

Forest Row Parish Council

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



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

To: All members of THE PROPERTY & ASSETS COMMITTEE:
Cllrs. Williams (Chairman), Hill, Josephson, R Lewin, Pritchitt, Spackman, Summers, Withers and Wogan.

Community Centre
Hartfield Road
Forest Row
East Sussex
RH18 5DZ
Tel: 01342 822661
Fax: 01342 825739
Email: info@forestrow.gov.uk
Website: www.forestrow.gov.uk

Dear Sir/Madam,
Your attendance is required at a meeting of the PROPERTY & ASSETS COMMITTEE to be held on TUESDAY 30th NOVEMBER 2021 in the Garden

Date: 24 November, 2021

Room at the Community Centre at **7.30pm**

Coombes

Mr D 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 – the meeting will start no later than 7.45pm
2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
3. TO DECLARE ANY INTERESTS OR REQUEST DISPENSATION PERTAINING TO THE ITEMS BELOW
4. RECORDS OF THE MEETING OF THE PROPERTY AND ASSETS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 22ND JUNE 2021
 - 4.1 To approve the minutes of the meeting of 22nd June 2021
 - 4.2 To consider any objections to deletion of the digital transcript of that meeting
5. CLARIFICATION OF ACTIONS FROM LAST MEETING
6. CLERK'S REPORT ON MATTERS NOT REQUIRING A DECISION
To note the following:
 - 6.1 Lease of 'The Cube'
 - 6.2 Lease of the Sports Ground
 - 6.3 Fingerposts
 - 6.4 Community Centre works
7. FINANCIAL MATTERS & BUDGET 2022/23
To consider and adopt a draft departmental budget for 2022/23
8. CURRENT ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION/RESOLUTION
 - 8.1 Litter bin
 - 8.2 Lease of the Treatment Room
9. CORRESPONDENCE
10. TO NOTE ITEMS TO BE REFERRED TO COMMITTEE OR FULL COUNCIL

COUNCILLORS' BRIEFING FOR THE MEETING OF PROPERTY & ASSETS COMMITTEE TO BE HELD ON 30th NOVEMBER 2021

1-5. Introductory matters follow the standard format. No public interventions have been signified in advance and there have been no objections lodged to the records of meeting.

ACTION: to note/resolve as required

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

6.1 Lease of the Cube. This matter is still ongoing.

6.2 Lease of the Sports Ground. This matter is still ongoing

6.3 Fingerposts. No further information received – still ongoing

6.4 Community Centre works:

- Boiler – the cost to replace the boiler is prohibitive at the present time
- Upstairs sash window – A quote is awaited

ACTION: to note and clarify as appropriate

7. FINANCIAL REPORT & BUDGET 2022/2023

The draft budget for 2022-2023 is attached to the agenda and has already been considered by the Committee Chair. As in previous years, it shows the last complete year, the current year to the half-year (with predictions to the year-end), and proposals for the coming year. The budget as adopted by this meeting will of course be subject to further scrutiny and possible amendment by 'Star Chamber' in December and any further representations by Members before the composite budget is adopted in January.

Please note that queries should be submitted to the Clerk before the meeting if possible.

ACTION: to note

8. CURRENT ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION/ RESOLUTION

8.1 Litter bins. Cllr. T Lewin was going to report on the progress of the matter of local businesses sponsoring new bins

8.2 Lease of the Treatment Room - there has been an expression of interest in leasing the Treatment Room. Is this something Committee would be interested in pursuing.

ACTION: to resolve as appropriate

9. **CORRESPONDENCE** – none not already available via Councillors Briefing/ Reading.

10. **TO NOTE ITEMS TO BE REFERRED TO COMMITTEE OR FULL COUNCIL**

Note on the draft P&A budget for Committee consideration.

The coming financial year 2022-2023 will be the first since the effects of the pandemic began to subside. However, there are still many uncertainties, and financial forecasting necessarily involves some speculation. The critical questions would seem to be:

1. Will hirings return to pre-pandemic levels, or should some reduction be allowed for?
2. Is it appropriate to increase hiring rates to recoup income lost during the pandemic?
3. Are there other income streams that P&A should be considering?
4. A number of significant building repairs/refurbishments have been identified. In the light of the above income factors, how many of these can realistically be dealt with during 2022-23?
5. What in particular should be done about the repairs to the Weirwood car park?
6. Should an emergency generator be purchased and if so, how should this be funded?

Following discussions with the Chairman, a draft budget is submitted for consideration by Committee, based on the following assumptions:

1. It would be prudent to assume that hiring income will not immediately return to pre-pandemic levels, and the income forecast should therefore be discounted – by approx. 20% for the Community Centre (slightly more for the VENUe based on previous figures). Lease rents will, however, continue at pre-pandemic levels.
2. It would not be appropriate to increase rates at this time, as this might act as a disincentive to returning hirers, although it would be helpful to look at possible grant funding and/or improved publicity,
3. The budget should allow for the most pressing works: electrical repairs, replacement of the first-floor window, renewal of the alarm system (plus whatever works can be undertaken in-house).
4. The replacement of the Crittal windows be funded from the P&A capital works reserve.
5. More extensive refurbishment/ reconfiguration works to be postponed for possible PWLB borrowing at a later date.
6. The Weirwood car park works be postponed for the time being.
7. The acquisition of a generator be considered a 'Full Council' issue for potential funding from reserves.

These assumptions and budget figures are submitted for consideration by Committee and are not set in stone, although as drafted they do result in a balanced revenue budget for the coming year.

DOD
24/11/21

PROPERTY & ASSETS BUDGET

v.2 for Committee discussion

INCOME BUDGETS

| | 2020-21 Budget | Actual | % forecast | Comments |
|-------------------------|----------------|--------|------------|---|
| 3180 CC lettings | 22000 | 2917 | 13.3% | as per half-yr estimate |
| 3181 CC equipment hire | 900 | 366 | 40.7% | as per half-yr estimate |
| 3182 CC rents | 22000 | 22796 | 103.6% | exceeded half-yr estimate |
| 3185 Misc office income | 600 | 250 | 41.7% | below half-yr estimate |
| 3187 Drinks machine | 500 | 0 | 0% | |
| 3188 Grants & donations | 0 | 1314 | 0% | |
| 3306 VotG income | 12000 | 256 | 2.1% | below half-yr estimate |
| | 58000 | 27899 | 48.1% | exceeded half-yr estimate due to hold-up in rents |

EXPENDITURE BUDGETS

| | | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------|--------------|------------|--|
| 2136 Bus shelter upkeep | 500 | 0 | 0.0% | |
| 1439 Public seats | 250 | 442 | 176.7% | reimbursed from CIL |
| 1442 Litter bins | 500 | 0 | 0.0% | |
| 2551 Offsite car park | 12000 | 150 | 1.3% | not used |
| 2553 Gritbins | 500 | 113 | 22.6% | |
| 6139A War memorial (FRPC) | 500 | 0 | 0.0% | |
| 7108 Notice boards | 250 | 0 | 0.0% | |
| 3111 CC rates & services | 18000 | 29223 | 162.3% | exceeded half-yr estimate |
| 3116 CC upkeep & cleaning | 10000 | 8057 | 80.6% | below half-yr estimate |
| 3127 Drinks machine | 900 | 544 | 60.5% | |
| 3136 CC enhancement | 4500 | 334 | 7.4% | below half-yr estimate |
| TOTAL | 47900 | 38863 | | |
| 3304 VotG non-youth eqpt | 1000 | 596 | 59.6% | as per half-yr estimate |
| 3305 VotG running costs | 9750 | 2704 | 27.7% | below half-yr estimate |
| TOTAL | 58650 | 42163 | 72% | exceeded half-yr estimate due to rate increase |

2021-22

| Budget | To month 6 | %/forecast | Year End | Comments |
|--------|------------|------------|----------|----------------------|
| 9000 | 2937 | 32.6% | 6000 | These figures are |
| 600 | 98 | 16.3% | 200 | reasonable estimates |
| 15000 | 8596 | 57.3% | 16000 | based on return of |
| 400 | 57 | 14.3% | 200 | long-term trends |
| 250 | 0 | 0.0% | 100 | & assuming major |
| 0 | 992 | 0.0% | 1000 | restrictions do not |
| 5000 | 533 | 10.7% | 1000 | return |
| 30250 | 13213 | 43.7% | 24500 | |
| 500 | 50 | 20% | 500 | These figures are |
| 250 | 0 | 0% | 0 | reasonable estimates |
| 500 | 0 | 0% | 0 | based on return of |
| 6000 | 0 | 0% | 0 | long-term trends |
| 500 | 0 | 0% | 0 | & assuming major |
| 500 | 0 | 0% | 0 | restrictions do not |
| 250 | 0 | 0% | 0 | return |
| 20000 | 15879 | 79.4% | 20000 | |
| 12000 | 4943 | 41.2% | 10000 | |
| 500 | 272 | 54.4% | 500 | |
| 2500 | 1257 | 50.3% | 2000 | |
| 43500 | 22401 | | 33000 | |
| 1000 | 2071 | 207.1% | 2100 | |
| 9750 | 2206 | 22.6% | 5000 | |
| 54250 | 26678 | 49.2% | 40100 | 73.9% |

2022-23

| v. MAX | Comments |
|--------|---|
| 18000 | assumes ± 80% pre-covid |
| 750 | assumes ± 80% pre-covid |
| 22000 | assumes as per pre-covid |
| 500 | assumes ± 80% pre-covid |
| 500 | assumes ± 66% pre-covid |
| 0 | |
| 4000 | assumes ±33% pre-covid |
| 45750 | |
| 0 | no budget allowance - to be |
| 0 | financed through CIL monies |
| 0 | |
| 0 | postponed this budget year |
| 0 | no budget allowance - to be |
| 0 | financed through CIL monies |
| 20000 | |
| 12000 | allowing mtce contracts |
| 500 | |
| 3250 | allow for essential repairs and upgrades only this year |
| 35750 | |
| 500 | replacement contingency |
| 9500 | estimate for full year |
| 45750 | |

P&A budget for 2022-23: preamble

Property & Assets deals essentially with the Council's 'hard' assets and their accessories. Some assets are public facilities which generate no income: street furniture, the war memorial. But the main ones are buildings which we choose to own as a service to the community, and these need to generate income to support their upkeep. The three latest financial years provide this context:

- In the last complete financial year pre-covid (2019-2020), the P&A budget forecast a surplus of £10,747 of income over expenditure, and in fact ran a surplus of £14,353.
- The budget for 2020-21 (signed off in January) was more cautious in allowing for a small deficit of £650, but included a £12,000 provision for resurfacing of the Weirwood car park.
- The pandemic meant closing the Community Centre & VENUe, with a consequent loss on hiring income, and the year-end income was 48.1% of forecast. However, while the car park work was shelved, many overheads continued, and the resultant expenditure was 71.9% of forecast – a deficit of £14,264.
- The budget for the current year (2021-22) took an understandably cautious view and has forecast income of £30,250 and expenditure (including £6,000 for car park work) of £54,250. This implies a forecast deficit of £24,000, which current performance suggests may reduce at year-end to about £16,000.

When it comes to budget setting for 2022-23: on the one hand, hirers are gradually returning to the Community Centre & the VENUe, and liability for the Lower Road premises is now wholly taken over by the Community Fridge CIC; on the other hand, there is some necessary expenditure required for the Community Centre, and the Committee is pressing for additional funds for refurbishment.

There is therefore a dilemma. One can perhaps justifiably take an optimistic view of income as hirers return, and the CIL monies we receive largely cover minor expenditure on 'street' assets. But in principle the P&A budget should aspire to balance without additional public funding, and it is not really acceptable to run a five-figure deficit on a revenue service budget year on year.

This version for discussion by Committee is drafted on the following bases: a) that income forecast should assume hirings will be less than pre-pandemic level in the coming year; b) that maintenance of 'street assets' can be covered by CIL receipts; c) that certain refurbishments at the Comm.Centre must be dealt with in the coming year, but d) the Weirwood car park works can be postponed, and e) the acquisition of an emergency generator should be an expense on the Council as a whole rather than P&A, and f) the Crittal window replacement should be dealt with from reserves.