

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE MAIN COUNCIL OF
FELPHAM PARISH COUNCIL 3RD DECEMBER 2024.**

PRESENT:

Chair: Councillor Russ Marsden-Sear, Vice Chair: Councillor Pat Young
Councillors: Emma Aylward, Steve Baker, Antony Bassett, Bob Budd, Kirsty Halls, Tom Harty,
Glen Hewlett, Jane Parker, Rick Parker, Jules Verhulpen

MC 129. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Councillors Jacki Burton, Martin Harvey, Graham Page

MC 130. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

None

MC 131. QUESTION TIME:

There were several residents present in the public gallery.

One resident made a statement outlining disappointment in the way in which many councillors had conducted themselves over the past months. The Parish Council tax precept should not be increased for by-elections called by ten residents for personal reasons and instead should be for the improvement and betterment of Felpham, including provision for trees and benches. Someone who has not attended and lost their seat due to non-attendance and their associates have now forced a by-election on Felpham West. Ex-members could have been co-opted for no cost. Why did this resident who has openly stated that did not want to be on the council use a by-election to inflict a cost on all residents? This problem has been caused by internal politics to the detriment of Felpham residents. This statement was supported by the public gallery.

MC 132. REPORTS FROM MEMBERS ON OUTSIDE BODIES:

None

MC 133. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Councillor Russ Marsden-Sear advised councillors of his and Councillor Pat Young's attendance at the Civic Carol Service, where contact was made with the local MP, Alison Griffith, who expressed an interest in attending a Felpham Parish Council meeting in spring 2025 and an intention to help at the next Freaky Felpham event.

**MC 134. TO APPROVE AS A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE
MAIN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 12TH NOVEMBER 2024.**

The minutes were APPROVED as a true and accurate record.

MC 135. CLERK'S REPORT:

Encampment: Approximately four tents and large awning and potentiality a clearing with log seats has been reported to Bognor Police as being in the patch of land between St. Michael's Allotments and the Felpham Pumping Station. Officers have visited site and the land ownership is being verified with the ADC ASB outreach team also being notified. Some damage has been reported to trees in the area and fires are being lit. The camp appears to be growing in size.

Blakes Mead Adoption: Column replacements have been completed and electricians are on site to carry out the lantern conversions. All works will be completed by the first week of December and then accrued accordingly.

Felpham Prom Railings: ADC contractors will shortly be removing a large amount of the defective blue railings along the Prom at Felpham.

MC 136. GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

There had been a number of emails received on the subject of parking in Wick Lane and on the double yellow lines and in the controlled parking bays around Boots in Felpham/Premier store near the lights at Felpham Road. Arun District Council will now make Felpham Road a hotspot for wardens. The area in question in Wick Lane is privately owned by the Rundle Resident's Association, so any parking restrictions would be controlled by them.

St. Wilfrid's Hospice had sent a letter of thanks for the two donations made by Felpham Parish Council in remembrance of ex councillors Paul English and John Holman.

Bishop Tufnell School has a current consultation in place to reduce the intake to two form entry.

An FOI request was received asking for details of councillor attendance since May. This information was outlined at the meeting and is available as an attachment to the minutes.

MC 137. REPORTS FROM COUNTY/DISTRICT COUNCIL MEMBERS:

- (i) **District Councillor Joan English** (Felpham East) – Not present at meeting and no reports received.
- (ii) **District Councillor Tom Harty** (Felpham East) Councillor – no report.
- (iii) **District Councillor Gill Madeley** (Felpham West) - Not present at meeting and no reports received.
- (iv) **District Councillor Elaine Stainton** (Felpham West) - Not present at meeting and no reports received.

(v) **County Councillor Jaine Wild** submitted the following report:

- Upper Bognor Road EV chargers will be installed in March 2025
- Golf Links Road – pavements due to be done – completed around Downview School
- A broken street sign has been replaced.
- Enforcement notice on Land north of Brooks Lane (Rabbit Island) – footpath has to be cleared by Dec 5th. A dead horse and foal had been found on the land and the owners fined.
- Limmer Lane – gullies booked for clearance in January.
- Bus stop on Felpham Way – flooding investigations are ongoing.
- Footpath works to FEL 153/5 footpath to the rear of Downview School has started.
- WSCC 5-year health strategy to tackle smoking.

MC 138. TO APPROVE AS A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE DATED 12TH NOVEMBER 2024

The minutes were APPROVED by the members present of the Finance & Administration Committee as a true and accurate record.

MC 139. CLERK'S REPORT

None

MC 140. TO APPROVE AS A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE PLANNING, LICENCING AND NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN COMMITTEE DATED 12TH NOVEMBER 2024

The minutes were APPROVED by the members present of the Planning, Licensing and Neighbourhood Plan Committee as a true and accurate record

MC 141. CLERK'S REPORT

None

MC 142. TO APPROVE AS A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE PROJECTS & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE DATED 19TH NOVEMBER 2024.

The minutes were APPROVED by the members present of the Projects and Community Involvement Committee as a true and accurate record.

MC 143. CLERK'S REPORT

None

MC 144. FERG GRANT

'I have already given our usual update to the Finance and Admin committee, including a little more detail on the grant however the awarding of a grant to FERG is really significant and we felt it was important to recognise the help we received in submitting our application.

Therefore, on behalf of FERG I wish to place on record our thanks for the support Doug Millen, in his role as RFO, gave us in successfully applying for this grant to SSEN. The application paper was extremely challenging, and Doug kindly provided the final piece of the jigsaw, the financial documents, which were required to complete the application.

FERG has been granted over £7k to purchase equipment. We will work diligently with Doug to ensure that we spend this money in full compliance with the very strict conditions placed upon this grant. SSEN reserve the right to carry out checks associated with the use of this grant. Such are the conditions that any failure to meet these criteria could result in the repayment of the whole grant amount, irrespective of any money already spent. In short, we had better get it right'.

MC 145. TO CONSIDER AUDIO RECORDING PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

Recommendations from the DPO had been circulated to all councillors and were available online to the public prior to the meeting. Councillor Jane Parker had not viewed the documents in the folders but questioned costings, reasons for both councillor and public download and the volume of work that would be needed to produce a GDPR compliant copy for members of the public/councillors.

Councillor Parker then remarked that the minutes generally were not detailed enough. The Clerk advised that minutes are approved at Main Council by those councillors present at the meeting in question and that this would be the appropriate point to raise any specific queries. Parish council minutes should not be verbatim and record actions and decisions, not what was said at a meeting. Councillor Jane Parker made a further statement about an alleged remark regarding minutes made by the Clerk, but the Clerk vehemently denied such a statement ever being made.

Councillor Glen Hewlett expressed the opinion that recording meetings would stifle debate as the natural flow of the meeting would be undermined.

Councillor Emma Aylward queried the costs of producing copies and the Clerk advised that this would be dependent on the number of requests received.

Councillor Rick Parker requested a named vote.

Councillor Russ Marden-Sear proposed that councillors vote on whether to agree audio meeting of Felpham Parish Council meetings. This was seconded by Councillor Bob Budd.

Councillors voted against audio recording of Felpham Parish Council meetings as follows:

Councillor Emma Aylward - against, Councillor Steve Baker - abstained, Councillor Antony Bassett - against, Councillor Bob Budd - against, Councillor Kirsty Halls - against, Councillor Tom Harty – against, Councillor Glen Hewlett - against, Councillor Russ Marsden-Sear - against, Councillor Jane Parker – for, Councillor Rick Parker – for, Councillor Jules Verhulpen – against, Councillor Pat Young - against

Votes: 9 against, 1 abstention, 2 for

MC 146. FELPHAM PARISH COUNCIL BY-ELECTION WEST WARD

A report on the events leading to the by-election was available to all councillors and formed part of the public meeting associated documents.

Councillor Jane Parker queried the reason for Councillor Emma Carrick being named first as the leading member of the ten residents who had called for an election at a cost of £12,508.00. The Clerk explained that the list was in alphabetical order.

MC 147. TO RATIFY THE DECISION OF THE FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE TO APPROVE THE BUDGET DOCUMENT FOR PRECEPT SUBMISSION TO ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Councillor Glen Hewlett explained details of the budget and recommendations made by the Finance and Administration Committee:

Councillor Glen Hewlett advised councillors that following unavoidable cost pressures, an increase to the current budget had been planned and agreed in principle by members of the Finance and Administration Committee, with approval scheduled for this meeting subject to no unforeseen costs.

On Thursday 21st November, Arun District Council Elections advised Felpham Parish Council that a valid request for a by-election had been received from ten residents of Felpham with accompanying estimated costs of £12508.00. Councillor Glen Hewlett advised councillors that following this, £25,000 had now been added to the budget to account for these costs and the possibility of a further by-election should any councillor lose their seat prior to the next election and another by-election be called.

Additional and unavoidable cost increases to the upcoming budget were outlined and included:

- By-election costs £25000
- Election Costs of £10,000 per annum over the next two years for 2027 elections
- National Insurance increases following the recent budget of £2800
- IT support £500
- Utility Costs and Standing Charges £4000
- Car parking charges – increase allowed for any potential uplift in donations made by Felpham Parish Council to maintain free parking in Grassmere/Links Avenue Car Parks
- Bus Shelter repairs
- Staff salary annual increase
- Community Hall costs

Where possible, budget areas have been cut including FERG, Project events budget, trees, grants and planters.

Reserves, which were previously highlighted as being too high despite being earmarked, had now been spent including £8000 on Community Hall roof repairs, a donation of £10,000 towards the new King George V playground, 2023 election costs and Felpham in Focus.

A budget of £193,000 is now proposed for the forthcoming year.

The average Parish Council Tax precept based on a Band D property is £66.00 whereas Felpham Parish Council's Band D Council Tax will be £38.87 despite Felpham being one of the largest parish councils in Arun.

It should be noted that election costs will be £10,000 for two years and this will then drop to £5000.00 per annum. It is hoped that the by-election cost will not be repeated, although allowance for a further unexpected by-election has been made.

Community Hall hire charges will be increasing by 10% for all hirers in April.

Councillor Steve Baker proposed an extension to the meeting, and this was seconded by Councillor Bob Budd and unanimously agreed.

Councillor Russ Marsen-Sear thanked Councillor Glen Hewlett, the RFO and Clerk for their work on the budget.

Councillor Bob Budd proposed that councillors ratify the decision of the Finance and Administration Committee to approve the budget document for precept submission to Arun District Council. This was seconded by Councillor Steve Baker and unanimously agreed.

MC 148. MATTERS OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE:

None

MC 149. BUSINESS AT THE CHAIRMAN'S DISCRETION:

Councillor Russ Marsden-Sear wished everyone a nice Christmas.

Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 7th January 2025 6.15pm

Approved.....Chairman

Date

This information is in the public domain on the website but is shown below.
 It should be noted that apologies were accepted by Main Council for a period of three months for Councillor Tom Harty and Councillor Martin Harvey.

The colours indicate committee membership.

Councillors	Main Council	Finance	Planning	Projects	Allotments	TOTAL
Emma Aylward	3	2	0	1	1	7
Steve Baker	3	0	0	0	0	3
Antony Bassett	2	2	2	4	1	11
Bob Budd	5	4	4	6	2	21
Jacki Burton	2	0	0	0	0	2
Emma Carrick	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kirsty Halls	5	4	4	6	2	21
Tom Harty	3	0	3	0	0	6
Martin Harvey	0	0	0	1	0	1
Glen Hewlett	3	3	3	0	0	9
Russ Marsden-Sear	5	4	4	6	2	21
Graham Page	5	0	4	0	0	9
Jane Parker	4	0	0	0	0	4
Rick Parker	4	0	0	0	0	4
Jules Verhulpen	2	2	0	1	1	6
Pat Young	4	3	4	6	2	19