

FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL

Tuesday 14th June 2022, 7.00pm in Firle Village Hall

Members of the Public in Attendance: 5

Questions RECEIVED from the Public: None

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

Others Present: Clerk and RFO Lorna Thwaites.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were received from Cllr Bolger via the Chair and were accepted by the Council.
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** No declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda, as required by the Members Code of Conduct were received.
3. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING:** The Council RESOLVED that the minutes of the Annual Meeting of Firle Parish Council held on 10th May 2022 are a correct record and were duly signed by the Chairman.
4. **FIRLE PRIMARY SCHOOL**
 - 4.1 Representatives of Firle Primary School were welcomed by the Council and their report was RECEIVED:
Rachel West, Exec. Head of Firle Primary School gave an update - in 2018 Firle Primary School federated with Laughton Primary School; in 2019 the school underwent a re-structure due to low pupil numbers; word of mouth, marketing, publicity, relationships with pre-schools and being part of a supportive community has resulted in numbers increasing with 14 pupils joining Reception in 2021; 2 school buses come from local villages; some pupils come from the coastal strip, Polegate and Lewes; 3 children have joined from the Ukraine; the school feels proud of the work it has done to maintain the uniqueness of Firle Primary School; the children are a credit to the school and the school works very closely with families; the school has pupils on roll with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND); children who receive Pupil Premium and pupils from families who wish to be part of a church school; the overarching vision of the school is inspiring learning for life; there are currently 78 children on roll and the capacity is 105.
Debra Vice-Holt, Chair of Governors spoke about the strong board of Governors which are shared across both schools in the Federation; this ensures the ethos and values of school, financial management and holding senior leaders to account; there are currently 2 governor vacancies.
The Council asked questions about the future of the Federation and if further schools were likely to join; the Head explained how small schools were tasked with the same as larger schools so being part of a federation has provided subject leads that work across the 2 schools; Firle was vulnerable from a viability perspective after a study was done 3 years ago; the Federation has helped to protect the school as both Firle and Laughton are now reliant on one another; it is key for governors that the schools maintain their own individuality; the Government wants all schools to be in a Multi-Academy Trust by 2030; Members of the Parish Council the School agreed to provide numbers of children living in Firle attending the school to the Parish Council were welcomed to visit the school and were offered the opportunity to put articles in their newsletter.
The school was thanked for attending the meeting and giving their report.
The Parish Council raised concerns with poor parking and the issue of parking on Bostal Road; the Head advised that the school bus can no longer park in front of the school; the school have been raising the issue of dangerous driving and parking with parents; the children have made signs to be put up; the school would like the speed limit to be reduced to 20mph; the school also asks parents to use the village car park.
The Council are concerned how dangerous the road is and their worry that a severe accident may occur; different options to help the parking issue were discussed; members of Firle Primary School raised concerns that there are potholes in the village car park and faded road marking outside the school.
5. **GRANTS**
 - 5.1 An application for a Grant Award was RECEIVED:
 - 5.1.1 Firle Primary School
A request was received from the Friends of Firle Charity who are fundraising to replace equipment in the school playground; significant fundraising has already been undertaken but there is currently a shortfall of £3000.
The Council RESOLVED 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

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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.

The Council RESOLVED to allocate funds from reserves to make a Grant Award to the school of £1500.

The Council Meeting was re-opened to the press and public and all were invited back into the meeting. The Grant Award of £1500 was confirmed to the members of the Friends of Firle.

6. REPORT(S)

6.1 Reports from Local and District Councillors and the MP for Lewes were RECEIVED: the Clerk was asked to forward details of the grant opportunity to the Village Hall.

6.2 A report on the events held for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations was RECEIVED: The celebrations were well run and a great success with lots of the community participation; thanks were given to all the different organisations that helped with the event; there was an adult and children's treasure hunt; the bonfire and Beacon lighting was very well organised with great fireworks; Friday Café well attended; the marquee on Saturday was enjoyed by many; a Street Party on the Sunday was held with at least 50 in attendance; Jubilee Coins were donated to the children of Firle Parish by the Parish Council; a member of the public advised the Friday Café raised over £100 and is giving a donation to the Village Hall; the Council thanked the member of public for all her hard work as part of the Jubilee Committee.

7. REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF ORDERS, REGULATIONS AND POLICIES:

7.1 The Planning Protocol was ADOPTED.

8. REVIEW OF ARRANGEMENTS AND LEGAL AGREEMENT WITH FIRLE VILLAGE HALL AND PLAYING FIELDS

8.1 An update on the discussions with Firle Village Hall and Playing Fields Committee regarding the legal agreement and fencing requirements was RECEIVED: An informal meeting was held with members of the Village Hall and Playing Fields Committee (VHPFC); the Council AGREED to arrange a further meeting with a working group from both the Parish Council and VHPFC.

8.2 To AGREE the Firle Village Hall and Playing Fields Legal Agreement – DEFERRED.

8.3 The format and frequency of playground inspections was not yet agreed: the responsibilities for inspections were discussed; the Council AGREED that the responsibility for the inspections needs to be defined between the VHPFC and the Parish Council; the Council discussed the playground plans they had been sent prior to the May meeting and the lack of consultation with Council Members; the Clerk was asked to contact the Village Hall Committee to request a meeting to discuss the plans for the playground along with the Agreement document.

9. INSURANCE COVER

9.1 Confirmation of the renewed insurance cover with BHIB was RECEIVED.

10. FINANCE

10.1 The additional hours worked by the Clerk, 02 May 2022 to 30 May 2022 were AGREED.

10.2 Payments to be made in May were AUTHORISED by the Council and the bank reconciliation was RECEIVED and SIGNED by the Chairman.

10.3 The Council RESOLVED to purchase 53 Platinum Jubilee Commemorative Coins for the children of the Parish of Firle and to re-imburse Cllr Symes for their purchase; Cllr Gravett was thanked for organising the idea and designing the card and Cllrs Symes and Bolger for purchasing, organising and delivering the coins around the Parish; several thank you cards from the children (under 16) have been received for which the Council were grateful.

11. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR)

11.1 The Internal Audit Report from Mulberry and Co was RECEIVED and NOTED.

11.2 The Annual Governance Statement was RECEIVED, and the conclusions were discussed and NOTED.

11.3 The AGAR Section 1 Annual Governance Statement was APPROVED and SIGNED by the Chairman and the Clerk.

11.4 The AGAR Section 2 Accounting Statement was APPROVED and SIGNED by the Chairman and the Clerk.

12. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED:

12.1 The following correspondence was RECEIVED, and actions AGREED:

12.1.1 Briefing document on speed indication devices: RECEIVED

12.1.2 Memorial bench enquiry: The Council AGREED that they would discuss with the Cricket Club and the VHPFC; the Clerk was asked to contact the Cricket Club and FVHPFC.

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12.1.3 Sandbags for Firle: RECEIVED; the Council discussed the possibility of including useful contacts on the website.

13. MATTERS ARISING:

- 13.1 An update on discussions with Glynde Forge and the Hugh Barnes Memorial Award for 2021 was RECEIVED: Cllr Barr needs the template to progress the Award; Cllr Hill expressed her concern that this award has been on the agenda for some time and not progressed and that the award needs to be made before the next meeting.
- 13.2 An update on the repair to the damaged post protecting the village carpark litter bin was RECEIVED: This post still is to be repaired; Cllr Barr and Cllr Hill AGREED to meet and repair on the weekend of 18 June.
- 13.3 An update on the water leak by the Ram Inn: No further information has been received; the Clerk was asked to contact Firle Estate again.
- 13.4 Views on written political messages on properties or in gardens in the Parish of Firle was DISCUSSED: Cllr Gravett advised that a member of the Parish had raised this matter with him; the Council discussed their views and AGREED it was not a matter for the Parish Council to engage with.
- 13.5 Increasing instances of poor parking and speeding parents on Bostal Road were NOTED: Members AGREED that the discussions about this matter with Firle Primary School (agenda item 4) sufficiently covered this item.

14. HIGHWAYS:

- 14.1 An update on the request for a signage review was RECEIVED: The review has been requested by the Clerk as per the information provided by Cllr Hill; no further correspondence yet received from ESH; Ian Johnson from ESH has asked one of his team to look at the issues raised.
- 14.2 An update on the request for a parking review was RECEIVED: The review has been requested by the Clerk as per the information provided by Cllr Hill.
- 14.3 The grass cutting programme 2022 was RECEIVED: The Council NOTED that Firle is on the Rural Schedule, Tractor 2 but no date for cut is on the schedule yet.
- 14.4 To RECEIVE an update from Cllr Denis on the question raised over opening the public toilets at the Ram Inn. DEFERRED.
- 14.5 The Council AGREED it would not pursue the purchase a speed traffic monitor.
- 14.6 The Council RESOLVED to request 3 Speed Traffic Surveys with ESCC at a total cost of £1066+VAT: The Council AGREED to send details of locations to the Clerk.
- 14.7 A response from Tom Beasley re the removal of the traffic island has not been received: The Clerk was asked to contact Maria Caulfield, MP and Lewes District Councillors.
- 14.8 The problem of surface water getting into the sewers was DISCUSSED: The Clerk was asked to contact Firle Estate.

15. SUB LEASE OF PLAYING FIELDS TO FIRLE CRICKET CLUB

- 15.1 An update on the Sublease with Firle Cricket Club was RECEIVED: The Council AGREED to arrange a meeting to discuss the lease.
- 15.2 To RESOLVE to adopt the Sublease for Firle Cricket Club. DEFERRED.

16. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

16.1 To AGREE comments for any applications received:

16.1.1 SDNP/22/02264/TCA – deadline for comments

Location: Firle Cottage The Street Firle East Sussex BN8 6NS

Proposal: T1 - Mature Yew - Reduce the height and spread by approximately 2m. Balance crown shape and form

Comments AGREED: NEUTRAL

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

- 17.1 To RESOLVE to apply for a sixth council seat.
- 17.2 To RECEIVE an update on the Beacon Event Hill Climb.
- 17.3 To AGREE to restore the Village Sign.
- 17.4 To AGREE action for the overhanging branches and hedges around the Parish.

18. TO RECEIVE THE TIME AND DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL. Tuesday 12th July 7pm Firle Village Hall

19. THE MEETING CLOSED at 21.54