

FRANT PARISH COUNCIL

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THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT THE STABLES, FRANT ON WEDNESDAY 15 SEPTEMBER 2021 AT 7.30PM

Present: Cllr Howell - Chairman
Cllrs Luther, Macdonald-Brown, Best, Rutherford, Steadman
County and District Cllr Standley
District Cllr Obbard
Representative from Corylus Ecology

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

None.

2. Receive apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs Crookshank and Park.

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 21st July 2021 as a true and accurate record

The Minutes were approved.

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

- It was agreed that all the streetlights in the Parish should be put onto the painting schedule for next year;

- Cllr Steadman to ask Mr Bowie for a quote for the stock fencing around Parish field and it was agreed that the Council would need to obtain another two quotes. With regard to the similar work required at the green in Eridge, it was agreed to also seek a quote from Mr Bowie which might enable some cost/time savings;

Action: CS

- meeting to be arranged between the Clerk and Cllrs Howell and Steadman to discuss the Council's email system;

Action: Clerk

- Cllrs agreed to consider enrolling for training courses;

- Cllr Standley asked the Council to ensure that GoGreen waste removal had the relevant licences to remove waste in line with regulations.

Action: Clerk

6. Public Forum – time limit 15 minutes

None.

7. Receive reports from County and District Councillors

Cllrs Standley and Obbard submitted reports prior to the meeting (see appendices). Cllr Howell gave the Council an update on the carbon neutral report; it was noted that the Council should do what it can, even in small ways, to support the climate emergency response.

Signed:

Date:

8. Highways

8.1 Discuss rise in road traffic accidents along A267

It was agreed to write to Highways concerning a number of dangerous junctions in the Parish (including, but not limited to, the Wadhurst and Bunny Lane junctions with the A267/A26). Further, it was agreed to keep Highways abreast of signs obscured by vegetation, although it was acknowledged that, in some cases, this was the responsibility of private landowners. Cllr Standley noted that Highways would normally be motivated by the number of accidents in any one place before taking action. **Action: Clerk**

It was agreed that highways generally were not a Parish Council responsibility, but a County responsibility.

9. Green Spaces

9.1 Presentation by Corylus Ecology about the green in Frant

A representative from Corylus Ecology gave a presentation, referencing the recent ecology report, circulated prior to the meeting. In summary:

- Cllr Howell enquired about the benefits of the change in ecology over time. It was noted that the Corylus report suggested some areas of great improvement, although the ecology of the banks had not changed;
- Cllr Best asked Corylus to provide numbers as to the area of grassland in the Parish, taking in Eridge Park and Broadwater Warren, and how significant Frant Green is in terms of this rare habitat;
- Cllr Luther raised the issue of the increase in carbon emissions arising from the increase in use of diesel for the grass cuts. A debate was had as to the significance of this;
- It was agreed that Corylus would provide a quote for a numbers-driven, one-page report on the significance of rare habitat in the Parish's eco-system.

9.2 Discuss installation of tree trunk to protect the green at the junction with the A267

Cllr Steadman agreed to discuss this further with the contractor.

9.3 Discuss the bonfire site and insurance

It was agreed to obtain a written response from the PTA's insurers that the PTA is covered for the build up of the bonfire site and for long prior to the actual bonfire event in November. **Action: Clerk**

10. Finance

10.1 Approve the accounts payable

The accounts were approved.

Item no.	Payee	Item	Amount
1	IMAGO	Dial2Drive (Henry Smith) Jul/Aug	£247.81
2	F. Murdoch	Maintenance of BYG green: Jul/ Aug	£150.00
3	N. McGregor-Gould	Jul/Aug/Sept cleans: play equip & bus shelters	£1,155.00
4	Rialtas	Annual fee for accounting software	£148.80
5	PCC Frant with Eridge	Hall hire (The Stables)	£72.00
6	Staff	Staff costs	£2,277.07

Signed:

Date:

10.2 Approve the bank reconciliation

The bank reconciliation (below) was noted and approved.

<u>Bank Statement Account Name (s)</u>	<u>Statement Date</u>	<u>Page No</u>	<u>Balances</u>
Current A/c	14/09/2021		400.00
Business Reserve	14/09/2021		138,561.92
			<hr/> 138,961.92
<u>Unpresented Cheques (Minus)</u>		<u>Amount</u>	
01/04/2021 BACS SSALC		144.00	
			<hr/> 144.00
			138,817.92
<u>Receipts not Banked/Cleared (Plus)</u>			
		0.00	
			<hr/> 0.00
			138,817.92
		Balance per Cash Book is :-	138,817.92
		Difference is :-	0.00

11. Communications

None.

12. Planning

12.1 Wealden Local Plan – rolling item

None.

12.2 Approve the Minutes of the Planning Meeting on 1st September 2021 as a true and accurate record

The Minutes were approved.

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

WD/2021/1940/F – Flowerpot Nursery, Frant Road, Frant, TN3 9HB

Change of use to C3 residential with the construction of 4 no. dwellings, parking for 9 no. vehicles and associated hard and soft landscaping.

The Council recommended refusal of this application on the grounds that:

- it would constitute over-development on this relatively small site, in terms of mass and scale and being adjacent to a 60mph A-road;
- it would amount to inappropriate development in the AONB; and
- it would see the loss of a significant rural business.

Signed:

Date:

WD/2021/2086/LDE – Bells Yew Green Business Centre, Bayham Road, TN3 9BJ

Existing established use for storage purposes.

To the knowledge of the Parish Council, only a small portion of this site has been used for storage and the Council therefore recommended that permission is not given for the whole site and the application should be refused.

13. Chairman’s announcements & correspondence for noting

None.

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

None.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 9.15pm.

Action	By Whom
Seek quotes from Mr Bowie for Eridge green and parish field.	CS
Convene a meeting with Cllrs Steadman, Howell and Luther to discuss the green.	Clerk
Check whether GoGreen has relevant licences to remove waste.	Clerk
Write to Highways about overgrowth of vegetation obscuring signs and limiting visibility at key junctions.	Clerk
Write to PTA to obtain written confirmation from insurers re: cover for bonfire material prior to the event.	Clerk
Identify images on google maps of the original grit bin on Benhall Mill Road.	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
Ascertain whether the new green in Eridge, meadow and parish field could be contenders for the Open Spaces ‘Grant a Green’ campaign.	Clerk
Obtain more information about cyber insurance and how this would work alongside the Council’s current web/email hosts.	Clerk

Signed:

Date:

APPENDIX ONE

County Council report to Frant Parish Council Sept 2021

Adult Social Care

The NHI (+ pension lock,d ividend tax) increase has been announced by Govt to cover the short-term challenge post Covid in the NHS and also the longer term funding of ASC. How the funding will be transferred in 2023 to ASC will be interesting. That a long-term solution needs to be found for ASC is not really in question.

Highways

A new highways contract is due to start in May 23, which seems a long way off but isn't, and extensive work is being done to ensure the new contract delivers improves the highway verge to verge not just the tarmac.

Covid

With schools returning there is a chance that cases will rise, and schools have contingency plans. As you will be aware there is a debate re vaccination of 12-16 year olds Greater social interaction in recent weeks has increased infection rates with Wealden being just below the national average. Having said that we do need to learn to live with Covid and get "back to as normal as possible. 87% of Wealden residents over 16 have had one jab and 80% two jabs.

New Crowborough Police Station

Pleased to attend the opening of the new Crowborough Police station last week. This is the refurbished old town council offices and replaces the old station down Crowborough Hill which was not only run down but few knew where it was! The old site is easily converted to residential and will cover the majority of the cost of the new station.

Solar Together

HOMEOWNERS in East Sussex are being invited to register for a solar panel scheme which could save them money and help cut their carbon emissions.

Solar Together Sussex, a group buying scheme supported by Sussex councils including East Sussex County Council, will allow residents to buy high-quality solar panels and battery storage at a competitive price.

The scheme, which could help residents reduce their annual carbon emissions by around a tonne each year, will support the county council's efforts to help tackle climate change.

The council has cut its own carbon emissions by more than 60 per cent since 2008 and hopes to inspire and support residents to make changes that will help East Sussex become a more environmentally friendly county.

Signed:

Date:

Households will be able to register free of charge for the initiative, run in partnership with group purchasing experts iChoosr, before September 28.

Following the registration period, an auction will be held with pre-vetted installers, to identify the most competitive bid to supply solar panels to all households who have registered an interest.

Residents will then have until November 26 to decide whether to accept the recommendation and quote and continue with installation.

Residents who have already invested in solar panels can opt for ‘retrofit’ battery storage to get more from the renewable energy they generate and increase their independence from the grid.

More information about the scheme and details on how to register an interest can be found at <https://solartogether.co.uk/eastsussex/home>

New Director of Children’s Services

Alison Jeffrey joined the Council on Sept 1st to replace Stuart Gallimore who retired at the end of July.

Bob Standley Sep 2021

Signed:

Date:

APPENDIX TWO

District Councillor's report to Frant Parish Council Sept 2021

Performance Report

The latest performance report (went to Cabinet last Wednesday) shows the vast majority of KPI's on target.

Items in the report include

Proposals to invest and improve the leisure centre in Crowborough including new learner pool.

The successful launch of the new tourism brand Explore Wealden

The investigation of low emission vehicles for the waste fleet across the waste partnership. Challenging in rural areas but more practical in urban areas such as Hastings

The shortlisting of the Sussex Weald Home's development of the Woodpecker View site in Crowborough for First Time Buyer Best Small development 2021 award. Woodpecker View was delivered on time met the aim for smaller properties for sale and delivered a surplus for the Council. It also met the affordable housing target. Sussex Weald Homes is owned by the Wealden District Council to provide new smaller housing for sale. Further sites are being investigated.

The report also gives information on waste collection

Whilst the amount of recycling increased in tonnage the % fell slightly given rise in residual waste presumably caused by the lockdown and continued home working. Wealden still has the highest recycling rate in East Sussex.

Garden waste has seen significant increases in tonnage owing to the warm but wet summer.

Planning

The Wealden Local Housing Needs Assessment, which will assist in informing the Local Plan with regard to housing size and mix has been published.

The report identifies a "need" for 519 rented affordable and 335 AHO (Affordable Market Ownership). However, this figure is caveated by any viability assessment. At almost 70% of the housing target this is unlikely to pass any viability test.

Local Plan is still on schedule with a draft plan early in 2022.

I have continued to make representations to Govt re the overall housing numbers for Wealden especially with regard to the Affordability Factor uplift which is illogical.

The next parish planning cluster is on September 30th at 2pm

Finance

The first quarter outturn prediction for the year is for a reduced deficit of 69K for the year. (budget £172k deficit.) Given it is the first quarter numbers will change.

Signed:

Date:

Solar Together

Please see detail in County report – WDC are also promoting the scheme.

Bob Standley Sep 2021

Signed:

Date:

APPENDIX THREE

Report for Frant Parish Council 15th Sept. 2021

District Wide

As part of the New Local Plan process there has to be an assessment of Wealden's Local Housing Needs, and this has been completed recently.

The standard calculation for Wealden's annual housing need amounts to 1,225 dwellings per year, compared to the 875 average completions over the last 10 years. The assessment shows that of these 1,225 per year, 854 need to be affordable (519 for rent; 335 to buy) that is 69%.

For both open market housing and affordable housing 70% of the requirement is in the 2 & 3 bedroom sized homes and for rented affordable housing 70% need to be 1 & 2 bedroom homes.

There is a huge amount of detail in the report which can be found at;

<https://www.wealden.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/planning-policy-evidence-base/housing/>

Wealden District Council

The Council has organised some "Carbon Literacy" training for all the Council Members this week which I am looking forward to.

I'm pleased that this is being organised as many of the members are way behind the knowledge curve regarding environmental issues, and it's a shame it wasn't done 2 years ago!

There is another "Solar Together" scheme across Sussex which the Council is promoting to residents through the website and "My Alerts".

This is the group purchasing scheme that brings residents together to buy PV solar panels and/or battery storage administered by iChooser.

The first auction in 2020 resulted in about 20 households accross Wealden in installing panels and I hope that this second run will be taken up to a much greater extent.

Residents can find out more on the website here;

<https://www.wealden.gov.uk/news/joining-forces-to-generate-renewable-energy/> until 30th September.

Planning Issues.

The linked applications regarding Warren Farm and Strawberry Farm continue to be stalled at the moment while the Planning officers obtain a report from an independent source regarding the cost and viability of the restorative development of Warren Farm.

Signed:

Date:

With regard to the “forestry building” that has appeared in the woods on Broadwater Forest. This is technically in breach of planning regulations and the owners have been requested either to remove it or apply for planning permission for a forestry building retrospectively.

The enforcement team has told us that it is now being dismantled.

The next meeting of the North Weald Parish Planning Cluster will be on Wednesday 22nd September on the online Teams system.

I would encourage at least one Councillor to attend as this is your opportunity to feed in your opinions with regard to all planning matters, but particularly on the developing new Wealden Local Plan.

Environment, Economic Development and Waste.

At a recent meeting of the Advisory group for this portfolio holder we heard updates on progress with several aspects of the Climate Action Plan.

The Riding Sunbeams project to link the Cuckmere Community Solar farm to the National Rail is progressing. They have received a government grant of £2.5m through the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) which guarantees that it will go ahead and it is planned to link the cables at Selmeston, which will hopefully happen by March 2022 when the solar farm will start construction.

The Plans for EV charging points in WDC car parks has progressed to the point of a short-list of car parks suitable for the first tranche, although the specification to be included in the tender document still has not been drawn up and as I have said before we are unlikely to see any EV charging points installed in WDC carparks before Spring 2023.

We had a very comprehensive update from the Housing Service regarding insulation and retrofitting of the Council’s Social Housing. This will be massively expensive (£60m) and nobody seems to know how it will be funded.

There is a hope that the government will provide most of the money.

There are also plans for the government to provide funds for Local Councils to assist private homeowners to retrofit their home, but this is to be done on a bidding system, so Local Authorities will have to compete with each other for an inadequate amount of funding.

At least I can report some good news on the waste collection service.

The bin collections have been on target and the numbers of households signing up for the green-waste collections is good, comparable to last year at around 35,000.

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.

Cllr Keith Obbard,
Wealden District Member for Withyham Ward.

Cllr.keith.obbard@wealden.gov.uk

Signed:

Date: