

Northern Rother District Councillors' Report September 2025.

Dear Clerks

We wish you and your Councillors a very Merry Christmas and a Healthy and Happy new year.

This year we have had some challenges presented to us by our residents regarding planning and enforcement. Hopefully we have been able to help them in getting the right results they wanted.

We attended the **Rother Housing Development** event at

Robertsbridge. There were various speakers from the council, developers, and housing providers and planning consultants.

The big issue is the lack of housing in Rother. The government has set a target of 912 house per year for Rother. While this might seem a small number for some, it will be a big challenge for Rother seeing only just over 200 were built last year. Obviously, the district of Rother is largely rural, so there is pressure to build in these rural areas. If you would like to see where the proposed housing developments could be in your village, you can find this on the overview and scrutiny agenda dated 17th November. It appears the some of the permitted development boundaries have been moved. Whilst we would like to see some houses built for local village residents, we do not want to see our lovely countryside disappear. There will be a public consultation in January, and we ask Parish councils and residents to please make your feelings known regarding these proposals.

We will give a verbal update at the PC meeting regarding our **PCSO's** report.

There is another **consultation** now open regarding the Local Government Reorganisation, which closes on the 11th of January. Please do not get this mixed up with Rother's housing development plan

The government has now officially launched its consultation on **Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)** in East Sussex.

The consultation is open to all residents, businesses, voluntary groups, and local organisations. This is the only opportunity for the public to comment on these proposals and every response counts. Back in September, Rother District Council approved the proposal for a single council for East Sussex as our submission for LGR in East Sussex. The government will be consulting on two options:

- The proposal submitted by Eastbourne Borough Council, East Sussex County Council, Hastings Borough Council, Lewes District Council and Rother District Council for one unitary council for the current East Sussex County footprint.
- The proposal submitted by Brighton and Hove City Council for five unitary councils on a pan-Sussex basis.

It is understood that the government will not be progressing or consulting on the district and borough model also submitted by Hastings Borough Council.

Take part in the official government consultation:

- The consultation is linked here: [Proposals for local government reorganisation in East Sussex and Brighton and Hove, and West Sussex - GOV.UK](#).

- It will be open for seven weeks until 11 January 2026.

- Responses can also be made by email to

LGRconsultationresponse@communities.gov.uk or in writing to LGR Consultation , Fry Building 2NE, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF.

Free parking gift this Christmas

Shopping in Battle, Bexhill and Rye will be able to enjoy an early Christmas gift with free parking in selected council-owned car parks. Rother District Council is once again waiving parking charges in some of the car parks it manages on selected days in the run up to Christmas to support local businesses and encourage people to shop locally.

Charges will be suspended all day in Lower Market, Upper Market and Mount Street car parks in Battle on Saturday, November 29 and Saturday, December 20.

Charges will also be waived from 4pm on Thursday, December 4 and Friday, December 12 for late night shopping events.

In Bexhill, charges will be suspended all day in the De La Warr, Eversley Road, Manor Barn & Gardens, Town Hall, Wainwright Road, and War Memorial car parks on Saturday, November 29, Saturday, December 6 and Saturday, December 13.

Free parking will be available in Little Common car park from 4pm on Saturday, December 6 and all day on Sunday, December 14, Saturday, December 20 and Sunday, December 21.

For those visiting Rye, parking will be free all day in the Cinque Ports Street, The Strand, Bedford Place, Lucknow Place and Gibbet Marsh car parks on Saturday, December 6, Saturday, December 13 and Saturday, December 20.

Signage will be displayed in the off-street car parks confirming the dates when visitors can park for free. For more information visit www.rother.gov.uk/news/christmas-parking-concessions-2025/.

Have Your Say on our Budget for 2026/27

The Council has started a public consultation on proposals to fill the funding gap for our revenue budget for 2026/27. Our proposals include a range of ways to make savings and raise the council's

income so that it can continue to supply services. This consultation ends on 5th January 2026.

Christmas at Bodiam Castle

From 29th November, the National Trust hosts a series of Christmas-themed events at Bodiam Castle, suitable for the whole family. Children can write a letter to Father Christmas, follow a magical Christmas trail, enjoy storytelling sessions and get creative with seasonal crafts. Families can also explore the castle grounds on winter walks, soaking up the Christmas atmosphere.

RESERVES

The Council has £5.00m in General Reserves not earmarked for any specific purpose (plus a further £5.54m in Earmarked Reserves). If the anticipated revenue outturn were to be realised, the General Reserve would reduce by £1.181m to £3.819m. The Council may have to draw from reserves for losses on investment (Hermes Property Fund) and where capital schemes have changed direction and we may be required to charge those costs to revenue. The total of these transactions is not anticipated to exceed £1.32m. If these were to materialise the General Reserve would be forecast to be **£2.5m** at year end. It is usually recommended that **reserves should not fall below £5m.**

Best regards,

Councillors Tony Ganly & Tony Biggs.