

East Preston Christmas Celebrations

Saturday 23rd November 12:00 to 17:00



In East Preston Christmas starts on 23rd November this year.

The East Preston Christmas Celebrations will again be a great way of starting your Christmas season. Officially, the event runs from 12:00 until 17:00, although some hospitality venues in the village will also extend your celebrations into the evening.

The numbers on this map identify specific event locations as detailed in the timetable overleaf.

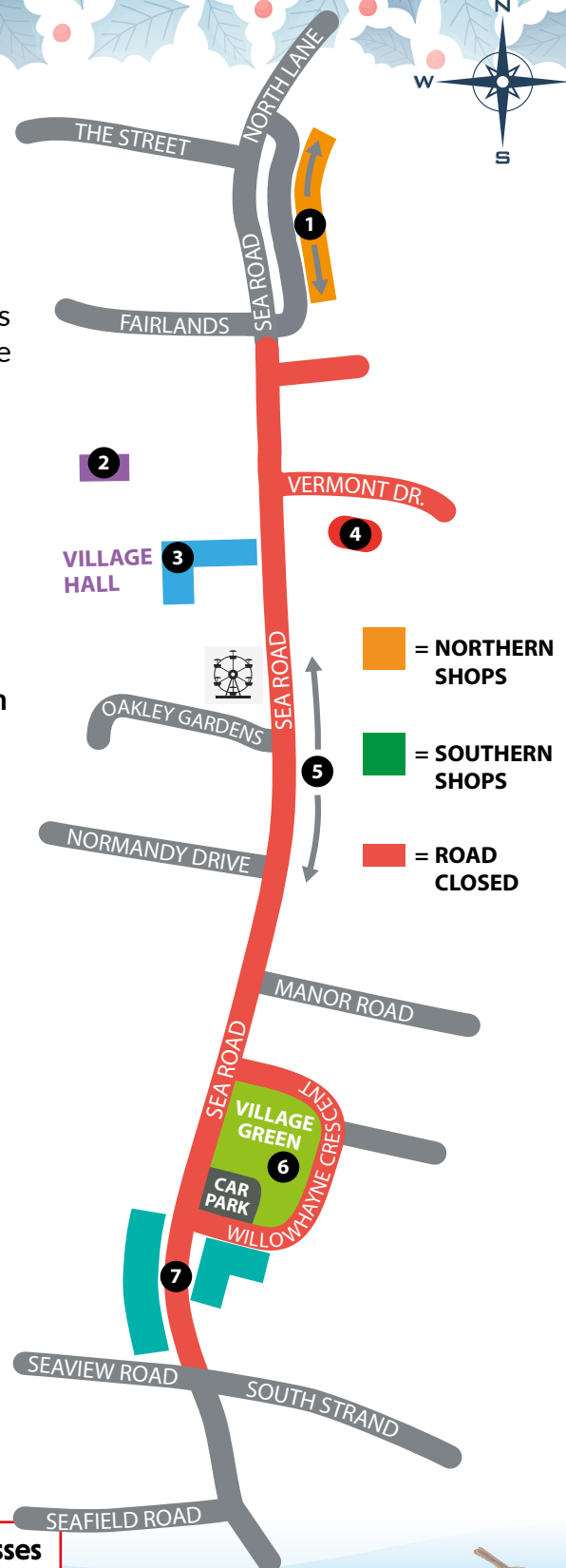
For many children, Storytime with Father Christmas is a big highlight of the event. Father Christmas will be reading stories in his temporary grotto in the hall at Our Lady, Star of the Sea Church in Vermont Drive. Storytime slots will be at 13:00, 14:00 and 15:00. All children will receive a gift bag at the end of the story. It will be necessary to **pre-book for Storytime with Father Christmas**. Tickets will be available online from 1st November – visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk> then Search for East Preston Parish Council.

There will be other children's entertainments on offer at the cricket pavilion on the Warren Recreation Ground, and more details on these and the whole event, can be found by following East Preston Christmas Celebrations on Facebook.

In and around the Village Hall will be a craft and gift fair. Fairground rides will be available in Sea Road. It has not been possible to provide a music venue as we have in previous years, but Celebration Samba will be performing outside the Conservative Hall from about 16:00 prior to helping Father Christmas lead the children's lantern procession at 16:45.

Please join us around the Village Green Christmas Tree for a short fireworks display at 17:00. Please take extra care of any pets which are nervous of fireworks.

Please remember there will be road closures on Saturday. If you usually park in Sea Road, please could you ensure your vehicle is parked elsewhere by 09:00 on the day. This will help with the success of the event. Thanks.



Special thanks to all the community volunteers and local businesses who willingly give their time, imagination and care to the event.



East Preston Christmas Celebrations

Saturday 23rd November 12:00 to 17:00

Event Guide - see overleaf for map of event locations

- Unless otherwise stated, all events run **from 12:00 onwards**
- **All event details may be subject to change**
- Keep up to date by liking East Preston Christmas Celebrations on Facebook

Timetable of events



NORTHERN AND CENTRAL BUSINESSES

- 1 - Barbecue, British Legion
- Al fresco wood-fired pizza, Ristorante Al Mare
- Pic 'n' Mix bags for sale, Graham Butt estate agents
- Christmas window displays
- Other activities to be confirmed

CRICKET PAVILION, Warren Recreation Ground

- 2 - Badge-making and lantern-making for children, **until 15:30**
- 1st East Preston Scouts kites, **from 16:00**

VILLAGE HALL (N.B. only hearing and guide dogs allowed inside)

- 3 - Craft and Gift Fair, **12:00 to 17:00**
- Lighthouse Café refreshments, **12:00 to 16:30**

OUR LADY, STAR OF THE SEA CHURCH, Vermont Drive

- 4 - Storytime with Father Christmas, **13:00, 14:00 and 15:00** (pre-booking essential)

SEA ROAD AREA

- 5 - Hot Food stalls
- Charity stalls
- Fun fair, **12:00 to 18:00**
- Celebration Samba, **16:15**
- Children's Lantern Procession, **16:45**

VILLAGE GREEN

- 6 - Short firework display, **17:00**

SOUTHERN SHOPS

- 7 - Christmas window displays
- Raffle, MediCentre Sussex, **12:00 - 17:00**
- Mulled wine to start Christmas, Seaview Hotel, **15:00 - 17:00**
- Café 80s (band) - Tudor Tavern, **20:30**
- Other activities to be confirmed

Poppy power

2024 marks the 80th Anniversary of D-Day. East Preston's Yarnbombers felt that a special commemoration was in order.

The Yarnbombers regularly decorate the village with knitted and crocheted items. This time they were inspired by The Tower of London's 2014 installation of thousands of ceramic poppies to mark 100 years since WWI began. East Preston has its own iconic tower, almost as old as the Tower of London. The plan was to create a poppy cascade for St Mary the Virgin Church, the village's only Grade I Listed building.

The village is fortunate to have a Royal British Legion branch, open to all as a social club and part of a national charity supporting members and veterans of the Armed Forces. With its backing, and that of Father Andrew Perry from St Mary's Church, the work began. It quickly became a very

Village Hall Foundation

Key to the social life within the village is East Preston & Kingston Village Hall. Built in the early 1800s as farm buildings for one of the village's ancient farms, Beehives, the larger barn was used for threshing corn and the smaller barn housed cattle. In the 1920s, the larger barn was equipped as a gymnasium and badminton court, whilst the smaller barn was later converted into a rifle range.

In 1943, as a bequest from the Reverend Warren of Preston Hall, the buildings and the recreation ground were passed to the village for recreational purposes. During the following years, the buildings were used for a variety of activities, including as an auction rooms.

1981 saw the smaller barn converted into a village hall and named the Warren Room. Within a few years, the larger barn was also converted and was named the Miller Barn.

Set up as a charity, the East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation has run the building since 1982. Many well-known residents have spent time volunteering as part of the Foundation, but more are needed. Could now be your time to add to the great history of this building?

We spoke to the current Chairman, Toni McElroy about the future facing her and fellow committee members.

collaborative project, with help of all kinds from many local groups and businesses, most notably, The Parish Council, Cooper Adams Estate Agent, the EP Film Society, and of course, the local residents.

It was the residents whom the Yarnbombers asked to knit or crochet over 4,000 poppies. The project was launched on 1st February and the target was achieved in May! From May to August the Yarnbombers assembled the individual poppies into a 12-metre high 'cascade'. Lastly, the Yarnbombers handed over to Steve Toney and Mick Stevens from 1st East Preston Scout Group who secured and suspended the cascade from the tower. And there it is. The cascade was officially 'unveiled' to the village on October 26th with a remembrance ceremony led by Father Andrew. The Yarnbombers want to thank everybody who helped make this happen, but we do have one last request...please don't forget to buy a poppy.

PS If you go to visit the Tower, don't miss the poppy path which links all the war graves in the cemetery.

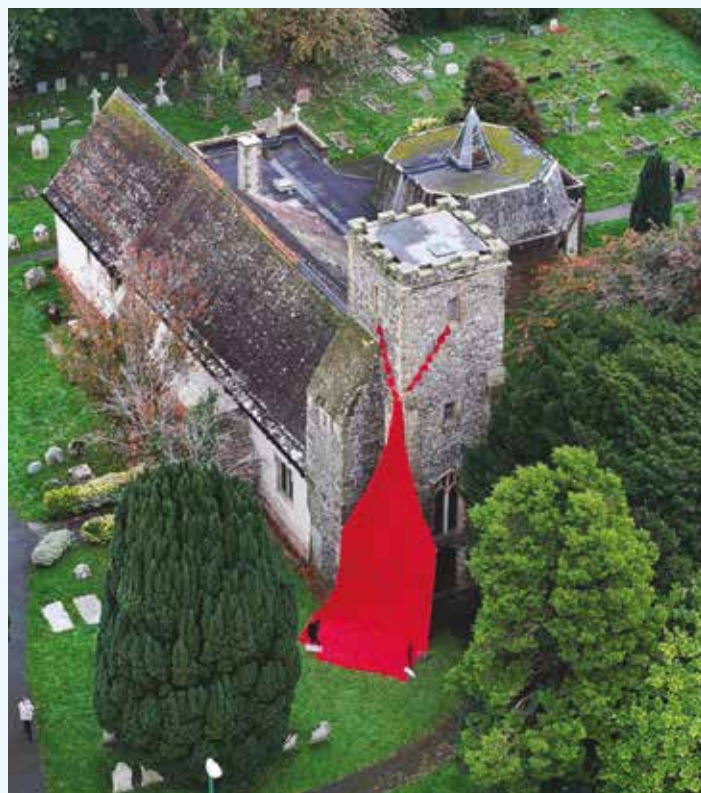


Photo © Eddie Mitchell

When and why did you join the Foundation committee? Originally a hirer myself, I was persuaded to join the committee in July 2014. I was then persuaded again, this time to become the Booking Secretary and subsequently the Chairman, Treasurer and, very recently, the Maintenance Manager, following the retirement this year of our last Maintenance Manager. As you can see from the number of hats I'm wearing, we need help urgently. Unless we get some new Trustees or even helpers, the future of the Village Hall Foundation could be in jeopardy.

What is the current make-up of the committee? Currently there are only four committee members, all working hard to keep the venue open and successful for the village. New committee members will all bring different skills and knowledge with them, and we will encourage anybody interested to use the best of their skills for the good of the Village Hall and wider community.

What do you feel is the biggest achievement in your time? Ensuring the Village Hall was as functional and available as it could be once it could reopen after the initial pandemic restrictions. We knew how important its availability would be for local residents and did whatever it took. In a wider village capacity, supporting the council in its refurbishment of the toilet block and the establishment of the East Preston Men in Sheds shed have been big achievements too.

What are some of the challenges facing the committee? A lack of people willing to support

the running of the building. If lots of people committed for just a couple of years each, that would provide the venue with a constant flow of new abilities and fresh ideas. More committee members would spread the current duties needed to provide the standard of the Village Hall everyone is accustomed to. We also need to keep up with constantly-changing procedures and legislations. The committee tries to work around people's availability.

What can the committee offer willing volunteers? We are a friendly and approachable committee, ready to help new members establish themselves on the committee. For people new to the village, committee membership can give you access to lots of organisations within the village and help you make new friends.

How can willing volunteers get in touch for a chat? The best way to contact us is to send us an email – chair@epkvh.co.uk. Please bear with us though as currently we make take longer to respond than we would like.

If more people do not come forward to help us with the running of the hall, it will not be possible to keep it running at the same high standard hirers have become used to. We could buy more services in, but that would inevitably result in higher hire charges and we want to avoid that. Please help us – Toni, John, Liz and Nicola (The Trustees) – Thank You.

Web: <https://epkvh.co.uk/>

Step into Christmas at glittering Tree Festival



You'll struggle to find a branch if you're looking for a bank in Rustington these days, but there will be branches a-plenty (and trunks and pine needles) this December if you drop into the ever-popular and evergreen Christmas Tree Festival at St Mary's Church in Vicarage Lane.

More than 40 trees have been donated by Quercus Nursery and each will be uniquely decorated by local businesses and organisations. All the funds raised at the three-day event will help maintain this beautiful medieval building - the oldest working site in the village.

As well as the grand arboreal aisle, there will be stalls full of Christmas goodies, a tombola packed with hundreds of prizes, and a fabulous pop-up café serving teas, coffees, steaming soup and scrumptious cakes. You can also buy some raffle tickets and stand a chance of winning one of many wonderful prizes, including donations from the Seaview Hotel, Wiston Estate and Brennan & Chatterton Estates.

One of the most popular parts of the festival is always when the children's choir from East Preston Junior School comes to sing - this year they'll be "Decking the Halls" and "Harking the Heralds" at 14:00 on Friday, 13th December. (With all the proud parents, grandparents, carers etc.. expected to attend, it's probably best to arrive early for that!)

You can bet your best bauble that Father Christmas will also be dropping in to the festival at various points - and as he'll be coming by sleigh, he won't have to worry about getting held up at the Roundstone crossing.



Plus, here's a top tip for festival visitors - please bring plenty of cash, including coins, as the church only has a couple of card payment machines.

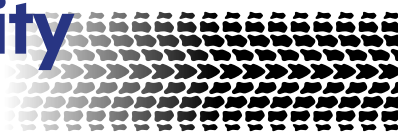
But if your digital muscles want a little flexing now, why not donate to this year's event by following the link via the above QR code?

Whether this will be your first Christmas Tree Festival, or you're a seasoned fir fan, please make a note in your diary to step into Christmas in a unique and very special place - the heart of our parish church.

You are all warmly invited to this tree-mendous occasion!

This year's Christmas Tree Festival runs from 13th-15th December at St Mary's church in Vicarage Lane, East Preston (13th and 14th: 10:00 – 18:00; 15th: 11.30 – 18:00, immediately followed by Carols For All).

East Preston Community Speedwatch (EPCSW)



After six years as Coordinator of EPCSW, Keith Harris is now stepping down from the role. We talked to Keith to learn more about Community Speedwatch in East Preston.

What is Community Speedwatch?

Community Speedwatch is a national police initiative working with local communities to help reduce the risk of accidents and injuries due to people driving too fast.

Anyone wanting to learn more about Community Speedwatch should visit their very accessible and informative website: <https://www.communityspeedwatch.org>

Our team of trained operators report speeding



drivers to Sussex Police. These drivers receive a letter from the police noting they have been reported for speeding. If a vehicle is repeatedly reported, the registration number is passed on to the Neighbourhood Policing Team and the national Road Policing Unit for targeted enforcement.

Why is Community Speedwatch needed in East Preston?

Sometimes it is easy to forget how lucky we are to live here! In my work, I routinely travelled across the country – East Preston is special. →

The speeding of a minority of drivers means Community Speedwatch is needed in our village.

East Preston Parish Council has continued its strong support of EPCSW, funding equipment and enabling traffic survey on key roads to help inform our watch planning.

Having been on well over a hundred 'watches' (recording and reporting vehicle speeds) the vast majority of people drive carefully and considerately, helping keep our village safe. **Recorded in September 2024, the average speeds in Sea Road and The Street were 25.2mph and 25.6mph respectively.**

But ... some people simply drive too fast. **In this one-week period, 2,691 vehicles drove over 30mph in Sea Road and 3,059 in The Street.** This driving puts local residents, especially the more vulnerable, at risk.

I understand that in most cases of drivers speeding at up to 35mph, this is simply a lack of attention and focus on the situation (e.g. when driving past the Village Hall and children's play area). I also understand how slow 30-35mph feels in a modern comfortable car or van.

I think this is where Community Speedwatch is most effective, i.e. with drivers who care, see us (we are very visible for this reason), check and reflect on their speed, and then drive more slowly in future.

25-30mph also feels slow when driving but, believe me, driving at 25mph past the village green may be within the speed limit but is dangerously fast, as pedestrians walking along there or trying to cross the road would agree.

Those who drive over 35mph through our village, cannot care or think about anyone but themselves. I doubt we can ever stop them speeding. **In the same week, 494 vehicles were recorded over 35mph in Sea Road and 461 vehicles in The Street.**

I ask everyone who cares about the people in our village to drive below 25mph. Wherever you are going, your journey will only be seconds longer but will make a lot of people feel, and be, safer and happier.

How are East Preston watch sites determined?

We have ten watch sites. All have been assessed and approved by Sussex Police (there are strict criteria for approval).

All watches are planned and registered. Sussex Police officers sometimes join our watches using their own radar equipment!

Who are the East Preston Speedwatch team?

We have a small team of volunteers, a diverse, representative cross-section of our community.

Our team works well because members have one thing in common, we care about our community and want to help make it safer. We are a dedicated, mutually-supportive team.

What is the role of the Coordinator?

The role of the Coordinator is to:

1. Plan and register the planned watches on the Community Speedwatch (CSW) website.
2. Report the output from each watch on CSW website.
3. Provide roadside training for new recruits (after completion of on-line training).
4. Ensure all equipment (e.g. radar gun and audio/video cam) is kept safe and available for the designated watch team as and when required.

What are the qualities and key skills you think the new Coordinator will need to have?

The new Coordinator will need to be a trained operator (on-line training on the West Sussex Police Community Speedwatch website followed by roadside training in the village). This is not as onerous as it may sound!

The new Coordinator will need good IT skills so they can access and use the CSW website, for watches, communicating with the team and taking full advantage of the support provided by Sussex Police.

For me, the key quality is the ethic of our team i.e. our prime purpose is not about catching and reporting speeders. It is about being a presence which causes drivers to reflect on their driving speed, then, if they realise it is too fast, see the risks this poses and drive more slowly in future.

We prioritise our watches, not on sites where we are likely to catch most speeders to report to the police, but on sites where there is the greatest risk of accident and injury.

Is there anything else you wish to say?

I am concerned about the risks of accident and injury due to illegal and inconsiderate parking in the south parade of shops and around our schools.

This is something people often raise. Although not directly to do with Speedwatch, people offload their worry and anger thinking we can pass on their concerns to someone who can do something about it.

As it is with that small minority of very fast drivers, these people parking inconsiderately have personally to find their own way, somehow, to care more about the safety and wellbeing of others, change their behaviour, and reduce the risk of accident and injury rather than increase it.

Everyone chooses how fast to drive. Everyone chooses where to park.

Roundstone Level Crossing update

On 10th October, three councillors 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.

Whilst everyone at the council understands the frustrations caused by barrier downtimes, we plead with all drivers, cyclists and pedestrians not to behave unsafely because of those frustrations. Councillors have also noticed more people taking chances at the crossing and we hate to think of what may happen one day. Please use both village crossings safely.

On the buses

The council has been working with Stagecoach South and Compass Travel, discussing options for the future provision of bus services in and through the village.

A meeting with Stagecoach showed it had a thorough understanding of the needs of East Preston bus passengers but the current unpredictability of downtime at Roundstone and Ferring level crossings has impacted the punctuality of the 700 bus service throughout the day. Bus companies are licensed by the Traffic Commissioners for Great Britain and partly measured on the punctuality and reliability of its services.

Here is the latest statement we have from Stagecoach, *"We continue to review all options to improve bus punctuality for our Worthing area bus services, including any scope to avoid delays at level crossings along the coast. As part of this process, we've held meetings with Network Rail and West Sussex County Council to explore our position and understand the best possible steps to meet customer expectations for our buses to run on time. We hope we can confirm any decisions within the next two months."*

Meanwhile, despite an offer of a reduction of the annual costs of running the No. 12 service into the village, the council agreed not to start financially supporting this service again as whilst it has proven to be a lifeline for some it is not good value for money. The council is looking at alternative services.

Village Green car-park - important update

Further to the article in the Summer 2024 Newsletter and the petition regarding charging for use of the Village Green car-park, the council has agreed to continue charging. The council felt the original reasons for introducing charging still stood. In mid-October, it changed management company to National Parking Control (NPC). Please note the car-park will remain a camera-monitored Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR), so your vehicle will be photographed on arrival and on exit.

Under the new contract, there will be no longer be a charge to park in the car-park between 18:00 and 08:00; for the remainder of the time, the hourly rate will remain at a very reasonable 50p. The new machine will accept cash, card and contactless payments; app payments will be possible via the more widely-used **RingGo**, which can be downloaded from your app store now. Please remember you can park in the car-park for up to fifteen minutes free-of-charge; this money goes back into maintaining the car-park and covering other expenditure such as business rates.



The future of the Conservative Hall – part 3

Possibly by the time you read this article, the new future of the Conservative Hall will be all signed, sealed and publicised.

If that is the case, you will know the parish council failed in its bid to take ownership of the hall.

At the end of 2023, after a period of discussions, the Trustees offered to give the hall to the council free-of-charge. As you will be aware, the council went public with this in its Winter 2024 Newsletter and asked residents for their opinions – over 90% of those of you who replied to the survey were in favour of the council taking responsibility for the hall.

In May, the Spring 2024 Newsletter, told the village the council was proceeding cautiously towards taking on the hall, a position of which we had already advised the Trustees. Alongside that

update, the council attempted to answer some of the most popular questions which had been asked in response to the public survey.

Regrettably, the Trustees took exception to one of the answers given and, in July, withdrew the offer to give the hall to the council. Soon after this, the Trustees put the building on the open market. Twice the council asked to meet with the Trustees to discuss this, but was advised the building was sold subject to contract.

In parallel, the Trustees gave notice to all its hirers citing the repairs necessary were too expensive to complete in time for the renewal of the hall's insurance in October. We understand most regular hirers have found alternative venues nearby.

This was not the outcome to which the council was working.

Village Life

December

- 2nd Full Council (19:00)
- 7th East Preston Repair Café (10:00, Spire Room)
- 9th Finance & General Purposes Committee (18:00)
- 13th to 15th – Christmas Tree Festival (see page 4)
- 16th Planning & Licensing Committee (18:00)
Major Events Committee (19:00)

January

- 6th Full Council (19:00)
- 7th Planning & Licensing Committee (18:00)
- 11th East Preston Repair Café (10:00, Spire Room)
- 13th Personnel Committee (19:00)
- 20th Planning & Licensing Committee (18:00)
Community Engagement Committee (19:00)

February

- 3rd Full Council (18:30 tbc)
- 8th East Preston Repair Café (10:00, Spire Room)
- 10th Planning & Licensing Committee (18:00)
Amenities Committee (19:00)
- 17th Finance & General Purposes Committee (18:00)
Major Events Committee (19:00)

Please consult the Noticeboards and website a few days before the meeting for the Agenda and venue.

Please note the above list may be subject to change.

Thanks to...

Everyone who took part in the Beach Clean on 29th September and to SALT Kiosk, KEPT and Arun District Council for additional support of the event



Everyone who was supportive and understanding about the cancellation of the Food & Drink Festival on 24th August



Everyone who has contributed to the establishment of a successful Men in Sheds group in the village. Visit epmis.org for more information

Warm Welcome Space 2025

We are pleased to announce we will be running Warm Welcome Space lunches again during the first three months of 2025.

We are still finalising details, so please look out for further announcements in e-newsletters and on noticeboards around the village.

If you would like to register your interest now, please email or call the Council Office, details below.



Council e-news

Would you like to be kept up to date with more East Preston news?

The Council has an email circulation list which is used to keep subscribers informed of local news and events. Subscriber details are not shared with any other organisation.

Please send us an email, details below, if you would like to subscribe to our email list – over 900 households and businesses already subscribe.

Please contact the office if you would like a large print version of this newsletter.



Contact point: Parish Clerk - Simon Cross, Assistant Clerk - Dawn Reid
Council Office, 122 Sea Road, East Preston BN16 1NN

Telephone: (01903) 770050 E-mail: clerk@eastpreston-pc.gov.uk

Website: <https://eastpreston-pc.gov.uk/>

Arun District Council (01903) 737500 West Sussex County Council (01243) 777100

Designed by Arun District Council, Civic Centre, Maltravers Road, Littlehampton BN17 5LF