

FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of **FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING** held on **Tuesday 13 July 2021 at 7.00pm** at Firle Village Hall.

Present: Cllr Richard Gravett (Chairman), Cllr Andrew Barr (Vice Chairman), Cllr Natasha Bolger, Cllr Liz Hill, Cllr Edgar Symes, Andy Beams (Locum Parish Clerk), 2 members of the public.

Cllr Gravett opened the meeting and welcomed Cllr Bolger to her first meeting as a member of the Parish Council.

1. Apologies for absence

None.

2. Declarations of interest

Cllrs Hill and Symes declared an interest in the planning application as close neighbours to the property.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 May 2021 were agreed as a true record and signed by the chairman.

4. Finance

4.1 Payments

RESOLVED: The council approved payment of the following invoices:

Payee	Purpose	Amount
ESALC	Subscription	£94.04
A Beams	Locum Clerk May 2021	£334.90
A Beams	Locum Clerk June 2021	£347.40
R Gravett	Reimburse for cones	£168.98
Chilli Graphics	Parking signs	£232.06
Playsafe Playgrounds Ltd	Cradle swing seat replacement	£198.00
Mulberry & Co	Internal audit fee 2020/21	£180.00
C Fox-Wilson	Strimming of play area	£40.00
PKF Littlejohn LLP	External audit fee 2019/20	£576.00
F Kennedy	Framed photo as leaving gift to Estate Manager	£50.00
A Barr	Reimbursement of expenses for car park	£179.25

Cllr Gravett was authorised to make the payments via online banking.

4.2 Accounting statement and bank reconciliation for Quarter 1 2021/22

This had been circulated prior to the meeting and the Locum Clerk explained the documents presented.

RESOLVED: Council approved accounting statement and bank reconciliation for Quarter 1 2020/21.

5. Planning

5.1 Applications

[SDNP/21/03269/HOUS](#) and [SDNP/21/03270/LIS](#) **Firle Cottage, The Street, Firle, BN8 6NS**

Replacement extension, interior renovations, external studio outbuildings, swimming pool and associated garden walls

RESOLVED: Further to the comments relating to the previous application (ref SDNP/21/00787/HOUS) the Parish Council recommends ensuring that the music studio building specifications are checked and then fully assessed for compliance once the building is complete.

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5.2 Applications requiring comment outside meetings

Members were reminded of the statutory 21 day deadline for responding to applications. As council meetings were held every two months, there would be occasions when the response deadline fell between meeting and a method for agreeing a response was required. Members were reminded that members of the public can comment on every application direct to Lewes District Council and/or South Downs National Park Authority as appropriate.

RESOLVED: It was agreed that if a deadline fell between scheduled meetings, the Locum Clerk will circulate the application to all Members for comment. If there is an agreed consensus for a response, the Locum Clerk will be authorised to respond as such. If the application is considered controversial and/or Members disagree over the response, an Extraordinary Meeting may be called, or an extension sought until the next scheduled meeting to allow full discussion.

5.3 South Downs National Park consultation on a draft Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document

Members commented on the document which had been circulated in advance of the meeting, and the content was generally well received. A Zoom meeting is being held on 21 July to go through the proposal in more detail, and Cllrs Bolger and Hill plan to attend the meeting.

RESOLVED: The Locum Clerk was asked to respond on behalf of the council expressing the general support for the content of the document and request that the Council is kept up to date with developments. The Clerk will also request a paper copy for circulation among councillors and ask if a recording of the meeting scheduled for 21 July will be made available.

6. Update on ongoing matters

6.1 Meeting held with MP in May 2021

Cllr Symes reported on the meeting, and that he was now awaiting contact information promised to him for key personnel at East Sussex County Council and the South Downs National Park Authority. Cllr Symes will prepare a synopsis of the meeting and circulate to Members for comment, and then provide the final version to the Locum Clerk for publication on the council website.

On a separate matter, the Locum Clerk was asked to contact East Sussex County Council to request refurbishment or replacement of the badly faded school sign.

6.2 Requests to LDC for additional litter bins

The Locum Clerk reported that an offer of a meeting to review the bin locations and requests for additional bins had come from Lewes District Council.

RESOLVED: Cllrs Barr and Hill offered to meet with the Lewes District Council officer to review the situation. The Locum Clerk will pass on the contact details to arrange the meeting.

6.3 Parking and visitor strategy for the village

The Locum Clerk reported that Richard Waring of the South Downs National Park Authority had responded to the request for a meeting to discuss the issues in Firle, stating that he was attending a meeting of the Authority on 6 July 2021 and would report the outcome. To date, no report has been received.

Cllrs Barr and Hill reported that the works on the A27, while allowing for an elevated embankment and planting of new trees, would not incorporate a new car park due to historic issues with unauthorised traveller use of the area.

The idea of a potential car park at Southerham Grey Pit was discussed, acknowledging that it was land owned by Firle Estate and outside the Parish. The Locum Clerk was asked to raise the idea with Firle Estate to gauge an initial response, and if positive, a feasibility study will be suggested.

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7. Village Hall and Playing Fields Committee (VHPFC)

7.1 Agreement between VHPFC and the Parish Council

Cllr Hill pointed out the clarification needed over the description of the inspection area, to ensure it read Children's Play Area as per the rest of the document.

RESOLVED: With the above amendment, the agreement was approved. The Locum Clerk will send an amended version to the Chairman for signing and forwarding to the VHPFC.

7.2 Request from VHPFC in relation to support for the grant funding application

Members discussed the principle of agreeing support for the application and considered the appropriate amount. The wording of the letter of support was discussed and amended on the advice of the Locum Clerk.

RESOLVED: The council agreed to provide financial support via match funding up to a maximum of £3,750 to allow the VHPFC to apply for the full amount available.

8. Firle Community Land Trust (FCLT)

Ian Pepe was invited to address the Council to provide further information on the FCLT proposal. Mr Pepe outlined the history of the previous CLT aligned to Ringmer Area, which had received positive support and identified a requirement for 17 homes in Firle. However, locally there was a backlash to proposals as they were seen to be 'Ringmer centric' and the project stalled.

A new Firle based CLT has been created and will have access to the information, studies and surveys previously completed to carry forward the proposals. At this time, support is sought from the council for the objectives of the FCLT and a future request for grant funding may be forthcoming.

Members, as individuals rather than councillors, are invited to attend a meeting and consider becoming involved with the FCLT.

RESOLVED: Members agreed with the general principle of the FCLT and authorised the Locum Clerk to provide a written reply supporting the proposals.

9. Exclusion of the press and public

RESOLVED: To confirm that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

10. Staff recruitment

10.1 Process for advertising and recruiting a replacement Clerk and RFO

The Locum Clerk circulated in advance of the meeting a suggested job description and salary scale, based on a recent recruitment process at a nearby council of similar size.

RESOLVED: Members approved the salary scale and draft job description and authorised the Locum Clerk to make any necessary amendments and advertise through the local county associations and on the Parish Council website.

11. To note any items for information or inclusion on future agendas

Cllr Gravett reported on a quote received to repair two noticeboards in the village. Members approved repairs to all three boards within a maximum agreed budget.

Cllr Gravett reported on proposals from the cricket club to add a lean-to and shed to the pavilion, to enable safe storage of equipment. Members raised no objections to the proposals.

Cllr Barr read a letter of thanks from Alistair Deighton, the former Firle Estate Manager.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 10.50 pm.