

I am sure that many of you will be aware the White Horse has finally been put on the market for sale. A lot of work is currently going on to see if the village can form a group and prepare a viable bid to make a purchase. The Parish Council is working with the other organisations, mainly START, to consider the options. I have deliberately kept this section short as it is early days, it is likely other articles will appear later in the magazine and the situation is changing rapidly. What is written now won't be the position when this letter is published. Hopefully the village can pull together to bring a successful conclusion.

December is the month when the Parish Council signs off the budget. For 2021/22 we are proposing keep the precept unchanged for the 7<sup>th</sup> year. This is good news when personal finances are tight, but this position may be difficult to maintain for the future, costs are rising and Chichester are seeking to cut their overall budget by £40m.

The budget cut for Chichester are already having some worrying and frustrating side effects, we are currently seeking confirmation that the Rake Community Highways road improvement scheme will go ahead. We have also heard that the tip in Midhurst is under scrutiny and bus cuts may be back on the agenda. We are seeking urgent clarification on these points, hopefully more news next month.

On a more local level. As you know from my constant pleading we are struggling with maintaining a full compliment of 13 Councillors, with this in mind we have written to Chichester with a request to reduce Councillor numbers to 9; this request will be considered in February.

We have launched a campaign to save the path from the A272 opposite the Church, thorough the White Horse car park to the recreation ground steps. I suspect that many people have used his route to access the church and/or the recreation ground. The main concern is one of safety as there is no footpath up North Street. If you would like to support, forms are available in the shop or contact the Clerk.

We are also looking at improved contacts and working more closely with our neighbouring parishes. We are seeing increasing volumes of work where we have common issues. For example planning concerns and consultations. We are hoping that a combined approach will bring more weight to our requests and that when consultations arise a combined approach will proved a wider knowledge. Work will continue with this over the next few months.

We are very pleased to have found a kind volunteer to look at the playgrounds and gym equipment on weekly basis.

With best wishes for the New Year

Max Harwood

December 2020