

# FRANT PARISH COUNCIL

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## THE MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING OF FRANT PARISH COUNCIL, HELD ONLINE VIA 'ZOOM' ON MONDAY 26<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2021 AT 7.30PM

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

County and District Cllr Standley  
District Cllr Obbard

Ms. R. Barnes – Clerk  
One member of the public

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

No-one except for the Clerk. The meeting is recorded in audio and deleted once the Draft Minutes have been issued to the Council.

**2. Receive apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Best and Crookshank.

**3. Receive declarations of interests on items on the Agenda and changes to the Register of Interests**

None.

**4. Approve the Minutes of the meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2021 as a true and accurate record**

The Minutes were approved as a true and accurate record.

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

Cllr Steadman said that, of the three companies he had approached about installing sleepers and bollards for the green in Frant, only one wished to submit a quote for consideration. The Clerk said that other firms should be contacted and Crestala, Tate Fencing and Richards Fencing were suggested.

**Action: CS**

Cllr Luther said she had provided the Clerk with details of bereavement services for posting on the website. She also said she had spoken with Frant Primary School who confirmed they already had a counsellor who visited regularly to speak with the children.

The Clerk confirmed that the new lantern had been installed in Rushlye Close.

Cllr Standley confirmed that he had spoken to both Biffa and the Portfolio Holder to pass on the Council's concerns about road-side littering and the need for more frequent collections.

The Clerk said that the Code of Conduct policy was on the website and was due to be reviewed and adopted at the May meeting.

Cllr Rutherford suggested that when the contractors are installing the sleepers and bollards at Frant green, they could also install the 'no parking' sign on the green.

The Clerk confirmed that she and Mr Black (Kember Loudon Williams) had spoken on the telephone to discuss the proposed pedestrian crossing in Frant and were considering setting up an online Zoom meeting with Highways

#### **6. Public Forum – time limit 15 minutes**

The member of the public present at the meeting addressed the Council and raised his concerns about the safety of the junction of the A267 and the B2099. He said he lived nearby and was aware of frequent accidents there, with at least one serious accident a year. Indeed, he noted that a serious accident had occurred recently involving a motorbike, which required an ambulance and the police to attend. He said he would be happy to fund a feasibility study (£500 plus VAT), prepared by East Sussex County Council (ESCC), but asked for the Parish Council's support for the associated application for match-funding.

Cllr Rutherford noted that the junction was well-known to the Parish Council as an accident blackspot and that it had commissioned a speed survey some years ago but the results were inconclusive. He further noted that experience had shown that it was usually not as simple as changing a speed limit; often some degree of re-engineering of the road was required. Cllr Standley noted, however, that in this instance, the 30mph zone (entering Frant) was not too far away from this junction so a change in limit may be an option (subject to a feasibility assessment). He said it may not be possible for an individual to pay for the assessment, in which case the Parish Council would need to agree to pay the fee. Cllr Standley also said that an open question should be asked of the study such that ESCC can recommend alternative measures to changes in speed limit, if appropriate. Cllr MacDonald-Brown suggested one option might be introducing an anti-skid surface. Cllr Standley noted that the splays at this junction were wide, which seemed to encourage people to speed in and out of it. Cllr Howell also commented that the seasonal van that parked in the bus-stop layby selling cherries may also cause a sight problem.

Cllr Rutherford concluded that the Council recognised the resident's concerns and would be happy to consider funding a feasibility study at a future meeting.

*(The member of the public left the meeting at 7.53pm)*

#### **7. Receive reports from County and District Councillors**

Cllr Rutherford noted that Cllr Obbard had circulated his report prior to the meeting (see Appendix One) and that Cllrs Standley and Howell noted they were both in Purdah because of the forthcoming local elections. Although all were happy to answer questions, none were raised.

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

No issues were raised.

#### **9. Finance**

##### **9.1 To approve the accounts payable**

The annual payment to Frant with Eridge PCC to assist with the production costs of Parish News was discussed, given that some editions had recently been produced online, because of Covid restrictions. It was agreed to contact the editor and review the payment at the next meeting.

**Action: Clerk**

## **9.2 To approve the bank reconciliation**

Approved.

## **9.3 To note new CIL payment**

The payment was noted; however, Cllr Steadman queried why some of the figures on the payment advice were shown as being negative figures. The Clerk said she would contact Wealden District Council for clarification.

**Action: Clerk**

## **10. Green Spaces**

### **10.1 To approve quote for maintenance of the Parish's green spaces**

The Clerk confirmed that four firms had been invited to tender but only one quote was received, from Orchard Landscapes. Cllr Steadman noted an error in their quote whereby provisional items had been quoted as a yearly amount (every year for three years) rather than as a one-off amount. Cllr Rutherford noted various areas in the quote which accounted for the increase over and above previous contracts with Orchard Landscapes. Cllr Luther expressed her concern that it was difficult to approve a quote without other quotes to compare it with. Cllr Rutherford responded that the last time the Council went to tender, two quotes were received - one from Orchard Landscapes, who carried out the contract and another, which quoted at over £100,000. He also considered that the current quote was reasonable given the increases in the volume of work in the tender and with inflation.

Cllr Rutherford proposed to accept the quote from Orchard Landscapes and a majority **resolved** to approve the quote. It was agreed that the Clerk would seek the amendments as above.

**Action: Clerk**

## **11. Communications**

### **11.1 To review the results of the Parish survey and discuss next steps**

Cllr Rutherford thanked Cllr Park for undertaking this task. She summarised the findings and listed the actions that the Parish Council should immediately take. Cllr Rutherford picked a number at random, representing one of the respondees – no. 12, initials HSG from the 12-17 year old group. The Clerk did likewise and chose number 88, initials NP for the 18 year olds and over. It was agreed that permission would be requested from the winners to put their names in the next edition of Parish News.

Councillors discussed various issues about how to proceed, including that it was important to draw in the Eridge and Bells Yew Green communities into future discussions. Further, it was considered that a dialogue with Wealden DC would allow the Parish Council some influence about key issues of importance to the parishioners. Cllr Park noted that a number of respondees had offered to be involved in any future focus or working groups and it would be useful for the Council to ascertain the range of skills they could offer.

It was **agreed** that Cllr Park would produce a 'presentation pack' to disseminate the results of the survey to parishioners; it was **agreed** that various methods could be used including an article in Parish News, using noticeboards, holding an event, etc.

It was **agreed** that a debate should be had at a future meeting to decide whether to pursue a Neighbourhood Plan or a Parish Plan.

## **12. Wealden Local Plan**

Cllr Park considered that the survey results would allow the Parish Council to be better prepared to respond to the various stages in drafting of the Wealden Local Plan.

Prior to leaving the meeting, Cllr Howell raised the following issues: firstly, she asked that the PTA of Frant Primary School be asked to clear the bonfire site when not in use; secondly, she noted that people were continuing to park on the green and on the pavement at the Shernfold Park end of the green and that the Parish Council ought to write to them about this; and thirdly, she said that two local residents were interested in refurbishing the BT phonebox in Frant and turning into a library. Cllr Rutherford said that this must be done in conjunction with the Parish Council as the phone box is within its ownership. These actions were **agreed**. **Action: Clerk**

*(Cllrs Howell, Rutherford and Standley left the meeting at 8.52pm; Cllr Park agreed to chair the remainder of the meeting).*

### **13. Planning**

13.1 To approve the **Minutes of the Planning Meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2021** as a true and accurate record.

The Minutes were **approved** as a true and accurate record.

13.2 To consider planning and listed building applications:

**WD/2021/0586/FR – Camden House, Bells Yew Green, TN3 9BD**

Part retrospective two-storey side extension and associated hard and soft landscaping to include rear access steps.

<https://planning.wealden.gov.uk/plandisp.aspx?recno=153197>

The Council expressed its disappointment that this had come forward as a retrospective application and queried why work had proceeded without planning permission. However, the Council did not object overall to the proposals.

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

None.

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

The Clerk noted that the next meeting was the following week, on 5<sup>th</sup> May.

Cllr Park raised concerns about the number of cars parked either side of the road past the green in Bells Yew Green, now that the Brecknock Arms PH was open once again. It was agreed that Cllr Crookshank should speak with the landlord about this. **Action: SC**

Cllr MacDonald-Brown confirmed that he would be organising the 'Great British Spring Clean' litter pick in Little Bayham again this year. Cllr Luther said she would help with the same in Frant. It was agreed to advertise it in noticeboards, the website and on the Next Door app.

Cllr Steadman enquired about whether the caravan parked in Rushlye Close would be moved. Cllr MacDonald-Brown noted it was taxed but did not have a current MoT. The Clerk said she would follow it up and get an update. **Action: Clerk**

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 9.01pm

*\*In accordance with The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panel (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020*

<b>Action</b>	<b>By whom</b>
Seek further quotes for supplying and installing sleepers and bollards for Frant green.	CS
Speak to the Parish News about their printing regimen in recent months vis-à-vis the Council's annual contribution to these costs.	Clerk
Seek clarification from Wealden DC about the CIL payment advice.	Clerk
Ask Orchard Landscapes to amend their quote to omit the duplication in figures for provisional items.	Clerk
Write to the school's PTA to ask that the bonfire site is cleared when not in use.	Clerk
Write to residents near the green about parking on the grass and/or pavements.	Clerk
Speak with the landlord of the Brecknock Arms PH about the large volume of parked cars nearby.	SC
Get an update about the caravan parked in Rushlye Close.	Clerk

## **Appendix One**

### **Report for Frant Parish Council 26th April. 2021**

All the Town and Parish Councils continue to get a fortnightly Covid Pandemic update 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

### **Update on the progress of the WDC Climate Crisis Action Plan.**

There are several threads which are slowly being progressed.

The Action Plan can be found on the WDC website and it is updated after every report to Cabinet.

### **Green Homes Grant Scheme.**

This Government scheme was badly thought out and therefore the uptake by the Public has been very poor.

The main problems have been a lack of registered trades-people to install the equipment, the clumsy voucher scheme for claiming the grant, and the desperately slow payment by Government when vouchers were presented.

It almost seems as though the Government wanted it to fail!

This scheme will now be scrapped, and a small proportion of the money will be made available to assist Councils to upgrade their Social Housing.

WDC have applied for some grant, but don't yet know if it will be forthcoming.

### **Microgeneration Certification Scheme**

WDC has successfully applied and obtained a £40,000 award from this scheme.

The project will be concentrated on the Diplocks Industrial Estate in Hailsham, where many of the Factory and Warehouse units are quite old.

The money will enable energy audits to be done and advice given about Insulation and renewable energy installation. IE Solar panels on all those big roofs, and switching from oil to heat pumps, etc.

### **Solar Together**

This is the scheme promoted by the WDC to residents to put Solar Panels on their roofs through a group buying scheme to obtain about 40% discount on normal prices.

The i-chooser organisation is organising the group buying scheme, and a company called EEC Home Improvements was commissioned to implement it.

WDC sent out over 20,000 letters to households in Wealden, and had about 5% of these register for a quote. (This is actually quite a good percentage response)

Installations have been delayed due to Covid restrictions, but of the 1,000 or so of initial registration about 140 households have agreed to solar panels &/or Battery storage.

So far only 18 have been fully installed and completed.

i-chooser will be running another scheme in 2021. This will be promoted by WDC, probably starting in late August.

### **Riding Sunbeams Project**

The Government has provided a £2.5M grant which is being administered by the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (which WDC is part of).

This money will provide initial funding to link the Cuckmere Solar Farm to the Rail Network, providing electricity directly into the electrified railway.

Once all the initial work is done, there will be an opportunity for the Community (IE the public) to invest in the Project, and WDC is also considering a direct investment.

### **Electric Vehicle (EV) charging in Wealden.**

There has been lots of discussions and preparatory work with the Energy Saving Trust

This has identified 36 Wealden Car parks as potential sites, where the criteria for footfall, housing accessibility, National Grid connection, and various other factors are favourable.

WDC has approached 18 leading EV charge point installers to gauge interest, but disappointingly only received expressions of interest from 4 companies.

It is unlikely that the contract would be decided upon before the Autumn 2021, so it will be 2022 before we see a roll-out of EV charge points in Wealden Car parks.

Which I find very disappointing.

### **Hydrogen Sussex**

This is a new grouping formed on February 2021 that WDC has joined to explore the place of Hydrogen in the energy mix for the future.

It is hoped that there would be a Hydrogen production plant at Shoreham, to make use of spare electricity from the offshore wind farms.

But this is very early days for this project.

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.