



# LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17

May 2017

Parish Office :

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Lindfield Enterprise Park  
Lewes Road  
Lindfield  
West Sussex  
RH16 2LH

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Opening hours: Tuesdays 1.00 – 4.00 p.m., Thursdays and Fridays 10.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m.  
or by appointment

Chairman: Cllr. Mr. William Blunden  
Parish Clerk: Mrs. Christine Irwin  
Planning Administrator: Mr. Iain McLean  
Responsible Financial Officer: Mrs. Tracy Ely

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## MEMBERS OF LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL 2016/17

Mike Allen	Stephen Henton	Roger Pickett	Christopher Snowling
William Blunden	Margaret Hersey	Ron Plass	2 casual vacancies
Judith Durrant	Simon Hodgson	Valerie Upton	

Members can all be contacted via the Parish Office in the first instance.

## CHAIRMAN'S OVERVIEW (Chairman of Council, Councillor William Blunden)

As ever this has been an interesting and challenging year for your Parish Council and also frustrating particularly in terms of planning as there is still no District Plan and five year land supply for Mid Sussex and the Lindfield and Lindfield Rural Neighbourhood Plan, which had passed referendum and was "made" by resolution of Mid Sussex District Council in March last year was challenged by a consortium of developers.

We were very sorry to lose two of our Councillors recently - Alan Gomme and Stewart Shortland have both had to resign due to health reasons. Alan contributed a great deal to the work of the Council as a member for nearly ten years and Chairman of the Planning and Traffic Committee for the last five. As Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee he devoted countless hours of his time, taking the plan through the various stages of consultation, drafting, revision etc. and we owe him a huge debt of thanks.

Stewart was co-opted onto the Council in June 2015 and in that time he was an active member of the Planning and Traffic Committee and Finance and General Purposes Committee. Again I would like to record the Council's appreciation for the contribution he made during this short time and wish them both well for the future.

Changes are also happening at the Parish Office: Iain McLean, our Deputy Clerk, retired on 13 April, although we are very grateful that he has agreed to stay on to provide cover on a casual basis. The Clerk, Christine Irwin, has also given advance notice of her intention to retire at the end of September. As always I would like to thank our office staff, Christine, Iain and Tracy for all their hard work and support.

## PLANNING & TRAFFIC COMMITTEE (Chairman: Councillor Simon Hodgson)

The Committee has considered 182 planning applications during 2016/17, of which 48 related to trees. All these applications come from Mid Sussex District Council as the Planning Authority, and include a few applications made by West Sussex County Council application, e.g. where they undertake work to trees that are either listed, or within the Conservation Area. As always, we are particularly concerned to protect our listed buildings and

properties within the Conservation Area, and the Areas of Townscape Character and to ensure, where relevant, that the guidelines contained within the Lindfield Village Design Statement are followed by homeowners and developers alike.

The applications normally relate to land, property or trees within our urban Parish but we did last year offer comments on a number of significant applications within Lindfield Rural Parish and Haywards Heath, when we considered that such developments would have an adverse effect on our own Parish, especially when it comes to the adequacy of our local infrastructure and amenities.

Aside from proposed large-scale housing developments, the Committee has examined a great many other planning applications of considerable public interest to local residents, who have on numerous occasions filled the public gallery to make their views known. These include applications for alterations to and change of use at Tamasha, formerly the White Horse Inn; a change of use at Lindfield Coffee Works; and a development of five dwellings to replace one unit and an annexe at Backwoods Lane.

The Lindfield and Lindfield Rural Neighbourhood Plan had been the subject of a claim for judicial review, which had left its status as a planning policy document unclear with the Council unable to count on it being effective in controlling development. The claim for judicial review has now been withdrawn, with the stated reason being that “the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government confirmed that policies 1 and 2 of the Neighbourhood Plan should be afforded greatly reduced weight in the determination of planning applications”.

The planning appeal in respect of the first of two applications for the development of 130 homes by Taylor Wimpey on land at the corner of Gravelye Lane and Scamps Hill has been formally withdrawn, following the second of their applications being finally approved by Mid Sussex District Council in March. The appeal by Wates in the matter of an application for 200 homes and a new single-form entry school at Walstead continues, with the appellants seeming satisfied that they will be able to persuade the Inspector that the Lindfield and Lindfield Rural Neighbourhood Plan is not a relevant factor in the decision.

The status of our Neighbourhood Plan, then, is still somewhat unclear in practice – while it remains a ‘made’ Plan, it is unlikely to prove effective in controlling development in any meaningful way until Mid Sussex District Council adopts a new District Plan and is able to demonstrate they have a five-year housing land supply in place.

As reported last year, the Council has commissioned a Traffic Study of the village because there are several areas within the village that have given our residents a lot of concern. The Consultant’s Interim Report has been published on our website and the focus of the next stage is the Lewes Road/High Street junction which is already at capacity and will be under yet more pressure as more homes are built.

Over the past year the Committee has examined a large number of planning applications, many of which have been complex, alongside the work undertaken on the Traffic Study. This would not have been possible without the dedicated and diligent work of our Deputy Clerk, Iain McLean. Iain has worked tremendously hard to support the Committee at what can sometimes be very challenging meetings, as well as in the office, where he has effortlessly translated Councillors’ poorly expressed ideas into eloquent, considered, and detailed responses to Mid Sussex District Council. The Committee would like to thank Iain for the excellent work he has done to assist us over the year.

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## **ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE** **(Chairman: Councillor William Blunden)**

The Environment and Amenities Committee is responsible for providing and maintaining the Denmans Lane Allotment Site, the public toilets, some street lighting, litter bins, bus shelters and other items of street furniture. The committee also liaises with MSDC regarding management of the Common, the Pond and Hickmans Lane Playing Field and with WSCC on various highway matters. Winter maintenance, Christmas lights, the annual Christmas Festival Night and Spring Clean also come under this Committee’s remit.

The E&A Committee’s achievements include the addition of extra bollards at the corner of the High Street and Lewes Road, as the work done the previous year had not stopped parking on the paving, and the replacement of five of our own street light lanterns in West View and Lewes Road with heritage lanterns to conform with the style of new WSCC lights for which the Parish Council made a large contribution the previous year. We also added a planted floating island to the Pond for the benefit of the wildlife.

The Parish Council is supporting Lindfield in Bloom with two Council representatives attending their meetings. The Highways Partnership Agreement between West Sussex County Council Haywards Heath Town Council

and Ardingly, Lindfield and Lindfield Rural Parish Councils has been renewed, although pot hole repairs have been withdrawn from this Agreement by WSCC. We also have a separate agreement with Haywards Heath Town Council to undertake grass cutting in the High Street and a number of other maintenance jobs which are outside the Highways Agreement, such as painting and cleaning street furniture,

The Mobile Refuse Freighters which visit the Tollgate Car Park every two months, paid for by the Parish Council, are always well used and the Village Spring Clean in April has been much better supported in the last few years – many thanks to the people who give up their morning once a year to make this a great community effort.

During the coming year the E&A Committee's priorities are to move forward with a number of joint projects with Mid Sussex District and West Sussex County Councils: including upgrading the play equipment in Hickmans Lane, repairs and painting of the roadside posts near the Pond and installation of some dropped kerbs. The Land Registry has now completed the registration of the Wilderness Field in the name of Mid Sussex District Council so we can now begin the process of getting it transferred to the Parish Council.

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## **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** **(Chairman: Councillor Stephen Henton)**

The Finance and General Purposes Committee is responsible for overseeing and reviewing the day to day financial matters of Lindfield Parish Council and to recommend to the Council the annual budget and the precept to be levied for the Parish. Staffing and the Parish Office accommodation also come under the remit of this Committee as well as governance, insurance, risk assessment, production of the Lindfield Parish Directory and Year Book and any matters of policy which do not fall clearly within the responsibilities of the other Committees, or where there is conflict between them.

Putting together the annual budget is a major task. As Lindfield Parish Council has very little income from other sources, most of its funds have to come from the annual precept which is one element of the Council Tax. In 2016/17 the precept was £157,000. If the amount required to fund the budget is underestimated, the Council is unable to obtain any further sums from other sources, other than loans for particular capital projects, so it is essential that reserves are held as a safeguard in case of unexpected but necessary expenditure. After careful consideration of the budget for 2017/18, it was agreed to increase the precept to £162,000.

Full copies of the accounts are available from the Parish Office. A breakdown of the budget for 2017/18 is enclosed with this report, together with an abbreviated version of the receipts and payments for 2016/17.

The on-going work of the Committee includes reviewing monthly income & expenditure against the budget, carrying out periodic checks on the financial records and reporting to Council annually on the effectiveness of the internal audit and internal control procedures. The finances of the Council are subject to both external and internal audit – to date no significant problems have been identified and some helpful suggestions have been followed up.

The proposed capital project for providing public conveniences on the Common also comes under this Committee. However, this project has stalled following adjoining neighbours objections expressed about the proposed location of the site. We are at present in consultation with Mid Sussex District Council about an alternative site and when this is resolved it is intended to hold a public consultation on the proposal.

Each year the Council sets aside an amount of money in the F&GP Committee's budget for grants/donations, either to local village based groups or to organisations whose activities benefit residents of our Parish. In 2016/17 a total of £1,975 was paid in grants to the following organisations: St Catherine's Hospice (£250); St Peter and St James Hospice (£250); West Sussex Mediation Service (£100); Mid Sussex Older People's Council (£150); 4Sight (£150); Victim Support (£100); the local branch of the British Heart Foundation (£75); Citizens Advice Horsham (£200); Home Start (£100); the Kent, Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance (£250); the Campaign to Protect Rural England (£100); and the Lindfield Arts Festival (£250).

## RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2017 (abbreviated)

2015/2016			2016/2017	
£	£		£	£
<b>RECEIPTS</b>				
152,000.00		Precept	157,000.00	
145.19		Interest Received	99.05	
787.80		Allotments: Rents and Licence Fee	839.62	
3,990.00		Village Directory: Advertising	3,295.00	
12.50		Village Directory: Donations	9.50	
462.86		Christmas Festival Night	277.50	
307.50		WSCC: Contribution towards paving repairs	-	
		WSCC: Re-imburement for grass cutting	384.62	
9,500.02		Rent: Clock Tower House	11,083.32	
4,390.75		Other Income	1,018.92	
14,325.97	<b>185,922.59</b>	VAT recovered	18,909.32	<b>192,916.85</b>
<b>PAYMENTS</b>				
73,764.91		Administration		72,727.44
26,320.91		Capital: repayment of loan for Clock Tower House; office equipment		25,687.00
5,263.33		Other Expenditure on Parish Office		36.94
11,353.55		Finance and General Purposes Committee		12,409.60
98,976.31		Environment and Amenities Committee		40,173.82
492.88		Planning and Traffic Committee		9,683.28
22,389.57		VAT on Payments		9,263.10
	<b>238,561.46</b>			<b>169,981.18</b>
-	<b>52,638.87</b>			<b>22,935.67</b>
<b>SUMMARY year ending 31 March 2017</b>				
Opening Balance	216,851.96	Payments		169,981.18
Receipts	192,916.85	Closing Balance		239,787.63
	<b>£ 409,768.81</b>			<b>£ 409,768.81</b>
<b>BANK RECONCILIATION</b>				
Current Account	238,792.40			
Business Premium Account	871.13			
	<b>239,663.53</b>		<b>£</b>	
Petty Cash in Hand	124.10			
<b>Total:</b>	<b>£ 239,787.63</b>			

**BUDGET 2017 / 18** (Precept £162,000)

<b>FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE</b>	<b>£</b>
Administration	123,130.00
Chairman's Fund	500.00
Grants/Donations	2,000.00
Annual Memberships/Subscriptions	2,500.00
Village Directory	6,500.00
Newsletter/Annual Report	2,000.00
Members' Allowances	2,500.00
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>139,130.00</b>
<b>ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE</b>	
Street Lighting - Energy/maintenance costs	4,300.00
- Upgrading Street lights	3,000.00
- Christmas lights	8,500.00
Maintenance/Gardening (including annual Village Spring Clean and work carried out by Haywards Heath Town Council)	4,000.00
Allotments	2,000.00
Christmas Festival Night	1,000.00
Village Archives	200.00
Mobile Civic Amenity Freighter	2,000.00
Denmans Lane toilets - running costs	13,000.00
Digital mapping	250.00
Joint Project with MSDC/WSCC - Post and rail fencing - Pond and Common	5,000.00
Grass cutting (High Street)	2,000.00
Wilderness Field - fees and expenses	1,000.00
Common Footpath: joint project with MSDC / WSCC	1,000.00
Reprint of Lindfield Leaflet	500.00
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>47,750.00</b>
<b>PLANNING AND TRAFFIC COMMITTEE</b>	
Miscellaneous	200.00
Traffic Study	10,000.00
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>10,200.00</b>
<b>BUDGET TOTAL 2017-18</b>	<b>£ 197,080.00</b>