

# FRANT PARISH COUNCIL

## THE MINUTES OF A MEETING OF FRANT PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT ERIDGE VILLAGE HALL ON WEDNESDAY 17<sup>th</sup> JULY 2019 AT 7.30PM

**Present:** Cllr Rutherford - Chairman  
Cllrs Crookshank, Macdonald-Brown, Luther, Park

Cllr Bob Standley  
Mrs Rosie Karim – Clerk

Mrs Jan Steadman – Friends of Frant Green Spaces (FOFGS)  
One local resident

**1. To receive apologies.**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Howell and Wallis and District Cllr Obbard and these were noted.

**2. To receive declarations of interests on items on the Agenda and changes to the Register of Interests.**

None.

**3. To approve the Minutes of the meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2019 as a true and accurate record.**

The Minutes were **approved** as a true and accurate record.

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

- The Clerk said that Tunbridge Wells Borough Council had not responded about ownership of the fingerpost on the county border. Cllr Rutherford offered to liaise with a contact at the Borough Council. **Action: WR**
- Cllr Rutherford confirmed he had submitted an article to Parish News. Completed.
- Cllr Standley confirmed that Wealden District Council had agreed with neighbouring councils not to object to adjoining planning applications because of potential harm to the Ashdown Forest, as long as it is taken into account in their deliberations. Cllr Standley noted that the Local Plan Inspector will decide whether the District Council's approach to its protection is correct or not. Completed.

**5. Public forum – time limit 15 minutes.**

The local resident in attendance enquired as to why the Parish Council had been given a large amount of CIL money compared to that received by other councils. Cllr Rutherford explained that the amount related to a large development of around 125 houses on the boundary with Tunbridge Wells and the Parish Council had been apportioned an amount per dwelling.

**6. To receive reports from County and District Councillors.**

Cllr Standley gave reports for both County and District, as follows:

**County**

- Now entering the next budget phase after ending last year in surplus by £8 million; however, still have to make significant savings;
- Challenges persist in adult social care and children's services;
- Anticipating another one-off contribution from Government but noted that the amount will likely not take into account demographic changes.

## **District**

- Climate Emergency declaration to go to Full Council in a fortnight and likely to be approved;
- District committed to being at zero carbon emissions by 2050;
- Encouraging Government to alter Building Regulations to implore developers to demonstrate zero carbon emissions in their schemes;

Cllr Standley noted that he would be writing to Nus Ghani MP about delivering effective Broadband in the Parish.

**Action: BS**

At this point, Cllr Rutherford agreed to bring forward Item 11 on the agenda.

## **11. Highways and Lighting,**

### **11.1 Lighting in Rushlye Close, Bells Yew Green – update.**

The Clerk advised that the Parish Council would need to apply for a Feasibility Study to be carried out by ESCC for a new streetlight in Rushlye Close. The cost would be £500 and this was agreed.

**Action: Clerk**

Cllr Crookshank enquired about the proposed pedestrian crossing over the A267. Cllr Standley said there was a possibility that the Eridge Estate would give the money for the crossing to Wealden DC. Various concerns about this scenario were raised, including that, if costs escalated, Wealden DC would not have the desire nor funds to top-up the original sum and may ask the Parish Council to do so. Cllr Crookshank noted that when Highways approved a crossing here some years ago, it was because they had acknowledged that there was a need for it within the community. It did not get implemented then because of rising costs. However, the need is still there now and arguably will be more pressing when the additional housing is built at Fern Close. The Council expressed its frustration with Highways' current reluctance to support a new crossing, given the ongoing need and considerable funds now available. Cllr Standley agreed to make enquiries about this situation.

**Action: BS**

### **11.2 Update from the SLR meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> June.**

Cllr Macdonald-Brown said that various queries from the Parish Council had gone unanswered at the meeting and there was ongoing poor communication from Highways about upcoming and future works. He noted how frustrating the SLR had been and said that with the number of SLR meetings decreasing now, communication was likely to worsen. Cllr Rutherford suggested a senior member of Highways is present at one of the two annual meetings at the very least and asked that Cllr Standley feed this back. Cllr Standley agreed and said he hoped to rearrange the next meeting date so that he could attend.

**Action: BS**

*(Cllr Standley left the meeting at 8.10pm)*

## **7. Green Spaces.**

Mrs Steadman said that Friends of Frant Green Spaces (FOFGS) had won a full grant of some £7000 from the Sussex Lund Grant. She noted that the confirmation letter suggested the possibility of the grant being paid to the Parish Council so the VAT could be reclaimed. The Clerk advised that there may be restrictions and that she would need to check on this.

**Action: Clerk**

The old gate on the boundary of the Parish field was discussed and it was noted that it formed part of an agreed right of way with the landowner for use by children to get to school. It was suggested the Clerk look into options for improving the security of this gate as, at present, cows, etc were often able to get through and this could affect the new hedgerow.

**Action: Clerk**

Mrs Steadman said that Orchard Landscape's van had unfortunately been broken into on the green and it was agreed the Council should send its regrets.

**Action: Clerk**

With reference to the complaints made about the management of the green (notably about the areas left uncut), it was agreed that Mrs Steadman would forward any more complaints to the Clerk.

Cllr Rutherford said that the reasoning and methodology for the management of the green, as well as the relationship between the Parish Council and FOFGS and the status of FOFGS itself, should be formalised and space given over to doing this on the new website. **Action: Clerk/DP**

Mrs Steadman said that FOFGS would pay for an end of year ecology review and said the group would be happy to present its accounts to the Parish Council. She noted that she had been approached by an interest group from Crowborough who were keen to use the green as an example. Cllr Park cautioned against FOFGS liaising with third parties about the green without the Council's knowledge or consent, as it was within the Parish Council's ownership.

Lastly, Mrs Steadman said that FOFGS had ring-fenced £2500 for a new village sign and had been liaising with a graphic designer, an historian and Tate Fencing to that end; she said that FOFGS' committee had voted for a sign. However, Cllr Rutherford said that the Parish Council had considered a village sign before and, on balance, the idea had proved unpopular. He also noted there was only a limited historic basis for them, with village signs being a Daily Mail organised initiative, in the post war period. Councillors agreed that if a village sign were to be implemented, it should be the Council that takes steps toward it, given that FOFGS' remit related only to matters concerned with the green and other open spaces.

#### **7.1 To consider revised report from Allen Scott concerning erosion at Frant green.**

Cllr Rutherford read out an email from Mr Huskisson concerning the revised report. After some discussion, it was **agreed** to seek another two quotes and to ring-fence £15K of CIL monies for receiving fully costed quotes for work around the green, by November. **Action: Clerk**

#### **7.2 To consider interim options for controlling parking around the green.**

Cllr Park agreed to draft a policy in order to formalise the Council's position about parking near the green. **Action: DP**

#### **7.3 Risk assessments of play areas.**

The Clerk relayed an advisory from the insurance company that the Council should regularly inspect its play areas and report back at each Full Council meeting. It was agreed that, on a monthly basis, Cllr Luther would inspect the play area in Frant and Cllrs Park and Wallis would inspect the play area in Bells Yew Green.

#### **7.4 To consider quote for works to trees.**

The quote from Treework was **approved**.

*(Mrs Steadman left the meeting at 8.55pm)*

### **8. Finance.**

#### **8.1 To approve the bank reconciliation and cash book.**

Both the bank reconciliation and cash book were **approved**.

#### **8.2 To approve the accounts payable.**

The Clerk noted an additional payment of £210.60 for the RoSPA play area inspections. The accounts were **approved**.

#### **8.3 Update on budget matters.**

The Clerk drew the councillors' attention to the following: the expenses paid to date for the new green in Eridge (the total to be confirmed at the next meeting), the Clerk's pension contributions and the status of the Henry Smith fund. These were noted.

**8.4 To consider options for internet banking.**

The Clerk referred to the comparison table of online banking (previously circulated) and recommended that the Council join Barclays Bank. This was agreed and **approved**.

**Action: Clerk**

**9. Safety in the Parish.**

It was agreed that this rolling item be removed from the agenda.

**10. Communications.**

**10.1 Update on new website.**

The Clerk said the new website was now live: <http://frant-pc.gov.uk>. She asked councillors to send her photos of themselves as well any photos of the Parish so that they could be posted onto the website.

**10.2 To consider draft questions for parish survey and Neighbourhood Plan.**

The Clerk tabled a first draft of potential questions for a Parish-wide survey that could help to inform either a revised Parish Plan (the existing one is out of date) or a Neighbourhood Plan. councillors were asked to submit names of parishioners who have expressed an interest in developing a neighbourhood plan. Cllr Park agreed to kickstart the process for developing a Neighbourhood Plan.

**Action: DP**

**10.3 To consider requests for representations on various consultations.**

**BT proposal for the removal of the phone box at Sleeches Cross**

It was agreed that the Council did not want to 'adopt' this phone box but felt that it should remain in situ and operational – there are a number of accidents on this corner off the A267 and a poor mobile phone signal in this location. There is also a bus stop nearby. Clerk to respond to BT.

**Action: Clerk**

**English Heritage's request for local memories of Bayham Abbey**

Cllr Macdonald-Brown agreed to respond.

**Action: AMB**

**Consultation on Building in the High Weald - a Design Guide**

Cllr Park agreed to circulate the report and collate councillors' responses.

**Action: DP**

**Flower Pot Nursery, Frant Road – Application for Lawful Development Certificate (Existing)**

The Council did not raise any comment.

**10.4 Confirmation of First Aid course.**

Cllr Macdonald-Brown confirmed the 4-hour First Aid course on 19<sup>th</sup> October. Cllr Rutherford thanked him for organising this.

**10.5 Consideration of a new logo for the Parish Council.**

Agreed to roll over to a future meeting.

**12. Horizon scanning.**

The local resident in attendance asked what the purpose of this agenda item was. Cllr Rutherford said it was for general items that the Council might like to think about for future projects, etc.

*(The local resident left the meeting at 9.30pm)*

**13. Chairman's announcements & correspondence for noting.**

The Council vacancy in the Eridge ward was discussed and it was suggested that a piece be put in the Eridge newsletter to encourage applicants.

**14. Urgent issues at the discretion of the Chairman, for discussion only.**

Cllr Rutherford suggested that a councillor take responsibility for applying for grants. It was agreed to roll this over for discussion at a future meeting.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9.40pm

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>BY WHOM</b>
To submit application for feasibility study in Rushlye Close for new light.	Clerk
To liaise with TWBC about fingerpost on the border between the Parish and Tunbridge Wells.	WR
To write to Nus Ghani MP re: Broadband.	BS
To investigate the reasons for Highways' position re: the proposed pedestrian crossing.	BS
To feedback to Highways about senior members attending SLRs.	BS
To write to Orchard Landscapes following the recent theft of their equipment.	Clerk
To look into securing the gate on the boundary with the playing field.	Clerk
To investigate whether the Parish Council can accept the Sussex Lund grant.	Clerk
To work on the new website and provide space for FOGS to insert updates.	Clerk/DP
To seek two further quotes re: erosion around the green.	Clerk
To draft a policy about parking on/adjacent to the green.	DP
To being the process of migrating the Council's accounts across to Barclays.	Clerk
To respond to BT re: the Sleeches Cross phone box.	Clerk
To being process for creating a Neighbourhood Plan.	DP
To respond to English Heritage re: Bayham Abbey.	AMB
To circulate AONB report to councillors and collate responses.	DP