

ALFRISTON PARISH COUNCIL

www.alfristonparishcouncil.org.uk

CLERK TO THE COUNCIL

Mrs Suzanna Dry CILCA

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Alfriston War Memorial Hall

Old School House

The Tye, Alfriston, BN26 5TL

31st July 2025

Draft Minutes of a meeting of Alfriston Parish Council (APC), held in the Alfriston War Memorial Hall on Monday 21st July 2025 at 7.15pm

Present:

Cllr J Watkins (Vice Chair)

Cllr N Parkinson

Cllr R Embry

Cllr J Spring

Cllr A Harris

In attendance:

Mrs Suzanna Dry – Parish Clerk & RFO

There were approximately 11 members of the public present.

72. Chair's Welcome

In Cllr Monteath-Wilson's absence, Cllr Watkins chaired the meeting.

73. Public Questions

Jamie Mansfield introduced himself as a representative for the Alfriston Welfare Lobby Group and spoke of their concerns on traffic offences occurring in the village and the lack of enforcement of these offences. AWLG have a database of traffic offences carried out. The group are also concerned over the diversion route for traffic when Exceat Bridge is closed for works. Cllrs listened to and responded to the groups concerns, and are happy to receive details of their proposals. Mr Mansfield gave Cllrs a letter for APC to respond to. A copy of the letter and APC's response is attached. [Appendix A](#). ESCC Cllr Shing responded saying that the Alfriston Traffic Calming Scheme recently installed, took the longest to agree in his 25 years as a Cllr. ESCC can't solve all the problems and the current scheme is the best solution they can find. Exceat Bridge works, Cllr Shing advised that work is due to start in Spring 2026 and the bridge will only be closed for a period of 19 days which is when the diversion route will be in place.

The Clerk asked AWLG to send details of their database of traffic offences to Sussex Police, who are responsible for enforcing traffic offences, to Operation Crackdown; www.operationcrackdown.org. or ring 101. APC invited Sussex Police Neighbourhood Policing Team to the Parish Assembly back in April, and they stressed the importance of members of the public that witness offences report these onto Operation Crackdown as this is how they log, deal with and retain data on traffic issues. And will form the basis for any Police response.

74. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Monteath-Wilson.

75. Update from MP

James MacCleary's report was read out at the meeting and a copy is attached to the minutes. [Appendix B.](#)

76. Update from Cllr Stephen Shing – East Sussex Council

Cllr Shing presented his report to the meeting. A copy is attached, [Appendix C.](#)

77. Update from Cllr David Greaves - Wealden District Council

Cllr Greaves presented his report to the meeting. A copy is attached to the minutes. [Appendix D.](#)

78 . Declaration of interest

Cllr Watkins declared an interest as she is a member of AEG & Heartstart. Cllr Parkinson declared he is the owner of Grenville House and an interest in allotments.

79. Minutes

Cllr Spring proposed and Cllr Embry seconded a motion that the unadopted minutes of the **APC monthly** meeting held on 16th June 2025, were a true and accurate record. It was unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Chair duly sign the minutes as an accurate record.

80. Finance

To approve the Statement of Finances for July 2025 as attached to the Agenda. Cllr Harris proposed & Cllr Parkinson seconded a motion these be approved. This was unanimously **RESOLVED**.

81. Alfriston PCSO Issac Wood – Meet & Greet to be arranged.

The Clerk reported that our dedicated PCSO Issac Wood, will be having a 'meet & greet' session for Alfriston residents. This will be held on Sunday 10th August from 1.00-2.00pm on The Tye and will be a chance for residents to discuss local issues. As soon as Sussex Police release a poster for this the Clerk will distribute it. [Action Point 1.](#)

82. SDNPA Management Plan Survey

APC to agree response to the survey - Cllrs **AGREED** for the Clerk to complete the survey on behalf of APC using comments put forward by Cllr Parkinson and Cllr Embry. [Action Point 2.](#) APC's response can be viewed on the SDNPA website. The Clerk confirmed that details of the survey for members of the public to respond directly, had been sent out by Mailchimp and on the APC website. The link is:
<https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/partnership-management-plan/>.

83. Replacement Laptop for APC

Clerk to provide quotes and get APC's agreement for new Laptop (following last year's assessment) - The Clerk reported that quotes had not yet been received and will therefore bring this back to the next APC meeting. [Action Point 3.](#)

84. Report on Highways & Twittens – Cllr Embry

Update on Roadworks - Cllr Embry reported that the obsolete sign for single yellow lines outside The Star has now been removed. Additional road markings outside The Alfriston are scheduled to be completed by ESCC Highways this summer. It was brought to Cllr Embry's attention that the footway from the Willows car park to Winton Street is severely overgrown, this has now been reported to ESCC Highways. We urge residents to self-report these issues, as the more reports received by Highways the quicker action will be taken. The website address is: <https://live.eastsussexhighways.com/report-problem/report-problem-condition-footway>.

85. Report on Allotments & Recreation Ground – Cllr Vacancy

ROSPA Inspection of Playground – The Clerk reported APC have now received the report, a copy of the full report can be found on the APC website. In summary there were no high risks, four medium risks being:- the damaged gate, vehicle gate post wobbly- both of these are being repaired in August. New post on the fort needs rounding off and gaping on the fireman's pole – these have been reported to Wickstead to be actioned.

Update on removal of rubble from allotment plot - Cllr Spring reported he has started to remove the rubble and will continue to get this done. The Chair thanked Cllr Spring for his help in getting this sorted.

Action Point 4.

86. Report on Public Transport & Environment – Cllr Harris

Approximately 26mm of rain have fallen over the last 3 days, and rain has fallen on four other occasions since the last meeting of the Parish Council on 16th June. However, Southern Water have reported 'Genuine Discharges' into the sea at Seaford on 3 occasions, potentially affecting water quality – ie sewage. This is not strictly a Parish Council matter, but I do continue to snap at the heels of Southern Water. I receive the standard response of '*All the spills met the pass forward rate and were consented storm discharges*'. I have yet to discover what that actually means!

Not surprisingly, there have been no flooding issues in Alfriston Parish.

The highest temperature recorded in Alfriston since the 16th June was 29.1c on both the 22nd June and 1st July.

I have received no reports of issues relating to footpaths, but have reported – again – the state of the stiles on the footpath on the west bank of the Cuckmere between the White Bridge and the Stone Bridge. As ever, I invite others to report these on the East Sussex County Council website – to keep pressure on the authority. The footpaths at this time of year are of course a bit overgrown, but I have not come across any that I would classify as impassable – a few stings excepted!

As I reported at the last meeting, the two piles of spoil on the east bank of the river, just downstream from the White Bridge are scheduled to be removed in August/September

I have nothing to report in respect of Public Transport.

87. Report on Strategic Planning – Cllr Parkinson

Emergency Plan Update - Cllr Parkinson confirmed the main document and circular have now been finalised. Once Cllr Spring provides details on the administration for the emergency number, Cllr Parkinson will get the documents published. Action Point 5.

88. Report on Tye – Cllr Spring

To discuss and decide on repair to Tye Rd - Cllr Spring reported that the two other quotes requested had not come back yet. Cllr Spring will chase these up and report back at the September meeting. It is preferable that work does not commence until after September when tourist numbers reduce.

89. Report from Planning Meeting – Cllr Watkins.

89.1 Applications considered by APC since the last Planning Meeting:

Ref. No: SDNP/25/02047/LIS Grenville House, High St, Alfriston, BN26 5SY.

Replacement windows and double doors and various window repairs. No Objection.

Ref. No: SDNP/25/02046/HOUS Grenville House, High St, Alfriston, BN26 5SY.

Replacement windows and double doors and various window repairs. **No Objection.**

Ref. No: SDNP/25/01994/LIS The Bakehouse, Whiteway, Alfriston, BN26 5TS.

Extension of existing cottage incl. demolition of extension & enhanced landscaping. **Object.**
On grounds of visual aspect from public footpath. ensure the Dark Sky's policy.

Ref. No: SDNP/25/01853/DCOND The Sanctuary, Winton St, Alfriston, BN26 5UL.

Discharge of Condition 4 & 5 of Planning approval SDNP/14/02288/HOUS. **No objection.**

Ref. No: SDNP/25/01501/CND Pyewacket, 19 Deans Rd, Alfriston, BN26 5XJ.

Change of Condition 2 (Approved Plans) for SDNP/20/03656/HOUS. **No objection.**

89.2 Applications notified or awaiting decision from SDNPA - None

89.3 Enforcement updates from SDNPA - None

90. Reports from Outside Bodies

90.1 Heartstart - The leaders at Eastbourne have been contacted regarding three new volunteers. We may soon have a responder in the village. Another defibrillator familiarisation course is being arranged for September.

90.2 Alfriston Emergency Group - No report.

90.3 Flood Forum - No report.

90.4 Neighbourhood Watch - No report. Although weekly reports continue to go out through the Neighbourhood Watch e-mail listing.

90.5 Twinning Committee - No report.

90.6 St Andrew's Church - Cllr Harris mentioned the South Downs Summer Music Festival has just finished and they had record audiences.

90.7 Clergy House - No report.

90.8 Alfriston War Memorial Hall - The hall continues to enjoy a busy schedule of use by local clubs & societies and a full calendar of wedding bookings. The hall is available to be used as part of the August bank holiday Sunday events on The Tye. If anyone wishes to be signed up to the Alfriston Hub, please e-mail alfristonhub@gmail.com.

90.9 Speedwatch - On hold.

90.10 Events -

Sunday 24th August - Gayle Hudson reported the Church will be doing the usual blessing of the animals, which will be followed by a dog show and fete. This is a community event for villagers so advertising is being kept local. Stall holders will be supported with parking. A risk assessment has been given to the Clerk and public liability insurance is being taken out very shortly and a copy will be forwarded to the Clerk.

91. Correspondence to The Clerk – Asking for permission from the council.

Alfriston Dog Show – Sunday 24th August – Request for permission for AEG's fire engine to come on to the track beside The Tye and Clergy House (appendix B on the Agenda). Cllrs **AGREED**, as long as the vehicle is insured. Request for A board poster in Market Square from 3-24th August. Cllrs **AGREED**.

Exhibition of Sculpture's in St Andrew's Church - Request for A board poster in Market Square from 7-21st September. (appendix C on the Agenda). Cllrs **AGREED** to display the poster for two weeks only and on the proviso this is a non-paying event. The Clerk was asked to confirm this. **Action Point 6.**

Letter of thanks to Alfriston Village & Community - (appendix D on the agenda). – Andrew Geoghegan's e-mail thanking Alfriston village and community for supporting wounded veterans, through Kevin's Open Garden, was attached to the agenda. Over £3,000.00 was raised.

92. Public Questions

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.33pm and opened the floor to public questions. The meeting was then re-opened at 8.35pm.

93. Date of next meeting – The next monthly meeting will be held on Monday 15th September 2025 in the AWMH at 7:15pm

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.40pm

Please see Appendices attached below and/or on the website

Appendix A - AWLG Letter & APC's Response

21st July 2025

Chair of the Alfriston Parish Council
PO Box 217
Polegate
East Sussex
BN26 5TL

Residents of Alfriston Village
Alfriston Welfare Lobby Group

www.awlg.org
jamie@awlg.org

Re: Increasing illegalities of traffic in and around The High Street, Alfriston

To all that serve on the Parish Council

We write today as a large group of residents of Alfriston (Alfriston Welfare Lobby Group - AWLG), to inform and ask for the Parish Councils support, and also to have it minuted, the concerns of the increasing illegalities of traffic offences and their effect on the village and its residents.

These serious concerns will be taken directly to the heads of the local authorities with responsibility by AWLG. Once our concerns have been heard and considered in the Parish Council meeting, we would appreciate the Parish Councils support in this approach.

Our main areas of concern are as follows:

- The continuous mounting of the pavements along the High Street by through traffic putting residents and visitors to the village at extreme danger and risk to life.
- The increasing frequency of physical and verbal assault to pedestrians and public in vehicles from frustrated drivers.
- The increasing frequency of HGV vehicles using Alfriston as a through route illegally ignoring the (inadequate) signage and law.
- The increasing frequency of damage to property by illegally present HGV vehicles.
- The increasing frequency of damage to the villages infrastructure i.e. kerb stones, pavements, residents homes, listed historical buildings by congested traffic at all times of the day.
- The increasing damage to the attractiveness and reputation of the village in which we all live.

Whilst these matters may have been brought to the Parish Councils' attention before and historically, solutions may have been sought, the solutions that have taken nearly ten years to come to fruition are totally inadequate. The reality of the current situation is that the law is being broken and there is a clear risk to life. This cannot be ignored.

As the Parish Council will be aware, there are imminent works planned on the bridge at Exceat. We have been communicating with the Project Manager, Richard Killeen (communications attached) at Balfour Beatty. He has confirmed that Alfriston will be used as the diversion route for traffic (non HGV). We have had extensive discussions with Richard regarding the works and the diversion routes planned. The recording of an important telephone call between Richard and Jamie Mansfield is available. The work will be starting in September 2025 (imminently) and although not officially, Alfriston will be used as a diversion. The increase of traffic will be exponential and will increase the already dangerous situation. The project manager for East Sussex County Council, Karl Taylor for the Exceat Bridge works and Richard Killeen have both confirmed that the works will be for two years and have the potential to over run this timeline.

The AWLG is currently developing a website/online portal for its members to upload photographic and video evidence creating a timeline database of occurrences. The database already has a considerable amount of evidence collected by its members prior to the formation of the AWLG.

The AWLG will be producing a petition to go to all residents in Alfriston and concerning areas for signed support. The AWLG will be meeting with James Cleary MP for his support.

The Parish Council has seven days to respond with its willingness to support the said motion before the AWLG approaches East Sussex County Council, East Sussex Highways, Wealden District Council and South Downs National Park Authority, Balfour Beatty, Sussex Police, and details the legal requirements to act. The AWLG has legal representation to support its approach. We will also be making the local and national press aware of our efforts to help ensure action.

If the Parish Council is unwilling to support the safety of its residents and visitors by ways of taking action within the RTA 1988 with immediate effect, we kindly request its reasons.

Regards

Jamie Mansfield
Representing
The Alfriston Traffic Lobby Group

From: clerk@alfristonparishcouncil.org.uk <clerk@alfristonparishcouncil.org.uk>

Sent: 28 July 2025 11:44 cc: APC Cllrs

To: jamie@awlg.org.

Subject: APC REPLY TO ALFRISTON WELFARE LOBBY GROUP

Dear Alfriston Welfare Lobby Group,

Increasing Traffic Offences in and around The High Street, Alfriston.

Thank you for your letter (copy attached) which was presented to the Parish Council at the July meeting.

Alfriston Parish Council can certainly appreciate your frustrations as APC have spent over a decade campaigning on this issue. This has included collection of evidence, public meetings, petitions, community surveys and calls for ideas to improve the situation. These ideas were collated and presented to ESCC Highways who have trialled some solutions and carried out safety audits of proposals. The traffic calming measures that have recently been installed were agreed by ESCC Highways having met their statutory obligations, guidelines and safety criteria.

With regard to the lack of enforcement we agree this is a major concern and have raised this with Sussex Police. APC invited the Sussex Police Neighbourhood Policing Team to attend the Annual Parish Assembly in April to discuss this, they stated how important it is that any traffic offences are reported by the public to Operation Crackdown on www.operationcrackdown.org or call 101. This is to ensure that Sussex Police have a record of all offences taking place. At the April meeting Sussex Police advised that there had been no incidents reported, therefore they were unaware of any issues. We urge you to pass your database of incidents to Operation Crackdown, so that these can be logged with the Police and to advise your members of the importance of reporting incidents directly to Operation Crackdown, or to call 101. Our local PCSO Issac Wood is holding a 'Meet & Greet' session for residents on Sunday 10th August between 1-2pm on The Tye, where residents can discuss their concerns. The Parish Council will be advertising this throughout the village. PCSO Issac Wood can also be contacted via the Wealden Neighbourhood Policing Team at Hailsham on <https://www.sussex.police.uk/area/your-area/sussex/wealden/alfriston-alciston-berwick-ripe-and-chalvington/about-us> or tel. 101.

County Councillor Stephen Shing did advise at the Parish Council meeting that the Exeat Bridge will only be closed for 19 days during the whole of the works and at all other times traffic will be able to pass through. This will limit the amount of traffic being diverted through Alfriston to a very short window.

We hope you find the above information useful and wish the Alfriston Welfare Lobby Group every success in your endeavours.

With kind regards

Suzanna

For and on behalf of Alfriston Parish Council

Mrs Suzanna Dry CILCA Clerk and RFO

[Appendix B - MP's Update](#)

Local Roads - A259 Follow up from my question to the Prime Minister and safety improvements on Avis Road.

I was glad to present the petition calling on East Sussex Council alongside Vera Zakharov to immediately implement a safe crossing point on Lewes Road in Newhaven between Lawes Avenue and Robinson Road. This is following a girl being injured here. I raised this with the Prime Minister, who agreed to look into this personally, and I look forward to working with him on this. Until the work is done this will continue to be an ever-present risk.

After months of pushing, I'm really pleased to share that East Sussex County Council has agreed to reduce the speed limit on Avis Road to 30mph – and deliver new safety measures for pedestrians. This is a big win for our campaign and for local people who've been calling for action. The new plans include:

- A new pedestrian island to make crossing the road safer
- A new stretch of pavement linking to the southbound bus stop
- Better access for people walking to Drove Ponds and Drove Park

These improvements really matter – as they make it safer for families, older residents and everyone trying to get around on foot or by bus. Huge thanks to local Lib Dem councillor Corina Watts, who's been brilliant throughout – and to all the residents who raised this with us. Your voices made the difference. We'll keep a close eye to make sure the plans are delivered properly – and we'll keep pushing for road safety improvements wherever they're needed.

School Visits

Recently I have visited several schools across the constituency and saw all the amazing different things they are doing. I was honoured to be invited to Chyngton Primary School to celebrate their Parent Teacher Friends Association's (PTFA) success in securing a donation of £10,000 from the Morrisons Foundation. The grant funded a new Trim Trail which will be used for outdoor play activities at the school. This will be a fantastic resource for promoting active play and a healthy lifestyle among the children. Thank you to Sophie Carpenter the Community Champion at the Morrisons in Seaford, and the school for inviting me; it was a privilege! It was lovely to be invited to the opening of the Grow Community Garden at Willingdon Primary School. It was fascinating meeting all the children and learning about plants and their new garden, which will be enjoyed by pupils for years to come. I was also able to talk to them and teach them a little bit about being a politician. It was great to visit Seaford Head School and talk to the students there. I had the privilege of meeting some of the very switched-on history and politics students. We discussed (among other things): Changing the voting system, Lowering the voting age to 16, The sewage crisis in our local waterways. Finally, it was fun to visit Seaford Primary and play football with some of the year 5s. I was really impressed by the children's skill and their ability to work as a team! Best of all, I even scored a goal! Unfortunately, this sporting prowess came at a cost the next day.

WASPI

I spoke in a debate about the Women Against State Pension Inequality campaign (WASPI). This government, like the previous one, is treating WASPI Women atrociously. These women were completely blindsided by the government increasing the state pension age, despite having paid into the system their entire working lives. They deserve better than this, which is why I am campaigning for them to receive compensation for their lost years of retirement. Having campaigned for them for years, it is disgraceful that now the Labour party has the power to right this wrong, they are now doing the exact opposite and taking these women to court.

Personal Independence Payments Cuts

I have spoken in parliament against the governments proposed changes to welfare, in particular their cuts to Personal Independence Payments (PIP) This is something I strongly oppose. The government's 'tough choices' seem to only target those of us in society who are having the toughest time. This has been something I have been persistently raising in parliament by questioning the relevant ministers to try and get them to show some humanity. The government should be helping the most vulnerable in society, not picking on them. I am glad their backbenchers were able to make the government reconsider.

Local Government Reorganisation

There have recently been rumours about the redrawing of Brighton & Hove's boundaries. The government's plan for local government is centralisation by stealth. They are giving themselves more power at the top whilst taking powers away from local people here in Sussex. This is a dangerous step, which is bad for our democracy, local services, and residents. Our communities must not lose their voice. We've seen Brighton try to shift its problems onto us before — we can't let that happen again. I understand the need for Brighton to grow but going west makes more sense than going east.

Royal Mail Fail

I've criticised Ofcom for letting Royal Mail off the hook after they announced they'll allow second-class deliveries to be scrapped on Saturdays and cut back during the week. This will leave so many people across Seaford, Lewes, Newhaven, Polegate and our villages in the lurch. I have heard a lot from residents fed up with delays to their post. Local posties do a brilliant job despite leadership that keeps failing them. Instead of giving those at the top a free pass, Ofcom should be holding Royal Mail properly to account. People shouldn't have to just grin and bear it – Our communities deserve a reliable postal service.

Hyperemesis gravidarum

I asked the Prime Minister about Hyperemesis Gravidarum (HG). A pregnancy condition that can mean vomiting more than 20 times a day. It causes extreme physical discomfort, acute malnutrition, and severe dehydration, with profound and long-lasting mental health consequences. Fortunately, there is a treatment, Xonvea. An anti-nausea drug that is available through the NHS. Unfortunately, its availability is not universal, and women face a postcode lottery when it comes to access. I am glad the Prime Minister has agreed to arrange a meeting between me, campaigners, and the relevant minister so we can hopefully improve access to this life saving drug.

Media interviews

My question on Hyperemesis Gravidarum was reported on by Sky News. I was also on BBC South East talking about Special Educational Needs & Disability provision in Sussex and the South East. BBC Radio Sussex interviewed me about the proposals for local government boundaries where I set out my view opposing Brighton's eastward expansion.

Summer Tour

I look forward to visiting Alfriston on the 5th August and discussing any issues the parish may be facing.

[Appendix C - Update from Cllr Stephen Shing ESC](#)



Mayor Election Set for Next May

You may already be aware from recent news that the Government has announced plans for a new Mayoral Unitary Authority. As part of this change, the first election for the new Mayor is scheduled to take place in May next year.

This is a significant development in local governance and will have an impact on how key decisions are made across the region. I will share further updates as more information becomes available.

Alfriston 20mph Limit Now in Place

After a long and challenging journey, the implementation of the 20mph speed limit in Alfriston has finally been completed. This significant achievement follows years of campaigning, consultation, and persistent effort by many local stakeholders.

County Highways have invited key stakeholders to take part in a group photo for the official press release marking the completion.

I am delighted with this outcome and would like to take this opportunity to thank Alfriston Parish Council, both current and former councillors, resident groups, and the many residents who provided their views with supported this initiative. In particular, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Mrs June Goodfield for her tireless dedication and advocacy throughout the process.

Exceat Bridge Update

- County Highways are out to tender to seek a contractor, and hope to appoint a contractor by December
- A planning application for a larger site compound has been submitted to SDNPA
- County Highways are continuing negotiations with various landowners
- County Highways don't expect to hear the outcome of the CPO public inquiry until the autumn
- County Highways still anticipate starting construction early in 2026

I have repeatedly called for the proposed new Exceat Bridge to include a safe pedestrian crossing at Seven Sisters Country Park. This is a vital safety measure for both visitors and residents accessing the park.

I understand that the South Downs National Park Authority is currently considering contributing funding towards a visibility study, which would support the County Highways team in assessing the feasibility and design of such a crossing.

I will continue to push for this essential safety feature to be included in the plans.

Polegate 20mph Scheme Update

We recently met with County Highways officials to discuss the proposed 20mph speed limit for Polegate. I'm pleased to report that we have agreed to move forward with the main town centre scheme as a priority.

The request for a wider 20mph zone covering the outer areas will be considered as a second phase, following the completion of the initial implementation.

Linden Court to remain open – with reduced capacity

Following strong feedback from families, carers, and service users, East Sussex County Council has revised its decision on the future of Linden Court Day Centre. The centre will now remain open, though with a reduced daily capacity of 25 adults, reflecting current attendance levels.

Councillor John [Surname], a member of the People Scrutiny Committee, said at the meeting "As someone who supported the call-in of the proposed closure of Linden Court, I wish to sincerely thank all the service users, families, and friends who raised their concerns. I'm pleased that the Council has listened and responded by choosing to retain this vital service."

Financial Impact - The revised plan will deliver partial savings of around £145,000 per year. County Council will need to manage a shortfall of approx. £182,000 in its Adult Social Care and Health budget.

East Sussex County Council 2024/25 Year in Review

East Sussex County Council has published its annual report for 2024/25, outlining how it has continued to deliver essential services, invest in communities, and tackle financial and operational challenges. Despite another difficult year marked by rising demand and limited funding, the Council made progress across a wide range of priorities. This report provides an overview of the Council's key achievements, pressures faced, and the path forward.

Performance at a Glance

- ❖ 72% of Council Plan targets met
- ❖ 91% satisfaction with Early Help services
- ❖ £7 million distributed to support households with essential costs
- ❖ Over 23,000 potholes repaired and 117 road schemes delivered
- ❖ 60 new jobs created via local business support
- ❖ £2.7 million in increased income and debt reduction achieved for residents
- ❖ Carbon emissions 36% lower than in 2019/20
- ❖ Forecast budget gap of £70.8 million by 2028/29

Delivering on Priorities

The Council continued to work toward its four key priorities:

1. Driving sustainable economic growth
2. Keeping vulnerable people safe
3. Helping people help themselves
4. Making best use of resources now and in the future

Despite financial constraints, 43 of the Council's 60 targets were achieved and 6 are awaiting final data. This represents an improvement over the previous year, demonstrating continued commitment to supporting residents and communities.

Financial Overview

Like many local authorities, East Sussex County Council is operating in a very tough financial environment. At the end of the year, the Council reported an overall overspend of £21.9 million. Key cost pressures included:

- Children's Services: especially Early Help and home-to-school transport
- Adult Social Care: overspend of £10 million, driven by increasing complexity of need and demand
- Transport Costs: school transport alone overspent by £3.8 million

To mitigate further pressures, the Council applied tighter controls on recruitment and spending, reduced its capital programme, and drew on reserves. However, this is not a sustainable long-term strategy. A growing budget gap of £70.8 million is forecast by 2028/29, and additional government support may be necessary.

Supporting Vulnerable Residents

The Council remained focused on supporting those in greatest need:

- Child Protection: The number of children with protection plans dropped to 59.8 per 10,000 (better than target).
- Looked After Children: Slightly above target, but overall improving trends.
- Adult Social Care: All waiting time targets met, reflecting better triage and case management.
- Trading Standards: 290 interventions to protect residents from fraud and unsafe goods, including seizure of over £500,000 worth of illegal tobacco and vapes.
- Refuge Services: A new contract will provide 18 more safe accommodation units for domestic abuse survivors.

Helping People Help Themselves

East Sussex residents continued to benefit from programmes that promote independence and self-reliance:

- Early Help Service: 91% of families said the support they received led to positive change.
-

- Carers Support: 321 carers received short-term crisis interventions. A revised service will now offer more support through increased home visits.
- Financial Inclusion Programme: 170,000 awards made from the Household Support Fund, worth £7 million.
- Debt and Income Support: £2.7 million in income gains and debt reduction achieved for over 3,000 clients.
- Social Enterprise Programme: Launched in April 2025 to build resilience and reduce reliance on formal care services.
- Gambling Harm Prevention: First multi-agency workshop held; workforce training funded and ready to roll out.

Maintaining Roads and Infrastructure

Keeping the county moving and improving transport infrastructure remained a core priority:

- 23,000+ potholes repaired and 117 road schemes completed
- Maintenance on principal and non-principal roads met targets
- However, 31% of unclassified roads require maintenance—above the 25% target
- 350 road signs repaired and 683 markings refreshed
- Additional funding helped improve road condition following storm damage and severe weather events

Investing in Jobs, Education, and Skills

East Sussex continued to invest in economic opportunity and youth development:

- 60 full-time jobs created through local business support
- £382 million spent with local suppliers, 60% of procurement spend
- Over 1,500 students participated in workplace visits
- 400+ young people attended the iCan careers event
- Support for adult numeracy provided to 1,300 people through “Multiply” initiatives
- Attainment challenges remain, especially among disadvantaged and looked after children

Climate and Sustainability

Despite funding cuts, progress continued on the Council's climate goals:

- 20 energy efficiency schemes delivered in 2024/25
- 36% reduction in carbon emissions compared to 2019/20
- Ongoing support for nearly 2,000 planning applications with environmental advice
- Continued delivery of the East Sussex Climate Emergency Road Map (40% of Council-assigned actions completed)
- Progress on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, due by 2026

Efficient Use of Council Resources

The Council focused on using its resources wisely:

-
- Office space at County Hall was consolidated, saving £1.05 million
 - 163 teams moved to fewer blocks, reducing building use and carbon emissions
 - Transition to a new financial and HR system (Oracle Fusion) progressed well, replacing the unsupported SAP system
 - Sickness absence increased slightly to 9.21 days per employee, driven by seasonal illnesses and musculoskeletal issues

Preparing for Change and Devolution

East Sussex is preparing for the most significant local government reforms in a generation:

- The Government's Devolution White Paper sets out plans for new Mayoral Combined Authorities
- East Sussex is working with West Sussex and Brighton & Hove on a proposal for a Mayoral County Combined Authority (MCCA)
- A new structure would come into effect by 2028, with a Sussex Mayor elected in 2026
- The Council has submitted its initial proposals and continues to work with MPs and partners to shape the transition

Lobbying for Fairer Funding

Throughout the year, the Council worked to influence national decisions and secure better funding:

- Responded to key consultations on Local Government Finance Reform
 - Highlighted how East Sussex's unique needs (rurality, ageing population, deprivation) are often overlooked in national allocations
 - The Leader and Chief Executive met regularly with East Sussex MPs to advocate for residents
 - Despite this, the county received no allocation from the new £600 million Recovery Grant
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Looking to the Future

The financial pressures facing East Sussex are serious. While the Council continues to make every effort to manage costs, reduce spending, and find efficiencies, the gap between funding and demand is growing.

By 2028/29, the Council forecasts a £70.8 million funding shortfall, with reserves rapidly diminishing. If sustainable long-term funding is not provided, the Council may have to:

- Make further service reductions
- Use its remaining reserves, limiting response to future emergencies
- Seek Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) from Government, including possible increases to Council Tax above referendum limits

Despite the challenges, the Council remains committed to being transparent and honest about the choices it faces. It will continue to:

- Focus on supporting the most vulnerable

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- Invest in prevention where possible
 - Work with partners to improve outcomes for residents
 - Maintain strong financial stewardship and public accountability

In Summary

East Sussex County Council has delivered for its communities in a year of great challenge. From fixing roads to supporting carers, helping families in crisis, and reducing emissions, vital work has continued across every service.

As financial and structural reform loom large, the Council's message is clear: with the right funding, local leadership, and shared vision, East Sussex can thrive — but difficult decisions lie ahead.

[Appendix D - Update from Cllr David Greaves, WDC](#)

Report – Alfriston PC - Monday 21st July 2025

1) Rural Services Network and BT Digital Switchover

The RSN hosted a BT Digital Switchover Event in June.

This was an extremely informative session and BT's presentation by Chris Hockley might be of interest to anyone in the Ward who relies on a care alarm and the current analogue telephone line connection. Things are changing (going digital) and there is an explanation of the safeguards that are being put in place for residents. To access the video recordings, presentations and useful links from the event, please click on the following link: <https://rsnonline.org.uk/16-06-25-member-induction-and-bt-switchover-event> Chris Hockley's presentation is the 3rd item down accessible through the above link:

To request a BT Digital switch over, online event in your area, contact: East England, London & South East – Chris Hockley - Christopher.hockley@ee.co.uk

2) Council climbs to fourth place in climate rankings

Remarkable improvements have been nationally recognised for Wealden District Council as a climate action leader according to an assessment that took place between July 2024 and March 2025.

Climate Emergency UK is an independent organisation that supports and empowers both councils and communities to drive local climate change action. The organisation assessed councils across the UK on the steps they are taking to reach net zero.

The independent assessment evaluated councils on the steps they are taking to deliver climate action and consisted of up to 91 questions, across seven different key areas including planning and land

use, buildings and energy, and community engagement - each council was marked against the criteria.

Wealden District Council has made a 20% improvement since 2023, ranking fourth among district and borough councils in the climate change scorecards. This achievement reflects the council's growing commitment to addressing the climate crisis through clear policy, strong leadership, and meaningful local action.

The council also outperformed the national average in five out of seven categories, including standout results in planning and land use and buildings and heating, critical to long-term emissions reduction and climate resilience.

A Wealden council spokesperson said, "We're proud to see our continued efforts on climate action recognised at a national level. These results reflect the hard work happening across the council and the district to make sustainability part of everything we do — from planning and biodiversity to how we engage with our communities. It's encouraging to see real progress that benefits both the environment and the people who live and work in Wealden."

This recognition highlights Wealden's growing commitment to climate leadership, embedding sustainability into local policy and working collaboratively with residents, businesses, and partners to build a greener future.

For further information please contact:

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3) Emergency Planning

A cyber security exercise was held this week to test all of the council's service areas' Business Continuity Plans. The event was well attended with staff engaged in the exercise and it was a good opportunity to test resilience and those BCPs in the event of a cyber-attack.

4) SE Water – Newsletter – 4th July 2025

See link: <https://mailchi.mp/southeastwater/your-latest-news-from-south-east-water-13938659?e=6ceda631e9>

5) National Park's Local Plan Review takes another step forward

The process of reviewing the South Downs National Park's Local Plan continues at pace after more than 3,700 comments were received to a consultation.

The National Park Authority has been analysing all the feedback to the consultation that was held between January and March as it prepares for the next stage of the Local Plan Review. The award-winning South Downs Local Plan is being updated to ensure it addresses important issues such as nature recovery, climate change, affordable housing and helping local communities thrive.

Earlier this year more than 1,000 people visited 20 consultation events across the National Park and over 10,400 people viewed the online consultation. More than 1,900 individuals responded to the consultation, making 3,714 separate comments.

Following a meeting of the National Park's Planning Committee last week, the next stages have been agreed:

- In response to the first consultation, 28 new sites were put forward to the Authority to consider for development. In addition to this, further feedback was submitted regarding 38 existing sites that the Authority had previously excluded or rejected in the Land Availability Assessment (LAA). An updated LAA, outlining the Authority's assessment of potential sites for development, will be published this autumn and inform the next consultation in 2026.
- Further engagement with National Park Parishes will take place during the autumn about any proposed changes to potential site allocations.
- All the feedback so far will be considered as the Authority prepares the next stage of the Local Plan Review, with the second public consultation taking place between May and July 2026.

- Submission of the revised Local Plan to the Government's Planning Inspectorate is expected in the autumn of 2026 and full adoption as planning policy by the National Park Authority in 2027.

Tim Slaney, Director of Planning at the National Park Authority, said: "I'd like to thank every person and organisation who took the time to respond to the first consultation as we carefully shape this updated Local Plan.

"This Local Plan Review is the framework for the future of this incredible National Park. It shapes where and how development takes place, ensuring we conserve and enhance its wonderful landscape, wildlife and heritage, whilst enabling villages and towns to flourish. We've had a real variety of responses, with broad support for policies around nature, climate and community facilities, for example, while housing and viticulture attracted mixed views.

"We're working diligently and methodically through the various formal stages of the process and look forward to engaging further with the public, parishes, landowners and partner organisations."

The Authority will be preparing several studies and evidence documents over the summer to support the next version of the Local Plan going out to consultation.

All comments so far have been registered and any personal information redacted, and published to view on the consultation platform at <https://sdnpalocalplanreview.commonplace.is/>

Summaries of the feedback by policy and site allocation are also available to read at www.southdowns.gov.uk/local-plan-review

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