

FROME TOWN COUNCIL

making Frome a better place

Minutes of a meeting of Frome Town Council

Wednesday 18 March 2015 at 7pm
Assembly Rooms, Christchurch Street West, Frome. BA11 1EB

Present:

Councillors: Dave Anderson; Carole Bullen; Graham Burgess; Toby Eliot; Pippa Goldfinger; Tricia Golinski; Damon Hooton; Peter Macfadyen; Dickon Moore; Mel Usher; Alex Shingler (Deputy Mayor for Young People).

In attendance:

Jeremy Smalley (Regeneration and Planning Consultant), Paula Blight (Mendip Community Support), Caroline Wood (Somerset Standard).

FTC staff: Paul Wynne, Chris Stringer, Kate Hellard, Rebecca Krzyzosiak, Peter Wheelhouse, Allan Bennett.

40 members of the public.

Minute Ref	Agenda Item	Action
2015/11/FC	<p>1 QUESTIONS, COMMENTS AND INFORMATION FROM THE PUBLIC</p> <p>County Cllr Linda Oliver updated Council on her recent work. District Cllr Damon Hooton informed Council that MDC's asset management group had decided not to have any more meetings until after the elections and outstanding items involving FTC would not be considered until June at the earliest. Cllr Sprawson-White said Friday is the decision deadline for the Police Station and Newland Homes; they met with MDC last week but due to a refusal were still in discussion.</p>	
2015/12/FC	<p>2 Presentation by Paula Blight, Chief Executive Mendip Community Support: a Vision for Volunteering in Frome</p> <p>Paula informed Council that MCS cover the Mendip area and Sedgemoor; supporting and developing small community groups. Their main services are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• General advice and guidance to groups• Information on sources of funding/help with applications• Support in development and starting-up groups• Networking opportunities and information sessions for groups across Mendip and Sedgemoor• Help with finding volunteers and importantly keeping volunteers• Acting as a voice for the Voluntary Sector at District, County and	

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	<p>the wider Regional level</p> <p>Paula explained the MCS had also started up the ‘Frome Forum’ – where community groups could update their activities and share their knowledge with others and provide support.</p> <p>Paula described how MCS had been heavily involved in supporting and organising volunteers following the Somerset floods a year ago.</p> <p>She highlighted that there are many reasons that people volunteer. For example, a young person wanting more experience on their CV; someone unemployed wanting experience to get back into the workplace; a retired person wanting to help others.</p> <p>Paula explained that MCS had learnt an enormous amount that can now be used to support volunteers and community groups in Frome. She believes MCS can enhance volunteering and create more resilient communities.</p> <p>Cllr Goldfinger asked about training for volunteer leaders. Paula said that having a team of volunteers to provide support to others was crucial. MCS recognise this and can link people together.</p> <p>Cllr Usher thanked Paula and said that he could see that a crisis does motivate people to get involved in their community, but can this motivation be at the same level when it is day-to-day life of cuts in the public sector and removal of services? Do we all need to rethink the position of volunteers within society? Paula said there <i>is</i> a call from Government for volunteers to help plug the funding gap and that people want to help but don’t always know how. She said in the Levels, working as a team effort (by bringing together different volunteer domains across counties) had helped.</p>	
<p>2015/13/FC</p>	<p>The Chairman formally opened the Council meeting at 7.25pm</p> <p>3 a. APOLOGIES Apologies of absence were received from Cllrs White, Hudson and Boyden.</p>	
<p>2015/14/FC</p>	<p>3 b. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS A declaration was received from Cllrs Bullen, 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 Sprawson-White declared an interest in item 5.</p>	

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	<p>Cllrs Hooton and Moore declared a personal and prejudicial interest in item 6.</p>	
<p>2015/15/FC</p>	<p>3 c. MINUTES</p> <p>The minutes of the Frome Town Council meeting held on 7 January 2015 were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.</p> <p>Proposed Hooton, seconded Goldfinger, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>The Council noted the most recent draft minutes of the IAC and EAC.</p>	
<p>2015/16/FC</p>	<p>4 Outstanding Actions and forthcoming items</p> <p>Peter Wheelhouse gave a verbal update on the project to improve the Market Place. FTC was still waiting on news of the planning application. Cllr Macfadyen said he was disappointed that MDC was going to 'stop' for three months.</p> <p>The Town Clerk advised Stuart Brown had to cancel their meeting, so was unable to give a verbal update presently.</p>	
<p>2015/17/FC</p>	<p>5 For decision: To agree the design brief for Frome Town Hall and receive an update on progress</p> <p>The Town Clerk updated the Council on the community engagement process to produce the Design Brief, described the main elements of it and the process of appointing a lead designer.</p> <p>Paul noted that the selling price of the Palmer Street offices was likely to be in the region of £250K. The Town Clerk suggested that Council should consider marketing it only when FTC was ready to move into the new building.</p> <p>The Town Clerk also noted that the best trust model of owning and managing the building was to establish a Charitable Trust. A model structure would be proposed at a future meeting.</p> <p>Cllr Dobinson arrived at 7.57pm.</p> <p>Cllr Usher said he was astounded by the interest in the building and said it reflected a powerful voluntary sector in Frome. He wanted to reiterate FTC will occupy a small proportion of the building. He said he doesn't want FTH to look like that a local authority runs it; he wants it to be 'bright and breezy'.</p>	

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	<p>Cllr Anderson asked whether the café is needed? The Town Clerk said feedback from the public was that one was needed. Paul also explained the plan was to have a community run café. He also touched upon the fact Critchill School had made a video and expressed interest in running it. He did not anticipate that FTC staff would run it.</p> <p>Cllr Hooton suggested FTC could rent Palmer Street as there was such high demand for the space. The Town Clerk said the decision to sell was not yet made and he was just getting estimates for its value at this time.</p> <p><i>The recommendations were:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the design brief at Appendix 3. 2. Authority be delegated to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to appoint a lead designer and Quantity Surveyor to take the project from RIBA Stage 0 up to and including 3. 3. Note the intention, subject to detailed design and costings, to retain the lead designer and QS to manage the project to completion. 4. To return to the next meeting with a detailed design and costed proposal for approval. 5. To return to the next appropriate meeting with a proposal to establish a Charitable Trust. 6. To market the freehold the Council offices in Palmer Street once a date is set to move out. <p>Proposed Cllr Goldfinger, seconded Cllr Hooton, agreed by majority.</p>	PWy
<p>2015/18/FC</p>	<p>6 For Decision: Saxonvale – next steps</p> <p>Cllrs Hooton and Moore left the meeting for this item.</p> <p>Jeremy Smalley outlined that Saxonvale offers a complex regeneration challenge for many reasons, but mainly because of the amount of people that own parts of the land. He said what he was presenting was not a master plan, but recommendations as to who is going to lead the regeneration of Saxonvale and what mechanisms can be used to explore a different way forward.</p> <p>Jeremy said he had engaged with the landowners and that this was key to get an understanding of their aspirations and restrictions. He also highlighted a need for on-going dialogue to continue. He had</p>	

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	<p>also sought advice from the Civic Society and Chamber of Commerce. His conclusion was that there is no one leader for the landholdings and no-one was quite sure what was happening.</p> <p>Jeremy proposed that all land owners and stakeholders work closely together to overcome issues. He also advised that FTC should take the lead and that there was a mechanism under the Localism Act to establish a Neighbourhood Development Order. Such an order would create certainty for prospective developers and could unlock funding.</p> <p>CLlr Goldfinger asked if the Neighbourhood Development Orders bypassed the normal planning system. Jeremy Smalley said that while NDOs have to be robust they do go around the planning system and therefore MDC. This would create an opportunity to establish more local control.</p> <p>CLlr Berry said that the presentation was interesting, but highlighted that Frontier Estates' planning application was still to be determined and said she felt it would be fool-hardy to allocate £16k to this project when Frontier remained confident that they will get planning permission. Jeremy said that if FTC waited it might be years. CLlr Berry said that CLlr White shared her concerns.</p> <p>CLlr Usher said it was a calculated risk but one that FTC needed to take; as there had been many developers interested in the site and then disappearing due to difficulties later. He stated that the current application has been in motion for 18 months and the world is changing now and supermarkets aren't investing in sites as they once did. He said he felt it was about time FTC took direction in its own destiny, and he was proud about pro-activeness of FTC. He said it was not being reckless, this was based on an assessment and FTC could take responsibility. Landowners could get on board with FTC being pragmatic. He felt the future is decision making at a local level.</p> <p>CLlr Sprawson-White said she felt it was a very positive presentation and agreed that someone needed to take the lead, that for the first time this presented an option.</p> <p><i>The recommendations were</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Set up the 'Saxonvale Project' and work towards the preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Order and/or a Business Development Order that would grant planning permission for development at Saxonvale that is in line with the approach in this report and the policies in the Neighbourhood	
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	<p>Plan.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Leader of the Council to become Project Sponsor. 3. ERDM to become Lead Officer with responsibility for developing and implementing the project plan. 4. Jeremy Smalley to be retained to produce a 'pitch book'/prospectus and provide advice as necessary for an initial period of 3 months. 5. Approach MDC with a view to entering into a Memorandum of Understanding that would commit MDC and FTC to work exclusively together on the regeneration of Saxonvale. 6. Continue to meet with other landowners with a view to securing their cooperation. 7. Meet with the LEPs and HCA to secure their support. 8. Allocate £16k from the Neighbourhood Plan Implementation budget to enable the work to proceed. 9. Report back to Council in July 2015 on this first phase of activity so that the next steps can be agreed. <p>Proposed Cllr Goldfinger, seconded Cllr Anderson, agreed by majority.</p>	PWh
2015/19/FC	<p>7 For information: Plans for the elections and Frome parliamentary Hustings</p> <p>The Town Clerk presented information on Democracy Day, that will be at the Cheese and Grain on 12 April and all parliamentary candidates were attending. He said that the hustings would be about Frome issues. The chair will be Lisa Millard, deputy principal, at Frome College who will identify questions in advance.</p> <p>The Town Clerk explained that a formal hustings was not the only thing going on; organisers were also inviting every prospective town and district councillor to set out a stall. As well as this, there would be a 'speaker's corner' where people could put their name on a list and stand on a 'soap box' and talk about issues close to them. The Town Clerk emphasised that it was being organised by three organisations working together FACT (Frome Area Christians Together), FROME FM and FTC for the betterment for the community.</p> <p>Democracy Day is only one part of what FTC wants to do in the run up to the elections. FTC is putting together a webpage which has lots of information on voting; ward boundaries; and the various elections happening at the same time this year. There are further plans for FTC to do flyer to help people understand more about their choices.</p>	

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	<p>Cllr Moore said that young people should be targeted to attend and Paul said that they would be.</p>	
<p>2015/20/FC</p>	<p>8 For Decision: Progressing the proposed Bert Jansch Media Centre at the Cheese & Grain Economic Development & Regeneration Officer, Peter Wheelhouse, explained that in the early part of 2014 Council had agreed the principle of bringing the Tower back into use. Since then the Cheese and Grain had secured funding from the Bert Jansch foundation and Frome development fund CIC to carry out a feasibility study.</p> <p>He showed slides illustrating the plans that included an external lift tower and a new main entrance facing the river. An internal illustration of the recording room, control room, reception, lift, and very top floor for training activities was also shown.</p> <p>Cllr Moore asked what FTC’s role was in the project. Peter Wheelhouse replied that it was to secure planning consent and landlord’s consent. It was not to necessarily commission or manage the project.</p> <p>Cllr Eliot said it was good to define roles, and that it was important the project was led by the Cheese and Grain and that it was not reliant on funding from FTC. Cllr Berry said she was pleased that they are funding their own project and she fully supported it.</p> <p><i>The recommendations were:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Authority be delegated to the EDRM to obtain the necessary planning and landlord’s consent from Mendip DC. 2. The cost of the planning application at £192.50 to be met by FTC using the existing Legal & Professional Fees budget. 3. Authority be delegated to the EDRM to enter into negotiations with MDC with a view to extending the area of FTC’s lease and Frome Cheese & Grain’s sub-lease to incorporate the new extension. <p>Proposed Cllr Hooton, seconded Cllr Sprawson- White, agreed unanimously.</p>	<p>PWh</p>
<p>2015/21/FC</p>	<p>9 For decision: Financial regulations Cllrs noted the paper.</p> <p><i>Recommendation</i> Approve the draft Financial Regulations at Appendix 7.</p> <p>Proposed Cllr Sprawson-White, seconded Cllr Goldfinger, agreed by</p>	

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	majority.	
2015/22/FC	<p>10 For Decision: Calendar for next civic year Cllrs noted the paper.</p> <p><i>Recommendation</i> Approve the new civic year calendar.</p> <p>Proposed Cllr Usher, seconded Cllr Eliot, agreed by majority. Cllr Bullen voted against.</p> <p>Cllr Usher addressed the meeting and said that it was the last Council meeting. He thanked all the Council members and FTC officers as they had given them “quite a hard time over the years”.</p> <p>Cllr Usher also gave thanks to the audience for all their participation - both negative and positive.</p>	
2015/23/FC	The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 20 May 2015 at the Assembly Rooms.	

The Chair closed the meeting at 9.10pm.