



East Preston Lit up!

The Christmas street event on 4th December, organised by the Parish Council in partnership with the traders, was a great success. We had added eight more motifs to the Christmas lighting display and we decided that this was something worth a village celebration. The event focused on the importance of all our local traders who contribute so much to our thriving community. We all hoped that the evening would provide a welcome boost to businesses at this time of economic concern and its success exceeded our expectations.

Special thanks to **Ray Leggett** who arranged for media celebrity **Neil "Dr" Fox** to switch on the lights; and to Councillor Philip Sherwin who played Santa Claus with such enthusiasm and gave out all the goodies generously provided by **Final Touch**.

ShortCuts provided a professional photographer who attracted long queues of families waiting to have a free photo taken of



Neil "Dr" Fox, Santa Claus and friends

their children with Santa Claus. The profits from the Christmas Card photos on sale were given to the Chestnut Tree House.

Festive nibbles and drinks, all delicious and most of them complimentary, were offered by many traders from their shops and were extremely popular with the crowds up and down Sea Road.

A star attraction for the children was a ride on an operational Fire Engine, courtesy of the **East Preston Fire Station**. A traditional barrel organ added to the lively atmosphere and the hand-bell ringers of **St. Margaret's C of E School** gave a special performance.

The good weather undoubtedly increased the public support and contributed to the very relaxed and friendly atmosphere in both shopping areas. Chairman Len Barnett said, *"This was a first for the Council and we are ready to make the occasion bigger and better next year! A big thank you to everyone who participated to make the evening such a success!"*

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

Message from the Chairman, **Councillor Len Barnett**

"May I take this opportunity to wish all of you a very happy New Year.

"Last year was another busy year for the Council. We continued with our campaign to improve the Roundstone level crossing with meetings with both West Sussex County Council and Network Rail. Some progress has been made but inevitably it will take time to implement improvements. We also looked at the speeding problems in the village by carrying out a speeding survey with the Speed Indication Device (SID).

"We put a lot of effort into improving amenities in the village and I was delighted with the flower displays in the hanging baskets and planters.



I was also very pleased with the successful Christmas event with the Council and traders working together.

"2009 will be no less busy. We want to build on the good work already started. Highlights include a "greening" campaign working with Kingston Parish Council, road safety measures and further enhancements to the village."

Village Hall Extension - **Project Update**

In our last issue of the Newsletter we promised to keep you informed about the progress of this rather complex initiative. The Charity Commission's input last spring made it clear that the area of land in question, under the control of the Warren Recreation Ground charity, must be leased to the Village Hall Foundation to be built on. As a consequence of the ruling, the Council advertised the agreement in principle in the Littlehampton Gazette on 15th January 2009.

"The corporate Trustees (East Preston Parish Council) of the Warren Recreation Ground agreed the following proposal:

'The Trustees agree, in principle only, to disposal of land from the Warren Recreation Ground to the East Preston and Kingston Village Hall Foundation, subject to the detail of the lease and the Parish Council's acceptance of the sub-lease'. If you have any questions or comments, please send them in writing to the Clerk."

The Council has also submitted its planning application for this building to Arun District Council (ADC). The Application Number is EP/7/09 and this can be viewed in the Planning section of the ADC website. Because this is the Council's own

application, it will not be discussed here at our Planning Committee, but any comments you may have can be made directly to ADC.

Village Action Plan This initiative needs YOU!

Many local residents have expressed an interest in developing this Plan and preliminary ideas and research are already underway. The Village now needs to set up a Committee to coordinate and manage the work and to kick-start the public involvement.

A public meeting has been arranged for **14th February at 10.30am in the Miller Barn**, when it is hoped that many residents will come forward to show their "love" for the Village. It is hoped that they will set up a Village Action Plan committee at that time, with Councillors in the minority! **This is the opportunity for local residents to shape the future of East Preston!** Please come along and get involved. Simon Cross, our Parish Clerk, will be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Village Hall Festive Fun

Thank you to Paul Amoo and members of the Village Hall Executive Committee for organising, for the third year running, the East Preston Village Day of Festive Fun on 22nd December. There was a great deal of laughter and merriment as people took to the “ice” and it was delightful to see so many young families enjoying themselves. The village has some more mature and experienced skaters who were able to show, with some style, just how it could be done! Several village traders in the Warren Room were very popular. The Village Hall was delighted to welcome back Dillistones who supplied the Charity Barrel Organ for the car-park.

New Councillor

A very warm welcome to John Melser who was co-opted onto the Council at the December 2008 Meeting. This now completes the Council of 13 members.

Open invitation

You are very welcome to attend all of our Council and Committee meetings.

We generally start at 7pm and the first 15 minutes is a public Question Time for you to raise any local matter.

Age Concern - Arun Neighbourhood Network

Susanne Arnold is Age Concern's community engagement worker in East Preston and Ferring. Her focus is developing activities for older people in the village to enable them to keep their independence. She is keen to work with existing organisations and with individuals.

For more information, please contact her on 01903 731800 or at susanne.arnold@acwestsussex.org

Planning News

Planning applications have significantly reduced, with half the submissions of a year ago. Recently, we were disappointed that major concerns expressed by many residents, and by this Council, about the detrimental impact on neighbouring properties of two particular developments were disregarded by ADC.

****102 Sea Road**

Change of use from residential to Day Nursery – now approved by ADC.

Concerns included: Noise impact on neighbours; adverse effect on residential amenities; impact on highway safety; parking and road congestion.

****27 Sea Road**

Change of use from retail shop to Indian Restaurant: Now approved by ADC.

Concerns included: adverse odour pollution and effect on the amenities of adjoining business users and residential accommodation; the absence of sufficient supporting evidence that retail use was no longer viable.

Interestingly, two separate applications to convert premises to dental practices have recently been received.

The application for change of use of the former off-licence on the corner of **Beechlands Close** to a dental surgery has been approved by ADC.

At the time of writing the application for change of use of a house in **Pinewood Close** is not yet determined by ADC. Residents in Pinewood Close and North Lane opposed the proposal and this Council supported their concerns over traffic safety and the adverse effect on neighbouring properties.

We will continue to oppose inappropriate developments that threaten the appearance and character of the village. We have been assured by Planning Officers at ADC that they do consider the advice contained in the Village Design Statement when making their recommendations.



What does the Parish Council do with your money?

Many local people admit that they really do not know what a Parish Council does. Very simply, the Parish Council raises an annual precept (money needed for the year) which is then included in your Council Tax bill from ADC. Your Council Tax bill also covers West Sussex County Council and Sussex Police. Our precept pays for:

- Street lighting (maintenance and power)
- The upkeep of our Warren Recreation Ground tennis court
- The provision and maintenance of the WRG playground
- The maintenance and cleaning of two public toilet blocks
- The maintenance of some bus shelters
- The upkeep and enhancement of the village's green spaces: Two Acres, the Village Green and the Warren Recreation Ground
- All the flower displays
- All the tree planting
- Maintenance of the three car parks
- The provision of the Christmas lighting
- The cost of the school crossing patrol
- The provision and maintenance of all the public seats
- The provision of litter and dog bins in conjunction with ADC
- Salaries of the Clerk, Assistant Clerk and Village Orderly
- Allowances to Councillors
- Grants to local organisations
- Production costs of the Newsletter
- Maintenance of War Memorial

These are local benefits for local people and we believe that this is good value. The accompanying photos show some of the work undertaken in the last few years.



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