MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF FOREST ROW PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON 1st JULY 2025 AT 7.30PM IN THE GARDEN ROOM AT THE COMMUNITY CENTRE

PRESENT: Cllrs. Eichner (Chair), Jaffay (Vice Chair), Evans, Gilbert, Killick, Matthews, Rainbow, Scott, Summers, Taylor-Smith, & Volkers

APOLOGIES: Cllrs Christie, Cocks, laDjoi & Waters
(District Cllr Patterson-Vanegas also messaged to say she was unable to attend)

NOT PRESENT:

IN ATTENDANCE: The Clerk. County Cllrs Galley & Taylor.

C47/25 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION None

C48/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Apologies were accepted from Cllrs. Christie (family), la Djoi (ill health) & Waters (family)

C49/25 RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETING
Minutes of the meeting of 29th April 2025 were proposed for acceptance by Cllr. Eichner, seconded by Cllr. Killick and AGREED.

C50/25 TO DECLARE ANY INTERESTS OR REQUEST DISPENSATION PERTAINING TO THE ITEMS BELOW
None

C51/25 DELEGATED DECISIONS
None

C52/25 CHAIRS COMMENTS
Cllr. Eichner noted that the new website is now fully operative, and that the office were updating as required: the analytics of website visits were interesting. He also noted that the new councillor 'gov.uk 'email addresses were being adopted progressively by the Members.

C53/25 CLERKS REPORT ON MATTERS NOT REQUIRING A DECISION
This had been previously circulated and was NOTED.

C54/25 ORAL REPORTS FROM PRINCIPAL COUNCILS
County Cllr. Taylor dealt largely with the local government reorganisation project. She thought it was better to look on it as 'merging' the current levels of local government through a joint consultation process, rather than 'abolishing' Districts & Boroughs.
Cllr Galley drew attention to the mayoral election process, distinct from 'unitarisation'. He noted the mayor would have control of housing and planning strategies, but thought that individual planning decisions might well be delegated to officers. He thought some form of 'local network' would be necessary to bridge the gap between Unitaries and local services – this was in current Government briefings. We should perhaps be thinking now of ways of promoting local engagement.
Neither Councillor thought the ambitions of Brighton & Hove posed a major threat to E.Sussex as a Unitary.

C55/25 ORAL REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES & WORKING GROUPS

1. Finance & Policy Committee –Cllr. Gilbert noted that F&P had not yet met in this financial year. A meeting was due on 15th July.

2. Community Services Committee – Cllr. Taylor-Smith reported that a meeting of this Committee was due on 8th July, at which current projects would be reviewed.
3. Facilities Committee – Cllr Matthews reported that the recent Facilities meeting had approved several items of repair work and sought quotes to progress some others. The issue of the square in front of the Cube had also been discussed
4. Community Centre refurbishment Working Group – Cllr Taylor-Smith noted the acquisition of new furniture. The group was still working on an outline plan for 'a room a year'. Measured drawings of the building would be the first step.
5. The Green Working Group – The on-site research had led to the formation of an outline plan, which would be formalised and then presented to Council for approval and budgeting. This might well require a project manager to be appointed.
6. Comms/Outreach Working Group – Cllr. Jaffay reported that the allotment holders were going to be surveyed, tat Cllr Volkers was trying to enlist volunteer support for a stall at the market. She was asking for a flyer to be circulated on 'Street reps' to test for interest. The next newsletter was due.
7. Resilience Plan Working Group – Cllr Gilbert reported that this was now officially renamed as the 'Emergency Plan…" He was working on the template text to adapt it for our use.
8. Planning Group - Cllr Summers had submitted a written report which was NOTED.

C56/25 ORAL REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Twinning Association – Cllr Summers had submitted a written report which was NOTED.

There was general dissatisfaction expressed that representatives did not know when meetings of the relevant outside bodies were being held. The Clerk was instructed to compile a list and circulate it to the relevant councillors .

C57/25 FREQUENCY & STRUCTURE OF COUNCIL MEETINGS: PROPOSAL FOR REVISED FORMAT

This had been submitted by Cllr Jaffay: and a position paper was with the meeting papers. She clarified that it was not a fully worked-up proposal, but an idea that she was floating for discussion.

A lengthy discussion ensued without a defined conclusion. Cllr Jaffay therefore proposed the formation of a working group to look at the system of Council meetings, with a view to being more efficient.

Seconded by Cllr Eichner and AGREED

The volunteer members of the group are: Cllrs Eichner, Evans, Killick, Scott and Volkers

C58/25 ENHANCED LITTER COLLECTION & STREET SWEEPING PROJECTS: CURRENT STATUS AND DEVELOPMENT

There was a brief discussion of this topic but a general consensus (without a vote being taken) that this topic would be best considered by Facilities within the overall context of possible service devolution.

C59/25 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

A separate confidential minute is attached.

C60/25 ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION BY FULL COUNCIL OR COMMITTEE

- Cllr Killick asked for the issue of social housing provision to be considered
- Was a 'Masterplan' was still under consideration? It will be on the 29th July agenda.
- Cllr Rainbow asked that the contributions from principal Councillors should be given 'integrated prominence' during the 'devolution period.'

The meeting closed at 9:53pm

SIGNED: …………………………………………….. DATE…..………………………………(Chairman)