EAST GRINSTEAD TOWN COUNCIL

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FULL COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of East Grinstead Town Council on Thursday 16 October 2025 at 7.00pm

Present:	Cllr J Belsey (Town Mayor) Cllr S Reeves (Deputy Town Mayor) Cllr S Barnett Cllr M Belsey Cllr H Farren Cllr L Gibbs* Cllr I Gibson Cllr E Godwin Cllr T Hughes Cllr J Mockford Cllr S Ody Cllr A Peacock* Cllr C Pond Cllr T Scott Cllr F Visser* Cllr R Whittaker * = absent
In attendance:	Town Clerk Deputy Town Clerk

Public Participation

10 members of the public were present however no questions were asked.

One member of the public spoke in relation to Moat Pond and provided some historic information in respect of how the community had previously been involved in maintaining the pond under the ownership of MSDC, but this had ended in 2022. The Town Mayor thanked those who had been previously involved in supporting the pond and noted it was an item for discussion on this evening's agenda.

Representatives from Age UK and the Food Bank informed the Council of the Community Connect initiative they were introducing, which involved other community groups meeting, sharing resources and collaborating on community initiatives and building up a direct referral process so that an individual did not need to go to many different places to find support. They invited Town Council officers to join in with the formation of the initial concept, and advised that they'd communicated with the District Council in respect of the ideas as a pilot scheme for Mid Sussex. A formal presentation and request for investment will be brought to the Council at a future date. The Town Mayor thanked them for their attendance and information, and it was noted engagement would continue via the Community and Tourism Team.

35. **Apologies for Absence**

Cllrs Peacock, Gibbs, Visser offered their apologies, which were accepted.

36. **To confirm the minutes of the Town Council meetings held on 1st July 2025**

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 1st July 2025.

37. **Declarations of Interest**

None.

38. **Town Mayor's Announcements**

The diary of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor's events was noted. The Town Mayor commented how nice it has been to meet so many people, including at the recent Mayors Reception.

39. **To receive such communications as the Leader of the Council may desire to lay before the Council**

None.

40. **To dispose of any business outstanding from the last meeting**

None.

41. **To receive and consider the minutes of Committees:**

		Date	**Minute No**	**Page No**
(a)	Planning	22/07/2025	18-25	5-6
(b)	Planning	12/08/2025	26-33	7-8
(c)	Environmental & Sustainable Travel	12/08/2025	12-22	4-6
(d)	Public Services	26/08/2025	12-21	4-6
(e)	Planning	02/09/2025	34-44	9-12
(f)	Amenities & Tourism	09/09/2025	13-21	5-8
(g)	Planning	23/09/2025	52-60	15-17
(h)	Finance & General Purposes	30/09/2025	16-29	4-7

Cllr Godwin proposed the Planning Committee minutes.

Cllr Ody proposed the Environment & Sustainable Travel Committee minutes.

Cllr Reeves proposed the Public Services Committee minutes.

Cllr Godwin proposed the Amenities & Tourism Committee minutes

Cllr Farren proposed the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

RESOLVED: The minutes and decisions of the meetings detailed above were accepted**.**

42. **To note progress on the Town Improvements Consultation**

The Council was provided with an update of project progress, noting the tender had been awarded to DWG consultants. A kick start meeting had been held on 21st July with Mid Sussex District Council, East Grinstead Business Association and the Town Council. A public consultation was held at East Court on 15th September where residents were invited to attend, alongside 1:1 meetings held with Councillors, EGBA and other stakeholders. The aim had been to understand people's views and ideas for future town improvements. DWG were in the process of formulating a set of proposals for consideration with a view to increasing footfall and improving wayfinding through the town centre. The proposals would identify potential short, medium and long-term projects to support future funding bids and improvements.

The next public consultation event was planned for early November. A further project meeting was being held on 17th October and an engagement event with local primary and secondary schools was also being arranged.

43. **To consider the committee restructure proposal and day of meetings**

A revised committee structure had been proposed, which would alter the committee structure to align them with the organisation structure as follows:

Estates & Environment Committee
Community & Tourism Committee
Finance & General Purposes Committee
Planning Committee
Human Resources Committee

Full Council meetings would be better utilised to share community information, which previously fell under the Public Services Committee. The addition of a Human Resources Committee was proposed to enable personnel matters to be considered and resolved during the meeting rather than continuing with a working group format.

The proposed restructure was discussed, and it was noted that it would support the new governance framework, reduce demands on officer time, and help ensure that Councillors are not stretched across an increased number of committees. While some concern was expressed regarding the removal of the Public Services Committee, it was highlighted that relevant speakers, including representatives from the Police, would instead attend full Council meetings. This approach would ensure that all Councillors remain fully informed.

Revised Terms of Reference would be presented to Council for consideration in January. At that time, amendments could be made, if necessary, prior to final approval.

The weekday for meetings was discussed; it seemed that Thursday would be the best day for maximum attendance by Councillors.

RESOLUTION: To approve the recommendations for the restructuring of the committees and move the day of meetings to Thursdays from the next annual cycle in May 2026. Updated Terms of Reference to be reviewed at the January 2026 meeting.

44. **To note amendments to MSDC parking fees and consider Council response**

A discussion was held regarding the increased parking fees, which had recently been confirmed by MSDC; the increases were for noting only.

It was discussed that MSDC will be trialling the ANPR system in Vicarage car park in April 2026 and it would not be in the Queens Road car park as originally planned. It was felt that the impact of the increases and charges at weekends/evenings and lack of available parking was impacting businesses, and it was suggested that a meeting be requested with MSDC officers in relation to parking in general. It was noted the improvements to Queens Road car park would not move forward due to estimated implementation costs, but it was important to understand the data surrounding parking requirements in the town, which could also feed back into the Town Centre Improvement Plan.

RESOLUTION: Town Clerk to draft a letter to MSDC on behalf of the Council as outlined in the discussion and request a meeting to discuss parking strategies in the town.

45. **External audit - to note the result of the external audit for 2024/2025**

The report was noted in which no matters were raised. A vote of thanks was given to the Responsible Finance Officer.

46. **Internal audit – to note the report supplied by the internal auditor for the council's interim audit for 2025/2026**

The report was noted in which the auditors confirmed that the systems and internal procedures at East Grinstead Town Council were well established and followed, with no matters of concern raised. A vote of thanks given to the Responsible Finance Officer.

47. **To consider audio/visual improvements for the Council Chamber**

A report was circulated regarding the current audio/visual equipment in the Council Chamber, which was not presently operational. It was noted that an upgrade to the system would not only restore full functionality but also provide enhanced facilities for external hirers.

RESOLUTION: To proceed with Quote B, for the sum of £6,503.60 to include equipment supply and installation, with additional costs of £24 a month for PC licence and a possible £200-£400 for data cable installation, all costs excluding VAT. The additional training and support package would not be taken. A demonstration of the equipment prior to purchase would be requested to ensure it was suitable for the room. Earmarked reserves would be utilised for the expenditure if required as noted in the report.

48. **To consider MSDC proposal and options for the future responsibility of Moat Pond**

An email from MSDC was received providing information regarding the title deeds, governance, byelaws and potential options of freehold transfer versus lease versus licence for Moat Pond.

It was discussed that the lack of maintenance of the pond has been raised with MSDC on many occasions and the Council taking on the ownership would be beneficial to the community, however it was also important to consider the costs, which could be a significant burden on the Council, so a sensible agreement needed to be achieved with MSDC.

RESOLUTION: Town Clerk to investigate further the potential transfer options of Moat Pond and associated maintenance costs, so the Council consider this in more detail, including continuing to explore the potential of the inclusion of King George's Field in the future transfer. Approval was given to spend funds on legal advice to consider and understand the options as required. Also, to contact Fields In Trust who might also be able to advise further regarding the land in trust.

49. **To note the action list**

Noted.

50. **To receive the feasibility study report on St Margaret's Loop for consideration**

A high-level feasibility study into the requirements for converting St Margaret's Loop into a cycle and walkway had been completed and circulated prior to this meeting. The final cost of the report was £10,000, plus VAT which would be paid from S106 funds allocated to the project and available from MSDC.

The summary noted areas including biodiversity net gain costs, key environmental issues, planning application considerations, high level cost estimates and a summary responding to key questions, noting the significant issues relating to delivery of the scheme.

Based on the information and costs outlined in the report the Council considered the proposed expenditure unjustifiable at this time, noting that the funds could be more effectively allocated to other community projects within the town. Council nevertheless welcomed the report, acknowledging that it provided a thorough and detailed assessment thereby enabling a well-informed and measured decision on the project's future direction.

The Council will look to also reduce their liability moving forwards by considering options for disposal of the land.

RESOLUTION: To discontinue with the project, looking to options for the future of the site including consideration of disposal to reduce the liability and ongoing maintenance.

The support from County Councillor Russell was particularly noted in respect of the transfer of the road bridges to WSCC, and the Town Clerk would communicate the decision to all parties involved in the project to date.

Meeting closed at 8.32pm.

The date of the next meeting of the Town Council was **Tuesday 27th January 2026.**