



# EAST PRESTON PARISH COUNCIL

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**MINUTES:** of the Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of East Preston Parish Council held at 19:00 on Tuesday, 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021 via the Zoom online meeting application

**PRESENT:** Councillors Kit Bradshaw, Andrea Chapman, Lisa Duff, Barbara Gale, Patricia Gander, John Gunston, Elizabeth Linton, Glyn Mathias, Rick McElroy, David Moore, Steve Toney (Chairman) and Steven Wilkinson

**ALSO:** Clerk to the Council, Simon Cross

Arun District Councillor Paul Kelly (until 19:29)

Sgt Amy McAlees, Sussex Police (until 19:17)

Mrs D (until 19:48)

Mrs M (until 19:48)

**ABSENT:** Councillor Christine Bowman

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The following abbreviations may appear in these Minutes:

ADC – Arun District Council;  
AoSERA – Angmering-on-Sea Estate Residents' Association  
BTP – British Transport Police;  
CPRE – Campaign for the Protection of Rural England;  
JEAAC – Joint Eastern Arun Area Committee;  
NHS – National Health Service;  
NR – Network Rail;  
PCSO – Police Community Support Officer;  
SLCC – Society of Local Council Clerks;

SSE – Scottish and Southern Electric;  
SW – Southern Water;  
TfSE – Transport for the South East;  
TRO – Traffic Regulation Order;  
VHF – East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation;  
WRA – Willowhayne Residents' Association  
WSCC – West Sussex County Council;  
WSALC – West Sussex Association of Local Councils

\* \* \* \* \*

The meeting opened at 19:00.

The meeting was held in accordance with *The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020* and the council's own *Protocol for Remote Meetings*.

## **337/21 INTRODUCTIONS**

Cllr Toney welcomed those present, especially members of the public and Sgt McAlees.

The following paper was circulated in advance of the meeting:

## **Annual appointment of the Chairman of the Council**

On 14<sup>th</sup> April, I wrote to all councillors asking them to let me know if they wished to stand for Chairman of the Council.

Of the eight councillors who replied, only Cllr Toney has put himself forward to be Chairman.

Following council protocol, even though Cllr Toney is the only candidate, there will still be a Yes / No paper ballot. In these unusual times, as a paper ballot would not be possible online, councillors have been asked to provide an electronic vote by midday on 1<sup>st</sup> May. I will then collate those and run them past Cllr Mathias in his role as incumbent Chairman of the Audit & Governance Committee.

**Council is asked to appoint a Chairman for the coming council year.**

Following the appointment of a Chairman of the Council, it will be necessary for the successful candidate to complete a Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

23<sup>rd</sup> April 2021

The Clerk reported twelve councillors had voted. All had voted in favour of Cllr Toney continuing as Chairman of the Council.

Cllr Mathias confirmed he had audited all twelve votes and confirmed Cllr Toney's re-appointment.

**1525** The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously Cllr Toney should be appointed Chairman for the 2021/22 council year.

### **339/21 DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE**

Cllr Toney completed a Chairman Declaration of Acceptance of Office form and held this up to the camera for all to see. This would be lodged with the Council Office.

Cllr Toney thanked all councillors for their hard work and dedication over the past year.

### **340/21 APPOINTMENT OF A VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2021/22**

The following paper was circulated in advance of the meeting:

## **Annual appointment of the Vice-Chairman of the Council**

On 14<sup>th</sup> April, I wrote to all councillors asking them to let me know if they wished to stand for Vice-Chairman of the Council.

Of the eight councillors who replied, only Cllr Linton has put herself forward to be Chairman.

Following council protocol, even though Cllr Linton is the only candidate, there will still be a Yes / No paper ballot. In these unusual times, as a paper ballot would not be possible online, councillors have been asked to provide an electronic vote by midday on 1<sup>st</sup> May. I will then collate those and run them past Cllr Mathias in his role as incumbent Chairman of the Audit & Governance Committee.

**Council is asked to appoint a Vice-Chairman for the coming council year.**

The Clerk reported twelve councillors had voted and all had voted in favour of Cllr Linton continuing as Vice-Chairman of the Council.

Cllr Mathias confirmed he had audited the results and confirmed Cllr Linton's re-appointment.

**1526** The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously Cllr Linton should be appointed Vice-Chairman for the 2021/22 council year.

Cllr Linton thanked her fellow councillors for their faith and trust in her.

### **341/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology and a reason for absence were received from Cllr Bowman (away without reliable signal).

**1527** The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously to accept Cllr Bowman's apology for the meeting.

County Cllr Elkins and District Cllr Bower had also provided apologies for this meeting.

### **342/21 DECLARATION OF PERSONAL AND/OR PREJUDICIAL/PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

Cllr Toney reminded councillors they could declare an Interest at the beginning of each Agenda Item. None were declared.

### **343/21 SUSSEX POLICE**

Sgt Amy McAlees explained she was a sergeant working in the Arun and Chichester Neighbourhood Policing Team, mainly in the Chichester side of that team. Following a number of incidents in recent months, Sussex Police had agreed with the Clerk a police presence at the meeting was required and, owing to an unusual combination of leave and rest days, Sgt McAlees was the senior officer available to attend the meeting. Sgt McAlees offered to take away any questions she was unable to answer at the meeting.

Cllr McElroy recapped the recent known criminal activity in the village and expressed concern Sussex Police was linking none of the cases whereas village hearsay suggested there were obvious links between some of the incidents. Cllr McElroy said the standard police response was to increase patrols in the affected area, but he felt patrols were not working. He questioned why policing appeared to be more reactive than proactive these days.

Sgt McAlees responded that in her experience East Preston was a low-crime area and this was just an unusual spike. Whilst others might be able to assume or guess the incidents were drug-related, she herself was not close enough to be able to say so. Policing is under-resourced and had been for a long time. Police officers were probably even more frustrated by this than anyone else was. Sgt McAlees explained resources were call-driven, directed to where the team feels the need is greatest based upon the number of calls received from residents and local information gathered.

Sgt McAlees said Littlehampton Police Station had recently re-opened, not with a front office, but partly as a base for a response team covering the eastern side of Arun District, enabling officers to respond more quickly than if they were still based in Bognor Regis Police Station.

Regarding police visibility, it is impossible to police every street. Information may direct officers to one part of a village, leading residents of another part of a village to say they never see a police officer, and vice versa. Neighbourhood Policing was active between 8am and midnight. For obvious reasons, forthcoming police operations could not be publicised merely so members of the public could spectate and say they have seen police.

The Clerk asked Sgt McAlees if there was anything any present could do to help tackle the resourcing issues. Sgt McAlees responded the force had been promised a further 2,000 officers. Sgt McAlees added police needed a true reflection of what was going on in an area. Sgt McAlees urged people to report any suspicions they had, preferably online as then those suspicions could be reported at any time without the need to hang on the telephone and also could be recorded in the words of the reporter. Sussex Police was slowly increasing its use of social media, and whilst it was not yet possible to report incidents via social media, concerns could be voiced and there was a team monitoring social media and passing those concerns through to the relevant officers. Sgt McAlees said there was always opportunity to volunteer with Sussex Police as a Special.

In response to a question from the Chairman, Sgt McAlees said she was very much in favour of local PCSOs holding street briefings and surgeries now the pandemic appeared to be coming to an end. If an organisation wanted a specific surgery, a request could be emailed to the local PCSO.

Cllr Gander asked Sgt McAlees whether the extra resources the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner, Katy Bourne, had promised when she had visited the village in February 2019. Sgt McAlees said there were definitely new recruits coming into her team all the time. Was this enough yet? Probably not. Sgt McAlees said the force aimed to have a named PCSO for every area and said the new temporary PCSO for East Preston was an excellent PCSO with a high visibility and a preference for being out on foot.

With no further questions forthcoming, the Chairman thanked Sgt McAlees. Sgt McAlees thanked the council for the opportunity to meet it and left the meeting at this point.

### **344/21 PUBLIC SESSION**

**Agenda Item 9 – West Sussex County Council** – Mrs D referred to an article in the e-newsletter published on 28<sup>th</sup> April in which the West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service reported its concerns about an increase in the number of deliberate fires being set across the county, resulting in the misdirection of Fire & Rescue Service resources to tackle these blazes. Was there something the Fire & Rescue Service could offer to local schoolchildren by means of showing them in person the risks of fire?

**Agenda Item 4 – Sussex Police** – Mrs D asked whether the public should be doing more to push for more police officers. Mrs D said she felt the public should be seeing more officers around.

**Agenda Item 13g – Planning & Licensing Committee** – Mrs D was thinking of writing to Sir Peter Bottomley, MP, expressing concerns about all the piecemeal development taking place in and around the village and the impact that has when not supported by corresponding uplift of local infrastructure. Mrs D questioned why space was not found for a whole new town to take in all the piecemeal development; such a scheme could include all the schools, surgeries, libraries and hospitals needed to support the number of residents expected.

### **345/21 COUNCIL RESPONSES**

**Agenda Item 13g – Planning & Licensing Committee** – Cllr Mathias reported he had already had a conversation with Mrs D on the subject of piecemeal development. He suggested the Arun District Councillors were well placed to provide Mrs D with information on the numbers of developments approved in the District over a set period and how that dovetailed with the Arun Local Plan. Cllr Mathias suggested District Cllr Bower was probably the best to start with in Planning matters.

Cllr Linton added Sir Peter was only MP as far west as Rustington.

**Agenda Item 4 – Sussex Police** – Cllr Gander asked whether the council could use the newsletter to publicise the need for residents to report their concerns and suspicions to Sussex Police. The Clerk replied the council had done this before and could certainly do it again.

**Agenda Item 4 – Sussex Police** – Cllr McElroy reminded the meeting there were elections for the role of Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner on Thursday, 6<sup>th</sup> May, and if anyone was unhappy with the way policing was going in the county, this was an opportunity to express that unhappiness.

District Cllr Kelly challenged Cllr McElroy's statement saying it was inappropriate at a meeting of a non-political organisation. With the support of his fellow councillors, the Clerk and the members of the public present, Cllr McElroy said his comment had been factual not political.

### **346/21 WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL**

County Cllr Elkins had sent his apologies for this meeting owing to the County Council elections due two days after the meeting.

### **347/21 ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

District Cllr Kelly asked whether the Community Speed Watch team would be resuming patrols.

The Clerk responded he was aware Sussex Police was cautiously allowing Speed Watch teams to go back out on patrol when they were comfortable doing so. That did not just refer to the comfort of team members being back out but also the comfort of members of the public who may have to walk past a patrol on a narrow pavement. The Clerk said he was aware the local Speed Watch coordinator was keeping in touch with the team members with a view to getting back out on patrol in due course.

District Cllr Kelly then asked whether the Clerk knew if there was any expectation about team members to undertake some refresher training before they went back out. The Clerk said he was not well enough acquainted with what Sussex Police had to say about that.

(Cllr Kelly left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.)

### **348/21 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2021**

The draft Minutes were circulated to all councillors on 14<sup>th</sup> April asking for comments by the 21<sup>st</sup> April. No suggested amendments had been received. Cllr Moore had emailed in, "I have carefully read through the Minutes and found them to be correct."

**1528** The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously the Chairman could sign the Minutes as a true record of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> April.

The meeting **AGREED** this action could be completed by the Chairman on the day after the meeting.

### **349/21 UPDATE ON MATTERS IN THE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

Council **NOTED** the following report, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

## **Monthly Update Report**

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Minute 203/21 – Reports from the council’s committees – Finance & General Purposes Committee**
- 3. Minute 285/21 – Planning & Licensing Committee – Community Infrastructure Levy Infrastructure Plan**
- 4. Minute 287/21 – Flat and Frontage Working Party**

### **1. Introduction**

This is the report covering items discussed during Full Council meetings up to and including the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

### **2. Minute 203/21 – Reports from the council’s committees – Finance & General Purposes Committee**

The invoice for the sycamore tree has been seen now and payment made to the Village Hall Foundation.

### **3. Minute 285/21 – Planning & Licensing Committee – Community Infrastructure Levy Infrastructure Plan**

As I await assistance from WSCC, I have not been able to submit an Infrastructure Plan to ADC but we have already received the £2,500 CIL money.

#### 4. **Minute 287/21 – Flat and Frontage Working Party**

In an email dated 20<sup>th</sup> April, Fuller Associates confirmed it “would be delighted to work with you and the Parish Council on your proposed works. I can confirm that our fees would be as our Fee Proposal dated 28/09/20, unless advised otherwise that the brief differs from that which our Fee Proposal refers to.”

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

26<sup>th</sup> April 2021

**Minute 282/21 – Code of Conduct** – all councillors had completed their Declaration of Acceptance of the new Code of Conduct and an updated Register of Interests within the required 28 days of the adoption of the new Code of Conduct. These had all been forwarded to ADC which, in turn, would produce a summary of the Register of Interest for publication on this council’s website.

[Clerk’s Note: thank you councillors]

**Minute 072/21 (Community Engagement Committee) – Office of National Statistics – Census 2021** – on the afternoon of the meeting, the Clerk had forwarded the following email to all councillors:

TO ALL PARISH COUNCILS in Arun, Chichester, Adur & Worthing

Over the last seven months I’ve been in touch on a number of occasions with requests for help and updates on planning for, and delivery of, the census, and I wanted to write to you one final time as the primary operational phase draws to a close.

Across my area the response has exceeded our expectations and I would like to thank you for the part you have played in publicising the benefits to all communities if everybody completes the census, as well as in many other practical ways. Not only have the headline numbers been excellent, but more people than we expected completed the census online with all the benefits which that brought and, from what I understand, the variability in response within my area is also within expectations, in other words we’ve reached a good level across the board.

You will have heard of a small number of concerns which have been raised, and some were justified. However, with over 25 million census forms completed during a very challenging period because of the pandemic in what has been a massive logistical exercise, a small number would unfortunately have been expected. The teams on the ground have been able to resolve many of them and, with West Sussex Libraries, have been able to help many who we had been worried might struggle without the face to face support and assistance which had originally been planned.

You may still see census staff around, but in much smaller numbers, as the Census Coverage Survey (CCS) begins in May. The CCS is a short, separate survey that follows the main census. It’ll ask similar questions to the census, just fewer of them. We’ll ask a sample of addresses in selected postcodes across England and Wales to take part. We use the CCS information, in conjunction with the census data, to produce a consistent set of results, fully adjusted for under (and over) coverage.

We aim to produce the first census outputs next Spring and more information will be sent to local authorities as soon as it is available. Hopefully later in 2022, local authorities will be able to use the data to plan and provide services for local communities.

The full ONS press release is attached. Judging by the response, I am sure that people will be interested to know how things have gone and you may wish to post this on your website. Alternatively, you could highlight the main points and post the weblink: <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKONS/bulletins/2d78368>.

My time with the census finishes on 21 May and it has been a most interesting experience. Once again, many thanks for your help. It’s been a pleasure meeting with you, both remotely and in person.

John Heaton

Census Engagement Manager, South and West of West Sussex | Office for National Statistics

#### 350/21 **REPORTS FROM PARISH COUNCIL COMMITTEES**

The council NOTED the following reports which had been circulated in advance of the meeting:

### **Committees**

This month, the following committee meetings have taken place: Major Events on the 26<sup>th</sup>; and Planning & Licensing and Personnel on the 19<sup>th</sup>.

Draft Minutes from the Major Events and Planning & Licensing meetings will have been circulated to all councillors ahead of this meeting. Personnel Committee Minutes are only circulated to members of the Personnel Committee due to the sometimes confidential subject matter.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

22<sup>nd</sup> April 2021

## **Amenities Committee**

The committee did not meet during April.

**Village Green** – Three additional lengths of low level recycled plastic fencing have been installed at the southern boundary of the Village Green. The fencing has been installed to help prevent travellers from accessing the site.

**Warren Recreation Ground** – Targeted resurfacing work is underway at the Tennis Court. A section of the court's surface is being replaced due to tree root damage. It is estimated the work will take five days to complete.

Dawn Reid – **Assistant Clerk to the Council**

26<sup>th</sup> April 2021

## **Audit & Governance Committee**

The committee did not meet in April.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

26<sup>th</sup> April 2021

## **Community Engagement Committee**

The committee did not meet in April.

The joint winners of the Easter Egg Hunt, a brother and sister, will be announced in the Spring 2021 Newsletter which will be published later in May.

Clr Elizabeth Linton –  
**Chairman of the Community Engagement Committee**

26<sup>th</sup> April 2021

## **Finance & General Purposes Committee**

The committee did not meet in April. The committee's next meeting is currently scheduled for the morning of 17<sup>th</sup> May.

## **Major Events Committee**

The committee met on 26<sup>th</sup> April.

The meeting was relatively short, with the committee holding off full discussion on most projects remaining cautious as the country continues to follow the government’s roadmap out of National Lockdown.

The committee agreed to set up an East Preston Voluntary Service Party Working Party to arrange a thank-you party for volunteers and service users on 31<sup>st</sup> July. All councillors are asked to put this date in their diary and to make themselves available for that afternoon. A working party will be able to meet at shorter notice than the committee and can meet remotely should that matter still be up in the air.

Good progress had been made on the East Preston Food & Drink Festival, scheduled for 28<sup>th</sup> August. There were currently 23 stalls planned for the Village Green itself and a further ten in the marketplace area on the car-park.

The committee agreed not to pursue further an outdoor film show for this summer.

Work on the East Preston Christmas Celebrations event had started and was chugging along in the background.

The committee especially thanked Mrs Roberts for her work on most of the above events.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

27<sup>th</sup> April 2021

## **Personnel Committee**

### **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)**

As previously agreed by Council, parish councillors are required to undergo a DBS check at the start of, and mid-way, through a term of office. The council is now mid-way through the current term.

Councillors have been reminded to complete the process as soon as possible

### **Covid 19 – Pandemic**

The current Government roadmap is working towards an end to all lockdown restrictions by 21<sup>st</sup> June. It is not certain whether any guidelines on social distancing will remain in place or whether the Council Office will open to the public at that time. It will be important to consult staff on any decision on the full re-opening of the office, although it must be remembered that throughout lockdown the office has been unofficially staffed and accessible to the public most of the time, albeit observing social distancing guidelines.

### **Council Meetings**

The resumption of conventional council meetings is currently under discussion and has been subject to an appeal to the High Court on 21<sup>st</sup> April. The Committee agreed it is important to ensure that all who attend meetings feel safe, at the same time ensuring the business of the council is conducted in a transparent manner. The outcome of the appeal hearing may not be received until 30<sup>th</sup> April and it was therefore agreed to defer further consideration of this at the moment.



### **Terms of Reference for Committees**

A review was undertaken by the Committee and a revised version will be submitted to Council on 4<sup>th</sup> May.

### **Standing Order for Working Parties**

A revision to the Standing Orders relating to the duration of working parties will be submitted to Council on 4<sup>th</sup> May.

### **Staffing**

Councillors Gander and Linton have recently undertaken the Clerk's annual appraisal. The Clerk has completed the appraisals of the office staff.

Cllr Patricia Gander – **Chairman of the Personnel Committee**

26<sup>th</sup> April 2021

## **Planning & Licensing Committee**

The committee met on 19<sup>th</sup> April.

The committee considered five Applications and agreed to object only to one in The Plantation. Local residents have also contacted the District Councillors on this Application. At least three households in The Plantation have sent in their thanks for the council's support in this Application. One wrote, "May I begin by thanking you for your kindness at the recent East Preston Parish Council Zoom meeting when you and your colleagues were so understanding and helpful regarding the planning application in our road."

I also agreed with the Chairman of the committee this council should support Angmering Parish Council in objections it has raised against a proposal to build a pair of semi-detached houses on a triangle of land in Downs Way. This land has long been assumed to be recreational greenspace, not to be built upon. An Angmering resident has written in thanking this council for its objections.

The committee's next meeting may be on 11<sup>th</sup> May.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

21<sup>st</sup> April 2021

Additionally:

Community Engagement – Cllr Linton said an article was being published in the Spring 2021 Newsletter, imminently, detailing the winding down of the East Preston Voluntary Service. This had also been mentioned in the past couple of e-newsletters. The Newsletter article once again thanked all volunteers for their help over the past thirteen months.

Major Events – Cllr Linton said the committee was closely following the government's roadmap out of national lockdown in the hope events it was currently planning would all be able to go ahead as planned.

Personnel – Cllr Gander reminded councillors of the need to complete a mid-term Basic DBS Check. Cllr Gander was aware several councillors had already done this and provided the Council Office with a paper copy for its records.

There was nothing to report from the other four committees.

### **351/21 PERSONNEL COMMITTEE – TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Council NOTED the following report, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

## **Personnel Committee – Committee Terms of Reference**

**Council is asked to adopt a change to the Terms of Reference for all committees.**

Cllr Gander to lead on this item.

At its meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> April, the Personnel Committee considered a suggested change to the Terms of Reference for all committees and agreed to recommend it to this council.

The proposal is to add the following clause to *Section 2 – Authority* of the Terms of Reference of each of the council’s committees:

2.3 Where a decision is needed ahead of a committee meeting, and this can clearly be justified, a decision can be made on behalf of the committee by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee in conjunction with the Clerk or Assistant Clerk. Wherever possible, committee members should be consulted electronically first.

This could possibly assist the council’s business in the period between the possible end of remote meetings and the full resumption of in-person meetings.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

26<sup>th</sup> April 2021

Cllr Gander spoke in support of this item. Cllr Gander explained this was something the council had needed to implement occasionally during national lockdown, and it was sensible to have that ability for occasional emergency use going forwards.

**1529** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to adopt an amendment to the Terms of Reference for all of the council’s committees relating to emergency and urgent decisions.

### **352/21 PERSONNEL COMMITTEE – STANDING ORDERS**

Council NOTED the following report, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

## **Personnel Committee – Standing Orders for working parties**

**Council is asked to adopt a change to the council’s Standing Orders.**

Cllr Gander to lead on this item.

Clause 28b of the council’s Standing Orders currently states: “All working parties will be set up for a maximum period of three months to be reviewed every three months by their owning committee.” The proposed change is to remove this clause from the council’s Standing Orders.

This was implemented to keep the council’s working parties focussed and on track, but working parties have tended to be self-governing and the reviews have not been necessary. Committees or individual councillors can speak up if they feel working parties have become too elastic in their timescales or ineffective.

Currently the council has six working parties: Conservative Hall, East Preston Voluntary Service Party, Environmental Initiatives, Flat and Frontage, Leases and Playing of Cricket.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

27<sup>th</sup> April 2021

Cllr Gander spoke in support of this item. The Clerk added the clause was being removed as it was not simple to implement because of meeting schedules and calendars and, in his belief, councillors would not allow working parties to go on endlessly without question.

**1530** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to remove Clause 28b from the council’s Standing Orders.

### **353/21 REPORTS FROM PARISH COUNCIL WORKING PARTIES**

The following report had been circulated in advance of the meeting:

## **Working Parties**

None of the council's working parties have met this month.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

26<sup>th</sup> April 2021

### **Playing of Cricket Working Party**

Three pieces of correspondence have been received since I delivered the working party's final report on its work on this topic. I would like another meeting of the working party to agree how the council should respond to the three pieces of correspondence. Two are from one household on the western boundary, and the third is from one household on the eastern boundary. The latter came to the council via the West Sussex Association of Local Councils, the Chief Executive there feeling this council was best placed to answer the letter. An initial response was agreed by Cllrs Toney, Linton and I and the Clerk. Initial holding responses have been sent to the household on the western boundary too. I hope to be able to have a meeting during the week beginning 10<sup>th</sup> May.

Cllr Christine Bowman –  
**Chairman of the Playing of Cricket Working Party**

26<sup>th</sup> April 2021

Additionally:

Environmental Initiatives Working Party – Cllr Gunston added the working party's next meeting was scheduled for 17<sup>th</sup> May.

Flat & Frontage Working Party – Cllr Wilkinson restated the Clerk's comment above Fullers Associates would honour its earlier quotation for design work on the Council Office frontage provided the council's requirements did not change.

Playing of Cricket Working Party – in the absence of Cllr Bowman, the Clerk reported the council had received three pieces of correspondence Cllr Bowman wished the working party to discuss in order to consider the council's response.

There was nothing further to report from the council's other working parties.

### **354/21 CLERK'S REPORT**

The council NOTED the following report which had been circulated in advance of the meeting:

## **Clerk's Report**

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Police matters**
- 3. Anti-social behaviour matters**
- 4. Freedom of Information / Data Protection requests**
- 5. East Preston Business Community Business Breakfast, 7<sup>th</sup> April**
- 6. East Preston Cricket Club, 7<sup>th</sup> April**
- 7. South Strand Community Toilets Annual General Meeting, 8<sup>th</sup> April**
- 8. WSALC Clerks' Meeting, 15<sup>th</sup> April**
- 9. SLCC Sussex Branch Annual General Meeting, 20<sup>th</sup> April**
- 10. East Preston Voluntary Service conference, 22<sup>nd</sup> April**

11. **Littlehampton Community Fridge on Tour, April**
12. **Social media**
13. **MailChimp stats**
14. **A selection of things we have been asked since the last meeting**
15. **Recent bouquets and complaints**
16. **Leave**
17. **May meetings and events**

## 1. **Introduction**

This is the report mainly covering April 2021 and matters which may not arise elsewhere on the agenda.

## 2. **Police matters**

An interesting month.

Firstly, on 16<sup>th</sup> April I learned of a raid that had taken place in St Mary's Drive on 8<sup>th</sup> March. Sussex Police was only able to confirm "a Police led activity in St Mary's Drive by our Serious and Organised Crime Unit."

As reported to the last meeting, there was a stabbing on 3<sup>rd</sup> April. Sussex Police has explained this was non-life-threatening and may have had something to do with dogs.

On the sunny afternoon of 15<sup>th</sup> April, there was a stabbing in Sea Road. Two males, 20 and 16, have been arrested in conjunction with this attack on a 20-year-old male.

All the above cases remain under investigation.

## 3. **Anti-social behaviour matters**

No new reports this month.

## 4. **Freedom of Information / Data Protection requests**

The council received a Freedom of Information request on 16<sup>th</sup> April related to littering and fly-tipping. I replied answer the three questions I could answer, referring the requester to ADC for the other ten questions asked. Interestingly, I can find no trace of this request on the WhatDoTheyKnow? website that it came through. That is where I usually look to find out how many other random councils have been asked the questions.

No Data Protection requests received.

## 5. **East Preston Business Community Business Breakfast, 7<sup>th</sup> April**

Cllr Linton and I attended this meeting, which included representatives from seven local businesses. Apologies had been received from a couple of other businesses.

After the usual introductions and catch-up with attendees, the group had a lively discussion about how we can bring live back into the village business areas. For me, this highlighted how much of a difference there is between living in the village and running a business in the village. On the one hand, people move to East Preston because it is quiet, with venues that are known only to those in the know, but on the other hand, those businesses need customers in order to survive.

Suggestions for how businesses can be supported during the post-pandemic rebuild included an advertising directory of local businesses delivered to every household, better signage to attract people into the village, better parking provision and temporary provision of toilets on or near the Village Green.

There was lively discussion on these topics both in the meeting and outside the meeting later on. I agreed to contact the publisher of All About East Preston and Kingston to see if a double-page spread of welcome back to East Preston businesses could be possible as free editorial rather than as advertising that we would need to pay for. I have also spoken to ADC about whether there are business regeneration grants available for signage to persuade people into the village – although that suggestion did split opinion as residents showed last year they were not always supportive of a great influx of visitors to the village, especially at a time when the physical health of the nation is at stake. There are grants available should we decide to commission some signage for some or all of the entrances to the village. There were no suggestions as to how to provide better parking in the village, nobody even raised the ageing chestnut of making the Village Green car-park free-to-use again or the even older chestnut of illegal parking at the southern end of Sea Road. Finally, although previous investigations into the long-term temporary provision of toilets on or near the Village Green have shown this could be a costly initiative, perhaps this or improved signage could be discussed by the Amenities Committee. (Less than an hour after the meeting had ended, a resident of Seaview Road called at the office to ask if temporary toilets could be provided close to the beach for the summer to reduce the temptation and justification for visitors to use local front gardens as a very public toilet.)

The next Business Breakfast will be on 5<sup>th</sup> May.

#### 6. **East Preston Cricket Club, 7<sup>th</sup> April**

This was the official first of the twice-yearly meetings between the club and the council. Council was represented by Cllrs Toney and Linton and Bowman. The club was represented by Messrs Simon Locke (Chairman), Andy Reeves (Treasurer) and Colin Smith (Secretary and Head Groundsman).

Within government and England and Wales Cricket Board guidelines, the season is likely to start in the first week of May. Fixture cards are being drawn up to deliver around the local properties, but there may be occasional, short-notice friendly matches added to the schedule after the card has been issued.

In the week before the meeting, the club had done a lot of work on the ground, including the use of a powered, ride-on roller to try and level out more of the field and a spiker to improve the drainage. The club has signed and returned the pre-season agreement for the year. Informal inspections of the safety netting have taken place and shown it to be in good condition. A more formal inspection will take place and any repairs necessary will be made before the seasons starts. The club remains concerned about the amount of football that was played, in boots, on the ground over the winter. This does seem to have dropped off after I asked the Football Club to ask its members not to play on the Warren Rec. This request followed reports of junior Football Club players wearing their kit whilst playing on the Warren Rec.

As per the Playing of Cricket Working Party's report, the club had invited its insurers to visit the ground before renewing the club's insurance, but the insurers had declined this year owing to the pandemic. The club said it would extend a further invite next year.

\* \* \*

Since the meeting, the Club has distributed its fixture card to properties around the ground and also to the council. I forwarded this to councillors on 26<sup>th</sup> April with my usual plea all councillors should try to spend some time at a match during the season. The first home match of the season is a 2<sup>nd</sup> XI match on 1<sup>st</sup> May at 13:00.

I have received the club's insurance for the coming year. I can make the schedule available to any councillors who asks.

## **7. South Strand Community Toilets Limited Annual General Meeting, 8<sup>th</sup> April**

I attended this meeting alone as Cllr Bradshaw was unable to attend because he was working at the 17:00 start time.

The meeting started late for technical reasons, but before the meeting did manage to start, a resident of Manor Road thanked the council for the double yellow lines implemented at the junction of Manor Road and Sea Road. The resident said this made her feel much, much safer was exiting Manor Road.

The 17:00 meeting finally started at 17:24, with only seven attendees, probably because of the technical problems, and it lasted half an hour.

The company is financially more secure than it had hoped to be at this stage of its lease, mainly thanks to a COVID-19 Grant from ADC. The group continues to make improvements to the block.

The Chairman asked whether the group could have a stall at the Food & Drink Festival. I replied in the negative as the South Strand Toilets, whilst a valuable asset, does not really fall under the banner of a food or drink business. I also had to say simply knocking up some flapjacks to sell would not fly either. I am sure there is a way in which the group can have a presence close to the Village Green on that day and have offered to discuss this further with them when they are ready.

I mentioned the council's change of date for the first Beach Clean of the year, suggesting the group might like to do something around the toilet block simultaneously and we could try and get joint publicity. Some saw this as a good idea.

Local resident, Mr Croston, thanked the group for the work they have done in keeping the toilets open and in improving them.

## **8. WSALC Clerks' Meeting, 15<sup>th</sup> April**

I attended this meeting which was led by Cllr Douglas Denham St Pinnock of West Hoathly Parish Council. More than once Cllr Denham St Pinnock reminded the meeting of the importance of Clerks. He said Clerks were "absolutely crucial" in local government.

Other Arun councils represented included Angmering, Barnham and Eastergate, Bognor Regis, Clymping, Kingston, Rustington and Yapton.

The new board is looking to restore Clerks' involvement in the board. The board hopes to implement a common constitution across the District Associations and retain but keep under review the current Limited Company structure.

In response to a question from me about councils' disappointment not to have received even an acknowledgement to pleas sent to the National Association of Local Councils Chief Executive during the recent WSALC debacle, Cllr Denham St Pinnock said the board would consider writing to NALC to express its concern about the lack of response.

There was much talk about a return to face-to-face meetings with most councils considering their options just as we have. It was felt the government would not be able to sanction councils who continued to have remote meetings at this time. Remote meetings are just as transparent as face-to-face meetings, if not more so.

The week after the meeting the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of WSALC were due to meet their East Sussex counterparts to start rebuilding bridges between the two associations.

## **9. SLCC Sussex Branch Annual General Meeting, 20<sup>th</sup> April**

Other Arun councils represented were Bersted, Rustington and Yapton.

I retained my post, unopposed, as Branch Communications Officer.

The Chairman of the Branch, Julie Holden, Clerk to East Grinstead Town Council thanked and praised all town and parish councils for their rapid response to the death of HRH – Julie felt councils would have let themselves down had they waited for the appropriate Lord Lieutenant's Office to instruct them.

Some town and parish councils have already commissioned memorials for residents that have been lost to the pandemic.

The Branch has asked for some Best Practice guidance on hybrid meetings and also for a survey into bullying of Clerks during the pandemic.

WSALC might be looking at an apprenticeship for future Clerks. Experienced Clerks are leaving feeling undervalued and inexperienced Clerks are finding their expectations of the job are not being met and so they are leaving too.

Nationally, SLCC has put up £50,000 towards the costs of a Bullying Officer and is looking for NALC to support this role similarly.

In the open session, other Clerks asked for advice on how to reduce vandalism in public toilets, how to stop people sleeping over in public toilets, littering of open spaces, and the effectiveness of *Don't Be A Tosser* and similar signage.

#### **10. East Preston Voluntary Service conference, 22<sup>nd</sup> April**

With the government foreseeing the official end of National Lockdown in June, the Voluntary Service coordinators all agreed it was time to have another conference (call) with volunteers.

The volunteers who attended were generally still happy to be helping or their circumstances were beginning to change and they needed some help with ending their working relationship with their service users. Where this was the case, generally they were happy to keep up a friendship with their service users.

An article will be published in the Spring 2021 Newsletter, advising the Voluntary Service was again coming to an end, this time in line with the government's roadmap.

#### **11. Littlehampton Community Fridge on Tour, April**

The Fridge on Tour made the following visits to the village, with the name of that session's council rep:

7<sup>th</sup> April, Cllr Toney

14<sup>th</sup> April, Cllr Gunston (with his queue managed by me)

21<sup>st</sup> April, Cllr Gander

28<sup>th</sup> April, Cllr Linton

A local resident visiting the Fridge for the first time on 14<sup>th</sup> April, later wrote in, "I absolutely loved the Fridge! Very efficient and friendly, van arrived, quick set up, all very organised and a truly British queue in operation. Just like Christmas not knowing what there would be, but in April! I am hoping to come again this Wednesday. Is there a suggested donation for the box?"

#### **12. Social media**

Only three Facebook posts have been seen by over 500 people this month, but all have been seen by an above average number of people for our posts.

- Photograph of a lost teddy bear – 1,943 people
- Found black Ted Baker purse – 1,202
- Request for information on the 15<sup>th</sup> April stabbing – 1,044

The purse was claimed by its owner and the teddy bear appeared to have been claimed too.

† Food & Drink Festival page

▲ East Preston Business Community page

\* East Preston Christmas Celebrations page

(posts up to and including 26<sup>th</sup> April)

The number of people currently liking the council on Facebook is 1,408, an increase of 4 on the last report.

### 13. **MailChimp stats**

Since the last papers were issued, the council has sent out the following emails to local residents on the council’s main e-mailing list:

Parish Council news – 8<sup>th</sup> April – sent to 870, opened by 568 (65.3%)

Parish Council news – 15<sup>th</sup> April – sent to 869, opened by 564 (64.9%)

### 14. **Things we have been asked since the last meeting**

“Can I go out now?”

“I used to visit the village and wondered whether Angmering-on-Sea still exists?”

### 15. **Recent bouquets and complaints**

(In addition to anything reported above)

From a resident of Kingston in an email about the Fridge, “Many thanks for all that you do for the village.”

From the owner of a local business, “Thanks for always being awesome with us btw x Lucky to have such good neighbours.”

From a resident of Willowhayne Avenue in response to me thanking her for putting out some Easter decorations, “Thank you so much for your email. It’s so lovely to be part of the village and nice to shed a bit of happiness in these strange times!”

From a resident of Milliers Court for assistance with concerns about the Station Road service road, “Many thanks for your quick reply.”

A resident of South Strand asked whether her expensive car keys had been handed in; they had not, but I posted about them on Facebook, and a resident of Seaview Road handed the keys into the Council Office the following day. “Thank you once again for the message on Facebook and dropping the keys back.”

At the Planning & Licensing Committee meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> April, a resident of The Plantation thanked the council and councillors for all they do for the village.



From a resident of Willowhayne Close, “By the way, the double yellow lines on Sea Road makes pulling out from Willowhayne Crescent much safer – thanks EPPC.”

#### 16. **Leave**

I am on leave on 29<sup>th</sup> April and 7<sup>th</sup> May. I also want to try not to be around for too many Fridays in May, so please bear that in mind when contacting the office during May.

#### 17. **May Meetings and Events**

This list may be incomplete and is subject to change.

- 4<sup>th</sup> Full Council (19:00, Zoom)
- 5<sup>th</sup> East Preston Business Community Business Breakfast (08:00, Zoom)
- 11<sup>th</sup> Planning & Licensing Committee (18:00, Zoom tbc)
- 17<sup>th</sup> Finance & General Purposes Committee (10:00, Zoom tbc)  
Amenities Committee (19:00, Zoom tbc)
- 20<sup>th</sup> Sussex Police / WSALC Local Forum (12:00, Zoom tbc) (ST and SC)
- 24<sup>th</sup> Planning & Licensing Committee (18:00, Zoom tbc)  
Community Engagement Committee (19:00, Zoom tbc)
- 26<sup>th</sup> Internal Audit

N.B. where committee meetings fall on the same day, the timings of these meetings may be subject to change.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

26<sup>th</sup> April 2021

**Item 9 – SLCC Sussex Branch Annual General Meeting, 20<sup>th</sup> April** – in response to a question from Cllr Linton, the Clerk said he had never felt bullied or undervalued in his fourteen years in post.

The Chairman thanked the Clerk for his report.

#### 355/21 **EXTERNAL MEETINGS AND EVENTS**

The council NOTED the following reports which had been circulated in advance of the meeting:

### **Other meetings and events – Part 1**

**Council is asked to note the following reports:**

#### **Councillor Walkabout, 13<sup>th</sup> April**

The walkabout was done p.m, on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2021, by Cllr Patricia Gander and me. Our route was from the Parish Office, down Sea Road, Seaview Road, Normandy Lane, Normandy Drive and Sea Road back to the Parish Office. It was a chilly afternoon with very few people about, but we did go into the Tudor Tavern garden and chatted to some patrons who were very positive about the village. In Normandy Lane, we had a long talk with a lady who expressed concern about parking in the road in summer and the lack of parking in the village car park because of the charges. She also thought that it would be nice to have trees and flowers in the grass verges. Otherwise, generally the lady was very complementary about the efforts of the parish council.

We chatted to a lady in Sea Road who was very positive about the village, but was shocked about the recent assault and stabbing in Beechlands Close, although the victim was found in Vermont Drive, where the lady lives. We did say that the police investigation is ongoing, therefore we had no further news about the assault. She also mentioned that rubbish is an issue in her neighbourhood, but enjoys living in East Preston.

Cllr David Moore

13<sup>th</sup> April 2021

Cllr Moore said he had nothing further to add to his report.

Cllr Chapman said a written report on the walk she had undertaken with Cllr Linton would follow. They had noticed how poor a condition the pavement was on the southern side of Old Worthing Road. They had spoken to a mum whose child's pushchair had got stuck in a hole in the pavement, nearly resulting in the child being tipped out. Cllrs Chapman and Linton had explained to the mum the pavement was the responsibility of the County Council but the Parish Council would report concerns to WSCC for her. Cllr Chapman will provide the Clerk with some supporting photographs.

**356/21 RESPONSE TO EXTERNAL MEETINGS AND EVENTS**

Nothing was added.

**357/21 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP FOR 2021/22**

The following paper was circulated in advance of the meeting:

**Committees for 2021/22**

Each year, council reviews the membership of its committees, giving councillors the opportunity to use their skills on different committees. In January 2013, council “**RESOLVED** that with effect from May 2013, in order to effect greater rotation of councillors between committees, the Chairman of the Council and the incumbent chairmen of the Committees will have a greater say in which councillors sit on which committees; this understanding to be in place until at least the end of the current municipal term, i.e. May 2015.” (Minute 013/13, Resolution 0635) There has, to date, been no move to revoke this policy.

All councillors were sent a form earlier this month.

Most councillors ticked the new No Change box at the top of the form, but the few changes requested have been built into the table below. Where changes were proposed, the Chairman of the Council and the incumbent Chairman of the relevant committee have agreed them.

**Council is asked to agree the committee membership as noted below:**

Amenities	Bowman, Gale, McElroy, Moore and Wilkinson	full
Audit & Governance	see note below	to be confirmed
Comm. Engagement	Chapman, Duff, Gander, Gunston and Moore	full
Finance & GP	Gunston, McElroy, Mathias and Wilkinson	one vacancy
Major Events	Bowman, Chapman, Duff, Gander and Gunston	full
Personnel	Duff, Gale, Gander, Linton, Toney with Wilkinson (substitute)	full
Plan. & Licensing	Bowman, Bradshaw, Mathias, Moore and Wilkinson	full

At the April 2018 meeting, it was resolved the Chairmen of the above committees should automatically be members of the Audit & Governance Committee. Therefore, membership of that committee will be finalised as soon as each of the other committees has met and elected a Chairman.

As Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council elected tonight, Cllrs Toney and Linton are automatically members of the Personnel Committee and they are also entitled to attend and vote at meetings of the other committees. The above permits all committees to function within their Terms of Reference.

As you will note, the Finance & General Purposes Committees has a single vacancy. If you would like to fill that vacancy, please let me know.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

26<sup>th</sup> April 2021

Subsequently, the Clerk had additionally circulated Cllr Gander’s willingness to sit on the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

All present agreed the table reflected their wishes and expectations.

**1531** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to agree the committee membership for 2021/22.

The Clerk would keep councillors up-to-date with the populating of the Audit & Governance Committee as councillors took on the role of committee chairmen.

**358/21 WORKING PARTY MEMBERSHIP FOR 2021/22**

The following paper was circulated in advance of the meeting:

**Working parties for 2021/22**

Each year, council reviews the membership of its working parties, giving councillors the opportunity to use their skills on different working parties.

All councillors were sent a form earlier this month. The only change is Cllr Bowman has joined the Conservative Hall Working Party. The only restriction on numbers for a working party is it must have at least three councillors aboard, there is no maximum number.

**Council is asked to agree the working party memberships as noted below:**

Conservative Hall	Bowman, Gander, Gunston, Linton, Mathias, McElroy, Toney and Wilkinson
Environmental Initiatives	Chapman, Duff, Gander, Gunston
Flat and Frontage	Gale, Linton, McElroy, Toney and Wilkinson
Leases	Gunston, Mathias, Moore, Toney and Wilkinson
Playing of Cricket	Bowman, Linton, McElroy, Moore, Toney and Wilkinson

As Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council elected tonight, Cllrs Toney and Linton are entitled to attend and vote at meetings of the council’s working parties. The above permits all working parties to function within their Terms of Reference.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

26<sup>th</sup> April 2021

All present agreed the table reflected their wishes and expectations.

**1532** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to agree the working party membership for 2021/22.

359/21 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION PANEL MEMBERSHIP FOR 2021/22

The following paper was circulated in advance of the meeting:

**Freedom of Information Panel**

The council has a Freedom of Information Panel to consider Freedom of Information requests received from the public.

**Council is asked to agree the panel's membership for the coming year as Cllrs Linton, Mathias, Toney and Wilkinson.**

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

26<sup>th</sup> April 2021

1533 The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to agree the Freedom of Information Panel membership for 2021/22 as Cllrs Linton, Mathias, Toney and Wilkinson.

360/21 REPRESENTATIVE TO THE EAST PRESTON & KINGSTON VILLAGE HALL FOUNDATION COMMITTEE FOR 2021/22

The following paper was circulated in advance of the meeting:

**East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation**

The council can have a member sit on the committee of the East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation.

Cllrs Bowman and Toney put themselves forward for this role. As Chairman of the Council, Cllr Toney can automatically attend any meetings between the council and the Village Hall Foundation. Therefore:

**Council is asked to agree Cllr Bowman is the council's representative to the East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation.**

The mechanics of this appointment will need to be agreed with the committee of the Village Hall Foundation which is aware of the council's desire to fill this post.

N.B. the six-monthly tenancy meetings with the Foundation would still be attended by the Chairman of the Council and the Chairmen of the Amenities, Audit & Governance and Finance & General Purposes Committees.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

26<sup>th</sup> April 2021

1534 The council **RESOLVED** unanimously Cllr Bowman was to be the council's representative to the East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation for 2021/22.

361/21 REPRESENTATIVE TO THE EAST PRESTON YOUTH CLUB FOR 2021/22

The following paper was circulated in advance of the meeting:

**East Preston Youth Club**

**Council is asked to agree Cllr Chapman is the council's representative to the East Preston Youth Club.**

Other councillors wishing to be members of the East Preston Youth Club committee may do so, but do so as independents rather than council representatives. This should be discussed with Cllr Chapman. Cllrs Duff and Toney have indicated an interest in working with the Youth Club. Cllr Duff is already secretary.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

26<sup>th</sup> April 2021

**1535** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously Cllr Chapman was to be the council's representative to the East Preston Youth Club for 2021/22.

The council **NOTED** Cllrs Duff and Toney were willing to be involved with the Youth Club too.

**362/21 REPRESENTATIVE TO SOUTH STRAND COMMUNITY TOILETS FOR 2021/22**

The following paper was circulated in advance of the meeting:

**South Strand Community Toilets**

Cllrs Bowman and Bradshaw are both happy to be the council's representative to the South Strand Community Toilets group. Over the past year, now the group is established, there has been little for a council representative to do. Any day-to-day contact is through the Council Office. Therefore, my suggestion would be Cllr Bradshaw continues as first named contact, with Cllr Bowman as substitute when needed.

**Council is asked to agree Cllr Bradshaw is the council's representative to the South Strand Community Toilets group with Cllr Bowman as named substitute.**

Should the representative(s) not be called upon this year, I would suggest we no longer have a named representative from May 2022 onwards.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

27<sup>th</sup> April 2021

**1536** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously Cllr Bradshaw was to be the council's representative to South Strand Community Toilets for 2021/22, with Cllr Bowman as a named substitute.

**363/21 NEW ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING (7<sup>TH</sup> JUNE)**

Nothing was suggested.

**364/21 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS**

The following report had been circulated in advance of the meeting:

**Exclusion of the press and members of the public**

**Council is asked to agree to exclude the public and press from the remainder of the meeting because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.**

The above legislation states:

A body may, by resolution, exclude the public from a meeting (whether during the whole or part of the proceedings) whenever publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons stated in the resolution and arising from the nature of that business or of the proceedings.

The Personnel Committee believes the discussion to be had at Agenda Item 27a would be better attended solely by councillors and officers as they will be most affected by any decisions made. Although there is a financial element to any decisions made at Agenda Item 27a, they are very much subsidiary and not part of the consideration.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

26<sup>th</sup> April 2021

**1537** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to exclude the public and press from the remainder of the meeting because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, pursuant to Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

(Mrs D and Mrs M left the meeting at this point.)

**365/21 PERSONNEL COMMITTEE – FORTHCOMING MEETINGS**

The following discussion paper had been circulated in advance of the meeting:

**Personnel Committee - meetings**

**Council is asked to consider matters related to the possible return to face-to-face meetings.**

At the time of writing, government instruction to return to face-to-face meetings still stands even though it is in direct conflict with the same government’s guidance on numbers of people meeting indoors. The outcome of the High Court case which may help councils to resolve this is not yet known. The Personnel Committee does not want the council to take any action which could jeopardise the safety of councillors, officers or local residents.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

27<sup>th</sup> April 2021

A further discussion paper had been circulated earlier in the day of the meeting:

As you know, the High Court case did not give local authorities the permission to hold its public meetings remotely despite a wealth of evidence confirming greater general involvement by the public in remote meetings.

Agenda Item 27a is for this council to consider how it will hold meetings over the coming seven weeks until 21<sup>st</sup> June when, in all likelihood, restrictions on numbers of people meeting inside will be lifted. At the time of writing, government does not seem to have recognised the conflict between COVID guidelines about the numbers of people meeting inside or outside together and the numbers of people that need to attend a council meeting – all committee meetings and Full Council meeting fall foul of this conflict. (Working Parties do not fall foul as they are not open to the public, although members of the public do attend by invitation.)

The National Association of Local Councils is meeting this week with other government bodies, presumably to formulate some more advice to give to local authorities.

If agreed tonight at Agenda Item 14a, each committee will have revised Terms of Reference permitting urgent decisions to be taken “on behalf of the committee by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee in conjunction with the Clerk or Assistant Clerk”.

Excluding working parties, these are the meetings lined up between now and the end of June:

Full Council	7 <sup>th</sup> June	<p><b>Urgent: sign-off Annual Return</b></p> <p>We have to hold some sort of face-to-face meeting, as we need to sign-off the Annual Return. I suggest that is the <b>only item</b> we have on that meeting’s Agenda. The meeting is held in the school hall but only attended by enough councillors to make the meeting <b>quorate</b>, in our case <b>five</b>. With me that makes six.</p>
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		Councillors not attending can let me know in advance of any questions they have about the Annual Return and whether or not they are happy it can be accepted and signed.
Amenities Committee	17 <sup>th</sup> May	Cancel the meeting. Anything urgent be agreed electronically (RMc, ST and DR as a minimum) and noted when the committee next has a meeting.
Audit & Governance Committee	n/a	
Community Engagement Committee	24 <sup>th</sup> May	Cancel the meeting. Anything urgent be agreed electronically (EL, LD and SC as a minimum) and noted when the committee next has a meeting.
Finance & General Purposes	17 <sup>th</sup> May	<b>Kind of urgent: Grant Aid for 2021/22.</b>  Cancel the meeting. Anything urgent be agreed electronically and noted when the committee next has a meeting.
Major Events	28 <sup>th</sup> June	Make no decisions on this meeting yet.
Personnel	n/a	
Planning & Licensing	11 <sup>th</sup> May 24 <sup>th</sup> May 14 <sup>th</sup> June  28 <sup>th</sup> June	Cancel these meetings. Go back to deciding electronically as we did during first lockdown. Cttee members send in their electronic comments on applications including whether or not they would object or not. I collate these comments and Glyn and I then agree a response on behalf of the council.  Make no decisions on this meeting yet.
Annual Parish Meeting	21 <sup>st</sup> June	This can be held remotely according to NALC

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

4<sup>th</sup> May 2021

A long discussion followed, with different people quoting different interpretations of government regulations and government guidance. All councillors confirmed they were happy to go back to face-to-face meetings; some had already been in similar situations in other aspects of their lives. All councillors accepted members of the public may not be comfortable returning to face-to-face meetings yet, but technology to hold so-called hybrid meetings was expensive and may not be cost-effective for this council.

There was a suggestion the emergency powers of the Chief Executive of ADC could filter down to town and parish councils but was dismissed once it was understood there was no direct reporting link between this council and ADC.

**1538** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to adopt the Clerk's suggestions as per his discussion paper until any more concrete alternatives became evident.

The Clerk will run his proposal past the Chief Executive of WSALC in case he has any suggestions on how the council could do things differently or better.

**The meeting concluded at 20:31.**

Chairman: *Cllr Steve Toney* Date: **7<sup>th</sup> June 2021**

END