



Welcome to new Chairman

On May 11th, Councillor Chris Roberts was elected unanimously as the new Chairman of the Council. Before taking the chain of office, he added his personal thanks to retiring Chairman Councillor Barnett for all the hard work he had done in bringing the Parish Council into the heart of the village.

Councillor Roberts had previously served on the Council from 1987 to 2000, when he had to resign because his seafaring rosters were replaced by daily commutes to London. We were delighted to welcome him back onto the Council in 2007 and now wish him well in his new role as Chairman.



Councillor Chris Roberts

Councillor Len Barnett stepped down from his position as Chairman of the Council after completing his statutory three year term of office at the Annual Meeting in May.

He has led the Council through a most demanding three years, beginning with the very sudden resignation of the then Clerk. All the Council's papers and archive material were at the Clerk's house and the Council had to move swiftly to arrange temporary accommodation in a portacabin in the Village Hall car park. Our Assistant Clerk agreed to move to the Cabin to work and with the appointment of our new Clerk, Councillor Barnett was able to say that the Council was back in business.

Amongst other achievements under Councillor Barnett's leadership has been the funding of the School Crossing Patrol, financial support for the Youth Club, resurfacing of the Tennis Court, the

transfer of the ownership of the Village Green from Arun District Council, greater expenditure on flowers and trees, the enhancement of the Village Green and the extended Christmas illuminations.

The need for more storage space and a meeting room for the Village Hall, and an office for this Council has resulted in an ambitious building project, the biggest scheme that this Council has undertaken. The Plans have now been approved by Arun District Council and Councillor Barnett, as Chairman, has been leading all the consultations and negotiations with the Village Hall needed for the financial management of this project as it comes towards fruition.

The Council is very grateful indeed to Councillor Barnett for his steadfast vision for the Council and for all his commitment given so willingly for the benefit of the village.

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

Annual Report

Presented by the retiring Chairman Councillor Len Barnett

I would like to start by saying "thank you" to Simon and Tracy for all their hard work over the past twelve months. We get many visitors to the Cabin and this shows the value of having an office in the centre of the village. We are a very busy Council and their efforts are much appreciated by all members of the Council. Also due are thanks to the Councillors for all their hard work and enthusiasm in ensuring that East Preston is a nice place to live.

Village Hall Extension

Over the last twelve months a great deal of effort has been put into this major project. Working in partnership with the Village Hall team, the Council has been pursuing this project and has ensured that the parishioners have been kept informed of developments. There have been some objections by the public but many people remain in favour of the extension. Planning permission has been granted and the Council will now be considering the next steps.

Roundstone Level Crossing

The Council has been campaigning for quite some time to see real improvements to the Crossing which we regard as dangerous. Meetings have been held with Network Rail and West Sussex County Council. West Sussex has supported the campaign and we are promised improvements to the road markings this year and by 2012 we should see the Crossing widened.

Road Safety

The Council has reacted to the concerns of many parishioners and set up a working party to see what can be done. A speed survey was carried out in several areas and the Council used the Speed Indicator Device (SID) to monitor speeds. Worthing Road was a particular hot spot and the Police did issue speeding fines to some motorists following our representations.

The Council continues to fund the School Crossing Patrol in Lashmar Road and we are looking at what other improvements can be made to ensure the safety of children using the schools.

The Council is hoping to involve parishioners in seeing what else can be done to improve road safety generally and a public meeting will be held soon.

Vandalism

Unfortunately, we still get many acts of mindless vandalism but the Council will do all it can to prevent such acts. The Council works closely with the Police, and through the Police Forum ensures our concerns are raised and action taken where possible.

Amenities

Special mention and thanks are due to the Amenities team for all their hard work. The village looked a picture in the summer with all the hanging baskets and planters full of flowers. The Village Green has been greatly improved with the removal of the "plinth" which has meant children have more room to play.

A big success was the Christmas Event where the Council and Traders worked together to produce a great evening. Many parishioners congratulated the Council on this innovation.

Village Action Plan

This was launched last year but has been struggling to make much progress. The Council will be trying to get more people involved in developing a plan to find out what the parishioners want for East Preston.

Greening Campaign

The Council will be supporting this campaign where we will be working with Kingston Parish Council in trying to improve the environment.

Greening Campaign Launch

The Greening campaign, supported by West Sussex County Council and Arun District Council, was launched locally for East Preston and Kingston on Sunday May 17th. This Council is supporting the campaign and has arranged for the Pledge Card to be delivered with this copy of the Council Newsletter.

Financial Report

In January 2008, the Parish Council set its budget for the financial year 2008/09 at £172,154. There are three Committees that control the Council's spending. These are the Amenities Committee (responsible for enhancements around the village as mentioned in the Chairman's report); the Buildings and Facilities Committee (public conveniences, street lighting, tennis court etc.); and the Finance and General Purposes Committee (administration, staff salaries including the School Crossing Patrol, charitable grants, newsletters, insurance, professional fees and the like).

At the time of writing, the Parish Council spent approximately £164,000 in the year. The remaining excess will be used to bolster the Parish Council's reserves, which should be maintained at a quarter of the Council's annual budget.

The Parish Council provides grants to organisations that can show they provide a benefit to residents of the village. During the financial year, awards were made to diverse organisations such as 4SIGHT, Friends of East Preston Infant School, East Preston Twinning Association, East Preston Festival, Sofas & Stuff and the local Citizens Advice Bureau.

In January 2009, the Parish Council agreed to keep any budget increase below 5% because of the current financial climate. A budget for the current year was set at £180,000, which is an increase of 4.55%. We believe that this is a prudent and well managed Council and we expect that our Accounts will be signed off as satisfactory very soon.

Village Hall Building Update

The Parish Council, in partnership with the East Preston and Kingston Village Hall Foundation and the Warren Recreation Ground, has had its planning application for the new building approved by Arun District Council.

The project will provide an improved reception and social area, improved storage and a Meeting Room for the Village Hall. There will be a Parish Council office and committee room. The playground will be rebuilt on the opposite side of the car park. Negotiations over the various leases required by the project are progressing.

At its meeting on 11th May 2009, the Council "RESOLVED to underwrite the build project up to a capital spend limit of £650,000 (which includes £72,000 for contingencies) exclusive of VAT liability. The cost of the project would be funded utilising £100,000 from the Council's

specific reserve and an application to the Public Works Loan Board for a loan facility of up to £550,000 over a period of 25 years.

The commitment is subject to detailed funding and leasing arrangements by and between the Parish Council, the Village Hall Foundation and the Warren Recreation Ground being agreed once loan arrangements have been ascertained and before any loan contract is approved.

Clarification with HMRC of this Council's VAT situation is in progress, but should the project be deemed VAT payable, the Council would then consider if the scheme is affordable."

This is an important milestone in this Council's prudent approach to such a major undertaking and we will keep you informed of our progress.

Public meeting of the Road Safety Working Group

JUNE 29th at 7pm in the Warren Room

Feedback at all recent village meetings has told Parish Councillors that road safety is the top concern for many residents. A Council Road Safety Working Party has been active for 18 months. There are limits to what can be achieved from Parish resources and powers, since the Highways Authority is West Sussex County Council, but we attempt to draw our concerns to the attention of the relevant people.

Issues we have tackled range from the Roundstone Level Crossing to improving the sight-line on the bend in Sea Road opposite the British Legion. At the time of writing, the latest news about the Level Crossing is that new white lining is to be undertaken to emphasise that Worthing Road and Old Worthing Road has the priority at the junction. This Crossing is now No.3 in priority in West Sussex for significant improvements.

The Council has obtained and operated a Speed Indicator Device (SID) in the village over an aggregate period of nearly a month. However there are some major issues that need to be thought through for the Village Action Plan. To list but a few:-

1. Do we want Parking Warden enforcement in the village?
2. Do we accept the evidence from SID that there is no serious speeding problem in the village or do we want traffic calming measures in our streets?
3. Do we want the whole village to be a 20mph zone?
4. Do we want a long term goal of a bridge over the railway, and if so, where?

If you would like to contribute to the Working Group's thinking, **please come along on June 29th**. However, to make an effective contribution, you would be better placed if you could inform Simon Cross, our Clerk, of your intention to attend and obtain a current 'Action List' from the Working Group's Minutes.

Basket Tree

We have received many compliments from residents on the newly installed basket tree on the pedestrian island in the southern shopping area. It does look very attractive and our thanks go again to our contractors Ferring Nursery.

It would be a pity if the basket tree were to be damaged by inconsiderate parking and therefore **we do ask everyone not to park on the island**.



Memorial Bench

The Council was pleased to receive the gift of a new bench on the Village Green, dedicated to the memory of our late Village Orderly Dave Thompson.

The presentation with Mr Thompson's partner, family, friends and Councillors took place on May 30th. Mr Thompson took great pride in keeping the Parish Council areas of the Village clean and tidy. He is much missed by us all.

Welcome to the new Village PCSO

Another change of personnel as PCSO Andy Orpin leaves East Preston and PCSO Lee Matthews takes over his new village beat here. The Council has already warmly welcomed his presence. However, the Council is concerned that our PCSOs are moved frequently so that there is no opportunity for them to establish a presence here and to learn about the community and its problems.

PCSO Lee Matthews trained as an operational Police Officer, working on the front-line in the

Neighbourhood Response Team, before deciding to specialise in community work as a PCSO. PCSO Matthews will be working predominantly in East Preston and Kingston and has already been alerted to one of our chief concerns: the anti-social behaviour of some youngsters, often accompanied by others from outside the village, when drinking outdoors.

PCSO Matthews is already walking his beat and is getting to know the village.



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