

# ***Telscombe Town Council Annual Report 2024-2025***

*We cover Telscombe Cliffs, Telscombe Village and East Saltdean*



*Working for our residents*

**Telscombe Civic Centre, 360 South Coast Road, Telscombe Cliffs,  
East Sussex, BN10 7ES**

**01273 589777**

**[enquiries@telscombetowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@telscombetowncouncil.gov.uk)  
[www.telscombetowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.telscombetowncouncil.gov.uk)**

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## Mayor's Report from Cllr Laurence O'Connor



As the days grow longer and the sun is showing itself again it is time for me to reflect upon my second year term as Mayor of Telscombe. In the past year I have been fortunate enough to represent the town at over 30 civic events plus of course, fund raisers within the town. From D Day events to Christmas celebrations and supporting other charities fund raising events. A real highlight was the opportunity to meet and support local paralympians Bill Bailey (Table Tennis) and Fabienne Andre (wheelchair racer). Congratulations to them for all they do to further disability awareness.

Local fund raising events for the Mayors Charity have been massively helped by all the Councillors, staff and of course Stella and Stan Newman without whom the bingo simply couldn't take place. Thank you to them and to all who have come along, enjoyed themselves and raised over £4000 for children's mental health in and around the town. Support has been given to Peacehaven Community School, Telscombe Cliffs Academy and Saltdean Primary School as well as the youth group which meets at Saltdean Lido. Saltdean Swim and Surf Club received some support. They have said that it has made a significant difference to children from our community, providing them with the opportunity to participate in sessions which support their mental health and overall well-being.

During the year I've been helped with my civic duties by our Admin Assistant, Diana Joel who has always kept me on track and organised so much. Many thanks to her for all that she has done. But everybody within the staff has helped one way and another for which I'm really grateful. Of course many thanks are due to my wife Carole for all her support and participation in many of the events.

As we move forward in the council there are lots of exciting projects including the continuing improvements within Chatsworth Park which I would urge all to simply have a walk around and enjoy in the coming warmer months.

Cllr Laurence O'Connor  
Mayor of Telscombe  
March 2025

## 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 should have 13 Councillors, eight in the Telscombe Cliffs Ward:-



Cllr Ciarron Clarkson



Cllr David Judd



Cllr Jo Perrotta  
*Resigned at end of April 2025*



Cllr Isobel Sharkey



Cllr Neil Watts



Cllr Tony Williamson

As at March 2025 we have 2 vacancies for the Telscombe Cliffs ward. Councillors can be contacted via email as follows:-

`cllr.name.telscombetowncouncil.gov.uk`  
Use their name as listed under their photo after cllr. in lower case with no punctuation or spaces.

and five in the East Saltdean ward:-



Cllr Cathy Gallagher



Cllr Michele Lawrie



Cllr Laurence  
O'Connor



Cllr Brian Page



Cllr Christine  
Robinson

The term of office for the current Councillors commenced on the date of poll being 4th May 2023 and will last for 4 years. Only 8 candidates stood and were automatically elected, which left 5 spaces. Following advertising for members of the public to stand for co-option, 3 Councillors were co-opted at the Annual Council Meeting on 17th May 2023 and one subsequently resigned in July 2024. In March 2025 we co-opted one further Councillor, Tony Williamson.

The Mayor is appointed at the Annual Council meeting in May. Councillor Laurence O'Connor was appointed as Mayor and Councillor Isobel Sharkey as Deputy Mayor in May 2024 for the 2024/25 year.

In May 2023 there were also elections for District Councillors and Cllrs Ian Alexander, Laurence O'Connor and Christine Robinson were appointed for the Telscombe area for the next 4 years.

Cllr Robinson was elected as an East Sussex County Councillor for this area in May 2021. Elections were due to take place in May 2025, but were cancelled due to the possible local government restructuring.

## Understanding How Councils Work

There are currently three tiers of local government:- County Councils; District, Borough or City Councils and Parish & Town Councils.

In some parts of the country, mainly cities, there's just 1 (unitary) tier of local government providing all the local services. There is a possibility that the current structure may change to a unitary authority in the not too distant future. However, at the present time the 3 tiers are as follows:-

### East Sussex County Council

They are responsible for services across the whole of the county including, as well as many other things, the following:-



- \* Education; children's services; social care; libraries; transport; fire and public safety and highways including road conditions and street lighting.

They can be contacted on 0345 60 80 190

Website - <https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/>

### Lewes District Council

They cover a smaller area than County Councils and their responsibilities include:-



- \* Refuse & recycling collection; environmental health; Council Tax; housing; planning & building control; elections

**Lewes District Council**

They can be contacted on 01273 471600

Website - <https://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/>

### Telscombe Town Council

Town Councils operate at a level below District and Borough/County Councils and are responsible for local issues and can, amongst other things, provide the following:-



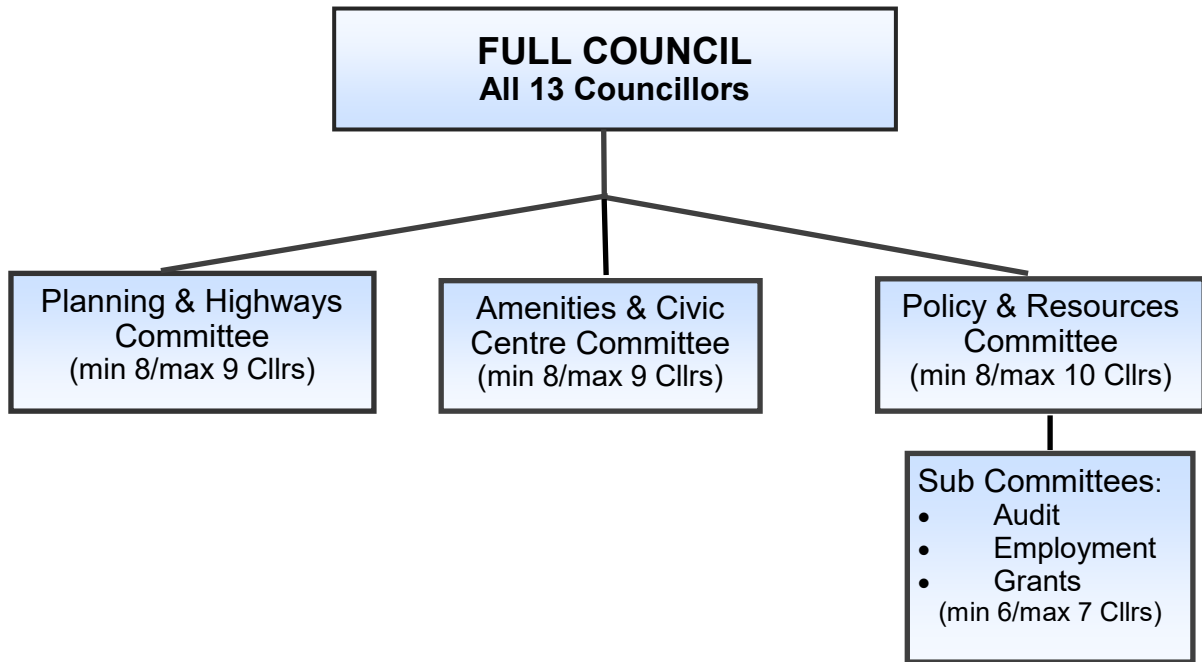
- \* bus shelters; play areas and play equipment; grants to help local organisations; community centres/village halls; public clocks and allotments.

Telephone - 01273 589777

Website - <https://www.telscombetowncouncil.gov.uk/>

Our Committees and responsibilities are detailed on the next pages.

# ABOUT 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. Telscombe Town Council owns several and they can be identified by their light blue colour. We also have the power to light public places and own several lighting columns off the main highways, including those along the pathway through Chatsworth Park from Ambleside Avenue to Park Avenue.

The Town Council owns and manages important local community facilities including the Civic Centre on the South Coast Road, Chatsworth Park including two equipped playgrounds, the Robert Kingan playground in East Saltdean, and Telscombe Tye which is 211 acres of open access Common land. We have also agreed to undertake grass verge cutting on behalf of East Sussex County Council.

The various aspects of the Council's responsibilities and activities are undertaken by several committees which are detailed in the chart above.

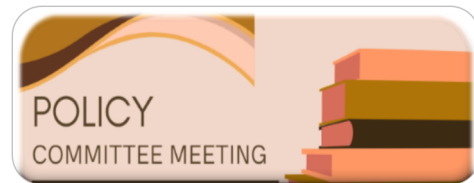


Council and Committee meetings are held on a bi-monthly basis, apart from the Planning & Highways Committee which meets every 3 weeks. A list of meetings dates can be found on our website or in our notice boards.

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 relevant to the Committee being attended.

## Policy & Resources Committee Update by the Chair

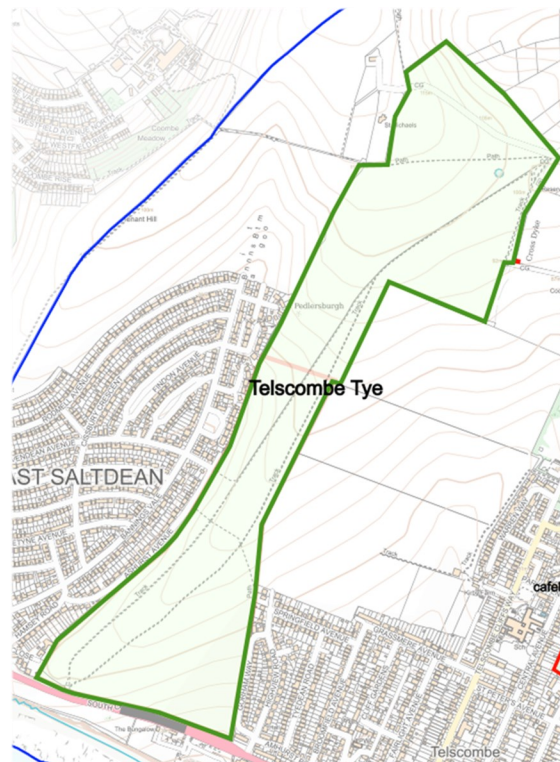
**Committee Chair - Cllr Ciarron Clarkson**  
**Vice-Chair - Cllr Cathy Gallagher**



It has been an immense privilege to chair the Policy and Resources (P&R) committee this past year. I would like to thank the Council staff for their support and incredible work over the year. The councillors on the committee are dedicated and committed to their responsibilities. This inevitably creates lots of complex and varied work for the Council staff and as they always do, they have risen to the challenge. I think it's important to thank them and acknowledge that.

The P&R committee oversees the policies under which the council operate. This includes creating new policy where necessary as well as regular review and update of existing policies. This work has significant implications from how complaints are managed, safety procedures for staff and legal ramifications. I am proud that the committee has continued to review current policies with a view to improve transparency, fairness and efficiency and that it has recognised the difficulties Council staff can face by enhancing lone working procedures and safe working policies.

The resource element of P&R is the management of the Tye. This is a huge responsibility with many diverse stakeholders. The Tye is a unique chalkland habitat and this P&R committee recognise that and have worked tirelessly to maintain and improve it as a habitat for wildlife and residents to enjoy. There have been huge leaps forward with work being undertaken on access management plans and community engagement. The most visible work has been on the test wildflower cut. I am grateful for the committee members support in allowing us to try this idea and I am hopeful we will see some significant wildflower blooms in the coming spring and summer.



I have enjoyed my time as Chair of the committee and hope that P&R continues its work in the same direction it has been moving.

Cllr C Clarkson  
Chair of Policy & Resources Committee

## **Amenities & Civic Centre Committee Update by the Chair**

**Committee Chair - Cllr Christine Robinson  
Vice-Chair - Cllr David Judd**



I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow Councillors on this committee and more notably the Council staff for their hard work over the last year.

The responsibilities of this committee are the maintenance, running and ongoing improvement of the town's amenities such as parks and playgrounds as well as the running and upkeep of the Civic Centre.

This Committee also focuses on arranging community events over the course of the year including raising the flag on Sussex Day, Armed Forces Day, Merchant Navy Day and September sees us hosting the very popular Macmillan fundraising coffee morning. Our Summer Fayre last July in Chatsworth Park was a great success despite some rain showers which certainly didn't deter residents from enjoying themselves. September also saw the Civic Centre host five days in the Artwave Festival where residents had a chance to discover new work, meet artists and makers, and buy directly from them.

The Chatsworth Park Volunteer Group is coordinated by this Committee and continues to go from strength the strength. Residents, councillors and children meet on the first Sunday of every month and carry out numerous tasks, including establishing wildflower meadows, planting bulbs, dead wood cutbacks, path sweeping and litter picking. All efforts are rewarded with a hot drink from the popular Wander Coffee who have become a firm favourite for park users.

After receiving very positive feedback from last year's public consultation to add a permanent café in Chatsworth Park, the Council successfully applied to Lewes District Council for a grant from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The Council are now in the process of drawing up a tender document which will then be advertised for architects to design a café building and for a quantity surveyor/project manager, in accordance with procurement procedures in the new Financial Regulations.

Maintenance and improvement of amenities in the Civic Centre is vital and this year saw the west side of the building re-pointed, installation of radiators in the main council chamber and a projector in room 1 for use by hirers.

I am also delighted that the generous public donations placed in the food collection basket in the Civic Centre foyer now go directly to the SCDA Community Supermarket (Thursday mornings 11-1pm at Community House, Peacehaven) rather than Fareshare, as this means that all the food collected goes straight to the local community.

The coming year will see exciting projects developing - not just the proposed café but also how we improve all three of our play areas along with potential refurbishment.

**Cllr Christine Robinson  
Chair of Amenities & Civic Centre Committee**

## **Planning & Highways Committee Update by the Chair**

**Committee Chair - Cllr Cathy Gallagher**  
**Vice-Chair - Cllr Neil Watts**



This Committee normally meets every 3 weeks depending on the number of applications received. Members of the public are welcome and often attend to give their point of view on matters important to them.

The planning authority is Lewes District Council (LDC) and we are an official consultee on planning applications, but LDC make the final decision.

This Committee considers all the Planning and Highways matters which affect our Town which includes East Saltdean, Telscombe Cliffs and Telscombe Village. Telscombe Village is a Conservation Zone and it lies with the South Downs National Park as does Telscombe Tye.

The comments and recommendations we make to support or object to an application must be based on planning policies as set out in the emerging Peacehaven and Telscombe Neighbourhood Development Plan, Lewes District Local Plan and National Planning Policy Framework.

The Highways element of the Committee includes:- road and pavement surfaces, lamp posts, bus shelters, and grass verges. We liaise with East Sussex County Council (ESCC), reporting potholes and the poor surfaces on roads and broken kerbstones.

Statistics are gathered in relation to the decisions made by LDC compared with the decisions made by the Committee, and these were published as part of the Committee Agenda for 12<sup>th</sup> March 2025. This helps us assess training needs for committee members.

**Councillor Cathy Gallagher**  
**Chair of Planning and Highways**

# Neighbourhood Development Plan Update by the Steering Group Chair

**Steering Group Chair - Cllr Cathy Gallagher**

**Steering Group Vice-Chair - Cllr Laurence O'Connor**

Peacehaven and Telscombe Town Councils resolved to complete a joint Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) in 2013, the plan area was officially designated and the Councils became joint authorising authorities.

The Steering Group was set up in 2018 made up from residents representing all of the neighbourhoods from East Saltdean to the borders of Peacehaven with Newhaven and Piddinghoe.

Years of public consultations, research and expert reports followed with over 40 substantial documents. All of the background work was completed in 2022/2023 and can be found on the Steering Group website - details below.

At Regulation 16 in July 2024, the Town Councils passed the approved plan to Lewes District Council (LDC) who are the Planning Authority. The progress of our plan is affected by circumstances beyond the control of the Town Councils.

The change of Government in July 2024 brought further changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the emphasis on strategic infrastructure and affordable housebuilding.

Local Plans including Neighbourhood Plans are seen as vital to give communities a chance to influence what happens in planning terms in Towns and Villages.

The plan has been viewed by a Government approved Examiner who recommended a Habitat Regulation Assessment be obtained to check that our policies were in line with Statutory Regulations. This was completed in March 2025 and sent to LDC along with other clarification information. We now await the Examiner's further comments before the plan can go forward to the next step to Referendum.

Once the plan is accepted at Referendum, as well as receiving 25% of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), the policies in the plan will carry equal authority as those in the Lewes Local Plan and NPPF.

Even though the NDP has not completed, it influences the Town Councils through their Business Plans and improvements to local amenities and infrastructure, improving air quality and increasing bio-diversity.

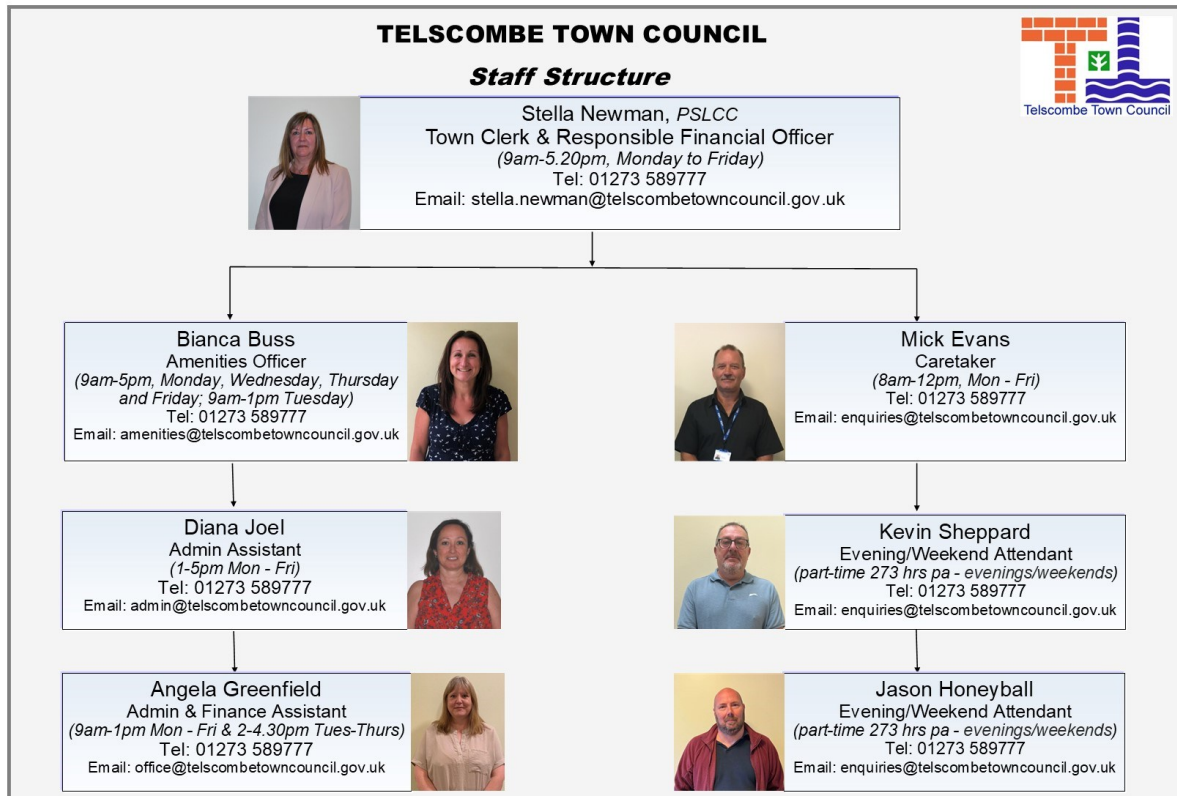
Cllr Cathy Gallagher  
Chair of Steering Group

[www.peacehaven-and-telscombe-neighbourhood-plan-steering-group.co.uk](http://www.peacehaven-and-telscombe-neighbourhood-plan-steering-group.co.uk)  
[www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk](http://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk) search neighbourhood plans

**Peacehaven and Telscombe**  
Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group



# Telscombe Town Council Staff



The Town Clerk is the 'Proper Officer' of the Council and ensures that the Council as a whole conducts its business properly and provides independent, objective and professional advice. The Clerk 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.

As head of the administration, the Clerk advises the Council on new developments in procedures, law, and local Council work and covers all areas such as employment, health & safety, legal and all other matters relating to employment and Council work. The Clerk is supported by all members of the Council.

At Telscombe Town Council, the Clerk is also the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO). By virtue of Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 the RFO is responsible for the administration of the financial affairs of the Council and ensures all financial records are prepared in accordance with proper practices, such as:-

- Managing budgets and all aspects of any business transactions
- Completing Annual Governance returns for assessment by external auditors
- Ensuring a sound system of internal control
- Financial Risk management & accounting responsibilities

The Town Clerk is supported by an excellent team comprising part-time admin & finance staff who, amongst other things, cover the Civic Centre reception desk, as well as an Amenities Officer who works 4.5 days a week and deals with the Council's outside spaces. Part-time caretakers oversee the Civic Centre building during the day, evenings and weekends including setting up the requirements of hirers, health & safety aspects and building maintenance.

## Finance Update

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 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 to assist us to deal with any unplanned eventualities as and when they may arise.

The Income & Expenditure accounts for the 2024/25 financial year are below:-

### TELSCOMBE TOWN COUNCIL

#### Income and Expenditure Account for Year Ended 31st March 2025

31st March 2024		31st March 2025
	<b>Income Summary</b>	
282,261	Precept Received	299,937
<u>11,864</u>	Interest Received	<u>15,334</u>
<b>294,125</b>	Sub total	<b>315,271</b>
	<b>Operating Income</b>	
1,342	General Administration	3,383
170	Town Events	1,456
6,673	Parks, open spaces/playgrounds	12,223
2,420	Amenities General	2,600
39,742	Civic Building	36,154
<u>14,317</u>	Planning and Highways	<u>8,652</u>
<b><u>358,789</u></b>	<b>Total income</b>	<b><u>379,739</u></b>
	<b>Running Costs</b>	
177,248	General Administration	193,205
6,580	Grants	6,140
1,404	Town Events	2,181
32,345	Parks, Open Spaces/Playgrounds	47,720
331	Amenities General	1,428
31,613	Civic Building	33,326
8,511	Civic Building Loan	2,561
16,774	Planning and Highways	17,349
<u>10,559</u>	Earmarked Reserves	<u>53,588</u>
<b><u>285,365</u></b>	<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b><u>357,499</u></b>
	<b>General Fund Analysis</b>	
108,418	Opening Balance	133,615
<u>358,789</u>	Plus : Income for Year	<u>379,739</u>
467,207		513,353
<u>285,365</u>	Less : Expenditure for Year	<u>357,499</u>
181,842		155,855
<u>48,228</u>	Transfers TO / FROM Reserves	8,052
<b><u>133,615</u></b>	<b>Closing Balance</b>	<b><u>147,803</u></b>

**Unaudited accounts**

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## Council Tax

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

We are dedicated to minimizing any increases in council tax, particularly given the current economic challenges, and have made every effort to avoid imposing unnecessary financial pressures on our residents.

However, as a result of the escalating costs of utilities, materials, and other factors, we have recently had to introduce modest increases.

For the forthcoming financial year 2025/26 Telscombe Town Council's portion of the council tax has increased by 7.4% or £8.67 for a Band D property.

## Community Grants

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 which incorporates Telscombe Cliffs, Telscombe Village and East Saltdean. We only have a small amount of £2,500 available and the maximum payable to an organisation is £500.

The Council has given grants to the following organisations during the 2024/25 financial year totalling £1,900:-

Deans Senior Tea Club  
Develop Outdoors CIC  
Kempton House Day Centre  
Kent Surrey Sussex Air Ambulance  
Peacehaven & Telscombe Bowls Club  
Peacehaven & Telscombe Flower Club  
Peacehaven Players  
Telscombe Cliffs Community Church  
Telscombe Residents Association

We have a separate grant provision for the Citizens Advice and provided them with funding of £4,240 for their continuing invaluable service.

We also have a Service Level Agreement with the CTLA to provide a community bus for the local area and provided them with funding of £3,845 as part of that agreement.

## Community

Community involvement is paramount to the Town Council. The Council has four outside notice boards across the Town. 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 and the Civic Centre. 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.

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

- \* Age Concern
- \* The British Legion
- \* Citizens Advice
- \* Community Transport for Lewes Area (CTLA) who provide the 4 Towns Community Bus operating in our area
- \* East Sussex Association of Local Councils
- \* The House Project
- \* Joint Action Group
- \* Lewes District Association of Local & Parish Councils
- \* Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
- \* Peacehaven Chamber of Commerce
- \* Peacehaven & Telscombe Football Club
- \* Parishes of the Lower Ouse (POLO)
- \* Saltdean Residents' Association
- \* The South Downs National Park Authority
- \* The Telscombe Residents' Association who meet at the Telscombe Civic Centre.



## Telscombe Civic Centre

The Civic Centre provides a focus for the community and is the venue for Civic events, Council/Committee meetings and private and community events. It also houses the Council offices. The Council continues to invest in upgrading and renewing facilities at the Civic Centre.



### ***Solar Panel Readings at the Civic Centre at end of March 2025***

CO2 saved:- 86,857 Kg      Total Energy Generated:- 152,382 Kwh  
Total revenue generated since installation :- **£70,382.38**

### **Peacehaven Community Supermarket**



We are pleased to support the Peacehaven Community Supermarket and have a food collection basket in the foyer. It is not a foodbank.

Members are asked to contribute on a pay as you feel basis which means that they can decide what to pay, based on what they feel able to contribute. Some weeks people might pay more, and some weeks they might pay less, and that's fine.

This facility is needed now more than ever and we encourage residents to bring in whatever they can.

## The Civic Centre Reception

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.

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.



# Council Offices

Staff in the Council offices deal with a large variety of enquiries and complaints on a weekly basis.

Some are not the responsibility of the Town Council and may therefore need to be referred to the appropriate authority or utility company. Below is a list of the complaints received and dealt with during 2024-25-

## Complaints/Requests Received by Residents 1st April 2024 - 31st March 2025

Annual Report 2024/25

<b>Totals</b>	
In process	10
Resolved	345

<b>Method of Contact - new complaints</b>		
Email	119	35%
In person	12	3%
Letter	64	19%
Phone	28	8%
Phone & Email	116	34%
Raised by TTC	4	1%
	343	100%

<b>Time taken to resolve</b>		
Same day	44	13%
1-7 days	168	49%
8-30 days	71	21%
31-90 days	37	11%
91-180 days	16	5%
181-270 days	8	2%
271-365 days	1	0%
366+ days		
	345	100%

Complaints/Requests by residents, received 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025	Beach	Chatsworth Park	Chatsworth Park North	Chatsworth Park South	Civic Centre	Clifftops	Communications	East Saltdean	Robert Kingan Playground	Telcombe Cliffs	Telcombe Village	The Copse	The Tye	Non TTC land	
Animals (Misc)		2		2						2			4	1	11
Anti Social Behaviour		42	1				1		1				4		49
Benches		4													4
Bins		5								3			2	1	11
Boundaries															
Bus Shelter															
Café															
Car Park		2													2
Council										1					1
Cycle Lane															
Fencing/Gates		2											7		9
Fly tipping		6	1				1		11		1	1			21
Graffiti															
Grass Verges							6		20					3	29
Health & Safety		1													1
Land ownership															
Litter														2	2
Management of Tye												9			9
Memory Garden		1													1
Mini Forest															
Non TTC		1					19		105	3	1	1	13		143
Other		1			2		1		3			2	1		10
Overgrown vegetation				2					1		1				4
Parking							2		2						4
Pathways		1													1
Pavement							1								1
Planning							2		7			2			11
Playground Equipment			1	2					2						5
Playgrounds															
Prohibited Activities												5			5
Recycling															
Signs															
Street lighting							1		1	2					4
Town Crier							1								1
Trees/Hedges		8					1		3						12
Twittens															
Vehicles on Tye													1		1
Wildflower Verges							2		3						5
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>76</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>357</b>

## Civic Centre Room Hire

Whether you want a room for a small meeting, exercise class, business meeting, training course or a larger function such as an exhibition, the Civic Centre offers a wide range of modern, attractive, flexible yet affordable accommodation for hire. There is a larger area downstairs and smaller meeting rooms upstairs.

The Civic Centre has a well-equipped kitchen for self-catering events, a private patio area, as well as a small car park.

Reduced hire charges are available for local charitable or community groups.

Please contact the reception desk for booking information on 01273 589777 or email [enquiries@telscombetowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@telscombetowncouncil.gov.uk)

Havens Community Hub no longer work out of the Civic Centre, but they provide emergency food and/or toiletry bags which are available from our reception desk.





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

***Email us - [enquiries@telscombetowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@telscombetowncouncil.gov.uk)***

