

LINDFIELD PARISH MEETING

The annual **Lindfield Parish Meeting** was held at King Edward Hall, Lindfield on **Thursday, 11 April 2013**, chaired by the Chairman of Lindfield Parish Council, Mr William Blunden.

Present: Lindfield Parish Councillors: Mr W Blunden (Chairman), Mr. M. Amor, Mr. A. Gomme, Mr. R. Plass, Mr. C. Snowling and Mrs. V. Upton.
Councillor Mrs. C. Field (WSCC)
Councillor Mr. J. Dumbleton (Lindfield Rural Parish Council)
4 members of the public
PCSOs Nicola Green and Emma Collett (until 8.30 p.m.)

Apologies: Councillors Mrs. M. Hersey, Mr. S. Henton and Mr. R. Pickett

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 and announced the emergency procedures for the King Edward Hall. He briefly explained his two legal duties in respect of the Parish Meeting:
- 1) To call a meeting of local government electors in the parish each year to discuss parish affairs, which he had done by means of a notice displayed on the Parish Council's notice board, the Parish Council's website and an article in the Parish Council's Spring Newsletter in *Lindfield Life*.
 - 2) To take the Chair at that meeting.

2. MINUTES OF THE PARISH MEETING HELD ON 17 APRIL 2012

- 2.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 17 April 2012. These were agreed and the Minutes were signed as being a true record of that meeting.

3. CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

The Chairman reported as follows:

- 3.1 Once again this had been an interesting and challenging year for the Parish Council. Firstly Pieter Hemsley who had served the Council well as Deputy Clerk for three years had retired and with the Council's ever increasing workload, recruiting a replacement had been a high priority. The calibre of applicants had been high and the Council had been pleased to appoint Iain McLean as Deputy Clerk.
- 3.2 The work of the Parish Council was done by the three standing committees. The Chairman introduced the current chairmen of these committees:

Stephen Henton had now nearly completed his third year as Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee and continued to keep the Council in a sound financial state. Ron Plass was Vice Chairman of the Committee.

Alan Gomme had taken over from Chris Snowling as Chairman of the Planning and Traffic Committee and had proved to be a very dedicated and able Chairman. Margaret Hersey was Vice Chairman of the Committee.

Councillor Blunden was chairman of the Environment and Amenities Committee assisted by Roger Pickett Vice Chairman.

Finally the Chairman introduced the Vice Chairman of Council - Val Upton - and thanked all those mentioned for shouldering so much of the workload and for their expertise, knowledge and dedication.

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- 3.3 After many years of looking for larger premises the Council had finally purchased the Clock Tower House on the Lindfield Enterprise Park and the office had been moved into the ground floor at the beginning of March. It had been recognised that it was a little further for some residents to visit the office but the extra office space provided better and more comfortable facilities for staff and visitors.
- 3.4 The Limes Development was almost completed but there were still many issues that remained outstanding such as the potholes in the surrounding roads, verges to be reinstated, kerbs to be repaired, the pond which needed to be made safe and the Wilderness Field which had not yet been transferred into public ownership.
- 3.5 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.
- 3.6 Planning and Traffic Committee.
- Although with planning applications, it was a case of “some you win and some you lose” but where the Council had not managed to get the desired result it was not for want of robust representations to MSDC.
 - The Parish Council had argued that the site for the Limes development was not suitable for a development of this size due to the poor access and lack of infrastructure and, sadly those fears and reasons for opposing this development had been proved right.
 - Currently the village was now facing an even greater threat as Wates had submitted plans for building 230 homes on the Gravelly Lane Scamps Hill site. Lindfield Rural Parish Council and Lindfield Parish Council had jointly employed a Planning Consultant to assist with the response to the consultation on this development. If this were to go ahead it would change the way of life in Lindfield forever. It was hoped that when MSDC came to consider this application they would make the right decision. In the meantime residents were encouraged to let their elected District Councillors know their concerns.
 - The Planning and Traffic Committee, with the support of the Deputy Clerk, had been monitoring the activity at the Limes development reporting the many issues to the MSDC and Barratts.
 - Together with colleagues on Lindfield Rural Parish Council members of Lindfield Parish Council were preparing a joint Neighbourhood Plan. Councillor Alan Gomme was the hardworking chairman of the group and he would be giving an update under item no 3 on the agenda.
- 3.7 Finance and General Purposes Committee
- A total of £1,500 in grants had been awarded during the 2012/13 financial year, to support organisations whose work had benefits locally.
 - A local firm had been commissioned to draw up plans for toilets on the common. They would draw up plans and provide an indication of cost to enable the Council to consult residents on whether they wished the Council to proceed with this project.
- 3.8 Environment and Amenities Committee
- The E&A Committee had achieved a number of things for the benefit of the village – in particular:
- Providing new festive lights at Christmas which had transformed the High Street and gave many a real “feel good factor”.
 - Christmas Festival Night had been one of the best ever and the Chairman acknowledged the detailed organisation by the Deputy Clerk and the Working Group.
 - Refurbishing the wrought iron Bus Stop Poles throughout the village.
 - Upgrading some of the street lamps that were owned by the Parish Council.
 - The purchase of additional grit bins and an additional grit spreader in order to make the village pavements safer after the heavy snowfalls earlier in the year.
 - The Committee had been pleased to support the Diamond Jubilee celebrations in the village.
- 3.9 Despite all that had been achieved including the purchase of new offices the Chairman was pleased to report that the Council had kept the precept to the same amount as last year.

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4. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

- 4.1 Councillor Gomme, Chairman of the Lindfield and Lindfield Rural Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, reported as follows:

Neighbourhood Plans were part of the Localism Agenda which, in theory, brought planning policy down to parish level and gave communities an opportunity to have a say in how their towns and villages should develop over the next 20 years, but how effective this would be remained to be seen.

A Steering Group had been formed of Councillors representing Lindfield and Lindfield Rural Parish Councils. The Neighbourhood Plan area would encompass Lindfield, Walstead and Scaynes Hill. Councillor Gomme thanked his fellow Steering Group members, in particular the Vice Chairman, Councillor Andy Spooner from Lindfield Rural Parish Council.

An exhibition had been held in September 2012 to try to get a feel for what residents wanted to happen over the next 20 years. There had been a good response and surveys completed had been analysed by consultants from Action in rural Sussex (AirS), who had been retained to guide the Steering Group through the next phase through the summer until September. During this period, four Focus Groups, made up of around 30 volunteers from both communities, would be carrying out research and drawing up proposals under the headings Community & Infrastructure, Landscape & Biodiversity, Transport & Traffic and Housing. The ideas, both positive and negative, that the Focus Groups had come up with would be featured at "pop-in" sessions to find out the views of residents and to check that the ideas were on the right track.

A Housing Need survey was to be conducted with the help of AirS, seeking evidence of housing needs – older people wanting to downsize, young people needing their own home, people wanting shared ownership etc. This would be going out to every house in the next couple of weeks with 2 weeks to reply. Residents were encouraged to fill this in and to spread the word among their acquaintance in the hope of a good response. The survey was to be funded 50/50 by the Parish Councils and MSDC for which Councillor Gomme expressed appreciation to MSDC. Other expenses were to be borne by the Parish Councils from the precept.

AirS would be preparing a State of the Parishes Report which was to be presented to the Steering Group at a meeting held in Public on 15 May and this would be followed in due course by a Planning Workshop to be attended by invited stakeholders, at which the draft Plan would start taking shape. Once the draft Neighbourhood Plan had been drawn up, there would be a public meeting.

It was noted that MSDC's District Plan, though in draft form, had not yet been approved by the District Council for adoption.

The Chairman expressed appreciation to the Steering Group members, in particular Councillors Gomme and Spooner for the hours they had spent on the Neighbourhood Plan.

5. GENERAL SESSION

- 5.1 King Edward Hall. The Chairman announced that Brian Newcombe, Chairman of the King Edward Hall Management Committee had decided to stand down due to ill health after 55 years service on the Committee. The Chairman wished to record appreciation and thanks to Mr. Newcombe for all that he had done for the Village over so many years.
- 5.2 Police Community Support Officers. PCSO Nicola Green introduced herself, having taken over PCSO Stuart Clough's duties in Lindfield, Scaynes Hill, West Hoathly, Ardingly, Sharpthorne and Horsted Keynes, when he began his training to become a Police Constable. Ms. Green had been a PCSO for two and a half years and had previously served in Burgess Hill. There had been a brief hand over and PCSO Green was now getting to know the village and the people. PCSO Emma Collett who had accompanied PCSO Green to the meeting, covered Haywards Heath Town. PCSO Green could be contacted on her work mobile number 07789 168791

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or by email - Nicola.Green.01@sussex.pnn.police.uk. The Chairman expressed appreciation to the PCSOs for the work they did in the community.

PCSOs Green and Collett left the meeting at the end of this item (8.30 p.m.).

5.3 West Sussex County Council matters. Councillor Christine Field reported as follows:

- Love West Sussex website. Councillor Field drew attention to the reporting procedure for highway defects through the Love West Sussex website and stressed that potholes etc would not get repaired unless they were reported. The Love West Sussex app. for mobile phones allowed for photographs and the precise location to be logged in on the site.
- Newton Road, Dukes Road and Brushes Lane. Councillor Field stated that WSCC accepted that they would have to mend the road, which was in a very poor state, because a Section 59 agreement with Barratts had not been signed which would have required the developer to repair the roads damaged by construction traffic. Pot holes of 10 cm depth would meet intervention levels for filling and the road would be resurfaced, but under the normal programme this would not take place until 2014/15. Councillor Field was also looking into the possibility of drawing from Section 106 money earmarked for the mini roundabout which was later withdrawn. Although this money was really for road betterment, it seemed reasonable to use it for repairs in this particular case. Councillor Field had sent a lot of photographs of these roads to pass on to Councillor Gary Marsh at MSDC. It was understood that Barratts had agreed to reinstate the verges and that this would be done in the next few weeks.
- Community Initiative Funding. Councillor stated that she had been pleased to support the Parish Council's application for funding for the computer in the public area at the new Parish Office. For the coming year, the allocation for Community Initiative Funding was to be increased to £6,000 per Member. Councillor Field's allocation would be split between the North and Central County Local Committees as her electoral division came under both these Committees.

5.4 Mid Sussex District Council matters. Councillor Snowling reported as follows:

- Council Tax. West Sussex County Council, Mid Sussex District Council, the Parish Council and the Police Authority, had all kept their precepts down for the coming year.
- Police and Crime Commissioner. Councillor Snowling, who sat on the Police and Crime Panel, stated that as the new role of Police and Crime Commissioner settled down, this would be seen to be a good move.
- Neighbourhood Plans. Councillor Snowling stated that there was a need for Rural Exception Sites to meet the needs of people who did not want to leave Mid Sussex, without the burden of a high proportion of private housing. He also commented on the fact that a number of people live in houses that are too big for them and ways of encouraging people to downsize would have to be considered in the years to come. There was a need for a vibrant community adapting to changing needs.

5.5 Brian Newcombe. Councillor Snowling, in his capacity as Trustee of the King Edward Hall expressed his appreciation for Mr. Newcombe: the Trustees had always found him to be a delightful man to work with and he added that the incoming Chairman would bring his own style of management to the Hall.

5.6 Highways Cluster Partnerhip. Councillor Dumbleton, (Lindfield Rural Parish Council), asked the Chairman to explain what the clustering arrangements would mean for parishioners. The Chairman explained that this would work in the same way as a long standing arrangement in Burgess Hill. Haywards Heath Town Council would take over certain devolved highway functions by agreement with WSCC and deliver services to their partner parishes as well as Haywards Heath Town. The services would include temporary pothole repairs with cold tarmac, cutting back vegetation, weedkilling and cleaning traffic signs. Because the County Council's contractors covered a large area, work was carried out by schedule and some tasks such as weedkilling were sometimes done when it was not needed and other jobs had to wait until they came up on the schedule. The

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Cluster team would be more responsive and there would be direct contact with the personnel responsible. The County Council would retain overall authority for the highways and the delivery of these services would be monitored. Money would be allocated to Parishes and paid direct to West Sussex. There would be no cost to the partner parish councils, but the service should be improved.

Councillor Field stated that she totally supported this initiative.

6. CHAIRMANS CONCLUDING COMMENTS

- 6.1 The Chairman thanked all those present for attending the Parish Meeting and for their contribution during it.
- 6.2 The Chairman paid tribute to County Councillor Christine Field for her dedication and for the amount of time she spent on Lindfield matters and travelling to Chichester. He congratulated her on her recent appointment as WSCC Cabinet Member for Public Protection.
- 6.3 The Chairman also wished to take the opportunity to thank his fellow Councillors for their support over the past year and the office staff for their guidance, dedication and support. Finally he acknowledged the Village Orderly, Paul Frost, who took great pride in his job and had made a huge difference to the appearance of the Village since his appointment.

The meeting concluded at 8.52 pm and members of the public were invited to stay for a glass of wine and take the opportunity to speak with Members of the Council.