



EAST PRESTON PARISH COUNCIL

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MINUTES: of the Proceedings of the Monthly Meeting of East Preston Parish Council held at 18:30 on Monday, 7th July 2025 at East Preston Infant School, Lashmar Road, East Preston

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

ALSO: Simon Cross, Clerk to the Council

Cllr Roger Elkins, West Sussex County Council (until 19:25)

Cllrs Philippa Bower, Ricky Bower and Paul Kelly, Arun District Council (until 19:25)

Ruby Hunt and Kevin Wallis, Air Ambulance Charity Kent Surrey Sussex (until 18:59)

Mrs D, Mr J, Mrs L and Mrs M (until 19:25)

Eight residents of Clarence Drive and St Mary's Drive (until 19:25)

ABSENT: Councillor Andrea Chapman

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The following abbreviations may appear in these Minutes:

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

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

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The meeting opened at 18:30.

527/25 INTRODUCTIONS

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

528/25 AIR AMBULANCE CHARITY KENT SURREY SUSSEX

The meeting received a presentation from Ruby Hunt, Sussex Community Fundraiser for this charity.

(Ms Hunt and Mr Wallis left at the conclusion of this item.)

529/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2004 The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously to accept the apologies received from Cllr Chapman (unwell).

530/25 DECLARATION OF PERSONAL AND/OR PREJUDICIAL/PECUNIARY INTERESTS

None were declared.

531/25 PUBLIC SESSION

Agenda Item 10a – Amenities Committee – Mrs D asked whether the meeting about cricket and the Warren Recreation Ground schedule for 9th July was open to the public. The Clerk replied the meeting was having to be rescheduled because of availability issues, but it would be open to the public.

Agenda Item 12a – Leases Working Party – East Preston & Kingston Bowls Club lease – Mrs D asked whether additional expenditure incurred by the council in negotiating a new annual rental for the club would be reimbursed by the club. The Clerk said that had not been broached yet, the more important thing was to get an agreement on the rental first.

532/25 COUNCIL RESPONSES

There were no further council responses.

533/25 ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

District Cllr Philippa Bower reported from the district council's Environment Committee. The Arun Flood Forum, only set up in 2023, had produced a worthwhile report although much of it did not involve East Preston where householders and landowners had responsibility for their own rifes and ditches.

Regarding the introduction of new bins in 2026, Cllr Philippa Bower advised ADC had now agreed to run a bin amnesty, during which it would collect any old, redundant bins from householders (something the Clerk had suggested to Cllr Bower in November 2024). There would be no charge for this service.

District Cllr Kelly said he had nothing to add at this time.

District Cllr Ricky Bower said he welcomed the prospect the government was to outlaw the committee system at district and borough councils as he believed the cabinet system was more effective. Whether this would happen before ADC was dissolved was unknown.

In response to a question from Cllr Gunston, Cllr Philippa Bower said she did not have any updates on the parish council's request to ADC to consider a new arrangement for the management of the allotments site in the village. Cllr Bower felt all such pieces of work should be being brought to a conclusion before the dissolution of the district council. Cllr Bower offered to work with Cllr Kelly on this.

534/25 WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

County Cllr Elkins reported WSCC had finally, after much heartache and campaigning on the part of local residents and the parish council, resurfaced the whole of Vermont Drive. The road markings still needed to be replaced but that was in hand.

Cllr Elkins highlighted the district council was about to embark upon a survey related to devolution and local government reorganisation and what local residents would want from a unitary authority. He believed the survey would be released on 21st July, and he knew the Clerk had already made councillors aware of this.

To be ahead of the game, with further financial challenges ahead, the county council was starting its budget-setting process earlier this year, probably later this month.

There was also to be a consultation on the county council's Children & Young People's Plan.

The council's Waste Prevention Team had extended its collaboration with UKHarvest and Biffa to support seven Community Food Hubs in the county until April 2026. These services are once a month in each district and borough and are not related to the Littlehampton Community Fridge sessions which took part weekly in the village. The aim of both organisations' sessions was to reduce the amount of surplus food going to landfill.

535/25 WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL – CLARENCE DRIVE

Council NOTED the following report, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting:

West Sussex County Council – proposed Traffic Regulation Order for Clarence Drive

Council is asked to consider support for a Traffic Regulation Order request for Clarence Drive.

Councillors will be aware of a campaign amongst residents of Clarence Drive to have a reduced speed limit introduced. The road is quiet most of the day but becomes much busier during school drop-off and pick-up times when children traffic both in cars and on foot or bike. To help this campaign with its data, the council agreed to fund a week-long traffic survey of the road. That took place from 17th to 23rd June.

The speed limit in Clarence Drive is, as you would expect, 30mph. During the week-long survey, fifty vehicles were recorded at travelling at more than the speed limit, with two vehicles travelling at over 40mph. During the one week, 1,677 vehicles were recorded using Clarence Drive. There are approximately only 34 houses accessible from that stretch of Clarence Drive, including two in St Marys Drive.

With the information from the traffic survey and the support of most of the road, the residents are looking to request a Traffic Regulation Order through WSCC Highways. The written support of this council may help their case. A number of residents of Clarence Drive are likely to attend the meeting.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

1st July 2025

The Chairman invited Mrs Tina Brockhurst to address the meeting.

County Cllr Elkins said he was aware of this request and said he had thought it would be discussed during Public Question Time. The Chairman replied the meeting was going to discuss the matter now.

Mrs Brockhurst thanked the meeting for the opportunity to address it. Mrs Brockhurst said she and fellow residents of Clarence Drive were concerned about the additional risks parking for the morning and afternoon school-runs presented. Concerns included the speed at which some drivers travelled in the road – the parish council-sponsored week-long traffic survey had recently recorded 50 vehicles travelling at more than the speed limit, a high number for such a small road; damage to grass verges from inconsiderate parking and driving around obstacles; parking in the southern hammerhead which had recently prevented an ambulance from turning around; pedestrians and cyclists having to navigate heavy vehicular traffic; residents having to time when to go out and when to come home to avoid the congestion; blocked driveways. Mrs Brockhurst added many of the residents in Clarence Drive were elderly and did not want to face confrontation with school drivers.

Mr Samwell added pollution from drivers keeping their engines running to use their aircon in summer and heating in winter made it very unpleasant for he and his neighbours.

District Cllr Ricky Bower suggested the residents ask WSCC to install speed humps in the road. Some residents were against this as it could damage their cars.

County Cllr Elkins cautioned some quite good applications for traffic management in the village had been turned down as the Highways officers had decided the applications did not meet the criteria. He felt this application was more a Community Highways Scheme proposal than a Traffic Regulation Order which was more about just yellow lines.

Cllr Linton suggested the residents think of proposing a chicane design with planters as this had been successful in Chichester and was more attractive than speed humps.

In response to a question from Cllr Duff, Mrs Brockhurst said the headteachers at East Preston schools had been supportive.

2005 The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously to support better traffic management, in whatever form, in Clarence Drive.

The Clerk advised Mrs Brockhurst he would send her a letter in due course.

Cllr Elkins asked for his thanks to Mrs Brockhurst to be recorded as she had done an enormous amount of work on this before bringing it to the council. The Chairman agreed.

(Cllr Elkins, District Cllrs Bower, Bower and Kelly, Mrs Brockhurst, Mr Eglinton, Mr Gatehouse, Mr Jones, Ms Knott, Mr Samwell, Mr Stocker and Mr Wheeler left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.)

536/25 MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING HELD ON 2ND JUNE 2025

The draft Minutes were circulated to all councillors on 3rd June asking for suggested amendments by the 10th June. None were received.

2006 The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously the Chairman could sign the Minutes as a true record of the meeting held on 2nd June. Cllr Toney duly did so.

537/25 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 427/25 – Below the Belt**
- 3. Minute 432/25 – West Sussex County Council**
- 4. Minutes 439/25 to 441/25 – Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for year-ending 31st March 2025**
- 5. Minute 442/25 – Financial Matters**

1. Introduction

This is the report covering items discussed during Full Council meetings up to and including the meeting held on 2nd June 2025.

2. Minute 427/25 – Below the Belt

A member of the public emailed on the morning after the meeting, “Thank you for allowing the presentation last night on Prostate Cancer, I was disappointed that more people did not respond and attend.”

3. **Minute 432/25 – West Sussex County Council**

Just a few days after the new yellow markings had been painted at the junctions of North Lane with Lashmar Road and The Street, some of the markings were removed. I contacted WSCC Highways about this and was told the new markings had been painted by over-zealous contractors ahead of when they should have painted them. A few days later, I was provided with the following statement we could release to the public, “Due to a miscommunication a contractor installed the proposed new restrictions earlier than intended. Objections to the proposal were received and will be considered before a decision is taken on whether to leave the newly installed lines in place.” I included this in the e-newsletter of 13th June.

4. **Minutes 439/25 to 441/25 – Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for year-ending 31st March 2025**

I sent off the AGAR on 19th June and we received acknowledgement of receipt by the external auditors on 24th June. Although Adrian and I rigorously checked the paperwork before despatch, I imagine the auditors will find something we have forgotten to submit.

5. **Minute 442/25 – Financial Matters**

The account Cllrs Linton and Wilkinson had noted was over the £85,000 Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) limit would be one used towards the purchase of 118-120 Sea Road, thus eliminating that risk.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

1st July 2025

The Clerk had nothing to add to the above report but was willing to answer questions. None were asked.

538/25 FINANCIAL MATTERS

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

- 2007** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the Outstanding Purchase Orders report for 2025/26, value £183.00 (exc. VAT).
- 2008** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the Regular Monthly Payments reports for June 2025 totalling £693.05 (inc. VAT).
- 2009** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the Supplier BACS Invoices Paid reports for June 2025 totalling £20,349.22 (inc. VAT).
- 2010** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the List of Sales Receipts & Bank Receipts by Bank report for financial year to date totalling £2,271.80 (inc. VAT) for June 2025, (Year to Date, £159,794.25).

The council NOTED the Bank Reconciliations to 13th June 2025.

The council NOTED the Budget Summary for 2025/26 to date including earmarked reserves.

Cllr Toney thanked Adrian for preparing the above reports.

539/25 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: Community Engagement, Major Events and Planning & Licensing. By the time of this meeting, the draft Minutes from all these meetings should have been circulated to all councillors.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

1st July 2025

Amenities Committee

Cllr Wilkinson is chairman of this committee.

June 2025

The committee did not meet in June.

Warren Recreation Ground Cycle Repair Station – The Cycle Repair Station has been installed at Warren Recreation Ground. The unit has been located on the right-hand side as you enter the car-park, next to the cycle hoops. The repair station consists of a wheel holder, high pressure compact pump and nine essential bike tools on retractable stainless-steel cables, all the essential tools which are needed for general cycle repairs. The repair station will be publicised in the council's newsletter and new signage is to be installed shortly.

Warren Recreation Ground Play Panels - The four intergenerational Play Panels situated at the north eastern side of the recreation ground have had a general service and clean. The committee agreed that future services should be carried out every two years. A new budget line has been added to the 2026/27 Warren Recreation Ground budget to cover this cost.

WRG Serenity Garden litter bin – A litter bin has been installed at the south eastern corner of the recreation ground next to the Serenity Garden. East Preston in Bloom commissioned the new bin as part of its Serenity Garden project. Due to the bin's location, ADC Cleansing has said Biffa would not be able to empty it. Casper, the council's Village Orderly, has agreed to empty the bin on his rounds.

Sea Road Toilets – The committee has submitted an application to the UK Loo of the Year Awards 2025. An unannounced inspection visit will take place sometime between August and September. The committee will receive a summary report with star rated grading.

There will be an additional Amenities meeting on 9th July 2025, to solely discuss concerns raised regarding the playing of cricket and other matters relating to the Warren Recreation Ground.

The committee's next meeting will be on 11th August 2025.

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

30th June 2025

Audit & Governance Committee

Cllr Mathias is the chairman of this committee.

The committee is due to meet on 14th July but I may need to reschedule it.

Community Engagement Committee

Cllr Linton is the chairman of this committee.

The committee met on 9th June. Cllrs Linton and Duff were, respectively, re-elected to the roles of Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

A few of the topics discussed at the meeting:

Annual Parish Meeting – the committee felt the public attendance at the meeting had been better and it would like to continue to find interesting guest speakers for this meeting.

East Preston Festival, 6th to 15th June – owing to a poor weather forecast, not many members of the public had attended this year's *Come and Meet Your Local Councillors* on 7th June, but those that had were generally positive about the village and the council. On 10th June, the visit of Emms Friendly Farm had been better attended, with children of all ages coming to meet a small selection of farm animals on the Village Green.

Across the three tennis coaching sessions held at the Warren Recreation Ground, seven or eight local residents received an hour of free tennis coaching courtesy of the council and Angmering-on-Sea Lawn Tennis Club's head coach, Andrew Cook.

On 23rd June, the council received the following email from Janine Nicholson, Chairman of the East Preston Festival Committee:

Dear Simon

On behalf of the Committee I would like to thank the Parish Council for organising so many events during this year's Festival. We are always very grateful to the organisations and village groups who support us in this way as it helps to create an interesting and more varied programme for residents and visitors and yours were certainly that.

I would also like to thank you personally for your help and encouragement in all we do.

Warmest regards

Janine

Meeting of village sports clubs, 28th July – the committee is working on this meeting which will initially include the bowls, cricket, football, stoolball and tennis clubs. The objective is to have the clubs working more closely for the benefit of the village.

2026 East Preston calendar – Cllrs Chapman and Duff are confident this will be available in time for the East Preston Food & Drink Festival on 23rd August.

Communications Audit – the committee reviewed the report produced by Mandy Jameson following a visit to the council on 25th April. Generally, Mandy had been positive about the council's engagement with the public and her report suggested some small changes which the committee was looking at.

St George's Day, 23rd April – following reference to St George's Day at both the May and June Full Council meetings, the committee agreed to buy an England flag and to add it to its calendar of flags to be flown on certain days.

The committee's next meeting will be on 21st July.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

1st July 2025

Finance & General Purposes Committee

Cllr McElroy is the chairman of this committee.

The committee did not meet in June. The committee's next meeting is scheduled for 18th August.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

30th June 2025

Major Events Committee

Cllr Linton is Chairman of the committee.

The committee met on 23rd June. Cllrs Linton and Toney were, respectively, re-elected to the roles of Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

A few of the topics discussed at the meeting:

East Preston Food & Drink Festival, 23rd August – lead councillor for the event, Cllr Chapman, reported all was on track for another successful event. Should the weather forecast that week look unfavourable, a go / no-go decision would be taken at midday on Wednesday, 20th August.

Autumn Quiz, 12th October – Cllr Linton is the lead councillor for this event which will run from 14:00 until 17:00. Tickets will be on sale from 1st September. Councillors will spend time in the Council Office selling tickets to take some pressure off the officers and to start putting singletons into teams.

East Preston Christmas Celebrations, 22nd November – all is going to plan for this event too.

Please add the above three dates to your diary and let the lead councillors or me know if you are available to help. Thanks.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

1st July 2025

Personnel Committee

The committee did not meet in June.

The committee's next meeting is scheduled for 21st July.

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

1st July 2025

Planning & Licensing Committee

The committee met on 23rd June.

In the absence of Cllrs Bowman and Bradshaw, Cllr Moore chaired this meeting. The meeting considered three Applications, and the committee agreed to object to all three.

The committee noted the Regulation 14 consultation period for the revised East Preston Neighbourhood Plan had closed. Public comments were to be considered by the Steering Group whilst organisation comments were being considered by the council's Planning Consultant. I had asked ADC whether it yet had any view on whether or not a referendum will be needed and was told no thought had yet been given to that, although it has now started.

The meeting ended in a tribute to David Sawers, former Chairman of East Preston & Kingston Preservation Society and leading contributor to the original East Preston Village Design Statement and East Preston Neighbourhood Plan. David had sadly died on 5th June at the age of 94.

The committee's next meeting will be on 14th July.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

1st July 2025

Additionally:

Amenities – Cllr Wilkinson added, following an electronic poll of committee members, the Warren Recreation Ground tennis court had been temporarily closed as of that morning as a means to combat antisocial behaviour and misuse which had been affecting nearby properties. This antisocial behaviour had primarily taken the form of groups of young lads playing football in the tennis court, sometimes for hours on end, laughing and swearing loudly. It was hoped this temporary measure would lead the groups to finding an alternative location for playing football and make the tennis court permanently available for tennis again.

Cllr Linton strongly disagreed with the temporary measure, particularly at a time of year when local residents may spontaneously decide they wanted to play tennis only to arrive at the Warren Recreation Ground, see the court was free but then get to the court and find it was locked and out-of-action. Cllr Linton asked for the committee to revisit this decision as a matter of urgency and suggested a key and lock would be a temporary solution with local businesses being approached to hold a key which could be allocated to people wanting to play. Cllr Wilkinson answered this was already on the agenda for the committee's next meeting and Dawn and Simon had already started to do some research into this. Cllr Gale's husband had also provided some input.

In answer to a question, the Clerk said he had raised this issue with both Sussex Police and ADC's Anti-Social Behaviour team. Sussex Police had agreed to visit the Warren Recreation Ground evenings when it could. ADC's Anti-Social Behaviour team had been very apologetic but was severely short-staffed at the moment, was hopefully recruiting, but was unlikely to be able to help before the end of the summer.

Cllr Mathias said there might be CCTV coverage from the Village Hall, which would at least see whether there was a pattern to time when police and anti-social behaviour officers were most likely able to find miscreants present.

Audit & Governance – as he had posited in his report, the Clerk said it was necessary to reschedule the Audit & Governance Committee meeting as there were simply too many meetings to fit into the evening of 14th July (and still allow the Clerk the rest of the week off). He would suggest a new date in due course.

Community Engagement – Cllr Linton reported upon the council's free tennis coaching sessions which had taken place during Festival week. Nine people had attended, one of whom, so far, had progressed to visiting the club saying, "It's only because of your free Festival session I've restarted tennis. I had no plan to do so. So I am very grateful." Cllr Linton added the club's Head Coach, Andrew Cook felt this year had been one of the more successful of recent years.

Finance & General Purposes – Cllr Wilkinson reminded the chairmen of the council's committee of his request they provide him with up-to-date information for his work on updating the Council Plan. Since the last meeting, two chairmen had done

so, and he thanked them for that. He asked all others to action this soon as the Council Plan would be out-of-date at the end of the month.

Major Events – Cllr Linton said the tickets for the Autumn Quiz were due on sale from 1st September. The committee had hoped councillors would volunteer to sit in the Council Office meeting room to sell tickets, as this would reduce the officers' workload, which was already heavy. Cllr Linton asked councillors to let her know what working mornings they would be able to sit in the meeting room.

Planning & Licensing – Cllr Bowman reported the council was now in the final stretch of revising the East Preston Neighbourhood Plan. Public feedback had been positive but there may be a few changes as a result of that feedback and as a result of time moving on.

Cllr Bowman thanked Cllr Moore for having chaired the committee's meeting on 23rd June as both she and Cllr Bradshaw had been away. Cllr Toney also thanked Cllr Moore for his efficient chairing of the meeting.

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

540/25 REPORTS FROM PARISH COUNCIL WORKING PARTIES

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

Working Parties

The Flat & Frontage Working Party met on 9th June.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

1st July 2025

20mph Working Party

Cllr Wilkinson is the chairman of this working party.

No updates from this working party.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

1st July 2025

Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation Working Party (DevoWP)

No updates from this working party.

Dawn Hudd, Chief Exec at ADC, issued a briefing on 1st July, and this was circulated to all councillors that afternoon.

Cllr John Gunston –
Chairman of the Environmental Initiatives Working Party

1st July 2025

Flat and Frontage Working Party (FFWP)

Cllr Wilkinson is chairman-elect of this working party.

At its meeting on 9th June, the working party agreed to visit the premises known as 118-120 Sea Road, East Preston with a view to recommending its purchase to Full Council.

Five members of the working party duly visited the premises on the afternoon of 12th June, following which there have been extraordinary Full Council meetings on 16th and 30th June.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

1st July 2025

Leases Working Party (LWP)

Cllr Wilkinson is the chairman of this working party.

The working party did not meet in June, but there is a recommendation below.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

1st July 2025

Additionally:

Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation – Cllr Gunston recommended the working party met soon after the ADC devolution survey was available to provide a response on behalf of the parish council.

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

541/25 LEASES WORKING PARTY – EAST PRESTON & KINGSTON BOWLS CLUB

The following report had been circulated ahead of the meeting:

Leases Working Party (LWP) – East Preston & Kingston Bowls Club lease

Cllr Wilkinson is the chairman of this working party.

Council is asked to agree to the commissioning of a surveyor to act on the council's behalf in negotiations with the East Preston & Kingston Bowls Club's surveyor. Initial costs would be £750 excl. VAT after which there could be court costs of £200 excl. VAT, but I suggest the council crosses that bridge when it gets to it.

Members of the working party know the details but, in brief, the two surveyors' verdicts of how much the annual rental should be are two different for the two sides to negotiate without some professional input.

Our surveyor writes, "Our fee for next stage of negotiations to include Heads of Terms, instructing solicitors and seeing the matter through to legal completion would be £750 + VAT. If the matter was unfortunately to go to court and we were needed to attend then an additional fee based upon an hourly rate would be the case. Hourly rate of £200 + VAT."

In a separate email, he writes, "Everyone is different but the way I do things and I believe is more beneficial is to firstly swop information, floor areas, comparable evidence, lease analysis via e-mail

following which I always look to then meet in person with the other Surveyor to discuss everything, find the mutually agreeable areas and the areas that we are not agreeable on. From that, then go away to research/consider further before meeting again to try and conclude a mutual standpoint that both our clients would sign off on. I would keep you the client abreast at each stage and would not agree anything without the Parish Council consent. All our correspondence and negotiations would be on a "Without Prejudice" basis. If that was agreed I would then draw up Heads of Terms to send to you, your solicitor and the tenants surveyor. I would then follow the matter through to legal completion, liaising with your solicitor throughout."

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

1st July 2025

Cllr Wilkinson spoke in support of this matter.

There was some concern the costs could run away with themselves and that the club's costs could put it in some danger of folding. The Clerk said the council was only being asked to agree to the next £750's worth of work and he presumed the same was true for the club.

2011 The council **RESOLVED** to commission a surveyor to act on the council's behalf in negotiations with the East Preston & Kingston Bowls Club's surveyor.

Cllrs Hill and Mathias abstained.

542/25 SUSSEX POLICE

No report had been received. Cllr Toney said it might be time to invite Sussex Police to attend the September meeting.

543/25 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. East Preston Film Society, 28th May**
- 6. Come and Meet Your Local Councillors, 7th June**
- 7. Come and Meet Ems Friendly Farm, 10th June**
- 8. Dr Beccy Cooper MP, 14th June**
- 9. Littlehampton District Lions Club, 18th June**
- 10. Southeast Communities Rail Partnership meeting, 20th June**
- 11. Sussex Society of Local Council Clerks meeting, 26th June**
- 12. Smartphone Free Childhood meeting, 26th June**
- 13. Social media**
- 14. MailChimp stats**
- 15. A selection of things we have been asked since the last meeting**
- 16. Recent bouquets and complaints**

17. Leave

18. July meetings and events

1. Introduction

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

2. Police matters

I asked Sussex Police to start paying some visits to the Warren Recreation Ground after several reports of the misuse of the tennis court and other facilities on the ground. Sussex Police said it would add the Warren Rec to its list of sites to visit.

The council has received a few queries about camper vans parked in the village, in particular adjacent to the Village Green and to the library. Concern in both cases is someone may be sleeping in the vans, but we understand that is not the case in either case. Both vans are currently taxed and have valid MoTs, so they are legally parked. Even if someone is sleeping in the vans, that is not necessarily illegal where there is no local legislation to prevent them – think Goring Gap and Mill Road, Arundel for examples.

Last month, I reported the Community Speedwatch team was back out monitoring vehicle speeds in the village. Then the coordinator returned from chasing tornadoes in America (true) and the speed gun's battery died. The gun belongs to the council so I contacted the supplier who said his company could replace the battery but it would be cheaper to buy one on Amazon. That was true and the new battery has been received but not yet tested in anger.

On 30th June, the council was contacted by a resident looking for cctv footage of a particular incident of criminal damage to their car. I looked by could not see such an incident but have made the contact aware the council can supply relevant cctv footage to Sussex Police.

3. Anti-social behaviour (ASB) matters

No developments in anti-social behaviour matters in the village previously reported to ADC anti-social behaviour team.

Arguably, there could be a case for ADC's anti-social behaviour team getting involved in matters on the Warren Recreation Ground. I have made an initial enquiry to ADC for advice.

4. Freedom of Information / Data Protection requests

On 17th June, I fulfilled the Freedom of Information request received on 21st May, two days ahead of legislation timescales.

No Data Protection requests received since the last report.

5. East Preston Film Society, 28th May

I attended the final film showing organised by East Preston Film Society, led by Paul Amoo. Cllrs Toney and Gunston also attended as well as former councillors, Patricia Gander and Philip Sherwin.

Before the film, *The Penguin Lessons*, was shown, Paul explained why this was the last presentation by East Preston Film Society, also giving some background to the establishment of

the society back in 2003. On behalf of the volunteers who have worked alongside Paul, John Cosier thanked Paul for his efforts and Linda Denton presented Paul with a card and a bag of goodies.

On the morning after the film, the council presented Paul with an Amazon gift card and card thanking him for all the entertainment he has brought to the village and the amenities the Film Society has provided around the village. Paul thanked the council for this gesture.

6. Come and Meet Your Local Councillors, 7th June

The weather forecast drove this event inside the Council Office. With only two households booked in to see councillors, a quick shuffle around of the offices meant my office, Dawn's office and Adrian's desk could be used for talking to members of the public and the meeting room could be used as a waiting room.

The event ran for two hours from 10:00. Five households were seen in total, mostly complimenting the council on its achievements. There was too little output to form the usual spread of answers in the Summer Newsletter.

7. Come and Meet Ems Friendly Farm, 10th June

At the sunny end of a relatively overcast afternoon, the village was delighted by a visit from Ems Friendly Farm. Based near Winchester, East Preston really is at the furthest extent of its area and only agreed to come to East Preston when Cllr Linton would not take no for an answer.

On the day, the farm provided Percy the pig, Sydney and Stanley the sheep, Lottie and Dottie the goats and Honey the miniature horse.

Officially open from 17:00, members of the public started coming on to the Village Green from 16:40 onwards, and there was a decent number of public around for the whole event. All ages were present and all feedback has been positive.

Council was represented by Cllrs Chapman, Duff, Gunston, Linton and Toney with Alison and myself on hand as officers.



Cllrs Toney and Linton joining in the fun



Four of the Ems Friendly Farm animals building their strength before meeting the public

8. **Dr Beccy Cooper MP, 14th June**

Beccy and her team arranged a surgery in the village to coincide with attending the East Preston Festival Carnival Parade. A couple of days before the surgery, the council was invited to send a couple of reps to be on hand for any local matters which Beccy felt we could assist with. Cllr Toney was already booked to judge the Carnival Parade, so Cllr Linton and I joined Beccy and her colleague, Clare Walsh, at Ristorante Al Mare. We sat discreetly out of earshot of those who had booked to see Beccy and, as it happened, none needed our local knowledge. However, in gaps between appointments, Beccy did ask about life in the village and Cllr Linton took the opportunity to mention the office next to the Council Office was on the market and Beccy appeared supportive of the suggestion the council should expand into it as she believes town and parish council will be offered a lot more power under local government reorganisation, if they want it.

There was security on hand throughout the surgery, a strong silent presence of a name familiar in East Preston twelve to fifteen years ago, former village PCSO, Andy Orpin. We did not get a chance to talk.

After the surgery had closed, the Festival Committee had asked me to ensure Beccy got to mingle with those in the parade and then watch the parade go by. At 12:00, Beccy and Clare raced off to see some Angmering residents, and then we met up again and I took them to the Spire Room where the judges of the parade were having a quick bite to eat before the parade set off. After they had had a sandwich, Beccy and Clare and their videographer, Ian, walked the length of Vicarage Lane, stopping for a chat with each group in the parade.



Beccy (in green) and Clare (in fuchsia) talking to members of Lashmar Ladies WI

9. **Littlehampton District Lions Club, 18th June**

Alison and I met with three representatives from the Littlehampton District Lions Club: Neil Helyer (President), Carole Webster (Public Relations Officer) and Steve Marsden (Activities). The group approached the council with a view to helping us with events and it seemed sensible for Alison to attend the meeting unofficially representing the Festival Committee.

Neil provided some history on the Lions and stated the Littlehampton branch was created in 1969. All money raised goes back to good causes. In addition to helping with marshalling and banksmanship, the Lions could also provide other input to events.

The organisation runs a bookstall each Friday in Rustington, weather-permitting and would like to try the same on the forecourt of the Council Office. I explained we would need relevant paperwork such as a Risk Assessment and proof of insurance and, with a bit of notice, we could allow a trial session. The reps will look at a date and come back to us.

The Lions are currently promoting the Message in a Bottle and Message in a Wallet scheme, which are methods by which people on medication or just with pets can provide valuable information to the emergency services should they be unable to speak for themselves in an emergency. I agreed the Council Office would take a supply of Message in a Bottles, and would distribute these to members of the public we encounter who could benefit. We have been given an initial supply and will be provided with some more soon.

The Lions run a mobile grotto at Christmastime and offered to come into the village. They asked me to suggest a route and I will suggest a route including Mill Pond Way and the Roundstone area as possibly having the greatest proportion of children in the village.

10. **Southeast Communities Rail Partnership meeting, 20th June**

I was invited to a meeting at Angmering Station by the West Coastway Line Officer of the Southeast Communities Rail Partnership, Lynda Spain, to meet with representatives of the Friends of Angmering Station and my Angmering PC counterpart, Katie Herr.

Our main task was to agree the siting of a temporary blue plaque as part of the Rail 200 celebrations and in honour of a former stationmaster, Horace Hayward who, as you can see from the plaque below, oversaw the transportation of locally-grown produce to the best hotels and restaurants in London.



The newly-installed, temporary blue plaque and a photograph of Horace Hayward, supplied by Richard Standing

During the meeting, we also heard the Friends' plans to install locally-produced children's artwork on the footbridge at the station. The Friends are very grateful for the financial assistance provided this year by East Preston Parish Council and took away details of how to apply for similar from Angmering PC.

11. **Sussex Society of Local Council Clerks meeting, 26th June**

I attended this quarterly meeting of the Sussex branch of the Society of Local Council Clerks, mostly because it was held at The Highdown Hotel. About twenty councils were represented, including (from Arun): Aldwick, Kingston and Yapton Parish Councils.

There was an amount of talk about devolution and local government reorganisation but mostly because so little is known.

The President of the Society of Local Council Clerks, Gina Lopes (also Brighton-born and bred), attended the meeting and said it was lovely to see so many male clerks present. In my experience, Sussex has always been pretty evenly balanced for involved male and female clerks. Gina said one of her charities of the year was White Ribbon, "the leading charity in England and Wales engaging men and boys to prevent men's violence against women and girls." The meeting received a presentation on the work of White Ribbon from Steve Trice, Clerk to Haywards Heath Town Council. The SLCC would like clerks to encourage their councils to join the White Ribbon campaign and I will raise this at the Personnel Committee in July. 1 in 3 women experience domestic abuse.

Trevor Leggo, CEO East and West Sussex Associations of Local Councils, talked about the uncertainty around devolution but said the Associations had a good route into government. He advised or warned, take your pick, of the number of district and county council officers who will be looking for work in the next couple of years and, perhaps more importantly, the number of district and county councillors who may be looking for new opportunities within local government and who might, quite intentionally, lead town and parish councils along a route of becoming political. Trevor said various councils were already using Artificial Intelligence for writing Minutes of meetings and thought this would explode in the next couple of years. Trevor suggested council's may wish to review any emergency plans they had to ensure they covered periods of civil unrest; until very recently, this would have been pretty unthought of in the UK, but possibly not anymore.

Trevor advised of a West Sussex Association of Local Councils conference scheduled for Tuesday, 4th November. Please let me know if you would like to be considered to attend.

Andy Beams, Mulberry & Co. Local Authority Services, gave some pointers for internal and external audit but nothing I think we are not already on top of.

12. Smartphone Free Childhood meeting, 26th June

As agreed by the Community Engagement Committee, I attended this meeting with Cllrs Chapman and Duff. The council's presence seemed to be much appreciated by the organisers and by other attendees. The organisers estimated seventy local parents attended.

In addition to three leaders from East Preston's Smartphone Free Childhood group, the meeting heard from the following speakers: Michael Tidd (Headteacher, East Preston Junior School), Lisa Blackwell (Children's Therapist, Youth Fairy), Emma Priest (Safeguarding Professional), Steve Jeffrey (Headteacher, Our Lady of Sion School), Daniel Sykes (Cyber Protect Officer, Surrey & Sussex Police) and Chloë Wheal (Teacher and founder of the Cole Collective).

Local resident and parent, Annabel Dearing, opened the meeting and explained its objective was to start to address the harms of smartphones. Annabel stated 25% of children aged between 5 and 7 now had smartphones. Smartphone usage was recognised as fuelling a mental health crisis. The meeting was about working together to sway the tide away from parents who think no harm can come to their children through a harmless smartphone.

It would be impossible to go into detail about what every speaker revealed, but here are a few points you may find interesting.

Michael Tidd said educators had a real balancing act, encouraging children to understand technology and how it will positively benefit their lives whilst encouraging them to put down their tech and to enjoy everything else the world has to offer. Asked later why schools simply did not just ban smartphones in schools, Michael said they probably would if they could, but the current backlash they would receive made it was simply not a move they could make in a way which would not present them with a disproportionate amount of work in responding to the complaints they would receive from aggrieved parents. Also, there were situations, such as for diabetic children, where a smartphone is a tool for monitoring vital blood sugar levels and to deny that child could be injurious to their health.

Lisa Blackwell said she understood it was 27% of children aged 3 and 4 now owned a smartphone. Whereas previously, the average time spent outdoors was 85% this was now down to just 7% apparently. 45% of teens describe themselves as "almost constantly" online. Children have lost the ability to feel bored, and it is during boredom a lot of our creativity is fostered and a lot of our feelings are processed. Children no longer have the time and space to let their brains settle and relax. Lisa suggested everyone started a gratitude diary, taking a few minutes at the end of each day to list three to five things about that day for which they were grateful.

Emma Priest said Sussex Police had handled over 500 cases of child sexexploitation in the county in 2023 alone; most if not all of these involved smartphones in some way. Children as young as 13 were being exposed to violent pornography. Emma listed several crimes affecting young people, all of which have been reported in a fairly local area in recent years; these included: grooming, sexexploitation; county lines; bullying and cyberbullying; sharing of sexual images; shoplifting and more, all directly related to having a smartphone.

Daniel Sykes said there was an epidemic of insecurity amongst children. He directed concerned parents to look at the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children's (NSPCC) webpages about parental controls.

During the Q&A session after the presentations, parents said they were concerned about the impact being one of a very small minority of children in a class without a smartphone could have upon their children; how to start a conversation with the parents of their children's friends; how better use of the harmful bits of technology can be used to have fruitful conversations with children leading to a more positive experience overall; and more.

Dr Beccy Cooper MP had been unable to attend the meeting but had met with two of the organisers ahead of the meeting. Beccy was represented at the meeting by Clare Walsh who encouraged concerns parents to keep lobbying their MPs, tech companies
I suggested to the organisers the council could publish a newsletter article as there are likely grandparents in the village who regularly look after their grandchildren without perhaps knowing the possible harms of lending those grandchildren their phones.

I imagine Cllrs Chapman and Duff will both have picked up other useful information from this meeting.

For more information, please visit <https://www.smartphonefreechildhood.org/>.

13. **Social Media**

Just the one recent Facebook post which reached more than 500 people.

- A post promoting the visit of Ems Friendly Farm – 2,707 people

(posts up to and including 1st July)

The number of Followers is currently 1,932, an increase of 9 on the last report.

14. **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 – 29th May – sent to 960 subscribers, opened by 692 (72.2%)

Parish Council news – 6th June – sent to 961 subscribers, opened by 705 (73.5%)

Parish Council news – 13th June – sent to 960 subscribers, opened by 704 (73.6%)

Parish Council news – 19th June – sent to 958 subscribers, opened by 701 (73.2%)

Parish Council news – 25th June – sent to 959 subscribers, opened by 723 (75.5%)

It's good to see more than 700 people opening an e-newsletter. That has happened very rarely in the past and here it has happened four times in one month.

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

"I'm sure the chemicals in the [WSCC Highways] weed killer are harmless but would you be able to check please?" (The WSCC Highways weed control webpage advises, "The chemical we use is Glyphosate, which is the most commonly used weed killer for public areas. Glyphosate is approved for use by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and is marketed as safe to its users and the public for use on the public highway.")

"I have dementia and wondered if you know of anyone who could take me to a hospital appointment in two days' time?" (Suggested she contact her GP surgery first, then Arun Community Transport, although two days was perhaps not much notice for either.)

16. **Recent bouquets and complaints**

(In addition to anything reported above)

From the Secretary at East Preston & Kingston Bowls Club: "Thanks for your help with the publicity [for the Big Bowls Weekend open afternoon] which everyone noticed and made a difference this year, we had 27 visitors over the 6 hours and two thirds expressed an interest in

trying bowls out further. With these events we normally see enthusiasm on the day then interest naturally falls off - the best indicator is how many people turn up for the follow on coaching sessions over the next few weeks - so a good result would be if around 4 to 6 people decide to join at the end. We lost 12 members last year due to the demographics of bowls - this is in line with what's happening at other Clubs - so our open days and evenings are really important as well as encouraging younger and more diverse members to join which is really difficult."

"The Festival Committee would like to thank you for taking the time and tremendous effort to be in the Best Dressed Window Competition. We were amazed by your creativity and the range of Games and Pastimes on display. These decorated windows really add to the Village Festival, are enjoyed by locals and visitors, and reflect your essential part in our special community."

17. **Leave**

I am on leave 15th to 17th (or 18th, to be decided) July. Dawn will be on leave on 3rd July.

18. **July Meetings and Events**

This list may be incomplete and is subject to change.

- 7th Village Green south-west corner project (09:30, Council Office) (SW, RMc, DM, DR only)
Full Council (18:30, East Preston Infant School)
- 9th Amenities Committee (18:00, East Preston Infant School) (tbc)
- 12th East Preston Repair Café (10:00, Vicarage Lane)
- 14th Planning & Licensing Committee (18:00, East Preston Infant School)
Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (18:45, East Preston Infant School)
Audit & Governance Committee (19:00, East Preston Infant School) (tbc)
- 21st Personnel Committee (18:00, East Preston Infant School)
Community Engagement Committee (19:00, East Preston Infant School)
- 28th Planning & Licensing Committee (18:00, East Preston Infant School)
Community Engagement: Village Sports Clubs (19:00, East Preston Infant School) (ST, EL, DM and SC only)

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

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

1st July 2025

Item 12 – Smartphone Free Childhood meeting, 26th June – Cllr Linton thanked Cllrs Chapman and Duff and the Clerk for attending this meeting which she understood had lasted 2½ hours. Cllr Duff said it had been very interesting but she could only take credit for attending the first half.

Item 14 – MailChimp stats – Cllr Linton regretted the number of subscribers having dropped by two between 29th May and 19th June and asked whether the Clerk knew why this might be when generally numbers increased. The Clerk replied subscribers numbers fluctuated and presumed a net loss over a month was probably due to subscribers dying or moving out of the village.

544/25 EXTERNAL MEETINGS AND EVENTS

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

Other meetings and events – Part 1

Council is asked to note any reports.

Littlehampton Town Council Armed Forces' Day, 28th June

East Green, Littlehampton

Early start as had to be in place by 9 am with the Legion Poppy stand with Karen. Anyway. A great day, weather was fantastic, sunshine from around 11am as the parade finished marching.

The service was conducted by Reverend George Butterworth, with prayers and hymns. After the Drum Head service we were entertained throughout the day with stunt bike riders, Kitcar building, Armoured Vehicle display and the Rose and Thistle pipe band.

At around 3pm we had a fly past from the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight (BBMF) Spitfire, we were also supposed to have the Red Devils Parachute display team, but due to the strong wind it was unable to take place.

Cllr Steve Toney – **Chairman of the Council**

1st July 2025

Cllr Toney said there was talk of extending future Armed Forces Days over three days from next year.

545/25 RESPONSE TO EXTERNAL MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Nothing was added.

546/25 NEW ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING (1ST SEPTEMBER)

The Chairman said there may be a meeting in August if needed and it would be on 4th August. Plenty of notice would be given if that was the case.

547/25 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

Council NOTED the following paper which had been circulated in advance of the meeting:

To exclude the press and public

Owing to the commercially sensitive nature of the rest of the agenda of this meeting, **council is asked to resolve to exclude the press and public from the rest of the meeting.**

As per Section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, a public body can resolve to exclude the public from a meeting because of the confidential nature of the business to be discussed.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

2nd July 2025

The four remaining members of the public left the meeting at this point, no resolution to exclude required.

548/25 118-120 SEA ROAD, EAST PRESTON

Council NOTED the following report which had been circulated in advance of the meeting:

118-120 Sea Road, East Preston

Council is asked to consider any matters relating to the purchase of 118-120 Sea Road, East Preston. At the time of writing, this is likely to be only updates on decisions already taken, but the situation is understandably dynamic and could change several times between now and the meeting,

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

2nd July 2025

The Clerk updated the meeting as follows:

- following the meeting held on 30th June, the council had submitted a bid of [REDACTED] on Tuesday, 1st July;
- by the time the Clerk last checked his email before this meeting, the vendor had not commented upon this offer;
- the Clerk had had at least two conversations with the estate agents and had their agreement the property would not be withdrawn from the council if the bid of [REDACTED] was not accepted by the vendor;
- also on 1st July, public works loan application had been submitted to the Chief Exec of WSALC on a form downloaded from the NALC website just a week before and dated February 2025;
- on 3rd July, the Chief Exec of WSALC forwarded an email from the Ministry of Housing and Local Government to say we had used an incorrect form and providing a more complicated form, which had been completed and submitted later on 3rd July;
- two surveyors had been lined up waiting for further instruction.

The Clerk suggested a possible way of progressing this was to submit a bid of [REDACTED] as a purchase price, that giving the vendor [REDACTED] once she had paid her agency fee and its VAT. The Clerk reminded the council the public opinion at the meeting on 30th June was the council she do whatever it took to secure the purchase.

2012 As a means of progressing this, the council **RESOLVED** to submit a bid of [REDACTED].

Cllrs Bowman and Gunston said they were both available to help with any related tasks the Clerk identified.

549/25 MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 16TH JUNE 2025

The draft Minutes were circulated to all councillors on 17th June asking for suggested amendments by the 24th June. None were received.

2013 The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously the Chairman could sign the Minutes as a true record of the meeting held on 16th June. Cllr Toney duly did so.

These Minutes would not be made public until any sale of 118-120 Sea Road, East Preston had been completed.

550/25 MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 30TH JUNE 2025

The draft Minutes were circulated to all councillors on 1st July asking for suggested amendments by the 8th July. Cllr Mathias spotted an omission from the list of attendees and Cllr Moore spotted a surname spelt incorrectly, and these had been corrected.

2014 The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously the Chairman could sign the Minutes as a true record of the meeting held on 30th June. Cllr Toney duly did so.

These Minutes would not be made public until any sale of 118-120 Sea Road, East Preston had been completed.

The meeting ended at 20:03.

Chairman: Cllr Steve Toney Date: 1st September 2025

END