



EAST PRESTON PARISH COUNCIL

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MINUTES: of the Proceedings of the Monthly Meeting of East Preston Parish Council held at 18:30 on Monday, 8th April 2024 at East Preston Infant School, Lashmar Road, East Preston

PRESENT: Councillors Christine Bowman, Kit Bradshaw, Andrea Chapman, John Gunston, Helen Hill, Elizabeth Linton (Chairman), Glyn Mathias, Rick McElroy (from 18:47), David Moore and Steven Wilkinson

ALSO: Simon Cross, Clerk to the Council

Arun District Councillors Philippa Bower, Ricky Bower and Paul Kelly (from 18:45) (all until 19:07)

Roy Allen, East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation (until 18:41)

Neil Ellis, Patricia Gander and Adrian Miller, East Preston Men in Sheds (all until 18:41)

Chris Chatfield, Compass Travel (until 18:43)

Mrs Akhurst (from 19:03 until 19:27), Mr D (until 18:38), Mrs D (from 18:50 until 19:46), Mr H (until 18:38), Ms C LD (until 18:38), Mr M (from 19:05 until 19:27) and Mrs M (from 18:50 until 19:46)

ABSENT: Councillors Lisa Duff, Barbara Gale and Steve Toney

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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 18.30. In Cllr Toney's absence, Vice-Chairman, Cllr Linton, chaired the meeting.

250/24 **INTRODUCTIONS**

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

251/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology and a reason for absence had been received from Cllrs Duff, Gale and Toney.

1837 The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously to accept the apologies received from Cllrs Duff and Toney (both away) and Cllr Gale (unwell).

Apologies had also been received from County Cllr Roger Elkins, Mr Kelvan Gale, Mrs Dorothy Lee and Mrs Toni McElroy, Chairman of the East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation.

252/24 DECLARATION OF PERSONAL AND/OR PREJUDICIAL/PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Cllr Hill declared a Personal Interest in Agenda Item 13, matters related to *East Preston and Kingston Village Hall Foundation and East Preston Men in Sheds* as her husband was currently working with East Preston Men in Sheds.

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

253/24 PUBLIC SESSION

Agenda Item 13 – East Preston and Kingston Village Hall Foundation and East Preston Men in Sheds – Mrs Gander explained she and two other Trustees of East Preston Men in Sheds were present to answer any questions the council had about the two parts of this Agenda Item. Cllr Linton thanked Mrs Gander for attending.

Agenda Item 11a – Community Engagement Committee – village bus service – Mr Chatfield, Managing Director of Compass Travel, said he was passionate about public transport and hoped the council would support the request to run the service for three months beyond the end of the initial 12-months trial period to give him more time to pursue other funding channels. In response to questions from the council, he said the service was carrying about 100 passengers a day, one-third of whom boarded in East Preston. He said he could not, off the top of his head, give an accurate sum of how much each passenger journey was subsidised.

254/24 COUNCIL RESPONSES

With no responses from the council, the Clerk advised the meeting the Chairman would amend the running order of the Agenda to enable members of the public to leave the meeting early if they so wished.

255/24 WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL – SEA ROAD PARKING RESTRICTIONS

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

West Sussex County Council – parking restrictions in Sea Road

Council is asked to support a highways matter raised by residents of Sea Road.

There is currently a seasonal single yellow line which runs northwards from no. 104 Sea Road to no. 88 Sea Road. This single yellow line only applies from 1st April to 30th September.

Residents living adjacent to the single yellow line would like council support for this to apply year-round.

I have been working with the lead campaigner on how this should be progressed with WSCC Highways. He has proven the support of neighbouring properties and is now asking for the support of the parish council. He has already contacted County Cllr Elkins for his support.

He is happy for me to include elements of his email to Cllr Elkins as part of this supporting paper:

Dear Roger

You may well be aware that there has been a growing issue regarding car parking on the stretch of Sea Road opposite the village Green in East Preston.

That stretch currently has single yellow line restrictions in place between 1 April and 30 September each year. Following representations from all of the residents on that stretch the Parish Council is to consider a resolution to extend that restriction all year round and on behalf of those residents directly affected I am writing to seek your support for that proposal.

The Problem

In recent years there have been a number of changes at the bottom end of the village which have all contributed to a very significant increase in the number of cars parking on that stretch throughout the year. As a consequence this is now causing a vastly increased safety risk on that stretch, more on pavement parking making it difficult for wheelchair users and pushchairs and more parking blocking access for residents to their drives. Residents asking people to move are being increasingly met by foul mouthed unpleasant abuse and threats.

The Contributing Factors.

1 Village Car Park

Perhaps the biggest factor is the decision to implement car parking charges on the village car park whilst at the same time allowing free unrestricted parking on the immediate surrounding roads. Any incentive to park safely on the car park is immediately negated by this and has resulted in local businesses employees parking on the streets all day.

These problems have been added to recently by the withdrawal of free disabled badge holders concessions and I am told by the elderly users the pressure to pay using the App.

It is a source of bewilderment to affected residents the local roads are free unrestricted parking whilst the car park is often empty.

2 Other changes

Recent times have seen a big increase in local businesses at this end of the village, all without their own car park meaning all day street parking pressure.

The business that spring to mind are

[...]

Further to these the introduction of more no parking restrictions round the green to facilitate the new bus service have pushed more cars into the affected area.

Increased Risks

The regular full (and often inconsiderate) parking on both sides of the road badly impairs visibility for safely crossing the road most especially for wheelchairs and children.

Inconsiderate parking across residential driveways means entering and leaving premises has to be done with reduced (or no) visibility with the associated accident risk.

There is often no passing space for vehicles to use as traffic is completely restricted to one way travel with increased stand offs.

This risk is often added to the speed of traffic who ignore the above as they travel through.

Action to date

I have spoken to all the residents immediately affected by these problems and there is unanimous unqualified support for a change to extend the current summer restrictions to all year round.

I understand all have sent their individual support to Simon Cross by email. I will forward a sample of these together with one of our own parking nightmare photos. I am aware several of the residents have their own photo portfolios.

Conclusion

I have tried to summarise the concerns and reason for writing for your support. We are not asking for wholesale changes rather an extension of existing policies which work well throughout the summer months.

There have been major circumstantial changes since the original restrictions were implemented which now need updating.

I would be happy to meet (with other residents)or organise further photographs etc.

I will await your initial response and advice on progression of our request.

Some residents of Sea Road are likely to attend the meeting in support of this request.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th March 2024

Councillors had also seen comments from affected residents of Sea Road and photographs showing the extent of the problem.

The Clerk explained the residents' request.

1838 The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously to support the residents' request to increase parking restrictions in front of nos. 88 to 104 Sea Road, East Preston.

The Clerk explained no further detail would be added to this resolution, allowing the residents to negotiate with WSCC Highways on their request. He would contact the lead campaigner for this initiative and advise him of the next steps.

(Mr D, Mr H and Ms LD all left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.)

256/24 EAST PRESTON & KINGSTON VILLAGE HALL FOUNDATION and EAST PRESTON MEN IN SHEDS

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

**East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation and
East Preston Men in Sheds**

Council is asked to agree to the Chairman of the Council signing an agreement between the above two organisations.

The two organisations have drawn up an agreement relating to the siting of the Men in Sheds cabin in the Village Hall car-park, as per Planning Permission granted under reference EP/35/23/PL. This can be found at Appendix A below. On 14th March, I did attend a three-way meeting with the two organisations and some of my suggestions were incorporated into this version of the agreement. The two organisations want parish council sign-off on behalf of the Warren Recreation Ground charity.

Council is also asked to agree proposed works starting in April. These works are the groundworks related to the wooden cabin being located on site. Council has already raised no

objections to the Planning Permission granted under EP/35/23/PL, but the lease says we should provide written agreement for such works.

Representatives of East Preston Men in Sheds are likely to attend the meeting.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

2nd April 2024

The latest version of the proposed agreement had been circulated to all councillors in advance of the meeting.

Cllr Hill declared a Personal Interest in this matter, as noted in Minute 252/24 above, and neither spoke nor voted in this matter.

The Clerk explained the latest version of the proposed agreement had been circulated to all councillors immediately before the meeting, following some further negotiations between the two organisations over the weekend prior to the meeting. The two organisations wanted the Chairman of the Council to sign the agreement on behalf of the Warren Recreation Ground charity purely as a courtesy underlining the council was fully aware of the agreement.

1839 The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously the Chairman of the Council could sign the agreement between the two organisations, effectively as a witness.

Furthermore,

1840 The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously to allow works for the Men in Sheds cabin in the car-park at East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation to start at the earliest convenience of both East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation and East Preston Men in Sheds.

(Mr Allen, Mr Ellis, Mrs Gander and Mr Miller all left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.)

257/24 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT – VILLAGE BUS SERVICE

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

Community Engagement Committee – village bus service

Council is asked to agree to fund the village bus service for the three months 1st June to 31st August.

Cllr Linton to lead on this item.

The extended No. 12 bus service has been running, in conjunction with Rustington Parish Council, since 30th May, 2023. The aim was to provide a service for residents at the southern end of the village who told us they maybe no longer wanted to use their car or maybe had no car but found it a struggle to walk to Fairland to catch a bus. The council initially wanted to trial an extended version of the No. 12 bus service in 2020, but then the pandemic hit and it was only at the end of 2022 the council felt confident usage numbers were back up to almost pre-pandemic levels and a trial could start.

The extended service started on 30th May. It has a small but loyal following, and committee is aware for some users it is the only time they leave the village in a week, and has opened up some social avenues for them. The drivers are regularly complimented by passengers.

For the first year, the council was given a discounted rate by Compass Travel, but that will expire at the end of May. Owing to a variety of increasing costs, the committee did not feel it could justify paying the increased rates for the new financial year. Again in conjunction with RPC, Cllr Linton and I have had a number of meetings with Compass Travel and with Littlehampton Town Council with a view to bringing the amount paid by RPC and EPPC down to a justifiable expense again. As

councillors will be aware, RPC agreed at its February meeting to withdraw its funding from the end of May, and this decision was reconfirmed at the council's March meeting.

Compass Travel has offered a reduced rate of £2,500pcm to run the service for three months beyond the end of May 2024. The committee would like to continue to run the service across the summer holidays for the benefit of anyone wanting to get to East Preston's beaches or to Wave Leisure Centre. There is money in the agreed 2024/25 budget that would cover this expenditure.

The Managing Director of Compass Travel, Chris Chatfield, has said he will attend the meeting.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th March 2024

Cllr Linton provided additional background, explaining the service had proved valuable to a number of residents at the southern end of the village who may otherwise not be getting out much, and it would be good to provide that service for an additional few months.

1841 The Council **RESOLVED** to fund the village bus service for an additional three months, from 1st June to 31st August.

One councillor voted against this resolution.

In response to question from Cllr Bowman, Mr Chatfield said he was always open to looking at re-routing the bus service, but including Angmering Station did introduce the level crossing to the mix, and with an increased number of trains due to be using the level crossing from the beginning of June, he was concerned about the negative impact this would have upon running reliably to a timetable.

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

258/24 ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

(District Cllr Kelly joined the meeting at the beginning of this item.)

(Cllr McElroy, Mrs Akhurst, Mrs D, Mr M and Mrs M each joined the meeting part-way through the item.)

Cllr Linton invited the district councillors to address the meeting next.

District Cllr Philippa Bower spoke first on the district council's concerns about the quality of local bathing water.

A new contract had been drawn up for Cleansing Services from February 2026. Households would be given a 5l internal food caddy and a 23l external caddy for their food waste. This would be collected weekly. Meanwhile, in future, only 180l rubbish bins would be offered to households, and these would only be collected fortnightly. It was hoped the small bin size would encourage more recycling. ADC would also take over the brown bin garden waste service from February 2026.

Cllr Ricky Bower said there was a proposal to provide more beach huts along the coast, although he was not aware of any details. With several private estates abutting the district's beaches, he had concerns about the feasibility of the proposal. District Cllr Kelly added no thought seemed to have been given to provision of car-parking and toilets as part of the proposal.

Cllr Ricky Bower reported the district council's decision to grant Planning Permission for 47 homes in Kingston Lane, K/46/23/PL, had gone against the wishes of not only Kingston and East Preston parish councils, but also Angmering, Ferring and Rustington parish councils. He was aware of moves by all five councils and Sir Peter Bottomley MP to have the decision called-in by the Secretary of State for Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, but such a call-in could only be made before ADC issued the Decision Notice which was usually within a fortnight of the ADC Planning Committee meeting. The Decision Notice had not yet been issued.

Cllr Kelly reported he also sat on the ADC Standards Committee but, because of the nature of that committee, he was unable to report anything to this meeting about business undertaken by that committee.

Cllr Ricky Bower reported he also sat on the Corporate Support Committee which was currently looking at a proposal to reduce the number of district councillors. No decision on this was likely until after the 2027 local elections. In response to a

question from the Clerk, Cllr Bower said the council was planning the process to be followed in the recruitment of a new Chief Executive.

Cllr Bowman reported an East Preston resident she knew had been advised by the ADC contact centre there were no allotments available in East Preston despite the work which had recently been done to reclaim and tidy untended plots. This came as a surprise and a disappointment to the district councillors. The Clerk said he would follow this up with the contact he had been provided by Cllr Kelly.

(All three Arun district councillors left at the conclusion of this item.)

259/24 PUBLIC SESSION

Noting the rather late arrival of four members of the public, Cllr Linton invited them to address the meeting if they wished.

No Agenda Item – Mrs Akhurst reported a resident of Sea Lane had been receiving hate mail because of the state of the open ditch in front of her property. Mrs Akhurst reported this ditch had been due to be infilled as part of WSCC’s Operation Watershed but this council had returned “£730” to WSCC in lieu of this work being carried out. Mrs Akhurst said the parish council had a moral obligation to infill this ditch as it had made the decision not to infill the ditch with Operation Watershed money it had then returned to WSCC, especially as it was about to spend a fortune on the Conservative Hall. Mrs Akhurst said there had been a meeting in the Council Office, attended by WSCC’s Jonathan Ullmer but not attended by the Clerk who had been, in her words, “photocopying”. The Clerk said he did not remember this but, in response to his question, Mrs Akhurst said this had happened during her time as a parish councillor, i.e. between May 2011 and April 2015.

Cllr McElroy said the council had made no decisions on the Conservative Hall yet, and that any amount of expenditure on the Conservative Hall was unrelated to and irrelevant to any amount of money spent on drainage matters; the council was spending money on different projects around the village all the time. Cllr McElroy said the matter was also not a moral one and felt it was wrong for Mrs Akhurst to make it into a moral matter; if the resident was feeling vulnerable and under attack, she should contact Sussex Police. The Clerk said the resident had once told him, in passing, she had received an anonymous letter, but had reported nothing more to him.

Cllr Mathias questioned whether infilling ditches was not against Environment Agency advice.

The Clerk said he would try and find confirmation this council had repaid the claimed £730 and any Minutes relating to such a payment. Mrs Akhurst said the decision had been made by the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

Agenda Item 11a – Community Engagement Committee – village bus service – Mr M read the following statement:

“The No:12 Bus that goes around the bottom green of the village is under used and only runs approx. 10am-3pm Mon to Fri. From Fairlands to the bottom of the village is only about ½ mile, we are paying £25000.00 per year for this service with the bus company looking to increase this figure, and next to nobody uses it, this is not value for money.

“Rustington also subsidise their part of this service and are pulling out of the contract due to lack of numbers at poor value for money. We have the 700-bus service that runs through most of the village approx. every 15 minutes, so do we really need another one for ½ a mile costing £25000.00.”

Cllr Linton advised Mr M he had arrived too late for the council’s discussion on the future of the No. 12 bus service. The council had agreed to fund the bus service until 31st August in order to provide coverage for residents at the very southern end of the village but also to give Compass Travel’s Managing Director a bit longer to find additional funding. Cllr Linton felt the likelihood of additional funding being found by the end of August was slim, and therefore it was likely to bus service would end then. Mr M said he did not agree with all Cllr Linton said but he accepted the bus running until the end of August.

Agenda Item 23 – To consider business related to the Conservative Hall – Mr M read the following statement:

“Conservative Hall, do we need yet another hall for the village that is already well served with halls of all types. The Parish Council are saying it won’t cost the villagers anything initially. Initially, so what are the costs to the villagers every year after that initial year.

“It’s just another way of getting the villagers to pay for a new Parish Council Office, when as parish councillors you should be supporting the local halls we already have, not competing with them. Where is your business plan for the Conservative Hall / Offices. A proper village poll should be conducted, not online with the opportunity for any villages who MUST contribute to this if they live in the village to vote.

“There is no reason why if the Parish Council think they need more space to refurbish the office and flat above which the Parish Council already own, making the downstairs accessible for all, a wheelchair lift can be installed if they felt they needed too they don’t take up much room at all.”

Cllr McElroy asked why Mr M would only want to give members of the public one chance on one day to have their say via a Parish Poll when the current poll had been open since 8th February, was still open, had been responded to by people online but also by people writing to the council, emailing, dropping into the Council Office and even telephoning their comments. Cllr McElroy believed an online survey was the right way forward, better than a Parish Poll.

Cllr Linton said the council had listened to what he had to say about the Conservative Hall and his comments would be considered as part of the council’s deliberations going forward.

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

Mrs D and Mrs M both apologised for arriving late for the meeting.

Agenda Item 9g – Planning & Licensing Committee – Mrs D thanked the council for the letter it had sent to the Secretary of State for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities regarding the Kingston Lane Planning Permission (K/46/23/PL), and said she hoped it would be considered fairly.

Agenda Item 23 – To consider business related to the Conservative Hall – Mrs M said she was very much in favour of the council adoption of the Conservative Hall, as this would allow the village to host even more activities for its residents. Mrs D said she fully agreed with Mrs M’s comments.

260/24 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4TH MARCH

The draft Minutes were circulated to all councillors on 5th March asking for suggested amendments by the 12th March. None were received.

1842 The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously the Chairman could sign the Minutes as a true record of the meeting held on 4th March. Cllr Linton duly did so.

261/24 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 1018/23 – West Sussex County Council – Vermont Drive**
- 3. Minute 009/24 – West Sussex County Council – Cotswold Way**
- 4. Minute 101/24 – Community Engagement Committee – Warm Welcome Space**
- 5. Minute 179/24 – Public Session – Winter 2024 Newsletter delivery**
- 6. Minute 179/24 – Public Session – Sea Road Beach Access**
- 7. Minute 181/24 – Arun District Council - allotments**

1. Introduction

This is the report covering items discussed during Full Council meetings up to and including the meeting held on 4th March 2024.

2. Minute 1018/23 – West Sussex County Council – Vermont Drive

After several public and council reports, the county council’s contractors visited Vermont Drive on Monday, 25th March and filled in the pothole at the entrance to that road. The first photo below was taken a week or so before the work was carried out, the second was the morning after and the third was two mornings after, showing some possible sinking in places.



3. Minute 009/24 – West Sussex County Council – Cotswold Way

After some chasing and an escalation on my part, WSCC Highways contractors visited Cotswold Way on 8th March. By this time, for surface water flooding this was probably the worst road in the village with surface water remaining for several days after any rainfall.

My main contact in Cotswold Way emailed, “The sludge guzzler was used then before they left a man had his arm down the drain and you can now see the bars that stop (or should), large items of rubbish from falling in. Thanks for all your help.”

Additionally, having visited the site after the “sludge guzzler,” I asked ADC to visit with the road cleaner to get rid of the sludge, a hazard in itself.

4. Minute 101/24 – Community Engagement Committee – Warm Welcome Space

Rachel Pawley, Field Marketer for the WSCC provider of hot meals – HILS, Health & Independent Living Support, attended both Warm Welcome Space sessions run on 11th March and spoke to most attendees about the WSCC hot meals service.

5. Minute 179/24 – Public Session – Winter 2024 Newsletter delivery

Following the meeting, I asked councillors whether or not they had received their Winter 2024 Newsletter. By this time, I had already contacted the distributor for confirmation of delivery to Orchard Road as she had that morning told me the delivery had been completed early the week before. Of the councillors who replied, several councillors had not received their newsletter, but several had. Distribution issues were considered at the Community Engagement Committee meeting on 18th March, and a meeting will be held with the distributor before the next delivery starts.

6. Minute 179/24 – Public Session – Sea Road Beach Access

On 5th March, having done a little of my own research into Marine Licences, I contacted Roy Allen of Sea Road Beach Access Limited and passed on the comment about needing a marine licence. This was Mr Allen’s response, “Thanks for the information. Sea Road Beach Access does not

require a Marine Licence because it is above Mean High Water Springs (MHWS). The test is, 'is it submerged at Mean High Water (spring)?'. The south edge of the platform is 25m north of MHWS.”

7. **Minute 181/24 – Arun District Council - allotments**

Following the meeting on 4th March, District Cllr Kelly again contacted the ADC officer responsible for allotments. At the time of writing, I have heard nothing further.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th March 2024

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

262/24 **FINANCIAL MATTERS**

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

- 1843** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the Outstanding Purchase Orders report for 2023/24, value £0.00 (excl. VAT), i.e. no outstanding purchase orders left for the year.
- 1844** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the Regular Monthly Payments report for March 2024 totalling £1,095.46 (inc. VAT).
- 1845** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the Supplier BACS Invoices Paid report for March 2024 (totalling £36,755.66 inc. VAT).
- 1846** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the List of Sales Receipts & Bank Receipts by Bank report for financial year to date totalling £352,695.04 (inc. VAT).

The council NOTED the Bank Reconciliations to 14th March 2024.

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

Cllr Linton thanked Mr Vyse, the council’s Book-keeper, for preparing the above reports.

262/24 **FINANCIAL MATTERS – END-OF-YEAR RINGFENCING**

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

Financial matters - ringfencing

Council is asked to note Dawn, Adrian and I will be looking at any budget underspends for the 2023/24 financial year shortly and seeing whether there are any sums we could ringfence for future expenditure against those items.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

26th March 2024

The council AGREED such a ringfencing exercise could be undertaken by the three officers named.

263/24 **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: Audit & Governance on 11th March; Community Engagement on 18th March; and Planning & Licensing on 11th March. The draft Minutes from these meetings have been circulated to all councillors.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th March 2024

Amenities Committee

Cllr Wilkinson is the chairman of this committee.

The committee did not meet in March.

Children’s Playground – The remedial work as highlighted in the 2023 Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) inspection report, has been carried out on the playground equipment. The majority of work needed was minor repairs and painting. However, the painting has been delayed until the weather is more suitable for drying.

Outdoor Gym Equipment – Repairs were previously carried out by the manufacturer to the Air Walker Double, the mechanism which holds the limiters in place had failed. The issue was resolved in the short term and committee was advised this piece of equipment will need replacing in the near future. Committee has begun researching into a suitable replacement.

Warren Recreation Ground - south eastern corner project – EP in Bloom has made a huge improvement to the south eastern corner. Planting is well under way to create a serenity garden for all to enjoy. One of the three new benches has already been installed, once all the work is complete Tivoli will clean the entire paved area.

The committee’s next meeting will be on 20th May.

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

2nd April 2024

Audit & Governance Committee

Cllr Mathias is the Chairman of this committee.

The committee met on 11th March.

The committee agreed the Terms of Engagement for Internal Audit for the next three years. The committee agreed it may then be prudent to contract with a different internal auditor.

During a chat about the Leases Working Party, the committee agreed to propose the disbandment of the Flat Working Party, see Agenda Item 10a below.

The committee also received an update on Cllr Wilkinson’s work on the Council Plan.

The committee next meeting is scheduled for 15th July.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th March 2024

Community Engagement Committee

The last meeting was on Monday 18th March and we were delighted to have a member of the public present.

Sam Cross with run the Spring Playscheme on 9th April with the Scout Hall as the base for the event. There is no charge this time.

Committee agreed to try and rearrange the Roundstone Level Crossing meeting for Wednesday 10th July. This needs to be held on a Wednesday as it is the best day for the Junior School and we are hoping for a high turnout. Councillors agreed to record the traffic queues and length of time the barriers are down as this was felt to be useful information for the attendees. Any additional help from other councillors is welcomed.

This year the Annual Parish Meeting will invite a guest speaker in order to attract members of the public with refreshments to be served afterwards. This will mean the Annual Meeting of the Council will start at 1800 and exclude District and County Councillors until the Annual Parish meeting which will start at 1915.

A reminder to all Councillors that the Come and Meet Your Local Councillors event is on the 1st June with set up at 0930 and ending at midday with dismantling to follow.

It is not too late to join the merry band of revellers in the carnival parade on the 8th June as our entry has been submitted and we will start in Vicarage Road at 1230, collecting buckets in hand. Speak to Cllr Duff for more information.

A special D-Day 80th Anniversary flag will be raised on 31st May and fly until 9th June.

Compass Travel has requested we continue the No 12 bus until 31st August at the discounted 2024/25 cost of £2,500 per month and it will no longer run after that date. Please see the Agenda Item below for more information.

The East Preston map is having its final tweaks and will be available soon.

The committee discussed content for the Spring 2024 Newsletter. It was also agreed Cllrs Hill and I should meet with the distribution company representative for us to re-stress how important the timings of our deliveries are and that we do not want to be distributed in conjunction with any other leaflets.

The Warm Welcome Space initiative for Winter 2024 will end on 25th March. Feedback from attendees has been positive. My thanks for fellow councillors and officers who have worked hard at each of the sessions. By the time you read this report, thank you letters will have been sent to our contacts at both venues – British Legion and St Mary the Virgin church.

Cllr Elizabeth Linton –
Chairman of the Community Engagement Committee

22nd March 2024

Finance & General Purposes Committee

Cllr McElroy is the chairman of this committee.

The committee did not meet in March. The committee's next meeting is scheduled for 19:00 on Tuesday, 14th May.

Major Events Committee

The committee did not meet in March.

D-Day Big Lunch, 2nd June – council has now received sponsorship money from the East Preston & Kingston Royal British legion branch covering live entertainment and, we hope the provision of a replica Spitfire.

Funday Sunday, 21st April – most tickets have now been sold. Cllr Hill is the lead for this event.

The committee's next meeting will be on 22nd April.

Cllr Elizabeth Linton –
Chairman of the Major Events Committee

27th March 2024

Personnel Committee

The committee did not meet in March.

Adrian undertook some year-end finance training with Andy Beams on 20th March. Adrian appreciated the training and said it was fairly straightforward. Cllr Chapman has renewed her Food Hygiene 1 and 2 training.

Further to the information provided about the increase to councillors' allowance reported last month, the council received confirmation on 22nd March, the basic allowance for District Councillors has in fact increased to £6,638 per annum. As a parish council, we pay one-tenth of that to councillors wishing to receive the allowance, so £663.80.

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

Cllr Lisa Duff – **Chairman of the Personnel Committee**

26th March 2024

Planning & Licensing Committee

Cllr Mathias is the chairman of this committee.

The committee met on 11th March.

On 11th March, the committee considered four Applications. The committee agreed to raise objections to a proposed extension in Vermont Way on the grounds the extension would result in a loss of privacy to neighbours in both Vermont Way and The Plantation.

The committee did not need to meet on 25th March. Only one Application was due to be considered and it was agreed not to object.

Work on the Neighbourhood Plan continues. The grant we received needed to be spent by the end of March and could not be carried over. I completed the grant review form which resulted in the council having to return about £2,000 of the £9,000+ we had received. Later in the new financial year, it may be possible to bid for a further grant, although the council has the money set aside to complete this project should further funding not be available.

On 2nd April, we were informed we had been awarded a Community Infrastructure Levy grant of £7,950.00 relating to redevelopment work in The Ridings.

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

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

2nd April 2024

Additionally:

Community Engagement – Cllr Linton referred to the previous day's Beach Clean, attended only by herself and Cllr Wilkinson, although Cllr Duff had helped with some preparation for the event earlier in the day. Although less obvious off the beach, there were very strong winds on the beach and these made administering the event very difficult. Cllr Linton said event dates were publicised well in advance and she hoped more councillors would be able to attend in the future. Public turnout had been good.

The Clerk offered his personal thanks to Mrs D who had looked after a member of the public during the event. The member of the public was very willing but quite frail and did look as if she could easily have been blown along the beach had the wind caught her binbag.

Major Events – Cllr Linton said the Royal British Legion had handed over sponsorship money to be used for the Big D-Day Lunch on 2nd June. This had enabled the council to book a replica Spitfire to be sited in the Village Green car-park as an additional attraction on the day. The Clerk reported at least six strong residents would be needed to help put the Spitfire together and to dismantle it at the end of the day.

Cllr Hill reported most *Funday Sunday* tickets had now been sold and the food had been ordered.

Planning & Licensing – Cllr Bowman said she felt the review of the East Preston Neighbourhood Plan was really moving forwards now. She was hopeful a final draft could be presented to Full Council in September. The accompanying Design Guide was also progressing and now the spring had arrived, it would be possible to take more attractive photos of the village. Cllr Bowman thanked Mrs D for her involvement in the project to date.

The Clerk referred back to a comment made by District Cllr Ricky Bower earlier in the meeting in which he had stated a Decision Notice was usually issued within a fortnight of an ADC Planning Committee meeting. In his experience, a Decision Notice was usually issued on the day after an ADC Planning Committee meeting had decided. Therefore, it was unusual for that not to have happened yet and could indicate the Decision Notice had not been issued because ADC was aware of the initial call-in request from Kingston Parish Council.

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

264/24 AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – FLAT WORKING PARTY

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

Audit & Governance Committee – Flat Working Party

Council is asked to agree to disband the Flat Working Party merging its workload into the Leases Working Party.

Cllr Mathias to lead on this item.

The Flat Working Party has been most active when the council has been between tenants, ensuring any reparations to the flat are completed before a new tenant moves in and suchlike. The current tenant has been in the flat for over a year and has given no indication of an early exit. The committee does not feel there is a need for a separate working party at this time, any matters related to the flat can initially be referred to the Leases Working Party.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th March 2024

1847 The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to disband the Flat Working Party and to merge its workload into the Leases Working Party.

265/24 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE – ANNUAL PARISH MEETING, 13TH MAY

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

Community Engagement Committee – Annual Parish Meeting

Council is asked to be appraised of the plans for the Annual Parish Meeting on 13th May.

Cllr Linton to lead on this item.

As you will have seen earlier in these papers, the Annual Parish Meeting will be scheduled to start at 19:15 on 13th May, following on from an early-start Annual Meeting of the Council.

As the RNLI has been the Chairman’s charity for the current year, the committee has invited a representative to attend the meeting. The initial response has been from the Visits Officer who is unable to attend, but he is asking around his colleagues and will get back to me.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th March 2024

Cllr Linton explained the committee wanted the Annual Parish Meeting to be more of an event again, more attractive to members of the public. To that end, the committee had invited the Royal National Lifeboat Institute to send a representative to the meeting, and there would be wine and nibbles available for anyone who wanted to chat to councillors less formally after the meeting. The Clerk advised the RNLI had confirmed it would send along a speaker. Cllr Linton said the Annual Meeting of the Council would start at 18:00, with a reduced Agenda, to be followed by the Annual Parish Meeting at 19:15.

266/24 REPORTS FROM PARISH COUNCIL WORKING PARTIES

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

Working Parties

None of the working parties have met this month.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th March 2024

20mph Working Party

Cllr Wilkinson is the chairman of this committee.

Further to the update given to the last meeting, I have not heard back from Olly King further to the updated map Keith Harris and I supplied to him. I have chased.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th March 2024

Environmental Initiatives Working Party (EIWP)

Four members of the Environmental Initiatives Working Party joined me on a run-through of our historic walk through East Preston. Some useful suggestions were made for additions to our map. The aim is to print 2,000 copies in April. Thanks to Cllr Bradshaw for completing the films and to Cllr Linton for her input.

A meeting of ten Repair Café volunteers took place at the Spire Room on Wednesday 27th March. Along with Helen, I introduced the concept of the Repair Café and we split into groups, (electrical, sewing, general DIY and reception) to discuss how we will run the first session. A good start to what we hope will be a successful initiative. We now have a lot of paperwork to complete as separate insurance has to be purchased to cover Repair Cafés. Some initial confusion over dates has been sorted by Alison and Simon.

On behalf of the council, I hope to be able to attend and ADC Climate Change workshop on 6th June. This hopes to look at ways in which town and parish councils can help tackle climate change.

Next EIWP meeting will be on Wednesday 24th April.

Cllr John Gunston –

Chairman of the Environmental Initiatives Working Party

28th March 2024

Leases Working Party

As previously reported, last month I suggested an informal meeting to the Secretary of East Preston & Kingston Bowls Club. He agreed but was unavailable until the week beginning 25th March.

I met with the Chairman, David Davies, Secretary, Craig Baker, and Treasurer, Ian Campbell on the morning of 27th March. As Trustees of the club, they are close to being in a position to make a counterproposal regarding the annual rent payable assuming the lease is renewed in 2025. Before submitting the counterproposal though, they want to seek legal advice. They are aware the next Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting is in mid-May and will do their best to have something for the Working Party to consider at that meeting.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th March 2024

Additionally:

Environmental Initiatives Working Party – Cllr Gunston thanked Mrs D for joining the working party's walk-through of its East Preston walking map. The walk-through had been very useful and some amendments had been turned around by ADC and the map was now about ready to go to print.

Cllr Gunston said the first session of the East Preston Repair Café was scheduled for 11th May, and he and Cllr Hill hoped this would be a success.

Leases – the Clerk said the Bowls Club had submitted its offer regarding the annual rent to be paid by the club when the lease is renewed in 2025. He was going to call a meeting of the working party and club reps for 19:00 on Monday, 22nd April.

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

267/24 WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

County Cllr Elkins had sent his apologies for this meeting and had provided the following report, received too late to table:

Brief WSCC Update report For 8th April Meeting

A Quick update on key areas the West Sussex £2 Billion Budget for 24/25

£507m on Adult Social Care and keeping people healthy an increase of £18.3m

£961m on Education Services, 94.2% of schools or academies rated good or outstanding

£204m On Childrens Social Care & Supporting Young People

All six of the West Sussex Childrens Homes are rated outstanding or good by Ofsted

Current Recycling rates of 53% which is higher than the National average of 44%

£83m On Maintenance of roads and supporting transport , including £10m much needed capital funding on the largest ever programme of road resurfacing.

Recycling Centres across West Sussex will switch to extended spring/summer

Opening hours from 1st April 2024, giving residents more opportunity to recycle their household waste
Littlehampton open 9am to 6pm every day except Tuesday and Wednesday.

Worthing open 9am to 6pm every day.

Support for people who care for family and friends

West Sussex County Council is reinforcing its ongoing support for people who care for family members, friends, and neighbours with a new five-year contract to offer them information, guidance, and emotional help.

The contract, which began on 1 April, has been awarded to [Carers Support West Sussex](#), a local charity with expertise and specialist knowledge in supporting unpaid carers.

The county-wide service will provide a dedicated Carers' Helpline, carer support groups and a dedicated specialist service to young adult carers aged 18 to 25.

It will offer access to Carer Wellbeing Workers who can provide information, help and guidance and enable carers to be identified as early as possible in their caring journey.

You can register as a carer by visiting the [Carers Support West Sussex website](#) or by calling 0300 028 8888.

A fleet of Hydrogen powered buses is set to launch with a successful bid for £10 million of Government funding.

The Department for Transport has awarded the partnership over £10 million, which combined with £11.6 million from Metrobus (Go Ahead) and almost £3 million from the other partners brings the total for the project to over £24 million.

The buses will operate across a wide area of Sussex, Surrey and Kent to connect rural areas with local towns and London Gatwick. Destinations will include Burgess Hill, Crawley, East Grinstead, Haywards Heath, Horsham, Worthing, Brighton, Caterham, Dorking, Redhill and Tunbridge Wells.

Cllr Roger Elkins

268/24 SUSSEX POLICE

The Clerk reported no monthly report had been received from Sussex Police but he had circulated the following report ahead of the meeting:

Sussex Police

Council is asked to note any report from Sussex Police should one be received.

No monthly report has been received, but I did receive the following email message from PCSO Raj Riju this morning:

“We are aware of spate of vehicle damage that happened on 04th or early hours of 05th April. I can ensure you that two kids have been named as suspects and investigation is undergoing.”

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

8th April 2024

269/24 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. Community Speed Watch, 6th March**
- 6. REACH, 6th March**
- 7. Meeting with East Preston Yarnbombers, 20th March**
- 8. Final Warm Welcome Space Winter 2024 session, 25th March**
- 9. East Preston Neighbourhood Plan review meeting, 26th March**
- 10. Repair Café volunteers meeting, 27th March**
- 11. Community Speed Watch, 2nd April**
- 12. Social media**
- 13. MailChimp stats**
- 14. A selection of things we have been asked since the last meeting**
- 15. Recent bouquets and complaints**
- 16. Leave**
- 17. March meetings and events**

1. Introduction

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

2. Police matters

On 28th March, PCSO Raj came to take a statement from me about the CCTV footage the council provided following the break-in at Seaview Stores on 8th December. This is because the footage may be used in a trial.

During the same week, a couple of unconnected residents asked me to report a camper van parking by the northern shops, one saying the camper van was a blight on the village. I chose not to report it as it is a familiar camper van which appears a couple of times a year, stays a few nights and then disappears again – presumably visiting someone in the village. Sure enough, by the end of the week, the camper van had moved on.

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

A local resident stopped me in Sainsbury's on 2nd April to talk about noisy motorbikes. He believes he knows which property they are coming from. I asked him to keep a diary of when he is disturbed by noisy motorbikes which, after a few weeks, we will raise to the ADC anti-social behaviour 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. **Community Speed Watch, 6th March**

My first Community Speed Watch shift of the year, together with Keith Harris and Chris Eschbaecher.

We set up in Sea Lane, the shift being from 09:00 to 10:00. We recorded 40 vehicles passing us during the hour, that covering both directions. The fastest any vehicle passed was at exactly 30mph. No abusive comments although one personalised number-plate did drive past really very slowly. A few people did call out "Excellent work gentlemen," or similar as they drove past.

6. **REACH, 6th March**

I attended this meeting which Cllr Gunston has reported upon below.

7. **Meeting with East Preston Yarnbombers, 20th March**

I had a quick, informal meeting with Valerie Sharp, Secretary of the East Preston Yarnbombers. Valerie wanted to talk about the official unveiling of the poppy cascade on Saturday, 26th October. Valerie stressed how much of a community project this is with various groups and individuals across and beyond the village are busily making poppies to be included in the poppy cascade to be installed at St Mary the Virgin in time for Remembrance Sunday. The Yarnbombers would like the council to discuss marking the official unveiling in some way. I have added this to the Agenda for the Major Events Committee meeting scheduled for 22nd April.

8. **Final Warm Welcome Space Winter 2024 session, 25th March**

The final two Warm Welcome Space Winter 2024 sessions took place on 25th March. Owing to the unavailability of Cllrs Gunston and Linton, I attended the British Legion session with Cllr Chapman, and Alison attended the St Mary the Virgin session with Cllr Hill.

For anyone who perhaps does not understand why the council runs these sessions, below is a scan of a card the council was given at the final British Legion session:

To all organisers and volunteers
at EP's Warm Space 2024

Thank you so much for all the thought and work you put into our Monday gatherings. Winters can feel long and a bit lonely for some of us and the cheerful atmosphere and tasty soup among friends makes such a difference. Happy Spring/Summer

During the season, which ran for 13 weeks at the church and 12 at the Legion, we served over 330 light lunches to appreciative local residents. Across the two venues, approximately twenty community volunteers helped out by looking after attendees whilst they waited for lunch to be served and chatting to them afterwards and, in one case, providing live musical entertainment. Several attendees at these last sessions expressed the hope the council would run similar sessions next winter – this will be considered by the Community Engagement Committee in due course.

Councillors will remember the council received a £1,000 grant from Arun District Council towards this initiative, and I have completed and sent off the rather complex form required by ADC at the end of the season – last year's form was a lot easier. On 27th March, Carrie Reynolds, ADC Communities and Wellbeing Manager, emailed, "Hey Simon, you get the gold medal for being the first back to report 😊 Super thank you. It's just as I need it thanks."

9. **East Preston Neighbourhood Plan review meeting, 26th March**

I attended this meeting which included Cllr Bowman and representatives from ADC and which was led by Leani Haim, our contact at Oneill Homer. The meeting discussed and confirmed how the three organisations will work together on the remainder of the review of the East Preston Neighbourhood Plan. The meeting threw up no surprises or concerns and tabled new timescales which are probably more realistic than the earlier ones.

10. **Repair Café volunteers meeting, 26th March**

I attended this meeting at the Spire Room. Cllr Gunston has reported on this meeting at Agenda Item 12b above.

11. **Community Speed Watch, 2nd April**

My second Community Speed Watch shift of the year, together with Keith Harris and John Redgrave. Unexpectedly, we were joined by two Sussex Police Casualty Reduction officers.

We set up in Sea Road opposite the Village Green, 08:30 to 09:30. Possibly because it was the first week of the Easter holidays, it felt quiet, but we recorded 91 vehicles passing us during the hour, only ten fewer than the last time I was part of a shift at this location. The fastest any vehicle passed was at 35mph.

One driver passed slowly giving us the finger, just before the two Sussex Police officers joined us. Unfortunately for him, his action and registration plate was captured on camera and he has been reported to Sussex Police.

Otherwise, the usual mix of comments about being good for the village but not being in the right place at the right time.

12. **Social media**

Again, only one of the council's posts in February reached more than 500 people:

- Poster for Beach Clean No. 21 – 3,058 people

† Food & Drink Festival page

▲ East Preston Business Community page

* East Preston Christmas Celebrations page

(posts up to and including 2nd April)

The number of Followers is currently 1,865, the same number as the last report.

13. **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 – 29th February – sent to 920 subscribers, opened by 644 (70.2%)

Parish Council news – 7th March – sent to 923 subscribers, opened by 656 (71.4%)

Parish Council news – 13th March – sent to 923 subscribers, opened by 661 (71.8%)

Parish Council news – 21st March – sent to 923 subscribers, opened by 646 (70.2%)

Parish Council news – 28th March – sent to 924 subscribers, opened by 631 (68.5%)

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

“Now this photo id thingy, can I use my bus pass for voting in May? I did last time, but didn't see it mentioned in the latest information that the council sent out.” (According to the Electoral Commission website, an older person's bus pass is acceptable as photo id in elections.)

“Can you lend me a bike so I can finish my paper round?” (Yes we can, from Lost (or Found) Property.)

“I was just wondering if you knew if and when these dreadful potholes around the village are going to be repaired?!”

“When are we getting the 20mph signs in the village? And I noticed this morning that the slip road opposite the Lighthouse was completely blocked with [...] vehicles and black 4×4's which I think

belong to the [...], any thoughts on this? Such a shame that these businesses seem to be taking over the village.” (Business names removed to protect the innocent.)

15. **Recent bouquets and complaints**

(In addition to anything reported above)

From the resident looking to walk the South Downs Way this year, “Thanks again Simon....you are a star and always so helpful.”

From a lady in America, looking to commission a bench in memory of her late parents, one of whom was featured in an article in the Summer 2023 Newsletter, “The article was wonderful.”

On 26th February, Caspar retrieved a backpack from the Station Road bus shelter, whilst carrying out his daily Village Orderly tasks. The backpack contained an NHS passcard, which I traced to a ward at Worthing Hospital. Caspar then contacted the ward and left a message for the owner of the backpack. The owner arranged to collect the backpack, and in doing so, left a financial token of appreciation for Caspar.

At the end of the Community Speed Watch shift, a member of the public came up and asked me if I could help with a resident’s telephone service which had been out for six weeks. I said there was little I could do but I would contact the resident which I did upon my return to the office. Later the same day, the resident replied, “Thank you for your message this morning and the helpful information. Believe it or not, at 8.15 this morning the phone rang, the first time we have had an incoming call since January 26th. The caller was an Engineer informing us that the problem was now fixed! I wouldn’t like to tell you what he said when [my sister] told him the length of time we had been disconnected! With best wishes and sincere thanks for your concern.”

From the former Cluster Manager of East Preston library, still a subscriber to council e-newsletters, “Lovely to see so much Library promotion in the last couple of newsletters.”

From a resident of Somerset Road, in response to the e-newsletter published on 28th March, “The letter re the proposed development is brilliant and I’m so grateful to all who contributed to it. A ray of hope now begins to glimmer. Kind regards, [name] and the foxes, hedgehogs, pheasant, frogs and all of the other wildlife whose home is the field. Maybe they will be safe after all.

Thanks from Kingston Parish Council for our support of its request to call-in the decision made on Planning Application K/46/23/PL for development in Kingston Lane. Rustington and Angmering PCs have also supported this request.

Some comments received in response to the Winter 2024 Newsletter:

“I’m just reading your winter newsletter which popped through the letterbox today. Excellent as always!”

“Once again a very useful Newsletter – thank you.”

“We found this issue of the newsletter to be particularly informative.”

16. **Leave**

Alison is off for the week beginning 8th April and I am on leave for the week beginning 29th April. The council is now using TimeTastic for recording of all staff leave.

17. **April Meetings and Events**

This list may be incomplete and is subject to change.

- 7th East Preston Beach Clean (11:00, Sea Road)
- 8th Full Council (19:00, East Preston Infant School)
- 15th WSALC Clerks' Forum (11:00, online)
Planning & Licensing Committee (18:00, East Preston Infant School)
Personnel Committee (19:00, East Preston Infant School)
- 17th South Strand Community Toilets Annual General Meeting (10:00)
- 22nd Major Events Committee (19:00, East Preston Infant School)
- 29th Planning & Licensing Committee (18:00, East Preston Infant School)

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**

3rd April 2024

Item 3 – Anti-social behaviour (ASB) matters – Cllr Linton asked the Clerk how often he held surgeries in Sainsbury's. Not often, he replied, but he preferred to have a short chat with a resident in Sainsbury's rather than them feel aggrieved they had refused to speak to him and had taken twice as long in the Council Office.

270/24 EXTERNAL MEETINGS AND EVENTS

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

Other meetings and events – Part 1

Council is asked to note the following report.

REACH, 6th March

East Preston Infant School

REACH stands for Renewable Energy Access for Communities and Households.

A meeting was held in East Preston to launch the local energy initiative on 6th March. We had around 30 people at the East Preston meeting and 20 individuals signed our expression of interest form. Alex Templeton from Community Infrastructure and Andrew Tolfts from WSCC also attended and took part in the presentations.

A second meeting was held at Angmering Community Centre on 12th March. Cllr Gary Lee from Rustington Parish Council (RPC) was at this meeting and is hoping that RPC will join the project. Around another 20 Angmering parishioners signed our expression of interest.

We will continue to promote the plan and hope to produce a film for the Parish Council YouTube channel which we will advertise in the next Parish Council newsletter.

Cllr John Gunston –

27th March 2024

Chairman of the Environmental Initiatives Working Party

Cllr Gunston added he and Cllr Bradshaw hoped to make a short film about the REACH project before the end of the month. This would then be made available via the council's YouTube channel and posters with QR codes. He hoped this might attract some younger interest in the project. The project was in contact with a representative of East Preston Junior School and one from The Martlets, and had submitted a grant application to the Community Energy Fund.

271/24 RESPONSE TO EXTERNAL MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Nothing was raised.

272/24 NEW ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING (13TH MAY)

Nothing new was suggested.

(Mrs D and Mrs M left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.)

273/24 CONSERVATIVE HALL

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

Future of the Conservative Hall

(If members of the public are still present) **Council is asked to resolve to exclude the press and public from the rest of the meeting.** In line with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public are to be asked to leave the meeting at this point, allowing the following discussion to be held confidentially.

Council is asked to consider the next steps related to the future of the Conservative Hall

An online survey was made available to the public on 8th February, via three e-newsletter (to date), various posters around the village and the Winter 2024 Newsletter. At the time of writing, 327 people have responded to the survey, of which 90.49% have said they agree the council should adopt the Conservative Hall, 4.6% said No and 5.21% voted Unsure. A report has been circulated to all councillors containing the survey results to date and, perhaps more importantly, comments that have been made. All responses via email have been added to the online survey, keeping all results in one place, as has the one in-person comment received. We have received no comments via telephone or letter.

The council needs to consider its options in this matter and work out the implications of any of those options.

On 21st March, I wrote to all councillors giving them the option of sending to me any questions they have so I may collate them before this meeting. At the time of writing, although some of you have talked to me about this, nobody has actually submitted any questions yet.

As a starting point then, here are some options for what the council may choose to do next. These are not the only options, but they should promote some discussion.

Option 1 – take a leap of faith and say yes to the Trustees – as councillors will have seen in the survey results, not just statistically but also in the comments, there is a lot of faith in the council and its ability to do the right thing by the hall and the village.

Option 2 – draw up a list of actions needed to be taken and information needed in order to make a more informed decision – we may never be able to know everything we want to know before deciding, but the more information we can agree we need, the better. If we are going to talk to other organisations, who is going to do that talking?

Option 3 – do nothing – the council could step back and leave the Trustees to find another future for the building and land.

Funding may be available from the Community Ownership Fund. Last year, I submitted an Expression of Interest form and received a favourable response.

Cllr Linton opened the discussion reviewing the Clerk's three options, acknowledging there were likely many more options.

1835 The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously Option 3 – do nothing – was not an option.

1836 The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously to send the Trustees of the Conservative Hall an Expression of Interest whilst it undertook further homework before it could decide.

The Clerk would contact the council's solicitor about him sending such an Expression of Interest.

1837 The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously to reform the Conservative Hall Working Party.

Cllr McElroy suggested councillors who have run their own businesses should meet and draft a proposed model for running the hall, both as part of a combined Village Halls offering and as a standalone venue.

There was no appetite to have the Village Hall and Conservative Hall running in competition, as stated in the front-page article in the Winter 2024 Newsletter.

The meeting **AGREED** moving the Council Office into the Conservative Hall was not currently on the table.

Cllr Mathias said the council needed the Trustees to show how much the hall has cost to run over the past five years.

Responding to Mr M's comment about the word initially, the Clerk explained the word initially had been used as nobody could predict future usage. Whilst several respondents had been confident an uplifted (and renamed) Conservative Hall would attract plenty of business, it just was not possible to predict that.

The meeting **AGREED** communications about the possible adoption needed to remain positive. The Clerk said a follow-on article would be published in the Spring 2024 Newsletter in May.

The Clerk said a meeting needed to be held with the Trustees of the East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation and also the current bookings person for the Conservative Hall as they would have useful input to any decision-making the council needed to undertake.

With the Conservative Hall Working Party reformed, it was hoped the members of the working party would now feel empowered to work together on gathering the information it felt was needed to assist the council make its decisions.

The meeting concluded at 20.11.

Chairman: *Cllr Steve Toney* Date: **13th May 2024**

END