



Looking to the future **please read**

The background

Prior to 1980, community facilities in East Preston were very limited. In the 1970/80s, led by the Parish Council, the "Barn" and "Rifle Range" were saved from progressive dilapidation and then renovated to become the Village Hall complex. The East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation was formed and the renovated buildings together with some adjoining areas were leased to the Village Hall Foundation in 1982 for a period of 60 years. The first two phases of the Village Hall complex – first the Warren Room, then the Miller Barn – were funded by a combination of grants from central government and the county and district councils and a loan of some £90,000 from the Public Works Loan Board. (The latter loan would equate to a figure of about £675,000 at today's prices.) The third phase to complete the agreed complex, building on the area known as the "Fives Court" and land immediately adjacent (which instead became part of the Children's Playground in 1991), never happened.

The proposal

Over the intervening years, the Village Hall has continued to gain in popularity but more than 25 years on requires an enlarged foyer/reception area and additional space so it can safely and sensibly store equipment, etc which currently occupies valuable floor space to the detriment of the groups which pay to hire the Village Hall for functions. To meet this requirement, modernise the outdated playground facilities, provide a dedicated meeting room for the community and a proper Parish Council office (to replace the overcrowded and temporary Portakabin), the Parish Council decided to work in partnership with the Village Hall Foundation to launch a building project – the Warren Recreation Ground enhancement project.

Consultation

The current proposal began life in July 2007. Plans have been available for viewing in the Council Cabin since January 2008. Councillors were available to discuss the plans on the Village Action Plan day in May 2008. Articles detailing the progress of the project and asking for residents' views have been in the last ten newsletters. Special Council meetings, all open to the public, have been held. At the time that the Planning

Application was submitted, in February 2009, there was a large article in the Littlehampton Gazette. Parents participated through focus groups and questionnaires in deciding facets of the new play area.

Financial implications

The latest estimated capital cost of the total project is £634,000 (excluding VAT because the Council expects to recover any VAT paid) which is within the budget ceiling of £650,000 announced last year. This capital cost will be funded by the combination of a loan of £500,000 [cf the 1982 loan value] from the Public Works Loan Board, any grants received and bank reserves which the Parish Council has built up over past years.

The cost of meeting the PWLB loan charge repayments will be met by the annual Parish Council precept and thus be a charge on council tax. Because the Parish Council believed a serious financial squeeze was on the way, it agreed to freeze East Preston's portion of council tax for the present year (2010-11) at the same level (£180,000) as last year (2009-10). The Parish Council favours a similar freeze for both next year and the following year.

The development project is considered financially sensible at this time because Government interest lending rates are at an all time low. If the building project was deferred to a later date, it would cost more and the cost of financing it would be less attractive. In the current economic climate of public sector cutbacks, the development can be seen to contribute positively to economic activity and private sector employment in the local area.

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Looking to the future



This building will undoubtedly benefit many future generations of our community. The world as many of us have known it has changed; with technological advances and economic circumstances never dreamt of. With this in mind, the Council has for a number of years been engaged in much discussion regarding the development of the Village Hall complex to include storage space, a new meeting room, a Council office and a new children's **playground equipped to the highest standard available today.** It has not been easy to arrive at plans which satisfy everyone but the Council has taken on board the ideas and concerns of interested groups who have come forward. Our village has grown and we must provide for more development in the future.

Warren Recreation Ground Trust Enhancement Project

The Facts

In 2007 it was agreed that the Warren Recreation Ground charity of which the Parish Council is Trustee would work in partnership with the Parish Council and the Village Hall Foundation, to launch a mutually beneficial project in order to address a growing local need and to provide resources for Community benefit. After several years of discussion, consultation and research an enhancement scheme has been agreed.

The enhancement project will provide much needed additional community facilities in a sympathetically designed building together with a modern children's playground.

- Additional storage space for equipment for the Village Hall and its users and an enlarged foyer area providing a reception / cafeteria facility
- A further fully equipped and dedicated meeting room and toilet facilities available to all the community
- A Parish Council area to include a staffed office, small meeting room and archive storage
- A new children's playground offering exciting and challenging modern equipment

The reasons why it is felt that this scheme should proceed:

- The Village Hall requires additional central storage for its equipment and an enhanced Foyer and Reception Area for it to operate effectively as a Village Hall
- The village has no dedicated and equipped Community Meeting Room other than the British Legion Poppy Room. The Warren Recreation Ground Charity will provide a Meeting Room for the village and have an income stream from lettings. Thus enabling better provision of resources for this area of the village

- The Parish Council has an increasing role within the village and has responsibility to provide appropriate accommodation for staff. The facility should be central and accessible to Parishioners
- The present Children's Playground is 19 years old and needs replacing / modernising for the growing number of young families in the village
- Planning Approval for this scheme was granted on 18th March 2009. 125 letters opposing the scheme were received from an electorate of 5,000
- The Charity Commission have approved the scheme
- The Department for Communities & Local Government has approved the scheme and agreed to a Public Works Loan at fixed 4 % interest over 25 years
- The total cost is projected as £634,000
- The Parish Council will borrow £500,000
- Repayments equate to a £6 per annum contribution for a Band D household taken from the Parish precept. However, no increase in precept is envisaged over the next three years
- Grant aid has been obtained from County and District and a £50,000 contribution from Lottery funds is anticipated
- The Parish Council has informed residents of the project through the Village Action Plan launch, ten quarterly newsletters, Parish Council meetings and the Annual Parish Meetings and the plans have been available for scrutiny at the Council office

Please affirm your approval for the project at the Parish Poll on Wednesday 25th August between 4pm and 9pm by voting 'Yes'.

East Preston Festival Photo Competition 2010

Congratulations to Anni Stevens who won this year's Festival Photo Competition with the photograph below. The judges felt that from the 42 entries received, Anni's photo best met the subject, "East Preston Through The Seasons."

Next year will be the 30th East Preston Festival and the judges are hoping for a bumper selection of entries in the Photo Competition, "People At Play." So get snapping now and look out for entry details nearer the time.

Next year's Festival will run from 4th to 12th June.



East Preston Youth Centre

is proud to announce a

**Community Open Evening - All Welcome
Monday 13th September 2010 7pm-9pm**

Tour the building, try out the music studio, learn a new dance move, have a go at activities, meet young people who attend each week and find out what opportunities there are for local young people aged 11-17 in this area.

There will be free refreshments.

We look forward to meeting you!



Village Life

- Sept 1 – Start of school term at Infant and Junior schools
- 6 – Full Council meeting 7pm. - Warren Room
- 26 – Wheels classic car show – Village Green
- Oct 4 – Full Council meeting 7pm. - Warren Room
- 13 – Film night* – The Barn, Village Hall
- 25-29 – Half-term week at Infant and Junior schools
- Nov 1 – Full Council meeting 7pm. – Warren Room
- 10 – Film night* - The Barn, Village Hall
- Dec 2 – Christmas "Lights On" and late night shopping, 4pm to 7pm

*Tickets on sale at Hedgers Newsagents and Seaview Stores. Doors open at 7pm and films start at 7.30pm.

Storytime for toddlers every Friday 11.10am – 11.30am in East Preston Library.

If you have an event in December, January, or February that you would like included in this list, please contact the Parish Clerk.

East Preston Infant School points the way to safe site

East Preston Infant School values its links with the community and enjoys being at the heart of the village.

Friends and neighbours appreciate that the school must ensure that the children are safe – and feel safe – throughout their time on site. That's why it's necessary to gently point out that there is **no public right of way through the school grounds** and that includes the cut-through from Lashmar Road to St Mary's Drive.

Security is a very important issue for all schools. To prevent trespassing, **East Preston Infant and East Preston Junior Schools will be keeping all gates on site closed during the day, aside from "school run" times**, and everyone is asked to abide by this and observe the signage.

This may be inconvenient for some local people but there is a public footpath just a little further down the road in North Lane, which goes through to the back of the library and into St Mary's Drive in one direction and virtually all the way to Ferring in the other direction!

Of course, visitors on school business and at official public events such as the Summer and Christmas Fayres are very welcome.

Thank you to everyone in advance for helping to fulfill this essential legal obligation – to protect the pupils.

To be or not to be? The Parish Council answers criticism

At a recent Parish Council meeting a small number of residents passed comment that the Parish Council manages the village very poorly - if at all.

In the light of this, we thought it might be interesting to imagine the village as it would be if there was nobody on behalf of the parishioners to administer the monies raised by the Council taxes.

The open spaces of the Warren Recreation Ground, Two Acres and the Village Green would all go untended. The tennis court on the Warren Recreation Ground would not have undergone essential resurfacing two years ago and, by now, would probably be unsafe and unfit for use.



Petty vandalism would go unrepaired, blighting such village assets as the children's play area in the Warren Recreation Ground, the four wooden bus shelters and the thirty plus public benches. There would be a build up of litter on the Warren Recreation Ground and the Village Green, in the children's play area, the Village Hall car park and Two Acres. There would be fewer litter and dog bins in the village for although they are marked Arun District Council, the Parish Council purchases these bins and pays for them to be emptied.



The St Mary the Virgin churchyard would be maintained less frequently. The Village Green would not have been developed as a family recreational area with

picnic benches, security lighting, a well kept Green and a newly installed boules piste.

No public toilet facilities. Sea Road and South Strand toilets may be basic but they are well-used and appreciated by residents and visitors alike.

No school crossing lady ensuring the safe crossing of North Lane to East Preston Infant and Junior Schools. The East Preston Youth Centre possibly open only one night a week instead of the two nights a week on which it currently offers a wide range of activities to local young people.

Less street lighting as the Parish Council owns over sixty streetlights within the village, and pays the running costs of all the village streetlights.

Gone would be all the colourful flower displays in hanging baskets throughout the centre of the village and in planters and beds in both shopping parades. There would be fewer trees in the village, and many of those that are here would go unmaintained.



More unsuitable property development within the village. More planning applications for blocks of flats going unchallenged and residents having nobody to turn to for assistance in writing their own objections to planning applications.

No quarterly newsletter keeping residents informed of the management of the village and delivered by hand to every household in the village. Streets do occasionally get missed, and if you think that your street has been missed, please tell us as we cannot possibly check on every single street in the village.

No monthly Parish Council meetings open to all, where East Preston residents can come along and have their say on the state of and the future of the village.

Without a central office, many residents would continue to have minor niggles which they have been able to address with guidance from the Parish Council.

All this costs less than £1 per week for a Band D property in East Preston. The Parish Council comprises thirteen hard-working, dedicated volunteer councillors who have been chosen from only sixteen residents who have been prepared to stand as councillors in the past three years.

These councillors are supported by four part-time officers, who all regularly work beyond their contracted hours and go out of their way to help residents.



It's easy to scoff and to dismiss the Parish Council's efforts in an ever-changing world, but would you really rather live in the village imagined above?



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