



EAST PRESTON PARISH COUNCIL

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- MINUTES:** of the Proceedings of the Monthly Meeting of East Preston Parish Council held at 19:00 on Monday, 4th November 2024 at East Preston Infant School, Lashmar Road, East Preston
- PRESENT:** Councillors Christine Bowman, Kit Bradshaw, Andrea Chapman, Barbara Gale, John Gunston, Helen Hill, Elizabeth Linton, Glyn Mathias, Rick McElroy, David Moore, Steve Toney (Chairman) and Steven Wilkinson
- ALSO:** Simon Cross, Clerk to the Council
- Cllr Roger Elkins, West Sussex County Council (until 20:03)
- Cllr Philippa Bower, Arun District Council (until 20:03)
- Mr Mark Beves (until 20:03) and Mrs Sioned Vos, East Preston Neighbourhood Plan Review Steering Group
- Mrs M
- ABSENT:** Councillor Lisa Duff

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The following abbreviations may appear in these Minutes:

ADC – Arun District Council;	SW – Southern Water;
AoSERA – Angmering-on-Sea Estate Residents’ Association	TfSE – Transport for the South East;
BTP – British Transport Police;	TRO – Traffic Regulation Order;
CPRE – Campaign for the Protection of Rural England;	VHF – East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation;
NHS – National Health Service;	WRA – Willowhayne Residents’ Association
NR – Network Rail;	WSCC – West Sussex County Council;
PCSO – Police Community Support Officer;	WSALC – West Sussex Association of Local Councils
SLCC – Society of Local Council Clerks;	

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The meeting opened at 19.02.

799/24 **INTRODUCTIONS**

Cllr Toney welcomed everyone to the meeting, explained the meeting protocol and safety information and led a round of introductions.

800/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology and a reason for absence had been received from Cllr Duff.

1898 The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously to accept the apologies received from Cllr Duff (away).

Apologies had also been received from Mrs Linda Denton, Mr Kelvan Gale, Mrs Dorothy Lee and District Cllrs Ricky Bower and Paul Kelly.

801/24 DECLARATION OF PERSONAL AND/OR PREJUDICIAL/PECUNIARY INTERESTS

None were declared.

802/24 PUBLIC SESSION

Agenda Item 9e - Major Events Committee – on behalf of Mrs Lee, Cllr Toney thanked the Yarnbombers and everyone involved in the wonderful Remembrance Poppies displays around the village.

No Agenda Item – also on behalf of Mrs Lee, Cllr Toney asked whether there was any update on the future of the 700 bus service in the village.

Agenda Item 13b – Conservative Hall – Mrs M asked whether there was any news on the future of the Conservative Hall.

Agenda Item 16a – West Sussex County Council – Mrs M said the new yellow box on the southern side of the Roundstone Level Crossing was genius, and should stop vehicles edging out from North Lane.

Agenda Item 9e - Major Events Committee – on behalf of Mrs Denton, the Clerk thanked all the councillors and officers who had been involved in the unveiling event for the Poppy Cascade and all the Yarnbombers and everyone involved in the wonderful Remembrance Poppies displays around the village.

803/24 COUNCIL RESPONSES

No Agenda Item – there is no update on the future of the 700 bus service in the village. As reported in the Clerk's Report to October's Full Council meeting (Minute 735/24), on 23rd September, the council has recently met with Stagecoach South which was very aware of the public transport needs of East Preston residents.

Agenda Item 13b – Conservative Hall – the Clerk said he had received no updates from the Trustees for about a month now. At the time of the last update, the Trustees had been confident the sale would be completed by the end of the first week of October, but as of the day of this meeting, the For Sale sign was unchanged outside the venue.

804/24 MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING HELD ON 7TH OCTOBER

The draft Minutes were circulated to all councillors on 9th October asking for suggested amendments by the 16th October. None were received.

1899 The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously the Chairman could sign the Minutes as a true record of the meeting held on 7th October. Cllr Toney duly did so.

805/24 UPDATE ON MATTERS IN THE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

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

Monthly Update Report

1. **Introduction**
2. **Minute 728/24 – Audit & Governance Committee – Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year-ending 31st 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 7th October 2024.

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

On 16th 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 9th 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**

29th October 2024

The Clerk said he had nothing to add to the above report. No questions were asked.

806/24 FINANCIAL MATTERS

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

- 1900** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the Outstanding Purchase Orders report for 2024/25, value £3,888.19.
- 1901** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the Regular Monthly Payments reports for October 2024 totalling £966.26 (inc. VAT).
- 1902** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the Supplier BACS Invoices Paid reports for October 2024 totalling £25,698.09 (inc. VAT).
- 1903** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the List of Sales Receipts & Bank Receipts by Bank report for financial year to date totalling £351,930.05 (inc. VAT).

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

The council NOTED the Budget Summary for 2024/25 to date.

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

807/24 REPORTS FROM PARISH COUNCIL COMMITTEES

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

Committees

Since the last Full Council meeting the following committees have met: Major Events, Personnel and Planning & Licensing. By the time of this meeting, the draft Minutes from all of these meeting 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**

29th October 2024

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 1st 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 14th 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 11th November.

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

28th October 2024

Audit & Governance Committee

The committee has not met since July.

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

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th October 2024

Community Engagement Committee

Cllr Linton is chairman of this committee.

The committee did not meet in October.

Some updates:

Roundstone Level Crossing meeting, 10th 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, 28th 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 25th November.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th October 2024

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 18th November.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th October 2024

Major Events Committee

Cllr Linton is Chairman of the committee.

The committee met on 21st October. Here are some updates.

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

Unveiling of the Poppy Cascade, 26th 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, 10th 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, 23rd 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, 27th 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, 12th 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 16th December.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

29th October 2024

Personnel Committee

The committee met on 14th 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. 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 1st April 2024. Allowances are to be increased by 2.5%.

The committee's next meeting is scheduled for 13th January.

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

28th October 2024

Planning & Licensing Committee

The committee met on 14th and 28th October.

At the meeting on 14th, 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 22nd 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 28th, 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 11th November.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

29th October 2024

Additionally:

Amenities – Cllr Wilkinson reported NPC was now the council's chosen car-park contractor, although the council was still trying to sort out some cases of OPS customers receiving debt collection letters when they had not received original letters from OPS – this had been a problem for over a year now and OPS had rejected the council's suggestion to send its letters recorded delivery. Of the two residents mentioned in the above report as having been in this situation, OPS had rejected both pleas from the council. One of the residents had called in at the Council Office and pretty much thrown £170 cash at the Clerk and said he was fed up of trying to deal with OPS and could we settle the fine as he refused to pay online or by cheque in this circumstance. The Clerk had arranged payment, including the £1.75 handling fee, and the council's bookkeeper would pay the money into the council's current account at his earliest convenience. The Clerk did not know any update on the second case.

Following what he referred to as “the outrageous behaviour” of a member of the public at the last meeting, Cllr Wilkinson had offered to attend a Disability Action Group meeting. He and Mrs Reid had attended such a meeting on 9th October, at which Cllr Wilkinson said the group could make a presentation to a future meeting of the Amenities Committee. It was agreed this meeting should be standalone and a date will be set shortly, but it will now be held in the new year.

Community Engagement – Cllr Linton advised the meeting the council had informed St Mary the Virgin church it would only be offering Warm Welcome Space sessions in 2025 at the British Legion. The church had replied understanding the council’s decision and declining to offer its own sessions.

Major Events – Cllr Linton thanked all the councillors and officers who had contributed to the event to unveil the Poppy Cascade. The event had been interesting at times and it was a shame it had rained on the morning.

Cllr Linton asked all councillors to stay behind at the end of the meeting as she had some holes in the Christmas Celebrations timetable she needed to fill.

Planning & Licensing – Cllr Bowman reported the meeting on 11th November was no longer needed and the committee’s next meeting would be on 25th November.

There were no updates from the council’s other committees.

808/24 AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2025

The council NOTED the following paper and the interim Internal Audit report, both of which had been circulated in advance of the meeting:

Audit & Governance Committee – Interim Internal Audit report for the year ending 31st March 2025

Council is asked to note the Interim Internal Audit report produced on 23rd 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**

28th October 2024

Cllr Mathias confirmed he had met with Andy Beams on the day of his interim Internal Audit. In his report, Andy had suggested the finances and decision-making for the Warren Recreation Ground charity should be separated; currently the charity’s finances were processed through the council and the charity agreed at every AGM to delegate management of the recreation ground to the parish council.

Cllr Mathis also reported the Clerk had continued not to get a clear response from the External Auditor, which had fallen back on its need to be independent.

The full interim Internal Audit report would be considered by the Audit & Governance Committee, on behalf of the council, at its next meeting.

809/24 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE – ROUNDSTONE LEVEL CROSSING

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

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 10th October, the council had a follow-on meeting to the public meeting held on 10th 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 10th 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 30th October.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

23rd October 2024

Cllr Linton spoke in support of the proposal to commission a traffic survey at the Roundstone Level Crossing at a cost of up to £350.

1904 The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to commission a traffic survey at the Roundstone Level Crossing at a cost of up to £350.

Cllr Linton also spoke in support of the proposal to refresh the RGP traffic consultancy report produced in 2015. The Clerk said he had spoken to Phil Russell since he had written the report for this item. Mr Russell had asked the Clerk for information on what factors the council felt had changed since the 2015 report; the Clerk had replied listing factors such as greater volume of traffic because of the housing developments in the vicinity of the village, increased train traffic, improvements to the A259 and so on. The Clerk said he did not yet know how much a refresh of the report would cost.

1905 The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to refresh the RGP traffic consultancy report produced in 2015.

810/24 PLANNING & LICENSING COMMITTEE – EAST PRESTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

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

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.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

29th October 2024

Cllr Bowman spoke in support of the proposal. Cllr Bowman thanked the small team which had been working with her on the review: Cllrs Mathias and Wilkinson, Mrs Vos of East Preston & Kingston Preservation Society, and Mr Beves.

The Clerk apologised for not having thought this before, but should the council ask ADC whether it was possible to have an informal review of the work completed to date before putting the draft out to full public and stakeholder consultation. Cllr Bowman and members of the Steering Group agreed this was sensible to pursue with ADC.

Cllr Gunston suggested some reference be made to the council working with WSCC on the provision of electric vehicle charge points in the village. Cllr Bowman agreed a statement could be added to the Transport section. Cllr Gunston also mentioned there was a meeting taking place on the day after this meeting which was to look further at the creation of an Allotments Association for the village, should this be mentioned in the Plan? Cllr Bowman replied the Steering Group had gone through a lot of heartache over the allotments section of the Plan and felt it was probably right for the current time.

1906 The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to send a draft revised Neighbourhood Plan to ADC for comment, and then on to stakeholder and public consultations.

Cllr Chapman congratulated Cllr Bowman and the team on having progressed this far.

811/24 REPORTS FROM PARISH COUNCIL WORKING PARTIES

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

Working Parties

No working party met in October.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th October 2024

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.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th October 2024

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).

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th October 2024

Environmental Initiatives Working Party (EIWP)

Cllr Gunston is the chairman of this working party.

The working party will next meet on Monday 11th November.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th October 2024

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 Bowls 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 29th November to discuss this all further.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th October 2024

Additionally:

Environmental Initiatives Working Party – Cllr Gunston added the next Repair Café would be held on 9th November, and services now included blade-sharpening and minor jewellery repairs.

Cllr Gunston advised the meeting the 1st East Preston Scout Group's building had successfully had solar panels installed. As part of the council's Greener Buildings Fund, the group was claiming £6,954. Up to £8,000 had been made available by the Finance & General Purposes Committee (19th August, Minute 608/24). On behalf of the Group, Cllr Toney thanked the council for its all support.

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

812/24 CONSERVATIVE HALL WORKING PARTY

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

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**

28th October 2024

Cllr Wilkinson spoke in support of this proposal.

1907 The council **RESOLVED** to disband the Conservative Hall Working Party.

One councillor abstained, feeling the disbanding was happening too soon, although he understood a working party could quickly be reassembled if necessary.

813/24 FLAT AND FRONTAGE WORKING PARTY

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

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**

28th October 2024

The Clerk reported Cllrs Gunston, Linton, McElroy and Wilkinson had offered to be part of this working party.

1908 The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to set up a new Flat and Frontage Working Party.

Cllr Wilkinson also said he would be willing to chair the working party.

The Clerk reported the current tenant would now leave the flat at the end of November.

814/24 WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

County Cllr Elkins started by adding his thanks to East Preston Yarnbombers for the fantastic job they had done in creating the Poppy Cascade and Poppy Trail around the village.

Cllr Elkins said there had been a good outcome from the ADC Economy Committee meeting which had thrown out proposals for additional beach huts at Rustington, Kingston and Ferring. Cllr Elkins said Cllr Bowman had done well in representing the view of East Preston at a well-attended and sparky meeting.

Cllr Elkins thanked the council for a good follow-up meeting on Roundstone Level Crossing. He reiterated how WSCC encouraged EPPC liaising with neighbouring councils also affected by the level crossing in working together to find some possible improvements. He did express caution, reminding those present sometimes improvements can have unintended negative consequences, but hopefully WSCC's expert highways officers would be able to foresee those and suggest ways around.

The county council had resolved to write to the Secretary of State for Transport, Louise Haigh MP, asking for reconsideration of the government's decision to cancel planned improvements to the A27 including the Arundel Bypass. Residents were already aware of the pressure the delay in these works put on other parts of the network, such as the A259.

The county council had also resolved to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rachel Reeves MP, questioning what support will be available for local residents who will just be no longer eligible for the Winter Fuel Payment. Within WSCC, the Community Hub, set up during the pandemic, was still operational and helping residents, and libraries were also geared up to help residents apply for Pension Credit, receipt of which would make them eligible for the Winter Fuel Payment. Last year, approximately 192,000 West Sussex residents received the Winter Fuel Payment; it was estimated only 21,000 were still eligible and about a third of those may need help in applying. Asked when the cut-off date for applying for Pension Credit was, Cllr Elkins said he did not know – Cllr McElroy said he knew it had passed. Cllr Gale reported she had applied for Pension Credit for a relative, soon after the July General Election and had been told she would not hear the outcome until early November.

Cllr Elkins reported there were two public consultations underway he urged residents to take part in. Firstly, a consultation on electric vehicle charge points, which included a proposal to locate some in the northern shopping area in the village. The consultation also gave residents an opportunity to suggest other locations. Secondly, the county council was consulting on its proposed budget for 2025/26.

There was still funding available within the Operation Watershed budget for local projects which would help tackle flooding. Central government had made funding available for improving bus services, but Cllr Elkins was not sure of the detail. In response to a question, he confirmed the capped fare would increase from £2 a journey to £3 a journey from the new year.

The county council was looking to invest in a new facility for children with Special Educational Needs and Disability. This would be located in Worthing with an initial capacity of 60 students.

Work was progressing on the design for improvements to the A259 between Bognor Regis and Littlehampton.

Cllr Mathias asked whether WSCC Highways took into consideration the impact housing developments would have on level crossings when considering its response to those Planning Applications. Cllr Elkins replied it was not so simple as that and government required there to be "significant impact" before an objection could be made on Highways grounds. Cllr Elkins said he completely agreed with Cllr Mathias's point. Cllr McElroy said "significant" was a meaningless term as it is down to an individual to judge an impact. Cllr McElroy also questioned whether WSCC Highways considered the cumulative effect of numerous Planning Applications on local infrastructure. Cllr Mathias added insufficient infrastructure came with Planning Applications, impacting everyone.

On behalf of the council, Cllr Gunston, with the Clerk, had submitted a response to the WSCC West Sussex Highway Network Management Plan stakeholder consultation. Cllr Gunston said there had been no mention of level crossings in the plan, which had been both a surprise and a concern.

Cllr Gunston and the Clerk had worked together to respond to the stakeholder consultation on the West Sussex Highways Network Management Plan.

Cllr Moore noted there had been more money set aside in the recent budget for pothole repair. Cllr Elkins said he did not know how much WSCC would receive. As an aside, the county was still waiting to see some of the finance promised to county councils when the HS2 project had been cancelled by the previous government about a year ago.

Cllr Elkins concluded by saying he fully understood the frustrations which accompanied all the extra traffic in the area.

815/24 ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

District Cllr Bower said there was to be an ADC Full Council meeting later in the week. The Conservative Group was going to put forward an amendment to the proposed new cleansing contract, allowing residents to retain their existing bins when the new contract starts. Without acceptance of that amendment, the Conservative Group would not support the new contract.

The redevelopment of the Alexandra Theatre in Bognor Regis was expected to go well over budget and councillors were asking officers to have a proper look at whether or not the work could be done within budget.

ADC was also looking to write to the government about the Arundel Bypass and the Winter Fuel Payment. ADC was also preparing to help residents apply for Pension Credit, and Cllr Bower wondered whether this was something parish councils could also look at.

The Clerk raised the following matter to both Cllrs Elkins and Bower. Leigh Whitehouse and Dawn Hudd had started as Chief Executive of WSCC and ADC respectively more than three months ago. To date, neither had communicated directly with town and parish councils as a whole. The Clerk said he had been lucky to work here in the time of Ian Sumnall and Nigel Lynn (ADC) and Kieran Stigant (WSCC), Chief Executives who had been very approachable and, more importantly, communicative with local councils. The Clerk asked whether it was too much to expect the two new Chief Executives to have sent an email introducing themselves to local councils within the first three months of being in post. Accepting both were very busy, was it inconceivable an officer could have drafted most of such an email, leaving the Chief Executives needing no more than ten minutes to complete the email.

Cllr Elkins replied he understood WSCC was looking at building closer relationships with local councils and this had started in the Highways department. Cllr Bower said she had not yet met Ms Hudd herself but would pass on this council's concerns to Cllr Gunner, Leader of the Conservative Group at ADC, although she was unsure of what the Clerk was asking. The Clerk said he would be happy to hold up his hand if people thought he was wrong, but pretty much all councillors spoke over each other to support his viewpoint. Cllr Gunston said he would have expected, at least, an introduction and something showing the Chief Executives' understanding of local councils and a wish to work together more effectively.

(County and District Councillors and Mr B left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.)

816/24 SUSSEX POLICE

No report had been received.

817/24 CLERK'S REPORT

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

Clerk's Report

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Police matters**
- 3. Anti-social behaviour matters**
- 4. Freedom of Information / Data Protection requests**
- 5. RNLI Littlehampton visit, 1st October**
- 6. East Preston Festival Committee donations evening, 9th October**
- 7. Meeting with WSCC on the subject of electric vehicle charging points, 10th October**
- 8. Roundstone Level Crossing follow-up meeting, 10th October**
- 9. East Preston Repair Café, 12th October**

10. **South-East Community Rail Partnership, 17th October**
11. **Dr Beccy Cooper MP surgery, 25th October**
12. **Official unveiling of the East Preston Yarnbombers' Poppy Cascade, 26th October**
13. **Sussex Police All Parishes Meeting, 29th 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, 1st 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 his 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, 9th 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 st 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, 10th 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, 10th 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, 12th 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, 9th November.

10. South-East Community Rail Partnership, 17th 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 200th 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 SCRP 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 SCRP 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 SCRP could discuss; she replied it could be and I have sent some background information.

11. Dr Beccy Cooper MP surgery, 25th October

Dr Beccy Cooper MP booked the Council Office meeting room for a surgery on 25th 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, 26th 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 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 28th October.

13. Sussex Police All Parishes Meeting, 29th 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 only Facebook posts in October which reached more than 500 people.

- Teaser posts about Paul Wicks taking on the care of the memorial trees – 1,588 and 1,240 (posts up to and including 28th 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 – 2nd October – sent to 943 subscribers, opened by 680 (72.3%)

Parish Council news – 10th October – sent to 945 subscribers, opened by 680 (72.1%)

Parish Council news – 17th October – sent to 944 subscribers, opened by 674 (71.6%)

Parish Council news – 23rd October – sent to 944 subscribers, opened by 665 (71%)

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 10th 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.”

In response to a post advising residents of the ADC Economy Committee meeting about Beach Hut proposals, reported in the Planning & Licensing Committee report above, a resident wrote, “Well done, Simon. A good letter. We agree wholeheartedly. Another stupid money making idea detrimental to the neighbourhood and residents.”

18. **Leave**

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

19. **November Meetings and Events**

This list may be incomplete and is subject to change.

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

N.B. where committee meetings fall on the same day, the timings of these meetings may be subject to change.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

29th October 2024

Item 5 – RNLI Littlehampton visit, 1st October – led by Cllr Gunston, councillors who had attended this visit thanked the Clerk for having arranged it. Cllr Gunston said he had found it informative and enjoyable.

Item 7 – Meeting with WSCC on the subject of electric vehicle charging points, 10th October – Cllr Bradshaw questioned how usage of the charge points would balance with parking restrictions. The Clerk replied users of the parking bays would be subject to the same restrictions as other users in the same location.

Item 14 – Social media – in response to a question from Cllr Linton, the Clerk explained the term “teaser”.

Item 16 – Things we have been asked since the last meeting – in response to a question from Cllr Linton, the Clerk said he would indeed arrange for all councillors to receive a new, branded pen.

818/24 **EXTERNAL MEETINGS AND EVENTS**

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

Rustington Parish Council Annual Civic Thanksgiving Service and Community Awards’ Reception, 13th 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

28th October 2024

The Future Shape of the Planning System, 22nd 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 too 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 consultees 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

25th October 2024

Official unveiling of the East Preston Yarnbombers' Poppy Cascade, 26th October

St Mary the Virgin Church

On Saturday morning, 26th 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 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, 29th October where Meridian TV was filming the cascade and interviewing a number of yarnbombers.

The poppies will be on display until 24th November.

On behalf of the council I offer a large vote of thanks to all yarnbombers and all members of the public who contributed to this fantastic project.

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

29th October 2024

A Morning with Nature playscheme, 29th 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**

29th October 2024

Cllr Chapman reported the playscheme had gone well and appeared to have been enjoyed by all who attended. Much of the time, the children could be found gathered in or around a large muddy puddle, seemingly the highpoint of the day. Cllr Chapman's one slight concern was all the attendees had been from Rustington. This would be reviewed by the Community Engagement Committee at its next meeting.

819/24 RESPONSE TO EXTERNAL MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Cllr Gunston said he echoed every positive comment made about the Poppy Cascade and congratulated Cllr Linton for her work on the unveiling event on 26th October. However, he said he felt the speeches outside had started too early, definitely before everyone who wanted to get out of the church to hear the speeches had been able to do so. Cllr Chapman said that she had been unable to hear all that was said outside. Cllr Bowman said part of the problem may well have been people's reluctance to go outside in what little rain was left. Cllr Linton felt the British Legion had been responsible for the timings of the outside part of the event.

820/24 NEW ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING (2ND DECEMBER)

Nothing new was suggested.

The meeting ended at 20:15.

Chairman: *Cllr Steve Toney* Date: **2nd December 2024**

END