

# Tressell Ward councillor's report from Peter Chowney

*4th February 2012*

## National Issues

Eric Pickles has announced details of his £250m fund for 'bringing back weekly bin collections'. This was never going to be anywhere near enough to reinstate weekly bin collections in all local authorities, as it's spread over five years and the total for reinstating weekly collections everywhere would have been in the region of £350m a year. Launching the fund, Pickles said he was 'fighting the Town Hall taliban' and added that 'Labour's barmy bin rules have made putting out your rubbish more complicated than solving a Rubik's cube.' Really? For you, Eric, perhaps.

The truth is of course somewhat different. No council would be able to get anywhere near enough from the fund to reinstate weekly collections, and in the detailed prospectus, that isn't really what it's about. Councils will be able to bid for money to introduce weekly food waste collections, along with incentive schemes to encourage people to recycle. Many councils are likely to be interested in bidding for money for this (including Hastings). But the chances of any council anywhere that now has alternate weekly collections of recyclables and residual waste (and most now do) returning to weekly collections, considering the huge additional cost, are extremely small.

## Hastings Issues:

From February 6<sup>th</sup>, the **informal consultation on the Development Management Plan** begins. This will run until 27<sup>th</sup> April. The DMP comprises the site specific map, which shows all the proposed potential sites for housing land, the development control policies, which are the existing and proposed new policies that are used to assess planning applications (new ones include, for example, a policy on space standards in housing, and design quality standards) and the 13 area plans, each of which will in effect constitute a development control policy. The consultation is on the website at:

[http://www.hastings.gov.uk/environment\\_planning/planning/local\\_development\\_framework/ldf\\_consult/](http://www.hastings.gov.uk/environment_planning/planning/local_development_framework/ldf_consult/)

There has already been a series of pre-consultation workshops for local groups and activists, and there will be a series of public exhibitions of the plans, with planning officers on hand. These are:

**Monday 6 February, 3 - 6pm** The Bridge Community Centre,

**Wednesday 8 February, 10am - 1pm** Gensing and Central St Leonards Community Centre,

**Friday 10 February, 3pm - 6pm** The Stade Hall,

**Tuesday 14 February, 12noon - 7pm** Town Hall,

**Thursday 16 February, 10am - 1pm** Tilekiln Community Centre, Tilebarn Road,

**Saturday 3 March, 9am - 5pm** Priory Meadow Shopping Centre

As well as this, planning officers are offering to come to meetings of residents' groups and the suchlike, and there will also be an exhibition in the planning reception area at Aquila throughout the consultation (with forms available and officers on hand if people have questions). The whole shebang was advertised in the Observer last Friday. This consultation is non-statutory, in advance of the 'formal' consultation that will take place on the DMP after it's been amended using feedback from this advance consultation.

The Development Management Plan will go to cabinet in September 2012, it then goes out for a 12 week formal consultation, to the inspector in March 2013, examination in public in June and July 2013, inspector's report in September 2013, with formal adoption in December 2013. And that's that for 15 years - unless government policy changes, of course ...

Separately, our **Planning Strategy** (the document containing the council's core planning policies) is about to go through its formal consultation, having already been subjected to the informal, advance consultation. The Planning Strategy formal consultation will begin on 3<sup>rd</sup> Feb., for 12 weeks. It then has to be agreed by full council in October, following which it goes to the inspector for an examination in public in January-February 2013, the inspectors report is published in May 2103, and the council formally adopts the strategy in July 2013.

There's also a consultation currently going on about the **council's proposed budget for the coming year (2012-13)**. That's been fairly low profile, as we set a two year budget last year, so there's not a lot of change. Savings from the senior staff restructuring now find their way into the budget, with council tax and car parking charges frozen for the coming year. If you want to see the details, find it at:

[http://www.hastings.gov.uk/decisions\\_democracy/voting\\_petitioning\\_having\\_your\\_say/current\\_consultation/current\\_consultations/#corporate](http://www.hastings.gov.uk/decisions_democracy/voting_petitioning_having_your_say/current_consultation/current_consultations/#corporate)

The big problems will come with next year's budget, when we have to somehow deal with a £2.5m cut in government grant, the highest cut for any council in South East England ...

I chaired the first 'official' meeting of the **Hastings Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG) this week**, after its formal launch a couple of weeks ago, and the publication of the action plan to spend the £1m European Axis 4 funding we've received. At the FLAG meeting, we set up a number of working groups for specific projects, as we're required to do. These were:

- Bulldozers & shingle group
  - finding a way of replacing the ageing 1950s bulldozers with some kind of equipment that will manage beach shingle levels
- Fish market improvements group
  - planning improvements to the fishmarket, including flooring, refrigerators, etc
- Seafood Training Kitchen group
  - planning and equipping the seafood cookery training kitchen at the Stade Hall
- Educational initiatives group
  - organising the 'classroom on the coast' to teach children and others about fish and fisheries, and other initiatives
- The interestingly-named 'fishermen's equipment group'
  - actually about onshore equipment to support the fishing boats
- Ecotourism group
  - Developing tourism initiatives around the Hastings sustainable fishery, and Hastings fish as a premium product.

There will be other working groups, for additional projects, including a lobbying group to publicise and make the case for the Hastings fishery, and to fight for a fairer quota allocation for our inshore fishing boats.

And I'm sure you all followed with great interest the 'Sun Wars' story, where **Eastbourne claimed to be the 'sunniest place in the UK'** in 2011, ignoring the fact that Hastings had recorded more hours of sunshine. And Eastbourne cheat by having their sun detector up on Beachy Head, so it could be thick fog on the seafront (ours is in White Rock Gardens). Anyway, this bit of nonsense got us quite a lot of press coverage, with me on television being 'outraged' about Eastbourne stealing our 'sunniest place in the UK' title. It even reached the national press, and got some decent publicity for both towns, to be honest. Anyway, the postscript to all that is that not only had they ignored Hastings, but they'd also ignored Ryde, on

the Isle of Wight, which was actually sunnier than both Hastings and Eastbourne. Fortunately, the press didn't seem to notice that ...

## **Tressell Issues**

The **Broomgrove allotments saga** rumbles on. The Planning application to vary planning conditions was approved by planning committee, and allows the site to be finished off as it is, with just the block of flats on Broomgrove Road built. But there's still a lot of work needed, to reinstate the footpath across the site and to bring Broomgrove Road up to adoptable standard, both of which the developers must still do before the flats can be occupied. In theory, they could develop 'phase 2' of the site at a later date based on their existing planning permission, but this is in practice pretty much impossible, as they'd have to re-excavate the road that was dug out and filled in again – one of the reasons it was filled in and the development wasn't completed was because it was too difficult to stabilise the land. There are rumours about the developer wanting to get access to the site from Farley Bank, but the Highway Authority and Amicus Horizon housing association (who own the play area at the end of Farley bank, which the road would have to go through) have objected to this in the past. And that would, of course, require a new planning application.

The developers who got planning permission to **build housing on Ore Business Park** have gone quiet too, since they discovered that their plans included 13 car parking spaces on land owned by Amicus Horizon. Amicus aren't about to let them use their land for car parking – and without those 13 spaces, they can't build their development. Watch this space for further news ...

And talking of **Amicus Horizon**, they've now got funding to **redevelop the site on Farley Bank** where the maisonette block was demolished a few years ago. But they've torn up their earlier plans for more flats, and say they want to carry out a 'blank canvas' consultation, asking local people what they want to see there, based on a requirement to build a mix of social rented housing and shared ownership housing. They came to the Ore Valley Forum meeting recently to ask – most there wanted to see houses with gardens, not flats. I suggested that the social rented houses should have four or five bedrooms, as there's such a shortage of those for rent in Hastings. They will be holding a consultation session at The Bridge community centre soon, date to be announced.

And **Ore Community Land Trust** will be holding a public meeting to discuss the future of the Upper Ore Valley, as part of the consultation on the Development Management Plan. A senior Hastings planning officer will be present to listen to views, so make sure you make your voice heard. **The meeting is at the Salvation Army Hall, Old London Road, at 2pm on Saturday, 3<sup>rd</sup> March.**

And lastly, Jay and I have been out door knocking in Deepdene Gardens and Waterside Close, delivering our latest local newsletter, which is available for download on the Tressell Councillors website. One of the issues raised was problems with motorbikes using the footpath between waterside Close and Quantock Gardens. So barriers are now going to be installed, to prevent this.

That'll do for now – if you'd like more information on any of this, contact me on 01424 436032, or e-mail at [cllr.peter.chowney@hastings.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.peter.chowney@hastings.gov.uk)

You can see our latest local newsletter (and all our other newsletters) on the Tressell Councillors website at: [www.tressell.org.uk](http://www.tressell.org.uk).

We also have a Facebook page at: <http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Tressell-Councillors/118961521479825>

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