



EAST PRESTON PARISH COUNCIL

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MINUTES: of the Proceedings of the Monthly Meeting of East Preston Parish Council held at 19.00 on Monday, 5th February 2024 at East Preston Infant School, Lashmar Road, East Preston

PRESENT: Councillors Christine Bowman, Andrea Chapman, Lisa Duff, Barbara Gale, John Gunston, Helen Hill, Elizabeth Linton, Glyn Mathias, David Moore, Steve Toney (Chairman) and Steven Wilkinson

ALSO: Simon Cross, Clerk to the Council

West Sussex County Councillor Roger Elkins (until 19:25)

Mr G and Mrs M

ABSENT: Councillors Kit Bradshaw and Rick McElroy

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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;
NHS – National Health Service;
NR – Network Rail;
PCSO – Police Community Support Officer;
SLCC – Society of Local Council Clerks;

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

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The meeting opened at 19.00. Cllr Toney welcomed everyone to the meeting.

092/24 INTRODUCTIONS

Cllr Toney welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the meeting protocol and safety information.

093/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology and a reason for absence had been received from Cllrs Bradshaw and McElroy.

1819 The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously to accept the apologies received from Cllrs Bradshaw (unavailable) and McElroy (work).

Apologies had also been received from District Cllrs Philippa Bower, Ricky Bower and Paul Kelly and Mrs Linda Denton.

094/24 DECLARATION OF PERSONAL AND/OR PREJUDICIAL/PECUNIARY INTERESTS

None were declared.

Cllr Toney reminded councillors they could also declare an Interest at the beginning of each Agenda Item.

095/24 PUBLIC SESSION

Agenda Item 13a – West Sussex County Council – Mrs M lamented the condition of the grass verge outside 96 Sea Road, the southernmost piece of verge in that stretch of Sea Road and one which had not been planted with a new tree during the November WSCC tree-planting programme. Mrs M suggested the piece of verge be tarmacked over as it was currently a trip hazard and an eyesore.

096/24 COUNCIL RESPONSES

Agenda Item 13a – West Sussex County Council – the Clerk replied WSCC was well aware of the stretch of grass verge to which Mrs M referred, but he was not sure of its current thinking on this matter.

097/24 WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

Cllr Toney invited County Cllr Elkins to address the meeting next.

Cllr Elkins said the main discussions at the county council at this time were around the final budget for the coming financial year. The proposal was for the maximum increase, 4.99%, without the need for a referendum.

Cllr Elkins reported the county council, although financially-challenged, was not in danger of going bankrupt as were other councils across the country.

The proposed budget included provision for an increase in highways maintenance spend.

The changing profile of the county's population presented its own challenges. Between the 2011 and 2021 censuses, the number of over-65s in the county had increased by 19%.

The county council was still looking at bus improvements as some services were still not getting the passengers they needed, despite the help given by the £2 flat rate offer.

Cllr Elkins confirmed he has passed on this council's letter about gulley clearance to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, Cllr Joy Dennis, although he understood the council had yet to receive an acknowledgement from Cllr Dennis's office. Cllr Elkins reported overnight gulley clearance work had been taking place in the area as the county council took the threat of surface water flooding very seriously.

The council's Pension Fund had been performing well and this had led to the council making savings elsewhere.

In response to a question from Cllr Linton, Cllr Elkins said he would liaise with the Clerk about the Roundstone Level Crossing public meeting scheduled for 21st March. Cllr Linton stressed the importance of the meeting and explained the thinking behind it – stakeholders and public both having the chance to put across their perspectives and hear others' perspectives. Cllr Elkins said the county council would want to ensure the best possible representative attended. He was not sure any WSCC representative would be empowered to make any decisions at such a meeting but they would listen and take away points the county council might consider.

Cllr Gunston invited Cllr Elkins to attend one of two public meetings being held to discuss the Local Energy Plan currently being formulated. The first meeting was on 6th March in the village and the second was on 12th March in Angmering. The WSCC Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change, Cllr Deborah Urquhart, had agreed to address both meetings, other commitments allowing.

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

098/24 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8TH JANUARY

The draft Minutes were circulated to all councillors on 10th January asking for suggested amendments by the 17th January. None were received.

1820 The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously the Chairman could sign the Minutes as a true record of the meeting held on 8th January. Cllr Toney duly did so.

099/24 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 824/23 – Warren Recreation Ground**
- 3. Minute 1016/23 – public session – East Preston in Bloom – East Preston Football Club boundary**
- 4. Minute 1019/23 – Arun District Council – flooding recovery group**
- 5. Minute 1019/23 – Arun District Council – allotments**
- 6. Minute 1021/23 – West Sussex County Council – parking restrictions in Vicarage Lane**
- 7. Minute 012/24 – Finance & General Purposes Committee – budget and precept for 2024/25**
- 8. Minute 015/24 – West Sussex County Council – highways maintenance**

1. Introduction

This is the report covering items discussed during Full Council meetings up to and including the meeting held on 8th January 2024.

2. Minute 824/23 – Warren Recreation Ground

The charity's Annual Return was submitted to the Charity Commission on 10th January, a full three weeks ahead of the deadline. The charity was charged £125 for this piece of work.

3. Minute 1016/23 – public session – East Preston in Bloom – East Preston Football Club boundary

Work has taken place to tidy the Roundstone Drive side of the boundary fence at the Football Club, and Patricia Gander has told me the chairman of the Football Club, Tim Teasel, has said the club is also working to improve its side of the boundary fence.

4. Minute 1019/23 – Arun District Council – flooding recovery group

On 19th January, the council was invited to send representation, initially chairman or vice-chairman, to be part of the ADC "Flood Forum to understand the issues of the main flooding events, understand the impacts and make recommendations on practical and deliverable measures to reduce the impact of flooding on the Districts residents and businesses." EPPC is one

of only four local councils invited to join the forum, as the four parts of the district worst hit by recent flooding.

Cllr Toney agreed to be this council's representative. The first meeting is on 26th February in Bersted, at which "Southern Water will be providing a short presentation on their roles and responsibilities and the workplan/actions being taken across the District to prevent the flooding issues that residents of the district have had." This does mean Cllr Toney will miss the finance training scheduled for that evening.

5. **Minute 1019/23 – Arun District Council – allotments**

No further update on this matter.

6. **Minute 1021/23 – West Sussex County Council – parking restrictions in Vicarage Lane**

This request has been allocated to Olly King at WSCC Highways, who has responded asking Mr Kimmer to provide supporting documents I know were included with the submission, as we submitted the request from the office. I have gone back to Olly to ask what may have happened to those supporting documents before we resupply them.

7. **Minute 012/24 – Finance & General Purposes Committee – budget and precept for 2024/25**

On 9th January, I informed ADC of our precept decision. Alan Smith confirmed my calculation was correct, i.e. a precept of £275,899.29 will be collected on our behalf this coming financial year.

8. **Minute 015/24 – West Sussex County Council – highways maintenance**

After some assistance from residents of Sea Lane, on 11th January, I sent a letter to Cllr Joy Dennis, WSCC Cabinet Member for Highways & Transport, via our own Cllr Elkins. I have received neither acknowledgement nor update to date.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

30th January 2024

The Clerk offered to answer any further questions but none were forthcoming.

100/24 FINANCIAL MATTERS

The Accounts for January 2024 had been distributed to Members in advance of the meeting.

- 1821** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the Outstanding Purchase Orders report for 2023/24, value £2,878.59 (excl. VAT).
- 1822** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the Regular Monthly Payments report for January 2024 totalling £1,135.82 (inc. VAT).
- 1823** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the Supplier BACS Invoices Paid report for January 2024 (totalling £50,628.42 inc. VAT).
- 1824** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the List of Sales Receipts & Bank Receipts by Bank report for financial year to date totalling £347,025.99 (inc. VAT).

The council NOTED the Bank Reconciliations to 12th January 2024.

The council NOTED the Budget Summary for 2023/24 to date.

The Chairman thanked Mr Vyse, the council's Book-keeper, for preparing the above reports.

101/24 REPORTS FROM PARISH COUNCIL COMMITTEES

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

Committees

Since the last Full Council meeting the following committees have met: Community Engagement on 22nd January, Personnel on 15th January and Planning & Licensing on 9th and 22nd January. The draft Minutes from these meetings have been circulated to all councillors with the exception of the Personnel Committee Minutes which have only been circulated to members of that committee.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

29th January 2024

Amenities Committee

Cllr Wilkinson is the chairman of this committee.

The committee did not meet in January.

Public Seating - The two benches by the chip shop at the Northern shops are in a poor state, repairs have been carried out but both benches have deteriorated further. Committee agreed that these benches are priority for replacing with recycled composite benches, which would be identical to the two Happy to Chat benches by the council's notice board. The cost of two replacement benches and installation is in the region of £1,750.00 exc VAT. Currently there is £940.00 available funding in the Amenities Seats (provide & maintain) budget.

Committee is asking Full Council to ringfence this amount until April 2024, when the order for the two new benches will be placed.

Committee is requesting Full Council ringfence £940.00 from the Amenities Seats budget until April 2024, to cover the cost of two new composite benches.

Flower Planting – Following committees' decision to extend the flower planting contract to 2028, committee has been waiting for a revised annual costing. This was delayed due to additional planters being added, each had a different seasonal flower planting. Unfortunately, the new figure has resulted in a overspend of at least £313.32 on the 2023-2024 Highways Planting Contract (Planting & Maintenance) budget. There will also be an overspend in the region of £1,523.32 in the 2024-25 Highways Planting Contract (Planting & Maintenance) budget, due to the new financial year's budget being set.

Committee is requesting at least £313.32 from Full Council's reserves to cover the cost of the 2023-2024 Flower Planting Contract.

Committee is requesting in the region of £1,523.32 from Full Council's reserves to cover the cost of the 2-24-2025 Flower Planting Contract.

Sea Road Toilets - Loo of the Year Awards 2023 - The unannounced inspection visit took place during September 2023. The initial report appeared to have several discrepancies which were amended. The overall grade awarded to the toilets is 'Platinum Plus'. The inspector's comments said, 'a very good clean well-maintained set of facilities'. The toilets have been positioned joint 9th on the Loo of the Year Awards top 10 Premier League table.

The committee's next meeting will be on 12th February.

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

30th January 2024

Audit & Governance Committee

The committee did not meet in January; the committee's next meeting will be on 11th March.

Cllr Glyn Mathias –
Chairman of the Audit & Governance Committee

30th January 2024

Community Engagement Committee

Cllr Linton is the Chairman of this committee.

The committee met on 22nd January.

The meeting agreed to pursue a public meeting about the Roundstone Level Crossing, and most major stakeholders have now been invited. A public invitation will be issued once we have received sufficient positive replies from major stakeholders.

The council will host a half-day playscheme on 9th April. This will be based at the Marjorie Bridger Scout Hall and may spill out into Langmeads Field if the weather is ok.

Cllr Duff is still seeking willing councillors to take part in the Festival Carnival Procession on 8th June.

The committee agreed to buy a snowman which could be used for photographs during Christmas Celebrations and beyond.

Discussions about the cost of the village bus service for the coming financial year are ongoing. We hope to be able to revise the route to include Angmering Station.

The Winter 2024 Newsletter was signed-off and went to print on Monday, 29th January.

Warm Welcome Space sessions are continuing at both the British Legion and St Mary the Virgin Church. The latter sessions will now run on a drop-in basis although places can still be reserved. Attendees are generally very grateful, and one wrote in on 29th January, "sorry I didn't get your message until after I saw you at The British Legion today. I enjoyed the soup and company thank you so much for organising this once again for us this year." Rachel Pawley, Field Marketer for the WSCC provider of hot meals – HILS, Health & Independent Living Support, has said she would like to visit a Warm Welcome Space session to let attendees know of what the company can provide. I am liaising with her on this at the moment. Boom Community Bank is also supplying some leaflets we could hand out.

The committee's next meeting is scheduled for 18th March.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

30th January 2024

Finance & General Purposes Committee

Cllr McElroy is the chairman of this committee.

The committee did not meet in January. Its next meeting is scheduled for 19th February.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

30th January 2024

Major Events Committee

The committee did not meet in January.

Funday Sunday, 21st April – Tickets are now on sale and advertised in the Winter 2024 Newsletter. Cllr Hill is devising a poster which will form part of the publicity for this event.

D-Day Big Lunch, 2nd June – this event is being led by the East Preston Festival Committee with support from the parish council and the East Preston and Kingston Branch of the Royal British Legion. The council has booked live entertainment and refreshments stalls for the afternoon, but will only book any attractions if the financial support from the British Legion is sufficient. At the time of writing, there has been no update from the British Legion.

East Preston Food & Drink Festival, 24th August – an initial round of invites has been sent out to businesses which may wish to take part. Initial response has been positive.

Christmas Celebrations 2024 – the French Market has agreed to attend again.

The committee's next meeting will be on 19th February.

Cllr Elizabeth Linton –
Chairman of the Major Events Committee

29th January 2024

Personnel Committee

Cllr Duff is the chairman of this committee.

The committee met on 15th January.

Cllr Duff and I are close to having a Social Media advice note available for council approval.

Further down this evening's Agenda is a suggested wording for councillors and officers wishing to comment personally upon Planning and Licensing Applications.

The committee agreed to run a financial training session for all councillors and officers. Although some councillors may feel finance is not a strong point, all councillors are party to financial decisions at most council meetings and this training may make them feel more confident about finance matters. This has subsequently been set for 18:00 on Monday, 26th February. All councillors are asked to attend.

The committee agreed to trial the Timetastic leave recording application. This will start at the beginning of March for thirteen months – the first month is free – at a cost currently of £86.40 for the year. This will help ensure all council employees are taking sufficient leave.

The committee felt public behaviour at council meetings remained very good, and the committee was happy to see a number of different faces appearing at council meetings now.

The committee continues to monitor the council's workload and its impact upon the council's staff.

On 29th January, ten councillors and all four office-based officers attended a one-hour training session on General Data Protection Regulations.

The committee's next meeting is scheduled for 15th April.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

30th January 2024

Planning & Licensing Committee

Cllr Mathias is the chairman of this committee.

The committee met on 9th and 22nd January.

The committee considered two Applications on 9th January and agreed not to raise any objections to either of them.

The committee considered a further two Applications on 22nd January, and again agreed not to raise objections to either of them. However, on one of the two, the committee agreed to ask for a Condition to be applied and also for the applicant to reconsider the positioning of a door within the proposal.

Work on the Neighbourhood Plan continues.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

24th January 2024

Additionally:

Community Engagement – Cllr Linton again stressed the importance of the Roundstone Level Crossing public meeting on 21st March and asked for as many councillors to attend as possible.

Cllr Linton said Cllr Duff needed to know final numbers of likely participants in a Festival Carnival Parade walking float on 8th June.

The two-centre Warm Welcome Space sessions were attracting acceptable numbers of attendees, the Royal British Legion proving more popular than St Mary the Virgin, but the latter providing a possibly calmer alternative.

Cllr Linton confirmed she and the Clerk had attended a further meeting with representatives of Compass Travel and Rustington Parish Council negotiating costs to the two councils for providing a No 12 bus in 2024/25. The meeting asked the CEO of Compass Travel to provide a costing for an amended and reduced route which would cover Angmering Station rather than Littlehampton Station and terminate at Wave – this should enable the route to be serviced by a single bus rather than two as at present. Concern was expressed at the dirty externals of the buses being used on the service and how this might not be encouraging to potential users.

Major Events – Cllr Linton advised tickets were on sale for the next *Funday Sunday*, being held on 21st April.

Cllr Linton said she personally was disappointed at the Royal British Legion branch's input to the joint Big D-Day Lunch event, which had, after all, initially been an idea from the branch. The council was still not certain of any financial assistance coming from the branch and to that end had not booked anything above what it would usually book for a Big Lunch event. Cllr Linton restated the overall organisation of the event was being undertaken by East Preston Festival Committee.

Personnel – Cllr Duff thanked all councillors who had attended the General Data Protection Regulations training session run on 29th January. Cllr Duff reminded all councillors of the finance training session which was booked for Monday, 26th February, two hours from 18:00. Although not all councillors may feel they have input to the financial workings of the council, all councillors do contribute annually to budget and precept discussions and this was why the Personnel Committee was recommending all councillors attended the training.

There were no updates from the council's other four committees.

102/24 AMENITIES COMMITTEE – PUBLIC SEATING

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

Amenities Committee – public seating

Council is asked to ringfence £940.00 from the Amenities public seating budget to be spent in April 2024.

As Dawn has explained above, the two benches at the northern end of the northern shops are in poor repair. Replacement and installation of the benches has been estimated at a cost of £1,750. At the time of writing, there is £940.00 left in this year's budget for public seating and the Amenities Committee would like that ringfenced to be spent in April 2024 towards the cost of the replacement benches.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

30th January 2024

Cllr Wilkinson, Chairman of the Amenities Committee, spoke in support of this proposal. No questions were asked.

1825 The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously to ringfence £940.00 from the Amenities Committee's *Seats (Provide & Maintain)* budget line for spending in the new financial year.

103/24 AMENITIES COMMITTEE – FLOWER-PLANTING

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

Amenities Committee – flower-planting contract

Council is asked to approve an overspend on Flower-planting for both 2023/24 and for 2024/25.

As Dawn has also explained above, committee has been waiting for a revised figure for its annual flower-planting. The figure has now been received, and the Amenities Committee would like approval for an overspend of **up to £500** in the current financial year, and **up to £1,750** in the new financial year. Dawn's report above gives the actual figures but we have just increased those figures here for a little contingency.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

30th January 2024

Cllr Wilkinson, Chairman of the Amenities Committee, spoke in support of this proposal. No questions were asked.

- 1826** The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve an overspend of up to £500 on the *Highways – Planting Contract (Planting & Maintenance)* budget line for 2023/24 and up to £1,750 on the *Highways – Planting Contract (Planting & Maintenance)* budget line for 2024/25.

104/24 PERSONNEL COMMITTEE – PLANNING AND LICENSING APPLICATIONS

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

Personnel Committee – Planning or Licensing Applications

Council is asked to agree a proposed wording for councillors wishing to respond to Planning or Licensing Applications as individuals.

The Personnel Committee considered this matter as councillors and officers are known to want to respond to Planning and Licensing Applications as individuals, but may be concerned their responses could be seen as a council response rather than their own personal responses.

The committee agreed to place the following recommendation before council for approval.

Councillors and officers are advised not to comment upon any Planning or Licensing Applications before a council line on an Application has been agreed by the Planning & Licensing Committee. Any comments upon an Application should be prefixed with the wording, “Although a councillor/officer of East Preston Parish Council, the following comments are my own and do not necessarily reflect those of the council.”

To some degree, this proposal was borne out at the GDPR training held on 29th January.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

30th January 2024

Cllr Duff, Chairman of the Personnel Committee, spoke in support of this proposal. No questions were asked.

- 1827** The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously to agree a proposed wording for councillors wishing to respond to Planning or Licensing Applications as individuals.

The Clerk will find a way to build this into the council’s Protocol on Councillor/Staff Relations.

There was a short discussion about councillors using their home addresses when responding to Planning and Licensing Applications. Although there was nothing to stop councillors using the Council Office address when responding to such Applications, in some cases, using an address further away from the Application site might lead to an ADC officer giving the comments less weight.

105/24 REPORTS FROM PARISH COUNCIL WORKING PARTIES

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

Working Parties

The 20mph Working Party met on 15th January. None of the other working parties have met this month.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

30th January 2024

20mph Working Party

Cllr Wilkinson is the chairman of this committee.

Following meeting with Keith Harris and me, Olly King, WSCC Highways Engineer, emailed the council on 10th January, “Prior to our meeting, as you are aware the application passed the Initial and Detailed Traffic Regulation Order assessments. Unfortunately, the application has now come to a halt at the design and pricing stage. Our Highways Technician has helped produce the attached draft Location Plan for the speed limit, and as you can see there is a significant need for materials to be installed to implement the 20mph Zone. Speed Limit Terminal signs will be required on all minor junctions (designed in black) and as requested on site, there are numerous 20mph Speed Limit Roundel road markings that will be required every 100m (designed in red) as referenced in Section 8.7.1 of the Department for Transport Traffic Signs Manual Chapter 3. With this design in mind, the estimated cost for materials alone is likely to exceed the £9,000 mark, and the threshold for a Community Traffic Regulation Order is £3,000. With these figures in mind, it is still unlikely that changing from roundels to speed repeater signs will make a difference.”

The working party called an emergency meeting for 15th January in order to consider its response to Olly. The working party agreed to progress with a 20mph speed limit in “Sea Road” stretching from the junction with Lashmar Road to the beach. I have gone back to Olly with this proposal.

I have been unable, to date, to ascertain how the proposal managed to get through two layers of assessment successfully before then falling foul.

The working party agreed it may be necessary to divert some of the funds which were set aside for purchasing Mobile Speed Indication Devices to the introduction of a the 20mph speed limit should WSCC Highways still feel the proposal is too expensive.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

29th January 2024

Conservative Hall Working Party

Cllr McElroy is the chairman of this committee.

The working party did not meet in January. An article asking the public whether or not it supports the council adopting the Conservative Hall has been included as the front page of the Winter 2024 Newsletter.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

30th January 2024

Environmental Initiatives Working Party (EIWP)

The working party did not meet, in toto, in January.

However, Michał Zarzecki, a member of the Environmental Working Party, set up and attended a meeting with Steve Hill of WSCC Highways on 10th January, along with Patricia Gander representing East Preston in Bloom. We discussed pollinator highways that can be set up on verges and managed by volunteers. Pat agreed to discuss the idea with the In Bloom group and it will be the main discussion point at our next EIWP meeting in February. We also agreed to sign up for the Nature Verge Network that meets quarterly. Operation Watershed may also offer finance to set up rain gardens so this is another option we will investigate.

Our next meeting will now be on 28th February, as 26th February has been booked for finance training.

Cllr John Gunston –
Chairman of the Environmental Initiatives Working Party

23rd January 2024

Flat Working Party

Cllr Wilkinson is the chairman of this committee.

Nothing to report at this time.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

30th January 2024

Leases Working Party

The working party is still awaiting further contact from the Bowls Club.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

30th January 2024

Additionally:

20mph – the Clerk reported he had subsequently heard back from the WSCC Highways officer who had confirmed the revised proposal could be processed under the original Traffic Regulation Order request. The officer had asked the Clerk to provide a map showing “the exact Speed Limit Terminal sign locations”. Although the Clerk thought he knew what the officer was looking for, he had asked for clarification after which he would hopefully be able to produce the required map. The officer was now on leave which caused a further delay.

Environmental Initiatives Working Party – Cllr Gunston took the opportunity to invite all councillors to the Local Energy Plan meeting being held at East Preston Junior School on 6th March at 19:00.

Flat – the Clerk reported some underhand behaviour by Southern Water which left the tenant believing her credit rating was being damaged by a speculative bill produced by Southern Water. The council’s bookkeeper, Adrian Vyse, had contacted Southern Water in December and been advised the bill would be cancelled and a letter sent to the tenant advising her of this. Adrian had spoken to Southern Water again on the day of the meeting, and the previous conversation was on record. The advisor said again the bill would be cancelled and a letter sent to the tenant although the advisor could not say how long it would take for this process to be completed owing to the number of customers in the same position. Adrian had also spoken to the debt collection company and advised them of the situation.

There were no updates from the council’s other working parties.

106/24 ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

No District Councillors were present.

Concern was expressed at the frequency Arun District Councillors attended parish council meetings or sent written reports in place of attendance. There were no similar concerns raised about County Cllr Elkins.

The Clerk said district councillors did usually give apologies and said he would go back for a period of time and look at attendance records of the district councillors and report his findings back to this committee.

107/24 SUSSEX POLICE

The Clerk reported no report had been received from Sussex Police.

108/24 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. Father Stephen Ortiger**
- 6. Meeting with WSCC Highways, 10th January**
- 7. Twice-yearly meeting with Angmering-on-Sea Lawn Tennis Club, 16th January**
- 8. Meeting with White Lodge, 17th January**
- 9. Meeting with Rustington PC and Compass Travel, 18th January**
- 10. Community Speed Watch team meeting, 18th January**
- 11. East Preston Yarnbombers meeting, 23rd January**
- 12. Levelling Up Act and updates to the NPPF Training, 24th January**
- 13. Social media**
- 14. MailChimp stats**
- 15. A selection of things we have been asked since the last meeting**
- 16. Recent bouquets and complaints**
- 17. Leave**
- 18. February meetings and events**

1. Introduction

This is the report mainly covering January 2024 and matters which may not arise elsewhere on the agenda.

2. Police matters

A lively member of the public called into the Council Office on 23rd January, highly concerned about a white van she had seen in Coastal Road, Kingston. She believed it was looking for tools to steal or unoccupied houses. I passed the details on to Sussex Police, details which turned out to be incorrect. Sussex Police replied saying PSCO Raj was aware of the concerns and would look out for any white vans acting suspiciously.

I asked for an update on correspondence received from a resident last October, and was advised there was no further update available beyond the fact the matter had been passed to agencies outside Sussex Police.

3. **Anti-social behaviour (ASB) matters**

The resident mentioned in last month's report has remained in touch and we have continued to discuss her concerns without her yet committing to taking further action.

No new updates on any other previous cases raised to the ADC ASB team.

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

No Freedom of Information requests received since the last report.

No Data Protection requests received since the last report.

5. **Father Stephen Ortiger, Our Lady, Star of the Sea church**

At services over the weekend of 20th and 21st January, the congregation of Our Lady, Star of the Sea were told Father Stephen was terminally ill. Father Stephen had returned to his community at Worth Abbey and would not be returning to East Preston.

On behalf of the council, I sent the congregation best wishes from the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council.

Sadly, Fr Stephen died on the evening of 27th January, apparently peacefully.

Moving to East Preston in July 2020, Fr Stephen came to the village after almost 60 years as a Benedictine monk at Worth Abbey. He very quickly became a fan of the village, its residents and the council, often delightfully introducing his many friends to the village. He bought several I ♥ EP bags as presents for such friends. My favourite conversation with Stephen was when he told me he had not heard of East Preston before he moved here, "But now I am here," he said with a twinkle in his eye, "I realise it is the centre of the universe!"

I am sure he will be missed by many across the village.



Fr Stephen on the Platinum Jubilee thrones, June 2022

6. Meeting with WSCC Highways, 10th January

After Dawn and I had met Steve Hill, Parish & Community Engagement with WSCC Highways, at the Arun and Chichester Clerks' networking event on 14th December, he wanted to come to East Preston to meet with us and our counterparts at Angmering and Rustington Parish Councils. Steve wanted to discuss how WSCC communications to the outside world could be improved and all three councils had plenty of advice for him. Being realistic, we all accepted he cannot change everything overnight, but he found our input useful and said we had raised points other local councils had not.

7. Twice-yearly meeting with Angmering-on-Sea Lawn Tennis Club, 16th January

I attended the twice-yearly meeting with the tennis club, alone as no councillors were able to make the assigned date and time on the assigned date and time.

The tennis club was represented by Alastair McCubbin, elected Chairman in December, and Sarah Fisher, the club's administrator and, on this occasion, note-taker.

The refurbished bar has been well-received and a limited number of evening events have taken place. Neighbours have been advised ahead of events. The council has not received any complaints about events disturbing neighbours. The final stage of the clubhouse refurbishment has started, the refitting of the gents' changing area.

Alastair thanked the council again for its contribution towards the new floodlighting which has been well-received by both club members and neighbours.

8. Meeting with White Lodge, 17th January

White Lodge, a residential care home in South Strand, contacted the council for advice on how to run some Warm Welcome Space sessions. I went and met with the Manager, Emma Pigott, and the two Activities Coordinators, Sam and Sharon. White Lodge was originally built in the 1920s and has 29 residential rooms.

By the end of a 20-minute meeting, the four of us had worked up the idea of Thursday coffee mornings each week in February and March, starting on 1st February. These would be open to up to 15 local residents who would need to book in each week. These sessions would give residents of the home the opportunity to hear about life outside at a time of year when few get out very much just because of the weather.

The council will help promote these sessions through the e-newsletter and the noticeboards as well as directly to attendees of the existing Warm Welcome Spaces in the village. If the February and March sessions are successful, the White Lodge team would like to continue to offer monthly coffee mornings through the Spring and Summer, reverting to a weekly offering from November onwards.

Subsequently, launch of this idea has been delayed awaiting Regional Manager approval.

9. Meeting with Rustington PC and Compass Travel, 18th January

This meeting was held to discuss charges for the coming financial year. A further meeting has been called for 17:00 on 30th January.

10. Community Speed Watch team meeting, 18th January

This meeting was held at the British Legion and there were eight volunteers present. These meetings usually start with the team agreeing which sites to prioritise over the coming months and then volunteers list their availability.

Other subjects discussed included an update on the 20MPH Zone request, parking at the southern end of Sea Road, seasonal parking opposite the Village Green, the feasibility and practicality of two-person watches (now there is a bodycam, two-person watches are more likely), annual recalibration of the gun – the council will arrange this each January from next year and inconsiderate parking at the southern shops in Sea Road.

The meeting lasted just under an hour and a half.

Just as Cllr Linton did late last year, any councillor is welcome to attend and observe a watch, just let me know and I will sort that for you.

11. East Preston Yarnbombers meeting, 23rd January

I attended this meeting to discuss the Yarnbombers' Remembrance Day project which is to be launched publicly on 1st February. The meeting was held in the Spire Room at St Mary the Virgin church, and other attendees included Cllr and Mrs Toney representing various organisations between them, Ritchie and Jane Leccia from the Royal British Legion, several Yarnbombers, Malcolm and Pauline McLelland representing the Friends of St Mary's and the Social Committee of St Mary's respectively and Fr Andrew Perry representing the church.

As you may already know, the project is to produce a cascade of knitted poppies from the top of the church tower to the ground. This has been done at other churches and the Yarnbombers are receiving a lot of help from one such church. The project is being launched publicly as approximately 4,000 poppies are needed, and the Yarnbombers are inviting the public to help, hopefully by making poppies but otherwise by donating wool or money.

The council's first piece of assistance with the project is to include an article in the Winter 2024 quarterly newsletter and in an e-newsletter scheduled to be published on 1st February. The Yarnbombers have said they may need to apply for some financial assistance and I have given them the right application form.

Cllr Toney agreed to be the project's Towermaster, calling upon his Fire & Rescue Service expertise. He will be Towermaster in a personal capacity not a council capacity.

The installation is scheduled to be revealed on the morning of Saturday, 26th October. How long it stays on display will depend, but it may be in place until the projected Christmas Tree Festival in mid-December.

Whether or not the cascade is displayed for one or more years will depend upon the resilience of the poppies once in position.

12. Levelling Up Act and updates to the NPPF Training, 24th January

I attended this interesting seminar with Cllrs Bowman and Mathias. Cllr Bowman will be reporting on this event in due course.

The event was organised by Angmering Parish Council. Other councils in attendance were Bersted, Rustington and Slindon parish councils and Littlehampton Town Council.

13. **Social media**

Only one of the council's posts in January reached more than 500 people:

- Post advertising a Silent Disco at the Sports & Social Club – 2,255 people

† Food & Drink Festival page

▲ East Preston Business Community page

* East Preston Christmas Celebrations page

(posts up to and including 29th January)

The number of Followers is currently 1,858, a drop of 3 on the last report.

14. **MailChimp stats**

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

Parish Council news – 3rd January – sent to 914 subscribers, opened by 671 (73.5%)

15. **Things we have been asked since the last meeting**

Nothing unusual asked this month, although we were informed when a young dolphin was washed ashore south of South Strand. I reported this to ADC Cleansing which said its contractors would attend within five days.

16. **Recent bouquets and complaints**

(In addition to anything reported above)

From a resident of Midholme, “Just to say how wonderful the no 12 bus is, I use it at least twice a week as it is very reliable, long may it continue to service the residents of East Preston. Also a very big thank you for arranging a warm space for us older people to be able to come to on Mondays for soup and a roll and a tea or coffee and company for those on their own. How lucky we are to have such a caring Parish council. With my grateful thanks”

Coincidentally, on the very same day, we received this, “Having recently broke my wrist, i've been using the No12 bus to get out and about, particularly for the bulk of the weekly food shop. It's been an absolute lifesaver. Not only have I been able to get out and about, i've been able to chat to the other bus users and meet more people from the village. The bus drivers are amazing, very good at waiting until people are seated before they move. All in all, i wanted to thank the Parish Council for arranging to get the bus down to the southern end of the village. Long may this fabulous service continue.”

From a member of Sir Peter Bottomley's staff, “I just wanted to send you a brief note to let you know I am due to leave Sir Peter's employment in the coming weeks. Thank you for always being so helpful and kind during our interactions over the years. Thank you too for all you do every day to make life better for others.”

From a couple who wanted to plant some trees on ADC land in Orchard Road, “We will not be pursuing this matter any further. Our most uppermost thought is any anti-social behaviour which

could return if trees were planted. Nevertheless it was most interesting to hear the information you obtained from Arun. We very much appreciate your time in following this matter through.”

A member of the public who attended the January Full Council meeting called me a few days later, thanking the council for all the good work it does for the village. The member of the public also scored each councillor but we shall say no more about that!

A resident of Oakley Gardens called in to the office on 30th January and, in passing, said the bus service was “very well-used” and “very beneficial” to residents at the southern end of the village.

17. **Leave**

Alison is unavailable on 6th February and off for the week beginning 19th February. Dawn is on leave for the week beginning 26th February. My plan not to be in the office on Fridays has been going ok so far.

18. **February Meetings and Events**

This list may be incomplete and is subject to change.

- 1st ADC Youth Engagement meeting (13:00, Civic Centre) (AC only)
- 5th Neighbourhood Plan Review Steering Group (18:00, East Preston Infant School)
Full Council (19:00, East Preston Infant School)
- 6th NHS Sussex, Annual Forum of the Sussex Mental Health Insight Forum (13:00) (AC only)
- 12th Planning & Licensing Committee (18:00, East Preston Infant School)
Amenities Committee (19:00, East Preston Infant School)
- 15th The Martlets 15th Anniversary party (11:30, The Martlets)
- 19th Finance & General Purposes Committee (18:00, East Preston Infant School)
Major Events Committee (19:00, East Preston Infant School)
- 26th Planning & Licensing Committee (17:00 tbc, East Preston Infant School)
Finance training session (18:00 tbc, East Preston Infant School)
ADC Flood Forum (18:00, Bersted) (ST only)
- 28th Environmental Initiatives Working Party (details to follow)

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**

30th January 2024

Item 2 – Police matters – Cllr Linton thanked the Clerk for attempting to get an update on the October correspondence matter. The Clerk reported he had had a bit of a debate with the Sussex Police officer who had cited the safeguarding of the author of the correspondence as reason no update could be provided. The Clerk had countered there was also the matter of the safeguarding of thirteen councillors and six officers, who had been threatened in the correspondence, but this had not changed Sussex Police’s stance.

The council NOTED the following report:

Other meetings and events – Part 1

Council is asked to note any reports.

WSALC Chairs' Forum, 22nd January

Zoom

43 Chairs online. The meeting was Chaired by Trevor Leggo, Chief Executive of WSALC.

1, Troubled Councils

This was brought up as Trevor has had requests from several Councils where certain Councillors have disrupted meetings and spoken out of turn outside of Council meetings.

If this kind of behaviour persists, they should be challenged on poor behaviour, and reported to the Monitoring Officer. There are no sanctions available to be able to remove them from office.

2, Civility and Respect pledge

Trevor asked the question recently how many Councils have signed up to this. At the date of the meeting, 16 Councils had responded, 120 had not. We then went on to talk about Clerks in positions. Now, there are 4 Locum clerks working in and around the area, and they are paid up to £45 per hour.

3, Comms Strategy

There was talk about a WSALC introducing a quarterly newsletter. Would we all like to participate as a Council? Apparently, the Isle of Wight do one and it is well received.

4, District and County Council Budgets

As we have spoken about, with District and County Council budgets being capped by Government, some of the services that were done by them are now being shifted down to Parish Councils i.e., street cleaning and public convenience cleaning and maintenance. Chichester District are closing the toilets in the Witterings area and Selsey. They are also looking at Chichester Town Council to take over the city toilets or close them down. To date Parish Councils are not capped by Government

5, Policing

Do we still have a point of contact? When did you last see a PCSO in our village or surrounding area? To date, there are 17 PCSO short in the Chichester area as most are gaining entry via the back door to joining the force as a Police Officer. The Police focus groups are running a risk of closing due to a lack of support.

Cllr Steve Toney – **Chairman of the Council**

28th January 2024

Cllr Toney said the meeting had been useful and informative. He particularly pointed out the actions of Chichester District Council in pushing services on to town and parish councils, something he had been foreseeing for sometime now.

110/24 RESPONSE TO EXTERNAL MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Nothing was raised.

111/24 NEW ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING (4TH MARCH)

Nothing new was suggested.

The meeting concluded at 19.59.

Chairman: Date: **4th March 2024**
Councillor Steve Toney

END