

Members' Update - East Sussex County Council - June 2023

From Cllr Bob Bowdler

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

Tributes paid to long-serving Eastbourne councillor



Tributes have been paid following the sad death of long-standing Eastbourne councillor Barry Taylor.

Councillor Taylor was first elected to represent the Eastbourne Meads division at the county council in 2005 and served on Eastbourne Borough Council up until May 2023. As an East Sussex County Councillor, Barry was most recently the Vice Chairman of the Planning Committee and sat on the council's Standards Committee. He was also a dedicated member of the East Sussex Fire Authority. We extend our condolences to his family, friends, and colleagues.

Adult Social Care

East Sussex County Council Celebrates Carers Week

Between 5 and 11 June, East Sussex celebrated Carers Week. The week is an annual campaign which aims to raise awareness of caring, whilst encouraging people who don't think of themselves as having caring responsibilities to identify as carers and access much-needed support.

East Sussex County Council has a carers strategy which sets out a commitment to support staff who have caring responsibilities.

Support is also available for young carers across the county, with access to services providing support with physical and emotional wellbeing. [East Sussex Young Carers](#) provide support to carers aged 5-18, and the [Young Carers Service](#) support carers aged 5-25.

More information about support and resources for carers can be found [here](#).

Support Services available for LGBTQ+ community

Specialist services offering advice and support for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual community (LGBTQ+) are available across East Sussex.

Funding has been awarded to the council's Joint Mental Health Commissioning Team from the Sussex Health and Care Partnership to fund three advice services. The services will offer support and information to those identifying as LGBTQ+, or who are exploring their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

According to the 2021 Census, over 15,000 residents aged 16 years and over identified with an LGB+ orientation in East Sussex, and 1,640 residents aged 16 years and over indicated that their gender identity was different from their sex registered at birth.

Information about the specialist services, including contact information, can be found [here](#).

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

Children's Services

Revitalisation of Youth Clubs

The Council has obtained £8m in funding to provide a complete rebuild of the Heathfield Youth Centre and a full refurbishment of the Peacehaven Youth Centre (known as The Joff). The funding is time limited and requires the project to be completed by March 2025. The funding includes £400,000 in revenue to ensure continuity during the build phase.

New specialist facility approved for East Sussex primary schools

East Sussex County Council has approved the establishment of two new specialist facilities for up to eight pupils at Denton Community Primary School and Meridian Primary School respectively, with effect from 1 September 2023.

More information about the meeting where this decision was made can be found [here](#).

Additional support to become available for families in East Sussex through Family Hubs

Following the receipt of funding from the Government's Family Hubs and Start for Life Programme, families across the county will be able to access a range of support services through 11 Family Hubs which will open their doors this summer.

Professionals, includes midwives, health visitors, Early Communications Support Workers and Early Years Practitioners, will offer support from the Hubs. Sessions will also give families the chance to socialise and support their children's needs and development. The Hubs will run across 11 sites, with more support offered [online](#).

East Sussex is one of 15 authorities to be awarded trailblazer status, specifically focussing on parent/infant relationships and perinatal mental health.

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

Communities, Economy and Transport

Grant funded capital project agreed to refurbish youth centres in East Sussex

Following the award of capital funding, East Sussex County Council has agreed to redevelop Peacehaven Youth Centre (The Joff) and rebuild Heathfield Youth Centre in Youth Hubs. The Council was also awarded revenue funding to enable delivery of youth services from alternative locations whilst the construction takes place.

More information about the meeting where this decision was made can be found [here](#).

County Council agrees additional investment to improve road conditions

East Sussex County Council has agreed additional investment in highways to include maintenance for extra patching and drainage work and to provide early improvements and resilience.

Decisions on future investment will be made during the council's normal budget setting process, starting in the autumn. East Sussex County Council continues to lobby central Government for better and longer-term funding for road maintenance.

More information about the meeting where this decision was made can be found [here](#).

New flexible, on-demand rideshare bus service introduced

East Sussex County Council has launched FlexiBus – a new, flexible and on-demand rideshare service operating across the county. The service is available in more rural areas of East Sussex which are not served by a regular bus service.

The cost of a Flexibus ride is equivalent to a standard bus fare, capped at £2 for a single journey until the end of October or an adult day pass can be bought for £5. As FlexiBus is a ride share service you may pick up or drop of others on your way.

More information about FlexiBus, including details of operational zones, can be found [here](#).

East Sussex celebrates Armed Forces Day

On 19 June, the Armed Forces flag was raised at County Hall in Lewes to mark Armed Forces Day. The flag flies in recognition of the whole armed forces community, from currently serving troops to Service families, veterans and cadets. Armed Forces Day is an annual event which intends to raise awareness of the contribution made by the UK's servicemen and women, past and present.

Data from the Office for National Statistics from the 2021 Census for England and Wales suggests that over 21,000 armed forces veterans aged 16 years and over live in East Sussex, and the county has the fourth highest proportion of veterans (4.6 per cent) in the South East.

The council is also a signatory to the Armed Forces Covenant, a promise that those who have served in the armed forces are treated fairly and suffer no disadvantage.

Apprenticeship Roadshow events to take place in East Sussex

The Apprenticeship Roadshow is back for 2023. Two events will provide an opportunity for young people, parents and carers as well as job seekers and career changers across East Sussex to meet employers with live apprenticeship vacancies in their area. Attendees can also speak to advisers about which pathway is right for them, and learn from current apprentices about their experiences.

Each event will provide up to date information on apprenticeships, ranging from pre-employment through to higher and degree level apprenticeships. One event will be held in Hastings on 21 June, and the other in Eastbourne on 12 July.

More information about the Apprenticeship Roadshow and registration instructions can be found [here](#).

Book amnesty sees hundreds of titles returned to East Sussex libraries

Hundreds of overdue books have been returned to libraries across the county following a seven-week book amnesty earlier this year. The amnesty ran from Monday, 13 February to Friday, 31 March and saw over 750 lost books returned. 240 of the previously lost books were re-loaned to new customers during the period.

To avoid any future overdue fines, library users are reminded that borrowed items can be returned to any East Sussex library, not just the ones they were borrowed from. Most libraries also have drop boxes for out of hours returns.

More information about to renew borrowed items can be found under the 'Renew your books' section [here](#).

New app to support volunteering opportunities

The contribution of volunteers across the county is being celebrated with the development of an app to make it easier for people to find opportunities. East Sussex County Council is working with [The Tribe Project](#) on an initiative to boost community involvement across the county and support voluntary for the right roles.

The app is currently in development and will help support the work of [Rother Voluntary Action \(RVA\)](#), [Hastings Voluntary Action \(HVA\)](#) and [Wealden, Eastbourne and Lewes Voluntary Action \(3VA\)](#). As the project develops, organisations that have volunteering opportunities are being invited to add these to the app ahead of its release in the autumn.

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

For your information: **Meetings I attended in June as your County Councillor:**

ESCC 4 x Weekly DCS/ADCS Briefings
South East Region Armed Forces Briefing
Ministerial Meeting East Sussex Family Hubs - Hailsham
Official Visit to Sussex Cadet Force - Heathfield
SE Region Armed Forces meeting - Crawley
Childrens Services Achievement Awards
Horam PC
Armed Forces Service – Guildford (Armed Forces Week)
Flag Raising – Lewes
Whole Council Forum
Cabinet Session
ESCC Official (Peer Review) Inspection (2 Days)
Cabinet Briefing
MOD Meeting in Lewes
Cabinet
Governance Committee
Highways Briefing - Ringmer
Launch of First Family Hubs – Hastings
Hope to Harm meeting with Police - Eastbourne
Borough & Districts Armed Forces Champions



Wealden East Division 1/7/23