

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the **MEETING** of **LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL** held on **THURSDAY, 23 JANUARY 2025**, 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)

191. TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE

191.1 Apologies were received from Cllrs Pickett. The reasons for absence were accepted.

192. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

192.1 There were no declarations.

193. TO CONFIRM AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 21 NOVEMBER 2024.

193.1 The Chair called for approval of the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 21 November 2024. It was **agreed** that the minutes would be signed by the Chair as being a true record of that meeting.

194. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

194.1 There were no members of the public present.

195. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

195.1 The Chair reported/noted the following:

- As this was the first Council meeting of 2025, the Chair wished attendees a Happy New Year.
- Devolution – Members would have seen the recent news that there potentially could be changes to the local government structure in Sussex.
- The council is aware of several ongoing issues with particular items in the village that are the responsibility of other local authorities. The council understand these frustrations but is not the responsible authority.
- Lindfield Academies – The Chair noted the correspondence sent from the Academy Trust to parents.

196. REPORTS BY COUNTY COUNCILLOR / DISTRICT COUNCILLORS.

196.1 County Council

Cllr Wall reported/noted the following:

- Devolution – The County Council, alongside East Sussex County Council and Brighton and Hove City Council, had applied to join the Devolution Priority Programme. A request had been submitted to the government to postpone the WSCC elections scheduled for May 2025. It was expected that a reply would be received from the government shortly as to whether the application had been successful.
- WSCC budget-setting process. There were no planned cuts to any services.

Cllr Grace raised the importance of supporting the well-being of employees of local authorities where changes to the local government structure were being suggested.

196.2 District Council

Cllr Wood reported the following:

- Cllr Cooke sends her apologies for not being able to attend the meeting.
- Hickmans Lane Pavillion - £400k had been secured for its renewal.
- Meetings had been held with various parties and groups. These included Lindfield Cricket Club and the Friends of Lindfield Playgrounds.
- An update on the management of the two schools in the village was reported

197. ACTION LIST

197.1 The action list was **noted**.

198. CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS

198.1 **Strengthening the Standards and Conduct Framework for Local Authorities in England**

It was **agreed** that the Council would submit a response to the consultation on Strengthening the Standards and Conduct Framework for Local Authorities in England. Members would send the office their comments. These would then be collated into a response.

It was **noted** that several members had already individually responded to the consultation.

198.2 Compulsory Purchase Process and Compensation Reforms

Cllr Woolley raised concerns about what is deemed underutilised land, which could include land with important environmental value. Members were encouraged to complete the consultation individually.

199. PLANNING, TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

199.1 Report by Cllr Upton on matters considered at the meetings held on 10 December 2024 and 14 January 2025.

Members had received the following report by email before the meeting:

Since the last report to the Full Council, PTTC has met on two occasions (10th December 2024 and 14th January 2025) and considered 20 planning applications. No objections were raised with respect to all but one of the proposals.

Planning Appeals and notable decisions made by Mid Sussex District Council:

AP/24/0044 (DM/24/0446) – Land Off Scamps Hill, Scaynes Hill Road The erection of up to 90 dwellings with public open space, landscaping and sustainable drainage system (SuDS) and vehicular access point. Members were advised that the Planning Inspector's Inquiry has been delayed until 28th January 2025 in view of the non-availability of the Council's barrister for the originally scheduled dates.

DM/24/2595 at 5 The Chestnuts– Single-storey rear extension. Raise roof level above existing rear extension by 295mm. Hard landscaping to rear garden. Members were advised that MSDC's Delegated Decision approving the planning application stated, "The Parish Councils comments are noted regarding the wood burning stove, however, this is only shown on the floor plans with no flue included on any plans and is not part of this planning application. The Parish Councils comments and the concerns raised in the letter of representation related to drainage are noted however the application site is located within flood zone 1 and the area of hardstanding is only a small increase from the existing hardstanding". The committee noted these comments.

Other Matters:

The following matters were also considered by PTTC:

West Sussex Road Safety Strategy 2025-2036 - *The committee agreed that no response was required to this consultation.*

Transport for the South East - *The committee noted the closing date and would consider whether any response was appropriate at the next PTTC meeting on Tuesday 4th February, if necessary, finalising the proposed response at the subsequent meeting on Tuesday 25th February.*

S106 Update - *The committee noted the report provided and ongoing correspondence with WSCC. Cllr Woolley raised questions around the (previous) existence of a footpath between Blackthorns and the common – it was agreed that this might be more appropriately considered at a future meeting.*

199.2 To receive the Minutes of the meetings held on 10 December 2024 and 14 January 2025 & to confirm their recommendations. It was **resolved** that the Minutes of these meetings of the PT&T Committee be received, and their recommendations confirmed.

200. ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE

200.1 Report by Cllr Blunden on matters considered at the meeting held on 28 November 2024, to include any updates. Cllr Blunden reported the following:

Christmas Lights – The removal is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 28th January. The Council has received very positive feedback from members of the public on the lighting display.

Service Charges – The Committee confirmed service charges for allotment plots and Christmas Festival Night stall pitches.

Risk Assessments – The Committee considered and approved three risk assessments; a) Winter Management, b) Wilderness Field & c) Streetlights.

Grass Verges – It was agreed that further research be undertaken on this matter with a report prepared for a future meeting.

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Village Cleaning Events – Since the meeting the dates for these events have been confirmed. The Spring Clean will take place on 26th April and the Autumn Clean will be on 11th October.

Christmas Festival Night – The Chair thanked everyone who had planned, run and participated in the highly successful event.

200.2 To receive the Minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 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.

200.3 Climate Change – Update

Cllr Wood advised that the Working Group had met on the 7th of January. At that meeting, members reviewed what had been achieved in 2024 and looked at what could be undertaken in 2025.

Cllr Grace advised members on the progress of research into grass verge maintenance. A meeting will be held on the 10th February that would include a WSCC Officer where the management of grass verges would be considered. There was an update on upcoming events that members of the working group would be attending. Greener Lindfield was scheduled to meet on the 7th of February.

201. FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

201.1 Report by Cllr Beecroft on matters considered at the meeting held on 9 January 2025, to include any updates. It was **reported** that the following had taken place at the meeting:

- It was agreed to grant £500 to St Peter & St Jame Hospice.
- Arrangements for the Internal Control Check were confirmed.
- The Communications Working Group has been renamed to the Communications and Community Engagement Working Group.
- Arrangements for council events were considered and will be considered further by the Communications and Community Engagement Working Group
- The Parish Meeting will take a different format this year.
- It was agreed to dispose of several surplus assets and that the council would submit an expression of interest to take over ownership of the BT phone kiosk on Lindfield High Street.

201.2 To receive the Minutes of the meetings held on 7 November 2024 & 9 January 2025 to confirm their recommendations.

Cllr Beecroft advised that the minutes of the meeting dated 7 November were not yet available and asked members to receive the minutes of the meeting dated 5 September and to confirm their recommendations. It was **RESOLVED**: that the Minutes of the 5 September 2024 meeting of the F&GP Committee be received, and their recommendations confirmed.

201.3 Budget Progress including General Reserves expenditure.

The reports as of 31 October 2024 are:

Committee / Activity / Reserve	Expenditure	Budget
F&GP	£ 102,365	£ 192,380
E&A	£ 31,633	£ 64,425
Allotments	£ 848	£ 2,500
PT&T	Nil	£ 2,900
General Reserve	£ 1,095	
Total	£ 135,940	£ 262,215

Earmarked Reserve	Expenditure	Closing Balance
Toilets on the Common	£ 5,698.17	£ 73,262.50
Wilderness Field S106 Maintenance	£ 4,380.20	£ 11,465.38
Council Elections	Nil	£ 1,350
Plan 23-27	Nil	£ 5,000
Planning Reserve	Nil	£ 4,000
SID Replacement	Nil	£ 2,000
Total	£ 10,069.37	£ 92,317.88

Income to 31 October 2024:

Description	£
Precept	£ 257,000
Interest	£ 2,422
Rental	£ 5,656

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Service Charge	£ (60)
Telephone Refund	£ (360)
Licence Fees	£ 145
Christmas Festival Night	£ 645
Allotments	£ 1,197
Photocopying	£ 9
Total	£ 267,255

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

Bank Reconciliation on 31 October 2024	£
Barclays current account	£ 14,923.08
Barclays premium account	£ 98,524.99
Nationwide building society	£ 92,734.45
Unity Trust current account	£ 422.80
Unity Trust savings account	£ 92,734.45
Petty Cash	£ 104.62
Unpresented payments	£ 5.89
Receipts not on bank statements	Nil
Closing balance	£ 298,958.82

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

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

185.6 To note the list of payments to 23 January 2025 and authorise payments, including internal transfers.

The list of payments drawn since the last Full Council meeting on 23 January 2025 has been tabled. Full Council was asked to note the payments, totalling £ 78,609.32, including £ 1,457.94 of VAT and that there were payments of £ 500.00 under S137 of the Local Government Act 1972. The Petty Cash balance at the meeting date stands at £ 87.73.

It was **resolved** to approve the list of payments totalling £ 78,609.32, including £ 1,457.94 of VAT. A copy of the list of payments would be signed by Cllr Blunden.

It was **agreed** that the list of direct debit and debit card payments for October, November and December be signed by Cllrs Beecroft and Blunden. It was **agreed** to authorise the standing order schedule for Bryan Cleaning Ltd.

185.7 Banking Arrangements

The Committee Chair provided members with the background to the proposed changes and that they had been scrutinised by the F&GP Committee.

It was **agreed** to

- a) Transfer day-to-day banking arrangements from Barclays Bank to Unity Trust Bank.
- b) To close the Barclays Bank Business Current Account.
- c) To apply for a Unity Trust charge card with a spending limit in line with the Council's Financial Regulations in the name of the Clerk.
- d) To replace the Barclays Bank Business Premium Savings Account with the Hinckley & Rugby Building Society instant access savings account and to agree the Bank Mandate to assist with the withdrawal of funds.
- e) Agree to the Action Plan and actions within, setting out the proposed switchover.
- f) Delegate authority to the RFO, in conjunction with the F&GP Chair and Clerk, to carry out the agreed changes.

185.8 Community Engagement

Members considered the Community Engagement statement recommended by F&GP. It was suggested by Cllr Woolley that the last sentence of the statement be removed. It was **agreed** to accept the Community Engagement Statement with the proposed amendment.

185.9 Budget 2025/26

Cllr Beecroft talked members through the proposed budget. It was confirmed that the proposed budget did not include any deficit. The budget for 2025/26 would be:

2025/26 budget summary

	2025/26
Expenditure	£ 354,245
E&A	£ 77,505
F&GP	£ 199,791

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

PT&T	£ 400
New Earmarked reserves	£ 35,000
Top-up Earmarked reserves	£ 2,850
General reserve top up	£ 38,699
Income	£ 64,027
2024/25 surplus	£ 48,577
2025/26 income	£15,000
Shortfall	£ 290,668
Increase	13.10 %

Cllr Wood **proposed**, Cllr Burns **seconded**, and the Council **agreed** to set the budget for 2025/26 at £354,245.

Cllr Matthews **proposed**, Cllr Nisbett **seconded**, and the Council **agreed** to set the precept for 2025/26 at £290,668.

202. LINDFIELD POND POSTS & RAILINGS

202.1 With the agreement of the Chair, this item was discussed earlier in the meeting.

The report set out that the Council had written the following to WSCC at the start of December 2024. The correspondence had stated that.

Our members believe that the post and railings serve as an important visual deterrent to drivers which helps protect the many users at this busy location. This deterrent effect may also help explain this location's lack of accident data. The approach that WSCC seems to be taking here, whilst perhaps understandable given the challenging funding position local authorities find themselves in, we believe is not the best possible option. Should the post and railings continue to fail WSCC resources will be spent on their removal. In total, there are 41 posts and 36 railings and this could involve numerous callouts for WSCC. In addition, once the post and railings have all been removed, we believe it is likely that as a result there will be issues with vehicles parking on the verges which would ultimately result in a TRO application for double yellow lines and or damage to the footpath/verges with further costs over time to WSCC. At its worst, we may also find in the absence of any posts and railings a serious accident occurs involving pedestrians.

Rather than defer these issues to the future we believe there is a beneficial solution for all parties. We propose that WSCC completely replace the 41 posts and 36 railings. Once this has been completed, subject to satisfaction with the works, the ongoing maintenance of the post and railings should be transferred to Lindfield Parish Council. The grass verges the posts are situated on though remain the responsibility of WSCC. WSCC will then have no further responsibility for the posts and railings and allow LPC and the community time to build up reserves for their future maintenance. This joint approach would hopefully allow both councils to reach a conclusion to the benefit of the communities we both serve.

No official reply has yet been received from WSCC Highways.

The Chair asked Cllr Wall to provide an update from West Sussex County Council. Cllr Wall provided an update on discussions that were taking place at WSCC Highways. Cllr Wall advised that the Council should receive a reply to its correspondence soon.

Members were frustrated with the ongoing situation and wanted to be able to provide a positive update for residents.

203. MATTERS ARISING

203.1 Cllr Grace advised that she had attended the MSALC meeting (21 January 2025). She had raised and participated in two points: e-scooters on pavements and Weald to Waves. The meeting covered a broad range of topics, and the minutes will be circulated to all members once available.

The meeting finished at 21:12.

The next meeting of the Council is on 13 March 2025.

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.