

## LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE** held on **THURSDAY 4 FEBRUARY 2016** at the King Edward Hall, Lindfield.

The meeting began at 8.10 p.m. immediately following the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council.

**Present:**

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

**Also present:** Councillor Mr. R. Plass and newly co-opted Councillor Mr. R. Pickett

**In attendance:** Mrs. C. Irwin (Clerk)

**Not present:** Parish Councillors Mrs. J. Durrant and Mrs. M. Hersey

The Chairman welcomed all those present.

**79. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

79.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Durrant and Hersey and the reasons were accepted.

**80. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

80.1 Item 15 – Allotments. Councillor Blunden declared a personal interest in this item as he was a plot holder. Councillor Allen also declared a personal interest in this item as his wife was a plot holder.

**81. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.**

81.1 There were no members of the public present.

**82. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE HELD ON 26 NOVEMBER 2015.**

82.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes of the Environment and Amenities Committee held on 26 November 2015. These were **AGREED** and the Chairman **SIGNED** the Minutes as being a true record of that meeting.

**83. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

83.1 Christmas Festival Night. The Chairman stated that the 2015 event was one of the most successful he had seen. He particularly wished to record thanks to the Pond Wardens, Richard Powell and Brodie Branch, who had put up and taken down the snowman on the Pond Island and also the tree on the butcher's shop roof. He added that the lights on the High Street had looked fantastic, but that the Pond lights had been disappointing, which would be discussed later on the agenda.

**84. ACTION LIST.**

84.1 Minute ref 74.3 – maintenance of sheds. **NOTED:** the leaking shed roof had been repaired the previous day and the other work on sheds may be done before April to fit in with the contractor's schedules, but would be invoiced in the next Financial Year when this had been budgeted for.

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### 85. ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE BUDGET PROGRESS 2015/16.

- 85.1 Budget progress 2015/16: payments made to 31.12.15. The budget progress spreadsheet to 31 December 2015 had been circulated. **NOTED:** that £45,520 had been spent out of the budget of £75,400 and a further £12,000 from the reserve for street lighting. The street lighting budget was overspent and with the agreement of Council, the difference had been shown against the General Reserve (total £3,073).

The Chairman reported that Pond Warden Richard Powell had, this week, received a quotation for the floating island on the Pond: £735 plus VAT. The reserve held for this purpose had been reduced to £500 when the reserves were reviewed in July. It was **AGREED** to take the balance from the maintenance budget.

### 86. REPORT ON CURRENT MAINTENANCE.

- 86.1 Horse Gin. A short report had been circulated with the Agenda, explaining that the contractors who had been refurbishing the Red Lion had taken it upon themselves to paint the wooden structure of the Horse Gin. It was noted that the horse gin itself was not a listed structure but the Red Lion was a Listed Building and the horse gin was within the Conservation Area and visible from the High Street.

The Chairman and Clerk had inspected the gin and believed that the paint would be difficult to remove satisfactorily as the wood was deeply grained and had some deep splits, typical of oak beams so it would be difficult to remove the paint from these crevices. It was **AGREED** to let it weather down and review if necessary.

- 86.2 Litter bins. At the last meeting it had been noted that the first batch of Knight QR bins, purchased in 2010 were deteriorating, with peeling paint and rusting metal beneath. The Clerk had taken this up with the supplier who had responded that this was not uncommon with the standard finish, which these were. The bins purchased since the first batch had the extra protection of being galvanised. The response from the supplier had been circulated and Members were disappointed to note the comment that most customers only got five years from the bins before refurbishment became necessary. The supplier had offered to refurbish the bins off site for 50% of the cost of replacement, which was approximately £300 each in 2013 when the last batch had been purchased. He had also advised on the method if the Council should choose to carry out the refurbishment instead.

It was considered that refurbishment would not add greatly to the serviceable life of the ungalvanised bins and Members were reluctant to replace these bins with the same model, even with the galvanised treatment. It was **AGREED** to leave the bins as they were, to build a fund for replacement and to look for a longer lasting model..

- 86.3 Arrangement with Haywards Heath Town Council for certain additional maintenance works. It was **NOTED** that the Town Clerk had confirmed that the extra maintenance work discussed at the last meeting was planned into the work programme.

### 87. PUBLIC TOILETS.

- 87.1 Waste water bills. The RFO had noticed that the bills from Southern Water for the waste water to the Denmans Lane toilets were on the basis of the water supplied by South East Water being unmetered, although there was in fact a meter and South East Water were charging according to the meter readings. She had brought this to the attention of Southern Water several months previously and in mid January a set of bills was received for charges from 2009 to January 2016 for the waste water, corresponding with the meter readings billed by South East Water. As public toilets used a lot of water, the metered charge was much higher than unmetered which was calculated on the rateable value of the building.

The amount owed up to January 2016 was £1,915.96; however the amounts paid against the unmetered charges since 2009 had not been deducted, although a credit note had been issued for the year from May 2015, leaving a total of £193.27 uncredited. The RFO had referred this back to Southern Water and pointed out that the Parish Council had been paying in good faith but she had been firmly told that there would be no allowance other than credit for amounts actually paid. She was going to put the case in

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writing, but it was anticipated that the net amount of £1722.69 would have to be paid. Future waste water charges would be in the order of £350 a year, which was ten times the amount paid on the unmetered basis.

It was **AGREED** that this was worth challenging, but it was accepted that the Council may have to accept having to pay the balance after adjustment for the amounts already paid.

- 87.2 Door to disabled cubicle. The Chairman reported that a member of the public had recently reported that the door to the disabled cubicle would not open far enough to allow a wheelchair through. On investigation it was found that the bottom of the door, which opened outwards, was catching on the brick paving outside because a couple of bricks had lifted. The Clerk had arranged for Haywards Heath Town Council's cluster team to reset the bricks which seemed to have been successful. She had also asked the engineer who serviced the toilets to check the adjustment of the hinges.

### 88. STREET LIGHTS.

- 88.1 West Sussex Street lights upgrade. **NOTED:** the Clerk had made enquiries as to when SSEC would be returning to finish the heritage upgrade but due to secondment of one contact and holiday of another, there had as yet been no reply. It was **AGREED** that if no reply was received shortly, this should be referred to County Councillor Mrs. Field.

- 88.2 Lights in Hickmans Lane. A letter and copies of previous correspondence had been received and forwarded to Members. This had concerned problems being experienced by residents of a property in Hickmans Lane, due to the amount of light from several lanterns which all shone into their house. They had been in correspondence with WSCC and SSEC but wanted the Parish Council to be aware of the problems this was causing them. Members **NOTED** the contents of the letter, but it was felt that there was nothing the Parish Council could do to influence the matter as the residents were already in communication with the appropriate authorities.

- 88.3 Request for an additional street light in Chestnuts Close. A request had been received for an extra light at the head of Chestnuts Close which was a private road and therefore did not come under WSCC for street lighting: the existing two pole-mounted lights in the road were on the Parish Council's inventory. It was however understood that this request, which had been referred to the Parish Council by the Chairman of the Resident's Association, had come from one resident and that not all residents were in favour of this extra light.

The Residents' Association Chairman had been in touch with UK Power Networks, although it was unclear whether the Association was prepared to pay the installation costs. He had asked whether the Parish Council would be willing to pay for the electricity to an extra light.

Subject to confirmation by the Parish Council's contractors, it was anticipated that for the Parish Council to pay for the electricity the light would have to show on the Council's inventory and therefore the Parish Council would become liable for the ongoing maintenance.

It was **NOTED** that the Committee had recently declined to pay for adjustments to the equipment in another private road to enable the switching off time to be changed. It was **AGREED** that the Parish Council would not be prepared to pay any costs associated with the proposed new light.

### 89. REVIEW OF THE POND LIGHTS.

- 89.1 It was **NOTED** that the lights on the far island of the Pond had not been lit over Christmas and the ones on the large island had not been as effective as in previous years. It was **AGREED** to look into improving the lights so that they functioned as they had previously. The firm that had supplied the lights would be contacted first, but other lighting contractors would be invited to quote if the first approach proved to be unsatisfactory.

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### 90. REQUEST FOR A BONFIRE BEACON ON LINDFIELD COMMON.

- 90.1 This request had come from the Lindfield Bonfire Society and the Committee had been looking into having a beacon installed on the Common in time for HM The Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday celebrations on 21 April, but for it to be a permanent installation for use on similar occasions in the future. Advice had been received from MSDC that the siting of a permanent beacon would require the same treatment as the provision of the public toilets, in terms of planning permission, Commons Act permission and landlord's consent, and that it would make sense to include it when consulting on the toilets. However the siting of a beacon for a one-off landmark event could be treated as though it were part of a bonfire type installation and removed after the event as long as no permanent socket was required.

During discussion, points raised included:

- This advice was disappointing; Burgess Hill and Haywards Heath both had beacons in the town parks, however these were not registered Commons.
- Lindfield had always been very proactive regarding royal celebrations in the village.
- There was a small unregistered area on West View which was not subject to the same restraints as the rest of the Common.
- The lower section of the Common was on the site of a former rubbish tip and it would be difficult and possibly unsafe to install a temporary beacon there because of refuse remaining underground.
- The Bonfire Society had not appeared to have enthusiasm for a request made in 2000 for a Beacon.
- Hickmans Lane field was suggested as an alternative site which was also on higher ground.

A letter from the Chairman of NALC was **NOTED**, in which Councils were encouraged to take part in the Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday celebrations by lighting a beacon on the night of 21 April at a time to be announced. The guide to taking part showed alternatives to a permanent beacon. However there was not enough time at this stage to put arrangements in place.

It was **AGREED** not to proceed with installing a beacon for 21 April, but there could be further consideration if a suitable site could be proposed. A letter would be sent to the Secretary of the Lindfield Bonfire Society explaining the constraints involved in installing anything permanent on the Common.

### 91. VILLAGE MAPS.

- 91.1 The advice received from MSDC regarding the beacon, recorded in Minute 90.1, stated that permanent maps on the Common would also need to go through the same processes as the public toilets and combined applications were recommended.

During discussion Members expressed disappointment and it was pointed out that the public toilets project may not eventually go ahead or that there would be complications if a composite application was refused because of one element of the application, which may impede progress on the others.

It was **AGREED** to seek the involvement of the Ward District Councillors and the MSDC Cabinet Member for Leisure and Sustainability.

### 92. DROPPED KERBS.

- 92.1 It was understood that two contracting companies other than the County Council's main contractor were able to carry out highways work for WSCC and may offer competitive pricing. It was suggested that County Councillor Mrs. Field may be able to advise on this. It was **NOTED** that the locations to be proposed still needed to be inspected and confirmed.

### 93. ALLOTMENTS.

- 93.1 Rental fees for year commencing 1 April 2017. 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 for 1 April of the current year. It had been the practice in recent years to increase the fees approximately every three years, the last increase being effective from 1 April 2015. However it was pointed out that it would be better to put up the fees incrementally and more frequently. It was noted that

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the income from rentals did not fully cover the overheads and that the rent per rod was a small amount (currently £3.30). The view was expressed that it was reasonable to apply increases to keep up with inflation.

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Snowling and **SECONDED** by Councillor Henton that the allotment rental fees should be increased with effect from 1 April 2017 to £3.50 per rod (an increase of 20p: 6%). The motion was carried by a vote of 2:1 with three abstentions.

93.2 Allotment tenancy renewal documentation for the year beginning 01.04.16. The draft covering letter and tenancy agreement had been circulated with minor amendments highlighted. It was suggested that the second bullet point in the covering letter should be reworded judiciously to clarify the dangers to children, and other vulnerable people, that exist on allotment sites.

93.3 Resurfacing of the path from Denmans Lane to Pondcroft Road. A section of this footpath, which was part of the allotment site owned by the Parish Council, had previously been dressed with bark chippings a few years previously after tree work had been carried out nearby. This had been effective but now the chippings had now turned to compost and the path was very wet and muddy, posing a risk the general public who used it. The Chairman suggested top dressing the path with MOT (crushed concrete) which would last longer and keep the path drier and stand up to heavy rainfall. This had been used on a short section of the path near Pondcroft Road 18 months previously to fill a channel in the path 18" wide by 10" deep. MOT was used at Wakehurst and was inexpensive (approximately £50 per bag). The Chairman believed only two bags would be needed. It was **AGREED** that the MOT should be purchased and laid as soon as possible. The Chairman offered to lay the MOT.

### 94. RISK MANAGEMENT.

94.1 Councillors Snowling and Allen offered to assist with co-ordinating risk assessments.

### 95. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

95.1 Lindfield Common Path Project. It was **NOTED** that a meeting for stakeholders was being arranged on 26 February.

The meeting concluded at 9.10 p.m.