

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Amenities Committee held on 4 JUNE 2009 at the King Edward Hall, Lindfield.

Present: Mr. W. Blunden (Chairman)
Mr. M. Allen
Mrs. M. Hersey
Mrs. M. Nicolle (from 8.37 p.m.)
Mrs. V. Upton

Also present: 2 members of the public

In attendance: Mrs. C. Irwin

The meeting began at 8.00 p.m.

235. WELCOME AND EMERGENCY ANNOUNCEMENTS.

235.1 As this was the first meeting of the new Council year, Cllr. Blunden, as Chairman of Council opened the meeting, welcomed those present and announced the emergency procedure for the King Edward Hall.

236. TO ELECT A CHAIRMAN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE.

236.1 Cllr. Blunden invited nominations for the office of Chairman of the Environment and Amenities Committee for the Council year 2009/10. Councillor Blunden was PROPOSED and SECONDED and, there being no further nominations, was duly ELECTED and chaired the meeting.

237. TO ELECT A VICE CHAIRMAN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE.

237.1 The Chairman invited nominations for the office of Vice Chairman of the Environment and Amenities Committee for the Council year 2009/10. Cllr. Nicolle was PROPOSED and SECONDED. It was understood that Cllr. Nicolle, who would be arriving late for this meeting, was willing to serve another year in this role. There being no further nominations, Cllr. Nicolle was duly ELECTED as Vice Chairman of the Environment and Amenities Committee.

238. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

238.1 Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Gomme and Pickett and the reasons accepted. Apologies had also been received from Cllr. Nicolle who would be arriving late for this meeting.

239. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

239.1 Cllr. Blunden declared a personal interest in item 17 as he was an allotment tenant.
Cllr. Allen declared a personal interest in item 17 as his wife was an allotment tenant and because he was a friend of Mr. Taylor. Depending on the nature of the discussion Cllr. Allen stated that he might later declare this interest to be prejudicial and withdraw.

240. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

240.1 Village Maintenance. Mr. N. Kerslake commented that only two things really mattered to the Council: maintenance of the Village and having the resources to do what was required. He reminded members that he had suggested that there should be a policy for maintenance: painting of hand rails, Pond posts etc. He had personally reported to Rupert Browning of MSDC that the weeds round the Pond and on the corner of

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Chaloner Road needed attention. A number of posters advertising events had been put up around the centre of the Village and no-one had done anything about them. Mr. Browning had commented that the weeds and the posters had not been reported by the Parish Council. The Environment and Amenities Committee had a job to do and it was hoped that Members would get to grips with it. The new growth on the trunks of the High Street trees showed the stupidity of the Parish and District Councils in insisting on pollarding. However now the trees had been pollarded they needed to be repollarded every year. The Parish Council must make the effort to push the County and District Councils into action as the appearance of the Village was important.

241. MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING OF 7 APRIL 2009

241.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Amenities Committee held on 7 April 2009. The Minutes were AGREED and SIGNED by the Chairman as being a true record of that meeting.

242. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT.

242.1 Greening Campaign. The Chairman stated that two members of the community had offered to take the Greening Campaign forward, following the presentation at the Parish Meeting. He had recently been notified that Sara Grimes, who had given the presentation, was leaving the Greening Campaign and the new contact was Fiona Wellings who would be making contact in due course.

242.2 Posters. The Chairman referred to the election posters put up by one of the political parties in the Parish Council's bus shelters, to which he had taken exception, particularly as Parish property was prohibited by law from assisting in the publication of material designed to affect public support for a political party. It was AGREED that a letter be sent to the local representatives of the party concerned.

242.3 Ducks. There had been a certain amount of publicity in the press regarding ducks being killed on the road alongside the Pond. The Chairman stated that the wildlife on the Pond was free to come and go and at this time of year the ducks were very active and tended to chase each other off the Pond. In response to an emailed suggestion from a Member, the Chairman confirmed that netting had previously been put in place to prevent ducks getting out onto the road and that everything that could be done had already been done. There had been a request to put up signs, which would be considered by the Planning and Traffic Committee, but it was noted that previous signs warning drivers about the ducks had been removed as they had been considered to be unnecessary.

243. REPORT ON ACTION / PROJECT PROGRESS LIST

243.1 Dog bins (E&A Minute 76.16). Cllr. Upton reported that she had identified a suitable location for a new dog bin. Cllr. Hersey enquired as to the colour as Cuckfield were angry that they had been issued with red bins. It was AGREED that neighbours should be consulted and that the colour and the emptying arrangements should be checked with MSDC before ordering a new bin.

243.2 Allotment Provision (E&A Minute 230.4). Cllr. Allen stated that a recent report in the press had indicated that Councils were only required to provide a certain number of allotment plots per thousand residents and that the Parish Council already provided enough according to this criterion. However, it was AGREED that an article could be put into the next Newsletter inviting landowners to contact the Parish Council if they felt they could help solve the problem of there being insufficient land available for allotments. Nevertheless it was recognised that the legal position needed to be checked before the Parish Council entered into any negotiations.

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244. WORKING GROUPS REPORTING TO THE ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE.

244.1 It was noted that the Finance and General Purposes Committee had, at its last meeting, considered the status of its working groups and Sub Committees and agreed that in cases where a group could be authorised to make decisions it should take the form of a Sub Committee, meeting in public, but when the work of the group was of a practical nature or considering issues for reporting to the Committee with recommendations, this should be a Working Group which did not need to meet in public. Consideration was then given to the three groups that reported to the E&A Committee

244.2 The Lighting Working Group. This group had always operated by making recommendations to E&A. The lighting issues that had been considered had not required quick decisions. It was therefore AGREED that this group should be kept as an informal working group and that the current membership of Cllrs. Blunden, Nicolle and Gomme should continue.

244.3 The Christmas Festival Night / Christmas Lights Working Group. Before discussing the work and membership of this group, the Chairman brought to the attention of Members a recent revelation that would affect future Christmas Festival Nights. CERT (Community Emergency Radio Team) were no longer able to operate road closures due to enforcement of requirements to hold Public Liability insurance cover for £10 million, to be specially trained and have the required certificate. WSCC had confirmed that this came from the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991, which, because of public litigation, was being enforced whereas it had to some extent been overlooked in the past. CERT did not have the necessary certificate and as it was a charity run by volunteers it was unlikely that its members would do the training. PC Geoff Bennett had confirmed that the Police were also unable to operate temporary road closures, except in cases of emergency, as the Police Authority had decided against having officers trained for this. However PC Bennett had indicated that the Police would be happy to stand at the barrier to direct drivers. Haywards Heath Town Council were understood to be paying a traffic consultancy over £500 to manage the road closure for the Town Day procession in September and it appeared that the Parish Council would have to do the same for Village Night. The Council had been given the name of a contact at Sussex Police who would provide a list of contractors. The budget for Christmas Festival Night would not cover this so if the event was to take place, a recommendation to Council to take the money from the reserves would be required.

It was AGREED that the Christmas Festival Night should be held with the necessary arrangements in place and a recommendation would be made to Full Council to meet the unforeseen expense of a professional traffic consultancy to manage the road closure, from the General Reserve.

It was AGREED that the date for the Christmas Festival Night 2009 should be Wednesday 2 December.

It was AGREED that the Christmas Festival Night / Christmas Lights Working Group should be kept as an informal work group as its function was mainly practical and for liaising with the United Reformed Church. Any recommendations about changing arrangements for the Christmas lights would go from the working group to the Environment and Amenities Committee. AGREED that the current membership should continue: Cllrs. Upton, Gomme and Leach (who, although no longer a member of the E&A Committee had indicated that he would still be willing to help with practical matters relating to Christmas Festival Night and Christmas Lights.

244.4 Denmans Lane Allotments Working Group. As the work of this group was mainly practical (ensuring that risk assessment was carried out with action taken where needed and holding a meeting with the allotment tenants each year) it was AGREED that it should remain as a working group, particularly as there were two members who were not Councillors. AGREED that the current membership should continue: Cllrs. Blunden, Allen, Gomme and Nicolle with Mary Allen and Richard Powell.

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245. ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE BUDGET: TO REVIEW PAYMENTS MADE TO DATE IN 2008/09 AND 2009/10

245.1 The RFO had produced budget analysis papers which were tabled.

245.2 To review payments made in 2008/09. Noted that:

§ From a budget total of £40,850 the sum of £18,699.50 had been spent. £2,024.29 of this had been spent under the provisions of S.137.

§ From a budget total of £4,913.81 for Outstanding Projects, the sum of £10 had been spent.

§ From a total of £19,161.39 in Designated Reserves, the sum of £1,020.02 had been spent.

245.3 To agree amounts to be carried forward as outstanding projects or to be transferred into designated reserves. AGREED that the following recommendations to be made to the Finance and General Purposes Committee:

§ The sum of £3,750 to be carried forward to Outstanding Projects

§ The sum of £4,800 to Designated Reserves

§ The sum of £13,600.50 to the General Reserve.

245.4 To review payments made to date in 2009/10. The figures were not yet available.

245.5 Budget 2010/11. The Chairman stated that at the next meeting Members should be thinking about what the Committee might want to do in the following year so that the budget could be planned accordingly. Good practice recommended to Councils was that they should engage in participatory budgeting: consulting with residents in advance of setting the budget. When the Committee had put together some ideas an article could be put into the Autumn newsletter.

Councillor Nicolle joined the meeting during the course of the next item (8.37 p.m.)

246. CURRENT MAINTENANCE.

246.1 NOTED that work had been done by Chris Hughes in the Medical Centre car park. He had also cleared the area alongside the toilets where prickly shrubs had become a nuisance. This area would be replanted in the Autumn.

246.2 Tree Wardens. Two new Tree Wardens had come forward: Lisa Offer and Ray Wicks and the Council was asked to give its approval so that WSCC could be notified. The new Tree Wardens would be supported by the existing Tree Wardens but both of them would later work in the Lindfield Rural Parish and would in due course need to approach that Council. AGREED to confirm the appointment of Lisa Offer and Ray Wicks as Tree Wardens and to notify WSCC.

247. WARDING: TO RECEIVE REPORTS ON WARD CHECKS.

247.1 Cllrs. Upton and Nicolle reported that a car had stood with a "for sale" notice on it in Newton Road for a few weeks and contractors had been unable to cut the grass around it. It was recognised that if the car was taxed there was probably little that could be done. Cllr. Upton agreed to check whether the tax disc was current.

Car park near All Saints Church: a signpost was obscured by weeds, the hedge needed cutting back, sycamore seedlings needed to be removed on the left side as attractive shrubs were being smothered.

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- 247.2 A complaint had been made to the Parish Office about overgrown vegetation on the left hand side of the footpath from Hickmans Lane behind The Welkin garages. The Clerk had referred this to the Access Ranger at WSCC. It was noted that there had been a request from a resident for the Parish Council to cut the hedge along this footpath some years previously. The Chairman stated that he would go and inspect this footpath.
- 247.3 It was noted that the old style street light by Spring Lane, which had been damaged by a vehicle, had now been removed. It was hoped that this would be replaced as it was the last one on the way out of the Village. AGREED to find out whether this light would be replaced.
- 247.4 Other matters noted by Members were reported on a day to day basis. It was noted that if Members had nothing to report to a meeting, it did not mean that they were not inspecting their wards and making a report at the time. However reporting to each E&A meeting was a way of remaining focused.
248. FINGER POSTS: WSCC COUNTYWIDE STRATEGY " A FUTURE FOR FINGERPOSTS"
- 248.1 NOTED: WSCC had given notice that they were no longer in a position to fund fingerpost repairs and replacements, although they would provide assistance in various forms. They had issued a schedule of costs for the various elements and Parishes could arrange for a third party to carry out repair work and ongoing future maintenance for which WSCC would draw up the necessary licences. A minimum of £10m public liability insurance was required for anyone working on the public highway. WSCC may also advise on sources of materials, provision of labour and plant to move or erect fingerposts or to provide specifications and local contacts and they would liaise regarding traffic management if necessary, which could be arranged and funded by WSCC.

There were only two old style finger posts in the Lindfield Parish: one at the Sunte Avenue/Gander Hill/Portsmouth Lane/Summerhill Lane cross roads and the other in the High Street outside Ryecroft, which was to be refurbished in due course.

249. FUTURE MAINTENANCE OF THE HIGH STREET AND COMPTON ROAD TREES: NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 MARCH 2009
- 249.1 The notes of the meeting were tabled. Those present had been: Cllrs. Blunden and Nicolle, Cllr. Mrs. Johnson, Mr. Ullmer (WSCC), Mr. Saunders (MSDC) and Mr. Tyler (Lindfield Preservation Society).
- 249.2 Epicormic growth. It was noted Cllr. Nicolle had removed a lot of epicormic growth but that this was not the easy task that had been anticipated and that the spoils, of which there was a huge amount, had to be disposed of. Mr. Ullmer had indicated that he would have no objection to the Parish Council arranging for the removal of the epicormic growth and Mr. Saunders had confirmed that planning permission was not necessary for this work. Members felt that if WSCC would not be dealing with this on a regular basis, it should be left to a contractor, with a clear specification to ensure that the work was done properly. It was AGREED recommend to Full Council to get contractors to remove the epicormic growth, subject to receipt of reasonable quotations.
- 249.3 Recommendations: The following recommendations were considered:
- Compton Road. The recommendation was that the tree outside Little Compton and the one opposite, at the entrance to Compton Road from Hickmans Lane, should be left as full size trees. The remaining Highway trees in Compton Road should be pollarded or repollarded in the Autumn of 2009 and repollarded thereafter on a three year cycle. AGREED.

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- High Street. Decision to be deferred until the Autumn to monitor how the trees responded during the Summer months to the recent pollarding. A maintenance programme in line with that for Compton Road could then be considered. AGREED.
- Funding As WSCC would only be able to pollard every four years on a twelve year cycle, it was proposed that WSCC should retain the responsibility for the trees and the Parish Council should make a contribution to allow pollarding every three years. AGREED.

It was noted that the cost to the Parish Council of contributing towards the ongoing maintenance on the basis agreed would be substantial and the RFO should be informed for budgeting purposes. Thanks were recorded to County Councillor Mrs. Margaret Johnson for all she had done to try to reach a solution for the trees that would be acceptable to everyone.

250. REVIEW OF SPRING CLEAN EVENT HELD ON 25 APRIL

- 250.1 The Spring Clean had been very successful. There had been about 35 volunteers litter picking, washing down posts and bins and removing epicormic growth from the High Street trees. The Highway Rangers had also come and cleaned up the north end gates, the large metal welcome signs at the other entries and other street furniture and they had helped with removal of epicormic growth. Thanks were recorded to: the volunteers, including children parents and staff of Blackthorns School, the Highway Rangers and SERCO who arranged for the order of new litter pickers and had provided gloves and bags, free of charge.

It was AGREED to hold the next Spring Clean on Saturday 17 April, subject to room availability at the King Edward Hall.

251. DENMANS LANE ALLOTMENTS. TO CONSIDER REQUEST FROM MR. AND MRS. C. TAYLOR FOR THE PARISH COUNCIL TO CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS MAINTENANCE OF THE GRAVEL DRIVE LEADING TO THE ALLOTMENTS SITE

- 251.1 Councillor Allen declared a prejudicial interest in this item and left the room.

- 251.2 A letter had been received from Mr. and Mrs. C. Taylor of 21 Denmans Lane making a request that the Parish Council make a contribution towards maintenance of the gravel path leading to the Denmans Lane Allotment Site. It was noted that the deeds for the Allotment Site stated that the Council had a duty to contribute towards maintenance of the path and if there was a genuine need for resurfacing the Council would be obliged, as a user of the path, to contribute. However the Chairman stated that it could be argued that the pea shingle surface was purely cosmetic. The E&A Committee, on 5 February 2002, had agreed not to make a contribution as it was felt that adding pea shingle could not be considered as maintenance. It was also noted that the pea shingle had been put down without consultation with the Parish Council. Members felt that the reasons previously given for not contributing towards reapplication of shingle were still relevant and were inclined not to support this request, but that advice should be taken as to whether maintaining the shingle surface could be interpreted as maintenance of the footpath according to the terms of the deeds.

Cllr. Allen rejoined the meeting.

252. RISK ASSESSMENT FOR ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

- 252.1 There was still work to do on the new risk management system, using the new software. Members had received copies of some of the print outs as an indication of what could be produced from it. The sheets would now be divided between the Members with specific responsibilities for different functions of the Committee for them to study and make suggestions as to scoring, other risks, actions etc.

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253. DROPPED KERBS - UPDATE

253.1 WSCC had notified the Parish Council that the dropped kerbs in the Newton Road / Eastern Road area should be put in the following week. The Clerk and Jonathan Ullmer who was responsible for dropped kerbs had made an inspection on 14 May and agreed that nine were needed in Newton Road/Eastern Road and these would be done by WSCC with a contribution of £4000 from the Parish Council to honour the original commitment. However the cost of dropped kerbs was significantly higher than Neil Smith had quoted - between £850 and £950 for a single crossing. Mr. Ullmer had indicated that the number of crossings that could be put in depended on the Parish Council's contribution. Two further double crossings in Compton Road and one in Hickmans Lane had previously been identified which would come to between £5100 and £5700. There was £1500 in the budget for the current year and there would be £500 over from the Newton Road/Eastern Road ones. Mr. Ullmer had stated that if the Parish Council paid two thirds of the cost there was a good chance of WSCC making up the difference to install dropped kerbs at the locations in Compton Road and Hickmans Lane. Two thirds of the total for these three kerbs would be £3800. It was AGREED to recommend to Full Council that WSCC should be asked to install dropped kerbs at the locations identified in Compton Road and Hickmans Lane on the basis of a 2/3 contribution from the Parish Council and that the balance of £1800 should be taken from the reserves.

254. RECYCLING AREA ON DENMANS LANE CAR PARK. TO CONSIDER WHETHER THIS AREA SHOULD BE USED AS A DISABLED PARKING BAY OR FOR CYCLE RACKS.

254.1 Mervyn Booth, MSDC's Officer responsible for car parks, had indicated that he was considering turning the former recycling area in the Denmans Lane car park into a disabled parking bay but he was prepared to consider its use for cycle racks. However, he first had to ascertain whether David Harper was considering retaining the area for recycling. The Parish Council had been asked whether it would prefer cycle racks or a disabled parking bay. Members considered that the two existing disabled parking bays were sufficient and that it had been difficult finding suitable locations for cycle racks. It was therefore AGREED to inform Mr. Booth that the Parish Council had expressed a preference for cycle racks.

255. NOMINATIONS FOR MSDC CHAIRMAN'S GARDEN PARTY.

255.1 The Parish Council had been invited to nominate one person to attend the Chairman's Garden Party. Names suggested so far by Members had been Richard Powell (Pond Warden) and Paul Frost (former Lindfield street sweeper), both of whom have been nominated in the past, and Jane Donald, one of the Lindfield Tree Wardens who was very active in this and in other roles in the community. It was AGREED to nominate Jane Donald and it was left to the Chairman's discretion to nominate someone else if she was unable to attend.

256. DENMANS LANE PUBLIC TOILETS

256.1 To note details of the Calabash contract (for nappy waste etc). Full Council on 12 May had approved the contract for nappy waste, sanitary bins, sharps and air fresh units, which had come out at a higher sum than originally anticipated. It was NOTED that this was to cost £1765.25 a year including VAT and the contract was for 3 years.

256.2 Ongoing maintenance of the installation. A quotation for ongoing maintenance of the newly refurbished WCs had been received from Premier Hygienic Ltd. of which Members had received a copy. The contract would cost £3500 p.a. plus VAT. Because of the amount spent on the refurbishment and the specialist nature of the installation Members felt that it should be maintained by the company that installed it. The contract provided for four routine service visits plus three emergency visits a year. It was AGREED to enter into this contract with immediate effect.

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257 ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

257.1 No items of other business were raised.

This part of the meeting ended at 9.32.

There followed a further period for questions / comments from members of the public.

Sub Committees and Working Groups. Mr. N. Kerlake commented that for formal groups a set of notes would have to be produced for every meeting, adding to the workload.

Warding. Mr. Kerlake stated that what mattered was that things were being done which was not happening. Councillors should take gloves and bags out on their ward inspections and pick up litter.

Fingerposts. Mr. Kerlake indicated his support for WSCC having a clear specification for work undertaken by third parties.

Lime Trees. Mr. Kerlake expressed concern about the decision on epicormic growth and stated that there must be a specification for contractors to prevent use of chain saws. The growth needed to be cut back close to the trunk so use of secateurs should be specified. It was also important to get at least two quotations on the basis of a clear specification.

Denmans Lane Allotments. Mr. Kerlake believed that there was no obligation on the Parish Council to maintain anything on the private road leading to the allotments. Any work carried out must be with the agreement of all stakeholders. It should be made clear to the residents of that road that the Parish Council was under no obligation to contribute towards work about which they had not been consulted.

Agendas. Cllr. Mr. C. Hersey (MSDC) suggested that it would be helpful to members of the public if a list of the Committee members was shown on agendas.

The meeting ended at 9.40 p.m.