

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of **LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL** held on **THURSDAY 21 JUNE 2012** at the King Edward Hall, Lindfield at 7.30 p.m..

Present: Mr. W. Blunden (Chairman)
Mr. M. Allen (from 7.40 p.m.)
Mr. M. Amor
Mr. A. Gomme
Mr. S. Henton
Mr. S. Hodgson
Mr. R. Pickett
Mr. R. Plass
Mr. C. Snowling
Mrs. V. Upton (Vice Chairman)

Also present: Councillor Mrs. C. Field
2 members of the public

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

Absent: Councillors Chatfield and Hersey

The Chairman welcomed those present.

151. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

151.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Chatfield and Hersey and the reasons were accepted.

151.2 Councillor Hodgson informed the Council that his university course required him to spend two terms abroad from the end of September and enquired as to how the Council should deal with his absence as he may be unable to attend at least one meeting in a period of six months, but he wished to remain a member of the Council. The Chairman stated that he would take advice and refer this to the next meeting.

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

151.1 There were no such declarations.

153. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

153.1 Mr. N. Kerslake re-iterated his comments at the previous meeting about the length of time he believed one member should remain as Chairman and about engagement with the public regarding the Neighbourhood Plan.

154. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 10 MAY 2012

154.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes and Confidential Minutes of the Annual meeting of Council held on 10 May 2012. These were **AGREED** and the Chairman **SIGNED** the Minutes and Confidential Minutes as being a true record of that meeting.

155. TO RECEIVE THE DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE OF THE VICE CHAIRMAN.

155.1 The Council received Councillor Upton's Declaration of Acceptance of office as Vice Chairman which had been made and signed in the presence of the Clerk.

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156. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

- 156.1 The Chairman paid tribute to Pieter Hemsely who was due to retire from his post as Deputy Parish Clerk on 29 June,. Mr. Hemsely had carried out his role very efficiently and served the public of Lindfield very well.
- 156.2 In response to Mr. Kerslake's comments during the public session regarding the length of office of Council Chairmen, the Chairman stated that no such comments had been directed to the Chairman of Lindfield Rural Parish Council at their recent meeting and he therefore interpreted these comments as personal.

157. REPORT ON POLICE PRIORITIES.

- 157.1 There were no representatives from the Neighbourhood Policing Team present, but Councillor Allen reported on the meeting of the Neighbourhood Police Panel held on 22 May, which had been very well attended.
- The Police were encouraging crime prevention through a series of road shows, although only one had been taken up in Lindfield. Members were asked to make recommendations on possible locations through Cllr. Allen.
 - Increased physical police presence in rural areas was being achieved through Operation Reaper; Farm Watch was an effective means of communication and was not restricted to farm owners or managers
 - Speeding appeared to be reduced in priority, although speeding in roads such as Hickmans lane and Lewes Road was still a problem.
 - Lindfield had been found to meet the WSCC School Crossing Patrol criteria and new "lollipop" people had been recruited and had made a difference to the crossing point to Lindfield Primary School.

158. REPORTS BY COUNTY COUNCILLOR / DISTRICT COUNCILLORS.

- 158.1 Councillor Mrs. Christine Field (WSCC) reported as follows:
- Cllr Field was delighted the crossing patrol had been reinstated and was having a beneficial impact on parking in Backwoods Lane
 - She was pleased to see a representative of the Parish Council at the public meeting at the Albemarle Centre where it had been made known that a management committee was to take the building over from WSCC. This would provide a good opportunity, in partnership with Oathall Community College, to be more responsive to local needs.
 - As part of the preparation for a Police and Crime Commissioner and to inform the newly formed Police and Crime Panel (of which Councillor Snowling was a member), who would work with him/her, WSCC had launched a Community Safety Survey which could be accessed on the WSCC website at the "Have Your Say" page. Copies were also available at the public library. Cllr. Field urged Members to fill this in as the feedback would provide good input for the Panel.
 - During the recent severe weather, particularly in coastal areas and the South West of the County, measures had been aimed at getting help to the 300 whose homes had been damaged. The Fire and Rescue Service had received 1000 calls via the 999 system (the average annual total was 20,000).

159. ACTION LIST

- 159.1 The Action List was noted without comment.

160. CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS

- 160.1 WSCC - Consultation on proposed expansion of primary schools in the north of West Sussex. Councillor Allen declared a personal interest as a member of the Governing Body of Lindfield Primary School. A draft response was tabled and Members **AGREED** the wording of this response with one minor amendment.
- 160.2 MSDC – Draft of Licensing Policy (Statement of Principles) for the Gambling Act 2005. Comments on this had to be submitted by 19 August. Councillor Henton agreed to assist the Consultation Panel with the response.

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- 160.3 Haywards Heath Town Council - Neighbourhood Plan. Comments were due by 28 June. Residents of Brook Lane and Roundwood Lane had expressed concerns as the area west of these roads was outlined as "another known site". The Town Clerk had confirmed that the Town Council had no intention of putting this area forward for development and explained that these roads were outlined because an existing map had been used and it had not been possible to amend it.

Councillors Snowling and Gomme agreed to draft a response on behalf of the Consultation Panel.

161. PLANNING AND TRAFFIC COMMITTEE.

- 161.1 Minutes of the Planning and Traffic Committee meetings held on 22 May 2012 and 14 June 2012. Councillor Gomme reported on the decisions recorded in the unapproved Minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2012 to object to planning applications for a development of 13 homes on the site of the former Blackthorns Nursing Home and for an amended planning application for extensions and alterations at Stable Lodge. In response to a question from a Member, it was stated that requests to call in planning applications for determination by Committee should go through the District Council Ward Members, who would act on such requests if supported by proper reasons, but that it was understood that a direct approach by the Parish Council to the Planning Department was not appropriate.

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meetings of the Planning and Traffic Committee held on 22 May and 14 June 2012 be received and their recommendations confirmed.

- 161.2 Neighbourhood Plan. Councillor Gomme reported on the progress being made by members of the Neighbourhood Plan Joint Working Party in preparing a questionnaire for consultation with the community. It was acknowledged that it was generally difficult to attract interest from most people, so the JWP had been working on putting together a questionnaire that would seek views on a range of matters, not just housing and development. A printer had been selected and their designers had been instructed to work on the presentation. Care had been taken to make it clear that the questionnaire applied to both Parishes. The target date for distribution of the questionnaire was the end of August (avoiding the peak holiday period) and the JWP was considering other means of reaching the community with this consultation .

162. FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Councillor Henton reported on the following items:

- 162.1 Bank Mandate. On the recommendation of the F&GP Committee it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Ron Plass should be added to the existing signatories (Councillors Blunden, Henton and Upton) to the Parish Council's Business Current Account and Business Saver Account with Barclays Bank, any two of whom to sign cheques. The Clerk, Mrs. C. Irwin, would continue to be a third signatory for petty cash cheques only, in order to comply with the requirements of the Bank.
- 162.2 To receive and approve the report on the Annual Review of the Effectiveness of the Council's Internal Audit and Internal Control Procedures. On the recommendation of the F&GP Committee it was **RESOLVED** to approve the report on the Annual Review of the Effectiveness of the Internal Audit and Internal Control Procedures.
- 162.3 Proposed public toilets on the Common. The agent whom it had been agreed to approach for assistance with this project had agreed to a meeting and this would be arranged by the Working Group as soon as possible.
- 162.4 Grant request from Police Community Support Officer for night vision equipment (referred to Full Council by F&GP Committee). This request had been referred by the Committee for approval by Full Council, pending confirmation that it was in order for the Parish Council to donate funds to another precepting authority. This had been confirmed but the application had since been withdrawn by PCSO Clough.
- 162.5 Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 17 May 2012. **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 17 May 2012 be received and their recommendations confirmed.

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162.6 Statements of Account/Budget Progress and Bank Reconciliation for the periods 01.04.12 to 30.04.12 and 01.05.12 to 31.05.12. As the reports for May were not yet available, it was **AGREED** to consider these reports together at the next meeting.

162.7 List of cheques for approval: cheques drawn since Council meeting of 10 May 2012. The list of cheques was tabled. **NOTED** that expenditure during this period under the powers granted by Section 137 of the Local Government Act totalled £4,363.00 (Grant to West Sussex Mediation and Christmas Lights on the Pond). The Petty Cash balance as at 21.06.12 was £101.56. **RESOLVED:** to approve the list of cheques numbered 104927 – 104952, totalling £18,557.80. The Chairman **SIGNED** the list of cheques which is appended to these minutes as Appendix A.

163. ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE.

163.1 Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Amenities Committee held on 7 June 2012. These Minutes were not yet available and would be received at the next meeting.

Councillor Blunden reported on the following items

163.2 Spring Clean. The E&A Committee had agreed to go ahead with the Spring Clean again in 2013, on 20 April. The Library and Kitchen at KEH had been booked. Members commented that the wider community should be encouraged to take part and that people might not appreciate the relevance of the Spring Clean as a once a year community event. However it was a highly visible exercise and could be considered worth doing for the awareness benefit even despite the small number of participants.

163.3 MSDC Community Service Award. **NOTED** that the E&A Committee had agreed to nominate Margaret Nicolle for the award which would be presented at the MSDC Chairman's Garden Party. A nomination form had been submitted.

163.4 High Street bollards. There was some doubt whether two extra bollards would in fact prevent the parking on the York stone paving near the Post Office and the E&A Committee had also agreed that the spacing of the bollards needed further consideration. A decision on the proposal sent by WSCC had therefore been deferred and Councillor Pickett had agreed to meet Elaine Hendren (WSCC Principal Community Officer) on site. It was suggested that Royal Mail should be asked not to park in this area, but it was noted that vehicles driven by other people were also parked there at times and that the waiting restrictions were rarely enforced.

163.5 Common car park off Lewes Road. The E&A Committee had considered the proposal by MSDC to reconfigure the car park opposite Flowercraft including tarmac over a small underutilised area of grass. The new arrangement should protect the vehicle access to properties from unauthorised parking. **AGREED** to confirm the recommendation of the E&A Committee to support the proposals.

163.6 Request from resident for exercise equipment on the Common. The E&A Committee had voted 4 to 3 against supporting this proposal, on the grounds of cost. **AGREED** to confirm the recommendation of the E&A Committee not to support the proposal for exercise equipment on the Common, although some Members were disappointed with this outcome.

163.7 Request from resident for a flower meadow area opposite Eastern Cottages. **AGREED** to confirm the recommendation of the E&A Committee not to support this request as it was considered that long grass would encourage antisocial use of the area leading to unsanitary conditions; establishment of wild flower meadows could be difficult to achieve and maintenance could be costly.

164. YEAR END ACCOUNTS FOR 2011/12 AND THE ANNUAL RETURN FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2012.

164.1 Year End Accounts 2011/12 The 2011/12 Accounts had been examined by the Internal Auditor on 30 May and had been circulated to Members. No queries were raised.

RESOLVED to **APPROVE** the Year End Accounts for 2011/12 and it was **AGREED** that the Supporting Notes for the Statement of Accounts and the Balance Sheet should be **SIGNED** by the Chairman of Council and the Responsible Financial Officer.

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164.2 Annual Return.

164.2.1 **Section 1 - The statement of accounts**

NOTED: the figures had been taken from the Income and Expenditure Account, the Balance Sheet and the Supporting Notes to the Statement of Accounts.

RESOLVED to **APPROVE** the Statements of Accounts for 2011/12 and **AGREED** that Section 1 of the Annual Return should therefore be **SIGNED** by the Responsible Financial Officer and the Chairman of Council.

164.2.2 **Section 2 – Annual Governance Statement**

NOTED: Members were required to acknowledge their responsibility for ensuring that there was a sound system of internal control, including the preparation of the accounting statements. Members considered and confirmed their responses to each of the statements listed at Section 2 (Annual Governance Statement), read aloud in turn by the Chairman.

RESOLVED to enter YES to each of Statements 1-8 and N/A to question 9. **AGREED** that Section 2 (Annual Governance Statement), duly completed as stated, should be signed by the Chairman of Council and the Clerk.

164.2.3 **Section 3 – External auditor’s certificate and opinion**

This would be completed in due course by the External Auditor (Mazars).

164.2.4 **Section 4 – Annual internal audit report**

This had been completed and signed by the Internal Auditor following his examination of the Accounts on 30 May.

164.3 The Annual Return, duly signed, would be sent to the External Auditor by the due date.

165. **STANDING ORDERS**

165.1 The draft revised Standing Orders had been submitted to Council on 22 March and a motion that they be approved had been moved and seconded. In accordance with existing Standing Order 41(b) the motion had been adjourned without discussion until this meeting which was the next ordinary meeting of the Council following the meeting of 22 March.

165.2 An omission had been discovered, which had been explained in a memorandum from the Clerk to All Councillors which had accompanied the agenda for this meeting. The existing Standing Orders had included provision for the Clerk to have delegated powers to take action in situations needing urgent attention. This had not appeared in the Model Standing Orders, but SALC and the Council’s former Internal Auditor had encouraged Councils to adopt such a Standing Order.

Councillor Snowling **MOVED** an amendment to add the following Standing Order:

“The Parish Clerk or, in the absence of the Parish Clerk, the Deputy Parish Clerk [*for the Responsible Financial Officer*], in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of a Committee, or in the absence of one of them, additionally with another Member of the Committee, may take action deemed desirable on any matter in respect of which the Committee concerned has delegated powers but which requires urgent attention.”

The motion was **SECONDED** by Councillor Allen and unanimously **AGREED**. *The additional Standing Order as agreed would be added to the section headed Proper Officer.*

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165.3 Councillor Snowling **MOVED** that the Draft Revised Standing Orders, duly amended as agreed under Minute 165.2, should be adopted. Councillor Allen **SECONDED** the motion. It was **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to adopt the Draft Revised Standing Orders as amended. *The newly adopted Standing Orders would come into force from the following day.*

166. CONSULTATION FROM AUDIT COMMISSION ON THE APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR FOR 2012/13 AND FUTURE YEARS

166.1 The Audit Commission had written to consult on the appointment of Littlejohn LLP as External Auditor for the next audit period and beyond, to ensure that there was no reason not to appoint this firm, e.g. if their appointment gave rise to a conflict of interest because of a member's business relationship with them. Members raised no issues with this appointment.

167. TO CONSIDER AND ADOPT NEW MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT

167.1 There was a requirement under the Localism Act to adopt a new Code of Conduct to take effect from 1 July. MSDC had provided a model code which had been attached to the agenda, completed by insertion of references to Lindfield Parish Council. The Chairman had just received a reply from Tom Clark, Solicitor and Monitoring Officer at MSDC, to his query about the issuing of dispensations. Mr. Clark had confirmed that dispensations now had to be issued by the Clerk of the relevant Parish Council instead of the District Council's Monitoring Officer as previously and the Code would need to be amended accordingly. Members thanked the Chairman for noticing this inaccuracy. The following amendments were **AGREED**:

12. 1 (a) last sentence to read " unless you have obtained a dispensation from your authority's Clerk or Deputy Clerk

15.1 delete

15.2 rename and amend to read "A dispensation may be granted only if, after having had regard to all relevant circumstance, the Clerk(or Deputy Clerk), following consultation with the monitoring officer- "

RESOLVED TO ADOPT the Code of Conduct based on the Model Code from MSDC, with the agreed amendments.

168. 2013 CIVIC SERVICE.

168.1 Members discussed the date of the 2013 Civic Service, as a date in May was proving difficult. Rev James Clarke had suggested 2 June but Members felt that changing the tradition should be considered and **AGREED** that the Clerk should liaise with Rev. Clarke about a date in September or October.

169. ANNUAL REPORT 2011/12

169.1 **AGREED** to approve the draft Annual Report for publication, pending the addition of the financial summaries provided by the RFO.

170. 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.

170.1 No other items of business were raised.

171. FURTHER PERIOD FOR QUESTIONS / COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

171.1 Mr. N. Kerslake commented on Chairmanship and challenged the confidentiality of the item on Parish Office accommodation.

171.2 Mr. D. Macmillan commented on the lack of interest locally in the Neighbourhood Watch scheme.

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172. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC (AND PRESS)

- 172.1 The following three items concerned staffing and commercially sensitive matters. It was therefore **PROPOSED**, **SECONDED** and **RESOLVED**, in accordance with Standing Order 35 (a) “ that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw”.

173. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 17 MAY 2012

- 173.1 **RESOLVED** that the Confidential Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 17 May 2012 be received and their recommendations confirmed.

174. STAFFING: APPOINTMENT OF NEW DEPUTY PARISH CLERK

- 174.1 The Chairman reported on the recent interviews for a new Deputy Clerk and that an offer had been made by the Interview Panel, subject to ratification by the Council. Councillor Snowling **MOVED** that this offer be ratified and this was **SECONDED** by Councillor Allen. It was **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to confirm the offer of appointment made by the Interview Panel to Mr. Iain McLean.

175. PARISH OFFICE ACCOMMODATION.

- 175.1 Members considered a report relating to Parish Office accommodation and agreed a set of resolutions.

The meeting ended at 9.30 p.m.