

FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL

Tuesday 8th November 2022, 7.00pm in Firle Village Hall

Members of the Public in Attendance: 2 (members of FVHPFC)

Questions RECEIVED from the Public: None

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

Members not in Attendance: Cllr Bolger.

Others Present: Clerk and RFO Lorna Thwaites.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Received from Cllr Bolger via Cllr Hill.
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 minutes of the ordinary meeting of Firle Parish Council held on 27th September 2022 were RESOLVED to be a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.
4. **REVIEW OF ARRANGEMENTS AND LEGAL AGREEMENT WITH FIRLE VILLAGE HALL AND PLAYING FIELDS**
 - 4.1 An update from FVHPFC regarding the installation of the new play equipment, fencing and insurance was RECEIVED: The play equipment is installed but will not open to the public until the fence has been erected; a full report has been received from PlaySafe and FVHPFC have checked the safety requirements for the fence and gates; 3 fencing quotes have been received and savings made on the original works to the play area will contribute to the fence work; this will leave a funding gap of just over £5k; Members of Firle Parish Council RESOLVED to award a grant of £3000 to fund half of the fencing costs; FVHPFC are seeking insurance for the play area - one quote has been received and a second is pending; FVHPFC gave thanks to the Firle Bonfire Society for providing temporary fencing, as well as Firle Cricket Club and local farmers for all their hard work and contributions; FPC praised the work of FVHPFC and stated how good the playground looks with the new equipment.
 - 4.2 Information from BHIB regarding the insurance of the playground equipment on the FPC Policy was RECEIVED: The current policy provides property damage cover to playground equipment to £60k and £12,500 for fences and gates; there is no reduction in policy cost if these items were removed as this is considered by BHIB as a standard item for parish councils. The policy also provides £10m for Public Liability.
 - 4.3 The responsibility for regular maintenance checks and works on the equipment and fencing were DISCUSSED with FVHPFC: FVHPFC are currently investigating maintenance and inspections costs; FVHPFC AGREED they would undertake both the inspection and maintenance of the play equipment, subject to being able to arrange insurance for the play area and equipment.
 - 4.4 Amendments to the Firle Village Hall and Playing Fields Legal Agreement resulting from agenda item 4.3 were DEFERRED.
 - 4.5 No further actions are to be undertaken by FPC resulting from agenda item 4.3; the Clerk advised that she had received a quote of £350+ Vat from Wellers Hedleys to review the Legal Agreement on behalf of the Parish Council.
5. **MATTERS ARISING:**
 - 5.1 An update from Firle Estate on the state of the pavement from the shop down to the wishing well at the bottom of the Dock, which has been covered in brambles and difficult to use was not yet received: DEFERRED.
 - 5.2 An update on the restoration of the village sign was RECEIVED: No progress has yet been made but the post is thought to be rotting inside the concrete and needs lifting and re-placing; the Council AGREED to investigate further.
 - 5.3 An update on the missing bus stop on Firle Bostal Lewes/Brighton bound side was RECEIVED: The bus stop has now been re-instated.
 - 5.4 An update on the storage of the Condolence Book for HRH Queen Elizabeth II at The Keep was RECEIVED: The Keep have advised they will only take East Sussex County Council and Brighton and Hove Council condolence books; the Clerk was asked to find out about the storage available to Firle Parish Council at the Keep; Cllr Symes AGREED to contact a parishioner who works at the Keep.
6. **SUB LEASE OF PLAYING FIELDS TO FIRLE CRICKET CLUB**
 - 6.1 An update on the Sublease with Firle Cricket Club was RECEIVED: Cllr Gravett has spoken with Alex Yearsley, Chairman of Firle Cricket Club to arrange a meeting to review the draft lease; a date will be finalised, and the meeting held in the next couple of weeks.
 - 6.2 To RESOLVE to adopt the Sublease for Firle Cricket Club. DEFERRED.

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7. FINANCE

- 7.1 Payments to be made in November were AUTHORISED and the bank reconciliation was RECEIVED and SIGNED; the Council NOTED their appreciation to the Platinum Jubilee Committee who claimed only for spends made against their grant award and not for the full award.
- 7.2 An update on spend vs. budget 2022-2023 was RECEIVED: The allocation of current earmarked reserves was discussed but no changes to current allocations agreed.
- 7.3 Budget priorities for 2023-2024 were DISCUSSED: The first draft of the budget was circulated by the Clerk and the Council discussed priorities for 2023-24 as well as the allocation of reserves; it was AGREED the precept required for 2023-24 would be discussed further at the next meeting.

8. HIGHWAYS:

- 8.1 To RECEIVE an update from Cllr Denis on the question raised over opening the public toilets at the Ram Inn: DEFERRED.
- 8.2 To RECEIVE an update on the removal of the traffic island: DEFERRED; the Clerk was asked to request an update again.
- 8.3 An update on the visit of Southern Water to the sewer by Gibraltar Farm which overflows with surface water entering it was RECEIVED from Cllr Barr: Southern Water visited the site and met with Cllr Barr who explained how the surface water in the park goes down into the sewer; Southern Water has organised for a sealed manhole unvented top to be placed onto the sewer; Cllr Barr felt that still more work needs to be undertaken to prevent the overflow of the sewer; the Clerk was asked to contact Maria Caulfield MP.
- 8.4 An update on the work undertaken by ESH further to the signage review and the request for warning signs for pedestrians in the road, along the Bostal Road was RECEIVED from Cllr Hill: Cllr Hill had sent photos via the Clerk to the Road Safety team; the Road Safety team will check progress with Ian Johnson of East Sussex Highways and will discuss Wick Street pedestrian signing with him; damaged or missing bollards have now been replaced and the road markings requested have been refreshed; new bollards to the right when exiting the carpark believe to have been sited to protect a gully; the Clerk was asked to request a further update.
- 8.5 An update on the shields to the lights on the A27 at the Firle Junction have not been received in response to the Clerk's email; the Council NOTED that work is currently being undertaken on the lights.
- 8.6 The Council AGREED to retain the request for a parking review in Firle Village: Cllr Hill reminded the Council of the reasons for the request - parking problems opposite the village hall car park resulting in access problems; the Council discussed the potential project of Firle Estate to charge for visitor parking in the Village Hall car park; the Council AGREED to put the parking review back on agenda before a decision is reached by ESCC.

9. REPORT(S)

- 9.1 A report from Maria Caulfield, MP for Lewes was RECEIVED: The Council NOTED Maria's support for 20mph speed limits in appropriate locations.
- 9.2 A report from Cllr Symes on the 20s Plenty meeting was RECEIVED: East Sussex County Council are perceived to be one of the worst bodies to accept a change of speed; Cllr Symes suggested creating a link to the 20sPlenty campaign webpage so a co-ordinated approach to petitioning ESCC and LDC could be achieved; the Clerk was asked to contact the 20sPlenty group and to put 20sPlenty on the agenda for the next meeting.

10. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED:

- 10.1 Lewes District Local Plan – Landscape Character Assessment: NOTED
- 10.2 Local Elections May 2023 – Town and Parish Council Estimated Costs of £1,100 were NOTED.
- 10.3 NALC Pay Award: The Council AGREED to adopt the NALC Pay Award.

11. POLICIES AND PROTOCOL

- 11.1 The first draft of the Firle Estate Protocol was RECEIVED by the Council: Councillors debated the need for a protocol; the motion to not adopt the protocol was proposed and seconded; the Council voted in support of this motion and RESOLVED not to adopt the protocol; one Council Member did not support this motion and voted against.

12. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

- 12.1 To AGREE comments for any applications received: NONE received.

13. AGENDA ITEMS PROPOSED FOR THE NEXT ORDINARY MEETING OF FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL.

- To DISCUSS the state of the drains between the village hall and the vicarage.

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To DISCUSS water at the bottom of the junction of the A27.

To DISCUSS the lack of the Firle Estate Parish Plan and its possible consequences to FPC.

To RESOLVE to make a grant award of £100 for the Village Hall Christmas Hamper – Cllr Barr.

- 14. THE TIME AND DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL: 13 Dec 2022**
- 15. THE MEETING CLOSED at 22.19.**