

**DRAFT Minutes of the ordinary Firsdown Parish Council meeting held on
Thursday 8th March 2024 at 7.30 pm in Winterslow Village Hall**

Present

Cllr Simon Brown (Chairman)
Cllr Jeremy Beaven
Cllr Jim Buckley
Cllr Nigel Walsh

In attendance: Catherine Purves (Clerk)

Also present: Four members of the public

Public Session:

- An update was given about the forthcoming Time and Talents event to be held at Winterslow Village Hall on Saturday 13th April, which was intended to advertise and encourage interest in all the voluntary organisations in the Winterslow and Firsdown Parishes.
- Concerns were raised about the amount of rainwater entering Firs Road (outside numbers 2/4) from the Winterslow direction.
- Clarification was given about the hedge cutting along the byway ie that the hedges are cut by a local contractor as a contribution to the local community. This was a long standing "Gentlemen's Agreement" but not formally documented. If charged, the FPC pays for the cutting of the field side hedge only.

There was no report from Wiltshire Councillor Rich Rogers in his absence.

PC Harry Murphy, the Community Police Officer had sent his apologies.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

The meeting began at 7.39 pm

15.24 To receive apologies for absence.

Resolved – to accept Cllr Stewart's apologies as she was indisposed, and Cllr Smith's apologies as he had a previous engagement.

16.24 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

17.24 Minutes

Resolved: To approve and sign as a correct record the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 11th January 2024 without amendment.

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

Councillors noted the information about the Time and Talents event, and that the issue of the hedge cutting was an agenda item. Cllr Brown advised he had an update about the water lying outside 2/4 Firs Road which would be noted at the appropriate Highways agenda item.

19.24 To receive reports from:

- a. The Chairman* – Cllr Brown noted that defibrillator training had been arranged in Winterslow Village Hall on Wednesday 17th April at 7.00pm.
- b. The Parish Clerk* – the Clerk advised the following:
- i. She had attended the Society of Local Council Clerks' Practitioners Conference in January and the SLCC Wiltshire branch meeting in January. She would attend the next branch meeting later in March. She had also attended the Local Highways and Footpaths Improvement Group online meeting, and the Southern Area Board meeting at Alderbury. Wiltshire Council was currently consulting on its Cultural Strategy and was encouraging residents to contribute the Community Area Joint Strategic Needs assessment. The 2023/2024 internal audit will take place on April 9th.
- c. The Council's representative to the Southern Area Board* – Cllr Brown advised that there had been a comprehensive presentation by Wiltshire Highways on all aspect of its work, and there was a lively question and answer session.
- d. Firsdown Conservation Group* – Cllr Walsh reported that the old noticeboard was now fully refurbished, awaiting installation when the weather improved. Hedges had been cut back where possible, any further hedge and tree work would have to wait until the autumn.
- Resolved:** to note these reports

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

- a. Highways issues* - **Resolved:** to note there were no new Highways issues. Cllr Brown advised he had been informed by Wiltshire Council that the dropped kerbs outside number 2 & 4 Firs Road would be reset to prevent surface water entering the driveways of those properties.
- b. Parish steward* - **Resolved:** to note there were no new tasks for the Parish Steward, and that the potholes previously reported had not been mended.
- c. Footpaths* – **Resolved:** to note the brambles around the play area needed cutting back.
Action: The Clerk and Cllr Walsh
- d. To note any updates from the Local Highways & Footpaths Improvement Group:*
Cllr Brown noted that all outstanding works had been completed.
A30 speed limit reduction to 50mph project – Cllr Brown noted that there had been strong support from other Parish Councils present, but less so from the Unitary Councillors. Although funding was available in the LHFIG budget, it was decided this project was outside the scope of the LHFIG. Cllr Brown had subsequently spoken to the Highways Officer dealing with this issue, and it was thought that the final cost would be less than originally suggested in the report, which had highlighted a worst-case scenario. After a short discussion, it was:
Resolved: to ask Highways to formally cost the work required and necessary to achieve the speed reduction, noting that the FPC could fund this, with Wiltshire Council providing funding in kind. **Action:** The Clerk and Cllr Brown.
- f. To note any updates from the Community Speed Watch Team*
Cllr Buckley noted that the Team continued to operate and raised concerns about the speed of traffic entering Firs Road from the Winterslow direction. After a short discussion, during which the possibility of moving the SID locations to obtain the evidence required to support further action was considered and discarded, it was:
Resolved: to recommend that the CSW Team should speak to their police co-ordinators and enforcement officers to seek advice on whether it would be possible to undertake sessions at the eastern end of Firs Road to assess the extent of the problem. **Action:** The Clerk and Cllr Buckley
- g. Enhanced discretionary gully cleaning service* – Cllr Brown advised he had submitted a request for six gullies to be emptied, which had still not been done.

21.24 Finance

- a. Resolved:* To confirm the payment of a schedule of accounts for March 2024 in the sum

of £1259.40

b. **Resolved:** To note the 2023.2024 Budget Monitoring form for March 2024

c. **Resolved:** To note that the balance was unavailable due to current lack of access to the bank account.

22.24 New Issues raised for consideration and action as necessary.

a. *Byway hedge cutting* – the information given during the public session was noted by councillors, and after a short discussion, it was:

Resolved: to put this gentleman's agreement on a more formal footing. **Action:** The Clerk

b. *Disposal of old FPC laptop* – Cllr Brown advised that the hard drive had been removed and disposed of in a proper manner and confirmed that no data remained. The laptop had never been recorded on the asset register, but it was:

Resolved: to sell the old laptop to the Parish Clerk for £1.00 for her personal use.

23.24 To review other ongoing matters.

a. *Bank mandate* – the Clerk reported the ongoing frustrations with trying to access the Lloyds account, she would continue to pursue this.

b. *Roundbarrow Farm* – Wiltshire Council is currently tendering for a contractor to manage the chalk grassland restoration, and are finalising the spec for the new footpath, which officers aim to install in the spring.

c. *Pitton Community Shop* – GPC had been advised by P&FPC that once the Shop was no longer a speculative proposition, i.e. that the share offer had been taken up by the community, then it would consider giving funds to the project.

d. *Provision of recycling bins* – the Clerk advised she was researching the issue of a waste licence.

e. *Trees overhanging highway* – these had been reported to the landowner.

Resolved: to note these updates.

24.24 Planning

a. *To consider a response to planning applications received:*

PL/2024/01212 – permanent use approval of current temporary rural workers dwelling and use of enterprise to include alpaca well-being at Barefoot Barn near Figsbury Ring, Firsdown

Resolved: No objection.

b. *To confirm the response determined by email for applications received since the last meeting:*

Resolved: to note none received.

c. *To note planning decisions made by Wiltshire Council since the last meeting:*

Resolved: to note none received.

25.24 Items for the next agenda

- Possible installation of a toddler specific swing.

26.24 To note the dates and times of the next meetings of the Council.

Thursday 2nd May 2024 at 7.30pm in the Meeting Room of Winterslow Village Hall – this will be the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council

Thursday 4th July at 7.30pm in the Meeting Room of Winterslow Village Hall

27.24 To close the meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.41pm.

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; Biodiversity.