



ESCC ANNUAL REPORT FOR DALLINGTON PC APRIL 2024

Driving sustainable economic growth

Following a competitive tender process, a new contract for highways and infrastructure services with Balfour Beatty Living Places Ltd, began in May 2023. In June 2023, the Council approved additional one-off funding for highways in 2023/24, including £2.5m for carriageway patching work, £3.1m for drainage works and funding for carriageway repairs. Over the first three-quarters of the year, 70 road improvement schemes were completed, over 19,000 potholes repaired, 132 patch works were completed across 62 sites, around 100 road signs were replaced and around 150 minor drainage schemes were completed.

As part of the Council's Bus Service Improvement Plan a number of projects have commenced including the roll-out of reduced price bus tickets, improvements to bus stops including the implementation of QR plates at all bus stops which can be scanned to receive next bus information, £10.5m of conventional bus service improvements to increase the frequency and running times of some services and the Flexibus service which now covers nearly 90% of East Sussex. 10,000 passengers have taken a trip on the Flexibus. In November 2023, a public consultation was launched on the draft Local Transport Plan. The plan looks ahead to 2050 and sets out how we will connect people to places through the county by walking, wheeling and cycling, using public transport, traveling by car, or by new ways to travel. In May 2023, the Council was awarded £1.22m from Active Travel England's Active Travel Fund 4 to support schemes that encourage people to become more active and help reduce carbon emissions.

The broadband project eSussex completed its final build in 2023. Together with commercial investment this brings gigabit-capable coverage (1000 Mbps) to 67% across the county, with 98% of premises receiving superfast speeds of >30Mbps. In addition, the Council hosts the new South East Grid (SEG) network, which contributes to the provision of ultra-fast data network connectivity throughout the county.

The Turner Prize exhibition opened at the Towner Gallery in Eastbourne in September 2023 with 1,200 people in attendance. The prize, which was awarded in December 2023, has been instrumental in showcasing the county to a wider audience. In June 2023, the Council-led Sussex Visitor Economy Initiative and Sussex Modern launched the Sussex Wine Tourism Plan for Growth which sets out how the Sussex wine sector could grow from bringing £25m of value to the economy currently to nearly £300m by 2040, creating over 3,600 jobs.

Promoting employability and skills, over 1,000 pupils attended Open Doors workplace visits over the first three quarters of the year, supported by Industry Champions to gain experience of a real workplace. 226 Industry Champions were supporting schools and colleges by the end of December 2023. In addition, in October 2023, the East Sussex Careers Hub hosted the online 'What Next?' event connecting young people and their families with careers experts and local employers. The Youth Employability Services was re-commissioned with the new contract, which has a focus on young people Not in Education, Employment or Training, starting in October 2023. Over 1,600 people enrolled on Family Learning Programmes at East Sussex Libraries over the first three-quarters of the year. In addition, since 2019, the Council has committed over £1m from its apprenticeship levy to support local small and medium sized employers take on an apprentice.

Keeping vulnerable people safe

An inspection of the Council's Children's Services by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) took place in December 2023. The inspection report published on 6 February 2024, found that the lives of the most vulnerable children in East Sussex are improved by 'consistently strong and effective' support. The help, protection and care children and young people are receiving from the Council earned an overall 'good' rating, while inspectors found the experiences and progress of children in care to be 'outstanding'. This report is set against the context of rising demand for Children's Social Care services and increased complexity of needs. Increases in costs have been particularly acute in looked after children's care costs, in particular external residential costs (with average costs increasing by 13% between quarters 1 and 2) and support for children with the most complex needs.

Following extensive engagement activity with clients, carers and families, the Council published a new Adult Social Care Strategy in 2023; 'What Matters to You'. The strategy guides residents' understanding of what adult social care is, outlines six priorities and sets out how these will be taken forward.

The delivery of the Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme over summer 2023 was the biggest yet with over 21,000 sessions attended by more than 4,200 young people. 75 providers ran activities at 118 sites reaching more areas of the county than ever before. The Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) element of the programme also grew with 14 specific SEND providers. Also over the summer, funding was made available to deliver positive activities to support young people with low attendance at primary school during their transition to secondary school. 313 young people participated with 86% saying they felt more excited about starting their new school.

Keeping vulnerable people safe continued...

Trading Standards were involved in over 1800 interventions over the first three-quarters of 2023/24 to protect vulnerable people, including installing CCTV and call blockers to try to prevent people from falling victim to telephone scams and as part of support sessions and training for vulnerable groups.

As of 31 December 2023, 1,762 guests had arrived in East Sussex under the **Homes for Ukraine** scheme, hosted by 812 sponsors. Over 600 people have subsequently moved into private sector accommodation.

Helping people help themselves

In 2023, the Council opened 11 **Family Hubs**, including in Eastbourne, Lewes, Hailsham, Peacehaven, Uckfield, St Leonards and Hastings. Visitors to the hubs can get support and advice from midwives, health visitors, early communications support workers, early years practitioners and more. Activity sessions give children, parents and carers the chance to socialise and support their children's development. In addition, the Council was successful in securing £7m of Youth Investment Funding to upgrade **youth facilities** in Heathfield and Peacehaven.

Reablement services are provided to help people to regain mobility and daily living skills, especially after a hospital stay. Between April and December 2023 95.1% of people who received short-term services did not request further support and between April and September 2023, 93.5% of older people discharged from hospital to reablement or rehabilitation services were at home 91 days after discharge.

Work continued on the **integration of health and social care** in 2023/24. A joint five-year Sussex Shared Delivery Plan was endorsed in June 2023 by the Council. The plan brings together delivery milestones for 2023/24 and a roadmap for years 2-5. This includes delivery of integrated community teams, operating initially in Hastings.

15 **road safety** schemes were completed during the first three-quarters of 2023/24 to improve road safety infrastructure. Over 3,700 people have also benefitted from 'Bikeability' courses.

In September 2023, ESCC partnered with The Tribe Project, an online platform and app that connects volunteers with local opportunities. There are now over 175 roles across the county. The Tribe Project offers volunteers flexible positions accommodating availability, location, and skillset. The Council's External Funding team responded to 220 enquiries over the first three-quarters of the year from the **voluntary, community and social enterprise sector (VCSE)**. The team has helped organisations secure £389,361 in funding over the same period.

Annually the Libraries team take part in the Summer Reading Challenge, to encourage children aged 4 to 11 to enjoy the benefits of reading over the summer holidays. This year East Sussex saw its largest uptake since 2018, with 7,198 participants. Libraries also provide free computer and internet access, alongside volunteer led 'IT for You' sessions to support people to develop IT skills. So far during 2023/24 over 1,729 adults have participated.

Making best use of resources in the short and long term

The Council's **budget and Council Plan** for 2024/25 were approved at the meeting of Full Council on 6 February 2024. Councillors approved a £538m net revenue budget for 2024/25 with no new cuts to services. The decision not to reduce services was taken despite the rising cost of providing them and funding not keeping pace. In setting a balanced budget, Councillors agreed to use £14.3m of the Council's limited financial reserves to meet the shortfall and to increase council tax by 4.99%.

The Council participated in a Local Government Association (LGA) **Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC)** in June 2023 with the aim of further improving the Council's work. The subsequent independent report found the Council to be well-run and well-managed, open and approachable as well as a trusted and respected partner. The Council was also found to be financially prudent with a good record of financial stability and on the delivery of savings.

Over 2,000 people took part in a **survey on the Council's priorities and spending** from October to December 2023. 70% of people felt the Council's priorities were the right ones, with 60% of people suggesting that highways should be the priority for any additional investment.

The Council has continued to work with partners to deliver carbon reduction and our **climate change** plan. In 2023/24 this has included securing £245k to develop a plan to provide people with the skills to enable the retrofit of domestic properties to reduce their carbon emissions, £4.4m to support the installation of electric vehicle charging points in over 280 locations and nearly £300k of Forestry Commission funding for tree planting projects. Sixteen **energy efficiency** projects were completed on Council buildings during the first three-quarters of the year, including 4 LED lighting projects and 5 solar PV energy generation schemes. Total energy use in quarter 2 of 2023/24 was down 9% on the same period last year and down 25% on the baseline year 2019/20.

The Council spent £307m with 853 **local suppliers** over 2023, equating to 64% of total contract spend. In addition, during the first three-quarters of the year, 11 contracts were awarded which were in-scope of the Social Value Measurement Charter. These contracts had a total value of £4.9m with £1.3m of **social value** commitments secured, including apprenticeships, work experience, creation of local jobs, and local volunteering initiatives. This equates to an outturn of 27% of applicable procurement spend, against a target of 10%.

In September 2023, the **East Sussex Pension Fund Team** won the Governance Award at the Local Authority Pension Fund Investment Awards.

ROTHER DISTRICT COUNCIL

My first year as a Councillor has seen Rother District Council having to make many very difficult decisions and sometimes controversial ones. Cost savings have had to be implemented in many areas notably, the closure of several public conveniences, increases in Car Park charges the which were last adjusted in 2015. Towards the end of this year parking ticket machines will not accept cash so they will be accessed by card or via Ring go, this will save £30,000 which is the contract charge for collecting the cash.

Obviously you will be aware by now that Council Tax also been increased, interestingly during the Budget consultation a number of respondents would be in favour an increasing Council Tax to help provide the services that are needed.

We faced a Budget deficit of £3.8 million for the current financial year hence the need for these cost saving exercises. One the major contributing factors was the need supply Temporary Accommodation for Homelessness, this has tripled over the last eighteen months. To offset this RDC now own 50 houses this consequently avoids very expensive Hotel costs, we do have statutory obligation to supply this service. In addition other costs have risen, waste costs increased by 14%, Staff 20% since 2020/ 2021 and of course interest charges. One advantage of the rise in interest is that our Financial Officer has created a plan to invest in many financial areas which has led to a very good income stream which is helping towards our costs.

A financial resilience programme is now place namely Fit for Future, this is targeting a cost saving £3.3 million which results in only £0.6 million being taken from reserves.

Many projects will be reviewed to establish need and viability they are varied and some innovative for a Council of our size. We are better placed than many other Councils having adopted this plan.

It's not all bad news we recently received £20 million from the levelling up fund which will be spent on various projects around Bexhill, unfortunately not a great will be allocated to Rural area's. The only thing that will come into operation is a Rural Mobile Community Hub details will be announced in the near future. A Town Board is in process of being established to take control of the fund.

It has been a pleasure and an honour to represent Dallington Pc along with my other Parish Councils, Ashburnham, Catsfield and Crowhurst

Chas Pearce

Dallington Old School Village Hall
Minutes of the A.G.M. held on February 21st 2024 at 7.10 pm

Present: Trustees- Jane Messer (Chair), Pauline Ridley (Treasurer), Diana Sewell, Judy Jeremy, Roz Pierson-Kay, Colette Parsons (Minutes Secretary).
Villagers- Bob Baldock, Kim Venner and Wendy Miers.

1. Apologies: were received from Bobbie Steel.
2. The Chair's Annual report for 2023 was received as follows:

I consider that 2023 was indeed a 'normal' year, more comparable to those before Covid. Usage of the main hall has been steady, although there is scope for more clubs and events and especially greater use of our refurbished billiards room. The two quiz nights held were well attended, friendly and sometimes quite competitive. The year culminated in an informal festive wreath making workshop and in early December, the village Christmas lunch.

We have continued to run the weekly Monday afternoon library café and the additional café on the first Saturday of each month. The library cafés have been very successful, not only filling the gap left by the closure of ESCC's mobile library service but also providing a regular informal social event for locals. The Art Club has continued to meet regularly and would welcome new members. The yoga classes remain popular. Our local Neighborhood Policing team have been very supportive, whether giving an informative talk about on-line scams, making a generous donation towards the purchase of a projector for the hall, or just popping in to the library café for a chat to locals.

I should like to record my personal thanks to my fellow Committee members for the work that they did to support the hall and the events held here over the last year, in particular to Frances Goringe and John Kay both of whom retired earlier in the year and to Bobbie Steel who is standing down after many years on the Committee. I must make special mention of Colette, who was co-opted onto the Committee and took over from Frances as our Secretary and Pauline our Treasurer, who not only looks after the hall finances and accounts but does so much more, including linking into the AIRS village hall network, running the weekly library cafes and generally keeping watch over the hall. Thank you all. For the year ahead I hope that usage of the hall, especially the billiards room, will continue to increase. This historic building is the Parish's asset, for its benefit. The Committee would welcome new ideas for events and volunteers to lend a hand whether in running events or maintaining our hall. If you have any suggestions or would like to get involved just contact any Committee member.

The Chair asked for any questions or comments on the Minutes from the previous AGM held on 15th February 2023. Pauline noted that Julie Manktelow, a new Independent Inspector of Accounts, had been used to examine the Hall accounts. The Minutes were unanimously agreed.

3. Treasurer's Report and approval of Annual Accounts as follows:

I am happy to report that our financial situation appears to have stabilised after the challenges and uncertainties of the last few years. (See attached Accounts Summary and notes below.) Our bank balance remains healthy, and I will be proposing a reserves policy to help us maintain this position and plan for future contingencies.

Judy asked if the charges for Polling Station use could be increased, but it was generally considered an asset for local villagers which should not risk being lost by overpricing.

Notes to 2023 Accounts Summary:

1. Bank accounts. The comparatively high balance at the start of 2022 last year was due to some unspent grant funding subsequently used for completion of projects during that year. The current figure of just over £12k reflects a more accurate annual average.
2. Hall Hire. We still have fewer weekly groups than pre-lockdown but this is compensated by regular bookings by our local residential home for their training days. From September 2023 the hourly rate increased to £12.00 (£6.00 for local non-profit clubs) to include heating costs- see note 3 below. The figure for DPC represents two years' hire charges, due to a late issue of 2022 invoice so payment not received until early 2023; now up to date. Billiard Room reopened last year, advertised on website and elsewhere, but take-up still light.
3. Electricity meters. Emptied in Jan 2023 and September 2023. A trial period with meter settings adjusted in line with higher electricity tariff proved inconvenient for users having to bring twice as many £1 coins with them. We have now increased the room hire rate instead and provide reusable tokens for the meter.
4. Fundraising events. Two quiz nights, a Christmas wreath workshop and Christmas lunch - all are community events, hence modestly priced rather than purely for fundraising, but yielded an overall surplus of around £400.
5. Library Café. This is also designed as a community benefit rather than a fundraising opportunity. Attendance varies from week to week, small donations and occasional sales of redundant stock to World of Books covering the annual costs of refreshments and heating and giving a modest surplus.
6. Grants. The 2022 figure included the final tranche of Covid related funding, used primarily for improvements to fabric and safety of the hall. This year, we are now back to 'normal' with no major grants sought. However, we successfully applied to the Police Property Act Fund (£300) towards purchase of a projector for talks and other activities, with DPC granting the balance of £100.
7. Electricity. This figure is lower than it might have been due to various rebates. Smart meter installation in January may help to reduce costs.
8. Building (general/recurrent). Fire extinguishers checks and replacements & cesspit emptying.
9. Building (capital projects). No capital projects this year.
10. Cleaning/supplies. This covers one hours cleaning per week, associated supplies, and kitchen supplies for library café etc.
11. Equipment. Projector (covered by grants) and two dehumidifiers which have reduced problems of damp
12. Surplus/deficit. The deficit figure was once again due to a delay in issuing invoices at the end of the year which led to payments of £1490 not being received until January. Adjusting for a similarly late payment in January 2023, we actually achieved a modest surplus over the year. I am reviewing our invoicing schedule to enable all hire payments to be received within the relevant accounting year.

Pauline presented a hard copy of the Treasurer's report for 2023, noting that the accounts had been inspected in January 2024 by Julie Manktelow, an independent reviewer, and invited questions. Acceptance of the report and accounts was proposed by Jane and seconded by Diana. Unanimously approved.

4. Election and Confirmation of Trustees.

The current Trustees were willing to stand again, with the exception of Bobbie Steel, and were re-elected. There were two new nominations to committee from Bob Baldock and Kim Venner. Bob was proposed by Roz and seconded by Pauline. Kim was proposed by Diana and seconded by Judy.

Both were unanimously approved and welcomed to Committee by Jane.

5. AOB.

There being no other business, Jane closed the AGM at 7.35pm with thanks to those who had attended.

Dallington Old School 2023 Accounts Summary

	2023	2022	Notes
Opening Balance 1st January 2023			
Lloyds Bank Account	12456.04	18188.49	1
Cash held	279.03	369.87	
TOTAL	12735.07	18,558.36	
Income			
Hall Hire:			2
Regular bookings:	Carried over:	3108.00	
<i>Art Club</i>	386.00		
<i>Yoga</i>	652.00	<i>Billiard Room</i>	40.00
<i>Carricks Brook</i>	1720.00	<i>Occasional Hire</i>	48.00
<i>Dallington PC</i>	350.00	<i>Elections</i>	250.00
<i>Subtotal</i>	<u>3108.00</u>		
Total Hall Hire Income	3446.00	3446.00	2597.50
Electricity Meters	391.00	0.00	3
Fundraising events	747.10	483.00	4
Library Café	180.52	427.77	5
Grants	400.00	2667.00	6
Donations	0	0.00	
TOTAL INCOME	5164.62	6175.27	
Expenditure			
Council Tax	87.96	146.80	
Electricity	595.00	677.00	7
Insurance	1147.01	1124.05	
Admin/subs (AiRSub, advert, review fee)	225.00	194.00	
Internet etc	378.61	339.61	
Building - general repairs & maintenance	811.66	565.76	8
Building - capital projects	0.00	8038.00	9
Cleaning & hall/kitchen supplies	916.35	467.43	10
Equipment	1084.65	349.96	11
Event expenses (food, prizes etc)	328.55	95.95	4
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	5574.79	11998.56	
SURPLUS/-DEFICIT (ie total income - total expenditure)	-410.17	-5823.29	12
Closing Balance 31st December 2023			
Opening balance +/- surplus/deficit	12324.90	12735.07	
consisting of:			
Lloyds Bank Account	12059.02	12456.04	
Cash in hand	265.88	279.03	
TOTAL	12324.90	12735.07	

Tree Warden Activity Report 2023

Due to medical matters, I've not been as active as liked in 2023/4, so I'm afraid there's less to report this year.

Dallington Forest Walks

Thanks to great organising by Brenda Booth, six guided walks in Dallington Forest were arranged during the year. Despite the miserably wet and windy weather we've had on occasions, we didn't lose anyone in the forest or in the mud!

Brenda is organising more walks and if you'd like to come on a walk and/or be involved in helping to organize the walks, please contact her at: – brendaboothkent@aol.com

I also conducted two walks for the Hastings and East Sussex Natural History Society, one of which included Dr Owen Johnson MBE author of Collins Tree Guide and Champion Trees (to name but a few). He was so impressed with the trees planted in one Dallington resident's land that he came back for a tour of their grounds after the walk.

Tree Group

We are so lucky in having wonderful trees in our parish, including many fine specimens that provide rare, important, and irreplaceable habitats. We need a small group of volunteers to perform simple visual surveys of notable trees to make a register for the parish. Please contact me if interested.

More Tree Wardens

Our parish needs more Tree Wardens and I'm looking for people with an interest in trees to join me in the role. You don't need to be a tree expert, I'm not, just enthusiastic. Please contact me if you can help.

Reports for Parish Assembly April 2024

Art Club

The Art Club continues to meet weekly on Monday mornings (10-12) in the Old School village hall throughout the year. Although we sadly lost one of our regular members due to ill health, we also gained several new members this year, giving a core group of around eight. We welcome new members and occasional guests (including some visiting grandchildren during school holidays).

We are a friendly and informal group, suitable for beginners as well as more experienced artists, with tutorial advice and materials available if wanted. Individual progress over the year has been excellent. Most sessions provide opportunities for observational drawing, but members can also choose to work on their own projects, using their own photographs or other reference materials. Everyone is encouraged to work at their own pace and to try out different materials and techniques. The noticeboard in the hall displays a changing selection of work.

Members pay £3.00 per session to cover room hire and refreshments (and if possible to build up a small surplus for visits or purchase of art materials). To find out more, please just come along on a Monday morning or contact Pauline Ridley on 07702 104392 or email p.ridley@brighton.ac.uk

Library Café

The weekly community Library Café continues to offer a regular informal opportunity for local residents to meet up to chat over tea and biscuits and to borrow or donate books. We have a growing collection of local history resources and other non-fiction, as well as a large and constantly changing selection of novels to suit all tastes.

A key principle of the Library is that we are open every Monday afternoon from 2-4pm except bank holidays, and on the first Saturday of every month. It is important that people know we will be there come rain or shine and that there will always be at least one friendly face to share a cup of tea and a chat. The monthly Saturday morning sessions are often enlivened by home-made cakes or bacon sandwiches, thanks to our small team of volunteers.

Thanks to the donations jar and occasional sales of surplus books, we cover our overheads, but this is not primarily a fund raising exercise but a vital community link organised by the Management Committee as part of our remit as a community asset. Thanks to everyone who continues to support this initiative.

Carricks Brook is a residential home for Adults with Autism, learning disability and who struggle with stress and distress.

We have a good stable team in place, lots of experienced staff, we are really lucky with our staff team. We have welcomed several over seas workers recently and they have brought a fabulous culture and outlook on life, that complements our own.

Our role, in our resident's life, is to ensure people have access to the community, are engaged in the community and have access to different experiences. We encouraged independence whenever possible and help them grow and learn new skills.

At the end of last year, one of our residents started work in a cafe, in Pembury, he is loving this role, we are hoping once he is trained, he will be offered a paid position. We are looking for volunteer work for another resident from July onwards, he is interested in cooking, maintenance and horses. If anyone has any ideas or opportunities, please contact us.

Report for Parish Council April 2024

Head teacher :Paul Cox

Overview

We have 111 pupils on roll (105 and we are full)

We have four classes

- Brightling class (Year 5/6) - 33 pupils
- Bodle Street Class (Year 3/4) – 36 pupils
- Wood Corner class (year 1/2) – 28 pupils
- Dallington Class – (EYFS) – 14 pupils

We have one Ukrainian pupil in school (Year 6).

We have 19 children on the SEN register including 2 EHCP (Educational Health Care plan)

We have 7 teachers across the school and 10 support staff members.

We have 14 children coming in (currently) for September

We will lose 20 year 6 children in July – I am confident we will pick up a few additional children throughout the year.

School attendance for September to now is 95%. This is below our target of 96% but is above National average for Primary Schools.

We are Federated with Punnetts Town. This relationship has become stronger over the last few years. We have a joint curriculum, share resources, expertise and hold fortnightly staff meetings. This relationship has helped us grow and become stronger.

Healthy Schools Excellence

We continue to feel the impact of COVID – we have children who are behind on expectations, children who are ‘missing’ key life skills (respect, turn taking, empathy) and a lot of children who are struggling with resilience and general motivation. We have put lots into place to support all of these and the children. We have a counsellor who works one day a week, we have two TA’s whose job is to deliver interventions, we have a therapy dog who comes in, we have clear focused interventions running across the school, we have also trained our year 5/6 children as Well being Warriors- they have been trained to work with and educate others about Mental health. It is tough as most of this is funded by the school but essential if we want the children to grow up to be happy and healthy!

We have an amazing team of teachers and support staff, wonderful children and very supportive parents.

We have had a really strong year – we have, academically, made huge progress as well as having fun! We strive- as always- to create life long learners and develop the children’s skills. We have run

forest school, we have strong links with Young at Heart (an OAP day club in Heathfield) and Dudwell St Mary's in Burwash- these links give the children lots of inter generational working and learning. We have excelled at sport this year with our children participating in football, netball, cross country, athletics, rugby and cricket – our individuals and teams have gone on to county finals in many events.

We currently have 22 children across the school learning musical instruments – from piano to drums. We also have 10 in our choir. The school have sung at De La Warr pavilion and State Hall in Heathfield.

We have just finished a whole school topic called Blue planet- there has been some wonderful work around the mysteries of the sea, The Titanic and the dangers of plastic pollution. The year 5/6 class had a film company in – they made short documentaries about plastic pollution, over fishing and deforestation – they worked with the company with all children using the cameras, sound equipment and being part of the production team – it was a wonderful experience – hopefully the finished video will be on our website very soon.

The school is in a very positive place – we face challenges on a daily basis but the school- the staff and children remain happy and improve on a daily basis!