

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the **MEETING** of **LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL** held on **THURSDAY, 18 JULY 2024** at King Edward Hall, Lindfield.

The meeting commenced at 20:00

Parish Councillors:	Mrs. A. Beecroft	Mrs. A. Matthews	Mr. I. Wilson
	Mr. W. Blunden (Chair)	Mr. S. Nisbett	Mr. T. Webster
	Mrs. I. Burns	Mr. R. Pickett *	Mr. C. Wood
	Mrs. L. Grace	Mrs. V. Upton (Vice-Chair)	Mr. D. Woolley

(*) Denotes absence

In attendance: Mr. A. Funnell (Parish Clerk)
Cllr Wall (WSCC)
Cllr Wood (MSDC)

143. TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE

143.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Pickett. The reasons for absence were accepted.

144. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

144.1 The following declarations of interest were received:

Cllr Blunden advised a personal interest in an item that would be reported at 147.1. His daughter is an employee at Lindfield Primary Academy.

145. TO CONFIRM AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 16 MAY & 13 JUNE 2024.

145.1 The Chair called for approval of the Minutes of the Council meetings held on 16 May and 13 June 2024. It was **agreed** that the minutes would be signed by the Chair as being a true record of that meeting.

146. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

146.1 There were no members of the public present.

147. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

147.1 The Chair reported the following:

Lindfield Primary Academy and Blackthorns Primary Academy - Staff belonging to The National Education Union had been balloted on strike action. Strikes had taken place at other schools within the University of Brighton Academy. Cllr Wood and Beecroft provided background information. Cllr Wood and Cllr Wall advised that they would be taking part in a parent's meeting taking place the following week regarding the issue.

148. REPORTS BY COUNTY COUNCILLOR / DISTRICT COUNCILLORS.

148.1 County Council

Cllr Wall reported the following:

Woodlands Mead Academy – The rebuild of the school has been signed off. The new facilities are now open.

WSCC Financial Position – A Cabinet meeting will be held on the 23rd of July to consider an update on the Council plan and medium-term financial position. For 2025/26 an immediate budget gap of between £30m to £60m, depending on the level of council tax, would need to be addressed before a balanced budget could be set in early 2025. Demands on adult and children's social care and their budgets were noted. Clarity was needed on government finances/support to help the Council plan its budget.

Road Repairs – Pot hole and surface improvement repairs were being carried out. Jet Patchers were being used. Demand for specialised equipment/expertise was greater than availability though. Frustrations regarding overlapping utility works on the highway were noted. It was noted that a large volume of broadband upgrade works were taking place locally.

Grass Cutting – Concerns have been reported regarding the recent grass cutting. These included very long-cut grass being left in situ rather than being collected. This issue was especially apparent due to weather conditions and the longer frequency between cuts.

Cllr Wall was asked various questions by members including:

- Whether a study had been undertaken about the benefits of leaving the verges uncut.
- Was WSCC actively seeking to recruit school crossing staff?
- Could a bullet summary of items to be reported be circulated to members before the meeting?

148.2 District Council

Cllr Wood reported the following:

Lindfield Common Playground – A meeting was trying to be arranged regarding accessible equipment and the creation of a 'friends of Lindfield Common Playground group' for the playground. It was understood that MSDC only had approximately £5k of s.106 funds that could support new equipment in the playground. MSDC did not have any other funding available.

Eastern Road Nature Reserve – Glendale had made proposals to improve areas of the site including a new wildflower meadow. Poor-quality soil would need to be obtained.

Lindfield Bonfire Society – A meeting would be held to discuss issues around parades and public events.

Cllr Wood was asked various questions by members including:

- The growth of weeds around the pond side bollards.

149. ACTION LIST

149.1 The action list was **noted**.

150. CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS

150.1 There were no consultation documents for review.

151. PLANNING, TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

151.1 Report by Cllr Upton on matters considered at the meetings held on 4 June, 25 June and 16 July 2024.

Since the last report to the Full Council, PTTC has met on three occasions (4th June, 25th June and 16th July) and considered 43 planning applications. Objections were raised in respect of two proposals:

- DM/24/1256 / 38 Blackthorns – Proposed detached, double garage to the front of the dwelling and partial change of use of the integral garage to include a gym. (Revised plan received and updated description agreed 07.06.2024).
- DM/24/1307 / 35 Beckworth Lane – Proposed rear single and double-storey extension with front dormer. (MSDC advised that this application was withdrawn on 16/7/24)

The following actions were undertaken under the Scheme of Delegation:

- Survey Response Transport for the South East PTTC noted the response submitted under the Scheme of delegation to meet the required timescales.

The following matters were also considered by PTTC:

- Joint Neighbourhood Plan – PTTC agreed that LRPC's proposed actions should be obtained to facilitate any meeting with MSDC's Senior Planning Officer to consider the next steps as appropriate.
- Budget / Speed Indicator Device – PTTC noted the update in respect of one of the council's SIDs no longer retaining data and that the manufacturer would be contacted to consider the appropriate repair.
- Near miss monitoring – PTTC agreed that a system would be put in place to log reports of vehicle/pedestrian interaction at the Lewes Road / High Street junction but recognised that at present WSCC Highway's approach to Traffic Restriction Orders did not accommodate such data.
- Lindfield Pond – PTTC noted WSCC's advice that it would no longer maintain the posts alongside the Highway and that a full report would be put to Full Council.

151.2 To receive the Minutes of the meetings held on 4 June, 25 June and 16 July 2024 & to confirm their recommendations.

It was **resolved** that the Minutes of these meetings of the PT&T Committee be received, and their recommendations confirmed.

152. ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE

152.1 Report by Cllr Blunden on matters considered at the meeting held on 6 June 2024, to include any updates.

Wilderness Field – Due to the very wet weather the 50% field cut has been delayed. We are seeking to arrange a meeting of the working group regarding the proposed pond.

Denmans Lane Toilet Cleaning – We have temporary cleaners servicing the facilities at present after Monitor Cleaning ceased attending on the 24th of June. Members will be asked to consider quotes for the cleaning later in the meeting under confidential items.

Festive Lights – Due to various issues it is unlikely that the Council will be able to install the lights earlier this year. It had been agreed at the meeting that we would seek an earlier installation in late September to support a charity event taking place in the village.

Streetlights – It was agreed to upgrade our remaining 14 Iffley lighting columns to LED. The order has been placed with our contractor.

152.2 To receive the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2024, & to confirm their recommendations. It was **resolved** that the Minutes of this meeting of the E&A Committee be received, and their recommendations confirmed.

152.3 Climate Change – Update from Cllr Grace.

Cllr Grace reported the following:

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The Working Group had met at the start of July. Items discussed included the Carbon Impact Calculator. Cllr Nisbett and Woolley will be researching areas identified in the report. The Working Group would meet again in September.

153. FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

153.1 Report by Cllr Beecroft on matters considered at the meeting held on 2 July, to include any updates. It was reported that the following had taken place at the meeting:

Financial Regulations - It has been agreed to instruct the Communications Working Group to review the template and provide the committee with a recommended draft.

Pension Discretions Policy – It has been agreed to instruct the Communications Working Group to review the proposed policy template and provide the committee with a recommended draft.

Communications Working Group – A Communications Working Group has been set up to consider internal and external communications. The Working Group will be meeting at the conclusion at the end of this meeting.

153.2 To receive the Minutes of the meetings held on 2 May & 2 July 2024 to confirm their recommendations. Cllr Beecroft advised that the minutes of the meeting dated 2 July were not yet available and asked members to receive the minutes of the meeting dated 4 January and to confirm their recommendations. It was **RESOLVED**: that the Minutes of the 4 May 2024 meeting of the F&GP Committee be received, and their recommendations confirmed.

153.3 Budget Progress including General Reserves expenditure.

Committee / Activity / Reserve	Expenditure	Budget
F&GP	£ 27,346	£ 192,380
E&A	£ 7,520	£ 64,425
Allotments	£ 548	£ 2,500
PT&T	£ Nil	£ 2,900
General Reserve	£ Nil	
Total	£ 35,414	£ 262,215

Earmarked Reserve	Expenditure	Budget
Toilets on the Common	£ 350.00	£ 77,191.67
Wilderness Field S106 Maintenance	£ Nil	£ 12,854.58
Council Elections	£ Nil	£ 1,350
Plan 23-27	£ Nil	£ 5,000
Planning Reserve	£ Nil	£ 4,000
SID Replacement	£ Nil	£ 2,000
Total	£ 350.00	£ 102,037.25

Income to 31 May 2024:

Description	£
Precept	£ 128,500
Interest	£ 182
Rental	£ 1,616
Service Charge	£ (60)
Telephone Refund	£ (360)
Licence Fees	£
Christmas Festival Night	£
Allotments	£ 1,110
Total	£ 130,988

153.4 Bank reconciliation (cash and investments) – To sign the statement.

Bank Reconciliation at 29 February 2024	£
Barclays current account	£ 14,837.16
Barclays premium account	£ 103,053.68
Nationwide building society	£ 85,000.00
Unity Trust current account	£ 464.20
Unity Trust savings account	£ 58,199.56
Petty Cash	£ 127.62
Unpresented payments	£ NIL
Receipts not on bank statements	£ 100.96
Closing balance	£ 261,783.18

It was **agreed** to sign the bank reconciliation statement.

153.5 Summary of receipts and payments. The list of receipts and payments was **noted**.

153.6 To note the list of payments to the 18 July 2024 and authorise payments.

The list of payments drawn since the last Full Council meeting on 18 January 2024 has been tabled. Full Council was asked to note the payments, totalling £30,092.22 including £1,635.96 of VAT and that there were no payments under S137 of the Local Government Act 1972. The Petty Cash balance at the meeting date stands at £127.62.

It was **resolved** to approve the list of payments totalling 30,092.22, including £1,635.96 of VAT. A copy of the list of payments would be signed by Cllr Blunden.

153.7 Bank Mandate – To confirm authorised signatories and consider a proposed change.

It was **agreed** to approve the existing bank mandate for 2024/25. In addition, it was **agreed** to approve the Clerk's proposed online 'view online' access to the Barclay's bank current account.

153.8 Internal Audit Arrangements for 2024/25 – To note the appointment of Mulberry and Co.

It was **noted** that Mulberry and Co. would be the Council's internal auditors for 2024/25.

154. LINDFIELD POND – ROADSIDE BOLLARDS

154.1 The Chair agreed to move the item up the agenda so that it took place after reports by County and District members. The Chair outlined the current situation and the response that had been received from West Sussex County Council regarding the future of the roadside set of bollards adjacent to Lindfield Pond. The content of the following email, from a WSCC officer, was conveyed to members:

*"I have revisited the council's position regarding the future maintenance and repair of the wooden post and metal rail fence in the grass verge between the footway and carriageway and discussed the situation with colleagues. I'm afraid that our position remains the same as set out in my previous email, in that maintenance and repair of the fence is not something the County Council is able to undertake at the current time. We will of course ensure that the site remains in a safe condition, and **this will involve removing any damaged sections that might pose a risk to members of the public.** (LPC bold annotation)*

The fencing budget available this financial year is limited and hence officers must target it at the areas of most need, with the priority given to those sites demonstrating highway safety implications. The wooden post and rail fence in this location would not be regarded as safety fencing, and we are unclear on what highway purpose the existing fencing serves, other than contributing to the street scene. Whilst I note your reference to the fence providing a physical barrier to prevent children from walking into the road, there are no highway requirements in these circumstances to provide a physical barrier, and the fence only extends the width of the pond.

We appreciate this response is disappointing, but hope you understand the rationale provided."

154.2 Members did not believe that the response addressed their position that the roadside bollards are a safety feature. The following observations were made:

- The footpath is heavily used by parents with children.
- The footpath is narrow.
- There is not a full pathway on the opposite side of the road.
- The bollards are a physical and visual safety barrier
- The same argument had been put forward by WSCC in 2016/17 which the Parish Council successfully challenged.

154.3 In addition, it was noted that the bollards are within the Lindfield Conservation area. Cllr Wall was asked various questions relating to the WSCC position. Cllr Wall confirmed that he would write to WSCC asking that their position be reconsidered. Members noted comments regarding WSCC's financial position but also stated that the Parish Council does not have funds to replace the posts and rails.

154.4 It was **proposed, seconded** and **agreed** that Lindfield Parish Council disagreed with the response received from West Sussex County Council. The Parish Council believes the posts and rails are a safety feature and not just a decorative feature. It was **agreed** that the Council would write to senior Highways officers, our Ward Members (Cllr Garry Wall) and the WSCC member for Highways (Cllr Joy Denis) asking that their position be reconsidered.

155. TREE WARDENS

155.1 Members consider the report regarding discussions at PT&T on tree wardens and their remit. The Council had previously sought to recruit replacement voluntary tree wardens but had been unsuccessful. It had been suggested that the voluntary role could be expanded further but the remit had not been defined and could cover the work of multiple committees. It had been

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recommended that before the Council considers recruiting a volunteer tree warden it should first introduce a tree plan. The Chair asked member(s) if any were willing to undertake further research in support of a draft tree plan report.

155.2 It was **agreed** that Cllr Grace would provide further information after attending a meeting of the local parish and town councils later in the year. The meeting, it was hoped, would be attended by an MSDC Tree Officer.

156. 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).

156.1 Cllr Wood **proposed** and Cllr Upton **seconded**. It was **agreed** to exclude the press and public due to the confidential nature of the items to be considered.

157. STAFF MATTERS

157.1 It was **agreed** to accept the appraisal policy.

158. DENMANS LANE TOILET CLEANING.

158.1 Members considered the quotes. It was **agreed** to accept the cleaning quote from TCFM.

The meeting finished at: 21:31.

The next meeting of the Council is 19 September 2024.

DISCLAIMER

The attached minutes are DRAFT minutes. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information, statements and decisions recorded in them, their status will remain that of a draft until they are confirmed as a correct record at the subsequent meeting.