

FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL held on Tuesday 10th October 2023, 7.00pm in Firle Village Hall.

Members of the Public in Attendance: 1 – Bob Baines, Firle Estate Director

Questions RECEIVED from the Public: Bob Baines requested to speak about agenda item 6, and it was agreed he would speak during this agenda item.

Members in Attendance: Cllr Hill (Chair), Cllr Bolger, Cllr Lance, Cllr Symes.

Members not in Attendance: Cllr Barr (Vice-Chair).

Others Present: Clerk and RFO Lorna Thwaites, Cllr Lucy Agace.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were RECEIVED and ACCEPTED from Cllr Barr.
2. **DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS AND TO CONSIDER ANY REQUESTS FOR A DISPENSATION WITH RESPECT TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**, as required by the Members Code of Conduct: All members declared their interest in agenda item 6 – Matters Arising with Firle Estate.
3. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING:** The minutes of the ordinary meeting of Firle Parish Council held on 22nd August 2023 were RESOLVED as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.
4. **FINANCE:**
 - 4.1 Payments to be made in October were AUTHORISED and the bank reconciliation was RECEIVED and SIGNED.
 - 4.2 An update on actual spend vs 2023-2024 budget was RECEIVED.
 - 4.3 Notification of exempt status 2023 was RECEIVED from PKF Littlejohn LLP.
 - 4.4 The Council RESOLVED to appoint Mulberry and Co as the internal auditor for 2023-2024.
 - 4.5 A donation of £50 /purchase of poppy wreath for Remembrance Sunday was AGREED; the Clerk was asked to contact Cllr Barr about ordering wreaths, if required.
 - 4.6 The Council RESOLVED to invite applications for grant awards to Firle Parish Council and to advertise in the Parish Magazine.
5. **REPORT(S):**
 - 5.1 Reports from Local and District Councillors and the MP for Lewes were RECEIVED from Cllr O'Brien and Maria Caulfield MP.
6. **MATTERS ARISING WITH FIRLE ESTATE:**

Bob Baines, Firle Estate Director made a request to speak, which was AGREED by the Chair; he spoke on the letter that was recently issued to Firle Estate, and the meeting that followed; he hoped the meeting had clarified a few points and moved things forward.

Lucy Agace arrived 19.08 and offered any advice with planning issues; as Cllr Agace was feeling unwell and the Council have concerns over the rising cases of COVID, the Council requested that she leave the meeting as there were no planning matters to discuss.

 - 6.1 The decision to add Firle Parish Council to a communication prepared by Firle Community Association to Firle Estate was RATIFIED with the following NOTED: The letter was prepared by FCA and circulated amongst available Members of Firle Parish Council; the majority of Council Members saw the letter and were in agreement to add the name of Firle Parish Council to the letter; this decision was made with the agreement it would be ratified at the October meeting of Firle Parish Council; the Council NOTED that the intention to put the name of Firle Parish Council on the letter was to support community concerns however the Council also NOTED that it wasn't involved in the drafting of the exact content of the letter.
 - 6.2 Correspondence 'Firle Residents Communication' from Firle Estate was RECEIVED.
 - 6.3 The decision of Firle Parish Council Members made via email, for Cllr Liz Hill to attend the meeting with Firle Estate in a listening capacity and to report back to Firle Parish Council was RATIFIED.
 - 6.4 A report of the meeting held by Firle Estate with tenants and stakeholders within the Parish was RECEIVED: The meeting was considered to be a positive meeting with Trustees of Firle Estate, Reverend Peter Owen-Jones, Bruce Levi, Chair of Firle Community Association and 2 tenants of Firle Estate in attendance; as agreed Cllr Hill did not speak on behalf of the Parish Council; actions have been agreed by Firle Estate as a result of the meeting.
 - 6.5 Actions for Firle Parish Council arising from this meeting were AGREED: The Council RESOLVED to consult with the Parish to develop a Parish Vision and to contribute to the completion of the SDNPA Parish Priority Statement; Bob Baines, Firle Estate Director advised that Firle Estate is working on a whole estate plan as part of the National Park Plans, which will be ratified by the board of the South Downs National Park.

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7. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED:

- 7.1 What matters to you – the ESCC Adult Social Care Strategy. AGREED to send to Firle Parish Magazine.
- 7.2 DLUHC Consultation on Local Plans. RECEIVED and NOTED.
- 7.3 LDC Policy and Performance Committee Advisory Committee Southern Water Panel. NOTED
- 7.4 National Trust Changing Chalk – Community Grants Scheme. NOTED
- 7.5 PCC/Police/ESALC Focus Groups. NOTED but with no plans to attend.
- 7.6 Electrical Safety Fund Opening – 2023: AGREED to send to promote.
- 7.7 Lewes District Council – Review of Polling Places and Polling Districts: NOTED
- 7.8 Firle Churchyard: RECEIVED – the Clerk was asked to advise the correspondent that the churchyard is under the remit of Firle Parish Church.

8. HIGHWAYS:

- 8.1 An update on Wick Street signage was RECEIVED: the signs are still pending from ESCC.
- 8.2 An update on the work to the bus stop at South Heighton was RECEIVED: Cllr Barr will soon complete.
- 8.3 To RECEIVE an update regarding the blocked drain from the Vicarage to Firle Village Hall – Cllr Barr: DEFERRED.
- 8.4 An update on the request to Firle Estate to remove overhanging tree foliage on Wick Street was RECEIVED: The works are now completed.
- 8.5 Details of planned road works/closures from ESCC were RECEIVED.
- 8.6 An update on the drainage at Firle where water accumulates quickly at Crossways was RECEIVED: Cllr Lance AGREED to log on the ESH portal.
- 8.7 The re-instatement of a grass verge just before Crossways was DISCUSSED: The area is being used a parking spot by people visiting the village; the resident is planning to re-seed the area, but the work has not yet been completed.

9. MATTERS ARISING:

- 9.1 The Council RESOLVED to put Council Meeting minutes on the noticeboard by the Village Shop but not on the other noticeboards; the Clerk was asked to create a sign for the other noticeboards to advise of this.
- 9.2 An update on the proposed location for the planting of the Coronation Grove was RECEIVED from Firle Estate: The Council has been asked to clarify the needs for the site; Cllr Barr is to liaise with Firle Estate to confirm the criteria of tree type and number.
- 9.3 An update from Firle Estate on the work needed to the gates from the Playing Fields car park into Firle Park and The Ram Field was RECEIVED: This work is in progress and gates into the Ram Field from the village car park are yet to be put in.
- 9.4 An update on the Citizen's Advice outreach service held in Firle was RECEIVED: the flyer was sent out via the village whatsapp group and posters were placed; Cllr Lance attended on behalf of a parishioner but the lack of people attending was disappointing.

10. PROJECTS:

10.1 Parish Priority Statements

- 10.1.1 An update on the progress of the working group on the questionnaire designed to survey parishioners on village priorities was RECEIVED: This work has not yet started; the Clerk was asked to chase SDNPA again to confirm if there has been an extension to the deadline of October 20th.

10.2 20sPlenty for Firle

- 10.2.1 An update on the first meeting of the working group was RECEIVED: the date of the first meeting is Wednesday 25th October, 6.30pm in Firle Village Hall; Cllr Symes AGREED to contact the core group, Firle Primary School and will also prepare a notice to advertise the meeting; the Clerk was asked to contact Kevin to establish any IT requirements.

10.3 Assets of Community Value

- 10.3.1 An update on the progress of nominating Firle Village Hall as an Asset of Community Value was RECEIVED: An application to nominate Firle Village Hall has been completed and a response is due from Lewes District Council by 2nd November; the Council RESOLVED to apply to nominate Firle Stores next.

10.4 Development of a Footpath to Firle Primary School

- 10.4.1 The response from Karl Taylor, Asst. Director Operations, Communities, Economy and Transport was RECEIVED and NOTED: The Council felt it was disappointing that there was no evidence of the existence of a footpath; the Council AGREED no further action that could be taken at this stage; Cllr

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Lance AGREED to contact the school to understand whether the walk to school is still an issue and to suggest the school might like to submit a grant application for high visibility items for the school children.

11. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS:** None Received.
12. **ITEMS AGREED FOR THE PARISH MAGAZINE:** Details and link to the ESH problem reporting portal; invite for the application for small grant awards; attendance at the Citizen Advice drop-in sessions; investigations made regarding the possibility of a footpath from Crossways to the school; PPS development; an update on the application to nominate Firle Village Hall as an ACV.
13. **AGENDA ITEMS PROPOSED FOR THE NEXT ORDINARY MEETING OF FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL:** To RESOLVE to request storage space at Firle Village Hall for Parish Council documents.
14. **THE TIME AND DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL was RECEIVED:** 14th November, 7pm
15. **THE MEETING WAS CLOSED** at 21.23.