



# LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14

June 2014

Parish Office :

Clock Tower House  
Lindfield Enterprise Park  
Lewes Road  
Lindfield  
West Sussex  
RH16 2LH

Tel: 01444 484115

Opening hours: Tuesdays 1.00 – 4.00 p.m., Thursdays and Fridays 10.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m.  
or by appointment

Chairman: Cllr. Mr. William Blunden  
Parish Clerk: Mrs. Christine Irwin  
Deputy Parish Clerk: Mr. Iain McLean  
Responsible Financial Officer: Mrs. Sue Kolien

email: [clerks@lindfieldparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerks@lindfieldparishcouncil.gov.uk)  
website: [lindfieldparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://lindfieldparishcouncil.gov.uk)

## MEMBERS OF LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Mike Allen	Jane Chatfield	Margaret Hersey	Ron Plass
Michael Amor	Alan Gomme	Simon Hodgson	Christopher Snowling
William Blunden (Chairman)	Stephen Henton	Roger Pickett	Valerie Upton (Vice Chairman)

Members can all be contacted via the Parish Office in the first instance.

## CHAIRMAN'S OVERVIEW (Councillor William Blunden)

In this report we aim to give a brief account of the Parish Council and what we have been doing on behalf of the community over the last financial year.

Once again this has been an interesting and challenging year for your Parish Council. The most notable challenge was our fight to prevent the development proposed by Wates on the Scamps Hill/Gravelly Lane site.

Although this is not within our Parish boundary it will have a huge impact on all of our residents and we worked closely with our colleagues on the Rural Parish Council, Haywards Heath Town Council, and a proactive group of local residents, making the case 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 currently enjoyed by ramblers, dog walkers and residents and it would also be unneighbourly to existing residents bordering this site. Nevertheless, to our disappointment, the Mid Sussex District Council Planning Committee approved the Application.

Due to the absence of a District Plan, developers have been 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 appears to conflict with the principles of "Localism" and the Parish Council will continue to do their very best to represent our Parishioners' views.

Essential work by South East Water to replace the water main from All Saints Church to Park Lane resulted in the top end of the High Street being closed for thirteen weeks from the 20th January, with loss of passing trade suffered by our High Street businesses at what is traditionally a quiet trading period. The Parish Council was proactive in getting a meeting arranged with WSCC, SE Water, bus companies and other stakeholders in November to discuss the road closure and any measures that could be implemented to minimise inconvenience to residents and liaised with WSCC and representatives of SE Water throughout the process, particularly in respect of the misleading signage.

Following the relocation of the Parish Office to the Lindfield Enterprise Park, the Council considered the future of the former office in Denmans Lane and the decision was finally made to sell the property.

The Parish Council continues to maintain communication with West Sussex County Council and Mid Sussex District Council through liaison with Local Members and Officers, attendance of our representatives at meetings of various forums such as the WSCC Central Mid Sussex County Local Committee. We are also represented at a number of other bodies, including the area Police Neighbourhood Panel, the Mid Sussex Association of Local Councils, the Mid Sussex Older People's Council, the Scrase Valley LNR Steering Committee and the River Ouse Stakeholders Group.

I would like to thank all those people, including our Pond and Tree Wardens, our Directory delivery team and those who volunteer for the Annual Spring Clean, clear snow etc., and all who help in many capacities behind the scenes. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow Councillors, who willingly give their time voluntarily and work hard to maintain and improve the Village for the benefit of all residents, and the Parish Council Staff for their dedication in serving the Council and local residents.

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## **PLANNING AND TRAFFIC COMMITTEE** **(Chairman: Councillor Alan Gomme)**

The Planning Committee has met every three weeks during the last year when we have considered 134 applications. Of these, 36 were tree related and we are always grateful for the comments on these that we receive from our tree wardens. In respect of the remainder, the Parish Council raised objections in respect of 17 and offered comments on a further 44 others.

We considered a major application for the construction of up to 48 houses on the land north of Birchen Lane, Haywards Heath, and lodged a number of strong objections. Whilst most of the land falls within the area of Haywards Heath Town Council, there is a spur of land at the end of Brook Lane, which falls within this Parish. We also commented on the application for the sizeable housing development at Penland Farm, although the land falls entirely within the area of Haywards Heath Town Council. We have tried to ensure that the interests of our Parish are fully considered in respect of other applications outside our Parish, such as at Buxshalls on the Ardingly Road, and the applications for agricultural re-grading works at several nearby farms, particularly in terms of traffic implications and concerns.

Over the year, we have commented on Haywards Heath Town Council's draft Neighbourhood Plan, and both the District Council's Submission District Plan and Community Infrastructure Levy (both unfortunately since withdrawn as a result of the Inspector's examination of the Duty to Co-operate). We have also commented on a number of other matters, including the proposed Traffic Regulation Order at Blackthorns, and the Footpath Creation Order at Brushes Lane.

### **Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.**

The Steering Group consists of Councillors from both Lindfield Parish Councils and has been continuing to progress the development of our own Neighbourhood Plan during the course of the year. It met in public on a number of occasions during the year, in order to develop the Plan and have it drafted for the pre-submission consultation stage. This process was informed by the work of the four Focus Groups (Housing, Landscape & Biodiversity, Transport & Traffic, and Community), the State of the Parishes report, and the results of the Housing Needs survey which we commissioned. We held a

number of publicity events throughout the year, including a Neighbourhood Planning workshop on 29<sup>th</sup> May and having a stall at Lindfield Village day on 1<sup>st</sup> June. This finally led to the draft plan going through its statutory 6 week consultation between November and December last year. The publication of the draft Plan was widely advertised, and this included two pop-in sessions in each of the two Parishes over the period. As a result of all the feedback and responses we have received, the Plan has now been refined and improved, ready for the next stages of the process.

For more information about the progress of our plan and all the relevant documents please visit our web site: [www.lindfieldparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.lindfieldparishcouncil.gov.uk)

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## **ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE**

**(Chairman: Councillor Will Blunden)**

The Environment and Amenities Committee is responsible for providing and maintaining the Denmans Lane Allotment Site, the public toilets, some of the Village street lighting, litter bins, bus shelters and other items of street furniture. The committee also liaises with MSDC regarding management of the Common, the Pond and Hickmans Lane Playing Field and with WSCC on various highway matters.

The cluster partnership with Haywards Heath Town Council is in place and working well. By agreement with WSCC Highways, the Haywards Heath team carries out minor highway works for their partner parishes, including cold fill pot hole repairs, gully cleaning and vegetation clearance, with the main benefit being the much quicker response.

Under a separate agreement, Haywards Heath Town Council maintain the grass verges on the High Street down to Pondcroft Road on behalf of the Parish Council with a licence from WSCC.

In addition to routine payments, the Committee's expenditure during 2013/14 included the six refuse freighter visits to the Tollgate car park, extra Christmas lights, litter bins to replace some of the wooden slatted bins which were in a poor state of repair, refurbishment of the bus stop poles, painting of the Parish Council owned street lights, new chain-link fencing on the SW boundary of the Denmans Lane allotment site and tree work following the periodic survey of the allotment trees.

Winter maintenance, the annual Christmas Festival Night and Spring Clean also come under this Committee's remit.

There is still a large demand for allotments and the waiting list is only open to residents of the urban Parish of Lindfield.

Paul Frost employed by the Parish Council as the Village Orderly, has continued to do an excellent job providing an extra service to complement the street sweeping arrangements carried out by SERCO on behalf of MSDC.

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## **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

**(Chairman: Councillor Stephen Henton)**

The Finance and General Purposes Committee is responsible for overseeing and reviewing the day to day financial matters of Lindfield Parish Council and to recommend to the Council the annual budget and the precept to be levied for the Parish. Staffing and the Parish Office accommodation also come under the remit of this Committee as well as governance, insurance, risk assessment, production of the Lindfield Parish Directory and Year Book and any matters of policy which do not fall clearly within the responsibilities of the other Committees, or where there is conflict between them.

Putting together the annual budget is a major task. As Lindfield Parish Council has very little income from other sources, most of its funds have to come from the annual precept. In 2013/14 the amount requested from MSDC was £152,000, as for the previous year, although on paper this was expressed

as a precept of £148,600 plus a grant of £3,400, to counter the effect of technical reforms to Council Tax. If the Committee underestimates the amount required, it is unable to obtain any further sums from other sources, other than loans for particular capital projects, so it is essential that reserves are held. The Council has several designated reserves “earmarked” for specific purposes as well as a general reserve which is a safeguard in case of unexpected but necessary expenditure. Full copies of the accounts are available from the Parish Office. A breakdown of the budget for 2014/15 is enclosed with this report, together with an abbreviated version of the receipts and payments for 2013/14. After careful consideration of the budget for 2014/15, notwithstanding rising costs and our new premises, we were pleased to be able to keep the precept at £152,000 for the third year running.

The on-going work of the Committee includes reviewing monthly income & expenditure against the budget, carrying out periodic checks on the financial records and reporting to Council annually on the effectiveness of the internal audit and internal control procedures. The finances of the Council are subject to both external and internal audit – to date no significant problems have been identified and some helpful suggestions have been followed up.

The Lindfield diaries continue to be distributed to every household. There had been some problems with printers over recent years leading to delays and a poorer quality end product. The 2014 edition was the first to be produced by our new printing company which has proved to be very satisfactory.

A group of Committee members has been working with a company of chartered surveyors on plans to reinstate public toilets on the Common. We hope to be in a position to publish proposals for public consultation during 2014/15 before submitting plans for planning permission and consent under the Commons Act.

Each year the Council sets aside an amount of money in the F&GP Committee’s budget for grants/donations, either to local village based groups or to organisations whose activities benefit residents of Lindfield. In 2013/14 a total of £1,600 was paid in grants to the following organisations: 4Sight (£100); West Sussex Mediation Service (£100); Victim Support (£100); Lindfield Arts Festival (£250); Mid Sussex Older People’s Council (£150), 1<sup>st</sup> Lindfield Scouts (£250), St Catherine’s Hospice (£200), Lindfield Bonfire Society (£200) and the Lindfield History Project Group, Great War Exhibition (£250).

## RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2014

2012/13			2013/2014	
£			£	
		<b>RECEIPTS</b>		
152,000.00		Precept	148,600.00	
113.41		Interest Received	103.98	
707.60		Allotments: Rents and Licence Fee	740.15	
3,970.00		Village Directory: Advertising	4,300.00	
6.00		Village Directory: Donations	7.00	
217.50		Christmas Festival Night	240.00	
1,512.75		Grants and Donations	3,760.00	
299,895.00		Public Works Loan Board	-	
1,275.47		Rent: Clock Tower House	11,874.97	
1,035.57		Other Income	894.39	
7,976.49	<b>468,709.79</b>	VAT re-imbursments	13,648.42	<b>184,168.91</b>
		<b>PAYMENTS</b>		
69,933.85		Administration:	81,695.33	
		Capital repayment of loan for Clock Tower House and associated costs. Toilets on the Common	33,933.99	
319,277.64		Other Expenditure on Parish Office	1,334.00	
7,015.00		Finance and General Purposes Committee	11,034.48	
9,701.83				
		Environment and Amenities Committee	39,431.17	
55,142.55				
		Planning and Traffic Committee	14,113.64	
1,590.29				
15,293.02		VAT on Payments	10,658.92	
	<b>477,954.18</b>		<b>192,201.53</b>	<b>192,201.53</b>
	<b>- 9,244.39</b>			<b>- 8,032.62</b>
<b>SUMMARY</b>				
Opening Balance	170,744.39		Payments	192,201.53
Receipts	184,168.91		Closing Balance	162,711.77
	<b>£ 354,913.30</b>			<b>£ 354,913.30</b>
<b>BANK RECONCILIATION</b>				
Current Account	- 14,188.06			
Business Saver Account	176,777.18			
	<b>162,589.12</b>			
Petty Cash in Hand	122.65			
<b>Total:</b>	<b>£ 162,711.77</b>			

## BUDGET 2014 / 15 (Precept £152,000)

		<b>BUDGET</b>
		<b>2014/2015</b>
<b>Finance and General Purposes Committee</b>		
A	Administration	108,520.00
B	Chairman's Fund	500.00
C	Grants/Donations	1,500.00
D	Annual Memberships/Subscriptions	2,500.00
E	Village Directory	5,500.00
F	Newsletter/Annual Report	2,000.00
G	Members' Allowances	2,500.00
<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>123,020.00</b>
<b>Capital Projects</b>		
H	Repairs and remedial work to Clock Tower House	10,000.00
I	Toilets on Lindfield Common	20,000.00
<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>30,000.00</b>
<b>Environment and Amenities Committee</b>		
1a	Street Lighting - Energy/maintenance costs	3,500.00
1b	- Upgrading Street lights	6,000.00
1c	- Christmas lights	3,000.00
2	Maintenance	5,000.00
3	Allotments	2,000.00
4	Gardening	600.00
5	Christmas Festival Night	1,000.00
6	Village Archives	300.00
7	Mobile Civic Amenity Freighter	2,000.00
8	Denmans Lane toilets - running costs	12,000.00
9	Street map of Lindfield	5,000.00
10	Replacement of litter bins	2,000.00
11	Digital mapping	250.00
12	Joint Project with MSDC/WSCC - Post and rail fencing - Pond and Common	2,000.00
13	Tree Pollarding	2,500.00
14	Grass cutting (High Street)	2,600.00
15	Emergency Equipment	750.00
16	Joint Project with WSCC: Dropped kerbs	3,000.00
17	Reprint of Lindfield Leaflet	1,500.00
18	Replace York paving by Post Office	10,000.00
19	Joint Project with MSDC: Upgrading Hickmans Lane Playing Fields	5,000.00
<b>Sub total</b>		<b>70,000.00</b>
<b>Planning and Traffic Committee</b>		
(i)	Miscellaneous	200.00
(ii)	Professional Fees/Neighbourhood Plan	20,000.00
(iii)	Traffic Study	20,000.00
<b>Sub total</b>		<b>40,200.00</b>
<b>Budget Total</b>		<b>263,220.00</b>
<b>Reserves</b>		
General Reserve		<b>50,000.00</b>
<b>Designated Reserves</b>		
Sinking Fund - Denmans Lane		4,600.00
Election		3,121.00
Grants/Donations		400.00
Street Lighting		13,404.88
Street Map of Lindfield		8,816.25
Posts around Open Spaces		7,000.00
Emergency Equipment		486.65
Joint Project with WSCC: Dropped kerbs		2,500.00
Joint Project with MSDC: Replacement of floating islands on Pond		1,000.00
Denmans Lane toilets - maintenance sinking fund		5,000.00
Repairs and remedial work to Clock Tower House		12,909.00
Capital Project: Toilets on Common		49,000.00
Public Toilets on Common: Sinking Fund		20,000.00
Repair/maintenance of community assets - sinking fund		3,000.00
Maintenance of King Edward Hall clock		900.00
Christmas Lights		437.93
Replacement of Litter Bins		2,916.50
Tree Pollarding		5,000.00
Professional Fees/Neighbourhood Plan		34,490.06
<b>Total</b>		<b>174,982.27</b>
<b>Total: Outstanding Projects and Reserves</b>		<b>224,982.27</b>