

Emily O'Brien's December Report Lewes District Council

Two issues continue to dominate – traffic and planning. On traffic, I was delighted that my recent motion to Lewes District Council on HGV traffic was passed. The motion focussed on what we can do as a council to reduce HGV traffic via the planning system, in strengthening our expectations about how developers manage construction traffic i.e. that this is given much more consideration, earlier on (sometimes the construction management plans feel like an afterthought which just isn't right) and that the plans look specifically at the routing of construction traffic away from villages and unsuitable roads.

The motion also supported the LGA campaign for HGVs to be required to use commercial satnavs (this is a campaign which I asked the LGA to pick up, in my role as deputy chair of one of the boards) and supported the campaign Cllr Johnny Denis and I have currently, asking East Sussex County council to take action on the growing number of HGVs using narrow or unsuitable roads as a cut through and to give serious consideration to introducing a lorry route network. Please continue to sign and share the petition on the same topic - it's at <https://bit.ly/VillageHGVs>.

As I write this I am working on my speech for planning committee regarding the Boklok application this week, yet another in the onslaught on our green spaces. This week's announcement on housing targets is at least a glimmer of hope in that government is admitting the housing target system is plain wrong. However the announcement was silent on the five year review loophole, which is actually a bigger issue for our district. Even re housing targets, I worry that by the time anything is legislation it will be too late. I have written to our MP to ask for assurances that she will ask for appeal decisions such as the Ringmer Croudace appeal (and two others in the district in the same month – Wivelsfield and just this week, Nolands at Plumpton Green) to be overturned - as it is small consolation for government to admit something is wrong if there is no way to make it right.

I also met with both the Environment Agency and Angling Club regarding the summer fish deaths at Glynde Reach. Both are satisfied these were due to extreme atmospheric conditions at the time, which effectively sucked the oxygen out of the water and were not directly caused by pollution for example from the wastewater treatment works, (though pollution could be a compounding factor.) The Ouse and Adur River Trust agree with this view, there were a number of other water bodies affected in the same way and you can follow the progress of the 'hotspot' as it worked its way across East Sussex affecting other bodies of water, mainly lakes. The conditions were caused by the extreme heat and drought this summer followed by intense rain i.e. were a result of the very unusual conditions in our changing climate.