

For Information – October Watch

Author: Chris Stringer, Environment Manager

Background

There are a number of organisations involved in the cleaning, maintenance and general upkeep of the town, including Frome Town Council (FTC), Mendip District Council (MDC), Somerset County Council (SCC) and the Environment Agency.

This joint *but split* responsibility can sometimes be challenging; at the very least it can mean delays working out who is responsible for any given area of land. As such, this is one of the reasons that previous efforts to improve the overall cleanliness of the town have fallen short.

To address this, the **Keep Frome Clean Panel** was setup to lead and organise the Keep Frome Clean campaign, working with all of these organisations – as well as residents, businesses and other local groups.

The overall aim of the campaign is make sure that Frome is *consistently* clean, tidy & welcoming throughout the year.

As an important first step, the Panel launched **October Watch** to get a full and detailed picture of what's going on across the town, encouraging everyone to report problems, concerns & observations throughout the month of October.

Coincidentally, MDC & The Landscape Group (TLG) also undertook a district-wide customer satisfaction survey focusing on the Core Services of the Council's contract with TLG. They received 74 responses during the six week period - and FTC Staff are currently analysing the results of this survey in conjunction with MDC's team.

Initial Findings & Analysis

Via Frome Town Council, the Panel received 94 distinct reports during October Watch.

These reports came in steadily throughout the course of the month, although there were days without any reports.

In one sense, the total number of reports is less than hoped for; a greater sample would have provided a more detailed picture.

Nevertheless, nearly 100 reports in a single month from a variety of residents, businesses and visitors would seem to confirm the *general feeling* that the town isn't as clean, tidy and well-kept as it should be. Very simply, the reports weren't limited to a handful of concerns from one or two people about one or two places.

By area

Reports came in in respect of the following streets and areas.

NB. The coloured text and brackets (M) identify those streets & areas that were reported more than once during the month; and/or those streets & areas where different and multiple problems were reported

A - I	J – R	S - Z
Alexandra Road (M)	King Street	Selwood Road
Badcox	Low Water	Spring Road (M)
Bath Street (M)	Lullington Lane	Stony Street
Blue House	Market Cross (M)	Town Bridge
Broadway	Market Yard (M)	Town centre
Catherine Hill (M)	Naish's Street	Trinity Row (M)
Catherine Street	North Parade (M)	Trinity Street (M)
Church steps	Palmer Street (M)	Trinity Road
Cork Street	Paul Street (M)	Trinity Walk (M)
Duke Street	Rodden Bridge	Vallis Road (M)
Eagle Lane	Rook Lane	Vallis Way (M)
Goulds Ground	Rossiters Hill (M)	Vicarage Street (M)
Hoopers Barton (M)		Victoria Park (M)
Iron Mill Lane		Welshmill Lane
		Welshmill Road (M)
		Westway
		Weylands
		Willow Vale
		York Street (M)
		Zion Path

General problems

Over half of the reports have been categorised as either ‘General litter’ (30 reports) or ‘Weeds’ (19 reports).

Not only are these the main problems, they were also common across the town by area. Meaning that nearly all the areas listed above had general litter or weeds reported at least once during the month.

Specific problems

The following problems were specific by category and area:

- The pigeons at Rodden Bridge
- Graffiti along Vicarage Street

Seasonal problems

Not too surprisingly, leaves were reported 12 times.

More specifically, leaves were a concern in places like Vicarage Street, where the pavement only runs on one side of the road – and the build-up of leaves becomes slippery and hazardous.

Leaves were also reported on steps around the town – like the two sets of steps leading to and from St John's churchyard.

Other problems

Blocked drains were reported 7 times.

Surprises

Only two reports came in on dog's mess.

It is speculative, but reasons for the overall lack of reports (and the lack of reports on something like dog's mess) could be as follows:

- Lack of public awareness about October Watch - and therefore a lack of promotion
- Lack of promotion in the right places and the right ways
- A combination of apathy, lethargy & acceptance amongst the public – the feeling that reporting problems won't change anything anyway; that it's been tried and failed before...
- That assumed problems – like dog's mess – are no longer perceived as keenly

Next steps

- Detailed analysis of the reports
- Cross-referencing with the findings of Mendip District Council & The Landscape Group's recent Core Services survey
- Cross-referencing with the relevant standards and contracts that describe how clean the town should be
- Identify locations for new litter bins based on the reports received
- Continue discussions about additional gulley & drain cleansing with SCC
- Complete and publish the Panel's summary report, including actions
- Report back to Council with the Panel's full findings and recommendations in December.

Recommendations

Note the report.