



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

15th May 2023

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

Present:

Parish Councillors Christine Bowman, Kit Bradshaw, Andrea Chapman, Lisa Duff, Barbara Gale, John Gunston, Elizabeth Linton Glyn Mathias, Rick McElroy, David Moore, Steve Toney (in the Chair) and Steve Wilkinson

County Cllr Roger Elkins (from 20:15)

Clerk to the Council:

Simon Cross

Apologies:

Mrs Linda Denton and Mrs Dorothy Lee

The Chairman of the Council, Councillor Steve Toney, opened the meeting at 20:00, and thanked and welcomed those attending.

APM2023/01 - To confirm the Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 13th June 2022

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 13th June 2022 were agreed to be a true record. The meeting agreed these could be signed by Cllr Toney.

These Minutes had previously been noted by the Parish Council at its meeting held on 4th July 2022, Parish Council Minute 575/22.

APM2023/02 - To receive the Annual Report of the East Preston Parish Council

Cllr Toney's report was due to be published in the Spring 2022 Newsletter and made available to all attendees before the start of the meeting. All present had read the report, which read:

"After the national challenges for 2020 and 2021, it was much easier in 2022 for the council to concentrate on local matters. Hopefully you have all read the Looking Back article we published in the Winter 2023 Newsletter a couple of months ago. In that article, you will have seen what my colleagues and I have found most rewarding about being a parish councillor in the past four years.

"On the whole, the past year has been another successful one for the council. Not only did we run a successful Food & Drink Festival, two successful half-day playschemes for local children, and a successful Christmas Celebrations event, we worked with

Working for the Local Community

the East Preston Festival Committee to host an enjoyable Big Jubilee Lunch on the Village Green, marking the 70th Year of Her Majesty the Queen's reign.

"We marked the jubilee in other ways too. All primary school age children in the village were given an embellished plastic drinks beaker; a Field Maple was planted to honour the Queen's reign; and, above all, the Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Clock was installed in the centre of the village, much-admired by almost everyone.

"On the day of that Big Jubilee Lunch in June, few of us imagined we would be mourning the passing of Her Majesty so soon. In addition to a small floral tribute hub on the Village Green, the council provided two condolence books. One was taken into two of the village's care homes, where residents shared memories of the Queen with Cllrs Gunston and Linton. One lady even remembered dancing on Brighton beach with the young Princess Elizabeth at the end of the Second World War.

"Elsewhere over the past year, in no particular order, the council has installed four new play panels on the Warren Recreation Ground. These are designed to be played by people of any age and any ability. To make these more accessible, we have doubled the width of the footpath that runs from the car-park to the northern side of the field. We hope you will all find some time to enjoy them with your friends. New trees have been planted on both the Warren Recreation Ground and Two Acres.

"The Sea Road toilets were awarded Platinum Plus status in the Loo of the Year Awards. Thank you to anyone who uses the toilets responsibly.

"Following an illegal encampment on Langmeads Field, the council temporarily installed a concrete barrier at the vehicular entrance to the Warren Recreation Ground for the rest of the summer. The council is currently planning on installing some heavy duty, but attractive, gates to protect the Warren Recreation Ground more permanently, although it is probably impossible to make the ground 100% secure.

"The council dedicated a Warren Recreation Ground bench to the memory of our former colleague, Steve Rolph, and added a plaque to the memorial bench outside the Council Office, this in memory of former councillor, Mervyn Howdle.

"Towards the end of the council year, we started to run weekly Warm Space sessions, designed to provide a warm space for residents to spend some time without needing to have their home heating on. The sessions very soon acquired a core following, who would attend each week for a light lunch, lots of chat and, sometimes, some live music. Thank you to everyone who supported these sessions, especially the Royal British Legion, without whose support the sessions could not have been as successful.

"The council ran a successful Funday Sunday in April but, unexpectedly, the one scheduled for October was cancelled for poor ticket sales. At the end of the year, also being the end of the council's four-year term, the council hosted a party to thank many of the residents who voluntarily contribute to the village in so many ways.

"The council was very happy to take part in another successful Christmas Tree Festival at St Mary the Virgin Church, raising much-needed funds to guarantee the future of the only Grade I-Listed building in the village. Not only did we sponsor and decorate a tree, I'm proud to say several councillors and officers also baked cakes for sale in the event café.

"As always, the council awarded a number of grants to local and national organisations which work to improve life within the village. The council also underwrote the Festival Committee's insurance for the year. During the Festival, in addition to the popular annual Come and Meet Your Local Councillors event, the council hosted *The Bell Orchestra*. Although poor weather in the run up to the event kept numbers down, those who attended enjoyed their time in this interactive orchestra.

"The council commissioned a fourth blue plaque for the village. This honours the artist, Heywood Hardy, and will soon form part of the forthcoming East Preston heritage map we are producing.

"The Village Bus is still coming, it's just running a bit late. We had believed everything was in place with West Sussex County Council Highways, just waiting for us to say Go, but when we did say Go, we were unexpectedly sent back to square one pretty much, and this has delayed the bus service starting.

"As you will have seen in council newsletters, we have continued to support the new East Preston in Bloom and East Preston Men in Sheds groups in the village, steering them towards autonomy. Both provide new social outlets in the village.

"Once again, the council's Annual Governance and Accountability Return was signed off by the External Auditor with nothing requiring any attention.

"Additionally, the council's Planning & Licensing Committee responded to a large number of Planning Applications and a much lower number of Licensing Applications in the village during the year, and the council's Personnel Committee ensured councillors and officers continued to act with the best interests of the village at heart. The Planning & Licensing Committee also agreed to review the East Preston Neighbourhood Plan, look out for more on this in the coming months including an opportunity to get involved. The council also supported neighbouring parish councils in their objections to proposed major developments.

"On a smaller scale, the council's Environmental Initiatives Working Party has been steadily coming up with ideas for making

the village more environmentally-friendly.

“The council has set up a 20MPH Working Party, which is working alongside the village Community Speed Watch team to look at where 20MPH could be introduced as a more appropriate speed limit in the village. Public support for the first proposal – for Fairlands, Sea Road and The Street – has been overwhelmingly in favour.

“I thank all my fellow councillors and the council’s officers who work almost tirelessly it seems for the benefit of the village. They are all quiet, low-profile people, but I know they like to be thanked if you see them out and about!

“I particularly want to thank Cllr Patricia Gander, now a former councillor, for her brilliant and copious contributions to the council and the village since becoming a councillor in July 2015. We will miss you but look forward to bumping into you around and about the village, lending your wide expertise to all sorts of projects.

“Most importantly though, thank you to all of you who regularly show your faith in and support for the council. We hope to serve you by continuing to improve the village where we can. Thank you.”

Cllr Toney added further thanks to councillors for all they do in support of him as Chairman of the Council.

APM2023/03 - To receive a report from the Arun District councillors representing East Preston.

Arun District Council was not represented at the meeting.

APM2023/04 - To receive a report from the West Sussex County councillor representing East Preston.

County Cllr Elkins said he was pleased to see improvements to the A259 locally had completed and this was having a big positive effect. A few parish councillors advised him there was some dissatisfaction now about how much harder it was for drivers to exit the village on to the A259.

Cllr Elkins was also pleased the parish council’s provision of a bus service to the southern end of the village was now close to starting.

Cllr Elkins talked in greater detail than usual about the increase in costs at WSCC, particularly the impact an ageing population was having on resources, particularly the council’s desire to support people in their own homes for as long as possible. The changing demographic along the coastal strip had resulted in an imbalance between the number of school places made available and taken up. There had been a significant increase in the number of children requiring special care.

WSCC was trialling a scheme for easier implementation of reduced speed limits around schools.

The council was encouraging businesses in and into the county.

During the pandemic, the council had set up the Community Hub which was effective in helping residents get the help they needed. The Community Hub continued to operate, focussing mainly now on providing support during the cost-of-living crisis. All of the county’s libraries were also able to provide cost-of-living support and advice.

The council was looking at the energy usage of each of its buildings and looking for opportunities to consolidate its estate to save money and energy.

In response to a question about rearranging the road layout from the Northbrook roundabout west, as had initially been part of the A259 improvements project, Cllr Elkins said traffic in that area needed to be analysed to confirm any revised road layout in that area.

In response to a question about what financial provision WSCC was making for the increasing burden on adult social care in the coming years, and also whether WSCC was building more care homes, Cllr Elkins said the council would be analysing census data in support of any such programmes. There was a feeling that in the past too many people had been moved into residential care too early, and in many ways it was better for everyone to support those people in continuing to live at home. The Sussex coast had long had a reputation for being somewhere people retired.

There was a suggestion funding for adult social care needed to be overhauled and be less reliant upon locally-raised Council Tax, Cllr Elkins said a large percentage of care home occupants were self-funded. He added a wide offering of local activities all helped to maintain the wellbeing of local residents, keeping them out of care for longer.

Cllr McElroy mentioned his mother lives in a “halfway house” in Rustington Hall, meaning she has retained a degree of independence, still goes out and does her own shopping and suchlike, but can readily call upon assistance if she needed. He felt this sort of arrangement needed to be more widespread.

As Chairman of the parish council's 20MPH Working Party, Cllr Wilkinson advised Cllr Elkins the council had that evening agreed to pursue a 20mph zone comprising Sea Road, The Street and Fairlands. A public survey had shown almost 80% support for the idea, which needed Cllr Elkins's support to progress to the next stage. Cllr Elkins said any scheme needed broad agreement from Sussex Police, and he was happy to discuss this further. The big expense of such a scheme is the Highways engineers' time.

Cllr Hill asked whether, now traveller season was approaching, the county council would be having proactive conversations with the traveller communities. Cllr Elkins replied there was a WSCC Traveller Officer and he would be willing to provide Cllr Hill with his details.

APM2023/05 - To consider any written resolutions received by the council no later than 12th May 2023

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

APM2023/06 – Public question time.

Cllr Gunston questioned the reasons behind the Annual Parish Meeting. The Clerk explained the meeting was a legal requirement, as set out in the Local Government Act, 1972. A parish meeting can discuss and vote upon matters relating to the village, but a council is not bound to any resolutions made by a parish meeting. The Clerk apologised this year's meeting had been arranged rather more hurriedly than usual and without a guest speaker to attract an audience. The meeting AGREED future Annual Parish Meetings should be part of the Community Engagement Committee's remit.

With nobody wishing to say anything further, Cllr Toney closed the meeting at 20:55.

Chairman:

Cllr Steve Toney

Date: 13th May 2024

Please note this Minutes were noted at the Full Council meeting held on 5th June 2023, Minute 459/23