East Preston Action Plan update

In 2012 we sent a questionnaire to all households in the village the output from which was published in the form of the East Preston Action Plan.

Three issues were clearly at the head of your concerns: Roundstone level crossing, parking and dogs.

The following actions have been taken in respect of each:

The council commissioned a survey to look at options for the Roundstone level crossing. Although there was some concern about the proposals, generally public opinion was in favour of the proposals and these were put forward to West Sussex County Council (WSCC). Unfortunately, as we have already reported, WSCC is not prepared to consider any of the proposals until after improvements have been made to the A259, currently scheduled for late 2017. Requests from residents for WSCC to reconsider have so far been unsuccessful.

Parking is an increasing problem across the country, not just in East Preston. Young people are leaving home later than ever before but also travelling further to work, necessitating another car on the family’s drive or, more often, on the road or grass verge. Some residents would like to see more bollards on verges to keep the verges neat, others think bollards themselves can be equally unsightly. There is no easy answer, but we are happy to discuss with you any suggestions you may have.

In the past few years we have installed dog bag dispensers on the Village Green and the Warren Recreation Ground. These have been well-received but it is very frustrating some people still think it is acceptable to help themselves to as many bags as possible. Repeatedly. It’s not and it means other dog owners with a genuine need may find there are no bags available. Additionally, the council has bought into Arun District Council’s dog warden scheme over the summer months. It is impossible to know what impact this has had on the problem, however dog owners have told us they feel it is a good thing to have a visible dog warden presence in the village. Similarly, the council also embarked upon a campaign of spray-painting un-cleared mess to highlight the problem – our thanks to community volunteers who have helped with this. At the end of the summer, the dog warden came to our September council meeting and reported the problem was not as widespread in East Preston as in other parts of the Arun district.

The council will continue to work on all three of these challenges, but if you feel there are any new challenges we should be considering, please get in touch. Thanks.

Community Speed Watch

By now some of you will have seen our Community Speed Watch Team operating in and around East Preston.

The team is made up of Parish Councillors and volunteers who have undergone the necessary training with Sussex Police and are now able to monitor, record and report back to the Police motorists who are driving too fast in East Preston.

The Community Speed Watch Team has come about as a response by East Preston Parish Council to complaints from villagers who have witnessed vehicles moving through the village at excess speed. The council has been asked to do something to reduce the possibility of accidents happening in the village and to help make the roads in the village safer for everybody.

Following a patrol, Community Speed Watch operators report speeding vehicles to Sussex Police via the Community Speed Watch website. This will initially trigger a letter from Sussex Police.

The moral to this is if you do not want a rather nasty police letter dropping on your doormat please keep to the speed limit and drive with care.

Finance News

2016 – 17 Precept

At its January meeting the Parish Council debated and set the Council budget for 2016-17 at £260,629.07

After an informed and robust discussion, the Council agreed to increase the precept (the portion of your Council Tax which comes to the Parish Council) by 2% to £211,789. The precept has been increased by £4,993.00, which is a lower increase than in previous years.

The new precept equates to £77.55 for the year for a Band D property, an increase of £1.55 per year. The difference between the budget increase and the precept increase will come from the council’s reserves.

For the past three years, the precept has been set lower than the budget which has reduced the Council’s reserves. The Council is mindful that it needs to exercise caution in this respect as it is unable to predict what services could be devolved to this tier of government in future.

The Parish Council continues its commitment to improve facilities and services to East Preston Village.
**Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) – Lashmar Road**

Progress on this project was delayed whilst the Parish Council waited for a second decision from Sport England to see whether it had been successful in their bid for funding. Sport England received many worthy applications for funding this time round and so sadly East Preston was unsuccessful. Since this news, Arun District Council (ADC) has undertaken cutbacks and no longer has officers who can allocate time to this project.

The Parish Council however is determined not to give up on this project, as this facility is something which the village clearly wants. It is planning to ring-fence funds set aside for the MUGA in 2015/16 and has budgeted further funding in 2016/17 to get this project up and running. The Parish Council has proposed to ADC, the landowner, the Parish Council starts to get quotes for a new MUGA and choose the contractor with ADC’s agreement. If this goes ahead, further funding options can be explored using the chosen contractor’s funding resources.

**Beach Clean 7**

The next of the council’s popular Beach Cleans will take place on 3rd April. Please register with council reps at the bottom of Sea Road between 11am and midday and bring any tools you have. The council can supply some tools but every little helps.

The council will again be placing large wheelie-bins at the bottom of Sea Road and Sea Lane this year. Last year, regular beach users reported a marked reduction in the amount of litter on the beach, and hopefully some of that reduction is due to these bins.

We are grateful to the local U3A which has started a twice-monthly beach clean on Thursday afternoons. This will help keep on top of beach litter throughout the year.

**Food and Drink Festival**

This year the council is going to organise what is possibly a first for East Preston, a Food and Drink Festival, taking place on Saturday, 27th August. In addition to the French market from last year’s Christmas event, a variety of hot and cold foods and drinks will be available from both village suppliers and companies from slightly further afield. This should be a really good day, with something for everyone. If you would like to talk about taking part or know more about volunteering opportunities, please get in touch. More details will follow nearer the time.

**Happy Birthday, Your Majesty**

In advance of her 90th birthday, we would like to wish Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II a very happy year.
New Youth Club for East Preston

We are pleased to announce a new Youth Club is up and running in East Preston at the youth centre in Lashmar Road. This is thanks to a partnership between the Youth Club Management Committee, East Preston Parish Council and ‘ACCelerate’ the children’s and youth work arm of Arun Community Church who already run several other successful youth clubs in the area. It’s early days but local young people are starting to attend and enjoy the activities on offer.

“We’re very excited about opening the centre again,” said youth worker Ben Young for ACCelerate, “it gives East Preston young people a space of their own and a chance to get involved with something on their doorstep”.

The youth club will be open to young people aged (11-14 year olds), and sessions will be from 7-9pm on Fridays during term-time with additional outings during school holidays. Entry is FREE for the first time, 50p for ACCelerate Members, and £1 for non-members. Joining as a member costs just £1. Young people can simply turn up.

For more details on the Youth Centre opening, contact ACCelerate on 01903 782744 or the Council Office.

Village Life

March
2nd Business Breakfast (8am)
7th Full Council
14th Planning Committee (6pm)
21st Community Engagement Committee (7pm)
29th Planning Committee (6pm)

April
3rd Beach Clean 7 (11am, bottom of Sea Road)
4th Full Council
7th Business Breakfast (8am)
11th Planning Committee (6pm)
13th Amenities Committee (7pm)
25th Planning Committee (6pm)

May
5th Business Breakfast (8am)
9th Annual Full Council
10th Planning Committee (6pm)
23rd Planning Committee (6pm)
31st Finance & General Purposes Committee (7pm)

N.B. The full schedule of committee meetings has not yet been set. All council meetings begin at 7pm at East Preston Infant School, Lashmar Road unless otherwise noted. For all meetings, please consult the Noticeboards and website a few days before the meeting for the Agenda.

* Please note the above list may be subject to change *

It may only be February, but the council and a team of volunteers is already working on this year’s Christmas Celebrations event. If you have any suggestions for attractions or would like to know more about volunteering opportunities, please get in touch. Meanwhile, please pop Saturday, 26th November in your diaries now.

Warren Recreation Ground Improvements

This year, the Amenities Committee has started to make improvements to the boundaries around the Warren Recreation Ground. The first stage of this project was to tackle the eastern side of the northern boundary which was badly overgrown and had some aged conifer trees which needed to be removed. Following clearance work along this boundary, a new fence was erected and shortly some new flowering Cherry trees will be planted along this stretch. Grass seed will then be sprinkled along here which should make the area much tidier and easier to maintain.

It is hoped before the end of this financial year, that the Warren Recreation Ground car park can also be re-configured to allow better parking. New slightly larger parking bays will be marked which will include a disabled bay and emergency yellow hatching at the entrance onto the recreation ground.

A new inclusive roundabout has been ordered for the Children’s Playground and will be installed ready for Spring!

The next phase of work in 2016/17 will be clearance and tidying of the western end of the northern boundary.

The East Preston & Kingston Preservation Society has approached the Amenities Committee about being involved with this project and will be meeting shortly to discuss further improvements.

* Please note the above list may be subject to change *
New dog bin
Late last year, in response to a letter to the council from Janeen Warman asking for a new dog bin in North Lane, East Preston Film Society offered to underwrite the full cost of purchase and installation. This offer was accepted by the council and the bin is now in situ at the junction of North Lane and Elm Avenue. In honour of Janeen's dog, the new bin has been named “Poppy's dog bin.” The photo below shows Janeen, Poppy and the new bin of which they are both so proud.
The remaining Film Society showings for this season are 9th March, 8th April, 5th May and 3rd June. Look out for posters around the village.

East Preston Business Community
As a way of highlighting the wealth of businesses and services available in East Preston, over the next few editions we will be offering a fictional scenario and showing what is available on your doorstep. For this edition, our Chairman would like to arrange a 21st birthday party.

Ping Pong Al Fresco
Following last year's very successful installation of Outdoor Gym Equipment, East Preston's Film Society has again been busy raising funds from its film nights to enhance the village. Its latest project is to purchase an outdoor Table Tennis Table. The Parish Council would welcome suggestions from youngsters and residents as to where they would like to see this new facility sited.

Contact point: Parish Clerk - Simon Cross, Assistant Clerk - Tracy Khoo Council Office, 122 Sea Road, East Preston BN16 1NN Telephone: (01903) 770050 E-mail: epparishcouncil@btconnect.com Website: http://eastpreston.arun.gov.uk Arun District Council (01903) 737500 West Sussex County Council (01243) 777100 Designed by Arun District Council, Civic Centre, Maltravers Road, Littlehampton BN17 5LF

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

This issue was written by Paul Amoo, Simon Cross, Joop Duijf, Pat Gander, Tracy Khoo, Paul Kelly, Elizabeth Linton and Hazel Tester.