

## Findon Parish Council

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

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

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

Item No		<u>Action By</u>
<b>25.112</b>	<b>To receive and note apologies for absence</b>	
	Apologies were received and noted from Cllrs Wilson and Hellett.	
<b>25.113</b>	<b>Chairman's announcements</b>	
	None.	
<b>25.114</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest on items on the Agenda</b>	
	None	
<b>25.115</b>	<b>To sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 15/9/2025</b>	
	It was proposed and seconded that the minutes dated 15 September 2025 be approved and signed by the Chairman.	
<b>25.116</b>	<b>Update on implementation of actions not covered elsewhere on the Agenda</b>	
	The report was noted.	
<b>25.117</b>	<b>To receive a report from WSCC and Arun District Council (ADC) Councillors</b>	
	The report from WSCC Cllr Urquhart is attached to the minutes. Cllr Kenna expressed her thanks to the Asst Area Highways Manager for his help at their recent meeting and looked forward to working together. Cllr Dean would investigate government funding for full fibre access for the village as part of the 'Connected County' initiative.	
<b>25.118</b>	<b>Public Question Time (PQT)</b>	
	PQT opened at 7.38pm. A resident congratulated the Open Spaces volunteer groups on their work in the village. Cllr Smith highlighted that the Saturday Group would welcome more community minded volunteers. There was also the potential to work with the School and other local organisations. PQT closed at 7.41pm.	
<b>25.119</b>	<b>Reports from Working Groups and Outside Bodies for noting/ratifying</b>	
	<b>a. Open Spaces Working Group</b> Lead Cllr Whitby introduced the report (as previously circulated) and advised that the Sheep Fair were very happy with the new security post on the North Verge. A representative from the Sheep Fair Committee would be invited to a future meeting to discuss Travel Plans. Possible badger and rabbit holes were seen on Nepcote Green in the vicinity of the Pond and further investigation would take place following the meeting with consideration given to signage near the Pond. Cllr Whitby drew attention to para 2 of the report for discussion. Para 2.1 Cllr Whitby would progress signage sympathetic to the Glebeland environment. Para 2.2, 2.3 It	

Signed:

Dated:

	<p>would be more sustainable to compost vegetative waste rather than burn it, however this would require regular turning. Councillors had no objection in principle to starting a compost heap, subject to evaluation at a future meeting.</p> <p><b>b. Trees Working Group</b> The Tree Survey recently undertaken by Connick Tree Care would be reviewed when received. The Sycamore tree on Pond Green was to be felled w/c 3 November and update notices placed on the tree and in both Notice Boards. Additional trees would be planted in the Glebeland orchard.</p> <p><b>c. Allotment Gardens</b> The Clerk to contact Cllr Wilson regarding the latest version of the Waiting List.</p> <p><b>d. Village Hall Trust.</b> No update.</p> <p><b>e. Community Resilience Plan (CRP).</b> Lead Cllr Peskett had received a good example of an approved CRP from the Clerk which could be adapted for FPC. CRP items would be moved from the Wattle House to Findon Village Hall in due course.</p> <p><b>f. Roads and Parking Working Group</b> With the agreement of Councillors, this item opened at 7.42pm. Lead Cllr Kenna introduced the report (as previously circulated) and advised that there would be a maximum of six projects to be prioritised to take forward. Timescales for a successful Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) could take up to 12 months, and a Community TRO for School Hill could take between 3-5 years. Concern was raised regarding potential impact on parking for Findon Village Hall and Findon Manor Hotel if the bus stop was relocated to the High Street, although it was understood that this was at the investigation stage only. Cllr Kenna updated that work on trees in the A24 central reservation would require a total road closure and would not be progressed. Comment was made that any public use of the Village Hall car park could impact on bookings. A response was still awaited from the School and WSCC Cllr Urquhart referred to the Safer Routes to School's budget which included 'small people' cut outs outside schools <a href="#">Safer routes to school</a>. A paper survey on speed limit reduction on the Cissbury Ring Road and making School Hill one way and QR code link would be available in the Findon Village Stores until 30 November 2025. This item closed at 8.05pm WSCC Urquhart and members of the public left the meeting at 8.36pm.</p> <p><b>g. Wattle House Feasibility Study Working Group</b> Lead Cllr Gilbert introduced the report (as previously circulated). The feasibility documentation including use of space and operational costs (as previously circulated to councillors) was discussed. The general view was for a community use for the Wattle House including a potential museum area and Sheep Fair storage, rather than any commercial element. A 95% Heritage</p>	
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	<p>Grant could be explored as commercially viable criteria was no long applicable.</p> <p><b>Resolved: that Vallis and Hall be instructed to rejig existing drawings to reflect a community use for the Wattle House including a potential museum area and Sheep Fair storage, subject to the remaining budget of £984.00.</b></p> <p><b>h. FPC and the Findon Village Pre-School Working Group</b>  An update had been received from Lead Cllr Hellett. Some relatively minor work was outstanding and the site needed to be cleared prior to any discussions to formalise an agreement/lease with the Pre-School. The project could then be signed off and closed. All relevant certificates would be sent to the Clerk for insurance purposes. Cllr Smith recommended an appropriate plaque at the Pre-School recognising the financial contribution from FPC and Findon Village Stores. Discussion took place regarding the way forward, summarised as follows, and subject to further discussion at the December FPC meeting prior to engagement with the Pre-School:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The agreement between FPC and the Pre-School to be formalised;</li> <li>• Broadly recognised that a lease with a rental should be put in place;</li> <li>• Rental should be based on a balance of commercial rates and what the Pre-School could afford;</li> <li>• Potential to include contribution towards future maintenance costs; and</li> <li>• The agreement could commence from the next academic year to allow for review and adjustment elements.</li> </ul> <p><b>i. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Working Group</b>  With the agreement of Councillors, this item opened at 8.05pm. Lead Cllr Dean reported that a local resident had been approached for the design of Interpretation Boards and the same oak framed surround would be used for continuity with the Pond Green Interpretation Board. The CIL award was for £2750.00 and dependant on budget there might be scope for additional QR codes around the village to link to the FPC website. Cllr Dean would contact the SDNPA for their logo, and contact the School. This item closed at 8.10pm.</p> <p><b>j. Street Lights Working Group</b>  It was agreed that this item would be taken off the Agenda until further notice.</p>	
<b>25.120</b>	<b>Grass cutting Tender process</b>	
	An update had been received from Cllr Hellett. A list of potential tenderers and the draft Tender would be circulated in the next few weeks. The Tender documentation would then be issued.	
<b>25.121</b>	<b>Nepcote Green Pond maintenance</b>	
	Lead Cllr Gilbert introduced the report (as previously circulated) and drew attention to the proposal from Pete the Pond regarding annual maintenance. It was agreed that Open Spaces Volunteers would not be asked to work inside the Pond fenced area. A quote would be requested	

	from A C Gardens (Sussex) Ltd to undertake some of the tasks, and Cllr Hellett be advised of the grass cutting requirements for the Tender documentation.	
<b>25.122</b>	<b>Village Defibrillators</b>	
	The Clerk referred to the report (as previously circulated). Cllr Dean would take on the Co-Ordinator/Liaison role and contact the resident who offered to undertake weekly checks. The Clerk would contact Simon Whitchurch to see if he was qualified to carry out annual servicing of the defibrillators.	
<b>25.123</b>	<b>Bench Requests</b>	
	The Clerk referred to recent memorial bench requests (as previously circulated to councillors). <b>Resolved: that Cllr Whitby be Lead Councillor for memorial bench requests.</b>	
<b>25.124</b>	<b>A24 Worthing to Horsham and Dorking Transport Improvements - Public Engagement</b>	
	Councillors noted the Engagement details which broadly covered elements of the Roads & Parking WG, who would respond to the online consultation.	
<b>25.125</b>	<b>Clerk Report</b>	
	The Clerk referred to the report (as previously circulated). <b>Resolved: that Findon Parish Council delegates comments on the SDNPA Active Travel Network Plan to Cllr Gilbert.</b>	
<b>25.126</b>	<b>Reports from FPC Committees for noting/ratifying</b>	
	<b>a) Planning</b>	
	No update.	
	<b>b) Finance &amp; Governance</b>	
	A Committee meeting would be arranged following the Planning Committee meeting on 4 December 2025.	
<b>25.127</b>	<b>Finance</b>	
	<b>a) Receipts and bank reconciliation</b> The bank reconciliation for September 2025 (as previously circulated) was noted and approved. <b>b) Payments</b> The payments of £21324.97 to date for October 2025 (as previously circulated) were noted and approved. A new payment of £320.00 for the North Verge security bollard was approved. <b>c) To note quarterly budget.</b> The quarterly budget to end of September 2025 was noted. <b>d) To consider a new contract offer from SSE.</b> The Clerk introduced the report (as previously circulated). <b>Resolved: that Findon Parish Council instructs the Clerk to apply for the SSE Protect tariff as outlined in para 1.4 of the report, subject to review after three months.</b>	<b>FM</b>
<b>25.127</b>	<b>Items to be referred to next Agenda not already included in the minutes</b>	
	None.	
	The meeting closed at 9.40pm – date of next meeting 1 December 2025.	

## OCT 25 REPORT TO FINDON PC BY WSCC CLLR DEBORAH URQUHART

- WSCC has published its Local Flood Risk Management Strategy. The strategy sets out a catchment-based approach to managing flood risk and building resilience across the county through collaboration, sustainable drainage and nature based solution. A webinar for parish engagement is currently being planned.
- The public consultation on the West Sussex Local Nature Recovery Strategy will begin shortly including a series of webinars for stakeholders and parishes.
- Last Friday I attended the inaugural meeting of the Proposed Sussex Mayoral Combined Authority to start shaping the strategy for West Sussex. Work has also started on Local Government Reform.

West Sussex County Council is stating its preference for a single unitary authority for the whole of the county as its preferred option for local government reorganisation. The council maintains that a single authority is best for providing high-quality and financial sustainable services to residents, and will save £50m per year, which is £30m a year greater than the savings that would be generated by moving to two unitary authorities. Creating two unitary councils in West Sussex will mean having to split essential services that keep our most vulnerable people safe and that are currently delivered countywide, notably children's and adults' social care. We await Government's decision as to the number of unitary councils for Sussex.

[Read the joint West Sussex business case for local government reorganisation](#)

- 4 WSCC children's homes have been commended by Ofsted, with 2 graded as excellent and 2 as good. All our homes are now either excellent or good.
- Adult Social Care has been judged as 'good' by the Care Quality Commission which is a testament to the investment of tax payers money and hard work of staff.
- The summer reading challenge for children run by our libraries, saw over 10000 children take part.
- **West Sussex is named UK's fifth most connected county** having considered a range of factors such as public transport links, broadband speed, access to airports, population size and public WiFi access, West Sussex was given fifth place (following West Midlands, Essex, Hampshire and Greater Manchester) by researchers working for broadband provider, Trooli.