

Forest Row Parish Council

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



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

To: All members of FOREST ROW PARISH COUNCIL:
Cllrs. Josephson (Chairman), Davies, Hill, R Lewin,
T Lewin, McNally, Miller, Moore, Pritchitt,
Spackman, Summers, Waters, Williams, Withers
and Wogan

Community Centre
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Dear Sir/Madam,

Your attendance is required at a meeting of the
FOREST ROW PARISH COUNCIL to be held on

TUESDAY 30th MARCH 2021 via Zoom at 7.30 PM.

Date: 24th March 2021


Mr David O'Driscoll
Clerk to Forest Row Parish Council

THE FIRST FIFTEEN MINUTES WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR RELEVANT QUESTIONS AND
REMARKS FROM THE PUBLIC – IF ANY. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ARE WELCOME TO STAY
AND OBSERVE THE REST OF THE MEETING.

AGENDA

1. PUBLIC QUESTIONS
2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
3. RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETING
 - 3.1 To approve the minutes of the Meeting of Council on 12th January 2021
 - 3.2 To consider any objections to deletion of the digital transcript of that meeting
4. CLARIFICATION OF ACTIONS FROM THE ABOVE MEETING
5. TO NOTE AND APPROVE LIST OF DELEGATED DECISIONS
6. TO DECLARE ANY INTERESTS OR REQUEST DISPENSATION PERTAINING TO THE ITEMS BELOW
7. CHAIRMANS COMMENTS
8. CLERK'S REPORT ON MATTERS NOT REQUIRING A DECISION:
 - 8.1 Re-opening the Community Centre
 - 8.2 Government 'Kickstart' scheme
 - 8.3 Tenancy of the former 'Venu' building
 - 8.4 Further on the recycling project
 - 8.5 The skatepark extension
 - 8.6 Financial year-end and audit
9. TO NOTE REPORTS
 - 9.1 County & District Councillors
 - 9.2 Chairmen of Standing Committees
 - 9.3 Representatives on outside bodies
 - 9.4 The Community Warden

10. SUBSTANTIVE MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION/DECISION

- 10.1 The Annual Parish Meeting
- 10.2 Application of the legacy
- 10.3 Membership of the County Association

11. MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS REFERRED FOR DECISION BY MEMBERS

- 11.1 Protection of the path leading to the VENUE
- 11.2 Approval of external storage at the VENUE
- 11.3 A memorial plaque for the new Skateboard extension

If relevant: Pursuant to Section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the committee believes that the public and press to be excluded from the meeting on the grounds of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

12. TO CONSIDER A STAFF MATTER

13. NOTICES, CONSULTATIONS & CORRESPONDENCE (IF ANY)

14. TO NOTE ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION BY FULL COUNCIL OR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE.

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

FULL COUNCIL

BACKING PAPERS FOR MEETING 30th MARCH 2021

	Description	Page nos
	Clerk's briefing note	1-3
5.	List of delegated decisions	4
9.2	Property & Assets report	5
	Amenities & Services report	6
9.4	Community Warden report	7-8
11.1.	VENUe path site meeting report	9
11.2	Specimen outdoor storage cabinets	10
11.3	Design for memorial plaque	11
12.	Job description (circulated separately)	C1

**COUNCILLORS' BRIEFING FOR THE MEETING OF FULL COUNCIL
ON 30th MARCH 2021**

1. **PUBLIC QUESTIONS** None signified in advance
2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** None signified in advance
3. **RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS** Meeting of 12th January 2021
4. **CLARIFICATION OF ACTIONS FROM LAST MEETING**
ACTION: to discharge as appropriate
5. **TO NOTE & APPROVE LIST OF DELEGATED DECISIONS:** (as attached to backing papers)
ACTION: to note
6. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/ REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION** Members who have a financial interest in any of the items covered by this agenda may wish to declare a personal interest. However, occasional users of services or volunteers need not be concerned.
ACTION: to note
7. **CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS**
8. **TO NOTE CLERK'S REPORT ON MATTERS NOT REQUIRING A DECISION**
 - 8.1 Re-opening the Community Centre. Community centres are allowed to re-open on 12th April. However, there is a continued prohibition on most of our hirers' activities. We shall be opening the centre to personal callers, and also the public toilets, but most activities will have to wait until May. There are limited exceptions (children and welfare matters) which we may accommodate on an individual basis. The market has already resumed and the Repair Café and the Spring trail are also in preparation.
 - 8.2 Government 'Kickstart' scheme. We have been officially allocated three work placements who will be deployed in the front office, outdoor maintenance and Gages kitchen. We have completed all the necessary form filling and now await notification of the candidates. We are told it may be at least another month.
 - 8.3 Tenancy of the former 'Venu' building. We have gone back to the charity manager on the points of discrepancy between his proposals and ours and expect to finalise a long-term agreement shortly. Meanwhile the old 'Venu' remains well-used by the charity.
 - 8.4 Further on the recycling project. We still await Secretary of State consent to borrow. Meanwhile, the CIC is fully constituted, quotes are being obtained for essential renovations and the business plan is being refined accordingly. Work on the legal status of the site continues. East Sussex has been slow to respond in negotiations over a Community Asset Transfer, but there is a meeting with County on Friday which will hopefully make progress.
 - 8.5 The skatepark extension. The promoters have now finalised their funding, and work should commence by the summer. To be clear, the family conceived the initiative, raised the funds and obtained planning permission. However, the extension is being built on council land and as an extension to the existing layout will become the property of the council on completion. A&S Committee have agreed that we will undertake the tree protection work. Two ancillary issues in this area which are mentioned at item 11 of this agenda.

8.6 Financial year end & audit. The accountants will complete the year-end formalities on 13th April, and the internal auditor will make his final visit on 26th April.

ACTION: to note (queries as necessary)

9. TO NOTE REPORTS

9.1 County & District Councillors have been invited and may report orally. Cllr Galley has confirmed attendance, although the pre-election *purdah* period now applies to County.

9.2 Chairman of Committees. At the time of this Briefing, reports have been received from Property & Assets and Amenities & Services, which are attached. Other Chairmen may report orally.

9.3 Representatives on outside bodies. To date one Member has indicated he will deliver an oral report.

9.4 The Community Warden. His report is attached.

ACTION: to note

10. SUBSTANTIVE MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION / DECISION

10.1 The Annual Parish Meeting. By law the APM should be held between 1st March and 1st June (inclusive), although there is no legal obligation on the Parish Council to convene it. Practice has varied across the sector. Some have held a virtual meeting already or plan to do so, but adding hundreds of potential participants to a single screen is a daunting prospect. Others have simply shelved the event for this year, though plan a similar public gathering later. As noted elsewhere, there is no legislation to permit virtual meetings beyond 7th May. A suggestion has been made that we should have a socially distanced meeting on Foresters' Green within the statutory period, though there would be weather & logistical factors to consider. For Council to consider.

10.2 The legacy. Council has already resolved to apply some part of the legacy to the (Men's) Shed project. Proposals have been received for a slide on Foresters' Green, a drinking fountain on Rush Green (and possibly the JFC field), or a changing/storage facility at the football field. None of these suggestions has yet been fully costed. Members may wish to list suggestions in order of priority subject to available funding.

10.3 Membership of the County Association. It appears West Sussex has definitively broken away and that Surrey is planning to do likewise. SSALC's website is still functioning, although the main administrator has left. However, we have had no invoice from SSALC but only from ESALC and from the National Association. There is no legal obligation to belong to a County Association – and some Councils have dispensed with it, although continued access to NALC resources seems to depend on it and Government borrowing approval is normally approved via the County. Does Council wish to continue subscribing to ESALC?

ACTION: to consider and resolve as necessary

11. MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS REFERRED FOR DECISION

11.1 The path to the VENUe. Originally designated as a path suitable as a disabled accessway to the new building (Cllr Pritchitt's site meeting report attached), but young people using the skatepark have regularly spilled out across the path, sometimes at speed, and it remains somewhat hazardous. Council may wish to consider how the path and its users might be protected.

11.2 External storage at the VENUe. The principle of some external storage at the VENUe (at the users' expense) once the security fence is installed has been approved in principle, A suggestion for a suitable cabinet is attached. Does Council approve this?

11.3 Memorial plaque at the skatepark. The family of Hugo Palmer would like to have a small memorial plaque installed at the site when the extension is completed. Design attached. Does Council approve?

ACTION: to resolve as appropriate

If relevant: Pursuant to Section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the committee believes that the public and press to be excluded from the meeting on the grounds of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

12. TO CONSIDER A STAFF MATTER

A separate briefing note is supplied to Members for this item of confidential business.

13. CORRESPONDENCE, NOTICES, CONSULTATIONS

At the time of drafting these notes there are no items which have not already been circulated to Members via Reading or Briefing.

14. TO NOTE ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION BY FULL COUNCIL OR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

FOREST ROW PARISH COUNCIL

ACTION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY

PERIOD - from: 02/12/2020 to: 24/03/2021

DECISION TAKEN	REASONS	OFFICERS NAME	DATE OF DECISION	COST
TREE WORKS	NECESSARY WORKS	APPROVED BY CHAIRS OF F&P AND A&S	09/01/2021	£650.00
TRACTOR SERVICE	NECESSARY WORKS	APPROVED BY CHAIR OF A & S	25/02/2021	£863.04

Property And Assets Report for the Full Council Meeting on Tuesday 31st March 2021

When I received the e mail from the parish clerk asking to write a report to discuss the past year and to look forward to routine activities and special projects words like “unprecedented times” “national lock downs”, “government guidelines”, “global pandemic” and “zoom meetings” bounced around my head.To name a few.

So I would like to thank the staff and all the councillors for all the hard work they have done to try to achieve a semblance of normality during this incredibly difficult year.And I personally think the Parish Council did a good job.

Our budgeted figures report a net loss of £13,921 as we had a drop in revenue predominately due to lettings.However this was out of our control as we followed the government guidelines.

The office staff had to repeatedly react and understand to changes in these guidelines which they did quickly and efficiently.So thankyou.

Going forward the government has announced a plan to open up our facilities and to return to a pre pandemic lifestyle.

This was allow us to re open the community centre for lettings and general public use, the youth centre and see a return of the facilities being used on the green.

The sub committee for renovation work on the community centre can continue to look at improvements to the centre to name just one of the current active projects within the council.

So there are indicators to a return to a pre pandemic lifestyle but we do need to approach the return with caution.

So I welcome the staff and Councillors to pat themselves on the back for all the good work because due to social distancing no one else can.

Brett Williams

Chair of the Property and Assets Committee

AMENITIES & SERVICES REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL

30TH MARCH 2021

The past year has been a difficult one for everybody due to the coronavirus pandemic and the Parish Council staff have done a sterling job in keeping all services, plus some extra ones, running throughout. The outdoor maintenance staff have kept the village tidy, especially during the autumn with the clearing of the leaves on the greens which in itself is a huge job. Despite the bad weather, the Parish Council has not had to deal with any fallen trees in places of danger to parishioners.

Financially the Amenities & Services Committee has fared well and this is due in part to the increased burials fees received as well as the grant monies for the repairs to Gilham Spring and for receiving the Cemetery of the Year 1st prize. Part of the latter monies are to be used for a memorial bench to John Comber, a previous outdoor maintenance staff member. Thanks go to the Burials Clerk for entering the cemetery into this competition.

A site meeting has taken place with the local NHS Estates manager and other NHS representatives with a view to widening the access road to Ashdown Health Centre. Definite plans and a timescale are awaited.

A grant has been applied for to enhance Gilham Bank and hopefully this will be successful. It is hoped that the Woodland Trust tree planting scheme which was deferred last year by the lockdown restrictions will go ahead shortly with the plans as agreed previously.

The Parish Council has been successful in securing three candidates under the government's Kickstart scheme, one of whom will join the outdoor maintenance team.

Wealden District Council has granted planning permission for the extension to the skatepark with monies raised by the family of Hugo Palmer. Stringent measures to protect the "shoe oak" were specified by WDC before work can begin. A start date for this project has not yet been specified.

The allotments continue to be successful and there is now a waiting list for parishioners and for some outside the parish. There have been some concerns raised over site security and these are being considered.

COMMUNITY WARDEN REPORT 23/03/2021.

This report contains the work that I have carried out and resolved in the three areas that I have been covering.

- I have been able to strike up a good rapport with the two PCSOs who cover Forest Row, Crowborough & Withyham. I have been able to liaise with them on a frequent basis regarding various concerns in these areas.
- Before Christmas it was brought to my attention by a resident in Crowborough that there was someone sleeping rough within the grounds of Crowborough Town Council building. I managed to get the name of the person in question, and was therefore able to contact my main link PCSO raising the concern, giving details of the person, and where he was located, so that the PCSOs could come up to the location and deal with the matter.
- Back in Forest Row concerns were raised with me regarding possible bogus contractors laying new block driveways. It was unclear if a proper job was being carried out, and whether they were a legitimate company. I went up to the location where they were working and spoke with the contractors, questioning whether they should be working at all due to Government 'lockdown' guidelines. There was clearly a language barrier, as they were unable to understand what I was trying to convey to them.

I could not establish who they were and whether their operation was legitimate. I therefore contacted the Police explaining the situation and asking them to check with Trading Standards whether they were a *bona fide* company. I took photos of the vehicles to check that they were in order and found out that the vehicles they were using were not road legal. I passed on this information on to the PCSOs who attended Freshfield Bank with the workers, taking names and addresses from all parties. This included their boss (who was not initially in the area) collating all his details which he was reluctant to share with them. All details were submitted for intelligence purposes, on suspicion that possible slave labour was being used by the owner of the company.

The PCSOs visited some of the properties that had been done to the work that had been done and provide reassurance.

- Other intelligence sharing has included anti-social gatherings by the VENUe with youths congregating in the skatepark & on the roof of the building, and the 'soup kitchen' that has now moved away from the skate park and had relocated to the Cricket club area. I have since informed the PCSOs that the land used by the Cricket Club is leased to them by the Conservators,
- so in theory the soup kitchen would have to seek permission to hold gatherings on their land.
- Concerns have also been raised by me to PCSOs about youth congregating in the Jubilee Garden with some of the furniture being vandalised. These areas mentioned

have now been put on one of the police operations for regular checks when they are in this area.

Other concerns I have been dealing with are as follows:

- A green metal container just past Chadders Bathrooms on London Road was spewing out water over the pavement into the road. I contacted South East Water raising my concerns, re visited the following morning to find that all the water had frozen into ice and turned the pavement into sheet ice which was forcing pedestrians into the A22 road endangering themselves due to fast flowing traffic.
- Numerous amounts of potholes in all the areas that I cover have been reported to Highways, with concerns especially along Lower Road. One of the calls made concerned a 6-inch-deep pothole outside No2 Medway House This was repaired within 24 hours along with 3 other potholes that I had not mentioned. I also had a very similar situation in The Broadway Crowborough recently where a utility company had connected a new service main to a new property and where a trench had been dug up across the road and a large section of it had sunk by a considerable depth with surrounding parts of the road surface breaking up. This was reported on one day and repaired overnight.
- I have also visited the Forest Row fire station regarding reports of youths believed to be from Michael Hall climbing the tower. I spoke with the watch manager, who in turn sent over to me images of the offenders who were there. These were then forwarded to the PCSOs for their records and would get some patrols up there when they were in the area knowing who to look out for. The Head Teacher of the School has also been made aware and has been in touch over some of these issues.
- I had to visit the pre-school recently as concerns were raised about a staff member driving too fast through the carpark, not taking into consideration other members of public being in the area especially young children. I spoke to the staff member about the incident also stating that it had been captured on CCTV to support the complaint.
- I have done a huge amount of work with WDC Waste Management Team regarding the Recycling Centres in two of the three locations that I cover (Withyham Parish Council has had theirs removed). I have taken multiple photos of the mess that has been left in Crowborough & Forest Row, liaising on a daily with Chris Bone (Wealden Waste Manager).
- Finally, I regularly get messages passed on by the office staff from members of the public who have phoned up with problems or concerns. The staff then let me know what the concern is and ask me if I can visit the location to try and establish what the problem is and whether it can be sorted out. Where appropriate I pass on the matter to the relevant agency for assistance.

PRESENT - FOR WDC - Debbie Green - Equalities Officer and John Cooper - Surveyor - Building Control.
DISABILITY ACCESS EAST GRINSTEAD - Cliff Barlow, Carol Steggle and Bob Astington.
FOREST ROW PARISH COUNCIL - Margaret Hindler and Gwen Pritchitt

INTRODUCTION. We first had a chat in the Blue Room - and Margaret showed the plan of the building and site. The two officers from WDC had not realised that the plan had Planning Approval from WDC - they thought they had come just to look at immediate access to the building. Mr Cooper said that they would look at access and fire exits etc. at the Building Regs. stage.

It was very useful having the representatives from DAEG - who provided an insight into needs we might have overlooked.

We then went over to visit the site and continued discussions.

CONCLUSIONS

- 1 The path: -
 - a) Must be of firm, smooth, with a good grip - like tarmac. Non glare surface.
 - b) Needs to be at least 1500mm for one wheelchair and pedestrian beside or 1800mm for two way wheelchair traffic.
 - c) Incline must be no more than 1:15 - preferred 1:20
 - d) There is a need for a raised edge to one side of the path
 - e) Lighting must be provided along its length.
 - f) There needs to be a seat (with arms and back) to rest half way along the path if it is to be long.

GENERALLY, there was surprise that the building is to be placed so far from the road and parking area - because of the long access (estimated 60 metres). Ideally there should be an access road and turning space - at least for dropping off and unloading heavy items. In fact WDC Building Control would insist on this if the building is to have general public use as well as youth provision. In any case, reasonable access would have to be provided for the youth and helpers who may have difficulties with access.

One proposal was that the play area be moved nearer to the skate park and an access road put in parallel to Station Road....but a turning point would be very difficult to provide. There might also be an issue with the large trees which it is intended to preserve.

The preference would be for (limited) access to be available via the present rough roadway from Hartfield Road now provided for maintenance vehicles - with a turning space provided and an access path along the back of the site, behind the skate park. This may negate the need for a seat along the way as it is estimated at just 40 metres. Presumably, lighting would still have to be provided.

It is suggested that a wheelchair should be provided to be kept in the building for occasional use.

OTHER POINTS NOTED ON SITE VISIT.

- a) A barrier should be provided to the edge of the skate park to prevent accidents - especially if the pathway remained as on the plan.
- b) There is a need for black matting to be placed under the existing gym equipment as there is a danger of partially sighted people walking in to this - the colour of the equipment being similar to the ground area.

Everyone was thanked for attending and for their very useful input.

Gwen Pritchitt
12/08/2016

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