

POLEGATE



POLEGATE TOWN COUNCIL

POLEGATE TOWN COUNCIL ANNUAL TOWN REPORT 2026







Welcome to the Annual Town Assembly Booklet 2025- 2026

Welcome to the Annual Town Assembly Booklet 2025–2026

We are pleased to present this year's Annual Town Assembly booklet, which brings together updates, achievements, and key information from across the Town Council's work over the past 12 months.

Our aim is to provide residents with a clear picture of the progress made on community projects, improvements to local spaces, financial stewardship, and the partnerships that help keep Polegate thriving.

This has been another year shaped by strong community spirit, collaboration with local organisations, and ongoing investment in our town's facilities and wellbeing. From environmental improvements and civic events to the Brightling Road project and the development of the new Community Library, this booklet highlights many of the positive developments taking place in Polegate.

We hope you find this booklet useful, informative, and reflective of the hard work and dedication shown across our community. Thank you to all residents, volunteers, partner groups, and organisations who have supported the town throughout the year.

We look forward to continuing to work together to make Polegate a safe, welcoming, and vibrant place for everyone.

Accessibility & Alternative Formats

If you require this document in a different format, such as large print, audio, or an alternative language, please contact the Town Council (admin@polegatetowncouncil.gov.uk or 01323 488 114) and we will be happy to assist. Ensuring our information is accessible to all residents is a key priority, and we will always try to provide materials in the most suitable format for your needs.

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Polegate Town Council & Mayoral Appointment

Polegate Town Council:

Polegate Town Council is the first tier of local government and focuses on services within the immediate community. The Council is responsible for managing two allotment sites Cophall and Gosford Way, maintaining certain street lighting (primarily side roads and the High Street), and looking after play parks and recreational areas owned by the Council. It also provides seasonal and decorative features such as Christmas lights, hanging baskets, and floral displays throughout the town.



Wealden District Council forms the next tier of local government and delivers a broader range of public services. These include waste and recycling collections, litter and fly-tipping control, environmental health, council tax collection, and planning matters.

East Sussex County Council is the upper tier of local government and is responsible for county wide, strategic services. These include Highways (non-trunk roads), education, social services, libraries, and a range of other essential statutory functions.

National Highways (formerly Highways England) is responsible for major trunk roads in the area, including the A22, the A27 and the A2270 from the A27 junction traffic lights (including the Polegate bypass).

Polegate Mayor re-elected alongside previous deputy mayor



At last year's Annual Statutory Meeting, Councillor Dan Dunbar was re-elected by his fellow councillors to serve as Mayor of Polegate for a third consecutive term. This marks a significant moment in the Council's history, as it is the first time a Mayor has served three terms back-to-back. Councillor Stephen Shing was also re-elected to continue in the role of Deputy Mayor for a second year.

The Mayor said: “It is both a privilege and an honour to once again be entrusted with serving as Mayor of Polegate. To represent the town I have lived in and grown up in over the last 30 years means a great deal to me personally, and I remain deeply committed to supporting our community and its future. I am proud to hold the distinction of being the town’s youngest Mayor, and the first in the Council’s history to serve three consecutive terms. I am grateful for the continued support of residents, local businesses, and colleagues, and it has been another wonderful year of working together for the benefit of Polegate.”



Mayor of Polegate Annual Report 2025–2026



Emergency Services Day
Flag Raising

It has been a privilege to continue representing our town as mayor. The past year has been one of community spirit, remembrance, celebration, and meaningful engagement with residents, local organisations, and regional partners. From May 2025 to March 2026 I have attended over 70 civic engagements, each providing an opportunity to support local initiatives, recognise achievement, and strengthen the connections that make Polegate such a special place to live.

Throughout my mayoral year, I have sought to champion community wellbeing and local causes. I was proud to select East Sussex Wildlife Rescue as my Charity of the Year, supporting their vital work caring for injured and vulnerable wildlife across our county. The generosity shown by residents and organisations during fundraising activities has demonstrated the compassion and community-minded spirit that defines our town.



WRAS



Air Ambulance KSS

A particular honour this year was becoming a member of the Civic Circle for Air Ambulance Charity Kent, Surrey, and Sussex. This role has enabled me to promote awareness of the lifesaving work carried out by the air ambulance service and to recognise the dedication of the crews and volunteers who provide critical emergency support across our region.

Community engagement has remained at the heart of my mayoralty. I was delighted to attend and support a number of events at Bernhard Baron Care Home, spending time with residents and staff and celebrating the important role care facilities play in supporting older members of our community. These visits were always warmly received and highlighted the value of companionship and shared experiences.



Bernhard Baron



Beacon Lighting

Remembrance events held across Polegate were among the most poignant occasions of the year. It was a privilege to join residents, veterans, and local organisations in paying tribute to those who gave their lives in service to our country. The strong turnout reflected the deep respect our community continues to hold for remembrance and reflection.



Mayors Tea Party

The festive period brought many opportunities to bring residents together. I was pleased to host the Mayor's Christmas Tea Party for retired residents, an occasion filled with friendship, conversation, and seasonal cheer. In addition, the Easter and Christmas events held in the High Street (organised by Ace Events) once again demonstrated the vibrancy of local businesses and the enthusiasm of our community to celebrate together.

One of the highlights of the year was hosting a Civic Carol Service in partnership with St George's Church. The service provided a moment of reflection and unity during the Christmas season.



Civic Carol Service

Over the past year, I have been proud to work closely with Polegate Drama Group in supporting our town's cultural

life. As Mayor of Polegate, I have greatly enjoyed attending their performances and witnessing the dedication, talent, and community spirit behind each production. It was an honour to present the group with a Civic Award recognising their long-standing contribution to the community. Polegate Drama Group is a true asset to our town, and I look forward to continuing to champion their important work and the role local theatre plays in bringing our community

Polegate
Drama Group

together.

Celebrating the lives and achievements of our residents has also been a great honour. I was privileged to mark the 100th birthdays of two local residents, remarkable milestones that allowed us to recognise not only individual longevity but also the rich history and experiences held within our community.

100th Birthday

During the year, I have been proud to welcome representatives from the Lieutenancy of East Sussex on a number of occasions. Their visits reinforced the importance of civic tradition and highlighted Polegate's active role within the wider county community.



Easter Market '25

As my mayoral year progresses, I remain grateful for the continued support of fellow councillors, staff, volunteers, community groups, local businesses, and residents. The strength of Polegate lies in its people, and it has been an honour to work alongside so many dedicated individuals committed to improving our town.

What Polegate Town Council has been up to this year:

Community Litter Picker Event:



In April, Polegate Town Council organised a community Litter Picker event at Brightling Recreation Ground as part of its ongoing commitment to maintain clean and well-presented public spaces. The event focused on improving the condition of the recreation ground, which are frequently used by families and dog walkers.

We were supported by several local organisations, including volunteers from PJ Skips, Balfour Beatty, and Lightning Fibre.

Wealden District Council also contributed by supplying additional litter-picking gear, ensuring the event was efficiently resourced.

A team of around 30 volunteers took part, working across the site to collect more than 20 bags of litter. Their effort resulted in a noticeable improvement to the area and demonstrated the value of coordinated community-focused initiatives.



VE Day beacon 80:



In May, Polegate Town Council held a special Beacon Lighting Ceremony to mark VE Day 80. The event began with a declaration delivered by the Deputy Lord-Lieutenant, Timothy Cobb DL, followed by the lighting of the beacon by the Town Mayor, Cllr Dan Dunbar. Attendees were invited to join in a communal rendition of *I Vow to Thee, My*

Country, with lyric sheets provided to support the singing and create a reflective atmosphere.

The Council would also like to thank PADMEC for running a VE Day-themed mini steam railway in the lead-up to the event, which added an engaging and educational element for visitors and families.



New Bench Installed at Oakleaf Play Park:

In July, Polegate Town Council installed a new bench at Oakleaf Play Park, enhancing the facilities available for families and visitors. The new seating provides a comfortable place for parents and carers to watch their children play, as well as a welcome rest point for anyone using the park. This improvement forms part of the Council's ongoing commitment to maintaining and upgrading local recreational spaces, ensuring they remain safe, accessible, and enjoyable for the community. The addition has been well received by park users and contributes to creating a more inviting and user-friendly environment.



Celebrating Community Green Spaces:



Polegate Town Council held its annual Best Allotment Competition and Best Front Garden Competition, recognising the dedication, creativity, and pride shown by residents in maintaining attractive and sustainable outdoor spaces across the town. Both competitions celebrate the wide range of gardening talents within the community, from productive and well-kept allotment plots to beautifully presented front gardens that brighten our neighbourhoods. Judging for each competition considered factors such as cultivation, layout, environmental awareness, and overall presentation. The high standard of entries reflected the ongoing commitment of residents to enhancing their local environment. Winners from both categories were presented with Certificates of Recognition by the Mayor, acknowledging their hard work and contribution to Polegate's green and welcoming character.

The Council extends its thanks to all those who took part in this year's competitions for their enthusiasm and valuable contribution to the community.



VJ DAY 80:

To mark VJ Day 80, Polegate Town Council raised the commemorative flag at the Council



Offices as a tribute to those who served and sacrificed during the final stages of the Second World War. The flag raising provided a moment of quiet reflection and ensured that this significant anniversary was respectfully acknowledged within the town. By observing VJ Day 80, the Council joined communities across the country in honouring the enduring legacy of all those involved in the conflict.



Honouring Emergency Services Day:

In September, Polegate Town Council marked Emergency Services Day by raising the official flag at the Council Offices to honour the vital work carried out by emergency service personnel. The flag raising provided a moment of reflection and allowed the Council to show its appreciation for the dedication and professionalism of all those who serve and support communities across the country.



Public Information Day and Blanket Testing:



Polegate Town Council hosted a Community Information Day on Wednesday 22 October at the Polegate Community Centre. The event brought together a wide range of local organisations, providing residents with an opportunity to learn more about the services, support, and volunteering

opportunities available within the area. Groups in attendance included Bernard Baron Care Home, Cuckmere Buses, Haine and Son, Trading Standards, Community Speed watch, and local First Responders, alongside community organisations such as the

Polegate Rambling Club, WRAS Wildlife Rescue, East Sussex Vision Support, and the Association of Carers.

A key feature of the day was the free electric blanket safety testing provided by East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service. A total of 37 blankets were tested, with 35% failing essential safety checks. Blankets over ten years old were automatically marked as unsafe due to the increased risk of faults that can lead to fires or electric shock. This service helped raise awareness of electrical safety and supported residents in preparing for the colder months.

The event was well received, with attendees praising the friendly atmosphere and the helpful information provided by participating organisations. The Council extends its thanks to all groups and volunteers who took part and contributed to the success of the day.



Mayor's Tea Party:



Cllr Dan Dunbar, Mayor of Polegate, was delighted to host this year's Christmas Tea Party, welcoming retired residents for an afternoon of festive cheer, good company, and plenty of treats.

Guests enjoyed a full programme of entertainment, including performances from Cydney Edwards and the talented Willingdon School Choir, who brought festive music and lots of smiles to the room.

Santa also made a surprise appearance, adding an extra bit of Christmas magic to the afternoon. The East Sussex School of Circus Arts Elves kept everyone entertained with fun and light-hearted performances, bringing laughter and festive mischief to the party.

The Mayor shared his thanks with everyone who made the event possible, from performers and volunteers to staff and residents who joined in and helped create such a lovely community occasion. He also welcomed Father Christmas and the town's pantomime character Widow Twankey to the celebration.

Events like this highlight the heart of Polegate, bringing people together and celebrating the spirit of community.

Remembrance Day:

This year's Remembrance Day ceremony at the Polegate War Memorial Recreation Ground was a meaningful and well attended occasion. People from across the community came together in a spirit of unity to honour and remember all those who sacrificed their lives in service to the country. Representatives from a range of local organisations laid wreaths, including British Legion Polegate who jointly organised the ceremony, -each reflecting the shared commitment of our community to remembrance and gratitude.



Christmas Switch on:



Polegate's own pantomime favourites, Dame Widow Twankey and Wishee Washee, helped switch on the Christmas lights ahead of the new pantomime season, bringing a burst of festive fun to the town.

Last weekend, crowds gathered along Polegate High Street for the Polegate Christmas Fun Day, a brilliant community event organised by Ace Events, full of activities, entertainment, and festive cheer.

Cllr Dan Dunbar, Mayor of Polegate, thanked everyone who helped make the afternoon a success. He said it was wonderful to see so many people come together for the switch on and passed on his thanks to Ace Events for arranging the day and to PJ Skips for donating Polegate's Christmas tree. He was joined for the countdown by Widow Twankey and Wishee Washee from Polegate Drama Group.

Polegate Drama Group said they were delighted to take part and enjoyed celebrating with the community.

Support for Cuckmere Buses:



Polegate Town Council awarded a grant of £350 to Cuckmere Buses to help support the operation of their New Year's Day service. This funding contributed towards maintaining essential public transport at a time when many services are unavailable, ensuring residents in Polegate and the surrounding areas could stay connected for important journeys. The Council is pleased to assist a long e-established community

transport provider whose work plays a valuable role in promoting accessibility, independence, and social connection throughout the year.



Best Dressed Christmas Lights and Shop Competition:



The Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Polegate presented certificates to local shops and residents in recognition of their outstanding festive displays in the annual Christmas Best Dressed Window and House competition.

The awards celebrated the creativity and community spirit shown across the town, with decorated shop windows and homes helping to spread

festive cheer. Certificates were given for Best Dressed Shop Window and Best Dressed House.

The Mayor thanked all participants for their efforts, noting how the displays brightened the town and supported the festive atmosphere. Congratulations were extended to the winners, along with thanks to local businesses and residents who helped make the competition a success.



Civic Award – Polegate Drama Group:



Polegate Town Council has proudly presented its Civic Award to the Polegate Drama Group in recognition of their longstanding contribution to the arts and their positive impact on community life. This award celebrates the group's decades of dedication to high- quality

theatrical productions, the nurturing of local talent, and their commitment to providing creative opportunities for residents of all ages-.

The award was presented by the Mayor of Polegate, who commended the group's enduring role in enriching the town's cultural landscape. The Mayor noted that the Drama Group has "brought people together, encouraged creativity, and provided a valued platform for local performers," highlighting their continued importance within the community.

Founded in 1966, the Polegate Drama Group has become a well-loved part of the local arts scene, staging a wide variety of productions including classic plays, contemporary pieces, and much-loved pantomimes. Beyond their stage work, the group also contributes to wider community life, such as hosting coffee mornings at the community centre and supporting local events.

The Chair of the Drama Group accepted the award on behalf of its members, expressing appreciation for the recognition and acknowledging the hard work, dedication, and support of performers, volunteers, and audiences over the years.

The Civic Award reflects Polegate Town Council's commitment to recognising individuals and groups who make exceptional contributions to the town, helping to strengthen community spirit and enhance the quality of life for residents.

Brightling Project

Project Update - March 2026



We're pleased to share the latest progress on the improvement works planned for Brightling Road Leisure Ground. As funding opportunities have developed, the project is now expected to be delivered as one larger package of works rather than several smaller ones. This approach allows us to reduce overall construction costs, minimise disruption to residents, and ensure the site remains safe throughout the works.

Archaeological Survey

You may see activity on site over the coming weeks as the required archaeological survey takes place.

The original survey was postponed, but a new site visit is expected in March 2026, followed by the geophysical investigation shortly afterwards. We will share updates as soon as information becomes available.

Combining the Project Elements

We are currently reviewing all individual project components and combining them into a single contract tender.

Each element will still reflect the outcomes of our public consultations, this step simply brings them together to streamline groundworks, reduce costs, and improve safety while contractors are on site.

Tendering and Funding

Tender documents are being drafted and are expected to be issued to contractors around April/ May 2026.

Due to the upcoming elections, confirmation of external funding may not be available until July 2026. There are also legal and planning conditions that must be met before work can begin. If full funding is not secured, the council may need to reassess which parts of the project can go ahead as funding is limited.

At this stage, we are working on the basis that the project will be jointly funded by the Town Council and an external funder.

Preparing for Polegate Grasshoppers

As part of supporting local sport, the intention is for Polegate Grasshoppers to use the field in future as their home ground. Significant ground preparation is planned for 2026–2027 to make this possible. This will form a core part of the early works, depending on final funding approval.

What Could Be Included in the Final Project

Subject to funding and contracts, the project pipeline currently includes:

- An inclusive playground
- A small event use car park
- A grass football pitch
- A potential catering and toilet facility
- Power supply and CCTV
- A new concrete skate park
- A pump track and improved BMX track
- Two tennis courts
- A refreshed basketball court
- A toddler learning cycle track
- A new accessible pathway around the field suitable for buggies, wheelchairs, and mobility scooters
- Solar lighting

Stay Updated

We will continue to keep residents informed via:

- Our website news section
- Our social media channels

Thank you for your patience as we work to deliver a safe, inclusive, and exciting community space for Polegate.

Polegate Library

Project Update - March 2026

Polegate Town Council is delighted to share an exciting update on the development of our new Community Library, now officially underway.

A Community Interest Company (CIC) has been established to run the library, and a full team of directors has been appointed to oversee its governance and long-term sustainability. The Council has also agreed that the Library CIC will use the room at the back of 51 High Street as the main library space, with an additional secure container being placed in the car park for book storage.

We are pleased to confirm that the project already has a dedicated team in place, including a Librarian, Volunteer Coordinator, Secretary, and Treasurer. A group of enthusiastic volunteers are also supporting the early stages of development, helping with preparations both day to day and behind the scenes. Once the building works are complete, we will be inviting further day to day library volunteers to join us and help bring the space to life.

To ensure the library is welcoming and accessible to all, several important improvements will be carried out over the coming months. These include installing a wider entrance door, an accessible toilet, and an access ramp. We are also awaiting planning permission for air conditioning units, which will allow us to replace the existing radiators and make the space more comfortable year-round.

We are extremely grateful to East Sussex Library Service for gifting us a set of shelving, which will be incorporated into the refurbished library room ready for our grand opening. While we had hoped to progress more quickly, some aspects of the project, such as grant applications and planning requirements, have taken a little longer than anticipated. However, these steps are essential to ensuring we deliver a safe, accessible, and well-equipped community facility.

Looking ahead, we are exploring ways to expand our facilities for summer events, helping to create a vibrant programme of activities for families and residents.

The Library CIC already has a Facebook presence, and once construction and fit out works are fully underway, we will begin sharing regular updates there, as well as on the Town Council website and social media channels. We look forward to keeping the community informed as the project progresses.

Business Plan and Vision

No.	Project	Sub-Projects	Timescale
1	Items outstanding from Previous Business Plan		
1a	Undertake a range of improvements and upgrades to Brightling Road Recreation Ground	<u>Continue with improvements and enhancements.</u> Planning permission in progress and data collection re pump track, concrete skate park, climbing wall, accessible park, car park and associated access, solar lighting, CCTV, and power. In progress	Short to medium term (ongoing)
1b	Continue to partner with Wealden on Cuckoo trail enhancements	<u>New signage to be installed in Feb outside of council offices which direct to cuckoo trail, SDNP Council toilets and offices</u>	Completed
1c	Improve signage to the Cuckoo trail and liaise with other authorities to achieve this	<u>In partnership with WDC signage as above</u>	Completed
1d	Financial feasibility of temporary structure in car park to provide accessible chambers and library	Work being carried out on feasibility of different location. Agreed, some legal matters to be considered. Now being provided in 51	Short term (ongoing)
1e	To continue to partner with Cuckmere buses and promote services that provide an easy access to the South Downs National Park from Polegate. Ideally services to South Downs National Park, Friston, Seven Sisters Country Park and Jevington.	Continue to advertise services that provide these facilities to residents and tourists. Supporting through New Years Day Service and grants when applied for.	Short to Long-term (ongoing) Initial stages completed

No.	Project	Sub-Projects	Timescale
1f	Establish a 'Friends of Brightling Road' group	Continue and development further partnerships with local groups interested in the environment with a view to setting up a friends of group.	Medium to Long-term (ongoing)
1g	Continue to develop partnerships between Southern Railways to encourage and promote visitors to the town	Ongoing	Short to Long-term (ongoing)
1h	Promote Polegate as a 'Gateway' to the South Downs National Park	Continue joint initiatives with Southern Railways and the South Downs National Park Authority Cuckmere Buses and other agencies. Ongoing	Short to Long-term (ongoing)
1i	Drainage of field	Continue with the Football Foundation initiative and Polegate Grasshoppers alongside GMA and other agencies. In progress	Short term 26/27 Long-Term – maintenance
1j	Brightling Road - Contact the local business community for prospective sponsors and grant funders	Continue to attract further sponsorship and grant funding <u>Festival July 2026</u>	Short term festival long-term partnerships.
1k	Brightling Road – enhanced bench provision	Continuation of improvements once complete. Install additional benches around the area. Awaiting installation with contractors and more locations being prepared.	Medium to long-term
2	Environment and Appearance of the town		
2a	Improve signage to the Cuckoo trail	Completed	Completed

No.	Project	Sub-Projects	Timescale
2b	<u>Continue</u> to liaise with other authorities to ensure that the Town Council can carry out certain services without issues. i.e. litter, weeds, cleaning signs, white gates etc	Encourage volunteer groups and individuals. <u>Continue</u> to Liaise with Wealden District Council waste department, street scene. Continue to liaise with East Sussex Highways. PTC already provide additional verge cutting; enhanced litter picking alongside volunteer groups and events. Encourage reporting of appearance issues and resolve where possible.	Short to medium term
2c	Further litter awareness campaigns	In partnership. Also litter events annually with varying groups.	Short to medium term
2d	Increase access to the town and its facilities including parks for those with decreased mobility and/or special needs	Continue with current initiatives and implement new ideas where possible taking this into consideration. Prep for requests to highways underway. High Street improvements 20mph etc. Ongoing	Short medium and long-term
2e	Continue support for wildlife areas	Continue supporting Jubilee Nature Reserve. Now taken back in house. Partnerships with payback team, Balfour Beatty, Jacobs, PJ Skips, and volunteers. Ongoing	Short to long-term (ongoing)
3	Tourism for the town		
3a	Promote Polegate as a destination	Social media	Short term
3b	Provision of a range of events in the town with the Council's role as facilitator	Summer festival now run in partnership with Ace Events. Xmas event now in partnership with Ace Events.	Short to medium term

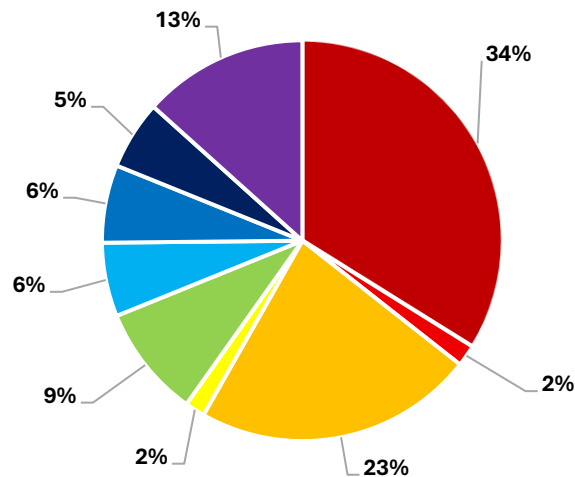
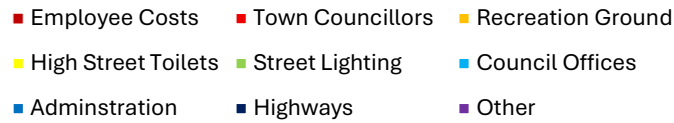
No.	Project	Sub-Projects	Timescale
		New public and civic events, annual events being developed. Ongoing	
3c	Provide additional funding for more events in the town	As events are created budgeting the previous year in readiness. £7000 new budget for 26/27 plus partnership with Ace events externally funded. Ongoing/ In progress	Short to medium term
3d	Create walking festival in summer	Design to promote an appreciation of the local area and environment to local residents, promote community activities and general health of the local population. Liaise with other organisations to achieve these goals. Currently sharing Health walks info on social media whilst Communities group discuss the format and intention of the event.	Medium term Removed from Business Plan
3e	Promote World Book Day in Polegate during March through fun activities such as hunt the book in local retailers, augmented reality tours, and other ideas.	Aim to increase the support for a library. Work in partnership with schools and other authorities to achieve this. Looking at new event in 2026. Will be discussed at Communities & Tourism committee.	Medium term Removed will now be done by Polegate community Library CIC.
4	Brightling Road Recreation Ground		
4a	Pathway from outdoor gym to new accessible roadway	Planning permission in place. Ongoing as part of larger works expected completion 26/27	Short term

No.	Project	Sub-Projects	Timescale
4b	Sponsorship scheme	Some completed and underway. Continue and add to. Refreshing sponsors for the flowers at present. Litter sponsorship from 2 partnerships. Ongoing	Short to medium term
4c	Funding for further events on the land	Included in 26/27 budget. Completed	Medium term
4d	Tennis court (new)	Grant / S106 / CIL funded. Ongoing as part of larger works on brightling road leisure ground	Short term 26/27
5	Climate Change		
5a	Educate residents and promote how to mitigate climate change and promote an environmentally sustainable approach	Continue and enhance social media and website posts. Hold events where appropriate. Theme for annual town assembly 2026 is climate change. Ongoing social media posts	Short to medium term
5b	Assess the town council's carbon footprint and carry out improvements where possible	In progress.	Medium term
5d	Investigate solar lighting and other schemes to reduce the impact of street lighting. NB the town council provides lighting for amenity and footways and is NOT required to light the roads.	Solar lighting is planned for Brightling Road Leisure Ground and is part of the planning permission being sought at present. Funding in Place In progress	Medium to long term
6	Wellbeing of residents		
6a	Promote the general health of the town and residents to support the NHS	NB other initiatives encourage health and wellbeing for our residents.	Medium to long term

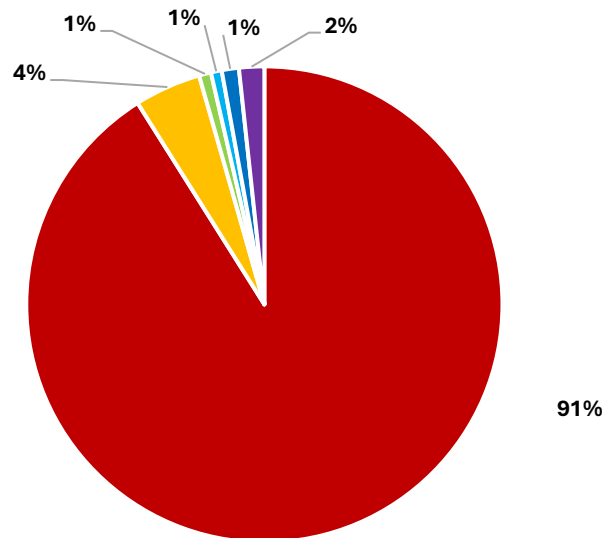
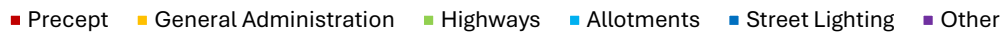
No.	Project	Sub-Projects	Timescale
		Partnership with WDC our parks sessions for residents for free. Sharing on social media of health and wellbeing subjects and initiatives and partnership with local sports clubs Ongoing as part of social media and website strategies.	

Polegate Town Council's finances

What the Council spends money on:



Where the Council's Income comes from:



Most of the Town Council's services are funded through the precept, which comes from Council Tax paid by residents within the parish. To help reduce costs and support local projects, the Council has also been exploring additional funding opportunities, including grants, income generating initiatives, and sponsorship. As a result, further grant funding has been secured to support projects taking place in Polegate.

Accounts:

The Council's accounts were prepared annually for the financial year running from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. These accounts were audited and formally approved around June 2025, with an external audit typically taking place between July and September.

The Council also maintained Ear Marked Reserves, which were funds set aside for specific projects. These reserves are reviewed each year to assess whether the projects remained viable, whether sufficient funding was available, or whether funds should be reallocated due to changing priorities (changes to the business plan) or legislation. As projects were completed, the reserves reduced accordingly, demonstrating careful and responsible financial management.

To meet audit requirements, the Council was required to hold an appropriate level of general reserves to cover routine expenditure. This usually equated to 6–12 months of standard spending, or around half of the annual precept. Polegate Town Council consistently operated within this recommended range, as confirmed by internal and external audits. Maintaining suitable general reserves ensured the Council could continue delivering essential services and respond effectively to unexpected costs or emergencies.

The Council remains committed to minimising the financial impact on residents by seeking sponsorships, grants, and alternative income sources. Securing additional funding enables the Council to support local improvements without increasing costs to the community. This approach strengthened the Council's financial resilience while continuing to invest in projects that benefit residents.

Polegate Town Council

Income and Expenditure Account for Year Ended 31st March 2025

31st March 2024

31st March 2025

Income Summary

365,846

365,846

Precept

452,896

Sub Total

452,896

Operating Income

2,312
5,107
612
48,032
0
0
1,234
1,263
79,320
3,762
3,279
1,193
900

512,861

Employee costs
Administration
Town Councillors
General Administration
Council Offices
The Pavilion
High Street Toilets
Town Centre and Community Safe
Recreation Grounds
Highways
Allotments
Street Lighting
The Polegate Partnership

2,328
109
1,026
22,479
176
1,534
1,353
519
120
4,048
3,641
5,788
1,350

Total Income

497,366

Expenditure Summary

16,478

16,478

General Maintenance

23,032

Sub Total

23,032

Running Costs

145,419
54,929
9,315
5,318
47,199
654
26,124
12,136
8,268
161,094
31,617
2,377
87,103
580
995
358
722

610,685

Employee costs
Administration
Town Councillors
General Administration
Council Offices
51 High Street
Wannock Office
High Street Toilets
Town Centre and Community Safe
Recreation Grounds
Highways
Allotments
Street Lighting
Prize and Prize Giving
The Polegate Partnership
The Planning Committee
The Retired

176,443
32,713
9,058
5,973
31,079
674
33,950
8,363
1,635
117,814
28,874
2,938
47,187
46
288
0
967

Total Expenditure

521,034

General Fund Analysis

207,502
512,861

720,363
610,685

109,678
(85,882)

195,560

Opening Balance

195,560

Plus : Income for Year

497,366

Less : Expenditure for Year

692,926
521,034

Transfers TO / FROM Reserves

171,893
(77,773)

Closing Balance

249,666

We Are Responsible For



- **Parks - Oakleaf Play Area** maintenance and safety, **Brightling Road Leisure Ground** skate park, outdoor gym, basketball court, informal football goals, trees and picnic benches, meadow and main field,
- **Allotments** - Cophall and Gosford Way,
- **Grass Cutting** - East Sussex Highways responsibility but Polegate Town Council carry out additional cuts,
- **Litter** - in parks and council owned land,
- **Parish Owned Street Lights** - lettered columns,
- **Toilets** - Council Garden (Toilets at Polegate Recreation Ground are part of the Community Interest Company),
- **Wooden Bus Stops | Benches | Dog Bins | Hanging baskets, flower tubs and planters**

Mayor and Deputy Mayor available for civic and social events

admin@polegatetowncouncil.gov.uk | 01323 488 114

East Sussex County Council

- **Education | Social Services | Estates** including old library grounds in Windsor Way, car park hedging and fencing

0345 60 80 190

East Sussex Highways

- **Hedges | Highways | Parking on street | Pavements | Yellow Lines | Pavement Gully Clearing | Potholes | Weeds in the road | Roadside Trees** overgrown or dead | **Street Lighting** numbered columns

0345 60 80 193

Highways England

- **A22 | A27 | A22-A27 Cophall Road | Lighting and Verges** on trunk roads

0300 123 5000

Bauer Media Outdoor UK Ltd

- **Glass/Perspex Bus shelters** with adverts

0208 015 6485

Wealden District Council

- **Bins and Rubbish** including fly tipping and Street Scene
- **Litter** in the High Street and streets
- **Environmental Health** rats, pigeons, seagulls, noise)
- **Car Parking** off street
- **Business Rates | Council Tax | Tourism | Enforcement | Housing | Planning | Road Sweeping**

01323 44 33 22

Wealden Citizen's Advice

Offices in **Crowborough | Uckfield | Hailsham**

www.wealdencitizensadvice.org.uk/

Advice Line **0808 278 7811**

Advisor Line **0800 144 8848**

Network Rail

- **Black Path Overgrowth | Network Rail Car Park | Porters Way Hedges**

0345 711 4141

Please Note: Roy Martin Way, the car park and grass area near The Co-Op is privately owned and not under the control of Polegate Town Council.

Tower Mill area, Clement Land and beyond Southfields, Farmlands and beyond falls with the Willingdon and Jevington Parish Council boundary **01323 489 603**

Useful Information

Residents' FAQ – Most Common Questions Answered



Litter Picking:

Polegate Town Council is responsible for litter picking on Council owned land and public open spaces, including:

- Wannock War Memorial Recreation Ground
- Brightling Road Leisure Ground
- Oakleaf Park

To report issues on these sites, contact:

- admin@polegatetowncouncil.gov.uk
- 01323 488114

Litter on Streets and Roads:

Litter collection and street cleansing on the High Street and all public roads in Polegate is carried out by Wealden District Council.

To report litter or street cleaning issues:

street.scene@wealden.gov.uk

Online reporting available via Wealden District Council's website.

Litter Bin Issues:

- Damaged bins: recycling@wealden.gov.uk
- Overflowing bins: Report online via Wealden District Council's reporting forms.
01323 443322



Parking in Polegate:

Parking enforcement has not been decriminalised in Wealden, so the Town Council receives many enquiries about parking issues.

However, Polegate Town Council does not own any chargeable public car parks and is not responsible for parking enforcement or issuing fines.

Parking concerns, restrictions, or enforcement queries must be directed to the relevant authority (typically Sussex Police for obstruction, or the landowner for private car parks).

Please be aware that we also get a number of calls about parking fines in Twin Oaks drive (and Birch Road) near the LIDL store. This is currently a privately owned road, and signs have been checked by Trading Standards and considered by them to be suitable and clear. We have contacted the developer/landowner, and they have advised that the roads are in the process of being adopted by East Sussex Highways, but there are no timescales for this, and charges will continue to be raised for those who park contrary to the signage.



Street Lighting:

Polegate Town Council owns and maintains over 300 streetlights, which provide amenity and pavement lighting throughout the town. East Sussex Highways is responsible for the lighting of public roads.

How to Identify Who is Responsible:

- Lettered columns indicate a Polegate Town Council streetlight.
- Numbered columns indicate an East Sussex Highways streetlight.

Reporting a Street Lighting Issue:

If you notice a streetlight that is damaged, not working, illuminated during daylight hours, or otherwise faulty, please report it to the correct authority:

Lettered streetlights:

- Polegate Town Council
- Email: admin@polegatetowncouncil.gov.uk
- Telephone: 01323 488114

Numbered streetlights:

- East Sussex Highways
- Telephone: 0345 608 0193
- Website: <https://live.eastsussexhighways.com/>



Jubilee Nature Reserve:

Polegate Town Council owns an area of land measuring approximately two acres located near Brightling Recreation Ground. The land was originally gifted to the Council and has recently returned to direct Council management. As part of this transition, the Jubilee Nature Reserve Working Group has begun exploring potential uses for the site, with a focus on enhancing biodiversity, supporting wildlife habitats, and creating accessible natural spaces for the community.

The Working Group is currently discussing a range of ideas, including habitat restoration, planting schemes, and opportunities for community involvement in conservation activities. The aim is to ensure that the land is managed sustainably and developed in a way that benefits both local residents and wildlife. The location of the site entrance can be found via What3Words: **///sunk.cubs.worth**.



Allotments in Polegate:

Polegate Town Council manages two allotment sites: Cophall and Gosford Way.

At Gosford Way, the land is rented from Wealden District Council, and the Town Council manages a limited number of plots there. Any income from Gosford allotment fees is returned directly to Wealden District Council each year.

If you are a Polegate resident and would like to apply for an allotment, please contact admin@polegatetowncouncil.gov.uk or 01323 488114 to join the waiting list. The current waiting time is approximately 1-2 years depending on availability.

Allotments are offered to residents in waiting list order. Annual fees apply and are reviewed each year. Allocation of plots is subject to availability and Council allotment regulations.



Council Committees

Polegate Town Council operates several committees that oversee different areas of council work:

- Finance & Policy – budget, governance, financial oversight
- Personnel – staffing matters and HR
- Planning – reviews planning applications
- Buildings & Land – council buildings, parks, and assets
- Climate – environment and sustainability projects
- Communities & Tourism – events, engagement, promotion of the town
- Christmas Lights – annual festive lighting
- Street Lighting – maintenance and management of council-owned lights



Working Groups

In addition to its formal committees, Polegate Town Council also operates a number of working groups. These groups support specific projects, provide detailed research, and make recommendations to committees and Full Council.

Current working groups include:

- Business Plan Working Group – develops and reviews the Council’s long-term strategic plan
- Website Working Group – oversees improvements to the Council’s online presence
- Neighbourhood Plan Working Group – progresses the development of the Neighbourhood Plan
- Risk Management Working Group – reviews and strengthens the Council’s risk management processes
- Libraries Working Group – monitors issues relating to library services and community access
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Working Group – considers allocation and use of CIL funds
- Flower Contract Working Group – oversees planting schemes and floral displays in the town
- Internal Audit Review & Internal Working Group – supports compliance, audit processes, and internal procedures
- Jubilee Nature Reserve Working Group – manages ongoing development of the nature reserve
- New Land Working Group – explores opportunities relating to potential land acquisition or use
- Devolution Working Group – reviews possible devolution of assets and services from principal authorities

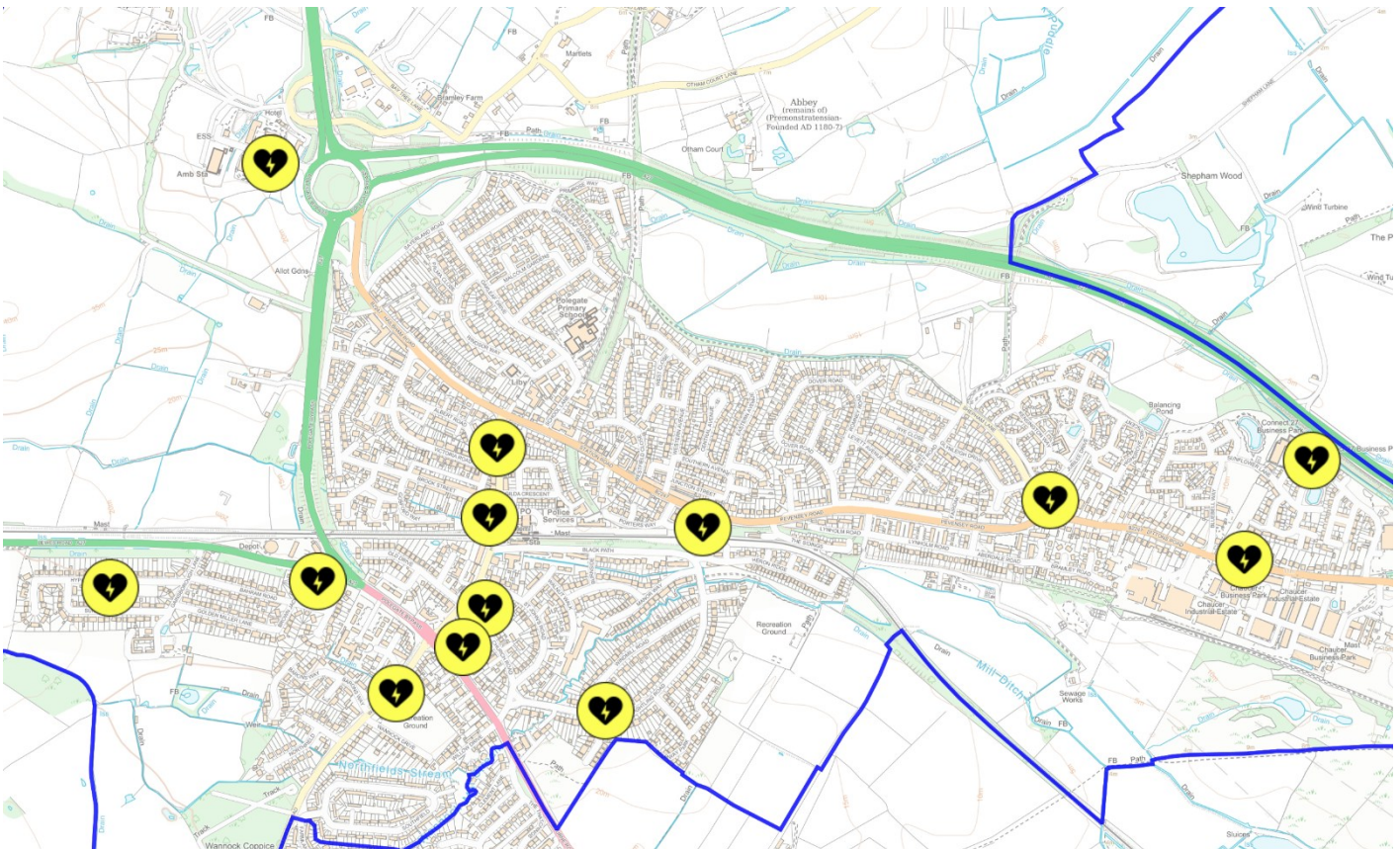


Polegate Town Council Defibrillator Locations:

Polegate Town Council maintains 13 public defibrillators (AEDs) across the town. These are placed to ensure they are easy to access in an emergency.

1. 28 Brightling Road – Red telephone box
2. 110 Eastbourne Road – On the front wall of St George's Church Hall
3. Co-op Petrol Station, Hailsham Road – On the wall to the right of the petrol station shop entrance
4. Stud Farm Allotments – On the building at Stud Farm Allotments
5. Polegate Free Church, High Street – On the wall of Polegate Free Church
6. St John's Church – On the wall of St John's Church Hall, outside near the car park
7. Commercial Unit 1, Old Station House – On the wall of Morrisons Daily
8. Electricity Sub-Station, Dittons Road – On the roadside wall at the entrance to the Mill Estate
9. Haere Mai, Dittons Road – Inside the silver glass phone box in the lay-by
10. Polegate Recreation Ground, Wannock Road – On the front of the building near the grass verge and noticeboard
11. 49 High Street – On the wall of the Council Office
12. Unit 17, Twin Oaks Drive – On the wall of Lightning Fibre
13. The Thoroughbred – Next to the bleed control kit

For a full map of all registered defibrillators in Polegate, including those not owned by the Town Council, visit: www.defibfinder.uk



Council Representative Reports 2025–26

Cuckmere Buses

Cuckmere Buses is a long-established, volunteer-run community transport charity providing essential links between rural villages and local towns including Polegate, Hailsham and Seaford. Its fleet of accessible minibuses enables residents to reach shops, medical appointments, social activities, and during the warmer months, leisure destinations across our beautiful region. The charity plays a vital role in filling gaps left by commercial services and supports many thousands of passenger journeys each year.



Polegate Town Council is proud to support Cuckmere Buses through a donation, helping to keep these valued community routes running. As the Council's representative, Cllr Dan Dunbar attends stakeholder meetings, the AGM, and the annual drivers' celebration, an important opportunity to thank the dedicated volunteers whose efforts make the service possible.

Polegate Twinning Association



The Polegate Twinning Association, founded in 1981, continues to promote international friendship and cultural exchange between Polegate and its twin towns: Appen in Germany and Saintry-sur-Seine in France. Through reciprocal visits, social events, and

fundraising activities, the Association strengthens long-standing ties and fosters greater understanding between our communities.

As the Council's representative, and in recent years, as Mayor, Cllr Dan Dunbar has played an active role in supporting the Association's work. He has hosted civic receptions to welcome visitors from both Appen and Saintry-sur-Seine, showcasing the warmth and hospitality of Polegate. Reflecting on the past year, Cllr Dunbar said:

"I have been incredibly fortunate to represent the town on official twinning visits abroad, spending time in both of our twin towns and learning more about our shared heritage. A highlight of my mayoral year was welcoming visitors to Polegate, including the Mayor of

Appen, and taking great pride in showing them our town, its people, and our strong community spirit. I was also privileged to travel to Saintry, where I met with their Mayor, explored the town, and helped further strengthen the friendships between our communities.”

South Downs National Park

Polegate is fortunate to sit on the doorstep of the South Downs National Park, one of the UK’s most treasured landscapes and a defining feature of our local identity. The National Park provides exceptional opportunities for outdoor recreation, biodiversity conservation, and heritage preservation, while also supporting sustainable tourism and the rural economy.

As part of ongoing engagement with regional partners, the Council continues to support initiatives that promote responsible access to the Downs, protect natural habitats, and encourage residents to enjoy our unique setting. The Park remains a much-loved asset for the people of Polegate, offering opportunities for walking, cycling, volunteering, and connecting with nature throughout the year.

Wealden Works:



Wealden Works is a unique rural employability programme established in 2017, supporting young people aged 16–24 into work across the Wealden area through intensive 6-week group courses. The programme focuses on helping those who are seeking employment and career pathways but may

not have access to professional networks, workplace contacts, or traditional support systems, in order to enable them to take meaningful steps towards employment, training, and contribute positively to their communities.

The programme is designed to bridge the gap between education and the world of work; Wealden Works offers a wide range of support tailored to individual needs. This includes one-to-one career guidance, mentoring, and intensive six-week group courses that help build confidence, build life skills, support research into careers and develop practical skills such as writing a professional CV and enhancing interview skills. The programme works closely with local businesses, community partners, and organisations throughout Wealden, offering students work trials and business tours. As an independent charitable organisation without government or CIO funding, its success relies on local engagement and partnership.



Representatives from Wealden Works met with Polegate Town Council in October to outline the important work they deliver and their plans for future support in the area. As part of this collaboration, the Council has agreed to provide facilities for Wealden Works to operate in Polegate during September – October 2026, enabling more young people locally to benefit from their services and

provide local businesses with local talent, removing the costly recruitment charges.

Polegate Town Councillors



Cllr M Caira



Cllr G Archer



Cllr A O'Kane



Cllr J Keen



Cllr J Heward



Cllr D Watts



Cllr D Dunbar



Cllr M Piper



Cllr C Berry



Cllr M Cunningham



Cllr A Wood



Cllr D Murray



Cllr S Shing



Cllr D Shing



**Cllr W Heasman
- O'Neill**

Contact Information

Polegate Town Council:

Phone: 01323 488114

Location: 49 High Street, Polegate, BN26 6AL

Email: admin@polegatetowncouncil.gov.uk

Website: www.polegatetowncouncil.gov.uk

Twitter: @PolegateTC <https://x.com/PolegateTC>

Facebook: Polegate Town Council <https://www.facebook.com/PolegateTownCouncil>

Polegate Town Councillors:

Table: Polegate Town Councillors Contact Information

Councillor Name	Ward	Preferred Contact
Cllr Graeme Archer	South	C/O Polegate Town Council 01323 488 114 cllr.g.archer@polegatetowncouncil.gov.uk
Cllr Cherie Berry	South	C/O Polegate Town Council 01323 488 114
Cllr Mickey Caira	North	C/O Polegate Town Council 01323 488 114 cllr.m.caira@polegatetowncouncil.gov.uk
Cllr Malcolm Cunningham	Central	C/O Polegate Town Council 01323 488 114 cllr.m.cunningham@polegatetowncouncil.gov.uk
Cllr Dan Dunbar	North	07743 982610 cllr.d.dunbar@polegatetowncouncil.gov.uk
Cllr Wilfred Heasman O'Neill	South	C/O Polegate Town Council 01323 488 114
Cllr James Heward	North	C/O Polegate Town Council 01323 488 114 cllr.j.heward@polegatetowncouncil.gov.uk
Cllr Jamie Keen	Central	C/O Polegate Town Council 01323 488 114 cllr.j.keen@polegatetowncouncil.gov.uk
Cllr Douglas Murray	North	C/O Polegate Town Council 01323 488 114
Cllr Andy O'Kane	Central	C/O Polegate Town Council 01323 488 114
Cllr Margaret Piper	South	01323 485611
Cllr Daniel Shing	South	C/O Polegate Town Council 01323 488 114
Cllr Stephen Shing	North	C/O Polegate Town Council 01323 488 114 cllr.s.shing@polegatetowncouncil.gov.uk
Cllr David Watts	North	C/O Polegate Town Council 01323 488 114 cllr.d.watts@polegatetowncouncil.gov.uk
Cllr Andrew Wood	North	C/O Polegate Town Council 01323 488 114 cllr.a.wood@polegatetowncouncil.gov.uk

Wealden District Council:

Phone: 01323 443 322

Website: <https://www.wealden.gov.uk/>



Wealden District Councillors:

Christ Primmett: cllr.chris.primett@wealden.gov.uk 07971 860 990

Oi Lin Shing: cllr.oilin.shing@wealden.gov.uk 07576 261 898

Daniel Shing: cllr.daniel.shing@wealden.gov.uk 07576 261 898



East Sussex County Council:

General Enquiries: 03456 080 190

Website: <https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/>



East Sussex County Councillors:

Councillor Daniel Shing: 07576 261 898



East Sussex Highways:

Phone: 03456 080 193

Website: <https://live.eastsussexhighways.com/>



Sussex Police:

Non-Emergency Contact number: 101

In an emergency: 999



East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service:

Email: enquiries@esfrs.org

In an emergency: 999

Telephone: 0303 999 1000

Website: <https://www.esfrs.org/contact-us>



Southern Water (Leaks and Supply Issues)

Phone: 0330 303 0368



UK Power Networks

Website: <https://www.ukpowernetworks.co.uk/>

Phone: 08000 294 285



Local MP Contact details:

Email: james.maccleary.mp@parliament.uk

Phone: 01273 526 310



Please note: External links are provided for information only. Polegate Town Council does not accept responsibility for the accuracy, security, or content of external sites.



Minutes of the Annual Town Assembly Meeting: 28th April 2025

1. Welcome by the Mayor:

The Mayor welcomed everyone.

2. Apologies for Absence:

Cllr N Dunbar, S Shing, W Heasman O'Neill

3. To sign and accept the minutes of the Annual Town Assembly held on 13th May 2024:

It was resolved to sign and accept the minutes of the Annual Town Assembly Meeting 13th May 2024. VOTE all in favour.

4. Matters Arising from the minutes:

No matters were arising.

5. Wealden District Council – Update on Climate Green Paper and how individuals can take action:

Wealden District Council representatives thanked Polegate Town Council for the invitation. They gave a presentation summarising their recent climate research. This included key findings on Climate risks, local perceptions, organisational concerns, and draft strategies towards net zero by 2024. Their updated vision and seven core principles were outlined along with eight draft strategic themes. The presentation also covered how individuals can contribute to tackling climate change through choices related to energy, transport, diet, consumption and supporting nature. Key data from the 'Impact' tool highlighted the primary sources of Polegate emissions: 36% from goods and services, 24% from food and diet, and 15% from housing. For full details, please refer to the PowerPoint Slides Polegate-Town-Assembly Presentation-28-04-2025.pptx. A resident asked where all the data has come from; Wealden responded that they would take it away and then follow up with further information.

6. Environment Agency – Update on Community Resilience and Flooding:

The Environment Agency reported the ongoing work to engage the local community and increase awareness of flood risks. They reiterated that while

flooding cannot be prevented, residents can be supported in managing risk and improving resilience. They strongly encouraged residents to sign up for the flood

warning service, which aims to provide at least 24 hours' notice of risk, helping households plan access to routes, medication, and essential supplies. The Environmental Agency has field operatives who remain active in the area, particularly working on main rivers. However, they reiterated that the responsibility for maintaining main rivers lies with riparian owners, although the agency is happy to support and advise them, especially in emergency situations. A resident raised concerns about a wall constructed across a stream near Manor Way, which increased flooding risk for neighbouring properties. The Environment agency explained construction near waterways typically requires consultation with them, though this is not always sought. The resident added that the new neighbour is willing to remove the wall. Another resident inquired about the Agency's powers of prosecution; the agency responded that they would follow up with further information.

7. Open Forum for residents' discussions:

A resident asked for an update on the library. The Clerk and Mayor confirmed that the current plan was to relocate the library to the back of the Council Offices at 51 High Street. It would operate as a community-owned facility, similar to the model used in Pevensey. Another resident then inquired about whether Health Checks would return to Polegate. The Clerk explained that a complaint had previously been lodged due to Polegate being the only town in Wealden not to host the service. Wealden has responded that the attendance figures were too low although a resident countered that the appointments had been fully booked when they tried to attend. A Councillor acknowledged that Polegate is sometimes overlooked and encouraged residents to attend Council Meetings, not only to stay informed about the Council's work but also to raise concerns and issues they may have. The Councillors stressed that if the Council is unaware of an issue it cannot help to resolve it. A resident mentioned parking in Polegate. Councillors explained how parking has been a long-standing discussion with Wealden District Council over many years. Wealden has not yet decriminalised parking enforcement in the area which means drivers are often able to park without consequences contributing to the ongoing parking issues, but that council continues to lobby for change.

8. Formal closure of Meeting:

Meeting Close at 8:45pm

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POLEGATE



**POLEGATE TOWN COUNCIL OPENING
HOURS:**

MONDAY TO FRIDAY: 09:00 - 13:00

CONTACT US:

PHONE: 01323 488114

EMAIL:

ADMIN@POLEGATETOWNCOUNCIL.GOV.UK

WEBSITE:

WWW.POLEGATETOWNCOUNCIL.GOV.UK

ADDRESS: 49 HIGH STREET, POLEGATE, BN26 6AL