

# *Lingfield Parish Council*

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## THIRTEENTH ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

**Minutes of the thirteenth Annual Parish Assembly of Lingfield Parish held on  
Monday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2012  
at the Lingfield and Dormansland Community Centre at 7.45pm**

**Present:**

In the chair – Mr C. D’Avray, Chairman, Lingfield Parish Council

**Speaker:**

Sarah Haywood, Surrey Police Authority (part of meeting)

**Members of the public:**

Sally Cole, Beryl Ashby, Sue Quelch, Peter Ashby, Rita Russell, Tim Pool, Rita Snow, Julie Hearn, Chris and Margaret Vasey, Jan Parris, Pat Dobson, Jacqui Smith, Anne Richards, Judy Mendell, Martin Cundey, Tony Head, Mary Ayres, Heather Francis, Peter Francis, Gilbert Reed

**Members of the Parish Council:**

Graham Marks, Lisa Bangs, Valerie Millar, John Cole, Mary Edwards

**Surrey County Councillor** – Michael Sydney (part of meeting)

**Tandridge District Councillor** - Lisa Bangs

**Press** - Michael Davies, Surrey Mirror

**In attendance:** Fay Elwood, Parish Clerk

### **1. Chairman’s Report**

The Chairman asked the clerk to record apologies from Brian and Sonia Perkins, who are at a prior engagement. Other apologies were not recorded although have been received.

Introduction and welcome: As this is not a parish council meeting fellow council members will be in the body of the audience. Should there be questions that they are able to answer they will be invited to respond. Otherwise, I will introduce the work the parish council has accomplished this year, and explain what the goals are for the forthcoming year.

When I took office Fay went to great lengths to qualify what could and couldn’t be accomplished by a parish council. The machinery of local government takes a considerable time to turn and ambitions take longer to fulfil than first anticipated. However, far from being daunted, I understand that working with the next tiers of local government in an atmosphere of cordiality can and will be fruitful.

There are several issues that we inherited from the previous council. The first being Godstone Road and the development of social housing by Asprey Homes on green-belt land at the Bays. I would like to express my sincere thanks to Lisa Bangs who has fought

tirelessly over this issue. The development and associated 'traffic calming' cannot progress until and unless ownership of a length of wall has been agreed.

The second issue we inherited is that surrounding the future of the Lingfield Library which my colleague, John Cole, has been pursuing on behalf of the parish council. This has been a thankless task and the parish council is indebted to John for his determination and hard work.

The third, following on from the previous council, is the conclusion of an agreement whereby the 7 parish councils that make up the Lingfield County Seat work together to undertake the County grass cutting contract for a 4 year trial period. Lingfield Parish Council will be taking the lead role in this contract and here I would like to extend a very special word of thanks to Fay Elwood (our parish clerk) for her diligence and determination in making this project a reality.

The fourth issue is now an unqualified success story and here I would like to thank the previous council in working toward a new allotment site in Newchapel Road in conjunction with Dormansland Parish Council. The first 24 plots were taken up quickly and a further 10 plots have now been allocated.

The fifth is Talbot Road recreation ground. Following a meeting with Arena Leisure last year it became clear that we were not going to be able to purchase, at an affordable price, additional land on which to site a second football pitch. We then began looking to see if we could enable the Godstone Road playing fields to expand by similarly purchasing additional land. This sadly fell at the last hurdle when the owner sold the land in question to others.

We have now resolved to work on a three year plan at Talbot Road which will see improvements to the tennis court this year, additional parking behind the surgery next year (subject to successful grant applications) and the culmination of a plan to build a new pavilion the year after. We are looking at the possibility of a facility that combines a sports pavilion in conjunction with a nursery similar to that in Felcourt, but subject to acquiring planning permission. I believe our desire to see Talbot Road recreation ground enhanced for the village meets with the goals envisioned by my predecessor.

Following the elections in May last year, parish councillors attended a dynamic 'Visioning' exercise run by the chairman of Surrey County Parish and Town Council's Association. From this meeting I drew up a Business Plan which the council adopted in September. This was split into short term and long term objectives:

### **Short Term Objectives:**

1. *Queens Diamond Jubilee celebrations.* The parish council agreed to set aside a sum of £2500 towards the costs of running celebrations for the Queen's diamond jubilee. We have received further funding through our County Councillor towards the costs of a commemorative beacon and will be hosting a picnic tea in Church Road on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> June with a walking theatre, live music, period costume competitions and children's entertainments, followed by lighting the beacon in Beacon Field along with hundreds of villages across the land.

2. *Improvements to Gun Pond.* We are in the process of looking at improvements to Gun Pond and to the electric meter that serves the memorial.
3. *Reduce HGV's travelling through Lingfield village.* We have asked SCC Highways to introduce signs on the A22 requesting HGV's wishing to access Hobbs Industrial Estate not to pass through Lingfield. Letters will also be sent to transport companies clarifying this.
4. *To work with neighbouring parishes to enhance quality of life for residents.* We are working with neighbouring parish councils, firstly in conjunction with the Hub grass cutting contract from SCC and secondly with respect to running the allotments in Newchapel Road with Dormansland p.c. I was elected onto the SCAPTC management committee last September and it is my intention to press for meetings to be held this side of Surrey rather than to the West of Guildford. The Chair of this committee is the chair of Burstow p.c. so again we are already working closely with neighbouring parishes.
5. *Re-vitalise Parish Web site & new stationary & open a 'village diary' and establish data base & portfolio of Lingfield organisations and societies.* We have already upgraded the parish web site and are in the process of producing new stationery. We haven't yet managed to establish a 'village diary' or Lingfield organisation portfolio.
6. *Eliminate use of plastic bags in Lingfield.* I would like to establish an initiative to remove plastic bags from Lingfield and will launch this as part of the Jubilee celebrations and work with local traders to fulfil my pledge.
7. *Speed-watch: to work with Police to re-establish speed-watch.* This still has to be arranged and I am waiting on a suitable training day to get this off the ground.
8. *To agree ways to communicate more effectively with Lingfield residents.* I believe we have begun communicating more effectively with residents. When I knocked on doors for the parish elections in 2011 there were two main issues where residents felt concern. The first was the feeling that the parish council had become remote from the electorate. I agreed I would push to reintroduce monthly parish meetings and look at the possibility of these being run on a Saturday. This is indeed what we have done, but the initial enthusiasm from the public to attend meetings has declined, and the parish council believes that it would be more efficient if it were to return to meetings on a Tuesday weekday evening, but to re-introduce monthly Saturday surgeries operated by councillors on a rota. Could I ask if there are any who would disagree with this proposal?

The second issue on the door step was 'what can be done about Lingfield Surgery'. Both Cllr Lisa Bangs and I have had meetings with the practice manager and partners of the practice.

Under the 'localism bill' parish councils can arrange government loans to enable community projects to flourish. However, it is clear that the partners of the surgery do not feel the current climate is conducive to expansion, especially with the demise

of the PCT and the uncertainty surrounding the commissioning body that will replace it. It is your council's intention to continue holding a dialogue with the partners.

**Long Term Objectives:**

1. *Undertake responsibility of running the 'Hub' grass cutting (possible hedge & ditches in later years).* As mentioned earlier, this is now a reality as we have signed the Hub contract.
2. *Apply in 2013 for Best Village in Surrey.* Lingfield is an exceptional community and I am happy to pursue Best Village status next year.
3. *Environmental: undertake a transportation survey & analyse alternatives to parking & travel.* Graham Marks has agreed to investigate alternatives to parking and travel and open a dialogue with Southern Rail and local Bus companies. We are in discussions with Arena Leisure at Lingfield Racecourse to see if they are supportive of creating additional commuter car-parking on their land, an initiative introduced by the previous council.
4. *Talbot Road: identify need for improvement, provision and upgrade of facilities.* We have already embarked on this and will continue with improvements and upgrades to Talbot Road recreation ground as already mentioned.
5. *Lingfield Surgery: to continue dialogue in an attempt to assist surgery expansion.* We will continue a dialogue with Lingfield Surgery.
6. *Neighbourhood Plan: to look to wider implications of planning in Lingfield.* Having held discussions with Piers Mason, planning director at Tandridge, we are not convinced Lingfield parish should be undertaking a neighbourhood plan at present as Tandridge already have a Core Strategy in place. The costs for undertaking a neighbourhood plan could be prohibitive.
7. *To analyse housing needs in Lingfield.* We have been advised that the Housing Needs Survey submitted with the planning application for The Bays in Godstone Road did provide evidence that there is a need for affordable housing. It is recommended that surveys should be repeated every five years and the parish council will consider this in due course.
8. *To work with County to re-introduce 30mph gateways in Lingfield.* I have had a meeting with Surrey Highways and your council is looking at ways to fund the re-introduction of 'welcome to Lingfield' village signs on the 4 main approach roads into Lingfield.
9. *To investigate continuing the pavement down the West side of Crowhurst Road with SCC.* We have invited Surrey County Highways to cost continuing a pavement along Crowhurst Rd, joining with Lingfield Common Road. This has become more necessary since the construction of 40 houses at Knights Mead.

10. *To investigate if there is a need to make Vicarage Road a 'one-way' system.* We will look at compiling a survey of residents in Vicarage Road including the school, churches, and police to see if there is sufficient support to apply for a one-way system to this road.
11. *Power of Wellbeing: to achieve status of 'Wellbeing'.* The Power of Wellbeing has been replaced by the Power of General Competence following the introduction of the Localism bill. Lingfield PC will be eligible to use this power as we have a qualified clerk and members who stood for election.

I would like to thank all my council colleagues for their support over the past year. However, my special thanks are to Fay Elwood whose advice and help throughout this year have been invaluable.

The job of the parish chairman is to facilitate discussion and assist councillors to reach decisions at meetings. We have become a cohesive team. I have already mentioned Lisa and John but would like to single out Mary Edwards for her work chairing the Planning Committee. She has accumulated a formidable knowledge on planning issues during the previous council and we are indebted to her for her incisive mind. A report on Planning is shown separately.

My thanks to Sonia Perkins for studying the numerous grant application requests and for making clear recommendations to council. It has not been an easy year for Sonia who has stood beside Brian throughout the countless duties he has undertaken as Chairman of Tandridge District Council. Thanks to both Sonia and Brian for waving the Lingfield flag so well. The grants and donations awarded by Lingfield parish are shown separately.

I recently co-ordinated a litter-pick on the Twitten from the Star Public House down to the Railway Station. Assisted by Tandridge District Council, who supplied all the litter-picking equipment, and collected the rubbish, 15 residents removed 26 bags of rubbish. This is something I am prepared to repeat in a bid to set the example to others. However, a new litter bin introduced by Tandridge along the Twitten was destroyed by vandals 48 hours after it had been fitted. If anyone has any knowledge who these mindless morons are, please let the police know. Barry Reece, our local police officer, holds monthly Saturday morning panel meetings in the Community Centre to enable residents to air their concerns. I know dog fouling is high on residents' agendas and we will work with Tandridge and local police in a bid to deter dog fouling.

### **Questions:**

Q. How is the Hub Project financed?

A. *Surrey County Council.*

Q. If the Parish Council conducts a survey on proposals to introduce a one-way system in Vicarage Road, could we please include residents of Rose Cottages and Billshurst Cottages.

A. *It is anticipated that any survey would be wider than just residents of Vicarage Road.*

## 2. Sarah Haywood from Surrey Police Authority talking about the forthcoming election for the Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner

On 15<sup>th</sup> November 2012, Surrey residents will have the chance to go to the polls to elect the county's first Police and Crime Commissioner. This influential figure will be responsible for overseeing the work of Surrey Police on behalf of residents.

The Commissioner will be elected by the public for four year terms of office; will hold the Chief Constable to account for the performance of Surrey Police; will set the police budget, the police share of council tax and the local 'Police and Crime Plan' which sets out the overall strategy for policing in Surrey; will be scrutinised by a 'Police and Crime Panel' involving Councillors and members of the public.

The Commissioner will replace Surrey Police Authority, the group of nine County Councillors and eight independent members of the public that currently oversees Surrey Police.

In the months leading up to the election date, potential candidates for the role will be coming forward, putting forward their plans for the job and campaigning for why they should get your vote.

This is a fundamental change to the way policing is overseen in England and Wales – for the first time there will be a direct democratic link between the public and their local police force. The Commissioner will also play an influential scrutiny and commissioning role in the wider community safety landscape.

### Questions:-

Q. How will candidates become known to us?

A. *Political parties will put forward candidates as they do for District and County elections and independent candidates can stand.*

Q. Is it a paid post?

A. *Yes but the overall cost is no more expensive than existing arrangements.*

Q. Was there a referendum on the subject in Surrey and if not, why not?

A. *No. Will find out why and get back to Surrey Mirror.*

Q. How will lack of experience for the job be addressed?

A. *There will be briefings prior to the election and an induction programme after.*

Q. Is the Police Authority currently politically neutral?

A. *Yes.*

Q. Is there concern within the police that they are becoming politicised?

A. *There is concern nationally but not locally.*

Candidates will need to put themselves forward between 6<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> October. They will need to have 100 signatures supporting their application, £5000 and enough funding to run a campaign.

### **3. District and County Council Issues**

#### **County Councillor Michael Sydney**

Michael explained why Surrey County Council had rejected the Government incentive to freeze the Council Tax. It would have cost SCC £70M in subsequent years. Members approved an increase of 2.99% which was increased to 3% because of a technicality. A large proportion of the increase has been allocated to road repairs. Detailed plans will be presented to Parish Councils in May. Michael asked people to spread the word about online reporting for pot-holes as this is more efficient than reporting by phone or letter. It was pointed out that if someone has already reported a pot-hole, anyone trying to report it subsequently cannot receive feedback. Michael promised to highlight this to the relevant department.

**Action: Michael Sydney**

Michael was asked if the road repairs which were carried out last year are still under guarantee because pot holes are reappearing in Town Hill. Michael said that it was.

Mary Ayres asked if utility work is coordinated with SCC. Michael replied that utility companies are required to schedule their work to fit in with any planned highway work but this arrangement does not apply to 'emergencies'.

Heather Francis pointed out that some of the white lines in the middle of the roads in Lingfield need repainting. Michael will take this up with officers.

**Action: Michael Sydney**

Gilbert Reed questioned SCC's priorities and expressed concern that bridges were being demolished unnecessarily. He pointed out that road closures cause difficulties to local businesses and urged SCC to impose fierce penalties on contractors who do not complete work in time.

Reporting on the youth service, Michael explained that SCC has decided to retain the services of the current youth worker after exploring the option to outsource the service. Although Tandridge has a good record in terms of lack of ASBOs, he is concerned about the lack of youth provision and urged the seven parishes in the Lingfield Hub to consider working towards some joint provision.

#### **District Councillor, Lisa Bangs**

Lisa reported that the new arrangement for refuse and recycling collection is the subject which will have the biggest impact on residents this year. She explained that TDC has taken their option to review the way our rubbish is dealt with and decided to introduce mixed recycling collections alternate weeks with food waste being collected weekly. Residual waste will also be collected alternate weeks.

The other subject taking up much of her time in recent months has been the proposed introduction of a traffic calming scheme to serve the affordable housing development to be built in Godstone Road. She reported that she does not think Lingfield has been served well by SCC. They carried out a public consultation which raised expectations but they were never going to be able to offer an alternative scheme. The effect of the

scheme on the village is to be monitored for a year but if there is no alternative then it is not clear what change could be implemented. There has been a general lack of information but Lisa has ascertained that Police comments on the scheme shows they have concerns about safety. When Lisa raised this issue with the leader of SCC she was told that Police approval is not a requirement for the scheme to proceed. SCC needs to learn that because they worked closely with the developer to design the scheme, they left themselves in a position where they were unable to turn it down. The developers are still in a dispute over ownership of part of the land required for sight lines but despite this, they have given notice they will be commencing work on 8<sup>th</sup> May.

At the present time, Lisa has no idea if the scheme will go ahead and she is asking how much the developer has been charged for the officer time spent on this application, bearing in mind that all costs were meant to be covered by the developer. The traffic calming scheme must be implemented before the houses are built.

Rita Russell asked how many councils have developers designing the roads. There are schemes which are only installed to serve developments but Lisa feels the emphasis should be on police approval and residents' views.

Finally, Lisa explained that she has been informed that SCC's 'Good Practice Guide for Traffic Calming Schemes' is not applicable to developer-led schemes and she is concerned about the way the statistics have been collected. The average traffic movements were based on a 9 day study which included 2 weekends. This effectively diluted the figures. Double pinch points are suitable for peak traffic flows of 600 per hour, whereas Godstone Road traffic movements are in excess of 1000 movements per hour.

Rita asked if there is any point in complaining further and if so, to who? Lisa said she thinks we should make it clear we are not happy and that we have good grounds for a complaint about how the decisions have been made. She further believes that officers at the County Council have made comments which have undermined the process.

Meeting closed at 9.10pm