

ESCC report for Parish Councils February 2020

We are working on the budget for 2020/21. The assumptions are that there will be a 1.99% increase in council tax and 2% Adult Social care precept. There is severely reducing government grant funding (based on need). As a county we have the highest number of over 65s and over 85s with increasingly complex needs. We have an increasing number of children requiring help and protection, in line with national trend. We have a relatively weak local economy, some of the most deprived communities in the country, and relatively low earnings.

We are continuing to work with the Core Offer. We have had some lobbying success with central government. We have been given additional funding for social care and continuation of the Better Care Fund. There is additional funding in the SEND High Needs Block, and additional funding in the per pupil funding for schools as promised. We still need to make savings of £3.5m in 20/21.

We await the Fair Funding Review for LG. There must be recognition of strain across all services caused by 10 years of funding cuts. The system must recognise future demand, not reflect old allocation. Locally raised council tax and business rates do not reflect need in areas like East Sussex.

Government investment in local solutions is needed if we are to achieve our target for climate change.

Congratulations to Peasmarsh Primary School for doing so well in their KS2 sats. Children reached the expected standard as follows; 90% reading, 100% writing, and 90% maths and in the greater depth standard the results were exceptionally good as 90% reached the standard in reading, 50% in writing, and 80% in maths.

There has been a recent decision by the ESCC planning committee on adoption of CPE (Civil Parking Enforcement). All the proposals were accepted for Bexhill and Battle but turned down for Robertsbridge (apart for the proposals near the school and bus stop). There will be no meters in Robertsbridge, yet there are serious problems with parking, particularly in Station Road. The Salehurst and Robertsbridge Parish Council will have further discussion on possible solutions.

We have a considerable amount of traffic disruption in Northern Rother in the foreseeable future. This is good in that there will be drainage works and extensive replacement works and repairs to water mains. **We need this work to be done:**

U6949 Pixies Lane, Horns Cross, closure between 22nd March and 14th May, SE water, water main renewal works

U 6936 Dixter Lane, Northiam from 13th February 2020 to 17th February 2020 SE Water, replacing meter and a stopcock

B2165 The Stream, Beckley/B2165 Beckley Road, Northiam closure to take place between 3rd February 2020 and 28th August 2020 SE water water main renewal works

B2165 Northiam Road, Staplecross /B2165 Horns Cross between 3rd February 2020 and 22nd January 2021 SE water replacement of water main (extensive work)

There is a contact number for SE Water 0333 000 0365

However, I am in the process of discussing these works with an engineer as the closure times seem so extensive. I will also be discussing proposed diversions with highways. Please contact me if there is a particular issue.

East Sussex Highways will be carrying out kerbing and road repair work on the A265 at Broad Oak and Burwash Weald, near Heathfield, in January, February and March.

The winter gritting season started on 1st October and continues till 30th April, during which time the highways service is on standby 24hours a day. Our highway maintenance contractor, Costain , employs a fleet of 23 gritters, 2 spares, and 48 fully trained gritter drivers. There are also 27 local farmers and contractors with snow ploughs across the county who are called upon to assist during heavy snowfall. Costain holds stocks of approximately 10,000 tonnes of dry rock salt (not grit) in our 6 highway depots (Ringmer, Sidley, Heathfield, Polegate, Cripps Corner and Maresfield).

Costain employs weather forecasters using the latest technology to predict when road surface temperatures are likely to drop below freezing or when snow will fall. Most gritting takes place early in the morning when temperatures are lowest. All gritting decisions are published on East Sussex highways website and on social media. Salt is spread on primary gritting routes which includes all A and B roads and some C roads.

During snow fall Highways deliver hippo bags of salt to 51 agreed locations across the county for local communities to use on roads and pavements in their area. We don't have the resources to routinely grit footpaths or pavements. Residents are encouraged to clear snow and ice from public areas near their properties. ESCC provides over 900 council owned grit bins . These are filled with rock salt in the autumn and are topped up periodically.

For information:

<https://www.eastsussexhighways.com/gritting-routes/primary-routes>

<https://www.eastsussexhighways.com/files/winter-leaflet.pdf>

Angharad Davies East Sussex County Councillor Northern Rother