

**Minutes of the ordinary Firsdown Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 8th
June 2023 at 7.30 pm in Winterslow Village Hall**

Present

Cllr Simon Brown (Chairman)
Cllr Paul Kennedy
Cllr Ginette Stewart
Cllr Steve Smith
Cllr Nigel Walsh

In attendance: Catherine Purves (Clerk)

Also present: Wiltshire Councillor Rich Rogers, five members of the public.

Public Session:

Wiltshire Councillor Rich Rogers gave his report:

- Planning – Wiltshire Council will soon be publishing consultation documents in connection with its review and update of its Strategic Plan
- Highways – concentrating on mending potholes, the good weather is enabling it to catch up on the backlog.
- Area Board – will be holding its summer social event on 15th July at Barry's Field. All are welcome.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

The meeting began at 7.38 pm

45.23 To receive apologies for absence

Resolved – to accept Cllr Beavan's apologies due to his indisposition.

46.23 To receive any Declarations of Interest from Members

a. To receive any **Declarations of Interest** in respect of matters contained in this agenda

Resolved: to note there were none

b. To consider any **Dispensation Requests** received by the Parish Clerk and not previously considered.

Resolved: to note none received

47.23 Minutes

Resolved: To approve and sign as a correct record without amendment the minutes of the Annual Meeting of Firsdown Parish Council held on 3rd May 2023

48.23 To consider any items raised in the public session (Note no decision can be made) No issues raised

49.23 To receive reports from:

a. *The Chairman* – Cllr Brown advised he had nothing to report that was not covered elsewhere

b. *The Parish Clerk* – the Clerk advised she had visited the History Centre at Chippenham, and had taken the opportunity to deposit the signed hard copies of minutes at the County Archives. The FPC retains hard copies from January 2022, but holds electronic copies from 2005.

c. *The Council's representative to the Southern Area Board* – Cllr Brown advised he had attended the most recent meeting, where those present heard a presentation from the Wiltshire Victoria County History Trust, which is gradually recording the local history of

Wiltshire. There were also presentations from the Nadder Valley Community Energy Scheme, from Wiltshire Council on the future use of Roundbarrow Farm as a nature reserve, and from an Open Reach representative on the analogue land line switch off in May 2025. It was noted that residents' landline supplier will contact them to arrange the changeover, and special help will be provided to elderly and vulnerable persons.

50.23 Finance

- a. **Resolved:** To authorise the payment of a schedule of accounts for June 2023 in the sum of £772.06, with the extra £10 due to the hire of projector and screen
- b. **Resolved:** To note the 2023.2024 Budget Monitoring form for June. No questions were asked.
- c. **Resolved:** To note the bank balance as at 31st May 2023 stood at £35,892.00
- d. **Resolved:** To note the final Q4 bank reconciliation as at 31st March 2023 stood at £27,019.68
- d. *To consider quotes for byway signage* – these will be available next month.
- e. **Resolved:** To contribute £1450.00 (50%) towards the costs of the Wiltshire Council speed limit assessment of the A30 through Firsdown Parish, following Cllr Brown's summary of the history behind this.
- f. **Resolved:** not to donate upto £1000 at present towards the set-up costs of the proposed Community Shop in Pitton, but to keep an open mind, and to revisit the issue when an online presence for the new shop is available, a business plan is available and funding from Pitton & Farley Parish Council is secured by the Community Shop Steering Group.

51.23 To complete and sign the Annual Governance & Accounting Return for 2022/2023

- a. **Resolved:** to redact the signatures on the AGAR documents to be uploaded to the FPC website, to protect signatories from "specific & identifiable threats" of identity theft, and GDPR concerns.
- b. **Resolved:** to note and accept the Internal Audit Report for 2022/2023 and that there were no recommendations from the Internal Auditor
- c. **Resolved:** To complete and sign the Annual Governance Statement for 2022/2023
- d. **Resolved:** To approve and sign the Annual Accounting Statement for 2022/2023
- e. **Resolved:** To resolve to certify that Firsdown Parish Council is exempt from a Limited Assurance Review by the External Auditor, as it meets the qualifying criteria.
- f. **Resolved:** To approve the dates for the period of the Public Right of Inspection of Accounts for 2022/2023 – Monday 12th June 2023 to Friday 21st July 2023

52.23 New Issues raised for consideration and action as necessary

- a. *Different website and contact information displayed according to search engine used* - Cllr Brown advised he had updated this information for the various search engines as far as possible to reflect the correct contact information, and would keep this under review. He is maintaining the Parish Council website in Cllr Beavan's absence.
- b. *Proposed location of map lectern* – Cllr Brown advised the lectern had been delivered. After a short discussion, it was **Resolved:** that the lectern should be located near the picnic benches, facing north towards the gardens of Firs Road. Action: The Clerk and Cllr Brown
- c. *Wiltshire Council's proposals for the future use of Roundbarrow Farm* – it was noted that Wiltshire Council had taken the decision to convert the working entry dairy farm to a Nature Reserve in 2022, and was now consulting residents about how this could be delivered, and what other facilities it might be possible to provide. Following a short discussion, the following was agreed;
 - i. Encouragement of local volunteers to become involved, either directly or via various environmentally friendly organisations eg Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds etc. Cllr Walsh advised that the Firsdown Environment Group had requested to be involved at an early stage.

- ii. A bridleway between Firsdown and Pitton – signage would be needed.
- iii. Stock proof fencing along the boundary with the Byway Open to All Traffic
- iv. Pond to help with ongoing drainage problems in Firs Road, which may lead to a wetland environment

Resolved: to forward these suggestions to Wiltshire Council. **Action:** The Clerk and Cllr Brown

d. Approval of prolonged absence for Councillor Beavan – owing to Cllr Beavan state of health, it was **Resolved:** to grant leave of absence to Cllr Bevan for six months to 8th December 2023, with a review at the November 2023 meeting.

53.23 Highway/Parish Steward/Footpath matters for consideration and action as necessary

- a. To note any new Highways issues:* No new issues.
- b. To note any new tasks for the Parish Steward:* Cllr Brown had agreed to be the formal Parish Council Liaison with the Parish Steward, who was now employed by the new Wiltshire Council contractor Milestone. The next visits are scheduled for 26th June, 20th July, 22nd August. There were no new issues raised, but Cllr Brown advised he had resubmitted the pothole repairs required in Firs Road and these have not yet been actioned.
- c. To note any new footpath matters:* None noted
- d. To note any updates from the Local Highways & Footpaths Improvement Group:* Cllr Brown advised there was nothing to report, all outstanding work is awaiting action by Wiltshire Council's contractors.
- e. To note any updates from the Community Speedwatch Team:* Cllr Brown noted that 47 warning letters had been issued since the CSW Team had begun their work earlier this year. In addition, Wiltshire Speed Enforcement Officers had issued a further 3 letters. It was noted that the equipment is shared with other parishes, and that the FPC was to consider the purchase of its own speed monitoring gun in the autumn. Cllr Brown also noted a suggestion for a reduction in the speed limit between Dunstable Crossroads and Winterslow, particularly around the junction with Cobb Lane, used by many pedestrians and riders. Wiltshire Councillor Rich Rogers undertook to raise this with Highways.

54.23 Planning

- a. To consider a response to planning applications received:* None
- b. To consider a response to applications notified between the publication date of the agenda and the date of the meeting, if necessary.* None received.
- c. To confirm the response determined by email for applications received since the last meeting:* None received.
- d. To note planning decisions made by Wiltshire Council since the last meeting:* None

55.23 To review other ongoing matters

- a. Co-option* – Cllr Kennedy advised he was aware of someone who was interested in the role. Cllr Brown offered to discuss the matter further with the person concerned.
- b. New Parish Council laptop* – there was earmarked funding in reserves for this, and two possible laptops had been identified which met the requirements. One also provided a two-year guarantee, and so it was agreed to proceed with the purchase of the laptop from John Lewis at a cost of £500.00
- c. Contribution towards the purchase of a film screen & projector for the WVH Meeting Room* – it was noted this would not be required, as the WVH already had the facilities, which were being used for this meeting. However, the WVH were open to the idea of a TV monitor type arrangement. This will be discussed at a future meeting.
- d. Bank mandate* – this had been completed and signed, and would be sent to Utility Trust bank for progressing.
- e. Final replacement Parish Council noticeboard* – this would be delivered on Friday 16th June to Cllr Brown's house, as arranged.
- f. Replacement swing* – access would now be via the footpath. The removal of spoil would

not be easy, but any soil could be placed around the slide to hide the concrete supports, where the existing soil has eroded.

g. Painting roadside benches – to be done when the weather was cooler.

h. Possible different date of meeting from July 2023 – after a short discussion, it was agreed to keep the July meeting date to Wednesday July 5th, but to change the meeting date to Thursday from September 2023 onwards. **Action:** The Clerk

i. Community Emergency Contacts – appropriate item on the website yet to be uploaded

56.23 Items for the next agenda

Governance – review of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

57.23 To consider a request to change date and time of the next ordinary meetings of the Council from

Thursday July 6th 2023 at 7.30 pm in Winterslow Village Hall, to Wednesday July 5th at 7.30pm. See item 55.23h above

58.23 To close the meeting

The meeting closed at 8.56pm

Councillors considered the following when discharging their duties: Equal Opportunities (Race, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Marital Status, and any Disability), Crime & Disorder; Health & Safety; Human Rights; Bio-Diversity