

# FLETCHING PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Gabriella Paterson-Griggs

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**MINUTES** of the Meeting of **FLETCHING PARISH COUNCIL** held on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2025 in the Village Hall, High Street, Fletching from 6.30 – 8.50pm

**PRESENT:** Councillors R Hannay (Chairman), R Borton, N Collum, D Greenish, C Logan, K Minch, L Schofield and D Woollven.

Also in attendance: Gabriella Paterson-Griggs (Clerk and RFO) and Councillors C Coleman (WDC) and R Galley (ESCC).

Members of the Public in Attendance: 2

**APOLOGIES:** Apologies for absence were received from Councillor G Garland.

## **25/194. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Declarations of Interest RECEIVED in respect of items on the agenda, as required by the Members' Code of Conduct.

Minute 25/203 - Councillors Hannay and Minch as trustees of the Fletching Memorial Hall Charity.

In accordance with the FPC Code of Conduct:

- Councillor Hannay, as an elected trustee, left the room during the discussion of the item; and
- Councillor Minch, as the Parish Council's representative on the management committee, took part in the discussion on the item but did not vote.

Minute 25/206(iv) - Councillor Collum as the applicant for WD/2025/2597/LB.

Note: Councillor Collum did not leave the room as this item was not discussed at the meeting.

## **25/195. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the last meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2025 were a correct record and were duly signed by the Chairman.

## **25/196. MATTERS ARISING**

The Actions List as prepared and circulated by the Clerk was noted. Updates were given as follows:

*Historical Documents* - a date was awaited from Mr Isted.

*Burial Ground* - the Clerk updated on the trawl through the previous minutes including a photo of the original gate. It was noted that a meeting was being held with Wealden DC officers in the new year.

*Owlsbury Planning Application* – Councillor Coleman stated that further meetings were due to be held and it was agreed that the action proposed would be deferred until after the next meeting held with the developer.

Note: Councillor R Borton arrived at 6.45pm during this item.

## **25/197. REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR**

Councillor Galley reported that a Care Quality Commission report had been received in respect of Adult Social Care which was very pleasing with the majority of areas being graded as outstanding. There had also been a good report on Children's Services with one home being marked as outstanding.

He stated that there had been fewer complaints with regards to the roads and it was noted that the drains were due to be cleared again in December. Cllr Galley confirmed that he would be attending the meeting about Speedwatch on the A275 with Cllr Logan and Steve O'Connell in January.

With regards to Owlsbury Cllr Galley reported that there should be local nature reserve strategies in place by March 2026 which should be a relevant consideration and he confirmed that Highways had been submitted very strong objections to the application.

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In respect of ESCC finances the government grant was not yet known and it was also not known whether there would be County Council elections in May 2026 as clarity was awaited from the Government. The elections for the new unitary authority would be in 2027 and the Strategic Mayoral Authority in 2028.

## 25/198. REPORT FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

Councillor Coleman reported that the Cabinet at Wealden District Council had voted not to raise its Council Tax precept for 2026/27 as the Council was in a sound financial position. She also updated on the ward grant and other funding awarded by Wealden.

The current position on Crowborough Camp was noted. Cllr Coleman stated that the hosepipe ban was still in place because the levels at Ardingly reservoir were only at 45% and that the main issue was the high consumption of water.

With regards to Flitteridge Farm it was noted that the Environment Agency had spoken to the owner and Wealden had written to them and that the fires appeared to have ceased at present.

In response to a question about a letter posted by Framfield Parish Council, Cllr Coleman stated that she was not aware of anything specific about it. With regards to Planning she agreed to raise the issue about the suitability of the size and design of new properties within a parish giving Splaynes Green as an example at her upcoming meeting with the Director. Cllr Greenish agreed to provide a note on the issue to Cllr Coleman.

## 25/199. PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED

The following application was discussed. See Minute 25/206(iii) below for further information.

WD/2025/2582/F Bonswick Cottage, Mill Lane, Fletching TN22 3PY

## 25/200. WORKING GROUPS / EXTERNAL GROUPS

- i. *Neighbourhood Plan*: Nothing further to report.
- ii. *Fletching Recreation Ground Committee (FRGC)*: Nothing further to report
- iii. *Village Hall Committee of Management*: Cllr Hannay reported that the new caretaker had now moved into the cottage.

## 25/201. CORRESPONDENCE / CONSULTATIONS RECEIVED

- i. *MHCLG Consultation on proposals for Local Government Reorganisation in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove and West Sussex*: Councillors discussed the proposals and the questions within the consultation document that had been circulated prior to the meeting. It was **AGREED** that a response be sent stating that the Parish Council strongly disagreed with the proposals as it considered the re-organisation would not achieve any savings and would be to the detriment of parishes.

## 25/202. FINANCE AND ASSETS

- i. The invoices and payments for December 2025 were **AUTHORISED** and the Council's current financial position and bank reconciliation were noted.
- ii. The Draft Budget for 2026/27 was **AGREED**.
- iii. It was **AGREED** that the Parish Council continue to fund, until 31 March 2026, five hours per week for the Clerk to work for the Village Hall Management Committee.

Note: Cllr R Galley left the meeting at 7.45pm at the end of this item.

## 25/203. GRANT APPLICATION

The following grant application was considered:

*Fletching Village Hall Management Committee*: £5000 towards the re-wiring of the caretaker's cottage as part of the refurbishments required to make the cottage habitable.

# FLETCHING PARISH COUNCIL

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After a long discussion it was **RESOLVED** to award the grant in full.

## Notes:

This item was chaired by Cllr D Greenish as Cllr Hannay left the room in line with the FPC Code of Conduct (see Minute 25/194 above for details).

The Clerk, acting in their capacity as the secretary for the Village Hall Management Committee, answered questions from the councillors about the grant application.

## **25/204. BURIAL GROUND**

There were no requests or permits received.

## **25/205. ENFORCEMENT – PLANNING AND DRAINAGE**

- i. *Wilderlands*: Cllr Greenish reported that he had looked at the information provided to him in detail and considered that the views of Wealden DC should be challenged but that legal advice would need to be sought in the first instance. It was **AGREED** that a quote be sought for the legal advice. Cllr Greenish to action in conjunction with the Clerk.

## **25/206. PLANNING APPLICATIONS - RECEIVED**

It was **RESOLVED** to make the comments as set out after each application in respect of the following:

### **i. WD/2025/2231/F Moons Farm, Sharpsbridge Lane, Piltdown TN22 3XG**

All weather equestrian arena and stable block with associated landscaping.

*The site is located to the south of the hamlet of Piltdown. The site is outside any defined development boundary but is within the southern edge of the Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC 7km zone of influence. The local landscape is characterised as the Low Weald Landscape Character Area.*

*This application is for the removal of the existing hard tennis court and the use of and minor extension to the level platform on which it stands, to provide the base for a 20 metre x 40 metre all weather equestrian arena. Also, a stable building is proposed to the south of the new arena. This is a simple timber building in a traditional stable style with space for 3 loose boxes with separate tack room and hay store and an extended roof to provide shade and weather protection for the horses.*

*It is noted that Moons Farm, the barns to the north (The Granary) and Moon's Oast are all listed Grade II. The associated buildings that are not specifically listed are considered to be curtilage listed and form part of the original post-medieval farmstead of Moons Farm.*

*Pre-application advice has been obtained in this case as follows:*

*"... the principle of the proposal is acceptable but any application would need to demonstrate how the development accords with Saved Policies DC12 and DC13. The acceptability of the design and visual impact would depend on a final design, including materials. A Heritage Statement would be required that undertakes a thorough settings exercise. Noted that the development would be served by an existing access on to Sharpsbridge Lane. The site seems separate from the nearest neighbouring dwelling and therefore does not seem to pose any concerns in terms of loss of outlook, privacy or sunlight. As a small site, the proposal would be liable for BNG and an application would need to be accompanied by the relevant metric. An application would also need to be supported by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA)."*

*The Council notes that the applicants have addressed each of these issues in their application. However, on inspection, there was one issue which is of concern to the Parish Council and that is the access to the highway. It is noted that there is an existing access to the highway – Sharpsbridge Lane – but given the current use of the site, appears little used. This is an unclassified narrow lane with numerous bends giving poor visibility, It is often difficult for vehicles to pass. The applicants' Design and Access Statement says:*

# FLETCHING PARISH COUNCIL

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*“There is an existing access from Sharpsbridge Lane onto the land. This has an existing 5 bar field gate which may be replaced with a new, wider gate to accommodate a horse lorry but there is sufficient space to do this without affecting any existing hedgerow or trees either side of the access. There is very good visibility in both directions from this point of access onto Sharpsbridge Lane. There is also a wide area in front of the gate already laid to tarmac where a vehicle can safely pull in clear of the lane to be able to then open the gate for access and not disrupt the flow of traffic.”*

*The Parish Council’s view is that the significant additional use of this access for larger vehicles (stated to be “a horse lorry/horse box, vets, farriers, feed and bedding supply delivery and equine skip delivery and collection”) is potentially dangerous.*

*In the circumstances, the Parish Council does not feel able to support this application without a full highway assessment of the potential use of this access for significant heavy traffic.*

ii. **WD/2025/2573/F Chapel Cottage, Shortbridge Road, Piltdown TN22 3XD**

Proposed rear extension to existing detached residential annexe.

*Chapel Cottage is not a Listed Building neither is it in a Conservation Area.*

*Chapel Cottage is a semi-detached cottage adjacent to Piltdown Golf Club with a road frontage to Shortbridge Road. In 2017 consent was granted for the construction of a detached annex alongside the main property, WD/2017/2257. A subsequent application WD/2020/2392 was submitted and approved to regularise the roof construction which did not conform to the original approval. These consents were implemented and the annex is now occupied by the applicants’ elderly mother. In 2023, consent was granted for a rear extension to the annex pursuant to application WD/2022/3184. The Parish Council supported that application but it has not been implemented.*

*This application is for a modified design of that extension as described in the applicants’ Design and Access Statement. The changes are modest but the applicants have been advised that a new application is nevertheless required.*

*The Parish Council SUPPORTS the application.*

iii. **WD/2025/2582/F Bonswick Cottage, Mill Lane, Fletching TN22 3PY**

Proposed 2m wide side extension, detached 3 bay (2 open car ports) car port building, clad in black timber cladding.

*No 1 Bonswick Cottages is one of a pair of semi-detached cottages. Although the frontages maintain a cottage appearance, alterations to No 1 over the years (particularly the construction of a substantial rear extension and a separate garage block with roof-space accommodation) means that it has largely lost its “cottage feel”.*

*The property lies to the south-west of the village of Fletching in a rural and somewhat isolated setting on Mill Lane. It is not within any development area and lies outside the Fletching Conservation Area and the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It is however within the Low Weald Landscape Character Area (LWLCA) which is described as being: “...predominantly agricultural, supporting mainly pastoral farming owing to heavy clay soils, with horticulture and some arable on lighter soils in the east, and has many densely wooded areas with a high proportion of ancient woodland.” It is also within the setting of “The Flying Engine”; a Grade II Listed Building on the immediate opposite side of the road. The property enjoys spectacular views, particular north easterly towards the village of Fletching and its church. The Council has had regard to these issues in formulating its comments.*

*The application can be summarised as comprising: (i) the addition of a single-storey side extension to the main house (ii) a link to join the present garage building to the main house at ground floor level (iii) some minor external alterations to and a change of use of the present*

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garage building and (iv) the construction of a separate 3xbay carport with a home office within the roof space.

In 2024, a similar application was made (WD/2025/2896/F) but was withdrawn. Subsequently, it was determined that the part of the site on which it is intended to construct the carport had an established use as land for purposes incidental and ancillary to the residential occupation of No 1 Bonswick Cottages (WD/2025/1782/LDE).

Although there are some design differences between what is being proposed by this application and the 2024 application, they are not significant. On the occasion of the previous application, the Parish Council stated that it did have some reservations on aspects of the application as follows:

1. It would be preferable if the proposed replacement of the existing window in the master bedroom in the main house affording a north easterly view could match the other windows in the main house
2. The number and size of glass windows/doors being proposed for the additional ground floor extension is excessive, and
3. The mass and bulk of the proposed new car port/home office building in the context of its prominent position on the site.

It is noted that point no. 1 has been dealt with in the new application but the concerns under points no. 2 and no. 3 remain.

Notwithstanding its reservations, the Parish Council did (subject to conditions) support the previous application on the basis that, overall, it was considered that it (i) would have improved the current appearance and use of the site (ii) would have been more sympathetic to the character of the LWLCA and (iii), subject to appropriate landscaping, on balance would not have an adverse impact on the setting of The Flying Engine.

On that basis, the Parish Council can SUPPORT this application provided that conditions are imposed (inter alia) that:

1. The car-port/home office use of the new building should at all times be ancillary to the residential use of main house, and
2. As such, the new car-port/home office building should not be occupied, sold or otherwise disposed of save in conjunction with the main house.

iv. **WD/2025/2597/LB Clinton Lodge, High Street, Fletching TN22 3ST**

Proposed pair of iron railings to front entrance steps.

The Parish Council has no comments and is content for the application to be determined on the basis of advice from WDC's Heritage Officer.

v. **WD/2025/2636/F Woodland House, Batts Bridge Road, Piltdown TN22 3XR**

Installation of 1.9m high automatic solid hardwood entrance gates, a matching pedestrian gate, and minor repositioning of an existing fence post.

Woodland House is a detached residential property situated on the north side of Batts Bridge Road in Piltdown. The dwelling sits on a substantial plot. The site benefits from a broad frontage with a gravel driveway, existing fencing, and soft landscaping along the boundaries. The surrounding area is characterised by low-density detached dwellings, mature trees, and open frontages typical of the semi-rural setting. The highway (Batts Bridge Road) has a 50mph speed limit and lacks continuous pedestrian pavements. This results in relatively fast-moving traffic immediately adjacent to the property entrance. The property already benefits from a dropped kerb and vehicular crossover, allowing vehicles to enter and exit directly from the highway.

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*The proposal seeks permission to install a pair of 1.9-metre-high solid hardwood automated gates, accompanied by a 1.9-metre-high pedestrian gate and the repositioning of one existing fence post to improve accessibility and safety at the entrance.*

*The Parish Council SUPPORTS the application.*

## **25/207. PLANNING APPLICATIONS – APPEAL DECISIONS**

Planning Appeal decisions received since the last meeting:

### **i. WD/2025/0698/F Oak Tree Cottage, High Street, Fletching TN22 3TD**

Erection of single storey side extension incorporating study, utility ground floor WC and living room. (ALLOWED 17 November 2025).

## **25/208. PLANNING APPLICATIONS - DECISIONS**

Planning decisions **RECEIVED** from Wealden District Council since the last meeting:

*Applications Approved* – none since the last meeting

*Applications Refused*

### **i. WD/2025/2186/LDE Woodside, North Hall Lane, Fletching TN22 3TJ**

Light industrial use (including storage, maintenance and processing of materials, plant and equipment and timber products used for and resulting from a landscape contractor's business). (CERTIFICATE NOT ISSUED 7 November 2025)

### **ii. WD/2024/1594/F + WD/2025/2098/LB Knabbs Farm, High Street, Fletching TN22 3SX**

Conversion of redundant barn to create ancillary accommodation to host property, change of use of land to residential to include remaining part of barn. (REFUSED 28 November 2025)

*Applications Withdrawn* – none since the last meeting

## **25/209. SPAYNES GREEN PHONEBOX**

The Clerk reported that the works had been completed on the Splaynes Green Phone Box and it was now back in an upright position with a new door and had been painted. The Parish Council was very grateful for the huge amount of work and time that Paula Tapp and her family had put into the project. It was noted that Cllr Garland had taken on establishing various uses that the phone box could be put to and she would be reporting on these at the next meeting. It was also agreed that Cllr Logan contact Paula Tapp with a view to writing an article about the project highlighting the community input that could be widely published on various platforms.

## **25/210. ITEMS FOR THE PARISH MAGAZINE**

It was agreed that the following items be included for the next edition of the Parish Magazine:

- Splaynes Green Phone Box

## **25/211. AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

It was requested that Councillors contact the Clerk with any items they wish to be considered at the next meeting.

## **25/212. TIME AND DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS**

The next meeting of the Parish Council is due to be held on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2026 at 6.30pm in the Village Hall.