

FRANT PARISH COUNCIL

THE MINUTES OF A MEETING OF FRANT PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT FRANT MEMORIAL HALL ON WEDNESDAY 19th JUNE 2019 AT 7.30PM

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

Cllr Bob Standley
Cllr Keith Obbard
Mrs Rosie Karim – Clerk

Three representatives of Inspired Villages

1 To receive apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs Howell and Wallis and 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 May 2019 as a true and accurate record.

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

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

- The Clerk confirmed that Treework had provided a quote for various tree works on the green in Frant.
- The Clerk said she had not submitted the match-funding application for the fingerposts as she was still awaiting the quote for their repair.
- The Clerk confirmed that the lamp on the A267 was within the ownership of the Parish Council.
- The Clerk said she had written to the local resident who had offered to repair the roof to the Victoria Well but had not had a response.
- With respect to attracting volunteers for litter picking in Frant, it was noted that the Youth Worker was keen to involve local teenagers in such activities.

5. Public Forum – time limit 15 minutes

The Executive Chair of the Inspired Villages Group gave a brief account of the company and its ethos behind the development of retirement 'villages', noting that there are currently six villages operating in the UK, caring for some 1000 people and employing around 400 staff. He noted that the company intended to submit a planning application to Wealden District Council for its proposed new village on Benhall Mill Lane.

Cllr Crookshank expressed serious concern at the prospect of potentially significant, additional traffic (staff, visitors, residents, etc) using the local C- and D-class road network, which was already under pressure from an increased volume of road users. He noted the increasing encroachment of development approaching Bells Yew Green from this direction. The response to this was that the overall increase in traffic would be less than with a commercial housing scheme and there would be a free at point-of-use electric taxi for local residents and the wider community.

Cllr Park enquired as to the average costs of the different types of units and the annual fees and said that although the philosophy behind the plans were commendable, it would cause undue pressure on local infrastructure. Cllr Rutherford asked what the company perceived the benefits to the community would be and it was suggested that the

wider community could make use of the swimming pool, in-house GP services, the library, social events and so on. Cllr Rutherford noted that the development would be far more accessible from Tunbridge Wells, noting that Benhall Mill Lane was not easily accessible for those living in the Parish, in Frant and Eridge particularly.

Cllr Rutherford thanked the team for coming to the meeting and said the Parish Council would consider the proposals once it had been consulted by Wealden District Council.

(The three representatives left the meeting at 8.10pm).

6. To receive reports from County and District Councillors

County

Cllr Standley confirmed that East Sussex County Council (ESCC) would not be prepared to install a streetlight in Rushlye Close. He did not think a petition would necessarily change that view and suggested the Parish Council look at applying for match funding. He considered it unlikely that ESCC would object to a light being installed on their land if paid for by a third party.

Turning to the possibility of a pedestrian crossing over the A267, funded by the new Fern Close development, Cllr Standley said that the East Sussex Highways were not against a crossing in principle but they did not think there was a need for one. He considered that they would probably allow one provided a third party paid for it and it passed a safety audit.

Cllr Standley noted that the houses on the bend before the corner shop in Frant had again been affected by the road flooding in this location. He confirmed it had been resolved this time but said that the drains in this location needed regular maintenance to avoid them becoming blocked up and flooding again.

Cllr Park enquired about any progress with improving the Broadband delivery in the Parish. Cllr Standley said there was no update and Cllr Park noted that the installation of a new cabinet was clearly required.

District

Cllr Rutherford welcomed Cllr Obbard to the meeting and congratulated him on his recent success at the local elections.

Cllr Standley commented on the presentation given at the beginning of the meeting noting that the proposed site is outside the development boundary and it is not in the Local Plan. He considered the philosophy behind the proposal was worthy but that the location was unviable.

With respect to the Draft Local Plan, Cllr Standley gave an update on the timetable, noting that by mid to late August, the Inspector should have decided whether to take the process to Stage 2, or not.

Cllr Standley noted that Biffa was taking over the waste collection contract on 1st July. One important change is that glass can now be placed in the recycling bin, alongside plastic, paper, etc. The small bins for glass could be reused or taken to the tip, but not sent back to Wealden DC. Cllr Obbard added that residents who had paid for their garden waste to be collected needed to place the sticker provided on their bin, or else it would be taken away.

Cllr Rutherford said the Parish Council had been notified about a development on Forest Road in Tunbridge Wells. He said that Wealden DC had provided their comments on the scheme to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council; Wealden DC had not objected but had pointed out that the application had not included an assessment of the potential impact of the scheme on the Ashdown Forest. Cllr Standley said he would check this position with Wealden DC. **Action: BS**

(Cllr Standley left the meeting at 8.30pm)

7. Report from the internal audit

The Clerk tabled the recent report from the internal audit and drew the councillors' attention to the advice about aiming to keep the level of the general reserve at roughly fifty percent of the precept. She also reminded councillors about the five year limit for spending the CIL funds.

The internal audit report was accepted and **approved** by the Council.

8. To review internal financial control procedures and governance

Councillors considered the current procedures were fit for purpose and they were **approved**.

9. To consider Section 1 of the Annual Return: Annual Governance Statement 2018/19

No comments were raised.

10. To approve Section 1 of the Annual Return: Annual Governance Statement 2018/19

Section 1 of the Annual Return: Annual Governance Statement 2018/19 was **unanimously approved**.

11. To consider Section 2 of the Annual Return: Accounting Statements for 2018/19

No comments were raised.

12. To approve Section 2 of the Annual Return: Accounting Statements for 2018/19

Section 2 of the Annual Return: Accounting Statements for 2018/19 was **unanimously approved**.

13. Green spaces

It was suggested that the issue of green spaces in the Parish be discussed in detail at the next meeting in July.

Cllr Luther noted the recent correspondence to the Friends of Frant Green Spaces (FOFGS) from local residents concerned about how the greens were being managed and cut, with particular concern about the sections of long grass. She noted that some residents, for one reason or another, had not engaged with the consultation about the greens at the time, but that this should not preclude them from raising their concerns now or in the future. Cllr Rutherford agreed and suggested that FOFGS could have a sub-section within the Parish Council's website which would give the rationale behind the management of the green, regular updates, and so on. Cllr Luther agreed and said more transparency would help to clarify who FOFGS were, what authority they had and how they related to the Parish Council. In addition, using the website as a vehicle to disseminate information would allow for the broader ecological remit to be more fully explained, therefore off-setting some of the local concern. Cllr Park offered to assist with the setting-up and ongoing maintenance of this sub-section of the website.

Cllr Rutherford tabled an email from FOFGS, stating they had raised £1,716 at the recent Open Gardens event and the Group were now starting to focus on the provision of the new information sign.

14. Finance

14.1 To approve the amended fixed asset register

The Clerk suggested this item roll over to the next meeting. This was **agreed**.

14.2 To approve additional insurance cover

Given point 14.1 above, the Clerk suggested this be considered at the next meeting, if it were still considered necessary. This was **agreed**.

14.3 To approve the accounts payable

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

14.4. To approve the bank reconciliation and cash book

The bank reconciliation and cash book were **approved**.

14.5 To review spend against budget to date

The spend against budget to date was reviewed and **approved**.

15. To allocate responsibilities to individual councillors and consider future projects

The following was agreed:

Green spaces – Cllr Howell; Planning – Cllr Wallis, possibly; Communications – Cllr Park; Highways and Lighting – Cllr Macdonald-Brown; Finance – Cllr Rutherford. It was agreed to remove Safety in the Parish as a rolling agenda item as any issues could be raised as and when necessary.

(Cllr Obbard left the meeting at 8.55pm)

16. Safety in the Parish

Nothing to report.

17. Communications

Nothing to report.

18. Highways and Lighting

18.1 Lighting in Rushlye Close, Bells Yew Green

It was agreed to ascertain whether match funding would be approved by the next SLR meeting in September (post meeting note: the next SLR is scheduled for 18th November).

Action: Clerk/BS

19. Planning

19.1 To consider planning and licence applications:

- **WD/2019/0934/F – Pounds Rough Lodge, Dundale Road, Frant, TN3 9AG**

Single-storey rear extension to dwelling, reposition of entrance and proposed front porch with minor internal works, change of roofline and replace two existing windows with new windows, extension to garage. A new oak farm barn and new driveway gates.

The Council agreed to support this application.

- **WD/2019/1100/F – 3 Rushlye Cottage, Hawkenbury Road, Frant, TN3 9AP**

Proposed two-storey rear extension and conversion of existing outbuilding.

The Council agreed to support this application.

- **WD/2019/0738/FA – Quarry Farm Bungalow, Bayham Road, Frant,**

Removal of Condition 2 (Agricultural Occupancy) of T/1972/1535.

It was acknowledged that the agricultural use may now have ceased and thus, there currently being no obvious agricultural need nearby, the condition is not as relevant as it would have been in the 1970s. In summary, it was agreed that Wealden DC consider its reserved policy in this regard.

19.2 To note other applications of interest:

- **WD/2019/8007/AA – 241 Forest Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN2 5HT**

Demolition of existing dwelling and the erection of 9 no. residential units within a single apartment block along with associated amenity space, landscaping, vehicle parking and other associated development.

Cllr Park noted that preparatory work was underway on this site. After some discussion, it was agreed that the Parish Council would not respond directly, given Wealden DC's response.

20. Horizon scanning

Cllr Macdonald-Brown said he was arranging a First Aid course on a Saturday morning in October and expected to have the twelve people required to run the course. It would be a three and a half hour session, costing £300 plus VAT.

Cllr Rutherford noted that, in 2020, it would be the 100-year anniversary of the unveiling of the war memorial and that this would be an appropriate time to inaugurate the new green in Eridge. He also noted that the early May Bank holiday was being moved to another date next year to mark the end of WWII.

It was noted that the Parish Council summer fair was scheduled for next year. Cllrs Park and Luther agreed to start thinking about arrangements.

21. Chairman's announcements & correspondence for noting

Cllr Rutherford said he had been contacted about a fingerpost in poor condition on the boundary between Frant and Tunbridge Wells, at High Rocks/Tea Garden Lane. He noted it was not in the same style as those in the Parish but suggested that, subject to enquiries to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, the Parish Council could consider paying for its repair. **Action: Clerk**

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

Cllr Crookshank said there were a few small branches from an oak tree hanging over Middle Lane in Bells Yew Green and that a local resident had offered to take these down.

The next issue of Parish News was discussed and Cllr Rutherford offered to draft the Council's contributory article for the next edition. **Action: WR**

It was noted that the Eridge Fair was being held on 30th June.

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

ACTION	BY WHOM
To liaise with Tunbridge Wells BC about fingerpost on Parish boundary.	Clerk
To submit an article to Parish News.	WR
To ascertain possibility of match funding for a streetlight in Rushlye Close.	Clerk/BS
To look into Wealden DC's position on commenting on planning applications in adjoining authorities' re: Ashdown Forest.	BS