

# FRANT PARISH COUNCIL

## THE MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING OF FRANT PARISH COUNCIL, HELD ONLINE VIA 'ZOOM' ON WEDNESDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2020 AT 7.30PM

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

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

**1. To receive apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Howell and Wallis.

**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 21<sup>st</sup> October 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 she had written to Ely Grange about parking near Home Farm Court and had received a response, circulated to councillors.
- The Clerk said that Strutt and Parker are sending a more detailed invoice and she has received confirmation that Title for the new green in Eridge will be completed shortly.
- The Clerk referred to an email she had circulated about dealing with the moles on the football pitch. It was **agreed** to go ahead with this because of the health and safety issues involved. It was also **agreed** to set up a trail camera to record what type of animal was active on the green in Frant and to liaise with the ecologist, who may have some idea. **Action: AMB/AFL/CS**
- The Tree Officer has confirmed that the walnut tree is not within a Conservation Area, does not have a TPO and is not listed as being Wealden-owned. Cllr Standley said that Wealden DC will know who owns the land. Clerk to follow up. **Action: Clerk**
- Parish surveys – on agenda to discuss.
- Cllr Crookshank said that the HGV traffic was still much reduced along Benhall Mill Lane. Cllr Standley said its unsuitability for such vehicles may have been reported to the sat nav companies.

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

No members of the public were present.

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

Cllr Obbard's report was circulated prior to the meeting (see Appendix 1) and no questions were raised. Cllr Obbard said he would circulate his report on the recent Parish Clusters meeting. **Action: OB**

Cllr Standley said that the incidence of Covid cases in Wealden are below average, with Hastings recording a particularly low level. School attendance is at roughly at 85%; a school in Hailsham has been closed for two weeks due to a localised outbreak.

Cllr Standley said that the Council's normal activities were ongoing, despite Covid, and he referred to the extra teams and money being made available for road markings. Cllr Macdonald-Brown said he had reported the faint markings at the Brecknock Arms junction in Bells Yew Green and, within 24 hours, they had been repainted.

Cllr Standley said he had attended the Parish Conference, which had looked at planning, the police, restart and recovery, amongst other matters. He said there was a current 8-week consultation called 'Direction of Travel' and he suggested councillors engage with it. He also said that businesses who had been forced into closure in the second lockdown are able to claim funds according to their rateable value at the time of the first lockdown and may also be eligible for a discretionary grant.

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

Cllr Luther enquired about using Henry Smith funds to support people and it was agreed the Clerk would contact the Rector about this. **Action: Clerk**

#### **8. Finance**

##### **8.1 To approve the accounts payable**

The payment of pay in lieu of holidays taken for the Clerk was noted. All accounts were **approved**.

##### **8.2 To approve the bank reconciliation**

The bank reconciliation was **approved**.

##### **8.3 To consider a request from Holy Trinity Church for funds to assist in the upkeep of the churchyard**

It was agreed that Council should avoid giving funds where they go in to a central 'pot' but rather that requests for funds should be for specific items, made explicit to the Council. It was agreed that Cllr Best would liaise with the Church about this and the Council would revisit the request. **Action: AB**

##### **8.4 To review the Council's risk assessment across key areas**

The risk assessment was **approved**.

##### **8.5 To review the proposed budget/precept for 2021-22**

The Clerk introduced the spend to date and forward budget to 2022 and asked councillors to consider any projects and/or additional categories of spend that should be included. With reference to the Clerk's salary, Cllr Rutherford said it had not been reviewed since 2016 and it was out of sync with other councils. He said he would circulate an email to councillors. **Action: WR**

There was some discussion about whether the next precept should reflect this year, with the pandemic. It was agreed that the Clerk would break down the budget headings and recirculate for the next meeting, by which time details about the tax base would hopefully have been provided. **Action: Clerk**

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

The Clerk said that Tofco had offered an additional solar panel, without charge, for the light in Rushlye Close.

Cllr Park was pleased to report that Conway and Trenchline are repairing the gullies and drains in the Benhall Mill Road area.

Cllr Rutherford enquired as to whether there is a limit on the number of lampposts that ESCC will undertake to refurbish, as there are a number that need to be repainted. **Action: Clerk**

## **10. Green Spaces**

Cllr Best said he was happy to take the lead on taking forward the establishment of the new green in Eridge and considered it would be important to reconsult with the local residents. Three quotes would be sought for the new fencing and grass would be laid down in the spring.

## **11. Communications**

### **11.1 To consider a response to the ESCC consultation about the Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan**

Cllr Park expressed her concern at the perceived lack of imagination in the Plan. It was noted by others that various cycle routes, for example, into Tunbridge Wells and the route along the old Groombridge railway line, had not progressed. Cllr Luther noted several funding options, which she suggested might complicate delivery unnecessarily. She suggested 'park and cycle' schemes could be one way forward. Cllr Standley noted there were practical difficulties with certain routes, with many roads unsuitable for cyclists and the advent of electric cars posing further problems. Cllr Rutherford recalled a 'quiet roads' scheme, designed to slow down traffic on B roads and encourage cycling.

Cllr Rutherford asked councillors to submit any comments on an individual basis.

### **11.2 To consider a response to Wealden DC's consultation about The Planning Validation Guide**

Cllr Steadman said the website access to the Guide was not very good and Cllr Park said she had been unable to find the document online. Cllr Steadman considered that the requirement for plans and drawings to be at certain scales means that they are very difficult to view properly on a screen.

As above, Cllr Rutherford asked councillors to submit any comments on an individual basis.

### **11.3 To note The Muddy Dog Challenge event on 11 September 2021 in Eridge Park and to raise any comments/concerns**

The event was noted.

### **11.4 Update on re-circulation of parish survey**

Cllr Park updated councillors, noting that the survey will be re-launched in early January, to avoid coinciding with the Christmas period. The Royal Mail's Door to Door scheme is going to deliver the surveys.

## **12. Planning**

### **12.1 To approve the Minutes of the Planning Meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020 as a true and accurate record**

The Minutes were **approved**.

### **12.2 To consider planning and listed building applications:**

- **WD/2020/0710/MAJ - Folly Wildlife Rescue Trust, Broadwater Forest Wildlife Hospital, Fairview Lane Broadwater Forest, Eridge, TN3 9LU**  
Use of additional land as part of wildlife hospital, erection of extension to building B1 for education purposes and construction of additional structures and enclosures to accommodate rescued animals.

It was agreed that the proposed additional animal pens were satisfactory. Cllr Best summarised the neighbours' objections to the proposed visitor/education building. He said that the new building would turn the rescue centre in to a visitor 'destination', with the resultant traffic increase along the single lane access and within the AONB. He noted also that a new car park for around 40 cars had been built within the last year, it appeared, without planning permission. The additional square footage was also regarded as impacting on the surrounding character.

There was some discussion around the benefits to children of learning about the work of the Trust in its rural setting; however, it was noted that visitors to the centre would not have access to the outdoor pens, etc.

The rudimentary quality of the plans and lack of measurements was noted.

A vote was taken to express support generally for the Folly Trust but object to the application on the grounds of impact on the AONB and this was carried by 5 out of 7 councillor votes.

- **WD/2020/2081/LDE – The Oaks, 2 Sellbourne Park, Frant, TN3 9DG**  
The use of former agricultural land as residential garden land associated with the Oaks, Sellbourne Park

No objections were raised.

12.3 To note planning applications determined by Wealden District Council

- **WD/2020/0337/F – Flower Pot Nursery, Frant Road, Frant, TN3 9HB**  
Change of use from commercial horticultural nursery to use within the B1 Use Class. Construction of two office buildings with associated hard and soft landscaping, including 14 no. parking spaces.  
*Refused on 6th November 2020*

The decision was noted.

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

None.

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

Cllr Park gave an update about the upgrading of Broadband in the Benhall Mill Road area and the Chairman agreed to call for an extraordinary meeting to discuss and approve the Council entering into a contract with OpenReach and making up any shortfall in funds using the CIL money.

ACTION	BY WHOM
Follow up with Wealden DC about the walnut tree in Warrant Ridge.	Clerk
Set-up camera to record animal activity on Frant green.	AMB/AFL
Speak with ecologist for any advice on what animal might be active.	CS
Circulate note to councillors about reviewing Clerk's salary.	WR
Look into retaining a mole catcher for the football field.	Clerk
Circulate report on Parish Cluster meeting	OB
Liaise with the Church re: recipients of Henry Smith funds.	Clerk
Liaise with the church warden at Holy Trinity about their request for funds.	AB
Liaise with ESCC about refurbishment of lampposts.	Clerk
Break down budget into further categories.	Clerk

## Appendix 1

### Report from District Councillor Keith Obbard

The new Covid -19 lockdown will mean that the Wealden Community hub may need to ramp up it's activity, although the expectation is that everyone needing help will know where it can be obtained by now, but the Wealden D C website is carrying details at; <https://www.wealden.gov.uk/press-and-media/coronavirus-covid-19-latest/community-support/>

The phone number to call is the usual one; 01323 443322

All the Town and Parish Councils are getting a weekly update from David Plank at the WDC Customer Services, keeping clerks up to date on the latest situation.

The Freedom Leisure facility and pool in Crowborough will be getting a new training pool built in the future, and the Leisure centre in Hailsham will also be getting a renewal when the Hailsham Town Centre is re-developed, but it has been decided that the leisure centres in Uckfield and Heathfield will go back to the County Council when the leases expire in two year's time.

As part of the Climate Emergency Action Plan the Council has co-ordinated a project called Solar Together, which is a group bidding project for domestic solar panels and storage batteries. Over 900 Wealden residents have signed up for quotes, and most of the participants have been sent their offers. They have until the middle of December to decide whether or not to sign up.

The Council is looking for a business partner to install a network of Electric Vehicle charging points across the Council's 36 Car Parks. At the moment there are only 8 public charging places in the whole of the Wealden District.

I attended the North Wealden Parish Cluster meeting the other week, which is an opportunity for the Parish and Town Councils to consult with the team at Wealden who are drawing up the new Wealden Local Plan, and keeping the Parishes up-to-date with progress. Cllr Jo Howell also attended, so I expect she will give a report of the meeting.

On the subject of planning, at the last Wealden Planning Committee they trialled a system to allow members of the public to attend the committee to give their presentations in person, which hasn't been possible until now, because of IT and security concerns. This seems to have worked quite well.

Anyone not wanting to attend the live meetings can submit a presentation that will be read by the committee members as has been done up till now.

If you have any specific questions or requests, I am contactable by phone or email and I will do my best to deal with them for you.

Keep safe, follow the Covid-19 advice, and I look forward to a time when we can meet in person,

Cllr Keith Obbard  
Wealden District Member for Withyham Ward.