



**Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2016**

**St John's, London Road**

Speakers:	Gary Langford	)Education planning
	Jessica Stubbings	)
	Sylvia Sigfusdottir	)
	Maria Goptareva	)Bexhill Youth Council
	Catrin Deacon	)
	Linda Harris	Dog Park Proposal
	Councillor Charles Clark	Disabled access in Bexhill
	Rachel Hills	)Protecting the environment
	Barbara Echlin	)

**Gary Langford, ESCC, Place Planning Manager; Jessica Stubbings, ESCC, ESCC, Senior Manager, Places and Participation: Education Planning**

Slides are available on the Forum's web site via this link:

<https://bexhilltownforum.co.uk/meeting-records/>

**Q: Lorna Extence:** I believe your figures are optimistic in light of government plans. Where would a new school be built?

**A:** We are confident of our figures, which are based on extensive experience. Land has already been allocated within Bovis's development.

**Q: Charles Clark:** There are short-term challenges such as at Saint Michael's. There will be lots of social housing families coming in and the Pebsham schools are full. Is there capacity at Glyne Gap special needs school?

**A:** We are not admissions people but we do know that Bexhill is a single admissions area. The town as a whole has sufficient capacity.

The local authority have not allocated an increase in special provision in recent years but are planning to do so now. We are seeking additional funding from the county council.

Capital funding is for schools' basic needs, for primary and secondary schools. It is not sufficient, we are therefore dependent on the county council and also seeking funding from the developers.

**Q:** **Lawrence Keeley:** Can we guarantee that the costs for the increased infrastructure will be met? If not surely the housing should be stopped. The county council have today said the money is not available so the Forum should tell Rother to stop.

**A:** Money has been secured from the developers and others; work will continue to make sure that needs are met.

We are currently putting forward the case for the next five years' funding and are confident we will be able to deliver.

**Q:** **Christine Bayliss:** About secondary schools: you showed that St Richard's is oversubscribed and Bexhill Academy is undersubscribed. Why have the county council not pushed for expansion of St Richard's, which is so much in demand?

**A:** Demand across the whole area doesn't justify an increase in a single location. We may need to consider St Richard's size in future.

**Q:** **Lorna Extence:** Has consideration being given to government requirements to accept unaccompanied Syrian children?

**A:** We do allow for migration as detail is provided to us about it. We don't have this information yet but it will be built in to the current calculations and so they may change.

**Q:** **Sybil Roughley:** How long does it take for a school to develop from conception to completion?

**A:** A school must be a free school or an academy, so the process is: 1. advertise for a sponsor; 2. when a sponsor has been found, move on to design. This takes two or more years.

**Q:** **Barbara Echlin:** Because Bexhill is seen as a single area children are expected to travel across the area; this creates problems with traffic around schools. It would be far better for the planet and for children if they were able to walk - why is that not part of the plan?

**A:** The Barnhorn development will probably lead to a shift in which school children go to and so create more opportunity for them to walk. Currently the size of the new development does not justify building a new school.

**Paul Courtel:** There has been mention of 3000 Syrian children but that is across the UK therefore we are only likely to get two or three in Bexhill.

**Q: Maurice Watson:** Special needs children get pushed around the system; how much is St Mary's is being used? It is depressing how little comes from central government for them.

**A:** The comment made about no funding related to capital funding but there is other funding and special-needs places are being increased by the council. We do use St Mary's but it is a private school and so is more expensive.

**Maria Goptareva, Sylvia Sigfusdottir, Catrin Deacon: Bexhill Youth Council**

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**Edward Echlin:** Congratulations, it is very pleasing that you have a platform to be heard. I suggest that you do more regarding the environment for your, and your children's, futures, for example regarding energy.

**Q: Frank Moore:**

I applaud what you have done but it is now dangerous on the promenade with bikes. Hastings has separate areas for people and bikes but it is too dangerous here.

**A:** Yes, we discussed this at our last meeting. It is a matter of people learning to respect each other. We are also discussing separation; we are still looking to improve safety.

**Charles Clark:** Your enthusiasm is infectious. It shows Bexhill is not a cemetery above ground! We have many young and we need to respect and cater for them. We want to keep them living locally. My own concern is the lack of night time buses, for example in Pebsham - some young can't go to clubs or night classes. This might be a subject for you to pick up?

**Mike Burton:** what a breath of fresh air.

**Maria:** Please encourage young people to join the Youth Council, there is no better way to influence the community.

## **Linda Harris: Dog Park Proposal**

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**Q. Frank Moore:** Where would a dog park be put?

**A:** As I mentioned, the Hastings side of Galley Hill might be a good place, we could start small.

**Q: Paul Courtel:** It's a great idea but I am concerned about the possible density of dogs in a small area – would there be a risk of fights?

**A:** Yes there is a risk but at least no children would be at risk as now happens in places like the promenade.

**Q: Lawrence Keeley:** The Bovis development must offer an opportunity to include this in its planning.

**A:** That's a great idea!

**Lorna Extence:** I was very pleased to see this topic on the agenda as I have previously lived in an area that had done this and I would like to promote dog section's all over. Lots of London councils have created clean areas in this way.

**Q: Ian Hollidge:** There is an issue of bags of dog waste being thrown to the sides of the paths; I am not happy at the idea of segregating, however do pursue the idea so the council might consider it.

**A:** All dogs can be walked but they can't all have the chance to run. They need to be let off the lead safely.

The new Greenway or countryside park may have potential for a dog park.

**Q: Richard Swain:** Is the speaker aware of Barrack Park? Many dog owners meet there and it lends itself to dog walking without having other people around.

**A:** But we still need the security of an enclosed area.

## **Charles Clark, Disabled Access in Bexhill**

Notes from Charles' presentation will be added shortly

**Q. Richard Sage:** Disabled parking spaces are no use without enforcement. This needs to be tackled quickly, for example people double park and block ramps.

**A:** I do agree and have had experience of this myself.

**Q: Lorna Extence:** There is an issue regarding money acquired through traffic wardens not going to the local council. There is also a big issue of visitors making the situation worse. Is it correct that new buildings and refurbishments must give disabled access, and is that being enforced?

**A:** Yes this should be done.

**Councillor Watson:** I was formerly involved with planning – yes it is the case for new builds but I am not sure if it is for refurbishments. Western Road is dangerous with motorised chairs coming up behind pedestrians. Something is needed to make Western Road more friendly. We do need to look at enforcement but that means decriminalisation – Ian Hollidge should know about this.

**Q: Richard Swain:** Motorised buggies are sometimes driven too fast and dangerously, that needs looking at as well. Perhaps users need guidance.

**A:** Yes they can be dangerous.

**Ian Hollidge:** Regarding reinforcement, traffic wardens are not likely to be brought in due to a government edict. A meeting in July will look at civil parking enforcement and will commence information gathering. I will speak to Planning to clarify the rules regarding refurbishments.

Note: Since the forum Ian has advised that the following was recently published in the Observer:

Please be assured that RDC agree that access for all is a worthwhile objective and RDC do encourage business to provide this and follow all the current legislation to facilitate it.

Ian added: It was an agenda item on the recent Town Centre Steering Group meeting.

**Mike Burton:** Every day at the junction of St Leonards and Eversley Roads there are good vehicles on the path blocking the safe crossing points. Parking on double yellow lines is making Bexhill a laughing stock. Police have said they will not police it so they are aiding and abetting. Let's stop talking about it and do something

**Sorry but we didn't catch this speaker's name:** Before 6am, 50% of available parking has already been taken by residents. Decriminalisation must be funded from the rates; the opportunity should be sought to increase parking facilities that are available.

**Christine Bayliss:** Charles' outline of making the town disabled friendly is good. The seafront group has done some initial work to attract people to Bexhill and the group would consider working with Charles.

### **Rachel Hills, Barbara Echlin, Bexhill Environmental Group: Protecting the environment while building new housing**

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**Q. Lorna Extence:** Are not solar panels or wind power obligatory?

**A:** No, they are not a national requirement. The main government guidelines have now reduced, not increased. Hastings' criteria are higher than Bexhill's. There is some improvement but not enough.

**Q: Lawrence Keeley:** Rother and Wealden have not adopted the idea to have self-sufficient gardens etc.

**A:** I suggest the forum look at Laurence's idea another time.

### **An extra point was raised by Frank Moore:**

Notices outside Marina Court state that cars can be parked for two hours at a time with no return within two hours yet cars are left for weeks and months, even put out for sale. Frank suggested that the council stop wasting money on the paint involved in the parking restrictions as there is no point in them.

As a former Traffic Police Officer he offered advice on the work that was done on Marine Parade but was ignored. Traffic in Bexhill is a mess – the council should either do it properly or stop bothering at all.

## **Updates**

### **Local governance review**

Just to remind everyone that the review is still scheduled to begin in October – as previously explained, it can only be started once the boundary review is completed. Please remember also that this is a review into what will be the best form of local governance for Bexhill, not just about setting up a town council, which is just one of several options.

Any changes that are agreed will take effect after the next elections, in 2019, and so starting the review this year gives plenty of time to get the review done and any changes implemented by then.

### **Boundary Review**

The timetable for the boundary review is progressing as expected and the Council anticipate the final recommendations being published in late September.

### **Wetherspoons**

We are aware that there is increasing disappointment at the lack of progress on the new Wetherspoons – not least because of the eyesore we have been left with on Western Road.

We have been in touch again with Jo Golding, the area manager who came and spoke to the Forum last November, and she is doing her best to make her management aware of Bexhill's feelings. We will provide any further news on this as and when we receive it.

Note: Since the forum we have received an update from RDC:

Following the original resolution to grant permission, Wetherspoons submitted a further application to vary the permitted opening hours, including for the proposed roof terrace. Due to on-going difficulties gaining access to the roof terrace to enable this to be assessed, the application has more recently been amended to exclude the terrace. The varied hours for the internal parts of the premises are to be recommended for approval and a decision will be issued within the next week or so.

However, we are also awaiting satisfactory details in connection with ventilation/extraction and details of windows & doors to the front elevation before works can commence and this would account for the lack of activity on site. Some internal clearing up has been done, including removal of pigeon guano etc.

### **Email addresses**

If there is anyone who has provided their email address and is wondering why they have not heard from us – unfortunately we have five addresses that just keep coming back as invalid. Please make sure we have your address clearly written so that we can be sure to get it right on our mailing list.

### **Community Page**

You may have noticed that we have added a community page to our website. We hope you will find it useful and do, please, let us have any announcements that you wish to have included on there.

### **Hearing from you**

As always – please do contact the committee if there is anything you would like to raise or learn more about. As you know we have the website, [bexhilltownforum.co.uk](http://bexhilltownforum.co.uk), we are on Facebook and you can email us at [bexhilltownforum@gmail.com](mailto:bexhilltownforum@gmail.com).

You can also talk to us here – we will be available before going home this evening. Or, if you prefer please use one of the slips that are on the table as you go out, to note anything you wish to bring to our attention – just drop it in the basket that is there also.

### **Before closing a final question was received from Lorna Extence:**

Lorna had suggested that at the end of presentations the attendees be invited to propose future topics and questions to be covered.

The committee are aware that after two hours people are keen to leave and so had provided slips for topics and questions to be noted on. This is in addition to the numerous other methods of contact that are already available to Bexhill's residents.

**Date of next meeting: The next forum is expected to be in September – the date and location will be advised as soon as available.**