

Reports from Cllr Standley and Cllr Dixon for Hadlow Down PC meeting 7th February 2023

1. Update from Cllr Standley to Hadlow Down Parish Council February 2023

Bridleway Outstanding Item

I have chased Rights Of Way, again, and hope to have an update for Tuesday

Budget

The budget is expected to be approved at Tuesday's Full Council.

It should be noted that ESCC are in a stronger position than most of our neighbours because we took difficult decisions over the last 10 years which entailed making savings of £138m

Police and Fire Budgets

The PCC proposed, supported by Police and Crime Panel, for a £15 a year increase for a Band D household. This is a percentage rate of 6.62%. I commented at the meeting the importance of the re-introduction of PCSO's. You will recall they were launched a number

of years ago and then, unfortunately, the then Chief Constable lessened their priority which impacted on rural areas more than urban. The commitment to PCSO in the future was welcomed.

ESFR is expected to approve an increase of £5 (4.8%) for a band D

Highways

Highways are still very busy and since the 1st January have repaired 2861 potholes although many of these are temporary fixes and will need further work. We have 23 gangs repairing potholes (normally 13). If you are aware of holes please report them and don't assume someone else has already done so. There are still 3762 potholes to repair the majority being 28 day

The problems caused by the weather has affected roads across the country and whilst it is no consolation that West Sussex and Kent are in the same position it is not just an East Sussex problem.

Education Budget

As previously reported school attendance in East Sussex is below national average and the pandemic has not improved the stats. I am pleased to have secured £1.5m in the budget 23/24 to address the problem.

I have also written to the Sec of State for Education expressing disappointment that the Schools' Bill has been dropped, given it included provision for a register of children not in school. In East Sussex there are appx 1000 children who attend school less than 50% of the time they should. I have been assured that Govt. are looking at ways to address the problem using secondary legislation.

Climate Change

Cabinet also discussed the progress on the target of net zero on its own activities by 2050 at the latest. The draft Climate Emergency Plan 2023-25 sets out.

1. The Councils' carbon footprint
2. Principles for the council to follow to achieve net carbon zero.
3. The Councils science based 5 year carbon budget.
4. Modelling to achieve the plan.
5. How spending of the additional £9.9m will be allocated up to 2025.
6. Monitoring and governance

2. Update from Cllr Dixon to Hadlow Down Parish Council February 2023

Elections

As you are aware, the Wealden District Council Elections will be held on 4th May, the same date as the Parish Council. Purdah will begin on 27th March at the latest and applies to all local authorities.

The voters will be required to provide photo ID, for the first time, at polling stations and we are anticipating some delays at polling stations as a result. It is important to spread the word so that no voter is disenfranchised due to a lack of ID. If they do not have a document then they can apply for one online at gov.uk. If you don't have a digital photo or can't do it online then contact the Wealden elections team and they will assist. The certificate is free of charge. This requirement doesn't apply to postal voters.

Five Year Supply

The latest AMR (Authority Monitoring Report) has been published and it shows that, not unexpectedly, we are still short of a Five Year Supply of housing land. This is due to the fact that, although we have approved large development sites in the south of the district, they will not all be completed within five years and cannot be fully included in the calculation. The government is currently consulting on changes to the calculation and changes are expected to be announced in the spring.

Local Plan

Wealden will be publishing a new timetable for the production of the local plan next month which will take account of the proposed changes to the NPPF and national guidance. The policy team have been working hard on the evidence base and the site assessments and policies for the new plan and will be able to move ahead with the draft plan, showing much lower numbers, after the election.