

Findon Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held Monday 17 March 2025 at 7.30pm in Nepcote Hall

Present: Cllrs Smith (Chairman), Wilson, Gilbert, Hellett, Kenna, and Whitby.

In Attendance: Clerk Miss F MacLeod, and members of the public.

Item No		<u>Action By</u>
25.20	To receive and note apologies for absence	
	Apologies were received and noted from Cllrs Peskett and Dean, and West Sussex County Council (WSCC) Cllr Urquhart.	
25.21	Chairman's announcements	
	Peter Goldsworthy had sadly passed away and his funeral would be held on 31 March 2025. Peter had been FPC Chairman for 14 years during his longstanding tenure on the Council, was instrumental in saving Findon Village Stores and Post Office, and had been an inspiration for the Parish.	
25.22	Declarations of Interest on items on the Agenda	
	None.	
25.23	To sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 20/1/2025	
	Subject to amendments from Cllr Kenna, it was proposed and seconded that the minutes dated 20 January 2025 be approved and signed by the Chairman.	
25.24	Update on implementation of actions not covered elsewhere on the Agenda	
	The report was noted. The Clerk would discuss WhatsApp with ProcessMatters2 re use of Councillors personal mobile numbers with no decision making on FPC matters i.e. use as a efficient method of contact for urgent/important updates in addition to email.	
25.25	Councillor co-option and vacancies	
	The single candidate had withdrawn their application. There were still three vacancies on the Council.	
25.26	To receive a report from WSCC and Arun District Council (ADC) Councillors	
	None.	
25.27	Public Question Time (PQT)	
	PQT opened at 7.39pm John Roche, St John the Baptist Primary School, gave a vote of thanks from the School and the Swimming Pool team for the support given by FPC, and offered to arrange a meeting with the Head Teacher and FPC regarding parking etc. PQT closed at 7.42pm	
25.28	Grant Applications	
	The Clerk reminded councillors of the background behind the Summer Revels grant request (as detailed on the application form following a change of Committee). FPC agreed to a one-off grant for 2025, however and earlier grant request of £1k for a new oven and football and netball kits was not approved. Cllr Smith had received figures from Mick Dicker	

Signed:

Dated:

	<p>regarding running costs to build into a Business Plan. The Air Source Heat Pump installed in 2024 would, in effect, negate the cost of £3400.00 cost of gas, thereby act as an enabler to pay for the fencing and groundworks grant application submitted in November 2024. £500.00 would be needed to fix the pool liner, which would be one day's work. A decision on this would be taken at the FPC meeting on 19 May 2025, which would not delay the expected opening date of the swimming pool. No further information had been received from the Findon Football Club.</p> <p>Resolved: that Findon Parish Council approves a one-off grant of £1000.00 to the St John the Baptist Primary School PTA for the Summer Revels 2025.</p>	FM
25.29	Reports from Working Groups and Outside Bodies for noting/ratifying	
	<p>a) Open Spaces Working Group/Wild Flower Working Group Lead Cllr Whitby introduced the report (as previously circulated) and was please to report that she now had a good contact at WSCC for any drain issues.</p> <p>b) Trees Working Group Lead Cllr Wilson reported that the orchard planting was continuing, and a quote for a rotavator was awaited.</p> <p>c) Allotment Gardens Lead Cllr Wilson introduced the report (as previously circulated). Following discussion, it was agreed that the annual plot rental would increase from £40.00pa to £50.00 pa for a full plot and from £20.00pa to £25.00pa for a half plot. The estimate to create a further two half plots was accepted and once the work had been carried out, ADC would be contacted for a contribution towards the cost. Cllr Wilson had been given a large compost bin for plot holders to use.</p> <p>Resolved: that Findon Parish Council</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increases the annual plot rental from £40.00pa to £50.00 pa for a full plot and from £20.00pa to £25.00pa for a half plot wef 1 April 2025; 2. Instructs Simply D&B to clear/move soil at a cost of £750.00 excl VAT; and 3. ADC be contacted for a contribution towards the cost. <p>d) Village Hall Trust. No update.</p> <p>e) Community Resilience Plan (CRP). It was agreed that Cllr Peskett be appointed Lead Councillor to take this forward following the resignation of Mr Toughey. At the request of the Chairman, the order of reports was changed to cover Agenda item i) Findon Village Pre-School Working Group at 8.08pm.</p> <p>f) Parking/Village Signage Working Group (Lead Cllr Kenna provided a copy of her report to councillors which built on previous signage information including photos of other local village entryway signs and potential costs. Cllr Gilbert suggested a larger version of the Pond Green sign could also be considered. Cllr Kenna would start the Community Infrastructure Levy application documentation to meet the SDNPA deadline of 25 April 2025.</p>	<p>FM</p> <p>FM</p>

	<p>g) Assets of Community Value (ACV) No update.</p> <p>h) Wattle House Feasibility Study Working Group Lead Cllr Gilbert updated that Vallis & Hall architects would explore the potential usage suggestions for a Stage 1 Pre-App with the SDNPA and focus on what could be achieved. This would allow ball-park costs to be reviewed in the future.</p> <p>i) Findon Village Pre-School Portacabin Working Group (brought forward for discussion during the meeting) Cllr Wilson, a Governor at the Pre-School, left the meeting to join the public gallery at 8.08pm and took no part in the discussion. The Chairman invited Steve Smith, Pre-School, to speak. Mr Smith provided details of a quote that had not been seen in advance by councillors for works covering cladding of the roof, walls, and the porch at a cost of £14/16k. The whole roof could be re-felted using double skinned felt and this would cost £21k in addition to the other works needed. Roof maintenance costs would be removed if the whole roof was re-felted. Only one quote had been received by the Pre-School and it had not been easy to obtain additional quotes so no like-for-like comparisons could be made. Councillors felt that an insulated roof could be appropriate and discussion took place regarding FPC engaging a building expert to validate such a solution in principle up to a maximum budget of £1k. It was made clear that the Pre-School would need to have at least two like-for-like quotes for the works needed and bring this back to FPC to consider any funding assistance. Cllr Wilson rejoined the meeting.</p> <p>j) Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Working Group Expression of Interest forms were being drafted to meet the SDNPA submission deadline of 25 April 2025. The Pre-School was only one of several areas that could be considered for CIL funding totalling £31k. Submissions would be reviewed at the FPC May 2025 meeting.</p>	
25.30	Policy & Strategy	
	<p>a) FPC Risk Register (as previously circulated) Resolved: that the Risk Register be approved.</p> <p>b) Volunteer Groups Risk Assessment Cllr Smith provided background to the revised Risk Assessment lead by Cllr Whitby that would only need to be reviewed and signed annually by the volunteers. The Findon Tree Warden was happy with the document. Resolved: that the Volunteer Groups Risk Assessment be approved.</p> <p>c) response to the Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation consultation – Sussex and Brighton Devolution Resolved: that no response be drafted.</p>	
25.31	Memorial bench for Pond Green	
	Lead Councillor Whitby, a member of The Willows Management Committee, left the meeting to join the public gallery at 8.08pm and took no part in the discussion. Cllr Wilson introduced the item with an email	

	from the applicant and photo of the proposed bench style (as previously circulated to Councillors). Following discussion and a vote, the preferred style of bench would be a standard bench as already in place around the parish. Cllr Wilson would contact the applicant. Resolved: that Findon Parish Council would only consider new/replacement benches that were of an appropriate standard style. Cllr Whitby rejoined the meeting.	
25.32	Nepcote Green Boules request.	
	A request had been received from a resident to make and develop a Boules area within the Conservation Area on Nepcote Green. The Clerk would contact the resident for more information (costs, local support, potential locations etc) to bring to a future meeting.	FM
25.33	Community Orchard for Findon Village	
	Lead Cllr Wilson reported that good progress continued to be made with the planting and establishment of the apple and pear trees at the rear of the Village Hall.	
25.34	Grass cutting tender process and Greens Mower research	
	Lead Cllr Hellett introduced the report (as previously circulated to Councillors) with draft Tender and mower research documentation. Councillors were asked to comment on the draft Tender document. The current greens mower was still in good condition and provision of 21K should be made to consider a second-hand replacement in the financial year 2026/27. As a result, the tender process would be put on hold and AC Gardens (Sussex) Ltd would continue to carry out grass cutting. Cllr Hellett would contact AC Gardens regarding the frequency and quality of work.	ALL SH
25.35	Clerk Report	
	The Clerk referred to the report (as previously circulated). Resolved: that Findon Parish Council <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. did not wish to express an interest in the ADC Code of Conduct training; 2. did not wish to attend the events outlined in para 1.2 of the report; 3. would apply for a stall at Findon Sheep Fair; 4. agreed to recognise the work of the Volunteer Working Groups; 5. agreed to the annual Findon Grand National Trail run on 13 April 2025; 6. did not consider that mini 'art exhibition' appropriate on Pond Green; and 7. did not wish to take part in Parishes in Bloom. 	JW SS
25.36	Reports from FPC Committees for noting/ratifying	
	a) Planning	
	No update.	
	b) Finance & Governance	
	No update.	
25.37	Finance	
	a) Receipts and bank reconciliation The bank reconciliations for January and February 2025 (as previously circulated) were noted and approved.	

	b) Payments The payments of £4562.62 made in March 2025 to date (as previously circulated) were noted and approved. Quarterly high level budget control reports would be included for the 2025/26 financial year.	
25.38	Items to be referred to next Agenda not already included in the minutes	
	Usage of proposed Pond Green structure to support the community. Village street lights review. The meeting closed at 9.26pm – date of next meeting 19 May 2025.	