

EAST GRINSTEAD TOWN COUNCIL

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29th May 2024

A meeting of the **PUBLIC SERVICES COMMITTEE** is to be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER** at **EAST COURT** on **WEDNESDAY 5TH JUNE 2024** at **7pm**.

Questions relating to matters on the agenda may be submitted at the beginning of the meeting during public participation. The public are welcome to attend in person at East Court or via Zoom. The public need not give their name, but are required to advise whether they live in the East Grinstead Parish.

A request for the zoom link should be sent via email to towncouncil@eastgrinstead.gov.uk before 12 noon on the day of the meeting.

J W Holden,
Town Clerk.

ORDER OF MEETING

Public Participation: The public are welcome to attend the meeting in person or by virtual link to observe. Before the start of the substantive agenda there is an allotted period of up to 15 minutes where the public may ask a question of the Committee on matters that are contained on the substantive agenda for this meeting in line with Standing Order 1. The question should not be a statement nor in several parts and it would be appreciated to be kept short, to maximise the time for other questions; there is no right of reply and the Chairmans interpretation of the standing orders is final. Should there be no questions or the questions complete before the end of 15 minutes the Chairman will move along to the substantive agenda and public participation will end.

To request the zoom link, please contact townclerk@eastgrinstead.gov.uk no later than noon on the day of the meeting.

AGENDA

1. To commence not later than 7.15pm – apologies for absence.
2. To receive Minutes of the meetings held 7th March and 13th May 2024.
3. Chairman's Update (information item)
4. To receive Members Declarations of Interest.
5. Police Matters, A report from the clerk following a meeting with Inspector Derrick and Superintendent Imran Ashgar.
 - Insp Derrick is also expected to attend to update on current police activity in the town
6. EGBA - Grahame Russell from the East Grinstead Business Association will update the committee as to their role in the town.

7. Community Team report
To hear from the Community team as to current projects and work streams relating to this committee.
8. Delegated Decisions
To note the delegated decision regarding the petition issued to the District Council in March.
9. Car Parking Charges in Mid Sussex
An update on the timetable for the changes to car parking tariffs and the forthcoming consultation.
10. Public Toilets Contracts
To advise the committee as to the current position of the cleaning contract for public toilets in Mid Sussex, which East Grinstead Town Council has been part of since 2012.

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on **THURSDAY 12th September at 7pm**

Note re: PROTOCOLS IN THE RUN UP TO A GENERAL ELECTION

Committee are reminded that the Council is affected by the pre-election period to the General Election and discussion aimed at influencing how electors should vote is not allowed. The Town Council as an entity must remain political neutral during this period.

Agenda item 5: Police Matters

Purpose of Report: This is an update on police liaison and matters currently affecting the town:

As stats are not provided, Councillors are asked to access http://www.ukcrimestats.com/Police_Force/Sussex_Police and view their ward for updated crime statistics and comparisons.

Contacts:

Contact numbers are: emergency 999, non-emergency 101 but also the dedicated neighbourhood policing number for Mid Sussex 01273 404937 – a response is guaranteed within 72 hours so it is more for intelligence and reporting concerns rather than specific incidents that need response. The Confidential anti-terrorism line is 0800789321.

Current Issues

We are advised that cycles and motorcycles are still being targeted, but this is believed to be the work of a very small group, the Police are working on resolving this.

A street drinking ban was served on those who had been hanging around the Kings St Toilets, we are advised that they are not allowed to congregate together and not allowed to drink in public spaces. In addition a 20m cordon around the Kings St toilets has been effected. This was put in place as an acceptable behaviour contract via the District Council anti-Social behaviour team, was effective from 25th April and will last for a year.

Despite the public area protection notice on the birches industrial estate “joy riding” bikes and cars from there and progressing around the Imberhorne estate continues to cause disturbances on a Sunday night.

Inspector David Derrick will be in attendance and can give further updates for any policing matters in the town.

The Clerk met the new superintendent (Imran Ashgar) last month, he has joined Sussex Police from the Met, is very interested in community policing and hopes to attend a meeting to meet the councillors.

Officers Recommendation: This report is for noting

Environmental Implications: none

Financial Implications: None

Community safety implications: The liaison with the police assists the town council with helping to promote residents safety and perception of the prevalence of crime and response to this in the town.

Agenda Item 6: East Grinstead Business Association

Grahame Russell will attend to explain the role of the EGBA in the Town

Agenda Item 7: Community Services Team Update

Purpose of Report: To see the work of the Community Team in the past quarter. The Community and Tourism Team report jointly to this committee and the Amenities and Tourism Committee, Town Events are reported to A&T.

Youth Club

A Youth Worker and Youth Co-ordinator have been appointed. A meeting was held for interested parent volunteers and 12 attended. Tagert start of mid-September is achievable.

DISC

DISC is being used in East Grinstead with successful outcomes however this is a reminder to always report theft and anti-social behaviour.

Some stats for the first year (May '23-May '24):

There are 535 members signed up across Mid Sussex although 70 of these have never logged in. Miss Fletcher has been in contact with some of the East Grinstead members who are registered to encourage use and the PCSOs continue to promote DISC with retailers. From May '23 to May '24 there have been 50 incidents logged in East Grinstead.

Total Mid Sussex incident reports received: 545

Total Mid Sussex Incidents involving theft & attempt theft: 324

Unknown subjects identified: 87

Crime reports submitted: 244

Incidents by location Burgess Hill : 324 East Grinstead: 69 Haywards Heath: 99

April Stats

Total incident reports received: 50

Total Incidents involving theft & attempt theft: 37

Unknown subjects identified: 5

Crime reports submitted: 29

Incidents by location Burgess Hill: 28, East Grinstead: 12, Haywards Heath:16

Committee are reminded that the scheme is funded for the first three years from the P&CC office and the MSP (Mid Sussex Partnership, Safety group), It is vital to continue to encourage registration and use in order to show the worth of the scheme and keep this quick reporting mechanism available.

East Grinstead Town Council remains a signatory to the Mid Sussex Crime partnership.

SID update

The 28 day public order notice to inform residents of the 6 temporary socketed posts will go up on the 1st June. Then an S115 licence can be applied for then installation can go ahead.

A quote has been received from Balfour Betty for £4,263.14 for the installation, which has been agree by the Environmental and Sustainable Travel Committee

Sunnyside Barn

Sunnyside Barn bookings are steady with six regular hirers Monday to Friday and another two hirers who are looking to book from August / September. One of these, the home working group, had to put back their original booking due to difficulties with wi-fi connectivity however, this has been addressed and no further problems are reported. In the interim, we have put Russell Thompson, the leader of this group, in touch with Cllr. Steve Ody and the Small Business Networking Group to see if they can work together.

To date, weekend bookings have been mainly ad hoc (birthday party) bookings. Training on the on-line room booking system Rialtas has been booked and is due to take place in June.

Information on Sunnyside Barn together with prices and booking form can be found on the East Grinstead Town Council website or the dedicated email address; sunnysidebookings@eastgrinstead.gov.uk

Farmers Market

Despite the dreadful weather, we have retained our regular stall holders, fish, cheese, coffee, bakery, falafel and honey. We have also added a new flower stall for the summer.

Community and Tourism Desk Enquiries

The Team have responded to approximately 132 Tourist and 167 Community enquiries since last report. The main information requests include 'what's on' group and club information, travel enquiries, queries around the new refuse site booking system, event information and several requests from people who have moved to East Grinstead and are new to the area.

The Team finally moved on 29th April. On entering the library, the team are now on the left of the main doors, next to Citizens Advice. The desk fits our needs better for space and it is branded as EGTC. The information leaflets aren't all in place yet as we are waiting for WSCC to provide leaflet holders and move the carousel from the old location.

Officers recommendation: This report is for noting

Environmental Implications: none

Financial Implications: none

Community Safety Implications: the work of the team compliments the police, neighbourhood speedwatch and West Sussex County Childrens Services, this work is positive to reduce community tensions and promote safety issues.

Agenda Item 8: Delegated decisions

The Clerk was approached in March asking that the Council be included in a public petition concerning the proposed car parking increases from April. The Clerk advised that this could happen, but due to the impending local election the petition could not take place during the pre-election period which would start on the day of the nominees being declared (26th March). The petition was organised by the East Grinstead Business Association and was handed in to the District Council on 26th March therefore not intruding on the pre-election period.

The Clerk in discussion with the Chair and Vice Chair of this committee agreed that East Grinstead Town Council would be a signatory to the petition.

Recommendation : Committee are asked to note this decision

Agenda Item 9: Car Parking Charges in East Grinstead

Purpose of report: To update the committee on the position as to changing car parking regime in the towns of Mid Sussex, including East Grinstead

Background:

- 1) Mid Sussex DC announced in the budget meetings that they are intending to start charging in their car parks for Bank Holidays and Sundays as well as elongating the charging times on other days to 8pm. At the same time the charges for East Grinstead short term car parks were announced for an increase by 30p an hour to £1.30. The increase is to encourage churn (turnover) in the car parks, as it is acknowledged that East Grinstead is lacking in car spaces. The reason for the increase is to bring forward the ten-year parking strategy agreed some years ago and will allow investment in MSDC car parking facilities.
- 2) This Town Council in concord with the East Grinstead Business Association launched a petition to call for a rethink on the increased charges and also a consultation on the increased charging times.
- 3) Mid Sussex have now advised that to charge at these additional times requires an Amendment Order as opposed to a Variation Order (which changes the tariff on the usual times) and that a Variation Order is subject to a 21day consultation. A notice is expected to be issued from Mid Sussex District Council on 30th May to advise of the timetable and legal process for the consultation. We are told that the consultation will not start until after the general election due to the restraint on consultations during the pre-election period. Following the consultation, Mid Sussex will then decide when, if at all they will commence charging for evenings and bank holidays.
- 4) Mid Sussex further advised that in the autumn they are to start additional consultation regarding charging for parking in the village parishes. This will not affect East Grinstead. The villages will be reviewed to determine the proposals to then go back to Mid Sussex DC for consideration. Any new charging in the villages will not come into effect until at least April 2025.
- 5) In an email from the District Council's Monitoring Officer we are advised that the petition will go no further as it would require revisiting a decision made by Council within a 6 month period. This is not allowed under the Local Government Act 1972.

Recommendation: By the time the Committee meets, the notice will have been received and circulated. The Committee will have the consultation, when it is released, referred to them for views and a reply can be drawn up. It may fall between Committees and will follow the Councils procedure for consultation via the Consultation Working Group. At this time the position is to be noted.

Financial implications: none

Environmental implications: none

Community Safety implications: none

Agenda Item 10: Public Toilets cleaning contracts

Purpose of report: This item is to advise the committee as to the position of the cleaning contract for public toilets which were included in the Mid Sussex District Council contract (including those who piggy backed on to the contract).

1. The contract comes to an end imminently. East Grinstead Town Council has been a party to the Mid Sussex contract since the opening of the Kings St Toilets back in 2012, both Kings St and the East Court public toilets are included in the Mid Sussex contract, Mid Sussex are billed in entirety and then bill us. Officers contacted Mid Sussex DC in the early part of this year to ask as to the position, as we were advised by the existing contractor that they had not been re-awarded the contract.
2. Mid Sussex have yet to advise who the contractor is, so we are unaware of the details at this time. We remain a little concerned that we have not been contacted by MSDC despite numerous emails and phone calls concerning the matter.
3. It has also become known that the current contractor, for those outside of the contract, has advised that for them to continue with their existing provider, it will result in a 72% increase in costs. This is a matter for our Amenities and Tourism Committee regarding the cost of the contract and how this goes forward for EGTC. We believe we are in the main contract and are simply waiting to be told what our costs will be. However, this is not the case of the other parishes and we are aware of public toilets in West Hoathly Parish, Turners Hill Parish and Horsted Keynes Parishes that are outside the contract. Faced with a significant increase in costs this may be difficult for some toilets to remain operational.
4. The public toilets that are operated by the parish councils are almost exclusively those which were once Mid Sussex District Council operated and have been devolved to the Parishes as the District no longer wished to continue providing these. At the recent communications meeting between the Parishes and District, this history was pointed out and further that as Mid Sussex are able to command a better price due to economies of scale, working together on this contract and allowing access to all really was important. This was taken on board by MSDC.
5. The concern for the committee to be aware of, is that if the parishes are faced with significant increases they may struggle to keep the toilets open. That is not anticipated to be an issue for East Grinstead at this time. Committee are also asked to note that the providers for the Queen Walk toilets is private and therefore not directly affected by the change in contracts (although the contractor is the same one as previously held the MSDC contract).

Recommendation: Officers recommend a letter should be issued to Mid Sussex sharing our disappointment as to how this situation has come about and urging Mid Sussex to ensure that the parishes can access the MSDC contract now and in the future should Parishes wish to.

Financial Recommendations: unknown at this time

Environmental implications: if the toilets are forced to close due to significant price increases this will have a detrimental affect on the town.

Community Safety implications: none

Officers Report Ends