

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE** held on **THURSDAY 10 JUNE 2010** at the King Edward Hall, Lindfield

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

Also present: 4 members of the public

In attendance: Mrs. C. Irwin

The Chairman of Council, Councillor W. Blunden, opened the meeting at 8.00 p.m. He welcomed those present and announced the emergency procedure for the King Edward Hall.

347 TO ELECT A CHAIRMAN OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE.

347.1 This being the first meeting of the Committee for the new Council year, Councillor Blunden, as Chairman of Council, called for nominations for the office of Chairman of the Environment and Amenities Committee. Councillor William Blunden was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** and, there being no further nominations, was duly **ELECTED** as Chairman of the Environment and Amenities Committee for the Council year 2010-11. Councillor Blunden chaired the rest of the meeting.

348. TO ELECT A VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE.

348.1 The Chairman called for nominations for the office of Vice Chairman of the Environment and Amenities Committee. Councillor Nicolle was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** and, there being no further nominations, was duly **ELECTED** as Vice Chairman of the Environment and Amenities Committee for the Council year 2010-11.

349. TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

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

350. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS IN RESPECT OF ANY MATTER ON THE AGENDA.

350.1 Councillor Blunden, as an allotment plot holder, and Councillors Allen and Pickett, as their wives were plot holders, declared personal interests in item 14 (Allotments).

350.2 Councillor Nicolle declared a personal and potentially prejudicial interest in item 19 (The Wilderness Field) as the field was adjacent to her property.

351. QUESTIONS / COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

351.1 Wilderness Field. Mr. J. Jesson, speaking on behalf of the Lindfield Preservation Society, stated that the Society had always supported, in their representations to MSDC on the Planning application for the Newton Road development, that the Parish Council should take ownership of and manage the Wilderness Field on behalf of Lindfield. He hoped that during the course of debate, this would be the conclusion the Council could come to. The Parish Council would have to prepare a Management Plan for submission to MSDC by way of a bid to take the field

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over. Mr. Jesson expressed the view that the present use of the field should remain until adequate debate within the Village at large had taken place about any changes.

Mr. N. Spratt stated that, as a resident of the Wilderness, he was keen for the Parish Council to take ownership and control of this land. If the Council did not act now this might be regretted in the future. He felt that the field should be left as it was at present, which was a lovely and well used route for walkers.

352. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE HELD ON 8 APRIL 2010.

352.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes of the Environment and Amenities Committee held on 8 April 2010. These were **AGREED** and the Chairman **SIGNED** the Minutes as being a true record of that meeting.

353. TO CONFIRM THE MEMBERSHIP OF WORKING GROUPS

353.1 It was **AGREED** that the Working Groups that reported to the Environment and Amenities Committee should continue and that their membership should be as follows:

- i) Street Lighting Working Group: Councillors Blunden, Gomme and Nicolle
- ii) Christmas Festival Night/Christmas Lights Working Group: Councillors Upton, Gomme and Leach, (plus Claire Nibloe representing the URC) and Councillor Blunden to be added because of his practical involvement in the arrangements.
- iii) Denmans Lane Allotments Working Group: Councillor Gomme wished to stand down from this group and Councillor Henton agreed to take his place. Membership: Councillors Allen, Blunden, Henton and Nicolle with Mr. Richard Powell and Mrs. Mary Allen.

354. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

354.1 The Chairman had nothing to report under this item.

355. REPORT ON ACTION / PROJECT PROGRESS LIST.

355.1 Snow equipment and grit bins (Minute 327.1) This would be looked at over the summer when suppliers put the equipment back on their websites and a report would be given at the E&A meeting on 5 August.

356. ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE BUDGET PROGRESS.

356.1 To review payments made to 31 March 2010. **NOTED** that to 31 March 2010, from a total budget of £44,200.00, £28,000.00 had been spent – a variance of £16,200. The main budget headings that were underspent were bus shelters (which it had been agreed should not be taken forward); litter bins and adult exercise equipment. If these items had been fully spent the variance would have been just under £3,200.

356.2 To consider allocation of outstanding projects and designated reserves. The RFO had circulated a budget analysis showing the E&A Committee's financial situation at year end, together with the current year's figures and the new headings for 2010/11. The RFO had recommended carrying all but one of the outstanding balances to the General Reserve. Members considered the RFO's suggestion of putting £996 for litter bins into outstanding projects to cover the invoice for bins recently delivered on Monday and to drop the remaining £3004 (together with the £3,000 for litter bins in outstanding projects) to the general reserve. However it was noted that arrangements were to be made during the current financial year for having the High Street bins refurbished and a supply of galvanised liners was to be bought for them so after further discussion with the RFO and the Clerk, the Chairman suggested keeping litter bins as an outstanding project with £4,000 in that fund and to rename it "replacement and maintenance of litter bins". There was also £2,000 for litter bins itemised in the current budget. This was **AGREED** and the remaining £3,000 was to go into the General Reserve.

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Adult Exercise Equipment had been spoken about with Rupert Browning at the last Wish List meeting, with a view to introducing a piece of equipment in the former hopscotch area. It was known that there was support from young mothers for this. The Committee had agreed in December 2009 that the £5000 budgeted for this item that year should be used, although no further amounts were agreed for 2010/11. **AGREED** that £5,000 should be held as an outstanding project.

It was **AGREED** that the balance of £750 for refurbishment of signs should go into the General Reserve. If the fingerposts were refurbished this year, the money could come from the maintenance fund or from the general reserve, subject to approval.

It was **AGREED** to remove the items for the replacement of the seat opposite Brookway and for new bus shelters from the budget as there were no plans in progress for either of these.

357. **WARDING: TO RECEIVE REPORTS ON WARD INSPECTIONS.**

357.1 Reports had been received from Councillors Upton and Nicolle, Gomme and Leach, Councillor Allen and Blunden and they had been forwarded to the appropriate authorities. It was **NOTED** that regular reports of inspections in Backwoods Lane, Appledore Gardens and Meadow Lane were not being received and the Chairman and Councillor Gomme agreed to raise this with the Councillors concerned.

358. **MAINTENANCE.**

358.1 Report on current maintenance. Councillor Nicolle reported that the triangle at Sunte Avenue needed attention. It was agreed that Chris Hughes should be asked to tidy up this area and to repair the bus shelter in Sunte Avenue opposite Crossways. Members were asked to inform Councillor Nicolle and the Clerk if they were aware of any other tasks of this nature that needed doing.

358.2 Mowing of High Street verges: to consider quotations received and to agree on a contractor. The licence from WSCC for taking over cutting the High Street verges between 157 High Street to the junction with Denmans Lane was now in place. Quotations from 2 commercial contractors and Haywards Heath Town Council (using their groundsmen) had been received. In the invitation to quote, the existing arrangements had been described, including the delayed first cut because of the crocuses, and it had been explained that the Parish Council was looking for an enhanced service with reference to the desire for more frequent cuts than WSCC's standard 7, use of appropriate machinery and cuttings to be removed every time. Contractors were invited to reply on the basis of their professional knowledge and experience, indicating how they would achieve the desired results.

During discussion, it was noted that Haywards Heath's new Town Clerk was keen to explore ways of working together with the neighbouring Parish Councils and it was known that the clustering arrangement worked well for Parishes buying services from Burgess Hill Town Council.

Members considered the merits of the two lowest quotations, which were very close when compared like for like. Although some reservations were expressed, it was **AGREED** by 5 votes to 1, with 1 abstention, that the contract should be awarded to Haywards Heath Town Council on a trial basis for the current season and that this would be reviewed for the next year. The cost of this would be £1,155 a year assuming 11 cuts.

358.3 Epicormic growth – High Street and Compton Road – to consider when pruning should take place. The Committee had agreed, at the meeting held on 8 April, to monitor the epicormic growth to determine the timing for its removal. KPS had quoted £570 plus VAT for this work. It was **AGREED** to place the order with KPS to carry out the removal of the epicormic growth on the High Street and Compton Road lime trees at their earliest convenience. It was noted that in view of the rate of growth this year, a second cut might be needed, although the Committee had only budgeted for one cut.

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- 358.4 To consider quotation for refurbishment of Parish Council's notice board. It was noted that a quotation had been requested but not yet received and it was agreed to defer this to the next meeting and to chase up the quotation.
- 358.5 To consider any issues relating to the installation of the new litter bins. The Chairman reported that four new bins had been delivered and that the Clerk would be asking the WSCC term contractor Charlie Grey of Grey's Fencing to quote for their installation but unfortunately he was about to go on holiday for about three weeks. It was recognised that as the bins were going on highway land it was wise to have them put in by this contractor who had the necessary approval from WSCC, the required insurance cover and they understood what had to be done.

359. SPRING CLEAN

- 359.1 Review of 2010 Spring Clean. It was **NOTED** that the Spring Clean had been well attended: there had been approximately 25 volunteers, including staff and Councillors. A lot of litter had been removed and the Village looked better for it. On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman thanked all who took part.
- 359.2 To consider any matters which should be added to the Risk Assessment. The Risk Assessment had been updated before the event and the advice note sheet given out to all volunteers had been revised accordingly. Members had received a copy of the risk assessment and advice note with the agenda papers and confirmed that the assessment seemed to be comprehensive and nothing needed altering or adding to it.
- 359.3 To consider whether to hold a Spring Clean event in 2011 and to agree a date. As the 2010 event had been successful, it was **AGREED** to hold a Spring Clean morning on 9 April 2011, subject to confirmation that there was room available at the King Edward Hall to use as a base. There was some discussion about a suggestion to invite the Lindfield Preservation Society to organise a similar event in the Autumn, but it was noted that the Parish Council had the appropriate insurance and it was **AGREED** not to pursue this suggestion. It was also suggested that the Council should encourage various organisations to take part by writing to them and Councillors Allen and Gomme offered to draw up a list. Advance notice by means of advertising in Lindfield Life was considered to be effective.

360. DENMANS LANE ALLOTMENTS

- 360.1 To note tenancy renewals and waiting list. **NOTED** that the renewal documents had been sent out to tenants went out early in April and that there were only two outstanding payments, which had been chased up. There were still 58 on the waiting list and the Council was therefore applying the rules more strictly and serving notice when plots were not being cultivated.
- 360.2 To note the quotation from Peter Thurman and to agree timing of next tree survey. The Chairman reported that the allotment trees were due to be surveyed this year and a quotation had therefore been obtained from Peter Thurman. His quotation was £300 plus VAT for a survey, brief report, update of schedule and work recommendations and he had suggested late summer or early autumn as the best times, although he was also willing to do the survey in early summer. **AGREED** that Mr. Thurman should be asked to survey the trees in September / October. It was noted that there were two broken boughs on one tree which were hanging but appeared to be well wedged and not over a plot so immediate action was not thought to be necessary.
- 360.3 To consider any other matters relating to the allotment site. It was **NOTED** that the new fence was nearly completed, with just one short length to be done within the next four weeks. Members commented that the Chairman and others who had worked on this had made a good job of it and it had been well received by users of the footpath and allotment tenants.

Councillor Allen reported that the bottom tap was dripping and filled a couple of watering cans daily.

361. RISK MANAGEMENT FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE'S ACTIVITIES: TO SIGN OFF THE ASSESSMENTS FOR REPORTING TO COUNCIL.

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361.1 Members had previously been asked to look at the risk assessment sheets for the activities they were responsible for and to suggest any amendments, additions, actions etc. The sheets had been updated accordingly and routine checks were being carried out as appropriate. It was therefore **AGREED** to sign off the Risk Assessments for the E&A activities for the previous year: Litter and Spring Clean; Christmas Festival Night /lights; Allotments; Bus shelters; Seats; Toilets; Street lighting and Signs.

362. TO RECEIVE NOTES OF LIAISON (“WISH LIST”) MEETINGS AND TO CONSIDER ANY ISSUES RAISED.

362.1 Meeting with Mr. R. Browning (MSDC) held on 14 April. The notes of this meeting had only just been circulated. The Chairman drew attention to the main issues discussed and gave an update:

- Pea lights for Christmas in the tree on the Pond island. Mr. Browning was asked for his views on this and he had agreed to refer this to colleagues at MSDC. He had since replied that as landlords of the site MSDC was unlikely to have a problem with the suggestion and that he had been told by the Planning Department that they did not think it would need planning permission.
- Boulder feature for playground. Since the meeting Mr. Browning had sent pictures of a wooden play sculpture similar to one at East Court, East Grinstead. The Chairman had also brought an illustration of a boulder designed for children to climb over. After the refurbishment of the playground on the Common it was recognised that something extra was needed in the central part where the circular seating was situated as the planting scheme there had not been very successful. A boulder had been suggested which would add to the landscaping and provide another play feature. Members preferred the idea of a rock style feature rather than the wooden sculpture. An estimate was to be requested from the supplier.
- Adult exercise equipment. Mr. Browning was reminded that the Parish Council was still interested in installing a piece of adult exercise equipment at Hickmans Lane.
- Future toilet provision on Lindfield Common. Backwoods Lane Car Park was suggested to Mr. Browning as a possible site for potential future toilet provision but nothing further had been said about this.
- Pond-side rail fence. Mr. Browning was reminded that the Parish Council had agreed to contribute towards the repainting of the pond-side fence. It had been noted that some of the posts needed replacing first.
- Hickmans Lane Field. Since the meeting, Dick Jackson had sent a copy of the report on the recent inspection of the Hickmans Lane playing area which would be copied to Members on request. This report appeared to be very thorough.

Members added the following comments:

- Common Playground. Councillor Allen drew attention to the need for a further application of bark under the aerial play feature and to the fact that this area tended to flood and needed improved drainage. He suggested piercing the tarpaulin under the bark.
- Backwoods Lane car park. Councillor Allen referred to the state of the Backwoods Lane car park and it was noted that MSDC were awaiting advice on whether or not the proposed resurfacing work would conflict with the 2006 Commons Act.
- Naming of the cul de sac at Eastern Cottages. Councillor Allen had noted the response in the meeting notes and stated that he was not in a position to bring this matter to the Parish Council.
- Pond Pump. Councillor Pickett stated that the Pond Pump needed replacing and that MSDC should be sent a reminder.

362.2 Meeting with Mr. J. Ullmer and Mr. P. Stanford (WSCC) held on 21 April. The Chairman referred to the main points from the meeting:

- Footpath from Hickmans Lane to Finches Park Road. This path was very narrow, with vegetation either side and the exit was directly onto the road in Hickmans Lane. This was also a bus stop. WSCC had been asked to consider the possibility of widening the entrance to the footpath from Hickmans Lane to Finches Park Road to allow enough width for a barrier to be installed to improve pedestrian safety. It had been confirmed that this was WSCC land and Mr. Ullmer would get a price. This would be low priority for WSCC but could be brought

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forward if the Parish Council agreed to contribute. When the cost of this work was known, the E&A Committee would consider whether to budget for part funding this next year.

- Christmas lights. Mr. Ullmer had not objected to the catenary wires put up to support the Christmas lights at a safe height but was going to consult with a colleague to investigate alternative means of securing the battens in the trees rather than by using nails. Christmas lights were to come up as the next item on the agenda.
- Road-side fence by the Pond. WSCC had agreed to arrange for this to be painted with the Parish Council paying for the paint.
- Litter bins. The locations for the new litter bins had been raised and Mr. Ullmer had asked for an inventory and map of all the street furniture that the Parish Council owned on the highway.

- 362.3 To note letter from LPS re High Street Limes and agree any action that may be required. The Chairman stated that putting Christmas lights in the trees last year had presented great difficulties. Following pollarding it had at first been thought that the lights could not be put up, meeting the safety requirements, but with catenary wire fixed taut between the trees, the electricity cables could be secured with cable ties so as to be held at or above the required height. However putting up the wire (and the electricity cables) had been very difficult because of the low springy growth on the trees which prevented the ladder from being positioned in the right place. Having got the wires up with difficulty, it had been hoped that they could remain in place as taking them down and putting them up again next Christmas would be equally as difficult and for safety reasons would have to be done by contractors. It was noted that in Hassocks, the lights were still in place with the electricity cables still connected to the street lights.

The Parish Council had received a letter from David Saunders at MSDC enclosing a copy of a letter to Claire Tester, signed by Mr. Jesson and Mr. Macmillan on behalf of the Lindfield Preservation Society, expressing their concerns about the wooden supports nails and cables. Mr. Saunders had stated in his letter that, in his own view, he did not consider that these would have a significant impact on the health of the trees, but he requested that they be removed as a gesture of goodwill.

Following discussion it was **AGREED** that:

- this matter should be an agenda item for the next meeting of Full Council
- the Clerk should obtain estimates from KPS for taking the wires, battens and nails out of the trees
- the Clerk should write to the Chairman of the Preservation Society, explaining the difficulties and the reasons why the wires had been left in place and asking them whether, in the circumstances, they would be prepared to reconsider the wording of their letter.

- 362.3 Alternative proposal for Christmas lights. A detailed paper from Mr. E. M. Turner had been received, presenting an alternative suggestion for the Christmas lighting arrangement. The Chairman had looked at the proposal and had some reservations particularly in terms of the distance between fixing points, resulting in long lengths of unsupported cable. However, this proposal was still to be considered by the Christmas Festival Night / Christmas Lights Working Group, which had not met since this paper had been received, and the recommendations of the Working Group would be considered by the E&A Committee in due course.

363. TREE WARDENS

- 363.1 To receive notes of meeting held on 12 May 2010 and to consider any issues raised. Councillor Nicolle wished to record appreciation for the work the Tree Wardens were doing in the Village. They had divided themselves up and taken responsibility for different areas of work: hedge surveys at the Parish boundaries, looking at tree issues arising from planning applications etc. A current issue was the lack of funding from WSCC for planting and replanting trees in grass verges and for their maintenance. The Tree Wardens were hoping to secure alternative funding. It was acknowledged that it was very important to identify the right location and the right trees for the situation, particularly in recognition of the recent difficulties at West Common Drive.

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363.2 To note the resignation of Ray Wicks as a Lindfield Tree Warden. Members **NOTED** that Mr. Wicks had resigned to devote more time to other interests. It was **AGREED** that a letter of appreciation should be sent to Mr. Wicks expressing the Parish Council's thanks for his significant contribution to the work of the Tree Warden group.

364. OFFICIAL GUIDE AND MAP LEAFLET: TO CONSIDER OFFER FROM LOCAL AUTHORITY PUBLISHING.

364.1 The Chairman reported that, as requested by the Parish Council, Local Authority Publishing, at Lower Dicket, had submitted a proposal for a Parish guide/map leaflet. Based upon the publication being fully funded by advertising, the Parish Council would be supplied with 4000 copies free of charge. There was also an option for the Parish Council to part fund this – there was £2,000 in the E&A Budget for a Lindfield map. The leaflet would contain a proper street map and could also include editorial material provided by the Council. The existing Lindfield leaflet could be incorporated if wished.

It was noted that another publication funded by advertising might take away some of the advertising revenue from the Lindfield Parish Directory and Year Book. However it had been recognised for some considerable time, as evidenced in the Parish Plan, that there was a need for a proper village street map of Lindfield and this may prove to be a cost free simple way to achieve it.

Members discussed whether to proceed with this project and comments included:

- the existing Lindfield leaflet was very good and popular
- there may not have been enough research into what people wanted
- the resultant effect of another publication which depended on advertising was not known
- the cost of the publication without advertising should be ascertained
- there appeared to be confusion about marketing – product positioning
- the Communications Forum had interpreted the need identified in the Parish Plan as being a static map on display centrally in the Village: the small map on the Denmans Lane notice board did not serve that purpose

It was **AGREED** that the way forward was to form a group to carry out more research and to report back to the Environment and Amenities Committee. **AGREED** that the membership of this group should be Councillors Pickett, Henton and Gomme and the Clerk, and that they should arrange to pay a visit to the Sales Director at Local Authority Publishing.

365. TO CONSIDER PARISH COUNCIL'S ROLE IN THE FUTURE OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE WILDERNESS FIELD.

365.1 Councillor Nicolle, having declared a potentially prejudicial interest as an adjoining property owner, left the room for the duration of this item.

365.2 The Chairman reported that a resident had spoken to Mr. Ashdown [Team Leader (Strategic Implementation) Planning Services at MSDC who was overseeing the implementation of the Newton Road development]. Mr. Ashdown had indicated that MSDC would not be averse to the Parish Council taking ownership of the Wilderness Field, which was to be handed over by Barratts for the community when 50% of the properties at the Newton Road development had been sold. A group of residents were understood to support the Parish Council owning the land as security against further development in the future. It was recognised that a lot of issues would have to be fully researched before a decision could be made to proceed, including the initial and ongoing costs, how the land would be maintained and whether there was, and would continue to be, adequate access for maintenance vehicles. It was understood that the High Weald Countryside Ranger at WSCC would advise on issues relating to ownership and management of open space.

It was **AGREED** (by 5 in favour, with 1 abstention) to recommend to Full Council that the possibility of the Parish Council taking ownership of this land should be discussed with MSDC officers, but without commitment at this stage.

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Councillor Nicolle rejoined the meeting.

366. TO RECONSIDER EMPLOYING A STREET SWEEPER TO SUPPLEMENT THE EXISTING ARRANGEMENTS.

366.1 The Chairman reported that it had become known that Cuckfield Parish Council was considering employing a street sweeper. The Clerk had spoken to their Clerk (Frances Jones) about it as she recognised a possible clustering opportunity which may enable both Parish Councils to supplement the existing street sweeping arrangements to improve the standard of this service. Cuckfield Parish Council was understood to be raising this matter at their Finance Committee meeting, also on 10 June. If Members of both Councils' Committees supported following this up in principle, the next step would be to meet with representatives of Cuckfield Parish Council to discuss how to proceed.

Members were all agreed that Lindfield's streets were not consistently as clean as desired and it was suggested that this should be taken up with MSDC and SERCO. It was **AGREED** in principle to discuss further with Cuckfield Parish Council the possibility of employing a street sweeper and that this would have to be fully researched, setting out the costs, before a decision could be taken.

367. ANY OTHER BUSINESS, ARISING AFTER THE PREPARATION OF THIS AGENDA, WHICH THE CHAIRMAN AGREES TO TAKE AS URGENT. ANY SUCH MATTERS WILL BE FOR NOTING OR REFERRAL TO A FUTURE MEETING ONLY.

367.1 **NOTED:** a resident had reported to the Parish Office that a yew tree at 92 High Street was growing into one of the highway lime trees and may be preventing the lime from recovering from pollarding. Planning permission had been granted for reducing the crowns of yews at that property in April but the work had not yet been done. The Clerk had passed this on to Jonathan Ullmer at WSCC.

This part of the meeting concluded at 9.23 p.m. There followed a second period for questions and comments from members of the public.

Tree planting. Mr. J. Jesson, with reference to Minute 363.1, stated that the Lindfield Preservation Society was, in principle, prepared to finance additional trees in the Village, but the backdrop of the recent decision by WSCC to remove trees in West Common Drive did not make this easy. It was important that WSCC explained their intentions and reasons somewhat better before carrying out this sort of work, especially as the West Common Drive trees had been planted by the Preservation Society in the first place.

The meeting ended at 9.30 p.m.