EAST PRESTON PARISH COUNCIL

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FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

MINUTES: of the Meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on Monday, 17th August 2026 at Council Office 2, 118 Sea Road, East Preston at 18:00

PRESENT: Councillors John Gunston, Elizabeth Linton, Glyn Mathias, Rick McElroy (Chairman) and Steve Toney

ALSO: Clerk to the Council, Simon Cross

Three representatives of the Warren Recreation Ground Safety Group (all until 18:15)

ABSENT: Councillor Steven Wilkinson

The following abbreviations may appear in these Minutes:

ADC – Arun District Council;
NALC – National Association of Local Councils
WSCC – West Sussex County Council.

The meeting opened at 18:00.

Cllr McElroy welcomed everyone to the meeting.

658/26 APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE

An apology and a reason for absence were received from Cllr Wilkinson (family commitment).

659/26 PERSONAL AND/OR PREJUDICIAL/PECUNIARY INTERESTS

None were declared.

660/26 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Clerk confirmed the members of the Warren Recreation Ground Safety Group were only present to discuss their official complaint.

661/26 OFFICIAL COMPLAINT – WARREN RECREATION GROUND SAFETY GROUP

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

Official complaint

Committee is asked to consider an official complaint.

Although currently being rewritten by the Personnel Committee, at this time the council's complaints procedure states a complaint that is not about a specific councillor or officer is referred to this committee first. The policy invites the complainant(s) to a meeting of the committee and the complainant(s) in this instance have accepted that invitation.

The content of the complaint has been circulated to all committee members with the supporting papers.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council** 10th August 2026

The Warren Recreation Ground Safety Group (WRGSG) had submitted a Formal Governance Complaint against the council on 21st July.

Cllr McElroy invited the members of the group to address the meeting. The representatives of the WRGSG asked for this Minute to be treated as a confidential Minute and read a prepared statement.

The Clerk read a statement on behalf of the committee.

The WRGSG representatives left the meeting at 18:10 and returned at 18:13 during which time the committee considered its response.

With the committee's agreement, Cllr McElroy said the council would provide a written response in due course which was then finessed to by the end of August.

(The representatives of the Warren Recreation Ground Safety Group left the meeting at this point.)

662/26 SECTION 137 GRANT AID 2026/27 – EAST PRESTON SPORTS AND SOCIAL CLUB

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

Grant Aid 2026/27

Committee is asked to consider the following Grant Aid request for the current financial year.

Organisation – charity no	**Amount requested? (£)**	**Electronic docs available upon request**
East Preston Sports and Social Club n/a	£6,500 "To assist fixing the flat roof"	accounts

In the past five years, the council has granted a total of £13,061 to East Preston Sports and Social Club (aka East Preston Football Club); £12,000 from the council's Greener Buildings Fund and £1,061 general Section 137 Grant Aid.

The council budgeted **£10,000** for Section 137 Grant Aid donations this financial year.

After grants awarded at the May meeting, £1,624 is left in this budget line for this year.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council** 27th July 2026

Prior to the meeting, Cllr Linton had asked the Clerk to ascertain for what the club had paid fines of nearly £3,000 in the year ending 31st May 2025. The Clerk had not received a reply from the club by the time of this meeting.

The committee AGREED unanimously to defer any decision on this application and to invite the chairman of the club to attend the committee's next meeting.

663/26 EAST PRESTON CRICKET CLUB

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

East Preston Cricket Club

Committee is asked to note receipt of the club's annual accounts for the year ending 31st October 2025.

Part of the licence from the council to the cricket club is the club "shall send a copy of its annual accounts to the Council each year with its numbers of its members who lives in the village of East Preston."

The most recent set of accounts is for the year ending 31st October 2025 and those were circulated to committee members together with the supporting papers for this meeting. Similarly the number of members living in the village. Submitting both the accounts and the number of members the club asked the council to treat this information in confidence.

Once this meeting has recorded its receipt of the club's annual accounts and member numbers, we should agree a retention period.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council** 10th August 2026

The committee NOTED receipt of the club's accounts for the year ending 31st October 2025 and the number of playing members on the club's books. The committee also NOTED this information had been provided by the club with the wish the information remain in confidence and not be shared with any third party.

664/26 LEASES WORKING PARTY: EAST PRESTON & KINGSTON BOWLS CLUB

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

Leases Working Party – East Preston & Kingston Bowls Club

Committee is asked to continue consideration of the renewal of the lease to East Preston & Kingston Bowls Club.

To recap, council representatives met with Bowls Club representatives on 7th July. A further meeting was agreed for 28th July but the club cancelled a couple of days before as it wanted to seek further professional advice.

At the council's August meeting, the council was asked which of the following options it favoured:

"1. Agree to a peppercorn rent as some councils do in recognition of the club running the asset which might otherwise cost the council; 2. Do nothing and wait for the Bowls Club to come back with its next proposal; 3. Push for a resolution, possibly through legal channels." (3rd August, Minute 611/26)

After some discussion, councillors were asked to let me know their thoughts for the consideration of this meeting.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council** 10th August 2026

No councillor had commented further to the Clerk or Cllr Gunston between the council meeting on 3rd August and this meeting.

After some discussion, the committee AGREED unanimously the Clerk should write to the club expressing the council's disappointment at the cancellation of the meeting scheduled for 28th July with no indication given as to when a meeting could take place. The committee AGREED a reduction to £250 for the first two years only should be offered to the club with a reminder any agreement would automatically be backdated to 1st May 2025, which would be the start date for any renewed lease.

665/26 INSURANCE VALUATION OF THE COUNCIL'S BUILDINGS

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

Valuation of the council's property portfolio

Committee is asked to consider the insurance valuation of the council's property portfolio.

At the committee's last meeting, it agreed an independent insurance valuation of the council's three properties should take place – 118-120 Sea Road, 122-124 Sea Road and Sea Road toilets. Cardinus Risk Management produced a Reinstatement Cost Assessment report circulated to all councillors with the Supporting Papers for this meeting.

The estimated reinstatement cost is £710,580 excluding VAT; the existing declared value is £938,329. I have informed our insurance broker and he told us some councils have an annual VAT cap of around £7,500 VAT reclaim in which case they should include VAT in the sum insured. This council does not have that cap, so we will be insuring excluding VAT, from our next renewal.

Any questions about the report?

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council** 10th August 2026

The committee AGREED with Adrian's advice not to include VAT in the insurance valuation.

The Clerk asked for a volunteer to complete the pre-renewal questionnaire with him; Cllr McElroy volunteered.

666/26 118-120 SEA ROAD

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

118 and 120 Sea Road

Committee is asked to assign budget to the Flat & Frontage Committee.

Full Council has upgraded the Flat & Frontage Working Party to a committee with delegated rights. At the time the budgets were set for the current year, the monies for works to 118 and 120 Sea Road were assigned to the Admin budget, overseen by this committee. The budget for improvements to 118 Sea Road was set to £20,000 and for 120

Sea Road, £30,000. These sums can be amended between the two addresses to suit whilst not exceeding £50,000.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council** 10th August 2026

The committee AGREED to delegate the £50,000 to the control of the Flat & Frontage Committee. Cllr Gunston had canvassed members of that committee as to a choice of replacement windows supplier and a decision had been taken to use Wizard Windows.

667/26 ASSET REGISTER

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

Asset Register

Committee is asked to undertake the annual review of the council's Asset Register.

Adrian maintains the Asset Register through our Rialtas accounting system. I have asked him to produce something I can circulate to all committee members ahead of next week's meeting.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council** 10th August 2026

The Clerk had circulated a copy of the Asset Register to all committee members on the morning of the meeting.

The committee AGREED the Asset Register looked good. The Clerk said he planned to meet with his three office-based colleagues in case there was anything these noticed needed further amendment.

668/26 TERMS OF REFERENCE

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

Terms of Reference

Committee is asked to review and agree the committee's Terms of Reference for the coming year.

The current Terms of Reference, v15, were last updated and re-adopted on 13th May 2025.

The Personnel Committee has resolved the discrepancy mentioned at the last meeting. In clause 3.1 the reference to Standing Order 13(a)(vii) has been updated to Standing Order 4g.

No other alterations are proposed at this time.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council** 10th August 2026

The committee unanimously AGREED to adopt the slightly revised Terms of Reference. These would be version 16.

669/26 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12TH MAY 2026

The draft Minutes had been circulated to all councillors on 15th May asking for suggested amendments by 22nd May. None were suggested.

The committee AGREED unanimously the Minutes could be signed as a true record of the meeting held on 12th May and Cllr McElroy duly signed the Minutes.

670/26 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The committee NOTED the following report, which had been circulated ahead of the meeting:

Updates from previous meetings

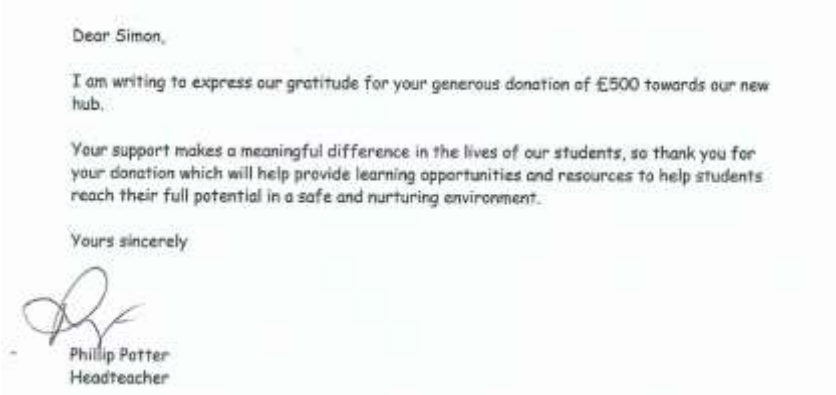
Minute 124/26 – Warren Recreation Ground – Mediation – the mediation exercise cost the council £4,105, part of which was room hire.

Minutes 346/26 and 354/26 – East Preston Community Boardwalk – receipt of the gift of the East Preston Community Boardwalk continues to be discussed. At the time of writing, the council has not agreed terms with Sea Road Beach Access Ltd. for the adoption of the boardwalk nor has it signed any agreement.

Minute 350/26 – banking – Charity Bank bond maturity – the original £80,000 was reinvested as per the committee's decision.

Minute 351/26 – Grant Aid 2026/27 – here are the thanks received to date:

Organisation – charity no	Comments
1st East Preston Scout Group 305895	That is fantastic news, many thanks to EPPC for awarding the grant and to you for all your support. I shall consider it to be my swansong for scouting.
4SIGHT Vision Support 1075447	Thank you for letting me know Simon, and for the councillors supporting our work in your parish again. We will of course formally acknowledge the grant when we receive it. If there is anything else that we can do in to support your parish, then please do let me know.
Air Ambulance Charity Kent Surrey Sussex 1021367	Thank you so much to everyone at East Preston Parish Council for so kindly awarding us with the £500 donation. We are incredibly grateful for all your amazing support for our lifesaving charity. We hope we won't be landing in East Preston any time soon, but thanks to your support, we can continue to be there for those who need us. Thank you again. * * * Many thanks to you personally for letting us know the outcome of our application, and to your Council for its generosity in making a grant. The funds will certainly be put to good use. * * * I am writing to thank you and the council for your generous grant donation of £500. Air Ambulance Charity Kent Surrey Sussex (KSS) are your local air ambulance charity. When there's a life-or-death call, we bring specialised doctors, paramedics and treatment to the scene, fast. Life threatening emergencies can happen to anyone, anywhere, including within your parish. We're here for millions of people across Kent, Surrey and Sussex. Every day we respond to nine emergency calls on average – over 3,300 per year. The generous contribution of the Council will be hugely helpful in ensuring that we can continue to be there for those that need us most in the future. Should you have any inquiries regarding your grant or wish to learn more about our vital work, please do get in touch.
Arun Counselling Centre 293053	This is wonderful news. Thank you so much for letting me know. Please pass on our sincere thanks to all at East Preston Parish Council for their support once more.
East Preston Cricket Club	Thank you to the council for supporting our grant application towards the costs of this year's extra net repairs.

n/a	
East Preston in Bloom n/a	That's great news many thanks
East Preston Yarnbombers n/a	Dear Simon Please can you pass our very grateful thanks onto the Finance Committee. I know you are aware of just how much this means to us and I am sure they do too . We just love doing the decorations in the village and love the comments we get back. A win, win all round. I will let the Yarnbombers group know. Jubilation all round!!
Family Support Work (FSW) 285337	Wow this is incredible news – we are so delighted with this outcome £450 will be such a wonderful contribution allowing the forest school sessions to go ahead – We cannot thankyou enough! We look forward to receiving in due course and of course, will let you know once safely received. We will also write to you with an update on how we used the grant monies in due course.
Friends of East Preston Junior School 1203222	That is great! thank you so much.
Friends of Oak Grove College	This is really wonderful news, thank you so much, we really appreciate this £500 donation and it will make a big difference to our students. I have copied to others so that everyone is aware of your generous donation! With very best wishes and thanks for supporting our school, our students and their families. * * *  Dear Simon, I am writing to express our gratitude for your generous donation of £500 towards our new hub. Your support makes a meaningful difference in the lives of our students, so thank you for your donation which will help provide learning opportunities and resources to help students reach their full potential in a safe and nurturing environment. Yours sincerely Phillip Potter Headteacher
Friends of St Mary's Church 1180544	Whilst Kevin (who is organising the Christmas Tree Festival this year) may drop you a separate note, I would like to thank you and the Parish Council for their financial help with the cost of providing safer stands for the trees that will be used this year. The old stands had done very well having been used by Goring church for about four festivals before we started using them in 2014. Eventually plastic becomes brittle and is therefore liable to crack. Many thanks again. Best wishes. Malcolm McLelland. Chairman. Friends of St Mary's * * * I would like to thank the Council's finance committee for their generous donation. It is much appreciated and be put to good use on the much needed stands.
Home-Start Arun, Worthing and Adur 1132416	What a lovely email to come into the office and read. Thank you so much that will be a massive help and the team will be delighted.
WADARS 1149884	What splendid news - thank you so very much to you and your colleagues for the trust you are placing in us through this generosity.

Thanks from East Preston Festival Committee for its Section 144 grant have already been circulated.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council** 11th August 2026

Nothing was added.

671/26 ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING (16TH NOVEMBER)

Nothing was raised.

The Meeting closed at 18.32.

Chairman: Cllr Rick McElroy Date: **16th November 2026**

(END)