

**Minutes of the Firsdown Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 9th October
2025 at 7.30pm in Winterslow Village Hall**

Present

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

In attendance: Catherine Purves (Clerk)

Also present: Wiltshire Councillor Rich Rogers

Public Session

Wiltshire Councillor Rich Rogers gave his report:

- Wiltshire Council budget – Wiltshire Council is conducting consultations on its 2026/27 budget. 87% of its income is derived from council tax.
- Wiltshire Council Local Plan – this has reached the legal compliance/soundness stage.
- Dunstable Crossroads – officers are finalising the design work, which will be considered by the next LHFIG meeting, prior to submission for a substantive bid.
- Car wash – case with enforcement to improve as the fencing is out of keeping with the local area.
- Firs Road surfacing near A30 – Cllr Rogers trying to bring the resurfacing with the Bob Cat forward to this financial year.
- A30 resurfacing from Firs Road to Lopcome Corner – approved, and due to last 2.5 weeks in March/April 2026

COUNCIL BUSINESS

The meeting began at 7.34 pm

61.25 To receive apologies for absence

All councillors present

62.25 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, and no Requests for Dispensation.

63.25 Minutes

Resolved: To approve and sign as a correct record the minutes of Firsdown Parish Council meeting held on 3rd July with two amendments at 54.25a:

- i. To add “because of perceived risk to pedestrians” at the end of the first sentence
- ii. To remove from the Resolution “to recommend the CSW contacts their Police Co-ordinator etc” with “To contact Wiltshire Council about its policy on additional signage.”

64.25 To consider any items raised in the public session (Note no decision can be made) No issues raised requiring further action.

65.25 To receive reports from:

- a. *The Chairman* – Cllr Brown noted he had attended the most recent Wiltshire association of Local Councils Chairs Networking Event online.
- b. *The Parish Clerk* – attended the SLCC Wilts branch meeting in July and September, to and learnt of updates from a Wiltshire Council Highways Officer. She had also attended the WALC annual conference.
- c. *The Council's representative to the Southern Area Board* – Cllr Brown advised those present heard presentations from Salisbury police, Flood Resilience, and Wessex Internet. The next meeting is on 20th November at Whiteparish Memorial Hall where there will be an update on the youth support project.
- d. *Firsdawn Conservation Group* – Cllr Walsh reported on the Rights of Way maintenance that had been undertaken in the parish. The extension of PIFA43 to the new permissive path needs reinstating. Bees have been nesting in one of the anchor chambers of the climbing net. After taking expert advice, it was agreed not to destroy the bees but to let nature take its course.

66.25 Finance

- a. **Resolved:** To confirm retrospectively the payment of the August 2025 schedule of accounts in the sum of £4529.19
- b. **Resolved:** To confirm retrospectively the payment of the September 2025 schedule of accounts in the sum of £565.00
- c. **Resolved:** To confirm for payment the October 2025 schedule of accounts in the sum of £1116.76
- c. **Resolved:** To note the September 2025.2026 Budget Monitoring form was not yet available
- d. **Resolved:** To note the bank balances as of 30th September 2025:
 - i. Current account £832.28,
 - ii Deposit account £47,047.57 including half year precept of £9,500
- e. **Resolved:** To note the September 2025.2026 Bank Rec was not yet available.

67.25 Governance

- a. **Resolved:** To adopt the basic IT policy that had been circulated, and to consider amendments at the November meeting
- b. **Resolved:** To note receipt of the External Auditors report for 2024/2025 and comments, and that the Clerk had contacted the Internal Auditor, who was querying the comments on the FPC's behalf.

68.25 New Issues raised for consideration and action as necessary

- a. *Benches on permissive bridleway* – the Clerk had referred the request to Pitton & Farley Parish Council, which requested permission for this from Wiltshire Council. This was sadly declined, as there was only enough space for a tractor and topper to mow the path.
- b. *Information lectern at junction of the permissive bridleway and the BOAT in Firsdawn parish, and/or at the junction with PIFA 43* – see above
- c. *Dog fouling* – the Clerk advised that she had purchased six spray cans of neon paint, which councillors were now using to highlight deposits.
- d. *Maintenance in the parish* – Cllr Brown advised that vegetation had been cleared from around the bus shelter opposite Illynton Avenue, from the bench at the end of Maple Drive, and from around the noticeboard at the A30 end of Firs Road. The shelter in the play area had also been treated for rust, repainted and repairs made to the roof fixings. The Firs Road bench opposite Illynton Ave will cost approximately £150.00 to repair, but the one in Maple Drive and at 99 Firs Road have reached the

end of their natural life as the concrete supports have failed and need to be replaced. After a short discussion, it was:

- e. **Resolved:** to obtain quotes for two replacement benches in recycled plastic, to research Parish Online, which provides mapping software to record assets, and two undertake the repainting of the bus shelters in 2026/2027. **Action:** The Clerk
- f. Recycling – soft plastics and future ideas in the light of Wiltshire Council's new Waste Initiative from 2027 – after a short discussion, it was
Resolved: not to reinstate this service, which had been misused, but to investigate the recycling of blister packs. To be discussed at the January meeting. **Action:** The Clerk and Cllr Brown

69.25 Highway/Parish Steward/Footpath matters.

a. *To note any new Highways issues* – Cllr Brown advised of more potholes which will be photographed and reported to Wiltshire Council

b. *To note any new tasks for the Parish Steward* – Cllr Brown advised he had already reported the need for the drainage run-off from Figsbury Ring on the A30 to be dug out.

c. *To note any new footpath matters* – the hedge outside 1 Firs Road has been cut back. The contractor will be reminded to cut the B.O.A.T hedge, on the inside all the way along, but just the top of the middle third. The trees near the play park need attention.

Resolved: to contact a local tree surgeon for advice **Action:** The Clerk

d. *To note any updates, particularly from the most recent Local Highways and Footpaths Improvement Group, August 2025:*

i. *Signing & lining improvements at the junction of the A30 London Road and Old Malthouse Lane (in conjunction with Pitton & Farley Parish Council)* – a design scheme was shown, and after a short discussion, it was

Resolved: to approve the proposed scheme, and agree to the required FPC contribution of £700 **Action:** The Clerk

ii. *Dunstable Crossroads safety improvements* – the white lining has been refreshed. Wiltshire Councillor Roger's report was noted i.e. that the design will be available at the next LHFIG meeting for approval and forwarding to the Substantive Bid fund.

iii. *Dropped kerb at Firs Road/A30 junction* - the legal process is complete, and the project is now in its design phase.

iv. *Amendments to the B.O.A.T. designation* – nothing to report

v. *A30 London Road/Firs Road junction speed reduction project* – the legal process is complete, no objections raised, so a works ticket has been raised to be treated as a priority. Should be complete in the New Year.

70.25 Planning

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

PL/2025/07215 – TPO - fell 1 x sycamore with a tree preservation order at 66 Firs Road, Firsdown **Resolved:** to object on environmental grounds due to a loss of habitat. Council would prefer to see a crown reduction/lift and lateral reduction.

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:*

PL/2024/05307 change of use at Summerlug Farm approved by Wiltshire Council's Strategic Planning Committee 17th July 2025 resolved: to note

71.25 To review and note other ongoing matters or decide on further action. As appropriate

a. *Possibility of the FPC buying the woodland at the northwestern end of Firs Road from the Christie-Miller Estate* – nothing to report.

b. *New FPC mobile phone contact number* – now operational. Item closed

c. Wiltshire Council Youth Support programme – a youth worker has been employed on a year's contract, and the Area Board's Community Engagement manager is looking at funding for 2026/2027. Long term, the intention is to create a charitable trust, similar to Seeds4Success which operates in southwest Wiltshire, to deliver the youth support provision in the area. It was understood that Winterslow had expressed an interest in becoming involved.

d. New accounting software – this has been installed, item closed

e. Community Speed Watch and speeding in the village – Cllr Buckley reported on a new site which was now active.

f. Pitton Community Shop – major grant funding had been declined, but the community had rallied to raise the £210k needed to enable the project to continue to the build stage. It was hoped construction will begin in January, and to be open in September 2026.

72.25 Items for the next agenda

- Quotes for two new benches
- Cyber security
- Amended IT policy
- New SID
- Parish Online mapping software
- Budget 2026/2027 – first draft

73.25 To note the date and time of the next ordinary meetings of the Council including 2026

Thursday 6th November 2025

Thursday 8th January 2026

Thursday 5th March 2026

Thursday 7th May 2026

Thursday 2nd July 2026

Thursday 3rd September 2026

Thursday 5th November 2026

All at 7.30pm in the Meeting Room of Winterslow Village Hall

Resolved: to note

74.25 To close the meeting

The meeting closed at 9.01pm

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.