



EAST GRINSTEAD TOWN COUNCIL

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FULL COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of East Grinstead Town Council Thursday 25th June 2026 at 7.30pm

Present:

Cllr S Reeves (Town Mayor)
Cllr C Pond (Deputy Town Mayor)
Cllr S Barnett
Cllr J Belsey
Cllr M Belsey
Cllr H Farren
Cllr L Gibbs
Cllr I Gibson
Cllr E Godwin*
Cllr T Hughes*
Cllr J Mockford
Cllr S Ody
Cllr A Peacock
Cllr T Scott*
Cllr F Visser*
Cllr R Whittaker*

* = absent

In attendance:

Town Clerk
Responsible Finance Officer (RFO)
Inspector B Fahey
3 Members of Public

Public Participation

One question was raised regarding agenda item 28 relating to MSDC's management of Moat Pond and the future ownership and maintenance of the pond.

20 To receive apologies for absence

Cllrs Godwin, Hughes, Visser and Whittaker had offered their apologies which were noted. Cllr Scott was absent.

21 To receive declarations of interest from members in respect of any matter on the agenda. The disclosure must include the nature of the interest. If you become aware, during the meeting, of an interest that has not been disclosed under this item you must immediately disclose it

Cllr J Belsey advised he had been Deputy Leader and a cabinet member of MSDC's Environment and Services Delivery between 2019 and 2023 when discussions regarding

Moat Pond occurred and flagged this in respect of item 28 relating to Moat Pond. Cllr Gibson was a current member of the MSDC Cabinet and also flagged an interest regarding item 28 Moat Pond. Cllr Peacock flagged an interest in item 29 due to living near to 2 of the proposed development locations.

22 To receive an update from Insp Ben Fahey regarding local policing matters

Insp Fahey was welcomed to his first meeting of East Grinstead Town Council. Being relatively new to the role, he apologised for any questions he may be unable to answer but would follow these up via the Town Clerk.

East Grinstead – Last 3 months (1.3.26 – 31.5.26)

- 2,107 incidents reported, 302 more incidents than the previous 3 month period.
 - 310 Cat A (emergency attendance within 20 mins)
 - 131 Cat B (attendance within 1 hour)
 - 181 Cat C (attendance within 24 hours, ideally same day)
- 127 with Domestic Abuse tag
- 782 incidents attended by Police in person
- Of the 782 incidents attended – these included 48 violent crimes, 75 medical incident/concern, 76 suspicious activities, 39 road related incidents, 38 RTCs, 48 ASB and 16 burglaries

Recorded crime in East Grinstead

- -5.2% Rolling Year (RY) reduction in Total Crime
- -15% RY reduction in Burglary
- +21.7% increase in Robbery (due to a change in classification for shoplifting assaults)
- +15% RY increase in Possession of Weapons offences (-60% 2 month rolling reduction), 22 offences recorded
- -0.6% RY reduction in recorded DA crime
- -1% RY reduction in Public Place crime

Neighbourhood Policing Team Engagement

- 258 patrols
- 7,356 minutes

E-bike and e-scooter usage had been an issue recently, reflecting a pattern seen across the whole UK. Whilst electric bikes were generally legal to ride, the others were not without a driving licence. The police were generally targeting those who were also undertaking antisocial behaviour rather than all users. Whilst they would attempt to stop them this would only happen if there was no risk of injury. Using both marked and unmarked police vehicles around the town, the unmarked cars had more success with apprehending users.

It was emphasised how important it was to continue to report all crimes or antisocial behaviour being witnessed to improve chances of police attendance and apprehension of offenders.

The attempted robbery at the Post Office had seen an arrest made at the scene, the offender had been bailed by the courts.

The juvenile responsible for throwing a shopping trolley off a bridge had been identified and spoken to. They did not live within the town and had been advised they were banned from visiting East Grinstead in future.

The police were trying to address anti-social behaviour around McDonalds and KFC by working with both establishments however success was limited. Most incidents happen around school pick up time so patrols were being focused at this time.

The rural crime team was investigating reports of wild animals being killed using catapults, this was ongoing.

Insp Fahey was thanked for his detailed report, a question was raised regarding the reclassification of shoplifting and how this was being assessed. A human would make the assessment but Insp Fahey would look into the statistics from last year for comparison and provide an analysis.

Increased reporting of crimes and suspicious behaviour was not being seen, and whilst some monitoring of social media accounts was being undertaken this was far from foolproof. There was no substitute for making a direct report to the police either online, or via 101 or 999.

It was suggested that a report of police activity addressing social media reports may be beneficial to reduce the fear these can cause amongst the general public. Insp Fahey advised that not all updates can be shared by the police on Facebook for reasons of security, and that often people report items they read on social media to the police. Social media reports can generate a lot of tension which the police are keen to try and avoid.

The general increase in the number of police vehicles in town and general police activity was welcomed. Businesses in town were lacking confidence in the DISC system, there was a reluctance to use this as they felt nothing was achieved by it, with an example of a theft with CCTV evidence having no future action taken after the shop owner had spoken to the police. The Town Council was keen to assist with improving relations between local businesses and the police. Insp Fahey was disappointed to hear that a crime with CCTV evidence had not been investigated further.

The 20 minute category A response rate can feel like a very long time when experiencing a crime, it would be interesting to receive a comparison of the response times experienced for the 3 towns in Mid Sussex.

Insp Fahey advised he was pushing to have response vehicles present more often in East Grinstead, but vehicles go where there was a need. When nothing urgent was happening elsewhere, officers were being encouraged to base themselves in the town when possible.

The antisocial driving at Birches Ind Est was still occurring, as well as at the train station car park, often taking place in the early hours of the morning. It was clear to see the doughnuts on the road at the junctions at both Imberhorne Lane and Saint Hill.

It was suggested that the information presented to Council this evening was shared on Sussex Police social media as it was helpful.

Finally, a Councillor expressed their appreciation for the support they'd personally received when the police were called to attend a road traffic accident they'd been involved in.

In summary, more communications with the public would be appreciated.

Insp Fahey was thanked for this attendance this evening, and was welcomed back to future Full Council meetings. He left the meeting at 8.09pm.

23 To ratify the recommendation made at the F&GP Committee to note and approve the Annual Review of Effectiveness of Internal Control Audit Report for 2025/26 (F&GP Item 10 & Appendix D)

RESOLVED: Council resolved to approve the Annual Review of Effectiveness of Internal Control Audit Report for 2025-2026.

24 To ratify the recommendation made at the F&GP Committee to approve the Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2026, Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2025/2026 (F&GP Item 11 & Appendix E)

RESOLVED: Council resolved to approve the Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2026, Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2025/2026.

25 To ratify the recommendations made at the F&GP Committee to approve the Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2026, Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2025/2026 (F&GP Item 11 & Appendix F)

RESOLVED: Council resolved to approve the Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2026, Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2025/2026.

26 To consider and approve an amendment to the NatWest bank mandate to reflect the Council's current financial approval processes and to align with Financial Regulations 6.1 and 6.2, as adopted by Council on 14th May 2026:

That the NatWest bank mandate be amended to designate the Town Clerk (Samantha Heynes), Head of Finance (Responsible Financial Officer) (Daniel Chambers) and Deputy Clerk (Sarah Mamoany) as the authorised signatories for the Council's financial transactions, in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations and subject to the existing approved transaction limits

RESOLVED: Council noted the explanation of the need to confirm the bank mandate details and resolved to approve the changes outlined above, including removal of all existing signatories effective immediately.

27 To consider the report outlining the boiler replacement options and costs for the Old Court House (Appendix A)

The Old Court House was not VAT registered, an historical decision made many years ago. The TC and RFO had researched whether this was still a valid choice, and financially it was due to the generally low expenditure incurred for this building vs the impact of charging VAT on the significant income received.

It had been requested that the leases for use of this building were returned to longer terms, this had already been raised with the hirers and work on this would continue.

RESOLVED: Council approved the boiler replacement recommended in the report.

Thanks were expressed to all officers involved in the production of these reports.

28 To note the request for an Independent Inquiry into the Management of Moat Pond and Disclosure of Environmental Information (2017 – 2026) submitted to MSDC on 15th June 2026

This item was noted, as well as the Council's interest in Moat Pond as part of the wider King Georges Field strategy. Samples of oxygen testing showed levels were not sufficient for the health of the fish in the pond. Air pumps or a water fountain would be required to resolve these issues.

The Clerk was instructed to find out how much was spent on the water and what was spent on the land of the pond, and to ask for records of the regular oxygen testing results that were being taken at the pond.

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:

29 To consider the draft sites proposed for inclusion in MSDC's draft District Plan including input to the Strategic & Local Community Infrastructure Needs for East Grinstead (Appendix B)

The proposed sites were discussed, with the town centre site broadly welcomed albeit with concerns expressed regarding the impact of the development period on residents visiting town, as well as concerns with parking requirements.

The other proposed sites caused grave concerns and should be protected from development where possible. The impacts of building in the AONB, traffic and speeding, road layouts, and perilous conditions for pedestrians were all noted.

Parking for new developments must be provided in accordance with the WSCC parking calculator. In combination testing was essential for the sites closely located, especially in relation to transport modelling, habitat regulations and air quality, as well as the additional schools, healthcare and utilities – particularly water supplies in light of the failures of SE Water.

The Clerk was instructed to collate comments received and submit to MSDC as per their deadline of 26th June 2026.

The meeting closed at 8.47pm.

The date of the next meeting was **Thursday 30th July 2026**.