

Icklesham DC Report March 2017

1. Lifeguards at Camber Sands: I am delighted that both Cabinet and Full Council recently approved the financial provision for lifeguards at Camber Sands, as contained in the Final Draft Budget.

The tragedies last year at Camber Sands are very sad and were significant and unprecedented. While RDC waits on the outcome of the inquest, RDC reacted promptly to these incidents, and we need to continue to react quickly to changing circumstances affecting policy, particularly where public safety is concerned.

I have been determined to reduce the risk of such incidents where we can and feel strongly that the deployment of lifeguards from now on will provide the opportunity for RDC, and for our residents and visitors, to find the best solutions for appropriate beach safety and other measures, in order to reduce the risk of any further fatalities.

I have always considered that the issue of safety as we move forward, is not just about the provision of lifeguards: they do not guarantee lives. It is also about people from all communities across Britain being better informed on beach/water safety before they come to the beach. It is interesting to note that on average, 400 lives per annum are lost in the UK due to drowning (38% are at coastal locations). The risk of drowning in the UK is statistically higher than of house fire deaths or cycling deaths on the road (where national campaigns have reduced such incidences). The Local Government Association (LGA) has been supportive in our aim to address the issue of drownings, not only in Camber but UK wide, and is working with the National Water Safety Forum (NWSF) which brings together a number of key agencies with the aim of preventing all types of drowning in the UK. The aim of RDC, the LGA and the NWSF is to make sure that people are educated more effectively and are better informed about water safety before they arrive at beaches. It is about education rather than the widespread provision of lifeguards and we are currently working to this end.

2. Cabinet Meeting on Monday 13th February, inter alia:

2.1 Rye Pre-School Playgroup - The building known as Rye Pre-School Playgroup was identified for disposal in RDC's review of its capital assets. In September 2016, Cabinet authorised a sale by auction as the Playgroup indicated at the time that it was unable to purchase the property. Since then, with the possible help of Rye Town Council (RTC) grant funding, it seems that either the Playgroup or RTC may offer the reserve price (£10,000). Cabinet would like the Playgroup to be offered first refusal, therefore decided that it should be offered to the Playgroup and/or RTC at the reserve price, but if not transacted before 1st May 2017, it is to be sold at auction.

2.2 Cabinet and Full Council have approved the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy 2017/18 and the Draft Budget (2017/18) and Capital Programme for 2017/18 - 2021/22. Of note, Council Tax for 2017/18 at Band D is increased by £5 and set at £169.32 and Council Tax Exemption for empty properties be reduced from one month to zero from 1st April 2018.

All reports and minutes of meetings etc can be found on RDC's website.

3. SCAM Alert - Operation Signature

I attended a recent training session on the dangers of SCAMS. It is truly horrendous how low some criminals stoop in targeting particularly, the elderly and vulnerable out of their hard earned savings. But just to note that scams do target people of all ages, backgrounds and income levels. It is really important that we all spread this message around.

To give an idea of the scale of the problem, we heard the story of an elderly gentleman who had lost £100,000 to scammers since 2007, via scam mail, phone calls and lottery 'wins'. It became clear to Sussex Police that there had been no process in place for recognising, recording or dealing with scamming crimes. So, working with the Metropolitan Police and the National Scams Hub, Sussex Police obtained a potential list of 1537 victims (names and addresses) living in Sussex. The police spoke to 900 of these people and identified 386 victims - mainly between 80-90 years of age. The highest amount one of these victims had sent to various scammers was £300,000. Altogether the loss was over £2 million. Without this list the victims would not have come to police attention as this is a hidden, unreported crime with victims often being unaware, ashamed or even in denial.

A standardised reporting and recording process has now been set up by Sussex Police. To stay on top of scams, the Sussex Police website (www.sussex.police.uk) contains information on current scams targeting consumers, up to date crime prevention advice and how to report scams.

Things to look out for in the elderly which may be signs that s/he is being targeted; receiving large quantities of mail, emails or texts; sending money to foreign or unusual destinations; secretive about finances and new contacts; getting through a lot of cheque books; and phone often ringing.

East Sussex Age UK provides free advice, support etc to anyone worried about being scammed. Contact details:

01273 476704 ext 208
scams.prevention@ageukeastsussex.org.uk
ageukeastsussex.org.uk
Call Julie Abson 07850 987133

4. Planning Application RR/2016/1967/P (Kennel Cottage, Dogs Hill Road, Winchelsea Beach) comes before the Planning Committee on Thursday 16th March. I have called it in for the reasons we are all aware of, but will be away - the meeting is open to the public should anyone wish to attend.

SAH