



EAST PRESTON PARISH COUNCIL

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AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

MINUTES: of the Committee Meeting held on Monday 13th July, 2026 at 19:00 at Council Office 2, 118 Sea Road, East Preston

PRESENT: Councillors Christine Bowman, Lisa Duff, John Gunston, Rick McElroy (Chairman) and Steve Toney

ALSO: Clerk to the Council, Simon Cross

ABSENT: Councillors Elizabeth Linton and Glyn Mathias

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The following abbreviations may appear in these Minutes:

ADC – Arun District Council

WSCC – West Sussex County Council

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The meeting opened at 18:56.

Following the Annual Meeting of the Council on 11th May and the appointment of chairmen to the council's other committees, the membership of the committee was Cllrs Bowman, Duff and McElroy with two vacancies. As Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council respectively, Cllrs Toney and Linton were entitled to attend and vote at meetings of this committee. Cllrs Gunston and Mathias had been willing to join the committee, which council agreed on 6th July (Minute 508/26, Resolution 2133).

In advance of the meeting, the Clerk had written to all committee members asking if any would be willing to stand as Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the committee; none had volunteered to stand for either role.

521/26 APPOINTMENT OF A COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN FOR THE YEAR 2026/27

Cllr Mathias was appointed unopposed.

All five councillors present had voted.

522/26 APPOINTMENT OF A COMMITTEE VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR THE YEAR 2026/27

Cllr McElroy volunteered and was appointed unopposed.

All five councillors present had voted.

523/26 APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE

An apology and a reason for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs Linton (away) and Mathias (family matter).

524/26 PERSONAL AND/OR PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS

No interests were declared.

525/26 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No members of the public were present.

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No members of the public were present.

527/26 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2026

The following report was circulated in advance of the meeting:

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The committee reviewed the report and thanked the council, in particular Adrian, for their contributions to keeping the council's reporting so clean.

528/26 ANNUAL REVIEW OF COUNCIL GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS

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

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Standing Orders – a couple of minor changes were being reviewed at the Personnel Committee's meeting on 20th July.

Cllr Gunston reminded the meeting a reason should be included in the Minutes whenever council resolved to exclude the public from a meeting. Generally members of the public left a meeting without the need for the council to take a resolution to exclude them.

Financial Regulations – Cllr Gunston reminded the committee §7.9 said "The approval of the use of each variable direct debit shall be reviewed by the council at least every two years." The committee could undertake this at its next meeting.

With reference to Financial Regulation §11.6, the Clerk confirmed WSCC did still provide payroll services despite the council having agreed to move to Mulberry & Co. for payroll. The Clerk had initiated his move but WSCC had not been happy to lose the council as a client. The Clerk wanted to arrange a conference call with both WSCC payroll and Mulberry & Co. but did not when that would be possible.

The Clerk confirmed the council had an Investment Policy, this having been adopted on 6th January 2020 (Minute 016/20, Resolution 1394). The committee could also review this at its next meeting.

The committee AGREED unanimously no changes were required to Financial Regulations at this time.

Risk Register – the committee AGREED some written guidance for how others could access council emails and documents in the case of prolonged absence would be useful, but accepted the time needed to write such documentation might not be available. Cllr Bowman suggested councillors should have a brainstorming session to agree what documentation would be necessary; this would provide officers with some starting points.

Some other amendments were suggested. The Clerk will build these into a draft to bring to the next committee meeting for approval.

Fees and charges – the committee was happy with the fees currently charged AGREED unanimously no changes were required at this time.

The committee asked the Clerk to ask how neighbouring councils charged for Freedom of Information requests.

Code of Conduct – the committee AGREED unanimously no changes were required at this time. The committee pondered how the Code of Conduct might change after local government reorganisation.

Council Plan – the Clerk AGREED to contact Cllr Wilkinson about any progress he was making in his review of this document.

529/26 ANNUAL REVIEW OF INSURANCE POLICY

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

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The committee AGREED the loss of income part of the policy needed to increase to cover any income generated by 118 and 120 Sea Road, particularly the latter.

The committee struggled to understand where the policy spoke of cyber attack. Cllr McElroy thought the policy did not cover cyber attack as a cyber attack was usually the result of someone clicking on something suspicious within an email which an insurer would say was self-inflicted. The Clerk was asked to see whether the provider of the council's server and other services provided any sort of cover.

530/26 INTERNAL AUDIT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2027

The following report was circulated in advance of the meeting:

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Cllr McElroy said he would attend, work permitting. The committee AGREED Cllr Mathias was probably the best councillor to attend given his years of experience of chairing this committee.

531/26 ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE COMMITTEE'S TERMS OF REFERENCE

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

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The committee accepted it would only be able to review the full Terms of Reference at its next meeting.

532/26 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9TH MARCH 2026

The draft Minutes had been circulated to all councillors on 16th March, asking for any suggested amendments by 23rd March. None were received.

The committee AGREED the Minutes could be signed as a true record of the meeting held on 9th March. Cllr McElroy duly completed this task.

533/26 UPDATES ON MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

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

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Minute 203/26 – Publication of draft Minutes – the Clerk reported he had asked internal auditor, Andy Beams, about this. Andy had advised several councils were now recording their meetings to assist with Minute and mostly the recordings were deleted once the following meeting had signed off the written Minutes.

There was still no strong feeling the council needed to record its meetings, except possibly for use as evidence but Andy's comment above negated that.

534/26 URGENT MATTERS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Nothing was raised.

535/26 MATTERS TO BE DISCUSSED AT THE NEXT MEETING (23RD NOVEMBER 2026)

Review of council's insurance policy.

The Meeting closed at 19:34.

Chairman:

Date: **23rd November 2026**

Cllr Glyn Mathias

(END)

Version	Date / Action	Changes from previous version (if any)
Draft	16/07/2026 / sent to Cllrs McElroy and Toney for initial approval	
	16/07/2026 / approved by Cllrs McElroy and Toney for distribution to all councillors	
	17/07/2026 / distributed to all councillors	