



# EAST PRESTON PARISH COUNCIL

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**MINUTES:** of the Proceedings of the Monthly Meeting of East Preston Parish Council held at 19:00 on Monday, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2020 via the Zoom online meeting application

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

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

West Sussex County Councillor Roger Elkins (until 19:30)

Two members of the public

\* \* \* \* \*

The following abbreviations may appear in these Minutes:

ADC – Arun District Council;	SSALC – Sussex and Surrey Associations of Local Councils;
BTP – British Transport Police;	SSE – Scottish and Southern Electric;
CPRE – Campaign for the Protection of Rural England;	SW – Southern Water;
JEAAC – Joint Eastern Arun Area Committee;	TfSE – Transport for the South East;
NHS – National Health Service;	TRO – Traffic Regulation Order;
NR – Network Rail;	VHF – East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation;
SLCC – Society of Local Council Clerks;	WSCC – West Sussex County Council.

\* \* \* \* \*

The meeting opened at 19:00.

The meeting was held in accordance with *The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020*.

## **317/20 INTRODUCTIONS**

Cllr Toney welcomed those present especially the two members of the public.

## **318/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

All Parish Councillors were present.

An apology had been received from District Cllrs Terry Chapman and Paul Kelly.

## **319/20 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

No interests were declared. Cllr Toney reminded councillors they could declare an Interest at the beginning of each Agenda Item.

### **320/20 PUBLIC SESSION**

**No Agenda Item** – Mrs D said how “absolutely wonderful” the yarnbombed bicycles were around the village. Knowing last week would have been East Preston Festival week, the yarnbombers had done a brilliant job in bringing some joy and humour to those many residents who would be feeling the loss of the Festival. Mrs D had spoken to some visitors to the village who had come specifically to see the bicycles, their fame had extended beyond the village. Mrs D asked if the council could thank the yarnbombers for enhancing the village’s reputation.

**Agenda Item 17 – Clerk’s Report – Item 2 – Police Matters** – Mrs D then referred to comments made by Sussex Police Chief Inspector John Carter in response to concerns raised by local residents about the number of visitors flooding into the village as the COVID-19 lockdown had eased. Mrs D felt this influx was worrying and inconsiderate to local residents who had stayed home for two and a half months but were now unable to enjoy their own village because of the possible spreading of the virus by visitors. Not only were there visitors in the village but there were groups of local residents gathering together far larger than government advised. What could be done?

**Agenda Item 17 – Clerk’s Report – Item 4 – East Preston Voluntary Service** – Mr C said he was very grateful for the help he and his wife had received from the East Preston Voluntary Service. He himself was shielding and whilst they had been able to get groceries delivered, it had been very useful having volunteers able to collect prescriptions and post letters and such like.

### **321/20 COUNCIL RESPONSES**

Cllr Gander agreed it was not just visitors who were gathering in larger groups than advised.

The Clerk reminded the meeting CI Carter’s comments had arisen as a response to concerns raised to both Sussex Police and Sir Peter Bottomley, MP over the weekend of 30<sup>th</sup>/31<sup>st</sup> May about the number of visitors in the village. On the day of the meeting, the Clerk had also seen a response from Nigel Lynn, Chief Executive of Arun District Council, to Sir Peter advising him Arun District Council’s Civil Parking Enforcement officers had mainly been redeployed into helping local residents through the WSCC Community Hub, but now ADC’s involvement with the Community Hub was tailing off, the Civil Parking Enforcement officers were to return to their parking enforcement roles. In Mr Lynn’s words, this enforcement “will include areas close to beaches which suffer from an increase of illegal parking during times of good weather.” The Clerk said he had already replied to Mr Lynn saying East Preston suffered year-round from inconsiderate and illegal parking and that any extra help ADC could give would be appreciated.

The Clerk said he and Mrs D had discussed the matter of visitors to the village during a telephone conversation earlier in the day. The Clerk had advised Mrs D to report her concerns about specific incidents to Sussex Police and to get her friends and neighbours to do the same as that would raise the profile of concerns in East Preston within Sussex Police. Cllr McElroy confirmed the Clerk’s advice.

Mrs D wondered whether it would be possible for the Parish Council to employ a private clamping company at weekends. The Clerk replied ADC was the Civil Parking Enforcement authority in the area and it would be up to it to make such a decision.

### **322/20 WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL**

County Cllr Elkins opened by supporting Mrs D’s comments about the yarnbombed bicycles. He described them as “absolutely fantastic” and he could tell from social media the bicycles had “brought a smile to a lot of people.”

Cllr Elkins said local residents appeared to be very happy the county’s Household Waste and Recycling Sites had reopened. Although there were queues to get into the sites, Cllr Elkins believed the sites were operating well.

Cllr Elkins reminded the meeting the WSCC Community Hub was still at the disposal of residents in need, especially as some local volunteers would now be returning to work and no longer able to volunteer within their communities. The Hub was staffed 8am to 8pm on 033 022 27980.

Central government had made funding available to local authorities to support the care homes within their areas. The funding was specifically for any additional expenditure incurred because of the COVID-19 pandemic and worked out at roughly £975

per bedspace. In response to a question, Cllr Elkins said he was not able to report on how many of the county's 235 care homes had been affected by COVID-19. He believed this was information he could access though and report back to the next meeting.

Noting that there was increased visitors to beaches all along the West Sussex coast, Cllr Elkins reported traffic volumes were still 29% lower than usual. The county council was proposing 21km of temporary cycleways in the county to promote cycling as a replacement for journeys which would usually be undertaken on public transport. The temporary relaxation of the hours during which bus passes could be used were to be reversed with effect from 15<sup>th</sup> June.

Cllr Elkins believed initial designs for the proposed Traffic Regulation Orders for the Sea Road / Manor Road area and for Lashmar Road were likely to be made available to the parish council soon.

Cllr Gander reported the government had, that afternoon, announced proposals which would involve local authorities contacting care home on a daily basis to ensure they were managing the pandemic. Cllr Elkins replied the WSCC Public Health team was most closely liaising with care homes in order to ensure they were meeting the requirements necessary to comply with the grants mentioned above.

(County Cllr Elkins left at the conclusion of this item.)

### **323/20 ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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

District Cllrs Chapman and Kelly had given their apologies for this evening's meeting. Cllr Chapman had sent the Clerk the following message, "Nothing substantial to report other than the continued legal saga of access across the land at the rear of the North parade of shops. Please accept my thanks for all that you and the team have done so far in these unprecedented times. Hope to see you soon. Best wishes, Terry".

### **324/20 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2020**

The draft Minutes were circulated to all councillors on 5<sup>th</sup> May, asking for comments by 12<sup>th</sup> May. No amendments were suggested.

**1420** The Council **RESOLVED** the Chairman could sign the Minutes as a true record of the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> May.

The meeting **AGREED** this action could be completed by the Chairman on the morning after the meeting. [Clerk's Note: Cllr Toney signed the Minutes before 09:00 on the 9<sup>th</sup> June]

### **325/20 UPDATE ON MATTERS IN THE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

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

## **Monthly Update Report**

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Minute 123/20 – Committees – Community Engagement Committee – village bus service**
- 3. Minute 263/20 – Appointment of a Chairman for the Municipal Year 2020/21**
- 4. Minute 276/20 – Amenities Committee – Sea Road Fig tree**
- 5. Minute 280/20 – Clerk's Report, Item 7 – Social Media – East Preston Book Exchange**

### **1. Introduction**

This is the report covering items discussed during Full Council meetings up to and including the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2020.

2. **Minute 123/20 – Committees – Community Engagement Committee – village bus service**

I received the following update from my Angmering P.C. counterpart, Katie Herr, on 29<sup>th</sup> April:

Hi Simon,

We were due to have sent out our Neighbourhood Plan Survey by now and had the results pending. Due to COVID-19 we decided not to send the survey out and put it on hold.

Because of this I have no clear response from the councillors as they were going to make a decision once receiving back the data from the survey.

It was noted by Paul Bicknell to put the needed figure in next years budget – but this was not voted on, just mentioned.

I am sorry I do not have a definitive answer for you.

Kind Regards

Katie

3. **Minute 263/20 – Appointment of a Chairman for the Municipal Year 2020/21**

Following their annual meetings, we have been advised of the following appointments at our fellow Eastern Arun councils:

	Chairman	Vice-Chairman
Ferring	Cllr Stephen Abbott	Cllr Lesley Young
Littlehampton	Cllr David Chace	Cllr Michelle Molloy
Kingston	Cllr Geraldine Walker	Cllr Roger Wetherall
Rustington	Cllr John Street	Cllr Alison Cooper

No word from Angmering P.C. to date.

4. **Minute 276/20 – Amenities Committee – Sea Road Fig tree**

The day after the meeting, I hand-delivered a letter to Mrs Lee, thanking her for her letter to council and advising her of the outcome. I handed the letter to Mrs Lee herself. Not in the letter as I was not sure I could word it correctly, but face-to-face I let Mrs Lee know the council could arrange for her to have part of the trunk should she want to make it into a garden side-table or similar.

Cllr Toney has arranged for some cuttings to be taken from the tree, should Mrs Lee wish to plant those on her land. It would be against the council's Native Planting Policy for the cuttings to be planted on council land.

On the day after the meeting, the council received an email from Mrs M who had been present at the meeting. In her email, Mrs M said, "Thanks so much, Simon, for [the details for] the meeting last night - it was good to be there. I was very touched by the trouble taken to help the lady grieving for the loss of the fig tree.... the loss of any tree is so sad, not least due to their longevity, and magnificence."

5. **Minute 280/20 – Clerk’s Report, Item 7 – Social Media – East Preston Book Exchange**

There is now an additional Book Exchange location of the bench outside the library. This currently supports two boxes, one especially for children. Vicki Davey, WSCC Library Cluster Manager, has seen the boxes outside the library and, whilst there is no official view from WSCC, believes the Library Service would be supportive of any initiative that encourages reading. Mrs Davey does not see the library re-opening until at least 4<sup>th</sup> July.

Following the success of the Book Exchange, the council has received a suggestion to install book shelves in at least one of its bus shelters. This will be considered by the Amenities Committee when time permits.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

1<sup>st</sup> June 2020

## **Monthly update report**

**Minute 013/20 – Finance & General Purposes Committee – Council precept for 2020/21** - On 3<sup>rd</sup> June, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) published precept data for the whole of England. This information came to us via the weekly bulletin of the Chief Executive of the National Association of Local Councils.

The average precept increase in England for the current financial year was 4%; East Preston’s increase was 3.5%.

The average Band D precept across England is £69.89; East Preston’s Band D precept is £98.43.

In Arun, 26 parishes set a precept for 2020/21. Of those, the following all set a higher Band D precept than East Preston – Angmering (£107.87), Arundel (£105.77), Bognor Regis (£128.84), Littlehampton (£126.31) and Rustington (£113.39). All of those have larger council tax bases than we do, with the exception of Arundel. How meaningful these figures are is debatable without knowing at least some of what each council does for its residents. Clapham Parish Council has a tax base less than 5% of East Preston’s, but a Band D precept just under ours at £95.92. conversely, Felpham has a tax base almost twice the size of East Preston’s but a Band D precept of just £23.19.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

8<sup>th</sup> June 2020

**Minute 263/20 – Appointment of a Chairman for the Municipal Year 2020/21** – Cllr Linton advised she believed Cllr Nikki Hamilton-Smith was due to be elected Chairman of Angmering Parish Council that evening and likewise Cllr Alison Reigate, Vice-Chairman. [Clerk’s Note: this was confirmed by Mrs Katie Herr, Clerk to Angmering Parish Council, on 9<sup>th</sup> June.]

### **326/20 FINANCIAL MATTERS**

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

- 1421** The council **RESOLVED** to approve the Outstanding Purchase Orders report for 2020/21, value £2,989.21 (excl. VAT).
- 1422** The council **RESOLVED** to approve the Supplier Non BACS Invoices Paid reports for March (totalling £1,339.95), April (totalling £1,360.14) and May 2020 (totalling £7,951.87) and Late Payments (April and May totalling £19.98) (incl VAT).

1423 The council **RESOLVED** to approve the Supplier BACS Invoices Paid reports for Marh (totalling £15,807.71), April (totalling £12,719.66) and May 2020 (totalling £18,304.05) (incl. VAT).

1424 The council **RESOLVED** to approve the List of Sales Receipts & Bank Receipts by Bank report, showing £144,349.04 (incl. VAT) for the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

The council NOTED the paper Bank Reconciliations to 13<sup>th</sup> March, 31<sup>st</sup> March (end-of-year), 14<sup>th</sup> April and 14<sup>th</sup> May 2020.

The council NOTED the year-to-date Budget Summary Report for 2020/21.

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

### 327/20 ANNUAL FINANCIAL MATTERS FOR YEAR-ENDING 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2020

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

## **Annual Financial Matters – Accounts for year-ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020**

**Council is asked to approve the accounts for the year-ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 and can be signed by the Chairman and the Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer.**

Cllr McElroy to introduce this item.

The accounts have been checked to the satisfaction of our Internal Auditor and can be found at Appendix A of these papers. This year, the Finance & General Purposes Committee has not met to review the figures.

Councillors with any questions are invited to call the office prior to the meeting.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

26<sup>th</sup> May 2020

No councillors had called in with any questions.

1425 The council **RESOLVED** unanimously the Chairman of the Council and the Clerk / Responsible Financial Officer could sign the accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.

The meeting agreed the accounts could be signed by the Chairman and the Clerk during 9<sup>th</sup> June, backdated to 8<sup>th</sup> June. [Clerk's Note: Cllr Toney and I signed the annual accounts before 09:00 on the 9<sup>th</sup> June]

### 328/20 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN FOR YEAR-ENDING 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2020

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

## **Annual Financial Matters – Annual Governance and Accountability Return for year-ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020**

**Council is asked to agree Section 1 – Annual governance statement 2019/20 - of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year-ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 can be signed by the Chairman and the Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer.**

**Council is asked to agree Section 2 – Accounting statements 2019/20 - of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year-ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 can be signed by the Chairman and the Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer.**

Cllr McElroy to introduce this item.



At the end of each financial year, it is necessary for this council to complete an Annual Governance and Accountability Return which is then sent for external audit.

Appendix B shows the two sections of the form the council needs to agree can be signed by the Chairman and me. Appendix B also includes the Internal Auditor's completed page of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

22<sup>nd</sup> May 2020

- 1426** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously the Chairman of the Council and the Clerk / Responsible Financial Officer could sign Section 1 – *Annual Governance statement 2019/20* of the Annual Return for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.
- 1427** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously the Chairman of the Council and the Clerk / Responsible Financial Officer could sign Section 2 – *Accounting statements 2019/20* of the Annual Return for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.

The meeting agreed the accounts could be signed by the Chairman and the Clerk during 9<sup>th</sup> June, backdated to 8<sup>th</sup> June. [Clerk's Note: Cllr Toney and I signed Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return before 09:00 on the 9<sup>th</sup> June]

### **329/20 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: Community Engagement and Major Events both on 26<sup>th</sup> May.

Draft Minutes from each of these meetings, may have been circulated to all councillors ahead of this evening's meeting.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

1<sup>st</sup> June 2020

## **Amenities Committee**

**Trees** – On Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> May the Fig Tree by the Village Hall was felled; Councillor Toney, Dorothy Lee and the Assistant Clerk were all present - it was a very sad moment indeed. As the tree surgeon began work on top of the tree it appeared to have extensive movement. One section of the tree, towards the top end and a section in the centre were both hollow in the middle and when the bottom stump was revealed, the centre of the stump appeared to have signs of disease.



Section of the Sea Road fig tree photographed on Thursday, 28<sup>th</sup> May 2020, courtesy of Dawn Reid. The photograph clearly shows the decay in the middle of the tree.

Councillor Toney has taken some cuttings from the tree and a section of the tree was saved to give to Dorothy. The Amenities Committee will decide what type of tree would be a suitable replacement for the area.

**CCTV** – The CCTV was installed at the Parish Council’s office on 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> May. There is one internal camera providing coverage of office entrance, two external cameras at the front of the office, covering the north and south approaches and the Village Green Car Park and one external camera covering the rear entrance to the office. Images are captured, stored on a recorder and can only be accessed by an authorised users, on-site. D-TECT the CCTV company, has installed the relevant signage, to make the public aware of the CCTV.

**Sea Road Toilets** – The two Unisex toilets have been closed for approximately 10 days, the door company removed the external doors to fit the new locking mechanisms. The new locks will indicate if the toilets are in use or not. The HAT door will have an additional overriding lock fitted, so it can be closed if the council requires, this can be added whilst on site. Thanks to Lauren Willard for coming out on a Saturday morning to meet the door engineer on site after he had failed to call me.

Please see Agenda Item 14a below for more details.

**Village Green Wild Flower Beds** – The council has received several compliments on this year’s wildflower displays on the Village Green. Given the current lockdown enforcement, the beautiful coloured display is uplifting and brings a welcome distraction from the current health crisis.

**Warren Recreation Ground tennis court** – Following the government’s announcement on outdoor exercise, we were delighted to have been able to re-open the tennis court from 8am on Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> May. Simon contacted the lady who had complained when the council had closed the tennis court, and she replied, “Thank you for your email, I really appreciate your update. That is great news! We are very excited to use the court this Wednesday. Thanks again.”

**New memorial bench** – Work has started on installing a new bench on the Village Green, in memory of Kim Taylor. The bench is to be located in the north-eastern corner, between the gate and the table-football table. Kim’s partner Lizzie has already thanked the council for pushing on with this piece of work.

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

1<sup>st</sup> June 2020

## **Audit & Governance Committee**



The committee has not met. There is one recommendation from the committee below plus an Internal Audit report to note.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

20<sup>th</sup> May 2020

## **Community Engagement Committee**

The committee met via the Zoom online meeting application on Tuesday, 26<sup>th</sup> May.

I was elected Chairman of the committee for another year and Cllr Duff was similarly re-elected Vice-Chairman.

This meeting followed on from major Events with all Committee members present.

It was agreed to postpone the pre-school picnic until next year.

Committee felt that a Come and Meet Your Councillors event could be held in early September as social distancing could be observed and dry weather would be a bonus.

It was felt that the September beach clean could go ahead as planned.

There was some discussion about a Newsletter and it was agreed to plan another with distribution sometime in July.

Two blue plaques were agreed and the owners of the properties occupied by Sir Maurice Craig and Stanley Holloway would now be approached officially.

The idea of an Outdoor Film Show and Community Flower Displays would be discussed again once further information had been obtained.

Given the uncertainty of how Government guidelines would change there were several items to be carried over to the next meeting.

Cllr Elizabeth Linton –  
**Chairman of the Community Engagement Committee**

27<sup>th</sup> May 2020

## **Finance & General Purposes Committee**

The committee has not met.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

20<sup>th</sup> May 2020

## **Major Events Committee**

The committee met via the Zoom online meeting application on Tuesday, 26<sup>th</sup> May.

I was elected Chairman of the committee for another year and Cllr Gander was similarly re-elected Vice-Chairman.

Funday Sunday was discussed and a provisional date agreed for 4<sup>th</sup> October as that is the national silver Sunday date. This will only be held if Government guidelines permit.

With great reluctance it was agreed to cancel the Food and Drink Festival as members thought that social distancing would be required and it was not something Committee felt they would be able to control. This decision is in line with other open air festival cancellations for the remainder of the year eg. Weald and Downland Museum and Amberley Open Air Museum.

The Christmas Celebrations decision is being considered at the next meeting.

Cllr Elizabeth Linton –  
**Chairman of the Community Engagement Committee**

27<sup>th</sup> May 2020

## **Personnel Committee**

The committee has not met.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

20<sup>th</sup> May 2020

## **Planning & Licensing Committee**

The committee was scheduled to meet via the Zoom online meeting application on Tuesday, 26<sup>th</sup> May. This meeting was cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances and related technical difficulties.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

27<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Additionally:

Amenities Committee – Cllr McElroy walked councillors through Mrs Reid’s report.

Community Engagement Committee – Cllr Linton said the committee had agreed to run a Come and Meet Your Local Councillors event in mid-September when hopefully the weather will be good enough to run the event outdoors, maintaining the appropriate amount of social distancing. Similarly, the committee had agreed to proceed with the Beach Clean scheduled for 27<sup>th</sup> September, although it will be necessary to spread out the handing out of equipment when volunteers arrive.

Major Events Committee – Cllr Linton said the committee had reluctantly taken the decision to cancel this year’s Food & Drink Festival as it did not believe it could ensure the advised amounts of social distancing for people attending the event. Mrs Roberts, the council’s Receptionist and Admin Assistant, had proposed a virtual festival on social media. The Clerk explained this would involve businesses that had been scheduled to attend using a hashtag to denote their scheduled attendance. Such a hashtag would lead potential visitors to the event to find out about other businesses that would have been at the event. Mrs Roberts would join the next committee meeting to explain this further.

The Clerk said the Society of Local Council Clerks had recently made available a webinar for councils that run outdoor markets. There may be some information in there useful for the committee. Cllrs Bowman, Gander and Linton all said they would be happy to watch this. The Clerk asked them to make an appointment to call into the office to watch this.

Planning & Licensing Committee – the Clerk reported the planned redevelopment of 56 Angmering Lane had been refused Planning Permission by ADC. In addition to the council, the Preservation Society and the Willowhayne Residents’ Association, several local residents had submitted objections.

There were no additional updates from the Audit & Governance Committee, Finance & General Purposes Committee or Personnel Committee.

Cllr McElroy introduced the following report had been circulated in advance of the meeting:

## Amenities Committee – Sea Road toilet doors

Cllr McElroy to introduce this item.

**Council is asked to agree retrospectively to £3,200 expenditure (excl. VAT) on the Sea Road toilets doors.**

The initial spec for doors for the refurbished Sea Road toilets was changed part-way through the project for stronger aluminium doors. However, these were supplied without locks that indicated whether or not the toilets were in use. Personally, I am surprised and disappointed the supplier did not suggest we might want that on our doors, upselling.

After some negotiation, the supplier agreed to make these changes at a cost of £3,200 (excl. VAT). As the company had a window available during the first week of June when they could collect and work on the doors, it was agreed they should do so, hence this request being retrospective. The doors of the two unisex cubicles were collected on Saturday, 30<sup>th</sup> May. When they came to collect the doors, the engineer decided the works to the door of the Hoist-Assisted Toilet could be done on site.

The £3,200 comprises:

Re: East Preston Toilets

### Male and female toilets:

Remove both doors to take back to the factory for amendments and board openings.

Fit a vacant / not vacant locking mechanism leaving the five point locking mechanism in place for when the door needs to be locked of an evening.

Replace barrels so that the thumb turn internally will be removed and changed for a key lock.

Add 250mm stainless steel kick plates to both doors inside and outside.

Touch up any minor scratches that have happened to the doors.

Revisit site to reinstall amended doors.

### Disabled toilet:

Retro fit an external bar with padlock for extra security.

Add 250mm stainless steel kick plates to door inside and outside.

Net total     £3200.00

VAT            £640.00

Gross total   £3840.00

The company required payment upfront.

It is recommended this money be taken from the council's reserves rather than against any 2020/21 budget line.

There was some debate about whether someone involved with the project should have picked up on the doors not having In Use indicators included before they were installed. Cllr McElroy said there could be mileage in that discussion but at the moment it was necessary to get the doors sorted and re-installed. Cllr Toney said another company might have been able to make the changes to the door more locally and more cheaply but that would have invalidated the warranty so to some extent the company had the council “over a barrel”.

**1428** The Council **RESOLVED** to retrospective expenditure on the doors of the refurbished Sea Road toilet block.

This expenditure is to be taken from the council’s reserves.

Ten councillors voted in favour and three abstained.

### **331/20 AMENITIES COMMITTEE – FLOWER-PLANTING CONTRACT**

Cllr McElroy introduced the following report had been circulated in advance of the meeting:

## **Amenities Committee – flower-planting contract**

Cllr McElroy to introduce this item.

**Council is asked to agree to waive Standing Order 18c to allow a two-year extension to the existing flower-planting contract.**

Standing Order 18c states: “A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 an estimated value in excess of £25,000 but less than the relevant thresholds in standing order 18(f) Is subject to Regulations 109-114 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 which include a requirement on the Council to advertise the contract opportunity in the Contract Finder website regardless of what other means it uses to advertise the opportunity.”

**Council is asked to delegate to the Amenities Committee extension of the existing flower-planting contract for two years, depending upon the terms agreed with the existing contractor.**

The Amenities Committee was almost ready to carry out a tendering exercise for the flower-planting contract, but COVID-19 lockdown prevented that from continuing. The government issued special guidelines allowing local authorities to extend contracts both to free up time for the local authorities for more important matters and also to free up time for contractors to concentrate more on their core business whilst operating with fewer staff.

In March, the government issued a *Procurement Policy Note – Responding to COVID-19*. The document was mainly to assist local authorities needing “to procure goods, services and works with extreme urgency.” The document refers to the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and, with reference to extending or modifying a contract during its term, refers to Regulation 72(1). This states:

*Contracts ... may be modified without a new procurement procedure ... in any of the following cases:*

*(c) where all of the following conditions are fulfilled:*

- (i) The need for modification has been brought about by circumstances which a diligent contracting authority could not have foreseen;*
- (ii) The modification does not alter the overall nature of the contract;*
- (iii) Any increase in price does not exceed 50% of the value of the original contract or framework agreement.*

The pandemic could not have been foreseen and the council was being diligent in preparing a tendering exercise. It is unknown as to whether or not the pandemic will occur again next winter.

Agreement to this Resolution will delegate authority to the Amenities Committee to agree an extension to the existing contract provided it is happy with the terms to be proposed by the existing contractor. Should the Amenities Committee not be happy with the terms to be proposed, the council will need to undertake a tendering exercise.

I appreciate this supporting paper may not be the clearest I have ever written. I am not proposing anything the council has not done before – i.e. extend and existing contract – but the circumstances are different. If anyone would like to see the full *Procurement Policy Note – Responding to COVID-19* let me know.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

1<sup>st</sup> June 2020

In response to a question, the Clerk said the proposal was for a two-year extension as there was some suggestion the COVID-19 pandemic might return during the winter of 2021. A two-year extension just gave the council a bit more flexibility.

**1429** The Council **RESOLVED** to waive Standing Orders in order to extend the existing flower-planting contract for an additional two years.

**1430** The Council **RESOLVED** to delegate to the Amenities Committee extension of the existing flower-planting contract for two years, subject to the terms proposed by the existing contractor.

In both the above resolutions, ten councillors voted in favour and one abstained.

**332/20 AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – INTERNAL AUDIT FOR THE YEAR-ENDING 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2020**

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

**Audit & Governance Committee – Internal Audit report for the year-ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020**

Cllr Mathias to introduce this item.

**Council is asked to note the final Internal Audit report for the year-ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.**

Andy Beams of Mulberry & Co carried out the final Interim Audit for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 on Tuesday, 19<sup>th</sup> May. As councillors will see from the report, Mr Beams carried out the audit remotely, because of the pandemic. Owing to its length, his final report has been circulated to councillors under separate cover. In discussion with Mr Beams about the council's Asset Register, he agreed to be available for longer if his company is selected for future audits so we can address the officers' concerns the Asset Register has become unwieldy.

As will be seen in the report, Mr Beams remains of the opinion, "the systems and internal procedures at East Preston Parish Council are well established and followed."

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

26<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Cllr Mathias added the Audit & Governance Committee would consider the report fully at its next meeting.

**332/20 AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – INTERNAL AUDIT CONTRACT**

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



# **Audit & Governance Committee – Internal Audit contract until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023**

Cllr Mathias to introduce this item.

## **Council is asked to contract with Mulberry & Co. for Internal Audit services for the three years ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.**

Last year, the council tendered for Internal Audit services by contacting six companies then on the Sussex and Surrey Associations of Local Councils website. Four offered their services and at its meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2019, the Audit & Governance Committee agreed to recommend Mulberry & Co. to Full Council, initially for a single year. On 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019, Full Council agreed to this recommendation (Minute 316/19, Resolution 1298).

The company has now completed a year of Internal Audit services including the completion of Section 3 of the Annual Governance and Reporting form. The reports provided have been comprehensive and advice given good.

Mulberry & Co. has confirmed the price will remain similar. Mulberry & Co. charged £168 for the Interim Audit Report and a very reasonable £105 for the Final Audit, but that obviously did not include any travel expenses. Both these figures exclude VAT.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

22<sup>nd</sup> May 2020

**1431** The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously to contract with Mulberry & Co. for Internal Audit services for the three years ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

## **333/20 REPORTS FROM PARISH COUNCIL WORKING PARTIES**

Cllr Mathias advised the Leases Working Party had not met since the last Full Council meeting. Owing to the legal complexities and language used in leases, he was not certain virtual meetings would be sufficiently effective.

## **334/20 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 Voluntary Service**
- 5. East Preston Business Community Business Breakfast, 6<sup>th</sup> May**
- 6. Social media**
- 7. MailChimp stats**
- 8. A selection of things we have been asked since the last meeting**
- 9. Recent bouquets and complaints**
- 10. Leave**
- 11. June meetings and events**

#### **1. Introduction**

This is the report mainly covering May 2020 and matters which may not arise elsewhere on the agenda.

## 2. **Police matters**

On 6<sup>th</sup> May, a local resident contacted us with his concerns about groups of teenagers congregating near to and around the back of the Scout Hall on Langmeads Field. He had reported this twice to Sussex Police but was unsure of the police response. I forwarded his concerns to PCSO Neil Billingham and Matt Rookes, ADC's anti-social behaviour officer. PCSO Billingham replied, "We have been targeting this area and were discussing it only this morning. I will get an Intelligence Log submitted to raise it to a higher level, but, as I am on early turn today and tomorrow then off Bank Holiday, I will also ask the late turn Officers if they can target this over the next two days. I am on an operation on Saturday and Sunday (on late turn) specifically targeting this type of behaviour, so I will be looking at all the open space areas across the district then as well. I have seen a couple of Logs regarding this, so the messages are getting through. Please can you thank the resident and by all means update them or forward this email."

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

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

## 4. **East Preston Voluntary Service**

The service continues to run supporting 150 households in the village with a similar number of volunteers. Just this week, we have started to see some volunteers drop out of the scheme as they return to work. The impact of this is, as yet, unknown.

Recent feedback received has included:

"Simon just to say how fantastic Nick my volunteer is can't fault him on anything so thank all of you for your help made life a lot easier even if I do feel like a locked on Canary". (resident of Normandy Lane)

"I have to write and thank you for the Volunteer Service you have provided within the community here in East Preston, such a great help at this time. For those isolating and many I am sure that are very anxious about leaving their homes to go to the shops. I have a lovely volunteer, Debbie. She has been wonderful and goes above and beyond to get my shopping, lovely lady always smiling and very polite. Thank you again." (resident of Orchard Road)

"Dear Steve. Thank you very much for helping me out with the first cut of my lawn. My daughter can manage now." (resident of Hillview Crescent)

"A very Big Thank You. I just wish to thank all involved with organizing the Volunteers for people who are vulnerable and self-isolating as I am. My volunteer, Marian, has been very very helpful to me, a complete gentleman, he has taken a bit worry off my mind. So thank you all for organizing this service. Well done. A Happy Resident of E.P." (resident of Beechlands Close)

## 5. **East Preston Business Community Business Breakfast, 6<sup>th</sup> May**

Cllr Linton and I attended this Business Breakfast which was mainly checking in with some of the regular Business Breakfast attendees.

## 6. **Social media**

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

- Post informing residents the Sea Road toilets will be temporarily closed whilst the doors are amended – 2,138 people
- News East Preston Book Exchange was now operating outside the library too – 1,478
- Repost of East Preston Infant School Year 1 video – 571
- News there was also a children’s book exchange operating outside the library - 548

† Food & Drink Festival page

▲ East Preston Business Community page

\* East Preston Christmas Celebrations page

(posts up to and including 31<sup>st</sup> May)

The number of people currently liking the council on Facebook is 1,320, a increase of 9 over the last report.

## 7. **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 – 16<sup>th</sup> April – sent to 834 recipients, opened by 615 (73.7%) (updated stats)

Parish Council news – 30<sup>th</sup> April – sent to 834, opened by 585 (70.3%)

Parish Council news – 7<sup>th</sup> May – sent to 833, opened by 563 (67.8%)

Parish Council news – 13<sup>th</sup> May – sent to 833, opened by 581 (70%)

Parish Council news – 27<sup>th</sup> May – sent to 835, opened by 553 (66.2%)

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

Maybe because we are living in unusual times, we have not been asked anything unusual recently.

## 9. **Recent bouquets and complaints**

(In addition to anything reported above)

From a resident of The Ridings for advice on the topic of objecting to a Planning Application, “Thanks for your help as ever.”

From the Chairman of Felpham Parish Council for advice given on the subject of blue (heritage) plaques, “My thanks for the info, it gives us somewhere to start.”

From Mr B., a resident of Sea Road, “Just thought I would say how much I appreciate the wild flower garden on the Green this year. Should look great for V. E. Day.”

In response to the e-newsletter sent on 13<sup>th</sup> May, a resident of The Street emailed, “Thanks for your e/mail. I especially enjoyed the pictures! Hopefully the lock down comes to an end soon,getting a little bit fed up”.

A resident of Cotswold Way also responded to the same e-newsletter, "Thank you Simon, your news is all ways welcome xxx".

A resident of Normandy Drive, also in response to the 13<sup>th</sup> May e-newsletter, "Thanks for the latest village news and lovely pics from around the village. We had a lovely time on VE Day all having a tea party in our own front gardens, strains of Vera Lynn echoing down the road, flags and bunting fluttering everywhere!!"

District Cllr Kelly emailed, "For the first time in nearly two months I managed to get an early Sunday morning stroll around EP with my new puppy. May I say how lovely and clean the village is and how beautiful the wild flower displays in both Two Acres and the Village Green are. It brought a breath of fresh air to an otherwise dismal lockdown period. My congratulations to all concerned with both the cleanliness and maintenance of the Village and the wonderful displays of wild flowers."

#### 10. **Leave**

No member of council staff currently has any leave booked in June.

#### 11. **June Meetings and Events**

This list may be incomplete and is subject to change.

- 3<sup>rd</sup> East Preston Business Community Business Breakfast (08:00, Zoom)
- 8<sup>th</sup> Planning & Licensing Committee (18:00, tbc)  
Full Council (19:00, Zoom)
- 11<sup>th</sup> Planning Review 2020: Town & Parish Councils (14:00, Zoom) (SC only)
- 15<sup>th</sup> Amenities Committee (19:00, Zoom)
- 22<sup>nd</sup> Planning & Licensing Committee (18:00, Zoom)  
Annual Parish Meeting (19:00, Zoom)
- 29<sup>th</sup> Finance & General Purposes Committee (10:00, Zoom)  
Major Events Committee (19:00, Zoom)

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**

1<sup>st</sup> June 2020

**Item 2 – Police Matters** – Cllr Linton expressed concern at the reports she had received about bad and inconsiderate behaviour at the Warren Recreation Ground and in other open spaces within the village, particularly since the easing of lockdown. The Clerk reported he had early on contacted Sussex Police about concerns about the more enclosed of the village's open spaces, and had received the positive response from the village's Police Community Support Officer as reported above. However, the problem of "demob happy" residents and visitors was a problem all along the coast, as Cllr Elkins had also mentioned, and police were not always available at the right time in what local residents may consider the right place. Cllr Gale said the Warren Recreation Ground had been quieter this past weekend than the weekend before. There were some indications people were possibly becoming more responsible.

#### **335/20 EXTERNAL MEETINGS AND EVENTS**

No councillor or officer had attended any external meetings or events owing to the government's national lockdown in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **336/20 RESPONSE TO EXTERNAL MEETINGS AND EVENTS**

There were no reports to respond to.

### **337/20 REPRESENTATIVE TO THE EAST PRESTON YOUTH CLUB**

The following paper was circulated in advance of the meeting:

## **East Preston Youth Club**

**Council is asked to agree Cllr Chapman is the council's representative to the East Preston Youth Club.**

Other councillors wishing to be members of the East Preston Youth Club committee may do so, but do so as independents rather than council representatives. This should be discussed with Cllr Chapman.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

1<sup>st</sup> June 2020

In response to a question from Cllr McElroy, the Clerk said he was unaware of any reason why the council's representative to the Youth Club could not be the Chairman of the Youth Club's committee. The council was the major stakeholder in the Youth Club.

**1432** The council **RESOLVED** Cllr Chapman be the council's representative to the East Preston Youth Club for 2020/21.

Twelve councillors voted in favour of the resolution and one abstained.

(Mr C left at the conclusion of this item.)

### **338/20 REPRESENTATIVE TO THE SOUTH STRAND COMMUNITY TOILETS**

The following paper was circulated in advance of the meeting:

## **South Strand Community Toilets**

**Council is asked to agree Cllr Bradshaw is the council's representative to the South Strand Community Toilets group.**

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

1<sup>st</sup> June 2020

**1433** The council **RESOLVED** unanimously Cllr Bradshaw be the council's representative to the South Strand Community Toilets for 2020/21.

### **339/20 NEW ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING (6<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2020)**

Nothing was suggested.

**The meeting concluded at 20:04.**

Chairman: *Councillor Steve Toney* Date: **6<sup>th</sup> July 2020**

END