

MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL held on Tuesday 13th February 2024, 7.02pm in Firle Village Hall.

Members of the Public in Attendance: Four (one member arrived at 7.30pm).

Questions RECEIVED from the Public: None.

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

Members not in Attendance: None.

Others Present: None.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** None received.
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: Agenda item 7 – Cllr Barr is a Trustee of Firle Village Hall.
3. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING:** The minutes of the ordinary meeting of Firle Parish Council held on 9th January 2024 were RESOLVED to be a correct record and were signed by the Chair.
4. **ACTIONS AGREED TO INSTALL A FOOTPATH BETWEEN CROSSWAYS AND FIRLE PRIMARY SCHOOL:** The Chair gave permission to Lucy Gribble, Parent Governor for Firle Primary School and Parish Councillor for Glynde and Beddingham and Ian Pepe, Chair of Firle Community Association to speak during the discussion; the Council NOTED that it is not easy during the current weather conditions and time of year for children to walk or cycle to school; some children are being brought from Glynde via car share arrangements; it was also NOTED that the need for footpath access is not limited to children and families attending Firle Primary School but also children attending secondary schools, and walkers/hikers particularly in the summer; different footpath routes and access points were discussed; the Council AGREED that a footpath suitable for all users was required and that the preferred route is through School Shaw to the current school crossing; the Council AGREED to write a letter to Firle Estate outlining the route and requesting permission subject to the agreement of the Firle Community Association at their meeting on Tuesday 20th February.
5. **THE DATE AND FORMAT FOR THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING WAS AGREED:** Tuesday 14th May, 7pm in Firle Village Hall prior to the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council; the meeting will follow the same format as last year.
6. **FINANCE/ADMIN:**
 - 6.1 Cllr Bolger was NOMINATED to review the bank statements and invoices during the meeting; at the end of the meeting Cllr Bolger CONFIRMED everything was in order.
 - 6.2 Payments to be made in February were AUTHORISED and to the bank reconciliation was RECEIVED and SIGNED.
 - 6.3 An update on spend to-date vs budget was RECEIVED.
 - 6.4 The meeting dates for 2024/5 were RECEIVED; the Council discussed the possibility of holding bi-monthly meetings but AGREED that a monthly meeting was beneficial and would be continued.
7. **GRANT AWARDS/S137:** An application was received from Firle Village Hall; Cllr Barr did not participate in the discussion or decision making but answered questions raised by the Council Members; Cllr Hill advised she has reviewed the state of the fencing, some of which is rotting; the quote for the replacement of the fencing was discussed; the Council AGREED they would like to receive further details on the quote (breakdown of labour and materials) and a second quote as well as information on the current financial position of the Village Hall.
8. **REPORT(S):**
 - 8.1 Reports from Local and District Councillors and the MP for Lewes were RECEIVED and NOTED.
9. **FIRLE ESTATE**
 - 9.1 An update on the planting of the Coronation Grove was RECEIVED: Cllr Barr has met the woodland expert and they have plotted where the trees will be planted in Lambpool; stakes have been placed with labels for the trees and the trees have now arrived; the location is next to a footpath so members of the public will have access to visit the grove; 14 trees have been sponsored and a couple of trees have been raffled; there has been lots of enthusiasm for the Grove.
10. **CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED:**
 - 10.1 Rural Grass Cutting Service – Environmental Enhancement Service Option: The Council RESOLVED to take option 2 (reduced option).
 - 10.2 D-Day Pin Badge and the County of East Sussex: Details to be published in the Parish Magazine.

10.3 New Net Facilities: 2 members from Firle Cricket Club were in attendance at the meeting; they provided details of their proposal for the purchase of new nets with the possibility of moving the nets a few metres to take them away from the tree line; these improvements would help attract new members; the Club propose to raise funds through crowd funding and whilst a detailed quote has not yet been sought, it is expected to be in the region of £8k; Members of Firle Parish Council AGREED to the proposition and asked for further details of the location and pictures; the Council NOTED that it will need to pass any plans to Firle Estate; Cllr Barr raised the matter of the hard apron that they would like to put at the entrance providing access to the pavilion; members of Firle Cricket Club felt this would be beneficial.

10.4 The Lewes Fund: AGREED to send to the Parish Magazine.

10.5 LNRS: Briefing Parish and Town Councillors on Monday 26th Feb at 6pm. NOTED.

11. HIGHWAYS:

11.1 The latest communication on Wick Street signage was RECEIVED from Ian Johnson, ESH; the arrangement with Highways England is that they would erect the signs as they are so close to the A27 Trunk Road; the latest information from HE is that the project team undertaking the work on these signs have advised that, although not installed yet, they will be shortly; no signs have been erected and the Clerk was asked to email Ian Johnson again.

11.2 The quote for the repairs required to the bus shelter at Crossways was RECEIVED: The Clerk was asked to request that water proofing is added to the quote; the Council AGREED to confirm the quote by email and to instruct the work to proceed if the quote is satisfactory.

11.3 An update on drainage and potholes in the parish and the letter sent to Cllr Johnny Denis and Maria Caulfield MP was RECEIVED: Cllr Lance updated the Council that since reporting the potholes some have been repaired; however they were not done within the timescales stated on the ESCC website; the drains around the school seem to have been cleared however since the recent rainfall one of the drains is again overflowing – this drain is believed to be collapsed; the Council AGREED that Cllr Lance will report again on behalf of the Parish Council.

11.4 An update from Cllr Denis on the request to ask ESCC Highways to attend to the dangerous verge-side potholes along Ripe Lane was RECEIVED: Cllr Barr felt ESH weren't understanding the problem and AGREED to send photos of the issue to the Clerk to forward.

12. MATTERS ARISING:

12.1 An update on the letter sent to the owners of The Cottage requesting permission to place a parking restriction sign on their wall was RECEIVED: Cllr Barr could not access the document and the Council requested that the Clerk resend to Cllr Bolger to print.

12.2 Actions AGREED to prevent dog fouling in the village: Two issues in the parish were NOTED: dog waste had been spread around the playground apparatus as vandalism; and regular dog fouling has been happening in Millennium Woods, in the Allotments and on the Playing Fields car park; the Council AGREED to put an article in the Parish Magazine as a polite request.

12.3 To RESOLVE to support the 'Don't Urbanise the Downs' campaign and agree any actions: Cllr Lance provided details of the campaign to the Parish Council and the request for people to respond to the Local Plan; Firle Parish Council has completed the Local Plan and the Council AGREED no further action was required.

12.4 The surface of the road by Middle Farm was DISCUSSED: the issue is on Firle Straight between Bostal Road and Ripe Lane on north side of the road; Cllr Barr has received complaints from local people who feel it is very rough to drive along; the Clerk was asked to contact Ian Johnson, ESH.

13. **LEWES LOCAL PLAN:** An update on the response of Firle Parish Council to the LDC Local Plan Consultation was RECEIVED: the response has been sent and an acknowledgement from LDC received.

14. **EAST SUSSEX DRAFT LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 4 (LTP4):** The Council AGREED to meet on Monday 19th Feb at 7pm to respond to the consultation on LTP4 (deadline 25th February 2024); Cllr Hill has reviewed the questions and will attend the display in the local library.

15. PROJECTS:

15.120sPlenty for Firle

15.1.1 The Council AGREED that Cllrs Hill and Symes will arrange a meeting to complete the appraisal application for Community Match Funding.

15.2 Assets of Community Value

15.2.1 An update on the progress of nominating Firle Village Stores as an Asset of Community Value was RECEIVED: The nomination has been submitted and a letter of acknowledgement has been received; a letter has been sent to other stakeholders and LDC will reach a decision by 01 March 24.

16. PLANNING APPLICATIONS: Comments AGREED for applications received:

16.1 **SDNP/24/00280/LIS Proposal:** Change of use of annex to holiday let and ancillary residential accommodation **Location:** 56 Crossways, Wick Street, Firle, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8 6LG (deadline 22nd Feb). Members of Firle Parish Council AGREED to remain NEUTRAL.

16.2 **SDNP/24/00377/LIS Proposal:** Installation of external lighting scheme **Location:** Riding School, The Street, Firle, BN8 6LP (deadline 01 March); Members of Firle Parish Council AGREED to OBJECT to the application with the following comments: The Council are concerned over light pollution and the amount of time the lights will be on and if their use is limited to only when an event is held; the Council would like further information on how light pollution issues will be mitigated; Members of Firle Parish Council also felt there was a lack of information regarding the lighting and the direction and extent of the lighting, the lack of detail on sensors and the impact this would have on the dark skies policy; the diagrams in the plans made it difficult to understand how many flood lights were being proposed and the luminated area around the riding school; Firle Parish Council would like to receive further detail in order to make an informed response.

17. ITEMS FOR THE PARISH MAGAZINE AGREED as detailed in the minutes.

18. AGENDA ITEMS PROPOSED FOR THE NEXT ORDINARY MEETING OF FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL: To consider the dangerous driving at the school corner.

19. TO RECEIVE THE TIME AND DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL: 12th March 2024, 7pm Firle Village Hall.

20. THE MEETING CLOSED AT 21.00