



# 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, 13<sup>th</sup> April 2026 at East Preston Infant School, Lashmar Road, East Preston

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

**ALSO:** Simon Cross, Clerk to the Council

Peter Dallimore and Colin Smith and other members of East Preston Cricket Club (all until 19:49)

Carol Longman and Wendy Walker, East Preston in Bloom (both until 18:50)

Neil Ellis, Kevin Hill, Adrian Miller and Tony Page, East Preston Men in Sheds (all until 18:50)

David Cross (until 20:08) and Samantha Cross (until 19:49), East Preston Repair Café

Frances Rainey, East Preston Stoolball Club (until 19:49)

Lance Allsop and Russell Granat, Sea Road Beach Access Limited (both until 20:08)

Members of the Warren Recreation Ground Safety Group (all until 19:49)

Mr P B (until 19:49); Mrs L D (until 20:08); Mrs L H (both until 19:25); Mrs D L (until 20:08)

**ABSENT:** Councillor Kit Bradshaw

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The following acronyms 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 18:32.

## 234/26 INTRODUCTIONS

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

The following report was circulated in advance of the meeting and covers the next three Minutes:

## **Presentations**

### **Council is asked to receive a short presentation each from East Preston in Bloom, East Preston Men in Sheds and East Preston Repair Café.**

Over the past few years, the parish council has helped the above three organisations establish themselves in the village. This is an opportunity for the three to give us a brief update on what they have been up to and where they see themselves going.

All three organisations have confirmed their attendance.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

31<sup>st</sup> March 2026

#### **235/26 EAST PRESTON IN BLOOM**

The meeting received a presentation from Carol Longman and Wendy Walker. Carol explained the organisation had been formed, with advice and financial assistance from the parish council, in order to brighten up and tidy up the village's planting schemes, both formal and informal. Carol listed areas of the village which the organisation has brightened such as in front of and behind East Preston Library, the Village Green, Two Acres and in front of East Preston fire station to name just some. Having been chair for the four years since the committee's inception, Carol was now standing down. Carol thanked the council for its support to date.

Wendy said that the organisation had decided to run without a formal chair for the time being although she would be chairing any meetings and would act as the organisation's first point of contact. Wendy announced the organisation had just been awarded a further £6,000 National Lottery grant. The organisation was keen to start a community allotment and, if that became a reality, some of the money would be spent on a couple of sheds, some tools and starting to grow vegetables. Wendy stressed the group really wanted to grow vegetables both as an education for young families that might want to get involved in that way and to supply local foodbanks.

Wendy added the group had agreed to take responsibility for the westbound platform at Angmering Station. This was currently maintained by the Friends of Angmering Station but its membership could no longer manage the workload. Angmering in Bloom had agreed to take responsibility for the eastbound platform. Let the friendly rivalry begin.

Finally, Wendy said the group had had business cards printed as it was looking to expand its membership. It was also hoping to include more articles in publications such as *All About East Preston and Kingston* and the parish council newsletter and e-newsletter.

#### **236/26 EAST PRESTON REPAIR CAFÉ**

The meeting received a presentation from Samantha Cross. Sam started by thanking the parish council for its help with setting up the Repair Café which, she was pleased to report, was now self-sufficient.

Sam explained the café operated on the second Saturday of most months, at the Infant School, from 10:00 with last entry at 12:30. There were twenty volunteers offering to look at sewing repairs, not alterations, electrical items, clocks and jewellery and more general repairs. There was also a very popular knife-sharpening service available.

The café asked attendees to give a small donation in recognition of the time spent upon their item. At the most recent session, two days before the meeting, over £250 had been received in donations.

Sam thanked John, Helen and Simon for their continuing voluntary support of the café.

If anyone had any ideas for any other service the café could offer, the team would be very happy to hear them. Suggestions already received included an IT Helpdesk, a gardeners' helpdesk and perhaps even Citizens Advice.

## **237/26 EAST PRESTON MEN IN SHEDS**

The meeting received a presentation from Kevin Hill and Adrian Miller.

Kevin explained Men In Sheds had started in Australia as a charity to help men with their mental health by providing a space in which men could meet and chat whilst making things. Although primarily aimed at men, the charity does not exclude women, and the East Preston shed currently included two women.

Kevin thanked the parish council for initiating the East Preston shed. Thanks to advice and a generous donation from the parish council, the shed opened its doors in August 2024. The shed now had a healthy bank balance, sufficient to have been able to drop its membership fee by £20 this year. The shed was open weekday mornings and afternoons and had recently reached agreement with its landlord, East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation, to open a number of Saturday mornings each year. The organisation was self-sufficient thanks to items made and then sold at village events and commissions arising from those events.

The group undertook voluntary work for organisations such as the parish council and the Friends of St Mary's to name but two. Initially, the group had undertaken private work around the village, but had moved away from that following concerns about the liabilities involved. The group had just agreed to be involved with a project for the MND Association.

All three presentations were applauded by all present.

Cllr Gunston asked the groups' representatives whether they would be willing to help with some tasks around the council's new acquisition, 118-120 Sea Road, tasks such as gardening and decorating. The representatives responded positively.

The chairman thanked the representatives for attending the meeting and for their contributions to the village.

(At the conclusion of this item Mrs Longman, Mrs Walker and Messrs Ellis, Hill, Miller and Page all left the meeting.)

## **238/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

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

**2088** The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously to accept the apologies received from Cllr Bradshaw (work commitment).

Apologies were also received from County Cllr Elkins, District Cllrs P Bower, R Bower and Kelly, and Roy Allen, Drew Baker, Frank Gainsbury, Kelvan Gale, Jeff Hills, Mary Jeavons (East Preston Stoolball Club), Jane, Gavin and Calum MacDonald, Sam Morton (*Littlehampton Gazette*), Sean Rebbetts, Andy Reeves (East Preston Cricket Club), Sioned Vos (East Preston & Kingston Preservation Society).

## **239/26 DECLARATION OF PERSONAL AND/OR PREJUDICIAL/PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

Prior to the meeting, Cllr Gale declared a Personal Interest in Item 9a, *Warren Recreation Ground – To consider the council's next actions regarding the playing of cricket.*

## **240/26 PUBLIC SESSION**

**Agenda Item 9a – Warren Recreation Ground – To consider the council's next actions regarding the playing of cricket** – Mrs Lee said she believed most of the village did not want to see cricket stopped as it had been played in the same place in the village since the 1860s. Mrs Lee felt the cricket club was absolutely marvellous and, apart from during the two World Wars when its players were away fighting, it had played cricket continuously for all that time. The club had played host to international players from as far afield as Australia, South Africa and the West Indies, all of whom had loved playing here. The club had also been the starting point for some county cricket players. Mrs Lee said people should not move next door to a cricket field and then expect cricket to be stopped. That was like moving next door to a railway line and expecting trains to stop running or moving next door to a school and expecting children to stop playing in the playground. Mrs Lee said she believed there were enough villagers who would be willing to help fund improvements to the netting at the ground and offered her own contribution to any fundraising.

## 241/26 COUNCIL RESPONSES

The chairman thanked Mrs Lee for her comments.

## 242/26 WARREN RECREATION GROUND - CRICKET

(Mr and Mrs H left the meeting towards the end of this item.)

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

### Warren Recreation Ground

**Council is asked to consider the council's next action regarding the playing of cricket on the Warren Recreation Ground.**

Councillors will be aware East Preston Cricket Club has played its home matches on the Warren Recreation Ground since 1860 (long before the ground was vested to the parish council (1943) and before the ground was renamed the Warren Recreation Ground (c1981)).

Councillors will also be aware the Warren Recreation Ground Safety Group (WRGSG) has serious concerns about the advisability of cricket continuing to be played at the ground, citing the small dimensions of the ground, the nuisance experienced by residents in neighbouring properties (damage to property, risk of personal injury), the risk of personal injury to people using the Warren Recreation Ground children's playground, the Village Hall and Warren Recreation Ground car-parks and adjacent roads.

Towards the end of 2025, council agreed to initiate an independent mediation exercise with East Preston Cricket Club, the WRGSG and the council itself. A number of sessions took place, the last being on 12<sup>th</sup> March. At that session, it was agreed to attend no further sessions as the mediator could see no further benefit in doing so. One agreement from the exercise was the RoSPA report commissioned by the council and completed in December 2025 was the benchmark. This report has been circulated to all councillors, although some factual corrections may yet be made.

The following suggestions have mostly come out of the mediation exercise and are for consideration by council tonight.

**Implement a dot ball local rule for a trial period (duration to be agreed) whilst investigations and fundraising towards increased safety netting take place.**

Our contact at the Sussex Cricket League has confirmed local rules are allowed. There may be different interpretations of what a dot ball can mean, but Wiktionary describes it as, "A ball off which no runs are scored."

The club has commissioned and received a ball trajectory report. This aims to show the height of safety netting required at any given point around the ground. Using the ball trajectory report as a starting point, the club has contacted netting companies to quote for this work. There is a discussion to be had over whether the dot ball local rule would apply to all four boundaries or just the east and west.

The club has agreed to fundraise, assuming the sum required is affordable, but has asked the council to consider the Warren Recreation Ground charity being the nominal lead on fundraising as it would be able to claim Gift Aid, as a charity. The WRGSG has agreed to support and assist with any fundraising campaign in whatever ways it can.

**Close the children's playground for the duration of any cricket matches, this to be implemented by the club from an hour before the game starts.** The mechanics of this may need further discussion because even locking the gates of the children's playground and putting

up relevant signage, youths will still be able to vault over the fencing and get into the children's playground.

Councillors involved in the mediation exercise have discussed whether or not to close the tennis court too, during cricket matches and agreed this is not necessary as tennis players will be aware when a cricket match is taking place.

**Publicise the closure of the children's playground in council newsletter and e-newsletter.**

**Provide a councillor at each match for at least an hour of observation.**

There are only 12 league matches scheduled to be played at the Warren Rec this season together with a handful of friendlies and charity games, perhaps a maximum of 15/16 matches. A councillor present at each of these matches would get some feeling for how matches run and what nuisance matches may cause. There are 13 councillors; if all councillors gave up one hour, their observations would be knowledge the council would otherwise not have; a few councillors would need to volunteer for more than one hour during the season. A knowledge of cricket is probably not essential.

**Organise a short conference call on the Monday morning after a match between council, club and safety group – one representative from each group to discuss the impact of the weekend's match and to agree the wording Colin should use in his weekly report.**

Currently, each week, the club supplies the council with a report of any balls which land outside the ground during matches. Some content in the report has been challenged by the WRGSG. By hosting a short conference call each Monday, with just one representative of each organisation, it is hoped the content of the report can be agreed, in a timely fashion, before it is published. The representative does not need to be the same person each week, so hopefully this would not be too onerous.

\* \* \*

On 1<sup>st</sup> April, the council and the club both received a Letter Before Action issued by solicitors acting on behalf of the WRGSG. Both parties were given 14 days in which to reply. I asked whether any allowance was given for bank holidays and was advised, "The 14 days is inclusive of the Bank Holiday weekend." This has been circulated electronically to all councillors with the Supporting Papers for this meeting.

Both the WRGSG and the club were asked to provide a statement for inclusion in these supporting papers. The WRGSG advised the Letter Before Action would be its statement.

The club has provided the following statement:

East Preston Cricket Club has been a central part of village life for 165 years.

The ground predates the majority of surrounding residential development, and throughout its history the Club has maintained a strong record of safety, with no known incidents of serious injury caused by cricket balls.

Despite previous objections by the Club, development has proceeded without always addressing the relationship with the cricket ground.

The Club acknowledges concerns raised by neighbouring residents and remains committed to being a responsible and considerate community asset. We have taken reasonable and economical steps to mitigate risk and regularly review safety measures where appropriate.

The Club engaged in unsuccessful mediation over a period of months which used up valuable time and expense.

The Club has now proposed temporary playing restrictions which, by its assessment, could reduce the number of balls leaving the ground by approximately 90% and cricket will be played c1.2% of daylight hours throughout the year which seems a reasonable proposal. This will ensure the continued playing of cricket in the village whilst the club work collaboratively with the Parish Council to further improve protective measures, including enhanced netting and other practical solutions.

It is important to recognise that the Cricket Club operates on land held in trust for the benefit of the village and highlighted as a 'cricket field' which provides significant social, recreational, and community value. Many residents have expressed surprise at the recent escalation in concerns.

The Club remains committed to constructive dialogue and proportionate solutions that balance the interests of safety with reality.

Peter Dallimore  
Chairman  
East Preston Cricket Club

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

7<sup>th</sup> April 2026

Also the following report which had been circulated on the morning of the meeting:

## **Warren Recreation Ground**

Some correspondence has been received as follows:

Mrs Vos, Chairman of the East Preston & Kingston Preservation Society, called the office to apologise for being unable to attend this meeting and submitted the following comments, "As I mentioned, I'm not able to attend tonight's Full Parish Council meeting, so please tender my apologies. I'd be grateful if the Preservation Society's concerns could be conveyed to the meeting. These arise from proposed restrictions on cricket being played on the WRG which might lead to significant harm to an important part of village life. While acknowledging that safety anxieties should be addressed (and indeed have been over the years) this should not be at the expense of healthy, constructive leisure activity shared by all ages, which has been carried out at this ground for over 160 years. Thank you, and I hope the meeting goes well."

\* \* \*

Sean Rebbetts applied too late to gain admission to the meeting, but wanted to say, "I would like to express my interest to attend the meeting regarding the cricket club this coming Monday. I played there as a junior and we host an annual match there in memory of my Mum, which raises money for Cancer Research each year. I appreciate there will be high demand for this but would love two minutes to speak about what the club has done for us growing up, and continues to do."

\* \* \*

Dylan Baker, also too late to gain admission to the meeting, asked for the following to be recorded: "As I am unable to attend in person, I would like it placed on record my absolute and complete objection to complaints against the cricket club and my full commitment as a local resident and club member to the cause of fighting for the continued legacy of cricket in East Preston."

\* \* \*

An anonymous resident asked for the following to be read to the meeting:

12/04/2026

Protection of Long Established Village Cricket Ground

**Subject: Protection of East Preston Village Cricket Club and Long - Established Recreational Use**

To whom it may concern,

I am writing as a resident for over 40 years and also on behalf of the many residents verbally talking about this recent attempt by a neighbouring property owner to restrict or prevent the continued operation of the East Preston Cricket Club and free Tennis Court. The club has been an established and valued part of our community since **1860** serving as a focal point for the village. The Club has won the Worthing & District KO in 1974, been runners up in 1975 & 1982. Renowned for Charity games. Has youth players, which has produced county-level players and Sussex Junior Cricket Festival Champions. The Club is praised for the up keep of the Warren “Recreation” Ground and holds a crucial and vital place to the community.

Cricket has been played on this ground for generations.

I/we wish to make clear that there is **strong legal precedent and statutory protection** supporting the continued use of this cricket ground, and preventing any attempt by a resident to curtail or eliminate this long-standing community activity.

All of the following apply:-

1. Established Legal Precedent: “Coming to the Nuisance”

UK case law — most notably **Miller v Jackson (1977)** — confirms that a person who moves next to an existing cricket ground **cannot demand that cricket be stopped** on the basis of occasional balls entering their property. The Court of Appeal held that:

- The cricket club’s long-standing presence carries significant public interest
- A new neighbour cannot reasonably expect to alter or extinguish a historic community activity
- Reasonable mitigation, not cessation, is the appropriate remedy

This principle remains good law and is routinely applied in similar disputes.

2. Public Policy and Government Position

The UK Government has repeatedly emphasised the importance of protecting long-established sports facilities. Recent amendments to planning and environmental legislation require local authorities to consider:

- The historic use of the land
- The community value of the sports club
- Whether the complainant moved to the area after the activity was established

This makes it exceptionally difficult for a single resident to force closure of a historic cricket ground.

3. Lawful Established Use

The cricket ground has been in continuous use for well over the 10-year threshold required to establish **lawful use** under planning law. Its long history also makes it eligible for designation as an **Asset of Community Value (ACV)**, which would provide further statutory protection. If this is not in place than East Preston Parish Council on behalf of it’s residents should apply for an ACV immediately after the meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2026.

4. Reasonable Mitigation Already in Place

The cricket club might take, or continue to take, reasonable steps to ensure safety and minimise inconvenience, including:

including:

- [Netting / screens / boundary adjustments]
- [Repairing any accidental damage]
- [Offering dialogue and cooperation]

**These measures exceed what the law requires for a club of this age and setting. So are not a requirement.**

## 5. Community Interest

The cricket club is not merely a recreational facility; it is a core part of village life, supporting:

- Youth sport and development
- Community cohesion
- Physical and mental wellbeing

The loss of the club would be a significant and unjustified detriment to the entire village.

## Conclusion

Given the long-established use of the cricket ground, the clear legal precedent, and the strong public interest in preserving community sports, I/ We respectfully request that the council:

- 1. Formally recognise the cricket ground's established lawful use**
- 1. Reject any attempt to restrict or prohibit cricket activities**
- 2. Support the club in maintaining reasonable mitigation measures**
- 3. Consider listing the ground as an Asset of Community Value**

We trust that the council will uphold the rights of the community and ensure that this historic cricket club continues to thrive for generations to come.

Yours faithfully

A resident of East Preston for over 40 years residing in BN16 1RB

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

13<sup>th</sup> April 2026

During a long debate, the following points were made.

Safety is paramount and is one of the reasons the Warren Recreation Ground Safety Group (WRGSG) had been formed. At no point had the group said it wanted cricket to stop being played at the recreation ground, but it was important for it to be played safely. With an up-to-date risk assessment from RoSPA and a Cricket Ball Strike Assessment from Labosport, there was no reason why cricket could not be played safely if the recommendations and suggestions within both reports were acted upon by the council and the cricket club.

Concerns about the playing of cricket on such a small ground had been expressed to the council and club for over thirty years.

The abuse of the WRGSG on social media was unacceptable.

In one day, seven balls had landed in the garden of one property, that was neither reasonable nor acceptable.

The WRGSG had over twenty members from more than ten households and was not just comprised of neighbours to the Warren Recreation Ground. Members were not all new to the village, some had lived in their properties for over thirty years and others had lifelong connections to the village. It was therefore not possible for members present at this meeting to respond on behalf of the whole group.

In the coming season, because of the loss of the Second XI and the Junior teams, cricket would be played for about 1% of the year.

In over 160 years, no serious injuries had been reported.

The club agrees the safety netting needs to be improved but that will take fundraising to enable that. The club needed to play cricket to keep the club alive whilst fundraising. Some balance in this matter needed to be found.

Cricket was a core part of the village. A village was not a village without a cricket club. The Warren Recreation Ground was one of the prettiest grounds in the county, a credit to the council and club.

A former resident of a property bordering the recreation ground reported an incident when a ball had bounced on her patio and into the house through open patio doors, landing very close to her very young grandchild. What would have happened if the ball had hit her grandchild? Maybe the ground was of a size suitable only for junior cricket.

There are reports of people having been hit and every incident, whether in East Preston or elsewhere, should be taken as a warning sign. The club and the council should be prepared for that eventuality.

The club had not fundraised to date as this had not been a requirement of its licence with the parish council. If cricket stops, the club will cease to exist and what risk did that pose to the East Preston Village Preschool and East Preston Stoolball Club. The village and the council and the WRGSG needed to give the club support and time.

Quotes received following the Cricket Ball Strike Assessment report suggested around £100,000 was needed for netting to meet every recommendation within that report. If cricket was played only on the centre wicket, that sum did reduce a bit. Following a conference call with a representative of the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), emergency funding was not as positive a possibility as the club had been led to believe.

The club would look at crowdfunding options and also look at what grants were available nationally. Available grants changed on an almost daily basis.

Were the club's insurers aware of the RoSPA and Labosport reports as there were possible insurance ramifications from both reports?

Reasonable precautions needed to be taken. In English law, this was still as judged by the hypothetical ordinary and reasonable person, the so-called man on the Clapham omnibus.

Had National Lottery funding been sought? Not yet, as the club needed to know where it stood following this meeting before it could start fundraising.

Directly asked whether the WRGSG wanted to stop cricket, the group said it had said in every meeting it had attended it did not want to stop cricket, but wanted to make cricket safer. Members of the WRGSG had even offered to help with any fundraising efforts.

In response to a question about whether meeting all the requirements of the RoSPA and Labosport reports would bring an end to this matter once and for all, Cllr McElroy said nobody could see into the future. Health & Safety legislation applied to the present time. Had reasonable steps been taken at the time of any incident?

If the club and council implemented the recommendations in both the RoSPA and Labosport reports, they would be protecting themselves from further legal challenges. Again, seven balls landing in one garden in one afternoon was not reasonable.

Cllr McElroy declared he was a Trustee of East Preston and Kingston Village Hall Foundation and the committee of that organisation had no opinions in this matter, it was remaining neutral but had said it had not received a fixture card for the past few years. That was a simple action the club could take to ensure neighbours knew when matches were scheduled to be played so they could plan accordingly.

Cllr Gale reported she lived adjacent to the recreation ground and had received a fixture card every year she had lived there.

In response to a question about the legal weight of signs which say vehicles are parked at the owner's risk, Cllr McElroy said such signs were designed to cover the landowner from the responsibility for any incident which may happen within that car-park.

Cllr Gunston thanked everyone present for being reasonable in their comments through the debate. It was clear everyone wanted cricket to continue but with a potential bill of £100,000 for increased safety netting, how could this matter be progressed? The parish council had underwritten a professional mediation exercise but that had not reached any substantial conclusion. Was the WRGSG willing to give the club time to fundraise? Cllr Gunston said he felt East Preston was a great community and there was much evidence everyone present wanted to live together reasonably and to improve the community. Possibly using the council as a conduit, could the club and the WRGSG work together towards a solution?

It was suggested the council needed to come up with a direction acceptable to all.

The cricket club had suggested some mitigation actions it could take to ensure cricket continued in the short-term whilst fundraising took place. These formed part of the supporting paper above. There was at least 50% less cricket due to be played at the recreation ground this season which should mean at least 50% fewer balls landing outside the ground. The dot ball local rule should significantly reduce the risk of balls landing outside the ground.

The WRGSG was unconvinced the dot ball local rule would significantly reduce the risk of balls landing outside the ground.

The Sussex Cricket League had introduced Power Play to liven up cricket, to make it more appealing to a younger audience. This initiative specifically encouraged players to hit sixes.

A member of the cricket club said all members had been made aware of the RoSPA and Labosport reports, but £100,000 of netting was not a quick fix. Having played for the club for a number of years and made lifelong friendships and memories, as the father of a very young son, he hoped the club would be there for his son to have similar experiences.

Cllr Moore said he often attended matches but had never seen any Power Play. He asked how visiting clubs responded when briefed about any local rules. The chairman of the cricket club replied he had already spoken to some other clubs who were very understanding of the club's plight and they would respond to the local rule with integrity. For visiting clubs, the local rule would only apply once a season.

Cllr Hill said she liked the word compromise and hoped some compromises could be found to allow cricket to continue whilst meeting the WRGSG's needs for safety improvements.

Cllr Bowman, partly responding to Cllr Moore's question about how visiting teams responded to local rules said, in her experience as a longstanding follower of cricket around the country, cricketers were usually very dedicated sportspeople who would respect any local rules.

Did the club's insurers accept a dot ball local rule as an acceptable mitigation? Confirmation of this could ease the minds of WRGSG members.

Cllr Gunston apologised for putting anyone on the spot tonight and said he felt a basis for further conversation had been established.

Cllr Linton asked the WRGSG whether the deadline for a response to its solicitors could be extended. The WRGSG said this had already been asked of its solicitors and the answer had been negative. Any further request would again have to be directed to the group's solicitors.

With discussion apparently coming to a natural conclusion...

**2089** The council **RESOLVED** to allow cricket to be played on the Warren Recreation Ground with certain restrictions, see below, and whilst funds are raised to extend safety netting at the ground.

**2090** The council **RESOLVED** to implement a dot ball local rule for a trial period (duration to be agreed) whilst investigations and fundraising towards increased safety netting take place.

[Clerk's note: Sussex Cricket League will only permit this to apply to the eastern and western boundaries.]

**2091** The council **RESOLVED** to close the children's playground for the duration of any cricket matches; this to be implemented by the club from an hour before the match starts.

**2092** The council **RESOLVED** to provide a councillor at each match for at least an hour of observation.

**2093** The council **RESOLVED** to implement a short conference call on the Monday morning after a match between council, club and safety group – one representative from each group to discuss the impact of the weekend's match and to agree the wording Colin should use in his weekly report.

On Resolution 2092, 9 councillors voted in favour with three abstentions; on the other four resolutions, 10 councillors voted in favour with two abstentions.

(At the conclusion of this item, all remaining members of the public, with the exception of Mrs Denton and Mrs Lee and Messrs Allsop, Cross, Granat and Short, left the meeting.)

## 243/26 EAST PRESTON COMMUNITY BOARDWALK

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

### East Preston Community Boardwalk

**Council is asked to consider the offer from Sea Road Beach Access Ltd to donate the boardwalk to the council.**

At the Annual Parish Meeting in May 2025, Roy Allen on behalf of Sea Road Beach Access Ltd., offered to donate the East Preston Community Boardwalk to the parish council. This would be accompanied by approximately £1,000 from the company's reserves.

No promise was made as to how quickly this matter would be considered and the Amenities Committee discussed the matter at a meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> February. By then, Mr Allen was no longer a director of the company, but the company was represented at that meeting by two other directors, Lance Allsop and Ray Windust. No decision was made at that meeting.

In light of that, Mr Allen attended the monthly council meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> March and offered to give a presentation to the council, detailing his qualifications, his experience and the design of the boardwalk. Council voted to accept Mr Allen's offer of a presentation and this took place on 30<sup>th</sup> March. Ten councillors attended, plus two directors of Sea Road Beach Access Ltd. and one member of the public. Mr Allen's presentation covered the points he had promised to cover and there was time for questions afterwards.

I have confirmation from our insurance company the premium for insuring the boardwalk would be, "Annually would work out around £149.50 including IPT. No report needed and Hiscox would not cover storm or flood." (IPT is insurance premium tax.)

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

7<sup>th</sup> April 2026

At the invitation of the chairman, Russell Granat reminded the council of why the boardwalk had been built and of the Sea Road Beach Access Ltd.'s reasons for wishing to donate the facility to the council. This had culminated in a presentation to council by Mr Allen on 30<sup>th</sup> March.

Cllr Wilkinson said he had not initially been in favour of the council accepting this offer but now he believed the council should as it would give it some control over the boardwalk.

Cllr Bowman said she was not against the council taking ownership but still questioned why the company had not commissioned a health and safety report before opening the boardwalk to the public. Mr Granat replied organisations such as RoSPA reported against standards and there were no standards in place for a boardwalk. Mr Allen had spoken with RoSPA and found any safety report would be in the form of a risk assessment at which point the company directors had chosen not to pursue that.

Cllr Duff said she was reassured the council's insurers were happy to insure the boardwalk without a safety report.

Cllr Wilkinson added he had been part of the county council's volunteer project team which carried out projects such as boardwalks and bridges around the county. He had spoken to his (paid) team-leader who said the council was still building boardwalks to a design first approved over a decade ago. He had very recently sent design information for the East Preston Community Boardwalk to his team-leader for his comments.

Cllr McElroy quoted "*Public beach boardwalks in the UK require regular, documented inspections to ensure public safety, focusing on structural integrity (decking, joists, supports), slip resistance, and edge protection. Inspections should be conducted by competent personnel to comply with health and safety duties, often covering routine visual checks, seasonal, and structural assessments.*" (source: Google) He asked whether the company had carried out any documented inspections.

David Cross replied he was a volunteer for the boardwalk and a qualified Mechanical Engineer. He had been party to a number of inspections since the boardwalk had been installed; there was an email trail of these inspections.

Cllr Hill said there was likely to be minimal involvement for the council and the boardwalk “brings more to the village than it doesn’t.” The materials used are reportedly guaranteed for fifty years.

Cllr Gunston said he had only heard good things about the community boardwalk. It had been a true community project. The council had money in an earmarked reserve for the boardwalk and that could be used to commission a RoSPA risk assessment. Cllr Gunston added he felt Mr Allen’s presentation to the council on 30<sup>th</sup> March had only highlighted the differences between the council and the company. Council suggestions to the company had apparently all been dismissed, including health and safety concerns. As there was a huge amount of community support for the project, he personally felt the better way forward would be for a community group to be formed to look after the boardwalk, such as the South Strand Community Toilets group, which had done fantastic work for the South Strand toilet block.

**2094** The council **RESOLVED** to accept the offer from Sea Road Beach Access Ltd. to donate the East Preston Community Boardwalk to the council.

Eight councillors voted in favour, two voted against and two abstained.

(Mrs Denton and Mrs Lee and Messrs Allsop, Cross, Granat and Short all left at the conclusion of this item.)

#### **244/26 MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING HELD ON 2<sup>ND</sup> MARCH 2026**

The draft Minutes were circulated to all councillors on 3<sup>rd</sup> March asking for suggested amendments by 10<sup>th</sup> March. None were received.

**2095** The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously the Chairman could sign the Minutes as a true record of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> March. Cllr Toney duly did so.

#### **245/26 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 525/25 – 118-120 Sea Road, East Preston**
- 3. Minute 176/26 – East Preston Allotments**
- 4. Minute 178/26 – West Sussex County Council – Vermont Drive**

### **1. Introduction**

This is the report covering items discussed during Full Council meetings up to and including the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2026.

### **2. Minute 525/25 – 118-120 Sea Road, East Preston**

The purchase of 118-120 Sea Road was completed on the afternoon of 31<sup>st</sup> March.

### **3. Minute 176/26 – East Preston Allotments**

Cllr Gunston met with local residents willing to work with the council once any lease with ADC has been agreed.

#### **4. Minute 178/26 – West Sussex County Council – Vermont Drive**

On the afternoon of 30<sup>th</sup> March, WSCC contractors repainted the road markings at the junction of Vermont Drive and Sea Road. These had gone missing when Vermont Drive was resurfaced in August 2025 and had been subject to something of a battle to get them repainted. It appears the repainting included the double yellow lines on the western side of Sea Road at that junction. The white access protection line (APL) outside the church car-park was also reinstated.



I had been in a lot of contact particularly with one resident in The Plantation and another in South View. Upon seeing the reinstated road markings, the former said, “Success. Thank you so much for following this up.” and the latter, “Thank you for all correspondence and work in getting it sorted.” On 1<sup>st</sup> April, whilst I was stood outside the Village Hall with Cllr Toney, the resident of South View walked past, introduced herself and again thanked the council for its efforts in this matter.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

2<sup>nd</sup> April 2026

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

#### **246/26 FINANCIAL MATTERS**

The Accounts for March 2026 had been distributed to Members in advance of the meeting.

- 2096** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the Outstanding Purchase Orders report for 2025/26, value £0.00 (exc. VAT).
- 2097** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the Regular Monthly Payments reports for March 2026 totalling £1,240.30 (inc. VAT).
- 2098** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the Supplier BACS Invoices Paid reports for March 2026 totalling £477,630.06 (inc. VAT).
- 2099** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the List of Sales Receipts & Bank Receipts by Bank report for financial year to date totalling £2,077.47 (inc. VAT) for March 2026 (Year to Date, £597,560.50).

The council NOTED the Bank Reconciliations to 13<sup>th</sup> March 2026.

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.

## **247/26 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, Community Engagement and Planning & Licensing. Draft Minutes have been circulated to all councillors.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

31<sup>st</sup> March 2026

### **Amenities Committee**

Cllr Wilkinson is chairman of this committee.

The committee did not meet in March.

**Sea Road Toilets – Opening Times** – In order to fall in line with ADC Cleansing's new opening and closing times for all the toilets in the area, the committee has agreed to change the Sea Road toilets times. ADC Cleansing's operative locks and unlocks the Sea Road Toilets on a daily basis, therefore it was necessary to make the changes.

The new opening times are 1<sup>st</sup> April – 30<sup>th</sup> September 8am-7pm and 1<sup>st</sup> October – 31<sup>st</sup> March 8am-5pm.

**Village Green south-western corner improvements** – Following the two consultations sessions held at the Village Green in the Autumn of 2025, the committee's working party received the first Landscape design strategy. Following further discussions with Michal, the Landscape Architect, he is now in the process of drawing up a draft design. The working party will then present its findings to the rest of the committee for its consideration.

**Warren Recreation Ground tennis court** – following concerns raised during the week beginning 9<sup>th</sup> March about the misuse of the tennis court, Cllrs Linton and Wilkinson met with three local residents on 31<sup>st</sup> March. The concern was youths playing football on the court as this is not the purpose of the court and causes additional noise nuisance to neighbours. Between the incidents and the meeting, Cllr Linton had liaised with The Great Dane which agreed to tighten up its processes around giving out the key; Cllr Linton can explain further if necessary. Following one incident, Cllr Linton got the booker's details from The Great Dane but these proved to be false. Neighbours reported youths on the roof of the pavilion on 30<sup>th</sup> March, and this information has been passed on to the cricket club. Following the meeting, no other concerns have been raised.

The committee's next meeting remains scheduled for 18<sup>th</sup> May 2026.

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

2<sup>nd</sup> April 2026

## **Audit & Governance Committee**

Cllr Mathias is chairman of this committee.

The committee met on 9<sup>th</sup> March.

The committee considered the council's current way of handling its draft Minutes and agreed this did not need to change at the moment. The committee also considered a suggestion the council made audio recordings of all its meetings; the committee was undecided and agreed to seek advice from our internal auditor.

The committee agreed to extend our internal auditor's contract by a further three years. Although with the same company, the council would see a different person in the role after the end of the current financial year's work.

The committee agreed to review the council's insurance policy at the committee's next meeting. The committee also agreed to recommend to Finance & General Purposes the council pays for an up-to-date insurance rebuild valuation for the council's three buildings. This was a recommendation from the SLCC Sussex branch meeting I attended in January. I have asked for a quotation from our insurer broker's preferred supplier.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

10<sup>th</sup> March 2026

## **Community Engagement Committee**

Cllr Linton is the chairman of this committee.

The committee met on 23<sup>rd</sup> March.

Some updates:

**Warm Welcome Space 2026** – average attendance at the sessions held so far has increased from 23 last month to 24. Our thanks to all community volunteers who have helped so far this year: Chris and Valerie, John, Naomi, Linda, Margo and Mark. Alison, Dawn and I have all taken a turn at helping out too when the number of attendees booked has been high. The committee started to discuss some thoughts about next year.

**Playscheme, October 2026** – the committee is planning a family event for October 2026, two one-hour sessions. More information in due course.

**East Preston Festival, 5<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> June** – the council is directly involved with three sessions of free tennis coaching on the Warren Recreation Ground, *Come and Meet Your Local Councillors* at the Council Office on 6<sup>th</sup> June, and *Putter Madness* mini-golf on the Village Green on 9<sup>th</sup> June.

**St Mary the Virgin Christmas Tree Festival, 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> December** – the committee agreed the council should again participate in the Christmas Tree Festival and Cllrs Chapman and Duff agreed to lead on the council's participation again.

**Youth Provision** – the council continues to work with Angmering and Rustington Parish Councils in working towards a local youth better informed about social opportunities available to them in the three villages.

**Newsletter No. 78, Spring 2026** – the committee discussed possible content for the next newsletter. If any councillor has any suggestions for items, please let me know.

Councillors and I took part in the beach clean on Sunday, 29<sup>th</sup> March. This was the first beach clean jointly organised with KEPT (Keep East Preston Tidy) and over fifty people joined in. Councillors in attendance were Cllrs Toney, Linton, Chapman, Duff and Gunston.

More rubbish was collected than has been collected for a while, not just because there were more participants.



Photograph courtesy of Sue Hickey and KEPT

Later in the day, Sue Hickey, leader of KEPT, contacted the council and thanked it for its support of the event. “Thanks to you as ever for organising the event. An event of this size is beyond KEPT at the moment but we would be happy to do it again as a joint enterprise with Parish Council.” This will need to be discussed at the committee’s next meeting. On the morning after the event, I sent a thank you message to all the community volunteers for whom I had an email address.

We have completed a feedback form to Arun District Council in recognition of the grant awarded to this year’s season of Warm Welcome Space sessions.

The committee’s next meeting will be on 8<sup>th</sup> June.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

7<sup>th</sup> April 2026

## **Finance & General Purposes Committee**

Cllr McElroy is the chairman of this committee.

The committee did not meet in March.

The committee’s next meeting is scheduled for 12<sup>th</sup> May. One of its main items for that evening will be consideration of the applications received for this year’s Grant Aid.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

7<sup>th</sup> April 2026

## **Major Events Committee**

Cllr Linton is Chairman of the committee.

The committee did not meet in March, however an update follow.

**Funday Sunday, 19<sup>th</sup> April** – tickets have sold well although there are still a few left at the time of writing. Councillors helping with the event have been issued with details of what they need to be doing and when. Any questions on that should be directed to Cllr Chapman.

The committee's next meeting is scheduled for 20<sup>th</sup> April.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

7<sup>th</sup> April 2026

## **Personnel Committee**

Cllr Duff is the chairman of this committee.

The committee did not meet in March.

**Training** – having agreed it would be a good idea to arrange some chairmanship training for all councillors, I have booked an evening session with Mulberry Local Authority Services on Monday, 29<sup>th</sup> June. Please put this date in your diary.

The session will be in person and led by Celia Price, until recently the Clerk at Lancing Parish Council and now a full-time trainer. The session will take place at East Preston Infant School and will start at 18:30, a bit earlier if everyone is there and ready.

**Work experience** – the council will be hosting a work experience student during the week beginning 1<sup>st</sup> June. The committee would like all committee chairmen to be available to spend some time with the student explaining the role of their committee(s). The student is very interested in politics and local government and will be tasked with writing an article for the Summer 2026 Newsletter whilst working here. Councillors who are not chairmen are equally welcome to spend some time with the student explaining their own contribution to the council and how that impacts the wider village.

The committee's next meeting is scheduled for 20<sup>th</sup> April.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

16<sup>th</sup> March 2026

## **Planning & Licensing Committee**

Cllr Bowman is chairman of the committee.

The committee only met on 9<sup>th</sup> March.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> March, the committee considered two applications. The committee agreed not to object to either.

On 18<sup>th</sup> March, Cllr Moore represented the council at a meeting of the ADC Planning Committee. Cllr Moore explained the council's concerns about the external seating proposed for the rear of the

new restaurant coming to the northern shops. The Planning Officer's report to the committee addressed these concerns thus: "Building Control confirm the work would be controlled under the Building Regulations (including fire safety). There is no change of use in terms of the Building Regulations, but there is a small extension, internal alterations including ventilation to the kitchen and new toilet facilities which would be assessed. The work would require statutory consultation with the Fire Authority. The outdoor seating area and its impact on providing a clear fire route would be considered as part of that process."

There were no applications to consider on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March so the meeting was cancelled.

ADC has chosen an independent examiner for the revised East Preston Neighbourhood Plan. The Regulation 16 consultation period closed on 2<sup>nd</sup> April. I have asked ADC to let me know how many people responded to the consultation but have not yet received that information.

On 1<sup>st</sup> April, ADC informed us the council was not eligible for any Community Infrastructure Levy payments for the period October 2025 to March 2026.

The committee's next meeting is on 14<sup>th</sup> April at which it will discuss, amongst other things, a licensing application received from The Podgy Spaniel, which is looking for permission to serve alcohol between 10:00 and 23:00 each day apart from Sunday, 10:00 to 22:00.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

7<sup>th</sup> April 2026

Personnel – Cllr Duff alerted councillors to the Chairmanship Training, for all councillors, scheduled for 29<sup>th</sup> June. This was for all councillors not only to enable them to be better chairmen but also to enable them to be more supportive of chairmen.

Cllrs Toney and Wilkinson said they were unable to attend on that night.

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

## **248/26 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 March.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

7<sup>th</sup> April 2026

### **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 and an article has been published in the Winter 2026 newsletter.

I encouraged members of the public to complete the survey before the end of March. The working party will need to meet to consider the results further, but 345 people completed the survey of which 223 voted Yes to a 20mph speed limit in the village, 115 against and 9 unsure. Asked whether they would prefer a 20mph to cover the whole village or just the original proposal of Sea Road, Fairlands and The Street), 170 said the whole village, 78 said the original three roads, 7

were unsure but only 90 said neither (90 as opposed to the 115 against a 20mph zone in the first question).

The last five freeform comments recorded show a reasonable cross-section of opinion:

“Possibly to make the road past the library one way?”

“I am not sure a 20mph limit would have any effect on some of the drivers and wonder how speeders will be recorded.”

“Also work at BN16 1JN and people speed fast all the junctions. Drivers don't think about drivers coming out of the junctions”

“Sadly, we all think “we know best” and road safety seems very low on many drivers’ agenda. I’ve noticed that the “yellow box” by the rail crossing is now often being ignored too.”

“Action should be sooner rather than later. Don’t wait for the inevitable!”

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

7<sup>th</sup> April 2026

## **Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation (Devo WP)**

Cllr Gunston is chairman of this working party which is currently dormant. Cllr Gunston has put forward some thoughts at Agenda Item 14a below.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

25<sup>th</sup> March 2026

## **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**

7<sup>th</sup> April 2026

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

Cllr Wilkinson is the chairman of this working party.

On 25<sup>th</sup> March, our negotiator in the matter of the lease renewal to East Preston & Kingston Bowls Club advised us his counterpart had advised he was scheduled to meet with club on 10<sup>th</sup> April.

I do not anticipate a further update before this meeting.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

27<sup>th</sup> March 2026

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

## **249/26 DEVOLUTION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION WORKING PARTY**

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

### **Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation Working Party**

**Council is asked to consider a response to the statement made to parliament by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Steve Reed MP, on 25<sup>th</sup> March.**

As Chairman of the working party, Cllr Gunston will lead on this item. Cllr Gunston accepts there are some pretty big agenda items above and this item may be deferred until May.

Cllr Gunston has provided the following discussion points:

***Quotes from Steve Reed letter - "The consultation revealed a concern that the two unitary proposal risks diluting the rural identity and economic profile of areas like Chichester by grouping them with coastal districts."***

- Shaping West Sussex - "Prosperous communities in the north (of Chichester) help balance economic challenges experienced in some coastal areas, creating a diverse and resilient socio-economic landscape and the opportunity to leverage the area's combined economic strengths and social diversity to build resilience and promote balanced growth."
- Part of Chichester is on the coast!
- Not all coastal districts have the same identity or economic profile. How different are East Preston and Littlehampton?

***"I note that there was also some support from Adur and Worthing for the concept of a coastal unitary which could focus on specific coastal challenges and local needs."***

- Some support - who from?
- Arun, Adur and Worthing - circa 350,000 - well below suggested 500,000.
- West Sussex leaders discounted Arun, Adur Worthing and Southern part of Chichester - failed financial viability criteria. How is Arun, Adur and Worthing without any of Chichester viable?
- Beccy Cooper told us at our first meeting the coastal strip would happen so was the consultation a sham?

***"I also received representations from other government departments that Chichester should be placed with Horsham as it would be a better fit in terms of needs and demographics.."***

- Which departments?
- All district and borough councils in West Sussex supported Chichester, Arun, Worthing, Adur so why introduce another proposal?

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

7<sup>th</sup> April 2026

Cllr Gunston said he would be happy to talk to any councillor on this matter.

## **250/26 WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL**

County Cllr Elkins had sent his apologies for this meeting as it would not have been possible to move him up the agenda.

## **251/26 ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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

252/26 SUSSEX POLICE

No report had been received.

253/26 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. **Northern shops incident, 1<sup>st</sup> March**
6. **Launch of Whistlestop Arts Arun Valley Line podcast Series 2, 11<sup>th</sup> March**
7. **Meeting with Dr Beccy Cooper MP, 13<sup>th</sup> March**
8. **Community Speedwatch (CSW), 17<sup>th</sup> March**
9. **Persimmon Homes Thames Valley community consultation, 18<sup>th</sup> March**
10. **Warm Welcome Space, 25<sup>th</sup> March**
11. **Social media**
12. **MailChimp stats**
13. **A selection of things we have been asked since the last meeting**
14. **Recent bouquets and complaints**
15. **Leave**
16. **April meetings and events**

1. **Introduction**

This is the report mainly covering March 2026 and matters which may not arise elsewhere on the agenda.

2. **Police matters**

Following a report from a concerned resident, I asked PCSO Raj to visit Clarence Drive a few afternoons during school pick-up time. The resident has seen an increase in arguments triggered by inconsiderate parking in Clarence Drive by parents and grandparents collecting children from the schools.

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**

One Freedom of Information request this month, requiring the input of Cllr Duff as Chairman of the Personnel Committee.

#### 5. **Northern shops incident, 1<sup>st</sup> March**

Further to the incident in January when a driver knocked over and drove over two of the council's safety bollards at the northern shops, the council included an article in the Winter 2026 Newsletter questioning whether a driver that could do that seemingly unknowingly should be driving. As councillors will know, subsequently, that driver was visited by Sussex Police and, although he had voluntarily decided to stop driving, he had his licence taken off him during that visit.

On Sunday, 1<sup>st</sup> March, an elderly lady driver was witnessed driving into the service road from the north and, apparently, accelerating rather than braking, resulting in damage to the grass verge and the street-sign. Thankfully, the street-sign slowed her down sufficiently she did not drive straight back out into traffic on North Lane.



I reported the damaged street-sign to ADC, but did not report the damaged verge to WSCC as it will grow back in its own time. ADC responded quickly about the street-sign but no remedial work appears to have happened yet.

#### 6. **Launch of Whistlestop Arts Arun Valley Line podcast Series 2, 11<sup>th</sup> March**

On 21<sup>st</sup> August last year, as recorded in Minute 684/25, I recorded some content for the second series of the Whistlestop Arts Arun Valley Line podcast. Today was the launch of the second series, six episodes, one for each of the six railway stations within the Arun district.

The launch was held at The Track, a coworking and business support space within an old station building. The launch was hosted by ADC. After some networking time, we were all escorted over to The Picturedrome, Screen 2, where free popcorn was available for those who wanted. After some introductory speeches, we then watched promotional videos for both series of the podcast.

The whole event lasted just under two hours during which I got to speak to some ADC officers I don't usually don't get a chance to talk to.

Four four-minute trailers can be found on the Whistlestop Arts YouTube channel, and the podcasts can be found at a number of podcast providers.

## 7. Meeting with Dr Beccy Cooper MP, 13<sup>th</sup> March

When elected in July 2024, Dr Beccy Cooper said she would meet with the parish council regularly. This was the third such meeting. To enable as many councillors as wanted to attend, the meeting was held in the meeting room at East Preston Infant School.

On this occasion, Beccy was accompanied by Ian Walker, a Constituency Support Officer. Councillors in attendance were: Cllrs Bowman, Chapman, Duff, Gale, Gunston, Linton, McElroy and Moore. Cllrs Toney, Hill and Bradshaw had given their apologies.

Topics covered included Southern Water and water quality, devolution and local government reorganisation, the future of Zachary Merton and other healthcare services, Arun's Local Plan and development, the Financial Services Compensation Scheme, Roundstone Level Crossing, Youth Emotional Support and other social care matters, and housing.

I'll let individual councillors comment upon this meeting as they wish, remembering the council is non-party political. There did not seem to be an issue Beccy was not prepared to take away and follow up on.

As the meeting drew to a close, Cllr Linton thanked Beccy for having visited. Beccy replied, thanking the parish council which, like many town and parish councils, she believed was "genuinely doing a good job."

Personally, I think the format of having as many councillors present as possible worked, as all councillors speak for different sections of the community at different times.



Dr Beccy Cooper MP, third from the left, with (l-r) Cllrs Moore, Bowman, Gunston, Linton, Gale and McElroy, photographed in the library at East Preston Infant School

## 8. Community Speedwatch (CSW), 17<sup>th</sup> March

Together with coordinator, Gavin Bernard, this was my first CSW shift of the year. Unexpectedly, we were joined by two Sussex Police officers, Kevin and Dale.

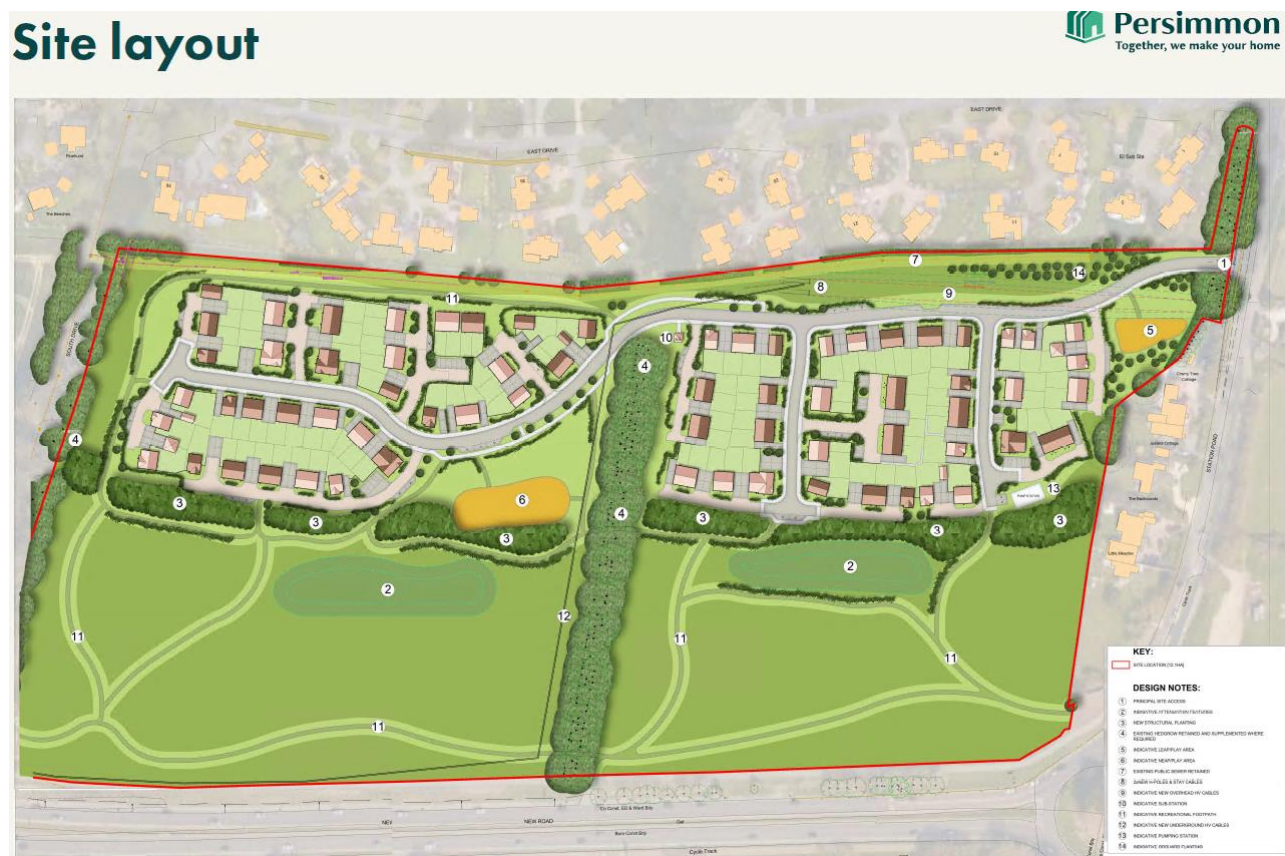
We were outside the Village Hall for the hour from 09:00. In that hour, there were 240 vehicle movements past us, and we recorded three cars travelling above the threshold. These will be reported to Sussex Police through the correct CSW portal.

Meanwhile, Dale spotted a woman driving into the Village Hall car-park not wearing her seatbelt. He went and spoke to her, and this uncovered the fact the woman had no insurance and a call to

her insurance company did not result in her being covered there and then. The police would not let her drive or walk home, but insisted she was given a lift home by a friend. A friend was found, but then he managed to hit another car in the car-park as he was getting his car into position to drive the woman home. I suspect the situation may have worsened further but our CSW shift was over and I returned to the office.

**9. Persimmon Homes Thames Valley community consultation, 18<sup>th</sup> March**

I attended this event at Angmering Village Hall at which the agents for Persimmon Homes Thames Valley shared the proposals for developing the land opposite Sainsbury’s better South Drive and Station Road, Angmering. The proposal is for 116 new homes, some of which would apparently be bungalows, to the north of the plot, the southern half of the plot being kept as permanent parkland:



Attendees had until 27<sup>th</sup> March to comment in this round of consultation. The event was held in the smallest possible room within the Village Hall and was well-attended at the time I was there.

This council’s Planning & Licensing Committee will undoubtedly liaise with Angmering Parish Council when the company starts to submit planning applications.

**10. Warm Welcome Space, 25<sup>th</sup> March**

Together with Cllrs Gunston and Hill, I attended this final session of the 2026 Warm Welcome Space season. There were 30 guests. An average of 25 lunches were served each week for twelve weeks.

The mood was mixed for this session. Attendees were sad this was the last session for this season but seemed determined to make the most of it. Dawn joined us just as guests were finishing their lunch. On behalf of the council, Dawn handed a bunch of spring daffodils to each guest plus members of Royal British Legion staff. This session also played host to the oldest attendee to date,

a man aged 102; he was delighted to be there and signed up to parish council e-newsletters so he does not miss out on future events and initiatives. As they left, most attendees expressed their thanks to the council, the Legion staff, the community volunteers and back this up with hugs and smiles. A couple of Thank You donations were made and these have been passed on to the Chairman's Charity.

I carried out a short survey with most of the attendees. Unsurprisingly, they all want the council to run a season of Warm Welcome Space sessions next year too. Fuller survey results will be presented to a future Community Engagement Committee meeting.

### 11. **Social Media**

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

- Post advising the council contractors' mower had failed part-way through mowing the Village Green and this was why the Village Green had only been partly mowed – 1,753 people
- Post advising of the temporary closure of Beechlands Close – 1,360
- Post advising of the temporary closure of Willowhayne Crescent on 18<sup>th</sup> March, an event which did not transpire – 756

(posts up to and including 7<sup>th</sup> April)

The number of Followers is currently 2,007, an increase of 14 on the last report.

### 12. **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 – 26<sup>th</sup> February – sent to 956 subscribers, opened by 718 (75.1%)

Parish Council news – 5<sup>th</sup> March – sent to 955, opened by 706 (74%)

Parish Council news – 12<sup>th</sup> March – sent to 954, opened by 706 (74%)

Parish Council news – 19<sup>th</sup> March – sent to 958, opened by 690 (72%)

Parish Council news – 27<sup>th</sup> March – sent to 959, opened by 699 (73%)

Parish Council news – 2<sup>nd</sup> April – sent to 960, opened by 686 (71.5%)

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

“Do you think we should organise a funeral for [a former East Preston resident]? Would enough people attend?”

The question was asked by a solicitor acting as an executor of the former resident. This was not a question I had ever been asked before. As three weeks had already passed by the time I was asked and as the resident was known for her ability to fall out with people, I suggested a funeral was probably an unnecessary expense.

“Does the council have a policy about the scattering of ashes on council land?”

The council does not have an explicit policy. I think this has happened twice in my time, and on both occasions we simply asked those involved to be discreet.

“Someone from [a political party] has been knocking at doors and asking questions like:

I could find no relevant guidance online, so I asked ADC Elections team for some help. The head of the team provided two documents provided to prospective

Did you vote in the general elections, who did you vote for, will you be voting in the local election, who will you be voting for. Is this sort of questioning allowed by law?”

candidates, one of five pages, one of 97 pages. A quick look through the documents highlighted no guidance for how canvassers should treat householders. I advised the questioner to terminate the conversation should anything offensive be said and to call the police if necessary.

“I believe my property is in the wrong council tax band. How do I appeal this?”

Contact the Valuation Office Agency via <https://www.arun.gov.uk/council-tax-bands/> or 03000 501501.

“The school is thinking of hosting a car-boot sale and a colour run, what permission do we need?”

No permission directly from the parish council but some permissions may be needed from Arun District Council. Contact details given.

“Do you have a contact for Preston Hall Residents’ Association?”

Yes.

“Do you know who owns the cut-through from Sea Road to South Strand?”

No. Referred questioner to Land Registry.

#### 14. **Recent bouquets and complaints**

(In addition to anything reported above)

From a resident of The Street, after I had given him information about the allotments, “Thank you so much for the thorough update Simon. The allotments are perfect for me!”

From two residents of Lashmar Road when subscribing to the e-newsletter service, “Please enrol us in the East Preston ‘e-news’ as featured in the latest edition of the Parish Council’s winter news letter! Which, incidentally we think is excellent!”

From a resident of Hillview Crescent, “What a fantastic newsletter the latest one is.”

Thanks from a resident of Sea Road whom Alison and I looked after when she had an unstoppable nosebleed. Alison called an ambulance which took the resident to hospital when the bleeding could not be stopped.

Thanks from the Junior School contact for the information on ADC licensing, “As usual Simon, you have been very helpful.”

From the resident of Palm Court Cottages who enquired about the cut-through between Sea Road and South Strand, “Thanks for your email, very helpful as always. The map you sent will be invaluable.”

#### 15. **Leave**

I have booked off the 23<sup>rd</sup> April, so far. Dawn has taken off 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> April.

#### 16. **April Meetings and Events**

This list may be incomplete and is subject to change. Where committee meetings fall on the same day, the timings of these meetings may also be subject to change.

- 1<sup>st</sup> East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation committee meeting (10:00, Village Hall) (CB only)
- 11<sup>th</sup> East Preston Repair Café (10:00, East Preston Infant School)
- 13<sup>th</sup> Full Council (19:00, East Preston Infant School)

- 14<sup>th</sup> Planning & Licensing Committee (18:00, East Preston Infant School)
- 19<sup>th</sup> *FunDay Sunday* (14:00-17:00, Village Hall)
- 20<sup>th</sup> Personnel Committee (18:00, East Preston Infant School)  
Major Events Committee (19:00, East Preston Infant School)
- 22<sup>nd</sup> South Strand Community Toilets Annual General Meeting (12:00, Littlehampton)
- 27<sup>th</sup> Planning & Licensing Committee (18:00, East Preston Infant School)

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

7<sup>th</sup> April 2026

**Item 7 – Meeting with Dr Beccy Cooper MP** – Cllr Linton reported Dr Cooper had agreed to provide a signed bottle of House of Commons champagne for inclusion in the East Preston Festival grand prize draw. Additionally, the winner would be invited for a tour of the Houses of Parliament with Dr Cooper.

254/26 **EXTERNAL MEETINGS AND EVENTS**

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

**Other meetings and events – Part 1**

**Council is asked to note any reports from Members attending other meetings and events.**

**Meeting with Dr Beccy Cooper MP, 13<sup>th</sup> March**

**East Preston Infant School**

As reported above, this meeting was attended by Cllrs Bowman, Chapman, Duff, Gale, Gunston, Linton, McElroy and Moore. Any of these may wish to comment upon the meeting.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

8<sup>th</sup> April 2026

**East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation meeting,  
1<sup>st</sup> April**

**East Preston & Kingston Village Hall**

The Meeting ran to schedule and all matters arising from the previous meeting were covered and discussed.

1. The EPPC and Men in Sheds were represented at the meeting to discuss the following:
  - EPPC and EPKVH discussed the result of the ROSPA Report in relation to the playing of cricket on the VG. Although fewer games will now be played in the VG the EPKVH felt that it would be prudent for them to have a copy of the fixtures for the Season to allow those Hirers using the VH on match days to be made aware. The committee felt the fixture list had not been received in recent years.
  - Discussion took place between MIS and EPKVH regarding amendments to their Policies and Procedures to bring them up to date and all amendments were agreed including an increase in the hire rate with effect from April 2026. EPKVH took on board the usual concerns about poor wi-fi and there will be an upgrade soon.

2. The ramp out of the exit doors from the Miller Barn is now in situ and the ramp only requires some form of slip matting as a runoff from the ramp and that EPPC would be looking into this.
3. A decision was made that the first priority is to replace the current boiler, which is 15 years old, due to its erratic heating! This does not affect the hot water, cooking and toilet facilities. The cost is around £5,386.86 and should take place after the Summer Festival.
4. Another large payment, which will take second priority, is to repair the flooring in the Warren Room at a hefty cost of £7,000.
5. Confirmation that no cheques from hirers will now be processed and all payments should be made by bank transfer.
6. Currently there is a hold on the replacement of the cameras as this current year has some hefty bills to pay.

Next Meeting is pencilled in for the Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> June @ 10.00.

Cllr Christine Bowman –  
**East Preston Parish Council official representative to East  
Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation**

2<sup>nd</sup> April 2026

Cllr Bowman advised she would be standing down as the council's representative to the Village Hall Foundation. She had agreed to become the secretary of the Trustees and therefore could not be the council's representative too. Cllr Chapman volunteered to take on this role; this would be subject to a vote at the Annual Meeting of the Council on 11<sup>th</sup> May.

#### **255/26 NEW ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING (11<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2026)**

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

### **New items to be referred to the next meeting – 11<sup>th</sup> May 2026**

Please note the Annual Meeting of the Council will start at 18:00 on 11<sup>th</sup> May and will have a reduced agenda. The meeting will be followed by the Annual Parish Meeting with a scheduled start time of 19:00.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

7<sup>th</sup> April 2026

Details of the Annual Meeting of the Parish would be discussed at the Major Events Committee meeting scheduled for 20<sup>th</sup> April.

Nothing was suggested.

#### **256/26 118-120 SEA ROAD, EAST PRESTON**

The council NOTED the following reports 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 future of 118-120 Sea Road, East Preston.** Cllrs Toney, Linton, Bowman and Gunston have been leading on this for the council to date.

Cllrs Bowman, Gunston and Toney and the Clerk had been around the building with a local buildings expert for 90 minutes on the morning of 10<sup>th</sup> April. They were meeting with Cllr Linton on 14<sup>th</sup> April to discuss this further.

The meeting ended at 20:19.

Chairman: **Cllr Steve Toney**    Date: **11<sup>th</sup> May 2026**

END