



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 Tuesday, 16th May 2023 at East Preston Infant School, Lashmar Road, East Preston at 19:00

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

ALSO: Clerk to the Council, Simon Cross

Neil Ellis and Ken Glover, East Preston Men in Sheds (until 19:40)

The following abbreviations may appear in these Minutes:

ADC – Arun District Council;

WSCC – West Sussex County Council.

The meeting opened at 18:00. Cllr McElroy welcomed everyone present.

Following the Annual Meeting of the Council on 16th May, the membership of this committee was Cllrs Bowman, Bradshaw, Mathias, Moore and Wilkinson. As Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council respectively, Cllrs Toney and Linton were entitled to attend and vote at meetings of this committee.

387/23 APPOINTMENT OF A COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN FOR THE YEAR 2023/24

Ahead of the meeting, the Clerk had asked for any candidates to let him know – Cllr McElroy had put himself forward.

The Clerk asked if there were any other candidates and there were not. The meeting AGREED Cllr Toney could act as a second teller alongside the Clerk.

Cllr McElroy was appointed unopposed.

Cllr Toney confirmed all six councillors present had voted.

388/23 APPOINTMENT OF A COMMITTEE VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR THE YEAR 2023/24

Ahead of the meeting, the Clerk had asked for any candidates to let him know – Cllr Gunston had put himself forward.

The Clerk asked if there were any other candidates and there were not. The meeting AGREED Cllr Toney could act as a second teller alongside the Clerk.

Cllr Gunston was appointed unopposed.

Cllr Toney confirmed all six councillors present had voted.

389/23 APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE

All committee members were present.

390/23 PERSONAL AND/OR PREJUDICIAL/PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Cllrs Toney, Mathias and Gunston all declared a Personal Interest in Agenda Item 9, *To consider Grant Aid applications from [...] respectively 1st East Preston Scouts, Chichester Diocesan Association for Family Support Work and East Preston Yarnbombers.*

Cllr Linton declared a Personal Interest in Agenda Item 12, *To consider applications for a grant from the Green Buildings Project fund: Angmering on Sea Lawn Tennis Club.*

391/23 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Messrs Ellis and Glover were present representing East Preston Men in Sheds. They said they were willing to answer any questions related to their Agenda Item.

The committee AGREED unanimously to consider the East Preston Men in Sheds item first.

392/23 EAST PRESTON MEN IN SHEDS

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

East Preston Men in Sheds

Committee is asked to consider a couple of matters related to East Preston Men in Sheds.

Last year, the committee AGREED to donate up to £750 to East Preston Men in Sheds for expenditure related to a Planning Application (Minute 734/22). At the time, the committee felt that was the most practical assistance it could provide.

A Planning Application has been submitted. I emailed committee members on 26th April, at which time I understood East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation (EPKVHF) had submitted the Planning Application. In that email I asked whether committee members were happy for the council to reimburse the VHF the £266.20 for the Planning Application. All that replied were happy but then my understanding was changed to the fact the Planning Application had been paid for personally by one member of the VHF committee, Roy Allen.

Keep reading because this is going somewhere.

On 8th May, the council received the following email from the Men in Sheds committee:

Hello Simon,

I hope that you are well, and that you have enjoyed the Coronation Weekend.

Would you please pass this email request to the Finance and General Purposes Committee. I am told this is their title, and that they are scheduled to meet on the 16th May.

For the Attention of:

The East Preston Parish Council

Finance and General Purposes Committee.

As a relatively new group, 'East Preston Men in Sheds' have developed with speed and purpose over the last 18 months.

During that time we have formed our management committee, and raised a modest level of finance.

We are already:

- an officially registered charity (No.1202293)
- have a detailed constitution
- have developed a series of operational policies
- have produced a detailed website
- sourced the way forward financially by talking to, and working alongside an experienced fund raiser
- have been invited to work at The Angmering School, and have supportive projects underway
- and much more.

In addition, we have written and submitted grant applications that are currently under consideration. On the finance front, we are part of the 'Threeway Partnership Grant Funding Application' with the 'National Lottery Community Partnership' for a shed in the Village Hall Car Park Area.

Inevitably, grant applications take time to become available, and then many months to be processed and hopefully awarded.

All of the above progress has incurred costs, and at this point our funds are heavily depleted. In the meantime, we are in need of some interim funding to keep us moving forward with routine operational and development costs.

In view of this situation, we wish to apply to you for interim financial support of £250 to keep the momentum in this community initiative.

We hope that you are able to support us in this way, which we recognise is in addition to you having agreed to meet the recent planning permission costs for the Village Hall Shed.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours sincerely,

The Trustees and Management Committee of East Preston Men in Sheds.

Neil Ellis,
Ken Glover,
Adrian Miller,
Tony Page,
Kelvan Gale

Taking the two matters above into consideration together, my proposal would be the committee agrees to donate the whole of last year's £750 to East Preston Men in Sheds now, on the understanding some of that is paid to Roy Allen to reimburse him for the Planning Application. This resolves the slight transparency problem of the council paying an individual for a Planning Application, it provides the £250 requested by the committee in the letter above, and it gives a further almost £250 for the group to spend as it sees fit whilst it is continuing to set itself up.

Cllr Toney and (now former) Cllr Gander have attended a couple of meetings recently with representatives of East Preston Men in Sheds and the EPKVHF, and I understand those meetings have been positive for all parties involved.

Neil Ellis, Chairman of East Preston Men in Sheds, has agreed to attend the meeting.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

10th May 2023

Following a brief discussion, the committee AGREED unanimously to release the full £750 agreed last year (Minute 734/22), on the understanding part of the grant would be for the Men in Sheds to reimburse Mr Allen for the Planning Application fee. This money will be taken from the council's general reserve as money agreed last year but not donated will have returned to the general reserve at year end.

393/23 ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE COMMITTEE'S TERMS OF REFERENCE

Terms of Reference

Committee is asked to review and agree the committee's Terms of Reference for the coming year.

The current Terms of Reference can be found at Appendix A below. These were last reviewed and adopted by the committee on 16th May 2022.

At the time of writing, I have proposed no changes this year.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

10th May 2023

The committee AGREED unanimously no changes were needed currently.

394/23 SECTION 144 GRANT – EAST PRESTON FESTIVAL COMMITTEE

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

Grant Aid 2023/24

Committee is asked to consider the following tourism grant request for the current financial year.

Organisation – charity no	Amount requested? (£)	Councillor notes:
East Preston Festival Committee n/a	£1900 “Festival insurance for 2023/24 and children's entertainment for the 2023 Festival Community Fete”	

Section 144 of the Local Government Act 1972, allows councils to encourage people to visit their area for recreation, health purposes etc..

The council budgeted £2,000 for Section 144 tourism grants to be used by the East Preston Festival Committee.

I have not invited any Festival Committee members to attend the meeting, but can do if any committee member thinks I should.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

10th May 2023

The committee AGREED unanimously to award £1,900 to East Preston Festival Committee.

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

Grant Aid 2023/24

Committee is asked to consider the following Grant Aid requests for the current financial year.

The council budgeted £6,000 for Section 137 Grant Aid donations this financial year.

Publicity about the Grant Aid process started in February, with a closing date for applications of 31st March. The following thirteen applications have been received.

Organisation – charity no	Amount requested?	Outcome
1 st East Preston Scout Group 305895	£400 “Camping equipment”	£400
4SIGHT Vision Support 1075447	£350 “to support 7 of these clients for 12 months” “So that we can continue providing help and support to anyone in your Parish of East Preston who is living with sight loss.”	£350
Arun and Chichester Citizens Advice 1099640	£250 “Improving our digital technologies”	£250
Chichester Diocesan Association for Family Support Work 285337	£500 “Funding to provide outreach for Ukrainian and East Preston Families and their children through creative after-school clubs”	†
East Preston & Kingston Bowls Club n/a	£1000 “Replacement of the Bowls Green Sprinkler System”	£1,000
East Preston Stoolball Club n/a	£100 “To enable several new members from EP access the club”	£100
East Preston Yarnbombers	£200 “To assist with the purchase of supplies required to decorate the village with crochet and knitting”	£200 *
FEPIS - Friends of East Preston Infant School 1108710	“Multiples of £250 per class eg: year group = £750 (3 x £250) whole school = £2,250 (9 x £250)” “New books for classes (supporting new reading scheme”	£750
Friends of Oak Grove College, Durrington 271168	£118.56 “Books for our local SEND school” (SEND is Special educational needs and disability)	£150
Home-Start Arun, Worthing and Adur 1132416	£500 “To continue to provide family-support to vulnerable families in East Preston”	£500
Patient Link 1127311	“We’ll happily accept any help you are offering us, please!” “Purchase of a replacement gazebo”	£250

Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, East Preston with Kingston 1180544	£175 "Microwave + 2 kettles for Church kitchen"	£175
Tyler's Trust 1162827	£200 "Provide Gift Boxes for Terminally Ill Children, Siblings and Parents."	£200
Victim Support (Sussex Area) 298028	£200 "Recruit and train new volunteers to give emotional and practical support"	£200
WADARS 1149884	£500 "The uniform and equipment to train 10 local volunteers as Animal Rescue Officers"	£500

As before, committee members are advised to call in at the Council Office in advance of the meeting to read the application forms for themselves.

Unusually, I have not been able to find a request from St Barnabas House.

Councillors may wish to think about a maximum sum we award the above organisations.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

10th May 2023

N.B. when circulated the Outcome column was headed Councillor's notes.

The committee AGREED donations as per the Outcome column above. The donations totalled £5,025, leaving £975 in the Section 137 budget line for 2023/24.

† The committee AGREED to ask further questions of the Chichester Diocesan Association for Family Support Work in order to understand the organisation's mechanics better.

* Cllr Gunston did not vote on the award to East Preston Yarnbombers as his wife is a member.

(Messrs E and G left at the conclusion of this item, saying it had been very interesting.)

396/23 SOUTH STRAND COMMUNITY TOILETS

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

South Strand Community Toilets

Committee is asked to consider funding for the South Strand Community Toilets for this council term.

At this point in 2019, soon after the Local Elections for that year, the committee agreed an annual sum to be paid to South Strand Community Toilets for the four years of the council term. Those payments were made approximately in April 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023.

The organisation is very appreciative of the donations this council has made in recognition of the value East Preston residents put upon the toilets. The Chairman, George Schlich, has attended council meetings to thank the council for its input, most recently the Annual Parish Meeting in June 2022.

According to an online RPI calculator, £1,000 in April 2020 is now worth £1,254. Perhaps the committee could agree to pay £1,250 in April 2024, 2025, 2026 and 2027 before reconsidering its position on this grant at the beginning of the next term.

There was concern expressed at the fact the organisation had not yet registered itself as a charity, which would have enabled it to earn more money on personal donations given. The Clerk reported he had attended the organisation's Annual General Meeting on 20th April, at which it had been stated the organisation was still investigating the pros and cons of being a charity.

The meeting AGREED unanimously to defer a decision on this matter until after a representative of the organisation had come to a meeting to answer questions about the charitable status.

397/23 GREENER BUILDINGS FUND

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

Greener Buildings Project fund

Committee is asked to consider the following request for funding from the Greener Buildings Project fund.

Cllr Gunston to lead on this item.

Organisation – charity no	Amount requested? (£)	Councillor notes:
Angmering-on-Sea Lawn Tennis Club n/a	£35,000 “replacement of ageing halogen floodlights with energy efficient greener LED floodlights”	

Cllr Gunston to lead on this item.

Earlier in the year, council agreed to transfer £42,076.22 into the Greener Buildings Project which is hoping to help the custodians of a number of publicly-accessible buildings in the village improve their carbon footprint (6th June, Minute 523/22, Resolution 1664). Following the purchase of Energy Performance Certificates for the buildings, and a grant each to East Preston Football Club and East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation, £35,814.22 was left in the fund.

Custodians were advised they could apply for grants of up to 50% of the costs of any projects which fell in line with the aims of the Greener Buildings Project. Please note the amount being requested is somewhat north of the 50% threshold.

Cllr Linton declared a Personal Interest in this item as a member of the tennis club, and reserved the right to speak upon and vote upon this matter.

Cllr Gunston provided some further background to this item. He reminded the committee the tennis club had, initially and of its own choice, not been part of the Greener Buildings Project, although it had joined in once the majority of the clubhouse refurbishment had taken place.

Several concerns were raised about this application.

Cllr Mathias said his understanding of the Greener Buildings Project had always been it was based upon buildings not peripheral utilities.

Cllr Gunston said the Greener Buildings Fund had been explicit in offering no more than 50% of a project's costs and yet this application was for almost 66% of the even the cheaper of the two quotes mentioned in the application.

The Clerk said he was concerned agreeing to such a large sum, even the genuine 50% of the project costs, would open the council to possibly-harsh criticism from some residents.

The meeting AGREED representation from the tennis club should be invited to the committee's next meeting.

Cllr Gunston AGREED to set up an update meeting for building custodians and interested councillors.

398/23 COUNCIL PLAN

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

Review of Council Plan and Action Plan

Cllr Wilkinson is the council lead on its review of the Council Plan and the East Preston Action Plan. Work has started but Cllr Wilkinson was waiting for the Local Elections to take place as that may well have seen a change in some of the personnel critical for this work.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

10th May 2023

Cllr Wilkinson said he had waited until after the recent Local Elections in case of any changes in personnel within the committees. Once all seven committees had been populated and had elected their chairmen, he would be in touch asking those chairmen to update their committee's pieces within the Council Plan and to review the list of actions from the East Preston Action Plan, with a view to incorporating relevant actions into the Council Plan so the Action Plan could be closed.

Cllr McElroy asked for a meeting of all committee chairmen so they could discuss the document(s) together. Cllr Wilkinson said he would call such a meeting at an appropriate juncture of the project.

399/23 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20TH FEBRUARY 2023

The draft Minutes had been circulated to all councillors on 28th February asking for suggested amendments by 7th March. Cllr Wilkinson had spotted a typo which had been corrected.

The committee AGREED unanimously the Minutes could be signed as a true record of the meeting held on 20th February. Cllr McElroy duly signed the Minutes.

400/23 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

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

Updates from previous meetings

Minute 154/23 – East Preston Village Preschool – Forest School Proposal – work has started and, by the time of the meeting, may well have ended on creating a Forest School area at the back of the Cricket Pavilion.

Minute 155/23 – Personnel Committee – Council Office – officer chairs – new chairs and a new desk for Alison have arrived and been brought into service. Thanks to Cllr Gunston for his assistance in building Alison's new desk. Three old chairs were adopted a member of the public, but my old chair simply needs scrapping. If a committee member could consider taking the chair to the tip for us, that would be much appreciated.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

10th May 2023

In response to a question from Cllr Gunston, the Clerk said the year-end figures had been finalised by the council's accountant, would be reviewed by the council's internal auditor on 22nd May, and then presented to council at the meeting on 5th June.

401/23 ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING (21ST AUGUST)

Nothing was suggested.

The Meeting closed at 20:11.

Chairman: *Cllr Rick McElroy* Date: **21st August 2023**

(END)