

FROME TOWN COUNCIL

making Frome a better place

Minutes of a meeting of Frome Town Council

Wednesday 6 Nov at 7pm
The Merlin Theatre, Bath Road, Frome. BA11 2HG

Present:

Councillors: Dave Anderson; Eve Berry; Graham Burgess; Adrian Dobinson; Toby Eliot; Pippa Goldfinger; Tricia Golinski; Damon Hooton; Peter Macfadyen; Dickon Moore; Helen Starkie; Mel Usher
Cara Honey (Mayor for Young People); Alex Shingler (Deputy Mayor for Young People)

In attendance:

Damian Wood (Frontier Estates), Nick Jones (GL Hearn), Ivor Phillips (Broadway Malyan), Alban Henderson (GL Hearn), Alexa Woodward (Broadway Malyan), Robert Spriggs (Callidus), Frome FM, Nigel Harris (Chamber of Commerce), Ric Swann (Civic Society), Elizabeth John (Frome For All), Damon Moore (Silk Mill), Keep Frome Local, Paul Wynne (Town Clerk), Peter Wheelhouse (Economic Development & Regeneration Manager), Jackie Wheeler (Responsible Finance Officer), Laura Poulton (Administration Officer)

Approx. 150 members of the public

Minute Ref	Agenda Item	Action
2013/70/FC	1 QUESTIONS, COMMENTS AND INFORMATION FROM THE PUBLIC AND COUNTY AND DISTRICT CLLRS David Taylor raised concern that the tyre swing in the Mary Baily playing field was not being checked on a daily basis.	
2013/71/FC	2 SAXONVALE BACKGROUND PAPER The Economic Development & Regeneration Manager presented a map of the Saxonvale area and indicated each of the areas currently owned by Notts Industries, Mendip District Council, Terremond and Frome Town Council. The EDRM then gave an overview of what Frontier Estates proposals are for the whole of the Saxonvale site. The EDRM explained that the planning brief, draft district local plan and draft neighbourhood plan are key documents to consider in the redevelopment of the site. He noted that the Planning brief specifies there is a comprehensive redevelopment of the site, with high quality design and it becomes a seamless extension to the town centre. He did note that not all of the principals had been observed in the development proposals by Frontier Estates.	
2013/72/FC	3 A PRESENTATION FROM FRONTIER ESTATES OF THEIR OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SAXONVALE	

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	<p>Damian Wood, Development Director, noted that the current master plan for the site had been amended after the feedback they had received from the public consultation. He emphasised that Frontier’s development proposals are designed to complement the town.</p> <p>Ivor Phillips, Broadway Malyan, explained that in their design they have looked at the wider context of the environment and have recognised the conservation and green areas of Frome. One of their aims in the design was to overcome the barrier of Saxonvale, in its current state, disconnecting the residential estates from the town centre.</p> <p>Ivor noted that the master plan showed a continuation of retail units into the Kingsway Centre, two large public squares (allowing for outdoor events and markets), a service road to bypass Vicarage Street and the height of the food store will be disguised and allows for a basement car park dug into the hill. He noted that they would ideally want the public squares adopted by MDC so they can be used throughout the day with no restrictions. Ultimately they would like to open up pedestrian permeability.</p>	
<p>2013/73/FC</p>	<p>4 QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM CLLRS ON FRONTIER ESTATE’S PRESENTATION</p> <p>Cllr Burgess asked of Frontier’s commitment to develop the whole site. Damian assured him that Frontier Estates deliver the developments they set out to complete.</p> <p>Cllr Eliot expressed concern that nothing had been done to address wider traffic problems and noted the need to improve the current infrastructure. Robert Spriggs, Callidus, explained they had been undertaking traffic surveys to produce a transport assessment which is then evaluated by the highway authority. He acknowledged that a development like the one at Saxonvale will inevitably generate more traffic and therefore they are looking for solutions. He used the example of alleviating traffic from Vicarage Street by incorporating a service road off Garsdale.</p> <p>Cllr Usher expressed his desire to have seen a full planning application so the public could see how the final design will look and see how the surrounding streets will be upgraded and how greater priority is given to pedestrians. He asked what Frontier’s agreement is with MDC as their land is the part of the site that outline planning application has been submitted for.</p> <p>Nick Jones, GL Hearn, noted that the outline planning application is</p>	

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	<p>important in the first instance as it attracts potential occupiers of the retail units and provides them with security to take a risk. Damian Wood noted there would be a full planning application within six months and they have a formal agreement with MDC.</p> <p>CLlr Hooton asked how important the size of the supermarket is to the viability of the development? Do they intend to enter into a s106 agreement? How will free car parking work? Damian only noted that with regard to free parking it had not been confirmed however there was a possibility of parking costs being refunded if you shop in a certain store.</p> <p>CLlr Dobinson voiced his concern of how big the impact of a supermarket will be on other retailers and shoppers. He felt people would only go there to use the supermarket. Damian assured him the scheme will be to encourage people to use the town centre.</p>	
<p>2013/74/FC</p>	<p>5 QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM INVITED LOCAL GROUPS</p> <p>Chamber of Commerce Nigel Harris spoke on behalf of the organisation. The Chamber of Commerce felt the plan is not in line with the planning brief, they were concerned about size of the supermarket, the increase of traffic and the loss of the MDC parking area. They do have a desire to see development of the town centre however felt it is better to doing nothing than the wrong thing. He noted the Chamber would be encouraging MDC not to support Frontier’s application.</p> <p>Civic Society Ric Swann spoke on behalf of the society. He noted that their support was for the Local Plan, Neighbourhood Plan and Saxonvale Brief from 2005. Therefore with the size of the supermarket and the impact of the traffic they would not be supporting Frontier’s application.</p> <p>Frome For All Elizabeth John spoke on behalf of the organisation. Frome For All felt the master plan produced by Frontier was constructive and showed they have listened to the feedback they received. She noted similarly there was an outcry when Sainsbury’s and Asda were built outside of the town centre. Frome For All wanted to see people shopping in Frome and not in outside towns. Elizabeth noted not everyone can afford the independent stores which Frome’s centre is largely made up of.</p> <p>Keep Frome Local Keep Frome Local felt that the people of Frome expected to see a</p>	

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	<p>design that is much more creative. They felt there is no need for such a large supermarket and it would undercut and undermine existing traders. They were concerned the large retail units have their back to the town centre and there is no provision for transport links. Overall they gave their support for the Local Plan.</p>	
<p>2013/75/FC</p>	<p>6 QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC Cllr Hooton left at 8.55pm.</p> <p>Damon Moore Damon Moore spoke as the director of the Silk Mill. He felt the application by Frontier felt like the end of the road, as the town grows people need places to live, shop and work. He noted supermarkets have been recognised as economic drivers. He was positive about the opportunities for further partnerships with Frontier and the possibility of land owned by FTC being used as a space for start-up businesses.</p> <p>Peter John Peter felt that to move forward you have to compromise. In his opinion he felt the development will bring in a wider range of shops and more shoppers, which in turn is good for new and existing traders. Another positive aspect would be the creation of 300 jobs. He urged the public to embrace the plans.</p> <p>Roger Barnes Roger noted in his experience that comprehensive developments such as the proposal for Saxonvale are often not very deliverable, people get afraid of investing in them and the easiest way is take a proportion of the site to get the rest moving. This approach often provides better results.</p> <p>Charlie Brandt Charlie was concerned that a dominating feature of the development was the inclusion of a supermarket. He felt that a supermarket was not necessary and have often been damaging to local economies in previous towns he has lived in.</p> <p>Neil Howlett asked Frontier if they could provide some information about a similar development they had completed previously. Damian explained that they had always worked alongside of local authorities and land owners and have delivered developments such as care homes, offices and distribution centres.</p> <p>Gerlinda Rambausek asked if the development will change according to the investors/occupiers of the retail spaces. Nick Jones</p>	

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	<p>explained the purpose of the outline planning application is to secure the amount of retail space to then encourage occupiers. If there is not enough demand the scheme could not be delivered. He also noted that a retail impact assessment showed that only seven percent of shopping is done in Frome.</p> <p>Cara Honey, Mayor for Young People, asked what provision they had made for the youth of Frome? Nick Jones explained that the demographic of the majority of people who responded to the consultation were older. He noted that they would be keen to find another way of communicating with young people to understand their response to the development.</p> <p>Cllr Usher ended the discussion by thanking Frontier Estates and their associates for presenting their proposals. He noted that FTC was not making a decision about their recommendations to MDC that evening. He said this would likely happen in January after another facilitative debate is held.</p>	
<p>2013/76/FC</p>	<p>7 a. APOLOGIES</p> <p>The Chair formally opened the Council meeting at 9.05pm and apologies of absence were received from Cllrs Bullen, Hudson, Sprawson – White and White.</p>	
<p>2013/77/FC</p>	<p>7 b. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS</p> <p>A declaration was received from Cllrs Dobinson and Hooton who have seats on MDC that their views on any items on this agenda as an FTC member were not necessarily those as their role as an MDC Cllr.</p> <p>Cllr Moore expressed a personal interest in item 8. Cllr Hooton expressed a pecuniary interest in item 8.</p>	
<p>2013/78/FC</p>	<p>7 c. MINUTES</p> <p>The minutes of the Frome Town Council meeting held on 18 September 2013 were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.</p>	
<p>2013/79/FC</p>	<p>8 DISCUSSION AND DECISION ON THE PROCESS FTC SHOULD PURSUE IN RESPONDING TO THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS FOR SAXONVALE</p> <p>Cllr Usher reiterated his desire to see a full planning application, and to hold another meeting in January. He noted MDC hold the key to the site; if they do sell they could make all sorts of recommendations.</p>	

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	<p>Cllr Burgess asked if FTC could insist on full planning application as this would allow them to better to see what Frome want included.</p> <p>Alex Shingler, Deputy Mayor for Young People, asked if in recommendation one an addition was made to make special effort to reach the young people in the town. Cara Honey also recommended some youth provision is shown in the planning application.</p> <p>Cllr Goldfinger expressed concern that on the planning board there is only one Frome Cllr that is able to make a decision. She asked if FTC could persuade a Frome District Cllr to join the planning board.</p> <p>Cllr Eliot recommended that when MDC make a decision they do it publically in Frome.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Once the implications of the application have been considered the Council holds a further meeting with presentations and a facilitated public debate, including young people, before making a decision 2. Mendip District Council be informed that FTC considers that in such a sensitive area affecting both a conservation area and listed buildings that a full planning application would be more appropriate, if that is not possible any outline application should include; means of access, landscaping, layout, scale, sections and youth provision 3. If Mendip District Council are minded to approve the outline application as the planning authority, they are requested not to complete negotiations for the sale of their land until such time as: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. all detailed planning issues are resolved including access, (especially from the Market Place), design and materials b. they are satisfied with the sequencing of the work c. there are agreed proposals for status of the building shown as “continuous retail frontage”, and “the extended service road” d. more details are known about the ownership and running of the proposed “community building”, “boutique hotel”, “the riverside walk”, “the new public squares” and the employment building e. neighbouring environmental improvements are identified and funded especially along Church St and Kingsway f. all section 106 agreements including highway improvements and a contribution to the town centre remodelling are agreed with a payment schedule 	
		PWh
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	<p>g. proposals are forthcoming from the owners of the land identified as owned by Terramond and the Town Council</p> <p>4. To ensure proper local representation MDC are requested to temporarily co-opt three Frome District Cllrs on the Planning Board if there are vacancies caused by recent resignations or due to long term sickness</p> <p>5. The Planning Board meeting to consider the application be held in Frome</p> <p>6. To ensure public confidence in the decision making process MDC be as transparent as possible about the proposed land sale, including any current agreements, to Frontier Estates</p> <p>7. To meet with MDC as soon as possible to discuss land sales on Saxonvale site</p> <p>Proposed Cllr Goldfinger, seconded Cllr Dobinson, unanimous.</p>	<p>PWh</p> <p>PWh</p> <p>PWh</p> <p>PWh/PWy</p>
<p>2013/80/FC</p>	<p>9 AN UPDATE ON PROJECTS THE COUNCIL IS WORKING ON AT THE MOMENT</p> <p>The Town Clerk noted that the Planning and Development Officer was leading discussions on the creation of the Frome Hub in the library. The discussions were progressing and were now including more detail such as layout and space arrangements.</p>	
<p>2013/81/FC</p>	<p>10 FOR DECISION - TOWN CENTRE REMODELLING – IMPROVEMENTS TO PALMER STREET</p> <p>Cllr Dobinson left at 9.45pm.</p> <p>The Economic Development & Regeneration Officer explained it was clear that the original resurfacing proposals would be too expensive and not delivered in SCC’s time scales. He noted SCC was under pressure to make the improvements by the end of the financial year. The replacement of the tarmac surface and the repair of the pavement were expected to be paid for by SCC.</p> <p>The EDRM noted the importance of dealing with the issues for pedestrians particularly allowing people to move over to the high pavement and vice versa. He explained that when you drive in to Palmer Street it does not show that pedestrians have high priority. In the improvements a paved crossing area at the entrance of Palmer Street would be installed to make this obvious and this would be done through use of materials.</p> <p>Cllr Burgess asked if the original proposal for buff coloured tarmac had been lost. The EDRM confirmed that SCC would only be able to carry out future repairs with black tarmac.</p>	

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	<p>Cllr Berry asked if there would be a ramp to the high pavement. The EDRM explained it will be sloped and they still wanted to make provision for a disabled parking space.</p> <p>Cllr Anderson expressed his concern that this project is not good value for money.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Councillors approve the elements of the scheme above 2. Councillors agree to a contribution to the scheme not exceeding £20,000 to enable the safety improvements to be made utilising the Town Centre Improvements earmarked reserve 3. Councillors delegate authority to the Economic Development & Regeneration Manager to agree a final scheme with the County Council <p>Proposed Cllr Macfadyen, seconded Cllr Burgess, agreed by majority.</p>	PWh
2013/82/FC	<p>11 FOR DECISION – FINANCIAL REGULATIONS</p> <p>Charles Wood was invited to speak and asked that the Council look critically at their spending and consider freezing or reducing the precept next year as there is likely to be a similar Council Tax grant available from MDC.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Council adopts the draft Financial Regulations 2. If Council adopts new Financial Regulations it is proposed that they become the formal Financial Regulations at the end of the meeting <p>Proposed Cllr Eliot, seconded Cllr Starkie, agreed by majority.</p>	
2013/83/FC	<p>12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 8 January 2013 at Frome Medical Practice</p>	

The Chair closed the meeting at 10:00pm