



# Battle & District In Focus



**Cllr Kathryn Field**  
County and  
District Councillor

**Cllr Vikki Cook**  
District and  
Town  
Councillor

**Your Local  
LibDem Team**

**Cllr Chas Pearce**  
Catsfield &  
Crowhurst District  
Councillor

**Becky Jones**  
Prospective  
Parliamentary  
Candidate



*Just a small selection of the amazing range of independent shops in and around our High Street.*

## Please support our amazing High Street

It's no secret that High Streets across the country are having a hard time. First there was Covid and the lockdowns that further boosted online shopping. Then came the cost of living crisis, high interest rates, parking issues, road closures, incessant rain, shoplifting, potholes and road closures. Add to all this sometimes high business rates and unsympathetic landlords, and it's a wonder that any business at all survives. We are truly in awe of our amazing independent retailers.

The spate of road closures has been the most serious recent challenge. The closure of London Road, with no work apparent for several weeks (while surveyors assessed the work needed) caused considerable frustration, inconvenience and loss of business. Traffic can now at last get through but road repairs will take many weeks. Add to this the closures of Netherfield Road and Virgins Lane, several brief closures of Whatlington Road, road works at Mount Street, Marley Lane, North Trade Road, Kitchenham Road and

on the A21, and it's no wonder that at times the town has felt under siege.

Our High Street has never been in more need of your support. It provides local jobs for local residents. It reduces the need to drive or use delivery vans. Typical car running costs of around 45p per mile mean the cost of an hour's parking is cheaper than a round trip of just 3 miles for 'free' parking. Homeowners benefit from enhanced property values and we all enjoy the 'feelgood factor' of bustling High Streets.

Just in the past few weeks we have welcomed a new 'Indian' restaurant (hooray!), an art and antiques shop, a local estate agent and solicitor moving onto the High Street, and a new 'sports bar', and we wish them all well. Hopefully the remaining few empty shops will soon be taken up. There's also a packed programme of community activities throughout the year, so get involved and enjoy helping to build an even better Battle!

## LibDems take outright control of Tunbridge Wells!



# Rother Environmental Update

A lot of progress has been made toward achieving our '2030 Net Zero' target for emissions of carbon and other noxious gases.

◆ Government funding has been secured for introduction of EV charging points in Rother car parks where energy supply is adequate. Mount Street will be included in the first batch, contracts under negotiation. The County Council is developing plans for on-street charging points.

◆ It is intended that existing refuse collection vehicles will be replacing diesel fuel with Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO). Kathryn has obtained confirmation that this will not include palm oil, and the fuel switch over requires no capital cost or engine changes. This will substantially reduce emissions.

◆ Paper volumes within the Council's operations have been reduced from over 9m sheets p.a. to just 0.25m, with big reductions in printing and paper storage costs.

- ◆ All Rother's buildings have solar panels where practical, and waterless urinals introduced to the Town Hall.
- ◆ A number of action plans have been developed to consider how the Local Transport Plan can be integrated with work on safer cycle and footpaths, and Planning to improve sustainable housing. Rather frustratingly our own Planning Department cannot impose conditions that exceed government guidelines.

Cllr Kathryn Field, Cabinet Lead on Climate Emergency

## Highways News *Road problems have dominated the past few months in and around Battle.*

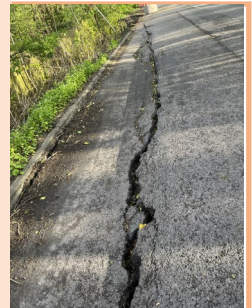
*All our roads apart from the A21 are the responsibility of ESCC Highways; the A21 is looked after by National Highways. The various utility companies have a right to close roads for emergencies but should liaise with ESCC for scheduled work.*

**A2100 London Road:** This has been the biggest problem affecting the town and entire surrounding area. The initial problem was a landslip which included a fallen tree and telegraph pole, coupled with the carriageway showing serious subsidence. Now that one lane is open, it will take several weeks to effect repairs, possibly followed by repairs to the north bound lane which is also showing damage. The lack of information or evident activity added considerably to the frustration. Kathryn has made Highways very much aware of the need to improve communications.

**Potholes:** The state of many of our roads is simply disgraceful. As well as posing threats to all road users, especially bikers and cyclists, it is an embarrassing reflection of the run-down state of so much of our infrastructure. Smaller cars with cheaper tyres are particularly vulnerable. The

administration at County boasts of the number of pot holes filled, but it's simply not enough and too many are rushed and do not last. Compensation payments totalling over £300,000 were paid out last year: surely that money should have been spent on holes!

**North Trade Road:** As reported at the Parish Assembly, we have been promised that NTR will be resurfaced 'in the current financial year'. However, due to scheduled gas main work on the diversion route work on NTR cannot start until January! In the meantime we are assured that the worst of the potholes will be patched up especially outside the police station and approaching Claverham. Kathryn has asked that this work should include repainting the pedestrian crossing as it is dangerously worn away, and she has logged the danger to pedestrians, especially schoolchildren, from swerving cars.



Subsidence on A2100



Almost anywhere on North Trade Road



A 'cairn' of broken hub caps

# Introducing Becky Jones, LibDem Prospective Parliamentary



Bexhill and Battle LibDems have selected Becky Jones to be their candidate to fight the next General Election, whenever the PM decides that should happen. She has vowed to campaign for a better deal for the widely varying communities that make up the constituency. Becky is a mum of 3 and works for the NHS, so she will be focusing on reducing health inequalities and increasing sustainability. Passionate about equality, fairness and inclusivity, Becky has worked in these areas in both local government and the NHS for the last 20 years.

Speaking after being selected Becky said: "I am honoured to have been chosen to take on this role, representing the values of the Liberal Democrats. The local party has made a real, positive difference to the communities across Bexhill and Battle through their current leadership roles on Rother and Wealden Councils. I am looking forward to working closely with them. I am determined to offer residents an alternative in Parliament to more years of Tory neglect and an unappealing offer from Labour locally and nationally. In Rother in 2019 and in Wealden last year we showed the Tories what happens if they take the support of their electorate for granted. There is a better alternative!"



## Rother toilet closures

It's no secret that government funding for local authorities has been falling consistently since 2010, and with restrictions on their ability to raise more funds through council tax, many authorities are having to cut their services. Some services are statutory requirements so cannot be cut. The provision of public toilets is not a statutory service so is not protected.

It is a disgrace that one of the wealthiest countries in the world does not regard this basic public service as a standard requirement. It is especially poor in a tourist area, and with an ageing population. However Rother has had little option but to close some of its toilets in order to maintain its statutory services.

LibDem councillors are working with others to encourage devolution of responsibility for toilets to individual town and parish councils. Local 'ownership' is likely to mean cleaning contracts are more economical and

facilities will be better maintained. We will keep pressing.

## Battle Hill Pedestrian Crossing

Many people have been asking what is happening about the long promised pedestrian crossing on Battle Hill. To be honest it is extremely frustrating. It was all ready to go ahead when County changed its roads contractor last April. The new contractors are having to go back over every aspect of the arrangements, we assume to satisfy their insurers especially on health and safety which is of course a concern for all of us. It IS still going to go ahead and it is promised for sometime this year.....!

**WE SUPPORT**

**Battle Hill Crossing**

*Thank-you for your support* ♥

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## 5 Years of unbroken election success



*The election stunts are to everyone's liking but at least they get media coverage!*

Liberal Democrats have an unenviable reputation for implausible by-election successes, such as our wins in Somerton & Frome, Tiverton & Honiton, and North Shropshire, each with swings of around 30%. Much less well known are our consistent gains at Council elections and by-elections. Over the past five years LibDems have had an unbroken record of net wins, gaining a total of 768 Councillors compared to 545 for Labour and a net loss of 1783 for the Conservatives. At the recent elections we gained 104 Councillors and overtook the Tories. We also held all 10 Councils we already had, and gained Tunbridge Wells and Dorset. And despite what the media

might say we are not just a party of the South and South West. We fell one short of taking control of Stockport, we run Hull, and gained seats right across the country including Manchester, Gateshead and Preston. We have to focus our efforts due to our lack of millionaire donors, but in all the areas we are targeting for the General Election, we are strengthening our position and confident of making big gains. Like most of the rest of the country, we just want the General Election as soon as possible, to 'make this government history'!

### Vikki Unchained!

For the past year Vikki Cook, South Battle & Telham Councillor, has proudly worn two chains of office, one as Mayor of Battle, the other as Chair of Rother. Now that her terms have finished she is 'unchained'! All who have seen her in action have been impressed by her capacity for hard work and her ability to get things done, though that was not news to anyone who knows her. Well done Vikki, you will be a hard act to follow.



### Come along to our events:

**Third Wednesday monthly:** informal meeting and political chat at The Denbigh, Little Common Road, from 7.00pm

**Bi Monthly:** Another Perspective Talk at The Bell, Ticehurst. See website for details.

TBA: Battle Quiz

TBA: Garden Open and coffee hosted by Kathryn Field

### Your local LibDem Contacts:

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#### Prospective Parliamentary Candidate:

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### Please give us a helping hand!

- ◆ Join the Liberal Democrats or become a registered supporter at [www.libdems.org.uk](http://www.libdems.org.uk).
- ◆ Help us with a few leaflet deliveries.
- ◆ Come along to our social events.
- ◆ Donate or join our 100 Club. We don't have unions or rich donors to pay our bills!
- ◆ LibDem Office: [hello@bexhillandbattlelibdems.org.uk](mailto:hello@bexhillandbattlelibdems.org.uk)  
Phone 07956 54795
- ◆ Check our website at [www.bexhillandbattlelibdems.org.uk](http://www.bexhillandbattlelibdems.org.uk)  
It's regularly updated and full of information.