

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of **LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL** held on **THURSDAY 24 JUNE 2010** at the King Edward Hall, Lindfield.

Present: Mr. W. Blunden (Chairman)
Mr. M. Allen
Rev. M. Davies
Mr. S. Henton
Mr. M. Leach
Mrs. M. Nicolle (Vice Chairman)
Mr. R. Pickett
Mrs. V. Upton

Also Present: Councillor Mrs. C. Field (WSCC)
5 members of the public

In attendance: Mrs. C. Irwin

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

420. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

420.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Gomme, Hersey and Willcox and the reasons were accepted.

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

421.1 Councillor Nicolle declared a personal and potentially prejudicial interest in item 12 (vi) – Wilderness Field as the field was adjacent to her property.

422. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

422.1 Christmas Lights. Mr. J. Jesson, on behalf of the Lindfield Preservation Society stated that he hoped that the Council was in receipt of the response from the Chairman of the Preservation Society to the Clerk's letter regarding the Christmas lights. The Chairman replied in the affirmative.

422.2 Mini roundabout - Lewes Road / High Street junction. Mr. J. Jesson asked to be informed as to whether there had been any notable developments since the Council's letter to Barratts regarding a possible application for rescission of the condition in the planning permission for the Newton Road development which required a mini roundabout to be installed.

423. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 13 MAY 2010

423.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Council held on 13 May 2010. These were **AGREED** and the Chairman **SIGNED** the Minutes as being a true record of that meeting.

424. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

424.1 Lindfield Arts Festival. The Chairman stated that he was sure everyone would agree that the Arts Festival had been an excellent day and well attended. He added that it had been good to see the two organisers included in the Lindfield Civic Service. Doubts had been expressed that Lindfield could sustain two big events within three weeks of each other but both the Arts Festival and Village Day had been hugely successful. This was attributed to the fact that these events had created different atmospheres and that Village Day centred on the Common whereas the Arts Festival had enlivened the High Street.

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424.2 West Common Drive trees. The Chairman reminded Members that the Parish Council had been invited to a site meeting on 7 July at 10 am to discuss trees on Highway land in Lindfield and asked them to advise the Clerk if they were able to attend.

424.3 MSALC AGM Members were asked to consider attending this meeting on 14 July at 7.30 p.m. as a substitute for Councillor Nicolle. Councillor Davies confirmed that he would be attending.

425. ACTION LIST

425.1 Actions from the last Council meeting had been completed.

426. CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS

426.1 West Sussex Mobile Library Service (reply date 30 June). It was **AGREED** that Members should send their comments to Councillor Nicolle who would draft a response in consultation with Councillor Allen for the Parish Clerk to return to WSCC.

426.2 West Sussex Fire and Rescue Draft Service Plan 2011-12 (online consultation – www.westsussex.gov.uk/fire). This consultation was to run from 19 July until 8 October. Members were asked to look at the document when it became available on the website and to feed in their comments to the Consultation Panel. A draft response drawn up by the Panel would then be confirmed at the next Full Council meeting in August.

427. REPORTS BY COUNTY COUNCILLOR / DISTRICT COUNCILLORS.

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

427.1 Leadership Changes Louise Goldsmith had been elected as the new Leader of the County Council. She was formerly the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources. She had reduced the size of the Cabinet from 10 to 9 members, in line with recommendations of the new Government to streamline where possible, and re-distributed responsibilities. Details were available on the County Council website.

427.2 County Local Committee Meeting. The next meeting of the Central Mid Sussex CLC would take place on Tuesday 6 July at 7 pm at Warden Park School. Young musicians from the Mid Sussex area were to play for half an hour or so before the meeting, to showcase their talents and the work of the County Music Service. Councillor Field encouraged as many as possible to attend. The meeting would be considering the amendment to parking restrictions in Denmans Lane, as the PC was aware. The Preservation Society had lodged an objection on the grounds of road safety. Councillor Field understood that a special arrangement would be put in place for one resident with disabilities, if the changes were adopted. She was also aware of a request made to WSCC for a one way system for Compton Road.

427.3 Newton Road Development . Councillor Field was looking forward to attending the site visit the following afternoon. She had made enquiries about the road signage, noting that the current signs were far from adequate and she hoped to be able to pursue this and other highway matters during the visit.

427.4 Lindfield Primary School. To date Councillor Field had no further information about the planning application for the siting of the temporary classroom. Councillor Allen, as a Governor of Lindfield Primary School, stated that the application papers had not been seen by the School either. He added that there had been very few questions at the recent new parents' evening regarding admissions which indicated that the County Council had managed this difficult situation very well.

427.5 West Common Trees. Since the last Parish Council meeting, there had been considerable correspondence about the removal and trimming of trees. Councillor Field said that it probably served no purpose to enter into discussion of the merits of the work, now completed, but she personally regretted the lack of consultation prior to the work. She had made Officers aware and hoped that lessons could be learned for the future. Although few decisions were likely to receive universal approval, acceptance was easier to achieve if the reasons for the actions were known and understood.

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- 427.6 High Street Trees. Largely as a result of discussion about the West Common trees, which would probably need more work within the next five years, Councillor Field had been approached about the future management of the High Street limes. She had arranged a meeting on site with Jonathan Ullmer on Weds 7 July at 10.00 a.m. extending invitations to the Parish Council and Preservation Society and hoped that representatives would be able to attend. This was all part of Councillor Field's endeavour to ensure better sharing of information now and for the future.
- 427.7 Budget. WSCC was looking seriously at the financial situation: there had been a grant reduction of over twelve and a half million pounds. There would be further information over time and reports of a Comprehensive Spending Review were expected on 26 October.
- 427.8 NHS White Paper The County Council was awaiting the publication of the NHS White Paper due on 5 July.
- 427.9 Mini roundabout. Councillor Field had not heard of any further developments.
- 427.10 Community Governance Consultation – Haywards Heath. Councillor Field was aware of this consultation and wished to encourage all parties to exchange information.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Field for keeping the Parish Council so well informed.

Councillor Snowling reported as follows:

- 427.11 Community Governance Consultation. Councillor Snowling had reported to the Planning and Traffic Committee on 15 June that he had been surprised to find that the Officer's Report to Council regarding this consultation, which had been understood to be about a separate Parish for Bolnore Village, had included a suggestion that Lindfield should cede properties west of High Beech Lane (Brook Lane and Roundwood Lane) to Heath Ward, Haywards Heath. The onus would have been on residents to write in to MSDC if they did not want the boundary changed so that their homes would be in Haywards Heath. However Councillor Snowling had now been successful in having these roads removed from the document which would go forward for further consultation. Members were relieved at this outcome and the Chairman congratulated Councillor Snowling for achieving this result.
- 427.12 Autumn Review. The District Council would be holding various workshops as part of the Autumn Review. The only significant change was that the Chief Executive was to leave at the end of June.

428. REPORT ON POLICE PRIORITIES

- 428.1 Police representatives had been unable to attend the meeting. Councillor Allen, as the Parish Council's representative on the Neighbourhood Panel, reported that the report given at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council had brought Members up to date (Minute 408). The next meeting of the Neighbourhood Panel was due to take place on 27 July. The Police priorities had been revised for the summer months in order to concentrate on youth disorders, speeding in villages and litter (fly litter).
- 428.2 Councillor Snowling stated that he had been made aware, as MSDC Cabinet Member for Health and Community, that there was a current outbreak of arson and the Police and Fire and Rescue Service were taking measures to deal with this.

429. PLANNING AND TRAFFIC COMMITTEE.

- 429.1 To receive and to confirm the recommendations of the Minutes of the Planning and Traffic Committee meeting held on 25 May 2010. Councillor Snowling stated that there were no particular items to note from these Minutes and added that he hoped Members were following the stock item regarding the Newton Road development. **RESOLVED:** that the Minutes of the Planning and Traffic Committee meeting held on 25 May 2010 be received and their recommendations confirmed.

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- 429.2 Minutes of the Planning and Traffic Committee meeting held on 15 June 2010. The Minutes of this meeting had only just been received by Members. It was **AGREED** to note the Minutes but to defer formally receiving them to the next Council meeting.
- 429.3 Newton Road development. Councillor Snowling paid tribute to the Deputy Parish Clerk for keeping a detailed record of issues relating to the Newton Road development. The notices directing site traffic were considered to be far too small to be effective. There was to be a site meeting the following day and Members who were attending were reminded to wear appropriate footwear. The houses on the north side of Newton Road were getting a lot of dust from the construction work and it was understood that Barratts' Managers were negotiating with the residents about this.
- 429.4 West Common Drive Trees. Councillor Snowling commented that the situation whereby the Lindfield Preservation Society had planted trees around the Village was not unfamiliar and stated that when trees were planted in another person's or authority's land they became that person's or authority's problem.
- 429.5 Planning Inspectorate. Councillor Snowling stated that he was considering raising with Mr Nicholas Soames, MP, the role currently played by the Planning Inspectorate with regard to local planning decisions.

430. FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

- 430.1 Meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 20 May 2010. Councillor Davies, as Vice Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, had chaired the last meeting of the Committee, in the absence of its new Chairman, Councillor Henton. Councillor Davies stated that the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 May had only recently become available but they had been circulated by email. He reported on the main items.
- 430.2 Insurance provision. **NOTED:** the decision to renew the existing insurance policy with Zurich, having considered the quotations and product details from two further insurers providing Local Council insurance. It had also been agreed to review this again in four years time.
- 430.3 Lindfield Parish Directory and Year Book. Consultation at a lower level than that suggested by the Communications Forum had resulted in few responses, all supporting the status quo. **NOTED:** the decision to stay with G C Publishing, having tested the market by considering the quotations from four other specialist printers along with other more practical considerations. G C Publishing had offered alternative options but these had been generally unsupported. The 2011 Directory would therefore be unchanged apart from the local events being shown on the diary pages, instead of in a list, at no extra charge. G C Publishing had also offered to print 200 additional copies at no extra charge.
- 430.4 Parish Office Photocopier. **NOTED:** the decision to lease a new photocopier from Image Runner, based in Haywards Heath, having considered the quotations received. The new machine had been installed and so far was proving to be satisfactory.
- 430.5 Emergency Plan. Councillor Allen reported that he and Councillor Willcox had struggled to get the Emergency Plan to this stage and acknowledged that it was not perfect. Members were asked to email Councillor Allen with a copy to the Clerk, to confirm whether they accepted the roles allocated to them in the appendices to the draft plan. Final detail still needed to be completed on a policy for dealing with snow, when advice from the principal authorities was made known. The Emergency Plan would then go before Full Council on 26 August 2010 for adoption. Following adoption the Plan would be lodged with MSDC and other relevant organisations and would be published on the Parish Council's website once the details had been confirmed. Councillor Allen also proposed to test the Plan via the Communications Forum.
- 430.6 To receive and confirm the recommendations of the Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 20 May 2010. **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 20 May 2010 be received and their recommendations confirmed.

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430.7 Statements of Account/Budget Progress and Bank Reconciliation for the periods 01.04.10 to 30.04.10 and 01.05.10 to 31.05.10. **NOTED** that the quarterly Receipts and Payments Summary should not have been itemised on the Agenda; this would be received at the August Council meeting. **RESOLVED:** to approve the statements of account / budget progress and bank reconciliation for the periods 01.04.10 to 30.04.10 and 01.05.10 to 31.05.10.

430.8 List of cheques for approval The list had not been circulated and it was **AGREED** to defer approval of the cheques until the next meeting, when a composite list would be produced. The Clerk drew attention to two items of expenditure which had been incurred by the Clerks under delegated powers and it was **AGREED** to **CONFIRM** the following:

- Drain clearance (£79.90 including VAT)
- Services of a locksmith (£115.74)

431. ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE

431.1 Minutes of the Environment and Amenities Committee meeting held on 10 June 2010. The Minutes of this meeting were not yet available. Councillor Blunden reported on the main items from that meeting.

431.2 Cutting of High Street grass verges: to note decision made regarding contract. **NOTED:** the licence from WSCC to do the grass cutting of the High St verges was now in place and the Committee had awarded the contract to Haywards Heath Town Council, having considered three quotations. This had been seen as a good opportunity for the two Councils to start working together to deliver services at local level. Following confirmation of certain points, the wording of the draft Service Level Agreement and Service Specification, which had been circulated prior to the meeting, were **AGREED**. A signed copy of the Service Level Agreement would be sent to the Clerk at Haywards Heath Town Council the following day for consideration.

431.3 High Street and Compton Road trees. **NOTED:** that an order had been placed with KPS for the removal of epicormic growth and this would be done on 1 July.

431.4 Spring Clean 2011. **NOTED:** the date for the 2011 Spring Clean had been agreed - Saturday 9 April – and the Library and kitchen at the King Edward Hall had now been booked.

431.5 Risk Management. **NOTED:** that risk assessments for the E&A Committee had been signed off after they had been examined and updated by the Members with responsibility for the different activities or functions.

431.6 Christmas Lights. to note the discussion that took place at the E&A Committee meeting on 10 June and to consider any action to be taken further to the letter to MSDC from the Lindfield Preservation Society. The Lindfield Preservation Society had written to MSDC about the catenary wire battens and nails left in the trees from the Christmas Lights. David Saunders had followed this up by writing to the Parish Council to say that in his own opinion these objects were unlikely to be having a significant impact on the trees' health but he would be grateful if the Parish Council could arrange to have them removed as a gesture of goodwill. The E&A Committee had agreed that the Clerk should write to Andrew Fox, the Chairman of the Preservation Society, to give a full explanation of the reasons for the wires etc. and the difficulty involved in putting them up which would also apply to taking them down. The Clerk had obtained a quotation from KPS for taking the wires down as it had been agreed that, for safety reasons, if they were to be taken down this should be done by skilled contractors. To take the wires etc. down so that they could be reused: £330 + VAT; to take the wires etc. down on the assumption that they would not be reused: £280 + VAT. The Clerk had also asked for the price for putting them up again for next Christmas, which would be £330 + VAT. Mr. Fox had been informed of these prices.

Mr. Fox had subsequently replied to the Parish Council's letter, stating that the Society's view had not changed but that they would not press the point further. He had emphasised that the Society supported the provision of decorative lights for the Christmas Season and suggested changing to a low voltage system as being more energy efficient and should make installation easier. The Chairman pointed out that some years previously, Festive Lighting had been invited to quote for a new Christmas lights installation and although the lights they provided would have been low voltage, a transformer for each tree would have been required to reduce the

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voltage and that type of lighting would have had to remain in the trees all year round as in Hassocks, where the lights and the mains connections had been left in place. Further to the reference in the third paragraph of Mr. Fox's letter to the "absence of a response from the Parish Council to our concerns about their retention", the Chairman stated that there had been no formal representation from the Society; the only written objections had been sent as informally written emails from an individual who had not indicated that he was writing on behalf of the Preservation Society. The Chairman added that even if a cherry picker was used to gain access instead of a ladder, taking the wires down would be likely to damage the bushy new growth on the trees.

During discussion, Members expressed appreciation for the comments made by Mr. Fox in support of the continuing to provide Christmas lights. It was generally considered that the wires were not very noticeable and had not given rise to comments by other members of the public. The wiring would need maintaining after a period of a few years and it would seem to be appropriate to do this after the next pollarding. It was therefore **AGREED** to reply to the Preservation Society that the catenary wire battens and nails should remain in the trees until the next time pollarding was due and then the arrangements would be reviewed.

- 431.7 Wilderness Field: to consider recommendation by E&A Committee to meet Officers of MSDC to discuss the possibility of the Parish Council being granted ownership of the Wilderness Field when it is released by Barratts.

Councillor Nicolle, having declared a potentially prejudicial interest in this item, as the Field was adjacent to her property, left the room.

Residents of the Wilderness had approached Steve Ashdown at MSDC regarding the future ownership of the Wilderness Field, as they considered that it should be handed over to the Parish Council, rather than retained by MSDC, to protect it from future development. It was understood that Mr. Ashdown was not adverse to this suggestion. This land would not be available until 50% of the houses at The Limes had been sold. It was understood that advice on management of open space could be obtained from West Sussex County Council. The E&A Committee had agreed to recommend to Council that the possibility of the Parish Council taking ownership of this land should be discussed with MSDC officers, but without commitment at this stage.

The following points were raised during discussion:

- it was accepted that discussion with MSDC would help to inform a decision at a future Council meeting on whether to proceed.
- an outline of a business plan should be produced before this matter came back to Council as there was no indication of likely costs
- Wilderness Field may not be an appropriate name for this land for the future
- for the Parish Council to own the land may be desirable, provided it was not a drain on hard pressed resources
- the Parish Council had previously reversed a decision to take ownership of a parcel of land because of the ongoing maintenance and liability issues
- the Parish Council had no policy supporting land ownership
- what was the benefit of the Parish Council owning the land rather than the District Council?
- the Parish Council was custodian of the Village and opportunities to acquire assets should be looked into.

It was **AGREED** (8:0 in favour with 1 abstention) to discuss this matter with appropriate officers of MSDC and to obtain any advice (including from WSCC) that would enable the Parish Council to draw up an outline business plan.

Councillor Nicolle rejoined the meeting

- 431.8 To receive and consider report following the meeting on 21 June of LPC Chairman and Clerk with Cuckfield Parish Council representatives, regarding employment of a street sweeper to supplement the existing arrangements. To consider and agree whether to proceed with negotiations with Cuckfield Parish Council.

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The Chairman gave an oral report of the meeting that he and the Clerk had attended on 21 June with the Clerk of Cuckfield Parish Council and Councillor Gregory. Both Councils had raised this matter at their respective Committee meetings and there had been support in principle for looking into the possibility of entering into an arrangement to employ a street sweeper to supplement the existing arrangements. The meeting on 21 June had been fairly positive but it was recognised that a number of issues would have to be considered and resolved before a decision could be taken. David Harper at MSDC had been approached for advice subsequent to the meeting.

AGREED: to continue to discuss this matter with Cuckfield Parish Council and take appropriate advice.

432. RISK MANAGEMENT: TO RECEIVE AND SIGN ACTION PLAN REPORT FOR 2009/10

432.1 Report sheets headed LCRS 7 Action Plan had been circulated with a covering note of explanation. Print outs of the risk assessment sheets for all the Parish Council's activities and functions had been reviewed by the Committees. This report showed only those risks which had rated as significant, together with any action plan to mitigate those risks. **AGREED** that the Action Plan report should be signed to acknowledge that the Council had assessed the risks it faced and taken steps to control them. The next step was to archive the 2009/10 risk assessment and open a new one for the current year.

433. TO AGREE THE YEAR END ACCOUNTS FOR 2009/10 AND THE ANNUAL RETURN FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2010.

433.1 Year End Accounts 2009/10 These had been looked at by the Internal Auditor and had been circulated to Members. No queries were raised. **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the Year End Accounts for 2009/10 and it was **AGREED** that the accounts should be signed by the Chairman of Council.

433.2 Annual Return. Members **NOTED** the following:

Section 1 - The statement of accounts

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 Statement of Accounts for 2009/10.

Section 2 – Annual Governance Statement

Members had to acknowledge their responsibility for ensuring that there was a sound system of internal control, including the preparation of the statement of accounts, and to consider the response to each of the statements listed on the Annual Governance Statement. The Chairman read aloud each statement in turn. **RESOLVED** to enter YES to each of statements 1-8 and N/A for question 9.

Section 3 – External auditor's certificate and opinion

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

Section 4 – Annual internal audit report

This had been completed and signed by the Internal Auditor.

RESOLVED: that the Annual Return should be signed and sent to the External Auditor.

434. 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.

434.1 Freighter visit. A problem had occurred at the last freighter visit when some members of the United Reformed Church, coming from outside Lindfield, had parked in the Tollgate Car Park to attend the 9.30 service and had

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been then been blocked in by the freighter. Joy Dyson of MSDC had told the Clerk that it was the Parish Council's responsibility to put up any signs or cordon off the area. It was suggested that a laminated sign should be put it in a suitable place on the car park, but not to cordon off spaces as that would become a long term commitment. The Clerk had emailed the Minister at the URC to inform him of the date of the next visit.

This part of the meeting ended at 8.50 p.m. There followed a second period for questions / comments from members of the public.

Wilderness Field. Mr. J. Jesson stated that the Lindfield Preservation Society, in correspondence with MSDC, had formally indicated support for the transfer of the Wilderness Field to the Parish Council.

Trees. Mr. N. Kerlake commented on the amount of epicormic growth on the High Street trees and suggested that the Council should authorise the Clerk with the Chairman to call in the contractors at the appropriate time (third week in May) without going through the Committee.

Christmas Lights. Mr. N. Kerlake questioned whether the fixing for the supporting wires would survive strong gales: there would be a serious risk if this gave way.

State of the Village. Mr. N. Kerlake commented on weeds round the Pond and a bollard leaning over in the High Street near number 38.

Litter. Mr. N. Kerlake commented that employing a street sweeper was a good idea but long overdue and that the opportunity should be grasped while Cuckfield Parish Council was also considering this.

Planning Inspectorate (Minute 429.5). Mr. N. Kerlake commented on the need for there to be a right of appeal in a decision making process.

The meeting concluded at 9.05 p.m.