



East Dean & Friston P a r i s h C o u n c i l

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 4th June in the Small Hall of the Village Hall, East Dean, commencing at 7.00 pm

Councillors present: Cllr Bustard, Cllr Gaffney, Cllr Greenway, Cllr Harvey, Cllr Hill, Cllr Larkin & Cllr Morris. County Councillor Shing and District Councillor Greaves

In attendance: Clerk & RFO Phil Burgess.

Public Session: One member of the public was present. The following issue was raised.

Architectural Drawings. These mid-century drawings were due for display at the recent Annual Village Meeting. However, this had to be delayed because none of the plans bore a street name and number. They were all distinguished by a plot number used prior to the build, so it was extremely difficult to identify the properties.

2360 **Apologies for absence.** Cllr Fowler.

2361 **Declarations of Interest.** None.

2362 **Member of Parliament report.** Written report noted.

2363 **County Councillor Report.** Cllr Shing reported the following:

- ESCC Leader was elected on 21st May. Cllr Woolley of Reform UK.
- Cllr Shing had been retained on the scrutiny committee and the Exceat Project Board. He would press for regular meeting updates from the contractors/Highways for affected parishes.
- He had turned down an offer to join the SDNP board.
- Cllr Bustard advised that the stakeholder meetings on the Exceat had so far been disappointing. The staff seemed to have little knowledge of the area and challenges during the build. The PC still has major concerns over a potential bus turning head at Friston Green and the effectiveness of diversions. Cllr Shing informed council that Paul the site manager was local and should have a better understanding. The council should refer to Highways rather than the contractor for these concerns

2364 **District Councillor report.** Cllr Greaves' written report would be circulated after the meeting. Main points as follows:

- Further funding added to the Community-led Infrastructure fund (CLIF)
- Government consultation on the make-up of the unitary authorities in East Sussex.
- Business and Networking Services available through Wealden DC
- Re-introduction of the Ward Members' Grant scheme available to local organisations

2365 **Minutes of the meeting on 14th May 2026.** These were approved by council and signed by the chair.

2366 **Matters arising and update on actions outstanding**

Minute 2338 Lead Councillors. Cllr Larkin stepped down as Environment lead and Cllr Harvey was elected.

Minute 2273 Phyllis Burningham Bequest. Cllr Fowler was away at present, and the bench position would be addressed for the July meeting. Cllr Hill would order an oak bench from Rustic Gardens.

Minute 2300 Roundabout Freeholds on private estate. Clerk still investigating and the results would be taken to the next Tri-partite meeting with EDDR.

Minute 2352 Wildflower Verges. Cllr Greenway has arranged to meet Jonathan Timberlake next week to identify suitable areas.

All other issues cleared.

2367 Payments and receipts. All approved as detailed.

2368 Bank Reconciliations. Both accounts agreed and signed by the chair.

2369 Disability Plan. Cllr Gaffney presented the plan. It was important to consider disability in every project the council should undertake. All disabilities should be considered including such conditions as dementia, heart disease, visual and aural impairment etc. The listing of actions to be undertaken (starting on page 12) should be prioritised and progressed over the next 3 years. *Action: Cllrs to advise Cllr Gaffney of their preferred priorities in advance of the next meeting.*

2370 Friston Pond Renovation. Peter Birchall of PTP was appointed to renovate and maintain the pond. It was noted that he was also the preferred supplier of both SDNP environmental team and Jonathan Timberlake of the Residents' Association environment group. *Action: Clerk to advise contractor and initiate grant request.*

2371 Annual Governance and Accountability Return AGAR 2026 – Governance

- a) The governance statement for the year 2025-2026 (AGAR Section1) was reviewed and approved. Both the chair and clerk signed section 1 page 4.
- b) The effectiveness of the council's Internal Audit regime for the year 2025-2026 was formally confirmed and their recommendations accepted
- c) The report of the Internal Auditor 2026 on page 3 of the AGAR was noted and approved.

2372 AGAR 2026. Accounts

- a) The Annual Accounting Statements 2026, with supporting end of year bank reconciliation and explanation of variances were considered and approved. Section 2 Page 5 of AGAR was signed by the chair to confirm.
- b) The period from Wednesday 10th June to Tuesday 21st July 2026 for the exercise of electors' rights in relation to the Annual Return was approved.
- c) The overall bank and investment reconciliation as at 31st March 2026 was noted and approved.
- d) The listing of significant variances between 24/5 and 25/26 years was considered and approved. *Actions: Clerk to submit AGAR to external Auditor and advertise elector's rights to view accounts.*

2373 Dog Fouling PSPO. Renewal of the Wealden Public Space Protection Order for the district was noted.

2374 Toilets in the Village. The estate had been informed of financial assistance available in return for the provision of public toilets. Should the scheme be terminated after the 27/28 year under local government re-organisation the council would consider assistance direct. *Action: Clerk to diarise for 2028 to review position. Current leaseholder at the Hiker's Rest would be identified and informed.*

2375 **Art Weekend.** Cllr Morris advised that the Village Hall rental fee of over £1000 was still the major stumbling block even if a set-up fee was not charged. Lesley Schillinger, the organiser of the event, was intending to attract a high level of artistic ability. Some local artists were suggested to Cllr Morris for potential approach. Further information and an income and expenditure projection were requested for the next meeting. *Cllr Morris to progress.*

2376 **Parking on Michel Dene Rd.** This relates to the issue of up to a dozen cars parked on the left leading up to the Elven Lane junction. The issue was worse when approaching up the hill towards Elven Lane, when parked cars created a blind bend. Suggested improvements were a 20mph sign/hazard sign immediately prior to the trouble spot and a refuge to allow vehicles to pull in halfway along the stretch. Yellow lines are often regarded as simply moving a problem. The verge along this stretch is largely part of the freehold for no 11 Michel Dene Rd. *Action: Observations to be taken to next Tri-partite meeting with EDDR.*

2377 **Improvements to Annual Village Meeting.** More advertising (hoardings), avoiding a Friday and improved catering arrangements were mentioned. Suggestions for improvements to be sent to the clerk for consideration at the next meeting. *Action: ideas to Clerk*

2378 **Signage on Verges.** "Verge restoration" signage would need approval by ESCC and would probably be prone to vandalism. Cuckmere buses may consider running a shuttle bus from the village to reduce pedestrian traffic. *Action: Clerk to approach Cuckmere buses.*

2379 Urgent Items.

- Recreation ground meeting with the estate This would be attended by Cllr Larkin, Jonathan Timberlake and the Clerk. Cllr Larkin would source a spray can to mark trees for removal/reduction.
- Cyclists on Friston Hill This remained a problem as cyclists were attempting to climb the hill without realising the dangers. Signage may assist in re-directing them to use the Hobbs Eares route, but positioning would depend upon freehold owners. *Action: Cllr Morris and Clerk to investigate further.*
- Resident facilities survey Text to be further refined and brought back to July Meeting. Trial of 20 or so residents suggested to ensure survey was ready for full distribution. Any suggestions for amendments to Cllr Morris.
- Hanging Basket watering rota The baskets were to be installed around 12th June by Cllr Hill. 1 litre of water required daily
 - Friston Hill to be shared between Cllrs Morris and Bustard
 - Monday and Friday Cllr Hill
 - Weds & 1 other day Cllr Larkin
 - Graham Street 1 day
 - Tuesday Cllr Greenway
 - Sunday Cllr Harvey

2380 Reports.

- a) **Chair of the council.**
- b) **Defibrillators.** All defibrillators had been tested and were in working order. New pads would be required by October.
- c) **Rights of Way and Highways.** Issue with overgrown hedge on FP8 (Ridgeway to Old Willingdon Rd) again this year. *Action: Clerk to liaise with Cllr Greenway to issue letter to no 33 Ridgeway.*
- d) **Tree Warden.** No report
- e) **Recreation Ground.** Village Sign and Beacon painting; Cllr Fowler would be approached first then Paul Seeley who had offered to undertake the work. *Action: Clerk*
- f) **Downlands Estate Management Group.**

g) **Greensward meeting.** Cllr Greenway reported that the trees had been catalogued.

2381 Correspondence.

- a) A resident's concerns over the Exceat project would be referred to the Jevington Rd Junction working group.
- b) EDDR priorities list for maintenance was noted

2382 Date of next meeting. This will take place on Thursday 2nd July 2026 at 7.00 pm.

Meeting Closed at 9.10 p.m.

Minutes confirmed as a true representation: Signed.....Date.....

