

FRANT PARISH COUNCIL

THE MINUTES OF A MEETING OF FRANT PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT FRANT MEMORIAL HALL, FRANT ON WEDNESDAY 17th JANUARY 2018 AT 7.30PM

Present: Cllr Rutherford Chair
Cllrs Mrs Best, Mrs Howell, Mrs Wallis, MacDonald-Brown, Crookshank, Stevens, Rowland

Mrs R. Karim Clerk
County Cllr Bob Standley
County Cllr Francis Whetstone
Mrs. Jan Steadman
5 members of the public

1. To receive apologies.

Apologies were received from Cllr Mrs Hutchings.

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

None.

3. To approve the Minutes of the Full Council Meeting on 13th December 2017.

The Minutes of the meeting 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 confirmed she had written to both the Brecknock Arms and the Bells Yew Green (BYG) Cricket Club to gauge their views about parking in the village. Cllr Wallis said she had spoken with the Brecknock Arms who said it was convenient for his customers to park around the green. However, he acknowledged that his business did not have any rights over parking in the village. Cllr Wallis said she had also spoken with a representative of the BYG Cricket Club who suggested that its users, both regular and those visiting, should be encouraged to use the Club's car park as it was rarely full.

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

4.3 The Clerk said she had written to Wealden District Council (WDC) about the ownership of the land between Yew Tree Cottage and Cricketers Close in BYG and is waiting for a response. Carried forward. **Action: Clerk**

4.4 The Clerk said she had still had no response from the contractors she had written to. It was agreed to identify some other firms who might be able to help. **Action: Clerk**

4.5 Cllr Standley said he would look into the issues of road safety and speed limits on the BYG road for the next meeting. **Action: BS**

4.6 Cllr Rowland confirmed that he had updated the mailing list for Neighbourhood Watch emails. Completed.

4.7 Cllr Wallis said she had spoken with the BYG Cricket Club who had confirmed they were happy for a new dog bin to be placed adjacent to the main gate to the Club. With a view to possibly contributing, the Club asked Cllr Wallis to confirm the cost of installing a new bin. Clerk to give Cllr Wallis the details. **Action: SW/Clerk**

4.8 The Clerk said she was waiting to hear from the play equipment company about the proposed surfacing underneath the see-saw. Carried forward. **Action: Clerk**

4.9 The Clerk confirmed that she had drafted two letters to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) and WDC about the SHELAA at Spratsbrook and these letters were with Cllr Rutherford for review. **Action: WR/Clerk**

4.10 The Clerk confirmed she had written to The George for confirmation about the cost of the Christmas Fair lights but had not yet received a response. Carried forward. **Action: Clerk**

4.11 The Clerk confirmed that she had been liaising with WDC about the proposal to alter the parish boundary. Completed.

4.12 Trustees of the BYG Village Hall – on the agenda to discuss.

Cllr Best asked Cllr Rutherford whether he had received a response to his letter to the land agent about the possibility of forming a green in Eridge. Cllr Rutherford said he had not and suggested he would call them directly. **Action: WR**

Cllr Best also enquired about when the work to the village sign in Eridge was due to be started. The Clerk said she would find out the exact date from the contractor, Jakk UK. **Action: Clerk**

5. Public Forum.

Parking in BYG

Two local BYG residents addressed the Parish Council with their concerns about parking in the centre of the village, notably around the green. They noted their frustration that the Parish Council had so far not carried out any works, such as installing posts, to prevent people from parking around the green. They also pointed out that posts had been installed around the green in Frant. Various associated issues were raised, such as erosion of and damage to the green - an essential and historic feature of the village – the increase in mud across the road surface as a result, and the reduction in visibility for pedestrians and drivers alike, combined with the dangerous way in which vehicles speed through the village.

Cllr Wallis asked the question as to whether it would be deemed as inconsistent on the part of the Parish Council if parking were allowed at certain times (e.g. during an event at the Brecknock Arms) but not at other times.

Cllr Rutherford thanked the residents for their comments and responded by saying that works to resolve the parking problems in BYG and to ameliorate any damage as a result was still very much a concern for the Parish Council. However, he noted that councillors had chosen to put any decision on hold about installing parking posts until the Brecknock Arms and the Cricket Club had been consulted for their views.

Cllr Crookshank noted that this had been an ongoing issue in BYG for some years and that he agreed with the residents about the problems that parking around the green was causing. However, he suggested that the installation of posts, apart from potentially affecting the character and appearance of the green, might inadvertently make the situation more dangerous. He suggested that, as had worked in previous years, leaflets and car stickers be distributed to deter drivers, as well as talking in person to them. Cllr Crookshank said he had been doing this for some weeks and there had been a noticeable drop in the numbers of cars parked around the green.

Cllr Rutherford said it would be on the agenda for the next meeting by which time it was hoped written responses would have been received from the Brecknock Arms and the Cricket Club.

(One member of the public left the meeting at 7.55pm)

Frant Green

Mrs Steadman, representing the Frant Open Spaces Group, tabled revised terms of reference for the Group and informed the Parish Council of a new group being set up called The Friends of Frant Green. She explained that the Group was not going to pursue charity status but, in order to be transparent, had drafted a constitution and an AGM would be held. She also noted that, on the top of the existing funds, the Group would continue with its fund-raising efforts to help pay for the services of the ecologist, the new information sign on the green and other items or services.

Cllr Rutherford said the Parish Council were very supportive of the Group's hard work and enthusiasm and the terms of reference and the formation of the new group were agreed. He asked that the Group regularly give the Parish

Council sight of its budget. Cllr Rutherford also suggested that a specific role for a Parish Councillor in the Group be created so that the Parish Council would always be represented. Mrs Steadman agreed with these two points.

Cllr Wallis expressed her warm support for the Group and suggested that something similar could be created to look after the green in BYG and, indeed, any future open spaces in Eridge. Mrs Steadman offered to share the Group's information assembled to date with any individual or group interested in doing so.

Mrs. Steadman asked Cllr Standley a question about the management of Himalayan Balsam where it grows on ESCC land. Cllr Standley said he would investigate and respond. **Action: BS**

(Mrs Steadman and four members of the public left at 8.10pm)

Other matters

A local Frant resident noted that owing to the growth in heather above the stone wall belonging to The Limes, it was becoming increasingly difficult to walk along the adjacent footpath. It was agreed that the Clerk would write to the owners about this. **Action: Clerk**

He also acknowledged the new, replacement fingerpost on Frant Green, outside the village hall. He suggested that there were a number of other fingerposts in the parish that could benefit from repair or replacement, notably the fingerpost opposite the junction of Church Lane and the A267. Cllr Rutherford responded that it was the Council's intention to continue with a schedule of repairs to fingerposts in 2018.

Lastly, he asked whether there was a current planning application for a new dwelling on the area sometimes used as a car park by St. Albans Church. He noted that this area was now blocked off, causing a potential latent problem with parking in the village in the near future. Cllr Howell said she was aware of pre-application discussions ongoing with officers at WDC about the proposal for one house on the site but, as yet, no formal application had been submitted.

6. Reports from County and District Councillors.

County

Cllr Rutherford extended a welcome to Cllr Whetstone and introduced him to members of the Parish Council.

Cllr Standley reiterated the various financial pressures on the County Council although he noted that the amount that needed to be 'found' by introducing cuts had thankfully reduced by some £2.6 million.

Cllr Standley informed councillors that there is a current proposal to permanently close the household recycling centres in Wadhurst and Forest Row. If they do close, the nearest centres will be in Heathfield and Crowborough. It was noted that while the centre in Tunbridge Wells is the nearest to the parish, it is out of county and TWBC use number plate recognition to ensure only local residents are using this service and not people from across county borders. Cllr Standley said that only a change in primary legislation would allow for people to be charged for using recycling facilities and thus improve their prospects of remaining in operation.

Cllr Crookshank asked whether fly-tipping might increase as a result of any closures. Cllr Standley said that most fly-tipping was in fact construction-related and there was no tangible evidence that he was aware of that fly-tipping of household waste would increase. Cllr Wallis opined that a by-product of these closures would be an increase in longer car journeys.

Cllr Standley said the consultation would likely begin in early February and it was agreed that the Clerk would submit comments setting out the Parish Council's position at that time.

Cllr Whetstone reiterated what Cllr Standley had said in highlighting the perpetual problem of central government expecting county and local councils to continue providing services and, in some cases, increased or additional services, with less and less financial assistance.

District

Cllr Howell raised the following:

- A new website has been launched called 'Healthy Wealden', promoting improved mental health services across the county.
- An unlicensed taxi driver was recently fined £4700 and disqualified for 18 months, illustrating that this issue is being dealt with and offenders prosecuted.
- Work is proceeding on the construction of the new crematorium in Horam and it is due to be completed toward the end of 2018.

(Cllrs Standley and Whetstone left the meeting at 8.20pm)

7. To discuss the framework for responsibility for Bells Yew Green Village Hall.

It was noted that the Hall's insert on the Charity Commission's website required updating with the details of the current trustees, namely Cllrs Mrs Wallis, Crookshank, MacDonald Brown, Rutherford and the Clerk. Cllr Rutherford said that the lease document of 2008 would also need to be updated.

Action: Clerk

It was noted that the financial summary on the website was up to date.

(Cllr Stevens arrived at the meeting at 8.25pm)

Cllr Wallis referred to an email from BCM Construction offering to engage with the village and to contribute to a local community initiative. It was agreed that the Clerk would write back thanking them for their offer and suggesting that the necessary repair and decorating works needed at the Hall might be how they could make this contribution.

Action: Clerk

(One member of the public left the meeting at 8.30pm)

Cllr Wallis said that there would be some changes to the members of the Hall's committee and that a meeting was going to be held on 7th February. She said her husband was willing to act as Treasurer and that a small number of local residents had expressed an interest in being involved. Cllr Crookshank clarified that it was acceptable for a trustee to take up a position on the committee provided the other trustees did not and remained independent. He further noted that the BYG Society and the residents' group from Broomfield were intending to hold a meeting to discuss the Hall. He suggested this would be an opportunity to harness this local interest.

Cllr Wallis said that a few issues in the Hall had been dealt with in recent weeks, including electrical testing and the provision of a replacement fridge. She further noted that archived documents and records had been located and needed to be sorted and assessed as to their value.

8. Finance.

8.1 To consider the projected budget and agree the level of precept for 2018.

Cllr Rutherford updated those councillors that had not been at the last Planning Meeting about discussions around how best to use the CIL money. He said he was going to draft a brief policy, ringfencing the CIL money and keeping it separate from running expenditure.

Cllr Best enquired whether it was the intention of the Frant Open Spaces Group to reimburse the Parish Council for some of the extra expense incurred as a result of the increased remit for the maintenance of the green in Frant. Cllr Howell considered that, as the green is a major asset in Frant, the enthusiasm of the Group should be used in a positive manner. Cllr Wallis said that some residents were perturbed at the level of spending on the green compared

with spending on other matters in the parish. Cllr Rutherford responded that the proposals for the green had been explained at the Annual Parish Meeting last year. He noted further that these proposals had been approved by Full Council and he agreed that the Group contributing some funds to the Parish Council would serve to demonstrate how the Group and the Council were working closely with one another. Cllr Howell said it was important that the Parish Council should also step up its stewardship of the green in BYG. This was agreed.

In considering the precept for 2018/19, it was **resolved** to raise the precept by the same amount proposed by WDC, at £5 per Band D property. **Action: Clerk**

8.2 To agree the terms for the Parish Council enrolling onto the Local Government Pension Scheme.

The Clerk noted that it had been **resolved** at the last meeting that the Parish Council would enrol into the Scheme. The Clerk said that the Council had to determine whether the Scheme would be specific to the current named Clerk or, instead, to the general position of Clerk & RFO, meaning that any future Clerks would fall under the Scheme automatically, providing they met the criteria. After some discussion, it was **resolved** to set up the Scheme for the general position of Clerk & RFO.

8.3 To approve the accounts payable.

Referring to the payment for the works to the fingerposts, the Clerk read out an email she had sent to Jakk UK identifying the 3 no. fingerposts to be repaired/replaced which had been agreed at Full Council. She then explained that she had received a phone call from Jakk UK saying that they had undertaken and completed work to a fourth fingerpost in error. It was agreed that the Clerk would write to Jakk UK, asking for a discount. **Action: Clerk**

The remaining accounts were approved.

8.4 To approve the month end bank reconciliation.

The bank reconciliation was approved.

9. Safety in the parish (MR).

Cllr Rowland informed the Parish Council about an initiative called Operation Cackle, aimed at reducing the number of vehicle break-ins by giving advice to motorists. He also noted that the number of shed break-ins was increasing, with one occurring recently in Eridge during which a toolbox was stolen.

10. Highways and Lighting (SH).

10.1 To receive feedback from the recent SLR meeting.

Cllr MacDonald-Brown tabled a summary of the key points arising from the recent SLR meeting on 15th January. The SLR Minutes refer.

Cllr Howell enquired whether introducing village gateways into Frant was an option. Cllr Rutherford suggested this would be a way of creating a sense of arrival at the village and possibly slow down traffic. He further suggested that the CIL monies could contribute to this.

Cllr Wallis noted that someone had placed 30mph stickers over existing 50mph signs in Little Bayham. Cllr MacDonald-Brown offered to address this. **Action: AMCB**

Cllr Howell referred to the poor quality of the A267 road surface and noted that virtually the length of the road was affected.

Cllr Crookshank said that there was a potential enforcement issue on Dundale Road whereby a gateway onto the highways was being installed and nearby designated Ancient Woodland had been affected. Clerk to write to both

WDC and Highways about this.

Action: Clerk

Cllr Wallis said a local resident had informed her that a new street sign had been installed near Barelands, BYG which he felt was incorrectly worded as Bells Yew Green Road. The resident thought the sign should instead read Lay Green. It was agreed the Clerk would contact WDC about this.

Action: Clerk

Cllr Howell raised a further potential enforcement issue. She noted that a large treehouse structure and a large shed had been erected within the designated Ancient Woodland adjacent to Tate Fencing on the A267. It was agreed the Clerk would write to Enforcement about this.

Action: Clerk

11. Communications.

With regard to the current parish boundary review, Cllr Stevens told councillors that he and Cllr Best had spoken with WDC and gained clarification about the consultation process, including a timetable for it. The consultation period will last for six weeks and WDC hope to make a final decision on 18th May. He noted that WDC would be happy to receive an updated document from the Parish Council for this consultation process and that an invitation to two meetings to discuss the proposals on 25th and 27th February would be included in this document. Cllr Stevens suggested that other measures to capture as wide an audience as possible could be undertaken, such as putting up posters, holding an evening meeting at The Huntsman PH to speak with commuters and holding Winter Warmer lunches.

Cllr Stevens said he had just come from a meeting of the Eridge Village Hall Committee, at which he spoke about the proposals. He said he made the political case for the proposals but also outlined the benefits to individual households. He said the proposals had received a good reception.

During the course of the meeting, it became clear that some parishioners were unclear about the exact role of the Parish Council. Together, the meeting participants came up with the following: One Village, One Voice, One Vision. Under the headline 'One Village', matters around community cohesion would be the focus; under 'One Voice', this would involve the Parish Council listening and responding to residents' concerns (e.g. rural broadband, parking at Eridge Station, road safety, village gates, etc); lastly, joined-up thinking, future initiatives and the Neighbourhood Plan would fall under the banner of 'One Vision'. Councillors considered this was a good idea and further discussion was had around initiatives such as introducing residents' permits for parking at Eridge Station and the possibility of setting up a community rail partnership with the railway companies to improve facilities and access at the railway stations within the parish.

(Cllr Howell left the meeting at 9.20pm)

12. Horizon Scanning.

12.1 The future of a sustainable village/community.

The Chairman suggested this was carried forward to the next meeting. This was agreed.

13. Correspondence.

The Clerk said she would circulate a general email that had been received.

Action: Clerk

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

Cllr Wallis informed the Council that the Friends of BYG were holding an afternoon tea for local residents in the parish. Details to be provided.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 9.25pm.

Action Points

WR to meet with Mr McGregor-Gould to discuss where the circular bench might be located.	WR
WR to call the land agent re: his letter about the possibility of forming a green in Eridge.	WR
Clerk to identify new set of contractors for the quotes for renewing the path across Frant green.	Clerk
Cllr Standley to look into the issues of road safety/speed limits on the BYG Road.	BS
Clerk and SW to liaise about a dog bin for BYG.	Clerk/SW
WR to review letters to TWBC and WDC concerning Spratsbrook. Clerk to amend and send.	WR/Clerk
Clerk to get further information about proposed surfacing for the area around the see saw.	Clerk
Clerk to find out how much The George spent on lights for the Christmas Fair with a view to reimbursing them.	Clerk
Clerk to liaise with Jakk UK about when work on the Eridge sign will start.	Clerk
BS to investigate how ESCC manages Himalayan Balsam on its land.	BS
Clerk to write to The Limes re: overgrowth of heather adjacent to footpath.	Clerk
Clerk to update details relating to the trustees of the BYG Village Hall.	Clerk
Clerk to write to BCM Construction re: contribution to improving the BYG Village Hall.	Clerk
Clerk to write to Jakk UK asking for a goodwill discount on the fourth fingerpost that was repaired.	Clerk
AMCB to remove 30pmh stickers in Litte Bayham.	AMCB
Clerk to write to Enforcement re: new gateway on Dundale Road.	Clerk
Clerk to write to WDC about the street sign near Barelands in BYG.	Clerk
Clerk to write to Enforcement about two structures in the woodland near Tate Fencing.	Clerk
Clerk to circulate one item of correspondence to note.	Clerk