

Report from county councillor Jeremy Birch November 2012

- **Highways Winter Preparations:** I'm afraid Winter weather is approaching and the County Council has recently produced and update on its preparations. All of the gritters have been serviced over the summer months and Operation Snow Drop has been held which involves sending the gritters out to ensure both they and the drivers are ready for the winter ahead. Salt stockpiles have recently been topped up to normal starting stock of 10,000 tonnes. Grit bins are being refilled – let me know if any have been missed. The County Council now has a policy whereby residents associations or groups who want additional bins will be asked them. Details of this can be found on the County Council's website:

<http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/roads/maintenance/saltingandgritting/gritbins.htm>

A reminder also that the County Council gritting routes are published on the website:

<http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/roads/maintenance/saltingandgritting/find/default.aspx>

The County Council will keep residents informed about when the gritters are going out via the website:

<http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/roads/maintenance/saltingandgritting/default.htm>

- **Ore Fire Station downgrade:** Unfortunately the resolution moved by my Labour colleague Cllr Phil Scott to support the campaign against the downgrade of the fire station was voted down by the county council's Conservative majority. The consultation on the Fire Authority's proposal to downgrade Ore continues and individuals and organisations should definitely respond. There is a public consultation meeting with the deputy chief fire officer on November 7th at The Hastings Centre on The Ridge, between 6.30pm and 8.30pm. All are welcome. The final decision will be taken by the Fire Authority on 13th December.
- **Old Town Traffic Review:** Some time ago the County Council agreed to review traffic management issues in the Old Town; they will now be appointing the consultants to carry out in mid-November. The Old Town Hastings Study will include an assessment of the traffic impacts of the Jerwood Gallery development and the changes made to the A259/Rock a Nore Road junction. The outcomes of the assessment will also be used to determine if the original pedestrian improvements in the lower end of the High Street, deferred in 2010, are still appropriate or whether there are alternative proposals to improve pedestrian safety in High Street. In addition, the consultants will be asked to review the

traffic signal arrangements at the A259/Rock a Nore Road junction to investigate potential options to address the problems of delay experienced by the bus operators which could include bus priority measures. The outcomes of the study are expected in February 2013.

- **Courthouse Street:** To tackle the on-going breaching of the pedestrianisation of Courthouse Street it is proposed to install a swing gate in the street which will be lockable in either the open or shut position using a padlock. A key would be provided to all residents and traders in the street but naturally the barrier would need to be self managed in receiving deliveries and visitors. The proposal has passed the safety audit process. The barrier would be located where the road surface changes approximately 7 metres (23 feet) into the street to allow for a vehicle to wait in the mouth of the junction without causing obstruction to traffic using the High Street while waiting for the gate to be unlocked. An additional lowered kerb will be provided to the east of the gate to allow access to the street for pedestrians. Consultation responses are requested no later than the 23rd November to Parking and Highways Service, Aquila House, Breeds Place, Hastings TN34 3UY.
- **Isobel Blackman Centre:** We have to be alert to what might be proposed for the Centre. The County Council has put on hold their tendering process to find one organisation to run the day care facility and the community hub. They were due to announce the successful organisation in September and for it to take over in January. The reason for this pause is the council's budget planning which includes a huge £30 million cut in the adult social care budget over the next three years. I am absolutely committed to maintaining the Isobel Blackman Centre as a day care facility for older residents in the Old Hastings and Tressell area and indeed the whole of Hastings. It is a vital facility for the users and their partners, carers and families. I will keep everyone updated on what is happening.
- **All Saints Primary:** The school was found to be failing by Ofsted inspectors earlier this year but pleasingly the recent Ofsted monitoring report (September 2012) indicates that much has been achieved since. The report notes the school's target for 90% of teaching to be good or better by December 2012. The County Council-led Interim Executive Board which replaced the previous board of governors will continue to regularly monitor the progress of the school and the County will continue to provide additional support to the school until July 2013. This will hopefully ensure that the school comes out of the Ofsted weak category within the specified time frame.
- **Councillor Surgeries:** I have held two councillor surgeries recently along with borough council colleagues in both parts of the Old Hastings and Tressell county division – in All Saints Church Hall and in the Bridge Community Centre. If you were unable to get along do please feel to phone or E-mail me.

Cllr Jeremy Birch – 01424 425585