

East Preston Parish Council Newsletter



Issue No. 80

eastpreston-pc.gov.uk

Autumn 2026

Something a bit different for Christmas

We thought we'd try something different this year and we are going to put a marquee over the Village Hall car park which will mean Cool Yule should not be affected by the wonderful British weather.

There will be lots of craft, foodie and gift stalls, some of your favourites as well as some new ones and a chance to have hot and cold snacks whilst you are doing your shopping.

Cool Yule will be on **Sunday, 22nd November** opening at 11:00 and closing at 16:00, so please come along for a browse and do your Christmas shopping here.

Please be aware only assistance dogs are permitted in the Village Hall and this will extend to the car park as it will be under cover. It is not possible to take pushchairs and the like into the Village Hall, but these can be put under cover to the south side of the steps into the Miller Barn. Also, for fire safety reasons, there is a limit of six wheelchairs allowed inside the Village Hall at any given time. Mobility scooters, buggies and suchlike are not currently allowed inside the complex.

We have asked Father Christmas whether he could join us for the day, but, unsurprisingly he is booked elsewhere! He has agreed to visit East Preston library on the afternoon of Saturday 12th December - more details to follow. However, Littlehampton District Lions have borrowed his spare sleigh for the day, and that will be available for photo opportunities throughout the event.

Please remember there will be road closures in Sea Road on 22nd November. These will cover a shorter area than usual, just between the junctions with Fairlands and Oakley Gardens. If you usually park in this area, please ensure your vehicle is parked elsewhere by 08:00 on the day. This will greatly help with the success of the event. Thanks.



Special thanks to all the community volunteers and local businesses who willingly give their time, imagination and care to the event.



Staffing changes

Our Clerk to the Council, Simon, has been with us for almost twenty years now. In that time, the council's workload has increased as has the council's team of officers. The council has recently recognised a Clerk's workload is now more than one person's workload. For just one example, in the year before Simon started, the then Chairman of the Council reported the council had held 11 monthly council meetings and 31 committee meetings; by the end of this year, the council will have held 12 monthly council meetings and about 50 committee meetings, all of which require an amount of work before, during and after. Additionally, there are occasional working party meetings and council events throughout the year, all requiring input from Simon and the team.

The council is currently about to interview candidates for the full-time role of Clerk to the Council.

In these somewhat turbulent times of possible local government reorganisation (will they or won't they?) and local elections next year, the council is not ready to lose Simon, his knowledge or his experience. However, the council does want to respect Simon's desire to step back from some of the rigours of the role. To that end, the council is following the lead of some other local councils and creating the part-time role of a Community Assistant Clerk. In this role, Simon will continue, at least for a while, to support the council's more outward-looking committees and our new Clerk as they settle in.

The council's personnel committee has done its sums and believes we can increase our staffing profile by this one part-time person without increasing your council tax.

Shaping an age-friendly East Preston

Thank you to everyone who took part in our recent East Preston Age-Friendly survey. Your responses provide a valuable insight into what helps people stay active, connected and independent as they grow older.

It is encouraging to see that 78% of respondents take part in organised activities, and know that East Preston already has a wealth of clubs, groups and opportunities. Awareness of U3A is also high, with 82% of respondents knowing about its affordable activities.

The survey also highlighted some areas where more support could make a difference. Four in ten respondents said reduced mobility affects them at least sometimes, while many people suggested accessible activities, improved access to spaces, social opportunities and IT support.

Importantly, 69% said they would use a central source bringing information about local activities together.



As we move forward with plans for the community hub space in 118 Sea Road, this information supports what we hope to offer the community and what is important to our residents. This will help inform our continuing work to make East Preston an inclusive, connected and age-friendly parish for everyone.

20mph in the village

Following the most recent survey of whether the village would welcome a 20mph speed limit, the council has decided not to pursue this as there was insufficient support within the village (plenty of you completed the survey, but support is now less than 65%). Whilst West Sussex County Council does not say a certain percentage of support is necessary, it would be unlikely to progress this idea with under 80% support. The parish council will likely revisit this in a year or two.

Sea Road pavement extension

Thank you to everyone who signed the petition to increase the pavement between the entrance to the Warren Recreation Ground and the Village Hall. The suggestion has been submitted to WSCC for its consideration and will now be assessed against the county council's standard criteria for such suggestions. A decision is not expected until the spring. If approved, detailed design work is undertaken during the next financial year with any agreed schemes being delivered during the subsequent year.

East Preston Community boardwalk

Although it was not an easy decision, the parish council has decided to accept the gift of the East Preston Community Boardwalk from the company set up to design and install it. The council fully appreciates how popular and successful the boardwalk is and thanks everyone involved in providing this for the village.

The council also thanks everyone who takes the time to clear the boardwalk of any pebbles. Please keep up the good work!

Warm Welcome Space 2027

We are happy to announce we shall be running a fifth season of Warm Welcome Space lunches at the beginning of next year.

These light lunches are open to all, although pre-booking is essential as space is limited. We are very grateful the East Preston & Kingston Royal British Legion has once again agreed to help the council host these sessions.

By popular request, the sessions will be back on a Monday this year, likely starting on 4th January and ending on either 22nd March, or Easter Monday, 29th March.

We are still finalising details, so please look out for further announcements in e-newsletters and on noticeboards around the village.

If you would like to register your interest now or would just like more information, please email or call the Council Office, details on the back page.



Correspondence corner

It is so disappointing WSCC has advised setting up a 20mph zone in part of the village (Sea Road, Fairlands, The Street) would be too costly. Also, some villagers are less than enthusiastic to have a 20mph speed limit established across the village.

Do we need reminding East Preston is more popular than ever? – more cars, lorries, vans, motorbikes, bicycles etc.; more importantly, more people, especially young children on small bikes and scooters and people with mobility aids.

These days, for example, crossing Sea Road needs much greater attention than before. Children coming out of the playground are more vulnerable to cars etc., more families are walking to the beach and local cafés, spending money in the village.

Furthermore, traffic speeds have increased creating more danger for the very young and the older generation. We have recently seen the support for the parish council's bid for a short extension to the pavement outside the entrance to the Warren Recreation Ground. If successful, this will be a boost to safety in that area.

If we REALLY want to remain a VILLAGE in “real terms”, the traffic needs to be better controlled. We need to make our voices heard that 20mph throughout EP (village-wide would be cheaper) would definitely support our village status. LD

Help save cricket in East Preston

Although reached from two different angles, the parish council, acting as trustee of the Warren Recreation Ground, and East Preston Cricket Club have agreed adult, hardball cricket will not be played again at the ground until increased safety measures have been put in place.

The club is working with both local and national companies to design a package of safety measures which will initially be put to the council and then to the village for comment.

Such a package will not come cheap and, as you probably already know, the club has started a campaign to raise £80,000, a current estimate of how much is needed. Please scan the QR code to donate or contact the club's chairman, Peter Dallimore to donate a different way or to offer more practical help.

Peter said, "We're delighted with the initial response to our fundraising efforts, but there's a long way to go. Please, please, please help if you can, every pound donated is a pound closer to the return of adult, hardball cricket to the village. Thank you. In the meantime, look out for some alternative forms of cricket we are going to discuss with the council, which should give more villagers a chance to play too."

Cllr Steve Toney, Chairman of the Council said, "Cricket has been played on the Warren Rec since at least 1860 and the council wants this village tradition to continue. But the village is a very different place from 1860 and we also want to ensure the game is played safely for everyone - player, fan and casual passerby alike. We thank those who brought their concerns to the council and we hope the village will get behind the club's fundraising."

Get in touch: peter.dallimore68@googlemail.com or 07802 326814



Take a bough, St Mary's Christmas Tree Festival!

If you like the idea of a festival that doesn't involve tramping through muddy fields in wellies to hear a star sing, then head down to St Mary's church in Vicarage Lane this December for the legendary Christmas Tree Festival that absolutely hits the right cosy note for the yuletide season.

The aisles will be festooned with dozens of twinkling, glittering firs, each uniquely turned out, thanks to their sponsors' vivid imagination.

Like any good festival, the atmosphere will be electric - in this case thanks to all the fairy lights. Plus, you too can experience a warm glow, as you'll be helping to raise funds to repair and maintain this much-loved building by perhaps stopping at the "pop-up" café for a light lunch, hot drink or a scrumptious cake, before buying some gifts at stalls piled high with festive goodies.

Previous St Mary's Christmas Tree Festivals have attracted thousands of visitors, and expectations are high that this year's event will prove just as popular.

As with many a famous festival, there will be fabulous singing when the three-day fundraiser concludes with a crescendo of carols.

So why not come on down to the church and "walk into Christmas" this December?

St Mary's Christmas Tree Festival runs from 11th-13th December: 10am – 6pm on 11th and 12th; 11.30am – 6pm on 13th, followed by free Carols for All!

To find out more email: friendsofstmarysEP@gmail.com



Felicity's special wild corner of East Preston

Tucked away in the north-east corner of the village, Felicity has created a wildlife haven. We talked to Felicity to find out more.

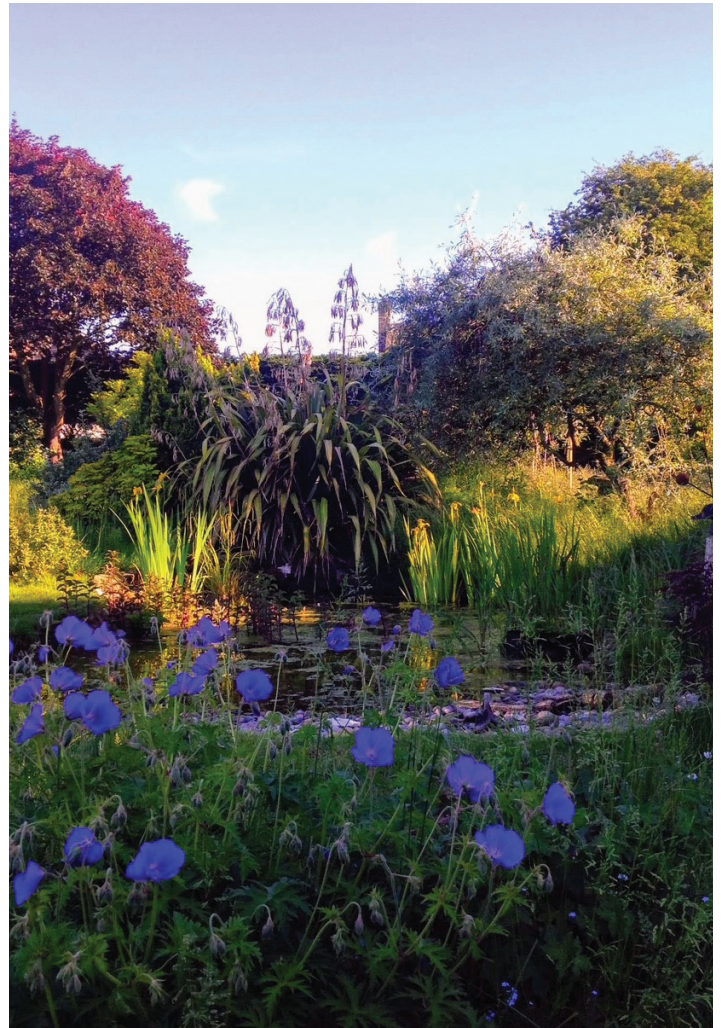
"I garden *for* wildlife. My aim is to garden *with* nature; it is not the enemy. I even like Herring gulls," Felicity laughed.

"In practical terms, this means I have put in a pond, which is usually stuffed full of newts and tadpoles, although I think the weather probably killed the latter this year. I have created a dead hedge for small mammals to shelter in and planted at least thirteen trees, including a medlar, a pendulous mulberry, a quince, four apple trees and a plum tree. My plants are chosen for their pollen and nectar. My *bête noire* is bedding plants, which provide neither.

"I was lucky to inherit some wonderful mature trees including a magnificent *Magnolia grandiflora*, which was around with the dinosaurs and thus predates the bee; they were pollinated by flying beetles. I have nesting boxes and wood piles, and have put up a wooden pergola with a Mermaid rose, native honeysuckle and a white Constance Elliott passionflower.

"I have grown a lot of my grass long and mow paths through it in the orchard area. The frogs shelter there, along with grasshoppers and crickets. Clouds of Gatekeeper butterflies fly ahead of you when you walk through. Visiting small children and even smaller dogs are enchanted by my garden.

"I recently had my breakfast watching the latest batch of Blue tit fledglings - ten or so - dive-bombing each other on the feeders, then all cramming into the bird bath at once. There were Great tits and one Long-tailed tit in the group. I'm a Garden Birdwatch counter for the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), so I know exactly what has been happening to East Preston's bird population in the time I have been here.



"The same with my hedgehogs. I've watched them get flattened on the road outside my house over the years. I had to take one to be put down last week. It had survived for a few days with one back leg trimmed off, one broken leg and a stomach wound.

"I am also rather fond of the family of foxes which hangs around my territory. Two parents and two "teenage" cubs. I think they look upon me as a necessary evil."

Allotments

It is a well kept secret that East Preston has allotments. The site is very small and is located between Roundstone Drive and Roundstone Crescent, towards the western end.

Arun District Council (ADC) is currently responsible for the site and took a decision several years ago not to award any new tenancy agreements nor keep a waiting list. Some of the 12 plots have not been cultivated for years. The parish council knows interest in having an allotment within the village is high.

For these reasons, over the last 18 months, East Preston Parish Council has been trying to take over the maintenance of these allotments. Progress has been slow but by the time you read this article the village's Environment Group will have asked a question at the November ADC Full Council meeting to try and force the district council to provide the parish council with a lease on reasonable terms so that the unmanaged plots can be brought back into production.

If you would like to get involved with this campaign please contact cllr.john.gunston@eastpreston-pc.gov.uk as we would like to get this resolved before another growing season passes by.



Bailey's East Preston Jane Denman - Coastal Creative



The natural beauty of the South Coast holds an abundance of creative inspiration, and acts as a restorative place of reflection and peace for those lucky enough to lay witness to it. Artist Jane Denman, an East Preston resident of over twenty years, embodies this sentiment beautifully. Her wider collection of work contains evocative scenes of both local and international coastal and natural environments. With luscious colour and innovative uses of light and shade, many of Jane's paintings depict intriguing scenes of people in a candid state of calm and repose, and demonstrate a keen eye for someone able to capture life in flow.

Jane's art practice is largely inspired by walks and conversations about painting and photography on the beach in East Preston with her partner, photographer Roy Matthews. Speaking to Jane about how East Preston shapes and stimulates her work as an artist, she said: "East Preston is really a lovely quiet space that gives me the opportunity to relax and feel able to be creative, whether it is walks on the beach and downs in summer and winter...I love retreating with new thoughts into my studio at the end of the garden."

That essence of quietness and tranquillity shines through in Jane's work, and many

of her works containing groups of people interacting are deeply atmospheric. This is exhibited wonderfully in Jane's piece 'The Family, East Preston Beach' made in 2025. With kaleidoscopic uses of colour, her textured rendering of the sea, and depiction of a family in all different states of movement, it makes for a wonderful representation of East Preston summertime. Jane says she was struck by the uniformity of the family's towels and their vivid colours, which acted as the creative spark for the painting. Jane notes that the practice of making a painting often involves the weaving of multiple strands of a story, culminating in a larger narrative that shows a scene in motion.

Jane continues to practice as an artist and an arts educator, often showcasing work with fellow creatives at Mettle Studios in Roundstone. She also recently featured in an exhibition, UnSeen, at Worthing's Colonnade House alongside Anna Cates, Lorraine Gibby, Fleur Grenier and Jessica Jordan. For more information on Jane and to see more of her works, visit her website: <https://janedenman.com/>.

Jane is one artist amongst a number of creatives working in and influenced by the village. We hope to feature others in editions to come.

Smartphone free childhood

Last summer, we reported on a presentation evening hosted at East Preston Junior School by Smartphone Free Childhood (Summer 2025, Issue 75). Just over a year later, we asked Matthew Finch, one of the organisers of that meeting, to give us a local update. Over to Matthew:

Schools have become increasingly concerned about the impact of smartphones on our children's well-being and development. There is now an alarming body of research highlighting the negative effects of early smartphone and social media use on children and teenagers. Most recently the Department of Education updated guidance to schools confirming that all schools should be mobile phone-free environments throughout the school day.

Most secondary schools in the area have implemented new phone policies from September 2026. The Angmering School recently announced year 7 and 8 students would not be allowed to bring smartphones into school from September 2026. This will apply to all students from 2027. Oscar Romero school implemented a similar policy prohibiting years 7 to 10 children from bringing smartphones and smart devices. Durrington High, Worthing High and Bohunt have all introduced similar smartphone bans. In all these schools children are permitted to carry a non-internet capable 'brick' type phone, provided it is turned off and in their bag at all times. In addition, The Littlehampton Academy and St Andrews in Worthing have recently introduced 'pouches', whereby students store their phone in a lockable pouch.

To learn more about kids and smartphones please visit <https://tinyurl.com/SFC-WestSussex>



Why not give something different next year?



The parish council is very privileged to be looking after such a vibrant village. Councillors often hear people say how lucky they are to live here, whether they have only just moved here or have lived here all their lives.

Whilst not unique in this, the village has so much to offer, from the annual award-winning Festival week and Food and Drink Festival to numerous sports clubs and other organisations actively keeping local residents engaged, socially, physically and mentally. There are also very local and national charities operating in the village, supporting particular sets of residents.

2027 is fast approaching – how did that happen? – so why not think about making volunteering in the village your New Year's Resolution? Volunteering does not have to be onerous and you can choose to do as little or as much as you like. For example, the Festival Committee could always use some extra help with setting up and clearing away tables and chairs for its events - no experience necessary and volunteering for this would only mean a few hours each year. For those who enjoy more physical work, many groups are looking for able-bodied individuals

on an ad-hoc basis to help with digging or moving heavier items. Committees to run these groups always need officers so if you want to contribute to the running of a club or society or indeed set one up, opportunities are available.

The recent Extraordinary General Meeting of the Village Hall Committee, when 176 people turned out to show their support for the hall, demonstrated that there is a lot of community spirit in the village. Many groups would like to tap into this support and are looking for help.

Ask people why they volunteer and they will come up with a variety of reasons, giving something back to the community, making new friends, improving how things work, or improving confidence to name a few. All volunteers probably agree they get more out of volunteering than they put in. Improved mental and physical health, reduced stress, an overall sense of wellbeing, social connections and a real sense of purpose are often cited as benefits of volunteering.

If you feel you have some time or a skill you can offer, why not have a word with Simon, Dawn or Alison in the Council Office and they will be pretty sure to point you in the right direction.

Village Life

December

- 7th Full Council (19:00)
- 11th Christmas Tree Festival opens
- 12th Father Christmas visits East Preston Library (tbc)
- 13th Christmas Tree Festival closes
- 14th Planning & Licensing Committee (18:00)
Finance & General Purposes Committee (19:00)
- 21st Major Events (19:00)

January 2027

- 4th Full Council (19:00)
- 5th Planning & Licensing Committee (18:00)
- 11th Personnel (18:00)
Major Events (19:00)
- 18th Planning & Licensing Committee (18:00)
Community Engagement Committee (19:00)

February

- 1st Full Council (19:00)
- 8th Planning & Licensing Committee (18:00)
Amenities Committee (19:00)
- 15th Finance & General Purposes Committee (18:00)
Major Events Committee (19:00)
- 22nd Planning & Licensing Committee (18:00)

Please consult the Noticeboards and website a few days before the meeting for the Agenda and venue.

Please note the above list may be subject to change.



Thanks to...

Everyone who joined in with the KEPT/EPPC Beach Clean on 27th September. The next is scheduled for 4th April, time to be confirmed. In the meantime, KEPT meets on the first Sunday of every month, 10:30 in The Great Dane. From there the group sets off to tackle litter around the village.



Anyone in any of the village organisations – or indeed individuals – who makes a positive contribution to the village in any way. There are too many for us ever to be able to thank you all by name, but please believe your contribution is almost certainly noticed.



Bailey Hackett for your wonderful, human interest articles. Long may they continue.

Council e-news

Would you like to be kept up to date with more East Preston news?

The Council has an email circulation list which is used to keep subscribers informed of local news and events. Subscriber details are not shared with any other organisation.

Please send us an email, details below, if you would like to subscribe to our email list – over 900 households and businesses already subscribe.



Please contact the office if you would like a large print version of this newsletter.



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