

FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL: Tuesday 7th October 2025, 7.05pm, Firle Village Hall. **Members in Attendance:** Cllr Hill (Chair), Cllr Barr (Vice Chair), Cllr Bolger.

Members not in Attendance: Cllr Symes and Lance. **Others Present:** Lorna Thwaites, Clerk and RFO, V Rowlands, Chair South Downs National Park Authority.

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

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** RECEIVED and ACCEPTED from Cllr Symes.
2. **MS V.ROWLANDS, CHAIR SDNPA AND CHAIR NATIONAL PARKS ENGLAND:** Ms Rowlands was welcomed to the meeting; she spoke on the SDNPA Partnership Management Plan which requires the authority to produce two statutory documents every 5 years (a plan of what everyone would like the park to be and how they would like it managed); there has been lots of engagement and views gathered and a draft plan is now out for consultation; one of the seven aims in the plan, is thriving communities (affordable housing and ensuring thriving land-managing businesses); SDNPA is considering how they can tackle affordable housing and analysed why affordable housing isn't being built - affordable housing builders want larger sites rather than scattered, small sites; Members of Firle Parish Council spoke of their keenness to have affordable housing and how a community land trust had been set up in Firle a few years ago; the demographics of Firle are 50 years plus and there are only 54 children in Firle Primary School. Water supply is also a big issue for the SDNPA, and work is being done to protect the water supply; FPC Members discussed the wasted water that runs of Glynde Reach; SDNPA is also keen to develop the skills of young people and encourage them out into nature. The Local Plan will come to the SDNPA in March 26 when it goes to the Inspector for Regulation 19. Devolution – mayoral elections are scheduled for May 2026; SDNPA needs to highlight its existence to the new Mayor and Ms Rowlands is meeting with all mayoral candidates; an informal partnerships board has been set up so the SDNPA isn't forgotten. Ms Rowlands asked about the Firle Estate Plan and when the plan is being put forward for adoption; SDNPA are looking at the community engagement undertaken as part of estate plans; a discussion was had regarding the change of use for farm buildings and the need for replacing agricultural buildings with agricultural buildings; FPC raised the issue of car parking for people to access the South Downs between Eastbourne and Brighton – SDNPA are looking at short term solutions for next summer and then a longer vision for how it can be best managed. FPC raised the issue of sludge spreading and their concerns with forever chemicals and asked if there are any relevant SDNP policies (none currently).
3. **NO DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS WERE RECEIVED AND NO REQUESTS FOR A DISPENSATION WITH RESPECT TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA,** as required by the Members Code of Conduct.
4. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING:** The minutes of the ordinary meeting of Firle Parish Council held on 2nd September 2025 were RESOLVED to be a correct record and were signed by the Chair.
5. **FINANCE/ADMIN:**
 - 5.1 Payments to be made in October were AUTHORISED and the bank reconciliation RECEIVED and SIGNED.
 - 5.2 An update on spend vs budget 2025-26 was RECEIVED: 42% of the budget has been spent.
6. **BUDGET 2026-27:**
 - 6.1 The Council AGREED to follow the same strategic direction of the budget 2025-2026.
7. **THE LEGAL AGREEMENT WITH FIRLE VILLAGE HALL AND PLAYING FIELDS. DEFERED.**
8. **REPORT(S):**
 - 8.1 Reports were RECEIVED and NOTED from James MacCleary MP. and Cllr O'Brien.
9. **MATTERS ARISING:**
 - 9.1 The works to repair the wall in front of the memorial will start before the winter.
 - 9.2 Correspondence regarding the interest in a bus service from Ringmer and Newhaven to Firle Village School was RECEIVED; the Council NOTED the current number on roll at Firle Primary School (54, with 25 from outside catchment) and AGREED that they will lobby ESCC for a bus service from Ringmer, if required.
 - 9.3 A letter regarding the recent sludge application will be finalised by Cllr Hill and circulated to the council for approval; the Clerk will invite Southern Water and ACS Group to the parish council meeting on 11th Nov.
 - 9.4 Details of the remembrance service will be sent by Cllr Hill to the Clerk to forward to James MacCleary MP; the Council AGREED to donate up to £200 for maroons and to ask the Bonfire Society if they will organise provision for the civic ceremony on the 11th November.
 - 9.5 The Council RESOLVED that Cllr Hill will arrange a recyclable wreath and will let the Clerk know the cost; the AGREED total spend including a donation is £75.

9.6 The Council AGREED to put up dog fouling warning signs in parts of the village; the Clerk to contact LDC for possible signs and to circulate alternatives and costs.

10. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED:

10.1 Police and Government Cyber Crime Support for Local Organisations – SECRC: NOTED.

10.2 Free 'Do Not Knock on Door' Stickers for Older People: AGREED to promote in the parish magazine.

10.3 Road Closure Order, Firle Bonfire – LDC: NOTED.

10.4 LGA Update – B.Mabey: NOTED.

10.5 Lewes District Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner Town and Parish Feedback Sessions: NOTED, no councillors can attend.

10.6 Invitation to SDNPA Parish Meeting (Virtual) 01 Oct: Attended by Cllr Hill and discussed under item 2.

10.7 Road Closure Application, Glynde, Beddingham and Firle Memorial Parade – LDC: NOTED.

10.8 Supporting East Sussex Local Access Forum Recruitment – ESCC: AGREED to put on the FPC website/FB.

10.9 An invitation to Parish Councils from East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service: NOTED. No attendance.

10.10 VJ Day Grant: The letter of thanks from FVHPFC was RECEIVED and NOTED.

11. HIGHWAYS:

11.1 The work to clear the foliage by village sign at the entrance to the village at Crossways is pending.

12. PLANNING: Applications Received:

12.1 **SDNP/25/03722/HOUS Proposal:** Demolition of existing conservatory and erection of single storey rear extension to replace, alterations to fenestration and external surface treatment to ground floor walling installation of solar panels to east and west facing roofline. (Amendment to approval SDNP/22/00238/HOUS has not been implemented) **Location:** Trosley Lodge, The Street, Firle, East Sussex, BN8 6LQ: AGREED: To SUPPORT.

13. PROJECTS:

13.1 Assets of Community Value:

13.1.1 The Clerk and Cllr Hill to work on the nomination of the Millennium Woods and the Allotments.

14. ITEMS AGREED FOR THE PARISH MAGAZINE: DoNotKnock Stickers; dog fouling signs; summary of item 2.

15. THE TIME AND DATE OF THE NEXT ORDINARY MEETING OF FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL. 11th November, 7pm.

16. THE MEETING CLOSED at 21.00.