



Chairman Statement: Annual electors meeting May 2026

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, 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.

In the last year the Parish Council has continued to work on environmental projects within the parish. We have replaced, improved and repaired the assets and facilities that we own and have persuaded Wiltshire Council to finance 2 road safety schemes. This shows the commitment of the Parish Council to improving the environment around Firsdown.

The new permissive bridleway across the Roundbarrow Nature reserve linking Firsdown with Pitton was opened on the 23rd May last year. It has been a resounding success and offers spectacular views of the countryside between the 2 villages.

The RSPB continue to manage the reserve with a 2nd field sown with wildflowers that are native to chalk downland. A public meeting was held in November 2025 which gave details of the future plans for the reserve.

The Parish Council have planted another 400 wild daffodil bulbs of 2 different species on the byway.

Whilst, the Firsdown Nature Group have planted cowslip and primrose plants to improve the habitat for the Duke of Burgundy butterfly that uses these 2 plants to lay its eggs. The Nature Group continues to improve the verge of the upper reaches of Firs Road with daffodil colonies.

Last summer, the shelter in the play area was given a comprehensive overhaul and repaint. Early in the spring this year, the rubber safety mats were treated to remove the accumulated moss and scrubbed clean. The 2 memorial benches in the junior section have also been treated with new preservative for the timber.

In Firs Road, the bench opposite Maple Drive that had failed concrete supports and rotten timber, has been replaced with a new bench that is made from recycled plastics and therefore maintenance free. Overgrowing vegetation around the bench and footpath from an adjacent empty property has been cut back and cleared.

The vegetation that was also inundating the nearby bus stop shelter has also been cleared – with the permission of the homeowner. The shelter was then given a good clean.

The path from 99 Firs Road to the A30 has been single handily cleared by the Chairman of the Parish Council. Vegetation on the field side has been substantially cut back and the scrub cleared. The surface of the path has been scraped back to remove grass at its edge and to improve drainage and grip in wet weather. Much of the path is now 3 times wider than before.

Via the Local Highways Footpath Improvement Group (LHFIG), the Parish Council have secured majority funding from Wiltshire Council for 2 road safety improvement schemes.

At the A30/Old Malthouse Lane/Pitton Road Junctions, there will be improved signage warning of the junctions as well as SLOW markings on the A30. Work is expected to be completed by the end of 2026. Pitton and Farley Parish Council have joined forces with Firsdown to fund 25% of the cost.

Improvements to the Dunstable Crossroads are constrained by the current highway boundaries. To make the junction compliant with current safety standards would require Wiltshire Council to purchase additional land, the cost of which would be over 6 figures, which is deemed unaffordable. A more modest scheme consisting of improved signage together with high visibility road markings has been agreed. Firsdown and Winterslow Parish Councils are jointly contributing 25% of the cost of the scheme, with Wiltshire funding the balance. The design of the scheme is yet to be fully finalised but we hope the works will be done in the next year.

The Parish Council are delighted to report that the long-awaited speed reduction to 50mph on the A30 at the Firs Road junction is now in place. This has taken over 3 years to achieve. The Parish Council had to commission a study to verify the safety benefits – we ideally wanted a 40mph limit, but the junction didn't meet this criteria. There was a statutory legal process to undertake by Wiltshire Council to reduce the speed limit, and this process has been revised which caused delay. Finally, the physical works needed to be programmed into the highways maintenance schedule.

Works to resurface the A30 from the Pheasant traffic lights to Lopcombe Corner have now unfortunately been delayed from this month to August. This is the 2nd postponement following Wessex Water works at Lopcombe Corner earlier in the year. The latest delay is due to the A30 being used as a diversion route whilst works on other major roads take place.

An additional Speed Indicator Device has been purchased by the Parish Council. This will provide an additional visual reminder of the speed limit at the top and bottom ends of Firs Road.

Interim repairs to the surface of Firs Road at its east end were carried out during 2025, however the west end in particular has continued to deteriorate. Wiltshire Highways carried out a survey of the entire length of Firs Road last autumn and they acknowledge that the surface has reached the end of its life. The Parish Council have been told that repairs will be undertaken during 2026.

Finally, I thank our clerk for her sterling hard work, excellent advice and support, and my fellow councilors, for their contributions over the last year.

Simon Brown

Chairman Firsdown Parish Council.