



# East Dean & Friston

## P a r i s h C o u n c i l

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> June in the Small Hall of the Village Hall, Gilberts Drive, East Dean, commencing at 7.30 pm**

**Councillors present:** Cllr Bustard, Cllr Greenway, Cllr Fowler, Cllr Hill, & Cllr Larkin. County Cllr Shing.

**In attendance:** Clerk & RFO Phil Burgess.

5 members of the Public were present plus Speedwatch district administrator Richard Baldwin

Public Session: The following issues were raised:

- A request was received that the public area should face the council.
- The woeful mobile service in the village was highlighted. Cllr Hill advised that discussions had been well advanced with O2 and the previous MP Maria Caulfield for a further mast. However, government policy changed to require them to share the mast with competitors and O2 backed out.

**2070 Election of Chair.** The clerk took the chair initially and Cllr Hill was elected as chair for the remainder of the meeting.

**2071 Apologies for absence.** Cllrs Baker, Seeley and White. District Cllr Greaves.

**2072 Declarations of Interest.** None

**2073 Minutes of the meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> May.** These were approved by council and signed by the chair.

**2074 Matters arising.** None

**2075 Member of Parliament report.** Written report received. Also a request for potential date for visit to the parish. *Action Clerk to liaise with village hall and MP's PA to arrange.*

**2076 County Councillor Report.** Exceat Cllr Shing reported that he had attended the public enquiry. Only one other "non-official" attended. The inspector highlighted the process the public enquiry would take and a final decision on the £22million project is expected by the secretary of state in the autumn. He still has doubts whether the two-lane project will be delivered on time and in budget.

Broadband In response to a question from the public, Cllr Shing advised that he had made enquiries with BT on the provision of broadband in the village, but as yet has received no definitive answers.

Cllr Shing left the meeting.

**2077 Community Speedwatch.** The district administrator Richard Baldwin gave a synopsis of the process. It is supported by all 48 police forces and Police and Crime Commissioners. All speeding reports are co-ordinated so transgressions can be collated nationwide. There remain 3 people in the village who are interested in continuing the campaign, with a minimum of 5 required for effective operation. One of those 5 should be a co-ordinator whose tasks are to arrange time and place for the sessions and data logging after the sessions. This is not onerous. *Action Clerk to publicise.*

**2078 District Councillor report.** Written report received to be circulated to councillors.

*Action Clerk to circulate.*

**2079 Update on Actions from May Minutes.** All actions completed or awaiting response.

**2080 Planning Terms of Reference.** Approval was given to the amendment to the Terms of reference to accommodate urgent decisions. *Action: Clerk to update on website.*

**2081 Donation to RBL.** VE day donation to the Royal British Legion was agreed at £40 (to match Cricket Club donation) plus the amount raised from bucket donations. *Action: Clerk to pay.*

**2082 Charity of the Year.** The Beachy Head Chaplaincy was selected to receive the annual £500 donation. *Action: Clerk to arrange.*

**2083 Annual Governance and Accountability Return AGAR 2025 – Governance**

- a) The governance statement for the year 2024-2025 (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 2024-2025 was formally confirmed.
- c) The report of the Internal Auditor 2025 on page 3 of the AGAR was noted and approved.

**2084 AGAR 2025. Accounts**

- a) The Annual Accounting Statements 2025, 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 Monday 30th June to Friday 8<sup>th</sup> August 2025 for the exercise of electors' rights in relation to the Annual Return was approved.
- c) The overall bank and investment reconciliation as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 was noted and approved.
- d) The listing of significant variances between 23/4 and 24/5 years was considered and approved. *Actions: Clerk to submit AGAR to external Auditor and advertise elector's rights to view accounts.*

**2085 Internal Audit Report.** The internal auditor's findings were noted, and the recommendations adopted. *Action: Clerk to implement.*

**2086 Email communications with residents.** Implementation on the lines of the agenda report was approved. *Action: Clerk to implement.*

**2087 Council Awards Scheme.** Date for presentation set at 4<sup>th</sup> October 2025. Format of the evening deferred until July agenda. *Action: Clerk to liaise with Cllr Baker and Village Hall to prior to July decision.*

**2088 Fireworks Display.** The last display on the recreation ground in November some years ago was chaotic. It had been deliberately set for the same date as the Lewes event and when that event closed the town to incoming transport, the village was swamped with visitors. Cllr Fowler suggested liaison with the cricket club to form a working group with a councillor representative. No event would be staged this year, but a 2026 event was possible. *Action: Cllr Fowler to contact Cricket Club.*

**2089 Payments and receipts.** Payments and receipts were approved as presented.

**2090 Bank Balances.** Balances for all accounts as at 31<sup>st</sup> May were noted. Large amounts were held in the current account which attracted no interest. *Action: Clerk to arrange retention of £10,000 working capital in the current account. Surplus to be transferred to the deposit account.*

**2091 Football Posts.** Cllr Fowler pointed out that fixed posts would impede events on the recreation ground. The current posts were smaller “kick-about” size and moveable. Moveable full-size posts were very expensive. The cricket club need to be consulted. *Action: Clerk to contact chair of CC to determine impact on their use of the recreation ground.*

**2092 Grant Application.** An application from a national charity (Action Against Abuse) was considered and deferred until the July meeting.

**2093 Urgent Items.** None

**2094 Reports.**

- a) **Chair of the council.** No report.
- b) **Defibrillators.** Cllr Larkin reported that all had been checked and reported to circuit. Pads are not due for replacement until June 2026.
- c) **Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.** Cllr Bustard reported that public sessions had been arranged for the 10<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of June, with the SDNP consultation ending on 30<sup>th</sup> June. It is important that the council ensure that a suitable examiner is appointed by SDNP. Non-policy actions from the plan (P63 of submission version) should be considered by council. *Action: Clerk to chase SDNP on examiner issue and check whether EDFPC can have a say. Non-policy actions to be presented to council over a period of time.*
- d) **Rights of Way and Highways.**
  - Ridgeway to Old Willingdon Rd (FP8). Tall overarching hedges and encroachment onto the path by owners remain an issue. Cllr Greenway requested guidance for hedge height and width/path width from ESCC with a view to enforcement letters to the owners.
  - A quotation has been sought by Cllr Hill for replacement steps between Peakdean Close and The Brow
  - Verges designated as Wildflower areas to be raised at next SLR meeting.  
*Actions: Clerk to check hedge specification & add verges to SLR agenda*
- e) **Tree Warden.** No report.
- f) **Recreation Ground.** Approval given to architect to go ahead with revised drawings following a meeting between Cllr Seeley and the Estate. Cllr Fowler advised that VE day was a great success with a fly past and short aerial display. Some benches on the recreation ground require attention/replacement. *Action: Clerk to check benches budget allocation.*
- g) **Downlands Estate Management Group.** No report.
- h) **Traffic Group.** Cllr Hill reported on a hugely positive meeting with NT and BHC. All 3 organisations will contribute to an overall Risk and Opportunities assessment and then expand the group to include ESCC, P&CC etc with a view to achieving a permanent road closure.

**2095 Correspondence.**

- a) **Work on A259.** 16<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> June overnight closures noted.
- b) **Police and Crime Commissioner.** "Safer is Sussex" Survey noted. *Action: Clerk to advertise on website.*
- c) **Rude Mechanical Company.** Performance on the Recreation ground on July 2<sup>nd</sup> noted. They are largely self-sufficient. *Action: Clerk to check charge due.*

2096 **Date of next meeting.** This will take place on Thursday 3rd July at 7.30 pm.

Meeting Closed at 9.03 p.m.

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