

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE** held on **THURSDAY, 1 DECEMBER 2016** at the King Edward Hall, Lindfield.

The meeting commenced at 8.00 p.m.

Present:

Parish Councillors: Mr. W. Blunden (Chairman)
Mr. M. Allen
Mr. S. Henton
Mrs. M. Hersey
Mr. S. Hodgson
Mr. R. Pickett (Vice Chairman)
Mr. C. Snowling
Mrs. V. Upton

In attendance: Mrs. C. Irwin (Clerk)

177. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

177.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Durrant and the reasons were accepted.

178. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

178.1 Item 11: Denmans Lane Allotments. Councillor Allen declared a personal interest in this item as his wife was a plot holder. Councillor Blunden also declared a personal interest in this item as he was a plot holder.

179. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

179.1 There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

180. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE HELD ON 6 OCTOBER 2016.

180.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Amenities Committee held on Thursday, 6 October. These were **AGREED** and the Chairman **SIGNED** the Minutes as being a true record of that meeting.

181. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

181.1 Compass Bus. The Chairman reported that Councillor Field had stated at a recent meeting of the WSCC Central Mid Sussex County Local Committee that Compass Bus were understood to be giving consideration to representations from residents about reinstating the former route serving Backwoods Land and Appledore Gardens, but they may approach the Parish Council for a small donation.

182. ACTION LIST.

182.1 Allotments – chestnut fencing (Minute 166.5). The Chairman reported that the additional posts had been purchased that day ready for installation.

183. ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE BUDGET PROGRESS 2016 / 17.

183.1 Budget progress 2016/17: payments made to 31.10.16. **NOTED:** as at 31.10.16, £23,206 had been spent out of the budget of £51,600 and there had been no expenditure from the reserves under E&A headings. November expenditure was anticipated to be in the order of £2,220.00

184. REPORT ON CURRENT MAINTENANCE.

184.1 There was nothing to report on this item.

185. WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL HIGHWAYS.

- 185.1 Roadside post and rail fence by the Pond. Further to Minute 163.2 (06.10.16), the Clerk had since met with Richard Speller on site. He had been thinking about using “birds-beak” post and diamond rail fencing but on inspection he agreed that any new posts and rails should match the existing ones. He had also agreed that the gaps between rails should remain to maintain the informal crossing points. Mr. Speller was going to look into replacing all the posts at once because this would be more cost effective particularly as traffic management would be needed. However he had doubts that this would meet the criteria for getting the work done by WSCC on safety grounds, so finding funding for this work could be difficult. He was going to get the job costed and look into available funding.

Since the site meeting, it had come to light that Barratt Homes had revised a former plan for some alterations to create an uncontrolled crossing point outside the King Edward Hall which would affect the position of some of the fence posts. This had been brought to Mr. Speller’s attention and the Clerk had suggested approaching Barratt Homes for a contribution to the replacement of the rest of the posts if their scheme should be implemented.

- 185.2 Dropped kerbs. A Member requested a record in the Minutes noting that dropped kerbs were a highways matter and therefore the responsibility of WSCC. The Chairman confirmed that the Parish Council had previously contributed towards additional dropped kerbs as a joint project with WSCC, in response to requests from members of the public.

Members considered the Clerk’s report on dropped crossings requested by members of the public and discussed the priorities to be recommended to WSCC for implementation with a contribution from the Parish Council’s reserve of £12,500.

It was **NOTED** that the Clerk had taken a call earlier that day from an elderly disabled resident in Newton Road who had a canopy attached to her scooter and because of its extra length she was unable to manoeuvre through the barriers in the footpath alongside the URC. The Lewes Road route to the High Street, with heavy traffic and narrow pavement, was too dangerous for her and Dukes Road was unsuitable because of the lack of dropped kerbs at the junctions, so she was currently going to the High Street by a circuitous route, crossing the Common. It was pointed out that the barrier was originally a double chicane, intended to stop bicycles and motor cycles for the sake of pedestrians; if the barrier was adapted to allow a longer than average mobility scooter through, motor cycles and bicycles could also be ridden through it. The Clerk would be making representations to WSCC Highways on this issue.

The estimate given by WSCC Highways for dropped kerbs was between £2,500 and £3,000 for each pair and it was **NOTED** that at the lower figure of £2,500 the budget of £12,500 would fund 5 pairs. It was understood that WSCC would fund alterations to existing crossings in the High Street at the junction with Brushes Lane and Sunte Avenue outside and opposite The Witch.

In respect of the crossing from the Oakfield Close side of Hickmans Lane to Denmans Lane, it was suggested that dropped crossings would not be necessary because there was no footway in Denmans Lane beyond Hickmans Court, so a driveway could be used to cross Hickmans Lane straight into Denmans Lane.

It was **AGREED** that the remaining locations on the list should be prioritised as follows:

High priority

- Hickmans Lane, north of Sunte Avenue
- Dukes Road, east side: to cross The Wilderness junction
- Dukes Road, east side: cul de sac
- Lewes Road, near West View (outside “Sturrow”): to cross from the Common.

Lower priority

- Dukes Road, west side: between house numbers 9 and 13
- Hickmans Lane, south of Sunte Avenue (near 15 Hickmans Lane): to access Denmans Lane from Sunte Avenue

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It was **RESOLVED** that the Council, in accordance with its powers under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, should incur the following expenditure, which, in the opinion of the Council, is in the interests of the area or its inhabitants and will benefit them in a manner commensurate with the expenditure: up to £12,500 as a contribution to WSCC towards installation of dropped kerbs.

186. POSSIBLE JOINT PROJECTS WITH MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL.

186.1 Contribution towards maintenance of the Common post and rail fence. Mark Hayler (MSDC) had recently asked the Clerk to confirm the available contribution from the Parish Council towards maintenance of the posts on the Common. It was **NOTED** that the sum of £2,000 in this year's budget was intended to cover a contribution to WSCC for the roadside posts by the pond as well as MSDC's posts. An estimate of the contribution that MSDC would be seeking from the Parish Council was still awaited.

186.2 Hickmans Lane playground upgrade. Further to a recent email to David Harper about progressing this and other joint projects, the Clerk had received the following reply:

"You will recall that when we met with you last year, I confirmed that the Council had discussed the LPC Hickmans Lane playground project at which time was willing to grant an agreement to the Parish Council on the basis that the Parish Council undertakes the works, as the Council's resources were directed to its own prioritised projects.

I have asked Mr Thuso Selelo, Head of Corporate Estates to follow this matter up with you. As most of your LPC projects relating to Outdoor Facilities will involve an appropriate legal agreement. I strongly recommend that you contact Mr Selelo as soon as possible whose team also incorporates the outdoor facility team.

The formation of a new Contracts Division including the Landscapes team managing the grounds maintenance contract will enable us to focus our contract management resources to maximise the efficiencies of our largest contracts going forward.

The Council will of course continue to contribute technical advice to any projects that are in place or come forward in the future."

It was **NOTED** that at a more recent meeting with David Harper and David Terry in September, attended by the Chairman and Clerk, Mr Harper had raised the question of how the project should be managed: i.e. whether the Parish Council would buy the equipment and MSDC install it, and the Chairman and Clerk had expressed the preference for working together on the design and choice of equipment and for MSDC to install it with a contribution from the Parish Council towards the project, which had been the way a similar project on the Common had been managed several years previously. Members were unhappy with Mr. Harper's suggestion as it was considered that, whilst a contribution to a joint project was appropriate, taking the lead on installing equipment on land owned by MSDC, was not. Also, the Parish Council did not employ specialist project managers and there were concerns about responsibilities for ongoing maintenance of the equipment.

The Clerk had asked for advice from SSALC about Mr. Harper's suggested method of managing this project, which was still awaited. It was **AGREED** to inform Mr. Harper that the Parish Council did not find his proposal acceptable.

A Member requested that, if the project were to go ahead, there should be inclusive equipment accessible to disabled children.

186.3 Additional posts round the area of the Common along Black Hill. Mr. Harper had confirmed that MSDC's Property Lawyer was considering this matter and Mr. Harper was awaiting clarification as to whether this would require any specific Council authorisation. There was some debate about whether or not to abandon this project, which did not seem to be a priority for MSDC. It was **AGREED** to retain the project, pending the outcome of further discussions with MSDC, but not to hold a specific reserve for this purpose. It was also **AGREED** to reallocate unspent funds from this designated reserve to the reserve for general maintenance at the financial year-end

187. DENMANS LANE ALLOTMENTS.

- 187.1 Tree work. The Chairman reported that the tree work recommended by Mr. Thurman had been completed, except for branch reduction to one tree which had been missed; the tree surgeons would be dealing with this shortly.
- 187.2 Replacement mower. The Committee had previously agreed to make allowance in next year's budget for a replacement mower to be purchased in the Spring. It was **NOTED** that plot holders had suggested the purchase of a good second hand power driven machine with a roller to go over the edges of paths.
- 187.3 Meeting with plotholders. This meeting was still to be arranged (January or February 2017). Plot holders would be notified as soon as possible.
- 187.4 Unworked plot. As agreed at the last meeting, a letter had been sent to the tenant of plot 23b who had subsequently employed contractors to clear the plot and it was now in good condition.

188. DENMANS LANE PUBLIC TOILETS.

- 188.1 Evidence of drug taking on the premises. Evidence of drug taking had been found in the disposal containers, in the form of increased numbers of needles and, recently, kitchen foil. The Clerk had informed the police who had confirmed that they would include the toilets on their patrols and asked to be informed of any further issues. It was **NOTED** that the light bulbs were to be replaced with blue ones as a deterrent to self-injecting.
- 188.2 Service area. The Chairman reported that the service area to the rear of the cubicles had not been redecorated since the refurbishment was completed in 2009 and it was in need of attention. It was **AGREED** to include provision in the 2017/18 budget for re-painting the service area.

189. CHRISTMAS LIGHTS UPDATE.

- 189.1 It was **NOTED** that the installation of the Christmas lights had been completed and they were lit tonight for the first time. The Chairman reported that it had been discovered that the previous sub-contractors had cut off and disposed of the catenary wire, when they removed the garland in January. This year's sub-contractors had not been aware of this and had had to replace it. The additional two trees outside 107 High Street had been dressed with spark-lights as agreed. The sub-contractors had found that the tree outside the Manor House did in fact have spark-lights in it, so they did not add to these; the previous sub-contractors must have failed to connect them in 2015.

190. CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL NIGHT - 6 DECEMBER 2016.

- 190.1 The Chairman reported that the arrangements were in place and reminded Members that volunteers were needed during the day and in the evening. Councillors Blunden, Upton and Henton confirmed that they would be available.

191. WILDERNESS FIELD WORKING GROUP.

- 191.1 As agreed at the last E&A meeting, a letter had been sent to Kathryn Hall - Chief Executive at MSDC, requesting that the terms of a contract for the transfer of the land be drawn up without further delay. This had been passed to Tom Clark, the Council's solicitor, whose reply confirmed what the Parish Council already knew – that the District Council would not start on the process of transferring the field to the Parish Council until the land had been registered in their name at the Land Registry which had been delayed. Mr. Clark had confirmed that colleagues in Property and Legal teams would then be working on the possible transfer of the land to the Parish Council with the Deputy Clerk.

The Chairman reported that after the last meeting, Councillor Pickett had indicated that he would like to be a member of the Working Group. This was **AGREED**. The Members of the Working Group were therefore: Councillors Blunden, Henton, Pickett and Snowling, with the Clerk and Deputy Clerk

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192. SOUTH AND SOUTH EAST IN BLOOM WORKING GROUP.

- 192.1 Councillor Durrant had sent an email asking the Committee to note that she had been in touch with Heather Martin who was aiming to have an article in the next edition of Lindfield Life magazine. They would be meeting when Councillor Durrant returned from leave.

193. LINDFIELD POND: SUGGESTED PURCHASE OF A SECOND FLOATING ISLAND.

- 193.1 Members considered the suggestion of purchasing a second floating island for the Pond. There was some difference of opinion about the success of the one installed earlier in 2016 and it was felt that this should be reassessed after there had been time for it to settle down. This was considered further under the budget 2017/18 item (Minute 195.1).

194. FORMER ZIPPER CLUB NOTICEBOARD

- 194.1 Members considered a brief report from the Clerk which had been circulated with the Agenda. Mr. M. Batterby, the former Chairman of the Zipper Club, which was no longer active, had agreed for the Parish Council to take over the Zipper Club notice board in Denmans Lane for Council / Community use, for a consideration in the form of a donation of whatever sum the Council decided, to a relevant charity, the suggestion being the British Heart Foundation. Members felt that this would be a worthwhile acquisition as the existing noticeboards were heavily used. It was **AGREED** to accept Mr. Batterby's offer and to make a recommendation to the Finance and General Purposes Committee that a donation should be made from the Grants and Donations budget to the British Heart Foundation; the sum of £75 was to be suggested, subject to any further discussion by the F&GP Committee.

195. ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE BUDGET 2017/18.

- 195.1 A spreadsheet and a paper giving details of each budget item had been circulated with the agenda. Members discussed the budget proposals under each of the separate headings.

Further to the Chairman's report at Minute 181.1 regarding the possibility that Compass Bus might approach the Parish Council for a contribution towards their Lindfield bus service, some reservations were expressed about subsidising private companies. It was **AGREED** not to make provision for a subsidy at this point, but that the position would be reviewed in the light of further information that may have become available before the deadline for approving the budget.

It was **AGREED** to recommend to the Finance and General Purposes Committee that the Environment and Amenities Committee budget for 2017 / 18 should be as follows.

		£	Comments
1a	Street lighting – energy/maintenance costs	4,300.00	Estimates: energy £1,600; maintenance contract £1,200, chargeable faults £1,500. No increase proposed.
1b	Street lighting – Upgrading street lights	3,000.00	The planned upgrade was now completed. Noted that conversion to LED could be considered in the future. Recommendation: reduce budget by £4,000 to cover replacing one heritage light (highest cost) as a contingency in case of damage.
1c	Christmas Lights	8,500.00	£2,500 increase recommended to include service or improvements to Pond lights and additional costs due to pollarding due in Jan 2018
2	Maintenance / gardening (including Spring Clean and maintenance work carried out by Haywards Heath Town Council	4,000.00	Routine maintenance, gardening, dog bin service, Spring Clean and unforeseen repairs to street furniture etc. Arrangements made with HHTC last year for certain maintenance work to be carried out by their grounds-staff and invoiced to the Parish Council. Recommendation: reduce by £3,500

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		£	Comments
3	Allotments	2,000.00	Maintenance of Allotment machinery, the boundary fencing, Council-owned sheds, three yearly tree surveys and any tree work which becomes necessary (no significant tree work anticipated in next year. Also includes – replacement mower. Recommendation: reduce by £1,000
4	Christmas Festival Night	1,000.00	Recommended – no change
5	Village Archives	200.00	Small reduction of £100 proposed
6	Mobile Civic Amenity Freighter	2,000.00	Recommended – no change
7	Denmans Lane toilets – running costs	13,000.00	Recommended - small increase of £500, to include repainting the service area
8	Extra bollards – High Street, north of crossing	0.00	Work completed: budget heading to be removed 2017/18
9	Digital Mapping	250.00	Recommended – no change
10	Joint project with MSDC/WSCC – post and rail fencing – Pond and Common	5,000.00	For planned maintenance to be agreed with WSCC and MSDC. Pending further discussion with MSDC about the Common posts and WSCC about the roadside posts by the Pond. Recommendation – retain unspent sum in a reserve and budget a further £5,000.
11	Grass cutting (High Street	2,000.00	Recommended – no change
12	Emergency equipment	0.00	Recommendation – add unspent balance to designated reserve at year-end and omit heading from in-year budget 2017/18
NEW 2017/18			
13	Floating island – Lindfield Pond	1,000.00	Recommendation – make provision in the budget, but the decision to proceed would be subject to further discussion.
14	Wilderness Field - fees and expenses	3,000.00	Recommendation – make provision in the budget to cover fees and expenses in respect of the proposed transfer of ownership to the Parish Council.
15	Common footpath – contribution to new path (as joint project with MSDC)	1,000.00	Recommendation - make provision in the budget for a contribution (if requested).
16	Reprint of the Lindfield Leaflet	1,200.00	Recommendation – budget for a reprint (subject to review of the remaining supply of leaflets during the year).
TOTAL		51,450.00	Overall budget - £150 less than 2016/17

It was also **AGREED** to confirm the E&A Committee’s reserves subject to review at the year-end and the amendments agreed during discussion on the in-year budget above.

196. RISK MANAGEMENT.

196.1 It was **NOTED** that the Insurance and Risk Management Working Group had not yet met. It was suggested that the members of that Working Group should plan to hold a meeting in the near future.

197. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

197.1 No other items of business were raised.

The meeting concluded at 9.10 p.m.