

# Polegate Town Council

## Annual Town Assembly set for 8th April

The annual meeting of Polegate's electors takes place on Monday the 8th April at 7pm at the United Reformed Church Hall, Victoria Road, Polegate. The Mayor and his fellow Councillors will be informing residents about the previous year's activities, and representatives from East Sussex County Council and Wealden District Council will be in attendance to explain the part night lighting scheme and the changes to waste collection in the town. There will also be an opportunity to ask questions. The meeting is open to all, but attendees must be on the Polegate electoral register to vote on any issues raised during the meeting. Polegate's Town Councillors and staff look forward to meeting you on the night.

## Call Wealden to stay green

In July Wealden District Council (WDC) will be improving its kerbside recycling services to include glass and a wider range of plastics. As part of the changes, Wealden residents will need to register with WDC before the 31st March if they wish to continue to receive a free green garden waste collection for lawn mowings, hedge trimmings and other green waste. The service will require residents to have an extra bin. To register, call WDC on 01323 443322 or go to [www.wealden.gov.uk/register](http://www.wealden.gov.uk/register)

## It's all gone to pot!

The expression 'gone to pot' is said to originate from the time of Good Queen Bess, when bones and other bits of leftover food would be tossed into the cooking pot to make soup. None of which has anything to do with pot holes.

You have probably noticed that there are quite a few pot holes appearing around Polegate, not to mention the rest of the County. It seems that the cause is not only the usual ice and snow, but also

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the excessive rainfall we experienced earlier in the year. If you spot a pothole in your travels, please let East Sussex County Council Highways know by calling them on 0345 60 80 193, or by email at [highways@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:highways@eastsussex.gov.uk)

## Pointing the way to Polegate's hidden gems



Your humble editor has previously mentioned the bucolic haven that is the Brightling Road Leisure Grounds, and hopes that more

of you have made the short walk from the town centre to explore the area following its mention in the newsletter last April.

For those of you who still haven't found it, help is now at hand. Walk a couple of hundred yards down the path beyond the William Daly gates, and you will encounter our shiny new fingerpost, which points the way not only to the meadow, but also to the miniature railway run by the Polegate and District Model Engineering Club.

We look forward to seeing you down there. When we get a bit of decent weather, that is...

## Wind farm plans rejected

The Council's Planning Committee has unanimously recommended the rejection of Galliford Try's revised plans for a wind farm at Shepham Lane. Local people at the meeting on the 14th March spoke for and against the scheme, which would see three wind turbines sited in an area close to existing and projected housing developments. The final decision as to whether the scheme goes ahead rests with Wealden District Council.

## PTC sets zero budget increase

Due to major changes in the way that housing benefit is calculated and the subsequent changes in tax base, Polegate Town Council found itself in an extremely difficult position regarding council tax this year. The Council had to delay setting the budget until this information was provided by both central government and the district council.

The updated position has finally been clarified and this year although the precept will go down a grant will be given to the Town Council to offset the reduction in precept income of £30,286. This is based on a new budget of 0% increase. Although the Town Council has to pay for services which have been increased by inflation and above, inevitably some services will have to be cut. This year the expenditure reduction will affect the youth and elderly sectors of our budget, with further cutbacks expected next year.

ESCC provide a targeted youth support in the form of a youth club, which has until now has been paid for by the Town Council. The service can no longer be afforded by the Town Council and so from now on it will be left in the hands of ESCC Targeted Youth support to determine whether the service continues in Polegate. The service is only utilised by a small number of children but the cost to the residents is high, taking up around 4% of the total Town budget.

The other casualty will be another ESCC provision that is paid for by the Town Council, the school crossing patrol. Council have resolved that this provision can no longer continue in full and have been liaising with Polegate School to see if they are in a position to cover the costs of this service to enable it to continue. This year the council will meet half of the cost via earmarked reserves and the other half will be funded by Polegate School. The Council is unlikely to be able to fund this service at all next year.

The tea parties are also to be cut to one per year as this is considered to be a desirable but luxury event.

Within this year's budget the Council has listened to your opinions on weed killing, and although ESCC highways will be cutting back, Polegate Town Council has made a provision to do two extra weed sprayings per year within the 0% increase by making cuts elsewhere.

Your Town Councillors and their phone numbers: Chris BERRY 486705; Edward BOARD 486508; Don BROADBENT 482896; Michael CLEWETT 486647; Malcolm CUNNINGHAM (Mayor) 486260; George GIBBS 484109; John HARMER (Deputy Mayor) 485801; Joseph O'RIORDAN 486021; Hugh PARKER 486478; Margaret PIPER 485611; Mark PYBUS 482128; Daniel SHING, Stephen SHING 489265; Jill VOYCE 486429; Tim VOYCE 486429

In the future as the grants are reduced in order to keep the council tax the same, the Town Council will need to look more closely at all the services it offers finding alternative ways to generate income and save within the budgets allocated.

Polegate Town Council always endeavours to provide you with a cost effective good service and will keep you informed about the changes that are likely to take place as often as possible.

## In a Polegate Country Garden...



Here's an early warning for all you keen gardeners and allotment holders. Polegate's ever-popular best kept garden and allotment competition will take place around June/July. Keep watching our notice boards, website and Twitter feed for further information. Happy gardening!

## No loos is bad news

Unless you have been exploring the Amazon rain forests or leading a climb of Mount Everest, it will not have escaped your notice that there is a possibility that the public toilets in Polegate High Street may close. Here at the Council offices we have received numerous enquiries and complaints on the subject. The toilets are run and maintained by Wealden District Council and a few years ago (2008/9) the District Council made a decision to close all public toilets and seek partners in running a community toilet scheme. We have now been informed that the assessment is likely to take place in the next three months, with a possible closure of the toilets around October 2013 – April 2014.

Due to cuts expected by the District Council following central Government legislation changes, it is likely that cuts of £30000 may need to be made to the Town Council budget. With imminent cuts and restrictions on raising the Town Council's portion of the Council Tax, it is unlikely that Polegate Town Council will be able to fund the operation of the toilets. Refurbishment is expected to be in the region of £50000 and annual operating costs at least £7000. Alternative solutions are being investigated. The Council will be looking at the issue on the 25th March 2013.