



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 5th February 2026 in the Small Hall of the Village Hall, East Dean, commencing at 7.00 pm

Councillors present: Cllr Bustard, Cllr Fowler, Cllr Greenway, Cllr Hill, Cllr Larkin, Cllr Morris (joined later) and Cllr Seeley. District Cllr Greaves.

In attendance: Clerk & RFO Phil Burgess.

Public Session: Two members of the public were present. No issues were raised.

2261 **Apologies for absence.** Cllrs Baker and Harvey. County Cllr Shing.

2262 **Declarations of Interest.** None.

2263 **Member of Parliament report.** Written report noted.

2264 **County Councillor Report.** Written report detailing a £70 million deficit, requiring the County Council to apply to central government for exceptional funding. *Action: Clerk to chase traffic concerns in advance of next meeting.*

2265 **District Councillor report.** Cllr Greaves' written report would be circulated after the meeting. The main points were as follows:

- WDC has requested that Local Government re-organisation be paused. However, the 3 Unitary model is likely to go ahead (Brighton, East and West Sussex).
- County Council elections have been postponed until 2027. District Council elections are due to take place in 2028.
- Birling gap steps remain closed for safety reasons after 9 people were winched to safety following a cliff collapse.
- WDC is having a recruitment drive.
- There are currently 68,000 homes in the Wealden area with a requirement to build a further 20,000.

2266 **Minutes of the meeting on 8th January 2026.** These were approved by council and signed by the chair.

2267 **Matters arising and update on actions outstanding**

Minute 2052 Broadband. Letter received from Department for Science Innovation and Technology in response to our query. Details of City Fibre project (still on-going) and assistance for the vulnerable following digital switchover would be publicised. *Action: Clerk*

Minute 2226 CIL grants from SDNP. Friston pond is likely to qualify for grant assistance, and a meeting has been arranged there with SDNP biodiversity officer, SDNP ranger, Jonathan Timberlake and Clerk. Cllr Hill will also attend. *Action: Clerk to report back*

Minute 2234 (ii) Water Run-off issue around 2a Windmill lane. Still happening. *Clerk to chase.*

Minute 2257. Emergency Plan. Further meeting arranged between Cllrs Bustard and Fowler to finalise changes required.

All other issues cleared.

2268 Payments and receipts. All approved as detailed.

2269 Bank Reconciliations. Accounts agreed and signed by the chair.

2270 Annual Governance and Accounts. The following policies and procedures were agreed and re-adopted:

- ICO Model Publication Scheme
- A completed guide to information handling – customised to our council
- Policy for information protection and data protection

Agenda items for Hybrid Meetings and the Pavilion Project debated later in the meeting.

2271 Old Architectural Drawings. Mid-20th century drawings of properties in the village would be accepted by the council for distribution to residents. Current occupants would be offered first refusal. Cllrs Hill and Larkin would assist the Clerk in cataloguing the drawings ready for distribution at the Annual Village Meeting (AVM). *Action: Clerk to arrange delivery.*

Cllr Morris joined the meeting.

2272 Signage for Local Walks. Brighton and Hove bus company has an initiative for signage in Korean and Chinese and the use of QR codes. We may be able to arrange a tie-in with this scheme. Cllr Bustard has a contact at the bus company and will report back with a view to forming a working party to determine requirements. *Action: Cllr Bustard*

2273 Phyllis Burningham Bequest. An approach would be made to a close friend of the deceased to determine a fitting tribute and whether such a tribute was considered appropriate. *Action: Cllr Fowler.*

2274 May Meeting Dates. The May parish council meeting would be moved to Thursday 7th May following postponement of the elections scheduled for that date. The AVM would remain at Friday 15th May. *Action: Clerk to progress.*

2275 Neighbourhood Plan Group dissolution. Following the referendum on 12th February, the clerk would prepare a letter of thanks to the non-council members of the group who had dedicated so much time and effort to the comprehensive plan. Cllr Bustard would liaise with the clerk. *Action: Clerk*

2276 Urgent Items.

- An encouraging email had been received from SDNP regarding vehicular access to Black Robin Farm. Bus services would be gradually scaled up to meet the need with 13X and sight-seeing bus services increasing. The reliance on private transport would be minimised.
- A code of conduct complaint made against Cllr Bustard had been rejected by the Monitoring Officer at WDC.
- Car Park Freehold. WDC had advised the council that the car park was considered a strategic asset, and the freehold would not therefore be offered to EDFPC. The concern, of course, is that charges would be levied should the car park pass to the new unitary authority.
- Hanging baskets for summer would again be arranged by Cllr Hill.
- Friston Green. The placement of equipment by SGN on the green without permission was still a concern. In the past, a similar arrangement on the recreation ground with a

water supply company had attracted a charge. SGN should be approached for a £500 donation to a charity in respect of potential damage caused. *Action: Clerk*

2277 Reports.

- a) **Chair of the council.** No report.
- b) **Defibrillators.** Cllr Larkin advised that pads were due for replacement in June. Cllr Hill has attempted to contact the resident with a view to sourcing a power supply for a further defibrillator. No response as yet.
- c) **Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.** No report.
- d) **Rights of Way and Highways.** Cllr Hill believed all spreading of bark chips was complete but would confirm with Cllr Harvey. Surplus chippings are available to residents at Friston Pond.
- e) **Tree Warden.** A tree had fallen into the A259 near the Old Parsonage recently. The importance of felling the remaining trees will be stressed at next SLR meeting in March.
- f) **Recreation Ground.** Latest inspection report supplied. Minor action required but will be done by Cllr Fowler. Bi-annual professional inspection due. *Clerk to arrange*
- g) **Downlands Estate Management Group.** There are 4 sites which require additional surveys prior to the introduction of the 20mph limit. Michel Dene, Warren Lane, Ridgeway and Deneside. Cllr Seeley has agreement for almost all camera sites. The police will shortly go ahead with the survey.
- h) **Traffic Group.** No report.
- i) **MUGA & Orchard Grant Application updates.** The MUGA grant application had now been submitted with all accompanying documentation. Although the application is not likely to be assessed until the April panel meeting, there is still plenty of funding remaining in the CLIF "pot". Initial observations of the funding officer were very positive. The orchard application has been largely completed in collaboration with Jonathan Timberlake. It should be ready for submission shortly.

2278 **Hybrid Meetings.** It was agreed that alternative free video-conferencing software should be investigated to allow regular attendance by Cllr Baker who had suffered disability related absences. Remote attendance would not be permitted for holidays and other commitments. Cllr Baker would be consulted on suitable methods. *Clerk to action*

2279 **Pavilion Project.** Cllr Morris felt that the project had been rushed so far, and we should ensure a thorough process. The following actions were agreed.

- Our arrangement with Peter Shoemith would be terminated owing to his family commitments. He would be thanked for his assistance thus far, and a request for a letter of introduction and a revised brief would be made
- The estate would be approached informally with the updated plans, specifically for agreement with the proposed ridgeline. Cllrs Morris and Harvey (& Cllr Bustard if required) would attend.
- A further meeting of the pavilion group would be arranged.

2280 **Correspondence.** None.

2281 **Date of next meeting.** This will take place on Thursday 5th March 2026 at 7.00 pm.

Meeting Closed at 9.00 p.m.

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