

FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL

Tuesday 16^h May 2023, 7.30pm in Firle Village Hall.

Members of the Public in Attendance: 2

Questions RECEIVED from the Public: None.

Members in Attendance: Cllr Gravett (Outgoing Chair), Cllr Barr (Vice-Chair), Cllr Hill, Cllr Bolger

Members not in Attendance: Cllr Symes.

Others Present: Clerk and RFO Lorna Thwaites.

1. ELECTION OF THE CHAIR:

1.1 Cllr Hill was proposed, seconded, and elected as the Chairperson for Firle Parish Council for the forthcoming year.

1.2 The Chair SIGNED the Declaration of Office form.

Richard Gravett, the outgoing Chairman of Firle Parish Council was duly thanked by all Council Members for his hardwork, time and commitment to the Council; Richard spoke of his experience with the Parish Council and how he feels proud of what he and Members of the Parish Council have achieved during his terms as a Councillor and Chairperson. Richard Gravett left the meeting at 19.42.

2. ELECTION OF THE VICE-CHAIR: Cllr Barr was proposed, seconded, and elected as the Vice-Chair for the forthcoming year.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were RECEIVED and ACCEPTED from Cllr Symes.

4. DECLARATIONS OF OFFICE, REGISTER OF INTERESTS, AND MEMBER'S CODE OF CONDUCT were completed and SIGNED by all Councillors.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS OR REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS WITH RESPECT TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA: None received.

6. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: The minutes of the ordinary meeting of Firle Parish Council held on 11th April 2023 were RESOLVED to be a correct record and were SIGNED by the Chairman.

7. TO RESOLVE TO APPOINT A COUNCILLOR BY CO-OPTION TO FILL THE VACANT SEAT ON FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL:

The Council RECEIVED one application; the applicant spoke about why she would like to be co-opted onto the Parish Council; Cllr Lance was proposed, seconded, and elected by co-option to Firle Parish Council; Cllr Lance was welcomed, and she signed her Declaration of Office in the presence of the Council.

8. COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS:

8.1 No committees or working groups were agreed.

8.2 Individual areas of responsibility AGREED: Cllr Symes - 20splenty; Cllr Barr - representative to the Firle Village Hall and Playing Fields Committee; Cllr Lance - Firle Community Association.

9. APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES:

9.1 Council Members RESOLVED not to nominate a councillor representative to sit on the SDNP Board.

9.2 Councillor appointments CONFIRMED to outside bodies: Cllr Barr has been elected as a Trustee for the Firle Village Hall and Playing Fields Charity.

10. THE ELIGIBILITY OF THE COUNCIL WITH REGARDS TO MEETING THE CRITERIA FOR THE EXERCISE OF THE GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE was CONFIRMED.

11. REGULATIONS AND POLICIES were REVIEWED and RE-ADOPTED:

11.1 Standing Orders

11.2 Financial Regulations

11.3 Freedom of Information Policy

11.4 Complaints Procedure

11.5 Co-option Policy

11.6 Document Retention Scheme

11.7 Grant Awarding Policy

11.8 Risk Management Policy

11.9 Scheme of Delegation

12. ARRANGEMENTS AND LEGAL AGREEMENT WITH FIRLE VILLAGE HALL AND PLAYING FIELDS were CONFIRMED.

13. INSURANCE COVER:

13.1 The Council RESOLVED to renew the insurance cover with BHIB by 01 June 2022 and to pay the annual premium.

FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL

14. FINANCE:

- 14.1 The Council RESOLVED to pay the following subscriptions, regular payments, and direct debits to other bodies: Subscriptions - SLCC; ESALC; Regular payments - L Thwaites (Clerk and RFO) salary & pension; Knill James payroll services; Direct Debits - ICO data protection.
- 14.2 Banking arrangements and nominated signatories for the year were AGREED: Cllrs Hill and Cllr Barr to be nominated signatories; the Clerk and RFO to be given access to the bank accounts to make online payments.
- 14.3 Payments to be made in May were AUTHORISED and the bank reconciliation was RECEIVED and SIGNED.
- 14.4 The Clerk's leave request for May was AGREED.
- 14.5 The Risk Assessment for 2023 – 2024 was RECEIVED and ADOPTED.

15. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR):

- 15.1 An update on the Internal Audit undertaken by Mark Mulberry & Co on 16th May was RECEIVED: The audit is now complete, and everything was found to be in order; the report by Mulberry and Co was RECEIVED by the Council and its conclusions were NOTED; the Clerk was thanked for her work on the Audit.
- 15.2 An update on the External Audit was RECEIVED: The Annual Governance Statement had been completed and was ready for signing; the Council proposed and made the following resolutions:
- 15.2.1 AGAR Section 1 Annual Governance Statement APPROVED and SIGNED by the Chair and the Clerk,
- 15.2.2 AGAR Section 2 Accounting Statement was APPROVED and SIGNED by the Chair and the Clerk,
- 15.2.3 Certificate of Exemption was APPROVED and SIGNED by the Chair and Clerk.

16. REPORT(S):

- 16.1 Reports from Local and District Councillors and the MP for Lewes were RECEIVED: A report on the ecology survey and owl nesting boxes at New Elms was RECEIVED from Bob Baines, Firle Estate Director; there was no sign of nesting in the old owl box and new nesting boxes have been installed; a Certificate of Lawfulness for the permitted development of a micro-brewery was applied for; Firle Estate understands that planning permission is not required for a micro-brewery of the size in question; the original application has been appealed and a new application has now been submitted.

17. HIGHWAYS:

- 17.1 An update on Wick Street signage was RECEIVED: The signs are still not in place and the Clerk was asked to chase ESH again.
- 17.2 An update on the request for a parking review of the verges by Firle Top car park was RECEIVED: This has now been added to the ESCC list of reviews for consideration.
- 17.3 An update on the work to the bus stop at South Heighton was RECEIVED: Cllr Barr has not yet undertaken this work.

18. PLANNING APPLICATIONS: Comments AGREED for any applications received:

- 18.1 SDNP 23/01569/FUL Location: Preston House Wick Street Firle East Sussex BN8 6LG Proposal: Installation of PV panels in field/garden to the west of the property
- The Council AGREED to SUPPORT with the following comments: The number of panels and dimensions of the panel area has not been provided; the Council would like its concerns noting – the PV panels should not impact on the view from the top of the South Downs caused by reflection, glare or glinting of the panels.

19. SUB LEASE FIRLE CRICKET CLUB:

- 19.1 An update on the Sublease for Firle Cricket Club was RECEIVED from Bob Baines, Firle Estate Director: Firle Cricket Club (FCC) have not yet signed the sublease issued to them by Adams and Remers; FCC have recently commented on the area of the cricket square defined on the lease; however if the cricket square area is changed then a variation on the original lease is required; the current plan and documents have been signed by the Firle Estate Trustees; as such Firle Estate recommends that FCC sign the sublease in its current form; the Clerk was asked to write to the Chair of Firle Cricket Club advising the sublease is ready for signing and will be issued by the appointed solicitor.

20. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED AND ACTIONS AGREED:

- 20.1 South Downs Local Plan Review: An OSS form needs to be completed for each open space submitted; Cllrs Bolger and Hill to complete the forms.
- 20.2 Grant Award for Coronation: A Lottery Grant has been awarded for the planting of a coronation grove; the grant award from FPC is no longer required; Cllr Barr AGREED to report back on the progress of the coronation grove.

FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL

- 21. ITEMS AGREED FOR THE PARISH MAGAZINE:** Election of New Council and Chair; update from the Annual Parish Meeting.
- 22. TO PROPOSE AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT ORDINARY MEETING OF FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL:** To undertake a review of the current Assets of Community Value; to receive an update on the works to the South Heighton bus stop; to receive an update on the planting of the coronation grove; to agree actions to be undertaken regarding the blocked drain from the Vicarage (opposite to West Place House) to the Village Hall; to receive an update on the work to the sewer in Firle Park; to discuss the new Toucan Crossing at the Firle junction of the A27.
- 23. THE TIME AND DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL:** Tuesday 13th June, 7pm Firle Village Hall.
- 24. THE MEETING CLOSED** at 21.15.