

FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL: Tuesday 14th April 2026, 7pm, Firle Village Hall. **Members in Attendance:** Cllr Hill (Chair), Cllr James, Cllr Lance, Cllr Symes.

Members not in Attendance: Cllrs Barr. **Others Present:** Lorna Thwaites, Clerk and RFO.

Members of the Public in Attendance: 0 **Questions Received from the Public:** None.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** RECEIVED and ACCEPTED from Cllr Barr.
2. **DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS AND TO CONSIDER ANY REQUESTS FOR A DISPENSATION WITH RESPECT TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA,** as required by the Members Code of Conduct: None received.
3. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING:** The minutes of the ordinary meeting of Firle Parish Council held on 10th March 2026 were RESOLVED to be a correct record and were signed by the Chair.
4. **FINANCE/ADMIN:**
 - 4.1 Payments to be made in April were AUTHORISED and the bank reconciliation was RECEIVED and SIGNED.
 - 4.2 The end of year report on actual spend vs budget was RECEIVED and it was NOTED that 85% of the budget was achieved at the year end.
 - 4.3 The requirements of Assertion 10 regarding .gov email addresses was DISCUSSED: The Council AGREED to set up at least one .gov email address and the Clerk will investigate further.
 - 4.4 The date of the 2025-2026 Internal Audit was RECEIVED as 21 April 2026.
 - 4.5 Firle Parish Council RESOLVED that it meets the criteria to declare itself exempt from the Annual Return 2025/26 (gross annual income or expenditure to not exceed £25,000); the Certificate was SIGNED.
 - 4.6 The agenda for the Annual Meeting of Firle Parish Council, Tuesday 5th May was AGREED.
5. **GRANTS APPLICATIONS RECEIVED.** None.
6. **REPORT(S):**
 - 6.1 To RECEIVE reports from Local and District Councillors and the MP for Lewes: None received.
7. **MATTERS ARISING:**
 - 7.1 Firle Cricket Club are in support of the placing of a memorial bench and the bench is currently being arranged.
 - 7.2 Significant fly tipping has occurred on Wick Street and thought to be linked to cannabis growing; it was reported to LDC, FixMyStreet and Police via 101 who advised would send an officer to look; it is now cleared; Cllrs AGREED that if there are further instances, they will set up a meeting with Firle Estate; AGREED to put an article in the parish magazine and to send notice to the Firle Community Whatsapp; the Clerk to try and investigate with LDC and will keep a log of any instances she is notified of.
 - 7.3 Cllr Hill raised the matter of Parish Council responsibility for improving bio diversity; Housemartins and Swifts have significantly declined in the last 20 years and Cllr Hill spoke with Lewes Swift Supporters; encouraging Swifts can take a few years for them to colonise but installing nesting boxes can help; Cllr Hill suggested potential locations and advised that grants are available from RSPB/ornithological society; the Clerk will contact Firle Estate to request permission to site nest cups and support with installation; the approx. cost is £200 for the set of boxes with installation an additional cost; Cllr Hill will draft an email to be sent to Firle Estate; the Council AGREED to allocated £100 from GPC and £300 from reserves (to include installation costs) and to place an article in the parish magazine if siting is agreed by Firle Estate.
8. **CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED:**
 - 8.1 Road Safety Councillor Toolkit – ESCC. NOTED.
 - 8.2 Grant Award – FVHPFC. NOTED.
 - 8.3 Visit from James MacCleary MP: The Council AGREED to the visit on 3rd August, 5.30 – 6.30pm; the Clerk was asked to advise that there may be low attendance; Cllrs Symes and James AGREED to set up the hall.
 - 8.4 Upcoming Bus Service Changes – ESCC: NOTED.
 - 8.5 Letter from the Secretary of State – Local Government Re-organisation: NOTED.
 - 8.6 Lewes Joint Action Safety Group: The Clerk will request that she is the main contact and will circulate agenda.
 - 8.7 Local Footpath Wardens – Ramblers Association: Cllr Lance will co-ordinate and share amongst the cllrs.
 - 8.8 Grant Expenditure – Action Against Abuse: NOTED.
 - 8.9 Parish Briefing Grass Cutting: NOTED.
9. **HIGHWAYS:**
 - 9.1 To RECEIVE an update on the blocked drains by Redwood Cottage in Wick Street: No update.

9.2 The blocked drain 42B, the Bostal: Cllr Lance has sent a video showing the water coming down the road but not received a response from ESH; Cllr Lance to pursue.

10. PLANNING: Applications received:

10.1 **SDNP/26/00759/HOUS Location:** 80 Heighton Street, Firle, BN8 6NZ

Proposal: Demolition of side extension and rear shed, single storey rear extension, installation of a rear air source heat pump and formation of front parking space and fenestration alterations. A response of NEUTRAL was AGREED with the following comments: No information has been provided on improvements to biodiversity and the Council requests provision to be made for suitable for bird nesting sites on the structure and in the surrounding woodland; the Council would like to request for swift bricks to be included in the rear extension.

10.2 **SDNP/26/01201/LIS Location:** Church House, The Street, Firle, East Sussex, BN8 6LP

Proposal: Reconstruction of collapsed wall: The Council AGREED to SUPPORT.

11. PROJECTS:

11.1 Footpath

11.1.1 To RECEIVE information further to the investigations of Cllr Barr on the footpath on the western side of The Street – Cllr Barr. DEFER to June.

12. ITEMS AGREED FOR THE PARISH MAGAZINE: Nesting cups; bus service changes; heating oil; fly tipping.

13. NO ITEMS AGREED FOR THE NEXT MEETING OF FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL.

14. THE TIME AND DATE OF THE NEXT ORDINARY MEETING OF FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL: Annual Parish Meeting and Annual Meeting of the Parish Council is 5th May 2026, 7pm and 7.30pm.

15. THE MEETING CLOSED at 20.56.