

Minutes of the
Fernwood Central Residents' Association (FCRA) Committee Meeting
Held at 19:15 hrs on Wednesday 26thth November 2025
Fernwood Village Hall

1. Attendance:

Present		Not Present	FirstPort – Not Present
John Newton (JN)	Nick Roberts (NR)	Matt Horridge (MH)	
David Heath (DH)	Terry McSwiney (TM)	(Barratts) (BDW)	Vanessa Crane (VC)
Henry Micah (HM)			Richard Lowe(RL)
			AR = A Resident

2. Approval of the Minutes and Matters Arising

The Minutes of the 29th October 2025 were approved.

3. Treasurers Report

HM reported that the only expenditures had been on the usual monthly Internet hosting fees and bank charges totalling £7.24.

4. Secretarys Report

DH reported that there were a number of queries that were outstanding with FirstPort and to assist everyone to keep track of progress, they had been detailed on the FCRA web site of www.myfernwood.org under the Maintenance and FirstPort tab. Members were encouraged to view these.

5 Questions From Residents

AR asked what had been done about the late bills from FirstPort that had been quickly followed by bills for December that were sent during October. JN responded that FCRA had been concerned over this and had raised the issue with FirstPort and through Barratt David Wilson Homes. An apology had been received with a reason of a misallocation error being blamed. VC had assured the Committee that the accounts were on schedule. This was a surprise to Members as it was suggested that an S20B notice was due by the end of the month. An assurance was given that late payments would not incur a penalty charge. FCRA was waiting for the news item that confirmed this, that had been promised by FirstPort, to be circulated to all residents. Whilst direct debit payments were available, there was apparently a charge of between £25 and £40 for monthly direct debit. Clarification had been sought on this through the Joint Meeting that is item 6 in these minutes.

6. Feedback from Joint Meeting with FirstPort and Barratt David Wilson Homes

VC reported that several complaints made to FirstPort had been elevated to Director level. These included the outstanding request for a list of Legal Charges with their explanation and the awaited signing of the Management Lease to enable a faster and less costly turnaround of DoV applications.

DH had raised the outstanding request for details of the financial income for outside work undertaken by the Fernwood workforce that had been requested at the July Joint Meeting. He did not accept that the item for Linked Site Charges in the Accounts included this work as it had always been for only the Fernwood Woodlands area. VC was reminded that this information was still outstanding.

MH had reminded VC that Barratt David Wilson was still waiting for a response to the request to resolve the Management Lease issue that had been outstanding for a significant time. VC had responded that this issue had been referred to a Direct and Legal Service representative.

JN had raised the issue of the bills for the annual charges that is referred to at item 5 in these minutes. The issue of charges for Direct Debits was discussed and it was agreed that an approach be made to FirstPort to remove all charges for direct debit payments.

Fernwood tree works was discussed and is covered at item 7 in these minutes. MH had instructed FirstPort that as Landowners, BDW would want to be informed of any major tree works on Fernwood.

DH had raised the issue of expenditure from Reserves that JN pointed out was not known by the FCRA until over a year had passed and was not generally revealed. JN requested that any amount of over £3,000 be notified to FCRA in advance of the expenditure. This had been reinforced by MH who confirmed that BDW would request for FCRA to be informed in advance of any expenditure over £3,000 from Reserves.

7. Fernwood Tree Works

DH reported that, following on from our previous meeting and the Joint Meeting, it had been clarified which groups of trees had been classified as Short £17,251, Medium £43,256 and Long term £14,791, with costs as shown and totalling £75,298. The short term most urgent work had been completed and would be charged to the S1 Reserves budget. Approval from NSDC had not yet been sought for the other priority work. Our workforce will be completing tree work that they are allowed to do which is expected to reduce the cost of specialised work. Once this is complete, further consideration will be given to when the reminder of the work is required.

8. Fernwood S1 Reserves

JN reported that FirstPort had supplied the amounts for the present state of our S1 Reserves for the year 2024/25 which stood at £62,000. Annual contributions to S1 reserves had been static at £19,800 for several years. The cost of tree works this year would almost account for the entire annual contribution.

It was agreed that it was unusual not to have a budget heading for tree work in view of the large number of trees and the apparent requirement for a tree safety survey every 3 years. It was impossible for the Committee to identify the average annual expenditure of tree works as this is likely to have been paid from Reserves previously. It was therefore agreed that VC be requested to provide the expenditure on tree work, including any surveys, over the last 5 years.

9 Feedback from Meeting with Parish Council

The previously agreed meeting with the Parish Clerk was cancelled by the Clerk, who suggested that January would be a more appropriate date for the meeting. Committee Members considered the Freedom of Information Request that had been submitted to Fernwood Parish Council on 20th August 2024 for which no information had been provided to date, despite several reminders. It was unanimously agreed that, in view of the time that had passed, a complaint be raised with the Information Commissioners Office regarding the Parish Council's failure to provide the information that had been requested.

10. Date of Future Meetings

December – no meeting

Wednesday 21st January 2026 at 7:15pm – Village Hall

Wednesday 25th February 2026 at 7:15pm – Village Hall

Meeting Closed 20:20 hrs