

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of **LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL** held on **THURSDAY 20 JANUARY 2011** at the King Edward Hall, Lindfield.

Present: Mr. W. Blunden (Chairman)
Mr. M. Allen (from 7.35 p.m.)
Rev. M. Davies
Mr. A. Gomme
Mr. S. Henton
Mrs. M. Nicolle (Vice Chairman)
Mr. R. Pickett (from 7.45 p.m.)
Mr. C. Snowling
Mrs. V. Upton
Mr. S. Willcox

Also present: Councillor Mrs. C. Field (WSCC)
P.C. G. Bennett (until 7.50 p.m.)
2 members of the public

In attendance: Mrs. C. Irwin (Clerk)
Mrs. S. Kolien (RFO) (from 7.40 p.m.)

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7.30 p.m., welcomed those present and announced the emergency procedure for the King Edward Hall.

472. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

472.1 Apologies were received from Councillors Hersey and Leach and the reasons were accepted.

473. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS IN RESPECT OF ANY ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.

473.1 Councillor Blunden declared a personal interest in Agenda item 12 iii (Allotment rent increase) as he was a plot holder.

474. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

474.1 Wilderness Field. Mr. N. Kerslake stated the importance of formally registering the Parish Council's interest in ownership of the Wilderness Field before the new Council was formed in May.

474.2 Project Management. Mr. Kerslake commented that management of projects such as The Wilderness Field and the Public Toilets should be done through a small team set up by the Finance and General Purposes Committee and that in order to maintain control, everything should go through that team.

474.3 Village Action Plan. Mr. Kerslake stated that there had been no report on implementation of the Village Plan actions since Summer 2009; two Councillors had been chosen to take a new steering group forward, but nothing had happened.

475. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 11 NOVEMBER 2010

475.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes and Confidential Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 11 November 2010. These were **AGREED** and the Chairman **SIGNED** the Minutes and Confidential Minutes as being a true record of that meeting.

476. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

476.1 King Edward Hall Centenary. The Chairman stated that he and most other Councillors had attended the King Edward Hall's Centenary Reception on 11 January. He commented that the Village was fortunate to have such a well run hall,

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used by so many and he paid tribute to Brian Newcombe, the Chairman of the King Edward Hall Management Committee, who had dedicated 52 years of his life to the management of the Hall. It was **AGREED** that a formal letter of thanks should be sent to the KEH Management Committee for their generous hospitality on 11 January.

476.2 Royal Wedding. The Chairman reminded Members that the King Edward Hall was hosting a meeting of Village organisations at 8.00 p.m. on 27 January to discuss how to mark the celebration of the Royal Wedding on 29 April.

477. REPORT ON POLICE PRIORITIES.

477.1 The Chairman welcomed PC Geoff Bennett to the meeting and invited him to give his report.

477.2 P.C. Bennett reported as follows:

- This was a difficult time for Sussex Police: staffing was being reviewed and changes would be coming that would affect the policing of local communities.
- The crime trend this year was fuel theft (fuel lines cut and the fuel drawn off) and this area was no exception, with incidents having occurred in neighbouring villages. Theft of heating fuel was anticipated.
- There had also been "burglaries other than dwellings" in the immediate area involving garden sheds and outbuildings with tools and welding equipment taken.
- There had been little notable antisocial behaviour and this had been taken off the priority list
- The New Year period had been relatively quiet
- There had been a break in at the Lindfield Co-op, targeting the cigarette counter, and their management apologised to the community for having to close the store for a day and a half. Cigarettes were very saleable and easy to convert into cash.
- On the whole, the area was doing alright, although with a lot of people out of work and less money being available, there was a certain element of society that would find other ways of supplementing their income. Rural areas were obvious targets as there was less electronic surveillance and the A272 provided a quick escape route from this area.

In response to a question from a Member, P.C. Bennett confirmed that the updated priorities (now 2 instead of 3) were fuel thefts (first priority) and speeding, which was being addressed through the Community Speed Partnership and use of Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) of which there was one shared between seven parishes. PC Bennett reminded Members that if the Police were informed of a particular area causing concern, they would add it to the list of requests.

The Chairman thanked P.C. Bennett and wished him and his colleagues well.

P.C. Bennett left the meeting.

478. REPORTS BY COUNTY COUNCILLOR / DISTRICT COUNCILLORS.

Councillor Field (WSCC) reported as follows:

478.1 Hanson Planning Application. The application had been approved. Councillor Field had secured an additional condition requiring the company to set up a local liaison group in order to give local residents a direct means of communication for concerns about traffic and other impacts of the new plant.

478.2 Central Mid Sussex County Local Committee. The next meeting was scheduled for 1 February at Haywards Heath Library at 7 p.m. and Councillor Field hoped the Parish Council would be represented at that meeting, as the School Safety Zone and safer routes to school for Oathall Community College and Lindfield Primary School (possibly with an impact for Blackthorns School) were on the agenda. These would be funded by S. 106 money, originally £100,000 but Councillors had considered this to be too much to spend on traffic calming and it had now been scaled down to £30,000 which was considered to be more proportionate. This S. 106 money was accruing from development in Haywards Heath, not Lindfield.

478.3 School Lane. There were several issues relating to safety and lighting in School Lane and the road's status was being looked into: it was not shown as adopted on the Highways Department's computer system and therefore it was not

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possible to raise orders for work to be carried out. Ian Patrick, Safer Routes to Schools Officer at WSCC, was liaising with George Chisenga, WSCC Highways Manager, and he would be contacting Bob White, Headteacher of Lindfield Primary School. Mrs. Field had arranged to meet Mr. White herself early in February. If it was confirmed that the road was not adopted, those concerned might be looking at ways to get it adopted and there might be a role for the Parish Council to facilitate this, without committing resources, if it was prepared to assist in the process. A Member pointed out that the road in question led to other properties as well as the school. The WSCC asset register disagreed with the highways register about this road and Mrs. Field stated that she had not as yet located an officer who was informed on both aspects who could be asked to give a statement.

478.4 Chief Executive. Kieran Stigant (formerly Deputy CEO) had been appointed as Chief Executive Officer in December by an open selection process and had been welcomed by staff. Other minor changes at WSCC had been reduction of the number of Cabinet Members from 9 to 8; the Communications portfolio had been taken out and changes to areas of responsibility included Pete Bradbury now leading on Public Protection and Peter Evans had moved to the Children's Portfolio. Further budget details would be available when the Cabinet was due to meet the following week and the budget would be reviewed by the Council on 11 February.

478.5 Royal Wedding. Deborah Urquhart, Cabinet Member for Environment and Economy, was endeavouring to ensure that as little red tape as possible would get in the way of plans for street parties. The required level of public liability insurance cover had been reduced from £10,000,000 to £5,000,000.

Councillor Snowling (MSDC) reported as follows:

478.6 Budget. The District Council's budget proposals had been put before the Performance and Scrutiny Committee on 18 January and the Committee had been pleased with the good job the officers, led by the Chief Executive, had done to meet the challenges. Cabinet would be considering the proposals and comments of the Committee on 7 February and the Council would fix the budget on 23 February.

479. ACTION LIST.

479.1 The Action List was noted and Members were reminded to note any flooding in their ward sectors (Minute 469.1).

480. CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS

480.1 Go for Green Spaces - Open Spaces Society. **AGREED** not to respond to this consultation.

480.2 Eastern Road Pocket Park – designation as a Local Nature Reserve. **AGREED** that the Consultation Panel (Councillors Blunden, Nicolle and Gomme) should study the consultation and liaise with the Clerk on a response on behalf of the Council.

481. FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

481.1 Meetings of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 25 November 2010 and 13 January 2011. Councillor Henton reported as follows:

481.2 Recommendations regarding public toilets on the Common. (Minute 459.1 of the meeting held on 13 January 2011) There had been a strong positive response to the survey which had been comprehensively analysed by Councillor Allen. The Committee had concluded that this response had given a clear mandate for taking this project forward and made five recommendations for consideration by the Full Council.

- that the Council should work towards provision of public toilets on Lindfield Common
- that the sum of £30,000 provisionally shown in the budget for this project should be confirmed
- that a working group should be set up to assist the Clerk with research etc.
- that the Council should approach MSDC formally as landowners for confirmation of support in principle before going to the expense of having plans drawn up
- that the Council should consult the bowls, cricket and tennis clubs

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It was **AGREED** to **CONFIRM** these recommendations.

481.3 Five Year Plan (Minute 440.6 of the meeting held on 25 November 2010) The Committee had recommended approval of the draft Five Year Plan, which had been circulated with the budget papers at the F&GP Committee meeting on 25 November 2010:

“Lindfield Parish Council aims to achieve the following:

- ❖ Continue search for larger premises to incorporate Parish Office meeting room, public access to Village Archives.
- ❖ Build new toilets on Lindfield Common to replace those previously demolished by Mid Sussex District Council.
- ❖ Become a Quality Parish Council.
- ❖ Use the Power of Wellbeing. In particular to consider the feasibility of taking over some of the services carried out by the District and County Councils which they may longer be able to afford to continue.
- ❖ Take over and manage the Wilderness Field.
- ❖ Continue to work towards a merger with Lindfield Rural Parish Council.
- ❖ Consider new corporate logo.
- ❖ Acquire additional land for allotments.
- ❖ Provide internet access for all.
- ❖ Continue to address issues at the Lewes Road/High Street junction.
- ❖ Consider next steps following Village Plan.”

During discussion the following points were raised:

- Whether it was appropriate to adopt a plan so close to the election
- The plan was a vision document as the foundation stones and starting point for the next Council for its members to pick up or put down.
- “Internet access for all” was clarified: providing access to computers for members of the public (as at the library) in the Parish Office if larger premises were acquired – not to be confused with broadband access.
- There was no order of priority stated on the list – it was suggested priorities and methods of achieving the priorities should be further debated, perhaps at an away day.
- The list had come from the F&GP Committee and should be further considered by that Committee and then brought back to Council.
- Spending money on a corporate logo was questioned, but all the priorities on the list had merit and there was no justifiable reason for postponing its adoption.
- Some of the priorities would not incur a significant cost, affecting the public purse, but others would and the F&GP Committee should be invited to provide more detailed ways of progressing them with business plans.
- It was noted that additional land for allotments depended on the availability of land in the area

AGREED to adopt the Five Year Plan for progressing further.

481.4 Lindfield Parish Directory and Year Book (Minute 467.1 of the meeting held on 13 January 2011). **AGREED** to **CONFIRM** the recommendations of the Finance and General Purposes Committee:

- the Council should proceed with the 2012 edition, provided a reasonable quotation was received.
- to continue to use GC Publishing
- print run to be 3600
- no change to the format, but with authority to the Clerks, in consultation with the Editorial Group to make decisions on content, layout and the number of pages according to demand.
- Advertising rates to remain unchanged
- Lindfield Rural Parish Council to be invited to contribute £436.50 towards the cost of the 2011 Directory (£200 towards administration costs as recent years plus 17% of the shortfall between the income from advertising and the cost of printing, 17% being the approximate percentage of directories delivered to homes in the Lindfield Rural Parish).

481.5 Councillors’ allowances and travelling and subsistence allowances (Minute 462 of the meeting held on 13 January 2011). The regulations required that Town and Parish Councils’ decisions on Members’ Allowances be taken with due regard to the recommendations of the Independent Panel. The Report dated 5 November 2010, issued by MSDC’s Independent Panel which had reviewed Members’ Allowances for 2011/12, was **NOTED**. The recommendations were as follows:

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- Allowances for Members of Town and Parish Councils should be decreased in line with the recommended decrease [5%] in the Basic Allowances for District Councillors
- There should be a commensurate decrease in the level of enhanced allowances for the Chairmen of Town and Parish Councils.

AGREED to **CONFIRM** the recommendation of the F&GP Committee that the Council should adopt the recommendations of the Independent Panel, on the allowances to be made available to Members of Lindfield Parish Council, according to the Electorate Banding set out in the report:

- the basic allowance payable to Members - £516 (previously £545)
- enhanced basic allowance payable to the Chairman - £774 (previously £814)
- travel and subsistence allowances available to Members to be as set out in page 5 of the Report, which was unchanged, (including car mileage allowance: 40p a mile)

These were the amounts to be made available to Members, but it was for individual Members to decide whether or not to take all or part of their allowance and that those few Members who had claimed against their allowance in previous years had only claimed small amounts for specific expenses.

481.6 Bank Mandate (Minute 465 of the meeting held on 13 January 2011). **NOTED** that it had been agreed to defer changing the Bank Mandate until after the new Council was in place after the May election.

481.7 Statements of Account/Budget Progress, Bank Reconciliation and quarterly receipts and payments summary for the periods 01.11.10 to 30.11.10, and 01.12.10 to 31.12.10. **RESOLVED:** to approve the Statements of Account / Budget Progress and Bank Reconciliation for the periods 01.11.10 to 30.11.10 and 01.12.10 to 31.12.10 and the Receipts and Payments summary from 1 April to 31 December 2010.

481.8 Lists of cheques for approval: cheques drawn since Council meeting of 11 November 2010. 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 had totalled £7,682.80.

RESOLVED: that the Council should resolve in accordance with its powers under Section 137 and 139 of the Local Government Act 1972 that it should incur the following expenditure which, in the opinion of the Council, is in the interests of the area or its inhabitants and will benefit them in a manner commensurate with expenditure: the total of £7,682.80 in respect of the printing of the Parish Directory, Village Orderly and expenses relating to Christmas lights.

RESOLVED to approve the list of cheques numbered 104605 to 104644 totalling £21,856.52. **NOTED:** that the Petty Cash balance as at 20.01.11 was £118.75. The Chairman of Council **SIGNED** the list of cheques which is attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Appendix A.

481.9 Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meetings held on 25 November 2010 and 13 January 2011. **RESOLVED:** that the Minutes of the meetings of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 25 November 2010 and 13 January 2011 be received and their recommendations confirmed, with the exception of the recommendations relating to the Budget proposals for 2011-12, which were to be considered at the next Agenda item.

482. BUDGET AND PRECEPT REQUIREMENT FOR 2011 / 12.

482.1 Councillor Henton led the discussion on this item. The Finance and General Purposes Committee had considered the budget proposals in full at the meeting held on 25 November and agreed recommendations subject to the outcome of the survey regarding public toilets on the Common. At the meeting of the Committee on 13 January, the provisional sum allocated to the new toilets on the Common had been confirmed and, as there had been no further comments from Councillors between meetings, it had been agreed to present the budget proposals, as originally set out, to the Full Council for approval: a budget total of £225,500, divided between: Finance and General Purposes Committee (£142,200); Environment and Amenities Committee (£73,100); Planning and Traffic Committee (£10,200). The general and specific reserves, totalled £94,833 and the anticipated income plus funds in hand came to £160,269.20, giving rise to a precept requirement of £160,063.80. The F&GP Committee had agreed to recommend that there should be no increase in the precept request and to round last year's figure down to £158,000.

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RESOLVED, unanimously and without further debate, to **APPROVE** the recommendation of the Finance and General Purposes Committee that the budget for 2011 / 12 should be £225,500, to be funded by a precept of £158,000 with the balance to be taken from the reserves.

A Member pointed out that the lack of comment on the budget proposals was not due to lack of interest, but because of the amount of detail and clarity in the working papers. Mrs. Koliien was thanked for her hard work on the budget .

483. ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE.

483.1 Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Amenities Committee held on 9 December 2010. Councillor Blunden reported as follows:

483.1 Christmas Festival Night / Christmas lights (E&A Minute 415) The Working Group had met on 18 January to review the Christmas Festival Night and the Christmas Lights and would be reporting to the next E&A Committee meeting with some recommendations for the next Christmas Festival Night. Tuesday 6 December was the provisional date for the 2011 Festival Night. The Christmas lights had been taken down and KPS had been instructed to remove the catenary wire. The Clerk had been asked to arrange a meeting with professional lighting companies, including Blachere, to find out whether there were any affordable alternatives for next Christmas.

483.2 Street Lighting Maintenance Contract (E&A Minute 414). The Street Lighting Working Group had also met on 18 January and the notes from that meeting would be considered at the next E&A Committee meeting. The current contract with Southern Electric Contracting was due to run out at the end of March, so the Clerk would approach other contractors for quotations in the meantime. The costs and the advantages and disadvantages of joining the WSCC Private Finance Initiative (PFI) would also be considered and compared with the existing arrangements with the current or an alternative contractor. The Working Group would then meet to prepare a report as soon as possible after the quotations had been received and an additional meeting of the E&A Committee would be arranged to consider the recommendations. An issue relating to street lights in The Welkin was also being looked into by the Working Group. Because of the timescales, it was **AGREED** to authorise the Environment and Amenities Committee to make a final decision on these matters.

483.2 Allotment rent increase applicable from 1 April 2012 (E&A Minute 419.2). Councillor Blunden, as a plot holder, and Councillor Allen, whose wife was a plot holder, declared personal interests in this item and did not take part in the discussion or vote. **NOTED** that the Parish Council had to give 12 months notice to plot holders of rent increases.

RESOLVED: to increase the allotment rent from £2.70 to £3 a rod (a 10% increase rounded up to the next pound) to take effect from 1 April 2012, as recommended by the Environment and Amenities Committee.

483.3 Barrier in Hickmans Lane, at entrance to footpath to Finches Park Road (E&A Minute 421.1). Following a request from the Parish Council to look into the possibility of widening the entrance to this footpath and install a staggered barrier, Jonathan Ullmer of WSCC had sent a quotation for this work which he wanted to complete within the current financial year. He had indicated that WSCC would part-fund the necessary work. The quotation for the work the Parish Council would be asked to pay for was £650.00 plus VAT. **NOTED** that the Parish Council was not holding funds for this project but had originally intended to include it in the coming year's budget depending on the quoted cost.

AGREED to pay WSCC £650 plus VAT from the general reserve, during the current financial year, towards the cost of installing the barrier.

483.4 Winter Management Plan (E&A Minute 417). Councillor Blunden reported that a new heavy duty salt spreader had been purchased and this had been used satisfactorily. The Parish Council had been much better organised this year and the extra salt bins and the bulk bags of grit had been welcomed by residents. The padlocks on the salt bins had been the right decision as some other Councils' salt stocks had been removed by unauthorised persons. It was **NOTED** that the bulk bags would have to be removed when winter was over.

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483.5 Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Amenities Committee held on 9 December 2010. **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Amenities Committee held on 9 December 2010 be received and their recommendations confirmed.

484. PLANNING AND TRAFFIC COMMITTEE.

484.1 Minutes of the Planning and Traffic Committee meetings held on 8 November, 30 November and 21 December 2010. **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meetings of the Planning and Traffic Committee held on 8 November, 30 November and 21 December be received and their recommendations confirmed. Councillor Snowling highlighted the following:

484.2 'Planning Power from Town Hall and Whitehall to Local People' (press release of 06.12.10 issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government (P&T Minute 536.1). Further to this press release, Councillor Snowling had stated at the P&T meeting on 21 December that he believed it was time to press Lindfield Rural Parish Council to get a joint approach to planning where applications would affect both parishes. The Chairman of Council had agreed that it would be appropriate to set up a formal meeting with the Chairman, Vice Chairman and one other Member of Lindfield Rural Parish Council. Lindfield Parish Council would be represented by the Chairman of Council and the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Planning and Traffic Committee. The Chairman reported that an informal approach to Councillor Dumbleton had been met with a positive response.

482.3 5 Portsmouth Wood Close. Councillor Gomme reported that the Committee, on 18 January, had considered a revised application for a radio aerial, further to an earlier application which had been dismissed on appeal. Objectors had undertaken a huge amount of research, especially into the health issues. The Committee's letter of objection would also be making reference to the manner in which this application had been handled by MSDC officers.

483. PARISH MEETING – 14 APRIL 2011

483.1 Arrangements for the Parish Meeting on 14 April 2011. Following discussion it was **AGREED** not to arrange a speaker for the Parish Meeting as the attendance was always poor and because the purpose of the meeting was for residents to discuss their own agenda. However it was **AGREED** to offer a glass of wine to those attending.

483.2 Village Action Plan. Arising from discussion on the Parish Meeting and a comment made during the public session at the beginning of this meeting, it was **AGREED** that the next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee should pick up any points relating to the implementation of the Village Action Plan at its next meeting.

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

484.1 No other items of business were raised.
This part of the meeting ended at 8.45. p.m.

485. FURTHER PERIOD FOR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

485.1 Parish Council Elections / Parish Meetings. Mr. N. Kerslake stated that it was only when there were controversial issues that Parish Council elections attracted candidates and the same applied to attendance of the public at Parish Meetings.

485.2 Allotments. Mr. Kerslake stated that allotments should not generate income beyond the cost of maintaining them. The allotment accounts had not been considered prior to agreement to raise the rent.

485.3 Co-operation between Councils. Once a better relationship had been cemented between Lindfield and Lindfield Rural Parish Councils, there were other opportunities which could be explored together, such as land for further allotments.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Russell who had taken photographs of the Council at work for publication in the Lindfield Village Day Programme to mark the King Edward Hall Centenary. The meeting ended at 8.55 p.m.