

Minutes of the Meeting Firle Parish Council Planning Committee Tuesday 19th January at 19:30hrs, via Zoom

1 (19/01/21)	19:30hrs	<p>Welcome & Apologies</p> <p>Cllr Gravett requested the Council stood for one minute in order to remember former Parish Councillor Hugh Barnes Yallowley, whose death was announced on the 8th January 2021</p> <p>In attendance: Cllr Richard Gravett Chairman Cllr Andrew Barr Vice Chairman Cllr Liz Hill Cllr Clare Partington Cllr Edgar Symes</p> <p>Finn Kennedy Associate Member</p> <p>Mr Ian Pepe, Firle Residents Association Chairman Kayla Ente BHESCO Mr Michael Leslie-Johnson Melanie Davis Cllr Johnny Denis LDC</p>	
1.1		<p>To Agree the Business of the Meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The business of the meeting was agreed without change 	
1.2		<p>Agreement to the GDPR recording of the Meeting</p> <p>FPC Resolution 1002 (item 1.1 19/01/21) FPC agreement that the meeting would be recorded to enable accurate minute taking</p>	
1.3		<p>Declaration of Interest to the Agenda 19/01/21</p> <p>Cllr Hill declared an interested to Item 5, Community Grant Applications as she is a member of the Firle Community Association which is the applicant</p>	
2 (19.01.20)		<p>Update on Planning Application:</p> <p>Ref: SDNP/20/05509/LIS and SDNP/20/05509/FUL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Partington welcomed Kayla Ente, Founder and CEO of Brighton and Hove Energy Services Co-op • Kayla Ente confirmed that planning application SDNP/20/05509/LIS and SDNP/20/05509/FUL is now withdrawn, as the application was inaccurate and the scope had been underestimated. The SDNPA Planning Department are now currently conferring as to whether this work should now be classed as a Major Development. • Quotes had now been received from the EPC Contractor and the Heat Service Agreement for residents was ready for review by members of the FCA and the Firle Estate • Kayla Ente outlined the Heat Service Agreement would involve consent from residents to have their heat supplied by BHESCO, removal of their current heating system and the installation in an external enclosure of new tanks and associated equipment. There would be no charge to residents for this. 	

FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• BHESCO have proposed that major efficiency works are required at each property to ensure that they meet the level of thermal efficiency and this is the responsibility of the property owner, the Firle Estate. Kayla Ente outlined that it was a condition of those works taking place by the Firle Estate, prior to the installation by BHESCO as poor thermal efficiency would have a cost implication for residents.• The Heat Service agreement would be modelled on a tariff considering the capital cost, infrastructure cost and electricity supply cost• Kayla Ente outlined the benefits of BHESCO being a not for profit social enterprise concerned about fuel poverty and the climate. A similar project in Cambridgeshire had much higher development costs, which would ultimately be passed on to residents within the tariff• Cllr Partington asked if the planning application would be re-submitted, which Kayla Ente replied it would be by 25.01.21• Cllr Partington reiterated the decision of Firle Parish Council to Object to the previous application, with comments and offered to explain the Council's decision• Kayla Ente stated that she understood the Council's decision and thought we had exercised our duty as there were errors in the application• Cllr Gravett asked how likely Kayla Ente thought it would be that the SDNPA would deem the works a Major Development• Kayla Ente replied that her Planning Consultant had lodged an objection because the impact above the ground would be minimal and the project had the wider aims of improving air quality and contributing to Net 0 carbon emissions. These both being National and local concerns• Cllr Barr enquired if the locations of the enclosures had been revised at Polecat, as previously they had been sited at the front of properties.• Kayla Ente stated that she had met with residents at Crossways and that the enclosures would be sited at the rear of the properties at Polecat• Cllr Barr enquired if access for maintenance engineers had been considered at the rear of properties• Kayla Ente stated that it had• Cllr Hill commented that she was very pleased that BHESCO had secured the agreement of the Firle Estate to insulate properties prior to installation of the heat pump system and did Kayla Ente have a Case Officer at SDNPA• Kayla stated that she had a Case Officer and that there would be an agreement in writing with the Firle Estate, otherwise BHESCO will not continue with the project. However, in order to meet the target of installing the heat pumps by September 2021 it may be necessary to break ground on the works, prior to the insulation of the properties. The insulation works may cause disruption to residents, with potential temporary re-housing and English Heritage will be consulting on the Listed Buildings• Kayla Ente stated that there were many lessons learnt from the project so far and that she was hopeful that these could be applied to the next phase of the project in Zone A and that subsidies have been extended to March 2022	
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FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Symes reiterated the Parish Councils support for the project and the endeavor by the Gage Family and BHESCo • Kayla Ente outlined the known issues with UKPN with the low voltage power network in the village and BHESCo would be working to hold UKPN to account on the condition of the power supply • Cllr Partington enquired as to the grant application for the proposed solar array at Lower Mays Farm in Selmeston • Kayla Ente outlined the application with UK Innovate for battery storage, in order to reinforce the power supply to the village • BHESCo have now assigned a Project Manager 	
3(19.01.21)	3.1	Precept Setting Financial Year 21/22	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Gravett outlined that the Council had underspent within this financial year, mainly due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The current reserve held was £34,000.00. The projected spend for the remainder of this financial year and the next would be £33,000.00, carrying a reserve of £11,000 into the 22/23 financial year. The current level of precept was 4% of the Council Tax on a Band D property and he would recommend no increase • Cllr Barr agreed to no increase on the precept and to carry a reserve, as the responsibilities at Parish level are likely to increase • Cllr Symes concurred and to carrying the reserve. He believed we should target and spend money for the good of the community and it was prudent to keep a reserve • Cllr Partington thought the draft budget was an accurate reflection on the liabilities of the Council, especially around the increased costs of financial reporting • Cllr Hill agreed that the precept should remain the same and the Council should get on with spending the reserve • Cllr Barr proposed that the precept should remain unchanged at £10,046.00 and the application made to LDC • Cllr Symes seconded the proposal • Cllr Hill and Cllr Partington were in favor <p>FPC Resolution 1003 (item 3.1 19/01/21) FPC agreement that the precept for Firle Parish Council should remain unchanged for the Financial Year 21/22 at £10,046.00</p>	
	3.2	Parish Clerk Vacancy	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Gravett updated that the Council have been looking for a new Parish Clerk following the resignation of Damian Mooncie. Cllr Gravett thanked Mr Mooncie for his work for the Parish Council over a number of years. FPC had approached Stephanie Mills for the role, but she has withdrawn her interest, due to increased home schooling responsibilities during the current lock down. However, she would be willing to reconsider this once the situation changes. FPC approached SSALC for a temporary interim clerk and have been recommended Andy Beams, who is a clerk an accountant and Responsible Financial Officer. He is available as a Temporary Interim Clerk. • Cllr Gravett outlined that the cost to the Council would be 	

FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £25.00 per hour and asked Councilors for their views on the costs and what work should be undertaken • Cllr Partington stated that given the fee paid to the former Clerk then the equivalent would equate to 2.5 hours per week and the priority should be financial reporting to year end and compliance for the website • Cllr Barr pointed out that the time spent at meetings should be factored into that as an additional cost • Cllr Hill outlined duties and recommended 3 or 4 hours may be more appropriate • Cllr Symes stated that we are in need of a Clerk and that 2.5 hours a week did not seem enough. The Council should consider paying for more hours initially and maybe we should request an estimated cost from Andy Beams • Cllr Barr proposed to give the Chairman the authority to negotiate the number of hours with Andy Bream directly • Cllr Hill moved to suggest an approach of 4 hours initially and then review • Cllr Barr Proposed to engage Andy Beam as a Temporary Interim Clerk for 4 hours a week to be reviewed at the next meeting. • Cllr Symes seconded the proposal • FPC Resolution 1003 (item 3.2 19/01/21) FPC agreement that to engage Andy Beams as a Temporary Interim Clerk for 4 hours a week to be reviewed at the next meeting 	
	3.3	Schedule of Parish Works	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Gravett highlighted the Spring 2020 Parish Council Survey and following receiving a first quote the scope of works may need revision • Cllr Barr stated that following a site visit with the contractor Tom Harvey that he had requested some revisions. This should be used as the template for further quotes • Cllr Gravett proposed a further site visit • Cllr Hill would appreciate a site visit and would welcome further work on litter bins • It was agreed to set a date for a further site visit 	Clerk
	3.4	Hugh Barnes Memorial Award	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Partington outlined correspondence between herself and the Wolstenholme and Barnes Yallowley Families on the creation of an annual award in memory of Hugh. The family have suggested the award should be focused on service to the community and the recipient should be someone who has brought joy and positivity to the village • Cllr Hill endorsed the idea and highlighted some of the good work that has been going on in the community, which could be honored in Hugh's name. She would support a nicely designed plaque, paid for by the Parish Council and awarded at the Fete. The award should be made to both organizations and individuals • Cllr Barr endorsed the idea of a Community Award and cited similar awards given within the Bonfire Society and the Ploughing Match. He queried if it should be re-made annually or passed on with names added each year. 	

FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Gravett stated that the council should be led by the family and would support Cllr Hill's suggestion of recipients being both individuals or groups. He suggested a small replica of the Village Sign as a possible trophy, made locally. • Cllr Symes stated he thought being led by the family would be the most sensitive way to proceed • Cllr Gravett hoped in time that the community could also be consulted on recipients • Cllr Symes advised communicating fully with the family • Cllr Gravett asked Cllr Partington to write to Carro Wolstenholme • Cllr Hill advised us to act swiftly • Cllr Barr suggested the trophy could be made at Firle Forge 	
	3.5	Inspection Report Wicksteed Leisure	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Gravett outlined the report on the Children's Play Area • Cllr Partington stated that the report had been circulated to the Village Hall and Playing Fields Committee and they are awaiting our decision • Cllr Barr had inspected the swings and confirmed the wooden uprights are rotten • Cllr Gravett highlighted the immediate issues with the swings, the log roll and the surface under foot. Replacement has to be by a certified contractor • Cllr Gravett suggested a site visit with the Village Hall and Playfield Committee • Cllr Barr suggested the swings should be disabled immediately and there have been children playing there, even though the playground is closed due to COVID-19 • Finn Kennedy questioned if the chains and iron fittings were still solid • Cllr Barr confirmed it was only the seat and uprights need replacement but the chain was in good order • Cllr Hill suggested that the Closed sign should be accompanied with a warning that the playground is unsafe and would endorse replacement • Cllr Barr to arrange a site visit with Jimmy Gribble • Cllr Gravett voiced he was keen to see the playground re-opened and Cllr Partington is to research current regulations on playgrounds in the pandemic 	
4(19/01/21)		Correspondence	
	4.1	<p>Southern Water, Gibraltar Farmhouse, Andrew Wolstenholme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Partington outlined Correspondence between Southern Water and Andrew Wolsternholme, together with South East Water, the Environment Agency and Cllr Johnny Denis, which the Parish Council had also sent a letter of support. With regard to the continued emission of sewage from the sewer in Wick Street, Southern have conducted a survey and identified fresh water egress. The appropriate treatment would be Tubogel, but unfortunately, this is not possible due to supply chain issues and COVID Restrictions. A further ElectroScan of the sewage pipe between Firle Place and Gibraltar Farmhouse is required. This will not be possible in the near future due to COVID restrictions. • Cllr Partington outlined the response to the Parish Council from Southern Water which included enquires on all the current drain and sewage issues. 56 Crossways has been resolved in after survey the fault is with the engineering and not a blockage. The flooding at Firle School is surface water and should be dealt with 	

FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL

		<p>by South East water and is not sewage, the flooding at the Ram Inn is surface water and should be dealt with similarly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cllr Gravett noted that the all the sewers meet at Gibraltar Farmhouse at Wick Street• Cllr Hill suggested we follow up with Southern Water as a matter of urgency as all the Village sewage is directed there.• Cllr Barr outlined he felt the problem was the pipe North of the A27 as it passes under the main road.• Finn Kennedy stated that further to that sewage emits alongside the A27 and is carried by the passing traffic and is sprayed into the air• Cllr Gravett agreed with Cllr Hill that we should respond to Southern Water and press them to continue investigations• Cllr Symes agreed we should keep up the pressure• Clerk to write again to Southern Water Drain Cover, The Dock, Louise Difford• Cllr Partington outlined the issues Louise Difford is experiencing on the blocking of the drain opposite her property in The Dock. This is compounded by the weight of the paving slab, making it not possible for her to remove it for maintenance. As The Dock is an un adopted road Firle Parish Council are not responsible. Louise Difford would prefer to replace the slab with a grill• Cllr Barr commented that a grill would not be sufficient to withstand farm traffic mounting the pavement• Cllr Hill questioned why it was necessary for farm traffic to mount the pavement• Cllr Barr stated it was due to parked cars• Cllr Hill highlighted that the drain fills quickly and readily with mud and some remedial works have been undertaken.• Cllr Barr commented this was an Estate matter• Cllr Hill proposed we write to the Estate requesting they deal with the issue• Cllr Gravett commented that we should support the Diffords as parishioners with this issue• Cllr Barr would like to support the Diffords, but is concerned that the proposed solution might make it worse• Cllr Hill requested more details on the why the parking is an issue.• Cllr Barr outlined that the major concern was larger vehicles often parked there by residents• Cllr Gravett proposed we write to the Firle Estate Office requesting they deal with the flooding issue <p>Drains Blocked Crossways and School Corner, Culvert Blocked The Ram Inn, Damian Partington</p> <p>Village Hall Drain, Road Sweeping Dates, Chris Antram</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cllr Partington confirmed that this correspondence had been dealt with or was ongoing with the exception of the Road Sweeping• Cllr Partington commented that it's ESCC that are responsible• Cllr Barr commented it would be good to know when the Road Sweeper was coming• Cllr Gravett agreed to write to ESCC requesting notice of the sweeper will be in attendance• Cllr Symes suggested could the Parish Council pay a contractor to clear the drains• Cllr Gravett agreed that might be the way forward and we should consider getting quotes in the future <p>Southern Water, Sewage Pipe Replacement, 56 Crossways, Bruce Levi</p>	
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FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cllr Partington outlined that this issue has been resolved with replacement <p>A27 Crossing Proposal, Andrew Wolstenholme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cllr Barr would not endorse a major lighting scheme on the crossing• Cllr Hill felt we should support Andrew Wolstenholme in rejecting the proposed lighting scheme• Cllr Barr felt that the FCA could also write in support of Andrew Wolstenholme• Mr Ian Pepe had seen the proposal and would consider asking the membership for a response• Cllr Partington suggested writing to Cllr Johnny Denis and requesting the most up to date plan <p>Wind Turbines, Michael Leslie Johnson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Michael Leslie Johnson ask for comment from Firle Parish Council• Cllr Gravett found the proposal interesting and why would we not consider this in the current climate• Michael Leslie Johnson said that the proposal had been forwarded to the trustees of the Firle Estate and by extension the family and they were not cold to it• Cllr Hill stated that anything that improved the power and network capability would be welcomed. She was concerned about there being enough wind at the location proffered• Cllr Barr believed that the valley between Mount Caburn and Firle was always windy. He has concerns about the scale of the turbines and would prefer a small scale wind field interspersed with trees• Cllr Symes questioned would this scheme work together with BHESCo• Michael Leslie Johnson stated not. They are completely different schemes and the wind turbines could incorporate other villages. This scheme would offer minimal disruption and would culminate in heating homes through green electricity and not require digging holes in the ground• Finn Kennedy stated that his own property he switches between electricity generated himself, the National grid and a ground source heat pump and it's very effective to have multiple options• Michael Leslie Johnson replied he wouldn't see the point in occurring the cost and disruption of the ground source system when Wind Turbines would offer a complete solution with the added advantage of selling the excess power back to the grid• Ian Pepe stated he is a former Consultant for wind farms and this wind farm would require a storage facility in order to sell power back to the grid and could not stand-alone. He asked for clarification on what problem building a wind farm would solve.• Michael Leslie Johnson highlighted the problem was the necessity to replace Oil Boilers with a cleaner solution for heating water which this would be• Cllr Partington commented that there is a plan for grid re-enforcement via Solar Array in train at Selmeston• Michael Leslie Johnson made the point that this would be a community driven initiative and all of the grants that are available are for community owned projects. This project would be owned by the Community• Cllr Gravett asked if the Council would be for or against Mike Leslie Johnson pursuing this initiative• Cllr Symes was in favor	
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FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Barr would be in favor provided it was in the right place • Cllr Hill would support further investigation • Cllr Partington stated that she was concerned that this would be another community owned scheme requiring the engagement of Parishioners at a time when two other schemes are ongoing. She would urge engagement with UKPN on the other grid reinforcement projects currently, but is supportive • Michael Leslie Johnson concluded by adding he had corresponded with Maria Caufield MP, who had introduced him to a new wind turbine manufacturer in Newhaven, which will make a difference <p>Village Car Park, Melanie Davis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Melanie Davis requested an update on the current situation of the Village Car Park • Cllr Gravett stated that the Village Car Park is owned by the Firle Estate and they are currently not minded to close it, despite heavy usage during lockdown • Cllr Symes commented that closing the Car Park would force people to park within the centre of the village and current government guidelines would not necessitate it closing • Melanie Davis asked why the Car Park had closed during the first lockdown • Cllr Partington responded that it was closed when exercise should only be taken from home and The Ram Inn was closed. Public concern over parking forced the re-opening in June, when lockdown restrictions changed and it was possible to drive for exercise • Michael Leslie Johnson remarked that currently people should be exercising locally • Cllr Hill responded that the government guidelines were unclear and people are muddled. If people drive to walk here they will not be deterred by the Car Park being closed or the Car Park up top being full. It was up to the COVID Marshalls and the Police to manage. She acknowledged it was a difficult problem but it was better if the car park remained open, rather than have cars all over the Village • Cllr Barr stressed that the ambiguous nature of the word local had caused the issue • Cllr Gravett reported that traffic has been heavy on the Bostal Road. • It was not the place of the Parish Council to judge who can access the Village and we have no right to prevent people from coming here. He has been dismayed at some of the recent rhetoric he has heard on this issue. The Parish Council and the Firle Estate will continue to monitor the situation 	
5		Community Grant Applications Received	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Firle Community Association applied for £750 for the renovation of the Village Phone Box for various rotating community projects • Firle Community Association applied for £200 for the development of a Community Website encompassing information for residents, local advertising and information for visitors and residents. • Cllr Symes stated his support for both applications, though he could foresee issues around the website • Cllr Barr thought the costs were high, but would support the application 	

FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Partington would support the application and outlined the budget for Community Grants was £1000.00 per year and had not be awarded in this financial year • Cllr Gravett agreed and did not think it probative to award the same recipient, twice • Cllr Hill endorsed the value for money in the quote for the phone box, given the labour intensive nature of the work required. The phone box is an asset to the village. With regard to the web site it would be an excellent method of communication to the Parish, offering one port of call with links to other village web sites and would support small businesses • Cllr Barr voiced this would be a good opportunity to support the FCA • Cllr Partington enquired if some of the work of the Parish Magazine would be incorporated into the website • Ian Pepe responded that this idea had been discussed and there was a cross over in material. The objective would be a public notice board online with pages managed by multiple parties. • Cllr Symes enquired would there be a committee for editorial control • Ian Pepe responded that the detail has not been finalized, but party politics would not be permitted. The spirit would be to keep the content as neutral as possible with an administrator who would monitor content. • Cllr Symes pointed out the risk of one person being responsible for monitoring the editorial content • Cllr Hill responded that it was a website for facts not views • Cllr Gravett moved to proposal and summarized. Given that the funds are still unspent this year that the Council should grant the FCA the full grant available of £1000.00 • Cllr Symes seconded the proposal <p>FPC Resolution 1004 (item 5 19/01/21) FPC agreement to award the Firle Community Association the full Community Grant of £1000.00</p>	
6		<p>Reports from Other Meetings</p>	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Hill reported from her update meeting with Kayla Ente, Cllr Emily O Brian, Cllr Johnny Denis and Chris Antram. Further to information already received in this meeting Cllr Hill added that BHESCo are applying for grant funding to assist with the cost of thermal insulation of properties • Cllr Partington asked given the cost of insulation and the initial reaction of Firle Estate, that they would adopt a sliding scale of works based on cost. Did she think BHESCo had a minimum limit for the level of insulation required before they would complete the works • Cllr Hill responded she thought there was a bottom line that BHESCo would take if the insulation were insufficient for the system to work. • Cllr Gravett were any follow up meetings plans • Cllr Hill stated that Kayla was willing to update anyone who wished at each stage of the project. • Cllr Hill Reported on her attendance at the SDNPA Town and Parish Council Workshop. On the subject of Visitor engagement in the National Park Cllr Hill commented that the policy of encouraging visitors to arrive by bike was not practical in Firle. She has also pursued with Lewes District Councilors the proposal 	

FIRLE PARISH COUNCIL

		of a Community Bus Service a project which was of interest to them and she would continue to look into.	
		Cllr Symes has received correspondence from Maria Caufield accepting a meeting to discuss the proposed reduction of the speed limit with the village to 20mph	

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