from our recent consultation at a meeting next week before recommending the budget to Full Council in February for a final decision.

[Read more about the budget](#)



Help to 'Call the Shots on Alcohol'

A new public health campaign is encouraging people in West Sussex to 'Call the Shots on Alcohol'.

Together with West Sussex Wellbeing and DrinkCoach, we are encouraging people to reflect on their drinking and to take the two-minute online DrinkCoach test to find out if it's putting them at risk.

The campaign guides people to free, confidential alcohol support available in West Sussex, both online and face-to-face.

For both men and women, it is recommended to drink no more than 14 units of alcohol a week, spread across three days or more. That's around six medium (175ml) glasses of wine, or six pints of 4% beer.

In West Sussex, men are thought to be more likely to drink above these recommendations, with one in four men (26%) likely to drink to hazardous levels, compared to one in eight (13%) women. Men also appear to be less likely to access the range of early alcohol support available across West Sussex. [Find more information on these statistics here.](#)

Press the button below to take the test, get tips on reducing your drinking and find out about free local support.

Call the shots on alcohol



Celebrate with us

2025 marks 100 years of our library service being in the heart of the community.

We're overjoyed to have been a part of so many people's lives and communities across the county over the past century.

Join us in celebrating our centenary by taking part in a series of exciting events and activities.

From special half term activities and centenary-inspired crafting to tea parties and murder mystery events – there's something for everyone at our 36 libraries.

One of the main attractions will be the *Library of Possibilities and Wonder*, an exciting virtual reality project. We'll be bringing VR headsets, as well as 3D posters, to your local library during the year.

We'll also be delving into the archives and sharing photographs and memorabilia about the library service from 1925 to the present day.

If you're not already a member of the library, [it's free and easy to join](#).

Celebrate the centenary



Applications open to cut waste

The Waste Prevention Community Grant Fund is now open for applications from community-based projects to encourage people to repair and reuse items they no longer want or use.

The fund is a joint initiative by the county council and Biffa to help local groups develop innovative ways to reduce household waste.

It's open to community groups, residents' associations, charities, community interest companies and social enterprises to apply for grants of up to £5,000.

[More information](#)



Free support to stop smoking

There are almost immediate improvements to your health when you quit smoking.

Your body starts repairing the day you stop smoking and your longer-term risks of cancer, lung disease, heart disease and stroke will be significantly reduced.

The [NHS quit smoking website](#) notes that after just one year of quitting smoking, the risk of a heart attack halves compared to continued smoking.

There are also financial benefits - [calculations on the costs of smoking made in 2024](#) show that the average smoker could save up to £48 a week (around £2,500 a year) by quitting smoking.

You are much more likely to successfully quit with the right support; with professional help you're three times more likely to quit for good.

So visit [Smokefree West Sussex](#) or call 0330 222 7980 to get free, non-judgmental support from trained advisors to help you quit smoking for good. All provide quit aids such as nicotine patches or gum and some offer free vape starter kits too.

Support is planned around your needs and is available face-to-face, over the phone or by downloading the new [Smokefree app](#).



Could you become a wholetime firefighter?

Our West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service is recruiting for wholetime firefighters.

The service is looking for individuals who would be proud to serve the communities of West Sussex in a highly rewarding role that genuinely makes a difference to people's lives.

Chief Fire Officer, Sabrina Cohen-Hatton, said: "The role of a firefighter is hugely varied and involves so much more than just fighting fires. To be a great firefighter you must be empathetic, a good problem solver, able to communicate effectively and be physically fit."

[How to apply](#)



Discover our Digital Strategy

We've launched our Digital Strategy for how we'll use technology to make best use of resources and improve everyday life for our residents, businesses and communities.

It focuses on making council services easier to access, more user-friendly and efficient, while ensuring everyone can benefit from digital technology.

Highlights include enhanced access, inclusion for all, safety first to keep you and your information secure, and sustainability to protect our environment and support growth.

We'll be introducing new ways for you to connect with the council including, for example, AI chatbots to help analyse enquiries and provide swifter, more accurate and consistent information and advice.

[More information](#)

Environment and Climate Change News

Take a look at the [latest news about the environment and climate change](#), including burning wood and the link to health, plus find out how more local schools are set to benefit from zero carbon emissions.

More news



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

- Increase your skills and awareness on the road as a biker, pillion rider and/or general road user by taking part in a [free Biker Down course taking place at Shoreham Fire Station on 20 February](#).
 - Do you have opinions on your local pharmacy services? Tell us about your experience of getting prescriptions and health advice from pharmacies and dispensing doctors to help improve future services. [Survey now open until Monday 3 March](#).
 - Kind and caring people are needed who could offer a few hours each month to support a child in care. Join an informal online information session to find out more about becoming an independent visitor on [Wednesday 29 January 2025 from 12.30pm to 1.30pm](#) or [Wednesday 5 February 2025 from 7pm to 8pm](#) or email Independent.Visitors@westsussex.gov.uk.
 - Take part and [give your views on sexual health and wellbeing in West Sussex](#). This work will support plans to improve people's sexual health and wellbeing.
 - Becoming a school governor means you could make a difference to the lives of schoolchildren in your local community. There are no specific qualifications needed, you don't need to be a parent or have a background in education. [Book your place on an online information event](#) on 11 February to hear current school governors experiences and ask them questions. Alternatively contact governancesupport@westsussex.gov.uk for more information [or watch this video](#).
 - Our Meals on Wheels customers have [received wheat bags to help provide warmth and comfort during the winter](#).
 - From better crossings to safer speeds, your feedback shapes our Road Safety Strategy. [Review the strategy and complete the survey by 2 February](#).
 - 25 things to do in Sussex in 2025! [Experience Sussex has curated a list to guide](#) you through the must-see places, unmissable events, and unforgettable adventures in Sussex this year.
 - The results of [recent electric vehicle public consultations](#) held for new proposed chargepoint sites across the county have been published and are now available.
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Did you know?



If you are newly engaged or planning your special day and need some inspiration, come along to [Edes House in Chichester on Sunday 26 January between 10am and 2pm](#) to meet a host of wedding suppliers from florists, jewellers, photographers, cake makers and more.

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

**What you do with your life could
forever change someone else's**

We urgently need more Foster
Carers so please watch and share
our latest fostering film.

Click here to watch

