

Reports from Cllr Standley and Cllr Dixon for Hadlow Down PC meeting 7th December 2021

1. Update from Cllr Standley to Hadlow Down Parish Council December 2021

Covid 19

The new Omicron variant has heightened concerns although it is not clear whether the increased transmissibility also has greater potency.

Revise guidance has been given to schools. There have been a few cases where a class has been sent home, but this has been triggered by staff shortages. Getting supply teachers to cover staff absence has been difficult.

Police

Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner, Katy Bourne, has launched a “have your say on police funding and priorities”. Sussex Police are funded by the Home Office grant and the local precept. The precept makes up 41% of the budget. The survey can be found at sussexpolice.researchfeedback.net.

Batteries in Waste

ESCC has highlighted the risks of residents disposing of batteries in their normal bins. Doing so can cause fires if the batteries are crushed. They can explode causing fires and injuries.

A number of incidents have occurred in recent months at the waste transfer stations and also fires have broken out in the refuse vehicles. WDC will collect normal domestic batteries from the kerbside, but they must be put in a separate container/bag.

Holiday Activity and Food

Govt announced additional HAF funding for the Christmas period, some months ago and has also agreed funding for the Easter and Summer periods 2022. This is funding for vulnerable families is naturally welcomed.

Youth Cabinet

I am meeting, virtually, with the Youth Cabinet this week and, as ever, hearing their views on their priorities is important so the ideas can be fed into the future priorities for the council.

Budget and Council Tax

Work continues on the budget proposals, but they can't be finalised until the Local Govt financial settlement is published by the Govt. This has to be announced before parliament goes into recess on Dec 16th.

County Clean

I am aware the trees have been trimmed and County Clean vehicles can now use the correct route. I have e-mailed ESCC to ensure County Clean have been informed and the correct route followed.

2. Update from Cllr Dixon to Hadlow Down Parish Council December 2021

Planning

Work on the new local plan is continuing and it is hoped to have a draft plan published in the spring. Clearly the government target for housing will be challenging and cannot be achieved

without a great adverse impact on our landscape and environment. It is hoped that they will alter the standard method numbers and lower our target early in the new year. Government speeches give us hope but we need action.

Staff are having to cope with a great number of planning applications at the moment, with a shortage of staff and are finding recruitment very difficult with 9 vacancies across the planning function.

Council Tax

Cabinet is considering tomorrow an increase of about 2.5% in Council Tax for next year, which , if approved, will go out for consultation. This is after a freeze last year in Tax and staff pay and will equate to £5 for a band D taxpayer.