

Reports from Cllr Standley and Cllr Dixon for Hadlow Down PC meeting 11th October 2022

1. Update from Cllr Standley to Hadlow Down Parish Council October 2022

Points raised in Clerk's notes

1. Sign at Five Chimneys scheduled to be in place by 18 November
2. Govt have put in place "cap" on energy but also see notes on advice available below
3. Waste Wood. Have raised again with RoW who have only confirmed they are intending to inspect the ROW in Autumn/Winter
4. I have raised issue re A272 raised by resident.

Highways Contract

The award is at the final stages with the successful contractor being announced in October/November. Inevitably the costs will be in excess of the current contract which was a fixed price.

Schools Outcomes 2022

The figures recently published show a mixed picture with Early Years performing better than later years.

Early Years outcomes were above the national average at 69%. Whilst literacy was the lowest outcome it was still above national average. Mathematics outcomes were particularly good.

However, for KS 1 through to KS 4 were disappointingly below the national average. Whilst by definition 50% of authorities will be below national average it would be pleasing to be above rather than below.

School attendance has always been a problem in East Sussex, and we have run campaigns in the past to improve attendance.

Covid has led to some children and indeed parents to have the belief that non-attendance at school is ok.

The above should however not distract from the very good results from certain schools and in particular where the LA has intervened.

Police and Crime Panel

It was interesting at our recent meeting the topic was raised again re the residents wish to have visible police and I am sure we all hear those requests. However, as we heard at P and CP a majority of crime (53% in England and Wales 2021) now has a direct or indirect link to cyber-crime. Not surprisingly 69% of fraud cases involved cybercrime. Traditional volume crime, such as burglary, violent crime, has dropped by 75% since 1995. The desire is for visible policing even though the majority of crime is elsewhere.

Careers Event

Next Sussex is an online event that offers a chance for parents, teachers and students to find about future career options.

Registration for the event is free and available on the Get Career Confident website.

Cost of Living

ESCC cannot solve the Cost of Living challenges that our residents are facing but, in partnership with the Borough's and Districts and the Voluntary and Community Sector, we can identify those individuals and groups most likely to be affected and provide information, advice and practical support including:

- Back in the Summer, restarting the East Sussex Financial Inclusion Group which brings together statutory and voluntary partners to maximise access for vulnerable residents to advice and support. The Group's initial work includes using data to help target support effectively, identifying shared priorities and approaches for improving financial inclusion, and maximising funding opportunities, including the uptake of benefits.
- Earlier this week we "soft launched" a local cost of living support webpage on the ESCC website which brings together into one place details on sources of help and advice – Including Money and Debt advice, Energy advice, Warm Homes Insulation advice, Food, Skills, Employment and Warm Spaces advice and grant support.
- We are distributing the third phase of the Household Support fund - £1.5m for the provision of Food Vouchers for families with children eligible for Free School Meals, and a further £2.2m to the Boroughs and Districts, VCSE partners and direct to Food Banks to support individuals at risk of food and fuel poverty.
- At the end of October, a further small grants scheme will be made available through Sussex Community Foundation Crisis Fund to support voluntary sector organisations as well as organisations, including parish and town councils, wishing to offer Warm Spaces.
- Separately we are also setting up a scheme for some schools to offer after school activities as a variation on the Warm Space concept.

NHS Pressures

- Local NHS services have been under sustained pressure throughout the Summer, and this is expected to continue and probably increase as we enter Winter.
- This has resulted in difficulty accessing GP appointments, long waits in the local A&E departments and some ambulance delays.
- Part of the problem, and it is only part of the problem, is the number of patients who are Medically Ready for Discharge (MRD) but are unable to leave the hospital.
- This is a whole systems issue, not just a social care issue, as the MRD numbers include people who fund their own care and those funded by the NHS as well as people waiting to access other NHS services.
- It would however, be fair to reflect that the situation is exacerbated by the current capacity challenges in the independent care sector and we have done a lot to support the market with the recruitment and retention of care staff including overseas recruitment, apprenticeships,

above inflation fee increases and a one off payment of £150 to home care workers in recognition of the high cost of fuel.

- It is also no coincidence that the numbers of MRD patients increased when the NHS funding for Discharge to Assess capacity (care home beds and homecare) reduced in April and again in July
- The Secretary of State has announced £500m nationally for Winter and we await the details of the grant – the purpose, our share and who receives it (the NHS or Local Authorities).
- But the plan is to use the funds to work as a whole system across East Sussex and the whole of Sussex to bring down the number of patients who are Medically Ready for Discharge and improve the flow through the hospitals.

Homes for Ukraine

1235 known Ukrainian arrivals out of a possible 1,581
Staying with **533** Hosts out of 649 registered

Our support to enable our Ukrainian Guests lead fulfilling, independent and integrated lives whilst they are in East Sussex is based upon providing funding for three key Pillars:

- Learning English as a second language
- Access to employment
- Safe and secure accommodation

In terms of accommodation, over 1,000 Guests will reach the six month point of their stay between now and Christmas

- To support the maintenance of accommodation our focus has been to incentivise Hosts to continue to provide accommodation to their guests through a financial incentive (£1,000 if they remain for >12 months). This is by far the most desirable and cost-effective option.
- If the Guest has to find alternative accommodation, we will fund a number of support measures including paying for the deposit and first month's rent and act as the rent guarantor for up to six months if required.
- Whilst the availability of housing within the County is a challenge, these measures put our Ukrainian guests on a level playing field with other refugee groups, such as people from Syria and Afghanistan, who receive similar levels of support albeit by a different means.

2. Update from Cllr Dixon to Hadlow Down Parish Council October 2022

Local Plan

The Government have yet to make any firm announcements on the future of planning although we are hearing that they want to give more power to local authority to decide on their own housing needs, but we have no clear idea how that will work. Despite rumours of less control on development in the countryside, it is unlikely that this will negatively impact the AONB.

Wealden have decided to press ahead with their draft plan, with possibly lower numbers that can be justified by the constraints, with the ability to amend the plan later in the process if future changes in the regulations allow.

The Robins

Due to the mourning period of the Queen, the committee meeting will be held on 13th October.

Ukraine Guests

Wealden has welcomed over 500 guests so far, with more expected, the highest in East Sussex. It is now over six months since the scheme began and there is a concern about how long some of the arrangements will last. A number of families have already been rematched with new hosts but we will be faced with having to house some of the families and the housing service is working hard on this issue.

Cost of Living Crisis

Wealden residents and businesses are impacted by the increase in cost of living and the impacts of lockdowns and a lot of work is being done on this including establishing a fund from which some initiatives could be funded.

Emergency Plans

Wealden are reviewing emergency planning across the district and will be communicating with PCs in the next week with the aim of trying to bring some consistency and best practice.