

Findon Parish Council

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held Monday 16 March 2026
at 7.30pm in Nepcote Hall**

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

In Attendance: Clerk Miss F MacLeod, and Arun District Council (ADC) Cllr Bicknell.

Item No		<u>Action By</u>
26.23	To receive and note apologies for absence	
	Apologies were received and noted from Cllrs Dean, Peskett, and Silver. West Sussex County Council (WSSC) Cllr Urquhart sent her apologies for the final FPC meeting before the WSSC elections in May, and commented that it had been a pleasure to work with the Parish Council and the community over the last five-year term.	
26.24	Chairman’s announcements	
	None.	
26.25	Declarations of Interest on items on the Agenda	
	None.	
26.26	To sign as a correct record the minutes of the meetings held on 19/1/2026 and 23/2/26	
	It was proposed and seconded that the minutes dated 19 January 2026 and the Part II Confidential minutes dated 23 February 2026 be approved and signed by the Chairman.	
26.27	Update on implementation of actions not covered elsewhere on the Agenda	
	The report was noted.	
26.28	To receive a report from Arun District Council (ADC) Councillor	
	ADC Cllr Bicknell referred to the Allotment Gardens and stated that although the area is on ADC owned land, no stipulated agreement had been found by ADC for the land to be used by Findon Parish Council (FPC) as Allotment Gardens. It was suggested that FPC could consider adopting the ADC land in its entirety by way of gifting of the land by ADC as a community facility via the Community Land Transfer initiative. In the meantime, areas such as duty of care insurance cover would be clarified with FPC’s insurers. As there was already an item for Allotment Gardens on the Agenda, a vote was taken regarding the Community Land Transfer process. Resolved: that Findon Parish Council progresses ownership of the Arun District Council owned land including the Allotment Gardens via the Community Land Transfer process.	FM
26.29	Public Question Time (PQT)	
	None.	
26.30	Harmonisation of village grants process	
	Cllr Smith introduced the item and referred to documentation and draft letter previously circulated to councillors. Cllr Smith and the Clerk had consulted with Maureen Chaffe, Processmatters2, regarding the proposed process for a single portal on the FPC website that various organisations in	

	<p>the village could access to review and award grant requests. This would centralise and harmonise the timing and award allocations across the village. Preliminary conversations showed a degree of support and FPC would offer GDPR training for the organisations. Councillors would provide the Clerk with any additional organisations for inclusion.</p> <p>Resolved: Cllr Smith to liaise with Processmatters2 regarding the development of the single portal on the FPC website and provision of GDPR training.</p>	<p>ALL</p>
<p>26.31</p>	<p>Reports from Working Groups and Outside Bodies for noting/ratifying</p>	
	<p>a. Open Spaces Working Group Lead Cllr Whitby provided a verbal update on the flint wall at Pond Green which needed repairs. Both Cllrs Whitby and Wilson had completed courses on lime work to repair flint walling. The estimated cost for materials would be £200.00. The owner of the unidentified memorial bench had just been identified and he was happy to provide and install a replacement bench. Cllr Whitby would liaise with him. Permission had already been given to two other residents for a bench at that location and it was suggested that their bench could be located near Nepcote Green pond/North Verge,</p> <p>Resolved: that Findon Parish Council approves a budget of £200.00 for the repairs to the Pond Green flint wall.</p> <p>b. Trees Working Group including Community Orchard Lead Cllr Wilson reported that 200-300 saplings were due to be planted in the village and another Open Day at the Community Orchard would be arranged in late Spring. The Tree WG would donate a total of £70.00 for a replacement Beech tree on the corner of Beech Road. Subject to confirmation of the suitability of the tree by the Findon Tree Warden, FPC would fund the cost of the tree (£70.00).</p> <p>c. Allotment Gardens Lead Cllr Wilson reported that the one spare plot had been taken up. Following discussion, the plot rental would not be increased for the 2026/27 financial year. Research would be undertaken regarding the proposed Community Land Transfer as detailed in Minute 26.28.</p> <p>Resolved: that plot rentals would not be increased for the 2026/27 financial year, subject to review by Findon Parish Council for the 2027/28 financial year.</p> <p>d. Village Hall Trust. Lead Cllr Hellett reported that storage for the community resilience items within the Village Hall was still in progress and a meeting would be arranged with the Chair of the Village Hall Trust.</p> <p>e. Community Resilience Plan (CRP). No update.</p> <p>f. Roads and Parking Working Group Lead Cllr Kenna introduced the report (as previously circulated) and drew attention to the disappointing decisions from WSCC Highways regarding a reduction in the speed limit to 20mph on Cissbury Ring Road which had not taken in consideration the speed</p>	

	<p>of cyclists travelling downhill, and the application for double yellow lines next to Greypoint House. Cllr Kenna will revisit the application for double yellow lines with WSCC Highways. The Clerk would contact both WSCC and ADC to determine if work can be carried out on the Pond Green car park and by whom. ADC Cllr Bucknell referred to the Village Enhancements Scheme. The School had highlighted the issue of students getting across the A24 to the Church as Sussex Police would not allow a TRO to stop traffic. The Clerk referred to previous involvement by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) in early 2023 to facilitate a solution at the time. Cllr Kenna would liaise with the Head Teacher to contact the PCC again. FPC recognised the amount of work undertaken by Lead Cllr Kenna.</p> <p>g. Wattle House Feasibility Study Working Group Lead Cllr Gilbert reported that an account had been opened with the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to support the Expression of Interest request required by December 2026. FPC could also apply for funds to support an approved application for five years. The Working Group would liaise with the Sheep Fair Committee.</p> <p>h. FPC and the Findon Village Pre-School Working Group Lead Cllr Hellett was researching an appropriate lease document/standard commercial agreement.</p> <p>i. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Working Group The Interpretation Boards for Pond Green and Nephcote Green were in the design phase. Subject to confirmation from the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) that was potential for the inclusion of an additional Notice Board panel on the Interpretation Boards.</p>	
26.32	Grass cutting Tender process	
	Lead Cllr Hellett reported that following their successful tender last month, Grasstex Ltd will shortly be undertaking their first cuts in Findon. A potential for buy-back of the FPC owned greens mower would be discussed with the shared user. Lead Cllr Hellett was congratulated on the project.	
26.33	Annual Parish Meeting	
	Cllr Smith explained that this was not a formal Parish Council meeting, however the FPC Chairman or Deputy would preside at the assembly of parishioners to discuss parish affairs and hear from local organisations. A review of the past 12 months achievements would be given by Cllr Smith. It was agreed that no external speaker be invited and the focus would be on break-out tables to engage with parishioners and councillors on the various current initiatives. Councillors would provide the materials for the session.	
26.34	Village Defibrillators	
	Cllrs Wilson and Gardner had checked all the FPC defibrillators and any replacement parts ordered and updated on The Circuit. There is a spare defibrillator and a white cabinet in the Open Spaces storage area. Cllr Wilson would contact the shops opposite the Black Horse to see if they would be able to re-locate the defibrillator currently at the Skittles Alley.	

26.35	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. Does not wish to undertake regular scheduled inspections of Nepcote Green as per para 1.1 of the report, however would consider suitable signage; 2. Considers replacement Notice Boards as an alternative to refurbishment; 3. Progress with a trial ‘street audits’ approach every two months as outlined in para 1.3 of the report; and 4. Ratifies the use of Nepcote Green for the Findon Grand National Trail Run as outlined in para 1.4 of the report. 	
26.36	Reports from FPC Committees for noting/ratifying	
	a) Planning	
	No update.	
	b) Finance & Governance	
	No update.	
26.37	Finance	
	<p>a) Receipts and bank reconciliations</p> <p>The bank reconciliations for January and February 2026 (as previously circulated) were noted and approved.</p> <p>b) Payments</p> <p>The payments of £1746.89 to date for March 2026 (as previously circulated) were noted and approved.</p> <p>c) FPC Risk Register</p> <p>Resolved: that Findon Parish Council approves the 2026 Risk Register as previously circulated to councillors.</p> <p>d) Internal Audit Provision.</p> <p>The Clerk referred to the report (as previously circulated). A briefing note had been received from the National Assoc of Local Councils (NALC) after the report had been published advising that parish councils should ensure they have a letter of engagement with their internal auditor and an audit plan for the year.</p> <p>Resolved: that Findon Parish Council approves the continued internal audit provision from Smithe and Co for a further period of two years i.e. subject to review in March 2028 , subject to receipt of a letter of engagement and an audit plan.</p>	
26.38	Items to be referred to next Agenda not already included in the minutes	
	The meeting closed at 8.58pm – date of next meeting 18 May 2026.	