

Questions from the Public under Rule 11

Questioner	Question	Answer
Becca Horn	<p>Thursday 7th September I was at my beach hut by the old bathing pool when I noticed a suspicious brown cloud in otherwise clear and calm waters emanating from the Combe Haven outfall on Bulverhythe beach (directly in front of the Sea Cadets). Myself and another member of Hastings and St Leonards Clean Water Action Group (CWAG) decided to take a water sample and the results revealed extremely high levels of e.Coli (4400cfu/100ml: the acceptable level for bathing water quality is <500cfu/100ml) and quite high faecal bacteria (280cfu/100ml – the sufficient standard is <185). I have attached a picture and our lab results.</p> <p>This is not an official Southern Water CSO, although we do not know for sure if outfalls further up the Combe Haven might be having an impact. Nor is this beach a designated bathing water, with free parking, all the beach huts, a playground and toilet facilities close by, many families were in the water through the heatwave and it is a popular area for fishing, water sports and bathing.</p> <p>What can the council do to put pressure on the Environment Agency to test regularly at this spot and investigate the source of this pollution which is a public health hazard?</p>	<p>Councillor Roark:</p> <p>Thank you to the Clean Water Action Group for undertaking this testing and sharing this information. Having discussed this with officers, it seems that similar questions have previously been asked of the Environment Agency, around whether sampling can be conducted away from bathing waters, outside of the bathing season, and/or at a greater frequency. The Environment Agency answer has always been consistent - that they only have the remit (and budget) to conduct routine testing in line with the bathing water directive, i.e., it must be at a designated bathing water and has to be during season. As you say, this location is not a designated bathing water.</p> <p>Having said that, if concerning sampling results have been presented to the Environment Agency they should be responding, even if that response is just to outline their position as has previously been communicated. I can certainly contact the EA and ask them to respond to CWAG on this issue if they have not already.</p> <p>I will also discuss this matter with the rest of Cabinet going forward.</p>
Michael Wharton	<p>My name is Michael Wharton and I have been living in St Leonards for nearly two years now. I have really grown to love this place and its people, but unfortunately there is a</p>	<p>Councillor Roark:</p> <p>Thank you for the question. As you say, this is not a problem unique</p>

	<p>major problem that plagues us all. Seagulls are aggressively attacking people on the promenade, as well as creating a major problem by pulling the rubbish from litter bins and wheelie bins alike. They are a growing nuisance in both size and numbers, and although this problem is not unique to Hastings, we aren't implementing enough measures to prevent the mess made by these birds, our wheelie bins need to be emptied more frequently, and the ones with broken lids need to be replaced. The street sweeping team does a good job of cleaning up after the birds, but it would be much better to prevent it in the first place. Recycling in the pink plastic sacks is also contributing to the issue, solid plastic wheelie bins for recycling would be a major improvement. When it's windy at night, there is a lot of loose plastic packaging being blown into the sea and causing plastic pollution. As a town that thrives on tourism, this experience of having to weave through and step over mounds of rubbish on the street is one that is off-putting to both tourists and local residents alike.</p> <p>What plans are in place to improve the on-street litter bins to prevent access to gulls, and also to improve residential waste containers to the same end?</p>	<p>to Hastings and St Leonards but is a frustrating one for residents. Some of the ways to help prevent seagulls getting access to rubbish and recycling are for residents to make sure that recycling has been rinsed and is clean of food debris, and to tie bags up securely (preferably using strong bags or double-bagging, or using seagull-proof sacks if provided – these are not available for residents on the immediate seafront but are available in other areas without a twin bin service). Presenting waste and recycling for collection on the morning of collection day, rather than the night before, also reduces the window of opportunity that seagulls have to attack the waste bags.</p> <p>If residents are aware of any broken communal bins or of ones with missing lids please send me the details and I can pass these onto officers. Alternatively, broken or full bins can be reported on MyHastings, as can dropped litter or litter spilled from bags.</p>
<p>Anna Sabin</p>	<p>Do you believe Hastings' children would benefit from being able to walk and cycle independently to school and, if so, along which routes should they safely make those journeys?</p>	<p>Councillor Batsford:</p> <p>Yes, and I am pressing East Sussex County Council to commit to safer routes for walking and cycling throughout Hastings.</p>

Questions from Councillors under Rule 12

Questioner	Question	Answer
Cllr Edwards	<p>The developer of the Harrow Lane Playing Field site, Ilke Homes, collapsed in June leaving debts of £68m to Homes England. Work stopped immediately and the site now resembles an abandoned lunar landscape. The proposed development of 140 affordable housing dwellings comprised an essential element in the strategy to reduce temporary homeless costs for the borough. The site was sold by Hastings Borough Council and is now believed to be owned by Orbit Housing Association.</p> <p>I hope the Leader understands there is anger amongst residents and an urgent necessity to resume construction on this now partially developed site.</p> <p>What active measures are the Council taking to persuade and cajole Orbit Housing Association to seek a new developer of the site?</p>	<p>Councillor Barnett:</p> <p>Orbit have updated us to say they are in the process of untangling the situation left at Harrow Lane and expect to have a more detailed update for us by the end of the month. They are clearly keen to progress the site – and I would say our regular engagement and offers of support with them would meet Cllr Edwards expectation that we are taking active measures.</p> <p>On the 40% affordable housing point – given we are aiming for 100% affordable on the site then anything which falls short of that would be a real loss. At the Temporary Accommodation all party parliamentary group last week, Bob Blackman (Conservative) who was chairing suggested the most important thing LAs can do to tackle homelessness is make sure their land is maximised for affordable housing.</p>
Cllr Hilton	<p>At the Hastings Country Park Management Forum on 2 March 2023, Sustrans presented the first stage of their feasibility study into an accessible wheeling route across the country park from the town centre to the Bale House, which would have been a valuable and sustainable form of transport for more people to enjoy free access to this wonderful nature reserve, has long been an ambition of this council and forms part of the Local Walking and Cycling Plan commissioned by ESCC. The recommendation was that the potential routes would be walked by the forum and the Friends of Hastings Country Park at a date in the summer to enable further discussion of the route. However this proposal was not mentioned at the recent forum meeting.</p>	<p>Councillor Roark:</p> <p>Thank you for the question. The Forum agreed to send this proposal to the Senior Leadership Team for consideration. I am told that capacity of the organisation to deliver a successful project is always considered by senior management when new projects are presented.</p> <p>The senior Leadership Team recognised the merit in the proposal but considered the organisational capacity to deliver it (legal, communications, financial, planning and project officer capacity etc). After consideration it was therefore decided that this scheme should be paused until such time that there were sufficient staff resources across the organisation; given the need for enhanced</p>

	Can we have an update on where the plans have got to?	<p>engagement and delivery with external partners and residents in order to deliver a successful scheme.</p> <p>We will continue to discuss the proposals with Sustrans and should the council be in a position to bring this project forward, we will consider it further. Following this question to Full Council, a statement from Senior Leadership will be presented at the next Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve Management Forum.</p>
Cllr Jobson	With reference to Cllr Roark's reply in July full council from a resident on the: Sewage pollution incident at Old Roar Ghyll & Alexandra Park stream. With the council pressing for a full disclosure and full review of the sewage incident including an impact analysis of the waterways and ecological water system of the streams at Alexandra Park has there been any clean up work completed at Old Roar Ghyll and to the streams and therefore has there been a full ecological assessment discussed with the relevant officers?	<p>Councillor Roark:</p> <p>To date the council have not received any results of ecology surveys from Southern Water and are continuing to press Southern Water for this information as a matter of urgency. All incidents of pollution should be reported directly to Southern Water at Alexandra Park - Hastings (southernwater.co.uk)</p>
Cllr Collins	<p>For the last two and a half years the Burton family memorial on West Hill Road, which is licenced to the Council by the Diocese of Chichester, has been cordoned off because of the unstable cliff face near the site. Recently the area has suffered from neglect and vandalism, and there have been repeated episodes of fly-tipping.</p> <p>Please would the Lead Member for the Environment outline the Council's strategy for dealing with this situation?</p>	<p>Councillor Roark:</p> <p>Thank you for the question. I have asked officers to look into this and give me a briefing on the situation – I will need to wait for this before answering as I am not immediately familiar with this particular area.</p>