East Sussex County Councillor Shing
Report to East Dean Parish Council
Parish Meeting October 2026

Good evening, Chairman and colleagues,

I am sorry that I am unable to attend this evening's meeting in person, as I have another engagement.
Please find my report below for your information and consideration. If you have any queries or require any further information, please feel free to contact me.
I apologise for my absence and hope you have a productive and successful meeting.

Local Government Reorganisation Decision to Pause

Following the Government's decision to pause the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) process in East Sussex, many residents have expressed their concerns and confusion to me.

In July, the Government announced its intention to proceed with a new unitary council covering Eastbourne, Hastings, Lewes, Rother and Wealden, subject to Parliamentary approval. The Government has now paused the process and launched a review following updated legal advice.

Residents deserve to understand what has changed. The Government had previously considered consultation responses and formally announced its decision, so it is reasonable to ask what the new legal advice has identified and why the process is now on hold.

There is also an important financial issue. Councils have already committed officer time and public money to preparing for LGR. Residents should be told how much has been spent, what further expenditure is committed, and what happens to these costs if the proposals are changed or abandoned.

Key questions include:

- What has changed since the Government's July decision?
- What has the updated legal advice identified?
- How much public money has been spent on LGR preparations?
- How much further expenditure is committed?
- What happens to this expenditure if the proposals change or are abandoned?
- When will residents know the future structure of local government in East Sussex?

I believe residents deserve clarity, transparency and value for money. They need to know what has changed, why the process has been paused and what happens next.

Before further taxpayers' money is committed, we need to be satisfied that the proposed reorganisation remains the right solution for East Sussex and will deliver better value, better services and effective local representation.

Residents should receive clear answers before further public money is committed to the reorganisation process.

Exceat Bridge Replacement – Latest Update

Work on the replacement of Exceat Bridge is continuing, with the project now moving into the next important stage of construction.

Sheet piling has been completed on both sides of the river. The steel columns that will form part of the foundations for the retaining walls on both sides of the new bridge have now been installed. Work to move the ditch on the east side of the river has also progressed.

From around mid-September, the contractor will begin the bored piling phase. This will involve drilling holes approximately 30 metres deep into the ground and filling them with reinforced concrete to create the foundations for the retaining walls. The bored piling on the west side is expected to continue for around six weeks, while work on the ditch and road realignment continues on the east side.
There are currently no road closures planned for 2026. However, construction materials are being delivered to the site more frequently while the main site compound is being completed. These occasional construction vehicle movements may cause some delays to traffic.

Minor disruption is expected to continue throughout the autumn while piling works are carried out. Residents and road users are advised to allow extra time for journeys through the area.

The project team is also continuing its community engagement. In July, members of the Jackson team worked with Futures for All to deliver a two-day construction careers workshop for 35 Year 10 students at Hailsham Academy. Jacksons has also supported the Warming Up the Homeless – Eastbourne Centre with a donation of 20 sleeping bags and £500.

A259 East Dean Road

I have received from East Sussex County Council regarding the request to review the speed limit on the A259 East Dean Road, with a view to considering a 40 mph limit.

I have attached a copy of the County Council's full response for the Parish Council's information.

In summary, the County Council has confirmed that the A259 East Dean Road was assessed as part of its Speed Management Programme. However, it was not included

among the 16 sites prioritised for review during the first two years of the programme, as other locations were assessed as having a higher priority.

The County Council has advised that:

- The A259 East Dean Road has a predominantly rural character.
- Current national guidance and the County Council's local policy do not presently identify sufficient features in the road environment to support a lower speed limit.
- Traffic surveys near Halfway Cottages recorded an average speed of 44 mph, with 85% of vehicles travelling at or below 50 mph.
- Safety improvements were carried out at the Warren Hill/A259 junction in September 2025.
- No injury collisions were reported to the Police at the Warren Hill junction between 1 October 2025 and 31 July 2026.
- The Council has also considered the approved change of use at Black Robin Farm and does not currently expect the additional traffic from the development to have a material impact on the operation or safety of the A259.

The County Council has confirmed that it will continue to monitor traffic conditions and collision data on the A259. It has also indicated that any change in circumstances or new evidence can be taken into account in future reviews.

Cracked Pavements – Highways Report

I have reported a number of cracked and damaged pavements to East Sussex County Council's Highways Team following concerns about the impact of the recent prolonged dry and hot weather.

The dry conditions appear to be contributing to movement and cracking in the ground beneath some pavements. I am concerned that, if defects are not identified early, they could deteriorate further, particularly during the winter months when rain, frost and freezing temperatures can make existing damage worse.

I am therefore encouraging residents to report any cracked or damaged pavements, footways, potholes or other highway defects they see. Residents are the eyes and ears of their local communities, and early reporting gives the Highways Team an opportunity to inspect and assess problems before they become more serious.

Hailsham–Polegate–Eastbourne Movement And Access Corridor Package

The design of the Hailsham–Polegate–Eastbourne Movement and Access Corridor Package is continuing to progress. Following comments from Brighton & Hove Buses, who operate the 28 and 500 bus services along Eastbourne Road, the designers are reviewing the proposed speed limit along the A2270 and the layout of the Huggetts Lane junction in relation to the proposed northbound bus gate.
The design also needs to take account of the new junction into Hindsland and the proposed accesses into Mornings Mill. These considerations could affect the final design, including the visibility requirements for the development accesses.

The Council has also asked the designers to look at opportunities to reduce construction costs and ensure that the scheme provides good value for money, as the current estimated costs are higher than expected.“Detailed designs for the bus lane and Wannock Road/Polegate High Street schemes are expected to be completed by spring 2027. Subject to the final cost, affordability, value-for-money assessment and securing the necessary funding, construction could potentially begin in late 2027 or early 2028 at the earliest.

A22 Package

The detailed design for the A22 junction improvements and active travel measures was completed earlier this year.

However, rising construction costs and delays in Government approval of the Outline Business Case have required the project team to look at ways of reducing costs.

As a result, Eagles Roundabout has been removed from the final package following discussions with Department for Transport officials and Wealden District Council.

To ensure value for money, the A22 scheme was put out to tender through the Hampshire Generation 5 construction procurement framework in May 2026.

Tender submissions were received in August and are currently being assessed. Subject to an acceptable tender outcome, the information will feed into the full business case, which is expected to be submitted to the Department for Transport in autumn 2026. Subject to approval of the final business case by the Department for Transport and Treasury, as well as road-space availability, a contractor is expected to mobilise in early 2027, with construction potentially starting in spring or early summer 2027.

We will continue to monitor progress on these important transport schemes and keep residents updated as further information becomes available.