

FRANT PARISH COUNCIL

THE MINUTES OF A MEETING OF FRANT PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT FRANT MEMORIAL HALL ON WEDNESDAY 16TH MAY 2018 AT 7.30PM

Present: Cllr Rutherford - Chairman
Cllrs Mrs Park, Mrs Best, Mrs Howell, Macdonald-Brown and Crookshank

Mrs R. Karim – Clerk
Mrs J. Steadman – Frant Open Spaces Group
Mr D. Huskisson
1 member of the public

1. To elect Chairman

William Rutherford was proposed as Chairman by Cllr Best and seconded by Cllr Howell.
Owing to a unanimous vote, it was **resolved** to elect Cllr Rutherford as Chairman of the Parish Council.

2. To elect Vice Chairman

Stuart Crookshank was proposed as Vice Chairman by Cllr Best and seconded by Cllr Rutherford.
Owing to a unanimous vote, it was **resolved** to elect Cllr Crookshank as Vice Chairman of the Parish Council.

3. To receive apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs Mrs Wallis, Stevens and Rowland and County Cllrs Whetstone and Standley.
Apologies were accepted.

4. To receive declarations of interest on items on the agenda.

Nil.

5. To approve the Minutes of the Full Council Meeting on 18th April 2018

The Minutes of the meeting were approved as a true and accurate record.

6. To determine matters arising from the previous Minutes for updating and noting

6.1 It was agreed that Cllr Rutherford would meet with Mr. McGregor-Gould to identify a location for the circular bench. Carried forward. **Action: WR**

6.2 Cllr Best said she had written an article about the proposed green in Eridge. Completed.

6.3 The Clerk confirmed she had written to Orchard Landscapes about the Himalayan Balsam on the A267.
Completed.

6.4 Cllr Rutherford confirmed he had written to Rotherfield Parish Council about the proposed boundary changes in Eridge. Completed.

6.5 The Clerk confirmed she had written to Highways and Cllr Standley about the pothole repairs near the green in Frant. Completed.

6.6 The Clerk said the insurers confirmed that the PTFA would require its own insurance for the school camping event on the field behind the school and that a copy of this must be forwarded to the Parish Council, along with their assurance that they will comply with requirements concerning bonfires.

6.7 Cllr Rutherford said he had carried out a risk assessment of the allotments and asked the Clerk to forward the assessment forms for him to complete for the other assets in Frant. **Action: Clerk/WR**

6.8 Cllr Standley to establish whether information from the call for sites made by WDC has been published.
Rolled forward. **Action: BS**

6.9 The Clerk confirmed that she had asked Treework to carry out the work to the two oak trees outside Bells Yew Green Village Hall. Completed.

6.10 The Clerk said she was preparing the application for match funding for the repair of 2 no. fingerposts. She said she had written to Jakk UK for a quote for the fingerpost opposite the entrance to the bottom of Church Lane. She also noted that she had, at the same time, requested an update about the Eridge sign.

7. Public Forum

A member of the public raised her concerns about development at Melfort Farm. She asked councillors what the difference was between a Conservation Area and a listed building. Cllr Howell gave a brief outline about what these designations mean. She also gave some background to the development at Melfort Farm, noting that it was an example of where Wealden DC had made use of the so-called 'flexible approach' to development on brownfield sites.

Cllr Rutherford clarified that the Parish Council was one of many statutory consultees on planning applications, noting that it is Wealden DC that decides the final outcome of applications and not the Parish Council.

Cllr Howell suggested that the local resident contact her directly in her capacity as District Councillor.

7. Reports from County and District Councillors.

County

No report was given in Cllr Standley's absence.

District

Cllr Howell noted that Cllr Chris Hardy had been elected Chairman of the Council that day and Cllr Pam Dodes had been elected Vice Chairman.

Cllr Howell also raised the following:

- She said there are concerns around Kier and the decline in numbers/frequency of their rubbish and recycling collections. She noted that Kier were coming to the end of their current contract and did not seem readily inclined to address these concerns.
- The application to vary (reduce) the provision of affordable housing already approved in the Benhall Mill Road housing scheme has been approved. Cllr Howell said this was because the costs of providing infrastructure were proving onerous to the developer.
- She noted that councillors will be meeting to discuss the way in which Wealden DC was interpreting the 'flexible approach' when determining planning applications. She noted that the south of the district had suffered particularly from developments approved under the guise of a loosely-interpreted flexible approach.
- A recent survey identified that 85% of residents in the county felt satisfied or very satisfied with the Non-emergency Patient Transport Services (PTS) – a good result.
- The 'Give Composting a Go' initiative had run from 6-12 May, aiming to encourage residents to start composting at home.

9. To approve Section 1 of the Annual Return: Annual Governance Statement 2017/18

The Clerk tabled Section 1 of the Annual Return and councillors considered its content. It was **resolved** by unanimous vote to approve this Section 1 for the year ending 31st March 2018.

10. To approve Section 2 of the Annual Return: Accounting Statements for 2017/18

The Clerk tabled Section 2 of the Annual Return and councillors considered its content. It was **resolved** by unanimous vote to approve this Section 2 for the year ending 31st March 2018.

11. Green Spaces

11.1 Erosion around green spaces in the Parish

Mrs Steadman raised the issue of the logs placed along each side of the road outside Mastingate, designed to restrict cars parking up against the green and worsening the erosion already occurring. While noting that the Clerk had asked that the logs be removed as a result of a complaint, Mrs Steadman suggested that if people were hitting the logs with their cars, that was evidence that they were in fact trespassing onto the green, as the logs were set into the sides of the green, rather than being laid on the highway. She said that erosion of the greens and verges in all three of the villages in the Parish was of growing concern. She tabled old postcards, which illustrated just by how much the greens and verges had retreated over the decades, and a picture of a solution installed by Kent County Council of logs properly embedded into the sides of an area of green open space.

Cllr Howell noted that this issue had recently been on the news and she said there was evidence of this in the Parish, particularly along the Bells Yew Green Road and Dundale Road.

Cllr Rutherford noted that the Parish Council had not given permission for the logs to be placed along the sides of the green outside Mastingate. He said that this exposed the Council in being liable for any damage caused to vehicles by one of the logs. However, he acknowledged that a solution was needed and noted that the new bund alongside the green in Bells Yew Green would prove to be a useful experiment. Cllr Crookshank suggested that a Parish-wide strategy/policy needed to be formulated and implemented. Cllr Rutherford agreed and proposed that the Clerk identify a list of consultants who could report on the level of erosion and provide eco-friendly, engineered solutions to the problem. **Action: Clerk**

Cllr Howell said she had received complaints about dog mess in the long grass on the green in Frant. Cllr Rutherford echoed this, noting he had received complaints that the grass was too long for children to play on. Mrs Steadman said that the contractor had missed a cut and had not carried out any strimming recently, leading to the degree of long grass now present. She said she was meeting with the contractor to discuss this and would report back to Cllr Rutherford. **Action: JS**

(Mrs Steadman and Mr Huskisson left the meeting at 8.20pm)

11.2 To consider quotes for new see-saw

The Clerk tabled the two remaining quotes for providing a new see-saw and surfacing for the play area on the green in Frant. It was noted that both quotes had been reduced. After some discussion, it was agreed that the quote from Kompan represented the best value for money. The Clerk enquired whether it was wise to commission the installation of the new see-saw during what would be the busiest months of the year in terms of usage of the play area. It was agreed that it would be best to commence the works as soon as possible. **Action: Clerk**

12. Finance

12.1 To approve the bank reconciliation as of 5 May

The Clerk noted that the relevant bank statements had not yet been received.

12.2 To approve the accounts payable

Cllr Rutherford asked whether the Parochial Church Council (PCC) had acknowledged the Parish Council's offer to fund half the costs for maintaining the churchyard in Eridge. The Clerk said she had written to a representative of the PCC but had not received any response.

The accounts were approved to be paid.

12.3 Use of Henry Smith funds

Cllr Macdonald-Brown tabled his report detailing ways in which the Henry Smith funds could be used to assist people with getting to and from medical appointments. Cllrs thanked Cllr Macdonald-Brown for the work he had put into the report. It was agreed that this would be a suitable use of funds. It was noted that the Council was not in a position to means-test local residents. Cllr Macdonald-Brown suggested that residents could pay a one-off registration fee of £20 to make use of the Dial2Drive initiative and the Henry Smith funds could pay the costs of individual trips. Cllr Park suggested generating a list of hospitals, surgeries, etc. to limit the scope of the use of the funds.

It was agreed that Cllr Macdonald-Brown would draft an article for Parish News to gauge local interest and opinion.

Action: AMB

(Cllr Macdonald-Brown left the room at 8.30pm)

13. Highways & Lighting

13.1 Frant village sign near Church Lane

Cllr Rutherford noted that the village sign with the crest on it located at the entrance to Church Lane was in need of repainting and he offered to carry out this work. This was agreed.

Action: WR

It was also noted that the 30mph VAS sign near Church Lane was again obscured by overgrown planting. Cllr Rutherford said this planting was the responsibility of the Parish Council as it was part of the allotments. It was agreed the Clerk would contact Orchard Landscapes about keeping this growth in check.

Action: Clerk

(Cllr Macdonald-Brown returned to the room at 8.35pm)

(One member of the public left the meeting at 8.35pm)

13.2 Car park at Eridge Village Hall

Cllr Best noted the concerns of the village hall committee in Eridge about the state of the Highways-owned car park in front of the hall, particularly the potential this might have to affect the revenue stream the hall receives through bookings for weddings and other celebrations. Cllr Best said that Highways had been approached about it but they were not minded to address this issue at present. Thus, the committee was now asking for assistance from the Parish Council in the form of liaising with Highways to get some positive action or contributing funds to resurface the car park.

It was agreed that, in principle, the Parish Council was happy to assist and that the village hall should obtain at least three quotes for the works and email this information to Cllr Best. It was noted that match-funding with ESCC was possibly an option. It was also agreed that the Clerk would write to Cllr Standley about this issue.

Action: Clerk

14. Safety in the Parish (MR)

In Cllr Rowland's absence, there was nil to report.

15. Communications

15.1 Fair

Cllr Rutherford ran through the list of activities and noted the councillors who had volunteered to help. There was little support for manning the Flowerpot Nursery stall. Councillors agreed generally that they would be available to lend a hand where necessary.

16. To consider roles for councillors within the Council for the forthcoming year

The following roles were agreed: Highways - Cllr Macdonald-Brown; Planning - Cllr Best; Communications, including IT – Cllr Park; Safety in the Parish – Cllr Rowland; Finance – Cllr Rutherford; Neighbourhood Plan – Cllr Stevens; and Green Spaces – Cllr Howell.

17. To discuss the Annual Parish Assembly to be held on 24th May

Cllr Rutherford said the theme this year was green spaces. It was agreed that the ecologist recruited by the Frant Open Spaces Group would give a talk and Mrs Steadman would be on hand to answer any questions. The Clerk noted that the Woodland Trust had not yet confirmed whether they were sending a speaker.

18. Assets of Community Value

Cllr Crookshank raised the issue that the Harveys Brewery may, in the future, sell the Brecknock Arms. Cllr Crookshank shared his concerns that this community asset could be lost through a change of use to residential. Thus, it was agreed that the Clerk would seek to list the pub as an Asset of Community Value which would, in turn, notify Harveys that the community valued it as an asset. It was suggested that other assets, such as The George and the corner shops, also be designated. However, it was agreed to use the Brecknock Arms as a test case. **Action: Clerk**

19. Planning Matters (VB)

19.1 To make recommendations about Planning Applications received:

• **WD/2018/0735 – Pinewood Farm, Frant Road, Frant, TN3 9HB**

To demolish the current old dairy and replace it with a single dwelling; plus use of existing cow shed for ancillary use.

Councillors agreed to raise no objections overall but wished to alert Wealden DC to the proposed external lighting, requesting that this be removed from the proposals in line with their dark skies policy.

• **WD/2018/0353/F – Perros, Church Lane, Frant, TN3 9DX**

Link extension to garage. Loft conversion with roof windows. Variation to approved scheme WD/2012/1703/F (demolition of existing dwelling and erection of replacement).

No objections.

• **WD/2018/0781/F – The Surgery, High Street, Frant, TN3 9DT**

Change of use of the former doctors' surgery to a two-bedroom single dwelling.

No objections.

• **WD/2018/0846/F – 1 Nobles Wood, Bells Yew Green, TN3 9EA**

Erection of single-storey conservatory to rear of the property.

It was agreed to support this application.

20. Chairman's announcements & correspondence for noting

Cllr Rutherford tabled a letter from ESCC quoting the cost of replacing a damaged lantern along the main road in Frant. The quote was agreed and the Clerk to write to the ESCC to ensure that they would not remove/replace the existing swan-neck.

21. Correspondence

Nil.

22. Urgent issues at the discretion of the Chairman for noting or inclusion on a future agenda

Cllr Macdonald-Brown noted a lamppost in Rushlye Close was almost entirely covered in ivy. This was noted but it was agreed that if the lamp still worked, the ivy could be left for now.

Cllr Crookshank said that the new grit bin in Bells Yew Green had been seriously damaged by an HGV turning in the road in this location. After much discussion, it was concluded that the Clerk contact ESCC to remove it and its contents. Cllr Park suggested that, as part of the wider strategy for roadside verges and the greens, the locations for grit bins could be considered. Cllr Macdonald-Brown suggested one such useful location might be near the s-bends beyond the bridge in Bells Yew Green, on the approach to Tunbridge Wells. **Action: Clerk**

Cllr Macdonald-Brown enquired about a property in the High Street in Frant, which appeared to be in a worsening state of disrepair. Cllr Howell said that the owner had been approached on several occasions in the past and offered help but that, ultimately, it was his responsibility and Wealden DC could not intervene.

Cllr Best asked Cllr Rutherford whether he had spoken again with Strutt and Parker about the proposed centenary green in Eridge. He said he had not but recommended that Cllr Best draft a letter for the immediate neighbours about the proposal **Action: GB**

Cllr Park noted that, despite the cross-country race having been completed, there were still numerous 'Caution: Runners' signs still in place near Hawkenbury. It was agreed that Cllr Park would try to speak to the organisers about this. **Action: DP**

Cllr Howell asked whether the Parish Council could create a generic letter about the need to remove signs after an event. Cllr Rutherford noted the Clerk had written to a number of organisations but had not received a formal response and they were continuing to put up notices and signs within the Parish. He also said that anyone can remove an unauthorised sign provided they store it safely.

Cllr Howell noted that a bed had been fly-tipped near Saxonbury.

Action: Clerk

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 9.40pm.

List of Actions

Action	Name
CLlr Rutherford to meet with Mr. McGregor-Gould to identify a location for the circular bench.	WR
Clerk to forward risk assessment forms to WR. WR to complete assessments for remaining assets in Frant.	Clerk/WR
CLlr Standley to establish whether information from the call for sites made by WDC has been published.	BS
Clerk to identify a list of consultants who can report on the degree of erosion in the Parish and suggest eco-friendly, engineered solutions to the problem.	Clerk
Clerk to liaise with Kompan about a schedule for the new see-saw.	Clerk
CLlr Macdonald-Brown to draft an article for Parish News about the proposed use of Henry Smith funds.	AMB
CLlr Rutherford to refurbish village sign.	WR
Clerk to write to Orchard Landscapes about keeping the growth around the VAS sign on the A267 in check.	Clerk
Clerk to contact ESCC about removing the broken grit bin from BYG.	Clerk
CLlr Park to ascertain who had left behind 'caution' signs following a running event near Hawkenbury and to speak with them about their removal.	DP
CLlr Best to draft a letter to neighbouring residents about the proposed green in Eridge.	GB
Clerk to inform WDC about a fly-tipping incident near Saxonbury.	Clerk