Forest Row Parish Council

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

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Date: 9 October, 2025

To: All members of the COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE:
Cllrs. Christie, Jaffay, Killick, La Djoi, Rainbow, Scott & Volkers

Dear Sir/Madam,
You are required to attend a meeting of the COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE to be held on **TUESDAY 14th October 2025 @ 7:30 pm in the Community Centre**

Mr David O'Driscoll
Clerk to Forest Row Parish Council

0. ELECTION OF A CHAIR & VICE CHAIR FOR THE COMMITTEE
1. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.
2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS/ DISPENSATION REQUESTS
4. RECORDS OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8th JULY 2025
5. REVIEW OF ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING
6. CLERK'S REPORT ON MATTERS NOT REQUIRING A DECISION
   - 6.1 Road safety signs
   - 6.2 Liaison with the Shed and the Soil Factory
7. FINANCIAL REPORT
8. COMMUNITY SERVICES BUDGET FOR 2026-27
9. REPORTS ON CURRENT SERVICES
   - 9.1 Gages
   - 9.2 Thursday Club
   - 9.3 Library volunteer service
   - 9.4 Youth service
10. MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION/ DECISION
    - 10.1 The future of the Outreach & Comms working group
    - 10.2 Community Services development
    - 10.3 A volunteer fair?
11. ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION BY FULL COUNCIL OR COMMITTEE

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE
BACKING PAPERS FOR MEETING 14th OCTOBER 2025

COUNCILLORS BRIEFING NOTE FOR THE MEETING
OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE 14th OCTOBER 2025

0. Following Kate Taylor-Smith's resignation of, this Committee is without a Chair. The first business of this meeting is therefore to elect one. There would be no objection to postponing the election of a Vice-Chair until the current Council vacancies are filled.

1-4 Standard items, no unusual difficulties foreseen.

5. **REVIEW OF ACTIONS** An annotated list is attached

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

6.1 The Shed This is now a legal entity in its own right and meeting regularly. Its members have also supplied us with the planters for the verges by the Thai & Indian restaurants. on the A22. We have agreed an occupation licence for the Shed building, which is waiting only on a decision form F&P over the future occupation fee.

6.2 Speed indicator devices As you are all probably aware, one has been installed on Hartfield Road on the approach to the school and one on the Lewes Road just before the 30 mph sign. Both appear to be working effectively, and there have been no complaints.

ACTION: to note

7. **FINANCIAL REPORT** Printout attached. At the end of month 6 expected performance against forecast would be 50%. Income is running at 62.5% and expenditure at 45.3%. Apart from the overrun on the community consultation, all items are within range.

ACTION: to note

8. **COMMUNITY SERVICES BUDGET FOR 2026-27.** A draft budget sheet is attached, and an A3 version will be available at the meeting to make it more legible. Comments as follows:

- There were no forward proposals received, following the preliminary emails of 29th September. This is disappointing, because as I noted, this is the point at which there is flexibility in the drafting, and where 'blue sky thinking' is most welcome.
- The format of the budget sheet is: figures for last complete year/ figures for current half - year with projections to the year end / draft figures for the coming year.
- Projected income for 26-27 is up by 8.7% , including provision for price increases in Gages.
- Projected expenditure is up by 10.4%: the sponsored counselling service has already used most of its voted allocation and should now, I think, have its own cost code split off from 'new service support'. I have also allowed for another independent community consultation

in case a major capital project requires it , and have raised one or two other cost codes to allow for inflation or service expansion.

ACTION: to discuss and adopt a draft committee budget

9. REPORTS ON CURRENT SERVICES (to note, with queries/ decisions as appropriate)

8.1-8.3 Gages, Thursday Club, Library Volunteer service Reports attached where received

8.4 Youth service Report to follow (Mel has been on holiday) .

I have not called for reports from the supported independent services, as there are no major developments to report. FrowFriends recently held another 'cabaret' event in the village hall which was well attended.

I have also not included the Community Services linked working groups for this meeting: Comms & Outreach has its own agenda item below, and the other groups have not, to the best of my knowledge, met since the last Committee

ACTION : to note

10. MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION/ DECISION

10.1 The future of the Comms & Outreach working group. This issue was raised for discussion by Cllr Eichner in a message to the group on Sunday 5th October, and responded to by Cllr Jaffay on the following day. Attached is a screenshot of those messages, not to fetter the discussion, but to set the scene for the point at issue.

Cllr Evans has also since made a written submission which it may be helpful to attach.

10.2 Community Services Development. As noted above, there were no proposals received for future items which might need to be budgeted for. Given the number of suggestions in the original list from the community, that is surprising, and even granted that many of the current projects belong more to Facilities, it seems that the appetite for developing more person-based services community has waned. However, we continually receive in the office representations for items like: a community minibus, the revival of the car club in some form, and some form of support for mothers with toddlers. The list is not exhaustive.

10.3 A volunteer fair? We are constantly under pressure from the lack, and sometimes reliability of volunteers, particularly for Gages . It has been suggested that the Council might host a volunteer fair covering both the Council and other organisations in the village.

ACTION (for items 10.1-10.3: to decide as appropriate

11. ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION BY FULL COUNCIL OR COMMITTEE

MEETING OF COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE
HELD ON 8th JULY 2025

MIN. NO	DECISION	ACTION BY	PROGRESS *To go out with next agenda*
100/25	Discussions between |High Five Club and Youth Leader	DD/MM	Initial discussions with Ms Worth, but somewhat on hold since Gwen Pritchit's passing
108/25	Look into grants for transport options	AS	Amanda is following this up
110/25	Look into pay as you go copier/printer	Office	Discussions with SME ongoing
112/25	Volunteer Fair	Comms/Outreach	For consideration by Committee
113/25	Comms/Outreach – chase up issue of proposed sculpture donation	KTS	Now being dealt with by separate W/G
116/25	Install speed signs as proposed	Office/Maintenance team	Done
117/25	Install 'wheelchair friendly' sign on accessible roundabout	Office/Maintenance team	Awaiting sign from signwriter

	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
Localism & Community Projects							
206 Community Transport							
2678 Medical Car Scheme Income	186	120	(66)			154.6%	
Community Transport :- Income	**186**	**120**	**(66)**			**154.6%**	**0**
2554 Wealdlink	546	1,100	555		555	49.6%	
2601 Voluntary Medical Car Service	0	100	100		100	0.0%	
Community Transport :- Indirect Expenditure	**546**	**1,200**	**655**	**0**	**655**	**45.5%**	**0**
Net Income over Expenditure	**(360)**	**(1,080)**	**(720)**				
207 Market							
3184 CC-Market Income	3,980	7,500	3,521			53.1%	
Market :- Income	**3,980**	**7,500**	**3,521**			**53.1%**	**0**
3151 CC-Market expenditure	4,128	8,000	3,872		3,872	51.6%	
Market :- Indirect Expenditure	**4,128**	**8,000**	**3,872**	**0**	**3,872**	**51.6%**	**0**
Net Income over Expenditure	**(149)**	**(500)**	**(351)**				
209 Localism & Community Proj Misc							
2670 Shed Project	1,550	0	(1,550)			0.0%	
2905 Repair Cafe & Wellbeing Servic	0	500	500			0.0%	
Localism & Community Proj Misc :- Income	**1,550**	**500**	**(1,050)**			**310.0%**	**0**
2671 Shed Project	589	2,000	1,411		1,411	29.4%	
2700 Repair Cafe & Wellbeing	2,045	6,500	4,455		4,455	31.5%	
2710 Environmental Support	0	1,000	1,000		1,000	0.0%	
2715 Community Consultation	3,119	2,500	(619)		(619)	124.7%	
2720 Capital Projects R & D	0	500	500		500	0.0%	
Localism & Community Proj Misc :- Indirect Expenditure	**5,753**	**12,500**	**6,747**	**0**	**6,747**	**46.0%**	**0**
Net Income over Expenditure	**(4,203)**	**(12,000)**	**(7,797)**				
304 Cafe							
3480 Gages - Sales	12,251	22,000	9,749			55.7%	
Cafe :- Income	**12,251**	**22,000**	**9,749**			**55.7%**	**0**
3436 Gages-Purchase of Equipment	444	2,000	1,556		1,556	22.2%	
3460 Gages -Purchases Food etc	7,304	15,500	8,196		8,196	47.1%	
Cafe :- Indirect Expenditure	**7,748**	**17,500**	**9,752**	**0**	**9,752**	**44.3%**	**0**
Net Income over Expenditure	**4,503**	**4,500**	**(3)**				

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Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 09/10/2025

Month No: 7

Committee Report

	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
306 Thursday Club							
3680 TC-Subscriptions	95	200	105			47.5%	
Thursday Club :- Income	**95**	**200**	**105**			**47.5%**	**0**
3636 TC-Running Costs	0	750	750		750	0.0%	
Thursday Club :- Indirect Expenditure	**0**	**750**	**750**	**0**	**750**	**0.0%**	**0**
Net Income over Expenditure	**95**	**(550)**	**(645)**				
406 Youth Provision							
4676 YP-Grants & Other Income	1,509	1,000	(509)			150.9%	
Youth Provision :- Income	**1,509**	**1,000**	**(509)**			**150.9%**	**0**
4603 YP - Dev costs & General Expen	1,927	3,000	1,073		1,073	64.2%	
4604 YP - Youth Forum	0	500	500		500	0.0%	
Youth Provision :- Indirect Expenditure	**1,927**	**3,500**	**1,573**	**0**	**1,573**	**55.1%**	**0**
Net Income over Expenditure	**(418)**	**(2,500)**	**(2,082)**				
Localism & Community Projects :- Income	**19,570**	**31,320**	**11,750**			**62.5%**	
Expenditure	**20,102**	**43,450**	**23,348**	**0**	**23,348**	**46.3%**	
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	**(532)**	**(12,130)**	**(11,598)**				
Grand Totals:- Income	**19,570**	**31,320**	**11,750**			**62.5%**	
Expenditure	**20,102**	**43,450**	**23,348**	**0**	**23,348**	**46.3%**	
Net Income over Expenditure	**(532)**	**(12,130)**	**(11,598)**				
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	**(532)**	**(12,130)**	**(11,598)**				

BUDGET PREP COMM SERV v.1

	2024-25 Budget	Actual	% forecast	2025-26 Budget	To month 6	% to date	f'cast 12 mth	2026-27	comments
Income streams									
2678 Medical transport	300	242	81%	120	186	155%	300	350	increased usage
2905 Service devpt income	500	0	0%	500	0	0%	0	500	as previous
3184 Market income	7500	7574	101%	7500	2988	40%	6000	7500	as previous
3480 Gages sales	22000	26236	119%	22000	11106	51%	22000	24000	price increases
3650 Thursday club subs	200	457	228%	200	0	0%	200	200	as previous
4676 Youth income	2500	997	40%	1000	1509	50%	1500	1500	increased receipts
4180 Other misc income	0	953	0%	0	0	0%	0	0	not forecastable
TOTAL	**33000**	**36459**	**110%**	**31320**	**15789**	**50%**	**30000**	**34050**	increase 8.7% over current year
							95.8%		
Expenditure									
2436 Road safety	1500	4679	312%	500	0	0%	0	500	asprevious for traffic survey
2554 Wealdlink	1200	1056	88%	1100	546	50%	1100	1200	likely inflation increase
2601 Medical transport	50	118	236%	100	0	0%	100	100	as previou
2700 New service support	2000	3197	160%	6500	1960	30%	4500	2000	splitting counselling
NEW CODE: counselling								3000	from other services for clarity
2710 Enviromental support	1000	0	0%	1000	0	0%	0	1000	possible carbon audit
2715 Community consultation	2500	3119	125%	2500	3119	125%	3200	6000	potential pwlb consultation
2720 Capital projects R&D	2500	2415	97%	500	0	0%	0	500	as previois
2750 Youth Forum	0	730	0%	500	0	0%	0	0	no call on funds
3151 Market expenses	7000	7652	109%	8000	4086	51%	8500	10000	allow for new equipment
3436 Gages equipment	2000	854	43%	2000	382	19%	1000	2000	contingency for repairs
3460 Gages food	18000	14363	80%	15500	6112	39%	15500	16000	marginal inflation increase
3636 Thursday Club running	750	388	52%	750	0	0%	250	1000	allow for trips
4604 Youth developemnt	3500	2606	75%	3000	1645	55%	3000	3000	as previous
TOTAL	**42000**	**41177**	**98%**	**41950**	**17850**	**43%**	**37150**	**46300**	increase 10.4% over current year
							88.6%		

Gages Café

28th June 2025 to 3rd October 2025

Total Number of Meals 892

Total Deliveries 264

Total Eat In 628

We have still been short on volunteers for Gages. I have had to cover a few shifts waitressing and often have to take deliveries. We need a couple of locals that I can call on when people are sick or on holiday. Now we are in October (and holidays are done) I have cover every day this month except for one waitressing shift (which I can do).

There is still no pattern to when we will be busy or not but any food leftover is frozen and sold as take-aways. These are very popular for a couple of people that live outside the village. I also offer them to our regular delivery diners when they are sick.

Library

October 2025

We have 8 regular volunteers in the library every Friday, from 1 to 4pm.

They each cover 3 shifts every three months.

We usually have 10 volunteers in the library but one is off sick long term and another has moved to help waitress for Gages instead. All is running smoothly.

Messages re future of Comms & Outreach working group

Eichner

I'd like to add one thing - The future of Outreach. So people aren't blindsided, my thinking is that Outreach and Comms has done fantastic work, but has lost several very actively involved people and the last several meetings haven't had anything that couldn't have been handled by Community Services (or at least, haven't seemed to benefit from the agile/responsive nature of a working group) thus I thought it would be worth having the discussion of whether we think there is energy/value in Outreach continuing. Not set on this at all, just what I'm feeling from where priorities and energy are currently.

17:27

~ Andi

I feel very strongly about Outreach needing to continue and engage community.

Those of us who came from Forest Row Forward got voted in on one promise to the community - that we would actively listen to them throughout our term.

Trying to get rid of Outreach would be getting rid of this very promise.

I don't think it's fulfilled it's intention at all - it's something that needs to be kept up as we go along, as part of our culture and ways of working.

Jason himself put a sentence around constant consultation with the community in the strategy that the councillors co-created about a year ago.

There is no way that one feedback box kept the office and the offer of people emailing in is going to gather the hundreds of responses that the events that we've put on can manage.

I don't know where this pressure to get rid of something that's important to the Council has come from. Maybe we just need a refresh as to the group's next iteration of our activities.

11:14

Submission by Cllr Evans (06/10/2025)

"As part of the discussion about the comms and outreach working group.

Would the community services committee be able to put enough time aside in meetings for the following?

a) discussing projects and ideas around the subject of communicating effectively with the community

b) working on specific projects including planning meetings that would involve community volunteers, liaising closely with office staff and other councillors re publicity etc.

As these specific projects take a lot of time and effort to organise, perhaps point a above might be discussed in committee meetings but point b might need a specific working group for each project?"