

## LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of **LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL** held on **THURSDAY, 17 JANUARY 2013** at the King Edward Hall, Lindfield.

The meeting commenced at 7.30 p.m.

**Present:** Parish Councillors - Mr. W. Blunden (Chairman)  
Mr. M. Allen (from 7.35 p.m.)  
Mr. M. Amor  
Mrs. J. Chatfield  
Mr. A. Gomme  
Mr. S. Henton  
Mr. S. Hodgson  
Mr. R. Pickett  
Mr. R. Plass  
Mr. C. Snowling

**Also present:** Councillor Mrs. M. Thomas-Atkin (Chairman, Mid Sussex District Council)  
Councillor Mr. A. Lea (MSDC)  
3 members of the public

**In attendance:** Mrs. C. Irwin (Clerk)  
Mrs. S. Kolien (Responsible Financial Officer (RFO))

The Chairman welcomed those present and announced the emergency procedure for the King Edward Hall. He gave a particular welcome to Councillor Mrs. Thomas-Atkin who was attending the meeting as a guest and invited her to address the Council.

Councillor Thomas-Atkin thanked the Council for inviting her to attend the meeting and stated that when she became Chairman of MSDC she had made the decision to go out and meet all the Town and Parish Councils and then realised there were 26 of them, but she had now visited most of them. She added that she hoped people would find her approachable and ask questions.

### **221. APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE**

- 221.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hersey and Upton and the reasons were accepted.
- 221.2 It was noted that Councillor Field (WSCC) had sent her apologies as she was unable to attend the meeting.

### **222. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/ DISPENSATIONS GRANTED.**

- 222.1 Councillors Allen, Amor, Blunden, Chatfield, Gomme, Henton, Hodgson, Pickett and Snowling declared personal and potentially prejudicial interests in item 12 (Budget and Precept 2013/14) as residents of the Lindfield Parish. It was **NOTED** that, with the authority delegated to her by paragraph 12 (a) and 15 of the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council on 21 June 2012, the Clerk had granted dispensations as requested on the grounds that otherwise the number of Councillors prohibited from participating in such business would be so great a proportion of the Committee as to impede the transaction of the business..

### **223. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.**

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

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### 224. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 8 NOVEMBER 2012

224.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes and Confidential Minutes of the Council meeting held on 8 November 2013. These were **AGREED** and the Chairman **SIGNED** the Minutes as being a true record of that meeting.

### 225. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

225.1 The Chairman wished everyone present a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.

225.2 Christmas Lights. The Chairman reported that there had been considerable positive feedback from residents and visitors about the new Christmas lights, which had given the Village a lift; they were tasteful and brought cheer in gloomy times and had been met with general approval and appreciation.

### 226. REPORT ON POLICE PRIORITIES.

226.1 There was no representative of Sussex Police present and there had been no report of any issues of concern in Lindfield. Councillor Allen confirmed that there had been no recent meetings of the Neighbourhood Police Panel.

226.2 Councillor Snowling, the Mid Sussex District Council member of the Police and Crime Panel, reported that responsibilities for the Police had changed considerably on the appointment of the new Police and Crime Commissioner and that no increase in the Police precept was being sought for the coming year. He stated that the Police Commissioner was very approachable and commended her website as a good source of information about her plans.

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

227.1 Councillor Field had sent a written report as she was unable to attend the meeting and this was read out:

Highways. Everyone is aware of the severe toll that recent weather conditions have taken on our roads. The Leader announced last week that £8.25m would be made immediately available to fund schemes to alleviate the flooding in the coastal areas in the South of the County and the particularly high number of highways defects (potholes!) everywhere, but especially in the north of the County. The number of teams working to repair potholes has increased from the original 7 to 15 and will remain at that level while the workload persists. 6 inspectors have been appointed to assess and prioritise reported defects. It is therefore vitally important that these are reported by the public, councillors and Council staff. Multiple reports are beneficial and should ideally be made via the website of the Love West Sussex Smartphone/tablet app, and a photograph attached. This allows the defect to be located by GPS. If unable to use this method, then of course the usual telephone numbers apply.

I have reported various potholes in: Dukes Road, Brushes Lane, High Street and the Welkin.

A date is set in February for re-surfacing in Backwoods Lane and Appledore Gardens (the Clerk has the details). The defects at The Welkin will be repaired but it, too, is due for re-surfacing in the year commencing 1 April 2013. The High Street is in the works plan for the following year but I am assured that defects will be addressed in the meantime.

A long term solution is needed for the depression in the surface adjacent to the mini roundabout at Black Hill and I am awaiting an update on this. This is not a pothole, but some form of more severe subsidence issue that will not be resolved by simple filling.

County Local Committee. The CLC meets in March and will consider TRO priorities for the coming year. There are still no proposals for Lindfield at the moment. There are funds left in the Community Initiative Fund budget but applications should be made soon.

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Recent reports on Hospital Staffing. The Health and Adult Services Select Committee will be seeking assurances from the NHS after the Princess Royal Hospital was cited as one of those with inadequate staffing levels.”

227.2 **Councillor Snowling** reported as follows:

Hospital Staffing levels. Councillor Snowling had today asked MSDC Officers to invite a representative of the Hospital Trust to attend before the Health Panel to get a better hold on what was going wrong with staffing levels, so that the panel could find out as much as they could.

Emergency Planning Liaison Group. At the last meeting, the EPLG had agreed to oversee the development of a better form of internal and external communication regarding illegal encampments. At the next meeting, members would be asked to consider a new chart for feeding back information as and when a problem arises which would enable the information to be forwarded to the right person so that appropriate action could be taken as soon as possible. The draft flow chart would be circulated in advance of the meeting to give members of the EPLG an opportunity to study it and give feedback. The key to effective action was for people to know who to contact.

Council Tax. Members of MSDC were hoping that when the 2013/14 budget was fixed there would not have to be an increase in the Council Tax.

227.3 **Councillor Lea** reported as follows:

Christmas Lights. Councillor Lea agreed that the Christmas lights in Lindfield looked magnificent.

Police and Crime Commissioner. Councillor Lea agreed that the new Commissioner would be excellent.

### 228. ACTION LIST

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

### 229. CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS.

229.1 There were no outstanding consultations.

### 230. ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE

Councillor Blunden reported as follows:

230.1 Devolved Highway Works: potential Haywards Heath Cluster. The Chairman and Clerk had attended a meeting in December with the Clerk and Leader of Haywards Heath Town Council (HHTC) and the Clerk and Chairman of Lindfield Rural Parish Council, to discuss a clustering arrangement for carrying out devolved highway works.

- HHTC would be the lead Council by legal agreement with WSCC.
- Ardingly PC had recently expressed interest in joining the cluster and both Lindfield and Lindfield Rural Parish Council had been involved in discussions from the outset.
- The partner Parish Councils would not be signatories to the legal agreement, thus relieving them of liability and the requirement to indemnify WSCC.
- The agreement between HHTC and WSCC would be based on the newly revised agreement between WSCC and Burgess Hill Town Council who had successfully operated such a scheme for a number of years.
- HHTC would carry out specified work in Haywards Heath and in partner parishes.
- HHTC would be able to draw down funding for each of the partner parishes from West Sussex County Council and take over certain Highway works, such as weed spraying, vegetation clearance and temporary pothole repair.

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- This money would go straight to HHTC from WSCC.
- There would be no cost to partner parishes.
- HHTC would manage the entire contract.
- With the parishes on board, the Town Council would be able to provide a vehicle, machinery, materials and staff to carry out the work in the town and parishes as well as back office support
- The benefit to parishes would be that response times should be much better with the service provided locally; works would be undertaken on a needs basis rather than stringent schedules being put in place and HHTC would be able to react quickly to emergencies etc.
- It was understood that the Parishes could not really lose – the agreement between WSCC and HHTC would include provision for appropriate measures to be taken should HHTC fail to meet the standards required and the last resort would be for WSCC to terminate the agreement.
- If the scheme were to fail, the arrangements for the highway works covered by the agreement would revert to WSCC and be put back into their highways contract as at present
- Haywards Heath Town Council would like to put the agreement in place to take effect from 1 April and the Parish Councils had been asked to give them a firm commitment by the middle of February. A further meeting had been arranged for the following week for the Clerks to discuss any remaining issues with Cali Sparks (WSCC's Community Solutions Officer).

In view of the tight deadline, Council **AGREED** to authorise the Environment and Amenities Committee, at the meeting on 7 February, to make the decision on whether to proceed, on consideration of any further matters raised at the Clerks' meeting.

230.2 Refurbishment of bus stop poles. The E&A Committee had agreed on the details of the refurbishment of the seven wrought iron poles with the removal of the half circular bins and an order had been placed. The Clerk had arranged for the Blacksmith to liaise with the bus companies about temporary bus stops, new flags and timetable fittings. It was **NOTED** that the representative of one of the bus companies was very pleased that the bins were being removed because they inhibited access for replacing timetables which were inserted from the bottom. . It was **NOTED** that an offer had been made by the Preservation Society to fund the refurbishment and modification of one of these bins for relocation in the footpath between the White Horse and the King Edward Hall. The E&A Committee would be considering this offer at the next meeting.

230.3 Minutes of the Environment and Amenities Committee meeting held on 6 December 2013. **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Environment and Amenities Committee meeting held on 6 December 2013 be received and their recommendations confirmed.

### 231. PLANNING AND TRAFFIC COMMITTEE.

231.1 Minutes of the Planning and Traffic Committee meetings held on 6 November, 27 November and 18 December 2012. Councillor Gomme reported as follows:

6 November 2012. The Committee had considered a response to the planning application in the Lindfield Rural Parish for the demolition of buildings at Buxshalls and the erection of new apartments for the over 55s. In line with the response made by Lindfield Rural Parish Council, the P&T Committee had been pleased that the old house was to be refurbished but had some concerns about the proposal in terms of increased traffic, access to the site and the design of the proposed new buildings which were not considered to be in sympathy with the rural surroundings and the AONB.

18 December 2012. The Committee had been pleased to note that MSDC had refused the application for new houses on land adjacent to The Witch Inn in Sunte Avenue and their grounds for refusal had included objections made by the Parish Council regarding the inappropriate design for the Area of Townscape Character and concern about increased flood risk.

**RESOLVED:** that the Minutes of the meetings of the Planning and Traffic Committee held on 6 November, 27 November and 18 December 2012 be received and their recommendations confirmed.

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231.2 Neighbourhood Plan –meeting of the Joint Working Party held on 13 December 2012. Councillor Gomme reported on the meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (as the former Working Party was now known) held on 13 December 2012.

- The Steering Group had received a presentation from Tom Warder of AiRS on the Survey Analysis
- It had been agreed to retain the services of AiRS to assist with the work in developing the Neighbourhood Plan.
- Other feedback had been considered: from the public and from Planning Aid volunteers who had been present at the exhibitions.
- The Steering Group had noted that a planning application from Wates for development of land at Gravelye Lane was imminent.

Councillor Gomme reported on progress and developments since the meeting:

- A Neighbourhood Plan in Yorkshire had passed independent examination but there had not yet been a referendum. Slaughtam Parish Council's Draft Neighbourhood Plan had gone out for consultation.
- Attempts were being made to recruit volunteers for the four Focus Groups set up by the NP Steering Group; disappointingly of the ten volunteers so far, only one was from the Lindfield Rural Parish. Without involvement of the Scaynes Hill community, the Plan would not achieve its objective of being a joint plan of the two parishes.
- Councillor Gomme and Councillor Spooner (LRPC) would be liaising with representatives from AiRS regarding the terms of reference and modus operandi for the focus groups.
- The aim was to have a draft Plan ready for consideration by Autumn 2013 and to have an interim public event at the annual Parish Meetings in April.
- Meetings of the Steering Group were to be held in public in future and all would be welcome to attend. It was intended to conduct the meetings so as to allow for participation by members of the public.
- The next meeting was scheduled for 24 January at Scaynes Hill Millennium Centre.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Gomme on behalf of the Council for all the work he had done to move this project forward.

231.3 Planning applications for development of 230 homes by Wates on land east of Gravelye Lane: 12/04316/FUL. A large box of documents relating to the planning application had been received. The process to be followed by the Lindfield and Lindfield Rural Parish Councils had been discussed at a recent meeting of Lindfield Rural Parish Council and noted at the Planning and Traffic Committee meeting on 15 January. Councillor Snowling asked for it to be noted that he had not been present at the meeting of Lindfield Rural Parish Council when this was discussed and he therefore came to this meeting with a fresh mind on this subject.

- LRPC should take the lead as the application site was in their parish.
- A public meeting was being arranged for 31 January at 8.00 p.m. in the King Edward Hall, to be chaired by the Chairman of LRPC.
- A planning consultant had been approached by LRPC with a view to hiring him to examine the application documents, brief both Councils jointly on the issues, attend the public meeting and prepare a report to enable both Councils to respond to the consultation.
- LRPC had suggested splitting the Consultant's fees according to the proportions previously agreed for costs arising from the Neighbourhood Plan (two thirds LPC / one third LRPC).
- Lindfield Rural Parish Council would be holding an extraordinary Full Council meeting on 11 February to consider the Council's response to MSDC.
- Lindfield Parish Council's meeting would be held after that, to allow LRPC to take the lead.

Council considered and **AGREED** the following:

- Jointly with Lindfield Rural Parish Council, to engage the Planning Consultant approached by LRPC, but on an equal basis in terms of payment of fees as the application was in the Rural Parish

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- To delegate consideration and a decision on the Parish Council's response to the Planning and Traffic Committee, but it would be open to all Councillors to attend.
- The extraordinary meeting of the P&T Committee to be arranged for a date after the Rural Council's meeting within the same week, subject to clarification of MSDC's deadlines.

In response to a Member's comment, it was stated that the Planning Consultant's fees could not be quoted publicly at this stage because his engagement had not yet been confirmed. However the fee quoted was considered reasonable.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Gomme for the work he had put into this matter.

### 232. FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE.

- 232.1 Meeting held on 10 January 2013. It was **NOTED** that the Minutes of this meeting were not yet available. The main business at that meeting had been to finalise the recommendations on the budget and precept for 2013/14.
- 232.2 Proposed Public Toilets on the Common. The Chairman reported that a second fee proposal for this project had been received from a locally based firm of surveyors to manage the whole project and this had been much lower than the first one received. Subject to a satisfactory meeting with the surveyor the F&GP had authorised the Clerk in consultation with members of the Working Group to confirm the appointment for the first stage of the project.
- 232.3 Parish Office Accommodation. Councillor Plass, who was project managing the work on Clock Tower House, reported that the work agreed in the schedule was well under way and should be finished on 31 January. The Working Group had agreed to aim for a moving date in mid-February, subject to the timing of the telephone and broadband installation.
- 232.4 Local Government Pension Scheme. The Committee had noted that the scheme administrators had asked employers in the Small Scheduled Bodies Pool to consider whether to take out ill health retirement insurance. More information was needed and this had been deferred to a later meeting.
- 232.5 Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meetings held on 14 November and 20 December 2012. **RESOLVED:** that the Minutes of the meetings of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 14 November and 20 December 2012 be received and their recommendations confirmed.
- 232.6 Statements of Account/Budget Progress and Bank Reconciliation for the periods 01.10.12 to 31.10.12 and the quarterly receipts and payments summary. **RESOLVED:** to approve the Statements of Account / Budget Progress and Bank Reconciliation for the periods 01.10.12 to 31.10.12, 01.11.12 to 30.11.12 and 01.12.12 to 31.12.12 and the quarterly receipts and payments summary. **NOTED:**
- from a total budget of £170,175.00, the sum of £91,909.05 had been spent
  - £19,820.80 had been spent from the Outstanding Projects and Reserves of £112,553.68
  - £286,371.30 had been spent from the new Capital Project for the Clock Tower House for which the total budget figure was £299,895.00 - the net amount of the loan.
- 232.7 List of cheques for approval: cheques drawn since Council meeting of 08.11.12 . 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 £10,133.83 and included the first payment for the Christmas lights. The Petty Cash balance as at 17.01.13 2 was £175.60. **RESOLVED:** to approve the list of cheques numbered 105031 to 105078 totalling £32,894.16. The Chairman **SIGNED** the list of cheques which is appended to the signed copy of these Minutes as Appendix A.

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### 233. COUNCILLORS' ALLOWANCES: REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT PANEL ON COUNCILLORS' ALLOWANCES.

- 233.1 The Report of the Independent Panel on Councillors' Allowances was noted and considered. **NOTED:**
- Travel and subsistence allowance for approved business was payable to all Councillors
  - Councillors Allowances however were only payable to those who had stood for election and co-opted members were not therefore entitled to allowances.
  - The Council had made the decision several years previously to make allowances available to eligible members.
  - According to the guidance, members wishing to forgo all or part of their allowance should inform the Clerk in writing.
  - The Independent Panel had recommended no increase to Councillors' Allowances - £516 a year - or the enhanced Chairman's allowance - 774 a year.
  - The recommended Mileage rate remained at the tax free figure of 45p a mile.
  - There were minor increases in subsistence allowances.

**RESOLVED:** to adopt the all the recommendations in the Report of the Independent Panel on Councillors' Allowances.

### 234. BUDGET 2013/14.

- 234.1 The budget had been considered by each of the Committees and by F&GP at the last two meetings. A final full budget paper had been presented to F&GP at the meeting on 10 January. No significant changes had been made to the budget further to the first draft.

Council considered the recommendations of the F&GP Committee which resulted in a total budget figure of £242,025.00 and a precept remaining at £152,000.00, supported by the Council's reserves. It was noted that there were changes affecting the Council Tax Base for 2013/14 due to the effect of MSDC's implementation of 'Technical Reforms to the Council Tax' and introduction of the local 'Council Tax Support Scheme'. This had resulted in a decreased tax-base for most preceptors. To counter this, MSDC would be able to distribute a grant to make up the potential shortfall, enabling Councils to reduce their precepts in proportion to the reduction in their tax-base, thereby keeping the Band D tax at 2012/13 levels, i.e. a 0% tax increase on the bill. MSDC had advised a precept of £148,600.00 for Lindfield to achieve this zero increase, with the shortfall of £3,400.00 being made up by the grant.

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED** and **AGREED** that the budget for 2013/14 should be set at £242,025.00

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED** and **AGREED** that the precept to be requested from MSDC should be £148,600.00, on the understanding that the grant of £3,400.00 would bring this up to £152,000.00, equal to the 2012/13 precept.

### 235. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

- 235.1 No other items of business were raised.

The meeting concluded at 8.27 p.m.