

FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL: Tuesday 13th January 2026, 7.03pm, Firle Village Hall. **Members in Attendance:** Cllr Hill (Chair), Cllr Barr (Vice Chair), Cllr Lance, Cllr Symes.

Members not in Attendance: Cllr Bolger. **Others Present:** Lorna Thwaites, Clerk and RFO, Cllr Emily O'Brien.

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

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** RECEIVED and ACCEPTED from Cllr Bolger.
2. **DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS AND REQUESTS FOR A DISPENSATION WITH RESPECT TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA:** Cllr Barr declared he is a tenant of the property of planning application SDNP/25/05123/PA3R.
3. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING:** The minutes of the ordinary meeting of Firle Parish Council held on 9th December 2025 were RESOLVED to be a correct record and were signed by the Chair.
4. **FINANCE/ADMIN:**
 - 4.1 Payments to be made in January were AUTHORISED and the bank reconciliation RECEIVED and SIGNED.
 - 4.2 Meeting dates for April 2026 to March 2027 were AGREED and the Clerk will send to the village hall.
5. **BUDGET 2026-27:**
 - 5.1 The Council AGREED that the allocation of reserves for 2026-2027 will remain as currently allocated.
6. **TO AGREE ANY COMMENTS REGARDING THE WHOLE ESTATE PLAN – FIRLE ESTATE.** Deferred.
7. **REPORT(S):**
 - 7.1 Reports were RECEIVED from Local and District Councillors and James MacCleary, MP for Lewes: Cllr Hill raised concerns regarding the number of houses allocated to Ringmer (@ 1150 between Ringmer and the Broyle) and the lack of infrastructure; Cllr O'Brien advised that people should be encouraged to respond to the consultation on the Local Plan and that government funding for neighbourhood plans has now ceased; LDC have introduced a green spaces policy in their Local Plan (which in law gives the same protection as green belt); Council Members asked Cllr O'Brien to raise the issue and their concerns over water supply and sewage capacity for Ringmer; Cllr O'Brien advised that South East Water has investment plans and are aware that the infrastructure requirements aren't being met; Cllr Hill raised the issue that additional people living in Ringmer and the surrounding areas would impact on visitors to the South Downs National Park and potentially worsen parking issues already experienced in Firle; Cllr O'Brien agreed she would raise this point.
8. **MATTERS ARISING:**
 - 8.1 A response from James MacCleary's office was received regarding Biosolids: His team has submitted two Written Parliamentary Questions to DEFRA; Cllr Barr advised the letters from the Parish Council have been delivered to the farmers.
 - 8.2 The Parish Council hasn't received any parishioner requests for additional dog fouling signs; significant amounts of dog waste has been noticed on the playing field and the field by the tennis court as well as the wood behind the old estate office; the Council AGREED that Cllr Symes would fix a sign to the gate to the playing field; Cllr O'Brien advised that we can contact her to request the dog patrol to visit the area.
 - 8.3 The Bonfire Society hasn't had a meeting yet and no response to the email sent to Firle Bonfire Society has been received.
 - 8.4 The FVHPFC haven't yet had a meeting and no update on the regarding an outdoor gym has been received; the Council AGREED to remove this item from the next agenda.
9. **CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED:**
 - 9.1 ESALC subscription fees – ESALC: The 10% increase was NOTED.
 - 9.2 Cabinet Green Light for next LDC Local Plan consultation – LDC: NOTED.
 - 9.3 SDNPA Draft Active Travel Network Plan and Vision Map – SDNPA: Confirmation that the cycle route and campsite have been added was RECEIVED.
 - 9.4 Consultation response from Firle Parish Council – LDC: The response from FPC has been RECEIVED.
 - 9.5 Urban Grass Cutting 2026-7 – ESCC: Confirmation RECEIVED that both sides of the road leading up to the car park are wildlife verges are not included in the urban grass cutting programme.
 - 9.6 LDLAC Meeting – LDALC: NOTED with no cllrs able to attend.
 - 9.7 Firle Boat Closing – Rights of Way: The closed signs are in place but the barriers aren't yet up which Cllr Barr will undertake; Cllr Barr advised the rural crime team are being very active around Firle.
 - 9.8 PFAS in Biosolids – office of James MacCleary MP: NOTED under item 8.1.
 - 9.9 Briefing note on alternate weekly collections – LDC: NOTED, details are on the FPC website.
 - 9.10 Fire Service Introduction – ESFRS: Cllr Hill will contact a resident in Firle who may benefit from this service; details of the service will be included in the parish magazine.

9.11 Enquiry re garden/land belonging to Firle Estate: Cllr Lance has been approached requesting that the Parish Council discuss the fenced off gardens of two houses belonging to Firle Estate, that have been up for sale/going up for sale; the Council AGREED that it isn't under the remit of the parish council to make any enquiries to the landowner regarding this matter.

Cllr O'Brien left the meeting at 19.50.

10. HIGHWAYS:

10.1 ESH referred the blocked drains by Redwood Cottage in Wick Street to South East Water but as yet no actions has been taken and water has been overflowing; the Council reported the issue on the South East Water portal during the meeting.

10.2 Cllr Lance has reported the blocked drain 42B on The Bostal many times but it still hasn't been fixed: Cllr Lance will take a video when it is overflowing and re-report; she will also send the video to the clerk to report to the ESH customer services manager.

10.3 Leaf sweeping on The Street was undertaken on the 22nd December: The Council AGREED this work was well done and to request the area by the school corner to be swept next year; the Clerk to write and thank W.Hemmings.

10.4 Repairs to The Street sign have not yet been done.

11. PLANNING: Applications Received:

11.1 **SDNP/25/05123/PA3R Proposal:** Change of use of agricultural barn to flexible Class E commercial Use (Office/Light industrial Workshop) **Location:** Place Farm North, The Street, Firle, East Sussex, BN8 6LP
Comments: Cllr Barr left the room; AGREED a response of NEUTRAL with no further comments.

11.2 **SDNP/25/05120/FUL & 05121/LIS Proposal:** Erection of a light industrial building, with associated parking area and landscaping and conversion of redundant agricultural buildings into ancillary office and showroom area **Location:** Land and Buildings adjacent to, Dairy Farm, Wick Street, Firle, East Sussex, BN8 6NB
(comments by 5th Feb). Comments AGREED: Response of NEUTRAL with no comments.

12. PROJECTS:

12.1 Footpath

12.1.1 No further information regarding the investigations of Cllr Barr on the footpath on the western side of The Street is available but the item is to be on the agenda for the next meeting.

12.2 Assets of Community Value

12.2.1 No update received on the nomination of the Millennium Woods and the Allotments as an ACV.

13. ITEMS AGREED FOR THE PARISH MAGAZINE: Road sweeping on The Street; Fire Safety inspections by ESFRS; the inclusion of the campsite and cycle route on the SDNPA Active Travel Network Plan; the wildflower verge on the Bostal Road; the consultation response by FPC; the Old Coach Road BOAT now closed till Spring; Rural Crime Team patrols; footpath investigations on the western side of the Street.

14. THE TIME AND DATE OF THE NEXT ORDINARY MEETING OF FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL: 7pm, 10th February 2026.

15. THE MEETING CLOSED at 20.42.