

# FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING held on

Wednesday 10 November 2021 at 7.00pm at Firle Church

**Present:** Cllr Richard Gravett (Chairman), Cllr Andrew Barr (Vice Chairman), Cllr Natasha Bolger, Cllr Liz Hill, Cllr Edgar Symes, Andy Beams (Locum Parish Clerk), Lorna Thwaites (New Parish Clerk), Bob Baines (Firle Estate Manager), 1 members of the public.

Cllr Gravett opened the meeting and welcomed Lorna Thwaites, who will be taking over as Parish Clerk from 15 November 2021.

**1. Apologies for absence**

None.

**2. Declarations of interest**

None.

**3. Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2021 were agreed as a true record and signed by the chairman.

**4. Finance**

**4.1 Payments**

**RESOLVED:** The council approved payment of the following invoice:

Payee	Purpose	Amount
A Beams	Locum Clerk Sep – Nov 21	£927.10

Cllr Gravett was authorised to make the payment via online banking.

**4.2 Budget position year to date and bank reconciliation to end of quarter 2**

Members noted the financial reports provided by the Locum Clerk, including the year-to-date budget position and bank reconciliation and bank statements for quarter 2.

**4.3 To note items for inclusion in draft budget 2022/23**

Members agreed new budget lines would be needed for litter bin emptying and for the car park. It was also agreed that arrangements will be made to add the new Clerk to the bank mandate, to allow her to make payments and access account information.

**5. Community Grants**

**5.1 To approve the grant awarding policy**

**RESOLVED:** The Community Grants Policy and application form were adopted.

**5.2 To consider the grant request from the Firle Community Land Trust (FCLT)**

Cllrs Gravett, Barr and Hill declared an interest as they have all been involved in discussions about setting up the FCLT but have no prejudicial interest. As the FCLT is for the benefit of the entire village, all councillors have a personal interest.

**RESOLVED:** The grant of £800 was approved. As the FCLT has yet to establish a bank account, it was agreed that the payment could be made to the Village Hall upon confirmation from the FCLT to the Parish Clerk.

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## **6. Highways**

### **6.1 To receive feedback from the SDNPA meeting and agree actions**

Cllr Hill reported on the meeting, stating that it had been a good meeting and the SDNPA officers had been able to provide details of other useful contacts. The SDNPA will be publishing a document in the summer detailing examples of other villages where they have tackled similar problems, and it is hoped this will provide some useful direction. There was an acknowledgement that the SDNPA website does not contain sufficient information on sustainable travel options and the Parish Council agreed to provide the details.

**RESOLVED:** Cllr Hill will report back to the SDNPA that the possibility of a car park at Southerham Grey Pit is no longer an option, due to the landowners having other plans for the site.

Cllr Bolger agreed to co-ordinate the information on public transport options for visiting Firle and provide this to the SDNPA.

### **6.2 To discuss the upcoming meeting with ESCC Highways on 17 November**

Members noted the meeting date with Ian Johnson (Traffic and Safety Manager, ESCC) and agreed the main topics for conversation will be traffic calming measures, speeding, the volume and size of vehicles in the village and parking.

**RESOLVED:** The Locum Clerk to forward Ian Johnson's email address to all councillors for any follow up actions post meeting.

### **6.3 To agree a response to the application to delete the byway open to all traffic (BOAT) from the Firle Bostal Road 14 via Beddingham 9**

**RESOLVED:** The council has no objection to the deletion of the BOAT but wishes to see the footpath remain in situ.

### **6.4 To agree on a temporary traffic management strategy for 2022**

Cllr Hill reported that an analysis of the cars visiting the village showed around 70 to 100 additional visitor cars were present on weekends and bank holidays. The overflow car park had been regularly full, and this has helped reduce some of the on-street parking issues.

Cllr Barr reported that the overflow car park had been used 22 or 23 times (of the permitted 28) during the summer, and that he was happy to provide the facility again in 2022.

**RESOLVED:** Cllr Barr was thanked for offering the overflow car park facility, while councillors acknowledged this was not the long-term solution to the problem.

### **6.5 To decide on plans for shared space signage on council property in The Street**

Cllr Hill reminded councillors of the previous discussions and reported the response from Firle Estate to additional signs. Bob Baines (Firle Estate Manager) clarified the comments, and that the Estate were keen on seeing effective signs, particularly relating to safety.

**RESOLVED:** It was agreed that the subject be put on hold pending the meeting with ESCC on 17 November, and then discussed again at the next council meeting.

## **7. Future meetings**

### **7.1 To confirm meeting dates up to and including May 2022**

**RESOLVED:** Members agreed to hold monthly council meetings, on the second Tuesday of the month commencing at 7pm.

## **8. Other matters**

### **8.1 To receive an update on the Hugh Barnes Memorial Award for 2021 and agree any actions**

Cllr Barr confirmed that he was still trying to secure someone to make the award.

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### **8.2 To discuss flood defence measures and agree any actions**

Cllr Symes raised the issue of the properties in the village that suffered from flooding and asked if there might be somewhere in the village where sandbags could be stored in case of need. Bob Baines stated that he was sure Firle Estate council provide a suitable location if needed.

**RESOLVED:** Cllr Symes agreed to contact Lewes District Council to see what provisions they made with regard to providing sandbags and report back to the next meeting.

### **8.3 To consider tree management, particularly Ash Dieback, and agree any actions**

Cllr Symes asked what management strategy Firle Estate has in place for trees, especially where disease may have been identified, as reports he had read suggested that felling diseased trees was not always either necessary or desired.

Bob Baines replied that a management strategy was in place which balances risk, biodiversity, practicality, aesthetics and economic factors. Where dangerous trees were identified which presented a risk to the public, they would normally be felled as soon as practical, although other low risk areas may be managed differently.

### **8.4 To receive information on the ESALC AGM and conference on 25 November and agree attendance**

The Locum Clerk reminded councillors of the date of the AGM and conference. No councillors can attend.

## **9. To note any items for information or inclusion on future agendas**

Items for next agenda:

- Update from ESCC meeting
- SDNPA call for nature sites (received after agenda for this meeting had been issued)
- Platinum Jubilee plans
- Playing Field maintenance
- Budget and precept for 2022/23

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 9.35 pm.