ALFRISTON PARISH COUNCIL

[www.alfristonparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.alfristonparishcouncil.org.uk)

**CLERK TO THE COUNCIL**  33 Swaines Way

Mrs Victoria Rutt Heathfield

 East Sussex

TN21 0AN

Tel: 07936 904743

E-mail: clerk@alfristonparishcouncil.org.uk Monday 26th June 2023

**Minutes of a meeting of Alfriston Parish Council (APC)**

**held in the Alfriston War Memorial Hall on Monday 19th June at 19:15**

**Present:**

Cllr D Monteath-Wilson [Chair] Cllr S Daw

Cllr J Watkins [Vice Chair] Cllr S Rabagliati

Cllr F Baker Cllr A Harris

Cllr J Spring

**In attendance:**

Mrs Victoria Rutt - Parish Clerk

Approximately 28 members of the public

**37.** **Chairman’s Welcome**

Cllr Monteath-Wilson welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**38. Public Questions**

1. Mrs Hilary Rawlins asked about Speedwatch as it had been many months since she expressed an interest to the Clerk. The Clerk explained that she is awaiting the new training from Sussex Police but could get the new interested members registered and get them to undertake the e-learning package. Clerk will get this sent out this week. **Action 1.**

2. Mrs Hilary Rawlins requested an update on where the EA are at with obtaining permits to sort out the sluices. The Clerk explained that the location of the sluices have been sent to the EA but APC do not get involved in the permit process, however she will seek an update.

**Action 2**

3. Mrs Hilary Rawlins asked for an update on the Willows car park leaflet board. The Clerk explained that this is the responsibility of SDNPA and the new map has been approved. The Clerk will request an update from SDNPA. **Action 3.** Mrs Adcock said that she has been liaising with SDNPA about this new map and that she has had confirmation that the map has been produced and is sitting at Stamner Park awaiting a date for erection.

4. Mrs Hilary Rawlins asked about the newly planted trees for the Queens Green Canopy needing more water. The Clerk explained that this was raised this week as no one expected the heatwave and Mr Daw has kindly been watering the one on the Tye. The Clerk believes that Mr Larkin may have been watering them but she will seek an update on this. **Action 4.**

5. Mr William Meyer introduced himself. He is a Rodmell Parish Council and is standing for the SDNPA election. He explained that he is committed to this role and wanted to come tonight to show that he is keen to serve the people directly.

6. Ms Persis Cornet asked about the process regarding the resurfacing of Tye Road. The Clerk explained that money has been ringfenced over the last few years and the pot is at £20,000. A quote has not been obtained for some time but when it was some years ago it was around the £40k mark. The Clerk suggested that she could add Tye Road resurfacing to the July agenda so the new Council can decide how they wish to proceed. This was agreed. **Action 5**.

7. Mr Bruce Sutherland asked about the car park income and could APC start to receive some again. The Clerk explained that the car park used to be managed by APC hence why they received 50% of the income, however in April 2020 the management of the car parks were taken back by Wealden District Council and any income was revoked.

8. Mr Adrian Butcher reported that the high path going out of the village towards Winton Street needs a hard cut back. It is very high and covered in brambles. The Clerk explained that this is the responsibility of ESH and would report to them. **Action 6.**

9. Mr Geoff Watkins asked whether the Council has considered issuing permits for the 20 parking spaces on Tye Road. Cllr Daw explained it has been looked into many times but there have always been issues raised with who would be allowed to park there and how it would be enforced. It is something that could be linked to the agenda item for the July meeting.

10. Mr Beechey asked if there was an update on the broken bench that was removed from the Dene car park, will this be replaced as vehicles are now parking on the grass verge. Clerk will liaise with WDC. **Action 7.**

11. Mr Beechey asked if the flint structure within the Dene car park could be reported to WDC for some urgent attention. Clerk will liaise with WDC. **Action 8.**

12. Ms McBride reported that the pathway from Dukes Greens down to the village is overgrown and unpassable. Clerk will report this. **Action 9.** Ms Cornet asked would it be good for residents to also email about overgrown paths. Clerk confirmed that yes it would, and the best email is to send it to customerservicemanager@eastsussexhighways.com

13. Mr Bruce Sutherland asked about the drainage system outside the Willows car park as it got blocked on Sunday after a little bit of rain. Cllrs explained that Alfristons drainage system does not work well and is not fit for purpose. Clerk to liaise with ESCC again. **Action 10.**

**39. Apologies for absence**

No apologies.

**40. Report from Maria Caulfield MP**

Maria Caulfield MP was unable to attend the meeting, but she submitted a report which can be found in **Appendix B**.

**41. Report from Cllr Stephen Shing [ESCC]**

Cllr Shing reported that it was great to see such a good turnout in the audience. He apologised for missing the May 2023 meeting, his previous meeting ran over so he knew he would not make it in time. Cllr Shing welcomed the new Parish Councillors and thanked those Councillors who retired. The opening of the A27 East of Lewes improvement scheme to create safer and more reliable journeys between West Firle and Polegate was held on the 16th June at Drusillas Park. We were invited to take a tour of the works before returning to the park for a short presentation event.  Following the unveiling, the winning entry of the competition to name the new bridge over the Cuckmere River was held. They received over 500 suggestions, and they were delighted by the interest and uptake from the local community. The winner, Tracy Call Anthony coincidentally who lives in Willingdon and whom Cllr Shing has known for many years. The new decoration design pod at the Drusillas roundabout is very nice and fits in the environment very well. Thank you to Alfriston Primary School for their achievement. Alfriston traffic management proposal is little delayed due to the new highway maintenance contractor who has just taken over. Regarding the SDNPA nominations, the current chairman Cllr Vanessa Rowlands is standing for this election. She lives in Litlington, works very hard for the parishes and Cllr Shing asks that you support her.

**42. Report from Cllr David Greaves [WDC]**

Cllr David Greaves sent his apologies for this meeting. No report.

**43. Declaration of interests**

Cllr Daw declared an interest as she is a Churchwarden. Cllr Watkins is a member of AEG.

**44. Minutes**

Cllr. Watkins proposed and Cllr. Harris seconded a motion that the unadopted minutes of the APC meeting held on 22nd May 2023 were a true and accurate record. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Cllr. Monteath-Wilson duly signed the minutes.

**45. Finance**

45.1 To approve the Statement of Finances: June 2023

Cllr Spring asked if the direct debit for BT was the monthly cost. The Clerk confirmed that is the quarterly bill. Cllr. Daw proposed and Cllr. Rabagliati seconded a motion to approve the Statement of Finances for June 2023. [**Appendix A**]. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Cllr. Watkins signed the Invoices for Payment.

**46. To discuss and agree which two candidates to nominate for the SDNPA election**

*Mr William Meyer, candidate for SDNPA, left the meeting.*

Cllr Monteath-Wilson explained that bios for each candidate had been circulated to Cllrs ahead of the meeting and had also been shared with residents. Cllr Monteath-Wilson asked if any of the Councillors had spoken with any of the candidates. Cllr Rabagliati reported that he had liaised with Mrs Rowlands and would support her in this role and would recommend voting for her. Cllr Spring reported that he had met with Mr Meyer and that he thought it was positive to see him attend the meeting this evening as a candidate. Cllr Harris said he had not met with any of them but having read the bios, the two mentioned by Cllrs Rabagliati and Spring were the two that received his vote. Cllr Rabagliati proposed that APC’s two votes would be Mrs Rowlands and Mr Meyer. This was seconded by Cllr Spring. Cllr Monteath-Wilson checked with all Councillors present, all agreed. Clerk to post the voting card after the meeting. **MOTION CARRIED.**

**47. To discuss, review and approve the terms of reference and membership of all APC committees and sub-committees**

Cllr Monteath-Wilson started this item by apologising to Cllr Spring for saying originally that he could not sit on the membership of the Traffic Sub-Committee as the membership was full. The portfolio holder for Strategic Planning is shown on the membership of the terms of reference [TOR] for the meeting so Cllr Spring has now been appointed and will attend the next meeting.

The Clerk explained that since Cllr Spring was elected he has been reading the official APC documents and he saw that one of the Standing Orders states that the TOR and membership for each committee should be discussed and agreed annually. This was missed at the May 2023 annual meeting hence why it on the agenda for today. The Clerk explained that she had drawn up TOR for the Planning and Finance Committees and circulated ahead of the meeting. All Councillors confirmed receipt and agreed these TOR.

The other committee that APC have is the Traffic Calming Sub-Committee. The Clerk explained that at the meeting in May 2023, Mr Beechey asked a question in public questions about whether APC were going to do any drawings following the public consultation, ahead of the ESCC lead member meeting. The Clerk explained that this was a good idea and that a meeting would be arranged. The Clerk asked Mr Beechey if he would be willing to be a member of this sub-committee still to which Mr Beechey replied ‘if the Council wish for me to be’. This is what was said at the meeting, is on the recording and shown in the minutes which all Councillors had sight of and approved. Sadly, one resident who attended this meeting misunderstood this conversation as that the Clerk created a new traffic committee, appointed Mr Beechey onto it and elected him as Chair. This accusation went around the village resulting in a barrage of emails being sent to the Chair and Clerk questioning the Clerk’s ability to manage processes and questionned her integrity. Something which was very unpleasant and a waste of time.

The Clerk continued to explain that this is not a new Committee. The Traffic Calming Sub-Committee was set up in 2020. The TOR were written and agreed in August 2020 and all meetings have been held in public or on Zoom when in lockdown but the links were published widely. All minutes and linked reports from ESCC, if permission has been given to publish, are available on the APC website. The TOR has been circulated to all for comments.

Cllr Baker asked why it is a sub-committee to which the Clerk could not remember why it was considered that but it was agreed that moving forward it would be referred to as just a Committee. Cllr Baker stated that the Traffic Calming Committee membership needed to be discussed and decided in the council meeting by the whole council, for it to be in line with agenda item 47 and that the standing orders, has been omitted. Cllr Rabagliati explained that this Traffic Calming Committee was set up to aid discussions and to move things forward following the back and forth dialogue with ESCC. The make up of the group and remit is somewhat developed now and we are close to the point of ESCC implementation and the committee now need to look at what other agreed proposals can be moved forward and funding options discussed. It was agreed that the Traffic Calming Committee which is meeting soon, will discuss and agree their TOR and membership.

Cllr Spring raised concerns about who has voting rights at the Committee. The Clerk explained that the Committee have no voting rights, anything discussed by the Committee comes back to full Council for approval. Cllr Spring raised a further concern about delegation arrangements which should have come under review of TOR and membership at the AGM. Clerk will look into this and report back. **Action 11.**

The Clerk commented that although they do not have to be on the APC website, a resident has suggested that the TOR are placed on the website for transparency. The Clerk agreed and will action this. **Action 12**.

**48. Report on Highways and Twittens – Cllr Rabagliati**

Cllr Rabagliati reported on the following:

**Potholes**.  APC continue to report and make representations about the potholes and pavement surfaces in and around the village.  Cllr Rabagliati has noticed that a limited amount of work has been carried out by the new contractors, Balfour Beatty, in the last week or so and this seems to be to a better standard than the previous contractors but, once again, the identifying paint marks of potholes have faded and the contractors seem to have missed many that had been marked up.  The Clerk has a meeting with ESCC on this subject, together with other Clerks early next month.  Cllr Rabagliati will discuss the outstanding issues we know about with the Clerk prior to this meeting.

**Week long Road closure.**  Following businesses and villagers expressing concern about another extended road closure at the end of this month for the provision of a gas supply to a house in North Street, APC wrote to ESCC who have replied notifying us that the planned closure has been cancelled.  We do not know if or when the work is to be rescheduled.

**High Street Plan.** As previously notified, we have been advised that the ESCC plan for the village wide 20mph speed limit and other measures is to be presented at the ESCC Lead Member for Transport and Environment meeting in August.  We have heard today that it has been delayed as they are awaiting a new project officer to be appointed so it is now known when the Lead Member will consider this report. The Clerk is continuing to seek approval to publish this report, following the consultation, to residents.

**APC Traffic Calming Committee.**  The date of the next meeting of this group has been set for Monday 3rd July, 18:30 – 19:30 at which we will discuss the next steps for the work of this sub-committee.  The agenda will be published shortly.

Cllr Rabagliati reported that he is disappointed that, over the last few days, so much of the Clerk’s valuable time has been spent dealing with correspondence on matters surrounding the Traffic Calming Committee.  This is particularly frustrating for Cllr Rabagliati because it seems that an amount of incorrect information has been circulating in the village concerning the good work done over the last 3 years.  This committee was properly set up in 2020 in the wake of the ESCC report on their trial of traffic lights in the village, with many public meetings between then and now.  This has been an active and collaborative forum which directly led to the ESCC plan for the village, upon which the whole village was consulted some months ago.  As already mentioned, the work of this committee will continue in the hope that we can refine and progress the recommendations of the committee that were not adopted within the ESCC plan.

**49. Report on Allotments – Cllr Baker**

Cllr Baker reported that the allotments were strimmed recently and the difference it has made to the allotment site is excellent. Cllr Baker explained that she is in talks with the Clerk about updating the allotment contract, enforcing 3 month weed notices and looking at erecting new signage.

49.1 To discuss allotment holders access to the allotment noticeboard

Cllr Baker reported that plot holders have spoken to her about accessing the notice board at the allotments. The Clerk explained that this notice board is owned by the Horticultural Society whom have emailed today to say they give permission for access. It has been raised whether the notice board could be moved but this would need further discussions so it was agreed it would be an agenda item for the July meeting. **Action 13.**

49.2 To consider possible water harvesting at the allotment site

Cllr Baker explained that there have been discussions whether there could be systems put in place on the allotment site to harvest water, utilising the doctor surgery, the AEG shed and possibly the Pavilion. All councillors agreed this was a great idea and gave permission for Cllr Baker to look into this further and report back at a future meeting.

**50. Report on Public Transport – Cllr Harris**

Cllr Harris reported that nothing to report at this time.

**51. Report on Rights of Way and Countryside – Cllr Harris**

51.1 To discuss and agree whether to support the application for Channel and bank works on the Cuckmere at Alfriston

Cllr Harris reported that the EA have reported on the following works taking place at White Bridge and associated timescales:

*1) Removal of accumulated silt from the Cuckmere over a 500m stretch from the footbridge at Alfriston.
2) Repair of eroded tidal embankments over a 255m stretch from the footbridge at Alfriston.*

*A Flood Risk Activity Permit has been granted by the Environment Agency for both phases of the works. The work will start with an emergency repair of heavily eroded sections of the embankment that are at risk of failing. This will be done in August 2023 and will consist of only filling the holes in the embankment without bringing the levels in line with the other sections of the embankment. The work is expected to take a maximum of two weeks.
The proposed silt removal will be undertaken when conditions are favourable in February 2024. This expected to last a maximum of two weeks but could extend into three weeks if the tides are not favourable. The material will be used to complete the repair the embankments once it has dried. The complete repair of the embankments, which involve bringing the low sections to the same levels as the surrounding sections will be undertaken in August 2024. This will be completed in two weeks.*

Cllr Harris proposed that APC support this application. This was seconded by Cllr Watkins. Clerk to submit approval to the application. **Action** **14.**

**52. Report on Strategic Planning – Cllr Spring**

Cllr Monteath-Wilson reported that Cllr Spring raised concerns about the existing portfolios and was asked to bring a report back to the June 2023 meeting for discussion. Cllr Monteath-Wilson explained that Cllr Spring had written a very thorough report. One point was the fact that APC have a very old Parish Plan and a new one should be set up. All Councillors agreed that a group should be set up to move this forward, Cllr Spring asked for this to be called a working group. Cllr Spring asked if he could go through his report by each section. Cllr Monteath-Wilson stated he could discuss the Parish Plan part but there was no need to discuss Governance, Financial Regulations and Code of Conduct as they are compliant and any concerns that Cllr Spring may have can be raised at the Personnel Meeting. Cllr Spring disagreed with this as he feels that the Standing Orders are not being met. Cllr Spring asked for his report to be published with the minutes. The Clerk explained that the report would not be published as it contained factually inaccurate information. Cllr Spring corrected the Clerk and asked her to refer to it as a discussion document and not a report. The Clerk continued that the discussion document contains inaccurate information so would not be happy to publish it at this time, Cllr Spring commented he wished he had known earlier. The Clerk will be emailing Cllr Spring with the details of the inaccuracies next week. **Action 15.** The Clerk explained that a member of the public recently raised some concerns about reports not being published following the meeting which has raised an interesting conversation and will result in an agenda item for Cllrs to consider at the July 2023 meeting. **Action 16.**

The Clerk asked whether Councillors wished to discuss who would sit on the working group so a date could be arranged. Cllr Spring stated that he would like to draw up the TOR for this group so they could be discussed and agreed at the July 2023 meeting. The Clerk understood but explained this would delay the meeting being held as no APC meeting in August and unlikely to get everyone available. Cllr Spring understood that there would be a delay and was content with this. Cllr Daw explained that she is hoping that the Parish Plan would focus on what Alfriston want to see moving forward.

**53. Report on Tye and Recreation Ground – Cllr Daw**

Cllr Daw explained that she received an e-mail from a dog walker complaining that people are leaving dog waste bags on the White Bridge. The dog walker asked whether signs could be erected to show where the dog waste bins are. The Clerk did confirm that some time ago the EA were asked whether a dog waste bin could be placed on the land known as ‘The Spots’ but permission was not given. However, the Clerk will go back and ask again as it has been some time. **Action 17.**

Cllr Daw reported that the Shot Coffee house have once again been putting out their A boards despite being told in the past that it breaches the byelaws. Cllr Daw suggested they could put a sign on their double doors when they are open. The Clerk confirmed that they are aware of the rules and there has been historic conversations regarding the byelaw breaches with them. The Clerk will need to check the rules about them trading out the double doors. **Action 18.**

Regarding the complaint at the last meeting about parents parking vehicles on the Recreation Ground. Both the school and Cllr Daw have been monitoring this and this has not been happening.

Cllr Daw reported that an email was received about the issues in the turning circle and vehicles parking there. It has been raised whether the AWMH, OCC and St Andrews could purchase a sign to place on the Tye gate, only when events are being held, to prevent parking in the turning circle. All Cllrs agreed to this.

The email also raised a concern that the yellow lines in Tye Road have faded and need repainting. This will be raised at the July 2023 meeting when Tye Road is on the agenda.

Cllr Daw reported to the Clerk that someone had reversed into a concrete bollard, Clerk will look into this. **Action 19.** Cllr Daw ended her report with a plea if anyone would like to take on the small garden area at the top of the turning circle, please liaise with her or the Clerk.

**54. Report from Planning Committee – Cllr Watkins**

54.1 Applications considered by APC Planning Committee since last meeting.

**SDNP/23/02324/HOUS** Pailin House, 6 Kings Ride, Alfriston, East Sussex, BN26 5XP Objected

54.2 Applications notified or awaiting decision from SDNPA.

**SDNP/23/00730/HOUS** 1A Rose Cottage, High Street, Alfriston, BN26 5SZ Ongoing

**SDNP/23/00870/FUL** The Star Inn, High Street, BN26 5TA Granted

**SDNP/23/01040/HOUS** 23 Deans Road, Alfriston, East Sussex, BN26 5XJ Ongoing

**SDNP/23/01305/FUL** Saddlers House, High Street, Alfriston, East Sussex, BN26 5SZ Ongoing

54.3 Enforcement updates

No updates.

**55. Reports from Outside Bodies**

*55.1 Heartstart*: Mr Watkins reported that Alfriston don’t have a single responder in the village. There is one in Eastbourne but it would be better to have one closer. He confirmed that the NHS are advertising this role. He confirmed it is not a paid role and the criteria can be found on the Sussex Ambulance website. Mr Watkins confirmed that a defib has been given to the Pavilion to be put up on the outside of the building and one is due to be installed at The Star in due course. Mr Watkins reported that the defib within the school has now been changed for one that can be used on children from age 1.

*55.2 Alfriston Emergency Group*: Mr Steve Woodgate was unable to attend the meeting but he did liaise with the Clerk this morning to inform her that they have been preparing and servicing equipment, so it is ready when required. They also assisted with other local villages over the weekend who had been out of water for 6 days, so they brought water to a local farms to assist one lady with 20 horses and one with lots of cows in calf. They were a great support to so many people.

*55.3 Flood Forum* – no report.

*55.3 Neighbourhood Watch* – no report.

*55.5 Twinning Committee* – Mr Michael Anderson sent in the following report. *‘ACVTA has organised a schedule of monthly events for members leading up to our visit to Veules-les-Roses in September, including another great Quiz Night 25th August (for all-comers, not just members) in the AWMH. Hope to see you there*!

*55.6 St Andrew’s Church* – Cllr Daw reported that the bell ringing is on Mondays, please reach out if you are interested. There are lots of weddings at the moment, keeping the flower ladies busy with some amazing flower arrangements. On Thursday 29th June the funeral for Mrs Butcher is being held. On Monday 17th July the music festival starts.

*55.8 Cuckmere Buses* – Mr Price reported that passenger rates are increasing. Families are using the buses which is good to see. There are 2 new drivers and there has been a re-routing so the bus goes into the Drusillas car park now which is great.

*55.9 AWMH* – Mr Adrian Butcher reported that last month they announced that the AWMH is now a licensed wedding venue. Please have the hall at the back of your mind for any day time bookings and please refer people to the AWMH website.

*55.10 Speedwatch* – As always, if you can spare 2 hours a month to volunteer, please contact the Clerk to become a member.

**56. Correspondence to the Clerk**

Cllr Monteath-Wilson made a plea. The Clerk has received an extraordinary number of emails this month, the Clerk has limited hours and receiving 12 emails about one matter as well as other issues have taken a lot of time. Looking at these emails, a lot have been about one issue so perhaps if you are speaking to your friend/neighbour/society perhaps it could be one email with all your names on. Cllr Monteath-Wilson explained that if it continues then the Clerk will not be able to respond to all them, of which Wealden are aware and will be able to see the sheer volume of them. Concerns were also raised about the tone of some of those emails, they have not been pleasant and one questioned the integrity of the Clerk. Just be a bit more considerate please as she does a great job.

1. Clerk reported that two requests have come in. One about the mobile bar who has had permission in the past to park on the Tye and leave the bar locked on the Tye for the duration of the musical festival commencing on the 18th July. All Councillors agreed this.
2. The other request was for two morris group dancers; Longman Bag and Ditchling Morris to dance on the Tye on Monday 28th August 2023. Permission was granted.

**57. Public Questions**

1. Mrs Heather Hurst said that she does not feel comfortable asking cars to move in the turning circle so something needs to be done. Thanks was expressed for permission to purchase a sign, Cllr Spring suggested a sign using sturdy and waterproof material to which he knows of a company so he will liaise. Mrs Hurst said something really does need to be done about the yellow double lines. Cllr Monteath-Wilson asked whether APC could do the yellow lines? Clerk will look into the rules around this. **Action 20**

2. Mrs Amanda Sutherland suggested could ‘No Parking’ be written on the tarmac itself on Tye Road. The Clerk confirmed that this could be looked into but there is no enforcement. Cllr Rabagliati commented that it is an urban look. Clerk confirmed it can be discussed under Tye Road agenda item for July 2023.

3. Mrs Elspeth Farrar suggested with Heartstart, could the ambulance service come and do a training session as if it was well advertised it is likely to be a good turnout and may get a volunteer from them. Mr Watkins said that he could liaise with an Eastbourne responder to arrange.

4. Mrs Elspeth Farrar asked about an update on the postbox. The Clerk confirmed she had hoped to have an update but phone calls are not being answered. The Clerk can confirm that it is being repaired, just no date is known yet but Clerk will continue to call to seek an update on where they are at getting the permits in place in order to do the work. **Action 21**.

5. Mr Richard Price asked about the recent works undertaken on the other side of the White Bridge, who paid for these. The Clerk confirmed they came under SDNPA. Mr Price explained that the EA are very slow on giving their approvals.

6. Mrs Adcock thanked the Council for the use of microphones at this meeting as it does make a great difference.

**58. Date of next meeting**

The date of the next APC meeting is Monday 17th July 2023 in the Alfriston War

Memorial Hall at 19:15.

Signed:  Mrs Victoria Rutt – Clerk and RFO

**APPENDIX A**

****

**APPENDIX B**

**Report from Maria Caulfield MP**

Please accept my apologies that I am unable to join you at your meeting this week. I do, however, have the following updates for the parish.

**New Sussex Police Officers**

Sussex Police has now seen over 800 new officers join the force helping to keep our streets safer. Sussex has also seen the reintroduction of community policing through its PCSOs and the creation of the rural crimes team which should help residents in Alfriston.

**Speaking out against the end of day travelcards**

I have spoken out against the Mayor Of London’s plan to end travel cards for those travelling by rail to London. This plan would mean commutes throughout East Sussex will be worse off while simply heading to work or visiting the capital. With a possible increase of up to £9.30 a day, the growing cost of travel to London is a concern I know many have on their mind. Ministers are raising this with TFL to see what can be done.

**Planning**

Following on from last month’s discussion about planning, I met with the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Michael Gove, to discuss Wealden District council’s delay in providing a local plan. It is now estimated this won’t be in place until 2025 and this means every green space is at risk. The Local Plan will protect our green spaces while ensuring that our area builds the housing it needs preferably using brownfield sites. Without a local Plan, Lewes and Wealden Councils will not be able to stop the planning inspector from overturning their decisions. I have therefore asked the Secretary of State, given he has just put nine local councils in special measures for not having a Local Plan in place, to do the same with Wealden DC so that we get some control of planning in the local area.

**Flexi bus service to go live**

The new Flexi bus service, being funded by £41 million of Government funding has gone live across East Sussex. Residents in rural villages now have access to an on demand bus service where the county has being drawn up into ten zones. Residents can call or book online a flexi bus service within their zone up to 30 minutes before they want to travel and up to 7 days in advance. Bookings can be made online, using an app and by telephone. Residents can book up to five seats per trip, subject to availability, and services are running 7 am to 7 pm, Monday to Saturday. There is no timetable, and there is no fixed route within each zone, it is completely flexible based on demand. Residents can book for other zones too, but you will need to get to the zone for pick up and drop off. For more information, visit the Flexibus website https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/roads-transport/public/flexibus.