



East Dean & Friston Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 5th March 2026 in the Small Hall of the Village Hall, East Dean, commencing at 7.00 pm

Councillors present: Cllr Baker, Cllr Bustard, Cllr Greenway, Cllr Harvey, Cllr Hill and Cllr Morris. District Cllr Greaves.

In attendance: Clerk & RFO Phil Burgess.

Public Session: One member of the public was present. No issues were raised.

2282 **Apologies for absence.** Cllrs Fowler, Larkin and Seeley. County Cllr Shing.

2283 **Declarations of Interest.** None.

2284 **Member of Parliament report.** Written report noted. MP's summer recess visit to the village would be requested for 4th August 2026. *Action: Clerk to book date.*

2285 **County Councillor Report.** Written report including

- a) May elections to go ahead.
- b) £693 Million budget for 26/27 and 4.99% council tax increase.
- c) Repayments on loan from government for Exceptional Financial Support.
- d) Construction of Exceat to commence in June with contractors Jackson Civil Engineering.
- e) Cllr Shing to seek clarity regarding Exceat impact on Friston Hill traffic but this is not likely to be progressed prior to the May elections.

The issue would be revisited at the forthcoming SLR meeting with ESCC

2286 **District Councillor report.** Cllr Greaves' written report would be circulated after the meeting. The main points were as follows:

- More funding is available for High Street Businesses *Action: Clerk to publish details. Cllr Morris would hand-deliver to new and existing businesses.*
- Hailsham community sports hub is now at an advanced stage.
- Details of rainfall and water supply from Southern Water.
- A Buy Local initiative from Sussex food producers.

The current status of the Birling Gap steps was discussed. Significant water run-off has been dismissed as a potential cause of the problem. Compaction of the car park area had been suggested as another possible cause. The repair is still in progress.

2287 **Minutes of the meeting on 5th February 2026.** These were approved by council and signed by the chair.

2288 **Matters arising and update on actions outstanding**

Minute 2226 Pond grant application would be submitted under the Pounds for Ponds scheme after advice from SDNPA biodiversity officer. See minute 2294.

Minute 2234 (ii) Water Run-off issue around 2a Windmill lane. Chased

Minute 2257. Emergency Plan. Cllrs Bustard and Fowler met to finalise changes required. *Now with Clerk to update as requested*

Minute 2264 Further chase on plans to allay traffic concerns in the village following Exceat project. Done

2271 Architectural Drawings. Now delivered. Cataloguing required. Cllrs Hill, Larkin and Seeley would sort and catalogue the drawings prior to the AVM when they would be distributed.

2272 Signage for Local Walks. No further forward with the Brighton Bus company. Working party to be formed. *Action: Clerk (still outstanding)*

2273 Phyllis Burningham Bequest. Cllr Fowler had approached a close friend of the deceased. The suggestion of a possible plaque to an existing bench or a brand-new bench with inscription, sited near the Village Hall or surrounding area was well received and would honour her legacy. Cllr Fowler to advise on suitable bench.

2276 SGN equipment of Friston Green. Company approached for charity payment of £500 See also Minute 2294 below.

2278 Hybrid Meetings. Cllr Baker and the Clerk had successfully tested a Teams meeting. Cllr Baker had a personal version of the software which is provided at no cost. Commercial versions are chargeable.

All other issues cleared.

2289 **Payments and receipts.** All approved as detailed.

2290 **Bank Reconciliations.** Both accounts agreed and signed by the chair.

2291 **Annual Village Meeting.** The format would be similar to last year. No public relations assistance would be required. Cllr Harvey would refine the prepared PowerPoint presentations which would include:

- Neighbourhood Plan
- Friston Pond maintenance
- Architectural Drawings
- Progress on the 20mph speed limit

The Residents Association would have an allotted slot for a presentation and talks from other organisations would be strictly limited both in time (3 minutes) and number. The “traffic light” timer would be used as last year to keep the meeting within a reasonable time frame.

An approach had been received from a resident who was keen to re-instate the art week event. A suggestion was made to combine this with classical music from our local composer Frank Bridge. The resident may wish to announce the intention at the AVM and would be invited to do so. The council would not be involved in the organisation but may be called upon to assist financially.

2292 **May Meeting Date.** It was agreed that the date would revert to 14th May following re-instatement of the County Council elections on the 7th May. The AVM would remain on Friday 15th May. *Action: Clerk to correct schedule.*

2293 **Sauna on the Recreation Ground.** The request from a sauna provider was rejected.

2294 **Friston Pond.**

Damage to grassed areas Grave concerns were expressed regarding the damage to the Pond (a scheduled ancient monument) and surrounding area, both from the shipping containers on the Green and the trench dug by SGN on the side of the pond plot opposite Friston Church. Damage had also been caused by large HGVs using the junction as a turning head. *Action: Clerk to contact Alison Potts (SDNP director of landscape and operations) to determine any enforcement action possible. SGN had already been contacted regarding sympathetic re-instatement of the trench.*

On-going Pond Maintenance Clerk would arrange remedial work to be carried out on the pond in 3 sections on a rolling 3-year basis to allow cleared areas time to recover. A maintenance plan would also be set up and grant funding applied for through the Ponds for Ponds scheme. *Action: Clerk*

2295 **WhatsApp Administration.** Cllr Morris and the Clerk were appointed as administrators to the internal group. *Action: Cllr Hill to progress.*

2296 **Clerk's delegated authority for expenditure.** An increase to £1000 from £500 was approved following advice from the external auditor. *Action: Clerk to amend financial regulations.*

2297 **Budget Progress.** Figures to January 31st were noted with an estimated overall general reserve amount at year end of £116,000.

2298 **Social Media.** No councillor was prepared to take on long term responsibility for Social Media releases. An additional 'phone handset was not considered necessary at this time. The issue was deferred.

2299 **Urgent Items.**

2300 **Reports.**

- a) **Chair of the council.** Cllr Bustard had attended a recent Parishes meeting hosted by SDNP. They are not currently accepting any new design statements
- b) **Defibrillators.**
- c) **Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.** The referendum result was a resounding success with total votes cast at 587, 557 of which were in favour and just 30 against. A positive vote of 94.89% on a very high turnout of 41.5%. The Plan will be used for reference in Planning Committee and will inform capital spending decisions. The Chair thanked all who had assisted in the plan.
Action: Clerk to meet the chair to prioritise suggested actions from the NP and present to next council meeting.
- d) **Rights of Way and Highways.**
 - Cllrs Hill and Fowler had met Jozef regarding the Horsefield squeeze gate and will arrange the oak post repair with him.
 - Remedial work is also required by Jozef on Footpaths 18 and 19, linking The Brow, Peakdean Lane and Micheldene Rd. Steps have degraded and are now a trip hazard.
 - Hedge requires attention at 42 Elven Lane adjacent to the Twitten between there and Elven Close. Also, a hedge on Summerdown Lane. *Action: Cllr Greenway to contact residents.*
 - Work is required on the border of 17 Dene Side where it meets Hillside. *Action: Clerk to inform resident.*

- e) **Tree Warden.**
- f) **Recreation Ground.** Water meter read and revised bill accepted and paid by Cricket Club.
- g) **Downlands Estate Management Group.** There is an issue with inconsiderate parking on the island at the junction between Elven Lane and Elven Close. The result is that traffic has to drive over the grassed island. Ownership of this area needs to be established before further action. *Action: Clerk to provide freehold details*
- h) **Traffic Group.** No report.

Note: Greensward meeting to be included in subsequent agendas

2301 **Correspondence.** None.

2302 **Confidential Item.** Minuted in confidential item M1.

2303 **Date of next meeting.** This will take place on Thursday 2nd April 2026 at 7.00 pm.

Meeting Closed at 9.30 p.m.

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

