

FRANT PARISH COUNCIL

THE MINUTES OF A MEETING OF FRANT PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT ERIDGE VILLAGE HALL ON WEDNESDAY 20TH JUNE 2018 AT 7.30PM

Present: Cllr Rutherford - Chairman
Cllrs Mrs Park, Mrs Wallis, Macdonald-Brown

Mrs R. Karim – Clerk
Mrs J. Steadman – Frant Open Spaces Group
Mr C. Steadman
Mr D. Huskisson

1. To receive apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs Mrs Best, Mrs Howell, Rowland, Crookshank and Stevens. Apologies were accepted.

2. To receive declarations of interests on items on the Agenda and changes to the Register of Interests

Cllr Wallis expressed an interest in the planning application at Nobles Wood on the grounds that she is a resident there.

3. To approve the Minutes of the meeting on 16 May 2018 as a true and accurate 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 Cllr Rutherford to meet with Mr McGregor-Gould to identify a location for the circular bench. Carried forward. **Action: WR**

4.2 Cllr Rutherford said he had carried out risk assessments of the assets in Frant ward and would forward the forms to the Clerk. **Action: WR**

4.3 Cllr Standley confirmed that the information from the call of sites made by Wealden DC would be published shortly, along with the Local Plan. Completed.

4.4 The Clerk said she had liaised with Kompan about the schedule for the new see-saw and would be meeting a representative from Kompan on site within the next few weeks. Completed.

4.5 Cllr Macdonald-Brown reported that he had drafted an article for Parish News about the proposed use of Henry Smith funds. Completed.

4.6 Cllr Rutherford said he would be refurbishing the village sign in the coming weeks. Carried forward. **Action: WR**

4.7 The Clerk said she had written to Orchard Landscapes about clearing vegetation around the VAS sign on the A267 but had not received a response, as yet. Carried forward.

4.8 Cllr Macdonald-Brown noted that the broken grit bin in Bells Yew Green had been removed. Completed.

4.9 Cllr Park reported that the various 'caution – runners' signs that had been put up around the Hawkenbury area was in connection with the Tunbridge Wells Harriers. She said she had sent an email but had not received a response. In the meantime, she said she would attach a note to the back of the signs asking them to be removed once the event was over.

4.10 Cllr Rutherford said that Cllr Best had circulated a letter to local residents about the proposed green in Eridge. He reported that there had been no negative feedback to date and no response from those residents who overlook the proposed area. Completed.

5. Public Forum

Mrs Steadman said that the logs that were positioned along either side of the road outside Mastingate would be removed by the following Saturday. She went on to explain that there had been problems with the frequency and spread of the cuts to the green in recent months. She said that the reason for this may inadvertently have been the way in which the Frant Open Spaces Group had drafted the tender document, such that only 8 -9 cuts a year were specified. However, she said she now realised that Orchard Landscapes had historically carried out many more cuts (up to 20 a year) on a pro bono basis but that these had now stopped in line with the latest tender document. She offered her apologies for this and asked if Cllr Rutherford could liaise with Orchard Landscapes to reinstate these additional cuts.

Mrs Steadman outlined some of the issues arising about the new regime for the green, including safety concerns about the length of grass reducing visibility for passing vehicles in places, issues around the width of the paths and the emerging need for different equipment to manage the varying lengths of grass.

(Mr Huskisson joined the meeting at 7.40pm)

Cllr Rutherford noted that there was concern that arisings were not being collected. He said he had received feedback about the length of grass on the cricket pitch, that the long areas of grass should be restricted to the margins and the area near the pillbox and swings was too large and was reducing the area of play for the children. Cllr Rutherford said he would speak to the Cricket Club and then speak with Orchard Landscapes. **Action: WR**

Mrs Steadman acknowledged that there were concerns but suggested it would not be good practice to interfere with the tender document mid-year. This was agreed.

Cllr Park said she knew of concern around dog mess in the long grass. Mr Steadman responded that this was down to the dog owners to act responsibly. Mrs Steadman suggested the provision of an additional dog bin may help matters.

Cllr Rutherford raised the concern about ticks in the long grass and the Clerk added that a number of residents were now avoiding taking their children to the park because of this potential problem, particularly as the long grass was now as far up as the swings. It was noted that the children were no longer able to play football matches in the park.

At this point in the meeting, Cllr Rutherford agreed to bring forward item 10 on the agenda.

10. Green Spaces

10.1 To consider the terms of reference for consultants re: erosion around the green

The Clerk asked for clarification as to what type of consultants she should approach and about what the terms of reference should be – to quantify the extent of erosion and/or recommend remedial measures to control it?

It was agreed that, although much of the erosion appeared to be as result of vehicle movements and parking, employing traffic consultants was not the right approach. Instead, advice should be sought from ESCC about traffic calming. Cllr Standley said the use of the Council's CIL money might be an option for this. Mr Huskisson suggested the Clerk contact consultants on the list that he had sent via email. Mrs Steadman said she would forward the contact details for the Curator of the Common in Tunbridge Wells to the Clerk, who may be able to offer some advice.

Cllr Wallis noted that she had been receiving positive feedback about the new bunds around the green in Bells Yew Green and that the signs and some planting were now in place. Mrs Steadman said that Orchard Landscapes could also supply small signs for the greens.

(Mr and Mrs Steadman and Mr Huskisson left the meeting at 8pm)

6. To receive reports of County and District Councillors

County

Cllr Standley said that ESCC were acting within 0.2% of its budget; however, he noted that difficult decisions still had to be made to achieve a saving of £30 million and that a raft of measures were going to Cabinet shortly.

He discussed the waste recycling centres in both Wadhurst and Crowborough ahead of the final decision being made about their future. He expressed the dilemma in one lobbying for a recycling centre to remain open on the one hand while asking for funds to keep adult social care centres open on the other. Cllr Macdonald-Brown agreed, noting that adult care homes were closing at a rapid rate and those remaining were vulnerable because they are mostly staffed by European workers.

Cllr Park enquired about the possibility of improved Broadband delivery in the parish. She agreed to provide Cllr Standley with more detail and he would then investigate.

Action: DP/BS

Cllr Rutherford raised the issue of whether Eridge Village Hall would be able to purchase the ESCC-owned car park immediately outside the Hall, should it wish to. Cllr Standley agreed to look into this.

Action: BS

District

Cllr Rutherford referred to the recent drop in frequency of certain rubbish collections by Kier. He noted that Wealden DC had met with Kier to ensure they fulfil their contractual obligations despite this being the last year of their contract. Kier have now brought in additional collection teams, so improvements should be seen shortly.

Cllr Rutherford introduced a new scheme in the district - akin to that operating in London - whereby members of the public can hire bikes from certain points for recreational use - from the Nevill Crest and Gun, for example. The idea behind the scheme is to promote this sustainable form of transport and to encourage physical activity. It was noted that the bikes can be picked up at one point and returned to another.

At this point in the meeting, Cllr Rutherford agreed to bring forward item 15 for consideration.

15. Horizon Scanning

Cllr Wallis said she had attended an event about community-led housing schemes and she tabled a document entitled Alternative Housing Delivery Models. She summarised the main points gleaned from the event and suggested it was something that the Parish Council could consider in the future. Cllr Standley said that these schemes were indeed very positive but were often affected by high land costs and/or the lack of available land. Cllr Rutherford noted, however, that some altruistic landowners offer a 'community payback' - sometimes a parcel of land - through a planning application process. Cllr Standley highlighted the work of Sussex Weald Homes, owned by Wealden DC.

8. To discuss the issues concerning Frant Memorial Hall

Cllr Rutherford said that the Memorial Hall was facing some difficulties and he asked councillors their opinion about how the Parish Council might assist. Cllr Park summarised a conversation she had had with one of the current Trustees of the Hall. Apart from him (and he himself has resigned but is willing to stay until matters are resolved), there is only one remaining Trustee. She noted that the Hall was running a surplus in funds which was encouraging but, for now, no more bookings were being taken. A meeting is to be held on 9th July to seek solutions; Cllrs Rutherford and Mrs Park will attend.

(Cllr Standley and Cllr Wallis left the meeting at 8.45pm)

7. Finance (WR)

7.1 To approve the accounts payable

The accounts were approved to be paid.

7.2 To consider cost of new accounting software and support

The Clerk tabled a quote from Rialtas for the provision of new accounting software and ongoing support. It was agreed that, in line with the Internal Auditor's comments, this was a necessary purchase for the Council and the quote was approved.

7.3 To approve the quote for the services of a data protection company

The Clerk said that the previous quote agreed for the services of a data protection company was not as appropriate for the Council's needs now that the appointment of a Data Protection Officer is no longer a legal requirement. She thus tabled a second quote and this was approved.

9. To discuss various legal matters

These were not discussed at this meeting.

11. Highways & Lighting

Cllr Macdonald-Brown noted that a lamp in Little Bayham needed fixing; he said he had asked the landowner to trim the vegetation around the lamppost. He also noted that there were two potholes near the station and he would report these to Highways.

Action: AMB

Cllr Rutherford noted that the Highways-owned lamp on the A267, previously reported, was still not fixed.

Action: Clerk

12. Safety in the Parish

Cllr Rutherford said that the new District Commander was keen to meet with Parish Councils.

The Clerk said there had been a head-on collision on the hill up into Frant some weeks ago and that this would added to the collisions register.

Action: Clerk

13. Communications

Cllr Park raised the issue of the poor delivery of Broadband to certain parts of the Parish and said that ESCC's Go Sussex Broadband Initiative allowed those bidding to cherry pick which postcodes they wished to deliver to. Cllr Park said she was going to undertake an exercise to quantify the impact of this and write to ESCC with the results. Cllr Macdonald-Brown suggested contacting Nus Ghani MP.

Action: DP

Cllr Park enquired as to how many of the councillors were up and running with the new email address system. For those who had not yet set it up, she offered her assistance with this on a one-to-one basis. It was agreed that a target date be set for all the councillors to be using their new email addresses by.

Action: DP

14. Planning Matters (VB)

14.1 To make recommendations about Planning Applications received:

- WD/2018/0813/F – Nobles Wood, Bells Yew Green, TN3 9EA
New 1.2m high replacement gates at the entrance to Nobles Wood.

Councillors raised no objections to this proposal and agreed to support it.

14.2 To note Planning Applications that have been determined:

- WD/2018/0735 – Pinewood Farm, Frant Road, Frant, TN3 9HB

To demolish the current old dairy and replace it with a single dwelling; use of existing cow shed for ancillary use.

Approved: 11th June 2018

Noted.

- WD/2018/0353/F – Perros, Church Lane, Frant, TN3 9DX

Link extension to garage. Loft conversion with roof windows. Variation to approved scheme WD/2012/1703/F (demolition of existing dwelling erection of replacement)

Approved: 11th June 2018

Noted.

16. Chairman's announcements & correspondence for noting

Cllr Rutherford reminded councillors that the fair was being held on Saturday 30th June and that their help would be needed for a range of tasks throughout the day.

Cllr Rutherford read out an email from the owners of Frant Stores asking for some assistance with two matters. First, the Council's litter bin was regularly being targeted by foxes, etc. with the result being that litter is strewn across the pavement; the owners often have to pick the litter up and they asked whether the Council could provide a new bin or a lid for the existing. **Action: Clerk**

Second, the owners asked whether they could site an A-board at the bottom of Church Lane, especially given that Mary Ensor and The George already have boards there. Cllr Rutherford pointed out that neither of these boards were authorised by the Parish Council and he noted that alternatives had been considered previously, such as positioning signs on the bus shelters. Cllr Park suggested a bespoke totem pole could be erected with all of the various business listed on it. Cllr Rutherford said that the Council would revisit this and asked that owners of Frant Stores refrained from putting up an A-board until then.

Cllr Rutherford read out a letter from the PCC of Holy Trinity Church in Eridge, thanking the Parish Council for its donation to the upkeep of the churchyard there.

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

None to report.

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

LIST OF ACTIONS

WR to meet with Mr McGregor Gould re: the circular bench for the green	WR
WR to forward risk assessments to Clerk for filing.	WR
WR to undertake refurbishment of village sign.	WR
WR to liaise with the Cricket Club and Orchard Landscapes about frequency of cuts.	WR
DP to provide Cllr Standley with more detail about Broadband issues in the Parish and Cllr Standley to investigate.	DP/BS
Cllr Standley to look into whether Eridge Village Hall would be able to purchase the ESCC-owned car park immediately outside the Hall.	BS
AMB to report two potholes near the railway station.	AMB
Clerk to chase Highways about fixing their lamp on the A267.	Clerk
DP to undertake exercise to quantify impact of poor Broadband service in the Parish.	DP
DP to assist councillors with email set-up.	DP
Clerk to look at options for the litter bin outside Frant Stores.	Clerk