

**DRAFT Minutes of the Annual Parish (Electors) Meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2025 held at  
7.30pm in Winterslow Village Hall**

**Present:**

Simon Brown (Parish Council Chairman),  
Four members of the public

**In the Chair: Simon Brown**

1. **To receive apologies** – apologies had been received from Jeremy Beavan
  
2. **To approve the minutes of the last ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2024.** The minutes were approved as a correct record without amendment.
  
3. **Matters arising** – No matters arising.
  
4. **A report on the year** – Simon Brown gave his report:

Welcome to the Annual Parish meeting which is a review of the work of the Parish Council over the last year. This is also an opportunity for electors to raise any issues of their choice. All town and parish councils are legally required to hold one such meeting a year – but it is not a meeting of the Parish Council.

The environment, and working with nearby communities, especially Pitton have been key themes in the last year for the Parish Council. The Roundbarrow Farm nature reserve is now operating and is being managed by the RSPB. Initial activities are aimed at reducing the levels of nutrient pollutants caused by the manure from dairy farming. This will take several years before new grassland can be sown to support insects that thrive on chalk downland. The low intensity sheep grazing that is currently taking place is aimed at breaking up the soil surface and preventing gorse and shrub becoming established. A new permissive bridleway has also been created, providing for the first time an off-road walking route connecting Firsdow and Pitton. The bridleway will open on 23rd May. Future plans include the planting of a community orchard, and the RSPB are due to hold further engagement with the communities of Pitton and Firsdow.

Last summer, there were extensive works on the byway to construct a new rainwater soakaway system to deal with surface water from the highway that had been causing flooding for many years in some of the gardens of properties in Firs Road. The very wet late summer and early autumn of 2024 tested the new system to the limit, and further works were found to be required which took place in October last year. Fortunately, these now seem to be effective. All the works were funded by Wiltshire Council, and I give my thanks to the Drainage Team for their collaborative work and engagement with the Parish Council to develop a suitable solution.

The disturbance of the ground by these works has created an opportunity to improve the biodiversity of the area. Over 400 native wild daffodils bulbs have been planted, and native wildflower seeds for chalk soil have been sown in more than 20 different clumps within the works area. The daffodils have already been on display this spring and it is hoped that the wildflowers will make a summer appearance and slowly spread over time.

The flooding of the Pitton Road is also an issue which affects Firsdow residents, making it more difficult to access facilities within Pitton and disrupting local bus services. The Parish Council has made a financial donation to support the community led efforts within Pitton to mitigate this long-standing problem. The Parish Council has also financially supported

another community initiative within Pitton, the creation of a community shop and hub. Development activities are proceeding well; planning permission has been granted, and fund-raising activities are continuing. The scheme should be a great benefit to Pitton and Firsdawn. We wish them well.

At the top end of Firs Road, several trees had grown to such an extent that overhanging branches were obstructing the highway and could cause damage to high sided vehicles. The Parish Council brought this to the attention of the landowner and over the winter a tree surgeon has sympathetically cut these back. As part of these works, the scrub adjacent to the footpath was also cleared. There was no charge to the Parish Council for any of this work. The Parish Council with the help of a local resident, has now cleared back the remaining vegetation alongside the footpath all the way to the top of Firs Road. Together with the use of recycled hardcore and stone to improve the footpath surface, there is now a much improved and more accessible walking route here.

A one-off increase to the precept last year raised sufficient funds to help implement a scheme to reduce to the speed limit to 50mph at the A30/Firs Road junction. Wiltshire Council has also agreed to install a new dropped curb to the pavement at this location, and they will be funding most of that work. We are waiting for the highways maintenance contractor to carry out both schemes, hopefully in the next year. There have been some interim repairs to the surface of Firs Road, but longer term, more substantial repairs are still required. The Parish Council, together with Winterslow and Pitton and Farley Parish Councils, have funded a topographical survey at the Dunstable Crossroads. This has digitally mapped the land boundaries and gradients. Wiltshire Council is using this data to look at options for realignment of the junction to reduce the accident rate. The options should be available to the 3 Parish Councils in the next year. However, we will need to secure funding from Wiltshire Council for any significant changes, and improved signing and road markings may well be a more affordable initial step.

Last summer the Parish Council set up a soft plastics collection bin located next to post box at Great Croft. It has been a huge success, with over 5Kg being collected every week. This means that over a year, more than a quarter of a tonne of soft plastic is being recycled rather than going to land fill – and that's a lot of crisp packets! Finally, I thank our clerk for her continued hard work, excellent advice and support, and my fellow councillors, some of whom have now stood down, for their contributions over the last year.

5. **Any other PARISH BUSINESS** – there was none.

6. **To close the meeting** – the meeting closed at 7.37pm