

East Sussex County Council report for Whatlington Parish Assembly

As usual I shall start with the money. It has been another tough year for the County Council. This is especially true in Children's Services where much of the budget is demand led; for example if a child needs looking after that is what happens and they often have complex needs. The same is true for unaccompanied asylum seeking children – the number changes but is often around 70. The County Council is part of a national transfer scheme and these young people can be planned for but the number arriving via Newhaven etc are an unknown quantity. Children's Services is just an example as all the County's services are stretched. Council Tax will be going up to the maximum allowed by government before the need for a referendum ie 4.99%. This is 2.99% of "normal" taxation plus 2% allowed for Adult Social Care.

From the next financial year the highways contractor will change to Balfour Beatty and hopefully they will adopt a more pragmatic approach to potholes and fill those around the one which actually meets the criteria. Thanks to the weather we are suffering from a great many more than usual but 6,000 have been mended since the beginning of January. At the time of writing there are 1,7800 in the system awaiting attention with 23 gangs busy repairing. When the weather makes this work impossible the gangs are redeployed gritting pavements, if required.

The County Council has been awarded £41m (half of the amount of the bid) to improve us services. I hope that this will be used to improve connectivity in the rural areas and not used where there are already adequate bus services or rail connections.

The County Council is working hard towards its target of being carbon neutral by 2050 and is planning to install Electric Vehicle Charging Points on street. Some Local Authorities use lamp columns for this but this is only possible where they are at the edge of the pavement, otherwise the County Council is expecting to place them outside houses which do not have drives. As neither the road nor any charging point will be specific to the house it is outside I can foresee problems!

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