

# FROME TOWN COUNCIL

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## Minutes of a meeting of the Internal Affairs Committee

Tuesday 4 February at 7pm  
Frome Town Council, 5 Palmer Street, Frome. BA11 1DS

**Present:**

Councillors: Toby Eliot (Chair); Claire Hudson; Peter Macfadyen; Mel Usher  
Cara Honey (Mayor for Young People)

**In attendance:**

Cllr Damon Hooton, Paul Wynne (Town Clerk), Jackie Wheeler (Responsible Finance Officer),  
Simon Woollen (Grounds & Properties Manager), Laura Poulton (Administration Officer)

Minute Ref	Agenda Item	Action
<b>2014/1/IAC</b>	<p><b>1 QUESTIONS, COMMENTS AND INFORMATION FROM THE PUBLIC</b></p> <p>Cllr Damon Hooton informed Cllrs that the Scrutiny Board at MDC had recently met to look at the Groundcare contract with the Landscape Group. They had noted that on the whole the contract was running well but accepted there were a few issues. The Landscape Group was intending to have a dedicated telephone number by the end of April and also have an online service by the end of the year. They would also be employing regional Managing Directors.</p> <p>Cllr Claire Hudson suggested that FTC invite the Landscape Group back to an upcoming Council meeting to address some of the issues that have been experienced in Frome.</p>	<b>PWy</b>
<b>2014/2/IAC</b>	<p><b>2 a. APOLOGIES</b></p> <p>The Chairman formally opened the Council meeting at 7.15pm and apologies of absence were received from Cllrs Goldfinger, Moore, Sprawson – White and Alex Shingler.</p>	
<b>2014/3/IAC</b>	<p><b>2 b. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS</b></p> <p>A declaration was received from Cllr Hudson 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.</p>	
<b>2014/4/IAC</b>	<p><b>2 c. MINUTES</b></p> <p>The minutes of the Internal Affairs Committee meeting held on 3 December 2013 were amended to include Cllr Hudson's apologies and then approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.</p>	
<b>2014/5/IAC</b>	<b>10 FOR INFORMATION - HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE FOR OUTSIDE SERVICES</b>	

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	<p>This was brought forward to item 3.</p> <p>The Grounds &amp; Properties Manager explained that an external company had completed an audit of the health and safety procedures for Outside Services. The GPM noted that the audit had proved invaluable and made the team much more efficient and confident. A similar audit will also be completed for the FTC offices in Palmer Street. He also noted that he is looking into completing a certificate in safety management.</p> <p>Cllr Hudson asked if FTC had a process to encourage other members of staff to complete qualifications. The Town Clerk explained that he encourages any member of staff to complete a course or qualification if it will benefit them in their current role.</p>	<b>SW</b>
<b>2014/6/IAC</b>	<p><b>3 A QUICK REVIEW OF PREVIOUS ACTIONS AND WHAT IS COMING UP NEXT TIME</b></p> <p>The Town Clerk noted that the development of the two new websites, one tourism and business focused and one community focused, was going well. The Economic Development &amp; Regeneration Manager and Community Projects Officer were working alongside Kate Hellard to establish a community database that would be a part of the new website. Cllr Usher asked that a deadline for the completion of the websites be finalised.</p> <p>Cllr Eliot suggested that as there had been no progress with re-establishing the One Frome project with MDC that the action is removed from the table.</p> <p>Cllr Hudson requested that the Park ward Cllrs were kept informed about the Victoria Park/Mary Baily Playing Field Strategy. Cara Honey, Mayor for Young People, also requested this as the area is an important space for young people in the town.</p> <p>Cllr Hudson suggested that to make progress with taking over the running of MDC car parks FTC could write to the Secretary of State. The Town Clerk asked Cllr Hudson to assist drafting a letter from the Leader of the Council stating FTC's intentions.</p> <p>Cara Honey asked about the progress of the job description for the youth support worker. The Town Clerk explained that he and the Community Projects Officer are intending to approach established youth service organisations and employ their expertise to implement the recommendation from the Youth Services research project. Cllr Eliot asked that the decision over which organisation to employ is brought back to EAC.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PWh</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>RK</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>PWy</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>TH</b></p>

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	<p>The Town Clerk noted that the dog control orders had been delayed due to restructuring within the police force. The Grounds &amp; Properties Manager and Outside Services Administration Officer were continuing to move this forward and the police were still keen to have the orders in place.</p> <p>The Responsible Finance Officer noted that the Mendip Credit Union would like to gain some PR after FTC made an investment with them. There were no objections to this from the Cllrs.</p>	
<b>2014/7/IAC</b>	<p><b>4 FOR INFORMATION - INTERNAL AUDITORS REPORT</b></p> <p>Cllr Hudson requested that the letter is amended to reflect that the report was taken to an IAC meeting not Council as mentioned in the letter from the Internal Auditors in order to avoid confusion.</p> <p>The Responsible Finance Officer noted that the auditors were due to come back that week and she would get the amendment done then.</p>	<b>JW</b>
<b>2014/8/IAC</b>	<p><b>5 FOR INFORMATION - EXTERNAL AUDITORS REPORT</b></p> <p>The Responsible Finance Officer informed Cllrs that the recommendation from the External Auditors report was to produce an internal controls document. She noted that Outside Services and the Information Centre had almost completed theirs and one for the Palmer Street Office was currently being prepared.</p> <p>Cllrs congratulated the Responsible Finance Officer and Town Clerk for such an outstanding report.</p> <p>Cllr Hudson suggested the RFO introduce a connected parties form whereby any contractors employed by FTC disclose whether they have any connection with an FTC Officer or Cllr to ensure transparency. Cllrs agreed this would be a useful practice.</p>	<b>JW</b>  <b>JW</b>
<b>2014/9/IAC</b>	<p><b>6 FOR DECISION – REVIEW OF RISK REGISTER</b></p> <p>It was agreed that the associated risk for the FTC website should be described as reputational rather than technical.</p> <p>Cllrs reviewed the risk register and asked the Chair and Clerk to sign it as a true record of current risks on their behalf.</p> <p>Proposed Cllr Usher, seconded Cllr Macfadyen, agreed unanimously.</p>	<b>JW</b>
<b>2014/10/IAC</b>	<p><b>7 FOR DECISION – FINANCE UPDATE INCLUDING CURRENT FORECAST FOR THE END OF MARCH</b></p>	

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	<p>With regard to the payments equal to or exceeding £500 Cllr Hudson asked on behalf of Cllr Hooton, if there had been any success with the employment of Green Strand. The Town Clerk noted Green Strand had given a detailed report at the last EAC meeting which he will email to Cllr Hooton.</p> <p>Cllr Hudson noted that the cheque to Green Strand appears twice making it appear FTC have paid them twice rather than the original cheque had been lost and had to be reissued. The Responsible Finance Officer noted the Internal Auditors had been made aware of this issue and that it had been followed through with them.</p> <p>Cllr Usher enquired as to how the Responsible Finance Officer was getting on with challenging MDC over the charge for the use of the Market Yard car park on the night of the Christmas Extravaganza. The Responsible Finance Officer noted it was still under dispute and despite offering a reasonable payment of £750, which was the average income for a Friday, MDC had refused.</p> <p>Cllr Hudson queried if the ear marked reserve was going to be enough for the elections in 2015. The Town Clerk explained that the current figure was based on costs from previous years and there was still another £5,000 to be added.</p> <p>The Responsible Finance Officer updated Cllrs on her progress with securing previously unpaid \$106 money. The RFO explained that there was a \$106 agreement in place for Mendip Lodge Hotel however FTC had been told that as MDC had failed to follow it up the money was no longer available. After persistence over a number of months £38,000 had been secured.</p> <p>The recommendation was to note the Council's main areas of income and expenditure, the third quarter year end forecast, the update on main \$106 budgets and the status of FTC investments.</p> <p>Proposed Cllr Usher, seconded Cllr Macfadyen, agreed unanimously.</p>	<b>PWy</b>
<p><b>2014/11/IAC</b></p>	<p><b>8 FOR DECISION - STAFF HANDBOOK UPDATE ON FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY</b></p> <p>The Town Clerk explained that the need for the policy arose after two members of staff requested compressed hours. The flexible working policy was based on advice received from South West Employers. He asked Cllrs to agree to the document with the amendment to paragraph five to say the Town Clerk will make the decision instead of the Internal Affairs Committee. In addition an</p>	

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	<p>amendment to paragraph six to say the Internal Affairs Committee will determine a right of appeal rather than the Council.</p> <p>The recommendation was the flexible working policy is adopted as part of the Staff Handbook.</p> <p>Proposed Cllr Eliot, seconded Cllr Hudson, agreed unanimously.</p>	<b>PWy</b>
<b>2014/12/IAC</b>	<p><b>9 FOR DECISION – TO APPROVE JOB DESCRIPTION FOR THE PLANNING &amp; REGENERATION APPRENTICE</b></p> <p>Cllr Hudson queried as to why the salary was so low. The Responsible Finance Officer explained that it works out to be £4 an hour and is for a four day week as the fifth day is spent at College. It also followed government salary guidelines for apprentices. All other expenses such as course fees, books and travel are covered by FTC. Cllr Eliot asked if the job advertisement could state the pay range.</p> <p>Cllr Hudson suggested that FTC could explore the possibility of employing paid interns for specific projects.</p> <p>The recommendation was to approve the job description and person specification for the Planning &amp; Regeneration Apprentice and delegate recruitment to the Town Clerk.</p> <p>Proposed Cllr Usher, seconded Cllr Hudson, agreed unanimously.</p>	<p><b>PWh</b></p> <p><b>PWy</b></p>
<b>2014/13/IAC</b>	<p><b>11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b></p> <p>The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 9 April, Palmer Street Office (<i>later changed to Saxonvale Centre</i>)</p> <p>Cllr Hudson gave her apologies in advance.</p>	

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.47pm