EAST PRESTON PARISH COUNCIL

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

PRESENT: Councillors Christine Bowman, Kit Bradshaw, Andrea Chapman, Lisa Duff, John Gunston, Elizabeth Linton, Glyn Mathias, Rick McElroy, Steve Toney (Chairman)

ALSO: Simon Cross, Clerk to the Council

Cllr Roger Elkins, West Sussex County Council (until 19:14)

Cllr Philippa Bower, Arun District Council (until 19:14)

Adrian Passfield and Frances Rainey

Two members of the Warren Recreation Ground Safety Group

ABSENT: Councillors Barbara Gale, Helen Hill, 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.

740/26 INTRODUCTIONS

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

741/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology and a reason for absence were received from Cllrs Gale, Hill, Moore and Wilkinson.

2162 The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously to accept the apologies received from Cllrs Gale and Hill (both away), Moore (unwell) and Wilkinson (unavailable).

Apologies had also been received from District Cllr Ricky Bower, Mr and Mrs Finnigan and Mrs Dorothy Lee.

742/26 DECLARATION OF PERSONAL AND/OR PREJUDICIAL/PECUNIARY INTERESTS

No interests were declared.

743/26 PUBLIC SESSION

No member of the public accepted the invitation to address the meeting.

744/26 MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING HELD ON 7TH SEPTEMBER 2026

The draft Minutes were circulated to all councillors on 8th September asking for suggested amendments by 15th September. None were received.

2163 The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously the Chairman could sign the Minutes as a true record of the meeting held on 7th September. Cllr Toney duly did so.

745/26 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. **Minutes 395/26 to 397/26 – Annual Governance and Accountability Return**
3. **Minute 603/26 – public session**
4. **Minute 703/26 – West Sussex County Council, Emergency Community Hubs**
5. **Minute 707/26 – West Sussex County Council – Royal British Legion**
6. **Minute 714/26 – Reports from parish council committees**
7. **Minute 715/26 – East Preston Community Boardwalk**
8. **Minute 716/26 – Major Events Committee – event security equipment**

1. Introduction

This is the report covering items discussed during Full Council meetings up to and including the meeting held on 7th September 2026.

2. Minutes 395/26 to 397/26 – Annual Governance and Accountability Return

Within half an hour of me sending out the paperwork for the September meeting, we received notice the external auditor had concluded this year's annual audit. I circulated the auditor's report electronically but it will need to be formally noted during this meeting. I also circulated the report to our internal auditor.

I published the notice of the conclusion of the annual audit on the council's website and in the Council Office window on Friday, 4th September.

3. Minute 603/26 – public session

Following the publication of the August meeting's Minutes, the council received the following email from the Warren Recreation Ground Safety Group:

Dear Simon and Councillors,

Thank you for publishing the minutes following their approval at the Council meeting on 8 September.

Having now read Minute 603/26, we are concerned that, although my statement has been reproduced in full, the minute does not record what occurred immediately afterwards.

As the statement itself records, I specifically asked:

"What action does the Council intend to take to protect users of Oakley Gardens, public highway, public footpaths and private properties along that southern border?"

I concluded by saying:

"As another match is due to take place this Saturday, I would be grateful if this question could be answered this evening."

Following my statement, Cllr Toney asked the Council for a response. No substantive response was forthcoming.

Cllr Toney then asked me to provide a copy of my statement and indicated that he would come back to me. I subsequently supplied the statement as requested, but to date I have received no response.

Before the matter concluded, I again asked whether my questions regarding safety could please be answered and what action would be taken for the forthcoming match. Again, no substantive answer was given. The only information provided was that Cllr Linton would attend part of the match.

None of this appears in Minute 603/26. Instead, immediately after reproducing my statement, the minute moves directly to the next question raised during the Public Session.

We fully appreciate that Council minutes are not intended to be a verbatim transcript. However, we believe these omissions are material. The minute records in full a public-safety question expressly requiring an answer that evening, but does not record that the Chair asked the Council to respond, that no substantive response was given, that I repeated my request for an answer, or that Cllr Toney indicated that he would come back to me.

We believe this gives an incomplete account of how the Council dealt with the safety question raised.

Subsequent incident

The importance of receiving a substantive response is reinforced by what has happened subsequently.

At a match approximately two weeks later following the meeting at which this statement was made, balls continued to leave the ground into the Two Acres area. On one occasion, all three WRGSG representatives present witnessed a ball enter the front garden of a residential property, narrowly missing a parked vehicle.

Approximately five minutes later, a lady pushing a pram walked past that same location.

We are not suggesting that this was itself a near miss involving the lady and her child, as they were not present when the ball landed. However, it clearly illustrates that this is an area regularly used by residents and members of the public and why the potential consequences of an uncontrolled cricket ball leaving the ground remain a serious concern.

We mention this because it demonstrates that the specific safety risk about which the Council was asked to respond was continuing and foreseeable, rather than hypothetical.

Correction of Minute 603/26

Could the Council please confirm:

1. how it proposes to correct or formally record the omissions from Minute 603/26 now that the minutes have been approved;
2. whether the Council accepts that Cllr Toney asked Members for a response following my statement and that no substantive response was given;
3. whether this correspondence will be retained with the Council's official records relating to Minute 603/26; and
4. when we can expect the response which Cllr Toney indicated would be provided;

For the avoidance of doubt, we are not asking for a verbatim account of the discussion. We are simply asking that the official record fairly reflects the material manner in which a specific and continuing public-safety question was dealt with by the Council.

It seems particularly important that the record is clear because Minute 603/26 itself records that these safety questions remained unanswered and that I expressly requested an answer that evening.

The subsequent incident also demonstrates why these questions cannot simply remain unanswered. Balls continue to leave Warren Recreation Ground and enter areas used by residents and members of the public.

We would therefore be grateful if the Council would now provide the substantive answer to the safety question recorded in Minute 603/26:

What action does the Council intend to take to protect users of Oakley Gardens, the public highway, public footpaths and private properties along the southern boundary?

We look forward to receiving the Council's response.

Kind regards,

Warren Recreation Ground Safety Group

I copy this here for completeness. The East Preston Cricket Club Cricket Ball Strike Assessment report, produced by Labosport, recommends the netting on the southern boundary be increased to 3m for its length of 88m. I believe this to be an increase in height of 1m. I understand the cricket club has been in touch with Angmering-on-Sea Lawn Tennis Club to discuss repurposing redundant tennis nets to increase the height of the netting along the southern boundary of the Warren Recreation Ground.

4. Minute 703/26 – West Sussex County Council, Emergency Community Hubs

I circulated Hope Blandamer's presentation slides to all councillors on the morning after the meeting.

At its meeting on 21st September, the Community Engagement Committee agreed to set up *What If?* training for the council. This will take place sometime in the new year.

5. Minute 707/26 – West Sussex County Council – Royal British Legion

Sally Ward came to the Council Office on 16th September and together we submitted the request for extending the parking restrictions outside the Royal British Legion building. In the application, we stressed these restrictions would benefit the whole community as they would improve visibility as this crossing point for drivers, pedestrians and cyclists alike.

WSCC officer, Oliver King, has opened a conversation with Sally.

6. Minute 714/26 – Reports from parish council committees

The WSCC bollards at the southern end of Sea Road were replaced on 23rd September.

7. Minute 715/26 – East Preston Community Boardwalk

The council's insurance company confirmed the boardwalk was now part of its insurance policy on 15th September. This does not cover storm or flood cover.

8. Minute 716/26 – Major Events Committee – event security equipment

The council has taken delivery of metal event barriers, metal fencing pins and cones as described in the supporting paper including within this minute.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council** 25th September 2026

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

Minute 708/26 – West Sussex County Council – County Cllr Elkins clarified it was he and District Cllr Bower who had raised objections to the ADC Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) rather than WSCC as a whole.

746/26 FINANCIAL MATTERS

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

2164 The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the Outstanding Purchase Orders report for 2026/27, value £5,104.95 (exc. VAT).

2165 The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the Regular Monthly Payments reports for September 2026 totalling £1,341.05 (inc. VAT).

2166 The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the Supplier BACS Invoices Paid reports for September 2026 totalling £29,289.63 (inc. VAT).

2167 The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the List of Sales Receipts & Bank Receipts by Bank report for financial year to date totalling £153,088.34 (inc. VAT) for September 2026 (Year to Date, £343,372.79).

The council NOTED the Bank Reconciliations to 14th September 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.

747/26 ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

District Cllr Philippa Bower reported she had attended a lengthy meeting of the ADC Environment Committee. This had included an hour-long report from Biffa advising the waste collection service, revised earlier in the year, was now running smoothly. Although not obliged to do so, ADC had collected thousands of redundant bins from across the district, a task which had taken four months.

The committee remained committed to reduce its use of pesticides.

A recent public consultation had resulted in a three-years extension to the current Public Spaces Protection Orders for Dog Controls. The committee felt it unnecessary for the council to employ dog wardens again as owners who failed to pick up after their dogs were usually upbraided by responsible dog owners.

In response to a question from Cllr Duff, Cllr Bower said the food waste collection service had been well-received although she herself had concerns about just how impregnable caddies were to foxes.

The Clerk countered Cllr Bower's earlier comment about responsible dog owners upbraiding irresponsible dog owners as he understood a lot of irresponsible dog owner behaviour took place very early in the morning or very late at night so it was not witnessed. Cllr Bower said she had not known that.

Cllr Linton made an impassioned plea for the return of the dog bin halfway along the greensward on the southern side of Tamarisk Way; as previously reported, this had been removed by ADC "on a trial basis" but had not been replaced. Cllr Bower said she would report this concern back to the relevant ADC officers. Cllr Mathias believed the original agreement between ADC and the WRA had been the WRA would provide bins from which ADC would then collect.

Cllr Gunston reported the East Preston Environment Group was registered to ask a further question about the proposed lease between ADC and EPPC for the allotments site in the village. Cllr Bower said she would be there cheering on the Environment Group.

748/26 WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

County Cllr Elkins reported there was no update on central government's plans for local government reorganisation. That said, the Sussex & Brighton Strategic Authority was now in place and had an interim budget of £30m. The mayoral elections would take place in 2028. The board of the authority comprised two councillors each from East Sussex, West Sussex and Brighton & Hove. In answer to a question from the Clerk, he said the board was electing its own chairs until the Mayor was in post in 2028. The authority was likely to start with an annual budget of £19m for revenue projects and £19m for capital projects.

Cllr Elkins advised there was a public consultation looking at proposals for additional electric vehicle charging points within the county. Anyone could submit a proposal.

The council was trialling the use of artificial intelligence cameras on eight vehicles mapping the condition of the county's roads. It was hoped the information gathered would be more in-depth than an officer could collate otherwise.

LED lighting had been installed in a number of county council buildings, bringing in a small saving on electricity bills. No changes had been made to the lighting at East Preston Library suggesting it was already pretty efficient.

Another current consultation was on activities for young people between the ages of 11 and 19. This was open until 26th October.

Referring back to Cllr Elkins's earlier comment about the LCWIP, Cllr Linton reported she had recently met head-on with about twenty cyclists on the greensward although cycling was not permitted on the greensward. Cllr Elkins confirmed this the LCWIP had not changed that permission.

On behalf of Mrs Lee, the Clerk asked Cllr Elkins whether he could get the correct Highways officers out to the A280/A259 roundabout as it is increasingly impossible for traffic to exit the village there or enter the village without a long delay, the latter because of the lack of a slip road. Mrs Lee had been on a bus which had had to wait six minutes to exit the village last Saturday. Mrs Lee proposed either yellow hatching at the roundabout or traffic lights. Cllr Elkins said the problem was the ever-increasing volume and density of traffic in this area. He felt traffic lights might slow all traffic down again and he was not sure how many drivers would respect hatching there. He was also unsure which criteria for additional measures the junction met. He would talk to officers though and see what data they had available. Cllr Mathias said a further problem was at the Blue Star roundabout where traffic frequently backed up from the closed level crossing gates on to the A259. An engineering friend of his had said the problem with a lot of roundabouts was they were simply not built big enough to handle the flow of traffic. Cllr McElroy reminded the meeting many drivers were likely breaking the Highway Code by entering the roundabout when their exit was not clear. But with no enforcement…

(With no further questions or comments, Cllrs Elkins and Bower.)

749/26 REPORTS FROM PARISH COUNCIL COMMITTEES

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

Amenities Committee

Cllr McElroy is chairman of this committee.

The committee did not meet in September.

Tennis Courts – The extension to the tennis court fencing has been completed. Extension poles have been added to the height of the existing fencing, with strong wire threaded through. It is hoped this will prevent the issues with unwanted access.



Sea Road Bollards – The four replacement bollards at the end of Sea Road have been installed. The new bollards are fixed cast iron bollards with reflective banding and display the Parish Council logo.



Village Green bench – A new composite memorial bench has been installed at the north eastern side of the village green. The bench has replaced one of the older council owned wooden benches. All previous benches have been supplied made-up but this was, unexpectedly, supplied flat-pack. I checked the company's website which, at the time, did not mention this and I challenged the company. The response was pretty much that's how it is now. We have other suppliers so may have to park this particular supplier for the time being.

The committee's next meeting remains scheduled for 9th November 2026.

Dawn Reid – **Assistant Clerk to the Council** 22nd September 2026

Audit & Governance Committee

Cllr Mathias is chairman of this committee.

The committee did not meet in September.

The council received external auditor sign-off just after the paperwork for the September council meeting had been circulated. This will be noted by council later in this meeting.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council** 29th September 2026

Community Engagement Committee

The committee met on 21st September.

Some of the matters discussed were:

Beach Cleans 2027 – the committee set dates of 4th April and 26th September. KEPT has asked the time not be set yet as a beach clean may be more effective at low tide.

Sussex 1550 – the council has been asked to consider celebrated the 1550th anniversary of the birth of Sussex on next year's Sussex Day, 16th June. The committee is concerned the anniversary is very close to the Festival Week, 2027, and the committee agreed to wait to see what neighbouring councils may offer.

Christmas lighting – the committee considered two quotations received solely for the infrastructure to provide additional Christmas lighting in the northern shopping area. The quotations were too high for consideration from this year's budget but would be considered as part of next year's budget.

Hearing impairment – Cllr Hill is hopeful a meeting of those originally interested can be held at the end of October. The meeting room at East Preston Infant School has been booked as the venue with probably the best acoustics.

East Preston sports clubs – the meeting scheduled for the evening of 28th September was cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances.

Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Clock – the committee began to consider whether the clock should be stress-tested in the same way lampposts are before they have Christmas motifs attached. The committee asked me to find out from Rustington whether it stress-tested its public clock.

Warm Welcome Space 2027 – the committee agreed to run sessions on Mondays in January, February and March. Verbal confirmation had been received from the Royal British Legion; I have asked for written confirmation.

The committee's next meeting will be on 16th November.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council** 28th September 2026

Finance & General Purposes Committee

Cllr McElroy is the chairman of this committee.

The committee did not meet in September.

Adrian has started work on preparing a budget for 2027/28. Each committee will have input to its own budget.

The committee's next meeting is scheduled for 19th November.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council** 28th September 2026

Flat & Frontage Committee

Cllr Toney is the chairman of the committee.

The committee did not meet in September but is looking to meet in October.

Work to replace most of the windows is due to start on Monday, 5th October.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council** 28th September 2026

Major Events Committee

Cllr Linton is the chairman of the committee. The committee did not meet in September.

The only updates for this meeting are:

Bingo afternoon, 4th October – at the time of writing this event simply is not selling. Cllr Duff and I will have a go / no-go call on the morning of 30th September.

Major Events catering – because of timescales, on behalf of this committee, the Community Engagement Committee agreed a preferred caterer for the end-of-term party scheduled for early April 2027 – an event which allows the council to thank local residents and organisations which have helped it through this term.

Personnel Committee

Cllr Duff is the chairman of the committee.

The committee did not meet in September.

Advertising has started for a new Clerk. An article on the proposed staffing changes will be published in the Autumn 2026 Newsletter.

The committee's next meeting is scheduled for 12th October.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council** 28th September 2026

Planning & Licensing Committee

The committee met on 14th and 28th September.

On 14th September, the committee considered three applications, one of which it deferred to the meeting on 28th requiring further information. No objections were raised against the other two applications.

Four applications were considered on 28th September, one of which had been deferred from the meeting as above. The three new applications attracted no objections from the committee. The committee felt there was still insufficient information on aspects of the fourth, deferred application and agreed to ask ADC for an extension to the closing date for comments.

An hour and a half before the meeting on the 28th, ADC had come back with a few further suggestions for the draft revised East Preston Neighbourhood Plan. These will be considered and/or implemented in due course.

The committee's next meeting is scheduled for 12th October.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council** 29th September 2026

Amenities – in response to a question from the chairman, Mr J said the works to the tennis court fencing looked good and he believed would greatly reduce the misuse of the tennis court.

Flat & Frontage – Cllr Toney said the committee would be having a short, informal meeting on Monday, 12th October at 18:15.

Major Events – Cllr Linton reported the 4th October bingo afternoon had been cancelled owing to very low ticket sales. Within the e-newsletter of 1st October, an article announcing the cancellation inviting residents to let us know why they thought the event had not sold and also to suggest other autumnal events.

The Clerk reported East Preston Library had now provided details of its Christmas event offering, in conjunction with the parish council. On Saturday, 12th December, the library would offer two Father Christmas Storytime events, one at 16:00 and one at 17:00. These would be free to attend but would need to be booked. The library had asked whether any councillors could help on the day with constructing and decorating the grotto and more. The Clerk asked those interested and available to let him know. Cllrs Gunston and Chapman thought they would be available.

Planning & Licensing – Cllr Bowman continued to think the council was getting ever closer to having its revised Neighbourhood Plan accepted by ADC.

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

750/26 WARREN RECREATION GROUND – PLAYING OF CRICKET

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

Warren Recreation Ground - cricket

Council is asked to consider the short-term future of the playing of cricket at the Warren Recreation Ground.

At the recent Warren Recreation Ground Annual General Meeting (see below), councillors heard from representatives of both the Warren Recreation Ground Safety Group and East Preston Cricket Club.

East Preston Cricket Club has launched its fundraising campaign which is looking to raise £80,000. I believe a leaflet has been hand-delivered to every property in the village promoting the campaign.

Cllrs Toney, Linton and Hill met with representatives of the cricket club ahead of the Warren Rec AGM. The councillors expressed their concern ten balls had landed outside the ground despite the introduction of the local dot ball rule. The councillors accepted no balls had landed in the gardens of adjacent properties but felt still too many balls were landing outside the ground.

Council needs to look at the fundraising task ahead of the club and whether the council can or should grant the club a licence to play cricket on the Warren Recreation Ground in the 2027 season.

The licence to play, first agreed in 2008 and reviewed and revised in 2018, includes the following at Clause 5: This Agreement recognises that the primary responsibility for preventing injury to persons and/or damage to property arising from the playing of cricket by the members, guests and invitees of the Club rests with the Club. The Club must take all reasonable steps to prevent such injury to persons and/or damage to property to the reasonable satisfaction of the Council in its role as a Parish Council and as Trustees of the Warren Recreation Ground, Charity Number 283037.

If the decision is not to grant a licence for 2027, council may want to add a caveat along the lines of "unless [agreed] increased safety measures have been implemented."

I have spoken to some councillors who believe the short-term pain of not playing for a season (or however long it takes to raise the money and implement the increased safety measures) would result in the long-term gain of being able to play cricket more safely for the benefit of everyone.

At its meeting with the cricket club, the council asked the club to come up with a near-definitive design which can then be put to the village for its support. A meeting has been arranged for 6th October, but a decision on granting a licence for 2027, with or without a caveat, should not be deferred any further. All parties need some clarity on this matter.

A decision tonight will enable the council to issue a statement in the Autumn 2026 Newsletter which is due to go to print mid-October.

The chairman asked the representatives of the Warren Recreation Ground Safety Group whether they had anything they wished to add at this time. One said the supporting paper said it all.

Cllr Mathias suggested more signs be put up along Sea Road and Two Acres to advise casual walkers and visitors of the fact cricket might be taking place in the near vicinity if not necessarily visible. The Clerk said signage was a good idea but people tend not to read signs.

Cllr Linton said the discussion should boil down to whether or not the council should allow the club to play adult cricket at the Warren Recreation Ground in 2027 without improved safety measures.

Cllr McElroy said that any High or Medium risks identified in the RoSPA reports needed to be reduced to a Low risk. The dot-ball local rule had not reduced the number of balls going out of the ground to the extent the council had been promised. Until further safety measures were in place, he would continue to have concerns about the playing of adult cricket at the Warren Recreation Ground. Although insurance was in place, insurance companies would always look for the reason not to pay out on a claim and, in this case, that could be RoSPA reports not acted upon.

Cllr Bowman said she had been impressed with the two-page article published in the latest *All About East Preston and Kingston*, and she hoped that would encourage residents to support the club's crowdfunding campaign.

The Clerk reported the chairman of East Preston Cricket Club, Pete Dallimore, had asked the council to defer a decision on this matter until after it had met with the council; a meeting was scheduled for the evening following this meeting.

Cllr Mathias said stopping the playing of adult cricket could result in potential donors believing there as no point in donating as the council would never allow adult cricket to be played at the Warren Rec again.

The Clerk said whatever decision was taken, if any, the council was obliged to explain in the forthcoming Autumn 2026 Newsletter. If the decision was taken to suspend cricket, such an article needed to explain the suspension was only temporary dependent upon the cricket club improving safety measures at the club.

Cllr McElroy said the driving force in this matter is the cricket club itself. Other forms of cricket could be played until sufficient safety measures have been put in place.

Mr P said there was a large gap between the crowdfunding target and what had been raised so far.

Mrs R asked whether any decision to suspend adult cricket would impact upon the playing of stoolball. The Clerk replied he believed stoolball would be able to continue as would the use of the cricket pavilion by the preschool; these were sources of income for the cricket club.

2168 The council **RESOLVED** not to grant a licence for 2027 unless increased safety measures have been implemented to result in RoSPA low risk scores.

Two councillors voted against the resolution.

751/26 WARREN RECREATION GROUND – ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 14TH SEPTEMBER

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

Warren Recreation Ground (charity no. 283037)

Council is asked to note the draft Minutes of the charity's Annual General Meeting held on 14th September.

These have been circulated electronically.

No changes were suggested.

752/26 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN

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

Annual Governance and Accountability Return for year-ending 31st March 2026

Council is asked to note the Annual External Audit Report 2025/26 page of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year-ending 31st March 2026.

Cllr Mathias to introduce this item.

The External Auditor's report was received on 2nd September and immediately circulated electronically to all councillors.

"Except for the matters reported below, on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is in accordance with the Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

"In completing Section 2 – Accounting Statements on a receipts and payments basis and due to the council not operating a separate bank account for the Warren Recreation Ground (Charity No. 283037), the council has included transactions and/or balances relating to the Ground within the boxes. However, by included these amounts the council has not complied with all of the regulations for the proper preparation of its accounts. As a result, the council should have provided a 'No' response to Assertions 1 & 9 of Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement.

"There are no other matters affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority."

Looking online at clerks' fora, it would appear the double negative wording on the Annual Return form has caught out others this year. As agreed at the Warren Rec AGM, this matter will be discussed with the council's new internal auditor when she visits in October, her first visit.

As per usual practice, the report will be considered fully by the Audit & Governance Committee at its next meeting, currently scheduled for 23rd November.

The *Notice of conclusion of the audit* was published on the council's website and in noticeboards on 4th September.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council** 29th September 2026

Cllr Mathias confirmed the Audit & Governance Committee would consider this report more fully at its meeting in November. In the meantime, the council's new internal auditor would be asked for her view of this particular matter.

753/26 REPORTS FROM PARISH COUNCIL WORKING PARTIES

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

Working Parties

Neither of the council's working parties met in September.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council** 29th September 2026

Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation (Devo WP)

The committee is currently dormant awaiting further central government news on whether or not local government reorganisation (LGR) will progress during this government's term in office.

As an aside, I recently spoke with a local resident who was working for Littlehampton Urban District Council at the time it was subsumed into Arun District Council in 1974. He said that particular local government reorganisation had been on the table since the mid-1950s.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council** 29th September 2026

Leases Working Party (LWP)

This working party is currently without a chairman.

In response to the letter the council sent to the chairman of East Preston & Kingston Bowls Club on 20th August, I have been promised a written response by the end of September, although it may only be a further holding response.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council** 29th September 2026

The Clerk said the treasurer of East Preston & Kingston Bowls Club had been in touch, apologising the club had not been able to supply a letter by the end of September and confirming he was still pushing for a letter to be issued to the council.

754/26 SUSSEX POLICE

No report had been received.

755/26 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. **Meeting with East Preston Cricket Club, 8th September**

6. **Chestnut Tree House Hospice visit, 10th September**
7. **Baytree Community Lunch Club Annual General Meeting, 25th September**
8. **East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation Extraordinary General Meeting, 25th September**
9. **Stagecoach South Customer Services bus visit, 29th September**
10. **Social media**
11. **MailChimp stats**
12. **A selection of things we have been asked since the last meeting**
13. **Recent bouquets and complaints**
14. **Leave**
15. **October meetings and events**

1. **Introduction**

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

2. **Police matters**

Not necessarily a police matter, but someone slept on the Village Green on the night of 3rd/4th September. Not seen since.

Over the weekend of 5th/6th September, the bus shelter in Station Road was graffitied. This was reported to Sussex Police as criminal damage.

The council has been invited to attend a further Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner forum on 7th October. At present, Cllr Bowman and I will attend unless any other councillor desperately wishes to attend.

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

No updates on existing cases.

Possible new cases involving Lashmar Rec and a road in the north-eastern corner of the village.

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

One new request received in September. This was a request likely sent to most if not all town and parish councils across the country and was requesting information on how much each council had spent on devolution and local government reorganisation. I conferred with Cllr Gunston in his role as chairman of the Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation Working Party, and he agreed our reply should be £0.

5. **Meeting with East Preston Cricket Club, 8th September**

Together with Cllrs Toney, Linton and Hill, I attended a meeting with representatives of East Preston Cricket Club.

The club had ended the season at the bottom of Sussex Cricket League (SCL) Division 9 West, arguably because of the additional strictures of the local dot ball rule which had been introduced at the beginning of the season.

Looking to the future, the council asked the club to provide a proposed design to the next meeting between the two organisations, which would then go forward to the Amenities Committee and could then be publicised to the public.

There was some discussion about not playing cricket at the Warren Rec in 2027 and this appears elsewhere on the agenda for tonight's meeting. Other forms of cricket were suggested such as walking cricket and visually-impaired cricket.

The council and club are scheduled to meet next on 6th October.

6. **Chestnut Tree House Hospice visit, 10th September**

Cllrs Chapman and Linton and I accepted the offer to visit Chestnut Tree House as part of the hospice being this year's chairman's charity. Our tour was led by Alice Jalley, the same community fundraiser who addressed this year's Annual Parish Meeting back in May.

Our visit lasted about an hour and included both inside and outside areas. Cllr Chapman has prepared a longer report, located at Agenda Item 17a below.

The venue and, more importantly, the work done there is incredible and well worth any support anyone can offer it.

7. **Baytree Community Lunch Club Annual General Meeting, 25th September**

I was invited to attend this year's Annual General Meeting of the Baytree Community Lunch Club. The meeting was held in the Village Hall in the afternoon. About twenty of the club's regular attendees stayed for the meeting which was chaired by Carol Feasey.

Average attendance is 70 lunches each Friday with a further eight served to volunteers. Carol introduced all the volunteers some of whom are rarely seen at they are always busy in the kitchen.

During the year, the weekly fee was increased from £6 a head to £7. Of that, £6.50 goes to the chef, Julie and the other 50p goes to club funds to cover hire of the hall and suchlike. The club also organises outings and holidays, usually subsidising the cost by paying for the coach.

The club is financially healthy and has been able to contribute towards the costs of a new cooker at the Village Hall and a new plate-warmer. As councillors will know from the council's e-newsletter, the current Treasurer, Ian Hoskins, would like to stand down from the beginning of the new financial year and the council is getting the word out there is a vacancy for a replacement volunteer Treasurer.

Carol and Ian both appreciated the council being represented at the meeting.

8. **East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation Extraordinary General Meeting, 25th September**

This meeting was open only to residents of East Preston and Kingston. As I fit into neither category, I was ineligible to attend, but I was able to stand in the car-park, adjacent to the open fire doors and listen in.

Cllrs Toney, Chapman, Duff, Gunston, Hill and Mathias attended in the audience; Cllrs Bowman and McElroy attended as members of the Village Hall Foundation committee.

Following the AGM in August, at which the existing committee was voted out, the agenda for the EGM was to elect a committee for the 2026/27 year. The first option was to re-elect the 2025/26 committee and 155 of the 176 present voted in favour of this. Cllr Mathias was used as an independent teller.

Any of the above councillors may have more they wish to add.

9. **Stagecoach South Customer Services bus visit, 29th September**

Having read about the new Stagecoach South Customer Services bus, I contacted Stagecoach South and asked if the bus could visit East Preston, thinking it would be sometime next year before it could. Wrong. We were able to book in a visit to the Village Green car-park for Tuesday, 29th September.

On the day, the bus was staffed by Rob Vince and Lee Bridle. Rob is a Business Development Manager and Lee is usually one of only four inspectors across West Sussex, Hampshire and Surrey.

The bus was scheduled to be here from 10:00 until 14:00, and indeed it was. I had closed the car-park just to ensure the bus would have enough room to manoeuvre on arrival. That was fine, the bigger problem was when the bus came to leave the car-park, negotiating the cars which were parked in Willowhayne Crescent, it being bigger than a Compass No. 12 bus.

I caught up with Rob and Lee at about 13:45. Rob said whilst they had not had the sort of footfall they would have had in a busy shopping precinct, they had a constant stream of people throughout the session and were only just having their first break. Conversations, as you would have expected, had been about the reduced frequency of buses since the 700 was replaced by the 11, the lack of bus-stops on the A259 (still) and the need to increase usage of the 11. Rob said some people understood Stagecoach South's view of the world, some did not.

Rob said they would be very happy to bring the bus into the village on another occasion, we would simply need to get a date in the diary. Within an hour of the bus leaving the village, my counterpart at Angmering PC had asked for details so the bus could visit there too.



10. **Social Media**

Only one of the council's Facebook posts reached more than 500 people in the past month:

- Publicity for the visit of the Stagecoach Customer Services bus – 2,981 people

- Publicity for the September visit of the Littlehampton District Lions book and jigsaw stall – 1,198
- MailChimp repost for the e-newsletter of 16th September – 947
- First poster advertising the visit of the Stagecoach Customer Services bus - 661

(posts up to and including 28th September)

The number of Followers is currently 2,054, an increase of 6 on the last report.

11. **MailChimp stats**

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

Parish Council news – 4th September – sent to 959 subscribers

Parish Council news – 9th September – sent to 957

Parish Council news – 16th September – sent to 957

Parish Council news – 23rd September – sent to 955

As announced previously, the MailChimp software continues to record the open information differently to before and now apparently unreliably. I will continue to monitor this, but until this is fixed, I will not be able to provide a figure for the percentage of recipients who opened the email.

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

Is that Kamsons?	No.
Can you put me in touch with local tennis players?	I directed the requested to both the tennis club and the East Preston community Facebook page.
Could the council approach the decision maker about their decision to remove the bollards from the bottom of Sea Lane?	I was able to inform the correspondent the council had been in touch with the decision maker and the bollards were due to be replaced before the end of the month. The correspondent replied, "Thank you for your reply, that's good news."
Is there anything I can do about my neighbour parking their large camper van on their driveway, blocking my light?	Not really, but maybe keep a diary and if there is a pattern, it might be something to report to the anti-social behaviour team at ADC.
Should I go to the Village Hall EGM?	Asked by several people and not a question we could answer.
I'm not a football fan, but please could you include more club news in e-newsletters as it made me feel really proud?	Happy to include any news the club provides, and that goes for each of the village's sports clubs.

13. **Recent bouquets and complaints**

(In addition to anything reported above)

From a Sea Lane resident who had heard a local businessperson (she was more specific than that) was trying to buy the Village Hall and to whom I provided a summary of the situation, "Perfect clarification."

From a representative of a Brighton-based company which had asked for information on a property at Station Parade, "Thank you so much for your helpful reply, I really appreciate you taking the time. I had been relying on Google Maps, so it's good to have the correct information. I'll get in touch with Carole at Rustington Parish Council."

14. **Leave**

Caspar is off from the 5th, returning on the 19th. I am off for the week beginning 19th. Alison is off for the week beginning 26th.

15. **October 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.

4th	An Afternoon of Bingo (14:00, East Preston Junior School)
5th	Full Council (19:00, East Preston Infant School)
6th	Meeting with East Preston Cricket Club (tbc)
7th	Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner Forum (10:30, online) (CB and SC only)
12th	Interim internal audit (10:30) (AV, RMc and SC only) Planning & Licensing Committee (18:00, Council Office) Personnel Committee (19:00, Council Office)
14th	ADC Town & Parish Climate Action Network (11:00, online) (JG only) East Preston Festival Committee donations evening (19:00, East Preston & Kingston Village Hall)
15th	WADARS new site visit for supporters (13:00, Patching) (KB only)
26th	Planning & Licensing Committee (18:00, Council Office) Major Events Committee (19:00, Council Office)
29th	Wild Science playscheme (Marjorie Bridger Scout Hall, morning)
31st	Littlehampton Community Fridge update training (details tbc)

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council** 29th September 2026

Cllr Linton apologised for having no questions to ask.

Item 3 – Anti-social behaviour (ASB) matters – Cllr Duff asked whether the possible new case at Lashmar Rec was related to the rec itself or to the case of someone letting off fireworks at the football ground to the extent the club had to cancel an important match over the weekend because of the amount of plastic detritus covering the pitch. The Clerk said the case was related to the riding of quadbikes and mini-motorbikes on the recreation ground.

The Clerk said he had been contacted, on the day of the meeting, by residents of The Street seeking to upgrade their concerns to an anti-social behaviour case. He would respond to them during the week.

Cllr Bradshaw highlighted the increase in e-scooters being ridden dangerously around the village, both on pavements and on roads, sometimes the riders wheelieing, usually wearing sufficient clothing around their heads and faces to be unidentifiable. The Clerk said he and Cllr Bowman were due to attend a Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner forum on 7th October, and would raise this there. He believed this problem was unlikely to be limited just to East Preston.

756/26 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.

Visit to Chestnut Tree House Hospice, 10th September

Chestnut Tree House Hospice, Dover Lane, Arundel

Accepting an offer in recognition Chestnut Tee House Hospice is this year's Chairman's Charity, Cllrs Elizabeth Linton and Andrea Chapman along with Simon Cross were fortunate enough to visit **Chestnut Tree House,** the children's hospice for Sussex and South East Hampshire, based to the east of Arundel. Cllrs Hill and Moore had also intended to go but were unable; if they are able to go at a later date, I am sure that could be arranged.

We were very kindly shown around by Alice Jalley, Community Fundraiser, who you will remember from her engaging presentation to our AGM Council meeting in May this year. Chestnut Tree House provides specialist care and support for children and young people with life-limiting conditions, as well as practical and emotional support for their families.

It was a very humbling experience and we were blessed to be shown around the hospice and to see the facilities available to children and their families, including bedrooms, sensory and activity rooms, family spaces and the hydrotherapy pool. The beautiful grounds include sensory gardens, forest walkways, vegetable gardens and we were also shown the hospice's memorial garden, where families can spend quiet time reflecting and remembering a child they have lost. The garden provides a peaceful and thoughtful space and was one of the most moving of several moving parts of the visit.

It was helpful to learn more about the support provided both at the hospice and in families' homes. The atmosphere was warm and welcoming, and it was clear how much difference the service makes to local families. What stood out was the hospice's focus on helping families make the most of the time they have together. Support is provided both at the hospice and in family homes, including respite care, end-of-life care, bereavement support and a range of activities for children and their siblings.

Chestnut Tree House is a much-valued local charity that relies heavily on donations, fundraising and volunteers to continue its work. It is an important resource for families across our area and provides a compassionate and supportive service during very difficult time. As East Preston Parish Council's chosen charity for the year, it was a privilege to visit Chestnut Tree House and gain a better understanding of the care and support it provides. Thank you Alice for taking time out in your busy day.

Cllr Andrea Chapman 29th September 2026

Macmillan coffee morning, 23rd September

Greenleas, The Leas, Rustington

Lucy met me at the entrance of Greenleas and introduced me to Florence John, the manager of the properties. There are 29 self-contained homes and some are the whole house whilst others are divided into flats. Some residents had moved from a house to a flat as their circumstances changed. There is a small communal garden in the centre of the plot.

There were only about 12 residents at the coffee morning but I managed to have a word with most of them. The majority seemed to have come from Brighton so were not very knowledgeable about East Preston. I suggested they find the council office and sign up for the e-newsletter so as to be better informed of the area and also to pick up any interesting literature. I have also taken the EP walk leaflet to their reception area.

There were a lot of home-made cakes and not enough people to eat them so I purchased a bread-and-butter cake to eat at home to help them out.

Florence took me to my bicycle to see me out and asked my age! She then said a lot of the residents were much younger than me. In the fullness of time perhaps I'll get a priority property!😊

Cllr McElroy also attended and may have other thoughts on the event.

Cllr Elizabeth Linton – **Vice-Chairman of the Council** 30th September 2026

Additionally, Cllr Bowman reported the committee of **East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation** had been astounded by the number of attendees at the **Extraordinary General Meeting** on **25th September**. Only about four people were turned away because they did not live with the parishes of East Preston or Kingston. The committee was re-elected with a big majority which the committee members took as a confirmation of the village's support. The committee is due to have its first meeting of the new committee year and will be looking at ways in which hirers and local businesspeople can be involved in positive ways. The committee will also look at reviewing and updating parts of the Trust Deed. Cllr McElroy said this last piece of work would be with the support of Action in Rural Sussex (AiRS) and the Charity Commission. Cllr Mathias said the Village Hall committee had done a lot of work with a barrister, some years ago, on rewriting the Trust Deed; that work might be very useful if it could be found.

Cllr McElroy added to Cllr Linton's report on their visit to the coffee morning at Greenleas that the visit had been very informative. Although the property is just over the boundary in Rustington, many of the residents he spoke to liked to think of themselves as living in East Preston with which they had much stronger ties. Perhaps a boundary review could be considered after the local elections in May 2027.

Talking of the local elections in May 2027, the Clerk said it was possible new bank signatories would be required. If any councillor who planned on standing for re-election was willing to become a signatory please could they talk to him or to Adrian for more information. Bank mandate forms were never simple.

757/26 RESPONSE TO EXTERNAL MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Nothing was added.

758/26 NEW ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING (2ND NOVEMBER 2026)

The meeting will start at 18:30 with a presentation from Elaine Sinclair, an Animal Rescue Officer for WADARS.

The meeting ended at 20:00.

Chairman: Cllr Steve Toney Date: **2nd November 2026**

END