

LINDFIELD PARISH MEETING

The annual **Lindfield Parish Meeting** was held at King Edward Hall, Lindfield on **Thursday, 10 April 2014**, chaired by the Chairman of Lindfield Parish Council, Mr William Blunden.

Present: Lindfield Parish Councillors: Mr W Blunden (Chairman), Mr. M. Allen, Mr. A. Gomme, Mr. S. Henton
Mr. C. Hodgson, Mr. C. Snowling and Mrs. V. Upton.
Councillor Mrs. C. Field (WSCC)
Councillor Mr. A. Lea (MSDC)
2 members of the public

Apologies: Councillors Mrs. M. Hersey, Mr. R. Pickett, and Mr. R. Plass; PCSO Nicola Green.

In attendance: Mrs. C. Irwin (Clerk, Lindfield Parish Council)

The meeting commenced at 8.00 p.m.

1. WELCOME.

1.1 The Chairman welcomed all those present to the meeting. Because all attendees were connected with the Parish Council, directly or indirectly, and familiar with its activities over the preceding year, it was **AGREED** that the reports from the Chairman, Councillors Field and Hersey and PCSO Nicola Green need not be read out but would be circulated to all attendees following the meeting. These reports are appended to the Minutes.

2. MINUTES OF THE PARISH MEETING HELD ON 11 APRIL 2013.

2.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 11 April 2013. These were agreed and the Minutes were signed as being a true record of that meeting.

3. REPORT FROM POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICER

3.1 Report from PCSO Nicola Green - *Appendix A*

4. REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR

4.1 Report from Councillor Mrs. Christine Field (WSCC) - *Appendix B*.

5. REPORT FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLORS.

5.1 Report from Councillor Mrs. Margaret Hersey - *Appendix C*.

6. PARISH COUNCIL REPORT.

6.1 Report from Councillor William Blunden, Chairman of Lindfield Parish Council - *Appendix D*.

7. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN.

7.1 Councillor Gomme, Chairman of the Lindfield and Lindfield Rural Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, gave a verbal report to the meeting:

- Councillor Gomme and colleagues from the Steering Group had attended a seminar arranged by MSDC at which there had been four speakers.
- There had been no new information from MSDC at the seminar about timescales for the District Plan following the examiner's decision that MSDC had failed their duty to co-operate.
- It was understood that MSDC were talking to Brighton and Hove Council to fulfil their duty to co-operate
- A number of attendees at the seminar who were involved in Neighbourhood Plans around the District had been very concerned about meeting the basic conditions, in the wake of the examiner's determination on the Slaugham Neighbourhood Plan.

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- There was also considerable concern due to Neighbourhood Plans in other parts of the country which had passed inspection and referendum but developers had then challenged the impartiality of the inspectors.
- Councillor Gomme felt that he was not alone in thinking that time was running out on Neighbourhood Plans, particularly as the next General Election may lead to a change of Government Policy.
- Slaugham had been judged to have approached their housing strategy from the wrong direction, having identified sites before assessing housing need.
- It was understood that the Slaugham Neighbourhood Steering Group was having difficulty recruiting new members to take the revision forward
- Councillor Gomme reported that the draft Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan had recently been published for public comments. He considered that this and the Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Neighbourhood Plans were written in a better style than the Lindfield Neighbourhood Plan.
- A meeting of the Steering Group with the Consultants from AiRS had been arranged for 8 May and it was hoped that Neil Homer would have taken on board the comments from the meeting in February, which had mainly been about the wording rather than content.
- There were other factors to be taken into account: lessons learnt and comments from examiners on other Neighbourhood Plans submitted for independent examination.
- It had been noted that Neighbourhood Plans could include aims rather than policies so that there was no firm commitment, for example where the ability to deliver was uncertain.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Gomme for his report and commented that preparing a Neighbourhood Plan could be compared with rolling a snowball up hill.

8. GENERAL SESSION.

- 8.1 Dog fouling. Councillor Snowling raised the matter of an increase in dog fouling, particularly in verges and asked the Parish Council to find out what arrangements other Councils had in place to deal with this problem. It was noted that dog wardens were rarely seen in the community.

Councillor Allen stated that the response from MSDC to requests for new dog waste bins was that there was a capacity issue in terms of the collection and disposal contract, so no new bins could be installed. It was noted that there were many instances of people tying the waste in bags and discarding it inappropriately in waysides, hedges or regular litter bins. Councillor Lea offered to take the matter of extra bins up with MSDC.

- 8.2 Denmans Lane. Councillor Field reported that she had received three requests for Denmans Lane to be re-opened to through traffic, which she felt had been prompted by the temporary road closure at the north end of the High Street.. The cost to do this would be a six figure sum because the road was not wide enough to meet current standards and it was likely that some garden land would have to be compulsorily purchased to enable a footway to be constructed. A scheme of this magnitude would therefore need significant support from the community and the Parish Council.

Councillor Blunden added that the requests were also prompted by a fallen tree which had blocked the road during the high winter winds.

Councillor Allen stated that one of the reasons for the closure had been because it was a dangerous road, particularly for children and elderly people.

Councillor Snowling stated that there had been strong feeling in support of the closure when it was a live issue.

Councillor Lea tendered a declaration of interest as a resident of the Glebe, but as a resident he stated that he would be horrified if the road was re-opened because it would return to being a very busy through route as he understood it had been previously.

There was no support from attendees of the Parish Meeting for re-opening Denmans Lane to through traffic.

The meeting concluded at 8.20 pm and all participants were invited to socialise with a glass of wine.

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Appendix A

REPORT TO LINDFIELD PARISH MEETING PCSO Nicola Green, Sussex Police April 2014

The main issues that we are focussing on at the moment relate to the Clancy Docwra site on Ardingly Road. They have unfortunately been targeted for fuel thefts on a repeat basis. We are working together with the project manager to ensure crime prevention measures are put in place and police carry out regular patrols on lates and nights.

I have recently teamed up with a member of the Roads Policing Unit to assess various sites around the villages to judge their suitability for speed checks. We are encouraging people to come forward who would be prepared to join a community speedwatch group. These groups are trained by police to go out in pairs or small groups with a speed gun and take note of vehicles driving at excess speed. The details are then passed to police and followed up accordingly. A local resident had recently suggested Lindfield High Street as a potential site. However this would not be suitable due to the amount of parked cars and obstructions, there is also no suitable safe place for the group to carry out checks. Lewes Road would be a potential site for speed checks, however I have not received many reports complaining of excess speed.

My next Neighbourhood Panel meeting is due to go ahead on Tuesday 27th May at 19:30, this is a quarterly meeting held at the police station. I would like to actively encourage local residents and/or members of the Parish Council to come along to these meetings. We discuss recent issues in the villages, assess recent crime figures and set priorities for the next quarter.

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Appendix B

ANNUAL REPORT TO LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL From WSCC Cllr Mrs Christine Field April 2014

Overview

This has been the first year of a new County Council. The financial position continues to be difficult, but Council Tax has remained unchanged for the past 4 years, leaving well in excess of £100m in the hands of local people, rather than County Council coffers. We hope that this will enable our residents to contribute to our aims of creating:

- The best start in life for all children
- A vibrant local economy
- Healthier and longer lives for all – especially in later years

Service levels and standards will be maintained and wherever possible improved, but the manner of delivery may well change over time. The Council is guided by a set of principles:

- We will help people to help themselves
- We will support the vulnerable
- We will do the things that are better delivered on a larger scale
- We will be there in an emergency
- We will keep taxes low

We have agreed to spend £15m (over and above normal expenditure) in each of the next 2 years on improving the condition of unclassified roads. Additionally, we have received £3.4m from HM Government to assist with damage caused by the winter weather – this will be applied to classified roads.

Local Issues

Lindfield Primary School

As you know a major building project has been undertaken to extend Lindfield Primary to a 3 form entry school. This reflects local demand and the excellent reputation which the school enjoys, as well as the impossibility of creating extra places at Blackthorns due to its constrained site.

There is no doubt that the increase in numbers will have a significant impact on traffic and travel, at peak times. WSCC Community Officer, Helen Card, has been co-ordinating meetings between the Parish, school and WSCC representatives to plan for this. A revised travel plan has been produced and a set of proposals will be coming forward for consideration by the PC and the community – later in the year. In the meantime, the County Local Committee have prioritised a Traffic Regulation Order to restrict and control parking on Backwoods Lane, in the hope of improving safety.

I am pleased to be able to report that all 3 school crossings are again manned and hope that this will continue as it has a noticeable impact on pedestrian safety and driver behaviour.

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SE Water work

It would be wrong to underestimate the impact which the SE Water mains replacement works have had on the village and surrounding area. Despite best efforts to plan for the event, with many organisations coming together as early as November to plan, there has been considerable disruption, particularly to the businesses in the High Street and on some of the surrounding minor roads. Despite best efforts, trade did suffer, especially in the early days and there is a feeling that latter remedial work to signage could be little more than a damage limitation exercise. WSCC is caught in the middle, without a great deal of influence over SE Water, but is seen by the public as the responsible authority. I have done the best that I could to assist but look forward to a full re-opening of the road – on time!

Major planning applications and their impact on local life

Although it is Mid Sussex District Council who are the Local Planning Authority, highway issues are always a significant feature of substantial developments, both in the planning and the execution. I am hopeful that I have now secured c. £80k of S106 money from The Limes development to fund the re-surfacing of Newton and Dukes Roads. I have also worked during the year to seek an improvement in communications over development related highway matters such as were experienced at Buxshalls.

Christine Field

April 2014

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APPENDIX C

Lindfield Parish Council – Annual Parish Meeting

Thursday 10th April 2014

Report by Councillor Margaret Hersey.

1. First and foremost I must apologise for not being present at tonight's meeting but I have to attend the MSDC Planning Committee A meeting to raise concern on behalf of some local residents to a local planning application.

These last 12 months have been dominated with PLANNING MATTERS including 2 large scale housing developments located on the edge of the Parish boundary. With respect to Gravelye development, I and my fellow Councillors and ably supported by local residents made what I consider to be very positive speeches seeking to have the application refused, but with most committee members supporting the planning officer's recommendation, the application was approved.

The other major development was the Penland Farm housing development which was very similar in many respects to Gravelye, the number of units, outside the built up area, farming land and in the strategic gap. This time the planning committee overturned the officer's recommendation to approve and the application was refused.

The MSDC District Plan has had a set back following a public enquiry into the draft plan due to concerns raised by the Coastal Authority that MSDC failed to undertake "The Duty to Cooperate" process correctly which the inspector agreed with.

Last but not least is the issue of expansion of Gatwick Airport to include a second runway and resulting from this MSDC has set up MSDC, Town and Parish Council Liaison Group which had its first meeting last Friday the 4th April which I attended on behalf of the Parish Council. The aim of this Liaison Group is to gather the concerns and views of the residents of Mid Sussex through the network of Town and Parish Councils to provide MSDC with information to help form a district wide response to the current Gatwick Airport Limited consultation on their preferred option 3, a new wide spaced runway.

Other than the above, I have had a very busy 12 months helping local residents with planning issues and other matters.

Cllr Margaret A Hersey
Thursday 10th April 2014

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APPENDIX D

REPORT TO ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Councillor Will Blunden, Chairman, Lindfield Parish Council April 2014

Once again this has been an interesting and challenging year for your Parish Council. The most noticeable challenge was our fight to prevent the Wates proposed development on the Scamps Hill, Gravelye Lane site; although this is not within our Parish boundary it would have a huge impact on all of our residents. We argued that the site was not suitable for a development of 230 homes due to poor access, lack of infrastructure, loss of countryside and local amenities enjoyed by rambblers, dog walkers and residents it would also be unneighbourly to existing residents bordering this site. The Parish Council worked closely with our colleagues on the Rural Parish Council, Haywards Heath Town Council, and a proactive group of Local Residents. Sadly we lost the battle when the Mid Sussex District Council Planning Committee approved the Application.

The essential work by South East Water on mains replacement at the top end of the High Street to Park Lane has resulted in the top end of the High Street being closed from the 20th January to sometime this month. This has resulted in the High Street traders suffering badly with loss of passing trade at what is traditionally a quiet trading period. The Parish Council produced signs stating that “the High Street was open for Business as usual” as the advance warning signs originally used were completely misleading. We look forward to the road being re-opened and our Traders getting back to normal and we wish them every success.

Due to the lack of a District Plan, Developers are taking this opportunity to test the Local Authorities by making unwelcome planning applications such as the Birchen Field site. This is particularly disappointing as local Town and Parish Councils are all working very hard to produce their Neighbourhood Plans, which will represent the views of local people as to where development etc. should go in their particular areas. The current situation flies in the face of “Localism” and the Parish Council will continue to do their very best to represent our Parishioners views.

As with most other local government bodies, the real work of the Parish Council is done in standing committees, of which we have three.

The Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee is Stephen Henton who continues to keep the Council in a sound financial state in these uncertain times. Ron Plass as his Vice Chairman has stepped in to chair meetings in Stephen’s absence.

The Chairman of Planning and Traffic is Alan Gomme who is very dedicated to this role and serves the Council well. Margaret Hersey is Alan’s Vice Chairman.

The present team is completed by me as chairman of the Environment and Ameniteis Committee assisted by Roger Picket as my Vice Chairman.

And I must not forget to mention Val Upton who is the Vice Chairman of Council, Val is someone who cannot say no if anyone wants something done, a real work horse.

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As always the past year had presented the Council with challenges but a number of achievements could be reported. The Minutes of the last year revealed how busy the Council had been, particularly the Planning and Traffic Committee and the Environment and Amenities Committee.

Planning and Traffic Committee.

Although with planning applications, it was a case of “some you win and some you lose” but where the Council has not managed to get the result we were aiming for it was not for the want of robust representations to MSDC. The Parish Council had argued that the site for the proposed Wates development was not suitable for a development of this size (230 homes) due to the poor access, lack of infrastructure, impact on the countryside and the impact it would have on our Village. Sadly the Planning Committee of the Mid Sussex District Council did not agree with us and granted Wates Planning Approval. The Council is represented on the Local Liaison Group which will be monitoring the activity on this site ensuring all the planning conditions are adhered to.

Together with colleagues on the Lindfield Rural Parish Council, members of Lindfield Parish Council are preparing a joint Neighbourhood Plan. Councillor Alan Gomme is the hardworking chairman of the group and he will be giving an update under item no 7 on the agenda.

Finance and General Purposes Committee

- A total of £1600.00 in grants has been awarded during the 2013/14 year, to support organisations whose work had benefits locally.
- We are still actively working on the project to replace the toilets on the Common which were demolished by the MSDC. It is hoped that we will soon be in a position to consult our residents.
- We now have new printers for the Village Directory and have been very pleased with the quality of this year’s Directory, which was delivered to us on time.

Environment and Amenities Committee

- We provided additional new festive lights at Christmas which transformed the High Street and the Pond Islands.
- The Christmas Festival Night was a huge success thanks to the work of our Deputy Clerk and the Working Group.
- The finger post in the High Street and the wrought iron Bus Stop Poles throughout the village have been refurbished and new litter bins have been bought to replace some of the old wooden ones.
- Additional grit bins have been purchased.
- The Parish Council has entered into a Cluster partnership with Haywards Heath Town Council, Lindfield Rural Parish Council and Ardingly Parish Council to carry out minor works which would have been carried out by WSCC.
- The street lights owned by the Parish Council have been painted.
- The Parish Council has been represented at Lindfield Primary School Traffic meetings.

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Despite all that has been achieved including the purchase of our new offices we are pleased to report that we have kept the precept to the same amount as last year.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow Councillors for their support over the past year. And a big thank you to our office staff for the guidance, dedication and support that they have given over the past year. And finally we have our village orderly Paul Frost, like the rest of our team Paul takes great pride in his job and what a difference he has made to the appearance of the village since his appointment, we can always tell when he is on holiday.

And finally a reminder that Saturday the 26th April is our Village Spring Clean Day and everyone is welcome to join us.