

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2025 in the Small Hall of the Village Hall, Gilberts Drive, East Dean, commencing at 6.30 pm**

**Councillors present:** Cllr J Greenway, Cllr P Hill, Cllr P Seeley (Chair), Cllr T Larkin, and Cllr D White.

**In attendance:** District Cllr D Greaves, Cllr Shing, and Clerk & RFO Fiona Chalk.

Public Session: There were no members of the public present.

Minute No.	Item	Action responsibility
1079	<b>Acceptance of apologies for absence:</b> Apologies were received from Cllr Bryant, Cllr Fowler, Cllr Baker, and Cllr Bustard	
1080	<b>Declarations of Interest:</b> None.	
1081	<b>Approval of minutes on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2024</b> <b>Resolved:</b> The minutes were approved as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chair	Clerk to publish
1082	<b>Report of the Member of Parliament</b> No report was received. Meeting dates have been requested, and reports will be submitted next year. A reminder was given that the MP session is scheduled for this Saturday at 9.30 am in the Village Hall.	
1083	<b>Report of the County Councillor</b> Cllr Shing presented his report, noting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exceat Bridge Update</li> </ul> The Public Inquiry into the objections to the Compulsory Purchase Orders in respect of the land required to build Exceat bridge is now scheduled for May 2025. There were six objections to the CPO, and whilst agreements were reached with two objectors, four remain unresolved. The objections primarily concern the provision for sustainable transport and pedestrian safety; opportunities for broader cycleway and active travel improvements; impacts on local businesses due to land requirements within a car park; ongoing control of the culvert and flood defences along the River Cuckmere; management responsibilities within the National Park; security and access to properties; and levels of compensation sought to settle terms. Discussions and negotiations are ongoing, with the aim of reaching resolutions before the public inquiry. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Government Finances</li> </ul> Additional Social Care Funding £ 8.9 m, New Children's Social Care Prevention Grant £1.5 m, Repurposed Services Grant £ 0.5m, and separately, £21m to Highways for pothole repairs.	

1084	<p><b>Report of the District Councillor</b></p> <p>Cllr Greaves presented his report, noting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Telephone Box removal</li> <li>• Wealden Playground consultation for Hailsham centre</li> <li>• WDC Council Tax payments taken early - An automated scheduling error meant that direct debits for Council Tax and Business Rates were taken on 27th December rather than on 1st January. 17,594 Council Taxpayers and 324 Business rate payers have been affected. Compensation can be requested. Any charges incurred because of the Direct Debit being taken early will be refunded by WDC. However, proof of the charges is required and must be submitted to <a href="mailto:localtax@wealden.gov.uk">localtax@wealden.gov.uk</a>. Please title the email 'DD error' as this will enable WDC to prioritise this correspondence.</li> <li>• Devolution and the implications for Wealden</li> <li>• The matter of repair to the VH car park is in hand.</li> </ul>	
1085	<p><b>Update on Actions from last meeting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cllr Hill to follow up on the quote for upright posts at Peakdean Lane.</li> <li>• Cllr Fowler/Seeley follow up on the posts for Willingdon Lane once the weather improves.</li> <li>• Cllrs to consider their property deeds on the Estate, regarding permitted rights for utility companies etc.</li> </ul> <p>All others completed, where appropriate.</p>	
1086	<p><b>Budget and Precept for 25/26</b></p> <p>The precept is based on the 2024/25 precept, but with a 2.7% uplift to reflect the RPI as of September 2024, together with a 2.3% uplift to cover improvement works and enhancement projects for the Parish.</p> <p>The Parish Council is extremely fortunate to have been notified that it has been left a financial gift in the will of a former resident. This is anticipated to be approximately £25,000, which will fund a number of planned improvement works on issues such as accessibility and safety.</p> <p>There is an anticipated income of £108,360 and expenditure of £105,989, leaving a small surplus of £2,371. The General Reserve figure at the end of 2025/26 will be approximately £63,000.</p> <p>The proposed precept of £77175 (£73500 24/25) represents £79.18 per household (£73.70 24/25) against a national average of £85.88 for the average Band D property.</p> <p>Discussions were had on the potential development at the Recreation Ground (to be discussed at the February meeting); Clerks salary (aligned to National Scales), and Churchyard maintenance.</p> <p>All councillors were thanked for their input on ideas for parish improvements for the upcoming financial year.</p> <p>All Councillors present thanked the Clerk for her diligence in preparing and presenting the budget proposals.</p>	

	<b>Resolved: The Council approved the budget and the signing of the Precept request form, in the sum of £77175</b>	Clerk to circulate agreed budget to Cllrs
1087	<p><b>Planning Application and Delegated Authority</b> SDNP/24/05030/HOUS – 40 Elven Lane <b>Resolved: The Council resolved comment no objection to this application.</b></p> <p>A Scheme of Delegation to give the Clerk authority to respond to planning applications, as proper officer of East Dean &amp; Friston Council, under the specified circumstances set out in the Scheme, was discussed. <b>Resolved: The Council resolved to approve a Scheme of Delegation for the Clerk to respond on planning applications that are minor and not controversial.</b></p>	<p>Clerk to respond to SDNP</p> <p>Clerk to update the website</p>
1088	<p><b>Payments &amp; Receipts</b></p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> The Council resolved to approve all the payments listed.</p>	Clerk to make payment
1089	<p><b>Business in Progress</b> A number of items were discussed and actions noted below.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> Phone box: Councillors supported the response, based on collated Councillors comments.</p> <p>Defib Training: The Council proposed the date be Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2025. Details will be published.</p> <p>Councillor Expenses &amp; Allowances: The Council resolved to approve the amended policy.</p> <p>Wicksteed Playground Repairs: The Council resolved to approve the additional expenditure for fitting of fixtures listed under the previous repair quote.</p> <p>Revised Meeting Dates: The Council resolved to move the date of March &amp; May's planning meetings to the third Tuesday of the month.</p>	<p>Clerk to respond</p> <p>Clerk to organise</p> <p>Clerk to publish</p> <p>Clerk to publish and circulate to all Cllrs.</p>
1090	<p><b>Website &amp; Gov.uk domain</b> The Council discussed the development of a new website under a gov.uk domain name.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> The Council <b>resolved</b> to approve the development of a new gov.uk domain, new website, and emails addresses, provided by VCS Websites, up to a maximum spend of £1000.</p> <p>The name for the new website was proposed as <a href="mailto:EastDeanFriston-pc@gov.uk">EastDeanFriston-pc@gov.uk</a>, as the current name is not acceptable for an @gov.uk web address.</p>	Clerk to organise

1091	<p><b>List of Contractors / Handyperson appointment</b> The Council considered the appointment of a Handyperson, on a self-employed basis, considering an independent appointment or joining an SLA with other parishes to utilise an existing Lengthsman.</p> <p>The Council considered a policy for drawing up a List of Approved Contractors.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> The Council <b>resolved</b> to progress discussions on both of these matters.</p>	<p>Clerk to further investigate. Cllrs to advise Clerk what duties to include in such a position. Cllrs Seeley/Hill/White to send suggested wording on the appointment/appeals element of the policy. To be discussed at February meeting.</p>
1092	<p><b>Urgent Items</b> None</p>	
1093	<p><b>Reports:</b> a) <u>Chair of the Council</u> SDNP management plan and local plan are up for discussion at a meeting for Councillors on 5<sup>th</sup> February in Lewes Town Hall.</p>	Cllr Seeley to attend
	<p>b) <u>Finance</u> The bank reconciliation was presented. The Chair signed the bank reconciliation.</p>	
	<p>c) <u>Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group</u> No further update. The next meeting is 11th February.</p>	
	<p>d) <u>Rights of Way &amp; Highways</u> Cllr Hill met with the Highway Steward and discussed relevant issues in the village. Old Willingdon Road – a quote to be sought for trees to be cut back on the roadside 2 benches have been ordered. The Council <b>resolved</b> a further bench in Oak, be ordered for the Recreation Ground. Footpath from Warren Lane to Peakdean Close has a Laurel bush that blocks the footpath. Meeting to be sought with owners of The Grange to discuss possible residential units for the elderly</p>	<p>Cllr Greenway Cllr Hill Clerk to write Cllr Hill/Seeley</p>
	<p>e) <u>Tree Warden</u> 12/14 Michel Dene – Land Registry be contacted to clarify ownership of the group of overhanging trees. Summer Down Lane – the resident has not responded. A quote will be sought and a re-charge proposed.</p>	<p>Cllr Bryant to advise Cllr Greenway</p>
	<p>f) <u>Recreation Ground</u> None.</p>	
	<p>g) <u>Downlands Estate Management Group (RC/RA/PC)</u> None.</p>	
1094	<p><b>Correspondence Report</b> Councillors noted items of correspondence, including.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speedwatch – invitation from the PCSO</li> <li>• The Council <b>resolved</b> for the Clerk to sign the Hire Agreement for 25/26 with the Village Hall Trust.</li> </ul>	<p>Clerk to liaise for the A259 Clerk</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signage for the shops and the issue of drivers entering Gore Farm Close in error</li> <li>• National Trust Car Park in adverse weather.</li> <li>• Ultra marathons – car parking</li> <li>• 48 Peak Dean Lane – hedge</li> </ul>	Clerk to contact NT Clerk to respond
1095	<b>Date of Next Meeting</b> Thursday 6 <sup>th</sup> February at <b>6.30 pm</b> in the small village hall	All

PAYEE	PAYMENTS	SUB TOTAL	VAT	TOTAL
	DETAILS			
P Hill	Xmas lights	£29.99		£29.99
ESCC Pension	Clerk Pension	£459.46		£459.46
Tansley Printers	Maps 20 mph	£26.00	5.20	£31.20
Cllr	Allowance	£188.00		£188.00
Cilca	Webinar - Intro to CilCA	£60.00		£60.00
Tansley Printers	Maps 20 mph	£13.00	2.60	£15.60
Clerk	Salary and allowance	£1,514.00		£1,514.00
Grants Eastbourne	Grass mowing	£680.00	136.00	£816.00
HMRC	PAYE & NI	£182.68		£182.68
Business Stream	Water Cricket Pavilion	£6.32		£6.32
Village Hall	Hire December	£42.00		£42.00
F Chalk	Laptop	£540.83	108.17	£649.00
Cuckmere Buses	Quarter ended 31 December	£443.52		£443.52
EDF	Cricket Pavilion	£68.86	3.44	£72.30
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£4,254.66</b>	<b>255.41</b>	<b>£4,510.07</b>