

# FRANT PARISH COUNCIL

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## THE MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT FRANT MEMORIAL HALL ON 13<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2023 AT 7.30PM

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

County Cllr Bob Standley, District Cllr Johanna Howell,  
One member of the public

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

None.

**2. Receive apologies**

Cllr Macdonald-Brown, County Cllr Georgia Taylor. District Cllr Jessika Hulbert, District Cllr Sarah Glynn-Ives

**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 22 November 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**

On agenda to discuss.

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

The member of the public thanked the Parish Council for reinstalling the glass panels to the two phoneboxes. She also noted that the 'ditch' installed at the green was relieving the problem of surface water run-off.

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

CCllr Standley said that Cllr Howell had informed him that a new pedestrian crossing had been installed near Robertsbridge but without streetlighting. He said he followed up with this given that ES Highways is stipulating approximately 8 no. new streetlights be installed for the proposed crossing in Frant. He was told that the road (A21) on which the new crossing without lights had been put in was within Highways England's remit. CCllr Standley said he has therefore asked for further clarification from ES Highways as to why they have specified additional lighting for Frant.

CCllr Standley said he had reported the ongoing problem of flooding and a very deep pothole near the cottages immediately north of the Wadhurst turning off the A267. Cllr Rutherford said he had counted five cars that had been damaged by the pothole.

DCllr Howell referred to the recent refusal of the proposed change of use application of the boat house at Bewl Water to holiday lets and considered it would likely go to appeal. She suggested that the Parish Council may like to consider applications at Bewl Water as it could have consequences for the parish.

## **8. Planning**

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

#### **8.1.1 WD/2023/2351/F – Mill Cottage, Benhall Mill Road, Frant, TN3 9AE**

Demolition of existing dwelling, garage and workshop and erection of dwelling, garage and replacement studio. Councillors **agreed** to recommend **approval**.

#### **8.1.2 WD/2023/2763/F – 5 Sussex View, Frant, TN3 9EZ**

Addition of 2 no. roof dormers and single-storey extension

Councillors **agreed** to recommend **refusal** on the grounds that the original design of the development had undergone scrutiny by the Parish Council (and others) at the time of the application and had been carefully considered, particularly given its location within the AONB and adjacent to a Conservation Area. The result, now built, is a group of houses with a cohesive design across the site. Thus, Councillors considered that the proposed 2 no. dormers and the single-storey extension were contrary to the original design philosophy, would be at odds with neighbouring properties and would cause harm. In addition, it was concluded that the extension was effectively to the front of the property, contrary to normal planning practice.

#### **8.1.3 WD/2023/2507/F – 15 Frant Court, Frant, TN3 9DW**

Rear conservatory

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

### **8.2 To note applications approved by Wealden District Council**

WD/2023/2462/F – 2 Rushlye Close, Bells Yew Green, TN3 9BB

Two-storey side extension

Cllr Crookshank noted that the Parish Council had recommended refusal of the application. DCllr Howell said officers at Wealden DC should have consulted her in this instance but had not and that she would follow up directly with them.

### **8.3 To note applications refused by Wealden District Council**

None.

## **9. Finance & Governance**

### **9.1 Discuss forward budget and set precept for 2024-2025**

Councillors discussed the last three years of budget figures and the proposed budget for the next financial year. The prospect of raising the precept again was considered. It was also discussed how the budget needed to be robust enough to meet the Parish Council's statutory obligations and to withstand any increased in inflation. The effect on Band D properties was discussed.

It was **agreed** to set the precept at £125, 400 for 2024-25.

### **9.2 Approve the accounts payable**

**Approved.**

### **9.3 Approve the bank reconciliation**

**Approved.**

### **9.4 Risk management**

The Clerk proposed various risk assessments for the assets within the Parish Council's ownership. Cllr Park suggested that councillors may need training in this. It was **agreed** that councillors would consider this over the Christmas period and revisit it at the Full Council meeting in January.

### **9.5 Approve cost of replacement bench**

Various benches were considered to replace the damaged bench on the green in Frant and one was selected for purchase.

**ACTION: Clerk**

Cllr Park said it was important, in the future, to ensure that if the Parish Council allows a new memorial bench to be placed on any of its green space, it is made clear that it will look after the bench, within reason, until the end of the natural life of the bench; if not, the Parish Council will always be financially liable, in perpetuity. This was **agreed** and Cllr Crookshank suggested that the Parish Council only continues to look after what is currently in position on the green in Frant and Bells Yew Green.

#### **9.6 Approve quotation for repairs to play equipment**

The quotation from Wicksteed to carry out repairs in the playground at Bells Yew Green was **approved**.

### **10. Highways**

#### **10.1 Agree terms for works to streetlights**

#### **10.2 Agree future use for phone boxes**

The future informal use of the phone boxes was discussed and a second-hand book exchange was suggested. The potential problem of this facility being abused was also discussed and it was agreed that some sort of regular oversight would be needed. It was agreed to install the shelves in the phone box in Bells Yew Green (only) and to trial a book exchange for a few months.

The Clerk said she had received a quote for £550 for installing shelves in the two phone boxes.

*(post meeting note: the Clerk sought clarification on this and the quote is, in fact, for both phones boxes.)*

The Clerk noted that the phone box in Frant was listed and therefore the new shelves would need to be (ideally) not fixed but, if they were, then they needed to be capable of removal without any impact on the fabric of the phone box.

### **11. Green Spaces**

#### **11.1 Discuss options for perimeter of Frant green and outcome of meeting with Cricket Club**

Cllr Crookshank said a local resident had tripped on one of the chains between posts near the entrance to Shernfold Park. The chains have been removed. He also said he had witnessed a vehicle reverse in between the posts to park on the green and he had approached the occupants of the house in question to remove the vehicle. It was **agreed** that a solution had to be found to stop this continued behaviour.

Cllr Crookshank said he met with Mr Bowie and members of the Cricket Club with the latter being particularly keen on the Parish Council implementing a solution to stop vehicles driving up on to the green and damaging its surface, especially the wicket. He said that an option of placing posts a metre apart (from the roughly the silver birches opposite Frant Court to the sleepers near the Frant Stores) had been suggested and one quote had been received. It was **agreed** to wait for a further quote and revisit this at the next meeting.

The Clerk read out another quote for reinstating the footpath across Frant green which involved removing the overgrowth of vegetation. It was noted that the original tarmac footpath was actually relatively wide. As above, it was **agreed** to look at this again at the next meeting.

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

Cllr Rutherford said that the fingerpost on Down Lane was lying on the ground. It was **agreed** that he would remove it and store it until its repair could be organised. He also said that the fingerpost in Bells Yew Green was damaged.

**ACTION: Clerk**

Cllr Best made reference to the recent report about the Albert Well, produced by Archaeology South East on behalf of the Parish Council. He noted that the report concluded that the Well was of 'moderate' heritage significance and he questioned whether there was merit in applying for the Well to be delisted. The Clerk said this outcome would be unlikely but an application could still be made. It was agreed that even if the Well were delisted, this would not affect the Parish Council's ownership of, or responsibility to, its upkeep.

**ACTION: Clerk**

Cllr Miles said the cautionary sign for HGVs on Dundale Road needed to be put right.

**ACTION: Clerk**

Cllr Park asked the Clerk if there had been progress with the grit bin and/or clearance of culverts on Dundale Road.  
The Clerk said not and that she would follow this up.

**ACTION: Clerk**

Cllr Crookshank thanked Councillors for their support and participation throughout the year and wished everyone a happy Christmas.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 8.45pm.