

**MONTHLY MEETING  
OF THE COUNCIL**

**4<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2024  
at 19:00**

**SUPPORTING PAPERS**

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

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## **Agenda Item 6**

### **Minutes of Monthly Full Council meeting, 7<sup>th</sup> October**

The draft Minutes were circulated to all councillors on 9<sup>th</sup> October, asking for suggested amendments by 16<sup>th</sup> October. None were received.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28<sup>th</sup> October 2024

## **Agenda Item 7**

### **Monthly Update Report**

1. **Introduction**
2. **Minute 728/24 – Audit & Governance Committee – Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year-ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024**
3. **Minute 732/24 – West Sussex County Council – North Lane bus cages**

#### **1. Introduction**

This is the report covering items discussed during Full Council meetings up to and including the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2024.

#### **2. Minute 728/24 – Audit & Governance Committee – Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year-ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024**

On 16<sup>th</sup> October, the council received a further response to its request for guidance on what the external auditors found we did not, “As we are the External Auditors, we have a responsibility to remain independent from the council and are therefore unable to aid you with your query. We would expect the council to be able to produce this information, as this is required every year as part of the Explanation of Significant Variances form.”

Whilst understanding the need to remain independent the combination of answers received from the external auditors leads me to believe the external auditors did not actually find something we had missed. I have completed the annual survey for those audited.

#### **3. Minute 732/24 – West Sussex County Council – North Lane bus cages**

I chased this matter again on the day after the meeting. On 9<sup>th</sup> October, my WSCC Highways contact also chased and received the following update, “Got some feedback from the project officer already...chasing sometimes works... No construction dates have yet been provided by the contractors, but they expect to carry out the work sometime around March 2025. I’ve been assured that as soon as the construction dates are finalised, they’ll let me/you know. I hope that helps a little.”

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

29<sup>th</sup> October 2024

## **Agenda Item 9**

### **Committees**

Since the last Full Council meeting the following committees have met: Major Events, Personnel and Planning & Licensing. By the time of this meeting, the draft Minutes from all of these meetings should have been circulated to all councillors, except for those from the Personnel Committee which have only been circulated to members of that committee.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

29<sup>th</sup> October 2024

## **Agenda Item 9a**

### **Amenities Committee**

Cllr Wilkinson is chairman of this committee.

The committee did not meet in October.

**Village Green Car Park** – The new parking management company, National Parking Control (NPC), has begun its management of the Village Green car park. The car park remains operating using the Automatic Number Plate Recognition System (ANPRS). NPC has installed a new ticket machine which is able to accept contactless payment as well as cash. Whilst changing the management of the Village Green car park, the committee reconsidered the hourly parking tariffs. The committee agreed the hourly charge will remain at 50p but agreed to remove the £1 overnight parking charge, therefore overnight parking is now free.

In the past couple of weeks, a further two local residents have come to the office claiming to have received a £170 debt recovery claim, both saying they did not receive initial fine letters from OPS. The first came into the office whilst we were still contracted to OPS. Simon contacted OPS who were unwilling to assist. Now that we no longer have a contract with OPS, presumably they will not suddenly become cooperative.

**Trees** - a large branch broke on the Silver Maple tree by the tennis courts during strong winds. Fortunately, no injuries occurred and the council’s tree surgeon removed the broken branch.

**Memorial Tree warden** – Paul Wicks began the voluntary role as the council’s Memorial Tree Warden, on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024. The role involves maintaining the memorial trees located at council owned sites.

**Disability Action Group, East Preston** – further to the public comments made at the October Full Council meeting, Cllr Wilkinson and I attended the group’s meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> October.

**East Preston Men in Sheds** – Simon and I have agreed Men in Sheds can place a key safe on the western wall of the Sea Road toilet block, immediately below the council’s own key safe.

The committee’s next meeting will be on 11<sup>th</sup> November.

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

28<sup>th</sup> October 2024

## **Agenda Item 9b**

### **Audit & Governance Committee**

The committee has not met since July.

The committee’s next meeting is scheduled for 18<sup>th</sup> November.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28<sup>th</sup> October 2024

## **Agenda Item 9c**

### **Community Engagement Committee**

Cllr Linton is chairman of this committee.

The committee did not meet in October.

Some updates:

**Roundstone Level Crossing meeting, 10<sup>th</sup> July** – the follow-up, online meeting with stakeholders in early October was attended by Cllrs Toney, Linton and Gunston and is reported in the Clerk’s Report below.

**Newsletter, Autumn 2024** – Cllr Linton signed off the copy on Monday, 28<sup>th</sup> October.

**East Preston Calendar 2025** – lacking a few photographs in a high enough quality, Cllrs Linton, Chapman and Duff agreed not to produce a substandard 2025 calendar, but to carry all the good bits over to a 2026 calendar.

**Warm Welcome Space** – the British Legion has agreed to work with the council on a Warm Welcome Space offering for 2025.

The committee's next meeting is scheduled for 25<sup>th</sup> November.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28<sup>th</sup> October 2024

## **Agenda Item 9d**

### **Finance & General Purposes Committee**

Cllr McElroy is the chairman of this committee.

The committee did not meet in October.

The committee's next meeting will be on 18<sup>th</sup> November.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28<sup>th</sup> October 2024

## **Agenda Item 9e**

### **Major Events Committee**

Cllr Linton is Chairman of the committee.

The committee met on 21<sup>st</sup> October. Here are some updates.

**East Preston Food & Drink Festival** – the committee agreed to host a Food & Drink Festival on Saturday, 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2025. Cllr Chapman will be the lead councillor for the event.

**Unveiling of the Poppy Cascade, 26<sup>th</sup> October** – all was on track for this event and you can see Cllr Linton's report and my report further down these Supporting Papers.

**Remembrance Sunday, 10<sup>th</sup> November** – the council had received final details from the British Legion, no change to last year's arrangements, and had also received confirmation of the requested road closures.

**East Preston Christmas Celebrations, 23<sup>rd</sup> November** – all was on track for this event too. Cllr Linton hopes to have a timetable of councillor duties available early in November.

**Funday Sunday, 27<sup>th</sup> April** – the committee agreed the Clerk should contact two previously-used music acts for a quote for the event. Cllr Hill agreed to be the lead councillor.

**Autumn Quiz, 12<sup>th</sup> October** – the date has now been set. Cllr Bradshaw has agreed to be the quizmaster for the event, and the Junior School hall has been booked.

The committee's next meeting is scheduled for 16<sup>th</sup> December.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

29<sup>th</sup> October 2024

## **Agenda Item 9f**

### **Personnel Committee**

The committee met on 14<sup>th</sup> October.

The committee discussed the Mind Community Conversations training, which I had undertaken on behalf of the council. This is a great basic course on mental health and committee agreed to recommend this course to councillors, officers and volunteers. Initially, those interested are encouraged to undertake the training on their own, but should anyone prefer to train with other, please let me know. The course can be found [here](#). Please let Simon know when you complete the training for our records.

The committee considered a letter received from the Monitoring Officer at ADC, Daniel Bainbridge, on the subject of predetermination. The letter was lengthy and detailed and the committee felt it should just circulate something shorter. That has been quite difficult, but I refer councillors to this one paragraph taken from a NALC Legal Topic Note, “S.25 of the Localism Act 2011 (“the 2011 Act”) is intended to deal with challenges to the validity of decisions taken by parish councils (or in Wales a community council) because a member or co-opted member is alleged to have had a closed mind when voting.” Simon has provided a link to the full Legal Topic Note when circulating these Supporting Papers.

Councillors were praised for their calm demeanour during a challenging October Full Council meeting.

The committee agreed to reinstate the Flat & Frontage Working Party now a move to the Conservative Hall site can definitely not even be considered now.

Subsequent to the meeting, the National Joint Council for Local Government Services has announced its pay settlement for council employees. All employees will have a lump sum increase, pro rata for part-time employees; this will be backdated to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024. Allowances are to be increased by 2.5%.

The committee’s next meeting is scheduled for 14<sup>th</sup> October.

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

28<sup>th</sup> October 2024

## **Agenda Item 9g**

### **Planning & Licensing Committee**

The committee met on 14<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> October.

At the meeting on 14<sup>th</sup>, the committee considered four Applications, one of which was for tree works. Earlier in the meeting, the committee had agreed a change to its Terms of Reference so tree Applications will now automatically be referred to the ADC arboriculturist unless a committee member asks for it to be considered by the committee. Of the remaining three

Applications, the committee raised no objections against two of them and the third had been withdrawn by the time of the meeting. The committee also agreed to support objections raised by Angmering and Kingston parish councils to Applications within their areas.

The same meeting agreed Cllr Bowman should represent this council at a meeting of the ADC Economy Committee to be held on 22<sup>nd</sup> October. This meeting was going to discuss whether to progress the investigation into a number of sites identified as “suitable” for additional beach huts. Although none of the sites were in East Preston, two were in Kingston but would need to be accessed via East Preston as the closest roads in Kingston were all private. Cllr Bowman spoke at the Economy Committee meeting and the committee threw out the proposals for additional sites in Rustington, Kingston and Ferring. A lot of members of the public had attended and spoken against the proposals. As Cllr Bowman had attended this meeting, Cllr Moore had attended a seminar which Cllr Bowman had been planning on attending – his report can be seen at Agenda Item 20b below.

There were no Planning Applications to be considered at the meeting on the 28<sup>th</sup>, but the committee met to consider one Licensing Application for an existing venue in the south of the village. The committee had concerns about the quality of the information in the application and also felt the outdoor drinking end time should be curtailed to that of other existing venues.

The Neighbourhood Plan review is progressing and council will be asked to agree a draft of the revised Neighbourhood Plan be sent to ADC (see Agenda Item 12a below).

The committee’s next meeting is scheduled for 11<sup>th</sup> November.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

29<sup>th</sup> October 2024

## **Agenda Item 10a**

### **Audit & Governance Committee – Interim Internal Audit report for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025**

**Council is asked to note the Interim Internal Audit report produced on 23<sup>rd</sup> October.**

Cllr Mathias to lead on this item.

The report was circulated as a separate document with these papers. A paper copy can be provided upon request.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28<sup>th</sup> October 2024

## **Agenda Item 11**

### **Community Engagement Committee – Roundstone Level Crossing**

**Council is asked to agree to carry out a traffic survey at the Roundstone Level Crossing.**

Cllr Linton to lead on this item.

On 10<sup>th</sup> October, the council had a follow-on meeting to the public meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> July. A report on this meeting can be found at Item 8 in the Clerk's Report below. The council was represented at the meeting by Cllrs Toney, Linton and Gunston.

On behalf of the Community Engagement Committee, and rather than waiting for a committee meeting, the councillors are recommending the council carries out a traffic survey purely to see how many vehicles travel across the Roundstone Level Crossing in an average week. As an aside the survey will also give us some information on the speed of vehicles crossing in one direction at least.

Council is asked for up to £350 from this year's contingency budget line for this work.

**Council is also asked to consider a recommendation to refresh the RGP traffic consultancy report produced in 2015.**

Councillors will remember the council commissioned RGP Transport Planning and Infrastructure Design Consultants to produce a report of options for the future of traffic management at the Roundstone Level Crossing. That report was presented to WSCC in 2015 and rejected until after the dualling improvements on the A259 had taken place. Those works have completed and WSCC considers them so successful the road is now taking a lot of A27 traffic too.

From the meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> October, Cllrs Toney, Linton and Gunston would like to start talking with Angmering and Kingston Parish Councils about discussing the RGP proposals with WSCC Highways, but the report is not ten years out of date and may need some refreshing.

I made an initial contact with RGP with a view to seeing how much such a refresh would cost but was told the company no longer did that work and the lead consultant had left and set up a different company. I have now contacted him and have a telephone meeting booked for 30<sup>th</sup> October.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

23<sup>rd</sup> October 2024

## **Agenda Item 12a**

### **Planning & Licensing Committee – East Preston** **Neighbourhood Plan review**

**Council is asked to agree a draft of the revised East Preston Neighbourhood Plan should be passed to Arun District Council for comment.**

Cllr Bowman to lead on this item.

Led by Cllr Bowman, the council's very small team reviewing the East Preston Neighbourhood Plan now believes it is in a position to pass a draft of the reviewed Neighbourhood Plan to Arun District Council for comment.



## **Agenda Item 13**

### **Working Parties**

No working party met in October.

## **Agenda Item 13a**

### **20mph Working Party**

Cllr Wilkinson is the chairman of this committee.

No further update to last month - traffic speed surveys have been completed for The Street and Sea Road and the data is being considered by Keith Harris, coordinator of the village's Community Speed Watch initiative.

## **Agenda Item 13b**

### **Conservative Hall Working Party (CHWP)**

Cllr Wilkinson is chairman of this working party.

Although the sale does not appear to have completed at the time of writing, the sale appears to be at advanced enough a stage for there to be nothing further for the council to do in this matter. An article to that end has been published in the Autumn 2024 Newsletter.

Council is therefore asked to disband this working party (see Agenda Item 14 below).

## **Agenda Item 13c**

## **Environmental Initiatives Working Party (EIWP)**

Cllr Gunston is the chairman of this working party.

The working party will next meet on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> November.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28<sup>th</sup> October 2024

## **Agenda Item 13d**

### **Leases Working Party (LWP)**

Cllr Wilkinson is the chairman of this working party.

The working party met as part of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting, and agreed to undertake a professional valuation of the club. I have made initial contact with the company which undertook a valuation of the Conservative Hall. I have informed the club and its solicitors of this fact.

That company has expressed reluctance to undertake a survey in a field in which it is not familiar unless the council could provide certain other information, which I have provided but I suspect the reluctance will remain.

I have a meeting with the council's solicitor on 29<sup>th</sup> November to discuss this all further.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28<sup>th</sup> October 2024

## **Agenda Item 14a**

### **Conservative Hall Working Party (CHWP)**

**Council is therefore asked to disband this working party.**

Cllr Wilkinson to lead on this item.

As stated above, although the sale does not appear to have completed at the time of writing, the sale appears to be at advanced enough a stage for there to be nothing further for the council to do in this matter. An article to that end has been published in the Autumn 2024 Newsletter.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28<sup>th</sup> October 2024

## **Agenda Item 15a**

### **Flat and Frontage Working Party**

**Council is asked to reinstate the Flat and Frontage Working Party.**

As stated in Cllr Duff's report above, the Personnel Committee would like council to reinstate this working party now a move to the Conservative Hall site can no longer even be considered. The front window of the Council Office is single-glazed which provides little protection from the heat of the summer and the cool of the winter, and is wood which comes with a regular maintenance bill. Previously, the council had been working towards replacing the frontage to tackle those issues. At the same time, it may be possible to improve access to the building for those with reduced mobility. The style of the glazing woodwork would need to be replicated to retain some semblance of the history of the frontage.

Since the Personnel Committee met, the tenant in the flat above the Council Office has given notice with the intention to be out of the flat by the end of the calendar year.

Councillors willing to be on this working party should let me know. Thanks.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28<sup>th</sup> October 2024

## **Agenda Item 18**

### **Sussex Police**

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

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

29<sup>th</sup> October 2024

## **Agenda Item 19**

### **Clerk's Report**

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Police matters**

3. **Anti-social behaviour matters**
4. **Freedom of Information / Data Protection requests**
5. **RNLI Littlehampton visit, 1<sup>st</sup> October**
6. **East Preston Festival Committee donations evening, 9<sup>th</sup> October**
7. **Meeting with WSCC on the subject of electric vehicle charging points, 10<sup>th</sup> October**
8. **Roundstone Level Crossing follow-up meeting, 10<sup>th</sup> October**
9. **East Preston Repair Café, 12<sup>th</sup> October**
10. **South-East Community Rail Partnership, 17<sup>th</sup> October**
11. **Dr Becky Cooper MP surgery, 25<sup>th</sup> October**
12. **Official unveiling of the East Preston Yarnbombers' Poppy Cascade, 26<sup>th</sup> October**
13. **Sussex Police All Parishes Meeting, 29<sup>th</sup> October**
14. **Social media**
15. **MailChimp stats**
16. **A selection of things we have been asked since the last meeting**
17. **Recent bouquets and complaints**
18. **Leave**
19. **November meetings and events**

#### 1. **Introduction**

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

#### 2. **Police matters**

The council has reported nothing to Sussex Police in the past month.

Sgt West and PCSO Raju were both invited to attend the unveiling of the Poppy Cascade, but neither was able to attend on the day.

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

It is now a few weeks since I last saw the man who had been sleeping in Langmeads Field. No other developments in anti-social behaviour matters in the village.

#### 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. **RNLI Littlehampton visit, 1<sup>st</sup> October**

In support of the Chairman’s Charity for this year, I arranged a visit to Littlehampton lifeboat station. This was attended by Cllrs Toney, Linton, Gunston, Chapman and Moore with Weekend Stephen, Karen Toney and me. Cllrs Bradshaw, Duff and Hill had also wanted to attend but were unavailable on the day.

The visit was arranged through a guy called Brian and he and he colleague Tony were our hosts for the afternoon. We started downstairs with a talk about the station’s two boats, a B-class boat (crew of 4, able to rescue twenty people, approximate cost today - £310,000) and a D-class boat (crew of 3, able to rescue three or four people, approximate cost today - £110,000). Both Littlehampton boats had been funded by single donations.

Tony then showed us around the crew’s changing room, talking us through each item each crew member is required to wear. Each crew member has a second outfit available, in case they are called out twice in a shift. Each outfit is shower-cleaned when the crew is back at the station.

We then went upstairs where we were shown a video about the work of the RNLI.

The visit lasted about an hour and was very interesting and worthwhile.



**6. East Preston Festival Committee donations evening, 9<sup>th</sup> October**

I attended this annual meeting together with Cllrs Bowman, Linton, Moore and Toney. Alison attended as a member of the Festival Committee.

As always, this was an informative event. The groups listed below are the recipients of grants this year, and most had a representative present to speak for a few minutes.

1 <sup>st</sup> EP Scout Group	East Preston Infant School	NSPCC
4SIGHT East Preston	East Preston Junior School	Our Lady, Star of the Sea
Angmering-on-Sea Tennis Club	East Preston Men in Sheds	Patient Link
Angmering School – Lavinia Norfolk Centre	East Preston Village Pre-School	Reach The Beach (aka Sea Road Beach Access Limited)
ARK Parent and Toddler Group	East Preston Yarnbombers	RNLI

Baytree Lunch Club	Ferring Country Centre	Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal
Cancer United	Friends of St Mary's Church	South Strand Community Toilets
Disability Action Group – East Preston	Home-Start Arun, Worthing & Adur	St Mary's Church
East Preston Football Club Youth	Kent, Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance	Turning Tides
East Preston Guides	Little Angels	WADARS
East Preston in Bloom	Littlehampton Food Bank	Waves Music Therapy

**7. Meeting with WSCC on the subject of electric vehicle charging points, 10<sup>th</sup> October**

I met with WSCC's project manager for the rollout of kerbside electric vehicle charging points (EVCs) after we had become aware of this WSCC project. I had asked councillors to suggest suitable sites, and together with a few I had identified, Gareth and I visited each of the sites proposed. The big thing to remember about this charging point bays is they will not be exclusively for the use of electric vehicles. We visited about ten sites around the village, the one which Gareth was most excited about was the western side of the service road at the northern shops – a nice, central location, plenty of properties around with no on-street parking, good wide pavements and so on. If successful, the charging points will be installed at no cost to the parish council.

Before he left, Gareth said it was really lovely/refreshing (I can't remember which) to engage with such an enthusiastic local council. Evidently, plenty of other local councils have chosen not to engage. He also said it was really useful to go around a location with someone who knows it well.

**8. Roundstone Level Crossing follow-up meeting, 10<sup>th</sup> October**

(The text below is mainly an article written for the Autumn 2024 Newsletter)

Cllrs Toney, Linton and Gunston and I met with representatives of Network Rail, West Sussex County Council Highways, Stagecoach South and County Cllr Roger Elkins to learn what actions each has taken following the public meeting held on 10th July. Southern Rail had been due to attend, but ultimately did not. Although the meeting was specifically about Roundstone Level Crossing, much of what follows also applies to Angmering Station Level Crossing.

Network Rail - following a recruitment drive, the Lancing signal box is once again fully-staffed. The training programme has been and continues to be adapted so crossing operators understand the impact barrier downtimes can have on local communities. Early on, operators now go out on awareness days, during which they see those impacts for themselves. As hoped, this has resulted in an increased number of shorter barrier-opening times whereas previously the barriers may have stayed down throughout. Network Rail is working to reduce the number of longer barrier closures, where the gates can be down for ten minutes or more.

Responding to a question about automating the level crossing gates to reduce downtime, the Network Rail representatives said such automation comes with a greater risk of the gates closing when a vehicle or a pedestrian are still on the crossing, effectively trapping them.

Rail passenger numbers are almost back to pre-pandemic levels but the pattern of usage has changed with fewer passengers during peak times but more travelling during the day and at weekends.

Highways - the road markings at the level crossing have been refurbished and an additional yellow box has been provided on the southern side. On safety grounds, further changes

suggested by Highways were vetoed by the government's Office of Rail and Road. (Some road markings are the responsibility of Network Rail.)

Stagecoach South - as reported elsewhere in this newsletter, the company continues to be concerned about the negative impact upon punctuality the June 2024 timetable changes have had. Bus drivers have noted an increase in dangerous driving at the crossing, people desperate not to get stuck at the barriers for any longer than they have already been stuck.

Parish council - we want to get a better understanding of the number of vehicles using the crossing in an average week, and also talk to neighbouring parish councils to resurrect collaboratively some or all of the proposals which were put forward by our traffic consultants way back in 2015. These are likely to need some updating in light of the increased housing stock in the area and the improvements to the A259. WSCC Highways would be happy to work with the council(s) on this, but warned a simple change in one location can have a greater unforeseen negative impact in another area.

The council has scheduled a meeting with our new MP, Dr Beccy Cooper, in early November, and public transport will be on the agenda for that meeting.

There was a feeling that without Southern Rail reducing the number of services along the coast each day, there may be little more that can be done to improve waiting times at both of the village's level crossings. During the 2023 public consultation on the then-proposed timetable changes, the council had asked about both the impact on barrier downtimes and bus services but not received much of a response to either concern. Network Rail believes around 170 trains travel our stretch of line each day, that figure including the occasional freight service and empty rolling stock being moved about. Furthermore, increased housing numbers mean an increased number of vehicles trying to get around the area, meaning longer queues at the level crossings.

#### **9. East Preston Repair Café, 12<sup>th</sup> October**

Cllr Gunston and I ran this session with some assistance from Cllr Hill later in the morning. The weather was a bit unfriendly, but the session handled twenty-five items, twelve of which were repaired there and ten, eight have been taken to be repaired before or at the next session and five were irreparable by members of the team present. We had one new team member attend and a potential new team member dropped in at the end and spoke other members of the team she might join. We also had a couple of members of the public drop in just to see how it all works.

Items presented during this session included a food mixer, a teddy bear, a (musical) mandolin, a dehumidifier, a clock radio, a wall-mounted electric fire, a gazebo frame, my necklace, a pair of trousers and a silver teapot.

Many customers completed a feedback form when leaving, and comments included, "very helpful," "we are delighted," "a skilled person," "marvellous service," "a great job," "couldn't get it fixed elsewhere," and "10/10."

Donations on the day were higher than they have ever been before.



Happy customer, District Cllr Philippa Bower, with a repaired table-lamp

The next session will be on Saturday, 9<sup>th</sup> November.

#### 10. **South-East Community Rail Partnership, 17<sup>th</sup> October**

I attended County Hall for the joint Annual General Meeting of the Arun Valley and Sussex Coast line groups of the South-East Community Rail Partnership, formerly the Sussex Community Rail Partnership.

The meeting was attended by nearly forty people including representatives of West Sussex County Council, Brighton & Hove City Council, Chichester and Horsham District Councils, Arundel and Bognor Regis Town Councils, Network Rail, Southern Rail, Shoreham Port and a number of other organisations.

The meeting received a presentation on the Southwick Station Community Garden, a plot of land on the south side of the station which was redundant, overgrown and a site for criminal activity, but which has been taken over by a community group which is creating a community garden. This is currently only open by appointment, but in time will be accessible to all.

The second presentation was by Alex Powell, a Network Rail Rail Enforcement Officer, part of a team which basically ensures our railways are used responsibly and respectfully. The team's biggest work in the Arun District has been at Bognor Regis station, at which a partnership of organisations is currently investigating changes to the forecourt area to make it less appealing to street-drinkers and, in turn, more appealing to regular users of the station. Rail Enforcement Officers have some police powers and can issue penalty fares.

The third presentation was on the subject of [Railway 200](#), an initiative which will be celebrating the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first public railway, opened in 1825. The programme of events being arranged can be seen on the Railway 200 website and already stretches into the middle of 2026. Locally, the SCRCP will be producing 200 'blue plaques' to mark 200 people with connections to the railways on its lines. Each of the Line Officers for the 10 SCRCP routes will work with local history groups/museums and youth organisations to research 20 stories of people or places.



I had planned on raising concerns about the negative impact the Southern timetable changes introduced in June have had on the village, but felt this was not the correct meeting to do so, and anyway the meeting ran out of time. Following the meeting, I wrote to the Sussex Coast Line officer asking her whether she thinks this concern is something the SCRCP could discuss; she replied it could be and I have sent some background information.

#### **11. Dr Beccy Cooper MP surgery, 25<sup>th</sup> October**

Dr Beccy Cooper MP booked the Council Office meeting room for a surgery on 25<sup>th</sup> October. Dr Cooper used the meeting room from 09:30 until about 12:00, during which time she had four half-hour appointments with constituents.

Upon leaving, Beccy was very grateful for the council's hospitality in letting her hold her surgery in the Council Office. Beccy hopes to be able to run three or four such surgeries each year.

Afterwards, Beccy posted on social media about her successful visit. Comments were made, on the East Preston West Sussex Community Facebook page about not knowing in advance Beccy would be holding a surgery in the village.

Some comments from me about those comments. In the past decade two MPs have been murdered just for being MPs. The second of those, David Aness, was murdered whilst he held a drop-in surgery. Following that incident, government security strongly recommended MPs no longer held drop-in surgeries.

With no disrespect to him, but in the seventeen years Sir Peter Bottomley was MP whilst I was in post, not once was I aware of him holding a surgery in the village, except the drop-in meeting he held in The Lighthouse in the run-up to the 2024 General Election.

It's disappointing a small number of local residents responded negatively to this. If those residents did not know about the surgery, that suggests they may not have contacted Beccy about an issue yet. As we know from our own *Come and Meet Your Local Councillors* events, just dropping in is fine, but can also result in swathes of wasted time when nobody has dropped in.

#### **12. Official unveiling of the East Preston Yarnbombers' Poppy Cascade, 26<sup>th</sup> October**

The following councillors and officers attended this event with me: Cllrs Toney, Linton, Bowman, Chapman, Duff, Gunston, Hill, Mathias and Moore and Dawn. Many had supplied cakes too including Cllr Bradshaw, Alison and Adrian. Former councillors such as Jack Cogman, Dorothy Lee and Alastair Sharp were also present.

The church was open to the public from 10:00 and was soon about as full as it could be. Despite it drizzling, I would estimate at least fifty attendees had to wait outside in the rain.

Several dignitaries who had said they would attend failed to, I don't know why. Those that did attend included the Deputy Lord-Lieutenant of West Sussex, Reverend Rupert Toovey; Dr Beccy Cooper MP; District Cllrs Mark Turner MBE (ADC's Military Covenant Champion) and Philippa Bower; and Cllr Geraldine Walker, Kingston Parish Council.

Courtesy of the Yarnbombers, here is Beccy blending in with the cascade:



A letter of thanks from the Yarnbombers to the council was circulated on 28<sup>th</sup> October.

### **13. Sussex Police All Parishes Meeting, 29<sup>th</sup> October**

I attended this audio call chaired by Inspector Ross Wickings, Arun Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT). Angmering and Rustington also attended.

Following the implementation of a new call system, response teams now have shorter queues meaning they should be able to respond more quickly.

Station Square continues to be a major concern in Bognor Regis. Lots of multi-agency work has taken place but the community and local businesses are not seeing enough improvements from the measures already taken.

Angmering reported some trouble with youths identified as from Littlehampton causing trouble around the Community Centre. Rustington has been having trouble with motorbikes and electric bikes on the recreation ground, and an increase in shoplifting in the village.

Police data does not support Hallowe'en itself being a problem night for anti-social behaviour, although weekends either side of the night itself is another matter.

### **14. Social media**

Here are the council's Facebook posts in October which reached more than 500 people.

- Teaser posts about Paul Wicks taking on the care of the memorial trees – 1,569 and 1,225

(posts up to and including 28<sup>th</sup> October)

The number of Followers is currently 1,891, a further increase of five on the last report.

#### 15. **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 – 2<sup>nd</sup> October – sent to 943 subscribers, opened by 676 (71.9%)

Parish Council news – 10<sup>th</sup> October – sent to 945 subscribers, opened by 679 (72%)

Parish Council news – 17<sup>th</sup> October – sent to 944 subscribers, opened by 666 (70.8%)

Parish Council news – 23<sup>rd</sup> October – sent to 944 subscribers, opened by 651 (69.5%)

#### 16. **Things we have been asked since the last meeting**

“A card has been delivered to my house for [name], how can I find out where he lives?” (I suggested a Facebook post and that worked. “The Facebook post idea came through so thank you for that.)

“Have you got a biro?” (One or two.)

#### 17. **Recent bouquets and complaints**

(In addition to anything reported above)

Thanks received from Home-Start Arun, Worthing & Adur for publishing its press release in the e-newsletter dated xx October, “Brilliant - thank you so much Simon - very much appreciated.”

From Angmering Parish Council as this council supported its objections to an application for 190 houses off Bewley Road, “Many thanks for your assistance with this matter, it is much appreciated 😊”

Thanks from East Preston Yarnbombers for engaging with the council's main contact at the Littlehampton Gazette for the Poppy Cascade, “You are so nice.”

A resident of The Roystons asked for some information about the Roundstone Level Crossing. In response, she emailed: “Thank you so much for your very full and frank email regarding the ongoing Roundstone level crossing issue. [...] However - If a choice ever became necessary, I would choose the train over my car every time. We chose to live here *because* it had a railway station! Essential, with a daughter and family in London; I must remind myself of this next time I am waiting at the crossing! I will also be more mindful of the enormous responsibility of public safety taken by all level crossing operators. It does all motorists good to be reminded of this.”

Two residents called in having heard the council had refused a grant to Sea Road Beach Access Limited. After the meeting, one emailed, “Thank you for taking the time to talk through things this afternoon, it was helpful.”

## 18. Leave

The only leave booked in November to date is Caspar will be off from 26<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> December.

## 19. November Meetings and Events

This list may be incomplete and is subject to change.

- 4<sup>th</sup> Full Council (19:00, East Preston Infant School)
- 5<sup>th</sup> EIWP Allotments meeting (10:00, Council Office)
- 7<sup>th</sup> Visit to Field House (10:00, Field House) (AC and SC only)
- 8<sup>th</sup> Dr Beccy Cooper MP visit (ST, EL, JG, CB and SC only)
- 9<sup>th</sup> East Preston Repair Café (10:00, Vicarage Lane)
- 11<sup>th</sup> Disability Action Group (12:00, British Legion)  
Planning & Licensing Committee (18:00, East Preston Infant School)  
Amenities Committee (19:00, East Preston Infant School)
- 14<sup>th</sup> Society of Local Council Clerks local monthly meeting (11:00, Littlehampton) (SC and DR only)
- 18<sup>th</sup> Finance & General Purposes Committee (18:00, East Preston Infant School)  
Audit & Governance Committee (19:00, East Preston Infant School)
- 21<sup>st</sup> Community Speedwatch meeting (19:00, British Legion)
- 22<sup>nd</sup> Bersted Chairmen's Meeting (19:00) (ST only)
- 23<sup>rd</sup> East Preston Christmas Celebrations (12:00 until 17:00)
- 25<sup>th</sup> Planning & Licensing Committee (18:00, East Preston Infant School)  
Community Engagement Committee (19:00, East Preston Infant School)
- 29<sup>th</sup> Autumn playscheme (10:00, East Preston Infant School) (AR and AC 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**

29<sup>th</sup> October 2024

## **Agenda Item 20**

### **Other meetings and events – Part 1**

**Council is asked to note any reports.**

### **Rustington Parish Council Annual Civic Thanksgiving Service and Community Awards' Reception, 13<sup>th</sup> October**

#### **St Joseph's Catholic Church, Station Road, Rustington**

The annual Thanksgiving Service was hosted by Rustington Parish Council and was followed by the Community Civic Awards in The Woodlands Centre Rustington.

Karen and myself attended this function on behalf of EPPC. We had a very formal Church service starting around 3pm, which lasted around 45 minutes, followed by a less formal afternoon Community Awards Reception.

We were treated to a very pleasant afternoon tea with refreshments, and then the recipients of Rustington whom had gained recognition throughout the year from various efforts and good deeds they had made.

The team award went to the Community First Aid Responders for their timeless work and dedication to duty.

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

28<sup>th</sup> October 2024

## **The Future Shape of the Planning System, 22<sup>nd</sup> October**

### **online**

I attended this session on behalf of Cllr Bowman, Chairman of the Planning & Licensing Committee, as she was required to attend an Economy Committee meeting at ADC at the same time.

The event was led by Steve Tilbury of Steve Tilbury Consulting. Steve is the go-to Planning Consultant for the West Sussex Association of Local Councils.

What was covered in the session:

- Government's approach to key planning issues
- Proposed changes to the National Planning Framework
- Calculating housing requirements and what that means for plan making
- Changes we are still expecting to hear more about
- What that means for local planning authorities, local councils and communities

National Policy and legislation — Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans— Planning Decisions

Common ground that there are problems with the system:

- not enough housing being delivered
- decision making takes to long and expensive
- infrastructure delivery is not properly coordinated
- the quality of the outcomes we achieve is patchy
- communities do not have confidence in the process Some of the reasons
- to few up to date local plans
- decision makers are under resourced
- the quality of decision making is not always as good as it should be
- the tension between different local and national objectives is unresolved
- there are too many competing objectives

The fundamentals of the new system not changing:

- we will still have a plan led system
- Producing plans should be quicker, streamlined, but the role is the same (but a modification of that is coming)
- the way applications are made and processes for granting permission will be largely the same
- the role of decision-makers and consul-tees is unchanged
- Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects regime remains in place - with

- modifications

What else is not changing under any of the reforms?:

- the status protections for National Parks and National Landscapes (AONBs)
- the role or process for making neighbourhood plans
- Community Infrastructure Levy - no replacement
- nutrient neutrality rules - but something expected
- Environmental Impact Assessments - not yet at least
- Biodiversity Net Gain

Speeding up plan making:

- proposals to speed up plan-making will be implemented
- to ensure that coverage of up to date plans is more comprehensive
- national development management policies will reduce the size of local plans
- Inspectors told to be 'less pragmatic' - no more five year examinations!

Standard Method to calculate housing need:

- housing requirements for each LPA worked out according to a formula set by government
- the current formula was introduced in 2018, and is now being amended
- new formula based on housing stock and affordability
- no cap and no extra weighting for large cities
- using the formula is mandatory not advisory

What's the impact of the new standard method:

ARUN 1342 increases to 1409  
 CHICHESTER 720 increases to 1206  
 HORSHAM 917 increases to 1294

Affordable Housing Policy:

- more emphasis on affordable rented property
- particularly social rent
- 'grey belt' approval will depend on high percentage of affordable housing

Neighbourhood Planning:

- no changes are proposed to the role or operation of neighbourhood plans
- Para 14 of the NPPF is unchanged - which might be considered a surprise
- but more neighbourhood plans may be significantly out of date as a result of changes to the NPPF and local plans being reviewed
- LPAs will have to decide their strategic approach to guide neighbourhood planning
- Transitional arrangements submitted for examination: the plan will be examined under the relevant previous version of the NPPF - but if it provides for 200 per annum less housing than the new SM figure, an immediate review must follow At Regulation 19: if you are with 200 per annum - continue to examination. If not 'rework' your plan to achieve SM requirement within 18 months with government assistance

What will this mean in practice?:

- it does depend on whether the government sticks to its position... but that seems likely
- significantly higher housing numbers in many LPAs
- local plans will be under constant review
- more resources into LPAs (but will attract staff)
- difficult conversations with many communities
- uncertainty and frustration at delays (inc. to neighbourhood plans)

I have tried to 'cherry pick' what will be of interest to EPPC colleagues.

Cllr David Moore

25<sup>th</sup> October 2024

## **Official unveiling of the East Preston Yarnbombers' Poppy Cascade, 26<sup>th</sup> October**

### **St Mary the Virgin Church**

On Saturday morning, 26<sup>th</sup> October, St Mary's church hosted the unveiling ceremony of the poppy cascade hanging from the tower to the ground. It is a spectacular sight and, in spite of the rain, was well attended.

The ceremony started in the church with three songs from East Preston Junior school choir, ably conducted by Mark Bylett. Then a standard party from the British Legion processed outside to the cascade and a short service of remembrance was conducted with a bugler playing the Last Post and Reveille.

In attendance were Rev Rupert Toovey, Deputy Lord-Lieutenant of West Sussex, the MP for our constituency Dr. Beccy Cooper, Cllr Mark Turner MBE and Cathryn French, the ADC Military Covenant Champion and Officer respectively.

There was a poppy pathway to the seven war graves in the church cemetery and all attendees were invited to partake of home-made cake and a hot drink once the formalities had been completed.

Our thanks to Valerie Sharp for coordinating the event on behalf of East Preston Yarnbombers in conjunction with East Preston Parish Council and church officials and, of course, all the yarnbombers and participating residents for their excellent poppies which can be found throughout the village.

As a follow-up, I went to the church on Tuesday, 29<sup>th</sup> October where Meridian TV was filming the cascade and interviewing a number of yarnbombers.

The poppies will be on display until 24<sup>th</sup> November.

Cllr Elizabeth Linton – **Chairman of the Major Events Committee**

29<sup>th</sup> October 2024

## **A Morning with Nature playscheme, 29<sup>th</sup> October**

### **East Preston Infant School – Forest School**

Cllr Chapman will provide a verbal report to the meeting.

Eight places were booked and all eight attended.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

29<sup>th</sup> October 2024

