

FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL

Tuesday 12th July 2022, 7.00pm in Firle Village Hall

Members of the Public in Attendance: 2 (1 arrived 19.31)

Questions RECEIVED from the Public: None

Members in Attendance: Cllrs Gravett (Chairman), Cllr Barr (Vice-Chair), Cllr Hill and Cllr Symes. Cllr Bolger (arrived 19.51).

Others Present: Clerk and RFO Lorna Thwaites.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** No apologies were received; Cllr Bolger sent notice of her late arrival due to train delays.
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** Declarations of interest RECEIVED in respect of items on the agenda, as required by the Members Code of Conduct: Agenda Item 7.2: Cllr Symes advised he had met with Bob Baines and Henry Gage from Firle Estate in a personal capacity and Cllrs Gravett and Barr advised they had been called to Firle Estate Office in a personal capacity on 21st June.
3. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING:** The minutes of the ordinary meeting of Firle Parish Council held on 14th June 2022 were RESOLVED to be a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.
4. **REPORT(S)**
 - 4.1 Reports from Local and District Councillors and the MP for Lewes were RECEIVED from Maria Caulfield MP; her views on the future of the A27 between Lewes and Polegate were NOTED.
5. **REVIEW OF ARRANGEMENTS AND LEGAL AGREEMENT WITH FIRLE VILLAGE HALL AND PLAYING FIELDS**
 - 5.1 An update on the discussions with Firle Village Hall and Playing Fields Committee regarding the legal agreement and fencing requirements was RECEIVED: Cllr Gravett reported that the order for playground equipment had been placed with PlaySafe and the last piece of equipment has now been received; the order has resulted in 2 toddler chairs; the installation date has not yet been agreed but the Council felt that it should not be before the beginning of August as the Beacon Hill Climb is scheduled for the end of July; the Council again expressed their disappointment regarding the removal of existing equipment that was suitable for continued use; FVHPFC advised at the meeting that approx. £5k of funding still remains but a quote of approx. £10k plus VAT has been received to undertake the fencing work which needs to be in place by the end of August; thus a funding shortfall exists of £5k; the Council have been advised by FVHPFC that the cost to repair the wetpour under the existing cradle swing and slide is approx. £500; the Council discussed the possibility of filling the gap with soil; they also NOTED that the gate specification proposed doesn't comply to one of the safety requirements; Members of Firle Parish Council were in agreement that they would have liked more involvement and a closer working relationship with FVHPFC over this project and it would have been beneficial if Cllr Barr (the FPC representative for FVHPFC) had been invited to the project meetings; they also felt advising the Council of the funding gap and requesting financial support at the end of the project made it difficult for the Council to offer support after the annual budget has been set; FPC also expressed concerns over the process and contracts in place for the project.
Actions AGREED: FPC to seek 3 further quotes for the fencing work; Cllr Hill to contact Chris Bibb, Lewes District Council for his view on the safety of the proposed gate and the matter of the wetpour repair.
 - 5.2 The Firle Village Hall and Playing Fields Legal Agreement was DISCUSSED: the Agreement was reviewed at the informal meeting held with FVHPFC on 11 July 2022; the responsibility of playground inspections would be Firle Parish Council but FVHPFC would be responsible for repairs and maintenance; the Clerk was asked to investigate the requirements of playground inspections; Cllr Symes offered to do a weekly visual check of the playground; the Clerk was asked to update the legal agreement to the above effect.
6. **FINANCE**
 - 6.1 Payments to be made in July were AUTHORISED and the bank reconciliation was RECEIVED and SIGNED by the Chairman, Cllr Gravett.
 - 6.2 The Council RESOLVED to appoint Cllr Symes to review the bank reconciliations and bank statements 01 April 2022 – 30 June 2022 at the meeting; Cllr Symes REVIEWED the documents and CONFIRMED the accuracy of the accounting records.
 - 6.3 The revised budget for 2022/2023 was RECEIVED and ADOPTED by the Council.
7. **CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED:**

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- 7.1 SDNPA Land Availability Assessment (LAA) Draft Methodology was RECEIVED: The Clerk was asked to send the email to Firle Estate.
- 7.2 Agenda Item Request: Parish Council discussions with Firle Estate: Cllrs Gravett and Barr reported to the Council that they were both requested to attend a meeting at the Firle Estate Office prior to the Estate addressing the Firle Community Land Trust AGM; Councillors were contacted personally by Firle Estate, at short notice due to the impending holiday of the Estate Manager; Cllrs Gravett and Barr were unsure of the reason for the meeting and whether they were being invited in a personal or Parish Council capacity; during the meeting various issues were discussed including housing and land for the Community Land Trust; Cllr Symes was also invited in a personal capacity to meet on a separate occasion; the meeting between Firle Estate and Cllrs Gravett and Barr has resulted in concerns about the lack of clarity over roles when a Member of the Parish Council is asked to a meeting by Firle Estate but the meeting is not arranged as a meeting with the Parish Council; the Council felt it was positive to have communications with the Firle Estate Office but a protocol to ensure transparency and openness would be beneficial; the Council AGREED to develop a protocol for adoption.
- 7.3 South Downs Way Anniversary Plaques. NOTED
- 7.4 David Quesner: The Council AGREED for Cllrs Gravett and Bolger to attend with Cllr Hill if 3 members are permitted; the Clerk was asked to confirm their attendance.

8. MATTERS ARISING:

- 8.1 An update on discussions with Glynde Forge and the Hugh Barnes Memorial Award for 2021 was RECEIVED; the Council felt 5 was too large a minimum order and therefore the Council did not resolve to spend up to £1000 on 5 replicate Hugh Barnes Community Memorial Awards for Public Service.
- 8.2 The Council RESOLVED to purchase an off the shelf decanter with a budget of @ £80 for the Hugh Barnes Award; the Council AGREED to include the image of the Firle Ram and for Cllr Symes to circulate the design to the other council members for approval; the Council NOTED the feeling of Cllr Gravett with regards to choosing or selecting an annual recipient for the award and the Council AGREED to make one award.
- 8.3 An update on the repair to the damaged post protecting the village carpark litter bin was RECEIVED from Cllr Hill: the post has been replaced and it is now obvious with reflective tape.
- 8.4 An update on the water leak by the Ram Inn was RECEIVED: the Council were pleased to confirm the leak has been repaired.
- 8.5 The state of Bostal Road at the bottom of the hill by New Elms was DISCUSSED: Cllr Barr reported that holes at the bottom of Bostal Road create a dip in the road; the Clerk was asked to request ESH to fill the dip; Cllrs Hill and Barr AGREED to send the Clerk a map of the location of the dip; the Clerk was asked to request Firle Estate to clear the ditches;
- 8.6 Members of the Council DISCUSSED the process to apply for a sixth Council Seat on Firle Parish Council: Based on the requirements, timescales and costs attributable to Firle Parish Council, the Council AGREED to remain with 5 seats.
- 8.7 An update on the Beacon Event Hill Climb was RECEIVED from Cllrs Gravett and Barr: Concerns were shared about the access in and out of Firle during the event; the Parish Council AGREED to offer Firle Estate the use of their parking cones; the Clerk was asked to email the Firle Estate office for an update on the event.
- 8.8 The Council AGREED that Cllrs Gravett and Barr would seek quotes to restore the village sign.
- 8.9 Actions AGREED for overhanging hedges and branches around the Parish: The Clerk was asked to speak Will Anderson about the cutting back the hedge and not to park on the road.
- 8.10 To RESOLVE to find a solution to the blocking of the Highway at Burning Sky Brewery by repeated loading and unloading of delivery vehicles: Cllr Barr reported to the Council that some of the Brewery employees and residents park up on the road side resulting in lorries needing to unload in the road; planning permission was granted with the agreement lorries would not block the road; a camper van that is often parked on the roadside adds to the problem; the Clerk was asked to contact Firle Estate with the concerns raised.

9. HIGHWAYS:

- 9.1 To RECEIVE an update from Cllr Denis on the question raised over opening the public toilets at the Ram Inn. DEFERRED.
- 9.2 The results of the Speed Traffic Surveys with ESCC were RECEIVED: 3 surveys were undertaken between 23rd and 30th June in 3 locations; Trosley Lodge (both directions); The Street, just after the school crossing and before the car park; and by Caburn View Bungalows on Bostal Road; the Council NOTED that the 85% percentile were at or below 30mph (26mph to 31 mph); however the Council also NOTED that the report

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shows there are a small number of vehicles travelling over 30mph; the Council discussed the need for a 20mph speed limit in the village and Members RESOLVED to campaign for a 20mph speed limit in the village of Firle; the Clerk was asked to contact Rupert Clubb, ESCC.

Cllr Hill also gave an update of the signage review: An assessment is currently being made; the parking review is currently in the system for consideration in 2023; the Clerk was asked to add to the parking review to the agenda in November.

- 9.3 An update on the removal of the traffic island was RECEIVED: Cllr Denis had raised this matter previously and will follow up further.
- 9.4 The problem of surface water getting into the sewers was briefly DISCUSSED: Cllr Barr and the Firle Estate have looked at a map to identify the area where the problem exists; to be further discussed at the next meeting.

10. SUB LEASE OF PLAYING FIELDS TO FIRLE CRICKET CLUB

10.1 An update on the Sublease with Firle Cricket Club was RECEIVED: A meeting has not yet been set but the Council AGREED to arrange a meeting in August and to invite Bob Baines to attend.

10.2 To RESOLVE to adopt the Sublease for Firle Cricket Club. DEFERRED.

11. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

11.1 To AGREE comments for any applications received: NONE RECEIVED.

12. HR MATTERS

12.1 The Clerk's leave Clerk was AGREED: The Clerk will send dates to Cllr Gravett.

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

13.1 Dialect and Heritage Project

- 14. THE TIME AND DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL WAS RECEIVED:** Tuesday 13th September, 7pm Firle Village Hall. Cllr Symes gave his apologies in advance of the meeting.

15. THE MEETING CLOSED at 21.39.