

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the **ANNUAL MEETING** of LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL held on **THURSDAY, 14 MAY 2020** using Microsoft Teams.

The meeting commenced at 19:00.

Parish Councillors:	Mr. W. Blunden (Chair)	Mrs. M. Hersey	Mr. R. Plass
	Mrs. V. Upton (Vice-Chair)	Mr. M. Leach	Mr. J. Stevens (*)
	Mrs. L. Grace	Mr. A. Matthews	Mr. I. Wilson
	Mr. S. Henton	Mr. R. Pickett	Mr. C. Wood

(*) Denotes absence

Also present: No members of the public were present

In attendance: Mr. A. Funnell (Clerk)

135. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN.

135.1 In accordance with Standing Order 5f, Cllr Blunden opened the meeting and presided for this item. Nominations for the office of Chairman of Council were called. Cllr Blunden was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Upton and **SECONDED** by Cllr Leach. There being no further nominations, Cllr William Blunden was duly **ELECTED** as Chairman of Lindfield Parish Council for the Council year 2020/21.

136. TO RECEIVE THE CHAIRMAN'S DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE, OR IF NOT THEN RECEIVED, TO DECIDE WHEN IT SHALL BE RECEIVED.

136.1 Cllr Blunden read aloud his Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Chairman of Lindfield Parish Council. It was **NOTED** that the declaration would be signed at a later date in the presence of the Proper Officer who counter-signed the declaration. Cllr Blunden assumed his position as Chairman for the remainder of the meeting.

137. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN.

137.1 Cllr Blunden **PROPOSED** Cllr Upton for the office of Vice Chairman of Council, **SECONDED** by Cllr Hersey. There being no other nominations, Cllr Valerie Upton was duly **ELECTED** as Vice Chairman of Lindfield Parish Council for the Council year 2020/21.

138. TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE

138.1 Apologies had been received from Cllr Stevens, the apologies were accepted. Due to technical issues Cllr Wilson was able to hear the meeting but could not participate.

139. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

139.1 There were no declarations of interest.

140. TO CONFIRM AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 12 MARCH 2020.

140.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 12 March 2020. These were **AGREED** and the Chairman would sign the Minutes as being a true record of that meeting at a later date.

141. TO REVIEW AND CONFIRM THE DELEGATION ARRANGEMENTS TO COMMITTEES, SUB COMMITTEES AND OFFICERS, TO APPOINT COMMITTEES AND REVIEW THEIR TERMS OF REFERENCE.

141.1 **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the Scheme of Delegation to Committees, Sub Committees and Officers with no amendments.

142. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO COMMITTEES

142.1 It was **NOTED** that the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council were, ex officio, voting members of every committee.

142.2 **RESOLVED:** to appoint Members to the Committees as follows:

Environment and Amenities Committee: Cllrs Blunden, Henton, Matthews, Pickett, Plass, Stevens, Upton, Wilson, & Wood
Finance and General Purposes Committee: Cllrs Blunden, Grace, Henton, Hersey, Leach, Pickett, & Upton
Planning and Traffic Committee: Cllrs Blunden, Grace, Hersey, Leach, Matthews, Plass, Stevens, Upton, Wilson, & Wood

143. TO REVIEW AND CONFIRM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

i) Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

Standing Orders. It was **AGREED** to confirm the policy at present, but the Policies Working Group would continue with its review of the document and report back to the F&GP Committee.

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Financial Regulations. It was **AGREED** to confirm the policy at present, but the Policies Working Group would continue with its review of the document and report back to the F&GP Committee.

- ii) Council's Complaints Procedure. It was **AGREED** to confirm the policy at present, but the Policies Working Group would continue with its review of the document and report back to the F&GP Committee.
- iii) Procedures for handling requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Data Protection Act 1998
It was **AGREED** to confirm the policy at present, but the Policies Working Group would continue with its review of the document and report back to the F&GP Committee.
- iv) Policy for dealing with the press/media. It was **AGREED** to confirm the policy.
- v) Council's and/or staff membership of other bodies and to consider the payment of any subscriptions falling to be paid annually.

RESOLVED to **CONFIRM** the annual subscriptions to the following organisations for 2020/21.

- West Sussex ALC Ltd (SALC) includes subscription to National Association of Local Councils. Annual Subscription - £1,882.51 (no VAT) (Apr 2020).
- Local Council Review - quarterly periodical. Annual subscription (discounted rate for NALC subscribers) paid through SSALC - £17.00 (May 2020).
- The Historic Towns Forum (in partnership with the Association of Small Historic Towns and Villages [ASHTAV]). Annual membership - £25.00.
- Mid Sussex Association of Local Councils. Voluntary annual contribution - £10.00 (Jun 2020)
- Action in Rural Sussex (formerly Sussex Rural Community Council). Annual Membership – Free- (Apr 2020)
- Society of Local Council Clerks. (Clerk's membership) Annual membership - £254.00 (Mar 2020).
- The Open Spaces Society. Annual membership - £45.00 (Aug 2020)
- Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE). Annual membership - £36.00 (Apr 2020).
- British Toilets Association. Annual membership - £50 plus VAT (Aug 2020)
- Information Commissioner's Office Data Protection Registration – Annual Registration Fee £35 (Feb 2020)

144. TO REVIEW AND CONFIRM ARRANGEMENTS

- i) Insurance cover in respect of all insured risks. It was **NOTED** that the council would at the end of the month be starting a new three-year agreement with Zurich.
- ii) Setting the dates, times and place of ordinary meetings of the Council for the year ahead - **RESOLVED** that, in normal circumstances, there should be no change to the frequency or pattern of meetings and that the meeting dates for the 2021 calendar year should be arranged by the Clerk in consultation with the King Edward Hall Booking Secretary, for confirmation at a later meeting. Due to the current Covid-19 situation, meetings would be using Microsoft Teams and meeting start times had moved to 7pm.
- iii) Reviewing the pay and conditions of service of existing members of staff. - **RESOLVED**: that this matter be delegated to the Finance and General Purposes Committee according to the Council's custom.

145. REVIEW OF INVENTORY OF LAND AND ASSETS INCLUDING BUILDINGS AND OFFICE EQUIPMENT

145.1 A summary of the updated asset register had been circulated and it was **NOTED** that the full register was available for members to inspect at the Parish Office.

146. REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

146.1 **RESOLVED**: that the following representatives be appointed to outside bodies:

Two representatives to West Sussex ALC Ltd - Cllrs Blunden and Upton

Two representatives to the Mid Sussex Association of Local Councils - Cllrs Blunden and Upton

One representative to the Mid-Sussex Older People's Council - Cllr Upton

Two representatives to the Lindfield Enterprise Park Shareholders group - the Clerk and the RFO. The Deputy Clerk would attend in the absence of the RFO

Gatwick Airport Town and Parish Liaison Group - Cllr Hersey.

It was **AGREED** that the representatives on outside bodies should report back to Council or a relevant Committee as and when appropriate.

147. TO NOTE AND CONFIRM THE LIST OF DIRECT DEBITS AND REGULAR CONTRACTS.

147.1 The list of Direct Debits which included several variable payments was **NOTED** and **CONFIRMED**.

147.2 The list of contracts, agreements and regular payments paid by cheque was **CONFIRMED**.

148. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

148.1 No members of the public were present.

149. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

149.1 The Chairman hoped that everyone was in good health and that the crisis would end soon.

150. REPORTS BY COUNTY COUNCILLOR / DISTRICT COUNCILLORS.

150.1 Apologies had been received from Cllrs Anthea Lea, Andrew Lea, & Jonathan Ash-Edwards.

150.2 The following reports were received by email before the meeting:

West Sussex County Council (Cllr Andrew Lea):

As you would expect, the Corona virus outbreak has been impacting all aspects of the County's work. Meetings are occurring virtually, and (in my opinion) are running very well.

I serve on the Children's and Young People's Services scrutiny committee, which has "met" to scrutinise the closure of certain schools which are not in this District.

The County Council meeting has been cancelled. I am hopeful, though, that future County Council meetings will still occur, though not in person, because matters still need to be attended to, not least how to address the Covid19 crisis. It seems probable, however, that County Local Committees will not restart soon, although I understand that in both these cases the final decision has yet to be made.

Highways has had challenges in getting hold of the materials to fill potholes, which is why fewer have been filled over the County. I understand this is supply chain issue. This same issue, along with the difficulty of workers being in lockdown, has also meant that roadworks could not be brought forward into this reduced-road use period, although I understand some work has restarted.

Locally I have been helping residents with various issues, meeting with colleagues and officers where necessary.

Mid Sussex District Council (Cllr Jonathan Ash-Edwards):

Coronavirus response - MSDC has been actively involved in the Coronavirus response and has been working with Government and regional bodies as required. Two substantial areas of work have been the Local Support Networks to support the most vulnerable and the business support grants.

Local Support Networks - there are approximately 2,700 residents in Mid Sussex identified as clinically vulnerable who are receiving a range of support tailored to their needs but which can include direct delivery of food boxes, delivery of medicines, regular 'check in' calls etc. There is a very active community and voluntary sector response as well supporting those who are not in this clinically shielded group which we have been supporting.

Business support grants - on behalf of Government, we have awarded just under £22 million in grants to support small businesses and those in the retail, leisure and hospitality sectors. Andrew, Anthea & I have worked to supplement the Council's efforts to contact eligible businesses by getting information about how to apply to Lindfield businesses. In line with Government guidelines, playgrounds in Lindfield remain closed however tennis courts will be reopened this week.

Wider implications for MSDC of Coronavirus - The lockdown has resulted in a very significant financial impact for all Councils and Mid Sussex is not immune from that and we are seeing negative impacts on revenue streams across the board. As I outlined in my letter to Parish Councils on 4th May (in my capacity as Leader of the Council), the worst case scenario is a financial impact of £6.5m this year. We have so far received £1.5m in financial support from Government.

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

We are closely monitoring this position and are hopeful that these forecasts begin to improve as the economy begins to reopen, but difficult times clearly lie ahead.

We will be working on a recovery plan as clearly there will be an impact on the Council's capacity to deliver on some of the projects that we wished to complete this financial year. This will also include work to support the economy.

Planning - Planning applications continue to be processed as the Government has not relaxed the statutory timeframes for making decisions. The Council intends to commence formal virtual meetings in June which will allow planning applications to be brought to committee with public access rights in due course. At the moment there is no timescale for a decision on the Tavistock or Golf Course applications.

151. ACTION LIST

151.1 The Action List was **NOTED**.

152. CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS

152.1 No consultation had been received before the agenda had been issued. Since the agenda was issued a letter from Wealden District Council regarding a planning consultation had been received. This has been forwarded to the Deputy Clerk and will be shared with the Chairman & Vice Chair of the Planning & Traffic Committee.

153. FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

i) Report by Cllr Henton on matters considered at the meeting held on 5 March 2020 (Minutes previously circulated) and 7 May 2020 (Minutes to follow, if available). The minutes of the meeting dated 7 May 2020 were not yet available. Cllr Henton **REPORTED** the following which were **NOTED** by members:

- Insurance renewal – A new three-year agreement with Zurich had been approved.
- Banking arrangements – During the current Covid-19 crisis the council has stopped using cheques and all payments have been made using internet transfer or debit card. A procedure for these processes has been put in place to ensure oversight. Cllr Pickett would be added as an authorised signatory in the future. Cllr Blunden's view only internet access would be changed to authorisation (the same level as Cllr Henton). This would allow Cllr Blunden to authorise payments.

ii) To receive the Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 5 March 2020 (previously circulated) and 7 May 2020 (if available) and to confirm their recommendations. **RESOLVED:** that the Minutes of the Meetings of the Planning & Traffic Committee held on 5 March be received and their recommendations confirmed.

iii) Statements of Account / Budget Progress and Bank Reconciliation for the periods 01.03.20 – 31.03.20 and 01.04.20 – 31.04.20 (to follow, if available) Cllr Henton **REPORTED** the following expenditure as at 31 March 2020:

- Finance and General Purposes Committee: £144,449.87 had been spent from the budget of £158,400.
- Administration Budget: £130,621.56 had been spent from the budget of £140,500.
- Environment and Amenities Committee: £56,673.43 from the budget of £79,400.
- Planning & Traffic Committee: no expenditure.
- General Reserves: £5,139.33 had been spent from the General Reserve of £50,000.
- Designated Reserves: £4,605.42 had been spent from the budget of £139,030.04.

In total £201,123.30 had been spent from the overall budget of £238,000. Cllr Henton would sign the bank reconciliation for the month ending 30 April 2020 at a later date.

Cllr Henton **NOTED** that there would be a review of the unspent balances.

iv) List of cheques for approval (to follow).

The list of cheques drawn since the Council meeting held on 12 March 2020 meeting was tabled. **NOTED:** that the expenditure during this period under the powers granted by Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 was £250 and that the Petty Cash balance as at 14.05.20 was £167.98.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the list of cheques and debit card payments, numbers 106549 – 106552 inclusive, totalling £26,181.50 with VAT of £942.66.

154. ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE – TO NOTE THAT THE LAST MEETING WAS CANCELLED DUE TO COVID-19

- 154.1 Cllr Blunden advised the meeting scheduled to have taken place on 9 April 2020 had been cancelled due to Covid-19 and the resulting social distancing measures legislation. Cllr Blunden commented that the uncertain times had affected the following matters overseen by the committee:
- Spring Clean – This unfortunately had to be cancelled.
 - Denmans Lane Toilets – These have been closed due to one of our cleaning contractors redeploying resources to assist cleaning of NHS facilities.
 - The Denmans Lane Allotments have continued to remain open, with users asked to follow government advices, and the waiting list has increased.

Members **NOTED** that the meeting had been cancelled.

155. PLANNING AND TRAFFIC COMMITTEE

i) Report by Cllr Plass on delegated decisions (due to cancelled meetings) and matters considered at the meeting held on 12 May 2020 (if available):

Cllr Plass reported the following:

Since my last report to Full Council on 12th March, the Planning & Traffic Committee was due to meet on three occasions; however, the coronavirus pandemic resulted in two of these meetings being cancelled and the planning applications being addressed under Delegated Authority by the P&TC Chair, Vice-Chair and Deputy Parish Clerk. All P&TC members were invited to provide their comments to the underlying applications, following which a conclusion was reached by the triumvirate and responses sent to MSDC. The third meeting was held by video conference using Microsoft Teams, with seven of the ten members joining the meeting; one member is now unavailable for health reasons and the other two have been liaising with the Parish Office staff to assist with their use of Microsoft Teams.

During this period, 29 applications have been considered of which; six were in respect of trees and one was seeking a Lawful Development Certificate.

The most significant application was within Lindfield Rural Parish and related to Haywards Heath Golf Course; however, consultations had been sent to neighbouring parishes as well as Haywards Heath Town Council. LPC submitted a comprehensive objection to this application; which, if approved, would dramatically change the area and having wide reaching implications for highways, schools, medical facilities and green space. Pleasingly, the other Councils consulted also submitted objections to MSDC.

No material MSDC decisions or issues were noted.

In addition to planning applications, the Lewes Road TRO and Traffic Study related issues are ongoing projects; however, these have rather 'stalled' following the impact of the Coronavirus shutdown but will be pursued as circumstances allow.

It is envisaged that video conferencing will be required for the foreseeable future; until government advice changes alongside developments with the Coronavirus pandemic. Whilst it is not perfect and loses the face to face councillor and public interaction enabled by physical meetings, P&TC's first meeting using this tool proved to be relatively painless and allowed views to be shared appropriately before reaching a conclusion.

ii) To receive the Minutes of the meeting of the Planning and Traffic Committee held on 12 May 2020 (if available) and delegate decision reports (31 March and 21 April 2020), and to confirm their recommendations. **RESOLVED:** that the Minutes of the Meetings of the Planning & Traffic Committee held on 31 March, and 21 April be received and their recommendations confirmed.

156. ANNUAL REPORT - TO CONFIRM THAT THIS WILL BE DELEGATED TO THE CLERK, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE COUNCIL & COMMITTEE CHAIRS.

- 156.1 Members **AGREED** to delegate arrangements for the annual report to the Clerk, in conjunction with the Committee Chairman. The Chairman **NOTED** it was not known when Lindfield Life would next be published so the newsletters initially may only be available online.

157. MATTERS ARISING

- 157.1 Covid-19 – The Clerk advised members that the current government guidance relating to social distancing and working practices was being monitored. The office staff would continue to work from home. The Deputy Clerk, in conjunction with the Clerk was preparing a report on the reopening of the parish office. This would only occur once the correct measures

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

had been put in place and the government guidance allowed for office working. The Clerk answered various questions from members regarding the report and potential safety measures. The Clerk confirmed that the report would be circulated to the Clock Tower House Working Group for comments.

The public part of the meeting finished at 7:30pm

158. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC [AND PRESS]: TO CONSIDER WHETHER A RESOLUTION SHOULD BE MOVED UNDER STANDING ORDER NO. 3(D) AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PUBLIC BODIES ADMISSION TO MEETINGS ACT 1960 SECTION 1(2), TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC AND PRESS FROM THE FOLLOWING PART OF THE MEETING, BY REASON OF THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED OR FOR OTHER SPECIAL REASONS (STAFFING MATTERS).

158.1 Cllr Blunden proposed the resolution which was **AGREED** by members.

159. CLOCK TOWER HOUSE – LEASE – TO CONFIRM RECOMMENDATIONS OF REPORT

159.1 Members **AGREED** to sign the lease agreement. Arrangements for two members to sign the lease would be undertaken by the Clerk

The meeting finished at 7:34pm