

FRANT PARISH COUNCIL

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THE MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT THE STABLES, FRANT ON WEDNESDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2021 AT 7.30PM

Present: Cllr Howell - Chairman
Cllrs Crookshank, Macdonald-Brown, Best
County and District Cllr Standley
District Cllr Obbard
Two representatives for the applicants of WD/2021/2467/MRM
Mr P. Payne
Mr M. Kilby

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

None.

2. Receive apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs Luther, Park, Rutherford and Steadman 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 20th October 2021 as a true and accurate record
The Minutes were **approved**.

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

- Cllr Howell asked for volunteers to start working on ideas for the Jubilee next year.
- The Clerk confirmed that she had spoken to SGN about the box on the green and was awaiting a call from the manager for that site.
- Cllr Howell said that Wealden District Council had eleven car parks encompassing electric car charging points and that the Council will send out a guide to support parish councils in terms of provision.
- The Clerk confirmed that she had asked the architect suggested by Kember Loudon Williams to start work on the streetscene drawings for the new pedestrian crossing.

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

Mr Kilby explained that Shernfold Park Farm Road is within his ownership and that neighbouring residents have a right of way over it. He explained that because of increased vehicle movements and errant parking, particularly associated with two recent house renovations, the green either side of the road has been eroded; he noted that he and the immediate residents were concerned and wished to take measures to preserve the green and its amenity value. Mr Kilby tabled various drawings and photographs to illustrate this and suggested some remedial measures, including reinforcing banks and building up turf, introducing planks, the re-surfacing of part of the road with tarmac and widening the splay onto the A267. Mr Kilby suggested it would be prudent to wait until the ongoing house renovations works had been completed, with a possible start in spring 2022.

Cllr Crookshank said that as Trustees of the green, the Council should avoid setting a precedent whereby it accepts that a road has increased in width simply because vehicles have caused erosion of its edges and banks.

Cllr Howell thanked Mr Kilby and it was agreed that he would keep the Council informed of any proposed work for further discussion and approval.

Mr Payne tabled detailed drawings showing draft designs for a village sign in Frant, perhaps to coincide with the Queen's Jubilee in 2022. He noted the various themes, including references to the fern, George Smart and Lieutenant-Colonel By. He said the sign would be wrought iron, mounted on an oak post, with a timber plinth on the base to act as seating, and placed on the green near the corner with the A267. Councillors thanked him for his work on this and queried what appetite there was in the parish for such a sign. It was agreed that Mr Payne would forward the drawings to the Clerk and the community could be consulted. It was suggested that the drawings could be placed in Parish News and Mr Payne said this was already in hand. **Action: Clerk**

The two representatives from Inspired Villages explained that following the recent refusal of its reserved matters scheme, the current application sought to take account of the objections by reducing the number of units from 63 no. to 55 no. in Phase 1, with the fourth floor removed. They noted changes made to the design of the buildings to better reflect the local vernacular. Cllr Best asked how many more units would be 'lost' if the scheme were reduced to two floors and they responded that it would reduce by another eight units.

Cllr Crookshank raised concerns about the impact on the AONB; they responded in part that the High Weald ANOB Unit had not objected to the scheme. The Clerk sought to clarify this by noting that the Unit had not supported it either, but rather had explained they could not respond because of pressure on their staff resources, instead referring officers to their standard advice for assessing applications that may affect the AONB.

Cllr Crookshank further noted that it was important for the applicants, the parish community and the District Council to recognise the *reality* of the potential impacts of the scheme on the AONB and particularly the rural road network. He further noted that the applicants had sought to mitigate the height, bulk and mass of the buildings by 'hiding' them beyond a tree belt; he suggested that this amounted to an acknowledgement on the applicants' part of the scale of the development and thus its potential to have a detrimental impact.

7. Receive reports from County and District Councillors

County Report

Cllr Standley summarised budget allocations, noting that £2.5 million was to be spent on 'road patching' (whereby roads are dug up and resurfaced), £1.8 million on pavement repairs, £0.5 million on line marking and £0.5 million on sign repair and cleaning. Cllr Howell raised the issue of the drains on Church Lane in Frant being blocked with mud.

Other budget allocations included for addressing climate goals, adult education and meeting the increasing demand for SEN.

District Reports

Cllr Obbard circulated his report prior to the meeting (see Appendix 1) and no questions were raised.

Cllr Standley said that Wealden District Council was hoping to publish its results of the SHELAA exercise in the spring next year. He also noted that he had written to Michael Gove (Secretary of

State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities), stating that the housing numbers were too high and to request an early indication of any potential changes to the numbers so as to inform the ongoing development of the Local Plan.

8. Highways

8.1 Approve cost of speed survey at junction of A267/B2099

The Clerk said she had sought clarification as to why the cost of the speed survey had increased but had not received a response at the time of the meeting. The Council **agreed** to approve the increased amount in principle, subject to this clarification.

8.2 Raise items for the SLR agenda in December

The following items were raised:

- flooding under the railway bridge in Bells Yew Green;
- blocked drains;
- the condition of Bunny Lane; and
- localised flooding at the bridge near Spratsbrook on A26.

9. Finance

9.1 Approve the accounts payable

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

Item no.	Payee	Item	Amount
1	IMAGO	Dial2Drive Oct 2021	£105.70
2	N. McGregor-Gould	Play equip. and bus shelters maintenance and cleans	£495.00
3	Staff expenses	Salary, PAYE, expenses/mileage, pension	£1,749.96

9.2 Approve the bank reconciliation

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

Bank Statement Account Name (s)	Statement Date	Page No	Balances
Current A/c	15/11/2021		400.00
Business Reserve	15/11/2021		146,794.92
			147,194.92
Unpresented Cheques (Minus)		Amount	
01/04/2021 BACS SSALC		144.00	
15/10/2021 BACS R.Karim		1,285.99	
15/10/2021 BACS R.Karim		-1,285.99	
			144.00
			147,050.92
Receipts not Banked/Cleared (Plus)			
		0.00	
			0.00
			147,050.92
		Balance per Cash Book is :-	147,050.92
		Difference is :-	0.00

9.3 Note 'except for matters' in External Audit Report and agree corrective measures

The Clerk conveyed the 'except for matter' for the audit 2020-21, as follows:

The AGAR was not accurately completed before submission for review.: Section 2, Box 9 in the comparative column is incorrect due to a transcription error and should read £104,956. This was **noted** by the Council.

It was **agreed** that the Clerk would inform the internal auditor and this transcription error would be rectified at the next audit for 2021-22.

9.4 Review spend year to date and consider proposed budget for 2022-23

The budget was reviewed and it was **agreed** to consider the proposed precept at the meeting in December.

10. Green Spaces

10.1 Select quote for fencing and gate at the parish field

The Clerk tabled three quotes for the above. Councillors discussed the merits of each quote and **agreed** to select the quote from Honnington Farm.

11. Communications and Events

11.1 Respond to consultation by Gatwick Airport concerning the existing northern runway

It was noted that West Sussex County Council had refused to support the proposals. It was considered that the Airport was a poor neighbour, was not adding to the local economy and, unlike Heathrow, operated 24 hours a day, seven days a week with the resultant impact in terms of noise pollution, in particular.

Action: Clerk

(Cllr Standley left the meeting)

12. Planning

Cllr Crookshank chaired item 12.

12.1 Wealden Local Plan – rolling item

None.

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

- WD/2021/2467/MRM – Little Mount Farm, Benhall Mill Road, TN2 5JW

Reserved matters pursuant to outline permission WD/2019/1648/MAO (Outline application for the demolition of the existing buildings on site and the erection of a continuing care retirement community of up to 146 units of accommodation (C2 Use) and community facilities, including restaurant, café, shop, hairdressers, spa, cinema and GP facility, with access, infrastructure, open space, landscaping and associated works (all matters reserved except for access) – Phase 1 comprising the erection of 55 no. units of accommodation (C2 Use), communal facilities, energy centre, maintenance buildings and other ancillary structures, parking, landscaping, SUDS and other associated works.

Cllr Park's comments circulated prior to the meeting were noted and it was considered that the points she raised were valid. Cllr Howell said she would not participate in the discussion, except to suggest that the Council consider a response that is reasonable.

Reservations were raised about the density across the application site which it was felt would result in over-development and a harmful level of scale, height and massing, with no comparable reference in the parish. Concerns were expressed about the impact, being felt already, on the local c-class

network of traffic associated with the construction, but also the inevitable increases in traffic movements into and out of the site (visitors, residents, staff, deliveries, etc). The various mitigation plans submitted with the application were considered to be reasonable on paper but would not reflect what would actually happen in reality. For example, it was noted that suggestions that traffic would flow to and from the site via the A21/Tunbridge Wells were wholly unrealistic – the A21 lies some two miles from the site and people would always seek the fastest, easiest option; in this case, this would mean traffic using the nearby lanes and rural roads. It was **agreed** to reflect the above in comments to Wealden DC.

(The two representatives for Inspired Villages left the meeting).

- WD/2021/2626/LB – Stable Cottage, Bells Yew Green Road, TN3 9BH

Proposed works to renovate interior of property to include the installation of a new en-suite bathroom and new underfloor heating throughout. Exterior alterations to include adding new window to west elevation, changing the colour of the existing windows, replacing existing rooflights with conservation rooflights, replacing existing softwood patio doors with new hardwood patio doors (to match existing) and replacing the existing external path leading up to the property.

No objections were raised to this proposal.

- WD/2021/2331/F – Land adjacent to Hargate House, St Marks Road, TN2 5LU

Erection of detached dwelling with integral double garage and driveway together with associated landscaping.

No objections were raised to this proposal.

13. Chairman's announcements & correspondence for noting

Cllr Howell noted her disappointment that no events had been held in the Parish for Remembrance Sunday this year and she urged the Council to encourage events for next year.

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

None.

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

Actions:

Clerk to submit representations re: Gatwick consultation.

Clerk to liaise with Mr Payne about display of village sign ideas.

Appendix 1 - Report for Frant Parish Council

District Wide

Work is ongoing to the Wealden Local Plan. The Local Plan Committee is drawing up the policies that will go in the new Local Plan.

This is a detailed process and various options will be included in the draft plan that will do out for consultation in the Spring of 2022.

SHEELA sites & report

The Strategic Housing and Economic Land Area Assessment (SHELAA) has now closed for new submissions.

The areas under consideration are all shown on the WDC Online mapping system (<https://maps.wealden.gov.uk/webmap/>) and the detailed considerations will be published on a site-by-site basis in a hefty report early next year, prior to the publication of the Local Plan consultation.

Next Cluster meeting

The next Planning Cluster meeting will be on Friday 26th November, by Teams online.

Wealden District Council

De-carbonisation of the Council Housing stock.

As part of the Housing Revenue Account Budget and Plans officers are now working on a schedule to bring all our Council Houses up to a much higher standard of insulation and to record all the details needed to know what needs to be done and where.

As tenants move out, the homes will be upgraded while the property is empty.

The aim is to have all our housing stock with an average EPC rating of “C” by 2030.

New homes will be built to an EPC rating of “A”.

It is hoped to have identified the carbon footprint of the WDC housing stock by April 2022

And to have a detailed asset management plan written by the end of next August.

Money available for Private Landlords.

The government has made grants available for assisting private landlords to upgrade the insulation in their houses. They will now have to achieve an EPC rating of “E” or better. The Council has obtained some funds to assist with this.

Planning Applications

As you know there are several application that have come forward recently, and more in the pipeline so we are keeping our eye on these, and will be happy to receive your comments.

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,
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