

FRANT PARISH COUNCIL

THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING OF FRANT PARISH COUNCIL, HELD ONLINE VIA 'ZOOM' ON WEDNESDAY 17TH FEBRUARY 2021 AT 7.30PM

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

County and District Cllr Standley
Mrs R. Karim – Clerk

One local resident

1. To enquire whether anyone present intends to film, photograph and/or record the meeting

The Clerk noted that the meeting would be recorded in audio. As soon as the draft Minutes are issued, the audio recording would be deleted.

2. To receive apologies

Apologies were received from District Cllr Obbard and Cllrs Crookshank and Howell.

3. To receive declarations of interests on items on the Agenda and changes to the Register of Interests

Cllr Wallis declared a personal interest in planning application WD/2021/0054/F. She noted that other neighbours had given their support to the proposals.

4. To approve the Minutes of the meeting on 20th January 2021 as a true and accurate record

Referring to the last sentence in para 7 - "...the charging station in Uckfield is now open" - Cllr Standley said that the charging station was not in fact open, but was currently going through the planning process. The Minutes were duly amended and **approved** and will be signed after the current Covid lockdown is over.

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

- Cllr Macdonald-Brown confirmed that Dial2Drive were still operating although they have fewer volunteer drivers. Information about Dial2Drive had been placed in Parish News and on the website.
- In Cllr Howell's absence, it was unclear whether the close-board fence in Frant on the A267 had been reported to Enforcement. Carried forward.
- The Clerk confirmed she had been liaising with Tofco about the light in Rushlye Close and had circulated correspondence.
- Cllr Steadman said he had circulated information he had received from Mr Freestone concerning sleepers around the green.
- The Clerk confirmed that a draft tender for maintenance of the greens had been prepared and was on the agenda to discuss.
- Cllr Rutherford said he had spoken with Strutt and Parker about the lease agreement for the new green in Eridge; the lease had been signed by the Estate but not the accompanying plan, causing a delay.
- Cllr Rutherford said he had spoken to the local resident about his offer to design a village sign, incorporating a memorial bench to remember his late wife. It was agreed this would be discussed at a future meeting.

(Cllr Best joined the meeting)

Cllr Rutherford proposed that the first item under 13.2 be brought forward to after the public forum to allow the local resident to share his views with the Council. This was **agreed**.

6. Public Forum

The local resident/applicant for application nos. WD/2021/0004/F and 0005/LBR explained the proposals therein, noting that the proposed extension would largely mirror the extension next door and would benefit from its own access and new garage through the scheme. He also explained that the existing garden area had been enlarged some forty years ago and the proposal now sought to regularise this, although the proposed garden area would, in fact, be made smaller.

13.2 To consider planning and listed building applications:

WD/2021/0004/F & 0005/LBR – 1 Yew Tree Cottage, Frant Road, TN3 9HB

Proposed rear extension and small side extension, construction of a new detached single garage with a roof space storage and family use area, new vehicular crossover combined with a new turning and parking areas and retrospective application for modifications to the garden area and formation of an enclosed storage area with velux roof light within the roof space.

The application was discussed and it was unanimously **approved**.

(The local resident left the meeting)

7. To receive reports from County and District Councillors

It was noted that reports from District Councillors Obbard and Howell had been circulated prior to the meeting (see Appendices One and Two).

Cllr Standley said there was a 1.99% increase on the general fund and 3% for adult social care over two years.

Turning to road safety initiatives, Cllr Standley said there been some successes, as follows:

- a pilot scheme involving sending out letters to individuals about prosecution matters had appeared to reduce reoffending;
- another similar scheme had seen a reduction in reoffending by about an eighth; and
- changes made to road layouts in accident black spots had reduced the number of accidents.

Cllr Park raised concerns about the state of some of the roads in the Parish, noting that on her road, for example, culverts are not maintained and the overspill ices over. Cllr Standley responded that the new Highways contract starts in 2023 and it is expected that the issue of drainage will be a key consideration. It was noted that the PC has, in the past, purchased grit bins for particular areas, to ease conditions during the winter.

Cllr Standley made reference to localised flooding near the corner shop in Frant caused, it is thought, by the drains having previously been 'filled up' with tarmac to reduce the vibrational noise from passing traffic. Cllr Standley said he would talk to the County Council to see if anything could be done.

Cllr Park, in referring to Cllr Howell's District Council report to the Parish Council, asked Cllr Standley about the lobbying of ministers concerning housing numbers. Cllr Standley said the issues were that the housing numbers being imposed on Wealden were considered too high and appeared to be based on old data which did not accurately reflect the current demographic. Other issues were around infrastructure provision and sustainability, as well as the constraints of the AONB. Cllr Best added that, post-Covid, there will be a lot of space in town centres as retail moves out; he considered that it was perhaps not the best time to be making decisions that could affect the AONB, in particular. Cllr Rutherford said that commuting patterns had altered and, post-Covid, people may continue to work from home, which would also influence housing need and demand.

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

Cllr Luther suggested that ways for people to access bereavement counselling could be posted on the Parish Council website. This was agreed.

Action: AFL

9. Finance

9.1 To approve the accounts payable

The accounts to be paid, as follows, were **approved**:

Item no.	Payee	Item	Cheque No./BACS	Amount
1	N.McGregor-Gould	BYG sundial, play park cleans, bus shelter cleans and repair	BACS	£480.00
2	Staff	Salary, mileage, expenses, pension	3151/BACS	£1,473.74
3	HMRC	Tax and NI	BACS	£42.47

9.2 To approve the bank reconciliation

The bank reconciliation was **approved**.

9.3 To agree to distribution of Henry Smith vouchers

The Clerk said that the Church knew of some families who may benefit from vouchers for the local shops but were concerned about privacy and data protection. It was agreed that one way forward would be to give the Church the vouchers for distribution. The Clerk said she had been made aware of one family who might benefit from a voucher and it was **agreed** to send one to them.

Action: Clerk

9.4 To consider options for new computer laptop for Clerk/RFO

The Clerk referred to the examples of laptops across a range of prices that had been circulated prior to the meeting. It was agreed that the Clerk would benefit from a faster and more efficient laptop and that it was better to invest in a decent one from the outset. It was thus **agreed** to purchase a Dell laptop at a cost of £549. The Clerk asked whether this amount could be paid to her directly so she could buy it online and that it be added to the accounts approved under item 9.1 above. This was **agreed**.

10. Highways and Lighting

10.1 To discuss the consultation process with regard to the proposed pedestrian crossing in Frant

The Clerk referred to recent correspondence from ESCC concerning the future match-funding application for the pedestrian crossing in which it was recommended that the Parish Council consult local residents about the proposed streetlighting that would be required to accompany the crossing. It was **agreed** to produce a 'streetscene' drawing of how the crossing might look in situ. The Clerk enquired whether printing this in the Parish News for comment would satisfy ESCC that the Parish Council had duly consulted on this. Cllr Standley considered that this level of consultation would likely be acceptable, particularly given the current pandemic situation. He also considered that a commitment by the Parish Council to part-funding a crossing should satisfy Wealden District Council that the CIL funds were going to be used, even if the expiry date for doing so was looming.

Action: Clerk

Turning to the solar light in Bells Yew Green, Cllr Wallis said she had met the contractor on site and understood a new, replacement lantern would be installed. She said she had clarified later via email that the light sensor should work at all times, rather than be on a timed setting. She said she would follow up to find out when the light would be fitted.

Action: SW

(Cllr Standley left the meeting)

11. Green Spaces

11.1 To agree the draft tender document and the period of time to which it relates for the maintenance of green spaces in the Parish

An area around the junction of the A267 and Shernfold Park Farm was discussed; Cllr Luther referred to several areas in the tender document that she felt would need extra mowing because the long grass inhibited visibility at this point, in both directions. It was agreed that Cllrs Steadman and Luther and Mr Huskisson would walk around the area with the contractor to establish exactly which areas should be mown. **Action: CS/AFL**

It was **agreed** that the tender document should be for a period of three years, with an option to extend it to five years. Subject to the legality of this being investigated by the Clerk, the draft tender document was **approved**.

12. Communications

Cllr Luther mooted the idea of the Parish Council producing an online bulletin, circulated to parishioners on a regular basis and providing up to date information, such as local road closures, etc. The issues around GDPR were raised and the possibility that this bulletin may overlap with those from Wealden District Council and go beyond the remit of the Parish Council. The Clerk said she was working on a draft leaflet about the Parish Council and its roles and responsibilities. Cllr Rutherford said it would be useful to know what the level of traffic was to the Parish Council's website. **Action: Clerk**

It was also agreed that platforms such as Facebook and Next Door could be made more use of. **Action: DP**

13. Planning

13.1 To approve the Minutes of the Planning Meeting held on 1st February 2021 as a true and accurate record The Minutes were **approved**.

13.2 To consider planning and listed building applications: (continued from earlier in the meeting)

WD/2020/2652/RM – Hargate House, St Marks Road, Tunbridge Wells, TN2 5LU

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

It was noted that this was a Reserved Matters application. Cllr Rutherford noted the rather pastiche design and the odd location of some windows. Given that the Council's original objections had related to the principle of development here, the Council determined it would be difficult to now influence the outcome as residential development had been approved. It was therefore **agreed** not to return a comment on this application.

WD/2021/0054/F – 2 Nobles Wood, Bells Yew Green, TN3 9EA

Construction of 2 no. single-storey side extensions with alterations at first floor level to include the creation of a terrace over part.

It was **agreed** to support this application.

14. Chairman's announcements & correspondence for noting

Cllr Rutherford raised the proposal for a Farmers' Market in Frant. It was agreed that it was a good idea and would add value to the Parish and its community. It was agreed to consider it in more depth as and when the proposal was firmed up.

Cllr Rutherford referred to correspondence from a local resident in Frant who wished to erect a bench to memorialise his pet dog, who had recently passed away. The Parish Council was sympathetic but concluded that additional

benches on the green in Frant were not warranted, in part because of the possibility that similar benches might proliferate, they would add to visual 'clutter' and thus detract from the character of the green and the Parish Council would ultimately have to take it on as an asset and maintain it. It was agreed that there may be more suitable ways to remember loved ones, including making donations, etc.

There was discussion about the proposed replacement of sleepers on the banks of the green and it was agreed that Cllr Steadman would carry out a survey and email the Clerk with his recommendations as to what was needed.

Action: CS

Cllr Wallis noted that the grit bin in Bells Yew Green was full of water. She also said the noticeboard inside the bus shelter in the village was damaged and needed to be repaired. Cllr Rutherford noted that this was not in the ownership of the Parish Council but it was **agreed** nonetheless to pay for its repair, given that the Parish Council looks after the bus shelters.

Action: Clerk

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

None.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 9.25pm.

Appendix One

Report from District Councillor Keith Obbard

Report for Frant Parish Council 17th Feb. 2021

All the Town and Parish Councils are getting a fortnightly Covid Pandemic updates from David Plank at the WDC Customer Services, keeping Parish Clerks up to date on the latest situation. The Wealden D C website has 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

Consultations Update

The first stage consultation on the Wealden Local Plan, "Direction of Travel Consultation" has now closed.

There have been about 1,700 comments from approximately 300 respondents. Some of these are individuals, and some are representing various interest groups.

Once the comments have been screened for inflammatory remarks, they will all be available for viewing by the public on the website.

Looking ahead to the Spring.

The ESCC and Police & Crime Commissioner elections are still scheduled for 6th May 2021, and the Wealden Electoral Services are working towards that date.

Although the Prime Minister has categorically stated they won't be delayed, I am personally not holding my breath.

Government Minister Clue Smith has said that canvassing, door-knocking and leaflet delivery by members of the public will not be allowed under the COVID-19 restrictions, but many of the smaller parties and independents who cannot afford to pay for delivery are disputing the leaflet delivery advice, as it is no different to delivering letters or parcels.

The Elections are being planned to take place under COVID restrictions, with social distancing, masks, and all the restrictions we have come to be familiar with.

If anyone is concerned about safety, such as people who have been shielding, then it would be sensible to arrange a postal vote, and do it now, because if too many people apply close to the election it will overload the system.

There is a suggestion that last minute proxy's will be allowed in the case someone has to self-isolate.

North Weald Parish Cluster

The next meeting of the North Weald Planning Cluster will be on Tuesday 16th March to take place on Teams from 2pm – 3pm.

If there are any planning issues, especially about the new Local Plan, but for any other issues too, then please bring them to the meeting, or email Chris Bending in advance

chris.bending@wealden.gov.uk

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.

Appendix Two

Report from District Councillor Johanna Howell

Wealden District Council Report – February 2021

Rampion 2 Launches First Consultation on Initial Proposals

Rampion offshore have just launched the first of two consultations, seeking feedback from local communities on a Rampion 2 proposal which looks to generate clean, green electricity for the equivalent of over 1 million homes and offset around 1.8 million tonnes of CO2 every year, in addition to what Rampion already provides. The proposal for Rampion 2 would make a significant contribution to tackle climate change and meet Government targets to quadruple the UK's offshore wind capacity by the end of the decade.

The area of search includes the land off the coast between Bognor Regis and west of Beachy Head. The cable connection route to the national grid would be via Climping, west of Littlehampton to then connect at Bolney in Mid Sussex.

Information about the consultation can be accessed via the Rampion website www.rampion2.com where you can view further information about the project and go on a virtual tour of the area put forward as part of the proposal. F

We are continuing to tackle electric charging and are looking to put in an electric charging station in Uckfield. All new developments are having electric charging points as part of their conditions. We are very keen to encourage to put sustainability at the top of our agenda.

Ashdown Forest

I would like to reassure you that the air quality testing on the Ashdown forest continues in accordance with Natural England's guidelines. It has been suggested that this is not happening and although Wealden has had to take Natural England's advice, we are still testing and will continue to do so.

Housing

As your local councillors we are lobbying ministers with regards to the housing numbers that central government are requiring in this area, although we have to follow National Guidelines we are not taking this lying down and are doing our utmost to let your views be heard.

Parish Cluster

As with other councillors I attended the North Cluster, which I hope is helpful. The Direction of Travel Document consultation has been completed and all the views as submitted will be added to the Draft Plan which will go out for consultation early next year, after which the Local Plan Sub committee, which Bob and I are members of, will see and review the comments. Members of councils and public alike are encouraged to get involved, but please be mindful to go on line and fill in the forms as this helps officers with hundreds of comments they have to sift through.

The next cluster will be 16th March, so if you would like to attend I would encourage you to do so.

I will not add to what you have already seen from other councillors, but was glad to see members attend and was glad that I had the opportunity to encourage officers to talk about the process and cost implication of following a neighbourhood plan.

Waste Management

Waste collection and street cleaning services continue to perform well, Biffa staff have been going above and beyond during this time of lockdown.

I hope you are well and having lost a member of my family to COVID last week am ever mindful of the fragility of the world we live in. Please feel free to contact me or Bob with any issues you may wish to discuss.

Kind regards, Johanna Howell

List of Actions

Action	By Whom
Find details for organisations who offer bereavement counselling for posting on the Parish Council website.	AFL
Liaise with Tofco re: provision of new solar lantern in BYG.	SW
Organise for a streetscene of the proposed pedestrian crossing to be prepared.	Clerk
Find out the level of footfall on the Parish Council website.	Clerk
Investigate using Facebook, Next Door or other platforms to communicate with parishioners.	DP
Ask Mr McGregor-Gould to undertake repairs to the noticeboard in the BYG bus shelter.	Clerk
Investigate timeframe for tender document for maintenance of green spaces.	Clerk
Do a walkabout of the green in Frant to assess how many sleepers would be needed on its banks.	CS
Meet on the green to discuss where the areas of grass should be mown near the junction of the A267 and Shernfold Park Farm.	AFL/CS