



EAST PRESTON PARISH COUNCIL

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MINUTES: of the Proceedings of the Monthly Meeting of East Preston Parish Council held at 19:00 on Monday, 5th January 2026 at East Preston Infant School, Lashmar Road, East Preston

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

ALSO: Simon Cross, Clerk to the Council

Cllr Roger Elkins, West Sussex County Council (until 19:16)

Mrs Linda Denton, Mrs Alice Finnigan, Mr David Jull and Mrs Sue Morley (all until 19:56)

ABSENT: Councillors Lisa Duff and Rick McElroy

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The following abbreviations may appear in these Minutes:

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

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

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The meeting opened at 19:01.

001/26 INTRODUCTIONS

Cllr Toney welcomed everyone to the meeting, explained the meeting protocol and safety information and led a round of introductions. He wished everyone present a very happy new year.

002/26 ANDY BILLUPS

Cllr Toney invited all present to join him in a minute's silence in memory of Andy Billups, a longstanding supporter and friend of the council, who had passed away between Christmas and New Year. Andy had helped the council with several projects including designing and constructing Father Christmas's grotto, the wooden Christmas tree which had been in the library for several Christmases, the counter at the Council Office, the semi-circular bench in front of the Village Hall and more.

003/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2058 The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously to accept the apologies received from Cllrs Duff (ill) and McElroy (holiday).

Apologies were received from District Cllrs Kelly, P Bower and R Bower, and Peter Galloway, Dorothy Lee and Andrew Moores.

004/26 DECLARATION OF PERSONAL AND/OR PREJUDICIAL/PECUNIARY INTERESTS

None were declared.

005/26 PUBLIC SESSION

No Agenda Item – Mrs D said she simply wanted to thank the council for its achievements during 2025.

Agenda Item 9a – Amenities Committee – Mrs M said she had had a conversation with the Clerk before Christmas in which he had explained neighbours' concerns about the playing of cricket at the Warren Recreation Ground. During the conversation, the Clerk had balanced those concerns with the perspective of the cricket club. After due consideration, Mrs M said she now felt the dangers associated with playing cricket at the Warren Recreation Ground outweighed any value from such playing and the cricket club needed to revise how it plays at the ground.

006/26 COUNCIL RESPONSES

The Chairman thanked Mrs D and Mrs M for their comments.

007/26 WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

County Cllr Elkins started by wishing all present a happy new year.

He reminded the meeting of two ongoing public consultations: first, the consultation on the 2027/28 Schools Admission Arrangements, which he noted would be discussed later in the meeting; and second, the government consultation on local government reorganisation in Sussex.

He explained that the Mayoral elections scheduled for 2026 had been postponed for one year, creating uncertainty as to whether any local elections would take place. WSCC had already indicated to central government that it would seek to postpone local government elections in order to avoid the unnecessary expense of electing a council for less than a full term. A final decision on this matter would be made by central government in due course.

In response to a question from Cllr Linton, Cllr Elkins stated that West Sussex was not the only area in this position, as a number of authorities were affected by forthcoming devolution and local government reorganisation proposals currently under consideration.

In response to a question from the Clerk, Cllr Elkins reported the county council had voted to urge the government to make all primary schools smartphone-free, following concerns raised by councillors about the impact of social media and mobile phone use on children's emotional health, wellbeing and learning. Cllr Elkins said the county council was asking the government to provide clear guidance which schools could then implement evenly and consistently across the country. Cllr Elkins said the request for clearer guidance did not appear to include secondary schools at this time.

(County Cllr Elkins left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.)

008/26 MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING HELD ON 1ST DECEMBER 2025

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

2059 The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously the Chairman could sign the Minutes as a true record of the meeting held on 1st December. Cllr Toney duly did so.

009/26 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 933/24 – Chairman’s Charity for 2025**
3. **(Community Engagement) Minute 463/25 – Smartphone Free Childhood, 26th June 2025**
4. **Minute 952/25 – Arun District Council**
5. **Minute 955/25 – Chairman’s Charity for 2026**

1. Introduction

This is the report covering items discussed during Full Council meetings up to and including the meeting held on 3rd November 2025.

2. Minute 933/24 – Chairman’s Charity for 2025

Ruby Hunt, local fundraising lead for Air Ambulance Charity Kent Surrey and Sussex visited the Council Office on 22nd December to collect the collecting tins we have housed for the past year. Early in the new year, Ruby will let us know how much we have collected.

Additionally, on the morning of 8th December, a member of the public called in and donated £40 to the 2025 Chairman’s Charity of Air Ambulance Charity Kent Surrey Sussex.

3. (Community Engagement) Minute 463/25 – Smartphone Free Childhood, 26th June 2025

On 15th December, WSCC issued a press release, *Council calls on Government to make primary schools smartphone free*. The motion passed by the council notes that current Children’s Minister, Josh MacAllister MP, previously introduced a Private Members’ Bill, known as the Safer Phones Bill, in October 2024. This Bill initially aimed to make all schools phone-free zones during the school day, raise the age of internet adulthood from 13 to 16 and strengthen Ofcom’s powers to protect children from addictive apps. However, the school phone ban provision was removed during the Bill’s progression and, whilst the Bill received both cross-party endorsements and support from educational and children’s organisations, it was withdrawn on 10 September this year.

Following support from county councillors, it was agreed that Councillor Jacquie Russell, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning and Councillor Bob Lanzer, Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing will write to the Secretary of State for Education, Bridget Phillipson MP, to request that the Government reconsiders its position on this matter and that all primary school settings become smartphone free.

Perhaps oddly, this press release made no mention of the Smartphone Free Childhood pressure group.

4. Minute 952/25 – Arun District Council

Although unable to attend the December meeting, Cllrs Bower and Bower generously contributed to the Chairman’s Charity Christmas jumper collection.

5. Minute 955/25 – Chairman’s Charity for 2026

I emailed Sarah Jackson to let her know this council had voted for Chestnut Tree House to be the Chairman’s Charity for 2026. Sarah replied, “Thank you for your email - what wonderful news! Thank you so much to all the councillors for thinking of us, and supporting children’s hospice care.”

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

23rd December 2025

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

010/26 FINANCIAL MATTERS

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

- 2060** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the Outstanding Purchase Orders report for 2025/26, value £3,413.21 (exc. VAT).
- 2061** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the Regular Monthly Payments reports for December 2025 totalling £917.46 (inc. VAT).
- 2062** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the Supplier BACS Invoices Paid reports for December 2025 totalling £35,721.59 (inc. VAT).
- 2063** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the List of Sales Receipts & Bank Receipts by Bank report for financial year to date totalling £252,933.67 (inc. VAT) for December 2025 (Year to Date, £581,260.95).
[Clerk’s note: this increase is because of the arrival of the government loan towards the purchase of 118-120 Sea Road.]

The council NOTED the Bank Reconciliations to 12th December 2025.

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

Cllr Toney thanked the council’s bookkeeper, Adrian Vyse, for preparing the above reports.

011/26 REPORTS FROM PARISH COUNCIL COMMITTEES

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

Committees

Since the last Full Council meeting the following committees have met: Audit & Governance, Finance & General Purposes, 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**

22nd December 2025

Amenities Committee

Cllr Wilkinson is chairman of this committee.

The committee did not meet in December.

Children's Playground – UK Power Network carried out emergency work to the Village Hall's power supply. Access was required to the underground cables running through the playground. The playground was closed whilst the work took place. UK Power Network applied top soil and grass seed in order to make good the playground. Tivoli has fenced off the affected area to allow the playground to be mostly re-opened. Council e-newsletters have kept the public informed about the temporary closure and no concerns have been raised by members of the public.

Sea Road Toilets - Loo of the Year Awards. The 2025 Loo of the Year Awards inspection took place in August 2025. The toilets were awarded a Platinum+ grading, which is the same as it was in 2023 and 2024. The report's overall comments said, 'very well maintained facilities. Well done.' The 2025 certificate will be displayed on the toilet's external wall.

Public Seating – As part of the committee's five-year bench plan to replace older wooden benches with new composite benches. The latest bench to be replaced was the bench on grass verge by the junction of The Street and Sea Lane. The new composite bench displays the council's logo and name:



The committee's next meeting will be on 9th February 2026.

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

25th November 2025

Audit & Governance Committee

The committee held its first meeting of the municipal year on 8th December.

Cllr Mathias was again co-opted to the committee and was re-elected chairman.

The meeting reviewed the external auditor's comments on the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ending 31st March 2025 and the internal auditor's comments on the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ending 31st March 2026.

Also, the meeting completed the following annual reviews on behalf of the council: Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Risk Register, Fees and charges and Code of Conduct. None was deemed to need changing.

The committee reviewed an initial Artificial Intelligence policy for adoption by the council, see Agenda Item 12a below.

The committee's next meeting is scheduled for 9th March.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

22nd December 2025

Community Engagement Committee

Cllr Linton is the chairman of this committee.

The committee did not meet in December.

Some updates:

Beach Cleans 2026 – the proposal future beach cleans should be run by KEPT (Keep East Preston Tidy) with limited support from the parish council has been put to KEPT and a response is being considered.

2026 East Preston Calendar – as of 15:00 on Monday, 22nd December, only six calendars remain available. That means we have sold 93 calendars with one in the council archive.

Warm Welcome Space 2026 – as of 15:00 on Monday, 22nd December, 23 people have registered for the first session, 7th January. I have informed community volunteers of which sessions they will be working.

The committee's next meeting will be on 19th January.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

22nd December 2025

Finance & General Purposes Committee

Cllr McElroy is the chairman of this committee.

The committee met on 8th December mostly to consider:

Budget and Precept for 2026/27 – the committee considered the council’s overall budget for 2026/27 and then a recommended precept for the same period. These will be for agreement later in the meeting.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

22nd December 2025

Major Events Committee

Cllr Linton is Chairman of the committee.

The committee met on 15th December. Some of the matters discussed were:

East Preston Christmas Celebrations, 22nd November – the committee considered various options for how to rejuvenate this event, including the possibility of not holding an event at all in 2026. A wide range of suggestions were made. Cllr Toney suggested committee members needed to time to think about all the suggestions and then have a meeting solely for the discussion of a 2026 event or events. A meeting has been called for the evening of Tuesday, 6th January.

The committee considered options for setting off the 2025 Christmas Celebrations fireworks, favouring setting them off from the beach soon after nightfall on 31st December. However, this did not give enough notice for ADC which is responsible for the part of the beach from which any fireworks would be released.

Funday Sunday, 19th April 2026 – the committee discussed some of the finer details of this event which will be co-led by Cllrs Chapman and Duff.

Autumn bingo, September or October 2026 – a decision upon the likely date for this event is dependent upon decisions about Christmas event(s) for 2026.

The committee’s next meeting is scheduled for 16th February.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

19th December 2025

Personnel Committee

Cllr Duff is Chairman of this committee.

The committee did not meet in December.

All councillors and office-based officers have signed the council’s IT Policy.

The committee’s next meeting is scheduled for 12th January.

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

17th December 2025

Planning & Licensing Committee

The committee met on 15th December.

The committee considered three applications. It agreed not to object to any of them but did raise questions or minor concerns on all three of them.

The committee’s first meeting of the new year will be on Tuesday, 6th January.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

17th December 2025

There were no updates from the council’s committees.

012/26 FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE – BUDGET AND PRECEPT FOR 2026/27

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

Finance & General Purposes Committee – budget and precept for 2026/27

Council is asked to agree to a recommended budget of £538,478 for the financial year 2026/27.

At its meeting on 9th December, the committee agreed to recommend a budget of £538,478 to Full Council. Each budget-holding committee has considered its financial requirements for the coming year. Proposed figures to make up the £538,478 are below.

2026/27 Budget

Committee	2025/26 net expenditure	2026/27 expenditure	2026/27 income
Admin (F&GP)	£129,820	£234,445	£425,181 (includes precept)
Amenities	£48,096	£96,550	£9,000
Audit & Gov.	£1,000	£1,000	£0
Comm. Eng.	£38,150	£41,450	£1,100
F&GP	£42,480	£79,850	£30
Major Events	£8,150	£14,150	£3,500
WRG Trust (Amenities)	£64,133	£71,033	£1,810
Total budget	£331,829 (net)	£538,478	£440,621

Councillors will notice we are setting a higher budget than before. This is mainly because of works expected to be carried out at 118-120 Sea Road before we can expect any income and the first year’s repayments of the loan. With the exception of the income to the Admin budget, which will include the maturity of a bond coming back into the council, all committees understandably spend more than they bring in. All committees are aware they now need to avoid unnecessary expenditure even more than before. The chairmen of each committee may wish to add some background to their committee’s proposed budgets.

Adrian will be available on the morning of 5th January for any councillors wanting to talk through any of these figures.

Council is also asked to agree a recommended precept of £104.15 per Band D property. This will be the first increase in this council’s precept since April 2020, and is £5.72 per household.

ADC informed the council on 9th December it was reducing this council's council tax base (the properties in the village expressed as a number of Band D properties) from 2,918 to 2,887; this

reduction is mainly because of the reduced number of second properties held in the village. The increased precept combined with the reduced council tax base will bring £300,681 into the council during the coming financial year. The committee is already aware of its need to include an explanatory article in the Winter 2026 newsletter should council agree to this increase.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

23rd December 2025

As Vice-Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee and in the absence of Cllr McElroy, Cllr Gunston first spoke in support of the budget proposal. As noted, the increase to the council's budget was larger than in previous years, largely due to costs associated with the purchase of 118–120 Sea Road, including refurbishment works and loan repayments. The committee had discussed this matter at length and agreed that the increase represented a relatively low risk, given the council's track record of financial prudence. It was also acknowledged that all committees were aware of the need to reduce expenditure wherever possible and practicable.

2064 The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to set a budget of £538,478 for the 2026/27 financial year.

Cllr Gunston then spoke in support of the proposal to increase the precept. Again, the committee had discussed this at length. Some preparatory work had been done with the public, articles on the proposed purchase of 118-120 Sea Road had said this might result in an increase to the precept of just under £6 per Band D property. Furthermore, the council had not increase the precept for five years.

2065 The council **RESOLVED** to increase the Band D precept from £98.43 to £104.15 for the 2026/27 financial year.

One councillor abstained from this vote.

013/26 FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE – ROUNDSTONE DRIVE ALLOTMENTS

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

Amenities Committee – Roundstone Drive allotments

Council is asked to agree to lease the Arun District Council allotments site from Arun District Council.

Arun District Council has proposed the parish council enters into a lease agreement for the East Preston allotments paying a peppercorn rent. We would also be liable for water charges, insurance (ADC has offered to pay for this) and lease registration. We could raise the plot charges from the existing £7 per annum to cover these costs.

Ongoing responsibilities include:

- Set up and maintenance of a waiting list.
- Sending out termination letters as necessary.
- Signing up new plot holders.
- Repairs and maintenance of boundary hedges.

The resolution is to accept the terms of the lease and aim to set up an allotment committee from the plot holders to perform most of the administration and resolve any disputes. The extra work on Parish Council office staff would therefore be minimised. Allotments would become a quarterly addition to the Amenities Committee agenda.

As most councillors know, the site is small, twelve plots maximum, some of which have lain dormant for some time now, ADC having had a policy of not issuing new tenancy agreements for several years. EPPC's attempts to encourage ADC to be a more active manager of the site have

failed, there is far too much else going on at ADC for such a relatively small matter to be given the necessary attention. Although there is no formal waiting list, EPPC knows there is a demand within the village for allotment plots and the site will only address part of that demand.

Members of East Preston in Bloom would like to start a community allotment on site, something already working well in Angmering we think.

There are some questions asked of ADC to which we have not yet had replies – it being Christmas – but seek at least agreement in principle. The draft of the lease is circulated electronically with these Supporting Papers.

Cllr John Gunston and
Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

23rd December 2025

Having done much of the liaison with ADC, Cllr Gunston spoke in support of this proposal. He was aware of comments made by councillors in response to the draft lease which had been circulated ahead of this meeting. He felt confident any concerns could be addressed and, at this stage, he was only looking for agreement in principle. There would be some small additional costs for the council in overseeing the site, but he believed those costs could be offset by bringing the plot fees in line with other local allotment sites. Cllr Gunston said there were local residents who had offered to do some of the work such as regular checks and reporting on how well plots were being used; this would reduce the impact upon the council.

Cllr Linton suggested a working party should be set up to manage the transfer from ADC to the council and to any association of local residents.

The Clerk said that, although the Supporting Paper was in the name of the Amenities Committee, he had subsequently had a conversation with the Chairman of that committee, Cllr Wilkinson who had suggested it may be better for the Finance & General Purposes Committee to manage the lease as it managed the leases with the council's other tenants. To that end, the Clerk proposed initial further discussion on this matter be referred to the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting scheduled for 16th February. That meeting could then consider Cllr Linton's suggestion to set up a working party.

Cllr Wilkinson said he was concerned the draft lease from ADC did not seem to take impact upon neighbours into account. Cllr Gunston said this was likely covered by the tenancy agreement, a copy of which had been requested from ADC.

Mrs F thanked Cllr Gunston for his work to date on this matter.

Mr J questioned payment of the water bills as the council did not want to end up out of pocket for providing this service to the village. Cllr Gunston said the subject of utility bills had also been raised with ADC. The Clerk said it was likely ADC either did not know it had been paying water bills or had not been paying water bills; indeed ADC did not appear aware it had been raising money from the site plots until this council provided it with evidence of bills raised for annual rental of the plots.

2066 The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to agree, in principle, to lease the East Preston allotments site from Arun District Council.

014/26 AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE POLICY

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

Audit & Governance Committee – Artificial Intelligence policy

Council is asked to adopt an Artificial Intelligence (AI) policy for the council.

At its meeting on 8th December, the committee agreed to recommend the council adopts an Artificial Intelligence policy.

AI is becoming a part of everyday life. AI refers to computer systems that can do tasks that usually need human thinking. These systems come in many forms and the definition of AI keeps changing as the technology develops.

AI is being used more and more across industries including the public sector. It can help improve services and can save time and money. AI can create useful content without someone needing to write it all. AI can understand and respond to normal everyday language, making it easier for anyone to use. AI can analyse different types of data and turn unstructured information into clear output. There is no UK law written specifically for AI yet.

Users of AI need to be mindful of the confidentiality of any personal data input to an AI tool – by its very nature, the tool will hold that information, effectively meaning it could be accessed by anyone with the necessary skills.

The policy, written by Maureen Chaffe of Process Matters 2, explains how officers and councillors can safely use AI tools such as ChatGPT, Copilot, Bard, Bing, Grammarly and so on. A copy is circulated electronically with these Supporting Papers.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

23rd December 2025

The Clerk explained the policy was intended to protect the council and local residents from the incorrect use of artificial intelligence.

2067 The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to adopt an Artificial Intelligence Policy for the council.

In response to a question from Cllr Bradshaw, the Clerk, several councillors and one member of the public said they were already using AI on occasion.

015/26 REPORTS FROM PARISH COUNCIL WORKING PARTIES

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

Working Parties

None of the council's working parties met in December.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

22nd December 2025

20mph Working Party

Cllr Wilkinson is the chairman of this working party.

At the December Full Council meeting, it was agreed the council would canvass the public on implementing a village-wide 20mph zone.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

23rd December 2025

Flat and Frontage Working Party (FFWP)

Cllr Wilkinson is chairman-elect of this working party.

No updates from this working party explicitly.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

23rd December 2025

Leases Working Party (LWP)

Cllr Wilkinson is the chairman of this working party.

Nothing further to the report to the last monthly meeting, i.e.: on 18th November, the council's surveyor emailed to say he had been advised by the East Preston & Kingston Bowls Club's surveyor he was waiting for the club committee to meet to agree its next action in this matter.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

23rd December 2025

Additionally:

Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation – although the working party was officially dormant, Cllr Gunston wanted to know whether the council wanted to respond to the government's current consultation as mentioned by County Cllr Elkins above. He asked members of the working party to stay on at the end of the meeting as any response was required by 11th January.

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

016/26 CORRESPONDENCE – CAR CLUBS

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

Agenda Item 14a

Correspondence – car clubs

Council is asked to consider a request for car-club spaces in the village.

At the council's November meeting, it considered a request from Mr Andrew Moores. Mr Moores was unable to attend that meeting, but council felt it needed to talk with him in-person before it could consider this matter further.

Mr Moores has indicated he may be able to attend this meeting, although his work can change his availability at very short notice.

Councillors wishing to refresh their memories on this matter are asked to refer to Minute 840/25 in the Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd November.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

23rd December 2025

The Clerk gave the meeting Mr Moores's apologies for not being able to attend this meeting. Mr Moores was still keen to discuss this matter with the council and hoped to be able to attend a meeting in the near future.

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

West Sussex County Council – 2027/28 Admission Arrangements

Council is asked to continue to consider any response to a consultation on 2027 [school] Admission Arrangements.

The following was provided to the December Full Council meeting –

This morning, the council received the following email:

Dear Colleagues

West Sussex County Council is consulting (24 November 2025 – 16th January 2026) on the proposed admissions arrangements for 2027/28.

WSCC propose to reduce the Published Admission Numbers (PANS) for 5 Primary Schools:

- Bersted Green Primary School from a PAN of 60 to a PAN of 30
- Swiss Gardens Primary School from a PAN of 60 to a PAN of 30
- Upper Beeding Primary School from a PAN of 45 to a PAN of 30
- East Preston Infant School from a PAN of 90 to a PAN of 60
- The Meads Primary School from a PAN of 45 to a PAN of 30

In addition, we would welcome your views on our proposed admission arrangements and oversubscription criteria (community and voluntary controlled schools) for September 2027 entry, as well as key dates in the admissions process.

Please find included the link to the consultation which will run between the 24 November 2025 and 16 January 2026.

<https://yourvoice.westsussex.gov.uk/admissions-2027-2028>

If any of the information for this consultation is required in an alternative format, please contact us on [0330 222 8543](tel:03302228543) or via email at schoolconsultations@westsussex.gov.uk and we will do our best to assist you.

If any stakeholders are deaf or hard of hearing and have an NGT texting app installed on their computer, laptop or smartphone, they can contact us on [18001 0330 222 8543](tel:1800103302228543).

Please share the information and link with any relevant stakeholders or groups that you represent

Best wishes

Sarah Bideleux

Team Manager, Admissions South/West

I contacted Mrs New, Headteacher at East Preston Infant School to ask whether any council support was needed either in support of or against this proposal. Mrs New replied the school was still attracting a good number of pupils and a reduction in PAN would have severe financial consequences. By the time of this meeting, I hope to have spent some time with Mrs New getting more information on this.

Additionally, at the December council meeting, the council felt it needed more information in order to help it make a decision on supporting the school in this matter. Unfortunately, the school is unable to send a representative to the meeting, but Mrs New has provided the following report for council's consideration:

CONSULTATION TO REDUCE PAN FROM 90 TO 60 AT EAST PRESTON INFANT SCHOOL

Context:

East Preston Infant School currently has a PAN of 90, with a maximum total on roll of 270 pupils.

Nationally the birth rate is falling and is predicted to continue to do so. This is having a significant impact on schools as the majority of our funding comes on a per pupil basis (£4955 per child for Infant children for 2025/26).

Whilst this affects all schools, Infant schools are hit particularly hard for a number of reasons:

- Infant classes (KS1 {KS=Key Stage} and Year R {R=Reception}) are limited to 30 pupils, whereas in Juniors (KS2) they are able to go over 30 in a class. This means that in KS2, staffing costs can be reduced by having over 30 pupils in a class, for example, 62 pupils in KS1 = 3 classes, 62 in KS2 = 2 classes of 31. It also means that if there are additional pupils who want to join a specific year group then they can be admitted into KS2 without needing additional staff and extra pupil funding can be gained via this.
- Because Infant schools only have 3-year groups, a low birth year equates to 1/3rd of the school. This means that very quickly Infant schools can find themselves in a deficit position as the budget suddenly cannot sustain the staffing costs. In a KS2 or Primary school they have the luxury of 'seeing' the lower numbers coming and being able to respond by reducing staffing over a period of time. This is an additional 4 years in the case of a Primary school.

East Preston Infant School (EPIS):

Whilst EPIS remains a popular school, we have seen our pupil numbers fall from 264 in 2022 to 223 currently on role. This equates to a loss of income of £203,155 based on current per pupil funding. The school currently has a deficit budget of £123,500 (£43,500 of this came from restructuring to reduce staffing in 2024 and the pension strain that the school was liable for).

For the last two years WSCC has been meeting with Infant schools to try to find ways to reduce costs and balance budgets. One of their concerns is that Infant schools have not been reacting quickly enough to the falling birth rate and that they need to take swift action to reduce staffing.

In September 2024 we had a particularly low birth year (62/90) meaning a loss of £138,740 in potential income. Because of the Infant class size legislation, we were not able to go over 30 pupils in a class and WSCC pupil number predictions showed a continued fall in birth rate, with our average predicted number being around 65 each year. Because of this and the class size limit, we decided that it would be prudent to reduce our PAN and go back to being a two-form entry school with an admission number of 60, as opposed to 90. This was written into our deficit recovery plan and meant that we would go out to consultation this year for a reduced PAN from September 2027.

During the first half of the autumn term 2025 I was absent from school but was aware that we needed to begin the consultation process. Our School Business Manager, Stephen Hill, contacted WSCC to ask about the consultation process and was told that indicative pupil numbers would not support a reduction in PAN at this time. Just before half term I attended a meeting where the pupil admissions team were present and I raised the point that our deficit recovery plan has us written in to be part of this consultation. The team then decided to add us to this round of consultations.

The following week we had a visit from the finance team who monitor our deficit. They raised concerns about reducing our PAN as no financial planning had taken place with WSCC. They said that our staffing structure, particularly for leadership, was set for nine classes and that this would not be viable if we reduced to six classes. They suggested we withdraw from the consultation until the financial planning had been undertaken. Unfortunately, we were too late to be able to do this.

Summary:

We would therefore like the council to vote against the reduction in PAN for the following reasons:

- WSCC has not completed the financial planning around the proposed reduction, and therefore the financial impact has not been properly considered.
- When we approached WSCC in the first half of the autumn term their initial response was that indicative pupil numbers would not support a reduced PAN at this time. We were only entered into the consultation because I raised it at the meeting.
- In September 2025 we admitted 81/90 pupils and we have had a good amount of interest in places for September 2026, so anticipate a similar number.
- EPIS remains a popular school and we take pupils from a wide area, including from Bognor Regis and Arundel – if we reduce PAN this would restrict our numbers and many families would not get their first choice.
- There is a lot of building work in the local area and we want our local families to be able to attend their local school.
- The school would need to make a number of staff redundant if we reduce PAN and this could add a significant amount to our deficit budget, as it has previously done.
- Without the financial planning in place, at this stage we are not sure that the school will be financially viable with a PAN of 180.
- There is the longer-term impact on East Preston Junior school, as they would only be receiving a maximum of 60 pupils from us in future years. Whilst they will be able to see this coming, they may still have to make staffing cuts and will suffer a significant loss of funding.

Thank you in anticipation of your support.

Claire New

Mrs Claire New
Headteacher
East Preston Infant School

Cllr Bowman reminded the meeting this situation had been predicted by then-District Cllr Terry Chapman a few years ago. The Local Education Authority (WSCC) or perhaps the Local Planning Authority (ADC) had not foreseen this. Housing developments which had been aimed at young families were, instead, being bought and occupied by empty-nesters downsizing; this, naturally, had an impact upon the numbers of children registering for local schools.

Cllr Mathias said he wanted to support the school.

Cllr Gunston felt the school was partly to blame for being in this situation as it seemed it had not fully recognised the financial implications of putting itself forward for reduced Published Admission Numbers.

2068 The council **RESOLVED** to send a letter of support for East Preston Infant School in response to the consultation on 2027/28 Schools Admission Arrangements.

One councillor abstained from this vote.

018/26 ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

District Cllrs P Bower, R Bower and Kelly had all sent their apologies to the meeting.

District Cllr Philippa Bower had provided the following written report:

Arun District Council

Dear Simon, please accept apologies from Ricky and myself. We have a group meeting at Arun on Monday.

The only committee during December has been Audit and Governance. We discussed a code in which officers give advice to members. I said what about members giving advice to officers and

sited the allotments and how we were being ignored. The suggestion was dismissed as irrelevant by the officers. I was then slated by Dr Walsh, who thought I was criticising the committee system. Duh.

All the best

Philippa

31st December 2025

019/26 ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL – PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER

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

Arun District Council – Public Spaces Protection Order consultation

On 18th December, council received a letter from Dax O'Connor, ADC Community Safety Manager, asking it to take part in a consultation on ADC's current anti-social Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) which is due to expire at the end of March. Dax's full letter was circulated electronically with these Supporting Papers.

Does council wish to comment upon the proposed PSPO?

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

23rd December 2025

2069 The council **RESOLVED** unanimously it had no response to the consultation on ADC's Public Spaces Protection Order.

020/26 SUSSEX POLICE

No report had been received.

PCSO Raju held a surgery outside the library on 11th December. Asked for feedback, Raj replied, "I had a couple of people who brought their bike to mark it."

021/26 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. South Strand cycle accident, 27th November**

6. **Disability Action Group East Preston meeting, 3rd December**
7. **East Preston Film Club, 10th December**

8. **Youth meeting with Angmering and Rustington Parish Councils, 17th December**
9. **Baytree Community Lunch Club Christmas lunch, 19th December**
10. **Social media**
11. **MailChimp stats**
12. **A selection of things we have been asked since the last meeting**
13. **Recent bouquets and complaints**
14. **Comments in Christmas cards to the council**
15. **Leave**
16. **January meetings and events**

1. **Introduction**

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

2. **Police matters**

There was something of a fracas in the village over the weekend of 5th/6th December, in the Beechlands Close/Montpelier Road area. PCSO Raju informed me, “A resident was injured after altercation with another resident. Suspect was arrested and investigation is ongoing.”

3. **Anti-social behaviour (ASB) matters**

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

4. **Freedom of Information (FoI) / Data Protection requests**

The council has received no further requests.

5. **South Strand cycle accident, 27th November**

The council was contacted by a Rustington resident who had fallen off his bike when cycling over a new speed hump in South Strand. The hump was so new it had not had any markings painted upon it although he did agree there had been signs erected at either end of the new hump. I explained, with some difficulty as the resident was calling from a noisy restaurant, the road was not public highway and I gave him the details for Arun Property Professionals (APP), the company which manages the estate on behalf of the Residents’ Association.

For a while, the resident was on the agenda to attend this evening’s meeting as he felt the parish and county councils needed to be made aware of this, although I told him there was little involvement either council would have on a private road, something a county council contact confirmed. Once he had confirmed APP had arranged for markings to be painted upon the hump he elected not to attend this evening’s meeting as he felt he had spent enough time on the matter. He still wanted me to let the parish council know though.

6. **Disability Action Group East Preston meeting, 3rd December**

I attended the group's last meeting of the year. Only three others were there: Jan, Deborah and Keith, the latter attending his first Disability Action Group. Other members had sent their apologies.

The meeting gave me the chance to talk about the council's plans for the south-western corner of the Village Green – currently in the hands of contractor Michał Zarzecki – parking at the southern end of Sea Road, Christmas lighting and the Sea Road toilet block.

No mention was made of the one member of the public who had been refused entrance to the Village Hall during the council's Christmas Celebrations event on 22nd November.

7. **East Preston Film Club, 10th December**

The first screening by the new East Preston Film Club took place on Wednesday, 10th December. The Film Club launched after Paul Amoo drew a line under the East Preston Film Society, after it helmed over 100 film showings in the village.

The Society has been able to move films back to the June Sutherland Chapel, the venue provided just for the price of a contribution to utility costs. The cinema service itself continues to be provided by Cinemobile from the Windmill at Littlehampton.

Over 60 people came along to watch and enjoy *Downton Abbey – The Grand Finale*. Capacity is just under 80. During the interval and after the show, tickets were on sale for the next film and 27 were sold. There were a lot of positive comments about the venue and the fact films are being shown in the village again.

The next film will be *The Choral* on 21st January.

(Fun note: there are now at least four EPFCs in the village – Festival Committee, Football Club, Floral Club and Film Club.)

8. **Youth meeting with Angmering and Rustington Parish Councils, 17th December**

I attended this meeting at Rustington Parish Council (RPC) with Cllr Chapman. Katie Herr and Cllr Nikki Hamilton-Street were present from Angmering Parish Council (APC) and Rosie Costan and Cllr Claire Stevens from Rustington Parish Council. This was a follow-up to the meeting Cllr Duff and I attended on 19th August (see Full Council 1st September 2025, Minute 684/25).

In the interim period, some of the above had met with local schoolchildren finding out what activities are missing from their lives with a view to seeing whether as councils we could fill that void. Angmering Parish Council has produced a 9-page report of findings from these meetings and this can be considered at the next Community Engagement Committee meeting. Within the summary of that report is a Key Themes Across All Feedback section which reads:

Safety and accessibility: Lighting, railway gates, safe cycle paths

Spaces for older kids: Better play equipment, skate parks, sports facilities

Affordable and inclusive activities: Free or low-cost clubs, intergenerational events

Creative and social hubs: Cafes for kids/teens, art and music spaces

Big dreams: Waterparks, ice rinks, indoor activity centres, theme parks

Children also said they were under- or uninformed about local events. They thought their parents might know but that knowledge did not always filter through. From the meeting, Andrea and I took an action to contact Helen Holt, publisher of the All About magazines to ask her to consider an All About Kids magazine, perhaps produced twice a year and distributed through the schools, libraries and council offices. I have subsequently contacted Helen, who has responded positively and we will have a further conversation about this in January.

There has been no public response to RPC ceasing its youth provision at Woodlands. This echoes our own experience of nobody in East Preston actively calling out for a youth provision. Littlehampton Army Cadets has moved from its condemned Littlehampton premises into the former youth centre. Currently running one night a week, once it has rebuilt from its temporary downtime, the cadets will increase to two nights a week, and will be looking to attract new members from neighbouring villages.

In another matter raised at the end of the meeting, Rosie advised RPC had received an email on 11th December telling it the Zachary Merton Community Hospital building had been put on the market. This went wholly against the NHS's promise to initiate some public consultation for ideas on how the space could be used. At the time of writing, RPC is considering its response to this and will likely be looking for support from neighbouring councils again.

9. Baytree Community Lunch Club Christmas lunch, 19th December

I attended this as the council's representative as, when organiser Carol Feasey visited the office to invite someone from the council, she made it very plain it was me attendees wanted there. More fool them!

Carol also made it very clear I had not been for a very long time and the first thing I noticed when I walked into the Miller Barn was how many more people attend the club than when I last went. Another change is there are now a few younger people going, people in their early 60s.

I was put on a table with Eileen, Sylvia, Maureen, Pam and Joan, four of whom I know from Warm Welcome Space and one of whom I recognise from her walking past the office sometimes. I won't name names, but one of the five is in her 90s.



Around the table, from the left: Pam, Maureen, Joan, Simon, Eileen and Sylvia
(courtesy of Toni McElroy)

Apart from a Christmas Day lunch, this was the last standard Baytree Community Lunch Club session of the year. Carol estimated there were 90 attendees today (later confirmed by Julie the Chef as 91 meals cooked). Toni McElroy, Chairman of East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation, was another guest of honour. In addition to a main course and a choice of three desserts, attendees were offered a glass of wine, a hot drink and mini mince pies. All attendees were also sent home with a gift bag of toiletries.

Something for this year’s Warm Welcome Space organisers to remember is very much people like their same seat each week. I chatted with (and hugged) a number of familiar residents on different tables and they all said how much they enjoy coming along on a Friday lunchtime. A few asked why Warm Welcome Space has moved to a Wednesday (as that might not be so convenient for them) and they seemed to accept my explanation the Legion does not open officially on a Monday until 16:00 and Legion staff work hard enough the rest of the week without us requiring them to come in even more.

After the event, one of my table companions emailed, “It was so nice to meet you again. You are such good company,” and another thanked me for my cheerful company.

Big thanks to Carol and her team of helpers (Davida, Vivien, Carol and Terry, Heather, Teri, Deni, Kaz, Liz, Ian, Sandra, Stephen, a couple whose names I don’t know, and especially the tireless chef, Julie) for their brilliant contribution to the village week in, week out. If the Baytree Community Lunch Club ever folds, it will leave a big hole in the village.

10. **Social Media**

These are the council’s Facebook posts to reach more than 500 people in the past month.

- Post advising of a Men in Sheds sale – 1,978 people

- Post advising of a mystery envelope left at the Council Office – 1,593
- Post advising of the temporary closure of the Warren Recreation Ground children’s playground – 603

(posts up to and including 22nd December)

The number of Followers is currently 1,964, an increase of 14 on the last report.

11. **MailChimp stats**

Since the last papers were issued, the council has sent out the following email to local residents on the council’s main e-mailing list:

Parish Council news – 27th November – sent to 962 subscribers, opened by 697 (72.6%)

Parish Council news – 4th December – sent to 962, opened by 707 (73.6%)

Parish Council news – 11th December – sent to 960, opened by 705 (73.6%)

Parish Council news – 20th December – sent to 960, opened by 695 (72.4%)

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

“I have now moved from East Preston to Rustington but would still like to receive your emailed newsletters, if that’s OK? We keep a keen eye on E.P. news and attend some of the events in the village.” (Happy to have you still on board.)

13. **Recent bouquets and complaints**

(In addition to anything reported above)

Dean Jones emailed, “I just wanted to take this opportunity to thank-you for allowing us to have a stall for Below The Belt and we was able to raise £405.00 for test kits. This means that we can order another 40 test kits for the local men of East Preston. We aim to do another test kit give away in March with date to be confirmed. Thank-you once again for your support of Below The Belt both now and in the future.”

In response to an article in the e-newsletter published on 20th December, a resident of Woodbridge Park emailed, “2 weeks closure seems a bit excessive! I remember getting 25th and 26th Dec and 1st Jan . I realise that there are 2 weekends but 9 1/2 working days off seems a lot .” In a slightly passive-aggressive way I asked the author if there were particular concerns he had about the duration for the Council Office would be closed and offered to refer those to the council’s Personnel Committee. At the time of writing, I have received no reply.

In contrast, in response to the same e-newsletter, a resident of The Ridings wrote, “Just a very brief note to thank you for the latest edition of the EPPC News and for all the editions that you have sent throughout 2025 - much appreciated and, I might add, a very valuable service for Residents in East Preston. Thank you too for all that you have done for us all during the year - I think that we are all very fortunate in the high quality of service that you and your Team provide. Well done!”

From a resident of Nursery Close for information provided about the RNID Near Me services in Angmering and Rustington, “Thanks v.m.for the info on RNID.”

From a resident of Somerset Road, “May I take this opportunity to wish you a very Merry Christmas and to say thank-you for being our lovely Parish Clerk.”

14. **Comments in Christmas cards to the council**

“To the Chairman, Members, Clerk and Staff of our wonderful Parish Council. With sincere thanks for all you do for the village.”

“Many thanks for all your hard work and wonderful events throughout 2025. Merry! Merry! and a Happy New Year.”

“With our very best wishes and thanks to all the various organisations that make EP a joy to live in. ”

“My nephews and nieces, I am very grateful for all that you have done for me and I say Thank You.”

“Thank you for all your do for the village.”

“Thank you for your continued support throughout the years.”

“Thank you for all you do for the village.”

“Thank you for all your support.”

“Thanks for all your support.”

“Thank you for all you do for us.”

“Thank you for all the work that you do for us.”

“Thank you so much for all the information you provide during the year. It is wonderful.”

“Thanks for all your hard work.”

15. **Leave**

Adrian is on leave for the rest of the week starting Tuesday, 6th January. Nobody else has booked leave but I shall try not to work Fridays, where possible.

16. **January Meetings and Events**

This list may be incomplete and is subject to change.

- 5th Full Council (19:00, East Preston Infant School)
- 6th Planning & Licensing Committee (18:00, East Preston Infant School) (cancelled)
Major Events Committee (19:00, East Preston Infant School)
- 10th East Preston Repair Café (10:00, East Preston Infant School)
- 12th Personnel Committee (18:00, East Preston Infant School)
East Preston Sports Clubs meeting (19:00, East Preston Infant School) (ST, EL, DM and SC only)
- 14th ADC Planning Committee (14:00, Civic Centre, Littlehampton) (CB or KB tbc)
- 19th Planning & Licensing Committee (18:00, East Preston Infant School)
Community Engagement Committee (19:00, East Preston Infant School)
- 22nd ADC Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan Briefing (18:00, online) (CB, JG 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**

23rd December 2025

Item 10 – Social Media – Cllr Linton enquired about the mystery envelope left at the Council Office. The Clerk explained the envelope had been marked, handwritten, Toca Boca together with a drawing of what appeared to be underpants. Inside the envelope were further cut-out drawings of figures and further pairs of underpants. Although still unclaimed, the Clerk had learnt Toca Boca was a Swedish video game for younger children, “founded in 2011 with a simple mission - to create playful experiences where kids can have fun and feel free to be themselves.” The “underpants” drawn on the envelope was a representation of the Toca Boca logo.



Item 15 – January Meetings and Events – ADC Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan Briefing – Cllr Wilkinson asked if he could attend this and Cllr Bowman said he could attend in her place.

022/26 EXTERNAL MEETINGS AND EVENTS

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

Other meetings and events – Part 1

Council is asked to note any reports.

Arun and Chichester Citizens Advice (ACCA), 8th December

The Assembly Room, The Council House, North Street, Chichester

Along with 60-70 others I attended the ACCA AGM in Chichester. Presentations highlighted the work of the local Citizens Advice Bureau, poverty in West Sussex and how AI can help in the future.

Since 2020 their income has increased from £1m - £6m, mostly from government grants passed on to clients. Last year they helped almost 23,000 people with 107,000 issues with £3.6m financial outcomes.

Although viewed as an affluent area West Sussex contains 5 wards that are in the 10% most deprived in the UK. 14% of children in Arun live in poverty and our area also has the highest food bank usage in West Sussex.

Working with the University of Portsmouth an AI system is being developed to save time and increase consistency when recording details of client meetings. This will allow advisors to see more clients as demand continues to grow.

A marketplace was then available highlighting focus areas for Citizens Advice. Mental health, dementia outreach and food were included as well as the key issues - utilities, benefits, consumer goods, debt and housing.

Having heard about the invaluable work they do I think it would be good to offer our new enlarged space as a potential meeting point and to promote all of their services. We could also consider them as a Chairman's charity in future years.

Cllr John Gunston

10th December 2025

East Preston Repair Café, 13th December

East Preston Infant School

Although the Repair Café is now its own entity, no longer attached to the parish council, I thought councillors might be interested in this short report of the Repair Café's year.

Thanks to the much appreciated efforts of our team of about 15 volunteers, over 200 people have had 199 items fixed, only 45 were not repaired and 30 people were given advice. That's a success rate of 72%. The range of items repaired is almost too great to record, but this year we have repaired delicate musical instruments, electrical appliances both large and small, filigree jewellery, clocks, clothes, toys, garden implements and so the list goes on, all while former parish councillor David Cross sharpens all sorts of knives, scissors and similar items.

The first half of the year, sessions were held in the Spire Room but from September sessions have been held in the main hall at East Preston Infant School, giving volunteers and attendees a pleasanter experience simply because of the increase space available. Our thanks to both venues for their generous hospitality and help with this initiative.

Total donations for the year exceeded £1,200 which more than covers our costs.

I am constantly being told what a great service the Repair Café provides for the village and long may it continue to do so. My thanks to Helen and Simon for giving up their time to help administer each monthly session.

Cllr John Gunston

15th December 2025

Dr Beccy Cooper MP Meet The MP discussion on Housing Development, 13th December

Angmering Community Centre

This meeting was put together by Beccy Cooper MP for Worthing West. Although the parish council was not invited to send an official representative, I was invited to attend as I have contacted Beccy previously with my personal concerns about overdevelopment locally and the lack of supporting infrastructure.

The first speaker was **Cllr. Alan Butcher, Vice Chair of Arun District Council Housing and Wellbeing** and also on the Housing Improvement Board. He explained that housing repairs were now in-house and that improvements to the housing stock should be happening at a considerable pace. He admitted that ADC had five decades of bad planning and unaffordable housing due to an inadequate local plan. He said that there were no plans to put forward a local plan and any work that had been done was now stopped.

The next speaker was **Cllr Nikki Hamilton-Street, Chair of Angmering Parish Council**. Their existing neighbourhood plan was currently being reviewed. She criticised that no drainage reports were submitted with consultations and, in her area, Highways should have been more focussed. Her next meeting with Highways and the County Councillor, Deborah Urquhart, was due on 15th January 2026. Nikki said that the parish council engages a planning consultant to help with legitimate objections. Within Angmering parish, only land south of the A27 is considered for development, the rest being in the South Downs National Park. They are waiting for Government to produce a planning policy and the delay to mayoral elections is causing uncertainty. ADC having stopped reviewing/revising its local plan is not helping the situation and they are holding Arun to account. They have formed a County Alliance and the parish council is working with residents to question developers regarding approved sites. Nikki asked the audience to read the Find Your Voice leaflet.

Jo Thompson, Save Bewley Road Campaign. She has been a town planner for 30 years gave her views. There are unmet housing needs mainly 1 and 2 bedroomed properties and the supply is not fulfilling that category. This is putting a massive strain on infrastructure and also effects health, education and transport. More gravitas towards housing is needed and use brown land first not prime agricultural land. This country is now only 50% self-sufficient as opposed to 80% 30 years ago. There is evidence to protect green gaps and as Adur and Arun are out of date with their local plans permissions will be more difficult to challenge but they are looking at site assessments to put forward.

Cllr Samuel Theodoridi, Vice-Chair of Worthing Borough Council Planning Committee. He said WSCC Highways was particularly frustrating and also expressed frustration at the out-of-date local plan. Apparently 5 million houses nationally are needed.

John Holmstrom, Chief Executive of Turning Tides. John said there were over 500 households in temporary accommodation and also emphasised the need for a local plan. Clients they have moved to social housing do well. He queried whether the developers were delivering affordable housing. Worthing Homes were one of their great partners.

By this time the meeting had run for over one and a half hours and I was only able to stay for some of the question time and these are my notes without the questions as multiple ones were taken at a time and are very random.

Question Time Session.

Roffey homes couldn't get the social housing providers and the 10-30% affordable housing required was not viable at 80% of market value. Some S106 money commitments should be returned in 2028 and are currently being used in WSCC accounting to hold the debt off their books!

Sussex housing targets mean development anywhere in Sussex instead of being concentrated in Arun or Worthing / Adur and Crawley want more housing.

Developers give a contribution if they don't meet the affordable housing requirements and the local plan has no control of this over the Planning Policy.

There are 800,000 empty properties in the UK and they need to be brought up to standard and back into use so avoiding the cost for new builds.

Planning should appeal decisions even if there is a cost as they have a responsibility to the public to turn applications down. Flooding and drainage should be outlined at planning stages not as a condition.

The Chatsmore Farm housing targets were able to be developed using a 5 year housing plan.

Beccy was clear about her desire for a coastal authority with one local plan. New legislation could be implemented for new builds to use grey water for flushing loos.

I made my exit at that point.

[Clerk's note: subsequently, I have been contacted by a resident of Kingston who requested **"the parish council fights for a moratorium on new housing developments until after the election."** Something for the Planning & Licensing Committee to consider at its meeting on 6th January.]

Cllr Elizabeth Linton – **Vice-Chairman of the Council**

16th December 2025

Arun District Council Local Government Reorganisation briefing, 8th December

Civic Centre, Littlehampton

21 people attended the briefing session given by Dawn Hudd (CEO Arun) and Martin Lury (ADC leader).

3 proposals for local government reorganisation were discussed.

1 unitary authority for West Sussex favoured by WSCC which could give greater initial savings of £30m

2 unitary authorities with Arun, Adur, Worthing and Chichester in one, favoured by all district and borough councils which could give greater democratic representation.

Both these proposals were seen as viable by all parties in West Sussex.

The third option from Brighton and Hove suggests 5 unitary authorities with Arun linked to Adur and Worthing. This proposal had not been discussed with representatives from West Sussex.

Several other issues were raised. The "off book" SEND deficit will be transferred to the new authority. Town and Parish Councils are planned to go ahead as normal in 2027 along with new council elections. There is no indication that the precept will be changed. A mayor will be elected in May 2028 and have a budget of £38m per year.

All Parish Councils were urged to respond to the public consultation on the proposals which closes on 11th January. The Devolution Working Party will be submitting a response on behalf of the Parish Council.

Cllr John Gunston –
**Chairman, Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation
Working Party**

19th December 2025

023/26 RESPONSE TO EXTERNAL MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Nothing was added.

024/26 NEW ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING (2ND FEBRUARY 2026)

The Clerk reminded councillors the meeting would start at 18:30 with a presentation from Vince Mewett, Chair of Trustees of Home-Start Arun, Worthing & Adur, a charity supported by the council over a number of years.

(All four members of the public left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.)

025/26 118-120 SEA ROAD, EAST PRESTON

The following report 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.

At the time of writing, our solicitor has opted not to implement indemnity insurance.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

23rd December 2025

The Clerk reported the council's solicitor had advised him on the morning of the meeting he had received responses to queries he had raised with the vendor's solicitor as a result of the searches undertaken. He would be considering those responses and coming back to the council in due course. The Clerk had reminded the council's solicitor the council was happy for indemnity insurance to be bought if appropriate and the solicitor was still holding off on this.

026/26 DEVOLUTION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT WORKING PARTY

Invited by the Chairman, Cllr Gunston addressed the whole meeting on the matter of the government consultation on local government reorganisation. There were three options proposed for the future of West Sussex. WSCC favoured a single unitary authority, basically the existing WSCC would greater powers. District and borough councils favoured two unitary authorities to cover West Sussex, one of which would cover the current Arun District together with Chichester District and Worthing and Adur Boroughs. The third option was one proposed by Brighton & Hove City Council and that would divide East and West Sussex into five unitary authorities. Cllr Gunston explained how each proposal would affect residents' relationship with the future Mayor of Sussex and the financial ramifications of some of the proposals.

Various questions were asked of Cllr Gunston. Cllr Bradshaw questioned the validity of responding to the public consultation when, he believed, central government already knew what the final model would be.

No councillors voted in favour of a single West Sussex unitary authority. Nine councillors voted in favour of two unitary authorities to cover West Sussex. One councillor voted in favour of the five unitary authorities proposal. One councillor abstained.

2070 The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to respond to the government consultation on local government reorganisation in support of the model for two unitary authorities to cover West Sussex.

The council accepted Cllr Gunston's offer to draft responses to the consultation based on the council's resolution. He would circulate the draft responses to councillors for comment before submitting a final response on behalf of the council.

The meeting ended at 20:19.

END