

Reports from Cllr Standley and Cllr Dixon for Hadlow Down PC meeting 2nd March 2021

1. County Report from Cllr Standley to Hadlow Down Parish Council March 2021

Schools

Schools are preparing for a return of pupils starting from next week. Some schools are staggering the start dates. In secondary schools tests will be carried out. Initially this will be in school but parents will be asked to do the test at home on a weekly basis.

Current attendance is above England Average at

- Primary 24.4% (England Av 21.5)
- Secondary 7.9 (5.3)
- Special 44.7 (33.3)

Budget

The Council tax increase was approved by Full Council a couple of weeks ago.

The combination of the Adult Social Care and General Fund increase will be £1 per week for a Band D Household as indicated in previous reports.

Road Safety

Research has been done into how the communications can help reduce traffic speeds.

In the first pilot, a proportion of drivers received an amended Notice of Intended Prosecution (NIP) letter and leaflet which simplified the form, addressed the misconception that collisions are out of drivers' control and explained the rationale behind speed limits. Within six months the rate of reoffending among this group reduced by 23 per cent compared to those receiving the usual letter and leaflet – equivalent to 170 fewer offences. The second involved drivers with a speeding offence within the previous three years receiving a one-off letter during the New Year period in 2019 reminding them of their offence and encouraging them to drive more safely. An eight per cent drop in reoffenders was recorded among the 55,000 drivers who received the letter compared to those who did not.

A third pilot focused on roads with the highest number of serious and fatal crashes and aimed to change drivers' behaviour by changing the appearance of the road and providing a consistent message to drivers along it.

This included modifying road-markings and signs, resurfacing, changing the speed limit and adding reflective posts. This has produced preliminary results which indicate crashes have been cut by 50 per cent at these sites.

Work continues on the analysis of the projects and a final report will be published later in 2021, which will be considered by the county council's Places Scrutiny Committee, while additional projects are being tested and developed.

2. Report from Cllr Dixon to Hadlow Down Parish Council March 2021

Waste

Biffa continue to perform well and better during the pandemic than with our previous contractor in normal times! We will now be collecting small electricals and cables etc with the kerbside collections, separately in a carrier bag on top of the bin. Batteries are also being collected separately from the general waste in a small bag.

Budget

At full council last week the budget for next year was approved which confirmed that there will be no increase in Wealden's share of the council tax for next year as we do not wish to add to the financial burden which residents might face as a result of the covid restrictions. Staff salaries for all but the lowest paid will be frozen.

Benefits

The team are still working flat out processing claims for the many different grant schemes for relief to businesses closed over the lockdown period and have to verify complex claims before they can be paid out which is very time consuming.

Local Plan

The responses from the consultation on the 'Direction of Travel' document are being analysed and will be discussed at a local plan sub committee meeting, amongst members and at a parish cluster meeting next month.

Staff changes

Kelvin Williams and Doug Moss will be retiring from Wealden after many years' service in the planning department, Kelvin as former Head of Planning and Doug Moss as Team Leader in the North of Wealden.