

Members' Update – East Sussex County Council – August 2025

Cllr Bob Bowdler - Wealden East Division - *"The Heart of Wealden"*

(Heathfield, Horam, Hooe, Herstmonceux, Ninfield, Warbleton & Wartling parishes)

LOCAL ISSUES:

UTILITY WORKS (Water) Returns to Punnetts Town: Works will recommence for this scheme with SEW starting on site from the 21st July setting up ready to commence the closures from the 23rd July on the B2096 Battle Road and Middle Lane through until 2nd September. A closure will be in place at the same time on Cade Street coming down onto and including Old Heathfield Road.

Heathfields NEW Youth Centre official reopening by Nus Garni MP scheduled for on mid September!

COUNTY REPORT:

Adult Social Care

East Sussex set for largest ever celebration for older residents

Countywide activities and events will be taking place across September and October to mark the celebration of International Older People's Day on 1 October.

The events, organised in partnership by the County Council and East Sussex Seniors' Association (ESSA), aim to promote healthy-ageing, social connection and wellbeing, and increase residents' understanding of how-to best support and care for themselves.

The festival includes a combination of 80 free and paid-for activities for residents over 50, offering a range of age-friendly activities such as nature sessions and walks, dancing, film screenings and chair-based yoga. Alongside this, a "First Time for Everything" programme will be running providing residents with the opportunity to try new activities and discover new interests.

Activities are taking place across East Sussex including Bexhill, Crowborough, Eastbourne, Hailsham, Hastings, Newhaven, Rye, Seaford, Uckfield, and Winchelsea.

More information is available [here](#).

East Sussex continues to welcome Ukrainian guests

Over 2000 Ukrainian guests have been welcome to the County since the Homes for Ukraine Scheme began more than three years ago.

East Sussex residents have continued to show their support of Ukrainian nationals, with over 900 households across the county providing safe and open homes for those fleeing conflict. Hosts have played a key role in supporting Ukrainian guests settle and establish their own independence.

To mark Ukraine Independence Day on 24 August, the county council thanked residents for their support, and reminded people that host families are still needed for those seeking refuge.

The County Council and its partners have provided invaluable support, aiding 865 individuals in finding accommodation and helping 420 people to find employment opportunities.

The scheme also supports guests with English language learning, housing and employment advice, education, wellbeing and provides additional beneficial activities for children and young people. The Council has also set up the Ukrainian Guest Advisory Panel, providing a forum for feedback.

More information is available [here](#).

East Sussex set for largest ever celebration for older residents

The Full of Life Festival is a programme of activities taking place in September and October celebrating the role older people play in our communities.

More than 80 free and paid-for activities for the 50-plus age group will be taking place over the next two months to mark International Older People's Day on October 1 - the largest programme of events since the initiative was established 18 years ago.

The programme has been designed by the county council with the support of East Sussex Seniors' Association (ESSA) to help older people in the county to make connections, understand how best to look after themselves and provide a range of activities that can boost health and well-being.



Starting with the first event on **September 1**, this year's programme features age friendly activities ranging from nature sessions, dancing, and art workshops to film screenings, walks, and singalongs.

Events to encourage healthy ageing include weekly wellbeing talks, seated exercise sessions, and chair-based yoga. Active Age Health MOTs for older people, which include balance and grip tests and information on how to stay active, are also available. More details available from our web site: eastsussex.gov.uk

Children's Services

Congratulations to East Sussex students as A-Level and GCSE exam results announced

Young people in East Sussex received their A Level, Technical and Vocational qualifications, and GCSE results this month.

98.1 per cent of post-16 students, achieved at least one A-level pass compared to 97.4 per cent at national level. In addition, 33.7 per cent of grades awarded were A*-A, a higher percentage than the national average of 28.3 per cent. For GCSE students, 63.1 per cent achieved grades 9-4 in both English and Maths.

The hard-work and commitment of pupils across the County was reflected in the results achieved, with appreciation being showed to the dedicated teaching staff who supported the students in their academic endeavours.

The Youth Employability Service provides information to 16 to 18-year-olds who may need extra support with the next steps: <https://www.cxx.org/services/youth-employability-service-yes>.

More information is available [here](#) and [here](#).

Communities, Economy and Transport

Hundreds benefit from successful apprenticeship roadshows

Over 900 people utilised the opportunity to access information on local job and training opportunities across two, free apprenticeship roadshows this summer. The events were available to young people, job seekers and those interested in a career change.

More than 40 businesses, apprenticeship training providers, and support organisations took part and provided attendees with information on apprenticeships from pre-employment schemes through to higher and degree level apprenticeships. The events were held by The Sussex Council of Training Providers, in partnership with, and financially supported by East Sussex County Council and East Sussex Careers Hub.

More information is available [here](#).

Herstmonceux Observatory's future has been secured for next decade

The historical observatory in East Sussex has been secured by the signing of a new 10-year lease which means that The Observatory Science Centre, a charitable venture run by Scientific Projects, will remain at the Grade II Listed Building of Herstmonceux Observatory site.

The science centre welcomes about 60,000 visitors a year where they offer spectacular interactive science & discovery among the domes and telescopes of a world-famous astronomical observatory.

More information is available [here](#).

Planning approval paves way for next phase of town scheme

The next phase of the Eastbourne Town Centre Movement and Access Package is due to commence following Council planning approval. The scheme which intends to increase accessibility and boost vitality in the town is set to begin in the Autumn.

The works, which mark the beginning of Phase 2 of a multi-phase plan to improve the seafront town will include the upgrade of Terminus Road, introductions of new pedestrian areas and traffic configurations, and – subject to funding – a new civic space.

Members of the public can keep up to date with progress by visiting <https://live.eastsussexhighways.com/highway-schemes/eastbourne-town-centre-phase-2>

More information is available [here](#)

Flexibus

We recently launched a marketing campaign to promote our on-demand bus service, Flexibus. It is an affordable, bookable, ride-share service that helps connect rural residents with shops, towns, and their local area within 14 miles of their pickup location.

The campaign uses an animation to explain how the service works and is running across social media, YouTube and Google. Supporting content includes ads on real time information boards, local print publications, radio ads and sponsorship, train station information points with location specific maps, a leaflet mailout, leaflets and posters in community spaces such as libraries, family and youth hubs, and [beer mats in 25 rural pubs](#).

All communications direct people to the new and improved [Flexibus website](#), with the animation as the focal point.

Those of you who live within the Flexibus service area will have received one of the new leaflets in the post. If you would like to have some leaflets or posters to distribute in your area, please contact Donnalyn Morris at: BSIP@eastsussex.gov.uk

You can also help support the Flexibus service by sharing posts on your social media channels using the links below:

- [Facebook post](#)
- [X post](#)
- [LinkedIn post](#)
- [Nextdoor post](#)

The main campaign ran until 31 August, with some channels such as train stations and radio ads running later into the autumn. It has been a successful campaign so far, with average weekly sign-ups and first-time bookings nearly doubling during the first phase.

Governance Services

Victory in Japan Day in East Sussex

Communities across East Sussex celebrated the 80th anniversary of Victory in Japan (VJ) day this month. Commemorated on the 15 August, VJ day marks the anniversary of the Japanese surrender on 14 August 1945, which marked the official end of World War Two. A range of events including services, ceremonies, and wreath laying were held throughout the county to mark the occasion.

More information is available [here](#).

For your info: **Meetings I attended in August as your County Councillor:**

4 x Weekly DCS/ADCS Briefing
Members Briefing on Funding Reform
Annual Foster Families Picnic
Herstmonceux Parish Council
Horam Parish Council
ESCC Cabinet
ESCC Governance Committee
Heathfield Parish Council

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. B. H.' with a stylized flourish at the end.

1/9/25