

On the move...

The Council is bringing all its office-based staff together in one building in Hailsham during 2012. Before we can do this, we need to move out of the existing offices at Vicarage Lane so that they can be refurbished.

Officers dealing with food and safety matters will continue to work as normal but from a variety of locations. We will endeavour to respond to any queries you may have as quickly as possible via the contact routes below. In addition we can be contacted by our individual emails if you have them or via our general foodandsafety@wealden.gov.uk

The first moves will be at the end of May. Our customer services team will remain in Hailsham and you'll be able to visit them at Prospects House in George Street. You can also continue to book appointments to meet us at a number of locations.

Staff will be based at Eastbourne and Pine Grove in Crowborough while the Vicarage Lane office is being refurbished, with a few staff working from home. It's all part of what the Council calls its Transformation

Programme which is all about the changes we're making to work more efficiently, so that our services run better and cost you less.

On a project of this size, some disruption is inevitable, but we hope to minimise the impact on our customers.

- You can request and pay for many services by telephone. Simply call us on 01323 443322 or 01892 653311.
- We also have lots of information on our websites, from planning applications to bin collections. You can also pay for services online. Visit www.wealden.gov.uk and our business site www.wealdenbusinesshelp.org.uk
- If you need to write to us, please use our new address Wealden District Council, PO Box 49, Hailsham, BN27 2AZ.
- If you can't find what you need, phone or email us and one of our Customer Services staff will help you access the information or service you require, guide you through our web pages or put you in touch with someone who can deal with your query.

Introducing the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme in Sussex

Councils in East and West Sussex are launching the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme in April 2011. This is a scheme where the hygiene ratings of food businesses are displayed to the public.

Some food businesses may have already been receiving information about how the scheme will work in Wealden. However, not all businesses will be included straight away and it does not apply to all businesses. You will receive information about when it will apply to you over the coming months if you have not already received it.

The aim of the scheme

The primary aim of the scheme will be to allow consumers to make

informed choices about the places in which they choose to eat and through this, to encourage businesses to improve hygiene standards.

This will be done by:

- Ensuring that the food businesses who achieve consistently high standards of food hygiene are publicly recognised
- Encouraging food businesses to improve their standard of food hygiene leading to greater food safety

For more information about the scheme, please visit our dedicated pages on the Wealden Business Help website: www.wealdenbusinesshelp.org.uk

Here you will find more information about:

- how the scheme works
- how it will affect you
- the safeguards available to protect your business
- what the scoring certificates and stickers will look like
- guidance on how to achieve a top rating



FOCUS ON... Change

Training – a year for change

Wealden's new training programme for 2011/12 is now available. It brings with it a number of changes but not necessarily the price. Our popular Level 2 Award in Food Safety has remained the same and concessions still apply in many cases for all courses.

The refurbishment of the Hailsham offices means we will be using some new venues this year. All have good training facilities and are easily accessible to businesses from all over the district.

We have also looked at the courses which have been in most demand and concentrated our resources to ensure we can meet the need. However, 'tailor-made' courses to suit your specific business needs are still a high priority to our service and will continue to be offered on demand.

We are expecting increased demand for training this year due to the introduction of this new National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme. Food businesses will be scored on a number of criteria and these scores will be available nationally . . . well trained staff is one of the criteria on which businesses will be scored.

If you want more information about our training please visit our business support website www.wealdenbusinesshelp.org.uk where you can download a copy of the new programme or you can email gail.fenn@wealden.gov.uk and request a booklet be sent to you if you prefer.

Courses offered

CIEH Level 2 Award in Food Safety

CIEH Level 3 Award in Supervising Food Safety

CIEH Level 2 Award in Healthier Food and Special Diets

CIEH Level 3 Award in Training Skills and Practice

Official food safety controls to be reviewed

The Food Standards Agency is reviewing its responsibilities as the UK central competent authority for official controls on food safety.

The FSA is responsible for protecting the interests of consumers in relation to food. Controls are currently delivered through a variety of organisations including local authorities. This makes food safety responsibility in the UK very complex.

'The heart of the FSA's role is protecting public health from risks, which may arise in eating food, including the way it is produced or supplied. In the current climate of financial pressures it is timely to consider how best it can secure consistency and sustainability in this fundamental public health protection function.

A number of options will be assessed including a more centralised model with four national delivery bodies in each of the countries of the UK.



Changes for the Food and Safety Bulletin

This will be the final bulletin delivered in this format as we will be combining the information published for our food businesses into the very successful Business Focus magazine issued by our Economic Development team.

Business Focus goes out to a wide number of Wealden businesses and covers economic development and tourism as well as general business support matters.

The Business Focus (incorporating the Food Bulletin) will be sent out electronically and be accessible on www.wealdenbusinesshelp.org.uk our business website. This will save costs but also enable easier electronic links to further information. It will still be available in paper format on request by contacting Gail Fenn on 01323 443322.

If you have received this bulletin by post but would like to receive future copies by email **please forward your email address** to gail.fenn@wealden.gov.uk



Support for Wealden's Lunch Clubs



Wealden District Council and Action in Rural Sussex have just successfully completed the first phase of training for the volunteers operating over 30 lunch clubs throughout the district. The training and the booklets provided for the clubs, was funded by a £10,000 grant we successfully bid for from the Food Standards Agency.

The main objectives of the project were to help the lunch club volunteers meet the requirements for the management of food safety and to increase their knowledge about nutrition.

The project has also improved the Council's working knowledge and relationship with the lunch clubs operating in the district. The lunches are mainly provided for older people (but not exclusively) and predominantly the over 65s, in our mainly rural district.

The clubs are a vital resource providing good food, friendship and they help to improve social networks for many older people. The next phase of training will take place shortly.

Food fraud

Food fraud is committed when food is deliberately placed on the market for financial gain, with the intention of deceiving the consumer. Although there are many kinds of food fraud the two main types are:

- the sale of food which is unfit and potentially harmful
- the deliberate misdescription of food, whilst not necessarily unsafe, deceives the consumer as to the nature of the product

The Food Standards Agency takes the issue of food fraud very seriously and although it does not believe that there is a significant



problem in the UK, when it does occur, the Agency has a responsibility to protect the consumer.

Not all occurrences of food mislabelling or misdescription are fraudulent as these sometimes arise because of human error. It is important to report all incidents where there are concerns about the actual or suspected threat to the safety or quality of food that could require intervention to protect consumers' interests.

You should tell both your local authority and the Agency about any suspicions.

You can send details to the Agency by emailing foodfraud@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

Guidance to prevent E.coli contamination



The FSA has issued guidance to clarify the steps that food businesses

need to take to control the risk of contamination from the food bug E.coli O157.

Serious outbreaks of E.coli in Scotland in 1996 and Wales in 2005 resulted in serious illness in some individuals and, in a few cases, death. These outbreaks were attributed to cross-contamination arising from the poor handling of food. This guidance has been developed to remind food businesses what they should be doing to protect their customers from the serious consequences of

E.coli food poisoning.

Many businesses will already be following the steps contained in the guidance but it is intended to provide reassurance that they are doing everything they can to prevent cross-contamination.

Key measures

Some of the key measures highlighted in the guidance to control E.coli are:

- Identification of separate work areas, surfaces and equipment for raw and ready-to-eat food.
- Use of separate complex equipment, such as vacuum-packing machines, slicers, and mincers for raw and ready-to-eat food.
- Handwashing should be carried

out using a recognised technique. Anti-bacterial gels must not be used instead of thorough handwashing.

- Disinfectants and sanitisers must meet officially recognised standards and should be used as instructed by the manufacturer.

Although E.coli is the key focus of this guidance, the measures outlined will also help in the control of other bacteria, such as campylobacter and salmonella.

The full guidance, developed following a public consultation and Professor Hugh Pennington's report into the 2005 E.coli outbreak, can be found on the food safety pages of www.wealdenbusinesshelp.org.uk along with a factsheet for businesses, which summarises the guidance.

Businesses and public warned of deer poachers in Wealden

The businesses and the public have been asked to be on the lookout for illegal game meat. The poachers may be looking to kill deer in areas of Wealden such as Nutley, Hartfield and the Ashdown Forest. PC Ted Anderson, of Sussex Police said: "Commercial poaching is a serious problem"



"There is a real risk to public health, as meat is introduced illegally into the system and as many of the deer are shot at night using high-powered weapons there is an obvious risk to public safety".

"There are also real concerns for the animals not being killed in a clinical and professional manner, as many are killed with weapons not suitable for the size of the animal."

"I would encourage anyone to contact the police with any information that would help in catching illegal poachers, especially if they have been offered venison from sources other than bona fide game dealers."

Game dealers, restaurateurs and hoteliers are being reminded to make all necessary checks before accepting game. Poached game is unlikely to have been checked for disease before entering the food chain. Legally killed game is checked. If caught, poachers can be prosecuted for offences under Food Safety Legislation and the Deer Act 1991, as well as for firearm offences.

Anyone with any information on the crime is encouraged to contact Sussex Police on 0845 6070999 or call anonymously to the independent charity Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Latest consumer attitudes tracker survey published

The Food Standards Agency has released the latest results of its tracker survey. The survey monitors public opinion and awareness of the Food Standards Agency and key food issues.

A representative sample of 2,105 adults in the UK was interviewed in the latest wave of the tracker.

The main food issues that survey respondents were concerned with were food prices (54%), the amount of salt in food (45%) and food waste (42%). The main food safety issues that people were concerned with were food hygiene when eating out (36%), food poisoning (29%) and the use of additives in food (27%).

Eighty per cent of respondents were aware of the hygiene standards in the places they ate out in or buy food from. The main way people judged the hygiene standards were from the general appearance of the premises (65%), appearance of staff (51%) and its reputation (42%).

Read more about the survey on www.food.gov.uk by searching for tracker surveys or downloading the pdf version.

The end is nigh for BSE

Food Standards Agency's Chief Scientist Andrew Wadge has recently announced that the latest official figures from the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), show BSE has almost been eradicated – just 25 years after it was discovered.

A newsletter from the Public Protection Team of Wealden District Council

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Don't forget to check what's happening to support our businesses on www.wealdenbusinesshelp.org.uk and in the Wealden Business Focus Magazine also on the site.



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