

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE** held on **THURSDAY, 8 OCTOBER 2009** at the King Edward Hall, Lindfield.

Present: Mr. W. Blunden (Chairman)
Mr. M. Allen
Mr. A. Gomme
Mr. S. Henton
Mrs. M. Nicolle
Mr. R. Pickett
Mrs. V. Upton

Also present: 3 members of the public

In attendance: Mrs. C. Irwin

The meeting began at 8.00 p.m.

276. WELCOME AND EMERGENCY ANNOUNCEMENTS.

276.1 The Chairman welcomed those present and announced the emergency procedure for the King Edward Hall.

277. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

277.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Hersey and the reasons accepted.

278. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

278.1 Item 15: Allotments. Councillor Blunden declared a personal interest as he was an allotment tenant. Councillors Pickett and Allen also declared personal interests as their wives were allotment tenants.

279. QUESTIONS / COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

279.1 Hickmans Lane – flooding next to the bus shelter at The Welkin. Mr. D. Macmillan stated that the flooding during a recent period of heavy rain had made the bus shelter untenable as drivers were unable to see the water in time to avoid driving through it. A drain was needed there urgently.

279.2 Budget. Mr. N. Kerslake commented on the item regarding the budget which had been published in the Parish Council's newsletter in the Lindfield Life magazine. He stated that the infrastructure of the Village should be the overriding priority and a policy determining frequency of various maintenance tasks should be agreed. He opposed the proposal for adult exercise equipment.

279.3 Christmas lights / Christmas Festival Night. Mr. Kerslake stated that the High Street swan necked lighting columns were unsuitable for hanging Christmas lights. He also stated that the difficulties regarding the road closure called into question the point of "traders' night" and suggested that that the time may be coming when it would have to be abandoned.

280. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE HELD ON 6 AUGUST 2009.

280.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Amenities Committee held on 6 August 2009. These were **AGREED** and the Chairman **SIGNED** the Minutes as being a true record of that meeting.

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281. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

281.1 The Chairman had nothing to report other than items that appeared on the Agenda.

282. REPORT ON ACTION / PROJECT PROGRESS LIST.

282.1 Cycle Stands – Cycle racks were still available free of charge from WSCC, however MSDC Officer, Mervyn Booth, had indicated that he would prefer to put motor cycle bays in the former recycling area in Denmans Lane although he was quite happy to install cycle racks in the Tollgate Car Park provided the Parish Council arranged to collect them from Drayton. The Highway Rangers may be able to assist by collecting and delivering the racks. The racks were designed to hold up to 2 cycles each. Members were unconvinced that motor cycle bays would be used more than cycle racks and agreed that MSDC should be asked why the preference for motor cycle bays had been expressed, particularly as encouraging cyclists would cut down on carbon. They felt that the motor cycle bays should be monitored to determine the usage and if this was low, MSDC could be asked to reconsider. **AGREED:** to order 2 cycle racks for the Tollgate Car Park and inform MSDC to go ahead with the motor cycle bays for Denmans Lane.

282.2 Dog Bin for Chaloner Road. Mid Sussex District Council had indicated that they were only installing red coloured dog waste bins which they would be prepared to supply and install at a cost of £200 plus VAT. If a green one was preferred, this would have to be ordered and paid for by the Parish Council, but MSDC would install it for £75 plus VAT. There would be an ongoing cost of £2.41 a week for emptying. A large capacity bin was available from Glasdon, which, together with a post, would cost £246.99 plus VAT. **AGREED** that the green bin should be ordered from Glasdon, but that MSDC should be asked why they were not installing green bins, as bright red was not appropriate in Conservation Areas. Cllr. Nicolle offered to raise this at the next meeting of the Mid Sussex Association of Local Councils.

283. ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE BUDGET PROGRESS

283.1 To review payments made to date in 2009 / 10. The September budget progress figures were not yet available. **NOTED** that £4,000 had now been paid to WSCC for the dropped kerbs in the Newton Road area which left £2,400 for further dropped kerbs. Two pairs in Compton Road and one pair in Hickmans Lane had already been requested by the Parish Council, but Jonathan Ullmer at WSCC had stated that the cost of a pair of dropped crossings was between £1,700 and £1,900 and that WSCC would not be able to make up the amount needed to complete this work. However he had asked the Parish Council to identify any walking routes that needed dropped crossings so that these could be built into a programme based on walking strategies for the next financial year. The Clerk had made enquiries as to whether WSCC could put in the kerbs in Hickmans Lane this year at the Parish Council's expense.

It was also **NOTED** that the running costs for the toilets would exceed the budget in September and further payments would have to be funded from the reserves.

284. MAINTENANCE

284.1 Report on current maintenance. Councillor Nicolle reported that Chris Hughes had been asked to do some work in the Tollgate car park, including the berberis. He had also been asked to repair the street name sign in Dukes Road which would require new posts.

It was noted that the Jubilee mosaic had a thin layer of mud all over it after an apparent water leak nearby.

284.2 Tollgate car park . There were several shrub and flower beds in the car park, some of which were maintained by MSDC's contractors and some by volunteers. In addition, the Parish Council paid Garden Care for grass cutting, leaf sweeping and general tidying. However there was some lack of clarity about the arrangements and MSDC had asked the Parish Council to show on an aerial photograph which borders

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were believed to be their responsibility and which the responsibility of the Parish Council. Councillor Nicolle stated that there used to be a whole team of volunteers but now there were very few and areas were being neglected, particularly when shrubs got too big for the volunteers to manage, so it would make better sense if the beds were all maintained by the same authority. Cllr. Nicolle agreed to look at the plan of the car park to identify the responsibilities so that discussions could take place with MSDC to work out a cost effective arrangement for maintaining the beds.

- 284.3 Programme of refurbishment of litter bins, seats, pond posts and rails, other railings etc. A quotation had been requested from Matt Coppard for painting seats and railings. The regular maintenance of the Pond and road side posts and rails, and those round the Common, had been raised with both MSDC and WSCC. The Chairman suggested that on receipt of the costings, a small group of Members should get together to draft a proposal for consideration at the next meeting, before finalising the Committee's budget recommendations. This group would need to go out and inspect the various items, take photographs then draw up an inventory and routine maintenance plan. This approach was **AGREED** and the group of Members was to be Councillors Blunden, Nicolle and Gomme. Councillor Nicolle stated that there had previously been an agreement with MSDC that the posts on the Common should be repainted every three years and that seats used to be treated with wood preservative every Spring. It was suggested that the paint/varnish products to be used should be researched as to life expectancy of the finish, which would help with determination of the frequency of tasks in the programme.

New Topsy Jubilee litter bins from Glasdon had previously been agreed for Denmans Lane and for the verge in Hickmans Lane next to Little Compton. It was noted that a bin was needed in West Common and a replacement for the one in Hickmans Lane opposite Brookway, as the wooden one had come away from the ground and was in a poor condition. **AGREED:** to purchase 2 further Topsy Jubilee bins.

285. LIAISON ("WISH LIST") MEETINGS:

- 285.1 Meeting held with MSDC Officer on 16 September 2009. The notes of the meeting held with Mr. Rupert Browning on 16 September 2009 were received and the issues raised at that meeting were noted without comment. Mr. Browning was taking a career break from January to the end of March 2010 and that David Terry would be taking over his duties in his absence.

- 285.2 Meeting held with WSCC Officers on 22 September 2009. **NOTED:**

- Hickmans Lane / High St junction (2.9) – Brian Lambarth had confirmed that the red coloured surfacing that had been suggested by the Traffic Study Joint Working Party for this corner, to identify the area for pedestrians to walk, tended to break up and then could become a trip hazard. He felt that this surfacing would not achieve a great deal, particularly as vehicles were travelling slowly, having negotiated the corner. It had also been noted that the accident rate at this junction was very low.
- Grass cutting (5/6) - the WSCC Highways Department would have to prioritise work on the basis of safety next year because of budget pressures. It was anticipated that the number of grass cuts was likely to be reduced from 11 to 9. Cllr. Nicolle and the Deputy Clerk had attended a site meeting in August with Brian Lambarth of WSCC and a representative of the grass cutting contractors to talk about the standard of the service, following complaints. Mr. Lambarth had then forwarded the cost for mowing the High Street with a box mower instead of the large ride-on machines and for removal of the cuttings. This would be £87.63 per cut. WSCC had since been asked to cost out how much it would cost the Parish Council to pay the difference between 9 standard cuts and 11 with the box mower. Cllr. Nicolle had reminded WSCC at the site meeting of the need to tidy the edges of the grass periodically.

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The offer from a resident to cut the grass in the High Street had also been raised. WSCC had provided a copy of the information on getting a licence but whilst owners or occupiers of premises adjoining the highway could get permission to cut the grass outside their own house, it would not permit them to do the whole road and Public Liability insurance would still be an issue. However WSCC could issue a licence to the Parish Council to cut the grass and this had been referred back to Zurich to find out whether volunteers would then be covered by the Parish Council's policy. It was acknowledged that as well as public liability, there was also the question of volunteers' personal safety. A formal arrangement would give the Parish Council a responsibility and possible liability in the event of serious or fatal accidents. In view of the risks involved if volunteers cut the grass, Members **AGREED** that when the prices had been obtained, the Parish Council should consider paying the WSCC contractors for 11 cuts with the box mower.

It was noted that patches of grass in the verges had been killed by contractors spraying the edges to prevent the grass creeping across the pavement.

- Street sign poles (8) - Mr. Lambarth had confirmed that the street sign poles in the Conservation Area should be black and he had been informed of the ones that did not conform.
- Finger posts (2.12) – Cllr. Allen expressed an unwillingness to accept that WSCC did not have the money to fund such items as finger post maintenance. It was noted that WSCC Councillor Bill Acraman was passionate about fingerposts and had personally conducted a county wide survey and report, but he had accepted that WSCC would not be maintaining them in the future.
- Trees in Newton Road (4) – concern was expressed for the trees as they had significant amenity value. It was suggested that MSDC could be asked to issue Tree Preservation Orders on them.
- Entrance to Oaklee (11) – it was noted that the new bollards at the southern entrance to Oaklee were exacerbating the problems in Compton Road when cars had to reverse into Compton Road.
- Paul Stanford had followed up a number of actions picked up at the meeting and emailed a progress report.

286. CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL NIGHT / CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

286.1 Notes of the informal meeting of the Christmas Festival Night Working Group held on 17 August 2009 . Councillor Upton reported that the event had been reviewed in the light of the 2008 Festival Night and that arrangements for the 2009 event were well in hand. There had been a meeting with a representative of Mid Downs Radio, who had agreed to site the van slightly further up the road and to keep the volume of the music down to background level. He had agreed to consult and co-operate with representatives of the URC. Mid Downs Radio would be charging £100 for their attendance and this was **AGREED**. The owners of the Manor House and Kieron James toy shop had agreed to have floodlights in a secure place within their properties. 13 stall bookings had already been received. It was **AGREED** to receive the notes of the meeting.

286.2 Christmas Lights. Feedback from the article in the October newsletter had so far been fairly evenly divided, with 13 for the Parish Council paying for new lights and 11 against. It did however appear that the high quotation referred to in the article had influenced the objectors and that a cheaper option might be more acceptable. The latest guidance, provided by George Chisenga at WSCC indicated that over the pavement there only needed to be 2.5 metres clearance. It might therefore be possible to put the existing lights in some of the trees at least, as most had been pollarded at 4 metres, but a licence would be required from WSCC. **AGREED** to research this further and, depending on the outcome, authorise the Clerk to make the application for the licence.

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- 286.3 Christmas Festival Night: Road Closure. Since the meeting of the Working Group, notification had been received that the application for road closure could not be approved until Sussex Police were satisfied that certain conditions would be met. To comply with this, Steve Tomlin of RANA Risk Management had been instructed to produce the required traffic management plan and the Council was expected to get a proper traffic management company to manage the road closure on the night. CERT were only allowed to marshal from behind the barriers and the Police were not allowed to instigate road closures, man them or direct traffic associated with them. Steve Tomlin would be arranging to go through the draft Traffic Management Plan with the Clerk shortly. It would appear that the advance warning signs had to be put up by people authorised for working on the highways because of risks and liabilities under the Corporate Manslaughter Act. The Clerk would be consulting with PC Day on this and it was hoped that WSCC Highways officers might be able to assist with this. New signs would be have to be obtained as the regulations required yellow background. The Clerk was to consult PC Day on this to ensure compliance.

The increasing difficulties and cost involved in organising this event were noted, although other Councils organising such events were in the same position. It was pointed out that this event had begun by the traders to help boost business, but the Traders Association had ceased and it had fallen on elected people to take responsibility. It may be that the point would come where the Parish Council was forced into the position where it had to weigh up the cost and time against the benefit.

287. WARDING: TO RECEIVE REPORTS ON WARD INSPECTIONS.

- 287.1 Reports had been received from Cllrs. Blunden, Gomme, Hersey, Nicolle and Upton and would be followed up.

288. RISK MANAGEMENT FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE'S ACTIVITIES.

- 288.1 Checklists were now in place for the public toilets and the allotments. The Risk Assessment for Christmas Festival Night was to be revised for this year's event. The Parish Council's responsibility in respect of street furniture would be addressed by means of a programme of maintenance as discussed at Minute 284.3.

289. FINCHES LANE

- 289.1 The response from the Rights of Way Department at WSCC had already been reported to the Committee but before replying to the residents, the comments of the Highways Department had also been sought at the WSCC liaison meeting. George Chisenga had then replied by email as follows:

"...our records show that Finches Lane is not part of the public highway and therefore we are not able to maintain it using public funds. But Mr Wooden is already aware that this is a private street and my comment may disappoint him further. Perhaps the way forward is for the residents to ask the original developer to help (if known) or arrange self-help repairs. They may also seek to have the road adopted. This requires entering into section 38 Agreement with WSCC whereby they would have to construct the road to an acceptable standard and seek its adoption. WSCC would also need to be satisfied that the road serves sufficient public utility to allow it. This is obviously an expensive option and maybe of little interest to the residents but should they want to pursue this route I am willing to refer them to our Local Development Department who will be able to help."

It was **AGREED** that a letter should be sent to Mr. Wooden, explaining that as the proposed work to the Lane would only benefit a very small proportion of the Parish electorate and because the County Council considered the Lane to be fit for purpose as a public right of way, the Council could not justify the expense in terms of benefit to the community and could not therefore agree to the request to make a contribution.

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290. ALLOTMENTS: TO CONSIDER CHARGING POLICY FOR MID YEAR TENANCY CHANGES.

- 290.1 This item had been prompted by a recent tenancy change which had highlighted that there was no written policy on charging for mid year transfers.

It was **AGREED** that because the amounts of money were very small, there should be no refund for surrendered plots and that the new tenants should be charged for the whole year irrespective of the point in the year when they took up their tenancy.

291. VILLAGE MAP.

- 291.1 The subject of a Village Map had been raised at the meeting of the Communications Forum held on 22 September 2009. The possibilities afforded by the digital mapping software had not yet been discovered. Members considered the alternative solution of having a professionally produced leaflet similar to the Hurstpierpoint and Hassocks ones, which combined a full street map with local information and advertising to offset the cost of production. **AGREED** that this should be investigated.

292. LINDFIELD CRICKET CLUB: REQUEST FOR PARISH COUNCIL'S SUPPORT FOR AN APPLICATION FOR FUNDING UNDER THE "BETTER MID SUSSEX FUND" IN ORDER TO PURCHASE GROUND MAINTENANCE EQUIPMENT

- 292.1 During the course of this item, it became evident that Lindfield Primary School may benefit from the improved facilities and Councillor Allen therefore declared a personal interest as Vice Chairman of the School's Governing Body.
- 292.2 The Cricket Club had applied for funding to pay for a heavy duty scarifier to help maintain the cricket pitch and they had requested the Parish Council's support in their application. The funding was to come from Thornfield and applications were managed by MSDC. This request had been received too late to agree a response before a first stage meeting which was taking place this same evening, but the Officers were aware of this and would report accordingly. **AGREED** to confirm the Parish Council's support for the Cricket Club's application.

293. LINDFIELD ARTS FESTIVAL.

- 293.1 After the presentation from the organisers of this event, at the last Full Council, Members had expressed concern about the request for the Parish Council to administer the funds. The Clerk had consulted Trevor Leggo at the Sussex Association of Local Councils and he had confirmed that under Section 139 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Parish Council could hold money and pay bills for local events such as this. A separate set of accounting records for the sums deposited would be necessary but the RFO would also have to find out how this should be shown in the Parish Council's accounts. Mr. Leggo had also advised the Parish Council to be very cautious and not to become involved until Members had seen a detailed business plan stating costs; insurance (including public liability) and exactly what the Parish Council's involvement would be. The organisers had presented a proposal document at the Full Council meeting, stating the objectives and the projected costs and sources of funding, but this was not detailed enough. Mr. Leggo had advised that there should also be a declaration as to the date by which a decision would be made not to run the event and whether the organisers would be coming to the Council to underwrite it. The business plan should show how many exhibitors were expected to be signed up by December (as there was income from registrations) and an estimate of how many people could be expected to pay for workshops. The Parish Council could not insure the Festival as it was not a Parish Council event. Mr. Leggo had advised that an existing established organisation such as the Dramatic Society might be asked to support the event.

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The organisers were keen to get a response from the Parish Council as time was limited for making applications for funding. The Clerk had checked with the County Local Committee and, although cheques were normally made out in the name of an organisation or charity, their application would not necessarily be ruled out.

During discussion Members stated that they were impressed with the enthusiasm of the organisers, but felt that the Parish Council should not become directly involved in this way and the Clerk was asked to reply to the organisers that the Council wished them every success but was unable to hold the funds for the Festival.

294. ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE'S BUDGET REQUIREMENTS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2010 / 2011.

294.1 It was noted that there had so far been very little feedback from the article in the Newsletter, inviting members of the public to comment on the budget for the next financial year. The RFO and the Clerk had not yet been able to put together a detailed budget proposal document - this would be prepared for the next meeting on 10 December. However a list was tabled and Members considered the budget headings in turn and suggested provisional sums for 2010/11, to assist in preparing the budget proposal paper for the next meeting.

There was some discussion about provision of adult exercise equipment. Some Members who had seen the new equipment in use in Victoria Park and in Balcombe considered this to be a worthwhile project, but the majority view was that this was not a priority and as it would represent approximately 10% of the budget, it should not be a budget item for next year.

Additional street sweeping had been discussed with Rupert Browning who had expressed the view that this would be a backwards step. Mr. Browning had stated that there was no clear schedule for the emptying of bins on the Common by English Landscapes and that the frequency of emptying would be likely to be reduced as a result of the Parish Council arranging for additional emptying. The need to empty the bins on Fridays before the Fish and Chip Van's visit was emphasised and Mr. Browning had stated that the Parish Council should refer the matter to him if it was considered that more frequent emptying was needed. Members considered that additional street cleaning should not be budgeted for next year.

	2009 / 10	2010 / 11
	£	£
<u>Street lighting energy / maintenance</u>	4,500	4,500
<u>Christmas lights</u>	2,500	3,000
<u>Upgrading street lights</u>	3,000	4,000
<u>Routine maintenance</u> (formerly Planned Maintenance) – <i>to include Garden Care, Chris Hughes, KPS, Spring Clean etc</i>)	3,500	2,000
<u>Occasional Maintenance</u> – (Formerly Maintenance – vandalism)	750	2,000
<u>Allotments</u>	3,000	3,000
<u>Gardening</u> (tubs etc)	150	100
<u>Christmas Festival Night</u>	500	800
<u>Village Archives</u>	500	500
<u>Extra Freighter visits</u>	1,750	1,750
<u>Denmans Lane public toilets – running costs</u> (Steep rise in costs since refurbishment)	8,000	14,000
<u>Bus shelters</u> (not proceeding)	4,000	-
<u>Dropped kerbs</u>	1,900	3,800
<u>Street map of Lindfield</u> (see Minute 291)	500	2,000

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<u>Replacement / refurbishment of litter bins</u>	4,000	2,000
<u>Digital mapping (annual charge)</u>	250	250
<u>Adult play equipment (Agreed not to proceed)</u>	5,000	-
<u>Benches in Hickmans Lane</u>	400	-
<u>Refurbishment of signs</u>	750	estimates to be obtained

New for 2010 / 11:

<u>Post and rail fencing – Pond and Common</u>	-	2,000
<u>Tree pollarding</u>	-	1,000
<u>Removal of epicormic growth (2 a year)</u>	-	1,200
<u>Grass cutting (High Street)</u>	-	970

The Environment and Amenities Committee budget total for 2010 / 11 was anticipated to be in the order of £50,000

295. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

295.1 No items of other business were raised.

This part of the meeting ended at 9.35 p.m. There followed a further period for questions / comments from members of the public.

Christmas Lights. Mr. N. Kerslake expressed concerns regarding the height at which the cable would be hung as there would be some sagging and if people were able to reach it, particularly in wet conditions if the insulation was impaired, when death was a likely outcome.

Litter bins. Mr. Kerslake stated that he hoped the Topsy Jubilee bins were not plastic.

Budget. Mr. D. Macmillan stated that the Parish Council had made a commendable start to the budget process by publicising the article in Lindfield Life, inviting comments. He suggested that the notes of the liaison meetings with MSDC and WSCC also be publicised so that the public would be aware of any projects.

The meeting concluded at 9.45 p.m.