



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, 7th September 2026 at East Preston Infant School, Lashmar Road, East Preston
- PRESENT:** Councillors Christine Bowman, Andrea Chapman, Lisa Duff, Barbara Gale, John Gunston, Helen Hill, Elizabeth Linton, Glyn Mathias, Steve Toney (Chairman)
- ALSO:** Simon Cross, Clerk to the Council
- Hope Blandamer, West Sussex County Council (until 18:52)
- Cllr Roger Elkins, West Sussex County Council (until 19:14)
- Cllrs Philippa Bower and Ricky Bower, Arun District Council (until 19:14)
- Nicola Harlow and Janine Nicholson, East Preston Festival Committee (until 19:43)
- Sally Ward, East Preston & Kingston Royal British Legion (until 19:14)
- Roy Allen (left at 19:42), Dorothy Lee (from 18:58), John McAdams and Adrian Passfield (all three left at 19:47)
- Three members of the Warren Recreation Ground Safety Group (all left at 19:47)
- ABSENT:** Councillors Kit Bradshaw, Rick McElroy, David Moore and Steven Wilkinson
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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 19:00.

702/26 **INTRODUCTIONS**

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

703/26 WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL, EMERGENCY COMMUNITY HUBS

The meeting received a presentation from Hope Blandamer, West Sussex County Council Resilience & Emergencies Team Adviser. Ms Blandamer had contacted the council in July suggesting East Preston might be a perfect location to establish an Emergency Community Hub (CHub). The Clerk had taken Ms Blandamer's correspondence to the Community Engagement Committee which had agreed to invite Ms Blandamer to present her idea to this meeting.

A CHub is a place where a community comes together during times of crisis to support each other, to link in with other local communities and agencies and to coordinate local help. The idea was the development of an idea tried and tested in New Zealand.

The CHub programme currently had six parishes in the county on-board. The programme aimed to build on pre-existing networks within a community. A hub would be a space only opened when needed and could operate from a school, a church, a village hall or a council building. A hub would require maybe five or six lead volunteers who would be responsible for activating it in an emergency.

A hub would be a place where members of the public could seek trusted information which would be provided by other agencies such as the county council, its Fire & Rescue Service or Sussex Police. It would also be a place where local people could volunteer to help and the model includes a Needs & Offers Officer who would be responsible for matching up those in need with the right volunteer.

Once it had been agreed a hub would be created, WSCC would provide a small box of essential items such as a guide book, lanyards for lead volunteers, hi-vis wear and suchlike. WSCC would lead training sessions. All would be provided at no cost to the community.

Cllr Gale said she and her husband were both licensed radio operators. Ms Blandamer said that was fantastic and just the sort of hidden skills the programme hoped to draw out.

Cllr Gunston mentioned the meeting he had had with the National Emergency Trust (see Minute xxx/26 below) and asked whether WSCC was working with the Trust on this. Hope replied the two organisations were not working together specifically on this programme but did work closely together as parts of the Sussex Resilience Forum.

Cllr Toney mentioned the village was host to one of the village's Fire Emergency Support Vehicles.

With no further questions or comments forthcoming, Cllr Toney thanked Ms Blandamer for her presentation.

(Ms Blandamer left at the conclusion of this item.)

704/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology and a reason for absence were received from Cllrs Bradshaw, McElroy, Moore and Wilkinson.

2149 The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously to accept the apologies received from Cllrs Bradshaw (away), McElroy and Moore (both ill) and Wilkinson (unavailable).

An apology had also been received from Mrs Mhairi Sharp.

705/26 DECLARATION OF PERSONAL AND/OR PREJUDICIAL/PECUNIARY INTERESTS

No interests were declared.

706/26 PUBLIC SESSION 1

No member of the public accepted the invitation to address the meeting at this point.

707/26 WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL – ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

The following report had been circulated ahead of the meeting:

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Mrs Ward introduced herself and explained why the British Legion branch felt there was a need for extended parking restrictions at the junction of The Street with North Lane.

Mrs Ward said she believed additional parking restrictions in this area would benefit everyone in the village.

2150 The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously the council should support the British Legion's bid for extended parking restrictions at the junction of The Street with North Lane.

708/26 WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

(Mrs Lee joined the meeting during this item.)

County Cllr Elkins said he would also support the British Legion's bid but stressed there were numerous Traffic Regulation Order requests across the county and only a finite amount of resources to address them.

Cllr Elkins talked about capped bus fares within the county.

Cllr Elkins reported the government's plans for local government reorganisation had once again been put on hold. This had only been announced on the day of the meeting so more information would hopefully become available in due course.

Cllr Elkins also reported the WSCC Library Service offered a number of reading challenges throughout the year, for people of all ages and for fans of different genres. More information could be found at local libraries or online.

Finally, Cllr Elkins reported WSCC had not agreed to the proposals in the recent ADC Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) consultation, particularly in respect of Kingston and Ferring parishes.

709/26 PUBLIC SESSION 2

Mrs L asked whether the council could contact the Diocese of Chichester which was implementing a regime of limited what ornaments could be left upon graves in the churchyard at St Mary the Virgin. Mrs L said there were large trees in the churchyard which were at risk of falling whilst ornaments on graves, including baby conifers were no risk to anyone. Mrs L said the ornaments all had to be removed by the end of the month. Cllr Mathias said he believed this was not a new instruction from the Diocese of Chichester but was maybe being more stringently applied than ever before. The council **AGREED** the Clerk should write to the churchwardens to find out more about this.

Mrs L asked for an update on the playing of cricket on the Warren Recreation Ground and Mr P asked whether the council had information on how many balls had been hit out of the ground during the 2026 season. The Clerk replied the council had a meeting with representatives of East Preston Cricket Club on 8th September and that the club produced a report for the council after each home match within which were details of the number of balls that had gone out of the ground.

710/26 ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

District Cllr Ricky Bower followed on from County Cllr Elkins's comment on the LCWIP, advising the ADC Planning Policy Committee had been presented with a revised proposed route through Ferring and Kingston but the map provided had been too small to understand and comment upon.

Cllr Bower also the district's Community Infrastructure Levy list of proposed improvements to support new development across the district. The local NH had bid to have two entries on the list, both related to the provision of health services at the former Littlehampton Hospital site, be removed from the list. ADC had refused this request. A hospital needed to be recommissioned for the site.

Picking up on Mrs L.'s concerns, Cllr Bower stated ADC was only there to administer the grounds maintenance of the St Mary the Virgin graveyard not to set the rules.

District Cllr Philippa Bower declined the invitation to address the meeting.

(Cllrs Elkins, Bower and Bower and Mrs Ward left the meeting at this point.)

711/26 MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING HELD ON 3RD AUGUST 2026

The draft Minutes were circulated to all councillors on 4th August asking for suggested amendments by 11th August. None were received.

- 2151** The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously the Chairman could sign the Minutes as a true record of the meeting held on 3rd August. Cllr Toney duly did so.

712/26 UPDATE ON MATTERS IN THE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

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

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

713/26 FINANCIAL MATTERS

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

- 2152** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the Outstanding Purchase Orders report for 2026/27, value £2,086.00 (exc. VAT).
- 2153** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the Regular Monthly Payments reports for August 2026 totalling £1,398.09 (inc. VAT).
- 2154** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the Supplier BACS Invoices Paid reports for August 2026 totalling £5,756.29 (inc. VAT).
- 2155** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the List of Sales Receipts & Bank Receipts by Bank report for financial year to date totalling £2,831.62 (inc. VAT) for August 2026 (Year to Date, £190,284.45).

The council NOTED the Bank Reconciliations to 14th August 2026.

The council NOTED the Budget Summary for 2026/27 to date including earmarked reserves.

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

714/26 REPORTS FROM PARISH COUNCIL COMMITTEES

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

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Amenities – the Assistant Clerk had been advised WSCC would reinstate the bollards at the bottom of Sea Lane during the week beginning 14th September.

Community Engagement – Cllr Linton said she had had initial conversations with two representatives of the British Legion and it seemed likely Warm Welcome Space for 2027 would revert to a Monday. Monday had been the preferred date for attendees and also avoided the clash with the U3A cribbage club which had affected the 2026 season. This would be discussed further at the committee's next meeting.

Flat & Frontage – Cllr Gunston confirmed the replacement windows had been ordered and we were waiting for an installation date.

Major Events – Cllr Linton advised the committee meeting scheduled for 19th October had been put back to 26th October to allow the Clerk a full week of leave. All committee members had already been informed.

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

715/26 EAST PRESTON COMMUNITY BOARDWALK

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

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Cllr Hill reported she had failed in her attempts to talk with Cllr Matt Stanley at ADC. She had been more successful in a conversation with RoSPA where the person she spoke to confirmed the drawings were probably sufficient to confirm the soundness of the design but a Risk Assessment could be commissioned for about £1,500.

Mr Allen said he had asked Adur District Council to provide its risk assessment for the boardwalk at Shoreham Beach and had been advised there was no risk assessment.

The Clerk confirmed he too had failed to elicit a response from District Cllr Stanley. He reminded the council he had spoken to Karl McLaughlin in about 2023 on the subject of ADC boardwalks but those conversations had ended when Mr Allen progressed his proposals for a boardwalk. Mr McLaughlin was no longer at ADC but the Clerk had approached his manager for help with casting an expert eye over the boardwalk. Cllr Wilkinson had drafted a letter which the Clerk had sent to the Public Rights of Way (PROW) team at WSCC pretty much asking the same question. He had received an initial response in answer to which he provided some photographs and a location plan.

Mr Allen again explained how the asset would revert to the Crown once Sea Road Beach Access Ltd. was formally wound up by Companies House, after which it could not be insured.

Cllr Bowman asked whether it would be possible for a community group to be formed to maintain the boardwalk, such as existed for South Strand toilets. Mr Allen replied such a group was effectively maintaining the boardwalk already.

The question was asked whether the council insuring the boardwalk implied the council accepted ownership. Cllr Gunston said this was essential information. He stated again he believed the boardwalk to be a fabulous asset to the village but not something for which the council needed to be responsible. Mr Allen said as long as the boardwalk was covered by the council's insurance he would be the only person with any personal liability as he had been the designer.

Mrs H said the boardwalk was indeed a huge asset for the village. She agreed with Mr Allen the council's resolution from April 2026 implied the council was now the owner of the boardwalk although no agreement or paperwork had been signed.

2156 The council **RESOLVED** to accept the gift of the East Preston Community Boardwalk and to insure it as soon as practical.

Five councillors voted in favour, three against and one abstained.

(Mr Allen left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.)

716/26 MAJOR EVENTS COMMITTEE – EVENT SECURITY

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

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On behalf of the East Preston Festival Committee, Mrs H said it would happily hire the equipment from the council as this would save the committee much in delivery costs, money which could then be distributed to worthy causes around the village.

2157 The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve expenditure of approximately £800 to buy safety barriers and related equipment for use at events.

This would be funded from the council's contingency budget line for the current year.

(Both representatives of East Preston Festival Committee all left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.)

717/26 REPORTS FROM PARISH COUNCIL WORKING PARTIES

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

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Nothing was added.

718/26 SUSSEX POLICE

No report had been received.

719/26 CLERK'S REPORT

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

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Item 2 – Police matters – in response to a question from Cllr Linton, the Clerk advised nothing further had been forthcoming about the red string mystery. He restated, despite concerns raised by members of the public, there had never been any threat of decapitation and the string had not been behind the beach chalets at all.

720/26 EXTERNAL MEETINGS AND EVENTS

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

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Cllr Chapman said she had nothing to report about the East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation Annual General Meeting.

721/26 RESPONSE TO EXTERNAL MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Cllr Gunston confirmed the Clerk would let Mhairi Sharp, the Chief Executive of the National Emergency Trust know about this evening's presentation about Emergency Community Hubs as she had wanted to attend the meeting but had been unable to do so.

722/26 NEW ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING (5TH OCTOBER 2026)

Nothing to report.

723/26 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

The six remaining members without the need for a council resolution.

724/26 CONFIDENTIAL – PERSONNEL COMMITTEE: STAFFING

(The Clerk excused himself from some of the discussion of this item.)

2158- The council AGREED unanimously to changes and actions related to the council’s staffing structure.
2161

The meeting ended at 20:00.

Chairman: Date: **5th October 2026**
Cllr Steve Toney

END