

FRANT PARISH COUNCIL

THE MINUTES OF A MEETING OF FRANT PARISH COUNCIL
HELD AT BELLS YEW GREEN VILLAGE HALL
ON WEDNESDAY 19th FEBRUARY 2020 AT 7.30PM

Present: Cllr Crookshank - Deputy Chairman
Cllrs Howell, Best, Luther

County Cllr Standley
Mrs R. Karim – Clerk

1. To receive apologies

Apologies were received from District Cllr Obbard and Cllrs Rutherford, Park, Macdonald-Brown and Wallis. These were accepted.

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 15th January 2020 as a true and accurate record

The Minutes were **approved**.

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

- Cllr Standley said he would be happy to ask the Member responsible for Highways to attend a Parish Council meeting. However, he requested that he be briefed as to what issues Councillors wished to raise. **Action: Clerk**
- Cllr Howell confirmed that Wealden District Council owned the litter bin near Warren Farm Lane.
- Cllr Howell agreed to liaise with Biffa about introducing litter bins with anti-pest lids. Carried forward. **Action: JH**
- Cllr Rutherford to liaise with contractor about quotations for forming a bund at the green. **Action: WR**
- Liaise with Enplan about consultancy work on the green. On agenda to discuss.
- The Clerk said she had been trying to get a response from Royal Mail about delivering the surveys to no avail. Clerk to chase. **Action: Clerk**
- Approach Frant Stores and Fullers about being a drop-off point for survey responses. Carried forward. **Action: DP**
- Generate a list of contact details for First Aiders and Councillors. Carried forward. **Action: Clerk**
- Purchase TofCo solar light and liaise with ESCC. On agenda to discuss.
- Write various letters re: Draft Local Plan and ongoing pressure for more housing in the north of the district. Cllr Standley noted that re: item 11 on the previous Minutes, he had not received a letter from Cllr Rutherford to date. Carried forward. **Action: WR**
- Cllr Crookshank advised that he did not wish to speak at the Planning Committee at which application ref: WD/2017/0143/MAJ would be heard. He said he had submitted representations in a personal capacity instead.
- The Clerk confirmed she had submitted comments about current planning applications.
- Liaise with Strutt and Parker about installing bollards at Warren Farm Lane. Carried forward. **Action: AB**

5. Public forum – time limit 15 minutes

None.

6. To receive reports from County and District Councillors

County

Referring to a recent budget meeting, Cllr Standley reported that a 1.99% rise in the General Fund had been approved. In addition, a 2% rise allocated by Government would be used for the provision of social services (adult and children). Cllr Standley said a sum of £4 million was available in the current year, of which £1 million would be allocated to Highways. £2 million would be allocated for each of the next three years for the 'No Wrong Door' initiative. A further £250 000 would be invested and used toward creating three additional residential spaces for disabled children.

Turning to other matters, Cllr Standley said that the County's emergency crews had been working continuously during the recent storms and should be congratulated on their efforts.

Cllr Crookshank raised the recent correspondence received from Highways concerning the problems of traffic using the road network around Dundale Road. He said the responses had been dismissive and verging on the rude. He noted that all letters were being kept on file and would be referred to in the event of a serious accident. Cllr Standley said that this was a problem right across the county. Cllr Howell said there was progress being made behind the scenes to encourage better cross-working between ESCC and Kent County Council.

District

Cllr Howell raised the following:

- Community projects in Wealden have received an extra £5,000 boost this year. This has increased the total amount shared by capital projects through the Wealden Community Grants Scheme to £55,000, with small projects sharing a total of £20,000. The grants will support the following:
 - Dementia training at Rotherfield St Martins and carers' cafes in Hailsham and Uckfield;
 - The Hailsham Horticultural Society;
 - Encourage people aged 6 – 86 to play chess in Crowborough;
 - High Five initiative and the Sussex Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus;
 - Hailsham Short Mat Bowls Club;
 - Herstmonceaux Men's Shed;
 - Applause Rural Touring and The Rude Mechanicals (theatre groups); and
 - Hailsham Festival.

The largest capital grant goes toward extending the Hugo Palmer Skate Park in Forest Row. Others being supported are:

- Mayfield Scout and Guide Hut;
- Villages halls in Bells Yew Green, Fairwarp, Litlington and Summerheath;
- Ashdown Place playground in Buxted;
- Hartfield Cricket Club; and
- Men's shed in Groombridge.

Cllr Howell noted that the next round of Wealden Community Grants will take place in September.

- Four new apprentices have started working at Wealden District Council in this, the fifth apprenticeship scheme run since 2014;
- the increase in provision of electric charging points in Wealden is being investigated;
- the District Council has approved an increase in Council Tax for 2020/21 that the average Band D property pays by £5 a year, with proportionate increases of 2.6% across the other bands; and
- a 2.5% increase in Members' allowances has been approved.

Cllr Howell confirmed that the District Council had decided to withdraw the Draft Local Plan. She noted it was not possible to run the failed Plan while preparing a new plan; she said that a lot of the work that had been done on the failed Plan would not be wasted and could still be used. The District Council had obtained legal advice which suggested it would likely not succeed in challenging the main reason for the failure of the Draft Local Plan; that is, the perceived failure to fulfil its Duty to Cooperate. Cllr Standley noted that Counsel had estimated a legal challenge costing between £100-200,000 and taking in excess of a year. He considered that the Council had been criticised unfairly in some quarters for having an 'over-precautionary- approach toward the protection of the Ashdown Forest.

Cllr Howell noted that there was a 'Plan A' and a 'Plan B' Draft Local Plan and it was the Plan A that had failed. The District Council would now revert to its Plan B. Plan A resolved that until it could be proven that deposits on the Ashdown Forest had fallen, no new houses would be provisioned for. Plan B, on the other hand, assumes deposits are falling and that there will be an increase in the use of electric cars in the Plan period. Cllr Standley said that as the monitoring kit was already in situ, it would be advisable to continue monitoring deposits to assess whether they had fallen; he considered this unlikely.

Cllr Best asked what the consequences were for the Parish, highlighting the site allocation at Spratsbrook in Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's Draft Local Plan. Cllr Howell said that this allocation traversed the border and that it could come in as an application before the Borough Council's Plan was in place. She noted that the NPPF does not define what a 'major application' is.

In terms of housing delivery, Cllr Howell said that Government expected a target to met of 85%. Wealden District had been achieving 82-83%. Government's view in this situation is that the District should deliver even more housing because they are not delivering what is expected of it. Cllr Luther enquired whether housing targets had not been met because of a lack of land stock; Cllr Howell said the main reason was actually because developers were simply not building.

Cllr Best enquired as to who or what process defended the AONB and referred to a Judicial Review to this end. Cllr Luther asked whether, in seeking to progress the Plan B, legal advice could be sought, at stages, as to its viability. Cllr Howell responded that this had been done at stages during the Plan A process and legal advice had been that the Plan was sound.

(Cllr Standley left the meeting at 8.05pm)

7. Green Spaces

7.1 Update from Clerk about consultancy study at Frant green

The Clerk advised Councillors that Enplan had been formally appointed to undertake the consultancy work around mitigating the impact of erosion at Frant green. A start date of 17th February has been agreed and a team from Enplan has carried out an initial site visit.

8. Highways and Lighting

8.1 To discuss installation of village gates on the Bells Yew Green Road

The Clerk reported that she had met with Mr Johnson, Traffic and Safety Manager at ESCC, on site earlier in the month to discuss options for addressing the speed of traffic along this road into Frant. It was agreed that Mr Johnson would ask the Highways Steward to action the repainting of the 'Slow' marking on the road surface. In addition, he suggested a location for a set of village gates, along a straight stretch of road before the layby, heading toward Bells Yew Green. Although still the national speed limit at this point, it was suggested that a 'Welcome to our village, please drive carefully' sign, or similar, could be placed on the gates. The Clerk advised the Council that the gates would need to be applied for through the Community Match Funding process, despite match funding not being available. It was **agreed** to make an application.

Action: Clerk

8.2 Update from the Clerk about provision of solar lighting in Rushlye Close

The Clerk advised that ESCC has provided a CAD image of the Close; Tofco are now using this to undertake a lighting design. Once done, ESCC can issue a licence and the light can be installed.

9. Finance

9.1 To approve the bank reconciliation and cash book

Both were **approved**.

9.2 To approve the accounts payable.

The accounts to be paid were **approved**.

9.3 To consider options for a replacement office printer

The Clerk tabled a report outlining the need for a new office printer. The report gave a comparison of different printers in terms of functionality and price and recommended a Brother printer at £149 with a bundle offer, including ink, at £230.99. This option was **approved**.

10. Communications

The Clerk enquired about how Councillors were finding the new email set-up. Some noted problems with using it and it was **agreed** to ask Cllr Park to revisit the email provision for the Council on her return. **Action: DP**

11. Planning

11.1 To approve the Minutes of the Planning Meeting held on 3rd February 2020

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

11.2 To consider licence and planning applications and make recommendations:

- **WD/2020/0012/FR – Tangier Wood, Frant Road, Frant, TN3 9HG**

Non-residential sustainable woodland management shelter – open on all four sides – situated within centre of 4.04HA privately owned woodland.

Concerns were raised about the scale, size and footprint of the shelter, in itself and in relation to the size of the plot. Although the principle of a shelter was found to be acceptable, it was agreed to object on the grounds above. It was also agreed that, should the District Council be minded to approve the application, a condition should be imposed obligating the applicant to dismantle the shelter once it was no longer required.

- **WD/2020/0183/F – Camden House, Bells Yew Green Road, Frant, TN3 9BD**

Single-storey side extension.

The proposals were considered and it was concluded that the extension was acceptable.

- **WD/2019/2520/FR – Whippers In Cottage, Eridge Park, Eridge Green, TN3 9HA**

Retrospective application for a change of use of equine grazing land to residential garden. Proposed relocation of stables and erection of studio.

Concerns were raised about the extent to which the residential curtilage was to be enlarged; it was considered it was unnecessary and would change the character of the land here. It was agreed to object and suggest that the applicants reconsider.

- **WD/2019/0275/F – Chase Farm, Frant Road, Frant, TN3 9HG**

Re-consultation on amended plans received on 23 January showing the revision to access and parking provision. Proposed change of use of the site to Use Class B8 for the storage and distribution of timber and woodchip and the associated process of timber to produce woodchip and firewood using the existing pole barn and former stable block, with associated 4 no. parking spaces (this development is permitted to operate at land read of Singlegate Lodge through application no. WD/2014/1822/LDE and is proposed to be transferred to Chase Farm).

The response from the applicant to the Council’s previous comments was considered. It was concluded, however, that its original comments still stood and that the Council’s view about the proposals remained unchanged.

12. Chairman’s announcements & correspondence for noting

None.

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

None.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 8.25pm.

ACTION	BY WHOM
Send Cllr Standley a list of topic areas that councillors would wish to discuss with a Member responsible for Highways.	Clerk
Liaise with contractor about options for a bund at the green in Frant.	WR
	Clerk
Determine whether Biffa is able to attend to litter bins with anti-pest lids.	JH
Liaise with Royal Mail about delivering the surveys with the post.	Clerk
Approach Frant Stores and Fullers about being a drop-off point for survey responses.	DP
Generate a list of contact details for First Aiders and councillors.	Clerk
Write various letters re: Draft Local Plan and ongoing pressure for more housing in the north of the district.	WR
Submit further comments about planning applications to WDC.	Clerk
Liaise with Strutt and Parker about installing bollards at Warren Farm Lane.	AB
Submit Community Match Funding application for village gate(s) on Bells Yew Green Road.	Clerk
Revisit the email provision for the Council.	DP