

EAST GRINSTEAD TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE EAST GRINSTEAD TOWN COUNCIL
ON MONDAY 9th JANUARY 2023 AT 7PM.

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

* = absent

** = Present via Zoom

Others present: MSDC Cllr Webster, Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk, 7 representatives of the sports youth awards groups and 1 member of the public.

The Council started the meeting with one minute's silence for former Town Mayor Ian Dixon and former Town Councillor Edward Belsey.

Condolences were also passed to the Deputy Town Mayor who had recently lost a family member.

44 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were none therefore the Chairman moved on to the substantial part of the agenda

45 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

RESOLVED: To note the following apologies

Cllr Scott	Work Commitment
Cllr Sweatman	Personal Commitment

46 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Regarding item 13 declarations were made by Cllr Visser, Cllr Mrs Mockford and Cllr Favor as employees at the Hospital, however as this was electing a staff representative to attend governor meetings they remained able to vote.

47 **TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES**

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes, of the meeting of 3rd October and that the Town Mayor sign them as a correct record.

48 **TOWN MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Town Mayor invited the members of the sports groups who had been awarded grants to join him for a photo and invited them each to explain a little of the projects which the grants have been awarded.

The recipients in attendance were: Felbridge and Sunnyside Cricket Club, EG Swimming Club, East Grinstead Cricket Club, EG Meads, EG Target Shooting Club, EG Town FC and Sackville School. He also advised that the EG Tri Club have today sent an email to thank the Council for the grant last year and giving an update on their projects.

He then noted his list of engagements, including the SSAFA concert and the Christmas Carols in December.

Finally he referred to the mayoral chain of office, he has been approached by two organisations in the town (Masons and Lions) for inclusion on the chain. The Clerk has established that adding two links will be acceptable to the jewellers. With the understanding that the chain will need to go on a new collar, and all this will be met by the two organisations (no cost to the council), this will now proceed. The Council were supportive of this manner of refreshing the collar for the chain.

49 TO APPOINT A NEW LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

The Chairman noted that Cllr Sweatman had stepped down as the Leader of the Council and advised that in accordance with the Councils standing orders the leader of the majority group is to be the leader of the Town Council, he noted that Cllr Woodgate was now the leader of the Majority group and invited he be nominated to be the leader of the council.

RESOLVED: Cllr Woodgate as leader of the majority group and in accordance with Standing Order TR3 was confirmed as leader of the Council

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

The new leader of the Council thanked the Council for his nomination as to the new position. He thanked Cllr Sweatman for his past role as leader for the past few years. Cllr Sweatman would be big boots to fill but he will continue the works started under his leadership. Projects such as St Margaret's' loop, St Barnabas Church Hall and Lowdells Lane, the LCWiP and not least pushing for the traffic works in the town to be resolved. We have a coronation party to plan for the town to look forward to.

51 TO DISPOSE OF ANY BUSINESS OUTSTANDING FROM THE LAST MEETING

There was none

52 PRINCIPAL COUNCIL UPDATE

Cllr Norman Webster was thanked for attending and invited to give an address. He congratulated Cllr Woodgate and said how the District Council would be looking forward to working with the councillors.

He referred to the new connections magazine which is now available on-line and in the hard copy.

He referred to the new Stone Quarry Café and the community fridge which has been a lot of work to get the funds diverted and to make this happen and he thanked all the councillors who had worked with him to make this happen.

He thanked those involved in the youth support and purple bus initiative which was many organisations, all tiers of councils and also the Mid Sussex Voluntary Action.

He mentioned the Mid Sussex Voluntary Awards and winners who were in East Grinstead including Dunnings Mill PH and the Ashurst Wood Football Club.

There is an air quality measuring station in London Road East Grinstead, the first one in the district with the readings uploaded each hour on to a publicly available website. An annual report will be provided to Mid Sussex and loaded to their website.

We are still awaiting the CCTV connection for the two new cameras in East Grinstead. The cameras were installed in 2021 but a date is still not established.

He indicated that he was willing to take questions.

Cllr Webster was thanked for attending and specific thanks given for the support of the Chequer Mead Theatre over the years. It was however asked whether a senior planning officer could attend East Grinstead and talk about the planning process in East Grinstead as there was so much discontent

Cllr Webster acknowledged that there was discontent in East Grinstead, the District Council has also written to the Secretary of State many times as to the District Council's discontent with the planning process.

It was mentioned that the MSDC Leader had attended an EGTC Council meeting and that the Cabinet Member for Planning had been the speaker at the Annual Town Meeting both within the last year.

It was asked as to what the LCWiP progress was?

Collate and reply to feedback from the stakeholder sessions is currently underway and East Grinstead is actually ahead of the other two towns on this. The final report will go through MSDC council for sign up and pass up to WSCC for final adoption, the anticipated timescale is by the end of March. It was then asked whether the stakeholder groups could be widened to include as much of the community as possible.

It was commented as to the great job that Stone Quarry Café was doing to support the those in need in East Grinstead. Also the playground will be refurbished at Stone Quarry Café to again give another dimension for the café users. All Councillors who have worked on the quarry projects have been involved for a long time and continue to work to bring improvements to this area.

It was commented that the Councillors continue to work with MSDC senior officers and press them to work with other authorities to help to improve the road traffic situations.

It was also asked as to whether there was any positive update as to the police contact centre at Chequer Mead. It is hoped that the police contact centre will reopen in the Spring. The delay has been the shortage of staff. Further conversations have been around the police response to crime. This is an area of great interest to the public who are not always able to see the visible works of the police. Also Anti-social behaviour has been raised and remains a high priority for the local police commander along with neighbourhood policing.

It was commented that the face of crime had changed to the cyber world, the days of the bobby on the beat are not necessarily the way of dealing with more sophisticated crime.

The Deputy Town Mayor referred specifically to the air quality initiatives and the ease of the website in reading the data and thanked Cllr Webster for attending the meeting today. Cllr Webster then left the meeting.

53 TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEES

Cllr Visser proposed the minutes of the meetings of the Planning Committee. He thanked the committee for their work and especially the Vice Chair who chaired the meeting last week for him. He made reference to the plan exhibition for Welbeck development and also the work on scrutinising the District Plan.

Cllr Woodgate proposed the minutes of the Public Services Committee, thanking his committee for their work during the past cycle.

Cllr Mrs Farren proposed the Amenities & Tourism Committee minutes; she thanked the committee for their work. She gave a couple of updates, St Margaret's' loop, our surveyors have advised us today that they are in touch with WSCC for an update which they will refer back as soon as possible. In addition the Queens Road Cemetery path is being reinstated and Clarion have agreed that they will (with conditions) help to provide a new entrance.

Cllr Woodgate proposed the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Meeting. He thanked the committee for their work at a very long meeting in December.

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

	Date	Page Nos	Minute No
(a) Planning	05/10/2022	83-88	137-144
(b) Planning	24/10/2022	89-95	145-152
(c) Planning	14/11/2022	96-102	153-159
(d) Public Services	01/12/2022	103-107	160-170
(e) Planning	05/12/2022	108-117	171-177
(f) Amenities & Tourism	08/12/2022	118-121	178-189
(g) Finance & General Purposes	15/12/2022	122-127	190-210

54 TO AUTHORISE THE SEALING OF THE FOLLOWING DEEDS

The Town Mayor introduced the report and it was

RESOLVED: To approve the sealing of the exclusive rights of burial deeds: 2273,2274,2275,2276,2277,2278 & 2279

55 TO CONFIRM THE LOAN APPLICATION TO THE PUBLIC WORKS LOAN BOARD

The Town Mayor explained that the PWLB had all of the additional information that they had asked for and that the Council needed to resolve the wording again in order to allow the loan to be finalised.

RESOLVED: To seek the approval of the secretary of state for levelling up housing and communities, to apply for a loan of £95,000 (50% of the cost, the remainder to be met by Council reserves), over the borrowing term of 10 years for the purpose of purchasing St Barnabas Church Hall. The annual loan repayments will come to

circa £12,000. It is not intended to increase the Council Tax Precept for the purpose of the loan repayments.

It was suggested that rather than taking a loan the council should pay the full amount from the reserves.

56 TO APPOINT A STAKEHOLDER GOVERNOR TO THE QUEEN VICTORIA HOSPITAL

RESOLVED: To appoint the Clerk, Mrs J Holden as the Council's stakeholder governor representative to the Queen Victoria Hospital for the following three year period.

57 CHRISTMAS LIGHT TENDER

Cllr Mrs Farren, as the working group Chair, gave some comments as to the Working Group. She was asked whether the automatic switch on will continue, probably not but we are looking to do what we can.

It was also noted that the Ship Street businesses would like to have some decorations, it was noted but also that the tender was only just within budget, so this will be difficult.

RESOLVED: The Council approved the recommendation of the Christmas Lights Working Group that Festive Lighting be awarded the contract for 2023-27.

58 REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS, FINANCIAL REGULATIONS AND CODE OF CONDUCT

It was proposed to amend Standing 27D be included to allow for a toss of coin to solve a resolution where the Chairman has the right to determine the standing orders. A Councillor felt this was a contentious issue that should be amended in the spirit of fairness. This was seconded and discussed however was not supported for amendment.

RESOLVED: The Council having reviewed the current Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Code of Conduct have no amendments at this time and resolve to proceed with these documents without alteration and for the next review to take place no later than January 2024.

59 TO APPROVE THE DATES OF THE COUNCIL MEETINGS FOR 2023/24

RESOLVED: that the following dates be set as the meetings for full council

Annual Council:	Monday 15 th May
Special Council:	Thursday 15 th June
Council:	Monday 3 rd July
Council:	Monday 2 nd October
Council:	Monday 8 th January
Special Council:	Monday 29 th January
Council:	Monday 8 th April

60 FINANCIAL RISK REGISTER

The Chairman introduced the report and explained there were only a few small amendments to the previously approved risk register

RESOLVED: The updated risk register as shown at Appendix C was approved

The meeting concluded at 8.24pm with the Town Mayor inviting all to join him in the parlour.

Town Mayor