

FRANT PARISH COUNCIL

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THE MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT BELLS YEW GREEN VILLAGE HALL ON 18th JANUARY 2023 AT 7.30PM

Present: Cllrs Howell (Chair), Crookshank, (Vice-Chair), Rutherford, Macdonald-Brown, Best, Park, Steadman
County and District Cllr B. Standley
District Cllr K. Obbard

Two local residents
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 County Cllr G. 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 21st December 2022 as a true and accurate record
Cllr Park noted that the reference at item 7 to Dundale Road was incorrect and should read 'Benhall Mill Road'. The Minutes were duly amended and subsequently **approved**.

5. To determine matters arising from the previous Minutes for updating and noting
None.

6. Public Forum (time limit to be extended only at the discretion of the Chairman)
The two local residents of Bells Yew Green raised their concerns about the speed of the traffic along the B2169, particularly from Nobles Wood to the village gates. They noted that there had been two crashes in the last six months, one of which resulted in the car ending up on its side in a driveway. Exacerbated by the lack of pavements, the residents said that walking the short 5-minute walk into the village was virtually impossible at peak times and very uncomfortable at other times.

Cllr Standley said he would raise the issue with Highways, noting that a speed survey followed by a feasibility study might be the next step. Cllr Rutherford said that it was often the case that if speed surveys produced data that showed *average* speed was low, then no measures would be taken; if the data showed high average speeds, then re-engineering of the road, etc. was often suggested. Cllr Howell said it was always a balance in finding a solution that responded to the safety issues while also not creating an urbanising effect in a rural area.

Cllr Standley suggested a mobile VAS sign might be an option and/or re-siting the village gates.

ACTION: BS to liaise with Highways.

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Mr Payne enquired as to the ownership of the redundant pole on the boundary of the Abergavenny PH on the A267. The Clerk confirmed that it was not on the Parish Council's Asset Register. Cllr Rutherford recalled that the pole had originally accommodated a VAS sign. The Parish Council had asked that the sign be moved further down the A267 to its current position and Highways had asked the Parish Council at that time if they wanted ownership of the redundant pole. The Council declined and the pole has remained in situ ever since. **ACTION:** BS to inform Highways that it is not in use and instruct them to remove it.

7. Receive reports from County and District Councillors

Cllr Howell said that the County and District reports had been circulated prior to the meeting (see Appendices 1-4). No questions were forthcoming.

8. Highways

8.1 Issues related to ongoing development at Benhall Mill Road.

Cllr Park said that a series of so-called road improvements required by the planning permission for the Inspired Villages site was resulting in serious issues for the flow of traffic; she noted that when two vehicles meet at certain points, one is required to reverse, in some instances back over the narrow bridge, or back up to the golf course. **ACTION:** JH to liaise with Wealden District Council about the planning permission and conditions. BS to liaise with Highways.

8.2 Pedestrian crossing in Frant

The Clerk gave a summary of progress to date, noting that she was now in contact with the Assistant Manager of Transport Development Control at East Sussex County Council (ESCC). The Clerk will work with him to draft a tender document for the Parish Council to send to engineering firms to formulate a detailed design. From this, the Parish Council will enter into a s278 with ESCC and tender again for contractors to build out the crossing. Cllr Standley offered to assist.

8.3 Streetlights

The Clerk relayed to the Parish Council a summary of her recent meeting with the Electrical Supervisor at Highways about the streetlights in the Parish, including the current delay in procuring replacement parts and installing them. The Clerk gave the following guide costs (all net of VAT) for replacement parts:

P18 – Bayham Rd, opposite Forge Garage – new lantern and column = £2,440.00

P08 – Church Lane, Frant – new lantern and making vertical a leaning column = £1,055.00. The Clerk agreed in the meeting with Highways, given the location by the primary school, that the leaning column would be addressed by them as a matter of priority, particularly as it did not appear to be reliant on replacement parts.

P15 – Bells Yew Green Road, opposite the Brewery Industrial Estate – new lantern = £840.00

The above costs were **approved**.

8.4 New grit bin(s) and relocation of existing

Cllr Park said that Highways had a record of a grit bin being sited on Benhall Mill Road (now gone) and had agreed to replace it as a matter of urgency, given the recent poor weather and problems experienced on this road. **ACTION:** Clerk to contact Highways for an update.

It was **agreed** to ask Highways if the unused grit bin on the Bells Yew Green Road could be relocated to the Adamswell campsite and to verify ownership of the verge in this location. **ACTION:** Clerk.

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9. Finance

9.1 Approve the accounts payable

The accounts were **approved**.

9.2 Approve the bank reconciliation

The bank reconciliation was not presented.

10. Policies

10.1 Consider a new policy around resilience and vulnerability in the parish

Cllr Howell said that Wealden District Council has a list of vulnerable people but because of GDPR, cannot share this list with the Parish Council. In light of recent events with the prolonged outage of the water supply and electricity, Cllr Howell suggested that the Parish Council start to look at developing its own list of vulnerable people and methodology for engaging with them and the wider parish in times of need. This was **agreed**. **ACTION:** Clerk to look at resilience policies adopted by other parish councils and report back at the next meeting.

11 Communications

11.1 Plans for the Coronation of King Charles III

It was **agreed** that the Parish Council would support any community initiatives for commemorating the Coronation but would not actively organise or run them.

(Cllr Crookshank chaired item 12)

12. Planning

12.1 Consider response to NPPF Consultation

Various observations were made, including: no statement about land banking is given; small firms of builders are encouraged for small sites less than one hectare; emphasis on 'building beautiful' and urban design; onshore turbines are discussed but little to no mention made of solar energy. Cllr Rutherford noted that if the discussion around housing density comes forward as meaningful legislation, it could benefit areas like the parish which are in the AONB.

ACTION: Clerk to submit response to consultation.

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

WD/2023/0049/F – Frant Grange, Church Lane, Frant, TN3 9DX

Extension of pool house, double garage basement, first floor and refurbish external finishes and revised landscaping and loft conversion.

Councillors **agreed to recommend refusal** of the application on the grounds that the proposed form, scale and treatment (notably with timber batten cladding) of the garage, pool house and link were at odds with the character of this iconic building in the centre of Frant. It was considered that the reference to the proposed development as responding to the neighbouring Stables building was tenuous. The Stables building is of a more traditional 'barn like' form than the proposed. Further, although parts of the proposed would not be visible, the character and appearance of the Conservation Area would nonetheless be negatively affected.

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

The Clerk asked the Parish Council about what level of contribution it wished to make toward the replacement windows of the village hall in Frant. It was **agreed** to look at contributions made previously the other halls and consider at the next meeting. **ACTION:** Clerk.

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The possibilities suggested by Treework for dealing with the tree leaning at an angle on Shernfold Park were discussed. It was **agreed** to add this to the next agenda for a more full consideration.

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

Summary of action points

Action	By whom
Liaise with Highways about moving BYG villages gates and/or installing a VAS sign to slow traffic past Noble Woods.	B. Standley
Inform Highways that the pole outside the Abergavenny is not in use and instruct them to remove it.	B. Standley
Liaise with Highways and Wealden DC about whether s278 and planning conditions have been met at Inspired Villages site in BYG	J. Howell B. Standley
Contact Highways for an update of the replacement grit bin in Benhall Mill Road. Ask Highways if the unused grit bin on the Bells Yew Green Road could be relocated to the Adamswell campsite and to verify ownership of the verge in this location.	Clerk
Look at policies around resilience from other PCs.	Clerk
Review previous donations to village halls.	Clerk
Submit response to NPPF consultation.	Clerk

Signed.....
Date.....

Appendix 1
Report by County and District Cllr Bob Standley

County Councillor Report to Frant Parish Council Jan 2023

Happy New Year

Budget

The Local Government financial settlement was announced just before Christmas and was broadly in line with our expectations.

The govt calculation is that local government core spending power would increase by 9.2%. This assumes that the County Council will agree to an increase of 5% in council tax. This is 2.99% for the general fund and an additional social services precept of 2%.

The announcement in the budget of an extra £1bn for the Household support Fund.

Whilst inflation is expected to fall significantly over the year there will be continued pressure on ESCC budget given as I have often stated that 2/3 goes on Adult Social Care and Children's services. Given the demographics of the county now and looking ahead the cost pressures are unlikely to reduce.

It is expected that the budget setting in February will see a balance budget for 23/24 but a more challenging 24/25 and 25/26. These predictions will be much influenced by future reforms to adult social care funding, much discussed over any years but no solution found.

Highways

I am sure it has not gone unnoticed that it has been a challenging time for highways.

The wet November followed by snow and ice followed by more rain has caused considerable damage

It's only ESCC everywhere else is no problem

I sometime hear the above stated but having travelled recently on Kent and Surrey roads there are facing the same challenge. You may have seen the recent programme on SE news which featured problems across Kent.

Potholes

We have some 2,400 defects reported in the system for attention, approximately 2,000 are potholes which is about 1,500 above normal operating levels. We have increased resources to 150% as well as working extended hours and weekends, and will keep these resources at this level in review over the coming weeks.

Drainage/Flooding

The second highest category of reports / defects is for drainage and flooding problems. Again we have additional resources covering 24 hours a day.

Gritting

We have 1,500 tonnes of salt on order and awaiting delivery, and are continuing to refill grit bins. Gritters were out yesterday (Monday) and Tuesday morning although this not stop a number of accidents on Tuesday morning

Customer Contact

We have had almost twice the number of customer contacts during December (around 8,000) compared to previous years (4,500) but have a full complement of customer service agents who are working overtime and weekends to process them. The Highway Stewards are also working overtime to help inspect and process cases as quickly as possible as well as undertake their statutory inspections.

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RWS Jan 2023

Appendix 2
Report by County and District Cllr J. Howell

Wealden District Council Report for Frant Parish Council
January 2023

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Commercial, Economic Development and Leisure

A masterplan for the Cuckoo Trail and support for towns and villages to encourage people to shop local and an outreach wellbeing programme to communities are all set to take a step forward following confirmation of government funding for Wealden District Council.

The council has received long awaited endorsement from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities that it will be receiving its UK Shared Prosperity Fund Year 1 allocation in full – a total of £148,023 revenue and £14,225 capital for 2022/2023.

In July the council's Economic Development team submitted an investment plan to DLUHC, detailing how the council would spend the indicative allocation of £1.17million across the three year period to meet the investment priorities and objectives required.

The confirmation of funding will enable activity to be delivered within this financial year including a focus on delivering projects under the Communities and Place Investment priority.

This includes supporting local town and village centres to encourage people to shop local and help them thrive particularly in the current climate as many continue to experience financial pressures.

In addition, a masterplan will be developed for the Cuckoo Trail which will be recommending how to better connect communities and improve the infrastructure as well as promotion of the trail to visitors. The council will also be working with a partner to deliver an outreach wellness programme to local communities.

Councillors Philip Lunn and Pam Doodes, the portfolio holders for Commercial, Economic Development and Leisure and Climate Change, Public Health and Community Leadership respectively, said, "We are delighted to have secured this much needed funding which will help support our local communities across the Wealden district.

"We have developed a robust investment plan which will enable different projects to benefit residents, visitors and businesses in Wealden.

"There are many exciting things planned using this money and it will go a long way to delivering a variety of projects and initiatives."

A new Wealden Vineyard guide for 2022/23 has been produced. In Sussex alone there are approximately 50 vineyards, 16 within Wealden – they are all showcased in the guide.

Cabinet members welcomed data showing almost 700 inspections were carried out at food premises across Wealden in a 12-month period during 2021-22.

Electric vehicle charging points are due to be installed in WDC car parks soon. The Council are currently reviewing 10 council car parks for charging feasibility, including Forest Row, Crowborough and Heathfield, with potential expansion to 22 more sites.

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As you know feasibility work has been underway at a number of car parks across the Wealden district by the council's chosen provider, Connected Kerb, an electric vehicle charging contractor.

As part of phase one, Connected Kerb is currently reviewing 10 council owned and operated car parks for charging feasibility with the potential to expand to an additional 22 sites throughout Wealden in subsequent phases.

The first phase of locations includes Lower Road, Forest Row; The Willows, Alfriston; Croft Road, Crowborough; **Mill Road, Heathfield**; Luxford Road, Uckfield; North Road, Pevensey Bay; Greyhound, Wadhurst: and Horse Fields, East Dean.

Also included in this first phase are bays in the Vicarage Lane car park in Hailsham and bays in the South Road car park, also in Hailsham.

The installations are part of the council's ongoing efforts to support the transition to low carbon transport and to improve local air quality. The aspiration is that all residents who drive electric vehicles (EVs), or are considering making the switch, have convenient access to EV charging.

Within Wealden there are currently 23 EV charge points distributed throughout the district and the council recognises the need to provide additional public charge points for residents – particularly as 24% of households with a vehicle park on the street overnight.

At the heart of Wealden District Council's climate emergency declaration sits the requirement to transform its transport systems to low and zero emission alternatives, with the intention of working toward net-zero CO₂ by 2050 or earlier for both the council and the Wealden district area.

In 2020, transport emissions account for 44.9% of total Wealden district emissions – 16.5% higher than the national average.

Recent research has identified that the potential demand for EV charging across East Sussex will increase over the next 10 years with numbers of EVs locally going from 3,573 to 33,945 (by 2025), to 98,054 by 2030.

This is particularly relevant in Wealden where almost 40% of all EVs first registered in East Sussex in 2021 were in Wealden.

Funding to support rural businesses and communities is being sought by Wealden District Council through the Rural England Prosperity Fund.

Wealden District Council proposes to administer and manage a business grants programme so rural businesses can apply for capital funding for projects which lead to job safeguarding, increased productivity and modernisation.

This might include the purchase of equipment and lasting assets or the conversion of buildings and business grants.

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A small allocation of funds could also go towards supporting rural tourism by developing- a Wealden Visitor Trail.

Once funding is confirmed, town and parish councils and community organisations will be invited to apply for grants in support of projects that support net zero and infrastructure which improves the natural environment such as ‘greening up’ outside space, wildflower verges and active travel initiatives.

This includes improving local resilience against the impacts of climate change and encouraging residents to walk and cycle more. In addition, some funding could be allocated to the roll-out of new electric vehicle charging points across Wealden.

The council has recently submitted information to the Department for Environmental, Food and Rural Affairs in order to secure the £838,120 of capital funding – allocated through the Rural England Prosperity Fund over a two year period starting from 1 April 2023.

The fund is a new £110million, two year capital fund from DEFRA complementary to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund run by the Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities. It is a top up for eligible authorities which have already submitted an investment plan for UKSPF, to address the extra needs of rural areas.

The fund aims to address three key challenges that rural areas face; lower productivity rates; poorer connectivity and poorer access to key services.

The fund will support rural businesses and support new and improved community infrastructure, providing essential community services and assets for local people and businesses to benefit the local economy.

The council expects to hear whether the submission has been successful by early next year.

Business and other interested organisations wanting details can contact the Economic Development and Wellbeing team on economicdevelopment@wealden.gov.uk

Finance and Benefits

Councillors at the District Council have agreed to earmark a £250,000 fund to help ease the current cost of living pressures.

The money will be put aside to support local initiatives, fund any increased service demands within the council and additional support for residents and businesses when needed.

Housing and Waste

A new online booking system to support housing tenants has been developed to help deliver five-star customer service.

Wealden District Council developed the new system to give a better service to residents needing to contact housing officers.

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Officers are often out on-site visiting tenants and communities and although they aim to respond as soon as possible to residents, the council are aware that their response may not always be at a convenient time.

The new booking system features an online map of housing officers responsible for certain areas and allows residents to book a 10-minute video call with a housing officer at a convenient time for the residents.

The easy-to-use system is now live for residents to use and can be accessed by visiting <https://www.wealden.gov.uk/housing-health-and-advice/housing/council-housing/im-an-existing-tenant/contact-my-housing-officer/>

Planning and Development

Construction of 15 affordable homes for rent in Heathfield is moving forward and has been named Cart Barn Place.

To complement the surroundings, high quality landscaping is being provided and as many existing hedgerows and tree lines are being retained as possible, plus additional planting.

Statistics presented to Cabinet members also showed a 547% increase in compliments from residents of Wealden for customer service delivery.

Proposed government reforms to housing targets and the planning system have been welcomed by Wealden District Council.

The council has been continuously lobbying government for the last few years to reduce its nationally set housing targets.

On Tuesday 6 December the Secretary of State for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing, and Communities confirmed in Parliament that he was listening to the council's call and is now looking to adjust housing targets and remove the five-year housing land supply requirements.

The plans would also see the council given greater powers to deter unjustified, speculative applications during the production of its Local Plan.

The government consultation on the proposed changes has been published and can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/levelling-up-and-regeneration-bill-reforms-to-national-planning-policy> . Wealden District Council is keen to see the finer detail of the proposals and engage fully with the consultation.

Under the proposals, housing targets set for local authorities will remain but will be a starting point instead with new flexibilities to reflect local circumstances such as national parks, heritage restrictions, and areas of high flood risk; local planning authorities will be able to tackle slow build out by developers; and there could be new financial penalties for

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companies failing to deliver housing despite having planning approval and give councils power to refuse further permissions across their areas.

Work has considerably progressed on Wealden District Council's Draft Local Plan, which will shape the district's places, plan and manage growth and infrastructure, and guide development in the district in future years.

The council needs to ensure that its emerging Local Plan fully considers these important forthcoming changes to ensure the Local Plan is robust and respects the district's landscape and rural nature.

Following the publication of the government consultation, the council is planning to bring an updated timetable for its Local Plan to the Local Plan Sub Committee in the new year.

Wealden District Council leader and portfolio holder for Planning, Councillor Ann Newton said, "The Local Plan is an important document and we want to progress it as quickly as possible to provide certainty to our communities, partners and developers on the future planning strategy for the district.

"However, following our successful lobbying efforts we will be working over the coming months to build these changes into our Draft Local Plan, with the central aim of protecting the natural beauty and character of our district and meeting our climate change commitments".

Climate Change, Public Health and Community Leadership

The council as a Licensing Authority is consulting on whether CCTV within both Hackney Carriages and Private Hire Vehicles would have a positive or adverse effect on the safety of passengers and users including children and vulnerable adults.

The council needs to consider the safety of those who use taxis but also take account of the effect on their privacy while using the vehicle.

The government's view is that CCTV can provide a safer environment for the benefit of taxi and private hire passengers and drivers by deterring and preventing the occurrence of crime; reduce the fear of crime; assist the police in investigating incidents of crime; and assist insurance companies in investigating motor vehicle accidents.

Before any decision is made, the council is running a six week consultation for the public to give their views and also talking to drivers, vehicle proprietors and operators.

Councillor Pam Doodes, Wealden District Council's portfolio holder for Public Health, said, "There is an important discussion to be had here over CCTV being mandatory in taxis and private hire vehicles within Wealden and we need to know what the trade feels and indeed those who use licensed vehicles within the community. I would urge everyone to have their say during this period of consultation so the council can make an informed decision."

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The consultation is now open and runs until 20 January.

For further information and to take part in the consultation you can follow the link below:

<https://www.wealden.gov.uk/consultations/should-it-be-compulsory-to-have-cctv-within-taxis-licensed-by-wealden-district-council/>

50% reduction for parishes on fees.

The District Council are supporting charities, not for profit organisations and parish councils by awarding them a 50% discount on our normal fees and charges.

More than 150 people attended the recent open day of the Wealden Crematorium.

Residents were invited to take a look ‘behind the curtain’ and have all of their questions answered by our friendly staff.

A cross-party motion to protect rivers and seas from pollution has passed through Wealden’s Council Chamber.

The motion was put forward by councillors and unanimously approved by all members. It follows the revelation that in 2021, according to The Rivers Trust, Southern Water was responsible for raw sewage being spilled into our waterways for over 17,000 hours, spanning across four river catchments.

A fresh call has been made for Southern Water to update and upgrade the sewerage and water infrastructure systems so they can deal with existing sewage issues and accommodate new development in the future.

A plea was issued as part of its response to a consultation on the water company’s Draft Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan, which proposes how it will meet its infrastructure challenges until 2050.

It also comes on the back of a Full Council Motion when councillors unanimously agreed to hold Southern Water to account and take a lead on addressing sewage issues backing up in the properties of local residents.

Southern Water is consulting with many stakeholders across the south-east, including us as there have been major concerns regarding existing water infrastructure, considering the number of homes the council is expected to provide.

The Council have reiterated commitments to protect and enhance the environment and support for groups protecting nature.

The pledge comes as conservation groups have expressed concerns over the government’s planned changes to EU protection for nature, a relaxation of planning laws in new Investment Zones and a review of environmental far subsidies.

Wealden Crematorium has donated £12,000 to charity.

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You Raise Me Up, a charity based in East Sussex, has been presented with a £12,000 cheque from our crematorium. The scheme recycles metals following the cremation of a deceased person. The metals are recycled by the ICCM with proceeds donated to a chosen charity.

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Appendix 3
Report by County Cllr G. Taylor

ESCC Report for Frant Parish Council – 18 January 2023

Happy New Year everyone.

Water cuts and SE Water: I have seen improved communication coming from the officers during the extreme cold weather and the aftermath. It was great to see that SE Water and ESCC were in continuous contact and coordinating over supplying water to households and repairs of leaks. Whilst this was not perfect and there were too many leaks and problems to be acceptable, the information about the situation and the delivery of water was much improved compared to the last big outage that we had. However there were some areas that did not receive information and water deliveries.

Potholes, drainage and flooding: We have also had regular updates before, after and over Christmas about the huge increase in potholes on the roads. Highways have been dealing with well more than double the usual number of pothole reports and the contractor has brought in additional resources and extended hours before Christmas and continuing now. Bunny Lane was closed a couple of weeks ago due to dangerous deterioration. Hindleap Lane has numerous potholes and several other reports have been passing through my inbox. Please do copy me any urgent requests.

Icy pavements: I had reports that there were terrible icy conditions on the pavements in the villages over the cold spell. The Highways team no longer have the resources to clear pavements regularly. However, when there is prolonged snowfall, and the maintenance gangs aren't able to repair potholes and lay tarmac, Highways do redeploy those resources to clear snow from precincts and high street pavements in the larger towns and deploy hippo bags to the smaller towns and villages, but given the snow fell for only a short time, those resources have continued repairing potholes.

Grit bin: I assume that the parish council has a grit-bin, or maybe more. It would be good to know where it is and who is responsible for gritting the pavements. The County has grit bins, but the Parish Council can also buy one or an additional one (requesting from ESCC) and buy the salt/grit to go into it. The County is in the process of filling the 600 ESCC grit bins, and this should have been speeding up from the 3 January. If the bin is owned by the Parish Council, or privately owned, they can still ask ESCC to fill the bin, but must request it soon as part of the programme. Please make sure that there is indeed a need as some bins that the Highways team were called to fill were already half or three quarters full.

In addition, we have been told that residents and businesses are permitted to clear snow from outside their own property and so we may wish to think about how we support residents to do this in the future (especially those who do not have the capacity to do this themselves). It is much easier to clear the snow when it is freshly fallen and then protect the pavement with grit, rather than try to remove solid ice later on. A store of snow shovels might be a good idea.

Highways expenditure: Because several parish councils in my division have had the impression that we are a bit neglected in the north of the county, I have been doing some investigations on Highways expenditure by division. Just before Christmas I received a full list of spend on roads (carriageway) and pavements (footway), potholes and road safety by division for the whole county. I have now done some analysis on the list and have some surprising news. The Forest Row and Groombridge division is in the top 20 for expenditure on roads, but at the bottom of the list for expenditure on footways. Firstly it is important to note that we 5th out of 50 divisions in the length of roads that we have in the division (146.6km), whereas we are 42nd in the length of footways (mostly pavements) we have.

Forest Row and Groombridge and Wealden North East Divisions Highways expenditure since 2016

Type of spend or repair	Amount FR&G	Place out of 50 for FR&G	Amount Wealden North East	Place out of 50 for WNE
Spend by km of roads	£39,372.74 per km	16	£32,244.01 per km	24
Spend by km on footways	£537.49 per km	50	£5,992.99 per km	12
Number of potholes	4176 total for 6.4 years (avg 54 per month!)	5	5,307	4

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Number of potholes per km of carriageway	28.49 per km	37	33.63 per km	26
Spend on traffic and road safety	£384.63 per km £4.87 per person	8 (same as for spend per person)	£132.79 per km £2.10 per person	35

The total amount for carriageway repairs in Forest Row and Groombridge division (FR&G) is £5.77m, of which 57% was spent on resurfacing and 24% of patching. The high amount spent on road repairs could reflect poor road surfaces generally or more extreme weather or wear and tear in this area. Certainly, an increase in traffic will mean more wear and tear. The amount spent on footways is the lowest in the county, which explains why they are in such a terrible state. While the number of potholes repaired is high, it is on the low side when measured by km (FR&G is number 37 out of 50). I would be happy to share more information from this analysis if you have further questions.

Planning and road safety: There are several current contentious planning applications which residents have contacted me about. One of the main issues is vehicle access, road safety and the potential increase in traffic for each of these sites. I continue to communicate with the relevant team at ESCC and with the District Councillors and residents. My personal view is that developers should be thinking more about supporting car sharing, electric bike and trikes and enabling road safety and reduction in speed limits around any developments. This should also be supported by County by dramatically improving bus services in the rural and remote areas. I would be interested to know your views and discuss this further as needed. While the developments are in Hartfield and Withyham wards, two of them are in Forest Row village and all of them would increase the traffic through the villages, especially Hartfield Road in Forest Row, and Edenbridge Road and Castlefields, as well as the whole B2110 through to Groombridge, in all of the parishes in the FR&G division. All of these roads are where residents already suffer from excessive speeds and thoughtless driving, and where many residents live in fear daily.

Social care: While one of our campaigners was delivering leaflets, they came across a resident who had no heating or hot water and no money to pay for food, and also had other needs for social care. I was able to report this to the head of social care and support was provided. Our campaigner also provided her own food delivery and the resident was put in touch with a foodbank. If you have any concerns about adults or children who are suffering in this way, or who need any support from County, including for concerns about child safety, please do contact me and I can make sure the appropriate teams are mobilised. I am sure the Parish Council would also be keen to make sure the Community Fridge in Forest Row and other village resources are made available.

Signed.....
Date.....

Report for Frant Parish Council 18th Jan. 2023

I don't have a great deal of News to report, as Christmas & The New Year has meant that normal routines have been disrupted, and the weather and water supply issues have been at the forefront of most residents' minds.

Nationwide Planning Issues.

The need for voter ID at Polling Stations has been widely criticised, this is a classic case of using a "Wrecking Ball to Crack a Nut".

The government says this law will prevent voter fraud but The Electoral Commission only recorded 79 cases of fraud in 2021 out of the 46,560,542 registered voters. Between 2017 and 2021 there were 1,556 allegations of fraud, but only 2 ended in Court and conviction.

This will cause the WDC Elections Service extra work and extra cost, and as far as I know there have been no cases of impersonation in Wealden.

As well as the changes to the planning system concerning housing numbers and delivery of new housing, the Secretary of State announced a consultation on some changes to the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) as part of the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Bill now going through Parliament. The consultation ends on 2nd March 2023.

The Consultation document says that the following immediate changes will be sought.

- *make clear how housing figures should be derived and applied so that communities can respond to local circumstances;*
- *address issues in the operation of the housing delivery and land supply tests;*
- *tackle problems of slow build out;*
- *encourage local planning authorities to support the role of community-led groups in delivering affordable housing on exception sites;*
- *set clearer expectations around planning for older peoples' housing;*
- *promote more beautiful homes, including through gentle density;*
- *make sure that food security considerations are factored into planning decisions that affect farm land;*

Signed.....
Date.....

- *and enable new methods for demonstrating local support for onshore wind development.*

However.

“The government remains committed to delivering 300,000 homes a year by the mid-2020s”

“At present, fewer than half of local authorities have up-to-date plans (adopted in the past 5 years). Our proposed reforms create clear incentives for more local authorities to adopt plans. And our analysis shows that having a sound plan in place means housing delivery increases compared to those local authorities with an out-of-date plan,.....”

You have been warned!!

“Finally, this document also sets out the envisaged role for National Development Management Policies (NDMPs). These are intended to save plan-makers from having to repeat nationally important policies in their own plans, so that plans can be quicker to produce and focus on locally relevant policies. “

“The Bill includes important measures to capture uplifts in land value more effectively through a new Infrastructure Levy,.....”

“...we are exploring how to do more through planning to measure and reduce emissions in the built environment. We also propose to do more to support environmental enhancement, nature recovery and climate change adaptation;”

“The Bill will strengthen opportunities for people to influence planning decisions that affect their immediate area.”

These are just some of the headline proposals, so hopefully there will be some goods things coming out of this revision of the NPPF.

Members of the Planning Committee might like to read through the consultation document carefully, and the Parish Council could make their comments if you wish.

If there is anything else 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.....