

**EAST GRINSTEAD TOWN COUNCIL**

**PUBLIC SERVICES COMMITTEE – 7<sup>th</sup> MARCH 7.00pm**

Committee Members: Cllr Whittaker (Chairman)  
Cllr Reeves (Vice Chairman)  
Cllr Visser\* (Town Mayor)  
Cllr Ody (Deputy Town Mayor)  
Cllrs: Barnett, Gibson\*, Hughes & Scott\*

Others present: Cllr Farren, Town Clerk, Community and Tourism Manager, Bob Shelley (EG Sports Council), Sasha Brown (MSVA), James Lowell (QVH)

\*\* present via zoom (this does not count as present under the Local Government Finance Act 1972 for voting purposes)

\*= Absent

317. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

No public attended, therefore the committee moved to the substantive agenda.

318. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from

Cllr Ian Gibson	Personal Commitment
Cllr Tony Scott	Personal commitment

Committee also **RESOLVED**: that Cllr Farren would substitute for Cllr Scott.

319. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the meetings held on 30<sup>th</sup> November and 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024

320. **CHAIR'S UPDATE**

The Chairman gave the following updates for the committee

**WSCC HIGHWAYS**

After the much improved progress of potholes repairs last summer with a new officer & contractor team - unfortunately this autumn and winter has seen our towns roads deteriorate even faster and further.

Key road traffic routes such as Turners Hill road , Imberhorne lane , Heathcote drive , Gardenwood road are in a dreadful state - with the level of social media complaints and notifications of tyre / wheel damage greatly increased.

The Dukes Head roundabout surface remains an embarrassment.

What makes matters worse - is that we see our immediate neighbours in Tandridge very well served by Surrey CC Highways who are prompt with pothole repairs to the A264 , and have a good resurfacing programme , including Newchapel road and Tilburstow Hill road ( Blindley Heath to Godstone ) totally surface replaced recently.

Update from Cllr Gibson

- *WSCCs highways maintenance programme is covered by two funding streams - £17M (2024/5) from capital and £4.5M from revenue. The latter is a temporary enhancement to try and fix problems. This is the second year that the enhancement has been funded (so maybe not so temporary). The funding covers roads, pavements, drainage, signage, grass cutting and street lighting. The current maintenance backlog is costed at £150M.*
- *The core maintenance programme sets standards for pothole repairs, gully cleansing cycle, etc. The contractor self-certificates when a job has been completed and the level of inspection by Highways staff is inadequate (due in part to difficulties in recruitment, but mainly just the volume). The number of potholes reported is still significantly above historical levels and many of the repairs are undertaken on a 'make safe' safe basis. Officers suggest that it is these repairs (rather than cut and fill) that are failing and require revisiting. Officers stated that cut and fill is now the standard unless circumstances dictate otherwise. There are problems in identifying whether a reported problem is the failure of an existing repair or a new pothole and there are no KPIs for the duration beyond the SLA of 28 days to fix a pothole. The only penalty is that the contractor has to make good inadequate repairs at their own cost. The make safe approach is being applied to large areas of road surface where re-surfacing is planned (like the Dukes Head roundabout and Heathcote Drive - I have still not been able to confirm that the July date for the works). This makes some sense to avoid wasting money, but the public has a right to be critical. The system does not incentivise the contractors workmen to do anything other than the work that they are specifically tasked to do. New systems are being developed to identify gullies that require intervention and the frequency of their cleansing cycle is being increased. Problems with gullies such as tree roots require CCTV inspection which requires multiple visits.*
- *The £4.5M extra funding is being used to target these issues. The funding is being used as follows:*
- *£786K to fund an extra jet patcher (the core programme funds two). There is a suggestion that jet patcher repairs have a high failure rate and the strength of the tarmac has been increased. They are productive in terms of area but are restricted to mainly rural areas because of concerns that the tarmac spray will coat private properties.*
- *£744K to fund an extra patching gang, early repair of 'non-intervention defects' (to stop them becoming intervention defects) adjacent to potholes and other proactive repair.*
- *£880K for additional cleansing of gullies and ditch clearance*
- *£585K for CCTV and jetting of gullies- 2 extra CCTV gangs.*
- *£225K for road signs, clearing vegetation off footpaths and rural grass cutting*
- *£780K for extra staff for more pro-active management of the highway and the contractor.*

## PHARMACIES

I have visited the newly taken over Moatfield pharmacy (ex Lloyds) which is now operating very smoothly with the new independent owners.

Also the Day Lewis pharmacy in Felbridge keeps expanding its services - and its recently installed 24 hour prescription dispenser wall machine working very well and popular with the public.

## DENTISTS

There has been a good deal of National press recently about the dentistry industry - particularly relating to the lack of access to NHS dentist services & charges. I have undertaken a brief survey within East Grinstead and surrounds. There are twenty advertised dental practices of which six state they have limited access to NHS services for children 17 years or under. NHS band charges are: Band 1 £ 26 / Band 2 £ 71 / Band 3 £ 306.

## MODALITY

The previous CQC report was published in June 2023. Modality are required to undertake a continuous improvement plan to move out of the current inadequate rating. A further interim six monthly inspection was agreed - and this is due for publication soon. EGTC remain in close communication with all leading local NHS primary care network providers, and we are informed that Modality are actively recruiting new GP's and other staff.

## POLICE MATTERS

EGTC through the Clerk retain very close communications with Sussex Police at all levels. This includes the Police & Crime commissioner's team, District Commander, District Neighbourhood Inspector David Derrick, Area Sargeant Doug Johnson, and Chief PCSO Chris Lovelock. Main issues in the period have been East Court estate serious ASB activity, suspicious activity adjacent to Imberhorne / Sackville schools , and town centre shoplifting and street drunkenness.

## FOODBANK DIALOGUE

EGTC continue to communicate and work closely with EG Foodbank following their presentation at the 30 November Public Services Committee. A further joint community group stakeholder meeting (chaired by Foodbank) was held on 21 February attended by the chair. A fuller report is included in Agenda item 11 of this meeting.

The objective is to create a unified joint support network of all town community groups to share information and resources.

## IMBERHORNE SCHOOL

Lee Walker is leaving at Easter, the dep head Kitty Marlborough will be interim for the summer term with a recruitment exercise

## PARKING

Increase of the car parking charges in the Mid Sussex Car Parks will take effect from April. The charges are an increase of 30% and will also include Sundays and bank holidays and 2 additional hours through to 8pm.

## CCTV

The temporary cameras have been put in at East Court and Mount Noddy. There have been some early teething problems with the East Court camera but they are operational and hoped to help deter the ASB that we have seen on the lower part of the estate.

## LOWDELLS LANE

The CCTV has been put in at the lane now by Clarion. The final part of the work depends on the WSCC position as to the BOAT and whether this can be removed. The lane has been confirmed as in the ownership of WSCC highways and they are taking over any long term aspiration as to upgrading the lane. However the small working group will no doubt continue to push this forward to make the lane a really viable cycle and footpath.

### 321. TO RECEIVE MEMBERS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were no new declarations of interest

### 322. POLICE MATTERS

Due to operational issues Insp Derrick was unable to be present to give an update on the current work of the Neighbourhood policing team. He sent the following brief update:

*Police continue to address ASB issues in East Grinstead and targeting issues when identified from communities or Council.*

*We have (this week) run intensify days where all of Mid Sussex resources were in EG at one time supporting businesses that suffer from theft or ASB.*

*We work with the council concentrating on properties that cause us issues with tenants and work with MSDC ensuring we address those issues.*

*My teams remain committed to ensuring EG is policed the best we can and more important we do not ever say no to a request from elected officials or their staff.*

*Inspector D Derrick.*

### 323. QVH STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT MILESTONE ROADMAP

The Chair introduced Mr Lowell, in doing so he mentioned the staff survey results published today which show that QVH is in the top quartile as a place to work which is great to hear. James Lowell CEO from the Queen Victoria Hospital then spoke to the strategy that is being put together. The QVH wants to supply great services to the community and also nationally for the specialist work. The Hospital has no ambition to become a general hospital so has determined what it will be and what it will not, which is a good pathway forward. Working

with Kent, Surrey and Sussex ICB for commissioning of services. In addition national services are being looked at for commissioning across the country.

There is a huge amount of clinical engagement which is helpful at the forefront of the strategy.

There are 60 apprenticeships in place at the moment and this is hoped to be grown. It was asked as to what the plans were for the community hub, it is a two-story building and there will be some imaging, diagnostic, phlebotomy and possibly others services there.

It was asked as to how well provided for senior staff the hospital is. The reply was that they have no concerns in this area, new staff are starting and there is a substantive executive team in place.

James was thanked for attending and updating the committee.

#### 324. MSDC CONTRACT FOR GREEN SPACES AND LANDSCAPING

Nick Brooks the contract manager for the MSDC contract was in attendance to explain the new contract.

He advised that Glendale have been in existence for 30 years. The company is based on arboriculture, landscaping and basically anything that is green. The company is run as a family trust. They have over 30 contracts in the UK. The new MSDC contract is an innovative contract, engaging stakeholders and the public to be part of the conversation. Rangers and sports bookings have also been transferred to Glendale. They have a Community Development Officer as a shared resource who is based at the office. Living Wage contract on 45 hours per week, has encouraged some really good applicants from the local area. There will be at least 2 apprenticeships on the contract at all times.

Working with local groups such as the sports council will help to make sure that the contract is delivering what the local community want.

Locally based in Plumpton Green, the operational team are all in place. Emptying bins, drainage channels and marking out sports pitches was the immediate work to deal with. Bob Shelley from the sports council said that he was looking forward to working with them to improve the sports pitch quality.

Questions and answers followed, covering: Community fund is available for community development works. The new community development officer is Sam Smith, she starts in a week's time. Looking at sustainable work and projects to improve the standard of maintenance to the green spaces.

Friends of groups, how might these be taken forward? The community development officer will be interested in where the groups are and what they are doing and how Glendale can help. Some community growth and sharing good practice through a website is also an initiative that has worked elsewhere.

Maintenance - hedgerows and verges, are these under your remit? Yes everything once you step off the main road in to the green space. Closed church yards etc.

It was noted that some of the sports pitches are so poor that clubs are going out of district to find training and playing pitches.

It was asked as to the opportunity for the subcontracting of work to the Town Council, we lost some of the work that we used to do with the new contract, so we would like to have a conversation. This was welcomed

The Vice Chair of the committee lead a vote of thanks to Nick Brooks and also Bob Shelley for attending the meeting for this item.

325. HEALTH UPDATE

This was noted

326. COMMUNITY TEAM REPORT

Alice introduced her report specifically regarding the youth project idea and Sasha from MSVA was also in attendance for this item and gave support for the council to support the youth provision in the town as there was no youth clubs in the town.

Questions followed as to the previous youth provision, what were the activities and costs that the previous group optioned, how many youngsters would be expected. The plan is to start with the younger age groups and then in time to grow the group and

**RESOLVED:**

1. Committee confirmed that they wish in principle to support the setting up of a Youth Club at Sunnyside Barn and in the longer term Kings Centre.
2. Committee confirmed that they are amenable for the youth worker and co-ordinator to be employed by the Council but this will be subject to a full break down of the costs of the staff to be presented to a future Finance and General Purposes Committee.

327. DEMENTIA ACTION ALLIANCE

Committee noted the report, the Clerk ran through some of the activities planned and strongly advised everyone to go along and be involved in an event if possible.

328. MULTI-AGENCY SIGNPOSTING TO TACKLE COST OF LIVING

The report was noted

The next full meeting of the Committee will be held on **Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2024** at 7:00pm. The chairman ended the meeting at 8:15pm

SIGNED:

CHAIRMAN