

FRANT PARISH COUNCIL

THE MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING OF FRANT PARISH COUNCIL, HELD ONLINE VIA 'ZOOM' ON WEDNESDAY 21ST OCTOBER 2020 AT 7.30PM

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

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

1. To receive apologies

None.

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 21st September 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 £149 remained of last year's Henry Smith funds.
- The Clerk confirmed she had received a copy of the original invoice from Strutt and Parker but that it was still quite vague.
- Cllr Standley said he had liaised with the officer at ESCC dealing with the feasibility study for a pedestrian crossing on the A267 and the study should now proceed. The Clerk confirmed she had received an email from ESCC saying the study was commencing and would take approximately six weeks to complete.
- The Clerk said had written to Ely Grange about the parking near Home Farm Court but had not yet had a response. She said she would write again. **Action: Clerk**
- Cllr Howell confirmed she had liaised with Wealden DC about the fly tipping in Bells Yew Green and spoken with Cllr Park about this.

5. Public Forum – time limit 15 minutes

None.

6. To receive reports from County and District Councillors

Cllr Rutherford noted that both Cllr Howell and Cllr Obbard had submitted their written reports prior to the meeting (see Appendices).

Discussing the Covid crisis, Cllr Standley said that cases were rising in East Sussex, with a cluster in Uckfield, but overall numbers were still comparatively low. He noted that approximately 25% of the cases reported were attributed incorrectly to East Sussex; they were cases where the individual's GP was in the County but they in fact were living elsewhere (at University, for example). He listed the testing centres, noting that new ones would be opening in Crowborough and Heathfield and that he had requested a list of testing centres for Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells. Cllr Steadman said there was a centre in Maidstone.

Turning to funding, Cllr Standley said that the county was hoping to receive a slice of the extra one billion pounds of funding from central government for upper tier authorities, likely to be around 1%. He noted that the Comprehensive Spending Review was taking up to a year to complete and the Fairer Funding Review was being postponed. With the uncertainty about its income, Cllr Standley said it was difficult for the County to set Council Tax.

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

Cllr Crookshank enquired whether £100 of the remaining Henry Smith funds could be used to assist a family in need in the Parish with some food and toiletry items. This was **agreed unanimously**.

8. To approve the remit for the CIL sub-committee/working party

Cllr Wallis proposed that Cllr Crookshank take the role of Chair of the CIL sub-committee and Cllr Macdonald-Brown seconded this. Cllr Crookshank accepted and it was **agreed unanimously**. It was agreed that public participation would be by invitation only and that the meetings would be held on the first Monday of every month. Cllr Park said it would be important to take into account the results of the Parish surveys in allocating CIL funds.

9. Green Spaces

9.1 To consider offer from FOFGS* to apply for grant money for Eridge and Bells Yew Green

Cllr Crookshank confirmed that he was awaiting a quote to maintain the bund at the green in Bells Yew Green. The Clerk noted that depending at what price the quote came in at, two further quotes might be required in line with the Standing Orders. Cllr Best thanked FOFGS for the offer but said it would not be sensible to apply for a grant until the Parish Council had Title for the land for the new green in Eridge. Cllr Steadman noted that the grant application process can take many months and this should be borne in mind. Cllr Rutherford agreed to chase the Estate for the completed legal paperwork.

Action: WR

Cllr Luther noted that FOFGS were keen to welcome Bells Yew Green and Eridge into their group and asked whether any approaches had been made. Cllr Steadman responded that no invitations had yet been extended but the group was happy to work with residents across the Parish. The essence of the Sussex Lund grant was ecology and it was therefore up to local residents (eg, in Eridge) if they wanted help from FOFGS with this.

Cllr Luther said it would be important to learn the lessons from the issues that have come about in Frant; Cllr Park agreed and said it was important that parishioners do not think that FOFGS speaks on behalf of the Parish Council. Cllr Luther asked councillors whether the Parish Council should bear the costs of the next ecology review in June 2021 and the costs for the ecologist to speak at the Annual Parish Meeting. Cllr Steadman noted that FOFGS had borne all costs to date, apart from a donation from the Parish Council some years ago, and had presented every idea and project to the Parish Council at every step. Cllrs Rutherford and Howell agreed. He went on to note that the ecology reports were very dense and required specialist interpretation. Cllr Park responded that Frant green is a village asset, entrusted to the Parish Council. She considered that any village group could procure and pay for expert advice about the green but that there should be no presumption that FOFGS should, in their doing so, get tacit approval from the Parish Council. Cllr Crookshank said the Parish Council must use its taxpayers' funds for the good of the Parish and its parishioners.

Cllr Steadman noted that the number of species on the green was now the most diverse recorded in Sussex. Cllr Howell added that the green was now part of Wealden DC's wider environmental strategy. Cllr Luther noted the national efforts for promoting green corridors, etc., but said that the diversity of uses of the green must also be considered by the Parish Council. She said that all too often, a key user of the green - families and children - are seen as 'informal' users; however, families, especially children, were previously perhaps the biggest user of the green but were now inhibited by the large areas of long grass.

Cllr Rutherford said the tender for the maintenance of the greens would be put out in the new year.

Cllr Rutherford raised the issue of moles and rabbits on the football and green. The Clerk noted there was £150 in the budget for the football field. It was **agreed** to employ a specialist to deal with the problem on the football pitch (because of health and safety issues) and to take advice about the moles and rabbits on the green. **Action: Clerk**

10. Highways and Lighting

10.1 Parking in the Parish

No discussion raised.

11. Finance

11.1 To approve the accounts payable

The accounts were **approved**, apart from item 10. Cllr Rutherford said he would chase more detail on this.

Action: WR

Accounts payable: 21st October 2020

Items shaded have been paid since last meeting – to be ratified

Item no.	Payee	Item	Cheque No.	Amount
1	East Sussex Pension Fund	Employer pension contribution – October 2020	3320	£233.25
2	East Sussex Pension Fund	Employee pension contribution – Oct 2020- deducted from salary	3321	£61.21
3	Castle Water	Inv 0001507670 Allotments supply	3317	£60.13
4	R.Karim	Salary, mileage and expenses	3326	£963.69
5	Thomson, Snell and Passmore	Inv 422991 Eridge green lease fees	3318	£300.00
6	RBS	Inv SM22055 Annual maintenance/support fee	3319	£148.80
7	N. McGregor-Gould	Playground cleans Repair to steps at Frant green Bus shelters maintenance Inv. 2 Oct	3322	£476.22
8	ESCC	Speed/Ped survey to inform A267 ped crossing feasibility study Inv. 8005061921	3323	£1176.00
9	FT Allen Limited	Erosion study at Frant Green Inv. 4666/20	3324	£940.80
10	Strutt & Parker	Fees for centenary green Inv. 761617	3325	£702.00
11	HMRC	Tax and NI (deducted from salary)	3326	£116.46
12	WDALC	Wealden District Association of Local Councils – annual subscription	3329	£23.00
13	Glasdon	Inv. 3043653 3 no. replacement litter bins	3327	£1217.12
14	Information Commissioner's Office	Annual registration fee	3330	£40.00

11.2 To approve the bank reconciliation

The bank reconciliation was **approved**.

11.3 To review expenditure to date and budget

The Clerk noted the budget document had been circulated prior to the meeting and highlighted the key features of it. The budget remaining for work to trees in the Parish was noted and the Clerk confirmed that she had taken advice about carrying out another survey of the health of the trees. Cllr Crookshank asked that the trees opposite the Brecknock Arms, overhanging the green, be looked at. Cllr Howell also noted there was a large walnut tree in Warren Ridge adjacent to the bungalows and its ownership needed to be established. **Action: Clerk**

12. Communications

12.1 To discuss the questionnaires received to date from local residents

Cllr Park circulated a document prior to the meeting, illustrating the results received from the 100 respondees and she elaborated on these with further detail. She noted that the over-65s and Frant were both over-represented and outlined some of the key issues being raised, notably the negative feedback about the new maintenance regime for Frant green. It was **agreed** to relaunch the survey in an attempt to improve the response rate and various options for delivery were considered. **Action: DP/Clerk**

12.2 To consider a response to the Planning White Paper consultation

The Clerk gave a brief summary and Cllr Standley shared his views and interpretation of the Draft White Paper. It was **agreed** to submit representations including, but not limited to, the need for Parish Councils to continue to play an active role in the planning system and that key designations, such as AONB, remain protected.

Cllr Crookshank noted that there had been a welcome and noticeable reduction in the number of large vehicles and HGVs using Dundale Road and he asked Cllr Standley whether ESCC/Highways had intervened in any way. Cllr Standley said he was not aware of any intervention but would make enquiries. **Action: BS**

(Cllrs Standley and Howell left the meeting at 9.12pm)

13. Planning

13.1 To consider planning and listed building applications:

- **WD/2020/1991/F & WD/2020/1992/LB – The Gatehouse, 46 High Street, Frant, TN3 9DU** Proposed demolition of existing rear glazed projection and a section of the rear wall at ground floor level; erection of a single-storey rear extension to the existing listed building and the installation of a floor access panel to provide cellar and associated alterations.
<https://planning.wealden.gov.uk/plandisp.aspx?recno=151361>
<https://planning.wealden.gov.uk/plandisp.aspx?recno=151362>

Cllr Rutherford noted that the proposals included bi-folding doors on this listed building. Cllr Steadman pointed out that they faced into the private area of the property. No objections were raised.

- **WD/2019/1998/F & WD/2019/1999/LB – Highham Farm, Higham Lane, Bells Yew Green, TN3 9AU**
Conversion of redundant barn and stables to dwelling (Class C3), including extension and new roof; demolition of existing steel clad open barn and replacement with new garage and ancillary accommodation.
<https://planning.wealden.gov.uk/plandisp.aspx?recno=147476>
<https://planning.wealden.gov.uk/plandisp.aspx?recno=147477>

The Clerk noted that some councillors wished to undertake a site visit. She suggested delaying consideration of this application until the planning meeting on 2nd November; in the meantime, she would liaise with the relevant planning officer for access to the application site. This was **agreed**.

Action: Clerk

- **WD/2020/1880/F - Curl Wood – uninhabited amenity woodland, Broadwater Forest Lane, Eridge, TN3 9JP**

Replacement of existing roadside wooden post and wire fence with a 1.6m wooden post and wire fence.

<https://planning.wealden.gov.uk/plandisp.aspx?recno=151193>

The impact of the height of the proposed fence was discussed and it was considered that it would have a deleterious effect on the surrounding rural character and AONB. It was **agreed** to object.

14. Chairman’s announcements & correspondence for noting

Cllr Rutherford said he had been invited to The George to witness the handing over of the ceremonial truncheon, donated by the family of the last-serving paid police constable in Frant.

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

Cllr Wallis said she had been copied in on an email to the Environment Agency about the fly tipping episode at Station Bridge Yard in Bells Yew Green. It had reported that some of dumped material was labelled ‘Croydon Council’.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 9.23pm.

*** Friends of Frant Green Spaces**

ACTION	BY WHOM
Write again to Ely Grange about parking near Home Farm Court.	Clerk
Ask Strutt and Parker for a more detailed invoice and enquire about the completion of the Title for the new green in Eridge	WR
Look into retaining a mole catcher for the football field.	Clerk
Ask Wealden DC about ownership of the walnut tree in Warren Ridge.	Clerk
Look into delivery of surveys for relaunch.	DP/Clerk
Ascertain whether ESCC/Highways has intervened to reduce traffic along Dundale Road.	BS
Liaise with planning officer for Higham Farm application to organise a site visit.	Clerk

Appendix 1
Report from District Councillor Johanna Howell
October 2020

Wealden District Council has launched a new website to help its residents stay healthy and active. The Healthy Wealden website provides the tools and resources needed to embark on a healthier lifestyle.

Wealden is supporting the Solar Together scheme to help residents save on the electricity bills and cut their carbon emissions. It enables them to buy solar photovoltaic (PV) panels and battery storage at reduced prices.

Solar Together uses the power of group-buying to secure significant savings. The scheme is being run in conjunction with iChoosr Ltd, the independent experts in group-buying, and other councils across Sussex.

Residents can register online to become part of the group until 5 October at www.solartogether.co.uk/wealden. It is free to register and there is no obligation to go ahead with an installation. It is also open to businesses, as long as they have landlord consent.

Wealden is urging its 3,000 council house tenants to get in contact if they are unable to pay their rent, or are getting into arrears. Private tenants concerned that they could face eviction should also contact the Council.

East Sussex Highways is currently conducting a long-term tree survey on the rural highway network, i.e. all roads not within 30mph speed limits.

All trees within falling distance of the highway are being inspected. Any trees considered to be a potential hazard to any of the below within the next three years, are being reported:

- * Highway users
- * The Highway Authority
- * Third party assets

Reported trees may be dead, dying, diseased or otherwise potentially hazardous for structural reasons. The issues the survey is identifying range from relatively minor to serious.

Online or in class? There is a range of free adult learning opportunities available this autumn through Street Learning.

Some courses will begin online, with a view to going back to a classroom environment when Government regulations allow. Other Street Learning classes this term will be fully online. Others, later in the year, will be taking place back in class.

Information about all these courses, and other sector-based training to help you secure the job you want, is available in Street Learning's September-December 2020 brochure, which can be downloaded from the Street Learning page of the Wealden website.

Wealden District Council's first shared ownership scheme, at the new Woodpecker View development in Jarvis Brook, Crowborough, is now providing new homes for two local families.

The 12 affordable council homes at the development, the first completed by the Council's own Sussex Weald Homes company, have also been fully let to local people.

The Woodpecker View development also includes 22 homes for market sale. Interest in these properties has been strong. The majority of prospective buyers coming from within 10 miles of the site. Woodpecker View was completed this year. It was built for Sussex Weald Homes by Trinity Homes. It has regenerated the former council depot in Jarvis Brook. The commercial benefit from the sale of the private homes will enable Sussex Weald Homes to continue to provide further niche developments. These can create more flexibility for local people in the housing market.

Wealden's shared ownership scheme can work out cheaper than privately renting a property, as the buyer is paying a mortgage on only part of the property, and rents the remaining share from Wealden District Council. The share of the property bought can be between 25% and 75% of the new home.

The deposit should be at least 5% on the value of the share being bought. The joint household income should be less than £80,000.

Appendix 2
Report from District Cllr Keith Obbard
October 2020

The Covid pandemic is having it's effect on the District Council as it is on us all.

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 few weeks, but they are asking to update them on the capacity of local groups in the case that a second wave of Covid means that local groups will need to be called on more again.

The Wealden Spring Clean that was delayed until September has been a success even with the difficulties of Covid restrictions, and many villages and Towns have managed a good clean up.

WDC is consulting the public on the use of the Cuckoo Trail from Heathfield to Polegate.

The last week of September was National Re-cycling week, and the latest figures for Wealden show a fairly steady 50% of rubbish going for re-cycling. Not as good as some other local Authorities, but better than many.

The formal call for sites for the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) has now closed, although in reality it is always open for any further suggested sites.

This is being published soon on the WDC website.

Within Frant Parish there are a quite a lot of sites, some old and some new submissions;

There is the land at Ramslye and Spratsbook farm, which is no surprise, but also land along both sides of the A26 on Strawberry hill.

Some smaller sites along St Marks Road, and land south of Broadwater Down adjacent to Hargate Forest.

Several plots along Bayham Road.

Little Mount Farm in Benhall Mill road.

Court Lodge Farm in Bells Yew Green.

Land near Rushlye Farm, BYG, and Wishwood.

Land north of the primary school in Frant,

Land at Shenfold Park, Wadhurst Road, and land north of Wadhurst Road at Sleeches Cross.

These sites have been put forward by the landowners for assessment by the WDC for their suitability.

This process will now begin, and will take many weeks.

It doesn't mean that planning permission is likely to be given, it is just an indication to the WDC that the landowners would be interested in development there.

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.