

ESCC update to Etchingam Parish Council 16th June 2022

Funding for volunteer groups to support Ukrainian refugees

East Sussex County Council plans to provide £490,000 funding to support Ukrainian refugees, which will be distributed across three voluntary organisations.

The three groups – 3VA, Hastings Voluntary Action, and Rother Voluntary Action – will, between them, help refugees across the entire county. The voluntary organisations will deliver a range of support and integration services to enable Ukrainian people to settle into East Sussex communities.

The latest figures showed there were 704 known arrivals in East Sussex, staying in 307 properties. Local councils and voluntary organisations have already provided significant support, but the additional funding will allow for longer-term infrastructure to be put in place which will last for at least twelve months.

Grass cutting programme is underway

Each year, the East Sussex Highways team cuts around 560 hectares, or 1,381 acres, of grass on verges and at junctions across the county.

The highways grass cutting programme began in April and continues until November. The majority of urban verges, which are along roads in built up areas, are cut twice a year.

Verges on rural roads also receive two cuts a year and additional cuts are made at junctions where it is necessary to increase visibility for safety reasons. This year, the trial to reduce rural grass cutting to once a year in some areas is ongoing. The trial aims to further support biodiversity across the county.

Designated wildlife verges are cut once year, in the autumn once the annual flowering has finished. There are now 176 wildlife verges in East Sussex and rare wildflowers, such as the Lizard orchid and the Spiked Rampion, have flourished in some locations.

Some Parish and Town Councils will receive six urban cuts annually if they choose to pay East Sussex Highways to carry out an additional four cuts per year. Parish and Town Councils also have the option to take on the responsibility to deliver all the urban grass cutting in their area.

The highways grass cutting schedule is available on the [East Sussex Highways website](#) and is updated weekly.

Welcome Wednesdays return to The Keep

The Keep Archive Centre's Welcome Wednesday visitor introduction sessions will be restarting from Wednesday 1 June. The sessions were stopped during the Covid-19 pandemic but will resume on the first Wednesday of each month, between 10am and 12pm.

The Keep is a world-class centre for archives, housing the collections of the East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Record Office, the University of Sussex and the Royal Pavilion and Museums Trust.

The centre cares for thousands of historic documents which record every aspect of the county's people, organisations, and way of life. The earliest document dates from the 1090s.

Welcome Wednesday visitors will have the opportunity to see the centre's state-of-the-art document repositories, conservation studio, and digitisation suite. The suite was recently used to digitise over six million local parish records, spanning over 450 years of Sussex history. These documents are now available online through the Ancestry website.

Expert staff will be on hand during the sessions to answer questions, show visitors how to navigate The Keep's website and catalogue and book documents, and provide a brief introduction to the reference and reading rooms.

More information about The Keep [is available online](#).

Work to secure £41m bus service funding underway

East Sussex County Council has received an indicative funding allocation from central government to improve bus services across East Sussex.

Officers are now working to develop detailed plans to secure the funding, a total of £41,415,002, which will be used to implement its Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP).

The BSIP sets out several proposals to improve services and increase the use of public transport. Proposals include investment in key bus corridors across the county, improvements to services linking rural and town communities, improvements to town centre services, and reducing and simplifying fares.

Once the county council knows the level of funding secured, full details and costs on specific schemes will be developed.