

# FRANT PARISH COUNCIL

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## THE MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT ERIDGE VILLAGE HALL ON 22<sup>nd</sup> NOVEMBER 2023 AT 7.30PM

**Present:** Cllrs Crookshank (Chair), Macdonald-Brown, Miles, Best, Davies, Park, Rutherford, Steadman  
Ms Rosie Barnes (Clerk & RFO)

County Cllr Bob Standley, District Cllr Johanna Howell, District Cllr Jessika Hulbert,  
District Cllr Sarah Glynn-Ives

Three members of the public

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

None.

**2. Receive apologies**

County Cllr Georgia 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 18<sup>th</sup> October 2023 as a true and accurate record**

The Minutes were approved and duly **adopted**.

**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)**

Mr Payne enquired about the replacement bench on Frant green. The Clerk said she was looking at options and asked whether the existing bench was inscribed or not. Mr Payne confirmed that there was a plaque on the existing that could be transferred to the new bench.

Ms Warwick asked about the glass 'telephone' panels in the phone box in Frant. The Clerk explained that the panels had been removed to allow for the like for like refurbishment of the phone box, which was now complete. The Clerk said the panels were stored safely and that the Parish Council was considering how the phone box could be used (e.g. a second-hand book exchange) and that other parishes had replaced the glass 'telephone' panels with, for example, 'the exchange', although probably on unlisted phone boxes.

*(post meeting note: the original glass panels have now been reinstalled).*

**7. Receive reports from County and District Councillors**

Cllr Standley said the budgets were being set for next year. He noted there was currently a £16 million deficit; however, while he thought this deficit would probably narrow he said that there was significant pressure on the budget from adult social care and children's services.

Cllr Howell said she attended Full Council at which Mr Stephen Shing was duly recognised as being the longest serving member. Cllr Howell also said she had attended a recent Overview and Scrutiny meeting at which the Director of Community gave a presentation. She noted that Wealden DC had been identified as doing more than most other councils to help its residents with the cost of living. Cllr Howell noted further that the Draft Local Plan

was due to be published on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2024 and she urged Parish councillors to carefully read the draft when issued.

Cllr Howell said she had attended a meeting of the Conservators of Ashdown Forest where the high accident rate affecting grazing animals was discussed. It was noted at the meeting that the Commoners were considering removing their animals from the Forest to avoid further accidents. Cllr Howell asked that councillors reinforced the message to their parishioners to keep to below the speed limit around the Forest.

Cllr Hulbert said she would be undertaking a drive around her ward with officers, looking at local businesses and talking to local people.

Cllr Glynn-Ives referenced the Rural Business Grant Scheme with details to follow its launch in January 2024. Grants of between £2,500 – £50,000 will be available for eligible recipients, with some match funding required from the business. She also noted that Round Two of the Wealden Community Spaces Grants Programme will also launch next year with a total of pot of funds of £103,590, focussing on the delivery of supporting community infrastructure, resilience and the environment. The Round 1 funding pot was £34,530.

Cllr Glynn-Ives said that she and Cllr Hulbert were holding a drop-in event for parishioners at The Stables in Frant on 9<sup>th</sup> December and would be advertising this shortly. They also intended to do a group walk.

## **8. Planning**

### **8.1 To consider licence and planning applications received:**

#### **8.1.1 WD/2023/2490/O - Whinlatter, St Marks Road, Kent**

Outline application for three self-build private residential dwellings. All matters reserved.

Councillors **agreed** to recommend that the application be **refused** on the grounds that the proposed would allow for new houses to be built within the protected AONB, adding to the creep from Tunbridge Wells toward East Sussex and Frant and further diminishing the buffer between the two counties.

### **8.2 Applications withdrawn**

#### **8.2.1 WD/2023/1600/MFA - Little Mount Farm, Benhall Mill Road, Frant**

Variation of condition no. 8 of WD/2021/2467/MRM to allow for the provision of PV panels onto the pitched roofs of the consented scheme.

Noted.

## **9. Highways**

### **9.1 Residents' concern over safety on the A267**

Cllr Standley and Cllr Howell said they had both liaised with a local resident who lives on the A267 in Frant with concerns about road safety in this location. Cllr Standley noted that the proposed pedestrian crossing would be a key improvement to road safety.

## **10. Finance**

### **10.1 Consider forward budget in advance of setting the precept**

Councillors asked that the previous three years' spend be brought to the next meeting.

**ACTION:** Clerk

### **10.2 Approve the accounts payable**

Approved.

### **10.3 Approve the bank reconciliation**

The Clerk said that the bank reconciliation would be brought to the next meeting.

### **10.4 To note annual notification from NALC re: salary grades**

Noted.

**10.5 Approve cost of new grit bin for scout club in Eridge**

Approved. It was also agreed to contact ESCC about ensuring the existing grin bins are filled for winter.

**ACTION:** Clerk

**11. Green Spaces**

**11.1 To consider trees near junction of the A267 and the Bells Yew Green Road**

Mr Huskisson said that the birch tree was not affecting visibility. He said that growth here was part of the annual management plan to encourage diversity. Mr Huskisson said that a general tidy up could be carried out in this location.

**11.2 To consider quotation to maintain hedge on the parish field**

The merits of the two options were discussed. Cllr Crookshank asked for Mr Huskisson's opinion and he suggested that the Parish Council seek a fixed cost for three years for option 1. This was **agreed**.

**ACTION:** Clerk

**12. Community**

**12.1 To consider community events for 2024**

The Clerk asked whether the Parish Council wanted to hold a summer fête next year. It was **agreed** that the Parish Council would instead rather support others in the community who wished to organise community events.

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

Cllr Best asked the Clerk to contact Orchard Landscapes to trim back a short section of the existing hedge alongside the new open space area in Eridge, alongside Warren Farm Lane.

**ACTION:** Clerk

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 8.30 pm.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Report from County Councillor Bob Standley**

#### **Adult Social Care**

Robotic pets bring comfort to dementia sufferers. A mechanical pet project to help people with early-stage dementia has been launched in East Sussex. The county council's RoboPets scheme aims to support clients living with the early stages of the condition by giving them a robotic cat or dog which acts as a positive distraction for them. The automated pets help with anxiety and ease the pressure felt by carers by providing companionship. Since the project's launch in April, 50 companion pets have been homed across the county, with carers seeing positive health and wellbeing benefits for the people they care for. When the project ends in April 2024, the council will evaluate the benefits of the pilot scheme to establish whether the pets should be made more widely available to eligible residents across the county.

#### **Help for the vulnerable**

The County Council approves use of funding to support vulnerable households. At a meeting on 15 September 2023, the Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health agreed to approve the use of £2,000,568 from Round 4 of the Household Support Fund to provide support to pensioners, households with a disabled person and other vulnerable households between 1 October 2023 and 31 March 2024. The scheme provides a further opportunity to extend the support to vulnerable households within East Sussex who are experiencing financial challenges. In addition, I had approved in September £1.896 in assistance to those families allocated FSM.

#### **Reading Challenge**

I have reported previously on the Childrens summer reading challenge which concluded in early September. Over 6000 children took part over the summer and completed the challenge of reading six books over the holiday period.

#### **Apprentices' graduation ceremony**

I was pleased to open the graduation ceremony last Thursday. The event celebrates the success of apprenticeships which improve the skills in East Sussex. The need to improve the skill levels is vital if the county is to attract new employers with highly skilled jobs with matching higher salaries. 46 graduates plus their families and employers attended the event.

#### **County Council's support for Armed Forces wins GOLD Award**

A commitment to support current and former military personnel and their families has earned East Sussex County Council national recognition. The authority has been given a Gold Award under the Ministry of Defence Employer Recognition Support Scheme, the highest honour which recognises the positive role employers play in supporting the armed forces community. To achieve the accolade, the council had to provide 10 additional paid days leave for reservists, and have supportive HR policies in place for reservists, veterans, Cadet Force adult volunteers and the spouses and partners of those serving in the Armed Forces.

#### **New highways control hub to help plan work on county roads.**

New technology is now in place in the form of a control hub to enable East Sussex County Council's highways contractor to monitor activity, track work and find ways to improve the service. The introduction of the hub follows the council's decision to invest an additional £15.7 million to address increasing road damage caused by extreme weather. The money is paying for more patching and surface dressing work to bring roads in poor condition up to a good standard and protect them for longer.