



# EAST PRESTON PARISH COUNCIL

Council Office, 122 Sea Road, East Preston, West Sussex. BN16 1NN

Tel: 01903 770050

[www.arun.gov.uk/eastpreston](http://www.arun.gov.uk/eastpreston)

Email: [eparishcouncil@btconnect.com](mailto:eparishcouncil@btconnect.com)

## **AMENITIES COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES:** of the Proceedings of the Meeting of the Amenities Committee held on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2018 at East Preston Infant School, Lashmar Road, East Preston

**PRESENT:** Councillors B Gale, L Linton, R McElroy (Chairman), D Shah, H Tester and S Toney (Vice Chairman)

Assistant Clerk to the Council, Tracy Khoo

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Simon Cross (Clerk to the Council); Colin Bradshaw & Karen Bradshaw (The Clockhouse Bar); [REDACTED]; Cheryl Burnal, Ralph Holt & Juliet Isherwood-Smith (Isherwood Insurance); Jenny Blackmore & Denise Whisson (Pebbles); James Butler (Littlehampton Gazette); Richard Akhurst (DAG), [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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The meeting opened at 19:05hrs.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and went through the usual points of protocol. Cllrs Linton and Shah had agreed to join the committee for this meeting.

### **035/18     APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies and reasons for absence had been received from Cllr Duijf. These were accepted by the Committee.

### **036/18     PERSONAL AND/OR PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS**

Cllr McElroy declared a Personal Interest in regard to Agenda Items 8 and 9 due to his son being disabled.

Cllr Gale declared a Personal Interest in regard to Items 8 and 9 due to being disabled herself.

The Chairman opened public question time by addressing Ms Bernal of Isherwoods Insurance to publicly answer some of the points she had raised in a letter about issues over parking at the southern end of the village, following the implementation of parking charges at the Village Green car park. Ms Bernal agreed to this.

The Chairman read out the following statement:-

*The council accepts that parking has increased on both sides of the road. Where this is illegal, we have asked – several times – for Arun District Council’s Civil Parking Enforcement team to visit and attend to this situation. You say it would be impossible for any sort of emergency vehicle to pass by and this gives rise to serious Health & Safety issues. Car park charges have been in place now for three months and in that time a number of emergency vehicles will undoubtedly have passed through the area and those emergency services have raised no concerns to our knowledge.*

*You wrote “we are in desperate need of growth & development for the Businesses located at the end of Sea Road. We want to encourage Customers to use our Services and amenities not dissuade them by charging for car parking.” As has been stated previously, there were three main reasons for the council to start charging for the use of the Village Green car-park. Firstly, there were businesses at the southern end of Sea Road who for several years have been asking the council to do something to address the unavailability of the car-park because of inconsiderate use by vehicle owners both daytime and overnight – polite notices were ineffective. Secondly, we had seen an increase in local residents coming in and complaining they were unable to use the car-park when they wanted to use the local businesses and so were not using those local businesses. Thirdly, the council has spent money on ensuring the car-park no longer floods during the winter and that work requires annual maintenance expenditure on top of the Business Rates the council has to pay, and there is no discount on those just because we are a council. The council’s action was designed to help the growth and development of local businesses. The lack of businesses from the southern end represented here perhaps shows the lack of negative impact on those businesses.*

*You wrote “it seems totally unfair that a mile down the road where there are bigger and more shops, parking is free in the designated parking bays for the first two hours. Not to mention the Village Hall car park which is owned by the Parish Council and is free of charge to park in.” The council has not received complaints from those businesses saying their customers cannot park nor from residents saying they cannot park by those businesses when they want. The council does not own the land of those designated parking bays so could not implement parking charges there. You are not comparing like with like. The Village Hall and its car park are leased to the East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation and again, the council could not implement parking charges there. That car-park is for the sole use of users of the Village Hall – it would be up to the Village Hall Foundation to charge if it wanted. The Warren Recreation Ground car park, which is under the direct control of the council, does not have people parking there for the whole day or overnight so there is no need to charge for it – this is not and never has been about fleecing the public in order to make the council money. There are no drainage problems at the Warren Recreation Ground car park.*

*You wrote “the majority of Businesses would quite rightly so have objected” – would they bearing in mind it was businesses that were asking us to address the situation and bearing in mind the council has tried to keep the charges as low as possible. If there has been a negative impact upon your business, please tell us what it is.*

*Thank you.”*

Cllr Shah joined the meeting.

Mrs Bradshaw from The Clockhouse Bar asked whether there would be any changes made to the present parking scheme in the Village Green car park within the next three to six months and whether businesses will be consulted in future.

██████████ spoke about concerns over the youth shelter on Lashmar Recreation Ground and the way it was being used as a meeting place for drugs and dealers. He said he understood it was put in with good intention to provide a meeting place for youngsters but over the years it had become a real problem for the area and was discouraging other residents to want to take their children to the park and play area. He also pointed out the mess left from drug packets and other sanitary items had increased and could potentially attract rats and become a health issue. He said

Chairman’s Initials:

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the work on the new MUGA project had seen the youth shelter taken down temporarily and this had improved the anti social behaviour and he asked for its permanent removal. The Chairman responded and said he had visited the area on several occasions in the late evening and had not witnessed anything but said if there was a blatant abuse of drugs and drug dealing going on then the police should be dealing with it. [REDACTED] said the police had been called many times but rarely came out and no action seemed to be taken.

[REDACTED] agreed with [REDACTED] about the drug abuse and drug dealing, with mess being left around the youth shelter. He also confirmed the police had been called but did not come out. He said the drug dealing had been happening virtually every night before the youth shelter was removed for the MUGA work to start.

[REDACTED] said when she had called the police and they did finally come out, the police did nothing apart from saying they knew who the youngsters were and many of them had ASBOs.

[REDACTED] appealed to the Committee not to put the youth shelter back after the MUGA had been installed.

[REDACTED] said he trained youngsters near to the youth shelter and had to go around and clear up the mess each time the youngsters trained as he was responsible for their safety. He felt without the shelter it would be a much safer place for everyone using the recreation ground. The Assistant Clerk said the Clerk had asked Arun District Council, as landowners, to do additional litter picks around the shelter prior to the MUGA being installed. The Chairman said the colder weather may have meant less presence over the last few nights.

Ms Burnal from Isherwoods Insurance asked the Committee what was its objective for introducing charges in the car park. She said in an East Preston Survey a few years ago, residents were asked how they found car parking at the southern end of the village and the survey showed generally people were happy with the existing parking provision. She questioned why it needed to be changed.

Ms Young also from Isherwoods Insurance said she worked in the office opposite the village green car park and there were usually only a maximum of three cars parked in the car park at one time, whilst many cars were double-parked on the road.

[REDACTED] said it was a shame to remove the shelter but it had become a favourite hangout for youngsters to take drugs and deal.

[REDACTED] said regarding the car park, it was good to have free spaces to park now but a longer period of free parking would be of benefit to residents and visitors.

Mr Bradshaw said he was one of the local businesses who had originally asked the Parish Council to try to do something about the anti social parking in the car park but said the new scheme had just moved the problem elsewhere. He said there should be a period of free parking and suggested half to one hour. Mr Bradshaw said customers of his business, The Clockhouse Bar, had been affected by the way in which tickets had been issued, especially on New Years Day when five customers were ticketed before 9am after leaving their car overnight in the car park after having a drink. He said his customers had paid their £1 for an overnight ticket and the parking officer had visited early intentionally to catch people out.

*Post Meeting Note: The Parish Office checked on the Parking Portal the day after the Amenities Meeting and found only two tickets were issued on New Years Day. One Parking explained neither ticket had paid the overnight parking charge and so that is why tickets were issued.*

Mr Bradshaw did not feel the overnight parking worked for the car park and it was predominantly empty. However, he did agree that the parking should not be left the way it was prior to implementation of the scheme, where some local businesses and residents abused the car parking facility.

Ms Blackmore from Pebbles Catering agreed with the other comments made about the car park and said their takeaway trade had suffered as a result of the new parking scheme. She said this was especially noticeable at Christmas when people came down to pick up their Christmas orders. Their customers complained they could not park and customers were seen driving off. She said one of their staff had also left their car in the car park on New Years Eve and received a ticket the following morning. Ms Blackmore said they were now concerned how the Summer parking would impact on the village.

Mr Akhurst asked when the Sea Road Public Toilets renovation would be moving forward. The Assistant Clerk said she had already explained to Mr Akhurst that the next stage was for an advertisement to be put into the local press to invite expressions of interest to tender for the work. This was currently being done in conjunction with the architect. Mr Akhurst informed the Committee the Disabled Action Group had started to look at grant funding available.

Mr Akhurst asked for progress on the Beach Access project and the registration of the land at the beach entrance. The Assistant Clerk said this was with the solicitor and she needed to speak to the solicitor regarding a development on this but had not managed to speak to her yet. Mr Akhurst said there was still the issue of the Caravan Park dumping spoil from the wall foundations along their boundary and asked for the Parish Council to tell the Caravan Park to remove this. The Assistant Clerk re-iterated that matters relating to the beach access were in the hands of the Council's solicitor and would be dealt with as this developed. Mr Akhurst pressed for progress to be made on this.

The Chairman thanked the public for their comments and said they had all been noted.

Going back to the youth shelter, [REDACTED] said youngsters should be directed to the youth club on a Friday evening and said benches would be a better option rather than an enclosed shelter.

[REDACTED] said CCTV would be a good idea to protect the new MUGA from vandalism and would provide valuable evidence when anti social behaviour was carried out. The Assistant Clerk said the Committee could look at grant funding for CCTV in that area.

Cllr Shah asked whether the Parish Council could pressure the police and go above the local policing team if they were feeling intimidated by the youths. He said something should be done about the youth shelter problem. The Chairman asked the public for dates and crime numbers as evidence that they had been reporting the incidents and felt the community should not have to deal with such behaviour, especially as the drug problem was more than just weed and dope.

[REDACTED] said he felt permanent removal of the youth shelter would make a massive difference.

#### **038/18     MINUTES OF THE AMENITIES MEETING HELD ON 20<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2017**

The Minutes were accepted by the Committee as a true record of the Meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2017 and were duly signed by the Chairman.

**039/18      MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE AMENITIES MEETING  
HELD ON 20<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2017 & PREVIOUS PENDING MATTERS ARISING**

The Committee NOTED a Matters Arising report produced by the Assistant Clerk.

**Amenities, 15<sup>th</sup> January 2018, Agenda Item 5**

Matters Arising from previous Minutes and not covered on  
this Agenda

**Matters Arising back from 12<sup>th</sup> September 2016**

**Minute 662/16 – Two Acres Fence** – I have written to Ms Richman again as landowner but have had no response to date.

**Matters Arising from 20<sup>th</sup> March 2017**

**Minute 218/17 – Village Green Access** – It is hoped some matting can be put down at the gateway to the Village Green and the walk through on the western side, before the end of this financial year. The wider gate access has been considered for the 2018/19 budget.

**Matters Arising from 17<sup>th</sup> July 2017**

**Minute 532/17 – WRG – Telescopic Posts** – These have still to be ordered as I am still looking into the best design with the Council's handyman for these. The current ones are still serviceable in the short term.

**Minute 536/17 – Trafalgar Planter** – This item will be noted by the Committee once the sponsorship detail has been finalised.

**Matters Arising from 20<sup>th</sup> November 2017**

**Minute 845/17 – New MUGA Lashmar Road** – Groundworks started on 8<sup>th</sup> January on the Lashmar Recreation Ground, ready to site the new MUGA facility. ADC has informed the Council that the project will take around 3 weeks to complete.

**Minute 847/17 – Outdoor Football Table** – Paul Amoo, Chairman of the East Preston Film Society was pleased to hear the Committee had agreed for a new outdoor football table to be sited on the Village Green from Spring 2018.

**Minute 848/17 – Wildflower Meadow Planting** – Following the Committee's decision to carry out the Meadow Planting again in the Spring of 2018, the meadow planting specialists, ISS Landscapes will start to prepare the beds shortly. I am still waiting to hear from ex Councillors as to how they would like to contribute towards one of the wildflower meadows in memory of former Amenities Chairman, Mrs Anne Harberson who passed away at the end of the Summer 2017.

**Minute 849/17 – Boat Donation** – I have emailed the resident who offered a boat for planting to suggest they get in touch with CooperAdams direct about sponsorship.

**Minute 850/17 – Village Green Fitness Class** – I have emailed The Outdoor Addict to direct her to Arun District Council who own the Lashmar Recreation Ground as a better venue for fitness classes.

**Minute 858/17 – Confidential Business – Sea Road Beach Access** – No further developments have happened since the last meeting.

Tracy Khoo – Assistant Clerk to the Council

9<sup>th</sup> January 2018



## **040/18 VILLAGE GREEN CAR PARKING**

The Chairman said a review meeting had been held with One Parking where issues over the new parking scheme had been discussed.

Mr Bradshaw said the parking officer had been seen in the car park as many as three times a day.

The Chairman explained that the Committee understood the main problem with purchasing a ticket was for those just wanting to drop into the local shops to buy a paper or a sandwich, or drop something off at one of the offices. To try to address this issue, One Parking had agreed to extend the grace period before a ticket was issued to 15 minutes, previously it was only 11 minutes. This would allow those just wanting to drop off or pick up something to park in the car park without a ticket.

Ms Blackmore asked for a longer grace period of at least 30 minutes. She said many of their customers were elderly and would not be able to make it in 15 minutes. The Chairman explained such a lengthy grace period would not be possible as this had been discussed when initial talks were made with One Parking over a new scheme and it was not viable for them to implement such a long period of free parking. The Chairman explained the Parish Council had no outlay for the parking scheme to be installed and One Parking would recoup the cost of implementing the scheme through ticket and PCN revenue. The Committee were asked whether the Parish Council had gone out to tender for the scheme and why it felt it needed to accept a scheme which obviously wasn't right for the village. The Assistant Clerk explained it was not necessary to tender for something that the Council did not have to pay for and like any new scheme, there are usually teething problems which need addressing once the scheme has run for a while. The Chairman confirmed the Council are continually monitoring the situation and will continue to do so.

The Committee voted to extend the grace period for purchasing a ticket and after expiration of a ticket from 11 minutes to 15 minutes with immediate effect (from 16<sup>th</sup> January 2018). This would be timed from when an enforcement officer arrived onsite and so would in reality give people a much longer period of free parking.

(Cllr Shah declared a Personal Interest in regard to this item as he had a retail business at the southern end of the village and did not vote.)

The Committee AGREED unanimously to extend the grace period for purchasing a ticket to 15 minutes.

A petition was handed over to the Committee by Ms Young. Ms Burnal said a full review of the parking scheme was being requested.

Mrs Bradshaw said the lighting was poor in the car park to see both the ticket machine and signage. The Committee said it would address this with the parking contractor.

The Chairman asked for the subject of Summer parking in the car park to be deferred to the next meeting. The Committee agreed this would be preferable, given the time already spent on the Village Green parking.

## **041/18 YOUTH SHELTER - LASHMAR RECREATION GROUND**

The Committee NOTED this item had been referred to the Amenities Committee by December Full Council after [REDACTED] had highlighted issues with anti social behaviour by youths at the youth shelter. [REDACTED] had requested removal of the youth shelter.

The Committee also noted the points raised by members of the public during the public question time.

Cllr Linton asked whether the youth shelter needed to be moved for the new MUGA to be installed. The Assistant Clerk explained it would need to be re-positioned the other way round to allow the MUGA to be sited. [REDACTED] said the youth shelter had been damaged when the contractor had removed it with a digger.

Cllr Linton said her main concern was that if the youth shelter was removed, the youngsters may turn their attention onto the new MUGA and damage that.

Cllr Shah suggested spot lights and CCTV should help to deter youngsters from carrying out anti social behaviour around the MUGA. [REDACTED] explained the older spotlights at the site were not working but there were some training lights which were controlled from the football club and used for training on the field.

Cllr Linton suggested maybe taking off the sides of the youth shelter to leave it more open and exposed, which may prove a deterrent to the youths.

[REDACTED] agreed there had been no youth hanging around this area since the youth shelter was removed and the MUGA work started. Although it was acknowledged the cold weather could be a factor, everyone felt this was a positive step.

As the youth shelter had already been taken down and damaged, Cllr Shah proposed to store the youth shelter away until after the Summer to give the Football Club and local residents an opportunity to see whether the issue with the anti social behaviour improved. He proposed that if this improved the situation, a new bench could be sited next to the MUGA site and the youth shelter not be returned to the site. It was suggested to ask the contractor to hold off re-siting the youth shelter until after the Summer and then if the decision was to put it back, it could be re-sited free of charge. However, if the youth shelter was not to be re-sited, the contractor could be asked to supply a bench in its place.

The Committee voted in favour to not put the youth shelter back until after the Summer, after the schools had gone back. One member abstained.

The Committee agreed to review the situation at its September meeting.

*(Post meeting note: The Assistant Clerk spoke to Arun District Council Officers and contractors on-site and it was confirmed the youth shelter was badly damaged and would need substantial repair if it was to be re-sited. Arun District Council and the Amenities Committee agreed, given the problems arising with the youth shelter, it would not be worth spending time and money to transport it into storage and ultimately repair it. The MUGA contractor has been approached about supplying a bench as suggested in its place.)*

At 20:20hrs two Police Community Support Officers joined the meeting, PCSOs Rebecca Bernier and Neil Billingham. The Chairman said to members of the public that it was their opportunity to speak to the officers.

[REDACTED] questioned the officers about the problems with the youth shelter and reports to the police not being followed up. PCSO Bernier said it had been herself who had come out one evening to a large group of youths and had to call back up as she was on her own. The officers explained a new team of Preventative Enforcement Officers had been set up to tackle youth problems in East Preston and Rustington and so far this was working well. They said to keep reporting incidents, although it was better for different people to call as the Call Centre treated the same person for the same incident as only one report, even though they may have called in several times.

*The majority of the public left the meeting at this stage. Mr Akhurst remained.*

**042/18      PUBLIC TOILETS – SEA ROAD REFURBISHMENT**

The Assistant Clerk explained she was working with the architect to place an advert in the local papers to invite contractors to tender. This should be done shortly. The architect would then be in a position to send out Tender Packs.

**The Committee NOTED progress on this project to date.**

**043/18      SEA ROAD BEACH ACCESS**

The Assistant Clerk said she was waiting to speak to the Council's legal adviser about developments over registering the land as a public right of way. She said she would progress this as soon as she could.

**The Committee NOTED progress on this project to date.**

**044/18      TREE MATTERS**

The Committee NOTED there were no tree matters to be discussed.

**045/18      2017/18 BUDGET**

The Committee NOTED the latest Amenities Income and Expenditure to date and also Income and Expenditure for the Warren Recreation Ground Trust, which is managed by the Amenities Committee.

**046/18      CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED**

No additional correspondence had been received which had not been covered under the relevant agenda items.

**047/18      URGENT MATTER ARISING (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)**

There were no urgent matters arising.

**048/18      ITEMS TO BE REFERRED TO THE NEXT AMENITIES MEETING**

There following items were to be referred to the next meeting:-

- a) Village Green Car Park – Summer parking scheme

**049/18      Pursuant to Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, members of the public present were asked to leave the meeting in order for confidential business to be transacted.**

Mr Akhurst left the meeting.



**CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS**

**050/18**      The Committee AGREED the Confidential Minutes be accepted by the Committee as true record of the Confidential Business discussed on 20 November 2017 and were duly signed by the Chairman.

**The meeting concluded at 20:40hrs.**

Chairman: ..... Date: .....