

Forest Row Parish Council

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To: All members of FOREST ROW PARISH COUNCIL:
Cllrs. Eichner (Chair), Christie, Cocks, Evans,
Gilbert, Hugo, Jaffay, La Djoï, T Lewin, Scott,
Summers, Volkers & A M Waters

Date: 29TH November 2023

Dear Sir/Madam,

Your attendance is required at a meeting of the
FOREST ROW PARISH COUNCIL to be held on
TUESDAY 5th DECEMBER 2023 in the Garden Room
at the Community Centre at **7.30 PM**.

Mr David O'Driscoll
Clerk to Forest Row Parish Council

THE FIRST FIFTEEN MINUTES ARE AVAILABLE FOR QUESTIONS AND REMARKS FROM THE PUBLIC ON ANY RELEVANT TOPIC. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ARE WELCOME TO STAY AND ADD QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS ON THE AGENDA ITEMS, AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIR OF THE MEETING

AGENDA

1. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
3. RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETING
 - 3.1. Approval of the minutes of Full Council held on 26th September & 10th October 2023
 - 3.2 To consider any objections to deletion of the digital transcripts of those meetings
4. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS/REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION
5. INTERVIEW AND VOTING ON CANDIDATES FOR CO-OPTION TO FILL CURRENT COUNCILLOR VACANCIES, AND RECEIPT OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE AS APPROPRIATE
(NOTE: STANDING ORDERS SHALL STAND SUSPENDED FOR THIS ITEM TO THE EXTENT NECESSARY TO ENABLE CONDUCT OF THE PROCESS)
6. CHAIR'S COMMENTS
7. SUMMARY FINANCIAL REPORT & DELEGATED DECISIONS (for noting)
(NOTE: IN VIEW OF THE PRIORITY OF OTHER BUSINESS, FORMAL REPORTS FROM THE CLERK, PRINCIPAL COUNCILS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS WILL BE DEFERRED ON THIS OCCASION)
8. CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT BUDGET FOR 2024-2025
9. CONSIDERATION OF MATTERS ARISING FROM THE OUTPUTS OF THE SECOND COUNCIL 'RETREAT', AND RESOLUTION AS APPROPRIATE
10. POSSIBLE RATIFICATION OF THREE ADDITIONAL WORKING GROUPS
11. CO-OPTION OF A NON-COUNCILLOR TO THE FACILITIES COMMITTEE
12. REPLACEMENT OF TREE LIGHTS ON VILLAGE GREEN
13. MEMORIAL FOR HER LATE MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II
14. ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION BY FULL COUNCIL OR COMMITTEE

FULL COUNCIL**BACKING PAPERS FOR MEETING 5th DECEMBER 2023**

	Description	Page nos
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**COUNCILLORS' BRIEFING FOR THE MEETING OF FULL COUNCIL
ON 5th DECEMBER 2023**

1. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**
2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
3. **RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS** 26th September & 10th October 2023
4. **INTERESTS/ DISPENSATIONS**

Members who have a financial interest in any of the items covered by this agenda may wish to declare a personal interest. Note: this does not include liability for Council tax.

CO-OPTION

5. **INTERVIEW & VOTING ON CANDIDATES FOR CO-OPTION**

There are two candidates for the two vacancies. Personal statements are being circulated as confidential backing papers. The candidates will be brought in one-by-one in alphabetical order, and Members may ask relevant questions.

Members will be asked: a) whether they wish to proceed to a vote. (Note: there is a legal obligation to advertise for co-option, but no obligation to accept any given candidate).

b) if they wish to vote, to follow the procedure in Standing Order 9 (text excerpted for convenience of reference).

Any successful candidate will then sign be asked to sign their acceptance of office, and may join the meeting forthwith.

Standing Orders will be suspended to the extent required by the above process.

ACTION: as specified above

REPORTS

6. **CHAIR'S COMMENTS**
7. **SUMMARY FINANCIAL REPORT & LIST OF DELEGATED DECISIONS**

The summary financial report is effectively to the end of month 8, but the November salary payments need to be added in (which include tax, NI and LGPS contributions, plus back pay for the 2023-24 pay settlement) in the total sum of £48,658.65. Performance against forecast should be around 66.7%. With apportionment of the precept and adding in the November salaries, income is at 66% , and expenditure at 69.5%, so within acceptable limits. There is one delegated decision to report, taken under the urgent business provisions. Please raise any queries in advance of the meeting.

ACTION: to note

[Note: in view of the priority of other business, formal reports from the Clerk, Principal Councils and Committee Chairs will be deferred on this occasion].

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION/ DECISION

8. **CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT BUDGET FOR 2024-25**

The budget process began in September. The general shape of the budget was discussed at by Full Council on 10th October, and a decision taken to prepare a draft on a dual basis of

lower & higher increases in the precept. Committees then met to adopt initial draft budgets – Community Services on 31st October, Facilities on 7th November, and Finance & Policy on 21st November. The ‘Star Chamber’ meeting of Committee Chairs, to discuss the drafts as a whole, took place on 27th November, and the consolidated draft is now submitted for consideration, together with an appended advice note.

Members are asked to read the budget figures and advice note carefully in advance of the meeting, as this is the substantive opportunity to comment on the figures and request any adjustments. A vote will be taken at the conclusion of the discussion to accept the consolidated draft as amended, and barring any genuine emergencies which necessitate last-minute amendments, it will be formally adopted and the resultant precept set at Full Council in January.

9. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE OUTPUTS OF THE SECOND COUNCIL ‘RETREAT’, AND RESOLUTION AS APPROPRIATE

9.1 The councillors’ recent review meeting (the ‘retreat’) finalised a vision statement that had been under discussion previously over several meetings, as follows:

“As part of this vibrant village, our council is here to help build a connected community where we look after the place, bring people closer and make things happen”

Members will be aware that Cllr Scott has given an account of the extended meaning of this statement. Does Council wish formally to adopt it as its ‘vision statement’?

9.2 It has been proposed that for convenience of administration, all Council business – Full Council, Committees and Working Groups – should take place on Tuesdays (with the possible exception of Planning and ‘Meet & Greet’ sessions). Does Council wish to adopt this as a working norm?

9.3 It has also been proposed that Council should consider adopting the ‘sociocratic’ method of decision making, and that the next scheduled meetings should have the discretion to test the method out in dealing with their business, with a full review thereafter. Does Council support this proposal?

9.4 The question of whether the current committees could be replaced by an alternative structure has not yet been fully discussed. It is proposed that the issue be referred to the ‘Discovery’ working group for further investigation. Does Council agree to this?

ACTION: to resolve the above matters as appropriate

10. WORKING GROUPS

Council currently has two recognised working groups (‘Outreach & Comms’ and ‘Discovery’) and one short term task-and-finish group (‘Christmas Community Celebration’).

For administrative efficiency, Council is asked to consider recognising the following:

10.1 The Road Safety Group, which with County Cllr Taylor’s assistance, has been negotiating with Highways over traffic calming measures. Cllr Lewin can provide a brief update.

10.2 The Shed Project, which is still researching the format, precise location and feasibility of the proposed shed premises. Cllr Lewin can provide a brief update.

10.3 A group to investigate the possibility of an investment company to support local energy saving and generation projects. This is at the legal & practical feasibility research stage, and Cllr Christie has prepared a business case which sets out the proposal in detail.

ACTION: to resolve as appropriate

11. REQUEST FOR CO-OPTION OF A NON-COUNCILLOR TO THE FACILITIES COMMITTEE

The Facilities Committee wishes to co-opt Alex J (formerly Cllr) Waters as a non-councillor member of the Committee, under Standing Order 4c. (excerpt attached)

ACTION: to resolve as appropriate

12. REPLACEMENT OF TREE LIGHTS ON VILLAGE GREEN

The decorative lights in the trees on the patch of village green behind the Peter Griffiths Hall were vandalised by children climbing in the branches, and Facilities Committee resolved on 7th November as follows:

"152/23/3. Cllr. Hugo proposed that the lights on the trees behind the Peter Griffiths Hall be renewed. This was seconded by Cllr. Gilbert and AGREED."

For appropriately robust replacements we have been quoted (including the professional installation which would be required for a mains installation) £4770.00 + VAT, with a narrow possibility of getting them installed before Christmas if agreed today. Because of the price, a vote of Council for this out-of-budget expenditure is required. For Council to decide.

ACTION: to resolve as appropriate

13. MEMORIAL FOR HER LATE MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH I

We have been asked to consider whether the Council should organise some permanent form of memorial for the late Queen. Is this acceptable to Council, and if so, in what form?

ACTION: to resolve as appropriate

14. ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION BY FULL COUNCIL OR COMMITTEE

Standard item

EXCERPT FROM STANDING ORDERS

9. VOTING ON APPOINTMENTS

Where more than two persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the Council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. A tie in votes may be settled by the casting vote exercisable by the chairman of the meeting.

Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 28/11/2023

Month No: 8

Committee Report

	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
Finance & Policy							
401 Finance & Administration							
4176 FI-Precept Received	446,000	446,000	0			100.0%	
4180 Misc Income	38	0	(38)			0.0%	
4181 FI-Wayleave Income	6	5	(1)			112.0%	
4182 FI-Devolved Services Income	735	1,450	715			50.7%	
4183 Community Warden Hire	0	10,000	10,000			0.0%	
4190 FI-Interest Received	4,700	1,500	(3,200)			313.3%	
Finance & Administration :- Income	451,478	458,955	7,477			98.4%	0
4100 PENSION TOP UP	0	4,000	4,000		4,000	0.0%	
4101 FI-Salaries	216,433	365,000	148,568		148,568	59.3%	
4102 FI-Payroll Outsource Costs	385	420	35		35	91.7%	
4103 FI-Contrib. to Library Salary	0	4,000	4,000		4,000	0.0%	
4108 FI-Staff Training/Travel	171	1,000	830		830	17.1%	
4110 Community Warden Costs	424	500	76		76	84.7%	
4111 Forest Rate	31	25	(6)		(6)	122.4%	
4120 Postage	75	500	425		425	15.0%	
4121 Telecommunications	5,080	7,700	2,620		2,620	66.0%	
4123 Stationery	506	600	94		94	84.4%	
4124 FI-Subscriptions	3,418	6,600	3,182		3,182	51.8%	
4125 FI-Insurance	10,528	10,000	(528)		(528)	105.3%	
4126 Printer/copier	2,266	4,000	1,734		1,734	56.6%	
4133 FI-Chairman's Fund	0	500	500		500	0.0%	
4134 FI-Parish Meeting	0	50	50		50	0.0%	
4135 FI-Councillors Training/Travel	475	500	25		25	95.0%	
4136 Security Checks	132	150	18		18	87.8%	
4137 FI-Members Allowances	854	6,000	5,146		5,146	14.2%	
4151 FI - Bank Charges	963	1,800	837		837	53.5%	
4156 FI-Legal & professional fees	1,738	3,500	1,762		1,762	49.7%	
4157 FI-Audit & Financial Managemen	2,582	3,300	718		718	78.2%	
4158 FI-Van Lease	0	300	300		300	0.0%	
4160 Office Equipment	424	500	76		76	84.8%	
4165 FI-Election Fund	5,118	4,000	(1,118)		(1,118)	127.9%	
4166 Wayleaves	1	25	24		24	5.6%	
4169 Community Occasion	221	500	279		279	44.1%	
7101 PR- Advertising/Publicity	33	50	18		18	65.0%	
7102 PR-Website	720	750	30		30	96.0%	
7110 PR-Newsletter & Distribution	0	500	500		500	0.0%	
Finance & Administration :- Indirect Expenditure	252,573	426,770	174,197	0	174,197	59.2%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	198,905	32,185	(166,720)				

Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 28/11/2023

Month No: 8

Committee Report

	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
403 Other Grants							
4360 Other Grants	650	7,000	6,350		6,350	9.3%	
4361 FRGSA Subsidy	0	2,500	2,500		2,500	0.0%	
Other Grants :- Indirect Expenditure	<u>650</u>	<u>9,500</u>	<u>8,850</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>8,850</u>	<u>6.8%</u>	<u>0</u>
Net Expenditure	<u>(650)</u>	<u>(9,500)</u>	<u>(8,850)</u>				
Finance & Policy :- Income	<i>302,811</i> 451,478	458,955	7,477			98.4% <i>66%</i>	
Expenditure	<i>301,882</i> 253,223	436,270	183,047	0	183,047	58.0% <i>69.2%</i>	
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	<u>198,255</u>						
<u>Amenities & Services</u>							
101 Allotments							
1180 Allotment Rents	2,036	1,750	(286)			116.3%	
Allotments :- Income	<u>2,036</u>	<u>1,750</u>	<u>(286)</u>			<u>116.3%</u>	<u>0</u>
1135 Allotments-Water & Upkeep	436	700	264		264	62.3%	
Allotments :- Indirect Expenditure	<u>436</u>	<u>700</u>	<u>264</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>264</u>	<u>62.3%</u>	<u>0</u>
Net Income over Expenditure	<u>1,599</u>	<u>1,050</u>	<u>(549)</u>				
102 Village Greens							
1280 VG-Hire Income	748	750	2			99.7%	
Village Greens :- Income	<u>748</u>	<u>750</u>	<u>2</u>			<u>99.7%</u>	<u>0</u>
1236 Outdoor Maintenance	4,557	8,000	3,443		3,443	57.0%	
1237 Outdoor Planting	634	1,000	366		366	63.4%	
1239 VG-Utilities	263	100	(163)		(163)	263.3%	
Village Greens :- Indirect Expenditure	<u>5,455</u>	<u>9,100</u>	<u>3,645</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3,645</u>	<u>59.9%</u>	<u>0</u>
Net Income over Expenditure	<u>(4,707)</u>	<u>(8,350)</u>	<u>(3,643)</u>				
104 Amenities General							
1400 Amenities grants/donations	0	1,500	1,500			0.0%	
Amenities General :- Income	<u>0</u>	<u>1,500</u>	<u>1,500</u>			<u>0.0%</u>	<u>0</u>
1436 Skate & Play areas	3,134	1,500	(1,634)		(1,634)	208.9%	
1447 Dog Fouling	1,494	3,200	1,706		1,706	46.7%	
Amenities General :- Indirect Expenditure	<u>4,628</u>	<u>4,700</u>	<u>72</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>72</u>	<u>98.5%</u>	<u>0</u>
Net Income over Expenditure	<u>(4,628)</u>	<u>(3,200)</u>	<u>1,428</u>				

Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 28/11/2023

Month No: 8

Committee Report

	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
105 Outdoor Maintenance							
1501 Outdoor Maintenance Equipment	312	1,705	1,393		1,393	18.3%	
Outdoor Maintenance :- Indirect Expenditure	<u>312</u>	<u>1,705</u>	<u>1,393</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1,393</u>	<u>18.3%</u>	<u>0</u>
Net Expenditure	<u>(312)</u>	<u>(1,705)</u>	<u>(1,393)</u>				
203 Street Lighting							
2314 SL-Power	2,985	6,600	3,615		3,615	45.2%	
2336 Streetlights	5,574	8,250	2,676		2,676	67.6%	
Street Lighting :- Indirect Expenditure	<u>8,559</u>	<u>14,850</u>	<u>6,291</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>6,291</u>	<u>57.6%</u>	<u>0</u>
Net Expenditure	<u>(8,559)</u>	<u>(14,850)</u>	<u>(6,291)</u>				
204 Road Safety							
2436 RS-Road Safety	0	750	750		750	0.0%	
Road Safety :- Indirect Expenditure	<u>0</u>	<u>750</u>	<u>750</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>750</u>	<u>0.0%</u>	<u>0</u>
Net Expenditure	<u>0</u>	<u>(750)</u>	<u>(750)</u>				
601 Cemetery							
6180 BU-Burial Fees	4,226	13,000	8,774			32.5%	
Cemetery :- Income	<u>4,226</u>	<u>13,000</u>	<u>8,774</u>			<u>32.5%</u>	<u>0</u>
6123 Cemetery Admin	256	330	74		74	77.6%	
6151 BU- Cemetery Rates	1,100	1,210	110		110	90.9%	
Cemetery :- Indirect Expenditure	<u>1,356</u>	<u>1,540</u>	<u>184</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>184</u>	<u>88.1%</u>	<u>0</u>
Net Income over Expenditure	<u>2,870</u>	<u>11,460</u>	<u>8,590</u>				
Amenities & Services :- Income	7,010	17,000	9,990			41.2%	
Expenditure	20,746	33,345	12,599	0	12,599	62.2%	
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	<u>(13,736)</u>						
Property & Assets							
201 Bus Shelters							
2136 BS-Bus Shelters	105	0	(105)		(105)	0.0%	
Bus Shelters :- Indirect Expenditure	<u>105</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>(105)</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>(105)</u>		<u>0</u>
Net Expenditure	<u>(105)</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>105</u>				

Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 28/11/2023

Month No: 8

Committee Report

	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
205 Miscellaneous Assets							
2551 Offsite Car Parks	150	0	(150)		(150)	0.0%	
7108 PR-Notice Boards	31	0	(31)		(31)	0.0%	
Miscellaneous Assets :- Indirect Expenditure	181	0	(181)	0	(181)		0
Net Expenditure	(181)	0	181				
301 Community Centre							
3180 CC-Lettings	13,429	15,000	1,571			89.5%	
3181 CC-Equipment Hire	256	400	144			64.0%	
3182 CC-Rents	14,676	22,000	7,324			66.7%	
3185 MISC - incl books/copying)	295	400	105			73.8%	
3187 CC Drinks Machine Income	440	500	60			88.0%	
3189 Misc Property Refunds	3,083	0	(3,083)			0.0%	
4180 Misc Income	100	0	(100)			0.0%	
Community Centre :- Income	32,279	38,300	6,021			84.3%	0
3111 CC-Rates & Services	28,242	33,000	4,758		4,758	85.6%	
3116 CC-Upkeep/Cleaning	7,106	13,200	6,094		6,094	53.8%	
3127 CC - Drinks Machine	811	770	(41)		(41)	105.3%	
Community Centre :- Indirect Expenditure	36,159	46,970	10,811	0	10,811	77.0%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	(3,879)	(8,670)	(4,791)				
303 Venue on the Green							
3306 VOTG Income	1,391	4,000	2,609			34.8%	
Venue on the Green :- Income	1,391	4,000	2,609			34.8%	0
3304 Votg Non Youth Equip	0	500	500		500	0.0%	
3305 VOTG Running Costs	2,227	4,000	1,773		1,773	55.7%	
Venue on the Green :- Indirect Expenditure	2,227	4,500	2,273	0	2,273	49.5%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	(836)	(500)	336				
Property & Assets :- Income	33,670	42,300	8,630			79.6%	
Expenditure	38,671	51,470	12,799	0	12,799	75.1%	
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(5,001)						

Localism & Community Projects

Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 28/11/2023

Month No: 8

Committee Report

	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
<u>206 Community Transport</u>							
2678 Medical Car Scheme Income	131	300	169			43.8%	
4180 Misc Income	27	0	(27)			0.0%	
Community Transport :- Income	158	300	142			52.7%	0
2554 Wealdlink	510	1,000	490		490	51.0%	
2601 Voluntary Medical Car Service	0	200	200		200	0.0%	
Community Transport :- Indirect Expenditure	510	1,200	690	0	690	42.5%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	(352)	(900)	(548)				
<u>207 Market</u>							
3184 CC-Market Income	4,945	9,000	4,055			54.9%	
Market :- Income	4,945	9,000	4,055			54.9%	0
3151 CC-Market expenditure	4,769	1,430	(3,339)		(3,339)	333.5%	
Market :- Indirect Expenditure	4,769	1,430	(3,339)	0	(3,339)	333.5%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	176	7,570	7,394				
<u>209 Localism & Community Proj Misc</u>							
2905 Repair Cafe & Wellbeing Servic	(516)	2,000	2,516			(25.8%)	
Localism & Community Proj Misc :- Income	(516)	2,000	2,516			(25.8%)	0
2603 Emergency Supplies	0	6,000	6,000		6,000	0.0%	
2700 Repair Cafe & Wellbeing	300	4,000	3,700		3,700	7.5%	
Localism & Community Proj Misc :- Indirect Expenditure	300	10,000	9,700	0	9,700	3.0%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	(816)	(8,000)	(7,184)				
<u>304 Cafe</u>							
3480 Gages - Sales	15,415	20,000	4,585			77.1%	
Cafe :- Income	15,415	20,000	4,585			77.1%	0
3436 Gages-Purchase of Equipment	3,576	2,200	(1,376)		(1,376)	162.5%	
3460 Gages -Purchases Food etc	12,400	13,200	800		800	93.9%	
Cafe :- Indirect Expenditure	15,976	15,400	(576)	0	(576)	103.7%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	(561)	4,600	5,161				

Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 28/11/2023

Month No: 8

Committee Report

	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
306 Thursday Club							
3680 TC-Subscriptions	117	400	283			29.2%	
Thursday Club :- Income	<u>117</u>	<u>400</u>	<u>283</u>			<u>29.2%</u>	<u>0</u>
3636 TC-Running Costs	163	1,100	937		937	14.8%	
Thursday Club :- Indirect Expenditure	<u>163</u>	<u>1,100</u>	<u>937</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>937</u>	<u>14.8%</u>	<u>0</u>
Net Income over Expenditure	<u>(46)</u>	<u>(700)</u>	<u>(654)</u>				
406 Youth Provision							
4676 YP-Grants & Other Income	1,154	2,500	1,346			46.2%	
Youth Provision :- Income	<u>1,154</u>	<u>2,500</u>	<u>1,346</u>			<u>46.2%</u>	<u>0</u>
4603 YP - Dev costs & General Expen	1,915	3,500	1,585		1,585	54.7%	
Youth Provision :- Indirect Expenditure	<u>1,915</u>	<u>3,500</u>	<u>1,585</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1,585</u>	<u>54.7%</u>	<u>0</u>
Net Income over Expenditure	<u>(761)</u>	<u>(1,000)</u>	<u>(239)</u>				
Localism & Community Projects :- Income	21,273	34,200	12,927			62.2%	
Expenditure	23,633	32,630	8,997	0	8,997	72.4%	
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	<u>(2,360)</u>						
Grand Totals:- Income	<u>364,764</u>	<u>513,431</u>	<u>552,455</u>	<u>39,024</u>		<u>92.9%</u>	<u>667</u>
Expenditure	<u>384,933</u>	<u>336,274</u>	<u>553,715</u>	<u>217,441</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>60.7%</u>	<u>69.57</u>
Net Income over Expenditure	<u>177,157</u>	<u>(1,260)</u>	<u>(178,417)</u>				
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	<u>177,157</u>						

FOREST ROW PARISH COUNCIL

ACTION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY

PERIOD - from: 18/09/2023 to: 29/11/2023

DECISION TAKEN	REASONS	OFFICERS NAME	DATE OF DECISION	COST
RUBBISH REMOVAL FROM THE ALLOTMENT	URGENT	Cllr. Eichner & Hugo	30/10/23	1500.00

BUDGET 2024-25: CONSOLIDATED DRAFT : v.1 Committee adopts pre-Star Chamber

FINANCE & POLICY INCOME			TBC		notes	
4176 Precept						
4180 Misc F&P income			0		none guaranteed	
4181 Wayleaves			5		unchanged	
4182 Devolved services income			1450		public toilet scheme	
4190 Interest received			5000		rate dependent	
TOTAL F&P INCOME			6455		excl.precept & ringfenced carryover	
					(= approx 49.8% of 2023-24 figure)	
FINANCE & POLICY EXPENDITURE			lower	higher	notes	
4101 Salaries			395000	418700		incl extra staff + 6% increase
4102 Payroll costs			800	800		inflation uprate
4103 Library salary			5000	5000		inflation uprate
4108 Staff training & travel			1000	1000		unchanged
4111 Forest rate			30	30		unchanged
4120 Postage			300	300		declining usage
4121 Telecommunications			7700	7700		unchanged
4123 Stationery			450	450		declining usage
4124 Subscriptions			6600	6600		unchanged
4125 Insurances			11000	11000		inflation uprate
4126 Printer/copier			4400	4400		inflation uprate
4133 Chairmans Fund			250	250		previous usage
4134 Parish meeting/ event			200	200		likely this year
4135 Cllr training & travel			2000	2000		new councillors
4136 Security checks (DBS)			150	150		unchanged
4137 Cllr allowances			7000	7000		current full sum
4151 Bank charges			1800	1800		includes card machine
4156 Legal & professional fees			3500	3500		unchanged
4157 Audit/financial mgt			4000	4000		inflation uprate
4158 Van lease			300	300		unchanged
4160 Office equipment			500	500		unchanged
4161 Office maintenance			500	500		unchanged
4165 Elections			1000	1000		pos by-election
4166 Wayleaves			10	10		unchanged
4169 Community event			1000	1000		enhanced frequency
7101 Advertising			300	1500		general PR
7102 Website			1000	1000		site m'tce charge
7110 Newsletter			2000	2000		allows hard copy
4360 Grants made (incl FRSGA)			12000	17500		unchanged
TOTAL F&P			469790	500190		
						(approx 107.7% (lower) or 114.6% (higher) of 2023-24 figure)

FACILITIES: INCOME		
1180 Allotment rents	2000	as per receipts 2023-24
1280 VG hire	750	unchanged
1281 VG utilities	0	unchanged
6180 Burial fees	18000	estimate on increased rates
1400 Am'ts grants & donations	1000	none guaranteed
3180 CC lettings	20000	estimate on increased rates
3181 CC equipment hire	400	unchanged
3182 CC rents	22000	unchanged
3185 CC misc income	400	unchanged
3187 CC drinks machine	600	as per receipts 2023-24
3188 CC grants & donations	100	not guaranteed
3306 VoTG income	2200	estimate on increased rates
TOTAL FACILITIES INCOME	67450	(approx 159.4% of 2023-24 figure)

FACILITIES: EXPENDITURE		lower	higher	highest	notes
1135 Allotment upkeep		700	700	700	unchanged
1236 Outdoor maintenance		400	400	400	to reflect current year
new Street cleaning/litter		10000	16000	20000	increased activity incl trees
1237 Outdoor planting		0	5000	12000	new code
1501 Outdoor equipment		1000	1000	1000	unchanged
1436 Skate & play areas		2500	2500	2500	incl machinery replacement
1447 Dog waste		5000	10000	18000	repairs & m'tce
6123 Cemetery admin		3500	3500	3500	inflation uprate
6151 Cemetery rates		350	350	350	inflation uprate
2314 Streetlights - power		1200	1200	1200	estimate on prev yr
2336 Streetlights		6600	6600	6600	allows for increased bills
2136 Bus shelters		20000	20000	20000	estimated inflation uprate
1439 Benches		0	0	0	no budget allowance - to be
1442 Litter bins		0	0	0	financed through CIL monies
2551 Offsite car park		0	0	0	see above new code
2553 Grit bins		0	0	0	postponed this budget year
6139 War memorial		0	0	0	no budget allowance - to be
7108 Noticeboards		0	0	0	financed through CIL monies
3111 CC rates & services		65000	65000	65000	incl code 3116 upkeep
3127 Drinks machine		1000	1000	1000	unchanged
3136 CC enhancement		5000	5000	5000	
3304 VoTG non-youth equipment		500	500	500	replacement contingency
3305 VoTG running costs		4000	4000	4000	inflation uprate
TOTAL FACILITIES EXPENDITURE		126750	142750	161750	(= approx 150.8% or 169.8% or 192.4% of 2023-24 figure)

COMM./SERVICES		lower	higher	highest	notes
2678 Medical transport income	300	unchanged	50	50	assumes unchanged
3184 Market income	7500	assumes development	1200	1200	inflation uprate
2905 Service development income	500	nominal	7000	7000	incl. manager fee
3480 Gages sales	22000	inflation uprate	18000	18000	inflation uprate
3680 Th.Club subscriptions	200	on 2023-24 figures	2000	2000	unchanged
4676 Youth grants/subscriptions	2500	assumes current numbers	750	750	unchanged
4180 Misc.income	0	not guaranteed	3500	3500	unchanged
TOTAL C-S INCOME	33000	(= approx 96.5% of 2023-24 figure)	1500	2000	contingency
			0	0	if yard site used
			0	0	not yet agreed
			1000	1500	assessments
			500	1000	alternative Committee choices
			2000	2500	3rd party surveys
			2000	2000	renamed from R/C & wellbeing
			500	2500	feasibility studies
TOTAL C-S EXPENDITURE		40500	44500	44500	(=approx 121.3 or 133.3% of 2022-23 figure)

SHORTFALL for precept: 530135 or 580535 or 599535

TOTAL INCOME (pre-precept): 106905
TOTAL EXPENDITURE: 637040 or 687440 or 705400

**BUDGET SHORTFALLS
POST COMMITTEE**

	income	expend low	expend high	expend highest	sh'fall low	sh'fall high	sf'fall highest
FINANCE	6455	469790	500190	500190	463335	493735	493735
FACILITIES	67450	126750	142750	161750	59300	75300	94300
COMMSERV	33000	40500	44500	44500	7500	11500	11500
TOTALS	106905	637040	687440	706440	530135	580535	599535

RESERVES 2023-25

	Projected 2023-24	Actual 23-24 v.2		lower	higher
General	180000	194949	Movements for 2024-25 round up to 200,000	200000	200000
Nominated					
Playground	40000	32500	increase for works	35000	55000
Highway match	2000	2000	increase for works	15000	25000
By-elections	1000	1000	hold steady	1000	1000
Cemetery land	35000	30000	hold steady	30000	30000
CC refurb	32000	31000	hold steady	30000	30000
Devolved services	5000	5000	hold steady	5000	5000
PWLB loan	11500	10000	hold steady	10000	10000
CIL	10084	10084	nothing spent	10000	10000
TOTAL	316584	316533		336000	366000
			increase from precept	19467	49467

ADVICE NOTE ON THE BUDGET 2024-25

The draft budget for 2024-25 has now been through both the Committee stage and scrutiny by the Committee Chairs and is submitted for consideration by Full Council.

The starting point was the discussion in Full Council on 10th October, which issued in the decision to prepare the budget on a dual basis of an increased precept of £550K and £700K. This decision generated some noise on the Facebook Community page, but needs to be set in context.

The precept for 2022-23 was £415K. In my advice note, I had offered the options of a 'post-covid restoration' budget or an active investment budget, but Council chose the third option of a 'steady state', namely the same as the previous year. For the following year 2023-24, I made my view clear that we should be aiming to regain lost ground. My first written advice was for a precept of £488K and in personal conversations I said that the ideal would be £500K. I also made the explicit point in both advice notes that while the existing council might have chosen to sacrifice the development of community services in favour of a lower parish tax, their decision should not restrict the potentially different priorities of a 'new' council from May 2023. In practice, they ignored both these points, and indeed aggravated the situation by lopping off £10K from the final recommendation of £456K.

It was therefore inevitable that the precept for the coming year 2024-25 would have to rise significantly: a) to redress the internal balance of the council's finances; b) to compensate for the ongoing effects of inflation on our overheads; and c) to allow for Council to invest in a community-led programme of service development, which was the platform on which the Forest Row Forward group based its approach to the electorate.

So much for the background, and the current Council has no need to apologise for its stance, which was an unavoidable consequence of previous decisions made by others.

I prepared the draft budgets on the dual basis as requested, except that I concluded the reasonable limit figure for the higher version was £650K rather than £700K. I make the following comments

Facilities Committee

- Projected income has increased by about £25K, due to increased hiring and cemetery fees.
- The expenditure codes have a 'high' and 'higher' version, reflecting Committee views.
- Four expenditure codes remain unchanged, and three remain covered by CIL income
- Five codes are subject to inflation uprates, based largely on this year's figures.
- The major increases are in respect of outdoor maintenance (with a significant prediction for extra tree work), a new code to cover street cleaning and enhanced litter collection, an allowance for disability-accessible play equipment, and two codes to cover the likely demands for works on the Community Centre.
- These changes reflect both Committee's concerns and representations from the public.

Community Services Committee

- Predicted income is little changed, although the forecast market income reflects its changed status and Gages sales are uprated for increased prices. A nominal figure is included for initial income from new projects.
- Seven of the expenditure codes are either unchanged or adjusted for inflation. Code 2700 (which originally supported the repair café and was reallocated to new service support) is retained at a slightly reduced level.
- The emergency equipment code in the current budget has been withdrawn.

- New codes have been created for the youth forum and the shed project, and the road safety and environmental support codes have been enhanced , all to reflect existing activity and its development.
- New codes have also been created to allow for the costs of future formal consultation of the community, and for feasibility studies for capital projects.
- The additional money in this committee therefore actively targets service development at both existing and future capital-based level, in line with the Council's stated policy.

Finance & Policy Committee

- The non-precept income has been depleted from previous year by the loss of warden hires. Savings income now accounts for a significant amount following increased interest rates. Most expenditure codes remain either unchanged or uprated for inflation.
- The major areas of increase are:
 - Salaries, allowing for this year's increase and a contingency for some additional hours for outdoor work and a part time community development assistant/ fundraiser. As a prudent measure, a general 6% increase for 2024-25 is factored into the 'higher' figure of this code.
 - Training for both councillors and staff
 - General external communications, including a more regular newsletter and upgraded website.

I have gone into some detail in order to highlight that the figures submitted for consideration are not in any way "think of a number and double it", but represent a considered approach to dealing with inflationary pressures on overheads, together with a reasonable provision for immediate and longer term community service development for the benefit of the whole community.

The 'lower' figures produce an aggregated expenditure figure of £637,040, resulting in a pre-precept shortfall of £530,135. To this I think should be added a £20,000 increase in nominated reserves, being the minimum necessary to sustain them at appropriate levels. Hence a precept of £550,000.

The 'highest' figures produce an aggregated expenditure figure of £706,440, resulting in a pre-precept shortfall of £599,535. To this I think should be added a £50,000 increase in nominated reserves, being a more realistic amount to bring them up to appropriate levels. Hence a precept of £650,000.

The Committee Chairs were satisfied that the consolidated draft budget was acceptable, and that the higher version represented a fair call on public funds to sustain the Council's commitments and planned projects for the coming year. The higher draft revenue budget is therefore submitted to Council on that basis. If any mitigation is felt desirable, I would propose this be directed at the reserves provision rather than revenue.

DOD

Parish Clerk & RFO

29th November 2023



Forest Row Investment Company R&D Proposal

November 2023

BUSINESS CASE FOR IN-BUDGET EXPENDITURE

Executive summary

This proposal sets out the rationale for the creation of an investment company for Forest Row, and a proposal to fund an R&D development phase establishing and carrying out the steps do so. Such a vehicle would help build a stronger, more resilient community by supporting and creating local jobs and businesses, and enable Forest Row to directly benefit from clean, affordable, locally sourced energy.

Problem statement

Forest Row, like many communities across the country, is faced with mounting energy costs that amount to a substantial and increasing proportion of household bills which affect different members of the community disproportionately. At the same time opportunities for local business incubation, mentorship and training are few and far between, with little in the way of government and corporate initiatives locally. Those who do have money to invest do not have attractive options to invest in local community assets and initiatives and are thus faced with putting funds in global schemes with little clarity about impacts and use, and the prospect of increasingly uncertain returns from traditional forms of investment in the future.

Situation analysis

The establishment of a community investment vehicle in Forest Row would provide a transformative building block for the village in financial, social and environmental terms, enabling a catalytic sequence of resilience through energy efficiency and generation at community level, economic activity and job creation, positive environmental action, and community cohesion through local endeavour.

This initiative is time sensitive in that we have the opportunity now to leverage partnership with the launch of a local energy efficiency business [OneZero](#) which seeks to partner with the community in piloting their business here in Forest Row in the first quarter of next year. This would see successive phases of appropriate Forest Row housing stock being retrofitted with energy efficiency measures (battery storage, insulation, solar panels, heat pumps etc) potentially financed by Forest Row's own finance vehicle, offering both reduced energy costs for households and returns for local investors. This could in turn start to build the asset base to finance further

local energy initiatives, such as energy generation, energy storage and community heat, and other community assets in the future.

Solution options

The establishment of such a vehicle would serve to:

- Empower local people to develop energy projects that will benefit the local area, meet environment goals, provide dependable investment returns and the potential for community investment at local level.
- Projects could potentially save and generate clean energy, such as an energy efficiency programme for Forest Row housing stock, a rural heat network, ground mount and rooftop solar energy generation, energy storage and trading using community electric vehicles.
- kick-start private investment to start or scale up projects and invest in community assets.

Project description

We propose to undertake a concerted phase of development of this initiative over the coming months with the following activities and goals:

- Desk research to identify key organisations, structures and expertise in the energy, impact investment and government community energy and local finance development space.
- Interviews with key organisations to develop appropriate strategy, legal structures, and timelines for Forest Row.
- Begin application process for development funding from relevant organisations.
- Initial community communications programme for dissemination through FRPC.

We are already in touch with the [Community Energy Fund](#) about development funding from March 2024 which could underwrite further development of this project and have been invited by CEF to deliver an EOI ahead of a full application in January. However, the process of successfully winning these funds and others like them is highly competitive, so we seek to ask the community to resource this initiative through community reserve funds to the end of this budget and capital project R&D in the next year.

Cost-benefit analysis

We have a wealth of energy, finance and business expertise in the community to help develop and build this project, and 3 core professionals willing and able to put time into the initial stages.

Geoff Dunnett, a former project finance lawyer specialising in the energy sector; Fionna Winston, a chartered accountant, and Benjamin Christie, a parish councillor and former project developer in the renewable energy sector.

We request £5,000 funds from this year's reserve budget to enable development work on this project to start in December 2023 to March 2024.

Breakdown:

Activity	Unit	Cost
R&D and project development	£1000 per month x 4	£4000
Professional fees and expenses (legal, incorporation, web etc)	£1000	£1000
Total		£5000

Dependant on other funding sources, we will then seek capital R&D funding from next year's budget in April 2024.

Recommendation

We recommend that the parish council grasp the opportunity presented at this moment with a key local partner in OneZero, and approve this proposal to enable the establishment of a potentially transformative project in Forest Row's community and environment.

STANDING ORDER 4c

The members of a committee may include non-councillors unless it is a committee which regulates and controls the finances of the Council. Pursuant to the Local Government & Housing Act 1989, such non-councillor members shall not be entitled to vote save in matters of the management of land, the promotion of tourism or the management of a festival



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Your Reference

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28.11.2023

Valid Until

28.12.2023

Currency

GBP

Page

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Billing Address

Forest Row Parish Council
The Community Centre
Hartfield Road
Forest Row
East Sussex
RH18 5DZ
UNITED KINGDOM

Delivery Address

Forest Row Parish Council
The Community Centre
Hartfield Road
Forest Row
East Sussex
RH18 5DZ
UNITED KINGDOM

Item Code	Description	Quantity	Price	Total	VAT
Product					
501CW	LED Spotlight 24V Warm White, Rubber Green Cable 24V-20m	30	70.00000	2,100.00	420.00
PRTR24V	DC Transformer for BRIN10N & FCL Bouquet	9	40.00000	360.00	72.00
			Subtotal	2,460.00	492.00
Installation					
	Installation			2,310.00	462.00
			Subtotal	2,310.00	462.00

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This quotation is valid for 10 days from the date of the quotation

Payment Terms - Nett 30 days from date of invoice

Notes:

Total Before Tax	£4,770.00
Total Tax Amount	£954.00
Total Amount	£5,724.00

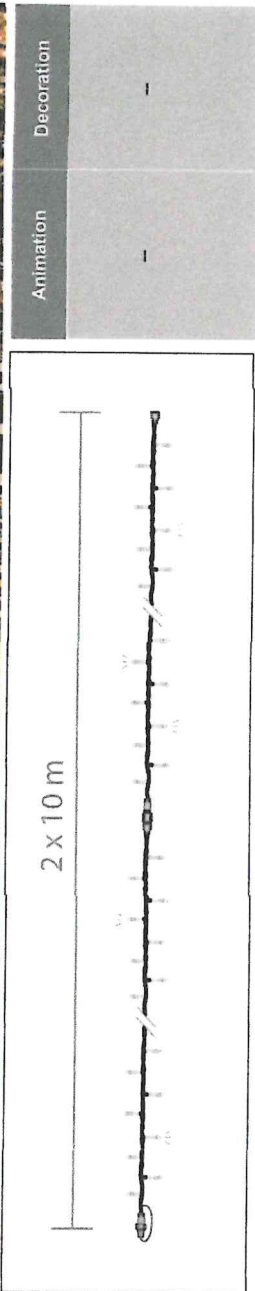
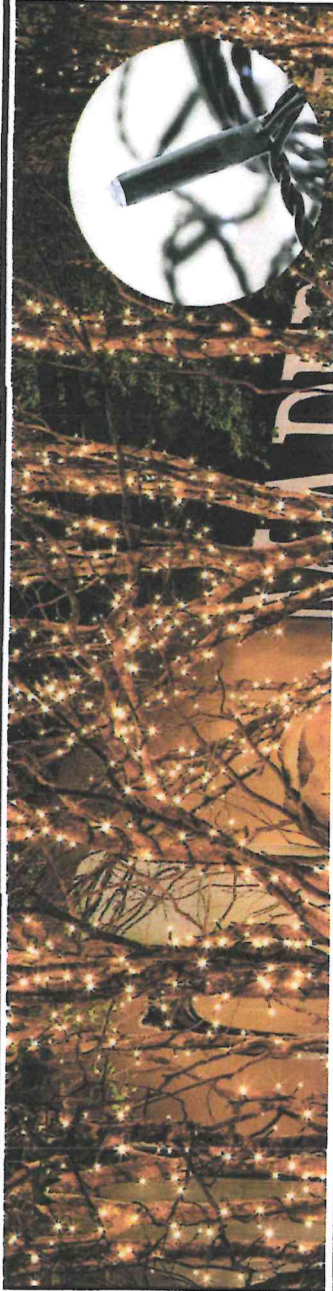
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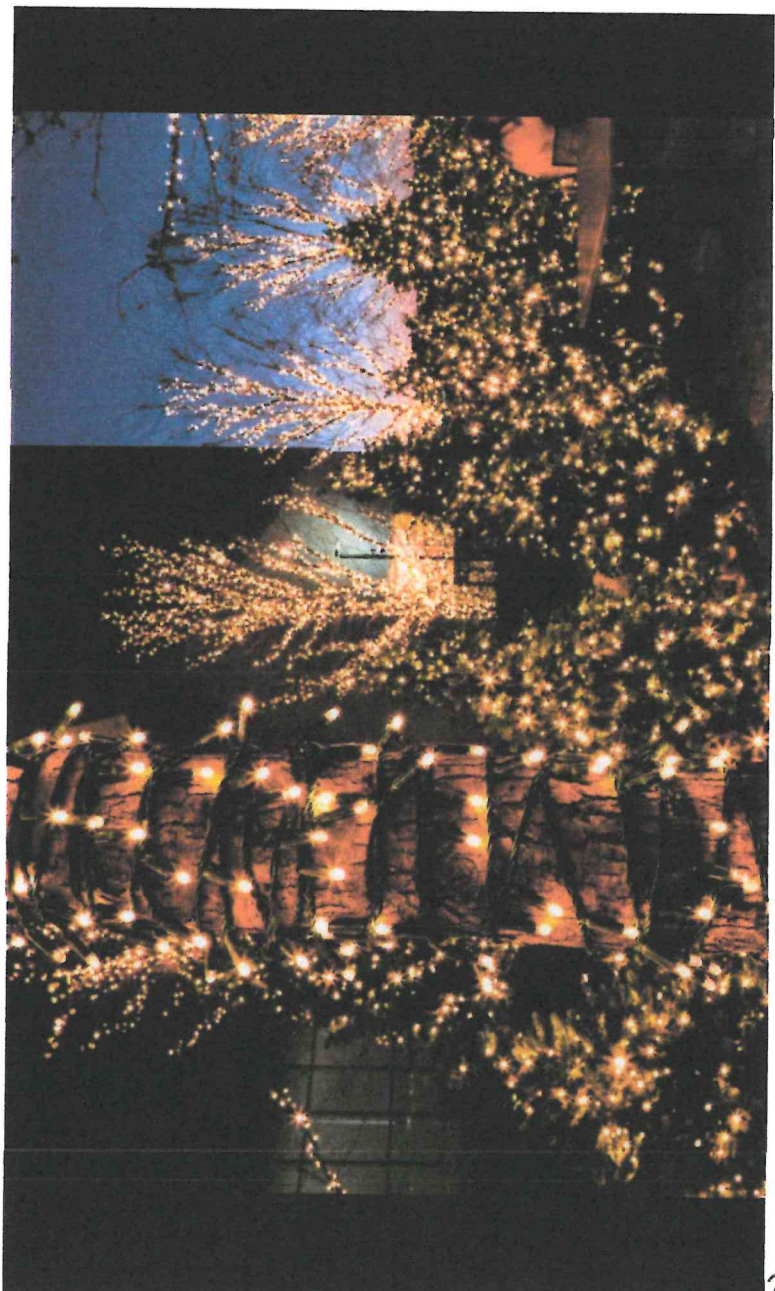
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501CW -- SPARK LIGHT- led-24V-20m



Compatible with our wireless animation solutions SAR (ref. PRX-E and PRX-R in option)
Compatible with our solutions for programming lighting time slots (ref. C003-T in option)



Code	501CW
Type of material	Professional garlands and accessories
Dimensions (m)	Length : 20
Voltage (V)	24
Wattage (W)	6.2
Connection	Standard
Weight (Kg)	1.7
Number of fastening points	---
Number of lights	196
Brightness (lumens)	835.04
Ratio No. luminous points / Power	31.6
Electrical classification	3
IP	IP55
Main colour	---
Maximum number that can be connected	4

Energy balance	
Total area (m2)	---
Net area (m2)	---
S x Cx	---
Carbon Footprint * (kg CO2 equivalent)	8.64

