

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF FOREST ROW PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON 9th JANUARY 2024 AT 7.30PM IN THE GARDEN ROOM AT THE COMMUNITY CENTRE

PRESENT: Cllrs. Eichner, Christie, Cocks, Hugo, Jaffay, La Djoï, Lewin, Rainbow, Summers, Taylor-Smith

APOLOGIES: Cllrs. Evans, Gilbert, Scott, Volkens & Waters

NOT PRESENT:

IN ATTENDANCE: The Clerk, Asst. Clerk. District Cllr. Patterson-Vanegas, County Cllr. Galley and 5 members of public

C1/24 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A member of public commented that he did not feel his remarks at the last Full Council meeting had been reflected correctly in the minutes. The Chair read out an amended section that was approved.

C2/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Apologies were accepted from Cllrs. Evans (holiday), Gilbert (holiday), Scott (work), Volkens (family) & Waters (holiday)

C3/24 RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Meetings of 5th December 2023. The Chair explained that minute no. 169/23 had been amended. Cllr. Eichner proposed that the minutes including the amendment be accepted. This was seconded by Cllr. Lewin and AGREED.

C4/24 TO DECLARE ANY INTERESTS OR REQUEST DISPENSATION PERTAINING TO THE ITEMS BELOW

Cllr. Christie declared a potential DPI in item 16 of the agenda.

C5/24 DELEGATED DECISIONS

A list had been previously circulated and was NOTED

C6/24 CHAIRS COMMENTS

Cllr. Eichner commented that the new Councillors were forging a new path and were already starting to change things.

Cllr. Lewin explained that he would be reducing his involvement in the Council. He had no firm plans at the moment and would stand down as Chair of Community Services. He would focus on the Shed project and would stand down from Council once that was running. He felt the time was right to step back a little as the Council was now in safe hands. He also congratulated the team on the Christmas celebration and said what a wonderful day it had been.

Cllr. Eichner thanked him for his contributions and said what a massive loss he would be to the Council.

C7/24 CLERKS REPORT ON MATTERS NOT REQUIRING A DECISION

This had been previously circulated and was NOTED.

C8/24 SUMMARY FINANCIAL REPORT

This had been previously circulated and was NOTED

C9/24 PRINCIPAL COUNCILS

County Cllr. Galley explained that County had some tough decisions to make regarding budgets and there would have to be some cuts to services. 80% of their budget went on adult care and children's services.

The Fire Authority needed to balance their budget too.

Roads – he was taking up pothole issues in his area.

District Cllr. Patterson-Vanegas spoke. She congratulated the Parish Council on their Christmas celebration. She reported for County Cllr., Taylor that the A22 would be re-surfaced again soon. The Wealden District Council Local Plan was going to an extra-ordinary meeting on 8th February with a 6 week consultation period to follow. She was working with a team concerned with air pollution and diffuser tubes had been placed in the village to monitor this. She wanted to see more equity in Wealden investments in both urban and rural areas.

C10/24 STANDING COMMITTEES & PLANNING GROUP

Reports had been previously circulated from Finance & Policy Committee and Planning Group – NOTED
Facilities Committee – nothing to report.
Community Services – Cllr. Lewin circulated a report – NOTED.

C11/24 WORKING GROUPS

Reports had been previously circulated and NOTED.

C12/24 REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr. Hugo reported that there would be a Forest Row Festival meeting on 23rd January.
Cllr. Lewin advised that he could not attend the meeting of Ashdown Forest Parish Liaison Group meeting on 11th January. Cllr. Rainbow advised that she would attend.
Cllr. Eichner advised that the Twinning Association would be hosting a French breakfast at the Community Centre on 27th January.

C13/24 ADOPTION OF THE REVENUE BUDGET FOR 2024/25 & SETTING OF THE PRECEPT

Members of public expressed their concern that there would be people in the village that could not afford an increase in the precept.
The Chair replied that whatever the precept was set at, it would upset some people, but this Council wanted to help parishioners and provide more services, and these would have to be paid for.
Cllr. Eichner proposed that the budget as set out at the meeting on 5th December be adopted and the precept set at £650,000.
This was seconded by Cllr. Taylor-Smith.
Cllr. Summers requested a recorded vote.

For: Cllrs. Christie, Cocks, Eichner, Hugo, Jaffay, La Djoï, Lewin, Rainbow & Taylor-Smith
Against: Cllr. Summers
Abstentions: None

C14/24 ALLOCATION OF THE CO-OPTED MEMBERS TO COMMITTEES

Cllrs. Rainbow & Taylor-Smith advised which Committees they would like to join.
Cllr. Eichner proposed the following:
Cllr. Rainbow – Facilities & Community Services Committees
Cllr. Taylor-Smith: Finance & Policy & Facilities Committees.

This was seconded by Cllr. Hugo and AGREED

C15/24 ALLOWANCE FOR CO-OPTED MEMBERS

Cllr Eichner proposed that Standing Orders be adjusted to allow a provision to co-opted Councillors equivalent to the Members' allowance.
This was seconded by Cllr. Christie and AGREED

C16/24 A WORKING GROUP TO RESEARCH AN ENERGY/ INVESTMENT VEHICLE

There was much discussion regarding this proposal.
Cllr. Christie took part in the discussion but did not vote.
Cllr. Lewin proposed that a working group be set up to discuss this matter further, reporting back to Finance & Policy. Also, to be discussed at the next Outreach meeting on 23rd January. The Group to consist of Cllrs. Christie, Eichner, Hugo, Jaffay, Lewin & Rainbow, (and to include the Clerk and/or the Asst Clerk).
This was seconded by Cllr. Jaffay and AGREED.

C17/24 POSSIBLE RECORDING/BROADCASTING OF MEETINGS

Cllr. Eichner proposed that in principle, this Council would consider some form of broadcasting of meetings.
Cllr. Eichner and la Djoï to assemble a short report with costs etc for consideration.
This was seconded by Cllr. Lewin and AGREED

C18/24 PROPOSALS FOR A LEGACY

This matter would be deferred until the next meeting.

C19/24 ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION BY FULL COUNCIL OR COMMITTEE

Cllr. Lewin advised that he had purchased a thermal imaging camera. Details of rental/deposits etc were still to be worked out.

Cllr. la Djoï asked that the rules around Cllrs. remuneration etc be formalised. The Clerk advised that he was investigating this matter.

Cllr. Taylor-Smith advised that she would like to look at holding future events for the Community following the success of the Christmas celebration.

The meeting closed at 9.40 pm.

SIGNED:

DATE.....(Chairman)