

ESCC update to Brightling Parish Council on 8th March 2023

Budget protecting vital services approved

The county council's 2023/24 budget, which will pay for services including roads, libraries, and support for vulnerable adults and children, was approved at a meeting of the Full Council on Tuesday, February 7. The authority's plan for delivering its priorities in the coming year was also announced.

As well as day-to-day spending on services, Full Council also approved the proposed capital programme, which includes investment in improvements to the highways infrastructure, school places, SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) provision, as well as further supporting the council's commitment to reduce its carbon footprint from its operations.

The Council Plan for the coming financial year was also announced. This sets out the programme of how services will be delivered, including improved bus services, integrated care services, a new strategy for providing Special Educational Needs and Disability support for East Sussex children, and the development of a new economic strategy for the county.

The full report can be found [here](#).

Library book amnesty to be held across East Sussex

A book amnesty is being held in libraries across the county to recover many missing library books. From February 13 to March 31, fines will be waived by the library service for any books returned.

Books can be returned to any East Sussex library during opening hours. Alternatively, most libraries have drop boxes for out of hours returns. Residents who are not finished with the books they currently have out on loan are being encouraged to renew them as soon as possible.

Details on the locations of local libraries can be found [here](#).

Further information about how to renew books can be found [here](#).

East Sussex marks anniversary of Ukraine Invasion

On Friday 24 February, the Ukrainian flag was raised in solidarity with the people of Ukraine as the country marks the anniversary of the Russian invasion. At 11am, the council joined the national one-minute silence to commemorate one year since the start of the year.

East Sussex residents have shown their continuing and steadfast support for Ukrainians during the last 12 months. Over 500 host families are currently offering

shelter to those fleeing the conflict, with more than 1,400 Ukrainian guests now living in the country. A further 300 guests are expected to arrive locally during the coming weeks. Numerous local groups and organisations have provided activities and support to assist Ukrainian guests in getting to know their new communities.

As the war continues, more Ukrainians are having to leave their homeland and the council is seeking more host families. Information on hosting Ukrainian guests, the support available to those arriving in East Sussex and other ways people can help is available [here](#).

Families urged to claim fruit and vegetable payments

Families are being urged to check their eligibility for help to buy milk and food through the NHS Healthy Start initiative. As well as providing funds each month to buy milk, fruit and vegetables, the scheme also allows those who are eligible to obtain free vitamins.

Women who are over 10 weeks pregnant and families with a child under 4 who are in receipt of certain benefits can apply for the scheme. It is estimated that over 1400 eligible families in East Sussex are missing out on at least £320,000 of available funding every year.

People who qualify will be sent a Healthy Start card with money loaded onto it; this can be used in shops such as supermarkets, convenience stores, petrol stations and pharmacies that display the Mastercard® symbol and sell healthy food and milk. The card can be used to buy plain liquid cow's milk; fresh, frozen, and tinned fruit and vegetables; fresh, dried, and tinned pulses and infant formula milk based on cow's milk. It can also be used to get Healthy Start Women's vitamin tablets and children's vitamin drops for free.

More information on the Healthy Start initiative and details of how to apply can be found [here](#).

East Sussex County Council signs new Armed Forces Covenant

At the meeting of 14 February, the Lead Member for Children and Families resolved to agree to the pledges outlined by the East Sussex County Council Armed Forces Covenant and to sign the updated document.

The re-submission of the Covenant demonstrates the council's continued support to the Armed Forces Community and allows for the council to aim for Gold Accreditation on the Employers Recognition Scheme in 2023.

The minutes of the meeting can be found [here](#).

Highways

8261 potholes have been repaired since the beginning of January. There are now 595 reported potholes in the system awaiting repair (1,619 previously) which is below 'normal' levels.

The contractor has been continually reviewing resource levels and has reduced to 15 gangs, but this will reduce down to 10 gangs (normal levels) next week.