

FINDON SHEEP FAIR COMMITTEE MINUTES

15th October 2025 at Findon Manor Hotel

Attendees: Simon Stace, Richard Bell, Adrian Riches, Vicky Riches, Graham Langford, Lorna Jones, Elaine Dibben, Colin Greenway, Ken Wheeler, Plum Prior, Geoff Parrish, John Wilson, Ian Wright (Scouts).

Welcome and Apologies: Apologies from: Tim Kersley, Paula Whitby (Findon Parish Council), Richard Edwards, Julia Culp.

Colin: Logistics -

- Improved signs and maps for car parks, particularly disabled car park.
- Review road signs – put out more to make clearer for scouts in a couple of places.
- Wattle House – audit of items stored to allow better access.
- Traffic Order – policy out for consultation by WSCC will become more onerous if put into action. Business responses for those affected by one way road system. Arun will review and decide on whether to approve on basis of replies. Colin will need more help to implement.
- Comments from Cissbury – due to 45/60 minute hold up Ian Wright took decisive action and allowed vehicles for the wedding up Nepcote Lane from the A24 rather than follow one way system.
- Mick from Findon Valley is on Elaine's radar – may be helpful to Colin.
- Wet weather contingency - more road mats, bags of gri/sand/bark chippings. Pallet of bark in bags – easy to move as a contingency for wet weather. Day after event Colin took pictures of all field entrances to show wet weather damage.

Ian Wright (Scouts): Parking –

- Tina decided unable to use her field due to wet weather. Contingency had to be found at last minute.
- Wet weather contingency - Straw and bark might be useful. Permission from landowner to place products on their land to help with vehicle mobility.
- Hiring of extra vehicle mats – this year doubled order on Thursday due to wet forecast, but needed 3 x as many,
- Signage – volunteer car park.
- Parked 550 cars. Had sufficient programmes.

Ken: Volunteers -Sheep End –

- More control of where everyone is.
- Need another tent for volunteers – they weren't sure where to report to. Big sign required. Ken happy to bring his caravan – have awning up, somewhere for volunteers to report to. Stewards tent next to it.
- Biggest problem, everyone wet and bedraggled.
- Ken found it useful doing all the days seeing the process from set up to finish.
- £500 pounds of mugs/calendars sold at Stewards Tent.

Graham Langford: Sheep End

- Need grit/sand at points of access.
- Week before event, filling in rabbit holes, was a big job, needs to be reviewed. Maintain holes throughout the year. John Wilson will take back to Parish Council – insurance purposes. **Action: John Wilson/Parish Council**
- 3 sets of keys for Wattle House over the Sheep Fair period – lots of waiting around for keys. Would allow things to run more smoothly in days running up to the Show
- Chess in position at Sheep Office much longer than was necessary.
- Chess, fed up that litter picking done before her volunteers arrived. Elaine and Ken are in touch with her. She was hoping to have a break for 2026. In 2026 another volunteer from litter group will be our liaison for Sunday cleanup.

Plum: Caterers

- generators – better vetting procedure. One van, selling cakes – refrigerator? Moved DEFRA required fencing to allow generator to run??? Cannot be permitted again as we will lose our DEFRA licence.
- Don't wait all year if a caterer is rubbish.
- Generally, takings were down due to less people, but people are feeling economic pinch and aren't spending as much money.

- Better way to vet catering certificates etc. Specification to be more detailed, is your generator noisy – petrol/deisel/decibels.
- Colin mentioned the need to monitor catering vans are compliant periodically throughout the event.
- This should be made clear on their application – if non-compliant at any time during the day will be shut down. Not been an issue before – wet weather exacerbated situation – include on wet weather contingency.
- Plum was disappointed at lack of representation of the Parish Council at their Stand by the Wattle House, other committee members were in agreement. Apparently, Bob Felling, didn't appear – **ACTION: Simon.**

John: Parish Council

- Lots of positive feedback from various sources, enjoyed the day, especially when it brightened up.
- Fiona's completed the VAT but doesn't include Farmyard Circus VAT - invoice was late, will be included in next 3 months.
- New post in place by the gate – 2 keys for the lock. One for James who cuts the grass. John has the other key he will keep with Parish Council keys. Post key for top gate in the Wattle House and labelled accordingly.
- Potholes on the Green are bad again – badger/fox/rabbit damage will bring up with Parish Council.

Richard: Publicity and Marketing

- Wet weather taught us a lot. First wet weather in 13 plus years.
- Unable to monitor Facebook/website as too busy on the day. Needs to be done in future.
- Managed a late post when sun came out. Irrespective of the weather in future Richard will dip into emails etc and monitor messages on Facebook to check if asking whether event cancelled.
- Gazebo sort out – arrange a Saturday morning. Could Colin use this as an opportunity to audit where items are stored. Richard will put suggested dates on the WhatsApp for helpers. **Action: Committee/Colin/Richard**
- Programme/calendars for 2026 - Committee agreed to both. Approx. 40 calendars left. Promote on Facebook.
- Winner of photo competition – Susan Thyrie. Picture of child is one of the farmer's children – seeking their permission to include photo on our website.

Vicky: Stallholders

- Hampered by her crutch on the day. Allowed her time to answer emails.
- Stalls – a few cancellations made it better – more spaced out. Some of the less desirable stalls were absent due to the weather – improved the ambience.
- Need to make it clear about refunds. Some cancelled in that week. Needs to be included at the booking stage.
- Due to reduced mobility was able to be in the Information Tent and gave her more of an overview of the day's events.
- Morris Dancers took over the tent due to wet. Friends' café was overrun by people sheltering from the rain.
- Ian Wright's biggest gripe is parking of Morris Dancers who all seem to arrive in separate cars. Have their own V in their vehicles. Suggest car shares in future and provide two pitches away from information tent where they can store possessions.
- Are we happy to give PAWs a refund – committee agreed.

Adrian: General

- Entrances negotiate with Parish Council when putting products down on the wet mud.
- Communications – WhatsApp group for everyone to use on the day.
- Loads of Walkie Talkies left in main office.
- Do we need calendars/mugs for sale in main office.

Adrian: Treasurer: Adrian reported on current financial situation.

- Rabbit skips – 50% reduction awaited – **Action: Simon.**
- Awaiting invoice from Ellis toilet cleaners – **Action: Simon.**
- Sheep show deposit paid last year and final invoice still awaited. **Action: Adrian to liaise with Richard Edwards.**
- Tim dealing with Cissbury Tap for their contribution.
- Future discussion - consider card machines for placement at Village Shop and at Michael Jones for event tickets. On the day could be used for selling mugs, calendars, car parking. **Can we afford to not have card machines missing sales of mugs/calendars.**
- No feedback about poor reception this year. Measures taken have helped with bandwidth issues.
- Do we want Farmyard Circus in 2026 – cost, providing food etc.

Geoff: Sheep End

- Rain had a big impact and knock on affect which has been discussed at Sub Committee to overcome in future.

- Judging has been expanded – impact on results office admin. Is amount of work incurred worth effort. Right award to correct farmer important. Geoff confident can be resolved for next year.
- More comments than ever about what a great day it is. Well run.
- Mossy enjoyed his auctioneering.

Elaine: Volunteers

- Had been worried about volunteer feedback session. Often a moan session about rain/parking, but this year was very positive. It was an exceptional year, and people were pragmatic about it.
- Essential to have a “Meet and Greet” area for both sets of volunteers – place to retreat to if it’s wet again.
- Walkie Talkies – people don’t want to use them.
- Traffic marshalling found walkie talkies not working properly. WhatsApp Group for marshalling in future.
- Meeting before Sheep Fair to discuss Traffic marshalling – health and safety, done last year – good to repeat in future years to make them feel appreciated.
- Communication was tricky coz there was lots of fire fighting on the day.
- Communication is key – make sure advice is consistent.
- Vouchers for volunteers’ bacon butties as none provided this year.
- New volunteers enjoyed themselves.
- Will need more volunteers for rabbit hole filling, unless Parish Council sort out through the year.
- Traffic marshalling volunteers need to increase but avoid confusing with Scouts. Where and at what times to be decided.

Simon: General

- Someone called Gary who would like to join the committee. Committee agreed. Simon will invite to next meeting. Graham suggested we take heed of Gary’s health issues.
- Where the Fun Fair serve food wasn’t mentioned on the programme. They are only food offering on the Friday/Saturday night – burgers, hot dogs.
- Wasn’t on the hygiene paperwork.
- Saturday night was a success.
- Lady interested in supporting Murdochs on a future occasion. Stick to Blue Dakota and Murdochs for next year. Keep lady on file.
- Tender for next year’s bar. Tim has set up a group to discuss (Tim, Plum, Vicky, Richard). Richard has new contender. Committee to decide outcome. Review date: February 2026 **Action: Bar Group as above.**
- Mobile Belfry: Good reception from public. Need to ensure they close their offering at 4:30. Held up clearing the Green. Frustratingly, kept ringing when Farmyard Circus were talking. Better coordination in future on the schedule.

Any Other Business:

Colin - **Lost property**, left in marquee, thinks it belongs to Morris Dancers.

Graham: **Ensure we book necessary attractions for 2026 asap.** Get booked up a year in advance. **Action: Richard E/Committee** 19th November, discuss.

Richard: Reminded the committee of importance of shadow helpers for all committee roles. Richard is putting information together for his role – passwords relating to website/Facebook etc. It was good that Richard Edwards was supporting Jason, highlighted the need.

Adrian – **Christmas meal booked 14th January at The Gun 7:30pm.**

Elaine – applied to **Christmas tree festival**. Please give us your thoughts and ideas for the event on 6th/7th December. Trees goes up Thursday 4th afternoon or Friday 5th. Fleeces available possibly via Plum’s neighbour. Rosettes left over for tree.

Margaret Allen’s podcast – education related. Happy to promote Sheep Fair nearer the time. Discuss at next meeting.

Ian Wright: **Scouts full feedback and info to come under separate cover.**

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 19th November 2025 at Findon Manor.

Meeting closed at: 21:27pm