



EAST GRINSTEAD TOWN COUNCIL

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PUBLIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 7pm on Thursday 13th March 2025

Committee Members: Cllr Reeves (Chairman)
Cllr Whittaker (Vice Chairman)
Cllr Ody (Town Mayor)*
Cllr J Belsey (Deputy Town Mayor)*
Cllr Barnett
Cllr M Belsey
Cllr Gibson*
Cllr Hughes
Cllr Scott*
* = absent

In attendance: Town Clerk
Community & Tourism Manager

307. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Two members of public were in attendance. One query was raised regarding the meet the police sessions at Chequer Mead, would it be possible to have a confidential space to use in case of raising a sensitive matter? To be flagged with Insp DD and CM. Another matter raised was the work at Evergreen Farm; the road widening condition imposed as a condition to be met prior to work starting had not been completed. The Clerk had written to WSCC to flag this and was waiting for a response and would enquire who the project contact was to try and arrange a site meeting, Cllr Whittaker offered to be the liaison regarding this matter. Concerns around the timings of the vehicles arriving and leaving the site were also raised.

308. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Gibson made his apologies which were accepted.

309. MINUTES

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the meetings held on 5th December 2024 and 9th January 2025.

310. CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

A reminder that all future meetings will be held on Tuesday evenings. James Lowell, former CEO at Queen Victoria Hospital (QVH), had been seconded to another location and Abigail Jago had taken over as Acting CEO. EGTC wished Mr Lowell every success in the future. The planning application for the expansion of QVH was now being considered. The Imberhorne Lane housing scheme had been approved by MSDC including a

community building for health or NHS use, discussions were underway between the developer and Sussex Health Board.

311. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

312. POLICE MATTERS

Inspector Derrick was unable to attend the meeting due to a prior engagement and had submitted a written report for review (copied below).

Police continued to operate in East Grinstead in various area.

- Uniform PCs from NPT and Response teams are in EG daily answering calls.
- Plain clothed officers attend the town visiting victims of crime.
- Officers in covert capacity have operated in the town targeting people of interest.
- A robbery was committed in the town centre in recent days. This was a drug deal gone wrong and police are investigating.
- Neighbourhood teams police the town daily responding to ASB and other low level activity
- We have been monitoring the areas near the cinema where street drinkers seem to frequent, albeit less in colder months but we are ready for the spring.
- Since the last time I attended there was a domestic Murder committed in the town, and this continues to be investigated with no other people involved. This was inside a private address.

The Clerk would enquire about an incident which had occurred in town on Saturday night (8th March). Investigation into the provision of a High Street location for a police station was underway with a meeting being arranged to take place before the end of March 2025 to discuss further.

Cuppa with a Copper was a great initiative and very welcome for the town, however more notice and more dates would be great. Would it be possible to attend the East Court Live events and perhaps join councillors at their Saturday surgeries.

It had been reported that motorbikes were driving through the footpaths around the rear of Ashplats Woods, with a request for additional signage or more bollards to be installed to discourage this.

313. UPDATE FROM GRENESTEDE TALKING NEWS

Gill Beeney, the Chair of Grenestede Talking News was welcomed to the committee meeting and gave an update regarding their current activities.

Founded in 1978, this small charity produced a monthly reading of local news and events free of charge to visually challenged members of the community of East Grinstead and surrounding areas. There were approximately 33 recipients of this service, mostly of an older generation. Most receive a CD, some a memory stick. The committee meets 4 times a year with an AGM at East Court. Funding is provided via grants and donations as they do not have an income stream.

Volunteers run the charity. Each month local information and news is gathered and a script of approx. 6,000 words is prepared. Once a month the script was read and recorded and a master copy created with copies produced for distribution. The old CDs were returned and new CDs posted to recipients free of charge via the Post Office.

Finances were needed to pay for studio rent, equipment replacements and CDs.

The service provided a lot of help and enjoyment to those in need. The people involved and enthusiasm shown was awe inspiring.

314. **COMMUNITY TEAM REPORT**

The Community & Tourism Manager provided a community team update.

Youth Club was going well at Sunnyside, interest was still exceeding capacity and so it continued to run on an alternate week basis. Local parents were providing valuable volunteer support.

Demand remained for an older youth group for age 13+ young adults as well as increasing the youth club facility to allow weekly attendance.

Worth Council was interviewing next week to recruit a part time youth worker, they would enquire whether this person may be interested in working in East Grinstead also.

The Clerk would explore funding opportunities to support this, with Committee preference being prioritisation of the older youth club provision.

The SIDs had been in place on Holtye Road and Dunnings Road for 3 months and the results had been shared with the Committee. Key points to note were that vehicle movements were incredibly high on Dunnings Road especially compared to last year, however the location of the SID just before a right turning may be skewing data. 11% of vehicles were recorded speeding. Holtye Road vehicle numbers were lower than anticipated with speeding levels at 6%. Once data was established future traffic calming measures could be explored.

3 months was the maximum length of time a SID could be in a single location. Two SIDs were moved around 6 locations within the town.

A Pubwatch meeting had taken place with learnings being shared by neighbouring schemes. All individuals banned by Pubwatch were logged with DISC to share information. DISC was just starting to be used more by organisations within the town.

Sunnyside Barn still showed some capacity, with a range of regular and new hirers. The Farmers market was still running through all weathers.

Interviews for the upcoming vacancy within the Community & Tourism team were taking place next week.

315. **DEMENTIA ALLIANCE**

Dementia Awareness week would be taking place on 19th to 25th May 2025. The forget-me-nots would be placed on the lawns outside Sackville College, and once details of other events had been obtained these would be signposted by the Community & Tourism team.

Age UK was now providing 5 days per week of dementia care which was of great benefit to the community, this had expanded from 1 day per week over the past 5 years.

316. **COMMUNITY HIGHWAYS SCHEMES**

Committee considered the Estcots/Sackville School active travel improvements proposed for Bourg de Peage.

Committee was broadly supportive of the proposed scheme whilst noting the careful balance required between pedestrians and vehicles at schools. A question was raised regarding funding for the scheme, and the timeline for the works to be completed. Confirmation of support of the County Councillor for the scheme would be established.

Committee noted the WSCC feedback regarding the crossing facilities on London Road and the widening of the footway from Felwater Court, and hoped the scheme would be successful when included in a future capital programme for consideration.

317. **BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE**

Committee reviewed the business plan items identified and noted there were no further comments to make at this time.

- To continue to scrutinise the services provided by the Principal Authorities West Sussex County Council and Mid Sussex District Council, and Sussex Police, Fire & Rescue, holding them accountable for the services provided to the residents of the town
- To identify and support new initiatives (not necessarily delivered by the Council) for community support
- To respond to consultations as appropriate to influence and ensure that East Grinstead residents receive affordable, accessible services

The continued focus of this committee regarding public engagement was welcomed.

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 8.03pm, having advised that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday 3rd June 2025 at 7:00pm.

SIGNED:

CHAIRMAN: