

**EAST GRINSTEAD TOWN COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE EAST GRINSTEAD TOWN COUNCIL**  
**ON MONDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2024 AT 7PM.**

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

\* = absent

Others present: Town Clerk, reps from Ashurst Wood Jnr FC, East Grinstead Sports Club, East Grinstead CC, Crawley Down/ Gatwick FC, EG Target Shooting Club and EG Town FC, 2 members of the public Along with 3 members of public in the zoom room

The Town Mayor welcomed all especially our guests and invited any questions

51 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

Along with sharing of a personal experience, a Question was asked as to what the Town Council is doing to protect people especially children regarding any allegation of abuse at the church of scientology.

The Town Mayor replied that the Council would struggle to reply to any details which may be subject to legal proceedings while outstanding.

He asked the Clerk to advise further who stated that allegations or concerns would be passed to Social Services, it is not in the Town Council remit.

It was further stated that the Church of Scientology did not comply with (District) Council procedures regarding their gala event in the Autumn and it was asked as to what is this Councils position as to the acceptance of gifts or hospitality which gives arise to concerns as to influence of the Church of Scientology, to what extent to Cllrs feel that attending events or accepting gifts or funds for charity bring the Council in to disrepute.

The Town Mayor replied that the Town Council and all Councillors adhere to the code of conduct. Mid Sussex DC have recently confirmed that the Town Councils procedures are robust in compliance with the code of conduct. Regarding the acceptance of charity cheques, it is common for the Mayor to receive cheques for good causes in the town and there is no issue as to influence. Indeed the Council is tonight issuing cheques to good causes.

He thanked the members of the public for their questions and then moved to the substantive agenda,

52 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

RESOLVED: To accept the following apologies

Cllr Scott	Unwell
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53 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes, of the meeting of 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2023 and that the Town Mayor sign them as a correct record.

54 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No new interests were declared

55 TOWN MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor advised as to the recipients of the youth sports grants to speak on behalf of the youth organisations. They spoke as to the clubs and how the funds are to be spent. A photograph was taken for a press release to highlight the clubs and their work supporting the youth sport community.

The Town Mayor then turned to his list of activities which are included in the minute. He thanked all who have supported the Mayoral charity events and all the organisations who work so hard for the town. A locally made film which was shown at the theatre in the town. He referred to his visit out with the street pastors on their rounds at a weekend. The fearlessness that the street pastors and good humour that they showed was amazing to see. The way that they are embraced by the community was also evident.

The Lions prostate testing event was a fantastic event, helping to identify men who need support and further medical attention.

The Mayor has been proud to attend the remembrance events and differently the big reveal which has changed so much from the humbling beginnings.

He had also attended the opening for the St Catherines hospice and the support they will give to families and those at end-of-life care is amazing to see.

The SSAFA concert and the panto were fun Christmas events, the Christmas carols at Sackville College is very special and he recommended all buy a ticket next year.

The being neighbourly Christmas lunch was heartwarming to see how our elderly people are supported by volunteers.

The foodbank bag pack was another good thing to be involved in before Christmas. The Greenaway foundation this year delivered to over 900 families, much needed support to our community and beyond.

This year started with the A level certificate presentations, and a new veteran's breakfast which is organised by a committee which has emerged from the ex services club. This will help so many. He thanked all who do so much to help our community.

October

7	Barn Dance
8	Horsham DC Chair Civic Service – DM attending
9	Chess Club – Grant cheque presentation
10	Sackville School Visit

14	Broken Eyes Premiere
21	EG Community Bonfire
23	Mayor's Reception
24	Greenaway Foundation – grant cheque presentation
28	Out with the Street Pastors
30	Charity Feast at Dom Domingo

#### November

3	Saint Haill Gala
5	Saint Hill Charity Concert
6	Talk at Beaver Group
9	PR Photo with EG Lions to promote their advert calendar
9	An Evening with Vox
10	Jan Stangryciuk funeral – Cllr Steve Barnett attending
11	Lions PSA testing
11	Lay a wreath in the High Stret
12	Remembrance Sunday
18	The Big Reveal
21	The Rotary Youth Speaks – DM to attend
23	St Catherine's Hospice Celebration
24	Twinning AGM
25	Saint Hill Christmas Light Switch On
28	Visit the Yoghurt Rooms
28	SSAFA Concert
29	Sackville Winter Concert

#### December

1	Turning on QVH Christmas lights
1	ATC Squadron Dinner
2	EG Choral Society – Performance of Messiah
4	Sackville College Carols
5	Being Neighbourly Christmas lunch
6	Veterans Breakfast
7	EG Foodbank Christmas Bag pack
9	Pantomime at Chequer Mead
11	EG Camera Club
17	Mayor's Christmas Carols
23	The Greenaway Foundation

#### January

4	Imberhorne School – A Level Certificate presentation
7	Veteran's Breakfast

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

The Leader advised, that Sunnyside Barn (the former St Barnabas hall) will be available for booking from beginning of February. We have some bookings already and will have an opening event, date to be advised.

The officers were thanked for all of their hard work. The end of the year is very busy but all events were well organised and attended.

Environmental and sustainable travel committee are a new committee, and thanks for their hard work and enthusiasm was given.

In response to question for the leader:

Cllr Farren and the officers were thanked for their hard work regarding St Barnabas in completing the purchase and making it user ready.

57 TO DISPOSE OF ANY BUSINESS OUTSTANDING FROM THE LAST MEETING

There was none

58 PRINCIPAL COUNCIL UPDATE

The Town Mayor welcome Cllr Ian Gibson from West Sussex County Council. He has been unwell and while in attendance his written report was read by the Clerk:

*The Introduction of a booking system at the Recycling centre in February has been confirmed. I endeavoured to call in the decision for review on the basis that the Cabinet Member had not presented any evidence of need as had been the case for its introduction at the Crawley Centre. The Call-in was supported by a Burgess Hill Lib Dem and two Chichester based Independents. I did not receive any support from other local Councillors. The request was dismissed by the County Monitoring Officer. The key reason was that the decision had been discussed and endorse by a Scrutiny Committee. The Committee discussion was actually inconclusive but the Monitoring Officer's decision is final.*

*I used the opportunity of written questions for the December Council to set out the information that I believe is required to support a decision to introduce a booking scheme, and to ask whether the Council had this. The question and the answers can be found on the WSCC Council meetings webpage. On the positive side, it turns out that, even without a booking system East Grinstead has the highest recycling rate of all the centres at 84%, and only drops to second when green waste is excluded. It is difficult to see how the booking scheme is going to improve these figures, given that East Grinstead is already ahead of centres operating the booking scheme.*

*The major pressures on the current year budget are in the children's, young people and learning and skills portfolio. These were predicted to be around £20M overspent on a £200M annual budget at the end of quarter 2. This overspend is in addition to the continuing growth in the education Direct Support Grant which is held off-budget. Quarter 3 figures should be available shortly. Notably the hand-over of the Woodland Mead Special Needs School has been delayed twice.*

*The Council will be setting the increase in Council Tax at the maximum allowed (3% plus 2% for adult social care) for the 24/25 Financial Year. The main pressures for setting a*

balanced budget are the increases in number of Special Educational Needs students and their home to school transport costs. There is also significant cost increases in capital projects. The new 4 form entry secondary school at Burgess Hill Brookleigh is being re-tendered after no affordable bids were received in response to the first tender. The specification, essentially a Passivhaus school, has not been changed.

Although the Imberhorne Farm application is being progressed and includes significant new sport facilities for Imberhorne School, there is no progress on the proposed relocation of the lower school from Windmill Lane to Imberhorne Lane. The inflationary increases in building costs will push up costs of the both the new buildings and the maintenance work needed at Windmill Lane. Against this background, there is expected to be significant pressures on year 7 secondary school places this autumn and a bulge class is being planned at Imberhorne Lane with the intention of a permanent change to an 11 form entry.

The roadworks at the Park Road / Maypole Road junction are the implementation of a Community Highways Scheme to make crossing from Crescent Road safer. Frankly, the layout revisions being implemented are not what the requesters wanted (the changes will force residents heading to Halstead Park and other schools to cross Park Road and then Maypole Road rather than just crossing Park Road to the western side of Maypole Drive). There is a lesson here about being careful what you wish for.

The Community Highways Scheme now has no fixed dates and applications are evaluated immediately. Implementation of anything other than the most minor works like painting the highway, will require the support of S106 funds. I cannot raise requests myself, I can only approve requests raised by others.

There is one outstanding CHS request in Imberhorne which is for a pedestrian refuge to make crossing the A22 London Road safer by Stream Park / Felwater Court. This scheme is unlikely to be considered until the outcome of the A22/A264 Corridor Study is known at the end of this year.

Regarding the A22/A264 Corridor Study, this was expected to conclude the review of previous studies by the end of last year, but no reports have been issued or announced and there have no further meetings of the Steering Group.

I am continuing to monitor the planned resurfacing of Heathcote Drive and the Dukes Head roundabout next Financial Year. do not have dates at the moment but tenders have been invited for both jobs.

Currently, flooding is a greater concern than potholes, but I would encourage everyone to report potholes on the WSCC Potholes webpage as soon as they emerge. The County target for repairs is 28 days; residents will be able to claim for damage if the pothole is not fixed by then. The County is paying out on a large number of claims from last winter, the process is slow. I think that most residents know to take photos and keep receipts.

With more local bus services being cut, particular links to West Hoathly, I thought that it was worth mentioning that the County introduced a Book-a-Bus service around Chichester last autumn. The mini-buses have no fixed routes or times, customers book on the day using an app called Pingu and have to be prepared to wait. This could be something that the Council should be pressing the County to introduce here given the need to reduce car usage.

The County is continuing to roll out EV charging points in partnership with MSDC and Connected Kerb. The focus has moved from car parks to residential streets. My experience is that residents don't want them because of the loss of parking spaces. Some Councils are testing systems like Charge Gully which enable houses without parking to charge their vehicles on the road in front of the house with the charging cable set in a secure channel cut

*in the pavement. This seems a good solution, although you can't always park in front of your house.*

*The County's upgrade of its business management systems covering finance, procurement, HR and payroll to ORACLE Fusion has run into some problems associated with data cleansing and the transfer of records. The programme is currently being reassessed. This is an activity which is expected to deliver major savings in administration costs for the Council.*

*The County is already looking ahead to May 25 elections and is holding a number of 'Be a Councillor' Events. The nearest to East Grinstead is in Crawley on 20<sup>th</sup> Feb 6.30pm.*

Cllr Ody thanked Cllr Gibson for this work on the amenity tip, it was noted that cyclists can now be accommodated in going to the tip.

He was thanked for his work on Heathcote Drive for the resurfacing. Cllr Gibson said that this work was due to go ahead and when he had dates he would happily advise. The Deputy town mayor gave a vote of thanks for the update.

## 59 TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEES

Cllr Ody proposed the planning committee minutes. Thanking the committee members for their work. 2024 looks as busy and eventful as 2023 was. He proposed the minutes of the planning meetings.

Cllr Ody proposed the Environment and Sustainable Travel Committee, again thanking his committee for their hard work, an exciting new committee and plenty of work to do over the coming year. He proposed the minutes

Cllr Whittaker proposed the minutes of the Public Services Committee. He updated on his full meeting on St Andrews day, he thanked the Vice Chairman and Clerk for the support to the committee. He referred to the new dispensing machine at the Day Lewis pharmacy on London Road. The Open spaces contract has just started and we are monitoring the changeover and effectiveness.

Committee were pleased to see the railway ticket offices proposal to close had been abandoned.

The new Sgt Doug Johnson was welcomed to the meeting and the PCSOs who work hard for the town.

The new CEO from the Queen Victoria Hospital spoke well, along with the ICB and the GP surgeries who are assisting with the improvements in health care across the town and particularly modality.

Foodbank gave a presentation, on the excellent work that they do to support those in most need.

Cllr Belsey proposed the Amenities & Tourism Committee minutes. Giving thanks to the committee for the exciting and fulsome meeting that was held in December.

Cllr Farren proposed the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Meeting. opting to keep her report short on this occasion.

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

	<b>Date</b>	<b>Page Nos</b>	<b>Minute No</b>
(a) Planning	16/10/2023	91-95	167-173
(b) Environmental & Sustainable Travel	19/10/2023	96-98	174-181
(c) Planning	06/11/2023	99-103	182-190
(d) Environmental & Sustainable Travel	23/11/2023	104-107	191-201
(e) Planning	27/11/2023	108-116	202-208
(f) Public Services	30/11/2023	117-123	209-221
(g) Amenities & Tourism	07/12/2023	124-128	210-225
(h) Finance & General Purposes	14/12/2023	129-133	226-245
(i) Planning	18/12/2023	134-138	246-253
(j) Environmental & Sustainable Travel	21/12/2023	139-143	254-264

60 TO AUTHORISE THE SEALING OF THE FOLLOWING DEEDS

The Town Mayor introduced the report.

RESOLVED: To approve the sealing of the exclusive rights of burial deeds: 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312 and 2313

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

The Council annually reviews these and adopts any changes based on best practice, legislative change or view of the Council. The current standing orders are based on the national model.

RESOLVED: To amend SO 5.6 to remove the words Town Promotion Manager and replace them with Estates and Civic Pride Manager.

The first motion from Cllr Pond was then moved as shown on the agenda.

RESOLVED: Standing Order 13a to insert "being the LGA Model Councillor Code of Conduct 2020 (approved by LGA 3.12.2020, as amended)", following the words "By the Council"

Cllr Pond then moved the additional standing order as set out in the agenda:

It was asked why there was a need to add anything to the code of conduct which already covers these points. Particularly the precise wording as to how this will apply, for example a trustee of chequer mead theatre, would need to add everything into the register including a cup of tea which is offered to the trustees when they have a meeting. Would that be included? The change of the threshold is not of concern but making changes above the national model would be a concern.

Additional concern as to moving away from the national model was raised and further time and advice were potentially needed to consider any unexpected ramifications that this may bring.

The Clerk gave some further advice as to how and why the processes are used. That it was for the Council to determine if they wish to have further clarity.

Cllr Pond summed up that he simply wanted to clarify the procedure that we currently use. The code is the framework and the standing order reinforce what the council will do.

An amendment to the motion was moved: to remove the words “of any value” after “refused” and replace with “if over £25” and remove the word in brackets after “estimated value”.

This was duly seconded and

RESOLVED: To remove the words “of any value” after “refused” and replace with “if over £25” and remove the words in brackets after “estimated value”

The Council then returned to the now amended substantive motion and

RESOLVED: to introduce a new Standing Order 13h : “In respect of code of conduct 10.2, all gifts and hospitality accepted, or refused, if over £25 should` be added to the hospitality book with an estimated value, and where the amount has exceeded £50 in value that entry should also be made in the declaration of interests within 28 days, which will then be notified to the Monitoring Officer by the Proper Officer of the Council. “

62 TO APPROVE THE DATES OF THE COUNCIL MEETINGS FOR 2024/25

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

Annual Council Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May  
Special Council 20<sup>th</sup> June  
Council 1<sup>st</sup> July  
Council 7<sup>th</sup> October  
Council 6<sup>th</sup> January  
Special Council 27<sup>th</sup> January  
Council 7<sup>th</sup> April

63 FINANCIAL RISK REGISTER

The Chairman introduced the report and explained there were a few amendments listed below:

Risk 8 : Impact downgraded from 3 to 2  
Risk 9 : Additional wording inserted in bold  
Risk 10 : Impact downgraded from 3 to 2  
Risk 11 : Impact downgraded from 3 to 2  
Risk 15 : Additional wording inserted in bold  
Risk 16 : Additional wording inserted in bold & likelihood of risk downgraded from 2 to 1  
Risk 17 : Additional wording inserted in bold  
Risk 18 : Additional wording inserted in bold  
Risk 19 : Impact downgraded from 2 to 1  
Risk 21 : Likelihood *upgraded* from 2 to 3

The RFO and Clerk along with other officers were thanked for their work on this amended risk register

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



64 EARMARKED RESERVES

The following earmarked reserves have been identified as not needed for the purpose that they were allocated. Council are requested to allow them to be vired for another use, specifically in this instance the purchase of furnishings for Sunnyside Barn.

Cost Centre 400/4099 defib batteries £1000 (leaving £321 in this reserve)

Cost Centre 999/4182 graffiti removal £2500 (leaving £1,819 in this reserve)

This will create a £3,500 earmarked reserve principally for new tables and chairs at Sunnyside Barn.

Council are recommended to approve the virement from these cost centres to 300/4061 of £3500 as detailed above.

RESOLVED: To vire the amount from the stated cost centres to create an earmarked reserve

The meeting was closed by the Town Mayor who reminded all that the date of the next meeting was Monday 29<sup>th</sup> January (budget and precept) and invited all to join him in the Mayor's Parlour for refreshment at 8.26pm.

Town Mayor