

FROME TOWN COUNCIL

making Frome a better place

The next meeting of Frome Town Council's

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Wednesday 26 June 2013 at 7pm

Frome Medical Practice, Enos Way, Frome, BA11 2FH

Members of the External Affairs Committee are:

Dave Anderson; Eve Berry; Graham Burgess; Adrian Dobinson; Tricia Golinski; Damon Hooton;
Peter Macfadyen; Mel Usher; Nick White
and
Cara Honey (Mayor for Young People); Alex Shingler (Deputy Mayor for Young People)

AGENDA

- 1 Questions, comments and information from the public
- 2 Election of the Chair and Deputy Chair
- 3 Short talks from:
 - Gill Bawler will give a short presentation on the Mendip Family Focus project that is working in Frome from the Autumn
 - Geoff Pell will give a short presentation on progress of the Missing Link Cycle route in Frome
- 4 Apologies for absence, declaration of members' interests and minutes from the last meeting on 15 May 2013
- 5 A review on previous actions and what is coming up next time
- 6 A presentation of the Neighbourhood Plan in advance of public consultation
- 7 Plans for making The Dippy a valued open space in the town
- 8 A request for FTC to support the Robin Hood Tax Campaign
- 9 Support for Frome Carnival
- 10 Progress and next steps for the Walking and Cycling working group
- 11 FTC is supporting the establishment of a renewable energy company in Frome – there will be a short update
- 12 Proposals to establish a partnership with adjoining local authority areas with a view to securing EU funding for economic development
- 13 The next meeting will be at 7pm on 4 September at Frome Library
- 14 Because the following two items are commercially sensitive, the public and press will be asked to leave
- 15 a. and b. Confidential items - Possible land acquisitions
- 16 Confidential item – Discussion on the People's Grant
- 17 Return to public session

Yours sincerely



Paul Wynne, Town Clerk
19 June 2013

Frome Town Council, 5 Palmer Street, Frome, BA11 1DS

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AGENDA

1. Questions, comments and information from the public
2. Election of the Chair and Deputy Chair
3. Short talks from:
 - a. Gill Bawler, Programme Manager at Mendip Family Focus
 - b. Geoff Pell, Frome Missing Link
4.
 - a. Any apologies for absence?
 - b. Cllrs to declare any interests on the agenda
 - c. To consider and approve the minutes of the last meeting held on 15 May 2013

Draft Minutes of a meeting of the External Affairs Committee

Wednesday 15 May 2013 at 7pm

Saxonvale Centre, Garsdale Road, Frome

Present:

Councillors: Dave Anderson; Eve Berry; Tricia Golinski; Peter Macfadyen (Chair); Dickon Moore; Helen Sprawson-White; Mel Usher;

In attendance:

Daren Cripps (Group Commander, Devon & Somerset Fire Service), Paula Fox (Harry's Hydro), Caroline Wood (Somerset Standard), Paul Wynne (Town Clerk), Peter Wheelhouse (Economic Development & Regeneration Manager), Sarah Hobbs (Community Projects Officer), Laura Poulton (Administration Officer)

5 members of the public

Minute Ref	Agenda Item	Action
2013/27/EAC	1 QUESTIONS, COMMENTS AND INFORMATION FROM THE PUBLIC None was received	
2013/28/EAC	2 SHORT TALKS FROM: a. Daren Cripps, Group Commander East Somerset, Devon & Somerset Fire Service Following the recent public consultation Daren stressed that there would be no changes for the Frome crew of 12-13 on call duty staff for the next two years. Cllr Moore asked how may fire fighters are retained in Frome.	

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	<p>Daren informed him that there is up to twenty people on call however the maximum required at any one incident is ten.</p> <p>The EDRM enquired whether Devon & Somerset Fire Service ever call on Wiltshire Fire Service. Daren explained that there are cross border agreements between Fire Services which come into effect depending on where the incident is located.</p> <p>Cllr Usher enquired how much the day to day work of the Fire Service had changed and whether they were feeling the effects of climate change. Daren acknowledged that a lot of work now is put into prevention and education through advocates who are Fire Fighters and are also employed to implement prevention education. They also attend more car crashes. With regard to climate change he explained they have a duty to rescue and have specialist equipment such as boats but there is no legislation to help with events such as flooding.</p> <p>Cllr Anderson enquired that if in the future more cuts are expected would Frome be safe from closure. Daren explained he could not be certain however would always anticipate an appliance being in Frome.</p> <p>The Town Clerk informed Daren of FTC's work with other public sector bodies such as the police in Frome who are reviewing public assets in the town and asked if he thought Devon & Somerset Fire Service would like be involved. Daren indicated this would be something the fire service would be interested in becoming apart of and requested to be contacted with further details.</p> <p>b. Paula Fox, Harry's Hydro Paula is the Chair of the trustees for Harry's Hydro which is a hydrotherapy pool in Frome and opened in November 2012. Paula explained that the model used for Harry's Hydro is becoming nationally recognised with awards and a visit from Jeremy Hunt MP who was very interested to learn that the Harry's Hydro model could be used to save money to build hydrotherapy pools in hospitals.</p> <p>There are just under three hundred people using the pool meaning they are at 85% capacity. Since opening four people have walked for the first time in their lives.</p> <p>Cllr Moore asked does the core funding for Harry's Hydro come from the users of the pool. Paula confirmed that this was the case and the only gap in funding comes from Critchill School where they</p>	PWy
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	<p>lack the funding for a second year. However FTC has pledged funding to fill this gap if the money cannot be raised by Critchill and users.</p> <p>Cllr Golinski enquired as to whether they had scope to take on more users. Paula noted that they always prioritise the key user but was very keen to promote to further individuals and organisations.</p> <p>Cllr Usher asked Paula if they had any plans to use sustainable energy. Paula informed Cllr Usher that they currently do not use sustainable energy however the building was designed to incorporate this and was something they were hoping to incorporate in the near future.</p> <p>Cllr Anderson enquired how many weeks of the year Harry's Hydro operates. Paula noted that this was fifty weeks of the year; two weeks are deliberately left free for maintenance work.</p> <p>The Chair was keen for Paula, the Town Clerk, CPO and himself to arrange a meeting to discuss Harry's Hydro current costs and funding.</p>	SH
2013/29/EAC	<p>3 a. APOLOGIES</p> <p>The Chairman formally opened the Council meeting at 7.42pm and apologies of absence were received from Cllr Burgess.</p>	
2013/30/EAC	<p>3 b. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS</p> <p>A declaration was received from Cllr Sprawson - White who has a seat on MDC that her view on any items on this agenda as an FTC member were not necessarily those as her role as an MDC Cllr. Cllrs Berry, Macfadyen, Moore and Sprawson - White declared a personal interest in Item 5. Cllr Moore also declared a prejudicial interest in item 5.</p>	
2013/31/EAC	<p>3 c. MINUTES</p> <p>The minutes of the External Affairs Committee meeting held on 20 March 2013 were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.</p> <p>The Chair informed Cllrs that a positive meeting to discuss poverty issues in and around Frome had been held on 13 May. In addition the Loop de Loop project would now move forward as the required money had been raised.</p>	

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<p>2013/32/EAC</p>	<p>4 REVIEW OF PREVIOUS ACTIONS AND WHAT IS COMING UP NEXT TIME Cllr Sprawson - White enquired as to the expected completion date of the Frome App. The Economic Development and Regeneration Manager informed Cllrs that the developers were now working on an iPhone version. The app will be available via the web and a QR code. FTC was currently in talks with MDC to secure signage locations to display the QR codes. The app will be tested in May to be up and running in June.</p>	
<p>2013/33/EAC</p>	<p>5 FOR DECISION – AWARD OF COMMUNITY GRANTS Cllr Macfadyen explained to Cllrs that the grant application and decision making process had been simplified for 2013 and encouraged anyone who was interested to become involved. Cllr Usher suggested that the Town Clerk formally ask all Cllrs if they would like to become a part of the advisory board. Cllr Anderson queried the amount awarded to the Frome Collegians. It was noted that this was an error on the table and should read £250 rather than £300. Proposed Cllr Sprawson - White, seconded Cllr Anderson, agreed unanimously.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">PWy</p>
<p>2013/34/EAC</p>	<p>6 FOR INFORMATION – PRIORITIES OF COMMUNITY PROJECTS OFFICER FOR 2013/14 Sarah Hobbs, Community Projects Officer, presented an overview of her work plan which was agreed at the start of her employment. She explained that her plan can be broken down into three main categories: 1. Supporting the work of FTC with communities 2. Supporting Community Development 3. Engaging Communities & implementing the Open Spaces Strategy Cllr Sprawson - White suggested implementing a previous initiative known as letter boxing alongside the riverside walk. The CPO agreed to meet with Cllr Spawson - White to discuss the initiative. Cllr Usher asked the CPO if she was identifying voluntary/community groups in Frome. The CPO informed Cllr Usher that she is working with Jenny Hartnoll who is based at the Frome Medical Practice to build a database of these groups with information about the organisation and their contact details.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">SH</p>

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<p>2013/35/EAC</p>	<p>7 FOR DECISION - DEVELOPMENTS TO HELP INCREASE RENEWABLE ENERGY IN FROME Cllr Macfadyen introduced the report to Cllrs.</p> <p>Cllr Golinski enquired as to how much the development fee would be. Cllr Macfadyen informed her this would be 2% which would be paid on completion of the project.</p> <p>Cllr Anderson queried that if FEC members could decide on their own dividends how could it be ensured the community still benefits. Cllr Macfadyen assured him that an agreement based on percentage would be made at the beginning of a project.</p> <p>Cllr Moore noted that he would be meeting with Gavin Ball, head teacher at Frome Community College, who would be keen on a project such as this. He suggested involving Frome Community College and contacting other schools in Frome.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support the principle of the above arrangements 2. Invite BWCE to talks with Peter Wheelhouse, Peter Macfadyen (as Chair of EAC) and Tim Cutting (as chair of Sustainable Frome Energy Group) at the earliest opportunity to agree how to proceed from the Council's point of view. As part of the discussions we will identify whether there are any significant barriers to entry for the individual investors and how these barriers may be overcome. 3. Offer BWCE £500, matching the same sum to be invested by Sustainable Frome, in return for shares in the energy production at an appropriate point. <p>Proposed Cllr Anderson, seconded Cllr Moore, agreed unanimously.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">PWh</p>
<p>2013/36/EAC</p>	<p>8 FOR INFORMATION – UPDATE ON THE WORK OF THE FUNDRAISER AND NEXT STEPS The report was received and progress noted.</p>	
<p>2013/37/EAC</p>	<p>9 FOR DECISION – NEXT STEPS FOLLOWING THE TOWN CENTRE BENCHMARKING EXERCISE Cllr Usher noted two figures out of the benchmarking report that he felt were the most significant; only 6% thought Frome was clean and 50% said that car parking in Frome would put them off visiting. He pointed out that these two areas, street cleansing and car parking, were responsibilities of MDC.</p> <p>Cllr Sprawson - White informed Cllrs that when the car parking</p>	

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	<p>charges were raised a petition of three hundred signatures were presented to the Chief Executive however the Leader dismissed them.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Repeat benchmarking on an annual basis in order to help the Town Council and its partners monitor future performance of the town centre 2. Share the report with the next round of Town Team and Retail Group meetings for their consideration and comment 3. Work with Frome Chamber of Commerce with a view to agreeing a joint position on car parking in the town ahead of Mendip District Council's review of car parking policies later this year 4. Include messages that reflect the strengths and opportunities highlighted in the report in planned promotion of the town 5. Focus on addressing the perceived weaknesses and threats in the Council's emerging Sustainable Development Plan and Neighbourhood Plan 6. Adopt a target of beating the regional average (18%) in terms of the percentage of town centre users rating Frome's cleanliness as very good in the next survey later this year 7. The Town Clerk writes to MDC to highlight the figures in the report and invite them to visit Frome. <p>Proposed Cllr Golinski, seconded Cllr Moore, agreed by majority.</p>	PWy
2013/38/EAC	<p>10 FOR INFORMATION – UPDATE ON THE PROGRESS OF THE FROME'S NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN</p> <p>The EDRM informed Cllrs that the intention is bring a draft of the Frome Neighbourhood Plan for Cllrs to review at the end of June. After which it will go out for public consultation.</p>	
2013/39/EAC	<p>11 FOR DECISION – UPDATE ON THE PROGRESS OF THE FROME SUPER MARKET AND NEXT STEPS</p> <p>The recommendations were to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Endorse Frome Town Council's appointment as a corporate member of Frome Super Market Limited 2. Endorse Councillor Nick White's nomination as Director to serve on the Frome Super Market Committee <p>Proposed Cllr Sprawson - White, seconded Cllr Anderson, agreed by majority</p>	PWh
2013/40/EAC	<p>12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>Wednesday 26 June at 7pm at Frome Medical Practice</p>	
<p>The Chair closed the meeting at 8.55pm</p>		

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5 A review on previous actions and what is coming up next time

SUMMARY OF RESOLUTION	MINUTE NO.	CMTEE	MEETING DATE	RESPONSIBILITY	PROGRESS REPORT	Target Date
Sports Working Party	2012/81	EAC	21/11/12	Eve Berry/Helen Starkie/Sarah Hobbs	CPO and Frome Medical Practice are organising a get together of sports groups. Also speaking with SCC to discuss the need for a new leisure centre	
Carbon audit plus other energy and recycling items from Sust Frome	2012/79	EAC	21/11/12	Sarah Hobbs	On agenda	26/06/2013
Community Fair update		EAC		Sarah Hobbs	Sarah Hobbs to contact Community Groups to design and deliver a Community Fair in November	01/11/2013
Arrange a meeting with Harry's Hydro	2013/28	EAC	15/05/2013	Sarah Hobbs	Laura arranging	tbc
Invite Clls to become apart of the Grants Advisory Board	2013/31	EAC	15/05/2013	Paul Wynne	Cllrs invited, verbal update to be given.	26/06/2013
Children's trail for riverside walk	2013/32	EAC	15/05/2013	Sarah Hobbs	Sarah Hobbs to discuss with Cllr Sprawson - White	
Renewable energy	2013/33	EAC	15/05/2013	Peter Wheelhouse	On agenda	26/06/2013
Town Centre Benchmarking. Town Clerk to write to MDC	2013/35	EAC	15/05/2013	Karen Clements/Paul Wynne		05/07/2013
River Corridor Project and Town Centre remodelling		EAC		Sarah Hobbs/Peter Wheelhouse		
Community Tree Planting Scheme		EAC		Sarah Hobbs	Proposals to be tabled at EAC meeting in September	04/09/2013
Poverty update		EAC		Sarah Hobbs	Proposals to be tabled at EAC meeting in September	04/09/2013
Cheese & Grain project		EAC		Peter Wheelhouse		
Town Team update		EAC		Karen Clements		04/09/2013
Discuss Work Programme and Budget		EAC		Jackie Wheeler		23/10/2013
Finalise Work Programme and Budget		EAC		Jackie Wheeler		18/12/2013

Key

- overdue
- on going (on schedule)
- behind schedule
- Action required
- Upcoming item
- Presentations planned

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6 For Decision – To approve the next steps in the Neighbourhood Plan

Author: Economic Development & Regeneration Manager

Councillor Graham Burgess, Chair of the Planning Sub-Committee and Peter Wheelhouse will make a presentation on the Frome Neighbourhood Plan and the next steps in the adoption process.

The presentation will highlight the key objectives that the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has developed which reflect important community objectives and the specific policies in terms of land use and development that are proposed.

The policies in the Neighbourhood Plan cover the following themes:

- Improving Frome Town Centre
- Employment & Enterprise
- Housing
- Transport & Movement
- Open Space
- Design

The next step in the process will be for FTC to consult on the current draft of the Plan. Thereafter, final adjustments will be made to the draft. This will then be submitted to Council for approval prior to it being sent to MDC for further statutory public consultation and a referendum. It is expected that the Plan will become a statutory document by spring of next year.

Recommendation

Agree to consult the public on the draft Neighbourhood Plan.

7 For Decision - The Dippy as an open space in the town

Author: Community Projects Officer

Summary

The Dippy is one of the sites that is being transferred to FTC from MDC. Although this has not happened yet, there is a burgeoning community interest in the site. This paper informs Cllrs of the work I have been doing so far with the community and the work, as part of the Community Warden Scheme, that the Outside Services Team has carried out with volunteers to cut back some of the vegetation alongside the public footpath that runs through the site.

Background

The Open Spaces Strategy identifies the Dippy as a high priority site to acquire in order to work with the community to create an open space in the town that we can be proud of. It could be greatly improved by working with local communities to create a much safer, more enjoyable space for people to use while enhancing the

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area for wildlife and as a biodiversity corridor. At present it is largely neglected and tending towards dereliction.

Thankfully, MDC has agreed to transfer the site to FTC and FTC agreed to accept it in May. The legal transfer is on-going. The job is now to understand what the community wants from the site and to support them to deliver it. The Mount Community Association (MCA) is one local community group which has expressed an interest in working on improvements to The Dippy. Although it has dissolved itself, it will be reforming as a larger group covering a larger geographical area and it is expected that a group of local people will be established under the umbrella of the wider organisation and gets more heavily involved in progression of plans on the site.

Progress

The MCA have identified that an extensive consultation on improving The Dippy was conducted a number of years ago. They are also aware that local people worked with MDC about 10 years ago and planted a significant number of trees. This is important information that should be built upon when starting new conversations about the area.

I plan to work closely with the new group in order to involve the wider communities in developing plans for this area with the overarching aim to make this a pleasant community space which is valued and cared for primarily by local people.

While the community engagement is gathering pace, a key concern of the site is the concrete channel that runs through the centre of The Dippy. As well as being unsightly and not beneficial to wildlife, this is acknowledged to be unsafe as it has steep concrete sides. Removing or improving the channel is likely to be a big project so it is important to ascertain the feasibility of this work before starting to make other plans.

In order to assess this feasibility, Sue Everett of the MCA and I met with a River Consultant to discuss the channel and the options for removing the concrete and making the channel safe. The consultant is working on a brief report as a result of that meeting.

Next Steps

The OS team plan to continue to support local people in looking after the site and retaining public access.

I will work with the newly formed group to develop a plan for the future of the site. I will work with the Sue Everett to find ways of reducing the impact of, or removing, the concrete channel.

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Recommendations

1. Note progress on The Dippy to date
2. Endorse the next steps

8 For Decision - Council's Support for the Robin Hood Tax ('Financial Transaction Tax') Author: Cllr Peter Macfadyen

Introduction

The idea behind the Robin Hood Tax is to generate billions of pounds – hopefully even hundreds of billions of pounds from fairer taxation of the financial sector. That money will fight poverty in the UK and overseas. A tiny tax on the financial sector can generate £20 billion annually in the UK alone.

Early this year 11 European countries agreed a 0.01%-0.1% tax on shares, bonds and derivatives that will raise an estimated £30bn each year from 2014. Britain is not one of those countries - based primarily on the assertion that a large number of businesses would desert the UK if taxed in this way.

Local Councils have been hit with 28% cuts since 2010. To give an idea of the sums involved - around 10,000 teachers, 6,800 police officers and nearly 6,000 nurses have lost their jobs. A Robin Hood Tax would raise enough money to re-instate all these within 3 weeks.

The Robin Hood Tax Campaign (run and supported by charities, green groups, trade unions, celebrities, financiers, religious leaders and politicians (including President Hollande of France and Chancellor Merkel of Germany) is engaged in more than 25 countries campaigning to bring in an international 'Financial Transaction Tax'.

They have asked that local Councils in the UK pass a motion in support of the introduction of a Financial Transaction Tax. Over 2,500 Councils have already done this, adding to the pressure on National Government to levy a tax on the speculative activities that have accelerated the recent enrichment of the few to the detriment of the many.

Recommendation

1. This council calls upon Government to enact the FTT and use the revenues from this measure to reverse on-going shrinkage in central grants to local Councils.
2. This Council write to Mendip District Council and Somerset County Council asking them to note our support for the FTT and for them, in turn, to register their support with national government.

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9 For Decision – Support for Frome Carnival

Author: Economic Development & Regeneration Manager

Summary

The purpose of this report is to secure endorsement for making a £2, 000 contribution to Frome Carnival as part of the Town Council's commitment to supporting Town Events. This is to enable development of the Carnival so that it has greater economic stability and community impact in the future.

Background

The Frome Carnival has been running for over 80 years and is the largest one-off event in Frome's calendar attracting over 20,000 people as audience for the evening procession and hundreds of local people as participants and audience for the afternoon children's procession. As well as this, the Carnival puts on a number of popular and enjoyable events during the year, such as the Fun Day in Victoria Park, which also raise money for charity.

The challenge is to develop a Carnival which is more relevant to the life and times of Frome. It should involve local people on many levels and provide greater social, cultural and economic benefits to the town at a time when costs are rising and therefore much of the Carnival Committee's time is taken up with fundraising. Frome Carnival Committee would like to work in partnership with Frome Town Council to help develop the Carnival.

Priorities for the Carnival

The priorities for the Carnival now are:

1. To develop the Carnival into an even more exciting and entertaining celebration which brings local people together and attracts people from beyond Frome as spectators.
2. To bring the town centre to life on Carnival day with street performances during the morning and afternoon (11am-2pm) followed by the children's procession, centering on Victoria Park, and culminating in the evening illuminated procession through the town.
3. To involve more local people as participants in the Carnival so that it has a real Frome feel to it. This would be done through a campaign to encourage local entries and by arranging workshops in schools and in the community. Frome people would benefit by learning skills, developing their creativity and meeting people in a friendly environment.
4. To make stronger connections with the creative community of Frome for development of the artistic side of Frome Carnival.
5. To develop further a sense of pride in, and ownership of the Carnival by the people of Frome. To find out what people of Frome want from their Carnival and how they would like to see it develop.

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6. To become sustainable as an organisation by attracting more volunteers, by establishing secure, regular funding and by reducing the number of fundraising events put on during the year so that more time can be spent on developing the Carnival.

The Carnival Committee has already begun to work towards realising these priorities through; consultation with the local community, promotion of greater volunteering, the exploration of other models e.g. Devizes Carnival, involving Frome Community College, investigation into external funding sources through Green Strand and investigation into street performance acts.

Proposal

It is proposed that Frome Town Council makes a financial contribution of £2,000 to be used to enable the Carnival to develop further.

The funding would be used to:

- bring street performances to Carnival day to create an exciting atmosphere in the town
- run workshops at Frome Community College to enable students to become more involved with the Carnival
- bring more music acts especially marching bands to the Carnival to create a greater spectacle (these would not be entered into any judging process)

In addition, to help the Carnival on to a financially sound footing and, to this end, FTC will support it in attracting more commercial sponsorship.

The impact of this contribution would be reviewed and, subject to the outcome of this review, the Town Council could consider entering into a longer term service agreement to support the development of the Frome Carnival.

Recommendations

1. Endorse a contribution to Frome Carnival of £2,000 in 2013/14 from the Town Events budget to be used for bringing street performances and music acts to the Carnival which are not part of the judged entries and running workshops at Frome Community College to enable students to become involved
2. Endorse a review of the impact of this contribution with a view to entering into a longer term service agreement
3. Support the Carnival on to a financially sound footing

10 For Information - Progress of the Walking and Cycling working group

Author: Community Projects Officer

Background

The External Affairs Committee meeting on the 23 January 2013 agreed to the establishment of a working party with the following terms of reference:

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1. Audit and collate existing data on routes
2. Identify gaps and hurdles (legal, engineering etc.) in routes and plan how to remove these
3. Identify routes that should be promoted and agree how best to do this (could be part of the Frome App, web based, paper based, on site etc.) and to fund it
4. Incorporate the proposals of the River Corridor Strategy
5. Produce a costed work programme to implement the findings

The first meeting of the working party took place on Friday 24 May 2013.

Progress

The meeting was well attended, with representatives from the following organisations:

- Frome Town Council (Cllr Golinski and myself)
- The Missing Link
- Frome Recreation and Open Ground Supporters (FROGS)
- Rights of Way
- Public Footpaths
- The Ramblers
- Health Walks
- Friends of the River Frome

It was agreed to meet a further three times at approximately six week intervals.

The main actions and next steps decided by the group were:

- To communicate with Frome schools and the SCC Cycling Officer about involvement in this work
- To digitise the data on Veryan Conn's hand-drawn map of walking routes across Frome to bring to the next meeting
- To collate the other known information on walking and cycling routes onto the same map to bring to the next meeting
- To consider how to fill important gaps in access routes throughout the town to list and prioritise at the next meeting
- To set up the next meeting in six weeks' time

Recommendation

1. Note the progress made to date
2. Endorse the next steps of the working group outlined in the section above.

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11 For Decision - To support the establishment of BWCE and Frome Energy Hub

Author: Economic Development & Regeneration Manager

Summary

The purpose of this report is to secure endorsement for Frome Town Council's instruction to Bath & West Community Energy to set up a new Frome Energy Company in the form of a Benefit Society that will have responsibility for identifying and investing in renewable energy installations in Frome. The report also seeks endorsement for developing an Energy Hub – an online resource that brings together data on the use of energy in the town and the potential for renewable energy generation.

Background

At the last meeting of the Committee, members supported the principle of setting up a community energy company in the form of a benefit society – a mutual society run for the benefit of the community. Members also agreed to invite Bath & West Community Energy (BWCE) to talks with the Chairman of the Committee, Economic Development & Regeneration Manager and Tim Cutting as Chair of the Sustainable Frome Energy Group to agree how to proceed from the Council's point of view. Subject to the outcome of these talks, members indicated that they were prepared to see the investment of £500 to match the same sum offered by Sustainable Frome payable to BWCE to set up the new Benefit Society. This grant would later be converted to shares at the first fund raise.

Update

The meeting was held on 7 June. The key outcomes were:

- BWCE have now been instructed to set up the Benefit Society and it is expected that this will be in place by the end of the summer; the Town Council and Sustainable Frome will each pay £500 to enable this work to be completed and will be founder corporate members
- It is envisaged that any surpluses (over and above installation and operational costs and share interest) would go into a Community Fund – to be set up as a separate entity.
- Once the Benefit Society is in place, a service agreement (between the Benefit Society and BWCE) will be prepared specifying work BWCE would undertake in terms of administration (similar to a company secretary role), investigation of installation opportunities, installation and in due course operations and maintenance services.

Energy Hub

In the meantime, it is essential that work is undertaken to understand current energy use in Frome against which the progress of the Benefit Society in generating renewable energy can be judged. It is also important that there is an assessment of the potential resources available for renewable energy production and the development of an action plan that will provide a basis for early investigations by BWCE.

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This requires some desk top work to bring data on local energy use together and discussions with local stakeholders to identify potential renewable energy generation opportunities. The outcomes from this work would be a report on the potential for renewable energy generation in Frome and an Energy Hub – an online resource that can be used to share data and ideas on renewable energy generation with the community. The Converging World, an organisation that has expertise in this field and a unique product to offer, has been instructed to complete this work by mid-July at a cost of £2,500. The FTC sustainability budget has been used for this purpose.

Recommendations

1. Endorse the instruction to BWCE to set up a new Benefit Society with responsibility for identifying and investing in renewable energy installations
2. Endorse work by The Converging World to prepare a report on potential renewable energy resources and establish an online Energy Hub at a cost of £2,500

12 For Decision – Support for involvement in proposed ‘Heart of Wessex’ local action group

Author: Economic Development & Regeneration Manager

Summary

The purpose of this report is to secure agreement to the principle of the Town Council’s involvement in the proposed ‘Heart of Wessex’ Local Action Group with a view to securing EU funding for projects that improve the economic wellbeing of the area.

Background

Partners are working together to develop a Local Action Group (LAG) situated in the ‘Heart of Wessex.’ The purpose of this partnership is to secure European Union LEADER funding through the 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme for England. The ‘Heart of Wessex’ area is intended to cover Mendip, South Somerset and the Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The choice of this geographical area is based on the connections between the communities both economically and socially and the fact that the areas share similar natural environments.

There is an existing LAG which covers part of this area. Known as Sowing SEEDS LAG, the partnership covers North Dorset and the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire AONB. Partners in this area were allocated a budget of £1.944 million to improve the economic wellbeing of the area with funding available until the end of 2013. £1.5 million was actually drawn down. Further information is available from <http://sowing-seeds.org.uk/>

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Frome Town Council is being invited to join the new Heart of Wessex LAG in recognition of the fact that Frome serves a broad rural hinterland and that the Town Council is active in supporting the local economy. The following organisations are also likely to be involved in the partnership:

- The Balsam Centre (a healthy living and children's centre in Wincanton)
- South Somerset District Council
- Mendip District Council
- Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Wiltshire Council
- Warminster Villages Development Trust

Benefits of joining

Examples of projects that have benefitted from the activities of the Sowing SEEDS LAG include business advice and mentoring schemes, tourism initiatives, renewable energy generation and markets. Individual grants have varied from a few thousand pounds to over £100,000 in individual cases. Grants have tended to be equivalent to between 40% and 75% of total costs. This hopefully provides a flavour of the nature and scale of projects that have benefitted and demonstrates how useful the Heart of Wessex LAG could be in supporting economic development in Frome.

By joining the Heart of Wessex LAG, the Town Council would be able to influence the setting of future priorities for the LAG.

A contribution towards approximately 50% of the costs of core staff and community consultation/promotional activity in 2014 is required from partners. The other 50% would be met by the Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (Defra). The contribution that Frome Town Council would be required to make is subject to further negotiation but it seems reasonable that the largest proportion of the partners' contribution would be met by other much larger authorities in the partnership.

Next steps

An application is being prepared by the Programme Manager of the Sowing SEEDS LAG on behalf of the above partners for transitional funding from Defra. Such funding would enable the preparation of a Local Development Strategy and local consultation to inform priority setting for the new programme. Frome Town Council is being invited to provide a letter of support for this application.

Recommendations

1. Support the application for transitional funding for the Heart of Wessex LAG
2. That authority is delegated to the Economic Development & Regeneration Manager in consultation with the Chair of External Affairs, to negotiate a contribution towards the core costs of the LAG in 2014 up to a maximum of £2,000. Given these costs are likely to be based on research and consultation it is proposed to allocate them to the Economic and Community Research budget.

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- 13** The next meeting will be at 7pm on 4 September at Frome Library
- 14** Because the next two items on the agenda are commercially sensitive the public and the press are asked to leave.
- 15** a. and b. Confidential items - Possible land acquisitions
- 16** Confidential item – Discussion on the People's Grant
- 17** Return to public session