

# HUW MERRIMAN MP NEWSLETTER

Dear Resident,

Welcome to my latest newsletter,

I hope the new year has started well for everyone. My team and I have started at a pace. At the beginning of each year, we sit down to focus on priorities for the coming year. This year I aim to focus on being out and about in the 200 square miles of the constituency when I am free from Parliament sitting days. As important as it is to be in my Bexhill office or in other meeting rooms across the constituency, it's good to get outside and cover more ground.

I will be holding a series of public meetings in the parishes and towns. Many will be outside in the village squares or town meeting points and others in village halls. I will work with each Parish Council or Town Council to ensure these meetings feature those who work so hard locally. I held my first one of these in Pevensey Bay last Friday and I was delighted to meet so many local residents who came along to talk to me.

I hope to meet many of you at my future public meetings. Please do drop me a line if you would like me to set one up in your village or town.

Best wishes to you all,

Huw



## Northeye Public Meeting

Last Friday, I held a public meeting to discuss the Home Office proposal to open a detained asylum seeker centre at Northeye. I promised to hold a meeting when the Home Office had made a final decision on whether to bring the proposal forward, which was due to be made in January. Although the Home Office have not yet been able to make a final decision, and



## Bexhill receives first £50,000 of £20m Long-Term Plan for Towns funding

Rother District Council has received £50,000 in capacity funding to support the development of the Government's Long-Term Plan for Bexhill. The Government announced in October that Bexhill had been

are unlikely to do so before Easter, I recognised that there may still be demand for a meeting.

During the meeting I reaffirmed that only a detained site is under consideration, meaning those residing there cannot come and go. I also explained the support I have been offering to residents of the Northeye estate, who are most impacted by the proposal, and took questions from the audience.

You can read more about the meeting [here](#).

selected as one of the first 55 towns to be given access to a £20 million ten-year endowment-style fund. This levelling up funding seeks to boost opportunities and prosperity in areas that have previously been overlooked, and gives local people a say on where investment should be made. You can find out more on my website [here](#).



### **Pevensey Bay Public Meeting**

I began my series of planned public meetings last Friday in Pevensey Bay. I was pleased that so many people came along to talk to me on such a beautiful sunny day. We talked about a wide range of issues and some matters of local concern which I will be taking up. I'd like to thank Pevensey Parish Council, for their help in arranging and promoting the meeting, and the councillors who joined me for the session. Read more [here](#).



### **Meeting the Home Secretary to discuss Northeye**

I recently met the Home Secretary to discuss Northeye. He again confirmed that the Home Office are only looking at bringing forward a proposal for a detained centre, meaning those residing there will not be able to come and go. I also conveyed my frustrations at the length of time it is taking for a final decision on the site to be made.

# **Tackling Sewage Pollution.**

## **Sewage Pollution**

One of my key priorities for the constituency in 2024 remains the same as in previous years: to ensure we continue to make a concerted effort to deal with sewage pollution. I wrote about this in more detail in my recent

Observer article which you can read [here](#).



### **Pevensey Sea Defences Environment Agency Meeting**

I recently met with officials from the Environment Agency (EA) in Pevensey Bay to talk about the next phase of sea defences for the bay. We discussed progress on the [Pevensey Bay to Eastbourne Coastal Management Scheme](#) which will protect 10,000 homes, businesses and infrastructure for the next 100 years from 2025 when the current sea defence project is due to end. I will maintain a close interest in this project to ensure it delivers the protections required due to climate change.



### **Tackling Shoplifting**

I had a good meeting with Sussex Police, Sally-Ann Hart MP, Cllr Christine Bayliss and Jempsons, on strategies to tackle the blight of persistent and aggressive shoplifting in Bexhill and Hastings. You can read more [here](#).



### **Bexhill College A Level Politics Students**

It was good to meet Bexhill College A Level Politics students recently to talk about being an MP and Government Minister. I discussed elections and campaigning, what it is like working with the Prime Minister, and took questions on local issues. Thank you to the fantastic students for such an interesting and engaging discussion. Read more [here](#).



### Hurst Green Over-75s Breakfast Club

It was an absolute pleasure to meet the members and volunteers of Hurst Green Over-75s Breakfast Club which meets fortnightly in the village hall. This is a fantastic club, supported by the parish council, which I would love to see replicated in other rural communities. You can read more on my website [here](#).



### Letter to Minister for Water Regarding Local Bathing Water Quality

I am keen to see a more widespread bathing water quality testing regime. Bathing water is currently only being tested at one site on Bexhill beach. As such, I am concerned that accurate information on the quality of water across the entire 3.5 mile stretch of beach, from Galley Hill to Cooden Beach, is not being recorded. I have written to the Minister for Water asking to meet with him to discuss the quality of local bathing water and how we can improve local testing. You can read my letter [here](#).



### Supporting the Samaritans' #BrewMonday

It was good to meet with the Samaritans to learn more about the vital work they do to help to prevent deaths by suicide. 15 January was 'Brew Monday', which sought to remind people of the importance of simply getting together and connecting over a cup of tea or coffee. As Rail Minister, I have also seen the great work they do helping those in need in public spaces through their Small Talk Saves Lives campaign. The Samaritans do a fantastic job and I would like to thank all those who work so hard to help others.



### Observer Article - Upcoming Public Meetings

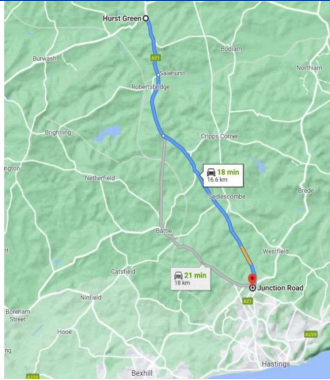
In my recent Observer article I wrote about the public meetings I will be holding in our parishes and towns over the coming weeks and months. You can read my article on my website [here](#).

## Link 4 – Hurst Green to Hastings

- Updating and improving signage
- Improving road markings and studs
- Improving visibility
- Improving driver information
- Speed Limit(s) review
- Road alignment improvements
- Pedestrian infrastructure

Specific locations to be considered in detail:

- Station Road Junction & Hurst Green
- Silver Hill Junction
- Cripps Corner
- Park Lane
- Marley Lane
- Tollgate Road (B2244)
- George Hill
- Stream Lane
- Most Lane
- Poppinghole Lane
- Blusman Lane
- Vinehall and Claremont Schools
- Whatlington and Kent Street villages



### Mountfield A21 Meeting

I organised a meeting for local stakeholders including Vinehall School, Mountfield Heath School, Sussex Police and parish, district and county councillors with National Highways to discuss their proposals for safety measures which are being put forward as part of the A21 Road Safety Package. We have asked them to consider speed limits and further engineering solutions to make this stretch of the A21 safer for all road users.



Funded by  
UK Government



### Refurbished Egerton Park Tennis Courts Reopen

Good news for tennis players as the newly refurbished tennis courts in Egerton Park have reopened. All five public courts have benefited from resurfacing, new nets and posts, and a new gate system. The improvements have been possible thanks to Government and Lawn Tennis Association investment of more than £100,000. Details on how to book a court can be found [here](#).



### Meeting with British Transport Police Chief Constable

It was good to meet with British Transport Police Chief Constable Lucy D'Orsi and Temporary/Superintendent David Udomhiaye to discuss the challenges officers are facing in policing our vast rail network. I would like to thank the the BTP team for their continued efforts and vigilance ensuring passengers are safe to go about their journeys all year round.

### *Tackling sewage pollution*

**100% of storm outflows  
now monitored,  
up from just 7% in 2010.**

Huw Merriman MP

### 100% of Storm Sewage Overflows Now Monitored

All of England's storm overflows are now being electronically monitored, meeting the government's target to achieve 100% coverage by the end of 2023. Increased monitoring provides greater transparency for the public on when discharges are happening, with the data provided being invaluable in helping to identify where improvements can be made. You can read more [here](#).



IN ASSOCIATION WITH BEXHILL COLLEGE  
& EAST SUSSEX HEALTHCARE NHS TRUST

**BEXHILL JOBS AND  
APPRENTICESHIPS FAIR**  
FRIDAY 15 MARCH 2024  
10.30AM-3.30PM

**QUIET TIME**  
2PM-3.30PM  
for d/Deaf, disabled  
and neurodiverse  
visitors

### **Bexhill Jobs and Apprenticeships Fair 2024**

Registration is now open for the Bexhill Jobs and Apprenticeships Fair which I'm proud to be actively involved in organising.

Over 50 businesses and organisations will be recruiting into full and part-time jobs, apprenticeships, work experience, placements, skills development opportunities, courses and training. There will also be Talks & Workshops, Google Digital Garage training sessions and more. Register and find out more [here](#).



### **Post Office Horizon Scandal**

Many residents contacted me having watched *Mr Bates v The Post Office* at the start of the year. I too watched the series and was shocked by what happened to so many sub-postmasters and mistresses, and the way they were treated. Those who had their lives ruined must now get justice, and we must ensure that such a scandal can never happen again. I have written more about this issue on my website [here](#).



### **National Policy Issues**

Every day I receive dozens of policy and campaign emails from constituents. Last month, I received a lot of correspondence on the Safety of Rwanda Bill, homelessness, and energy and climate change. I regularly update my website with responses to key campaigns, as well as further information on various policy issues, which you can find [here](#).



### **New Mental Health Hospital in Bexhill**

Earlier this week there was a ground-breaking ceremony for the new mental health hospital which is being built in north Bexhill. Sadly, due to Parliamentary commitments, I couldn't attend but a member of my team represented me for this significant moment of investment and commitment to local mental health care.

The new hospital will be called Combe Valley Way and will provide 54 beds over three wards in individual bedrooms with ensuite bathrooms.

