



An exciting opportunity for the parish council

We want you to come with us on an exciting journey, a journey into the near future.

On 30th June, the council agreed to pursue the purchase of the premises known as 118-120 Sea Road, the premises immediately to the north of the existing Council Office. This decision was taken after an online survey and in front of members of the public, all of whom stated their support for the project. This presents the council with probably the best possible opportunity to expand, not only its accommodation, but also what it offers the village and residents. Our offer was accepted late on 9th July.

In brief, we see these as some of the advantages of taking on these additional premises:

1. Increased, accessible space enabling the council to provide additional support to village groups – meeting room space, office facilities. In recent years, the parish council has helped launch groups such as East Preston Men in Sheds, East Preston in Bloom, East Preston Repair Café and would like to support the creation of yet more groups in the future, groups which will unquestionably bring value to the village;
2. The council could again host organisations from further afield, for example Citizens Advice and Sussex Police, on a regular basis;
3. It might even be possible to persuade a bank to visit the village;
4. Increased, accessible space would enable the council to hold the majority of its public meetings at the Council Office again, saving money on room hire;
5. The government's plans for devolution and local government reorganisation are likely to see an increase in the parish council's workload; the parish council runs on a smaller staffing profile than similar councils in the area; some additional space would open up the possibility of additional staff to support any additional workload;
6. All of the above could form the beginnings of a community hub in the village, with space for additional activities such as a library of things, more pop-up activities on the council forecourt;
7. An additional rental property available in the village, the income will go a long way towards paying off any loan the council would take out for the purchase;
8. Buying this property now would give the village another community asset which is likely to increase its value in time.



The big question - by how much will this increase my council tax? Thanks to careful financial management over recent years, the council could fund almost 50% of the purchase from reserves with the balance being made up of a low-cost government loan. Income from the flat and saved room hire for council meetings would further reduce repayment costs to £16,600 per year - equivalent to £5.72 per Band D household per year. There would likely be further income from hiring the meeting room to other groups which would bring that £5.72 down further. These calculations are correct at the time of writing and no decision has yet been taken on any change to the precept in 2026. Please remember, the council has not increased its portion of the council tax since April 2020. The council has applied for the government loan to be repaid over ten years.

We believe this is a great opportunity for the village and would really appreciate your support.

Council has considered all the comments made in response to the online survey, both positive (92% at the time of writing) and negative (6%). We believe the village expects more of its parish council than "Planning, parking and Roundstone crossing. Nothing else!" Conversely, "East Preston local council is extremely important to the local area, the present office really does not reflect the importance of this organisation and a move is recommended." This second comment is more representative of the comments we received.

Thank you.

East Preston Food & Drink Festival

Sadly, last year's weather prevented the annual East Preston Food & Drink Festival from taking place. This year, the parish council is confident the event will go ahead (we have a back-up plan!).

East Preston's ninth much-loved Food & Drink Festival will be taking place on the Village Green on Bank Holiday Saturday, 23rd August, between 12:00 and 17:00. Every year, the event offers a real feast of food and drink delights, as well as some children's entertainment. Whether or not you have been before, please come along and find out what you have been missing.

The council has again selected a mix of stalls - some old favourites and some first-timers. Amongst the stalls returning will be: Ristorante Al Mare, Ditch Brisket, Mr Delicious Hog Roast, Cheesology, JJ's Cider, the Cat Burglar Dough Company (doughnuts), Potty for Puds, Krishna Cuisine and Charlene's Chocolate Factory.

New stalls will include Rockhopper Roaster, The Quirky Mixologist, Tana Mediterranean, Wise Tree Oil Limited, Souvlucky (Greek), The Tin Box (bar) and Big Spoon (sweet treats). Please note these details are subject to change at short notice.

The organiser is confident everyone will find something to appeal, whatever their taste in food and drink. Please stop on the Village Green to eat what you have bought or take lunch to the beach for the afternoon and pick up something else for tea on your way back home!

There will be live entertainment throughout the event comprising Nick Cook's Circus Skills for children and The Ukelele Apothecary looking for people to make friends with, bring a smile to and to pass joy to.



Please read these boring but important bits...

There will be some road closures, for everyone's safety, although we have tried to keep them to a minimum. With the exception of event vehicles, Willowhayne Crescent will be closed between 08:00 and 18:00. Additionally, Sea Road from the southern side of the entrance to Crown Place down to the junction with Seaview Road and South Strand will also be closed for the same period of time. "But I only live (or work) just there" or "I only need to get to..." are excuses a small number of drivers use each year. Please take this as fair warning of the road closures which will be in place on the day.

Please could you ensure no vehicles are left alongside the Village Green or in the car-park after 08:00 on Saturday, 23rd August.

There will be alcohol available to drink at the event and there will be alcohol available to

take home. Sussex Police has asked us to let everyone know that if any alcohol purchased for take-home purposes is opened in public, it may be seized and poured away. No opened containers of alcohol should be taken beyond the area of the event, basically the area of the road closures. Your understanding and co-operation in all these matters during this time will be much appreciated.

Dog owners are strongly advised to leave their pets at home as this is a popular and well-attended event. In addition to chocolate, which most dog owners know is poisonous to dogs, among other foodstuffs dangerous to dogs are raw and cooked onions and various cooked meats. If you do bring your dog(s) with you, please ensure they are kept on a lead at all times and bring some water for them. Please remember to bring some poo bags too.

Keep up to date with the latest Food & Drink Festival on Facebook and Instagram

 facebook.com/epfdf  [@ep_food_drink_festival](https://www.instagram.com/ep_food_drink_festival)

This event will be the culmination of a lot of hard work from a very small number of people. We thank them all.

We look forward to a wonderful day for the village - Cllrs Christine Bowman, Andrea Chapman, Lisa Duff, Helen Hill, Elizabeth Linton, Rick McElroy and Steve Toney - the Major Events Committee

30 years a councillor

Way back in May 1995, a younger Glyn Mathias, about to retire from BT, became a parish councillor, and he has served the village diligently for all thirty of those years.

Why did you want to become a councillor?

Moving from an area like Bromley, where there were no parish councils, I started coming to parish council meetings about eighteen months after we moved to the village. Being naturally curious, I wanted to know more about the village and how the parish council worked.

Doug Medhurst was chairman at the time and he picked up on my interest and saw a 12-hour window in which he could persuade me to stand in the 1995 Local Elections otherwise I might have to wait as long as another four years, a timetable I had not understood.

How does being a councillor differ from your former day job?

I ended my BT career as the Southern Home Counties (from Bournemouth to Dover) Network Integrity Manager. Being a councillor, although covering a wider range of subjects, I was able to use the same skills developed during my career. I think the results of what I was able to contribute to in the village are visible. In my BT job this was not so.

How have the village and the council changed in the past thirty years?

I believe the village is much-improved by council initiatives such as flower beds, trees, the purchase

of the Village Green, outdoor facilities and Christmas lighting.

What do you consider to be the biggest council achievements and disappointments in your time?

Many things have changed, but having a shopfront office is a big achievement for the council and has made it much more approachable than it was previously. Personally, I am sad the council didn't achieve a purpose-built office of its own in the centre of the village, something I supported fully.

What have you learned about yourself in your time as a councillor?

I have learned to accept other people's views and opinions. At work, opinions were usually based upon what someone had learnt from practical experience or had been formally taught on technical courses. However, on the council it is often far more about the lived experiences of the people and what goes on around you.

If you had to imagine how the village would look in thirty years' time, what would you see?

I think it would still be a lovely place to live, but there will be even more cars than there are nowadays; and that is far more than there were thirty years ago!

Finally, Glyn, is there anyone you would like to thank?

Dorothy Lee, once a councillor for even longer than I have been one, as she was always very supportive as a fellow councillor and who took the time to explain things to me; the council's staff, past and present, all of whom have always been open with me, available to discuss any council matters with; but most of all my supportive wife Ann, who has quietly helped and supported me in my role as a councillor – I could not have been as effective without her.

Glyn photographed (centre) at the May Full Council meeting surrounded by all twelve of his current councillor colleagues and three past colleagues: Dorothy Lee, Jack Cogman and Carol Ellis.





The next Repair Café, 13th September, will be at the café's new home, East Preston Infant School in Lashmar Road.

We have taken the decision to move from the Spire Room at St Mary's Church to give ourselves more room. We would like to thank all the volunteers from the Church who have made us so welcome. They have provided us and our visitors with refreshments and helped us make the Repair Café such a success. We also need to thank East Preston Parish Council, without its support, encouragement and a grant, this project might never have started. We are now a separate community group with our own management committee and bank account.

We are now just over a year old and have repaired well over 300 items. We are constantly amazed by the skill and ingenuity of our volunteers. They manage to mend everything from musical instruments to medal ribbons to teddy bears to home-made ironing boards as well as an array of electrical items from toothbrushes to lawnmowers.

We manage to repair around 60% of the items that are brought in and all we ask is for a donation to cover our expenses – including hire of the hall, insurance and cost of consumables such as glue. Thanks to the generosity of our visitors we are now self-funding.

There are also volunteers who can mend jewellery and sharpen knives. If you have something at home that is not working, rather than throwing it into the bin why not let us have a look at it and try to fix it.

If you have a skill that you think we could use or you are just good at fixing things and want to join our team, why not come along and see what we do or contact eastprestonrepaircafe@gmail.com

REACH project ends

Together with Angmering and Rustington Parish Councils, the council has taken the difficult decision to close down the REACH project (Renewable Energy Access for Communities and Households).

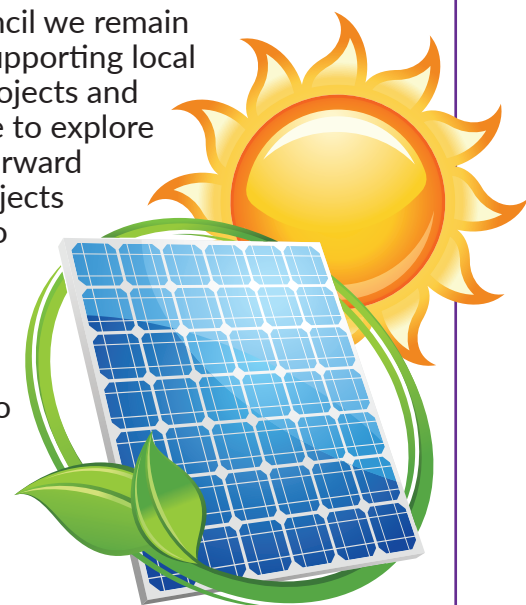
The grant we received from the Community Energy Fund allowed us to appoint a project manager and set up East Preston Energy Community Interest Company to properly evaluate the idea of setting up a local energy community. Together, we have been working with West Sussex County Council and renewable energy companies to help local people by increasing the amount of cheap, clean electricity generated, stored, and used here.

There are two main reasons for our decision to stop work on the project:

- 1) Firstly, the funding that was expected to arrive in late 2024 has still not materialised. We have therefore not been able to put together an acceptable "Pay as You Go" offering. Negotiations continue, but any alternative funding route would take several more months to get started and we have no guarantee that this would provide us with the required solution.
- 2) We encountered a licensing issue with the GIS data we planned to use to show residents their solar potential—something we were told was available, but which we later found was not.

As a parish council we remain committed to supporting local sustainability projects and we will continue to explore ways to bring forward local energy projects in the future. No council money was spent on this project.

We would like to thank everyone who expressed an interest and supported the project.



(Problem) foxes

The parish council has recently been made aware of a number of instances of problems caused by foxes. A parishioner recently found a number of fox cubs floating in a pond and discovered their mother with two further cubs underneath a garden shed. The clean up operation cost hundreds of pounds. Numerous examples of foxes attacking cars and chewing brake cables have also been reported. This causes substantial damage and again costs considerable sums to have repaired. Fewer than four years ago, we published a letter from a resident whose dog had been attacked by a fox in her garden.

Urban foxes are a nuisance for many gardeners, trampling plants, eating ripening fruits, digging holes and leaving droppings. For these reasons the RSPCA advises caution if thinking about feeding foxes - "You may enjoy seeing foxes in your garden but your neighbours may not! They might bury the extra food, leave droppings or cause other problems in your neighbour's gardens."

The Sussex Wildlife Trust warns - "Although they may seem friendly, don't be tempted to tame your local foxes. Doing so will make them less wary of



humans, which could result in them inadvertently frightening other people, or getting themselves into trouble by approaching them for food. Urban foxes are much more used to the sight and sound of people but you should still be wary of close contact and keep your distance, which is best both for their safety and yours."

Arun District Council states although not illegal, the culling of foxes is a very expensive, difficult procedure and it is only a short-term solution. Putting them off visiting your property is a more effective form of control.

The district council website has some top tips for discouraging foxes including:

- Keeping any food sources, like pet food, secure and closed away
- Not leaving bags of garden waste laying around, but put them in closed bins
- Filling gaps under sheds and outbuildings - a fox can squeeze through a gap only 10cm high
- Protecting any small animals or birds who live outside with welded mesh, as chicken wire is not strong enough
- Keeping your garden clean and tidy
- Repairing gaps in fences
- Making sure bird food is kept in a proper dispenser

For further information about foxes, visit The Fox Project or the RSPCA.

As always the parish council would welcome your views.

Village Green car park

Help with avoiding a parking fine

From time to time, the council is approached by people who have received a parking fine or a debt recovery letter but when investigated, neither the council nor the company which manages the car park for us has done anything wrong.

If you accidentally key in your numberplate incorrectly, please let the parking company know as soon as you can - call 0330 111 5888. If you have a ticket confirming you have paid albeit with an incorrect digit somewhere, the parking company should be able to sort that so you will not receive a parking fine.

If you move house, please remember to inform the DVLA as soon as you can - not doing so carries a fine of up to £1,000 anyway. The parking company will send your fine letters to your DVLA address. Saying you have not received letters when they have been sent to your DVLA address is not an excuse.

If you park before 08:00 and intend to stay beyond 08:00, you will need to return to the car-park at 08:00 to buy a ticket or use the app. We appreciate this may not be exactly convenient but have not found a way around this yet.



Can't get to your local library? They can come to you!

Do you, or someone you know enjoy reading but have trouble getting to and from the library? If so, your local library may be able to help!

If you cannot get to the library due to ill health or disability and you do not have someone to collect books for you, West Sussex Library Service can arrange to have your books delivered directly to your home.

How does it work?

Home Library Direct is a FREE service where library books, including audio books and large print books, are chosen according to your taste and delivered through a team of friendly library volunteers.

When you apply for the service, library staff will chat to you about your needs and find out what you like to read or listen to. They will then match you with one of their team of trained, DBS-checked Library Volunteers who will select books on your behalf and deliver them to you at home.

How can I sign up?

To find out more information or to register for the Home Library Direct Service, call East Preston Library on 01903 786118 or email: [eastpreston.library@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:library@westsussex.gov.uk)



Ofsted visits East Preston

Both East Preston schools have been visited by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (rather better known as Ofsted) in the past term.

East Preston Junior School was visited by Ofsted at the end of April as part of the routine inspection of schools. The school was last inspected just before the pandemic back in 2019, when it was judged Good in all areas. The short inspection which took place this year was to ensure that the standards had been maintained in the intervening years. In her report, inspector Liz Bowes confirmed that the school continues to be Good, and praised the "welcoming and inclusive school".

The inspection looked closely at behaviour, curriculum standards and leadership, as well as the important areas of safeguarding and special educational needs. The finished report recognised many of the strengths of the school, from pupils' high standards of behaviour, to the ambitious curriculum and teachers' strong subject knowledge. Mrs Bowes particularly highlighted the excellent work taking place for pupils' personal development, praising the sporting provision, leadership opportunities and residential visits throughout the school.

Headteacher Mr Tidd said, "We were obviously very pleased with the outcome, but more importantly were grateful for the many parents who contacted the inspector to offer their recognition of the work of the school. As the report says, "pupils feel happy and safe" and EPJS,

and parents value the work of the school."

East Preston Infant School was visited in June and was also judged Good in all areas. Inspectors praised the school's warm, welcoming environment, where pupils feel safe, supported and eager to learn. Children spoke enthusiastically about their experiences, especially how they enjoy creatively exploring the natural world in the forest and beach school sessions. Strong relationships and the school's 'golden rules' foster kindness and inclusion from the very start with one pupil telling inspectors that "everyone must feel like they are cared for and belong."

The report highlighted pupils' independence and resilience, encouraged through the school's 'learning crew' and commended the ambitious curriculum, high expectations for behaviour and teacher's subject knowledge. The school's commitment to inclusion and support for SEND pupils was praised.

Reading is a key strength, with well-trained staff, targeted support and events like 'Get Caught Reading' promoting a genuine love of books. Pupils are also developing as thoughtful citizens through their involvement in the eco council, local community visits and charity work.

Mrs New, headteacher, said "I am very proud of all of our children, how confident and enthusiastic they were in talking about their learning. I would like to thank all of the staff, governors and families in making our school such a special place to be."

Childhood is too short to be spent on a smartphone

On 26th June, Cllrs Chapman and Duff and our Clerk, attended a panel event at East Preston Junior School discussing the negative impact smartphones are having on children. The event was organised by a group of local parents, members of the 'Smartphone Free Childhood' movement, and included talks from experts in neuroscience, cybercrime, safeguarding and education. We asked Tilly Glover to tell us about the group, its aims, and—importantly—what family members beyond parents need to know before letting young relatives play on their phones.

With the end of the school year approaching, many children are preparing to start new schools or travel independently for the first time. It's natural for parents and grandparents to want reassurance—and smartphones often feel like the obvious answer.

I felt the same when my older children started secondary school. Tracking them gave me peace of mind. But I hadn't considered what else I was handing them. The evidence is now clear: smartphones are fuelling a mental health crisis and are fundamentally reshaping childhood. Smartphones expose children to addictive algorithms, explicit content, cyberbullying and grooming—at an age when their brains are not ready. The results? Anxiety, poor attention, sleep issues, loneliness and even self-harm.

So what can we do?

We can delay giving smartphones until at least 14. Talk openly with children. Help them build real-life confidence, connections and friendships. Encourage outdoor play and creativity. Keep mealtimes and bedrooms screen-free. Be role models ourselves.



And we can stand together. The Smartphone Free Childhood movement is growing rapidly and has incredible resources to support families to make the right decision for their children. Over 150,000 parents have now signed the parent pact to delay smartphones and social media until at least age 14.

The goal?

This is about a culture shift. The movement is bringing families, schools and communities together to take action and give kids the chance to grow up without the pressures of algorithms and constant connectivity. Many parents and families are not aware of the harmful effects smartphones pose, so our aim is to raise awareness and provide a forum where ideas be discussed in an open, non-judgemental environment. We want to support headteachers in creating smartphone free schools where children can thrive, free from harmful distractions.

Whether you're a parent, grandparent or carer—visit the SFC website to find out more; sign the parent pact and spread the word www.smartphonefreechildhood.org.

Let's protect what matters most. Let's reclaim childhood—together.

Could you help keep our roads safe?

Our village Community Speedwatch team is looking for new volunteers! We're a small group of local residents who care about keeping our roads safe for everyone, especially pedestrians, cyclists, and children. The scheme is operated in partnership with and reports to Sussex Police, monitoring vehicle speeds around key areas in the village, encouraging drivers to drive responsibly.

Volunteering is flexible, sociable, and only takes a small amount of time each month. Full training and equipment are provided, and you'll always work as part of a team. It's a great way to contribute to the community, meet new people, and help make a real difference to road safety.

If you'd like to find out more about what's involved—without any obligation—please contact the Council Office (details on back page) and we will get in touch. We'd love to hear from you!



Village Life

September

- 1st Full Council (19:00)
- 8th Planning & Licensing Committee (18:00)
Warren Recreation Ground AGM (19:00)
- 22nd Planning & Licensing Committee (18:00)
Community Engagement Committee (19:00)
- 28th East Preston Beach Clean (11:00)

October

- 6th Full Council (19:00)
- 12th Autumn Quiz (14:00)
- 13th Planning & Licensing Committee (18:00)
Personnel Committee (19:00)
- 20th Major Events Committee (19:00)
- 27th Planning & Licensing Committee (18:00)

November

- 3rd Full Council (19:00)
- 10th Planning & Licensing Committee (18:00)
Amenities Committee (19:00)
- 17th Finance & General Purposes Committee (18:00)
Community Engagement Committee (19:00)
- 22nd East Preston Christmas Celebrations (12:00 – 17:00)
- 24th Planning & Licensing Committee (18:00)
Audit & Governance Committee (19:00)

Please consult the Noticeboards and website a few days before the meeting for the Agenda and venue.

Please note the above list may be subject to change.

Council e-news

Would you like to be kept up to date with more East Preston news?

The Council has an email circulation list which is used to keep subscribers informed of local news and events. Subscriber details are not shared with any other organisation.

Please send us an email, details below, if you would like to subscribe to our email list – over 900 households and businesses already subscribe.

Get free newspapers and magazines!

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Sign up in person at your local library or online: <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/libraries/join-the-library/> (or scan the QR code below).

PressReader is compatible with Macs, PCs, iOS, Android devices, and many e-readers. Download the app from your device's app store. YouTube offers helpful instructions if needed.



Thanks to...

Everyone who contributed to this year's East Preston Festival whether as an event organiser, a participant or one of the dedicated East Preston Festival Committee, whose members work so tirelessly throughout the year

Paul Amoo and his team for bringing many films to the village as the East Preston Film Society. Many village amenities have been provided from the money raised by each film including such items as: outdoor table football and table tennis tables, bicycle hoops, Conservative Hall chairs, outdoor chess table, dog bins, outdoor gym equipment, public seats and more. Watch out for one final East Preston Film Society project coming soon

Special thanks to Ken whose contributions around the village – including Men in Sheds, Baytree Club, Littlehampton Community Fridge on Tour, East Preston Railway Club – were appreciated by all. You will be much missed

Please contact the office if you would like a large print version of this newsletter.



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