

CROWBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL

To all Members of the **ENVIRONMENT** Committee (with copies to all other Members for information).

You are summoned to attend a meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT** Committee to be held at the Town Hall, The Broadway, Crowborough on Tuesday 29th September 2015 at 7.30 pm when it is proposed to transact the following business:-



Town Clerk
23rd September 2015

ALL MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Questions from members of the public (15 minutes maximum)

1. **APOLOGIES**
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
3. **MINUTES**
 - 3.1. **Minutes – 28th July 2015**
 - 3.2. **Matters Outstanding (including reports on updates)**
 - 3.2.1 **Lighting improvements at Jarvis Brook pedestrian crossing (7073)**
 - 3.2.2 **Crowborough Cross Traffic Signals Improvement Scheme**
 - 3.2.3 **Strengthening Local Relationships meeting – 21st October**
4. **RAILWAY REPORT**

Report from John Coleman.
5. **HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT**
 - 5.1 **Proposed change to speed limit on B2100 at Jarvis Brook**
 - 5.2 **Bus service 228 and 229 – changes introduced 1st September**
 - 5.3 **Bus stops – improvements**
 - 5.4 **North Wealden Community Transport Partnership Limited report April-July 2015**
6. **ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**
 - 6.1 **Report on I Care for Crowborough event 21st – 26th September**

- 6.2 Report on the additional support for litter clearance during the summer
 - 6.3 Request for summer planting in the anniversary bed to celebrate the 50th anniversary of twinning with Montargis
- 7. CCTV
 - 7.1 Information report and future contract
- 8. CROWBOROUGH'S NATURAL HABITATS
 - 8.1 To review Ranger's report of tasks completed against Management Plans and other work
- 9. FINANCE
 - 9.1 Management Account Reports to 31st July and 31st August 2015
- 10. URGENT MATTERS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN FOR NOTING and/or INCLUSION ON A FUTURE AGENDA

Report for Environment Committee meeting 29th September 2015

3.2. Matters Outstanding (including reports on updates)

3.2.1 Lighting improvements at Jarvis Brook pedestrian crossing (7073)

Improvements completed.

3.2.2 Crowborough Cross Traffic Signals Improvement Scheme

A revised scheme has been approved by the Road Safety Team and will be installed by the end of October.

3.2.3 Strengthening Local Relationships meeting – 21st October

This meeting has been rescheduled for 21st October.

4. RAIL REPORT

Please see attached report.

5. HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT

5.1 Proposed change to speed limit on B2100 at Jarvis Brook

East Sussex County Council is proposing to introduce a 40mph speed limit on the B2100 Rotherfield Road from the end of the existing 30mph to a point between the junctions of Clackhams Lane and Palesgate Lane. In 2011, the Town Council recommended an extension of the 30mph limit in the area.

5.2 Bus service 228 and 229 – changes introduced 1st September

Please see attached information regarding the changes introduced to bus services 228 and 229.

5.3 Bus stops – improvements

East Sussex County Council is carrying out improvements to a number of existing bus stops to make them more accessible and visible. The works include:

- Provision of passenger hard-standing boarding areas
- Installation of 3m black steel poles
- Fitting of bus stop flags showing name of bus stop


Work is progressing on the provision of additional bus stops on either side of Croft Road near Waitrose; parking will not be affected.

5.4 North Wealden Community Transport Partnership Limited report April-July 2015

Please see attached report.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

6.1 Report on I Care for Crowborough event 21st – 26th September

The I Care for Crowborough  week was launched on Monday 21st September at the Bluebell Wood with the help of pupils from Ashdown School, Waitrose staff members, local volunteers and councillors. There will be a verbal report of the activities of the week at the meeting.

6.2 Report on the additional support for litter clearance during the summer

During the summer, additional support is provided from the seasonal staff for the clearance of litter and litter bin emptying; this year 120 additional hours were required.

6.3 Request for summer planting in the anniversary bed to celebrate the 50th anniversary of twinning with Montargis

The Town Council has been asked to plant red, white and blue flowers in the anniversary bed as part of the 50th anniversary celebrations. The planting will be undertaken in-house at no additional cost.

7. CCTV

7.1 Information report and future contract

The Town Council has four CCTV cameras and these are located at Crowborough Cross, The Piazza, Chapel Green and at Jarvis Brook. Crowborough is part of the Sussex CCTV Partnership which is run by Sussex Police; the CCTV contract expired 4th August 2015. Sussex Police is reviewing maintenance contract options with the aim of providing new contracts in 2016.

8. CROWBOROUGH'S NATURAL HABITATS

8.1 To review Ranger's report of tasks completed against Management Plans and other work

Please see attached report.

RAIL REPORT for the ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING**29th SEPTEMBER 2015****MEETINGS ATTENDED****Uckfield Railway Line Parishes Committee 1st September 201**

This meeting was also the Annual General Meeting of the Committee and the Treasurer/ Secretary presented the Accounts for the year which were approved but did indicate that a modest additional funding for expenses (largely for postage) would soon be needed to enable the Committee to continue. It was agreed that the parishes and towns represented should be written to and invited to provide further contributions. This would be the first such request for 4 years and it is hoped that this can be agreed by all including Crowborough. The present officers were re-elected.

GTR (Southern) was represented at the meeting but unfortunately the anticipated Network Rail representative was unable to attend.

The Committee discussed and complained of the current poor performance of the Uckfield line services both in the peak and off-peak times. The problems included cancelations, turn-backs and late running. It appeared that some other services were as badly, or worse, affected than ours. Problems were still largely down to staff shortages, train failures and infrastructure problems. Suicides and trespass incidents are also now increasing problems. The staffing problem is being tackled by the ongoing recruitment programme. The rise in train failures is difficult to deal with as the defects appear to be of a random nature. This is very disappointing as the trains have all been recently overhauled and are being maintained by reputedly one of the best teams in the country. This is not very encouraging for the forthcoming overhaul and rehabilitation programme for the eagerly awaited additional trains.

[Last week, the September progress report for the Service Improvement Plan was published and reported on the number of improvements being undertaken by Network Rail with regard to their infrastructure problems. It also reported that the most recent timetable changes did in fact seem to have significantly improved the morning peak services and benefited the evenings as well.]

The additional four trains saga has taken another turn. It may not actually be practicable to convert these trains from 3-car units to 2 and 4-car units as used by Southern! Southern are now re-looking at the possibility of running them as 3-car units. The undertaking now is that, in any event, they will be available by July 2016 as promised to and/or by the DfT.

Southern were able to brief the Committee on the Network Rail platform lengthening project and the other planned concurrent works on the line.

Contractors are at work and a main compound has been set up at Hever.

Temporary works crossings have been put in place at several stations.

Platform works have started at Edenbridge Town and Cowden.

Ground clearance has started at Ashurst and elsewhere.

Some signals have very recently been renewed and re-positioned, including one at Crowborough.

The alternative bus services to be provided during the future planned engineering possessions and line closures were discussed and some suggestions for consideration by Southern were provided.

Southern confirmed that it was working very hard to provide as good a replacement bus service as it could achieve during what will be quite demanding conditions.

The Committee were told by a member that it had been heard that under GTR policy notices with regard to replacement buses would no longer be provided by Southern, as Thameslink didn't do this. The Committee requested Southern to check if this policy change had been implemented and, if indeed it had, to reverse what was considered to be a very backward step ASAP.

At least we were told all replacement services for the planned works discussed earlier will be well publicised.

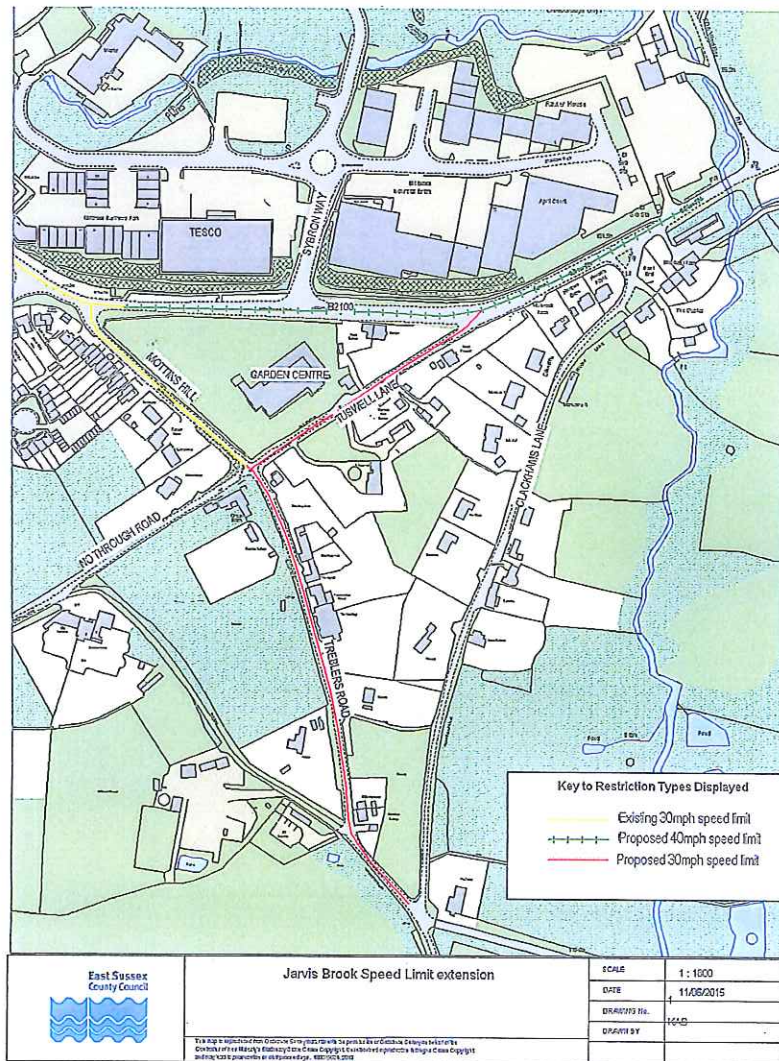
It has been learned that the Uckfield station car park is nearing completion, with work having restarted after resolution of a drainage issue and may soon actually be opened.

OTHER

Network Rail has published its Sussex Route Study. This concludes, as did the earlier draft, that in the short to medium term there is not sufficient value in restoring the Uckfield – Lewes, link either by reason of offering passengers an additional route from the South Coast to London or by offering a diversionary route in times of emergency or engineering works.

Railfuture (the Pro-Rail Lobby Group) has published some interesting propositions with regard to how, despite the above, the new study requested by the Chancellor may be conditioned by the wider scope that he requires to be considered. Essentially, Railfuture suggests that the terms of reference for this report define a comprehensive list of potential benefits to be produced and requires the study to provide a viable solution to providing as many of these benefits as possible. This solution could, it is suggested be staged, with a lower budget initial early stage, including re-opening the Lewes – Uckfield link, which would lead on to a second stage which would make further use of the infrastructure gained to provide the regional benefits. Details may be found on their web-site.

A notice has been posted at Eridge station advising passengers that unless the parking of cars in the nearby roads becomes safer, more responsible and considerate to residents and other road users then the roads concerned will be totally double yellow-lined and enforcement action will be taken as necessary thereafter.



AGENDA ITEM 5.2

228,229	Tunbridge Wells -- Crowborough -- Jarvis Brook	<p>Service renumbered in Crowborough with the section from the town centre via Whitehill to Alderbrook to be 229 (in both directions) and the section from town centre via Montargis Way/Crowborough Hill, Rail Station and Jarvis Brook to Alderbrook to be 228.</p> <p>Timetable completely revamped during daytime with the off-peak service operating between Tunbridge Wells, Crowborough town centre and Crowborough Station or Alderbrook as service 228. There will be a half-hourly frequency in both directions between Tunbridge Wells, Crowborough town centre, Montargis Way and Crowborough Station with alternate journeys serving Hill Rise, Medway, Forest Rise/Forest Dene and journeys extending beyond Crowborough Station to Western Road, Walshes Road and Alderbrook on an hourly basis. Buses will no longer serve Old Lane, running between Hill Rise and Crowborough Hill via Green Lane.</p> <p>Croft Road, Whitehill Road and the western end of Farmor Road will be served only by peak and evening buses on service 229. The Whitehill area has a regular service provided by Brighton & Hove's 28/29/29B routes.</p>	Run commercially by Arriva between Tunbridge Wells and Crowborough with funding from ESCC for the daytime sections of route within Crowborough and with Developer Contribution funding for the evening service in the town.	1 September
There is no change to the evening service				

NORTH WEALDEN COMMUNITY TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP LIMITED

Report: April-July 2015

Wealdlink Operations Summary

Our operation currently consists of four main elements

- The daily shopping service, Monday to Friday
- Community trips service
- Youthlink service
- Supported scheduled routes - 224 Wadhurst-Mayfield-Rotherfield-Crowborough (3 days), 225 Crowborough-Heathfield-Battle (2 days) and 226 Town Row-Rotherfield-Crowborough Town Service (3 days)

1. Staff and Volunteers

Paid Staff

Our Operations Manager, David Homewood, continues to juggle his management role with that of driver, sharing the task of driving the scheduled routes with three other paid drivers as well as driving for the shopping service when no volunteer can be found. Ideally we need another paid driver to take on some of this work but it is not proving easy to find someone who is sufficiently flexible to fit in with the other drivers. Eduardo Angeleri was much missed by both staff and passengers when he was off sick recently but is now back in the office and has resumed his role as office manager and passenger assistant.

Volunteers

Finding sufficient drivers to cover our shopping and community trips has proved very challenging recently. We have one new volunteer from Hartfield but need several more in order to be able to fulfil all the requests we receive and cover the shopping schedule with ease. We have produced a new leaflet to publicise this need but so far this has not produced any results.

2. Transport Services Update

Wealdlink Shopping Service

The table below shows passenger journeys and fares for the period January-July 2015 with the previous year's figures for comparison.

Passenger numbers and fares income are still showing a healthy year-on-year increase, mainly due to an extra run on Wednesdays to the Crowborough Lunch Club. Some of the lunch club passengers are now using our other services, particularly the trips to Eastbourne, which now regularly require two minibuses.

	JANUARY-JULY 2014					JANUARY-JULY 2015				
	Passen- ger Trips	Fares	Days	Average trips per day	Average fares per day	Passen- ger Trips	Fares	Days	Average trips per day	Average fares per day
Jan	310	£691.00	20	16	£34.55	314	£726.75	19	17	£38.25
Feb	276	£556.00	17	16	£32.71	348	£664.15	18	19	£36.90
Mar	308	£625.50	18	17	£34.75	380	£763.70	20	19	£38.19
Apr	326	£649.50	19	17	£34.18	434	£912.45	19	23	£48.02
May	312	£662.50	20	16	£33.13	380	£820.50	18	21	£45.58
June	296	£588.50	18	16	£32.69	358	£830.25	19	19	£43.70
Jul	320	£780.50	22	15	£35.48	424	£1,004.45	21	20	£47.83

Note: One passenger shopping journey = 2 passenger trips

Wealdlink Youth Transport

The Tuesday Youthlink Service has continued, and will carry on through the summer holidays.

Wealdlink Community Group Transport

There have not been as many trips by community groups this year as in previous years. Only 14 trips have taken place since April, including some quite short school trips. We have picked up some regular work for an older people's group based in Hadlow Down, but the regular trips we were doing for the Heatherview Care Home have now come to an end. We have had to turn down a couple of requests due to the shortage of volunteer drivers.

Contract for supported scheduled bus routes

The supported bus routes are being operated to the satisfaction of the County Council. The services are well used, particularly by concessionary bus pass holders (so not much fares income results). Some passengers from Crowborough and Rotherfield are taking advantage of the new 225 route in order to visit Battle.

3. Vehicles

As the result of a crisis in May, when three of the vehicles were giving problems and the shopping service had to be cancelled one day (it was re-scheduled for the following day), we took the decision to purchase a fifth minibus, part-funded by an interest free loan. This has ensured that we have had sufficient vehicles to cover all the schedules and will be able to carry out some non-urgent but necessary repairs by taking them out of service one at a time.

4. Finance

As reported in April, we are seeing a shortfall in our finances in the current year which is causing the Trustees some concern. We are in urgent need of more vigorous marketing, both of our services and of the need for more drivers, and the Trustees met recently for a strategic review in order to address this. Any help that our parish partners can provide would be much appreciated.

31/07/2015

Rangers Update for The Environment Committee 29th September 2015

Overview

This report covers the key management activity in relation to The Country Park, The Ghyll and Bluebell Wood.

- 1.1. A large proportion of time has been spent during the period since the end of July to manage the invasive species (Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed) that were reported as part of the 28th July 2015 report.
- 1.2. The school summer holidays have meant that increased time has been spent clearing litter, from all reserves.

2. The Ghyll

- 2.1. Himalayan Balsam has been a particularly prevalent problem in the vicinity of the northern banks of the Ghyll stream. A large amount of time has been needed weekly to hunt for, and pull up this highly invasive species. Willing volunteers have been recruited where possible and this has been a great help.
- 2.2. The Conservation Grazing ponies have been on site since mid-August and have done an excellent job of reducing the sward. They have also been very useful for controlling the bracken which will otherwise overtake the field if left unchecked. Much positive feedback has been received from families and walkers who have been to visit the ponies. The ponies leave at the end of September.
- 2.3. Dormice surveys continue to show that the woods are an attractive habitat with two dormice being found in boxes since the last report.
- 2.4. Wealden District Council has now acted upon their commitment to put in fences for the properties which back onto the lower car park (off of Burdette Road). This has made an aesthetic improvement.
- 2.5. Rubbish/litter continues to be a problem in and around the stream near the Burdett Road entrance to The Ghyll. Photographic evidence is being gathered regularly to send a letter to Sainsbury's this autumn to ask them to provide some sort of assistance given that the bulk of the litter originates from their store.
- 2.6. Motorcycle ingress – there is currently no evidence that motorcycles are continuing to enter the reserve. This is good news and follows the previously reported increase in efforts made to spread the word that there is a zero tolerance for this anti-social behaviour.

2.7. Several unofficial 'antisocial behaviour' entrances to the Ghyll (from Burdett Road) have been identified and closed. These routes were being used to allow quick hidden access and have resulted in very high levels of localised rubbish/litter which is now being cleared in stages.

3. The Country Park

3.1. Minor maintenance of the bridges is now required with a few rotten pieces needing replacing. This will be carried out during the next period.

3.2. Himalayan Balsam has continued to appear all along the stream edges with continuous weekly effort needed to maintain control. Rhododendron and Laurel saplings have also been pulled where identified.

3.3. Small areas of damage to the top information board have been repaired by painting. This appears to have been successful so the bottom information board will be repaired in the same way. Protective perspex will then be fitted to reduce future damage through vandalism.

3.4. Litter is a problem around the picnic benches (mainly beer cans and occasional drug packets). A spare small green CTC bin has been identified and will be placed next to the benches in the hope that the problem can be reduced.

3.5. The large fallen Alder on Tollwood Road (Hilders Farm Close entrance) has now been cleared through liaison with WDC. The broken fencing is still being covered with temporary plastic guards and an email has been sent to WDC to ask when the fence will be repaired.

4. Bluebell Wood

4.1. Tree safety inspections have been conducted on a regular basis given the high footfall through the woods and increased risk to members of the public due to bouts of heavy rain and strong winds.

4.2. Bench cleaning commenced with two of the four benches having been thoroughly cleaned of moss and dirt. The remaining two benches will be cleaned by the 1 October.

4.3. Met with manager of Mill Court Apartments (on Pine Grove) regarding Japanese knotweed encroachment. Contractors have subsequently been employed to treat the problem with instructions to clear the small area of encroachment in the woods at no cost to CTC.

4.4. Some very small shoots of Japanese Knotweed have been identified along the edge of the wood as it runs up from the recycling area. These have been removed and their locations marked for ongoing management as appropriate.