

FRANT PARISH COUNCIL

THE MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT FRANT MEMORIAL HALL ON WEDNESDAY 23rd JUNE 2021 AT 7.30PM

Present: Cllr Crookshank – Vice-Chairman
Cllrs Park, Luther, Macdonald-Brown, Best

County and District Cllr Standley
District Cllr Obbard

Cllr Park confirms all COVID-19 prevention measures were adhered to, as required by the hall management.

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

None.

2. Receive apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs Rutherford, Steadman, Howell and Ms. R. Barnes (Clerk).

3. Agree to exclude the public for item 17 under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

Agreed.

4. Receive Declarations of Interests on items on the Agenda and changes to the Register of Interests

None.

5. Approve the Minutes of the meeting on 5th May 2021 as a true and accurate record

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

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

- At the request of Cllr Howell, the report of the survey results had been reviewed to ensure there was no contentious or libellous content. A summary had been sent to Ms Kinley for the Parish News and the printed versions would be in the village halls soon. Ongoing.
- Due to the absence of the Clerk and Cllr Rutherford, all other matters arising from the previous meeting were referred forward to the next meeting.

7. Public Forum – time limit 15 minutes

The public forum considered item 12.1 - consider funding a feasibility study into improving road safety at the junction of the A267 and B2099.

Mr Richard Smith (RS) attended to discuss community concerns regarding the A267 / Wadhurst Road junction. In addition to numerous prangs, injured motor cyclists and car-on-car collisions, more recently a car had mounted the pavement outside Saxonbury, and, in demolishing the garden wall, had left bricks and debris in a child's paddling pool which, fortunately, was not in use at the time. It is hoped that insurers will foot the bill for the reinstatement of the garden wall. It was also noted that there is an adjacent footpath used by school children. RS requested that consideration be given to a feasibility study to evaluate how the junction could be made safer. RS has established a WhatsApp group locally to communicate with other concerned neighbours and this has good support. RS offered to pay for the feasibility study but was advised that such requests were more likely to receive favourable consideration where application was made through the parish council.

RS agreed to supply the parish clerk with a record of "vehicular events" at the junction. It was agreed that on receipt the clerk would apply for the feasibility study and the cost (approximately £500 plus VAT) would be met by the parish council.

Action: RB

8. Receive reports from County and District Councillors

Reports were circulated prior to the meeting and are attached at Appendix One. No questions arose.

Cllr Standley reported that he had been pursuing the problem of the motorhome parked opposite the green in Bells Yew Green. It appears that the vehicle is taxed and as such, it is not abandoned and can sit on the highway; there are no issues relating to the owner's tenancy. There is 'just' sufficient room for the recycling trucks to get up into the road and it is thought access to ambulance or fire engine would not be restricted. Cllr Standley is establishing whether there is an issue of legality regarding repairing a vehicle at the roadside; Cllr Park felt this is only illegal where it is done for profit and without licence. It appears an alternative solution may need to be found - perhaps a local landowner allowing space for the vehicle to be parked and repaired.

(Cllr Best joined the meeting)

The proposed pedestrian crossing by the Abergavenny Arms was discussed. Cllr Crookshank gave the example of the new crossing by Hawkenbury Rec, which sits opposite a housing estate and has low level lighting. Cllr Standley wondered if the road conditions (e.g. a B-road, 20mph limit) meant that was acceptable at that location, but not on the A267.

Cllr Best raised with Cllrs Standley and Obbard concerns regarding the erection of a building in Broadwater Forest, stating that he felt officers should attend the site and conduct a review. He was concerned that allowing that building to go unchallenged could mean that other landowners would act similarly, with a resultant plethora of buildings.

Cllr Obbard reported that a new Big Switch initiative had just opened up with the supplier offering 100% green energy.

9. Discuss and review ongoing support within the Parish during the Covid-19 pandemic

It was felt the COVID numbers were very low in the district. Vaccination rates were generally high with the exception of Hastings, Eastbourne and Forest Row. It was noted that Cllr Rutherford and the Clerk were absent due to COVID concerns (test isolation and track and trace). The meeting extended good wishes to the Clerk and her family.

10. Approve Section 1 of the Annual Return: Annual Governance Statement 2020/21

Noted and **approved**.

11. Approve Section 2 of the Annual Return: Accounting Statement for 2020/21

Noted and **approved**.

Cllr Crookshank brought attention to the parish council's substantial reserves.

12. Highways

12.1 Consider funding a feasibility study into improving road safety at the junction of the A267 and B2099

Cllrs agreed to fund a feasibility study into improving road safety at the junction of the A267 and B2099. See notes under Item 7: Public Forum.

13. Planning

13.1 Wealden Local Plan

Cllr Standley reported it was on-going and progressing well. The next phase of consultation would be issued early 2022. The plan is to be produced by 2023 and will be compliant with the government's new Green Paper on Housing Development. Cllr Standley had recently been involved in a series of meetings with government regarding the year-on-year housing targets and stressed that the 'affordability factor' was flawed, as far as Wealden was concerned, as an increase in supply would not result in a drop in price to the perceived level of affordability. Presently, the requirement is for 1,200 dwellings per year and it is hoped to reduce this to 800. The SHELAA sites are now under review and the final list will be issued shortly though this will not guarantee the 5-year housing supply required.

Cllr Park wondered if consideration might be given to a solar farm initiative in support of landowners who were rejected from the SHELAA.

13.2 Approve the Minutes of the Planning Meeting on 7th June 2021

The Minutes of the Planning Meeting on 7th June 2021 were approved.

13.3 To consider licence and planning applications received and make recommendations:

- WD/2021/1347/F – Fairway, Bayham Road, Bells Yew Green, TN3 9BP

Proposed rear single-storey extension and replacement terrace.

No objections were raised.

14. Finance

14.1 Ratify payment of overtime

Cllrs agreed to ratify the payment of overtime. It was noted that the Clerk had felt the need to carry out necessary work and had done so willingly. It was further noted that in general councillors did not feel it appropriate to rely on employees having to work overtime.

14.2 Approve the accounts payable

The following accounts were approved.

Item no.	Payee	Item	Amount
1	IMAGO	Dial2Drive (Henry Smith) May 2021 (Inv: 8721, 8722, 8743 & 8744)	£50.77
2	Fraser Murdoch	Inv 072 Maintenance of BYG green: May	£75.00
3	Mulberry & Co.	Courses for Cllrs Crookshank and MacDonald-Brown – Inv nos: 50059 / 50063	£120.00
4	Mulberry & Co.	Internal audit fee	£216.00
5	R. Karim	June 2021 salary (already paid on 15th June)	£1,051.61
6	R.Karim	Expenses and mileage	£46.32
7	ES Pension Fund	Employer's contribution June 21.6%	£247.51
8	ES Pension Fund	Employee's contribution June 5.8%	£63.02
9	HMRC	Tax and NI	£31.27
10	N. McGregor- Gould	May park cleans, bus shelters, removing stump from green	£400.00

14.3 Approve the bank reconciliation

The bank reconciliation was not available for consideration. Rolled forward.

14.4 Consider costs for refurbishment of streetlights and discuss the impact to the Council of lighting standards

The cost of refurbishing streetlights was agreed.

The impact of the lighting standards briefing document is to be reviewed in conjunction with a resumption of the inspection by councillors of the parish assets.

Action: All

15. Green Spaces

Cllr Park advised that Cllr Howell had asked her to convene a meeting with Cllrs Luther and Steadman. This would happen on Cllr Steadman's return from holiday on 28th June.

Action: DP

Cllr Luther advised that she was addressing concerns raised by Orchard Landscapes that they are currently disposing of approx. 20m³ grass cuttings on an unlicensed site. Cllr Luther has spoken to ESCC who have confirmed grass cuttings cannot be dumped in the field. They referred her to the Environment Agency who have referred it to the local team and an answer is awaited. In the absence of a solution our cuttings will have to be disposed of via a grab lorry at the cost of £840 per annum. Cllr Standley is to ascertain if third parties are charged to dispose of green waste to a council operated waste deposit. Cllr Park wondered if a solution could be found in the construction of compost bins in the manner deployed at Dunorlan Park.

Action: BS/AFL

16. Communications

16.1 Receive update from Community Rail Steering Group

Cllr Luther, who sits on the Community Rail Steering Group, had met with Catherine Simmonds; it had been agreed that consideration would be given to painting that bit of Frant railway station that had not yet been renovated and that some improvement to the use of the green spaces (mainly flower beds) be considered. A suggestion was made that a lending library might also be established within the station. The run-off from the station that has previously resulted in flooding under the railway bridge is to be monitored and should the problem reoccur, Cllr Luther will raise the issue with Ms Simmonds.

17. Personnel

17.1 Consider changes to employment contract and written statement of particulars

Changes to the clerk's employment contract and written statement of particulars were considered. It was agreed to increase the clerk's hours to 22 hours per week with effect from 1st July 2021.

18. Chairman's announcements & correspondence for noting

None.

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

None.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 8.40pm.

Action	By Whom
Submit feasibility study re: the junction of the A267 and the turning to Wadhurst.	Clerk
Convene a meeting with Cllrs Steadman, Howell and Luther to discuss the green.	DP
Undertake physical inspection of streetlights within the parish's ownership.	All
Ascertain if third parties are charged to dispose of green waste to a council operated waste deposit.	BS
Continue liaison with the Environment Agency about dealing with the arisings from grass cuts.	AFL
The following are rolled forward:	
Amend asset register to include truncheon.	Clerk
Check procedure re: accepting quote for new sleepers and bollards for Frant green. Look for cost of work previously carried out by Tate Fencing.	Clerk
Write to the school's PTA to ask that the bonfire site is cleared when not in use.	Clerk
Seek clarification from Wealden DC about the CIL payment advice.	Clerk
Put up 'no parking on the green' sign on the green at the Shernfold Park end.	WR
Speak with Kember Loudon Williams about commissioning street scene drawings for the new pedestrian crossing and liaising with Highways.	Clerk

APPENDIX ONE

District council Report – June 2021 – Johanna Howell

We held a meeting this month with all four of our MP's to discuss our deep concerns with regards to planning in the Wealden area. We made them aware of our grave concerns with government pushing for more development and that the 7500 extant permissions that have granted in Wealden should all be counted towards our 5 year land supply. They are now very well aware of the depth of feeling in this area and as your representatives we gave voice to the issues that have been raised with us.

Volunteers and community groups across Wealden were out in force during the Great British Spring Clean, which ran from 28 May – 13 June. Over 50 individuals and community groups took part this year, still under the protection of COVID-19 prevention measures.

Organised litter picks during the Keep Britain Tidy campaign collected over 300 bags of litter from the District's streets and open green spaces. A 50% increase on the 200 plus bags collected in 2020. With many groups now taking to the streets throughout the year, it's estimated that over 700 bags of litter have been collected since April 2021.

Litter picking events in some Wealden towns and villages are now a regular fixture, with groups like Brighter Crowborough, Brighter Heathfield, Brighter Uckfield, and the Wealden Wombles organising clean-ups through-out the year.

The Council's anti-littering campaign launched at the end of May. The "Do the right thing!" campaign will continue to reinforce how costly littering is to the taxpayer, the environment, and our local wildlife. It is also helping to shine a light on the many community groups and volunteers who strive to keep the District free of litter.

I know Ann-Francis has tried to organise a group in Frant and Andy has been active in Bels Yew Green. Perhaps we should set another date in the diary.

Horsted Green Park, Wealden's latest country park, is frequented by hundreds of visitors and their dogs each year. But a far corner of the park has become home to a thriving industry of pollinators – thanks to the High Weald Beekeepers' Association.

The swathes of buttercups enjoying the summer sun outside of Uckfield provide some of the pollen and the nectar that the bees live on and use to make honey. They will fly as far as three miles to find nectar and pollen, and by visiting different flowers along the way, help to fertilise many thousands of plants to provide fruit, seed and crops for the future. No pesticides are used at Horsted Green making it a great home for the bees.

Wealden District Council has been awarded more than £300,000 through the Government's Safer Streets initiative.

It is the first time that the Safer Streets Fund has been made available to local authorities and we are pleased that Wealden has been successful. It is the only district council to have made a successful bid. This was secured by Cllr Councillor Philip Lunn, Wealden Cabinet member for Community & Public Health and his team.

Wealden is a very safe place to live. However this funding, provided by the Government, will help us to target one area where we believe a carefully thought-through strategy will make it much more difficult for criminals in the future.

The £309,453 will be used to install crime-preventative measures such as CC-TV, improved security measures, education and information projects and a neighbourhood watch scheme in parts of Hailsham. It is in response to higher than average recorded incidences of neighbourhood crime, including robbery and burglary and theft from vehicles.

The Council will be looking to see what are the most effective interventions so that they can be deployed in other areas of the District. Last year the Safer Streets Fund provided nearly £900,000 to the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner to help tackle anti-social behaviour, theft and burglary parts of Eastbourne and Hastings. This year's second round saw 40 areas across England and Wales awarded a total of £18.4 million.

Wealden's Mid Term Corporate Plan

The Plan sets out the strategic direction and explains how they intend to deliver their vision. The eight objectives listed in the Corporate Mid-term Update are:

- Ensure that Wealden is Carbon Zero by 2050 at the latest.
- Work with partners to regenerate our diverse market towns, creating jobs and attracting investment.
- Support our local businesses, tourism sector and entrepreneurs to achieve a locally sustainable economy.
- Protect and enhance Wealden's unique natural environment and heritage.
- Ensure development meets future needs, with associated investment in infrastructure.
- Promote a better quality of life for Wealden people through activities that improve health, resilience and well-being.
- Improve access to essential services for all our communities.
- Generate ongoing sources of income to reinvest in local priorities and optimise funding from external sources.

Report for Frant Parish Council 23rd June 2021: Cllr Keith Obbard

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

Internal News.

The Wealden Councillors meetings are starting to get back to normal.

The last Full Council meeting on 19th May was held at the Council Offices, but because of social distancing rules, and the fact that we cannot hold Hybrid Meetings, the numbers of Councillors allowed to attend was reduced.

This isn't a satisfactory solution and why the Government refuses to alter the law to allow Hybrid meetings is a mystery to me, especially as the Westminster Parliament have been having them for ages.

The Full Council meeting was the annual meeting where the Chair was elected and Cabinet and Committee members were announced.

There was a change in the make-up of the Council as a new Independent Group has been formed, and this involved a slight change in the representation on committees.

With the election of some new Councillors in a number of bye elections the Council has embarked on a new round of Training for Councillors, which so far has covered Planning matters, Code of Conduct and Tree Protection

Recent Cabinet Meeting

This was the first Cabinet meeting to be held in person since the start of the Pandemic.

The leader presented a very glossy brochure of the WDC Corporate Plan 2019 – 2023 which has been updated with the changes entailed by the adoption of a Climate Emergency Plan and the effects of the Covid Pandemic.

In my opinion it is rather long on rhetoric and short on detail, but it is just a brief outline for presentation purposes I suppose.

The financial performance report for the 4th Quarter of 2020-21 was presented, and considering that we have had a global pandemic the results and figures are really quite good. Some of the reporting targets have been suspended, for example the relet time periods and the percentage of rents received on the Council Housing because the pandemic has made it impossible to work normally.

Hailsham Aspires project.

The Council has applied for a government grant from the Levelling-up Fund, as Hailsham is a fairly deprived part of the District and it was decided to see if it was eligible for government grant as the project could be delivered fairly quickly because much of the initial stages had been done. The bid is for about £17.6m so it's worth going for.

The result of the bid has not yet been made known.

A re-vamped Digital Strategy was also presented. The Council now has over 120 services that can be accessed on the internet and more than 75,000 residents are registered with the Council for online services.

Planning Issues.

There are several planning applications in the Ward which are still outstanding, and I am keeping an eye on these, but so far there are none that are going to the Planning Committee.

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.

East Sussex County Councillor report to Frant Parish Council

Covid 19

The council continues to deliver services as the pandemic, hopefully, recedes and we can all get back to as normal a life as possible. The postponement of the lifting of restrictions was disappointing especially given the low number of cases in Wealden. Having said that cases have risen in the last couple of weeks but with the vast majority of residents having been vaccinated the risk of hospitalisation is much reduced.

The uptake of vaccinations across East Sussex has been good although Eastbourne, Hastings and Forest Row have a lower uptake.

LAs are working together to assist the recovery in the economy. Tourism is an important part of the economy of East Sussex and staycations will assist in that recovery.

Council Monitoring 20/21

The monitoring report goes to Cabinet next Tuesday with 69% of the targets met with 9 not met although 7 of those were due to the pandemic.

The budget outturn was an underspend of £26.9m although £15.132 related to Covid which will be spent in the current year. The Council is continuing to lobby for a 3-year finance settlement, rather than the 1-year settlements in recent years. The fair funding review is unlikely to be completed till 2024 but are hopeful of at least a 2-year settlement to cover 22/23 and 23/24. For members wanting more information the monitoring the Cabinet papers are on -line.

Adult Social care

Also coming to Cabinet is a report enhancing the integration between Social Services and the NHS. In line with the NHS white paper "Integration and Innovation" the Council will be a member of the Integrated Care System (ICS). The White paper of ASC funding is still awaited.

Live Meetings

As with other Local Councils we now need to meet in person to make decisions. Non- decision-making meetings will normally be remote.

Motorhome in Rushlye Close

Given the vehicle is taxed, ESCC /WDC cannot remove it as an "Abandoned Vehicle." The fact that the owner is a WDC tenant is also not relevant in terms of the eyesore of the unroadworthy vehicle. I have written to Waste Management at WDC in the hope that they will complain re: the obstruction which would be a Sussex Police matter.

On a personal note, I continue as Lead Member for Education and ISEND but also have the additional role as the Council's representative on the Police and Crime Panel. The PCP is charged with holding the Police and Crime Commissioner to account.