



FERNHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Full Council Meeting Wednesday 19 February 2025 Minutes

Minutes of the Meeting of Fernhurst Parish Council held at the Hub on Wednesday 19 February 2025 at 7.00pm

Councillors Present: Mrs H Bicknell (Chair), Mr B Black, Mr J Buchanan, Mrs S Heath-Clough, Mr C Honeyman Brown, Mr G Inns, Mrs M Jenkins, Mr C Lloyd, Mr G Williamson.

In Attendance: West Sussex County Councillor T Richardson, Chichester District Councillor E Newbery, and Mrs E Ford (Clerk).

015/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Mr P Bellet.

016/25 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS: None

017/25 PUBLIC REPRESENTATIONS: None

018/25 PREVIOUS MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting on **15 January 2025** were presented for approval.

Resolved: To approve the minutes of the meeting on 15 January 2025.

019/25 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES: None

020/25 TO NOTE CASUAL VACANCY

There was a casual vacancy on the Council following the resignation of Mr S Flatt. The Council thanked Mr Flatt for his work on the Council for the last two years. A Casual Vacancy notice had been posted and if ten residents have not requested an election by Friday 7th March the Council would fill the vacancy by co-option. **Action: Clerk** to place an advert in the April parish magazine inviting residents to stand as candidates for the vacant seat on the Council.

021/25 COUNTY COUNCIL COMMENTARY

The new reduced speed limit was now in place at Henley Hill. There was an option to re-apply in a few years for a reduced speed limit for the remaining 50 mph section between Henley Hill and Fernhurst.

The school was planning to submit an application for a 20mph zone in front of the school. Information on the public consultation re. devolution had been posted on the Fernhurst Community Facebook page. It was planned that all councils would be unitary authorities by 2027 with each new authority's area defined so as to serve 500-700K residents. Above these would be larger Strategic Authorities with a mayor (serving of the order of 1.5M residents and with mayoral elections in May 2026). West Sussex and East Sussex County Councils and Brighton and Hove City Council had all applied to be part of the primary phase. The restructuring process would include an option for parish councils to apply for more powers. It was unclear how the National Park Authority would replace the services currently provided by the district councils. The West Sussex County Council elections had been postponed for a year.

The County Council had a new riparian team to advise and enforce landowner maintenance of roadside culverts and hedges. **Action: Clerk** to make report onto the WSCC website of collapsing roadside at Vann Road bridge and follow up with report to Operation Watershed if necessary.

The two highways items minuted below as 025/25 and 026/25 were brought forward and discussed at this point in the meeting.

022/25 DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMENTARY

Cllr Newbery had provided a written report which had been circulated to Councillors and was available on the Parish Council noticeboards. Key items were:

- progress on the adoption of the Chichester District Council Local Plan;
- information on Petworth Laser Shows at the half term;
- public consultation on a CDC Rough Sleeping Strategy;
- public consultation on the SDNPA Local Plan, closing date 17th March 2025;
- invitation for feedback to Cllr Newbery re local council re-structuring.

Cllrs Richardson and Newbery left the meeting.

023/25 TO CONSIDER COMMENT ON THE FOLLOWING PLANNING APPLICATION

SDNP/24/05253/CND, Wheelwrights, Fernden Lane, Fernhurst. GU27 3LA

Proposal: Erection of detached outbuilding, addition of enlarged entrance porch, dormer, pool and pool house. (Variation of condition 2 of permission SDNP/23/03757/HOUS - reposition proposed pool, amend outbuilding roof, omit pool house).

Decision: The application was discussed and it was **RESOLVED** to submit the response of no comment.

024/25 TO CONSIDER ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE 2025 PARISH ASSEMBLY

The arrangements were discussed and the Parish Assembly would be on Tuesday 8th, Wednesday 9th or Thursday 10th April, subject to room availability. Parish Organisations would be invited to present reports but there would be no speaker. Refreshments would be served at the end of the evening.

025/25 TO CONSIDER AN APPLICATION TO THE COUNTY COUNCIL FOR A VEHICLE ACTIVATED SIGN ON VANN ROAD AND ALSO ON MIDHURST ROAD OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE HALL

It was confirmed that any vehicle activated sign would need to be paid for and operated by the Parish Council. **ACTION: Clerk** to contact WSCC Highways for advice on cameras. Additional road safety options, being 1) a 20mph speed zone throughout the village rather than just in the approach to the school and 2) a zebra crossing at the school, were suggested under this item. Cllr Richardson would enquire about moving the speed camera closer to the school.

026/25 TO CONSIDER AN APPLICATION TO THE COUNTY COUNCIL FOR THE NATIONAL SPEED LIMIT SECTION OF VANN ROAD TO BE REDUCED TO 40MPH

It was confirmed that road marking along Vann Road would be re-done in mid March. The County Council speed limit policy allowed for the national speed limit to be reduced to 40mph on rural roads. **ACTION: Clerk** to liaise with Lynchmere Parish Council to enquire about a joint application to reduce the speed limit to 40mph along Vann Road. Cllr Richardson suggested that the village consider re-forming a Community Speedwatch Group and advised that such groups were primarily for data gathering on traffic speeds plus a capacity to issue speeding fines when a PCSO was in attendance.

027/25 TO CONSIDER A REQUEST FOR THE SCATTERING OF ASHES IN THE CEMETERY

A request for the scattering of ashes in the cemetery was discussed and it was noted that there was already provision for the interment of ashes in the Garden of Remembrance.

Resolved: the request was refused and there was to be no scattering of ashes in the cemetery.

028/25 TO CONSIDER SUBMISSION OF GRANT APPLICATION TO CHICHESTER DISTRICT COUNCIL TOWARDS COMMEMORATIONS OF THE 80TH ANNIVERSARIES OF VE (VICTORY IN EUROPE) ON 8TH MAY AND VJ (VICTORY OVER JAPAN) ON 18TH AUGUST

Past commemoration events and options for 2025 were discussed.

Resolved: to apply for the CDC grant towards repairs to the Fernhurst war memorial

029/25 TO CONSIDER FPC ENTERING THE 2025 PARISHES IN BLOOM COMPETITION

The Parishes in Bloom competition was discussed. It no longer solely focused on formal flower displays and included a wider scope of village upkeep and environmental improvements.

Resolved: to enter the Parishes in Bloom competition subject to an offer of involvement by the Horticultural Society.

030/25 REVIEW OF COUNCIL POLICIES & REGULATIONS

The Clerk had provided proposed revisions of the following policies to Councillors prior to the meeting and these were discussed: Code of Conduct; Risk Management Schedule; Statement of Internal Controls; Freedom of Information Publication Scheme; Investment Policy.

Resolved: to adopt the Code of Conduct.

Resolved: to adopt the Risk Management Schedule with the suggested changes as follow:

- Signatories, on page 1 "Loss of signatories", to be listed as at February 2025;
- inspection frequency and date of last inspection recorded for the war memorial;
- Council computers recorded as password protected and having anti-virus software (pages 3 "Security of Data" and 5 "Data Protection/GDPR");
- Added on page 5 under "Data Protection/GDPR" - Ensure that all hard drives/electronic equipment are reset to factory defaults or otherwise cleared data before disposal;
- Page 7 "Trees on Council Land" – added in "Additional biennial safety inspection by one or more councillors with accredited safety training, to alternate with professional inspections".

Action: Clerk to enquire re means of encrypting Council computer.

Resolved: to adopt the Statement of Internal Controls.

This included the addition of the tracking of receipts on page 2 under Payments/Receipts:

- All invoices issued are recorded and the receipt of payment monitored.
- All receipts are reported to Council.

Resolved: to adopt the Freedom of Information Publication Scheme.

Future development of a Parish Plan was discussed. The Parishes in Bloom process was identified as a means of doing this.

Resolved: to adopt the Investment Policy with a change in item 4. to read “The Council will invest with banks or building societies (both FSCS approved).”

031/25 MONTHLY EXECUTIVE REPORTS/COMMITTEE MATTERS

A) Finance and Administration;

- Bank Reconciliations approval.

Resolved: to approve the January 2025 bank reconciliation

- To approve the February payment schedule

Resolved: to approve the February 2025 payment schedule

B) Planning Committee

The preparation of the Parish Council response to the public consultation on the Revised SDNPA Local Plan was discussed. One additional site - Land at Hawksfold (for 8 houses) had been included in the revised plan. The closing date for comment is 17th March and Mr Buchanan would draft a comment based on the Neighbourhood Plan and circulate to Councillors before submission by the Clerk.

Mrs Jenkins left the meeting.

Mr Buchanan would post information on the Fernhurst Community Facebook page to signpost residents to the ongoing consultation.

C) Property, Highways and Environment Committee

The last meeting of the Property, Highways and Environment Committee had taken place earlier that evening at 6.15pm. **Action: Clerk** to write to three properties to request hedges which were overhanging the pavement alongside the A286/Church Road in the village to be cut.

032/25 UPDATES ON LOCAL ISSUES

The Council congratulated a resident on her recent award of a British Empire Medal. **Action: Clerk** to write formal letter of congratulation from the Council.

- a) Services and Facilities for Young People – nothing to report
- b) Fernhurst Village Hall – nothing to report
- c) Policing – nothing to report.
- d) Fernhurst Primary School –the school was reported to be low on numbers
- e) Fernhurst Recreation Ground – **Action: Clerk** to advise the Recreation Ground clubs of the suggestion to do a field walkover prior to games to check for dog mess.

Date of next meeting – 19 March 2025

The meeting ended at 9.07pm

Chairman Signed:

Date: