

Wealden Cabinet News 8 March 2017

[Enforcing on-street car parking](#)



Cabinet has agreed to work with East Sussex County Council to look at ways of enforcing on-street car parking in the District. The Council's free parking policy in existing town and village car parks will remain unchanged, but Cabinet members agreed that a 'do-nothing' policy when it came to on-street parking enforcement in town centres was no longer acceptable to the public. "The Cabinet decision means we will look at all the options to enforce illegal on-street parking including whether this is funded by Wealden or the County Council," said Council Leader Bob Standley. "We will also talk to the towns and parishes on

how any decriminalisation is introduced and the levels of enforcement required. I have been assured by the Chief Constable that if we choose to decriminalise on-street parking, the police will allocate resources in enforcing on-street parking during the 18 months - 2 years while it is being set up." Cabinet is expected to discuss a further report later this year. Members pointed out that enforcement measures may result in more car parking in residential areas which could lead to residents requesting residential parking permits in those areas.

*For further information, please contact Isabel Garden, Director of Environment & Community Services.
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[Rate relief helps Wealden's small businesses](#)



Half of Wealden's 5,754 businesses will pay no business rates in the coming year due to changes announced by the Government last year. Doubling the rate of Small Business Rate Relief from 50% to 100% and increasing the threshold at which this applies means all business properties with a rateable value of less than £12,000 will receive 100% relief, and those with a rateable value of less than £15,000 will receive tapered relief. The Council's provisional estimate is that 2,833

Wealden businesses will qualify for full Small Business Rates Relief, which will save them £3.4 million. The Council will be compensated for the loss of business rate income. "Small and medium-sized firms are the backbone of business in Wealden," said Councillor Graham Wells, Cabinet member with responsibility for Council Tax. "We also operate a Discretionary Rate Relief scheme which offers significant support to local businesses. We do not want to see the last shop or last pub in the village close." The Council's Discretionary Relief Policies have been worth over £235,000 to local businesses since 2015.

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Performance report



Six inward investment successes from outside East Sussex were highlighted in the Council's performance report for the first nine months of the 2016/17 Council year including Urban Jump, a trampoline park which has created 40 new jobs in Heathfield. Working with Locate East Sussex has helped create or safeguard over 135 jobs. Councillors also paid tribute to the efforts to improve residents' health and the work being done by the Council's Benefits team with the Department for Work and Pensions to ensure the smooth transition to Universal Credit across the District so that the most vulnerable do not lose out. The Universal Credit roll-out in Wealden should be completed by September 2018. Councillors also voiced their concern about the rise in reported crime and stressed the importance of investigating crime incidents when they are reported, wherever the location.

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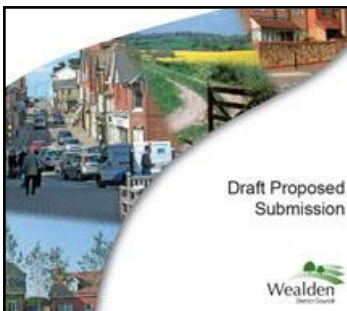
New Build programme

Wealden's Cabinet member for Housing, Councillor Graham Wells, confirmed that the Council will be going ahead with its New Build programme for the coming year after hearing directly from the Housing Minister that measures seeking councils to provide compensation to housing associations, through the sale of their own high-value council houses, have been delayed for a year. The Council's Housing Revenue Account had been affected by Elizabeth Court being vacant pending redevelopment but this has been offset by an easement payment to enable a new development and income from photovoltaic panels which had been installed in Council properties. Cabinet thanked Head of Housing Amanda Hodge, who is leaving the Council to become a director of Sussex Housing & Care. The new Head of Housing, Andy Vincent, will take up his post in April.

*For further information, please contact Isabel Garden, Director of Environment & Community Services.
Tel: 01892 602404 or email: isabel.garden@wealden.gov.uk*

Planning News

Wealden Local Plan Draft Proposed Submission



The number of new homes proposed under the next stage of the Wealden Local Plan, the draft Proposed Submission is 11,456 and the plan period will run to 2028. As 7,392 of these have already been built or granted planning permission since 2013, the total number of additional new homes to be built by the end of the 2028 will be 4,064. Three years of monitoring carried out in the Ashdown Forest Special Area of Conservation has shown that the amount of nitrogen deposition from motor vehicles is already exceeding levels that can cause ecological damage to the heathland. The numbers proposed are expected to have a neutral effect across the Forest Special Area of Conservation, and will enable the Local Plan to meet national and international legal obligations. Councillor Ann Newton, Cabinet member for Planning and Development, said: "The majority of housing will be distributed away from Ashdown Forest to the south of the District. The revised plan continues to provide employment opportunities to support both existing housing and new homes so that fewer people have to travel outside of the District to work. The Draft Submission will include 38,600 square metres of employment land centred about the A22 which is already becoming an attractive location for new and growing businesses. New housing development will still be planned for towns and villages in the north of the District where resultant traffic can access Tunbridge Wells using alternative routes to the A26."

*For further information please contact Marina Brigginsshaw, Head of Planning Policy & Economic Development.
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Compensation measures and new development



As a result of the monitoring of nitrogen deposition around the Ashdown Forest Special Area of Conservation, new planning applications within the District will need to show that they will not generate any additional vehicle movements in order to be considered for approval. The nitrogen deposition levels are affected by traffic movements originating from across the whole District and beyond, so this will apply to development in the south of the District as well as the north. In line the duty to co-operate on Local Plan issues, we have informed Mid Sussex District Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, Eastbourne Borough Council, Rother District Council and

Lewes District Council about the action Wealden District Council is taking. Existing planning permissions are not affected and can proceed. The compensation measures the Council will be seeking are to provide comparable habitat which can be restored to lowland heath to compensate for the roadside areas affected by nitrogen deposition. We are working with Natural England on this. Further adjustments to our approach may be necessary if the evidence provided by the ongoing nitrogen monitoring suggests they are needed. All types of new planning application will be affected with the exception of domestic extensions, adverts, most agricultural applications, telecommunication installations, local retail and some brownfield sites and / or where there are existing vehicle movements greater than what is proposed in the application. Any potential applicants are advised to contact the planning service so that planning officers can give an early indication of the likely success of a development proposal.

*For further information please contact Kelvin Williams, Head of Planning and Environmental Services.
Tel: 01892 602484 or email kelvin.williams@wealden.gov.uk*

Wealden spring-cleaned



Nearly 25 community groups from across Wealden took part in the *Great Wealden Spring Clean* earlier this month and indications are that even more litter was collected than in last year's *Clean for the Queen* event. "This has been a fantastic response," said Councillor Roy Galley, Cabinet member with responsibility for Waste Management. "We will be organising another Wealden Spring Clean next year." Groups from Polegate, Crowborough, Chiddingly, Maresfield, Ripe and Chalvington, Arlington, Hooe, Heathfield, Uckfield, Berwick, Fletching, Hartfield, Laughton, Hailsham, Rushlake Green, Five Ash Down, Wadhurst, Pevensey, Halland and the Dickers took part. A total of 24

different organisations were involved including parish and town councils.

*For further information please contact Chris Bone, Waste Manager (Policy)
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The Year of Coffee, Cakes and Computers



Wealden District Council's popular *Coffee, Cake and, Computers* FREE digital skills events are returning throughout 2017 starting at the Luxford Centre in Uckfield from 10am to 12pm on Wednesday 29 March. These drop-in events are for anyone interested in developing their computer skills or wanting help to get online. Everyone is welcome. There's no need to book, just drop in. Bring your own laptop or tablet - or try out a tablet which will be available for use on the day. As well as the Uckfield event, other free *Coffee, Cake and Computers*

mornings scheduled for 2017 are:

- Herstmonceux – 26 April, Herstmonceux Village Hall, 10am-12pm
- East Dean – 21 September, East Dean Village Hall, 10am-12pm
- Heathfield – 8 November, State Hall, 10am-12pm

*For further information please contact Alex Colbran, Policy Officer.
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[Uckfield Fire Station hosts Fun & Safety](#)



After the success of Wealden District Council's ever-popular Fun and Safety Day at Hailsham last month, *Fun & Safety* returns again, this time to Uckfield Fire Station on Wednesday 5 April and Crowborough Fire Station on Wednesday 12 April. Both events run from 10:00am to 1pm. "*Fun and Safety* is a great morning out, educational and enjoyable, and always incredibly popular. Last year in Uckfield we had over 700 people attend," said Councillor Claire Dowling Cabinet member for Public Health and Community Safety. "The children get to learn about personal safety, the prevention of home accidents, fire prevention, food safety and community safety, all whilst having a good time. Fun and Safety is free and everyone is welcome, although children under 10 should be accompanied and supervised by an adult. East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service is also offering the chance to sign up for a home fire safety check and I highly recommend that parents attending do so." Crowborough Fire Station will host the next *Fun & Safety Day* event on Wednesday 12 April. More information on the Active Wealden Facebook page, the Wealden District Council website, www.wealden.gov.uk, Twitter accounts for Wealden (@wealdendistrict) and Wealden Economy Tourism and Communities (@wealdenetc) or by telephoning 01323 443322.

*For further information please contact Sophie Hepworth, Community & Regeneration Officer.
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A date for your diary



Parish and town councils are invited to send a representative to the First Anniversary event of the Wealden Dementia Action Alliance. It is taking place on 16 May between 2-4pm in the Hailsham Civic Community Hall, and will provide opportunities to learn about how to make our communities safer, friendlier places for people with dementia. Following the Alliance's launch in 2016 with the help of the Wealden Strategic Partnership's Strong Resilient Communities Fund, a number of dementia support groups have been set up and regular events arranged included Dementia-Friendly film screenings at Hailsham Pavilion (Please note: the 24 March screening of *Top Hat* and the 21 April screening of *Easter Parade* have been postponed due to the road works in George Street, Hailsham). Find out more about the work of the Wealden Dementia Alliance on [the Council's website](#). As part of the initiative, the Council's Hailsham office building and its retirement living courts are being assessed for their dementia-friendliness including signage, design and floor coverings.

*For further information please contact Debbie Peters, Equalities Officer.
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