



Lindfield Parish Council Newsletter

Annual Report 2011/12

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CHAIRMAN'S OVERVIEW

(Cllr. 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.

Last May we said goodbye to five much respected Members of the Council who did not stand for re-election: Margaret Nicolle, Michael Davies, Mike Leach, Roger Pickett and Steve Willcox and we welcomed five new Councillors: Michael Amor, Jane Chatfield, Simon Hodgson, Ron Plass and Lester Corp. [Councillor Corp resigned several months later and former Councillor Roger Pickett was co-opted to fill this vacancy in May 2012]. Margaret Nicolle had served the Council continuously since its inception in 1987 and for twelve of these twenty four years she had been either our Chairman or Vice Chairman.

The challenges arising from the Localism Act have been exercising the minds of members of all local councils over the past year. The effects of this legislation are particularly evident in the restructuring of the West Sussex County Council's Northern Area Highways Department, which is now known as the Gatwick Diamond Area Community and Economic Development Team and which covers much more than highway matters, the objective being to enable local communities to achieve more for themselves. We have held meetings with representatives of Haywards Heath Town Council and neighbouring Parish Councils to explore ways we can work together to deliver services at local level and the High Street grass cutting is an example of how this can be achieved. WSCC have licensed the Parish Council to maintain the verges and we pay Haywards Heath Town Council for their grounds staff to cut the grass to the standard we require. We have been very pleased with the result.

Localism has also led to the introduction of a new layer into the development planning process in the form

of community-led Neighbourhood Planning. Lindfield Parish Council has joined up with Lindfield Rural Parish Council to produce a joint Neighbourhood Plan for our area, without which we could be more vulnerable to uncontrolled development.

Parish Councillors have attended launch events at The Limes development. We welcome new residents to this community and hope they enjoy what Lindfield has to offer.

The Parish Council maintains a good relationship with the local police through representation on the Police Neighbourhood Panel, Police reports to Council meetings, sometimes in person, and the monthly Police Surgeries at the Parish Office, when PC Geoff Bennett and/or PCSO Stuart Clough are in attendance to talk to residents about any concerns they may have.

The Council was fully supportive of Cllr. Gomme, in his capacity as Chair of Communications Forum, with his successful campaign to bring faster Broadband to Lindfield through the BT "Race to Infinity" Scheme.

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, maintain flower beds and all who help in many capacities behind the scenes. Without this help, there is no doubt that the Parish Council alone would be unable to carry out the huge amount of work that it does and it is a credit to Lindfield that we have so many willing volunteers. However we can always do with more, so if you are able to help in any way, please contact the Parish Office on 01444 484115. 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.

Members of Lindfield Parish Council:

They can all be contacted, in the first instance, via the Parish

**Cllr. William
Blunden
(Chairman)**

**Cllr. Valerie
Upton
(Vice Chairman)**

**Cllr. Mike
Allen**

**Cllr. Michael
Amor**

**Cllr. Jane
Chatfield**

**Cllr. Alan
Gomme**

Lindfield Parish Council Office is open on Tuesdays 1.00pm to 4.00pm, Thursdays and Fridays 10.00am to 1.00pm – when members of the public are welcome to come along to look at planning applications for Lindfield, apply for bus passes and obtain railcard vouchers, or simply seek advice on issues of concern. However, if you do need to speak with someone outside our normal opening hours, then please contact the Clerk who will be happy to make alternative arrangements with you.

Parish Clerk:
Mrs. Christine Irwin

Deputy Parish Clerk:
Iain McLean

Responsible Financial
Officer: Mrs. Sue Kollen

Planning and Traffic Committee

(Chairman Cllr. Alan Gomme)

The routine work of the Planning and Traffic Committee is to comment on planning applications for work on buildings and trees within the Parish. Over the past year the Committee has commented on a total of 153 applications, of which 40 related to trees. We raised objections to 18 of the applications and offered comments on 11 others, as well as suggesting conditions to the planning permission to address specific concerns.

Applications that have been particularly significant during the year have included two associated with the Lindfield Cricket Club on the Common: new nets and an extension to the Pavilion. The extension to the existing building was not seen as controversial but there were some concerns expressed regarding the visual impact and positioning of the nets and their use ahead of formal agreement by the statutory bodies concerned, in this case the Planning Inspectorate (PI) acting under the Commons Act 2006. The matter is still under examination by the PI but the process should be complete during Summer 2012. In the interim, the nets are in frequent use by large numbers of adults and youths.

In addition, the Committee has monitored progress of the Barratt's development at Newton Road – The Limes – which has seen completion of the 120 dwellings started in January 2010. From the outset the Parish Council saw its role as protecting the interests and well-being of residents, particularly those living on the periphery of the site; consequently it was pro-active throughout and held a meeting with the developer early in 2010. As a result, we believe we have had co-operation from and maintained largely good relations with the developer in a way that other communities have not. As the developer leaves the site we will continue to keep a close eye on activities and in particular matters relating to refurbishment of the Pond on the east side – works that are expected in late Summer 2012, following the nesting season - and planting up of as many as 7,000 trees and shrubs on the re-profiled, northern boundary field.

ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE

(Chairman Cllr. William 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 WSSC on various highway matters. This has been a busy year for this Committee and a great deal has been achieved.

Having published our Winter Management Plan in 2010, we considered how this could be improved on and we have now purchased mechanised equipment for clearing snow from pavements, plus some extra salt bins.

On our behalf, Haywards Heath Town Council's grounds staff planted 2,000 extra crocus bulbs in the High Street verges last year and they have continued to cut these verges to a high standard.

The round wrought iron litter bins have been refurbished and other street furniture maintenance has been carried out over this year; seats painted, bus shelters repaired where necessary and painted and the finger post at the Sunte Avenue cross roads has been fully restored with the help of funding from WSSC. Our new street lighting contractors, Direct Technical Services, are proving to be a real asset; we now have very few reports of lamp failures from residents and a large proportion of the lanterns are being upgraded to comply with current standards.

Paul Frost, employed by the Parish Council as the Village Orderly, is doing a fine job providing an extra service to complement the street sweeping arrangements carried out by SERCO on behalf of MSDC.

To improve safety we have carried out a joint project

Office, or by reference to the Lindfield Village Directory and Year Book, which contains details of individual contact numbers.

Cllr. Stephen
Henton

Cllr. Margaret
Hersey

Cllr. Simon
Hodgson

Cllr. Roger
Pickett

Cllr. Ron
Plass

Cllr. Christopher
Snowling

with WSCC to install a barrier at the Hickmans Lane end of the footpath to Finches Park Road, which involved clearing and widening the entrance so that pedestrians are more easily seen.

There is still a huge demand for allotments and we have implemented a policy of subdividing larger plots as they become vacant to give more people the opportunity to have an allotment. Unfortunately a possible opportunity to acquire land on the outskirts of the village for this purpose did not come to fruition.

The Parish Council, through the Environment and Amenities Committee's budget, was pleased to give financial support to the committee organising the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations in the Village.

The Christmas Lights has been a thorny issue for the last few years and, supported by a petition signed

by over 500 people on Christmas Festival Night, the Committee will soon be considering what can be done to decorate the trees in the High Street for next Christmas. Meanwhile a lighting scheme on the Pond islands was successfully trialled over the last Christmas period and the Parish Council has agreed to purchase the equipment as a permanent installation to be switched on for Christmas and other special occasions.

Other projects running over into the next year include provision of street maps in the two main village car parks and refurbishment of the wrought iron bus stop poles.

The Committee continues to organise the Annual Village Spring Clean and Christmas Festival Night; to provide six visits a year by the refuse freighter to the Tollgate car park; and to carry out regular and occasional maintenance of flower beds and footpaths.

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

(Chairman: Cllr. Stephen Henton)

As its name suggests, the Finance and General Purposes Committee has the responsibility to oversee and review 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 (£152,000 for 2012/13). 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. A breakdown of the budget for 2012/13 is enclosed with this report, together with an abbreviated version of the receipts and

payments for 2011/12. Full copies of the accounts are available from the Parish Office.

The ongoing 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.

A working group is looking into the feasibility of reinstating public toilets on the Common. We are also seeking additional or larger premises in order to improve working conditions for the staff and to provide better facilities for members of the public.

Each year the Council sets aside an amount of money in the F&GP Committee's budget to enable it to make grants/donations, either to local village based groups or to organisations whose activities benefit residents of Lindfield. In 2011/12 payments were made to the following: 4Sight (£200); West Sussex Mediation Service (£100); Victim Support (£50); Lindfield Arts Festival (£500); Haywards Heath Food Bank (£500).

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2012

2010/11 £			2011/12 £	
		RECEIPTS		
158,246.00		Precept	158,000.00	
84.83		Interest Received	105.24	
631.62		Allotments: Rents and Licence Fee	634.32	
4,934.00		Village Directory: Advertising	3,910.00	
-		Village Directory: Donations	887.40	
205.00		Christmas Festival Night	330.00	
372.00		Grants and Donations	208.50	
3,202.97		Other Income	2,804.67	
6,837.12	174,513.54	VAT re-imburements	8,319.57	175,199.70
		PAYMENTS		
65,071.38		Administration:	67,755.02	
975.47		Capital	479.44	
6,121.00		Other Expenditure on Parish Office	8,415.44	
10,770.83		Finance and General Purposes Committee	11,125.96	
38,822.64		Environment and Amenities Committee	50,919.20	
-		Planning and Traffic Committee	-	
6,866.42	128,627.74	VAT on Payments	9,543.99	148,239.05
	45,885.80			26,960.65
SUMMARY				
Opening Balance		152,900.30	Payments	148,239.05
Receipts		175,199.70	Closing Balance	179,857.06
		328,100.00		328,096.11
BANK RECONCILIATION				
Current Account	- 16,769.75			
Business Saver Acc	196,626.81			
	179,857.06			
Petty Cash in Hand	131.72			
Total:	£ 179,988.78			

BUDGET 2012-2013

	BUDGET 2012/2013
Finance and General Purposes Committee	
A Administration	78,925.00
B Chairman's Fund	500.00
C Grants/Donations	1,500.00
D Annual Memberships/subscriptions	2,500.00
E Village Directory	6,000.00
F Newsletter/Annual Report	2,000.00
G Members' Allowances	2,500.00
Sub Total:	93,925.00
Environment and Amenities Committee	
1 Street Lighting - Energy/maintenance costs	6,000.00
- Upgrading Street lights	5,000.00
- Christmas Lights	9,000.00
2 Maintenance	5,000.00
3 Allotments	2,500.00
4 Gardening	500.00
5 Christmas Festival Night	1,000.00
6 Village Archives	500.00
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 Removal of epicormic growth	600.00
15 Grass cutting (High Street)	1,700.00
16 Emergency Equipment	1,500.00
17 HM The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Celebrations	1,500.00
18 Bus Stop Poles refurbishment	2,500.00
19 Pond Aerator	3,000.00
Sub total	66,050.00
Planning and Traffic Committee	
(i) Miscellaneous	200.00
(ii) Professional Fees	10,000.00
Sub total	10,200.00
BUDGET TOTAL	170,175.00
Outstanding Projects	
Street map of Lindfield	2,922.52
Christmas Lights	3,500.00
HM The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Celebrations	650.00
Sub total	7,072.52
Reserves	
General Reserve	50,000.00
Designated Reserves	
Sinking Fund - Denmans Lane	3,600.00
New Premises	20,000.00
Election	3,121.00
Street Lighting	8,605.68
Allotments	500.00
Denmans Lane toilets – maintenance sinking fund	5,000.00
Capital Project: Toilets on Common	30,000.00
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	2,100.00
Replacement of Litter Bins	5,727.00
Professional Fees	10,000.00
Sub total:	112,553.68
Total: Outstanding Projects and Reserves	169,626.20