



EAST GRINSTEAD TOWN COUNCIL

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AMENITIES AND TOURISM COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 7pm on Tuesday 24th March 2026

Committee Members: Cllr E Godwin (Chairman)
Cllr T Hughes (Vice Chairman)
Cllr S Barnett*
Cllr J Belsey (Town Mayor)*
Cllr M Belsey
Cllr H Farren
Cllr J Mockford
Cllr A Peacock*
Cllr S Reeves (Deputy Town Mayor)*
* = absent

In attendance: Town Clerk
Cllr S Ody
Community & Tourism Manager
Cemetery and Compliance Manager
Estates Manager

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None present.

34. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs Barnett and Peacock were noted absent.

35. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

36. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 6th January 2026.

37. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

38. TO CONSIDER THE ACTIONS LIST

The actions list was reviewed and noted.

39. **TOURISM REPORT**

Social media hits had been slightly lower over the past quarter, however the number of followers had increased by over 300. The library desk continued to be well attended.

The recent Health and Wellbeing event had been successful with 11 of the 60 attendees being referred on for further health checks as a result of high blood pressure and/or elevated blood glucose levels. Although not high numbers, it felt like those who attended found it genuinely valuable. The providers in attendance also found the session useful as it allowed them to meet with and have discussions with other providers in the area. Falls were a particular issue within the town, and Kings Centre was running a class to try and improve strength relating to this. Targeted leafleting would be included in prescription bags to help publicise this.

Explorations into increasing the number of screening providers would be done to try and further enhance a future event.

The formal invitation to tender for the sound and stage provision at East Court Live had been issued and the 6 responses had been received, with Highgain being instructed to provide support for 2026 from a shortlist of 2. Details of the quotes received had been included in the report for this item, and attention was drawn to the range of the quotes shared. The budget for East Court Live in 2027 should be considered in light of this as it would become increasingly difficult to deliver these major flagship events to the same scale and standard without any increase. Committee was requested to share any thoughts or ideas regarding the future of East Court Live with the Community & Tourism team.

South East Water had confirmed they would not be sponsoring the event in future, however they had made a £1,000 donation towards the 2026 programme. A suggestion was made to approach local businesses to see if they would be interested in taking up a sponsorship package in 2027.

The Facebook and social media content was recognised again as being hugely improved over the past year.

The report was noted.

40. **ESTATES AND CIVIC PRIDE**

A comprehensive report of all activities that had taken place over the previous quarter had been presented.

The proposed new partnership agreement with MSDC for street name plate maintenance had been received, the team was in the process of reviewing the changes before agreeing to the terms.

Public Toilets: a quote had been received to replace the vandalised door, however due to the door only being available from Canada the transportation costs were higher than the cost of the replacement door. As a result the team was exploring replacing the inner cubicles as a cost and value comparison, due to the age of the existing fixtures.

South East Water had connected the water fountain to a new supply pipe, however no evidence of water quality testing had been provided to date despite many requests.

RESOLVED: Committee agreed that, subject to satisfactory water quality tests and the consent of our insurer, the water fountain could be turned on for the summer months. If the

test results were inadequate, the fountain would remain turned off. Usage of the fountain would continue to be monitored to determine whether there was sufficient demand to justify it remaining operational. Officers were granted delegated authority to make decisions regarding the future of the fountain based on the outcomes of the water quality tests.

The boiler at the Old Court House had broken down and, due to its age, was now deemed to be irreparable. Quotes obtained were in excess of £20k for replacements, further quotes to be sought. Alternative heating sources would be explored to assess whether these would be viable.

A boiler at East Court had also failed, and it had been advised by the manufacturers that the main part of failure was no longer available. The other parts required that were available would cost several thousand pounds to purchase and install. Another contractor had attended and advised that replacement would be necessary for 2 of the boilers, not just the one that had failed.

RESOLVED: A full proposal of options for replacements at both buildings was requested for presentation at the next committee meeting. It was also recommended to liaise with Chequer Mead as they had been experiencing similar issues.

The remainder of the report was noted.

41. **BURIAL SERVICES**

Replacement signage had been installed at the entrance to Mount Noddy Cemetery to state more clearly the expectations of use, with a second sign installed at the entrance of section 5C. Strimming had commenced, with grass cutting to follow. The Outdoor Services team had also been instructed to ensure all burial plots were turfing immediately after interments had taken place.

Southern Water had reversed into the car park wall at the cemetery, they were sending a member of their legal team to review the damage. The updated burial fees had been shared with all local funeral directors.

A small flail had been purchased to enable the team to stay on top of the maintenance required at Queens Road Cemetery, this would also be used for general hedge cutting. Planting within the cemetery continued to be addressed to ensure all plots met the requirements of the terms and conditions as a working grass cemetery.

A decision regarding release of S106 funding to purchase the columbarium for Mount Noddy was still outstanding. Once approval was received, it was expected to take approximately 6 months for installation to be achieved.

Memorial testing continued, and of the 34 memorials which had been laid flat for safety reasons, 3 had been reinstated safely by families. A wobble testing course was being run at East Grinstead with new staff attending alongside approximately 10 attendees from neighbouring councils.

The insurance repair for the damage incurred to the wall at Queens Road was still in hand, with new bricks awaited before this work could be finished. A meeting had been held with Belfry residents regarding the goats returning to the cemetery and other general maintenance matters.

The rest of the report was noted with thanks.

42. **BOOKINGS & CARETAKING**

Installation of the new audio visual equipment for the Council Chamber had been completed, however it was not working as intended. Due to availability of the room and installation company, attendance on site was scheduled for 2nd April. A detailed timeline of all issues experienced had been shared with the company to demonstrate that so far the equipment provided was not fit for purpose.

Four new regular hirers had been secured at East Court, Sunnyside Barn and the Old Court House. The premises licence had been successfully transferred to the F&GP Committee, and the wedding licence was currently undergoing the renewal process.

The rest of the report was noted with thanks.

43. **TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE REGARDING THE FUTURE OF KING GEORGE'S FIELD AND THE PROPOSAL FOR INSTALLATION OF A PERMANENT PUMP TRACK**

- To consider whether it would be agreeable to enter into a lease for use of the site, and what the ideal length of time might be.
- To consider a ballpark budget to guide discussions relating to scope and installation of a permanent pump track.

RESOLVED: A splash pad was also suggested as an additional option for the site. The Committee considered £100,000 to be a reasonable initial sum to commence planning, while acknowledging that full development and improvement of the site would require significantly more. Officers were tasked with establishing the existing costs of maintaining the field and pond. A peppercorn rent of £1 and a lease term of at least 25 years was proposed to MSDC.

44. **TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE REGARDING EAST GRINSTEAD'S ENTRY INTO THE UK TOWN OF CULTURE 2028 AND RATIFY THE EXPENDITURE FOR THE BID SUPPORT**

A community engagement event had been held on Monday 16th March, 59 people attended and it was a really buzzing evening with lots of valuable and positive feedback received, and the blend of regular contributors alongside new faces had been particularly welcome.. Many community groups and residents had expressed their support for the scheme, with 89 responses received on the online survey to date.

Officers had been working with the bid writer to formulate the Town of Culture bid, there was stiff competition for the short list but the team was optimistic that we had done our best to meet the requirements.

The concept of the Town of Culture blended well with the findings of the Town Improvement plan, and both contained valuable findings which would help formulate the future business plan and priorities of the Town Council..

45. **TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE REGARDING THE TENNIS CLUB RENEWAL OF THE USE OF THE EAST COURT TENNIS COURTS, AND CONSIDER WHETHER THIS SHOULD BE PROGRESSED AS A LICENCE OR A LEASE**

It was advised that the existing licence arrangement for the exclusive use of the tennis court was not the most appropriate legal mechanism, as licences were typically short-term arrangements that were renewed annually and did not grant exclusive possession. As the

court had been used exclusively by the club, a lease would be more appropriate, as this provided greater security of tenure and could be granted for a longer period of years.

RESOLVED: Move to a lease arrangement with the tennis court as this was more suitable for their occupation.

Confidential Business: Council resolved to exclude the press, broadcast media and public (pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960) during consideration of the following confidential business to be conducted:

46. **TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE REGARDING PROGRESS OF THE SALE OF ST MARGARET'S LOOP INCLUDING CONFIRMATION OF THE AUCTION DATE, AND TO RESOLVE WHETHER TO SET A RESERVE AND IF SO, WHAT THE RESERVE SHOULD BE**

RESOLVED: Council considered the options identified in the confidential report and opted to instruct Option 2, which was Emson auctioneers, with an auction date of 5th May 2025 and fees of 1% (minimum £1,250+VAT). This was aligned with Railway Paths who were also listing their adjoining plot for sale at the same auction.

The recommended guide price and reserve price was accepted. This would be confirmed with the auctioneers once the F&GP committee had formally agreed at their meeting on 31st March 2026. Buyers would be requested to cover the auction fees and contribute £1,000 towards legal expenses.

47. **TO CONSIDER THE TOWN IMPROVEMENT PLAN FEASIBILITY STUDY**

The town improvement feasibility study was reviewed, with some reflections made that it was lacking detailed proposals meaning options would require detailed analysis of feasibility prior to delivery, and also that some of the suggestions were aspirational rather than realistic.

RESOLUTION: The Clerk was instructed to review the Town Improvement Plan recommendations and identify those which could feasibly be delivered by the Town Council. These would then be incorporated into a business plan proposal with each item allocated against a committee for further consideration by Council.

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 8.48pm, having announced the following future dates of Council and Committee meetings:

14 th May	Annual Town Council (Mayor Making)
4 th June	Estates and Environment
18 th June	Community and Tourism
25 th June	Finance & General Purposes

Signed

Chairman