

# **FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL**

## **MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL**

Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> Feb 2022

**Members of the Public in Attendance:** 0

**Questions RECEIVED from the Public:** None

**Members in Attendance:** Cllrs Gravett (Chairman), Cllr Barr (Vice-Chairman), Cllrs Hill & Symes.

**Others Present:** Clerk and RFO Lorna Thwaites

**Cllr Denis arrived** 19.20.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Apologies for absence were RECEIVED and ACCEPTED from Cllr Bolger.
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** Declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda, as required by the Members Code of Conduct were RECEIVED: Agenda item 8.1 Cllr Symes declared an interest due to the location of his property and its potential for flooding; Agenda item 10.4 Cllr Barr farms land adjacent to the fence requiring repairs.
3. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING:** The minutes of the ordinary meeting of Firle Parish Council held on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2022 and the extraordinary meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2022 were RESOLVED to be correct records and were signed by the Chairman.
4. **TO RECEIVE ANY REPORT(S)**
  - 4.1 Reports from Local and District Councillors and the MP for Lewes were RECEIVED: Maria Caulfield MP sent a written report to the Council; apologies were received from Cllr O'Brien; Cllr Denis gave a report and advised Councillors of his desire to support Firle Parish Council; he would like to attend further meetings if available (he also attends neighbouring parish council meetings where possible and is the Chairman of Glynde and Beddingham Parish Council); items from Cllr Denis report included: District Council budget proposals – Lewes District Council (LDC) has limited council tax increases to 9p per week/£5 per year (for an average Band D property); LDC is considering proposals for the Council Tax Reduction scheme including increasing the maximum reduction to 100% for eligible people; an additional support scheme has been set up to help people through a temporary period of financial crisis; LDC plans to make investment in parks, recreation grounds and biodiversity programmes; public toilets are being invested in for the first time in 20 years; funding for community grants to the voluntary community sector over the next 3 years has been approved; the public toilets at the Ram Inn were discussed – they were built by public subscription but no longer accessible if the pub isn't open; the Clerk was asked to email Cllr Denis about the possibility of having the toilets open again to the public; a letter received by a Member of Firle Parish Council regarding the parking of school buses on the zigzag lines by the school was brought to the attention of Cllr Denis who agreed to look into the matter.
  - 4.2 Matters for discussion at Cllr Denis's forthcoming meeting with Firle Estate were AGREED.
  - 4.3 A brief report on the Cllr training attended was RECEIVED from Cllrs Hill and Gravett: this was a very good training session run by ESALC and it was felt this would be beneficial for other members to attend; it clarified roles and responsibilities and relationships between the Parish Council and the Parish; the Clerk was asked to find out about the Rural Crime Team, its monthly newsletter and the PCSO for Firle; the Clerk was asked to re-circulate further dates for Cllr training.
5. **PLAYING FIELDS LEASE**
  - 5.1 An update on the lease (s) for the Playing Fields was RECEIVED; the Council did not resolve to accept the final draft of the Headlease as it was received from Firle Estate on the evening of the meeting of 8<sup>th</sup> February and there had been insufficient time to review; the Council AGREED that each Councillor would review the leases and meet as a working group to discuss the content; an extraordinary meeting would be called by the Chairman to progress the lease; the Clerk was asked to contact Surrey Hills Solicitors for a quote to prepare the Statutory Declarations for contracting out of the L&T '54 Act.
  - 5.2 The Sublease for the Cricket Club could not be adopted as it had only been received by the Parish Council on the evening of the meeting of 8<sup>th</sup> February.
  - 5.3 The Council RESOLVED to arrange a meeting with Firle Cricket Club to discuss the terms of the Sublease after the Headlease has been agreed.
6. **FINANCE:**
  - 6.1 The Council RESOLVED to pay the Clerk for the additional hours worked in January 2022 (8hrs 15 mins).

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- 6.2 Payments for February were AUTHORISED and the finance report was RECEIVED.
- 6.3 The appropriate sum for the allocation of S137 for 2021/22 was RECEIVED (£8.41 per elector); no donations were agreed from the S137 budget 2021-22.  
*Cllr Denis left at 20.35*
- 6.4 The payment to be made to the Village Hall for bookings up to March 2022 was AGREED; the Council RESOLVED to pay an annual subscription of £250 for 2021/22 to include use/hire of the village hall; Council Members AGREED they would welcome a grant application from the Village Hall.
- 6.5 The 2022/23 allocated reserves were AGREED:  
Bus Shelters £500  
Repairs to Playing Fields £5,000  
Playground Equipment £6,000  
Electricity to Park £2,500  
Repairs to Assets £300
- 6.6 The Council nominated and AGREED that Cllrs Gravett, Barr and Hill would be bank signatories for Firle Parish Council; C Partington is to be removed as a signatory.
- 6.7 The Council RESOLVED to register the Clerk with Lloyds Bank to make payments and access the bank accounts.
- 6.8 The Council RESOLVED to undertake an internal audit for 2021-22 and to appoint Mulberry and Co.
- 6.9 The Council RECEIVED the recommendation of the most recent internal audit and RESOLVED to set up council specific email addresses; the Clerk was asked to email proposed addresses.
- 6.10 The Council RESOLVED to renew the Clerk's membership to SLCC at an annual cost of £120.
- 6.11 The Council RESOLVED to appoint the payroll company KnillJames to undertake the payroll and pensions administration on behalf of Firle Parish Council.

## **7. PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 Comments AGREED for applications received:  
7.1.1 **Black Tile House The Street Firle BN8 6NU** Proposal: (T1) - Ornamental Cherry - Fell to ground level (T2) Bay -Fell to ground level LISTED BUILDING GRADE (deadline for comments 01 March 22):  
Comments AGREED: Firle Parish Council OBJECTS to the application as no reasons were provided for the felling of the trees.

*Cllr Barr left the meeting at 21.10*

## **8. MATTERS ARISING:**

- 8.1 An update on the meeting between Cllrs Symes and Tim Bartlett and Ellen Yerdley with respect to flooding and possible defence measures was DEFERRED to the next meeting.
- 8.2 An update on the discussion with Spiral Staircases with regards to the Hugh Barnes Memorial Award for 2021 was RECEIVED: Cllr Barr has not yet seen Spiral Staircases but has spoken to Glynde Forge who are keen to undertake the work; Cllr Barr requested this item to be included on next month's agenda.
- 8.3 Members of Firle Parish Council RESOLVED to support the 20s plenty East Sussex campaign in the Parish of Firle.
- 8.4 The Council AGREED that it would like to investigate having a social media presence for Firle Parish Council: The Clerk was asked to provide a social media policy at the next meeting; the Council requested this item be put on the agenda for March; the Council discussed how to share Parish Council news via the website or Whatsapp group.
- 8.5 The maintenance of the defibrillator was DISCUSSED: The defibrillator is sited outside the Village Hall and it is believed that the Village Hall is responsible for its maintenance; the Clerk was asked to contact the Village Hall for confirmation of this.

## **9. HIGHWAYS:**

- 9.1 An update on the progress made on the signage review was RECEIVED: The Clerk emailed Ian Johnson on 18 Jan but has not yet had a response; Cllr Denis AGREED to follow up.
- 9.2 The Council DISCUSSED the parking restrictions to be requested in the parking review: The view was shared that double yellow lines aren't appropriate for the Parish and Cllrs are concerned that a parking review could lead to an unwanted scheme; Cllr Denis proposed that Firle should request a review but make it clear it is looking for options other than yellow lines; Cllr Denis AGREED to speak to parking review team for clarity on the process.

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- 9.3 Further information on Speed Traffic Surveys with ESCC was RECEIVED: the Clerk has spoken with the Transport Monitoring Manager and a lead time of 2 to 3 weeks to book a survey is required; Cllr Denis advised that some parish councils are investigating Black Cat so they can undertake their own traffic surveys; the Clerk was asked to contact ESALC.
- 9.4 To RECEIVE an update on the compilation of information on public transport options for visiting Firle – Cllr Bolger. DEFERRED to the next meeting.
- 9.5 To AGREE a date for the next SLR meeting and agenda items. DEFERRED to the next meeting.
- 9.6 To RESOLVE a strategy for bollards in the Parish: The Council noted that bollards are subject to vandalism; a plan for the bollards is needed before Easter; the overflow car park is considered helpful with the parking problems experienced but wouldn't be open for Easter; the Council AGREED this item would need to be on the agenda for the next meeting.
- 9.7 The Council did not resolve to formally request the construction of an embankment and tree planting at the A27 toucan crossing at this stage: The Council AGREED that the Clerk should contact VolkerFitzpatrick to establish what scheme is planned for the embankment and tree planting.
- 10. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED:**
- 10.1 SDNPA Call for CIL Projects: The Council AGREED that there were no projects to submit a bid for funding at this stage.
- 10.2 50 mile running race: A request has been received from an events company who are organising a race; they would like permission for the run route to pass through the village and place a feed station; the Council discussed the siting of the marquee last year; the Council AGREED to forward the email to Firle Estate and defer to the next meeting; the clerk was asked to request details of the route that is being run.
- 10.3 £50 award for the Village Hall Christmas Raffle: An email expressing thanks to the Parish Council by the Village Hall and Playing Fields Committee was RECEIVED.
- 10.4 Playing Field Boundary Fencing: Cllr Barr updated the Council that 120 posts and a new gate are required from the Playing Field into the park; Cllr Barr was asked to provide costs at the next meeting.
- 10.5 Introducing Community Action Safety Groups: The Council AGREED it would like to participate and Cllr Gravett would attend the first meeting.
- 11. QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS:**
- 11.1 The meeting to discuss plans in the Parish has not yet been held and next steps for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations, 03 to 06 June 2022 were not yet agreed; Cllr Gravett AGREED to arrange a meeting on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> March and to send a letter to all local groups within Firle inviting them to the meeting to ask for their level of involvement; Cllr Gravett AGREED to provide an article for the Parish Magazine.
- 12. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC:**
- 12.1 To confirm that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted. RESOLVED
- 13. HR MATTERS:**
- 13.1 The Clerk's contract was SIGNED by the Clerk and Chairman.
- 14. COUNCIL PROCEDURE:**
- 14.1 Expectations of councillor's, what councillors can expect from each other and how councillors individually/jointly prepare for meetings was DISCUSSED: Cllr Gravett shared his views of the importance of councillors accessing the information required for Council meetings, particularly with regards to planning applications; the idea of providing a Parish Council laptop and printer and meeting in advance of the Council meeting to review planning applications was suggested; any problems with downloading items should be raised prior to meetings.
- 15. AGENDA ITEMS PROPOSED FOR THE NEXT ORDINARY MEETING OF FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL:** The Glover Landscape Review
- 16. THE TIME AND DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL was RECEIVED:** Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2022, 7pm in the Village Hall.
- 17. THE MEETING CLOSED at 22.03**