



# EAST PRESTON PARISH COUNCIL

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

01903 770050

<http://eastpreston.arun.gov.uk/>

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

**MINUTES:** of the Proceedings of the Monthly Meeting of East Preston Parish Council held on Monday, 6<sup>th</sup> January 2020 at the East Preston Infant School, Lashmar Road, East Preston at 19:00.

**PRESENT:** Councillors Christine Bowman, Kit Bradshaw, Andrea Chapman, Lisa Duff, Barbara Gale, John Gunston, Elizabeth Linton, Glyn Mathias, Rick McElroy, David Moore, Steve Toney (Chairman) and Steve Wilkinson

**ALSO:** Clerk to the Council, Simon Cross

West Sussex County Councillor Roger Elkins (until 19:46)

Arun District Councillors Terry Chapman and Paul Kelly (until 19:46)

Mr R and Mrs J Akhurst (both until 19:51), Mr B, Mrs B (until 19:30) and Mr M (until 19:46)

**ABSENT:** Councillor Pat Gander

\* \* \* \* \*

The following abbreviations may appear in these Minutes:

ADC – Arun District Council;  
BTP – British Transport Police;  
CPRE – Campaign for the Protection of Rural England;  
JEAAC – Joint Eastern Arun Area Committee;  
NHS – National Health Service;  
NR – Network Rail;  
SLCC – Society of Local Council Clerks;

SSALC – Sussex and Surrey Associations of Local Councils;  
SSE – Scottish and Southern Electric  
SW – Southern Water;  
TfSE – Transport for the South East;  
TRO – Traffic Regulation Order;  
VHF – East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation;  
WSCC – West Sussex County Council.

\* \* \* \* \*

The meeting opened at 19:00.

## **001/20 INTRODUCTIONS**

Cllr Toney welcomed those present and led a full round of introductions.

## **002/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology and a reason for absence had been received from Cllr Gander (ill).

**1385** The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously to accept Cllr Gander's apology for the meeting.

An apology had also been received from District Cllr Ricky Bower.

### **003/20 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

No interests were declared.

### **004/20 PUBLIC SESSION**

**Agenda Item 12a – Amenities Committee** – Mrs B read the following statement to the meeting.

“Hi. I would like to mention my recent problems with the car park at the south of the village.

“I am a long-term resident but don’t use the shops down there often – mainly because of parking problems.

“I needed a pint of milk but as usual the roads were full and the car park empty.

“I was unaware that I had 15 minutes grace so I tried to put in 50p. The display glass was so fogged up I could not see the instructions I was meant to follow. In the end I gave up and drove away.

“There are three suggestions – the first is that the equipment is maintained properly – water must have got in to fog the display.

“The second is that it is clearly marked that people have 15 minutes grace.

“The third is that instead of the present system, which is not working well, you consider two-hour disc parking, which is cheap, easy to patrol and seems to work well in Littlehampton.”

Mrs B ended by thanking the Clerk for reassuring her she was not about to be arrested for having parked temporarily in the car park whilst she tried to get the machine to work.

**Agenda Item 9 – Update on matters from previous Full Council meetings** – Referring to the Full Council meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December, Mrs Akhurst read the following statement and asked it be recorded in the minutes in toto.

“During Public Question Time at the December Full Council Meeting, there were serious breaches of procedure in the running and conduct of the meeting.

“When a member of the public was told that he could speak, he told the meeting that he also had a question for the District Councillor present. He was immediately shouted at by the Chairman, was told that he could not speak to the District Councillor and was informed that he would have to write him.

“Not one Council member corrected this statement, and the parishioner did not ask his question.

“The Council's silence would appear to indicate that this breach of procedure is either condoned, or, that its members are unaware of the correct procedure. The latter is unlikely as every councillor has to attend training sessions on how a meeting is conducted.

“The public were not asked if they had any questions for the District Councillor.

“I am given to understand that this type of incident is a reportable issue.

“I wish this to be recorded verbatim in the Minutes.”

**Agenda Item 9 – Update on matters from previous Full Council meetings** – Mr M referred to a visit he had made to the Clerk in the Council Office a few dates after the Full Council meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December. Mr M said during his conversation with the Clerk he had asked for a written apology for the way in which he was spoken to by the Chairman as referenced by Mrs Akhurst above. He had not yet received an apology.

The Clerk said Mr M had indeed said he wanted an apology but he had not said he wanted a written apology.

District Cllr Chapman was given permission by the Chairman to address the meeting at this point. District Cllr Chapman felt there was a grave misunderstanding within the public about his and his District and County colleagues’ role at these meetings. They were summoned by the Clerk expressly to report to the parish council on matters of interest. That was clear from the wording of the Agenda Item, *To receive a report from the Arun District Councillors representing East Preston*. He and his District and County colleagues were easily accessible throughout the rest of the month. District Cllr Chapman had

arranged a meeting with the Chief Executive of Arun District Council, Nigel Lynn, an officer well-respected for his knowledge in these matters, at which he would ask if his understanding of his attendance at parish council meetings was correct.

Mr M said he felt District Cllr Chapman was simply confirming he did not want to know. The question he had wanted to ask had related to the Duty of Care all taxpayers have to ensure our collected waste is disposed of properly.

District Cllr Chapman repeated his comment from September 2019 that ADC is the collection authority and WSCC is the disposal authority. (Minute 733/19)

Mr M said he had long-threatened to report the council for misconduct and he would now do so.

**Agenda Item 11b – precept for 2020/21** – Mr M said the council was proposing to increase the precept again. He believed the council should be looking to freeze the precept. He said the council had increased the precept dramatically in 2008/09 to cover predicted expenditure on the later-abandoned project to build an extension onto the East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation. With the abandonment of that project, that increased precept had never been returned to the village.

Mr M said he believed the council was overstaffed.

The two projects referred to in the Clerk's supporting paper for the proposed increase were both, once again, projects to benefit the southern end of the village. Why was no money ever spent on the northern end of the village? Mr M said £15,000 was far too expensive for a CCTV system for the Village Green, especially when there was so little anti-social behaviour to talk of, and there was no evidence CCTV was a deterrent. Mr M asked whether the council had done any loadings for the proposed community bus service which would cost nearly £400 a week to the village.

**Agenda Item 11b – precept for 2020/21** – Mr Akhurst agreed he did not want the precept to keep on increasing with money set aside for projects which did not come to fruition and no balancing reduction in the precept.

## **005/20 COUNCIL RESPONSES**

**Agenda Item 11b – precept for 2020/21** – in response to Mr M, the Clerk reminded Mr M the council had purchased the Multi-Use Games Area installed on the Lashmar Recreation Ground, firmly in the northern half of the village.

As Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee, Cllr McElroy said he had spent almost five years on the council and throughout that time he was aware only of the council "doing stuff for the village." He supported sensible budget and precept increases, the latter because it was necessary for the council to retain its spending power to keep doing good in the village. The council had the option of reducing the precept and then doing nothing for the village. In his experience, many residents were complimentary about the council's efforts in the village and felt the council gave good value for money. The council was not a business which could be run in a certain way. The council needed to futureproof itself for sudden and unexpected expenditure.

Cllr Gunston, also a member of the Finance & General Purposes Committee, had raised some objections to the proposed precept increase but he stressed the budget would again be a deficit budget with the council using some of its reserves to make up the difference during the coming year.

Cllr Toney said the Finance & General Purposes Committee had agreed the "CCTV money" would also be spent on other electrical infrastructure improvements on the Village Green.

Cllr Moore read a letter from the Additional Supporting Papers for the meeting in which a resident spoke in favour of both the CCTV for the Village Green and a community bus service.

Mrs Akhurst said she had been talking to other residents and there was a lot of interest in the community bus proposal. She had been reading the Community Engagement Minutes from, she thought, September and from those she believed there were safety issues that needed looking at. Mrs A made a personal request for better information in the public domain and a public meeting.

Cllr Toney said he and Cllr Linton were meeting the Chief Executive of Compass Travel later in the month following which further information would be put before the public.

Cllr Gale said she felt a lot of the public discussion about the provision of a community bus had taken place within people who could drive and was not taking into consideration the sizeable part of the East Preston population which did not drive or would give up driving if such a service was provided to the southern end of the village.

Cllr A Chapman said she was upset by comments about reporting the council. From her time on the council, Cllr Chapman had learned everyone on the council putting their all into the council and all it did for the community. Such comments all felt uncomfortably “a bit personal.”

(Mrs B left the meeting at this point.)

#### **006/20 WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL**

County Cllr Elkins thanked the council for the East Preston Christmas Celebrations event on 23<sup>rd</sup> November. He had brought along some friends who, like him, had been very impressed by everything on offer during the event. Cllr Elkins described the event as “absolutely amazing.”

Becky Shaw, Chief Executive at East Sussex County Council was now joint Chief Executive of West Sussex County Council. ESCC’s Children’s Services had been marked Excellent by OFSTED. The Department of Education had appointed John Coughlan CBE, Chief Executive of Hampshire County Council, to lead on improving Children’s Services in West Sussex, probably by setting up a Trust to run the services.

Cllr Elkins reported the Public Inquiry into the Compulsory Purchase Orders for the A259 improvements had taken place on 26<sup>th</sup> November. The inspector’s report was not likely to be available until April.

Cllr Elkins thanked Cllr Gunston for representing this council at the Transport for the South East drop-in event on 23<sup>rd</sup> October. Cllr Gunston confirmed he was leading this council’s response to the proposals presented at that event.

#### **007/20 ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

(Throughout this Minute, Cllr Chapman refers to District Cllr T Chapman not Parish Cllr A Chapman.)

Cllr Chapman said he would speak on behalf of himself and his colleagues, Cllrs Bower and Kelly.

He wished health and happiness to all councillors and to the Clerk. He said that both as a resident and a District Councillor he was happy with all the parish council achieved.

ADC had undertaken a Public Consultation on a proposed Public Space Protection Order to replace that implemented in 2017. The new Order greatly reduced the area covered, leaving areas outside the centres of Bognor Regis and Littlehampton exposed to anti-social behaviour fuelled by street drinking. Cllr Kelly and he were going to push for the existing Order to be retained in favour of the proposed Order.

ADC was moving towards its annual budget debate. The Supporting Paper for the budget meeting will be available in advance of the EPPC Full Council meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> February, enabling Cllr Chapman to give more detail at that meeting.

Cllr Chapman ended by thanking those East Preston parish councillors who helped, in whatever capacity, to keep the East Preston Youth Club moving forwards. Cllr Chapman said he hoped a second night could be offered again this year, even if only during the lighter evenings.

(County Cllr Elkins, District Cllrs Chapman and Kelly and Mr M left at the conclusion of this item.)

#### **008/20 ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL – COUNCILLORS AND COUNCIL TAX ARREARS**

(Throughout this Minute, Cllr Chapman refers to District Cllr T Chapman not Parish Cllr A Chapman.)

Council NOTED the following report which had been circulated in advance of the meeting:

### **Arun District Council – Council Tax arrears**

**Council is asked to note the following letter from Liz Fitcher, ADC Monitoring Officer.**

This advice was circulated to all councillors electronically on Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> December.

“Dear Clerk

“**Councillor Council Tax Arrears and Restrictions on Voting**

“I have been contacted by a Clerk about an issue raised at a recent SALC training session that you should be briefing your Councillors about the implications of Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. For those of you not aware, this part of the Act covers what happens if a councillor is in arrears of Council Tax of over two months and it introduces a restriction on voting rights. I promised to share some advice that you can all consider issuing to your Parish Councillors to set out their obligations – see the attached letter.

“You will see that the onus is on the Councillor to identify if they are in arrears that fall within the criteria that then prevents them from voting, and must make a declaration accordingly. We would not expect the Revenues Team to be providing the Clerk with personal information of this nature unless you received a Freedom of Information Act 2000 request and then you would need to consider if it was information you held, such as the simple question “is any councillor in arrears of Council Tax”, or if it asked for detailed information you would refer the requester to Arun District Council as the billing authority.

“What you do all need to be aware of is the personal information about a Councillor being in arrears of Council Tax is potentially disclosable information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. I would recommend you reading this decision from the Information Commissioner’s Office from 3 November 2016 against Leeds City Council

<https://ico.org.uk/media/action-weve-taken/decision-notice/2016/1625351/fs50635609.pdf>

“You will see that it confirms that the expectation is that the information is disclosable unless exceptional circumstances apply, and the bar for such circumstances is very high.

“I hope this advice will be helpful. Please do come back if you have any questions.”

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

18<sup>th</sup> December 2019

#### **009/20 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2<sup>ND</sup> DECEMBER 2019**

The draft Minutes were circulated to all councillors on 4<sup>th</sup> December, asking for comments by 11<sup>th</sup> December. No suggested amendments were made and Cllr Gander emailed in, “All fine – thanks”.

**1386** The Council **RESOLVED** the Chairman could sign the Minutes as a true record of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December.

This action was completed by Cllr Toney.

#### **010/20 UPDATE ON MATTERS IN THE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

Council NOTED the following report, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting, without comment:

## **Monthly Update Report**

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Minute 1057/19 – Care for Veterans Presentation**

### **1. Introduction**

This is the report covering items discussed during Full Council meetings up to and including the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2019.

### **2. Minute 1057/19 – Care for Veterans Presentation**

I have twice asked Ms Gillott for a copy of the presentation she gave to the last meeting, but have received no reply either time, hence the lack of detail in Minute 1057/19.

Nothing was added.

### **011/20 FINANCIAL MATTERS**

The Accounts for December 2019 had been distributed to Members in advance of the meeting.

- 1387** The council **RESOLVED** to approve the Outstanding Purchase Orders report for 2019/20, value £9,045.89 (excl. VAT).
- 1388** The council **RESOLVED** to approve the Supplier Non BACS Invoices Paid report for November 2019, totalling £64.32 (incl. VAT) and for December 2019, totalling £1,537.17 (incl. VAT).
- 1389** The council **RESOLVED** to approve the Supplier BACS Invoices Paid report for December 2019 totalling £63,390.55 (incl. VAT).
- 1390** The council **RESOLVED** to approve the List of Sales Receipts & Bank Receipts by Bank report, showing £297,611.54 (incl. VAT) for the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.

The council NOTED the paper Bank Reconciliations to 13<sup>th</sup> December 2019.

The council NOTED the year-to-date Budget Summary Report for 2019/20.

The Chairman thanked the council's Book-keeper, Mrs Khoo, for the above reports.

### **012/20 FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE – BUDGET FOR 2020/21**

As Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee, Cllr McElroy spoke in support of the following report which had been circulated in advance of the meeting:

## **Finance & General Purposes Committee – Council budget for 2020/21**

**Council is asked to agree a recommended budget of £291,771.88 for the financial year 2020/21.**

Cllr McElroy to lead on this item.

The Finance & General Purposes Committee met on 16<sup>th</sup> December to finalise its budget and precept recommendations for the financial year 2020/21.

The committee settled upon a recommended budget of £291,771.88, an increase of 3.5% on the current year's budget. The two big new budget items for the coming year are £15,000 for cctv to cover the Village Green and the Council Office and £10,000 to offset the likely increase should the council decide to trial a bus service to the southern end of the village from April 2021. In the event of the latter, there may also be some infrastructure expenditure required in the coming financial year. These two items more than account for the increase in the recommended budget as other budget items are no longer required or have a lower predicted expenditure in 2020/21.

Each of the council's budget-holding committees has created proposed budgets for 2020/21, details in the table below. As I'm not the world's greatest financial expert, the figures in the table below may be slightly rough and ready, but Tracy has reviewed them and agreed they are correct:

Committee	2019/20 (£)	2020/21 (£)	Change (£)	% change	Notes
Amenities	32,885.60	48,193.38	+ 15,307.78	+ 46.5	One-off increase to provide cctv on the Village Green

Audit & Governance	1,250.00	1,000.00	- 250.00	- 20	
Community Engagement	22,123.00	33,420.00	+ 11,297	+51	Increase primarily because of setting money aside for village bus service
Finance & General Purposes	38,950.00	35,096.00	- 3,854	- 9.89	
Finance & General Purposes – Admin	129,694.77	113,492.12	16,202.65	- 12.5	
Major Events	4,650.00	5,100.00	+ 450	+9.7	Main increase for Silver Sunday
Personnel	n/a	n/a		n/a	Budget held by F&GP
Planning & Licensing	n/a	n/a		n/a	Budget held by Full Council
Warren Rec	42,351.83	45,277.28	+ 2,925.45	+6.9	Budget held by Amenities
Contingency	10,000	10,193.10	+ 193.10	+1.9	Budget held by Full Council

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

30<sup>th</sup> December 2019

**1391** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to set the budget for the financial year 2020/21 to £291,771.88.

**013/20 FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE – PRECEPT FOR 2020/21**

The council **NOTED** the following reports which had been circulated in advance of the meeting:

**Finance & General Purposes Committee – Council precept for 2020/21**

**Council is asked to agree a recommended precept of £275,604.00 for the financial year 2020/21.**

Cllr McElroy to lead on this item.

The Finance & General Purposes Committee met on 16<sup>th</sup> December to finalise its budget and precept recommendations for the financial year 2020/21. The committee **AGREED** to increase the precept by 3.5% too, in line with the proposed budget increase.

ADC has informed the council its Council Tax base (the number of Council Tax-payable properties in the village expressed as the number of Council Tax Band D properties in the village) has increased this year from 2,797 to 2,800.

An increase of 3.5% on a £95.10 Band D property results in a precept of £98.43, an increase of £3.13. Multiply that by the increased Council Tax base of 2,800, and the overall precept income for 2020/21 will be £275,604.00, an increase of £9,662.20 on the current year's precept.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

30<sup>th</sup> December 2019

The following report was also circulated to councillors ahead of the meeting:

## Finance & General Purposes Committee – budget and precept for 2020/21

In the e-newsletter to residents sent out on 2<sup>nd</sup> January, I included details of the proposed precept increase, asking for comments. At the time of writing (10:40 on 6<sup>th</sup> Jan), 411 recipients have reportedly opened the e-newsletter.

The following are the only comments to have been received to date:

RA	<p>Dear Simon</p> <p>Happy New Year!</p> <p>[my wife] and I entirely support the two projects for which money has been set aside in the 2020/21 budget:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The implementation of CCTV to cover the Village Green; the possible implementation of a community bus service to the south of the village, for which there may need to be some expenditure on infrastructure in the coming financial year.</p> <p>Antisocial events on the Village Green have been of concern to us and we would be very pleased to see CCTV installed.</p> <p>The bus service would be of great help to those who are less mobile.</p>
FT	<p>Dear Simon</p> <p>I wish to object to the proposal of a Community Bus Service as outlined below on the following grounds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the date for objections by the 6th of January is ludicrous (email sent out on 2nd of January) without any details</li> <li>• there is no indication of infrastructure costs or running costs</li> <li>• there is no detail of where the Bus will run from/to</li> <li>• what study or data do EPPC have of the need for this service</li> </ul> <p>yours sincerely</p>
GL	<p>Both the proposals for capital spend seem to be exclusive to the bottom of the village which seems a tad odd.</p> <p>Not sure how you justify the need for CCTV on the green, maybe it's the same group that thought charging for the car park was a good idea!! Furthermore I'm left wondering who will use this bus that appears to be needed for the bottom of the village? Maybe someone should talk to the bus company although I did pickup that the very thought of a bus travelling to the bottom of the village was pretty abhorrent to our illustrious councillors. That said a bus wouldn't work as it would find it difficult to negotiate a way past all of the street parked cars that are avoiding the car park now there's a charge! I had thought that a priority was to get people out of there cars and start walking or using a bike but clearly any efforts to encourage this didn't make the cut for spending money.</p> <p>I do recognise that making the public toilets fit for purpose was a great idea, expensive but a great idea. The village hall is a great facility, not one that I personally use much but none the less a great facility. There must be lots that could be done there to keep it up to date.</p>



So a year in which something useful was done which sadly isn't followed up with anything commendable. As I've suggested the council need to take time out to develop a strategy for what it should be influencing others to do for the benefit of the village and what it could do to make things happen that the village can own.

I sort of got the impression that the previous attempt to gather thoughts was a bit of a disappointment. Maybe one of the council's challenges should be to correct that. You already have a good outlet as your newsletter must be read by many but those many are not sufficiently inspired to attend a stuffy council meeting and need a better platform that's fit for the 2020's to become more actively involved in the community.

Sadly until more is done to evaluate real need I'm left wondering if charges should remain as they are or even be reduced until there's a sensible way forward.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

6<sup>th</sup> January 2020

The Clerk advised, as far as it was possible to tell, subscribers to the council's e-mailing list represented a pretty good cross-section of the population.

The Clerk had responded to all three correspondents.

**1392** The council **RESOLVED** to set the precept for the financial year 2020/21 to £275,604.00.

Eleven councillors present voted in favour of the increase, Cllr Gunston abstained.

(Mr and Mrs Akhurst left at the conclusion of this item.)

#### **014/20 REPORTS FROM PARISH COUNCIL COMMITTEES**

The council **NOTED** the following reports which had been circulated in advance of the meeting:

### **Committees**

Since the last meeting, the following committee meetings have taken place: Audit & Governance on 9<sup>th</sup> December; Finance & General Purposes and Major Events on 16<sup>th</sup> December; and Planning & Licensing on 23<sup>rd</sup> December. Draft Minutes from each of these meetings, should have been circulated to all councillors ahead of this evening's meeting.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

24<sup>th</sup> December 2019

### **Audit & Governance Committee**

The committee met on 9<sup>th</sup> December. Some of the matters discussed are reported below.

The committee reviewed the External Auditor's report on the Annual Return for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019. Whilst the committee noted I have rudimentary access to just one of the council's bank accounts, a quote should be sought for increasing the council's Employee Dishonest cover.

The committee also reviewed the interim Internal Audit report for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 and agreed what actions are necessary to address comments made within that report.

The committee reviewed the non-financial entries on the council's Risk Register and agreed no changes were necessary at this time.

## **Community Engagement Committee**

The Chairman of the Committee, Cllr Linton, and the Chairman of the Council, Cllr Toney, will be meeting with the Chief Executive of the Compass bus company towards the end of January. The purpose of the meeting is to go through comments made by the public so far, in response to the article in the Autumn 2019 Newsletter. These two councillors are also meeting two residents of Manor Road immediately before this evening's meeting to discuss the concerns they have about the proposed community bus and its possible impact upon the existing bus provision within the village.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

30<sup>th</sup> December 2019

## **Finance & General Purposes Committee**

The committee met on 16<sup>th</sup> December and agreed a proposed budget and precept for 2020/21, see Agenda Items 11a and 11b above for more details.

The committee also agreed an Investment Policy for adoption by the Council. This can be found at Agenda Item 14a below.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

23<sup>rd</sup> December 2019

## **Major Events Committee**

The committee met on 16<sup>th</sup> December. Some of the matters discussed are reported below.

The committee considered the mostly positive feedback received following the Christmas Celebrations event held on 23<sup>rd</sup> November. The committee agreed to hold a further Christmas Celebrations event on Saturday, 21<sup>st</sup> November 2020.

The meeting also received updates on the Funday Sunday event scheduled for Sunday, 3<sup>rd</sup> May and the Food & Drink Festival scheduled for Saturday, 29<sup>th</sup> August.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

23<sup>rd</sup> December 2019

## **Planning & Licensing Committee**

The committee met on 23<sup>rd</sup> December.

Four Applications were considered. The committee agreed not to object to an Application in Seaview Avenue nor one in Meadow Park. The committee agreed to object to proposed changes to the agreed development of the Scorton site in The Street and also to a proposal for a property in

South Strand. Further details are available in the draft Minutes which have been circulated to all councillors.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

24<sup>th</sup> December 2019

Additionally:

Planning & Licensing Committee – Cllr Mathias advised the committee meeting for 13<sup>th</sup> January was not needed and had been cancelled.

There were no updates from the other six committees.

#### **015/20 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE – WEBSITE ACCESSIBILITY**

The following report had been circulated in advance of the meeting:

### **Community Engagement Committee – website accessibility statement**

**Council is asked to note the Public Sector Bodies (websites and mobile applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 report.**

As you will see from the report, copied at Appendix A below, the Public Sector Bodies (websites and mobile applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 came into force on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2018. The purpose of the regulations is to improve accessibility to public sector websites and mobile applications so they can be used by as many people as possible.

The report at Appendix A has been produced by Maureen Chaffe, as the host of this council's website. The two-page report is followed by a two-page **Accessibility statement this council is asked to adopt**. This will then be published on the council's website.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

30<sup>th</sup> December 2019

The council NOTED the Public Sector Bodies (websites and mobile applications) (No.2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 report, prepared by the council's website host.

**1393** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to adopt the Accessibility statement for East Preston Parish Council's website.

#### **016/20 FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE – INVESTMENT POLICY**

The following report had been circulated in advance of the meeting:

### **Finance & General Purposes Committee – Investment Policy**

**Council is asked to adopt an Investment Policy for the council.**

Cllr McElroy to lead on this item.

At its meetings on 18<sup>th</sup> November and 16<sup>th</sup> December, the committee has worked upon and agreed a draft Investment Policy for adoption by the council. This can be found at Appendix B below.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

30<sup>th</sup> December 2019

As Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee, Cllr McElroy spoke in support of the above paper.

**1394** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously to adopt the Investment Policy for the council.

**017/20 REPORTS FROM PARISH COUNCIL WORKING PARTIES**

## **Working Parties**

At its meeting on Monday, 16<sup>th</sup> December, the Finance & General Purposes Committee elected Cllrs Gunston, Mathias and Wilkinson to the Leases Working Party. Any councillors not on the Finance & General Purposes Committee but interested in joining the Leases Working Party should let me know.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

30<sup>th</sup> December 2019

Cllr Mathias said he had nothing to add to the Clerk's report above.

**018/20 CLERK'S REPORT**

The council NOTED the following report which had been circulated in advance of the meeting:

## **Clerk's Report**

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Police matters**
- 3. Freedom of Information / Data Protection requests**
- 4. East Preston Business Community Business Breakfast, 3<sup>rd</sup> December**
- 5. Society of Local Council Clerks, Sussex branch meeting, 6<sup>th</sup> December**
- 6. East Preston & Kingston Bowls Club**
- 7. St Mary the Virgin Christmas Tree Festival, opening reception, 12<sup>th</sup> December**
- 8. Social media**
- 9. MailChimp stats**
- 10. A selection of things we have been asked since the last meeting**
- 11. Recent bouquets and complaints**
- 12. Leave**
- 13. January meetings and events**

**1. Introduction**

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

**2. Police matters**

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

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

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

#### 4. **East Preston Business Community Business Breakfast, 3<sup>rd</sup> December**

I attended this month's Business Breakfast which was held at Kerry's Community Tea-room. Cllr Linton also attended. About ten businesses were present. Conversation tended to be about the East Preston Christmas Celebrations event and the East Preston Christmas Tree Festival.

#### 5. **Society of Local Council Clerks, Sussex branch meeting, 6<sup>th</sup> December**

I attended this quarterly meeting in Lewes. Littlehampton TC was the only other Arun council present.

As always a variety of topics was covered.

One of particular note to councillors is the requirement under Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for councillors to declare when they are two or more months in arrears in paying their own Council Tax. Such a situation should be declared at any meeting where financial matters are going to be discussed, so pretty much any council meeting. Following the meeting I sought further information on this from Liz Fitcher, ADC Group Head of Council Advice and Monitoring Officer. Liz replied, "The onus is on the councillor to keep you updated on their personal situation as this section of the legislation relates to all financial matters considered during a Council year that would affect the precept you would set for Council Tax. We write to all our councillors at the start of each year to advise them of their responsibilities and I would suggest this action. Please be aware that where a councillor is in arrears of more than two months, the ICO have confirmed in decisions made in 2016 that this is disclosable information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 unless exceptional circumstances apply. The bar for exceptional circumstances is extremely high. [...] I will look to issue some guidance to Clerks by the end of the year on this."

In the meantime, if you think you are two or more months in arrears with your Council Tax, please let me know.

Further advice was received from the ADC Monitoring Officer on 18<sup>th</sup> December and circulated to all councillors the same day. This advice can be found at Item 7b on the Agenda for this meeting.

#### 6. **East Preston & Kingston Bowls Club**

On Friday, 6<sup>th</sup> January, I received the following email from the new General Secretary of the Bowls Club:

Dear Mr Cross,

Following a recent reshuffle of our Club's General Management Committee (GMC), I have to advise you that all three of our Trustees have changed.

The appropriate newly-elected Officers are:

- Mrs Janet Pidgeon, GMC Chair & Club President;
- Mr Ian Campbell, Club Treasurer; and
- Myself, Jonathan Colebrook-Taylor, Club General Secretary.

I look forward to meeting you in due course but, in the meantime, please let me know if you need anything more from me.

Yours sincerely,

**Jonathan Colebrook-Taylor**  
General Secretary, EP&KBC

#### 7. **St Mary the Virgin Christmas Tree Festival, opening reception, 12<sup>th</sup> December**

I attended the opening reception for the Christmas Tree Festival along with Cllrs Toney, Chapman and Duff all representing the council. Together with Cllr Walker, Chairman of Kingston Parish Council, Cllr Toney officially opened the event. The reception was enjoyed by those present but the main news is over 2,500 people visited the event over its three official days of business and over £11,000 has been raised for repairs to the building.

## 8. **Social media**

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

- Post detailing the mystery of two Christmas presents (see below) – 4,785 people
- 
- Poster for Angmering Chorale concert - 789
- Reminder Polling Stations were open - 781
- Black Mercedes blocking the access to the residents' car-park at Parade Mansions – 719
- Lost gentleman's wedding ring, 5<sup>th</sup> December – 719
- Poster for December meeting of the East Preston Railway Club – 664
- Lost purse, 13<sup>th</sup> December – 576
- Poster for *Carols at the Tudor Tavern* - 563
- Poster for St Mary the Virgin Christmas Tree Festival - 509

† Food & Drink Festival page

▲ East Preston Business Community page

\* East Preston Christmas Celebrations page

(posts up to and including 29<sup>th</sup> December)

The number of people currently liking the council on Facebook is 1,279, an increase of five over the last report.

## 9. **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 – 27<sup>th</sup> November – sent to 810, opened by 431 (53.2%)

Parish Council news – 13<sup>th</sup> December – sent to 812, opened by 438 (53.9%)

Parish Council news – 23<sup>rd</sup> December – sent to 811, opened by 431 (53.3%)

The sharp-eyed amongst you will notice these last three e-newsletters, whilst a higher number of recipients has seen a marked decrease in the number of people opening them. This could just be a seasonal occurrence, although not seen in previous years, or it could be something to do with the way in which MailChimp collects its data. Something to keep an eye on in the coming months.

## 10. **Things we have been asked since the last meeting**

“Whilst I was in a class at the Village Hall, someone has left Christmas presents for x in my car, and I don’t know anyone called x. Can you help find the right person?” (Turns out the questioner had given her friend x a lift to the Village Hall class that day, but had forgotten.)

## 11. **Recent bouquets and complaints**

(In addition to anything reported above)

On 17<sup>th</sup> December, Malcolm McLelland, Chairman of the Friends of St Mary’s, called into the office, partly to return some temporary signage we had lent him and partly to thank the council and its officers for the support given to the Christmas Tree Festival. Over 2,500 people visited the event over its three days, and £11,000 was raised. Both these figures are up on the two previous Christmas Tree Festivals.

From a resident of Sea Lane, “Just a very brief note to wish you, and your Staff, a very happy Christmas and, of course, all the very best of good fortune for the New Year! Thank you all for your support during the year - it hasn't been necessary to re-instate meetings of the "East Preston Grumblers Club" at all!! - and we have continued to enjoy living in the Village.”

From residents of Sea Lane Close, “Thank you for all your hard work again this year.”

From Marcelle on the St Barnabas House Hospice Outreach Project vehicle, “Thank you so much for all your support for the ‘HOP’ service in 2019.”

## 12. **Leave**

No leave booked at this time.

## 13. **January Meetings and Events**

This list may be incomplete and is subject to change.

- 6<sup>th</sup> Full Council (19:00, East Preston Infant School)
- 13<sup>th</sup> Planning & Licensing Committee (18:00, East Preston Infant School)  
Finance & General Purposes Committee – Business Plan (18:45, East Preston Infant School)
- 14<sup>th</sup> Angmering-on-Sea Lawn Tennis Club meeting (10:30, Tennis Club) (RM, GM, ST, SW and SC only)  
Community Speed Watch team meeting (18:00, Fire Station)
- 20<sup>th</sup> Personnel Committee (18:00, East Preston Infant School)  
Amenities Committee (19:00, East Preston Infant School)
- 27<sup>th</sup> Planning & Licensing Committee (18:00, East Preston Infant School)  
Community Engagement Committee (18:00, East Preston Infant School)
- 30<sup>th</sup> St Barnabas House Hospice Outreach Project vehicle (10:00-14:00, Village Green car-park)

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**

30<sup>th</sup> December 2019

**Item 8 – Social Media** – Cllr Linton asked whether either the wedding ring or the purse had been reunited with their owners. The Clerk did not believe so.

Cllr Toney thanked the Clerk for his report.

## 019/20 **EXTERNAL MEETINGS AND EVENTS**

## **Other meetings and events – Part 1**

**Council is asked to note the following reports:**

### **Arun Youth Aqua Centre Annual General Meeting, 30<sup>th</sup> November**

#### **Marjorie Bridger Hall, East Preston**

I was invited on behalf of the Parish Council to attend the Arun Youth Aqua Centre A.G.M. at the East Preston Scout hut by the Chairman Mr R Elliman on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> November.

The Chair from Rustington and the Mayor from Littlehampton were also invited but did not show.

Various club representatives spoke about how it is getting harder to encourage juniors to join these clubs and how to retain the members that they have already. The club at the moment is managing to keep its head above water. During the evening, there was a slide show highlighting personal achievements gained by club members and how the new storage facilities were coming on.

I was there to present trophies, awards and certificates which had been gained during the past 12 months water activities on the high sea and in the lake.

The club had managed to gain support in the form of 2 very large donations which will keep them "AFLOAT" for the next 12 months.

After the formalities, I mingled with the award winners and their families whilst having some refreshments.

If anyone would like to try sailing they have "taster" sessions for you to have a go at.

Cllr Steve Toney – **Chairman of the Council**

5<sup>th</sup> December 2019

### **East Preston Infant School Christmas Show, 12<sup>th</sup> December**

#### **East Preston Infant School**

I attended this show on behalf of the Parish Council and what a show it was. There were approx 150 children performing, singing, playing instruments and narrating the Christmas story with some little help from the teaching staff.

I would imagine there were a lot of hours preparing for this production. I, along with all the parents/guardians/grandparents, it was great to see everyone having an enjoyable afternoon.

On behalf of the Parish Council, I would like to congratulate the school on a first class professional performance which will be hard to follow.

On behalf of myself and the other three councillors who were able to attend (Andrea, Liz and Pat), Simon has sent thanks to the Headteacher, Mrs Claire New.



**Baytree Lunch Club Christmas Lunch, 20<sup>th</sup> December**

**East Preston and Kingston Village Hall**

Well, what a treat. We (Councilor Linton and myself) arrived at the correct time 12 o'clock and were escorted to our table. There were some crackers and a choice of red or white wine awaiting us. We had a lovely full Christmas Turkey dinner and all the trimmings, followed by either Christmas pudding and custard or some lovely individual trifles and cream.

We then had a nice cup of coffee, mince pies and some after eight mints.

The organizing and preparation for such an event were you are entertaining 84 people is very well thought out.

After dinner we were entertained by the East Preston Junior school choir with some traditional carols and some not!! We were all invited to join in especially with the 12 days of Christmas carol.

I would like to thank the organisers on behalf of Liz and myself for a very enjoyable dinner.

Cllr Steve Toney – **Chairman of the Council**

30<sup>th</sup> December 2019

**020/20 RESPONSE TO EXTERNAL MEETINGS AND EVENTS**

No comments were made.

**021/20 NEW ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING (3<sup>RD</sup> FEBRUARY 2020)**

Cllr Chapman reported there was an East Preston Youth Club meeting scheduled for 23<sup>rd</sup> January following which she would provide an update report to the council.

**The meeting concluded at 20:02.**

Chairman: ..... Date: **3<sup>rd</sup> February 2020**  
Councillor Steve Toney

END

## Agenda Items 13a and 13b

### Community Engagement Committee – website accessibility statement

**Council is asked to note the Public Sector Bodies (websites and mobile applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 report and agree the Accessibility statement.**

Report to	:	East Preston Parish Council
Title of Report	:	The Public Sector Bodies (websites and mobile applications) (No.2) Accessibility Regulations 2018
Purpose of Report	:	Introduction to new accessibility statement
Date of Report	:	September 2019

#### **1. Background**

The Public Sector Bodies (websites and mobile applications) (No.2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 (“the 2018 Regulations”) came into force on 23 September 2018.

The purpose of the 2018 Regulations is to improve the accessibility of public sector websites/mobile applications so that they can be used by as many people as possible. They build on existing obligations to disabled people under the Equality Act 2010 and the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people.

#### **2. Accessibility requirement**

Regulation 6 of the 2018 Regulations provides that subject to exemptions contained in Regulation 7 (see below) public sector bodies must comply with the accessibility requirement. This is defined as a requirement to make a website or mobile application accessible by making it perceivable, operable, understandable and robust. This can be done by meeting accessibility standards, that is, it complies with the International WC AG 2.1 AA accessibility standard.

As per Regulation 7 (1) of the 2018 Regulations a council is not required to comply with the accessibility requirement if doing so would impose a disproportionate burden on the council. The council seeking to rely on this exemption must perform a disproportionate burden assessment of the extent to which compliance with the accessibility requirement imposes a disproportionate burden.

In undertaking a disproportionate burden assessment, the council must take account of relevant circumstances including (a) the size, resources and nature of the council and (b) the estimated costs and benefits for the council in relation to the estimated benefits for persons with disabilities, taking into account the frequency and duration of use of the specific website / mobile application.

Things like lack of time or knowledge cannot be taken into account.

If following the assessment, the council determines that compliance with the accessibility requirements would impose a disproportionate burden, they must explain in an accessibility statement the parts of the accessibility requirements that could not be complied with and, where appropriate, provide accessible alternatives to documents it holds that are not available on its website/mobile application.

### **3. Accessibility statement**

In addition to complying with the accessibility requirement, a council not seeking to rely on the disproportionate burden exemption must provide an accessibility statement and keep that statement under regular review. For a website, the accessibility statement must be provided in an accessible format and published on the council's website. For mobile applications, the accessibility statement must be provided in accessible format; and available on the councils website or alongside other information available when downloading the mobile application.

### **4. Providing an accessible alternative format upon request**

The council is also required to provide information in another format if someone requested where it's reasonable to do so.

### **5. Issues for the Parish Council**

As the website is relatively new it was built using the most up to date software and therefore complies in most of the technical aspects set out in the WCAG 2.1 AA accessibility standard. Work is ongoing to improve the areas, such as image tags, that do not currently meet the standards.

Going forward staff must not in future put scanned documents onto the website and where it loads a poster it must also provide a textual description of the document/image. Training for staff will be provided.

### **6. Recommendation**

An accessibility statement has been produced for East Preston Parish Council (attached) and it is recommended that it be adopted and published on the website.

## **Accessibility statement for East Preston Parish Council**

This website is run by East Preston Parish Council. We want as many people as possible to be able to use this website. For example that means that you will be able to:

- change colours, contrast levels and fonts
- zoom in up to 300% without the text spilling off the screen
- navigate most of the site using just a keyboard
- navigate most of the website using speech recognition software
- listen to most of the website using the screen reader

We have also made the website text as simple as possible to understand.

[AbilityNet](#) has advice on making your device easier to use if you have a disability.

### **How accessible this website is**

We know some parts of this website are not fully accessible:

- you cannot modify the line height or spacing of text
- some older PDF documents are not fully accessible to screen reader software unless they are downloaded from the site

### **What to do if you cannot access parts of this website**

If you need information on this website in a different format like accessible PDF, large print, easy read, audio recording or braille:

- email [eparishcouncil@btconnect.com](mailto:eparishcouncil@btconnect.com)
- call 01903 770050

We will do our best to respond within three working days.

If you cannot view our map on our 'contact us' page, call or email us and we will provide directions.

### **Reporting accessibility problems with this website**

We're always looking to improve the accessibility of this website. If you find any problems not listed on this page or think we're not meeting accessibility requirements, contact [eparishcouncil@btconnect.com](mailto:eparishcouncil@btconnect.com)

## **Enforcement procedure**

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is responsible for enforcing the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 (the 'accessibility regulations'). If you're not happy with how we respond to your complaint, [contact the Equality Advisory and Support Service \(EASS\)](#).

## **Technical information about this websites accessibility**

The Council is committed to making its website accessible, in accordance with Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.

This website is partially compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.1 AA standard, due to issues with the naming of image files which we intend to remedy and some old pdfs not being readable within the browser window.

## **How we tested this site**

This website was tested in August 2019 using online testing software. Our approach was to review all image tags and to test the main textual pages for use with the adaptive and assistive technology readily available on a normal PC.

**Finance & General Purposes Committee – Investment Policy**

**Council is asked to adopt the following Investment Policy for the council.**

**INVESTMENT POLICY**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This policy sets out the treasury management procedures for the monitoring of the cash flow and banking arrangements of East Preston Parish Council.
- 1.2 Authority reference is to the council's Financial Regulations.
- 1.3 The Local Government Act 2003 Section 12 provides the power to invest (a) for any purpose relevant to its functions under any enactment or (b) for the purpose of the prudent management of its financial affairs. Section 15(1) of the Act requires a local authority to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 1.4 The council acknowledges its duty of care to the community and the prudent investment of funds.

**2. OBJECTIVES**

- 2.1 The council's investment priorities are, in the following ranking order:
  - (i) The security of capital to minimise the risk of losses.
  - (ii) The liquidity of investments to meet the cash flow needs of the council.
  - (iii) Achieving a high rate of return on investments commensurate with adequate safeguards of security and liquidity.

**3. INVESTMENTS**

- 3.1 All investment and deposits will be with UK banks, building societies or public investment bodies registered with, and regulated by, the Prudential Regulation Authority and the Financial Conduct Authority. Such banks, building societies and public investment bodies must participate in the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS).
- 3.2 All investments, deposits and interest will be in £ sterling.
- 3.3 Bank accounts should not exceed the current FSCS amount + 5%.
- 3.4 Investments for current expenditure will be in an instant access current account with a 30-day access account for topping as required.
- 3.5 Investments not required for current expenditure i.e. the general reserve may be placed on longer term deposits of up to 5 years.

- 3.6 Investments not required for current expenditure i.e. earmarked reserves may be placed on medium term deposits not exceeding 3 years.
- 3.7 In order to spread the financial risk to a minimum, investments will be made with a minimum of two financial institutions.
- 3.8 The credit ratings of the institutions will be a minimum of 'B' and these will be monitored regularly.
- 3.9 The management of this policy will be by the Clerk / RFO and reported to two Finance & General Purposes Committee meetings each council year.

#### **4. REVIEW**

- 4.1 This policy will be reviewed by the Finance & General Purposes Committee on an annual basis. Any variation to the policy will be submitted to the council for approval.