



EAST PRESTON PARISH COUNCIL

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ANNUAL PARISH MEETING - EAST PRESTON

18th April 2016

The Annual Parish Meeting at East Preston duly convened and held this day at the East Preston Infant School, Lashmar Road, East Preston.

Present:

Parish Councillors Joop Duijf (in the Chair), Pat Gander, Paul Kelly, Glyn Mathias, David Moore, Lisa Peters, Danny Shah, Hazel Tester and Steve Toney

District Councillor Terry Chapman (East Preston with Kingston) and County Councillor Peter Evans (East Preston and Ferring)

Members of the Public:

Judith and Richard Akhurst, David Beale, Jack Cogman, Linda Denton, David Gander, George Schlich and Jennifer Wallace

Clerk to the Council: Simon Cross

Apologies:

Parish Councillors Barbara Gale and Elizabeth Linton; District Councillors Ricky Bower and Mike Clayden

The Chairman of the Council, Councillor Joop Duijf, opened the meeting at 19:00, and thanked and welcomed those attending.

APM2016/01 - To confirm the Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 27th April 2015

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 27th April 2015 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record, proposed by Cllr Hazel Tester. There were no objections.

These Minutes had previously been noted by the Parish Council at its meeting held on 18th May 2015, Parish Council Minute 293/15.

APM2016/02 - To receive the Annual Report of the East Preston Parish Council

Cllr Duijf read the following Annual Report, which was distributed to all attendees upon arrival:

“This year was different to my previous ones as Chairman because of the local elections held in May 2015 and subsequently the influence on the functioning of the Council. There were only seven candidates resulting in all being automatically elected to the council, but this left the council with six vacancies. Five of those elected in May were, so to speak, from the old school having been councillors here before – Glyn Mathias, Rob Ellis, Elizabeth Linton, Hazel Tester and myself; we welcomed two new councillors, Paul Kelly and Rick McElroy. Over the following few months, the council undertook the legal co-option exercise and a further six councillors were co-opted, from a pool of over twenty residents willing to be councillors. We welcomed Barbara Gale, Pat Gander, Lisa Peters, David Moore, Danny Shah and Steve Toney, to the council. On the one hand a lot of experience and knowledge left the council last year and it takes time to replace that. On the other hand, each of the new councillors brings with them different skills, different abilities and different perspectives which will inform the council and ultimately the whole village moving forwards.

“Based upon my opening statement I could say it was quite an eventful and busy year. Just one of the activities we organised or participated in was our second Christmas Celebrations event, and thanks to all involved in organising and making this a success, and most importantly thanks to the public who ultimately make it really work. Having seen so many happy people we have decided to organise the village’s first-ever Food & Drink Festival and the Christmas Celebrations event again this year. The council financially supported the East Preston Festival and took part in Remembrance Sunday. Our continuing twice-yearly Beach Cleans were supported by many local residents and made a big difference to our beach. For the first time, the council took part in Commonwealth Day, raising the Commonwealth flag outside the library.

“Many councillors attended training courses to educate them in the mystery of councillorship, committees were manned, oh forgive, populated, to get involved in the running of the day-to-day operation, guiding everything in the right direction to serve the village.

“In August, our Planning Committee became our Planning & Licensing Committee and as usual it meets more frequently than our other committees, due to the timescales set down in Planning and Licensing legislation. Our main guideline when commenting upon Planning Applications to Arun District Council is the East Preston Neighbourhood Plan.

“The committee has provided comments on a number of applications including controversial ones such as Slater’s Cottage at 3 The Street – sadly the Planning Inspectorate has overturned Arun District Council’s decision not to allow demolition of this unique 1850s building in the centre of the village. Our MP, Sir Peter Bottomley, has got involved but sadly the future does not look good for this house. This council’s concerns about the proposed redevelopment of the Bradbury Hotel site in Station Road led to a rethink and eventual withdrawal of the scheme completely. The future of the site remains unknown at this time. The council has expressed its concerns too about traffic management in this area, but West Sussex County Council at present will not investigate this further until the hotel site redevelopment has completed. Who knows when that will be?

“The council has been involved in getting parking restrictions in place at the western end of Worthing Road and discussions concerning the future development of the A259.

“The council has a Community Speed Watch team in place, supported by Sussex Police, and visible several times a month, monitoring traffic speeds around the village. Results are reported back to Sussex Police which contacts drivers registered as having been speeding.

“Our Amenities Committee has started the improvement of the Warren Recreation Grounds based upon a four-year plan. In the last days of the year, a new roundabout was installed in the children’s play area specifically to be inclusive for all children. The committee has also decided to create wild flowers meadows in the Village.

“Our Finance Committee has kept any increase to the precept – our portion of your council tax – to 2%, and has done a lot of work to ensure the council’s reserves are secure and working hard for the village in the future. The council’s budget for the coming year is larger than the increased precept which will involve the council in dipping into its reserves.

“With diminishing contributions from central government to both the county and district councils, in order to preserve our reserves as much as possible for inevitable future expenditure, the council took the difficult decisions to try and end the lease of the South Strand toilet block, returning it to Arun District Council, and also to stop providing street lighting for the Angmering-on-Sea estate.

“A number of residents approached the council upset at the Village Hall Foundation’s decision not to reinstate the Millennium Collage following extensive redecoration of the Village Hall. The council tried unsuccessfully to mediate in this matter.

“The council has also met with its other tenants – the Angmering-on-Sea Lawn Tennis Club, the East Preston & Kingston Bowls Club and the East Preston Cricket Club.

“The council has supported the re-launch of a village Youth Club and attendance numbers have been pointing towards this venture being a success.

“We still look for suggestions on how to tackle the very visible problems of dog fouling and parking on verges in the village – if you have ideas, please let us know.

“As Chairman, with other councillors, I have represented the council at numerous meetings and social events and taken part in Council and District events and meetings and duly reported all this to Full Council.

“I would like to end by thanking our councillors, District and County councillors, the council staff and in particular those parishioners who attended our meetings, visited our surgeries and were involved in other ways.

“I hope we will see you at our meetings in the coming year and please tell us what we might be able to do better.

“Finally, should we all work together to try to keep our village clean? no dog pooh, no litter, no dustbins in the street except on collection day. Thank you for that!

“Thank you for listening.”

APM2016/03 - To receive a report from the Arun District councillors representing East Preston.

District Cllr Terry Chapman introduced himself to the meeting and started by thanking East Preston councillors and officers for “tremendous work over the last year in keeping the village as it is.” Cllr Chapman explained this did not mean he was anti-change but he was only supportive of the correct form of change.

Two of his roles at Arun District Council (ADC) are as the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and as the champion for the Military Charter. Taking the latter first, he was pleased to report he had no current Military Charter cases in East Preston.

As previously reported to the most recent Parish Council monthly meeting, the beach at East Preston has increased in width and height by 1.3% over the past year. This is good news for East Preston. Cllr Chapman offered the council his compliments on its efforts to keep the beach clean and tidy, either through its twice-yearly Beach Clean events or its agreement with ADC to have seasonal bins in place at the bottom of Sea Road and Sea Lane.

Cllr Chapman described the re-launch of a Youth Club in East Preston as an “absolutely tremendous achievement.” He was still willing to work with East Preston Parish Council and Arun District Council to deliver a multi-use games area (MUGA) on the Lashmar Recreation Ground.

A beautiful new 200m long hedge has been planted at Langmeads Field by local schoolchildren. This was one of a number of co-operative efforts to keep “this village the lovely place it is and hopefully always will be.”

APM2016/04 - To receive a report from the West Sussex County councillor representing East Preston.

County Cllr Peter Evans introduced himself to the meeting and started by congratulating the council on its efforts which he knew were much appreciated by residents and by himself as a West Sussex County Council (WSCC) councillor. He believed East Preston to be a jewel in West Sussex’s crown. As a Ferring Parish Council he was also aware his parish council often “look over the fence” at East Preston to copy initiatives seen to be successful here.

He congratulated Headteacher Mrs Claire New and her team for an exceptionally good, recent OFSTED report.

Extra money had been allocated to support a big push in resurfacing and white lining across the county.

Money was also once again available for communities to bid for in support of flood prevention initiatives.

Last week, Cllr Evans had stood down from his long-standing role as Cabinet Minister for Children and was instead now leading on the integration of Health and Social Care across the county, working with all local Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs). He believed real benefits would be felt by local residents. One initiative being considered was the (re-)introduction of council convalescent homes as older people were sometimes stuck in hospitals purely because there was nobody available to look after them upon release.

Cllr Evans also reported on a new apprentice scheme he was working on with Rolls-Royce which would be aimed at "looked-after" children, i.e. those fostered and adopted in the county. As a "corporate parent", WSCC wanted to give these children the best possible start in their working lives.

WSCC had recently awarded grants to East Preston Film Society and the 1st East Preston Scout Group.

He congratulated the council on its new committee system and made sure the meeting understood the increased workload on councillors of all levels and council officers.

Mr Cogman asked how effective the recent improvement works had been on surface water flooding across the village. Mrs Akhurst answered there had been fewer reports of surface water flooding recently but she was always interested to know of any standing water over gulleys as this would highlight a problem with the gully which could be reported to WSCC. WSCC would visit the gully although there was still a concern the pipes beyond the gulleys were not being maintained.

In response to a question from Cllr Gander about whether financial pooling of resources between WSCC and the CCGs would become a reality, Cllr Evans answered this had already happened in Manchester, but legally it was not currently possible elsewhere in the country. Cllr Chapman added it would depend upon how favourably central government looked at the current combined devolution bid prepared by Surrey and East and West Sussex county councils. Government is insisting it will only support devolution bids where an elected mayor is put in place but that would not necessarily be a good thing for West Sussex.

With no further questions forthcoming, Cllr Evans gave his apologies and left the meeting at 19:30.

APM2016/05 - To consider Resolutions of which written notice have been given.

Cllr Duijf advised the meeting one written resolution had been received, the wording of which was on the agenda all attendees had. He asked Mr George Schlich, Commodore of East Preston Open Dinghy Club, to address the meeting.

Mr Schlich explained the club had been in the village for forty years and had members of all ages. The club was regularly involved with East Preston Festival and had in the past won the parade float competition. The club was an integral part of the village, a reasonable number of members have chosen to live in East Preston purely because of the club. The club has safety boats, and these have been used mainly to rescue members of the public thus providing a further level of service for the village.

The good news is the club is not seeking financial support. However, as its lease will not be renewed after 31st December 2016, it is looking for help in finding a new site. Ideally, it would like a nice, small site at the side of the sea. Villagers can help by spreading the word about the club's dilemma; someone out there may be just the person who could help keep the club in or close to the village. In future, the club may also need village support for any relatively minor Planning Applications it may submit; there are no current Applications as the club has no site. For now though, the club would welcome knowing the village is supportive of its effort to stay within the village.

Cllr Kelly reminded the meeting the council had already agreed its support for a proposed relocation to the beach in front of the South Strand toilet block, also taking over the lease of the toilet block. He asked if the club had pursued that. Mr Cross replied he had contacted Paul Broggi at ADC, advising him of the council's support of this proposal and asking for a meeting between the two councils and the club. He had asked for a meeting sooner rather than later just to see if there is anything which could feasibly be pursued. He was aware Mr Broggi had consulted other ADC

colleagues, but he had not yet replied to this council with suggested meeting dates. Cllr Chapman said the matter fell within his Environmental Services cabinet responsibilities and he would contact Mr Broggi direct. Both Mr Cross and Cllr Chapman reported Mr Broggi is a very busy man.

In response to a question, Mr Schlich said he had spoken to the managing agents for both the Willowhayne and West Kingston estates and there did not seem to be any mileage in using the greenswards in either area.

The meeting RESOLVED unanimously to support the attempts of the East Preston Open Dinghy Club in identifying a new base in or very close to East Preston.

On behalf of the club, Mr Schlich thanked the meeting for its support and time.

APM2016/06 – Public question time.

Mr Akhurst said the Disability Action Group of East Preston was still working on providing access to the beach for more residents and had been in touch with someone from Natural England about the coast path proposals. Cllr Chapman responded ADC was still investigating the use of buffalo matting although with this area's dynamic, constantly-changing beaches, it could be a challenge to keep the matting clear of shingle and suitably level. In conjunction with Littlehampton Shopmobility, ADC had carried out some trials and these will continue. A lot of agencies will be involved in the sign-off of the project.

Mrs Akhurst picked up on an earlier comment of Cllr Chapman's in which he said the only incident there had been since the opening of the Littlehampton riverside improvements had involved a mobility scooter user driving where they should not have and toppling over. Mrs Akhurst questioned whether the design was correct if such incidents were possible. Cllr Chapman stressed this was the only incident there had been and disputed there was anything wrong with the design – health and safety begins with the individual. Why enclose the walkway when there had only been one incident? All the designs had been approved by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) and RoSPA had also investigated this one incident and determined it was user error.

Mr Beale asked Cllr Chapman whether ADC monitored licences once they have been granted. Cllr Chapman said ADC did monitor licences but this work had to be led by local intelligence. In the current economic climate, councils could not be expected to fund out-of-hours inspections for licences regardless, but would follow up on public concerns.

Mr Schlich asked the Chairman to explain how the pool of twenty local residents mentioned in the Chairman's report had been selected. Mr Cross responded the council was obliged to follow very strict rules when co-opting and the twenty local residents had responded to notices the council had posted in noticeboards, on its website, on the council's Facebook page and in the quarterly newsletter. If anyone was interested in learning more, they were welcome to speak to him any time.

Following on from her report to last year's meeting, Mrs Akhurst reported a new independent East Preston Flood Action Group had been set up, and was seeking affiliation to the National Flood Forum. The aim of the group is to continue the work already started in East Preston to win funding for such work. The group will continue to provide reports to the council.

Mrs Wallace reported the Collage Reinstatement Campaign had written to the editor of the Littlehampton Gazette responding to the comments made by the Chairman of the East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation in the edition dated 31st March, concerning the non-reinstatement of the millennium wall-hanging, as mentioned in the Chairman's report earlier in the evening. The campaign was ongoing and being properly conducted. The Campaign had also written to the Chairman of the Foundation asking for a meeting.

Mrs Denton read three comments recently-received by the Collage Reinstatement Campaign, one of which was from a local builder who said there were definitely ways in which the wall-hanging could be reinstated safely. The Campaign hoped to see written proof of the surveyor's comments used by the Foundation as justification for not reinstating the wall-hanging, also the insurer's comments. Mrs Denton re-stated the Foundation committee is very efficient in its way of running the Village Hall.

Mrs Denton praised the council for the improvements made recently at the Warren Recreation Ground. There were a "pleasure to see" and the rec was looking "extremely smart." Cllr Duijf replied the improvements made so far were just the beginning.

Mrs Wallace asked whether the council had yet decided the locations for the wild flower meadows mentioned in the Chairman's report. The Chairman replied these had recently been sown – Village Green, Two Acres and the wide verge at the top of Sea Lane.

Mr Schlich asked how often East Preston Parish Council met with Kingston Parish Council. Cllr Duijf replied the two councils met on an ad-hoc basis when there was something to discuss. Aside from that, representatives of the two councils met at various events throughout the year.

With no further questions forthcoming, Cllr Duijf closed the meeting at 20:05 and invited those present to join the council for a drink and less formal conversation.

Chairman: *Cllr Joop Duijf* Date: 24th April 2017