

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE** held on **THURSDAY 6 APRIL 2017** at the King Edward Hall, Lindfield.

The meeting commenced at 8.20 following the conclusion of an Extraordinary Meeting of Full Council.

Present:

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

In attendance: Mrs. C. Irwin (Clerk)

Absent: Parish Councillors Mrs. M. Hersey and Mr. R. Pickett

217. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

217.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hersey and Pickett and the reasons were accepted.

218. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

218.1 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 in this item as his wife was a plot holder.

219. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

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

220. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE HELD ON 2 FEBRUARY 2017.

220.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes of the Environment and Amenities Committee held on 2 February 2017. These were **AGREED** and the Chairman **SIGNED** the Minutes as being a true record of that meeting.

221. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

221.1 The Chairman reported that Jane Donald had resigned as Tree Warden after just over ten years' service. The Trees and Woodlands Officer at WSCC had been informed and had sent a set of guidelines for selecting tree wardens. The other Tree Wardens would be consulted on whether they would support recruiting a replacement. Members expressed gratitude to Mrs. Donald for her service to the community.

222. ACTION LIST.

222.1 The Action List was **NOTED**.

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

223.1 Budget progress 2016 / 17: payments made to 28.02.17. **NOTED:** as at 28.02.17, £ 35,371 had been spent from the in-year budget of £51,600 and there had been no expenditure from the designated reserves.

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224. REPORT ON CURRENT MAINTENANCE.

- 224.1 Former Zipper Club noticeboard. **NOTED:** an order had been placed to change the lock and refurbish the board: £160 inclusive of VAT.
- 224.2 Planter in Denmans Lane. **NOTED:** the Clerk had arranged for Haywards Heath Town Council's CIC Team to remove the ivy and cut back the shrubs in the planter to enable an assessment of the condition of the planter with a view to replanting by Lindfield in Bloom. However the planter disintegrated and they removed the whole thing. After discussion it was **AGREED** to replace the planter and to delegate the selection and purchase of a replacement costing in the order of £600 to the Clerk in consultation with the Chairman, the preference, subject to price, was the square heavy duty plastic planter of which a photograph from the brochure was tabled,.
- 224.3 Litter bins. **NOTED:** that the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman, had arranged for the village Blacksmith to re-fix two wrought iron litter bins which had become loose (one in the High Street and one in Sunte Avenue). This had cost £100.

225. HIGHWAYS CLUSTER AGREEMENT.

- 225.1 The Haywards Heath Town Clerk had confirmed that the Highways Agreement and the Street Name Signs Agreement had now both been signed.

226. OPERATION WATERSHED (Savill Road).

- 226.1 It was **NOTED** that the Committee's recommendation not to get involved with this project had been considered by Full Council at the meeting on 16 March and, having listened to Highway Manager, Richard Speller, and the resident of Savill Road who had attended, the Council had decided to proceed with the first part of a two stage application for funding to investigate a solution to a drainage issue to the rear of properties 20-48 Savill Road. The Chairman stated that Councillors may be called upon to lead this project due to forthcoming staff changes.

227. WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL HIGHWAYS.

- 227.1 Roadside post and rail fence by the Pond. The Head of Highway Operations at WSCC had initially stated that this work would be done by the end of March. He had recently confirmed that the order had been placed with the contractor and he hoped the work would be completed by the end of March.

228. POSSIBLE JOINT PROJECTS WITH MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

- 228.1 Maintenance of Common post and rail fence. It had been confirmed that the painting would be started this month when the posts had dried out.
- 228.2 Hickmans Lane playground upgrade. The Council was still waiting for Mid Sussex District Council to report back on how to proceed.
- 228.3 Additional posts round the area of the Common along Black Hill. Advice had been received from Tom Clark (MSDC) confirming that MSDC had no objection to installing these bollards to protect the Common against inappropriate vehicle activity, provided the bollards avoided restricting pedestrian access which may be by wheelchair or with push chairs. David Terry would work with the Parish Council to get the bollards installed appropriately with a contribution from the Parish Council. This would be on the agenda for the next Liaison Meeting with MSDC officers.

229. DENMANS LANE ALLOTMENTS.

- 229.1 Meeting with plot holders held on 27 February 2017. The notes of this meeting had been circulated. The Chairman reported that 31 plot holders and 5 members of the Allotments Working Group had attended the meeting at which there had been an exchange of suggestions, reminders and observations. The E&A Committee considered the following actions arising from that meeting:

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- to display a list of freighter dates on the allotment site (*done*)
- to contact plot holders about sharing their email addresses or other contact details within the group to aid communication (*all plot holders had been contacted by the Clerk about this suggestion and asked to reply direct to the plot holder who had made the suggestion and offered to act as co-ordinator*).
- A suggestion to purchase a supply of weed suppressant material to cover empty or unworked plots was not supported by the E&A Committee because the cost outweighed the benefit as it was unlikely the material could be re-used. Plot holders with neglected plots would receive letters giving four weeks' notice to clear the weeds before the Working Group applied weed-killer to prevent the weeds from spreading.

Volunteers had been invited for a work party to carry out some maintenance work. One had come forward

It was **NOTED** that Mary Allen had given notice of her intention to relinquish her role on the Working Group and managing the waiting list. The waiting list could be managed by the Parish Office staff, with the help of a reliable plot holder with good knowledge of the site to showing new tenants their plot and advise them about the important matters. The Chairman stated that Mrs. Allen had looked after the waiting list and been the first point of contact for many plot holders for over 20 years in the days when there was an Allotment Association: the Parish Council owed her a huge debt of thanks.

- 229.2 Suggestion from a plot holder to make an area of tarmac or other hardstanding by the Denmans Lane entrance to the site. It was **AGREED** not to support this suggestion because tarmac was not considered to be in keeping and would spoil the pleasant appearance of this area of grass which enhanced the rural setting of the allotments site. The Chairman had suggested to the plot holder who had proposed this that he could fill the ruts with the wood chippings from the recent tree work. It was **NOTED** that it was sensible to put tarpaulin on the ground for manure deliveries.
- 229.3 Purchase of a mower. The Chairman reported that the choice of replacement mowers was limited to the self-drive type with a rear roller, made of aluminium or polypropylene rather than steel which would rust. Cheaper mowers could be bought new for £150 - £200, but better quality mowers, although more expensive, lasted longer. A Hayter aluminium model was the cheapest at around £450. A new Honda machine of the specification described would cost in the order of £1,000. There was currently one functioning mower, but parts were no longer available for this and a second mower was considered essential. Both Councillor Henton and Councillor Blunden stated that they had second hand mowers of the right specification for sale. It was **NOTED** that Councillors Henton and Blunden had a personal interest but it was recognised that a better price could be achieved by buying second hand machines known to be in good condition. It was therefore **AGREED** that Councillors Henton and Blunden should negotiate to achieve a cost effective outcome for the Council.
- 229.4 Allotment Trees. An email had been received from a resident regarding branches from allotment trees falling onto her property which shared a boundary with the allotments site. It was **NOTED** that these trees had not been highlighted in the Arboricultural Consultant's report of August 2016 as needing attention. It appeared that the resident had expected the lower branches to be removed, although the Council had only instructed lower branches to be removed from trees overhanging allotment plots. The branches that had fallen had come from a fir tree, but the resident had asked for work on a lime tree. It was **AGREED** that Councillors Blunden and Allen should carry out a risk assessment and report back with a recommendation as to whether or not to have further tree surgery done.
- 229.5 Waiting List. It was **NOTED** that there were now 11 people on the waiting list for an allotment plus a further 5 who had been retained on the list for several years but had not been ready to take up the offer of a plot when their turn came. There were also three plot holders whose existing plots were well maintained and who had been waiting for more than 10 years for additional space to become available. The Chairman explained that originally, the average size of the plots was 5 rods, but when the waiting list increased significantly, plots had been divided to allow more people the opportunity to have one. As the number on the waiting list had come down, consideration was given to re-opening the list to non-Lindfield residents. However it was **AGREED** that the waiting list should remain closed to non-residents

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and that extra space could be offered to existing plot holders with well-maintained plots if no-one else was waiting for an allotment.

230. SOUTH AND SOUTH EAST IN BLOOM: UPDATE FROM THE WORKING GROUP.

- 230.1 Councillor Durrant reported that a Working Group had been set up by Heather Martin, which met monthly with a core number of five members. The group had met with the Chairman of South and South East in Bloom who had been very instructive, making the suggestion that different small groups in the village could be encouraged to participate in the "in your Neighbourhood" category, brought together under the Lindfield in Bloom banner. Mrs. Martin had also organised a walk around the village at the beginning of March, but unfortunately the Council representatives, Councillors Durrant and Snowling, had been unable to take part. However this had been successful in terms of identifying areas in neighbourhoods that could be improved and planted. Opportunities for planting included an untended border in Noahs Ark Lane, the Chaloner Road pocket park, the Tollgate car park, pub planting, the planters converted from the old half round litter bins and the recently removed planter near the notice boards in Denmans Lane, which the group would like to plant up if the Parish Council would replace it. During the walk, the group had met the organiser of the Eastern Road Local Nature Reserve volunteers and Mrs. Martin would be in touch by email with details about Lindfield In Bloom and how the LNR volunteers could become involved, which could be simply keeping the path through the LNR clear and did not have to involve a garden. The group was engaged in publicity and fund raising, a donation had been promised by the Lindfield Horticultural Society when the group had a bank account set up, which required them to have a small committee. The Bowls Club was planning to put up hanging baskets and create wildflower borders by their car park and a resident of Dukes Road hoped to get together with neighbours to do something in their road. Fundraising would allow the group to obtain prize certificates for a floral front gardens competition, organise insurance through the RHS affiliated scheme and purchase plants / bulbs for projects. The group had been advised about the Spring Clean event on 8 April. The next meeting was due to take place on 24 April.

231. SPRING CLEAN EVENT ON 8 APRIL.

- 231.1 The Chairman called for volunteers to assist with transporting equipment to and from the base at the King Edward Hall and to be present at KEH throughout the morning, to sign people in, manage the allocation of tasks, hand out equipment and provide light refreshments for people when they returned.

A Member questioned why the Council kept this event going, when there was an apparent reluctance on the part of some members to take an active part. Another Member stated that he was always pleasantly surprised at the number of people who came to take part and that interest had been growing again in recent years; the Council should not stop organising this event while it was so well supported by members of the public.

232. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

- 232.1 No other items of business were raised.

The meeting ended at 9.20 p.m.