

# FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL

To RECEIVE questions from the Public:

## AGENDA INFORMATION

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** To receive and accept apologies for absence.
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.
3. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING:** To RESOLVE that the minutes of the ordinary meeting of Firle Parish Council held on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2024 are a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
4. **FINANCE & ADMIN:**
  - 4.1. To RATIFY payments made in November, AUTHORISE payments to be made in December and to RECEIVE the bank reconciliation.
  - 4.2. To RECEIVE the letter from Lloyds bank re changes to the bank account. From 14 January, the Treasurer's Account is being changed to a community account. An account maintenance fee of £4.25 per month will be charged. There will also be charges for electronic banking although I think we are probably below the threshold for these charges. I will call Lloyds to confirm.
  - 4.3. To RECEIVE and AGREE the NALC pay award 2024-2025. The pay will increase by 61p per hour and the award is to be back dated to 01 April 2024.
  - 4.4. To RESOLVE to make a donation to the Village Hall Christmas hamper. Last year it was £100.
5. **2025-2026 BUDGET AND PRECEPT**
  - 5.1. To DISCUSS and AGREE the 2025-2026 budget. Info has been circulated by email. I have put on agenda info. Reserves for 2025-6 need to be reviewed and agreed. A list is on agenda info.
  - 5.2. To AGREE the precept for 2025-2026.
6. **REPORT(S):** Any written reports to be taken as read.
  - 6.1. To RECEIVE reports from Local and District Councillors and the MP for Lewes. Reports from Emily and Lucy on agenda info.
7. **CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED:** To RECEIVE the following correspondence and AGREE any actions:
  - 7.1. **Consultation – Enabling Remote attendance and proxy voting at council meetings – ESALC:** the consultation seeks to allow remote and hybrid attendance at council meetings. Consultation ends 19 Dec.  
<https://consult.communities.gov.uk/local-government-standards-and-conduct/remote-attendance-and-proxy-voting/>
    - 7.2. Loss of Lewes Bus Station and impact on your parishioners – Cllr West. Cllr West is looking for support in his campaign against the planning application to demolish the Lewes Bus Station and replace with residential and commercial premises. The letter is on agenda information.
    - 7.3. Speed limit letter to MP – Westmeston Parish Council (via ESALC). Westmeston PC have written to James MacCleary asking him to support the reduction in speed limits on rural roads. They are asking for councils to put their names to their letter. The letter is on agenda information.
    - 7.4. Transport Forum 18 November – ESALC. Slides and meeting notes from the forum are on the agenda information page. Thank you so much for those of you who were able to attend the meeting of the Transport Forum on Monday in Southampton Please find attached the slides shared on the day, along with some brief meeting notes. As discussed at the meeting – we will be beginning a public consultation on the Draft Transport Strategy next month. As part of this, the next in-person Transport Forum will focus solely on this and will provide you, as Forum members, the chance to take part in a workshop as part of the consultation. This meeting is confirmed to take place in London on the afternoon of January 30<sup>th</sup>. We will be sending formal invitations and more information in the coming weeks. However please do hold this time if you wish to attend. The meeting on Monday also explored our current consultation on Next Steps and Potential Powers for TfSE. I have attached the consultation document for reference. [This survey is currently open](#) and we ask that if you wish to respond you submit one response per organisation only. Please note this has already been shared with all local authority representatives for consideration.
    - 7.5. **Electoral Register – revised 01 Dec 2024 - Annual Revised Register of Electors**

As you are aware, a copy of the Full Register of Electors cannot now be sent automatically to Town and Parish Councils. Under the Representation of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001 it is now a requirement that the register is only sent to Town and Parish Councils upon request.

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If your council would like a copy of the Full Register of Electors for your Town or Parish area, please contact the Electoral Services on 01273 085269 or email:

[electoral@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk](mailto:electoral@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk)

The register can be provided in either PDF or csv (data) format and must be sent to a secure email address; either with a .gov.uk address or via the use of an Egress secure email.

### 7.6. Results of Sewerage Survey – CPRE Sussex – [survey results on agenda information](#).

As you may recall, CPRE Sussex launched a campaign for “sewerage before development” earlier this year <https://www.cpresussex.org.uk/what-we-care-about/water> As part of our campaign, we undertook a survey of the local town and parish councils across Sussex.

The final results of this survey are summarised in the attached table and confirm the widespread extent of sewerage deficiencies in Sussex. The data gathered is an important part of our evidence base and very helpful for progressing the campaign. Many thanks to all those local councils who participated.

We think the issue of needing to ensure that sewers and wastewater treatment works are upgraded *before* development will become more and more pressing. In Oxfordshire, we've now seen the Environment Agency object to major new housing schemes on the grounds that the treatment facilities were inadequate to handle lots of new waste; we suspect that this will be far from the last case where this happens.

We've heard from some LPAs that they are already actively using pre-commencement conditions to address the need to upgrade sewerage before new homes are occupied, and we hope that others will do the same. We've written to Sussex MPs, asking them to contact the Secretaries of State for MHCLG and DEFRA to make the case for the NPPF to more explicitly require that sewerage and sewage treatment facilities must be adequate before allowing housing developments to commence or be occupied. We've also requested that they contact the Environment Agency, urging them to review the environmental consequences of diffuse sewage flooding. Further, we have suggested that an appropriate parliamentary select committee should explore the conflicts between inadequate sewerage infrastructure and housing policies, including making suitable recommendations to the Independent Commission on the future regulation of the water companies.

We're also producing a guide on how to assess the sewage system for parish and town councils, including actions that they can take, which we will be making available soon

## 8. MATTERS ARISING:

- 8.1. To AGREE any actions regarding the siting of waste bins for collection in The Street – Cllrs Hill and Barr.
- 8.2. To PROPOSE a volunteer to be recognised for their contribution by ESCC. [Cllr Denis requested this at the last meeting](#).
- 8.3. To AGREE dates from 10 March onwards (excluding April) for a SLR meeting. [Also to note, Liam Reilly has taken over as the Stakeholder Mgr.](#)
- 8.4. To RECEIVE an update on the parking restriction signs for the wall of The Cottage – Cllrs Barr and Symes. [Now on the wall.](#)
- 8.5. To RECEIVE an update on the request to clear the ditch alongside the church spinney wall of saplings and undergrowth.
- 8.6. To RECEIVE an update further to the request to owners/tenants of properties along The Street and The Dock to cut back vegetation overhanging and blocking the public footpath.
- 8.7. To RECEIVE an update on the St Peter's Church curtilage visit – Cllr Hill.
- 8.8. To AGREE the process for the inspections of trees for tree works applications – Cllrs Hill and Symes.
  - 8.8.1. To AGREE a policy to report anti-social behaviour of motorcyclists along The Old Coach Road BOAT – Cllr Barr.

## 9. HIGHWAYS:

- 9.1. To RECEIVE an update on the work done to waterproof the Crossways bus shelter – Cllr Barr.
- 9.2. To RECEIVE any responses re sewage leaking onto Wick Street.

[Email from Southern Water 8 Nov: We have completed the 30m sewer relay mentioned earlier in the email chain, this was upstream of Wick Street so would not have been the cause of flooding there. Our main sewer there runs through Gibraltar Farm before getting to Firle WPS. There is a history of the WPS getting overwhelmed and causing flooding in the area but the main issue with this is there is no surface water sewer in the area, so we believe that all the surface water in the catchment goes into this foul sewer. Unfortunately, we don't have ownership of the surface water system in Firle, it may be under control of the local Council.](#)

[Email to Cllr Denis 15 Nov Good afternoon Councillor Denis,  
Thank you for your email.](#)

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I have contacted our Drainage Team who have advised me that they will need to carry out a site investigation to be able to advise any further on this. This will require a road closure, which may take some time to arrange, I will keep you and Firle Parish updated as soon as I have a date for this investigation.

Kind regards,

Judy Deane

East Sussex Highways Members Services | East Sussex Highways

Email from Customer First Team LDC 22 Nov

Good afternoon Lorna,

Thank you for your recent email dated 15/11/2024 regarding your query related to Sewage leaking onto Wick Street. I have brought your query up with our Green Consultancy department, who have advised that this query would not be related to anything under the jurisdiction of Lewes District Council. So, unfortunately we are unable to assist you further with this.

I can see you have also emailed East Sussex County Council, who will be your best course of action for further assistance with this. You may be able to find further information regarding your query via their website, here:

<https://live.eastsussexhighways.com/report-problem>

The Customer First Team

- 9.3. To RECEIVE an update on the re-painting of the zig-zag markings outside of Firle Primary School (RML1863). Are these now complete?

- 9.4. To RECEIVE the response of National Highways regarding the A27 road closures.

Thank you for emailing our Customer Contact Centre today about the recent and forthcoming closures of the A27 near Firle.

I appreciate you getting in touch and apologise for any misinformation caused by the Advance Warning Signs (AWS) detailing closures from tonight. I understand and apologise for resident concerns for access to and from Firle.

The AWS have been installed to advise of planned scheme works which commence tonight between 9pm and 6am for 4 nights until Sunday 10 November. These are return works to complete the recent resurfacing near Middle Farm to apply high friction surfacing as a safety improvement.

Due to the short notice obtaining the necessary road space for the closures, we were remiss in not sending our usual resident and stakeholder notifications, and I can only apologise for this.

These works are however detailed on our website and can be found at <https://nationalhighways.co.uk/our-roads/south-east/south-east-maintenance-schemes/> - 'A27 near Selmeston'.

For your further information, the hard closure points will be from Middle Farm to The Street, Selmeston, with an escort in place for any resident or business with access only via the A27 between these points.

There will be access to Firle eastbound from Beddingham roundabout, but anyone traveling westbound from Polgate to Firle will need to follow the signed diversion from Cophall roundabout via the A22, A26 to rejoin the A27 at Southerham roundabout.

Our service providers have been carrying out routine maintenance in the area overnight on 4, 5 and 6 November, which included an emergency closure for a safety defect which unfortunately they didn't communicate as thoroughly as we would have expected. This is to be raised with them to improve community communication for future works. That said, their operatives should have assisted with any required escort or politely advised drivers to follow the diversion.

We also publish all closures [here](#) which is a useful tool for journey planning.

Please accept my apologies for our poor communication on this occasion and thank you again for taking the time to contact us.

### 10. PLANNING APPLICATIONS/TREE WORKS: To RATIFY or AGREE comments for any applications received:

- 10.1.1. **SDNP/24/03760/TCA** Proposal: Holm oak (T1) - Fell to ground level Location: Preston House , Wick Street, Firle, East Sussex, BN8 6LG. To RATIFY the comments of Firle Parish Council: To remain NEUTRAL with the following comment: An alternative tree should be planted as soon as possible after felling of T1
- 10.1.2. **SDNP/24/04381/TCA** Proposal: T1 Cedar: Fell to stump, due to concerns over wind firmness, if Cypress hedge is removed. T2 Cedar: Fell to stump, due to concerns over wind firmness, if Cypress hedge is removed. T3 Ash: Fell to stump. Remove to replace with new native hedgerow. T4 Cypress: x48no. forming lapsed hedgerow. Fell to stump. Remove to replace with new native hedgerow. T5 Malus: Fell & remove stump, to extend driveway. Replace with suitable fruit tree. T6 Malus: Fell & remove stump, to install new pathway. Replace with suitable fruit tree. T7 Malus: Fell & remove stump, to install new pathway. Replace with suitable fruit tree. T8 Malus: Fell & remove stump, to install new pathway. Replace with suitable fruit tree. T9 Ash: Fell to stump. Remove to replace with new native hedgerow. T10 Cypress: Fell & remove stump, to create new vegetable plot. Location: Trosley Lodge , The Street, Firle, East Sussex, BN8 6LQ: To RATIFY the comments - The Council AGREED to remain Neutral with the following comments: Firle Parish Council requests that the

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new native hedgerow and the 4 replacement fruit trees are planted as soon as possible after felling of the ten trees.

- 10.1.3. **SDNP/24/04664/TCA** Proposal: T1 - Ash - Fell to base due to advanced disease progression Location: Old Vicarage, The Street, Firle, East Sussex, BN8 6NR (comments by 13 December)
- 10.1.4. **SDNP/24/04671/TCA** Proposal: T1. Bay. Ornamental planting to front of property that has become oversized for location and proximity to dwelling. Heavy shade cast & roots lifting garden path. Remove and replace with something more appropriate. Location: Little Talland, The Street, Firle, East Sussex, BN8 6NT (comments by 13 December).
- 10.1.5. **SDNP/24/04663/TCA** Proposal: T1. Ash: Fell to Base: Severe canopy decline due to Ash Dieback T2-T4. Sycamore: Standing dead trees to be removed Location: Street Record, The Dock, Firle, East Sussex, (comments by 13 December).

### 11. PROJECTS:

#### 11.1.1. School Footpath

- 11.1.2. To RECEIVE an update on the DINPP request and to DISCUSS access requirements for the footpath. LDC have responded stating planning permission is required. Info sent by Cllr Hill:

Permissive Path Management – Equalities Act 2010 A landowner providing a permissive path or access is deemed a ‘supplier of services’ and hence must comply with the Equality Act 2010 which requires that any reasonable adjustments should be made to ensure that those with disabilities, which could be physical or mental impairments, are not substantially disadvantaged. While it would not necessarily be considered reasonable to ensure that a path includes a surface and entry point suitable for wheelchair use, as this would be incompatible with agricultural uses, it could be claimed that a particularly heavy gate or awkward catch creates a disadvantage to an individual with a physical or mental impairment. A reasonableness test prevails and it is considered that the risk to a landowner is relatively low, particularly given the requirement for a ‘service provider’ to respond to requests as a first duty and consider the reasonableness of such requests. The provision of a multi-user path increases the breadth of ‘service’ and a surfaced path is more likely to require consideration to the Equalities Act 2010, as a new surface has been provided. A risk assessment would be required to consider the need for pictorial signage with graphics in addition to lettering to warn of hazards etc.

#### 11.2. Assets of Community Value

- 11.2.1. To RECEIVE an update on the nomination of Firle Playing Fields Area as an ACV – Cllr Lance.

### 12. TO AGREE ITEMS FOR THE PARISH MAGAZINE.

### 13. TO PROPOSE AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT ORDINARY MEETING OF FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL.

### 14. TO RECEIVE THE TIME AND DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL.

### 15. TO CLOSE THE MEETING.