

# FRANT PARISH COUNCIL

## THE MINUTES OF A PLANNING MEETING HELD ONLINE VIA 'ZOOM' ON TUESDAY 1<sup>st</sup> SEPTEMBER 2020 AT 7:30PM

**Present:** Cllr Andrew Macdonald-Brown – Acting Chair  
Cllrs Wallis, Park, Best

Rosie Karim - Clerk

**1. To receive apologies.**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Rutherford and Howell.

**2. Declarations of Interests on items on the agenda.**

None.

**3. Public forum (15 mins).**

None.

**4. To consider licence and planning applications received and make recommendations:**

**- WD/2020/0013/MAJ – High Rocks, High Rocks Lane, Broadwater Forest, TN3 9JJ  
Demolition of single-storey outbuilding and erection of 46-bedroom development to provide ancillary overnight accommodation for High Rocks events venue.**

A discussion was had about the history of the site and the main building, including its origins as a small pub and the various extensions it has had over the years, resulting in the current, much more substantial building. The sensitivity of the area was also discussed, in terms of its location adjacent to the High Rocks themselves (an Ancient Monument), the Conservation Area, in the AONB and the listed building(s).

Concerns were raised about some aspects of the new building, including the view of the building from the Rocks and the means of escape and fire exits, notably for disabled people. It was agreed that exiting onto a railway platform was not suitable. There was discussion, too, about the numbers of vehicle trips and the pressure on the local road network (also during construction). It was noted that, arguably, trip numbers should not, in theory, increase because people staying in the hotel would be visiting the venue anyway. However, if the guest accommodation were to enlarge in the future, to grow from simply ancillary accommodation with no catering facility to a more all-encompassing offer and / or a health club/spa/gym were developed giving memberships to non-residents, vehicle trips would almost certainly increase.

Notwithstanding these comments, following further discussion, the Council agreed to object to the proposed development on the ground of its harm to the character of the surrounding AONB. Justification for further commercial development at this very sensitive site was questioned, as was the need for more hotel rooms in the Tunbridge Wells area, which is already well endowed with accommodation and hotels.

It was agreed that should Wealden DC be minded to approve the application, conditions should be imposed to restrict further development of the guest rooms or the offer (e.g. prohibit a health club etc being developed) and to tie the new rooms to the venue. Further, it was agreed that the proposed materials should be reconsidered, to include more locally-sourced materials.

**- WD/2020/1523 / LB – High Rocks, High Rocks Lane, Broadwater Forest, TN3 9JJ**

Demolition of curtilage listed building.

In principle, there was no objection to the demolition of the building subject to the findings of the Conservation Officer at Wealden DC and that any development proposed in its place is acceptable (whether this current scheme or a future scheme).

**- WD/2020/1395/F – 1 The Green, Frant, TN3 9ED**

New entrance porch.

The Councillors reported technical difficulties with viewing the application online. The Clerk noted that there was some time before the deadline and suggested Councillors email their comments in this instance. This was agreed.

**5. To note planning applications determined by Wealden District Council**

**- WD/2020/1159/FR – Old Police House, Mayfield Road, TN3 9DU**

**Outdoor swimming pool.**

*Approved on 25<sup>th</sup> August.*

Noted.

**- WD/2020/0146/F – Land at Pepes View, 38 Warren Ridge, Frant, TN3 9EE**

**Erection of new dwelling and associated works.**

*Approved 21<sup>st</sup> August*

Noted.

**6. To approve selection of litter bins for use in the Parish.**

It was agreed to proceed with the *Topsy Royale* bin from Glasdon for outside the corner shop in Frant, by the sign in Eridge and at the playground in Bells Yew Green. The Clerk said she would confirm that this style would be acceptable with Wealden DC's Conservation Officer. **Action: Clerk**

**7. Further matters at the discretion of the Chairman, for discussion purposes only.**

Cllr Wallis reported the positive feedback from residents of Rushlye Close about the new solar lamppost and it was proving to be a real success.

The Clerk noted that there was currently an application for 9 no. new houses at 13A Benhall Mill Road but, because it was an 'Adjoining Authority' application, the Parish Council had not been consulted in this instance. It was agreed to liaise with Wealden DC about this. **Action: Clerk**

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 8.25pm.