

# FRANT PARISH COUNCIL

## THE MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING FRANT PARISH COUNCIL, HELD ONLINE VIA 'ZOOM' ON WEDNESDAY 15<sup>th</sup> JULY 2020 AT 6.30PM

**Present:** Cllr Rutherford - Chairman  
Cllrs Crookshank, Wallis, Park, Macdonald-Brown, Best, Luther,  
  
County and District Cllr Standley  
District Cllr Obbard  
Mrs R. Karim – Clerk

**1. To receive apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Howell.

**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 17<sup>th</sup> June 2020 as a true and accurate record**

The Minutes were **approved**. Cllr Rutherford signed the Minutes.

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

- Cllr Best said he had looked at the fingerposts in Eridge and that all of them were in good condition and did not need attention;
- Cllr Park said she would continue to work on an input to the website concerning the green in Frant;
- The Clerk confirmed that she had written to Wealden DC to request that they list site constraints on their consultations about planning applications; and
- The Clerk confirmed she had submitted a letter in support of the drive-in cinema in Eridge.

**5. Public Forum – time limit 15 minutes**

None.

**6. To receive reports from County and District Councillors**

**County**

Cllr Standley said that the County Council's finances had improved slightly, with there now being a £17 million shortfall between money spent and Government funding. He suggested that this shortfall could be covered by diverting reserves this year, but that this would have knock-on effects for future years.

Cllr Standley noted that a meeting of the Cabinet had considered a report detailing budget setting: '*Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources – State of the County*'. He urged Councillors to read the report.

Turning to schools, Cllr Standley said that with the schools reopening in September, there were a number of challenges, including accommodating social distancing amongst staff and pupils, delivering a reduced curriculum and possible staggered school days - the latter a particular issue in rural areas.

**District**

Cllr Rutherford noted that Cllr Howell had circulated her report prior to the meeting (the report is appended to these Minutes at Appendix 1).

Cllr Obbard added to Cllr Howell's report by referring to ongoing concern about the number and scope of developments that were being granted planning permission despite not being properly sustainable. He argued that the aspiration for zero carbon by 2050 was being compromised by the extent of house building across the County. Cllr Standley responded that, while he understood the point, Wealden DC was obliged to grant planning permission where planning policy had been met. He suggested that ensuring Building Regulations were also met was a sound way to ensure effective sustainability measures were in place.

Referring to Cllr Howell's report, Cllr Standley said that £38 million had been given in grant funding to businesses. He noted that the second phase of discretionary grants had begun, opening up grants for businesses, notably in retail and hospitality, that had thus far been constrained by the rateable value.

Cllr Standley referred to a report produced by Wealden DC called '*Restart and Recovery*' which sets out how the Council will approach the next few months in terms of the Covid-19 crisis. He referred to six objectives, summarised as follows: 1. support existing businesses as they re-open; 2. create the right conditions for new businesses to emerge and grow; 3. support people to find new employment; 4. make positive changes to support certain groups within communities, such as those who have been shielded; 5. increase the resilience of voluntary groups to ensure they continue to operate; and 6. support those who are vulnerable.

#### **7. To review the risk assessment and proposed measures for reopening the play parks**

The Clerk explained the key features of the risk assessment. The risk assessment was approved and the following was agreed: a one way system in the park in Bells Yew Green was not considered necessary; both parks in the Parish will be cleaned three times a week; and the middle swings in both parks will be removed and stored. Cllr Rutherford suggested that a summary of this be posted on the Parish Council website. **Action: Clerk**

#### **8. To discuss and review ongoing support within the Parish during the Covid-19 pandemic**

Cllr Wallis said that the support network and local 'grapevine' had been working well in Bells Yew Green to date. Cllr Rutherford suggested that the Parish Council may, in the future, wish to acknowledge those in the local community who have volunteered during the pandemic.

#### **9. Highways and Lighting**

##### **9.1 To consider options for replacement and purchase of new litter bins in the Parish**

The Clerk summarised the situation across the Parish, identifying bins that needed to be replaced. There was some discussion around the types and location for different bins and it was **agreed** to source lidded bins for outside Frant Stores and by the Eridge sign. It was **agreed** to purchase a more suitable and sturdy bin for the playground in Bells Yew Green. There was also some discussion around whether to replace or adapt the two bins on the green in Frant, to address the problem of them overflowing. Clerk to circulate links to websites for councillors to review options for new bins online. **Action: Clerk**

#### **10. Finance**

##### **10.1 To approve the accounts payable**

The Clerk said there were two extra items to be paid, in addition to those before the Council. These included £210 to PlaySafety Limited for undertaking the RoSPA inspections of the two playgrounds and £105 to Mr McGregor-Gould for carrying out work in the playgrounds and the monthly bus shelter cleans. The accounts were **approved**.

##### **10.2 To approve the bank reconciliation**

The Clerk said she had not received the bank statement for the current account and could not therefore reconcile the accounts in time for this meeting. Cllr Rutherford asked that the bank reconciliation be forwarded to him once completed.

**Action: Clerk**

### **10.3 To agree in principle to relocate bank accounts to Unity Trust Bank**

The Clerk explained that the previous application made to Barclays had now lapsed and a new application would be required. She said that in recent audits, two auditors had suggested Unity Trust Bank as a sound alternative for Parish Councils. The Clerk said she was seeking an in-principle agreement to undertake the first stage of the application process with this bank in order to receive information about how the accounts would work for the Parish Council. Cllr Crookshank disagreed with giving an in-principle agreement at this stage, without more information. Cllr Park noted that this bank was commonly used by voluntary organisations and charities. It was **agreed** that the Clerk would prepare a comparison of the banking terms between Barclays and Unity Trust Bank for the next meeting.

**Action: Clerk**

## **11. Green Spaces**

### **11.1 To consider the proposal by FOFGS for the Parish field**

Various concerns were raised including that consultation had already been carried out concerning a Parish Council asset but without Parish Council input and the Council had been given very little notice. It was noted also that there was an increasingly interventionist approach in the green spaces around the Parish, in advance of the proposed statement/plan about how the green spaces are looked after. Concerns were raised also about potential unforeseen impacts arising from these interventions (including self-seeding, increased prevalence of hay fever, etc) and it was suggested an element of balance was needed. It was **agreed** to decline the proposal.

### **11.2 To consider options for signage**

The Clerk said she had been looking into anti-litter signage but noted that the style of the current bins did not lend themselves well to this. It was **agreed** to look into a sign on a low post that could be periodically moved around the green, for greater impact. Cllr Luther volunteered to have a look around the green to ascertain the best location for a sign with the Council's contact details.

**Action: Clerk/AFL**

## **12. Communications**

None.

## **13. Planning**

Cllr Best said that the Abergavenny Estate had kindly offered to lease a section of road to Sussex Wildlife Trust to allow for those visiting the Eridge Rocks to park. However, Cllr Best voiced his concerns that the Trust would not adequately maintain or monitor this section of road were it leased to them. Cllr Rutherford concurred with these concerns and it was agreed that he would write to the Abergavenny Estate to decline their offer.

**Action: WR**

Cllr Best referred to an application for eleven units at Warren Farm.

## **14. Chairman's announcements & correspondence for noting**

None.

## **15. Urgent issues at the discretion of the Chairman, for discussion only**

Cllr Wallis updated the Council about progress with the refurbishment of the village hall in Bells Yew Green, noting that a local business had kindly donated various materials.

Cllr Macdonald-Brown requested that the time of Full Council meetings revert back to 7:30pm. This was **agreed**.

Cllr Best noted that the travellers who had recently settled on a parcel of land in Eridge had now moved on. He said that some form of barricade had been erected, he presumed by East Sussex County Council.

Cllr Park updated the Council about the Broadband issue in Bells Yew Green and said a decision was still being awaited about the voucher scheme.

The Clerk noted that apart from the planning meeting at the end of the month, the next Full Council Meeting in August was a 'reserve' meeting. It was **agreed** to make a decision on this nearer the time.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 7.45 pm.

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>BY WHOM</b>
Post a summary of the Council's approach to operating the playgrounds safely.	Clerk
Circulate website links to Councillors for new litter bins.	Clerk
Forward bank reconciliation to Cllr Rutherford.	Clerk
Prepare a comparison between the banking terms of Barclays and Unity Trust Bank for the next meeting.	Clerk
To look into signage for Frant green re: litter and contact details.	Clerk/AFL
Write to the Abergavenny Estate to decline their off of a lease of a section of road near Eridge Rocks.	WR

## APPENDIX 1

### District Report June

Covid has of course had impact on the running of the District Council. Many meetings have been run on Teams, which has been a new learning curve. After the initial phase of trying to see what everyone had in their homes and trying to not too close to the camera and remember not to pull any unfortunate faces it has worked as well as could be expected under the circumstances, but I think we are all looking forward to getting back to normal meetings where and when possible.

There have been some unfortunate incidents where people have not disposed of batteries correctly and this has led to fires in the refuse bins, so I would urge people to dispose of batteries correctly.

Wealden's procurement policy is one of the key factors in the district COVID recovery and we seek to maintain a high level of spending with local small and medium sized business. The council spend just under £4.5 million with Wealden business in 2019/20. Recent Covid support measures have seen £37 million distributed to local business through Small Business Grants and Retail Hospitality and Leisure Grants. It is planning to allocated an additional £2.6 million through the new Discretionary Business Grant.

Wealden has re-opened applications for letting in to their retirement living courts there are of course, safety measures in place, but they are being as diligent as they can be.

Wealden has given £5000 to 12 organisations to cover cost incurred through their community support work, who have done tremendous work through this difficult time support the most vulnerable in our society.

On a lighter note could I urge you all to make the most of your recycling, composting and water, if you don't already have a water butt, they are easy to get and install, also composting is good for those of you with a garden.

Wishing all a safe summer.

Johanna Howell