

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE** held on **THURSDAY 2 FEBRUARY 2017** 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. Hodgson
Mr. C. Snowling
Mrs. V. Upton

In attendance: Mrs. C. Irwin (Clerk)

Absent: Parish Councillors Mrs. J. Durrant, Mr. S. Henton, Mrs. M. Hersey and Mr. R. Pickett (Vice Chairman)

The Chairman welcomed those present.

198. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

198.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Durrant, Henton, Hersey and Pickett and the reasons were accepted.

199. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

199.1 Item 13: Allotments, Councillor Blunden declared a personal interest in this item as he was a plot holder and Councillor Allen also declared a personal interest as his wife was a plot holder.

200. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

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

201. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE HELD ON 1 DECEMBER 2016.

201.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes of the Environment and Amenities Committee held on 1 December 2016. These were **AGREED** and the Chairman **SIGNED** the Minutes as being a true record of that meeting.

202. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

202.1 There were no Chairman's Announcements.

203. ACTION LIST.

203.1 Minute 194.1 - Former Zipper Club Noticeboard. **NOTED:** the Finance and General Purposes Committee had agreed the £75 donation to the British Heart Foundation for the Zipper Club noticeboard, as recommended by the Environment and Amenities Committee and a cheque had recently been sent to the Mid Sussex branch. The Clerk had informed their former Chairman, Mike Batterby that the donation had been sent and a letter of thanks had been sent to him. A locksmith would be needed to open the door, as the keys had not been located, prior to obtaining an estimate for refurbishment and a new name plaque. The board would be added to the insurance schedule.

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204. ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE BUDGET PROGRESS 2016 / 17

204.1 Budget progress 2016/17: payments made to 31.12.16. **NOTED:** as at 31.12.17, £29,581 had been spent from the in-year budget of £51,600 and there had been no expenditure from the E&A reserves. Expenditure in January was approximately £5,075.

205. REPORT ON CURRENT MAINTENANCE.

205.1 The Chairman reported that the planters in Denmans Lane near the noticeboards were overgrown and ivy was climbing the wall. This would be attended to shortly.

206. HIGHWAYS CLUSTER AGREEMENT.

206.1 A report from the Clerk was **NOTED.** At a meeting on 26 January, Steve Trice, the Town Clerk at Haywards Heath, had briefed the Clerks of cluster partners Lindfield, Ardingly and Lindfield Rural Parish Councils about the review of the Highway Services Partnership which they operated through a Community Interest Company (CIC):

- The agreements for Burgess Hill, Haywards Heath and East Grinstead had been reviewed, brought into line and rolled into one.
- Funding from WSCC would be significantly less than previously, mainly because pot hole repairs had been removed from the contract.
- Contract work in future would consist of jobs such as vegetation and weed clearance, epicormic growth removal and cleaning of gulleys and signs (the "green offer").
- The street name sign contract, worth about £5,000 for which HHTC received funding from MSDC and serviced through the CIC was under review by MSDC.
- The CIC directors were due to meet to consider whether to continue with the CIC or not and if so whether to take it forward on the basis of a revenue budget only, without reserves.
- All three Clerks confirmed support for the continuation of the agreement and Mr. Trice was to make that recommendation to the Directors, but warned that it would probably be necessary to look to the partner parish councils for a financial buffer during the coming year.
- Mr. Trice had asked for it to be noted that the contract problems he had referred to were not the fault of the three town councils.

- Since that meeting, Mr. Trice had reported that the Directors had been in agreement that they wanted to move forward with the CIC and the Highways Agreement, although it had not yet been confirmed whether the name plate contract would be renewed.
- Mr. Trice was 90% confident that the service would continue as at present with a review in September prior to budget setting.
- The extra money HHTC would be seeking from the parish councils would be for extra work carried out by the CIC team for such tasks as cleaning and maintenance of seats, bus shelters, litter bins etc, which were outside the Highways contract, following the precedent already in place with Lindfield Parish Council. Ardingly and Lindfield Rural Parish Councils were being approached about this. The extra amount sought was not likely to exceed £500.

207. REQUEST BY WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL FOR THE PARISH COUNCIL TO MAKE AN APPLICATION FOR FUNDING UNDER OPERATION WATERSHED IN ORDER TO RESOLVE A DRAINAGE ISSUE TO THE REAR OF PROPERTIES 20-48 SAVILL ROAD.

207.1 Members considered the background paper from the Deputy Clerk, which included a plan of the proposed solution to the drainage problem:

- "1. Going back over some years, there have been a number of complaints about periodic flooding in the back gardens to the rear of a number of properties in Savill Road (mainly nos. 20-48).
2. The Flooding is being caused by problems with a ditch that runs to the rear of the properties along the southern boundary of an adjoining field situated within the Rural Parish. However, the flooding being caused affects properties within this Parish.

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3. West Sussex County Council investigated the matter, and has made a number of technical suggestions for resolving the issue. However the best solution put forward is the construction of a new culvert to drain accumulated flood water into a nearby pond. WSCC say that *“whilst their budget can support the investigation and cleansing of an existing drainage system, it cannot fund the installation of a new one.”*
4. Accordingly, WSCC has suggested that either this Parish or the Rural Parish, make an application under the Operation Watershed (OW) programme in order (i) to finalise the work that needs to be carried out, (ii) obtain at least three estimates for that work (as required by the scheme), and then (iii) to acquire the appropriate funding from OW in order to pay for it.
5. Lindfield Rural has said that because the properties affected are within this Parish, it is happy for this Parish Council to progress the matter, and to make the appropriate application.
6. It is likely that in order for the application to be successful, the Parish Council will also need to seek and obtain the consent of a number of nearby property owners in order to allow the culvert to be constructed under their land. There is an alternative in that if the culvert proves to be impossible to lay, an alternative pipe route has been suggested.
7. The responsibility for the original ditch appears to be unclear, as it may have been put in at the time the properties in Savill Road were constructed in the late 1960's or early 1970s.
8. There will be a number of obstacles to overcome, but the Committee is asked in principle, whether it wishes to authorise the commencement of an OW application in order to try and resolve the problem.
9. It will be necessary to obtain the support of County Councillor Christine Field, who will need to sign off on the application, and she is already aware of the previous correspondence from previous involvement.

During discussion, Members were uneasy about this proposal and the following points were made:

- Would the Parish Council be expected to take ongoing responsibility for maintenance and any consequences resulting from constructing the culvert
- The project would need the consent and co-operation of several landowners
- The pond into which the culvert would drain was understood to be owned by the Finches Gardens Freeholders Association whose views would need to be sought
- If the additional water draining into the pond caused it to overflow other properties may be at risk.
- A specialist report on the effect on the pond would be needed
- The Deputy Clerk had been involved in two Operation Watershed applications by Albourne Parish Council and had reported that the procedure had become more difficult, involving a lot of work, in the case of the most recent application.
- As the land from which the flood water was draining was in the Lindfield Rural Parish it was suggested that the application should be made by Lindfield Rural Parish Council.
- Flooding mitigation would be a significant consideration in connection with any future planning applications for development of the area.

It was **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that this Council should not take responsibility for an application for Operation Watershed funding for this project.

208. WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL HIGHWAYS:

- 208.1 Roadside post and rail fence by the Pond. Further to the meeting with Highways Area Manager, Richard Speller, as noted at the last E&A meeting, Mr. Speller had provided an update for this meeting:

“Whilst I appreciate the outer post and rail fence have significant impact on the street scene within the conservation area, they are not a highway safety feature and as such I cannot use highway

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maintenance funding to repair them. I suggest we consider alternative funding arrangements eg CLC CIF fund, members fund etc."

The Clerk had then discussed this with Councillor Christine Field (WSCC) who was going to refer the matter to the Head of Highway Operations, making the point that the fence was a safety feature, restricting people to crossing the road in specific places, keeping people on the pavement when gathered by the pond and also acting a deterrent against vehicles mounting the kerb. Councillor Field had also suggested making an application form for a grant from the CLC Community Initiative Fund, but this did not appear to meet the criteria and at this stage there was insufficient information to make a valid application. There was also concern that by applying for a grant for this would imply that the Parish Council was accepting responsibility for the project.

Members commented that people, including the elderly, crossing to the King Edward Hall for the weekly market for example were safer with the fence in place, as were the children, including pre-school age siblings, on this major route to the two primary schools and Oathall Community College. Councillor Field was to be asked to apply as much pressure as she could with WSCC Highways.

- 208.2 Dropped kerbs. As reported to Full Council on 19 January, West Sussex County Council's Highways Engineer, Christine Ellison, had been informed about the priorities for the dropped kerbs and had provided an update. As the budget had not yet been set, she was unable to provide an exact quotation, however this was being looked into as a joint project, with WSCC funding the improvements to existing kerbs. Mrs. Ellison had also received a request from a resident for improvements in Backwoods Lane by Linden Grove - to assist people crossing Backwoods Lane at the point where the footpath on the Common side of the road ran out. She was going to include this in the costings for further consideration.

209. JOINT PROJECTS WITH MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL.

- 209.1 Maintenance of Common post and rail fence. Mark Hayler (MSDC) had forwarded the estimate provided by his contractor for replacement of rotten posts and rails and for painting. It was **AGREED** to thank Mr. Hayler and his contractor for the detailed estimate and inform Mr. Hayler that the Parish Council would only contribute towards painting and not replacement of posts.

- 209.2 Hickmans Lane playground upgrade. Further to the action from the last E&A meeting, the Clerk had written to David Harper who had recommended contacting Thuso Selelo, MSDC's Business Unit Leader for Corporate Estates & Facilities Business Unit, in order to agree the best way to deliver the project. Mr. Selelo had since stated that he had arranged for a colleague to look into S 106 funding and would be allocating this project to one of his team members to arrange a meeting with representatives of the Parish Council.

- 209.3 Additional posts round the area of the Common along Black Hill. As reported at the Full Council meeting on 19 January, David Harper had sent a reminder to MSDC's property lawyer as he had not received a reply to his email enquiry as to whether this would require specific consent from the Council. Nothing further had been received. It was **NOTED** that posts had been put in around all other parcels of land owned by MSDC to prevent unauthorised incursion.

210. DENMANS LANE ALLOTMENTS.

Councillors Blunden and Allen declared personal interests in this item, as recorded at Minute 199.1. They remained present and took part in the discussion.

- 210.1 Meeting with plot-holders. **NOTED**: a meeting had been arranged for Monday 27 February at 7.30 p.m. in the Jubilee Room. It was the intention to try to cover the main points by giving feedback on questions previously asked, or points raised, by plot holders with a briefing on any other important matters, then the meeting would be opened for questions and comments from the floor. After brief discussion it was **AGREED** not to provide refreshments for a short social session at the end of the meeting.
- 210.2 Rental fees to be charged from 1 April 2018. The Parish Council was required to give plot holders a full year's notice of increases to the rental fees and this was done by means of a note in the renewal letter

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for 1 April of the current year. Councillor Snowling recalled that at the E&A meeting on 4 February 2016, it had been agreed to review the fees every two years instead of every three years as previously and at that meeting it had been agreed to increase the fees for 2017/18 by 20p per rod. It was therefore **AGREED** that the fees for 2018/19 should remain at £3.50 per rod and the fees would be reviewed in February 2018 for the 1 April 2019 renewal date.

211. DENMANS LANE PUBLIC TOILETS.

211.1 Necessary repair work. It was **NOTED** that the Clerk had placed an order for the extractor fan unit to be replaced in one of the cubicles, a new 'no access' sign for the service area and for new low energy blue light bulbs to deter use of needles for drug taking. This totalled £133.28 plus VAT for the parts and the work was due to be carried out on 7 February. Members endorsed the Clerk's action. In response to a Members' question, the Chairman confirmed that the decorating of the service area had been budgeted for the next financial year.

212. CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL NIGHT 2017.

212.1 It was **NOTED** that Tuesday 5th December had been provisionally published in the Lindfield Diary marked 'to be confirmed'. It was **AGREED** to **CONFIRM** this date.

213. SOUTH AND SOUTH EAST IN BLOOM.

213.1 Councillor Snowling reported that he had attended the first meeting of the Lindfield in Bloom group on 23 January, which Councillor Durrant had been unable to attend. The Clerk had provided the group with some information about responsibilities for maintenance of various parts of the village to help with the research.

Councillor Snowling reported that ten people had attended the meeting, including David Macmillan, representing the Horticultural Society. Preliminary notes had been forwarded to the Clerk. The group did not intend to rush into entering the South East in Bloom competition in their first year, considering that they needed time to develop awareness and support. Initially they had been intending to start with the High Street, which would have the highest impact, but Councillor Snowling had suggested that they should also look at other areas which would benefit. The focus would be on gardens and hanging baskets.

214. SPRING CLEAN (8 April).

214.1 Offer from WSCC Waste Prevention Team for volunteers to attend with a table of information and promotional items. A resident who was one of the Spring Clean volunteers was also a volunteer with WSCC and had been in touch with Rachel Carruthers, Household Waste Prevention Officer, about the possibility of getting support from her team and linking their campaigns with Spring Clean. Mrs. Carruthers had informed the Clerk that basically they would be looking to have a table of leaflets and promotional items at the Spring Clean to promote their waste prevention campaign and to help increase understanding about recycling etc. They may also be able encourage a few of their local volunteers to join in at the Spring Clean and they were able assist with advertising the event. It was **AGREED** that provided that they recognised that this was a working day, the volunteers would be welcome to bring a small table of promotional items.

214.2 Spring Clean Risk Assessment. The risk assessment had been circulated with the Agenda. The Chairman who was tasked with reviewing this risk assessment with Councillor Upton, stated that the document was comprehensive and no new risks had been identified. A check list based on the identified risks to participants was handed out to every individual or group leader at the Spring Clean event when they signed in.

214.3 It was **NOTED** that attendance of volunteers in the last few years had been good. The Chairman encouraged Members to attend and it was suggested that a tactful note should be sent to the Lindfield in Bloom group informing them of the date and that the Council looked forward to representatives of their the group attending the Spring Clean.

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215. RISK MANAGEMENT.

- 215.1 Review of risk assessments for the E&A Committee. Arrangements for reviewing risk assessments and conducting physical inspections were discussed.

Allotments. A detailed risk assessment was in place for the allotments site which was a facility that could present a lot of different risks. The Clerk had reviewed the documentation and updated the check list for physical inspections of the site drawn from the risk assessment. The designated members (Councillors Blunden, Henton and Allen) were asked to review the risk assessment and an inspection of the site was to be arranged. It was **AGREED** that the detailed inspections should be carried out twice a year by members of the Working Group with a visual check done monthly and any issues reported to the Clerk by email.

Public toilets. It was **AGREED** that monthly physical inspections should be made by the designated members (Councillors Henton, Hersey and Pickett) and recorded.

Parish Council owned street lights. It was **AGREED** that an annual physical inspection (Councillors Hodgson and Snowling) would be adequate as the lights were well cared for and monitored by the contractor.

Street furniture. It was **AGREED** that street furniture should be inspected twice a year by the designated members (Councillors Snowling, Hersey and Upton).

216. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

- 216.1 No other items of business were raised.