

# Wealden News

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from the



Conservatives

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## LOADS OF RUBBISH

*Councillor Roy Galley, Wealden's Portfolio Holder for Economic Development & Waste Management, updates us on a hot topic, and one which we can't ignore: Wealden's rubbish*

It seems I'm writing a lot on rubbish recently but it is a hot topic.

**W**E HAVE some serious problems with our waste contractor as we enter the last year of Kier's contract.

Frankly they are not managing the contract well. They are moving resources from one job to another rather than resourcing the contract fully. We have seen an increase in missed bins from an average of about 150 per week to one week in May when it was 812. You have to realise, however, that they empty

approximately 90,000 bins a week, but 812 is a lot of households not getting the service they deserve and is an understatement because we can only sort out problems which people report to the Wealden Contact Centre or Waste Management Team, either by phone or online.

We have had forthright discussions with them so we now have an Action Plan for them to put in more staff, doing extra rounds, and hiring a couple of extra vehicles. This has meant missed bins down to 327 per week at the end of May. We are keeping an eagle eye on progress. More resource has also been put into the waste team because all this adds pressure on them to try and sort it out. That can be difficult when we are acting through a third party who is actually doing the job on the ground.

On a more positive note, we now have three confirmed bidders for the next contract to start in July 2019 and they all seem on the ball. The new contract may cost us more and we have emphasised quality rather than cheapness as a main criterion for awarding the contract.

We are also looking at what action a local Council can take on reducing the single-use plastic, and I'm looking to arrange discussions with businesses in the next few weeks.



## ELEVATED to serve as Mayor

*The Chariman of Crowborough Conservatives, Councillor Greg Rose, has been elected the town's Mayor for the forthcoming year. Here he talks about his new, ambassadorial role for the Wealden town.*

**I**T IS an honour to have been chosen and I think it's a momentous occasion when councillors in a rural town such as Crowborough elect an openly gay man and his husband as the public face of the town council.

The fact it was not even raised as an issue that the Mayor and Mayoress would both be men shows what a modern, open and equal place Crowborough is, and that is the message I intend to spread far and wide across Sussex during my term as Mayor.

I'm not usually one to stand on my soapbox about being gay, however if by being open about my sexuality, and showing that it hasn't stopped me being successful in life, helps just one person who is currently struggling to come out, or deal with their sexuality, then I've done my job and I'm a happy Mayor!

I have already had the honour of attending functions as Mayor, including the Crow-

borough and District Chamber of Commerce meeting, and a training session to learn CPR taught by the Crowborough First Responders (photographed below). I was first elected in 2015 to represent Crowborough East Ward as both a Wealden District Councillor and Crowborough Town Councillor.

I hit the ground running: supporting local businesses, charities and promoting Crowborough as a great place to live and work. I love living in Crowborough: I may not be born and bred in Sussex, but I feel like I belong here. Crowborough has given me so much over the past seven years and now it's my turn to give something back. I am delighted to be working alongside Cllr Martyn Garrett who was elected for a second term as Deputy Mayor.



## Wealden's year

by Wealden District Council Leader Cllr Bob Standley



The Local Plan will be published at the end of June and, if past form is anything to go by, then there will be considerable interest in the document.

Whilst the plan covers a wide range of topics housing numbers are likely to be the centre of attention. The Local Plan is due to be debated and voted on at Full Council in July and, after going out for public representation, will be subject to a Examination in Public by a Planning Inspector in early 2019 and then, hopefully, approved by the Secretary of State.

Waste Contract - Kier's contract comes to an end in June 2019 and WDC are significantly down the road of finding a replacement contractor for both waste collection and roadside cleaning.

Elections - In less than 12 months the elections take place for a new Council. The number of councillors has been reduced from 55 to 45 so all the Wards have new boundaries. Final selection of candidates will take place in the next few weeks. Any assistance members can give during the election campaign will be most appreciated.

## N. KOREAN PEACEMAKER

*ONE OF our MEPs, Nirj Deva, worked tirelessly behind the scenes in the process which has led to North Korea's historic freeze on nuclear weapons.*



*In his capacity as Chairman of the European Parliament's Delegation for Relations with the Korean Peninsula, Nirj Deva said: "Following meetings over recent weeks with most of the international parties involved, I truly believed that North Korea would be prepared to accept a freeze on its nuclear development -- a highly significant step for Kim Jong Un to take.*

*"I hope it will be a precursor to further engagement and, hopefully, a move towards our ultimate goal which is the removal of all nuclear weapons and the Korean Peninsula being declared a nuclear-free zone. Nirj Deva is pictured (third from left) at a Korean Global Forum".*



Wealden Conservatives

# MISSION EAST SUSSEX



The Leader of East Sussex County Council, Cllr Keith Glazier (pictured with Amber Rudd) talks about the challenges facing the county in the year ahead.

IN FEBRUARY of this year East Sussex County Council agreed to spend £371million for services in 2018/19. However, a sharp reduction in funding from central Government and rising demand for the services the council provides meant tough decisions had to be made. Savings of £17 million were agreed for the year ahead, which brings the amount saved by the council since the start of the decade to £130 million, enough money to provide care for 6,500 vulnerable adults or repair 2.6 million potholes.

Wherever possible, savings are being made from back office or support services. The council has already reduced the number of senior managers by 30 per cent since 2010, and £1.4 million of the 2018/19 savings will

come from the sharing of finance, IT and HR functions with other local authorities.

But this only makes some of the savings needed. The council must also change the way it delivers some services, and stop providing others altogether – focusing now on delivering the services we are legally obliged to. The planned savings include reviewing many adult social care services, reducing funding for school improvement services, changes to household waste and recycling sites, and changes to the county's library services. Where changes are being proposed to service delivery we have consulted widely, before any final decisions are made.

An increase in Council Tax was also agreed in February: this is to minimise reductions in services and focus as many resources as possible on the most vulnerable – for example, the frail elderly and children in care. Council Tax has increased by 2.99 per cent, with an additional three per cent to meet the rising cost of social care. Of course, asking residents to pay more is not something we do lightly, but the additional contributions helps us support some of the most vulnerable people across the county.

We also continue to lobby central Government for a fairer funding deal that works for East Sussex. Over the course of the last year we have attempted to highlight to Government the ongoing challenges the county faces and this will continue to be a key focus for the months ahead.

## MOVING BOUNDARIES

Cllr Phil Dixon on the proposed boundary review as it affects us in Wealden.

### Why are we having a boundary review?

In order to make elections fair, it is necessary to review parliamentary boundaries so that the constituencies have a more equal number



of voters. Demographic changes mean that some areas are over represented and some are under represented.

### What is different this time?

The Cameron government proposed reducing the number of MPs from 650 to 600 which will result in major changes. The size limits for constituencies are also much more rigid. They will have to have between 71,031 and 78,507 electors, a maximum range of 5% above and below the current quota. This also means more changes in future reviews to keep within the limits.

### What is the timetable?

The review began in early 2016 and has already completed three stages of consultation. The Boundary Commission is due to publish final proposals in September which will go to **Parliament. If passed, the new constituencies will come into force immediately.**

### What will change for us?

Well, everything really. The Wealden Constituency, formed in 1983, will be abolished and split between a new constituency of Tunbridge Wells and Crowborough, a new constituency of Lewes and Uckfield and an altered constituency of Bexhill and Battle. The Tunbridge Wells and Crowborough constituency will, unusually, be a cross-county constituency.

### And for the Party?

Currently the Conservatives are suffering a handicap of up to 10 seats, due to the unequal boundaries and, according to some, might have won a majority at the last election if the boundaries had been fairer.

### Is this final?

Very likely. The Boundary Commission have said that they will need new and compelling evidence to make any changes as a result of the last consultation.

### Will it actually happen?

The big question! The Government will need the support of the DUP to pass the changes and there are some Conservatives that are not happy. However, the DUP are much more relaxed with the last set of proposals for Northern Ireland and one feels that the Government must believe that they can win or they would have abandoned the review last year and restarted the process with the existing number of MPs for completion in 2020.

## Talk about it!



The next Wealden Political Discussion Group evening takes place on Wednesday 11 July at the Boar's Head Inn Nr Crowborough, (Boars Head Rd, Boarshead TN6 3GR). The topic is 'The Nanny State' and we look forward to welcoming members, their friends, colleagues and neighbours. This will be an interesting subject and you are warmly invited to bring a supporter with you. **TO REGISTER your interest, please let the Office know by either email or calling 01273 937661.**

### University Education

In May, our monthly programme took us to Uckfield for an evening on the topic of University Education, as Phil Dixon explains.

It was a wide-ranging discussion in which there was a consensus around the fact that many students are going to university to study academic courses when a more vocational path of study or apprenticeships would be more beneficial.

The value of some degrees was questioned and the growing tendency for employers to demand degrees from candidates for roles that shouldn't require them has added to the problem. There was also great concern over student debt which will never be repaid and general agreement that student financing needs to be reviewed, although holding to the principle that students will have to pay fees for most post-18 education. Universities should also be held to greater account for the quality of the courses they provide, the meeting concluded.



Keep up-to-date wherever you are by Liking our Facebook page and Following us on Twitter

We have been working hard to revamp the Wealden Conservatives website and add regular news stories at [www.wealdenconservatives.com](http://www.wealdenconservatives.com) while Trevor in the Office tries to update the Association's Facebook feed every day - so be sure to check it out: [fb.com/wealdenconservatives](https://fb.com/wealdenconservatives) and give our page a 'Like'.

### Tweeting

Our Twitter feed is the place to catch-up on the political scene internationally, at Westminster and here in Wealden. [www.twitter.com/wealdentories](https://twitter.com/wealdentories) is the place to go. We re-tweet from some big names in politics as well as snippets which we hope will be of wider interest.

As Trevor explains: "The website allows for in-depth articles and news stories from a variety of sources as they affect us here in Wealden; Facebook is ideal for a constant stream of matters of interest while Twitter is perfect for quick snippets and reaction."

