



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, 3rd February 2025 at East Preston Infant School, Lashmar Road, East Preston

PRESENT: Councillors Christine Bowman, Kit Bradshaw, Andrea Chapman, Lisa Duff, Barbara Gale, John Gunston, Helen Hill, Glyn Mathias, David Moore, Steve Toney (Chairman) and Steven Wilkinson

ALSO: Simon Cross, Clerk to the Council

Cllr Philippa Bower, Arun District Council (until 19:29)

Mr G and Mrs M (from 19:31)

ABSENT: Councillors Elizabeth Linton and Rick McElroy

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The following abbreviations may appear in these Minutes:

ADC – Arun District Council;
AoSERA – Angmering-on-Sea Estate Residents' Association
NHS – National Health Service;
NR – Network Rail;
PCSO – Police Community Support Officer;
SLCC – Society of Local Council Clerks;

TRO – Traffic Regulation Order;
VHF – East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation;
WRA – Willowhayne Residents' Association
WSCC – West Sussex County Council;
WSALC – West Sussex Association of Local Councils

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The meeting opened at 18:59.

086/25 INTRODUCTIONS

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

In the absence of Cllr Linton, Cllr Toney invited Cllr Gunston to act as Vice-Chairman for the meeting.

087/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

1935 The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously to accept the apologies received from Cllrs Linton (holiday) and McElroy (work commitment).

Apologies had also been received from Mrs Denton, Mrs Lee, County Cllr Roger Elkins and District Cllr Paul Kelly.

088/25 DECLARATION OF PERSONAL AND/OR PREJUDICIAL/PECUNIARY INTERESTS

None were declared.

089/25 PUBLIC SESSION

No Agenda Item – Mr G thanked the councillors and officer for “the stunning job you all do for the village.”

090/25 COUNCIL RESPONSES

The Chairman thanked Mr G for his praise.

091/25 ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

District Cllr Philippa Bower reported she had attended two meetings since this council’s last meeting. The first had been ADC’s Environment Committee at which a new Green Spaces contract had been awarded to the current contractors, Tivoli. This contract was to run until 2032 which pleased Cllr Bower. She was less pleased about a 2-year public consultation which was to take place on the subject of the protection of the River Arun, as she felt the duration was too long and if devolution goes ahead, any report would be produced just as the district council was disbanded. Asked by Cllr Wilkinson about protection from what, Cllr Bower replied protection from everything and cited the use of electric boats rather than those powered by more traditional fuels. The latest report from the Arun Flood Forum did not appear to mention East Preston explicitly anywhere, but it did include some useful information on legal riparian responsibilities.

Cllr Bower had also attended the most recent Full Council meeting, which had been all very financial. She was pleased to report the district council would be buying seven 2-bedroom homes for use as temporary accommodation, and three larger homes to be used to home Afghan refugees. These would be bought with £1½m from central government matched by a loan of the same size. Cllr Bower was not happy about the loan part. Asked by the Clerk where the homes might be, Cllr Bower said no decision had been reached yet.

(District Cllr Bower left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.)

092/25 MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING HELD ON 6TH JANUARY 2025

The draft Minutes were circulated to all councillors on 8th January asking for suggested amendments by the 15th January. None were received.

1936 The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously the Chairman could sign the Minutes as a true record of the meeting held on 6th January. Cllr Toney duly did so.

093/25 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 924/24 – Community Engagement Committee – Roundstone Level Crossing**

3. Minute 010/25 – Financial Matters

4. Minute 014/25 – Finance & General Purposes Committee – Lashmar skatepark

1. Introduction

This is the report covering items discussed during Full Council meetings up to and including the meeting held on 6th January 2025.

2. Minute 924/24 – Community Engagement Committee – Roundstone Level Crossing

The council has now received the data from the survey carried out on 13th, 14th and 16th December. Cllr Linton and I have had an initial look through the information provided.

I can tell you across the three days there were 24,559 crossings of the Roundstone Level Crossing, of which 4.59% were pedestrians. 12,232 vehicles crossed north to south whilst 12,327 crossed south to north. Friday was the busiest day with 8,950 crossings, whereas Saturday had 7,194 and Monday, 8415.

On Friday, the busiest quarter-hour started at 15:45, Saturday it started at 10:15 and on Monday it started at 15:30.

Barrier downtime was also monitored. Thrice the gates were down for longer than ten minutes: at 10:03 on the Saturday and again at 18:36 on the Saturday, both times for just shy of eleven minutes, and at 06:02 on the Monday, just over ten minutes. The shortest downtime I have found so far is just 1:03 on Monday afternoon.

If any councillor would like to look at the data provided, please let me know.

3. Minute 010/25 – Financial Matters

The unknown payee was indeed for some Funday Sunday tickets paid for with cash. I have asked Adrian to update the report to reflect this but note that has not happened yet.

4. Minute 014/25 – Finance & General Purposes Committee – Lashmar skatepark

Ros Bryant, ADC Landscape Officer (Projects) delivering the skatepark renovations, emailed on 23rd January, “Just to let you know that the old ramps are due for removal next week (week commencing 27 Jan), weather permitting, and the tarmac contractor is due onsite the following week on 3 and 4 Feb. The installation of the new ramps will follow after – I will let you know once the installation date has been confirmed. Thanks very much for the parish council’s contribution it will make all the difference to the scheme for local skaters.”

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

27th January 2025

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

094/25 FINANCIAL MATTERS

The Accounts for January 2025 had been distributed to Members in advance of the meeting.

1936 The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the Outstanding Purchase Orders report for 2024/25, value £4,608.19.

- 1937** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the Regular Monthly Payments reports for December 2024 totalling £810.81 (inc. VAT).
- 1938** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the Supplier BACS Invoices Paid reports for December 2024 totalling £41,837.76 (inc. VAT).
- 1939** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the List of Sales Receipts & Bank Receipts by Bank report for financial year to date totalling £365,486.87 (inc. VAT).

The council NOTED the Bank Reconciliations to 14th January 2025.

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

Cllr Toney thanked Adrian for preparing the above reports.

Cllr Moore asked whether the council had received any interest from Boom Bank yet, and the Clerk said he would find out.

095/25 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: Amenities, Community Engagement, 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.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

24th January 2025

Amenities Committee

Cllr Wilkinson is chairman of this committee.

The committee held an extraordinary meeting on 27th January solely for the top item below.

Village Green and Village Green car-park proposal – The committee received a presentation from EP Disabled Action Group (DAG), outlining a proposal for improvements to the Village Green and Village Green car-park access. DAG proposed creating a path along the western side of the Village Green to allow easier access to the green for the less abled. The proposal included removing a cycle hoop and levelling the ground surface next to the car-parks ticket machine. The committee will be considering the proposal in more detail at its February meeting.

Village Green Benches – Two new memorial benches have been installed at the Village Green, the Terry Golding memorial bench was installed on the western boundary and the John Phillip Maguire bench at the south-eastern corner. Both benches are the same design and made from composite material.

Council Office Shed – Men in Sheds (MiS) has installed the new shed in the Council Office back garden. The shed will be used to help alleviate storage issues within the Council Office. There have been a few snags which require addressing before the shed is ready for use.

Trees – The council's tree surgeon has completed the tree work as recommended in the 2024 annual tree inspection report. The white poplar group at the south-western corner of the Village

Green has been removed and a silver birch tree with wood decay fungus was removed from Two Acres. The committee will consider planting replacement trees at the appropriate planting time.

The committee's next full meeting will be on 10th February 2025.

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

28th January 2025

Audit & Governance Committee

Cllr Mathias is the chairman of this committee.

The committee did not meet in January and there are no updates. The committee's next meeting is on 10th March.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

20th January 2025

Community Engagement Committee

Cllr Linton is chairman of this committee.

The committee met on 20th January and the draft Minutes were circulated to all councillors on 22nd January. One member of the public attended.

Here are some updates:

St Mary the Virgin Christmas Tree Festival – the committee was pleased with the council's contribution to the event, as decorated by Cllrs Chapman and Duff. Discussions has already started for the 2026 Festival.

Covid-19 Day of Reflection, 9th March – the National Association of Local Council has asked local councils to consider involvement in this event. The committee was very much in two minds about this, feeling for some reflecting upon the events which started five years ago might be just too painful. I have contacted Angmering and Rustington Parish Councils and neither had, at that point, considered this matter.

East Preston Festival, 6th to 15th June – the committee agreed to retain the Saturday morning format for *Come and Meet Your Local Councillors* and asks as many councillors as possible to be available between 09:30 and 12:30 on that date.

Similarly, please could as many councillors as possible make themselves available for the visit of Ems Friendly Farm (petting zoo) on Tuesday, 10th June between 16:30 and 19:15.

The committee agreed not to take part in the Carnival Parade this year. The council's officers and allies were already working on a window display for the Festival.

Beach Clean, 6th April – the next Beach Clean will take place on Sunday, 6th April, 11:00 – 12:00, with councillor support needed between 10:30 and 12:30.

Defibrillators – Cllr Toney reported the Fire & Rescue Service had agreed to the installation of a publicly-available defibrillator on the outside wall of East Preston Fire Station. Details to be confirmed in due course.

Warm Welcome Space – the council has now run the first four sessions of this season, and attendance has settled at about 22 to 24. Attendees are generally appreciative.

Village Crier – the committee considered Cllr Hill’s suggestion of appointing a Village Crier, but did not feel this was appropriate at this time.

Village Sports Clubs – the committee agreed I should contact the chairs of local sports clubs to see if they would attend a meeting where they could each share information with each other.

East Preston Christmas Celebrations 2025 – on behalf of the Major Events Committee, the committee considered a suggestion 22nd November was too early and the event should move back to 29th November. Armed with additional information supplied by Alison, the committee agreed to stick to 22nd November. I have informed Our Lady, Star of the Sea, which was briefly holding both dates for us, and I have submitted a booking form to East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation.

The committee’s next meeting is scheduled for 24th March.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

27th January 2025

Finance & General Purposes Committee

Cllr McElroy is the chairman of this committee.

The committee did not meet in January and there are no updates. The committee’s next meeting is on 17th February.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

27th January 2025

Major Events Committee

Cllr Linton is Chairman of the committee.

The committee did not meet in January, and the only update is the decision, made by the Community Engagement Committee, to hold East Preston Christmas Celebrations 2025 on 22nd November as originally proposed.

The committee’s next meeting is scheduled for 17th February.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

27th January 2025

Personnel Committee

The committee met on 13th January.

At our meeting in January the committee talked again about the mental health training offered free from MIND available online for all. A few councillors have taken up this course and it can be completed within a couple of hours, you can always go back in as necessary. The course is available here. Please let Simon know if you have taken this course as we are recording those attended. www.conversationsinthecommunity.org.uk

As we enter a new year, a few reminders about councillor behaviour. We are in the very enviable position of having very good relationships both inside the council and in and around the village; this relies on councillors and officers being mindful of their position and always being polite and measured when we speak to people and meet people at our many events and arranged projects. We should all do what we can to maintain good relationships with the public even in tricky situations; the above training may support this.

Following some of the discussions at the last Full Council meeting, the committee also agreed to remind everyone the council is non-political, and to ask that councillors refrain from political statements at council meetings. This extends to all present so that our council meetings are concentrated on the business of East Preston and our reasons for attending.

The health and safety audit of the office is currently being undertaken by Cllr Toney and me.

Later this year we will be asking councillors to complete the biennial DBS checks, but no action needed until May and details will follow as required.

The committee's next meeting will be in April.

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

27th January 2025

Planning & Licensing Committee

The committee only met on 7th January.

The committee raised no objections to the three Planning Applications put before them, although it did comment upon one in West Ridings.

ADC Licensing had responded to the committee's concern about a lack of parity between two local establishment's licences and had justified this by saying every licensing application was considered on its own merits. The committee did not feel this response was satisfactory.

The committee's next meeting is scheduled for Monday, 10th February.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

27th January 2025

Additionally:

Amenities – Cllr Wilkinson reported no conclusion had been made about the Disability Action Group's proposal for the Village Green, discussion would continue at the committee's meeting on 10th February.

Community Engagement – the Clerk added he had been asked to speak to both churches about any plans they had for the Covid-19 Day of Reflection. Both ministers had felt similarly wary of any major marking of the pandemic within their congregations. The Clerk felt it was likely this council would simply let residents know of the day and allow them to mark it in their own ways.

Personnel – Cllr Duff reminded councillors of the MIND training the committee was recommending councillors and officers undertook. Cllr Duff also asked councillors to be mindful of their behaviour at meetings and when working with the public. Cllr Duff concluded by reporting she and Cllr Toney had undertaken the annual Health & Safety audit at the Council Office.

Planning & Licensing – Cllr Bowman added she hoped to be able to hold a Neighbourhood Plan Review Steering Group meeting on 10th February, immediately before that evening’s Planning & Licensing meeting, which was due to start at the slightly later time of 18:30.

Cllr Mathias questioned whether the committee had agreed any form of escalation in answer to the response received from ADC Licensing. Cllr Bowman said this was a matter which could be raised to the district councillors at March’s meeting.

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

096/25 REPORTS FROM PARISH COUNCIL WORKING PARTIES

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

Working Parties

Only the Environmental Initiatives Working Party met in January.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th January 2025

20mph Working Party

Cllr Wilkinson is the chairman of this committee.

I have now met with Keith Harris, outgoing coordinator of the village’s Community Speedwatch group. He has given me pointers for how he believes the council should move this forward, and I now need to discuss these with Cllr Wilkinson, which may well result in a resolution to the March Full Council meeting.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th January 2025

Environmental Initiatives Working Party (EIWP)

Cllr Gunston is the chairman of this working party.

The working party met on 27th January.

The main discussion was about our proposed Green Day event planned for September. We are hoping to invite village groups and societies who are involved with recycling to set up stalls as well as outside agencies such as WSCC and Southern Water. We plan to conduct a survey on bin disposal and also hold the Repair Café at the same event. We may invite speakers to give short talks on green issues. We will suggest to Community Engagement that we purchase some hedgehog warning signs for the village and take part in the National In Bloom competition.

Allotment discussions are ongoing.

The working party's next meeting is on Monday 24th February at 19:00.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th January 2025

Flat and Frontage Working Party (FFWP)

Cllr Wilkinson is chairman-elect of this working party.

The working party has not yet set a date for an initial meeting.

For very personal reasons, the tenant who moved in at the beginning of December has had to give notice, and will likely leave at the end of February. All fees for re-advertising and reletting the property will be covered by the existing tenant as per the rental agreement. Hopefully a new and suitable tenant will be found soon.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

27th January 2025

Leases Working Party (LWP)

Cllr Wilkinson is the chairman of this working party.

Slow progress. Please see Agenda Item 11a below.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th January 2025

Additionally:

20mph – the Clerk would meet with Cllr Wilkinson before the next Full Council meeting.

Environmental Initiatives Working Party – Cllr Gunston said a working proposal for the future management of the East Preston allotments was almost ready to present to ADC.

The Repair Café regulars had recently met and now the venture was as good as self-funding, the group was looking to set up as a standalone organisation with its own bank account and committee. This was another council-initiated success.

Flat & Frontage – the Clerk reported the leaving of the tenant was slightly up in the air at the moment, for personal reasons. The agency was fully aware and on top of the situation.

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

097/25 LEASES WORKING PARTY – EAST PRESTON & KINGSTON BOWLS CLUB

The following report had been circulated ahead of the meeting:

Leases Working Party – East Preston & Kingston Bowls Club

Council is asked to agree to the commissioning of a valuation survey at the cost of approximately £750 (excl. VAT).

Council will be aware the current lease to the Bowls Club expires this year, and the council has yet to agree the financial terms of a new lease.

The council's solicitor has suggested a valuation be sought which could give the council some more in the way of bargaining power. The solicitor has contacted various surveyors he has worked with previously, and only one has offered to do this work.

I have canvassed members of the Leases Working Party electronically, and the majority recommend this survey is commissioned.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

27th January 2025

Cllr Wilkinson provided some background to this request, and asked for the sum requested to be increased to £1,000 to be on the safe side.

1940 The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to commission a valuation survey at a cost of approximately £750 but up to £1,000 as necessary.

This money would be taken from the council's general reserves.

098/25 STAGECOACH SOUTH

The following report had been circulated ahead of the meeting:

Stagecoach South

Council is asked to consider whether the council should comment upon proposed changes to bus services in Littlehampton and Worthing.

On 21st January, Stagecoach South announced proposed changes to bus routes in the Littlehampton and Worthing areas. These changes have been expected since we have understood the impact of the Southern Rail timetable changes made last June which have seen level crossing downtime increase. For Stagecoach, this has meant a reduction in reliability and punctuality of its 700 service which is scheduled to run through the village every 12 minutes.

After a lot of deliberating, Stagecoach has put a proposal out for public consultation. This has been circulated to recipients of the council's e-newsletter and also linked to from the council's Facebook page.

Does the council want to contribute its own comments and, if so, which councillors would like to get together to draft these comments? Such comments need to be submitted by 7th February (so 6th February in council terms).

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

27th January 2025

The Clerk reported a small number of residents had asked whether or not the council would be commenting. He asked Cllr Gunston to comment upon the council's contribution to the Southern Rail consultation about its 2024 timetable changes. Cllr Gunston said the council had contributed to that consultation, both in writing and in public, and, although its comments had gone largely ignored, having contributed did give the council something to show residents and to use in future discussions with Southern Rail, as necessary.

Cllr Hill said the proposed changes were big, were being talked about a lot, and it would be good for the council to comment. Cllr Moore said some residents had expressed concern about how much earlier they might now have to arrive at appointments because of the reduction in the number of buses coming through the village each hour. Cllr Bradshaw said he had entered the meeting feeling there was little point in the council contributing to the consultation but he had been persuaded by the arguments he had heard and was willing to be part of the council's responding team.

1934 The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to respond to the public consultation on the future of Stagecoach South bus services in the Littlehampton and Worthing area.

Cllrs Bradshaw, Chapman and Gunston volunteered to compile an answer on behalf of the council and set a date at which to do so.

Cllr Hill wondered whether it was worth escalating concerns to the district councillors.

099/25 WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

County Cllr Elkins had sent his apologies for this meeting. In his email apologising for his non-attendance, he had promised a report which he had then not attached.

At her request, the Clerk reported Mrs Lee had grave concerns about the proposed devolution proposals, fearing money raised in the village would be spent in far-flung other parts of the area covered by any new local authority created.

100/25 SUSSEX POLICE

No report had been received.

101/25 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. Tree scam**
- 6. East Preston Repair Café, 11th January**
- 7. Meeting with East Preston Cricket Club, 13th January**
- 8. Meeting with Angmering-on-Sea Lawn Tennis Club, 14th January**
- 9. Meeting at Rustington Parish Council, 20th January – Zachary Merton Hospital**
- 10. Littlehampton RNLI Lifeboat Station visit, 23rd January**
- 11. Meeting with Sea Road residents, 24th January**
- 12. Social media**
- 13. MailChimp stats**
- 14. A selection of things we have been asked since the last meeting**

15. Recent bouquets and complaints

16. Leave

17. February meetings and events

1. Introduction

This is the report mainly covering January 2025 and matters which may not arise elsewhere on the agenda.

2. Police matters

After some persuasion, the company which manages the Village Green car-park on behalf of the council was able to provide the registration details of the perpetrator's car. That information has been passed to our insurer. Sussex Police has requested the CCTV footage today although, at the time of writing, I am having trouble uploading it.

3. Anti-social behaviour (ASB) matters

No 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. Tree scam

On 23rd December, I noticed some tree works taking place on a verge in the village. The contractors were not wearing hi-vis, had not coned off the road next to where they were working and generally did not look like official WSCC Highways contractors. The following morning, I photographed the results of the works and sent that to my tree contact at WSCC asking if he knew about the works, which I believed had been carried out on WSCC verge.

The tree contact replied he was not aware of the works but was also not sure the land in question was Highways land.

Early in the new year, the owner of the house adjacent to where the works had been carried out called me and told me how he had been approached on the 23rd by someone who has done tree works for him before. The man showed the householder how one of the trees had fallen into the road and needed to be removed. He showed the householder some credentials from WSCC, and the householder agreed to the removal of the tree and some maintenance works on adjacent trees. The householder believed the man was asking on behalf of WSCC Highways for permission to work on these trees, but at the end of the works, he was presented with a bill for just under £2,000. Having had this man work for him before, he thought it best to pay up and that's what he did.

A family member was concerned about this but by the time they contacted the man's bank, the bank was unable to retrieve the money and started to talk about a scam. WSCC Highways has subsequently come back saying the land in question was sold sometime in the past but, because of a records fire or flood, there are no details of to whom the land was sold. WSCC Highways is interested in finding out who the man was and whether he is genuinely a recommended contractor. This matter is ongoing, but could be a warning to us all.

6. East Preston Repair Café, 11th January

Cllr Gunston and I ran this session.

After the event, Cllr Gunston provided the following report to the volunteers: "Another great Repair Cafe, 25 items were looked at 19 repaired, 2 taken home and 1 person was given advice. We took £123.85 in donations. Feedback as always was very positive - "brilliant, excellent service, absolutely delighted"."

Special thanks to Cllr Chapman's husband, Scott, who stepped in at very short notice to be a Portable Appliance Tester for the session. Additionally, he turned his hand to repairing a heated seat-pad, two electric heaters, a vacuum cleaner charger and more.

The session wound up at 12.45.

The next session will be on Saturday, 8th February. I will not be able to attend that session.

This will probably be the last regular report from Repair Café sessions as the council's direct involvement may be winding down.

7. Meeting with East Preston Cricket Club, 13th January

Cllrs Toney, Gunston and Wilkinson and I met with representatives of the cricket club for the first of this year's meetings. The club was represented by Pete Dallimore (Chairman), Andy Reeves (Treasurer) and Colin Smith (Secretary).

During the 2024 season, the club had played about twenty matches. The council had received two complaints of balls landing in neighbouring properties, one each on the western and eastern boundaries.

The club's current mower is coming to the end of its life and the club may need some assistance with the purchase of a new one. Mowing in 2024 had carried on as late as November. Members of the public regularly praise the club for how tidy it keeps the Warren Recreation Ground.

Although the club appreciated the cutting-back of trees on the eastern boundary, it was concerned about how far back some of the trees had been cut. It planned on seeking advice on what measures could be put in place and, at the council's request, will seek similar advice on increasing the height of the safety netting on the western boundary.

The 2025 season is likely to run from the first week of May until the first week of September.

The club thanked East Preston in Bloom for its improvement works in the south-eastern corner of the Rec.

8. Meeting with Angmering-on-Sea Lawn Tennis Club, 14th January

Cllr Toney and Gunston and I met with representatives of the tennis club for its annual meeting. The club was represented by Alastair McCubbin (Chairman), Andrew Cook (Head Coach and Premises Manager) and Sarah Fisher (Administrator). A member of the council's Environmental Initiatives Working Party, Michał Zarzecki, also attended.

The refurbishments to the clubhouse were now complete, the latest works being improvements to the men's changing room and the provision of an accessible toilet and shower room as a non-binary space. The club now needed to maintain the standards of the clubhouse, the courts, fencing, external areas and so on.

A decision needed to be made about the future of Court No. 1, currently an acrylic court not playable during the winter or in wet weather. The club had met with a local Padel provider which wanted to convert this court into two Padel courts but the club had decided now was not the right time for such a project.

Current membership was about 450, of whom 120 were juniors. Membership fees were about to be increased.

The newly lighting, partly sponsored by a grant from the council, had received all good feedback and was much better to play under. Electricity bills were likely lower too, but this could not yet be confirmed.

Michał introduced the idea of rain gardens and rain-harvesting and the club said it was happy for Michał to talk to it more on this, perhaps including a volunteer gardener in the conversation.

In response to a Cllr Gunston suggestion the village sports clubs could pool resources, Alastair said he would happily attend a meeting of the village's sports clubs if set up by the parish council. Community Engagement considered this idea and is going to gauge interest.

Andrew confirmed he would be willing to run a few free tennis-coaching sessions on behalf of the council this summer. Cllr Linton will liaise on details.

9. Meeting at Rustington Parish Council, 20th January – Zachary Merton Hospital

Together with Cllrs Toney and Linton, I attended this meeting to discuss the future of community medical services in the area now the NHS has said it will cost £8m just to bring Zachary Merton Hospital up to a standard at which it could be reopened.

Rustington Parish Council led the meeting and was represented by Cllrs Jamie Bennett, Alison Cooper, Don Rogers and officers Carole Ward and Rosie Costan. Angmering Parish Council was represented by Cllr Nikki Hamilton-Street (great initials for this meeting) and officers Katie Herr and Tracy Lees. Kingston Parish Council was represented by Cllrs Roger Wetherell and Dave Marr. Shaun Gunner (Rustington) and Andy Cooper (Angmering) were also there as Arun district councillors; Alison Cooper is also an Arun district councillor (Rustington) and a West Sussex county councillor (Rustington).

Cllr Gunner provided the background to the meeting. Rustington Parish Council was already in contact with the NHS Trust which owns and has closed Zachary Merton but wanted the support of other parish councils for a combined campaign to restore, in some format, community medical services to the building or, at the very least, to the site in a new building if the current building is too decrepit to be recommissioned. The fear was the site would be left to deteriorate further, promises to recommission the building would disappear and, as with Littlehampton Hospital, nothing good would come from it.

Cllr Alison Cooper explained RPC was looking to gather local requirements through a survey they hoped neighbouring councils would also run. The councils present were supportive of that idea. With information gathered from the survey, there may then follow a petition. Reportedly, there is a fair amount of developer money sitting at ADC which could be used towards recommissioning or rebuilding a community facility in Rustington.

The NHS Trust is of the opinion a lot of the public support for Zachary Merton hospital is sentimental from people born there. However, nobody has been born there since the 1970s, and how many thousands of local residents have moved to the area since then? A survey could find out their feelings about the facility.

The meeting agreed a survey should be designed by RPC councillors and then run past all clerks for their comments on the design and practicality of the survey. Each council would then distribute the survey to their residents as they saw fit.

Cllrs Toney and Linton may well have additional comments to make about this meeting.

10. **Littlehampton RNLI Lifeboat Station visit, 23rd January**

Together with Cllrs Toney and Linton, I visited the Littlehampton Lifeboat Station to conclude the Chairman’s Charity for the year 2024 with a final donation of £65.50 to the station. This brought the sum donated by councillors and their activities to about £197.91 for the year.

Thursday night is training night, and we were privileged to see both lifeboats launch. We were also able to chat to various crew members, and one of us (no prize for guessing which) also tried on several items of crew kit.



Cllrs Toney and Linton with four crew members
(photograph courtesy of Beth Brooks, Voluntary Lifeboat Press Officer, Littlehampton RNLI Lifeboat Station)

We also met Beth Brooks, the Voluntary Lifeboat Press Officer. In sending us the photograph above, Beth wrote, “Thank you so much for visiting yesterday, and for your generous donation. Your support is very much appreciated by everyone at Littlehampton RNLI.”

11. **Meeting with Sea Road residents, 24th January**

Together with Cllrs Wilkinson and Moore, I met with three residents of the houses in Sea Road opposite the Village Green.

The residents already have this council’s agreement to pursue having the seasonal single yellow line outside their properties made into a year-round single line. County Cllr Elkins advised the leader of the group to get some more signatures on to the petition already started, but for various reasons, that has not been possible, and the situation has worsened and the residents feel they need council assistance.

During the winter, employees of local businesses regularly park outside these properties for most of the day, making it difficult and dangerous for householders to drive out of their driveways safely. Householders who have asked politely for drivers not to park across their driveways have been verbally abused unacceptably.

If a change to the single yellow line is not possible, the residents would like to see residents’ parking implemented in their stretch of Sea Road. They also suggested the car-park be made free to use again.

There is no “residents’ parking” in Arun district, but there is a Controlled Parking Zone in Bognor Regis. This and all suggestions made by the residents would be subject to a Traffic Regulation Order being agreed by WSCC Highways.

In order to help with their initial campaign, we agreed to include some wording in a future e-newsletter as part of a poll to see what support there is beyond Sea Road for the proposal suggested.

12. **Social media**

Here is the council’s only Facebook post in January to reach more than 500 people.

- A post announcing Stagecoach South’s proposed changes to local bus routes – 893 people (posts up to and including 27th January)

The number of Followers is currently 1,903, a decrease of one on the last report.

13. **MailChimp stats**

Since the last papers were issued, the council has sent out the following email to local residents on the council’s main e-mailing list:

Parish Council news – 31st December – sent to 946 subscribers, opened by 701 (74.2%)

Parish Council news – 3rd January – sent to 947 subscribers, opened by 695 (73.4%)

Parish Council news – 23rd January – sent to 945 subscribers, opened by 689 (73%)

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

“Do you know the date of the next garage sale and how I can take part?” (10th May and contact the East Preston Festival Committee for more details.)

“Do you know anything about the 700 no longer coming into East Preston?” (Yes. Details provided.)

“I have heard food waste collection is beginning in February, is that right?” (Kind of, kerbside food waste collection is scheduled to start in February 2026.)

“I need to pick your brains, how do I apply for one of them yellow needle bins??” (A GP should provide an initial yellow sharps box, after which the client should contact a company called Medisort.)

“We haven’t seen out neighbour for a while. We have knocked, we have looked through the windows, but we cannot see into the bedroom. What can we do?” (Call Sussex Police, non-emergency, and they should send someone out in due course.)

“Please can you let me know how I go about finding information regarding my grandparents plot at St Mary’s church?” (Speak to Fr Andrew Perry at the church.)

15. **Recent bouquets and complaints**

(In addition to anything reported above)

Thanks from Jane at dizzy for arranging for Cllr Chapman’s interview with her to be included in the January edition of All About East Preston & Kingston, “I just wanted to say Thank you very much for the interview and organising for it to be published in the All About magazine. I have

received some positive feedback, people have enjoyed reading it and found it interesting. Thank you.”.

Thanks from East Preston Library for remembering its 64th birthday on 18th January!

A correspondent from elsewhere in the country who had been seeking information related to his family history; I directed him to eBay for a copy of Richard Standing’s *East Preston & Kingston – An Illustrated History* and also confirmed the location of Coronation Cottages for him. “Our family met today at our house it was prearranged for something completely different and all my aunt and uncles plus cousins were over the moon with the book which arrived this morning and the pictures you sent. The book is now going around the family so goodness knows when I will eventually be able to read it cover to cover. I can only say thank you.”

From a resident of Vermont Drive after I added detail to an email he had sent to WSCC Highways, “Beautifully crafted (if I may say so).”

From a member of the public who suggested asking Stagecoach to erect a bus shelter at the stop immediately to the east of the A280/A259 roundabout, “Thank you for your reply. As you say it could have been worse.”

16. **Leave**

Alison and Adrian are both off for the week beginning 17th February.

17. **February Meetings and Events**

This list may be incomplete and is subject to change.

- 3rd Full Council (19:00, East Preston Infant School)
- 8th East Preston Repair Café (10:00, Vicarage Lane)
- 10th East Preston Neighbourhood Plan Review Steering Group (17:30, East Preston Infant School)
Planning & Licensing Committee (18:30, East Preston Infant School)
Amenities Committee (19:00, East Preston Infant School)
- 13th Home-Start Arun, Worthing and Adur *Meet the Charity* (13:00, Arundel) (AC only)
- 17th Finance & General Purposes Committee (18:00, East Preston Infant School)
Major Events Committee (19:00, East Preston Infant School)
- 18th Visit to Ford Materials Recycling Facility (09:30 and 13:00, depending upon your booking)
- 24th Planning & Licensing Committee (18:00, East Preston Infant School)
Environmental Initiatives Working Party (19:00, East Preston Infant School)
- 27th ADC Clerks’ Meeting (10:00, Civic Centre) (SC only)

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

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th January 2025

Item 11 – Sea Road – Cllr Duff asked whether vehicles were still parking on the western side of Sea Road despite the trees which had been planted by WSCC in late 2023 and late 2024. The Clerk reported they were but they were no longer parking on the verges as much, thus further narrowing the carriageway available.

Item 9 – meeting at Rustington Parish Council, 20th January – Zachary Merton Hospital – Cllr Duff asked whether the meeting was seeking a replacement hospital or some other medical provision in the area. The Clerk replied the meeting was undecided upon that.

Item 2 – police matters – Cllr Bradshaw asked whether there were any updates on the car-park incident or the tree scam. The Clerk replied he had, finally, been successful in sending the CCTV footage of the car-park incident to Sussex Police but had yet to hear further. He assumed Sussex Police had been invited to investigate the tree scam further but did not know for certain. He needed to speak to the householder again anyway, as WSCC wanted the details of the contractor who may or may not be accredited by WSCC.

Item 10 – Littlehampton RNLI Lifeboat station visit, 23rd January – on the day of the meeting, the council had received the following card:



Littlehampton Lifeboat Station,
Fisherman's Quay
Littlehampton

On behalf of all the volunteers here at Littlehampton
Lifeboat Station, I should like to thank East Preston Parish
Council for their generous donation. It is thanks to the support of
our local communities that our crew are able to continue their
work, saving lives at sea.

With many thanks
B. B. B. B. B.
Fundraising (Littlehampton)

(Mrs M arrived towards the conclusion of this item.)

102/25 **PUBLIC SESSION**

Cllr Toney invited Mrs M to raise anything she wanted.

Agenda Item 12 – Stagecoach South – Mrs M said she felt what Stagecoach South was proposing was a “very good compromise” and kept much-needed buses running through the village. However, she was unable to understand the logic behind the renaming of the 700 to the 701 and why the 11 was going to be the 11. Cllr Bowman suggested this was because the 701 was actually a new route, which would link up with the westbound 700 at Anchor Springs and the eastbound 700 at Worthing Pier. The Clerk suggested renaming the 700 to the 701 would prevent anyone looking for the eastbound 700 in, say, Rustington, catching a bus which served a different route to the one they were expecting. Cllr Toney said the village used to be served by the 31A, B and C. The No. 9 had also come into the south end of the village, once upon a time. Mrs M thanked the respondents named above for their contributions to her greater understanding of the situation.

Cllr Gale asked whether there was any update on the No. 12. The Clerk replied it was still running and there had been no recent information from Compass Travel about its future.

103/25 **EXTERNAL MEETINGS AND EVENTS**

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

Other meetings and events – Part 1

Council is asked to note any reports.

WSCC Waste Prevention Webinar, 21st January

online

WSCC has £50,000 (maximum £5,000 per project) to award to local initiatives that have a demonstrable impact on waste prevention. These must be new or expanded projects run by voluntary or community groups, charities or parish and town councils. Food, furniture, plastics,

textiles and electrical and electronic equipment are the key target areas. Grant requests need to be submitted by 3rd March and the projects delivered in the financial year 2025/26.

More information wasteprevention.fund@westsussex.gov.uk EIWP members will contact me if they can think of any projects.

Cllr John Gunston –
Chairman of the Environmental Initiatives Working Party

28th January 2025

ADC Climate Change Seminar, 28th January 2025

online

A short presentation on Arun District Council's focus on solar panels and heat decarbonisation plans was followed by a talk on the challenges associated with climate change messages. Avoiding technical details and acronyms, making information simple and accessible, pooling resources with other local councils and signposting people to other organizations were some of the suggestions.

In the open forum I talked about our Repair Café and asked what ADC may be able to do to help us with unwanted rubbish bins and our plan for a Green Day in September. It was great to feel part of a proactive parish council and to share some of our experiences and ideas.

Cllr John Gunston –
Chairman of the Environmental Initiatives Working Party

28th January 2025

Cllr Gunston reported on the Waste Prevention webinar and asked if anyone present had any suggestions for schemes the council could propose. Repurposing of redundant bins was suggested again, the bins being made redundant by ADC's new bin proposal from February 2026.

The Clerk reported the council had received an email from the NHS Laundry Service asking councils to consider local sites "that would be able to accommodate a laundry drop off bin. It would be similar to the clothes bank bins we see out on the streets. This would be nowhere near that size and scale, it would be more the size of a wheelie bin and the transport team would come and collect any returned laundry every 14 days. If the demand requires more frequent collections we will ensure that would happen. Places of interest would be - community halls, council offices, public areas, large health centres, pub car parks, anywhere that is easy to access for the public. All items will be returned to the hospital laundry department based at St Richards Hospital for laundering and re-using or condemning depending on the condition of the item." As the obvious location was the Village Hall, the Clerk had sought agreement from the Chairman of the East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation to discuss this matter at its next committee meeting.

With reference to the ADC Climate Change meeting, Cllr Gunston said ADC had been very interested in the Repair Café and wanted to know more about it. Cllr Gunston again felt East Preston PC was doing more than most of the other councils represented at the meeting.

104/25 RESPONSE TO EXTERNAL MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Cllr Chapman offered a vote of thanks to Cllr Gunston for the good work he had done in setting up the Repair Café. Cllr Gunston thanked Cllr Chapman and noted the assistance he had received from Cllr Hill and others in getting to this point.

105/25 NEW ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING (3RD MARCH)

Sea Road parking.

The meeting ended at 19:51.

Chairman: **Cllr Steve Toney** Date: **3rd March 2025**

END