

Polegate Town Council

POLEGATE



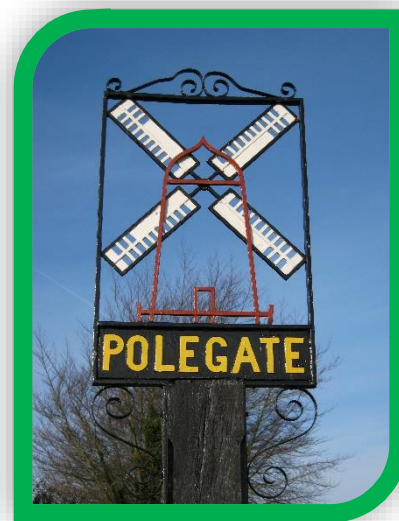
Polegate Town Council

Polegate Town Council is the local level of council. The council is responsible for allotments of which it has two (Cophall & Gosford Way), some street lighting (*mainly side roads plus the High Street lighting*), play parks and playing areas owned by the council, Christmas lights and floral decorations.

The District Council is the next level of council and deals with a wider range of services, such as waste disposal, litter, environmental health, council tax collection and planning.

The County Council is the highest local authority in our area and has an even wider range of services, which are more strategic including Highways (non-trunk roads), libraries, social services and education.

Highways England is responsible for A22, A27 and the A2270 from A27 junction traffic lights (including the Polegate bypass).



Two Councillors Awarded Honorary Freeman of Polegate in 2023

The award of Honorary Freeman is one of the most prestigious awards which a council can bestow upon a valued member of the community.

Although the title of 'freeman' confers no special privileges it is without a doubt an honour to receive such an award and is a great and lasting tribute to a person held in high regard.

Polegate Town Council is delighted to have made the award of Honorary Freeman of Polegate to both Cllr Stephen Shing and Cllr Malcolm Cunningham this year.



Cllr Shing was presented his award on behalf of the Town Council by the Town Mayor Cllr Dan Dunbar on 30th October 2023. Over 100 people attended the awards presentation on 8th November at the Cumberland Hotel including the Deputy Lieutenant Professor Nick Webbhorn CBE and High Sheriff Mr Richard Bickersteth, at which many personal and notable commendations were made to Cllr Stephen Shing for his tireless work within the community.

Cllr Cunningham was presented his award at a ceremony at St. Georges Hall on 11th March in honour of his lengthy and dedicated service to the town of Polegate. Mayor Cllr Dan Dunbar made the award to Cllr Cunningham in the presence of his family, friends, fellow councillors and invited guests.

The awards were made to Cllr Shing and Cllr Cunningham as the council considered that they had served their community for many years in many ways.

Polegate Mayors Tea Party Raises Money for First Responders

Polegate Mayor Cllr Dan Dunbar hosted a Christmas party for Polegate's retired residents, which raised over £400 for Eastbourne Area Community First Responders.



At the party for Polegate residents the Mayor held a raffle and an auction which raised £411 for his chosen charity. The volunteers from the First Responders give their time to respond to 999 calls alongside the Ambulance Service.

Cllr Dan Dunbar said "My sincere thanks must go to my fellow councillors and the local businesses who generously donated prizes these included One Stop, the View Hotel, the Cumberland Hotel, Hillier Garden Centre, the Hydro Hotel, the Langham Hotel, Bistrot Pierre and Staverton Nurseries.

Eastbourne Area Community First Responders Chair of Trustees Alec Stephens thanked the Mayor of Polegate Cllr Dan Dunbar saying "I would like to congratulate the Mayor for organising such a wonderful event, that I much enjoyed, and raising £411. The money will help keep the First Responders responding".

New Changing Places Toilet Officially Opened

A new Changing Places amenity has been installed at Polegate War Memorial Recreation Ground, Polegate, marking its official unveiling on March 15th, 2024.

Securing over £70,000 in funding via the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' (DLUHC) Changing Places Fund, through Wealden District Council played a pivotal role in bringing this facility to fruition for our town.

Polegate Town Council spearheaded the delivery of this initiative, supported by Wealden District Council and Muscular Dystrophy UK (DLUHC's delivery partner), with Rise Adaptions providing and installing the modular unit.



Now, visitors to the area can access a fully inclusive Changing Places facility, meticulously designed to cater to the needs of individuals who require assistance.

Featuring amenities such as a height-adjustable changing bench, a peninsular toilet, and a ceiling hoist, these facilities also offer ample space for caregivers.

Mayor Cllr Dan Dunbar expressed his enthusiasm, stating, "This facility is a fantastic addition to the area. The expanded accommodations and specialised equipment cater to the needs of individuals with disabilities and their caregivers. We have hosted a number of sporting activity groups on the recreation ground who will benefit from the new facility along with visitors to our town".

Life-Saving Defibrillator Network



Polegate Town Council has unanimously agreed to adopt six public access defibrillators, elevating the network to a total of eight strategically placed defibrillators throughout the community.

These six defibrillators were previously under the care of the dedicated Polegate Defibs Group, and Polegate Town Council are immensely grateful for their initial efforts. The defibrillators, located at Dittons Road, Morrisons store, United Reform Church, St Johns Church, Brightling Road, and St George's Church, have all undergone comprehensive checks and improvements. Four of them now boast new batteries, while all six have had their outdated pads replaced. One unit received a manufacturer's upgrade due to a previous product recall, and another location now sports a new heated cabinet for added protection.

The registration of all six defibrillators onto the British Heart Foundation's national database 'The Circuit' is a game-changer. This ensures that in times of emergency, our Ambulance service can swiftly direct residents to the nearest defibrillator, potentially saving lives.

Polegate Mayor, Cllr Dan Dunbar, expressed his gratitude, stating, "Bringing these defibrillators under our ownership guarantees their full maintenance and secures their availability to our residents during life-threatening emergencies."

For those interested in learning how to use defibrillators and perform CPR, free training sessions are available in Polegate. Simply contact the Eastbourne Area Community First Responders via email at info@eastbourneresponders.com for further details.

With these additions to our town, we're taking a proactive step towards a safer, more resilient Polegate community. Your safety is our priority, and we're here to serve you.



New bins for the Town

Two additional waste bins were successfully installed this year at the Station Road and Hailsham Road bus stops as part of the council's ongoing commitment to improve our town's infrastructure.

This strategic initiative aligns with the council's business plan, aiming to enhance the overall appeal of the town and contribute to maintaining a clean and tidy environment. The decision to install these bins was prompted by community requests for improved waste disposal facilities at these specific locations.

Polegate Town Council's Green LED Lantern Initiative Illuminates High Street

The latest addition to the High Street: the splendid green LED lanterns! These marvellous luminaries, powered by state-of-the-art LEDs, mark a transition towards eco-friendly brilliance, a departure from the aging relics of yesteryears. The verdant hue, carefully chosen, not only illuminates our High Street but also beckons tourists to explore our charming town centre, which stands as a proud gateway to the majestic South Downs National Park. The lower energy lighting is also intended to reduce energy.

The columns

Spring Bulbs Enhance Polegate

Some good news to brighten up your day! We've been dealing with some little hiccups caused by Lightning Fibre's installation contractor last year and Polegate Town Council has been hard at work ensuring we get the compensation we deserve.

Thanks to their efforts, not only have those damages been sorted out, but we've also received some extra perks – bulb planting along Pevensey road and around Brightling Road Leisure Ground! Despite the recent downpours, those bulbs put I quite the show, adding an extra splash of colour to our town.

Mayor Cllr Dan Dunbar said "I'm delighted that Lightning Fibre has created this blooming marvellous display in the town following their infrastructure works last year. These daffodils will continue to bring spring colour for many years."



Polegate Town Council Recognises Exceptional Gardeners and Allotment Keepers

In a display of appreciation for the artistry of gardening, accomplished gardeners and dedicated allotment cultivators were duly acknowledged through a competition organised by Polegate Town Council.

Councillors of Polegate Town Council took to the streets in July, meticulously selecting their preferred gardens for evaluation by the council's flower group judges.

Serving as the chair of the flower group, Councillor Dan Dunbar – himself an ardent gardener – extended a respectful nod to the challenges faced by the gardening community this year.



"As a gardener myself I'm fully aware the difficulties faced by gardeners this year with a long cold spring, a period of



drought with a hosepipe ban and more recently high winds and rains. I'm delighted to see many residents keeping their gardens blooming and allotments full of produce."

Councillor Dunbar expressed profound admiration for the numerous residents who have diligently nurtured their gardens into vibrant showcases and transformed their allotments into bountiful sources of produce.

In his dual capacity as the town's Mayor, Councillor Dunbar expressed his deep satisfaction in personally visiting the distinguished winners.

"As the Town's Mayor I was delighted to visit the winners who included Mr and Mrs Weston who were awarded the best front garden in the town and Mrs Fordham who has one of our favourite allotment plots in the town."

The awards were presented to the winners by the Mayor Cllr Dan Dunbar and Deputy Mayor Cllr James Heward.

Polegate War Memorial Improvements



Following a request from the public and subsequent resolution by Polegate Town Council, the War Memorial had improvements made to allow the ease of laying wreaths at the remembrance service each year.

New Outdoor Gym at Brightling Recreation Ground

A new outdoor gym was opened at the councils leisure grounds at Brightling Road by the Mayor Cllr Dan Dunbar along with his fellow councillors.

Local residents were given the option to select the design and equipment which allowed councillors to decide on the final designs based on user feedback. The outdoor gym promises to provide an excellent opportunity for fitness enthusiasts to exercise and embrace an active lifestyle in the open air.

Cllr Dan Dunbar Mayor of Polegate said "I was delighted to welcome this new fantastic asset to our local leisure ground. Speaking with those who have already used the equipment it clear it is proving to be popular with residents of all ages".

Grand Opening of A27 Improvements by Deputy Mayor Cllr James Heward

Deputy Mayor, Councillor James Heward was thrilled to attend the grand opening of the A27 East of Lewes improvements. The celebration also marked the inauguration of the 'multiple use pathway' extending west from Polegate, bringing countless benefits to residents. Cllr Heward, Deputy Mayor of Polegate accompanied by esteemed local MPs and representatives from neighbouring parish councils, embarked on a delightful journey to explore the fully operational scheme. The abundance of wildlife preservation and flood prevention measures along the route left everyone amazed, showcasing a harmonious blend of enhancements. Amongst the residents, the lucky Tracy Styles won the honour of naming the splendid shared pathway Bridge over the Cuckmere, beating out over 500 other entries. Inspired by the exquisite wildflower that thrives exclusively on Sussex's chalky soil, Tracy chose the enchanting name 'Rampion'. To everyone's delight, Tracy, joined by local MP Maria Caulfield, officially inaugurated the bridge. Cllr Heward later shared a delightful conversation with Tracy, applauding her incredible inspiration. Congratulations, Tracy, for a job well done!

Brightling Road Leisure ground Improvements

Following on from the last business plan work is being undertaken on the planning application for various enhancements to the area.

The accessible roadway is now in place and further work will be done on an extension of the smaller path to join the new outdoor gym and other planned facilities on the main field. The roadway is multipurpose and for all age



groups including to allow vehicles to cross during winter, pedestrians, mobility scooters, families with prams and buggies, children on bikes etc.

There are also plans to have an accessible playground towards the front of the "Urban Park" entrance area near where the trees have been planted and picnic benches. Alongside small car park. Some consultation has already been

taken on what equipment would be suitable for accessibility and further consultations will commence once planning permission is in place.

There will be another tree planting event to plant whip hedgerow trees between the main trees in the autumn. Do let us know if you'd like to be involved in that event.



On the main field a new concrete skate park is planned close to the beginners' skate park (which replaced the original). Although some consultation has already been carried out, we will be asking skate park users more about what they would like to see. If you would like to be part of this, please contact us on admin@polegatetowncouncil.gov.uk heading Skate Park user consultation group.

Where the old mud BMX track used to be there are plans for a formal pump track. Once again, some initial consultation has already taken place by those requesting the improvements, if you would like to be part of the BMX/Pump track user consultation group please contact us on admin@polegatetowncouncil.gov.uk Heading pump track/BMX user group.

We are also looking at a climbing wall (bolder) and grant funding for this.

Whilst keeping the field as a grassed area, rather than a purpose-built pitch, there are also plans to improve drainage on the field to assist with football and cricket games on the field. Testing is due to be carried out in partnership with the football foundation.

The majority of the improvements are being funded by either S106 developer funding or CIL (community infrastructure levy) developer funding plus grants.

Although the majority of the improvements fall under permitted development rights, the council has included these in the planning application to ensure that all residents have the opportunity to share their views on the plans.

Business Plan and Vision

Polegate Town Council has undergone a number of visioning exercises since 2019, the latest following the elections in 2023. From this came a new business plan which is a working document. The business plan is in place and many of the projects are either underway, completed or delayed due to other authorities.

Business Plan Progress

Polegate Town Council's Business Plan has been prepared to clearly set out the key priorities and objectives for Polegate Town Council over the next five years (2023 to 2028) The purpose of the plan is to provide an overview of the Council's aims to improve the quality of life and services for residents, businesses, and visitors in Polegate. It will also form the basis of the Council's budgeting process over the next five years.

Below is a table of some of the objectives which Council came up with during their visioning exercise and how they have progressed so far.

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	Short to medium term (ongoing)

		access, solar lighting, CCTV and power	
1b	Continue to partner with Wealden on Cuckoo trail enhancements		Short to medium term (ongoing)
1c	Improve signage to the Cuckoo trail and liaise with other authorities to achieve this		Short to medium term (ongoing)
1d	Financial feasibility of temporary structure in car park to provide accessible chambers and library	<u>Continue</u> work with East Sussex County Council, Wealden District Council and independent work. Consult and re invigorate following collapse of previously facilitated library CIO.	Short to medium 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	Short to Long term (ongoing)
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	Short to Long term (ongoing)
1g	Continue to develop partnerships between Southern Railways to encourage and promote visitors to the town		Short to Long term (ongoing)
1h	Promote Polegate as a 'Gateway' to the South Downs National Park	<u>Continue</u> joint initiatives with Southern Railways and the South Downs National Park Authority Cuckmere Buses and other agencies	Short to Long term (ongoing)

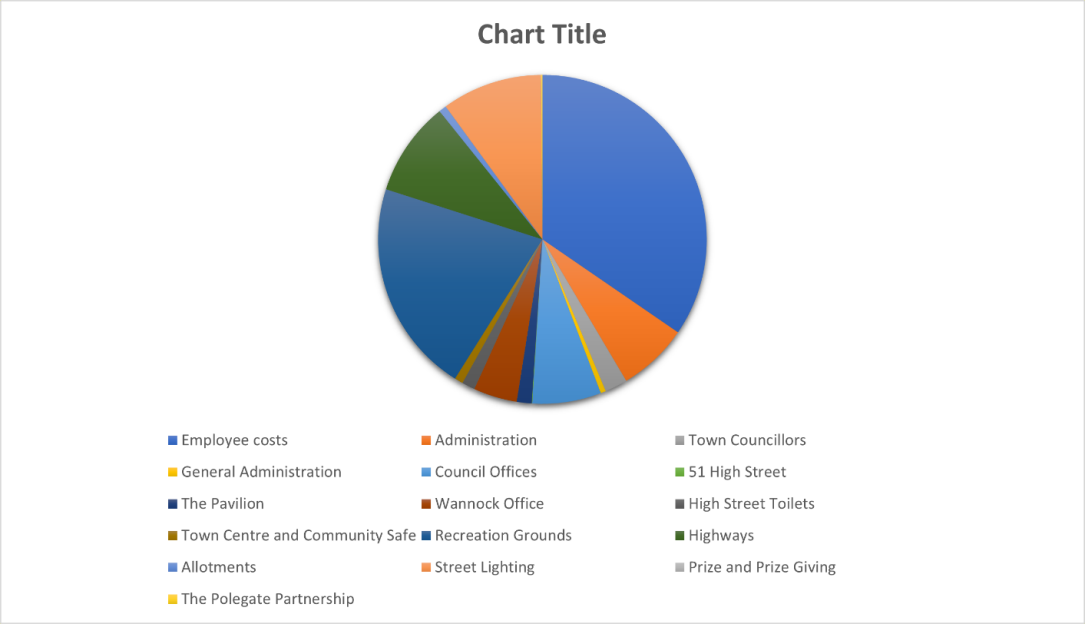
1i	Drainage of field	<u>Continue</u> with the Football Foundation initiative and AFC Langney in a field friendly drainage system. (not full drainage)	Short term – assessment Medium term – funding and implementation Long Term – maintenance
1j	Brightling Road - Contact the local business community for prospective sponsors and grant funders	<u>Continue</u> to attract further sponsorship and grant funding	Medium and long term
1k	Brightling Road – enhanced bench provision	<u>Continuation of improvements once complete.</u> Install additional benches around the area	Medium to long term
2	Environment and appearance of the town		
2a	Improve signage to the Cuckoo trail		Short term
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		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	Short medium and long term

		ideas where possible taking this into consideration	
2e	Continue support for wildlife areas		Short to long term (ongoing)
3	Tourism for the town		
3a	Promote Polegate as a destination		Short term
3b	Provision of a range of events in the town with the Council's role as facilitator	Summer festival now run by PCF, Xmas event now run by PCF. New public and civic events, annual events being developed.	Short to medium term
3c	Provide additional funding for more events in the town	As events are created budgeting the previous year in readiness. £2000-5000?	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.	Medium term
	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.	Medium term
4	Brightling Road Recreation Ground		
4a	Pathway from outdoor gym to new accessible roadway	Planning permission in place. Funding required.	Short term

4b	Sponsorship scheme	Some completed and underway. Continue and add to	Short to medium term
4c	Funding for further events on the land	Budget 2025/26 set in Autumn Winter 2024/25	Medium term
4d	Tennis court (new)	Grant / S106 / CIL funded	Medium to Long Term
4e	Upgrade equipment	New outdoor gym completed	COMPLETED
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	Short to medium term
5b	Assess the town council's carbon footprint and carry out improvements where possible		Medium term
5c	Promote charging points for electric vehicles. Install EV points if possible at Wannock	Resolution passed. Continue pursuing with Wealden District Council	Medium to long 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.		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

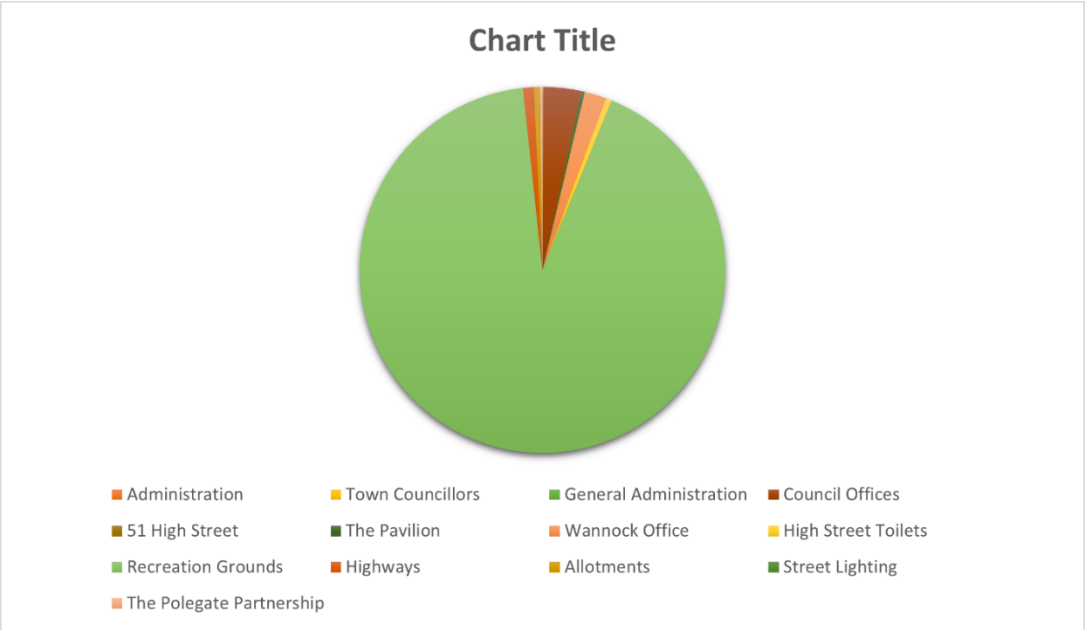
Council Finances

The Council Spends the precept and income on a wide variety of services for residents.



Where does the council receive its income?

Most of the services are covered by the precept income, which is generated from those who pay council tax within the parish boundary. The Town Council has been looking at several avenues to generate income and reduce the costs to the council, in various ways, such as grants, income initiatives, sponsorships and other avenues to reduce costs. The council has managed to get further grants, to support projects in Polegate.



The Council charges for rental and hire of its buildings and allotments. It also receives a small grass cutting contribution from East Sussex County Council plus a small amount from Wealden District Council towards the public toilets. (Community Toilet Scheme) It also gains some income from sponsorship of flowers, which offsets the cost of providing some of the flowers and other sponsorships.

From 1st April 2024 the Band D rate for the town council part of your council tax bill will be £140.27 for a Band D property and less for lower bands. This is equivalent to £2.70 per week for all of the services provided by Polegate Town Council.

Accounts

The accounts are prepared from 1st April each year to 31st March. They are audited and signed by the council around June of each year. The external audit takes place around July to September.

The council also keeps some ear-marked reserves (savings). These are funds set aside for specific projects. The council assesses these projects annually and decides whether a project can go ahead (if there is enough funding), or whether the reserve is now obsolete, due to changes in legislation. Some of the projects have now been completed, and the reduction in the ear marked reserves demonstrates this. The council is obliged by audit to keep a certain amount of general reserves to pay for the monthly outgoings. This is usually 6 -12 months of normal expenditure or half of the precept. Polegate Town Council keep within that range as approved by internal and external audit.

The town council endeavours to obtain sponsorship, grants, and other income funding in order to keep your council tax as low as possible each year, whilst still providing the services that you expect from the council. It is actively seeking ways to generate further income and other sources of funding. This in turn reduces the impact on residents' council tax.

Polegate Town Council
Income and Expenditure Account for Year Ended 31st March 2023

31st March 2022		31st March 2023
354,402	Precept	367,485
354,402	Sub Total	367,485
	Operating Income	
175	Administration	147
0	Town Councillors	238
117	General Administration	33,260
10,856	Council Offices	0
90	51 High Street	0
904	The Pavilion	0
6,282	Wannock Office	0
1,806	High Street Toilets	1,234
300,917	Recreation Grounds	3,981
3,013	Highways	3,073
1,769	Allotments	3,200
41	Street Lighting	0
750	The Polegate Partnership	750
681,120	Total Income	413,368
132,194	Employee costs	148,276
26,447	Administration	26,638
8,511	Town Councillors	8,496
1,976	General Administration	5,561
25,881	Council Offices	26,082
200	51 High Street	90
5,629	The Pavilion	0
16,422	Wannock Office	25,181
4,934	High Street Toilets	9,294
3,186	Town Centre and Community Safe	3,500
80,305	Recreation Grounds	66,399
35,536	Highways	28,837
2,854	Allotments	1,383
37,771	Street Lighting	33,104
30	Prize and Prize Giving	15
557	The Polegate Partnership	918
382,432	Total Expenditure	383,773
184,809	Opening Balance	204,122
681,120	Plus : Income for Year	413,368
865,929		617,490
382,432	Less : Expenditure for Year	383,773
483,497		233,717
279,375	Transfers TO / FROM Reserves	26,215
204,122	Closing Balance	207,502

Committees

Planning

The council's planning committee continues to act as consultees for planning applications and licensing. The committee also comments on stages of the new local plan following the rejection of the older plan. Polegate has had to bear the increased housing that has come to Polegate over the last year with more being proposed. The Council vehemently opposed the mornings Mill farm application, which was allowed on appeal.

Upcoming events

Annual Town Assembly – Monday 13th May 2024 7.00pm, St Georges Hall

Annual Statutory Meeting – election of the Mayor - Monday 20th May 7.00pm, Council Chambers

Public Info Day – Monday 21st October 2.00pm, St Georges

Useful Info

Speedwatch:



Community Speedwatch is a national initiative in which proactive members of local communities, with the support and supervision of their local police, use approved detection devices to record details of speeding vehicles. The volunteers report drivers exceeding the speed limit to the police, with the aim of educating drivers to slow down.

The aims are to reduce death and injury on the roads, improve the quality of life for local communities, reduce the speed of vehicles to the speed limit and increase public awareness of inappropriate speed. Registered keepers of vehicles exceeding the speed limit are contacted - initially with a letter explaining the potential risks and consequences of their dangerous behaviour. Repeat offenders receive a visit from the local police, irrespective of where they live. Beyond these friendly gestures, focused enforcement and criminal prosecution can follow, based on the collated evidence. To become part of CSW, please go to [CSW Online \(www.communityspeedwatch.org\)](https://www.communityspeedwatch.org) to register and for more information. Volunteers receive training, and neighbourhood policing team staff will support them.



WE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR

PARKS - Oakleaf Play Area
maintenance and safety and
Brightling Road Leisure Ground
meadow, skate park, outdoor gym,
basketball court, informal football goals,
trees and picnic benches in the
entrance field, meadow and main field
Allotments - Cophall and Gosford Way
Benches • Dog Bins • Flowers
Grass Cutting (East Sussex Highways
responsibility but PTC carry out additional cuts)
Litter in parks and council owned land

Parish owned Street Lights
(lettered columns)

Toilets - (Council Garden)
NB: Toilets at Wannock Road are part of
the Community Interest Company

Wooden Bus Stops

**Polegate War Memorial
Recreation Ground** is
managed by the Community Interest Company,
not Polegate Town Council
pwmrgcic@polegatetowncouncil.gov.uk

Contact: admin@polegatetowncouncil.gov.uk

Mayor and Deputy Mayor - available for civic and social events

Please contact the office **01323 488114**

Wealden District Council

Bins and rubbish including fly tipping
and street scene

Business rates • Council tax

Car parking (off street) • **Tourism**

Enforcement • Housing • Planning

Litter in High Street and streets

Road Sweeping

Environmental Health

(rats, pigeons, seagulls, noise)

01323 443322

CAB (Wealden Citizens Advice)

Appointments can be booked in Polegate

0300 330 9022 or **03444 111444**

Network Rail

Black Path overgrowth • Network Rail Car Park
Porters Way hedges

03457 114141

East Sussex County Council

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

0345 60 80 190

Highways

Hedges • Highways • Overgrown hedges
Parking on street • Pavements • Yellow lines

Pavement gully clearing • Potholes

Roadside trees overgrown or dead

Street lighting (numbered columns)

Weeds in road

0345 60 80 193

Highways England

A22, A27, A22-A27 Cophall Road
Lighting and verges on trunk roads

0300 123 5000

Clear Channel

Glass/Perspex bus shelters with adverts

0800 731 3699

Please note that the car park, Roy Martin Way and the grass near the Co-Op is privately owned and not under the control of the town council. If you live in Tower Mill area, Clement Lane and beyond Southfields, Farmlands and beyond you are in Willington and Jevington Parish Council boundary. Their offices can be contacted on **01323 489603**

POLEGATE TOWN COUNCILLORS



Cllr W Alexander



Cllr N Dunbar



Cllr A O'Kane



Cllr J Keen



Cllr J Hewerd



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

Useful Numbers

Polegate Town Council 01323 488114

Email: admin@polegatetowncouncil.gov.uk

Twitter: @PolegateTC

Facebook: Polegate Town Council

Website: www.polegatetowncouncil.gov.uk

Polegate Town Councillors

Mrs Wendy Alexander	01323 484122
Mrs Cherie Berry	01323 656879
Mr Malcolm Cunningham	01323 486260
Dan Dunbar	07743 982610
Nathan Dunbar	C/O Polegate Town Council 01323 488114
Wilfred Heasman-O'Neill	C/O Polegate Town Council 01323 488114
James Heward	C/O Polegate Town Council 01323 488114
Jamie Keen	C/O Polegate Town Council 01323 488114
Douglas Murray	01323 482715
Mrs. Margaret Piper	01323 485611
Andy O'Kane	C/O Polegate Town Council 01323 488114
Daniel Shing	07576261898/07872014028
Raymond Shing	07576261898/07872014028
Stephen Shing	07576261898/07872014028
Mr David Watts	07984 577146
Mr Andrew Wood	C/O Polegate Town Council 01323 488114

East Sussex County Councillors

Daniel Shing	07576261898
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Wealden District Councillors

Chris Primett	
Oi Lin Shing	07576261898/07872014028
Daniel Shing	07576261898/07872014028

Wealden District Council	01323 443322
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East Sussex County Council

General enquiries: 0345 60 80 190

Highways: 0345 60 80 193

(To report defective street lights/potholes, etc)

Sussex Police

Non-emergency contact number: 101

In an emergency: 999

Annual Town Assembly 2023 Minutes

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN ASSEMBLY POLEGATE 6th MARCH 2023

Present: 8

1. The Mayor welcomed everyone present to the meeting.
2. Apologies – none received.
3. The minutes were voted as an accurate record of the previous meeting on 10 March 2022.
4. There were no matters arising from the previous meeting
5. Residents received a presentation on flood management by Woody Wilcock, Flood Resilience Engagement Advisor, Environment Agency.

Questions and answers arising from presentation:

1. What caused the flooding in Polegate?
2. Who can enforce the clearing and keeping clear of the riparian rights in peoples gardens?
3. Can the EA take this on?
4. Volume of water was too great for the culvert, what will be done about this.
5. There was nowhere for the fire brigade to pump the flood water to, what will be done to stop this happening in the future.
6. The tree next to Tesco and across the road will cause a danger who will deal with this.
7. The area at Tesco, who will contact Tesco to ensure that they keep their part of the stream clear
8. When the gate was opened the flood water was gone within 20 minutes, why was the gate not opened before?
9. How does the gate work normally, what went wrong?
10. In the knowledge that there was a spring tide, why wasn't this pre-empted?
11. Were the gates working at 100% optimum performance?
12. Can the EA apply for Cll money to take out appropriate works in mitigating developments?
13. Can the EA liaise with highways where culverts run under the roads, who maintains these?
14. Who should be clearing the culverts when logs get wedged up against them?
15. Who makes sure that the debris removed and set on the bank (for creatures) is then removed so it doesn't fall into the river again and cause a blockage?
16. Can flood packs be sent to all/added to the PTC website or a link to the EA one so everyone can get one?

17. Who is the authority responsible for ensuring that areas don't flood?
18. What was the explanation about the winter and summer levels of water?
19. What is the criteria for opening the gates re salt water/fresh water mixing?
20. Who can ensure that WDC clear their land to ensure that water can flow freely and those at the Wannock mill stream?
21. Please can you send the updated riparian rights leaflet?
22. Can you list the case law that enforces action against landowners who do not maintain their parts of the water course, who enforces this?
23. How will EA manage the flood risk in Polegate?
24. Copy of living on the edge leaflet
25. How will you ensure that people in Polegate understand their responsibilities with regards to the streams on their land?
26. Who is responsible for the gates, maintaining them and ensuring that they work correctly?
27. Can you list the govt hotline and what its for (reporting incidents)
28. Liaising with Grant Moffit? 1995 report

Response:

In relation to question 1, there are many factors that can increase flood risk and so it is difficult to hold accountable one reason for a flood event. Our current understanding is that the event occurred due to an intense amount of rainfall over a short period, which exceeded local capacity. Following the event, we are looking to gather information from the impacted areas to better understand the mechanics of flooding here. We are also improving our relationship with key partners in the area.

Concerning question 2 and 3, the responsibility to maintain a watercourse lies with the landowner (known as Riparian Ownership). A Riparian Owner must let water flow naturally. They may have to remove blockages, such as fallen trees or overhanging branches from their length of watercourse, or cut back trees and shrubs on the bank, if they have the potential to reduce the flow of water or cause flooding. It is good practice to leave all other trees, branches, and shrubs, as they can help prevent flooding by varying the shape and flow of the channel and reduce erosion. The EA has permissive powers to ensure that Main Rivers are maintained and can issue Notices for the clearance of any watercourse if they become excessively blocked.

Regarding questions 8, 9, 10, 11, 18, 19 and 26, all relevant assets within the area were operating on "winter levels" and therefore were operational throughout the event. There is no downstream manual control mechanism, but there are tidal locking events that can occur twice a day. This happens as the watercourse discharges into the sea via a 'tidal gate', that automatically closes on high tides. The tidal gates are not manually operated and they only open when fluvial (river) water levels upstream of them are higher than the tide level downstream. We can confirm that all gates were in working order prior to the event. The EA takes responsibility for maintaining assets that we have adopted or built.

In response to questions 14, 15 and 20, it is the landowner's responsibility to ensure the

watercourse is operating effectively, however, we do have teams which undertake emergency works under our permissive powers. If items are removed from the watercourse by our teams during the use of their permissive powers, it may not be our responsibility to further remove those items from the area. Residents who are concerned about items being left upon the banks of the watercourse can contact our general enquiries team (contact details listed below), to report the situation. I can

confirm that we do have enforcement powers related to maintenance of a watercourse, that can be

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utilised in specific situations. In response to questions 6 and 7 we have raised this concern with the relevant internal teams who will ensure our responsibilities are met in relation to the tree and further updates can be requested from our general enquiries team.

Responding to question 21, and 24, the leaflet has been superseded by the following.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/owning-a-watercourse>. Should an updated / alternative publication become available, I would be happy to share this with your community. On question 22 due to the specific nature of case law, I am unable to provide generalised examples and it would be unsuitable for me to try and provide specific examples related to the Polegate area. In response to question

28, we will continue to work with Grant and his team to ensure a holistic Environment Agency interaction with yourselves.

In response to question 12 and 23, the EA would not be the best authority to complete a project funded by councillor, private, or community funds, however depending on the plans we may be able to offer advice. We regularly check the assets within the area but if anyone in your community

finds something of concern with one of our assets, we would encourage them to report the concern

to our general enquiries team. Currently there is a low probability that a scheme in Polegate is possible due to the way funding is allocated. All schemes are funded based on a cost benefit analysis. We are exploring natural flood management solutions, which could provide some benefit to flood risk, however this is in the preliminary phase and therefore should not be considered a factor at this time.

In relation to question 5, we are building good connections with our Fire & Rescue partners to explore closer working practices. Although at this time I cannot provide a direct answer to this issue, it may be something that together our organisations can address.

Regarding questions 4 and 13, we have alerted East Sussex County Council and East Sussex Highways as the relevant authorities to the concerns relating to the culvert and will continue to work with them. Any further questions relating to this topic can be directed to East Sussex County Council's Highways team. East Sussex Highways has provided the following quote in response to question 4:

"It would be helpful to provide context before the simple yes or no answer to this question. The majority of the roads in East Sussex are many decades old and were designed at the time to the appropriate design standards then. The alignment and construction of many of the older roads along with their infrastructure are also 'evolved' roads. An evolved road is one which was originally a track used by the population to take goods by cart or manually (pedestrians) and then over many years they became metalled (surfaced) to give them longevity. The act of discharging

water off the surface enormously increases road longevity. The drainage systems mostly evolved to

carry the average rain (precipitation) that existed when these routes became popular, and the various acts of parliament made various bodies responsible for them. The early drainage systems were not necessarily designed but were provided by empirical evidence of what would work.

Today East Sussex has a network of highway drainage that has evolved and been designed to a standard relevant at the time of construction.

The increase in atmospheric temperatures due to higher levels of carbon being used has meant

that more heat is stored in the air. The higher atmospheric temperature means more water vapour can be stored than previously; this has meant we have a larger volume of water discharging in a fixed period of time than previously.

As the drainage systems were designed and constructed to no recognised standard or to a standard that is now out of date then not all of them can manage the new higher levels of rainfall.

The rainfall event in January 2023 was not a regular event and the existing culvert system would not cope with it. The County Council endeavours to maintain its drainage systems to the best standard it can within the available financial resources but with unusually heavy rainfall the systems will on occasions simply not cope.

To answer the question briefly we will continue to maintain the culverts to a good standard but have no ambition to replace and/or enlarge.

Even if the culverts were enlarged, unless they were part of a wider drainage area study it would not by itself deliver any measurable benefit. There will be many parts/ segments of the system that would have to be upgraded and the cost of this would certainly be substantial.”

Additionally, we would like to note the Blue Heart project, which is partnered with East Sussex County Council and are trying out innovative ways to predict and mitigate the impact of flooding in Eastbourne and southern Wealden area. Below is a statement recently presented to our team:

“The Blue Heart project is seeking to install new water level sensors so that water levels can be better monitored. This new data will inform a new flood warning and alert system so that residents can be better notified of possible flooding. Residents will be better informed, prepared and more resilient to future risks of flooding. In the future, the water level data will be available to the public for viewing via an online web portal.

The system will also be used to better inform risk management authorities for asset management, managing flood risk, better informed decision making and understanding of flooding mechanisms.

We also have a community fund available for those with ideas and projects around the topic of climate change resilience. We have two levels of grant available, small grants of up to £500 are available at any time throughout the year. Larger grants of up to £5,000 are available during an application window each year. The next opportunity to apply for large grants will be in Spring.

2024.

For more information on Blue Heart and how to get involved, please visit our website at

www.blueheart.org.uk.”

To conclude with question 27, there are several phone numbers that the EA operate. Please find a list below with their descriptions:

Incident Hotline - 0800 80 70 60

You can call our 24-hour incident hotline to report the following:

- Collapsed or badly damaged riverbanks
- Damage or danger to the natural environment
- Dead fish or fish gasping for air
- Flooding from main rivers or the sea
- People taking water illegally from rivers, streams, canals, or underground sources such as wells
- Incidents at Environment Agency-regulated waste sites
- Main rivers blocked by a vehicle or fallen tree causing risk of flooding
- Poaching or illegal fishing
- Pollution to water or land
- Unusual changes in river flow

General Enquiries - 03708 506 506

Our General Enquiries can help answer any questions you have about the work the Environment Agency does, and operates from Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm. If you are calling from outside the UK (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm GMT), please use +44 (0) 114 282 5312.

Floodline - 0345 988 1188

Floodline provides live flooding information and advice on how to prepare for or cope with the impacts of flooding 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Flood Warning Service

The Environment Agency provides an online tool to check your long-term flood risk from the sea, rivers, surface water, reservoirs, and groundwater. For more information about your flood risk, visit

<https://www.gov.uk/check-long-term-flood-risk>. You may also sign up for our free Flood Warning

Service at <https://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings>.

Finally, we would like to ask for your help in identifying which locations were affected by the event. If you have information which you believe might help us, please complete the online MS Forms questionnaire by visiting <https://forms.office.com/e/LQGEdjjsGA>.

6. The meeting closed at 20:44pm

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