

Background Notes for Firsdown PC meeting June 2023

Reports:

b. The Parish Clerk – The SLCC Wiltshire Clerks' branch meeting did not meet in May, but instead we arranged a tour of the Wiltshire History Centre in Chippenham- so I took advantage of taking the signed copies of the FPC minutes to be deposited in the archives there. We now have signed copies dating back to January 2022, but still hold electronic copies from 2005.

Finance

c. *To note the bank balance as at 31st May 2023 - £35,892.13*

e. *Quotes for byway signage – no response, trying Bob in Winterslow*

f. *Contributing £1450.00 towards cost of A30 speed review by Wiltshire Council – the LHFIG has agreed to action this, in the light of the two fatalities last summer. Normally parish councils would be required to contribute 25% of the cost, but residents have felt very strongly about this matter over the years. This would use almost all the 23/24 budget allocation for this (£1500), but funds for the other current/ongoing projects are earmarked within the reserves. and it is recommended that to show the community's support for this, the FPC should contribute half the total cost of £2900.00.*

g. *Donation of upto £1000 towards the set-up costs of the Community Shop – after much research, the Community Shop Steering Group has identified that Pitton Village Hall is the most appropriate site for the proposed community shop, with the building of an extension to house the facility. Legal, architects and planning application fees will need to be paid and the proposal is for the FPC to donate towards these costs. £1000 has been identified in the 23/24 budget as being available, from the new website project which was actioned and paid for in 2022/23. The Community Shop will provide post office and newsagents services, as well as local produce, a café, and the usual offerings, all of which will be of interest to Firsdown residents. The Internal Auditor recommends a short survey to establish support for this, as this proposal requires investment in another parish.*

New issues raised

- a. *Different website and contact info – Cllr Brown to give a verbal report.*
- b. *Proposed location of map lectern – yet to be decided – somewhere near the play park/picnic benches area?*
- c. *Future of Roundbarrow Farm – Wiltshire Council held a consultation event on 24th May, where the Farm is to be returned to open downland, with areas of managed grazing as part of the overall conservation/environment project. There are no firm plans yet for the future use of the buildings. There is to be a fenced ROW created from the end of the BOAT in the woods down to the end of Above Hedges in Pitton – should this be a footpath or a bridleway? Appropriate gates/signage will be needed to deter wheeled vehicles?*
- d. *Prolonged absence – if a councillor does not attend a meeting or event in his/her capacity as a councillor for six calendar months without an apology for absence being received, and the reason for the absence accepted and approved by the Council, then the councillor is automatically removed from office, and a casual vacancy is created.*

However, the Council may approve a councillor's absence for longer than six months from the date of his/her last apology, provided this is done before the six months deadline.

Councillor Beavan's last meeting was in March, and he gave apologies for the May meeting, so the clock started ticking from May 3rd. He has a long-term health issue, and whilst he intends to return to his office of councillor, it may take him longer than six months to do ie he would need to attend the November 2023 meeting to remain on the Council. It is recommended that he be given a leave of absence until March 2024, which should remove the pressure from him to attend and give him plenty of

time to recover. Councillor Beavan may return to councillor work earlier than this if he feels able to, but that will be a matter for him to decide, and if he does so, the six-month rule reappplies.

Highway/Parish Steward/Footpath matters.

b. Parish stewards – the next visits are scheduled for 26th June, 20th July, 22nd August. Cllr Brown has agreed to be the Parish Contact.

d. To note any updates: a colleague attended the South West Wilts LHFIF meeting last week, where they were advised that the new contractors, Milestone, have not made a good start, and are understaffed. They provide the Parish Stewards as well...

e. Community Speed Watch – Cllr Brown will update.

Other ongoing matters

a. Co-option – no applications received

b. New Parish Council laptop – in progress, suitable models have been identified.

c. Contribution towards the purchase of a film screen & projector for the WVH Meeting Room still awaiting a response

d. Bank mandate – Cllr Brown, Cllr Stewart, Cllr Walsh have all agreed to be signatories on the Unity account. The paperwork will be brought to the meeting for signing.

e. Final replacement Parish Council noticeboard – ready, and should have been delivered by the date of the meeting.

f. Replacement swing – awaiting installation, dates of access being negotiated

g. Painting roadside benches – to be actioned.

h. Possible different date of meeting from July 2023

i. Community Emergency contacts – to be actioned