

East Sussex County Council Report to Bexhill Town Council – October 2023 Bexhill Conservative County Councillors Azad, Geary and Hollidge

Monthly report with website links included below for additional information.

Bexhill

Northeye

Huw Merriman held a meeting on 17 October with residents most impacted by the Home Office proposals on the Northeye Estate. Councillors were in attendance. Home Office announced it completed the purchase of the site and further surveys underway. We understand that the surveys and HO assessment of the site will continue until the end of this year or early in the new year. He has assured us that when he receives further news he will publicly share. To read more about his Northeye update, 17 October, see:

<https://www.huwmerriman.org.uk/news/northeye-update-17-october>

Bexhill Roads

At the time of writing this report - Storm Ciaran has created massive challenges, on top of what we already know re the state of our roads and highways and the fall out of the flooded drains, pumping station damage, sewage outage etc. The Highways team continue to work hard and reported on 1 & 2 November the excessive number of fallen trees, and flooding incidents and with emergency crews and tree surgeons on stand-by. If you need to report any emergencies call 0345 60 80 193 to be redirected to the out of office hours service. Bexhill and Hastings have been hit hard – an understatement we know. Keep yourselves safe out there and look out for each other.

UK Power Networks – important Storm Ciaran update received below:

‘As you may be aware, UK Power Networks manages the local power lines and substations which distribute electricity to over 8.5m homes and businesses across London, the South-East and the East of England. Storm Ciarán will bring with it strong winds and rain, and an amber alert has been issued by the Met Office. Our electricity network is built to be resilient but strong winds and heavy rain can bring down branches and trees, damaging overhead power lines. Where this happens we work to restore power as quickly and safely as possible. We have organised for additional staff in our contact centre and more engineers on the ground, particularly for Storm Ciarán, to be available to help customers whose electricity supply might be affected by the predicted weather.

Constituents will be able to find regular updates and information about individual power cuts on our website www.ukpowernetworks.co.uk . We will also be posting general updates on @UKPowerNetworks . Anyone experiencing a power cut should:

- Visit www.ukpowernetworks.co.uk to view our live power cut map, with details of individual power cuts or to report a power cut
- Call 105 free of charge to report damage to the network or speak with our customer service team
- Tweet @UKPowerNetworks to report a power cut or to receive updates

We advise people to stay clear of power lines and report damaged power lines immediately by calling 105 free from either a landline or a mobile phone. If they see electricity lines that are down or causing significant risk to the public they should call 999.

We provide extra help to customers on our Priority Service Register during a power cut. Households with people of pensionable age, those with a health condition, have children under five living with them, or someone in the household who uses medical or mobility equipment that requires electricity, as well as those who may be in vulnerable circumstances during a power cut, can join the register. You can find out more information about our Priority Service on our website: ukpowernetworks.co.uk/priority . Visit www.ukpowernetworks.co.uk or call 105 for any issues regarding your electricity supply.’
End of UK Power Networks update email.

Herbrand Walk and Sluice Lane

Cllr Geary has continued to have discussions and work closely with, Rother District Council officers, including the CEO, and the two district councillors, Pevensey Coastal Defence, Environment Agency and Police, as well as liaising with local residents and both beach and fishing hut owners and one of the key beach land owners. Everyone who knows Nuala will know this has been a commitment she made when first elected and is determined, with others, to see an improvement on this beach area, in terms of enforcement breaches, ie parking and overnight camping, anti-social behaviour, disrespect for the area and much more. Nuala continues to liaise with Highways, in terms of parking breaches on the road itself and repairs and Rother Officers and working together to find potential solutions. The recent critical beach work always undertaken by Pevensey Coastal Defence has meant movement of shingle has created a bank that is currently deterring some from thinking they can drive on. There is a determination to protect this beach, ensure it is able to provide a safe and pleasant space for our residents, visitors etc. The state of the road surface and overgrown vegetation on Sluice Lane, Pevensey, has also been reported to Highways.

Adult Social Care

New family hubs open in Eastbourne

Families in the Eastbourne area can now access a range of support services under one roof as two new Family Hubs open their doors. They are the latest of the 11 Family Hubs East Sussex County Council to open this year, giving access to a host of professionals. Visitors to the hubs can get support and advice from midwives, health visitors, Early Communications Support Workers, Early Years Practitioners, Community Engagement Coordinators and Early Years Keyworkers. Activity sessions will also give children, parents and carers the chance to socialise and support their children’s needs and development. More information about the Family Hubs can be found on the County Council’s [website](#). Read more about this story [here](#).

Day service celebrates 50 years

A special celebration event has been held to mark the Golden Jubilee of Beeching Park. This year, the service is celebrating 50 years of providing day services for people with learning disabilities. The park, which is the home of Hastings and Rother Day Service, has seen two monarchs, 12 Prime Ministers, and has delivered over 12,000 days of service. The site has the latest facilities and equipment for clients’ use, including training kitchens, activity rooms, a computer suite and a large garden for relaxation, gardening, and sports. The service opened on the Bexhill industrial estate in 1973 and became a day service providing activities and support to adults with learning disabilities in the late 1990s. More information about Beeching Park is available on the [1 Space website](#). Read more about this story [here](#).

Free maths courses available for adults in East Sussex

Free maths courses are being offered in East Sussex to help adults build their numeracy skills and to mark Number Confidence week, which runs from the 6th to the 10th of November.

The courses are being offered as part of a new national programme, The Multiply Project, to help improve people's confidence with numbers. 18 different maths and numeracy courses are being run at locations across the county including Plumpton, Hastings, Eastbourne, Lewes, Rye, and Newhaven. Courses are free and available to residents aged 19 or over, with beginner sessions to boost confidence and help participants build on the foundations of their maths knowledge, as well as more advanced offers up to a Level 2 Functional Skills Qualification. All Multiply courses are fully funded and accept self-referrals. For more information and to sign up to courses, visit the [Careers East Sussex website](#). To find out more about Number Confidence Week, visit the [National Numeracy website](#). Read [here](#).

Communities, Economy and Transport

East Sussex town to receive a Tree City of the World award

Bexhill has joined 170 towns and cities across the globe to receive a Tree City of the World 2023 award. Following a successful application by Rother District Council, the town is one of just 21 places in the UK to receive the accolade. Run by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, the award recognises cities and towns committed to ensuring that their urban forests and trees are properly maintained, sustainably managed, and celebrated. More information about the award can be found on [website](#). Read more [here](#).

County Council's support for Armed Forces wins **GOLD** Award

A commitment to support current and former military personnel and their families has earned East Sussex County Council national recognition. The authority has been given a Gold Award under the Ministry of Defence Employer Recognition Support Scheme, the highest honour which recognises the positive role employers play in supporting the armed forces community. To achieve the accolade, the council had to provide 10 additional paid days leave for reservists, and have supportive HR policies in place for reservists, veterans, Cadet Force adult volunteers and spouses/partners of those serving in the Armed Forces. Read more [here](#).

Project explores impact of art on youth mental health

An ambitious project to examine the positive impact of art on mental health has been launched in East Sussex. To understand the specific mental health and wellbeing benefits exposure to the arts can have for children and young people, a survey has been commissioned by East Sussex County Council's Public Health team as part of the Eastbourne ALIVE project. The survey will assess how Eastbourne ALIVE's artistic and creative activity contributes to children and young people's social, emotional and mental health, as well as their wellbeing. The information collected will be used to help shape future planning for mental health and wellbeing services in East Sussex. Working with young people, local cultural organisations, businesses, and the wider community, Eastbourne ALIVE includes public art installations, dance and music events, as well as school visits to Towner Eastbourne. More information about Eastbourne ALIVE can be found [here](#). Read more about this story [here](#).

New highways control hub to help plan work on county roads

New technology is now in place in the form of a control hub to enable East Sussex County Council's highways contractor to monitor activity, track work and find ways to improve the service. The introduction of the hub follows the council's decision to invest an additional £15.7 million to address increasing road damage caused by extreme weather. The money is paying for more patching and surface dressing work to bring roads in poor condition up to a good standard and protect them for longer. Reports of road defects can be made [online](#), where information about how East Sussex highways are managed and upcoming roadworks can also be found. Read more [here](#).

Governance Services

Council receives positive peer review feedback

East Sussex County Council has received a strong vote of confidence following a recent independent peer review. The council participated in a Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) with the aim of further improving the authority's work. The review is offered to all local authorities by the Local Government Association and included a three-day site visit in June 2023. The independent CPC report found the county council to be well-run and well-managed, open and approachable as well as a trusted and respected partner. It also noted that it was clear from the interviews conducted that 'the organisation does what it says it will do and does it well', with the review team finding a strong record of delivery across all key service areas. The final CPC Final Feedback Report can be found [online](#). Read more about this [here](#).

If town councillors need to raise any matters or seek further information on any of the above or want to raise any issues or concerns that impact on Bexhill, please let us know.

Cllrs Azad, Geary and Hollidge, as always, happy to provide more specific updates or a presentation at a future Town Council meeting, please contact us.