

EAST GRINSTEAD TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE EAST GRINSTEAD TOWN COUNCIL
ON MONDAY 1st JULY 2024 AT 7PM.

Present: Councillor S Ody (Town Mayor)
Councillor J Belsey (Deputy Town Mayor)
Councillors Barnett, M Belsey, Farren, Gibbs, Gibson, Godwin*,
Hughes*, Mockford, Peacock, Pond, Reeves*, Scott* Visser and
Whittaker*.

* = absent

Others present: Town Clerk, Mr Hodges (Chairman of Town Twinning) and four
members of the public

The Town Mayor welcomed all to the meeting

24 Public Question Time

There were none.

25 Apologies for absence

RESOLVED : Apologies were ACCEPTED from:

Cllr Godwin	Personal Commitment
Cllr Hughes	Work Commitment
Cllr Reeves	Personal Commitment
Cllr Scott	Work Commitment
Cllr Visser	Unwell
Cllr Whittaker	Personal Commitment

It was clarified that the accepting of apologies resets the 6 months rule, which if breached would result in a Councillor losing their seat. The Clerk also confirmed that virtual attendance does not legally count as an attendance and any Councillors attending via Zoom cannot vote.

26 To confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 14th May and 20th June 2024.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting of 14th May and 20th June 2024 were approved.

27 To receive any Declarations of Personal, or Pecuniary Interest.

There was nothing new

28 Town Mayor's Announcements

The Town Mayor thanked Cllr Visser for his year, just ended and said what a rollercoaster being Mayor was. He referred to his list of engagements which was circulated to the Council. Highlighting the Town Twinning exchanges, the Armed Forces Day and other events attended.

MAYOR'S DIARY EVENTS

13/05/2024 to 01/072024

Cllr Steve Ody

May

18	East Grinstead Veteran's Event with Chelse Pensioners
22	Chess Club

June

2	Ex servicemen sponsored 2 day bike ride-medal awards
2	East Court Live
6	D Day 80 – Beacon Lighting
7	Mayor's High Street Walkabout
9	Kidicalmass Community Bike Ride
10	Dinner with Schwaz visitors
11	Schwaz visit to East Court
11	Lieutenancy Briefing
12	On Your Bike – "Learn How to" event
13	EGBA at Chequer Mead
15	Mayor's bike ride
19-22	Visit to Bourg de Peage
29	Armed Forces Day
29	East Grinstead Choral Society Concert

29 To receive such communications as the Leader of the Council may desire to lay before the Council

Councillor Farren stated:

"At this time the pre-election period does make the Leaders update difficult.

However there are a few items that I would like to highlight, but we will talk more about them after Thursday

The Finance and general purposes committee in this cycle have approved the working groups for this year. Amongst them is the Shared Surfaces group which will be looking at how best we can support our High St and shopping area in the Town. Ensuring that we remain a thriving rural town. This cross party group will hopefully bring great ideas over the remainder of this year and see some initiatives in place by the end of the administration.

Additionally we will be watching the progress of the District Plan and in the wake of this, start the work to update our own Neighbourhood Plan, where we have seen planning permissions come forward in areas that our Plan did not promote, yet are the allocations of the District Council. It simply highlights how out of date our plan is. The Problem of course being that we need to “go last” to be the most “up to date made plan” rather than jump the gun now and find that again we are put “out of step” due to changes to the District Plan.

I would like to wish good luck to all those who have stood as candidates in the Parliamentary election. It has been a clean fight with good hustings and debates in the town and surrounding area, good humour from all involved and I look forward to working with our newly elected MP, for the new constituency of East Grinstead and Uckfield, after Thursday.”

30 To Dispose of any business outstanding from the last meeting

It was noted that there was none

31 Principal Council Update

Mr Kevin Toogood the District Council monitoring officer was unable to attend, as we are in the pre-election period, no alternate was asked to attend. The next meeting in October will have a West Sussex update.

32 To receive and consider the Minutes of Committees:

The Town Mayor invited the Chairmen of the Committees to introduce their minutes:

Cllr Ody – Environment and Sustainable Travel Committee

The Town Mayor as Chairman of the committee proposed the minutes.

Cllr Gibbs – Planning

Cllr Gibbs stated that the role as Chair is somewhat daunting, and thanked the former Chair, his Vice Chair and the Clerk for their support. He updated that the last meeting saw two controversial sites come forward, being Imberhorne Farm and the Old Police station which are both allocations in the Mid Sussex Plan, neither site development has been supported by the Town Council at this time.

Public Services

In the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair of Public Services the Town Mayor proposed the minutes.

Cllr Peacock - Amenities and Tourism

Cllr Peacock thanked the committee for appointing him, he thanked the volunteers, staff and councillors who helped at East Court Live and noted that the second date was fast approaching, anyone who can help was asked to contact Alice Fletcher.

He also gave an update on St Margarets Loop to say that the second trench had been a successful dig and the council are now awaiting the report to allow the scheme to be drawn up and returned to the Council for the viability considerations.

Cllr Farren - F&GP

The Chair proposed the minutes of the meeting.

Cllr Farren - Personnel Sub Committee
The Chair proposed the minutes.

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes and the decisions included in the following schedule of meeting minutes.

	Date	Page Nos	Minute No
(a) Environmental & Sustainable Travel	13/05/2024	1	1-3
(b) Planning	13/05/2024	2	4-6
(c) Public Services	13/05/2024	3	7-9
(d) Amenities & Tourism	13/05/2024	4	10-12
(e) Finance & General Purposes	13/05/2024	5	13-15
(f) Planning	14/05/2024	6-15	16-25
(g) Environmental & Sustainable Travel	30/05/2024	16-19	26-35
(h) Planning	03/06/2024	20-24	36-42
(i) Public Services	05/06/2024	25-29	43-53
(j) Amenities & Tourism	13/06/2024	30-33	54-65
(k) Finance & General Purposes	20/06/2024	34-37	66-83
(l) Personnel sub-committee	24/06/2024	38-40	84-87
(m) Planning	24/06/2024	41-48	88-95

33 To authorise the sealing of the following documents:

RESOLVED: Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial Numbers: 2318, 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322, 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326, 2327, 2328 and 2329

34 To approve amendments to the membership and meeting frequency of the Environmental and Sustainable Travel Committee.

The Chair introduced the item and the reasons for its request as laid out in the report

RESOLVED: 1) Committee to be reduced to 5 plus Ex Officio Mayor and Deputy Mayor (Cllrs Gibbs, Godwin, Farren, Mockford and Pond).
2) The meetings scheduled for 25th July and 16th January to be removed from the remainder of the 2024/25 calendar of meetings.

35 Policies for Youth Club

The Chair introduced the item as per the papers and asked the Clerk to give a further update. She advised the reasons for these policies coming forward and also that a small tweak was needed to the front page of the child protection policy and a safer recruitment policy was also needed which can come forward later. The Job descriptions are clear that DBS checks are needed but a policy will make this even clearer.

RESOLVED: To approve the Sunnyside Youth Club; Child Protection Policy, Safeguarding Policy and the Code of Conduct for staff and volunteers. Noting that an addition to the front page of the Child Protection Policy needs to include the named safeguarding officer and the contacts for WSCC.

It was also noted that the “safer recruitment policy” stating that DBS checks were necessary for recruitment would also be required.

Thanks were given to Ellie Lester for her work on this and it was clarified that she would be staying with the Council as youth work.

36 Recruitment of Town Clerk

The Chairman introduced the item stating

“Following the sad news of the resignation of the Town Clerk, item 12 on the agenda is the recruitment of a new Clerk. Before we move forward with this item, I would just like to say a few words as the leader of the Town Council.

Julie has been the Clerk here at East Grinstead for over 13 years. In that time she has worked with many Councillors, some around this table this evening, some who are no longer elected Town Councillors and some who are no longer with us.

There have been several leaders and I will be the last one, I have really enjoyed working alongside Julie, she has always shown patience, a huge understanding of the role and the ability to work with so many different people. Her knowledge is outstanding and she has taught me and I’m sure my predecessors so much. She works with fantastic people here at the Town Council and has created a brilliant team.

I have not counted the number of Councillors that she has worked with, but she has worked with 14 Mayors which is quite an achievement.

This will be her last full Council meeting and I would like to officially thank her for everything that she has achieved for East Grinstead, for her commitment and hard work.

I would also like to personally thank her for the help and guidance over the past 14 months and I will miss our weekly meetings. Finally I would like to wish her every success on her new adventure with Burgess Hill.

The Personnel Sub Committee met on 24th June to consider the job description, person specification and advert along with the process and panel members for recruitment. This will include the need to hold a special council on Thursday 1st August to appoint the new Clerk. I would like to move to propose the process for the recruitment as outlined in the papers.”

This was seconded

Cllr Barnett (Leader of the Opposition) also spoke to say he was the first Town Mayor who worked with Julie and had been part of the recruitment, process at the time. The Council made a good choice at that time and she has stayed with the Council for some years, he wished her well.

- RESOLVED:
- 1) The process, Job Description, Person specification and Advert as appended to the papers was agreed along with the timeline to recruit.
 - 2) That a special Council will be called on 1st August to approve the appointment of a new clerk.

37 Update from the East Grinstead Museum

The Town Mayor noted that the advertised speaker of Lester Porter could not be with the Council today. The bids to support the extension at the museum have yet to be successful so the project has a brief set back. Lester will attend at another time to brief the Council, when hopefully the funds will be secured. In the meantime he welcomed Nick Hodges who had kindly agreed to attend to give an update on Town Twinning.

Town Twinning

Mr Hodges, advised that three of the committee members were present along with himself. He reminded the Council that East Grinstead was twinned with five towns in Europe and had one friendship town also. The purpose of Town Twinning was to promote good neighbourly bonds with other countries. East Grinstead has been twinned since 1962 with Bourg-De Peage and the others followed in in 1990s. The contractual relationship with the twinned towns is the East Grinstead Town Council and the conduit is EG Town Twinning. There are youth sports events each year held in each of the towns. Next year will be in Verbania, then San Fileu, East Grinstead will host in 2027. The Twinning Team want this event to be a whole town event along with Council involvement. This will be a tremendous event and needs to be funded. The Council grant is £500 per year, it is hoped this will be reconsidered to allow Twinning to meet their objective. Assistance with sponsorship and ideas as to where funding can come from along with organising and supporting the visit will be much welcome.

The three-day weekend could cost up to £30,000, which will need to be met in order to repay the wonderful hospitality that East Grinstead young people, Twinners and Town Mayors have received from the other towns over the years.

EG Twinning will continue to fund raise, look for new events and opportunities to fund raise, which will all help to fund the exchange event in 2027.

The Town Mayor seconded the wonderful events in the twinned towns and the relationships that have been built. Our young ambassadors who went to Bourg De Peage acquitted themselves with getting involved and representing the town so well.

Questions were asked:

Would the Mayors from the twinned towns come over as well? It was commented that they are funded roles on the continent and are different roles to the Mayoral role in East Grinstead.

There are no fund-raising events in the calendar at the moment, but hopefully in the autumn.

The schools choose the youngsters who will go to the exchange.

The EGBA should be involved with helping the fund raising, along with the various dance groups and schools.

It was commented that other Councils are not doing so well with Twinning and it is great to see the enthusiasm and the life in twinning in this town.

The Town Mayor noted that the Council will need to consider how they can help further and this can come back to a later committee.

The Town Mayor thanked the Council for their deliberations and stated that the date of the next ordinary meeting of the Town Council is Monday 7th October 2024, although a special meeting will be called for 1st August. He closed the meeting at 7.58pm.

Town Mayor

DRAFT