

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Amenities Committee held on 7 APRIL 2009 at the King Edward Hall, Lindfield.

Present: Mr. W. Blunden (Chairman)
Mr. M. Allen (from 8.10 p.m.)
Mrs. M. Nicolle (Vice Chairman)
Mr. R. Pickett
Mrs. V. Upton

Also Present: 3 members of the public.

In attendance: Mrs. C. Irwin

The meeting began at 8.00 p.m.

214. WELCOME AND EMERGENCY ANNOUNCEMENTS.

214.1 The Chairman welcomed all those present and announced the emergency procedures for the King Edward Hall.

215. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

215.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Leach, Gomme, Hersey and Johnson and the reasons accepted.

216. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS IN RESPECT OF ANY MATTER ON THE AGENDA.

216.1 Cllr. Blunden declared a personal interest in item 17 as an allotment tenant and Cllr. Pickett also declared a personal interest in that item as his wife was an allotment tenant.

217. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

217.1 Proposed Bus shelter in the High Street. Mr. Verrall spoke against the proposed bus shelter on the grounds that he considered that it would become an extension to the Stand Up, and may encourage young people to gather there and possibly lead to vandalism. Mr. Verrall stated that it would be unfair on the neighbouring residents, there had never been a bus shelter there before and there was a possibility that people would shelter there while waiting for the south bound bus and taking risks running across the road when the bus arrived. Mr. Verrall suggested that new toilets on the Common would be a much better use of public money.

217.2 Public Toilets. Mr. N. Kerslake commended three members for their part in getting the work carried out on the public toilets in Denmans Lane. Cllr. Johnson had taken an active role in the early stages, then Cllr. Pickett had taken responsibility for overseeing the refurbishment and Cllr. Blunden had made regular visits to the site while the work was being carried out. Mr. Kerslake stated that the result, which was nearing completion, was a credit to all three Councillors and he hoped that when future projects were being undertaken by the Parish Council, other Councillors would follow suit and take over the supervision of the projects.

217.3 Maintenance. Mr. Kerslake commented on the condition of the street furniture in the Village. Attention should be given to the railings dividing the footpath from the High Street to the Medical Centre, litter bins, railings by the Pond, seats on the Common and the finger post outside Rycroft. All these features were in need of attention and there should be a policy in place detailing the nature and frequency of maintenance on each of these. Mr. Kerslake went on to comment on the need for the Parish Council to insist on new

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posts being painted black, because of the Conservation Area, noting that recently installed signs had silver metal poles.

218. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE HELD ON 5 FEBRUARY 2009

218.1 The Chairman thanked Cllr. Nicolle for chairing that meeting in his absence due to illness.

218.2 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Amenities Committee held on 5 February 2009. The Minutes were AGREED and signed by the Chairman as being a true record of that meeting.

219. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT.

219.1 Street Cleaning. It was noted that, following an article in the recent newsletter, the Parish Council had received two emails from members of the public, drawing attention to the difference in the standard of street cleaning under the new arrangements. The Chairman read out an article entitled "MSDC warm to our Mr. Frost" from the March edition of The Bugle – a quarterly newsletter written by and for SERCO's workforce at Bridge Road: "Our very own Paul Frost was recently involved in the re-structuring of the street sweeper schedules and rounds and was newly placed in the Haywards Heath town area where he has immediately made a big impact on MSDC. In fact they have commented on how they ever managed without him, such is Paul's high standard of work. However, someone had to lose out on this occasion it was Lindfield and Cuckfield. For 17 years Paul has kept their respective High Streets clean and tidy. The two Parish Councils awarded Paul for all his years of service to their communities. Lindfield and Cuckfield are now in the capable hands of Dave Goatcher and Douglas Bonner and we are sure they will keep up the standards set by Paul. Congratulations to you Paul."

Members were not satisfied that the final sentence reflected reality. Areas reported by members of the public had been checked by members of the Committee and the standard of cleaning was nothing like it had been when this was Paul Frost's round. It was noted that the village streets were cleaned, but the frequency and standard were questioned. It was AGREED that these comments should be passed on to SERCO and MSDC. Cllr. Allen wished to record thanks to those who had responded and to the Chairman for being pre-emptory.

220. REPORT ON ACTION / PROJECT PROGRESS LIST.

220.1 The list which had been tabled at the meeting was noted without comment. A number of items were to be discussed or noted later on the Agenda.

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

221.1 NOTED: after consultation with the RFO, the payments to residents for energy used for the Christmas lights had been slightly increased.

221.2 NOTED that for the period from 1 January to 28 February 2009 :

- From a budget total of £40,450.00, the sum of £16,560.69 had been spent, of which £2,024.29 had been spent under the provisions of Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972.
- From a budget total of £4,913.81 for Outstanding Projects, the sum of £10.00 had been spent.
- From a budget total of £19,161.39 for Designated Reserves, £149.00 been spent.

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- During March 2009, payments had been made in respect of
 - the resurfacing of the Horse Gin (£1693.95) – it was noted that this work had been carried out to a very high standard.
 - contribution to WSCC towards the new street lights in The Welkin (£500)
 - hedging plants for the hedge on the allotment site (£332.35) plus sundry other smaller amounts. 50% of the cost of the plants would be recovered by way of a grant from WSCC
- During April 2009, payments had been made in respect of
 - a new scythe for the Denmans Lane Allotments site (£960.00) – this was to replace the old Allen Scythe. The new machine would be an effective means of controlling the long grass, brambles and weeds.
 - maintenance work done by Chris Hughes (£195.00)

221.3 Other projects were under way but not yet completed and invoices not yet received. An invoice from WSCC for £4000.00 for dropped kerbs in the Newton Road area was being retained until the work had been done. It was noted that WSCC may have to get outside contractors in to do this work which would increase the cost to WSCC, but this would not be passed down to the Parish. The Blacksmith had now finished the work on the Black Hill litter bin and replaced it so an invoice could be expected shortly. The Best Kept Village Sign was just awaiting the gold leaf work – Richard Bradshaw had located a suitable person in Uckfield to do this. AGREED to put up a statement on the notice board as there had been a number of enquiries as to what had happened to the sign.

221.4 Malcolm Beaton of WSCC had obtained a price (£3,500.00) for the new light on the Common and he was willing to arrange for the contractor to install the light on behalf of the Parish Council. £500 would be paid to the Parish Council by WSCC as a grant, already agreed by the Community Safety Unit, which brought the price to the sum allocated for this in the 2009/10 budget. AGREED that the order should be placed through WSCC.

222. CURRENT MAINTENANCE.

222.1 Councillor Nicolle reported that she had not contacted Chris Hughes recently, but she suggested asking him to do some work on the beds in the Tollgate Car Park, some of which were in need of attention. This was AGREED subject to liaison with Rupert Browning of MSDC, as their contractors took care of some of the beds in the Car Park. Members were asked to inform Cllr. Nicolle if there were any other tasks that Mr. Hughes could be asked to do at the same time. Cllr. Allen asked for thanks to be recorded to Cllr. Nicolle for her attention to this aspect of Village maintenance over the years.

223. WARDING: TO RECEIVE REPORTS ON WARD CHECKS.

223.1 Reports from Cllrs. Gomme, Blunden and Cllrs Upton and Nicolle were noted. Cllr. Allen had reported on specific matters concerning his ward as they arose. Cllr. Pickett stated that the main concern in his ward was the condition of the road in The Welkin near the junction with Hickmans Lane, where there were deep potholes.

224. STREET LIGHTING MAINTENANCE CONTRACT: TO NOTE ACCEPTANCE OF CONTRACT BY SOUTHERN ELECTRIC CONTRACTING

224.1 Terry Edmonds, New Business Manager of Southern Electric Contracting had written to confirm that the company would take on the maintenance of the Parish Council's lights. The Clerk had sent the necessary paperwork on to him and Mr. Edmonds and a colleague, who would be supervising the operational work had been into the Parish Office to introduce themselves. At the start of the contract there would be a bulk

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lamp change; all lanterns would be cleaned and an electrical test of the lighting units carried out followed by issue of test certificates. This initial work was to be carried out during the next few weeks.

224.2 The Committee had already agreed for the lamp columns to be numbered and it was further AGREED that the numbering should be by road rather than sequentially through the village.

225. PROPOSED BUS SHELTER FOR HIGH STREET.

225.1 The Parish Council had put a notice in the recent Newsletter published in Lindfield Life asking members of the public to comment on the proposal for a bus shelter outside the Stand Up. Mr. Verrall's comments as expressed at the beginning of this meeting were noted along with other comments received, some of which had suggested that the opposite side of the road would be a better location as more people caught the bus there. Businesses and residents in the immediate vicinity had not yet been individually consulted. The original request had come from a few members of the public who used that bus stop where there were no shop canopies for shelter as on the other side. Enquiries about putting a shelter on the side near Mark Revill had met with opposition from the proprietor of that business. Having heard the arguments against the bus shelter outside the Stand Up, Members AGREED to defer making a decision on this to allow further and wider consultation.

226. BENCHES IN HICKMANS LANE

226.1 At the Wish List meeting with Rupert Browning on 11 March Cllr. Blunden had asked if the seat on the slope on Hickmans Lane field opposite Finches Gardens could be moved down to the footway level and slightly along towards Finches Park Road. Councillor Pickett would liaise with WSCC regarding a new seat opposite Brookway to replace the one removed after it was vandalised.

227. LITTER BINS

227.1 Report on the condition of litter bins. Cllrs. Blunden and Upton had surveyed all the bins and had tabled a report listing all the bins with priority ratings for maintenance.

AGREED:

- the maintenance schedule
- the worst of the metal bins should be refurbished and that liners (where needed) and tops should be included
- the bin on the post in the footpath between the King Edward Hall and the White Horse should be replaced with one of a similar type but with a hood to prevent large items being put in it.
- Bin cleaning to be included as a job at the Spring Clean.
- Wooden bins to be repaired by Matt Coppard

227.2 Purchase of new bin for West Common bus shelter. NOTED that an additional bin was needed by the bus shelter on West Common, opposite Chestnuts Close as crisp packets etc accumulated in the corner of the shelter. AGREED to buy an additional bin: the Topsy Jubilee model from Glasdon in black, as agreed for Denmans Lane.

228. LIAISON ("WISH LIST") MEETINGS

228.1 Meeting held with MSDC on 11 March 2009. The notes of the meeting were accepted and the points noted. Members commented on the good working relationship the Parish Council had with Rupert Browning of MSDC.

228.2 Meeting held with WSCC on 1 April 2009. The notes of the meeting were tabled. It was noted that Neil Smith was to be moving to the Southern Area Highways Department. AGREED to send a letter to WSCC expressing appreciation for the good working relationship the Parish Council had had with Mr. Smith. The

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Chairman also wished to record thanks to Paul Stanford who was the local superintendent and who had attended the recent Wish List meeting and had responded the next day on actions taken resulting from issues raised at the meeting. Health and safety issues relating to potholes were noted, in particular a large hole in Backwoods Lane at the entrance to School Lane. The notes of the meeting held on 1 April 2009 were accepted.

229. SPRING CLEAN – 25 APRIL.

229.1 The Highway Rangers had confirmed their attendance to help with some of the heavier work and washing down street furniture. They were to be given a list in advance to help with organisation and a photograph would be taken of the team working together with the Parish volunteers. Twenty new litter pickers had been obtained through SERCO for a total of £146.74 including VAT and a box of sacks had been given free of charge. Paul Hickman of SERCO had promised to put bins out on the Common: a recycling bin and one for other waste so bottles and cans would have to be collected separately for recycling. A press release with a photograph would be sent to the Mid Sussex Times. Members were asked to inspect their wards for tasks needing doing as a substantial list of jobs for all abilities was needed.

230. DENMANS LANE ALLOTMENTS, TO INCLUDE:

Having declared a personal interest due to his wife being an allotment tenant, Councillor Allen left the room.

230.1 New hedge on the boundary. The Chairman was pleased to report that the hedge had now been planted, following the digging of a trench 2' wide, 100m long and a spit deep and removal of weeds. It was hoped that this hedge would be an asset. Members wished to record their thanks to Cllr. Blunden and others who had helped with this work: Richard Powell, Ian Cooper, Tim Richardson and Jim Stockwell. AGREED to place an article in Lindfield Life. NOTED that the invoice for the plants and stakes had been received and forwarded to WSCC so that the grant of 50% could be paid.

230.2 Purchase of new scythe. NOTED: a new scythe had been bought for £960.00 - over the internet to get the best price: a saving of around £300. The Chairman had ordered by credit card, after clearing this with the Clerk as it was the only payment option available. This was to be reimbursed by cheque. Richard Powell had used the new scythe and was very impressed with the ease in which it cut through the rough grass and weeds. Use of the scythe would be restricted to Mr. Powell and Cllr. Blunden who had received appropriate training.

230.3 Repair of the Mountfield mower. NOTED that it had been necessary to get the Mountfield mower repaired at considerable cost (£208.31) due to misuse by an allotment tenant. When the mower was returned it would be locked in a separate shed and its use would be restricted to Richard Powell, Cllr. Blunden and Cllr. Allen, Tim Richardson, Ian Cooper and Jim Stockwell, to reduce the risk of damage in the future.

230.4 Demand for Allotment Plots. As there were 62 people on the waiting list it was AGREED that in future any 5 rod plots would be divided into 2 before re-letting. NOTED that the demand for allotments had been highlighted recently in the press and at both the Clerks' Networking Day and the MSALC / MSDC conference the previous week. Trevor Leggo of SALC had reminded Councils of their duty to provide allotments and he had listed the steps to be considered to satisfy the demand:

Land within the parish owned by the PC

Land within the parish that can be bought by the PC

Land within the parish that can be rented by the PC

Find out whether neighbouring parish has spare allotment plots that could be used by our parish

Land outside the parish that could be bought by the PC

Land outside the parish that could be rented by the PC

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When all these options had been fully investigated and the demand still could not be satisfied, there was a case for asking the District Council to act on the Parish Council's behalf in a compulsory purchase of suitable land. AGREED that a small working group comprising Cllrs. Blunden, Nicolle and Pickett should investigate options outside the existing site. SALC were conducting a survey on the demand and provision of allotments to which a response would be sent.

231. RISK ASSESSMENT FOR ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES.

231.1 A new specially designed computer package was about to be ordered which should facilitate the documentation. Meanwhile, checks were being carried out as required.

232. REQUEST FROM METROBUS TO PUT TIMETABLE HOLDERS INSIDE THE WOODEN SHELTERS ON BLACK HILL AND WEST COMMON.

232.1 Metrobus had phoned the clerk to ask whether the Parish Council would agree to them putting timetable holders inside the wooden bus shelters on Black Hill and West Common, where there were no poles. WSCC would pay for them and Metrobus would maintain them and deal with graffiti. They would not be easily pulled off and Metrobus had given assurance that the job would be done properly. This was AGREED. It was noted that the bus timetable had been missing from the bus stop outside the Butchers for some time.

233. DENMANS LANE PUBLIC TOILETS: ONGOING MAINTENANCE OF THE INSTALLATION.

233.1 The refurbishment of the toilets was nearing completion, and the ongoing maintenance should be considered. ISS, the cleaning contractors, had stated that they could not empty the sharps containers which had been fitted as part of the tissue unit, nor would they remove sanitary and nappy waste, which was classed as bio-hazardous waste and they did not hold the necessary certificates. The tissue dispensers also contained a litter disposal chute with a bin on the other side to be emptied from the service area and it was likely that sanitary waste would be disposed of in this receptacle unless other provision was made. MSDC's contractor for sanitary and nappy waste was Calabash, based in London, and the Clerk had arranged to meet their representative the following week.

Cllr. Allen rejoined the meeting.

As baby changing surfaces had been installed in all three cubicles, nappy disposal bins should be provided. The cost would depend on frequency of service but Calabash had estimated: approximately £300 p.a. for the "lady care" bin and £150 p.a. for the nappy bin (Calabash would provide the bins and deal with waste) plus another £100 p.a. for sharps removal. The Clerk had also emailed the British Toilets Association to enquire about other service providers. Members considered three options:

- Engage a company with the necessary certificate to deal with sharps and sanitary waste in addition to ISS (Calabash did not do cleaning)
- Change cleaning contractors to one which would deal with the waste as well as regular cleaning
- Blank off the chutes and risk sanitary waste being flushed down the toilets and causing blockages – (Premier would charge for blanking off the chutes).

As it appeared that re-opening was imminent, it was AGREED to authorise the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Cllr. Pickett to negotiate a contract for sharps, nappies and sanitary waste and report to Full Council in May. The arrangements would be reviewed after an appropriate period.

233.2 Premier should be prepared to deal with faults within 12 months (apart from damage due to vandalism) under normal consumer rights. But the Council would need to consider ongoing maintenance of the installation. The Clerk had emailed Premier to find out what service they could provide after the first year,

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which was likely to be expensive, but by using Premier for repairs to their installation it should ensure that the work was done to industry standard. Requirements for water treatment were to be investigated and reported to Full Council or the next meeting of the Committee.

234. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

234.1 NOTED: receipt of a letter requesting a contribution towards the maintenance of the gravel drive to allotments site which would be considered as an agenda item at the next meeting of the Committee. Councillor Allen declared a prejudicial interest in this item as he was well acquainted with the writer of the letter.

234.2 NOTED: a letter of thanks from Canon and Mrs. Bridgman for the installation of the new street lights at The Welkin.

This part of the meeting ended at 9.15 p.m. There followed a further questions / comments session for members of the public.

Gravel Drive to the Allotments Site. Mr. N. Kerslake stated that previous involvement in maintenance of the drive had been documented and he advised the Council not to go beyond what had been done before.

Bus shelters. Mr. Kerslake stated that if there was doubt, no action should be taken.

The meeting ended at 9.20 p.m.