

## **Report**

**To:** Lindfield Rural Parish Council

**From:** Cllr Trevor Webster and Cllr Sol Mead

**Date:** 13<sup>th</sup> January 2020

**Subject:** Council Business Plan

### **Background**

Like most public sector bodies, the Parish Council has finite resources in terms of budget and human resources.

To ensure that the Parish Council makes the very best use of its resources Cllrs Trevor Webster and Sol Mead met with Santi Gil and Sarah Anderson to review the pressures on, and the priorities of, the Parish Council.

Following those meetings, a draft business plan for 2020/21 has been created to enable the Parish Council to stay organised and to remain on track with the delivery of short term and longer terms aims and objectives.

Our concern is that without a business plan that the Parish Council could fail to deliver on agreed tasks and that targets and budgets would suffer as a result.

After initial agreement from the Council our aim is to consult more widely on the content of the plan and to come back to the Council before the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 with a final version for approval.

### **Recommendation**

1. That the Council approves the draft Business Plan for wider consultation.
2. That the Council agrees to receive back a final version for approval before the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020.



## **LINDFIELD RURAL PARISH COUNCIL BUSINESS PLAN 2020/21**

## ABOUT US

Lindfield Rural Parish Council is responsible for a number of front-line services, our core areas of responsibility can be found in the Appendix. The day to day operations to implement these functions are not included in this Business Plan however they carry equal importance to our specific aims for 2020/21 as detailed in this document.

The work of the Parish Council is funded by the Precept via the Council Tax. A precept is an allocation of Council Tax money from Mid Sussex District Council based on the population within the Parish.

There are other revenues generated through some direct charges for services we provide. We own and manage many assets such as the Walstead Burial Ground, Allotments in Scaynes Hill and Gravelye Lane, the Scaynes Hill Common, Bus shelters, benches, street lighting, footpath signs etc.

We have nine Councillors whose role it is to listen and represent the residents of the Parish, we also have a Parish Clerk, and a Responsible Finance Officer who keep the business of the Parish running on a day to day basis from the Parish Office located at Scaynes Hill.

Without our valuable staff, the Councillors, the work of the Parish Council would not be achievable. It is our future intention to network with other community groups to increase our effectiveness.

We recognise that the Parish is a historic and popular location in which to live and subsequently one of our major challenges is how to protect our rural landscape whilst simultaneously recognising that this has to be balanced with the need for additional housing (which is managed by through Mid Sussex District Council

In addition, we also recognise that we have an absolute responsibility to ensure that we provide all of our services in the most efficient and effective way through services that deliver value for money.

We recognise the challenge of modernising a Parish Council that is fit for the 2020s that is relevant to, and valued by, every one of our residents and visitors.

These aims and business objectives have been set to drive our new initiatives through innovation and working in partnership with a network of strong community groups.

Our vision is to ensure that our Parish remains a pleasant and attractive place to live and work that reflects the needs and views of our residents.

## Our Business Plan

### NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Localism Act 2011 gave Councils the opportunity to develop a Neighbourhood Plan for their communities. Our Plan is the result of significant, skilled work by Parish Councillors, with the assistance of professional advice. Following public consultation, the plan was set for the period Of 2014 – 2031.

**AIM:** To ensure we can sustain a vibrant Parish within a countryside setting and to keep the Neighbourhood Plan up to date in line with statutory requirements.

#### Objectives:

1. Continue to engage with the residents to keep the plan relevant.
2. Preserve and enhance the rural character and biodiversity of the Parish.
4. Stress with developers the need for appropriately sized, affordable and sustainable housing, developed in sympathy with the rural surroundings, built to very high standards of design, construction and energy and water efficiency.
5. Press for appropriate Section 106 agreements with developers.
9. Explore opportunities for acquisition of community assets and land for recreational spaces or allotments if demand exists.

### ENGAGING WITH THE COMMUNITY

**AIM:** To engage with all sections of the community through a variety of appropriate and effective channels of communication in order to build a strong sense of community and a culture of delivering services in partnership.

#### Objectives:

1. Become more active and supportive of local initiatives and projects.
2. Ensure residents and businesses are kept informed and updated on a regular basis about initiatives being undertaken by the Parish Council and its partners.
3. Explore appropriate and frequent methods of communicating with all sections of the community including volunteer events

4. Review our branding and modernising our website and maximise our use of social media.
5. Research the needs of the community and encourage feedback and participation, contribute by having stands at local events.
6. Improve accessibility of Parish Councillors through engagement with the community.
7. Seek grant funding to provide seed money for new projects to assist wellbeing organisations to provide services directly to residents.
8. Surgeries held at community locations within the Parish and examine the possibility of Virtual meetings
9. Increase the accessibility of face to face appointments with Councillors and Parish staff

### **IMPROVING THE USE OF OUR ASSETS**

**AIM:** To establish where improvements can be made on assets that are held with LRPC, including the introduction of new assets where possible.

#### **Objectives:**

1. To establish and utilise Section 106 funding to fund improvements within the Parish.
2. To look for sponsorship and partnership opportunities for new assets and ensure that maintenance of existing assets
3. Through community engagement, decide what assets the residents would value.
4. Improving our use of our assets through the examination of Best Practice and Value Councils.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

**AIM** To ensure Lindfield Rural is kept environmentally safe and promote a greener, cleaner community.

#### **Objectives:**

1. Ensuring as far as possible that contracted work is given to environmentally friendly businesses without the compromising Council Standing Orders
2. Champion the Tree Charter, though the identification of opportunities to plan new trees.
3. Ensure that paperless systems are identified and initiated at LRPC

## **OUR STAFF AND OURSELVES**

**AIM:** The Council will support and enable staff to work effectively as a team together with Councillors, to maximise the service to the Community.

**Objectives:**

1. Budget to provide the financial resources to enable us to implement the Business Plan.
2. Where appropriate, deliver larger projects through external support to enable staff to maintain existing operations.
3. Endeavour to ensure decisions made by the Council, take into account the workload of staff.
4. Invest in continuous professional development for the Clerk and the staff.
5. Encourage development for Councillors and committees in line with the "Good Councillor's Guide".
6. Implement computer programs, that automatically perform routine tasks including resident's self-serve through the Parish web site.
7. Ensure that our decision making is made at the most appropriate level

Area of Responsibility	Lindfield Rural Parish Council	Mid Sussex District Council	West Sussex County Council
Parks & Recreation	Owns and operates allotments in Scaynes Hill and Gravelye Lane and manages Scaynes Hill Common. Anchor Pond/Common Involvement in the provision of playground equipment		
Burial Ground	Owns and operates the Walstead Burial Ground		
Street Scene	Owns Bus Shelters, benches & Street Bins, funds emptying of street litterbins. The management of some street lighting		Operates highways, including on-street parking provision, repairs and maintenance. Manages most street lighting.
Planning and Development	Influences via Neighbourhood plan and comments on each planning application.	Determines planning applications within the district of Mid Sussex excluding those in the National Park.	
Public communication	Provides an office for the community which is the first port of call for local services.		

## Local Amenities



St Augustine's Church Scaynes Hill



Walstead Burial Ground



River Ouse East Mascalls



Anchor Pond Scaynes Hill



Scaynes Hill Common



Lindfield Rural Parish Council Office