



Minutes

Council Meeting

Tuesday 9 April 2024 at 6:00 PM

**Council Chambers (and by video conferencing)
East Gippsland Shire Council Corporate Centre
273 Main Street, Bairnsdale 3875**

Councillors

Tom Crook (Mayor), Jane Greacen OAM (Deputy Mayor), Arthur Allen
Sonia Buckley (Online), Mark Reeves, Trevor Stow, Mendy Urie and
John White (Online)

Attachments referenced in these minutes can be located in the meeting agenda on East Gippsland Shire Council's [website](#).

Vision

East Gippsland is an inclusive and innovative community that values our natural environment, puts community at the centre of Council decision-making, and creates the conditions in which communities can thrive.

Our Strategic Objectives

1. An inclusive and caring community that respects and celebrates diversity.
2. Planning and infrastructure that enriches the environment, lifestyle, and character of our communities.
3. A natural environment that is managed and enhanced.
4. A thriving and diverse economy that attracts investment and generates inclusive local employment.
5. A transparent organisation that listens and delivers effective, engaging and responsive services.

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1 Procedural

1.1 Recognition of Traditional Custodians

Mayor Cr Tom Crook welcomed all to the Council meeting and acknowledged the traditional owners.

East Gippsland Shire Council acknowledges the Gunaikurnai, Monero and the Bidawal people as the Traditional Custodians of this land that encompasses East Gippsland Shire, and their enduring relationship with country. The Traditional Custodians have cared and nurtured East Gippsland for tens of thousands of years.

Council value their living culture and practices and their right to self-determination. Council pays respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in East Gippsland, their Elders, past, present, and future.

1.2 Apologies

Cr Kirsten Van Diggele

1.3 Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Nil

1.4 Confirmation of Minutes

Motion

That the minutes of the Council meeting held Tuesday 19 March 2024 and the unconfirmed Council meeting held Tuesday 2 April 2024 be confirmed.

Moved: Cr Trevor Stow

Seconded: Cr Arthur Allen

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

For: Cr Arthur Allen, Cr Sonia Buckley, Cr Tom Crook, Cr Jane Greacen OAM,
Cr Mark Reeves, Cr Trevor Stow, Cr Mendy Urie and Cr John White

1.5 Next Meeting

The next Council Meeting of Tuesday 30 April 2024 to be held at the Corporate Centre, 273 Main Street Bairnsdale commencing at 6.00 pm.

Procedural Note

At this point in proceedings, Mayor Cr Tom Crook acknowledged Master Archer Rickman from St Brendan's Primary School who observed the meeting from the public gallery as part of his Rotary Junior Community Awards program. To acknowledge Archers participation in this community program, the Mayor presented Archer with a Council pin.

1.6 Requests for Leave of Absence

Cr Arthur Allen requested a leave of absence from 12 April to 17 May 2024 inclusive.

Motion

That leave of absence be granted to Cr Arthur Allen from 12 April to 17 May 2024 inclusive.

Moved: Cr Arthur Allen

Seconded: Cr Mark Reeves

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

For: Cr Arthur Allen, Cr Sonia Buckley, Cr Tom Crook, Cr Jane Greacen OAM,
Cr Mark Reeves, Cr Trevor Stow, Cr Mendy Urie and Cr John White

1.7 Open Forum

1.7.1 Petitions

Nil

1.7.2 Questions of Council

1.7.2.1 Advisory Committees

Ms Cosette Murphy asked the following question:

“What are the requirements for creating an Advisory Committee for Customer Experience, Libraries and Communication?”

Stuart McConnell Acting General Manager Business Excellence provided a response which is summarised below:

Advisory committees are formally established by Council where Council identifies a specific need for specialist/sectoral advice. This follows an endorsed Charter which may define the purpose, the terms of reference and the requirements for members to be considered.

Council seeks feedback in relation to the items identified through a range of mechanisms including the community perceptions survey, regular meetings with Friends Groups and through engagement on specific initiatives.

1.7.3 Public Submissions

1.7.3.1 Service Centres and Library 12-month Trial

The following community members spoke on the Service Centres and Library 12-month Trial and spoke at item 5.1.1.

Ms Julie Baldwin
Master Simon Lynch
Ms Fiona Seaton

1.8 Items for Noting

Nil

2 Notices of Motion

Nil

3 Deferred Business

Nil

4 Councillor and Delegate Reports

4.1 Cr Arthur Allen

On 4 April 2024, the Marina Consultative Committee (Committee) met to review the draft Terms of Reference for the Committee. Committee members were able to discuss with Officers the context of some proposed changes and to offer suggestions to improve the wording. Once adjustments are made the draft will again be circulated to ensure the changes suggested by the Committee have been captured.

4.2 Cr Jane Greacen OAM

01/03/24 - International Women's Day. Trust for Nature – 'Women in Conservation' breakfast, which I attended via webinar. The event was opened by the Chief Executive Officer of Trust for Nature and Bush Heritage. Minister Steve Dimopoulos made an excellent speech about the successful promotion of equality for women, and the number of women parliamentarians (50%) in Cabinet (two thirds). The fact that Landcare was started by two women – Joan Kirner and Heather Mitchell. That Heather was the first female president of the Victoria Farmers Federation, and she changed the attitude of the Victorian Labour Government towards agriculture, leading to the establishment of the Rural Affairs Subcommittee of Cabinet.

The presentation by Anna Rose was inspirational – she established Farmers for Climate Action eight years ago, and now Environmental Leadership Australia – designed to engage with conservative voters and politicians. Anna talked about the 26 years before the tipping points when climate change becomes irreversible; the Greenlands permafrost melted and the methane released, the arctic ice melted, the amazon forest burned and carbon released. The need for a stable policy environment so that business can work on environmental conservation and a stable energy source. It needs to cease being a political football. Anna gave a series of quotes and colloquialisms such as "it is never too late to come and stand up for nature"; "conservation requires conversation"; "find the common ground and build on it"; "never give up on people"; etc and the best: "humans are wired to collaborate and help each other". Otherwise, as a relatively weak species, we would have failed to thrive, but we are now on top.

01/03/24 – 03/03/24 - Paynesville Classic Boat Rally. A brilliant weekend of boating and boats.

04/03/2024 - Broadlands Affordable Living visit with Cr Trevor Stow and Cr Tom Crook. Very interesting development which is doing well. Currently building a huge community centre with pool, gym, library, kitchen, lounge etc.

06/03/2024 – Local Aboriginal Justice Action Committee (LAJAC) meeting. It was good to see these people again and hear about the work being done in the justice space. Some discussion about the need to confirm Aboriginality having a significant role in Koori Court – and the issues around this such as how can you do it when escaping from Domestic Violence – it is a safety issue and putting more shame on people who are coming to court – they come into court with all sorts of shame already.

Another issue was the inability to get Working With Children cards if there has been any conviction at all such as a driving ticket, yet they might be the best person for the job. Building cultural intelligence in the non- Aboriginal workforce was also discussed. "Cultural capabilities is learnt through training, but it does not equal intelligence". The Victorian Police have stated that family violence is what is hurting the community most in the crime space – it is through the roof, and Aboriginal representation is too high. There is a work in progress to hold police accountable so that reporting is encouraged and police can provide support.

08/03/2024 - 2024 International Women's Day – EmpowHER. Great event at the Forge Theatre which was packed with almost all women. Lots of fun and laughter.

12/03/2024 - Business Networking Event with Vicky Brady, Telstra Chief Executive Officer. Everyone very impressed with how personable Vicky is and also her senior staff team.

13/03/2024 - Chief Executive Officer Remuneration and Employment Committee on the road to recruiting a new Chief Executive Officer for Council.

14/03/2024 – Municipal Association of Victoria Active Leadership in Active Transport webinar. Some interesting data and concepts.

15/03/2024 - Rising Strong – the East Gippsland Path to Resilience. This full day workshop at The Bellevue in Lakes Entrance attracted some very good speakers involved with recovery in Mallacoota and Sarsfield. Inspirational volunteers.

18/03/2024 - Chief Executive Officer recruitment

22/03/2024 - Omeo Stakeholder Meeting. This was well attended by local people as well as Council staff and Councillors.

25/03/2024 – Planning Consultation Meeting – 215 Tambo Upper, Swan Reach

27/03/2024 - Chief Executive Officer Recruitment

3/04/2024 - Orbost Stakeholders Meeting

4/04/2024 - Special Marina Consultative Committee meeting – reviewing the Terms of Reference. Wanting more direct influence on Council.

4/04/2024 - Planning Consultation Meeting – 33 Wood Street, Metung

5/04/2024 - Gippsland Agriculture Centre Grand Opening.

6/04/2024 – East Gippsland Field Day. I enjoyed this, asking young people what they want Bairnsdale to become, and what they would like there – some great responses, and one young man with great knowledge of the skate park and the sport, whom I introduced to Stuart McConnell Acting Chief Executive Officer for follow-up as he had very useful ideas.

4.5 Cr Mendy Urie

Out and about over the Easter period, it seemed East Gippsland was the perfect holiday destination with Paynesville, Eagle Point, Bairnsdale, and Lakes Entrance all appearing to be exceptionally busy when I visited. It was perfect weather for holidaymakers out on the water as well with the Grange appearing to be a favorite destination for day visitors to the 90-mile beach. I also visited Rotamah Island, but was disappointed with the lack of maintenance of the walking tracks there, a place I normally enjoy very much. I trust all visitors and locals enjoyed the Easter break.

The exceptionally important task of appointing a new Chief Executive Officer has kept a number of Councillors particularly busy over the last few months and while ultimately all nine Councillors were involved in the process, I particularly appreciate the efforts of those Councillors on the Chief Executive Officer Remuneration and Performance Committee.

Ms Fiona Weigall and Mr Stuart McConnell stepped into interim roles of Acting Chief Executive Officer during this time and both, I believe did a wonderful job. Taking up the permanent role as of this week, I sincerely congratulate Fiona for her well-deserved appointment as Chief Executive Officer of East Gippsland Shire Council for the next five years and look forward to working together towards more great achievements for East Gippsland and the wider Region under her fresh leadership approach.

I attended the wonderful Field Days on Friday 5 April 2024. It was a thrill to be present for the opening of the excellent new Gippsland Agricultural Group facility on arrival, with a fantastic, spacious shed, outdoor shaded area, a full kitchen as well as purpose-specific meeting rooms. It is a credit to the many people who contributed (and they were all roundly named and applauded).

Congratulations to the organisers of the East Gippsland Field Days once again for such a well-presented and fun event. Our Council tent was well attended and full of activities and welcoming staff.

There were two planning consultation meetings held in the last three weeks, which I attended virtually. Again, I find these meetings are a valuable way to understand some of the more complex applications before they proceed to decision, and I appreciate people taking the time to put their objections to the meetings to be heard as well as our Officers in being available to answer questions.

5 Officer Reports

5.1 Business Excellence

5.1.1 Service Centres and Library 12-month Trial

Authorised by Acting General Manager Business Excellence

Public Submissions

Ms Julie Baldwin
Master Simon Lynch
Ms Fiona Seaton

Motion

That Council:

- 1. receives and notes this report and all attachments pertaining to this report;*
- 2. approves the continuation of opening hours for the Service Centres and Libraries based on the trial hours;*
- 3. approves making the two-vehicle mobile library service an ongoing service; and*
- 4. notes that data will continue to be collected on library and service centre use to inform future service delivery improvements and efficiencies, and will be tabled with Council as required.*

Moved: Cr Sonia Buckley

Seconded: Cr Jane Greacen OAM

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

For: Cr Arthur Allen, Cr Sonia Buckley, Cr Tom Crook, Cr Jane Greacen OAM,
Cr Mark Reeves, Cr Trevor Stow, Cr Mendy Urie and Cr John White

5.1.2 Advocacy Strategy 2024

Authorised by Acting General Manager Business Excellence

Motion

That Council:

- 1. receives and notes this report and all attachments pertaining to this report; and***
- 2. endorses the updated Advocacy Strategy 2024, provided at Attachment 1.***

Moved: Cr Mendy Urie

Seconded: Cr Jane Greacen OAM

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

For: Cr Arthur Allen, Cr Sonia Buckley, Cr Tom Crook, Cr Jane Greacen OAM,
Cr Mark Reeves, Cr Trevor Stow, Cr Mendy Urie and Cr John White

6 Urgent Business

Nil

Motion

That Council resolves to move into confidential business pursuant to section 66(2) of the Local Government Act 2020.

Moved: Cr Mark Reeves

Seconded: Cr Trevor Stow

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

For: Cr Arthur Allen, Cr Sonia Buckley, Cr Tom Crook, Cr Jane Greacen OAM,
Cr Mark Reeves, Cr Trevor Stow, Cr Mendy Urie and Cr John White

The meeting was closed to the public at 6.44 pm.

7 Confidential Business

7.1 Funding Agreement to Support Bushfire Rebuilding

Under section 66(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020* a meeting considering confidential information may be closed to the public. Pursuant to sections 3(1) and 66(5) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, the information contained in this report is confidential because it contains private commercial information, which if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage.

The meeting was re-opened to the public at 7.02 pm.

8 Close of Meeting

Mayor Cr Tom Crook closed the meeting at 7.03 pm.