

MONTHLY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

3RD JUNE 2024 at 18:30

SUPPORTING PAPERS

Please note not every Agenda Item will have a supporting paper.

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Agenda Item 6

Minutes of Annual Full Council meeting, 13th May

The draft Minutes were circulated to all councillors on 15th May, asking for suggested amendments by 22nd May. None were received.

Simon Cross – Clerk to the Council

23rd May 2024

Agenda Item 7

Monthly Update Report

1. **Introduction**
2. **Minute 358/23 – 20mph Working Party – 20mph Zone for The Street, Fairlands and Sea Road**
3. **Minute 108/24 – Clerk’s Report – Item 6 – Meeting with WSCC Highways, 10th January**

1. Introduction

This is the report covering items discussed during Full Council meetings up to and including the meeting held on 13th May 2024.

2. Minute 358/23 – 20mph Working Party – 20mph Zone for The Street, Fairlands and Sea Road

Following the council receiving notice from Oliver King, WSCC Highways Traffic Engineer, the application had failed the Detailed Assessment, on 22nd May, the council submitted an appeal to the head of WSCC Highways to review this decision. We do not know whether or not there is an appeal process.

3. Minute 108/24 – Clerk’s Report – Item 6 – Meeting with WSCC Highways, 10th January

Following the update provided to the May meeting, on 15th May, council received a further update:

Dear Parish and Town Councils

Thank you again for registering your interest to take part in a pilot where we will be trialling some new ways of working with you.

Following from my email on 25 April 'Talking Parish Communications' I am pleased to provide an update and advise you of the next steps of our pilot aimed to improve the way we work with you to ultimately improve the information and services to residents.

The pilot is supported by our Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport and includes the following:

- A dedicated 'Your Voice' webpage – this webpage will be a forum for you to provide feedback to us and for us to share useful information in a timely and user-friendly format.
- A dedicated Parish/Town Council e mail – this e mail will provide you with a way to escalate more complex enquires to WSCC directly.
- A virtual drop-in session – a virtual meeting with WSCC Officers to provide councils with information on the services run by WSCC Highways (Key themes to be agreed with you)

The pilot will run for three months, during June, July, and August after which we will carry out some evaluation and make recommendations for wider roll out.

Next steps

I will be putting a virtual meeting invite in your calendars for week commencing 10 June 2024 which will provide an opportunity to meet each other, give more details of the pilot and deliver a demo for the 'Your Voice' Engagement platform.

Please do reach out if you have any questions.

Kind regards

Steve Hill
(he/him)
Parish & Community Engagement
Business Assurance Group
Highways, Transport and Planning
West Sussex County Council

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th May 2024

Agenda Item 8a

Annual Financial Matters – Accounts for year-ending 31st March 2024

Council is asked to approve the accounts for the year-ending 31st March 2024 and can be signed by the Chairman and the Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer.

Cllr McElroy to introduce this item.

The accounts have been checked to the satisfaction of our Internal Auditor and can be found at Appendix A of these papers. This year, the Finance & General Purposes Committee has not met to review the figures.

Councillors with any questions are invited to call the office prior to the meeting.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

23rd May 2024

Agenda Items 9a and 9b

Annual Financial Matters – Annual Governance and Accountability Return for year-ending 31st March 2024

Council is asked to agree Section 1 – *Annual governance statement 2023/24* - of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year-ending 31st March 2024 can be signed by the Chairman and the Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer.

Council is asked to agree Section 2 – *Accounting statements 2023/24* - of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year-ending 31st March 2024 can be signed by the Chairman and the Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer.

Cllr McElroy to introduce this item.

At the end of each financial year, it is necessary for this council to complete an Annual Governance and Accountability Return which is then sent for external audit.

Appendix B shows the two sections of the form the council needs to agree can be signed by the Chairman and me. Appendix B also includes the Internal Auditor's completed page of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return. I have circulated the complete Internal Auditor report to all councillors to give them additional confidence in agreeing to sign-off this paperwork.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

23rd May 2024

Agenda Item 11

Committees

Since the last Full Council meeting the following committees have met: Finance & General Purposes on 14th May and Amenities (sort of) on 20th May. The draft Minutes from the F&GP meeting have been circulated to all councillors.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

23rd May 2024

Agenda Item 11a

Amenities Committee

Cllr Wilkinson is the chairman of this committee.

The committee met on 20th May, but owing to some confusion, it did not believe it was quorate and so reduced the Agenda to items which only needed to be noted, nothing that required a decision.

Warren Recreation Ground – Mound.

East Preston in Bloom completed its planting project at the mound by the Warren Recreation Ground car park. A variety of shrubs that will give colour all year have been planted across the mound.

Northern shops – Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee Clock.

The commemorative plaque has been installed at the base of the Platinum Jubilee clock. The plaque was cemented in place for security reasons. East Preston in Bloom has agreed to upkeep the planter troughs at the clock's base, a colourful floral display has been planted for the summer 2024.

The committee's next meeting will be on 24th June.

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

28th May 2024

Agenda Item 11b

Audit & Governance Committee

The committee did not meet in May. The committee will comprise the chairmen of the other six committees.

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

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

23rd May 2024

Agenda Item 11c

Community Engagement Committee

The committee did not meet in May. The committee's next meeting is scheduled for 19:00 on Monday, 10th June.

Agenda Item 11d

Finance & General Purposes Committee

Cllr McElroy is the chairman of this committee.

The committee met on 14th May. Cllrs McElroy and Gunston were re-elected Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively.

The committee received a presentation from East Preston Men in Sheds which resulted in a recommendation to award the group a grant of £15,000, see Agenda Item 13a below.

The committee granted a total of £6,069.92 from this year's Section 137 Grant Aid budget and £2,000 from this year's Section 144 Tourism budget line.

The committee reviewed its Terms of Reference, agreeing no changes were needed at this time, and noted there are new Model Financial Regulations available from the National Association of Local Councils. Cllr Gunston volunteered to carry out an initial review of the council's existing Financial Regulations against the new ones.

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

Agenda Item 11e

Major Events Committee

The committee did not meet during May.

The committee's next meeting will be on 17th June.

Agenda Item 11f

Personnel Committee

The committee did not meet in May.

Staff appraisals for the past year have been completed.

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

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

22nd May 2024

Agenda Item 11g

Planning & Licensing Committee

There were no Planning Applications to be considered during May.

Kingston Parish Council has received notification the Secretary of State for the Department for Communities, Housing and Local Government has refused to review ADC's decision to give Planning Permission for 47 new homes in Kingston Lane. Days later, a General Election was called and days after that, said Secretary of State announced he would not be standing for re-election. This council has not yet received similar notification in response to its request for a review of the planning decision.

The committee's next meeting is scheduled for 10th June.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

24th May 2024

Agenda Item 12a

Audit & Governance Committee – internal audit for year ending 31st March 2024

Council is asked to note the final Internal Audit report for the year ending 31st March 2024.

Cllr Mathias to lead on this item.

Mulberry & Co.'s Andy Beams carried out the second internal audit of the financial year on 15th May. His report has been circulated with these Supporting Papers. Andy found nothing to concern him although the council does need to do some work on its Asset Register and Adrian and I are already aware of that.

Should any further discussion on the report be needed, this will take place at the next Audit & Governance Committee meeting.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

17th May 2024

Agenda Item 13a

Finance & General Purposes Committee – East Preston Men in Sheds

Council is asked to agree to award a grant of £15,000 to East Preston Men in Sheds to enable it to complete the build and kitting out of its shed.

Cllr McElroy to lead on this item.

Representatives of East Preston Men in Sheds attended the Finance & General Purposes Committee's meeting on 14th May and gave a presentation on how the group is coming along.

The group was seeking a grant of £15,000. This money would be used to complete the electrical and fire alarm installation in the cabin, add security grilles, a bicycle shelter and planters – to meet the biodiversity requirements of the Planning Permission – and to fit out the cabin with a range of equipment, ready for the group to start operating as it had always envisaged. The group will then aim to be self-funding, carrying out community maintenance, making and selling products, supporting the local schools and care homes and suchlike. For the members, the group should reduce social isolation, promote new friendships and teach new skills.

Committee members were impressed the group had already raised over £20,000 for the project.

Councillors will have seen the cabin has been built, by the Men in Sheds themselves.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

17th May 2024

Agenda Item 14

Working Parties

Only the Environmental Initiatives met in May.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

27th May 2024

Agenda Item 14a

20mph Working Party

Cllr Wilkinson is the chairman of this committee.

As reported above, the council has submitted an appeal to Michele Hulme, WSCC Highways Head of Local Highways Operations, to review the dismissal of the proposal for a 20mph zone covering Sea Road north to the junction of North Lane with Lashmar Road. Several contradictions were found within the reasons for dismissal.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th May 2024

Agenda Item 14b

Conservative Hall Working Party (CHWP)

The working party did not meet in May.

I would suggest the working party sets a meeting date for this month. I have started to work on a business plan although, as I have no experience of writing such, some assistance would be appreciated.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

23rd May 2024

Agenda Item 14c

Environmental Initiatives Working Party (EIWP)

The working party met on 15th May.

A short meeting to discuss the Environment Table to be set up on 1st June on Village Green. Lisa suggested using the badge maker to encourage children to make nature badges. Naomi will try to get some information on hedgehogs. Michał will put together a display to illustrate what we have been doing based on our sustainability framework. I will arrange to get laminated printouts of articles from the Parish Council newsletter. We will also give out walking maps and try to recruit more people for REACH project.

Next meeting 24th June to discuss Neighbourhood Plan.

Cllr John Gunston –
Chairman of the Environmental Initiatives Working Party

23rd May 2024

Agenda Item 14d

Leases Working Party

No update on the negotiations with East Preston & Kingston Bowls Club.

The club's Open Day on Sunday, 19th May was successful and the club hopes some new members will result.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

23rd May 2024

Agenda Item 15

Annual Parish Meeting

The Annual Parish Meeting took place on 13th May and included a presentation from the Littlehampton branch of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. The meeting was followed by drinks and nibbles with some of the members of the public who had attended.

Council is asked to note the draft Minutes from the meeting. These can be found at Appendix C below.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

23rd May 2024

Agenda Item 17a

West Sussex County Council – safer crossing requirements in Worthing Road

Council is asked to support a highways matter relating to Worthing Road.

An Angmering resident with a child at East Preston Infant School, Annabel Dearing, has started a petition for a pedestrian crossing somewhere in Worthing Road. The resident has the support of both East Preston headteachers and has been advised by County Cllr Elkins to get the support of East Preston and Angmering parish councils, as residents of both parishes are likely affected by safety issues getting to and from school in both directions.

Cllr Elkins and I met Annabel on site on Thursday, 23rd May. Other parents stopped to talk to us whilst we were there, all reporting their concerns and hopes.

I understand both East Preston headteachers are supporting the campaign, and Annabel will be contacting the head at The Angmering School after half-term.

At the time of writing, 336 people have signed the petition which is hosted by change.org. There is the opportunity to comment upon signed petitions, and some of the comments from East Preston residents are:

“I would love to walk with my family to the Northern part of the village safely.”

“The area of road between Clarence Drive and the Roundstone Crossing has no safe crossing area for any pedestrian and is heavily used. View of the road is limited by bends and you almost take your life into your hands crossing it.”

“Children’s safety is paramount.”

“How sad parents are forced to beg the council for a crossing or lolly pop person just so their kids can get to school safely.”

“As a driver, I’m always concerned when I see school children waiting to cross the Worthing Road. I want to stop and let them cross, but am so scared that vehicles approaching from other directions will not. [...] It’s awful and something needs to be done – urgently!”

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th May 2024

Agenda Item 19

Sussex Police

Council is asked to note any report from Sussex Police should one be received. It is possible Sgt West and PCSO Raj will attend the beginning of this meeting.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

29th May 2024

Agenda Item 20a

Electrical Safety First – lithium batteries

Council is asked to consider supporting a campaign to improve the safety of lithium batteries.

On 20th May, the council received the following letter:

Dear Local Council

I am writing to ask your Council to support our campaign to improve the safety of lithium batteries (used in e-bike and e-scooters) and their disposal.

Let me begin by introducing myself. I am the researcher for Lord (Don) Foster (hence my email address), who has been campaigning on this issue in the House of Lords. I am also the parliamentary advisor to Electrical Safety First, a UK Charity dedicated to reducing the deaths and injuries caused by electricity.

As you will probably know lithium battery fires are on the increase – there have been over 1000 in the past few years, nearly 200 injuries and a dozen fatalities. Homes have been destroyed. The cost to the UK runs into £billions. You will doubtless know of examples in your area. I attach a spreadsheet of some recent fires – as you will see there have been some in your area.

Lord Foster and Electrical Safety First are promoting the attached Bill (a summary of which is included at the end of this email) to ensure greater safety in the use and disposal of lithium batteries and are aiming to get it into law as soon as possible. It has its First Reading on 5th June.

We have the support of many national organisations, as the attached logos show – including the National Fire Chiefs Council, the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents and the Royal Society for Public Health. In addition 2 coroners have called for the law to be tightened to ensure greater safety.

We are now contacting more locally based organisations, and it would be great if your Council was able to support this campaign. It would be a great boost. Please do get in touch if you require any further information.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Yours sincerely,

Ron Bailey

PS Don't worry if you are not meeting before June 5th. That is only the 1st Reading – other stages will follow, so you won't be too late. Your support will be valuable at any time.

Clause 1 would require third party *independent* approval-testing for e-bikes, e-scooters and their batteries before entering the UK market.

Clause 2: incidents of fires and harmful fumes resulting from lithium-ion batteries in waste vehicles and landfills are increasing. There are reportedly more than 200 landfill fires annually, making up 48 percent of all fires, costing £158 million and contributing significantly to pollution. This clause requires the government to establish regulations for the safe disposal of used lithium-ion batteries.

Clause 3 addresses specific fire concerns, ensuring safer access, charging, and storage of lithium-ion batteries. While an outright ban is suggested by some, conversion kits remain a financially practical solution, especially for gig economy workers reliant on sustainable transportation. Implementing a standardised approach to kits could establish design and installation controls, mitigating foreseeable risks.

I have looked at the spreadsheet mentioned, to save councillors needing to, and of the 168 constituencies listed, Worthing West is not one, but we can overlook that detail for the principle of the matter.

For info, e-scooters are not allowed on Southern Rail trains because of “known” safety risks related to the batteries.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

29th May 2024

Agenda Item 16

Clerk’s Report

1. **Introduction**
2. **Police matters**
3. **Anti-social behaviour matters**
4. **Freedom of Information / Data Protection requests**
5. **Kingston Parish Council meeting, 16th May**
6. **Rustington Parish Council meeting, 20th May**
7. **Village Green vermin**
8. **Social media**
9. **MailChimp stats**
10. **A selection of things we have been asked since the last meeting**
11. **Recent bouquets and complaints**
12. **Leave**
13. **June meetings and events**

1. **Introduction**

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

2. **Police matters**

Nothing to report this month.

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

No updates at the time of writing.

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. Kingston Parish Council meeting, 16th May

Having received correspondence and visits from ten households within Kingston parish, on the subject of ADC's beach huts proposal, I dropped in to this meeting. A small number of residents were present and did raise their concerns about ADC's beach huts proposal. District Cllrs Bower and Bower were present and were able to confirm the proposals have been referred back to the officer who put the proposal before ADC. I was only able to stay for the first half an hour.

Sussex Police PCSO Raj was present at the very beginning of the meeting. When I joked he did not visit us, he said he and his boss, Sgt Daniel West, were planning on visiting lots of parish council meetings in the coming months. Subsequently, I have been in touch with Sgt West and he has advised he and Raj may well drop in to our meeting on 3rd June.

6. Rustington Parish Council meeting, 20th May

I attended this meeting, mainly in support of Cllr Gunston who attended to give a presentation on REACH.

Here too, there were some residents concerned about the ADC beach hut proposal. At least four Rustington parish councillors are also district councillors and were able to shed a little more light on the proposal. Originally mooted in 2022, the proposal had taken this long to get to ADC Full Council, apparently not even known about by members of the proposing committee. Only two officers work in the department behind the proposal, and it is not believed to be a priority for the department. I had written to one on 13th May, asking him for an update. At this meeting, it was announced he had been off sick and had only returned to work on the day of this meeting. There was general agreement amongst the district councillors, this proposal would not progress quickly (if at all).

Affected local councils are due to be consulted, and when that happens I shall let you know.

It was interesting attending even just part of both councils' meetings.

7. Village Green vermin

During the month, we received some reports of rats in the gardens of some properties close to the Village Green. These had been seen climbing up fences to get into the gardens from the top. We called out our preferred pest controller who visited the site, with me, on Tuesday, 14th May. He could see no obvious nests or reasons why the rats were visiting that area of the Village Green. He did wonder whether they had been disturbed by very-nearby development work, but there was nothing close taking place. He advised local householders not to leave out food or water for wildlife as this will also attract rats.

I wrote to affected households advising them as above. We received the following replies:

"Thank you for organising this Simon. Both K and ourselves have checked, emptied, cleaned and replaced items in our sheds (and my metal kiln shed). All nooks and crannies have been cleaned out and disinfected. R, at no. [...] will be checking her garden. The rats WERE coming over the fence and gate in our properties and I could see them running along outside our gate. They have now fully gone and R reports that she hasn't seen them again. The Parish Council works hard for the local residents and Roy and I appreciate all that you do."

"Many thanks."

"Thank you so much for update Simon, very much appreciated"

8. **Social media**

We did not post much during May, but these two posts reached more than 500 people.

- Publicity for One Big Walk! on 29th May, a Healthy Walks in Arun walk to mark over 20 years of such walks in Arun – 2,704 people
- Sea Road closed for treeworks, no advance notice given – 807

(posts up to and including 27th May)

The number of Followers is currently 1,868, an increase of 1 on the last report.

9. **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 – 8th May – sent to 925 subscribers, opened by 641 (69.6%)

Parish Council news – 16th May – sent to 926 subscribers, opened by 646 (70%)

Parish Council news – 23rd May – sent to 927 subscribers, opened by 621 (67.3%)

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

“Do you have a telephone number for the Littlehampton RNLI station?”

“Can covenants affect the outcome of a Planning Application?” (Covenants are not usually considered as part of a Planning Application. They could form part of a civil legal case.)

“Please could you explain to me what a parish council does.”

“May I run a supercar show on the Village Green?” (Come and talk to us.)

“Have you any bingo tickets?” (No, this is a Festival event.)

“Do you have any George Michael tickets left?” (No, this is a Festival event.)

11. **Recent bouquets and complaints**

(In addition to anything reported above)

Vicky Hartkemeyer, CEO of Waves Music Therapy, wrote to thank the council for including the charity in the Spring 2024 Newsletter.

From a resident of Kingston who asked some questions about the future of the Conservative Hall, “Thank you Simon for this comprehensive reply. The consensus of the people talking about the survey was that it would be a great shame for yet another development to arrive in the village. Have a good day and thank you for what you do to encourage and promote village life.”

From a resident user of the boules piste, “You are a star! Thank you so much for organising this”, a reference to sprucing up the notices on the boules noticeboard.

A resident of Golden Acre, West Kingston, stopped me in Rustington to thank me for the support given to Kingston residents concerned about the ADC proposal to install new beach huts to the east of the existing beach huts at the end of South Strand.

12. **Leave**

Caspar is on leave for the week beginning 10th June.

13. **June Meetings and Events**

This list may be incomplete and is subject to change.

- 1st *Come and Meet Your Local Councillors* (09:30 for councillors, Council Office)
- 2nd The Big D-Day Lunch (12:00 -17:00, Village Green)
- 3rd Full Council (18:30, East Preston Infant School)
- 4th *Alpacas on the Village Green* (17:00 for councillors, East Preston Infant School)
- 6th ADC Climate Change workshop (10:00, Civic Centre) (JG only)
- 8th East Preston Carnival Parade (see Cllr Duff for details)
- 10th Local Council Clerk Week begins
Planning & Licensing Committee (18:00, East Preston Infant School)
Community Engagement Committee (19:00, East Preston Infant School)
- 15th East Preston Repair Café (10:00, Vicarage Lane)
- 17th Major Events Committee (19:00, East Preston Infant School)
- 19th Arun Community Transport AGM (13:30, Littlehampton) (HH only)
- 24th Planning & Licensing Committee (18:00, East Preston Infant School)
Environmental Initiatives Working Party (19:00, East Preston Infant School)
- 28th Sussex Police Clerks' Call (15:00, online) (SC only)

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**

28th May 2024

Agenda Item 22

Other meetings and events – Part 1

Council is asked to note any reports. Where a written report is not included below, please expect a verbal report at the meeting.

Meeting with Applegate Distribution, 16th April

Council Office, 122 Sea Road, East Preston

Following some concerns about the distribution of the Winter 2024 Newsletter, Cllr Linton and I met with Dana-Jane Fisher, owner of Applecarte Distribution, the delivery company which delivers the parish council's quarterly newsletters.

Councillors were concerned re a possible perception of political bias within the village because the EPPC Winter 2024 newsletter had been delivered with a political flyer and other business literature.

Therefore, the purpose of the meeting was to establish what delivery options were available and at what cost. At present EPPC pays £340.56 per delivery for a shared rate delivery. An alternative option is a single rate delivery at a cost of £545 per delivery and it would be guaranteed EPPC newsletters would be delivered on their own. This will be considered by the Community Engagement committee in due course, and could be budgeted for from next April.

Cllr Helen Hill

22nd May 2024

Field House coffee morning, 2nd May

Council Office, 122 Sea Road, East Preston

Last year, Field House residents invited Parish Councillors to attend their monthly coffee morning once every six months, where we all engage in topics around their everyday living and local community.

Attending today were Cllr Linton and myself. It was lovely to see both regular and new residents present.

Following introductions, the Manager commenced with multiple topics ranging from smoke detectors in their accommodation, Broadband being installed, online banking due to local bank closures to extreme weather and how it effects their daily lives.

It was very evident that the closure of local banks has effected many of the residents, only a handful were able to manage the online banking APP. The majority of the residents spoke about the daily challenges this brings and how it effects their independence.

We have been experiencing some extreme weather conditions of late, residents highlighted some of the difficulties the weather had on them. Heating on longer times than usual, how difficult it is to get out and shop not knowing if they would be caught in heavy rain and how much they missed sitting in the lovely grounds of Field House, socialising with friends. It was highlighted they now have a community room called "Jigsaw Room" named so because many residents spend time doing jigsaws.

One resident brought the topic up around "RESPECT FORMS" which received a little shock response; topics like this have always been quite emotive, however, it did spark a very good awareness to other residents exactly what this entails. A "RESPECT FORM" records a patient's wishes about a range of care and treatments, a "DNA CPR" is an advanced decision not to attempt CPR, it is not about other treatments. Many questions arose from the discussion and most residents were quite philosophical around the topic.

Wanting to end on a happier note, Cllr Linton regaled the group on all the wonderful up and coming community events East Preston Parish Council has to offer. D Day celebrations and the poppy appeal were highlights, for many of whom have contributed to the poppy appeal and very much enjoyed it. We spoke about warm welcome space, Men in Sheds, Repair Café, Come and Meet your local councillor and the Food and Drink Festival.

This drew the visit to a close, where we were thanked for attending, stating they enjoyed our visits and the time they have to generally just chat about anything and everything.

We thank Field House Residents for our invite and look forward to our next visit.

Cllr Helen Hill

26th May 2024

East Preston Repair Café, 11th May

Spire Room, St Mary the Virgin Church, Vicarage Lane

Our first Repair Café was a great success.

Thirteen items were brought in, ranging from ripped trousers to a broken camcorder. Our team of brilliant volunteers managed to fix eight of the items, make some new friends and give advice on items that could not be repaired. Tea and biscuits were provided by members of the Church, ably supported by Helen's grandchildren.

Although we aim not to have volunteers take items home, one volunteer did take home a garden fork, the handle of which had been broken. The owner hoped there would be a fix so he could keep using his beloved fork for a bit longer. Without the right tools to hand, one volunteer was certain he would be able to fix the fork at home, and the owner was happy to agree. Within 48 hours, the repaired fork had been returned to the Council Office and then on to the owner who was delighted by the repair.

Feedback was best summed up by one comment - "I am very impressed with the service and very kind reception". We also received generous donations towards our running costs.

Thanks to the support from Helen in setting up the initiative, Alison for pre-event admin and Lisa and Simon on the day. Next session is on Saturday 15th June from 10-12.



Kerry successfully helping Lynne with her broken litterpicker



Sue with her painting newly repaired by Roy and Mark

Cllr John Gunston –
Chairman of the Environmental Initiatives Working Party

13th May 2024

Rustington Parish Council, 20th May

Woodlands Centre, Rustington

I attended the monthly meeting of Rustington Parish Council with Simon to give a short presentation on the REACH project. Questions were mainly about detail - costs, potential damage to roofs, ownership issues and concern was also expressed about potential reputational damage to the Parish Council. I asked for support to set up a public meeting to present the plan to Rustington residents and received unanimous support. Cllr Gary Lee was nominated as the contact on the Council. We left the meeting once our presentation was finished.

Before I spoke six residents asked why there was no information from the Parish Council on the planned Arun Beach Hut programme. An email campaign opposing the project has already been started. They were informed no consultation had yet been made on the idea and advised that it may be better to hold back on the campaign until the proposals were fully developed. Rustington Parish Council agreed to keep them all informed on any progress.

Cllr John Gunston –
Chairman of the Environmental Initiatives Working Party

21st May 2024

Agenda Items 25 and 26

Future of the Conservative Hall

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

At the time of writing, there are no updates since the last meeting.

I propose a meeting of the working party at 18:00 on Monday, 17th June.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th May 2024

Appendix A

Agenda Item 8

Annual Financial Matters – Accounts for year-ending 31st March 2024

Council is asked to approve the accounts for the year-ending 31st March 2024 and can be signed by the Chairman and the Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer.

East Preston Parish Council
Balance Sheet
as at 31 March 2024

Year ended 31 March 2023		Year ended 31 March 2024
	CURRENT ASSETS	
183.88	Debtors	2,810.39
1,875.99	Prepayments	1,206.50
11,813.85	VAT recoverable	13,464.19
537,250.01	Cash & Bank	461,367.14
<u>550,923.73</u>		<u>476,848.22</u>
	CURRENT LIABILITIES	
(16,609.95)	Creditors	(11,740.40)
(11,208.25)	Accruals	(3,588.72)
(80.05)	Receipts in Advance	(1,120.05)
<u>(27,898.25)</u>		<u>(16,449.17)</u>
<u>523,025.48</u>	NET ASSETS	<u>462,399.05</u>
	Represented by	
347,905.22	General Fund	240,175.60
35,814.22	The Greener Buildings Project	35,814.22
21,105.00	Parish Office - Major Improvements	21,105.00
0.00	Village Clock	-
1,300.00	End of Term Party	1,300.00
30,000.00	EP Youth Provision	30,000.00
20,000.00	Village Bus Service	-
1,000.00	Film Event	-
0.00	Children's Playground	-
0.00	EP in Bloom	-
3,005.00	Defib Fund	3,500.00
25,000.00	WRG Car Park Lighting	-
3,974.00	WRG Enhancements	3,974.00
11,225.81	Play Panels - WRG	-
0.00	Queen's Platinum Jubilee Fund	-
8,992.45	Traffic Calming Measures	8,992.45
10,000.00	Neighbourhood Plan Reviews	10,000.00
3,703.78	Public Conveniences - Major Works	3,703.78
0.00	WRG tennis, playground and equipment works	3,144.00
0.00	Village map	680.00
0.00	Conservative Hall	100,000.00
<u>523,025.48</u>		<u>462,399.05</u>

The above statement fairly represents the financial position of the authority and reflects its income and expenditure for the year.

Signed
Chairman

RFO

Date

**East Preston Parish Council
Income and Expenditure Account
For the year ended
31 March 2024**

<u>Year ended 31 March 2023</u>		<u>Year ended 31 March 2024</u>
	INCOME	
278,064.75	Precept	278,261.62
5,831.95	Rent income (Property: 124 Sea Rd)	10,830.00
3,000.00	Rent income (Sports) - Parish Council	3,000.00
4,577.29	Other income (Amenities & Admin)	46,857.46
3,980.79	Community Engagement & Major Events	5,306.22
1,271.18	Community Infrastructure Levy	0.00
566.70	WRG Trust Income (inc Sports & V/Hall Rent)	636.84
3,713.24	AoSERA Street Lighting	4,258.44
4,213.88	Village Green Parking Income	3,951.71
4,877.29	Bank interest received	12,001.36
<u>310,097.07</u>	TOTAL INCOME	<u>365,103.65</u>
	EXPENDITURE	
(37,417.42)	General Administration (inc F&GP)	(27,086.96)
(88,816.35)	Staff Costs (Salaries, NI & Pension)	(100,724.35)
(5,222.11)	Property Costs - Flat 124 Sea Rd	(2,510.65)
(5,208.32)	Grant Aid Section 137	(5,625.00)
(3,000.00)	Donations/ Contributions to organisations	(1,000.00)
(35,456.75)	Amenities	(43,685.59)
(4,170.00)	Street Lighting	(2,006.87)
(34,514.94)	WRG Trust Total Expenditure	(38,753.16)
(1,644.05)	Annual Contingency Budget	0.00
(52,705.99)	General Reserve Fund (inc Earmarked Reserves)	(66,848.65)
(26,207.82)	Community Engagement (inc Major Events)	(36,784.50)
<u>(294,363.75)</u>	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	<u>(325,005.73)</u>
<u>15,733.32</u>	TOTAL NET INCOME	<u>40,097.92</u>
	GENERAL FUND	
311,858.44	Balance 1 April	347,905.22
15,733.32	Total net Income after interest	40,097.92
<u>327,391.76</u>	Balance before transfers	<u>388,003.14</u>
	Transfers to/ (from) Reserves	
6,262.00	The Greener Buildings Project	(10,000.00)
0.00	Parish Office - Major Improvements	(7,244.38)
13,502.50	Village Clock	0.00
(250.00)	End of Term Party	0.00
0.00	EP Youth Provision	0.00
0.00	Beach Access	0.00
0.00	Village Bus Service	(17,259.78)
0.00	Film Event	0.00
2,000.00	Children's Playground	0.00
0.00	Tennis Court	0.00
5,000.00	EP in Bloom	0.00
495.00	Defib Fund	0.00
0.00	WRG Car Park Lighting	(7,054.38)
(2,574.00)	WRG Enhancements	0.00
13,774.19	Play Panels - WRG	0.00
5,000.00	Queen's Platinum Jubilee Fund	0.00
(8,992.45)	Traffic Calming Measures	0.00
(10,000.00)	Neighbourhood Plan Reviews	(6,269.00)
(3,703.78)	Public Conveniences - major works	0.00
<u>347,905.22</u>	Balance 31 March	<u>240,175.60</u>

Agenda Items 9a and 9b

Annual Financial Matters – Annual Governance and Accountability Return for year-ending 31st March 2024

Council is asked to agree Section 1 – Annual governance statement 2023/24 - of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year-ending 31st March 2024 can be signed by the Chairman and the Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer.

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

We acknowledge as the members of:

East Preston Parish Council

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2024, that:

	Agreed		Yes' means that the authority'
	Yes	No*	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓		prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓		made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	✓		has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✓		during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✓		considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓		arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit	✓		responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	✓		disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable, in our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes ✓	No	N/A has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts

*Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

DDMMYYYY

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by the Chair and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chair SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk SIGNATURE REQUIRED

ENTER PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

Council is asked to agree Section 2 – Accounting statements 2023/24 - of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year-ending 31st March 2024 can be signed by the Chairman and the Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer.

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24 for

East Preston Parish Council

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2023 £	31 March 2024 £	
1. Balances brought forward	507,292	523,025	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	278,065	278,262	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received
3. (+) Total other receipts	32,032	86,842	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received
4. (-) Staff costs	88,816	100,724	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any)
6. (-) All other payments	205,548	325,006	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5)
7. (=) Balances carried forward	523,025	462,399	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6)
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	537,250	461,367	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	898,864	1,001,338	The value of all the property the authority owns – if it made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March
10. Total borrowings	0	0	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PwLB)

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The figures in the accounting statements above exclude any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2024 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

SIGNATURE REQUIRED
COMMITTY
Date

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

COMMITTY

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by Chair of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24

East Preston Parish Council

www.eastpreston-pc.gov.uk

During the financial year ended 31 March 2024, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2023/24 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2022/23, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2022/23 AGAR tick 'not covered')			✓
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✓		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (during the 2023-24 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2022-23 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2022/23 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).	✓		
O. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	Yes	No	Not applicable
	✓		

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

12/10/2023 15/05/2024 20/05/2024

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

Andy Beams, Mulberry LAS Ltd

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

Andy Beams

Date

20/05/2024

*If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

**Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

Annual Parish Meeting

Council is asked to note the draft Minutes from the meeting.

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING - EAST PRESTON

13th May 2024

The Annual Parish Meeting at East Preston duly convened and held this day at East Preston Infant School.

Present: Parish Councillors Kit Bradshaw, Andrea Chapman, Lisa Duff, Barbara Gale, John Gunston, Elizabeth Linton, Glyn Mathias, Rick McElroy, David Moore, Steve Toney (in the Chair) and Steve Wilkinson

County Cllr Roger Elkins

District Cllrs Philippa Bower and Paul Kelly

Roy Allen, Linda Denton, Kelvan Gale, Pauline and Malcolm McLelland, Sue Morley, Jennifer Wallace

John Phipps, Royal National Lifeboat Institution (Littlehampton)

Clerk to the Council: Simon Cross

Assistant Clerk to the Council: Dawn Reid

Apologies: Parish Councillors Christine Bowman and Helen Hill, District Cllr Ricky Bower

The Chairman of the Council, Councillor Steve Toney, opened the meeting at 19:18, and thanked and welcomed those attending.

APM2024/01 - To confirm the Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 15th May 2023

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 15th May 2023 were agreed to be a true record. The meeting agreed these could be signed by Cllr Toney.

These Minutes had previously been noted by the Parish Council at its meeting held on 5th June 2023, Parish Council Minute 459/23.

APM2024/02 - To receive the Annual Report of the East Preston Parish Council

An abbreviated version of Cllr Toney's report had been published in the Spring 2024 Newsletter and made available to all attendees before the start of the meeting. All present had read the report, which read:

"I would like to start by thanking every single resident, businessperson and visitor who has made a positive contribution

to the village during the past council year. Not a day goes by when something in the village does not make me feel proud to live here. There are too many voluntary organizations beavering away in the village for it to be fair for me to mention any one organization, but you will be aware of many of the groups around and will have your own favourites. If you subscribe to the council's e-newsletter service or Facebook page, you will see how we help not-for-profit groups to publicize their activities when we can. In more practical terms, councillors, with help from community volunteers, staff the weekly Littlehampton Community Fridge on Tour sessions in the village.

"The council year started with local elections in May. I am pleased to say 12 of the 13 councillors in post at that time agreed to continue being councillors. Patricia Gander stood down and was replaced by Helen Hill. Now a year into the role, we hope Helen is enjoying herself and finding being a councillor rewarding. Officer-wise, our longest-standing member of staff, Tracy Khoo, left the council in July after close to twenty years and is now living happily in Suffolk. In Tracy's place we have welcomed Adrian Vyse to look after the council's finances.

"The past year has been another successful one for the council's events – another successful Food & Drink Festival, two successful half-day playschemes for local children, a *Funday Sunday* for the young-at-heart, two beach cleans and a successful Christmas Celebrations event. We also worked with the East Preston Festival Committee to host an enjoyable Big Coronation Lunch on the Village Green, marking the Coronation of King Charles III.

"We marked the King's Coronation in other ways too. All primary school children in the village were given a Coronation coin in a presentation box and a Field Maple was planted to complement the one planted for Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee.

"At the end of May, the council was finally able to launch a bus service to the southern end of the village, extending the Littlehampton to Rustington no. 12 service into East Preston. Although appreciated by those who do use it, too few people use it currently and the council has decided to stop funding the service at the end of August. If a cost-effective alternative can be found, the council will consider it accordingly.

"As Trustee of the Warren Recreation Ground, the council improved security by installing large gates at the vehicle entrance from the car-park on to the recreation ground itself, and by installing three new lights in the car-park. Additionally, in conjunction with East Preston Cricket Club, the council maintained the recreation ground and will work with East Preston in Bloom to improve various aspects of the recreation ground. The council also installed an outdoor chess table, thanks to the generosity of East Preston Film Society.

"Increasing the council's Community Engagement work, from late in 2023, the council is now attending the St Mary the Virgin Church Welcome Café once a quarter and joining the Field House monthly coffee morning once every six months. The council welcomes these opportunities to meet local residents – if your group would like a visit from a couple of councillors, please get in touch.

"In September, the council installed four new planters on the island opposite the Council Office. Although they have not been successful in tackling inconsiderate parking on and beside the island, the planters have been well-received by members of the public. Recycled plastic noticeboards have been installed to replace the council's five wooden noticeboards. These are indistinguishable from the real thing and two of the old ones have been adopted by local organizations.

"Although initially supported by West Sussex County Council, the council's proposal for a 20mph Zone had to be scaled back and a revised proposal submitted. We have recently learnt this has been rejected by WSCC and we are looking at alternative proposals. New parking restrictions have been implemented in Sea Road adjacent to the northern shops and at the junction of North Lane and Lashmar Road. The council has shown its support for some parking restrictions at the Vicarage Lane entrance to Langmeads Field.

"In the annual Loo of the Year Awards, the Sea Road toilet block received the Platinum Plus award, the top award for this size of toilet.

"Boom Community Bank makes low-cost loans available to local residents who may not be able to secure a loan anywhere else, and in December the council agreed to deposit £36,000 to support its work. Alongside such loans, the bank works with its customers to become responsible savers. The collaboration has seen an increase in the number of East Preston households banking with Boom, and we hope this will be of value and continue.

"Starting on New Year's Day, for the second year running, the council supported Warm Welcome Spaces to which local residents could go for a hot lunch and some company on cold Mondays. In addition to sessions at the British Legion,

we also supported sessions at St Mary the Virgin Church. During the three months of the scheme, over 330 lunches were served to people from over 40 households in the village. Those attending the sessions were very appreciative. Our thanks to Arun District Council for a grant to help with this initiative.

“For the fourth year running, the council did not put up its portion of your Council Tax. During the council year, councillors and officers have received specific finance training, more general refresher training, Data Protection training as well as attending various seminars to keep their knowledge up-to-date.

“In the middle of the year, the council was approached by the Trustees of the Conservative Hall asking the council to consider adopting the hall in order to keep it in community use for the foreseeable future. The council is keeping residents informed through the newsletter and its e-newsletter service. A survey has shown good support for such an adoption.

“The council has responded to many Planning Applications over the past year plus a few Licensing Applications, considering near neighbours’ feelings where possible.

“Once again, the council’s Annual Governance and Accountability Return was signed off by the External Auditor with nothing requiring any attention.

“I thank all councillors and all of the council’s officers for making this job a relatively easy one. I also thank our County and District Councillors for their involvement throughout the year.

“Above everything, thank you to any of you who regularly show your faith in and support for the council. We hope to continue to improve the village where we can. Thank you.”

Cllr Toney added, “A big thank you to all the Parish Councillors and Parish Officers for their tireless work throughout the year.”

APM2024/03 - To receive a report from the Arun District councillors representing East Preston

District Councillor Philippa Bower started by giving her husband, Cllr Ricky Bower’s apologies for meeting. Cllr Bower reported a new Chief Executive had been appointed for the district council, Dawn Hudd, and she would be starting sometime in the next three months.

Cllr Bower advised she sat on two ADC committees, the first of which was the Environment Committee. This had recently agreed to a proposal to give all residents a small bin or caddy, to enable a weekly food waste collection. Alongside this, all households would be given a 180l refused bin which would only be collected fortnightly. This would encourage greater recycling rates although recycling collection would remain fortnightly too. ADC was also due to take on the brown bin garden collection service, starting in 2026. In response to a question, Cllr Bower reported she had experimented with the proposed food caddy and it was relatively vermin-proof.

ADC had implemented parking meters in all its car-parks, in some cases simply to monitor usage of the car-parks at no cost to drivers. However, the scheme was not especially popular and was deemed to have exacerbated road safety problems in at least one part of the district.

Cllr Bower also sat on the Audit & Governance Committee, the main interest of which was keeping track of the council’s finances.

District Cllr Kelly said he had nothing to add.

Cllr Gunston thanked Cllr Kelly for having represented this council in its desire to have the overgrown allotments at the Roundstone Drive site tidied. Subsequently though, despite Cllr Kelly and the Clerk trying to get a response from the ADC officer responsible for the site, no further information or responses had been forthcoming, and Cllr Gunston was now aware of residents keen to set up a community allotment at the site. The Clerk added he was aware of two separate residents who had contacted ADC about leasing an allotment plot but both had been stonewalled. Cllr Kelly said he would escalate within ADC.

APM2024/04 - To receive a report from the West Sussex County councillor representing East Preston

County Cllr Elkins thanked East Preston Parish Council for all it did for the village. He said some other local councils struggled to be active and it was great to see how dedicated all councillors were, backed up by a great team of officers. Cllr Elkins said he had attended some great events in the village, and there were great for the village.

By way of explanation, Cllr Elkins said the annual budget for the county council (WSCC) was £2bn. He then broke that figure down into some of the more interesting departments, such as education (£960m) and potholes (£83m).

Using central government funding aimed at encouraging people to use buses, WSCC had spent £1.2m on new bus information signs, some of which were already visible in East Preston.

A sustained campaign of road repairs should see more progress with better weather expected. That said, heavy rainfall over the winter had hampered this campaign. WSCC had set up a Task & Finish group to investigate flooding matters in the county. This was likely to take a year to produce its findings.

The county council remained financially secure, and had made no reductions in services; for example, the library service offering had remained unchanged for several years now whilst other county councils had reduced opening hours or the number of libraries in their portfolio.

The population of the county was now about 880,000 with 37,000 businesses operating. WSCC was concerned about the increase in the number of residents in the 50-64 age range, an increase of 15% in recent years. This would likely have a future impact on adult social services.

Referring to the meeting scheduled for 10th July concerning the Roundstone Level Crossing, Cllr Linton asked Cllr Elkins for assurance West Sussex County Council Highways would be able to attend, and would not ask for the meeting to be deferred with only two weeks' notice as it had done in March. The importance of WSCC Highways as a stakeholder in this meeting could not be underestimated and all other vital stakeholders had committed to attend the meeting. Cllr Elkins was surprised the Clerk had heard nothing further from Highways beyond an initial response to the invitation saying someone would get back to him. Cllr Elkins said experts within the Highways department were often booked for meetings a whole year ahead. Cllr Linton said if that was the case, then a simple notification of that would suffice, and the council could work out a different plan.

Referring both to the ADC situation with allotments and the WSCC situation with the Roundstone Level Crossing, Cllr McElroy said it felt as if councillors at both organisations were being led by officers rather than the other way around. District Cllr Bower said she felt district councillors were too respectful of ADC officers.

Wanting to end on a lighter note, the Clerk asked Cllr Elkins for any comments about the parish council playscheme he had attended on 9th April. Cllr Elkins said the playscheme had been very enjoyable, all attendees were engaged and he had enjoyed helping them with their kites during the event.

APM2024/05 - To consider any written resolutions received by the council no later than 10th May 2024

The Clerk to the Council confirmed no resolutions had been received.

APM2024/06 – Public question time

There were no questions nor comments.

With nobody wishing to say anything further, Cllr Toney closed the meeting at 20:37.