



# EAST PRESTON PARISH COUNCIL

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## ANNUAL PARISH MEETING - EAST PRESTON

12<sup>th</sup> May 2025

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

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

County Cllr Roger Elkins

District Cllrs Philippa Bower and Ricky Bower

Roy Allen, Sea Road Beach Access Limited

Jack Cogman, Linda Denton, Carol Ellis, Peter Galloway, Dorothy Lee, Ann Mathias, Sue Morley, Jennifer Wallace

Gary Williams, Surrey and Sussex Police Cyber Crime Consultant Volunteer

Clerk to the Council: Simon Cross

**Apologies:** Celeste Amoo, Len Barnett, Peter Dallimore, Patricia Gander, John Heaver, District Cllr Paul Kelly, Fiona MacLeod, Alastair Sharp, Philip Sherwin and Peter Vincent

Ruby Hunt, Air Ambulance Charity Kent Surrey Sussex

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The Chairman of the Council, Councillor Steve Toney, opened the meeting at 19:00, and thanked and welcomed those attending.

The Chairman apologised it had no longer been possible to receive a presentation from the Chairman's Charity for 2024, Air Ambulance Charity Kent Surrey Sussex, as the scheduled representative was no longer available. Instead, the council will receive this presentation at its monthly meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> July.

### APM2025/01 - To confirm the Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024 were agreed to be a true record. Cllr Toney duly signed these.

These Minutes had previously been noted by the Parish Council at its meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2024, Parish Council Minute 364/24.

#### **APM2025/02 - To receive the Annual Report of the East Preston Parish Council**

Cllr Toney's report had been published in the Spring 2025 Newsletter and made available to all attendees before the start of the meeting. All present had read the report, which read:

“I start by thanking everyone who has made a positive contribution to the village during the past year. Every single day, I am aware of something happening in the village reinforcing the pride I feel in living here. So many voluntary organizations work tirelessly to enhance the village, and everyone reading this article will have their own favourites.

“The council runs on a committee system and I would like to explain a little about each committee, in alphabetical order.

“The Amenities Committee is responsible for ensuring the council’s greenspaces – the Village Green, Warren Recreation Ground and Two Acres – are kept presentable and attractive for residents and visitors alike. Additionally, across the wider village, the committee is responsible for some of the floral displays – the others being cared for by East Preston in Bloom, an ever-increasing number of public seats in lots of different places and the village’s wooden bus shelters.

“The Audit & Governance Committee ensures the council is meeting its legal obligations. Each year, the committee considers the findings of two internal audits and one independent external audit. I am happy to report the findings of these audits are almost always wholly positive.

“The Community Engagement Committee communicates with residents through the council’s small events, publications such as the quarterly Newsletter, the ad-hoc e-newsletter, articles in All About East Preston and Kingston, and face-to-face wherever possible. If your organization would like a visit from a pair of councillors, please contact the Council Office to arrange. The committee supported the launch of the East Preston Repair Café which has gone from strength to strength since its launch last May.

“The Finance & General Purposes Committee looks after the money the village has entrusted to the council to keep the village a good place to live. This involves careful budgeting, careful spending and ensuring the council’s bank accounts are earning what they can. The only exception to this final statement is the relatively small amount of money the council has invested with Boom Community Bank which provides financial services to village households which might not otherwise be able to access such services. Once again, the council did not put up its portion of your Council Tax for the coming year.

“The Major Events Committee runs the council’s bigger events – at least when the weather permits it to – the Food & Drink Festival, Funday Sundays, the Christmas Celebrations each November. Sadly, the weather in 2024 resulted in the full cancellation of the Food & Drink Festival and the partial cancellation of the Christmas Celebrations and we thank every member of the public whose understanding of those cancellations helped the council to realise it had made the right decision.

“The Personnel Committee does not just look after the council’s officers but also councillors themselves, ensuring all have refresher training each four-year term but also more specific training is available if needed.

“Finally, the Planning & Licensing Committee considers a number of applications each year. At the time of writing, in the council year 2024/25, the committee has considered 33 planning applications and one licensing application. Additionally, the committee supported two neighbouring councils on applications to which they were objecting.

“Each of those committees has worked tirelessly throughout the past year, doing the best they can for the whole village.

“We are now half-way through the current term of office for this council, the next local elections scheduled for May 2027. If you have thoughts about becoming a parish councillor yourself, now might be a good time to start finding out more about the council works. Meetings of all the above committees, with the exception of the Personnel Committee for hopefully obvious reasons, are open to the public as are the monthly Full Council meetings. Agendas for these meetings are published in the week before each meeting, in council noticeboards and on its website.

“I thank every councillor and officer for making this job a relatively easy one.

“Above all, thank you to any of you who regularly show your faith in and support for the council. We hope to continue to improve the village where we can. Thank you.”

No comments were made nor questions asked.

#### **APM2025/03 - To receive a presentation from Surrey and Sussex Police**

Gary Williams, Cyber Crime Volunteer Consultant for Surrey and Sussex Police, presented to the meeting on the subject of Cyber Crime.

In an engaging presentation, Mr Williams explained the everchanging types of Cyber Crime people needed to be aware of and provided a number of useful tips people could use to enhance their protection.

After his presentation, Mr Williams answered some questions from attendees.

#### **APM2025/04 - To receive a report from the Arun District councillors representing East Preston**

District Councillor Ricky Bower said the district council had had very few meetings during April as it had been expected to be a run-up to county council elections, although those had been cancelled because of the government's plans for devolution and local government reorganisation within the county. Cllr Bower said he was expecting more information on devolution and local government reorganisation at an ADC briefing in the week following this meeting. He was still of the opinion devolution and local government reorganisation was undemocratic.

Cllr Bower thanked the chairman and members for their support of the parish and the work of ADC, and he thanked the clerk for his support too.

(Mr Williams left at the conclusion of this item.)

#### **APM2025/05 - To receive a report from the West Sussex County councillor representing East Preston**

County Cllr Elkins thanked the council for the opportunity to report on the county council's year.

The council had changed its highways contractor and had invested more funding into keeping on top of the condition of the county's roads. Within the past couple of weeks, the county had opened the Lymminster bypass which, following a question from Mrs Denton, Cllr Elkins confirmed had cost £50m. He remembered the initial cost of the bypass being predicted, just three or four years ago, at £22m, the final cost reflecting how costs have increased following the pandemic. Cllr Ricky Bower added the viaduct over Black Ditch had contributed greatly to the costs of the new road.

Compared to the previous year, some 1,500 additional children were receiving special educational needs support. There was no definitive reason identified for this year.

The county proudly still had a full complement of 36 libraries. Cllr Elkins urged people to keep using the libraries and also to make use of the service's online offerings.

New light bulbs were being installed in streetlights across the county and solar panels were being installed on the council's schools, all aiming to reduce the council's carbon footprint.

Cllr Elkins advised the meeting of the county council's monthly economic snapshot reports available on the council's website. The report contained a range of economic information about the county's business activities such as how many businesses had started or closed in the month, how many job vacancies there were, what the county's Gross Domestic Product was and the state of the county's labour market.

Cllr Elkins ended by saying it was still very early days for devolution and local government reorganisation and related matters were subject to rapid change.

Cllr Ricky Bower referred back to a matter raised at the April Full Council meeting at which he raised the matter of resurfacing notices which had been posted in Vermont Drive only to be withdrawn with no works having taken place. Cllr Elkins said he had been made aware of this matter and the contractor had misjudged when to put up the notices as not all the permits had been granted at that time. He was confident the works will still take place this summer but was not currently able to provide a definitive date.

Cllr Elkins ended by saying the parish council undertook "some fantastic work here." The council was a "great complement of people" fostering a "great community feel" within the village. He thanked the council for this.

#### **APM2025/06 - To consider any written resolutions received by the council no later than 9<sup>th</sup> May 2025**

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

## **APM2025/07 – Public question time**

Roy Allen introduced himself as a director of Sea Road Beach Access Limited, and read out the following statement:

“The East Preston Community Boardwalk was formally opened by Rob Mitchell on Saturday 26 April 2025 at 12:00 noon, exactly one year after the death of Alan Hultquist [former Chairman of Disability Action Group of East Preston]. Alan's cousin Trevor Hultquist was present. Trevor was agent for the planning application submitted in 2013.

“The boardwalk was built in compliance with the conditions of the Planning Permission for EP/145/23/PL, namely: 1 The development was started on 27 January 2025, which is less than 3 years from 16 February 2024 when the development was Permitted; 2 The boardwalk was built in accordance with the submitted plans; 3 The planting detailed within the submitted Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy (Accepted: 05/12/23) has been carried out.

“We were unable to stop the boardwalk being used before the planting was carried out as this is a public space.

“Arun District Council Planning Department do not issue a Certificate of Compliance with Planning Permission because the Building Regulations do not apply to the boardwalk.

“The scheme had cost £31,000 as much of the work was carried out by volunteers.

“For information: Sea Road Beach Access Limited have applied for a new Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to change the waiting restrictions for the most southerly 24 metres of Sea Road to 'No waiting at any time' (reference number WSAC-710941831). Olly King, WSAC Traffic Engineer, has stated that "it may take approximately 12 months for a TRO application to proceed to implementation".

“Sea Road Beach Access Limited will review the use of the East Preston Community Boardwalk in October before deciding whether to apply for planning permission to extend the platform at the end of the boardwalk by 8.3 metres in an easterly direction.

“Questions: Would East Preston Parish Council consider accepting a gift of the East Preston Community Boardwalk? This would be permitted by Section 139 of the Local Government Act 1972. Would East Preston Parish Council consider supporting a project to install a boardwalk at the end of Sea Lane similar to the Community Boardwalk at the end of Sea Road? This would enable those who use mobility aids to view the beach from the end of Sea Lane.”

Mr Allen appreciated the council would not be in a position to discuss or answer his questions at this meeting. The Clerk confirmed the questions would need to be considered first by the Amenities Committee.

## **APM2025/08 – Cllr Glyn Mathias**

Cllr Toney handed over to the Vice-Chairman of the Council, Cllr Elizabeth Linton.

Cllr Linton reported Cllr Mathias had this month served as an East Preston parish councillor for thirty years, the first councillor to reach this milestone since Dorothy Lee some years ago. Cllr Linton had not had access to information about his earliest years as a councillor but knew he had served as Vice Chairman for some of the time Dorothy had been Chairman. He had been chairman of East Preston Youth Club when it was a regular and popular attraction and whilst that was no longer the case, Glyn continued to be a strong supporter for the provision of youth facilities in the village.

Until recently, Glyn had been a diligent chairman of the council's Planning & Licensing Committee, attending ADC site meetings to fight the council's case. His knowledge and experience of the complexities of the planning system continued to be appreciated by the committee to this day. As his Vice-Chairman, Cllr Linton could remember only a very few occasions when Glyn had not been available to carry out his chairman's responsibilities. Currently, Glyn was chairman of the council's Audit & Governance Committee, a role he had held for eleven years to date.

Cllr Linton said Glyn had never been afraid to have an alternative view on some matters and he was fully democratic never holding a grudge when a decision went against his view, always remaining amenable.

Glyn was a ready volunteer when asked to help out at council events, becoming well-versed in the storage of tables in the Village Hall, the Conservative Hall, the Junior School and, earlier in the evening, he had shown his skills with the storage of Infant School table. All this and more was always undertaken with a cheerful smile.

Cllr Linton concluded by thanking Glyn for his thirty years of valuable service to East Preston Parish Council and the village as a whole. “Please don't forget you have another two years until the end of term!” Cllr Linton presented Glyn with a card and gift.

The Clerk passed on best wishes from the following former councillors who had been unable to attend this evening's meeting: Celeste Amoo, Len Barnett, Peter Dallimore, Patricia Gander, John Heaver, Fiona MacLeod, Alastair Sharp, Philip Sherwin and Peter Vincent.



(left to right: Dorothy Lee\*, Steve Toney, Jack Cogman\*, Helen Hill, Lisa Duff, John Gunston, Christine Bowman, Rick McElroy, Glyn Mathias, Andrea Chapman, Elizabeth Linton, Barbara Gale, Kit Bradshaw, Carol Ellis\*, Steve Wilkinson and David Moore – all current councillors expect former councillors (marked with an asterisk))

With nobody wishing to say anything further, Cllr Toney closed the meeting at 20:21.

Chairman: ..... Date: **12<sup>th</sup> May 2026**

**Please note these Minutes were noted at the Full Council meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2025, Minute 364/25**