



East Preston Village Action Plan

The Village Action Plan was successfully launched on May 10th at an exhibition highlighting why an Action Plan is needed and how people in the village can become involved. Many stands from local organisations and West Sussex County Council (WSCC) were there giving out information on what they do for the village, and Action in Rural Sussex were on hand to explain more about the Action Plan itself.

Over 90 people came and contributed to the day by adding in excess of 200 comments (positive and negative) on a range of subjects including Community Safety, Traffic and Transport, and Facilities for both young and older people. The Village Action Plan differs from the Village Design Statement in that the process is a means by which the whole community can voice their opinions on what actions they wish to see taken in their local area in the future. When the Plan is completed it may highlight actions that can be taken forward by community members, be used to influence councils and service providers, and act as justification of need when applying for funding. Therefore, although very much supported by the Parish Council, the Action Plan is for the **whole community** to take forward.

If **you** would like to become involved in this exciting initiative, please contact the Clerk.



Speeding in the Village

The Village Action Day highlighted your concerns over speeding in the village. We have commissioned a speed survey at key locations and preliminary results offer evidence that we can use to encourage police enforcement action. Believe it or not, on one day two vehicles achieved 60mph northbound in Sea Road at lunchtime. If prosecuted for driving at double the speed limit these drivers risked losing their licence. Once full results are analysed, we will have further discussions with the WSCC Highway Authority. Be warned, we are actively encouraging Police radar enforcement.

Councillors - Celeste Amoo, Len Barnett (Chairman), Gordon Fleming, Anne Harberson, John Heaver (Vice-Chairman), Mervyn Howdle, Fiona MacLeod, Clive Maltby, Glyn Mathias, Chris Roberts, Alastair Sharp, Philip Sherwin, Betty Wagstaff. **Contact point - Council Cabin 01903 770050**

Annual Report

- Presented by the Chairman
Councillor Len Barnett

I want to start by thanking our Clerk and Assistant Clerk for all their hard work and patience. Simon Cross has just completed his first year with excellent support from our Assistant Clerk, Tracy Khoo. We are lucky to have such a strong team.

Our thanks also go to our Village Orderly, Dave Thompson, who was working so hard to keep the village neat and tidy. Unfortunately he is not well now and we send him our best wishes.

Finally, my thanks go to the Vice Chairman John Heaver and to the Chairmen of Committees and to all Councillors for their hard work and commitment.

New building project

The latest plans for the Village Hall are displayed on the wall in the Cabin. The Council and the Village Hall Management Committee are working closely together to achieve our goal of a much improved Village Hall and permanent accommodation for the Council. We will keep you informed of developments.

Crime

This Council is increasingly concerned about crime in the village and our budget has to be spent in repairs to our bus shelters, our public toilets and the children's play equipment etc as a result of vandalism. In addition, we have had a recent break-in at the Cabin when all our computer equipment was stolen.

The Council funds the Neighbourhood Management Forum which is run by the Police. We work with them to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in East Preston. Our PCSO Andy Orpin holds a number of Police Surgeries throughout the year when residents can raise matters of concern with him.

I would like to thank Jim Stobart who was our Sergeant here for many years before being transferred. We are awaiting news of his permanent replacement.

Road Safety

We have set up a Road Safety Working Party to consider improvements. Some problem areas:
Roundstone Level Crossing We want both short term and long term improvements to increase safety. Working with WSCC, the short term involves repainting the lines on the road to ensure everyone knows who has the right-of-way.

Speed We are carrying out a speed survey in important areas of the village so that we can establish evidence of speeding motorists. This will be followed by other measures to reduce speeding and to improve **parking** management.

Drivers' sight line We are removing the shrubs from the bed opposite the British Legion to improve visibility on that bend of Sea Road.

School Crossing As well as paying the salary of the school crossing lady, Mrs Holland, we are also campaigning strongly for the official school warning lights and markings to be installed ahead of WSCC's timetable.

Amenities in the village

The Amenities Committee is a major budget holder and its improvements this past year have included:

- Replacing seats and refurbishing others in a two year programme;
- Removing 18 dead elms bordering the Warren Recreation ground;
- Continuing to improve the flower planting in tubs and baskets;
- Increasing Christmas lighting.

Planning

The Committee ensures that all EP applications are properly scrutinised and that they adhere to the now adopted Village Design Statement. We make objections to developments where necessary but we are not always successful.

Communication The notice boards, the newsletters and the website are our main means of communication with residents. There is also a public question time at the beginning of ALL Council and Committee meetings.

Traders This Council wants to develop contact with all the traders and to encourage successful business in the village. We have held two meetings to date and have involved our MP, Peter Bottomley, to express our concern over shop closures.

Outside meetings We meet regularly with other parishes and the Joint Eastern Arun Area Committee where the issue of the threatened closure of the A&E and the downgrading of Worthing Hospital was vigorously resisted and the strongest letter of objection was issued.

Financial Report for 2007/2008

Presented by **Councillor Alastair Sharp**

Chairman of Finance and General Purposes Committee

The Council budgeted £137,810 and spent £124,704 through its Committees. The underspend was returned to balances. Expenditure included: administration, grants and other services; village amenities; buildings and other physical facilities.

Major items of expenditure included: lease of Cabin office; the salary of the school crossing lady; the village orderly; two toilets blocks – contract for continuing maintenance and improvements; all flower enhancements – contract with Ferring Nurseries; financial costs of outreach youth worker; regular newsletter delivered to each home and financial support for the Village Design Statement.

The year 2008/2009

The Council has budgeted for £172,154, an increase of 25% over last year's budget figure but the actual precept has increased by 39% because last year we took money from Reserves to keep the precept down. That cannot be done this year.

Amenities	£51600
Buildings and physical facilities	£43860
Administration, grants and other services	£81487

(Some income reduces the total)

Village enhancement now includes the new grass cutting contract for the Village Green with Kent County Council and a new contract with Ferring Nurseries.

The proposed new building project will not have any effect on the precept, because for over 10 years the Council has been prudently laying away money in order to be able to undertake an opportunity purchase or a building project for Council offices, and has recently been adding to this money to enhance the Village Hall. This has amounted to around £20000 per year, although not always as much as this. From the current year onwards, this has ceased and has been replaced by the expected interest payment on a loan to cover the proportion of the expected building costs which will not be covered by the accumulated fund. It turns out that this interest payment is almost exactly equal to the previous savings amounts. Thus the effect on the Council's budget, and hence the precept, is nil.



3D Vision of proposed Council building project - Image courtesy of John at Image Modelling Limited.
The plans have not yet been submitted to Arun District Council because we are awaiting consent from the Charity Commission but we hope that this will not be too long delayed.

Amenities Update

Tennis Court Apology

The Council is disappointed that the long-planned refurbishment of the Tennis Court at the Recreation Ground has been so badly delayed this year. This was due to problems beyond our control with the contractor. However, the work is now underway and the court should reopen by the end of June at the latest. Apologies to everyone waiting to play – we are sorry.

More flower baskets

We have added 5 more double baskets of flowers along Sea Road as part of the enhancement programme. Our new “basket tree” will be installed soon on the traffic island at the southern shopping area to add flower power to that side of the road (and to deter the selfish motorists from parking on the island). Our thanks to the traders opposite who use their own forecourts to brighten the village.

Village Green

The ugly concrete plinth in the centre will be removed shortly and the area returned to grass. If you have suggestions about the use of the Green and/or its enhancement, please contact the Clerk.

Village Traders

This Council wants to assist traders in every way possible to maintain their businesses and to raise their profile in the village. At our second meeting with the traders, we were pleased to welcome our MP, Peter Bottomley, who came to listen to specific problems in the northern shopping area. He has promised to do what he can to resolve these matters. There is no longer a Traders' Association here and we hope that this can be reformed.

Please support your local shops and businesses and help to maintain a thriving shopping focus.

Planning News

The Planning Committee voted unanimously to raise objections to the following applications, amongst several considered:-

In **Sea Road**, for a change of use from a 4 bedroom detached house to a 24 place Day Nursery and for a 15 place before-and-after school facility for ages 4 to 11. This was considered unneighbourly, noisy and would generate more traffic problems in an already busy area, particularly in summer when yellow lines operate, resulting in no parking in the vicinity.

In **Normandy Lane**, for the siting of a static caravan for occupation by a relative. This was considered unneighbourly and not in keeping with the street scene.

STOP PRESS Work on the flats on the corner of Manor Road and Sea Road seems to have halted.

MJH now inform us that they envisage work resuming in a few months.

Crime in East Preston

Vandalism and anti-social behaviour continues and makes us all very angry. It seems impossible for the Police to control the louts who are involved, some of whom come into the village from other areas. Summer is coming and with it more gangs of young people and their alcohol. The debris left around their congregating areas is disgusting. At the present time, we have no Village Orderly so we are reliant on good traders and local residents to remove the worst. The Cabin has suffered its share of crime in the village; two break-ins and one aborted one. All our computer equipment was stolen and no arrests made. Not a satisfactory outcome.

We are very concerned over recent developments and we want to talk to the Police URGENTLY about future policing in East Preston. We will seek a meeting with the new Inspector to discuss these issues.

Every Call Counts

This Council and Sussex Police have started an awareness campaign to help stamp out anti-social behaviour. You will soon be seeing posters in shop windows, on notice-boards and at schools and the Youth Centre emphasising this number – **0845 60 70 999**. Call if you see **anything** which worries you.

If you wish, your details will remain confidential. **Make That Call – It's that simple!**

STOP PRESS We are very sorry to report the death of Dave Thompson, our Village Orderly. This is a sad loss for the Council and his cheerful presence will be missed. Our thoughts are with his family at this time.



Parish Clerk

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