

Members' Update – East Sussex County Council – September 2023

Cllr Bob Bowdler - Wealden East Division

(Wealden East Division:- Heathfield, Horam, Hooe, Herstmonceux, Ninfield, Warbleton & Wartling parishes)

Adult Social Care

Robotic pets bring comfort to dementia sufferers

A mechanical pet project to help people with early-stage dementia has been launched in East Sussex. The county council's RoboPets scheme aims to support clients living with the early stages of the condition by giving them a robotic cat or dog which acts as a positive distraction for them. The automated pets help with anxiety and ease the pressure felt by carers by providing companionship.

Since the project's launch in April, 50 companion pets have been homed across the county, with carers seeing positive health and wellbeing benefits for the people they care for. When the project ends in April 2024, the council will evaluate the benefits of the pilot scheme to establish whether the pets should be made more widely available to eligible residents across East Sussex.

More information about dementia support in East Sussex is available [here](#).

Details about local dementia services can be found on the [East Sussex 1Space website](#).

Further information about this story can be found [here](#).

Children's Services

New film highlights need for more foster carers

A powerful new film released on 26 September highlights the difference fostering can make. 'Any of Us' is the sixth film produced by a growing partnership of councils and children's trusts to promote local authority fostering. The film follows three people from different walks of life, who deal with everyday situations and realise that they have the skills to become a foster carer and make a difference.

The project is the largest public sector fostering film collaboration to date, with over 80 participants including East Sussex County Council. The film was produced by Reel TwentyFive and project managed by CAN Digital.

Help and advice is available to East Sussex County Council foster carers day or night, and every foster carer has a dedicated social worker who is locally based in East Sussex. An additional 24-7 telephone helpline is also available.

For more information on fostering with East Sussex County Council and to view the film 'Any of Us', visit the [ESCC website](#).

PLEASE WATCH THIS FILM, help spread the word, and change a child's life!

Communities, Economy and Transport

East Sussex County Council approves use of funding to support vulnerable households

At a meeting on 15 September 2023, the Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health agreed to approve the use of £2,000,568 from Round 4 of the Household Support Fund to provide support to pensioners, households with a disabled person and other vulnerable households between 1 October 2023 and 31 March 2024.

The scheme provides a further opportunity to extend the support to vulnerable households within East Sussex who are experiencing financial challenges.

The minutes of the meeting are available [here](#).

App and online platform to boost volunteering efforts

A new app and online platform designed to make it easier for people to volunteer has been officially launched by East Sussex County Council. The Tribe app was unveiled to voluntary organisations in the final week of September, with demonstrations by developer Bronze Labs.

The app enables those interested in volunteering to find opportunities with local groups and organisations. Voluntary organisations will also be able to use Tribe to manage and schedule their volunteer tasks and find new local volunteers. Rother Voluntary Action (RVA), Hastings Voluntary Action (HVA) and Wealden, Eastbourne, and Lewes Voluntary Action (3VA) are working alongside Bronze Labs to assist voluntary organisations in using Tribe, and to get their volunteering opportunities included.

Find out more about the Tribe project and download the app [here](#).

Eastbourne gallery exhibits the Turner Prize

On the 28th of September, one of the world's most prestigious art awards opened to the public in Eastbourne. The Towner gallery is hosting the finalists in the Turner Art Prize for the next 6 months to mark its centenary. The Turner Prize is the biggest contemporary art prize in the world, and only goes to one venue each year.

More information about the art on show is available on the gallery's [website](#).

Tree funding boost to council's environmental efforts

Funding from the national Local Authority Treescapes Fund will see more trees planted across the county as the council continues its efforts to address the climate emergency. Nearly £300,000 of funding from the Forestry Commission has been awarded to the county council, following a successful joint bid with Lewes District Council and Eastbourne Borough Council for tree planting projects.

The project will include the planting of up to 20,000 trees on the downland fringes between Eastbourne and East Dean and the planting of a number of trees in Chailey parish. It will be delivered over two years, beginning at the start of this winter, and will allow three years of maintenance to ensure the successful establishment of the trees.

The grant brings the total amount secured by the county council from the Treescapes Fund over the last three years to nearly £900,000.

More about this story can be found [here](#).

More information about the actions taken by East Sussex County Council to reduce its carbon footprint can be found on the council's [website](#).

Highway improvement programme gives county roads a new lease of life

Roads across East Sussex have been given a new lease of life thanks to an annual highways improvement programme.

Surface dressing has been carried out on 17 sites this year, extending the life of almost 30km of road by up to 10 years at a fraction of the cost of removing and replacing the road surface. An additional surface seal was applied to eight of the surface dressing sites where stress is caused due to turning vehicles or higher vehicle speeds. This will further strengthen the roads and help prevent defects, cracks, and potholes from forming.

More information on work taking place across East Sussex is available [here](#).

Thousands of children take part in summer reading challenge

Over 6,000 children have taken part in the Summer Reading Challenge, setting themselves the target of reading six books during the holidays. Throughout East Sussex, young people have visited the library and participated in dance duets, Lego workshops, archery and fencing. Children can receive their certificates for completing the challenge in school by [logging into their library accounts](#) and filling in their details.

School Crossing Patrols celebrate 70 years

Badges and certificates marking the Platinum Jubilee of the School Crossing Patrol service have been presented to lollipop men and women across the county. Provided by Road Safety GB, the badges and certificates have been distributed to School Crossing Patrols (SCPs) by the county council as part of nationwide celebrations to mark the 70th anniversary of the service.

SCPs have been helping children cross the road safely since the service was officially created by the School Crossing Patrol Act in 1953. There are patrols at 28 schools across East Sussex including in Battle, Eastbourne, Hastings, Robertsbridge, Rye, Uckfield and Wadhurst.

Read more about this story [here](#).

Apprentices invited to graduation ceremony

The commitment and hard work of local apprentices will be celebrated at a special graduation ceremony. The East Sussex Apprenticeship Graduation Ceremony on the 16th of November will celebrate the county's apprentices of all ages and levels, across all sectors. Apprentices who live or work in the local authority area of East Sussex and who have achieved their apprenticeship between the 1st October 2022 and the 1st November 2023 are invited to attend and graduate.

The event is organised by the Sussex Council of Training Providers with support from strategic partner and sponsor East Sussex County Council, headline sponsor the University of Brighton, and sponsors the East Sussex College Group, the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB), the South East Apprenticeship Ambassador Network, and Apprenticeships in Sussex.

Nominations are also currently being invited for four awards, which will be presented at the ceremony.

More information about the ceremony, the awards, and how to make nominations can be found [here](#). The deadline for nominations is 5pm on Friday the 20th of October.

Innovative scheme offering free contraception now available in East Sussex

An online service offering free condoms alongside sexually transmitted infection testing kits is now available in East Sussex. The existing home testing kit delivery service has been expanded to give residents the option to request a complimentary pack of 12 condoms alongside an STI testing kit. In addition, those under 25 who can access free condoms alone are also being offered a testing kit.

The East Sussex Public Health team partnered with Preventx, the largest provider of remote sexual health testing in the UK, to launch the scheme during the Covid pandemic. Following the success of the pilot scheme, the online condom service is now a standard part of the East Sussex sexual health system.

Free condoms are also available at sexual health clinics across the county and by post. The C-card scheme enables those aged 16-24 to access free condoms from a range of outlets across East Sussex.

More information is available [here](#).

Read more about this story on the [East Sussex News Room](#).

Health officials urge eligible residents to book covid and winter flu vaccinations

Health officials in the region are urging those eligible for their covid and winter flu vaccinations to book their appointments. The jabs are currently being offered to the over 65s and those who are clinically vulnerable.

This story was reported nationally. More information can be found [here](#).

For your information: Meetings I attended in September as your County Councillor:

ESCC 4 x Weekly DCS/ADCS Briefings
Wartling Parish Council
LM Education & Special Needs
Hooe Parish Council
ESCC Planning
Armed Forces Covenant, Newcastle
Horam Parish Council – DNA
ESCC Cabinet Briefing
ESCC HOSC
South East Region Childrens Safeguarding
Warbleton Parish Council
ESCC People Scrutiny
Turner Prize Opening, Eastbourne



Wealden East Division
3 October 23