

FRANT PARISH COUNCIL

THE MINUTES OF A MEETING OF FRANT PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT FRANT MEMORIAL HALL, FRANT ON WEDNESDAY 25TH OCTOBER 2017 AT 7.30PM

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

Mrs R. Karim Clerk
County Councillor Bob Standley
Mrs S. Wallis
Mrs J. Steadman
Mr D. Huskisson
Mrs L. Myers
Mr S. Williams
Mrs J. Pearson
Mr. G. Lawson
5 members of the public

1. To receive apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs Wright, Mrs Hutchings, Mrs Howell and Mrs Kinley and County Cllr F. Whetstone.

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

Cllr Stevens declared a personal interest in application WD/2017/1797/F.

At this point in the meeting Cllr Rutherford agreed to bring forward item 13 of the agenda.

13. To consider the co-option of a local parishioner to councillor for the Bells Yew Green ward

Mrs Susan Wallis introduced herself to councillors and gave a brief summary of her background, interests and involvement in the local community.

Cllr Rutherford thanked Mrs Wallis for her interest and he proposed that she be co-opted onto the Council. Cllr MacDonald-Brown seconded the proposal and, by a show of hands, it was **resolved unanimously** by 5 votes to co-opt Mrs Wallis onto the Council as councillor for the Bells Yew Green ward. Mrs Wallis took her seat within the Council for the remainder of the meeting.

In view of the numbers of members of the public attending, Cllr Rutherford agreed to bring forward item 5 of the agenda.

5. Public forum

Mrs Myers addressed the Council and read out a statement about the proposal for 2 no. new dwellings at Manor Farm on the Bells Yew Green Road.

Mr Williams, who lives immediately to the south of the application site and owns the driveway, spoke next noting that he was speaking on behalf of other neighbours. He raised concerns about the intensification in use of the driveway which would arise as a result of the development. He noted that ESCC would not normally permit 5-6 houses off a single-track access; there are currently 6 houses, a stud operation and holiday lets already making use of

this track. Mr Williams said that there are currently no rights of access to go across the grass verges (that are within his ownership), especially for a roadway. He noted also the presence of drains beneath the verges.

Mr Williams raised concerns about light spillage in this sensitive AONB location and the potential for increased noise. He also questioned why an area of hardstanding was proposed for dedicated parking, noting that this served to increase the amount (and perception) of development across the site in this rural location.

Mrs Pearson spoke next and said that her property was within the closest proximity of the application site and yet no screening had been included with the application documents. She said her property and garden, particularly as it is set down from the application site, would be overlooked and she invited councillors to undertake a site visit to observe this first-hand. She concluded by saying that she supported the comments made by Mr Williams concerning the access and the rural character of the general location. Mrs Pearson also noted that there is a registered colony of bats within her properties and the presence of light is a sensitive issue in terms of the bats' ability to forage.

Mr Lawson spoke last to confirm his support for the comments made by Mr Williams and Mrs Pearson and reiterated the present difficulties of navigating the single-track driveway when cars approach one another en route.

Cllr Rutherford thanked the interested parties for their representations to the Council. Cllr Best queried what would happen to the existing access. Mrs Myers said that it was proposed to use only the new access and leave the closure of the existing access to a condition imposed on any permission granted. She noted that they would ask for a pedestrian gate in order to be able to leave their bins out for collection.

Cllr Rutherford said he had sought clarity from Wealden DC about why ESCC Highways had not been consulted about this application given the issues and concerns surrounding the single-track driveway, and was waiting for a response. Cllr Best said she shared the neighbours' concerns about the separate parking area proposed.

Cllr Rutherford said he had reviewed the Council's reasons for objecting to the original application in 2015, which included concerns about access and the height and scale of the proposed building. He noted that the Minutes of the Council's consideration of the 2015 application expressed concern amongst councillors that the applicants would, in the future, submit an application for another dwelling. He pointed out that the Council had, at that time, asked Wealden DC to impose restrictions to ensure this did not happen, but they did not do so. Cllr Rutherford thus concluded that the Council's concerns were now being borne out with this current application.

Cllr Rutherford asked councillors to vote. 4 no. were against the proposals, with one abstention on the grounds of conflict of interest; it was **resolved** to therefore submit an objection to the Council. The grounds for the objection were the over-development of the site, intensification in use of the existing driveway and the overall impact on the rural character of the site and surrounding area within this AONB location. Councillors noted that if Wealden DC are minded to approve the application, the Council should submit suggestions for conditions with respect to: external lighting, the area of hardstanding, restricting lorry movements and wheel washing.

(Mrs Myers, Mr Williams, Mrs Pearson, Mr Lawson and the remaining members of the public left the meeting at 8.05pm)

3. To approve the Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 13th September 2017 as a true record

Cllr Rutherford noted that item 8.3 should be amended to read "the current MP for Tunbridge Wells". The Minutes were duly amended and approved.

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

- 4.1** Cllr Rutherford to email councillors with suggestions for possible roles for them during the forthcoming year. Carried forward. **Action: WR**
- 4.2** Clerk to liaise with Frant Cricket Club about providing additional netting. Cllr Stevens to draft an agreement between the Club and the Parish Council. Carried forward. **Action: Clerk/MS**
- 4.3** Cllr Standley said the recent flooding at Park View had been dealt with. Completed.
- 4.4** It was agreed that Cllr Rutherford and/or Cllr Wright would meet with Niall MacGregor Gould to identify a location for the circular bench. **Action: WR/DW**
- 4.5** Cllr Rutherford said he had drafted a letter to the landowner in Eridge about the possibility of establishing a 'green' in the village and would be sending this out shortly. **Action: WR**
- 4.6** Cllr Standley informed the Council that under s.333 of the Highways Act, anyone is permitted to remove a sign (advertisement) if they consider it is causing a danger or obstruction. The sign must be stored and the owner informed. If the sign is authorised but is not posing a hazard, then it can be reported to the District Council. Cllr Standley noted that the Act fell short of defining 'dangerous' and 'obstruction'. Completed.
- 4.7** The Clerk said she had met with a representative from Kompan about the see-saw in Frant. He explained that, in fact, no screws are missing; the two plates with screw holes on opposing sides of the see-saw are mirror images of one another, but different screw holes are used on the plates to secure the see-saw on either side. He offered to return to the site for a more detailed investigation into whether the see-saw was actually in need of replacement. Carried forward.
- 4.8** The Clerk said she had sought three quotes for renewing the path across the green in Frant but had not yet had any response. Carried forward. **Action: Clerk**
- 4.9** 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**
- 4.10** The Clerk noted that Cllr MacDonald-Brown was due to meet another contractor the day after the meeting for an additional quote for parking posts at BYG green. Carried forward. **Action: AMDB**
- 4.11** The Clerk confirmed that Cllr Hutchings would be meeting with Mr Johnson from ES Highways outside Knowle Grange to consider ways in which to improve road safety in this location.

6. Reports from County and District Councillors

County

- Cllr Standley said he had received complaints about the traffic management associated with the ongoing gas works along the A267.
- Cllr Standley alluded to the closure of doctors' surgeries in the district; notably, the recent closure of the satellite surgery in Frant and the proposed closure of the surgery in Rotherfield. He noted that the Chief Executive of the CGG acknowledged the problems with these closures – not least the difficulties people would have in travelling further distances to other surgeries – but that part of the issue was with the recruitment of new GPs.
- Cllr Standley identified a cross-party campaign called Stand Up for East Sussex which is seeking to lobby Government for additional funds so that key services do not have to be cut back. He noted that there is an online petition.

District

Cllr Rutherford said there was nothing to report on this occasion.

(Cllr Standley left the meeting at 8.25pm)

Cllr Rutherford agreed to bring forward item 8 on the agenda.

8. Green Spaces

8.1 To agree the wording of the tender document for maintaining the green spaces within the Parish and to approve the commencement of the tender process

Cllr Rutherford expressed thanks to Mr Huskisson and Ms Steadman on behalf of the Council for producing the draft tender document. He went on to enquire about item 8.0 of the draft tender and suggested that Frant Cricket Club be consulted about how many cuts of the outfield per year they would wish to see. **Action: DH**

It was agreed to exclude Sleeches Cross from the tender as the maintenance of this falls with ES Highways.

Action: DH

The ownership of the land between Church Lane and the football pitch was queried and it was agreed the Clerk would investigate this.

Action: Clerk

It was agreed to put the tender out to four contractors, including Orchard Landscapes. Subject to confirmation with Cllr Rutherford, it was agreed to move the date of the next Full Council Meeting from the 15th November to the 22nd November in order to give the contractors more time to submit their tender.

The Council **resolved** to approve the tender document subject to the amendments above.

8.2 To consider options for assisting with the maintenance of the churchyard in Frant

The councillors discussed the options and concluded they would be in favour of a possible one-off grant to assist with the maintenance of the churchyard in Frant. It was agreed to review this during the budget-setting process.

7. Community Governance Review and the parish boundary

Cllr Stevens tabled the proposal to alter the boundary of the parish in Eridge and an accompanying A3 map. Cllr Rutherford thanked Cllr Stevens and Cllr Best for their work on this and it was **resolved** to submit the proposal and map to Wealden DC. **Action: Clerk**

9. Finance (WR)

9.1 To consider regulations in relation to the spend of CIL monies

The Clerk said that the Council were shortly to be in receipt of substantial CIL funds. She tabled a document outlining the regulations concerning the way in which these funds could be spent, noting that, in the main, they should be used to fund projects that seek to mitigate against any impact arising from the development from which the funds are derived. The Clerk said she was flagging this up now because the use of the funds is time-limited to five years and also because the Council is about to start its annual budget review.

It was agreed that a dedicated meeting should be held in December to give detailed thought as to how the funds should be used.

9.2 To begin the budget-setting process for 2017/18

The Clerk said that it was now time to start considering the budget and precept for the next financial year. She noted that in the current model financial regulations, there was a requirement to set a budget for three years ahead. This was discussed and the Clerk noted that it was an opportunity to identify capital projects for the longer term and provision for these across a 3-year budget. She also noted that the precept was still not capped, although this could happen in the future. She suggested that the Council should consider any projects they may wish to undertake and adjust the precept accordingly, while there was still no cap in place.

9.3 To approve the accounts payable

The accounts were approved for payment.

9.4 To approve the bank reconciliation for October 2017

The reconciliation was approved.

10 Safety in the Parish

Cllr Rowland said he had attended a workshop run by ES Police and Friends Against Scams concerning fraudulent scams. He noted that between £5-6 billion is extracted every year through such scams and that they normally target the over-75s. Cllr Rowland suggested that these groups be invited to the next Annual Parish Meeting.

Cllr Rutherford noted that there had been a significant accident near Bells Yew Green involving three cars. He said there is an interactive map online whereby one can identify accident hotspots. He agreed to circulate this.

Action: WR

11 Highways and Lighting (SH)

11.1 To review correspondence from Highways about an additional 'pedestrians in road' sign in Bells Yew Green

Cllr Wallis noted that the new 'pedestrian in road' sign was now in place in Bells Yew Green. A location for an additional sign with the same wording was discussed and it was agreed that the Clerk would write to Ms Pain at ESCC about the possibility of putting a new sign in the place of the existing 'horses in road' sign.

Action: Clerk

12. Communications (CK)

12.1 To consider how the Council can contribute to the Christmas Fair in Frant

The upcoming fair in Frant, to be held on Friday 1st – 2nd December, was discussed. It was suggested that the Council proceed with placing a Christmas tree adjacent to the cricket pavilion on the green but that Cllr Rutherford would also meet with The George to discuss ways in which the Council can contribute to the fair.

Action: WR

Cllr Wallis noted that there is a possibility of a local resident funding a Christmas tree in Bells Yew Green this year.

14. Planning (GB)

14.1 To approve the Minutes of the Planning Meeting on 2nd October 2017

The Minutes were approved as a true and accurate record.

14.2 To consider and comment on the following planning applications:

- **WD/2017/1797/F – Manor Farm, Bells Yew Green Rd, Frant, TN3 9BH**
Demolition of two redundant farm buildings and erection of two new dwellings incorporating, as part of the curtilage, the existing historic walled garden of the former manor house.

Considered under item 5 above.

- **WD/2017/2018/MFA – Land to the east of Benhall Mill Road, Tunbridge Wells**
Variation of Condition 6 of WD/2015/2675/MAJ

It was agreed that, in varying the condition, there was a possibility that future harm would arise from an insufficient drainage system being in place prior to occupation of the new dwellings. It was concluded that there were no sound reasons for varying the condition and that an objection would be lodged.

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

- **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).
Approved on 9th October 2017.

Councillors noted the decision.

15 Chairman’s announcements & correspondence for noting

Cllr Rutherford informed the Council that he had received Cllr Kinley’s resignation from her position within the Council. He said that Cllr Kinley had been a valued member of the Council and had contributed significantly over the years. It was suggested that Cllr Kinley be invited to a future meeting for her input on certain matters.

16 Correspondence

The Clerk said she had received an email from Ms Trudi Godfrey just prior to the meeting. Ms Godfrey was keen to open up a dialogue with councillors about the closure of the doctors’ surgery in Frant and what that would mean for residents, particularly the infirm and elderly, in terms of being able to get to and from appointments. Councillors sympathised with the problem and it was agreed that the Clerk would invite Ms Godfrey to attend a meeting.

There being no other business the meeting ended at 9.50pm.

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
WR and/or DW to meet with Mr McGregor-Gould to discuss where the circular bench could be located.	WR/DW
Cllr Rutherford to finalise letter to the landowner (via the agent) about the possibility of forming a green in Eridge and send.	WR
Clerk to chase contractors for the quotes for renewing the path across Frant green.	Clerk
Clerk to continue to try and make contact with Jakk UK about the repair of the sign in Eridge.	Clerk
AMDB to meet with a contractor on site to discuss installing bollards around the green in BYG.	AMDB
WR to make contact with The George about their Christmas Fair.	WR
Clerk to identify owner of land between Church Lane and the football pitch.	Clerk
Clerk to submit proposals to ESCC for amending the parish boundary.	Clerk
WR to circulate details of online accident map.	WR
Clerk to write to ES Highways about installing the second 'pedestrians in road' sign in BYG.	Clerk