

EAST GRINSTEAD TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE EAST GRINSTEAD TOWN COUNCIL HELD VIA ZOOM, ON MONDAY 4th OCTOBER 2021 AT 7PM.

Present: Councillor J Dabell (Town Mayor)
Councillor A Peacock (Deputy Town Mayor)
Councillors Amos, J Belsey*, Mrs Belsey, Mrs Bennett*, Duly, Mrs Farren, Favor, Mrs Mainstone, Matthews, Mrs Mockford* Ody, Osborne, Scott*, Sweatman, Visser, Whittaker and Woodgate.

* = absent

Others present: Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk via zoom and 3 Members of the Public

29. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

It was stated that the councillors in the room are representing the views of East Grinstead. A leaflet has been put through the doors regarding allowances yet many people volunteer in work roles and don't get paid. The opinions of most people in East Grinstead are not being represented; Queens Walk is terribly wrong and was not supported by many. Why are banks and money lenders not required to pay council tax?

The Town Mayor advised that the Town Council could not reply to the question as this was not within the remit of the Town Council, who do not write the law nor collect the Council Tax.

Another member of the public stated that a Councillors allowance is useful for many people in order to do the role of Councillor, he would like to know if the Council find it of use. He believes local views have been very well represented.

The Town Mayor thanked them both.

30. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED: To accept the following apology and reason for absence

Cllr Scott	Delayed at Work
Cllr Bennett	Personal Commitment
Cllr J Belsey	Away
Cllr Mrs Mockford	Delayed at Work

31. TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the meeting of 5th July for accuracy and that the Town Mayor sign them at the next opportunity.

32. DCLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no new declarations

33. TOWN MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor's engagements

July

25	EG Lion Donkey Derby (& Jenny)
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August

1	East Court Live
8	Moat United Reform Church 150 th Anniversary (& Jenny)
10	Stone Quarry Cafe
14	Felbridge & Sunnyside CC VP Lunch
26	100 th Anniversary RBL – East Court

September

1	U3a Open Day – Meridian Hall
1	TWBC Mayor – Lope and Lunch – Deputy Mayor attended
5	EG Hockey Club open weekend – Hockey Club
6	Grenstede Talking News AGM – East Court
8	EG Town Twinning Meeting – East Court
13	Michael Leppard Plaque Unveiling – High Street
16	Jean Glynne Wake – Chequer Mead
25	Lions Diabetes Screening – St Swithuns
25	Matt Ratana Memorial Day – EG Rugby Club
28	Saint Hill for coffee and walk around the grounds with staff

October

2	East Grinstead Lions Club Charter Night (+Tracy & Jenny) – Felbridge Hotel
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The Town Mayor referred to the list of events and said how much he has enjoyed represented the Council. The events were noted

34. TO RECEIVE SUCH COMMUNICATIONS AS THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL MAY DESIRE TO LAY BEFORE THE COUNCIL

The Leader advised that the Rugby Club are facilitating the Covid Booster Jab with help from the Lions again. He expressed thanks to the volunteers for helping with this.

He also advised that there were outstanding Consultations:

- 1) Gatwick 2nd Runway
- 2) Government Boundary Commission

Please can comments be submitted to the Clerk and Consultation Group to allow a response to be submitted.

Budget is also underway : Aspirations and requests are requested as the work is now underway.

35. TO DISPOSE OF ANY BUSINESS OUTSTANDING FROM THE LAST MEETING

There was none

36. PRINCIPAL COUNCIL UPDATE – MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

Councillor Webster was welcomed to the meeting and asked to give an update on MSDC matters.

Cllr Webster advised that his portfolio was manifold and he gave a brief run through: Police and Crime Panel: Cllr Webster sits on this including the role of making representations regarding the Police Precept.

The Community Safety Partnership has been joined with the Strategic Partnership to be one board. There are representatives for Mid Sussex Association of Town Councils as well as Sussex Police, Police and Crime Commissioner, West Sussex CC. NHS, Clinical Commissioning Group, Clarion Housing and Mid Sussex Voluntary Association.

Three sub groups to the partnership board:

- Health
- Safety
- Community resilience (net yet met)

MSDC Wellbeing group are a partnership with WSCC. MSVA/Age UK and others are supported by MSDC in the Community. They also work with schools.

CCTV has been installed at Mount Noddy and East Court in order to help tackle anti-social behaviour. Stone Quarry and King George's Field CCTV is supported by Sussex Police.

Stone Quarry green space is a partnership project for a new community area, along with new community space and buildings across the Mid Sussex District.

Emergency Planning: Mid Sussex DC is a Category 2 responder and supports the resilience and emergency services response.

Cllr Webster Chairs the Cabinet's grants panel

Legal services: internal MSDC departments and legislation compliance. Also the Democratic Services Section who ensure elections are run and electoral roll kept up to date.

Council has kept the legal teams up to date with the remote meetings and other guidance to legislation.

By-elections, referendums also keep them busy.

Local Land charges also come under the remit and work has been very busy as the property market has not stood still during the pandemic.

Building Control and Environmental (which includes licencing).

Disabled people are assessed for independent living.

The Food Standards ratings inspectors also work in licencing and HMO inspectors.

The area outside McDonalds is a concern due to air pollution and contamination which is also being monitored.

Questions followed: The CCTV at King George's and East Court is great are there any other plans?

Holtze Avenue covers the recreation ground and old post office. Spring Copse will be monitored but no new CCTV is on the cards at the moment.

Cllr Webster was thanked for his work in supporting groups and charities in the Community. Sports Council met last week and were talking about an upgrade of facilities at King George's Field Skate Park.

Grants have been awarded to Community infrastructure projects and MSDC are happy to help where they can.

The Sports Council work is great in this town and projects are supported. A grant application would be welcomed.

The Deputy Town Mayor gave a note of thanks for the update on the wide ranging portfolio.

Cllr Webster responded that Cllr Peacock (Deputy Town Mayor) attends meetings at West Sussex on behalf of community health and provides a valuable support which was also acknowledged.

Cllr Webster was thanked in the usual manner.

37. TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEES

Cllr Visser Proposed the Planning Minutes, thanking his committee for all of their work this year. He updated the Council that 9 Morton Road had been refused by the planning authority. Cllr Peacock and others had helped to put in a strong representation.

Q: Do we have an update on the District Plan DPD?

A: No, we are awaiting results and information for MSDC's approach.

Cllr Woodgate thanked his committee and proposed the Minutes of the Public Services Committee, there were no questions.

Cllr Mrs Farren thanked her committee and proposed the minutes of the Amenities & Tourism Committees

Cllr Sweatman proposed the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Meeting. He thanked the Committee for their work on the Committee. He thanked the Town Clerk and Registered Finance Office as since the meeting the audit had been returned unqualified from the external auditors.

Q: It was commented with thanks for the strong response to the Government Spending Review Consultation which has been submitted. Congratulations to Finance & Governance work for the audit was also offered.

RESOLVED: To accept the minutes and decisions therein of the below meetings:

	Date	Page Nos	Minute No
(a) Planning	12/07/2021	34-41	36-43
(b) Planning	02/08/2021	42-52	44-49
(c) Planning	23/08/2021	53-58	50-56
(d) Public Services	02/09/2021	59-63	57-70
(e) Amenities & Tourism	09/09/2021	64-66	71-83
(f) Planning	13/09/2021	67-80	84-90
(g) Finance & General Purposes	16/09/2021	81-84	91-101

38. TO AUTHORISE THE SEALING OF THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS:

RESOLVED:

- i) To authorise the seal of the exclusive rights of burial deeds: 2232, 2233, 2234, 2235, 2236, 2237, 2238, 2239 and 2240.
- ii) licence with Mid Sussex DC for the beacon position on King George's field

39. CHEQUER MEAD TRUSTEES

Cllr Whittaker was thanked for his work and years given to Chequer Mead as a Trustee. He had put in a huge amount work at the Theatre which will be greatly missed.

This was seconded by Cllr Osborne who as Chairman of the Trustees wanted to add this thanks for the varied tasks that Cllr Whittaker had previously undertaken and hoped that one day he would rejoin the trustees.

40. MOTION RE COUNCILLORS ALLOWANCES

Cllr Amos introduced his motion:

1. He believes that £1,000 plus is not needed in order to attract councillors to stand. Volunteers also give their time to many other groups in the town without accepting payment.

Other Councils do not pay an allowance. In his view the Councillors are taking far more out than the cost of covering expenses.

Councillors help the Community and this is recognised; whilst he himself is not community minded. However in his view paying Councillors makes them anti-productive as they will vote for the popular idea rather than what is right. Council tax is high and the removal of the allowance will reduce the tax by £1.50.

Motion failed as not seconded.

2. Cllr Amos proposed the 2nd motion arguing along with his previous points on motion 1 that a 1% reduction should be considered as a compromise. As Councillors attend 16% less meetings than previously, there should be a reduction;

Seconded by Cllr Osborne

The matter was opened for discussion.

Comments were made by several Councillors:

Disappointment was expressed in hearing a Councillor state they are not community minded. From experience not many people would come forward to serve regardless of the amount of the allowance. The time that the Councillors put in to the various community groups is significantly more than council meetings alone.

The amount is £20 per week before tax and all expenses have to be met, it does not cover the cost of an active Councillor.

There is a hidden cost to being a Councillor, those who are self-employed often lose income due to council work. £1,000 is not comparable to the cost it is only a token amount. It is staggering how people get excited about the EGTC amount but do not ever raise the MSDC nor the WSCC amount.

Most councillors do not know there is an allowance at the point of standing for election, it is therefore not an incentive.

It is not just attending the meetings that takes time but the proper planning for these meetings too. Some members do the minimum (just attending meetings, but many do much more) those who do least do not see the fuller work done. Cllr Amos has created upset by political point scoring.

Allowance was there to help to bring extra, more diverse, people to the Council where costs stop them being able to attend meetings such as childcare or travel costs. .

It is imperative to be community minded, if a Councillor does not wish to be involved in the Community he should not be in the Council.

Cllr Amos wrapped up his proposal and freely accepts he is not community minded, and is poles apart from the thinking of many of the other Councillors regarding this issue.

The Motion was defeated on a majority vote.

The Town Mayor advised that the next meeting was **Monday 10th January 2022** and the meeting was closed at 8.15 pm.

Town Mayor