FERNHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Full Council Meeting
Wednesday 15 October 2025
Minutes

Minutes of the **Meeting of Fernhurst Parish Council** held at the Hub on **Wednesday 15 October 2025** at 7.00pm

Councillors Present: Mrs H Bicknell (Chair), Mr B Black, Mr J Buchanan, Mr C Honeyman Brown, Mr G Inns, Mr C Lloyd (arrived after start of meeting), Mrs S Heath-Clough (arrived after start of meeting), Mr G Williamson.

Also in Attendance: 3 residents, District Councillor Brett Burkhart (arrived after start of meeting) and Mrs E Ford (Clerk).

136/25 Apologies for Absence
Apologies were accepted from Cllr Bellet and Cllr Jenkins.

137/25 Declaration of Interests: None

Cllr Lloyd arrived at the meeting

138/25 To Approve Minutes of the Meeting on 17 September 2025

Resolved: To approve the minutes of the meeting on 17 September 2025.

139/25 Matters Arising from the Minutes: None

Cllr Heath Clough arrived at the meeting

140/25 Public Representations
A resident reported on problems with speeding traffic and asked that preventative traffic calming measures were considered on the A286. The ongoing efforts by the Parish Council to increase road safety in the Parish were listed. In Spring 2025 the school had submitted a request for a 20mph limit from the upper cross to the cross roads in the village. No decision was expected on this for about twelve months. A request was made for residents to report speeding cars/dangerous driving to the Police and also West Sussex County Council.
ACTION: Clerk to check whether the Council could directly request the speed camera van.

District Councillor Burkhart arrived at the meeting

141/25 County Council Commentary – No report to meeting

142/25 District Council Commentary
The Chichester Local Plan was now in place but the government introduction of a new buffer requirement in Spring 2026 for Planning Authorities to provide 20% more housing than the agreed target would reduce the strength of the plan in controlling speculative development. There was concern that there was increasing political pressure for more housing in the National Park/north of the County. It was reported that planning permissions for large housing developments in isolated rural locations were not being implemented as the houses were difficult to sell. A recent High Court injunction to enforce the restoration of an unauthorised development site in Lurgashall had also included the award of significant costs. This was seen as a useful precedent and deterrent. Mixed views on the recent graffiti at the crossroads were noted. Rural crime was a major problem. A suggestion was made for local MP Andrew Griffith to attend the Annual Parish Meeting

District Councillor Burkhart left the meeting

The Grant application from the Village Hall (see min 146/25) was considered at this point.

143/25 To consider recommendation from the Planning Committee regarding further correspondence regarding the Pondfield Farm application

The Planning Committee meeting earlier that evening had made no recommendation on the Pondfield Farm application for the Council to consider.

144/25 To consider update on the arrangements for the Council Christmas festivities

The licence from Chichester District Council for the installation of Christmas lights on the Crossfield flats balustrade and the Christmas tree in the green was yet to be provided. **ACTION: Clerk** to chase. The Christmas Lighting event would take place on Tuesday 2nd December and start at 6pm with the lights being turned on at 6.30pm followed by carols at 6.35pm. **ACTION: Cllr Buchanan** to finalise arrangements for the music and the bellringers. **ACTION: Cllr Bicknell** to liaise with Reverend Liz Yonge and the May Queen, and buy the refreshments. **ACTION: Clerk** to finalise arrangements for the purchase and installation of Christmas tree, placing of the lights on the tree and its disposal after the twelfth night.

RESOLVED: to approve a budget of £300 for the supply of a 14ft Christmas tree.

The Parish Council Christmas Party would take place in the Village Hall on 14th December. **ACTION: Cllr Bicknell and Cllr Jenkins** to finalise invitations list and menu. **ACTION: Cllr Bicknell** to purchase and deliver invitations and confirm arrangements with the caterer. **ACTION: Cllr Buchanan** to organise the wine for the event.

145/25 To consider Parish Council input to the 2025/26 Winter Resilience Plan

The Winter Offer 2025-26 from West Sussex County Council was discussed.

RESOLVED: that in defined significant weather events the Parish Council would co-fund the gritting of additional roads to the County Council winter service network.

ACTION: Clerk to circulate list of additional roads to Councillors for review. **ACTION: Clerk and the local contractor** to be nominated contacts for the Community Winter Resilience Plan.

146/25 To consider grant application for £2,000 from Fernhurst Village Hall for improvements to the hall sound system/microphones

The application was discussed.

RESOLVED: to make a grant of £2,000 to Fernhurst Village Hall for improvements to the hall sound system/microphones.

147/25 To consider quotes for replacement of the slide in the Council playground

Quotes had been received from three contractors for several designs of new slide for the playground. The quotes were discussed.

RESOLVED: to appoint Playsafe Playgrounds Ltd to supply and install a new 2.165m slide for a cost of £9,080 exc VAT as per quote ref 37025 dated 13th August 2025.

ACTION: Clerk to check grounds maintenance requirements at playground (including clearance overhanging vegetation on the path and wood treatment of the fence posts) and request Cllr Buchanan and Village Ranger to carry out any necessary works.

148/25 To consider quote for the replacement of the field gate to the Council playground

Two quotes had been obtained for replacement of the 10ft wide five bar gate at the playground and decision was deferred until the November Council meeting. **ACTION: Clerk** to obtain a third quote for the replacement of the gate.

149/25 To consider quotes for replacement of part of the fencing at the Council playground

Three quotes had been obtained to fit MUGA type mesh panels at ground level on the cricket safety fencing alongside the playground to replace the wooden post and wire fencing along this part of the playground boundary. As the new fencing would require the use of additional posts the quotes were not discussed and the fencing would not be installed.

150/25 To consider replacement of a memorial tree in the Fernhurst Burial Ground

The floribunda crab apple tree, which had been purchased and planted by the Parish Council in the burial ground in memory of former Councillor Andrew Montcrieff, had died and a resident had enquired as to whether it would be replaced.

RESOLVED: to approve budget of £70 to purchase and plant a new Malus floribunda crab apple tree with stake and tie, plus compost and mycorrhiza addition to the planting pit. The tree to be planted in a clearly visible location with better ground conditions.

151/25 To agree Council representatives with voting rights to the WSALC AGM on 4th November 2025

The Councillors and the Clerk were not available to attend the WSALC AGM on 4th November.

RESOLVED: to appoint the Chair of the AGM to vote "FOR" on behalf of the Parish Council on the three ordinary resolutions at the meeting.

Monthly Executive Reports/Committee Matters

152/25 Finance and Administration

a) To consider the September Income and Expenditure Report

The September Income and Expenditure Report had been circulated to Councillors before the meeting and there were no concerns. The report has been included as Appendix A.

b) To approve the September Bank Reconciliation

The September bank reconciliations had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting and had been checked in detail by Cllrs Honeyman Brown and Inns.

RESOLVED: to approve the September 2025 bank reconciliations for the three Council accounts

c) To approve the October Payment Schedule

RESOLVED: to approve the October 2025 Payment Schedule

The October Payment Schedule has been included as Appendix B

d) Chair Comment

The 22nd October Finance and Administration Committee meeting would review of the 2025/26 six month accounts, start the preparation of the 2026/2027 budget and include consideration of a plan to build earmarked reserves for future major expenditure. The October Committee meeting would also include review of the proposed new IT and Data Protection policies.

153/25 Planning Committee

The last Planning Committee meeting had taken place on 15th October 2025. No Chair comment.

154/25 Property, Highways and Environment Committee

No report to meeting.

155/25 To confirm the date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting would be 19 November 2025.

156/25 To resolve that the press and public be excluded from the meeting

RESOLVED: in accordance with the Provisions of Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 that the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted (staff employment matters).

157/25 To confirm salary of Clerk following Local Government Services Pay Agreement 2025/26

RESOLVED: the Clerk's salary would increase in line with the Local Government Services Pay Agreement 2025/26.

158/25 To consider pension provision for the Clerk

Decision on the form of provision of pension benefit to the Clerk from 1st October 2024 until 15th July 2025 was deferred until the November Council meeting to enable possible additional costs to the Council to be determined.

The meeting ended at 9.15pm

Chairman Signed: ……..

Date:

Please also see documents:

Appendix A: September 2025 Income and Expenditure Report

Appendix B: October 2025 Payment Schedule