

A Happy Christmas from everyone at Wealden District Council

Wealden Cabinet News 7 December 2016

[Benefit of high street improvements](#)



The completion of the Uckfield High Street improvement works was welcomed by Cabinet in its review of the Council's second quarter performance report, with the improved traffic flow and a more welcoming High Street on course to deliver real benefits to the people of Uckfield and the surrounding areas, balancing the future needs of businesses, visitors and residents. Improvement work to the main shopping street in Hailsham has been put on hold for the Christmas period, and Polegate is to get a new Lidl supermarket, following planning consent, which will lead to 40 new jobs. Other good news on the job creation front is the arrival of vacuum equipment manufacturer Vacgen at the Swallow Park Business Centre along the A22, which will employ 80 -110 people. Councillors also welcomed the work taking place to improve health through physical activities involving the Council's Leisure centre operator, Freedom Leisure. Freedom Leisure has just won best rehabilitation centre category in the National Fitness Awards for the second year in succession. Welcoming the strong performance, Cabinet members noted that, although the District had the lowest crime rate in Sussex, the number of reported crimes had risen again.

*For further information please contact Malcolm Harris, Policy Officer.
Tel: 01323 443744 or email malcolm.harris@wealden.gov.uk*

[Plans for 137 new council houses by 2020](#)



Cabinet has approved for stakeholder consultation a housing budget which will see 137 new build council houses built in the District by 2020 and ensure the continuation of the Council's ongoing maintenance budget of £4.5million a year. Together with the 86 new council houses already added to the District's housing stock, the programme will provide one-to-one replacement of Right-to-Buy properties. The Housing Revenue Account also allows for the 1% reduction in all rents next year, in line with Government policy, but the proposed budget does not include any provision for a high value council house levy, as no proposals have yet been put forward by the Government. Such a levy has been talked about as a way to compensate Housing Associations for Right-to-Buy sales. Phase two of the Council's new build programme includes schemes in Crowborough, Hailsham, Uckfield, East Dean, Hooe and Wadhurst.

*For further information, please contact Amanda Hodge, Head of Policy & Community Services.
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Council tax proposals



Wealden's Cabinet is recommending a £5 a year increase in this year's Band D council tax payment to safeguard the District's services, with proportional increases for other bandings. As part of the national deficit reduction, the Council faces a £868,000 reduction in its central government funding next year following a £1.3 million reduction this year. "We have carefully managed the Council's finances, and been successful in freezing the Wealden council tax for a number of years," said Council Leader Bob Standley. "Wealden's share of the council tax is approximately 10%, and the proposed increase of £5 a year for a Band D household is an increase of 9.6 pence a week. The Council is also seeking additional savings of £1 million over the next 5 years to achieve a balanced budget in 2020/21. Infrastructure investment in the District is, in part, being provided by the Community Infrastructure Levy paid by developers. The New Homes Bonus paid by the Government, of which 20% goes to the County Council, is also used for infrastructure delivery. Many councils have used the New Homes Bonus for day-to-day spending but, given its longer term funding is not guaranteed, Wealden has allocated it to capital projects." Cabinet has agreed to go out to consultation about the proposed increase - the equivalent of £5 a year for an average Band D Wealden property - with stakeholders including parish and town councils. The consultation is available on the Council's website, search under [Consultation Diary](#). A final decision on the 2017/18 council tax will be made at the meeting of Full Council on 22 February.

*For further information please contact Trevor Scott, Director of Governance and Corporate Services
Tel: 01892 602524 or email: trevor.scott@wealden.gov.uk*

Ensuring equality in public services



Cabinet welcomed the emphasis on equality which is embedded in the delivery of council services helping residents, particularly those who are most vulnerable, to access benefits and take control of their fuel usage costs, as well as teaching children the importance of safety and helping disabled people access leisure activities and local services. The range of events which Wealden provides for all age groups and abilities is outlined the Annual Report on Equalities, Health & Safety and Workforce Matters. The Council used the help of a focus group and various equalities groups, including Wealden Disability Involvement Group, to help design and position car park signage and bay markings as part of the Car Park Maintenance and Improvement programme.

*For further information please contact David Palmer, Head of Business Services.
Tel: 01323 443229 or email david.palmer@wealden.gov.uk*

Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk

Updated Council Policies on Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk have been adopted by Wealden's Cabinet. The changes reflect the increased emphasis on the importance of partnership working in the latest Government guidance relating to the safeguarding process. They also highlight the new and emerging agendas relating to 'Prevent' (preventing terrorism), Modern Day Slavery and Child Sexual Exploitation. The policies are aimed at preventing unsuitable people working with children or adults perceived to be at risk, and involves appropriate checks for certain staff with the Disclosure and Barring Service. The policies explain how staff can report concerns, should they think a child or adult is at risk and also how the Council will deal with any allegations made against any of its employees.. The policies apply to all staff, contractors, consultants, volunteers and elected members (whilst carrying out their duties for Wealden District Council) regardless of whether or not they are in regular contact with children or adults perceived to be at risk. The Adult Protection Policy and the Child Protection Policy will now be referred to Full Council for approval.

*For further information please contact Dr Jeremy Leach, Principal Policy Advisor.
Tel: 01323 443305 or email jeremy.leach@wealden.gov.uk*

Call for action on long running rail dispute



At the Full Council meeting on 23 November, Wealden District Councillors unanimously called on the rail unions and Southern railways to find a solution to the current dispute as a matter of urgency. Council Leader Bob Standley, who proposed the motion, said the latest round of strikes, which includes the Christmas and New Year period, were designed to cause the maximum disruption to the public, and that the strikes were affecting the economy of the District. The full effect the dispute has been having in the District was made clear by councillors taking part in the debate. Commuters on the Uckfield line had been particularly badly affected by a combination of platform extensions, industrial action, rolling stock shortages and light failures, all making the situation unacceptable. Hard working residents were being held to ransom. They were also being unfairly penalised by the practice of terminating services at Crowborough to improve turn-around times, which meant an hour delay for those commuters. Councillors called on the Government to support the BML2 infrastructure improvements which would improve rail capacity in the south east by re-instating the rail link between Uckfield and Lewes. Seconding the motion, Cllr Roy Galley said the debate had highlighted just how horrendous the situation had become, not just in terms of delays but also the conditions passengers were expected to travel in. The Council will also be sharing its concerns about the dispute with local MPs and the Ministry for Transport. The debate on the rail dispute is available in full here: https://wealden.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/227138

*For further information please contact Gabriella Paterson-Griggs, Democratic Services Manager
Tel: 01892 602433 or email gabriella.paterson@wealden.gov.uk*

Fair deal for women nearing pension age



Wealden District Council has called for pension transition arrangements for women nearing retirement age to be made fairer following legislative changes which have increased the State Pension Age for women beyond 60. A motion passed unanimously at a meeting of Full Council on 23 November said that some women born after 6 April 1951 were being unfairly penalised by the increase in the State Pension Age because of a lack of appropriate notification. The motion proposed, by Councillor Daniel Shing, called upon the Government to make fair transitional state pension for all women born on or after 6 April, 1952, who have unfairly borne the burden of the increase to the State Pension Age with lack of appropriate notification. The motion, seconded by Councillor Johanna Howell, estimated that some 10,000 women in Wealden could potentially have been affected by these changes. Some women had only two year's notice of a six year increase to their pension age. Councillors said that while they respected the need for equality in payment and pension provision, there has been a lack of information forthcoming to enable women to make adequate financial provision. A full webcast of Wealden Full Council's debate on pension transition arrangements can be found here: https://wealden.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/227138 .

*For further information please contact Gabriella Paterson-Griggs, Democratic Services Manager
Tel: 01892 602433 or email gabriella.paterson@wealden.gov.uk*

Planning News

Crematorium plans approved



Planning Committee South has approved plans for a crematorium south of Horam. [A webcast can be viewed of the debate at planning committee.](#) The plans have been put forward by Wealden District Council and this will be the first crematorium in the District. When it opens, which is expected to be in 2018, it will be able to allow an hour for each service and will include a garden of remembrance and an online book of condolences. There will also be a facility to webcast services so mourners who are unable to attend will still be able to be part of the service. Further details including answers to Frequently

Asked Questions about the project, links to the full planning application and an explanatory leaflet can be found on the Crematorium page on [the Wealden website](#).

*For further information please contact Trevor Scott, Director of Governance and Corporate Services
Tel: 01892 602524 or email: trevor.scott@wealden.gov.uk*

Spreading the word about smart meters



Wealden District Council is one of 18 organisations to receive grant funding to spread the word about Smart Energy meters to rural communities. The £22,500 grant from the *Smart Energy GB in Communities* fund will be used to target homes in ten rural Wealden communities which are not connected to mains gas. The smart meter will help identify where savings can be made, ensuring households can keep warm in winter without hefty heating costs. As well as raising awareness about smart meters which can provide consumers with

accurate information about their energy consumption, the Council will be working with the Big Energy Savings Network to offer a free fuel bill checking service. At other events in the District, these sessions have provided consumers with the opportunity to save £200- £300 a year on their energy bills. A guest speaker will talk about *Smart Energy Villages from 2020* at listed times and free energy monitors will be available at events. Every home in Britain will be offered a smart meter by their energy supplier, at no extra cost, by 2020. Smart meters provide gas and electricity readings directly to suppliers. Events are planned for

HARTFIELD - Village Hall: 6 January, 5-9pm (speaker 7-8pm).

WADHURST - The Commemoration Hall: 7 January, 10am-3pm (speaker 1-2pm).

ROTHERFIELD - Village Hall: 9 January, 5-9pm (speaker 7-8pm)

NINFIELD - Memorial Hall 11 January, 5-9pm (speaker 7-8pm)

MAYFIELD -The Memorial Hall: 14 January, 10am-3pm (speaker 1-2pm)

EAST HOATHLY - Village Hall: 16 January, 5.30-9.30pm (speaker 7-8pm)

ISFIELD- Village Hall: 17 January, 5-9pm (speaker 7-8pm)

HERSTMONCEUX - Village Hall, 18 January, 1.30-5.30pm (speaker 3.30-4.30pm)

HALLAND - The Forge. 19 January, 3-6pm

FRANT- Village Hall: 20 January, 5-9pm (speaker 7-8pm)

FIVE ASHES - Village Hall: 21 January, 10am-3pm (speaker 1-2pm).

*For further information please contact Justin Bailey, Home Energy Efficiency Officer
Tel: 01323 443313 or email: Justin.bailey@wealden.gov.uk*

2017 with Street Learning



A new range of free Street Learning courses has been announced for 2017 offering training and advice opportunities to anyone from Wealden or Eastbourne aged 19 or over. They are a fantastic opportunity for anyone wanting to learn a new skill, get some expert advice or improve their lives. To download the new year programme, just search for *Street Learning* on the Wealden website, or request a copy by emailing streetlearning@wealden.gov.uk.

*For further information please contact Zoe Clarke, Community & Regeneration Officer
Tel: 01323 443266 or email zoe.clarke@wealden.gov.uk*

The Great Wealden Spring Clean 2017



Following the success of the Clean for the Queen campaign last March, which saw some 19 groups of litter heroes in Wealden take action and collect over a tonne of waste, Wealden District Council is again supporting Keep Britain Tidy with the Great Wealden Spring Clean 2017. **The Great Wealden Spring Clean** will take place over the weekend from **Friday to Sunday March 3 to 5, 2017**. Wealden District Council is providing free litter picking kits, on a first-come-first-served basis, to those groups who register and add their event to the official website at www.greatbritishspringclean.org.uk. The Council will also be distributing special edition waste sacks to registered groups from its offices in Vicarage Lane and Wealden libraries as well as providing waste collection. Anyone can register an event. No group is too big or too small. Parishes can organise their own event. To claim litter picking kits, request waste sacks, campaign posters, or arrange collection of waste, please email pr@wealden.gov.uk or telephone 01323 443268. Groups must provide email confirmation of event registration or be visible on the official website to use these services.

*For further information please contact Fiona Berry, Sustainability Co-ordinator.
Tel: 01323 443268 or email fiona.berry@wealden.gov.uk*

[Take a stand against domestic violence](#)



Wealden District Council has been awarded White Ribbon Status for the stand it is taking against domestic violence. Councillors and staff have been encouraged to sign a pledge opposing domestic violence in all its forms, and representatives from parish and town councils took part at this year's Parish Conference. Front line staff in the Council's services have received training in how to identify domestic abuse and encourage people not to tolerate it. The Council is also planning a number of campaigns to raise awareness about the issue in the wider Wealden communities. The number of domestic abuse crimes in

Wealden has risen from 315 in 2012/13 to 580 in 2015/16. Where domestic abuse is an issue, members of the public should contact Sussex Police on 999, if it is an emergency, otherwise use 101. A new website, The Portal, www.theportal.org.uk; freephone 0300 323 9985, has been set up to provide advice and support to people suffering domestic violence in East Sussex. *Refuge* provides a 24 hours emergency hotline on 0808 2000 247.

*For further information please contact Dr Jeremy Leach, Principal Policy Advisor.
Tel: 01323 443305 or email jeremy.leach@wealden.gov.uk*

Support for local retailers



Small Business Saturday - 3 December – was once again well supported across Wealden with Christmas Markets held at both Forest Row and Uckfield as well as the weekly street market at Hailsham. The Council published a Wealden Christmas Events Cracker leaflet detailing seasonal promotions and the Wealden Christmas Window Competition promoted interest in making local shops attractive. Following voting on the Wealden Facebook page. This year's winner was the St Peter & St James Hospice Shop in Uckfield.

For further information please contact Helen Markwick, Community & Regeneration Manager. Tel: 01892 602756 or email helen.markwick@wealden.gov.uk

Wealden Dementia Action Alliance



The 2017 Dementia-Friendly Film screenings begin again on 20 January at Hailsham Pavilion with *Blue Hawaii*, and actress Suzy will be taking the part of the King himself, Elvis, as part of the interactive fun. In November she played Marilyn Monroe at a special screening of *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*. The 2017 screenings, which begin at 2pm are:

- 24 February - *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* where Suzy will also be performing.
- 24 March - *Top Hat*
- 21 April - *Easter Parade*
- 26 May – *On the Town*
- 23 June – *High Society*

The film screenings are just one in a number of activities provided by the Wealden Dementia Action Alliance, which has been set up with the support of the Wealden Strategic Partnership's Strong Resilient Communities Fund. Since it was launched in May, the Wealden Dementia Action Alliance has held meetings across the District with dementia groups in Uckfield and Herstmonceux and is planning further meetings in Polegate, Crowborough, Hailsham, and Rotherfield with the aim of setting up forums where carers and supporters can raise issues and provide better training opportunities. The Alliance has organised Dementia Friends training sessions for 60 Wealden District Council staff, and is hoping to organise Dementia Champions training in the District next year. Further details of the 2017 season of Dementia Friendly Films in Wealden can [be found on the Council's website](#).

For further information please contact Zoe Clarke, Community & Regeneration Officer
Tel: 01323 443266 or email zoe.clarke@wealden.gov.uk

No badge, no plate = no ride



Wealden District Council is encouraging festive revellers to stay safe over the Christmas period by using only licensed taxis. All taxis licensed by Wealden District Council are subject to annual insurance checks and a full mechanical inspection every six months. Demand for lifts at this time of year offers bogus drivers, who may be driving unsafe and uninsured vehicles, an opportunity to capitalise on unwary passengers. "If you are looking forward to partying the night away this Christmas, make sure you get home safely by being able to clearly

recognise a licensed taxi. Here's a simple rule to remember: NO BADGE, NO PLATE = NO RIDE. By taking a moment to check both car and driver are licensed, you can make sure you stay safe and have a happy Christmas." explained Councillor Nigel Coltman, chairman of the Council's Licensing Committee. Details of current fares are [available on the Wealden website](#). All rear licence plates carry, in addition to a large licence number, the make and model of the vehicle, its registration number, and the number of passengers it is licensed to carry.

For further information please contact Richard Parker-Harding, Head of Environmental Health.
Tel: 01323 443208 or email richard.parker-harding@wealden.gov.uk

Prosecution for recycling centre rubbish dumper



A Heathfield resident who dumped over 30 bags of rubbish at their local recycling centre, blocking access, was fined £120 and ordered to pay £820 costs. Sadie Jeffs, 29, of Hailsham Road, Heathfield, pleaded guilty to failing to ensure domestic waste produced at her property was disposed of in the correct manner, as required under section 34 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Earlier this year, a large amount of general household waste, both in rubbish bags and cardboard boxes from Ms Jeff's property, was left at the Neighbourhood Recycling Point in Station Road, Heathfield, severely disrupting access to the site for other users. On 25 November, Hastings Magistrates Court fined Ms Jeffs £120, ordered her to pay costs of £800 to Wealden District Council and a £20 victim surcharge. Every householder and producer of waste has a Duty of Care to ensure their waste is disposed of correctly to avoid issues and potential prosecution; this may be by placing it in their own household bin, by taking it to a Household Waste and Recycling Site or by paying a registered waste carrier to remove the waste.

*For further information please contact David Whibley, Team Leader- Planning and Enforcement.
Tel: 01892 602507 or email david.whibley@wealden.gov.uk*

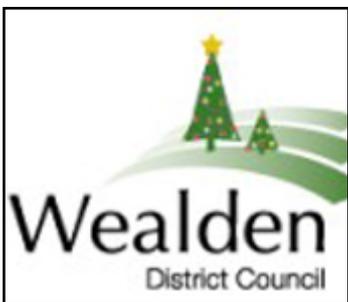
Grants Hill go-ahead



Work will begin in January on the £10 million scheme to provide 67 affordable retirement living apartments in the heart of Uckfield. The redevelopment of the former Grants Hill House will be carried out by Sussex-based developer Thakeham and will increase the number of apartments at the site from 42 to 67, including two bungalows, improving the quality of accommodation and facilities available. "There is an increasing need in Wealden to provide high quality accommodation which is flexible enough to meet the complex needs of people in their later years," said Councillor Graham Wells, Cabinet member with responsibility for Housing. Work is expected to be completed in October 2018. Planning permission has also been granted for two further New Build council housing schemes in Wadhurst: three one-bedroomed apartments in Snape View and two one bedroom chalet bungalows in Courthope Avenue. Building work is nearing completion at Leap Cross to provide 12 new homes at affordable rents in Hailsham.

*For further information please contact Hayley Frankham, Housing Development Team Leader.
Tel: 01323 443278 or email: Hayley.frankham@wealden.gov.uk*

Christmas opening times



Wealden Council offices will close for Christmas on Friday 23rd December at **4:00pm**, and re-opens again at 8:30am on Tuesday 3rd January 2017. In an emergency please contact **01323 644422**. The duty Building Control Officers are listed on the Wealden webpage. Waste and Recycling collections in Wealden District over the Christmas week 26-30 December are being advanced a day – Monday collections will take place on Tuesday, Tuesday collections on Wednesday... and Friday collections will take place on Saturday 31 December. Collections return to normal the following week, with Monday's waste and recycling collections taking place on the Monday 2 January Bank Holiday. To allow for these changes, we are suspending all garden waste collections for the two weeks from Monday 26 December to Friday 6 January. Don't forget to stick the recycling sticker which was sent out with this year's Waste and Recycling calendar on your recycling bin.

*For further information please contact Alex White, Head of Customer Services, Revenues & Benefits
Tel: 01323 443171 or email Alex.White@wealden.gov.uk*

Business partnerships with Saspire



Saspire, a Wealden social enterprise offering training and work experience for disabled people, is looking for new partnerships with local businesses to provide work for this group. Saspire aims to help people with physical, sensory or learning disabilities to develop a range of work-based skills, and help them socially. Based near Horam, Saspire has over 30 regular attendees who benefit from the light assembly work that they are involved with. There is a strong emphasis on personal development and the support this can provide for independent living. Examples of light work Saspire can offer include preparation of portfolios for a training company, sorting show bags for international companies and hand finishing and envelope packing. Saspire is run by the Sussex Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus.

*For further information please contact Romeen Sanglaji, Director Saspire.
Tel: 01323 443278 or email: office@sasbah.org.uk*

Homeless in winter



There are a small number of people sleeping rough in Wealden and we will do all we can, within the constraints of available resources, to find solutions. We operate a severe weather emergency provision of accommodation (SWEP) when weather is very cold or there are other extreme weather conditions. For someone sleeping rough, we can provide emergency accommodation until the weather improves. This allows the customer time to work with the Council or other agencies to find other accommodation. Church-based night shelters outside of Wealden also operate in the winter months but availability for people with no local connection may be limited. People needing help and advice on their housing situation, or if they are at risk of homelessness, should contact the Council's Housing Options team at housingoptions@wealden.gov.uk or call 01323 443380.

*For further information please contact Gemma Forshaw, Housing Options and Strategy Manager.
Tel: 01323 443267 or email gemma.forshaw@wealden.gov.uk.*

Prevent agenda

Parish halls, social clubs and community centres are reminded to be aware when taking bookings from unusual organisations. The District Council and Sussex Police liaise regularly on issues affecting community welfare and possible activities by extremist groups. With the recent addition of the extreme right wing group *National Action* to the Government's list of Proscribed Organisations, hall secretaries are reminded about the need to be aware of activities taking place in local venues and report to the police if they think a booking is suspicious. A full list of proscribed organisations can be found on [the Gov.uk website](http://the.gov.uk).

*For further information please contact Dr Jeremy Leach, Principal Policy Advisor.
Tel: 01323 443305 or email jeremy.leach@wealden.gov.uk*



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