

## LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of **LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL** held on **THURSDAY 14 MARCH 2013** at the King Edward Hall, Lindfield.

**Present:** The meeting commenced at 7.30 p.m.

**Present:**

Parish Councillors - Mr. W. Blunden (Chairman)  
Mr. M. Allen  
Mr. M. Amor  
Mrs. J. Chatfield  
Mr. A. Gomme  
Mr. S. Henton (from 7.45 pm)  
Mr. R. Pickett  
Mr. R. Plass

**Also present:** 1 member of the public

**In attendance:** Mrs. C. Irwin (Clerk)

**Members not present:** Councillors Mr. S. Hodgson, Mrs. M. Hersey, Mr. C. Snowling and Mrs. V. Upton (Vice Chairman).

The Chairman welcomed those present.

### 236. APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE

236.1 Apologies were received from Councillors Hersey, Hodgson, Snowling and Upton and the reasons accepted.

### 237. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/ DISPENSATIONS GRANTED.

237.1 There were none.

### 238. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

238.1 Mr. N. Kerslake commented as follows:

- He expressed deep concern about the lack of openness regarding the two hundred dwellings listed in the draft District Plan as a result of a letter sent jointly by Lindfield and Lindfield Rural Parish Councils after discussion at a meeting of the Joint Neighbourhood Plan Working Group which had not been open to the public. He considered that this should have been agreed by the Council at a meeting in public.
- The way the Council had conducted the purchase of the new Parish Office had not, in his opinion, given the public an opportunity to comment.
- Lindfield Parish Council had been the pathfinder of openness, having been the first Council in Mid Sussex to introduce a public question time at their meetings. However the Council's new Standing Orders adapted from the NALC model in 2012 had defaulted to the minimum position by removing the period for public comment at the end of meetings. He suggested that the Council should give consideration to how it could be more open, honest and transparent.

### 239. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON 17 JANUARY 2013.

239.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 17 January 2013. These were **AGREED** and the Chairman **SIGNED** the Minutes as being a true record of that meeting.

### 240. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

240.1 Snow clearing. The Chairman thanked all those from the Council and the two volunteers who had turned out to clear snow in the village centre on 12 March. This had been very well appreciated by members of the public, many of whom had expressed their thanks.

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240.2 Formal Complaint. It was **NOTED** that a letter of complaint had been received from a member of the public. The Council's response had not been accepted and the complaint was to be pursued through the Parish Council's Complaints procedure. As the complaint was in effect against all members of the Council, the Monitoring Officer at MSDC had suggested that another Council be asked to assist in order to give an independent perspective on the complaint and seeking advice from SALC was being considered.

### 241. REPORT ON POLICE PRIORITIES.

241.1 Police Community Support Officer, Stuart Clough was unable to attend the meeting and he matter he had reported was the continued higher incidence of burglary in the area and pointed out the need for vigilance and to report any suspicious persons.

It was **NOTED** that PCSO Clough would be leaving his job as PCSO at the end of March to complete his training to become a police officer. His replacement would be Stephen Low who had worked in Haywards Heath for six years covering a beat area in the town. He would be continuing with Neighbourhood Police Panels and it was hoped that he would also hold monthly surgeries in the Parish Office. A short note of appreciation and good wishes from the Parish Council had been put into the next newsletter and a card would be sent.

Councillor Allen, as the Parish Council's representative on the Police Neighbourhood Panel, added his thanks and appreciation to PCSO Clough. He added that the Panel had met recently but the priorities discussed had not be local to Lindfield.

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

Councillor Field reported as follows:

242.1 County Local Committee. Cllr. Field had been delighted to support the Parish Council's successful application for funds from the Parish Initiative Fund, to help with the provision of the public help point at the new office.

242.2 Highways Councillor Field had reported fully at the last meeting on the additional resources allocated to fixing potholes and defects. These were being done at a rate of 1250 a week across the whole County.

She had reported the pothole outside the Co-op with a photograph and encouraged people to report potholes via the website of the "Love West Sussex" Smartphone/tablet app. rather than by contacting officers as this was the more effective method of getting the information to the contractors, Balfour Beatty who had tight performance standards to work to but depended on the information being made available from WSCC.

Patching had been carried out in Appledore Gardens and Backwoods Lane, preparatory to complete surface dressing which had been scheduled for April, but had now been deferred pending a new supply to be laid by one of the utility companies, the timing of which the County Council had no discretion over. Verges damaged by contractors' vehicles had received remedial work at the contractors' expense.

Councillor Field was working with Robert Rhodes-Kubiak to try to bring forward the resurfacing of the High Street, scheduled for 2014 and also to get the current defects addressed and a permanent solution to the subsidence at the Black Hill mini roundabout which would require a major road closure.

Councillor Field was aware that in some areas, pot holes had been filled and others left undone and she was in contact with officers to seek a more sensible approach.

242.3 The Chairman thanked Councillor Field for the amount of work she did for the village, which was evident from County Local Committee meetings. It was felt that there was now a more positive approach to highway works following the appointment of a new officer who attended the CLC meetings.

### 243. ACTION LIST

243.1 The Action List was **NOTED** without comment.

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### 244. CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS.

244.1 There were no current consultations.

As Councillor Henton was not yet present, it was **AGREED** to rearrange the order of the Agenda to enable him to give the Finance and General Purposes Committee report.

### 245. ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE.

Councillor Henton joined the meeting during this item.

Councillor Blunden reported as follows:

245.1 Devolved Highway Works: potential Haywards Heath Cluster. An update had been received from the Clerk at Haywards Heath Town Council to say that the Town Council had reviewed and agreed the contract that they would be signing with WSCC which was to be a direct agreement between HHTC and WSCC so that the Parishes would not be liable for any of the works, insurance and employment matters. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) would outline the detail and commitment to the Parishes by HHTC. The Clerk of HHTC had been authorised by the Council to agree the MOU with the Parish Councils.

HHTC had agreed to form a Community Interest Company (CIC) owned by HHTC to deliver the contract. This would make the Cluster delivery more clean-cut with all monies separate from HHTC's budget and easily accounted for and could be documented to the Partner Parishes in a simple manner. The Parishes through the MOU would be statutory observers of the company. The CIC would not be directly run by HHTC as the staff would work for the company. Also by nature of the CIC any surplus year on year would go back into a project agreed by the Town and Parishes. HHTC would be advertising for extra staff and two of their existing groundstaff staff, who were Highways trained, would set up the contract during April. They would visit the Clerks to find out the needs of each Parish, identify any equipment that would be needed and put all the Health and Safety in place.

Lindfield's Deputy Clerk had put together a generic MOU and sent to the partner councils for consideration. Monies would be transferred by WSCC when requested and Cabinet Member agreement was in place to enter into the contract.

245.2 Litter bins: to consider the recommendation of the Environment and Amenities Committee regarding replacements for the litter bins in the footpath to the side of the King Edward Hall. The Committee had considered the options for the replacement of this litter bin including re-using one of the half circular ones being removed from the bus stop poles. The Preservation Society had offered to pay for the bin's refurbishment if that option was approved. The reuse of the wrought iron bin had not been supported because a smooth finish bin was considered to be less of a hazard to passers-by than the ornate wrought iron and if mounted on a pole it would take up more of the width of the path. It was noted that the wall, which belonged to the King Edward Hall, was not structurally sound enough to risk attaching the bin to it. The Committee had considered two other options and had favoured a Victoriana post mounted bin in preference to a Trimline. However, when measurements were checked subsequently it had been found to be too deep for the space. The Committee would be seeking other alternatives for consideration at the next meeting.

245.3 Refurbishment of finger post in the High Street. A quotation had been received for refurbishing the fingerpost in the High Street, with a choice of options regarding the fingers: whether to retain the double line depth finger pointing the Medical Centre or to replace it with two singles, for the Medical Centre and the public telephone near the Bent Arms. Members felt that there was no certainty that the telephone would remain and it was therefore **AGREED** to retain the double line finger bearing the words "Medical Centre".

245.4 Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Amenities Committee held on 6 December 2012. **RESOLVED:** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Amenities Committee held on 6 December 2012 be received and their recommendations confirmed. The Minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2013 would be received at the next meeting of Council.

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### 246. FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Councillor Henton reported as follows:

246.1 Proposed public toilets on the Common **NOTED:** Goulds Surveyors had been engaged to carry out stage 1 work as set out in their fee proposal: to survey the site and draw up plans enabling the Council to consult the public and apply for planning permission if the consultation returned a positive result.

246.2 Grants and donations: to note decisions made at the meeting held on 7 March. Six applications had been on the agenda at the last meeting of the F&GP Committee, all of which had been supported. As the remaining balance for 2012/13 was £1,150, the Committee had agreed to make three payments immediately and earmark the remaining three to be paid in the new Financial Year. Because of the increased demand on this budget the Committee had agreed that £500 should be vired from the General Reserve in 2013/14 to increase the Grants and Donations budget to £2,000. It was **AGREED** to confirm the following:

- Grants to the Lindfield Arts Festival (£500), the Haywards Heath Food Bank (£500 and 4Sight (£100), in the current year, leaving £50 remaining in the 2012/13 budget.
- Grants to St. Catherine's Hospice (£200), Lindfield Bonfire Society (£200) and Mid Sussex Older People's Council (£150) to come out of the 2013/14 budget.
- To vire £500 from the General Reserve in 2013/14 to increase the Grants and Donations budget to £2,000.

246.3 Parish Office Accommodation: **NOTED:**

- The move to the new office had taken place on 1 March
- Rented accommodation at Masters had been vacated on 1 March and the final bill had been paid.
- A suggestion regarding the alarm installation was to be looked into with the supplier.
- The Parish Council had been successful in obtaining a grant of £1,200 from WSCC's Community Initiative Fund, through the Central Mid Sussex County Local Committee, to help with the cost of setting up the public information point.
- Central Sussex Revenues and Benefit Services had confirmed that the Business Rates for the ground floor of the Clock Tower House would be £3,834.60 p.a. and that Small Business Rate Relief on Denmans Lane would no longer be available because the Council occupied more than one premises simultaneously. £556.76 was also to be paid for the charges applicable from 1 March.
- The Working Group would be arranging a meeting with the tenant to discuss various matters including the terms of the lease.
- The Working Group would also be considering the use of the Denmans Lane office. It had been agreed that this would be reviewed six months from the moving date, but it would remain a matter for consideration in the meantime.
- The Planning Department had advised that advertising consent was required for the external sign as designed. Alternatives that came within the limits of the guidelines were being sought.

It was **AGREED** to authorise the Clerk to arrange for the ground floor room at Denmans Lane to be decorated.

246.4 Lindfield Parish Directory and Year Book 2013. A report on the production of the 2013 edition of the Directory had been circulated. The recommendations were considered in turn and it was **AGREED** as follows:

- To proceed with the 2014 Directory with a concerted campaign to increase advertising
- To obtain three quotations from printers against a clear specification, to include paper quality, sending a sample page from an earlier edition with a higher GSM than the 2013 edition.
- The Clerks in consultation with the Editorial Group to be authorised to make decisions on content, layout and number of pages depending on the amount of content.
- To make no changes to the format:
  - 80 pages of text and advertisements
  - Dark green cover with gold blocked logo (Lindfield signpost) and title
  - No ribbon

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- To defer a decision on the advertising rates pending receipt of the quotations for the printing costs
- To invite Lindfield Rural Parish Council to contribute £235 towards the cost of production of the 2013 edition.

246.5 Local Government Pension Scheme. The LGPS administrators at WSCC had sent a list of discretions available to employers in the scheme which the Council should decide whether or not to exercise. The regulations required employers to publish their policy on certain of these discretions – ie state whether or not they would use these discretions. The significant discretions for a small employer such as the Parish Council were to determine what was pensionable, the method of payment of the employees' contributions and a statement that the Council would review the contribution bands annually.

It was **AGREED** to inform WSCC that the Parish Council would use three discretions from the list as follows:

The Determination of elements of pay on which pension contributions should be assessed

- All payments to an employee as a normal incidence of their employment
- Paid to the employee for their own use
- Paid in accordance with a contract of employment (actual or implied)

Method of payment of employee contributions

- Contributions to be deducted directly from member's pay (*the universal approach to this discretion*)

Determination of the annual contribution rate to be paid by active members by reference to pay band and how those rates are to be reassessed

- Assess pay band each April, in line with annual pay awards or incrementation.

246.6 LGPS - Contribution Bands. The revised banding thresholds, as provided by the Scheme Administrators, were reviewed. Members **NOTED** that there was no resultant change to the contribution rate applicable to Lindfield Parish Council staff member in the Local Government Pension Scheme whose salary came into the band for which the contribution rate was 6.5%.

246.7 Statements of Account/Budget Progress and Bank Reconciliation for the periods 01.01.13 to 31.01.13. **RESOLVED:** to approve the Statements of Account / Budget Progress and Bank Reconciliation for the periods 01.01.13 to 31.01.13. **NOTED:**

- From a total budget of £170,175, the sum of £104,231 had been spent.
- £20,897 had been spent from the Outstanding Projects and Reserves of £169,626.
- £291,923 had been spent from the Capital Project for the Clock Tower House for which the total budget figure was £299,895 – the net amount of the loan.
- From the Administration Budget, £57,615 had been spent from a total of £78,925
- The Environment and Amenities Committee had spent £37,238 from the budget of £66,050
- The Planning and Traffic Committee had spent £1,442 from the budget of £10,200.

A suggestion from a Member that the figures could be presented as percentages of the budget totals was not supported by other Members.

246.8 List of cheques for approval: cheques drawn since Council meeting of 17 January 2013. The list of cheques was tabled. **NOTED:** that expenditure during this period under the powers granted by Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 totalled £4,410.39, which included payments in respect of Christmas Lights, the Directory and grants. The Petty Cash balance as at 14.03.13 was £125.07. **RESOLVED:** to approve the list of cheques numbered 105079 to 105145 totalling £43,314.92. The Chairman **SIGNED** the list of cheques which is appended to the signed copy of these Minutes as Appendix A.

246.9 Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 10 January 2013. **RESOLVED:** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 10 January 2013 be received and their recommendations confirmed. The Minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2013 would be received at the next meeting of Council.

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### 247. PLANNING AND TRAFFIC COMMITTEE.

- 247.1 Councillor Gomme reported that applications in respect of extensive work at 61 and 63 Denmans Lane to which the Committee had raised objections, had been withdrawn and that the proposed work at 89 High Street had been considered to be out of keeping with the Conservation Area.
- 247.2 Planning application by Wates for development of 230 dwellings: to note the response agreed at the meeting on 12 February. Councillor Gomme reported that a meeting had been held on 12 February to consider the response to three applications by Wates for land at Gravelye Lane. The sites were in the Lindfield Rural Parish and the Planning and Traffic Committee had therefore allowed Lindfield Rural Parish Council to take the lead and they had held a meeting on 11 February. Together the Parish Councils had employed the services of a Planning Consultant to give a professional view of the proposals and he had provided a comprehensive report on the main application and the two alternative proposals for the leisure land. Both meetings had been well attended; many letters had been posted onto MSDC's website and a poster campaign had been conducted by residents. Both Councils had accepted the Consultant's report and a few other points raised by residents had been added to the response. It was understood that the applications were to have been considered by MSDC at their meeting on 19 March, but that it had been deferred to a later date.
- 247.3 Minutes of the Planning and Traffic Committee meetings held on 15 January and 5 February 2013 and the Additional Meeting held on 12 February. **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meetings of the Planning and Traffic Committee held on 15 January and 5 February and the additional meeting held on 12 February be received and their recommendations confirmed. It was noted that the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 February had only just been circulated and these were deferred until the next meeting of Council.
- 247.4 Neighbourhood Plan. Councillor Gomme reported on the work of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group:
- The Steering Group was now meeting monthly and the next meeting was to be held at Scaynes Hill the following week.
  - Focus Groups had been set up with a combined total of 28 local volunteers. Councillor Gomme expressed his thanks to Councillor Plass and Councillor Upton and the two Members of Lindfield Rural Parish Council who had agreed to become members of these Groups.
  - The Landscape Focus Group had undertaken site visits
  - Members of the Transport Focus Group had been looking at historic records relating to traffic matters.
  - The Community and Infrastructure Focus Group members were visiting Health Centre Practice Managers and school Headteachers in a conscious effort to consult with them and not simply accept statements made by other parties about capacity.
  - The Housing Focus Group was putting out a call for sites which was a requirement for passing independent inspection. They were looking at ways and means to identify rural exception sites or self-build opportunities.
  - Two "Pop-in" sessions were to be held on 20 April in Scaynes Hill and 23 April at King Edward Hall.
  - The Steering Group would be present at the Lindfield Arts Festival and Village Day.
  - Action in Rural Sussex would be giving a presentation to the Steering Group on the State of the Parishes on 15 May. This would be a statistical report drawn from Census and other well documented data.
  - A workshop was to be held in May by AirS for invited stakeholders.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Gomme taking over the leadership of the Neighbourhood Plan and for the huge amount of time he had devoted to this – an average of four days a week.

- 247.5 The Limes development: update on outstanding matters. It was understood that Mr. Ashdown of MSDC had met with representatives of Barratts earlier in the week to discuss outstanding matters and he had indicated that he would send the Parish Council a report of that meeting. It was suggested that Ward Councillor Andrew Lea be asked to take up the outstanding issues.

### 248. ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COUNCIL'S INTERNAL AUDIT AND INTERNAL CONTROL PROCEDURES.

- 248.1 It was **NOTED** that the written report would be on the agenda for the Annual Council meeting on 9 May.

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### **249. SET OF PRINTING BLOCKS - HELENA HALL'S BOOKS.**

- 249.1 It was **NOTED** that an email had been received in February from a Mr. McDougall who was a co-executor and beneficiary of the estate of Helena Hall's niece who had died in Australia. The executors were in possession of a set of printing blocks used for the printing of 'Helena' Hall's two books which they were willing to donate to the Parish Council's Archive, provided the Council agreed to pay for the shipping and certain other costs which amounted to £753 Australian dollars. The Clerk had consulted Richard Bryant who had replied that the blocks would not be of any value to the Archive. Mr. McDougall had requested a quick response and the Clerk, having consulted with the Chairman had replied that the Council did not want the blocks as the cost could not be justified. The blocks were subsequently put on EBay and it was understood that they had not yet been sold.

### **250. FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS FOR ADMINISTRATION OF CONCESSIONARY BUS PASSES**

- 250.1 It was **NOTED** that WSCC had outsourced the administration of bus passes and the free senior rail cards to a company called Euclid. Their association with MSDC and the Parish Councils would stop and applications would have to be made direct to Euclid. It was expected that people would still look to the Parish Councils as the first point of contact, so a stock of forms would continue to be held at the Parish Office. The paid-for senior rail cards and taxi vouchers would still be administered by MSDC and the Parish Councils would continue to issue vouchers on their behalf.

### **251. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.**

- 251.1 No other items of business were raised.

The meeting concluded at 8.40 p.m.