

## **Closing report of the COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE Focus Group**

Name of Lead: Valerie Upton

Date and time: 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2013

**Introduction** (Aim, members, current situation of community under this theme)

### **Members.**

Tracy Ely  
Richard Cox  
Rod Hodgkinson  
Sue Spooner  
Val Upton

### **Aim.**

To assess the current situation with regard to infrastructure and services and the impact of any ongoing development.

### **Current situation.**

In summary, infrastructure services such as schools, medical services, and social facilities are close to full capacity or oversubscribed and most are unable to expand. Existing planning applications, if approved, would result in services working beyond capacity.

### **Evidence gathered / Work undertaken (summary)**

- Interviews arranged with representatives of persons/groups responsible for the running/maintenance of the assets identified and questionnaires completed to record views and comments made.
- There have been 2 pop- in -sessions one in Scaynes Hill and the other in Lindfield. These sessions were organised to consult with the community. Sheets were provided for those who attended to make comments.
- 101 people attended Scaynes Hill and 77 In Lindfield village.
- Summary of community assets identified in Lindfield Village, Scaynes Hill and Great Walstead.
- Interviews arranged with representatives of persons/groups responsible for the running/maintenance of the assets identified.
- Questionnaires completed to record views and comments made.

### **Focus group general recommendation on future development**

- 1.Residents would support small scale housing development but not large.
- 1.The community Infrastructure would be unable to support large developments.
- 2.Schools in Lindfield as well as the medical centre are oversubscribed and cannot be expanded.
- 3.All development in the future must safeguard the nature of Lindfield as a village community and enhance Lindfield as an historic village.

**List of documents, bodies, groups, individuals etc consulted (*could include names and contacts if approved by consultees*)**

1. Claire Stone, co-chairman of the Group Executive committee of 1<sup>st</sup> Lindfield Scout Group, Lindfield.
  - Questionnaire following meeting
  - Copy website literature and Spring Newsletter
2. Paul, The Kitchen People – representative of Lindfield Traders
  - Questionnaire following meeting
  - Copy website literature
3. Mr W Blunden, Trustee for The Lindfield Club
  - Questionnaire completed via telephone conversation and e-mail
4. Marianne Brand, Head Teacher, Blackthorns Community Primary School.
  - Questionnaire following initial meeting and e-mail
  - School prospectus
5. Mr S Cartwright, Trustee for King Edward Hall.
  - Questionnaire following initial telephone conversation and e-mail
  - Copy April diary
  - Copy website literature
  - Copy list of regular hirers
6. Mr. Bob White, headmaster lindfield Primary School
  - Questionnaire following e-mail
7. Mr. Alan Jones, one of a group of leaders at Lindfield Evangelical Free Church
  - Questionnaire given to Mr. Jones to look at.
  - Questionnaire completed after appointment made to meet with him.
8. Revd. Charles Martin, minister of the United Reformed Church.
  - Questionnaire sent after making an appointment to meet.
  - Questionnaire completed
  - After a Elders meeting I was contacted by one of the elders Mr. David Waters to ask if the elders could complete the questionnaire, as there were concerns that they thought the information I had been given was from more of a personal view of the minister. New form completed by the elders.
  - All Saints Church, Canon James Clarke contacted by e-mail, and spoken to, would like to complete questionnaire with another member of the church. Questionnaire not yet completed.
9. Tessa Clarke, practice manager Northlands Wood medical centre.
  - Questionnaire following e-mail
10. Christine Howard practice manager Lindfield Medical Centre
  - Questionnaire following e-mail
11. Dolphins Medical centre

- Visited
- Telephone calls
- Questionnaire sent awaiting completion

## **Conclusions**

- The King Edward Hall, Scout hut, All Saints Church, United Reformed Church and the Evangelical Free Church fully support the local community by providing venues offering a range of social, worship and educational activities across all age groups.
- An increase in demand for these services will be difficult to accommodate as they are all near to or have already reached maximum capacity and there is very little opportunity to expand their existing sites.
- Large scale development would have to result in new medical facilities and schools as well as the village hall, being expanded, which would fundamentally change the character of the village.
- The construction of new buildings in the heart of the village is not possible because it is a conservation area with many grade listed buildings.
- We need to recognise the economic and environmental benefits of low impact farming in the parish, which would be adversely affected by large scale housing development.
- Local shops in the High street cannot expand.
- Residents are asking for a cycle path from Lindfield to Scaynes Hill, as well as a bus service.
- The village is unable to support large developments, as this would detrimentally affect the overall nature of the village, which is of important historic interest to visitors as well as residents.

## COMMUNITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE REPORT LINDFIELD RURAL

### WHO CONTACTED?

4 visits to The Anchor coffee shop. Spoke to a variety of ages (approx 8-10 each time) and left a questionnaire.

### OUTCOME

1. Wanted bus to Lindfield.
2. Wanted tennis court.
3. Affordable housing for young (within reason)
4. Retirement bungalows so elderly can remain in the village.
5. Farm shop with possible PO.
6. ATM and notice board.
7. Allotments.
8. Surgery in Millennium centre.
9. Most wanted the Inn on the Green to remain as a pub. Some suggested selling and converting into flats for the elderly with a warden.

### OVERALL FEELING

All wanted to maintain the atmosphere and friendliness of the village.

### WHO CONTACTED?

Questionnaire sent to St Augustine's School (see enclosed). Could the school encourage more children from outside the area in order to remain viable?  
Questionnaire sent to Great Walstead School (declined as already consulting a planning consultant)

### WHO CONTACTED?

Questionnaire sent to Scouts (approx 10) and Cubs (see enclosed) Cubs did not respond.

### OUTCOME

1. Would like a tennis court.
2. Would like a skate park.
- 3.

### WHO CONTACTED?

Spoke with Dan and Charlotte at The Inn on the Green. Seemed keen on new ideas. Had already considered a farm shop and were interested in my findings. The pub could be the hub of the village with a farm shop selling local produce, possible PO, ATM and notice board.

### OUTCOME

Dan and Charlotte are now leaving. Could we find out why the pub keeps failing, why two people with good ideas are moved on and how things could be changed so our pub survives? Most people feel strongly about keeping the pub because of its history.

### WHO CONTACTED?

Local WI with questionnaire. Out of approx 30 members (a few come from outside the village) I had 9 responses.

### OUTCOME

1. A surgery in perhaps the Millennium centre would be helpful for the elderly together with a pharmacy and foot clinic.
2. 7 would like a farm shop.
3. 4 would like allotments
4. 5 would like a bus to Lindfield.

### RESULTS OF POP-IN SESSION APRIL 20<sup>th</sup>

1. Many people expressed dismay at the constant failure of the Inn on the Green public house. The latest managers seemed open to the idea of a shop (see my report) but have since been moved on, having only been there since last November.
2. There must have been at least 12 different managers over the past 15 years.
3. What is going wrong? Most people feel it is too big as a pub and not very welcoming but would like to keep it as the centre of the village. Could someone approach the owners, Enterprise Holdings and discuss the future. If it isn't going to survive as a pub, the alternatives suggested are a hotel, restaurant, or conversion into flats for the elderly with live-in carer which of course would depend on Enterprise selling up.
4. Bus into Lindfield. West Sussex has a 12 seater, could this be viable? The bus into Haywards Heath is quite often almost empty and does not run during the evening. Perhaps this bus could also be replaced by a smaller one that runs for longer hours, earlier for those catching a train to London and later for those going out for the evening.
5. Cycle track through Costells Wood linking the villages and schools so children were kept off the now very busy main roads. Cycle paths along the main road.
6. Could St Augustine's school be used by the community more after school hours and at weekends? There are many facilities eg. computers which could be used and bring in some revenue to the school. The cricket club would like a bigger field. Could this be on plot 515 Eastlands which had been suggested for housing? The existing pitch could then be used for housing instead. Perhaps the cricket club could also incorporate extra play facilities for the young e.g. a skate park
7. Tennis court and covered seating for the recreation ground.
8. Shop, especially a farm shop with Post Office. To encourage the community to come together more often. This idea has proved to be very popular with many residents. If not housed in the pub, could we find somewhere else? Could it be run by the community?
9. Dog fouling is on the increase and needs to be dealt with severely.

10. The footpath from Hillcrest Lane down to the A272 running beside the Inn on the Green is now in a terrible state with lots of muddy holes.

### **SWOT Analysis**

#### **Strengths**

- Lindfield and Scaynes Hill community spirit is high and is valued by residents
- Residents support development plans for Lindfield and Scaynes Hill that maintain the historic nature of the Lindfield area and access to countryside.
- The centre of Lindfield village is a conservation area where major change and development cannot take place

#### **Weakness**

- Infrastructure cannot expand should large scale developments take place
- No joined up thinking during the planning process to consider infrastructure needs
- Increasing population will require more parking facilities in Lindfield otherwise there will be a detrimental impact on traders

#### **Opportunities**

- The scale of future development can be managed to ensure the wider Lindfield community is protected and enhanced
- Improved facilities can be provided for residents
- Cycle paths between Scaynes Hill & Lindfield are supported by the residents and if constructed would reduce the feeling of isolation in Scaynes Hill
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#### **Threats**

- Residents believe large scale development would destroy the village community and result in infrastructure services under tremendous strain with a subsequent reduction in the quality of services
- Repeated medium size development would be detrimental