

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE** held on **THURSDAY 5 DECEMBER, 2013** 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
Mr. S. Hodgson
Mr. R. Pickett (Vice Chairman)
Mr. R. Plass
Mrs. V. Upton

In attendance: Mrs. C. Irwin

Not present: Councillors Mrs. J. Chatfield and Mrs. M. Hersey

The Chairman welcomed those present to the meeting.

308. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

308.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Chatfield and the reasons were accepted.

309. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

309.1 Councillor Blunden declared a personal interest in item 14 (Denmans Lane Allotments) as he was a plot holder. Councillors Allen and Pickett also declared personal interests in this item as their wives were plot holders.

310. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

310.1 There were no members of the public present.

311. MINUTES OF THE MEETING THE ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE HELD ON 3 OCTOBER 2013.

311.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Amenities Committee held on 3 October 2013. These were **AGREED** and the Chairman **SIGNED** the Minutes as being a true record of that meeting.

312. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

312.1 The Chairman had nothing to report under this item.

313. ACTION LIST.

313.1 The Action List was noted without comment.

314. ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE BUDGET PROGRESS 2013/14.

314.1 The reports for October and November were not yet available, due to the RFO's annual leave.

It was **NOTED** that to 30 September, a total of £11,329 had been spent from the in-year budget of £64,150 and £3,019 from the designated reserves and outstanding projects. Since that date, there had been considerable expenditure from the E&A Committee's budget.

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315. REPORT ON CURRENT MAINTENANCE.

- 315.1 Tollgate Car Park. An email had been received from a resident regarding the state of the flower beds in the Tollgate car park which, in her view, was looking neglected. Historically the maintenance of the car park had been a joint effort between MSDC's contractors, volunteers and Garden Care, paid by the Parish Council for regular general tidying and grass cutting. The bed opposite the front door of the surgery had previously been beautifully cared for by an elderly lady who had died and it was uncertain whether anyone else had done any work on it since. The bed to the side of the Medical Centre had been dug over at the request of the Acorns Nursery School, so that they could take up caring for it as they had a few years previously. They had carried out some planting in early Spring 2013, but maintenance did not seem to have been consistent.

The matter of the maintenance of the Tollgate car park beds had been raised with Rupert Browning at the Liaison meeting in November and it had been agreed that a better arrangement was required overall and this would be discussed further with MSDC. One option, subject to MSDC's agreement and the terms of the existing contract, would be for the Parish Council to take over the maintenance of the grassed and planted areas. The Clerk of Haywards Heath Town Council had been asked whether this could be an addition to the grass cutting contract and he would look into it and report back. Members **AGREED** with this proposal in principal, subject to confirmation with other parties.

- 315.2 Seat in the footpath between The Welkin and the High Street. The work to replace the seat had been ordered, but had not yet been carried out.
- 315.3 Chaloner Road landscaped area. **NOTED:** a tree had been uprooted, which the District Council had removed and reported that this had been deliberate vandalism: the bark had been stripped from the trunk and the tree pulled over.

At the Liaison meeting with Rupert Browning the possibility of a joint project to replace the wooden edgings to the beds with something more durable had been discussed. Members **CONFIRMED** support for this proposal.

- 315.4 Litter bin beside the King Edward Hall. It was **NOTED** that the new litter bin had now been installed at the entrance to the footpath alongside the King Edward Hall.

316. RISK MANAGEMENT.

- 316.1 Risk assessments were being carried out on an ongoing basis.

317. WINTER MAINTENANCE PLAN.

- 317.1 It was **NOTED** that the reserve salt bags supplied by WSCC were now in place on the tennis court car park and the Hickmans Lane car park. Members were asked to monitor them and report any concerns to the Clerk.

In response to the Parish Council's request for permission for 12 extra salt bins, WSCC had so far delivered seven of these. WSCC had agreed to pay for three in full, fifty percent of the cost of 7 and the Parish Council was expected to pay for two in full. It was **NOTED** that some of the bins had not been delivered to the correct location and that a number of them were bright yellow ones, not green as requested. A check was to be made and reported back to WSCC. It was understood that a number of other Councils shared the concerns of Lindfield Parish Council regarding winter service from WSCC and their contractors.

318. SPRING CLEAN.

- 318.1 **NOTED:** At the meeting of Full Council on 14 November 2013, Members had voted against the recommendation of the E&A Committee not to hold the Spring Clean next year. The Spring Clean would therefore take place in the morning of Saturday 26 April.

319. CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL NIGHT.

319.1 The Chairman reported that Christmas Festival Night had been a very successful evening: it had been well supported throughout and had gone on longer than usual. There had been some negative feedback from one or two of the High Street businesses, which would be considered at the post-event review meeting to be arranged for early in the New Year. Members were asked to inform the Clerks of any points they wished to have raised at the meeting. Members of the Working Group and the Parish Office staff were thanked for organising the event.

320. CHRISTMAS LIGHTS.

320.1 The Chairman reported that there had been a lot of compliments about the Christmas lights, which were looking very good. However there had been some disappointment with the installation methods. Lengths of lights that had been cut to fit between certain trees last year had not been put back in the same trees, resulting in short lengths being joined with connectors part way along instead of the connector plugs being secured and hidden in the trees as they should be. It had also been discovered that a number of bulbs were missing and more than one set was wired into a single 'commando' plug in some instances. There was concern that the way the equipment was being treated was destroying the Parish Council's property and it was **AGREED** that Blachere should be asked to rectify this and label the strings of lights to enable them to be installed correctly next year and also that the lights should be put up earlier to allow time to rectify any faults or other issues. It was **NOTED** that the lights on the Pond were working and that further lights were on order.

321. DENMANS LANE ALLOTMENTS.

321.1 Tree work. Following the tree survey carried out by Peter Thurman, quotations had been obtained, which had differed considerably. There had been some confusion with one of the quotations, which had since been clarified. It was **AGREED** to place the order with KPS and that the work should include removal of some overhanging branches from trees in the garden of an adjacent property, whose owners had been contacted but had not replied. It was further **AGREED** that another letter should be written to these residents to inform them that the work was going to be carried out and the Chairman offered to hand deliver it and speak to them if possible.

321.2 Visits by nursery school groups to the allotment site. The Chairman reported on a recent encounter which required a policy decision by the Committee. He had noticed that the gate to the allotments site had been left open and discovered a small group of children and practitioners from Lindfield Nursery School walking up the centre path. He had approached the adults to point out that the allotments were private property. One of them, Mrs. C., who was also one of the allotment holders, had since written by email to the Council to express disappointment in the group being asked to leave the site and to seek a compromise. It was **NOTED** that several years previously, the Committee had agreed that nursery school visits to the allotments should not be allowed after a child had been seen kicking one of the sheds.

During discussion, the points were made that the allotment site was not a community space and the Council needed to consider this in terms of risk assessment and insurance because the allotment site was not considered to be a safe place for young children, irrespective of whether they were covered by the school's insurance. Although Members had some sympathy with the request, it was **AGREED** that groups of pre-school and school aged children should not be allowed because of the risk.

Mrs. C. had also asked for clarification regarding bringing her own children to the site. It was **NOTED** that the wording of the current tenancy agreement needed to be consistent with the Council's policy. It was **AGREED** that the Clerk should take advice from the Council's insurers and report back to the next meeting.

321.3 Hazard on plot 33a. It was **NOTED** that there was a gap between the path and the railway sleepers, put in by the plot holder to contain the raised beds, into which a dog had fallen (unharmd). The Clerk was pursuing this with the plot holder.

322. BUS SHELTER.

322.1 The Chairman reported that there had been a request for a bus shelter in the High Street and the Committee was asked to consider whether to budget for this, suggesting that a clear sided shelter would have less impact on the street scene and not obscure the businesses behind it. However Members **NOTED** that a bus shelter outside Mark Revill, the most used bus stop, had been considered previously and that there had been strong opposition from the adjacent business owner. As nothing had changed since this was last considered, Members **VOTED 6:1 AGAINST** the proposal to put a bus shelter outside Mark Revill.

323. REPORT ON LIAISON MEETINGS WITH OFFICERS FROM MSDC AND WSCC.

323.1 Liaison Meeting with MSDC Officer Rupert Browning. The notes of the meeting with Rupert Browning from MSDC on 13 November were not yet available. The Chairman gave a verbal summary of the main items discussed, which included matters relating to the Common, the Pond, Hickmans Lane Field, car parks, nature reserves and possible joint projects.

Mr. Browning had responded quite positively to suggestions for putting posts around the Black Hill strip of the Common, replacing wooden litter bins on MSDC car parks and Chaloner Road, upgrading the play equipment in the Hickmans Lane playground and replacing the wooden edging to the beds in Chaloner Road with a more durable solution.

323.2 Liaison meeting with WSCC Principal Community Officer Helen Card. After the meeting with Mrs. Card on 22 October, she had sent a spreadsheet showing all the issues raised as a log which would be updated on an ongoing basis.

Matters discussed had included A boards on the pavements, request for dropped kerbs, paving and bollards at the Post Office corner, damage to Dukes Road, Newton Road and Brushes Lane (attributed to the Limes construction vehicles) and the reinstatement of the verge at the corner of Dukes Road and Newton Road (temporarily reinforced during the building of the Limes), speed surveys in Hickmans Lane, Sunte Ave, High Beech Lane, High St and Lewes Rd, the South East Water road closure, zebra crossing, commuter parking in Sunte Avenue, WSCC street lighting upgrade, flooding near Lindfield Primary School, winter maintenance and over grown vegetation in Noahs Ark Lane. Mrs. Card would confirm costs as appropriate and had already supplied estimates for:

- Post Office corner - (reported at minute 323.3)
- dropped kerbs - £3,000 for both sides of the road at one crossing point.
- zebra crossing - £20,000 to £50,000 depending on complexity

323.3 Post Office corner. There was further discussion about the paved area. It was **NOTED** that York stone paving at this location had originally been requested and paid for by the Parish Council. The surface had deteriorated, with temporary repairs to broken slabs having been made using cement, and a long term solution was urgently needed. It was acknowledged that the deterioration was largely due to vehicles, the Post Office van in particular, being parked on the pavement and the Council had been considering putting in extra bollards as a preventative measure. However, Members had previously expressed concerns about the effect of this solution on the Lindfield Post Office and WSCC had been asked to consider alternatives, including reinforcing the area to take vehicles and relay with York stone, re-using the undamaged slabs. Mrs. Card had supplied the following estimates:

- bollards: up to £200 plus installation
- reconstruction, including reinforcement and finishing with brick pavers or specialist paving slabs: £150/m²

The cost of paving would be calculated when the area had been accurately measured, but as a rough estimate, the area between the crossing and the Post Office was approximately 100-130m², which would cost at least £15,000 and a further £200 each for any extra bollards plus installation. Subject to obtaining more accurate costings, it was **AGREED** in principal to support the proposal to reinforce and repave the area from the crossing to the Post Office and to re-space the bollards more evenly, with the addition of extra bollards if necessary. It was also **AGREED** to make enquiries as to whether S106 funding could be obtained towards this project.

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324. BUDGET 2014/15

324.1 It was **NOTED** that the E&A Committee's budget proposals had to be submitted to the F&GP Committee meeting on 9 January for consideration and recommendation to Full Council. It was also **NOTED** that the precept did not have to match the budget, because the Council held reserves, and that there was a possibility that the requirement for Councils to hold a referendum when proposing increases in Council Tax may be extended in the future to apply to Parish Council precepts and it would therefore be unwise to reduce the precept; however it was not the Council's intention to increase the precept for 2014/15.

Members discussed the budget proposals under the separate headings and the following draft E&A Committee budget for recommendation to the F&GP Committee was **AGREED**:

		£	Comments
1a	Street lighting – energy/maintenance costs	3,500.00	
1b	Street lighting – Upgrading street lights	6,000.00	Replace concrete columns in Brookway
1c	Christmas Lights	3,000.00	
2	Maintenance	5,000.00	
3	Allotments	2,000.00	
4	Gardening	600.00	Additional crocus bulbs
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	Additional boards for Common and Hickmans Lane Playing Field
10	Replacement of litter bins	2,000.00	Ongoing project
11	Digital Mapping	250.00	
12	Joint project with MSDC/WSCC – post and rail fencing – Pond and Common	2,000.00	Subject to meeting with MSDC
13	Tree pollarding	2,500.00	£2,500 to designated reserve – 3 year cycle for pollarding
14	Removal of epicormic growth	-	Included with grass cutting
15	Grass cutting (High Street)	2,600.00	Undertaken by HHTC
16	Emergency equipment	750.00	
17	Joint project with MSDC: Posts around MSDC open spaces	-	
18	Joint project with WSCC: dropped kerbs	3,000.00	Ongoing project
19	Joint Project with MSDC – replacement of floating islands on Pond	-	
new	Reprint of Lindfield leaflet	1,500.00	
new	Replacement of York stone near Post Office	10,000.00	Quotations to be obtained
new	Upgrading of Hickmans Lane playground	5,000.00	Subject to meeting with MSDC
TOTAL E&A Budget 2014/15		70,000.00	

325. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

325.1 No other items of business were raised.

The meeting concluded at 9.25 p.m.