

## Icklesham DC Report September 2017

### 1. Cabinet Meeting 4th September 2017, including:

1.1 Street Naming and Property Numbering Policy: all new developments or re-developments need to be named and numbered according to legislation. On occasion RDC receives requests for streets to be renamed or renumbered - normally where this would be in the wider public interest or to eradicate confusion. The scale of RDC administrative charges is to be updated to reflect changes in legislation.

1.2 Even though there are robust recovery processes for debt owed to RDC, some are written off. Since 21st March 2017, Cabinet was asked to agree to write off seven cases of debt amounting to £42,681.46, the majority being as a result of dissolved or bankrupted businesses. This is comparable with previous years.

2. Music Month from 8th September to 31st October there will be hundreds of events across Hastings, Bexhill, Battle, Rye and more. Further details can be found on: <https://visit1066country.com> - the official tourism website for 1066 Country (Hastings and Rother).

### 3. Support for Local Businesses

3.1 Pro-actions Business Coaching and Support Ltd and Wealden and Rother District Councils are holding free business seminars in 2017 for businesses in the Wealden and Rother area, covering a range of topics. Further details can be found on: [www.rother.gov.uk](http://www.rother.gov.uk)

3.2 South East Business Boost Grants: small to medium-size and start-up businesses based in East Sussex can get help to fund a wide range of capital items to help increase sales, improve productivity and boost profitability. Grants are available for amounts between £1,000 and £10,000, and are able to cover up to 30% of the total cost of a wide range of eligible capital items, including anything from new equipment and machinery to new technology and processes. Further details can be found on the website: <http://www.businesseastsussex.org.uk/south-east-business-boost/>, including whether your business may be eligible or not.

To find out whether your business is eligible for funding and to make an application, please contact:

Business East Sussex  
Ocean House, 87-89 London Road  
St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex TN37 6LW. Telephone: 0844 415 2272  
Email: [info@businesseastsussex.org.uk](mailto:info@businesseastsussex.org.uk)

### 4. Rye Harbour Nature Reserve and proposed new Discovery Centre

I thought it might be an idea to let you know my position on this. I became a member of the Appeal Board for the proposed new Discovery Centre a few months ago.

As Rother's portfolio holder for tourism, I take an active role in looking for ways to boost tourism in Rother. In England, rural tourism provides about £17 billion per year to the economy. In 2015, direct expenditure generated by tourism in Rother District was £238.1 million. Direct expenditure multiplies into £291.6 million worth of income for local businesses. This tourism-related expenditure is estimated to have supported 4,871 full-time equivalent jobs in Rother. This increases to 6,836 actual jobs once part-time and seasonal employment is added. Based on Tourism South East Research Unit, total-tourism related expenditure supported 26.5% of these jobs in Rother in 2015.

UK wide, tourism is recognised as an important part of the rural economy and has huge potential for growth, particularly in many deprived rural areas, where there is untapped potential to generate

tourism-related economic growth and employment. Initiatives such as the proposed Discovery Centre will bring considerable benefits not only to Rye Harbour, but to the area as a whole. An improved tourist attraction will increase tourism spend supporting further employment in the surrounding area. The South East LEP Economic Plan recognises the significance of the visitor economy sector particularly to the coastal areas. The landscape, history, wildlife, flora and recreational opportunities presented by the coastline are a major part of the South East's visitor offer and visitor centres play an important role in promoting and supporting visitors to access this resource.

In my capacity as one of your district councillors, I am well aware of the concerns which may arise regarding a new improved visitor attraction in the village. These concerns centre around traffic congestion and the impact on local businesses and services. The proposed Discovery Centre is intended to be an 'eco-tourism' type initiative. This is a form of environmentally friendly tourism which involves people visiting fragile, unspoilt areas that are usually protected. Eco-tourism is designed to be low impact and small scale. The increase in the number of tourists expected to visit the proposed Discovery Centre is low and this will help ensure minimal disturbance to the environment.

I am supportive of the proposed Discovery Centre. The proposed centre will greatly enhance the visitor experience for people who come and enjoy the nature reserve throughout the year, increase learning opportunities by providing a hub for education and create 6 new full-time equivalent jobs. I also believe that evidence shows that such an initiative will improve income for Rye Harbour's local economy and may even help preserve its rural services like buses, village shops, pubs and cafes.