

FRANT PARISH COUNCIL

THE MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING OF FRANT PARISH COUNCIL, HELD ONLINE VIA 'ZOOM' ON MONDAY 21st SEPTEMBER 2020 AT 7.30PM

Present: Cllr Rutherford - Chairman
Cllrs Crookshank, Park, Howell, Best, Luther

County and District Cllr Standley
District Cllr Obbard
Mrs R. Karim – Clerk

Mr David Huskisson
Mr Colin Steadman
Mr Will Patrick

1. To receive apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs Wallis and Macdonald-Brown.

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

Cllr Howell recorded that she would not be taking part in discussions concerning planning applications.

3. To approve the Minutes of the meeting on 29th July 2020 as a true and accurate record

The Minutes were **approved**.

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

- The Clerk confirmed that information concerning the re-opening of playgrounds had been posted on the website. Completed.
- The Clerk confirmed that she had forwarded last month's bank reconciliation to Cllr Rutherford. Completed.
- It was noted that an improved design of litter bin had been suggested; for discussion.
- The Clerk confirmed that she had begun the process of moving to online banking with Natwest.
- The Clerk said she was liaising with JakkUK about signage for the green.
- Cllr Rutherford noted that the offer a lease for a section of road near the rocks in Eridge was made to Sussex Wildlife Trust by the Abergavenny Estate. He noted that the Estate were aware of the Council's concerns.

5. Public Forum – time limit 15 minutes

Mr Patrick addressed the Council and gave a comprehensive summary of the Football Club's recent activities, noting its key successes. Mr Patrick summarised a number of requests and asked that the Parish Council consider these, as follows: 1. allow continued access to the Glebe car park; 2. assist with the management of rabbits and moles; 3. install a defibrillator in the village; 4. agree to the thinning of the brambles between the field and the allotments; and 5. permissioned access to the facilities going forward.

Mr Patrick also requested that the Parish Council provide some guidance about requests to use the field on an informal basis from other clubs. Cllr Howell queried what sort of facilities visiting clubs might want. Mr Patrick said that with those that he had spoken to, there was an understanding that no facilities would be available (such as toilets, etc) and they had no expectations to that end. Parking was one area of potential concern, however. He noted

also that the pitch was never going to attract serious players and teams, in part because the size of the pitch had been reduced to below standard size, to accommodate the local players.

Cllr Park said the Parish Council must be satisfied that clear plans were in place for visiting teams in terms of child safeguarding. Mr. Patrick said, to date, only Forresters had made use of the field. He noted they had two child welfare officers and adhered to FA guidelines around safeguarding. Cllr Park suggested a checklist be developed to be used whenever a club made use of the facilities.

Mr Patrick noted that the Football Club was not profit-making, was not registered with the FA and did not retain bank accounts. It subsisted on subs paid by its players and local sponsorship. The Club might consider a nominal fee for outside clubs using the pitch to assist with ongoing costs. Cllr Crookshank asked what these costs might be and Mr Patrick suggested in the region of the low hundreds for dealing with moles and rabbits, but that volunteers from the club would carry out any work to the brambles, etc. Cllr Rutherford thanked Mr, Patrick for his update. He suggested it be put on the next agenda for discussion as to how the Parish Council could facilitate the issues raised and put some structure around other clubs using the pitch, safeguarding issues, public liability insurance, etc.

(Mr Patrick left the meeting at 7.50pm)

Mr. Huskisson was invited to speak and he raised three issues. Firstly, he noted that the Football Club wished to thin the brambles behind the pitch but that care must be taken not to cut the new meadow planting. Secondly, he noted that there was an agenda item to ratify the decision to implement the meadow. He said that the work had already been carried out with no cost to the Parish Council on the understanding that the meadow had been approved; he voiced his concern that FOFGS had misunderstood this and apologised if so. Lastly, Mr. Huskisson referred to a recent Parish Council article in Parish News that suggested that the future of the green spaces had to be resolved. He said he was concerned that any future decisions be based on the knowledge that FOFGS had acquired through the various surveys and reports carried out and in light of the support for FOFGS in accessing Wealden DC and Sussex Lund funds.

Cllr Crookshank said he had written the article for Parish News and it was intended to reflect that some councillors had not been privy to the history of the way in which funds were spent and/or allocated, to the green, in particular. Mr. Huskisson noted that the money allocated for the consultancy work on the green was separate from the money allocated for its ongoing management.

Cllr Rutherford thanked Mr. Huskisson for his comments and invited Mr Steadman to introduce himself to the Parish Council as a prospective councillor. Mr Steadman summarised his previous career and gave a detailed list of all the community initiatives, clubs and groups he has been involved with over the years. He said by joining the Parish Council, he hoped to expand his involvement in the community and contribute further. Cllr Rutherford thanked him and added that his membership of some groups might find him conflicted but that there were procedures in place for councillors to declare any interests they may have and absent themselves from discussions and voting. Mr Steadman said he understood this. Cllr Rutherford thanked Mr Steadman for his interest in the Parish Council.

6. To receive reports from County and District Councillors

Cllr Rutherford noted that both Cllr Standley and Cllr Obbard had submitted their written reports prior to the meeting (see Appendices) and he invited questions. Referring to Cllr Obbard's report, Cllr Howell pointed out that planning officers and planning committees always seek to engage with developers for more sustainable outcomes, within the confines of the NPPF and Building Regulations, the latter which particularly inform the extent to which proposed development can, in practice, include sustainable measures. Cllr Obbard noted Cllr Howell's points.

7. To discuss and review ongoing support within the Parish during the Covid-19

Cllr Crookshank reported that some families were in receipt of food boxes. He asked the Clerk to establish how much of the Henry Smith funds were available as this may be a way that the Parish Council could assist. **Action: Clerk**

Cllr Park noted that a lot of elderly people in the community were reluctant to participate in social clubs at the moment and suggested the Parish Council could liaise with the churches to ensure that these parishioners were being reached out to. Councillors agreed and Cllr Rutherford noted that the Parish Council had put information in the Parish News and on its website. Mr Steadman offered to include the Council on the local Whatsapp group.

8. To discuss the future of the Glebe field

Cllr Rutherford said that the Diocese has indicated it wants to develop the site with houses and he noted that the results of Wealden DC's Call for Sites would be published in October. Cllr Standley said that only a list of sites would be published; at that stage, there would be no assessment or judgement of each site. Cllr Howell said she had discussed the site with officers at Wealden DC and confirmed that no planning application had as yet been submitted. Mr Huskisson noted that the Glebe field had been approved as a development site in the last Call for Sites.

Cllr Rutherford said that the Parish Council had, in the past, approached the Diocese about selling or granting the field to it but the Diocese had not previously been willing to do either. Cllr Crookshank suggested the grant of a right of way could form part of any planning application submitted. Cllrs Rutherford and Best agreed but thought it was too early in the process to discuss this with the Diocese. Cllr Crookshank noted that the current provision was only a permissive right and not a right of way. Cllr Rutherford said that the route via the graveyard was also only a permissive right, originally granted to school children making their way to and from the village school.

9. To discuss green spaces in the Parish and ratify the decision to create a meadow on part of the parish field

Cllr Crookshank voiced his concerns around the level of expenditure on the green in Frant to date and also committed to date; he queried whether the amount set aside for the consultancy work included implementing any of the measures proposed. It was agreed that the £15K did not include implementing any measures. It was noted that Cllr Best had previously put forward a motion that, in commissioning the consultancy work, this did not obligate the Parish Council to carry out any of the recommendations. Cllr Howell recalled that there had been agreement that any work would be carried out in phases. Cllr Crookshank said that there should be a forward plan in place, perhaps for the next three years. Cllr Rutherford said that the consultants had not yet produced their recommendations which would necessarily inform the making of a forward plan. Cllr Park noted that the most recent report from the consultants indicated that the rate of erosion was low and thus a plan could seek to address critical areas only. Cllr Luther added that CIL money was finite and the money committed to the study of erosion around the green was using approximately one sixth of this. She considered that it was important to recognise the needs of other sectors of the community and how they might benefit from other projects paid for with the CIL funds.

Cllr Best considered that the Council ought to set out a plan for the year in December/January, including proposed activities and projects and spend and then stick to this throughout the year. There was general agreement on this and the Clerk added that in the autumn, the Parish Council considers its budget for the forthcoming year and this is an opportunity to pin down on what and to what extent the Parish Council wish to spend the precept and CIL. The Clerk noted also that the Parish Plan was old and needed updating; she said that the Parish Council should endeavour to have a 3-year business plan in place, too.

To this end, Cllr Rutherford proposed establishing a CIL sub-committee that would convene once a month after the planning meeting; this was put to a vote and **agreed unanimously**. Cllr Rutherford suggested also that the Parish Council institute more formality to meetings, particularly as meetings were being held online, with the potential for misunderstandings, technical issues and so on.

Turning to the ratification of the decision to implement the meadow by the field in Frant, Cllr Park noted that the Parish Council had originally declined the request from FOFGS to carry out this project but, at the next meeting, this decision was seemingly overturned and the meadow was now a *fait accompli*, henceforth requiring ongoing management and cost. Cllr Luther added that she was surprised the Parish Council could not stop it from being done, as a principle.

The Clerk said there must be more formality in decision-making to ensure it was less ad hoc and piecemeal. Cllr Best agreed, noting that the opportunity to receive a bale of seeds from Great Dixter should not have been enough to drive this decision. Cllr Luther noted that there had been concerns raised about 'mission creep' with ongoing projects for the green and now other green spaces and that the Parish Council was the proper body for consulting about what should be done on its land, not FOFGS – the Parish Council was not privy to consultations taking place, who was asked or what was asked and no formal record of responses was provided.

Cllr Luther said she circulated her summary of the 2018 ecological report by Corylus, which was very specific in its recommendations and in its guidance to the Parish Council about whom the Council should seek advice from; she considered that the Parish Council had not followed this report nor taken on board the essence of the report which was that the recommendations were a choice, not a given – things the Parish Council could choose to do, or not. Cllr Rutherford said his understanding of the report was that the sowing of seeds was for sensitive areas of acid grassland and not by the football pitch. Cllr Luther considered that the Parish Council needed to take ownership of these reports and again reiterated that the report made its recommendations with an 'if desired' caveat. She noted that in the report, the cricket pitch square was considered the 'best' in terms of species and yet the cricket pitch is rarely used. By contrast, the area around the pill box is less important in terms of species, but was very well used before the change in strategy at this end of the green. Cllr Luther recommended to the Parish Council that it take on board the recommendation in the report - that is, for a review every 3 to 5 years - and carry out a review at the 3-year point, in June 2021.

Cllr Luther enquired whether the Parish Council could be told, albeit retrospectively, what seeds had actually be sown by the football pitch. Mr Huskisson responded that it would be possible to obtain a generic list of commonly occurring species at Great Dixter but that it was not possible to establish exactly what had ended up in the mix in the donated bale. Mr Huskisson apologised to the Parish Council for this situation coming about as it did, noting FOFGS thought they had the support of the Parish Council. Cllr Park said that Parish Council had been taken on a journey not of the Parish Council's making, particularly in light of the pressures on timings indicated by FOFGS. Cllr Luther said that the Parish Council in fact had a wider window in the autumn period in terms of planting the seed; Mr Huskisson agreed but noted that cuttings, not seeds, were used which did benefit from this wider window.

Cllr Rutherford said that he and the Clerk and a few other councillors had left the last meeting with the impression that agreement had been reached that the meadow could go ahead and thus the greenlight was given to FOFGS. Cllr Best said he was concerned now about the need for the meadow to be intensively managed and opined that the next thing would be a request for funds to do so. He proposed that the Parish Council ratify the decision but agree that this did not bind or commit the Parish Council to maintaining the meadow or to future spend on it. This was reiterated by Cllr Rutherford and **agreed unanimously**.

10. Highways and Lighting
10.1 Pedestrian crossing over the A267

The Clerk gave an update noting that before the feasibility study could be undertaken, a pedestrian and speed survey needed to be carried out. This had been delayed to after the summer holidays, to ensure a more accurate picture of users. The Clerk was chasing this but had no response to date. Cllr Standley asked the Clerk to forward him the information as he may be able to help.

Action: Clerk

10.2 Parking for Home Farm Court residents

Cllr Howell conveyed a conversation she had had with a resident at Home Farm Court about the problems with parking, notably since Ely Grange had stopped people from parking on the verge. It was agreed that the Clerk would write to Ely Grange in the first instance, to establish why they had done this.

Action: Clerk

10.3 Fly tipping on Benhall Mill Road

Cllr Park referred to the photographs she circulated of recent fly-tipping on Benhall Mill Road. She said that Biffa had visited on two occasions and done the best they could; however, they were unable to retrieve items that were dumped further down the bank near the river, because of health and safety guidelines. Cllr Howell offered to engage with Chris Bone at Wealden DC and the Environment Agency.

Action: Clerk

10.4 Fingerpost at Partridges Lane

The Clerk noted that ESCC had declined to provide a grant as they were in the process of reviewing their policies. She thus recommended that, given the parlous state of this fingerpost, the Parish Council pay the full cost, quoted by JakkUK. Cllr Rutherford proposed the Council commission this repair work and it was **agreed unanimously**.

10.5 Refurbishment of BT phone boxes

The Clerk said that as the red BT phone boxes were in the ownership of the Parish Council, it was important to ensure their longevity, upkeep and use. She suggested that the Parish Council consider their refurbishment, using suppliers approved by BT to ensure match of paint colour and fittings, etc - particularly important for the phone box next to Frant Stores, which is Grade II listed. She also made a suggestion that uses for the three phone boxes could be determined by way of competition amongst local residents. It was agreed to put this on a future agenda for discussion.

10.6 Repairs to Victoria Well

The Clerk said she had approached three firms to carry out repairs to the roof of the Victoria Well with only one - Mastercraft Roofing Services - submitting a quote. The Clerk noted that the firm's website gave details of its experience in working with listed buildings and structures. It was **unanimously agreed** to ask this firm to carry out the work.

Action: Clerk

11. Finance

11.1 To approve the accounts payable

The Clerk read out the list of accounts to be paid, as follows:

Item no.	Payee	Item	Cheque No.	Amount
1	Staff	Staff costs	3311/12/13	£1,598.21
2	Frant Memorial Hall	Hall rental Nov 2019 – March 2020 incl.	3314	£65.00
3	Orchard Landscapes	Inv 1455 Work to 30.7.20	3309	£2522.64
4	N.McGregor-Gould	Disinfecting parks in August and bus shelter cleans	3315	£390.00
5	Strutt and Parker	Fees associated with Centenary Green in Eridge	3316	£702.00

6	SLCC	Virtual Conference - training	3310	£30.00
---	------	-------------------------------	------	--------

All payments were approved except for the payment to Strutt and Parker. It was agreed that the Clerk would ask for a detailed invoice. **Action: Clerk**

11.2 To approve the bank reconciliation

The bank reconciliation was **approved**.

11.3 To agree to move over to online banking with Natwest

The move to online banking was **approved**.

12. Communications

12.1 Training for councillors

The Clerk said she would soon be enrolling councillors onto training courses about the GDPR. Cllr Rutherford asked the Clerk to confirm with the Parish Council's Data Protection Officer about whether or not those who have undergone GDPR training need do further training. **Action: Clerk**

The Clerk reminded councillors that SSLAC and SLCC offered a range of different courses to councillors. This was noted.

Cllr Rutherford further reminded councillors to use their 'gov.uk' email addresses although Cllr Park and the Clerk noted that the email system was being reviewed because of a series of ongoing difficulties with it.

12.2 Nominees for recognition award from Wealden DC

In light of the need to tell individuals they had been nominated because of data protection issues and also that some may then not be selected, it was **agreed** instead that the Parish Council would undertake its own recognition awards.

(Mr Steadman left the meeting at 9:30pm)

13. To consider the co-option of a prospective councillor

It was agreed that Mr Steadman would be a great asset to the Parish Council and would be a useful link with FOFGS. Cllr Rutherford proposed that Mr Steadman be co-opted and it was **agreed unanimously**.

(Cllrs Howell and Standley left the meeting at 9.30pm)

14. Planning

14.1 To approve the Minutes of the meeting on 29th July 2020 as a true and accurate record

The Minutes were **approved**.

14.2 To approve the Minutes of the meeting on 1st September 2020 as a true and accurate record

The Minutes were **approved**.

14.3 To consider planning and listed building applications:

- **WD/2020/1757/F – 1 Yew Tree Cottage, South Farm Lane, Broadwater Forest, TN3 9JN**

Single-storey rear extension and part 2-storey extension. Addition of oak-framed open porch to front.

It was noted that the same applicant was proposing a new house on the land opposite. The Councillors considered the current application and **agreed** to support it.

- **WD/2020/1657/F - The Dairy, Wadhurst Road, Frant, TN3 9EJ**

Roof conversion and single-storey extension to house and single-storey extension to summerhouse.

It was considered that the revisions had improved the scheme and it was **agreed to support** the application.

WD/2020/1656/O – Hargate House, St Marks Road, Tunbridge Wells, TN2 5LU

Erection of up to 2 no. dwellings, provision of a new vehicular access, landscaping and other associated infrastructure.

Concerns were raised about the impact this scheme would have on the AONB and it was considered to be an over-development and intensification of the site. On these grounds, the Parish Council **agreed to object** to the proposal.

WD/2020/1594/F – Bohemia Lodge, Eridge Park, Eridge Road, Eridge Green, TN3 9HA

Removal of existing conservatory and erection of 2-storey side extension.

It was considered that the Lodge is well-hidden from public view and the proposed development would be in keeping. The Parish Council **agreed to support** this application.

WD/2020/1674/PO – 2 Home Farm Cottages, Bayham Home Farm, Frant

Discharge of s.106 agreement dated 24 Oct 1995 attached to application WD/1995/0599/FA (removal of Condition 2 attached to planning permission T/70/657/B and transfer to 2 Home Farm Cottages)

It was noted that this type of condition is becoming less and less relevant with the deployment of modern machinery and fewer staff. The Parish Council thus **agreed** in this case to the discharge of this condition.

20/02232/FULL – 13A Benhall Mill Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN2 5JH

Demolition of existing buildings and redevelopment of the site to provide 9 no. dwellings, associated parking and gardens.

There was discussion around the continued pressure of new development on this rural road network and councillors questioned when development would ever stop on Benhall Mill Road. It was noted that the site was brownfield and outside the AONB but the adverse comments from Highways were also noted and it was **agreed** to lodge an objection with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council on the grounds of impact on the AONB, impact on the surrounding rural road network, poor design and over-development.

(Cllr Crookshank left the meeting at 9.41pm)

14.4 To note applications determined by Wealden District Council

WD/2020/1241/F – Fawkeners, Ely Grange, Frant, TN3 9DY

Replacement and enlargement of rear extensions and bay windows, conversion of existing garage/annexe into ancillary accommodation, including addition of two dormer windows, windows, doors and porch. *Approved on 3 September 2020.*

The decision was noted.

15. Chairman's announcements & correspondence for noting

Cllr Rutherford reported that he had been approached by a resident of Rushlake Green who had seen the recent changes to the way in which the green in Frant is managed and asked for advice, as Rushlake Green wish to do similar. Cllr Rutherford said he conveyed the importance of having a structure in place between the Parish Council and any community groups involved.

Cllr Rutherford said he had been contacted by the Delves family who explained that one of their relatives had been the last paid constable in Frant, prior to the Justice of the Peace Act, which centralised the payment of police constables. Upon retirement, the Frant constable was allowed to keep his ceremonial truncheon. The Delves family felt this belonged in Frant and had contacted The George about displaying it in the pub. However, they wished the

Parish Council to take over the ownership of the truncheon to ensure that if the pub closed, etc. it would be retrieved and looked after. Cllr Rutherford said it had been valued at £80. It was agreed to revisit this at a later meeting.

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

Cllr Park gave an update on the situation re: Broadband delivery, noting that some addresses may now be incorporated into the Broadband delivery to new developments at the top of Benhall Mill Road; she thus considered that some re-evaluation may now be needed.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9.50pm.

ACTION	BY WHOM
To establish how much of the Henry Smith funds are currently available.	Clerk
To ask Strutt and Parker for a detailed invoice.	Clerk
Forward emails concerning pedestrian/speed survey on A267 to Cllr Standley.	Clerk
Write to Ely Grange about parking near Home Farm Court.	Clerk
To engage with Chris Bone at Wealden DC and the Environment Agency.	JH

APPENDIX 1

District Council report to Frant Parish Council, September 2020

Cllr Bob Standley

Covid

As with the County report (below), Covid is slowly having a lesser effect on the delivery of services. Contingency plans have been made for any Local Outbreaks working with ESCC, NHS and the Sussex Resilience Forum.

Planning

As you will be aware, the new planning system consultation has been published and that consultation closes on 29th October at 23.45. As Cllrs will be aware, this changes the way planning permissions are given and introduces zoning. Duty to Co-operate and the 5Y Land Supply would also be removed with LPA's being judged on the housing delivery numbers. Under the new scheme, which requires primary and secondary legislation, Local Plans should take no more than 30 months (currently min of 5 years) with all LPAs having a new plan in place by 2024. Areas defined as Growth Areas will have automatic "outline" planning with LPAs having more influence on design.

Call for Sites

As part of the new Local Plan the "Call for sites" has been published. This will be published by the end of October but it should be noted these are sites proposed, normally by Landowners, for consideration and not those approved by Wealden Finance. Covid has, so far, cost the District £2.139 with £1.989 re-imbursed by HMG. No further grant is expected so overall net cost by the end of the pandemic will higher and be covered from reserves.

Leisure Centres

All four Leisure Centres are now open and WDC has given extra funding to the operator to facilitate the re-opening. Revenues at Leisure Centres and Gyms across the District, not surprisingly, fell sharply. From "Eat Out to Help Out" to "Work Out to Help Out"

Appendix 2

County Council report to Frant Parish Council, September 2020

Cllr Bob Standley

Covid

Whilst the pandemic continues to dominate the work of the Council attention is slowly being transferred to other topics. The other work of the Council has not been ignored but the necessary transfer of staff to cover Covid responsibilities has had an affect. Thankfully, cases in East Sussex are significantly below the national average. Contingency plans have been made for any Local Outbreaks working with Districts and Boroughs, NHS and the Sussex Resilience Forum.

Schools

Schools are now back and attendance last week averaged 76.8%. Schools are taking a precautionary approach. With the normal autumn colds it is difficult for parents to differentiate from colds to Covid but Covid does not give you a runny nose.

Finance

Covid has cost the County £59m extra with so far £52m being re-imbursed by HMG. Lobbying continues to seek fully recompense for the extra work. Until this funding is finalised then budgeting for 2021-22 will be challenging.

Libraries

Battle, Hastings, Eastbourne and Crowborough libraries re-opened in mid July. These are larger libraries to all for Social Distancing. The Select and Collect service is also working at these centres. Other libraries will re-opening over the coming weeks but with reduce hours as more staff than normal are needed when libraries are open.

Broadband

Please find attached a top-up scheme for businesses and residents with poor broadband Government Rural Gigabit Voucher broadband scheme given a £500,000 digital connectivity boost by East Sussex County Council. Businesses and residents in rural areas of the County who are struggling to get high-speed broadband are being offered a helping hand by the council to access improved connectivity. East Sussex County Council has invested £500,000 to support the Government's Rural Gigabit Voucher scheme, which helps businesses and residents in rural areas to access fast and reliable broadband. Currently those eligible can apply for Government funding towards the installation of gigabit capable technology (up to 1000Mbps), with businesses receiving up to £3,500 and residents receiving up to £1,500. With the new eSussex scheme being launched this week, those receiving the Government's funding will automatically receive an additional top-up subsidy of up to £1,000 per eligible applicant from East Sussex County Council towards the cost of installing new fast and reliable connections. Councillor Rupert Simmons, the county council's lead member for economy, said: "We are delighted to support this important development in the eSussex infrastructure project which will be of great help to many businesses and households in our rural areas. "The Government voucher scheme is a key addition to the programme to help ensure that gigabit broadband is accessible to those people in hard-to-reach areas across the county; the additional funding will help further to break down the digital divide and support local communities with their economic recovery." Businesses and residents who are eligible for Rural Gigabit Vouchers can access the top-up scheme through a registered supplier, who will apply on their behalf, and eligible applicants will automatically receive the top-up funding. Interested groups can check if they are eligible for the scheme and find details of suppliers in their area by visiting <https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/>. Alternatively, businesses and residents can register their interest with their chosen supplier who will check if they are eligible and

start the process to get them connected. Funding will be available on a first come, first served basis until the end of March 2021. Ends Contact Information Saffron Phillips saffron.phillips@eastsussex.gov.uk Bob Sept 2020

Appendix 3
Report for Frant Parish Council, 21st Sept 2020
Cllr Keith Obbard.

I am still restricting my travel and contacts due to the Covid Pandemic, but have made a few socially distanced visits. I know that regular updates have come out to Parish Clerks from Andy Vincent at the WDC.

The Community Hub has only had a handful of enquiries for help in the last week or so, and these have been passed on to the appropriate local support group.

The Covid-19 Test & Trace plan has been organised in conjunction with the ESCC, there have been a few 'pop-up' testing centres set up around the County, a couple have been run in Uckfield.

The Discretionary Grant Fund was opened again for a couple of months for small businesses who have missed out on the earlier Government Grants. They are now working through the applications.

All the WDC meetings are continuing to be done remotely, on Microsoft Teams, and this seems to work pretty well. In fact the participation in the Cabinet Advisory Groups (informal committees which advise the Portfolio Holders) has been better than when they were in person in Hailsham.

The normal functions of the Council carry on, and the new Local Plan is being drawn up. The main call for sites in the SHELAA (Strategic Housing & Economic Land Availability Assessment) has closed, and these are being considered.

They will be available on the WDC website sometime in October.

The first consultation is being drafted, they are setting up clusters of Parish Councils so the Councillors can be consulted, and it will go out to the Public at the end of October.

The officers are working on the Climate Emergency Plan, but progress here is painfully slow.

There was a web conference for Parish & Town Councils, hopefully you will be able to tell me how you felt that went, as I haven't received a report of it.

A couple of bits of news;

There has been an application for a solar / electric car charging station near Uckfield, so that will be an interesting development if it goes ahead. (Just opened the first one in Essex)

Riding on Sunbeams Project.

I don't know where exactly this is in East Sussex, but there is a project to link a Solar Farm to the Railway electricity supply directly. This is an idea promoted by one of the environmental lobby organisations (Used to be 10:10, now called Possible)

Update;

As you may know I have made an Official Objection to the application for a premises licence at the Good Things Brewing which is a local micro-brewery in Eridge, next door to the Bowles Outdoor Education centre. This came before the Licencing Committee, and the application for both On-sales and Off-sales was refused. The owner is now in the process of applying for retrospective planning applications for some of his developments, and we await to see what transpires with that.

There is also an application for a premises licence at Benchmark Barn in Eridge, which I hope to go and visit in the near future to find out more details.

Various Planning Applications have involved quite a bit of my time and thought, some are more welcome than others, but of course they will all be considered on their own particular merits.

I mentioned last time that my Forest Row colleague and I are challenging the current WDC's interpretation of sustainable development described in the National Planning Policy Framework. (NPPF) because we are concerned that all the new housing is adding to the Climate Crisis by building homes that are not carbon neutral, and therefore this will make the achievement of a Carbon Zero target by 2050 completely unobtainable.

We have seen a little movement in our direction recently. An application to rebuild Harecombe Manor in Crowborough on a Planning Committee that I attended has been re-submitted with much improved sustainability credentials due to my criticism of their lack of vision and foresight, and the planning officers seem to be supporting our push in that direction, but again it is painfully slow progress.

I am trying to keep up with the Government's White Papers and Consultations on reforms to the Planning System, but these documents seem rather vague and woolly when it comes to actual detail, and I haven't got anywhere near a personal response to them as yet, except a gut feeling that whatever they are proposing will be worse than what we have now!

The WDC Planning Policy committee and officers are studying the white paper proposals and will make formal response.

If you have any specific questions or things for me to chase up I am happy to do my best.

Keep safe, follow the Covid-19 advice, and I look forward to seeing you all later in the year,

Cllr Keith Obbard
Wealden District Member for Withyham Ward.