

MONTHLY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

4TH NOVEMBER 2019

SUPPORTING PAPERS

Agenda Item 3

Presentation from Dogs Trust

Pia Offord and Lisa Herbert, Support Relations Officers from [Dogs Trust](#) Shoreham contacted the council on 12th July. The idea was to let us know about the Trust's new Canine Care Card Scheme, a free service for dog-owners. "For people who don't have friends or relations who can take care of their dog after their lifetime, Dogs Trust can [...] promise to look after their dog indefinitely, providing them with all the care they need until we can find a responsible, loving new home for them. [...] Every year we love and care for over 15,000 dogs at our nationwide network of rehoming centres. **And we never put down a healthy dog.**"

Lisa Herbert will be at the meeting to talk to the council further about this scheme and will very likely have a four-legged friend with her.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

24th October 2019

Agenda Items 5 and 6

Co-option

As previously stated, Arun District Council's Democratic Services team confirmed on 2nd September there had been no calls from East Preston electors for a by-election to fill the council's vacancy. A co-option exercise has been underway subsequently.

The vacancy was advertised on the council's website and Facebook page, in the council's noticeboards, Council Office window and in council emails to local residents.

Two local residents submitted a completed Expression of Interest form by the closing date of 18th October. Both were sent a letter on the 24th October inviting them to attend this evening's meeting, and advising they would be permitted to speak for up to three minutes. I also advised them the council is not obliged to co-opt if no candidate is felt right for the role.

No other residents asked for an Expression of Interest form to complete.

Current councillors and officers are welcome to see the Expression of Interest forms for the candidates upon request to me.

Council is asked to appoint Cllr Gander to act as a teller alongside the Clerk. As Chairman of the Personnel Committee, Cllr Gander is perhaps the most obvious candidate for this role.

(If necessary) **Council is also asked to agree to receive a written statement from any candidate who is unable to attend this evening's meeting**, should unforeseen circumstances make this necessary. At the time of writing, both candidates have confirmed they will attend the meeting.

Council is asked to co-opt up to one new councillor.

Please be aware (again) the council is not obliged to accept any of the candidates if it does not feel they are suitable.

When the meeting reaches this Agenda Item, the candidates will be asked to wait in a separate room. Each candidate will be given up to three minutes to address the council, in the order they returned their completed Expression of Interest forms; they can explain anything from why they want to be a councillor to what their background is. Candidates will return to the waiting area after they have addressed the council.

The first round of voting will be a simple Yes or No. Any candidate receiving seven or more No votes will automatically be disqualified from the exercise.

The candidates will then be ranked by the number of Yes votes they receive.

As previously, the result is announced to the candidates in the waiting room first, then to the council.

Any successful candidates will be required to complete a Declaration of Acceptance of Office form before they can join the council tables. Completion of this form could take place whilst the meeting hears from members of the public attending the meeting.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

24th October 2019

Agenda Item 11

Minutes of Monthly Full Council meeting, 7th October

The draft Minutes were circulated to all councillors on 8th October, asking for comments by 15th October.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

25th October 2019

Agenda Item 12

Monthly Update Report

1. **Introduction**
2. **Minute 851/19 – Southern Water Presentation**
3. **Minute 855/19 – West Sussex County Council**
4. **Minute 860/19 – Reports from the Council's committees – Amenities Committee – East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation**
5. **Minute 860/19 – Reports from the Council's committees – Major Events Committee – *Friday Sunday***

6. **Minute 868/19 – Clerk’s Report – Item 13 – Things we have been asked since the last meeting**
7. **Minute 868/19 – Clerk’s Report – Item 16 – October Meetings and Events**

1. **Introduction**

This is the report covering items discussed during Full Council meetings up to and including the meeting held on 7th October 2019.

2. **Minute 851/19 – Southern Water Presentation**

Cllr Gunston wrote an article for inclusion in the Autumn 2019 Newsletter. This was run past Ms Ryan-Crisp before being included in the newsletter.

3. **Minute 855/19 – West Sussex County Council**

Further to the final comments in Minute 855/19, on the subject of Civil Parking Enforcement, on Monday, 21st October, I sent a photograph to ADC at 09:48 highlighting four vehicles illegally parked outside the Council Office, three on the island and one on the northern corner of the southern junction of Willowhayne Crescent and Sea Road. The response from ADC, “I will add this area back onto the hotlist” suggested the extra attention referred to by Cllr Moore had not lasted long.

4. **Minute 860/19 – Reports from the Council’s committees – Amenities Committee – East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation**

As requested by council, I wrote to the Chairman of the East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation, Mrs McElroy, expressing the council’s concerns about the industrial drums that were located on the southern side of the Village Hall car-park and also the ununlockable 11001 bin also on the southern side of the Village Hall car-park.

Mrs McElroy replied on 17th October:

Good Afternoon Simon,

Thank you for your letter dated 9th October 2019. As per my visit to you on Monday 14th October 2019.

All the concerns the council raised in your correspondence have been dealt with.

The Waste bin has been replaced by a lockable bin, which is now constantly locked. We have been supplied with keys, which we have passed onto the relevant users.

Regarding the second concern the Industrial drums were removed immediately by our Premises Manager, I hope this alleviates the concerns that the Council raised.

Kind Regards
Toni McElroy

5. **Minute 860/19 – Reports from the Council’s committees – Major Events Committee – Funday Sunday**

As requested, I sent a letter of thanks to the 4th Goring Guides for the help given at Funday Sunday.

6. **Minute 868/19 – Clerk’s Report – Item 13 – Things we have been asked since the last meeting**

In response to the question about restoration of old petrol pumps, I suggested Steve Hodgson of SMH Engineering in Sea Road might be able to help. I have heard subsequently he has agreed to take on this task. The petrol pumps in question are the only visible ones in the village, Manor Road. When Manor Road garage was converted into residential accommodation, the petrol pumps were sent to Yorkshire for a full restoration and now they just need some topping-up on that restoration.

7. **Minute 868/19 – Clerk’s Report – Item 16 – October Meetings and Events**

Due to other work commitments taking priority, neither Cllr Gander nor I was able to attend the Citizens Advice Bureaux AGM on 17th October.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

24th October 2019

Agenda Item 14

Committees

Since the last meeting, the following committee meetings have taken place: Major Events on 28th October; Personnel on 14th October; and Planning & Licensing on 14th and 28th October. Draft Minutes from each of these meetings, with the exception of the Personnel Committee, should have been circulated to all councillors ahead of this evening’s meeting.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

25th October 2019

Agenda Item 14a

Amenities Committee

Here are some updates since the last Full Council meeting.

Sea Road Toilet Refurbishment Project - Unfortunately the project’s start date was moved back from 30th September to 2nd October, this was due to issues with suppliers and weather. Cloud 9 still aim to complete the work in 8 weeks as they had initially indicated. The building work is well underway and progress appears to moving swiftly. The demolition side of the work is complete and the new access ramp for the accessible toilet is in place. Closomat, the internal specialist equipment contractors, are due to commence work 11th November for the internal fit and this will take approximately 3 days for completion. All being well the project should be completed by the end of November. The working party agreed not to provide the temporary toilet facility which was due to be located in the Village Hall car park; this was due to various health and safety concerns which had been raised and guidance from the Village Hall’s Insurance company recommendations.

Village Green CCTV – The working party are making good progress exploring the provision of CCTV to cover the Village Green and the council's office. Several CCTV companies have met with the working party and given advice and recommendation, including the possibility of using Solar Power cameras.

Dawn Reid – **Assistant Clerk to the Council**

29th October 2019

Agenda Item 14b

Audit & Governance Committee

The interim Internal Audit for the year-ending 31st March 2020 took place on 3rd October. Agenda Item 16a is for council to note the report from that audit.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

25th October 2019

Agenda Item 14e

Major Events Committee

The committee met on Monday, 28th October.

The main part of the meeting discussed the forthcoming Christmas Celebrations event. Some of the community volunteers were present and had a say in how things are going. Councillors who have not yet made it clear when they are available on the day, 23rd November, or indeed the day before, are asked to let Cllr Linton know their availability so they can be allocated tasks.

As mentioned at last month's Full Council meeting, the committee met with representatives of the East Preston Festival Committee, Mrs Janine Nicholson and Mrs Carol Longman. They had presented the committee, in advance, with a list of help the Festival Committee needs in order to put on a Festival in 2020. The committee agreed to take on some of the tasks, a member of the public agreed to take on one of the larger tasks, and the Festival Committee representatives left happier. Everyone agreed, the council's increased involvement with the Festival is only until the Festival Committee can recruit sufficient new members and will be reviewed annually until that point.

The committee reviewed *Funday Sunday* and although not a sales success, the committee was happy those attending had thoroughly enjoyed themselves, and that, more than turning a profit, had been the point of the event. The committee agreed the event had probably worked better in the Warren Room than it might have in the Miller Barn. The committee would like to run a follow-up *Funday Sunday* in May 2020.

The committee also reviewed the Food & Drink Festival and agreed to run a fifth one in August 2020. The committee noted there had been some comments made about the lack of stalls obviously selling produce to take home. The committee agreed to try and address this.

Agenda Item 14f

Personnel Committee

The committee met on Monday, 14th October.

The following non-confidential matters were discussed by the Personnel Committee.

1. Administrative Support for Youth Club

The Committee met with Councillor Mathias, at his request. Councillor Mathias wished to further discuss withdrawal of administrative support. A full and frank exchange of views was helpful to the Committee in broadening the understanding of the background to the youth club operation. In addition, the Committee was able to elaborate on the breadth of the staffing review that had taken place in October 2018 and the reasons for the withdrawal of the support. The Committee agreed that the Parish office could be the registered address for the youth club. Some helpful suggestions were offered to Councillor Mathias on extending the youth club committee membership and avenues to explore to source administrative and fundraising support.

2. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)/Safeguarding

The Committee discussed this subject in some detail, examining the pros and cons of councillors and staff undertaking a DBS check. Whilst there is no legal requirement it was felt that it is good practice to have the basic DBS check as it would protect the reputation of the Council. In addition, it was recommended that safeguarding training should be offered to councillors and staff.

3. Staff Handbook

I have recently attended HR and appraisal training run by SSALC. One of the recommendations was that a staff handbook should be available incorporating all existing policies and adding additional policies, both statutory and recommended. The Committee agreed to draft a Staff Handbook over the next few months.

4. Meeting duration

The Committee considered concerns raised by councillors and members of the public about the duration of the business part of the October meeting. It was felt business specific to East Preston was not given its due time. One suggestion to be trialled is a cap on the amount of time allowed the County and District Councillors – five minutes for the County Councillor and a total of ten minutes for the three District Councillors combined.

5. Social Media Policy

The Committee will review and amend the existing policy to take account of the increased usage of social media by the Council.

6. Health and Safety

The Committee agreed to recommend to full Council the purchase of external Health and Safety support. Safecouncil is a health and safety resource and advice service for local

councils, curated by qualified experts who have held senior positions in local authorities. See Agenda Item 17c below.

Cllr Patricia Gander – **Chairman of the Personnel Committee**

29th October 2019

Agenda Item 14g

Planning & Licensing Committee

The committee met on 14th and 28th October and draft Minutes will have been circulated by the time of this meeting.

The meeting on the 14th considered three new Applications and one revised Application. The committee agreed to object to two of the Applications.

The meeting on the 28th considered revised versions of two Applications. The applicant for the demolition of Gladwyn in The Street and its replacement with a terrace of three houses had made some alterations to the parking layout resulting in a total of nine parking spaces, two allocated to each of the properties and three visitor spaces. The committee felt this addressed the concerns it had had about insufficient parking on site. However, the committee remained concerned about the depth of the roof of the properties and the partial removal of the flint wall at the front of the property. The committee also felt disappointed the council had not been invited to a meeting between ADC Planning, WSCC Highways and the agent as the meeting would not have taken place had it not been to address issues raised by this council.

The committee also considered a further iteration of the Planning Application to make alterations to 2, Hillview Crescent. The committee agreed it would not withdraw its objections to this proposal, which is on a prominent corner location.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

29th October 2019

Agenda Item 15a

Amenities Committee – Warren Recreation Ground, accessible roundabout

Council is asked to agree to expenditure of up to £2,000 from this year's Contingency budget line for the replacement of the bearings on the accessible roundabout at the Warren Recreation Ground children's play area.

Cllr McElroy to lead on this item.

The ball bearings on the accessible roundabout in the Warren Recreation Ground children's play area need replacing. They have been serviced before but now need replacing. This is a popular piece of equipment. Dawn has contacted three suppliers, has heard back from two of them, one quoting £1,521 and the other £1,800, both prices excluding VAT which the

council would claim back anyway. Once council has agreed this sum, I would suggest it is left to Cllr McElroy and Dawn to decide upon a contractor between them.

The playground maintenance budget line was set at £1,000 this year, of which £700.25 has already been spent on essential items such as two new swing seats and such like.

Now we know how long the ball bearings can be expected to last, Dawn and Tracy have worked out how much money the Amenities Committee needs to set aside each year so the money is there when needed.

At the time of writing there is £9,680 left in the Contingency Budget line this year.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th October 2019

Agenda Item 16a

Audit & Governance Committee – interim Internal Audit for the year-ending 31st March, 2020

Council is asked to note the interim Internal Audit report for the year-ending 31st March 2020.

The interim Internal Audit was conducted by Andy Beams on 3rd October. This was the first Internal Audit carried out by Mulberry & Co. and threw up some useful matters which will be considered by the Audit & Governance Committee at its meeting in December. The full report can be found at Appendix A below.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th October 2019

Agenda Item 17a

Personnel Committee – Terms of Reference

Council is asked to agree to some new generic clauses to be inserted into the Terms of Reference for all committees.

Cllr Gander to lead on this item.

At its meeting earlier this month, the Personnel Committee considered the following two new generic clauses I suggested could be included in the Terms of Reference for each of the council's seven committees:

Where there are more councillors willing to sit on a committee than spaces available, the Chairman of the Council and incumbent Chairman of the Committee, should agree to one of those extra councillors becoming the committee's official substitute.

Where it is necessary to include a substitute councillor, because of known absence or a conflict of interest, the official substitute should be approached first. Where that councillor is also unavailable or the committee does not have an official substitute, the Chairman of the Committee and the Clerk should agree between them the order in which to approach other councillors.

The maximum number of substitute councillors at any one committee meeting shall be three (for committees of seven members) or two (for committees of five members).

and

After any evening meeting, regardless of the venue, the Chairman and/or Vice-Chairman of the Committee must stay with the Clerk or Assistant Clerk until he or she has locked up the whole of the venue, as necessary.

Hopefully both clauses are self-explanatory and sensible.

If agreed, both Terms of Reference would be immediately effectively and will be incorporated into the next annual review of each committee's Terms of Reference immediately following the Annual Meeting of the Council on 6th May.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

24th October 2019

Agenda Item 17b

Personnel Committee – Disclosure and Barring Service

Council is asked to agree all councillors and officers undertake a Basic Disclosure and Barring Service check.

Cllr Gander to lead on this item.

The Personnel Committee considered the matter of councillors and officers having Disclosure and Barring Service checks as we all have the potential to interact with vulnerable adults whilst on council business.

A basic check costs £23 per individual. Thirteen councillors and six officers would total £437. The Personnel Committee is going to work upon a policy which may reduce that sum if a councillor or officer has an existing check which is less than a year old.

At the time of writing, the council has spent less than £320 of the £10,000 Contingency budget for the current year, although Agenda Items above this one may have an impact upon that.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

24th October 2019

Personnel Committee – Health & Safety expertise

Council is asked to agree a recommendation the council buys into an external Health & Safety resource.

Cllr Gander to lead on this item.

The Personnel Committee considered the following paper which was circulated to committee members in advance of its meeting on 14th October:

The committee is asked to consider the offer from Terrain to provide Health & Safety support to the council.

The council received an email on 15th July from Terrain Safety entitled *Introducing Safecouncil.uk*. The email read as follows:

What is Safecouncil?

Safecouncil is a health and safety resource and advice service for local councils, curated by qualified experts who have held senior positions in local authorities.

Councils have very limited resources but must comply with health and safety legislation and provide a good example for their communities.

Safecouncil is a very affordable way for clerks/managers to quickly access essential information, ready-made forms and guidance, saving time and money.

How does it work?

Safecouncil has three subscription levels:

Basic Subscription - £6.99 per month

Your council will have 24/7 access to the Safecouncil.uk site, providing guidance on health and safety topics and articles. You will be able to download a large range of ready-made health and safety forms and information relevant to council activities.

Standard Subscription - £9.99 per month

Your council will have access to the benefits of the basic package above. You will also be able to download:

- **A full range of detailed health and safety policies**
- **A staff health and safety handbook.**

Premium Subscription - £14.99 per month

Your council will have access to the benefits of the basic and standard packages above. In addition, you will receive:

- **An annual phone consultation with a health and safety expert.**
- **A follow-up action plan report.**
- **Email support to assist with any queries – usually a Safecouncil expert will respond to your email the same day.**

All pricing **includes VAT** to help with budgeting and **you can cancel at any time**. There are **no hidden charges**.

We offer a free month's subscription if you introduce a neighbouring council to the Safecouncil service.

We think Safecouncil.uk is the perfect solution to allow councils with limited resources to access expert, qualified health and safety support at very low cost.

A free trial of the site is available, should we want to arrange that.

The committee agreed to recommend to Full Council the standard subscription of £9.99 per month. As this is not in the council's budget for this year, the committee is asking council for £40 from the Contingency budget for the current year.

At the time of writing, the council has spent less than £320 of the £10,000 Contingency budget for the current year, although Agenda Items above this one may have an impact upon that.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

24th October 2019

Agenda Item 18a

Working Parties

The Leases Working Party has not met since the last Full Council meeting.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th October 2019

Agenda Item 19a

Sussex Police

Council is asked to note the following email which was received on 24th October:

Dear Parish and Town Councils

As you are aware the way we deploy our PCSO's is changing. This has been as a result of the investment opportunity provided by the precept increase, proposed by Police and Crime Commissioner Katy Bourne. I have attached the partnership briefing which provides the full detail and answers many of the questions that you may already have.

The areas follow established electoral division boundaries, which can be seen on map attached. Each area has been allocated PCSO numbers according to crime, deprivation and indices of need.

Attached is a list of the PCSO allocations for the whole of the Chichester/Arun area. As we recruit and train more PCSO's we will fill the spaces that are currently vacant. We will update you in relation to this as these changes occur and what this means for your area.

In these early days the direction for our PCSO's is to get to know the area and spend as much time getting to engage with you, understand the issues within the community and work together to identify solutions.

If you need to make contact please email us at arun@sussex.pnn.police.uk or chichester@sussex.pnn.police.uk

Regards

Inspector Sharon Sawyer and Inspector Steve Turner
Arun and Chichester Prevention Team

Any councillor wishing to see the supporting documents just needs to ask me. PCSO Neil Billingham has been allocated to East Preston. PCSO Billingham has been the village's PCSO before so will be roughly aware of the issues we have here.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th October 2019

Agenda Item 20a

West Sussex County Council – concessionary travel

The council is asked to note the following email received on 24th October and to decide whether it wishes to respond:

Consultation on proposed changes to concessionary rail travel for older people

A new consultation has been launched on a proposed change to the concessionary travel support provided by West Sussex County Council.

There will be no changes to the national 'free bus passes' provided to older and disabled people. However, council funding is currently provided for certain additions to the national 'free bus pass' scheme. The proposal being consulted on is to no longer offer a free Senior Railcard as an alternative to the bus pass.

If the proposal goes ahead, eligible older people will be able to receive their free bus pass instead of a free Senior Railcard. WSCC will continue to fund the following additions to the national scheme in West Sussex:

- Free travel on buses at any time for Disabled Person's Bus Pass holders
- Companion passes so that qualifying pass holders who need help to travel on buses can take someone with them who can travel for free as well
- A free Disabled Person's Railcard instead of the Disabled Person's Bus Pass

Before any decision is made, we are keen to gather feedback from passengers and others to help us understand the impact of this change.

Further information and the consultation questionnaire is available online at www.westsussex.gov.uk/buses - or by calling 01243 642105 for a paper copy.

We would appreciate your help in promoting the consultation as appropriate. A promo poster is attached; please let me know if you require any hard copies.

Feedback on behalf of your organisation can be made by completing the online consultation questionnaire or by email to: buses@westsussex.gov.uk

The closing date for responses is **4 December 2019**

Best regards

Jo Kenworthy

Information Officer

Place Services – Highways, Transport & Planning

West Sussex County Council

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th October 2019

Agenda Item 21a

Arun District Council – precepts for 2020/21

The council is asked to note the following letter received on 25th October:



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

Arun District Council
Civic Centre
Maltravers Road
Littlehampton
West Sussex BN17 5LF

Tel: 01903 737500
email: raman.singla@arun.gov.uk
www.arun.gov.uk

25 October 2019

Please ask for: Raman Singla
Direct Line: 01903 737562

Dear Town/Parish Clerk,

Town/Parish Council Precepts – 2020/21

In order to facilitate the tax setting process, I should be grateful if you could inform me of your precept requirement for 2020/21 at the earliest possible time, but in any event no later than 7th February 2020.

The Government has issued a consultation paper setting out its intended approach to the 2020/21 local government finance settlement.

With regard to the extension of referendum principles (often known as capping) to town and parish councils the Government noted that in 2019/20 the average Band D parish precept increased by 4.9%, the same increase as in 2018/19. The Government remains concerned about the pressure placed on taxpayers from town and parish councils across England and expects these councils to exercise even greater restraint in 2020/21. On this basis the Government intends to continue the deferral of setting referendum principles for town and parish councils but will keep the situation under active review for future years.

If you wish to model the various factors influencing your 2020/21 town/parish council tax (expenditure and income projections, effect of new properties on the tax base, use of reserves etc.), and need any advice or assistance please do not hesitate to contact Raman Singla (contact details above).

For 2020/21, I intend to pay half of each precept on 9th April 2020 and the remaining half on 11th September 2020.

I will write again in early December with details of the tax base for each Town/Parish Council for 2020/21.

Raman Singla has taken over the responsibilities of Collection fund from Richard Lathey (who has been your finance contact for several years) and going forward will be your first point of contact. Please do not hesitate to contact Raman by phone or e-mail as provided above.

Yours sincerely,



Alan Peach
Group Head of Corporate Support
Arun District Council

Members may be interested to know Mr Singla was once my next door neighbour.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th October 2019

Agenda Item 22

Clerk's Report

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Police matters**
- 3. Freedom of Information / Data Protection requests**
- 4. East Preston Business Community Business Breakfast, 1st October**
- 5. SLCC meeting, 1st October**
- 6. ADC Development Control Committee pre-site inspection, 3rd October**
- 7. Funday Sunday, 6th October**
- 8. East Preston Festival Committee donations evening, 16th October**
- 9. South Strand Community Toilets Ltd, Annual General Meeting, 21st October**
- 10. Twice-yearly meeting with Angmering-on-Sea Lawn Tennis Club, 24th October**
- 11. Fr David Rea's retirement party, 26th October**
- 12. Social media**

13. **MailChimp stats**
14. **A selection of things we have been asked since the last meeting**
15. **Recent bouquets and complaints**
16. **Leave**
17. **November meetings and events**

1. **Introduction**

This is the report mainly covering October 2019 and matters which may not arise elsewhere on the agenda.

2. **Police matters**

The council has had no interaction with Sussex Police during October.

3. **Freedom of Information / Data Protection requests**

The council received no Freedom of Information or Data Protection requests during the month of October.

4. **East Preston Business Community Business Breakfast, 1st October**

A much better-attended Business Breakfast than last month with topics ranging from the Business Community itself to *Funday Sunday* and taxation. November's Business Breakfast will be on 5th November, venue to be confirmed.

5. **Society of Local Council Clerks monthly networking meeting, 1st October**

I attended this meeting in Bersted. Thirteen other Clerks and Assistant Clerks were present and I was the one longest in post.

The main attraction of today's meeting was the chance to meet the new Sussex Police District Commander for Arun & Chichester, Chief Inspector Jon Carter. CI Carter seemed open and honest and explained that whilst there would, in future, be named PCSOs for communities again, these would not be permanently available to those communities, they would work where they are most needed. In his own words there would not be a return to Dixon of Dock Green policing.

CI Carter is a big supporter of partnership working to which end he said he would like to attend this meeting at least quarterly.

6. **ADC Development Control Committee (DCC) pre-site inspection, 3rd October**

I attended this together with Cllr Mathias, Chairman of the council's Planning & Licensing Committee. Four members of the ADC DCC pre-site inspection panel attended together with the Planning Officer. The recommendation to the Development Control Committee was to be approval of the Planning Application to demolish the existing property at Gladwyn, The Street and replace it with a west-facing terrace of three properties. Cllr Mathias and I were listened to and the District Councillors there saw for themselves the traffic- and bus-management problems which would arise from cars having to park on the road if there was not more on-site parking provided.

Subsequently, Cllr Moore represented the council at the Development Control Committee meeting on 9th October, at which a decision was deferred until after ADC and WSCC Highways had met on site. That meeting has taken place and, presumably, the Application will be taken back to the next DCC meeting.

Even more subsequently, the applicant has increased the amount of parking available and allocated two spaces to each of the three properties and a further three spaces for visitors. This revision will be considered by the Planning & Licensing Committee on 28th October.

7. Funday Sunday, 6th October

This event took place in the Warren Room of the Village Hall. Twenty-four members of the public paid to attend. They were provided with a sizeable traditional afternoon tea and entertainment from the duo Vintage Candy and Jonathan Cann with his up-close table magic.

Although the number of attendees may have been disappointing the calibre of the attendees was faultless. Many had dressed up, several danced throughout the afternoon and all seemed to leave with a smile on their face.

Some unsolicited feedback:

JW – “There was nothing you could have done better. It has been a lovely afternoon. No, I cannot think of anything you could have done differently. Thank you all.”

A different JW, unrelated to the one above – “It’s been a lovely afternoon, thank you so much.”

CE – “We feel we must write and say what a enjoyable afternoon we had at the Sunday Funday event. You could not fault anything - the food, the entertainment and the service were all excellent. East Preston is very fortunate to have such an active Parish Office and Councillors. Congratulations to you all. We will spread the word to say how good it was.”

GS – “Lots of people I spoke to said they would love you to run another one.”

Our thanks to The Seahorse Café, Sainsbury’s and One-Stop for contributing parts of the afternoon tea and to the 4th Goring Guides for providing table service (in both senses of those words).

8. East Preston Festival Committee donations evening, 16th October

Together with Cllrs Toney, Gale and Gunston, I attended the Festival Committee’s annual donations evening.

During the evening, £8,750 was given out to the following 42 organisations:

1 st East Preston Scouts	Buddy’s
4Sight East Preston	Butterflies Breast Care Support
Angmering-on-Sea Tennis Club	Cancer United
ARK Parent and Toddler Group	Chestnut Tree House
Arun Home-Start	Children’s Liver Disease Foundation
Baytree Lunch Club	Contact The Elderly

Disability Action Group	Our Lady, Star of the Sea Christmas Lunch
East Preston Cricket Club Colts	PatientLink
East Preston Floral Club	Paws Animal Rescue
East Preston Football Club Academy	Rascals After School Club Ltd
East Preston Friends of St. Barnabas House	REAL Patient Participation Group
East Preston Girlguiding	RNLI
East Preston Infant School	Royal British Legion- Poppy Appeal
East Preston Junior School	Rustington Methodist Church
East Preston Village Pre-School	St. Mary's Church
East Preston Youth Club	St. Mary's Little Angels
Ferring Country Centre Fire Fighters Charities	SENCAT
Friends of St. Mary's Church	Shared Lives
Friends of Zachary Merton	Sussex Air Ambulance
Happy Days Pre-School	Turning Tides
Littlehampton Blind Club	WADARS
Littlehampton Food Bank	Yarnbombers

A further £404 had been donated to Cancer Research following the Race Night during Festival week and a further £5,000 was donated to the refurbishment of the Sea Road toilet block during the crowdfunding for that project. That adds up to a total of £14,154 donated to local good causes by the Festival Committee this year.

The evening was as humbling as it always is, representations of local organisations explaining how they help local residents have a better quality of life, and two recipients of donations said things which have stuck in my mind since. Firstly, a lady called Charlotte, representing Chestnut Tree House, said this had been her first visit to East Preston. She said it was clear from the atmosphere in the hall and the words people were using when receiving their cheques, East Preston was a very special place to live. Secondly, Mr Tidd, Headteacher at East Preston Junior School, said he had only been in post for seven weeks, but he was already being made to feel more welcome and a greater part of the community than anywhere else he had taught.

9. South Strand Community Toilets Ltd, Annual General Meeting, 21st October

I attended this meeting held in the Infant School. Cllrs Toney and Wilkinson also attended. Although Cllr Wilkinson is the council's official representative to the South Strand Community Toilets Ltd (SSCT), Cllr Toney attended as the council's voting member leaving Cllr Wilkinson to concentrate on his official board member responsibilities at the meeting.

The meeting was chaired by George Schlich and attracted a larger audience than perhaps the Infant School's meeting room could hold comfortably.

Mr Schlich explained Arun District Council had been running the toilet block whilst it drew up the lease which the SSCT Ltd. board now felt was ready for signing. Agreement to sign the lease was put to the vote and agreed unanimously by those members present.

Cllr Wilkinson talked through the company's accounts. These are in a healthy state. Organisations such as ourselves and the Angmering-on-Sea Estate Residents' Association have committed to annual funding for a certain number of years ahead, as have many of the private donors. The fact the lease has not yet been signed means the running costs have not yet fallen upon SSCT and therefore it is financially stronger at this point than expected.

10. Twice-yearly meeting with Angmering-on-Sea Lawn Tennis Club, 24th October

Owing to works at the club, the second of this year's twice-yearly meetings took place at the Council Office. The council was represented by Cllrs Toney and Mathias, Cllr McElroy was unable to attend; the club was represented by Ian Robinson (Chairman), Trish Stanley (Secretary) and Sarah Fisher (administrator). As this meeting should have been at the club, Mr Robinson chaired the meeting.

The notes from the meeting held in February were agreed and signed by both chairmen.

Mr Robinson reported the exterior works to the clubhouse had started in late March and been completed during the first week of May. The exterior was now a form of man-made cladding which should never rot. The only maintenance required will be a wash with lukewarm water once every two years. The building is now accessible to wheelchair- and buggy-users but the car-park will need some addition of a footpath for those users to get to the clubhouse. Internal plans are to be drawn up and put to the membership at a future date.

Mr Robinson said the club's new gardener was doing great work in keeping the club's grass areas neat and tidy and that extended to the ditch on the western boundary of the club. I confirmed the council has received no complaints about the ditch from residents of Nursery Close this year.

The club had held a charity day earlier in the year and had raised £8,250 for the Chestnut Tree House children's hospice. Mr Robinson said he would like this to be an annual event, and Chestnut Tree House was his preferred charity.

Juniors Tennis at the club was going from strength to strength with 80 children attending each day of Juniors' Week. The club is now one of the top two for Junior Tennis in West Sussex. At a recent Juniors' competition in Lewes, the club had fielded more Juniors than any other club in Sussex. The club was represented in every single final in the competition, thus winning or being runners-up in every category. The club is so highly regarded one family travels regularly from Seaford for Junior coaching.

Finally, from a club perspective, Mr Robinson said the club had passed the new Lawn Tennis Association safeguarding measures first time. This status would last for three years before review.

The council questioned the rental amounts paid over the first three quarters of the current financial year. The club accepted these should have been higher and would address this in the final payment of the year. The annual rent payable will increase from 1st April 2020 to £3,000 a year for five years.

The council thanked the club and, in particular, Head Coach Andrew Cook, for helping with the annual free tennis-coaching sessions run on the Warren Recreation Ground. This year had seen the best attendance to date and very good feedback from all involved.

The council had reviewed the checklist the club had completed following the last meeting and was happy with what it said. In response to a question, Mr Robinson confirmed the electricity certification had been brought up to date at the completion of the exterior works on the clubhouse.

The meeting ended at 11:00. The likely date for the next meeting is Tuesday, 14th January.

11. Fr David Rea's retirement party, 26th October

I attended this together with Cllr Steve and Karen Toney and Cllr Elizabeth Linton. The party was held in the church hall at Our Lady, Star of the Sea following that evening's Mass. The event was well-attended as befits a man who has been in office for over twenty years in the village. The council gifted Fr David a bottle of wine as a very small token of its appreciation for his involvement in the community in the past twenty plus years.

Speeches were made amid suitable laughter. During his speech, Fr David thanked the council for attending his party and said he thought all the different strands of the community of East Preston worked well together. Below is just one of the cakes made to mark his retirement.



After the meeting, the council received the following email from the Deacon at Our Lady, Star of the Sea, Fr Allan Veness, "Many thanks to you and the councillors who came to celebrate this parish event on Saturday evening. The P.C.'s support was greatly appreciated-many thanks. It seems to have gone off very well with plenty of food still available after yesterday's morning Mass. I am sure Fr. David will have appreciated the kind gift from the Parish Council to mark his 'stepping down'."

12. Social media

These are the Facebook posts published since the last supporting papers which reached more than 500 people:

- WSCC Public Notice about temporary closure of Long Furlong – 3,461 people
- * 4 weeks to go poster – 2,141
- East Preston Infant School poster advertising Open Mornings for the parents of new pupils – 1,392

- Post about a missing, then found, cat – 1,000 (at which point the post was deleted as it contained a private telephone number)
- Final publicity for *Funday Sunday* – 987
- Post of WSCC poster about school admissions – 717
- * Ride-on train publicity – 707
- * Notification of the volunteers’ meeting on 28th October - 702
- * Lantern-making in the library - 649
- World Mental Health Day, 10th October – 599
- * Royal British Legion attractions poster - 548

† Food & Drink Festival page

▲ East Preston Business Community page

* East Preston Christmas Celebrations page

(posts up to and including 27th October)

The number of people currently liking the council on Facebook is 1,263, an increase of six over the last report.

13. **MailChimp stats**

Since the last papers were issued, the council has sent out the following emails to local residents on the council’s main e-mailing list:

Parish Council news – 26th September – sent to 806, opened by 528 (65.6%)

Parish Council news – 2nd October – sent to 805, opened by 517 (64.3%)

14. **Things we have been asked since the last meeting**

“Can I speak to the lady who is advertising the job at Littlehampton Town Council?”

“Would you like to see my new kitchen?”

15. **Recent bouquets and complaints**

(In addition to anything reported above)

Thanks from ADC for pointing out a spelling mistake on its website.

16. **Leave**

I am on leave week beginning 11th November and also 29th November.

17. November Meetings and Events

This list may be incomplete and is subject to change.

4 th	Full Council (18:30, East Preston Infant School)
5 th	WSCC Joint Eastern Arun Area Committee (19:00, LTC)
6 th	Visit to WSCC Recycling Centre (13:00, travel details tbc) West Sussex Mediation Service meeting (18:30, East Preston Infant School) (ST and SC only)
11 th	Planning & Licensing Committee (18:00, East Preston Infant School) Amenities Committee (19:00, East Preston Infant School)
13 th	SSALC Finance training (18:00, East Grinstead) (ST and JG only)
18 th	Finance & General Purposes Committee (10:00, Council Office)
21 st	East Preston Youth Club AGM (19:00, Council Office) (tbc)
23 rd	East Preston Christmas Celebrations (midday to 17:00)
25 th	ADC Safeguarding training (13:00, Civic Centre) (ST, PG and SC only) Planning & Licensing Committee (18:00, East Preston Infant School) Community Engagement Committee (19:00, East Preston Infant School)
30 th	Arun Youth Aqua Centre AGM (19:30) (ST only)

N.B. where committee meetings fall on the same day, the timings of these meetings may be subject to change.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th October 2019

Agenda Items 23a-c

Other meetings and events – Part 1

Council is asked to note the following reports:

Transport for the South East (TfSE) Transport Strategy meeting, 24th September

Amex Stadium, Brighton

Transport for the South East have produced a draft transport strategy based on a sustainable future in 2050.

This will be achieved by moving away from planning for vehicles to planning for people and then planning for places. Congestion will be reduced by, for example, investing in public transport, developing integrated land use to reduce the need for travel, developing pay as you go pricing to incentivise travel at less busy times or by more sustainable modes.

The strategic priorities include better connectivity between major economic hubs with more reliable journeys on a resilient and smart transport network. Active travel will be promoted to improve health, wellbeing and air quality. Transport will be affordable, accessible and integrated with passengers at its heart. Safely planned and operated transport will protect and enhance the environment and also minimise energy and resource consumption.

The plan looks at 6 different journey types to identify the major challenges and opportunities. Some examples that affect East Preston: -

Coastal journey challenges include issues on A259 and A27 which is trying to be all things to all people. The railway similarly tries to accommodate slow, stopping rural and suburban services alongside faster, non-stopping longer distance services. This creates conflicts between users and undermines capacity, performance and sustainable growth on this corridor.

The opportunity is to build a consensus on a way forward for the M27/A27/A259 that seeks to segregate high and low speed users. On the railways the group want to improve long distance rail connectivity along orbital corridors and support the introduction of more direct east-west services to Gatwick.

Challenges on local journeys include reduction of the bus network which risks leaving some of the most vulnerable members of society isolated and unable to access key services. Public transport is also not always affordable for everybody.

Transport Strategy for the South East plan to lobby Government to protect and enhance funding for socially necessary bus services in rural areas and freeze rail fares in real terms and provide lower off-peak fares in the longer term.

The Parish Council can provide online feedback via the Transport for the South East website.

Cllr John Gunston

27th October 2019

WSCC Joint Eastern Arun Area Committee Highways and Transport sub-group, 24th October

Rustington

In attendance were representatives from the Parish Councils of Kingston, Angmering, Rustington and East Preston. an ADC Councillor from Ferring, James Walsh WSCC (Chair) and West Sussex Council officers David Lambert and Ben Whiffin.

I have only included the items that I think are of interest to the residents of East Preston.

The A259. There will be a Public Enquiry regarding this, the details of which will be available in Littlehampton 26th November to 3rd December. I am not sure if there are any other venues. This will delay the start of the build process which should now begin in August 2020 and will take 21 months, not the original 18 as first stated. I did enquire if work could be started where there were no problems regarding Compulsory Purchase Orders but was told it was not viable or cost effective as utilities need the entire length of the road.

Bus service. As far as the bus service to East Preston was concerned I said we were waiting for comments from Eastern Parishes Group and also villager feedback. This item will remain on the Agenda for the next meeting.

Traffic Regulation Order. I was very surprised to find a junction protection TRO had been requested by Roger Elkins for Lashmar Road and had been awarded 23 points which placed it at the top of the list in red. The group made the assumption that there must have been an accident in the area which accounted for the high points. The Manor Road TRO has also been approved with a point count of 13. It was not made clear as to how long it will take to implement these changes.

Ben Whiffin gave a presentation of the changes of Service Levels in West Sussex. The main points were:

- The budget of £8.8 million is less than half of what it was five years ago.
- Drainage. This is now on a more targeted demand-driven approach and some low silt level gullies will move from a two to a four-year programme.
- Grass cutting-urban will reduce from seven to five cuts and rural to three. The final cut will be in October/November.
- Weed spraying will focus on safety issues and should be reported direct to WSCC when identified. Similarly repainting or signage can be reported direct.
- Any winter gritting boxes in the area will be filled once per year.
- Any community schemes will get assistance from WSCC and some funding or other assistance eg equipment may be available.

Clerks will now be rotated every two years and as Littlehampton have not yet taken their turn, along with Arundel and Kingston, the former was volunteered. This should leave the East Preston Clerk free for the next six years!

Cllr Elizabeth Linton – **Vice-Chairman the Council**

24th October 2019

The Martlets, Celebrating our Team, 24th September

Rustington

Further to an invite to all councillors from Shaw Healthcare to attend this event, I went for tea at the Martlets along with Arun District Councillors Chapman and Kelly. We were given a tour of the building by the Manager Angela Douglas, who left the following day to take up an appointment in Newcastle. Jane Harris, the Relationships & Sales Manager for Shaw Healthcare Group, will email Simon with details of the new Manager who is due to start at the end of the month.

The tea party was to recognise members of staff who have been with the group for 5 and 10 years together with Sheila, a local volunteer, who has been helping at the Martlets for 30 years. Both residents and staff had an enjoyable afternoon.

Cllr John Gunston

27th October 2019

Agenda Item 24a

TfSE consultation

Cllr Gunston has suggested the council responds to the public consultation on the TfSE Transport Strategy. If you would like to work with Cllr Gunston on this, please let the council know at the meeting.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th October 2019

Agenda Item 16a

Audit & Governance Committee – interim Internal Audit for the year-ending 31st March, 2020

Council is asked to note the interim Internal Audit report for the year-ending 31st March 2020.



MULBERRY & CO

Chartered Certified Accountants
Registered Auditors
& Chartered Tax Advisors

9 Pound Lane
Godalming
Surrey, GU7 1BX

t + 44(0)1483 423054
e office@mulberryandco.co.uk
w www.mulberryandco.co.uk

Our Ref: MARK/EAS007

Mr S Cross
East Preston Parish Council
Council Office
122 Sea Road
East Preston
West Sussex
BN16 1NN

Date 3 October 2019

Dear Simon

**Re: East Preston Parish Council
Internal Audit Year Ended 31st March 2020**

Following completion of our interim internal audit on the 3 October 2019 we enclose our report for your kind attention and presentation to the council. The audit was conducted in accordance with current practices and guidelines and testing was risk based. Whilst we have not tested all transactions, our samples have where appropriate covered the entire year to date. Where appropriate **recommendations for future action are shown in bold text and summarised in the table at the end of the report.**

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require smaller authorities, each financial year, to conduct a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control and prepare an annual governance statement in accordance with proper practices in relation to accounts. The internal audit reports should therefore be made available to all members to support and inform them when they considering the authority's approval of the annual governance statement.

Interim Audit – Summary Findings

At the interim visit we reviewed and performed tests on the following areas:

- Review of the Financial Regulations and Standing Orders
- Review of the risk assessments
- Review of the budgeting process
- Proper bookkeeping – review of the use of the accounts package
- Review of fixed asset register

It is our opinion that the systems and internal procedures at East Preston Parish Council are well established, and followed. The Clerk is very experienced and ensures the council follows best practice regulations and has overseen changes to the internal procedures as regulations and technologies have changed to maintain compliance.

It is clear the council takes governance, policies and procedures very seriously and I am pleased to report that overall the systems and procedures you have in place are fit for purpose. I would like to thank Simon and his team for their assistance and whilst my report may contain recommendations to change these are not indicative of any significant failings, but rather are pointers to improving upon an already well ordered system.

Registered as auditors in the United Kingdom by the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants.
Partners: Mark L. Mulberry BA (Hons) FCCA CTA Terri A McClure FCA

A. BOOKS OF ACCOUNT (INTERIM AUDIT)

The Council uses SAGE as a day to day accounting package. The system is used regularly to report on and record the financial transactions of the Council. There are two users – the Clerk/RFO and the bookkeeper.

The bookkeeper deals with the majority of processing, with an external accountancy support company assisting with preparation of the year end reports. The SAGE system has been updated and is ready to operate the Making Tax Digital (MTD) process from 1 October 2019.

My audit testing showed that supporting documentation could be easily located from records, which are logically filed. I make no recommendation to change in this system.

I tested opening balances as at 1/4/19 and confirmed they could be agreed back to the audited accounts for 2018/19.

The Council is VAT registered and the last VAT return was for the quarter ended 30 June 2019. The refund has subsequently been received in to the Council's bank account.

Overall, I have the impression that the accounting systems are well ordered and routinely maintained and as such I make no recommendation to change.

At the interim audit date, I am of the opinion that the control assertion of "Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year" has been met.

B. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS, GOVERNANCE AND PAYMENTS (INTERIM AND FINAL AUDIT)

Interim Audit

Check the publication and minuting of the prior year audited AGAR and notice of conclusion of audit

The external auditors report was not qualified in 2018/19. However, a note was raised in other matters stating 'Insurance cover in relation to employee dishonesty appears relatively low for a Council of this size. Best practice is to base cover on a value of the reserves brought forward plus half the expected income for the year.' This is on the Council agenda for discussion on 7 October 2019.

Evidence was noted in the minutes of the internal auditor's year-end report being reviewed and accepted, although this did not mention the insurance issue raised by the external auditor. Confirmation of the conclusion of audit and audited AGAR have been posted to the council website.

Confirm by sample testing that councillors sign statutory office forms

Acceptance of Office and agreement to observe the Members Code of Conduct have been completed, along with Register of Members' Interests, in line with regulations. The Register of Members' Interests is published on the Council's website. Councillors have also signed acceptance to receive information by electronic means.

Confirm that the council is compliant with the relevant transparency code

I note that due to the income and expenditure of the council, it is required by law to follow the 2015 Local Government Transparency Code. A review of the web site shows that the majority of the required information is available on the website, although some is not easy to find. Information relating to the pay multiple appears to be missing.

The attached link to Crowborough Town Council's website www.crowboroughtowncouncil.gov.uk/about-us/transparency/ is a good example of how the information can be clearly displayed.

Confirm that the council is compliant with the GDPR

The council is aware of GDPR and has a privacy notice on the home page of its website. It was noted the council has common email addresses internally and also for councillors. A common email system is recommended because it gives a natural segregation so it is clear beyond doubt in what capacity a councillor is acting, gives control to the council, adds a degree of professionalism and in the event of a FOI request limits access to personal computers.

Confirm that the council meets regularly throughout the year

The council has the following committees:

- Full Council – meets monthly
- Amenities – meets every two months
- Audit & Governance – meets quarterly
- Community Engagement - meets every two months
- Finance & General Purposes - meets quarterly
- Major Events - meets every two months
- Personnel Committee – meets quarterly
- Planning & Licensing – meets fortnightly as required

Check that agendas for meetings are published giving 3 clear days' notice

The Clerk was able to demonstrate that at least 3 clear days' notice is given on both web site and hard copy agendas. Whilst we have not tested every single committee and council meeting there was no evidence of non-compliance in giving three clear days' notice of the meeting. I was noted that the supporting documentation referred to in the agendas is also posted to the website.

Check the draft minutes of the last meeting(s) are on the council's website

Draft and final minutes are uploaded to the council website. The minutes are extremely comprehensive including detail of all background information relating to Council decision. Minutes and agendas are easy to locate on the Council website.

Confirm that the Parish Council's Standing Orders have been reviewed within the last 12 months

The Standing Orders are based on a NALC model and were last reviewed and adopted on 1 July 2019. It was noted the model version used is out of date, and therefore contains some items which are no longer appropriate, such as reference to the Power of Well Being.

Also, the version in use prohibits recording/filming of meetings SO 1(m) which is now a legal right for members of the public, and does not contain up to date reference to the Council's responsibilities with regard to the management of information as updated by the changes to Data Protection legislation. The most recent model version dated 2018 is available on the SSALC website and **I recommend urgently updating the Standing Orders to be based on the legislative changes contained in the 2018 version.**

Confirm that the Parish Council has adopted and recently reviewed Financial Regulations

Financial regulations are based on a NALC model and were last reviewed and adopted 10 December 2018. The regulations being based on the NALC model contain provisions for the approval of spending, setting of budgets, reconciliation of the bank and reporting to council. The model version being used is based on an out of date version. The most recent model version dated July 2019 is available on the SSALC website and **I recommend updating the Financial Regulations to be based on the most recent model 2019 version.**

Check that the council's Financial Regulations are being routinely followed

The Council receives comprehensive financial reports and discussion and agreement of these is recorded in the minutes of Council meetings. Bank reconciliations are completed for all accounts, verified by a councillor, reported to

Council and recorded in the minutes. The face of the original bank statements are signed during the verification process.

The Clerk has produced a one page summary of the key financial limitations noted in the Financial Regulations, which is agreed and signed off by Council. This practice is to be commended for allowing easy reference to the key information held within the more detailed document.

These key limitations are:

- Amount to which RFO can incur expenditure without F&GP or Council approval - £5,000
- Petty Cash - £200
- Values above which the Clerk must obtain at least three tenders - £30,000
- Values between which the Clerk must obtain at least two tenders - £15,000 and £30,000
- Values between which at least two written quotations must be obtained - £3,000 and £15,000
- Quotations not required below - £3,000 (best value to be demonstrated)
- Value below which property may be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without reference to Council - £250

The Council has a comprehensive purchase order system in place and review of this shows it to be suitable for a Council of this size.

Invoices are predominately paid online via BACS. The online payments system is established and allows for dual authentication. Payments are entered into the system by the bookkeeper, checked by one councillor and then subsequently double checked by a second councillor who releases the payment.

A small number of cheques are issued where necessary. Sample testing of invoices, bank statements and payment lists show payments are being properly authorised in line with the requirements of Financial Regulations. Invoices and payment details are logically filed and easy to find. I make no recommendation to change this system.

Confirm all section 137 expenditure meets the guidelines and does not exceed the annual per elector limit of £8.12 per elector

The council has section 137 expenditure which is within guidelines.

Confirm that checks of the accounts are made by a councillor

The system noted above details internal review takes place at councillor, committee and council level. I am under no doubt that council properly approves expenditure.

I am of the opinion the council is following its own regulations and that any changes to financial regulations are to be considered minor and no indicative of errors in the system.

At the interim audit date, I am of the opinion that the control assertion "This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for" has not been met, due to the need to address the statutory changes required to the Standing Orders. This will be further reviewed at the year-end audit.

C. RISK MANAGEMENT AND INSURANCE (INTERIM AND FINAL AUDIT)

Interim Audit

The council undertakes a full risk assessment that covers operational and financial risks. This has regularly been reviewed by Council and is due for further review at the December 2019 meeting. The risk register is in a tabular format and notes areas of risk, likelihood and severity, consequences of taking no action and measures in place to mitigate risk. This is a suitable system for a council of this size.

I have confirmed that the council has a valid insurance certificate. The council reviews its insurance requirements as part of the renewal process.

As mentioned in the external auditor's report, the level of employee dishonestly cover is currently £150,000. The Council ordinarily has in excess of this amount in its accounts, and **I would recommend the level of employee dishonesty cover should be increased to cover the highest level of funds held in the council's bank account held during the year.**

Once the insurance cover has been suitably amended, at the interim audit date I am of the opinion that the control objective of "This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these" has been met.

D. BUDGET, PRECEPT AND RESERVES (INTERIM AND FINAL AUDIT)

Interim Audit

I confirmed that regular reporting of activity against budget is reported to the Council and a review of the minutes shows discussion and agreement of these reports. The budgetary process for 2020/21 commenced in September 2019 and it is anticipated Council will set the budget and precept in January 2020.

Council set an expenditure budget of £302,062 and an income budget of £19,657 for the financial year. Precept was set at £265,942 leaving a shortfall of £16,463 which has been budgeted to be taken from reserves.

At the interim audit date, reported expenditure was £81,528 year to date and income (excluding precept) £9,330 year to date. The Council's reporting information provides projected year-end figures and these currently stand at expenditure £297,202 and income (excluding precept) of £20,385.

It was noted that currently no three-year forecast is shown. The Council's existing Financial Regulations make no mention of a three-year forecast, however this may be useful to adopt to support the Council's longer term aims and objectives. This can be relatively simple in terms of a % increase year on year on standard expenditure items, but also allow more substantial planned projects to be reflected in the plan.

At the interim audit date, the Council had £564,385 in total across all of its bank accounts. Four accounts with different financial institutions were opened in 2016/17 to take advantage of the protection offered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FCSC), and this action is to be commended. It is clear the Council understands the protection offered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FCSC) and regularly reviews its balances held for this purpose. There is an attachment to the Council's Financial Regulations outlined the level of protection offered.

At the beginning of the financial year, the Council held £271,855 in general reserves and a further £100,000 in a number of designated earmarked reserves. Guidance recommends that the level of general reserve is held at circa 50% of precept, adjusted for local conditions. The level for the Council is therefore higher than might normally be expected, although the Council has planned to use some to support its planned expenditure this year.

At the interim audit date, I am of the opinion that the control objective of "The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate" has been met.

E. INCOME (INTERIM AND FINAL AUDIT)

Interim Audit

Other than the precept, the council receives rental income from a variety of sources, an annual fee from the Village Hall and income from the car park and any events held during the year. The council reviews its rental fees in line with the lease conditions.

The precept was received in two parts - April and September 2019. The amounts have been verified to the bank statement and match the precept request.

At the interim audit date, I am of the opinion that the control objective of "Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for" has been met.

F. PETTY CASH (FINAL AUDIT)

To be checked at year end.

G. PAYROLL (FINAL AUDIT)

To be checked at year end.

H. ASSETS AND INVESTMENTS (INTERIM AND FINAL AUDIT)

Interim Audit

The council has a fixed asset register in place. Assets are correctly stated at original cost where known. Insurance values are included as a separate column, along with the dates of acquisition of the asset and estimated replacement value. **The only recommendation I would make is to consider the addition of a column indicating the date the asset was last physically vouched.** This would also comply with the Financial Regulation requirement for an annual review of assets.

At the interim audit date, I am of the opinion that the control objective of "Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained" has been met.

I. BANK AND CASH (INTERIM AND FINAL AUDIT)

Interim Audit

At the interim audit date the council had a reconciled bank position as at 13 September 2019 which had been verified by a councillor and on the agenda for the meeting on 7 October 2019 to report to Council. I have reviewed and verified the reconciliation and there were no errors.

At the interim audit date, I am of the opinion that bank and cash balances are properly shown on the AGAR and that the control objective of "Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out" has been met.

J. YEAR END ACCOUNTS (FINAL AUDIT)

To be tested at year end.

K. TRUSTEESHIP (INTERIM AUDIT)

The Council is the managing trustee for the Warren Recreation Ground. There are historic arrangements in place for the handling of the trustee finances, **but I would recommend these are reviewed to ensure they comply with the requirements of both the Charity Commission and the Council rules relating to the management of trustee funds.** Further advice will be sought and provided to the Council in a separate summary to follow.

L: EXERCISE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS - INSPECTION OF ACCOUNTS (FINAL AUDIT)

To be tested at year end.

Should you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards

Yours sincerely

Andy Beams

Andy Beams

Interim Audit - Points for consideration by council

Audit Point	Audit Findings	Council comments
Financial Regulations, Governance and Payments	I recommend urgently updating the Standing Orders to be based on the legislative changes contained in the 2018 version.	
Financial Regulations, Governance and Payments	I recommend updating the Financial Regulations to be based on the most recent model 2019 version.	
Risk Management and Insurance	I would recommend the level of employee dishonesty cover should be increased to cover the highest level of funds held in the council's bank account held during the year.	
Assets and Investments	The only recommendation I would make is to consider the addition of a column indicating the date the asset was last physically vouched.	
Trusteeship	I would recommend these are reviewed to ensure they comply with the requirements of both the Charity Commission and the Council rules relating to the management of trustee funds	