

# ***Telscombe Town Council Annual Report 2020-2021***



**Telscombe Civic Centre, 360 South Coast Rd, Telscombe Cliffs,  
East Sussex, BN10 7ES  
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## ***A Message from the Mayor, Cllr Isobel Sharkey***

It has been my pleasure to have served a second term as mayor because of Covid and the resulting lockdown and in many ways it has been a “caretaker” year, with me just keeping things ticking over.

There have been a few in person duties to perform: the flag raising for Merchant Navy day, a small Victory over Japan commemoration and Remembrance Day ceremony in Peacehaven were the only formal events I attended.



I was also invited to attend a birthday celebration for a Saltdean resident who turned 100 in the autumn, and more recently, the opening of two memorial benches, also in Saltdean.

Other than those, all other events were online: there have been a few Mayors and Chairs networking events on Zoom hosted by The High Sheriff and The Lord Lieutenant where we were able to share experiences of this unprecedented year. All worthwhile events, even though we obviously had to provide our own refreshments!

I did also record a few video messages with Telscombe Town residents which I hope may have been of some support to those who watched them.

At the end of the first main year, I was able to donate what was left over from my mayoral allowance to the local foodbank as well as give 4 local charities (The City Cat Shelter, Autism Sussex, The House Project, Art Works Sussex) an equal split of the money I'd raised in that year.

At the end of this year I was also able to donate what was left of my mayoral allowance and this was split equally between Lewes Citizens Advice and Kempton House.

I wish my successor the very best for the coming year, and again thank my fellow councillors and the officers at the council for all of their support.

Cllr Isobel Sharkey  
Mayor of Telscombe

April 2021

## **Councillors**

The role of a Councillor is to make decisions that impact on their ward and across the Council as a whole. Becoming a Councillor is a rewarding form of public service which involves a lot of hard work.

The Town Council has 13 Councillors, eight in the Telscombe Cliffs Ward:-



Cllr Daryll Brindley  
07917 393050



Cllr Claude Cheta  
07869 069332



Cllr Ciarron Clarkson  
01273 024717



Cllr Job Harris  
01273 583050



Cllr Lyn Mills  
07976 910182

Vacancy exists



Cllr Isobel Sharkey  
07818 243405



Cllr Andy Smith  
01273 584484

and five in the East Saltdean ward:-



Cllr Cathy Gallagher  
07810 560337



Cllr Laurence O'Connor  
01273 309444



Cllr Brian Page  
01273 302220



Cllr David Judd  
07729 817558



Cllr Christine  
Robinson  
01273 579613

New Councillors were elected in May 2019, some of which had served the Town previously. They will stay in office for 4 years. Unfortunately Cllr Hill resigned in 2020 and a by election has been called for May 2021 to fill the vacancy.

Councillors O'Connor and Robinson were also elected as Lewes District Councillors for the Telscombe Town area. Cllr Smith is an East Sussex County Councillor for this area, with an election due in May 2021

The Mayor is appointed at the Annual Council meeting in May. Councillor Isobel Sharkey was appointed as Mayor and Councillor Daryll Brindley as Deputy Mayor in May 2019 for the 2019/20 year and due to the Annual Council meeting for 2020 being cancelled as a result of Covid, they have remained in office for a second year.

Also due to Covid, the Councillors' surgery which was normally held on the first Saturday of each month from 10-11am at the Telscombe Civic Centre was cancelled for the last year.

## **Understanding How Councils Work**

There are three tiers of local government:-

County Councils

District, Borough or City Councils

Parish, Community and Town Councils

In some parts of the country, mainly cities, there's just 1 (unitary) tier of local government providing all the local services.

### **County Councils**

They are responsible for services across the whole of a county, eg:

- \* education
- \* transport
- \* fire and public safety
- \* social care
- \* libraries
- \* waste management
- \* trading standards

### **District, Borough and City Councils**

They cover a smaller area than County Councils. They're usually responsible for services like:

- \* rubbish collection
- \* recycling
- \* Council Tax collections
- \* housing
- \* planning applications

### **Parish, Community and Town Councils**

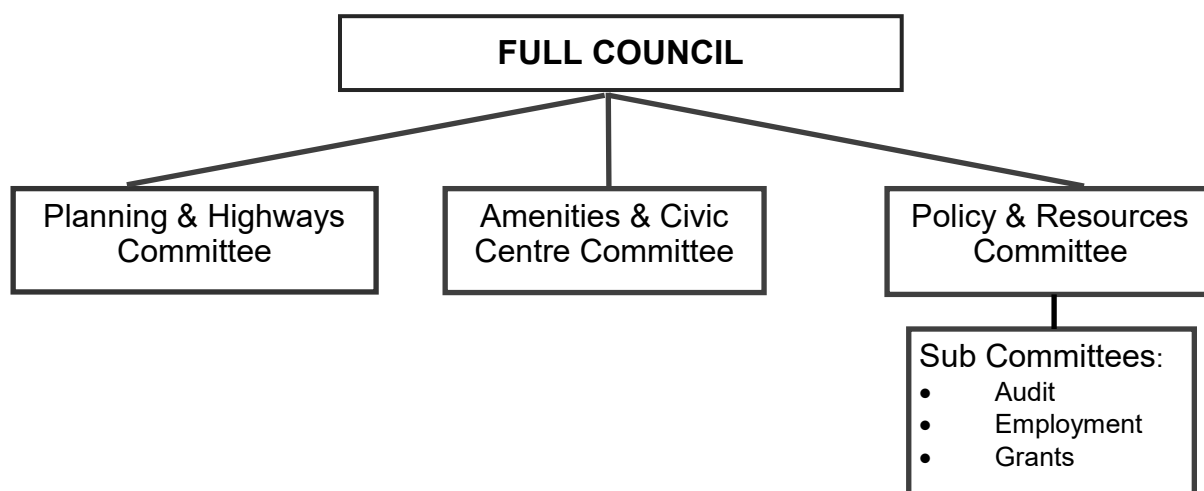
They operate at a level below District and Borough Councils and in some cases, unitary authorities.

They're elected and can help on a number of local issues and can provide:

- \* allotments
- \* public clocks
- \* bus shelters
- \* community centres
- \* play areas and play equipment
- \* grants to help local organisations
- \* consultation on neighbourhood planning

In our area we have East Sussex County Council, Lewes District Council and Telscombe Town Council.

## **Telscombe Town Council**



Telscombe Town Council serves Telscombe Cliffs, East Saltdean and Telscombe Village and has approximately 7,400 residents.

Local Councils have a range of powers and duties including the power to provide and maintain bus shelters of which Telscombe Town Council has several and to light public places. Telscombe Town Council has several lighting columns, including those along the pathway in Chatsworth Park.

The Town Council owns and manages important local community facilities including the Civic Centre on the South Coast Road, Chatsworth Park including two equipped play spaces, the Robert Kingan play space in East Saltdean, and Telscombe Tye (211 acres of open access Common land). It is also responsible for grass verge cutting.

The various aspects of the Councils responsibilities and activities are undertaken by various committees which are detailed above.

### **Meetings**

Council and Committee meetings are held on a bi-monthly basis, apart from the Planning & Highways Committee which meets every 3 weeks. A list of meetings dates can be found on our website or in our notice boards.

Members of the public are welcome to attend meetings and there is a 15 minute period at the beginning of each meeting for public questions.





## **Policy & Resources Committee**

I would like to start the Policy and Resources (P&R) annual report by commending and thanking the Council staff for their incredible work over the last 12 months. It has been an unprecedented time and they have all been a credit to the town.

Despite the difficulties of the last year the P&R committee has managed to progress a number of key issues which will not only improve council operations but also the town. The first is the Enquiry and Feedback mechanism. This was devised with Cllr Robinson, Cllr Gallagher, Diana Joel and myself and is a method to track and respond to resident communications. It increases transparency but also provides Councillors with data on what issues are being reported and where, ensuring we better understand the needs and concerns of residents and can react.

There has also been great progress with wild flowering for the Tye which has been a project driven by Cllr Robinson and the Town Clerk, Stella Newman. The committee is keen to improve the biodiversity of the Tye for residents now and in the future and although the last year has made it difficult for us to progress as quickly as we would like to Cllr Robinson and Stella have managed to push this forward.

We now have expert land management advice in place to support the committee in how best to improve the Tye as an asset for the town but also a unique habitat for wildflowers and birds. This is feeding into plans for a formalised Tye management document which will help council operations and promote the Tye.

I will close by saying I have enjoyed my time as chair of the committee and hope the work we have started can progress to greater improvements. In the meantime I hope everyone stays safe and well.

*Cllr C Clarkson, Chairman of Policy & Resources Committee*

The Policy & Resources Committee has three sub-committees, being Audit, Employment and Grants.

A list of the grants awarded by the Council for the 2020-21 financial year are listed on page 13 under the Finance Section of this report.

## **Amenities & Civic Centre Committee**

Telscombe Town Parks are Chatsworth Park, The Copse and Robert Kingan Playground.

The last twelve months have been dominated by the Covid 19 Pandemic which has prevented meetings taking place inside. This Committee has been able to carry on with the plans for improving the amenity value of the open spaces by holding meetings via Zoom.

In August 2020 a survey was delivered to all of the 77 homes whose gardens border Chatsworth Park and the Copse. The aim was to find out how they felt about the boundary and the wildlife. 40% of residents responded and all replies were collated and the opportunity taken to contact those with specific issues. We learnt that residents wish to be given the opportunity to be involved with the decisions made regarding plans for the upkeep and improvements to Chatsworth Park and The Copse.

The Committee wishes to pro-actively manage the green spaces to enhance the existing facilities to reduce the weeds and invasive undergrowth and introduce a greater variety of blossoming and colourful trees, bushes and plants. A Management Plan is being produced with reports commissioned to feed in to that plan.

Accessibility for all is not possible at present. What wildlife, flora and fauna are present now and how it is surviving has not been recorded. Recently we have received professional reports covering both these areas.

Lewes District Council have also provided two strategic documents covering Local Green Spaces and Sports Playing Pitches.

There is a lot to do. Community volunteers will help us bring positive change. Chatsworth Park Café Working Group, Friends of Chatsworth Park and Telscombe Town Tree Wardens are already supporting and actively working in the Parks. A trial mobile café and public toilet has been introduced to Chatsworth Park.

The Memory Garden is a place for quiet reflection within nature. In the Spring and Summer 2021 more attention and care will be given to the central planting mound to encourage a more colourful planting regime. Memorial benches and plaques can be purchased from the Town Council.

Keeping Telscombe Town tidy and litter free remains a Town Council objective, the provision of dual waste bins and educational notices are plentiful.

The Civic Centre as the Community Hub has been closed for events and hire through lockdown. As we come out of lockdown, maintenance and congregating will be resuming.

Committee including bingo and a Summer outdoor gathering will be planned, slowly and carefully we are unlocking.

Report by Cllr Cathy Gallagher, Chair Amenities & Civic Centre Committee



## **Planning & Highways Committee**

The Planning & Highways meetings are held approximately every three weeks. Telscombe Town Council is consulted by Lewes District Council, the Planning Authority, on planning applications but we are however only statutory consultees in the planning process. This means that we only have the right to be informed of planning applications as the final decision is made by the Planning Authority and not the Town Council. However, they do take our comments into consideration before making the final decision on a planning application.

Planning applications considered by the committee during the past 12 months April 2020 - March 2021 totalled 49 (35 supported and 14 objected) of which 33 have been approved by Lewes DC, 8 refused and 8 are still awaiting a decision.

The Committee are also responsible for matters concerning Council owned assets such as bus shelters, some street lights, grass verge cutting, the Peacehaven & Telscombe Neighbourhood Development Plan as well as liaising between residents and ESCC and other bodies on issues connected to the public highways.

Unfortunately, the verge tree planting scheme, which many residents were keen to be involved with, was not able to progress due to the underground services being too near the surface on the proposed verges. The committee have now gone back to ESCC Highways to see if hedges would be a more favourable alternative and await their decision.

We are also committed to improve the biodiversity of our local area as well as encouraging habitats for bees, butterflies and insects by introducing wildflowers to our verges in certain areas. The verges at Crowborough Road, Telscombe Tye, Gorham Court and Telscombe Road where it turns into Kirby Drive have now been formally designated by ESCC as wildflower verges for 2021.

*Cllr Christine Robinson, Vice-Chairman of Planning & Highways Committee  
on behalf of the Chairman, Cllr J Harris*

## **Neighbourhood Development Plan**

**Peacehaven and Telscombe**  
Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group



**The Vision for the NDP is for Peacehaven and Telscombe towns to provide a good quality of life for all residents and an environment which is sustainable with clean air.**

## **Neighbourhood Development Plan (Contd)**

### **Background**

The National Government from Westminster publishes Planning Policy for England through the National Planning Policy Framework. At present 300,000 new homes per year is the housing target.

In 2011 through the Localism Act 2011 the Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDP) was introduced to give Towns and Councils more say as to how Communities develop and where new homes, businesses, sports and leisure facilities are sited. Once adopted the NDP and its local policies is a legal document which carries weight in determining planning applications.

Peacehaven and Telscombe Town Councils resolved to work together in 2013 and the plan area was designated. The process started in significantly in 2017. Our plan is complex and difficult as it combines two towns and an increasing population circa 25,000. Evidenced reports have been prepared by Consultants paid for by grants from Locality which is funded by central government.

The fact that two Towns are preparing an NDP ring fences the land from speculative development.

Once adopted the Towns receive 25% of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) instead of the current 15% which means the Towns have more control over the spending on infrastructure.

### **The Meridian Centre**

The proposed redevelopment of the Meridian Site is an important opportunity for the two Towns to become sustainable. Two public consultation surveys have taken place. The first was undertaken by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group on the Masterplan concept from AECOM.

The owners of the Meridian Centre are Co-op Properties who have also conducted a pre-application survey. The future of the Meridian Site is undecided as at May 2021.

### **The Wider Plan Area**

Maintaining and protecting local green spaces, parks and recreational facilities (including new 'pocket parks'), creating alternatives to travelling on the congested A259, walkways and cycle tracks, improving the public realm, supporting business and employment, attracting tourism are some of the projects to be included in the NDP which will benefit residents and the environment.

**DRAFT PLAN COMPLETION DATE SEPTEMBER 2021**

For more information go to the website:

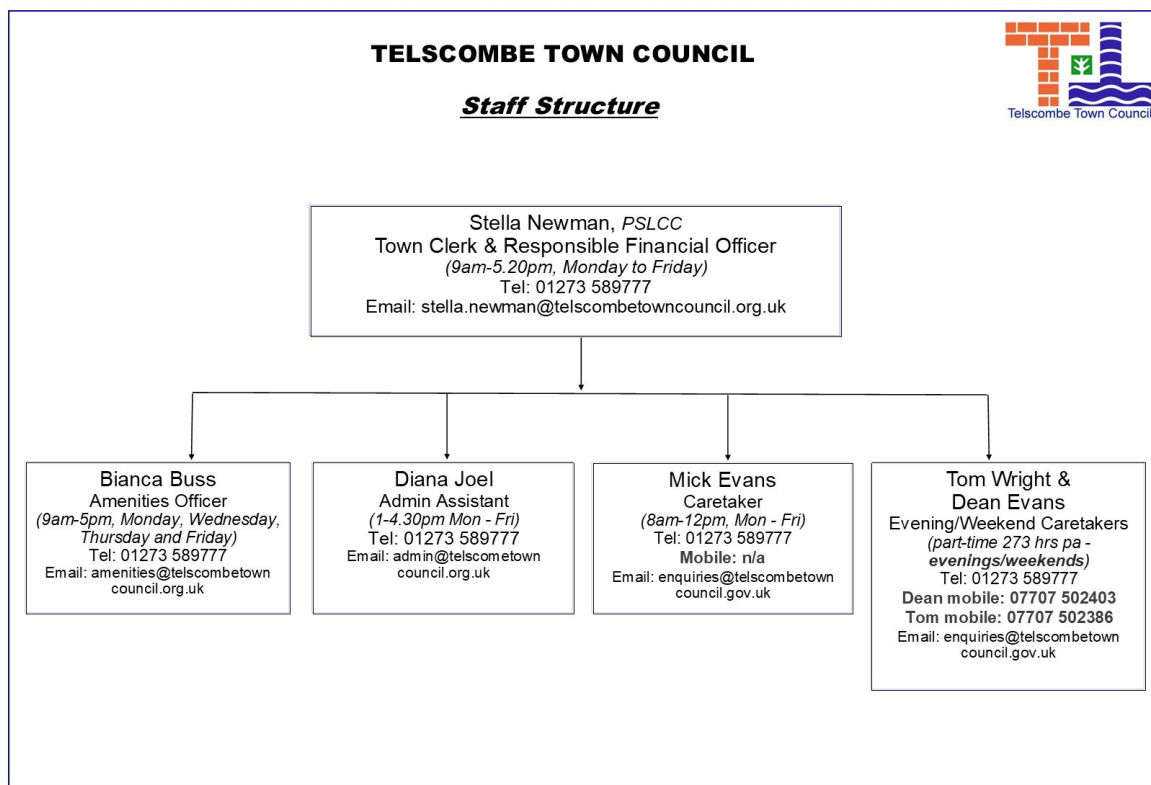
[www.peacehaven-and-telscombe-neighbourhood-plan-steering-group.co.uk](http://www.peacehaven-and-telscombe-neighbourhood-plan-steering-group.co.uk)

Cathy Gallagher

Chair of Steering Group

Email [ptsteergroup@yahoo.com](mailto:ptsteergroup@yahoo.com)

## **Meet the Staff**



The Town Clerk & RFO is the Proper Officer of the Council and as such is under a statutory duty to carry out all the functions of the Council, and in particular to serve or issue all the notifications required by law of a local authority's Proper Officer.

The Town Clerk is expected to advise the Council on, and assist in the formation of, overall policies to be followed in respect of the Authority's activities and in particular to produce all the information required for making effective decisions and to implement constructively all decisions.

The Clerk is also the Responsible Financial Officer and responsible for all financial records of the Council and the careful administration of its finances.

The Town Clerk is supported by part-time admin staff, as well as an Amenities Officer who works 4 days a week.

Three part-time caretakers are employed to look after the Civic Centre during the day, evenings and weekends, although the Civic Centre has had to close to hirers for the last year due to Covid.

## **Finance**

The Council has built a reputation for sound financial management over recent years and has developed a financial strategy that has value for money at its core – making sure every penny counts.

We continue to ensure that decisions around service priorities are supported by the resources needed and to make sure that we continue to deliver the high quality services our community needs. Our financial strategy is underpinned by the strong foundation of the Council's reserves and balances that ensure we are able to deal with any unplanned eventualities as and when they may arise.

The Income & Expenditure accounts for the 2020/21 financial year are below.

### **Telscombe Town Council**

#### **Income and Expenditure Account for Year Ended 31st March 2021**

31st March 2020		31st March 2021
	<b>Income Summary</b>	
225,417	Precept Received	239,943
803	Interest Received	164
	Sub Total	
<b>226,220</b>		<b>240,107</b>
	<b>Operating Income</b>	
40,301	General Administration	12,670
1,186	Town Events	582
3,850	Parks, Open Spaces/Playgrounds	100
31,371	Civic Building	12,079
9,244	Planning and Highways	7,636
	Total Income	
<b>312,172</b>		<b>273,174</b>
	<b>Running Costs</b>	
162,270	General Administration	152,780
5,860	Grants	6,160
3,179	Town Events	859
28,380	Parks, Open Spaces/Playgrounds	23,898
970	Amenities General	853
31,034	Civic Building	24,314
10,203	Civic Building Loan	9,780
11,662	Planning and Highways	12,260
22,739	Earmarked Reserves	21,936
	Total Expenditure	
<b>276,297</b>		<b>252,840</b>
	<b>General Fund Analysis</b>	
97,600	Opening Balance	90,784
312,172	Plus : Income for Year	273,174
409,772		363,958
276,297	Less : Expenditure for Year	252,840
133,475		111,117
42,691	Transfers TO / FROM Reserves	9,046
<b>90,784</b>	<b>Closing Balance</b>	<b>102,071</b>



Council tax is a tax on the occupiers or owners of domestic properties such as houses and flats.

We are committed to keeping any necessary council tax increases to a minimum, especially in the current challenging economic climate and have worked hard to minimise unnecessary additional financial burdens on our residents. We established a 0% increase in the Town Council's precept for several years, but have recently had to implement a small increase.

For the forthcoming financial year 2021/22 Telscombe Town Council's portion of the council tax has increased by 5.3% or £5.05 monthly for a Band D property. This was mainly due to a lack of hire income at the Civic Centre as a result of Covid 19.



The aim of the Council's small grants scheme is to promote an active local community. The Town Council supports local voluntary and charitable organisations across a wide range of activities through this scheme. These organisations provide valuable services and support to local residents and help enhance the entire community of Telscombe Town. The maximum payable is £500.

The Council has given grants to the following organisations during the 2020/21 financial year:-

Air Ambulance Trust Kent Surrey Sussex, C.A.T.S. Club, CTLA, Deans Senior Tea Club, Girlguiding Peacehaven District, Helping Out CIC, Kempton House Day Centre, Macmillan Cancer Support, Newhaven Cricket Club, Peacehaven & Telscombe FC, Rotary Club of Newhaven, Telscombe Residents Association and Telscombe Village Club.

There is also a separate grant provision which was given to the Citizens Advice Bureau of £3,490.

## **Community**



Community involvement is paramount to the Town Council. The Council has five outside notice boards across the Town and in Telscombe Village. These are used to advertise forthcoming Council meetings and community events.

The Council also publishes and delivers to households in its area a quarterly newsletter called The Town Crier which gives details of Council meetings, local news and events. The Town Crier is distributed free to properties within the Council's area of East Saltdean, Telscombe Cliffs and Telscombe Village, as well as having copies available in local shops and restaurants. The newsletter is also published on the Council's website, [www.telscombetowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.telscombetowncouncil.gov.uk), along with any other up-to-date news. The use of social media also ensures that the Council can communicate promptly with residents.

Unfortunately due to Covid-19 we have not been able to put on any functions for the public over the last year, but with restrictions lifting, we hope to re-start these in 2021.



Telscombe Town Council has appointed Councillors to serve on several outside bodies including:-

- \* The Telscombe Residents' Association who meet monthly at the Telscombe Civic Centre.
- \* The Saltdean Resident's Association which covers both East and West Saltdean
- \* The Citizens Advice Bureau who have a representative for the public to meet and give advice to at the Civic Centre on the last Tuesday of the month from 10.30am-12.30pm
- \* The Community Transport for Lewes Area (CTLA) who provide the 4 Towns Community Bus operating in our area
- \* Age Concern
- \* The British Legion
- \* Crimestoppers
- \* The Joint Action Group
- \* Lewes District Association of Local & Parish Councils
- \* Peacehaven & Telscombe Housing Association
- \* Peacehaven & Telscombe Towns Forum,
- \* The South Downs Land Management Group



## **Telscombe Civic Centre**



The Civic Centre provides a focus for the community and is the venue for Civic events, Councillor surgeries and private and community events. Council and Committee meetings are also held in the Civic Centre.

The Council continues to invest in upgrading and renewing facilities at the Centre.

We are pleased to support the FareShare foodbank and have a food collection basket in the foyer at the Civic Centre.

FareShare are the UK's largest charity fighting hunger and food waste. They redistribute surplus food to charities, including homeless hostels, children's breakfast clubs, lunch clubs for older people, domestic violence refuges and community cafés. We have been taking donations throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.



### **Civic Centre Reception**

Normally the Town Council operates a reception and enquiries point between 9.00am and 4.30pm Monday to Friday. In addition to being able to book rooms for meetings and functions in the Civic Centre, staff will assist in answering queries and provide contact details in respect of services provided by the District and County Councils. At times over the last year we have had to close reception due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Phone: 01273 589777 Email: [enquiries@telscombetowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@telscombetowncouncil.gov.uk)

A notice board and display stands are available for local groups to display details of their events and services in the reception area.



### **Civic Centre Room Hire**

The Centre offers a wide range of modern, attractive, flexible yet affordable accommodation for hire. Unfortunately due to Covid-19 the Centre has been closed for hires over the last year, but we are hoping to resume opening later this year.

It can provide an ideal room for a small meeting, exercise class, business meeting, training course or a large function such as an exhibition, wedding reception or party. It also has a private patio area. The Civic Centre has a well-equipped kitchen for self-catering events.

Reduced hire charges are available for local charitable groups.

We are hoping to resume room hire as soon as Covid restrictions are lifted.

Please contact the reception desk for booking information on 01273 589777.





***Check out our website  
[www.telscombetowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.telscombetowncouncil.gov.uk)***

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