



# 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, 7<sup>th</sup> April 2025 at East Preston Infant School, Lashmar Road, East Preston
- PRESENT:** Councillors Christine Bowman, Andrea Chapman, Barbara Gale, John Gunston, Helen Hill, Elizabeth Linton, Glyn Mathias, David Moore, Steve Toney (Chairman) and Steven Wilkinson
- ALSO:** Simon Cross, Clerk to the Council
- Cllrs Philippa Bower, Ricky Bower and Paul Kelly, Arun District Council (all until 19:23)
- Mr Allen, Sea Road Beach Access Limited (until 19:04)
- Mrs M
- ABSENT:** Councillors Kit Bradshaw, Lisa Duff 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 19:00.

## 258/25 **INTRODUCTIONS**

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

## 259/25 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

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

**1955** The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously to accept the apologies received from Cllrs Bradshaw and Duff (both away).

Apologies had also been received from County Councillor Roger Elkins, Linda Denton, Julian Ellis, Dean Jones and Dorothy Lee.

Retrospective apologies were received from Cllr McElroy (work commitment).

## **260/25 DECLARATION OF PERSONAL AND/OR PREJUDICIAL/PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

None were declared.

## **261/25 PUBLIC SESSION – WSCC – SEA ROAD PARKING RESTRICTIONS (SRBAL)**

**Agenda Item 15 – West Sussex County Council** – Mr Allen, representing Sea Road Beach Access Limited, advised the council the company was submitting a request for a Traffic Regulation Order to West Sussex County Council Highways, the details of which had been circulated to councillors earlier in the day. Mr Allen asked for the council's support of this proposal.

Cllr Linton questioned whether it would be better to link this request with the proposal for increased parking restrictions further north on Sea Road as discussed at the March meeting (Minute 184/25). The Clerk said in previous examples of where nearby requests had been combined, it had been WSCC Highways which had done the combining. As this request was ready to submit to WSCC Highways he felt it could delay consideration of this request for the parish council or applicants to combine the requests.

**1956** The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously to support the Sea Road Beach Access Limited request for increased parking restrictions at the very southern end of Sea Road, adjacent to the junction with Seafield Road.

(Mr Allen left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.)

## **262/25 PUBLIC SESSION**

**Agenda Item 15 – West Sussex County Council** – Mrs M referred to the request for additional parking restrictions opposite the Village Green and said she was concerned at County Cllr Elkins's suggestion the residents most affected by the problems opposite their properties should find support from others in the community. Mrs M felt many residents would not consider themselves disadvantaged until they found themselves disadvantaged and that could happen at any time. Mrs M said up to four hours of free parking in the Village Green car-park might alleviate the problem with trade vehicles being able to block the car-park all day. Cllr Hill agreed parking on both sides of that stretch of Sea Road affecting most people in a number of ways. The Clerk replied the council had agreed last month to help the residents find support and had published an online survey in the e-newsletter of 13<sup>th</sup> March. As reported in the Monthly Update report, at the time of writing, 75% of respondents were in favour of increased parking restrictions in that stretch of Sea Road. District Cllr Kelly again reminded those present why the parish council had implemented charging for use of the Village Green car-park originally, reasons he felt had not changed.

**Agenda Item 9a – Amenities Committee** – Mrs M said she was concerned at the council's decision not to replace the bus shelter at the top of North Lane, especially now the village's bus service was, at best, half-hourly. The Clerk advised Mrs M the council had agreed at the last meeting it would reconsider its decision at the next Amenities Committee meeting (Minute 191/25).

**Agenda Item 15 – West Sussex County Council** – District Cllr Ricky Bower expressed concern about the dangers of people parking too close to the mouth of Vermont Drive which created problems for drivers in both Vermont Drive and Sea Road. He felt there was insufficient enforcement of the double yellow lines in the area and the problem was only exacerbated by the Friday night pizza van which parked on the forecourt pavement on the north side of the junction. It was sometimes necessary to park in the Warren Recreation Ground car-park when collecting a pizza.

The Clerk replied the parish council had reported concerns to WSCC Highways and had asked for the existing double yellow lines to be repainted in Vermont Drive as they were almost completely degraded and people could not see them. WSCC Highways had replied the lines would be repainted when Vermont Drive was micro-asphalted, work which was scheduled to start last week but which did not. Councillors reported the works had also not started on the day of the meeting and any advance warning signs had been removed.

Cllr Kelly added it was often dangerous driving out of the Warren Recreation Ground car-park because of cars parking immediately to the south of the entrance.

Cllr Ricky Bower further expressed concern about drivers exiting the Sea Road service road treating that junction as a crossroads whereas he believed priority was to Sea Road and Fairlands ahead of the service road.

## **263/25 COUNCIL RESPONSES**

There were no further council responses.

## **264/25 ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Cllr Ricky Bower said he was still recovering from recent ill health and he and Cllr Philippa Bower thanked the council for its well wishes and support throughout this period.

Cllr Ricky Bower said he had attended the most recent ADC council meeting at which the Planning Policy Committee had put forward a proposal to progress work on the ADC Local Plan but this had been put on hold because of the government's work on the Planning System. For the time being then, there would be no changes to policies within the ADC Local Plan.

Regarding the government's proposal for devolution, Cllr Bower believed a unitary authority comprising the current Chichester, Arun and Horsham District Councils was being considered whilst Crawley Borough Council was considering joining up with a neighbouring council in Surrey rather than looking at Mid-Sussex. Cllr Bower thought Adur & Worthing Councils would join with Brighton & Hove City Council which he felt did not bear thinking about. Cllr Bower finished by saying the government's devolution plans would be "the destruction of local government" and were purely about having fewer representatives of the people involved in government.

Cllr Bowman asked if Cllr Bower had any advice on the council's review of its Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr Bower said the parish council should "go with the flow."

(All three district councillors left the meeting at this point.)

## **265/25 MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING HELD ON 3<sup>RD</sup> MARCH 2025**

The draft Minutes were circulated to all councillors on 5<sup>th</sup> March asking for suggested amendments by the 12<sup>th</sup> March. None were received.

**1957** The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously the Chairman could sign the Minutes as a true record of the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> March. Cllr Toney duly did so.

## **266/25 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 892/22 – Public Session – West Sussex County Council Highways**
- 3. Minute 141/25 (Finance & General Purposes) – Kingston Parish Council – Judicial Review**
- 4. Minute 014/25 – Finance & General Purposes Committee – Lashmar skatepark**
- 5. Minute 098/25 – Stagecoach South**
- 6. Minute 181/25 – Ian Hart Funeral Services – Conservative Hall**

7. **Minute 184/25 – West Sussex County Council – Traffic Regulation Order for Sea Road**
8. **Minute 198/25 – West Sussex County Council – electric vehicle charging points**
9. **Minute 200/25 – Clerk’s Report – Item 2 – Police matters**
10. **Minute 203/25 – East Preston Youth Centre**

1. **Introduction**

This is the report covering items discussed during Full Council meetings up to and including the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2025.

2. **Minute 892/22 – Public Session – West Sussex County Council Highways**

Three residents of Milliers Court, Worthing Road attended the Full Council meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2022, following a fatal road traffic accident in Worthing Road on 25<sup>th</sup> October.

The police investigation finally resulted in a conviction of a motorcycle rider who hit an elderly lady as she crossed the road in broad daylight. On 28<sup>th</sup> February, the rider was sentenced to three years and nine months in prison; he had been disqualified from driving at the time of the accident.

The three residents reported to the meeting they had a petition of 100 signatures asking WSCC to implement some traffic calming measures in Worthing Road. They had contacted then-MP, Sir Peter Bottomley, and he had directed them to County Cllr Elkins.

Now the criminal case has now ended, I have asked Cllr Elkins whether WSCC routinely takes any action following fatalities.

This whole topic may now reappear at council meetings.

3. **Minute 141/25 (Finance & General Purposes) – Kingston Parish Council – Judicial Review**

On 26<sup>th</sup> March, council received the following from Kingston Parish Council: “Please could you pass on to EPPC this Council's sincere thanks for supporting our Judicial Review application regarding planning Application K/46/23/PL (as recorded in our minutes). The £3000 has made a big difference to our final costs as you can see from the attached. The outcome was very disappointing but at least we tried! Also FYI, there is an application in to Arun to remove the affordable housing (commuted to £s)”.

I have asked my Kingston counterpart, Mrs Val Knight, to let me know if her council decides to object to the new Application and seeks this council’s support.

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

The latest date ADC has provided for the installation is 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> April with a soft reopening on 4<sup>th</sup> April.

5. **Minute 098/25 – Stagecoach South**

The new bus timetable was announced on 4<sup>th</sup> March, the day after the March Full Council meeting. The webpage gave answers to some of the point respondents had raised during the consultation period. The new timetable will take effect on Sunday, 6<sup>th</sup> April.

An online news article published on 28<sup>th</sup> March gave details of new bus stops which had been requested for new services being introduced but no timescales for when those bus stops would be implemented. The closest to East Preston would be stops on the A259 for the new No. 701 service.

6. **Minute 181/25 – Ian Hart Funeral Services – Conservative Hall**

Ian called on the morning after the meeting to thank the council for letting him introduce his ideas for the Conservative Hall to the community.

7. **Minute 184/25 – West Sussex County Council – Sea Road parking restrictions**

The residents of Sea Road represented at the March Full Council meeting came back to me agreeing a survey should be published in an e-newsletter without waiting for council to have a further discussion about the future of charging at the Village Green car-park. This was published in the e-newsletter dated 13<sup>th</sup> March.

At the time of writing, 62 people have responded to the survey, although only 60 answered the question of whether “there should be additional parking restrictions opposite the Village Green in Sea Road” – 75% in favour, 25% against. I shall share the results document with councillors and then with the lead campaigners in Sea Road. The freeform text is, as always, interesting.

8. **Minute 198/25 – West Sussex County Council – electric vehicle charging points**

As per the Minute, I contacted the project manager to ask about the number and speed of electric vehicle charging points which could be implemented.

On 6<sup>th</sup> March, I emailed councillors to inform them, “7kWh chargers are the normal install, which puts them at the low end of the ‘fast’ category. East Preston would not be a viable site to situate ‘Rapid’ Chargers, the long and short is there just wouldn’t be enough usage at this point to warrant the significant outlay that comes with rapid chargers.” Therefore, the offer remained six charging points in the Village Green car-park.

In response, support for the scheme was not as comprehensive as it had been. Two respondents asked for confirmation the parking bays adjacent to the charging points would not become exclusively for the use of electric vehicles and the project manager has not responded to that question yet.

In consultation with the Chairman, and in light also of the comments made at the last monthly meeting about perceived underuse of the car-park and also concerns raised by local residents and businesspeople about the implementation of electric vehicle charging points in the northern shops slip road, we agreed now was not the time to implement charging points in the car-park.

9. **Minute 200/25 – Clerk’s Report – Item 2 – Police matters**

On 11<sup>th</sup> March, our insurer confirmed settlement of £4,154.49 for the rebuilding of the wall at the Sea Road toilet block damaged in the incident of 7<sup>th</sup> February.

10. **Minute 203/25 – East Preston Youth Centre**

I understand, unofficially, the centre has been leased to a children’s organisation already active in the village.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

The Clerk had nothing to add to the above report but was willing to answer questions.

**Minute 098/25 – Stagecoach South** – Cllr Chapman reported there were still buses in the village advertising an Every 15 Minutes service although that was no longer the case. The Clerk would investigate.

**Minute 203/25 – East Preston Youth Centre** – Cllr Mathias wondered whether a clause had been included in any new lease of the Youth Centre about providing a free-of-charge night for use by the East Preston Youth Club. He felt, sadly, it was highly unlikely this clause would have been carried forward from previous leases.

## **267/25 FINANCIAL MATTERS**

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

- 1958** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the Outstanding Purchase Orders report for 2024/25, value £1,530.00.
- 1959** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the Regular Monthly Payments reports for March 2025 totalling £1,363.20 (inc. VAT).
- 1960** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the Supplier BACS Invoices Paid reports for February 2025 totalling £30,355.53 (inc. VAT).
- 1961** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the List of Sales Receipts & Bank Receipts by Bank report for financial year to date totalling £408,751.28 (inc. VAT).

The council NOTED the Bank Reconciliations to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.

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

Cllr Toney thanked Adrian for preparing the above reports.

## **268/25 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: Audit & Governance, Community Engagement 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**

28<sup>th</sup> March 2025

### **Amenities Committee**

Cllr Wilkinson is chairman of this committee.

The committee did not meet in March, but here are some updates.

**Warren Recreation Ground Car-Park** – The damaged railing panel located next to the height barrier at the car-park's entrance has been replaced. A contractors' vehicles collided into the railings and caused the damage. The contractor has covered all costs to replace the damaged panel.



**Warren Recreation Ground Car-Park Line re-painting** – The car-park will be closed on the 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2025 for line repainting. The committee were made aware of vehicles parking directly next to the children's play entrance causing issues for vehicles reversing out from parking bays. The committee has an additional yellow hatched area to prevent this happening.

**Litter Bins** – The committee has agreed to the installation of three new litter bins, one is to be placed inside the children's playground and it is likely to be a novelty type bin to encourage children to dispose of litter correctly. A second will be next to the serenity garden at the south eastern corner of Warren Recreation Ground and the third which is a sponsored litter bin is to be located at Two Acres. Arun District Council Cleansing will be installing all three bins.

**Village Green** – Following the recent removal of the white poplar trees at the south western corner of the green, the committee is exploring the idea of enhancing this area into an accessible space for all to enjoy. Three committee members are consulting with a local Landscape Architect regarding how this could be achieved. The committee is also consulting with the Disabled Access Group (DAG), who initially had asked for the access to the green to be improved.

The committee's next full meeting will be on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2025.

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

1<sup>st</sup> April 2025

## **Audit & Governance Committee**

Cllr Mathias is the chairman of this committee.

The committee met on 10<sup>th</sup> March.

On behalf of the council, the committee agreed an initial Memorandum of Understanding between the council and the Warren Recreation Ground charity. This will address a recommendation made in the internal auditor's interim audit, undertaken last October. The Memorandum of Understanding is not yet perfect but any changes will now be made after the internal auditor's final visit for the financial / municipal year, in May.

Cllr Wilkinson provided an update on his work on reviewing the Council Plan. He has sent the plan back out to current committee chairs, asking them to review the section related to their committee. Cllr McElroy noted mentions of ADC needed to be handled carefully in light of the devolution work currently taking place.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

13<sup>th</sup> March 2025

## **Community Engagement Committee**

Cllr Linton is the chairman of this committee.

The committee met on 24<sup>th</sup> March. Some of the matters discussed included:

**East Preston Festival, 6<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> June** – councillors are asked to let Cllr Linton know their availability for two events during the week: *Come and Meet Your Local Councillors* on the morning of Saturday, 7<sup>th</sup> June, 09:30 – 12:30, and *Ems Friendly Farm on the Village Green*, Tuesday, 10<sup>th</sup> June, 16:30 – 19:30. Partial availability is better than none. Councillors know the format of the first event, and would be required mainly for crowd control and visibility at the second event.

Also at part of the Festival, the council will be hosting three sessions of free tennis coaching on the Warren Recreation Ground, in conjunction with Angmering-on-Sea Lawn Tennis Club. These will be on Fridays 6<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> June and Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> June.

**Defibrillators** – the committee has been trying to find a site to host a defibrillator in the north-east of the village, just south of the Roundstone level crossing. Cllr Toney has received agreement from East Preston Fire Station and the committee has agreed to fund the purchase and, possibly, the implementation of a defibrillator at cabinet at the site. See Agenda Item 10a.

**Warm Welcome Space** – ahead of the final session of the year, the committee agreed the council should give a small spring plant to each attendee at the final session.

**Sports Clubs** – the committee agreed a suitable date for the meeting of the village's main sports clubs should be on Monday, 28<sup>th</sup> July.

**Communications Audit** – the committee considered an offer for a professional Communications Audit and agreed to recommend commissioning of such, see Agenda Item 10b below.

**First Aid training** – the committee considered an offer from St John Ambulance to provide some free-of-charge First Aid training within the village. The committee will consider this further at its next meeting.

**Hedgehog warning signs** – the committee agreed an Environmental Initiatives Working Party request to purchase up to three hedgehog warning signs at a cost of £26.99 each. Cllr Gunston will propose sites for these, based upon the recent call for information on where hedgehogs are seen in the village.

**Roundstone Level Crossing traffic management consultancy** – following the widening of the brief after the meeting with Angmering and Kingston Parish Councils, a further request for funding was agreed. See Agenda Item 10c below.

The committee's next meeting will be on 9<sup>th</sup> June.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

1<sup>st</sup> April 2025

## **Finance & General Purposes Committee**

Cllr McElroy is the chairman of this committee.

The committee did not meet in March.

The committee's next meeting is on 13<sup>th</sup> May.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28<sup>th</sup> March 2025

## **Major Events Committee**

Cllr Linton is Chairman of the committee.

The committee did not meet in March.



**Funday Sunday** on 27th April is pretty much sold out. Councillor Hill is the lead councillor and the theme is Spring.

All is on track for the **Food & Drink Festival** on 23<sup>rd</sup> August and **East Preston Christmas Celebrations** on 22<sup>nd</sup> November.

The council's attempt to set off the 2024 Christmas Celebrations **fireworks** on 21<sup>st</sup> March were cancelled due to the weather forecast. This proved the correct decision.

The **Autumn Quiz** will be held in the Junior School on 12th October and, via Councillor Duff, we have booked a quiz master. Cllr Linton is the lead councillor for this event.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

1<sup>st</sup> April 2025

## **Personnel Committee**

The committee did not meet during March, and there are no updates. Just a reminder we would like all councillors and officers to get themselves an up-to-date DBS check, but not before 1<sup>st</sup> May. The council will cover the cost of a basic DBS check.

The committee's next meeting will be on 14<sup>th</sup> April.

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

24<sup>th</sup> March 2025

## **Planning & Licensing Committee**

The committee met on 24<sup>th</sup> March; the meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> March had not been required.

The committee considered one Application to which it raised no objections although it did ask for one window to be of obscured glass.

Work continues on revising the Neighbourhood Plan. Agenda Item 13a seeks council agreement to undertake consultation with stakeholder bodies and the Local Planning Authority i.e. Arun District Council.

On 1<sup>st</sup> April, the council was informed by ADC it had been awarded a further Community Infrastructure Levy payment of £969.68 in relation to a development in Lashmar Road.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

1<sup>st</sup> April 2025

Additionally:

Amenities – Cllr Wilkinson reported he had asked Dawn to organise a briefing meeting for committee members to consider matters related to the replacement of the gym equipment provided at the Warren Recreation Ground. The Clerk confirmed Cllr Wilkinson's assertion no decisions could be made as this was not a public meeting, it was simply for committee members to agree understanding of the points raised ahead of the full committee meeting scheduled for 19<sup>th</sup> May.

Community Engagement – Cllr Linton thanked councillors who had attended the Beach Clean on 6<sup>th</sup> April. Twenty members of the public had joined in, most not finding much litter to collect. Perhaps the most unusual item found was a champagne glass and this was handed to Cllr Chapman for her to upcycle.

Major Events – Cllr Linton reported Funday Sunday on 27<sup>th</sup> April was as good as sold out and asked if more councillors could be available to help with setting up, dismantling and generally serving through the afternoon.

Regarding the Christmas Celebrations 2024 fireworks, Cllr Linton asked councillors to agree to the council offering the fireworks to a charity such as St Barnabas House or Chestnut Tree hospice.

**1961** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to offer the fireworks to either St Barnabas House or Chestnut Tree hospice.

Personnel – Cllr Toney reminded councillors of the need to renew their DBS checks very soon after 1<sup>st</sup> May.

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

## **269/25 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE – DEFIBRILLATORS**

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

### **Community Engagement Committee – additional defibrillator**

**Council is asked to spend up to £2,500 on providing and installing a defibrillator and cabinet at East Preston Fire Station.**

Cllr Linton to lead on this item.

The committee has long been looking to provide a defibrillator for the north-east end of the village (south of the level crossing). Cllr Toney has now received agreement from the station commander at East Preston Fire Station for a freestanding cabinet and defibrillator to be installed close to the existing clothing bank. Expenditure on this should be no greater than £2,500. As you will see from the back page of Adrian's finance reports, there is £3,500 in the council's defibrillator fund. If the council agrees to spend this up-to-£2,500 from general reserves, the defibrillator fund can remain intact for any other community bids for defibrillator projects in the village.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28<sup>th</sup> March 2025

Cllr Linton explained the background to this request.

**1962** The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously to spend up to £2,500 on providing and installing a defibrillator and cabinet at East Preston Fire Station.

This sum would be taken from the council's general reserve.

## **270/25 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE – COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT**

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

### **Community Engagement Committee – Communications Audit**

**Council is asked to spend £550 on a Communications Audit.**

Cllr Linton to lead on this item.

The council has been approached by Mandy Jameson who has previously works as a communications expert for the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner's office and is currently helping Trevor Leggo at West Sussex Association of Local Councils.

I can advise that a comms audit for East Preston PC would be charged at £550 and would cover the following:

- A face to face meeting with you and at least one of your councillors to discuss the council's existing methods of communication with residents, engagement levels and any elements you would like to change or improve
- Analysis of your current comms channels including website, social media, surveys, use of printed publications etc
- A written report with suggestions for improvements to your existing comms along with cost-effective ways to increase opportunities for resident engagement

Ms Jameson has recently undertaken a similar exercise at Angmering Parish Council which informed me "We had a session with Mandy which we did find useful. While she said we were doing a lot of the things she would suggest she did come up with other ways to do things which we are going to try. If you were thinking of doing a session I would say it was worth it."

The committee feels this exercise would be worthwhile. Funding would come from general reserves.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

1<sup>st</sup> April 2025

Cllr Linton provided further background to this request.

**1963** The Council **RESOLVED** to spend £550 on a Communications Audit.

One councillor abstained from this vote. This sum would be taken from the council's general reserve.

#### **271/25 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE – ROUNDSTONE LEVEL CROSSING**

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

### **Community Engagement Committee – Roundstone Level Crossing traffic management consultancy**

**Council is asked to spend up to £9,000 (excluding VAT) on a traffic management consultancy regarding the Roundstone Level Crossing.**

Cllr Linton to lead on this item.

Following the meeting with Angmering and Kingston Parish Councils, it was agreed to widen the scope of any consultancy to include the A259 roundabouts with Station Road and with the A280. This has resulted in a revised costing of £6,750. Angmering Parish Council has shown it is willing to contribute to the cost of the consultancy but not to what degree. If this council wishes to undertake this consultancy, I would suggest it expects to pay the full amount – which is likely to be more than £6,750 – with any donation from Angmering Parish Council being a bonus at the end of the consultancy.

The fee proposal does not include an independent Stage 1 Road Safety Audit the need for which would be determined later; this would cost approximately £1,200. Additional meetings would be charged at £350 and normal disbursements would be approximately an additional 5% of the fee (£337.50), hence suggesting up to £9,000.

Any resolution tonight will supersede Resolution 1917 made on 2<sup>nd</sup> December to spend up to £4,500 on this piece of work (Minute 924/24).

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28<sup>th</sup> March 2025

Cllr Linton also provided the background to this request reminding council the request was here again because Angmering Parish Council (APC) had asked for the scope of the original 2015 report to be widened. Cllr Linton was confident APC would contribute some funding to the exercise.

**1964** The Council **RESOLVED** to spend up to £9,000 on a traffic management consultancy regarding the Roundstone Level Crossing.

One councillor abstained from this vote. This sum would be taken from the council's general reserve.

## **272/25 FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE – FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

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

### **Finance & General Purposes Committee – amendment to Financial Regulations**

**Council is asked to agree some minor changes to the council's Financial Regulations.**

Cllr Gunston to lead on this item.

WSALC advised councils NALC had released new Model Financial Regulations stating, "The Model Financial Regulations have been updated because of The Procurement Act 2023 and The Procurement Regulation 2024, which came into effect last week. The changes are to Model Financial Regulations 5.4, 5.7 and 5.11."

Cllr Gunston offered to compare the wording of those paragraphs with our own Financial Regulations and reported, "Only change is to replace "The Public Contracts Regulations 2015" with "The Procurement Act 2023 and The Procurement Regulations 2024."

My thanks to Cllr Gunston for his work on this.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

31<sup>st</sup> March 2025

Cllr Gunston explained he had reviewed the council's Financial Regulations and the legislation referred to by NALC and the changes really were very minor.

**1965** The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously to amend the council's Financial Regulations in line with WSALC guidance. The revised Financial Regulations will be published as Financial Regulations 2025 v2.

The Clerk advised WSALC had, on 3<sup>rd</sup> April, advised NALC had made some changes to Model Standing Orders, partly in line with the above change to Financial Regulations and partly to reflect more closely Code of Conduct requirements. As the council had agreed to the changes to Financial Regulations he would take that to apply to Standing Orders too; these would be published as Standing Orders 2022.5. The other changes to Standing Orders would be referred to the next meeting of the Personnel Committee.

## **273/25 PERSONNEL COMMITTEE – BUDGET OVERSPEND**

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

## **Personnel Committee – training overspend**

**Council is asked to agree an overspend on the Officer Training budget line for 2024/25 to enable the council's bookkeeper to attend year-end software training.**

Cllr Duff to lead on this item.

Councillors will be aware the council has been using new accounting software for the past financial year. This will be Adrian's first year of compiling the year-end under the new software and training is available. The training is £912 but it is essential and it does mean the budget line will be overspent.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

1<sup>st</sup> April 2025

The Clerk explained the Officer Training budget line for the 2024/25 would be overspent by approximately £560.

**1966** The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously to an overspend on the Officer Training budget line of approximately £560 for the financial year 2024/25.

### **274/25 PLANNING & LICENSING COMMITTEE – EAST PRESTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

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

## **Planning & Licensing Committee – Neighbourhood Plan stakeholder consultation**

**Council is asked to agree the revised East Preston Neighbourhood Plan can progress to Regulation 14 stakeholder consultation.**

Cllr Bowman to introduce this item.

The East Preston Neighbourhood Plan Review Steering Group has now been revising the village's Neighbourhood Plan for some time, a very small number of people putting a lot of time and effort into this review. The revised plan has been informally reviewed by ADC and also reviewed by our contractors Oneill Homer; both organisations have helped bring the revised plan to this point.

If council agrees to this recommendation, this will supersede Resolution 1906 made on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2024 (Minute 810/24).

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

31<sup>st</sup> March 2025

Cllr Bowman reported the steering group felt it was ready to move the revised Neighbourhood Plan to Regulation 14 of the process, i.e. "publicise in a manner that is likely to bring it to the attention of people who live, work or carry on business in the neighbourhood area" and "consult any consultation body referred to in paragraph 1 of Schedule 1 whose interests the qualifying body considers may be affected by the proposals for a neighbourhood development plan" and send a copy to ADC as Local Planning Authority. Cllr Bowman had pulled all the appropriate documents into one place and these would undergo a final review amongst the steering group the day after this meeting.

**1967** The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously to progress the revised East Preston Neighbourhood Plan to Regulation 14 stakeholder consultation.

### **275/25 REPORTS FROM PARISH COUNCIL WORKING PARTIES**

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

## **Working Parties**

Only the Environmental Initiatives Working Parties met in March.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28<sup>th</sup> March 2025

### **20mph Working Party**

Cllr Wilkinson is the chairman of this committee.

As reported last month, the working party had met on 24<sup>th</sup> February and would like a meeting with WSCC Highways. I asked County Cllr Elkins to facilitate the arrangement of such a meeting and he called me on the morning of 24<sup>th</sup> March for more details. He is happy to liaise with Highways on arranging the meeting but said a new Highways officer for this area is soon to start work and Cllr Elkins felt it would be best to wait until that officer is in post, likely late May.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

1<sup>st</sup> April 2025

### **Environmental Initiatives Working Party (EIWP)**

The working party met on 12<sup>th</sup> March.

Regretfully we took the decision to ask council to disband the working party as we believe our work can be taken over by Parish Council committees. We are proud of the achievements of the committee listed in last month's report. All outstanding projects will be completed. The Village Hall booking for the proposed Green Day has been cancelled, the Community Engagement committee has been asked to order some hedgehog signs and write an article explaining how parishioners can work with the Parish Council on environmental, as well as other issues.

Allotment adoption, cycle signs and verge planting will be completed by the individuals who have been leading on these projects. Before we adjourned to the Tudor Tavern for a closing drink it was agreed that members could keep in contact on a less formal basis.

Cllr John Gunston –

**Chairman of the Environmental Initiatives Working Party**

23<sup>rd</sup> March 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.

A new tenant has occupied the flat since early March. He has spotted some faults which the previous tenant had not spotted and the council has, hopefully, rectified these.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

25<sup>th</sup> February 2025



## **Leases Working Party (LWP)**

Cllr Wilkinson is the chairman of this working party.

I have chased the site valuation report with the council's valuer and await his response. Any report should be imminent and will then need to be considered by the working party.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

1<sup>st</sup> April 2025

Additionally:

Leases – the Clerk reported he had chased the council's surveyor and been advised he hoped to provide a report by 11<sup>th</sup> April. The Bowls Club had apparently now appointed a valuer too.

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

### **276/25 ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES WORKING PARTY**

The following report had been circulated ahead of the meeting:

## **Environmental Initiatives Working Party - disbandment**

**Council is asked to agree to disband the Environmental Initiatives Working Party.**

Cllr Gunston to lead on this item.

As Cllr Gunston reported to Full Council last month, the working party feels it has achieved a lot and further achievements should be managed by existing council committees (Minute 197/25). It is likely a village environmental group will emerge and the council will work with this group as it works with other groups in the village.

The Terms of Reference for the working party were adopted on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2020. In the council's Standing Orders, clause 28d states, "The minimum number of active councillors on a working party at any time [is] to be three." Effectively those councillors who were on the working party until the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> March – Cllrs Chapman, Duff, Gale, Gunston and Hill – have all resigned, leaving the other eight councillors to choose three new working party members or to agree the Environmental Initiatives Working Party can disband.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

25<sup>th</sup> March 2025

Cllr Gunston explained he had stepped down from the EIWP and nobody else had volunteered to be chairman. Of the working party's outstanding projects, he would continue to negotiate with ADC about the allotments in the village until such time as it was appropriate to hand this over to the Amenities Committee; he would suggest to the Community Engagement Committee where hedgehog signs should be posted in the village; and other continuing initiatives were being led by members of the public.

**1968** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to disband the Environmental Initiatives Working Party.

Led by Cllr Chapman, council thanked the working party and Cllr Gunston in particular for the work achieved by the Environmental Initiatives Working Party.

### **277/25 WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL**

County Cllr Elkins had sent his apologies for this meeting.

#### **278/25 SUSSEX POLICE**

No report had been received.

Cllr Toney reported he had recently bumped into PCSO Raju in Rustington which had afforded him an opportunity for a chat.

Cllr Mathias questioned whether PCSO Raju solely covered East Preston. The Clerk said PCSO Raju also covered Rustington, Kingston and Ferring.

#### **279/25 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. ADC Clerks' Meeting, 27<sup>th</sup> February**
- 6. Community Speedwatch meeting, 27<sup>th</sup> March**
- 7. Library of Possibilities and Wonder, 28<sup>th</sup> March**
- 8. Warm Welcome Space, 31<sup>st</sup> March**
- 9. Dr Beccy Cooper MP meeting, 4<sup>th</sup> April**
- 10. Social media**
- 11. MailChimp stats**
- 12. A selection of things we have been asked since the last meeting**
- 13. Recent bouquets and complaints**
- 14. Leave**
- 15. April meetings and events**

#### **1. Introduction**

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

#### **2. Police matters**

PCSO Raj called into the office on the morning of 25<sup>th</sup> March, just to catch up. Caught on the hop, initially I had little to report to him, but once I got going...

#### **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. **ADC Clerks' Meeting, 27<sup>th</sup> February**

This meeting was held at the Civic Centre, having originally been planned for November but cancelled then due to illness. The most senior officer present was Daniel Bainbridge, ADC's Monitoring Officer. Also on the top table: Lauren Fairs-Browning, Election Services Manager, and Shirley Quinlan, PA to the Chief Executive and other senior officers.

Other councils represented included: Aldwick, Angmering, Bersted, Clapham, Felpham, Slindon, Walberton Parish Councils and Arundel and Littlehampton Town Councils.

Some of the interesting points from the meeting:

Daniel noted an increase in complaints about councillors in 2024 over 2023 and 2022. Unlike previous years, he estimated two-thirds of all complaints about councillors had involved town and parish councillors rather than district councillors. I asked whether there were any particular themes to the complaints and was advised social media, personal interests coming into the council arena and general disrespect between councillors and between councillors and officers.

One council of 16 members had had 15 new members elected at the May 2023 elections, all, at that time, friends, but subsequently divisions had arisen and life at that council was pretty hellish. One councillor had resigned. Another councillor then got ten residents to call for a by-election rather than a co-option, and this cost the council £12,500.

Only one other council was represented by a man and he attended with his female boss.

One council has appointed a Community Clerk, whose role is mainly liaising outwards to community organisations and activities.

Several councils reported difficulties getting councillors to go on training courses, some new councillors feeling they don't need to have any training. I am grateful this council has a Training Plan in place which expects all councillors to undertake training once a term and equally grateful that councillors and officers happily attend such training.

There was some talk about devolution but really, nothing we haven't already seen in comms from the Chief Exec.

Some WSCC by-elections were likely as not all current councillors will have seen themselves sitting beyond the expected 2025 county council elections, now deferred as part of the devolution process.

Daniel would like to hold a further meeting of clerks in September.

#### 6. **Community Speedwatch meeting, 27<sup>th</sup> March**

I attended the approximately quarterly meeting of the village Community Speedwatch (CSW) team. This was the first meeting led by the new coordinator, Gavin Bernard. The meeting was basically Gavin introducing himself and getting to know the team members, but Gavin also announced, in addition to Keith Harris, two other members have recently stood down, and John Wintle announced his intention to move away from the village shortly.

Part of Gavin's new role then will be to recruit some new members to the team. Shifts are scheduled around the availability of team members and commitment can be as little as one shift a month. If anyone reading this would like to know more, please contact me and I will put you in touch with Gavin.

#### **7. Libraries of Possibilities and Wonder, 28<sup>th</sup> March**

Cllr Chapman and I attended this event which was part of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of the West Sussex Library Service. We sampled the service's new Virtual Reality (VR) headsets and our visit will form an article in the Spring 2025 Newsletter. (We took photographs of each other, but none are useable!)

Away from work, earlier in the same week, I attended an evening talk at West Sussex Record Office on the first 100 years of the library service. This was well-attended and interesting, led by Martin Hayes, former Local History lead for the county, and Russell Allen, current head of the library service.

#### **8. Warm Welcome Space, 31<sup>st</sup> March**

This was the final scheduled Warm Welcome Space session of this year. This session was led by Cllr Hill with support from Alison, Dawn, Cllr Linton and myself. We served 27 lunches, no session this year reaching the dizzy heights of 30+ attendees.

This year, Cllr Linton suggested we give all attendees a primula to take home with them, and these were well-received. (In the first year, we gave everyone an Easter egg and in the second year, we gave everyone a slice of cake to follow their soup.)

As before, as the session broke up, there were many complimentary comments passed by attendees and lots of gratitude expressed. Members of the Legion said they would miss the sessions and the extra people brought into the club. As we know, some Warm Welcome Session attendees have subsequently become members of the club too.

This year, over thirteen sessions, we served 308 lunches, averaging an attendance of just under 24 people a session.

#### **9. Dr Beccy Cooper MP meeting, 4<sup>th</sup> April**

(circulated on the morning of the meeting)

This was the council's second direct meeting with our MP and was attended by Cllrs Toney, Linton, Chapman and Gunston. Cllr McElroy had also been scheduled to attend but was unable on the day.

Once again, Dr Cooper was accompanied by her colleague Caroline Baxter.

Topics covered included a recap on public transport; level crossings; fiscal drag affecting pensioners; checks on Ukrainian refugees; and new topics of devolution and local government reorganisation and the provision of health services in the local area.

Beccy explained devolution and local government reorganisation, whilst intrinsically linked, were two separate matters. She said her preference in local government reorganisation would be a unitary authority covering coastal Sussex as, whilst there were similar concerns across the whole county, the coastal strip has a different spin on those concerns. Beccy would like to see a unitary authority covering the existing Arun District, Worthing Borough and Adur District council although possibly without bits in the South Downs National Park. Specifically regarding the future role of parish councils, Beccy asked the council to provide her with some details of what this

council would be prepared to do additionally in the future and what resources it would need to be able to do so.

Regarding local health services and, in particular, local accident and emergency provision, Beccy said she and Caroline would investigate the statistics for the area and work out whether or not the area is lacking according to NHS guidelines.

Asked by me whether there were any constituent concerns she could share with us without, obviously, identifying anyone in anyway, Beccy said East Preston was probably the part of her constituency which had, so far, flagged fewest concerns to her. That said, Roundstone Level Crossing and the changes to the bus service were two concerns which had been regularly raised to her.

She praised the parish council saying she had only heard good things about it.

Having been to Ferring immediately before our meeting, Beccy and Caroline left us to go to Angmering PC.



Dr Beccy Cooper MP (second left) with Cllrs Linton, Chapman, Toney and Gunston  
(photograph courtesy of Caroline Baxter)

## 10. Social media

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

- A post announcing the cancellation of the Christmas Celebrations fireworks on 21<sup>st</sup> March – 6,323 people



(posts up to and including 31<sup>st</sup> March)

The number of Followers is currently 1,921, an increase of 13 on the last report.

#### 11. **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 – 20<sup>th</sup> February – sent to 946 subscribers, opened by 675 (71.4%)

Parish Council news – 27<sup>th</sup> February – sent to 946 subscribers, opened by 670 (70.9%)

Parish Council news – 6<sup>th</sup> March – sent to 948 subscribers, opened by 676 (71.5%)

Parish Council news – 13<sup>th</sup> March – sent to 945 subscribers, opened by 686 (72.4%)

Parish Council news – 20<sup>th</sup> March – sent to 948 subscribers, opened by 654 (69.2%)

Parish Council news – 27<sup>th</sup> March – sent to 951 subscribers, opened by 661 (69.6%)

#### 12. **Things we have been asked since the last meeting**

“Perhaps the council can act to prevent the double parking that we have on St Mary's Drive which has completely blocked access to emergency vehicles?” (The Junior School was hosting a new monthly event and has spoken to the organisers of that event.)

In the wake of two village organisations arranging their Annual General Meetings on the same evening, I was asked whether there was still a Village Diary, the idea being organisations could check the Village Diary before booking an event to see whether any other organisation had an event on that evening or was planning one. In my 18 years in post, there has never been a Village Diary, and the person who asked me had been a councillor before my time and said there had not been a Village Diary then either.

#### 13. **Recent bouquets and complaints**

(In addition to anything reported above)

From Sioned Vos, Chairman of East Preston & Kingston Preservation Society, “Thanks for the plug for the Preservation Society in the latest Newsletter - Diolch yn fawr!”

From Cllr Philippa Bower after I enquired about the health of Cllr Ricky Bower, “We are both very appreciative of the support shown by you and the Parish Council.”

None in writing as yet, but almost all attendees at the final Warm Welcome Space for 2025 thanked council representatives also present.

From a resident showing a film of a play she wrote in the Village Hall this month, “Thanks very much Simon. You were so helpful this morning.”

#### 14. **Leave**

Currently, I am off on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, Dawn is off on 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> and Caspar on the 23<sup>rd</sup>.

#### 15. **April Meetings and Events**



This list may be incomplete and is subject to change.

- 6<sup>th</sup> Beach Clean (11:00, Sea Road)
- 7<sup>th</sup> Full Council (19:00, East Preston Infant School)
- 10<sup>th</sup> Sussex Community Rail Partnership (14:00, Lancing Parish Hall) (SC only)
- 12<sup>th</sup> East Preston Repair Café (10:00, Vicarage Lane)
- 14<sup>th</sup> Planning & Licensing Committee (18:00, East Preston Infant School) (tbc)  
Personnel Committee (19:00, East Preston Infant School)
- 27<sup>th</sup> *Funday Sunday* (14:00, East Preston & Kingston Village Hall)
- 28<sup>th</sup> Planning & Licensing Committee (18:00, East Preston Infant School) (tbc)  
Major Events Committee (19:00, East Preston Infant School)
- 30<sup>th</sup> South Strand Community Toilets Annual General Meeting (10:00, Littlehampton tbc) (SC only)  
*WSALC Clerks: Mastering Meetings: Agendas, Clerking & Minute Taking* (10:30, online) (DR 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**

1<sup>st</sup> April 2025

**Item 3 – Anti-social behaviour (ASB) matters** – Cllr Hill reported ITV News had shown footage of the level crossing at Angmering Station, youths playing chicken with trains one night. Several other councillors said they had seen it too. Cllr Hill added the report had said a lot of train journeys were disrupted because of such trespassing on the line. Cllr Chapman questioned whether Network Rail or British Transport Police still visited schools to educate students about the dangers of such behaviour.

**Item 5 – ADC Clerks’ Meeting, 27<sup>th</sup> February** – Cllr Gunston asked which council had employed a Community Clerk - Bersted.

**Item 5 – ADC Clerks’ Meeting, 27<sup>th</sup> February** – Cllr Linton questioned the process for calling a by-election when a vacancy arose and did such a small number of residents really have the ability to cost a community so much. The Clerk explained communities have the ability to call a by-election whenever a casual vacancy arose at a local council and only ten electors needed to ask for a by-election within 14 days of the vacancy notice being posted for one to progress.

**Item 5 – ADC Clerks’ Meeting, 27<sup>th</sup> February** – the Clerk told Cllr Moore the meeting had been both beneficial and enjoyable.

**Item 9 – Dr Beccy Cooper MP meeting, 4<sup>th</sup> April** – Cllr Linton advised councillors Dr Cooper predicted a unitary authority covering coastal West Sussex, Shoreham-by-Sea to somewhere such as Pagham.

**Item 7 – Libraries of Possibilities and Wonder, 28<sup>th</sup> March** – Cllr Chapman agreed the event had been very enjoyable and informative and it was likely the use of VR would open up the world of books to a lot of people. Cllr Chapman particularly liked the fact the VR headsets could be taken into care homes.

## **280/25 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.**

### **REACH meeting with West Sussex County Councillors, 13<sup>th</sup> March**

## **Rustington Parish Council**

Together with Alan Evans - Angmering PC and Gary Lee - Rustington PC I met with West Sussex County Councillors to discuss the REACH project. Unfortunately, Roger Elkins was unable to join us. Deborah and Alison confirmed that WSCC will assess the REACH toolkit when it is available later this year as well as helping with due diligence on potential Power Circle investors. The County Council cannot currently help with funding for the project or management of a Local Energy Company and will not guarantee the project. Once the toolkit is available we will explore ways in which the County Council can help promote REACH.

Cllr John Gunston –  
**Chairman of the Environmental Initiatives Working Party**

23<sup>rd</sup> March 2025

## **Voluntary Action Arun and Chichester (VAAC) – Community Green Initiatives, 26<sup>th</sup> March**

### **The Council House, Chichester**

The meeting was a series of presentations by local government and groups on green initiatives.

Chichester District Council presented details of their carbon reduction programme, focussing on their buildings and vehicles - including purchasing 2 electric refuse trucks.

Meadow Blue Community Energy, who own a solar farm between Chichester and Bognor, then explained how they have generated enough capital to offer grants to local community groups. East Preston is outside their area of operation but they did give me a useful contact at Community Energy South for the REACH project.

Chichester City Council have managed to reduce the carbon footprint of their offices by 77% since 2019. The grade 2 listed building is now a model of energy efficiency. Their Property Maintenance Manager, Andrew Watson, is arranging future meetings that may be of interest to the Flat and Frontage Working Party as they consider solar panels for the Parish Council offices.

Cllr John Gunston

4<sup>th</sup> April 2025

## **ADALC Devolution Conference, 31<sup>st</sup> March**

### **Civic Centre, Littlehampton**

Many details still not clear. There were three presentations, key points from these are listed below.

Presentations from Dawn Hudd, Chief Executive of Arun DC.

- White Paper wants stronger engagements as community voice important.
- No framework yet from government.
- Arun working on a communications framework - not yet signed off.

Katy Bourne, Police and Crime Commissioner.

- This is an opportunity if we work together.
- “If you’re not at the table you’ll be eaten.”

- Be ambitious but realistic.

Paul Marshall, Leader of WSCC.

- Drivers for change - housing and need to save money
- Looking at scenarios for number of unitary authorities.
- July hopefully White Paper on how parishes can work with Unitaries.
- Need to devolve financial powers responsibly.

Issues from questions

- Parish Councils don't have necessary skills and resources.
- Asset transfers being discussed in some areas.
- Set up clusters to share resources.
- List local assets and services. What is statutory and what not.
- Produce Parish Council strategic plan.
- Clerks are key to any changes.
- Wait for July White Paper but prepare.

### **Do we need a working party to consider our position?**

Cllr John Gunston

31<sup>st</sup> March 2025

Cllr Gunston said the Council House at Chichester had won awards for its creative use of solar panels on a Listed Building. A representative of Chichester City Council would be willing to talk to the Flat & Frontage Working Party about implementing solar panels on the Council Office building.

### **281/25 RESPONSE TO EXTERNAL MEETINGS AND EVENTS**

Nothing was added.

### **282/25 DEVOLUTION MATTERS**

Following on from his attendance at the above ADALC Devolution Conference, Cllr Gunston talked through the main points from the meeting. Whilst there had been lots of uncertainty at the conference, Cllr Gunston felt Dr Cooper MP had helped him to a greater understanding of the proposals, as far as they stand at this time. The conference had underlined Clerks' buy-in was crucial, otherwise councils might find their clerks walking. As a unitary authority will be larger than a district or borough council, will the council find itself remoter from the working relationships it had currently officer to officer?

Dr Cooper MP had asked the council to come up with a list of what it might be able to take on in the future, and had asked for this information to be given to her by the end of April. For this and subsequent other devolution and local government reorganisation matters, Cllr Gunston recommended the council set up a working party.

**1969** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to create a Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation Working Party.

The following councillors volunteered to be part of the working party – Chapman, Gunston, Hill, Linton, Toney and Wilkinson – and agreed to an initial meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> April, primarily to work on the information requested by Dr Cooper MP. Agreeing Terms of Reference for the working party might have to wait until after that meeting.

### **283/25 NEW ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING (12<sup>TH</sup> MAY)**

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

## **New items to be referred to the next meeting – 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025**

There will be two meetings on the evening of 12<sup>th</sup> May.

AT 18:00, there will be the Annual Meeting of the Council. As last year, this will have a reduced agenda, mainly administration for the beginning of the new council year.

At 19:00, there will be the Annual Parish Meeting. I have invited Daniel Sykes, the Cyber Crime Protect and Prepare Officer for both Sussex and Surrey Police to join the meeting to present on cyber crime.

The Major Events Committee has an Agenda Item for its next meeting to sort out refreshments for the Annual Parish Meeting. Please let me know if you are willing to help with refreshments on the evening.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

1<sup>st</sup> April 2025

Cllrs Bowman, Chapman and Hill said they would work together on provision and supervision of refreshments for the Annual Parish Meeting.

The meeting ended at 20:35.

Chairman: **Cllr Steve Toney**    Date: **12<sup>th</sup> May 2025**

END