

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

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

Present:

Lindfield Parish Councillors: Mr. W. Blunden (Chairman)
Mr. M. Allen
Mr. A. Gomme
Mr. S. Henton
Mrs. E. Hinze
Mr. S. Hodgson
Mr. C. Snowling
Mrs. V. Upton (Vice Chairman)

Also present:

Councillor Mrs. C. Field (WSCC)
Councillor Mr. A. Lea (MSDC)
1 member of the public

In attendance:

Mrs. C. Irwin (Clerk)
Mr. T. Clark (MSDC Monitoring Officer) until 8.10

Not present:

Parish Councillors Mrs. J. Durrant, Mrs. M. Hersey, Mr. P. Plass and Mr. S. Shortland.

The Chairman welcomed all present, with a particular welcome to Mr. Tom Clark, Monitoring Officer (MSDC) who was in attendance to address the Council on the Code of Conduct and Standards in Public Life, prior to commencement of the Council meeting.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Clark addressed the Council.

Mr. Clark's duties as Monitoring Officer gave him a certain role in respect of breaches of the Code of Conduct involving Parish Councillors and he worked with the Standards Committee which was comprised of twelve members, including two Independent Persons who were not Councillors and who had an advisory function.

The Code of Conduct adopted by Lindfield Parish Council was based on the revised version adopted by MSDC in line with WSCC and complied with the Principles of Public Life. The Code applied when attending meetings and at other times when Members were acting in their role as Councillors. Members must respect confidentiality, act in a manner expected of a Parish Councillor and not use their position to improve their own personal circumstances.

The Localism Act required disclosure of pecuniary interests and failure to do so was potentially a criminal offence. If a Member had an interest relating to their employment, land or, contracts, they must declare it and withdraw from the meeting place. In the case of personal interests as a member of an organisation standing to benefit from a decision of the Council, this must be declared and such prejudicial interest must be treated in the same way as a pecuniary interest: ie: that Councillor must withdraw.

There was ability for the Clerk to issue dispensations on occasions where almost the whole membership of the Council had the same prejudicial interest (e.g. all trustees of a community facility), to enable these members to take part. In smaller Councils preparing a Neighbourhood Plan, most or all members may live near a site proposed for inclusion for development and a dispensation may be issued. However Councillors may not promote land they own and it would not be appropriate for them have a dispensation.

With reference to persistent Freedom of Information requests, which were time consuming, Mr. Clark clarified that documents being worked on would not be handed out to the public in draft form; only in proposal form.

Mr. Clark reminded Members to make sure they kept their Register of Interests forms up to date.

In terms of the number of complaints received, these had fallen away almost completely since the May 2015 election, although a couple of queries had been dealt with informally.

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Another area to be aware of was predetermination or bias. Although the Localism Act had made it easier for Councillors to remain present at meetings where they have an interest, if Councillors were involved in a matter under discussion it was advised that they should make a statement and step back. Councillors would know if they had such an interest if they felt uncomfortable.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Clark for his attendance and advice and Mr. Clark left the meeting.

The Chairman then declared the meeting of Full Council open at 8.10 p.m.

78. APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE.

78.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Shortland, Plass, Hersey and Durrant and the reasons were accepted.

79. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

79.1 There were no declarations of interest from Members in respect of any items on the Agenda.

80. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 17 SEPTEMBER 2015.

80.1 An amendment to correct a minor typing error was **AGREED** (the word tanalised in the last bullet point of Minute 73.4). The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 17 September 2015 as amended. The Minutes were **AGREED** and the Chairman **SIGNED** the Minutes, as amended, as being a true record of that meeting.

81. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

81.1 There were no questions or comments from members of the public.

82. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

82.1 Bonfire night and Remembrance Sunday. The Chairman stated that these recent events had taken place peacefully. There was disappointment about the damage to the grass on the Common caused by the refreshment vans on Bonfire Night and this had been pointed out to MSDC. It was noted that there had been reduced Police presence but there had been no problems. The Chairman stated that on Remembrance Day it had been very rewarding to see so many young people present to pay their respects and it was important to keep Remembrance Day alive in the village. It had been revitalised due to the enthusiasm and hard work of the Lindfield Branch of the Royal British Legion and the branch now had one of the largest memberships. It was **AGREED** that a letter of appreciation should be sent to the RBL thanking them for their work.

82.2 SSALC Chairmen's Networking Day. The Chairman had attended this recent event at which a presentation had been given by John Connell (Department for Communities and Local Government) and Jonathan Owen (Chief Executive Officer, National Association of Local Councils) on the subject of devolution whereby functions could be devolved to Parish Councils because of reduced funding. Parish Councils would need to form clusters in order to deliver devolved services. A presentation by Sussex Police at an event attended by the Chairman and Clerk in September had been on a similar theme. Because of huge budget cuts, the Police were unable to maintain the same levels of staffing and were looking at devolution of certain powers to Parishes (for example issuing fines) by creating community wardens who would be trained and equipped.

83. POLICE / NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICE PANEL REPORT.

83.1 It was **NOTED** that the next meeting of the Panel was due to take place on 1 December.

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84. REPORTS BY COUNTY COUNCILLOR / DISTRICT COUNCILLORS.

84.1 Councillor Mrs. C. Field (WSCC) reported as follows:

- Police funding. Since the meeting referred to in the Chairman's announcements (minute 82.2) the Police Funding Formula (and consequently the reductions in funding) had been deferred.
- WSCC budget. The setting of the WSCC budget was delayed this year because the Local Government settlement was as yet unknown until the Autumn Statement on 25 November. WSCC was keen not to make unnecessary reductions and it was prudent to wait until it was clear what the Council needed to achieve. Some work was being done in the background, but the budget would not be set until after Christmas.
- 3 Counties Devolution Bid. The prospectus for this was on the WSCC website. This was a true partnership between the three County Councils and their District and Borough Councils. Throughout there had been joint delegations to London.
- Consultation on Primary Schools provision. The consultation was drawing to a close. Councillor Field stated that she welcomed it particularly after the trials and tribulations involving the Lindfield Primary School expansion due to the lack of a long term plan.
- Proposed Traffic Regulation Order. Councillor Field had met with John O'Brien (Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport) and Nicola Debnam (Director of Highways and Transport) regarding the HGVs and the TRO being proposed by the Lindfield Preservation Society. Mr. O'Brien had responded to the Chair of the Central Mid Sussex County Local Committee subsequent to that meeting. WSCC Highways were unable to do anything definitive until the TRO application had been received, but there was no process in place for a TRO application that covered three County Local Committee areas. There were differences of opinion about the likely effectiveness of the TRO, but until the application had been submitted it could not be analysed.
- Central Mid Sussex County Local Committee the next meeting was due to take place at Victory Hall, Balcombe on 15 December and the agenda would include the Schools Consultation, the Haywards Heath Transport Study Scheme Prioritisation. The Capital Programme had been approved for the next few years, but funding had not yet been settled for this.
- Highways issues. Richard Speller (Area Manager – Highways, Mid Sussex) was dealing with a number of issues, including street lights and the footpath to Lindfield Primary School.

84.2 Councillor Mr Lea (MSDC) reported as follows:

- Devolution. This affected District Councils but to a lesser degree than County Councils. MSDC was keeping a watching brief and the matter would come up at the Scrutiny Committee.
- Birchen Lane Planning Application. MSDC's planning committee had refused permission for this application.
- District Plan. Since the rejection of the previous District Plan on the grounds of the Duty to Co-operate, a great deal of extra work on consultation with neighbouring councils had been undertaken in the preparation of the new District Plan. It had been decided to increase the number of houses and this had gone through the Scrutiny Committee and the previous day Full Council had approved the draft Pre-Submission document for consultation.
- Dog bin in road from Lewes Road to the Common playground. A Member stated that he had enquired a year previously about the reasons for this bin not having been replaced, but had not received an answer. Councillor Lea confirmed that the District Council was increasing provision and agreed to find out more details.
- Potholes in School Lane A Member raised the matter of potholes in the first section of School Lane which crossed a section of Common Land. These were over five inches deep and had been there for several months, despite having been reported. Councillor Lea agreed to look into the matter.
- Footpath to Lindfield Primary School. A Member expressed disappointment and frustration at the postponement of the new footpath. Councillor Lea stated that he shared this frustration and was unsure of the way forward.

Councillors Field and Lea temporarily withdrew from the meeting to discuss matters raised that concerned WSCC and MSDC.

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85. ACTION LIST.

85.1 The Action List was **NOTED**.

86. CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS.

86.1 Gambling Act 2005 - Statement of Licensing Principles - (MSDC). **AGREED**: no response to be made

86.2 Haywards Heath Town Council Draft Neighbourhood Plan (HHTC). The deadline had been extended from 14 November to 20 December. **AGREED**: that the response, to be expressed in positive terms, should be delegated to the Planning and Traffic Committee.

86.3 The proposed building and expansion of primary schools in the Crawley and Mid Sussex Areas (WSCC). **AGREED**: to respond that Members were pleased to see long term positive planning in place.

87. FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE.

Councillor Henton reported as follows:

87.1 Update on Parish Office matters: clock repair. A written report had been circulated regarding the repair of the clock in the tower. It was **NOTED** that having received a quotation for over £800 for scaffolding, the clock repairer had agreed to use a cherry picker at a cost of £180 for each of two visits for up to two hours and this had been arranged.

When the hands were removed for refurbishment, the clock repairer had pointed out that they had originally been finished in gold leaf, as were the numerals on the clock face. He had advised that whilst gold leaf was expensive (estimate from a specialist: £390), it would last considerably longer (at least ten years) than paint and lacquer which would cost approximately £75 but only last one or two years before starting to peel. It was noted that the cost of a cherry picker (at least £200) should be taken into account when comparing costs. On balance, the Council **AGREED** that the hands should be properly finished in gold leaf.

87.2 Minutes and Confidential Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 10 September 2015. A verbal report had been given at the last Council meeting as these Minutes had not been available. **RESOLVED**: to receive the Minutes and Confidential Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 10 September 2015 and to confirm their recommendations.

87.3 Statements of Account/Budget Progress and Bank Reconciliation for the periods 01.09.15 to 30.09.15. It was **NOTED** that the October reports were not yet available. To 30 September 2015:

- from the in-year budget of £203,620, the total of £89,659 had been spent
- from the F&GP budget of £128,020, £49,565 had been spent
- from the Admin Budget breakdown, from the total of £112,520, £45,895 had been spent
- from the E&A budget of £75,400, £40,094 had been spent
- Nothing has been spent from the P&T budget of £200,
- From the reserves £158 has been spent

87.4 List of cheques for approval. **NOTED**: further to Minute 72.9, the list of cheques presented at the Council meeting held on 17 September 2015 had been amended as agreed and the amended list had been signed by the Chairman.

The list of cheques drawn since the meeting of Council held on 17 September 2015 was tabled. **NOTED**: that the expenditure during this period under the powers granted by Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 totalled £50 and that the Petty Cash balance as at 12.11.15 was £81.01.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the list of cheques, numbers 105663 to 105688 inclusive, totalling £18,159.99.

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88. ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE.

Councillor Blunden reported as follows:

- 88.1 Paving at corner of High Street and Lewes Road. A short report had been circulated. During the course of the work which had begun on 19 October, a lot of the old stone slabs had broken up and more than the anticipated number of new slabs would be required, however Balfour Beatty had confirmed that the extra cost would not be charged to the Parish Council. However it had also become apparent that three extra bollards needed to be installed and the others repositioned as evenly as possible. The Clerk and Chairman had discussed this with Balfour Beatty and their sub contractors and the Clerk had received a quotation for an additional sum of £1,818, making the total for the work £28,069.82. The Clerk, acting under delegated powers according to Standing Order 15 xviii, had instructed the contractors to install three extra bollards and respace the existing ones.

Members discussed whether the Council could be satisfied the new arrangement of bollards would be sufficient to prevent parking on the paving. It was noted that the parking restrictions on the highway extended over the pavement so it would be a matter for enforcement if vehicles were still able to access the paved area. Further measures would need to be considered if this continued to be a problem. Chains between bollards were suggested but reservations were expressed in terms of equality as this might compromise safety for disabled and blind or partially sighted people.

RESOLVED:

- i) to endorse the action described above, taken by the Clerk under delegated authority, committing the Council to the additional expenditure.
 - ii) to authorise virement of the £1,818 shortfall in the budget of £26,250 listed on the budget progress sheet under Outstanding Projects.
- 88.2 Christmas lights. The Clerk and Chairman had held a useful meeting in September with the Project Manager from Blachere, at which the shortfall in the quantity of sparklights and a few other concerns had been brought to his attention. Subsequently he confirmed that faulty and incorrect product would be replaced and the quantity made up to the original specification at no additional cost to the Council. Installation had been confirmed for 23 – 25 November.
- 88.3 Christmas Festival Night. **NOTED:** the Working Group had met on 23 October to discuss arrangements and preparations were now under way for the event on 8 December.
- 88.4 WSSC street light upgrade. A report was received following the meeting with representatives of SSE Contracting which took place on 6 November and the quotation received subsequently.

- Heritage upgrade. It was **NOTED** that during implementation of the scheme, SSE Contracting had made a number of necessary changes to comply with industry standards. Taller lights gave better coverage and where lights were lower for a particular reason, additional lights had to be installed, some of which were on the heritage list: one extra column in Hickmans Lane between the High Street and The Welkin and two in Lewes Road. SSEC were seeking the Parish Council's agreement to pay for the heritage embellishment for these extra lights at approximately £700 each. A quotation had been received for the heritage embellishments including these additions: £13,971.62 for 11 columns and 7 pole lights. However this had been challenged as it was believed there should only be 10 columns (£13,011.23).

It was **NOTED** that the additional cost would take this project over the amount held in the designated reserve.

The agreement SSEC had required the Parish Council to sign and which had been queried as the terms were not appropriate to the circumstances, had now been replaced with the quotation with the only condition being that pre-payment was required as acceptance of the quotation.

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AGREED:

- to fund the additional heritage lighting columns in Hickmans Lane and Lewes Road, £13,971.62 for 4; £13,011.23 for 3 (subject to the outcome of discussion with SSEC on the number of columns.
- To authorise virement of the overspend from the General Reserve.
- To authorise the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman, to confirm acceptance of the quotation, having first resolved the discrepancy with SSEC.

- Pole brackets – Lewes Road. The diagram provided by SSEC showed three pole bracket lights in Lewes Road from the corner of West View towards Gravelye Lane to be heritage. It was **AGREED** to confirm that the first of these, on the corner of West View should be heritage.
- All-night / part-night illumination. Certain roads which had been included on a list provided by WSCC as all night, were currently set for part-night illumination and this would be taken up with SSEC. The lights in Lewes Road were discussed as these had not been on the WSCC list for all-night lighting. It was **AGREED** that WSCC should be asked to consider setting Lewes Road lights for all-night illumination as Lewes Road was a main entry into the village and well used.

88.5 Bonfire Beacon. A response was still awaited from the contractor who had offered to price the total job. This would be followed up prior to the next meeting of the Environment and Amenities Committee.

88.6 Winter Management. **NOTED:**

- the snow plough had been serviced and arrangements were to be made with Tracmaster for training volunteers to use it. Councillors were asked to inform the Clerk if they wished to attend the training.
- Four new salt bins had been delivered and arrangements were to be made with Haywards Heath Town Council to put them in position and fill them.

88.7 Minutes of the Meeting of the Environment and Amenities Committee held on 1 October 2015. **RESOLVED:** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Amenities Committee held on 1 October 2015 be received and their recommendations confirmed.

89. PLANNING AND TRAFFIC COMMITTEE.

Councillor Gomme reported as follows:

89.1 Planning application DM/15/3415 - Land north of Birchen Lane. MSDC's refusal of planning permission for this application, to which the Parish Council had objected as agreed at the meeting held on 22 September 2015, had been noted at the P&TC meeting held on 2 November 2015.

89.2 Planning application: DM/15/3457 – 30 Appledore Gardens. At the P&TC meeting held on 22 September, the Committee had agreed to object to the proposal for two dormers on the front elevation, as being out of keeping.

89.3 Lindfield Traffic Survey / Study (P&TC 02.11.15, Minute 68): to receive and consider the recommendation of the Planning and Traffic Committee, further to the Committee's review of the bids received, in terms of selecting the preferred bidder to carry out the work. Having reviewed the bids received, the Planning and Traffic Committee had agreed to recommend that the Council should accept the bid from Creative Roads (£11,402.50) to carry out the Traffic Survey/Study as it was well within budget and would appear to give best value of the two similarly priced bids, the third bid being considerably higher. Councillor Gomme added that heavy traffic was to be added to the specification and to ask the consultants to keep a note of the numbers of movements of vehicles over 7 ½ tonnes.

RESOLVED: to confirm acceptance of the bid from Creative Roads (£11,402.50), as recommended by the Planning and Traffic Committee.

89.4 Haywards Heath Town Centre Transport Study (P&TC 02.11.15 Minute 69): to note the agreed response. **NOTED:** the Planning and Traffic Committee had been disappointed with aspects of the proposed scheme, particularly in view of the high cost, but the proposals were not expected to affect Lindfield. It had been agreed

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to respond to this consultation by thanking Haywards Heath Town Council for consulting the Parish Council and to note the study with interest.

- 89.5 Lindfield and Lindfield Rural Neighbourhood Plan. **NOTED:** the Neighbourhood Plan was due to go back to Cabinet. If approved, the next stage would be the Referendum and the Steering Group would be called upon to assist with publicity.
- 89.6 Outline Planning Application for up to 200 homes on land south of Scamps Hill. The date of the meeting when Lindfield Rural Parish Council would be considering this application was not yet known.
- 89.7 Minutes of the meetings of the held on 22 September, 13 October and 2 November 2015 and to confirm their recommendations. **RESOLVED:** that the Minutes of the meetings of the Planning and Traffic Committee held on 22 September, 13 October and 2 November be received and their recommendations confirmed.
- 90. FOOTPATH TO LINDFIELD PRIMARY ACADEMY: TO RECEIVE REPORT AND CONSIDER ANY MATTERS ARISING FROM AN OFFICERS' MEETING TO TAKE PLACE ON 11 NOVEMBER**
- 90.1 **NOTED:** after the publication of the agenda for the present meeting, the Officers' Meeting had been postponed at the request of the WSCC Principal Community Officer for the Mid Sussex area, to enable a discussion at WSCC about this project.
- 91. CIVIC SERVICE.**
- 91.1 It was **NOTED** that attendance by civic representatives had been lower since the date had been moved from May to September and it was therefore **AGREED** that the 2016 Civic Service should be held in May.
- 92. PARISH OFFICE CHRISTMAS OPENING.**
- 92.1 As Christmas Eve would fall on Thursday this year, when the office would normally be open to the public, it was **AGREED** that the Parish Office should be closed on 24th December to enable the staff to take the day as leave.
- 93. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.**
- 93.1 No other items of business were raised.
- 94. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC [AND PRESS]**
- 94.1 It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED** and **AGREED** in accordance with the Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960 Section 1(2) and the Parish Council's Standing Order 3 (d) that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted (staffing matters) it was desirable in the public interest that the public [and press] be excluded
- 95. STAFFING MATTERS.**
- 95.1 A staffing matter was noted and a recommendation confirmed.