

Background Notes for Firsdown PC meeting March 2025

18.23 Reports

b. Parish Clerk's report

- I attended the SLCC Wilts branch meeting in January to hear a presentation on the forthcoming local government elections. Information has been circulated; please note I can provide you with the electoral register number of your own and your nominators. You need to make an appointment at Bourne Hill to submit your form yourself. The deadline is 4.00pm on Wednesday 2nd April
- I attended the SLCC Practitioners Conference in January, where I attended presentations on cemetery management, elections, accuracy and planning reform.
- The UKHSA has lifted the restrictions on litter picking.
- The annual internal audit will take place on 17th April.
- Highways have circulated their new discretionary emptying schedules. The next visit to Firsdown is in July. Any gullies reported in 2024 and not emptied will need to be resubmitted.

19.25 Highway/Parish Steward/Footpath matters

d. Update on existing Highways/Footpath issues: I have submitted a request to the LHFIFG regarding the request for scalping on the BOAT. This has been acknowledged and is being considered by the Rights of Way team. The next LHFIFG meeting is not until June, so it may be a few months before we hear anything, and probably not until after the election.

21.25 New issues

a. Clerk's registration for the FiLCA qualification – this is a module qualification to be completed in 12 months covering all aspects of Parish Council finance and administration including VAT, budgeting, financial controls, the role of councillors and clerk/RFO in the processes etc. Cost is £120 plus VAT to be shared 40:60 with Grimstead PC. The cost to the FPC will be £40.00

22.25 Ongoing matters

a. *Tree/hedge cutting from 99 firs Rd to A30 junction* – complete. Item closed.

b. *Bank card* – application submitted

c. *Purchase of woodland* – I have contacted the land agent, no response yet other than an acknowledgement.

d. *Roundbarrow Farm*: From WC RoW:

The new permissive bridleway which is in the process of being created at Roundbarrow Farm, Pitton. The route has now been fenced off, but the work required to achieve this, and to remove sections of hedgerow, has resulted in damage to the ground which needs to be repaired through seeding before the route can be opened.

The bridleway will remain closed until an official opening on a date to be set towards the end of May 2025. Thank everyone for their patience.

WC has signed a 15-year agreement with the RSPB who are now tenants of the site and will be liaising closely with them over the coming months regarding joint publicity and the creation of a steering group which the respective parish councils will be invited to sit on. Just to re-iterate that whilst the site will be managed by the RSPB as a nature reserve, access to it will be strictly via the permissive bridleway or open days and working parties organised by the RSPB. Further news later in the spring.