

FRANT PARISH COUNCIL

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DRAFT MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT ERIDGE VILLAGE HALL ON 23rd MARCH 2022 AT 7.30PM

Present: Cllr Howell - Chairman
Cllrs Crookshank, Macdonald-Brown, Park, Best
County and District Cllr B. Standley
District Cllr K. Obbard

Mr P. Payne
One resident

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, Luther and County Cllr Taylor.

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 23rd February 2022 as a true and accurate record
The Minutes were **approved**.

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

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

Mr Payne said that defibrillators were now required in schools and, possibly in the future, in some public buildings. Cllr Howell said that the school in Frant was a Church of England school so would fall outside the Council's remit.

Mr Payne also again raised the suggestion of a village sign for Frant. He said that the Historical Society of Ottawa had been consulted and were happy to help and had confirmed that Colonel By did not have any links with slavery. The local resident noted that the Society had asked that publicity be given locally to their support, for example, in Parish News.

Cllr Howell confirmed that planning permission was not needed for a sign. She asked that Mr Payne supply the Council with the petition. She reiterated that the decision to erect a sign was a matter for the Council, as Trustees of the green, and that it would be discussed in due course; it would also be raised at the Annual Meeting.

Cllr Howell informed the local resident that work was being done to restore the old BT phoneboxes in Frant and Bells Yew Green.

7. Receive reports from County and District Councillors

Councillors confirmed they had received Cllr Taylor's report, circulated prior to the meeting (Appendix 1). Cllr Standley, referring to this report, said that the last sentence was not accurate because the District Council *must* take into account County's comments on planning applications because it is a statutory consultee.

Cllr Park enquired as to what support there would be for Ukrainian refugees. Cllr Standley said there had been some government guidance but it was not very detailed. He said that both the County and District Councils would be pooling their resources and looking at ways they could support refugees, including in terms of school place provision, temporary classrooms, language support, etc. He suggested that the Head of Housing could be contacted in the first instance and this could be signposted on the website.

Action: Clerk

Cllr Standley noted that the County Council has a contract with a Russian gas provider, which provides gas to the county's sheltered homes. He said the County Council would like to withdraw from the contract but until the government passes legislation to protect from being sued over breach of contract, it had to stay engaged with it. He also noted there might be consequences for those residents in sheltered housing from withdrawing from the contract, such as an increase in cost for their gas supply. Cllr Park noted that the doubling in the cost of purchasing oil for heating and cooking would affect local residents in the parish.

Cllr Howell said she was receiving a number of complaints about the road surface in Bunny Lane. Cllr Standley said he had already reported it to Highways and it would be inspected shortly.

8. Highways

8.1 Approve content of explanatory pamphlet for pedestrian crossing

The pamphlet was **approved**.

9. Finance

9.1 Approve the accounts payable

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

| Item no. | Payee | Item | Amount |
|----------|-------------------|--|-----------|
| 1 | ES Highways | Install new lighting column P02 | £3,209.93 |
| 2 | ESCC | Painting of all lighting columns | £1,130.40 |
| 3 | IMAGO | Dial2Drive Feb 22 | £201.97 |
| 4 | N. McGregor-Gould | Feb and Mar 22 Bus shelters | £255.00 |
| 5 | Staff | Feb and Mar | £2,663.25 |
| 6 | SLCC | Subscription | £186.00 |
| 7 | Wealden DC | Fee for application to discharge condition for new Eridge green | £116.00 |

9.2 Approve the bank reconciliation

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

| <u>Bank Statement Account Name (s)</u> | <u>Statement Date</u> | <u>Page No</u> | <u>Balances</u> |
|--|-----------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Current A/c | 23/03/2022 | | 400.00 |
| Business Reserve | 23/03/2022 | | 119,497.31 |
| | | | <hr/> 119,897.31 |
| <u>Unpresented Cheques (Minus)</u> | | <u>Amount</u> | |
| 01/04/2021 BACS SSALC | | 144.00 | |
| 17/02/2022 BACS ESCC | | 864.00 | |
| 02/03/2022 BACS Manor Farm Stud | | 420.00 | |
| | | | <hr/> 1,428.00 |
| | | | 118,469.31 |
| <u>Receipts not Banked/Cleared (Plus)</u> | | | |
| | | 0.00 | |
| | | | <hr/> 0.00 |
| | | | 118,469.31 |
| | | Balance per Cash Book is :- | 118,469.31 |
| | | Difference is :- | 0.00 |

9.3 Note changes to staff salaries

The Clerk said that there had been an uplift across all salary grades, back dated to April 2021. This was noted.

10. Green spaces

10.1 Consider placing tree trunks on green at apex of A267 and the Bells Yew Green Road

The Council **agreed** to placing one tree trunk in this location to deter vehicles from mounting the kerb and the green.

10.2 Discuss use of parish field for a PTFA Father's Day event

This was **approved** with the proviso that the field would be fully cleared after the event.

10.3 Consider response to ESCC's proposed reduction in rural grass cutting / rural verges as wildlife corridors

It was **agreed** that the response would be in favour provided the verges around junctions were regularly kept cut back in order to ensure sightlines were maintained for road users.

10.4 Consider response to NALC's Policy Consultation Briefing on DEFRA Consultation on its Response to the Landscapes [National Park & AONB Governance] Review

Cllr Park said she supported it in principle but considered that there should be more recognition of the consequences building right up to the AONB boundary can have for communities and the landscape beyond. The Clerk said it was almost a 'setting' issue. Cllr Best said that this would require a change in planning legislation. The Clerk suggested it could be that development control departments be encouraged to be more sympathetic when considering applications for

development up to AONB boundaries, notably when the Parish Council returns its comments. It was **agreed** to respond in support.

At this point, Cllr Crookshank raised the issue of safety in the playground in Frant, noting that he had been approached by three people who no longer took their grandchildren to the playground because of its proximity to the road. He suggested a hedge could be installed around the equipment. Cllr Howell said the Council would need to take legal advice on this and it would be put on the next agenda.

11. Communications and Events

11.1 Discuss proposed Jubilee celebrations

11.2.1 Update on arrangements

Cllr Park gave a summary of the arrangements for the street party in Bells Yew Green. She asked if the Council could buy 150m of bunting and this was **agreed**. She also enquired as to insurance requirements for the event. The Clerk said she had received a response from the Council's insurers and would circulate this.

Cllr Park said it had been suggested that people be able to use the railway station car park for free on the day, with drivers putting a special Council voucher in their windscreen. Network Rail had not responded and it was suggested that Cllr Luther may have some useful contacts following her work with the railways.

Cllr Howell summarised the arrangements to date for Frant and noted that the meetings had been well attended by residents.

11.2.2 Consider spend/gifts from Parish Council

It was **agreed** to purchase 150 jute bags and seeds to give to children in the parish.

11.2.3 Tree planting

Cllr Howell said the intention was to buy 2-3 fruit trees to plant behind the school, inside the parish field boundary. Cllr Park suggested planting early pollinators.

11.2.4 Selection of design for posters and flyers

The Clerk said that children at Frant Primary School were taking part in a competition to create the design for the posters and flyers. Two designs would be chosen and it was **agreed** to buy both winners a £20 voucher each.

11.2.5 Consider giving a donation for the celebrations in Eridge

It was **agreed** to give the sum of £200 toward the purchase of a flagpole for the village. Cllr Best suggested a ceremony to formally open the new Eridge green be arranged for the autumn and he would contact Strutt and Parker about this.

12. Planning

12.1 Wealden Local Plan – rolling item

Cllr Park said she would be attending the next North Parish Cluster meeting.

12.2 To consider licence and planning applications received and make recommendations:
- **WD/2022/0060/FR and 0061/LB – Stable Cottage, Bells Yew Green Road, Frant, TN3 9BH**
Retention of garden shed and installation of new air source heat pump

The Council supported this application.

WD/2022/0359/F – Edgend, Shernfold Park, Frant, TN3 9DL

Erection of a small garden pavilion, including some storage, a gazebo structure and hard and soft landscaping.

Overall, the Council did not favour the design of the proposed and queried the need for it. On balance, the Council agreed not to support the application given this and its sensitive location in the AONB and Conservation Area.

WD/2022/0089/F – Plot 1, Land adjacent to Hargate House, Tunbridge Wells, TN2 5LU

Phased development comprising the creation of a new vehicular access (phase 1) and erection of a single residential dwelling with associated landscaping and infrastructure (phase 2)

The Clerk noted that this was an exact re-submission of an already approved application, in order for the applicant to satisfy procedures and criteria relating self-help funding.

13. Chairman’s announcements & correspondence for noting

None.

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

Cllr Crookshank said he been approached by a local resident in Frant about the problem of dog walkers, mostly coming in off the field, depositing their dog bags in the bin outside The George. This led to it often overflowing. It was **agreed** in principle that a dog bin could be provided but its location would need to be carefully thought out. It was **agreed** that placing a bin on the street side of the church was unlikely to be considered. While a position by the field gate was suggested, the Clerk said that Wealden DC would be unlikely to agree to walking the distance through the church yard to empty it. It was **agreed** that Cllr Crookshank would relay this to the local resident and the Clerk would liaise with Wealden DC.

Action: SC/Clerk

Cllr Park said that the village hall in Bells Yew Green was considering replacing the main doors and had quotes of between £3-7,000 and enquired whether the Council could help toward this. Cllr Howell asked that firm details of the quote be given to the Council to look at.

Action: DP

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 8.20 pm.

Actions

| Action | By whom |
|---|----------------|
| Post details of help for those supporting refugees on website. | Clerk |
| Liaise with local resident about new dog bin in Frant and speak with Wealden DC about best location for it. | SC/Clerk |
| Provide Council with quote for new doors at BYG village hall. | DP |

Appendix One

County Council Report from Cllr Georgia Taylor

Roads: You may be aware that the works programme for the year will be finalised by the end of this month. At that point Councillors will be given the list of planned works, which tend to be the larger scale works (not things like individual potholes that are repaired on an ongoing basis). While there is no formal process for Councillors to be involved in the decision making, we do get to put forward roads for urgent attention. I have requested that the A26 by Eridge Green should be considered, probably on both sides of the Parish boundary, as well as several others in the division I cover.

Climate: The most recent IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) report can be found here: [Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability | Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability \(ipcc.ch\)](#). As the summary of this report is quite technical here are a couple of articles that summarise the main points: [Five key points in the IPCC report on climate change impacts and adaptation \(theconversation.com\)](#) and [Five Key Takeaways From the New IPCC Climate Risk Report - Bloomberg](#)

The main message is that we are not doing enough to stop further global heating, people are already suffering all around the world, ecosystems are being damaged irreversibly (e.g. coral reefs) and our window of opportunity is closing. Whilst some of the messages are disturbing and we may not wish to face them, it is imperative that we all work together to support each other and face up to the serious situation we are in.

I attended an LGA Climate conference last week and the big message for local government is that we need to urgently tackle emissions from housing and transport. Both house building and household running are a major source of emissions; and building on green field sites is damaging nature. We need to minimise the building of new homes, and instead adapt existing buildings and empty buildings – both to reduce emission, but also to protect us from hotter weather and flood risks. We need to stop road building, and we should encourage reduction of traffic and increase public transport and active travel dramatically.

Planning and Development: We had a training about the Transport Implications of Development Proposals. If there are any developments in the parish that have access or road safety issues you can bring those to the County Councillor or officers who will take into account residents' and the PC concerns. The District Council doesn't have to take into account the recommendations of the County Council on these issues, but they are consulted as a formal part of the process.

Appendix Two

District Council Report from Cllr Keith Obbard

District Wide

Work continues on the Wealden Local Plan.

The Officers are working hard on the evidence base for the local plan. There have been a few more areas of land submitted for the SHELAA and these are now on the Council's website.

The Final document still has not been completed because of the question over the housing numbers calculation and everything is waiting for a pronouncement from the Secretary of State Michael Gove MP.

Wealden Cabinet

At a recent Cabinet meeting the results of the biennial Residents Satisfaction Survey were presented.

This asked questions such as "How satisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?" The survey was last done in 2019, and almost all the overall scores showed an improvement since then and it also compares this year's overall results against the national average, and this also shows that Wealden scores higher than the national average on every question. Drilling down into the details to compare this year with 2019 the survey shows that whilst residents are more satisfied with the rubbish collection and street cleaning, the services such as planning and council tax collection are less well thought of than before.

Nationwide

The WDC website has a page dedicated to the Ukrainian Refugee Crisis;
[Ukrainian Refugee Crisis - Wealden District Council - Wealden District Council](#)

It carries the government information on what they are doing and also where residents can find out ways that they can donate or help. As well as a link to the housing team if anyone wishes to offer accommodation for the refugee resettlement scheme.

The Government scheme to give a £150 rebate of Council Tax to help with rising energy costs is underway.

Residents living in Council Tax band A-D properties are eligible, and if you pay by Direct Debit the Council will pay you automatically sometime in May or June.

Anyone who pays their Council Tax by cash or cheque will need to apply for the refund, but the simplest thing to do is to sign up for a direct debit as soon as possible.

There may be a discretionary refund for people living in Properties in band E – H.

Bin Lorry Dispute

The contractor Biffa are in talks with the UNITE trade union over pay and conditions at the present time, but the GMB union has announced that it will be balloting their members between 11th – 25th March over possible industrial action.

We are hopeful that an agreement can be reached without the resort to a strike.

If there is anything specific you wish me to follow up, I will do my best to do so. You can email or phone on the contacts below.

Cllr Keith Obbard,
Wealden District Member for Withyham Ward.
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