

## Report for Parish Councils      November 2020

Cases of Sars-Covid-2 causing Covid-19 continue to rise in East Sussex but we are still the second lowest area in the country. Rother has the lowest infection rate at 331.0 per 100,000 population compared with England 1117.9 per 100,000. We are placed in Tier 1.

**Stay Well This Winter** is this year's flu campaign, launched on October 19<sup>th</sup>. The campaign aims to vaccinate 3m children aged 2-6 in years 1 and 2, this is a nasal spray vaccine, making this the largest school-based vaccination programme ever in England. Groups being offered adult flu vaccine are: pregnant women, people aged 65 or over, under 65s with long term conditions, and carers. Other people wanting the flu vaccine can obtain this in pharmacies and supermarkets at a cost of £12. Everyone should have the flu vaccine, particularly this winter when we need to cut admissions to hospital for influenza.

ESCC and other local authorities and the NHS in Sussex have joined to ask residents their views in the **Big Health and Care Conversation**. Please join and engage with the Big Debate platform which will be live till November 15<sup>th</sup>. This is to find out how residents have fared during the pandemic, and to improve the way services are provided in the future. This link is in the Wellbeing section of ESCC web page.

We now have a coronavirus testing site at Eastbourne. The walk-through site at Devonshire Park car park, 80 College Road, Eastbourne will be operated by Sodexo, commissioned by DHSC. This is in addition to the Plumpton racecourse site, also Wainwright Road in Bexhill, and Gatwick airport. A new walk-through testing centre opened on 16<sup>th</sup> October at the car park of the former Helenswood Academy upper school in the Ridge. All testing facilities collect swab samples which are sent to laboratories for analysis and results.

Book a test at GOV.UK or call 119

All our **Libraries** in East Sussex are now open. Please visit; [www.eastsussex.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/libraries). Customers can order online or by phone any item from the lending stock of the entire county library catalogue free of charge, and have it delivered to their library of choice. Computers will be available during time-limited pre-booked sessions. Buddy sessions will resume and those needing help with virtual job interviews can be offered support at Eastbourne and Hastings libraries. Opening hours are reduced at present due to extra staff needed at each site for enhanced cleaning and Coronavirus rules.

**Civil Parking Enforcement** went live in Rother on 29<sup>th</sup> September. The enforcement contractor, NSL, issued 604 warning notices rather than penalty charges during the first couple of weeks. But PCNs are now being issued. All streets in all areas have been visited

once so far by enforcement officers. Feedback from residents and passers-by have been positive and people are saying that there are now places to park. Nuisance parking is being dealt with. Yellow line parking has reduced considerably across the District. All resident parking permit applications applied for before 13<sup>th</sup> October have been issued. Daniel Clarke is the officer in charge of CPE at ESCC. [Daniel.clarke@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:Daniel.clarke@eastsussex.gov.uk)

An 18 month scheme to improve **street lighting**, which will reduce council energy bills and lower carbon emissions, started in the middle of October. Additional funding has been secured enabling East Sussex Highways to upgrade 16,000 street light units to high efficiency LED lights and replace 3000 aging concrete street lighting columns as part of a countywide project between now and 2022. Since the wider programme began 6 years ago, 22,000 of the 38,000 street lights in the county have been upgraded to LED lights.

**The gritting teams** are on standby 24/7 from October 1<sup>st</sup> to keep our roads ice free. 42 gritter drivers cover 1,592 km of roads through the night and in the early hours of the morning. All 21 vehicles in the ES gritting fleet were recently checked out through Operation Snowdrop, doing a trial run to check vehicles are ready for wintery weather. ES Highways has 8000 tons of rock salt in stock at depots across the county, each gritting run uses approximately 100 tonnes of salt. Over the winter, gritters treat all A and B roads and some C roads--a total of 42% roads across the county, with over 1,252 km of roads treated on a primary route gritting run.

**The Leader of ESCC** issued a statement recently saying his intention is for ESCC to keep its core offer to residents unchanged in the next budget. If agreed in the February 2021 budget this would be the first time in more than a decade that we have avoided seeking new savings. We are still more hard pressed financially but we think this is not the time to further reduce the services we offer. We have absorbed drastic cuts in our funding from central government since 2010 and the demand for services keeps rising. We know and understand that our residents particularly need support at the present time because of the Covid-19 crisis and we will continue to lobby central government about the difficult situation we face.

Angharad Davies      East Sussex County Councillor Northern Rother