

## LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of **LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL** held on **THURSDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2009** at the King Edward Hall, Lindfield.

**Present:** Mr. W. Blunden (Chairman)  
Mr. M. Allen  
Mr. A. Gomme  
Mr. S. Henton  
Mrs. M. Hersey  
Mr. M. Leach  
Mrs. M. Nicolle  
Mr. R. Pickett  
Mr. C. Snowling  
Mr. S. Willcox

**Also present:** Councillor Mrs. C. Field (WSCC)  
6 members of the public

**In attendance:** Mrs. C. Irwin

### **337. WELCOME AND EMERGENCY ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

337.1 The Chairman welcomed those present and announced the emergency procedure for the King Edward Hall.

### **338. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

338.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Davies and Upton and the reasons accepted.

### **339. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

339.1 There were no declarations of interest from Members in respect of any item on the Agenda.

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

340.1 Litter bins Mr. D. Macmillan expressed the concerns of the Lindfield Preservation Society regarding the choice of Glasdon "Topsy Jubilee" litter bins, which had been agreed for four locations at the Environment and Amenities Committee meeting on 8 October 2009. These were considered by the Preservation Society to be out of place in Lindfield and wrought iron or timber were preferred. The Society had written to the Parish Council stating that members would be quite willing to discuss this with the Parish Council.

340.2 Lewes Road/High Street junction. In response to Mr. G. Stanley's request to speak immediately before the relevant item on the Agenda, the Chairman asked him to raise his points during this period which was allocated for public participation, in accordance with normal procedure. Mr. Stanley stated that regardless of whether the Council agreed to continue to support the mini roundabout at the junction of Lewes Road and the High Street, he was asking Members to consider his suggestion for a by pass across the Common which, in his view, would improve pedestrian safety. The currently planned mini roundabout may improve the traffic flow, but would only be of partial benefit as it would not address the issue of pedestrian safety particularly in view of the probable increase in traffic volumes resulting from new development. Mr. Stanley acknowledged the legal constraints associated with the Common's status, but recommended the by pass as he believed it would fulfil all three priorities: pedestrian safety, traffic safety and traffic flow and he asked the Council not to dismiss the idea.

340.3 Mini roundabout – Lewes Road/High Street Junction. Mr. J. Jesson, representing Lindfield Preservation Society, explained that the Society had originally supported the concept of a mini roundabout at this location based on an intuitive feeling that it would lead to improved discipline and regulation of traffic

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behaviour. However the Society had now withdrawn its support on the grounds of serious safety concerns highlighted by Highways Consultants FMW, who had been instructed by the Lindfield Preservation Society to carry out a study of the Transport Assessment submitted by the Dennis Wilson Partnership with the planning application for the Newton Road development. FMW had concluded that highway widths and capacities had been overstated in the Transport Assessment and they had raised serious concerns about the safety of the mini-roundabout and zebra crossing designed by Project Centre. FMW had forecast increased congestion in the High Street southbound and northbound by the Pond with the mini roundabout in place. They had also concluded that, with a mini roundabout, a higher accident rate must be expected than currently recorded, due to sub-standard inter-visibility by Peartree House. In the face of well informed professional critique, the Society had had to change its policy to one which gave less help to fast tracking through traffic and gave more to supporting the safety and well-being of vulnerable road users and pedestrians. The Society was supporting the suggestion of a resident, a retired Professional Highways Engineer who believed that a STOP sign in Lewes Road and a 20 mph limit in the village would be of benefit.

Mr. N. Kerslake reminded the Parish Council of its long standing policy of putting pedestrian safety first, with vehicle safety second and traffic management and flow third. The Council had a duty of care to its residents not to increase the risk to pedestrians, regardless of planning conditions or Section 106 agreements.

### **341. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 27 AUGUST 2009**

341.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minute and Confidential of the meeting of Council held on 27 August 2009. These were **AGREED** and the Chairman **SIGNED** the Minutes and Confidential Minutes as being a true record of the meeting.

### **342. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT.**

342.1 Shirley Cruse RIP. The Chairman was sad to announce the recent death of the Parish Council's first Clerk, Mrs. Shirley Cruse. As Clerk she had been involved in the formation of the Parish Council in 1987 and had dealt with all the paperwork efficiently from home. Members wished Mrs. Cruse's family well at this difficult time and it was **AGREED** that the Chairman and Vice Chairman should write to the family with the Council's condolences.

342.2 Remembrance Day Service. The Chairman reported that the Service at All Saints Church had been very well attended and had seemed particularly poignant in view of the current news reports of service personnel being killed in Afghanistan and Iraq. It had been good to see young people present and that the schools had been involved in the Service. Congratulations were recorded to Andrew Harding for his work in reviving the Lindfield branch of the Royal British Legion which was now flourishing.

### **343. ACTION LIST**

343.1 It was noted that tasks were being completed.

### **344. REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS.**

344.1 Councillor Mrs. Christine Field (WSCC) reported on the following local issues:

- Hickmans Lane /Savill Road dropped kerbs. Cllr. Field would be taking up the issue of lack of consultation prior to installing the barrier.
- Oathall Community College, planning application for floodlit all weather sports pitch. Cllr. Field was acutely aware of the large number of residents affected on both sides – school children as well as residents. She was a member of the WSCC Planning Committee and had called the application in for determination by the Planning Committee on 12 January 2010. Cllr. Field was aware of the disquiet regarding the method of determination and explained that the previous similar applications had been determined by MSDC as they had been submitted by the Governing Body and the work

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was to be funded from external sources. This time, the application had been submitted by the Director of Education with funding from WSCC and would be determined by WSCC according to the regulations. Cllr. Field was considering her own position: whether to remain objective and listen to the arguments on all sides, or to declare that she had predetermined the issue to allow her to address the Committee, but in so doing sacrifice her vote. She would welcome any representations on this matter.

- Fit for the Future. Cllr. Field was likely to be made Chair of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and would be involved in "Fit for the Future". Following a deliberative event that morning, it appeared that the services which had been feared would be lost at the Princess Royal Hospital would in fact be saved.

344.2 Councillor Snowling (MSDC) reported as follows:

- MSDC. As reports in the local press had indicated, MSDC was going through interesting times. The indications were that Gary Wall would be confirmed as the new Leader at the meeting the following week.
- Health. As Cabinet Member for Health and Community, Cllr. Snowling reported that there was a good working relationship between members of the panel advising on health issues. From the studies of the North West Review Panel, there were still concerns regarding the lack of facilities in the southern part of the District.
- Materials Recycling Facility. A group of Councillors had recently been taken round the facility at Ford, which Cllr. Snowling found to be most impressive and felt that this should be more widely publicised to encourage residents to recycle waste. The Chairman asked Cllr. Snowling to write an article for the Parish Council newsletter.

344.3 Cllr. Mrs. Hersey added that the Health Panel, of which she was Chairman, had paid visits to East Sussex and East Grinstead hospitals and were due to visit the Princess Royal and Brighton hospitals in the New Year. The control room at Lewes was to be the venue for the Advent Service.

### 345. TO NOTE ANY CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS RECEIVED.

345.1 **NOTED:**

- Planning Mid Sussex Special Schools for the Future – Councillors Blunden, Nicolle and Allen
- MSDC Statement of Community Involvement – closing date 27 November - Cllrs. Blunden, Nicolle and Snowling). It was also noted that there was to be a workshop on 7 December.

### 346. FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE.

346.1 Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 24 September 2009

In the absence of Cllr. Davies, Cllr. Willcox, as Vice Chairman of the F&GP Committee, reported that the only item requiring Council's approval was the recommendation to adopt the Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures which would be dealt with under the next item.

It was noted that the main item on the next meeting's Agenda would be the Committee's budget for next financial year. The Committee had begun to consider the budget requirements at the September meeting and the Administration Sub Committee would be meeting on 25 November to consider the detail of the Admin budget. The Committee would consider the overall budget in January and make a recommendation to the Full Council meeting later that month regarding the budget and precept.

With reference to Minute 306 Members were reminded that there were three Power of Wellbeing training sessions coming up before the end of the year. Cllr Upton had booked to go to the one on 14 December

346.2 Grievance and Discipline Procedures. The F&GP Committee had recommended that the model grievance and discipline procedures, published by the Society of Local Council Clerks in May 2009 in line with the ACAS Code of Practice 2009 as set out in the Employment Act 2008, should be adopted by

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the Council with only some minor alterations to customise them for use by the Parish Council,. It was noted that SLCC had given permission to adopt their model procedures and an appropriate acknowledgement had been added to the final draft. It was **AGREED** to adopt the model procedures, duly amended.

346.3 Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 24 September 2009. **RESOLVED:** that the Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 24 September 2009 be received and their recommendations confirmed.

346.4 Statements of Account/Budget Progress and Bank Reconciliation for the periods 01.08.09 to 31.08.09, 01.09.09 to 30.09.09 and 01.10.09 to 31.10. **RESOLVED:** to approve the statements of account / budget progress and bank reconciliation for the periods 01.08.09 to 31.08.09, 01.09.09 to 30.09.09 and 01.10.09 to 31.10.09.

346.5 List of cheques for approval. The list of cheques for approval was tabled. **NOTED:** the payment of £4,000 to WSCC for the dropped crossings in the Newton Road Area. **AGREED** the list of cheques (numbered 104297 to 104343 inclusive) for the period 28 August to 12 November 2009 totalling £19,141.34. **NOTED:** that the Petty Cash balance stood at £68.76 as at 12 November 2009 and that no payments had been made under Section 137. The Chairman of Council signed the list of cheques to confirm the Council's approval.

346.6 The Chairman on behalf of the Council wished Councillor Davies a speedy recovery from his surgery.

### 347. ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE.

347.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2009 Councillor Blunden reported on several items prior to Council receiving the Minutes.

347.2 Christmas Lights. The electrician, Mr. Wiggins, had put up a test cable between two trees that were some distance apart to ascertain the clearance and it appeared that the requirements could be met, even allowing for sagging. Although the regulations stated that there should be 2.5 metres over a pavement, the aim was for the lights themselves to be at least 3 metres above the ground and the cable between the trees and to the houses to be fixed at 3.5 metres to allow for some sagging. It was noted that Mr. Wiggins was expected to charge more than previous years because the existing cabling would have to be reconfigured.

Paul Smyth of KPS had met with the Chairman, the Clerk and Councillors Leach and Gomme to consider the arrangements. Each tree had been measured with a marked out pole and the crowns examined to decide how the lights should be arranged and secured. Mr. Smyth was confident that the lights could be put in most of the usual trees, but there were some that were too close to the kerb and would not meet the regulations. Mr. Smyth had recommended that the lights were secured to the branches with cable ties to keep them in place at the necessary height.

The licence from WSCC was still awaited but provided that WSCC were able to grant the licence, it was **AGREED** to go ahead and put lights in the suitable trees. KPS should be given a clear specification and the lights would be checked before connecting to the power supplies.

347.3 Christmas Festival Night. The Traffic Management Plan for the road closure had been received from RANA Risk Management and sent to PC Day who had indicated that CERT could man the road closure subject to submitting a satisfactory risk Assessment and insurance certificates. Members approved the purchase of new advance warning signs to comply with the regulations, which the existing ones did not, particularly regarding the background colour which had to be yellow. Diversion and road closed signs would also have to be bought or rented.

347.4 Cycle Stands. WSCC had approved the Parish Council's application for two free stands for the Tollgate Car Park. Mervyn Booth at MSDC had wanted to put a motor cycle bay in Denmans Lane where the

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recycling bay had been but he had now indicated that this space could be used for cycle stands and a further application for four further stands would be submitted.

- 347.5 Litter bins. Since the last E&A meeting, objections to the style of bin agreed on had been received and litter bins would therefore be an agenda item at the next meeting of the Committee.
- 347.6 Arts Festival. After taking advice from SALC, Members had agreed that the Parish Council should not become directly involved in this by agreeing to hold the funds.
- 347.7 Budget. The Committee had given some thought to the next year's budget but the RFO and the Clerk would be putting together a paper for the next meeting.
- 347.8 Dropped crossing at Hickmans Lane/Savill Road. Complaints had been received about the barrier that WSCC had put in the footpath while they were installing the dropped crossing. It was disappointing WSCC had not consulted the Parish Council before authorising the barrier which would have given members the opportunity to weigh up the benefits against the aesthetic effects. However Jonathan Ullmer (WSCC) had felt that the barrier was necessary and now the dropped kerbs were in place, there was probably little more that could be done other than painting it to improve the appearance.
- 347.9 Minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2009. **RESOLVED:** that the Minutes of the Environment and Amenities Committee held on 8 October 2009 be received and their recommendations confirmed.

### 348. PLANNING AND TRAFFIC COMMITTEE.

- 348.1 Minutes of the meetings of the Planning and Traffic Committee meetings held on 7 September and 29 September. **RESOLVED:** that the Minutes of the Planning and Traffic Committee meetings held on 7 September, 29 September be received and their recommendations confirmed.
- 348.2 Minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2009. The Minutes of this meeting were not yet available but the Chairman summarised the item relating to the planning application for a floodlit sports pitch at Oathall Community College for which a large number of residents had attended the meeting to speak or just to hear the discussion. Two people had spoken in favour of the application and five against. A letter had now been sent to WSCC setting out the views of the Committee which had agreed to object to the proposal.
- 348.3 Minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2009. **RESOLVED:** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2009 be received. Councillor Snowling regretted that he had been unable to attend the meeting and thanked Cllr. Gomme for taking the chair in his absence. Cllr. Snowling introduced the main items from that meeting: the mini roundabout and the zebra crossing. The Committee had agreed to recommend to Full Council that it should withdraw support for the mini roundabout but support the zebra crossing outside Somerfield.
- 348.4 Lewes Road High Street Junction – mini roundabout. Cllr. Snowling stated that most Members of Council had been present at the meeting on 20 October at which there had been a thorough examination of the issues regarding the mini roundabout.

Cllr. Snowling informed the Council that he had previously supported the mini roundabout, but now had doubts as to its benefit to residents rather than just to drivers passing through. As Chairman of the P&T Committee, Cllr. Snowling formally **PROPOSED** the Committee's recommendation "that the Parish Council's support for the mini roundabout should be withdrawn. The motion was **SECONDED** by Cllr. Gomme.

This had been fully debated at the Planning and Traffic Committee. However it was further pointed out that it had been customary to defer even minor issues to WSCC, the Highways Authority. WSCC had suggested a mini roundabout for this location twenty years previously and the objections at the time had been on the grounds of urbanisation and aesthetics, not safety. The mini roundabout had been given as

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an option in the first draft of the Frank Graham Report and residents concerns about the safety at this location had been evident during consultation on the Parish Plan. Roger Hobbs from WSCC had been in favour of the mini roundabout. Also, the impact of 185 new dwellings in Newton Road and Gravelye Lane could not be judged.

It was also pointed out that the benefit of the mini roundabout would be not so much for residents of Lindfield, but for those travelling in an east – west direction in the morning and west – east in the evening.

Members voted for the motion, by 9 votes with 1 abstention and it was therefore **AGREED** that the Parish Council should now withdraw support for the mini roundabout.

348.5 High Street - zebra crossing outside Somerfield: it was noted that the Planning and Traffic Committee had considered that the issue of the zebra crossing should be separated from that of the mini roundabout and recommended that that regardless of the solution at the Lewes Road / High Street junction, support should be given to a zebra crossing outside Somerfield as this option should be looked into anyway. It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED** and **AGREED** (9 votes for and 1 against) that the Parish Council should support a zebra crossing outside Somerfield.

348.6 Alternative solution to traffic management at the Lewes Road / High Street junction as proposed by a resident, Mr. G. Stanley. Councillor Allen declared a personal interest in this item as a nearby resident.

Mr. Stanley had set out his proposal in writing with an illustrative map and he had spoken about the proposal during the public participation period at the beginning of the meeting. His suggestion was for a new road across the Common from Eastern Road to the Backwoods Lane / Black Hill mini roundabout, to by pass the Lewes Road High Street junction. Members considered the proposal and the following points were made:

- The fundamental issue of this being common land, requiring an Act of Parliament for work such as this; the Council had fought hard over the years to maintain the Common
- A road with signs, lights and other street furniture would ruin the appearance of the Common.
- The triangle of Common next to Old School Court would be separated from the rest of the Common, cutting off the play area and creating a child safety issue
- Cost – WSCC had advised that highways work would be prioritised on safety grounds; however one of the arguments against the mini roundabout had been its excellent accident record, so this could not be justified on safety grounds
- The road would join the main route adjacent to Lindfield Primary School and would go through the proposed School Safety Zone
- There would be no benefit for north / south traffic
- Backwoods Lane / High Street / Black Hill would be less safe than at present with increased traffic joining the B2028 at this point.
- The proposal would not address the problem: something should be done about the A272 traffic outside the village

It was unanimously **AGREED** that this proposal was not a practical solution to the traffic problems relating to the Lewes Road / High Street junction and that it should not be taken forward.

### 349. CAR ALLOWANCE FOR COUNCIL STAFF

349.1 As this was not a personal staffing matter, it was agreed to bring this item forward from Agenda item 15 to the public part of the meeting. The recommended car allowance circulated with the recent Employment Briefing relating to salaries had not changed since the notification of rates applicable from 1 April 2009 which had been noted by F&GP on 28 May 2009. However the minute had not stated the amount and for clarity it was **AGREED** to confirm that the Council would pay staff the recommended casual users allowance as set out in the NALC Employment Briefing dated 23 September 2009, which gave the amount for the highest rate applicable (1200 – 1450cc engines) as 60.1 p a mile.

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### 350. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

350.1 There were no other items of business.

This part of the meeting ended at 8.45 p.m. There followed a second period for questions and comments from members of the public.

Christmas Lights. Mr. N. Kerlake expressed concerns about the height of the electrical cable and lights as sagging cable may be low enough to reach from the ground. Zurich should be asked to confirm that the risk was insured.

Hickmans Lane/Savill Road dropped crossing and barrier. Mr. N. Kerlake did not accept the suggestion of painting the barrier black and stated that if WSCC carried out work without consulting, they should be prepared to pay the cost of removal or replacement with something more acceptable such as a wooden barrier.

Village Design Statement Mr. J. Jesson stated that the Village Design Statement had been released for public consultation recently, however there had been no news on progress. In the light of issues raised at this meeting, Mr. Jesson pointed out the significant benefit to having the Village Design Statement in place and would welcome anything that the Parish Council could do to speed the process up.

351. Having considered the nature of the following items, the Chairman **MOVED** under Standing Order number 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". This was **AGREED**.

### 352. STAFFING MATTERS: 2009 / 10 NATIONAL FINAL SALARY AWARD FOR LOCAL COUNCIL CLERKS

352.1 A resolution was passed confirming the pay settlement for the Parish Council staff and it was agreed that this should be backdated \ to 1 April 2009.

### 353. ISSUES RELATING TO THE LEASE OF ADDITIONAL ACCOMMODATION

353.1 It was **NOTED** that no further progress had been made with the lease negotiations.

The meeting concluded at 8.55 p.m.