

# LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the **MEETING** of **LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL** held on **THURSDAY, 21 MARCH 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)

## 94. TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE

94.1 Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Matthews, Webster, and Wilson. The reasons for absence were accepted.

## 95. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

95.1 The following declarations of interest were received:

- i. Cllr Blunden declared a personal interest in agenda item 10 (item 103.1 below) as he is an allotment holder.

## 96. TO CONFIRM AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 9 NOVEMBER 2023

96.1 The Chair called for approval of the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 18 January 2024. It was AGREED that the minutes would be signed by the Chair as being a true record of that meeting.

## 97. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

97.1 There were no members of the public present.

## 98. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

84.1 The Chair updated members that Cllr Wilson had been very unwell. Cllr Upton advised that she had been visiting him and that he now seemed to be progressing well, members wished him a speedy recovery.

## 99. REPORTS BY COUNTY / DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

99.1 **West Sussex County Council** Cllr Wall provided a verbal report, noting pressures on Council Tax levels which were considered likely to increase over time as infrastructure and care costs grew. He noted that child and adult social care accounted for the bulk of the county's budget, with highways at c£47m around 7% of the total county figure. He expects WSCC Highways to start to provide more frequent communications to all parishes regarding works and noted that whilst WSCC roads required significant improvement, they were still considered to be in a better condition than those located in some adjoining counties. However, the wet weather continues to make the situation extremely challenging, with modern, more environmentally friendly repairs alongside the increased weight and volume of traffic, combining to exacerbate the difficulties. He acknowledged that the user experience of WSCC's Highway's reporting system needed to be improved. Finally, Cllr wall advised that the appointment of a new CEO for WSCC was imminent.

99.2 Cllr Grace advised that she had attended a nature recovery webinar organised by WSCC but was disappointed that this did not provide the collaborative networking opportunity expected, as the online session was run on an anonymous basis. Cllr Wall asked for the details to be sent to him, as this would seem to be a missed opportunity.

99.3 **Mid Sussex District Council** Cllr Wood updated members on several matters:

- i. Eastern Road Nature Reserve – he had attended a recovery session with the local group and the District Council, which he considered had gone well. He flagged that there may be a grant application from the group and Cllr Beecroft encouraged a prompt application before the financial year end, recognising currently available funds.
- ii. Lindfield Society – he and Cllr Cooke had met with the society and shared their concerns in respect of the planning application for 90 houses at Scamps Hill.

- iii. Bowls Club – last year's problems with MSDC's contractor and the playing surface seem to have been overcome and the green was now back into a much better condition. The Club are planning to improve their infrastructure with a new tank and irrigation system and will apply to MSDC for permission.
- iv. Wyncote – the longstanding issues regarding double glazing have now been addressed, with a compromise acceptable to both the applicant and MSDC reached.
- v. Play equipment – a resident of Shenstone is seeking improved equipment and access suitable for both able-bodied and less able-bodied users to be installed at the playgrounds in the village, particularly as the life of existing equipment comes to an end.

Cllr Wood also offered Cllr Cooke's apologies for not making this meeting, as she had a full day of meetings which overlapped.

The Chair thanked Cllrs Wall and Wood for their respective reports and activity supporting Lindfield's residents.

#### 100. ACTION LIST

100.1 There were no outstanding issues.

#### 101. CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS - TO CONSIDER CURRENT CONSULTATIONS AND AGREE ON WHETHER TO RESPOND.

101.1 There were no consultation documents.

#### 102. PLANNING, TRANSPORT & TRAFFIC COMMITTEE (PT&T)

102.1 **Report on matters considered at meetings held on 30<sup>th</sup> January, 20<sup>th</sup> February and 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024:** Cllr Upton referred to the report previously circulated to members and sought any comments. No questions were raised.

102.2 **To receive the Minutes of the meetings of the PT&T held on 30<sup>th</sup> January, 20<sup>th</sup> February and 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024 and to confirm their recommendations.** It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of these meetings of the PT&T Committee be received, and their recommendations confirmed.

102.3 **DM/24/0446 Land Off Scamps Hill** - proposed development of up to 90 dwellings. Following PTTC on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024, a draft response to this planning application was circulated to council members for consideration. It was **AGREED** that the proposed response should now be submitted to MSDC.

#### 103. ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE.

103.1 **Report by Cllr Blunden on matters considered at the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024, to include any updates:**

**Denmans Lane Allotments** – it was agreed to raise allotment fees to £7 per rod for 2025/26 and to add MOT to the footpath between Pondcroft Road and Denmans Lane that borders the allotments.

**Footpath between Brushes Lane/Dukes Road and the Wilderness Field** - Members considered a report on whether the Parish Council should contribute towards adding Type 1/ MOT to the footpath between Brushes Lane/Dukes Road and the Wilderness Field. Members were cognisant of the poor condition of the footpath in the winter months but noted that there was mixed advice as to whether adding MOT would work. It was agreed to proceed with the proposals outlined by The Monday Group to spread MOT along the path, subject to the finalisation of costs, also recognising the likely contribution from the Lindfield Society. Also recognising the success of this approach on the path alongside the allotments.

**Village Clean Events** – Members agreed that the Council a spring and autumn village clean. The spring clean will take place on Saturday 13th April and Cllr Blunden noted the fantastic community support for these events.

**Village Archives** – Since the meeting an application by three members of the public to jointly volunteer has been received. This will be reviewed at our next meeting.

Lastly, the date of the next meeting has been moved from the 4th to 11th April.

103.2 **To receive the Minutes of the meeting of the E&A held on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024 , and to confirm their recommendations.** It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of this meeting of the E&A Committee be received, and their recommendations confirmed.

103.3 **Climate Change – Update**

## LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

- Cllr Grace advised that the new approach to networking with local councils, involving a 12 strong informal councillor meeting seemed to be well received. Cllrs Wood and Grace considering that it was generating several new ideas.
- The Eastern Road Nature Reserve group were being encouraged to join forces with the Greener Lindfield group in considering ways forward for the nature reserve and attending the Repair Café to widen input for the future. It is also understood that the Repair Café would be inviting the Climate Change group to attend a future event.

The Chair congratulated the group on the progress it had made so far.

### 104. FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE.

#### 104.1 Report by Cllr Beecroft on matters considered at the meetings held on 4<sup>th</sup> January and 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024, to include any updates:

- Members considered the reserves policy, proposed amendments to standing orders and financial regulations and these are addressed below.
- It was agreed that the Council should take out Ill Health Liability Insurance to protect against any early retirement strain claim from the West Sussex Pension Fund.
- Cllr Pickett agreed to undertake the Annual Review of the Effectiveness of the Internal Audit and the Annual Review of the Effectiveness of the Internal Control System.
- Members noted the results of the internal communications survey and agreed that training on the use of Microsoft 365 be explored further.
- Toilets on the Common – It was agreed:
  - a) to instruct the architects, with Working Group input, to prepare the building specification for the proposed tender.
  - b) to instruct the architects, with Working Group input, to prepare and submit the discharge of conditions applications.

Following which, the construction would be put out to tender.

#### 104.2 To receive the Minutes of the meeting of the F&GP held on 4-Jan-24 and 7-Mar-24 and to confirm their recommendations (if available). Cllr Beecroft advised that the minutes of the meeting dated 7 March 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 4<sup>th</sup> January 2024 meeting of the F&GP Committee be received, and their recommendations confirmed.

#### 104.3 Budget Progress including General Reserves expenditure to 29-Feb-24.

Committee / Activity / Reserve	Expenditure	Budget
F&GP	£ 148,601	£175,849
E&A	£ 44,792	£ 54,975
Allotments	£ 2,787	£ 2,500
PT&T	£ 0	£ 8,000
General Reserve	£ 3,430	£ 0
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 199,611</b>	<b>£ 241,324</b>

Earmarked Reserve	Expenditure	Budget
Toilets on the Common	£ 862.50	£ 84,170
Wilderness Field S106 Maintenance	£ 5,850.00	£ 18,696
Council Elections	£ 6276.09	£ 5,400
Traffic Improvement/Planning Support	£ 0	£ 4,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 12,988.59</b>	<b>£ 112,766</b>
<b>Accrued Expenditure 2022/23 Budget (Paid in Aug 2023)</b>		
EMR - Traffic Study Improvements	£4,044.26	

Cllr Beecroft advised that the January monthly report had included an understated earmarked reserve (EMR) expenditure of £14,033, which should have been £17,033. The correct figure was reported at the F&GP committee meeting on 7th March 2024 and the February monthly report also states the correct total expenditure:

Toilets on Common	£862.50
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**LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL**

Wilderness Field S106 Maintenance	£5,850.00
Council Elections	£6,276.04
Accrued Expenditure 2022/23 Budget (Paid in Aug 2023)	
Traffic Study Improvements	£4044.26
<b>Total EMR expenditure to end February 2024</b>	<b>£17,032.80</b>

**Income to 29 February 2024:**

Description	£
Precept	£ 216,000
Interest	£ 2,847
Rental	£ 8,888
Service Charge	£ 795
Licence Fees	£ 141
Christmas Festival Night	£ 785
Allotments	£ 1,135
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 229,457</b>

**104.4 Bank reconciliation (cash and investments) to 29-Feb-24 – To sign statement.**

Bank Reconciliation at 29 February 2024	£
Barclays current account	£ 15,147.38
Barclays premium account	£ 48,496.58
Nationwide building society	£ 85,000.00
Unity Trust current account	£ 482.20
Unity Trust savings account	£ 57,803.25
Petty Cash	£ 152.12
Unpresented payments	£ NIL
Receipts not on bank statements	£ 148.57
<b>Closing balance</b>	<b>£ 207,230.10</b>

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

**104.5 Summary of Receipts and Payments to 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

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

**104.6 To note the list of payments to the 21-Mar-24 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 £49,953.46, including £2,182.85 of VAT and that there were payments totalling £250 under S137 of the Local Government Act 1972. The Petty Cash balance at the meeting date stands at £152.12.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the list of payments totalling £49,953.46, including £2,182.85 of VAT. A copy of the list of payments would be signed by Cllr Blunden.

**104.7 To authorise internal transfer of funds.**

To manage cash flow, until the 1st instalment of the precept is paid at the end of April, members are asked to authorise the internal transfer of up to £40,000 from the council's Nationwide account to the Barclays Current Account.

It was **AGREED** to authorise the transfer between accounts.

**104.8 Policy Documents – To consider implementing a Reserves Policy and revised Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.**

Cllr Beecroft apprised members of proposed changes to the council's policies:

- **Reserves Policy** at F&GP it was agreed to recommend to Full Council that the Reserves Policy be implemented. The policy will help support the budget-setting process and ensure the council maintains an appropriate level of general and earmarked reserves.
- **Standing Orders** – LPC's existing Standing Orders are based on the National Association of Local Council's 2013 template, which has been superseded (2018 including 2022 amendments). The latest version reflects new legislation introduced after 2013. The new SO include:
  - • GDPR (we already have a separate policy on this)
  - • Updated transparency requirements (we already comply with these)
  - • Thresholds for public tendering of contracts in the Public Contract Regulations 2015.
- **Financial Regulations** – The main changes from our existing FR are updates to contracts and procurement legislation and some payment limits to rectify disparities between payment methods.

Cllr Beecroft sought members views and whether they were happy to approve and implement the policies outlined. Cllr Woolley sought to ensure that in adopting the new templates that any previous modifications made to support LPC's workings would not be lost, and Cllr Wood asked whether any outside examination was required in respect of the GDPR requirements. Cllr Grace expressed her satisfaction with the proposal. Cllr Beecroft advised that she considered that the new policies would continue to meet both LPC's needs and provide good governance and transparency, further that no additional GDPR burden was anticipated.

It was **AGREED** adopt and implement the policies as proposed. The Chair thanked Cllr Beecroft and F&GP members for all the work that has gone into reviewing and delivering the proposed policies.

**105 RISK MANAGEMENT** – to confirm (i) that the Council has a suite of Risk Assessments in respect of all of its activities in accordance with its Financial Regulations(s17) and (ii) to confirm its agreement to existing risk management procedures.

105.1 The Chair considered that this was a very good report and sought members thoughts and whether they were happy to accept the report recommendations.

It was **AGREED** to accept the report and its recommendations.

**106 COUNCILLOR APPOINTMENTS, INDUCTION & TRAINING**

106.1 The Chair introduced the report, advising that members have provided the parish office of their committee preferences for 2024/25 and that actual committee membership will be decided at the Annual Meeting of the Council (16 May 2024). With Cllr Wilson currently unable to contribute to the exercise, when his health improved that would be likely to change the numbers indicated below.

The current Committee membership is as follows:

Environment & Amenities (E&A) 9 members:

- Blunden, Burns, Matthews, Nisbett, Picket, Upton, Wilson, Wood & Woolley

Finance & General Purposes (F&GP)6 members:

- Beecroft, Blunden, Grace, Picket, Upton & Webster.

Planning, Traffic and Transport (PT&T) 10 members:

- Beecroft, Blunden, Burns, Grace, Matthews, Nisbett, Upton, Webster, Wilson & Woolley

Looking forward, it is suggested that Committee sizes should be no lower than F&GP 6 members, E&A 7 members and PT&T 8 members. Committee membership (using first and second preferences only) would be as follows:

Environment & Amenities (E&A) (9 members):

- Blunden, Burns, Grace, Matthews, Nisbett, Picket, Upton, Wood & Woolley

Finance & General Purposes (F&GP)(5 members):

- Beecroft, Blunden, Grace, Picket, & Webster.

Planning, Traffic and Transport (PT&T) (7 members):

- Beecroft, Burns, Matthews, Nisbett, Upton, Webster, & Woolley

It was recommended that members should consider the supporting comments by each respondent (Appendix 2).

106.2 The recommendation for this report have been refined and Full Council is therefore asked to:

- a) Consider the appropriateness of the proposed numbers for each committee for 2024/25 (these will be agreed upon at the Annual Meeting in May).
- b) Note the requests for each committee and any adjustments that will need to be resolved.
- c) Importantly - note that committee membership will be decided at the Annual Meeting of the Council.

It was **AGREED** to note the report as a precursor to discussions at the Annual Meeting of the Council in May. The Chair thanked the clerk for the time and work undertaken in researching this matter.

**107 MATTERS ARISING AFTER THE PREPARATION OF THIS AGENDA**, which the Chair agrees to take as urgent. Any such matters will be for noting or referral to a future meeting only.

No matters raised.

The meeting finished at: 20:55.

The next meeting of the Council is 16 May 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.