FERNHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Full Council Meeting Wednesday 15 April 2026 Minutes

Minutes of the **Meeting of Fernhurst Parish Council** held at the Hub on **Wednesday 15 April 2026** at 7.00pm

Councillors Present: Cllr Peter Bellet, 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 and Mrs Elizabeth Ford (Clerk).

059/26 Apologies for Absence
Apologies were received from District Cllr Ellie Newbery.

060/26 Declaration of Interests - None

061/26 To Approve Minutes of the meeting on 18 March 2026

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

062/26 Matters Arising from the Minutes - None

063/26 Public Representations
Two resident enquiries had been received and were included in the Property, Highways and Environment Committee report later in the meeting (see min 73/26). All local organisations who had received Parish Council grants in 2025/2026 had sent a thank you to Council.

064/26 County Council Commentary – No report to meeting

065/26 District Council Commentary
Cllr Burkhart had previously provided a written report (included as Appendix A) and gave a summary to the meeting. The introduction of food waste collections was ongoing with the first local collections in the next week. County Council elections would take place on 7th May and it was important to note several imminent closing dates for the registration for postal voting etc and that residents would need to take a photo i.d. when voting. Two new options had been proposed by Government for the local government re-organisation in Sussex and these would undergo public consultation after the May local elections.

District Cllr Burkhart left the meeting

066/26 To Consider the Following Planning Application

SDNP/26/00864/HOUS, The Hollies Fernden Lane Fernhurst West Sussex GU27 3LA
Proposal: Extensions and alterations including new chimney, dormer, external cladding and a detached garage to replace existing.

DECISION: The application was discussed and it was RESOLVED to submit the comment of no objection in principle but that the Parish Council objected to the two large windows in the garage roof and proposed that there was an opportunity to reduce the light pollution caused by them in this sensitive area (as per SDNP Local Plan Policy SD8) by either removing them or replacing them with dormers/vertical glazing.

067/26 To finalise arrangements for the 2026 Fernhurst Annual Parish Meeting
The Annual Parish Meeting would take place on Friday 1st May in the Village Hall with refreshments being served from 7pm and the meeting proper starting at 7.20pm. The Parish Councillors and representatives from many of the local organisations were attending. Following the presentation of reports there would be an open forum session which was an opportunity for residents to discuss local issues. All residents were invited but only those entitled to vote in local elections in Fernhurst were allowed to speak in the Open Forum. Arrangements for the setting up of the Annual Parish Meeting and the presentation of the Parish Council reports were agreed. **ACTION: Cllr Buchanan** to buy six bottles of white wine and soft drinks; **ACTION: Clerk and some Councillors** to arrive at 6.30pm to set up the hall for the meeting and check the operation of the sound system.

068/26 To consider Council entry to Parishes in Bloom 2027 and preparatory work
Cllr Lloyd had attended a meeting of the Fernhurst Horticultural Society to discuss the Parishes in Bloom competition and members had provided information on the work carried out by the Society. A list of possible additional Parish Council work towards village upkeep was started. Village upkeep and community activities by other groups in the village was noted and it was suggested to contact these organisations. Any entry would need to be submitted in early 2027. It was requested that Councillors take photographs of the village throughout the year to add to the view of the village available during the judging visit which would take place in summer 2027. The use of historic photos of key areas was also suggested. Other areas of the Parish would be included such a Kingsley Green and an effort made to include all age groups in the community. **ACTION: Clerk** to enquire whether Chichester District Council would dispose of waste collected by volunteer litter picking. **ACTION: Clerk** to provide additional information on the range of community activities which could be included in the submission. **ACTION: Clerk** to include Parishes in Bloom as an item on the agenda of future Council meetings and provide information to the Annual Parish Meeting. **ACTION:** the election of a new School representative would be included on the agenda of the Parish Council Annual Meeting (AGM) on 20th May. **ACTION: Clerk** to enquire if "no litter" signage was available from Chichester District Council.

069/26 To consider petition calling on Central Government to "Pause housebuilding targets imposed on councils, review and identify local need."
There was no decision for the Parish Council to sign the above petition.

070/26 To consider sale of disused Stihl shredder
A Stihl Petrol Chipper/Shredder, model GH460, had been bought in 2022, was little used and was not now needed.

Cllr Pearce declared an interest in purchasing the item and took no part in the discussion or vote on selling it.

RESOLVED: to sell the Stihl chipper/shredder (*caveat emptor*) to the highest bidder with a reserve of £500

Monthly Executive Reports/Committee Matters

071/26 Finance and Administration:
a) To consider the March 2026 Income & Expenditure Report
The March Income and Expenditure report had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting (included as Appendix B). A duplicate payment had been made to Chichester District Council for the annual charge for dog bin emptying. A refund had been applied for and was expected shortly. There were no other concerns.

b) To approve February and March 2026 Bank Reconciliations
The February and March bank reconciliations for all the Parish Council accounts had been provided to Councillors before the meeting.

RESOLVED: to approve the February and March bank reconciliations.

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

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

d) To note that annual accounts will be reviewed by the Finance and Administration Committee on 29th April 2026
It was noted that the 2025/2026 annual accounts would be reviewed at the meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee on 29th April 2026.

072/26 Planning Committee
No comment.

073/26 Property, Highways and Environment Committee
Cllr Bellet and the Village Ranger had previously met in to inspect the Parish Council assets. The Clerk had then met with the Village Ranger on Tuesday 14th April to review ongoing village upkeep works. A summary report on key items was presented to the meeting.

Public Toilets
An update on the arrangements for the cleaning of the toilets would be provided later in the meeting (see min 076/26). The Village Ranger would be progressing the repair of the area of raised tarmac outside the toilets as requested by CDC. **ACTION: Clerk** to purchase padlocks for security gates on the toilets.

Burial Ground
The Village Ranger was starting a programme of inspection of the memorials at the Parish Council burial ground and the war memorial in the next two weeks following the process detailed in the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management policy document on the management of memorials. The mowers had been serviced and were back in use.

Playground
The annual inspection report had been received on Monday 13th April. The new slide had been installed correctly and there were no safety issues but some works to the playground had been identified.

Village Green and damage along Lickfold Road
Quotes had been requested for the damage at the village green and along Lickfold Road and would be considered at the May Full Council meeting.

Van Common
There had been a resident request to check a leaning tree close to overhead cables. This have been checked and was not considered of immediate risk but a failing ash tree nearby was expected to require removal. The trees would be checked in the 2026 professional inspection of Parish Council trees to be carried out later in the year.

Cllr Jenkins left the meeting.

The culverting of the open ditch which had been causing erosion of the edge of the highway was now complete but it appeared that there was a blockage of the older culvert pipe where it ran under the access to the common. The Clerk had already advised WSCC and would chase.

Copyhold Lane
A consultation letter had been received regarding an application to divert a section of the Copyhold Lane Public Right of Way and would be considered at the May Full Council meeting.
ACTION: Clerk to forward the letter to Councillors and contact WSCC for advice.

074/26 Date of next meeting – 20 May 2026, the Parish Council Annual Meeting (AGM)

075/26 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.

076/26 To receive update on new arrangements for the cleaning of the Crossfield Public Toilets
Notice had been served on the previous company to terminate the contract to clean the Crossfield Public Toilets with effect on 1st May 2026. New contractual arrangements were in place and starting on 1st May for the daily opening and closing of the toilets (from 7am to 7pm Monday to Saturday and from 8am to 6pm on Sundays for every day except Christmas Day and Boxing Day) and with a separate party for the daily cleaning of the toilets.

077/26 To discuss other confidential business
The other confidential business was discussed.

The meeting ended at 8.50pm

Chairman Signed: ……..

Date:

Please also see documents:

Appendix A: District Council Update for April 2026

Appendix B: March 2026 Income & Expenditure Report

Appendix C: April 2026 Payment Schedule