

Forest Row Parish Council

Clerk: Mr D O'Driscoll
Email: parishclerk@forestrow.gov.uk

(Office Hours: Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm)



To: All members of AMENITIES AND SERVICES COMMITTEE:
Cllrs. J Wogan (Chairman), Hill, Josephson,
R Lewin, McNally, Summers and Williams

Community Centre
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East Sussex
RH18 5DZ

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Dear Sir/Madam,
Your attendance is required at an extra-ordinary meeting of the AMENITIES AND SERVICES COMMITTEE to be held on **TUESDAY 21st JULY 2020** via Zoom at **7.30pm**.

Date: 15 July, 2020

Mr D O'Driscoll

THE FIRST FIFTEEN MINUTES WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR RELEVANT QUESTIONS AND REMARKS FROM THE PUBLIC – IF ANY.

AGENDA

1. PUBLIC QUESTIONS - the meeting will start no later than 7.45pm
2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
3. TO DECLARE ANY INTERESTS OR REQUEST DISPENSATION PERTAINING TO THE ITEMS BELOW
4. TO RESOLVE TO CONSIDER THE RECORDS OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9TH JUNE 2020 AT THE NEXT ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE
5. TO RESOLVE TO CONSIDER CLARIFICATION OF (NON-CONFIDENTIAL) ACTIONS FROM LAST MEETING AT THE NEXT ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE
6. TO RESOLVE TO NOTE UPDATES ON MATTERS NOT REQUIRING A DECISION AT THE NEXT ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE
7. TO CONSIDER A REQUEST FOR USE OF COUNCIL-OWNED OPEN SPACES BY LOCAL BUSINESSES
8. CORRESPONDENCE NOT OTHERWISE DEALT WITH
9. ITEMS FOR REFERRAL TO FULL COUNCIL OR COMMITTEE

"This meeting will be held electronically via ZOOM, and the meeting ID and password will be circulated separately to Members. The meeting is also open to public attendance (with an initial period for public questions), but for security reasons, any member of the public wishing to participate is asked to telephone or email the Parish Clerk in advance (01342 822661 or parishclerk@forestrow.gov.uk) for the access codes."

AMENITIES & SERVICES COMMITTEE

BACKING PAPERS FOR EXTRA-ORDINARY MEETING 22nd JULY 2020

Agenda item	Description	page
	Clerk's briefing to the Committee	1
7	'Transition out of lockdown' business proposals (& map)	2-3
	Cllr McNally email of proposals	4-6

**COUNCILLORS' BRIEFING TO THE MEETING OF THE AMENITIES AND SERVICES COMMITTEE DATED
22nd JULY 2020**

1. **PUBLIC QUESTIONS** The same business representatives may wish to be present as were on the last occasion this matter was discussed (F&P 7th July)
2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** – none received at the date of this briefing note.
3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – Unlikely to be relevant – although Cllr Josephson may wish to register a personal interest as a village trader
4. **RECORDS OF MEETING** – to defer to next ordinary meeting.
5. **CLARIFICATION OF (NON-CONFIDENTIAL) ACTIONS FROM LAST MEETING** – ditto.
6. **UPDATES ON PROGRESS (MATTERS NOT REQUIRING A DECISION)** – ditto

7. **TO CONSIDER A REQUEST FOR USE OF COUNCIL-OWNED OPEN SPACES BY LOCAL BUSINESSES**

This issue was previously discussed at the Finance Committee meeting of 7th July, with business representatives present, although the written submissions arrived at very short notice. After a lengthy discussion, Committee resolved as follows:

“that the Council would engage fully and use its reasonable endeavours to contribute the things it has control over, taking into account HMG, law, Guidance and insurance conditions, and conditional on clear wide support from businesses and affected residents.”

Although positive, this resolution was clearly (and understandably) lacking in specificity, and if something practical is to be done while the need for business recovery is still pressing, further discussion is needed. The main areas of Parish Council control are its open spaces, hence this meeting. Additionally, following the F&P meeting, Cllr McNally made some outline suggestions to take things forward, and these are included with the backing papers. For Committee to decide what the Council is prepared to offer and on what conditions.

ACTION: to resolve as appropriate

8. **CORRESPONDENCE NOT OTHERWISE DEALT WITH**
None not already in Councillors' Reading.
9. **ITEMS FOR REFERRAL TO FULL COUNCIL OR COMMITTEE**

Forest Row: A plan for the transition out of lockdown

We ask for support from the parish council to ease the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis.

The economic crisis

Retail in Forest Row (and nationally) has been struggling over the last 2 years before COVID-19 arrived, and the village has seen a number of closures and empty shop spaces¹. During the period of COVID-19 Forest Row has witnessed the **permanent closure of at least 7 retailers**² resulting in an approximate **loss of 36 local jobs**. 36 jobs at an average of 25 hours a week on an average wage of £10 per hour, represents **a local wage loss of about £500,000**³. Other local businesses have furloughed staff and are not in a position to employ students returning from university during the holidays, adding further to the loss of local wages.

Restaurants and Pubs

Forest Row's restaurants and pubs collectively employ (full and part time) over 150 staff with a **combined wage bill in excess of £2 million per year** into the local economy. Indirectly, these businesses spend approximately £200,000 with local suppliers. For example, Java and Jazz source cakes locally (Forest Row) at a cost of £25,000 per year. The summer is crucial to the profit of many of these businesses. This period, alongside 3 weeks in December, covers bills for the rest of the year. Therefore, the COVID-19 crisis could not have come at a worse time.

Case Study: Java and Jazz

- **Trading at 60% of turnover** since lockdown.
- Java and Jazz usually employs 30 staff from Easter in both full time and part time roles.
- **14 staff** currently employed
- **18 staff** currently furloughed (some staff have returned home and are working at Java because they would otherwise have no income; some furloughed staff earn more on furlough than returning to part time work; others are living with vulnerable people)

Case Study 2: The Hop Yard

Opened off licence and food.

- **Trading at 20% of turnover** since lockdown.
- **10 staff** furloughed (this has reduced to 5 since the easing of lockdown on July 4th)
- The Hop Yard usually employs an additional 2 or 3 summer staff, which is unlikely to this summer because capacity has been reduced to 1/3.

No pub or restaurant is expecting sales over 60% of last year's takings because they will not be able to operate at full capacity in their internal space.

Excluding the loss of revenue for the individual businesses, the consequential **loss to the Forest Row economy is expected to be approaching £1 million**⁴, some of which can be recovered if we can collectively act and quickly create usable outdoor spaces that make Forest Row an attractive destination.

Outdoor space

We propose the **closure of Hillside and the square end of Lower Road** to vehicles for 3 months (at certain hours), relocating parking to another area and providing more seating areas for pubs and restaurants (see plan below). This will also resolve the social distancing issues of the narrow pavement along Hillside (especially for wheelchair access). Traffic calming measures will be essential to ensure public safety.

¹ All numbers are indicative of the financial challenge.

² Costa, Lilly's lingerie, The Lavender sisters, The Internet Electric Lighting shop, Private Collection shop, Lily and Grace, and Taffles

³ 36 x 25 x 10 x 52 = 468,000

⁴ £800,000 in wages and £80,000 spend in other local businesses.

David O'Driscoll

From: Mike McNally <mike.mcnally.frpc@gmail.com>
Sent: 08 July 2020 12:47
To: kolisko_info@yahoo.co.uk; David O'Driscoll; robert.lewin3@btopenworld.com; vhillforestrow@btinternet.com; jwoganfrpc@gmail.com; rowena_moore@me.com; Tony Lewin; Brett Williams
Subject: Parish Council / Local Business Transition thoughts

Dear all,

Having pondered last night's meeting I have been trying to figure out how the PC and local businesses can work together in a way that is mutually beneficial and offers something of value to all businesses and the community. So here are my first thoughts. Please see these ideas as a jumping off point not as something carved in stone. I am sure our combined experience and understanding of the opportunities and challenges can deliver better but it is a start.

At present I have included only members of the F&P as some context for this email would be required for all committee members. Nor have I addressed our guests last night. I also suggest waiting till the next Full Council for a resolution would render these proposals redundant as there is a fair sense of urgency.

Best

Mike

Part 1: A Village on the Green

A joint business group & PC branded Village Market initiative. It could be similar in feel to the Xmas & Easter Frow business trails. This will offer maximum opportunity for all retailers to be part of an event that celebrates the diversity of FROW businesses and remind parishioners and others outside of FROW what the village offers. A FROW village market as opposed to the normal market days. Offering al fresco sampling of drinks, foods, haircuts, products, services - a chance to broadcast what the PC does - a sort of pop-up village on the green. Perhaps a live music stage to celebrate the talent.

Location; Foresters Green or if weather inclement PC Car Park.

When: End of July? Mid August? A two day event to accommodate all comers. Hours: 11.00 - 17:00 so minimal impact on residents.

Strengths:

A showcase of the village in one place celebrating all that is to offer - a village taster menu if you will - so that residents and consumers from outside the parish get a snapshot of why they should visit and enjoy the uniqueness of Forest Row.

Equality of representation for all businesses. It is up to them whether they take advantage. No obvious competitive advantage to any particular business.

Opportunity to offer special deals / discounts at actual stores, bars, restaurants etc.

No noise impact on residents

PR opportunites

Weaknesses:

Issue of managing demand and footfall especially regarding safe distancing though we have a better understanding of this than a few months ago

Cost - it would need contributions from businesses and marketing support.

Logistics - litter, toilets etc.

Opportunities:

As outlined above.

Threats:

Management of footfall, expectations and cohesiveness. However we can manage the first, we will have to manage the second and if the business group and PC work fast, efficiently and with an entrepreneurial spirit most issues can be surmounted.

Health & Safety

Anti-Social behaviour / Security costs

Residential concerns

Please note: This is a partnership. Costs cannot be covered solely by the PC.

Part 2: The Village 'Cafe' Culture

I propose that the PC allows certain areas of PC land to be (literally) ring fenced for seating and tables for ALL restaurants and pubs/bars customers to use. Suggest Hillside (not War Memorial), parts of Foresters Green and other spaces deemed appropriate by the PC. No roads to be closed or calmed.

These will be takeaway only and no table service will be allowed. This is to avoid potential issues over customers sitting at venue specific tables and consuming food from other venues and ensures no obvious competitive advantage.

Supply of seating & tables to be decided but a joint PC & business initiative is recommended.

The PC will be indemnified by the businesses against liability for accidents etc resulting from anti-social or drink related accidents.

Litter clean-up will be the responsibility of the venues.

Areas will be 'dressed' in bunting, umbrellas (maybe a beach) and generally be attractive and fun whilst adhering to safe distancing regulations. Propose this be a joint initiative as above. All furniture to be removed to storage by 7pm.

Hours to be weekend only (Sat / Sun) 10 - 7pm. ASAP to last weekend in September.

Strengths:

Provision of al fresco eating and drinking with a friendly, inclusive and celebratory ethos

All food / drinks retailers can benefit

Community led approach

PR opportunities

Weaknesses:

Logistically challenging

Similar to A Village on the Green

Opportunities:

Benefits all businesses from the Kebab Van to Java & Jazz and points in between

Promotion of community spirit

Threats:

Anti-social behaviour

Litter

Residential concerns

