

**FORCE AGM Minutes**  
**10<sup>th</sup> September 2024 at the Rochester Community Hub**

1. Terry Clennell, the FoRCE chair, welcomed the attendees to the AGM. He thanked the committee members and local councillors for their continued support.

He said that FoRCE has enjoyed a very successful year with the completion of the Sensory Garden and the dedication ceremony, the increase in the number of litter picks carried out this year, the very productive Foreshore litter picks, and the progress already achieved with our most recent project the pier. He reported to the AGM that Councillor Alex Paterson has said FoRCE is a “*blueprint for engagement with volunteers*”. He thanked the volunteers and commented that he looked forward to continuing with the work being done by the volunteers and branching out into the exciting new projects whilst continuing to maintain the sensory garden

2. Committee Updates:

Kristian Hansen gave an overview of the **Pier project**.

- Discussed the progress with mains and water supply to the Pier and the issues related to how to pay for the water supply as this may be metered.
- 1<sup>st</sup> Pier Volunteering evening session was very successful with high levels of engagement: sweeping the Pier, removing paint.
- Since then the rust on the pier has been treated, sections have started to be painted, the plant boxes have been carefully restored.
- Plan going forward is to: treat the interior roof, plant annual plants in the plant boxes that can survive in harsh salty conditions, have seating built that can securely house FoRCE equipment, window boxes on the edge of the Pier, educative signage to be created and installed, commemorative plaques and for the Pier to be a model of sustainability using solar and wind power.
- Funding will be shared in due course.
- The Pier to be a venue for Food Pop Up Stalls to generate income for the Pier and to attract visitors.

Kristian Hansen gave an overview of the **development of the new FoRCE website**

- FoRCE are developing a new website with a new provider which will improve ease of access and will be easier to enter data
- The progress will be fast tracked in the Autumn with the aim to launch on the 15<sup>th</sup> January with a deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> of January.
- Issues surround committee email address because the provider is black listed so some outgoing emails are blocked. As we change provider Committee members will need to migrate over to the new system.

3. Elections (Officiated by the Medway Greenspaces Team)

- Chair – Terry Clennell
- Vice Chair – Natalie Poulton
- Treasurer – Jean Skilling
- Engagement – Elizabeth Gilliard
- Membership – Aileen Smith
- Partnerships – Terri Zbyszewska
- Communications – Natalie Poulton
- River – Kristian Hansen
- Without portfolio – Will Kingsland

4. Interactive Session No1: Reflection on past year.

Chair – Terry: Shared the success with the **Foreshore Litter Picks** covering a large area, the most recent in partnership with Medway Towns Rowing Club with high levels of engagement and the next being the 5<sup>th</sup> October.

Terry shared the success with this year with **gardening**.

- There have been high levels of dedication, time and money.
  - The gardening has been a very successful way to engage people.
  - FoRCE has increased the ad hoc activities and therefore increased capacity.
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- The response to FoRCE reporting graffiti has been great and has been dealt with very quickly.

- Watering of the Sensory Garden by Norse has improved.

#### 5. Interactive Session No2: Looking forward.

- Discussed maintaining the Sensory Garden, continuing to carry out litter picking while developing the pier.

#### 6. Question time with Committee, Councillors and Officers

### **The Balustrade**

- The missing parts of the balustrade were discussed, and the cost of replacing is a huge amount because they are listed and require Portland stone. It was suggested that the Rochester Bridge Trust may take ownership of as they have ownership of 1/2 of the balustrade already.

### **Riverside Rejuvenation**

- Fiona Leadley, Principal Greenspace Development Officer at Medway Council, shared that The Rochester Riverside is part of the 1.06 Building Regulation which will improve the open space of the Esplanade and Jacksons Field. Just over £2 million will be provided over 4 phases. There are big gaps between instalments. The final payment will be received in 2029. The priority will be the Play Area in the Esplanade to ensure it is bigger and more residents can use. Foot paths will need to be improved. Bedding will need to be replaced. The Skate Park at Jacksons Field needs extending.
- No decision has been made, projects need to be formally approved but can be in consultation with FoRCE to agree priorities.
- These projects should start next year in the Autumn.
- Flooding was discussed a scheme needs to be used to improve as water comes up through the ground. Scheme to be improved.

### **Trees**

- Trees – 12 trees have recently been cut down. The Cherry Trees don't do well.

- The Tree Team to be contacted by the council officer to find out about the stumps that have been left.
- Trees have been planted without a watering device and are not watered so they don't survive.

### **Compaction**

- The Esplanade has been used as a car park, not sure by who, the Events Team to check and consider not using a combination padlock.

### **Seating**

- Seating along the river front – great vista. This could be part of the improvement with seats facing both ways.

### **Picnic benches**

- It was suggested that the Esplanade would benefit from more picnic benches.

### **Bins**

- Bins needs to be redistributed; some are very close to each other and then big stretches without bins. Also, important that bins are fox proof particularly at the bottom of Churchfields.

### **Action**

- Terry to send bins document to Fiona.

### **7. Close**

The chair reiterated his call for continued support and funding and thanked everyone for what they had contributed thus far.