

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL** held on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2024, 7.45pm in Firle Village Hall.

**Members of the Public in Attendance:** 1

**Questions RECEIVED from the Public:** None.

**Members in Attendance:** Cllr Hill (Chair), Cllr Barr (Vice-Chair), Cllr Bolger, Cllr Lance, Cllr Symes.

**Members not in Attendance:** None.

**Others Present:** Lorna Thwaites, Clerk and RFO, Cllrs Johnny Denis, and Emily O'Brien.

**1. ELECTION OF THE CHAIR:**

1.1 Cllr Liz Hill was ELECTED as the Chair for Firle Parish Council for the forthcoming year.

1.2 The Chair AGREED to sign the Declaration of Office form.

**2. ELECTION OF THE VICE-CHAIR.** Cllr Andrew Barr was ELECTED as the Vice-Chair.

**3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** None received.

**4. NO DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS WERE RECEIVED AND NO REQUESTS WERE MADE FOR A DISPENSATION WITH RESPECT TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA,** as required by the Members Code of Conduct.

4.1 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING:** The Council RESOLVED that the minutes of the ordinary meeting of Firle Parish Council held on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2024 were a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

**5. COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS:**

5.1 The Council AGREED that it wouldn't have establish any committees or working groups.

5.2 Individual areas of responsibility were AGREED: Cllr Lance – Assets of Community Value, highways matters for potholes and drainage reporting; Cllr Barr – representative for Firle Village Hall, highways matters for ditches and drains; Cllr Symes - 20sPlenty/traffic calming; Cllr Bolger - consultation support.

**6. APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES:**

6.1 The Council CONFIRMED Cllr Barr's appointment as a Trustee of Firle Village Hall.

**7. THE COUNCIL CONFIRMED IT IS ELIGIBLE FOR AND MEETS THE CRITERIA FOR THE EXERCISE OF THE GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE:** The Clerk is CiLCA qualified.

**8. THE FOLLOWING ORDERS, REGULATIONA AND POLICIES WERE REVIEWED AND ADOPTED:**

8.1 Standing Orders

8.2 Financial Regulations

8.3 Members Code of Conduct

8.4 Freedom of Information Policy

8.5 Complaints Procedure

8.6 Co-option Policy

8.7 Document Retention Scheme

8.8 Grant Awarding Policy

8.9 Risk Management Policy

8.10Scheme of Delegation

8.11Social Media Policy

**9. THE ARRANGEMENTS AND LEGAL AGREEMENT WITH FIRLE VILLAGE HALL AND PLAYING FIELDS WAS**

**CONFIRMED:** The Clerk was asked to invite a member of the FVHPFC to attend the next meeting to sign the agreement.

**10. INSURANCE COVER:**

10.1The Council RESOLVED to renew the insurance cover with Clear Councils (BHIB) by 01 June 2024 and to pay the annual premium.

**11. FINANCE:**

11.1 The Council RESOLVED to pay the following subscriptions, regular payments, and direct debits to other bodies: Subscriptions to ESALC and NALC; CPRE - to be paid by direct debit; SLCC; Direct Debit to ICO; Standing Orders for L Thwaites Salary and ESPF Pension.

11.2 Banking arrangements for the year were AGREED and no changes were made to nominated signatories.

11.3 Payments to be made in June were APPROVED and the bank reconciliation was RECEIVED.

11.4 The Risk Assessment for 2024 – 2025 was AGREED.

**12. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR):**

12.1 An update on the Internal Audit was RECEIVED: the audit is being undertaken remotely on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

12.2 An update on the External Audit was RECEIVED: Firle Parish Council will complete a Certificate of Exemption to be submitted to PKF Littlejohn.

**13. REPORT(S):**

13.1 Reports from Local and District Councillors and the MP for Lewes were RECEIVED during the Annual Parish Meeting.

**14. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED:** To RECEIVE the following correspondence and AGREE any actions:

14.1 LDALC/LDC/ESCC Proposed Conference: Firle Parish Council AGREED to request the following topics to be raised: Traffic safety concerns; pressure of traffic; having a shared space for all road users; speed of traffic and safety; local transport requirements to avoid village parking congestion and sharing of best practice and experiences of other councils; road infrastructure maintenance – concerns over ongoing potholes and drains.

*Cllr O'Brien left the meeting at 20.07.*

14.2 Monies received from Firle Parish Council to Firle Village Hall: The Council RECEIVED confirmation of monies received from the Parish Council to Firle Village Hall in the way of Affiliation Fees and Grant Awards; the Council NOTED the thanks expressed by FVHPFC.

14.3 Adoption of the Selbourne Village Design Statement as a Supplementary Planning Document: NOTED. The Council AGREED to discuss the design statement in more detail at the next meeting with a view to establishing if there is any action required by Firle Parish Council.

14.4 Update post March 2024 Planning Committee: NOTED.

14.5 Wheelie Bins Roll-out: The new wheelie bins are to be installed in Firle in July.

14.6 Grant for Fencing: The grant was received by FVHPFC with thanks.

14.7 Defibrillator: The Council AGREED to donate £318 from the village hall award fund allocation in the 2024/4 budget for replacement of pads and battery; the Council NOTED that the batteries have a life of approx. 5 years and pads 2 years.

14.8 New Accredited Playground Courses: The Clerk was asked to send to FVHPFC.

14.9 Grants for People in Fuel Poverty – mostly rural areas: AGREED to include in the parish magazine.

14.10 Wealden Compass Bus Timetables: The Clerk was asked to send to Firle Community Association with the request to put on their website.

14.11 Dog Fouling/PSPO comms: NOTED

14.12 Hello from Transport for the South East and our Your Voices Survey now live: NOTED and the Council AGREED to receive the monthly newsletter.

14.13 Survey on Sewage Spills and Development Pressures in your Area: Cllrs Barr and Symes AGREED to complete the survey.

14.14 South Downs National Park By-Election Results: The Council NOTED the appointment of Paul Bevan.

14.15 Contact from Chair of LDALC: RECEIVED.

**15. MATTERS ARISING:**

15.1 The resolution to vote for Adrian Ross in the SDNP elections was RATIFIED.

15.2 A quote for the parking restriction signs to be placed on the wall of The Cottage was RECEIVED: The Council AGREED to proceed with the order and Cllrs Barr and Symes AGREED to install the signs.

15.3 The Council RESOLVED to contact Highways Road Safety Team to install safety measures at A27 pedestrian crossing if no response is received from the parishioner who has been in contact with the ESCC Road Safety team and Maria Caulfield MP.

15.4 The Council RESOLVED to take the following action to be taken to increase road safety in the village: to request ESH to repaint the yellow lines and junction signs by the school; to include an item on the September agenda to discuss parking on the yellow markings with Firle Primary School; to place a warning sign, provided by Cllr Barr, on the 30mph sign into the village; the Council discussed the possibility of placing blind bend and warning signs and has received a response from ESH Road Safety team advising that signs can be placed on private land at the risk of the person/body placing the sign.

**16. HIGHWAYS:**

16.1 An update on Wick Street signage was RECEIVED: The Road Safety Team have advised the signs are now in place; Cllr Barr AGREED to check the signs have been installed and to email the Clerk to confirm.

16.2 An update on the quote and repairs required to the bus shelter at Crossways was RECEIVED: an area of the roof has been repaired at the front but further work is still ongoing; Cllr Lance advised it was currently full of rubbish which Cllrs Bolger and Lance AGREED to litter pick.

16.3 Further actions AGREED on the drainage problems and potholes in the Parish: Cllr Barr has prepared a list which Cllr Denis will take up with the Highways Steward at Balfour Beatty.

16.4 Further actions AGREED regarding the dangerous verge-side potholes along Ripe Lane: Cllr Barr has included this in the list for Cllr Denis.

16.5 The Council RESOLVED to contact all relevant authorities concerning the sewage pollution along Wick Street, between Rose Cottage and Redwood Cottage: Cllr Barr advised there is pollution running down the road; the Council AGREED to contact Southern Water followed by the Environment Agency, East Sussex Highways; and the MP for Lewes.

**17. PLANNING APPLICATIONS: Comments AGREED:**

17.1 Location: 4 Railway Cottages Ripe Lane Firle East Sussex BN8 6NJ: Proposal: Installation of pitched roof over existing flat roofed detached garage with alterations to fenestration at the rear. The Council AGREED to SUPPORT.

**18. PROJECTS:**

**18.1 School Footpath**

18.1.1 The report received from Reeves Transport Planning was DISCUSSED: Cllr Hill gave an overview of the report and its response to the different path options; the path behind the school and houses being favoured by the report with a rough cost of £16-20k; the Council discussed the different routes and their benefits and limitations; concern was expressed that the path behind the school and houses wouldn't be used because of its location; the Council also discussed accessibility requirements for permissive paths; the Clerk is pending a response from LDC Planning regarding planning permission and access requirements.

*Cllr Denis left the meeting at 21.17.*

18.1.2 Next steps AGREED: Cllr Hill will continue discussions and update further at the next meeting.

**18.2 20s Plenty for Firle**

18.2.1 A response has been RECEIVED from the East Sussex Highways Road Safety Team: Shared Space signs are for schemes specifically designed to reduce the segregation between different road users and as such are not relevant to the speed reduction requirements of Firle.

18.2.2 Further actions AGREED: Council Members discussed the current attitude of ESCC towards introducing 20 mph speed limits and felt that a change of Council and Government may be a more appropriate time to progress and implement a speed reduction; Cllr Hill proposed undertaking a survey in the Autumn to gauge the view of residents towards a speed reduction in the village.

**18.3 Assets of Community Value**

18.3.1 An update on the progress of nominating the Ram Inn as an Asset of Community Value was RECEIVED: Cllr Lance has submitted an application to LDC.

**19. ITEMS AGREED FOR THE PARISH MAGAZINE:** Fuel poverty; Chair's report; link to the bus timetable (Bruce and Ian).

**20. NO ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT ORDINARY MEETING OF FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL** were proposed.

**21. THE TIME AND DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL WAS RECEIVED** as 11<sup>th</sup> June 2024, 7pm in Firle Village Hall.

**22. THE MEETING CLOSED** at 21.35.