

### Motorists hit with new fees

CHARGES are to be introduced in previously free car parks.

Chichester District Council has announced parking fees will be brought in at its rural towns as a way of generating £150,000 a year.

A range of tariffs will be introduced in Midhurst, Petworth, Selsey and East and West Wittering.

Seasonal charges will be introduced in Bracklesham Bay at £1.20 for up to two hours between April and October.

Parking will be free between November and March.

The tariffs will operate between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Saturday.

Sylvia Beaufoy car park in Petworth will remain free.

A season ticket for each of the rural towns will cost £10 a month.

The council said the fees would help cover annual maintenance costs of about £93,000.

The proposals have been agreed by West Sussex County Council.

The district council had concerns the move could lead to vehicles being parked on streets but said the scheme would lead to better management of the car parks.

The charges will come into effect on April 1 next year.

### Chance to go for a stroll

WALKERS are being invited to take part in a Sussex Day hike in Amberley tomorrow.

The walk, led by South Downs Rangers, will take in scenery around the Arun Valley.

There are two walks, one is three to four miles, lasting two hours, and the second is five to six miles and takes three hours.

Anyone can join in the walk and enjoy exploring the newly designated South Downs National Park.

Although refreshments are not provided, there are tea-rooms by the river.

It is advisable to bring a drink and snack, along with some sunscreen and a hat.

Meet at Amberley station at 9.30am.

The walks start at 10am.

For more details, call Adur health walks organiser Liz Timmer on 01273 263240 or email liz.timmer@adur.gov.uk

### Quiz champs off to finals

FOUR Year 10 pupils will head to Scotland to take part in the nationwide finals of a consumer challenge quiz.

Earlier in the year pupils from St Anthony's Special School, Chichester, became the first to win the regional consumer challenge quiz, organised annually for special schools by trading standards teams in Brighton and Hove, East Sussex and West Sussex.

Pupils Jamie McNamara, Melissa Butcher, Georgina Carpenter and Thomas Spiers got 28 out of 30 questions correct.

The challenge involves consumer and trading standards issues. The finals will be held as part of the Trading Standards Institute's annual conference.

## A Sussex acupuncturist who has helped more than 70 couples conceive celebrated with a special mother and baby event

# THE BABY WHISPERER

PICTURES: LIZ FINLAYSON

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SLEEPY: Sarah Boyett with Oliver



SMILER: Michelle Brownrigg with Finley

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AMAZED: Helen Higgins with Emily

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WHEN more than 40 women joined together to celebrate their children, they all had one thing in common – the Sussex Baby Whisperer. Past and present clients of acupuncturist Yvonne Darnell gathered together at a Celebration Of Life event in Burgess Hill. Although their stories are all different, each mother says her pregnancy was helped by the treatment she received from Yvonne Darnell. EMILY-ANN ELLIOTT reports.

THE journey to motherhood can be difficult for some women but more are turning to alternative treatments to help them fulfil their dream.

Many of the parents at a special celebration had waited a long time to have their own family and thanks to some help from Yvonne Darnell, who runs Unity Acupuncture Practice, now they have their little bundles of joy.

Mrs Darnell, who specialises in fertility and pregnancy at her clinic in Burgess Hill, has helped more than 70 couples to conceive in the past three years and has an average 67% success rate.

Some of the women she has worked with have even dubbed her the Sussex Baby Whisperer and the Sussex Stork.

Mrs Darnell organised the Celebration Of Life event at the Park Centre in Burgess Hill as a chance to meet some of the babies, who range in age from only two weeks old to three years.

She said: "This is the first time I have organised something like this."

"It just got to the stage where I couldn't get around to seeing all of the babies individually and it was also a chance for the mums to meet each other as well."

"It went extremely well. It is wonderful just to see the babies grow."

Mrs Darnell attracts many of her clients through word of mouth. About half of the women she works with use purely acupuncture to aid their attempts to conceive, while the others use it alongside assisted conception such as IVF treatment.

Mrs Darnell said: "Acupuncture is much more readily accepted now, especially in the past few years."

"It has become more and more accepted by the medical profession and often we are working alongside them."

"As a practitioner, our knowledge base is the skill and then you help the body to heal itself."

"We work psychologically as well as physically, because a lot of these women have been through a lot of trauma by the time they come to see me."

"They have been told they can't conceive without help and that is really overwhelming."

"Many women when they first come to me are really stressed and upset. But helping with that side makes them much more relaxed and in time much more receptive to treatment."

Helen Higgins, 36, from Hassocks, attended the Celebration Of Life with her daughter Emily, who is almost 12 weeks old.

She said: "We had been trying to conceive for about 18 months and a friend of mine who was in a similar situation in London said, 'why don't you try acupuncture?'. I didn't really know anything about it but I called Yvonne and had treatment for about six months."

Mrs Higgins had acupuncture alongside the fertility drug Clomid.

She said: "It was just amazing really. I am so appreciative to Yvonne. It is a hard time in your life if you can't conceive."

"You can talk to your friends about it but talking to Yvonne was like some kind of therapy because she understands what you are going through."

"It gave me a much more positive attitude than I'd had before because I had been getting to the despairing stage."

Mrs Darnell also helped Mrs Higgins to make changes to her lifestyle and she took up running. She said: "Four days after I had run the Race



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JOY: Yvonne Darnell with Ella-Rose and Harry, above, and with happy mothers at the event, right

For Life I found out I was pregnant. I would never have done anything like that before but it gave me the confidence to make changes which were necessary."

"The Celebration Of Life event was lovely. It was so nice to see the complete happiness and joy in the room and a lot of that is down to Yvonne and the work she does."

Michelle Brownrigg, 36, from Hurstpierpoint, brought along her son Finley, who is seven months old.

She began having acupuncture with Mrs Darnell alongside her first round of IVF treatment, after picking up a flyer at the clinic.

She said: "I have quite a stressful job so I was looking at anything which could help me relax so my treatment could be more successful. I had used acupuncture in the past for different things."

"Yvonne is a very good person to talk to because the IVF process is quite traumatic and stressful. I was on a programme that worked in



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conjunction with my IVF and my clinic was quite positive about me using acupuncture alongside the treatment."

"I would definitely recommend it to anyone who is going through the same thing."

"Yvonne has kept in touch since I've had Finley. She is a very caring person and wants to know about the welfare of the people she's treating, which I think is quite unique."

Sarah Boyett, 36, from Burgess Hill, attended the celebration event with her son Oliver who was born on May 4.

She visited Mrs Darnell after discovering her baby was breech.

She said: "I went to the midwife in the morning and she confirmed the baby was feet down in the womb and booked me in for a scan the following day at the hospital."

"The same day I went to see Yvonne and said I desperately didn't want to have a Caesarean. She put needles in my toes, which is the furthest point

away from the baby, to draw him down and encourage him to turn. She also gave me little pins to put in my toes for the next 24 hours."

"The following day I went to the hospital and found out the baby had turned."

"I couldn't believe it had happened after just one treatment, I kept calling it the miracle treatment."

"I'm a real believer in alternative therapies and I had used acupuncture years ago for my asthma."

"The Celebration Of Life was really nice as everyone there had been in the same boat."

Unity Acupuncture Practice is based in Lower Church Road, Burgess Hill. Sessions are priced from £45. For more information, call 01444 235400 or visit www.unitypractice.co.uk.

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### Films focus on climate

STUDENTS have launched a series of films about the issue of climate change.

Eastbourne Borough Council has been working with media students at Sussex Downs College to raise awareness of climate change.

A series of 30-second online videos have been produced by the students studying the Digital Media Design Foundation Degree.

Councillor Steve Wallis, Eastbourne Borough Council's cabinet member for the environment, said: "We are very excited to have had the opportunity to team up with Sussex Downs College and its students to try to raise awareness of climate change."

"The videos the students have produced are very clever and really make you think about how we can all do our bit to help protect our environment. We will be sharing the videos across the council's website and social networking pages and hope they will catch people's attention online and provide a unique way for us to engage with the wider community."

### Museum in need of help

SUPPORTERS of a popular museum are appealing for helpers to assure its future.

The Friends of Marlpins Museum want new volunteers to attend the group's first annual meeting at the museum in High Street, Shoreham.

They are looking for people to volunteer as custodians, to help with displays and events or to arrange exhibitions.

The meeting takes place at the museum on June 23 at 7pm.

For further information, call Vera Tickler on 01273 885994.

### Tips on how to cope with ME

NUTRITION and homeopathy will be discussed at a meeting about ME.

Top nutritionist Dr Alan Stewart and GP Dr Susie Rockwell, who is a medical homeopath, will speak at a meeting hosted by the Sussex ME Society at the Cornerstone Community Centre in Hove on June 25 at 1.30pm.

The discussions will cover approaches to helping those with the chronic fatigue syndrome ME towards recovery. Call 01273 674828 for tickets.

### Burning success

A FIREWALK has raised £2,500 for charity.

A group from Adventure Unlimited walked over fire on Brighton seaford for the charity, which helps provide outdoor activities for children in Brighton and Hove from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The 36 firewalkers were accompanied by a samba band and fire jugglers and the spectacle drew an audience of 500.

Organiser Emma Smith thanked the "brave firewalkers whose efforts mean we continue our work with young people".