

Residents' eNewsletter



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



Our Budget 2025-2026

Our balanced budget with no cuts to frontline services

We have agreed a balanced budget for the year ahead which provides support for the most vulnerable, without cuts to frontline services.

In the coming year, we will spend more than £2.2bn on vital services, including:

- £1,284m for schools, education, and children's social care

- £553m to care for adults and keep people healthy
- £98m to protect the environment, recycling and waste disposal
- £87m to maintain roads and provide transport
- £65m for Fire and Rescue services and support for communities
- £5m to support the local economy

The pressures facing us outweigh the funding we receive from government, and we were able to achieve a balanced budget by reducing spending by £12.3m, and an increase in council tax of 4.99% (2% for adults' social care and 2.99% for general fund services).

The increase in council tax for a Band D property is £85.59 per year or approximately £1.65 per week.

[WATCH: Council Leader Cllr Paul Marshall said:](#) "We approved our budget to spend on essential services to support Our Council Plan, and that's about keeping people safeguarded, protecting our communities, focusing on our economy, and of course underpinned by protecting the environment."

[More information](#)



Devolution: have your say on plans for Sussex

Sussex has moved a step closer to gaining new powers and investment for local communities.

[The government has approved a joint bid](#) between West Sussex County Council, East Sussex County Council, and Brighton & Hove City Council to be a priority for devolution.

It means the county as a whole will have an elected mayor to lead on big issues such as transport, public safety, health, housing, the economy and the environment.

Now is your chance to have your say on the plans for a Mayoral Combined Authority for Sussex and Brighton.

[Take part in the government consultation.](#)

Cllr Paul Marshall said: “A mayoral authority will give our communities greater influence in the big decisions that affect the region. I’m pleased the government has accepted us onto its priority programme, meaning we can unlock these benefits sooner rather than later.”

[Read more on devolution](#)



Get involved in our libraries' centenary year

It's 100 years since the county council adopted the Public Libraries Act and established a county-wide library service.

A special event was held last week at Burgess Hill Library, the service's newest library which opened in 2019.

The celebrations included the launch of the service's exciting Library of Possibilities and Wonders virtual reality (VR) experience, created especially for the centenary.

You can try out the VR headsets as they tour libraries across the county, as well as take part in a whole host of activities including special events for adults and children, a history webinar, and much more. Click on the link below to find out more.

Photo shows left to right: Cllr Paul Marshall, Leader of West Sussex County Council, Russell Allen, Head of Libraries and Heritage, and Cllr Duncan Crow, West Sussex County Council Cabinet Member for Community Support, Fire and Rescue.

Join the celebrations!



Welcome to Experience Sussex

We're excited to introduce Experience Sussex – your ultimate guide to discovering the best of Sussex!

Formerly Experience West Sussex, the website has been transformed to offer even more ways to explore, experience, and enjoy the area.

If you're looking for fun days out our [Things to Do](#) section is packed with ideas, from family attractions and historic sites to thrilling activities for all ages.

Check out [What's On](#) for the latest events, festivals, and theatre in Sussex, or if you are planning a visit for friends and family our [Trip Builder](#) makes it easy to create a tailor-made itinerary, just click the heart icon on your favourite places to start.

If you need inspiration, explore our [Ideas and Inspiration](#) section, where you'll find blogs, news, and discover new places right on your doorstep.

And you can use our [Food & Drink](#) search to find great dining spots, hidden gems, and dog friendly pubs in your local area.

Start exploring via the link below or follow @experiencesussex. Share your own adventures with us using #ExperienceSussex.

[Experience Sussex](#)



Have your say on fire service emergency response standards

West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service has launched a public consultation to review its Emergency Response Standards.

Emergency Response Standards refer to the time it takes us to attend incidents such as fires and road traffic collisions in West Sussex.

The proposed changes will not affect the location of any fire stations or fire engines within West Sussex or change the time it takes for a fire engine to attend an incident but will bring the way the service measures its performance in line with other fire and rescue services to allow for greater transparency.

You can review the proposals and share your views as part of the public consultation via the link below until February 27.

[Take part in the consultation](#)



More local buildings to benefit from solar power

More schools and other buildings across West Sussex will soon be able to generate and use their own renewable energy thanks to the expansion of a county-council solar project.

We are growing our Solar Photovoltaic (PV) & Battery Storage programme and plan to install new renewable energy systems at 60 further sites across the county, including libraries, fire stations, and schools.

Excess energy will be stored in batteries for later use or exported to the national grid depending on the set up and needs of each site.

[Read more](#)

Environment and Climate Change News

Take a look at the [latest news about the environment and climate change](#), including progress with electric vehicle chargepoints, how to tackle food waste, and a podcast from the reuse shop and repair cafe.

More news



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

- We are seeking views on how you use pharmacies to help us understand how local residents and communities use them. [Take part in the survey which is open until Monday 3 March](#). Your feedback will help to inform a draft West Sussex Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment, which we'll be asking for further public comment on later this year.
- Sunday 9 March is the national Covid-19 Day of Reflection, which marks the fifth anniversary of the pandemic. It's a time to remember and commemorate those who lost their lives during the Covid-19 pandemic. [Click here for help and support or ways to commemorate the day](#) or [here for local bereavement support](#).
- Anyone diagnosed with HIV in the UK can access free treatment and support. HIV testing is free, quick and easy and you can get tested at a sexual health clinic, your GP practice, or by ordering a test online. [Order a free test for HIV and other STIs online](#).
- Our West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service is urging people to [close their internal doors and shut fires out](#) following a fire in Chichester.
- It's National No Smoking Day on 12 March and it's never been easier to quit smoking in West Sussex, as there's now even more support available. Visit [Smokefree West Sussex](#) or call 0330 222 7980 to get free, non-judgemental support and the right quit aids from specialist advisors to help you quit smoking for good. Support is available face-to-face, over the phone or by downloading the new [Smokefree app](#).
- If you're looking to start a rewarding career where you can make a difference to children, young people and their families then come along to our Children's Services recruitment event on 12 March. [Sign up here to attend](#).
- A campaign has been launched to help [tackle the growing problem of drivers using their mobile phone behind the wheel](#).

Did you know?



West Sussex schoolchildren [enjoyed a special visit to the Houses of Parliament](#) in recognition of their inspirational efforts in helping young people have their voices heard.

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

Celebrating 100 years of West Sussex Library Service

[Click here to find out more](#)

