

FALMER PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING JANUARY 20th 2026.

PRESENT Chair Melanie Cutress MC, Vice Chair Andy Pearce AP, Helen Herbert HH, Annie Heining AH, APOLOGIES Martin Gapper MG.

Two villagers attended.

THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING WERE SIGNED AS A TRUE RECORD OF THAT MEETING
DECLARATION OF INTERESTS. None

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR. To be answered as the meeting progresses.

MATTERS ARISING.

1. Stadium issues

There were no issues.

2. Village maintenance.

• Pond restoration.

Community volunteer sessions to cut back bankside vegetation had seen dwindling numbers of volunteers.

The tree survey was available, and the work would be done in February. Date to be announced. The contractor was the OZ group from Heathfield. All households to receive an information leaflet.

Foul water by the roadside outside the church was linked with Court Farm and the agent to the farm Knight Frank would be meeting Eric Huxham this week.

Pond silt was having new tests for contamination. This investigation and the work ahead will be led by engineer Jeff Waller who has done quite a few pond restorations. His current opinion was that the silt is probably not badly contaminated and might be able to go to landfill. Dredging was expected to be carried out summer 2026. Planning permission was needed. The quantity of silt to be removed was hard to ascertain as was its composition. It might not be a costly enterprise.

Inflow and outflow Pipework needed to be improved and banking supported.

Planting out will be the last improvement summer 2027.

- ESCC Grass verge cutting service. All agreed to continue this in 2026/27. Cost 439.69
- Church Clock last serviced October 2022. All agreed to a new clock service. Cost £235.
- Weekly waste bin collection Falmer North had started just after Christmas Cost £364

3. Village issues.

- Devolution. It was for the government now to decide whether the new unitary authority would be under ESCC for all East Sussex or whether Sussex would be split into 5 equal population areas and Falmer would be under the control of Brighton and Hove City Council. Governments Decision expected in March

- Camper van parking around Falmer pond had been a summer issue. FPC was seeking to have all year-round parking controls implemented to deter camper vans from staying for days. There was the question as to where toilet waste was disposed. Decision expected from ESCC in March.

4. Planning applications.

- Polowood shoot SDNP/25/00814/FUL Permission given for 1 year. For 160 days. Many conditions had been attached. See SDNP planning website
- St Marys farmhouse barn conversion SDNP/24/01562/LDE permission given.
- St Marys barn Padel Court SDNP/25/04748/HOUS Mr Chapman.
- Housedean farm Padel Court SDNP/25/04590/FUL conversion of grain store.
- BHA Village way fencing and Gate north side. LW/25/0495

5. Finance

- The accounts were presented.
- Our CIL award money had been donated to the pond restoration fund.
- MC ran through expenses for 2026/7 to help with decision making on the precept. Proposal was to precept for £1500. All agreed.

6. AOB

Plumtree. East Street passage.

Villager Matt Thomsett raised this issue. The tree had been cut down very recently and he wanted to know if FPC had any information about why and how this had happened. It was unlawful to cut trees down in conservation areas without planning permission. It was a criminal offence. Whoever had cut it down had done a poor job and all the tree trunks and branches had been thrown over the footbridge onto the A27 embankment.

Villager Jill Burt then informed the meeting that Sylvia Carr who lived at 6 The Courtyard had told her that she had wanted to cut the tree down as it was affecting her view and damaging her wall. Her son Tom Carr had arranged for this to be done.

Matt Thompsett said that this type of tree did not cause invasive root problems. He wanted villagers to be informed that any tree felling needed planning permission and without pp the irresponsible person could be fined up to £20,000. He would like to see the tree replaced, in the same spot, even though the tree had self-seeded. It had not been planted.

There was considerable discussion over the issue and how it should be dealt with. Matt Thompsett had already made FOI requests about the tree to the SDNP and LDC.

The final decision agreed by the PC was that MC would go to see Sylvia Carr to see if more information could be provided and then would write to her son Tom Carr if Sylvia confirmed he had had the tree cut down.

NEXT MEETING

March 17th 2026 7.30PM