

BERWICK PARISH ASSEMBLY

Minutes of the Berwick Parish Assembly held at the Berwick Village Hall on 25th May 2023 at 7:00pm

1. Present

Cllrs Keith Winter, Tom Mills, Beryl Smith, Victoria Burrough and Sally Carnie.

County Councillor Nick Bennett, District Councillor Alison Wilson, Keith Stevens (NALC) and Alison Stevens (Clerk). Two members of the public were also in attendance.

2. Apologies for absence

No apologies for absence were received.

3. Annual report by the Chairman of Berwick Parish Council

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and read from his report which said;

‘Last year the Parish Council commissioned a Feasibility Study to look into ways to slow down the traffic through the village, the results of which were disappointing.

There were not too many planning applications, and we lost a particularly knowledgeable member of the team in Dexter Robinson who moved away.

We welcomed Tom Mills though and he and Councillor Burrough were fundamental in getting a tree planted in memorial to the late Queen.

I would also like to thank the County Councillor, District Councillor, all the Parish Councillors and especially the Clerk for all their hard work’.

4. Speaker Councillor Keith Stevens, Chairman of NALC

Councillor Stevens spoke about the work of NALC and explained why the Civility and Respect Pledge is needed.

More information about the work of NALC can be found at: <https://www.nalc.gov.uk/library/join-us/3856-nalc-member-benefits-2023/file>

More information about the Civility and Respect Pledge can be found at: <https://www.nalc.gov.uk/our-work/civility-and-respect-project>

5. Annual Report from the County Councillor

County Councillor N Bennett sent a report which said;

‘This summary sets out some of the key achievements of East Sussex County Council (ESCC) in 2022/23 (up to February 2023) under the four strategic priorities of the Council:

www.eastsussex.gov.uk/your-council/about/key-documents/council-plans

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The Council Plan for 2023/24 will be on our website from 1st April 2023.

Driving sustainable economic growth

Following a competitive tender process, ESCC awarded a new contract for highways and infrastructure services to Balfour Beatty Living Places Ltd. The contract valued at £297m for an initial seven years from May 1 2023, has an option to extend to a maximum of 14 years. During the procurement process bidders were asked to demonstrate how they would support the Council's goals to reduce its carbon footprint, ensure high quality work, provide value for money and improve social wellbeing.

Planning permission was secured, and work has begun to replace the single lane crossing at Exceat with a new two lane bridge. Extensive and vital environmental surveys and work have commenced to ensure the bridge is constructed sensitively, protecting the unique nature of the area. The new structure will improve reliability of the road network, accessibility for visitors and will create a new shared meeting space.

Over 752 road improvement schemes, utilising the one-off additional investment agreed by ESCC Cabinet in November 2021, were completed by the end of 2022 at 398 sites with a further 100 sites expected to be completed by the end of 2022/23. This includes patching schemes, new signs and new road markings. In addition, during the first three-quarters of the year we completed 140 road maintenance projects to maintain and improve the county's roads and repaired over 17,000 potholes in the roads and pavements. There was a significant increase in reported potholes following the wettest November on record and one of the coldest starts to December. By the end of January 2023, we had more than doubled the number of pothole repair gangs from 10 to 23 and extended working hours.

In September 2022, over £41m of funding to improve bus services across the county was confirmed by Government. ESCC's Bus Service Improvement Plan was approved which has enabled the Council to reduce fares and will support bus priority and bus stop improvements, investments in infrastructure and the provision of more bus services.

Following extensive consultation, Transport for the South East, the region's sub-national transport body which is chaired by ESCC, approved their Strategic Investment Plan which is the blueprint for future investment in strategic transport infrastructure for the next thirty years.

Over the summer, over 600 people looking to get into the world of work attended Apprenticeship Roadshows in Hastings and Eastbourne, with more than 60 training providers and employers from a range of industries on hand to give advice and information. The Apprenticeship Roadshows are part of the £600,000 Transform programme, supported by the European Social Fund, and including match funding of £300,000 from the Council's Apprenticeship Levy which helps small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) access apprenticeship advice and funding. More than 3,600 students from across East Sussex gained an insight into the world of work through the Council's work experience scheme with pupils aged 14-18 from 32 schools being offered placements during the last academic year with over 1,400 businesses. More than 20 businesses have also signed up to the Open Doors scheme which gives young people real-life experience of the workplace and runs from November to June 2023 this year. Recruitment of Industry Champions has also continued, with 190 champions supporting schools and colleges in place by the end of 2022.

Keeping vulnerable people safe

The Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme provided for more than 1,800 young people during the Easter holidays, including 300 young people with additional needs. May half-term activities

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focused on supporting young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and those with low attendance: 1,440 young people were involved through more than 4,500 sessions. Provision was also extended over the summer holidays with over 80 providers across 144 sites, offering activities and nutritious food to children who receive free school meals.

A new Connected Families Service was launched in 2022 for families with children aged 11-17 who are on the edge of care. The service aims to enable children to live safely at home, or where care is necessary, to maintain relationships and work to support children to return home when appropriate. Connected Coaches provide proactive, tailored support for families at their point of need. Trading Standards were involved in over 425 interventions over the first three-quarters of 2022/23 to protect vulnerable people, including installing CCTV and call blockers to try to prevent people from falling victim to telephone scams. Trading Standards have also obtained Proceeds of Crime Act confiscation orders against convicted individuals this year totaling nearly £100,000. The team also took part in Scams Awareness Fortnight, including speaking to people at local libraries to raise awareness of the types of scams which target vulnerable people.

As at mid-January 2023 1,170 guests were in East Sussex under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, with more than 400 school places allocated to Ukrainian children. ESCC is working with Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations to provide support to Ukrainian families.

Helping people help themselves

A new East Sussex SEND strategy for 2022-25 was launched in November 2022 after a 10-month consultation period. The strategy outlines a partnership approach to service provision and commissioning by putting children, young people and their families at the centre of decision making.

A new specialist facility for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder opened at All Saints Primary School in Bexhill during 2022, alongside a new free special school in Eastbourne; Summerdown School – which will educate up to 84 learners with a diagnosis of autism, between the ages of 5 and 16. Reablement services are provided to help people to regain mobility and daily living skills, especially after a hospital stay. Between April and September 2022 90.7% of older people discharged from hospital to reablement or rehabilitation services were at home 91 days after discharge.

Work continued on the further integration of health and social care. The Integrated Care Board (NHS Sussex) was formally established on 1 July 2022 and is responsible for agreeing strategic priorities and resources for all NHS organisations in Sussex. The joint statutory committee between local government and the NHS, the Sussex Health and Care Assembly approved the Sussex Integrated Care Strategy with work underway to develop a joint Forward Plan which will support delivery of shared priorities. During the last part of 2022, schemes to support people who were medically fit to leave hospital into appropriate onward care settings were mobilised to help alleviate pressures on the NHS. ESCC teams also worked with urgent community response healthcare services to support people and their carers to remain in their own homes. Thirteen road safety schemes were completed during the first three-quarters of 2022/23 to improve road safety infrastructure. Nearly 3,000 people have also benefited from 'Bikeability' courses.

In July 2022, a new website 'The Stopping Place' – the Council's new one-stop shop for Gypsy, Roma and Travellers (GRT) was launched. The new website was co-designed to improve the educational experience of GRT families. Believed to be the first website of its kind, 'The Stopping Place' has been developed to encourage a greater understanding of school life and help families access the support they may need. The site also provides education professionals with valuable insight into GRT customs and beliefs.

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A new initiative to tackle fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency in privately rented households within areas of Hastings was launched in August 2022. ESCC was one of 13 local authorities to secure funding from the Government's Partnerships for People and Place programme. The funding will help the Council, local partners, and central government colleagues to develop new solutions which aim to reduce fuel poverty and increase the take up of energy efficiency improvements, boosting residents' health and providing environmental benefits.

Making best use of resources in the short and long term

The Council's budget and Council Plan for 2023/24 were approved at the meeting of Full Council on 7 February 2023. Councillors approved a £501m net budget for 2023/24 for the day-to-day provision of services. Spending in 2023/24 also includes part of our £725m 10-year capital programme, which includes investment in roads and highways structures, in reducing the Council's carbon emissions and in school places.

Following the declaration of a climate emergency in 2019 the Council developed a corporate climate emergency plan for 2020-22, which set out the baseline carbon emissions and the actions to be delivered. In January 2023, Cabinet approved an updated corporate Climate Emergency Plan covering 2023-25. The plan sets out a number of actions to reduce our carbon emissions including in property services, travel, street lighting and procurement.

The outturn for quarter 2 of 2022/23 showed a 29% reduction in carbon emissions, from the baseline year 2019/20.

The Council spent £295m with 908 local suppliers over 2022, equating to 67% of total spend. In addition, during the first three-quarters of the year, 10 contracts were awarded which were in-scope of the Social Value Measurement Charter. These contracts had a total value of just over £340m with almost £198m of social value commitments secured, including apprenticeships, employability support and support for the VCSE. This equates to an outturn of 58% of applicable procurement spend, against a target of 10%.

The East Sussex Pension Fund was named Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) Fund of the Year (assets over £2.5 billion) at the 2021 Local Authority Pension Fund (LAPF) Investments Awards (announced in March 2022). The award recognises the Fund's excellence in implementing best practice, leadership across pension fund operations, investment performance, governance and administration. In addition, the Fund was highly commended in the Best Climate Change Strategy category'.

In addition he said;

- i. the new Highways Contract has started and the new Contractor has made a good start
- ii. residents need to report all road problems, including pothole, to the County Council for repair.

6. Annual Report from the District Councillor

District Councillor Wilson said;

- i. there is a new administration at Wealden. The Liberal Democrats and the Green Party have formed an alliance and no one party has overall control.
- ii. they've made a good start, and at the first Full Council Meeting they agreed to ask the County Council to prioritise road repairs and looked into ways to keep Uckfield Swimming Pool open.

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7. Reports from Clubs and Associations

There were no reports from any Clubs and Associations on this occasion.

8. Open Forum

Mr Dutnall asked for an update on the Station Farm application. The application has been Approved and work is expected to start soon.

There was no further business and this meeting closed at 7.45pm

Signed: _____
Chairman

Date: _____