

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the **MEETING** of **LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL** held on **THURSDAY, 13 MARCH 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)

204. TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE.

204.1 Apologies were received from Cllrs Matthews, Nisbett and Upton.

204.2 Cllr Grace had sent apologies but was able to join the meeting at 20:12.

205. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS.

205.1 There were no declarations.

206. TO CONFIRM AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 23 JANUARY 2025.

206.1 The Chair called for approval of the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 23 January 2025. It was **agreed** that the Chair would sign the minutes as being a true record of that meeting.

207. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

207.1 There were no members of the public present.

208. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

208.1 The Chair reported/noted the following:

Mid Sussex Older People's Council – The Chair attended the group's Annual Meeting on the 10th March, which had been held at Lindfield Evangelical Church. Various speakers attended the event, including Cllr Wood, who explained the role of being a councillor.

Haywards Heath Community Awards – The Chair reported that Val Upton had been Highly Commended in the volunteer of the year category. Val was recognised for her tireless volunteer work with multiple charities, including Mid Sussex Older People's Council, the Lindfield Branch of the Royal British Legion, and her contributions to the local community through various roles.

Alison Eggert-Hobbs – The Chair had attended the Funeral of Alison Eggert-Hobbs. The funeral had been well attended.

209. REPORTS BY COUNTY COUNCILLOR / DISTRICT COUNCILLORS.

209.1 County Council

Cllr Wall had sent his apologies and had provided a written report:

Nothing definite as yet on pond bollards other than I have asked the Cabinet Member to increase the WSX financial contribution. I spoke informally to the LPS who have expressed an interest in supportive funding if required.

A resident continues to challenge both WSCC & MSDC on s106 funding reserves and plans to spend it!

WSX campaign to target food waste, which aligns with MSDC ambitions to increase collections.

The WSX campaign to increase smoking cessation is going well, this includes vaping use and uptake.

The recent campaign to encourage vaccination uptake has also produced results. Vaccinations were down this year which added extra pressure on NHS services.

SECAMB, our Ambulance provider, has been proactive in its improvement journey ...this has resulted in them being taken out of special measures.

WSX Qtr 3 report shows an increased overspend of c£20+m on Adult Social Care. Not unexpected as service costs continue to rise but those most vulnerable need our full support. This is a national issue and will continue to impact on all LA finances going forward.

Care Quality Commission has carried out a full inspection of Social Care services, report due in early summer.

The Devo and LGR work continues at pace. The Mayoral position is reasonably clear with Sussex Mayor in place by May 2026. Candidates are coming forward.

Government reform more challenging, but all Council Leaders are involved in discussions to identify possible Unitary Boundaries. Options will be placed before Gov't late March for a decision in Sept/Oct 26. The main discussion continues to centre on the ambitions of Brighton & Hove CC, who are integral to any final decisions. It is likely the size of that existing authority, based on population numbers, will need to increase!

Very interesting times and possibilities for Towns and Parishes will no doubt be on the SALC agenda.

209.2 District Council

Cllr Cooke reported the following:

1-2-3 Collection Trial – The current food waste trial will be rolled out across the District by the end of the year.

Clair Hall – Work on this project continues. It has been agreed that the building will be a three-screen cinema. One of the cinema rooms would also be used as a live entertainment venue. The project would be funded by other partners and not the taxpayer.

Eastern Road Nature Reserve – A grant of £5k had been awarded to the Friends of Eastern Road Nature Reserve Group.

Cllr Wood reported the following:

Eastern Road Nature Reserve – There continues to be a good turnout at the volunteering events.

210. ACTION LIST

210.1 The action list was **noted**.

211. CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS

211.1 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 Establishing a Mayoral Combined County Authority across East Sussex, West Sussex and Brighton and Hove. 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.

211.2 Compulsory Purchase Process and Compensation Reforms

Members were encouraged to complete the consultation individually.

212. PLANNING, TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

212.1 Report by Cllr Webster 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 Full Council, PTTC has met on two occasions (4th February 2025 and 25th February 2025) and considered 25 planning applications. No objections were raised to any of the applications.

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

MSDC has refused four applications (DM/25/0093/0131/0041/0042) concerning The Old Bakery /65/66a High Street. These included:

1) Replacement of front door.

2) Retrospective consent for the removal of paint finish from the brick plinth to front bay. Proposed external finish to brick plinth to front bay.

LPC had raised no objections to these applications.

Other Matters:

The following matters were also considered by PTTC:

MSDC Village Parking - Stakeholder Engagement – The Committee agreed that the Council would submit a response to MSDC. The Council submitted a response and also emailed it to the Members of MSDC's Cabinet. The Council in principle, is against the introduction of parking charges in the village car parks.

Transport for the South East – It was agreed that the Council would submit a response to the consultation.

212.2 To receive the Minutes of the meetings held on 4 February 2025, and 25 February 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.

213. ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE

213.1 Report by Cllr Blunden on matters considered at the meeting held on 6 February 2025, to include any updates. Cllr Blunden reported the following:

Festive Lighting – Reimbursement payments would be made to those who had provided power for the lighting display. The existing Sparklights scheme has now finished. Quotes, via a tender, will be presented to the Committee and then the Full Council.

Lindfield Archive – The Committee considered a draft policy for the running of the Lindfield Archive. This will be considered at the next Full Council meeting.

Stakeholder Engagement - Committee members were also asked to provide their comments to the office regarding the MSDC Village Parking – Stakeholder Engagement letter.

Events – It was agreed that the Council would attend Lindfield Village Day and contribute towards the event's medical cover.

213.2 To receive the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2025 & to confirm their recommendations. It was **resolved** that the Minutes of this meeting of the E&A Committee be received, and their recommendations confirmed.

213.3 Climate Change – Grass Verges

Cllr Grace provided members with a summary of the proposed grass verges trial. It was **agreed** that:

- a) The Parish Council apply to WSCC to manage a pilot scheme on three verges.
- b) A trial would take place on a small area of the Wilderness Field.
- c) The management of the pilots will be delegated to the Clerk, in conjunction with the Climate Change Working Group.
- d) Expenditure of up to £400 from the Climate Change budget will be used to support the schemes.

214. FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

214.1 Report by Cllr Beecroft on matters considered at the meeting held on 6 March 2025, to include any updates. It was **reported** that the following had taken place at the meeting:

214.2 To receive the Minutes of the meetings held on 7 November 2024 & 9 January 2025 to confirm their recommendations. The minutes of the meeting dated 6 March 2025 were not yet available. It was **RESOLVED**: that the Minutes of the 7 November 2024 & 9 January 2025 meeting of the F&GP Committee be received, and their recommendations confirmed.

214.3 Budget Progress including General Reserves expenditure.

The reports as of 31 January 2025 are:

Committee / Activity / Reserve	Expenditure	Budget
F&GP	£ 141,451	£ 192,380
E&A	£ 54,429	£ 64,425
Allotments	£ 923	£ 2,500
PT&T	Nil	£ 2,900
General Reserve	£ 1,095	
Total	£ 197,898	£ 262,215

Earmarked Reserve	Expenditure	Closing Balance
Toilets on the Common	£ 7,784.17	£ 69,407.50
Wilderness Field S106 Maintenance	£ 4,380.20	£ 8,465.38
Council Elections	Nil	£ 1,350
Plan 23-27	Nil	£ 5,000
Planning Reserve	Nil	£ 4,000
SID Replacement	Nil	£ 2,000
Total	£ 12,164.37	£ 90,222.88

Income to 31 January 2025:

Description	£
Precept	£ 257,000
Interest	£ 3,778
Rental	£ 8,080
Service Charge	£ 914
Telephone Refund	£ 288

Licence Fees	£ 145
Christmas Festival Night	£960
Allotments	£ 1,197
Photocopying	£ 9
Total	£ 271,736

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

Bank Reconciliation on 31 January 2025	£
Barclays current account	£ 14,323.79
Barclays premium account	£ 67,155.81
Nationwide building society	£ 93,197.23
Unity Trust current account	£ 87.73
Unity Trust savings account	£ 9,575.06
Petty Cash	£ 57,756.43
Unpresented payments	£ Nil
Hinkley & Rugby Building Society	£ 1,000.00
Receipts not on bank statements	£ NIL
Closing balance	£ 243,096.05

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

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

214.6 To note the list of payments to 13 March 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 £ 36,454.40, including £ 500.85 of VAT and that there were no payments under S137 of the Local Government Act 1972. The Petty Cash float has now been closed down.

It was **resolved** to approve the list of payments totalling £ 36,450.40, including £ 500.85 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 January and February 2025 would be signed by Cllrs Beecroft and Blunden.

214.7 Communications

Members **agreed** that they would support an in-person training session on communications. All members were encouraged to attend and participate in the proposed session.

214.8 Devolution

Members **agreed** that a devolution working group would be created. The membership would be:

- a) Cllr Beecroft
- b) Cllr Blunden
- c) Cllr Grace
- d) Cllr Webster
- e) The Clerk and or Deputy Clerk.

The terms of reference for the Working Group would be:

Governance: It will report to F&GP and the Full Council.

Purpose: To monitor the ongoing and evolving situation relating to devolution and advise the council on how these changes will or may affect the Council.

Remit: Provide, as and when required, briefings and reports.

Liaise with other local authorities.

Explore any opportunities and/or risks for the Council that may occur from devolution.

214.9 Annual Review of the Effectiveness of the Internal Control System and Overall Internal Audit 2024-2025. It was **reported** that Cllr Pickett would undertake the Annual Review of the Effectiveness of the Internal Control System and Overall Internal Audit for 2024/25. Members **noted** the Internal Control Check for October to December 2024. Members also **noted** that the Interim Internal Audit Report had been circulated to all members by email on the 22nd November 2024.

215. LINDFIELD POND POSTS & RAILINGS

215.1 Members expressed their frustration that no official reply had been received from West Sussex County Council Highways to the Council's correspondence sent in early December 2024. An article had been included in the Council's April newsletter providing details of the current situation.

216. MSDC PARKING STRATEGY – LARGER VILLAGE CAR PARKS

216.1 The Chair reported that MSDC's Cabinet agreed on the 10th March to proceed with a revised approach to the management of the village car parks (Lindfield, Cuckfield, Hassocks and Hurstpierpoint) subject to statutory consultation, applying the following principles:

- Use of technology to digitise the service where feasible to improve the efficiency of the enforcement team, so that it can focus on on-street parking. Discs should be digitised.
- Apply a charging regime from 8 am to 6 pm, Monday to Saturday, with an initial uncharged period to reflect the specific needs of large villages.
- Charges to be reasonable, reflecting local conditions and community needs.
- Provide discounted digital season permits/tickets where appropriate to support residents and businesses.
- Subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment, and the development of a policy to guide their use, investigate making available a limited number of permits to support the work of volunteers supporting organisations.

216.2 The Parish Council, in principle, is against the introduction of car parking charges. An article on this issue had been included in the Council's April newsletter.

216.3 Cllr Cooke was in attendance and answered various questions from members. Points raised by members included:

- Technology – If charges are introduced, the technology used must be reliable and easy to use.
- High Street Employees & Businesses – The proposed charges will put extra financial pressure on those who work in the High Street shops. Some of these staff may not be able to afford the proposed charges. Will the proposed charge impact the viability of High Street businesses?
- Residents – Those who live very close to the car parks are likely to find that the roads they live on will face additional on-street parking pressure.
- Proposed charges – What discounts are available, and are they sufficient?
- Dispensations – Given the proposed number of dispensations and the limited number of parking bays in the village, is there a business case for introducing charges?

217. COUNCILLOR APPOINTMENTS

217.1 Members note the report and the first and second preferences expressed by respondents. Eleven members had responded. Committee membership would be agreed at the Annual Meeting of Council.

The current Committee membership is as follows:

Environment & Amenities (10 members): Blunden, Burns, Grace, Matthews, Nisbett, Picket, Upton, Wilson, Wood & Woolley

Finance & General Purposes (6 members): Beecroft, Blunden, Grace, Picket, Upton & Webster.

Planning, Traffic and Transport (9 members): Beecroft, Blunden, Burns, 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 (9 members): Blunden, Burns, Grace, Matthews, Nisbett, Picket, Upton, Wood & Woolley

Finance & General Purposes (5 members): Beecroft, Blunden, Grace, Picket, & Webster.

Planning, Traffic and Transport (7 members): Beecroft, Burns, Matthews, Nisbett, Upton, Webster, & Woolley

It was **agreed** to note the report as a precursor to discussions at the Annual Meeting of the Council in May.

218. RISK MANAGEMENT

218.1 Members considered the report and **agreed** that:

- a) The Council confirms that it has a suite of Risk Assessments in respect of all of its activities in accordance with its Financial Regulations(s17).
- b) Confirm its agreement to existing risk management procedures.

219. MATTERS ARISING

219.1 There were no matters arising.

The meeting finished at 21:14.

The next meeting of the Council is on 22 May 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.