

ESCC annual report for Whatlington

Once again I shall begin with the money. The County Council portion of this year's Council Tax will rise by 3.49%. This is made up of 1.99% of "normal" tax rise plus an extra 1.5% for Adult Social Care; we are allowed 3% for this element to be taken over two years if required and the County Council has decided to take half this year and half next.

Not surprisingly COVID-19 has taken up much of our time this year and the County Council's staff has worked tirelessly and deserve a massive vote of thanks. The County Council has received substantial amounts of money from the Government to help with the pandemic but to date this has not covered the cost. At the beginning of the outbreak there were delays in getting PPE to where it was required but that seems to have been dealt with and people are protected. I am pleased to say that the vaccination programme is rolling out apace. It is also the case that those whom for whatever reason cannot travel have received their vaccinations in their homes.

The County's children and young people have continued to be educated although often in unusual ways. I am glad to be able to report that they are now back at school. There is real concern that so much isolation is causing mental health problems for increasing numbers of the population at all stages of life. During the lockdown's schools remained open for vulnerable children and the children of key workers. In East Sussex attendance at school was compatible with the national average at around 13%. The County's Looked After Children continue to do well with 13 having been offered university places. Unfortunately, we are, as ever, in need of foster carers. This is very rewarding work and the Council gives excellent training and support so if it appeals to you please get in touch.

Like many of you since I last reported I have not been far from Battle. When I go out for my daily exercise I usually finish up in the High Street for a takeaway coffee and some shopping. Aren't we lucky! We live in a beautiful area with friendly people and shops to supply all our needs, although having lunch in draughty pub gardens has been a challenge!

I am surprised that so far I have not been asked what is happening at Battle Library. No one can have missed the forest of poles which is growing daily. I can tell you that the building is being reroofed and it is anticipated that it will take six weeks to erect the scaffolding and that the job is expected to be complete in May. The project also includes swift boxes.

Kathryn Field
May 2021