



EAST PRESTON PARISH COUNCIL

Council Office, 122 Sea Road, East Preston, West Sussex. BN16 1LP

01903 770050

eastpreston.arun.gov.uk

Email: eparishcouncil@btconnect.com

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING - EAST PRESTON

13th June 2022

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

Present: Parish Councillors Kit Bradshaw, Lisa Duff, Barbara Gale, Pat Gander, Elizabeth Linton and Steve Toney (in the Chair)

Members of the Public: Chris and Valerie Eschbaeher, Philip Hopkins and George Schlich

Clerk to the Council: Simon Cross

Apologies: Parish Councillors Christine Bowman, Andrea Chapman, John Gunston, Glyn Mathias, Rick McElroy, David Moore and Steve Wilkinson. District Councillor Terry Chapman. Mrs Dorothy Lee.

The Chairman of the Council, Councillor Steve Toney, opened the meeting at 19:02, and thanked and welcomed those attending.

APM2022/01 - To confirm the Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 21st June 2021

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 21st June 2021 were agreed to be a true record. The meeting agreed these could be signed by Cllr Toney when he was next in the Council Office.

These Minutes had previously been noted by the Parish Council at its meeting held on 5th July 2021, Parish Council Minute 418/21.

APM2022/02 – South Strand Community Toilets

Cllr Toney invited Mr Schlich, Chairman of the South Strand Community Toilets, to address the meeting.

Mr Schlich thanked the council for the invite to the meeting and thanked those present for allowing him to speak first as he had domestic duties to attend to.

Mr Schlich said the toilets continued to be funded nicely by organisations such as East Preston and Kingston Parish Councils, local private estates, East Preston Infant School and individuals. Mr Schlich felt the toilets were financially healthy. A COVID business loan had been secured in the early days of the pandemic, and this had been used to set up a sinking fund to protect the

group against any unexpected future expenditure. In the meantime, there was sufficient funding available for the group to replace the washing facilities in the toilets.

In response to a question from Cllr Linton, Mr Schlich said the group would look at less restrictive turning off of the water supply to the external tap during the winter months. The group wanted to avoid any risk of ice forming under the tap, but if the weather was not likely to be freezing, it may be possible for the tap to remain operational, although there was a human resources element to this request too.

Cllr Gander thanked Mr Schlich and his team for keeping the toilets as a valuable community asset, made all the more attractive by the introduction of flowers. Mr Schlich said he hoped the group was maintaining a genuine community asset in the way in which the Parish Council had foreseen when it did not renew its lease in 2018.

With no further questions, Mr Schlich left the meeting at 19:07.

APM2022/03 - To receive the Annual Report of the East Preston Parish Council

Cllr Toney's report had been published in the Spring 2021 Newsletter and made available to all attendees before the start of the meeting. All present had read the report, which read:

"I started last year's report saying 2020 would be the year none of us would probably ever forget, little knowing 2021 would be just as challenging for many of our residents. In some respects, many of us have incorporated managing with COVID-19 into our daily lives, but some are still afraid to go out or anywhere that might be crowded. Just as I said last year, local businesses have, on the whole, survived and we ask residents to keep supporting our local businesses. On behalf of the whole council, I really want to thank again all those business owners who adapted and worked within the government's frequently-changing guidelines to keep serving residents in ways old and new.

"Let's start this year's report where we started last year's report, with the East Preston Voluntary Service. In the middle of the summer, with life then getting back to some sort of normality, more people back at work, events taking place again and fewer restrictions in place, we wound the Voluntary Service up for a final time. In the middle of September, the council hosted a thank-you party which brought together again many of the volunteers and the people they had helped. We were delighted at the number of people who attended, and to see for ourselves the friendships that had built up over the lockdown periods and beyond. We know there are volunteers and beneficiaries still in regular contact, a lovely side effect of an unlovely time.

"Talking of events taking place again, the council decided to go ahead with both the fifth East Preston Food & Drink Festival and the East Preston Christmas Celebrations, both attracting far larger audiences than we could have expected. Clearly residents and their friends from outside the village were very happy to be able to attend such events again, and to support them wholeheartedly. Both events will run again in 2022.

"The council's year was marred by the death of our main Village Orderly, Steve Rolph, in June. In addition to doing a great job, Steve was a great man with a lovely sense of humour. Although Steve tended to work very early in the mornings, he was greatly liked by his colleagues and the members of the public out early enough to see him. He is much missed.

"The government's concession to allow local councils to hold meetings virtually ended at the beginning of May 2021, despite requests from numerous local councils and MPs for local councils to be allowed to continue meeting online. In 2020, I was delighted with how quickly councillors and officers adapted to holding meetings online; in 2021, I am equally delighted with how quickly councillors and officers adapted to meeting in-person again and operating within socially-distancing guidelines to ensure all remained safe. Members of the public have returned to our meetings too, albeit we still ask them to pre-register to attend, and we have a small band of regular attendees willing not just to keep us on our toes but also to praise initiatives we have undertaken on your behalf.

"What are just some of those initiatives? At the Warren Recreation Ground we replaced the damaged area of the tennis court surface. The railings around the children's playground were repainted resulting in the whole area looking a lot brighter and more fun. Trees donated by both the Woodland Trust and a local resident have been planted along the southern edge and four new bicycle hoops have been provided.

"We replaced the low-level fencing the full length of the Village Green perimeter. We chose recycled plastic which should last twenty-five years with very little maintenance required. The markings in the car-park were refurbished for the first time in a decade. The boules piste also received some refurbishment and a 6ft rootballed Norway Spruce tree has been planted which we hope will grow into a fine Christmas Tree.

"An additional planter was installed at the junction of North Lane and Lashmar Road. This will be joined by a further planter sometime this year.

"We ran a well-attended *Funday Sunday* event in October, giving attendees an enjoyable afternoon tea accompanied by live music and dancing. Aimed at a much lower age range, the council's *A Morning with Nature* half-day playscheme was well-attended and well-received.

“In the 2021 Loo of the Year awards, the Sea Road toilet block received a Platinum Award, the highest possible. Not bad for our first attempt.

“During the summer, the council ran an online survey on environmental issues and in December, the council ran an online survey about possible further parking restrictions in North Lane and Sea Road between the junctions of Lashmar Road and Fairlands. As there was plenty of support for the latter, this has now been submitted to West Sussex County Council for it to propose a scheme.

“Tackling social isolation whilst also providing something new in the village, the council has recently set up new East Preston in Bloom and East Preston Men in Sheds groups with a view to both groups becoming autonomous in due course.

“Wrapping up the year, the council hosted a meeting between Southern Water and local residents to gain a better understanding of what improvements Southern Water will be making to our local seawater.

“The Personnel Committee oversaw the recruitment of a new Village Orderly, and we are happy to have found Caspar Williams who has fitted into the role well.

“Throughout the year, the council has worked solo and in conjunction with other local councils to stave off increasingly inappropriate attempts to build on recognised Strategic Gaps between communities. This fight continues.

“Financially, the council agreed not to increase its portion of your Council Tax for the second year running. In the current cost-of-living crisis we all know how every little helps.

“Please remember this is just some of what the council has achieved this year. There are elections taking place in May 2023 – if you think you have something to offer the village and would like to know more about becoming a councillor, please get in touch.

“The council remains always approachable and willing to consider ideas for ways in which life in the village can be improved. Please submit suggestions in writing (letter or email) so the correct committee can consider them or our officers can report on previous discussions on the same matter. We look forward to hearing your ideas and hopefully implementing some of them to make the village even lovelier.

“As in previous years, I would like to finish by thanking my fellow councillors for their hard work throughout the year and their support of me, and also by thanking the council’s officers who maintained a visible presence throughout the lockdowns and who really do work tirelessly for the village.”

The Chairman added to the written report as follows:

“On behalf of the Parish Council and the village community I want to say a like THANKYOU to the Yarnbombers for their fantastic display around the 2 Acres field and various locations around the village.

“I would also like to add our great THANKYOU from the Parish Council and our Community to the Festival Committee for a fantastic Festival on this our first “Covid” free year.”

APM2022/04 - To receive a report from the Arun District councillors representing East Preston.

Arun District Council was not represented at the meeting.

APM2022/05 - To receive a report from the West Sussex County councillor representing East Preston.

West Sussex County Council was not represented at the meeting.

APM2022/06 - To receive a presentation from Philip Hopkins, West Sussex Digital Ambassador, Get Safe Online.

Mr Hopkins gave a thirty-minute presentation on staying safe online and avoiding fraud.

APM2022/07 - To consider any written resolutions received by the council no later than 7th June 2022

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

APM2022/08 – Public question time.

Mr and Mrs Eschbaeher had no questions they wished to ask and said they were very happy with the council and all it did for the village.

With nobody wishing to say anything further, Cllr Toney closed the meeting at 19:43.

Chairman:

Date: 15th May 2023

Cllr Steve Toney

Please note this Minutes were noted at the Full Council meeting held on 4th July 2022, Minute 575/22