

FRANT PARISH COUNCIL

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THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT ERIDGE VILLAGE HALL ON 22ND FEBRUARY 2023 AT 7.30PM

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

Mr. R. Smith
Mr. W. Patrick
Five local residents

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 18th January 2023 as a true and accurate record
The Minutes were approved.

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

- Cllr Standley confirmed he had written to Highways about possible measure to slow traffic down in Bells Yew Green, from roughly Nobles Wood and into the village. He said he would follow-up for a response. **ACTION: BS**
- Cllr Standley confirmed that Highways would move the redundant pole outside the Abergavenny Arms and that he had told the agent there was an existing electrical box adjacent to the pole that was not within Highways' ownership.
- Cllr Howell said that she had spoken with Enforcement at Wealden who had confirmed that the Inspired Villages development in Bells Yew Green had not breached the s278 or planning conditions with respect to work to the Highways.
- The Clerk relayed the response from Highways about re-siting the ESCC-owned grit bin in Frant, which is full of litter and unused, to the Scout site in Eridge. They had not agreed to this and Cllr Standley said he would liaise with them to take this forward. **ACTION: BS**
- The Clerk said she had reviewed the financial records to 2019, which showed one donation to Eridge Village Hall of £200 for the new flagpole. She said she would delve further back into the records from 2016. **ACTION: Clerk**

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

A local Frant resident, Mr. Smith, in referring to the safety issues at the junction of the A267 and B2099 (the Wadhurst Road), noted that another accident had occurred in early February whereby a lady travelling in a car with children had taken action to avoid a fast-moving vehicle and had crashed

into the boundary fencing opposite the junction. Mr. Smith said this added to the crash toll of three accidents involving injury, two of which were serious, and some others that had not been reported.

Mr. Smith summarised the options proposed in the recent Feasibility Study carried out by ESCC but concluded that his preference would be to extend the 30mph limit beyond Frant and through the junction. Two residents who live near the junction reported that although the speed data had shown an average speed of 40pmh, in fact, many drivers went well in excess of that, made more dangerous by a certain blind spot near Holly Cottages.

Cllr Standley said he had been surprised at what the data had shown and noted that if accidents were happening at the average speed of 40mph then, despite reducing the limit to 40mph, the accidents would presumably still occur. Cllr Rutherford said the data was slightly misleading as it included all vehicles slowing down to make a turn at the junction. He said that a reduction to 30mph could involve the re-engineering of the road, which would significantly increase costs.

Mr. Patrick addressed the Council to raise three requests. Firstly, he asked if the three Jubilee trees could be replanted by the benches near the football pitch to avoid the area where the marquees are positioned for bonfire night and to create a barrier between the pitch and the meadow. Secondly, he asked that measures be taken to prevent cars getting on to the green, particularly the wicket, and doing 'donut' manoeuvres and churning up the grass. He suggested various measures, including a trench to the boundary of the green along the A267, placing tree trunks and/or bollards and installing a barrier by the pavilion. Lastly, Mr. Patrick said that the pavilion required a replacement slate roof, with the latest quote being some £19,000. While recent fundraising had yielded a good sum, there was still a significant shortfall. Cllr Howell said there was likely to be a number of grants that could be accessed and agreed, along with the Clerk, to assist Mr. Patrick in identifying them.

ACTION: Clerk/JH.

A local resident of Bells Yew Green asked if there was an update into the concerns he and others had raised about the speed of the traffic along the B2169, particularly from Nobles Wood to the village gates. Cllr Standley said he would follow up with Highways on this. **ACTION: BS.**

The resident also asked about the outcome of a previous feasibility study carried out in this location. Cllr Crookshank said that the study had focussed on the area from Ivy Lane into the village. The village gates were put in at their current location before Nobles Wood was built. Following on from this, the resident suggested that the current delineation of the village boundary could be revisited and Cllr Standley said he would speak to Highways about this. **ACTION: BS.**

7. Receive reports from County and District Councillors

Cllr Howell noted that the County and District reports had been circulated prior to the meeting (see Appendices 1 & 2). Cllr Macdonald-Brown asked Cllr Standley about the situation with Sussex Integrated Health Care, noting that the surgery in Wadhurst currently had no GP partners, with residents moving to the surgery in Lamberhurst. Cllr Standley said while this was not a County responsibility he was nonetheless aware of the situation. It was noted that surgery building in Wadhurst was not attractive to GP partners.

Cllr Howell asked for Cllr Standley's opinion concerning the correspondence from Hadlow Down Parish Council seeking a collective response to encourage Highways to be more proactive. Cllr Standley said that Highways were well aware of the problems raised and, in his opinion, felt that identifying individual officers and threatening legal action was not appropriate nor a good use of public money.

8. Highways

8.1 Consider conclusions of feasibility study into safety and improvements at the junction of the A267 and B2099

Cllr Rutherford said he was pleased to see Highways engaging on the issues at this junction and that the Parish Council should seize this opportunity for dialogue. He suggested the order of priority should be: reducing the speed limit, improving junction safety and accommodating pedestrians. Cllr Rutherford also suggested that the Parish Council note its interest with Highways about moving the 40mph speed limit further out. It was **agreed** to explore this and to ask for a detailed breakdown of costs for the options identified in the feasibility study. **ACTION: Clerk.**

Cllr Standley suggested the Parish Council considered submitting a Community Match application as soon as possible.

8.2 Discuss proposal for joint action amongst parish councils against ES Highways maintenance strategy

Cllr Macdonald-Brown said the proposal seemed to be borne out of frustration and he cited his ongoing attempts to have a site meeting with Highways about the flooding at the bridge at the railway station in Bells Yew Green. Cllr Standley offered to facilitate this. **ACTION: BS.**

Cllr Best considered that joining in with the proposal against Highways would be counter-productive and that it was in the best interests of the Parish Council and its parishioners to maintain a positive relationship with Highways. Cllr Rutherford agreed and suggested it would be a waste of public funds and it was important to maintain an open dialogue with Highways.

Cllr Standley noted that considerable additional monies were allocated to Highways but that the reality was that some two thirds of the county budget went on adult social care and childrens' services. Cllr Howell agreed and added that, from her work with the People Scrutiny Committee, she was aware that the care of one child could cost up to £1 million per annum.

It was **agreed** to decline to join the group action proposed by Hadlow Parish Council.

9. Green spaces

9.1 Consider recommendations from Treework about leaning tree on Frant green

It was **agreed** to have the tree removed.

9.2 Discuss ESCC offer of reduced rural grass cuts to support biodiversity

Subject to grass and overgrowth at junctions being kept back to ensure visibility is maintained, it was **agreed** to join the ESCC trial.

9.3 Consider measures to protect Frant green from cars coming off the A267

The Clerk suggested that digging a trench may undermine the base of the banks, which are already known to be subject to erosion. Bollards were suggested as one option. It was **agreed** to investigate the options further. **ACTION: Clerk/JH.**

Cllr Crookshank observed that the tree trunks placed at apex of the Bells Yew Green Road and the A267 looked stark. Cllr Steadman said the grass around it would hopefully begin to grow now that vehicles were not trespassing over this piece of the green.

9.4 Consider request to re-site fruit trees on parish field

This, and the provision of metal grilles around the trees, was **agreed**. **ACTION: JH**

10. Finance

10.1 Approve the accounts payable

The following accounts were approved:

Item no.	Payee	Item	Amount
1.	Honnington Farm	Inv SI26377 Supply and install two gates and fencing at Eridge green	£3,300.00
2.	A. Best	Reimbursement for padlocks for Eridge green gates	£37.96
3.	N. McGregor-Gould	General maintenance	£85.00
4.	Imago	Dial2Drive Jan 2022	£76.90
5.	Rotherfield Parish Council	Share of 3 no. speed surveys on A26	£533.00
6.	Cripps	Professional charges to date for services re: deed easement of the Glebe land	£600.00
7.	SLCC	Annual subscription	£186.00
8.	SLCC	Training webinars x 3	£90.00
9.	Mulberry & Co.	Inv. 20721 Interim internal audit	£198.00
10.	Frant PCC	Annual contribution to production of Parish News	£650.00

10.2 Approve the bank reconciliation

The bank reconciliation was **approved**.

10.3 Approve contract to outsource payroll

The quotation from Mulberry & Co. was **approved**. It was agreed to investigate setting up standing orders for staff payments. **ACTION: Clerk**.

11. Policies

11.1 Discuss review of resilience policies from other bodies

Cllr Howell said that in the light of recent episodes of snowfall, power cuts and the water being cut off for multiple days, the Parish Council should consider how it can provide practical help to parishioners; she suggested, for example, approaching the water companies as a council body to ask that pallets of water be provided to the parish in the event of a future water stoppage.

Cllr Best said that it was difficult to overcome the limitations of the GDPR in terms of storing people's contact details. Cllr Crookshank added that some people do not wish to be categorised as 'vulnerable'.

Cllr Rutherford said that he understood the impulse to try to help, but considered that it was beyond the scope and ability of the Parish Council to provide that level of support in the midst of problems

that often at a regional level. He argued that the Parish Council is not set up for it, either in terms of budget or structure, noting that at present, there are only six councillors, all of whom are volunteer.

It was agreed that Cllr Howell would liaise with Wealden DC to see if they can facilitate the Parish Council providing some support. **ACTION: JH.**

12. Planning

12.1 Consider responses to NPPF consultation by The Working Group Against Over-Development

As a member of the Group, it was **agreed** to endorse its responses to the NPPF consultation.
ACTION: Clerk.

12.2 Consider licence and planning applications received and make recommendations:

WD/2023/0172/FR - Whippers In Cottage, Bunny Lane, Frant, TN3

Change of use of land to extend the residential curtilage of the property and the creation of associated residential amenity land

Councillors **agreed** to recommend **approval**.

12.3 To note application withdrawn by Wealden DC

WD/2022/3151/F – Mill Cottage, Benhall Mill Road, TN3 9AE

Demolition of existing dwelling, garage and associated buildings and erection of replacement dwelling and garage.

Noted.

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

None.

At this point in the meeting, members of the public will be excluded to allow the Parish Council to consider a confidential item, under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

14. Staffing matters

There being no other business, the meeting concluded at 9pm.

LIST OF ACTIONS

ACTION	BY WHOM
Follow-up for a response from Highways about possible measure to slow traffic down in Bells Yew Green, from roughly Nobles Wood and into the village.	BS
Liaise with ESCC about re-siting unused grit bin in Frant to the Scout site in Eridge.	BS
Review financial records to identify previous donations to village halls.	Clerk
Assist in identifying sources of grant funding to support the provision of a replacement roof for the cricket pavilion in Frant.	Clerk/JH
Follow up with Highways about possible road safety measures in Bells Yew Green from roughly Nobles Wood and into the village. To also include asking Highways whether the delineation of the village boundary in Bells Yew Green could be revisited to allow for road safety measures to be introduced beyond the village gates.	BS
Ask Highways to break-down the costs of the various options in the feasibility study at the Wadhurst Rd/A267 junction and explore option of pushing 40mph speed limit further out.	Clerk
Liaise with Highways on behalf of Cllr Macdonald-Brown to set up an onsite meeting re: flooding at the railway bridge in Bells Yew Green.	BS
Submit responses to NPPF consultation.	Clerk
Investigate options for deterring vehicles from driving on the green and cricket pitch.	Clerk/JH
Organise on parish field fruit trees to be relocated.	JH
Ask Wealden DC if and how they could facilitate the Parish Council providing support to parishioners during crises.	JH
Speak to NatWest about possibility of setting up standing orders.	Clerk

Appendix 1

County Councillor Report to Frant Parish Council

Budget

As expected the budget was approved at the full council a couple of weeks ago with a 3% increase in General Fund budget and an additional 2% for Adult Social care.

It should be noted that ESCC are in a stronger position than most of our neighbours because we took difficult decisions over the last 10 years which entailed making savings of £138m.

Police and Fire Budgets

Police budget was accepted by the Police and Crime panel at £15 a year (6.62%) increase on Band D. ESFR has approved an increase of £5 (4.8%) for a band D.

Highways

Potholes

We have repaired 7,299 potholes since Jan 1st including 2,598 in February.

There are 1,619 still in the system, many classified as within 28 day repairs.

Hadlow Down Letter

I am aware of the letter circulated to parishes from Hadlow Down especially given it is in the Division I represent. Frankly not convinced that criticising individual members of staff or threatening legal proceedings is the best course of action or indeed the best use of public money.

Sussex Integrated Health and Care

The organisation is now established and has announced its priorities for 2023

- **Increasing access to and reducing variability in primary care -***to help people get appointments at their GP as quickly as possible*
- **Improving response times to 999 calls and reducing A& waiting time-**
To help the sickest patients get the emergency care they need as quickly as possible
- **Reducing diagnostic and planned care waiting lists- to help people get the operation or procedure they need as quickly as possible.**
- **Accelerating patient flow through the system and discharge from hospital- to help make sure people do not stay in hospital any longer than absolutely necessary**

The longer 5 year strategy “Improving Lives Together” is on the website
[0438-NHS-Sussex-VF4-4.pdf \(ics.nhs.uk\)](https://www.ics.nhs.uk/0438-NHS-Sussex-VF4-4.pdf)

RWS Feb 2023

Appendix 2

District Council Report to Frant Parish Council

Kings Charles' Coronation

As you are probably aware, the Coronation of King Charles 3rd will take place on Saturday 6th May and WDC is keen to help publicise any organisations who are planning to organise a celebration or street party, or whatever.

Let them know with an email to pr@wealden.gov.uk if you want to be listed.

If you require a road closure this needs to be organised ASAP!

Wealden District News

Voter ID

The WDC Electoral Services has sent out information to residents about the need for Photographic Voter ID for the Elections in May.

This has gone directly to all those for whom we have an email address, and in notices to all the Parish Clerks and to everyone signed up for the WDC weekly email service, as well as publicising it on Web based groups such as village Facebook pages and Nextdoor groups.

Community Lottery

The Community Lottery that WDC has instituted has been launched.

The Lottery is being run for the Council by a company called Gatherwell, who run lotteries for lots of other Councils across the Country.

The Lottery will raise money for good causes, who will receive 50p from every £1 spent on a ticket.

If any not-for-profit organisation wants to participate in the lottery they can sign up at <http://www.wealdencommunitylottery.co.uk>

Ticket sales are due to start from 21st February and

The first draw will take place on 25th March 2023

Cost of Living Hub

The Council has set up a Cost of Living Hub to assist businesses, community groups and residents to cope with the cost of living crisis.

There are some grants available and it is sometimes a bit of a minefield to pick your way through what help might be available, so if you go the page on the WDC website you will be guided through the maze.

www.wealden.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support

This brings together all the different potential sources of support on to one place.

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.

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