



EAST PRESTON PARISH COUNCIL

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ANNUAL PARISH MEETING - EAST PRESTON

21st May 2018

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

Present: Parish Councillors Barbara Gale, Pat Gander, Rick McElroy, David Moore, Danny Shah, Steve Toney (in the Chair) and Steve Wilkinson

West Sussex County Councillor Roger Elkins (East Kingston and Ferring)

Arun District Councillors Ricky Bower and Terry Chapman (East Preston with Kingston)

Martha Pusey, Dementia Support

Members of the Public: Celeste Amoo, Linda Denton, David Gander, Pauline and Malcolm McLelland and Jennifer Wallace

Clerk to the Council: Simon Cross

Apologies: Parish Councillors Christine Bowman, Lisa Duff, Elizabeth Linton and Glyn Mathias

The Chairman of the Council, Councillor Steve Toney, opened the meeting at 19:02, and thanked and welcomed those attending. Those present agreed the meeting need not run in the order of the published agenda.

APM2018/01 - To receive a presentation on dementia awareness

Martha Pusey started by explaining she no longer worked for Age UK but as of a fortnight ago, she worked for Dementia Support from its new “dementia hub” at Sage House, Tangmere. Martha thanked the council for giving her this opportunity, at the beginning of Dementia Awareness Week, to give a short talk to the Annual Parish Meeting.

Working for the Local Community

Currently, 1 in 3 people could develop dementia and that risk is increasing; eventually everyone could be at risk of developing dementia. Dementia is no longer about old people; the youngest person to have been diagnosed with dementia was 32. Experts are beginning to understand there is also a children's version of dementia and this has been seen in 5-year-olds.

Dementia Awareness week is just one initiative to try and remove the fear and stigma attached to dementia, which is an umbrella term for about 150 brain diseases, the most common of which is Alzheimer's Disease. There are still many negative connotations in the public domain, for example some media still refers to those with dementia as "the living dead." There is no known cure for dementia and even regular news articles about eating more or less of this, drinking more or less of that are just stabs in the dark.

Dementia affects different people in different ways. For some, even the simplest everyday tasks can become a minefield. Even something as mundane as making a cup of tea has, when broken down, about fifty separate steps from having the initial thirsty thought to sitting down and not forgetting to drink the tea you have made.

For anyone with concerns about any relatives, Martha suggested keeping a log of concerns and then speak to a GP. GPs are more dementia-aware now and much more open and helpful. With the right care and support people with dementia can live well.

Dementia Support is one of a number of organisations working to make Arun a dementia-friendly community wherein residents are more aware of dementia and better able to work with it. Martha said Arun District Council had been wonderful receptive to this idea and all customer-facing staff had recently undertaken relevant training. Dementia Support offers a one-hour session on becoming a Dementia Friend. Businesses and other local organisations are all being encouraged to take part.

Diagnosis rate in West Sussex at the moment is really bad with diagnoses taking up to 18 months. With new facilities open at Sage House in Tangmere, it is hoped to cut diagnosis time down to about two weeks.

In addition to assessment facilities, Sage House has a community café and a range of drop-in activities. These have to be funded by the user but the cost per session is based upon what the user can afford. Dementia Support's work at the moment is currently all funded by fundraising. From an outreach perspective, the organisation works really closely with other local organisations such as Coastal MIND, Age UK, GuildCare, local councils, Clinical Commissioning Groups and so on.

Currently, Dementia Support's catchment area is from The Witterings north to Midhurst and from Littlehampton west into the eastern part of Hampshire. Although Sage House has only been open for a couple of weeks, already people in Surrey are getting in touch about whether their relatives can practically attend sessions there.

In response to a question about night-time care for those with dementia, Martha suggested relatives contact locally-based care agencies which were likely to be able to provide support. There may be cost implications but that would depend upon the assessment made by social services.

More information on Sage House and its activities can be found on the Dementia Support website () and interested people can self-refer if necessary. Informational visits to Sage House were welcomed.

As there were no further questions, Martha again thanked those present and left the meeting.

APM2018/02 - To receive a report from the West Sussex County councillor representing East Preston.

County Cllr Roger Elkins started by saying he had attended last year's meeting as a member of the public but was now here as the village's representative on West Sussex County Council (WSCC). Cllr Elkins gave some commentary on the roles he has assumed since becoming a County Councillor.

High on the County Council's achievements within the village in the past year had been the fantastic expansion project at both East Preston Infant and Junior Schools. This should be seen as a great investment in the future of East Preston.

As a member of the WSCC Joint Eastern Arun Area Committee, Cllr Elkins had overseen several grants to organisations working in East Preston over the year.

Cllr Elkins is a firm believer in the value of libraries in the centre of communities. The WSCC Library Service is running more events and training sessions to keep members of the public familiar with latest technologies available from and in libraries. Libraries have a role to play in tackling social isolation and Cllr Elkins said we could expect to see more services running out of libraries in the future.

Cllr Elkins reported he had joined an East Preston Business Community Business Breakfast earlier in the month. The meeting had been very enjoyable and underlined what a vibrant community there is in East Preston.

Like all public sector organisations, WSCC was facing financial challenges. The Leader of the County Council, Cllr Louise Goldsmith, was undertaking a biennial survey of local residents under the What Matters to You 2018 banner. Previous versions of the survey had identified certain priorities for the county and Cllr Goldsmith hoped the latest survey would fine tune those priorities further.

On the day before the meeting, Cllr Elkins had joined a Parish Council-organised working party to spruce-up East Preston library. The working party had included parish councillors Toney and Wilkinson and the Clerk and a handful of very handy local residents. The library looked much better as a result of their efforts and Cllr Elkins felt this had been a great example of what communities could do together when they tried.

Cllr Elkins finished his presentation by saying East Preston was a fantastic local community with a fantastic Parish Council and councillors and an excellent Clerk who was keeping him informed.

In response to a question about the standard of pothole repairs, Cllr Elkins said he was aware people were concerned some potholes seemed to need to be repaired within a matter of weeks of having been repaired. He reassured the meeting such revisit repairs were done at the contractor's expense, so no cost to ratepayers but he accepted that was not really the point. WSCC had been given £1.2m from a central government pothole fund and this had helped WSCC repair 8,500 potholes in the first four months of this year compared to 14,000 for the whole of 2017.

In response to a comment grass-cutting was "appalling", Cllr Elkins defended the county council's contractors who were having to cope with a sudden growth spurt along the county's verges with reduced resources. Perhaps the What Matters to You 2018 survey was an opportunity for the public to influence WSCC thinking of grass-cutting around the county.

There being no further questions for Cllr Elkins, he apologised and left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.

APM2018/03 - To receive a report from the Arun District councillors representing East Preston.

District Cllr Bower started by thanking the parish council for its work in the village over the past year.

He explained the new Local Plan, which has taken twelve years to author because of pressure for ever greater housing numbers, was now close to adoption. He was hopeful adoption would take place in July. Once the new Local Plan is in place, all made Neighbourhood Plans in the district will need to be assessed for compliance with the Local Plan. His gut feeling was the East Preston Neighbourhood Plan was probably going to be all right.

Cllr Bower explained the current process for referring Householder Planning Applications to the Arun District Council (ADC) Development Control Committee and how this had not been in place when a certain Planning Application had been granted Planning Permission in May of 2017. This particular Planning Permission was under threat of Judicial Review although he personally did not believe there was a case to answer.

District Cllr Chapman started by advising the meeting his comments were more by way of observations than a formal report.

ADC had recently extended its contract with Age UK for running services out of The Laurels in Rustington, amongst other locations. This was good news for the older residents of East Preston as The Laurels was so much more readily accessible than The Tamarisk Centre in Littlehampton had been in the past.

Party Houses were causing grief in the area again and currently there was no ADC strategy for how to control these. A small number of residents were finding, after up to forty years of quiet enjoyment of their property, they were suddenly living next to a Party House and enduring noisy, disrupted weekends.

East Preston had always been blessed by a high level of neighbourliness with plenty of societies keeping plenty of people occupied and entertained across the village. This had been deteriorating lately – party houses was an example – and a further example of this deterioration was the number of East Preston societies struggling recently because people have been subjected to personal verbal, and in one instance, physical abuse from disgruntled society members. Where were East Preston manners?

Without wishing to dismiss concerns about inconsiderate dog-fouling, Cllr Chapman asked for some leniency towards elderly and infirm dog-owners who literally may be physically incapable of picking up after their dogs. Those same dogs are often a lifeline for their owners, providing invaluable companionship.

Mrs McLelland said she had noticed often it was people walking along chatting being unaware of what their dog was up to behind them and joggers who did not clear up after their dogs.

Cllr Chapman repeated his comments about grass-cutting in the St Mary the Virgin churchyard made at the Full Council meeting on 14th May. The contractors had a large amount of work to get through and the contract for closed churchyards was very specific and maybe not as extensive as members of the public might have hoped.

Cllr Chapman praised the “superb commitment” of the parish council in providing a youth service in the village following the sudden withdrawal of WSCC youth provision in the village a few years ago. The council had contracted the services of the very dedicated Arun Community Charge and the Youth Club’s management committee could not function without the great commitment of the council’s Assistant Clerk, Tracy Khoo. For those not aware, the Youth Club had recently started a second night on Tuesdays in the Conservative Hall to complement the Friday nights in the old Youth Centre building between the two school buildings.

Various local agencies have started to work together as a Local Community Network addressing health and wellbeing issues across the county. The Clerk said the parish council’s Community Engagement Committee had agreed Cllr Gander could liaise with the Local Community Network but so far his emails to the contact he had been given had gone unanswered.

Cllr Chapman said the local parish councils and the district councillors were keeping the westbound slip-road off the A259 on the agenda now WSCC had said it would not provide this much-needed slip-road. He and Cllr Bower had asked for a meeting with the WSCC Cabinet Minister for Highways, Cllr Bob Lanzer.

Cllr Chapman asked the parish council to give some consideration, in due course, to attempting to include the area between Station Road and the A280, south of the A259, currently within Angmering Parish Council’s boundary. With recent and planned boundary changes, such a move would align the area better through the various tiers of central and local government.

Cllr Chapman ended by thanking the parish councillors who “really do a good job in sometimes adverse circumstances” and the Clerk and Assistant Clerk for doing “a fantastic job on the council’s behalf.”

In response to a request for an update on the future of the South Strand toilet block, Cllr Chapman said he was aware members of the public were assuming the parish council’s decision not to renew its lease on the toilet block after 31st March 2019 meant automatic closure by ADC. This had indeed been the situation when discussed at an ADC Full Council meeting on 11th January 2017 but was not necessarily the case now. He and Cllr Bower were carrying out some consultation and meeting with senior ADC officers to look at options before then calling a public meeting. The block does require some capital investment for which ADC had not budgeted and there will also be future running costs of course but the situation is not as bleak as some have portrayed.

In response to a question of why infrastructure only seems to be provided after housing in the UK whereas in Europe, infrastructure is provided first, Cllr Bower explained there was a trigger system on money from developers. For example, a trigger may be set at a certain number of houses in a development have to have been built or occupied before a developer has to pay a financial agreement. Mr McLelland added developers in the past had said early payment of money for infrastructure projects left them with a cashflow problem.

Cllrs Chapman and Bower left at the end of this item.

APM2018/04 - To confirm the Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 24th April 2017

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 24th April 2017 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record, proposed by Cllr David Moore. There were no objections.

These Minutes had previously been noted by the Parish Council at its meeting held on 8th May 2017, Parish Council Minute 327/17.

APM2018/05 - To receive the Annual Report of the East Preston Parish Council

Cllr Toney advised the Annual Report had been included in the Spring 2018 Newsletter which had been being distributed across the village since the weekend of 12th May. As such did anyone want the report read to the meeting. It was agreed nobody needed the report to be read to the meeting.

The report, as included in the Spring 2018 Newsletter, read:

“Here is the council’s Annual Report for the past financial year.

“Although the council has had to face some major challenges and changes in the past few months, overall the year was another successful one for the council’s activities in the village.

“As part of East Preston Festival, the council ran a successful Come and Meet Your Local Councillors event. Attendance was down on 2016, primarily because the weather was unwelcoming. The event will be running again this year, 7th June, because councillors enjoy meeting you face-to-face and learning what you like about the village and what could be improved. Two attempts to bring Owls About Town into the village for an event on the Village Green failed because of poor weather. We shall try again this year.

“Each year, the council puts on two flagship events. In August, we held the second East Preston Food & Drink Festival which built on the success of the first with more stalls and more importantly more people attending and enjoying the afternoon. We will hold the Food & Drink Festival again this year, on Saturday, 25th August between midday and 5pm on the Village Green. Please pop the date in your diary now.

“In November, we held the fourth Christmas Celebrations event in its current format. This is a big, wide-ranging and successful event for a small village and is enjoyed by lots of you, yet it is a difficult event for the council to arrange as the village has two shopping areas and trying to link the two together each year is no mean task. The event is also run with only a very small team of community volunteers – if you would like to join in, please get in touch with the Council Office.

“In February, the council ran a playscheme for younger children, in conjunction with Bee-Fit. Attendance numbers were good, feedback was positive and the council is hoping to run similar events during the coming Autumn and Spring half-terms.

“The council is proud to have provided the new Multi-Use Games Area at the Lashmar Recreation Ground. This is free to use and will hopefully provide entertainment and exercise for people of all ages. Thank you to the residents who contributed extra financial support to this project. The Warren Recreation Ground improvements project has continued and been well-received by many. Further improvements will need to sit in abeyance for a short while as some of the other council projects, such as improvements to the Sea Road toilet block, reach a critical stage. Last summer and autumn, the council trialled improved access to the beach at the bottom of Sea Road. This was appreciated by many and the council is still working on providing a permanent form of improved access to the beach there.

“The council was sad to see Slater’s Cottage at 3 The Street disappear after about 150 years. Campaigns to have the building listed failed as it was not deemed sufficiently interesting or unusual to be saved. Alongside interested groups of residents the council’s Planning & Licensing Committee also fought in vain not to have Tudor Lodge in Sea Road replaced by a block of seven properties and not to have a new property built in a Vermont Drive back garden.

“Financially, the council has been careful with your money whilst still working to improve life in the village. The council’s independent internal and external auditors both raised no concerns about the management of the council.

“It will never be possible to please every one of you, but the positive comments we receive throughout the year outweigh the negative. The main negative for some of you this year was the introduction of charging for use of the

Village Green car-park. This was never going to be something all of you welcomed but the council is pleased to see usage of the car park is increasing again.

“The council is approachable and willing to consider ideas you have for ways in which life in the village can be improved. Such suggestions are best submitted in writing so the correct committee can consider them or our officers can report on previous discussions on the same matter. We look forward to hearing your ideas and hopefully implementing some of them to make the village even lovelier.”

APM2018/06 - To consider any written resolutions received by the council no later than 14th May 2018

The Clerk to the Council confirmed no such resolutions had been received.

APM2018/07 – Public question time.

Cllr Toney opened the meeting up to members of the public to have their say on any matter affecting East Preston.

Mrs McLelland said she had seen the Clerk photographing the fig tree outside East Preston & Kingston Village Hall, was something bad going to happen to it? The Clerk responded he had been photographing the new growth on the tree as some residents had expressed concern when the tree had been pollarded last year. Despite the new growth now appearing at the very top of the tree, there was still some concern the tree might yet not flourish and comments the council must replace the tree if it did not flourish.

Mrs Wallace read the following statement to the meeting:

“May I remind everyone that in [Full Council] Minute 874/15, Resolution 0958 in December 2015, Full Council resolved to pursue the matter of the Millennium Wall hanging and I quote “with the intention of seeing the Millennium Wall-hanging reinstated in its previous location with in the East Preston & Kingston Village Hall, because the wall-hanging is part of East Preston’s heritage and is of great importance to many residents.” This resolution still stands but has not been realised.

“The positioning of the Collage in the Library is temporary made clear by a notice placed alongside it. The question of “until when” needs to be answered by the Parish Council and the Village Hall Committee who are joint Trustees of the Foundation.

“The Warren Recreation Ground, which includes the Village Hall, was bequeathed to the residents of East Preston and we believe we have every right to have our concerns and wishes considered and should not be flagrantly ignored by a very small group of people who seem to consider themselves “arbiters of taste”, accountable to no one.

“Since Spring of 2015 the Village Hall Committee has seen the reaction to the removal without consent of the Wall-hanging and been aware of the opinion of the Parish Council. Now we sincerely hope that in the near future there can be sensible and amicable discussion resulting in a fair conclusion.”

Mrs Amoo concurred and asked whether many people had contacted the council following the last Annual Parish Meeting to say they had visited the library and their thoughts on the wall-hanging being in the library. The Clerk replied there had been some initial positive comments when the wall-hanging had been installed but he could not say whether these had been as a result of the Annual Parish Meeting. Mrs Amoo said the wall-hanging was part of the cultural heritage of the village as was the Village Hall and these needed better stewardship for future generations.

Mrs Amoo said there had been an increase in litter and general untidiness around the village. Only the day before the meeting she had been around just part of the village with a litter pick and had collected a binbag’s worth of litter ranging from sweet wrappers to beer bottles to unused condoms and a pair of tights. Cllr Gander replied there had been some informal discussion between councillors on just this subject and it would be discussed formally at a future Community Engagement Committee meeting although she could not say when. Cllr McElroy reported the council’s Finance & General Purposes Committee had met that morning and had agreed its Grant Aid grants for 2018. One of these was to the local Scout troupe and as part of the grant, the troupe would be asked to propose some form of village litter-picking event. There following some discussion about the value of education of all ages in this matter.

With no further questions forthcoming, Cllr Toney closed the meeting at 20:47 and invited those present to join the council for a drink and less formal conversation.

Chairman:

Cllr Steve Toney

Date: 15th April 2019