



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 Tuesday 6th May in the Small Hall of the Village Hall, Gilberts Drive, East Dean, commencing at 6.30 pm

Councillors present: Cllr Baker, Cllr Bustard, Cllr J Greenway, Cllr Fowler, Cllr P Hill, Cllr P Seeley (Chair) & Cllr White (who joined the meeting at 19.07pm). County Cllr Shing.

In attendance: Clerk & RFO Phil Burgess.

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

2041 **Election of Chair.** The Chair postponed all appointments (agenda items 1 and 4-14) until all councillors were present.

2042 **Apologies for absence.** Cllr Larkin and District Cllr Greaves.

2043 **Declarations of Interest.** None

2044 **Minutes of the meeting on 3rd April.** These were approved by council and signed by the chair.

2045 **Matters arising.** None

2046 **Member of Parliament report.** None

2047 **County Councillor Report.** Devolution - Cllr Shing advised that a final decision on the fate of the 5 District and Borough councils within Sussex will be made by September. They are likely to be absorbed into 3 unitary authorities (East Sussex, West Sussex and Brighton and Hove) who will be presided over by an elected mayor. Members representing each unitary authority will serve under the mayor as a strategic group. The number of members from each unitary authority has yet to be decided.

Exceat Bridge. ESCC cabinet has approved the expenditure for the full 2 lane option to replace the existing 150 year old bridge. The public enquiry begins in mid-May. Work is due to start next spring.

Cllr Shing left the meeting.

2048 **District Councillor report.** None

2049 **Update on Actions from April Minutes.** Cllr Baker had provided a list of awards for consideration (May agenda item 25). All other actions complete.

2050 **Payments and receipts.** Payments and receipts were approved as presented.

2051 **Annual Village Meeting.** All arrangements are in place. 5 verbal presentations will be made, and the Clerk will ensure any Powerpoint presentations are present on the council laptop in advance of the meeting. *Action: Clerk to chase presentation media.*

2052 **Broadband Service in the Village.** Cllrs advised that many fibre cabinets had been installed by Openreach in the private estate in Friston, but East Dean was less well served. It was clear that Openreach had no plans to take the supply to individual properties. The clerk would approach Openreach (BT) to identify cabinets installed and plans for any further units. The follow-up would then be to approach independent fibre installers with co-ordinated orders from residents. *Action: Clerk to approach BT and independent fibre providers (City/Lightning etc).*

2053 **Sussex Police Rural Crime Team.** It was resolved to invite the team to visit the village hall car park. *Action: Clerk to arrange.*

2054 **Council Awards Scheme.** Cllr Baker circulated a revised listing for awards and the following were approved:

- a) Young Achiever (18 or under).
- b) Community Hero
- c) Group/Society of the year.
- d) Business of the year
- e) Special recognition

Full descriptions of the criteria for the awards will be included in the publicity material and in the parish magazine. Nomination forms will be available at the village fete and nominees will require both proposer and seconder. There will be an August cut-off for nominations and the shortlisted candidates (winner only in the under 18 category) will be invited to the awards ceremony in Autumn.

A trophy will be awarded to the winner in each category. The special recognition award may not be presented every year. *Action Cllr Baker/Clerk to arrange publicity and nomination forms.*

2055 Reports.

- a) **Chair of the council.** No report.
- b) **Defibrillators.** Cllr Hill had carried out the monthly inspection on behalf of Cllr. Larkin. Cllr Greenway had had a productive meeting with Balfour Beatty, and the council may yet receive solar units to power both defibrillators and the speed sign.
- c) **Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.** The SDNP planning service is happy with the submission and it will go to consultation. They will also appoint suitable examiners for the plan.
- d) **Rights of Way and Highways.** Chris Haffenden (Grants of Eastbourne – our mowing contractor) is retiring and his brother Stuart will be taking over as sole director. Cllr Hill will meet Stuart shortly and contact Rustic Gardens regarding footpaths with issues.
- e) **Tree Warden.** No report.
- f) **Recreation Ground.** Cllrs Seeley and Fowler to meet Thursday morning regarding final VE day preparations.
- g) **Downlands Estate Management Group.** The 20 mph speed limit is out for consultation with ESCC at present. Stewart Fuller is stepping down from the roads company.

2056 Correspondence.

- a) **Work on A259.** 21-23rd May overnight closures noted.
- b) **Exceat Bridge.** Work on 2 lane bridge to start spring 2026. Noted.
- c) **Beachy Head Traffic Issues.** Meeting to be arranged involving the National Trust, the chaplaincy and Cllr Seeley. *Action: Clerk to arrange*

2057 **Election of Chair.** Cllr Seeley agreed to retain the chair until the Annual Village Meeting, but will be stepping down after that event. At this point no councillor was prepared to take on the role and no nominations were received. The position would be reviewed once the two new councillors had started.

2058 **Election of Vice Chair.** Cllr Hill was elected as vice chair on the understanding that he would deputise as chair for three months only. A declaration of acceptance of office was taken.

2058 **Standing orders.** These were approved and re-adopted.

2059 **Financial Regulations.** These were approved and re-adopted.

2060 **Internal Auditor.** Mulberry and Co were approved for the 2025-26 year.

2061 **Planning Committee.** Terms of reference were re-adopted. All Councillors would be eligible to join this standing committee. Cllr Fowler agreed to remain as chair for 3 months. The position would be reviewed once all new councillors are in place.

2062 **Meeting Times.** Since working councillors were often unable to attend at 6.30 pm the start time for both planning and council meetings would be moved to 7.30 pm. This change would take effect from the meeting on June 5th. Planning meetings would move to the third Thursday of the month (again from June). The May planning meeting would go ahead as advertised. A revised schedule of meetings would be produced. *Action: Clerk to amend website and issue a revised schedule.*

2063 **Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.** The terms of reference were approved. Cllr Bustard will shortly be leaving the council. Cllrs Fowler, White and Baker will remain on the steering group and Cllr Seeley would take over as chair.

2064 **Lead Councillors.** Existing councillors to remain in post. To be reviewed in 3 months. *Action Clerk to include in August Meeting with following item.*

2065 Other Appointments

- a) **Councillor Appointments** to the Village Hall trust, ESALC and Wealden District Association of local councils would remain the same until reviewed in 3 months.
- b) **Emergency Plan.** Again, councillors will remain in post until reviewed in August.
- c) **Appointments to external roles.** The following were approved. Mrs Jan Smith (Pavilion Caretaker), Mr David George (Council Honorary Solicitor) and Mr Graham Street (Flag Master and Bus Shelter Officer).

2066 **Programme for reviewing Council Policies.** The review would start at the October meeting with policy review staggered over the remainder of the council year. *Action: Clerk to schedule.*

2067 **Review of Banking Arrangement and Signatories.** A replacement mandate is currently with Barclays to add the clerk and Cllr Hill to the signatories. Cllr Seeley will remain as signatory.

2068 **Charity of the year.** The item was deferred until the June meeting when suggestions would be invited.

2069 **Date of next meeting.** This will take place on Thursday 5th June at the later time of 7.30 pm.