

Welcome to the 4th edition of the Overview & Scrutiny e-bulletin for 2008-2009, updating you on the key issues and activities of the Select Committees.

Scrutiny Events

Sustainable bag initiative is launched



In an effort to make the town greener and encourage sustainability, the Council and AXA PPP have joined forces in a venture to provide staff with reusable 'Love Where We Live' cloth bags. The bags will be housed in special box 'drop-points' in their building entrances. Year 5 and 6 Children from Sherwood Park Community Primary School, with help from the Kent High Weald Project, made specially designed wooden boxes using chestnut taken from local sustainable woodlands and milled at a yard in Crowborough. Staff can now borrow a bag and return it when they have finished with it to save from using plastic bags. Other local businesses, including Cripps Harries Hall LLP Solicitors and Atlantic Business Centres, have followed suit and adopted the initiative in their offices and we would encourage more businesses to promote reusable bags in this way. The Council will make the branded bags available at cost price to those that are keen to join in, as well as holding other box making days at local schools if the scheme is a success. The initiative was borne from the ESSC Select Committee review into waste and recycling in the borough.



November Meetings

Corporate Services (CS)

Tuesday 11 November – Gateway visit, 5.30pm

– Committee meeting, 6.30pm

Following a site visit to the Gateway, the Committee will be receiving Quarter 2 performance and financial monitoring reports, a draft report on urban parishing, and updates on the budget working group and outside bodies review.

Environment, Safer & Stronger Communities (ESSC)

Tuesday 18 November, 6.15pm

At the next meeting Members will be discussing the Environmental Management System and Town entry signs, as well as receiving updates on the provision of public conveniences and the dogs mess and litter review.

Local Economy & Housing (LEH)

Tuesday 25 November, 6.00pm

A report on the further investigation into the options for the future delivery of the Tourist Information Centre will be discussed at this meeting. Also on the agenda will be reports on tourism and economic development in the Eastern area of the borough and the West Kent Leader programme – a new source of funding for rural businesses.

South East Employers (SEE) workshop

This workshop provided an update for both local authorities and local strategic partnerships on the recent Government White Paper 'Communities in control: real people, real power'. The White Paper was launched in July and focuses on passing power to communities and giving real control and influence to more people. Local examples of where authorities or LSPs were working in an innovative way were sought and SEE invited Angela and Kat to present an account of the development of the Overview and Scrutiny Partnership between Tunbridge Wells and Maidstone Borough Councils. Representatives of local authorities across the south east of England heard about the sharing of resources, the joint review of communication between district councils and Kent Highways Services, and the joint mental health services review that is currently being undertaken.



Woodbury Park Cemetery Review



The ESSC Select Committee met in October to discuss a report into the privately-owned triangle of land at the south-eastern corner of Woodbury Park Cemetery. The land was a grot spot as it was not kept clean and was an eyesore next to the Cemetery. Members heard that for the past two years the Friends of Woodbury Park Cemetery had volunteered their own time to carry out work to preserve the Cemetery for public benefit and enjoyment and as an educational resource for the community. June Bridgeman represented the Friends at the meeting and stated the group's desire that the Council look into acquiring the land for public use. Jane Frostick from the Kent High Weald Project explained that the natural habitat of the area was fragile and should be preserved and that any human intervention on the site should be limited. The Committee agreed that a working group of Officers should be formed to



look into the possibility of acquiring the land. A detailed analysis of the cost of acquisition and maintenance of the site as a nature conservation area with limited public access will be presented to the Committee at its meeting in February 2009. - www.fwpc.org.uk

Contact Us

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Licensing Review – *Input needed!!!*

Councillors Atwood and Mayall are conducting a review to identify how residents view licensing in the borough on behalf of the ESSC Select Committee. The Chairman of the Licensing Committee, Councillor



Jukes, and the Licensing Manager, Anthony Garnett, attended the last Committee meeting and gave an overview of the Council's licensing function. The review is focusing on customer satisfaction with the Council's licensing work. Kat is supporting this review and if you live in the borough she would greatly appreciate any comments on licenses in your area that have been approved by the Council.



Your views welcomed

We would like to encourage people to be active in Scrutiny and welcome Officers, Councillors, and members of the public to give us your views on topics to be discussed in November, the major reviews, or any other issues that people would like raised.

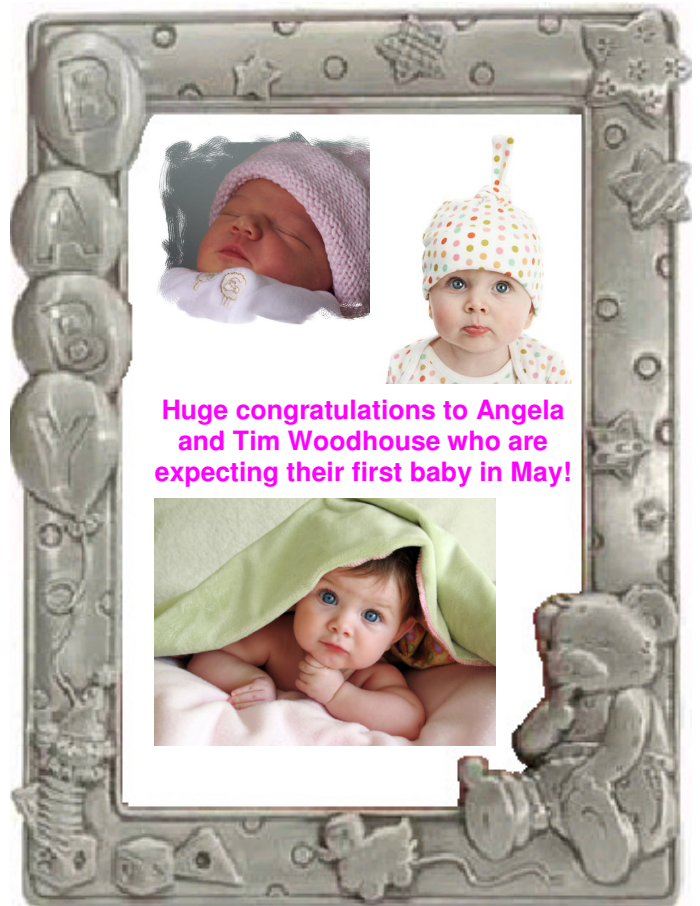
Major Reviews for 2008/09

CS – Medway/North Farm Depot, Partnerships

ESSC – Licensing, Mental Health, Nuisance Neighbours

LEH – Road Safety and Transportation

...and finally...



Huge congratulations to Angela and Tim Woodhouse who are expecting their first baby in May!