

Findon Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held Monday 20 January 2025 at 7.30pm in Nepcote Hall

Present: Cllrs Smith (Chairman), Wilson, Gilbert, Hellett, Peskett, Whitby, Kenna, Dean, and Toughey.
In Attendance: Clerk Miss F MacLeod, West Sussex County Council (WSCC) Cllr Urquhart, and members of the public.

Item No		<u>Action By</u>
25.01	To receive and note apologies for absence	
	None.	
25.02	Chairman's announcements	
	Mark Robinson had resigned from the Council as he was now the Chairman of the Findon Village Hall Trust. Councillors were saddened by the passing of Del Henty, a previous councillor.	
25.03	Declarations of Interest on items on the Agenda	
	Cllr Whitby declared a prejudicial interest in Agenda item 25.18 b) as she had expenses for payment approval. Cllr Whitby would leave the meeting and take no part in any discussion.	
25.04	To sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 2/12/2024	
	It was proposed and seconded that the minutes dated 2 December 2024 be approved and signed by the Chairman.	
25.05	Update on implementation of actions not covered elsewhere on the Agenda	
	The report was noted. Councillor were reminded about any outstanding biographies for the web site. The damaged signage on the A24 was in the WSCC Highways Work Programme. The Clerk would contact all Allotment Garden plot holders in February 2025.	
25.06	To receive a report from WSCC.	
	<p>WSCC Cllr Urquhart reported on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A balanced budget had been achieved for 2026/26 with no cuts to services and in increase for Highways; • The proposed devolution timetable and process was highlighted – May 2025 elections would be postponed, 2026 for election of Mayor of Sussex, and only unitary authority elections in 2027 (shadow year); • Gritters had been deployed during the recent cold spell; • Residents should report potholes online via Report a pothole online - West Sussex County Council . 	
25.07	Public Question Time (PQT)	
	None.	
25.08	Councillor vacancies	
	A Notice of Vacancy would be placed in both Notice Boards and published on the FPC and Community websites following the resignation of Mark Robinson. There were two councillor vacancies on the Council.	

25.09	Precept/budget for 2025/26	
	<p>The Clerk referred to the Report (as previously circulated). Councillors had reviewed the covering report and supporting Appendix and thanked the Clerk for her work.</p> <p>Resolved; that Findon Parish Council:</p> <p>1. Approves the Precept/Budget table as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report; and</p> <p>2. Instructs the Clerk to confirm the precept requirement of £62k for 2025/26 to Arun District Council by 24 January 2025.</p>	FM
25.10	Grant Applications	
	<p>The Chairman invited Mick Dicker, Findon Swimming Pool, to introduce the application, background to previous applications, and the quotation supplied regarding fencing and pool maintenance for circa £3500.00. It was not known how much the other outstanding work would cost as the previous contractor went into liquidation in November 2024 and a new contractor would be sought. The pool liner would be the priority and the hope was that the pool would re-open in May 2025. A Business Plan with costings etc would be needed before FPC could consider any grant and Cllr Smith offered to assist with this. The Findon Village Football Club application was discussed. Comment was made that the 'subs' received should cover running costs and that other local groups/organisations could also be contacted for funding. No decision would be made until all required documentation had been received.</p>	SS
25.11	St John the Baptist Primary School	
	<p>Reference was made to the written request from the Headteacher (as previously circulated) requesting funds to support a request for specialist Speech and Language software.</p> <p>Resolved: that Findon Parish Council approves a donation of £375.00 for the purchase of Speech and Language software by the School.</p>	
25.12	Reports from Working Groups and Outside Bodies for noting/ratifying	
	<p>a) Open Spaces Working Group/Wild Flower Working Group</p> <p>Lead Cllr Whitby referred to the report for the Open Spaces Volunteers Working Group and the proposed Memorial Benches Policy/application form (as previously circulated). Cllr Whitby reported that the generic Volunteers Risk Assessment (VRA) had been drafted and would be brought to a future meeting for ratification. Following discussion, the VRA would only need to be signed once by a volunteers joining the group, and the updated VRA to be signed by all volunteers on an annual basis. The volunteers would then accept responsibility for the tasks they undertake. The Clerk would contact the FPC insurers to review the VRA. A request had been made to WSCC Highways for clearance of 43 drains on the A24.</p> <p>Resolved: that Findon Parish Council</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. approves the purchase of timber as detailed in 2.1 of the report; and 2. approves the Memorial Bench Policy and application form, including a non-refundable amount for future maintenance. <p>At the request of the Chairman, the order of reports was then changed to</p>	FM

	<p>cover Agenda item f) Parking Village Signage before the other reports – see below for minutes.</p> <p>b) Trees Working Group Lead Cllr Wilson handed out an unauthorised Free Trees for Residents poster for their awareness. A request for reimbursement of the costs of the leaflet (£50.00) had been received from Mr Carr. In future, requests for similar initiatives would be considered in advance by FPC. Resolved: that Findon Parish Council reimburses Mr Carr for £50.00.</p> <p>c) Allotment Gardens Lead Cllr Wilson advised that Arun District Council (ADC) was considering replacing the fence on the south side of the Allotment Gardens.</p> <p>d) Village Hall Trust. No update.</p> <p>e) Community Resilience Plan (CRP). Cllr Toughey referred to the Community Risk Register for Sussex and it was agreed that it was not appropriate for the FPC CRP. Cllrs Toughey and Wilson had made a list of Community Resilience items currently stored in the Wattle House.</p> <p>f) Parking/Village Signage Working Group (brought forward for discussion during the meeting) Lead Cllr Kenna advised that a meeting would be arranged with Cllr Smith to investigate any potential improvements at drop-off and pick-up times with the School. In the meantime, following discussion, it was agreed that the following options could be achievable to address car parking and traffic flow:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved parking at Pond Green (ADC) • Village Hall car park • Relocate the bus stop to the Village Hall • Request white lines repainted at Horsham Road entrance <p>It was also agreed that a one-way system on School Hill would not be progressed again. Cllr Kenna had received some quotations regarding village signage and was aware of the SDNPA Sustainable Communities Fund. Another option would be to combine CIL allocation for the signage.</p> <p>Cllr Kenna and WSCC Cllr Urquhart left the meeting at 9.02pm.</p> <p>g) Assets of Community Value (ACV) Lead Cllr Hellett would arrange a Teams meeting to scope locations and report back at a future meeting.</p> <p>h) Wattle House Feasibility Study Working Group Lead Cllr Gilbert introduced the report (as previously circulated). Resolved: that Findon Parish Council appoints Vallis and Hall for a total fee proposal of £4365.00 plus VAT and disbursements for submission of Pre-Application advice from the South Downs National Park Authority.</p> <p>i) Findon Village Pre-School Portacabin Working Group Councillors felt that it was not viable fund a replacement structure,</p>	
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	<p>although consideration could be given to a phased refurbishment or cladding. Cllr Smith would produce a draft document for potential SDNPA/CIL funding (see Agenda item 25.12 J CIL)</p> <p>j) Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Working Group</p> <p>Lead Cllr Dean that storyboards would be created to support both Expressions of Interest for CIL funding and CIL allocations, split as follows: Pre-School – Cllr Smith; signage, interpretation boards, Pond Green roundhouse shelter – Cllrs Dean and Kelly; and Swimming pool - Cllr Smith.</p>	
25.13	Community Orchard for Findon Village	
	Cllr Wilson reported that Phase 1 of the project was on budget and that trees would be planted in early February 2025.	
25.14	Proposal for partial double yellow lines in Cross Lane	
	Cllr Dean advised that WSCC Highways had advised that if residents wanted white or yellow lines and verge reinstatement, a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) would need to be raised and prioritised.	
25.15	Grass cutting tender process and Greens Mower research	
	Lead Cllr Smith advised that he and Cllr Hellett would finalise the draft Tender document prior to consideration at a future FPC meeting.	
25.16	Clerk Report	
	<p>The Clerk referred to the report (as previously circulated). Cllrs Gilbert and Dean expressed interest in the Parish on Line mapping software group and would be sent the link to join.</p> <p>Resolved: that Findon Parish Council</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. would offer support to local organisations hosting events for VE Day 80; and 2. did not wish to respond to the consultations detailed in para 1.5 of the report. 	FM
25.17	Reports from FPC Committees for noting/ratifying	
	a) Planning	
	Councillors noted the Briefing Paper regarding the North Verge Bund application (as previously circulated), which would be considered at the Planning Committee meeting on 6 February 2025.	
	b) Finance & Governance	
	<p>The Clerk referred to the report (as previously circulated) regarding the appointment of a councillor following the resignation of Mark Robinson.</p> <p>Resolved: that Cllr Hellett be appointed to the Finance & Governance with immediate effect.</p>	
25.18	Finance	
	<p>a) Receipts and bank reconciliation</p> <p>The bank reconciliation for December 2024 (as previously circulated) was noted and approved.</p> <p>Cllr Whitby left the meeting at 9.44pm and took no part in the discussion.</p> <p>b) Payments</p> <p>The payments of £3687.64 made in January 2025 to date (as previously circulated) were noted and approved.</p> <p>Cllr Whitby rejoined the meeting at 9.45pm.</p>	

25.19	Items to be referred to next Agenda not already included in the minutes	
	None. The meeting closed at 9.48pm – date of next meeting 17 March 2025.	