

Forest Row Parish Council

Clerk:
Email:

Mr David O'Driscoll
parishclerk@forestrow.gov.uk

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



Community Centre
Hartfield Road
Forest Row
East Sussex
RH18 5DZ

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To: All members of FOREST ROW PARISH COUNCIL:

Cllrs. Eichner (Chair), Christie, Cocks, Evans,
Gilbert, Jaffay, Killick, La Djoï, Matthews, Rainbow,
Scott, Summers, Taylor-Smith, Volkers & A M
Waters

Dear Sir/Madam,

Your attendance is required at an extra-ordinary meeting
of the FOREST ROW PARISH COUNCIL to be held on
TUESDAY 29th APRIL 2025 in the Garden Room at the
Community Centre at **7.30 PM**.

Date: 23rd April 2025

Mr David O'Driscoll
Clerk to Forest Row Parish Council

THE FIRST FIFTEEN MINUTES ARE AVAILABLE FOR QUESTIONS AND REMARKS FROM THE PUBLIC.
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 OF 25th FEBRUARY 2025
4. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS/DISPENSATION REQUESTS FOR THIS MEETING
5. DELEGATED DECISIONS
6. REVIEW OF ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING
7. CHAIR'S COMMENTS
8. CLERKS REPORT ON MATTERS NOT REQUIRING A DECISION:
 - 8.1 Annual Parish Meeting
 - 8.2 Internal audit
 - 8.3 Approval of the Annual Return
 - 8.4 Speed Indication Signs
9. ORAL REPORTS FROM PRINCIPAL COUNCILS
10. ORAL REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS
11. ORAL REPORTS ON MATTERS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES
12. SUMMARY FINANCIAL REPORT
13. FORMAL APPROVAL OF RESERVES BUDGET FOR 2025-26
14. TWO URGENT GRANT APPLICATIONS
15. ARRANGEMENTS FOR VE DAY
16. THE CEMETERY CONSULTATION – NEXT STEPS
17. REVIEW OF THE CONTENT & ALLOCATION OF REFLECTION DAY ACTION POINTS
18. REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS
19. ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION BY FULL COUNCIL OR COMMITTEE

FULL COUNCIL**BACKING PAPERS FOR MEETING 29th APRIL 2025**

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**COUNCILLORS' BRIEFING FOR THE MEETING OF FULL COUNCIL
ON 29th APRIL 2025**

1. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

3. RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF 25th FEBRUARY 2025

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/ DISPENSATIONS

5. DELEGATED DECISIONS

6. REVIEW OF ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

ACTION: to note & approve

7. CHAIR'S COMMENTS

8. CLERK'S REPORT ON MATTERS NOT REQUIRING A DECISION

8.1 Annual Parish Meeting This will be held at the VENUE on 7th May beginning at 7:00pm. There will be a presentation by the disability charity *On My Side* about their new ventures at Hambro Hall and Orlingbury House, and by our own Youth Service. The floor will then be open to residents to have their say on any matters of concern.

8.2 Internal audit The internal audit is scheduled for 2nd May. The internal audit report will be sent to all Councillors afterwards as it is a requirement prior to item 7.3 below.

-098.3 Approval of the Annual Return, which will now take place at the Annual Meeting of Council on 13th May. I am hopeful that we will have been able to upload on to the new website the documentation required by the Transparency Regulations before the auditor's visit, as deficiencies in that area of compliance have been highlighted since last year.

8.4 Speed Indication Signs These were purchased at the end of the financial year and delivered this month. They are still sitting in their packaging in the Office. It would be helpful if a decision could be made as to where they are going to be installed.

9. ORAL REPORTS FROM PRINCIPAL COUNCILS

All County & District Councillors have been invited to attend and report orally on any relevant issues. Devolution is certain to loom large.

10. ORAL REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES & WORKING GROUPS

The Chairs of Committees and current facilitators of working groups have been asked to report orally on current and planned projects.

11. ORAL REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Members who currently represent the Council on outside bodies have been asked to report orally on any relevant current issues.

ACTION: to note reports

12. SUMMARY FINANCIAL REPORT

I will draw down a report from the accounting system shortly before the meeting, to provide Councillors with an overview of Month 1 financial activity.

ACTION: to note (queries as necessary)

13. FORMAL APPROVAL OF THE RESERVES BUDGET FOR 2025-26

The final balance sheet total at the year-end (including debtors and delayed payments) was £365,406. This, together with the addition from the precept of £50,000 as set out in the budget advice note of 27th November 2024, is the sum available for the reserves budget, a total of £415,406. I attach the draft reserves budget, showing last year's figures, and this year's proposals with allocation between general and nominated reserves with the reasoning behind them. These proposals were approved by Finance & Policy on 15th April and are now submitted to Full Council for ratification.

ACTION: to resolve as required (queries as appropriate)

14. TWO URGENT GRANT APPLICATIONS

Grant applications are normally dealt with by Finance & Policy. The two submitted here arrived too late for the last F&P meeting, but both have date limitations, so I have accepted them for consideration by Full Council.

ACTION: to resolve as appropriate

15. ARRANGEMENTS FOR VE DAY

It has been suggested that the occasion be marked with an informal gathering at the War Memorial in the evening, with a lighting of the Peace Lamp. Is this acceptable to Council? And if so, at what time? If not, what alternative is proposed?

ACTION: to resolve as appropriate

16. THE CEMETERY CONSULTATION - NEXT STEPS

The cemetery consultation has now concluded. The response rate was a somewhat disappointing 18.5%, and the results were mixed, but with a higher proportion of first choices for Option D – purchase of adjacent land (38.6%) and Option A – closure of the cemetery (36.2%). [A trial redistribution of votes on an STV proportional representation basis produced the same result]. There were a number of requests for further information and/or a public meeting. Where does Council wish to go from here?

ACTION: to resolve as appropriate

17. REVIEW OF THE CONTENT & ALLOCATION OF REFLECTION DAY ACTION POINTS

A document (attached) has been produced summarising the action points from the Day of Reflection, noting in particular Committee tasks in red and Member tasks in green. Council is requested to review progress on these points.

ACTION: to consider and resolve as appropriate

18. REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS

It was agreed some time ago that Council's policies should be reviewed, and at Full Council on 25th February a specific request was made for a review of Standing Orders, with commentary on the current version to be provided for Councillors' guidance. The latter was circulated to everyone on 3rd April.

That review now falls due, and at Cllr Jaffay's request, I also attach the Standing Orders of Portishead & Frome Town Councils, "so Councillors can have a look at how other progressive Councils have altered little areas to become more efficient."

ACTION: to consider and resolve as appropriate

19. ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION BY FULL COUNCIL OR COMMITTEE

FOREST ROW PARISH COUNCIL

ACTION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY

PERIOD - from: 20/02/2025 to: 23/04/2025

DECISION TAKEN	REASONS	OFFICERS NAME	DATE OF DECISION	COST
NONE				

FRPC RESERVES 2025-
2026 V.2

	2024-25		2025-26	
	actual	reason	actual	reason
General reserve	200,758	held at ± £200K	249,467	in line with budget
Nominated				
Playground	45,000	increase for interim works	45,000	held steady
By elections	1,000	held at £1k	2,000	increased fees
Cemetery	35,000	increased for prep works	60,000	increased for prep
CC refurb	31,000	restore to 2023-24 figure	25,000	back up to revenue
Devolved services	0	no longer required	10,000	possible devolution
PWLB repayment	10,000	allow 6 months worth	10,000	as before
 CIL money	 10,084	 carried over unspent	 10,084	 carry over
FrowResource (escrow)	0		2,625	held on account
Shed project (escrow)	0		1,230	held on account
 TOTAL	 332,842	 total from	 415,406	 total from
	282,377	yr-end plus	365,406	yr end/ plus
	50,465	precept top up	50,000	precept top up

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Clerk: David O'Driscoll

REQUEST FOR GRANT AID

Please note that grants will only be considered by the submission of this form

NAME OF ORGANISATION: Forest Row Festival		
NAME OF CONTACT PERSON: Lili Barcroft		
ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE:	Tel: 07990801289	
	Email: lilibarcroft@gmail.com	
	Web (if any):	
POST CODE:	SUM REQUESTED: £650	
TO WHOM SHOULD ANY GRANT CHEQUE BE MADE PAYABLE?		
DO YOU HAVE AUDITED ACCOUNTS? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	IF YES, ARE THEY ATTACHED? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No (Accounts)	IF NO, PLEASE EXPLAIN WHY This is group of local artists who are involved as part of the forest row festival creative tent team,
IF APPLICABLE, DO YOU HAVE A BUDGET? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (Budget)	
ARE YOU ASKING FOR FUNDING FROM OTHER SOURCES? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No		
From	Amount	Purpose
PURPOSE OF REQUEST (please use second sheet if necessary) We are excited to introduce you to a unique opportunity to support the Forest Row Festival's 'Creative Tent' program, a series of art-based workshops designed to bring our community together through creative expression. Last year was the first pilot year of the Creative Tent, sponsored by Frow Resource. This was extremely popular and successful, and filled the need of accessible community/family activities within the festival. Although the Festival is ticketed the children's tickets are free so the ticket costs only just cover the main costs of the festival and no extra costs. Our goal is to offer these workshops free of charge, working with experienced arts tutors, ensuring that all festival-goers can participate without financial burden. To achieve this, we are seeking funding to support the costs of artist fees and materials. We are committed to sustainability and will prioritize the use of recycled items whenever possible. Our team of talented art facilitators has crafted a diverse range of family-friendly workshops, including a community mandala workshop, mural painting and headdress design workshops. These activities will provide a much-needed platform for creative engagement, community building, and social connection among individuals, children, and families		

Our goal is to offer these workshops free of charge, ensuring that all festival-goers can participate without financial burden. To achieve this, we are seeking funding to support the costs of artist fees and basic materials. We are committed to sustainability and will prioritize the use of recycled items whenever possible. Please note the team are also generously providing a number of voluntary hours to organise, co-ordinate and host this exciting programme of events.

CREATIVE TENT – Forest Row Festival June 2025

Mandala workshop (2hr workshop)	Community workshop	£150
Community collage - painting workshop (2 hr workshop)	Family workshop	£150
Festival Headress workshop (2 hr workshop)	Family workshop	£150
Art materials		£200
Total		£650

HOW WILL IT BENEFIT THE COMMUNITY?

The Creative Tent will provide local artists with exciting work opportunities and provide the local community with a dynamic programme of participatory art workshops. The Mandala workshop will develop into a beautiful piece of community art. After the festival it will be offered to the Parish Council to be displayed with the Community Centre for all the community to enjoy afterwards. Community art workshops give local people the chance to connect and get to know each other through the common goal of art making. They will also help people develop their creative skills and provide exciting activities for children too. Many of the artists are also keen to build and design similar projects within Forest Row so this is a great opportunity to strengthen partnerships and raise awareness of what is on offer locally.

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Date of Meeting:	Min.No:	Approved: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Amount:
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POINTS TO NOTE WHEN APPLYING FOR A GRANT

In accordance with its General Power of Competence under Section 1-8 of The Localism Act 2011, the Council is empowered to commit to reasonable expenditure, in the form of grants, which is not restricted by other legislation.

1. General

- Applications will be considered by the Finance & Policy Committee which meets quarterly. Please check the Council's website for dates: www.forestrow.gov.uk
- Applications should be received in the Parish Council Office at least 7 days prior to the scheduled meeting dates.
- Only one grant per community organisation will be awarded in any one financial year
- Annually recurring grants will not be considered as a rule but each grant will be considered on its merit and the benefit to the community as a whole.
- Retrospective applications or payments/reimbursements will not be considered
- Payments to individuals will not be considered as a rule unless there are very specific, proven benefits to the community
- It is a condition of the grant that successful applicants will be required to show proof of expenditure and submit relevant purchase orders/quotations/invoices etc to the Clerk.

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REQUEST FOR GRANT AID

Please note that grants will only be considered by the submission of this form

NAME OF ORGANISATION: FOREST ROW ENERGY COOPERATIVE LTD		
NAME OF CONTACT PERSON: JONATHAN SHOPLEY		
ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE: 8 Gage Ridge, Forest Row POST CODE: RH18 5HL	Tel: 07855359099	
	Email: jonathan@forestrowenergy.com	
	Web (if any): www.forestrowenergy.com	
	SUM REQUESTED: £1,966	
TO WHOM SHOULD ANY GRANT CHEQUE BE MADE PAYABLE?		Forest Row Energy Cooperative Ltd (Cooperative Bank Account # 65737295-00; Sort Code 08-92-99)
DO YOU HAVE AUDITED ACCOUNTS? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	IF YES, ARE THEY ATTACHED? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No (Accounts) Attachment #3 is 23/24 annual return to the FCA including <u>unaudited</u> accounts.	IF NO, PLEASE EXPLAIN WHY AGM resolution approved un-audited accounts while revenue and reserves are well below regulatory requirement for independent audit.
IF APPLICABLE, DO YOU HAVE A BUDGET? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (Budget) Attachment #1 provides project plan and budget. Attachment #4 sets out our process for managing grant-funded projects.	
ARE YOU ASKING FOR FUNDING FROM OTHER SOURCES? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No		
PURPOSE OF REQUEST Forest Row Energy Cooperative's mission is energy that costs less to us and the environment. Our request for a £1,966 grant is to implement a plan that will significantly increase the Coop's ability to engage, educate and support our community in its transition to clean, affordable energy. Attachment #2 sets out a multi-channel marketing plan focused on community engagement, valuable content creation, and pro-active outreach. Using existing resources (members, subscribers, community presence) as a base, and incorporating minimal, targeted spending, we will increase visibility, foster interaction, and re-energise the cooperative's mission within Forest Row and surrounding areas.		
HOW WILL IT BENEFIT THE COMMUNITY? The direct benefit will be our increased ability to support all socio-economic sectors of the community with independent & trusted advice and guidance that people need to make informed decisions about their energy use. It will also provide avenues through which we can better understand and respond to specific needs. Indirectly, this plan will support local trades and individuals looking for meaningful employment and business development opportunities in the clean energy space.		
FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY		
Date of Meeting:	Min.No:	Approved: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
		Amount:

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- Annually recurring grants will not be considered as a rule but each grant will be considered on its merit and the benefit to the community as a whole.
- Retrospective applications or payments/reimbursements will not be considered
- Payments to individuals will not be considered as a rule unless there are very specific, proven benefits to the community
- It is a condition of the grant that successful applicants will be required to show proof of expenditure and submit relevant purchase orders/quotations/invoices etc to the Clerk.

2. Eligibility

The Council will consider applications from the following eligible groups:

- Registered Charities (if National, then there should be a proven benefit to local residents)
Community Organisations
- Voluntary Groups – run on a not-for-profit basis with a current bank account in the name of the group.
- The Council will consider applications from religious groups, but the application must show that the project will bring wider community benefit.
- Grants will not normally be considered from individuals

3. Criteria

- Grants will be given towards direct costs/expenditure for a wide range of purposes including marketing, professional fees or training costs, capital expenditure, refurbishment or development projects or events.
- Any grant received must be specifically for the project at purpose described in the application. Any changes to the objectives/purpose stated in your application, must first be discussed with the Parish Clerk.
- Whilst the Council does not require that applicants have match funding from other sources for their project, it should be stated on the application if other funding is being sourced.



Forest Row Energy Cooperative Ltd (FRECL)

May to December 2025 Marketing Plan

I. Executive Summary

This document sets out an engagement and marketing plan to run from May to December 2025 in support of a grant aid application being made to the Forest Row Parish Council (FRPC). The total budget for the plan is £2,966. FRECL will cover £1,000 from its reserves, and therefore seeks £1,966 from the FRPC.

[Forest Row Energy Cooperative Ltd \(FRECL\)](#) is a community-owned, not for profit cooperative that promotes local action on energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. Founded in 2015, our mission is energy that costs less to us and the environment. We are based in Forest Row and serve surrounding towns and villages within a 15-mile radius.

We are currently funded through grants, consultancy, membership fees and donations. This allows us to run projects that help enable residents, businesses and organisations in our community to improve their energy efficiency, save money on energy bills and increase the use of renewable energy technologies that benefit the environment. We funded the solar panel array and battery on the FRPC offices & community centre.

The objective of this marketing plan is to significantly increase the Coop's ability to engage, educate and support our community in its transition to clean, affordable energy. It sets out a detailed multi-channel marketing strategy focused on community engagement, valuable content creation, and strategic outreach. Using existing resources (members, subscribers, community presence) as a base, and incorporating minimal, targeted spending, we will increase visibility, foster interaction, and re-energise the cooperative's mission within Forest Row and surrounding areas.

Success will be measured by increased engagement metrics, audience growth, event attendance, and positive community feedback by the end of 2025. We will use these to report progress to the FRPC.

The project will over-seen by FRECL director [Jonathan Shopley](#). It will be managed by [Morgan Loughton](#), local resident and founder of marketing and website design company Ferris Creative Ltd

II. Goals & Objectives

- **Overall Goal:** To build FRECL into an active, visible, and trusted community resource for renewable energy and energy efficiency by the end of 2025.
- **Specific Objectives (by Dec 31st, 2025)**
 - **Audience Growth**
 - Increase social media followers (combined across platforms) by 40% (from May 1st baseline).
 - Current numbers:
 - Facebook: 483,
 - Instagram: 0,
 - Twitter: 286,
 - Mailchimp: 564 (373 subscribers),
 - YouTube 0,
 - Google Profile 0,
 - Website Traffic: 30 days to 9/4/25
 - 26 visits,
 - 2 new email subscribers,
 - 2:25 session duration.
 - Increase active newsletter subscribers by 30% to 485 (111 new subscribers)
 - Increase average monthly website traffic by 50% to at least 40 site visits and an increase of session duration to 3:00 to 4:00 mins
 - **Engagement**
 - Increase average social media post engagement rate (likes, comments, shares per post) by 50%. Currently around 2 to 3 shares per post up to 5 interactions per post.
 - Achieve an average newsletter open rate of 35% and click-through rate of 5%.

- Generate at least 100 responses across all surveys/feedback requests launched (May-Dec).
- Successfully host and achieve target attendance (defined per event) for at least 4 major events between May-September.
- **Reach & Visibility**
 - Secure at least 3 media features (radio, magazine).
 - Establish contact/collaboration with at least 1 relevant local influencer.
 - Generate 15 qualified inquiries through the 'Recommended Resources' section on the website.
- **Community Building**
 - Successfully facilitate 3 online debates/discussions with measurable participation.
 - Receive positive feedback mentions in at least 10 survey responses or direct communications.

III. Target Audience

1. **Primary:** Residents of Forest Row and immediate surrounding villages (e.g., Sharpthorne, West Hoathly, Wych Cross, Coleman's Hatch). Homeowners interested in reducing energy bills, improving home energy efficiency, or installing renewables. Existing FRECL members and subscribers.
2. **Secondary:** Local businesses seeking energy solutions, community groups with environmental interests, environmentally conscious individuals in the wider Wealden/Mid Sussex area, and individuals facing fuel poverty seeking advice.
3. **Tertiary:** Renters and what tenants can legally request from their landlords.

IV. Key Messages

- FRECL is your local, trusted partner for navigating the world of energy.
- Community-powered solutions for a sustainable future.
- Unbiased advice, real experiences, practical help.
- Save money, reduce your carbon footprint, together.
- Get involved, share your voice, shape our energy future.

V. Marketing Strategies & Tactics (Execution Plan)

(A) Foundational Work (Complete by End of May 2025)

1. Website Audit & Update

- Ensure all existing information is current.
- Create dedicated sections outlined in the prompt: Events (Past & Upcoming), Recommended Resources, Myth Busting, News, Updates.
- Set up Google Analytics tracking.

Responsibility: [Morgan - Ferris Creative - Websites, Marketing & Advice](#)

2. Social Media Profile Optimisation

- Ensure consistent branding (logo, bio, links) across all platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Google Business Profile).
- Update contact information and add a clear call-to-action (e.g., Visit Website, Sign up for Newsletter).

Responsibility: [Morgan - Ferris Creative - Websites, Marketing & Advice.](#)

3. Email List Cleanup & Segmentation

- Review the current subscriber list for inactivity. Launch a re-engagement campaign ("Are you still interested?").
- Segment list e.g., Members vs. General Subscribers.

Responsibility: [Morgan - Ferris Creative - Websites, Marketing & Advice.](#)

4. Resource & Contact List Compilation

- Verify contact details for recommended suppliers (Ashdown Solar, HMB Plumbing, Utilities etc.). *Crucially, identify and conduct due diligence on local, reputable suppliers for:*
 - home energy efficiency improvement services;
 - solar array, air- and ground-source heat-pump, storage battery installation and maintenance
 - electric bikes & scooters (non-branded focus).
- Add disclaimers regarding recommendations.
- Compile contact list for local media (Meridian FM, BBC Sussex, RH Uncovered, Forest Row Local) and potential local influencers.

Responsibility: [Morgan - Ferris Creative - Websites, Marketing & Advice.](#) & jonathan@forestrowenergy.com

(B) Content & Engagement Strategy (Ongoing - Launch May 1st, 2025)

1. Social Media Plan

- **Frequency:** Aim for: Facebook (3-4 posts/week), Instagram (2-3 posts/week), Twitter (4-5 posts/tweets/week), YouTube (1 video/month initially, plus event recordings), Google Business Profile (Updates 1x/week).
- **Content Mix (Implement suggestions):**
 - *Facebook:* Focus on community building. Share news updates, promote events, run surveys/polls, spark debates (ask open-ended questions), share research results visually, and member spotlights. Use Facebook Events for promotion.
 - *Instagram:* Visually driven. Share infographics of research/survey results, photos/videos from events/projects, 'Meet the Member' features, short myth-busting clips, visually appealing news snippets. Use Stories for polls and Q&As.
 - *Twitter:* News-focused & conversational. Quick updates on tariffs/grants, links to website news/resources, live-tweeting events (if feasible), sharing relevant articles, posing quick debate questions.
 - *YouTube:* Showcase projects (walkthroughs, member testimonials), record and upload event sessions/webinars/debate highlights, create simple 'How To' or explainer videos (e.g., understanding smart meters).
 - *Google Business Profile:* Post news updates, event announcements, photos, and link to relevant website pages. Crucial for local search visibility.
- **Engagement Tactics:** Respond promptly to comments/messages, ask questions, use polls/quizzes, encourage User-Generated Content (e.g., "Share your top energy-saving tip!").

Responsibility: [Morgan - Ferris Creative - Websites, Marketing & Advice.](#)

Timeline: Start consistent posting **May 1st**.

2. Website Content Development

- **Events Calendar:** Populate immediately with planned 2025 events (from May onwards). Add past events for credibility. *Implement the Google Calendar integration* - create a public Google Calendar and embed/link it.
- **Recommended Resources:** Develop detailed pages for each category during May/June. Include pros/cons, potential costs, links to *vetted local suppliers*

(with disclaimer). Add Q&A for vehicles, covering all mentioned types (EV, H2, PHEV, Synthetic, Bikes, Scooters - including laws/myths).

- **Myth Busting:**

- *Execution:* Identify 5-10 common myths.
- *Process:* Research facts. Post the myth on social media/newsletter asking for opinions/experiences (starting May). Reach out to identified industry professionals/sceptics for quotes. Collate responses, professional input, and facts into a balanced website article/post. Promote heavily. First article live by end of June.

- **News Section:** Regularly update (starting May) with summaries/links regarding tariffs, supplier changes, government policy shifts, new grants. Keep it locally relevant.

- **Updates Section:** Post event summaries (turnout, key takeaways), project progress (photos, milestones), member spotlights, summaries of survey/debate results (starting after first events/surveys in May/June).

Responsibility: [Morgan - Ferris Creative - Websites, Marketing & Advice.](#),
Content Creators (tbc)

Timeline: Populate core sections during May. Add new content (News, Updates, Myths) bi-weekly/monthly starting June.

3. Newsletter Strategy

- **Frequency:** Monthly minimum, potentially bi-weekly leading up to major events.
- **Content:** Mix of: Updates, Engagement prompts, Event Promotion, Value highlights (new resources).
- **Calls to Action:** Interactive, questions, share events and get involved in the cooperative.

Responsibility: [Morgan - Ferris Creative - Websites, Marketing & Advice.](#)

Timeline: First revitalised newsletter in **early May**.

(C) Outreach & Collaboration (Ongoing from May 1st)

1. Media Relations

- **Pitching:** Contact local radio (Meridian FM, BBC Radio Sussex) and magazines (RH Uncovered, Forest Row Local) starting in May for coverage related to June/July events or significant news/project milestones.
- **Angle:** Focus on community benefit, local impact, human interest stories, and upcoming events. Offer interviews or expert comments.

Responsibility: Media Outreach Volunteer/Coordinator

Timeline: Pitch the first story/event in May. Aim for 3 features by year-end.

2. Influencer Collaboration

- **Identification:** Research local social media users, bloggers, or community figures active in sustainability, home improvement, or Forest Row community life (Ongoing in Q2 - May/June).
- **Approach:** Build relationships. Engage with their content first. Reach out with a specific, mutually beneficial proposal (e.g., co-host a Q&A, offer them content, feature them in newsletter) (starting Q3 - July). Ensure values align.

Responsibility: Social Media/Outreach Coordinator

Timeline: Identify potential influencers by end of June.

Aim for first collaboration in Q3.

3. Partnerships

- **Suppliers:**
 - Formalise relationships with key recommended suppliers (such as Ashdown Solar, HMB Plumbing etc.).
 - Explore co-marketing opportunities (e.g., joint info leaflet, mention in their newsletters) (starting conversations in Q2 - May/June).
 - Ensure transparency and cooperative values are maintained.
- **Community Groups:** Connect with other local environmental, community, or residents' groups for cross-promotion of events and initiatives (starting conversations in Q2 - May/June).

Responsibility: Coordinator/Partnership Lead

Timeline: Initiate conversations in Q2.

(D) Events (May - September):

- **Plan Specific Events:** Define *purpose* and *format*. (to be refined Schedule Example):
 - *May:* Launch Event - "Re-Energising Forest Row" (Intro, plans, Q&A, networking).
 - *June:* Workshop - "Solar Panels for Your Home: Myth vs. Reality" (Partner w/ Ashdown Solar?). Discussions with planners at Forest Row Festival underway.
 - *July:* Q&A Session - "Ask Us Anything About Energy Bills & Savings".
 - *August:* Community Debate - Topic sourced via survey (e.g., "Heat Pumps vs. Boilers"). Invite local experts/sceptics.

- *September:* Open Home Event (if feasible) or Local Stall / Workshop - "Understanding Heat Pumps".
 - From September onwards, the promotion of thermal camera service to identify energy inefficiencies in homes and other buildings.
 - **Promotion:** Promote heavily across all channels (social, website, newsletter, local media partners) starting 4-6 weeks prior. Use our Wix membership for easy RSVP/ticketing (even if free).
 - **Execution:** Ensure smooth running, gather feedback forms at the event. Record sessions for YouTube where appropriate.
- Timeline:* Confirm event details & venues ASAP. Execute events May-September.

(E) Advertising (Strategic & Budget-Conscious - From May Onwards)

1. Social Media Ads:

- **Purpose:** Boost reach for key event promotions and high-value resource guides (like comprehensive myth-busters).
- **Targeting:** Geographically target Forest Row +10-mile radius. Target interests like 'renewable energy', 'sustainability', 'home improvement', 'energy saving'.

2. Local Magazine Ads:

- **Purpose:** Broader local awareness, event promotion.
- **Consideration:** Can be expensive. Weigh cost vs. potential reach in RH Uncovered / Forest Row Local. Perhaps explore smaller, cheaper ad formats or advertorials.

Try for interviews, features and cooperative partnerships rather than paid-for routes.

3. Brand Partnerships:

- Not direct advertising *for* partners, but co-branded content or event sponsorship *from* partners (e.g., Octopus sponsoring refreshments at an event in return for a banner). Must align with FRECL values.

VI. Measurement & Evaluation:

- **Tools:** Google Analytics, Social Media Insights, Email Platform Analytics, Google Forms, Wix Event Attendance sheets, Feedback forms (Google Forms), Media Monitoring (Google Alerts for "Forest Row Energy Cooperative").
- **Reporting:** Monthly internal check-in on key metrics (starting June report for May activity). Quarterly review against SMART objectives (First review end of July

covering May-July). Adjust strategy based on what's working/not working.

- **Key Metrics to Track:** Website visitors, bounce rate, time on site; Social media reach, impressions, engagement rate, follower growth; Newsletter open/click rates, subscriber growth; Event attendance numbers & feedback scores; Survey response rates; Media mentions; Number of inquiries via website resources.

VII. Resources Needed:

- **Personnel:** Dedicated volunteers or a part-time coordinator with allocated time for:
 - Social Media Management & Content Creation [Morgan - Ferris Creative - Websites, Marketing & Advice.](#)
 - Website Updates & Content Writing: Morgan
 - Newsletter Coordination: Morgan
 - Event Planning & Management
 - Media & Partnership Outreach: Morgan
- **Skills:** Strong communication (written & verbal), basic digital marketing understanding, organisation, community engagement focus. Basic graphic design (Canva) and video editing skills are beneficial but not essential.
- **Tools:** Access to website CMS, social media accounts, email marketing platform (e.g., Mailchimp free tier), survey tool (Google Forms), design tool (Canva).

VI. Proposed Budget (May-Dec 2025)

(A) Foundational Work - Total **£429.00**

(B) Content & Engagement Strategy - Total **£1,039.50**

(C) Outreach & Collaboration - Total **£478.50**

(D) Events - Total **£450.00**

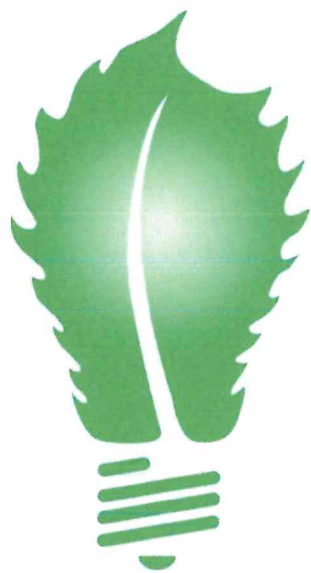
(E) Advertising - Total **£300.00**

Contingency (10%): **£269.70**

Total (May-Dec 2025): £2,966.70

Categories	Task	Frequency	Hours	Cost (ph)	Subtotal
(A) Foundational Work	Website Audit & Update	1 time activity	3	£16.50	£49.50
	Social Media Profile Optimisation	1 time activity	1	£16.50	£16.50
	Email List Cleanup & Segmentation	1 time activity	1	£16.50	£16.50
	Resource & Contact List Compilation	1 time activity	21	£16.50	£346.50
				Total	£429.00
(B) Content & Engagement Strategy	Social Media Plan	1 hr / week x 28 wks	28	£16.50	£462.00
	Website Content Development	1 hr / week x 28 wks	28	£16.50	£462.00
	Newsletter Strategy	0.25 hr / week x 28 wks	7	£16.50	£115.50
				Total	£1,039.50
(C) Outreach & Collaboration	Media Relations	1 hr / week x 28 wks	28	£16.50	£462.00
	Influencer Collaboration	1 time activity	1	£16.50	£16.50
	Partnerships	0	0	£16.50	£0.00
				Total	£478.50
(D) Events	May: Launch Event	one off	lump sum	£75.00	£75.00
	June: Workshop (fr festival)	one off	lump sum	£75.00	£75.00
	July: Q&A Session	one off	lump sum	£75.00	£75.00
	August: Community Debate	one off	lump sum	£75.00	£75.00
	September: Open Home	one off	lump	£75.00	£75.00

	Event		sum		
	Thermal Camera Heat Mapping workshop	one off	lump sum	£75.00	£75.00
				Total	£450.00
(E) Advertising	Social Media Ads (7 days up to events)	for each event in (D)	6	£50.00	£300.00
	Local Magazine Ads	0	0	£0.00	£0.00
	Brand Partnerships	0	0	£0.00	£0.00
				Total	£300.00
Categories	Subtotal				
(A) Foundational Work	£429.00			Total:	£2,697.00
(B) Content & Engagement Strategy	£1,039.50			Contingency 10%	£269.70
(C) Outreach & Collaboration	£478.50			Total with Contingency	£2,966.70
(D) Events	£450.00				
(E) Advertising	£300.00				



forest row
energy

**FOREST ROW ENERGY CO-OPERATIVE
DIRECTOR'S REPORT AND
UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2024**

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT	2024	2023
	£	£
INCOME		
Trading income	250	500
Other income	76	268
Total Income	326	768
EXPENDITURE		
Cost of sales (Staff costs)	-5,145	-4,846
Administrative expenses	-1,521	-1,117
Total Expenditure	-6,666	-5,963
GROSS TRADING PROFIT	6,916	6,463
OPERATING PROFIT	-6,340	-5,195
Loss carried forward	-6,340	-5,195
Tax on profit	0	0
PROFIT AFTER TAX	-6,340	-5,195

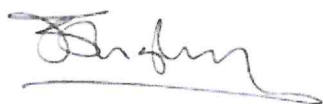
**Forest Row Energy Co-operative 32361R
Balance Sheet**

As at 30 April 2024

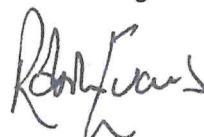
BALANCE SHEET	2024	2023
	£	£
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash at bank and in hand	4,738	11,078
Creditors: Amounts Falling Due Within One Year	225	6,166
NET CURRENT ASSETS (LIABILITIES)	4,513	4,912
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES	4,513	4,912
NET ASSETS	4,513	4,912
RESERVES	4,513	4,912

The notes on pages 8 form part of these financial statements.

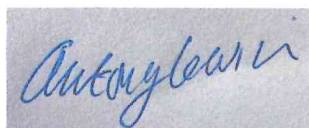
Approved by the board/management committee/members on 10.11.24 and signed on their behalf by:



Jonathan Shopley, Director



Robin Evans, Director



Tony Lewin, Director

Notes to the Financial Statements

**Forest Row Energy Co-operative 32361R
For the Year Ended 30 April 2024**

Notes to the Unaudited Accounts

1. Statutory Information

Forest Row Energy Co-operative is a private company, limited by shares, registered in England and Wales. The company's registered number and office address can be found on the Company Information Page

2. Accounting Policies

Basis of Preparation of Financial Statements

The financial statements are prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with the FRS 102 Section 1A Small Entities - The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland and the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014.

Turnover

Total Income comprises the income received from grants, consultancy and other income in respect of specific projects.

**Registered Society Limited
Trading Profit and Loss Account
For The Year Ending 30 April 2024**

DETAILED PROFIT & LOSS ACCOUNT	2024		2023	
	£	£	£	£
INCOME				
Grants receivable	76		268	
Consultancy	250		500	
Donations				
TOTAL TURNOVER		326		768
COST OF SALES				
Consultancy		(5,145)		(4,846)
GROSS PROFIT		(4,819)		(4,078)
EXPENDITURE				
Accountancy	(500)		(500)	
Marketing	-		-	
Computer expenses	(500)		(96)	
Insurance	(521)		(521)	
Tax	-		-	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		(1,521)		(1,117)
NET PROFIT (LOSS)		(4,819)		(5,195)



Forest Row Parish Council

Cemetery Consultation

March 2025

Undertaken by



Action in rural Sussex
16 Market Street
Lewes
East Sussex
BN7 2NB

E: info@ruralsussex.org.uk
T: 01273 473422
W: www.ruralsussex.org.uk

1. Introduction

Forest Row Parish Council manages a cemetery and authorises burials within it. In the cemetery extension section it has full burial plots and cremated remains plots in the main cemetery. It is a beautiful and peaceful place, much valued by the community, and has won awards for several years running in the national Cemetery of the Year competition.

Unfortunately, space in the cemetery is limited and within three years, the cemetery will be full. Burials and interments of ashes will continue for a while in plots that have been purchased in advance, but there will be no more free space. Consequently, the Parish Council identified six options for future provision:

- A. Close the cemetery to new burials while maintaining the grounds.
- B. Install vertical burial walls.
- C. Reuse old graves.
- D. Purchase adjacent land for expansion.
- E. Pursue compulsory purchase of the adjacent land.
- F. Find alternative land within the village.

While Forest Row Parish Council is the ultimate decision maker of what happens to the cemetery, the Council wanted to assess the views of Forest Row residents and those with family members with graves at the current site. This involved local publicity and discussion in a series of public meetings.

In addition, the Parish Council commissioned Action in rural Sussex to undertake a survey of the opinions of local residents on the options available. Action in rural Sussex is an independent charity that has been supporting and enabling people living in rural areas of Sussex since 1931.

2. Methodology

A list of all the addresses in the parish was provided by the Parish Council – a total of 2202 homes.

All residents were sent by post an Information Sheet (see **Appendix 1**) summarising the six options, a Survey Form (see **Appendix 2**) together with a prepaid envelope, and were invited to complete and return the survey - or to utilise an online version of the survey,

Residents were given two weeks to complete the survey with a published cut-off date of 7th March 2025. In practice, both online and postal surveys continued to be returned, and entries received up until 26th March (the cut-off date) were included in the analysis.

In completing the survey residents were invited to rank the six options in order of personal preference to enable the Parish Council to understand not just their first preference, but also how residents viewed the other options available.

The survey also invited residents to state if they would like the opportunity to meet / comment further, and if they would like more information.

3. Key Findings

3.1 Response

In total 397 survey replies were received – an 18% return rate. This is lower than average in our survey experience. Of these 330 (83%) were received by post and 67 (17%) online.

A number of factors can affect a survey response rate, including the demographic of the target audience and interest in the nature of the survey.

According to the 2021 National Census 26.2% of the Forest Row Parish were aged over 65 years of age.

In this instance it is worth noting that cremation has become an ever-increasingly popular option in the UK over the last 120 years. The Cremation Society estimated that in 2023 some 80% of funerals were cremations.

3.2 Preferred Options

In considering the findings it is important to bear in mind the level and nature of the response. Clearly it is a snapshot of opinion from a portion of the population. Those who responded provided a range of replies – most ranked six options, many up to four, and a number only one. A few households submitted two responses where opinions differed.

The survey findings should therefore be used as an indicator of preferences and not as an absolute determinant.

The overall summary of findings is as follows:

Option		First Choice	Second Choice	Third Choice	Fourth Choice	Fifth Choice	Sixth Choice	Total
A.	Close the cemetery to new burials	36.23% 125	10.43% 36	8.12% 28	12.17% 42	14.78% 51	18.26% 63	345
B.	Install vertical burial walls	11.82% 37	12.46% 39	13.10% 41	15.02% 47	26.84% 84	20.77% 65	313
C.	Reuse old graves	13.98% 45	12.11% 39	13.98% 45	18.63% 60	13.98% 45	27.33% 88	322
D.	Purchase adjacent land for expansion	38.62% 134	25.94% 90	18.44% 64	9.22% 32	6.05% 21	1.73% 6	347
E.	Compulsory purchase of the adjacent land	7.14% 23	24.22% 78	18.94% 61	17.70% 57	15.53% 50	16.46% 53	322
F.	Find alternative land within the village	11.44% 39	23.75% 81	34.02% 116	17.30% 59	8.21% 28	5.28% 18	341

There was no overwhelming preference for any of the options. Overall, the most popular options by numbers of 'votes' were:

- D.** Purchase adjacent land
- A.** Close the cemetery to new burials
- F.** Find alternative land in the village

Of these...

D. Purchase adjacent land (39%) and **A.** Close the cemetery to new burials (36%) were by far most people's first preferences.

The most popular second preferences were:

D. Purchase adjacent land (26%), **E.** Compulsory purchase of the adjacent land (24%) and **F.** Find alternative land in the village (24%)

Of third preferences, **F.** Find alternative land in the village (34%) was the most popular.

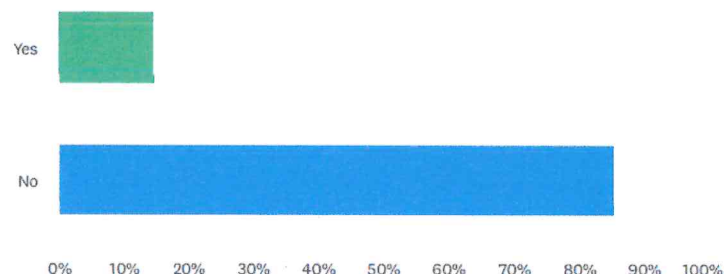
Bar Charts summarising the response to each option is set out in **Appendix 3.**

3.3 Opportunity to meet / comment further

The questionnaire invited residents to state if they would like a further opportunity to meet and discuss the options. Of the 326 residents responding to the question, 48 indicated that they would like to meet / comment further suggesting another meeting would be welcomed by a small proportion of residents.

Q2 Would you like the opportunity to meet / comment further? (if 'Yes' - please provide your contact details below)

Answered: 326 Skipped: 71



ANSWER CHOICES

Yes

No

TOTAL

RESPONSES

14.72%

85.28%

48

278

326

3.4 More information?

The questionnaire invited residents to state if they would like more information.

There were 42 responses to the question – many simply to say, ‘no thank you’.

Comments in relation to information required were as follows:

1. Keep me informed by email please
2. Online Facebook
3. A general meeting would be useful
4. What is the time limit for a grave to be reused?
5. Yes, particularly to find out where burial walls could go e.g. this would be for coffins or cremated remains. Is there provision for the burial of ashes? This could encourage this practice and would not need so much space...
6. Yes, when decisions are made
7. Will my purchased plot remain mine in the future - regardless of when I die?
8. How would the decision be taken regarding which old graves are reused?
9. Yes please
10. Yes - information on village preferences and progress
11. I would like cost of graves to purchase
12. If there is an update, I would be interested to know
13. Yes - suggestions of alternative land
14. On compulsory purchase
15. I would like to have a natural burial site as an alternative to the existing traditional cemetery.
16. Definitely regarding the outcome
17. Yes, just to know your decision please
18. None of the above
19. Any options for woodland burial site?
20. As and when available
21. Yes. Has a cost analysis been carried out for all the options. If so, are they available for public viewing.
22. I would like to comment that I would only prefer the purchase of adjacent or alternative land, if the land is used as a natural burial site rather than a standard cemetery.
This is an excellent example of a natural burial site:
<https://www.sustainability-centre.org/burial-site.html>
23. Vertical Burial walls are common in some Mediterranean countries as the ground is too hard to make graves.

Appendix 1 – Options for Forest Row Cemetery



Forest Row Parish Council

Options For Forest Row Cemetery

1. **Close the cemetery.** This is the simplest, but in a way the most radical solution. Obviously, residents who have already purchased a plot will be buried or interred there and the churchyard itself will continue to be tended and kept tidy indefinitely. But no more spaces will be available.
Pro: this solution would cost the community nothing and could be implemented as soon as the last available plot is purchased.
Con: residents of the village would have to look elsewhere, for instance in East Grinstead, for burial/interment space.
2. **Install a vertical burial wall.** This is a system widely used in continental Europe. Basically, it consists of a ground-mounted 3- or 4-layer high honeycombed structure into which the remains of the deceased are placed horizontally before being sealed in with an appropriate plaque to mark the resting place.
Pro: this enables a limited ground area to be economically but individually used, and is akin to a catacomb system, only above ground.
Con: It is unusual in the UK and would require prior research and costing. Some families might feel it overcrowds spaces to the detriment of respect.
3. **Reuse very old graves.** This involves reintering the original burial at a deeper level and placing a new burial on top. The system has been used in some urban cemeteries where space is at a premium. At present it requires a private Act of Parliament, although the Law Commission has recently proposed simplifying the process.
Pro: This can be a pragmatic land use where ancient graves have become untended.
Con: It involves a degree of exhumation, and succeeding generations of the original deceased may object to the same space being used for unrelated persons
4. **Purchase of adjacent land for an extension.** Land adjacent to the existing cemetery does exist (and the 2009 extension was taken from that land). However, the land is in joint ownership and one co-owner has consistently refused to consider a sale.
Pro: It is the obvious solution, as there would be a simple flow-through from the original to the additional site.
Con: It requires consent of the landowners (subject to the alternative solution in option 5)
5. **Compulsory purchase of the adjacent land.** A formal legal process whereby a local authority can force a landowner to sell land for a defined social purpose.
Pro: If the compulsory purchase order is upheld, the landowner has no choice.
Con: The process is complex and expensive, the compensation value for the land may exceed its market value, and if the landowner appeals, the Order could be overturned by a Tribunal.
6. **Find an alternative site within the village.** Research into this option has been pursued for several years. Two possible sites were identified which would meet the strict criteria for a burial ground. However, in the first case, the landowner has simply declined to reply, and in the second, although the landowner was willing, Wealden Planning Department raised major objections.
Pro: If suitable land could be found, it could resolve the problem for the next 50 years.
Con: the site would probably be some distance from the original and some residents might feel it was a 'second-class' cemetery.

There is also the issue of cost to be considered.

Only **Option 1** is effectively cost-free, since there would be no capital outlay, and the ongoing costs of administration and maintenance of the site are already factored into the annual budget.

The Council has over several years been building up a reserve against the cost of extending the cemetery, but land values have increased at a greater rate, so that there will inevitably be additional costs.

Options 4-6 would involve the cost of the land, and the costs of obtaining the necessary Environment Agency licences and of having the cemetery professionally laid out. It is not possible to give an exact figure for land purchase, but a fair estimate would be between £60,000 and £100,000. Set-up costs could be between £50,000 and £100,000 depending on location.

Option 5 would also involve significant legal costs, possibly up to £100,000.

Option 2 would not involve the purchase of land, but there would be construction costs for the structure (as yet unascertained) and possibly additional licenses.

Option 3 would at present involve the direct permission of Parliament, a procedure which cost an urban council approximately £100,000 last year, and there would then be associated costs of implementation, but no extra land costs.

Some of the costs could undoubtedly be recouped through an increase in burial fees, but under any of the options except closure there will inevitably be at least one substantial capital payment, and that will inevitably exceed the current nominate reserve of £35,000. So it will be necessary to apply for a public works loan.

The Public Works Loan Board is a government organisation which makes long term loans to local authorities to fund community projects at below market interest rates. For instance, the Forest Row Community Centre was purchased with a £180,000 loan over 25 years – now paid off. The loans are only available for *capital* projects where, for instance, the parish is acquiring a valuable asset for the community, and are on a repayment basis, with the repayments being factored into the annual parish tax (precept).

To give an example, if the Parish Council supplemented its existing reserve with a Public Works Loan of £150,000 over 25 years to cover the costs of a cemetery extension, the interest rate would 5.91% and require an annual repayment of £11,560. This would add an additional 1.7% to the current annual precept. However, the loan has to have the prior approval of the Ministry, which will investigate if there is sufficient support for the project in question among the residents. That is one of the purposes of this independent consultation.

Appendix 2 – Forest Row Cemetery Consultation



**Forest Row
Parish Council**

Forest Row Cemetery Consultation

Dear Resident

Forest Row Cemetery is a beautiful and peaceful place, much valued by the community, and has won awards for several years running in the national Cemetery of the Year competition.

Unfortunately, space in the cemetery is limited and within three years, the cemetery will be full. Burials and interments of ashes will continue for a while in plots that have been purchased in advance, but there will be no more free space.

While the Forest Row Parish Council are the ultimate decision makers of what happens to the cemetery, we need to incorporate the views of Forest Row residents and those with family members with graves at the current site.

We are therefore undertaking a consultation on the options open to the Parish Council and would like to know the views of all residents. **Please complete and return the survey overleaf in the enclosed prepaid envelope OR complete the survey online using the QR Code below.**

The closing date for the survey is 7th March 2025. We would appreciate your views on the six options open to us - a more detailed explanation of each option is set out in the enclosed Information Sheet:

- A.** Close the cemetery to new burials while maintaining the grounds.
- B.** Install vertical burial walls.
- C.** Reuse old graves.
- D.** Purchase adjacent land for expansion.
- E.** Pursue compulsory purchase of the adjacent land.
- F.** Find alternative land within the village.

For any questions about the consultation, please contact David O' Driscoll, Parish Clerk by phoning 01342 822661 or emailing parishclerk@forestrow.gov.uk.

This consultation is being managed by Action in rural Sussex, an independent charity that exists for all people living in rural areas of Sussex. The forms will be gathered and analysed independently by Action in rural Sussex. The Parish Council will receive the analysis but will not see any of the individual responses; all the information will be kept completely confidential. Contact information will be shared with the Parish Council where contact / more information is requested.

If you require any assistance in completing the survey form then please contact: Graham Maunders Action in rural Sussex by phoning 07824 900092, or by email graham.maunders@ruralsussex.org.uk.

To complete the survey online go to: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ForestRow>

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jason Eichner'.

Jason Eichner - Chair of Forest Row Parish Council



© Action in rural Sussex





Forest Row Parish Council

Forest Row Cemetery Consultation

Q1. Question – what is your preferred option?

Please rank **all** the options in order of your priority – 1 - First, 2 - Second, 3 - Third ...and so on:

A.	Close the cemetery to new burials while maintaining the grounds - this would cost nothing to implement but would force burials to take place elsewhere.	
B.	Install vertical burial walls - while this approach exists in the UK, it is not common and would require extensive research into regulations and costs. For an example please see: www.greenbridgedesigns.com/burial.html#mausolea	
C.	Reuse old graves - this is being done in some city cemeteries but requires an expensive parliamentary act.	
D.	Purchase adjacent land for expansion - while a suitable site was identified, one co-owner has consistently refused to sell.	
E.	Pursue compulsory purchase of the adjacent land - though seemingly attractive, this legal process offers no guarantee of success, requires payment of all parties' costs, and the final price is set by the District Valuer, which can be expensive.	
F.	Find alternative land within the village – this requires approximately two acres of level ground with good access and away from watercourses; previous attempts have faced either landowner refusal or significant planning authority objections.	

Q2. Would you like the opportunity to meet / comment further?

(if Yes - please provide your contact details below)

Yes	No

Q3. Would you like more information? (Please specify and provide contact details below)

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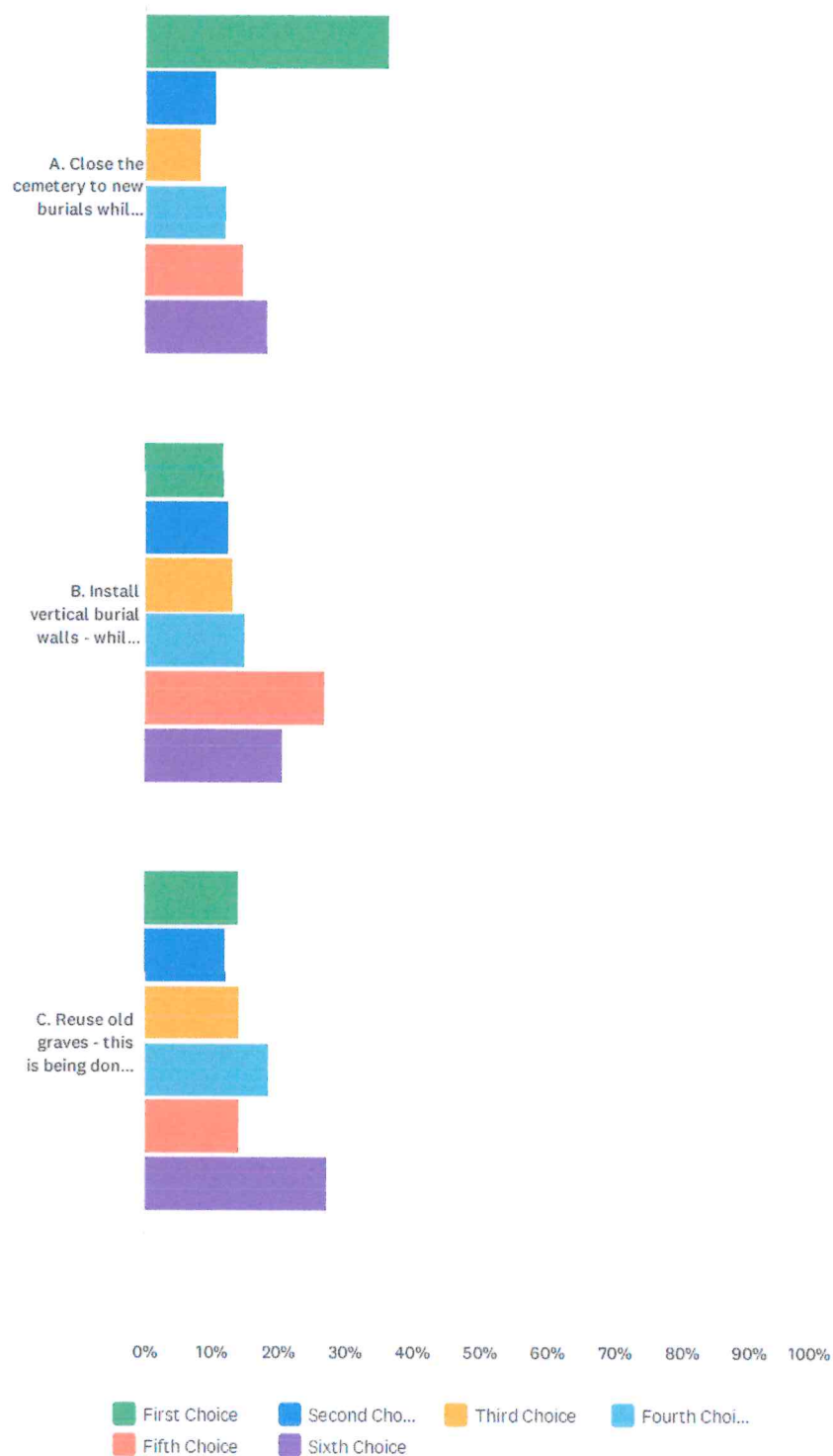
For further information please provide your name and contact details here:

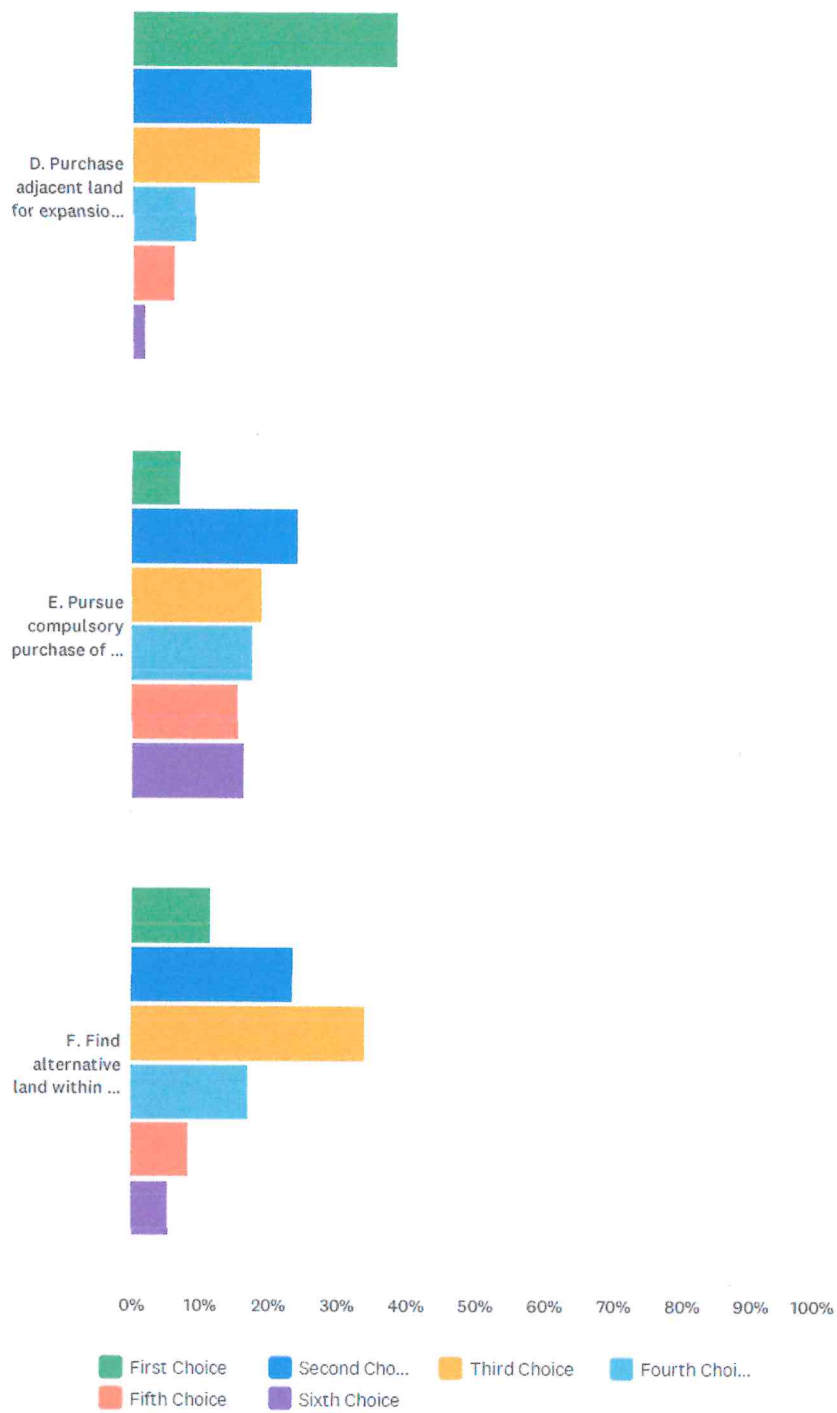
Name	
Address	
Telephone number	
Email address	

Appendix 3 – Summary of responses

Q1 What is your preferred option? Please rank all the options in order of your priority First, Second, Third ... and so on:

Answered: 396 Skipped: 1





FRPC Reflection Day - February 2025

Summary of Actions

A proposal for Full Council: For the relevant Committees to appoint people to working groups, in order to meet the actions listed.

Now-Next-Later actions

NOW

Emergency and Contingency Plan

Gybe

ACTION: David to share current plan, which needs updating

ACTION: David to bring this to full council for debate and decision. 1x Cllr and 1x Staff to be liaison officers to review county emergency plan

ACTION: David to organise training for liaison officers as part of plan: *Full Council*

Taking care of People and Place

ACTION: Working group to research piece into devolution, what the terrain is, how we can make the best of the opportunity with changes

ACTION: Working group to look at enhancing support services: *Full Council*

Communication with residents

ACTION: Amanda to email template for monthly newsletter, 5x headings of what's happened, what's happening, what's next: *Community Services/ O&C*

Strategy - General

ACTION: LGA offer 3 day review and strategy support – David to investigate if this is available for FRPC, or look at NALC have an equivalent service: *Full Council*

Strategy – Comms

ACTION: O&C Working Group to develop a comms strategy that we can refer to when thinking about comms: *O&C*

Activity based comms

Alex V, Kate, Andi, Portia, Rebecca

NEXT: This term

Gybe, Patricia, Andi

Democratic Engagement

ACTION: O&C to create plan for education piece around democratic engagement: *O&C*

Young and Old

ACTION: Working group to plan for consultation with groups: *Community Services*

Income for the Parish Council - Finance & Policy

ACTION: David to bring to Finance & Policy committee as an item for discussion: *F&P*

Housing

ACTION: Working group to begin research into what's possible

ACTION: Resurface presentation from AiRS around housing: *Facilities*

LATER: Next term and beyond

Master Plan - incorporating Wellbeing, Culture, Continuity, Energy & Environment

ACTION: Working group to begin this. Next term Council can then use it however they want:

Full Council

Policy-Process-People actions

Ways Of Working

Policy & Governance

ACTION: ??who?? to create directories of information available and where to find it / who to contact

ACTION: All councillors to reread the **Standing Orders: Full Council**

Actions between meetings

Kate, Alex W, Carolyn

ACTION: Carolyn to send us all a list of action points from each meeting and who has agreed to what

Then before the meeting comes, Carolyn to send an email round checking in on status of actions

ACTION: David to incorporate into the Agendas that the first item of the agenda for the next meeting is to review the actions from the previous meeting: *All Committees*

Define roles and responsibilities

Alex V, Angela, Andi

ACTION: David to research what support is available for people and culture, e.g. LGA, Nalca

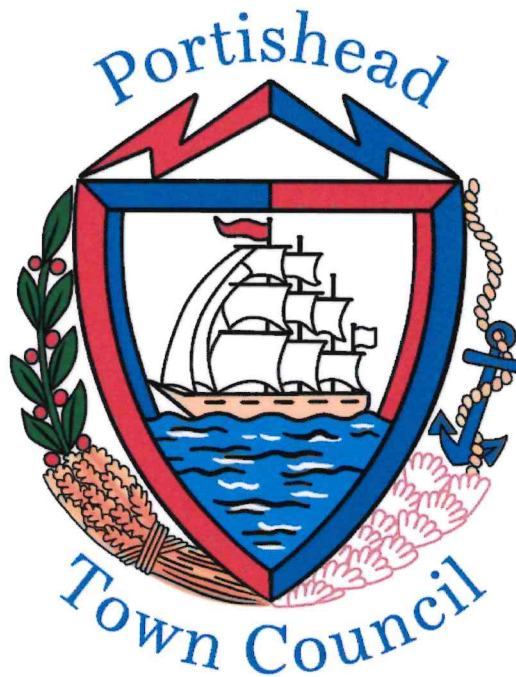
Can we have more training to support our work?

Honda – better relationships within Council: *Full Council*

Maureen, Angela, Alex W, Patricia, Carolyn, Kate, Portia

Portishead Town Council

Standing Orders



Version Control

Version	Change	Author	Status	Date
0.1	Full redraft	Cllr P Sterndale	Draft	22-08-2021
0.2	Amendments following preliminary consultations	Cllr P Sterndale	Draft	31-12-2021

Approval

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1.0	Town Council		

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1 Introduction

1.1 Use of Standing Orders

- 1.1.1 These Standing Orders incorporate the statutory Standing Orders applying to Parish and Community-level councils, and additional clauses which we, the Council, feel will enable and promote the following:
- a. Smooth running of meetings;
 - b. Appropriate and positive engagement by the community in meetings;
 - c. Clarity on the role of the Chair of the Council, Vice-chair and Committee Chairs;
 - d. Rules on voting;
 - e. Information management, including minutes and accessible information under relevant law;
 - f. Roles of the Town Clerk as Proper Officer.
- 1.1.2 **Statutory clauses are integrated into the relevant sections of these Standing Orders and are shown in bold typeface.**
- 1.1.3 Throughout these Standing Orders 'written' is deemed to include email or other digital forms of communications.
- 1.1.4 The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the Council's Standing Orders to a Councillor as soon as possible after they have delivered their acceptance of office form, and they shall be published as part of the Council's Scheme of Publication.
- 1.1.5 Where, from time to time, the Council defines policies on certain matters, these shall have the same effect as these Standing Orders, excepting that where there is disagreement in the terms of those policies, these Standing Orders shall take precedence.

2 Roles

2.1 Chair and Vice-chair of the Council

- 2.1.1 Where, from time to time, the Council defines policies on certain matters, these shall have the same effect as these Standing Orders, excepting that where there is disagreement in the terms of those policies, these Standing Orders shall take precedence.
- 2.1.2 A Chair of the Council is required by the Local Government Act 1972 (LGA 1972) (Part 1, Section 15), and will fulfil the roles and responsibilities required by that Act.
- 2.1.3 The Chair of the Council is elected by members of the Town Council.
- 2.1.4 The Chair of the Council has no direct powers or privileges beyond those of an ordinary Councillor. The Chair cannot take decisions or actions as an individual.
- 2.1.5 The Chair will:
 - a. Chair Full Council Meetings.
 - b. Work with the Town Clerk and Councillors to develop and propose to Council the strategic direction and policy objectives of the Council.
 - c. Not alter the strategic direction of the Council.
 - d. Work with the Town Clerk to ensure the strategic direction and operational management of the Council are working effectively.
 - e. Work with the Town Clerk to negotiate on behalf of the Council with other local authorities and organisations to deliver the strategic direction and policy objectives.
 - f. Discuss with relevant Committee Chairs the purpose of any negotiation and report the outcome to Council or the relevant committee.
 - g. Discuss with the Town Clerk, on a regular basis, the operational work of the Council and issues within the town.
 - h. Be asked for advice by the Town Clerk when making significant decisions.
 - i. Approve the Town Clerk's leave and time off in lieu.
 - j. Appraise the Town Clerk's performance at least annually and jointly with the Chair of Staffing and Finance.
 - k. Be briefed by the Town Clerk of any upcoming meetings with external organisations.
 - l. Make the Town Clerk aware of any upcoming meetings with external organisations.
 - m. Undertake other roles as may be defined in Council Policies or by resolution.
- 2.1.6 The Council will also appoint a Vice-chair who will fulfil the roles and responsibilities required by that Act in the event that the Chair is not available.
- 2.1.7 The Chair and Vice-chair have only such powers as are granted under the LGA 1972—the roles confer no other special privileges.

2.2 Statutory provisions relating to the Chair and Vice-chair

- 2.2.1 **The Chair, unless s/he has resigned or becomes disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until a successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the Council.**
- 2.2.2 **The Vice-chair, unless s/he resigns or becomes disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chair at the next annual meeting of the Council.**

- 2.2.3 In an election year, if the current Chair has not been re-elected as a member of the Council, s/he shall preside at the meeting until a successive Chair has been elected. The current Chair shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chair but must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.
- 2.2.4 In an election year, if the current Chair has been re-elected as a member of the Council, s/he shall preside at the meeting until a new Chair has been elected. S/he may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chair and must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.
- 2.2.5 Subject to Standing Orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chair of the Council may in their absence be done by, to or before the Vice-chair of the Council.
- 2.2.6 The Chair, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chair is absent from a meeting, the Vice-chair, if present, shall preside. If both the Chair and the Vice-chair are absent from a meeting, a Councillor as chosen by the Councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.

2.3 Proper Officer

- 2.3.1 The Proper Officer shall be known generally as the Town Clerk;
- 2.3.2 The Deputy Clerk will undertake the role of the Town Clerk during the Town Clerk's absence.
- 2.3.3 The Proper Officer, and other Officers of the Council will hold (or be working towards) such qualifications as to confer upon the Council the General Power of Competence;
- 2.3.4 **The Proper Officer shall:**
 - a. **at least three clear days before a meeting of the Council, or a committee, (excluding Sunday and Bank holidays) serve on Councillors by delivery or post at their residences or by email authenticated in such manner as the Proper Officer thinks fit, a signed summons confirming the time, place and the agenda (provided the Councillor has consented to service by email);**
 - b. **give public notice of the time, place and agenda at least three clear days before a meeting of the Council or a meeting of a committee, excluding Sunday and Bank holidays, (provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the Council convened by Councillors is signed by the relevant Councillors;**
The minimum three clear days' notice does not include the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning.
 - c. **convene a meeting of full Council for the election of a new Chair of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in that office;**
 - d. **receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities;**
 - e. **provide a copy of the Council's Standing Orders to a Councillor as soon as possible after he has delivered his acceptance of office form.**
 - f. **facilitate inspection of the minutes of meetings by local government electors, other than when agenda items are considered pursuant to the provision of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business by reason of the confidential nature of business to be transacted, when minutes remain confidential;**
 - g. **implement decisions of the Council via delegated authority;**
 - h. **have overall managerial responsibility for service delivery**
 - i. **have overall managerial responsibility for staff recruitment (including the drafting of job**

descriptions) and management, while alterations to the corporate staff structure and changes to staff grading will be resolved by the Staffing & Finance Committee;

- j. provide objective advice on all matters;
- k. Liaise with other bodies in order to identify and keep abreast of important issues in the town.

3 Structure of the Council

3.1 Committees

- 3.1.1 The Council shall, at the Annual Town Council meeting, or otherwise as required and subject to a proper motion, appoint such committees as it deems necessary, and confirm the remit, Terms of Reference, levels of authority, meeting dates and membership.
- 3.1.2 Each committee shall have the number of members determined by the Council such that it can effectively conduct its business and achieve a quorum.
- 3.1.3 The Chair of the Council shall be an ex-officio member of each committee unless otherwise agreed at the Annual Town Council meeting.
- 3.1.4 Unless a Chair has already been elected at Full Council, committee members will elect a Chair and Vice-chair of their respective committee, who shall hold office until the next Annual Town Council Meeting, unless a motion is passed at full Council to remove them.
- 3.1.5 Committees are empowered to take decisions within the powers and duties defined in the relevant Committee Terms of Reference documents.
- 3.1.6 Councillors other than committee members may attend meetings of each committee, may participate in discussions, but may not vote.

3.2 Removal, addition of and changes to committees

- 3.2.1 If a committee is no longer required to fulfil its stated Terms of Reference, the Full Council may vote to disband the committee, and disburse or reserve its powers and duties to other committees or the full Council.
- 3.2.2 The Council may form further committees at any Full Council meeting and may appoint members to those committees at that time. The newly appointed Chair/Vice-chair will only hold office until the next Annual Town Council meeting, at which point all committee membership will be subject to review.
- 3.2.3 The Council may review and amend the membership and Terms of Reference of committees by resolution in a Full Town Council meeting.

3.3 Appointment of non-Councillors to Committees

- 3.3.1 The Council recognises the role that members of the wider community can play in the business of the Council.
- 3.3.2 The members of a committee may include non-Councillors unless it is a committee which regulates and controls the finances of the Council. Non-Councillors may be appointed by vote of the members of that committee, on the basis that;
 - a. They add additional expertise to the work of the committee;
 - b. They have been subject to a selection process which may be defined by the Council;
 - c. They have declared any interests, pecuniary or otherwise, in a way consistent with requirements on elected members of the Council;
 - d. They are not permitted to vote on any matter.

- 3.3.3 Any relationship of a proposed non-Councillor appointee to a committee to an elected Councillor shall be reported to the Proper Officer in any case prior to their acceptance of appointment.
- 3.3.4 **Unless the Council determines otherwise, a committee may appoint a sub-committee whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by the committee.**
- 3.3.5 A register of non-Councillor members of committees, including registered interests and expertise will be maintained by the Proper Officer.

3.4 Proposals from Committees

- 3.4.1 Any individual may make a proposal for a consideration by committee, and the Council will provide a suitable process to assist with that proposal. In the first instance, the proposal should be addressed to the committee in which Terms of Reference it falls.
- 3.4.2 All proposals whether from individuals or a Councillor, will be assigned a Councillor as mentor who will assist with drafting the proposal and guiding it through the process.
- 3.4.3 All proposals with a financial requirement above the assigned annual budget and/or spending cap for each Committee, as agreed by full Town Council shall be brought before the full Town Council for scrutiny. Proposals for financial commitments in excess of £10,000, or which require a loan to be taken will be presented to and considered by Full Town Council.

4 Meetings

4.1 Notice of meetings

- 4.1.1 **Notice of meetings shall be as given in section 2.3.**
- 4.1.2 **Subject to standing order 4.1.3., a person who attends a meeting is permitted to report on the meeting whilst the meeting is open to the public. To “report” means to film, photograph, make an audio recording of meeting proceedings, use other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear the meeting as it takes place or later or to report or to provide oral or written commentary about the meeting so that the report or commentary is available as the meeting takes place or later to persons not present. Further detail is given in the Portishead Town Council Filming and Recording Policy (Policy C8) and Portishead Town Council Behaviour Policy.**
- 4.1.3 **A person present at the meeting may not provide an oral report or oral commentary about a meeting as it takes place without permission.**

4.2 Statutory Annual Meeting

- 4.2.1 **The Statutory Annual Meeting shall be held;**
 - a. **In an election year, on or within 14 days following the day on which the new Councillors elected take office;**
 - or**
 - b. **In a year which is not an election year the annual meeting of a Council shall be held on such day in May as the Council may direct.**
- 4.2.2 **If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the Council shall take place at 7.30pm.**
- 4.2.3 **The first item at the Statutory Annual Meeting shall be the election of the Chair followed by the election of the Vice-chair of the Council in order to fulfil requirements under section 2.1 of these Standing Orders and the LGA 1972.**
- 4.2.4 **Following election of the Chair of the Council and Vice-chair (if any) of the Council at the annual meeting of the Council, the business of the annual meeting shall include:**
 - a. **In an election year, delivery by the Chair of the Council and Councillors of their acceptance of office forms unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date.**
 - b. **In a year which is not an election year, delivery by the Chair of the Council of their acceptance of office form unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date.**
 - c. Review of delegation arrangements to committees, working parties, staff and other local bodies;
 - d. Appointment of members to existing committees;
 - e. Appointment of any new committees in accordance with section 3.1 above;
 - f. In an election year, to make arrangements with a view to the Council becoming eligible to exercise the general power of competence in the future;
 - g. Review of the Council's and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies;
 - h. Review and agreement of Councillors' representation on external bodies;
 - i. Determine the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.

4.3 Other meeting requirements

- 4.3.1 **The Council will hold a minimum of three other meetings in the year; those other meetings shall be held at such an hour and on such days as the Council may determine.**
- 4.3.2 **Extraordinary meetings of the Council may be called:**
 - a. **By the Chair at any time;**
or
 - b. **Upon receipt of a requisition signed by two Councillors, to the Chair or Proper Officer and stating the business to be transacted, no other business being allowed.**
 - c. The Chair of a committee (or a sub-committee) may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee (or the sub-committee at any time)
- 4.3.3 **If the Chair does not call an extraordinary meeting of the Council within seven days of having been requested to do so by two Councillors, any two Councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council. The statutory public notice giving the time, venue and agenda for such a meeting must be signed by the two Councillors.**
- 4.3.4 **Meetings shall not take place in premises which at the time of the meeting are used for the supply of alcohol, unless no other premises are available free of charge or at a reasonable cost.**
- 4.3.5 Wherever possible, meeting venues shall be fully accessible for all people to participate fully in meetings
- 4.3.6 Meetings will finish within 2 hours except by agreement of all Councillors present and the Proper Officer.
- 4.3.7 Minutes, including any amendments to correct their accuracy shall be confirmed by resolution and every page shall be signed and dated by the Chair of the meeting and stand as an accurate record of the meeting to which the minutes relate. Every page shall be numbered.
- 4.3.8 Minutes shall include a summary record of public participation at a meeting.

4.4 Quorum requirements

- 4.4.1 **No business may be transacted at a meeting unless at least one-third of the whole number of members of the Council are present and in no case shall the quorum of a meeting be less than three.**
- 4.4.2 **If a meeting is or becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted and the meeting shall be adjourned.**
- 4.4.3 Committees shall not be quorate unless three or more Councillors with voting rights are present.
- 4.4.4 In the event that a member declares a disclosable interest in respect of a specific agenda item, such that the meeting becomes inquorate, that item will be deferred to the next meeting, or to such and other meeting as will be determined by the Council or the Committee.
- 4.4.5 To that end, all members of meetings will be asked to disclose interests as early as possible in proceedings to allow for agendas to be adjusted.

4.7 Absence from Committee meetings and substitutions

- 4.7.1 If a Committee member knows that they will be absent from a meeting, they may, by prior agreement with the Chair of that Committee, request that another member of the Council acts as their substitute on that committee for that meeting only. Such an arrangement is deemed desirable if the meeting would otherwise not be quorate.
- 4.7.2 The absent member shall in any case be recorded as giving apologies for that meeting, and a note of the substitution made in the record.

5 Public involvement in meetings

- 5.1.1 Public involvement is central in the promotion of democratic government—access to meetings is a right for all members of our community, both in terms of physical access to the meeting itself, and wider accessibility of Council proceedings. However, the Council's Behaviour Policy may result in members of the public being asked not to attend Council meetings for a specified period of time if their behaviour is considered unacceptable. Conduct of Councillors and consequent actions are covered in section 8.1.
- 5.1.2 **All meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons, subject to Section 4 of these Standing Orders. The public's exclusion from all or part of a meeting shall be by resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion.**
- 5.1.3 At the Chair's discretion, individual members of the public shall be provided with the opportunity to speak for not more than 5 minutes each on a subject which is relevant to the agenda of that meeting at the time indicated in the agenda or as determined by the Chair of the meeting, including Committee meetings, subject to;
- A request being made to the Clerk of that meeting to speak, including the subject of the question or statement being made (which may be via email in advance, or ahead of the published start time of that meeting);
 - The Chair of the meeting granting a request to speak, if made at the meeting;
 - Disclosure of any relevant interest they have in relation to the matter they wish to discuss (for example, membership of an interest group¹, proximity to a proposed development or such);
 - The total time allocated to public questions and statements will not exceed 30 minutes except at the discretion of the Chair of the meeting.
- 5.1.4 Where it is apparent that multiple individuals wish to speak on the same subject, and taking account of differing views, the Chair may request that a spokesperson be selected by those speakers to represent them, rather than allow all individuals to speak.
- 5.1.5 Members of the public may be invited to speak during an agenda item where they can provide additional information. Committee members shall receive the Chair's assent prior to directly engaging a member of the public, although assent should only be withheld where there would be significant detriment to the running of the meeting.
- 5.1.6 **The press shall be provided reasonable facilities for the taking of a report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present.**
- 5.1.7 By acceptance of these Standing Orders, Councillors consent to the recording or broadcasting of meetings by analogue or digital means.
- 5.1.8 Where a meeting is to be recorded or broadcast in any format, clear notice will be given of this to members and to the public.
- 5.1.9 With respect to meetings organised by the Council for the specific purpose of public engagement, outside of standard meetings, these Standing Orders will apply only insofar as is required to meet statutory requirements and ensure the smooth running of the meeting.

¹ for the purposes of 5.1.3.b, interest groups are defined as any group, whether constituted or not, body corporate or not, that consists of 3 or more individuals or companies that wish to express an opinion on a matter or matters under consideration by the Council.

6 Conduct of meetings and debate

6.1 Motions not requiring notice

6.1.1 Motions in respect of the following matters may be moved without written notice to the Proper Officer:

- a. To appoint a person to preside at the meeting;
- b. To correct an inaccuracy or approve the accuracy of the minutes of the previous meeting;
- c. To dispose of business, if any, remaining adjourned from the previous meeting;
- d. To alter the order of business on the agenda for reasons of urgency or expediency;
- e. To put a motion to the vote in relation to any agenda topic;
- f. To refer by formal delegation a matter to a Committee, sub-committee or an officer;
- g. To note the minutes of a Committee or sub-committee;
- h. To consider a report and/or any recommendations made by a committee, sub-committee, officer, professional expert, advisor or consultant;
- i. To authorise legal deeds to be sealed by the Council's common seal and witnessed;
- j. To amend the wording of a motion before it is put to the vote;
- k. To give leave to withdraw a motion or an amendment before it is put to the vote;
- l. To defer consideration of a motion and proceed to the next business on the agenda;
- m. To conduct a consultation with residents who are directly affected by any specific measure;
- n. To exclude the public and press (See Section 7.3 of these Standing Orders);
- o. To not-hear or eject from the meeting a person for disorderly conduct. (See Section 6.5);
- p. To require a written report;
- q. To extend the time-limits for speaking;
- r. To suspend any Standing Order except those which are mandatory by law;
- s. To temporarily suspend, close or adjourn the meeting;
- t. To appoint representatives to outside bodies and to make arrangements for those representatives to report back the activities of outside bodies.

6.2 Motions requiring notice

- 6.2.1 All motions except those listed under Section 6.1 require written notice of no less than 7 clear days to be given to the Proper Officer, to allow its inclusion in the Agenda such that it will have public notice.
- 6.2.2 The Proper Officer shall maintain a record of all motions received for a meeting.
- 6.2.3 Motions to amend Standing Orders, or to remove the Chair, Vice-chair or assignment of membership to a committee are reserved to Full Council, and the Chair of the Council will be informed of the receipt of such motions without undue delay.
- 6.2.4 The Proper Officer, in consultation with the Chair or conveners of the meeting, may reject a motion on the basis of;
 - a. Lack of clarity or legibility;
 - b. Irrelevance to the Terms of Reference of the meeting;
 - c. Unlawful or improper subject or wording.
- 6.2.5 The Proper Officer will set out in the Summons for each meeting all notices of motion or recommendation in an order agreed with the Chair of the meeting.

- 6.2.6 Any motion may be withdrawn by the member proposing it, or a deferral sought, up to and including during the meeting, by written or verbal notice to the Chair.
- 6.2.7 Any motion which is not moved during the meeting without notice having been given under 6.2.6 will be considered withdrawn and will not automatically be deferred.
- 6.2.8 Any motion which falls under the Terms of Reference of a committee will be referred by the Council to that committee unless the Chair deems it to be a matter of urgency, or the matter has been referred by that committee.
- 6.2.9 Every motion, recommendation and resolution shall relate to the Council's statutory functions, powers and lawful obligations or shall relate to an issue which specifically affects the Council's area or its residents.

6.3 Rules of debate

- 6.3.1 Motions included in an agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear on the agenda unless the order is changed at the discretion of the Chair of the meeting.
- 6.3.2 All motions require a proposer and seconder. The Chair may require the motion to be provided in writing at their discretion, even if proposed during the meeting.
- 6.3.3 Once proposed, any member may request an amendment to the words of the motion; the proposer may only propose the withdrawal or amendment of the motion by agreement with the seconder.
- 6.3.4 Amendments shall not rescind the original motion proposed.
- 6.3.5 One motion or amendment will be discussed at a time.
- 6.3.6 The Chair will determine the order of speakers and will, at their discretion set a time-limit on both individual contributions and the whole debate.
- 6.3.7 Members and other permitted contributors will conduct themselves appropriately and respectfully of each other, and attention is drawn to the Portishead Town Council Behaviour Policy, Member and Officer Protocol and the Nolan Principles.
- 6.3.8 The proposer of a motion or amendment shall have the right to reply prior to the matter being put to the vote.
- 6.3.9 A member raising a point of order will refer to the specific provision of these Standing Orders. The decision of the Chair on a point of order is final.
- 6.3.10 When a motion is under debate no other motion shall be moved except the following:
 - a. To amend the motion;
 - b. To put the motion to the vote;
 - c. To adjourn the debate and proceed with business;
 - d. To refer a motion to a committee or to the Council, as appropriate for consideration;
 - e. To take any actions on exclusion from the meeting subject to Section 6.5 or Section 7.1;
 - f. To suspend any standing order, except those which reflect statutory requirements.
- 6.3.11 Any member may move to put the motion to a vote, providing that the Chair is satisfied that sufficient time has been allowed for debate and allowing for the Proposer's rights under section 6.3.8.
- 6.3.12 If there is more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion, the amendments shall be moved in the order directed by the Chair of the meeting.
- 6.3.13 If an amendment to the original motion is carried, the original motion (as amended) becomes the substantive motion upon which further amendment(s) may be moved.

6.4 Temporary suspension of Standing Orders

- 6.4.1 All or part of a Standing Order, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory requirements, may be suspended by resolution in relation to the consideration of an item on the agenda for a meeting.
- 6.4.2 Having due regard to the advice of the Proper Officer or meeting Clerk, the decision of the Chair on the application of Standing Orders is final.

6.5 Disorderly Conduct

- 6.5.1 No person including members shall at a meeting persistently disregard the ruling of the Chair, wilfully obstruct business, or behave irregularly, offensively, improperly or if a member, in such a manner as to bring the Council into disrepute.
- 6.5.2 Any member deemed by the Chair to be unfit to take part in proceedings, through alcohol or other substances, will be asked to leave the meeting and further action may be taken under the Code of Conduct.
- 6.5.3 If, in the opinion of the Chair, a person has acted in a manner contrary to that required, the Chair shall express that opinion to the Council and thereafter any member may move that the person named be no longer heard or that the person named leaves the meeting, and the resolution, if seconded, shall be put forthwith and without discussion.
- 6.5.4 If any of the resolutions mentioned in Standing Order 6.5 are contravened, the Chair may suspend the meeting or take such further steps as may reasonably be necessary to enforce them as set out in the Portishead Town Council Behaviour Policy.

7 Confidential matters

7.1 Handling confidential information

- 7.1.1 No member of the Council, where a member is either a Councillor or an officer, shall disclose to any person not a member of the Council any information which they believe to be confidential, or which was provided to them in circumstances that would normally give rise to that belief.
- 7.1.2 In discussions with other members, members will at all times consider whether others 'need to know' the information and refrain from sharing information outside of that need, accepting that there will in many cases be a legitimate public interest in sharing information.
- 7.1.3 Members will ensure that any materials with protective markings of 'Restricted' or 'Private and Confidential' are treated as such and shall follow any further instructions or policy that the Council may define on the handling of such information.
- 7.1.4 If they believe that such a marking is inappropriate or is no longer relevant, the Proper Officer may agree with the Chair to disclose such documents.
- 7.1.5 In respect of Council Employees, apart from members of the Staffing and Finance committee, no member shall, at any time, have a right of access to employee records, salary, appraisals or other documents that are held in the context of an employment relationship. Access may be granted only in specific circumstances, by agreement of the Proper Officer and Chair or Vice-chair of the Staffing and Finance committee and unless detrimental to the purposes of the request, by consent of the individual employee.

7.2 Information Security

- 7.2.1 Councillors and Officers of the Council shall take all due precautions to ensure the security and integrity of information that they receive or create in the course of their duties. These may include;
 - a. Using only systems provided by the Town Council for official Council business, except where otherwise agreed with the Proper Officer;
 - b. Taking due care of those systems, including following instructions from Council staff or contractors in respect of security and other software updates;
 - c. Refraining from the use of portable media such as USB flash drives;
 - d. Installation or use of encryption technologies;
 - e. Undertaking such training as is identified by the Town Council as providing an appropriate level of knowledge on matters relating to information security and privacy.
 - f. The Council shall have policies and procedures in place to respond to an individual exercising statutory rights concerning his/her personal data.**
 - g. The Council shall have in place and keep under review, technical and organisational measures to keep secure information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. Such arrangements shall include deciding who has access to personal data and the encryption of personal data.**
 - h. The Council shall have in place, and under review, policies for the retention and safe destruction of all information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. The Council's Retention Policy shall confirm the period for which this information (including personal data) shall be retained or if this is not possible the criteria used to determine that period e.g. the Limitation Act 1980).**

- i. **The Agenda, papers that support the agenda and the minutes of a meeting shall not disclose or otherwise undermine confidential information or personal data without legal justification.**
- j. **Councillors, staff, Council's contractors and agents shall not disclose confidential information or personal data without legal justification.**
- k. **The Council shall have a written policy in place for responding to and managing a personal data breach.**
- l. **The Council shall keep a record of all personal data breaches comprising the facts relating to the personal data breach, its effects and the remedial action taken. The Council shall ensure that information communicated in its privacy notice(s) is in an easily accessible and available form and kept up to date.**
- m. **The Council shall maintain a written record of its data processing activities.**

7.3 Confidentiality within meetings

- 7.3.1 The press and public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion; 'That in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, such that it would be prejudicial to the Public Interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the meeting resolves that the public and press will be temporarily excluded'.
- 7.3.2 Such resolutions shall only be permissible within these Standing Orders where;
 - a. The Council has a duty under Law (for example as employer) to individuals whose personal data or other confidential information is required to be, or is likely to be discussed;
 - b. The Council is otherwise bound by law or compliance with a contract that requires a matter to be discussed confidentially in line with the 1960 Act.
- 7.3.3 Records of matters discussed in confidential session will remain confidential while the reason for confidentiality remains extant, subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 1998 and other relevant laws of England and Wales.
- 7.3.4 Members shall always be mindful of their general duty of confidentiality under law, both as individuals and, collectively, as the Employer (Portishead Town Council).
- 7.3.5 Discussion in relation to any aspect of employee relations with Town Council staff, collectively or individually, shall be referred to a meeting of the Staffing and Finance Committee. Such agenda items will be considered confidential to the members of that committee, and other members will be asked by the Committee Chair to vacate the room for those items, pursuant to section 7.1.5.

8 Code of conduct and declaration of interests

8.1 Code of conduct

- 8.1.1 All members of Portishead Town Council are bound by Policy C2 'Code of Conduct for Members'.
- 8.1.2 Suspected breaches of the Code of Conduct will be referred to the North Somerset Council Monitoring Officer and reported to the Council.
- 8.1.3 **Upon notification by North Somerset Council that a Councillor or non-Councillor has breached the Council's code of conduct, the Council shall consider what, if any, action to take against that individual. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office.**
- 8.1.4 The Council reserves the right to suspend or permanently remove, by motion at a meeting, any office held by that member including Chair, Vice-chair or membership of a committee, where it deems that doing so is necessary for the protection of the dignity of the office held or failure to do so would bring the Council into disrepute. This may be irrespective of any final decision by the Monitoring Officer.

8.2 Disclosure of interests

- 8.2.1 **A Councillor with voting rights who has a disclosable pecuniary interest in relation to any item of business being transacted at a meeting may**
 - a. make representations,
 - b. answer questions and
 - c. **give evidence relating to the business being transacted but must, thereafter, leave the meeting before the vote, or not engage in the voting process if it is not practical to leave.**

8.3 Dispensations in respect of disclosable interests

- 8.3.1 **Dispensation requests shall be in writing and submitted to the Proper Officer** or if this is not possible, verbally at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.
- 8.3.2 **A dispensation may be granted in accordance with the above if having regard to all relevant circumstances the following applies:**
 - a. **without the dispensation, the number of persons prohibited from participating in the particular business would be so great a proportion of the meeting transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business or**
 - b. **granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the Council's area or**
 - c. **it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.**

8.4 Other Restrictions on Councillor activities

- 8.4.1 No Councillor shall claim to represent the Council without a resolution authorising them to do so.
- 8.4.2 Unless authorised by a resolution, no Councillor shall inspect any land and/or premises/which the Council has a right or duty to inspect/investigate; or issue orders/instructions or directions.

- 8.4.3 No Councillor shall represent their personal view in any forum or meeting as the expressed view of the Council unless such has been expressed by a resolution of the Council in a meeting.
- 8.4.4 Unless authorised by a resolution, no individual Councillor will act in the name or on behalf of the Council, a committee or a sub-committee unless delegated to do so by Council.

9 Financial controls and deeds

9.1 Financial regulations

- 9.1.1 **Responsible finance materials, services and the execution of works with an estimated value in excess of £25,000 shall be procured on the basis of a formal tender (section 9.1.2).**
- 9.1.2 **Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed £164,176 (or other threshold specified by the Office of Government Commerce from time to time) the Council must consider whether the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (SI No. 5, as amended) and the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2006 (SI No. 6, as amended) apply to the contract and, if either of those Regulations apply, the Council must comply with UK Government public procurement rules.**
- 9.1.3 **A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulation 2015 with an estimated value in excess of £25,000 but less than the relevant threshold in Section 9.1.2 is subject to Regulations 109 – 114 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, which includes a requirement on the Council to advertise the contract opportunity on the Contracts Finder website regardless of what other means it uses to advertise the opportunity, unless it proposes to use an existing list of approved suppliers (framework agreement).**
- 9.1.4 **A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulation 2015 with an estimated value in excess of £189,930 for a public service or a supply contract or in excess of £4,733,252 for a public works contract shall comply with the relevant procurement procedures and other requirements in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 which include advertising the contract opportunity on the Contracts Finder website and in the OJEU.**
- 9.1.5 **A public contract in connection with the supply of gas, heat, electricity, drinking water, transport services or postal services to the public; or the provision of a portal airport; or the exploration for or extraction of gas, oil or solid fuel with an estimated value in excess of £378,660 for a supply, services or design contract; or in excess of £4,733,252 for a works contract; or £663,540 for a social and other specific services contract shall comply with the relevant procurement procedures and other requirements in the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016.**

9.2 Execution and sealing of legal deeds

- 9.2.1 A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the Council unless authorised by a resolution.
- 9.2.2 **Subject to Section 9.2.1 above, the Council's common seal shall alone be used for sealing a deed required by law. It shall be applied by the Proper Officer in the presence of two Councillors who shall sign the deed as witnesses.**

10 Responsibility to provide information

- 10.1.1 **In accordance with the Freedom of Information legislation, the Council shall publish information in accordance with its publication scheme and respond to requests on information held by the Council.**
- 10.1.2 **The Council shall publish information in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Transparency Requirements – England) Regulation 2015.**

Frome Town Council Constitution

Chapter 2 Standing Orders

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A copy of this document is also available in different formats such as large print, audio or in a different language, please contact the office if this is required.

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Items in bold are legal requirements

1. Meetings Generally

- 1 The Chair and vice Chair(s) of the Council will be the Mayor and deputy Mayor(s) respectively.
- 2 The Proper Officer will be the Town Clerk
- 3 Cllrs are expected to attend meetings
- 4 Council meetings will follow the Council's procedural rules set out in these Standing Orders and Financial Regulations (chapter 3) when considering any matter.
- 5 All decisions of the Council will be made in accordance with the following principles:
 - 6 Proportionality i.e. the action should proportionate to the desired outcome.
 - 7 Due consultation and the taking of advice from staff.
 - 8 Respect for human rights.
 - 9 Presumption in favour of openness.
 - 10 Clarity of aims and desired outcomes.
 - 11 Reflecting the balance of evidence, or legal or financial advice.
- 12 The Town Clerk is responsible for preparing the Agendas for all meetings of the Town Council, Committees and Subcommittees, and for circulation of them to meet statutory requirements. However, out of courtesy, the Town Clerk may consult with the appropriate Chair during the course of preparation of Agendas.
- 13 The Chair works in partnerships with the Town Clerk to make sure that the Council is properly informed for making lawful decisions during meetings.
- 14 Matters for inclusion on an Agenda may be considered at the discretion of the appropriate Clerk in consultation with the Chair of Council or Committee.
- 15 The Town Clerk or other appointed officer as delegated by the Town Clerk will be present at all meetings involving Cllrs of the Town Council and will advise on any questions relating to the Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, legal requirements or committee procedures and will supervise the production of formal Minutes of the meeting.
- 16 Where, for whatever reason, a staff member is not able to attend a meeting, the meeting is not invalidated. The Chair presides and a Cllr is elected to take the minutes.

- 17 **Meetings shall not take place in premises which at the time of the meeting are used for the supply of alcohol unless no other premises are available free of charge or at a reasonable cost.**
- 18 **The minimum three clear days for notice of a meeting does not include the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning.**
- 19 **Meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion.**
- 20 Members of the public are encouraged to contribute to the discussion.
- 21 A member of the public shall raise their hand when requesting to speak and shall not speak for more than 5 minutes unless the chair permits otherwise.
- 22 In accordance with standing order 1 (20), a question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The chair of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.
- 23 A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct their comments to the chair of the meeting.
- 24 Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the chair of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.
- 25 **Subject to standing order 1 (21), a person who attends a meeting is permitted to report on the meeting whilst the meeting is open to the public. To "report" means to film, photograph, make an audio recording of meeting proceedings, use any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear the meeting as it takes place or later or to report or to provide oral or written commentary about the meeting so that the report or commentary is available as the meeting takes place or later to persons not present.**
- 26 **To avoid disrupting the meeting, a person present at a meeting may not provide an oral report or oral commentary about a meeting as it takes place without permission.**
- 27 **The press shall be provided with reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present.**

- 28 **Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chair of the Council or Committee may in their absence be done by, to or before the Deputy-Chair of the Council or Committee (if there is one).**
- 29 **The Chair of the Council or Committee, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chair is absent from a meeting, the Deputy-Chair of the Council or a committee (if there is one) if present, shall preside. If both the Chair and the Deputy-Chair are absent from a meeting, a councillor as chosen by the councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.**
- 30 **Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the councillors and non-councillors with voting rights present and voting.**
- 31 **The chair of a meeting may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise their casting vote whether or not they gave an original vote.**

See standing orders 7 (7) and (8) for the different rules that apply in the election of the Chair of the Council at the annual meeting of the Council.

- 32 **Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on a question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave their vote for or against that question.** Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.
- 33 The minutes of a meeting shall include an accurate record of the following:
- i. the time and place of the meeting;
 - ii. the names of councillors who are present and the names of councillors who are absent;
 - iii. interests that have been declared by councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
 - iv. the grant of dispensations (if any) to councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
 - v. whether a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights left the meeting when matters that they held interests in were being considered;
 - vi. if there was a public participation session; and
 - vii. the resolutions made.
 - viii. which Cllrs voted against the majority or abstained
 - ix. when Cllrs arrived after the start of the meeting and when they left before the end of the meeting
 - x. they were confirmed as an accurate record by resolution and every page signed and dated by the chair.

- 34 **A councillor or a non-councillor with voting rights who has a disclosable pecuniary interest, or another interest as set out in the Council's code of conduct in a matter being considered at a meeting is subject to statutory limitations or restrictions under the code on their right to participate and vote on that matter.**
- 35 **No business may be transacted at a meeting unless at least one-third of the whole number of members of the Council or Committee are present and in no case shall the quorum of a meeting be less than three.**
- 36 **If a meeting is or becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted** and the meeting shall be closed. The business on the agenda for the meeting shall be adjourned to another meeting.
- 37 A meeting shall not exceed 2.5 hours without a resolution to continue.

2. Rules of Debate at Meetings

- 1 Motions on the agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear unless the order is changed at the discretion of the chair of the meeting.
- 2 A motion (including an amendment) shall not be progressed unless it has been moved and seconded.
- 3 A motion on the agenda that is not moved by its proposer may be treated by the chair of the meeting as withdrawn.
- 4 If a motion (including an amendment) has been seconded, it may be withdrawn by the proposer only with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- 5 An amendment is a proposal to remove or add words to a motion. It shall not negate the motion.
- 6 If an amendment to the original motion is carried, the original motion (as amended) becomes the substantive motion upon which further amendment(s) may be moved.
- 7 An amendment shall not be considered unless early verbal notice of it is given at the meeting and, if requested by the chair of the meeting, is expressed in writing to the chair.
- 8 A councillor may move an amendment to their own motion if agreed by the meeting. If a motion has already been seconded, the amendment shall be with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- 9 If there is more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion, the amendments shall be moved in the order directed by the chair of the meeting.

- 10 Subject to standing order 2 (11), only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the chair of the meeting.
- 11 One or more amendments may be discussed together if the chair of the meeting considers this expedient, but each amendment shall be voted upon separately.
- 12 A councillor may not move more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion.
- 13 The mover of an amendment has no right of reply at the end of debate on it.
- 14 Where a series of amendments to an original motion are carried, the mover of the original motion shall have a right of reply either at the end of debate on the first amendment or at the very end of debate on the final substantive motion immediately before it is put to the vote.
- 15 Unless permitted by the chair of the meeting, a councillor may speak once in the debate on a motion except:
 - i. to speak on an amendment moved by another councillor;
 - ii. to move or speak on another amendment if the motion has been amended since they last spoke;
 - iii. to make a point of order;
 - iv. to give a personal explanation; or
 - v. to exercise a right of reply.
- 16 During the debate on a motion, a councillor may interrupt only on a point of order or a personal explanation and the councillor who was interrupted shall stop speaking. A councillor raising a point of order shall identify the standing order which they consider has been breached or specify the other irregularity in the proceedings of the meeting they are concerned by.
- 17 A point of order shall be decided by the chair of the meeting and their decision shall be final.
- 18 When a motion is under debate, no other motion shall be moved except:
 - i. to amend the motion;
 - ii. to proceed to the next business;
 - iii. to adjourn the debate;
 - iv. to put the motion to a vote;
 - v. to ask a person to be no longer heard or to leave the meeting;
 - vi. to refer a motion to a committee or sub-committee for consideration;
 - vii. to exclude the public and press;
 - viii. to adjourn the meeting; or
 - ix. to suspend particular standing order(s) excepting those which reflect mandatory statutory or legal requirements.

- 19 Before an original or substantive motion is put to the vote, the chair of the meeting shall be satisfied that the motion has been sufficiently debated and that the mover of the motion under debate has exercised or waived their right of reply.
- 20 Excluding motions moved under standing order 2 (18), the contributions or speeches by a councillor shall relate only to the motion under discussion.

3. Disorderly Conduct at Meetings

- 1 No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly. If this standing order is ignored, the chair of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.
- 2 If person(s) disregard the request of the chair of the meeting to moderate or improve their conduct, any councillor or the chair of the meeting may move that the person be no longer heard or be excluded from the meeting. The motion, if seconded, shall be put to the vote without discussion.
- 3 If a resolution made under standing order 3 (2) is ignored, the chair of the meeting may take further reasonable steps to restore order or to progress the meeting. This may include temporarily suspending or closing the meeting.

4. Confidential Business

- 1 Cllrs will not disclose information given to them in confidence, or which they believe or ought to be aware, is of a confidential nature
- 2 Confidential items can be sent to Cllrs marked "confidential" electronically or on pink paper. Pink paper will be collected by the Town Clerk at the end of the meetings
- 3 A Cllr in breach of this Standing Order may be removed from a committee or a sub-committee by a resolution of the Council

5. Motions for a meeting that require written notice to be given to the Proper Officer

- 1 A motion shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting for which it is tabled and in any event shall relate to the performance of the Council's statutory functions, powers and obligations or an issue which specifically affects the Council's area or its residents.
- 2 No motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is on the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least 3 clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.

- 3 The Proper Officer may, before including a motion on the agenda received in accordance with standing order 5 (2), correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.
- 4 If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with standing order 5 (2) is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it, so that it can be understood, in writing, to the Proper Officer at least 3 clear days before the meeting.
- 5 If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the chair of the forthcoming meeting or, as the case may be, the councillors who have convened the meeting, to consider whether the motion shall be included in the agenda or rejected.
- 6 The decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.
- 7 Motions received shall be recorded and numbered in the order that they are received.
- 8 Motions rejected shall be recorded with an explanation by the Proper Officer of the reason for rejection.

6. Motions at a Meeting that do not require written notice

- 1 The following motions may be moved at a meeting without written notice to the Proper Officer:
 - i. to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes of a meeting;
 - ii. to move to a vote;
 - iii. to defer consideration of a motion;
 - iv. to refer a motion to a particular committee or sub-committee;
 - v. to appoint a person to preside at a meeting;
 - vi. to change the order of business on the agenda;
 - vii. to proceed to the next business on the agenda;
 - viii. to require a written report;
 - ix. to exclude the press and public from a meeting in respect of confidential or other information which is prejudicial to the public interest;
 - x. to not hear further from a councillor or a member of the public;
 - xi. to exclude a councillor or member of the public for disorderly conduct;
 - xii. to temporarily suspend the meeting;
 - xiii. to suspend a particular standing order (unless it reflects mandatory statutory or legal requirements);
 - xiv. to adjourn the meeting; or
 - xv. to close the meeting.

7. Ordinary Council Meetings

- 1 In an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the councillors elected take office.
- 2 In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on such day in May as the Council decides.
- 3 If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the Council shall take place at 6pm.
- 4 In addition to the annual meeting of the Council, at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as the Council decides.
- 5 The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the Council shall be the election of the Chair and Deputy-Chair (if there is one) of the Council.
- 6 The Chair of the Council, unless they have resigned or becomes disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until their successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the Council.
- 7 The Deputy-Chair of the Council, if there is one, unless they resign or become disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chair of the Council at the next annual meeting of the Council.
- 8 In an election year, if the current Chair of the Council has not been re-elected as a member of the Council, they shall preside at the annual meeting until a successor Chair of the Council has been elected. The current Chair of the Council shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chair of the Council but shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.
- 9 In an election year, if the current Chair of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the Council, they shall preside at the annual meeting until a new Chair of the Council has been elected. They may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chair of the Council and shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.
- 10 Following the election of the Chair of the Council and Deputy-Chair (if there is one) of the Council at the annual meeting, the order of business will be as follows:
 - i. **In an election year, delivery by the Chair of the Council and councillors of their acceptance of office forms unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date. In a year which is not an election year, delivery**

by the Chair of the Council of their acceptance of office form unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date;

- ii. In an election year, the annual meeting of the Council will be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the new Cllrs elected take office
- iii. In an election year, if the current Mayor has not been re-elected as a Cllr, they will preside at the meeting until a successor Mayor has been elected. The current Mayor will not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Mayor but must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes
- iv. In an election year, if the current Mayor has been re-elected as a Cllr, they will preside at the meeting until a new Mayor has been elected. They may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Mayor and must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes
- v. In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of a Council will be held on such day in May as the Council decides
- vi. In addition to the annual meeting of the Council, at least three other ordinary meetings will be held in each year on such dates and times as the Council decides
- vii. The election of the Mayor and deputy Mayor(s) will be the first business conducted at the annual meeting of the Council
- viii. The Mayor, unless they have resigned or become disqualified, will continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until their successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the Council
- ix. The deputy Mayor(s), if any, unless they resign or become disqualified, will continue in office until immediately after the election of the Mayor at the next annual meeting of the Council
- x. Following the election of the Mayor and deputy Mayor(s) of the Council at the annual meeting of the Council, the order of business will be as follows:
 - a. In an election year, delivery by Chair and Cllrs of their acceptance of office forms unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date. At other annual Council meetings delivery by the Chair of their acceptance of office form unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date
 - b. Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the Council
 - c. Resolve whether to approve the Council's Standing Orders (including the remits for the Leader, committees, sub-committees and advisory groups) and Financial Regulations
 - d. Resolve whether to adopt the Power of General Competence
 - e. Resolve whether to appoint a Leader (and a Deputy Leader) of the Council, committees, sub-committees and advisory groups
 - f. Receive nominations for and appoint Cllrs to committees, sub-committees and advisory groups
 - g. Receive nominations for and appoint Chairs and deputy Chairs of committees, sub-committees and advisory groups
 - h. Receive nominations for and appoint the post of Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council
 - i. Receive nominations for and appoint Lead Cllrs for discrete areas of work and projects, if any. In election year this can be postponed to the next Council meeting

- j. Set the dates, times and place of ordinary meetings of the Council, committees and sub-committees for the year ahead
- k. Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.

8. Extraordinary Meetings of the Council, Committees and Sub-Committees

- 1 **The Chair of the Council** or a Committee **may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council at any time.**
- 2 **If the Chair of the Council** or a Committee **does not call an extraordinary meeting of the Council within seven days of having been requested in writing to do so by two councillors, any two councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council** or a Committee. **The public notice giving the time, place and agenda for such a meeting shall be signed by the two councillors.**
- 3 If the Chair of a committee or sub-committee does not call an extraordinary meeting within seven clear days having been requested to do so by two members of that committee or sub-committee, any two members of the committee may convene an extraordinary meeting.

9. Matters that must be resolved only by Council

- 1 These include:
 - i. Agreeing the Strategic Plan, the annual work programme, staff management structure showing post titles and grades, and the annual budget
 - ii. Setting the precept demand
 - iii. Borrowing money
 - iv. Approving the end of year Accounts and approving submission of the Annual Return to the External Auditors
 - v. Incurring capital or revenue expenditure which is over and above the Council's approved budget
 - vi. Adopting, amending, or revoking Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Cllrs' Code of Conduct. Other chapters comprising the Council's Constitution fall under the remit of the Oversight Committee
 - vii. Agreeing the dates of meetings of the Council, Committees, and sub-committees
 - viii. Filling of Cllr vacancies occurring on any outside bodies
 - ix. Making, amending, or revoking byelaws
 - x. Making of Orders under any statutory powers
 - xi. Important matters of principle or policy which have been referred directly by Committees or the Town Clerk
 - xii. Prosecution or defence in a court of law

- xiii. All matters affecting the appointment, promotion, discipline, salary, and conditions of service of the Town Clerk
- xiv. Appointment of the RFO
- xv. Annually review the Strategic Plan and the annual work programme
- xvi. Acquiring land and other significant assets and commissioning services of significant value
- xvii. The Mayor will manage Council meetings in a way that encourages engagement of the public as well as Cllrs

10. Chairing the Council (role of the Mayor)

- 1 The Mayor, who will also be the Chair of the Council, will be elected by the Council annually and will receive regular briefings by the Town Clerk on current issues. While the title confers no additional powers on the Mayor, as Chair they will have the following responsibilities:
 - i. to uphold and promote the purposes of the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations,
 - ii. to preside over meetings of the Council so that its business can be carried out efficiently and regarding the rights of Cllrs and the interests of the community;
 - iii. to ensure that the Council meeting is a forum for the debate of matters of concern to the local community and the place at which Cllrs who do not hold committee Chairs are able to hold the Mayor and committee Chairs to account;
 - iv. to promote public involvement in the Council's activities;
 - v. to be the conscience of the Council; and
 - vi. to attend such civic and ceremonial functions as the Council and he/she determines appropriate.

11. Voting on Appointments

Where more than two persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the Council or a committee 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 chair of the meeting.

12. Draft minutes

- 1 If the draft minutes of a preceding meeting have been served on councillors with the agenda to attend the meeting at which they are due to be approved for accuracy, they shall be taken as read.
- 2 There shall be no discussion about the draft minutes of a preceding meeting except in relation to their accuracy. A motion to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes shall be moved in accordance with standing order 6 (1)(i).

- 3 The accuracy of draft minutes, including any amendment(s) made to them, shall be confirmed by resolution, and shall be signed by the chair of the meeting and stand as an accurate record of the meeting to which the minutes relate.
- 4 If the chair of the meeting does not consider the minutes to be an accurate record of the meeting to which they relate, they shall sign the minutes and include a paragraph in the following terms or to the same effect:

"The chair of this meeting does not believe that the minutes of the meeting of the () held on [date] in respect of () were a correct record but his/her/their view was not upheld by the meeting and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings."

- 5 **If the Council's gross annual income or expenditure (whichever is higher) does not exceed £25,000, it shall publish draft minutes on a website which is publicly accessible and free of charge not later than one month after the meeting has taken place.**

13. Code of Conduct and Dispensations

See also standing order 1 (34).

- 1 All councillors and non-councillors with voting rights shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the Council.
- 2 No individual Cllr (including the committee Chairs and the Mayor) or informal groups of Cllrs can decide on behalf of the Council.
- 3 **Dispensation requests shall be in writing and submitted to the Proper Officer** as soon as possible before the meeting, or failing that, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.
- 4 A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by a meeting for which the dispensation is required, and that decision is final.
- 5 A dispensation request shall confirm:
 - i. the description and the nature of the disclosable pecuniary interest or other interest to which the request for the dispensation relates;
 - ii. whether the dispensation is required to participate at a meeting in a discussion only or a discussion and a vote;
 - iii. the date of the meeting or the period (not exceeding four years) for which the dispensation is sought; and
 - iv. an explanation as to why the dispensation is sought.

- 6 Subject to standing orders 13 (5) and (7), a dispensation request shall be considered at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.
- 7 **A dispensation may be granted in accordance with standing order 13 (6) if having regard to all relevant circumstances any of the following apply:**
- i. **without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating in the particular business would be so great a proportion of the meeting transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business;**
 - ii. **granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the Council's area; or**
 - iii. **it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.**

14. Code of Conduct Complaints

- 1 Alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct by a Cllr must be referred to the Monitoring Officer at the Unitary Council
- 2 Upon notification by the Unitary Council that it is dealing with a complaint that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the Council's code of conduct, the Proper Officer shall, report this to the Council at its next meeting.
- 3 Where the notification in standing order 14 (2) relates to a complaint made by the Proper Officer, the Proper Officer shall notify the Chair of Council of this fact, and the Deputy Town Clerk shall assume the duties of the Proper Officer in relation to the complaint until it has been determined and the Council has agreed what action, if any, to take in accordance with standing order 14 (5).
- 4 The Council may:
- i. provide information or evidence to the Monitoring Officer where such disclosure is necessary to investigate the complaint or is a legal requirement;
 - ii. seek information relevant to the complaint from the person or body with statutory responsibility for investigation of the matter;
- 5 **Upon notification by the Unitary Council that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the Council's code of conduct, the Council shall consider what, if any, action to take against him. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office.**

15. Committees and Sub – Committees

- 1 The Council may appoint and dissolve committees, sub-committees, and advisory groups.

- 2 Each committee will consist of at least eight Cllrs, proportional to the political strength of the Council. The exception being the Planning Committee which will consist of at least six Cllrs.
- 3 Cllrs who are not members of a committee may participate in debate but will not be permitted to vote on business at that meeting
- 4 Council will decide the frequency of committee meetings.
- 5 The Chairs of committees will manage meetings in a way that maximises engagement of the public as well as Cllrs, without compromising the decision-making process
- 6 **Unless the Council determines otherwise, a committee may appoint a sub-committee whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by the committee.**
- 7 **The members of a committee may include non-councillors unless it is a committee which regulates and controls the finances of the Council.**
- 8 **Unless the Council determines otherwise, all the members of an advisory committee and a sub-committee of the advisory committee may be non-councillors.**
- 9 When appointing a committee the Council:
 - i. shall determine their terms of reference;
 - ii. shall determine the number and time of the ordinary meetings of a committee up until the date of the next annual meeting of the Council;
 - iii. shall, after it has appointed the members of a standing committee, appoint the chair of the committee.
 - iv. may dissolve a committee.

16. Terms of reference of the Oversight Committee

- 1 The committee will be responsible for and review of:
 - i. Chapters comprising the Council's constitution (excluding Standing Orders, Finance Regulations, Cllrs code of conduct that must be reviewed by Council);
 - ii. Financial administration, including savings and investments, monitoring income and expenditure against the budget and making recommendations to Council accordingly.
 - iii. All aspects of risk management and insurance
 - iv. All aspects of Health and Safety policy and monitoring of health and safety incidents, such as staff accidents at work or accidents to the public on the Council's estate
 - v. The Frome Town Hall and the Council estate

- vi. Policies and processes related to communications and marketing, including FTC events and those events that FTC supports.
- vii. ICT planning and delivery (including websites and CRM) and matters relating to data protection.
- viii. All aspects of community engagement and participation including organisational support and the Welcome Hub
- ix. All aspects related to human resources (both paid staff and volunteers) beyond the remit of the Council and the Town Clerk, including changes to the organisation chart so long as these are within the overall staff budget, and establishing a group comprising three Cllrs including the Chair of the committee and the Leader to advise the Oversight Committee on issues related to staff grievance, complaints, disciplinary issues and other issues related to individual staff members beyond the authority of the Town Clerk
- x. Civic and twinning matters

17. Terms of reference of the Planning Committee

1. The committee will be responsible for and review of:
 - i. Undertake all duties of the Council under Town and Country Planning Acts, Orders and Regulations and all matters relating to roads and highways including Road Closure Notices, road signs, traffic management, traffic regulations and bus shelters
 - ii. Within the context of the Neighbourhood Plan, campaign for the best development and, where possible, identify and work with prospective developers in advance of any planning application
 - iii. Promote to developers FTC guidance on more environmentally sustainable building
 - iv. Make recommendations to Council on matters that, in its opinion, are significant. Occasionally, responses to urgent significant consultations will need to be ratified by Council
 - v. Delegate authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair, to respond to minor planning issues on behalf of the Council
 - vi. Promote to the community the role of the planning authority
 - vii. Provide straightforward advice to the community and developers on how to make and respond to planning applications

18. Terms of reference of the Grants Committee

1. The committee will be responsible for a review of:
 - i. The design and content of the application forms for both Community Grants and Mayor's Grants
 - ii. The design and content of the terms and conditions for both Community Grants and Mayor's Grants
 - iii. Set the criteria that applications must demonstrate

- vi. Policies and processes related to communications and marketing, including FTC events and those events that FTC supports.
- vii. ICT planning and delivery (including websites and CRM) and matters relating to data protection.
- viii. All aspects of community engagement and participation including organisational support and the Welcome Hub
- ix. All aspects related to human resources (both paid staff and volunteers) beyond the remit of the Council and the Town Clerk, including changes to the organisation chart so long as these are within the overall staff budget, and establishing a group comprising three Cllrs including the Chair of the committee and the Leader to advise the Oversight Committee on issues related to staff grievance, complaints, disciplinary issues and other issues related to individual staff members beyond the authority of the Town Clerk
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- iv. Setting three application rounds per year for Community Grants and the associated closing dates and meeting dates of the committee to be held in public
- v. To publicise the meeting dates of the Grants Committee in advance
- vi. Setting a scoring system, related to the criteria, for the committee to inform their decision making
- vii. To decide whether to award grants based on the applications received.
- viii. Record the reasons why applications were refused and any changes to grants awarded.
- ix. The Grants committee will be chaired by the Mayor

19. Advisory Groups

- 1 Council and committees may establish Advisory Groups comprising only Cllrs or Cllrs and members of the public.
- 2 Each Advisory Group will include a member of staff to provide advice and administrative support
- 3 The remit, timescale and membership will be determined by Council or the appointing committee
- 4 Advisory groups make recommendations and are not decision making forums

20. Lead Cllrs

- 1 These can be appointed by Council and advise, support, are a critical friend to the member of staff responsible for an area of work or a project and inform other Cllrs of progress.
- 2 A lead Cllr provides a strategic overview.
- 3 These roles are not decision makers.

21. The role of the Leader of the Council

- 1 Leader of the Council:
 - i. Will work with the Town Clerk and Cllrs to develop and propose to Council the strategic direction and policy objectives of the Council
 - ii. Will not alter the strategic direction of the Council
 - iii. Will work with the Town Clerk to ensure the strategic direction and operational management of the Council are working effectively
 - iv. Will work with the Town Clerk to negotiate on behalf of the Council with other local authorities and organisations in order to deliver the strategic direction and policy objectives

- v. Will discuss with the Mayor and relevant Committee Chairs the purpose of any negotiation and report the outcome to Council or the relevant committee
- vi. Will discuss with the Town Clerk, on a fortnightly basis, the operational work of the Council and issues within the town.
- vii. Will be asked for advice by the Town Clerk when making significant decisions.
- viii. Will approve the Town Clerk's leave and time off in lieu.
- ix. Will appraise the Town Clerk's performance at least annually. If the Leadership is shared by two Cllrs they shall appraise the Town Clerk's performance
- x. Will be briefed by the Town Clerk of any upcoming meetings with external organisations
- xi. Will make the Town Clerk aware of any upcoming meetings with external organisations.

22. Proper Officer

- 1 The Proper Officer shall be the Town clerk
- 2 The Deputy Town Clerk will undertake the role of the Town Clerk during the Town Clerk's absence
- 3 The Proper Officer shall:
 - i. **at least three clear days before a meeting of the council, or a committee,**
 - **serve on councillors by delivery or post at their residences or by email authenticated in such manner as the Proper Officer thinks fit, a signed summons confirming the time, place and the agenda (provided the councillor has consented to service by email), and**
 - **Provide, in a conspicuous place, public notice of the time, place and agenda (provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the Council convened by councillors is signed by them).**

See standing order 1 (18) for the meaning of clear days for a meeting.

- ii. subject to standing order 5, include on the agenda all motions in the order received unless a councillor has given written notice at least 3 days before the meeting confirming their withdrawal of it;
- iii. **convene a meeting of the Council for the election of a new Chair of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in his/her/their office;**
- iv. **facilitate inspection of the minute book by local government electors;**
- v. **receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities;**
- vi. hold acceptance of office forms from councillors;
- vii. hold a copy of every councillor's register of interests;
- viii. respond to requests made under freedom of information legislation and rights exercisable under data protection legislation, in accordance with the Council's relevant policies and procedures;

- ix. receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the Council except where there is a resolution to the contrary;
- x. be responsible for the organisation of, storage of, access to, security of and destruction of information held by the Council in paper and electronic form subject to the requirements of data protection and freedom of information legislation and other legitimate requirements (e.g. the Limitation Act 1980);
- xi. arrange for legal deeds to be executed;
(see also standing order 30);
- xii. arrange or manage the prompt authorisation, approval, and instruction regarding any payments to be made by the Council in accordance with its financial regulations;
- xiii. record every planning application notified to the Council and the Council's response to the local planning authority in a book for such purpose;
- xiv. manage access to information about the Council via the publication scheme; and
- xv. retain custody of the seal of the Council (if there is one) which shall not be used without a resolution to that effect.
(see also standing order 30).
- xvi. implement decisions of the Council via delegated authority
- xvii. have overall managerial responsibility for service delivery
- xviii. have overall managerial responsibility for staff recruitment (including the drafting of job descriptions) and management, while alterations to the corporate management structure will be the Council's responsibility and changes to individual staff grading will be the Oversight Committee's responsibility
- xix. consult with the Leader and Chair of Oversight Committee about next steps when staff posts become vacant
- xx. provide objective advice on all matters
- xxi. liaise with other bodies in order to identify and keep abreast of important issues in the town
- xxii. act in an emergency without recourse to Council
- xxiii. clerk Council and committee meetings

23. Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)

The Council shall appoint the RFO

24. Financial Matters

The Council shall abide by its Financial Regulations which is chapter three of the constitution.

25. Communicating with the MP and Unitary Councillors

An invitation to attend a meeting of the Council shall be sent, together with the agenda, to the MP and ward councillor(s) of the Unitary Council representing the area of the Council.

26. Matters affecting Council Employees

The Council policy regarding staff is contained in the Staff Handbook which is chapter four of the Constitution.

27. Management of Information

- 1 The Council shall have in place and keep under review, technical and organisational measures to keep secure information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. Such arrangements shall include deciding who has access to personal data and encryption of personal data.**
- 2 The Council shall have in place, and keep under review, policies for the retention and safe destruction of all information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. The Council's retention policy shall confirm the period for which information (including personal data) shall be retained or if this is not possible the criteria used to determine that period (e.g. the Limitation Act 1980).**
- 3 The agenda, papers that support the agenda and the minutes of a meeting shall not disclose or otherwise undermine confidential information or personal data without legal justification.**
- 4 Councillors, staff, the Council's contractors and agents shall not disclose confidential information or personal data without legal justification.**
- 5 See constitution chapter 15 – Publication Scheme for more information**

28. Responsibilities to Provide Information

- 1 In accordance with freedom of information legislation, the Council shall publish information in accordance with its publication scheme and respond to requests for information held by the Council.**
- 2 The Council, shall publish information in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015.**
- 3 See constitution chapter 14 – Information Policy for more information**

29. Responsibilities Under Data Protection Legislation

- 1 The Council shall have policies and procedures in place to respond to an individual exercising statutory rights concerning their personal data.
- 2 The Council shall have a written policy in place for responding to and managing a personal data breach.
- 3 The Council shall keep a record of all personal data breaches comprising the facts relating to the personal data breach, its effects and the remedial action taken.
- 4 See constitution chapter 18 - General Data Protection Regulation Privacy Information for more information
- 5 The Council shall ensure that information communicated in its privacy notice(s) is in an easily accessible and available form and kept up to date.
- 6 The Council shall maintain a written record of its processing activities.

30. Execution and Sealing of Legal Deeds

See also standing orders 22 (3)(xi) and (xv).

The Council's common seal shall alone be used for sealing a deed required by law. It shall be applied by the Proper Officer in the presence of two councillors who shall sign the deed as witnesses.

31. Standing Orders Generally

- 1 All or part of a standing order, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory or legal requirements, may be suspended by resolution in relation to the consideration of an item on the agenda for a meeting.
- 2 A motion to add to or vary or revoke one or more of the Council's standing orders, except one that incorporates mandatory, statutory or legal requirements, shall be proposed by a special motion, the written notice by at least 2 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 5.
- 3 The decision of the chair of a meeting as to the application of standing orders at the meeting shall be final.