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6th May 2022

Report to Parish Councils – May 2022

This report is written in early May and is for Parish Councils meeting in May. It is for all 7 parishes in Northern Rother.

It is shorter than normal as I am still convalescing from some completely unexpected and at times challenging heart surgery though expect to be back doing actual (rather than remote) meetings from the 11th May, subject to my follow up medical on the 10th. My strength and stamina are not yet back to the level before my illness but are improving by day and should return to normal in a few more months. I would like to thank all parish councils and residents for their support and tolerance during my period of enforced absence.

Some of the items here are from information circulated by ESCC but which may not have drawn the attention of parish councillors and others.

Chairman's Teas for Volunteers

The Chairman of ESCC used to hold teas for volunteers though these ceased during the pandemic. These are now planned to resume. If you know of anyone in our parish who has gone out of their way to help others please pass me their name, contact details etc in full confidence. I will pass these to the Chairman. We do not yet have a date for the first of these events.

Expansion of Substance Misuse Service for young people

In some areas of Northern Rother substance misuse is a significant issue.

Following successful treatment activity last year, the East Sussex Substance Misuse Service will now be expanded to support young people up to age 25.

Funding from the Project ADDER government initiative enabled a significant increase in the number of young people accessing treatment through the service in 2021. In addition, 92 per cent of young people successfully completed their treatment in East Sussex - compared to 81 percent nationally.

As a result of these successes, the former Under 19 Service has received additional funding for new staff, including health practitioners, who will deliver drug and alcohol support services to young people aged up to 25 across the county.

As well as offering specialist treatment services to young people who are using alcohol, drugs, 'legal highs' and research chemicals, the service also provides advice and support to parents and carers.

Cases

Each month I will give summaries/updates for a sample of current cases across Northern Rother. I currently have about 12 which are being progressed.

- **Flooding in Northbridge Street, Robertsbridge.** This continues to be a top issue with Huw Merriman's office dealing with National Highways, me dealing with Highways East Sussex and Councillor Sue Prochak dealing with Rother district council. There is some small progress – for example Highways East Sussex have raised a drop kerb which was enabling relatively small amounts of rain to go into some back gardens, but the main response needs to come from National Highways. More interim measures have been taken – for example there are now sandbags down one side of the A21 to help prevent water from land coming across the carriageway, into the layby and then to Northbridge Street. (Footnote – not checked but I believe these may no longer be needed as the blocked ditch has apparently been cleared). Immense pressure is being put on National Highways by Huw's office. One challenge is assessing if measures are working given that flooding does not occur every year and seems to depend on a combination of factors. Recent experience has apparently been good, with no evidence of flooding.