

Strategy for open spaces in Frome

1. Introduction

The aim of this strategy is to give Frome the opportunity to make sensible decisions that link the five areas of 'A Strategy for Success 2011-15' – the Town's overall strategy:

- a) Building a sustainable economy
- b) A Vibrant Participatory Community
- c) A Thriving Town Centre
- d) Efficient and Effective Public Services.
- e) An Innovative and Supportive Town Council.

These five areas are underpinned by green aspirations and activity.

Once implemented, it will make Frome a more relaxed place to live, work and get around and it therefore supports fully the aspirations at paragraph 2.6: Parks, Trees, Grass and Play, which considers the open spaces of the town. These will be better managed reflecting local needs with pleasant green routes between the main areas

This Strategy represents a starting point. It aims to provide a framework and the commitment of the Council to encourage and inspire groups and individuals to engage further in the development of Frome becoming "a more relaxed place to live, work and get around".

It recognises that more work needs to follow in a variety of areas, which could include allocation of funds arising from section 106 housing developments, and citing of new facilities for skateboarding plus developing ways for residents and visitors to walk and cycle easily around the town.

This strategy was put together by a working party comprised of a broad range of experts which met three times. The experts covered the following areas:

- Biodiversity
- Dog walking
- Children 0-4
- Children 4-11
- Young People 11-16
- Adults (fishing, picnicking, quiet enjoyment etc)
- Health
- Informal recreation (cycling walking etc)
- Play including wheeled sports

2. How this strategy fits with wider initiatives

Frome's Neighbourhood Plan will be completed in 2012. It is intended to designate the open spaces and routes in order to ensure their retention and

protection. The Neighbourhood Plan will be informed by this open space strategy and will also need to identify how improvements can be financed.

The Neighbourhood Plan will also use the Open Space strategy to identify what routes and open spaces are required on all new development sites and how much the developer needs to allocate for establishment and maintenance. The prescription for these new open spaces and routes will need to be developed on a case by case basis as the Neighbourhood Plan identifies the sites. Therefore, the principles of this Open Space strategy will be adhered to in all future developments.

Principles

Physical Environment

In order to make Frome “a more relaxed place to live, work and get around” we will:

- identify and protect important open spaces in or close to the town;
- invest resources in a few large sites rather than lots of smaller sites;
- ensure high quality maintenance throughout the spaces managed by the town.
- Explore whether some smaller open spaces might be better targeted at older children, who are still too young to go far from home on their own and at adults rather than toddlers.
- use natural material such as logs and stones for seating
- ensure a critical mass of bins (including for dog waste) are provided
- develop further routes for cycling, running and walking
- develop ‘corridors of biodiversity’

Vibrant Community participation

Local communities know what needs to be done. And to be vibrant, they need to meet the needs of everyone. We will:

- ensure that wherever appropriate, spaces meet the needs of everyone: older people in order to rest; parents who need to supervise children; all people who want space to relax and re-charge their batteries and for young people who want to meet;
- encourage people in their local areas, to engage actively in the day to day decision making and management of spaces.
- work with community groups to implement management plans.
- work with the Medical Practice and other health advisors to supply and promote appropriate fitness opportunities on open spaces
- Encourage local people to donate seating.

The sun never sets.....

This strategy and especially the detailed needs (below) will be regularly revisited. This will be supported by research into changing demography and needs.

3. **Next steps**

Once adopted this strategy will take forward elements of the new town strategy and the Neighbourhood Plan will draw from it. In addition we will:

- a. Prioritise the areas that require work from the table in appendix 1
- b. Work with owners and local residents to develop detailed action plans for specific areas.
- c. Identify how to deliver what is needed including sources of funding

The main open spaces and access routes are identified in appendix 1: A table of need. It also includes a short description of the functions each of these ought to provide.

Pw/ December 2011

Appendix 1 – table of need

In planning to meet the needs identified below, the Principles (above) will guide prioritisation and detailed implementation plans. In addition, the following implementation guidelines emerged from the working party discussions:

- Wherever possible, fences and planting should create and / or retain site lines across open spaces to increase security.
- Map areas of open spaces and routes through the town so that they can be accessed by and promoted to residents and visitors.
- These include organised Health Walks and consideration of the best locations for fitness equipment. This might be adjacent to play equipment or elsewhere.

Appendix 1 – table of need

Main sites	Main function being provided at present	Functions that should be provided	Ownership of site / ownership of action
Sites			
The Dippy (priority site)	Informal recreation, public access, conservation,	This is an important access route. Enhancement should include partial scrub management and more tree planting to enhance ecological value. Paths need improving specially the cross path.	MDC
Brunel Way open space (priority site)	Informal recreation	More tree planting including fruit trees, natural play and adult fitness areas, discrete seating for young people and a sports wall.	MDC
School Playing Fields (priority sites)	Insufficient functions at present	More informal public access and organised use in holidays.	SCC / Academy / Free School
Fields below the Mount (priority for protection)	Informal public access, landscape, conservation	Sufficient – need protecting as public open spaces in Neighbourhood Plan	Private
Rodden Meadow (priority for protection)	Informal recreation, conservation, landscape	Sufficient – needs protecting as public open spaces	FTC
Other Rodden Meadows (priority for protection)	Informal recreation, conservation, landscape	Sufficient – need protecting as public open space	Private
Fields beyond Trinity/Critchill Sch (priority for protection)	Informal recreation including dog walking	Sufficient – need protecting as public open space	Private
Fields at The Retreat, Adderwell and Watcombe Skips (priority for protection) (which fields?)	Informal recreation including	Sufficient – need protecting as public open space	Private

	sledging fields, camping and dog walking		
Weylands (priority site)	Informal recreation	Use part of southern area for community gardens.	FTC
Playing field above Weylands (priority site)	Informal recreations and school playing field in summer	Expand usage to develop intergenerational open space.	SCC
Play area behind Frome Town FC (priority site)	Play area	Refresh focussing on natural play, young people facilities such as basketball/sports wall. Create all weather path from road too play area. Consideration given to higher fencing to protect neighbours' gardens.	MDC
River Corridor (priority project)	Informal recreation, conservation, community involvement	Establish a project to link open spaces along the river under one management regime. To include area near The Retreat and Adderwell.	Various
The Mount Community Garden	Community involvement, food production	Sufficient	Private
Closed cemeteries / churchyards	Quiet informal reflection, conservation	Improve conversation management and more seating.	MDC
Football / cricket / rugby clubs	Formal recreation	Sufficient	Private
Millennium Green	Informal recreation, conservation, community involvement	Need to support the Trust and help to keep litter down and to clear scrub between trees. More variety of appropriate planting required.	MG Trust
Welshmill Play park	Play ground, conservation, access route	Master plan drafted and lottery bid submitted (mid Nov) to implement phase 1 of improvements.	FTC
Victoria Park	Informal recreation	Sufficient	FTC
Mary Baily Playing Field	Play area	Yes, except not enough skate facilities and need to move dirt bank and parents would benefit from more seating and shade in the toddlers play area.	FTC
Allotment gardens	Growing	Create new allotments at Weylands and relocate North Parade holders. Create new park on North Parade	

		Allotments.	
Old allotments behind police station	None	Re-establish allotments	MDC
Pedlars Grove play areas (MDC) a. Chapman's Close b. Packsaddle Way	Basketball net, but other ball games restricted Substantial area with very limited play equipment	These areas should complement each other and need local consultation to understand what is needed. The bank between this play area and Packsaddle Way has potential as a wildflower meadow	MDC
Vallis Youth Centre field	None	This area could be used for activities such as wheeled sports and/or community gardens.	SCC
Open spaces on edge of Redrow estate	None	Use for community gardens. Planting to soften development from west.	MDC / Redrow?
Egford lane Play area	Informal recreation and play park	Could be improved by moving goal posts. Need to improve access from Leys Vale area	MDC
Open ground on trading estate	None	Has outline planning permission for industrial development.	Private
Showground	Informal Open Space and play area	Adventure playground type equipment needs adding to existing play equipment and these need to be fenced. Plant formal parkland in the North East possibly to include community orchard. Paths need formalising to allow access for all. <i>MDC has received £33k s106 to improve this area from Medical Practice.</i>	MDC
Asda field and nature reserve	Limited dog walking in field only. Primarily a Nature Conservation site.	Limited access to nature reserve, public access to be increased so long as dogs could be excluded during bird nesting periods? A hide for bird watching. Biodiversity.	Asda
Routes			
Sustrans route (priority project)	Cycling and walking	FTC to support Missing Link project.	Various
Walks along the river	Recreation, access, landscape	Riverside Walk refresh by FTC in progress. Promote fishing.	MDC, FTC, SCC, private
Frome walks and cycleways	Recreation and health	Identification of off-road routes to include links between main	Usually MDC on housing estates, RoW

		open spaces, residential areas and the town centre. Map routes, promote maps, Improve signage / interpretation, promotion and lighting where needed.	owned by SCC. Occasional private ownership
Bridge over river at Rivers Reach	none	Install new pedestrian and cycle bridge linking Rodden with Garsdale, maybe under existing rail bridge? A bridge is already in the Saxonvale planning brief.	FTC, Environment Agency, ??
New sites and development			
Saxonvale development	None	To include riverside pedestrian and cycle links between town centre and Garsdale and beyond. Establish open space at Rivers Reach.	Various
All new developments	None	Planning permission needs to include provisions for off road pedestrian and cycle routes, sufficient open green space (not just play areas) and community gardens.	Various
Allotments and market gardens	Community involvement, food production	Current allotments are good. But more allotments / community gardens need identifying	FTC and some private.
Clink and Wyevale		Identify small green spaces in the town and especially in Clink and Wyevale areas to establish small natural play functions and seating.	MDC
Facilities for young adults		Consult with Frome College students to identify demand	FTC / Young People Frome
Skateboard, scooter facilities		Confirm demand, identify site and fund raise with Frome Skateboarder Association (FSA)	FTC / SCC Youth Service / FSA