

Johnny Denis

County and District Councillor Report for Ringmer Parish Council

28/09/22

Ringmer Pool

The Consultation on the future of Ringmer Swimming Pool closed on the 15th August. The results are being considered.

It is uncertain when the Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change, Nick Bennett, will make a decision though he is holding a meeting on the 11th October at 1pm [Agenda for Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change on Tuesday, 11th October, 2022, 1.00 pm | East Sussex County Council](#) and it could be at this meeting that its future is determined. The agenda is not yet published.

Rob Cottrell, CEO of Lewes District Council submitted a response to the consultation which was extremely supportive and seemed to grasp the importance of the Pool to the Community. At the end of this report I've attached Rob's submission to the consultation in full as I think it gives real hope of LDC support in getting our pool re-opened.

HGVs

The Community Campaign (residents as well as Parish, District and County Cllrs) to discourage rat-running HGVs through the village postponed its action on the Green because of the death of the Queen. The rearranged date is the 18th October at 1pm. Come and join if you can.

There is a petition as well. This aims to get ESCC to consider a strategic Road network for HGVs ie using trunk roads where possible. This is something West Sussex have but East Sussex doesn't. I'm working with colleagues to get this considered by the County Council.

Here's the link to the petition set up by Cllr Emily O'Brien to support the Campaign and broaden it to other villages affected [Tell the County Council: keep HGVs out of our villages! \(actionnetwork.org\)](#)

Parking

I have written to the Lead Member for Transport and the Environment at ESCC, Cllr Claire Dowling, to ask for the parking enforcement team to visit Ringmer to look at antisocial parking, blocking dropped kerbs eg near the shops and over pavement parking, eg Middleham Close. I've also asked if the team can speak to the Parish Council about their presence in the village.

Parking Review (PR). The next stage of the current parking review will be out for consultation - from 7 to 28 October. The list is here <https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/media/23vpv2gi/lewes-review-list-for-website-formal.docx>

The next round deadline is, I believe but can no longer see it on the website, January. If the Parish Council is intent on requesting a PR this should be submitted by December to avoid missing the deadline. The PC previously submitted something just out of time in 2021. Best to resubmit rather than expect these to automatically be considered.

More info here [Parking reviews in Eastbourne and Hastings boroughs and Lewes and Rother Districts | East Sussex County Council](#)

Community Safety

There have been a number of incidents over the summer of anti-social behaviour in and around the Green causing grief to residents. Operation Blitz – the dedicated number for reporting incidents on Fridays and Saturdays has given some recourse for people but much has been outside the hours of operation.

I've called to more flexible response times for this initiative to better cover the needs of residents as unfortunately ASB activity doesn't stop at 10 because PCSOs do.

Community Safety Grants

The Community Safety Partnership and Joint Action Group have funds to spend on initiatives to support priorities, which are;

- Address the incidence of anti-social behaviour and the importance of creating safe and welcoming community spaces
- Tackle the incidence of hate crime, domestic and sexual abuse
- Reduce the incidence of serious violence and knife crime
- Support the street community and address related ASB
- Reduce the incidence of anti-social driving on our roads
- Address the community impact of organised crime and drug dealing

If the council or residents have ideas for impacting on any of these areas, please apply for money.

Full details here [Community safety partnerships - Lewes and Eastbourne Councils \(lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk\)](https://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/community-safety-partnerships)

Planning

While Ringmer residents and Councillors have been quite successful this year in persuading the Planning Committee to turn down or mitigate inappropriate development in the Parish, the recent appeal success for a Wivelsfield development will be giving hope to developers going to appeal in Ringmer. Our successes are not in the bag!

It was turned down by Lewes Planning Committee on the grounds "that the scheme would be outside the village's development boundary and have an 'unacceptable and detrimental impact' on the area"

Both these reasons for refusal were acknowledged by the planning inspector, however they concluded that the harms were outweighed by the district's relative lack of housing. **National** planning policy requires a 'presumption in favour' of new and sustainable development in these circumstances, they said. "The 'tilted' balance introduced by the presumption in favour of sustainable development requires that planning permission be granted unless the adverse impacts significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

"In my judgement, the moderate adverse impacts do not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, particularly those relating to increased housing supply, when weighed one against the other. It follows that planning permission should therefore be granted."

[Inspector approves Wivelsfield Green housing plans | The Argus](https://www.argus.co.uk/news/18222222-inspector-approves-wivelsfield-green-housing-plans/)

This is rather similar to the grounds which have been used to turn down applications in Ringmer!

Parish Council

There are full elections next May for District, Towns and Parishes. I will no longer be eligible to stand to be a Ringmer Parish Councillor, so I hereby give notice to that effect. As the Parish Council benefits from having elected rather than co-opted councillors – in being allowed to have what is called a General Power of Competence – I'd like to join the Parish Council in encouraging people to put themselves forward for election or re-election to fulfil the important role that Ringmer Parish Councillors play. If any one wants to sound out what the role entails I will happily put myself forward if prospective councillors wish to have an informal chat.

Cllr Johnny Denis

www.facebook.com/CouncillorJohnnyDenis

www.Twitter.com/CllrJohnnyDenis

East Sussex County Council cldr.johnny.denis@eastsussex.gov.uk

Lewes District Council johnny.denis@lewes.gov.uk

Swimming Pool Consultation submission from Rob Cottrell, CEO, Lewes District Council

“Ringmer village is a thriving and growing community near to but distinct from the town of Lewes. It is considered a sustainable settlement and the Lewes District Local Plan classifies it a rural service centre. The adopted Ringmer Neighbourhood Plan Vision for 2030 states "Ringmer village, as a rural service centre within Lewes District, will continue to meet the demand for local services, including secondary education, healthcare, social care, and informal recreation and leisure facilities, for a wider area than just Ringmer itself".

In this context, to support the needs of the community and to ensure that any future growth is truly sustainable the retention of existing services is essential. Working in partnership to encourage a good range of shops and services to be retained results in an increasingly viable centre not just for Ringmer but surrounding villages.

There are several other complementary uses in the village, the adjacent school, primary care and outside leisure facilities being key examples, which could all benefit from the pool re-opening and a greater collaboration across the different activities. The pool would also encourage more visitors to the village centre to combine trips and contribute to the viability of local businesses. This would provide an alternative to centres further afield for local residents thereby reducing the need for travel and consequential impact on the environment.

The environmental impact of closing the pool permanently would have other adverse environmental impacts. The existing biomass heating system on the site would enable the pool to operate with a lower carbon footprint than most other established swimming facilities.

The pool is essential for maintaining Ringmer as an attractive village centre and reducing journeys centres further away to access similar facilities. Its permanent closure would not support the aim of promoting sustainable development nor enhance the viability of the shops and other services in the village.

It is important to recognise that as an existing facility there is a significant existing investment in the structure and that it is already a fit for purpose swimming pool. It is accepted that given the closure that some of the equipment will need to be upgraded and replaced to enable it to re-open. It would be helpful to understand what renewal works would be undertaken should it be agreed that pool re-open.

LDC, with our partner Wave Leisure, own and operate a number of other leisure facilities across the District as well as having the benefit of the joint working with Eastbourne Borough Council. The partnership has extensive experience of managing such facilities at a high quality and on a cost effective basis.

In this context it is recognised that the pool will need some financial support to be sustainable. Lewes District Council is supportive in principle to contribute to these costs to enable the pool to re-open. We have modelled projected operating costs and income based on our experience of running this and similar facilities. There will also be economies of scale by part of a wider network of leisure facilities and the backing of two established and resilient organisations.

Given recent events, a significant part of operating costs and risks will be utilities. As energy costs are particularly volatile there are various scenarios that could emerge. One distinct benefit the pool has is the existing biomass heating system the County Council has installed at the site. We would very much welcome continuing our helpful dialogue with the County Council to understand in more detail how this can contribute to the financial sustainability of the pool.

Further understanding on the capital costs of re-opening and the impact of the existing heating system on operating costs would enable LDC to submit further details of plans to work with partners with a view to re-opening the pool for both school and public use on a long term basis.

It is recognised that there are potential safeguarding issues with public access to the site and we would be delighted to work with the school and County Council on how the entrance can be best configured to facilitate wider use. We would also want to continue to work with and support the Parish Council and local groups to broaden access and maximise public use of the pool.

Permanent closure of the Pool or using the facility for a different purpose would have an adverse impact on all but particularly those with disabilities, the elderly and those who are pregnant/on maternity.

The closure would inevitably lead to people simply no longer being able to enjoy the health and wellbeing benefits associated with swimming. Others may find another pool but would likely have to travel further which, apart from increased costs and time, presents additional challenges.

As well as the positive health and wellbeing impacts for older people and those who are pregnant, swimming has a positive impact on a range of physical and mental health conditions including obesity, cancer and anxiety.

There is increasing evidence that swimming is a cost-effective activity that will help to save the NHS and other service providers money.

Access to swimming is vital for those with certain physical disabilities, and generally an inclusive swimming strategy is achievable for all.

Organisations such as Swim England have a range of resources available for improving inclusion within swimming.

Increase engagement with local pupils with SEND.

Link with local organisations that can appropriately signpost to Ringmer Pool.

Specific swim sessions for different audiences.

Let me know if you need any more info.