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Report to Parish Councils – April 2023

This report is written is for Parish Councils meeting in April. It is for all 7 parishes in Northern Rother.

Some of the items here are from information circulated by ESCC but which may not have drawn the attention of parish councillors and others.

Potholes

This is an ongoing concern for residents and all 50 county councillors. Some recent developments:

- In the national budget an extra £2.36 million was awarded to East Sussex for potholes. We are waiting to hear details of this. As finances limit what we can do on road maintenance in East Sussex this is very welcome.
- The new contractor (Balfour Beatty Living Places) takes over at the end of April. Most or all existing staff are expected transfer over. I know of one case concerning signs where the forthcoming switch apparently caused a delay but in general this should not occur.
- Place Scrutiny Committee, of which I am a member, has created a specific pothole panel. You can see the terms of reference for this at [Agenda for Place Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday, 28th March, 2023, 10.30 am | East Sussex County Council](#). Look at the Agenda reports pack and the appendix starting at page 67. I am not a member of this (I chair two other panels) but I will report back.

- There is a lot of feeling from residents and councillors that pothole repairs, even temporary ones, are not lasting long. This is one of the items which will be investigated, I hope urgently.

Drains and Flooding

There are currently four areas where flooding has been an issue in Northern Rother, mostly but not exclusively linked to Highways. Although this has always been an issue it is possible that climate change will lead to higher localised rainfall which in return could lead to more flooding.

One cause is, of course, tarmac/concrete in housing developments leading to more rapid runoff. New housing developments above particular numbers are required to have Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs), typically large ponds to slow and smooth the effect of downpours. This helps with new developments, but with existing houses and highways this is rarely a solution.

For existing properties, these can hopefully be resolved with relatively small changes to drains, kerbs and ditches but we need to ensure these actions happen. My county phone has many pictures of potholes but also now many of drains and ditches! I am liaising with Highways and others if appropriate on any drawn to my attention.

At Place Scrutiny this week I asked if we have estimates of the number of similar issues that could arise due to the changed patterns of rainfall. I expect to get an answer soon.

All changes to reduce run-off will also help reduce the discharges of sewage into our rivers and sea, as in so many cases combined drainage systems carry both foul and rainwater. In the longer term separating foul and rainwater will need to be part of the solution, albeit very expensive, as will additional capacity in treatment works.

Cases

Each month I will give updates for a sample of current cases across Northern Rother. I currently have about 12 which are being progressed. I now only show updates or new information on significant cases. Please look at previous reports for the full background.

Development off the Paddocks, Northiam

Contractors parking in the Paddocks or Goddens Gill continues to be an issue. Whilst this is legal in most cases, it causes inconvenience to local residents. I have continued liaison with the site manager, developer and residents. This has helped in some cases.

Some contractors are using the scout hut area for parking but not enough. Some have continued to park in Goddens Gill and the Paddocks. Please keep sending me number plates and pictures so that I can raise with the developer.

Bus Services

There are problems such as delays and cancellations with several bus services, particularly those serving Robertsbridge Community Collage from Hastings and those going to Bexhill 6th Form College from this area. In some cases these are run commercially with no subsidy, in other cases ESCC provides subsidies. This can have various causes including driver shortage and road works. I am liaising with ESCC and

others to see if and how this can be improved.

Carmen Bridge

This bridge on a bend near Beckley has seen many accidents though fortunately none as far as I am aware none causing death or serious injury. Signage has been improved and may have helped but accidents still occur. I am making a case for some active radar activated signs giving warning of the bend. Normally these are justified using injury/death statistics but I am trying to use arguments of saving repair costs to the bridge – the last one costed about £18k. This is unusual but makes financial sense apart from the risks to drivers.