

**Minutes of the Firsdown Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 8th January
2026 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: No items raised

Wiltshire Councillor Rich Rogers gave his report:

- Wiltshire council has voted not to impose a second home premium tax but has voted to introduce an empty homes premium tax.
- Firsdown carwash – The Enforcement Team are now involved, and it is understood that the owner will address the boundary treatment issue in 2026.
- Reduction of A30 speed limit to 50mph – the implementation of this has been delayed to mid-spring, he will investigate the reasons for the delay.
- Repair of Firs Road surfacing – the temporary repairs have failed, the road has been surveyed and long-term repairs scheduled, but no confirmed date yet.
- Waste collections – the forthcoming changes are required by central Government, and it is proposed that food waste is collected weekly, recycling is collected fortnightly and residual waste is collected every three weeks. However, this includes clinical waste which may result in a health hazard, so this is already being reviewed.
- Wiltshire Council's budget meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 24th February, with Wednesday 25th February also allocated, if required.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

The meeting began at 7.41pm

1.26 To receive apologies for absence

All councillors present

2.26 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.

3.26 Minutes

Resolved: To approve and sign as a correct record without amendment the minutes of Firsdown Parish Council meeting held on 6th November 2025.

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

5.26 To receive reports from:

- a. *The Chairman* – Cllr Brown advised he had litter picked twice from the A30 to Dunstable

Crossroads and had attended an informative meeting held by Pitton Nature Trust which updated residents about the progress of the Roundbarrow Nature Reserve.

b. The Parish Clerk – The Clerk advised she would be attending the Society of Local Council Clerk’s branch meeting and Practitioners Conference later in January. Pitton Community Shop has raised the funding required, and the build project has already started.

c. The Council's representative to the Southern Area Board – Cllr Brown advised he had attended the recent meeting in November where there was an update on the youth support project and Rights of Way maintenance. The next meeting is on Thursday 12th March at Morgan Vale & Woodfalls Village Hall.

d. Firsdown Conservation Group – Cllr Walsh advised that overhanging branches had been removed from the permissive path.

e. Community Speedwatch – Cllr Buckley advised there had little activity due to the cold weather, but the Group would begin monitoring again soon.

6.26 Finance

a. **Resolved:** To note the bank balances as of 31st December 2025:

i. Current account £516.62

ii Deposit account £41,643.98 including £246.41 quarterly interest.

b. **Resolved:** To approve the following internal bank transfers undertaken by the Clerk:

i. 7th November 2025 - £1,400 from deposit to current

ii. 9th December 2025 - £3,500 from deposit to current

c. **Resolved:** To confirm retrospectively for payment a schedule of accounts for December 2025 in the sum of £3458.40

d. **Resolved:** To confirm for payment a schedule of accounts for January 2026 in the sum of £1233.84 together with three late invoices, final total approved £2445.39

e. **Resolved:** To note the December 2025.2026 Budget Monitoring form

Resolved: To note the December 2025 bank reconciliation

f. *To consider and agree the draft budget recommendations for 2025/2026* - The Clerk and Chairman presented the draft budget for 2026/2027 which had previously been circulated to all councillors, and which the FPC considered. After some discussion it was:

Resolved: To agree to a budget of £21057.75 for 2026/2027. Earmarked reserves will be considered at the March meeting.

g. *To consider and agree the precept recommendation for 2026/2027* - Wiltshire Council had advised the FPC that the estimated tax base figure for 2026/2027 would be 277.18 (previous year 273.83). Having agreed the budget, the FPC considered the precept, and it was:

Resolved: to agree an increase of £1000.00 on the previous year to £20,000.00, (using £2057.75 from reserves to cover the difference) 2026/2027 The annual cost to a Band D household would be £72.16 (£7.22 per month) an increase of £2.77 on the whole year. **Action:** Clerk to inform Wiltshire Council.

7.26 New Issues raised for consideration and action as necessary

None noted

8.26 Highway/Parish Steward/Footpath matters.

a. To note any new Highways issues – none noted

b. To note any new tasks for the Parish Steward – none noted

c. To note any new footpath matters – Cllr Brown advised he had cut back the hedge along the pavement from the field gate to the woods at the A30 end of Firs Road. The landowner to be contacted to cut back the hedge from the field gate to the A30 junction. **Action:** The Clerk

d. To note any updates – it was noted that Pitton & Farley Parish Council had declined to contribute to the proposed lining and signing project at Dunstable Crossroads.

9.26 Planning

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

PL/2025/08317 – part demolition of existing garage and formation of utility room at 96 Firs Road – recorded in error, no new plans received

b. *To consider a response to applications notified between the publication date of the agenda and the date of the meeting, if necessary.* None notified.

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

i. PL/2025/08714 – retrospective application for completed garden landscaping works constructed without prior approval at Shanaway, Maple Drove Firsdawn – Resolved: to object. It was also noted that Wiltshire Councillor Rich Rogers has called in this application for determination by the Southern Planning Committee

ii. PL/2025/09167 – TPO – 1 x sycamore tree – reduce height by 305 and crown clean, remove 3 low overhanging branches at Shanaway, Maple Drive, Firsdawn (tree located at 66 Firs Road, Firsdawn) Resolved: No objection

iii. PL/2025/09487 – TPO – various works to 6 x beech trees at Firsland, 18D Firs Road, Firsdawn Resolved: No Objection

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

PL/2025/08317 – part demolition of existing garage and formation of utility room at 96 Firs Road, Firsdawn Approved 11th December 2025

10.26 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, to be chased.

b. Purchase of additional Speed Indicator Device – an additional SID has been purchased and installed. Item closed.

c. Purchase of replacement bench – purchased and delivered, to be installed when the weather permits.

d. Hedge/trees on the byway - a local tree surgeon has been requested to provide estimates to lower the hedge at the play area end of the BOAT.

11.26 Items for the next agenda

- Earmarked Reserves
- GDPR/Data Protection policies

12.26 To note the date and time of the next ordinary meetings of the Council

Thursday 5th March 2026 at 7.30pm in the Meeting Room of Winterslow Village Hall

13.26 To close the meeting

The meeting closed at 8.17pm

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.