

FRANT PARISH COUNCIL

THE MINUTES OF A MEETING OF FRANT PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT THE VILLAGE HALL IN BELLS YEW GREEN ON WEDNESDAY 20th FEBRUARY 2019 AT 7.30PM

Present: Cllr Rutherford – Chairman
Cllrs Wallis, Stevens, Howell, Crookshank, Rowland and Park

County Cllr Bob Standley
Mrs Rosie Karim – Clerk
Mrs Jan Steadman -Friends of Frant Green

1. To receive apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Macdonald-Brown. Apologies 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 Draft Minutes of the meeting on 16th January 2019

The Minutes were approved as a true and accurate record.

4. To determine matters arising from the previous meeting

- Cllr Howell confirmed that 14 houses in Rushlye Close are owned by Wealden District Council. Cllr Wallis expressed her serious concerns about the situation of absent street lighting in the Close, noting that several residents were vulnerable in these conditions.
(Cllr Park arrived at the meeting)

Cllr Howell said she would ask one of the houses with an overgrown hedge, currently making the situation more perilous, to cut it back regularly. **Action: JH**
(Cllr Stevens arrived at the meeting)

County Cllr Standley said he would investigate whether there were funding opportunities with Wealden DC for a new lamp/lamppost at the far end of the Close. **Action: BS**

- Regarding establishing rights of way across the green, the Clerk said she had emailed the solicitor and was waiting for a response.

5. Public forum

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

6. To receive reports from County and District Councillors

County

County Cllr Standley said there had been some improvements in terms of the budget and that the Core Offer consultation had prompted government ministers to listen more closely to the problems being experienced by the County Council. He noted that various initiatives, such as the Comprehensive Spending Review, Fairer Funding and the Business Rate pilot scheme were all helpful, to an extent, in mitigating budgetary concerns.

With regard to the delivery of Broadband, County Cllr Standley said he had received correspondence from Nus Ghani MP and was going to write to Rupert Simmonds, the Portfolio Holder. Cllr Park said that UK Power and BT Openreach

had met in recent weeks and were keen to do something to resolve the problems with Broadband service in affected areas. She noted that the government was yet to sign off the Universal Service Obligation. However, the landowner at Frant Lakes had suggested installing bundles of 10 or so cables in a trench with a cabinet at the front of property, enabling better delivery. County Cllr Standley said he would speak with the Broadband roll-out team and Cllr Park welcomed this.

Action: BS

Cllr Stevens said that Eridge was in desperate need of faster Broadband. Cllr Park said that there was some opportunity to extend the service off the existing provision in Eridge and this area was being picked up in the relevant surveys.

District

Cllr Howell referred to items in the recent Parish Bulletin and to the numerous achievements at district level, including that social housing in the district is rated amongst the best in the country with increased investment in maintaining this housing stock and that there is a relatively low unemployment rate.

Turning to household waste collections, Cllr Howell confirmed that Biffa would be taking over the contract from Kier. She noted that 99.6% of bin waste is collected, estimated at 90 000 bins per week in Wealden. She also confirmed that there will be an annual charge of £50 to collect garden waste with an opt-in/opt-out scheme operating. Lastly, Cllr Howell confirmed that Full Council had approved a 2.7% rise on Council Tax for 2019/2020.

Cllr Rutherford, in referring to the Parish Council's recent precept request, noted that Frant Parish had the tenth lowest Band D charge of all the parishes in Wealden.

7. Green Spaces

7.1 To consider a draft submission for a grant application

Mrs Steadman reported that the deadline for the submission of the Sussex Lund grant application was 8th April and she noted that the document circulated to councillors prior to the meeting was a summary, the full draft application being a rather much larger document.

Mrs Steadman said she had met with the AONB Advisory Unit who advised that the application was very well researched and evidenced. She raised the following:

- Re: the area below Shernfold under the two coppiced limes – there would be two costs associated with this: firstly, the capital cost (incorporated into the grant application) and secondly, the ongoing maintenance of this area, which would become a legacy cost for the Parish Council. She has approached Orchard Landscapes for quote for this work.
- Re: the allotments / football club – the grant application would include works to the area behind the goalposts, where there is rich soil. It is proposed to cut it back, form a bank and plant native hedging.
- Re: the parish field – the provision of hedgerow around the inside of the parish field (the field side of the existing rickety perimeter fence [to be left in situ]). Again, there would be an ongoing maintenance cost of this hedge for the Parish Council and an estimate from Orchard Landscapes is awaited. The ownership of the existing gate was discussed and it was noted it was inefficient in restricting deer and cows from entering the parish field. A kissing gate had been suggested but this was unlikely to be acceptable in terms of accessibility. It was noted that when the original land transfer occurred, a permissive right of way from the land beyond the gate and across the parish field was granted for school children to access the school. In reality, this permissive path has been used by local residents for over 20 years. Cllr Stevens noted that this right of way could be formalised but it was just a more difficult process now, given recent changes in the law. It was agreed that the Clerk would consult the Parish Council records.

Action: Clerk

County Cllr Standley said he would have a look at the fence and existing gate and investigate whether there is any funding available.

Action: BS

It was agreed that the full draft application would be considered at the Full Council meeting on 20th March and that the Parish Council would write a letter in support of the application. Mrs Steadman said that any capital amounts not approved for grant funding would be made up by the Friends of Frant Green.
(Mrs Steadman left the meeting at this point)

7.2 To consider a request from BT for a wayleave to place ducting underground on the green

Cllr Stevens suggested that BT could take this opportunity to install sufficient cabling to service effective Broadband delivery in the parish. Cllr Rowland queried whether the Parish Council was happy with a one-off payment or if an annual payment might be preferable. Councillors agreed that a one-off payment was acceptable.

The request by BT was **approved** subject to the affected area of the green being restored to its current state.

(County Cllr Standley left the meeting)

8. Finance (WR)

8.1 To approve the accounts payable

The Clerk tabled the accounts to be paid, as follows:

Payee	Item	Cheque No.	Amount
Dial2Drive	Inv 6195 – Jan 2019	3189	£50.95
SSALC	Staff training	3190	£48.00
Staff	Salary/expenses/tax/NI	3191/92/93	£1056.41
SLCC	Annual membership fee	3194	£136.00
Wealden District Council	Fee for planning application for new green in Eridge	3195	£462.00
Thomson Snell & Partners	Searches relating to formation of new green in Eridge	3196	£240.40
Frant PCC	Annual contribution to production of Parish News	3197	£650.00

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

8.2 To approve the bank reconciliation

The bank reconciliation was **approved**.

8.3 To discuss Henry Smith funds

The correspondence from the Parochial Church Council (PCC) in Frant asking about the possibility of a financial contribution to maintain the post of Youth Worker was discussed. It was agreed that this was a suitable use of Henry Smith funds and Cllr Crookshank suggested that last year’s fund of £1840 be given to the PCC for this purpose. This was **agreed unanimously**. It was further agreed that this year’s Henry Smith fund of £2000 would be used, as previously agreed, for the Frant Friendship Group and the Dial2Drive service.

Cllr Rutherford suggested that both a representative from 'Young at Heart' and the Youth Worker be invited to talk at this year's Annual Parish Meeting in May. **Action: Clerk**

9. Elections in May and changes to numbers of councillors by ward

The Clerk gave a summary of the upcoming elections process and noted the recent changes in numbers of councillors by ward to seven in Frant, three in Bells Yew Green and one in Eridge. She outlined the process of councillors completing nomination forms and delivering these to the Returning Officer and the period of purdah.

Cllr Crookshank expressed concern about how Wealden DC had presented information concerning the elections, using 'he' rather than 'he/she' or 'person' in its literature.

Cllr Howell offered to collect nomination forms if Wealden DC did not deliver them this year to the Clerk. She also offered to deliver, acting as each councillors' representative, their completed forms to the Returning Officer.

10. Neighbourhood Development Plan

It was agreed that a committee be formed, made up of councillors and local residents, with a non-councillor taking the chair. Cllr Howell offered to sit on the committee, given her planning experience. It was further agreed that the Clerk would advertise for volunteers and that a 'start date' could be after the May elections. The Clerk enquired whether the Council would wish to seek funding and/or technical advice, for example, from Locality, and this was considered a possibility. **Action: Clerk**

11. Risk assessment

The Clerk said it was time to carry out risk assessments again on the Council's fixed assets. It was agreed the Clerk would circulate the proformas to complete. **Action: Clerk**

12. Safety in the Parish (MR)

The recent 'ram-raiding' attack on Lambs Larder, which was recorded on CCTV, was discussed. It was noted that the police did not attend until two hours after it had been reported and there some discussion around the fact that the Kent police had allegedly refused to attend as it was in Sussex. It was agreed that Cllr Rutherford and Cllr Howell would raise this with Kent Crime Commissioner. **Action: WR/JH**

Cllr Rowland noted the following:

- Changes are being made to what types of lost property the police will and will not accept;
- Operation Blitz, which seeks to address anti-social behaviour, saw extra patrols during half-term.

Cllr Stevens noted the recent invitation from Sussex Police to learn more about PCSO provision in the district.

Cllr Park said she had noticed a marked increase in fly-tipping on Benhall Mill Road, Hawkenbury Road and, specifically, opposite Frant Lakes.

12.1 Defibrillator for the Parish

Cllr Wallis explained that local business, Raspberry Pie, had offered to provide a defibrillator in Bells Yew Green. She went on to read aloud an email from Cllr Macdonald-Brown who gave his opinion on installing these devices, based on his medical experience, noting that they are rarely used, do not have a high success rate over and above CPR and users require regular training.

Cllr Rutherford agreed and said that vandalism was often a problem, too. He suggested it might be better to use Parish funds to support training for a First Responder(s) and/or First Aid courses, perhaps for local publicans, shop owners, etc. It was agreed to review this at a future meeting.

13. Communications (DP)

The Clerk confirmed that she had, within the last two days, received email instructions on how to commence the migration of the website and setting-up of the new email for councillors. Cllr Park offered her assistance with this.

14. Highways and Lighting (AMB)

14.1 Lighting in Rushlye Close, Bells Yew Green

Cllr Wallis reiterated her concern about this issue and requested it be kept on the agenda. It was agreed that Cllr Howell would speak with the Access Officer at Wealden DC about how to take this forward. **Action: JH**

14.2 Proposal for new Mobile VAS displays

The Clerk tabled details about Mobile VAS displays, which can be moved around the parish, with a view to gauging whether councillors think this might be a good way of using CIL monies to address increasing traffic/speed concerns in the parish. There was some discussion around this; in particular, how well they actually worked in reducing these issues and also their aesthetic impact. It was agreed to move forward with training for Speed Watch. Cllrs Howell, Wallis and Park volunteered to be part of any future Speed Watch initiative and it was agreed that the Clerk would contact Wadhurst Parish Council again about the shared camera. Cllr Rutherford said the Council could ask Sussex Police about suitable (possible) sites for Mobile VAS devices when identifying areas to be designated for Speed Watch.

15. Planning (GB)

15.1 To approve the Draft Minutes of the Planning Meeting held on 4th February 2019

The Minutes were approved as a true and accurate record.

15.2 To note applications approved, refused or withdrawn:

- WD/2018/2509/F – Bohemia Lodge, Eridge Park, Eridge Green, TN3 9HA
Removal of conservatory. Two-storey addition to include an entrance hall, dining room, utility, WC, study area, two bedrooms, bathroom and en-suite shower room. Alterations to the kitchen/dining areas and bedrooms.

Application withdrawn.

The decision was noted.

16. Horizon scanning

Cllr Howell asked the Clerk to write to a property by the green, the occupants of which she has seen persistently parking on the green, indeed, most evenings. **Action: Clerk**

Cllr Stevens enquired about producing a map of the parish to use during meetings. The Clerk said she had made enquiries about getting a very large, hard copy plan, which is not in good condition, copied and laminated but had been given an extortionate price. Cllr Howell offered to see whether she was able to get hold of a map. **Action: JH**

Cllr Park enquired about whether the Council wished to do something about the moles on the green in Bells Yew Green. It was agreed that, for now, no action would be taken.

17. Chairman's announcements & correspondence for noting

None.

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

None.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9.15pm.

ACTIONS

Action	By whom
To approach the occupants of a house in Rushlye Close to ask whether they could cut back their hedge to improve pedestrian safety.	JH
To investigate funding options for a new lamp and lamppost for Rushlye Close.	BS
To liaise with the Broadband roll-out team about providing a better service to parts of the parish.	BS
To examine parish records to establish ownership of the gate off the parish field in Frant.	Clerk
To investigate funding options for a new gate to the parish field.	BS
To invite both Young at Heart and the Church's Youth Worker to speak at the Annual Parish Assembly in May.	Clerk
To advertise for volunteers for the Neighbourhood Plan Committee.	Clerk
To circulate risk assessment proformas.	Clerk
To consult the Kent Crime Commissioner about the recent ram-raid event in BYG.	JH/WR
To liaise with Access Officer at Wealden DC about options for improving safety in Rushlye Close.	JH
To write to local resident about parking on the green.	Clerk
To check whether she has a copy of the parish map.	JH