

LINDFIELD PARISH MEETING

The annual **Lindfield Parish Meeting** was held at King Edward Hall, Lindfield on **Wednesday, 21 April 2010**, chaired by the Chairman of Lindfield Parish Council, Mr William Blunden.

Present: Lindfield Parish Councillors: Mr W Blunden, Mrs M Nicolle, Mrs V Upton and Mr S Willcox
Mrs S Blunden, Mr G Irwin, Mr E M Turner, Mr G Upton

Apologies: Lindfield Parish Councillors Davies, Hersey, Leach and Snowling.
West Sussex County Councillor Mrs C Field

In attendance: Mr P Hemsley (Deputy 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. 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 and an article in *Lindfield Life*.
- 2) To take the Chair at that meeting.

2. MINUTES OF THE PARISH MEETING HELD ON 23 APRIL 2009

2.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 23 April 2009. These were agreed and the Minutes were signed as being a true record of that meeting. Thanks were recorded to the Clerk, Christine Irwin, for providing a clear record of the meeting.

3. CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

3.1 The Chairman stated that this had been his third year as Chairman and the first year with the new Deputy Clerk, Pieter Hemsley, not forgetting the Clerk, Christine Irwin, who was unfortunately ill that day, and former Clerk, Sue Kolien, now the RFO. He thanked Mrs Kolien for stepping into the breach that morning for a meeting with WSCC. He said that someone once told him that life got easier as you got older, but that was not the case as the parish of Lindfield seemed to go from one problem to another.

3.2 Development at Newton Road. The Chairman reminded the meeting that, after a well fought fight, the village had lost the battle to prevent the building of 120 homes on the land parcel at Newton Road, the Parish Council together with the Lindfield Preservation Society and the Local Action Group having argued that the site was not suitable for a development of such size due to the poor access and lack of infrastructure. Sadly, he said that they had been proven right as residents of Dukes Road, Newton Road, Luxford Road, Eastern Road and Chaloner Road had experienced problems with large vehicles, excessive noise, damaged verges and kerbs, mud on the roads and, on occasion, aggressive drivers. Lindfield Primary School, amongst others, had also advised that they could not take further pupils in their current accommodation, something that was predicted but ignored. However, he said the village was where it was and the houses would be built, but he assured everyone that the Parish Council would do all that it could to minimise inconvenience to residents.

3.3 Core Strategy. The Chairman advised that MSDC had deferred approval of the draft submission document and a revised version was expected in August. He hoped that MSDC accepted that Lindfield had had more than its fair share of new development in the past and that the Newton Road development should be the last large site to be built on. However, MSDC was required to have a five year land supply for development and they were currently short of that target. In such a situation, developers could seek to bring forward other development sites and objections to those could only be made in terms of site constraints, such as flooding. Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) for example would be more difficult to defend. As Lindfield was on the edge of the AONB, it made it all the more difficult for the village. He hoped that the Council would be able to prevent any development on the scale of Newton Road.

- 3.4 Controlled Parking Zones. Controlled Parking Zones had been another subject that had been given a lot of time and attention; regrettably WSCC had been unable to agree with the Council that there should be some restrictions in Denmans Lane as it was sometimes difficult to pass parked vehicles. Again, the Council had been proven right when the WSCC gritting lorries had been unable to access Compton Road during the severe weather. He said that the Council had asked WSCC to reconsider Denmans Lane.
- 3.5 Public Toilets. The Council had opened the Denmans Lane Public Toilets, much to the relief of many residents and visitors. The Chairman said that the Clerk was able to keep a watchful eye on the toilets and to monitor activities.
- 3.6 Standing Committees. As with most other local government bodies, the Chairman said that the real work of the Parish Council was done in standing committees; the PC had three. Michael Davies had again been re-elected as Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee and what a dynamic chairman he had proven to be. Stephen Willcox was his very able Vice Chairman. The Chairman of the Planning & Traffic Committee was Chris Snowling; the Chairman said that Lindfield was lucky to have such an asset as Chris - he had helped recently with enclosures on The Common sought by the Lindfield Cricket Club - as he had probably spent more years in local government than the rest of the councillors added together. His expertise and knowledge had proven to be invaluable on numerous occasions. Alan Gomme as Vice Chairman had represented the Council on a number of occasions at planning meetings elsewhere. The team was completed by the Chairman himself as Chair of the Environment & Amenities Committee, assisted by Margaret Nicolle as Vice Chairman. Margaret was another of the Council's assets: she was not only Vice Chairman of E&A but was also Vice Chairman of Full Council; her commitment to the Council was huge, having served on it since 1987, and Lindfield would be a much poorer place without her.

4. PLANNING FOR SEVERE WEATHER

- 4.1 The Chairman said that, now that the sun was shining again, residents had probably all forgotten the trials and tribulations of the snow and prolonged cold of the winter. However, the weather had highlighted areas where the Council needed to have a contingency plan in place and that would be implemented in time for the next winter.

5. LINDFIELD PARISH DIRECTORY AND YEAR BOOK

- 5.1 The Chairman said that the Council had received recommendations from the Lindfield Communications Forum as follows:
- a) That a consultation be arranged by the Forum in late Spring (late April/May) between representatives of the Parish Councils, the Preservation Society, schools, churches and other interested local organisations to undertake a thorough review of the publication of a Parish Directory and Yearbook, with or without a diary included, and to make appropriate recommendations to the Parish Council.
 - b) That both Parish Councils be asked to raise the matter at their forthcoming Parish Meetings for the public to express their opinions for consideration at the consultation.
 - c) That the Secretary write to the editor of *Lindfield Life* inviting public comment to be fed into the consultation process.
- 5.2 The Chairman stated that Full Council had decided that, 'if it was not broken, it should not be fixed', and believed the Directory was ideal as it stood. He felt that the Council should avoid the huge cost of consultation. He asked members of the public to consider sharing their views on the Directory during the General Session.

6. GENERAL SESSION

- 6.1 The Chairman asked for comments from members of the public, including consideration of any resolutions that might be put forward. He said, with regard to the Directory, that he doubted the need for a public consultation on whether or not to change its format.
- 6.2 Mr G Irwin said that when he had first moved to the village he was impressed by two things: the welcome pack from the churches; and the Directory. He said that the latter was a useful size which thus could be kept handy,

where others tended to be recycled. When going to meetings in the village, it was evident that the bulk of diaries that emerged were Directories.

- 6.3 Mr E Turner said that he supported Mr Irwin's remarks. As the road representative of Meadow Lane, the feedback he received was just as Mr Irwin had found; he welcomed the arrival of the Directories in November.
- 6.4 The Chairman said that the Council had found how popular the Directories were: people were asking after them in the office.
- 6.5 Mrs S Blunden inquired as to why the Communications Forum had wanted a consultation. Mrs M Nicolle, a member of the Forum, said that they had wanted the reactions of a wider group of residents. The Chairman said that the Forum had become largely a small, hard core of campaigners who were very vocal. Mrs Nicolle felt that there was no need for a huge consultation, although she believed it was useful to have a review each year of the diary of events and group activities. Mr Irwin pointed out that, were it purely a diary, it would attract VAT. Mr Willcox said that the range of contacts it provided was one of its strengths.
- 6.6 The Chairman summarised by saying that the article in *Lindfield Life* had attracted two responses, both supportive of the current format. He felt it was useful to have all information in one place.

7. CHAIRMANS CONCLUDING COMMENTS

- 7.1 The Chairman thanked all for attending the meeting and for their contribution during it. He took the opportunity to thank three people in particular who had enabled him to carry out his duties as Chairman of the Parish Council. First, he thanked Christine Irwin for what had been her second year as Clerk; she had been great and Lindfield was very lucky to have had her. He could not think of any other Parish that had such a hard working and dedicated Clerk, as she seemed to be there 24/7. Second, he said that the Council also had Pieter Hemsley (Deputy Clerk) who had been involved in the Village Day Committee and who, with his partner Angela, had assisted in the recent Annual Spring Clean and who seemed to be well qualified for business on the Planning & Traffic Committee. And of course he said there was Sue Kolien to whom he was indebted for her advice. All had given him their support and help, without which his position as Chairman would have been a lot harder, so once again he offered his grateful thanks.
- 7.2 The Chairman thanked the rest of the Councillors for their support; they were very dedicated to a thankless task. He said it was a role which attracted the attention of villagers when they were out and about in the street. Members walked a tightrope, but were not party political and they put the village first.
- 7.3 Finally, the Chairman said that this Council would shortly enter its final year as elections would take place in May 2011. Some existing Councillors had indicated that they would not stand again, so the Council would be looking for 'new blood'. He asked those present that if they thought they would be interested in serving on Lindfield Parish Council but were not sure what was involved, to not hesitate to ask him or any of the other Councillors or staff, and they would be pleased to discuss it with them. Additionally, if they knew of anyone willing to serve, they should get them to speak to Members or the Clerks.
- 7.4 Mrs Nicolle thanked the Chairman for all he did for the Parish.

The meeting concluded at 8.30pm 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.