

## Report from Cllr. Lunn for Hadlow Down PC Annual meeting 16<sup>th</sup> May 2023

### 1. Update from Cllr. Lunn – Wealden District Council (WDC) May 2023

Firstly, it is a great pleasure to represent Hadlow Down as your District Council representative.

My role is to represent the residents of the ward and it is my pleasure to do so. I will be honest and do the best of my ability to ensure residents and the Parish Council's views are represented. I look forward to working closely with the Parish Council and the various voluntary groups within the village and wider Parish.

#### Results of Wealden District Council elections.

As I am sure you will be aware there were no elections for either the Parish or District for Hadlow Down. Some may feel this is disappointing but it has saved the Parish Council some significant money which will benefit the Parish Council's finances and ultimately the wider community.

The results for the District Council elections are outlined in the below table.

<b>Party</b>	<b>Election in 2023</b>	<b>Prior to this election</b>	<b>Gains/losses</b>
Conservative	9	28	-19
Green	11	4	+7
Independents	10	7	+3
Labour	2	0	+2
Liberal Democrat	13	6	+7
Total	45	45	

It must be noted that the Green Party and the Liberal Democrats deny that they influenced the elections by having a pact on numerous seats. However, analysis suggests that an agreement was made by the Green Party and the Liberal Democrats.

The Conservatives ran candidates in 44 seats.

Out of 41 wards, the number of candidates from Green and Lib Dems who stood against each other was just 3 seats. The number where all parties were represented was zero. This is to enable tactical voting which appears on this occasion to have duly worked. Some I suspect will be pleased to bring down the former administration but the implications for the new Council are very much unknown at this stage even 12 days since the election.

The Full Council of Wealden District Council is set for the 24th May where we will have greater clarity on who will be Leader of Wealden District Council and who is representing various portfolios, and allocations to various committees and other civic duties to which the new administration will have. At the time of writing this there is no clarity on any of these matters.

At this point of transition to a new administration I would like to acknowledge the position of Wealden District Council (WDC) under the previous administration.

1. The recycling rate of Wealden District Council was 49.5% under a Conservative run Council and the highest recycling in Sussex. The rest of the waste gets taken to the Newhaven incinerator which generates local power for the area. Only 1% of waste is sent to landfill which is regarded as unable to be recycled or incinerated.
2. The charge of brown bins for garden green waste is currently set at £55 per annum per household.
3. The Wealden District Council proportion of Council rose by 2.99% and the Council was in a good financial position.
4. The Council had maintained Free Car Parking in Wealden Car Parks to support the local economy. We were also opposed to on-street car park charging (Parking Meters).
5. We had created a new modern Crematorium which is serving the local community and generating an income for the Council.
6. The Council had passed a motion to write to the Secretary of State for DEFRA with regard to bring forward requirements to make Southern Water accountable for Sewage infrastructure upgrades which the Green Party abstained or objected to. I attach a copy of the response from DEFRA Minister Rebecca Pow MP for Members' interest.
7. The Local Plan which was in draft was waiting on 1 crucial factor which was the Governments Housing numbers which the Conservative Group did not agree with and which caused delays in bringing forward the Local Plan. It was estimated that given the 8,500 approvals which had been approved and not built, that the housing numbers would have been significantly reduced, potentially by 50%, given the constraints of the High Weald, Ashdown Forest, South Downs NP, and Pevensey Levels. We now wait to see what the new administration will do.

### **Planning matters**

I have been informed that a replacement caravan has been installed into the Cart Lodge site last week. This is something that WDC were made aware of in advance of it happening and is unrelated to the claimed new owners of the barn.

The lady who has planning permission for her equestrian activities on the field (WD/2018/0535/FR) is swapping out her existing permitted caravan for this fresh one. However, since then WDC were informed that the replacement caravan is not like for like but a full blown mobile home. This has been reported to Enforcement and I await further updates which I hope will be forthcoming by Tuesday evening.

Based on the current definition, even a mobile home still falls within the definition of a caravan, which it appears to, so no further planning permission is required. The use of it can only be in association with the approved equestrian activities on the land, so for storage, shelter, refreshment etc.

However, I am seeking clarification from the planning team and from the applicant that it is her caravan that has been brought in, as had been planned.

I have also been informed that there is a risk of 3 Travellers trying to move on the same site, and some clearance has taken place. Enforcement are aware but are unable to action anything until something actually happens.

**Cllr Michael Lunn**

**Wealden District Council representative covering Hadlow Down and Rotherfield**

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