

Fovant Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 28.01.2025 at 19:00hrs.

Venue: The Waterside, Fovant Youth Club, High Street, Fovant, Salisbury, Wiltshire

Present: Cllr. A Phillips (Chair), Cllr. M Wallis, Cllr. D Horne, Cllr. A Cousley,
Cllr W Hobbs, Cllr P.Page, Cllr J. Cllr. N Najar (from 19:15)

Attendees: Clerk J Wallis, Seven members of the public.

01.25: Apologies for absence

None received.

02.02: Noting of absence

Cllr Coxe

02.25 Declarations of Interest

None declared.

04.25 Resolution of Previous Minutes and review of action points for meeting having taken place on the 29.11.2024

Minutes for the meeting of the 29.11.2024 unanimously agreed, signed by the chairperson and entered into record.

Matters arising:

08.28.07.24(m) Future contract for grass cutting (Cllr Coxe) Deferred. Carry over.

09.07.24(c) Tree survey (Cllrs Wallis and Cousley) Cllr Wallis reported that the survey had been started and would be fed back at the next meeting. Carry over.

07.09.24 New .Gov.uk emails (Clerk) JW reported that two councillors remained as unsigned in, she asked the councillors to please log on, further feedback at next meeting. Carry over.

08.09.24(h) Clerk reported as completed. Action closed.

08.29.11.24(f)n Clerk reported as completed. Action closed.

08.29.11(g) Setting up on SCRIBE for new fiscal year, JW reported in hand. Carry over.

08.29.11.24(ii) Setting of precept (Clerk) reported as complete. Action closed.

08.29.11.24(h) Setting up of all councillors on SCRIBE (Clerk) reported all councillors have received their log in details and should now have access. Action closed.

09.29.11.24(b) Review of portfolio holders (Chair) Chair proposed that Cllr Page be given the

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portfolio of liaison with local schools, she accepted, and the meeting unanimously agreed the proposal.

09.29.11.24(g) Risk policy (clerk) JW reported it was in progress and would be available at next meeting. Carry over item.

09.11.24(k) Update on Sutton Road land transfer (Clerk) meeting updated that following some chasing, Wiltshire council could not find the deed for the land, it has been agreed with the solicitor acting for the parish council that the clerk would attend and swear to the authenticity of the deed currently held and so the transfer can proceed without further delay. Carry over item.

05.25 Chairmans Introduction

A busy meeting tonight.

Planning applications in recent years have sometimes attracted considerable local interest, and you may guess that the workload for Councillors in drawing up its 'material' recommendations to the Planning authority can be significant. We sometimes have detected a difference between the views of individual Planning Case Officers in what seem to be cases with significant similarities. This may of course be down to our lack of understanding of the planning rules, especially now that training meetings are no longer offered by Wiltshire Council. But equally we feel that we detect inconsistencies at the planning end. To try to save everyone's time and angst in the long term, Cllr. Wallis and I are drawing up a list of questions about the rules in various generic planning contexts, and Cllr. Najjar has offered to arrange a round table between us and senior staff in Planning. We hope this can now take place in February.

Action: Chair and Cllr. Wallis to draw up questions and attend at meeting arranged by Cllr. Najjar between the Parish Council and planning department

06.25: Governance

(a) Statement of Internal control and audit – Introduced by the clerk and unanimously adopted by the council. The first audit will take place after the close of the fiscal year 2024/2025 and will be undertaken by Cllrs. Jackson and Cousley

Action: The clerk to the council to upload the statement and the audit to the website

07.25: Statement From CC Nabil Najjar

CC Najjar informed the meeting about the annual budget; he stated that central government are cutting the rural budget by seven million pounds and as a counter measure Wiltshire council will be increasing the precept by 4.5%.

CC Najjar spoke about local government devolution and the reduction in smaller councils by merging, whilst Wiltshire council will remain a unitary there will be another mayoral tier, he reiterated that there will be no boundary changes. He further stated that a decision was expected the following day on local elections, but there would be mayoral elections in 2026.

The chair enquired if the reduction in central funding would affect LHFIG or SWWAB budgets, CC Najjar reassured it would not.

CC Najjar stated he still awaited a date for himself and Cllrs to meet with planning officers to discuss inconsistencies he also awaited the questions from the council for the meeting.

CC Najjar was asked for a status update on Clays Orchard by a member of the public as residents had received no update recently, he stated he was still awaiting an update and would give further information as soon as possible, Cllr Wallis stated he had called Christine Brown but has received no response, CC Najjar reported that this department were undertaking some internal realignment which would be complete by the 4th February and so further headway should be seen after that. The Chair asked CC Najjar about the moving of speed signs in Broadchalke, CC Najjar reported they had commissioned a metro count to further give weight to the need to move their signs.

08.25: Planning Matters requiring consideration/noting

(a) Application PL/2024/10282 -Ashbrook, Tisbury Road, Fovant, SP3 5JT

The chair thanked the owner for their hospitality at the site meeting. The owner of the site was given the opportunity to speak to give an overview of the proposal that has been submitted, after which the Councillors gave some feedback on movement on the site so far and their concerns surrounding this. The concerns were in relation to demolition of garage and removal of trees, potential for flooding to surrounding properties if solid paving was used in the garden and the potential for loss of light to the village hall due to the proximity of the building following construction of the extension.

Following summation by the chair, he put forward that he felt the council have no option but to object to the proposal. Following further debate and discussion the proposal was voted on and the council voted five to two in favour of objecting to the proposal.

Action: Chair to send to clerk a form of words from the council as to their objection.

Action: Clerk to file response with Wiltshire council before the deadline

(b) Decision PL/2024/10998 – Ashbrook, Tisbury Road, felling of tree

Approval notice noted into the record.

(c) Decision PL/2024/08671 – The Stables, Green Drove, Classroom

Approval with conditions noted into the record – Chair noted his agreement with the outcome in that the case officer had accepted the conditions that the council had requested.

09:25: Financial Matters for Consideration/Noting

Income and Expenditure report to:

(a) December 2024 Reconciliation of Bank – Agreed and signed by Cllr. Horne.

(b) January 2025 Reconciliation of Bank _ Agreed and signed by Cllr. Horne.

Report circulated for member consideration/Noting.

(c) Summary of receipts and payments – Noted and accepted by council.

(d) Net position from start of fiscal year – Noted and accepted by council

Other Financial matters for resolution, consideration or noting.

(e) Purchase of clips for the SID by (Cllr. Wallis) £43.93

Council unanimously accepted the spend.

(f) Payment for external audit to PK Littlejohn £252.00

Council unanimously accepted the spend.

(g) Payment for grass cutting for last year (2024) £510.00

Council unanimously accepted the spend.

(h) Payment for playground hedge cutting (Cllr Coxe) £120.00

Council unanimously accepted the spend.

(i) Payment for commencement of CILCA training (Clerk) £60.00

Council unanimously accepted the spend.

(j) Request for funding by village hall – application circulated to councillors before the meeting, the meeting heard a brief explanation from members of the village hall committee. Chair gave an overview of the situation as the Parish Council is the lessee of the building, chair via the clerk will be writing to the Diocese in Salisbury for clarity around responsibilities for maintenance, upkeep and necessary improvements to the building. The chair had also made prior contact with the SWWAB to see if a potential application would be considered, the response was positive. When asked by the council about the tender process and alternatives, the representative from the village hall considered that their plans for the improvement were made and would not be changed, they reiterated that the application was made for financial support following a difficult year for the village hall team.

Decision: for further discussion following response from the Diocese of Salisbury. Defer to March meeting.

(k) Payment for additional hours (Clerk) December 2024 for 5 hours and January 2025 for 15 hours.

Council unanimously agreed the spend.

(l) Formal increase in clerks' hours to 7 per week from 1st April 2025 (Clerk)

Having been discussed at budget setting and in consideration of additional hours currently used.

Council unanimously agreed the spend and amended clerk hours from five per week to seven per week.

(m) VAT returns (clerk) – already claimed and awaiting payment of £1687.17 for the year 2023, when received clerk will be allocated the payment number to claim for 2024/2025 which currently stands at £1889.11

Council unanimously noted the item.

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- (n) Direct debit payment schedule for 2025/2026
- i. Yay for the emergency telephone £7.19.
 - ii. Scribe for accountancy platform -£37.20
 - iii. Emptying of bins from two sites not covered by Wiltshire Council £65.28
 - iv. Clerks' salary, awaiting usual monthly pay for additional hours.

Council unanimously accepted the monthly spend for 2025/2026.

10:25 Other agenda items requiring consideration/Noting.

(a) Precept chairs comments – Chair introduced the rationale for the document in giving information to villagers about the rise in the precept for 2025/2026. Following debate, it was agreed to appendix the document to the minutes for residents to view and take question as received.

Action: Clerk to attach to minutes and publicise as normal.

(b) Best Kept village (clerk) – Clerk gave an overview of this year's event with no take up to move forward.

Outcome: Noted by council but not actioned

(c) Elections (Clerk) – Expectations that the election will go ahead, clerk reminded councillors of the online seminar on the 11th of February which she has already circulated. To be widely circulated to residents.

Action: Clerk to advertise upcoming election and upcoming online seminar for any prospective candidates

(d) Internal Audit (Clerk) Clerk has sourced internal auditor (Moderamen) who is happy to undertake our audit following the end of the fiscal year cost £195.00.

Outcome: Council unanimously agreed the appointment of Moderamen and the spend for the internal audit for 2024/2025 fiscal year

(e) Dates for Annual Parish meeting – (Chair) After debate and checking of calendar date agreed as Thursday 13th March 2025.

Outcome: noted by council

(f) LHFIG news of substantive bid (Chair) Chair updated the meeting that the bid outcome was expected on Mid-March and will update the meeting following this.

Outcome: Noted by Council

(g) Deployment of new SID (DH/MW) Cllr. Horne reported he expected to move the mobile SID every three weeks, Cllr Wallis reported he has a place on the Wiltshire course for moving SIDS.

Outcome: Cllr. Wallis and Cllr. Horne to write schedule for movement of the SID and the guidance

(h) Prospect of ANPR in Village (chair) – Not feasible.

Outcome; Noted by council.

(i) Proposed discussion group between the Parish council and the village hall management committee (Chair) – Chair gave an overview of the current lease and schedule which was not felt to be supporting the village hall committee in moving forward with its aims. Council agreed to set up a working party between the Parish council and the village hall committee, Chair to write some terms of reference setting out aims and objectives of the working party with some clear guidance on how the group would work together for the betterment of the village hall with clear outcomes and a time scale.

Action: Chair to set out terms of reference and seek participants from the parish council with the chair of the village hall committee agreeing those terms and putting forward equal numbers of participants from the village hall committee.

(j) Village website – Chair discussed the website as it stood, all agreed it was working and would only need reviewing should there be changes.

Outcome: Noted by council

(k) Movement of 20 MPH sign in Dinton Road – Chair explained he had spoken to Highways engineer Paul Shadrack at Wiltshire council who had quoted up to £5000 for the movement of sign and he suggested a speed survey (metrocount) at the existing location to council.

Action: Chair to contact Paul Shadrack and request a free metro count at the site of the current sign

(l) Gates at Green Drove – Cllr Hobbs explained that he had been contacted by a resident of Green Drove complaining about the condition of the Drove plus that gates had been placed on the Drove obstructing a bridle way.

Action: Cllr Hobbs to speak to the landowners regarding the gates and the condition of the Drove.

(m) Update from Mobile police station visit – Update from Cllr Horne given regarding the event and update given from chair following his discussion with the police and crime commissioner (PCC) who was present, chair informed the meeting that Phillip Wilkinson PCC is happy to arrange for one of his staff Perry Payne to make a visit to Fovant to discuss the current 20mph speed limit.

11:25 Items for next meeting – None

12:25 Date and time of next meeting - 24th March 2025 7p.m.

Action: Clerk to book venue and send out invitations

Appendix 1

Parish Council Chairman's note on the increase in Council Tax To residents

The Precept is the levy imposed on each householder to determine the amount the County contributes to a Parish Council to allow it to carry out its work. This precept is based on the budget required by the Parish council in order for it to fulfil its commitment to its residents,

The Precept in Fovant has remained almost unchanged for the last three financial years, but Parish reserves have become seriously depleted and must now be brought back to a safe level. The Council has therefore reluctantly decided to increase its Precept for the coming year to cover its full budget. For the financial year 2025/2026 the Fovant Parish Councils budget has been agreed at £25,717.00. In making this decision the Parish council, at a Full Parish Council meeting on the 29th November 2024 agreed the precept based on the full requirement for budget – Adding £22.65 on band D rating per year.

For illustration purposes the additional costs based on the housing banding system showing both yearly and monthly costs.

Banding	Total £	Annual Difference	Monthly cost
A	£49.83	£15.10	£1.26
B	£58.13	£17.62	£1.46
C	£66.44	£20.14	£1.67
D	£74.74	£22.65	£1.88
E	£91.35	£27.68	£2.30
F	£107.96	£32.72	£2.72
G	£124.57	£37.75	£3.14
H	£149.48	£45.30	£3.76

This increase will ensure the Council can continue its high standard of support to residents especially on road and other safety matters. The County grant allocation to our Area Board budget will be inadequate to fund the road safety needs of the 38 parishes under the Board; the full costs of additional road safety measures in Fovant in FY 25/26 are therefore likely to fall on the Parish Council.

Significant expenditures in recent years of which we can be proud have been:

- Four Speed Indicator Devices SIDs purchased to deter speeding.
- Three public access Defibrillators (AEDs) at well separated locations.
- The Waterside Youth Club building converted into an Emergency Hub.
- A major revision and reset of the Council's administrative arrangements.

Plans for 2025/2026 Financial year:

- Supportive funding to our voluntary group of gardeners to provide tools to enable them to carry on their good work at St. Georges Church.
- Supportive funding to 'Fovant Relief In Need' these monies will support local residents who may be struggling financially to cope with one off support.
- Earmarking reserves for our 'Fovant Green' project to enable works to rewild an area of green space in the centre of the village for the benefit and use of all Fovant residents.

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- Joint funding with the South West Wiltshire Area Board giving opportunities for local youth initiatives for teenagers who live in Fovant, while enabling them to access youth facilities in the local villages as well.
- On going programme of work to make our roads safer for everyone.