NOTES OF THE PUBLIC MEETING WITH EAST SUSSEX HIGHWAYS
held in Hadlow Down Village Hall, Hadlow Down
at 7pm on Tuesday 28th July 2026

Present: Councillors: Michael Lunn (ML) Chair (plus WDC and ESCC), Ben Floyd (BF), Stephen Lester (SL), and David Munday (DM).
In attendance: Vicki Rutt (Clerk), Andrew Turner (ESCC) and 32 members of the public.

1. **Welcome from Cllr Lunn**
   Cllr Lunn welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked everyone for taking the time to attend this important meeting. He used the opportunity to update on two key points:

   - Regarding Local Government Reorganisation, as of next year the Government have announced that there will be Unitary Council Elections which will shadow the County Council for 12 months before taking over. The County Council will cease to exist from May 2028. The new Unitary Authority will formally take over from May 2028 having shadowed for 12 months. The District Councils will cease to exist from May 2028 and there will be no further District Council elections However there will be Elections for the Unitary Council and Parish Councils to be held in May 2027.
   - The Minor Planning Committee will no longer exist from September 2026. Minor applications, which cover 10 houses or less, will now be decided by Officers and will no longer be able to be called into Committee by District Councillors. This is a significant change which undermines scrutiny of controversial planning applications.

2. **Rules of the Public Meeting**
   The Clerk read out the following statement:

   Thank you all for attending tonight's Public Meeting with Head of Highways at East Sussex County Council (ESCC). As mentioned by Cllr Lunn, this meeting is being recorded to ensure I capture everything accurately with the Q&As. This Public Meeting does not come under the rules of the Parish Council's Standing Orders, but this is a meeting run by the Parish Council, with Mr Andrew Turner presenting on behalf of ESCC. As with all public meetings, please be respectful at all times, put your hand up when you wish to speak and let others finish before speaking. Verbal abuse will not be tolerated.
   I will capture your questions and the answers provided, in the event that Andrew is unable to answer, he will feedback to me later in the week so this can be included in the notes.

3. **Presentation from Andrew Turner, Head of Highways at East Sussex County Council**
   Mr Andrew Turner went through a presentation for 45 minutes.
   The presentation can be found in full on the Parish Council website.
   The key points were:

   - Approximately two thirds of the ESCC budget is spent on social care.
   - Competing demands for the County Council are not unique to East Sussex, it is a national issue.
   - The ESCC Asset management policy supports the decision on which road(s) are repaired.
   - Investment pressures are rising contractor and material costs, more frequent extreme weather costs, higher public expectations and potholes.

- ESCC need to spend approximately £24m a year to keep the roads in stable condition. However, funding from Government is around £21m in 2026/27. Inevitably, this challenging budgetary and investment settlement is not keeping pace with deterioration of the highway network.
- Winter service planning has commenced, winter for Highways starts on the 15th October 2026. 23 gritters are available.
- In Hadlow Down, there is 4.3km of A road (A272), 11km of C roads and 11.9km of unclassified roads.

- What has been done in Hadlow Down:
    - Hastingford Lane and Five Chimneys Lane have been re-surfaced again at the cost of the contractor as it failed last year.
    - 79 potholes repaired in 2025/26.
    - 309 gullies cleared.
    - A further 239 gullies programmed for November 2026.
    - Recent potholes repairs and further patching on A272.

- Planned future works on the A272. (This can be found in full on slide 20)
    - In the financial year 2026/27, A272 will undergo phase 1 which will be resurfacing from the junction of the A267 to Tinkers Lane. This area is being focused on first due to the condition data and higher speeds.
    - Phase 2 which will hopefully be in 2027/28, but not yet confirmed, will be resurfaced from Tinkers Lane to School Lane.

4. Question and Answer Session

Q. Regarding Five Chimneys Lane, this was not in a bad state when first done, it is quite embarrassing that the road keeps being repaired when no potholes and there are worse roads in the village.
A. Cllr Lunn explained that the Parish Council raised it when it failed and it was pushed through for County for a re-repair at the contractors cost. The surface dressing works were part of the Councils' preventative maintenance programme in line with the asset management policy. The approach is to not let it get in a bad state therefore requiring major investment, East Sussex Highways promotes surface dressing to help prevent roads getting into a poor state which gives it a further 6-10 year life.

Q. Thank you for coming tonight, we can understand the budget restraints, but it is the inconsistency that is frustrating. A lot of the side roads are safer to drive on the A272. This resident lives on an unclassified road, Stocklands Lane where there are 300/400 defects, maximum speed is 15mph. However, when contractors come out they only repair a few, no others have been assigned to them yet. A recent unit came from Ashford to do it, and they were annoyed and frustrated also.
A. Andrew stated it is concerning to hear that a contractor has been acquired from Ashford as this is dead time to travel when there are resources here in East Sussex. Andrew will look at this. Andrew explained why some defects are fixed before others - repairs are prioritised according to the risk each defect presents to road users and the importance (classification) of the road.

Q. Hadlow Down have 2 busy and heavily used roads, the A272 and School Lane. These should be a priority. School Lane is being closed in August for UKPN works, this is the best time to do a resurfacing. A272, the section from Tinkers Lane to the village centre, the potholes are getting worse, speed and weight of traffic. It is very dangerous, people are swerving to avoid the potholes and there are so many near misses.
A. Andrew stated he understands but with the limited budget they have to rely on a robust, transparent and systematic approach in accordance with the asset management policy that decides when roads need repairing. Cllr Lunn shared some pothole history in Hadlow Down and reported that both residents and the Parish Council, share a lot of frustration.

Q. Well done for coming tonight, my background is working for street works so I am pleased to say that I have seen the quality of potholes get a lot better over the last 6 months. However, the noise is unbearable, we suffer from sleep deprivation, it is just constant. If a pothole more than 40mm, the potholes are repaired, they then get fixed, but the small ones do not get fixed and create the noise. 'A roads' should be given priority.
A. Highways recognise this and this is partly why the A272 is being resurfaced in a phase 1 and 2 approach.

Q. I do not agree that Phase 1 needs to go first due to the speeds, the speeds are consistent through the village. I live in the centre, and they do not slow down. They can go between 50-70mph. If you put a speed camera up in Hadlow Down, the fines incurred will pay for the A272 resurface. not agreed, the speeds are coming through the village so fast. They do not slow down. School Lane is 30mph, you would never know that the speed and noise is shocking. Nothing has been done to mitigate it.
A. Andrew stated he will look in School Lane with traffic management to see if the speed and volume of cars can be captured.

Q. Two residents talked about pavements along the A272. One stated when events on at Tinkers Park, people walk along the A272 as no pavement for one section, it is too dangerous. Another stated she finds it very stressful and thought she would be killed last year. Walking along the A272 with dogs is scary, you can get soaked from top to bottom by vehicles hitting potholes and you get verbal abuse. You should be able to walk around the village.
A. The narrow pavements and lack of in some cases was noted by Andrew. The provision of new footways would require significant capital investment on budgets that are already under pressure.

Q. Hastingford Lane was resurfaced well, but the side of road has not, there are two massive craters. They are so dangerous for cars coming round the corner and cyclists. The Clerk stated she has been reported this for 2 years, with pictures, but no repair.
A. Andrew was disappointed to hear this and asked the Clerk to send him the information so he can look into this.

Q. Hastingford Lane, all the loose grit goes into the gulley and blocks the drain. The gulleys are sometimes being emptied but the gullies are not unblocked so the issue will happen with the next rainfall.
A. Cllr Lunn stated he did a walkthrough and audited the gulleys, only 2 were working. Andrew stated that there is a gulley programme that can be reviewed online. He also noted that further gulley cleansing is planned for November 2026.

Q. I live at the bottom of hill for the past 45 years. There are fatalities outside due to the surface water. 10/15 years ESH stated they needed to improve the gullies and it will be done annually. It has not been cleared for 2 years and the reason giving is due to the water shortage. Reports have been made weekly, with photographic evidence. It only got looked at recently when escalated to formal complaint.
A. Andrew will look at this so he can investigate this further. Andrew was disappointed to hear stories and lack of action on key service requests. Andrew stated to please let your elected member or him know if you hit any blockers.

Q. Does the gulley clearing also include the ditches. The ditches in Wilderness Lane have not been cleared in 5 years, the overflow creates issues on the road leading to potholes.
A. Adjacent landowners should be maintaining the ditches in most cases.

Q. Cllr Lunn stated that the speed sign consultation has ended, what is the next stage and expected timeframe for installation?
A. Andrew reported that he could not get the information ahead of the meeting, but he will find out and let the Clerk know.

Q. You said this is Nationwide issue, I agree in regard to the budget, but when you drive around other places like Scotland etc who have poorer weather, it does not make sense as their roads are ok.
A. The Department of Transport published a report recently with comparative data. Sussex is classified as amber, the majority of local highway authorities are amber with a few being classified as green. There are some red areas, which the Government has offered support.

Q. It is so frustrating when you see road ahead closed signs, it doesn't say which road is closed or sometimes the road is not closed at all.
A. Andrew noted this can be frustrating. There is a website called 'one network' which shows full information on a road closure. The website is publicly accessible, but Parish Councils can have additional access rights.

Cllr Lunn and all present thanked Andrew for attending the meeting, providing a lot of information and answering important questions.

Cllr Lunn invited Steve O'Connell from Sussex Police to update on Community Speedwatch.

Steve reported that Community Speedwatch is making a big difference in other villages so Hadlow Down would benefit from setting up a group again. The Clerk confirmed she had added it to the agenda for the PC meeting being held on the 4th August.

Steve's role is to work with Parish and Town Councils about road safety. Steve would support the Parish Council to set up a group again, which the Clerk would administer but it does not work without volunteers. If you are interested, please let the Clerk know.

The meeting closed at 20:45