

Findon Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held Monday 29 May 2025 at 8.05pm in Nepcote Hall

Present: Cllrs Smith (Chairman), Wilson, Gilbert, Whitby, Hellett, Kenna (part), and Dean
In Attendance: Clerk Miss F MacLeod, and representatives from Findon Pre-School.

Item No		<u>Action By</u>
25.39	To appoint a Chairman for the ensuing year	
	There being no other nominations, Cllr Smith was appointed Chairman for the ensuing year and signed the declaration of Acceptance of Office.	
25.40	To appoint a Deputy Chairman for the ensuing year	
	There being no other nominations, Cllr Wilson was appointed Deputy Chairman for the ensuing year and signed the declaration of Acceptance of Office.	
25.41	To receive and note apologies for absence	
	Apologies were received and noted from Cllr Peskett, and West Sussex County Council (WSSC) Cllr Urquhart.	
25.42	Chairman's announcements	
	The new signage for the Pre-School had been put in place by Cllrs Smith and Wilson and their assistance was much appreciated by the Pre-School. A dangerous large limb had been identified on 28 May 2025 on a Sycamore tree on Pond Green following recent high winds and worst case scenario would need to be felled. A quote for this urgent work had been received from AC Gardens (Sussex) Ltd for £1000.00. Resolved: that subject to a further safety investigation, AC Gardens (Sussex) Ltd be instructed to urgently fell the tree at a cost of £1000.00, protective fencing to be placed around the tree, and a retrospective planning application raised with the South Downs National Park Authority.	FM
25.43	Declarations of Interest on items on the Agenda	
	Cllrs Wilson and Whitby declared a prejudicial interest in Agenda item 25.61 b) as they had expenses for payment approval. Cllrs Wilson and Whitby would leave the meeting and take no part in any discussion.	
25.44	To sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 17/3/2025	
	It was proposed and seconded that the minutes dated 17 March 2025 be approved and signed by the Chairman.	
25.45	Update on implementation of actions not covered elsewhere on the Agenda	
	The report was noted. Cllr Wilson would check that the FPC request for a stall at the Sheep Fair had been accepted.	
25.46	To receive a report from WSSC and Arun District Council (ADC) Councillors	
	None.	
25.47	Public Question Time (PQT)	
	None.	
25.48	Need for Part II exclusion of press and public	

	Resolved: that should any members of the press or public join the meeting, they be excluded for Agenda item 25.56 i) under Para 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972 being information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information.	
25.49	To agree councillor membership for the following Parish Council Committees	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Planning Committee – all standing councillors. b) Finance and Governance Committee – Cllrs Hellett, Peskett, and Smith with Deputy Chairman ex officio, voting. c) Sheep Fair Committee – Cllrs Smith and Wilson. 	
25.50	To agree councillor representation on non-Committee roles, Working Groups, and Outside bodies.	
	List of representations attached to the Minutes.	
25.51	Grant Applications	
	<p>Three grant applications had been received. The application from the football club was supported in principle, however further details would be requested prior to a final decision.</p> <p>Resolved: that Findon Parish Council approves the following grants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) £500.00 to Findon Swimming Club for flagstones; and b) £50.00 to Arun & Chichester Citizens Advice. 	SS
25.52	SDNP/24/03396/FUL Nepcote Green low grassed earth bund	
	<p>The Clerk introduced the report (as previously circulated) outlining options following the approval of the application by the SDNPA and subject to a Condition.</p> <p>Resolved: that Findon Parish Council approves a 1.52m gap with timber posts as illustrated on approved drawing no. FNP_01 Rev A within three months of the date of the approval decision.</p>	
25.53	Electric vehicle (EV) charging points	
	Councillors were aware of previous email exchanges between a resident of Lime Road and WSCC in relation to the proposed designation of six of the current ten spaces for EV parking. FPC was unaware of the proposed EV location and had been previously advised in December 2023 by WSCC that Findon Village did not meet the EV criteria. However councillors felt that this was a matter for WSCC to address having noted the correspondence trail.	
25.54	Street lights	
	Resolved: Cllr Gilbert to be Lead Councillor to review the provision of four FPC owned street lights.	
25.55	20 mph speed limit from Nepcote Lane junction to Cissbury Ring car park	
	Resolved: Cllrs Kenna, Gilbert and Dean to take this forward as part of the Parking/Village Signage Working Group.	
25.56	Reports from Working Groups and Outside Bodies for noting/ratifying	
	At the request of the Chairman, the order of reports was changed to cover Agenda item i) Findon Village Pre-School Working Group at 8.36pm. As no members of the public or press were in attendance, this item was discussed in Part I, however the contractor details remained confidential.	
	<p>a) Open Spaces Working Group</p> <p>Lead Cllr Whitby introduced the report (as previously circulated) and reported that a new bench in memory of Peter Goldsworthy</p>	

	<p>would be considered for an appropriate location. The new dog bin had been installed at the top of Stable Lane. A request for a volunteer lead for the new Saturday Volunteers Group would be made in Findon News. The wild flowers on the green area at the top of Steep Lane looked great this year.</p> <p>Cllr Kenna left the meeting at 9.19pm</p> <p>b) Trees Working Group Lead Cllr Wilson reported that watering continued as usual. The Trees Group had cleared a large branch from Homewood play area. Mention was made of the little plaques made by the Findon Tree Wardens wife and placed on the new orchard trees. It was agreed to thank Mrs Ward with a box of chocolates.</p> <p>c) Allotment Gardens Lead Cllr Wilson reported that one new plot holder had been identified and attempts were being made to contact the next two applicants on the waiting list.</p> <p>d) Village Hall Trust. No update.</p> <p>e) Community Resilience Plan (CRP). No update.</p> <p>f) Parking/Village Signage Working Group Lead Cllr Kenna introduced the report (as previously circulated) and would contact WSCC Cllr Urquhart on several items. The Open Spaces Volunteers could clean existing 20mph signs and remove any overhanging foliage. The WG would now include road improvement initiatives.</p> <p>g) Assets of Community Value (ACV) No update.</p> <p>h) Wattle House Feasibility Study Working Group Lead Cllr Gilbert introduced the report (as previously circulated). Cllr Dean would investigate possible grant funding sources in conjunction with Cllr Gilbert. Dependant on the pre-application advice, there would be the ability to produce a steady income.</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 8.40pm and took no part in the discussion. The Chairman invited Steve Smith and Yvonne Wilson, Pre-School, to speak to the meeting regarding the confidential quotes received regarding the work need on the Pre-School roof (as previously circulated to councillors). Mr Smith had not seen the surveyors report, however Lead Cllr Hellett had been sent an interim report, which although not complete, had suggested that the building structure was sound. Of the two quotes received, Contractor A did not charge VAT, had included contingency in the quote, work came with a 20 year guarantee, and the Pre-School had previous experience with the firm. Contractor B was slightly higher, did include VAT, which could be reclaimed, but did not include contingency cost. On balance, Contractor A was the preferred choice, subject to satisfactory contract agreement. The Chairman</p>	
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	<p>reminded all councillors the CIL funding reserves were awarded to the entirety of Findon Parish and to be mindful of that fact when reaching a decision on its whole allocation to the Pre-School. Comment was made that the portacabin was an FPC asset, which, if the Pre-School was not in residence, could be rented out to other organisations when this work was completed. As the Pre-School is remaining, it should take over maintenance costs for the improved building. A vote was taken and the unanimous decision was to award the £31k CIL money to fund the renovation.</p> <p>Resolved: that Findon Parish Council:</p> <p>1) (in liaison with the Pre-School) appoints Contractor A to carry out the work quoted for of £31,458.30, subject to contractual agreements; and</p> <p>2) Ring fences £31k of CIL funding for this project</p> <p>Cllr Wilson rejoined the meeting.</p> <p>j) Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Working Group</p> <p>No update.</p>	
25.57	Nepcote Green Boules request.	
	Additional information had been requested but not received.	
25.58	Grass cutting tender process and Greens Mower research	
	Lead Cllr Hellett drew attention to the email from AC Gardens (Sussex) Ltd outlining the reasons for the recent price increases. The 2025/26 grass cutting precept had been increased in anticipation of this. The tender process would restart in the Autumn.	
25.59	Clerk Report	
	<p>The Clerk referred to the report (as previously circulated).</p> <p>Resolved: that Findon Parish Council</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Would take no further action regarding the condition of the barrier on private land as detailed in para 1.1 of the report; 2. Would take no further action regarding the provision of a new fence as detailed in para 1.2 of the report; 3. Cllr Smith would contact the resident re the above two items; and 4. Approves the services of Smithe & Co as internal auditors for the 2024/25 and 2025/26 financial years. 	SS
25.60	Reports from FPC Committees for noting/ratifying	
	a) Planning	
	No update.	
	b) Finance & Governance	
	No update.	
25.61	Finance	
	<p>a) Receipts and bank reconciliation</p> <p>The bank reconciliations for March and April 2025 (as previously circulated) were noted and approved.</p> <p>Cllrs Whitby and Wilson left the meeting at 9.41pm and took no part in the discussion.</p> <p>b) Payments</p> <p>The payments of £8643.60 (excluding grants approved at the meeting) to date for May 2025 (as previously circulated) were noted and approved.</p> <p>Cllrs Whitby and Wilson rejoined the meeting at 9.42pm</p>	

	c) To note quarterly budget Not available.	
25.62	Items to be referred to next Agenda not already included in the minutes	
	None. The meeting closed at 9.45pm – date of next meeting 23 June 2025.	

**FINDON PARISH COUNCIL
REPRESENTATION ON NON-COMMITTEE POSTS, WORKING GROUPS AND OUTSIDE BODIES
MAY 2025**

TREES WG John Wilson	ALLOTMENT GARDENS John Wilson
FINDON VILLAGE PRE-SCHOOL John Wilson	WINTER MANAGEMENT PLAN Sean Hellett (Lead) John Wilson
PARKING/VILLAGE SIGNAGE WG Chris Gilbert Lisa Kenna (Lead)	VILLAGE HALL TRUST Sean Hellett
OPEN SPACES VOLUNTEERS WG Paula Whitby (Lead) John Wilson	STRATEGIC PLAN REVIEW WG Sean Smith
COMMUNITY RESILIENCE PLAN David Peskett	WATTLE HOUSE WG Kelly Dean Chris Gilbert (Lead) David Peskett Sean Smith
STREET LIGHTING REVIEW Chris Gilbert	
COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) WG Kelly Dean (Lead) Chris Gilbert	PRE-SCHOOL PORTACABIN WG Chris Gilbert Sean Hellett (Lead) David Peskett
ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE Kelly Dean Sean Hellett (Lead) Lisa Kenna	GRASS CUTTING REVIEW Sean Hellett
NEPCOTE GREEN CHARITABLE TRUST (all parish councillors) Kelly Dean Chris Gilbert Sean Hellett Lisa Kenna David Peskett Sean Smith Paula Whitby John Wilson	WEST SUSSEX ASSOC OF LOCAL COUNCILS: FPC Chairman FPC Deputy Chairman NEPCOTE LANE SPEED REDUCTION WG Kelly Dean Chris Gilbert Lisa Kenna (Lead) FINDON SWIMMING POOL Sean Smith

Approved by Findon Parish Council 29 May 2025

Next scheduled review May 2026