FERNHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Full Council Meeting
Wednesday 19 November 2025
Minutes

Minutes of the **Meeting of Fernhurst Parish Council** held at the Hub on **Wednesday 19 November 2025** at 7.15pm

Councillors Present: Mr P Bellet, Mrs H Bicknell (Chair), Mr J Buchanan, Mr C Lloyd.

Also in Attendance: District Councillor Ellie Newman and Mrs E Ford (Clerk).

159/25 Apologies for Absence
Apologies were accepted from Cllr Black, Cllr Heath-Clough, Cllr Inns and Cllr Jenkins.

160/25 Declaration of Interests: None

161/25 To Approve Minutes of the Meeting on 15 October 2025

Resolved: To approve the minutes of the meeting on 15 October 2025

162/25 Matters Arising from the Minutes: None

163/25 To report a second Casual Vacancy on the Council
There was a second casual vacancy on the Council following the resignation of Cllr Honeyman Brown. The Council thanked Mr Honeyman Brown for his work while on the Council and wished him all the best. A Casual Vacancy notice would be posted on the noticeboard at the village hall and if no residents requested an election by the specified date the Council would co-opt a new Councillor to fill the vacancy.

164/25 Public Representations
There were no members of the public at the meeting. The Clerk reported that two residents had contacted the Council to note concern about the graffiti on the crossroad bollards and to enquire when it would be removed. **ACTION: Clerk** to submit a request for removal to West Sussex County Council Highways.

165/25 County Council Commentary – No report to meeting

166/25 District Council Commentary (see Appendix A for full report)
The Government consultation on the West Sussex proposals for Local Government Reorganisation was still expected to take place in November. Food recycling would be rolled out across Chichester District from February 2026 with a "starter pack" of counter top caddy and a collection bin to be provided to residents. Free trees and support materials were on offer to residents, farmers and community groups. Chichester District Council's Festive programme started in November.

167/25 Update on arrangements for the Fernhurst Christmas Tree
One licence had been issued by Chichester District Council for the Christmas lights on the Crossfield flats balustrade and a second licence for a Christmas tree on the Crossfield green, with specified requirements for the works to ensure health and safety. The Christmas tree was being donated and installed by the donor.

The traditional festive lighting event would take place at 6pm on Tuesday 2nd December with carols, mince pies and mulled wine and was open to all residents.

a) **RESOLVED: to accept the donation of a 16-18ft Christmas tree with installation following the method specified in the Risk Assessment.**

Cllr Buchanan would inspect the tree weekly or more frequently following any windy weather.

b) **RESOLVED: to instruct WB Electrical Services Limited to carry out electrical installation and portable electrical appliance testing and certification for the balustrade and Christmas tree lighting, as required by the CDC licence, for a cost of £345 exc. VAT**

168/25 To consider the offer of a donated Christmas tree for the Village Green

A resident had offered the Parish Council a 5m "Christmas tree" for Fernhurst Village Green. The tree was planned to be felled in their garden. It was decided not to accept this tree.

169/25 To consider quotes for the replacement of the field gate to the Council playground

The 10 foot wide wooden field gate to the playground and its hanging post was in need of replacement. Three quotes had been obtained and these were discussed.

a) **RESOLVED: to instruct Straight Line Fencing (Southern) Limited to supply and install a new gate post and field gate for £633.70 exc. VAT**

b) **RESOLVED: Cllr Buchanan to dispose of the old gate and gate post**

170/25 To consider making a regular monthly report in Fernhurst News

The option of the Parish Council submitting a monthly one page report for inclusion in the Fernhurst News parish magazine was discussed.

RESOLVED: to submit a regular monthly one page report to Fernhurst News at an annual cost of up to £1,000.

ACTION: Clerk to upload the report onto the Parish Council website.

171/25 To consider adoption of a new Information Technology Policy

The October Finance and Administration Committee meeting had recommended the approval of a new Information Technology Policy. This policy had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. The policy was discussed.

RESOLVED: to adopt the new Information Technology Policy

172/25 To consider proposed new Council Privacy Notice (data protection policy)

The October Finance and Administration Committee meeting had also recommended the approval of a new Council Privacy Notice which would serve as the Council data protection policy. This policy had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. The policy was discussed. It was noted that the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 would introduce changes for improved public service delivery in 2026 which would necessitate future changes to the new policy.

RESOLVED: to adopt the new Council Privacy Notice

Monthly Executive Reports/Committee Matters

173/25 Finance and Administration

a) To increase the 2025/2026 Staff Costs budget from £36K to £38K

It had been reported to the July Committee meeting that there would be a shortfall in the Staff Costs budget. This was primarily on account of the change to Employers NI and the higher than expected 2025 National Pay Award.

RESOLVED: to increase the 2025/2026 Staff Costs budget from £36K to £38K

b) To consider the October Income and Expenditure Report

The October Income and Expenditure Report (see Appendix B) had been circulated to Councillors before the meeting. The transactions and bank balances in the report matched those in the October bank statements and there were no concerns.

c) To approve the November Payment Schedule - see Appendix C.

RESOLVED: to approve the November 2025 Payment Schedule

d) To consider the 2026/2027 budget

A proposal for the 2026/2027 budget had been considered in detail at the October meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee. This budget was then presented to the Council meeting with the addition of small amounts of additional expenditure which had arisen for 2025/2026 since the October meeting and the addition of a £5K sum to the 2026/2027 budget expenditure to cover potential legal costs in any adoption of Chichester DC community assets. No operational costs for such assets were included in the 2026/2027 budget. The budget also included alternative options for 2026/2027 precept amounts.

RESOLVED: to include a £5K provision for legal costs in the 2026/2027 budget

The tax base for the 2026/2027 year was not available by the time of the meeting and so final decision on the 2026/2027 budget and precept was deferred until the December meeting.

174/25 Planning Committee

A Planning Committee meeting had taken place earlier that evening.

175/25 Property, Highways and Environment Committee

Cllrs Bellet and Jenkins had met with the Village Ranger in October. The war memorial had been cleaned prior to Remembrance Sunday but re-pointing of the stones was unfinished. Cllr Bellet had met with a member of the roads policing unit who advised that engineering measures were more effective than education and enforcement in improving road safety.

176/25 To confirm the date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting would be 17 December 2025.

177/25 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).

178/25 To consider pension provision for the Clerk

Due to delay in the joining of the West Sussex Pension Fund there had been no employer pension contribution to the Clerk from 1st October 2024 to 15th July 2025. Since the October meeting it had been confirmed that an employer pension contribution did not currently incur any tax or national insurance liability, so there would be no additional costs to the Council.

RESOLVED: to make a payment of £4,017.94 to the Clerk's Royal London personal pension to cover the outstanding employer pension contribution from 1st October 2024 to 15th July 2025

The meeting ended at 8.55pm

Chairman Signed: ……..

Date:

Please also see documents:

Appendix A: District Council Update for November 2025

Appendix B: October 2025 Income and Expenditure Report

Appendix C: November 2025 Payment Schedule