

**Minutes of the Annual Parish (Electors) Meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2022 held at 7.00pm in  
Winterslow Village Hall**

**Present:**

Simon Brown (Parish Council Chairman),  
Six members of the public

**In the Chair: Simon Brown**

1. **To receive apologies** – apologies had been received from Ginette Stewart and Rich Rogers
  
2. **To approve the minutes of the last ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2021.** The minutes were approved as a correct record without amendment
  
3. **Matters arising** – No matters arising.
  
4. **A report on the year** – Simon Brown gave his report:

The first full year of the new Firsdown Parish Council since the elections in May 2021 has been eventful and productive. Helen Edgeley stood down after the elections after many years as a councillor; we thank her for her contribution. In her place, we welcomed Steve Smith.

A new logo for the Parish Council was designed, and immediately put to good use by smartening up the defibrillator kiosk with a vinyl wrap. Many thanks to Councillor Jeremy Beavan, for designing the artwork.

We invested in a Speed Indicator Device which is now permanently installed in the central section of Firs Road, and we still have use of a 2nd SID shared with Winterslow. The Community Speed Watch initiative made a brief return during 2021, but has since been unable to operate due to a shortage of volunteers. The Parish Council asks that residents support this community initiative.

Further funds were used to replace a 2nd public notice board in Firs Road, and we have carried out a public consultation, which indicated an overwhelming majority, for 2 picnic benches to be installed on the byway. This is with permission of Wiltshire Council. The Parish Council noted the views of those residents who were not in favour of this scheme.

Our streetlighting was updated to LED during July 2021 by Wiltshire Council which has reduced our carbon emissions, improved the quality of the lighting and made it more reliable. To further reduce carbon emissions, we asked Wiltshire Council to retain switching off the lighting after midnight rather than leaving it on, dimmed all night. Firsdown was one of the first Parishes to request switching off of its streetlights after midnight back in 2010. We also asked Wiltshire Council to fit anti-glare shields to some of the new lights following residents' feedback.

We engaged with the local bus company to suggest rerouting of the Salisbury/Winchester services via Firs Road instead of the A30. Unfortunately, we were not successful in this regard.

The Parish Council has decided to change how the grass on the byway and the cutting of the field hedge is carried out, in order to promote better diversity of flora and fauna.

The Parish Council undertakes a regular litter pick of the road down to the Dunstable Cross roads, and asks residents to help keep our parish litter free.

The condition of the drainage system of Firs Road continues to exercise the Parish Council. Despite extensive clearance works in 2020, flooding of the gardens of several properties remains an ongoing issue. The Parish Council has conducted a thorough survey of the drainage system which has identified the cause of the problem and has suggested to Wiltshire Council where remedial maintenance work needs to be carried out, and further improvements made.

The surface of Firs Road continues to deteriorate and there have been more accidents at the Dunstable cross roads. The Parish Council met with the highways department of Wiltshire Council during January 2022 to discuss both of these issues as well as the Firs Road drainage problem. Wiltshire Council suggested that permanent repairs to Firs Road would be sanctioned and that improvements to the Dunstable junction would be considered. Unfortunately, we have no timescales for either of these schemes.

Regrettably, last autumn a local resident was injured whilst walking in the woods. The incident highlighted that access to the byway for emergency vehicles needs to be improved, and information about locating someone if they are not in the built-up area of the village was required. The Parish Council is exploring two options to improve byway access both for emergency vehicles and maintenance purposes. We have provided guidance on our website on how to get assistance in an emergency. If you are a vulnerable person or household, the guidance also covers what to do in the event of loss of water or electricity supplies. We encourage all residents to look at this guidance. Hard copies may be obtained on request from the Parish Clerk.

Last September, a planning application was received for a number of new dwellings on land at 6 Firs Road and provision of additional public open space. A public meeting was held to hear the views of the parish, but since that time we are not aware of any further progress on the application.

The Haven Cafe on the A30 has now closed, the site is under a new lease and the premises have been completely refurbished and renamed. For the first time in several decades this brings a food and grocery shop within walking distance of Firsdown, as well as an eatery. The new venture is providing approximately 20 jobs to the local community.

Finally, thanks must go to all councillors, the Parish Clerk and all volunteers who worked so hard on behalf of the Parish

**5. Any other PARISH BUSINESS** – there was none

**To close the meeting** – the meeting closed at 7.08