

Press Release

PR 3245

13 June 2011

For Immediate Release

Highway robbery - warning pushed out on bogus council workers

Businesses, schools, local councils and GP surgeries are being warned to be on their guard if offered work by people claiming to be from East Sussex County Council's Highways Department.

The Council's Trading Standards Service is pushing out the warning ahead of the summer months after incidents last year when people claimed to part of the Council's Highways Department - or working in association with them.

Around this time last year, the bogus workmen were offering line marking of car parks, on the basis that spare paint was left over from jobs being done nearby. Work was offered at a discounted rate, claiming that charges would be in line with what it would cost them to dispose of the paint.

Councillor Carl Maynard, Lead Member for Economy, Transport & Environment said: "I would ask people to be on their guard this summer and watch out for this scam. None of the companies who work for the County Council would ever approach people offering any service in this way. Any individual or company that does make this type of approach does not represent the Council, East Sussex Highways, May Gurney or any of our supply chain partners.

- 1 -

“The claims being made last year were false and unfortunately those people that did express an interest, or agree to work being carried out, soon found themselves in a situation where the price had risen dramatically or more work was carried out than agreed. We are very concerned that these bogus Highway workers could try the same thing again this year.

“Our advice would be not to deal with cold callers offering to carry out work on behalf of the Council, and requesting payment from you. Do not feel pressurised to make a decision on the spot. Verify the claims being made by contacting the Highways Department directly on 0345 60 80 193.”

If you are concerned about cold callers, you can contact East Sussex County Council Trading Standards Service on 01323 463430.

For more information about the work of Trading Standards visit the County Council’s website at www.eastsussex.gov.uk/consumeradvice.

For further information please contact:
Martin Fitzgerald
Tel: 01273 481691
Out of hours: 07974 427569
Email: martin.fitzgerald@eastsussex.gov.uk

Follow East Sussex County Council on Twitter at: <http://twitter.com/eastsussexcc>