

FROME TOWN COUNCIL

making Frome a better place

Minutes of a meeting of the Internal Affairs Committee

Tuesday 11 June 2013 at 7pm
Rossetti House, Welshmill Lane, Frome

Present:

Councillors: Toby Eliot; Pippa Goldfinger; Claire Hudson; Dickon Moore; Helen Sprawson-White.

Cara Honey (Mayor for Young People); Alex Shingler (Deputy Mayor for Young People)

In attendance:

Cllr Damon Hooton, Cllr Peter Macfadyen, Caroline Wood (Somerset Standard) Paul Wynne (Town Clerk), Jackie Wheeler (Responsible Finance Officer), Karen Clements (Town Centre Manager), Laura Poulton (Administration Officer),

4 members of the public

Minute Ref	Agenda Item	Action
2013/37/IAC	<p>1 QUESTIONS, COMMENTS AND INFORMATION FROM THE PUBLIC Cllr Eliot welcomed Cara Honey (Mayor for Young People) and Alex Shingler (Deputy Mayor for Young People) who were attending their first official FTC meeting in their new roles.</p> <p>Cllr Hooton informed Cllrs that the amended Steiner School travel plan had been sent out for consultation and an MDC Planning Board meeting will be held on 3 July.</p> <p>Cllr Hooton also noted that he had been contacted by Berry's, the local coach company, who were keen to publicise the launch of a seven day a week service to London.</p>	KC
2013/38/IAC	<p>2 ELECTION OF THE CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR Cllr Eliot opened the meeting at 7.15pm.</p> <p>Cllr Moore proposed Cllr Eliot as Chair, seconded Cllr Hudson, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>Cllr Eliot proposed Cllr Goldfinger as Deputy Chair, seconded Cllr Sprawson - White, agreed unanimously.</p>	
2013/39/IAC	<p>3 a. APOLOGIES Apologies of absence were received from Cllrs Starkie and Usher.</p>	
2013/40/IAC	<p>3 b. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS A declaration was received from Cllrs Hudson and Sprawson -</p>	

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	<p>White who have seats on MDC that their view on any items on this agenda as an FTC member were not necessarily those as their role as an MDC Cllr.</p> <p>Cllrs Hudson and Sprawson - White declared a personal interest in item 8. Cllr Sprawson - White declared a personal interest in item 13</p>	
2013/41/IAC	<p>3 c. MINUTES</p> <p>The minutes of the Internal Affairs Committee meeting held on 1 May 2013 were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.</p> <p>The Town Clerk confirmed that the two pictures and the historic deed had been donated free to Frome Museum.</p>	
2013/42/IAC	<p>4 REVIEW OF PREVIOUS ACTIONS AND WHAT IS COMING UP NEXT TIME</p> <p>The Town Clerk noted that the Grounds and Properties Manager had submitted quotes for proposed work on the Showfield to MDC for approval. The Town Clerk noted that it will remain MDC's responsibility to maintain the Showfield.</p> <p>The Responsible Finance Officer noted that the s106 money for Tickleberry Alley had been received. She and the Community Projects Officer will be meeting to discuss the next areas s106 money could be used to benefit.</p> <p>The Town Clerk explained that no further response from Adam Savery with regard to the Market Yard Car Park had been received. The Responsible Finance Officer had been reviewing the figures previously sent and noted there are still significant gaps specifically with regard to staff overheads and fines. Cllr Hudson suggested submitting a Freedom of Information request and also offered to approach Adam Savery as a District Councillor. Cllrs agreed that Cllr Hudson should email Adam Savery requesting an explanation of the figures as well as for other MDC owned car parks in Frome and request an answer within 28 days.</p> <p>It was noted that the demolition of the old factory at Garsdale had been delayed mainly due to the necessity of removing two electricity meters; that no business rates had been paid so far and the latest estimate for demolition was July 2013.</p>	Cllr Hudson
2013/43/IAC	<p>5 FOR DECISION - POSSIBLE USES OF A GRANT FROM MDC FOR £117,027</p>	

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	<p>Cllr Eliot clarified that the grant from MDC is to partially compensate for the 15% increase Frome residents paid in Council Tax. He also explained that the grant received this year may not be received in the future.</p> <p>A member of the public, David Taylor, was invited to speak. He suggested that if there were to be no constraints on how to spend the grant that FTC should explore how to assist those residents who are struggling financially. Cllr Macfadyen, as a member of the Poverty working party, was keen to explore this option further.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note that FTC has a received a grant of £117,027 from MDC related to the changes in Council Tax Benefits. 2. Note that all other town councils in Mendip District adopted the same low risk approach as FTC when setting their budget and precept amount by deciding to consider what to do with the grant if the grant was received. 3. Hold the grant in general reserve until a decision about how to use it has been made. 4. Take advice over whether it is legal to offer a refund to each household in the town. 5. Return to IAC in August with further recommendations on whether to (a) devise a refund scheme to offer households in the town, or (b) reduce the precept demand next year by £117,027 based on the certainty that it is in reserves, or (c) devise projects and plan to spend the grant this year. <p>Proposed Cllr Eliot, seconded Cllr Sprawson - White, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>Cllr Moore left the meeting at 7.40pm</p>	PWy
2013/44/IAC	<p>6 FOR DECISION - ETHICAL DECISION MAKING WORKING PARTY FINDINGS</p> <p>Cllr Eliot explained that the working party had initially looked into ethical decision making and that the matrix in the paper was the recommended approach.</p> <p>Cllr Hudson suggested that all Council staff are made aware of an ethos around ethical decision making. Cllr Sprawson - White also suggested that when new staff are employed they be informed of the Council ethos.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adopt the matrix with immediate effect 	

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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Apply the matrix to FTC bank accounts, investments, credit cards within three months and return to IAC in October with recommendations. 3. Review FTC's grant application form using the matrix as a guide and refine it if need be in time for the final round this year. This will help us to encourage local organisations to take an ethical approach. 4. Include an ethical commentary in the Annual Report for 2013/14. 5. Investigate how to promote other ethically based organisations. 6. Review of the matrix to IAC in October. <p>Proposed Cllr Goldfinger, seconded Cllr Hudson, agreed unanimously.</p>	PWy
2013/45/IAC	<p>7 FOR INFORMATION - WEBSITE UPDATE</p> <p>The Town Centre Manager explained that the internal website group had noted that there would be cross pollination between two websites; one designed for visitors to Frome and the other for residents. However, both would contain some information that would be of interest to either group.</p> <p>She explained that domain names had been explored and the recommendation was to secure frometowncouncil.gov.uk. She noted that the name of the website was not the most important thing as the majority of users find the website through a search engine.</p> <p>Cllrs agreed that the new website should be interesting, aesthetically pleasing and make information easy to find.</p> <p>A member of the public, Matt Sims, was invited to speak. He recommended that FTC do not advertise community websites as this could make the homepage cluttered and not user friendly.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Endorse the approach taken by the internal website group 2. Approach Boson and other website developers with finalised briefs for the new website development 3. Adopt the frometowncouncil.gov.uk website address <p>Proposed Cllr Eliot, seconded Cllr Goldfinger, agreed unanimously.</p>	KC
2013/46/IAC	<p>8 FOR DECISION - CHRISTMAS EXTRAVAGANZA 2013</p> <p>The Town Centre Manager noted that Sunrise were delivering the Christmas Extravaganza in 2013.</p>	

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	<p>The Town Clerk noted the Chamber of Commerce Chairman had expressed concern, on behalf of Frome traders, of the proposal to hold the Extravaganza on a Saturday as they felt this would affect their trade negatively.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree a service agreement with Sunrise Festivals to organise the Christmas Extravaganza for 2013, including sourcing additional external funding as necessary 2. Frome FM to be involved in the event via liaison with Sunrise Festivals 3. The Town Centre Manager acts as a contact point for Sunrise Festivals to provide information and receive planning and financial reports 4. This will be a one year trial to be reviewed in early 2014 <p>Proposed Cllr Goldfinger, seconded Cllr Eliot, agreed unanimously.</p>	KC
2013/47/IAC	<p>9 FOR DECISION - UPDATE ON KEEP FROME CLEAN</p> <p>The Town Centre Manager confirmed that she had been speaking with Police Inspector Mark Nicholson following the Council meeting on 22 May. He was open to the idea of the PCSO's having the power to issue fixed penalty notices to anyone who did not clean up after their dog.</p> <p>Cllr Sprawson - White noted she had been speaking to the Enforcement officer at MDC who confirmed that if FTC were able to report to them the hotspots for dog fouling then they would be able to send enforcement officers specifically to those areas.</p> <p>Cllr Hudson enquired as to whether it would be possible to have poo bags available to take at bins to encourage dog owners to use them and have a map of where the bins are on the website. The Town Centre Manager noted that this is an option she is exploring with the Dog Warden at MDC.</p> <p>Cllr Hooton noted that when the street cleaning contract is taken over by The Landscape Group we should ensure that the areas that are meant to be covered by them are. Cllr Macfadyen noted that it would be good idea to report on the FTC website a schedule of when street cleaning is meant to be carried out for their information.</p> <p>David Taylor was invited to speak. He suggested that PCSO's should carry poo bags to hand out dog walkers giving them the</p>	<p>KC</p> <p>KC</p> <p>KC</p> <p>KC</p>

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	<p>opportunity to talk to dog owners and perhaps educate them about the importance of picking up after their dog. He also enquired whether horses were allowed to roam on places like The Dippy. It was believed that they were not.</p> <p>The Mayor for Young People, Cara Honey, raised a concern that at times horses on the Showfield are not always tethered and this could be dangerous as many school children use the Showfield as a route to and from School.</p> <p>The recommendation was to note the progress to date and endorse the next steps in the campaign.</p> <p>Proposed Cllr Eliot, seconded Cllr Sprawson - White, agreed unanimously.</p>	KC
2013/48/IAC	<p>10 FOR DECISION - FROME PARTICIPATION WEEK</p> <p>The Mayor for Young People asked for the Frome Participation Week to have events that were accessible to young people in the town. This was considered a good idea and will be incorporated into the planning of the week. Cllr Macfadyen noted that in the twin town of Murrhardt they allow young people to have a week off school to enable them to help at the Summer festival.</p> <p>The recommendation was for Cllrs to endorse a series of lively and engaging participatory events across the town in the same week under the banner of 'Participation Week'.</p> <p>Proposed Cllr Eliot, seconded Cllr Hudson, agreed unanimously.</p>	SH SH
2013/49/IAC	<p>11 FOR DECISION - INVESTMENT BANKS</p> <p>The recommendation was that, on maturity, future investments be delegated to the RFO in consultation with the Chair of IAC to invest and to spread the Town Council's reserves over three or more banks/building societies offering ethical and competitive investments in line with the Ethical Decision making matrix discussed at the meeting and Financial Regulations.</p> <p>Proposed Cllr Eliot, seconded Cllr Sprawson - White, agreed unanimously.</p>	JW
2013/50/IAC	<p>12 FOR INFORMATION - FINANCIAL UPDATE AND FORECAST</p> <p>Cllrs received for information:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Payments made (over £500 in value) since last meeting. b. A breakdown of Income and Expenditure as at 30 April 2013 c. Balance sheet and reserves as at 30 April 2013 	

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	<p>Cllrs agreed that they found it very useful to have a narrative for explanation of the three financial appendices.</p> <p>The Mayor for Young People queried how much funding there was for youth projects. The Responsible Finance Officer agreed to email a detailed breakdown of how much funding there was and what had been spent.</p>	JW
2013/51/IAC	<p>13 FOR DECISION - ADOPTION OF SHOWFIELD CONSULTATION REPORT</p> <p>It was recommended that FTC adopted the Showfield Consultation report.</p> <p>Proposed Cllr Eliot, seconded Cllr Hudson, agreed unanimously.</p>	PWy
2013/52/IAC	<p>14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>Tuesday 6 Aug 2013, 7pm at the Saxonvale Centre</p> <p>Cllr Goldfinger sent her apologies in advance of the next meeting.</p>	

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.25pm