

## Findon Parish Council

### Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held Monday 28 July 2025 at 7.30pm in Nepcote Hall

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

**In Attendance:** Clerk Miss F MacLeod, West Sussex County Council (WSCC) Cllr Urquhart, and members of the public.

Item No		Action By
<b>25.80</b>	<b>To receive and note apologies for absence</b>	
	Apologies were received and noted from Cllrs Hellett and Dean.	
<b>25.81</b>	<b>Chairman's announcements</b>	
	None.	
<b>25.82</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest on items on the Agenda</b>	
	Cllr Wilson declared a prejudicial interest in Agenda item 25.94 b) as he had expenses for payment approval. Cllr Wilson would leave the meeting and take no part in any discussion.	
<b>25.83</b>	<b>To sign as a correct record the minutes of the meetings held on 23/6/2025 and 26/6/2025</b>	
	It was proposed and seconded that the minutes dated 23 June 2025 and 26 June 2025 be approved and signed by the Chairman.	
<b>25.84</b>	<b>Update on implementation of actions not covered elsewhere on the Agenda</b>	
	The report was noted and updated.	
<b>25.85</b>	<b>To receive a report from WSCC</b>	
	Cllr Urquhart's report was attached to the unconfirmed minutes. In response to a question raised regarding the A24 signage covered by vegetation by Homewood, this would be picked up by the Roads Working Group.	
<b>25.86</b>	<b>Public Question Time (PQT)</b>	
	<p>PQT opened at 7.39pm.</p> <p>A resident from Nepcote Lane/Cissbury spoke on the speed limit on Nepcote Lane down to Nepcote adjacent to Nepcote Green and referred to his letter on the matter (as previously circulated). Cyclists rode at speed in this area, particularly on a Strava Challenge, and the area was also used by electric bikes. Cllr Smith advised that this had been discussed at a previous FPC meeting and, following changes to the Highways Code, both FPC and WSCC Cllr Urquhart supported the reduction to 20mph. Although more practical, speed humps would require street lighting which would not conform to Dark Night Skies criteria. Cllr Urquhart advised that speed indicators could be hired. The reduction in speed for this location would be progressed by the Roads/Parking/Signage Working Group.</p> <p>Steve Smith, Pre-School, updated on the construction work being undertaken. The roof had been stripped off and another surveyors report was awaited, which may indicate additional repair work. Mr Smith would advise FPC of any additional costs. The roof and front panels were expected to be completed during the school holidays.</p>	

	PQT closed at 7.59pm.	
<b>25.87</b>	<b>Co-option of Councillor(s) and vacancies</b>	
	The Clerk reported that, as no Expression of Interest forms had been received, there remained three co-option vacancies on the Council.	
<b>25.71</b>	<b>Reports from Working Groups and Outside Bodies for noting/ratifying</b>	
	<p><b>a) Open Spaces Working Group</b>  Lead Cllr Whitby introduced the report (as previously circulated) and updated that the savings from para 1.4 of the report were in the region of £2k. Cllr Peskett asked if there was any scope for a dog bin in the twitten adjacent to the Findon Manor Hotel, who would contribute to the cost. Cllr Whitby would investigate. Discussion took place regarding keyholders. Cllr Smith agreed to be a back up keyholder for the Wattle House. Cllr Wilson advised that a key box had been installed in the Wattle House.  <b>Resolved: that</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Clive Ball and Graham Gostick remain as keyholders to the Wattle House; and</b></li> <li><b>2. The Notice Board on Nepcote Green could be used for community notices.</b></li> </ol> <p><b>b) Trees Working Group</b>  The Clerk referred to her report (as previously circulated). Lead Cllr Wilson updated on the Sycamore tree on Pond Green and the quote for its removal received from A C Gardens (Sussex) Ltd. The request for formal quotes for removal of the Pond Green Sycamore tree would take place following approval and any Conditions from the SDNPA. It was not appropriate to consider a sculpture using the trunk as Sycamore would be too soft. A replacement tree would be in the region of £300.00. A TPO planning application would be made by the Clerk.  <b>Resolved: that Findon Parish Council instructs Connick Tree Care to carry out a survey as per para 1.4 of the report at a cost of £680.00 excl VAT and Cllr Wilson will be the FPC point of contact.</b></p> <p><b>c) Allotment Gardens</b>  Lead Cllr Wilson reported that two plots were available and the waiting list was being reviewed. Several compost recycling bins would be put in place.</p> <p><b>d) Village Hall Trust.</b>  Cllr Smith would contact the FVH Trust Chairman regarding potential contributions to the village in 2026 and the location of Community Resilience equipment in the Hall.</p> <p><b>e) Community Resilience Plan (CRP).</b>  Lead Cllr Peskett had met with Robin Carr, who had offered to be an emergency contact. The Community Resilience equipment currently stored in the Wattle House would be reviewed after the Sheep Fair. The Clerk would provide the contact details for the Resilience and Emergencies Team, WSCC.</p> <p><b>f) Roads and Parking Working Group</b>  Lead Cllr Kenna introduced the report (as previously circulated). WSCC Cllr Urquhart had provided some very useful information on the process for 20mph speed limits via a Traffic Regulation Order</p>	<b>FM</b>

	<p>(TRO), yellow lines shifting parking issues to other areas, white lines are advisory only i.e. not enforceable. A walkabout with the current WSCC Highways manager would be arranged regarding roads and parking issues in the village. Cllr Kenna would contact Greypoint House residents regarding potential 'no parking' signs in the High Street. Cllr Smith had written again to the Head Teacher and Governors of the St John the Baptist School regarding Village Hall parking proposals. Villagers would be encouraged to contact the Clerk with roads and parking concerns.</p> <p><b>g) Assets of Community Value (ACV)</b> No update.</p> <p><b>h) Wattle House Feasibility Study Working Group</b> Lead Cllr Gilbert referred to the pre-application advice recently received from the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) as previously circulated to councillors. The SDNPA response was mainly positive and the draft Feasibility Study could now progress. Public consultation would also need to take place. Cllr Gilbert would visit other similar initiatives to help inform possible funding streams for the project. The proposal for change at the Wattle House had been raised at a recent Sheep Fair Committee meeting.</p> <p><b>i) Findon Village Pre-School Portacabin Working Group</b> See Agenda item 25.89.</p> <p><b>j) Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Working Group</b> No update.</p>	
<b>25.89</b>	<b>FPC and the Pre-School – a long term plan</b>	
	<p>It was agreed that the Portacabin Working Group be disbanded. Cllr Smith introduced the report (as previously circulated) to consider proposed options and set up a fresh Working Group to evaluate these options. The following comments were made during a robust discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £50k had been spent over the past five years;</li> <li>• A grant might be required for future renovation;</li> <li>• FPC provided the portacabin rent-free;</li> <li>• The Pre-School as a business showed a pre-tax profit of £60K from the latest accounts on the Charity Commission website;</li> <li>• The interior of the portacabin had been much improved by the new Committee over recent years (at no cost to FPC); and</li> <li>• Following the exterior works, the portacabin would be waterproof, fit for purpose, with a lifespan of over five years.</li> </ul> <p>The Clerk would provide councillors with the email trail from the Village Stores regarding the proposed donation of £5k to FPC who had already committed CIL monies for the Portacabin works. Flowing on from this, it was the intention of FPC to create an ongoing list of all grants and donation monies from local sources to create an informed choice and fuller picture when assessing funding requests.</p> <p><b>Resolved: that FPC creates a new Working Group formed of Cllrs</b></p>	

	<b>Gilbert, Hellet, and Peskett to evaluate the options and approaches detailed in the report.</b>	
<b>25.90</b>	<b>Replacement defibrillator at Nepcote</b>	
	The defibrillator located on the flint was discussed for replacement due to its age and clarity was requested regarding the need for an annual service for all the FPC defibrillators. Cllr Peskett would obtain information regarding annual service provision for a future meeting. The Clerk would investigate a replacement defibrillator.	
<b>25.91</b>	<b>FPC stall in Wattle House for Sheep Fair.</b>	
	Cllrs Smith and Dean would manage arrangements. A ramp would be constructed by Men in Sheds to enable accessibility to the FPC stall and history exhibition at the Sheep Fair.	
<b>25.92</b>	<b>Clerk Report</b>	
	The Clerk referred to the report (as previously circulated) and drew attention to para 1.2 of the report regarding a single complaint regarding the chiming of the School Clock. <b>Resolved: that Findon Parish Council</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Does not wish to comment on the Consultation detailed in para 1.4 of the report; and</b></li> <li><b>2. Wishes to consider the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) at its September meeting.</b></li> </ol>	
<b>25.93</b>	<b>Reports from FPC Committees for noting/ratifying</b>	
	<b>a) Planning</b>	
	No update.	
	<b>b) Finance &amp; Governance</b>	
	No update.	
<b>25.94</b>	<b>Finance</b>	
	<b>a) Receipts and bank reconciliation</b> The bank reconciliation for June 2025 (as previously circulated) was noted and approved. Cllr Wilson left the meeting at 9.16pm and took no part in the discussion. <b>b) Payments</b> The payments of £19676.63 to date for July 2025 (as previously circulated) were noted and approved. Cllr Wilson rejoined the meeting at 9.17pm <b>c) To note quarterly budget</b> The quarterly budget to 31 June 2025 was noted.	
<b>25.95</b>	<b>Items to be referred to next Agenda not already included in the minutes</b>	
	None. The meeting closed at 9.20pm – date of next meeting 15 September 2025.	

Unconfirmed Minutes – to be confirmed at the next Council meeting

## Cllr Deborah Urquhart (WSCC) Report to Findon PC July 25

### **Highway Operations 2024/2025**

Figures for the 2024-2025 financial year have highlighted the significant progress made by WSCC's highways team in improving the condition of the county's 2,500 miles of road.

Between April 2024 and March 2025, the council's highways team delivered a wide programme of essential reactive maintenance and proactive improvements including:

- 44,767 potholes repaired,
- A decrease in the average time between receiving a report and repairing a pothole to just 14 days
- 36,031 sqm of small and medium scale patching

The overall number of defects identified and waiting to be repaired on the network are at some of the lowest levels in recorded years. In a clear sign of the improvement in the condition of the county's road network, there has been a drop in reports from 69,669 last year to 53,574.

The highways team also delivered a variety of traffic related maintenance, including:

- 2,635 signs cleaned and cleared of overhanging vegetation
- 123,000 drainage gullies cleansed
- 63 small scale drainage schemes completed
- 27million sqm of grass verges cut

### **Increasing winter resilience by managing the county's drainage assets**

A relatively dry winter allowed the County Council's contractor to utilise additional resource to maintain the county's drainage assets in a serviceable condition through the winter months.

We operated 5 reactive jetting vehicles through the winter which were deployed to flooding locations reported by members of the public. In most cases the contractor was able to resolve the problem and ensure the asset was free flowing.

Works continued on clearing our ditch network in rural areas and again this work had a positive impact on enabling surface water to drain from the highway.

Our Riparian Drainage Team has been working with local landowners to resolve highway flooding caused by issues with the privately maintained ditch network in West Sussex. The team will shortly be issuing a Riparian Toolkit to aid our Parish and Town Council partners to monitor and police these issues on a more localised level.

### **Bookmark the date of this year's Summer Reading Challenge!**

Children of all ages can combine reading with nature and the great outdoors at West Sussex libraries when taking part in Story Garden, the 2025 Summer Reading Challenge.

- Landline phones are switching to digital, which could stop telecare alarms working. The switchover is already happening, so you need to act now. If you or someone you know uses a telecare alarm, call the landline provider now for support. Visit the [Digital Phone Switchover website](#) to find out more.

- West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service has launched a public consultation on its proposals for its next Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).  
The CRMP is the fire service's business plan setting out how it will keep the communities of West Sussex safe over the next four years, building on the priorities laid down in the service's CRMP 2022 to 2026. The service is now asking people for their views on the plans it proposes to put in place from April 2026 to make West Sussex a safer place to live, work and visit.
- The county council, in partnership with Biffa, has [awarded funding of up to £5,000 each to ten community groups as part of the Waste Prevention Community Grant Fund.](#)
- Over **21 tonnes** of disposable vapes were thrown away in the past year in West Sussex alone. The individual components of the vapes can't be separated so can't be recycled. The lithium-ion batteries used are highly flammable, especially when damaged, and have been known to cause fires in waste collection lorries and at waste processing centres. Businesses across the country were banned from selling or supplying single-use vapes, also known as disposable vapes, from 1 June 2025. Find out more about our [Trading Standards team's work to tackle the sale of illegal vapes, especially sales to children by rogue businesses.](#)