

FRANT PARISH COUNCIL

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THE MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT ERIDGE VILLAGE HALL ON WEDNESDAY 23 FEBRUARY AT 7.30PM

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

Mr Christopher Nevill
Mr P. Payne

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

None.

2. Receive apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs Best, Luther 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 19th January 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 that a letter had been sent to Mr Clubb and a reply received from one of his colleagues. The Parish Council considered next steps.
- The Clerk said she had not been able to find details of the tree planted in 1953 for the Queen's Coronation in the Council's records.
- The Clerk said she had drawn up a list of first aiders in the parish but that she had not received a response from them as to whether they were happy to have their name and number on display in the village hall.
- Cllr Steadman confirmed that the revisions to the Council's contract with Orchard Landscapes were underway.

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

Mr Nevill spoke to the Council about the Queen's Canopy initiative and noted a series of tree-planting events across Sussex, including at four hospices, with the Duchess of Cornwall present at one, at Pashley Manor, in Eridge Park and in Eastbourne, using cherry trees donated by the Japanese government; in addition, several more events were planned, at the Spa Valley Railway and Glyndebourne, among others. The main launch would be at the Heathfield Show on 28th May.

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Mr Nevill also noted that a woodland had been nominated for 'ancient woodland' designation. The tree planting ceremony in the Parish, proposed to be behind the primary school, was discussed. Mr Nevill said that the Sussex Wildlife Trust had a list of suitable trees; elm, beech and pear trees were considered to be possibilities. Mr Nevill said he would invite the Lord Lieutenant but noted his busy schedule.

Mr Payne asked the Parish Council to confirm they had agreed to install a village sign. Cllr Howell said that this was not the case and a discussion had yet to be had about this. Cllr Rutherford supported this noting that the Parish Council had not yet agreed to a village sign. Cllr Crookshank said he had serious concerns about using imagery connected with Colonel By, given some of the negative history associated with him.

Mr Payne noted there was no copyright attached to using details of George Smart or Colonel By. He said a petition for a village sign had been circulated. He went on to say he had discussed the project with a metal worker and a local carpenter. In terms of planning permission, which he expected would be required, he asked if the Parish Council would bear the application fee of £206. Permission would be needed by October to be able to install the sign within the Jubilee year and suggested that applications were taking some 4-5 months to determine by Wealden District Council. Cllr Standley considered that this was unlikely to be the case.

Cllr Howell thanked Mr Payne for all his hard work and said that the Parish Council now needed to debate the issue. She said she would speak to officers at Wealden about whether planning permission was required.

Action: JH

While discussing the Jubilee, Cllr Howell said she had met with the Vicar and, given there appeared to be little appetite for a bonfire or to hire a beacon at some expense, it was suggested that a light could be fixed to the church spire instead and lit at the appointed time. This was **agreed**.

(Mr Nevill left the meeting)

7. Receive reports from County and District Councillors

Cllr Taylor, referring to the recent storms, noted that around 150 trees had fallen across the county with Highways working continuously to clear roads.

Cllr Taylor said the budget had been passed at Full Council and £5 million from central government had been set aside. She noted there were opposition groups that wanted the money allocated now for various investment and/or pilot projects. She noted further that there was an underspend in the Community Match fund that now needed to be reallocated.

Lastly, Cllr Taylor said that a petition had attracted some three hundred signatures for a crossing over the A26 in Eridge.

Cllr Standley said that until the County Council had received the 3-year settlement, it was being prudent by not immediately allocating the funds.

Cllr Standley noted that the Levelling-Up Paper was due to be published soon and it will likely include the establishment of an Educational Investment Area in East Sussex. The School White Paper

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is due to be published in the spring and it is anticipated it will recommend acadamising schools that receive two Ofsted inspections in a row which determine that the schools 'require improvement'.

Cllr Obbard submitted his report prior to the meeting (see Appendix 1). He raised the ongoing GMB Union members' strike in Brighton and Eastbourne. Cllr Standley said there were signs that it was dissipating and that the strikes in Hastings and Rother had been resolved. He said that Biffa had done a very good job during the storms and the current missed bin rate of 13 in every 100,000 was very low.

Cllr Standley told the Council that he had met with the Rail Minister to open the new lift at Eridge Station, following a £1.92 million refurbishment.

(Cllr Standley left the meeting)

8. Highways

8.1 Discuss outcome of Parish Survey and agree to proceed with application for puffin crossing

The results of the Parish Survey were discussed, particularly where they revealed that over 70% of the respondents felt that a lack of pavements and the need for a crossing over the A267 was 'important'. Along with anecdotal evidence for the dangers posed by crossing the A267, support from the primary school and with funds available, it was **agreed** to proceed with the puffin crossing and to submit an application for Community Match funds.

Cllr Macdonald-Brown suggested that, in addition to the article in Parish News, posters could be displayed to advertise the public exhibition for the crossing, scheduled for 26th March and to let the PTA know. This was **agreed**. **Action: Clerk**

8.2 Discuss use of recreational motor vehicles on green lanes

Councillors discussed the government consultation about its response to the Glover Landscape Review, notably the part which addresses the problem of recreational motor vehicles (4x4s, quad bikes and motorbikes) driving on green lanes, particularly in the AONB. Cllr Rutherford considered that the consultation did not necessarily affect the parish as there are no bridleways, although he sympathised with the issue. Cllr Howell said she regularly sees motorbikes and 4x4s, particularly around Brickyard. It was **agreed** on balance to respond to the consultation. **Action: Clerk**

8.3 Discuss creating teams of volunteers for speed camera sessions

The Clerk said she had registered the parish for a Community Speedwatch group with the police. It was agreed to now seek volunteers, via Parish News, the PTA and at the Annual Meeting.

9. Finance

9.1 Approve the accounts payable

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

Item no.	Payee	Item	Amount
1	Manor Farm Stud	Supply of 2 no. Christmas trees in Dec 21	£484.00
2	N.McGregor-Gould	January invoice Bus shelters and park sprays	£350.00

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3	PCC Frant with Eridge	Annual contribution to Parish News	£650.00
4	John Whiting	Preparation of sketch illustrations for proposed pedestrian crossing Inv 2104-01	£1,527.00
5	NetWise UK	Upgrade to premium package hosting Inv 2379	£118.36
6	Imago	Dial2Drive Jan 22	£178.50
7	Staff	Staff	£1,899.77

9.2 Approve the bank reconciliation

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

Date: 21/02/2022

Frant Parish Council

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Time: 15:58

Bank Reconciliation Statement as at 21/02/2022
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	21/02/2022		400.00
Business Reserve	21/02/2022		122,803.59
			<u>123,203.59</u>
<u>Unpresented Cheques (Minus)</u>		<u>Amount</u>	
01/04/2021 BACS SSALC		144.00	
17/02/2022 BACS ESCC		864.00	
			<u>1,008.00</u>
			122,195.59
<u>Receipts not Banked/Cleared (Plus)</u>			
		0.00	
			<u>0.00</u>
			122,195.59
		Balance per Cash Book is :-	122,195.59
		Difference is :-	0.00

9.3 Grants

The Clerk suggested to the Council that it seek to take advantage of grants that are available to support local projects. It was noted that the Council had successfully obtained grants in the past and that it was very worthwhile. It was **agreed** that the Clerk would circulate information about grants as and when it became available and consideration would be given as to whether the Council should apply on a case by case basis. Cllr Steadman cautioned that the application process could sometimes be very time consuming.

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10. Green Spaces

10.1 Eridge green

In Cllr Best's absence, it was agreed to leave this item until the next meeting.

11. Communications and Events

11.1 Consider offering regular in-person surgeries for residents

Cllr Howell raised the possibility of holding surgeries on a regular basis, perhaps with different councillors 'on duty'. These could take place somewhere local and accessible, such as The George. It was **agreed** that this was a good idea although Cllr Crookshank noted from previous experience that they were not well attended. Notwithstanding this, it was **agreed** the Clerk would circulate information in due course.

Action: Clerk

(Cllrs Taylor and Obbard left the meeting)

11.2 Queen's Jubilee

Cllr Howell gave a summary of preparations to date for the Jubilee celebrations, noting that two public meetings had been held at The George and both had been well attended. Ideas ranged from an agricultural machinery display and cricket display on the green to a wood carving display and tea and cakes in the village hall. Cllr Howell said the vicar had agreed to act as Master of Ceremonies and the church would be putting up a display of old photographs in The Stables.

Cllr Howell said that preparations in Eridge and Bells Yew Green were well underway, although the latter was having difficulty recruiting volunteers. Cllr Crookshank offered to help with this. Cllr Howell said that help would be needed from councillors in advance and across the Jubilee weekend. It was agreed that Cllr Howell, the Clerk and Ms Warwick, from the village hall, would meet regularly.

Cllr Steadman said that the closure of the High Street in Frant should extend to the edge of Greenwood and down past Mastingate.

11.3 Consider conversion of BT phone boxes to a village use

The Clerk suggested to the Council that it begin the process of converting the phone boxes in Frant and Bells Yew Green to other uses. She circulated photographs of the converted boxes in nearby Rotherfield as a good example. The Clerk confirmed that a change of use application would be required and, depending on the extent of the conversion 'works' (ie. if they went beyond like-for-like repair), listed building consent may also be required. Because of their status, the Clerk recommended commissioning a specialist company to carry out the refurbishment although it was agreed that, upon inspection of the phone boxes, it might be that this could be undertaken locally. The Clerk noted that there were BT-approved companies that supplied the correct paint and ironwork. It was **agreed** that the Clerk would pursue this and report back to the Council.

Action: Clerk

Cllr Howell asked Cllr Macdonald-Brown if he would speak at the Annual Meeting about the advantages and disadvantages of defibrillators, as there are examples of these being placed in converted phone boxes elsewhere.

11.4 Great British Spring Clean

Cllr Macdonald-Brown explained that during the Great British Spring Clean, volunteers in Little Bayham use the equipment stored in the village hall in Bells Yew Green and spend a morning picking litter, along some two miles of road. Volunteers come forward on local Whatsapp and intranet

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groups. Cllr Steadman said there was a Frant Whatsapp group which could be made use of, in addition to Parish News and the website. It was agreed to advertise for this year for Frant and Bells Yew Green.

Action: Clerk

12. Planning

12.1 Wealden Local Plan – rolling item

None.

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

- WD/2021/3157/F – Yew Tree , Broom Lane, Broadwater Forest, TN3 9JL

Proposed erection of an outbuilding comprising a home office, garden store and home gym, along with external tennis court with fencing.

Concerns were expressed about the site’s location within the AONB and set well apart from the main building, making it more conspicuous. The new building and adjacent tennis court were considered excessive in terms of scale, positioning and design and not in keeping with its AONB/countryside location. It was **agreed** to object.

13. Chairman’s announcements & correspondence for noting

Returning to the subject of a village sign in Frant, Cllr Howell said she was aware of a groundswell of interest in this locally. It was **agreed** to discuss it at the next meeting.

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

None.

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

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Date:.....

Appendix 1

Report from District Cllr Keith Obbard

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. It had been expected to start the consultation early in the New Year, but it is likely to be somewhat delayed now because of the uncertainty over announcements from The Secretary of State Michael Gove MP and the issue of a planning White Paper in the near future.

You may have read that The Leader of the WDC and the Planning Policy portfolio holder have had a meeting with Mr Gove and been assured that things will change. However the difficulty for the Council is that if things do change, particularly with regard to housing numbers, then the WDC could be “caught short” with numbers in a plan that don’t make sense in the changed circumstances.

Grant funding available

The Cabinet has agreed a funding package for Community Grants to be given out across Wealden to a total of £300,000.

These will go to groups such as Citizens Advice Bureau, Clued-Up Info, Cuckmere Community Bus and many other local Community organisations.

Because WDC uses Biffa for our waste collection there are grants available from the Biffa Awards scheme for Community Groups across Wealden. This is money from the Landfill Communities Fund, although there are no landfill sites actually in Wealden District.

The Grants are available for projects such as children’s play areas, refurbishing community buildings, or creating green spaces. To find out more go to <https://www.biffa-award.org>

The W D Council, in partnership with Wealden Works, has obtained a fund of £72k from the Department of Work & Pensions to assist 16-24 year olds in Crowborough, Hailsham, Heathfield & Uckfield. This will support Youth Hubs so they can help young people gain work experience and improve their employment prospects.

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Wealden District Council has a meeting of the Full Council on Weds 23rd when the Budget for the forthcoming year is to be approved.

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Queen's Baton Relay

Wealden residents are being asked if they would like to be baton bearers to carry the Queen's Baton ahead of the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham this Summer.

You can nominate someone on their website;

<https://www.birmingham2022.com/queens-baton-relay/batonbearer-nominations>

Heads-Up on a possible Bin Lorry Dispute

Following the Bin Lorry disputes in Brighton and Eastbourne it is quite possible that the GMB Union may get into a disagreement with Biffa, the Wealden Waste contractor and this could lead to a strike of Lorry Drivers, which would cause similar disruptions to waste collection as has been seen elsewhere in Sussex.

The Director of Services at Wealden is doing all they can to avert a strike, but of course the discussions are between the GMB and Biffa, so to some extent it is just a matter of trusting that a mutual agreement can be achieved without a walk-out.

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.

Cllr.keith.obbard@wealden.gov.uk

_07941 578 427

Signed:.....

Date:.....