

FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL held on Tuesday 22nd August 2023, 7.00pm in Firle Village Hall.

Members of the Public in Attendance: 1 – Bruce Levi (Chair of Firle Community Association – FCA)

Questions RECEIVED from the Public: None.

Members in Attendance: Cllr Hill (Chair), Cllr Barr (Vice-Chair), Cllr Symes.

Members not in Attendance: Cllr Bolger, Cllr Lance.

Others Present: Cllr Johnny Denis, Cllr Vanessa Rowlands (Chair SDNPA).

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** No apologies for absence were received.
2. **NO DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS WITH RESPECT TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**, as required by the Members Code of Conduct were received.
3. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING:** The minutes of the ordinary meeting of Firle Parish Council held on 11th July 2023 were RESOLVED to be a correct record and were signed by the Chair with the following matters arising from the minutes:
Cllr Symes was thanked for his work organising a presentation tankard for the retiring chairman; Cllrs had posted the Firle Parish Council agenda on all noticeboards however the Council agreed that minutes would only be posted on the Parish Council noticeboard by the shop - this matter is to be formally agreed at the next meeting of Firle Parish Council meeting.
4. **FINANCE:**
 - 4.1 Payments to be made in August were APPROVED and the bank reconciliation was RECEIVED and SIGNED.
5. **REPORT(S):**
 - 5.1 Reports RECEIVED from Local and District Councillors and the MP for Lewes: Maria Caulfield, MP sent details of the consultation on the closing of the rail ticket offices; Cllr Emily O' Brien provided details of a consultation increasing the Living Coast UNESCO Biosphere area over all of Lewes District Council; Cllr Hill AGREED to post links to both consultations on the Firle WhatsApp group.
6. **AN OVERVIEW OF THE OLDHOUSE SOLAR FARM FROM SCOTTISH POWER RENEWABLES was RECEIVED:** Sophie Williams, Project Manager, Scottish Power Renewables and her colleague Graham attended the meeting via ZOOM; both are project managers for the proposed solar farm at the Ringmer site; Sophie explained that this was a 44 hectare site rented from Glyndebourne Estate to generate power for >7000 homes for approx. 30-40 years; planning permission for the proposal was likely to be submitted in Dec 2023; the agricultural class of land is likely to be 3A or 3B but they are still awaiting soil analyses results; Cllrs asked questions on the impact of the loss of grazing and wheat production on the local farmer; why modern vertical solar panels are not being used to allow for agrivoltaics; the capacity required of the local electricity infrastructure to cope with a new solar farm; why the project was proposed on this site prior to the publication of the LDC local plan, and on the impact of additional traffic and lighting on the local neighbourhood.
7. **PARISH PRIORITY STATEMENTS**
 - 7.1 Information on completing SDNP Parish Priority Statements (PPS) was RECEIVED from Vanessa Rowlands (Chair of the SDNPA): Vanessa explained the importance of each parish submitting a PPS to feed into SDNP planning policy; the deadline for submission is currently 20th October, but Cllr Rowlands has requested an extension to Dec 2023 for submission.
 - 7.2 The Council RESOLVED to appoint a work group of Bruce Levi, other FCA members and Cllrs Symes, Barr and Hill; the working group will design a questionnaire to survey parishioners on village priorities, which could include affordable housing, employment and energy requirements.
8. **CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED:** The following correspondence was RECEIVED:
 - 8.1 Daring to Dream – Jane Brendgen, Compassionate Cultures: The proposer declined to attend the meeting due to FPC not owning any land for housing use.
 - 8.2 World's First Car Powered Village Fete, Hyundai – Ellie Tudor: The Council AGREED that this proposal was not of interest as the fete didn't require large amounts of electricity and is not a suitable event for commercial activities.
 - 8.3 D-Day Anniversary Guide – 6 June 2024: The information was sent to the Firle Bonfire Committee with a note that a grant application to Firle Parish Council for support of a firework display would be considered.
 - 8.4 RSN Funding Digest – Cllr Denis: It was noted that RSN funding maybe appropriate for the reinstatement of the footpath.
 - 8.5 Rural Verges as Wildlife Corridors – trial of Early Season Reduction in Rural Grass Cutting: The Council gave positive feedback on the restricted cutting of the verge on top of the Bostal Road.

FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL

9. HIGHWAYS:

- 9.1 The Council RECEIVED the update on Wick Street signage that there was no further progress or information from ESCC: Cllr Barr reported that in the past week there had been 3 near accidents with cyclists not stopping at road junctions when riding along the new cycle path; the Council Cllrs AGREED to request 'stop' signs prior to the junctions along the A27.
- 9.2 An update on the work to the bus stop at South Heighton was RECEIVED: Cllr Barr has undertaken half of the work and the remainder will be completed in September.
- 9.3 An update regarding the blocked drain from the Vicarage to Firle Village Hall was RECEIVED: Cllr Barr has received a job number and is still waiting for the work to be undertaken.
- 9.4 Actions AGREED for overhanging tree foliage on Wick Street: The Council requested the Clerk to send a reminder email to Firle Estate.
- 9.5 Planned road works/closures from ESCC were RECEIVED: The Council NOTED that most of the works are out of the Parish and will be completed by the end of August.

10. MATTERS ARISING:

- 10.1 An update on the planting of the Coronation Grove was RECEIVED: The Clerk was asked by the Council to request a suitable location from Firle Estate.
- 10.2 An update on the completion of forms for the SDNP OS Survey was RECEIVED: Cllr Bolger has now completed the forms.
- 10.3 The work needed to the gates from the Playing Fields car park into Firle Park and the Ram Field was AGREED: Cllr Barr AGREED to send a reminder to Bob Baines, Firle Estate Director.
- 10.4 Further information on the offer of a Citizen's Advice outreach service was RECEIVED; the Council RESOLVED to support the first two sessions by paying for the hire of Firle Village Hall; the Clerk was asked to liaise with Advice Services Manager.

11. PROJECTS:

11.1 20sPlenty for Firle

- 11.1.1 A date for the first meeting of the working group was RECEIVED as being during the first week in October.

11.2 Assets of Community Value

- 11.2.1 An update on the progress of nominating Firle Village Hall as an asset of Community Value was RECEIVED: Cllr Lance is finalising the application.

11.3 Development of a Footpath to Firle Primary School

- 11.3.1 An update on the progress of establishing the feasibility of creating a footpath and any further information on re-instating the footpath from the A27 to Firle Primary School was RECEIVED: Cllr Hill has sent a marked map to the Clerk; it was noted that funding from the Sustainable Communities Fund (SCF) or RSN maybe available.

12. PLANNING APPLICATIONS: None received.

13. ITEMS FOR THE PARISH MAGAZINE: No items to be submitted as the meeting was held after the deadline for the magazine.

14. AGENDA ITEMS PROPOSED FOR THE NEXT ORDINARY MEETING OF FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL: To request new stop signage on the cycle path.

15. TO RECEIVE THE TIME AND DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL. 7pm Tuesday 10th October 2023

16. TO CLOSE THE MEETING. At 9.30 pm