

Questions and statements on behalf of the residents of Bexhill-on-Sea:

Please read all of the questions and statements below, most of which are from our Town Council meeting on Northeye, others are electronic submissions from those that could not attend. All questions that require an answer from the Home office, Prime Minister, or Huw Merriman have been underlined so that they are easily distinguishable.

We look forward to hearing from you.

1.A member of the public asked.

- a) How many extra police will we see on the streets of Bexhill in September?

2.A member of the public asked.

- a) In the 2021 census, it was found that there were 43,000 residents of Bexhill, a percentage of those are young males. To add 1,200 more young males with no prospects and nothing to do will create loitering and will take up too much space. For example: in the shelters on the sea front.

A member of the public asked.

- a) I think we can afford to welcome more asylum seekers to England, as we did for the Ukrainian people. However, I think the camp is unsafe and not suitable. I think it will traumatize the people that have suffered terribly to get here.

A member of the public asked.

- a) In the last couple of years, we have suffered from issues from Southern Water. How will Southern Water be able to cope with 1,200 more people using toilets, showers and taps in Bexhill?

A member of the public asked.

- a) We have just over 200 people living on the Northeye estate. These are mainly families with young children. There are already issues on the Northeye site, and police on there. How can we cope with having three times the amount of the people here tonight (350) living on one estate. There are already issues on the site, and no one lives there yet.

A member of the public asked.

- a) How many people in this room oppose Northeye? Please raise your hand. (the vast majority of people raised their hands).

A member of the public asked.

- a) Thank you to the Mayor for chairing this meeting. Why is our MP, Huw Merriman, not here?

A member of the public asked.

- a) We are becoming a minority in our own country. The government are spending millions on people coming over. Let's fix our doctors, our dentists and our country.

A member of the public asked.

- a) We moved to Little Common because it offered a safe environment. The majority of people here are elderly. We have families and children here. Everyone is terrified. I'm worried for our daughters. Why is Huw Merriman not here? He has let us down. I am furious.

A member of the public asked.

- a) I am from the refugee buddy project. We are working in the rother area with volunteers, trying to create a culture of welcome. We do not want Northeye. We believe it is a human rights violation. It has been proven that refugee camps do not work. Most are evacuated. They're not humanitarian. We are open to working with other organisations to find a middle ground. Let's work in agreement to find a solution that works for us all.

A member of the public asked.

- a) My son lives 49 steps away from the Northeye gates. He has a wife and infant children. Northeye was proposed for one year, but the current backlog for immigrant processing is 15 months. Over 400 people have come over in one day. How do we know only 1,200 men will be kept there, will it be stretched?
- b) What are these men supposed to do all day, wander about? They can go wherever, whenever.
- c) Will we have 24/7 police and CCTV? My grandchildren are not safe. I hope the town council fight this with everything they have.

A member of the public asked.

- a) I live walking distance from Northeye. I have just moved in. I am just absolutely horrified that this is happening.
- b) When will this (Northeye) be happening?
- c) How are we going to stretch our services such as doctors and dentists?
- d) We might as well go and live at Northeye so we can have a dentist appointment. We struggle to get them as it is.

A member of the public asked.

- a) How much did it cost to buy the Northeye site?
- b) How much will it cost to remove the asbestos?
- c) How much will it cost to rebuild the site?
- d) How much will it cost to provide the services such as doctors and dentists?

A member of the public asked.

- a) This is directed at the Home Office and Huw Merriman: I don't care what your excuse is. You should be here. You are our representative.

A member of the public asked.

- a) This is a steppingstone for Huw Merriman to get to where he wants to be. He has no regard for his constituents. He has not done anything for them. If he wants to go

on to the Lords, he needs to do something for the people that got him in to begin with. If he doesn't want to attend meetings like this, speak to us and meet us face to face: he should be voted out. We need someone that will listen to us, speak to us, meet with us and do what they are told by the people.

A member of the public asked.

- a) I hope the council will do everything they can to stop this.

A member of the public asked.

- a) I live 300m from the site. There is nothing around us in terms of shops. Having 1,200 men walking around, getting buses will take up too much space. It's a shame Huw Merriman is not here.

A member of the public asked.

- a) To the MP, you represent a diplomatic community and country. What you have agreed on is bullying. We have had no say on this, no vote. This is happening and we are being bullied.

A member of the public asked.

- a) I believe the meeting today is meaningless. Its nothing to do with the Town Council, and we have no say in this. We are here to show we will not go down without a fight. This will cause harm to individuals and our community as a whole. We've seen the government abuse our rights during Covid. Power can be a good thing, but only when people are held accountable for abusing that power. There should be structures in place to stop people abusing their power. Little by little, our power is being taken away. We require communal action, including legal action. Recently, the De La Warr was given £19 million. What else will we be promised to stay quiet?
- b) Why are the Government avoiding us? The people of Bexhill are asking for Huw Merriman's resignation. We need to reject these illegal immigrants and stop this. We have to stick it to Huw Merriman quickly.

A member of the public asked.

- a) I live four doors away from the gates of Northeye. I am a widow, and I live alone. A year ago, a UAE employee came over to me, as we had a good relationship, and told me the site had been sold. He said that over 1,000 male immigrants would be coming to live in the site. They had been living in Luton, and have been up to no good, so they have been moved here. I fear for my safety. I told all the residents what was going to happen, and we investigated. Some of us got ahold of Cllr Connor Winter, who started an investigation as well. Cllr Winter sent 21 emails to various people of importance, such as Priti Patel. He only received 5 responses. I had a meeting with Huw Merriman and told him what I had been told. He told me he would also investigate, and I never heard back from him. Since this has begun, my house has been valued. It is now worth less than half of the original price. All of us in Bexhill are going to suffer.

A member of the public asked.

- a) I live on the Northeye estate, and I think we need to stand together as Bexhillians. I'm a father of three and a Husband. I'm concerned about the lack of communication from Huw Merriman. We are living in limbo right now. We can't afford to move out because of house prices. I travel a lot and I'm scared to leave my wife and kids when I do. I want to know when in history it has been a good idea to put 1,200 18-30 year old men with no prospects and nothing to do, together- regardless of where they are from.

A member of the public asked.

- a) I think Little Common is a wonderful place and community. I feel that these plans are a disaster for Bexhill. I think it's interesting that Huw Merriman says he isn't a NIMBY (Not in my backyard), but lives in Burwash. Why don't we move the camp to Burwash, then.

A member of the public asked.

- a) The issue I have with Northeye is the proportions of it, what is fair and what isn't. The site was a prison that held 200-300, now it is expected to hold 1,200 people. That makes it a concentration camp. I don't want to live in an area that has introduces concentration camps on my back door.

A member of the public asked.

- a) I live 60ft away from Northeye. My main concern is safety. We have young people and children here. Our properties are next to worthless now. We are native and we're paying the price. Our mortgages are high and our properties are worthless. Huw Merriman is being ridiculous. He can't even be here.

A member of the public asked.

- a) I don't care what everyone says. It does matter where these people are from. They come from medieval countries with no word of law and violence against women. I'm scared for the safety of myself and my daughter.

A member of the public asked.

- a) I have two daughters and a son. My 13 year old daughter goes out constantly. She loves to go out. Their freedom is being taken away by the government like it was during Covid because of their safety.

A member of the public asked.

- a) If you walk anywhere in this area, or Hastings and Eastbourne: there's homeless people. Why can't we turn it into a place for the homeless? Somewhere we can live.

A member of the public asked.

- a) Everyone is against the Northeye camp, but let's address the cause of the issue, and recognize that this is an issue caused by the Tory government. These are international issues caused by the government, so that refugees can't enter the

country legally. If this was funded to begin with, this wouldn't be an issue. The average immigrant actually brings in more tax money.

A member of the public asked.

- a) I was in a similar position when I was living in Hampshire. The only way to stop it was to do a Judicial review. Despite what everyone has said, the government may not take any notice. If you're faced with this review, you may need to raise a lot of money as the Town Council might not hold the amount of money to go to the High Court. Maybe with the help of the Town Council you can raise enough money for the review.

A member of the public asked.

- a) I have not yet heard an action plan. We need a group of people with skills to push this forward and drive it into action. Let's not be scared of using the words 'illegal immigrants'. People will be scared to go out. Put together an action committee with the skills to get communications with the media. We can move this forward without being scared of the government.

A member of the public asked.

- a) This circumstance will drive a lot of emotion.
- b) What is the planning process going to be?
- c) What are the legal issues with said planning process?
- d) The government policy that this is based on talks about reusing military sites. Northeye is a privately owned site. Why are we buying this specific site when there are other government owned sites that are ideal for this. There needs to be a joint, combined, all-council effort to be used as a single, coordinated point against Northeye.

A member of the public asked.

- a) We need an action plan, effort, something we can use because the majority of us feel the same way. I am more than happy to look into the potential of this. I'm not fully sure what the ownership of the site is, but there's a lot of reasonably wealthy people here that could maybe put in a bid to take over the land and give it back to the community. I will not see the beautiful community go to ruins because of youngsters potentially causing havoc. This is bound to be a complete mess.

A member of the public asked.

- a) We all feel deserted by Huw Merriman. Holders of public office should act solely on public impact. Huw Merriman didn't oppose this due to his image.

A member of the public asked.

- a) The thing that is concerning me is that last July, the land was bought for over £6,000,000. It's strange that they set the company up a month before buying it. All of a sudden, seven months later we find out it's a refugee camp. This is calculated.
- b) I used to go to the site regularly as a worker in construction, and asbestos is a big deal. It was buried in the ground. There is lots of testing that will go into this

asbestos contamination. We have a good way of life here and we don't want it to be disrupted. To let those people go in there; you've got a chance of serious health risks. No one should be in there. It will cost a lot of money to remove that asbestos, and it will not be done in September when the immigrants are due to come.

- c) Thank you, everyone, for coming tonight.

A member of the public asked.

- a) Democracy has gone and been taken out of our hands. We have to legally challenge this. Anyone with a legal hat that is interested, throw it in.

A member of the public asked.

- a) Why haven't the government done enough to return the illegal immigrants. It is insulting to the legal ones.

A member of the public asked.

- a) This is not a government emergency. It is failure to keep people out.

A member of the public asked.

- a) This site has historic value. A much better use of it would be a conservation site for Pevensey levels and the RAF site nearby.
- b) What security will be given to the children when these men hang around outside their schools? It's a known fact that it will happen.
- c) Will parents have to pick their children up from the school gates?

A member of the public asked.

- a) We have all had our voices taken from us. We have no say. This is a complete over breach of government. We will have no legal way to challenge this. Its like communist China. The refugees are voiceless just as we are now. We have no say in it. We need to say it is unacceptable to stamp all over democracy like this.

A member of the public asked.

- a) My heart goes out to the Northeye community. My daughter will be travelling to Lewes for college in September and I'm concerned for her. This is wrong for the taxpayer.

A member of the public asked.

- a) Will there be adequate street lighting near the estate so it's safer for residents?
- b) How will we keep the noise levels down near Northeye?
- c) Has the government actually reviewed the costs of all of this? It's a waste of money.
- d) Why have most of the asylum seekers passed through safer countries and come here?
- e) Huw Merriman is removing parts of his online statements.
- f) Once all of the hotels are cleared, will the refugees get off the boats and come straight to the camps?

A member of the public asked.

- a) How will we keep these people in the camps and not have them wandering around the country?

A member of the public asked.

- a) I heard recently that 56,000 people were expected to come over here in the next few months.
- b) What do young men do when they have nothing to do in life?

A member of the public asked.

- a) I'm new to Bexhill. This happened when I was living in France. The police had to go to all of the schools and escort pupils home. It got violent and there were assaults. Im sorry to the people here that have teenage girls. The police have to step up.

A member of the public asked.

- a) We all feel the same way. The government will try to bulldoze this through. We need to get a group together to take action. Lets try and find legal representation and fight this, or we will be pushed aside. There's no guarantee how many, or what people will be there. Please get together. The Northeye estate will be hit badly. There's no transport, no infrastructure. The area will suffer.

A member of the public asked.

- a) I am the closest business to Northeye. I am positive that this will destroy my business. Customers will not want to be there.
- b) Where are the families of these single, 18-30 year old men?
- c) Why are they coming here when they're in fighting shape and age and could go to the army?

A member of the public asked.

- a) There's a lot of confusion about who on the council is for Northeye.
- b) Who wants to stand up for the people and represent us?
- c) Let us know that you support us. We want your support and to know whether you're with us or not. We need your support to stop this.

Electronic submissions on Northeye:

A member of the public asked.

- a) The impact on a small town such as ours will be huge with an influx of some 1200+ young males of unknown background.

I am sure that left to their own devices & free to come & go from site until 11pm at night & with little to do that there will be issues with increased crime in the area. As a woman I am concerned for my own safety alone with the thought of these extra men in the vicinity.

We do not have the infrastructure to deal with this many extra people, as it is there are currently problems with our utilities such as sewage overflow etc..our medical services are stretched to the limit locally with hospitals in Hastings & Eastbourne

struggling to cope. I am not 100% sure but I had heard that there would be some type of medical services on site ?..it's a stark contrast to us Bexhill residents that can't even get a GP appointment ourselves, I was in a queue of 20 people this week trying to get an appointment & the best I was offered was a phone appointment in 2 weeks time!

Northeye is close to a residential area with many elderly, vulnerable residents & young families so it is just not suitable for housing this many men right next door & I would have this concern regardless of their race, creed or colour!

I have attended the recent residents gatherings in Bexhill & I am sure there are many more concerned residents that although can't always attend meetings do share this utter despair about how this will affect our community.

Bexhill is NOT the answer to this problem.

A member of the public asked.

- a) It seems evident to me that the safety and well-being of a huge number of young men is focused upon to the nth degree. But the right of local residents especially that of women and girls to feel safe in their homes and community has not been considered.

This overwhelming number of single men in a small community obviously presents a genuine threat.

A member of the public asked.

- a) It does not make any sense housing 1200 young men together near a housing estate and a small town.
Women and girls rights are once again bottom of any agenda. They have the right to feel safe in their town. This is undermined by this amount of young men being placed.
If it were families it would less threatening.
These young men should be housed far away from local communities.

A member of the public asked.

- a) we wish to voice our concern at the proposal to place such a large number of single males in one place, free to roam through Little Common and Bexhill. It seems like madness.

We are also very concerned for friends who live in the Northeye estate, for their security, their mental health, the loss of value of their homes.

It is a huge disappointment for us and for a large number of people in this lovely area that we are being forced into accepting this plan.

A member of the public asked.

- a) How many police will patrol the town and seafront if this goes ahead?
- b) Eastbourne papers say sexual assaults have doubled in the last year-is this linked to the asylum seekers in hotels there?
- c) Do they think that placing the asylum centre in a tourist town is a good idea? We rely on tourism and I strongly believe people will stay away this will then impact our local economy
- d) How much was the site sold for and how much to do it up?
- e) How long will it be open for?
- f) Why were residents and the only local Councillor ignored last May when this was first spoken about being proposed?

A member of the public asked.

- a) I'm am a resident of Pleyden Rise and in September my granddaughter who lives with me will start going to the nearest senior school which is Bexhill high - we are just out by about 200ynds from the free transport. Their current walk to school would take them past the main entrance to the prison and follow the fenceline to the back of the prison!

Can the home office/district council please fund a mini bus to collect children rather than them waiting at the bus stop. As residents we are planning to stand with our children at the bus stop and travel with them to the local schools to protect them, but think this in going to cause conflict and overcrowding. If any of the children are approached by migrants people will not stand by and allow this to happen. The cost of them sending police to monitor the situation would be much more expensive than providing a bus and much more pleasant for the children who will already be stressed from so many strange men on their estate just yards from their houses.

I think in general the bus stop will and services into Little Common and Bexhill need to be looked at. I posed this question to Huw Merriman at the residents meeting and he dismissed this by saying they would not have enough funds to use the bus and that they had their own transport. The residents are not convinced by this and want to protect their children and vulnerable residents.

I would appreciate any reply or comments to this as our MP has been very remiss in his replies to emails and is failing to represent us.

We are also still awaiting notification about the lighting and there is no evidence that a survey has taken place. The lighting on the estate and the prison needs to comply to with new rules regarding wildlife and safety of the residents considering the sudden increase and some lighting that looks 1960 era or before.

A member of the public asked.

- a) I attended last night's meeting that was arranged by the council, thank you very much for this, we now know that everyone has been left in the dark over this matter, my one question that I am afraid I could not make is, if this land purchase and its purpose has been done in secret from the council and the people from the local area, is this not a breach of any law to not have done this and does this give us a legal right to challenge this, and could we not get free funding for this as well as the

asylum seekers all do, there must be some protocol rules which have been not followed from the governments bank handed way they have done this, your earliest reply would be most grateful.

A member of the public asked.

- a) You have asked if there are any other points we wish to make. Last night's meeting was very well attended, but only by a comparatively small proportion of Bexhill residents.

The Northeye proposal has been kept very quiet by the Government until now. I am concerned that, since this is predominantly a retirement area, there are many people who are still unaware of what is proposed, as they do not have social media. My husband and I would fall into this category if I were not a Facebook user. Would it be possible to reach these people via a leaflet drop? I am happy to be part of this.

I have been involved in other local campaigns and have found that leaflets produced a lot of awareness.

Thank you for organising the meeting last night.

A member of the public asked.

- a) Why has our MP not been more vocal in opposing this proposal?
- b) Will the site have its own medical provision?
- c) Will the asylum seekers' backgrounds have been thoroughly checked before entering the site?
- d) Will any part of the site be used for detaining people or are they all free to wander through our communities at will?
- e) Will they be tagged?
- f) Once approved, will they be given housing before our local residents who often have to wait very long times for housing when they are in dire need?
- g) Will there be additional funds for policing and our security?
- h) Is this a permanent or short term solution for the town?
- i) Will Rother District Council or East Sussex County Council benefit financially or in other ways such as levelling up or Community infrastructure Levy? It has been said that Rother District Council will receive in excess of £3.2million for allowing this proposal to go ahead.

A member of the public asked.

- a) Is Suella Braverman & the cabinet aware that the sewage for the houses on our estate is collected at the site & then pumped back up to the main drains by an electric pump?

Last year following a very bad storm when electricity lines were brought down we were without any electricity of note & had a trickle of water coming through meaning we could not cook for 5 days & it took half an hour to boil sufficient water to make 2 mugs of tea.

Tankers were outside our house for over a week because when the pump is incapacitated they have to take the sewage by tanker to the treatment centre at Bexhill. A similar situation arises when we have a drought. Tankers have regularly been stationed outside our house to collect the sewage.

- b) How do they think another 1200 people plus staff etc will affect a system like that?
- c) Another query I have is that the buses stop running from Bexhill to Eastbourne around 8.00p.m. so how are these people supposed to get back to the camp in the evenings? Are they going to get preferential treatment over the local population?

A member of the public asked.

- a) What happens to successful asylum seekers, where do they go?
- b) Will they receive priority over our people who are homeless or are living in sub standard housing?
- c) Why is the government bending over backwards to give them so much when our people are suffering?
- d) They are draining our resources . We are funding people that are being forced upon us, why?

A member of the public asked.

- a) I fully recognise that asylum seekers need accommodation while their claims are being processed.
However to quote the Home Secretary “these people have values that are at odds with our country”.
Therefore should not be housed in small communities which puts local women and children at risk.
I would like raise concerns about the proposed 1200 young male asylum seekers - being imposed on this small community. Men allowed to roam free amongst the small local population.
Having read everything is going to be provided on site WHY are they going to be allowed to roam around in our community. They should be housed away from local communities until their claims are decided.
It is already apparent from other areas that local women are propositioned (there is a view British women will do this). An elderly couple were threatened at knife point by one in another local town, I understand it took four police workers to disarm him. These are a few examples of what fear the resident British women are in when it is proposed that 1200 young men (a small army) will be put in their area and allowed to roam free.
Some of these men will no doubt be genuine asylum seekers and are probably traumatised. That is no reason to put local residents in fear in their own homes.
Yes we need to help people who have to flee for their lives.
These men should be housed far away from local residents while they are processed.
If it were families it wouldn't be so threatening.
This duty of care must be applied to local residents as well as asylum seekers.
The big difference with these and the Ukrainian people is the refugees were women and children. Therefore not a threat.

This is real fear - please think again would you want up to 1200 young unknown men "with values that are at odds with our country " to be living next to women and children you know and or love?

The fact that this site had been part of the local plan for housing, some of them being affordable is yet another blow for this local community.

Please let us all live in peace and safety.

A member of the public asked.

- a) Where have these men come from? Straight of a boat or from hotels in Eastbourne and Hastings and if from Eastbourne and Hastings what impact has there been in these towns including antisocial behaviour

How are these men screened? Do have health checks so not to expose people to diseases that could cause serious illness or death especially in the elderly or people with underlined health issues.

Has the government considered the mental illness and anguish this is already causing effecting people's mental heath. I was under the impression our mental health was important to this government.

The impact these men will have on people. Whether it be from school children to the elderly travelling around Bexhill when being confronted by groups of men at bus stops, parks, sea front etc..

There will be situations where the elderly may get a bus once a week to go to town for shopping and socialising, but will be confronted with dozens of young men waiting at a bus stop which will seem threatening for the elderly. This will mean that they will not travel into town again, stay at home not socialising with others getting lonely and die!!

This government is supposed to be concerned for peoples mental health which is obviously untrue as due to this situation everyone in Bexhill is suffering with their mental health whether it be financial or medical.

Residents will be scared to enter Bexhill due to these young men taking over area's causing antisocial behaviour.

This will clearly effect the town centre with residents not going into the town centre eventually shops closing and becoming a ghost town with no visitors.

A total disgrace!!!

A member of the public asked.

- a) Why are illegal asylum seekers allowed to wonder around freely until 11pm?
- b) They knowingly come with bad press work illegally with false documents, paid in cash, paying no tax and abusing our generosity. Knowing this happens, why?

