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COUNCIL MEETINGS

JUNE

4 June Estates & Environment
11 June Planning
18 June Community & Tourism
25 June Finance & General Purposes /
Full Council (AGAR Approval)

JULY

2 July Planning
23 July Planning
30 July Full Council

AUGUST

13 August Planning

SEPTEMBER

3 September Planning
10 September Estates & Environment
17 September Community & Tourism
24 September Planning

OCTOBER

1 October Finance & General Purposes
8 October Full Council
15 October Planning

NOVEMBER

5 November Planning



Meet your Councillors in Queen's Walk
on the following Saturdays:

2026:

27th June: 1pm -2:30pm
25th July: 10am - 11:30am
22nd August: 1pm to 2:30pm
19th September: 10am to 11:30am
17th October: 1pm to 2:30pm
14th November: 10am to 11:30am

USEFUL CONTACTS

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Age UK East Grinstead | 01342 327 046 |
| Being Neighbourly | 01342 544 044 |
| Bluebell Railway | 01825 720 800 |
| CAP Debt Help | 0800 328 0006 |
| Chequer Mead | 01342 302 000 |
| Citizens Advice | 0808 278 7969 |
| Clarion Housing | 0300 500 8000 |
| Community People | 01444 258 102 |
| Community Transport Sussex | 01444 471 919 |
| Disability Access – East Grinstead Area | 01342 322 242 |
| East Grinstead Foodbank | 07983 209 940 |
| East Grinstead Library | 01342 332 900 |
| East Grinstead Museum | 01342 302 233 |
| East Grinstead Tourism Desk at Library | 01342 410 121 |
| East Grinstead Town Council | 01342 323 636 |
| Kings Centre | 01342 328 616 |
| Mid Sussex District Council | 01444 458 166 |
| Mid Sussex Wellbeing | 01444 477 191 |
| National Dementia Helpline | 0800 888 6678 |
| National Rail Enquiries | 0345 127 2920 |
| NHS (non emergency) | 111 |
| Police (non emergency) | 101 |
| Police Contact Point, Chequer Mead | 01273 470 101 |
| Quarry Café and Community Fridge | 0772 4873 336 |
| Queen Victoria Hospital | 01342 414 000 |
| Samaritans | 116 123 (free) |
| The Hope Job Club | 01342 488 282 |
| West Sussex County Council | 01243 642 122 |
| West Sussex County Council Highways | 01243 642 105 |

CONTACT THE COUNCIL

East Grinstead Town Council

Visit: East Court, College Lane, East Grinstead RH19 3LT
Call: 01342 323636 Click: www.eastgrinstead.gov.uk
Email: town council@eastgrinstead.gov.uk
Instagram: egcouncil Facebook: egtowncouncil

East Grinstead Community and Tourism

Visit: Community and Tourism desk, Library Building,
32-40 West Street, East Grinstead RH19 4SR
Call: 01342 410 121 Click: www.visiteastgrinstead.com
Email: communityandtourism@eastgrinstead.gov.uk
Visit East Grinstead Facebook: visiteastgrinstead

THE Line

WHERE EAST MEETS WEST
ON THE MERIDIAN LINE

Spring 2026
Edition 91



NEWS FROM
EAST GRINSTEAD
TOWN COUNCIL

Introducing the New Mayor, Stephanie Reeves

I am honoured to have been elected to serve as the Mayor of East Grinstead for the next 12 months.

I grew up around East Grinstead and moved back here from London with my young family about 5 years ago. I represent Town South Ward, which includes much of our historic High Street and town centre.

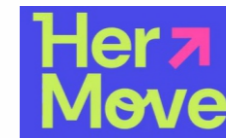
East Grinstead is a hugely special place. Not just because of our historic town centre, beautiful countryside and tremendous cultural and sporting clubs, but the wonderful community of people and volunteers who make our town so special. The brilliant people of East Grinstead who give so much back to our community are the heart and soul of our town. I look forward to working with you all in supporting activities and fundraising to make the coming year a great success.

I know the Town Council is working hard to support another full year of interesting events and activities in our town, and I look forward to meeting you all over the next 12 months.

As Mayor, I have nominated two organisations which I would like to raise funds for during the year – the East Grinstead Lions and HerMove.

The first is **East Grinstead Lions**, who support the local community through fundraising, health initiatives and social events. Their popular May Fair raises funds for local causes, while the Warm Over Winter campaign has helped 60 households with over £6,000 towards heating costs. They deliver annual prostate screening for around 1,000 men, supported by the East Grinstead Runners' 10K Andy Ripley Memorial Run. Each spring they host a Senior Citizens' Tea Party to reduce isolation, and they support young people through ROAR, a *Dragons' Den*-style competition for primary school pupils.

Secondly, the hugely exciting **HerMove**. This East Grinstead-based charity is all about inspiring and enabling women and girls to get active, feel great and connect with their communities. They have had a tremendous first year and I look forward to continuing outgoing Mayor John Belsey's great legacy of support for this fantastic organisation.



Mayor Cllr. Stephanie Reeves



Mayor Cllr. Stephanie Reeves
and Deputy Mayor Cllr. Craig Pond.

Goodbye from Councillor John Belsey

How quickly a year goes by – it has been a huge honour to serve as Mayor of East Grinstead for 2025/26, meeting so many members of our community and seeing the amazing work done by so many helping serve in our community.

There have been a lot of highlights across the year, from East Court Live events in the Summer and Armed Forces Day through to our Classic Car Show, Bonfire, Remembrance, the Big Reveal, Christmas carols and so much more. It has been an honour to meet so many groups and organisations of this town and to see how valued those activities and contributions really are.

During January the whole town had a water shortage, and although we hope this never happens again, the town came together and we are well placed to support our community

and its most vulnerable should something like that reoccur.

It has been a pleasure to support my two charities this year – Age UK East Grinstead and District and the East Grinstead District Scouts. I hope there will always be Age UK in East Grinstead to provide a much-needed service to help people live independently for longer and also to provide respite services for those caring for people with dementia.

Similarly, it has been a pleasure to support the Scouting movement and seeing many of our young townfolk involved in adventurous or teamworking activities, building qualities that will stand them well in their adult lives. It has also been hugely rewarding to set up HerMove, which is an organisation I am confident will grow, encouraging girls and women to participate in sport and wellbeing activities.

Although no longer Mayor I look forward to continuing to support our community for years to come. A huge thanks to everyone who has supported my mayoral year.



Cllr. John Belsey

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Town Events

For information on town events, contact our Community and Tourism Team on 01342 410 121 or communityandtourism@eastgrinstead.gov.uk or go to www.visiteastgrinstead.com



Sunday 7 June

East Court Live, East Court

Saturday 13 June

Sussex Day, The Sussex Arms

Saturday 27 June

Armed Forces Day, East Court

Sunday 5 July

East Court Live, East Court

Tuesday 28 July–4 August

Pump Track Week, King George's Field

Sunday 2 August

East Court Live, East Court

13–16 August

East Grinstead Jazz Festival, various venues

Sunday 13 September

Classic Motor Show, High Street

Sunday 4 October

East Grinstead 10K

Saturday 17 October

East Grinstead Community Bonfire Parade, Bonfire and Fireworks, Town and East Court

Sunday 8 November

Remembrance Parade, High Street and London Road

Wednesday 11 November

Remembrance Day Service, High Street

Saturday 21 November

The Big Reveal and Christmas Light Switch on, High Street and London Road

Sunday 6 December

Christmas Market, East Court

Chequer Mead 30th Birthday

Chequer Mead Theatre is celebrating its 30th birthday this year – a milestone that marks 3 decades as a vibrant creative hub for the community. While many know us for the performances and events we host, it's often overlooked that we are a charity! We are fundraising this year to raise £75,000 towards the ultimate 30th birthday gift for our theatre, a brand-new heating system!

As a charity, we rely heavily on our incredible volunteers, who are truly the backbone of everything we do. From stewarding performances and ensuring the safety of our audiences to welcoming guests with a smile, scanning tickets and much more, their dedication keeps the theatre running smoothly. Quite simply, we couldn't function without them.

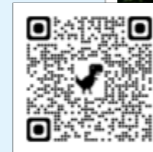
Chequer Mead has been a key part in countless creative journeys. For many, our stage is where they first fell in love with performing and took their first bow. We are proud to be a space that welcomes all, from theatre enthusiasts to local groups and societies. In our commitment to making the arts accessible, we've introduced free crafting sessions for both children and adults, ensuring that creativity is open to everyone.

As well as putting on a great show, we also work closely with other charities within our community, such as Being Neighbourly and Eyes Wide Open – as much as we ask for, we do try and give back too!

Chequer Mead is a truly valuable place; it brings the community together and fosters creativity. We have so many ideas and dreams for Chequer Mead as we want to fulfil the incredible potential we know this special place has. Please help us make our dreams a reality by spreading the word about our charity and donating if you can.



Chequer Mead Theatre



New Committee Structure

The Council has approved changes to its committee structure to better align with officer roles responsible for service delivery, with the aim of improving efficiency and streamlining decision-making processes. From May 2026, the following committees will be in place, with meetings scheduled to take place on Thursday evenings (a full list of dates is available on the Council website):

- Community & Tourism Committee
- Estates & Environment Committee
- Finance and General Purpose Committee
- Planning Committee

As part of these changes, the Council will no longer have a Public Services Committee, and Council meetings will be used for sharing community information relevant to all Councillors.

Supporting the Community at Christmas

Each festive season brings joy, but for some residents it also creates financial pressure. In Christmas 2025, 41 local people received food vouchers thanks to the generosity of The Sidney Betchley Charity, Henry Smith's Charity, and John Smith's Trust. The scheme supports residents aged 67 and over in East Grinstead, Ashurst Wood and Forest Row who are on a low income, with all applications carefully means-tested by trustees.

Details for the 2026 scheme will be announced in the autumn on the East Grinstead Town Council website. Application forms will also be available at local collection points, including the library. For enquiries, contact the Deputy Town Clerk. towncouncil@eastgrinstead.gov.uk

East Grinstead Town Council Youth Clubs

The Sunnyside Youth Club continues to run very successfully with a varied programme of activities and workshops, with both the junior and senior sections showing strong engagement and consistently high attendance. The two junior groups meet on alternate weeks and the senior group weekly. Whilst nearly full, there are still a few spaces available across all groups.

The Kings Youth Club is continuing to establish itself within the community and numbers are growing steadily. Both Youth Clubs are grateful to have just received grants from East Grinstead Memorial Estate. For more information please contact: youthclub@eastgrinstead.gov.uk



Local Government Reorganisation Update

West Sussex local authorities were expecting a decision from the Government on Local Government Reorganisation in our area by the end of March, and the Government issued an update on the 25 March 2026. They have not decided on which unitary solution to apply in Sussex and instead have confirmed they will be running a second consultation on plans covering the whole of Sussex. For further details on this please scan the QR Code.



An Introduction to the East Grinstead Memorial Estate (EGMEL)

Following the impact of the Second World War, local philanthropist Alfred Wagg purchased the land that we now know as the East Court Estate in 1944. His vision was that the estate would be preserved forever as a living war memorial and a place for the community to enjoy whilst also providing space, including East Court Mansion, for the Town Council offices. EGMEL was established as a limited company and charity in May 1949 to implement Alfred Wagg's vision and to protect the future of the estate.

The estate covers approximately 100 acres of beautiful public-access land which is easily accessible on foot, just a short walk from the heart of East Grinstead. In addition to open parkland and sports pitches, the woodland of Ashplats Wood is a truly special public asset. Ashplats Wood is an Ancient

Woodland and a Site of Nature Conservation Importance, and forms part of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty with the whole site recently designated as a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG).

Volunteers from the Ashplats Conservation Group (ACG) meet every month to look after the beautiful woodland that is Ashplats Wood, whilst Mid Sussex District Council is responsible for managing much of the public parkland, sports pitches, pavilion and paths and signage in the wood.

The estate is a hub for local life and activity. It is home to playing fields, the Memorial Gardens, Parkrun, the Bonfire Society, East Grinstead Target Shooting Club, East Grinstead Town Football Club and the Estcots Tennis Club.

At EGMEL, our primary objective is to protect, enhance and champion this estate for the benefit of our whole

Town Improvement Update

The Town Council have been working alongside Mid Sussex District Council, East Grinstead Business Association, and DWG consultants to explore potential ways to improve the town centre over coming years and support future funding bids as opportunities arise.

This is early-stage thinking that will help shape short-, medium- or long-term future improvements. The aim of the plan is to identify projects that will improve the town's appearance and public realm to increase footfall and improve wayfinding through the town centre.

Further information and next steps will be shared via our Town Council website and Facebook page.



EGMEL Map

community. Wherever possible, we seek to encourage growth in public use of the estate. We recognise our important place in the town and we actively encourage increased public use of the estate and proudly support local groups through practical assistance and financial grants for projects that enrich community life. You can find out more about us and our wider activities on our website: www.egmel.co.uk



East Grinstead Museum

100 Years of East Grinstead Museum

Celebrating its 100th birthday, East Grinstead Museum tells the story of the town and its people, bringing a century of collected history to life for visitors of all ages.

The museum's story begins in 1926, when the Rev Golding Golding-Bird, vicar of St Swithun's Church, became fascinated by objects stored in the church tower. Among them were grappling irons once used to pull burning thatch from roofs. This sparked a passion for collecting local artefacts, and a small museum was born. Although it closed in 1955, the collection was carefully preserved at East Court.

In the 1970s, local enthusiasm revived the idea of a town museum. The East Grinstead Town Museum opened at East Court in July 1976, quickly growing through generous public donations. Highlights included artefacts from the town's former pottery, saved by local resident Charles Goolden. The museum gained national accreditation in 1995, but limited space led to the search for a better home.

That home opened on 1 September 2006, just off the High Street in a striking purpose built environmentally friendly building. Funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and strong community support, it has since become a much loved local landmark.

Today, the museum continues to grow, with collections such as photographer Malcolm Powell's negatives and important artefacts from the Queen Victoria Hospital. These form the heart of the Rebuilding Bodies and Souls gallery, and we are proud to be the official museum of the Guinea Pig Club. For more information please visit www.eastgrinsteadmuseum.org.uk



UK Town of Culture Competition 2028

We officially submitted our application for the UK Town of Culture Competition 2028.

A big thank you to everyone who shared their ideas and recommendations – we truly couldn't have done it without you. Please see the Town Council website and Facebook for further updates.