



East Dean & Friston Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 9th April 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 Harvey, Cllr Hill, Cllr Larkin, Cllr Morris and Cllr Seeley. District Cllr Greaves and County Councillor Shing.

In attendance: Clerk & RFO Phil Burgess.

Public Session: Five members of the public were present. The following issues were raised.

Dene side/Hillside Junction Overgrown hedges were obscuring the sight lines on the junction between these 2 roads. *Action: Clerk to view hedges around nos 2, 17 and 19 Hillside (some of whom had already been approached by Cllr Greenway) and issue letters requesting cutback. ESCC will enforce if no action taken.*

Jevington/Crowlink/A259 Junction Again the issue of safety here was raised for both pedestrians and vehicles. The chair had recently been the victim of a shunt at this junction. Cllr Shing addressed this in his report below. A speed limit on the Jevington Rd and a roundabout was suggested.

Boundary Issues A dispute over the border between the Bowls Club and Maryfield, Friston Hill was brought to council's attention. The Bowls Club had been assessed as not suitable for designation as a local green space (LGS). The resident of Maryfield felt that this should be re-considered owing to the excellent views and wildlife diversity. *Action: Clerk to check qualifying conditions for LGS sites and advise resident. Still OS*

2304 Apologies for absence. Cllr Baker.

2305 Declarations of Interest. None.

2306 Member of Parliament report. Written report noted. MP's visit on 4th August to be arranged in the small hall at the Village Hall.

2307 County Councillor Report.

- Over 50% of County Councillors will be standing down at next month's elections
- Election purdah restricts the actions councillors can take prior to 7th May
- ESCC Highways and Jackson engineering are to open stakeholder consultations with those parishes affected by the Exceat Bridge following completion. *Action: Clerk to pursue a meeting & prepare a formal letter requesting a review of road safety. Meetings arranged – letter to be sent post-election.*

2308 District Councillor report. Cllr Greaves' written report would be circulated after the meeting. The main points were as follows:

- Wealden DC would allow exemption from council tax for the terminally ill.
- Work will start shortly on the Birling Gap steps
- How to report problems regarding the new food waste collections
- Heating Oil support – details not known as yet but will be publicised shortly
- £10,000 councillor award scheme to be re-introduced in near future. Cllr Greaves had helped secure an amount from the last round of grants from another councillor's unused allowance
- Cllr Greaves announced his defection to Reform UK.

2309 Minutes of the meeting on 5th March 2026. These were approved by council and signed by the chair.

2310 Matters arising and update on actions outstanding

Minute 2257. Emergency Plan. Updates underway, some responses still awaited. The new owners of the Hiker's rest and Italian restaurant would be approached to replace the original catering provider volunteer who had now left the village. Farming equipment/vehicles would be addressed on a contact basis through Cllr Greenway.
*Action: Clerk to pursue. **Still some OS***

2273 Phyllis Burningham Bequest. *Action: **Bench site to be considered and finalised at next meeting.***

2276/2294 SGN equipment on Friston Green. Company approached for charity payment of £500 and meeting for remedial work.

2291 AVM Clerk and chair to meet to arrange format and presentations

2300 c. NP Priorities This Agenda.

2300 g Roundabout freeholds on private estate. Still under investigation

All other issues cleared.

2311 Payments and receipts. All approved as detailed.

2312 Bank Reconciliations. Both accounts agreed and signed by the chair.

2313 Annual Village Fete. The council do not require a table at the event Saturday 18th July. *Action: Clerk to advise organising committee. **Done***

2314 Signage for Visitors to the area. The main requirement was for signage to guide visitors safely to Birling Gap. This could be situated on the border of the recreation ground.
*Action: Clerk to investigate and bring back to council. **Still OS***

2315 Gilbert's Drive Path. The initial step would be to write to both WDC and ESCC (as path crosses their land) and state what the council intends to do. *Action: Clerk **Still OS***

2316 Internal Audit Contract. 3-year contract agreed. *Action: Clerk to advise Mulberrys **Done***

2317 Grant Application from Wealden Citizen's Advice. A donation of £300 was agreed. *Action: Clerk - **Done***

2318 Pavilion Cleaning Services. Enquiries should be made regarding "going rate" generally and with Friston Church who have recently engaged a cleaner. This rate would apply to the temporary cleaner, and the rate would be reviewed once our regular cleaner returns from sick leave. *Action: Clerk – **May agenda***

2319 Neighbourhood Plan copies. Requirement for councillors to have copies available at meetings noted.

2320 Neighbourhood Plan Priorities.

- Pavilion Improvements – Project underway
- Climate Change Mitigation. To be considered in all planning requests
- Mobile and Wi-fi connectivity. City Fibre Broadband project still underway

- Provision of local facilities. A public toilet to the rear of the village hall was ruled out for various reasons. Wealden District Council run a scheme to recompense businesses for the provision of public toilets within their opening hours under their community toilet scheme. This may be of interest to the Hiker's rest and the Tiger. *Action: Clerk to contact Estate to check feasibility. Still OS*
- Sustainable Tourism (incl. parking at Birling Gap). To be progressed at meeting with BHC NT and Meads County Cllr on Monday.
- Communications. Mailout is now in force. Website is due for upgrade later in the year. Visitor signage is under investigation.
- Disabled Person's issue. Cllr Bustard and the Clerk to investigate Downlands issues and report back. *Action. In progress*

2321 **Footpath Warden.** A designated footpath warden is not required since the council maintains its own paths and councillors regularly patrol these. *Action: Clerk to advise Ramblers Association. Done*

2322 **Urgent Items.** None

2323 **Reports.**

- Chair of the council.**
- Defibrillators.** Michel Dene Rd unit has been opened and battery is low. Replacement will be purchased. *Done*
- Rights of Way and Highways.**
 - Cllr Hill has approached Rustic Gardens for a schedule relating to the 3 outstanding tasks. Posts on Horsefield path, FP8 repairs and FP19 Michel Dene to Peakdean which is a trip hazard. Tasks have been outstanding for a while, and another contractor will be sought.
 - The Clerk reported an approach from a resident about "Pooh Corner" off Downs View Lane. This is a potential hedge removal which would require planning permission. This property is No 8 Downs View Close. *Action: Clerk to visit to view and write letter. Done – no fence intended*
- Tree Warden.**
- Recreation Ground.**
- Downlands Estate Management Group.** Cllr Seeley will forward a list of positioning for 20mph roundels to Clerk for follow up. Issue currently with Police.
- Traffic Group.** Report not required – remove from next agenda.
- Greensward meeting.** Cllrs Hill and Greenway are invited but are not able to contribute. Any issues will be brought back to council.

2324 **Correspondence.** Notification from SDNPA regarding the new Seven Sisters National Nature Reserve was noted

2325 **Confidential Item.** Minuted in confidential item M2.

2326 **Resignation** Cllr Seeley tendered his resignation with immediate effect. He was thanked for his service both as chair and councillor. Cllr Hill has agreed to stay on the council for a further year. His additional duties for the Benefice will, however, preclude him from chairing meetings or sub-committees.

2327 **Date of next meeting.** This will take place on Thursday 14th May 2026 at 7.00 pm.

Meeting Closed at 8.50 p.m.

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