

## LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of **LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL** held on **THURSDAY 12 MARCH 2015** at the King Edward Hall, Lindfield.

The meeting commenced at 7.30 p.m.

**Present:**

Parish Councillors: Mr. W. Blunden (Chairman)  
Mr. M. Allen  
Mrs. J. Chatfield  
Mr. A. Gomme  
Mrs. M. Hersey  
Mr. R. Pickett  
Mr. R. Plass  
Mr. C. Snowling

**Also present:** Councillor Mrs. C. Field (WSCC)

**In attendance:** Mrs. C. Irwin

Not present: Councillors Mr. M. Amor, Mr. S. Henton, Mr. S. Hodgson and Mrs. V. Upton.

The Chairman welcomed those present. As this was the last meeting of the Full Council before the elections, he thanked Members for their input into the work of the Council and acknowledged that at times this could be frustrating, particularly as it often took longer than anticipated to achieve objectives. However some schemes were currently coming to fruition.

Councillor Snowling, on behalf of the Council, expressed sincere thanks to the Chairman and congratulated him for his tolerance and good humour, because of which it had been a very pleasant four years.

**497. APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE**

497.1 Apologies were received from Councillors Amor, Henton, Hodgson and Upton and the reasons were accepted..

**498. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS.**

498.1 There were no declarations of interest from Members in respect of any item on the Agenda.

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

499.1 There were no members of the public present.

**500. MINUTES AND CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 22 JANUARY 2015.**

500.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes and Confidential Minutes of the meeting of Lindfield Parish Council held on 22 January 2015. These were **AGREED** and the Chairman **SIGNED** the Minutes and Confidential Minutes as being a true record of that meeting.

**501. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

501.1 Central Mid Sussex County Local Committee (CLC). The Chairman reported that he and the Clerk had attended the CLC meeting on 15 March, at which there had been a presentation from John Jesson of Lindfield Preservation Society and Graham Turner acting on behalf of Sussex Heritage, who were very enthusiastic about achieving a weight limit, width restriction and 20 mph speed limit through the village, prompted by the increase in lorry traffic.

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### 502. NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICE PANEL REPORT.

502.1 PCSO Erica Baxter was unable to report in person. She had sent a report which had been circulated to Members. The main points in the report were:

- Courier Fraud. Reports of phone calls received had been followed up and PCSO Baxter was using every opportunity to advise and inform people of this and other types of fraud. She had provided a link to information on this and to scams in general and she was concerned about the possibility of community members having given money and not yet realised that they were a victim to crime.
- Antisocial behaviour. Car parks and other areas that may experience ASB were being patrolled whenever possible. Incidents had lessened during the wet winter, but the police were aware that they may increase as the weather improved.
- Burglaries. An arrest had been made in connection with some of the recent burglaries.
- Lead theft. PCSO Baxter had given her input to appropriate authorities about the risk of repeat crime if the lead was not replaced with a look-alike substitute. She felt that those comments were well received and would be taken into account by the decision makers.
- Reporting suspicious activity. PCSO Baxter had been encouraged by the number of Lindfield residents phoning with reports.

502.2 Councillor Allen commended PCSO Baxter for her diligence in seeking effective solutions.

### 503. REPORTS BY COUNTY COUNCILLOR / DISTRICT COUNCILLORS.

Councillor Field reported as follows:

503.1 Traffic. Councillor Field and Councillor O'Brien, Deputy Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, had met with Mr. Jesson and Mr. Turner on Lindfield High Street to discuss the proposals being put forward by Mr. Jesson and Mr. Turner for weight and width restrictions and a 20mph speed limit to safeguard the village centre from the effects of the increased number of lorries using the B2111 and the B2028. Councillors Field and O'Brien had much sympathy with residents regarding these traffic problems, particularly the large number of lorry movements by Browns Lorries.

The Browns lorries were accessing Northall Farm in Fletching, delivering material for the construction of bunds to restrict noise pollution from the clay pigeon club on this land. It had come to light that Wealden District Council, as part of their District Plan process, had obtained a Special Protection Order for the Ashdown Forest supported by EU legislation and tested in the High Court, prohibiting traffic causing environmental damage from using the A275. As a result, all construction traffic was to use the A272 and A23 or the B228 and B2111. West Sussex County Council Highways Department had been totally unaware of this until the problems had been brought to their attention. Wealden District Council was not a highway authority, but had apparently not consulted either East or West Sussex County Council Highway Departments about this. As the A23 / A272 route involved a significant detour, it was not surprising that the lorry drivers were using the B2018 / B2111 route. It was understood that the project would take a further 6 months to complete and it had recently come to light that further lorry deliveries were being made to Fullingmill Farm.

The Central Mid Sussex County Local Committee had advised that such matters should go for consideration via the Community Issues List, but that in order to be included on the list, the proposers would have to demonstrate strong support from the Parish Council and the community.

The initial reaction of Highway Officers was that this would not be easy to resolve. It was not in fact the case that all villages had weight restrictions as stated by Mr. Turner (West Hoathly being one example of a village without such a restriction). Mr. Turner had suggested a weight restriction zone from the Dukes Head roundabout at Crawly Down to the A 272, but Councillor Field pointed out that lorries could not be prevented from travelling throughout the County. As Councillor Field represented the larger area, she would want to know the views of all affected areas.

503.2 Dukes Road and Brushes Lane. These roads were to be resurfaced the following week. Councillor Field was also making strong representations for work to be done on Copyhold Lane.

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- 503.3 Lindfield Primary School Traffic Group. Helen Card and a colleague had been successful in obtaining money from the Highways Quick Fix Fund to pay for a footpath to the school from the Bowls Club car park and it was hoped the work would be done during the next school holidays.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Field on behalf of the Council for support with village issues.

Councillor Snowling reported as follows:

- 503.4 District Plan. The Scrutiny Committee for Planning and Economic Development had met to consider the District Plan Pre-Submission Draft for Public Consultation. Councillor Hersey, who had sat on the Scrutiny Committee, confirmed changes by Central Government were not considered to be significant. Councillor Snowling stated that there were grounds for optimism about progress with the District Plan and the number of Neighbourhood Plans coming forward, including the Lindfield/Lindfield Rural Neighbourhood Plan.

### 504. ACTION LIST.

- 504.1 The Action List was **NOTED** without comment.

### 505. CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS.

- 505.1 No such documents had been received.

### 506. FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE.

- 506.1 **NOTED:** that the minutes of the meeting held on 5 March were not yet available. Councillor Plass reported as follows:

- 506.2 Proposed public convenience on the Common. The Working Group had considered an alternative site for the PCs on the other side of the Bowls Club car park to the original site. This had been referred to MSDC for their views on this site's suitability. David Harper was consulting with the Planning Department and a response was awaited.

A quotation had been received for a scale model on a baseboard measuring 500mm x 400mm. The F&GP Committee had felt very strongly that this tool was essential for the consultation with the public as drawings were not enough. It had however been agreed to wait for MSDC's views about the alternative location and also to put this on hold until after the elections when the new Council would be in place.

- 506.3 Equality Policy and Dignity at Work / Bullying and Harassment Policy. F&GP had agreed that these two new policies should be put to the Full Council for approval. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Equality Policy and the Dignity at Work / Bullying and Harassment policies as drafted.

- 506.4 Annual Review of the Effectiveness of the Internal Audit and Internal Control Procedures. When completing the Governance sheet for the Annual Return, the Council was required to indicate whether or not this review had been carried out. A draft report had been agreed by F&GP for recommendation to Full Council and this had been circulated. There were no questions or comments and the report was duly **NOTED**.

**RESOLVED:** to approve the report on the Review of the Effectiveness of the Internal Audit and Internal Control Procedures for the financial year 2014/15.

- 506.5 Statements of Account/Budget Progress and Bank Reconciliation for the periods 01.12.14 to 31.12.14, 01.01.15 – 31.01.15 and 01.02.15 – 28.02.15 The financial statements were **RECEIVED** and **NOTED**. To 28 February 2015:

- from the overall budget of £263,220, £126,955 had been spent (£136,265 underspent)
- from the F&GP budget of £123,020, £101,799 had been spent (£21,221 underspent)
- from the Admin Budget of £108,520, £91,125 had been spent, leaving a balance of £17,395
- £1,028 had been spent from the Capital Project heading for toilets on the Common.
- from the E&A budget of £70,000, £23,044 had been spent (underspent by £46,956).
- from the P&T budget of £40,200, £1,081 had been spent (£39,119 underspent).

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- From the reserves of £309,152, £4,619 had been spent.

506.6 List of cheques for approval: cheques drawn since Council meeting of 22 January 2015. The list of cheques drawn was tabled. **NOTED** that the expenditure during this period under the powers granted by Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 totalled £1,108.85 and that the Petty Cash balance at 12.03.15 was £60.10.

**RESOLVED:** to approve the list of cheques, numbers 105530 – 105569 inclusive totalling £22,901.96. The Chairman **SIGNED** the list of cheques, which is appended to the signed copy of the se Minutes as Appendix A.

### 507. ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE.

Councillor Blunden reported as follows:

507.1 West Sussex PFI street lighting upgrade. A number of issues had arisen during the work on the street lights:

- Expressions of dismay had been received about the modern lights in the High Street, although the modification to be done at a later date had been explained in newsletters. The contractors' first priority was to complete the installation work to the deadline in the contract.
- There was some inconsistency with the information on the plans for Black Hill and Lewes Road. The former referred to straight glazing bowls and the latter to curved ones. It was **AGREED** that the Clerk should contact Simon Bushell to point this out and to ask him to ensure that curved glazing bowls were installed throughout.
- Extra columns had been installed in the High Street to give a better coverage and these would be converted to heritage.
- The change to part-night lighting had not been welcomed by many residents, although others were happy with it. At present, the lights in Black Hill, the High Street, West Common and Hickmans Lane were going out around midnight, due to a wrong photo cell being installed. These roads should be lit all night lit but dimmed by 50% and this was to be corrected shortly. Residents with comments or objections are being referred to WSCC as they have prepared a standard letter in response.
- A resident of Hickmans Lane had expressed concern about the brightness of the lights in the area around their house and he had been directed to WSCC
- It was noted that driving from the Pond towards Black Hill, drivers found the lights dazzling and it was hoped that the heritage lamps after conversion would be less bright.
- Conversion to heritage entailed columns being cut down to 4 metres. The addition of the swan neck bracket would add a further metre to the height. There had been representations from a resident of Denmans Lane as the light outside his house would be taller than the existing one and would affect his bedroom window. A short report had been received from the Lindfield Preservation Society who had measured the existing lights and considered 5 metres to be too tall, expressing a preference for the distance from the ground to the luminaire to be 4.7m. Simon Bushell of SSEC had responded as follows: "These roads have been designed to have the lanterns at a mounting height of 5 metre. The current columns will be cut down to 4 metres to allow for the 1 metre uplift from the heritage style bracket. Any lowering in the height would be detrimental to the lighting, in several ways. It brings the light source down to give more glare to the road users and to achieve the required levels would necessitate even more extra columns in the street."
- Residents had expressed concerns about the removal of a light at the top of a cul de sac in Blackthorns. Councillor Field reported that she had inspected at night and confirmed that it was very dark in that area and possibly the two other lights being on the same side of the road had made this worse. She had requested that WS Officers/PFI contractors inspect the area in the dark.

507.2 Paved area at the corner of the High Street and Lewes Road. On comparing the quotation received from WSCC's contractors with the one obtained by the Parish Council, it was noted that the former covered a larger area and included the re-spacing of the existing bollards, as well as the addition of a 10% contingency for any unforeseen ground conditions, which accounted for a difference in the price. It was also noted that, if the Parish Council was to arrange for a contractor other than WSCC's Highway Contractors, there would be the added complication of having to obtain a licence from WSCC to carry out the work.

It was **AGREED** that the whole of the York paving between the crossing and Lewes Road should be done and that the order should be placed with WSCC's Highway Contractors.

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### RESOLVED:

- to place the order with WSCC's Highways Contractors (total £26,251.82)
- to make the necessary arrangements to obtain the contribution of £5,000 from WSCC
- to make up the budget shortfall of £11,252 by virement from the General Reserve.

507.3 Village Map. **NOTED:** the two village street maps had been installed on the walls of the Denmans Lane Public Convenience s and the Lindfield Medical Centre. An article would be published in the next Parish Council newsletter with acknowledgements to Merie Blundell for permission to use her pictures and the Lindfield Medical Centre for their permission to put the map on the surgery wall.

507.4 Retirement of the Village Orderly. Paul Frost was to retire at the end of March and the Environment and Amenities Committee had agreed to defer consideration of replacing him pending the outcome of meetings to be arranged with MSDC / SERCO and Haywards Heath Town Council.

507.5 Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Amenities Committee held on 5 February 2015. **RESOLVED:** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Amenities Committee held on 5 February be received and their recommendations confirmed.

### 508. PLANNING AND TRAFFIC COMMITTEE.

Councillor Gomme reported as follows:

508.1 14/03411/FUL – 17-19 Denmans Lane. At the meeting held on 03.02.15, a further application for construction of a new detached house, with amended plans and an architectural report, had been considered. This application was not supported by the Committee as it was considered that it still breached policies, including overlooking.

508.2 14/03955/FUL – Land r/o 67 Sunte Avenue. At the meeting held on 24.02.15, it had been noted that this application for 2/3 bedroom semi detached chalet bungalows had been approved by MSDC.

508.3 Minutes of the meetings of the Planning and Traffic Committee held on 3 February and 24 February. **RESOLVED:** that the Minutes of the meetings of the Planning and Traffic Committee held on 3 February and 24 February 2015 be received and their recommendations confirmed.

508.4 Neighbourhood Plan. Councillor Gomme reported that the Neighbourhood Plan had been published for consultation, starting on 12 February and ending on 26 March 2015. A few enquiries received had been referred to MSDC.

Progress was being made with the appointment of an Examiner: MSDC had forwarded to the two Parish Councils a shortlist of three who met the criteria. This had been forwarded to members of the Steering Group who had been asked to reply by 16 March. At the end of the consultation period, the Plan would either go forward to the Examiner with amendments based on the comments received or submitted as it stood, with the consultation responses enclosed with the supporting papers. The next stage would take place after the local elections in May. It was hoped that residents would turn out to vote at the referendum which would follow provided that the plan was passed by the Examiner.

Councillor Gomme had recently attended a briefing at MSDC on neighbourhood planning and agreed with the comment made by Councillor Snowling at minute 503.4 that the outlook for neighbourhood plans was looking more positive.

508.5 Traffic Survey. Councillor Gomme reported that he would be attending the second session for stakeholders regarding the Haywards Heath Town Centre Transport Study the following week. The draft brief for the Parish Council's Traffic Study would be considered at the next meeting of the Planning and Traffic Committee. All issues that had been raised had been included in the brief so that the consultants would have as much information as possible. It was hoped that the traffic survey would be put out to tender in May.

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### 509. OPERATION WATERSHED.

- 509.1 A pothole by the mini roundabout at the junction of Backwoods Lane and Black Hill had been a recurring problem for over two years; it had been filled several times and the repairs had sunk. WSCC had indicated about two years previously that this should be investigated for subsidence, requiring a road closure, but this had not yet been carried out.

Helen Card, Principal Community Officer until her recent promotion to another post, had contacted the Clerk on 16 February to propose working with the Parish Council on an Operation Watershed bid for the investigative works. Mrs. Card had expressed the thought that the subsidence might be due to underground springs, hence the suggestion of investigating as an Operation Watershed project. The Parish Council would be the applicant and project manager, with support from WSCC. The process would be that the Parish Council would obtain three quotations and oversee the works. Initially, Mrs. Card would arrange for Balfour Beatty to look at the issues and establish the next course of action. Fully worked up applications would have to be submitted by 31 March.

The Chairman and Clerk had discussed this further with Mrs. Card and her colleague Joanne Stanley at a recent meeting and had expressed concerns about the amount and nature of the work the Parish Council would have to take on a project manager; the unknown issues that may arise (such as the need to organise the road closure and what would happen if the project exceeded the estimate on which the bid for Operation Watershed funding would be based). The Clerk and Chairman had expressed strong reservations due to the fact that the Parish Council lacked the expertise to act as project manager for highway engineering work.

Mrs. Card and Mrs. Stanley had agreed to arrange for Balfour Beatty to carry out a scoping exercise to look at what potentially needed to be done and to indicate whether this was a job that would be taken up by Highways or to be dealt with otherwise. Mrs Stanley had subsequently sent an email to Balfour Beatty asking their representative to contact the Clerk but so far there had been no response. It was now likely that the deadline for submission of a funding application could not be met.

Councillor Field agreed to look into this matter as this was not how she had understood Operation Watershed to work and she had no knowledge prior to this meeting about this approach by Mrs. Card.

Members were in agreement that the investigation needed to go ahead because the footpath at the crossing was constantly under water, but they shared the reservations about the Parish Council's involvement in managing the project. Subject to the outcome of Councillor Field's discussion with WSCC officers it was **AGREED** to authorise the Clerk in consultation with the Chairman of Council to make a bid to WSCC to get this investigation onto the County Council's agenda.

### 510. DATE OF ANNUAL MEETING.

- 510.1 The date of the Annual Council meeting had been set for 14 May. At a recent Clerks' Networking Day, it had been pointed out that the earliest day that the annual meeting could take place was 15 May. The Local Government Act 1972 stated that the Annual Meeting shall be held on or within 14 days after the day on which Councillors took office, which was the fourth day after the day of the election. However the summons to the meeting had to be issued giving three clear days' notice and those people elected could not be summoned until they were in office. It was therefore proposed the change the date of the Annual Meeting in order that the summons could be issued with three clear days' notice.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- that the date of the Annual Meeting of Council should be changed to Tuesday 19 May.
- that the date of the Planning and Traffic Committee should be changed from 19 May to Wednesday 20 May.

### 511. CHANGE TO THE ORDER OF THE AGENDA FOR THE REMAINING ITEMS.

- 511.1 At the suggestion of the Chairman, it was **AGREED** to change the order of the Agenda, bringing forward the Staffing item, which did not need to be taken in confidential session.

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### 512. STAFFING.

512.1 Recruitment of Responsible Financial Officer. It was **NOTED** that there were sufficient applicants for interviews to take place on 24 March.

### 513. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

513.1 Local Council Elections - May 2015. It was **NOTED** that Democratic Services at MSDC would be setting up an appointments system for submitting nomination papers which would be checked in the presence of the person delivering them. Because of the short nomination period, which spanned the Easter weekend, and to avoid there being a large number of appointments for individuals and the possibility of long waiting time, one person from each Council was to be encouraged to act as "trusted person" to deliver the forms and wait for them to be checked.

At the recent SSALC Networking Day, Clerks had been advised not to get involved and that it was the candidates' responsibility to deliver their forms.

Councillor Hersey offered to deliver forms on behalf of members of the Parish Council provided they were handed in a Parish Office for her to collect. She would make an appointment early in the nomination period and notify the Clerk who would then inform members of the arrangements.

The Clerk stated that she would set up a system for recording the forms received and issuing receipts.

The meeting concluded at 8.35 p.m.