



# EAST PRESTON PARISH COUNCIL

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## **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES:** of the Meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> February 2022 at East Preston Infant School, Lashmar Road, East Preston at 18:00

**PRESENT:** Councillors Patricia Gander, John Gunston, Elizabeth Linton, Glyn Mathias, Rick McElroy (Chairman), Steve Toney and Steven Wilkinson

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

Roy Allen, East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation (until 18:07)

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The following abbreviations may appear in these Minutes:

ADC – Arun District Council;

WSCC – West Sussex County Council.

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The meeting opened at 18:00.

### **157/22 APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE**

All committee members were present.

### **158/22 PERSONAL AND/OR PREJUDICIAL/PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

Cllr McElroy declared a Personal Interest in Agenda Items 6 – *To consider correspondence received from the East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation* and 7 – *To continue consideration of a proposal from the East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation regarding its CCTV system* as he is married to the Chairman of the East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation.

Cllr Linton declared a Personal Interest in Agenda Item 12 – *To consider a request from the Environmental Initiatives Working Party to take £35,000 from the Village Improvement Fund to start a Greener Buildings Project fund* – as she is a member of the Angmering-on-Sea Lawn Tennis Club.

### **159/22 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

Mr Allen said he was not present so much to ask questions as to answer any questions the committee had on Agenda Items 6 – *To consider correspondence received from the East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation* and 7 – *To continue consideration of a proposal from the East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation regarding its CCTV system*.

160/22 **EAST PRESTON FOOTBALL CLUB**

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

**East Preston Football Club**

**Committee is asked to consider a request received from East Preston Football Club.**

The Football Club operates on land leased from Arun District Council. For some time, the club has been attempting to renew its lease so it may benefit from grants. Those currently available include one to cover 70% of the costs of upgrading the floodlighting to LED, which would also reduce the club's electricity bill dramatically, and another which would help to improve the pitch. ADC is slow to respond to correspondence on this from the club and the club thinks it may help if it could show the parish council supported its request. In an email from Terry Doyle, Chairman of the Football Club, dated 11<sup>th</sup> January, he wrote, "With the massive electricity costs looming and the carbon reduction commitment would the PC be able to support my suggestion at the end [of the attached email] on extending current lease?" i.e., "to extend the current lease on the same terms and conditions that prevail now so that the current lease is 10 years plus a few months. That would be a relatively short extension that would allow us to move forward and apply for the grant."

Committee is asked to consider whether it wishes to support the club in its attempts to renew its lease in a timely manner.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

15<sup>th</sup> February 2022

The committee AGREED it would support the Football Club's efforts to renew its lease with ADC.

161/22 **EAST PRESTON & KINGSTON VILLAGE HALL FOUNDATION – CCTV CAMERA MOUNT**

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

**East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation CCTV camera mount**

**Committee is asked to agree to the mounting of additional CCTV cameras by the East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation.**

On 7<sup>th</sup> January, Premises Manager Roy Allen contacted the council as follows:

Dear Simon

We are proposing to add two additional CCTV cameras to our existing CCTV system.

One camera will be mounted on the outside of the West wall of the Miller Barn, close to the Fives Court, looking South to view the outside of the West wall of the Miller Barn, including the exit to the Warren Recreation Ground.

We would like to mount the other camera about 3m up on the Fives Court wall close to the junction with the Village Hall, looking East to view the outside of the North wall of the Warren Room, including the fire exit to the Playground.

**Please confirm that the Parish Council agree to us mounting a camera on the Fives Court wall.**  
The cable will be protected by black plastic conduit.

Kind regards

Roy Allen  
Premises Manager  
East Preston and Kingston Village Hall

I emailed Roy's request to committee members on 11<sup>th</sup> January, but only appear to have received replies from three committee members, none of whom had a problem with the proposal. In order to give the other four of you a chance to comment, I bring this to this meeting.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

15<sup>th</sup> February 2022

Mr Allen provided additional background to the Foundation's request. He agreed the Foundation would take responsibility should any damage happen to the equipment. Mr Allen confirmed the equipment and its infrastructure would be regularly monitored.

The committee AGREED unanimously to allow the Foundation to mount additional CCTV kit as requested.

#### **162/22 EAST PRESTON & KINGSTON VILLAGE HALL FOUNDATION - CCTV**

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

### **East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation CCTV**

**Committee is asked to continue consideration of a proposal from the East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation regarding its CCTV system.**

As discussed at previous meetings, the Village Hall Foundation is replacing and upgrading its CCTV system (Minute 589/21). There is capacity within the new system for four cameras which could be included for the council's use, covering areas such as the toilets and the Warren Recreation Ground which would otherwise be of little interest to the Village Hall Foundation.

The committee agreed to Cllrs Gunston, Mathias and Wilkinson looking into this proposal further. At the last meeting, the committee agreed Cllr McElroy could provide expert knowledge to the three councillors named above.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

15<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Cllr McElroy apologised to Mr Allen and said the group of councillors working on this had not been able to meet since the last committee meeting, and therefore there was no progress to report. Mr Allen accepted Cllr McElroy's apology and his promise the matter would be discussed in due course.

(Mr Allen left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.)

#### **163/22 SEA ROAD PAVEMENT EXTENSION**

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

### **Pavement extension between the Village Hall and the Warren Recreation Ground**

**Committee is asked to consider quotations received to extend the pavement in Sea Road, between the Village Hall and the entrance to the Warren Recreation Ground.**

At the Full Council meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021, council resolved, "unanimously to agree an initial Infrastructure Plan for the spending of the Community Infrastructure Levy

(CIL) income received.” That initial Infrastructure Plan contained just one item, the extension of the pavement from the Village Hall to the southern side of the main entrance to the Warren Recreation Ground car-park.

I approached WSCC for its view of this project, the response to which was not hugely helpful as it said:

There are essentially two approaches that can be taken.

1. They apply for a community highway scheme – this will go into the mix with other schemes for assessment and scoring and be considered for, at the earliest, the 2022/23 financial year for feasibility and 23/24 financial year for construction. In submitting their application they can tell us they have CIL money and we can use that first and supplement with Capital budget if not enough to cover.
2. They can entirely self-fund and deliver themselves, through a s278 Minor Works Agreement (<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/information-for-developers/road-agreements/>). This would be processed via Andrew Howick’s team but will in the first instance need our confirmation that it is a suitable project. To do this we will need to see a formal drawing with details of specification. They would need to obtain this themselves at their cost, and then procure a contractor once the MWA is agreed. There is a £3k fee for a MWA and they will need to pay a bond up front.

I am not aware of a route whereby they can “commission us to do the work”.

Underestimating the likely costs, we have pursued the self-funding option, managing to get a quotation from Balfour Beatty and subsequently, we have recently received one from Landbuild too. Both companies are WSCC-approved, but re-reading paragraph 2 above, it looks as if we would still have to pay an additional £3,000 for the MWA on top of the sums quoted by the two companies mentioned. Adding the £3,000 to either quotation received takes the costs over £12,000 and I wonder now whether it would be better going down the community highway scheme route.

The two quotes we have received are for £9,775.34 excl. VAT and £9,761.46 excl. VAT. Neither contains the formal drawing which will be a further expense. Both can be found at Appendix A below.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

15<sup>th</sup> February 2022

Cllr Toney proposed the project be directed back to WSCC to be progressed as a community highway scheme.

In response to a question, the Clerk explained the proposal was to improve safety for people walking between the Village Hall and the Warren Recreation Ground and also to provide a safer refuge on the western side of Sea Road for people crossing from the eastern side wanting to visit either the Village Hall or the Warren Recreation Ground. This is particularly important for people with children wishing to use the children’s play area.

In answer to another question, the Clerk said ADC expected councils to have spent their Community Infrastructure Levy money on authorised projects within three years, but that period could be extended if there was good reason. The council was not in danger of losing the £2,500 at this time.

The committee AGREED unanimously to try and progress this as a WSCC community highway scheme.

#### **164/22 FLAT AND FRONTAGE WORKING PARTY**

The committee considered the following paper which had been circulated in advance of the meeting:

### **Council Office – Flat and Frontage Working Party**

**Committee is asked to consider the following update from the Flat & Frontage Working Party with a possible view to making a recommendation to Full Council.**

At its meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> April, Full Council agreed to use Fuller Associates for work on the frontage and internal layout of the Council Office (Minute 287/21, Resolution 1524). The company has been working on revising the layout of the Council Office to make it all more accessible.

In his role as Chairman of the Flat and Frontage Working Party, Cllr Wilkinson and I have met with David Fuller and he has explained the changes he is proposing to the lobby area of the office. David has spoken to Building Regulations who appear to be happy some accessibility improvements are being made.

The proposals would see one desk space go, requiring two members of office staff to share a desk. The Personnel Committee did not see that as unworkable, and the two members of staff were approached about this idea, one responding more positively to the idea than the other.

At the last meeting, Cllr Wilkinson gave a presentation on the proposals. He expanded upon the work Fuller Associates has done and suggested a way to provide even better access through the office would be for the central section, i.e. the areas in which Dawn and Tracy / Caspar currently sit. Committee agreed I should go to an office furniture company to see what suggestions they may have. Cllr Gander put me in touch with a company in Burgess Hill she had used before.

The company has produced two initial designs, one for opening up the whole of the area and one for retaining Dawn's "cubicle" as it is. Cllr Toney has spoken to Dawn to gauge her feelings about going open plan, and Dawn did express some reservations. I believe Cllr Gander may have also spoken to Dawn on this.

The committee may consider it irrelevant, but when Rustington Parish Council redesigned its office space about ten years ago, it retained separate, enclosed working spaces for the Clerk and the Assistant Clerk.

The two designs can be found at Appendix B below.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

16<sup>th</sup> February 2022

In light of the council's current negotiations over the future of the Conservative Hall, Cllr Wilkinson proposed all proposals for changes to the office frontage and internal layout were put on hold. Cllrs Mathias and Gander supported the proposal.

Cllrs Gander and Toney confirmed they had spoken to Mrs Reid and that she had expressed concerns about the noise levels in the office when it was busy with visitors. Reconfiguring the office to an open plan would likely increase the noise levels around Mrs Reid's workspace.

The committee AGREED unanimously to defer further work on the office frontage and internal layout for the time being.

The Clerk provided an update on the flat tenancy. The court hearing had taken place on 18<sup>th</sup> February and the judge had agreed to issue a "notice for possession, repayment of rent arrears and also payment of the court fees." No dates were known yet.

**165/22 DEFIBRILLATORS**

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

**Village defibrillators**

**Committee is asked to consider a proposal to increase availability of defibrillators in the village.**

Cllr Wilkinson to lead on this item.

Councillors will be aware of the article in the Winter 2022 Newsletter, written by Cllr Wilkinson and listing the defibrillators we know about in the village.



**Defibrillators in East Preston**

A defibrillator is a device that gives a high energy electric shock to the heart of someone who is having a heart attack. This high energy shock is called defibrillation and it's an essential part in trying to save the life of someone who's in cardiac arrest. A defibrillator may also be referred to as a defib, an AED (Automated External Defibrillator) or a PAD (Public Access Defibrillator).

Defibs are very easy to use. Although they don't all look the same, they all function in broadly the same way. You do not need training to use one because the machine gives clear spoken instructions – all you have to do is follow them. A defibrillator will not shock someone unless they need it.

These are the 24/7 defibs in and near the village:

- Council Office, 122 Sea Road, BN16 1NN
- Village Hall, 52 Sea Road, BN16 1LP
- Our Lady, Star of the Sea, Vermont Drive, BN16 1JU
- South Strand Community Toilets, South Strand, BN16 1PW
- Angmering Railway Station, Station Road, BN16 3RE

Meanwhile, these are currently stored inside and have less than 24/7 availability:

- Angmering-on-Sea Lawn Tennis Club, Homelands Avenue, BN16 1PS
- British Legion, The Street, BN16 1JL
- East Preston & Kingston Bowls Club, Sea Lane, BN16 1NG
- East Preston Football Club, Lashmar Road, BN16 1E5
- Willow Green Surgery, Station Road, Rustington, BN16 3AH

Do not worry about remembering this information as the 999 operator will direct you to the nearest available. If directed to a locked defib cabinet, the 999 operator will give you the necessary code. Thereafter follow the audio instructions given by the defib.

Additional information provided by the British Heart Foundation

Cllr Wilkinson would like to propose the council purchases external, lockable cabinets for those venues where the defibrillator is not available 24/7 because it is stored inside the building. The owners of the buildings would be responsible for installing the cabinet and supplying it with power.

Since the article was published, Cllr Toney has secured a defibrillator for outside the fire station too.

Defib cabinets can be purchased from a number of suppliers, some of which offer special discounts from time to time, so it would be a matter of choosing a spec and then shopping around. When the council bought its defib in late 2017, the stainless steel cabinet we bought was £670. Polycarbonate cabinets are now available and can be as little as half that price. Our installation cost £210. Both prices exclude VAT.

If the committee agrees to pursue this idea it will need to ask Full Council for the money.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

16<sup>th</sup> February 2022

Cllr Wilkinson provided further background to the proposal to ask council to finance the provision of external defibrillator cabinets for six venues within the village in order to make those additional defibrillators available for use 24/7 rather than the limited hours they were currently available. He had looked at some suitable cabinets and one which had heating and lighting provision would cost approximately £500 at present.

The committee AGREED unanimously to ask council to set aside up to £3,500 for use in this project.

The council could assist those organisations which receive a grant from this fund to ensure the defibrillators were subjected to regular checking and listed with the relevant service providers.

**166/22 WARREN RECREATION GROUND – ANNUAL RETURN**

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

## **Warren Recreation Ground – Annual Return**

### **Committee is asked to consider a proposal regarding the future compilation of the Annual Return for the Warren Recreation Ground charity.**

As I reported in my Clerk's Report to the February Full Council meeting, for the year-ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020, the council worked with a new volunteer from the community on the charity's Annual Return as our previous community volunteer had emigrated.

The Charity Commission requires a charity's Annual Return is submitted by 31<sup>st</sup> January of the following year, a full ten months after the charity's financial year has ended. The charity has its Annual General Meeting, usually around September, which approves the financial reports, after which there is a small amount of work to do by the accountant.

For the year-ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020, it was necessary to ask for an extension to the filing date as the volunteer accountant had had Covid and was catching up. I did not expect to have to ask for an extension this year too but, despite me chasing him and despite his promises to provide the necessary documents in plenty of time, it was something like 16:30 on 31<sup>st</sup> January he fulfilled his promise. Having not heard from him for several days before the 28<sup>th</sup> January, in my frustration I attempted to complete the online bit of the Annual Return as no filing extensions were being awarded this year. Luckily, because both income and expenditure for the year were below £25,000, fewer documents were required so effectively the charity submitted its Annual Return on 28<sup>th</sup> January. When the volunteer provided his paperwork, thankfully my figures agreed with his so I did not need to amend anything.

In short though, I would prefer not to go through this for a third year. The amount of work required is small and could easily be done within a month of us signing off the figures at the Annual General Meeting. I have been in touch with a village-based accountant to ask if his company would be willing to undertake this work for us. His reply:

Dear Simon,

We would be happy to undertake this assignment.

As you know, a charity with income of between £25,000 and £250,000 must have an independent examination.

No qualification is required for the person undertaking this assignment, although the person must be competent to undertake it. There are guidelines on the government website as to how to proceed. We, as a regulated firm of Chartered Accountants have our own work program which we have to follow for this type of assignment. This means that it is quite top heavy administratively in order to ensure that we complete all of the work program provided and we also have onboarding and money laundering considerations with any new assignment.

This means that, from a professional point of view, it is very difficult to undertake this type of work for less than £400 plus VAT because of the entire rigmarole of making sure that it is completed in accordance with Best Practice, etc.

However, this assignment is relatively close to my heart, involving cricket and the village and therefore we would be happy to set a fee of £150 plus VAT for an annual intervention, subject of course to annual inflation review.

It is not too small for us and there is an element of wishing to help the community. I do feel however there needs to be this minimum charge to cover our costs.

We would of course ensure you are not left waiting for the arrival of the report minutes before the deadline is due to expire and would look to turn it around as quickly as possible. In many ways, it would be a useful exercise for our trainees in how to prepare these reports.

If that is of interest to you, please let me know.

Kind regards,

David Macdonald BA FCA  
Managing Partner

The Martlet Partnership LLP

On behalf of the charity, is the committee happy to proceed with The Martlet Partnership LLP for future Annual Returns?

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

16<sup>th</sup> February 2022

The Clerk explained the background and the committee AGREED unanimously for the Warren Recreation Ground charity to contract The Martlet Partnership LLP to complete its Annual Return in future. As this matter arose after the budgets for 2022/23 had been agreed, there is no provision in the 2022/23 budget for this expenditure. Therefore this will be an overspend on a new budget line covering the Warren Recreation Ground Annual Return in the 2022/23 financial year.

#### **167/22 ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES WORKING PARTY (EIWP) – GREENER BUILDINGS PROJECT**

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

### **Greener Buildings Project fund**

**Committee is asked to consider a request from the Environmental Initiatives Working Party to take £35,000 from the Village Improvement Fund to set up a Greener Buildings Project fund.**

Cllr Gunston to lead on this item.

Councillors are already aware of the Greener Building Project which is working with the custodians of East Preston buildings used by members of the public to reduce the village's carbon footprint. The Environmental Initiatives Working Party has said all along it would like to set up a fund to which those custodians could apply if their own attempts at finding grants were unsuccessful.

At the time of writing, there is just over £42,000 in the council's Village Improvement Fund.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

16<sup>th</sup> February 2022

Cllr Gunston provided in-depth background to this request. Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 gave local councils the ability to provide grants to organisations working within their areas for the benefit of the village. A sum was set centrally for this expenditure and that sum for the current financial year was £8.41. The Act allowed that sum to be multiplied by the electorate of a community and that provided the maximum amount that could be spent against Section 137 in a given year. [Clerk's Note: the sum for 2022/23 had been set to £8.82. Assuming at electorate of c5,000, that allowed the council Section 137 spend of up to £44,100 for the coming financial year.]

Cllr Gunston said the EIWP would like to divert £35,000 from the Village Improvement Fund to work on further environmental improvements at the publicly-used buildings within the village in order to improve the village's carbon footprint. Similar amounts could be budgeted in coming financial years. Grants would be made available to those



buildings on the understanding no grant would ever be bigger than the amount of money the building custodians themselves were putting into the project. At a rough estimate, Cllr Gunston believed £35,000 of funding matched with £35,000 of funding provided by the building custodians could fund three or four larger projects towards improving the village's carbon footprint.

Cllr Mathias suggested a better use of public money might be the contracting of a fundraiser to help the council and the building custodians find suitable grants to apply for. On behalf of the EIWP, Cllr Gander had done some initial investigation into grant finders who generally seemed to work on a percentage of the money they raise.

Cllr Gunston had been hoping to meet with all the building custodians together in March to hand out the Energy Performance Certificates the council funded and, if it was ready in time, to talk the custodians through the report from the Brighton & Hove Energy Services Cooperative (BHESCo) which the council had also recently agreed to fund. Cllr Gunston was not sure it would be possible to meet his preferred date in March now. Part of his aim for such a meeting was for the custodians to get talking amongst themselves about possible solutions and improvements they could make to their buildings. The Clerk had also suggested the sports clubs involved might want to band together to make a single, village-wide grant application to a body such as Sport England.

Following a suggestion to defer further discussion on this topic until after the BHESCo report had been received, the meeting moved on.

### **168/22 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2021**

The draft Minutes had been circulated to all councillors on 14<sup>th</sup> December asking for suggested amendments by 21<sup>st</sup> December. Cllr Linton spotted one typographical error which has been corrected.

The committee AGREED unanimously the Minutes could be signed as a true record of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> December. Cllr McElroy duly signed the Minutes.

### **169/22 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

The committee NOTED the following report, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting, without adding anything:

## **Updates from previous meetings**

**Minute 1000/21 – Council budget for 2022/23** – Full Council supported this committee's resolution to set the budget at £304,491.78 for the 2022/23 financial year (Minute 012/22, Resolution 1605).

**Minute 1001/21 – Credit card** – the tortuous credit card application process has ended and two credit cards have been received, one in my name and a back-up card in Cllr Gunston's name. I have used it twice so far, once for the Village Clock Planning Application and once for the rubber backing for the next blue plaque.

**Minute 1002/21 – Grant Aid 2021/22 – West Sussex MIND Youth Mental Health Service** – Full Council supported this committee's resolution to grant £500 to this organisation (Minute 014/22, Resolution 1607). The Funding Development Officer who initiated the grant request, Jenny Rowley, has written in, "Thank you so much for letting us know this is fantastic news. We really are appreciative for your support."

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

16<sup>th</sup> February 2022

### **170/22 ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING (16<sup>TH</sup> MAY)**

Nothing new was suggested at this time.

*The Meeting closed at 18:55.*

Chairman: *Clr Rick McElroy*    Date: **16<sup>th</sup> May 2022**

(END)