

## ESCC Report for Parish Councils January 2020

I would like to start by wishing everyone a very happy new year. I hope that 2020 is good for all of us.

People who struggle with their energy costs have been helped by a council backed Energy Supplier this Xmas. "Your Energy Sussex" was set up in 2018 to encourage more people to switch, and save on their energy bills. It supplies 100% renewable energy to its customers. The company is supported by authorities including ESCC, and the company runs a Fuel Poverty Fund built up by the surplus it generates. The company awarded a payment to their pre-payment tariff customers who need to access emergency credit on their account and go "off supply" when they run out. These customers received an automatic £20 credit towards heating and lighting on Xmas Eve, Xmas Day, and Boxing Day.

The latest contingent of young people voted onto the East Sussex Youth Cabinet decided their priorities for the next 2 years term of office. The top priorities are knife crime and the environment. A total of 21 young people aged between 11 and 18 have taken their seats, having been elected by their peers to represent their school, college or youth group. A national Make your Mark ballot is run by the British Youth Council to decide the top issues for campaigns in the next 2 years.

People in East Sussex are being urged to have the Flu jab. Flu is not the same as the Common Cold and the vaccine is different each year so has to be repeated each year. Catching flu can cause several weeks of debilitating illness and can lead to potentially serious complications particularly for the elderly and vulnerable. Nasal flu vaccination is recommended for healthy children in reception class and school years 1,2,3,4, and 5 who will be offered nasal flu vaccine in school. All healthy 2 and 3 year olds can have the vaccine in their GP Practice. Any child with a long term condition aged 2-17 will be encouraged to have the vaccine. Adults in the following categories can have the jab: adults aged over 65, adults with a long term condition, all pregnant women at any stage of pregnancy, carers, people in long stay residential and nursing care homes, those with obesity (BMI=40 and above) and care home staff, all healthcare and social care workers. Vaccination is the best protection against flu and people should be encouraged to ask for it.

Ore Library is being leased to Ore Community Library Group on a peppercorn lease from ESCC. This includes fixtures and fittings and a selection of stock so that the facility can be run as a community library. This will be just one of the new community libraries in East Sussex. Heathfield library will be closed for refurbishment work in January. This will include improvements to the childrens' area and a dedicated public computer for young people. The building will be made more energy efficient with a new heating system, new windows and LED lighting. The library which is in the High Street will be redecorated and will become a modern and more vibrant space for people of all ages. Northiam Community Library is moving forwards slowly. There are plans for a portocabin on the village hall site which will house the new library.

The decision on the closure of two East Sussex Primary Schools will be taken on December 23<sup>rd</sup>2019. All rural schools must be financially viable and there was a problem with school roll numbers at both Broad Oak Community Primary School and Fletching CE Primary School with serious financial

problems at Fletching. There has been a public consultation and all views will be taken into account. The outcome for Broad Oak Primary will be decided in March.

The role of the county council within the school system has reduced in recent years as national policy has moved to a school-led system. Responsibility for improvement rests with school leaders and governors. However, that does not mean that schools work in isolation. Apart from academies there are federated schools which work in partnership. There are Secondary and Primary Improvement Boards which share collective responsibility for improvement. There will be scrutiny of these Boards during the next year or two.

Angharad Davies      East Sussex County Councillor Northern Rother