

**Aim:**

To deliver a project which increases participation in Frome

**Objectives:**

To engage all people in Frome in all things Frome. To coordinate a week of events and workshops which generate conversation and increase involvement in local projects and issues resulting in positive change in Frome.

**Executive Summary:**

Participate Frome provided a well attended successful week of events and workshops which started the process of embedding participation in Frome. It highlighted a need to distinguish between participation and consultation and to work across statutory and non statutory sectors to increase participation in the Town.

There are a number of residents / volunteers who regularly take part and attend meetings and events who reported fatigue. We also talked to a number of other residents who said that they would like to be more involved in the town but that they did not know how to.

The recommendations suggest that Frome Town Council find a balance between delivering practical action in the town and increasing capacity in staff and infrastructure to support strategic social development in Frome.

There are a series of practical recommendations which include the facilitation of a "Participate Frome Advisory Board", a "Participate Frome Award", the establishment of a database of organisations, continued use of the Participate Frome brand and Facebook site, support to increase volunteers, identification and development of a mechanism for working with local 'community changers',

The themes which arose in the week as key issues that the community would like to see addressed:

- Traffic Flow through the town
- Car Parks
- Services for Young People
- Access to The River
- improved community cohesion between young and old, old and new
- increased information about community services.

One of the prominent themes that occurred before, during and after the week was that there is a strong sense of "Us and Them" in Frome and that there is an emphasis on those who were born here and those that have moved here. There are a number of events and venues which bring these two groups together and the Christmas Extravaganza is one of these, which was particularly successful this year. Facilitation and opportunity for dialogue between the two groups is needed.

## What is Participation

'the action of taking part in something.'

Purpose + Context + People + Process = Outcome

## Outputs – what we did

### Engagement

worked with over 50 organisations  
16 organisations ran projects over the week  
19 businesses donated prizes  
280 people filled in postcards  
talked to over 1000 people  
137 people filled in chalk board speech bubbles  
over 650 people came into the pop up shop

### on Facebook we have had

total reach: over 4393 in one week  
page likes: 266 in 10 days (still growing now 315)  
averaged people actively engaged: 542  
average post clicks: 6991

### What Worked

Facebook 266 people liked the Participate Frome Facebook page in one week  
now 315 (with no 'boost page' promotions)

The screenshot shows the Facebook profile page for 'Participate Frome'. The page header includes the Facebook logo, the name 'Participate Frome', and navigation options like 'Home', 'Find Friends', and 'Kate'. Below the header, it indicates the user is logged in as 'Participate Frome' and offers a 'Change to Kate Hellard' option. The main content area features a large orange question mark logo and the text 'Participate Frome'. Below this, there is a smaller version of the logo and the text 'Participate Frome' with '315 likes · 50 talking about this'. The page also includes an 'Admin Panel' button, a 'Promote Page' button, and a 'See Your Ad Here' section with a promotional post for 'Participate Frome' featuring a photo of an event. At the bottom, there are sections for 'Community' with a question about favorite things about Frome, 'GET INVOLVED IN THE GIPPH!' with a list of events, and 'Photos', 'Likes' (showing 315), and 'Events'.

**Out and About** – apprentices from Edventure Frome took to the streets and asked people what they liked about Frome and how they would change it. They spent four days covering an area from ASDA to The Mount, Trinity and the Town Centre.

## What is your favourite thing about Frome?



## What one thing would you change about Frome?



**The Pop Up Shop** saw an impressive 650 + people come through the doors during the week hosting displays and information about the Neighbourhood Plan, Frome Carnival, IT Support at Home, the Volunteer Bureau, Somerset Skills and Learning, Frome Active, Town Budgeting and Mendip Community Forum.



### The Participate Frome Seminar

36 professionals attended a full day to look at how to increase participation in Frome's statutory and non statutory services



**Participatory Planning** – 15 people attended this training and planning event at Edventure

**Trinity Pizza** – Aster and Knightstone got onto the streets to meet their residents.

Young Peoples Consultation  
Launch at Routes Cafe



**Great Frome Clean Up** 8 litter picks across the town and as a result three of the national high street businesses pledged to clear up outside their premises on a regular basis.



**Fair Frome launch**

39 professionals attended the launch event of a new project to build a resilient community to address the issues of poverty in the town.



## Young Peoples Question Time

200 young people attended a question time event in the Merlin Theatre with a panel including the Town Clerk and the Mayor of Frome organised by Young People Frome.

## Participate Frome Town Meeting

Was held in the Cheese and Grain with over 200 local residents who heard about the outcomes of Participate Frome and participated in plans to address the key themes of the week.



The **Participate Frome Mural** captured the thoughts and ideas of everyone who contributed.

## Open Storytellers and The Job club held open events.

280 postcards were filled in and returned to drop boxes across town



**Branding** gave PF a real identity which people started to recognise.



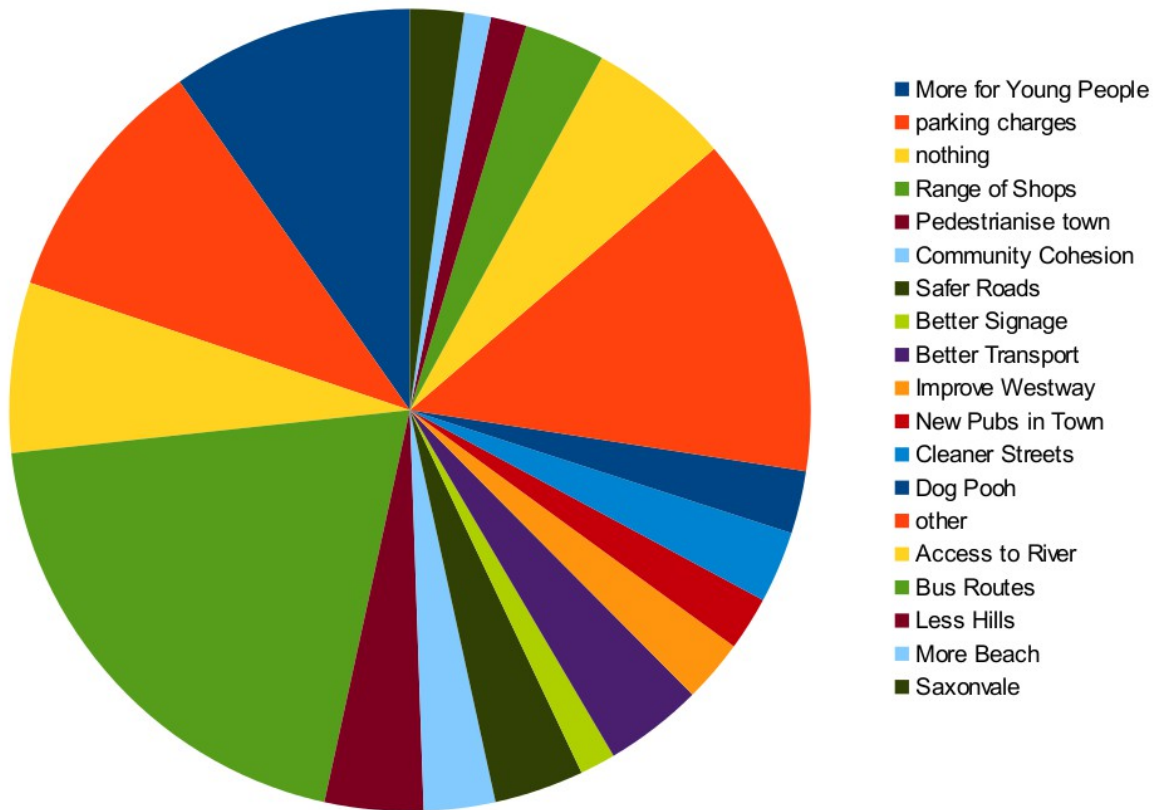
### **What could have worked better**

- More capacity to attend events and talk to more people
- Reach to more people – schools, Children's Centres
- Engaging the Health Centre and Hospital in the week.
- Promotion – posters – using bus stops
- FTC meeting – venue – parking – stage – audience participation – improving promotion
- In the pop up shop we could have displayed the material in a story which lead them through the information in a more engaging way.
- More of the Town Councillors could have got involved – got on their soap boxes and got out into their ward.
- Town Budgeting
- Frugal Fine Dinner did not run because they lost their venue.



## The Findings

The Themes which emerged from the postcards and bubbles  
(follow the chart around to the left)



The notes from the practitioners seminar are attached in Appendix 2

### Other things people would change

What people liked about Frome

The People

The Architecture

The Park

The Community

Independent Shops

The Markets

The Cheese and Grain

### who I met and what I did

Individual meetings with

Active and in Touch

Vision 4 Frome

Edventure

Somerset Skills and Learning

Frome Town Council

Aster

Knightstone

Mendip Community Forum

Fair Frome

Frome FM

Open Storytellers

Frome Active

The Cheese and Grain

Frome Carnival

Frome College

Black Swam Arts  
Green Strands

Frome Job Club

Attended FTC, Community Forum and other relevant meetings. Coordination of events and workshops. Liaison with workshop leaders

Time spent before PF week: 232 hours

Time spent during PF week: 66 hours

Time spent after PF week: 35 hours

Total time to coordinate Participate Frome: 333 hours

Breakdown of costs in appendix 1

### **Organisations that actively attended and participated in events over the week**

Friends of the River Frome

FROGS

Conservative Party

Sustainable Frome

Keep Frome Local

Frome Town FC

Somerset Skills and Learning

Frome Community Education

The Key Centre

Frome Health Centre

Active and in Touch

Vision 4 Frome

Edventure Frome

Somerset Skills and Learning

Frome Town Council

Aster

Knightstone

Mendip Community Forum

Fair Frome

Frome FM

Open Storytellers

Frome Active

The Cheese and Grain

Frome Carnival

Frome College

Black Swam Arts

Green Strands

Somerset County Council – Children's Centres

Somerset Business Agency

Frome Town Football Club

Mendip YMCA

FRECO

The Bridge Children's Centre

Mendip Community Credit Union

Community Resilience and Emergency Welfare

Food Bank

The Bridge Café

Home In Frome

IT Support @ Home

Jackdaws

The Key Centre

Cranmore Tower

Long Term Conditions Support Group

Routes Café

Frome Job Club

Observations

### **Observations**

Communication could be more clear, open and honest.

There are many cases of misunderstanding in Frome due to lack of freely available information. One example of this is the Saxonvale development where it is widely understood that FTC is opposed to any development which includes high street shops.

There could be a better flow of communication out from the FTC and other organisations as part of a process which involves a flow and return using a diverse range of communication methods and building on the local community's activists / changers that already exist.

There are circa 200 people who regularly attend events and meetings many of whom are reporting fatigue. Volunteer capacity and engagement could be increased through a number of channels including supporting capacity of third sector organisations, both practically and through training to support residents to engage in issues that effect them.

There is value in facilitating conversation between people representing different groups. There were many examples during the week where, through conversation with two parties, people were able to communicate their frustration around particular issues, reach a common understanding of the issues and constructively consider the potential ways forward.

One example of this was when a resident expressed her concerns about the Super Market not being demographically representative of the community. One of the members of the management team explained why it was important to bring people into the town. Both parties were able to listen to each other and then discuss possible solutions and the 'Them and Us' beginnings of the dialogue dissipated.

Other examples were with conversations about how 'they' should do more for young people and 'parents should be responsible' culminating in older people considering what skills they could share with young people and a local care home considering how they could facilitate the two groups coming together.

## **Summary of Recommendations:**

### **FTC to increase capacity to:**

- Strategic overview of organisations working in Frome
- Support, advice and guidance for organisations to work collaboratively, try new ways of engagement, meet.
- Continued use of the Participate Frome Brand Administration and Moderation of PF; including Facebook,
- Promote and campaign for a positive 'can do' attitude to local people improving the places that they live in.
- Provide and coordinate training – methods of participation, skills which enable local people to get involved
- Delivery and coordination of events
- Enable review and update of Vision 4 Frome
- Develop a model of 'community changers' for Frome.
- Celebrate success
- Participate Frome Award for organisations demonstrating participative approach.
- Promote, increase, support and celebrate volunteers

### **To consider the following:**

- Embed participation across FTC and in all posts
- Recognise and promote Participation as opposed to consultation
- Review FTC Communications Strategy
- Community Database
- Feasibility study for One Stop Shop for service users and organisations.
- Increase attendance and engagement:
- Practical support for attendance: crèche, transport.

### **To address the following key themes:**

#### **Increase in a range of shops in the town**

- to work with the new Town Centre development worker in the Town.

#### **Enable better access to the river**

- seating
- low level board walk
- cafés / pub next to the river
- access for swimming in the river

#### **Car Parks**

- FTC to buy the car parks
- pay on exit
- use large supermarkets for park and ride

### **Young and old, old and new**

- find common interests
- create opportunities for people to mix and meet
- Food festival back in the Town Centre
- have a 'men in sheds' project

### **Traffic Flow**

- re route the buses
- create shared spaces
- 20 mph speed limits throughout Frome
- park and ride from the supermarket car parks

### **Community Services**

- directory of organisations
- skill share opportunities
- community services fair
- Better info in the library
- bring back the notice boards

## **Detail of Recommendations**

To embed a culture of “participation” and not “consultation” in Frome

For FTC to avoid consultation which is re-active to issues and engage the community in pro-active planning for the future.

There is a place for consultation however this should be undertaken with integrity: be real, encourage engagement and influence, and be fully participative in planning and delivery. In addition it is important to feed back the results of such consultation to the consultees within an agreed time frame with headline actions to be acted upon as a result of the consultation.

Lots of people we talked to asked “What’s the point? no one ever listens to us anyway”. They had provided their views in the past but felt that they were not acted upon and or they did not hear any more about it, this was particularly the case around the issues of having a variety of shops in the town.

## **Strategic Overview of Organisations working in Frome**

The need for a strategic overview of organisations working in Frome has been highlighted throughout the week and in the preparation for the week. A great deal of time is spent by practitioners and professionals working in Frome ascertaining who is working with who and who knows what. In addition organisations are competing for the same pots of money, in some cases doubling work and or overlapping without knowledge of doing so.

Attendees at the PF Seminar identified the need for a central record of organisations and a need to 'map' priorities and gaps in service across all areas of third sector and statutory services.

In addition the success of the pop up shop demonstrated a need for a central resource point for members of the public and professionals which would provide information, support and advice as well as facilitating a space for conversation and discussion.

### **Recommendations :**

Increased capacity in FTC to facilitate strategic overview of organisations and / or to out source this to a third party. There is a significant overlap with the aims and objectives of Fair Frome, who would be well placed to support and or provide the following.

#### **A feasibility study for a “One Stop Shop for information re organisations / resources / advice**

- central information point
- a place to stop for a chat
- accessible / inclusive

#### **Community Database**

To establish and maintain a database of organisations which could be accessible through a web based portal. It would also allow officers to produce reports of organisations/ groups/ individuals working in specific fields, create mail shot lists, details to include:

- name
- address
- contact details (preferred communication method)
- website address
- purpose
- type (charity, voluntary sector, company, statutory)
- beneficiaries – inc: age range
- what they do (how they achieve purpose)
- where they meet
- when they meet
- geographical reach
- funding
- membership / service users criteria (ie referral/open)
- resources – including : buildings, meeting rooms, equipment,
- partners

#### **Community organisations directory**

physical paper copy of the above

### **Continued use of Participate Frome Brand**

The Participate Frome logo, icons and key questions became identified across the town during the week as an independent brand. For its continued use it now requires brand guidelines to determine what, where, when and who can use the brand PF.

The use of PF brand and Facebook page but another organisation is currently being trailed by Edventure in their "Dippy" Consultation. It is showing that there is a need for communication to be clear about purpose and outcomes and what will happen next.

There is a need to oversee posts, for there to be a named person to respond to comments.

### **Facebook site**

This was very successful over the week and continues to attract new visitors and provide a neutral space for discussion and comment which can be measured and collated.

### **Recommendation:**

That there is continued use of PF Brand. Guidelines and systems need to be agreed and monitored centrally.

Responsibility for administering / moderation of the site should be held centrally in order to protect the brand as a 'participative' information sharing resource.

Guidelines for its use

- ensure appropriate content
- who is given administrator access
- how often posts are made

### **Participation Award**

To create an award for organisations which work in a participative way

### **Training**

The seminar identified gaps in understanding, practical tools and methods of engaging people in participative methods.

The Edventure training on Participative Planning facilitated by Martin Gilbraith was very successful ( <http://martingilbraith.wordpress.com/tag/actionplanning/>) and a

model which can now be facilitated by Neil Oliver, Sarah Hobbs, Kate Hellard and Nikki Cox.

**Recommendation:**

To develop and facilitate a range of training opportunities for practitioners, FTC employees and councillors which will promote a common understanding of Participation and methods.

**Events as a means of connecting people**

The week of events was a success, however many people commented that they had attended a number of events and were tired!

**Recommendations:**

- Run a yearly seminar / conference
- Facilitate regular opportunities for Volunteers to get together – Parties / celebrations

**Celebrate success**

Engage and encourage people to consider what is positive in Frome.

Street parties

Awards

Participate Frome Award for participative organisations.

**Central Intergenerational public open spaces**

To enable and facilitate different groups in Frome to meet, play and 'hang out' together.

Space for events and engagement which reach a wide demographic

**Vision 4 Frome**

Vision 4 Frome was widely represented throughout the week at many of the events. The report has been widely used as evidence for a range of projects across the town. There is a common understanding that it is now due to be updated.

A process for regular revision and updating could be implemented in a partnership between V4F and the FTC and or a third party.

**Recommendation:**

Enable, support and facilitate a review and update of Vision 4 Frome



## **Use a range of methods of engagement**

To promote and increase use of:

- social media
- press / media
- posters
- school newsletters (usually printed on one side with space for other info)
- community notice boards
- Community activists
- Community notice board

To ensure that the public have access to information other than in a digital format or through the press.

FTC to manage notice boards throughout the town centre and wider community displaying public notices, posters and information.

## **Increase attendance at community meetings**

- to publicise meetings well in advance through a range of forum – media, in local children's centres, schools, facebook,
- use a range of accessible venues throughout the town – mindful of transport, parking.
- To take specific issues of interest into the community to discuss / address. (go to the people!)
- Practical support for engagement
- childcare (Coop)
- travel / transport
- having a friend

## **Community 'changers' / activists**

Many of the communities in Frome have a network of informal activists (people in the know). These people could be identified and supported to gather feedback and inform local issues and decision making. They could also be used more for information sharing.

## **To continue to evidence and collect data**

This project has produced some valuable data which could be further explored and recorded. It could also be enhanced through the collection of further data through PF postcards and other means of research. This could then be used to inform many areas of work and the review of Vision4Frome.