

LINDFIELD PARISH MEETING

The annual **Lindfield Parish Meeting** was held at King Edward Hall, Lindfield on **Thursday, 30 April 2015**, chaired by the Chairman of Lindfield Parish Council, Mr William Blunden.

Present: Lindfield Parish Councillors: Mr W Blunden (Chairman), Mr. A. Gomme, Mr. S. Henton, Mrs. M. Hersey Mr. S. Hodgson, Mr. R. Plass, Mr. C. Snowling and Mrs. V. Upton.

1 member of the public: Mr. G. Upton

PCSO Mrs. E. Baxter, Sussex Police

Apologies: Parish Councillor Mr. R. Pickett, and West Sussex County Councillor Mrs. Christine Field.

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

The meeting commenced at 8.00 p.m.

In accordance with the statutory duties under the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12, paragraphs 15 (1) and 11 (1), the Chairman of the Parish Council, Mr. W. Blunden had called the meeting and now presided at the meeting. The notice and agenda, duly signed by the Chairman and dated 15 April 2015 had been displayed on the Parish Council noticeboard since 15 April and had been available on the Parish Council's website since that date.

1. WELCOME.

1.1 The Chairman welcomed all those present to the meeting.

1.2 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 Parish Council Chairman, West Sussex County and Mid Sussex District Councillors, Hersey and Gomme need not be read out. These reports are appended to the Minutes.

2. MINUTES OF THE PARISH MEETING HELD ON 10 APRIL 2014.

2.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 10 April 2014. These were agreed and the Minutes were signed as being a true record of that meeting.

3. REPORT FROM POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICER, MRS ERICA BAXTER.

3.1 Burglaries. There had been an increase in the number of burglaries in the area during recent months and in fact there had been three incidents on PCSO Baxter's beat area in a very short period of time. PCSOs made follow-up visits to burglary victims, usually about a week afterwards as best practice. The Police were working very hard to find the people responsible for these burglaries and it was possible they were all linked. Crime in the more rural areas involved theft of garden / farm tools and machinery rather than house burglary.

3.2 Appledore Gardens. Further damage to cars parked on pavements in Appledore Gardens had taken place recently. PCSO Baxter stated that on one side of the road there had previously been a verge, making its status as a pavement since it had been hard-surfaced unclear. However the Police stance was that, because the road was relatively quiet and traffic did not travel fast, it was safe to cross and use the opposite pavement. Cars parked on the pavement would therefore only be moved from the Oathall College side of the road. Residents were being referred to WSCC Highways for enquiries regarding signage or bay marking for the other side.

3.3 Neighbourhood Police Panel. PCSO Baxter would welcome new members from the community on the Neighbourhood Police Panel.

3.4 West View/Tennis Court car park. This area was still being patrolled, but there had not been any recent incidents, possibly attributable to changing group dynamics, and directed patrols were taking place elsewhere in the village.

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3.5 Reporting crime. Emergencies, including crimes in progress, should be reported on 999. Non emergencies could be reported by a selection of different means, including telephone on 101, the online form or by email: 101@sussex.pnn.police.uk.

3.6 Future focus. Sussex Police were undergoing budget related savings and as part of this it was unlikely new PCSO's would be recruited to fill vacancies so PCSO beat areas may become larger. This would be managed by reducing PCSO involvement in non-Policing matters and focussing on issues with a policing purpose. In appropriate cases residents were being referred direct to other bodies for solutions.

3.7 Questions/comments. PCSO Baxter invited questions and comments. There were none.

4. REPORT FROM WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCILLOR, MRS CHRISTINE FIELD

4.1 Councillor Mrs. Christine Field (WSSC) had tendered her apologies and had submitted a written report - *Appendix A.*

5. REPORT FROM MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCILLOR, MRS MARGARET HERSEY

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

6. PARISH COUNCIL REPORT.

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

7. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN.

7.1 Report from Councillor Mr. Alan Gomme, Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. – *Appendix D.*

8. OPEN FORUM.

8.1 No matters were raised or questions asked under this item.

9. CHAIRMAN'S CONCLUDING REMARKS.

9.1 The Chairman thanked those present for their attendance and expressed appreciation to his fellow Councillors, with a special mention for the three Parish Councillors who had not stood for the forthcoming election: Councillors Amor, Chatfield and Pickett, who had all contributed in different ways and played their part towards the wellbeing of the Council. As ten people had stood for twelve places, the Council would be considering the co-option of two members in due course.

9.2 The Council had appointed Mrs. Tracy Ely as the new Responsible Financial Officer but sadly would have to say goodbye in due course to Mrs. Sue Koliën, who had been a good friend, serving the Council so well first as Clerk/RFO and for the last seven years as RFO. She had agreed to continue in a consultant/advisory role for the time being.

The Chairman thanked the Clerk, Mrs. Christine Irwin, the Deputy Clerk, Mr. Iain McLean, and also the Village Orderly, Mr. Paul Frost, who had retired after working for the Parish Council for five years and had served the village well.

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.15 p.m.

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Appendix A

REPORT TO LINDFIELD ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2015 BY COUNCILLOR MRS CHRISTINE FIELD (WSCC)

I try to make regular reports to the Parish Council on local issues but thought that it might be helpful, at the Annual meeting, to put this in to the wider context of West Sussex.

I represent the Division of Lindfield and High Weald: over 10,300 electors (i.e. over 18s) across the Parishes of Lindfield Rural and Urban, Horsted Keynes and West Hoathly.

From an examination of my postbag - and many of the monthly reports to Parish Councils, you could be forgiven for thinking that WSCC is all about roads and potholes. There is rather more than that.

WSCC receives about 80% of the total amount that you pay in Council Tax with approx 9% going to MSDC, 9% to Sussex Police and just 2% to Parishes and Town Councils. Annual expenditure (not including schools) is over £530m with over 75% of this coming directly from Council Tax - so only 25% or so from Central Government grant - the exact opposite from the position in much of the country.

That money is spent on providing a very wide ranges of services: some you will be very aware of, others maybe not:

The list includes: schools, nursery provision, children and family centres, social care and support to people of all ages, from cradle to grave - literally. It also includes the Fire and Rescue Service, registration of births, deaths and marriages and the Coroners services, trading standards, community safety and provision for gypsies and travellers and 36 Libraries. Recently upgraded to a statutory duty, is the grass roots part of the Government's anti-terrorism strategy, called Prevent - aimed at preventing radicalisation by any groups. Also a more recent newcomer is public health, the prevention of disease and promotion of good and healthy lifestyles. WSCC maintains the public rights of way across the County and is the planning authority for waste disposal and minerals extraction. We do not collect the waste, but have the responsibility for disposing of it and for the promotion of waste reduction, re-use and re-cycling.

Smaller, but no less important are services such as: prevention of domestic and sexual violence and support for perpetrators and victims. Services to prevent alcohol and drug misuse and support for those who suffer as a result of it. Safeguarding our children from exploitation of all sorts and our older population from harm, especially in residential settings. Looking after children whose families are unable to do so and arranging adoption and fostering.

Add to this the management of one of the largest Pension schemes in the country.....And then there are the roads and potholes.

This is not a comprehensive list, but does I hope give a feel for the range of work with which a County Councillor becomes involved and for which we are accountable to you. As well as representing you, I have additional responsibilities in particular for Public Health and Community Safety and through Chairmanship of the Health and Wellbeing Board to bring health and social care much closer together - as well as being the Deputy Leader of the Council, which gives me an overview of the full spectrum of work that is undertaken to support the people of West Sussex.

Current Local Issues

These are, at the moment, all about traffic and parking. Over the past few months, I have been contacted in connection with:

- Parking and road safety concerns associated with the expansion of the primary school.
- Several requests to re-open Denmans Lane as a through road.
- Pavement parking in Pelham Road and Appledore Gardens
- Parking in Compton Road
- Parking and speeding in Hickmans Lane
- Parking in Sunte Avenue
- Traffic volumes, speed and safety in High Beeches Lane
- Concerns with the narrow junction of Lewes Road and High Street
- Concerns about lorries accessing sites within the village (Spring Lane and Buxshalls)

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- Most recently the petition to impose a 7.5 tonne weight restriction on B2028, width restrictions on B2111 and a 20mph speed limit through the village

None of these issues 'stand alone' and few are capable of a simple, affordable solution, which does not just move problems elsewhere. A traffic survey, such as the Parish Council plans, will be very helpful in establishing priorities and garnering information and opinion from across the Parish.

Street Lighting Replacement

I have done my best to follow up on the issues which arose from this. Some amendments were achieved but I am aware that the heritage lighting has yet to be completed.

Appendix B

REPORT BY COUNCILLOR MARGARET HERSEY (MSDC).

This last 12 months has seen a number of important issues directly/indirectly affecting Lindfield and these include the following:

- 1) Planning - the approval of the Penland Farm Development application by the inspector on appeal for just over 200 housing units.
- 2) The Birchen Lane Housing development application which was refused by MSDC, as yet no indication on any appeal or revised application.
- 3) At a special meeting of the District Council the "District Plan" pre-submission Draft for Public Consultation covering the period 2014-2031, was approved and will be formally issued for consultation in early June.
- 4) Once again the District Council through its careful management has been able to extend the No Increase in Council Tax for the 5th year including 2015/16.

Finally Chairman as you are aware, Chris Snowling is standing down as a District Councillor for Lindfield after many years of service and the MSDC April Full Council was a special occasion to acknowledge this.

With the Chairman's agreement, Councillor Hersey read out the tribute she had paid to Councillor Snowling at that meeting, as Lindfield Ward Councillor.

APPENDIX C

REPORT TO ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Councillor Mr. William Blunden, Chairman, Lindfield Parish Council

Once again this has been an interesting and challenging year for your Parish Council. The most noticeable challenge was the upgrading of the WSCC streetlights which gave the Parish Clerks and Councillors plenty of headaches in terms of communication with WSCC and their contractors and enquiries from distraught residents. We are still awaiting completion of the lights.

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.

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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 the Planning and Traffic Committee 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 Amenities Committee assisted by Roger Pickett 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.

As always the past year has 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 Council is represented on the Local Liaison Group which monitors the activity on the Barratt site in Gravelye Lane ensuring all the planning conditions are adhered to.

Together with colleagues on the Lindfield Rural Parish Council, members of Lindfield Parish Council have prepared a joint Neighbourhood Plan. Councillor Alan Gomme is the hardworking chairman of the group. (*Neighbourhood Plan report at Appendix D*).

Finance and General Purposes Committee

A total of £1,500 in grants has been awarded during the 2014/15 year, to support organisations whose work had benefits locally, plus a further grant of £1,000 towards the All Saints Bells project, funded from the reserves.

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.

The Environment and Amenities Committee has achieved a number of things for the benefit of the village, the main items being:

- Two village street map panels have been installed on the walls of the public toilets in Denmans Lane and the Lindfield Medical Centre.
- Replacement of three of the Parish Council's street lights one of which had been damaged and the other two were planned replacement of concrete columns.
- Christmas Festival Night was a huge success thanks to the work of our Deputy Clerk and the Working Group.
- Arranged six refuse freighter visits to the Tollgate car park.
- Reprint of the Lindfield leaflet.
- Cluster partnership, our 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, has worked out well.
- Lindfield Primary School Traffic meetings, the Council has been represented at these meetings.
- We welcome our new Assistant Pond Warden, Brodie Branch, who will work alongside Richard Powell.
- Paul Frost our Village Orderly retired at the end of March, Paul has provided excellent service to the Village since 2010 and previously as an employee of MSDC's street cleaning contractors.

Despite all that has been achieved we are pleased to report that we have kept the precept to the same amount as last year.

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APPENDIX D

REPORT ON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (Councillor Mr. Alan Gomme, Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group)

The Steering Group, comprised of Councillors from Lindfield Rural and our own Parish, continued to endeavour to progress our Plan during last year against a background of problems with Mid Sussex's District Plan, and amendments by Central Government to both the Neighbourhood Planning process and new guidance on the National Planning Policy Framework.

Having considered these and other matters, a slightly revised Plan, Consultation Statement, and Basic Conditions Statement were passed to the Neighbourhood Planning Officer, Mid Sussex District Council, for a health check last June, and an independent second opinion on these documents was also obtained. As a result of these checks MSDC suggested that we should consider further consultations on the Plan with our chosen statutory consultees, and this was duly undertaken last autumn for a period of 6 weeks.

Our Plan was then formally submitted to MSDC last December who published the Plan for the regulation 6 week public consultation period during February and March. The responses it received as a result of that consultation can be found on their web site. The Plan has now moved into the examination phase and an independent examiner has been appointed. We expect the examination itself to take place over the next few months.