

## April District Councillors Report – Cllrs. Tony Ganly and T. Biggs

In March Councillor Tony Ganley and I visited the KESR and the RVR and met with David Nibloe and Gardner Crawley as part of Rother's Tourism week.

It was a very interesting meeting with them both showing how much progress has been made with regards to both railways meeting up to complete the line to Robertsbridge.

Now that the Government has given the green light for them to carry on the works, it is hoped that the Railway will be up and running by 2027 so you will be able to travel from Robertsbridge to Tenterden. It is estimated that this will bring in 20,000 tourists and bring in the region of 4 million pounds to the local economy.

We also met up with the owners of Oastbrook Winery Nick and America and Councillor Timpe to talk about their vision of a winery trail around the Rother area and East Sussex.

Lots of ideas were discussed and if they work out hopefully there may be opportunities for local employment to be had.

They also want to get together local business in the Bodiam area to link in with the running of the railway. Which in turn will help with tourism and the local economy.

The PCSO's report for Ewhurst and Bodiam will be given verbally.

PCSO's report for Northiam and Beckley

Northiam

2<sup>nd</sup> – Theft of garden pots and rockery boulders from a property in Dixter Lane.

3<sup>rd</sup> – Over a 2-week window, garden pots and bird bath stolen from garden from a property in Fullers Lane.

7<sup>th</sup> – Overnight table & chairs were stolen from a garden along Station Road.

8<sup>th</sup> – Number plate stolen of a Mini along Main Street during the day.

26<sup>th</sup> – Vehicle parked in Cavix Field had all windows smashed by unknown male holding a catapult.

Beckley

1<sup>st</sup> – In the evening 2 shrubs were stolen from a garden in Kings Bank.

13<sup>th</sup> – White Van seen acting suspiciously around Orchidwood Mushroom Depot in Hobbs Lane.

Annual council tax bills are hitting doormats across the Rother district this week, but do you still need a paper copy?

After you've read the letter and before you pop it in the recycling, please consider signing up for online billing.

Every March we post out 47,000 council tax bills to residents and spend over £45,000 on printing and postage costs for annual billing – reducing this number could help us lessen our environmental impact and spend more on frontline services.

Cabinet Highlights

You can now view a summary of the key points from the latest Cabinet meeting that was held on Monday 4th March. ( see Rother's my alerts )

These include updates on the following: A new Local Plan consultation, PSPO consultation for anti-social behaviour on beaches, a new grounds maintenance contract, community grants & a new depot for a future food waste collection service.

## Vehicles on beaches – driving, parking, and camping

Have your say about whether the council should ban and give a penalty notice (fine) to people who drive, park and camp on the beaches if they refuse to leave. We would like the views of businesses, residents, and beach users on what the impact might be. This was prompted by incidents at Herbrand Walk, Bexhill and on Camber beach in 2023. However, the proposal is for a public space protection order on all Rother beaches, impacting Norman's Bay, Winchelsea beach, Pett and Rye Harbour. Consultation closes 3 May.

## Rother Voluntary Action

Rother Voluntary Action (RVA) works across Rother in East Sussex, covering towns such as Bexhill, Robertsbridge, Rye, Battle, Camber and Burwash. They support and champion Rother's voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector to make positive change and strengthen communities. RVA are currently recruiting for a Community Development Officer, based in their Bexhill-on-Sea office. Closing date for applications is Monday, 1st April 2024.

Rother District Council's Coronation Community Orchard Grant Scheme has been made possible thanks to an award of £49,024.50 from DEFRA's Coronation Living Heritage Fund.

The fund seeks to create green spaces and connect communities with nature as a permanent reminder of the coronation of King Charles III, linking with the King's lifelong support of the natural environment. Grants ranging from £500 to £5,000 can be applied for from the council's new scheme to cover the costs of planting at least five fruit or nut trees in a new or existing community orchard.

As well as involving the planting of new trees, the projects must also benefit a Rother community.

This could be through engaging the community in the setting up, planting, or maintaining of the orchard, or giving the community free access to the orchard for activities and events, or to harvest the fruit.

Community groups, local organisations and Town and Parish councils are invited to apply for funding from the new grant scheme, which opens for applications on Monday, April 1, 2024.

Projects must be completed, with trees planted and grants claimed, by March 1, 2025.

Cllr Kathryn Field, the council's portfolio holder for environmental and climate strategy, said: "The new Coronation Community Orchard Grant Scheme will enable people in Rother to come together to plant and cultivate a variety of fruit and nut trees, creating a lasting focal point for community activities.

"The new orchards will also improve the natural environment and increase biodiversity across the district now and in the future, as well as being a wonderful way to commemorate last year's Coronation.

"I urge community groups, organisations, charities, schools and our local councils who would like to create an orchard for their community to apply for a share of the funding pot."

Funding will be awarded on a first come, first served basis. The scheme will remain open until either all the available grant funding has been allocated or until Friday June 28, 2024, whichever is sooner.