

Chichester District Council

Full Council

26 September 2023

Public Questions and Answers Sheet

Question from Simon Lloyd-Williams:

1. The pedestrian areas of North and East Streets will reach their 50th anniversary this decade. Does the Council intend to throw them a birthday party or come forward with a comprehensive plan for their renewal?
2. Once again, the district has suffered multiple incursions on CDC land by travellers this month. It is no coincidence that these incursions coincide with events at Goodwood. In this most recent case, the Revival. Would the Council agree with me, that instead of the CDC spending tens of thousands of pounds of council taxpayers money on earth works and trenches to stop these incursions, the Duke of Richmond is asked to provide a couple of acres on a temporary basis for the travellers whenever there is an event at Goodwood. After all, I believe he has 12,000 acres at his disposal.

Answer for question 1 from Cllr Brown:

Thank you Simon for your question. A 50th birthday party sounds like a great idea and an opportunity residents to highlight the dangers of the pavements in North and East Street. Of course, as you know, this question really needs to be put to West Sussex County Council, who are responsible for the maintenance of the roads and pavements. I encourage you to raise this at a meeting of the County Council.

Nevertheless, this administration has highlighted this both internally and with the County Council as a priority to be resolved and is able and willing to help. Indeed, this was raised by the leader, Adrian Moss, in the first meeting between the leaders of the Districts and the County Council after the May elections.

We all recognise that the state of the pavements are a health and safety risk, with many falls being recorded, including those which have required hospitalisation. Improving the public realm in central Chichester is a major item on the Chichester Vision project and you will be aware that this was subject to a grant request for Levelling Up Funding – which was, unfortunately, not successful.

The County Council will be considering the business case for a big bang improvement rather than piecemeal repairs very shortly – I believe later this week. We have been urging them to go ahead. At the next Cabinet meeting of the District Council we will be considering a proposal to contribute financially to the options consultation which will be required to get this moving – finally. And without wishing to predetermine anything, I am confident that the proposal will be listened to very sympathetically!

I very much hope that the County Council will choose to proceed. I and I think we all feel that this can has been kicked down the road quite often enough. This work is urgent and really must be included in the County Council's programme of work.

In answer to Simon's follow-up question I said that we would urge WSCC to proceed (and that I didn't realise WSCC didn't allow questions from the public).

Answer for question 2 from Cllr Bangert:

Many thanks for your question, whilst the most recent incursions have occurred around the time of events at Goodwood this is not true of all and from the engagement we have with them the reasons why Gypsy and Travellers visit Chichester are varied. It can include medical appointments but more often than not they are "just passing through" on their way to other events elsewhere in the country. There is lots of land around Goodwood as you have stated and if they wished Gypsy Traveller groups could set up on this land, however they choose to be close to the city centre to access the amenities. Therefore it would be unlikely, even if such an offer was made by the Duke of Richmond, that it would be taken up and they would continue to access sites within the City.

For this reason It is prudent of the Council to look at preventative measures in the most vulnerable locations.