

AGENDA ITEM 13 – CORRESPONDENCE FOR 7TH APRIL MEETING

a. Update regarding gritting service

Thank you for your email of 12 January 2026 on behalf of Hadlow Down Parish Council regarding the proposed reduction in gritting services. I apologise for the delay in my response.

I recognise the importance of the winter service in supporting safe travel and community resilience, especially in rural areas where access to neighbouring villages and essential services is critical. At this stage, it may be helpful to clarify that no final decisions have been made regarding the extent of reduction. The Council is currently undertaking a review of the existing arrangements to ensure that the service remains safe, effective and deliverable within available resources.

East Sussex currently treat more than 1,250km (42%) of the entire network and an additional 338km (9%) in prolonged winter weather periods. Much of this is based on historic information and requests. This review would look to rationalise the network based on clear criteria to ensure only the most appropriate sections are treated. This will balance safety and deliverability against budget.

Should any changes to the current gritting arrangements be proposed as a result of this work, these will be clearly presented and subject to appropriate consultation before any final decisions are taken. Parish councils and other stakeholders will be kept informed of opportunities to engage and provide local insight as part of this process.

Thank you again for raising this important issue. Please be assured that the Council remains committed to maintaining a winter service that supports meets its statutory requirements and ensures public safety and community resilience across East Sussex.

b. A letter from Horam Parish Council

CONCERNS OVER THE LEGITIMACY OF THE LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION HORAM PARISH COUNCIL

At the WDC Parish Cluster meeting on 5th March the host (James Webster) was informed that access to the WDC website had been intermittent and often access was denied to residents by a Forbidden 403 error message. Residents had already informed your IT department and their District Cllrs of this. James acknowledged that he was already aware of the problem and that WDC's IT department was working on it.

Other parishes expressed concern at that Cluster meeting that if and when residents experienced this denial of access to the Local Plan documents and the online response forms they would not try and try again but would then not comment on the Local Plan at all. As WDC have been promoting online responses as its preferred mode of response this denial of access to the documents raises concerns over the legitimacy of the Local Plan consultation due to end on 20th March because residents did not have 6 uninterrupted weeks to respond using your preferred and promoted process.

We were informed on Monday, 9th March, that because of diligent interaction over the weekend by one of our residents with your IT department the issue was resolved. This means that for 4 weeks of the 6-week consultation period there had only been intermittent access for residents to the documents that they would need in order to respond. On Wednesday 11th March we were advised that you had extended the consultation deadline by one week to Friday 27th March.

Horam Parish Council appreciates that WDC might have only received a limited amount of feedback. However, the parish council has received a large number of complaints about this from residents. Therefore, it was unanimously AGREED at the Horam Parish Council Full Council meeting of 11th March that a one-week extension for four weeks of disrupted access to the Local Plan documents and response forms was totally inadequate and undermines the legitimacy of WDC's consultation process.

Therefore, to preserve the legitimacy of this very important Local Plan consultation, where WDC are allocating sites of such a large size that they represent massive overdevelopment of rural villages with commensurate demographic changes, it was RESOLVED that I request that you extend the consultation period by 4 weeks to Friday 17th April. Also, that WDC undertakes a very active advertising/promotion campaign to support this extension, which acknowledges the problem and makes it very clear that the deadline has been moved and reiterates the web addresses that residents will need to use to respond.

Without a four-week extension and active advertising/promotion campaign Wealden District Council will have denied democracy to its residents as they will not have had a consultation period of 6 uninterrupted weeks to respond. It should be noted that other district councils are giving an 8-week response period to their Local Plans.

c. Dangerous Condition of the A272 Through Hadlow Down – Formal Notice and Request for Immediate Action

Dear Councillors,

I am writing to you formally and in the strongest possible terms regarding the **dangerous and deteriorating condition of the A272 through Hadlow Down**, both eastbound and westbound. I must be absolutely clear: the current state of this road is **unacceptable, unsafe, and represents a failure of statutory responsibility** on the part of the relevant authorities.

Despite repeated attempts over many months to raise these concerns, the situation has not improved. In fact, it has worsened to the point where it now constitutes a **serious and immediate risk to public safety**.

1. Condition of the Road – A272 Eastbound and Westbound

The A272 is, without exaggeration, in a disgraceful condition. Even the sections that have supposedly been "repaired" are so poorly executed that they are as dangerous as the original potholes. The repairs are shallow, uneven, and already breaking apart.

This is not routine wear and tear. **This is systemic neglect.**

2. Near-Misses and Personal Safety Incidents

I have personally experienced:

- **multiple near-misses** with oncoming vehicles travelling at national speed limit who are swerving violently to avoid deep potholes,
- **two near-accidents**, including one incident where my vehicle **lost traction and spun** after unavoidable contact with a deep defect in the carriageway,
- and, most recently, a **puncture** caused by the worsening westbound section.

These are not isolated events. They are predictable consequences of a road surface that has been allowed to fall into a **dangerous state of disrepair**.

3. Evidence of Widespread Damage to Other Road Users

Over the past month alone, I have personally witnessed **multiple drivers on Tinkers Lane** pulled over to change tyres or inspect wheel damage caused by the same defects. This is a clear indication that the problem is not only widespread but escalating.

4. Legal Responsibilities

While I appreciate that East Sussex Highways holds primary responsibility for maintenance, the Parish Council has:

- **a statutory duty to represent the safety concerns of residents,**
- **a duty of care to escalate and press for urgent action, and**
- **a responsibility to ensure that dangerous defects are not ignored.**

The current situation is so severe that it raises legitimate questions about **dereliction of duty** and whether the ongoing failure to address these hazards could amount to **misconduct in public office** on the part of those responsible for ensuring road safety.

5. This Is Not a Minor Issue – It Is an Emergency

This is not “a few potholes”. This is a **major safety hazard** on a **60 mph road** where serious injury or loss of life is now a foreseeable outcome.

If this road is not repaired properly and urgently, it is only a matter of time before someone is seriously hurt or killed.

6. Request for Immediate Action

I am formally requesting:

1. That the Parish Council **urgently escalate this matter** to East Sussex Highways at the highest level.
2. That the Council **formally records this issue** at the next meeting and provides a written response outlining the actions taken.
3. That the Council **presses for a full, proper resurfacing**, not temporary patching that fails within weeks.
4. That I am provided with a **clear timeline** for when the Parish will next engage with Highways on this matter.

The residents of Hadlow Down deserve safe, passable roads. At present, we do not have them.

I look forward to your prompt response and to seeing this matter treated with the urgency it clearly requires.

d. Email from residents re the dangerous state of the A272

Dear Cllr Lunn,

Thank you for highlighting the serious condition of our local roads.

As a resident of Hadlow Down, I actively avoid using this stretch of the A272 due to the poor surface and the number of potholes. I know I am not alone in doing this, and the result is increased pressure on the surrounding rural lanes which were never designed to carry that level of traffic.

I appreciate that East Sussex Highways are managing a road network that is already in very poor condition. However, it cannot be right that the current largely reactive approach — repeatedly filling potholes that quickly fail, is seen as the long-term solution. These repairs are temporary, disruptive, and ultimately costly when they have to be repeated again and again.

Many councils that perform well in road maintenance have adopted a far more proactive approach. Preventative maintenance, surface dressing, and properly planned resurfacing programmes have proven to be more cost-effective over time than continual patching.

According to recent 2025 government data, around 7% of B and C roads in England are rated in poor condition, yet some of the best-performing authorities keep their red-rated roads below 2% by investing in preventative maintenance and structural repairs rather than relying primarily on reactive pothole filling.

I urge East Sussex Highways to consider whether a similar long-term approach could be adopted here. While proper resurfacing programmes require upfront investment, the question is whether we can afford not to make those investments if we want a safe and sustainable road network.

Thank you for raising this issue and for encouraging residents to engage with it. I strongly support the call for a more strategic, preventative approach to maintaining our roads.

e. Email from resident re supporting changes needed on the A272

Dear Michael

I have seen your post on the state of the roads around our area.

I live in Five Ashes.

I am in full support of this campaign as where I live , all I hear is sirens RTA's which makes me anxious and worry for road users.

I travel to Uckfield to see my children and grandchildren, I'm disgusted at the state of these roads!

I've blown tyres, alloys and felt very unsafe!

I have a lot more to say here and I fully back you in your campaign!

What is so bizarre, East Sussex Highway's should have prepared in advance for the amount of rainfall we have had, which then freezes and breaks up roads with HGV's and total lack of driving control.

That's not the point. However, they paid probably a huge wage to control our roads should be dismissed!

As residents, we prepare for the Winter, cold spells and frost etc.

Why cannot our local council's have the savvy to do the same?

Bad preparation, bad decisions, causing crashes, road blocks and goodness knows what else!

But they still expect us to pay Council Tax and Road Tax!!

I'm with you on this and thank you

f. Email from resident asking if the PC will consider serving a legal notice on

Dear Clerk. Would the PC be prepared to do this? I am sure you would have the support of the whole village. Article attached....

fill in potholes - and wins!
By Andrew Levy and David Churchill
A MOTORIST driven to distraction by potholes has forced a council to fix three roads after taking them to court using little-known legislation. Derek Bennett, 68, took action after becoming fed up with the crater-strewn streets around his home of Berkhamsted in Hertfordshire and nearby Hemel Hempstead. After researching the law, he discovered that under section 56 of the Highways Act 1980, highways authorities have an absolute duty to maintain roads at public expense. So he filed a notice requiring the county council to fulfil its responsibility. When it failed to respond in time, the case went to St Albans Crown Court, where a judge ordered the work to be completed in 20 working days. He also awarded costs of £1,650 to the retired construction project manager, who represented himself in court. Mr Bennett told the Daily Mail: 'I don't know why we put up with this. It's so easy to deal with. If everyone did it, we'd have lovely roads within six months.' Demands had been submitted for three other roads but they had been repaired by the time the case was heard on Thursday. Mr Bennett added: 'The judge said he'd never come across this. He didn't realise it was their jurisdiction because they deal with rapists and murderers - and there I was talking about potholes.' He has now filed submissions about other roads in the county and in Cambridgeshire and Buckinghamshire. Hertfordshire council said: 'We're disappointed that this routine maintenance issue has resulted in legal proceedings.' It came as it emerged that tough new rules to end the 'pothole plague' could leave town halls with huge financial losses. Ministers can withhold a quarter of the cash earmarked for councils that don't share repair progress with the Government, and prevent them from spending money earmarked for road maintenance on anything else.

Hell of road dubbed the 'wheel eater'
OFFICIALLY, it's the A505, but thanks to hundreds of potholes locals call it 'the wheel eater'. They say the road between Saffron Walden in Essex and villages in Cambridgeshire could be the UK's worst - and call swerving to avoid the craters the manoeuvre the 'pothole cha-cha-cha'. Ada Sula, 44, pictured, who had to spend £700 on tyres, said the holes 'have become a permanent fixture'. Cyclist Morgan Brewer said: 'I snapped a carbon wheel - the replacement cost £300.' Cambridgeshire County Council and Essex Highways said they had made temporary repairs, and would make a permanent one soon.

END THE POTHOLE PLAGUE
Daily Mail CAMPAIGN

Father's fight to cremate
By Sophia S...
A CHRISTIAN court fight wife over w their tenm buried or e Budding elle Harbu east Lond last Dece with his e Stefan Christia 'soul' wil missing the dis buried Oprite beliefs not cu be cre tered that Mr tion moty poss Ba Kle ing Lo vi ju E r

g. Shepherd Hut spotted in Waste Wood

Dear Cllr Lunn

A shepherds hut has been spotted in Belvedere wood/ part of WASTE wood near its SE boundary. Pic attached.

