



As we head into the Christmas season of goodwill, the challenges for 2023 come more sharply into focus. We will at least be spared another round of local elections in May but will need to be ever alert to ill-considered policies rooted in prehistoric economics. Businesses - particularly small enterprises - often have a greater understanding of the need for social and environmental investments, whilst the two red Parties will dismiss those investments as 'subsidies' - unless, perhaps, they happen to line their pockets?

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## **Seasonal Greetings from your Lib Dem Councillors**



2022 may have been a discomfoting year for many families and the wider community but we hope the joy of Christmas, the spirit of new endeavours, and the prospects for New Year, will sustain us all through tough times.

Best wishes from Chrissie, Paul, and Roger, and thanks to all who turned out for the Christmas lights and singing in the precinct.

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## **Cow Lane gate**

-A gate restored . . . after 5 months of Chrissie badgering HCC. To be sure we hope the Spring gang of 'tree fellas' won't be after knocking it down again!



## Tidal Tensions

High tides over the last weekend of November were a timely reminder of climate concerns for Portchester.



We could choose, of course, to ignore the signs. It could be argued that the circumstances were 'exceptional' - a predictably high tide after the full moon, boosted by a southerly gale blowing directly into the harbour, coinciding with recent heavy rains draining into Fareham Creek.

We could take comfort from our normal protection - the harbour is sheltered by the Isle of Wight but that did not prevent massive seaweed dumps along the coast path or lunchtime dog walkers seeking alternative, dryer, routes.

There were no great inconveniences except, perhaps, for the yacht washed ashore. But in the context of [predicted sea-level rise](#), the coastal defence study (mentioned last month) takes on a new urgency and highlights the chasm between a nascent awareness of future climate concerns and some real reckoning of the true scale of impending crisis.

Climate Policy deserves to be at the top of every agenda - not because we need any more worries but because the process of adaptation will take time - time that has already been wasted in avoiding action - time that has been used to make the local challenge greater - time that Portchester's children will see as squandered.

Some might argue that our individual actions would have negligible impact - that governments could do far more - but there'll be no hiding from the reality of our past and present climate abuse when Portchester is washed away. So do not scorn those rebels who may be inconvenient, but press for action - for faster, greater, seriously-scaled climate action, NOW.

(Ed - recommended reading, 'Hothouse Earth - an inhabitant's guide' by Prof. Bill McGuire ISBN 978-178578-920-5)

## Solent Pollution

Cllr. Chrissie Bainbridge's Facebook page featured the work of the [Solent Protection Society](#). In the year 2020- 2021 water companies dumped 42,600 hours of untreated sewage into the Solent from 300 outlet pipes along the coastline. This number doubled last year. Now the Tories are saying water companies can inspect and report on their own pollution as they cut funding for the Environment agency still further.

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## White Hart



Eyebrows were raised at the removal of the old White Hart signpost and the painting above the door. The White Hart identity survived its transition from pub to Co-op store and an even a shorter tenure as a bathroom trade depot. Now all that remains is the name of the bus stop - unless, perhaps, the new owner is planning to re-paint the picture?

Nearby residents wondered why 'change of use' permission was never required and whether the height limitation along the corner border will be maintained.

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## New Top Cop



When Hampshire's Chief Constable, Olivia Pinkney, steps down next year, her successor will be a career officer who started his police service for Hampshire back in 1992.

**Scott Chilton** has experienced the senior role with a recent brief spell as Deputy and then Chief Constable for Dorset.

This appointment will cheer the ranks of dedicated officers committed to the service. We take this opportunity to thank Olivia and wish her well after 31 years serving our communities.

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## Two Homeless souls in Portchester

With the onset of colder weather, we were more than ever concerned about Portchester's rough sleepers.

One young chap suffering mental health issues had been reluctant to engage with support services over many months. With the help of the safeguarding team, he was offered and accepted a place in a hostel in Fareham and will now be offered a package of support. Chrissie also spoke to the other homeless chap in Portchester precinct to hear his story. He'd been made homeless in the summer of this year when his landlord sold the property he'd lived in. He actually liked living outside but was keen to sleep indoors during the coldest months. Chrissie contacted StreetLink and the council's Outreach team who made contact with him and he's now been offered somewhere warm to sleep.

The community of Portchester has been unfailingly supportive of these two chaps who found themselves in difficult times. The good souls of Portchester provided hot drinks, food, and numerous other items to make their lives more bearable. The kindness shown was brilliant and thanks to all those who didn't simply walk on by.

## **Wicor Copse**

Chrissie met with three members of the Hampshire Countryside team recently to establish why last summer's promised pathways hadn't happened, why noticeboards informing residents of progress had not been installed, and why the long-promised tree planting had not started.

The funding for the pathways should (apparently) now be finalised in January. Noticeboards are being built and the hope is to get a team of local volunteers to help with the planting out and future management of the Copse.

The hot summer and mild autumn had created a delay to tree stock being ready for planting, but over 1000 new trees should now be planted before Christmas. Let's hope that our lovely Copse will finally be reinstated.

## **Portchester Precinct - a relic of the past?**

We all know our precinct is looking increasingly tired and dated. The paving, constantly being lifted by the roots of Plane trees, creates many trip hazards.

We continue to lobby for improvements to be made but the precinct needs serious investment to make a vibrant and welcoming area to shop and socialise. But strangely, the root responsibility for serious remedial effort remains lodged with central government - apparently a long-forgotten legacy of its former main road role!

The already under-funded County Council continues to plead for Government funding to improve our precinct but without that capital funding all that will happen is, as now, continuous patching to minimise trip hazards and injury claims. Maybe the Home Office Minister should ask the Minister for Roads to give up highway robbery?

## **A27 Portchester Walk & Cycle Route Update**

Chrissie & Paul attended one of the A27 Design workshops and it was well attended with huge interest from local residents with lots of creative suggestions. Eventually we might imagine petrol and diesel vehicles will be banned, but we're still a long way from converting the A27 to a calm tree-lined cycle way.

## **Cranleigh Road Open Space update**

The developer, Persimmon, has informed us that the tree replacement and footpath works will now take place in the first week of January, followed by a FBC inspection of the works. The sign discarded by Sage Homes and causing an eyesore, will be removed after a conversation with one of their team.

Chrissie and Paul are constantly pressuring FBC on this issue with Persimmon, next update Mid-January.

# Parking at the Castle

## *The pursuit of Price versus Value*

In November Fareham Borough Council undertook a further review of their 2020 coastal parking charges review.

The proposals were to extend charging through to 8PM and increase the annual parking pass by 80% (to £145). In the face of stiff opposition from residents, churchgoers and the sailing club, the scrutiny panel decided to (A) stick with the current charging rates, and (B) limit the annual pass hike to 'only' 19% for residents, but (C) charge non-residents the full £145 and (D) increase the hourly rate in line with inflation.

Despite those modifications, the increases will have a hugely detrimental effect on people who worship or attend events at St Mary's church and members of the sailing club who live outside of the borough. St Mary's parish boundaries and the Sailing club's catchment area are very different to the borough boundaries.

Both church and sailing club are already struggling to increase community engagement post Covid. This will be another disincentive to attend spiritual, social, and sporting events for many, and illustrates the inability to recognise the community *value* of these great Portchester amenities. Chrissie and Roger Price will be making representations to the December executive committee.

# Romsey Avenue development

Foreman Homes hosted an evening at Portchester Community Centre for residents to voice their concerns over the impending developments, It was very well attended with plenty of discussions with the team from Foreman homes. We found them to be very open and willing to discuss all concerns that were put to them - it is in their interest to have local residents involved at this stage of the process.

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