FERNHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Full Council Meeting
Wednesday 18 March 2026
Minutes

Minutes of the **Meeting of Fernhurst Parish Council** held at the Hub on **Wednesday 18 March 2026** at 7.30pm

Councillors Present:, Cllr William Black, Cllr Heather Bicknell (Chair), Cllr John Buchanan, Cllr Graham Inns, Cllr Margaret Jenkins, Cllr Chris Lloyd, Cllr Cayte Pearce, Cllr Rebecca Stroud-Matthews and Cllr Graeme Williamson.

Also in Attendance: District Cllr Brett Burkhart, one member of the public and Mrs Elizabeth Ford (Clerk).

039/26 Apologies for Absence
It was resolved to accept apologies from Cllrs Peter Bellet and Sophie Heath-Clough. Apologies were also received from District Cllr Ellie Newbery.

040/26 Declaration of Interests - None

041/26 To Approve Minutes of the meeting on 18 February 2026

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the meeting on 18 February 2026

042/26 Matters Arising from the Minutes - None

043/26 Public Representations
A resident had attended the meeting for information on the recent damage along the Lickfold Road following a theft of telecommunication cables. Cllr Bicknell welcomed the resident to the meeting.

044/26 County Council Commentary – No report to meeting

The order of business of the meeting was changed and the items minuted under 045/26 and 046/26 were discussed later in the meeting, after the item minuted under 048/26

045/26 District Council Commentary
Cllr Newbery had previously provided a written report (included as Appendix A) and Cllr Burkhart provided a summary to the meeting. The introduction of food waste collections was taking place across the District. The Chichester District Council "App" gave the first local collection date as Monday 20th April 2026. The final re-use/disposal of the collected recycling was discussed.

046/26 To note an update on arrangements for the 2026 Fernhurst Annual Parish Meeting
Andrew Griffith MP would no longer be a speaker at the 2026 Fernhurst Annual Parish Meeting. This was on account of the recent Government decision to hold the West Sussex County Council elections on 7 May and the obligation on Parish Councils to ensure that they avoided any risk of promoting political parties in the period before elections.

The Annual Parish Meeting would be held in Fernhurst Village Hall on Friday 1st May and the evening would start with refreshments from 7.00pm. The meeting proper would start at 7.20pm with reports from the Parish Council and local community groups followed by a public forum.

047/26 To appoint new members to Council Committees

RESOLVED: to appoint Cllr Pearce to the Planning Committee.
RESOLVED: to appoint Cllr Pearce to the Property, Highways & Environment Committee.
RESOLVED: to appoint Cllr Stroud-Matthews to the Finance & Administration Committee.

048/26 To consider report on planned repairs to Council property following damage on the night of Thursday 5th March 2026

District Councillor Burkhart arrived at the meeting during discussion of this item.

In the early hours of Friday 6th March, damage had been caused to Parish Council and other property at the Village Green and other locations along the Lickfold Road following a cable theft on the Midhurst Road. This was discussed.
The Clerk had reported the damage to the Police and had started a claim with the Parish Council insurers. Chichester District Council had replied to the report on the damage to the two "Hogs Hill" road signs. A quote would be obtained to repair the damaged chestnut post and rail fence around the Village Green from the original supplier. A request was made to include gaps in the fenceline on both sides of the Green to allow pedestrians to cross without climbing over the fence. Repairs to other items of Parish Council property were discussed and it was requested not to use a concrete collar to stabilise the heritage fingerpost sign at the junction of the Lickfold Road and Miggs Lane but to use stone wedges.

The item minuted under 045/26 was discussed at this point in the meeting.

District Cllr Burkhart left the meeting.

The item minuted under 046/26 was discussed.

049/26 To consider grant application from Tyler's Trust for £300
The application was discussed. It was recognised that the application was for a good cause but it was questioned whether the services were available to residents of Fernhurst.

RESOLVED: not to make a grant of £300 to the Tyler's Trust.

050/26 To consider approval of the updated Asset List
An updated Asset List had been provided to Councillors prior to the meeting and was discussed.

RESOLVED: to approve the updated Asset List.

The member of the public left the meeting

051/26 To consider approval of the updated Risk Management Schedule
An updated Risk Management Schedule had been provided to Councillors prior to the meeting and was discussed.

RESOLVED: to approve the updated Risk Management Schedule.

052/26 To consider update on cleaning of Crossfield Public Toilets
Alternative cleaning provision for the Crossfield public toilets was discussed along with estimated costs.

RESOLVED: to terminate the contract with the current cleaning contractor with a month's notice period ending on the 30th April 2026 following acceptance of written offers by one party for the daily opening and locking of the toilets and a second party for the cleaning of the toilets.

Monthly Executive Reports/Committee Matters

053/26 Finance and Administration:
a) To consider the February 2026 Income & Expenditure Report
The February Income and Expenditure report had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting (included as Appendix B). The transactions and balances matched the February bank statements and there were no concerns.

b) To approve February 2026 Bank Reconciliations
This item was deferred.

c) To consider the March 2026 payment schedule
The March 2026 payment schedule had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting, along with supporting invoices.

RESOLVED: to approve the March 2026 payment schedule (included as Appendix C)

d) To consider quotes for change of financial software and move of Council accounting to a receipts and payments basis
Quotes from three companies had been obtained for the change of the Council accounting to a receipts and payments basis and these were discussed.

RESOLVED: to change the Council accounting software to EdgeIT Advantedge Finance software with a five year agreement, year one cost of £594 and ongoing annual cost of £439.

e) To appoint additional bank signatories.
There were four existing bank signatories.

RESOLVED: to appoint Cllr Stroud-Matthews as a bank signatory.

054/26 Planning Committee
A Planning Committee meeting had been held earlier that evening.

055/26 Property, Highways and Environment Committee
Report deferred.

056/26 Date of next meeting – 15 April 2026

057/26 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).

058/26 To consider report on Staff Appraisal

The report on the staff appraisal of the Clerk was discussed.

RESOLVED: that Clerk salary would be at SCP35 from 1st April 2026.

RESOVED: that Council office opening hours would be changed to two days a week from 9am until 2pm, being Tuesday's and Thursdays apart from the week of Council meetings when they would be Tuesday's and Wednesday's.

ACTION: Clerk to organise a new notice for the Village hall and post information on the noticeboards.
ACTION: Clerk to contact Councillors two weeks before each meeting to request suggestions for business to be included on the agenda.
ACTION: Clerk to request Parish Council website address and Council Office opening times to be listed in the Fernhurst News.

The meeting ended at 8.17pm

Chairman Signed: ……..

Date:

Please also see documents:

Appendix A: District Council Update for March 2026

Appendix B: February 2026 Income & Expenditure Report

Appendix C: March 2026 Payment Schedule