

Minutes of the Firsdown Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 19th
September 2024 at 7.30pm pm in Winterslow Village Hall

Present

Cllr Simon Brown (Chairman)
Cllr Jeremy Beavan (Vice Chairman)
Cllr Jim Buckley
Cllr Steve Smith

In attendance: Catherine Purves (Clerk)

Also present: Seven members of the public

Public Session

Pitton Community Shop – a representative from the Steering Committee gave a short presentation and update towards the establishment of the shop. Thanks were also expressed for the FPC's support so far.

Dunstable Crossroads – further representations were made, and grave concerns expressed about the number of accidents occurring at the crossroads. Most were caused by drivers approaching from the A30/London Road direction. The lack of adequate signage was thought to contribute greatly to the issue.

In their absence, there were no reports from Wiltshire Councillor Rich Rogers or PC Kelvin Ramsey

COUNCIL BUSINESS

The meeting began at 7.49 pm

60.24 To receive apologies for absence.

Resolved: to receive apologies Cllr Stewart. Cllr Walsh's absence was noted.

61.24 To receive any Declarations of Interest from Members

- a. To receive any **Declarations of Interest** in respect of matters contained in this agenda.
- b. To consider any **Dispensation Requests** received by the Parish Clerk and not previously considered.

Resolved: to note there were no Declarations of Interest, or requests for dispensations.

62.24 Minutes

Resolved: To approve and sign as a correct record without amendment the minutes of the ordinary Firsdown Parish Council meeting held on 3rd July 2024

63.24 To consider any items raised in the public session (Note no decision can be made) No issues raised that weren't already included on the agenda.

64.24 To receive reports from:

- a. *The Chairman* – Cllr Brown advised that he had nothing to report that wasn't covered elsewhere.
- b. *The Parish Clerk* – the Clerk advised she had nothing to report.
- c. *The Council's representative to the Southern Area Board* – Cllr Brown reported that the Police & Crime Commissioner Philip Wilkinson attended and had advised that Wiltshire Police were no longer in special measures, as a robust management and command structure had been put in place. They were focussing on Drugs & County Lines, Knife Crime,

Violence against Women, Anti-social Behaviour, speeding and Local Rural Crime including theft of agricultural machinery and from domestic outbuildings. The next meeting would be held on Thursday 7th November at 7.00pm in Alderbury Village Hall.

d. Firsdown Conservation Group – In Cllr Walsh's absence, no report received.

65.24 Highway/Parish Steward/Footpath matters.

a. **Resolved:** To note there were no new Highways issues

b. **Resolved:** there were no new tasks for the Parish Steward. The weeds in Juniper Close had been reported, but had been sprayed off rather than pulled up, due to the possible damage that might be done to the granite setts. No other no other new tasks were noted.

c. **Resolved:** To note there were no new footpath matters

d. **Resolved:** to note the following updates.

i Issue at Dunstable Crossroads – the residents' concerns raised in the public session were noted and acknowledged, particularly the need for additional and improved signage on all four roads approaching of the crossroads. The Chairman noted that thanks to pressure from Firsdown, Winterslow and Pitton & Farley Parish Councils, Wiltshire Council was now taking action to see what could be done to rectify matters. A topographical survey had been undertaken, which would inform what works might be appropriate, starting with additional/improved signing and lining. The report was awaited, and it was hoped that an update would be available at the next Local Highways & Footpaths Improvement Group (LHFIG) meeting at the beginning of October. Reducing the speed limit was discussed, but it was noted that the police do not have enough resources to enforce a lower speed limit, and that the criteria for particular speed limits to be imposed was very prescriptive.

ii. Wiltshire Council's Firs Road drainage solution – a pipe on the byway had been installed, together with silt traps at the start of the pipework. More silt traps are to be installed during the last two weeks in October, which will require Firs Road to be closed between Firs Close and Ilynton Avenue. Only residents and busses will be allowed access a road closure future works including road closures

iii. A30/London Road speed reduction project – in hand, the works order had been sent to the contractor.

iv. Proposed downgrading of BOAT status – in hand. The Clerk advised this will take some years to achieve.

v Proposed dropped kerb at Firs Road/A30 junction – Wiltshire Council has started the legal process of taking legal ownership of the verge in question, as no one has claimed ownership.

vi Community Speed Watch Team – Cllr Buckley reported that the police had recently carried out enforceable speed checks. Speeding seemed particularly bad on a Saturday morning.

66.24 Finance

a. **Resolved:** To confirm the payment of a schedule of accounts for September 2024 in the sum of £1,136.79

b. **Resolved:** To note the 2023.2024 Budget Monitoring form for September 2024. It was noted that quotes were being obtained for the dog bin emptying contract.

c. **Resolved:** To note the bank balances as of 31st August 2024:

Current - £1,405.22 Deposit - £28,000.00

67.24 New Issues raised for consideration and action as necessary.

i. **Resolved:** to adopt the new model Financial Regulations 2024

ii. Tree/hedge cutting from 99 Firs Road to A30/London Road junction

Resolved: to remind the land agent for the estate owner of the need to cut the overhanging yew trees to the required minimum of 5m above the highway, and to request the hedge to be cut back quite hard from Woodside to the A30 junction. **Action:** The Clerk

iii. **Resolved:** to agree to the Clerk's attendance at the Society of Local Council Clerks' Practitioners Conference in late January 2025. It was noted that the cost would be shared

pro-rata with the other parish councils for which she worked.

iv. **Resolved:** to apply for a bank debit card, noting that there was a one-off administration fee of £50, plus an ongoing monthly charge of £3.00 **Action:** The Clerk

68.24 To review other ongoing matters.

a. *Bank mandate* – **Resolved:** to note the successful transfer of the FPC bank account to Unity Bank Trust. This item is closed.

b. *Roundbarrow Farm* – **Resolved:** to note there was no further information about the new right of way, and that the RSPB, in conjunction with the Pitton Nature Trust had arranged a talk on the proposed land management at Pitton Village Hall on 26th October at 3.00pm

c. *Pitton Community Shop* – Councillors noted the information given in the presentation during the public session, in particular that there had been a successful Pioneer Share Scheme, and planning permission had been given for the shop to be built. It was noted that the FPC had previously agreed in principle to the application for grant funding, and as both conditions had been satisfied, it was **Resolved:** to pay the grant funding of £2,500 in full to Pitton Community Shop. **Action:** The Clerk

d. *Soft plastic recycling bin* – this had proved to be very successful, and the Chairman advised he was emptying it weekly. A full list of the type of plastics that could be deposited in the bin was on the FPC website.

69.24 Planning

a. To consider a response to planning applications received:

PL/2024/07899 – front & rear single storey extension plus a garage conversion at 16 Firs Close, Firsdwn. **Resolved:** No objection

b. To consider a response to applications notified between the publication date of the agenda and the date of the meeting, if necessary: No applications received.

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

PL/2024/06074 – demolition of existing chalet bungalow and construction of replacement chalet bungalow with detached garage/car port at 7 Firs Road, Firsdwn. **Response:** No objection. **Resolved:** to confirm

d. To note planning decisions made by Wiltshire Council since the last meeting: None received.

e. To consider a response, if any, to the current Wiltshire Council consultation on its draft Local Development Plan. Noting that Firsdwn is considered to be an unsustainable development in planning terms, and that therefore only infilling was permitted, it was **Resolved:** no response required.

f. To consider a response, if any, to the current Wiltshire Council consultation on the proposed Gypsy & traveller sites. Noting there were no sites, nor proposed sites in Firsdwn, it was **Resolved:** no response required.

70.24 Items for the next agenda

To note any items for the next agenda

- Co-option of new councillor
- Budget/precept for 2025/2026

71.24 To note the dates and times of the next ordinary meetings of the Council.

Thursday 14th November 2024 at 7.30pm in the Meeting Room of Winterslow Village Hall

Thursday 16th January 2025 at 7.30pm in the Meeting Room of Winterslow Village Hall

72.24 To close the meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.02pm

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.