

FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of **FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING** held on

Tuesday 14 September 2021 at 7.00pm at Firle Village Hall.

Present: Cllr Richard Gravett (Chairman), Cllr Andrew Barr (Vice Chairman), Cllr Liz Hill, Andy Beams (Locum Parish Clerk), Bob (Firle Estate Manager), 1 members of the public.

Cllr Barr was delayed arriving at the meeting, and as the meeting was not quorate it could not start until his arrival. The meeting started at 7.25pm.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Natasha Bolger and Edgar Symes.

2. Declarations of interest

Cllr Gravett declared an interest in agenda item 5.4 as a member of Firle Bonfire Society.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 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
Firle Management Ltd	Rent of land Mar – Sep 2021	£50.00
A Beams	Locum Clerk Jul – Aug 2021	£694.80

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

The Locum Clerk informed Members that he had received an invoice from Firle Estate after the agenda had been circulated chasing a payment of £750 for a contribution to works. Members recalled agreeing to pay up to £500, and the Locum Clerk was requested to ask Firle Estate for an amended invoice for £500, which is authorised to be paid.

5. Highways

5.1 To acknowledge recent concerns raised by residents, confirm arrangements for meetings with ESCC and SDNPA regarding traffic matters and agree objectives for those meetings

The member of the public shared concerns over recent traffic issues in the village, including speeding vehicles, large lorries driving through the village, overgrown hedges and parking problems. The Locum Clerk confirmed that he had received correspondence from a number of residents expressing similar concerns.

The Parish Council have attempted to arrange meetings with both the SDNPA and ESCC to raise these and other concerns, and a meeting with the SDNPA had been arranged but subsequently had to be rescheduled and is now planned for 22 September. Cllr Hill confirmed that there needed to be a clear strategy from the SDNPA for how traffic and parking issues to visitor destinations within the Park would operate. The Locum Clerk was asked to chase ESCC for a meeting date.

The Firle Estate Manager confirmed that he would contact any tenants where overhanging hedges were an issue and ask for action to be taken. He was happy to consider changing signage to make the lorry route clearer, and to remove any unnecessary signs relating to social distancing which were still in situ.

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Cllr Gravett agreed to contact the school to ask them to remind parents to use the Village car park to reduce the number of vehicles on the road at drop-off and pick-up times.

The Firle Estate Manager left the meeting at 8.05 pm.

5.2 To consider identified issues with signage and agree any actions

Cllr Barr confirmed he had spoken with the owner of Firle Cottage who would be happy for signs to be erected on his wall asking people not to park their vehicles on the pavement. It was agreed that Cllr Barr can negotiate the exact wording and location of the signs with the property owner and report to the next meeting.

Cllr Hill suggested some temporary signs could be erected similar to those in Glynde, which included various polite requests to reduce speed. The Locum Clerk pointed out that the signs in Glynde were not on the highway but appeared to be on various pieces of privately or Parish owned land. Permission would need to be sought from ESCC Highways before erecting any signs on the roads.

5.3 To consider additional and/or replacement cones and agree actions

Cllr Gravett reported that half of the cones previously purchased were now damaged and he suggested replacing them. Members considered more permanent concrete markers but acknowledged the potential difficulties of placing these on the highway and the risks of damage to vehicles.

RESOLVED: It was agreed to purchase 24 new cones at a cost of £111.

5.4 To consider a request for a road closure for the bonfire celebrations on 30 October and agree a response to Lewes District Council

RESOLVED: Members have no objection and welcome the return of the event.

6. Future meetings

6.1 To consider the frequency of future meetings and agree arrangements for November

Cllr Gravett suggested that the council consider moving to a monthly meeting in future due to the volume of business currently being conducted by the council. The Locum Clerk also pointed out that the new Clerk would not be in post prior to the scheduled meeting on 9 November, and that he was unavailable on that date.

RESOLVED: To move to monthly meetings from November 2021. The November meeting date will be amended to Wednesday 10 November and the Locum Clerk will then be able to attend. The October business meeting will also be moved to Wednesday 13 October due to the Locum Clerk's unavailability on the Tuesday evening.

6.2 To agree a process for adding agenda items for future meetings

The Locum Clerk explained that requests for agenda items from councillors would be clearer if they were in the form of a proposal for action, including an indication of cost where applicable. This would allow for a speedier decision, and it was agreed to work towards this for future meetings.

7. Other matters

7.1 To agree the cost of purchase and emptying of litter bins and agree locations in the village

Cllr Hill had circulated information in advance of the meeting following her recent meeting with Cllr Barr and Darren Liddy of LDC, and her subsequent follow up communications. The information included the costs of purchasing new bins and the ongoing costs of emptying them. There was some confusion as to whether the Village Hall and Playing Fields Committee had formally commented on a preferred location for the bin outside the Village Hall, and it was noted that this would be clarified at their next meeting on 28 September.

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RESOLVED: It was agreed to purchase 3 new bins at a cost of £1,044.97 plus installation costs of £150. Each of the 5 bins will be emptied once a week initially. The council will monitor whether emptying needs to increase to twice weekly during the summer months.

7.2 To receive an update on the Hugh Barnes Memorial Award for 2021 and agree any actions

Cllr Barr has been speaking to various people to find someone able to make the award, and it was acknowledged that this has gone on for many month snow. He hopes to find a suitable provider imminently and will provide an update to the next meeting.

8. 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.

9. Staff recruitment

9.1 To ratify the appointment of the Parish Clerk and contract terms

RESOLVED: That Lorna Thwaites be appointed as the new Parish Clerk as per the agreed hours and salary scale. The council also agreed to join the East Sussex County Council Local Government Scheme and enrol Lorna as a member upon her commencement in November (exact date to be confirmed).

9.2 To approve the purchase of IT equipment for the new Clerk up to the value of £1,000 form the IT earmarked reserve

RESOLVED: That the new Clerk will purchase suitable equipment as needed up to the value of £1,000.

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

Cllr Gravett reported that a final amount was due to the former Clerk. Members were aware an amount was outstanding, and it was agreed this should be settled as soon as possible.

Cllr Gravett also reported that one contractor had been unable to provide bank details to complete a previously authorised bank payment, so this invoice had been settled in cash and would subsequently be reimbursed to Cllr Gravett.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 9.45 pm.