

# Reports for Brightling Parish Council meeting 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023

This report covers 4 topics:

- Welcome packs
- Environment Strategy
- Web site
- Broadband

## Welcome packs

The welcome pack is available, and I will email or print copies on request.

Since the last meeting, one copy of the welcome pack has been issued.

I have attached a copy alongside this report. There are some things that are definitely not up-to-date, and I would ask councillors to let me have updates as soon as possible.

## Environment strategy

The Village Hall has been offered a possible grant of “up to” approximately £7500 specifically towards an air to air source heat pump. I attended a meeting of the Village Hall committee last night. It is unlikely that they will proceed to take up the air-to-air ASHP offer. However, they are investigating the possibility of solar panels and changing the lighting from fluorescent to LED.

Brightling Environment Group. Doug Edworthy has joined the group and it is hoped that we will take part in the 2024 Dark Skies Festival. Katrina has attended training in the use of a thermal image camera (it shows pictures of where the heat is leaking out of your house). It is hoped to organize an event, possibly in February, to demonstrate the potential of this, and also look at some of the myths surrounding eco-friendly heating methods and renewable energy. The group continues to meet regularly and we are hoping to participate in a “nature recovery network”.

Katrina and I have completed the “Energy Champion” training delivered by Energise Sussex Coast. Details of what this is about can be seen at <https://www.rother.gov.uk/news/rother-welcomes-its-first-cohort-of-energy-champions/> I will be appearing in this role at the Repair cafe in Robertsbridge on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> November.

## Web site

The site continues to be hosted by Rother District Council.

The main contributors are me, the Parish Clerk, and Jane Beard.

The website will be changed so that the Village Hall has its own dedicated menu item, and a VH representative will be given editor rights to update the VH pages and post news items.

If other contributors want to come forward I would be very happy to get them a logon and give any necessary training.

## Broadband

At last! The project to bring full-fibre ultrafast broadband to Brightling, Woods Corner and parts of Netherfield is now almost entirely complete. Out of the 245 properties in the scope of the project, 232 now have access to full-fibre broadband, leaving just 13 properties to be completed.

The remaining 13 consist of: six properties at Woods Corner (expected completion mid-November); six on Netherfield Hill (the B2096 going in to Netherfield – expected completion mid-January) and one elsewhere (expected completion mid-January).

With the exception of 4 properties that were outside the scope of the project on grounds of cost, this means that the whole of Brightling parish can now access full-fibre broadband, with a choice of speeds of up to 900 Mbps.

The project started in July 2022 and was scheduled to take one year, so it has over-run by about six months. However, it is the culmination of a campaign to bring decent broadband to Brightling that started back in 2013. (East Sussex County Council announced in 2011 that they aimed to bring superfast broadband to the whole of East Sussex by 2017, and would be prioritizing rural areas. The campaign launched when it became apparent that they were doing neither of those things).

Points to note: 1. You will not automatically be upgraded. If you want to upgrade to the new service, you need to apply. A starting point is to contact your existing supplier. Although the infrastructure has been installed by Openreach, a subsidiary of BT, you are not obliged to use BT. You can shop around, subject to any existing contract you may have. It is a competitive market and there are a variety of different prices and service levels available 2. If you pledged your Gigabit broadband voucher back in 2022, you will get a letter or email from Openreach reminding you that you promised to upgrade to the new service when available. The new service is available to everyone, not just those who pledged vouchers, but those who pledged will probably get quicker installation for technical reasons.

If you have any queries, please drop an email to [highwealdsuperfastbroadband@gmail.com](mailto:highwealdsuperfastbroadband@gmail.com)

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