

FRANT PARISH COUNCIL

THE MINUTES OF A MEETING OF FRANT PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT ERIDGE VILLAGE HALL, ERIDGE ON WEDNESDAY 13TH SEPTEMBER 2017 AT 7.30PM

Present: Cllr Rutherford (Chair)
Cllrs Mrs Best, Mrs Hutchings, Wright, Rowland, MacDonald-Brown, Stevens

Mrs R.Karim Clerk
County Councillor Bob Standley
Mrs J. Steadman
Mr M. Freestone
Mrs M. Freestone

1. To receive apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs Mrs Howell and Mrs Kinley.

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

None.

3. To approve the Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 19th July 2017 as a true record

The Minutes were approved as a true and accurate record.

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

4.1 The Clerk said she was awaiting an email from Mr Whittle about details of the petition for changing the name at Frant Station. Carried forward.

4.2 Cllr Rutherford to email councillors with suggestions for possible roles for them during the forthcoming year. Carried forward. **Action: WR**

4.3 The Clerk tabled a response from the Council's insurers, alongside a correction about the detail in this response from Cllr Rutherford. He explained that the nature of the agreement with the Allotment Association was that the Council let the plots to the Association (a form of devolved management) and public liability insurance is the responsibility of the Association rather than individuals. It was agreed, again, that the Council had no objection in principle provided the Association had the relevant insurance in place. Completed.

4.4 Cllr Standley said the recent flooding at Park View was still under review. Carried forward. **Action: BS**

4.5 Cllr Standley confirmed that works had been carried out near Holly Cottages in connection with recent flooding. Completed.

4.6 The Clerk noted that a reduced quote for works to the green had been approved on 4th September 2017. Completed.

4.7 The Clerk said she had spoken to Mr Pearce about the provision of cricket nets and was awaiting an email about costs. It was agreed that (a) the councillors would revisit whether the Council would contribute to the costs of new cricket nets at a later date and (b) a basic agreement between the Council and the Cricket Club would be drafted re: any split in liability. **Action: Clerk/MS**

4.8 The Clerk tabled a quote from Wadhurst Gardeners for maintaining the churchyard at St Albans in Frant. It was agreed to revisit this at the next meeting. Carried forward.

4.9 The Clerk said she had received some quotes for a new see saw. On agenda to discuss.

4.10 The Clerk said she had emailed JAKK UK to confirm works/quote for the Eridge sign but, despite a follow-up email, had not yet heard back from him. Clerk to try and make contact. **Action: Clerk**

4.11 The Clerk said she had received another quote for parking posts at BYG green. On agenda to discuss.

4.12 The Clerk confirmed the dimensions of the new circular bench as 4ft, on level ground (preferably with no extensive roots at the tree's base). The copper beech, next to the oak around which the original bench was located, was suggested as a possible option for the new bench. Clerk to contact Mr McGregor-Gould about this.

Action: Clerk

4.13 Cllr Rutherford said he had drafted a letter to the landowner about the possibility of forming a green in Eridge. He suggested that a new green could form part of commemoration events for the end of the First World War in 2018. Carried forward.

Action: WR

4.14 The Clerk confirmed she had written to Orchard Landscapes about the brambles around the VAS on the A267. Awaiting response. Carried forward.

4.15 The Clerk confirmed she had written to Mr McGregor-Gould about relocating the noticeboard in BYG to outside Lambs Larder. Awaiting response. Carried forward.

4.16 The Clerk confirmed she had written to both Frant CEP and Wealdlink to confirm that the Council had resolved to reinstate its payments for the service. Completed.

4.17 The Clerk confirmed she had written to the Friends of BYG about WDC's proposal to submit the red phone boxes in the Frant and BYG for listing. Completed.

5. Public forum

Mrs Steadman gave a summary of the work carried out to date by the Frant Open Spaces Group (FOSG), as follows:

- The funds from the Open Gardens event were being used to seek specialist advice. An ecology survey had been carried out and its interim results had been received. The headline result was that there are two distinctive habitats on Frant green that will require sympathetic management and sensitive enrichment over time.
- The ecology specialist is going to send through a draft Management Plan that will seek to strategically manage the various habitats, balanced with ensuring the green is still suitable for use by others (children, cricketers, etc).
- FOSG is applying for a grant from Wealden DC. Although FOSG is already able to substantially meet the match funding requirements, Wealden DC have suggested it would be unusual for the Council not to contribute, financially or in other ways. In the spring 2018, FOSG intends to apply for the Sussex Lund grant.
- FOSG are hosting a number of events to engage the local community, including a bird and box event, a school quadrant survey, a BBQ and a quiz night.
- An 'active users group' is proposed whereby key users of the green are invited to email FOSG about any problems they are experiencing with how they are able to continue to use the green as a result of the ongoing management of the green. FOSG will then react to these concerns.

Mrs Steadman asked for the Parish Council's support for the following:

- The provision of an information display sign, about hip height off the ground, giving details about the habitats on and around the green. The proposed location would be in the triangle of grass behind the three benches adjacent to the cricket pavilion (subject to planning permission).
- To assist with erosion defence, the exact details of which will be agreed at a later date.
- Mrs Steadman tabled a plan of the green, with certain areas highlighted in colour. She asked that the Council agree to the increased management of the areas shaded in pink as heather and heathland, involving a cut by hand only once a year. Further, she asked that the area of high acid soil, highlighted in bright green, be left unattended for this year.

Cllr Rutherford thanked Mrs Steadman and noted the Council was very pleased that she had taken the initiative to improve our green spaces. He also acknowledged the fantastic way in which FOSG was intending to work with and involve all parts of the Parish community. He noted that the Council had demonstrated its commitment by providing seed monies for the Open Gardens event. In terms of practical steps, it was agreed that FOSG would forward a draft tender document (based on advice from the ecologist) to the Council for agreement. The Council would then put this out to tender to three contractors. It was noted, however, that FOSG had a deadline for their grant application of 15th

November and each contractor should therefore be told to submit their tender within a tight timeframe. It was agreed that it would be the Council who would manage the contract, once approved, and that the contract should be for three years.

Councillors **resolved** to support the items raised by Ms Steadman. Cllr Rutherford suggested also that a basic agreement be put in place between the Council and FOSG, detailing the split of responsibility between the two.

6. To receive reports of County and District Councillors

County

County Councillor Standley noted there had been an overspend in the first quarter, notably in children services and adult social care, reinforcing the pressures these two sectors are under.

Cllr Standley also referred to the ongoing consultation about the possible closure of local libraries. He noted that the County's statutory obligation to provide library facilities in some form for all residents was being met.

Cllr Rutherford asked Cllr Standley about whether the Council was permitted to remove signs/advertisements on verges owned by ESCC. Cllr Standley said he would find out and report back at the next meeting. **Action: BS**

District

Cllr Rutherford reported the following:

- Information days are to be held at various locations in October and early November about the WDC's small grant and capital grant schemes. Clerk to display details on the website. **Action: Clerk**
- The Dog Fouling Order has now been renamed the Public Spaces Protection Order, but is otherwise ostensibly the same.
- There will be free events at various locations on 28th/29th September for electric blanket testing. Clerk to display details on the website. **Action: Clerk**

7. Community Governance Review and the parish boundary

Cllr Rutherford said the Council was being consulted on the Community Governance Review and, as part of that, had the opportunity to express an interest in seeking a change in local boundaries. Cllr Stevens noted that Eridge is currently split in two, with one part within Frant Parish and the other within Rotherfield Parish. He said that Eridge naturally sits with Frant and that combining the whole of Eridge within Frant Parish was the logically sensible thing to do. It was agreed that Cllr Stevens would take the lead with this and the Clerk would write to H. Blanshard at WDC to put forward the Council's expression of interest in changing the boundary. **Action: Clerk**

8 Green Spaces (DW)

8.1 To consider quotes for a new see-saw in the playground in Frant

The Clerk tabled a quote from Kompan for the installation of a traditional, 4-seater see saw. It was noted that a new surface underfoot was being proposed and councillors questioned why the current surface could not be re-used and, if not, could the replacement be the same material as the existing. It was agreed that the Clerk would arrange to meet a representative from Kompan on site to discuss these issues. **Action: Clerk**

8.2 Renewing the path on the green in Frant

The Clerk tabled examples of material/specifications from ESCC and a company called CEDA, specialising in bound gravel. It was agreed that this particular surface was not suitable. It was noted that the original surface was tarmac and was probably over twenty years old; it is now well worn and in need of renewal. It was agreed to seek three quotes from contractors, specifying tarmac. **Action: Clerk**

8.3 To consider a cycleway from Eridge to Tunbridge Wells

Cllr Stevens mooted the idea of introducing a cycleway from Eridge, through Groombridge, to Tunbridge Wells, adjacent to the steam railway line. He highlighted the various benefits, including improved tourism, reduction in car use, improvement in public health, etc. Cllr Stevens also suggested that, in the future, the cycleway may extend across Eridge Park to Frant. He noted two groups – TW Bicycle Users' Group and Sustran - both of whom have experience with how to go about establishing a new cycleway. The councillors agreed that this was a good idea and worthy of further investigation. It was suggested that, as the plans progressed, the Council should engage with Withyam PC, Forest Way Country Park and the previous MP for Tunbridge Wells. Cllr Stevens agreed to report back at a future meeting.

Action: MS

9 Finance (WR)

9.1 To review the budget against spend, year to date

The budget up to 13th September was reviewed against spend to date. It was noted that in all categories, the spend was within budget. The document was approved.

9.2 To approve accounts payable

The accounts to be paid were approved.

9.3 To approve the bank reconciliations for August and September 2017

The bank reconciliation for August was approved. The Clerk said the September statements had not yet been received so the reconciliation had not been carried out.

10. Safety in the Parish (MR)

Cllr Rowland said there were still reports of rogue traders in the district and a rise in the number of burglaries. He also noted an increase in reported incidences of a scam whereby people are contacted about supposed refunds owing to them from HMRC.

11. Highways and Lighting (SH)

11.1 To review the quotes for the parking posts in BYG

The Clerk tabled a new quote and it was noted how much cheaper this was than the previous quote. It was agreed, however, that the Clerk would seek another quote.

Action: Clerk

11.2 Feedback from the SLR on 4th September

Cllr MacDonald-Brown gave an update from the recent SLR. Various items were discussed but, notably, it was agreed that the Clerk would contact I. Johnson at Highways to find out when he would be carrying out his site visit along the road near Knowle Grange.

Action: Clerk

12 Communications (CK)

12.1 Christmas Fair in Frant

The Clerk tabled an email from The George Inn, concerning the arrangements for a Christmas Fair to be held on the High Street in Frant in early December. The Council said it supported the idea and that a meeting with the owners would be the next step.

Action: Clerk

13 Planning (GB)

13.1 To approve the Minutes of the Planning Meeting on 31st July 2017

The minutes were approved as a true and accurate record.

13.2 To approve the Minutes of the Planning Meeting on 4th September 2017

The minutes were approved as a true and accurate record.

13.3 To consider and comment on planning applications:

- **WD/2017/1928/F – Brook Farm Poultry Shed, Bayham Road, Frant, TN3 9BP**
Demolition of remaining disused pole barn and hay barn and erection of new triple garage to serve new house under construction (WD/2016/0805/F refers).
Councillors discussed the scheme and raised concerns about the size and scale of the proposed garage, questioning why it had to be a triple garage and have accommodation above. There were concerns also that future applications for its conversion into a separate dwelling may follow. It was not considered to be subservient to the main house. However, it was noted that a dwelling already had approval here and that the footprint of the new garage was smaller than the total of those redundant buildings being removed. It was agreed to voice these concerns but not to object overall to the proposal.
- **WD/2017/1974/LDE – Annexe, Smallfield, London Road, Crowborough, TN6 1TD**
Use of the building (known as ‘Annexe’) as a single dwelling house, independent from the dwelling known as Smallfield.
Cllr Rutherford explained that this had not been within the Parish and had been received in error.

13.4 To note planning applications that have been determined by Wealden District Council

- **WD/2017/0751/F – 1 Rushlye Cottage, Frant, TN3 9AP**
Part single-, part double-storey side extension and demolition of outbuildings
Approved: 4th September
- **WD/2017/0438/F – Land adjacent to 3 Rushlye Cottages, Frant, TN3 9AP**
Proposed sand school
Approved: 5th September
Councillors noted the decision.

14. Chairman’s announcements & correspondence for noting

Nil.

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

Nil.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.10pm.

Action Points

Cllr Rutherford to email councillors with suggestions for possible roles for them during the forthcoming year.	WR
Clerk to liaise with Frant Cricket Club about the cost of providing cricket nets. Cllr Stevens to begin drafting an agreement between the Cricket Club and Parish Council about split of liability.	Clerk MS
Cllr Standley to continue to monitor the flooding situation at Park View in Frant.	BS
Clerk to write again to JAKK UK to confirm works to the Eridge sign, after amendments to the specifications in the quote.	Clerk
Clerk to liaise with Mr McGregor-Gould about the possibility of placing the circular bench around the copper beech near the playground in Frant.	Clerk
Cllr Rutherford to write to the landowner (via the agent) about the possibility of forming a green in Eridge.	WR
Cllr Standley to investigation the whether the Parish Council can remove unauthorised signs and advertisement on ESCC land.	BS
Clerk to display information about various events and information days on the website.	Clerk
Clerk to meet Kompan representative on site to discuss the provision of a new see saw.	Clerk
Clerk to seek the three quotes for renewing the path across Frant green.	Clerk
Cllr Stevens to continue to investigate the possibility of a new cycleway and report back at a future meeting.	MS
Clerk to seek an additional quote for new parking posts in BYG.	Clerk
Clerk to email I.Johnson about his site visit to the road outside Knowle Grange.	Clerk
Clerk to email The George to suggest a meeting about the Christmas Fair.	Clerk