

LINDFIELD PARISH MEETING

The annual **Lindfield Parish Meeting** was held at King Edward Hall, Lindfield on **Tuesday, 17 April 2012**, chaired by the Chairman of Lindfield Parish Council, Mr William Blunden.

Present: Lindfield Parish Councillors: Mr W Blunden (Chairman), Mr. M Allen, Mrs. J. Chatfield, Mr. A. Gomme, Mr. S. Henton, Mrs. M. Hersey (from 8.35 p.m.), Mr. S. Hodgson, Mr. R. Plass, Mr. C. Snowling and Mrs. V. Upton
Councillor Mrs. C. Field (WSCC)

8 members of the public

Mr. B. Prior and Mr. P. Sargent (Haywards Heath Food Bank)

Apologies: Councillor Mrs. Hersey had sent her apologies for her anticipated late arrival.

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 14 APRIL 2011

2.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 14 April 2011. These were agreed and the Minutes were signed as being a true record of that meeting. Thanks were recorded to the Parish Clerk for providing a clear record of the meeting.

3. CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

3.1 This first year of the current Council term had been an interesting one. The Parish Council election in May 2011 had been uncontested and at the Annual meeting on the 17th May 2011 the Council had been pleased to welcome Jane Chatfield, Lester Corp, Simon Hodgson and Ron Plass onto the Council, regrettably Lester Corp had later resigned half way through the year. The Chairman took this opportunity to thank him for the contribution he made to the Council during the short period he served as a Parish Councillor and on behalf of all Members wished him well for the future. The Council was then pleased to welcome Roger Pickett back onto the Council as a co-opted member. Councillor Pickett had previously served on the Council and taken the lead on several major projects. All the new Councillors had shown that they cared about our Village and had demonstrated a true commitment in serving our community.

3.2 The real work of the Parish Council was done by the three standing committees. The Chairman introduced the current chairmen of these committees who shouldered much of the work load.

Councillor Stephen Henton had now nearly completed his second year as Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee and with the support of the members of his committee, had worked hard and, in particular, guided the Council through a difficult budget setting exercise.

The Chairman of the Planning and Traffic Committee was Councillor Christopher Snowling, who would shortly have served in Local Government for 41 years and whose expertise and knowledge had proved to be invaluable on numerous occasions. Councillor Alan Gomme as his Vice Chairman had stepped in to chair a

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number of P&T meetings in Councillor Snowling's absence and he had attended a number of meetings of the Mid Sussex District Council Planning Committee to speak on behalf of this Council about planning applications affecting our village.

Councillor Blunden was the Chairman of the Environment and Amenities Committee assisted by Alan Gomme as Vice Chairman.

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

3.3 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.

3.4 Planning and Traffic Committee. With planning applications, it was a case of "some you win and some you lose" but where the results were not what the Council was aiming for it was not for want of robust representations to MSDC.

The P&T Committee with the support of the Deputy Clerk had been monitoring activity at The Limes development and many emails have passed between Pieter and representatives of Barratts and Plannign Officer Steve Ashdown at MSDC. These had included issues such as pot holes, damage caused by heavy vehicles, lorries using the wrong route, inconvenience caused to residents and work being carried out on Sundays.

Together with colleagues on Lindfield Rural Parish Council a Joint Working Party had been formed and its Members were working towards a Joint Neighbourhood Plan for both Parishes. Progress on this would be announced

3.5 Finance and General Purposes Committee. During the 2011/12 financial year The F&GP Committee had awarded a total of £1,350 in grants to support organisations whose work had benefit locally, including the Haywards Heath Food Bank and the Lindfield Arts Festival.

It had been disappointing that the search for additional Parish Office accommodation had not been successful, but this remained an objective.

3.6 Environment and Amenities Committee. The E&A Committee's main achievements for the benefit of the village had been:

- Refurbishment of the wrought iron litter bins throughout the village.
- Renovation of the bus shelters and seats.
- Joint projects with MSDC and WSCC had been completed: the replacement of the white painted posts around the front of the Pond and Common (MSDC) and the pollarding of the lime trees in the High Street (WSCC).
- Replacement of the fingerpost sign at the top of Sunte Avenue.
- Upgrading of some of the Parish Council's street lights.
- The purchase of a small snow plough and other equipment which enabled the pavements in the High Street to be made safe after the heavy snow fall earlier this year.
- Christmas Festival Night which went very smoothly, thanks to the detailed organisation done by the Deputy Clerk and overseen by the Working Group. The lighting of the islands on the pond during the festive period was very well received by residents and visitors alike for which the Parish Council owed a vote of thanks to Siamax.
- The Spring Clean on Saturday 14 April had been another successful community event – the sign in sheet shows that 23 people had turned up and plenty of good work was done litter clearing, cleaning down posts and litter bins and rediscovering the paved area around the horse trough on the common.
- The Committee had also given financial support from the E & A Budget to the Diamond Jubilee Committee towards the celebrations in the village.

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Despite the additional commitments the Chairman was pleased to report that the Council had reduced the precept for 2012/13 by £6,000.

4. HAYWARDS HEATH FOOD BANK: PRESENTATION BY BARRY PRIOR AND PETER SARGENT

4.1 The Chairman stated that he had recently been privileged to attend the official launch of the Haywards Heath Food Bank. Like many others he had been impressed by the enthusiasm of the volunteers and organisers and the speed in which they achieved their goal. People tended to think that everyone in our village was able to manage without having to ask for help but this was not the case. Lindfield did have residents who had to decide whether to pay for food or heating, young and old alike. To them the food bank would be a real life line. The Chairman invited Barry Prior to talk about the Food Bank and how the local community could help them in their work in the future.

4.2 Mr. Prior and Mr. Sargent showed a short DVD film from the Trussell Trust about how Food Banks worked and then Mr. Prior gave a talk and answered questions.

The Haywards Heath Food Bank had begun with the vision of one local person who had become aware of the amount of hidden poverty in the area which was rising due to unemployment and people undergoing different kinds of crisis needed help before the front line professionals could put support in place for them. She had approached local churches and a steering group of 15 members had been set up in 2011 which had achieved charitable status and been adopted by the Trussell Trust, the parent charity. A one-off franchise fee of £1,500 had been paid to the Trussell Trust who had provided information, support and training. Grants had been obtained from a number of sources, including Lindfield Parish Council, MSDC, Haywards Heath Town Council and WSCC which had all gone towards start-up costs. Premises for storage and distribution of food had been obtained and larger premises were being sought. There was a strong base of volunteers doing a variety of work and the project had brought people together from different groups within the community. The first food collection at Sainsbury's had returned 3 tons of food and the Food Bank had opened to clients the previous day. Clients were to be referred by the front-line professionals (including nurses and Social Services staff) by means of vouchers to be exchanged for a three day supply of food according to the size of the family. There were ideas for future development which would need ongoing finance, but it was recognised that the team needed to walk before it could run.

4.3 Questions:

How many clients were anticipated over a 12 month period?

The estimate was about 750 - 1000 clients in the first year, receiving 3 meals a day for a 3 day period.

What was the geographic "catchment area"?

The area covered by the Haywards Heath Job Centre, including Haywards Heath, Burgess Hill, Lindfield and some of the outlying villages.

Would people collecting large amounts of food receive help getting it home?

Arrangements would be made to assist the elderly and other people unable to carry bags of food home.

What arrangements were being made for future collections of food and would there be permanent drop-off points?

Arrangements were being made for a future collection at Haywards Heath Co-op and negotiations would be taking place with other possible locations for siting bins for food collections, eg. local schools, churches, halls.

How would a person go about getting someone in need referred?

The Food Bank was able to deal discretely with direct referrals.

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4.4 The Chairman stated that a recent training event at MSDC had made him aware of poverty in the area and how people were struggling. He thanked Mr. Prior and Mr. Sargent for their presentation and wished them well with their work.

5. GENERAL SESSION

5.1 Christmas lights. Mrs. S. Blunden sought and received confirmation that the Parish Council was making every effort to reinstate the Christmas lights, following the petition signed by over 500 people on Christmas Festival Night.

5.2 Village Archive. Mr. D. Macmillan enquired whether the Parish Council had considered other options for the storage of the Village Archive which was currently stored in rented accommodation. The Chairman stated that other paperwork and equipment were also stored along with the Village Archive in this room. A lot of paperwork had been moved out of the Parish Office to improve working conditions for members of staff. He also stated that the Village Archive was a Village Treasure; he and Councillor Gomme had inspected local commercial storage facilities and considered them to be unsuitable for the Archive which needed to be more easily available.

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 9.05 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.