Forest Row Parish Council

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

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Date: 22 January, 2026

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

Dear Sir/Madam,
You are required to attend a meeting of the PEOPLE COMMITTEE to be held on **TUESDAY 27th JANUARY 2026 @ 7:30 pm in the Community Centre**

Mr David O'Driscoll
Clerk to Forest Row Parish Council

1. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.
2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS/ DISPENSATION REQUESTS
4. RECORDS OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14th OCTOBER 2025
5. REVIEW OF ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING
6. CLERK'S REPORT ON MATTERS NOT REQUIRING A DECISION
7. FINANCIAL REPORT
8. REPORTS ON CURRENT SERVICES
    - 8.1 Gages
    - 8.2 Thursday Club
    - 8.3 Library volunteer service
    - 8.4 Youth service
9. MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION/ DECISION
    - 9.1 The future of the Outreach & Comms working group
    - 9.2 Community Services development
    - 9.3 The public art project
10. ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION BY FULL COUNCIL OR COMMITTEE

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE
BACKING PAPERS FOR MEETING 27th JANUARY 2026

COUNCILLORS BRIEFING NOTE FOR THE MEETING
OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE 27th JANUARY 2026

1-4 Standard items, no unusual difficulties foreseen.

5. **REVIEW OF ACTIONS** An annotated list is attached. Several items appear to have fallen by the wayside and need to be reviewed in view of further action

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

No current issues

ACTION: to note

7. **FINANCIAL REPORT** Printout attached. Performance against forecast should be in the order of 80% at this stage of the year. Income is showing at 90.8%, with 'Gages' being particularly buoyant. Market income is disappointing at only 64.4%, which may need some looking at. Expenditure is running at 71%, which perhaps reflects a rather sluggish activity level.

ACTION: to note

8. **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 Mel's report is attached.

There are no other reports.

ACTION : to note

9. **MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION/ DECISION**

9.1 The future of the Comms & Outreach working group. This issue was discussed at the last meeting, where it was noted that the group had not met since June last year and that the 'Meet & Greets' had been discontinued. The relevant minute is brief: "Cllr. Volkers counter proposed that meetings be held on an 'as needed' basis and a line item be included on the Community Services agenda."

This working group now falls foul of the 6-month limit which Council agree would apply to working groups to avoid stagnation. Nothing has happened since the last meeting of this Committee, although there are several major projects being mooted or underway. But since working groups are not *per se* open to the public, there is a clear risk of development taking place without communication. Is there not a need for some action by this Committee?

ACTION: to discuss and decide as appropriate

9.2 Community Services Development. This was raised at the last meeting, and the briefing note questioned whether "the appetite for developing more person-based services community has waned." The issue was minuted as follows: "New initiatives were suggested and discussed. The discussion would be continued." Amanda has supplied a position paper (attached) to continue the discussion accordingly.

ACTION: to discuss and decide as appropriate

9.3 The public art project. This request comes from Cllr Eichner, who writes:

"I'd like to request an agenda item about the public art fund. Specifically, I've been hearing from students at the local schools that they're not aware of these funds, but several would be interested in doing something similar to the 'bus shelter mural', so I'd like to propose we approach all the local schools directly and signpost several initiatives/funds that may be open to their students (graffiti workshop, VENUe, arts fund, etc.)

I also think it would be helpful for such conversations if we were able to provide a list of public-facing areas that we own that we can approve for painting. Though could we potentially accept canvasses/other discrete art pieces for inside buildings like the Community Centre?

ACTION: to discuss and decide as appropriate

10. ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION BY FULL COUNCIL OR COMMITTEE

MEETING OF COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE
HELD ON 14th OCTOBER 2025

MIN. NO	DECISION	ACTION BY	PROGRESS *To go out with next agenda*
	FR Festival – seek permission from landowners of alternative venue	DD	Done
155/25	Share Shop/Library of things – RR to give details of similar initiative	RR	To be reported
169/25	Volunteer fair – begin initial planning	Office	Preliminary discussions held
170/25	Low-cost supported services - support for young families – AV to follow up	AV	To be reported
170/25	Youth skills – AK to speak to MM	AK	To be reported

Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 21/01/2026

Month No: 10 — Committee Report

	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	1,091	1,100	9		9	99.2%	
2601 Voluntary Medical Car Service	0	100	100		100	0.0%	
Community Transport :- Indirect Expenditure	**1,091**	**1,200**	**109**	**0**	**109**	**90.9%**	**0**
Net Income over Expenditure	**(906)**	**(1,080)**	**(175)**				
207 Market							
3184 CC-Market Income	4,827	7,500	2,673			64.4%	
Market :- Income	**4,827**	**7,500**	**2,673**			**64.4%**	**0**
3151 CC-Market expenditure	6,398	8,000	1,602		1,602	80.0%	
Market :- Indirect Expenditure	**6,398**	**8,000**	**1,602**	**0**	**1,602**	**80.0%**	**0**
Net Income over Expenditure	**(1,571)**	**(500)**	**1,071**				
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	1,550	2,000	450		450	77.5%	
2700 Repair Cafe & Wellbeing	3,570	6,500	2,930		2,930	54.9%	
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	**8,239**	**12,500**	**4,261**	**0**	**4,261**	**65.9%**	**0**
Net Income over Expenditure	**(6,689)**	**(12,000)**	**(5,311)**				
304 Cafe							
3188 Grants & Donations	30	0	(30)			0.0%	
3480 Gages - Sales	19,843	22,000	2,157			90.2%	
Cafe :- Income	**19,873**	**22,000**	**2,127**			**90.3%**	**0**
3436 Gages-Purchase of Equipment	772	2,000	1,228		1,228	38.6%	

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Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 21/01/2026

Month No: 10 **Committee Report**

	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
3460 Gages -Purchases Food etc	11,642	15,500	3,858		3,858	75.1%	
Cafe :- Indirect Expenditure	**12,414**	**17,500**	**5,086**	**0**	**5,086**	**70.9%**	**0**
Net Income over Expenditure	**7,458**	**4,500**	**(2,958)**				
306 Thursday Club							
3680 TC-Subscriptions	95	200	105			47.5%	
Thursday Club :- Income	**95**	**200**	**105**			**47.5%**	**0**
3636 TC-Running Costs	133	750	617		617	17.8%	
Thursday Club :- Indirect Expenditure	**133**	**750**	**617**	**0**	**617**	**17.8%**	**0**
Net Income over Expenditure	**(38)**	**(550)**	**(512)**				
406 Youth Provision							
4676 YP-Grants & Other Income	1,923	1,000	(923)			192.3%	
Youth Provision :- Income	**1,923**	**1,000**	**(923)**			**192.3%**	**0**
4603 YP - Dev costs & General Expen	2,596	3,000	404		404	86.5%	
4604 YP - Youth Forum	0	500	500		500	0.0%	
Youth Provision :- Indirect Expenditure	**2,596**	**3,500**	**904**	**0**	**904**	**74.2%**	**0**
Net Income over Expenditure	**(673)**	**(2,500)**	**(1,827)**				
Localism & Community Projects :- Income	**28,453**	**31,320**	**2,867**			**90.8%**	
Expenditure	**30,871**	**43,450**	**12,579**	**0**	**12,579**	**71.0%**	
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	**(2,418)**	**(12,130)**	**(9,712)**				
Grand Totals:- Income	**28,453**	**31,320**	**2,867**			**90.8%**	
Expenditure	**30,871**	**43,450**	**12,579**	**0**	**12,579**	**71.0%**	
Net Income over Expenditure	**(2,418)**	**(12,130)**	**(9,712)**				
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	**(2,418)**	**(12,130)**	**(9,712)**				

Gages Café

8th October 2025 to 16th January 2026

Total Number of Meals 1078

Total Deliveries 340

Total Eat In 738

Gages is running well. We have had two new volunteers join us and one returned. All shifts are covered unless someone is on holiday or sick but I can usually find someone else to cover.

The Christmas meal was a great success. We sold all 50 tickets to eat in our Main Hall and 9 tickets for our volunteers to deliver to homes in Forest Row and Ashurst Wood. A further 20 tickets were sold to On My Side in Hambro Hall, which was the first time we have done this and it went very well. A great time had by all.

A deep clean of the kitchen and all equipment is currently being arranged with a professional company.

Thursday Club

Members: 21

New recent members: 2

Volunteer Helpers: 2

October - December

6 meetings were held between October-December.

In October, some of Thursday Club attended the Cabaret organised by FROW Friends and enjoyed what was being shown. Those that didn't attend, have asked if the Cabaret can have more sing-along acts included next time.

Film afternoons have become a feature over the past year which has been enjoyed. Tea and Cake are also enjoyed whilst watching the film.

We were booked into receive a visit from the East Grinstead Museum but this has been put back until March.

December was the usual Christmas razmatazz. We were very lucky to be joined by a young harpist at the Thursday club Christmas Party. Wendy and Ruth provided a wonderful spread.

Some attended the Gages Christmas Party and enjoyed it.

Library

January 2026

We have 7 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, one is nursing their wife and another has moved to help waitress for Gages instead. I have had two new people asking to help so I will be adding them to the next rota which will start in March. All is running smoothly.

Youth Service report
for the 'People' Committee

October -December 2025

A busy few months for the Service: with the colder and darker evenings we have had more youth in for the sessions.

The younger sessions on average range from 12-25 attendees and the older sessions are averaging about 15 youth per session.

Lots of concessions for older teens with subs.

October was a busy month themed on Halloween fun.

This year I delegated the planning and delivery of the Halloween party to youth volunteers whilst supported by myself.

The volunteers spent an extensive amount of time planning the party and this was evidenced in portfolio style.

From decorations, to activities and games and our volunteers did a fantastic job.

We now have three youth mentor volunteers that support the younger sessions.

One of whom is Neet, so I've worked really hard on creating a role that gives her structure , routine and allows creativity.

This has boosted her confidence majorly and it's been fantastic to watch the teens take on more of an empowering volunteer role.

November was spent planning for December activities .

We spent some weeks creating with arts and crafts and encouraging the youth to get out into the community to source things that we could utilise for Christmas craft activities.

This year we made hot toddies/ hot chocolates in jars decorated by youth.

We were proud to support the grotto this year.

Four of our teens volunteered for roles as elves and our youth worker Ben played Father Christmas.

I have been attending meetings to network with the planned Community Hub and had meetings with Tony Lewin to discuss some ideas of linking youth with The Shed.

December was super busy with Christmas activities.

We had our Christmas party for the younger session with our very own Grinch / our Ben does love fancy dress !

We took 15 teenagers ice skating at Battersea power station mid-December.

We were kindly gifted some beautiful trinket boxes and jewellery from *Second Life* which enabled all youth to have a small gift for Christmas.

The fridge has been incredible with weekly donations to enable us to feed teens during sessions.

We wouldn't be able to do many of the fantastic days out and extras without the support of Ruth and Wendy and their boot fair fundraising.

Our teens wrapped close to 200 selection boxes for the grotto which was a fantastic end to our 2025 !

This year we are planning on more community links with youth in the form of challenges etc and are aiming to start looking at fundraising through the service to enable us offer more opportunities to the youth.

One of the ideas that we have is to run a bingo event – youth will support in asking local business for donations for prizes.

In the summer car washes etc.

I will update in next quarterly report.

Mel Rey-Mesher

Youth Service Leader

Community Development

Development within the Parish is vital to enable us to move forward in 2026 and the forthcoming years.

Key areas to develop:

Seniors groups

Dementia groups

Better links with the schools within the Parish

Toddler/Library liaison

Revival of the Car Club

Mini-bus

Communication with neighbouring Parish Councils

Build on our current relationship with the Conservators of Ashdown Forest

Communication is key in this current age! We must build on our current relationships within our own Parish (churches/schools etc) and forge links with other Parish Councils to make sure that we can build on what 'we have' and 'don't currently have'.

Further discussion and planning are needed to maintain Forest Row for future generations.