

FRANT PARISH COUNCIL

clerk@frant-pc.gov.uk / 07903 661581 / www.frant-pc.gov.uk

THE MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT BELLS YEW GREEN VILLAGE HALL ON WEDNESDAY 19 JANUARY AT 7.30PM

Present: Cllr Howell - Chairman
Cllrs Crookshank, Macdonald-Brown, Park, Rutherford, Steadman
County and District Cllr B. Standley
County Cllr G. Taylor

Mr P. Payne
Mrs L. Jackaman

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

None.

2. Receive apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs Best and Luther and District Cllr Obbard.

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 17th November as a true and accurate record

The Minutes were **approved**.

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

- The Clerk confirmed the submission of the Council's representations concerning the expansion of Gatwick Airport; and
- the Clerk confirmed she had liaised with Mr Payne about the proposed village sign.

6. Public Forum (time limit to be extended at the discretion of the Chairman)

Mrs Jackaman expressed the growing concern amongst parents of children at the school in Frant about the hazards associated with walking along the narrow pavement between the Abergavenny PH car park and the bottom of Church Lane.

(Cllr Howell brought forward item 11.1)

11.1 Consider an ESCC feasibility study for improving safety of path along the A267 near Church Lane

Mrs Jackaman referred to the narrowness of the pavement, without railings, next to the fast-moving A267 and queried what measures could be taken. She also asked whether the VAS sign on the hill into Frant could revert to a school warning sign at peak hours. Cllr Rutherford said that the VAS was supposed to do this but was faulty in this respect.

The Clerk noted that East Sussex Highways had visited the site after the recent SLR meeting and explained that it did not meet their benchmark score for it to be considered for further detailed

appraisal and consideration as part of their Capital Programme. A feasibility study was suggested as an option.

Cllr Howell suggested writing to Mr Rupert Clubb at ESCC, requesting that he visits the site at peak times to see exactly the problem parents and their children encounter here. This was **agreed** and Cllr Standley asked to be told when the letter had been sent so that he could follow it up. **Action: Clerk**

(Cllr Taylor joined the meeting at 7.37pm)

It was agreed that safety measures could be incorporated into the design and provision of the new pedestrian crossing, rather than commission a feasibility study. Cllr Howell confirmed that she had spoken with Chris Bending about the use of the council's CIL funds before their 'expiry' date. Mr Bending had said that whether or not the expiry date could be breached would be at the discretion of the Leader and Deputy Leader of Wealden DC. Cllr Rutherford said that, given it was Wealden DC who had included a condition that a crossing be delivered, the Parish Council should ask for a contribution from Wealden-held CIL funds.

Mr Payne spoke next about the idea of a village sign. He noted that a petition had received a large number of signatures following an article he placed in Parish News. He suggested it be considered further at a public meeting. Cllr Howell agreed and said it could be discussed at the Annual Meeting on 24th May (*post meeting note: date of the Annual Meeting has been changed to 12th May*).

Mr Payne also raised the Queen's Jubilee and referred to historical documents about the planting of commemorative trees and the lighting of a beacon for the Queen's Coronation in 1953. It was agreed to check the Parish Council records for details of these trees. **Action: Clerk**

7. Receive reports from County and District Councillors

District

Cllr Howell noted that reports from both Cllr Standley and Cllr Obbard had been circulated prior to the meeting (Appendices 1 and 2 refer) and invited questions. Cllr Park asked Cllr Standley about the housing figures. He responded that Mr Gove was ruminating on the issues raised by Cllr Standley at their recent meeting, notably about whether to use 2014 or 2018 population data (the latter being preferable to Wealden DC) and affordability. Cllr Standley said that Mr Gove understood the theory that extant planning permissions, amounting to some 7,500 possible houses in Wealden, should count toward the 5-year land supply, not least to avoid land banking.

County

Cllr Taylor referred to a recent motion to ESCC to ask Cabinet to ban the spraying of glyphosate and other herbicides in its treatment of unwanted foliage on ESCC-owned land. She said that following discussions, it was agreed to put forward streets for piloting different methods of getting rid of weeds.

Cllr Standley confirmed that ESCC had been judged as 'good' in terms of its efforts vis à vis climate change. With reference to the capital budget, he also confirmed that some £31 million would be available for road maintenance, particularly patching.

8. Finance

8.1 Approve the accounts payable

The payments, as follows, were **approved**.

Item no.	Payee	Item	Amount
1* Shaded already paid	ESCC	Two speed surveys: A267/B2099 Inv 8005064191	£864.00
2	N.McGregor- Gould	Nov invoice Bus shelters and park sprays	£350.00
3	PCC Frant with Eridge	Hall hire Nov & Dec 2021 (The Stables)	£48.00
4	Imago	Dial2Drive for Nov 2021 (Henry Smith EMR)	£103.60
5	Employees	Staff costs	£2,006.83
6	N.McGregor- Gould	Dec invoice Bus shelters and park sprays	£380.00
7	Netwise	Inv 2344 Hosting package	£420.00
8	Imago	Dial2Drive for Dec 2021 (Henry Smith EMR)	£67.79
9	Employees	Staff costs	£1,980.11

8.2 Approve the bank reconciliation

The bank reconciliation, as follows, was noted and **approved**.

Date: 19/01/2022

Frant Parish Council

Page 1

Time: 12:33

Bank Reconciliation Statement as at 19/01/2022
for Cashbook 1 - Current Bank A/c

User: CLERK

<u>Bank Statement Account Name (s)</u>	<u>Statement Date</u>	<u>Page No</u>	<u>Balances</u>
Current A/c	19/01/2022		400.00
Business Reserve	19/01/2022		126,048.55
			<u>126,448.55</u>
<u>Unpresented Cheques (Minus)</u>		<u>Amount</u>	
01/04/2021 BACS SSALC		144.00	
			<u>144.00</u>
			126,304.55
<u>Receipts not Banked/Cleared (Plus)</u>			
		0.00	
			<u>0.00</u>
			126,304.55
		Balance per Cash Book is :-	126,304.55
		Difference is :-	0.00

9. Consider the forward budget

Councillors discussed various aspects of the proposed budget and asked the Clerk about different allocations. It was agreed that in some categories, the amount proposed in year 3 could be spread out over years 1 and 2. Cllr Park queried the allocation for surveys and the Clerk said that there may be a need to consult via post about the new crossing or, in future years, about the developing Parish Plan. Cllr Macdonald-Brown suggested that Henry Smith funds be once again used to support the exercise class for the elderly, which had been recently revived. He noted the cost at £500 from February to December. This was **agreed**.

The provision of defibrillators in the Parish was raised and it was agreed to put this on the next agenda.

Cllr Rutherford referred to the Clerk's budget report and said a key issue for the Parish Council was delivering the pedestrian crossing, the cost of which was likely going to be around £200,000, probably more. It was agreed that a combination of using CIL money and raising the precept over three years to pay for the crossing (in addition to the substantial funds already committed by the developer). Cllr Rutherford asked whether the increase in the precept could be explained to parishioners in the same way that Council Tax is broken-down into its constituent parts. Cllr Standley did not think this would be possible in the official document produced by Wealden DC; however, it was **agreed** that the Parish Council would circulate this information in a format to be agreed.

10. Approve the precept for 2022/23

Based on the discussion at item 9, Cllr Howell proposed a precept level of £81,300 for 2022 to 2023. Cllr Rutherford seconded this proposal and councillors **voted unanimously in favour**.

(Cllrs Standley and Taylor left the meeting at 8.15pm)

11. Highways

11.2 Approve quote for replacement fingerpost

The quote from Jakk UK was **approved**.

12. Green Spaces

12.1 Select quotation for boundary works to new green in Eridge

The three quotes received were considered. Councillors decided that the quote from Mr Bowie represented the best value for money and this was **approved**.

12.2 Consider changes to the cutting regime in Frant and approve quote for maintaining the cricket pitch

The changes to the cutting regime were noted and the quote from Orchard Landscapes to maintain the cricket pitch and outfield was **approved**. It was **agreed** that Cllr Steadman would liaise with Mr Huskisson to produce the revisions to the Council's contract with Orchard Landscapes. Cllr Steadman referred to the improvements to the diversity in species noted in the recent ecology report.

Action: CS

12.3 Consider PTA's request to create a further bonfire to deal with remaining material

It was **agreed** that the PTA could have one further bonfire but, after that, any remaining debris should be removed manually.

12.4 Review quote for repairs to play equipment in Frant

Following advice from RoSPA in their annual inspection, the quote provided by Playdale (the providers of the equipment) to carry out the necessary repairs was **approved**.

13. Communications and Events

13.1 Queen's Jubilee

Cllr Howell referred to an email circulated by Mrs Steadman, arranging a meeting of interested local residents to discuss how to mark the Queen's Jubilee. Councillors said they had not received this email. Cllr Howell said she had arranged meetings for the Parish Council with The George and The Brecknock and would also approach the Abergavenny. It was agreed that the Parish Council needed to oversee any events to ensure that the necessary insurance and licences were being obtained. It was suggested that the village hall and the school should be invited to be involved; ideas were raised, such as giving each resident a commemorative packet of seeds, or similar, and ensuring the elderly and less mobile could also join in.

14. Planning

14.1 Wealden Local Plan – rolling item

Cllr Park confirmed she would attend the next Parish Cluster meeting organised by Wealden DC on 12th February. She noted that these meetings represented a good opportunity for the Parish Council to raise its concerns and put markers in the sand for what it envisaged for the parish but that that these needed to be clarified and firmed up. Cllr Howell said that she represents the Parish Council's views where necessary, including about the encroachment onto the parish's borders. This was noted and it was **agreed** to have a session during the next planning meeting to consider the position the Parish Council wished to take at these cluster meetings and into the future, as the development of the Local Plan progresses.

14.2 To approve the Minutes of the Planning Meeting held on 4th January 2022

The Minutes were **approved**.

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

- WD/2021/2824/F – Barelands Farm, Bells Yew Green Road, Frant, TN3 9BD

Demolition of an existing agricultural livestock barn (9m x 8m) and replacement with 24m x 12m agricultural barn for livestock.

The Council agreed that there was a lack of justification for the proposed, much larger barn noting that the acreage of the farm had not increased. It was also noted that the location of the barn matched that of the previously proposed detached dwelling that was dismissed at appeal. It was questioned whether, in the future, this barn, if permitted, would become subject to an application to convert it to a dwelling. It was **agreed** to object.

15. Chairman's announcements & correspondence for noting

Cllr Howell said she had been approached by the village hall in Frant to put a list of first-aiders and their contact details. This was discussed and it was **agreed** to do so (subject to the first-aiders consenting to this), but that any list should caution that the emergency services should be called in the first instance.

Action: Clerk

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

Cllr Crookshank said that he and Cllr Park had attended the Bells Yew Green Village Hall AGM. He gave a brief summary, noting that the hall's finances were well run and very healthy, with a reserve of some £10,000. He acknowledged the time and effort that both Mr and Mrs Wallis had put into reviving the hall's prospects.

Cllr Crookshank noted that Mrs McGregor-Gould had set up a committee at the Brecknock Arms PH to make plans for the Jubilee in June. He also said that she was intending to provide electric charging points in the pub's car park.

Lastly, Cllr Crookshank said that there was new gardener now in place to maintain the bund around the green in Bells Yew Green, at the same cost to the Council as the previous gardener.

Cllr Howell said that she had received a report from a resident that the solar light in Rushlye Close had been operating very well throughout the winter and there had not been any problems with it.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 8.50pm.

Action	By whom
Write to Mr Rupert Clubb at ESCC, requesting that he visits the junction of Church Lane and the A267 at peak times to see exactly the problem parents and their children encounter here.	Clerk
Search PC files for record of tree(s) planted for the Queen's Coronation in 1953.	Clerk
Prepare a list of first aiders that could be given to Frant Village Hall.	Clerk
Liaise with Mr Huskisson to produce the revisions to the Council's contract with Orchard Landscapes.	CS

District and County Report Jan 2022

District

Budget

The proposals for council tax were circulated for consultation in December. The proposed increase is £5 per year (9.61pence per week) for a Band D household. Band H would be 19.23pence pr week with the lowest Band A at 6.34p a week. The percentage increase is 2.53%.

As with household budgets the council is under pressure from inflation with the refuse collection service expected to rise by 5% from April 1st. This service alone will cost approx. £300k a year extra which is similar to the total extra revenue raised by the council tax increase.

The financial performance in the current year will show a surplus . Additional income from garden waste collection and increased numbers of planning applications boosted income.

Performance Report

Council on target with reference to the Corporate Plan

Waste

The waste service has performed well, despite the pandemic, fuel shortages etc. The missed bin rate across the partnership (Hastings, Rother and Wealden) is running at 30 missed bins per 100,000.

Recycling rate at Wealden is still highest in East Sussex.

Covid 19

Grants to local businesses now total £65m. The careful scrutiny of applications, whilst expediting delivery, has saved over £1m in fraudulent or erroneous applications.

Local Plan

The council's view that, given our constraints, the standard methodology gives housing numbers that are too high continues to be made to Govt. With Nus Ghani MP help I had meetings with Michael Gove and Rishi Sunak in the last 6 weeks. The Michael Gove meeting centred on the Local Plan and the wish for more flexibility in the numbers. The conversation with the Chancellor covered a wide range of topics including planning.

County

Budget

As previously reported the challenge for ESCC is the expense of Adult and Children's social care particularly the former. The council tax proposed increase is 1.99% but with an additional adult social care precept of 2.5% giving a total of 4.49% . This represents a £1.33 per week increase for a typical Band D (2.66 band H and 0.87 per week for the lowest Band A.)

The budget is a balanced budget with no cost reductions and in fact reverses two service reductions for postponed from previous years within children's services.

The pressures on SEN education continue and although 2 new school have been built (and 2 more to follow) they are immediately fully subscribed.

Extra funding has been allocated to highways with an emphasis on patching rather than just pot-hole filling.

The budget includes a 10 year capital programme and commitments on climate change.

Children's Book Challenge

ESCC have launched a challenge for 8-11 year olds to read 6 books from the shortlist and then vote for their favourite author. There will interactive events with authors and a final award ceremony to the most popular author.

Holiday Food and Fun scheme.

This follows on from the successful summer scheme when 3600 children participated. The December scheme, again open to children with FSM, involved 50 organisations across the county.

Solar Together Sussex Scheme

This saw more than 7600 households register for the scheme on the solar together website Separately ESCC are fitting 750 solar panels to county buildings by Spring 2022.

Environmental Project Funding

ESCC in partnership with Crowdfunder are offering a total of 25K match funding through Projects that Matter competition. The 6 projects will receive match funding if they reach their targets. All projects relate solving problems caused by climate change.

RWS Jan 2022

District Report Jan 2022

District Wide

Work continues on the Wealden Local Plan.

The Local Plan Team is drawing up the details that will go in the new Draft Local Plan document for an 8 week consultation period starting in the next month or two.

The next North Parish Cluster meeting will be on Friday 11th February on Teams at 2pm and I very much hope that at least one Frant Councillor will be able to attend.

The District Wide consultation on the raising of the Council Tax by 2.5% for next year 2022/23 is still running until 20th January.

This is equivalent to £5 per year on a band "D" property for the WDC element of the Council Tax. This has been decided upon by the Cabinet and is expected to be confirmed at the February Full Council meeting.

<https://www.wealden.gov.uk/consultations/budget-2022-23>

The Council is supporting the "Street Learning" free education courses for any resident over 19 at Eastbourne and Hailsham centres. This is being run in conjunction with the Adult College for Rural East Sussex (ACRES) organisation. www.wealden.gov.uk/streetlearning

Covid Related matters

The Government Grants for Hospitality and Leisure business are still available through the Council until the end of February.

The Test & Trace Support Payment scheme for a one-off £500 grant will continue until 31st March. About 370 people have received this grant in Wealden.

The Household Support Fund for help with food and energy bills for families on certain benefits has helped about 540 families in Wealden, but the funding has now all been spent.

All the details of these schemes can be found on the WDC website, just follow the Covid links on front page.

What with Christmas and the New Year I don't have a great deal else to report, but 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
07941 578 427